



# SHEFFIELD BIRD STUDY GROUP **BULLETIN**

ISSUE 209

SEPT 2011

[www.sbsg.org.uk](http://www.sbsg.org.uk)

## **THE SUMMER'S SIGHTINGS**

All the highlights from  
June, July and August

## **RAPTOR REPORT**

The state of our birds of  
prey in 2010

## **BIRDING BOOKCASE**

Favourite bird books reviewed

## **PIT HOUSE WEST UNDER THREAT**

Theme Park plans for Rotherham  
wildlife hotspot



## **PLUS!**

Plovers on patch

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# NEWS

## Betty Smith

I regret to inform the group that Elizabeth (Betty) Smith, a long-standing member, died on July 29<sup>th</sup>. Although Betty would make no claim to expertise she developed an interest and enthusiasm for birds during her marriage to her husband and fellow group member Harold, and her own knowledge developed as a result of the support she gave him during his long-standing work on various aspects of bird life in the

Sheffield area. Among other roles, Betty was adept in the use of satellite navigation in determining the precise location of sites of birding interest. As a professional colleague at the time I well remember Betty bringing a radio into the workplace so we could all listen to Harold being interviewed on local radio back in the 1970s following the publication of 'Birds of the Sheffield Area,' of which

he was editor.

Betty had a warm, fun-loving and helpful nature and her life touched many people. Our thoughts are with Harold and his and Betty's children and grandchildren at this difficult time.

Rod Hinchliffe

## News in brief

### Website Milestone

The SBSG website has reached a major milestone, with a staggering 50,000 website records submitted. Congratulations to all those who have submitted records since early 2009 when the new site was launched. It's an awesome total - roughly 1,500 per month since launch, and the current figure is around 2,100 per month.

A massive thank you is owed by all to David W and Andy D who have been tireless in checking the incoming records.

### A splash of colour!

Those of you who have email bulletins will have noticed the online version is now in colour! If you'd like to change from the black-and-white print version to the colour PDF, then email [peterjmella@googlemail.com](mailto:peterjmella@googlemail.com) - sadly printing costs mean that the paper version is still black-and-white.

### More features next issue...

I've been in the enviable position of having more features than I can fit in a Bulletin this time, so articles by John Kirkman and Dermot Smyth will be held over until next issue - many thanks for these, they were much appreciated as ever!

### Cover photo

This month's excellent cover photo of a stunning male Stonechat is by **Chris Hurst**.

## Deadline for next Bulletin

The next Bulletin will be issued at the November indoor meeting. Please note that any items for inclusion in the Bulletin must be received by Pete Mella at [peterjmella@googlemail.com](mailto:peterjmella@googlemail.com) (for preference), or 21 Lump Lane, Grenoside, Sheffield, S35 8PL, by **Saturday 29th October**.

## Bulletin by email

More and more members have agreed to receive their Bulletins by email, and now **well over half** of you are on our email list, meaning we have been able to cut our print run considerably, and make big savings on postage. Many thanks to all members who have agreed to this, and if you would like to switch over to receiving your Bulletin in pdf format then please email me at [peterjmella@googlemail.com](mailto:peterjmella@googlemail.com).

# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

## Indoor Meetings

### Roy Taylor and Danny Udall - The Future of the Eastern Moors Estate

Wed 12th October 2011, Sheffield University Arts Tower, Lecture Theatre 5, 7.15pm

Roy Taylor of the RSPB, and Danny Udall of the Peak District National Park Authority, will be speaking on a subject close to many birdwatchers in the area - the future of the Eastern moorlands of Totley Moor, Big Moor, Ramsley Moor, Leash Fen and Clod Hall Moor., as it develops in a groundbreaking partnership between the RSPB and National Trust.

### Mark Holling - Rare Breeding Birds In The UK

Wed 9th November 2011, Sheffield University Arts Tower, Lecture Theatre 5, 7.15pm

Mark Holling is secretary of the Rare Breeding Birds Panel, and former president of the Scottish Ornithologist's Club. Having a long interest in the status of breeding birds in the British Isles, he will be sharing some of his knowledge and experience of some of the UK's rarest breeding species.

## Field Meetings

### Visible Migration and Pipit Ringing

17th/18th September, Ramsley Pools

On the September 17th/18th weekend there will be a vis mig event which will link up later in the morning with the Sorby Breck Ringers Group Meadow Pipit Survey, in which ringers at different moorland sites will target Mipits.

Meet at the roadside near the gate to Ramsley Pools from around 07:00. The choice of Saturday or Sunday will be made nearer the time and announced on the website.

