

# **BIRD NEWS**

**Number 72 October 2006**



**County Rarities 2005 and 2006**

**Garden birds dying - *Trichomoniasis* update**

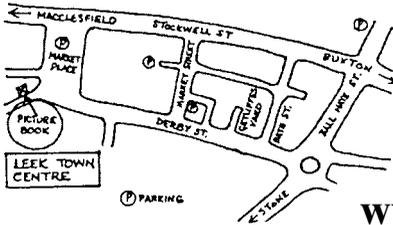
**Dusky Warbler ID • White-winged Black Tern**

**Wintering Richard's Pipits at West Kirby**

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## OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

Chairman : Brian Dyke

Vice-Chairman : Steve Barber

Secretary : David Cogger

Treasurer : Clive Richards

Recorder : Hugh Pulsford

6 Buttermere Drive, Great Warford, Cheshire, SK9 7WA. Tel: 01565 880171

Email address : [countyrec@cawos.org](mailto:countyrec@cawos.org)

Membership Secretary : David Cogger

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

Email address : [memsec@cawos.org](mailto:memsec@cawos.org)

Newsletter Editor : Sheila Blamire

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

Email address : [sheilablamire@cawos.org](mailto:sheilablamire@cawos.org)

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Society, the Council of the Society, or the Editor.*

Front cover : Coal Tit by Ray Scally

Other illustrations : Dave Quinn and Phil Jones

# Guest Editorial

So what exactly changes? Another issue of *Bird News* and another autumn slowly creeps south with promises of mass migration and much sought after rarities. But despite the expectations and familiarity of it all, each day is truly different, each moment a surprise. That is the best thing about birding, the fact that separates us from train and plane spotters. Okay, so the listing element may fulfil a similar need and give as much satisfaction as any new registration, but it's the living ball of feathers that has just made a journey of over three thousand miles to appear in the bus in front of you that gives the real thrill. The County Rarities article in this issue touches on the identification of Dusky and Radde's Warblers, two Asian species that regularly occur in Britain in the autumn. There is one record of a Dusky Warbler in Cheshire, but none of Radde's. They are common migrants on the Chinese coast in spring and autumn and some travel westwards to arrive on our shores in favourable conditions. There will be a Radde's very shortly, I promise.

After my note in the last issue about the death of finches in my garden, I actually received two telephone calls from other birdwatchers in the county with tales of similarly tragic situations. I was gratified that someone had not only replied (a very rare event in *Bird News* requests), but had actually managed to identify the disease, *Trichomoniasis*, a terrible thing that must cause the birds that catch it a lot of distress before eventually killing them. Then, the news hit the press and made the front pages of several dailies, before finally being mentioned in the birding press, including the RSPB website. Why the disease has proved so devastating this year is unclear, but even now in late October, I still have sickly Greenfinches around even though I haven't fed them for about a month.

One of the articles inside mentions the changing attitudes of the farming fraternity. Alright, so it's taken a certain amount of persuasion and a larger amount of money, but the mentality of having to make every last square centimetre of land profitable in the traditional sense is slowly waning. The Countryside Stewardship Scheme incentivises the return of some land to a more natural state, benefiting not only wildlife but humans in some areas with new access to once forbidden pastures, so to speak. It is something which should be encouraged in Cheshire (particularly at Frodsham Marsh if I may suggest a worthy area) and it would be nice if any landowners that can identify with Richard Symes, to drop a note to CAWOS for publication in *Bird News*.

The Atlas is still moving along at a graceful pace. In August, the 24<sup>th</sup> International Ornithological Congress in Hamburg were told that Britain leads the way when it comes to ordinary birdwatchers carrying out fieldwork such as breeding bird and wintering surveys etc. David Norman reckons that Cheshire volunteers for the Atlas work have spent an estimated 50,000 hours traipsing up and down their allotted patches to enable an up-to-date assessment of the breeding birds in the county to be made and that the additional time accrued by other people actually organising the project is also significant. Mind you, anyone regularly involved in the publication of the *Bird Report*, or indeed each edition of *Bird News*, will also have amassed many thousands of hours..... it would be an interesting exercise to work out some of the facts and figures that keep a society like CAWOS ticking over!

**Tony Broome**

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**Note: the copy date for the next issue is 16<sup>th</sup> December - 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 Sheila Blamire know as soon as possible.

