

# **BIRD NEWS**

**Number 51**

**July 2001**



**~ STOP PRESS NEWS ~**

**First Record for Cheshire and Wirral  
Little Egrets breed at Frodsham Marsh**



# Subbuteo Books

## The Wildlife Book Specialist

Order your world wildlife, travel and natural history books from the comfort of your own home, delivered direct to your door.

**NEW Online shop: [www.wildlifebooks.com](http://www.wildlifebooks.com)**

Over 6500 titles covering all Natural History subjects and checklists.  
UK and World Travel Books and Maps including  
Field Guides, Sites Guides, Monographs

Send for your FREE 2000/2001 catalogue today,  
quoting ref: 0S05

Call 0870 010 9700 Fax 0870 010 9699

The Rea, Upton Magna, Shrewsbury, SY4 4UR

E-mail: [info@wildlifebooks.com](mailto:info@wildlifebooks.com)

### OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

Chairman : Sheila Blamire

Vice-Chairman : Jeff Clarke

Secretary : David Cogger

Treasurer : Clive Richards

Recorder : Tony Broome

4 Larchwood Drive, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 2NU. Tel: 01625 540434

Membership Secretary : David Cogger

113 Nantwich Road, Middlewich, Cheshire, CW10 9HD. Tel: 01606 832517

E-mail address : [memsec@kawos.org](mailto:memsec@kawos.org)

Newsletter Editor : Simon Edwards

24 Badby Wood, Liverpool, L33 8YQ. Tel: 0151 547 1895

E-mail address : [birdnewsed@kawos.org](mailto:birdnewsed@kawos.org)

Publications Chairman : Sheila Blamire

Woodruff Cottage, Clamhunger Ln, Mere, Cheshire, WA16 6QG. Tel: 01565 830168

E-mail address : [info@kawos.org](mailto:info@kawos.org)

*Bird News welcomes articles, letters and comments relevant to birdwatching in Cheshire & Wirral.  
Please either e-mail or post (on disc) your contributions to the Editor at the address shown above.*

*The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the  
Society, the Council of the Society, or the Editor.*

Front cover: Red-rumped Swallow by Tony Broome

Other illustrations by Tony Broome, Tom Lowe, Bill Morton and Thelma Sykes

# Editorial

The astute amongst our readers will no doubt have immediately noticed two things about this issue of *Bird News*: firstly, it's a lot thinner than the norm, being 24 pages rather than our preferred 32, and secondly, it's late. In fact, it's very late considering this is supposed to be the July issue! Perhaps the *Bird News* editorial team should reconsider referring to the issues as Winter, Spring, Summer and Autumn, thus giving us a three-month band in which to get the newsletter on to your doormats. We might still be late, but at least it narrows the odds of that a bit!

Seriously though, for both of these failings it is I, as Editor, that must take the blame; they really are down to me and the amount of time that I am able to contribute towards being *Bird News* Editor. Now, I'm not - I promise, so please don't turn straight to Recent Reports - about to commence on one of those drum-banging tirades about the level of involvement that there is from the CAWOS membership in running the Society's various activities. In fact, if anything, the level of contribution to *Bird News* remains such that it will keep me supplied with sufficient articles for Notes & Letters for some issues to come. However, if I am to achieve my aim of making *Bird News* one of the foremost bird club newsletters in the land, I need help (and not just the psychiatric kind!).

Probably unbeknown to most members it is a small dedicated group of individuals who work with me - and often despite me - to produce this publication. Sheila Blamire, together with her husband Geoff, is responsible for all of the desktop publishing, layout and printing; all in all this is quite a considerable task. Hazel Raw, our resident lyricist, proofreads every article and Tony Broome coordinates the artwork, especially the superb front-cover paintings that we feature every issue. Collating and distribution are handled by Geoff Lightfoot and David Cogger respectively. Of course, it would be remiss of me not to also mention those like Phil Oddy, Pete Hall, Hugh Pulsford and Chris Benson who routinely, and without prompting, submit their regular columns. All of these people greatly relieve the workload that rests on my own shoulders and make my life somewhat easier. There is, however, one area where I believe that there is scope for another individual to join the *Bird News* 'family', and where I am appealing for help: helping to commission articles for our regular feature slots.

Over the two years that I've been Editor, *Bird News* has contained a number of sections that have strived to become regular features. In particular, these include Sites to Watch, Society Spotlight and Personality Profile. In order for me to spend more time sourcing major articles on specific topics, as well as being a better editor, I am looking for somebody (or bodies!) with a sound knowledge of birding within the CAWOS recording area to take on commissioning authors of articles for these slots. If you're interested, please contact either Sheila or myself. The job's not paid, but the rewards are excellent and you wouldn't want to see a grown man beg (would you?).

On a different note, I'm sure that most birders in the County are now well aware of the breeding Little Egrets at Frodsham, and the fact that this is a truly historic event for the UK let alone Cheshire. This information is in the public domain, having been released on BirdLine North West in agreement with the RSPB. I would like, though, to make two further appeals to you all, if this event is ever repeated. Firstly, please do not disturb the birds; whilst I believe that it was difficult to approach the nest at this year's site, it is worth a reminder that it would be an offence under the *Countryside Protection Act* to do so. Secondly, please be aware of the temptation that this nest could present to eggers; record the registration numbers of any suspicious vehicles near the site and provide these to the wildlife officer at the nearest police station. Please do not get physically involved with anyone you suspect of being an egger, as these moronic delinquents are just not worth the effort. Of course, the person might just be an innocent twitcher (if that's not a contradiction in terms!). By the way, my registration number is X 366 WDM!

**Simon Edwards**

**Note: the copy date for the next issue is 15<sup>th</sup> Sept - please be prompt**

We cannot guarantee that material received after this date will be published in that issue.

If you are aware that your material may be delayed, please let the Editor know as soon as possible.

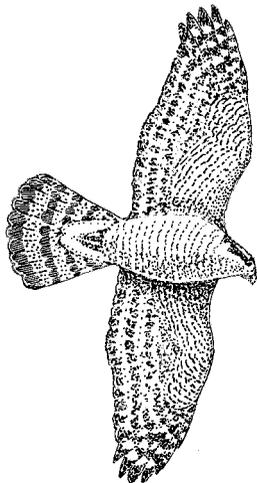
**Friday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2001 'BALTICS: THE UNKNOWN EUROPE'**

**by Dr Algirdas Knystautas at the Grosvenor Museum, Chester**

# County Rarities

## **GOSHAWK (*Accipiter gentilis*)**

Goshawk is still a rare bird in Cheshire and Wirral, despite there being a couple of so-called traditional sites located in the recording area, but perhaps more so because the UK population can largely be described as resident and it is probably only dispersing juvenile birds along with falconers' escapes that account for flyover sightings away from known sites. The upshot of this is that most birders do not tend to see Goshawks on a regular basis, and that alone should justify its requiring a description as a county rarity, despite being reasonably easy to identify if seen well. The other reason however, is that Goshawk has something of an image



problem, often being described as a notorious 'beginners' bird, with big Sparrowhawks or Buzzards regularly accounting for Goshawk sightings from up-and-coming birders. The reality is that Goshawk is a large, heavy-looking bird of prey, and one should not be tempted to classify Goshawk as a big Sparrowhawk since most of the UK birds are of the large northern race, with some, particularly females, being larger even than Buzzards.

Although size evaluation of a high flying raptor is not easy, Goshawk has a chunky, powerful look to it, a big-chested appearance with long tapering wings, which bulge at the secondaries, a less obvious round-tipped tail and a distinctive flap-flap-glide flight. I am always struck by the overall jizz this gives to a soaring Goshawk, it simply does not have the slim-bodied, compact rounded wings and square-ended tail jizz that a Sparrowhawk shows. When you add the plumage details of cold pale greyish underparts, dark face with a white supercilium giving a capped effect in adults or the well-streaked dark brown underparts and under wing coverts of a juvenile, Goshawk suddenly becomes quite distinctive and very un-Sparrowhawk like.

Goshawks are mainly birds of extensive coniferous woodland, tending to be quite secretive and intolerant of disturbance, and thus hard to see, but in these extensive forest tracts, they may perch out on the tops of trees and prove surprisingly conspicuous, and their tumbling and occasionally noisy aerial display flights in spring usually give away their presence.

**Hugh Pulsford, 19 Tudor Way, Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 2AS**

### **EDITORIAL AND RECORDS COMMENT:**

Goshawks are very rare in the county and there are usually no more than one or two records accepted away from known favoured localities. Most birds will be brief fly-bys and perhaps too quick for the observer to assimilate the visual information. This is supported by a lot of Goshawk descriptions lacking substance and so being unproven. To simply say 'big Sparrowhawk-like' is not enough. Some females are truly huge, some dwarfing Buzzards in flight. Some males are not much bigger than female Sparrowhawks when size in a wide open sky is often impossible to judge. Female Sparrowhawks often show big, white, fluffy undertail coverts to make matters worse. Observers should be wary of jumping to the 'must-be' syndrome and submitting a record if the views were brief, unless they are very experienced with both species.

**Tony Broome, County Recorder**

## **HOUSE MARTIN SURVEY**

Please take part in this year's House Martin survey. Further information and forms from:  
**Brian Martin, 45 Albert Road, Grappenhall, Warrington, WA4 2PF. Tel: 01925 264251.**

# Recent Reports

*Some of the records may be unauthenticated and therefore will require review by the Society's Rarities Panel or the BBRC. This report covers the spring period from March to May.*

## EARLY DATES FOR SUMMER VISITORS

The following is a list of the earliest dates which I have received for returning migrants, some of which may be subject to ratification. If you have recorded species earlier than those listed please send in your records.

**Garganey** - Woolston Eyes - May 5th

**Osprey** - Wheelock - Mar 31st

**Quail** - Little Neston - May 29th

**Whimbrel** - West Kirby - Apr 6th

**Great Skua** - Hilbre and Hoylake - Apr 7th

**Common Tern** - Hoylake - Apr 15th

**Little Tern** - Hoylake - Apr 22nd

**Turtle Dove** - Red Rocks - May 12th

**Swift** - Sandbach and West Kirby - Apr 21st

**Swallow** - Antrobus - Mar 26th

**Tree Pipit** - Hoylake - Apr 16th

**White Wagtail** - Hilbre - Mar 24th

**Whinchat** - Hilbre - Apr 26th

**Ring Ouzel** - Hilbre - Mar 24th

**Sedge Warbler** - Fiddler's Ferry/Red Rocks - Apr 16th

**Red Warbler** - Red Rocks - Apr 16th

**Whitethroat** - Fiddler's Ferry - Apr 20th

**Wood Warbler** - Poynton Pool - Apr 14th

**Spotted Flycatcher** - Moore NR - May 12th

**Marsh Harrier** - Fiddler's Ferry - Mar 30th

**Hobby** - Northwich - Apr 15th

**Little Ringed Plover** - Sandbach - Mar 13th

**Arctic Skua** - Denhall and Hilbre - Apr 7th

**Sandwich Tern** - Hilbre - Mar 23rd

**Arctic Tern** - Hoylake - Apr 5th

**Black Tern** - Hilbre - Apr 8th (tbc)

**Cuckoo** - Woolston Eyes - Apr 29th

**Sand Martin** - Tatton Park - Mar 9th

**House Martin** - Sandbach - Apr 6th

**Yellow Wagtail** - Sandbach - Apr 14th

**Redstart** - Higher Whitley - Apr 18th

**Wheatear** - Fiddler's Ferry - Mar 20th

**Grasshopper Warbler** - Red Rocks - Apr 1st

**Lesser Whitethroat** - Crewe - Apr 19th

**Garden Warbler** - Crewe - Apr 28th

**Willow Warbler** - West Kirby - Mar 8th

**Pied Flycatcher** - West Kirby - Apr 2nd

## SITE REPORTS

### Chester/Mersey Estuary

Two **Little Egrets** visited Frodsham No6 tank during May and two **Garganey** were seen late in the month. Up to six **Mandarins** were at Raby Mere in Mar with two males on May 5th. A **Honey Buzzard** was reported over Huntington, near Chester (May 12th) and a **Hobby** hunted between Farndon and Holt along the River Dee (May 27th). **Peregrines** bred at Birkenhead with public viewing arranged by the Wirral Rangers. Three **Curlew Sandpipers** were recorded at Frodsham in May and 650 **Black-tailed Godwits** were on No6 tank on May 30th. 500 **Little Gulls** were reported off New Brighton (Apr 14th) but only four were seen three days later and two visited Frodsham in May. Up to three **Caspian Gulls** and a **Glaucous Gull** were at New Ferry Tip in Mar. The pair of **Great Black-backed Gulls** returned to nest on Frodsham No6 tank. A **Common Tern** passed through Frodsham in May and a **Blue-headed Wagtail** returned late in the month. The best bird at Frodsham was a singing **Nightingale** on May 23rd - only the fourth record since 1980 and the second site record. The previous bird was on Aug 18th 1973. A **Black Redstart** was at Wallasey (Mar 24th).