## OTHER DATES TO NOTE

**25th Sept - Guided Wader Walk at RSPB Old Moor** - Booking essential, £3 RSPB Members, £5 non-members. Tel 01226 751593 or old.moor@rspb.org.uk

**30th Sept - DOS Indoor Meeting** - John Gardner will give a talk entitled 'A Bird Photographer In Britain'. 7.30pm, Evergreen Club, Allestree, Derby.

**6th Oct - RSPB Sheffield Group Indoor Meeting** - Steve Rutherford will be discussing Land Management at Old Moor. This will also be the group's AGM. 7.30pm, Central United Reformed Church, Chapel Walk, Sheffield.

**10th Oct - Paul Hobson Photography Workshop in Greno Woods (SWT)**. Wildlife Trust event, suitable for all skill levels. 9.45-16:00, to book call 0114 2 6 3 4 3 3 5 or email j.gough@wildsheffield.com

**16th Oct - Joint DOS/Carsington Bird Club Indoor Meeting** - Graham Appleton is speaker, with a talk entitled 'Four Years of Atlas Work'. 7.30pm, Hognaston Village Hall.

**29th Oct - Feed The Birds Day** - Family day at RSPB Old Moor, 11am-3pm.

**3rd Nov - RSPB Sheffield Group Indoor Meeting** - Danny Udall will be giving a talk on the Future of the Eastern Moors Estate. 7.30pm, Central United Reformed Church, Chapel Walk, Sheffield.

## Group contacts

### Bulletin

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# THEME PARK THREAT TO PIT HOUSE WEST

As reported several weeks back plans are afoot for the development of a Chinese Theme park on the Pit-house West site adjacent to Rother Valley Country Park. Most local birders will be aware of the history of Pit-house West (PHW) that after several years of opencast it was sympathetically landscaped in preparation for it being absorbed into the adjacent country park.

For over a decade the site began to mature alongside the existing water courses and woodland. A reedbed steadily grew and within a several years attracted its first wintering Bittern albeit a rather elusive individual. At least one Bittern has wintered there for the last nine winters usually arriving in September and departing in mid March.

Birds are the main attraction at this site with notable records over the years including the first record of Cetti's Warbler in the Sheffield area, Firecrest, Bearded Tit, Hobby, Woodcock, 3 species of Owl, 3 species of Woodpecker and Woodlark. There are several birds featured on the RSPB's Red List that breed at PHW namely Grey Partridge, Lapwing, Cuckoo, Skylark, Song Thrush, Grasshopper Warbler, Willow Tit, Linnet, Lesser Redpoll and Yellowhammer, any kind of development would have an adverse affect on these.

There's plenty of other wildlife with a good population of Grass Snakes, Smooth Newt, Common Frog, Pygmy Shrew, Common Shrew, Water

Shrew, Brown Hare, Stoat, Weasel, Badger and Fox (these are just the ones that I've found).

All the above pictures have been taken at Pit-house West over the last few years. RMBC are desperate to offload the site because they can't afford to maintain the public footpaths, fences and basically look after the site - a site that was given to them by British Coal, who presumably as part of a deal to extract the coal were required to restore the land.

Is it too much to ask that Pit-house West remains as public-open space not just for birders but for everyone? Do we really need a Chinese Theme Park in Rotherham? Do we really need 380 more minimum wage jobs? The Rother Valley had over a hundred years of heavy industry and heavy pollution, industries that created real jobs and communities around them. What's there now is a legacy of those industries. Actually it's not a legacy it's a thank you, a thank you for those years that we took from the land. To put it back to what it is today is an achievement to take that away would be a bloody disgrace.

Please take a moment to sign the petition. If you've got more time on your hands write to the leader of Rotherham Council and make your feelings known at [leader@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:leader@rotherham.gov.uk)



**Sign the petition by visiting -**

**<http://bit.ly/qpe712>**

Words & pictures: Mark Reeder  
Originally published on Mark's blog  
<http://ofpiesandbirds.blogspot.com>

# BIRDING BOOKCASE

The first in a series of reviews of birdwatching classics, beginning with **Dermot Smyth** discussing Fred Bodsworth's 1954 novel *Last of the Curlews*.

Fred Bodsworth's novel *Last of the Curlews* is regarded as a classic of wildlife literature in North America. A recent review\* was titled, 'A Love Story' and claimed: 'Over the decades the book has sold three million copies ... and inspired countless people to take up birdwatching, which has become one of the fastest-growing hobbies in America.. You would be hard pressed to find an avid birder who has not read it ...'