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~ **THE CHESHIRE AND WIRRAL ATLAS** ~

**Please submit your 2006 breeding season records asap!**

# County Rarities

## DUSKY WARBLER *Phylloscopus fuscatus*

The brisk easterly is reassuringly strong enough to give the promise of something a little more exciting than the Goldcrests and Redwings that have appeared on your local patch in Cheshire in mid-October. This far west in the country, eastern vagrants are scarce, very scarce in fact, but you never know. It doesn't harm to be forever optimistic. The pager tells you that the east coast has experienced fall conditions. Thousands of thrushes and good numbers of Bramblings, Woodcocks and Lapland Buntings. There have also been many eastern warblers. Yellow-browed, Pallas's and even a Blyth's Reed. Fair Isle has several Olive-backed Pipits, a Radde's and a Lanceolated Warbler and there have been 'Duskiess' in Norfolk. Suddenly you wish you were anywhere else but tramping the hedgerows close to home, and a sense of frustration threatens to turn to mild depression.

The light is going and the icy blue sky pales as the sun sinks lower and the shadows become longer. You round a corner and fail to notice the bird sitting right in front of you on the path. Too late! It gives a sharp 'teck!' and dives into a bramble patch. What was it, a *Sylvia* warbler? Perhaps a late Lesser Whitethroat? It looked too small and dark. A silent wait ensues but the bird doesn't call again. You wonder if you should pish at it, but decide to wait a little longer. One more call, off to your right, a quiet 'teck' and the brambles shudder as something moves around in amongst the ripened blackberries and rusting leaves. Your bins, trained on a likely spot, detect an outline. Definitely a warbler, but small and the tail is squarish. You strain in the light to get colour. It looked all dull brown and there was a definite pale 'super' over a beady black eye. Then it's gone and you're left wondering, puzzled but half excited at the same time. You promise to return tomorrow.....

The morning light is harsh, the sun is behind you in the east and the wind is still at your back, but lighter than yesterday. The smells of autumn add to the atmosphere and a chill runs down your spine in anticipation as you once more stand silently in front of the patch of brambles. A small bird pops up briefly and then drops almost instantly but a Dunnock calls sibilantly and you scowl. Why is it always a Dunnock!? But there is another call, a scolding, irritable, stony 'teck, teck.....teck.....teck, teck!' You can stand it no longer and you begin to pish quietly, varying the tone. It works! The bird

appears on top of the brambles, still calling, and remains on view for what seems a lifetime as you mentally struggle to take in all the features as your breathing gets shallower. It reminds you of a chocolate brown Chiffchaff, but it can't be. Can it? The call is all wrong.

The bird has dark grey-brown upperparts with a hint of rustiness, and the unders strike you as off-white with warmer, grey-brown looking breast sides, flanks and undertail coverts. The throat is whitest. You keep focusing on the pale and very distinctive supercilium. It is long and tapering, narrow in front of the eye but slightly broader behind, and doesn't meet over the bill. It is also palest in front of the eye and quite warm buff towards the rear and it is accentuated by a very dark eye stripe over rusty ear coverts. There is a palish lower eye ring. The bill is weak-looking and all dark except for a yellowy lower mandible and the legs



and feet look dark at times, but pinky or even yellowish hued in some lights. You look at the upperparts again. Quite uniform really and definitely no olive hues or wing bars. The alula is blackish but doesn't especially stand out, the primary extension isn't particularly long and the squarish tail is notched. The eye looks black and beady. It preens briefly in the sunshine and then drops back into cover, wing flicking and calling as it moves away.

You try and remember what that Radde's looked like on the Isles of Scilly last year. Much stouter, paler pinkish bill, legs and feet, more olive-toned brown upperparts, but the underparts were similar. The much stouter bill had a lower mandible that was actually pale all the way to the tip and the upper mandible had an obvious downcurved tip, not a shallow angle as in the bird in your bramble patch. The undertail coverts had looked contrastingly orangey at times and the supercilium was thicker and diffusely buff *in front* of the eye, and palest at the rear, the blackish eye stripe accentuating the stripes on the head. The lower eye ring stood out more... didn't it? It had a darker lateral crown stripe as well at some angles which made it stand out, even at a distance and weren't the ear coverts more mottled? The whole bird looked stouter with a more rounded crown and a thicker neck. It spent a lot of time hopping about on the ground, slower and more sluggish than this bird. It flicked its tail more and swivelled its rear end, with less wing flicks. The call - similar but more of a 'chuck', not so hard sounding.