### Crewe/Sandbach area

A fem **Mandarin** and seven young were seen at Wistaston Green, Crewe on May 31st. An early brood of nine **Mallard** ducklings was found on Mar 31st at Crewe Business Park and a **Red Kite** flew over here on May 7th. During Mar, five **Buzzards** were at Swettenham with three over Crewe Business Park. A **Black-tailed Godwit** over Crewe Business Park (May 13th) and a **Common Sandpiper** in Crewe town centre after heavy rain (Apr 29th) were both exceptional records. An early **Swift** flew over Crewe Road, Sandbach (Apr 21st). Single **Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers** were at both Church Minshull and Bradfield Green in Mar. Crewe Business Park hosted a **White Wagtail** on Apr 30th, male **Redstart** on Apr 29th, **Sedge Warbler** on Apr 26th, **Whitethroat** on Apr 26th and **Garden Warbler** on Apr 28th. A **Lesser Whitethroat** was singing at Wistaston Green,

Crewe on Apr 19th and **Pied Flycatchers** returned to Timbersbrook on Apr 27th. Two **Ravens** flew over Walgherton on May 7th and a late **Brambling** visited Sandbach Park on Apr 2nd.

## Dee Estuary

One/two **Little Egrets** were seen in the Burton/Parkgate area with three at Denhall Quay on Mar 12th and 22nd. Two **Whooper Swans** were at Parkgate on Mar 10th with a **Barnacle Goose** off Neston on Apr 10th and 20 **Brent Geese** were seen off Heswall on Mar 11th. A female **Scaup** was at Parkgate (Apr 9th). A calling **Quail** was off Little Neston on May 29th. On Mar 10th at the Parkgate high tide watch at least 17 **Water Rails** were seen but only four were present next day. Two **Little Ringed Plovers** returned to Denhall Quay on Apr 7th. 15,000 **Knot** were off Caldly on Mar 1st and 3rd. At Parkgate (Mar 10th) the high tide flushed 8+ **Jack Snipe** and 100+ **Snipe**. 990 **Black-tailed Godwits** were off Caldly and 3000 **Bar-tailed Godwits** visited Leasowe Bay, both on Mar 5th. A dark phase **Arctic Skua** was reported over Denhall Quay on Apr 7th.

Arrival dates for **Cuckoo** were May 1st at Little Neston, May 7th at both Stapledon Wood and Thurston, and finally at Leasowe on May 8th. Five **Short-eared Owls** were off Parkgate on Mar 10th and an escaped **Eagle Owl** visited Gayton on Mar 22nd. 400 **Swifts** flew over Leasowe on May 10th. The last **Water Pipit** at Neston was on Apr 4th. Two **Stonechats** were at Burton on Mar 22nd, Heswall on Mar 24th and a single at Caldly on Apr 3rd. The first **Wheatears** were at Burton on Mar 22nd and Heswall next day. A notable influx of birds on Mar 28th produced 50 at Meols, 19 at Red Rocks, four at Parkgate and two at West Kirby. Arrival dates for warblers included a **Whitethroat** at Caldly Hill on Apr 27th, **Wood Warbler** at Stapledon Wood between May 4th-8th, **Chiffchaff** at Heswall on Mar 11th and a **Willow Warbler** of race *acredula* at Lingham Lane, Leasowe on May 11th. A large fall of Willow Warblers was noted in the Red Rocks/West Kirby area on Apr 10th. A **Firecrest** was reported at Tesco in Heswall on Mar 13th and a **Pied Flycatcher** was at Stapledon Wood on May 5th.

## Frodsham

Due to Foot-and-Mouth there was no access to Frodsham Marsh for the three month period of this 'Recent Reports'.

## Fiddler's Ferry

A **Greylag Goose** flew over on Mar 4th. Four broods of **Canada Geese** totalling 19 young were seen in May. 152 **Mallard** on Mar 5th declined to 38 on Apr 1st with five broods seen in May totalling 35 young. A male **Pochard** on May 19th was the first May record since 1993. An early **Marsh Harrier** on Mar 30th was followed by further singles on Apr 14th-15th and May 27th. A **Goshawk** reported on May 7th was followed next day by a first for the reserve in the form of a dark phase **Honey Buzzard**. The first **Hobby** of the year was seen on May 5th. A **Water Rail** calling on May 20th was the latest ever reserve record. A **Crake spp** heard calling from Apr 22nd-29th was thought to be a Little Crake. **Little Ringed Plover** and **Common Sandpiper** returned on Apr 1st and 20th respectively. Rarer spring waders during May included **Turnstone** on 27th, 11 **Sanderlings** on 28th, a **Little Stint** on 26th and a **Black-tailed Godwit** on 12th-13th. An adult **Glaucous Gull** on Mar 25th was followed by another bird on Apr 5th-6th. Arrival dates for summer migrants included:- **Common Tern** (May 11th), **Arctic Tern** (May 7th), **Cuckoo** (May 6th), **Swift** (Apr 23rd), **Sand Martin** (Mar 28th with 500 on Apr 19th), **Swallow** (Apr 13th), **House Martin** (Apr 28th), **Whinchat** (May 5th), **Wheatear** (Mar 20th), **Grasshopper Warbler** (Apr 21st), **Sedge Warbler** (Apr 16th), **Reed Warbler** (Apr 28th with a record 12 in May), **Whitethroat** (Apr 20th with 53 in May), **Blackcap** (Apr 13th with a record 12 in May), **Willow Warbler** (Mar 30th with 24 in May) and **Chiffchaff** (Mar 25th). A **Tree Pipit** (May 17th) was a first for the reserve. A pair of **Stonechats** and a **Yellow-browed Warbler** were reported on Mar 4th. The latter will be the first spring record for the county if accepted. An *abietinus* **Chiffchaff** (a reserve first) was seen from Apr 29th to May 13th. Two **Ravens** on May 6th was the third May record here.

## Hilbre

Small numbers of **Red-throated Divers** were seen on several dates including a peak of seven on May 6th. The first **Fulmars** were seen (Apr 7th) with 10 flying past on Apr 15th. During late Apr, **Gannet** passage included 150 on 15th and 200 on 28th. A **Shag** on Apr 21st was the only report of that species. Up to 19 pale and one dark-bellied **Brent Geese** were seen during late Mar/early Apr with seven birds remaining till Apr 22nd. Eight **Eider** (Apr 1st) was the peak count here so far

this year with a male on Apr 21st. A **Long-tailed Duck** flew past on May 2nd. The peak counts for **Common Scoter** passage were 70 on Apr 22nd and 57 two days later. A **Marsh Harrier** flew over on May 1st. 1500 **Knot** on Apr 26th increased to 10,000 on May 1st. 35 **Purple Sandpipers** on Mar 26th declined to nine on Apr 27th - the last sighting of the winter. A **Woodcock** visited on Mar 24th. **Whimbrel** passage was strong with the first on Apr 21st followed by 66 more until May 23rd including 10 on Apr 30th, 29 on May 2nd and 17 on May 19th. A **Greenshank** on May 1st was an unusual spring record here. Single **Arctic Skuas** flew past on Apr 7th, 24th, 26th and 27th. Three **Great Skuas** and 20 **Little Gulls** flew past on Apr 7th. An adult **Iceland Gull** was reported on Mar 26th. The peak counts of **Kittiwakes** were 50 on Apr 22nd and 120 on Apr 28th.

The first **Sandwich Tern** was seen on Mar 23rd with 100 present on both Apr 26th and May 5th. Two **Roseate Terns** were reported on May 2nd. The first **Common Terns** were on Apr 24th, with 135 on Apr 28th and 300 on May 6th. 16 **Little Terns** on May 2nd were the first of the year with 40 three days later and 72 on May 16th. A possible **Black Tern** flew past on Apr 8th. The only auks reported were two **Guillemots** on Apr 15th with seven on Apr 18th and six **Razorbills** on Apr 26th. The first dates for **Swift**, **House Martin** and **Tree Pipit** were Apr 28th, Apr 21st and May 6th respectively. Large movements of **Meadow Pipits** included 2000+ on Mar 24th, 1000 on Mar 31st and 600 on Apr 22nd. **Yellow Wagtails** arrived from Apr 29th and 18 **Grey Wagtails** flew over on Mar 24th. 30 **White Wagtails** on Mar 24th was a very large count for that month with a further peak of 11 on Apr 29th. Single **Redstarts** were seen on Apr 26th-27th and May 10th-11th. **Whinchats** were present from Apr 26th. The first **Wheatears** were 18 on Mar 24th with 11 on Apr 1st and 16 on Apr 30th. Greenland race birds included three on Apr 27th, 12 on May 2nd and eight on May 26th. Single **Ring Ouzels** arrived on Mar 24th and 26th. Arrival dates for warblers included **Grasshopper Warbler** (Apr 24th), **Lesser Whitethroat** (May 2nd) and **Willow Warbler** (Apr 2nd with 60 on May 10th). Six **Siskins** and two **Redpolls** were seen on May 5th with five Redpolls a week later.