The book certainly matches the best Mills and Boon eye-moistener. The basic storyline is so simple one can't help thinking there must be more to it. Why such enduring popularity across the Atlantic? And, why so poorly known on this side?

All the action is set along the Eskimo Curlew migration route from its breeding ground in the high Canadian Arctic to the Labrador coast, south over the Caribbean in one hop, down through South America to Patagonia – and back again on an even more dangerous route. It doesn't visit Europe, but I don't think this explains its under-exposure in the UK.

Eskimo Curlews were so abundant in the late 19th Century they were slaughtered by the lorry load causing this charismatic little bird to flutter on the verge of extinction throughout the whole of the 20th. It is still officially (IUCN) listed as 'Critically Endangered (possibly extinct)'. Could this explain its appeal? A story about the last Dodo wouldn't have the same impact. We

would know the ending.

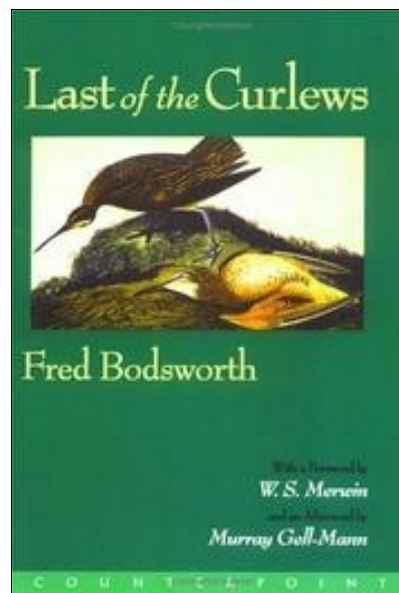
*The Last of the Curlews* poses many questions, the most obvious being how the annual curlew cull could continue well beyond the point when it was obvious there would soon be none left to shoot. Bodsworth prefaces his chapters with newspaper cuttings in which shooters bragged how many curlews could be killed by a single discharge (several dozen) or of how high were the piles of rotting birds left on the prairie for lack of space in the trucks. The preface to the last chapter is different: '... for twenty years only the occasional lone... hope... may yet escape extinction...'

Maybe the 'hunters' regarded Eskimo Curlews as not deserving to survive because they were so docile and trusting. As if mugging victims are to blame for being 'mugs'.

For over half the book the male curlew is alone and Bodsworth manages to make gripping reading from a simple account of the bird's behaviour. When he does diverge, it is to project himself its mind and describe the bird's expectation of meeting a female. Given the book's title, this maintains its dramatic tension throughout. I was shocked at the level of empathy I felt for the tiny creature.

Unsurprisingly, the *Last of the Curlews* has been accused of anthropomorphism. But this is no Walt Disney tale. There is only one unambiguous lapse into this too-easy option for writers of animal stories. The story is, for the most part, strictly realistic and even educational.

So what of the Eskimo Curlew in the real world? A small trickle of reported sightings keeps alive the uncertainty about the bird's status.



One was photographed in Texas in 1962 and another shot in Barbados in 1963. Without evidence (or multiple observers) sightings are officially classed as 'unconfirmed', as with a group of 23 seen in Texas in 1981 and an adult and immature found in the Canadian Arctic in May 1983. More recently, there is a lengthy and quite convincing description of a single bird in Nova Scotia in September 2006. There were about sixteen other less reliable reports between 1964 and 2002.

*Last of the Curlews* is what would today be called a crossover book, gobbled up as eagerly by adults as by children. It is a great shame that it hasn't been widely read in UK because it would surely have an equally dramatic effect in promoting the cause of birds and conservation of the natural environment.

A Love Story; Review by Brenda Bell of The Last of the Curlews by Fred Bodsworth; 23 March 2003; <https://www.texasobserver.org/article.php?aid=1312>

*If you have a favourite book, new or old, that you want to review for the Bulletin, then please get in touch.*

# South Peak Raptor Study Group Annual Report 2010

**The South Peak Raptor Study Group** (SPRSG) was formed in 1998 to monitor breeding success of scarce 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 2010.

Mick Taylor introduced the Annual Report by noting that 2010 had followed the familiar pattern of lack of success in the Upper Derwent Valley (from Bamford northwards) compared with continued progress elsewhere: the whole of the North Peak area is becoming known nationally for its apparent high level of raptor persecution. In November 2009 (after the 2009 Annual Report was published) the group co-hosted the annual North of England Raptor and Upland Bird Conference. It was a very successful event, and Mick

expressed his thanks to all members of the group who had contributed to its success, particularly Geoff Mawson and Trevor Grimshaw for their planning and organisational efforts, and Anthony Messenger for his talk on Hobbies. [A detailed report is available on the SBSG website.]