You smile to yourself as the realisation sinks in that you've been watching Cheshire's second Dusky Warbler, a real rarity. The first was caught in a mist net and never seen in the field before or after. There was a photograph in the *Bird Report*. The bird calls again and seems to be feeding in the upper brambles, giving tantalising glimpses and the occasional longer view, which you savour as your description is confirmed. You reach for your phone....

The first and only Cheshire record was caught on 19<sup>th</sup> November 1995 on the Arley Estate. It was found in a mist net in rhododendrons and was never seen again after release. How many more are missed each year on the west coast of Britain?

I have visited Happy Island off the east coast of China several times in recent years including September 2006 and Dusky Warblers can often be the commonest, or perhaps more accurately, the most obvious warbler at times, perhaps more so in spring. Over 100 in a morning is not unusual. Both species can be confiding and even tame, but the majority of Dusxies act as the one above is described as doing, whilst Radde's are much more confiding. They can both be ace skulkers and can hide under a single leaf. They are as much at home in long grass and areas of tall plants such as docks and other perennials.

I was videoing Hummingbird Hawk Moths one day on Happy Island in September. They were coming to a species of labiate which was growing in a large clump with a species of convolvulus. There were two species of the moths, including the one we see in Britain with orange hindwings and another one with clean white unders and a yellow hindwing. They were coming so close I could hear them 'hum'. I noticed a movement and looked up to see a Radde's Warbler about a metre away which began to call, which in turn started a Dusky off, about three metres away. Having both species calling side by side was an opportunity rarely experienced in Britain, but one which is common in that part of the world.

Once learnt, the calls help tremendously with the identification. I paid particular attention to both species in September and was confident of correctly identifying both species on call alone in a very short space of time. Dusky utters a stoney 'teck!' or 'tcheck!' often repeated quickly when alarmed and not very variable. At a distance they can sound softer, perhaps a 'tack' or a 'chuck', but always harder than Radde's. Radde's on the other hand is always softer and fuller, more of a 'chuck!', sometimes a 'chuck.....chuck.....chrrrr', or perhaps ending in a liquid 'churruc'. Lots of Radde's began with the liquid rolling 'churruc' (even written 'drrrooop?') before continuing with the 'chucks...', this call being something that Dusxies never did.

With Dusxies, you are likely to first hear a repetitive 'teck, teck...teck.....' before a bird dives out and disappears into the nearest thicket. Radde's tend to be more obvious, more likely to hop about in the open, often on the floor, or, if in cover, they will actually come closer and have a look at you before moving gradually away. I think that they actually look 'friendlier' than Dusxies which always have an 'irritable' look about them. It doesn't mean that you can't enjoy them of course!

**Tony Broome**

## COUNTY RARITIES 2005 AND 2006

The Rarity Team has evaluated the 74 descriptions it received for birds seen in 2005. Nine of these were considered either insufficient or not proven, and five records have been pended whilst the Committee obtains more information to assist us with a valued judgement. In addition several records from previous years have been submitted, following requests in the 2004 *Annual Report*, and the Committee especially thanks these observers. These are added for completeness.

In 2006 we have received 20 records so far, of which one was considered not proven, and one has been pended awaiting further comment.

The list below details the accepted sightings, in each case the principal observer or submitter of the record is mentioned:

### 2001

Ring-billed Gull	Hoylake	22.10.01	T Vaughan
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### 2003

Water Pipit	Heswall	15.11.03	M Kelly
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Accepted as either Water Pipit or *littoralis* Rock Pipit; this will be a new category to appear in the annual report.

Red-throated Diver	Deer Park Mere	27.03.04	R Anderson
Snow Bunting	Birchenough Hill	03.12.04	JV Oxenham

### 2005

Water Pipit(s)	Neston OQ	03.01.05	T Vaughan
Water Pipit x 3	Neston OQ	22.01.05	F Duff
Water Pipit(s)	Neston OQ	07.02.05	B Rimmer
Water Pipit	Frodsham No. 3	12.02.05	AM Broome

Despite there probably being up to three birds present at the traditional Neston site, the presence of *littoralis* Rock Pipit remains a confusion species, both to seeing these birds and getting a description accepted by the Committee. The Frodsham record does suggest that they are also available elsewhere if you look hard enough!