### Hoylake

A seawatch on Apr 7th produced seven **Red-throated Divers**, 100 **Fulmars**, 40 **Manx Shearwaters**, 55 **Gannets** (with 44 on Apr 15th and 50 on Apr 30th), 18 pale-bellied **Brent Geese**, **Long-tailed Duck**, 45 **Common Scoter**, a **Great Skua** and 15+ **Little Gulls**. On Apr 8th, 12 pale and one dark-bellied Brent Geese were seen. Another seawatch on Apr 15th produced seven **Little Gulls**, 14 **Kittiwakes**, 32 **Sandwich**, 20 **Common**, 22 **Arctic** and 35 "Commic" **Terns**, 12 **Guillemots** and two **Razorbills**. An escaped 1st sum fem **Barbary Falcon** was seen on May 21st. A **Grey Plover** was seen on May 26th with 40 **Sanderling** present on May 5th. The earliest dates for migrants included: **Whimbrel** (Apr 16th also 15 on May 5th), **Arctic Tern** (Apr 5th), **Little Tern** (Apr 22nd), **Cuckoo** (May 11th), **Sand Martin** (Mar 15th), **Swallow** (Mar 30th), **House Martin** (Apr 19th), **Tree Pipits** (three on Apr 16th and four on May 11th), **Yellow Wagtail** (Apr 23rd), **White Wagtails** (25 on Apr 8th), **Whinchat** (May 11th), **Wheatear** (three on Mar 23rd), male **Ring Ouzel** (Mar 27th), **Lesser Whitethroat** (May 11th), **Whitethroat** (May 5th), **Garden Warbler** (May 11th), **Willow Warbler** (Mar 30th) and a male **Pied Flycatcher** (Apr 30th). 195

**Meadow Pipits** flew over in two hours on Mar 23rd. Large numbers of White Wagtails were recorded including 10 on Apr 19th, 45 on Apr 22nd, a massive 80 on Apr 23rd (the largest Cheshire count since 1997) and 60 on Apr 27th. Four Greenland Wheatears were seen on May 11th with a **Siskin** on May 11th. Late **Redpolls** flew over on May 5th and 11th.

### Northwich/Middlewich area

A **Little Egret** at Neumann's Flash briefly on May 12th was the second for the Witton area. This was surpassed by a first in the form of a drake **Ring-necked Duck** at Budworth Mere on Apr 11th - only the 13th county record, if accepted. A **Honey Buzzard** was reported over Middlewich on May 11th. **Hobbies** were seen at Whatcroft junction of A556, Northwich (Apr 15th), Lach Dennis (May 27th) and Twemlow (May 28th). Two **Common** and a **Black Tern** were on Budworth Mere on May 15th. At least 150 **Sand Martins** were at Marston Flashes on Apr 10th. The first **Swallow** at Antrobush (Mar 26th) was followed by others at Marston Flashes (Apr 6th) and Higher Whitley next day. Higher Whitley hosted **Yellow Wagtail** on Apr 17th, a **White Wagtail** on Apr 18th-19th, male **Redstart** on Apr 18th, **Sedge Warbler** on May 12th and **Garden Warbler** on May 11th-12th. A **Whitethroat** was singing at Winsford on Apr 26th.

### Macclesfield area

Redesmere struck gold with a drake **Lesser Scaup** (Apr 13th-24th) - only the second county record. The bird was very tame and its i.d. was studied by many birders from far and wide. A **Red Kite** flew SW over Trentabank Resr on May 12th - a site first. Four **Buzzards** were counted at Redesmere (Apr 21st) with one over a Wilmslow garden (Mar 28th) the first ever there. A **Common Sandpiper** arrived at Redesmere on Apr 19th with 20+ **Collared Doves** at a feeding station in a Wilmslow garden on Mar 28th. An early **Swift** was at Prestbury Sewage Farm (Apr 25th) and a **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** was at Styal CP on May 10th. The first **Sand Martin** was at Astbury SQ on Mar 17th. 150+ Sand and several **House Martins** were at Redesmere on Apr 17th. A pair of **Grey Wagtails** bred at Styal CP. The first **Ring Ouzel** in the hills was a male at Danebower on Apr 1st and **Bramblings** were still at Macclesfield Forest in early Apr. Two **Mealy Redpolls** were at Toothill, Macclesfield Forest on Mar 16th with one **Lesser Redpoll** and a **Siskin** flock.

### Poynton area

A **Hobby** was reported over the village on Apr 30th. An **Oystercatcher** flew over one observer's house on Apr 27th - only the second garden record. This was one of the regular pair which nested at Adlington during May - the first confirmed breeding attempt here. A pair of **Curlews** prospected in the Adlington area and a **Common Sandpiper** at Poynton Brook on Apr 22nd was a garden first. Three **Sand Martins** at Adlington on May 28th were unusual there. Moderate **Meadow Pipit** passage was noted over Poynton on Mar 20th. Adlington hosted a very late **Redwing** on May 4th and a **Lesser Whitethroat** on May 28th. **Whitethroats** returned to Hazelbadge Fields, Poynton on May 4th and nearby a **Chiffchaff** was at Poynton Station on Apr 2nd. The earliest **Willow Warbler** was at Poynton Tip on Apr 11th with a small fall of birds on May 8th. The first fledged **Starlings** were seen on May 18th. The **Tree Sparrow** roost at Lostock Hall Farm, Poynton rose from 29 on Mar 3rd to 46+ on 30th (the second highest count here) with birds in three separate sub roosts. 43 birds were still present on Apr 12th making this the largest roost in east Cheshire. 130 **Linnets** there on May 6th was the observer's largest ever local count of that species.

### Poynton Pool

During Mar, **Cormorants** were recorded during every visit (including several *sinensis* type birds) and birds used the site as a day roost with a record six birds on 17th and 29th. In April, five on 1st-2nd declined to the last bird on Apr 24th - the second latest spring record. Display was noted on Apr 9th. The pair of **Mute Swans** nested again but vandals took the eggs in May. A **Greylag** joined the Canada flock on Apr 1st-2nd and 20th. An **Egyptian Goose** on May 16th was the first record since 1995 and a very welcome year tick !! The drake **Wigeon** from Feb was seen on 12 dates in Mar. Two drake **Goosanders** remained all morning on Mar 23rd. A **Buzzard** heard calling on Apr 22nd had been seen nearby the previous day and two distant birds were seen on May 1st. A female **Pheasant** on Mar 22nd was only the third site record. The long-staying **Water Rail** remained by the outfall to Mar 17th. Three **Oystercatchers** flew over SW on Apr 22nd - third site record but a welcome first for the observer. A **Common Sandpiper** on Apr 10th equalled the earliest ever with four more in Apr but surprisingly there were no May records. The first arrival

dates included:- **Swift** (Apr 29th), **Sand Martin** (Apr 14th with a good total of 11 birds in Apr and another on May 31st), **Swallow** (Apr 10th), **House Martin** (Apr 26th - a very late arrival date), **Blackcap** (Mar 25th - the earliest ever), **Wood Warbler** (Apr 14th - only the second record here), **Chiffchaff** (Mar 11th - the earliest ever by one day) and **Willow Warbler** (Apr 12th). A **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** was recorded on three dates in late Apr and two **Skylarks** over on Mar 8th was evidence of passage movement. A **Fieldfare** on Apr 12th and 17th was the second latest ever. Two partial albino **Carrion Crows** flew over on Apr 29th and a late **Redpoll** was seen on May 6th.

### Red Rocks/West Kirby

Two **Red-throated Divers** flew past Red Rocks on Apr 24th and a **Black-throated Diver** flew past on May 6th. Two **Little Egrets** flew past Red Rocks and West Kirby on May 23rd - only the second record there. A **Red Kite** reported over West Kirby on May 24th will be the second there, if accepted. A **Marsh Harrier** flew over West Kirby ML on Apr 23rd. Three **Water Rails** were at Red Rocks marsh in late May and two/three **Turtle Doves** reported there on May 12th were the first since 1997. The earliest dates for migrants at Red Rocks were:- **Whimbrel** (nine on Apr 24th), **Swallow** (Mar 28th), a female **Redstart** (May 13th), **Whinchat** (May 12th), a **Grasshopper Warbler** (Apr 1st), both **Sedge** and **Reed Warblers** (Apr 16th), **Lesser Whitethroat** (May 2nd), **Garden Warbler** (May 12th) and **Spotted Flycatcher** (May 13th). Two **Whimbrel** flew over Gilroy Pool, West Kirby (Apr 6th) and 23 **Little Gulls** were on the Marine Lake (Apr 16th). An early **Swift** flew over West Kirby on Apr 21st and nine **White Wagtails** were at Red Rocks on Apr 24th. A pair of **Stonechats** were in the West Kirby sand dunes on Mar 5th and 10 singing **Sedge Warblers** were at Red Rocks marsh (May 4th). A **Blackcap** was at West Kirby on Mar 12th with a **Willow Warbler** reported in the sand dunes on Mar 8th. A fall of 15 **Goldcrests** was at Red Rocks (Apr 1st) with a male **Pied Flycatcher** at Rectory Road, West Kirby next day.

### Rostherne Mere

Due to Foot-and-Mouth there was no access to Rostherne Mere for the three month period of this 'Recent Reports'.

### Sandbach Flashes

The peak count of 41 **Shelducks** on Mar 6th was a high count. A drake **Mandarin** was seen on May 7th and 16th. 68 **Wigeon** in March declined with one remaining on May 30th. 300 **Mallard** were counted on May 30th and up to 12 **Pintail** lingered in March. During Mar, single **Goldeneye** and **Goosander** were recorded on 13th and 29th respectively. A **Marsh Harrier** over Elton Hall Flash (May 10th) was only the seventh flashes record. A **Hobby** arrived on May 15th and the first **Little Ringed Plover** was seen on Mar 13th. During May wader passage included 33 **Ringed Plovers** on 14th, three **Sanderling** on 14th with two on 28th, a **Temminck's Stint** on Elton Hall Flash from 8th-12th (half of all records here have been in May), 17 **Dunlin** on 14th, 57 **Black-tailed Godwits** on 21st, a **Bar-tailed Godwit** on 12th and a **Turnstone** on 14th. The first **Common Sandpiper** was seen (Apr 13th). An adult **Mediterranean Gull** was at Elton Hall Flash on Mar 7th with a **Kittiwake** there on Mar 24th. 15 "Commic" Terns flew through on May 14th and next day a **Little Tern** at Watch Lane was the tenth flashes record.

A **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** on Apr 20th was a rare record. The first **Sand Martins** arrived on Mar 24th with a **Swallow** seen four days later and a **House Martin** on Apr 6th. A **Red-rumped Swallow** at Watch Lane on May 15th, which stayed for only 35mins, was a first for the site and only the fourth county record, if accepted. **Yellow** and **White Wagtails** were seen on Apr 14th and 22nd respectively. A migrant **Redstart** on May 11th was a welcome record and three **Stonechats** were at Rookery Bridge in Mar. The first **Wheatear** was there on Mar 23rd and the last **Fieldfare** record was 23 birds on Apr 25th. The earliest dates for migrants were:- **Sedge Warbler** (Apr 25th), **Reed Warbler** (Apr 25th), **Whitethroat** (Apr 28th), **Garden Warbler** (Apr 30th with four on May 20th), **Willow Warbler** (Apr 1st), **Spotted Flycatcher** (May 19th) and a male **Pied Flycatcher** at Watch Lane Flash (Apr 20th) was the sixth flashes



record. Three **Willow Tits** at Watch Lane on May 4th raised hopes of breeding nearby. A partial albino **Rook** flew over on Mar 6th. Three **Ravens** over on May 6th was a record count for May. 25 **Tree Sparrows** were at the feeding station in Mar.