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 Occupied Sites					Number Successful					Number of Fledged Young				
	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10
<b>Hen Harrier</b>	2	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	10	-	-	-	-
<b>Goshawk</b>	18	23	24	13	21	12	14	11	7	12	25+	26+	27+	13+	25
<b>Buzzard</b>	69+	75+	80+	100+	?	25+	30+	40+	27+	?	35+	40+	50+	41+	?
<b>Merlin</b>	9	7	9	9	9	4	3	7+	6	5	13	8	24+	24	21
<b>Hobby*</b>	40	44	35	34	41	32+	28	25	28	28	73+	55	61	64	64
<b>Peregrine**</b>	23	28	32	29	32	14	11+	19+	17+	18	32	23+	41+	35+	40+
<b>Barn Owl</b>	10+	10+	18	18	20	10	10	12	18	20	28+	37	27	55+	49+
<b>LE Owl</b>	3	3	8	2	3+	2	2	1+	1	2+	5	5	2+	1	4+
<b>SE Owl</b>	1	1	9	8	4	1	1	2+	3	1+	2+	4	5+	6	1+
<b>Raven</b>	31+	33	42+	37+	49	19+	20	15+	12	11+	46+	64+	48+	44+	47+

\* includes South Derbyshire.

\*\* includes North Staffordshire sites.]

It will be recalled that, in 2006, two pairs of **Hen Harrier** bred successfully for the first time in the SPRSG recording area but the event was marred by the unexplained disappearance of both adult males. Since then, birds have been present in suitable breeding areas in the spring, and 2010 again saw birds present in the Eastern Moors in spring but no breeding activity was seen. There were several autumn records from the Eastern Moors

from mid-September to the year end, possibly involving five individuals. The paucity of records in an area with much suitable habitat may be explained by the unabated persecution of the species on northern grouse moors.

As in all recent years, there was a noticeable split in breeding success for **Goshawks**, with very low success rates to the north of Bamford

but much higher success to the south. Thus, north of Bamford, six territories were located, but only two reached the hatching stage, and both failed in very suspicious way. At the first site, only one egg hatched from a clutch of five, a sure sign of disturbance at the early incubation period, and signs of a "campfire" nearby followed similar occurrences in previous years. At the second site, three young

fledged but a month later were found dead 500m from the nest, and laid out on a bank so it was obvious that they had not died naturally. In addition, a mountain bike obstacle course appeared adjacent to Goshawk nests, raising suspicions that there is a serious campaign to wipe out the species from the Derwent woodlands. In complete contrast to this, 13 out of 17 known territories elsewhere were definitely occupied, at least ten were successful, and at least 21 young fledged successfully.

**Peregrines** overall enjoyed a fairly successful breeding season with the pairs in the Roaches, Derby Cathedral and two sites in lowland North Derbyshire all successful. An additional pair at a newly discovered site in the limestone dales of the White Peak was also successful. As usual, there was again a marked contrast in success rates in the north and the south, with none of the five monitored sites in Upper Derwentdale area being successful. In particular: there were only occasional sightings of birds at Alport Castles with no breeding attempt being made; one previously successful site held four eggs that were incubated well past the normal period but never hatched, again suggesting human interference; immature birds were seen at one other site. There continues to be no feasible explanation for the disappearance of pairs in Derwentdale, other than human interference. A total of six young birds were ringed at two White Peak Quarry sites.

**Merlins** had a slightly less successful breeding season compared to 2009, and it was thought that birds had failed to reach breeding condition after the severe winter of 2009/2010. The productivity of the successful nests was good. It was noted that a local bird ringed as a nestling in June 2009 was shot at Lavau sur Loire a distance of 682 miles.

**Hobbies** again did well, and can

sometimes be seen catching moths on the moors in June and July. Breeding adults are notoriously difficult to track down, and it is only thanks to the diligence and perseverance of three local observers that we know as much about them as we do.

**Buzzards** have hitherto been monitored by the Group, but the species is now so widespread that it is no longer possible to monitor all known nests. However, it is known that unexplained failures continue to occur in the Upper Derwent Valley where three nests were found but none were successful. This failure is in stark contrast to the success of the species elsewhere in the area.