Green-winged Teal	IMF	30.01.05	MR Miles
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I know this isn't a particularly exciting rarity, but to only get one description of a bird that was resident from 2004, throughout the first winter period in 2005 doesn't help the quality of the database. However, at least it confirms it survived to the end of January! The Committee will be more than willing to accept just a couple of lines in description if it would help keep track of this bird.

Pallas's Warbler	Crossley	29&30.01.05	RM Blindell
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A superb find, and it was pleasing to receive several supporting descriptions confirming the date range of this charming Siberian sprite.

Pallas's Warbler	Crossley	01.02.05	C Lythgoe
Pallas's Warbler	Crossley	03.02.05	G Palmer
Pallas's Warbler	Crossley	05.02.05	MR Miles
Pallas's Warbler	Crossley	01&04&09.02.05	A Booth
Red-necked Grebe	Woolston Eyes NR	09.02.05	D Barley
Slavonian Grebe	IMF	10.02.05	L Castell
Slavonian Grebe	Houghton Green Pool	11.11.05	F Duff
Cetti's Warbler (2)	Neston reed bed	28.02.05	F Duff

Present on other dates, these birds were photographed.

Goshawk	Tegg's Nose	13.01.05	P Walton
Goshawk	Sandbach Flashes	08.02.05	JT Jones
Goshawk	Hatchmere	02.05.05	F Duff
Goshawk	Mow Cop	09.06.05	JH Swan
Goshawk	Neumann's Flash	04.09.05	V Lundy
Goshawk	Woolston Eyes NR	15.10.05	MR Miles

This species remains difficult to describe well on what are often brief flight views. The Committee considered nearly as many records as not proven. Observers with a potential Goshawk should

always attempt to age and if possible, sex the bird. This alone often helps to eliminate the obvious confusion species.

Rough-legged Buzzard	Wilmslow	03.04.05	MR Miles
Rough-legged Buzzard	Woolston Eyes NR	18.05.05	D Riley
Rough-legged Buzzard	Houghton Green	1-2.10.05	J Tymon

The first two sightings may relate to the same wandering individual that was also seen in Lancashire at around the same time. This remains a true rarity in the west of the UK, and there were several other records submitted which were considered incomplete and not proven. The Committee has seen a marked increase in claimed Rough-legged Buzzard sightings, and separating this species from the now very common Buzzard in pale phased plumage requires all the key identification features to be seen well.

Garden Warbler	Hampton Heath	06.04.05	R Allenby
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Perhaps unusual to see such a bird submitted with a description, but the observer felt that the early date merited one, and he should be complimented for doing so.

Woodlark	Hilbre	17.04.05	M Eden
Common Crane	Woolston Eyes NR	19.04.05	B Martin
Common Crane x 2	Dutton	17.11.05	C Spurling
Dartford Warbler	Hilbre	22.04.05	S Williams
Black-throated Diver	Hilbre	23.04.05	F Duff
'Channel' Wagtail	Budworth Mere	2-5.05.05	H Fearn

Hybrids need to be well described, if not more so than their source species, to be considered proven.

Ring-necked Duck	Wigg Island	02.04.05	F Duff
Ring-necked Duck	Wigg Island	02-22.04.05	WS Morton
Wryneck	IMF	04.05.05	S Williams
Nightjar	Thurstaston	4-7.05.05	M Ingham
Puffin	Hilbre	07.05.05	F Duff
Black Guillemot	Hilbre	21.05.05	F Duff
Golden Oriole	Moore NR	23.05.05	F Duff
Pectoral Sandpiper	Neumann's Flash	31.05.05	M Payne
Pectoral Sandpiper	Elton Hall Flash	16-18.09.05	CB Perkins
Pectoral Sandpiper	IMF	27.10.05	N Friswell
Red Kite	Mooresbarrow Hall	28.05.05	Dr.B Bellamy
Red Kite	Elton Hall Flash	28.05.05	A Firth
Red Kite	Marton	10-12.08.05	S&G Barber
Red Kite	Milton Green/Aldford	15.08.05	N Friswell
Red Kite	Holmes Chapel	24.08.05	JW Clowes
Grey Phalarope	Leasowe Lighthouse	01.10.05	S Round
Grey Phalarope	New Brighton	05-06.10.05	P Rogers, A Booth
Grey Phalarope (ad)	Doddington Pools	4-5.11.05	C Lythgoe
Grey Phalarope (1st w)	Doddington Pools	11-12.11.05	C Lythgoe
Grey Phalarope	Doddington Pools	14.11.05	R Anderson

Considered the same as above.