### Tatton Park

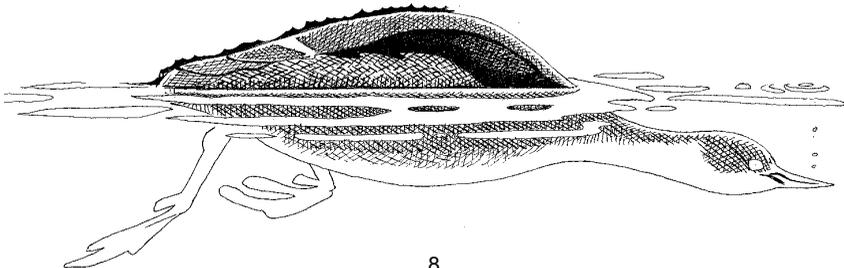
A pair of **Barnacle Geese** was found to be nesting during May. Two **Greylags** visited Tatton Mere on Apr 19th and May 16th. A **Ruddy Shelduck** was seen with two **Shelducks** on Melchett Mere on Apr 12th and then on Tatton Mere three days later. Presumably the two Shelducks were those seen on Tatton Mere between Mar 1st and 15th. Two drake **Mandarins** visited Birkin Brook on May 25th and a pair of **Wigeon** were on Tatton Mere on Apr 15th. A **Red-legged Partridge** near Rostherne entrance on Apr 10th was a rare sight here. A **Green Sandpiper** at Birkin Brook on Apr 13th was presumably the wintering bird. Five **Common Terns** visited Tatton Mere on Apr 24th with three on May 13th-14th. Four **Black Terns** on May 13th reduced to two next day, these two remaining till the 16th. Possibly two pairs of **Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers** were nesting in the park. Summer migrants included:- **Swift** (Apr 28th), **Sand Martin** (Mar 9th), **Swallow** (Mar 29th), **House Martin** (Apr 19th), **Wheatear** (Mar 22nd), **Grasshopper Warbler** (May 25th), **Garden Warbler** (May 16th) and **Willow Warbler** (Apr 6th).

### Warrington area

Single **Honey Buzzards** were reported over Rixton Moss on May 30th and near Widnes on May 22nd. A **Marsh Harrier** was at Astmoor (May 27th) while a male **Hen Harrier** visited Risley Moss on Apr 19th. A report of a ringtail **Montagu's Harrier** at Risley Moss on May 30th remained unconfirmed. **Hobbies** were at Risley Moss from May 5th (where there were up to three regularly), Sankey Valley CP (May 1st) and several were at Rixton Moss (May 30th). Rixton Moss had an unconfirmed report of a **Collared Pratincole** on May 23rd. A **Grey Plover** was at Moore NR on May 13th. Two **Temminck's Stints** were at Linley Mere, NE of Warrington on May 12th. A **Bar-tailed Godwit** at Moore NR (May 12th-13th) and a **Turnstone** at Houghton Green Pool (May 12th) were good local records. An **Iceland Gull** was at Richmond Bank in Mar with another seen there on May 12th. A **Glaucous Gull** visited Arpley Tip during Mar and two were present on Apr 1st. Three **Kittiwakes** were recorded at Moore NR (May 28th) and three **Common Terns** visited Houghton Green Pool (May 14th). A **Tree Pipit** flew over Moore NR on May 28th and a **White Wagtail** visited a Stretton garden on Apr 16th. A migrant **Whinchat** was at Risley Moss on May 5th with a **Lesser Whitethroat** and **Spotted Flycatcher** at Moore NR a week later. A **Garden Warbler** arrived at Risley Moss (May 6th). The male **Bearded Tit** was relocated at Moore NR on Mar 24th.

### Woolston Eyes

A **Slavonian Grebe** was reported on No1 bed on May 5th. The **Black-necked Grebe** colony continues growing with a record 33 birds on No3 bed (Apr 21st) and 20 still present on May 5th. A drake **Garganey** visited No3 bed on May 5th and 23rd. A fem **Marsh Harrier** on Apr 29th was followed by three more in May. A **Merlin** visited No1 bed in May. A **Spotted Crane** on Apr 20th will be the seventh Woolston record, if accepted and first here since 1995. 20 **Black-tailed Godwits** dropped in on Apr 26th and the first **Common Sandpiper** was seen on Apr 29th. Up to three **Mediterranean Gulls** were present throughout. Three **Little Gulls** visited No3 bed in May. An early **Sandwich Tern** on Mar 24th was the first record here since 1997. Three **Common** and nine **Black Terns** dropped into No3 bed on May 14th. Two/three **Cuckoos** arrived on Apr 29th and a **Short-eared Owl** lingered on No1 bed into May. A **Wryneck** on Apr 25th was a site first. The first **Sand Martin** arrived (Mar 24th). A **Nightingale** was trapped on No1 bed in late May. A **Redstart** visited No1 bed (May 5th) and the first **Wheatear** was seen on Mar 24th. The annual warbler





In 1995 a pair engaged in courtship and tentative nest building on No6 tank at Frodsham Marsh but decided that they would move on, possibly due to disturbance. A year later or so, a pair once again attempted to breed at another site but were unsuccessful. Perhaps they were inexperienced birds?

And then along came foot-and-mouth a disaster for farmers and the countryside - or was it? True, in human terms there has been much suffering and loss as farmers have seen their entire herds and flocks decimated, but as far as the countryside is concerned, it appears to have been the silver lining around a very black cloud. Meadows of wild flowers have appeared where once only short, cropped grass could be found and birds have bred where it would normally have been too disturbed for them to do so. The lack of birders, shooters and dog walkers meant that Frodsham Marsh effectively became a true reserve. When at last access was once again open to all, amongst the Grey Herons nesting on No6 tank was a small white heron, crouching low on what looked to be a nest.

But was it? A concerted effort over many days eventually seemed to confirm that a Little Egret was indeed on a nest. It hardly ever moved and but for brief stretches, could not be seen properly at all. Then one day a chick could be seen and both parents were feeding it. Success at last! It was decided not to put the news out and pager companies were asked to withhold the information, to give the most northerly breeding attempt of Little Egrets in Europe every chance of success. The chick grew rapidly, accompanied by the female for much of the time, the male returning with food every so often. Eventually the chick was left on its own for long periods and eventually fledged in July, all three birds being present on No6 from then on. Even with the expectation of such an event, it was a remarkable occurrence and a real thrill to witness. Hopefully it will be repeated.

Now if the place was a real reserve! The list of European species that have attempted to breed on Frodsham Marsh already includes Black-winged Stilt, Spoonbill and Mediterranean Gull. What an excellent place it is.....

**Tony Broome, 4 Larchwood Drive, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 2NU**

## Ringers' Notebook

In recent years, there have been two spectacular recoveries of British bred Grey Herons from overseas – one to Gambia, the other to Iceland. In truth though, recoveries of this species from over 100 km away are fairly few and far between, so the finding of a bird in Kendal, Cumbria, 110 km to the north in November last year, having been ringed originally in the nest at the Budworth Mere colony in April 1995 as a chick, was noteworthy.

An Oystercatcher ringed in February 1974 was found dead on the beach at Point of Ayr, Clwyd, in September of last year some 26 years later. Impressive though the interval between ringing and recovery is, it is nonetheless five years' short of the BTO longevity record for this species, which stands at 31 years and six months.

Black-headed Gulls have featured frequently in this column over the years, and news of a further five involving birds ringed in our region has just been received. What is interesting about these recoveries over the years is how they show us that some birds both winter and summer in the area, whereas some just winter here and breed abroad, while others breed here and winter abroad. To complicate matters even further, some birds do not winter in the same area in subsequent years. A bird trapped on the old Rixton tip in February 1990, was killed in collision with a car at nearby Stockton Heath, in June 2000, showing an individual that perhaps spent all year round in the area. A wintering bird ringed on the same tip in March 1993 was found tangled up, and dying, in discarded fishing line on the sea shore near Mold, Clwyd in July of last year. The next record showed an individual spent at least two winters in different countries. Trapped this time at the Risley landfill site in November 1996, it was subsequently ring read in the field at Ain, eastern France, close to the Swiss border, in December 1998. Finally for this species, two birds ringed at Risley, one in February 1997, the other in January 1998, were both ring read in the field, at Copenhagen, Denmark, on the same day, 17<sup>th</sup> March 2000. Perhaps these were birds which breed further north and east, having stopped on the way.

A Sand Martin ringed at the Cookson Green sand quarry colony in June last year, was trapped in northern Spain, at Palencia one month later; this is just the 130th from the British Isles to that country, rather surprising considering there has been a total of close to 1,000,000 birds of this species ringed here over the years.

Of course many of our wintering Blackbirds come from much further north and east in a southerly migration to escape the harsher winters, and therefore many birds also pass through this region en route. A young female, ringed at Woolston in October 1999, would appear to be one of these, being re-trapped in March 2000, at Mansfield, Nottinghamshire. There have been 4000 or so recoveries of British and Irish ringed Blackbirds to Europe, with the Baltic States and Scandinavian countries accounting for 50% of these, giving us a good idea of their origins!

A Sedge Warbler taken out of a mist net at Woolston in early May, last year, sported a ring with 'Bruxelles' stamped on it. This turned out to be the 30th bird of Belgian origin to be captured in the British Isles, and was ringed at West-Vlaanderen, halfway between Brussels and the North Sea, in August 1999. A Sedge Warbler ringed at Woolston on 8<sup>th</sup> August 1999, was re-trapped in the Moselle region of north-eastern France, just 21 days later, obviously not hanging about on its migration to Africa, to spend it somewhere to the south of the Sahara.

The Greenfinch is a species, of which more are probably ringed than any other in the autumn in this region, and obviously generate a lot of recoveries. The latest, again ringed at Woolston, in September 1999, was found at Welshpool, Powys in January of this year, showing the typical southerly bias movement in winter of this species.

Reed Bunting populations normally stay within their breeding range during the winter months, with those from the more northern areas of Europe moving southerly or westerly during this time. 'Our' birds tend to stay here for the winter, except in the hardest of weather when they too may move to the coast or go south themselves in search of less harsh conditions. A probable bird from the north, which was trapped at Rostherne Mere in April 1999, killed itself by flying into a window at Wareham, Dorset, in February of this year. With many hundreds of this species trapped in the region every year, recoveries like this are quite rare with only one or two per annum. Hence we are fairly sure that nearly, or all, of our population stay here with us all year round.

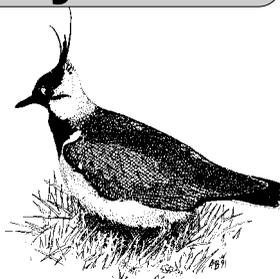
**Chris Benson, 39 Redesmere Park, Flixton, Manchester, M41 9ER**

## View from the Farmyard

Since Toft Hall was renovated in 1984 the House Martin colony had increased from two or three pairs in 1985 to 59 nests in the late spring of 2000. The spread of the nests around the corbel-table has taken in the north and west fronts of the Hall, and several of the ins and outs as well. The corbels are each large enough to house two nests, and on some stretches even the plain wall is used. Bernesconi applied the stucco in 1813 and ever since, the walls have been home to a colony of varying size. The last Mr Leycester who died in the 1930s left the Hall to his cousin Mr Roxby, who in turn left it to his son, the present squire of Toft. Mr Leycester-Roxby (*see footnote*)

has a great interest in wildlife and is responsible for much of the excellent habitat which exists in Toft. When he and his wife were in residence at the Hall orders were given not to destroy the old martin nests when repainting. Since then the Hall has changed hands several times, being largely rebuilt in 1984, since when the colony has flourished unmolested to the present day.

2000 saw excellent returns to the House Martin department, 59 first broods were raised and all looked well for an impressive crop of second broods. However that all began to change; as July eased into August little interest was being shown in continuing with a second brood. On August 14<sup>th</sup> when the young from the first brood would normally have begun their drift away, it was plain that the adults were departing too. Although about 20 birds remained to see out the summer only one or two pairs bothered with a second brood, where about 40 pairs would have been more normal.