There was continuing good news for the **Barn Owl** in 2010 with a slight increase in sites, and 16 broods totalling 45 young, being ringed. Thanks were again extended to farmers and others who allowed nest boxes to be erected on their property. It is hoped that the deep and prolonged snow in December 2010 will not prove to have been too detrimental to the species.

**Long-Eared Owls** had a slightly better year, but disturbance continued at one site, although at a slightly lower level than previously. Because the species is highly nocturnal, there may be other pairs present in the area.

**Short-eared Owls** had another poor year with only one site confirmed successful. It is hoped that the species may recover locally if vole numbers increase.

Of the 49 sites occupied by **Ravens**, 23 were in limestone quarries, 15 in tree nests, eight on natural rock faces, two in gritstone quarries and one on an electricity pylon. The largest broods were two

broods of six, believed to be the second and third highest recorded in our area.

Three other (non-breeding) species are also mentioned in the SPRSG report. There were again sightings of **Red Kites** throughout the study area, mostly of single birds, but a party of four soaring together over Padley Gorge suggested that breeding may have taken place somewhere not too far away. There was an increase in records of **Marsh Harrier** in 2010, with at least four spring records between 21st April and 2nd June, and at least eleven individuals were recorded in autumn between 2nd August and the late date of 27th October. All were seen on the Eastern Moors or Upper Derwent area, except for one sighting at Wormhill. The third species was a **Montagu's Harrier** that was present on the Eastern Moors from late April to Mid May, and was seen displaying on 11th May. This species is a very rare visitor to our moors, and last bred in the area in 1953.

**Some Acknowledgments:** The membership of the group in 2009 was: Mick Taylor (Coordinator), John Atkin, Matthew Capper, Roy Frost, Trevor Grimshaw, Mick Lacey, Geoff Mawson, Anthony Messenger, Stephen Moores, Steve Samworth, Ken Smith, Jack Street and Paul Tooley. Mick Taylor expressed his thanks to the photographers concerned, and to the members of the group who were involved in the production of the report. He also expressed his thanks to all the members of the group for their diligent fieldwork and expertise, and to the landowners who allowed access to their property.

Wendy Thomson



# Plovers on Patch!

**David Woodriff** explores the upland reservoirs, and uncovers some great breeding species..

In most seasons there seems to be winners and losers on the breeding front. On Wharncliffe Chase, there seems to have been fewer Meadow Pipits around, I hadn't seen a Stonechat since the last couple of harsh winters until recently and Yellowhammer have lessened in number somewhat.

This may not be a true reflection though as I've spent less time on my local patch and have been making more of an effort to cover the upland reservoirs of late in an attempt to broaden my birdwatching experience. This has been quite rewarding and I'm happy to report positive news.

In early May (10/11th) I recorded a pair of Little Grebe on Midhope Reservoir. A single Little Ringed Plover and Spotted Flycatcher were entered in capitals in my notebook to denote my yearly "firsts". A couple of weeks later, the Little Grebes on Midhope had increased to 6 (entered with an ! in aforementioned notebook).

By the 8th June, I recorded 5 adult and the first 2 tiny Little Grebe young on Midhope. Spotted Flycatchers were becoming easy to see in nearby Langsett Wood whereas previously I'd "stumbled" across them.

I was enjoying discovering new areas within these semi-regular haunts of mine and decided to spend some "proper time" around Broomhead Reservoir. The woods provided a pair of Pied Flycatchers and I made a note to get here earlier in the season next year to look for them.

On the waters edge, a single Little Ringed Plover fed in its ponderous manner. I looked around at all the sandy shingle and wondered if there was a pair? As I scanned it seemed that a black eye surrounded by a yellow ring jumped down my binocular lens as another adult was sitting amongst some small rocks not far away. Breeding was underway, but surely the chance of success was limited due to disturbance from dog walkers?

I continued to visit the site regularly for the next few weeks to check on progress, even discouraging the odd dog walker to alter their route so as not to disturb. During this spell I continued to encounter Spotted Flycatchers on a regular basis which eventually culminated in me finding (and photographing) an adult pair feeding 3 nestlings right next to a path on the edge of Langsett Wood.

I'd seen Oystercatchers infrequently in the area in previous years but never on a regular basis. A visit to Langsett Reservoir in mid-June provided an alarming adult flying over the water. It settled on the shore next to another adult and, as I got them I my scope, a couple of juveniles appeared from within the rocks and fed in the open. Breeding confirmed but where had they nested exactly?

Then, one Monday morning around 3 weeks after I first saw the sitting Little Ringed Plover at Broomhead it had happened – four chicks were walking around the nest site under the wary eye of two adults. Fantastic! The adults called constantly and seemed to take offence with any approaching bird including juvenile Pied Wagtails and Common Sandpipers.

