

# Sheffield Bird Study Group

# BULLETIN



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**www.sbsg.org**

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**Bulletin**

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Dates for your diary

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## INDOOR MEETINGS

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**Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> January - 7.15 pm – Lecture Theatre 5, Arts Tower, Sheffield University**

**Phil Palmer** will talk to us about "The Secret Life of the Nightjar". Until quite recently was a council member for the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust and chairman of their reserves committee. He is well known for his photographs and articles that have appeared in many birding magazines. He last spoke to the Group in 2003 about his book "First for Britain and Ireland". For the past 15 years he has been involved in a project studying Nightjars so this should prove to be a very interesting and informative talk.

**Wednesday 13th February– 7.15 pm - Lecture Theatre 5, Arts Tower, Sheffield University**

**David Lingard** will talk to us about "Birds of Europe". For many years David has been associated with LIPU - the society working for the protection of birds in Italy where there has always been a problem of persecution by hunters and the killing of small birds for the restaurant trade (Illegal but still going on!). He will talk about the birds of Europe in general and finish in Italy with the work of LIPU and a picture of the position now.

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## FIELD MEETINGS

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**Saturday 15th December 2007 – 1.00 pm, Winter Gulls at Poolsbrook Country Park**

A visit to Poolsbrook Country Park to get to grips with those winter gulls. Kevin Gould will sort through the various sets of plumages and hopefully there should be something a little more unusual to see. December is the best time of year to see Caspian and Yellow-legged Gulls, both now full species according to the British Ornithologists' Union. Meet at Poolsbrook CP at SK436737 at 1pm. The birding can be done from the relative comfort of the café veranda but do wrap up warm.

**For information on this field trip contact Kevin Gould on 01246 261383**

**Sunday, 25<sup>th</sup> January – Meet 7.00 am, Holkham/Tichwell, North Norfolk**

An annual pilgrimage to North Norfolk to find the winter migrants to this area. Past trip lists have included many species of geese, Snow Buntings, Shore Lark, Long-tailed Duck, Arctic Redpoll to name but a few.

**At the moment this trip is fully booked but in case of cancellations and for details of this and further field trips please contact Paul Medforth on 01246 418120 or 07968 092032.**

## South Peak Raptor Study Group Annual Report 2006

The South Peak Raptor Study Group (SPRSG) was formed in 1998 to monitor breeding success of raptors in the South Peak. In general, the study area extends into the Upper Derwent Valley in the north, and also parts of NE Derbyshire that are not in the Peak District, but does not include those parts of South Derbyshire that are outside the Peak District. There is some variation in this, as indicated below. The following is a summary of their Annual Report for 2006.

Mick Taylor introduced the Annual Report by describing 2006 as an “interesting, challenging and

ultimately rewarding year for the group”, mainly due to the successful fledging of two Hen Harrier broods, of which more below. The group has also been involved with the North of England Raptor Forum, an umbrella organisation for all raptor groups from the Scottish borders in the north to themselves in the south.

The table below summarises the data for breeding success over the past five years. In general, the number of fledged young can be assumed to be the minimum.

	Number of Sites					Number Successful					Number Fledged				
	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06
Hen Harrier	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	10
Goshawk	13	17	15	16	18	10	10+	8+	11	12	26	23+	16+	18+	25+
Buzzard	32	30-40	c43	44+	69+	20	c24	17+	17+	25+	35	c55	42+	30+	35+
Merlin	9	6	11	9	9	6	4	5	5	4	24	17	17	21	13
Hobby*	4	6	23	35	40	4	4	17	31	32+	8	11	41+	72	73+
Peregrine* *	16	16	18	17	23	10	12	10	11	14	18	25	26	30	32
LE Owl	6	3	3	2	3	6	3	2	1	2	??	4+	6	1	5
SE Owl	9	9	8	11+	1	3	6	2+	7+	1	??	6+	7+	?	2+
Raven	14	24+	27	31+	31+	11	22+	19	15+	19+	35	51+	40+	47+	46+

\* includes South Derbyshire from 2004 onwards.

\*\* includes North Staffordshire sites from 2001 onwards.

A notable addition to the above table is the **Hen Harrier**, which in 2006 bred successfully for the first time in the SPRSG recording area. The young were wing-tagged, with royal blue on each wing, and radio transmitters were also fitted. One pair consisted of a full adult male and an immature female (possibly second year), and the second pair was a sub-adult male and an adult female. Each female laid six eggs, and the nest areas were cyphermarked. The first pair had eggs by 22 April, and the second pair approximately two weeks later. All appeared well until the 1st and 2nd June

during which period both males disappeared. With no males to provide food, English Nature took the decision to provide supplementary food at each nest and, without this, the second nest would certainly have failed. The main natural prey items were mountain hare leverets, small birds, and a few lizards and voles. All the youngsters had left the area by the end of August, but tagged birds were subsequently seen in Big Moor and Leash Fen, and later in Hampshire and North Yorkshire. In addition to our local birds, autumn passage birds were seen on the Eastern Moors from 29th August

until late December. It is extremely rare for males to abandon at that stage in the breeding cycle and, although SPRSG have been scrupulous in not making accusations in the absence of firm evidence, the Derbyshire Ornithological Society newsletter reported that shots were heard in the area at the time, and I personally think we can draw our own conclusions. [Since then, of course, there has been the shooting of two Hen Harriers on the 24th October at the Sandringham Estate, and I have said what I think about that in the summary of RSPB's *Peak Malpractice Update* elsewhere in this Bulletin.]

This was overall a successful year for **Goshawks**, a secretive and possibly overlooked species. In the Derwent Valley area, six sites were occupied, with three sites successfully fledging seven chicks between them. The other three failed: one pair deserted a clutch of four eggs whilst, at another, the nest tree was climbed (climbing iron marks were found on the tree) and at the final site, the birds just disappeared. Clearly human interference was a factor at one site at least. Elsewhere 12 pairs were located, fledging at least 18 young from 9 successful nests. One failed site had been climbed to, but reasons for the other failures was not known. Interestingly, some new sites were located away from the uplands.

The **Sparrowhawk** is not under close scrutiny by the group. Many urban/suburban sightings were recorded, and the species appears to be more or less stable.

The **Buzzard** continues to spread and infill. Three pairs bred successfully in the Upper Derwent Valley, fledging at least five young; continuous CCTV footage from one of the sites produced much interest at Fairholmes. In some areas the Buzzard is considered to be the commonest raptor, and may in future overtake the Kestrel as the most numerous raptor in the Peak District as a whole.

The **Kestrel** had a very poor breeding season in 2006, mainly due to a lack of voles. However the overall population seems to be only slightly below that of 2005.

The breeding success of **Merlins** continues to give cause for concern. Of the five failed sites, one pair laid five eggs but deserted for no apparent reason; three other pairs held territory but failed to breed; one pair had their nest washed out in torrential rain in late May and, although they re-laid and hatched in early July, the chicks were found dead in the nest on 24th July, and had possibly died of heatstroke.