I awaited the arrival in spring with bated breath, first only one bird, and then a few days later seven. On the Birdwatching UK newsgroups on the Internet, people were reporting later than normal arrival dates for House Martin so I was not too concerned at the rather casual arrival rate, especially as others in the south talked of large numbers being present over large waters, apparently held up by the poor weather. Come the first week of May and all but two birds had left once more; these two are now feeding the only brood at an otherwise deserted colony. Several theories have come to mind, however there is little evidence to support them. Were the birds disturbed by new CCTV installations on the building? Had parasite levels in the nests become unbearable? Was there a shortage of prey? Each of these is a real possibility, however the CCTV didn't affect all the faces of the colony. Parasites are commonly visible on hirundines and Swifts, particularly the avian tick, and lastly the Swallows had an excellent breeding year and at least 12 pairs have returned in 2001, much as last year. Insect numbers are I feel stable, though I have no science to support this feeling, only the day-to-day experience of resisting attacks on the cattle and myself. Suggestions on a postcard to me please.

This may be a little premature as regards the progress of foot-and-mouth disease, but with regards to the general feeling in the farming community, a very sincere thank you is in order. Thank you to all those who have experienced the deprivation of not being allowed to wander on your favourite footpaths, and enjoy the sounds of spring on a country walk. Thank you for adhering to the pleas to stay away, thank you for being patient and especially to those who have disrupted a long series of consecutive years' records. If it is any consolation my own rambles have also been curtailed, though observations have been made during the course of my duties. Over 12 years of records have been brought to a standstill, as my access on the Toft estate has been limited to this farm only. I have little sympathy with the government's view that foot-and-mouth has been so widespread due to the incompetence of many farmers. Nor do I agree with the notion that the rapid spread of the virus was assisted by farmers' greed for the compensation money. The very great distress caused to the human and animal victims of the virus and the immense strain caused to both farmers and their employees waiting to see if they would be next still goes on. Our lives revolve around our work, and the fact that on this farm we are still able to carry on, is in part due to the combined efforts of all parts of the community in preventing the spread of the virus, for which to date we are very thankful.

David Cogger's article in the last *Bird News* asked the question, "Why do some farms house their stock year round and cart feed to, and muck away from them?" I will try to answer this as best I can. There is an old farming law that "When the weather is wet, cows eat with five mouths", the reason behind this being that for every mouthful of grass they take, they tread and spoil four others with their feet. It is also true that cow-pats spoil even more of the grass, gateways become mires and areas around water-troughs resemble the Somme. This is why some farms have turned to carting the grass to the cattle, known in farming circles as zero-grazing. Higher stocking levels can be obtained and grass spoilage minimised. On the down side is the cost of extra machinery, labour, bedding and animal health. Cows' feet require a great deal of careful attention when cattle are housed on concrete for long periods. These costs can be somewhat offset by a reduction in the need for stockproof fencing and of course should hedges be removed, as they no longer serve a purpose, increased grass acreage. I don't know if any study has ever been carried out into the reduction in dung beetles' numbers in land where muck is applied as slurry, as opposed to being deposited naturally in pats. My personal observations point to the beetles' attraction to thick pats, where eggs can be safely laid below. Many of the corvids and even Curlew know of the juicy treats that lie hidden beneath cow-pats. My personal feeling is that this method of farming is both stressful to man and beast, and most likely not in the best interests of the countryside. However it may in the future be one of the methods used more widely, if the emphasis is maintained on producing food for supermarkets as cheaply as possible.

**Pete Hall, The School House, Toft Road, Knutsford, Cheshire**

### **Edmund G. M. Leycester-Roxby**

On 21<sup>st</sup> July 2001 Mr Leycester-Roxby died aged 88. Known to many in Toft as the 'Squire' and to his friends as Ted, he was descended from the Toft and Leycester families who between them were masters of Toft estate for 700 years. During his time at Toft he was responsible for many projects to improve the woods and avenues, planting many new trees and having woods thinned and re-planted.

In the 22 years that I knew him he granted me permission to wander almost at will and was always keen to hear news of birds on the estate. He was also instrumental in assisting me to protect birds that I thought vulnerable, a quick word with the Squire and whatever fears I held were soon put to rest. Though much of his work on the estate was aimed at improving the Pheasant shoot, he held a great regard for all wildlife and many species at risk on other estates were openly protected in Toft.

However I feel his greatest contribution to conservation was as a result of his love of Toft. His efforts to preserve the estate as a traditional unit and to add his brushstroke before handing the masterpiece on to the next generation enabled a bit of England to survive into the 21<sup>st</sup> century as an agricultural/game estate. He was an avid dog walker and never left home without his binoculars; in the last few years of his life his eyesight failed, then our every meeting included a debrief on the birds of Toft estate. We on the estate will miss him greatly, and the Cheshire countryside has lost a great guardian.

## Notes & Letters

*Bird News* is always keen to hear from CAWOS members. Please send us any notes of unusual avian behaviour or amusing anecdotes that you think your fellow birders will be interested in. Also, we are always interested in your views on any of our articles or on the newsletter itself. Ed.

### CORMORANTS

I read with interest the note from Sheila Blamire in April's *Bird News* about Cormorants and the power of the bird lobby. What struck me most, however, was not the fisheries lobby's acknowledgement of the RSPB's role in future considerations regarding the protected status of Cormorants but the former's continued insistence on taking odd phrases from government reports and using them out of context. As the main author of the report on *Case studies of the impact of fish-eating birds in England and Wales* (a major part of the government's £1 million three year research programme) I'd like to put the 'serious damage to fisheries' claim attributed to the Minister in its proper context.

What the case studies showed was that large numbers of fish can sometimes be removed from fisheries by Cormorants but in other cases they are not. Standing crop biomass removed from the four still waters and two rivers we studied ranged from 3% to 57% during the three years of the study. Depredation at still waters was more variable than on rivers and was consistent with the view that the latter, at least in the short-term, may be able to buffer against Cormorant depredation more effectively than still waters can.

An important point to note, however, is that even the high levels of depredation recorded at some of our still water sites did NOT result in a detectable change in fishery performance. Put simply, just because Cormorants ate a lot of fish didn't necessarily mean that angling catches declined. In fact, at several sites there was a positive relationship between bird depredation and angler catches, i.e. when birds were doing well, so were anglers and *vice versa*. The evidence we collected from our case studies tends to suggest, therefore, that Cormorants are responsive to and not responsible for changes in fish populations in many cases.

Far from concluding that Cormorants cause 'serious damage to fisheries', we were at pains to point out that each site needs to be looked at on a case by case basis and that the evidence to date didn't support the view that Cormorants were a widespread problem. Sometimes, maybe, but on the evidence we collected this is more likely to be the exception than the rule.

**Mark Feltham, 39 Brookfield Avenue, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 5RE**

A dear little Phalarope chick  
Shouted "Dad, will you please come here quick.  
Can our food not be found  
Without spinning around?  
I'm feeling quite dizzy and sick."

**Hazel J Raw**



## MYSTERY FALCON

Mark and I saw a falcon today that had us stumped. It spent two hours sitting on the beach, took off and circled, had a serious go at a wader then teased us by soaring overhead for five minutes. To all intents and purposes it just was a male Peregrine... unless it wasn't! Size/jizz/action: nothing to say it wasn't a male Peregrine - short tail, wide wing base, shortish arm and longish hand. It was a small bird and was extremely quick while chasing. There was evidence of inner primary moult.

Anomalies: (1) Showed prominent pale buff/white supercilia as might a juvenile Peregrine, though these were more strongly marked. There was also a pale nape patch - where the supers merged, almost looking like a collar in some conditions - I first assumed it was a juv. (2) Underparts appeared completely unmarked sandy buff, possibly peachy on the breast. It was distant and there might have been very fine vermiculations, but certainly the bird was far too pale underneath for an immature or even an adult standard Peregrine. (3) Upper tail pattern - base very pale, slightly sandy grey, similar in tone to the rump with a strong blackish terminal/sub-terminal band (not too clean cut so might have been up to three close together bands). Overall about two thirds pale to one third dark.

Otherwise - looked quite brown on the upper mantle and crown, much greyer on the upper wings and rump (which was strikingly grey and pale). Primaries were very dark and contrasted with the rest of the wing/back at rest. Forehead might have been paler than crown - but not certainly. Cere brilliant yellow, feet less so. Moustachial streak blackish but possibly a little thinner than normal, cheek patch well marked and broad.

I've been through Lanner/Peregrine hybrid, worn moulting and faded Peregrine, escaped Barbary Falcon and all combinations thereof. Hopefully it will come back tomorrow. Views, thoughts and clues welcome.

### Jane Turner, 'Hoylake Bird Observatory'

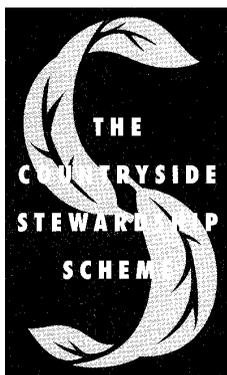
**Note** To answer my own question, having spent the night buried in literature, my best guess is 1st summer female Barbary Falcon that had suspended or failed to complete its moult, leaving old head and upper back plumage. I can't see how a Peregrine could get the upper tail pattern and underparts colouration. Hybrid is still on the table though.

A Peregrine Falcon called Joe,  
Decided to put on a show,  
So he dived in a stoop  
Did a quick look-the-loop  
And waved at his fans down below.

Hazel J Raw



## COUNTRYSIDE STEWARDSHIP SCHEME



The Government's Countryside Stewardship Scheme makes payments available to farmers and landowners for carrying out conservation measures on their farms. The management options available include measures which can help declining farmland birds such as Tree Sparrow and Corn Bunting. Next year, the Scheme will include some new options which will be especially beneficial for these species, such as the sowing of spring crops and the retention of overwintered stubbles. The RSPB has lobbied hard to have these options made available.

In Cheshire the RSPB works very closely with the local project officers for Countryside Stewardship and we need to be in a position to help them target these options at sites where they will deliver the most benefit. Having good information on the distribution of these species in Cheshire and Wirral is therefore vital. This is especially the case for Tree Sparrow and Corn Bunting as the Scheme in Cheshire has a local objective specifically aimed at benefiting these species.

Records from the existing CAWOS county *Bird Reports* have already been very valuable as a source of information for the Scheme project officers. Please keep sending records in for these two species so that we build up as good a picture as possible, in order that Countryside Stewardship spending can be targeted to deliver maximum benefit. Thank you.

**Andrew Gouldstone, RSPB Conservation Officer; Cheshire, Staffordshire and Shropshire. Tel: 01785 664902**

## GARGANEY

I rarely manage to get to Inner Marsh Farm and my only visit last autumn was on 26<sup>th</sup> October. Looking through the logbook I was surprised by recent sightings of Garganey but eventually managed to locate a bird upending repeatedly with Teal. I have never seen Garganey upend before but this behaviour continued for a further 10-15 minutes until we had to leave. Was this just a result of abnormally high water levels last autumn? Or is it a regular occurrence at IMF - and if so why since the available literature suggests it happens only rarely?