Storm Petrels	Hilbre	20&23.07.05	F Duff
Spotted Crane	Haydn Pool	01-02.08.05	H Fearn
Spotted Crane	Haydn Pool	03.08.05	MR Miles
Spotted Crane	Haydn Pool	05.08.05	P Woollen

Again pleasing to have complementary descriptions to confirm the bird's presence over the date range.

Honey Buzzard	Sandbach	18.08.05	JT Jones
Red-crested Pochard	Budworth Mere	29.08.05	H Fearn
Roseate Tern	Meols	31.08.05	A Patterson
American Wigeon	HiBO	23.09.05	P Williams
Sooty Shearwater	HiBO	23.09.05	P Williams
Corncrake	Eastham Refinery, Ellesmere Port		K Hayes

Picked up dead, photographed and sent to IMF for identification. Actual date required.

Mealy Redpoll	Woolston Eyes NR	29.10.05	MR Miles
Mealy Redpoll	IMF	30.11.05	F Duff

Perhaps expected given the influx into the eastern side of the UK in late 2005. However, this is not an easy species to identify, let alone describe well and separate from Lesser Redpoll, given the size and colour variations of this species complex. In the Woolston's bird's case the observer had the advantage of full biometrics having caught the bird for ringing, whilst the IMF individual was well photographed.

Yellow-browed Warbler	Hilbre	19.10.05	D Bates
Lapland Bunting	Hale	28-29.10.05	RP Cockbain
Hawfinch	Marbury CP	31.12.05	V Lundy

## 2006

The Committee has also been evaluating records as they have been sent in during this year, in an attempt to provide more rapid feedback to observers. These accepted records are from submissions and records received by the Secretary up to end July.

Richard's Pipit	West Kirby	08.01.06	MR Miles
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It is disappointing that we have not received any descriptions for the two birds present from late Nov onwards to mid-Dec 2005. At least we now have one for the bird that remained till mid-Feb 2006 and it is hoped that the Committee will receive further descriptions to confirm the presence of these wintering individuals over their date range!

Mealy Redpoll	Farndon	Jan '06	N French
Caspian Gull	Moore NR	11.03.06	G Thomas

A first for the county of this race of Yellow-legged Gull, the observer is to be complimented on his excellent description supported by several photographs. The Committee sought external expert opinion on this one to validate their views.

Spotted Crane	Parkgate marsh	29.03.06	J Turner
Spotted Crane	Parkgate marsh	29-30.03.06	R Smith
Spotted Crane	Parkgate marsh	02.04.06	MR Miles

As ever the supporting records of this well-watched and photographed bird are very valuable.

Hawfinch	Wistaston	23-31.03.06	M Stubbs
Hawfinch	Cuddington	09.04.06	Dr.M Hems
Chough	Greasby	13.04.06	P Fraser

On the face of it a surprising record. The first for the county since two over Hale in April 1988, which were preceded by singles over Hilbre and one at Utkinton way back in 1980.

Alpine Swift	Barnston	13-20.04.06	M Turner
Alpine Swift	Barnston	18.04.06	MR Miles

One of the species handed over to county rarity committees from BBRC in 2006, so despite being well seen and photographed, and unlikely to be confused with much else, the supporting descriptions are especially welcome. A number of other observers submitted photographs by email with dates which is also to be encouraged.

Wryneck	Knutsford	28.04.06	G Wright
Great Grey Shrike	Leasowe	30.04.06	J Smith
Temminck's Stint	Neumann's Flash	09.05.06	H Fearn
Common Crane	Sandiway	18.05.06	A Garner
Red-necked Phalarope	Neumann's Flash	24.05.06	D Goodwin, H Fearn
Pectoral Sandpiper	IMF	28.05.06	P Woollen
Great White Egret	Woolston Eyes NR	10.06.06	AH Pulsford
Great White Egret	Woolston Eyes NR	10.06.06	MR Miles

Sighting of same bird some 2 hours later.

Red Kite	Woolston Eyes NR	10.06.06	MR Miles
Black-necked Grebe	River Dee, Heswall	15.07.06	CF Farnell
Cetti's Warbler	Woolston Eyes NR	23.07.06	D Riley

Photographed in the hand.