Hearing and absorbing the call was exactly the type of learning I'd hoped for and would stand me in good stead for further encounters with this species. This was proven when I heard that same call from Midhope Reservoir in mid-July. I couldn't believe it – another adult with 4 chicks plus an older juvenile that approached to within feet of where I was stood with my scope!

Across the whole of the reservoir I counted at least at least 17 Little Grebe of all ages – there must have been 4-5 breeding pairs including some raising second broods. Also of note was a juvenile Sparrowhawk which flew to the waters edge and spent several minutes bathing and drinking which you don't often see.

In the surrounding woods another family group of Spotted Flycatchers fed. The woods in the Midhope/Langsett area have held several pairs of this species which is encouraging. The SBSG website reported other breeding success of Spotted Flycatchers in Wharncliffe Woods, Redmires, Broomhead Woods and even Ulley CP. Is it always like this or has 2011 been a good year?

Both the Broomhead and Midhope family parties of Little Ringed Plovers fledged. It was noticeable how the adults departed to begin their migration south soon after fledging leaving the immatures to feed in loose groups.

My knowledge of the call helped upon a visit to a fairly bleak Strines Reservoir in August where an adult and another juvenile fed on the far shore. Coupled with the success of a pair at Redmires Reservoir it would seem to have been an excellent breeding season for this species.



# RECENT SIGHTINGS

31st May - 30th August 2011

**These records are largely unchecked. Records in bold require supporting details.**

**Little Egret** - Two at Orgreave Lakes on 20th July, with singles at Catcliffe Flash on 24th and 29th August, and Orgreave Lakes on 25th.

**Great White Egret** - One was flushed from willows at Firsby Res on 12th June. Presumably the same bird was relocated at Carr Vale later that morning, where it stayed until the early evening.

**Ruddy Shelduck** - One briefly at Ulley CP on 27th August, leaving NE.

**Shelduck** - Two adults with juveniles were reported from Middleton Moor on various dates in July.

**Wigeon** - Reports of a singles at Silverwood Lagoon on 21st and 22nd August, Catcliffe Flash on 22nd, and Orgreave Lakes on 23rd.

**Eurasian Teal** - Maximum counts were 22 at Middleton Moor on 23rd July, 12 at Orgreave Lakes on 25th August, and 18 at Thrybergh Tip on 28th.

**Pintail** - A "dodgy drake" was still present at Damflask Res on 4th June. A female was at Silverwood Lagoon on 11th August.

**Red-crested Pochard** - A female was at Catcliffe Flash from 13th July, until at least the 19th. An eclipse drake commuted between Orgreave Lakes and Thrybergh CP between 1st and 23rd August.

**Common Scoter** - Three female/immatures were at Orgreave Lakes on 29th July.

**Red Kite** - Widespread reports throughout the period, including birds at Rod Moor, Broomhead Res, Barlborough, Ewden Beck,

Curbar Edge, Agden Side, Stanage Edge, Eckington and Redmires. All were singles, except two seen in the Ewden Area on 24th June, and 10th and 13th July. One of these was observed to have a to have pink wingtags, from the Northumberland reintroduction scheme.

**Marsh Harrier** - Singles at Pit-house West on 21st July, Thrybergh CP on 30th, Barnside Moor on 18th August, Firsby Res on 18th, and Agden Side on 21st.

**Osprey** - One circled Ladybower Res on 9th August.

**Quail** - A remarkable series of reports from the Peat Pits/Onesmoor/High Bradfield area, with at least five calling birds present throughout the summer. The first were reported from Peat Pits and Brightholmlee on 1st June, with the last a heard at Onesmoor on 10th August.



Red-crested Pochard (MA Smethurst).



Yellow-legged Gull (MA Smethurst).

**Water Rail** - A chick was seen at Catcliffe Flash on 13th and 20th July.

**Sanderling** - One was on the top dam wall at Redmires on 13th June.

**Ruff** - Three males circled Orgreave Lakes on 12th August, where one was also present on 24th.

**Black-tailed Godwit** - Five summer-plumaged adults were present at Middleton Moor on 8th July. Three were at Orgreave Lakes on 21st July, with the same site seeing one on 27th and two on 5th August. Two roosted at Silverwood Lagoon on 13th August.

**Whimbrel** - One flew N over Thrybergh CP on 2nd June, and another NW at Redmires on 24th July. There were records from Orgreave Lakes of one on 2nd August, two on 4th, one E on 13th, and 2 E on 24th. One flew SE over Langsett Res on 20th.