The **Hobby** continues to thrive and spread, and 2006 was another record year for the species. A total of 42 juveniles were ringed, and 36 of these were also colour-ringed. This may throw light on site fidelity and movement of individuals, and any sightings would be welcomed by Anthony Messenger (01332 665257). Immature birds (non-

breeders) can regularly be seen on the Eastern Moors during the summer, catching moths.

The **Peregrine** overall enjoyed another successful breeding season in 2006, despite some adverse weather in April and early May which may have contributed to failure of first clutches at the laying stage and mortality of young birds shortly after hatching. The numbers in the table includes five new sites in Derbyshire, including one in lowland Derbyshire which fledged one young, and one on Derby Cathedral which fledged three young who were ringed by Anthony Messenger. In the Upper Derwentdale area, two sites were successful, fledging two and four young; there was no evidence of birds at two previously successful sites. Five of the young birds were ringed and samples taken for DNA analysis. At Alport Castles, a hide was erected again as part of the Peak NestWatch initiative. An immature female found dead in May in suspicious circumstances in the Derwentdale area is the subject of a police investigation. The White Peak quarry nests were generally successful and, although some failed initially due to adverse weather conditions, some of these did re-lay successfully.

There was continuing good news for the **Barn Owl** in 2006, assisted by nest box schemes. At least 10 pairs bred, all successfully, and fledged at least 28 young, all of which were ringed. At four sites, the adult female had been ringed in previous years, indicating site fidelity. A pair almost certainly bred at another site, but on the downside, two adults were found dead as road casualties.

The **Little Owl** is not intensively studied by the Group but it continues to thrive, mainly in the White Peak where it frequents old farm buildings and dead trees. Two broods, of two and one young, were ringed.

The **Tawny Owl** is by far the commonest owl in the area and, again, is not intensively studied. It is found in most woodlands. Two young from one brood, together with a juvenile at another site, were ringed. This species is increasingly heard and seen in urban areas.

This was a better year for **Long-Eared Owl**, another secretive and possibly overlooked species. Three pairs were located early in the year, two of which reared three and two young, whilst the third pair did not breed. At a fourth site, young birds were heard calling in June, and at a fifth site a female with a brood patch was caught in a mist net set up to ring Swallows.

This year was clearly a "vole crash" year in the uplands, as only one pair of **Short-Eared Owl** bred, fledging at least two chicks. No pairs were located in the upper Derwent Valley, an area which has held up to six pairs in a good vole year. It is hoped that the vole population recovers, and that the Short-Eared Owl population follows suit.

**Ravens** are also monitored by the Group, and after several years of fairly dramatic increases, the breeding population appears to be stabilising. A total of nine young were ringed at two sites. It will be interesting to see if there is a further increase in tree nesting as the nucleus of quarry sites is exhausted, or indeed reduced due to “landscaping” of worked out quarry faces. In the early part of the year there were large pre-roost gatherings in the Swallow Moss area of North Staffordshire: the peak count was 71 in January — not quite up to the record 96 birds in December 2005.

Two non-breeding species are also mentioned in the SPRSG report: there was an increase in **Red Kite** sightings in both upland and lowland areas, and it is hoped that this species may breed in Derbyshire before too long; the **Marsh Harrier** is increasing as a breeding species in areas such as Humberside and Lancashire, and this may account for an increase in local sightings in August and September, with at least five identifiable individuals passing through the Eastern Moors.

The Group continues its involvement with the **Peak Nestwatch Scheme** which was launched in 2001, and is supported by RSPB, Peak District National Park, Severn Trent Water, National Trust and Forestry Commission, other local landowners and the police.

**Raptor Ringing** was increased in 2003, with stronger links between SPRSG and Sorby Breck Ringing Group, and the 2006 Report included a list of some of the ringing returns for 2002-2006. There were 27 returns (1 Hen Harrier, 1 Goshawk, 6 Sparrowhawk, 5 Kestrel, 4 Merlin, 2 Hobby, 3 Peregrine, 4 Tawny Owl and 1 Short-eared Owl). Of these, 26 were ringed as chicks or in their first year, so their year of birth was known, and only 19 had survived for more than a year.

Distance from natal site was fairly predictable with farthest travelled being the Hobby found dead in Kent, closely followed by one of “our” Hen Harriers juveniles who was seen (fit and well, recognised by wing-tag) in Hampshire. The three Peregrines were found dead at distances of 228, 123, and 72 km; the time since they were ringed as chicks being 32, 4 and 5 months respectively.

**Some Acknowledgments:** The membership of the Group in 2006 was: Mick Taylor (Coordinator), John Atkin, Matthew Capper, Roy Frost, Trevor Grimshaw, Mick Lacey, Geoff Mawson, Anthony Messenger, Stephen Moores, Steve Samworth, Jack Street and Paul Tooley. In their annual report they list, and express their thanks to, the landowners who allow access to their property.

*Wendy Thomson*

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## Peak Malpractice Update 2007

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### Introduction

Early in 2006, the RSPB published a report *Peak Malpractice* drawing attention to the persecution of raptors in the Upper Derwent Valley and the North-East moors (Strines, Broomhead, etc.). They called for statutory bodies, voluntary groups and landowners to protect wild birds and to tackle “with vigour and determination any criminal activity against wildlife”. I summarised the report for the SBSG Bulletin September 2006, and also included some of the responses that followed its appearance. This report was published before the two Hen Harrier nests in the Peak District — the

success of fledging 5 chicks at each site being somewhat overshadowed by the unexplained disappearance of both males. Now, in 2007, with raptor persecution continuing unabated during 2006, which was in fact the worst year on record, RSPB have produced a report of the 2006 breeding season by way of an update to their original report. The following is just a summary of this Update, but you can find more details in the full document on the RSPB website (its address is very long, so it is easier to find it by typing “peak malpractice” into the website’s search engine).

### The Peak Malpractice Update

The Update begins with a summary of what is happening in the Peak District, how the heather moors are valuable for ground nesting birds, and that grouse shooting has undoubtedly saved a significant amount of heather moorland from post-war tree planting and intensification of farming. This has benefited a number of moorland species, particularly waders, but the illegal persecution of

raptors has continued. In particular, species such as Peregrines, Goshawks and Hen Harriers should be flourishing in this habitat, but are absent or much scarcer than they should be.

The Update looks at breeding success in three general areas, namely the North-East moors, the Derwent Valley area, and the rest of the Peak District moors i.e. the White and South-West

## Peaks.

The breeding success of raptors on the North-East moors can be quickly summarised: no breeding Goshawk, no breeding Peregrine, and no breeding Raven in this area. As for Buzzard, a pair had built and lined a nest, but after gunshots were heard in the woods containing the nest, neither bird was

seen again.

The following is a summary of breeding success in the Derwent Valley area, showing the number of sites at which each species attempted to breed, the number where young were successfully fledged, and the total number of young fledged.