Because of the behaviour I puzzled slightly over the initial identification. The bird was distant, right in the back corner of the pool but good comparisons could be made with the accompanying group of Teal. The longer bill and head pattern appeared typical of Garganey with the pale loreal spot showing well. The rear end lacked the white streak along the tail edge/undertail covert, which showed clearly on the nearby Teal. The exact bill colour and feather markings could not be determined at this range but the general impression was a greyer plumage than normal for Garganey. Also a pale, not sharply demarcated, patch was obvious on the rear flank - not a feature I associate with Garganey. The only field guide which even hints at this is the *MacMillan Field Guide* illustration of "Dull Garganey (left)" on page 39.

In view of the late date, odd behaviour and plumage anomalies could this have been a hybrid or escape? Blue-winged Teal would have been a possibility but for the upending (the wing pattern was not seen). Any comments would be most welcome.

**Irene Blagden, 55 Goyt Road, Disley, Stockport, SK12 2BT**

## WELL SPOTTED

The leopard cannot change his spots - so the saying goes. But there is a garden bird that can and does: it's the Song Thrush. The Song Thrush has always been among my top ten birds: the warm browns of the plumage, the crisply-cut markings down the breast emphasising the bird's roundness, the dark intelligent eye, and of course, the song. This is one of the first songsters to voice the spring along. His clear melodic phrases are methodically repeated so that you miss none of their careful cadences. And the Song Thrush *does* change its spots.

In late summer the thrush moults old worn feathers and wears fresh plumage. The markings on the breast are then large and fan-shaped. But as autumn and winter progress, the dark feather-ends become brittle and rub away, so that the spots are abraded to an inverted v-shape. Some of those on the lower breast disappear altogether.

This thrush has another remarkable trait - a unique way of getting a meal. Have you ever found a patch of broken snail shells around a stone and wondered how so many snails have come here to meet their end? You have found a Song Thrush's anvil.

The snail's shell is its protection, and the armour works well against all birds - except the Song Thrush. The thrush is a snail specialist. It knows that a hefty bash on a hard surface will break the shell to reveal a nourishing meal inside. The thrush chooses a suitable stone on which to hammer its snails. Holding the rim of the shell in its bill it pounds it upon the stone with rapid blows, bringing its head down first on one side and then the other, a sharp flick of the neck on impact adding a twist to the blow. Any hard surface will serve as an anvil - it may be a boulder, the top of a wall, a gnarled tree root - but you will spot it by the litter of broken snail shells around.

Often a thrush has a favourite anvil which is used time and again. When the Song Thrush is breeding, this will be sited some distance away from the nest, so that neither the noise of the blows nor bright shells will give a predator clues to the whereabouts of the young. I found an impressive anvil on Aberffraw Dunes, Anglesey, recently. So many shell fragments must surely have accumulated over a long period of use. These dunes are a windswept and inhospitable





wilderness, the sand colonised by stunted grasses and dwarf willows which barely lift themselves above the ground. The anvil was a flat out-cropping rock set in a hollow and so sheltered a little from the elements. A willow flourished here, reaching a height of perhaps nine inches, studded with seemingly outsize catkins golden with pollen. And the colour was echoed on the anvil by touches of ochred lichen and the yellow of banded snail shells.

The Song Thrush might soon find another claim to fame - though I hope not. It might become a rarity. Fifty years ago this was our commonest thrush, outnumbering the Blackbird three to one. Now the ratio is reversed: three Blackbirds for every Song Thrush. Being the smallest of the resident thrushes, the Song Thrush is more vulnerable in cold winters. But over the last 10 years its decline has become ever more rapid, and certainly can't be explained by severe weather.

Current research shows that the Song Thrushes' nesting success is as good as, indeed better than it was before, so that old scapegoat the Magpie is clear of blame. It is the fully-grown bird which is at risk. In exploiting snails, the Song Thrush feeds on an animal which man deplores as a pest - a pest now increasingly controlled by the use of powerful molluscicides. These are big business now, used increasingly to protect autumn-sown crops, while in our own gardens slug pellets prevent the primulas from being munched to shreds.

Whatever is happening to the Song Thrush, I hope we find out before it is too late. I look hopefully for the upright stance, and the run and pause of this gentle thrush as it crosses the lawn, but it is a rare visitor to my garden now. My primulas are under attack too: slug pellets are banned here, but I wouldn't begrudge the snails one bit if they brought the Song Thrush back. I'm attacking their cousin slugs with the time-honoured and environmentally friendly upturned grapefruit skin. I don't know if this old gardening wrinkle is working against the slugs, but I do know that I get to eat a very healthy breakfast - and so, I hope, will the thrush.

**Thelma Sykes, Blue Neb Studios, 18 Newcroft, Saughall, Chester, CH1 6EL**

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

I have to admit when it comes to bird names I've become a bit of an anorak. I don't mean the likes of starling or sandpiper, or even their local names; I mean their scientific names. I just love to know what they mean. Long names and short names. Sensible names and daft names. Birds named after places, or better still, birds named after people and the stories behind them. Did you know, for example, that Swainson (of Swainson's Hawk fame) was born in Hoylake, or that Forster (of Forster's Tern fame) worked in Warrington? I'll bet you didn't. Look at the warblers; Savi's, Radde's, Upcher's, Ménétries's, Rüppell's, Brooks's, Bonelli's, Cetti's, Hume's, Marmora's, Gray's, Tristram's, Pallas's. Who were these people?! What stories lie beneath? Perhaps another time...

Truth be told and fascinating as all this 'naming-birds-after-people' is, it's just a small part of the overall whole. Of the hundreds of species of birds recorded in the Western Palearctic, only 85 are named after people - at least as far as their common names are concerned. Far more, however, can be found when you begin to sift through the scientific names of birds, but even then they are in the minority. The norm, as we all know, is to name birds most often according to their appearance, habitat or behaviour. So we have the likes of *Hydrobates pelagicus* ('marine water-dweller') for European Storm-petrel, *Anser brachyrhynchus* ('short-billed goose') for Pink-footed goose, or *Somateria mollissima* ('very soft woolly body') for Eider! Sounds all very logical doesn't it? All very 'scientific', but look a little further and cracks begin to appear... Names that are onomatopoeic rather than scientific start popping up, like *Crex crex* (Corncrake), or even made up names, like *Delichon urbica* (House Martin). OK, so *urbica* is from the Latin meaning urban, but try finding *Delichon* anywhere in a Latin or Greek dictionary! And then it can get REALLY silly. Take for example seagulls. As far as names are concerned something went seriously awry..... but I'll let Bob (a British birder) and Jim (his pedantic, American non-birder friend) explain....

JIM: Bob, what's that?  
BOB: Oh, that's nice...it's a Med. Gull.  
JIM: (Puzzled look)  
BOB: It's short for Mediterranean Gull.  
JIM: (Rather patronisingly) So why is it here, shouldn't it be in the Mediterranean?  
BOB: Not necessarily. Despite its name, the species is not actually restricted to the Med. You see now why I'm so keen on scientific names? Gets you around little problems like that.  
JIM: You SAD little man!  
BOB: (Looks hurt)  
JIM: (Continuing in the same vein) So, Bob, if you're so keen what's the scientific name of Med. Gull?  
BOB: (Nervously) Er, *Larus melanocephalus*.  
JIM: (Feigning interest) Which means?  
BOB: Black-headed Gull.  
JIM: (More interested now) But it hasn't got a black head.  
BOB: No, it's in winter plumage. It only has a black head in the summer.  
JIM: But didn't you say earlier that all those other gulls were Black-headed Gulls?  
BOB: Well yes...  
JIM: (Getting the bit between his teeth) But they don't have black heads either.  
BOB: (Slightly irritated) No, because they're in winter plumage too.  
JIM: So in the summer they also have black heads?  
BOB: No, they have brown heads.  
JIM: (Rubbing it in) So why aren't they called brown-headed gulls?  
BOB: (Knowledgeably) Because there's an Asiatic gull already called that, which has the scientific name *Larus brunnicephalus*...which means...yes, you've guessed it... Brown-headed Gull!  
JIM: (Sarcastically) Well that makes sense.  
BOB: (Devilishly) Not really, cos their heads can look kind of greyish...  
JIM: (Taking the bait) So, they're grey-headed gulls?  
BOB: Sort of...but not quite because there is actually a species called Grey-headed Gull.  
JIM: (Perplexed) In Asia...?  
BOB: No, South America and Africa.  
JIM: (Genuinely trying to figure things out now) So, what's the scientific name of Black-headed Gull then?  
BOB: *Larus ridibundus*.  
JIM: But I thought you said *Larus melanocephalus* meant black-headed?  
BOB: Good memory! Yes I did.  
JIM: (Wishing he'd not started this) So what does *Larus ridibundus* mean?  
BOB: (Sniggering) Laughing Gull  
JIM: I know for sure that we get those in the States and they don't look like that!  
BOB: (In a 'don't you know anything' kind of tone) Yes, but the ones YOU get actually ARE Laughing Gulls whilst the ones you're looking at now are Black-headed Gulls whose scientific name simply means laughing gull.  
JIM: (Grasping at straws) So what's the scientific name of Laughing Gull? Did you tell me already?  
BOB: No. It's *Larus atricilla*.  
JIM: (Floundering) *Larus atricilla*?  
BOB: (Relishing Jim's discomfort) Which.....means.... Black-tailed Gull.  
JIM: Do we get those in the States too?  
BOB: Yes, but their scientific name is *Larus crassirostris*, which means large-billed gull....and before you ask, there isn't a gull called the Large-billed Gull....well...not officially...unless you count Pacific Gull....  
JIM: (Totally lost) Don't tell me. Their bills are not actually large at all and they're not actually found in the Pacific either, are they?  
BOB: (Triumphantly and lying through his teeth) Jim, you've got me. They've actually got medium sized red bills, black heads and are found in the Med.....except of course when they're on the Dee....  
So much for science, eh? Oh - and in case you're one of the few (shame on you!) who sneered at my use of the dreaded word 'seagull' (paragraph 2; line 14), check out the scientific name of Great Black-backed gull... it's *Larus marinus*.... Which means, you've guessed it, sea-gull.

# Membership News

**Welcome to the following new members:** Viv Mountford and Tony Gillam, Roberta Cameron, Richard Carter, Terry McCombs, FG and HA Linley, Dr MJ Feltham, David Lamb, Dr Jayne Nation, Ms J Steed, Dr B Denton, David Edwards, M A Blaydon, Dr RS Taylor, R Daniel, Paul Quigley, CN Hall and David Bissitt.. Several members have joined as a result of the kindness of the Woolston Eyes Conservation Group, which sent our membership forms to all their members in a recent newsletter. **If any other group or affiliated society would be willing to follow suit** please contact Sheila or myself. Membership for 2001 now stands at 351.

**Stanlow** - I have had a letter from Shell Chemicals stating that, as part of the World Birdwatch 2001 fundraising event, they are opening Stanlow on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> October. They intend to take a coachload around the site on both days, starting about 10.00am and finishing about 5.00pm. Numbers are restricted to 40 people per day. If you are interested contact the organiser, Rachel Strefford, Public Affairs Assistant, on 0151 350 4137, mentioning CAWOS.