**Spotted Redshank** - Two flew

E at Thrybergh CP on 12th August, and one was NW at Orgreave Lakes on 25th.

**Greenshank** - One south at Orgreave Lakes on 4th July was the first recorded on passage. Various reports from the period, with notable sightings including four at Orgreave Lakes on 4th August, two juvs at Redmires on 6th and 7th, where one remained until 13th, a single at Ramsley Res on 13th, two at Silverwood Lagoon on 18th and 21st, and one at Langsett Res on 23rd.

**Green Sandpiper** - Records from various sites, all being singles except three at Thrybergh CP on 14th August, two at Catcliffe Flash on 17th and 25th.

**Turnstone** - An adult in summer plumage was at Redmires on 7th August.

**Little Gull** - A juvenile roosted at Silverwood Lagoon on 4th August.

**Black-headed Gull** - Maximum counts included 232 at Middle-

ton Moor on 31st July and 190 at Orgreave Lakes on the same date. 50 were at Redmires on 23rd August.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** - Larger counts included 150 at Cressbrook Dale on 14th June, 300 at Orgreave Lakes on 4th August, at Middleton Moor on 22nd and 230 at Redmires on 26th, and 500 at Langsett on 29th.

**Yellow-legged Gull** - Birds recorded on various dates from Middleton Moor, Orgreave Lakes, Redmires and Langsett Res. The highest count was six at Orgreave Lakes on 4th August.

**Common Tern** - Breeding confirmed at Thrybergh CP and Orgreave Lakes.

**Arctic Tern** - 15 stopped off at Orgreave Lakes on 29th July.

**Cuckoo** - Widespread reports. Notable sightings include two at Redmires Top Res on 2nd June, two at The Little Don Valley on 4th, two mobbed by Meadow



Snipe (S. Duckworth).



Little Owl (C. Hurst)

Pipits at Agden on 11th, and two at Big Moor on 16th. A juv was observed fed by Reed Warblers at Blackburn Meadows on 2nd July, and another by Meadow Pipits at Ramsley Res on 9th August. Other juveniles sighted included one at Roper Hill on 27th August.

**Nightjar** - Churring males were recorded from five locations. One which landed on the road at Peat Pits on 5th June was unusual for the site.

**Swift** - Large counts include 200 at Thrybergh CP on 5th June, 100 at Ulley on 29th, 100 at Ashton on 18th July, 90 at Sharrow on 22nd, and 73 at Firsby Res on 23rd. Small numbers were still reported into the end of August, with the last (at the time of writing) being one over Ecclesall on 29th.

**Sand Martin** - Nesting reported at several sites including many on the Don in Sheffield and Rotherham, and at Ulley CP. A pair showing breeding behaviour

at Malin Bridge on 21st August were unusual in both time and location.

**Tree Pipit** - Five were at Wharncliffe Heath on 12th June, seven at Blacka Moor on 23rd, five at Bretton Clough on 28th, and four at Wharncliffe Chase on 10th, the latter site having confirmed breeding. Movement included four over Wharncliffe Chase on 13th August, 10 at the same site on 17th, and five over Redmires on 21st and 23rd.

**Yellow Wagtail** - Breeding behaviour recorded at sites including Thrybergh, Ulley CP and Silver Wood, and, more unusually, there was confirmed breeding in the west of the area at Onesmoor. Larger post-breeding and passage counts included 9 around Firsby Res on 13th August, 20 were feeding off algae mats at Pebley Pond on 19th, 11, including a party of seven, flew SW at Redmires on 23rd, and eight at Ewden Valley on 25th.

**Redstart** - Confirmed breeding at several locations, with larger counts including six birds at Padley Woods on 6th June, three pairs at Cressbrook Dale on 14th June, and a male with four juvs at Abney Moor on 28th July. The latest records (at the time of writing) were at Wyming Brook on 22nd August, and Ramsley Moor and Wharncliffe Chase on 27th.

**Whinchat** - Breeding behaviour recorded at several upland sites, with four pairs recorded at White Edge Moor on 3rd August. Passage birds included one at Orgreave Lakes on 13th August, two juvs at Redmires on 13th, and up to four juvs at Wharncliffe Chase between 17th and 27th August.

**Stonechat** - Breeding reported from a number of sites, with the highest count being five at Hathersage on 21st June, and Barbrook Valley on 22nd July. Two family parties, totally seven birds, were recorded at Stanage Edge on 21st August. Two juvs at Wharncliffe Chase on 24th August, associating with juvenile Whinchats, were thought to be passage birds.