	Monitored Sites	Number of Successful Sites	Total Number of Young Fledged	Comments
Goshawk	5	2	6	There was evidence that one nest tree had recently been climbed. At one site, a nest was built but then the adults vanished
Peregrine	3	2	6	At the unsuccessful site, display and territorial behaviour were seen, then both birds vanished.
H. Harrier	2	2	10	Both males vanished, but supplementary feeding enabled the success of both nests.
Buzzard	2	2	4	
Raven	2	1	4	A nest was built at the unsuccessful site but the adults vanished.

The following is a summary for elsewhere in the Peak District moorlands

	Monitored Sites	Number of Successful Sites	Total Number of Young Fledged	Comments
Goshawk	1	0	0	A first female vanished but was replaced by a second female who laid eggs; this female also then vanished.
Peregrine	5	2	6	Of the 3 failed nests: one pair hatched young but they failed to fledge; two territorial pairs just vanished — at one location a dead Peregrine had earlier in the year been found in a pole trap.
H. Harrier	0	0	0	A territorial pair were present in the South-West Peak but sightings ceased. The ground was subsequently found to be criss-crossed with fresh tracks from an all-terrain vehicle.

In addition to the incidents of persecution referred to above, the Update also details:

- The unexplained disappearance of a nesting pair of Short-eared Owls in the Dark Peak.
- A first-year Peregrine found dead from gunshot wounds, having apparently survived a previous shooting.
- A gunshot heard, and a man subsequently seen carrying a dead Raven.
- A Larsen trap illegally baited with pigeon. A Larsen trap may legally be used for some corvid species: it should be baited with an (unfortunate) individual of the same species as

the target species to attract other birds to it; pigeons do not react to other pigeons in this way so are only ever used to trap raptors (illegally).

- The confirmed poisoning of Raven and Jay (and badger).

The Update goes into some detail regarding Hen Harriers. Not only did the two Peak District males disappear, but Natural England reports that many Hen Harriers fail to rear young because adults go missing. Since 2002, there have been 52 nesting attempts in the Forest of Bowland, and no instances of actively breeding adults just disappearing but, elsewhere on English grouse moors, nearly 60% of nesting attempts failed for

this reason. The Report also quotes research showing breeding success on driven Grouse moors to be lower than that on other moors in both Scotland and England.

The Update summarises all 17 cases of illegal persecution incidents in 2006 (the highest number on record), including those mentioned above. These comprised:

- Unexplained nest failure (2, namely Goshawk

and Raven)

- Unexplained disappearance of adults (9, namely the Hen Harriers, Peregrine, Goshawk, Buzzard, and Short-eared Owl)
- Shooting (2, namely Peregrine and Raven)
- Trapping (2, namely raptors generally — i.e. the Larsen trap — and Peregrine)
- Confirmed Poisoning (2, namely Raven, Jay)

## Update to the Update

Following publication of the original report in 2006, Radio 4 ran a programme *Peak Nestwatch*, concerned with this issue. It included an interview with one Martin Gillibrand from the Moorland Association who claimed that there was no evidence for persecution, that there was no question of the Hen Harriers having been persecuted, and it was more likely that they had been scared off by crowds of birdwatchers, etc. etc.

This year Radio 4 devoted an edition of *Nature* to the same topic, but in a much more balanced way, with Mick Taylor of the SPRSG and Mark Thomas of RSPB given a chance to summarise the reports in some detail. They also related a more recent case when a grey squirrel had been covered in a powerful adhesive, and tied to a stone wall with baler twine some 30 metres from an active Goshawk nest: the clear intention was to attract the Goshawk to the squirrel where it would be stuck fast, and thus meet an untimely end without leaving incriminating evidence. The programme did also acknowledge that illegal persecution takes place.

At the time of writing, we have the incident in which Prince Harry and two others (a friend and a gamekeeper) were implicated in the shooting of two Hen Harriers on the Sandringham estate on 24th October. The official statement admitted that they were the only people present at the time but “unfortunately did not see the incident”. Although the police sent details to the CPS, the two birds’ bodies had disappeared, and the CPS dropped the case due to lack of evidence. The concept that person or persons unknown could be present with shotguns in the vicinity of Prince Harry without causing alarm was met with widespread derision,

and further statements were issued by various parties suggesting that there had been no shooting, and even that Harry might have been set-up by the anti-shooting fraternity.

In particular the website of the Sandringham Estate states that there was “... no evidence to prove that these birds were in fact shot down” which I suppose is true, but “no evidence” does not mean that it didn’t happen. The National Gamekeepers Association went further in saying that “... it has emerged that the original story ... was based on nothing more than misidentification by someone who thought he saw two hen harriers being shot in poor evening light”. This statement is not true at all, and both Natural England and the CPS have reiterated that there was no doubt that the harriers had been shot.

It is also worth considering that we have two undisputed facts: firstly, there was certainly a reported shooting on the Sandringham estate in the vicinity of Harry et al; secondly, the only official response was a bland denial. There can only be one explanation for the absence of any security alarm, and that is that officialdom knew exactly where the shots had come from. Furthermore, if there had been a (highly implausible) misidentification, they would have issued a very different initial statement from just saying that Harry et al “unfortunately did not see the incident”.

This latest episode gave the clearest possible illustration of the problems facing raptors and the people who try to protect them. Despite the matter receiving widespread publicity, it seems that nothing could be done and, once again, there are denials that any wrong-doing has occurred.

**Wendy Thomson**

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## BTO NEWS

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### Regional Representative

The news that Chris Falshaw was retiring as the BTO Regional Representative for Yorkshire SW and SE came as a bit of a shock, particularly as I was still learning the ropes as his assistant. Anyway, I am now continuing Chris's work as Regional Representative, though it may be some time before I can meet his standards. On that note, I should like to take this opportunity to thank Chris for his sterling work and wish him all the very best for the future.

Please contact me if you want to know more about becoming a member of the BTO or if you can help with any of the following surveys – you do not have to be a BTO member to do survey work.

**David Gains 28 Raleigh Road, Sheffield, S2 3AZ. Tel. 0114 2557075 (evening) E-mail: [bto-rep@fireflyuk.net](mailto:bto-rep@fireflyuk.net)**

### Breeding Bird Survey

The BBS is a simple but very important survey that requires three visits to a randomly selected 1 km x 1 km square. The first visit is to find a 2 km route across the square and record the habitat within the survey area. On the two subsequent visits, one between early April and mid-May and another between mid-May and late June, you record all the birds you see or hear.

The fieldwork usually takes 5 to 6 hours. You need a reasonable knowledge of the songs and calls of common and widespread UK bird species, but the BTO supplies you with full instructions, forms and a CD or tape containing the calls and songs of many typical bird species.

We are still looking for volunteers to survey 16 squares in the region; these are SE5605, SE5702, SE6427, SE6608, SE6812, SE2003, SE2010, SE2405, SE2614, SE2704, SE3608, SK1099, SK1395, SK1594 and SK3391 and SK6494.

