



For immediate use

Cheshire and Wirral Ornithological Society Honoured

The Cheshire and Wirral Ornithological Society (CAWOS) have been honoured for their contribution to British ornithology at an awards ceremony held at the Royal Society, London.

Clive Richards, Chairman of CAWOS, was handed the Marsh Local Ornithology Award by Professor Ian Newton, Chair of the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) and Brian Marsh of the Marsh Christian Trust, in recognition of the outstanding contribution the Society made to local ornithology with their publication '*Birds in Cheshire and Wirral: a breeding and wintering atlas*'.

Cheshire and Wirral provides a wide range of habitats for birds, from the internationally important estuaries of the Dee and Mersey in the west to the high moors of the Peak District National Park in the east. During 2004 to 2007 more than 350 volunteers spent over 50,000 hours surveying each 2x2 km square in Cheshire and Wirral, recording every bird species in both the breeding season and in winter. This work revealed dramatic changes in bird populations since the county's last census of 1978-84.

Professor David Norman, who led the project and wrote the book, commented, "*I am delighted that CAWOS has been given this award. It recognises the voluntary efforts of all those individuals that made the Birds of Cheshire and Wirral possible, from the observers who put in so much time in the field, to those who helped in its publication. This weighty tome will be the authority on the county's birds for many years to come.*"

Professor Ian Newton, BTO, said, "*It gives me great pleasure to see this outstanding piece of work recognised. Wherever one dips into the book, there are gems to be found. It gives unprecedented understanding of the region's birds.*"

At the same ceremony, Dr Jennifer Gill of the University of East Anglia was awarded the Marsh Award for Ornithology Award for her considerable and ongoing contribution to British ornithology, whilst Chris Packham (of Autumnwatch fame) received the Dilys Breese Medal, for his contribution to the public understanding of ornithology.

[More >>](#)

Notes for editors

1. **The Marsh Local Ornithology Award**, is awarded to a bird club or group that publishes a book, completes a study or conducts any other exceptional activity that advances knowledge about birds and is made possible by a grant from the Marsh Christian Trust.
2. **The BTO is the UK's leading bird research organisation**. Over thirty thousand birdwatchers contribute to the BTO's surveys. They collect information that forms the basis of conservation action in the UK. The BTO maintains a staff of 100 at its offices in Norfolk and Stirling, who analyse and publicise the results of project work. The BTO's investigations are funded by government, industry and conservation organisations.
3. **Cheshire and Wirral Ornithological Society (CAWOS)** was founded in October 1988 and it quickly became an important part of the county birdwatching scene.

The objectives of CAWOS are to promote and encourage the study, recording and preservation of species and habitats within the designated recording area of Cheshire and Wirral. The county is uniquely placed within the British Isles and attracts a variety of breeding and wintering birds.

The society liaises with other local societies, conservation groups, statutory bodies, local councils and government organisations. It also periodically holds conferences and exhibitions to promote birdwatching in general and Cheshire in particular.

Threats to habitats are a very real problem these days and to be able to counter these, it is essential that to hold as much information on the county's avifauna as possible.

4. **The Marsh Christian Trust** was established in 1981 and has two main areas of work; grant-making and the Marsh Awards.

The Trust runs a portfolio of Awards with a number of internationally and nationally recognised organisations such as Barnardos, the National Trust and the Zoological Society of London. The Awards seek to recognise unsung heroes who all aim to improve the world we live in. Recipients of Marsh Awards range from scientists working in conservation biology and ecology, to authors and sculptors from the arts world, and those who give their time unselfishly to work with the young, the elderly, people with mental health issues and for our heritage.

Contact information

Paul Stancliffe (BTO Press Officer)

Office: 01842 750050 (9am to 5.30pm)

Mobile: 07845 900559 (anytime)

Email: press@bto.org

Images are available for use alongside this News Release

Please contact images@bto.org quoting reference 2010-11-48

The BTO has an ISDN line available for radio interviews

Please contact us to book an interview

Office: 01842 750050