Great Spotted Woodpecker (P Garrity).



Yellow Wagtail (A Deighton).

**Wheatear** - Juveniles reported from Cressbrook Dale, Wardlow, Bleaklow Hill and Stanage Edge, where 10 birds were recorded on 22nd July. Three were at Wharnccliffe Chase on 7th and 15th August, three at Monsal Head on 9th, three at Peat Pits on 28th and six at Whitwell Moor on 29th.



**Ring Ouzel** - Juveniles reported from some of the usual strongholds for this species. A singing Male was at Upper Ewden Valley on 26th June.

**Grasshopper Warbler** - Reeling males recorded from widespread sites including Totley Moss, Beeley, Stubley Hollow, Wharnccliffe Chase, Stoke Flat, Poolsbrook Marsh, Redmires, Ughill Moor, Blackburn Meadows, Silverwood Lagoon, Breck Farm, Stanage Pole, Thryvergh CP, Canklow and Agden Side.



Spotted Flycatcher (MA Smethurst) and Whinchat (A Deighton).

**Wood Warbler** - Breeding confirmed at Padley Gorge and Wyming Brook, and singing birds at Windy Bank Plantation at Agden on 3rd June, and Wharnccliffe Heath on 12th. One at Norfolk Park on 27th June and one at Abney Moor on 28th July were more unusual records.

**Spotted Flycatcher** - The highest concentration was five singing males were at Langsett Wood on 8th June, where breeding was confirmed later in

the season. Family parties were widely reported, including two adults and four juvs at Broomhead Red on 1st August, a party of four at Midhope Res on 5th, and six at High Bradfield on 19th.

**Siskin** - Higher counts include 100 at Midhope Res on 12th August, 40 at Longshaw on 13th, and 115 at Redmires on 21st.

**Linnet** - Numbers gathering

post-breeding, with higher counts including 70 at Thrybergh CP on 7th August, 200 at Ulley CP on 21st, 66 at Orgreave Lakes on 24th, and 70 at Firsby Res on 28th.

**Crossbill** - The highest counts were 13 at Dukes Road on 4th June, 13 at Canklow Woods on 23rd June, 15 at Wyming Brook on 26th, 20 at Broomhead Wood on 1st July, 54 at Redmires Res on 17th, and 40 at Lockerbrook on 6th August.

**Records were received from the following observers, with apologies for any omissions:**

C Almond, MG Archer, S Ashton, B Bailey, S Bailey, R Barnard, SJ Barnes, AR Bell, AS Bilton, RP Blagden, C Bonnington, K Borman, K Bower, P Bowker, SJ Branch, PL Brown, R Butterfield, DM Bye, M Capper, EO Chafer, I Chapman, J Clarke, L Coates, R Cobley, B Cole, SJ Cooper, J Crank, J Crooks, N Cross, M Cunningham, A Cutts, A Deighton, J Ducker, S Duckworth, M Dyson, H Egan, L Fairhall, D Gains, G Games, S Green, T Grose, S Guymer, R Harris, I Hedge, A Hicks, A Hill, RD Hill, D Hitchen, M Hodgson, M Hollis, J Housden, J Hornbuckle, C Hurst, P Jackson, S Jackson, G James, J James, M Jarvis, Alan Johnson, Anne Johnson, A Jones, C Kelly, JE Kenward, S King, J Kingsland, N Kipling, M Kramer, M Lamont, P Lawson, P Leonard, P Lockwood, JL Marriott, P Mella, B Merryweather, M Miller, TH Misnklip, JA Mountford, D Neill, H Nichols, MG Oxlade, M Parnell, J Partridge, I Payne, PH Peasall, R Platts, NR Porter, P Read, MN Reeder, P Ridsdale, D Rigg, B Roberts, D Roddis, GA Rodgers, M Sanders, G Sharlpes, J Sherwin, M Sherwin, S Sherwin, A Siddall, D Simmonite, MA Shethurst, C Smith, R Smith, B Spencer, CG Stack, J Stobart, G Stride, MJ Sweeney, J Taylor, M&L Taylor, N Taylot, SG Tebbutt, J Thompson, M Timms, P Tuffin, R Twigg, C Tyler, SE Vickers, EC Vincent, DL Vine, F Walker, RV & GV Walker, D Warburton, P Wareham, MC Wells, G Williams, RDR Williams, P&A Wilson, D Wood, D Woodriff, P Wragg, H Young, Thrybergh CP Bird Log, BTO Bird Track