### Bird Atlas 2007-11

Although long-term surveys, like BBS, provide us with information on trends in populations, they are only sample surveys and do not cover all of Britain and Ireland. In contrast, atlases give us the chance to visit all 10 km squares in Britain and Ireland and find out what is there and approximately how common they are.

There have been two previous breeding atlases (1968-72 and 1988-91) and just one winter atlas (1981-84), and they have provided vital information for bird conservation. For example, one of the important findings from the last breeding atlas was the widespread range contraction of many of our farmland birds. This led to detailed research into the causes of these declines and conservation effort to prevent further deterioration.

However, these atlases are at least 20 years old and it would be fascinating to look at the changes there have been in that time. Bird Atlas 2007-11 is a huge and exciting project that will map the abundance and distribution of birds in Britain and Ireland during both the breeding season and winter. Will the conservation efforts for farmland birds have made a difference? What will we discover about woodland bird species? More importantly, the results from this atlas will be the basis for the conservation of birds in Britain and Ireland for the coming decades. What's more, we can all take part and make a real contribution to its success.

There are two components to the fieldwork: *Timed Tetrad Visits (TTVs)* and *Roving Records*. TTVs involve two visits in the breeding season and two in the winter to a tetrad (2 km x 2 km square). Each visit is for a minimum of one hour and the idea is to record species you see and hear along with numbers, so we can calculate the relative abundance of species in the 10 km squares. We are aiming to cover a minimum of eight tetrads in every 10 km square (there are 25 tetrads in a 10 km square). You can choose to survey a tetrad in the winter, the breeding season or ideally both.

The first winter visits started in November and have to be completed in December, the second takes place in January/February. Unfortunately, it is now too late to request a tetrad for this winter, but there is plenty of time to sign-up for a tetrad (or more if you are able) for the coming breeding season. The first breeding season visit takes place in April/May and the second in June/July. At the time of writing, SK28, 29, 38 and 39 are the only 10 km squares in the SBSG recording area that have achieved the minimum coverage of eight tetrads in their respective 10 km square.

Incidentally, if you are already a BBS observer, you may also do Timed Tetrad Visits (TTVs) for the Bird Atlas 2007-2011, though it is preferred that your TTV survey route covers the whole tetrad and does not simply follow your BBS route.

Of equal importance are general birdwatching visits to 10 km squares (*Roving Records*) where the aim is to note the species you see and hear in a 10 km square and then enter the records online at [www.birdatlas.net](http://www.birdatlas.net) or fill out a *Roving Records* form (available from BTO HQ or download from the website). These records may be complete lists of birds you have seen on a field trip or just one-off records of elusive birds, like Lesser Spotted Woodpecker.

**Fieldwork for the *Timed Tetrad Visits* is being organised through a network of local Atlas Regional Organisers. To find out more, visit the website [www.birdatlas.net](http://www.birdatlas.net), contact the Atlas Regional Organiser Dawn Balmer, Atlas Coordinator, BTO, The Nunnery, Thetford, Norfolk, IP24 2PU. Tel. 01842 750050 Email: [dawn.balmer@bto.org](mailto:dawn.balmer@bto.org) or your Regional Representative.**

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## LOCAL FIELD TRIP

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### Visible migration at Redmires (27 and 28 October)

Our efforts to enable the membership to enjoy the pleasures of visible migration were thwarted by poor weather for the third year in succession. Even the plan of offering events on both days of the favoured weekend failed to produce good conditions (although – typically – Monday 29<sup>th</sup> provided the required clear skies...). On the Saturday morning a gentle passage of Woodpigeons, winter thrushes and finches was enlivened by 2 Rock Pipits through W, while the shoreline hosted a party of Lapwing that held a few Snipe and Golden Plover.

The Sunday morning brought heavy drizzle driven in by a stiff wind from the SW – a washout for birds on the move, although 3 Great Spotted Woodpeckers arrived from the E, one flying only feet from the ground right past us. The undoubted highlight of the weekend did,

however, appear on the Sunday morning as Ian Wallace, inspirational birder and one of the national figures and authorities on many aspects of British birding, arrived keen to learn of our experiences of vis-migging. Ian made contact late last autumn with a view to witnessing the visible migration for which Sheffield has become renowned, and had arranged to join us on the morning of the local field trip. Despite the appalling conditions, those of us present very much enjoyed his company, and it seems too that he was able to take something from ours: the letter below arrived 10 days later, and gives a sense of Ian's unflinching enthusiasm for local birding, and of the significance of our local records towards the national picture.

**David Wood**

5/11/07

Dear David

*Many thanks for prodding me up (and over) to Redmires. It was good to meet you and Richard and the other stalwarts and sense the spirit of the Sheffield "vis-mig" team. Fortified by porkpie and coffee, I found my way to Strines Gap which looked pure Bronte land in the lowering weather and a real funnel for birds!*

*Thanks also for the 2003 report and its highlights of trans-Pennine migrants. I am most impressed by your counts made over 30 years and counting. Obviously you have been publishing your results locally but I would urge you to write up the "1<sup>st</sup> 30 years" in British Birds. I am sure that the editors would welcome a submission and it would be great to have the often rather barren Migration Atlas outflanked. It was particularly grudging about Northern Bullfinch but the bird blew away the cobwebs in the end. In similar vein it would be fascinating to see the pattern over 30 years of your Reed Buntings. They have undoubtedly migrated through/ over my last two patches (and Regent's Park in the early 60s) but I never saw "35SW on 30/10/89" as at Strines. Such records really do deserve wider publication.*

*As I said, my attachment to "vis-mig" was fierce 40 years ago and after meeting you all I feel some guilt at my more recent fitful attempts! I looked in my diaries for anything that might link Redmires to the coast. Lo, in October 1984 from the top of Church Hill, Holme upon Spalding Moor, E. Yorks – c.51 miles NW of Redmires, I put together a 10 day/1 hour sample usually from 0730 – 0830. The overall westerly passage rate was 132 birds per hour and the most numerous species were Lapwing, Wood Pigeon, Skylark, Fieldfare, Redwing, Meadow Pipit, Starling, Chaffinch. Interesting fellow travellers included Rock Pipit, Bullfinch, Corn Bunting and Reed Bunting.*

*Down here since 1985, I haven't found a decent watchpoint but I have good evidence that not only do Lapp Bunts travel with Skylarks, but also Northern Great Spotted Woodpeckers and Northern Bullfinches come in/ down from winter thrush passages/ falls. Alas, the West Midland BC has ignored most of my records and hence my enthusiasm for your discoveries. So, fired up again, I have tested the morning sky on the seven mornings since we met. Remarkably, some birds have passed over every day and the stars have been 80 Pinkfeet and a Rock Pipit on the 29<sup>th</sup>, Ring Ouzel on 30<sup>th</sup>, 200+ Starlings on 1<sup>st</sup>, 450 Wood Pigeons on 3<sup>rd</sup> (with 300 winter thrushes). My top Skylark count was 25W/1 hour on 29<sup>th</sup>. I'm amazed!*

Yours ever, Ian



## CHART-TOPPING GARDEN BIRDS

I read with interest the latest update on the British Trust for Ornithology Garden Bird Feeding Survey published in the last issue of *BTO news* (Number 272, September-October 2007). In this article they have produced a list of the top 12 chart topping species in U.K. gardens where supplementary food

### BTO List

Rank	
1.	Robin
2.	Blackbird
3.	Blue Tit
4.	Great Tit
5.	Dunnock
6.	Chaffinch
7.	Greenfinch
8.	Collared Dove
9.	Coal Tit
10.	House Sparrow
11.	Goldfinch
12.	Starling

My garden is on the northern edge of Sheffield, and the house overlooks Concord Park whilst the rear garden has an open area of 'wasteland' behind it, which was former tennis courts, now long overgrown and very 'wildlife friendly'.