**Council Meetings** were held on 29<sup>th</sup> March and 7<sup>th</sup> June. The following points emerged:

- Simon Edwards, Derek Kelly and Colin Schofield were co-opted for 2001-2.
- David Steventon was stepping down as Technical Editor after 12 very successful years of leading the *Bird Report* team and would be replaced by Richard Gabb. David was thanked for all his hard work. Work on *Bird Report 2000* was well in hand.
- A proposal, still under consideration, has been made that the CAWOS record archive (consisting mainly of material sent in for past *Bird Reports*) be transferred from the Grosvenor Museum to the County Record Office in Chester, where suitable storage facilities will be easier to provide. Any member with views on this should please contact me by **1<sup>st</sup> September**.
- Several contacts with neighbouring societies have been made. Derbyshire Ornithological Society has given us a copy of their database and system which we are using to computerise our records. West Midlands Bird Club hope to organise a National Forum for Bird Clubs in spring 2002 and we have agreed to send a delegate.
- Gift Aid – the total sum received from the Inland Revenue now stands at £482.
- Bob Anderson resigned from Council at the June meeting. His resignation was accepted with regret and he was thanked for all his hard work. There is now a vacancy for an ordinary member of Council; anyone interested please contact me.
- Brian Martin is taking over the House Martin survey from Phil Oddy.
- Council were dismayed to hear about the vandalism at Rostherne. They agreed to discuss with English Nature about a further three year agreement to run the Observatory.

**David Cogger, 113 Nantwich Road, Middlewich, Cheshire, CW10 9HD. Tel: 01606 832517  
E-mail memsec@cawos.org**

## STAFF COMMUNITY FUND GRANT

When I first heard that CAWOS wanted to 'get into' the computerisation of bird records, I hoped it would be a small step for individual members but a giant leap forward for the Society. Then slowly the realisation dawned on me that it would be a truly mammoth task. So, like many others (?), I volunteered my services to Jane Turner to help computerise old paper records.

It was also quite clear to me from the first announcement of this project that the purchase of computer equipment and the associated software, for writing and storing the records, would be a severe drain on the funds of the Society. Although, as we all know, collections are made at events such as the Parkgate High Tide Birdwatch, etc. these collections only raise small amounts of money.

So it was with some delight that I opened an e-mail from my company's 'Human Resources' (that's Personnel, in old money) department. That e-mail was an offer of money from the company 'Staff Community Fund'. This Fund is distributed on a twice-yearly basis, provided the committee that oversees the Fund approves the application.

I immediately contacted our Chairperson, Sheila Blamire, with an offer to try and obtain some money from the Fund to aid with the computerisation project. The relevant forms were duly completed, detailing the advantages offered by the project to be supported; my involvement with the Society; the amount required and the amount that had already been raised towards the final sum.

As with all big companies, decisions are not taken lightly (nor quickly!) but on 8<sup>th</sup> June I had a letter from the Fund Secretary telling me that the CAWOS application for funds had been successful. The generous sum of £400 had been enthusiastically donated. In fact it was so enthusiastic I wish I'd asked for more! I managed to let Sheila know the good news just before she jetted away on yet another foreign birding holiday. I'm reliably informed that she now passes through Manchester Airport regularly enough to receive an invitation to the Staff Christmas party!

The only stipulation on the provision of the funds was that CAWOS should provide a suitable photograph of any equipment purchased, for the Staff Community Fund display board. This will allow Sheila to demonstrate the full range of her photographic expertise! This does raise a few concerns for me though. Firstly, I'm hoping that the photograph won't be a picture of the County Recorder (nice chap though he is), draped 'artistically' across a PC. Secondly, will I be computer literate enough to access the photograph when it arrives?

So now we wait with anticipation for the Database Manager, Dave Walters, to do his bit in setting up the computer hardware and software. By the time this letter is published, this work should be well under way and we can all look forward with enthusiasm to the future of bird recording in Cheshire and Wirral.

**Mike Crawley, 17 Leeside, Heaton Mersey, Stockport, SK4 2DN**

## **CAWOS CONSERVATION REPRESENTATIVES**

Council has decided on the need for Local Area Representatives in order to respond to conservation threats within the CAWOS recording area. Individual members have volunteered to cover each of the Borough Council Areas (with the exception of Wirral so far). These representatives should be contacted as soon as any member becomes aware of any possible threat to a site that is considered important for bird life.

**Time is crucial in organising any preventative action that can be taken by Conservation Organisations to conserve the area under threat.**

**The volunteers and their phone numbers are as follows:**

### **CHESTER**

Neil Friswell, 8 Oaklands Crescent, Tattenhall, Cheshire, CH3 9QT. Tel: 01829 770463

### **CONGLETON**

Richard Blindell, 5 Bath Vale, Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 2HF. Tel: 01260 275084.

### **CREWE & NANTWICH**

Colin Lythgoe, 11 Waterloo Road, Haslington, Crewe, Cheshire, CW1 5TF. Tel: 01270 582642.

### **HALTON**

Jeff Clarke, 90 Simonside, Hough Green, Widnes, WA8 9YN. Tel: 0151 423 4275.

### **MACCLESFIELD**

Derek Kelly, 5 Avon Road, Heald Green, Cheadle, Stockport, SK8 3LS. Tel: 0161 282 0273.

### **VALE ROYAL**

Paul Hill, 1 Clive Cottage, London Road, Allstock, Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 9LT. Tel: 01565 722938.

### **WARRINGTON**

Brian Martin, 45 Albert Road, Grappenhall, Warrington, WA4 2PF. Tel: 01925 264251.

### **WIRRAL**

Position vacant. Jeff Clarke will provide temporary cover until this position is filled preferably from a member from that area. *Please contact Jeff on the above phone number if you are able to help.*

# Indoor Programme

All meetings are held in the Cranford Suite, Civic Centre, Toft Road, Knutsford, on the first Friday of the month, **unless otherwise stated** - please check the programme. The doors open at 7:30pm for a 7:45pm start. An entrance fee of £1.00 to members and £2.00 for non-members will be charged at all meetings (unless stated in the programme), except the AGM which will be free.

## **5<sup>th</sup> Oct 'BALTICS: THE UNKNOWN EUROPE' by Dr Algirdas Knystautas**

After 50 years of occupation the Baltic States are free again! Before, tourists could only visit the capital cities, and all journeys to the countryside were forbidden. Now, free of such restrictions, the area offers a combination of excellent birding, beautiful scenery and the incredibly varied and attractive architectural landmarks of the Baltics. Tonight we will hear about Lithuania, the southernmost and largest of the three states, where the nature reserves protect huge swamplands, open lakes and beautiful pine forests. Estonia, the smallest of the three, is the northernmost country and has a coastline with rocky islands and wetland habitats. Latvia is the most forested of them all, having nearly half of its territory covered by mixed woodland. This, the first meeting of the new season, is *not* to be missed!

**Note: this meeting will be held at the Grosvenor Museum, Chester.** Tickets available in advance from Sheila Blamire, Woodruff Cottage, Clamhunger Lane, Mere, WA16 6QG. Tel: 01565 830168 (£1.50 members, £3.00 non-members). Directions and parking info on the back of the tickets.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Nov 'SAVING SCOTERS' by Dr Baz Hughes**

Tonight Baz Hughes, Head of Threatened Species at WWF, describes efforts to safeguard one of the UK's rarest ducks, for sadly today the Common Scoter is anything but common in the UK. This handsome diving duck is the only species of waterfowl in the UK to be 'red-listed' - officially classed as threatened under the Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern, because breeding numbers have suffered more than a 50% decline over the last 25 years. Yet it seems that this plump, black sea duck is a fighter - will we be able to unlock the uncommon secrets of the Common Scoter's life cycle and use that knowledge to halt its sorry decline?

## **7<sup>th</sup> Dec 'KOOKABURRAS, CURRAWONGS & CROCODILES' by Keith Offord**

There can be few parts of the world which feel so far removed from us as Australia, not only in terms of distance but also in terms of the flora and fauna. This presentation takes the audience on a memorable journey through some of the most exciting and remote parts, from the temperate hills of New South Wales to the steamy rainforests of Queensland and then on to the north, visiting the immense Kakadu National Park, and finally ending up in the spectacular gorges of the Kimberley. The wildlife is similarly varied with outrageously plumed parrots, impossibly cryptic frogmouths and, lurking in the still waters of the north, are some of the biggest crocodiles in the world. Many parts of Australia have retained a new, undiscovered feel and host an extraordinary range of wildlife from the breathtaking to the bizarre. This talk, illustrated with a wealth of photographs, blends spectacular scenery with fascinating insights into the lives of some of these amazing creatures.

## **4<sup>th</sup> Jan 'POLICE AND WILDLIFE' by Mike Wellman**

In 1992 the forward-thinking Cheshire Constabulary appointed Mike Wellman to the role of the first full-time Wildlife and Environment Officer in Great Britain. Today, as a result of Mike's campaigning, every police force in the country now has a Wildlife Liaison Officer. Mike says "Policing wildlife in Cheshire has been a challenge with the criminals trying every trick in the book to exploit wildlife for illegal means and profit. The incidents of cruelty have been horrendous and wildlife crime is now second only to drugs, with vast sums of money made in the illegal trade of some of the world's most endangered species." Mike's talk will highlight some of the varied work of a Wildlife and Environment Officer in a modern police force, and emphasise the role that the public can play in the fight against wildlife crime.

## **1<sup>st</sup> Feb 'SRI LANKA: THE TEARDROP OF INDIA' by Tim Loseby**

Tonight Tim Loseby, a renowned ornithological photographer based near Maidstone, will take us on a journey through the island of two monsoons which is Sri Lanka. Palm-fringed coasts and lagoons, tropical rainforests, mountainous tea estates and the remains of ancient cultures all provide beautiful and varied habitats. So close yet so different from India it boasts an impressive list of wildlife including over twenty endemic species of birds.

## **1<sup>st</sup> Mar AGM & MEMBERS' SLIDES**

Following the AGM there will be updates on the projects and studies undertaken throughout the year. The evening will conclude with the entries and winners of the Annual CAWOS Photographic Competition.

# Outdoor Programme

## **HIGH TIDE BIRDWATCH**

**Venue: Old Baths car park, north end of Parkgate promenade**

Tuesday 21 <sup>st</sup> August	12:00am	(HW 13:49, 9.9m)
Tuesday 18 <sup>th</sup> September	11:00am	(HW 12:44, 10.1m)
Wednesday 19 <sup>th</sup> September	11:45am	(HW 13:27, 10.2m)
Wednesday 17 <sup>th</sup> October	11:00am	(HW 12:21, 10.1m)
Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> October	11:30am	(HW 13:02, 10.1m)

**Venue: Banks Road Car Park, Lower Heswall, Wirral**

Saturday 18 <sup>th</sup> August	9:00am	(HW 11:25, 9.2m)
Sunday 19 <sup>th</sup> August	9:15am	(HW 12:16, 9.6m)
Sunday 16 <sup>th</sup> September	8:30am	(HW 11:11, 9.3m)
Saturday 15 <sup>th</sup> December	8:45am	(HW 11:21, 9.4m)
Saturday 16 <sup>th</sup> December	9:00am	(HW 12:01, 9.3m)

**Venue: Riverbank Road car park, Lower Heswall, Wirral**

Saturday 17 <sup>th</sup> November	10:45am	(HW 12:19, 9.6m)
------------------------------------	---------	------------------

**2002 dates, times & tides to be confirmed**

Further information: Jeff Clarke tel: 0151 423 4275 or contact Wirral Country Park 0151 648 4371/3884 or RSPB 0151 336 7681

## **MIGRATION WATCH (CAWOS & Wirral Ranger Service)**

**Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 6:00 - 10:00am Denhall Lane, Burton**

Further details tel: 0151 648 4371/3884.

**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> October 7:30 - 11:30am Denhall Lane, Burton**

For details of other watchpoints on the above date contact Wirral Country Park Visitor Centre tel: 0151 648 4371/3884.