It is interesting to see how far down House Sparrow and Starling are in the National List. In my garden House Sparrow is common not just in the winter months but through the year and in spring/summer nests not only under my neighbour's eaves but also in my high Privet hedges. To illustrate how numerous it is at the moment, just before writing this (Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> November) I filled my eight feeders and had only just replaced them on their poles and stepped back on to the path when 14 House Sparrows and Three Starlings descended, seemingly from nowhere, and set about the food.

I also find it surprising that Wren does not figure in the top 12 nationally but ranks as my number 6. Wrens are often out and about in my garden, both front and rear, and are remarkably unafraid. In spring 2007 one built a nest in my *Leylandii*. Starlings are much more common in autumn and winter hence it being my number 2. It is less so in summer but still visits regularly in smaller numbers. Blue Tit on the other hand is present throughout the spring and early summer and a pair usually occupies a nest box on my garage wall, but in autumn and winter they are somewhat irregular in occurrence, so is down to 7<sup>th</sup> position. Sparrowhawks are frequent visitors in a, usually hopeless, attempt to surprise birds on the feeders. Coal Tit is, interestingly, becoming an increasingly

is provided during the winter months. I also make a daily garden list through the year for my rear garden. Out of interest I decided to produce a list comparing the species I recorded in the period November 2006 to March 2007 in my back garden with the BTO's UK list.

### DH's List

Rank	
1.	House Sparrow
2.	Starling
3.	Dunnock
4.	Robin
5.	Blackbird
6.	Wren
7.	Blue Tit
8.	Collared Dove
9.	Wood Pigeon
10.	Goldfinch
11.	Sparrowhawk
12.	Coal Tit

frequent visitor, usually singly but occasionally in pairs. I rarely get Greenfinch and never see a Chaffinch. I have just recently put in a small pond and it will be interesting to see whether this changes the rankings during this coming winter and then in the spring and summer months. As far as I am concerned the major recent change is a new visitor recorded on three occasions in the past three weeks or so – a Grey Wagtail. On the first two visits it alighted on the patio, which is at the bottom of my garden. Yesterday (15th November) what I assume was the same bird (an immature) came onto a path by the side of the pond, the latter being situated directly alongside the front of my conservatory. It then hovered over the pond and landed on the side of the water. It was much less than half a metre from where I was sitting on the other side of the conservatory window! Unfortunately, it was then chased off by a nasty aggressive Starling! I'm not really sure whether a Grey Wagtail in a small suburban garden is a record. Perhaps other SBSG members also get them?

I would be very interested to see how my list compares with fellow SBSG members elsewhere around Sheffield.

**Dave Herringshaw**  
16<sup>th</sup> November, 2007

P.S. At the time of emailing this letter to Margaret Miller (13.55) there were 24 House Sparrows and 7 Starlings on the feeders with a Robin and 2 Dunnocks on the ground beneath them whilst a Wren searched for food along the edge of the pond.

**NOTE ON THE ABOVE ARTICLE**

It is interesting to know what other people have in their gardens and I would bet that different parts of Sheffield have a great variation in garden lists. Being not too far from Redmires – and having two ponds in my garden - I am not really surprised that I too have on occasions been honoured by a visit from a Grey Wagtail (although not yet this winter). Nor that I have at the moment got two Bramblings and a Bullfinch joining the Chaffinch and Greenfinch on my Black Sunflower feeders. The presence of these is of course dependant on the

season, and numbers increase in the winter months because they know they can always rely on my feeders being filled every day (even when I go on holiday – courtesy of my next door neighbour!). Apples (gathered earlier from my trees) supplement the Blackbird's food and the other day attracted two Redwings (late afternoon – probably on the way to their roost in Wyming Brook). Still waiting for the Waxwings to arrive this winter but hopeful ...

*Margaret Miller*

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## FIELD TRIPS

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### **Twitchers Trip - 19<sup>th</sup> November**

The day started with snow on the hills and heavy rain everywhere else! It was also a V ERY cold east wind.

A group of hardy hopefuls turned up at Paternoster Row and when Paul asked if anyone had any ideas of where they wanted to go there was a shout of "Back to Bed". The wimps were overruled but it was decided that the coast was a very bad idea and nothing had come up on the "pager" so Blacktoft was a compromise. We arrived there just as the wardens were opening up and set off in various directions to see "what was about". Some of the group were lucky enough to arrive at the Centre just as a Kingfisher was spotted just outside the window fishing in the dyke giving cracking views! Braving the wind and rain we tried the various hides but found very little in the way of waders; Godwits, Redshanks and a few Dunlin being the only ones in evidence. There were good numbers of Shoveller, a couple of Shelduck, but very few other duck. A Marsh Harrier, which was quartering around raised the temperature slightly in Singleton Hide and when it lifted another three Marsh Harriers this was a good sight. Shortly afterwards two wind-battered Little Egrets came in and tried to find some shelter in the reedbeds in front of Singleton. At First Hide a pair of Mute Swans were accompanied by a single Whooper Swan. Whilst searching for Jack Snipe, a few Common Snipe were discovered skulking in the edge of the reeds. No one managed to find the Water Pipit, which was allegedly "always on the edge in front of Singleton".

We met back at the Bus for an early lunch. Ken was a bit late back having been the only one to brave it all the way to Ousefleet Hide. He reported that it was "a good walk". It was decision time as to what to do with the rest of the day. Some wimps said "Back to bed" but were overruled again and a decision was made to go to another place where there were hides, "Old Moor". There were also reports that 2 Firecrests which had been there for about a fortnight were still to be seen.

On arrival at Old Moor some set off along the path to where the Firecrests had been regularly seen whilst some lingered in the shop before braving the weather. The braver ones found a Firecrest in exactly the spot which they have been favouring during their stay. Unfortunately, it flew off to a quieter place away from the path and some individuals will have to try another day. On the Wader Scrape side there were Goosander and Goldeneye as well as Wigeon, Teal, Shoveller, Gadwall and quite a few Coot.

The Group dragged itself away from the cold slightly earlier than usual, most looking forward to a centrally-heated house and a good hot dinner! Considering the weather the bird total for the day of 55 was not at all bad.

Thanks as usual to Paul and Janet for organising this trip – they can't take credit (debit!) for the weather!

*Margaret Miller*

## Spurn - October 21<sup>st</sup> 2007

Despite being members of the SBSG for 20 years plus and participating in dozens of surveys over the years, this particular birding partnership had never been on a SBSG day trip. It was also extremely coincidental that a discussion on the urgent need to visit Spurn Point before the winter seas demolished it, and before either of us had ever visited it, that Paul's next field trip was to be that very place.

The 10-minute break at the October meeting was used to make enquiries about seats on the bus for up to 3 extra birders. A phone call later in the week made the booking and at 7:30 am we descended onto Paternoster Row. The bus arrived just a few minutes late, but this was nothing to worry about apparently. There was some apprehension about actually fitting into the bus, as there were multiple rucksacks, sandwich lunches, tripods, telescopes and binoculars protruding from every nook and cranny. However, we got seated and there was brief discussion about 'I know we are supposed to be going to Spurn but there is a Red Flanked Bluetail at Flamborough apparently'. Our hearts sank.

- a) We were there for Spurn.
- b) There wasn't a cat in hell's chance of seeing the red tailed blue thingy.

Whatever, we set off and after 1 hour and something we stopped off to answer a call of nature. Paul assured us it wasn't far now. He was lying of course - it was 09:45 before we arrived at the car park at Spurn. The weather was fantastic; the ensemble tumbled out of the bus having agreed no strategy other than meeting back at 12:30. What now, where were two virgin Spurners to go. It seemed a safe bet to tag behind a former SBSG chairman Pete Brown and friend Paul. We ambled up the hedgerows along what we found out was the 'Triangle'. Was this the Humber equivalent of the Bermuda Triangle, with lost birders and their pagers disappearing over decades of autumn visits? 'There's not much about' became a mantra that we would hear a lot in the next 2½ hours. Seemingly randomly Pete and Paul would be attracted to particular spots, a churchyard - 'there's not much about'. At this point Pete went into some sort of transcendental meditation, or catatonic trance. We were later to learn that this was born out of earlier experiences in the car park when there had previously been carpets of Goldcrests rippling under your feet.

The first corner of the 'Triangle' brought us to a crisp and serene estuary scene with lots of waders avidly feeding close by, mostly Knot and Redshank, scattered with Dunlin and a large group of Golden Plover further out. There were odd Curlew and Black Tailed Godwit.

We then walked along the canal. The fields inland had quite a few Blackbirds and the odd Thrush, whilst the canal itself just gave up Coot, Moorhen and a party of 4 Little Grebes.

It really was a beautiful morning and a Reed Bunting perched nearby. We now came across a small group from our own party - thank god not lost to the 'Triangle' yet. They of course had seen Merlin and Stonechat and gossiped about a Yellow Browed Warbler. Not much

further on - a second group from Sheffield confirmed that the Warbler was on the Warren with Paul or vice versa. 5 minutes later we were at the information hut and learnt that the Warbler had been rung, held in hand, seen really well by a few and then released. We were left to look for the extremely naffed off bird in the brambles. It did seem annoyed and gave very brief glimpses over the next 20 minutes, along with an obliging Blackcap.

We took the opportunity to wander around the information hut - lots of old photos, whale bones; etc before realising that Pete and Paul had disappeared. Our worst fear, the Triangle claims its first victims from the Sheffield 2007 trip.

We set off back, presumably on the third side of the b\*\*\*\*y triangle. We were relieved to see our two lost souls appear seaward side after about 10 minutes. The small lake beside the car park, held a remarkably good-looking Common Scoter, and after a few photos we advanced along the extremely vulnerable footpath. East Coast erosion seemed to be very active here.

This brought us back to the car park, and a quick conference on the whereabouts of a Black Redstart in the Caravan Park. Suddenly the group coalesced like a Starling flock and headed off on the new mission to get this bird. Not without danger as the inhabitants of the caravans did look quite threatening. The bird seemed elusive, until an advance party returned looking very smug - it had been spotted on the beach. The main body of the group hotfooted it up through the precipitous edge of the caravan park - how exciting to be so close to the sea. However the bird had exited right of stage BUT surprise - a Snow Bunting gave obliging views on the cliff edge. We returned to particularly ugly scenes - Black Redstart versus Snow Bunting factions, but lunch beckoned. Some had been lucky - Short-eared Owl coming in off the sea, Swallow and House Martin loitering into the autumn.

During lunch a consensus agreement was forged to chase the Red Flanked Bluetail and we set off for a sleepy coastal drive to Flamborough. Not optimistic but after 1½ hours - Car Park signs - "Flycatcher Car Park £1" signified our arrival. We piled out of the bus near the lighthouse and along the hedgerow now replete with autumn berries and dodgy birders with very large lenses. A sharp left into a recently ploughed field with 20-30 telescopes pointing down the field and within 5 seconds there it was - in perfect lighting. The second Siberian wanderer of the day was a confiding smart little bird flitting to and fro. Mega! Worthy of a quick text to our third birding partner who was confined to bed with pleurisy. How to kick a man when he's down. We spent some 45 minutes watching the bird and the unbelievably inconsiderate behaviour of some of the birding fraternity before heading off to the lighthouse to look for Shrikes. Three Shrikes and you're out was the call but none to be seen, so a cup of tea with Peter and Paul and then back to the bus. 78 species on the group list and a great introduction to the SBSG day trips.

*Neil Porter and Rod Hinchliffe*

## PROGRAMME OF SPEAKERS FOR 2008

9 <sup>th</sup> January	Phil Palmer	The Secret Life of the Nightjar
13 <sup>th</sup> February	David Lingard (LIPU)	Across Europe to Italy!
12 <sup>th</sup> March	AGM plus Andy Deighton	Madagascar
9 <sup>th</sup> April	Tim Appleton	Ospreys and Rutland Water
14 <sup>th</sup> May	Richard Dale	Mauritius
11 <sup>th</sup> June	Members' Night	
10 <sup>th</sup> September	Pete Brown	Highlands and Islands
15 <sup>th</sup> October (NOTE THIS IS THE 3 <sup>RD</sup> WEDNESDAY)	Algirdas Knystautas	Indonesia – Birds and Conservation in the World's Largest Archipelago
12 <sup>th</sup> November	Graham Appleton	BTO Bird Atlas of Britain
10 <sup>th</sup> December	Roy Croucher	Managing Britain's Habitats