## **WORKSHOPS/GUIDED WALKS**

**Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 9:30am - 2:30pm Moore Nature Reserve**

**'RAPTORS ON HIGH' (CAWOS & Moore Nature Reserve)**

Meet Lapwing Lane, Moore, nr. Warrington). Tel: 01925 444689 or 0151 423 4275.

## **OTHER EVENTS**

**THE GREAT CAWOS YULE LOG January 2002 (date tbc)**

# Diary

## AUGUST

- 18 **High Tide Birdwatch, Banks Rd car park, Lower Heswall - 9:00am (HT 11:25, 9.2m)**
- 19 **High Tide Birdwatch, Banks Rd car park, Lower Heswall - 9:15am (HT 12:16, 9.6m)**
- 19 KOS Hilbre, meet at Sessions House at 7:30am or at West Kirby at 8:30am
- 19 NCRSPB Point of Ayr, meet at Point of Ayr car park (SJ 124847) at 10:00am
- 21 **High Tide Birdwatch, Old Baths car park, Parkgate - 12 noon (HT 13:49, 9.9m)**
- 31 LOG 'COOKS TOUR' by Fred Leddon

## SEPTEMBER

- 8-9 KOS Fairburn Ings, Blacktoft & Spurn Weekend - ring for details
- 10 SRSPB 'A FLORIDA LANE' by Mike Lane
- 11 MRSPB 'A NATURE PHOTOGRAPHER'S DIARY' by Geoff Simpson
- 13 HO AGM & 'THE REIVERS WAY' by David Cookson
- 14 SECOS '35 YEARS OF LEIGHTON MOSS' by John Wilson
- 15 ADNHS Tittesworth, Staffs, meet public car park, Cecil Road, Hale at 9:30am
- 15 NCRSPB Seaforth/Mere Sands, meet at Seaforth at 9:00am
- 16 SECOS Leighton Moss, ring for details
- 16 **High Tide Birdwatch, Banks Rd car park, Lower Heswall - 8:30am (HT 11:11, 9.3m)**
- 18 **High Tide Birdwatch, Old Baths car park, Parkgate - 11:00am (HT 12:44, 10.1m)**
- 19 **High Tide Birdwatch, Old Baths car park, Parkgate - 11:45am (HT 13:27, 10.2m)**
- 21 NCRSPB 'A TASTE OF THE PICOS D'EUROPA' by Margaret Sixsmith
- 21-23 LOG Holy Island weekend, contact Peter Tonge 01606 891274
- 22 **CAWOS Migration Watch 2001 at Burton, 6:00-10:00am, contact Jeff Clarke 0151 423 4275**
- 23 **CAWOS 'Raptors' at Moore NR, 9:30am - 2:30pm, contact Jeff Clarke 0151 423 4275**
- 28 LOG 'THE MAGIC OF SWANS' by David Cummings
- 28 KOS 'SEABIRD SUMMER' & 'BIRDS OF PENNINE FOREST' by Gordon Yates
- 28 WGOS 'BIRDS OF THE WHITE PEAK' by John Power

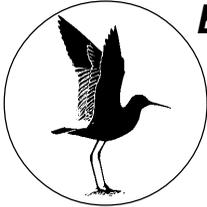
## OCTOBER

- 5 **CAWOS 'BALTICS: THE UNKNOWN EUROPE' by Algirdas Knystautas at Grosvenor Museum, Chester**
- 4-7 KOS Holy Island weekend. Ring for details.
- 8 SRSPB 'BIRDING IN LESBOS' by Steve Knell
- 10 MRSPB 'LIFE OVER 1000 FEET' by Keith Offord
- 10 HO 'BULGARIA - RIVER & COAST' by Mike Chandler
- 12 SECOS 'HEBRIDEAN SPLENDOUR' by Gordon Yates
- 14 SRSPB Carsington Water by coach departing Stockport at 8:00am - ring for details
- 14 WGOS North Wales by coach departing at 8:00am - ring for details
- 14 LOG Southport by coach, contact Peter Tonge 01606 891274
- 14 SECOS Spurn Point (or Fairburn Ings), ring for details
- 17 **High Tide Birdwatch, Old Baths car park, Parkgate - 11:00am (HT 12:21, 10.1m)**
- 18 **High Tide Birdwatch, Old Baths car park, Parkgate - 11:30am (HT 13:02, 10.1m)**
- 18 NNHS 'THE COMPLETE OWL' by Michael Leach
- 18-21 NCRSPB Bridlington weekend, for further details ring Cliff Gibson on 01925 817874
- 19 WGOS 'BIRDING LA MANCHA & EXTREMADURA' by Susan and Allan Parker
- 21 **CAWOS Migration Watch 2001, various sites, for further details ring 0151 648 4371/3884**
- 26 KOS 'CYPRUS' by Paul Trigg
- 26 NCRSPB AGM & FILM SHOW
- 26 LOG 'BIRDS OF A BRISBANE GARDEN' by Steve Woolfall

## NOVEMBER

- 2 **CAWOS 'SAVING SCOTERS: Conservation of Common Scoters' by Dr Baz Hughes**





## **Binocular & Telescope Sales FOCALPOINT**

*Birdwatching at its Best*

**Phone Focalpoint on 01925 730399**

*Part Exchange & Repairs Welcome*

- Optics----- ✓
- Repairs--- ✓
- Books----- ✓
- Clothing-- ✓
- Bird Art--- ✓
- Part Ex--- ✓

Low Prices, High Standards.

### DIRECTIONS

Marbury House Farm, Bentleys Farm Lane, Higher Whitley, Cheshire, WA4 4QW.

*(Very easy to find with ample free parking, unique & unrivalled viewing.)*

M56 jct 10, take the A559 towards Northwich for 1 mile, when you reach the Birch & Bottle (public house) turn right into Bentleys Farm Lane. We are on the left after 1/2 mile, through the Marbury House Farm gates.  
*Opening times 9.30am - 6.00pm Mon - Fri / 9.30am - 5.30pm Sat / 10.30am - 3.30pm occasional Sundays.*

Phone 01925 730399 / Fax 01925 730368

Alpha dial **07000 BIRDWATCHER (247392)**

E-mail focalpoint@dial.pipex.com / Web site <http://dialspace.dial.pipex.com/focalpoint/>



## **THE BIRD I.D. COMPANY**

THE BIRD I.D. COMPANY run daily tours designed to help birdwatchers improve the skills needed to find and identify birds in the field. The tours are based along the north Norfolk coast, with Cley, Titchwell and Holme being the most popular tour sites as a wide variety of species are seen here and almost any species could turn up at any time. The tour is led by a tour guide with over 25 years' birdwatching experience around the world. During the day this guide will explain both the basic knowledge and also the rather more technical information for example topography and jizz, in a clear and precise method that gives birdwatchers an excellent basis to develop their own skills in bird identification and is an ideal basis for beginners. In fact many birdwatchers take part in three or four tours during the year as we cover all seasons and visit over seven prime birdwatching sites and our tours are for a maximum of six-eight birdwatchers.

PRICES START FROM £20.00 PER DAY PER PERSON. GROUP RATES ARE ALSO AVAILABLE ON REQUEST.

If you are interested in our tours then please write to the address below or telephone the office and we will be glad to send you our latest brochure.

PAUL LAURIE

**THE BIRD I.D. COMPANY** 37 WESTGATE, WARHAM ROAD, BINHAM, NORFOLK, NR21 0DQ TELEPHONE 01328 830617

**FREE  
DELIVERY**



**FREE PRICE  
LIST**

WILD BIRD SEED	2.5kg	.99	25kg	£ 7.50
BLACK SUNFLOWER SEED	2.5kg	£ 1.99	15kg	£ 8.50
SUNFLOWER HEARTS ~ NEW ~	Ring to order		25kg	£25.99
PEANUTS GRADE ONE	2.5kg	£ 2.35	25kg	£16.99
PEANUTS IN NET	each	.45		
NIGER SEED	Ring to check availability and price			
WILD BIRD FAT DUMPLINGS	each	.30	per 4	.99
FORTRESS SEED FEEDER (squirrel proof)	£	7.75		
FORTRESS PEANUT FEEDER (squirrel proof)	£	7.75		
WIRE PEANUT HOLDER SINGLE PERCH	£	1.55		
WIRE PEANUT HOLDER THREE PERCH	£	2.35		
RED PLASTIC PEANUT HOLDER	£	1.15		

Other seed loved by wild birds also available, eg. canary and foreign finch.  
Also bird nest boxes and houses available. Please ring for details.



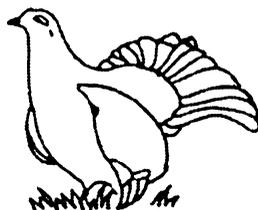
**80 PARK ROAD, TIMPERLEY, CHESHIRE**

Tel: 0161 905 1619 Fax: 0161 962 0625



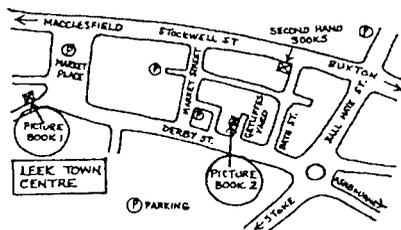
# PICTURE BOOK

## BIRD BOOKS



Visit the Midlands' new specialist bookshop on the edge of the Peak District National Park for a 10% discount on our excellent range of ornithological books, guides, videos and audio tapes. Or send for our free catalogue - books despatched quickly and free of charge.

**10%  
discount**



**6 Stanley Street  
LEEK  
Staffordshire  
ST13 5HG**

**Phone or Fax  
01538 384337**

# Index

Page 1	Editorial	Page 11-13	View from the Farmyard
Page 2	County Rarities	Page 13-17	Notes and Letters
Page 3-9	Recent Reports	Page 18-19	Membership News
Page 9-10	Stop Press News	Page 20-21	CAWOS Programmes
Page 10-11	Ringers' Notebook	Page 22-23	Diary and Events

*Imminent dates for your diary:*

Sat 22 <sup>nd</sup> Sept	Migration Watch, Burton	see page 21 for details
Sun 23 <sup>rd</sup> Sept	Raptors on High, Moore NR	see page 21 for details

# Waxwings

## NATURAL HISTORY BOOKS

Hundreds of titles in stock

Field Guides  
Checklists  
Monographs

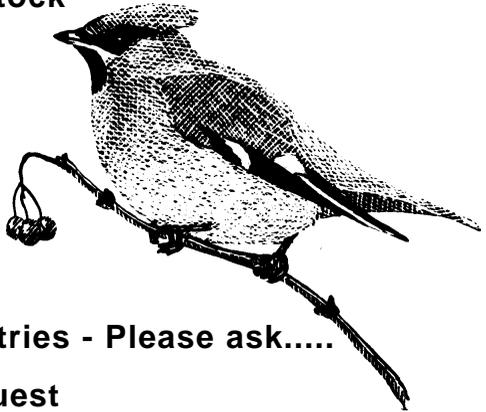
Videos of the Birds of  
Britain and Europe.

Going abroad?  
Site guides to 50 countries - Please ask.....

Free catalogue on request

Visitors by appointment please.

Why not give us a try?  
We're friendly, helpful and efficient.



12 BELLFIELD AVENUE, CHEADLE HULME,  
STOCKPORT, CHESHIRE, SK8 7AG

Tel: (0161) 486 0784 Fax: (0161) 485 3536

Front cover sponsored by:-

**umbra**

Software Ltd (0161 406 6320)