## DATES TO NOTE – OTHER GROUPS

Time/Date	Group	Location	Speaker	Title
3 <sup>rd</sup> Jan 2008	RSPB Sheffield Local Group	Central United Reformed Church	Phil Palmer	Spitzbergen- Wildlife of the High Arctic
25 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2008	DOS	Evergreen Club, Allestree	Glyn Sellors	Seychelles
7 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2008	RSPB Sheffield Local Group	Central United Reformed Church	George McCarthy	The USA Road Trip

## COPY DATE FOR FEBRUARY BULLETIN

The next Bulletin will be issued at the February Meeting.  
 The last date for articles for the February Bulletin is 3<sup>rd</sup> February.  
 Please send by email to [margmiller@talktalk.net](mailto:margmiller@talktalk.net), or by post to Margaret Miller,  
 14 Worcester Close, Sheffield S10 4JF.  
**PLEASE NOTE NEW EMAIL ADDRESS**

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## RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

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### October to mid-November 2007

These records are largely unchecked. Those in bold require submission of full supporting details

<b>Slavonian Grebe</b>	<b>Singles at RVCP on 12<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Oct.</b>
<b>Gannet</b>	<b>1 at Howden Res on 6<sup>th</sup> Oct (per pager report).</b>
Whooper Swan	11 at Silverwood Pit Tip on 20 <sup>th</sup> Oct, singles at Thrybergh CP on 30 <sup>th</sup> Oct, and at Silverwood Lagoon on 9 <sup>th</sup> Nov.
Pink-footed Goose	Max 820 in three skeins SE at Redmires 29 <sup>th</sup> Oct; Also 450 in four skeins SE at Baslow on 7 <sup>th</sup> Oct, 150 at Inkersall also on 7 <sup>th</sup> , 140+ NW at Thrybergh on 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 121 E at Ramsley on 7 <sup>th</sup> . Smaller numbers at Redmires: on 2 <sup>nd</sup> (37 feeding by inflow stream), 42 SE on 18 <sup>th</sup> Oct and 32 NW on 19 <sup>th</sup> .
Egyptian Goose	2 at RVCP on 8 <sup>th</sup> Nov.
Shelduck	Singles at RVCP on 12 <sup>th</sup> , 19 <sup>th</sup> and 20 <sup>th</sup> Oct, and at Thrybergh CP on 13 <sup>th</sup> .
Mandarin	58 at Linacre on 31 <sup>st</sup> Oct.
Common Scoter	Singles at Thrybergh CP on 1 <sup>st</sup> , 13 <sup>th</sup> , 21 <sup>st</sup> and 23 <sup>rd</sup> Oct, and at Linacre on 7 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>Marsh Harrier</b>	<b>A cream-crown at Cutthroat Bridge on 20<sup>th</sup> Oct.</b>
Hen Harrier	A ringtail at Ramsley area 11 <sup>th</sup> and 20 <sup>th</sup> Oct.
<b>Rough-legged Buzzard</b>	<b>(suspected) at Abney Moor on 17<sup>th</sup> Oct.</b>
Pheasant	2 males in Fulwood garden (obs' 1 <sup>st</sup> there).
Water Rail	2 calling at Thrybergh Banks on 21 <sup>st</sup> Oct.
Oyster Catcher	1 at Silverwood Lagoon on 25 <sup>th</sup> Oct.
Ringed Plover	2 flew SE at Thrybergh CP on 2 <sup>nd</sup> Oct.
Knot	4 at Redmires, initially over top dam, then flying around middle dam.
Purple Sandpiper	1 at RVCP on 8 <sup>th</sup> Nov (per pager).
Dunlin	Singles at Thrybergh CP on 5 <sup>th</sup> Oct, Silverwood Lagoon on 8 <sup>th</sup> Oct, and Redmires Res on 30 <sup>th</sup> Oct.
Jack Snipe	2 at Ramsley Res on 18 <sup>th</sup> Oct, and 1 at Silverwood Pit Top on 13 <sup>th</sup> Nov.
Redshank	Singles at Silverwood Lagoon on 1 <sup>st</sup> and 20 <sup>th</sup> Oct, Ulley CP on 7 <sup>th</sup> Oct, and Thrybergh CP on 19 <sup>th</sup> Oct.
Green Sandpiper	1 at Blackburn Meadows NR on 15 <sup>th</sup> Oct.
Common Sandpiper	Singles at Ulley CP on 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Oct.
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Flocks of between 200 and 330+ at Redmires Res on 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 7 <sup>th</sup> and 23 <sup>rd</sup> Oct, and Langsett Res 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 19 <sup>th</sup> and 22 <sup>nd</sup> Oct.
<b>Caspian Gull</b>	<b>1 at Poolsbrook CP on 17<sup>th</sup> Nov.</b>
<b>Glaucous Gull</b>	<b>1 at Poolsbrook CP on 17<sup>th</sup> Nov.</b>
Arctic Tern	2 at RVCP Main Lake on 12 <sup>th</sup> Oct.
<b>Little Auk</b>	<b>1 at Ulley CP on 14<sup>th</sup> Nov.</b>
Woodpigeon	Ten records of large flocks flying W or SW: Redmires Top Res (1314+ on 18 <sup>th</sup> Oct, 514 on 19 <sup>th</sup> , 757 on 20 <sup>th</sup> , 792+ on 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 1668+ 29 <sup>th</sup> , 2535 on 30 <sup>th</sup> , and 1390 on 2 <sup>nd</sup> Nov); Wharcliffe Chase (660 on 21 <sup>st</sup> Oct, 4530 on 4 <sup>th</sup> Nov), Harthill Res (1000 on 22 <sup>nd</sup> Oct).
Ring-necked Parakeet	Singles at Heeley City Farm on 19 <sup>th</sup> and 20 <sup>th</sup> Oct, and General Cemetery (Sharrow) on 5 <sup>th</sup> Nov.
Short-eared Owl	Up to 4 at Silverwood Pit Tip on 6 dates between 17 <sup>th</sup> Oct and 14 <sup>th</sup> Nov (1-3 regular from 16 <sup>th</sup> ), and one at Ulley CP on 14 <sup>th</sup> Oct.
Woodlark	1 at White Lee Moor on 20 <sup>th</sup> Oct.
Swallow	Three records of 1-2 at Ramsley Res (5 <sup>th</sup> Oct), Inkersall (7 <sup>th</sup> Oct), Ulley CP (13 <sup>th</sup> Oct).
House Martin	3 at Thrybergh CP on 2 <sup>nd</sup> Oct, and 20+ at Carr Vale SF on 6 <sup>th</sup> Oct.
<b>Rock Pipit</b>	<b>1+ at Redmires Res on 27<sup>th</sup> Oct.</b>
Pied Wagtail	50 Langsett Res feeding on eastern banking on 2 <sup>nd</sup> Oct.
Whinchat	1 at Silverwood Pit Tip on 23 <sup>rd</sup> Oct.

Stonechat	17 records of 1-4 throughout Oct, plus 14 <sup>th</sup> Nov, at Silverwood Pit Tip, Listerdale Wood, Thrybergh CP, Ramsley Res, Ulley CP, Chatsworth, Curbar Edge, Redmires Res and Middleton Moor.
Wheatear	1-2 at Silverwood Pit Tip on 11 <sup>th</sup> , 12 <sup>th</sup> , 13 <sup>th</sup> and 16 <sup>th</sup> Oct.
Fieldfare	Big Moor (80 on 6 <sup>th</sup> Oct and 150 on 4 <sup>th</sup> Nov), Ramsley Res (40+ on 11 <sup>th</sup> Oct and 295 on 20 <sup>th</sup> ), Redmires Top Res (323+ on 18 <sup>th</sup> Oct, 296 on 19 <sup>th</sup> , 200+ on 20 <sup>th</sup> , 157 on 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 87 on 29 <sup>th</sup> , 40 on 30 <sup>th</sup> , and 66 on 2 <sup>nd</sup> Nov); Thrybergh CP (338 on 19 <sup>th</sup> Oct), Langsett Res (78 on 19 <sup>th</sup> Oct), Scholes Village (50 on 20 <sup>th</sup> Oct), Ulley Res (114 on 21 <sup>st</sup> Oct), Wharnccliffe Chase (220 on 21 <sup>st</sup> Oct, and 95 on 4 <sup>th</sup> Nov), Silverwood Pit Tip (50 on 29 <sup>th</sup> Oct), Stubble Hollows (40 on 3 <sup>rd</sup> Nov), R Noe, Edale (50 on 9 <sup>th</sup> Nov).
Redwing	Foulstone Delph (100+ on 2 <sup>nd</sup> Oct), Ramsley Res (65 on 5 <sup>th</sup> Oct, 49 on 7 <sup>th</sup> Oct, 942 on 20 <sup>th</sup> Oct), Barbrook Plantation (120 on 6 <sup>th</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup> Oct), Ecclesfield (100 on 13 <sup>th</sup> Oct), Ulley Res (67 on 14 <sup>th</sup> Oct, and 85 on 21 <sup>st</sup> ), General Cemetery, Sharrow (51 on 15 <sup>th</sup> Oct), Redmires Top Res (68+ on 20 <sup>th</sup> Oct), Stubble Hollows (107 on 20 <sup>th</sup> Oct), and Wharnccliffe Chase (170 on 21 <sup>st</sup> Oct).
Blackcap	1 at Thrybergh CP on 20 <sup>th</sup> Oct.
Chiffchaff	1 at Ulley CP on 10 <sup>th</sup> Nov.
Willow Warbler	1 at Silverwood Pit Tip on 7 <sup>th</sup> Oct.
<b>Firecrest</b>	<b>2 at Ouzleden Clough on 1<sup>st</sup> Oct, and 1 there on 4<sup>th</sup> Nov.</b>
Great Grey Shrike	Singles at Leash Fen on 28 <sup>th</sup> Oct, and Ouzleden Clough on 14 <sup>th</sup> Nov.
Starling	2000+ roosting at Catcliffe Flash on 19 <sup>th</sup> Nov.
Brambling	1 at Thrybergh CP on 2 <sup>nd</sup> Oct, 1 at Redmires Top Res on 3 <sup>rd</sup> Oct, 16 at Wharnccliffe Chase on 13 <sup>th</sup> Oct, 6 at Ramsley Pools on 6 <sup>th</sup> Nov.
Lesser Redpoll	Flocks of 30-50+ at Redmires on 29 <sup>th</sup> and 30 <sup>th</sup> Oct, and Gores Plantation (W of Derwent Res) on 31 <sup>st</sup> Oct.
Crossbill	17 at Gores Plantation (W of Derwent Res) on 31 <sup>st</sup> Oct. Also 2-5 on Big Moor (6 <sup>th</sup> Oct), Redmires Res (20 <sup>th</sup> and 29 <sup>th</sup> Oct, and 15 <sup>th</sup> Nov), Wharnccliffe Chase (21 <sup>st</sup> Oct), Wyming Brook (1 <sup>st</sup> Nov).
Lapland Bunting	1 S at Redmires, 11 <sup>th</sup> Oct.
Snow Bunting	1 just below summit of Lose Hill on 4 <sup>th</sup> Nov.
Corn Bunting	1 on Loscar Common on 22 <sup>nd</sup> Oct.

*The above records were received from the following observers, with apologies for any omissions*

*MG Archer, S Bailey, B Bartlett, RP Blagden, D Booth, K Bower, D Buxton, DM Bye, ID Chapman, MC Cross, R J Croxton, A Deighton, G Featherstone, J Ferguson, A Kydd, A Johnson, P Leonard, A Palethorpe, N Porter, P Ridsdale, J Sherwin, M Snook, CG Stack, E Townend, , D Wood, D Woodriff, Derbyshire OS, Rotherham and District OS, Sorby-Breck Ringing Group, Thrybergh CP Bird Log*

**Wendy Thomson**

# GIFT AID AND MEMBERSHIP

In recent years there have been changes to Gift Aid legislation, making it easier for charitable organisations to reclaim income tax on the contributions, including subscriptions, made by members.

The group is constantly looking for sources of income to offset the increasing costs of running the group, such as printing the excellent Annual Report, (the better it gets, in terms of photos etc, the more it costs) and also room hire for our Indoor Meetings.

Gift Aid is a means by which every basic rate tax-paying member can contribute to the group's income, courtesy of the Inland Revenue (what an incentive!). If you are about to pay your 2008 subscription and have not already filled in a Gift Aid form, please complete the tear off slip below, and return it to any committee member at an indoor meeting or send with subs to Jenny Kingsland by post. Alternatively, please send it to me at:

Anselm,  
White Edge Drive,  
Baslow

Derbyshire  
DE45 1SJ

At the end of the tax year I can then recover 22/78 of your subscription (£3.95). If you are a higher rate taxpayer, you can include the payment on your tax return, and get higher rate tax relief yourself.

Please take the time to do this, as we can potentially raise hundreds of pounds for the group.

*Ron Blagden  
Treasurer*

## GIFT AID FORM

NAME .....

Are you a basic rate taxpayer? YES/NO

Do you agree to Sheffield Bird Study Group treating your membership payment for 2008 and future membership payments, as a Gift Aid contribution?

YES/NO

# ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions for 2008 become due in January.

As you will see from the list on Page 12 we have a good programme of speakers planned for next year, and many local and more distant field trips are also in the pipeline. The subscriptions remain the same at £14 for individual members, £16 for family membership, and £7 for juniors (up to age 16), which I am sure you will see as good value for money. A subscription form is below. To renew, please see Jenny Kingsland at any meeting, or send your cheque payable to Sheffield Bird Study Group, together with a stamped addressed envelope for return of your membership card, to Jenny Kingsland, 52A Riverdale Road, Sheffield S10 3FB. For new members an application form is available at meetings, on the website, by phone to 0114 2660759 or by e-mail to [jkingsland@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:jkingsland@tiscali.co.uk)

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