As ever the Rarities Team thank all observers who have submitted records, including those who supplied supporting descriptions and photographs to confirm identifications and date ranges. It is also pleasing to see the use of the updated Rarity Form available for downloading from the CAWOS website ([www.cawos.org](http://www.cawos.org)), and the use of email to submit these descriptions.

**A Hugh Pulsford, County Recorder**

## WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERN IN CHESHIRE

Al Orton and I were once again partaking in an alcoholic beverage in Big Al's Bar (Bund Hide, Neumann's Flash) on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2006. The now daily evening search of the gull roost was again proving fruitless, no sign of the hoped-for Yellow-legged Gull, a much needed addition for the local patch year-list.

As the skies above us darkened and the oncoming rain front advanced towards Neumann's, I picked up a tern in my bins as it flew over the bar (hide) onto the flash heading for the gull roost (7.55pm). Immediately I shouted to Al standing two yards away....

"Al – *White-winged Black Tern....there...bl\*\*\*y hell!!!*"

Al... "Where ?"

Me... "*There!*" pointing out of the hide as one does in great moments of excitement.

Al... "*Got it. Nice one Pod, patch lifer*"

We watched the tern make its way over the gull roost to the far north corner of Neumann's then off it disappeared over the trees towards Budworth Mere (where it was probably seen by a local yachtsman at 8pm). The combination of striking black and white wings, jet black body and head, all white rump/tail with the distinctive jizz of a marsh tern could only be one bird – White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus* in summer plumage.

Several rounds of back slapping and high fives then ensued. What a bird to find on one's local patch, the first since one on Budworth Mere in September 1993. This was my second White-winged Black Tern find after locating another summer-plumaged individual at Woolston Eyes No. 2 on 13<sup>th</sup> July 1986. I texted the news out to the local patchers, knowing that 'Doc' Paul Brewster, would relay it to the wider birding world.

Shortly after the skies opened up with a deluge of rain, the White-winged Black Tern probably being pushed along by this oncoming front. My telephone then went ballistic!!

Oh! The joys of patch birding.

**Pete Antrobus**

This is in fact the 16th record of White-winged Black Tern in Cheshire and Wirral and arrived as part of an influx into the UK which was mainly concentrated along the east coast of England. The histogram indicates the arrival dates (in half monthly periods) of White-winged Black Terns in Cheshire and Wirral between 1969 and present day and shows how well spread these are with the Neumann's bird arriving almost at the mid-point of the spread.

**Allan Conlin and Steve Williams**

This article was first published in *BIRDING NORTH WEST* Volume 3:8 pp 205-206



## MIKE ROGERS

News has reached CAWOS Rarities Team members of the sad death of Mike Rogers, for years the secretary of the British Birds Rarities Committee. As an active member of the organisation which has adjudicated on the records of every birder who has ever found a rare bird in Britain, his loss will be greatly felt.

Since I became County Recorder for Cheshire in 1987, Mike has always been my main contact, as he will no doubt have been for all my fellow recorders. I always appreciated his honesty and thoroughness when dealing with records, even though I might have disagreed on the final decisions that the BBRC members came to on occasion. Sometimes his correspondence was just a postcard with a tick in a box (hopefully the accepted box), but there would be the odd lengthy letter and a glimpse of a more personal side.

I feel that as my own role within the county has changed, so another, much more remarkable era has come to an end. I will miss a truly memorable birder and friend.

**Tony Broome**

# Species Spotlight

## WINTERING RICHARD'S PIPITS AT WEST KIRBY

Following the arrival of two Richard's Pipits *Anthus novaeseelandiae* at West Kirby during November (still present at the time of writing) and the excellent find of Blyth's Pipit *Anthus godlewskii* on Bardsey in October (a first for the North-West) I thought it appropriate to look at the status of Richard's Pipit in the North-West and to look at the identification features of the three larger pipits that occur in the UK.

Richard's Pipit breeds in Siberia, Mongolia and China, wintering in India and South China. Sub-species of Richard's also occur in South-East Asia and Australasia. Blyth's has a similar range to nominate Richard's, whilst Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris* breeds in Southern Europe and winters in Africa and also east to India.

In terms of identification I am a great believer in any initial identification in the overall look or feel, over and above technical examination of each feather which more often than not is not possible anyway. If a bird appears to have many salient features but doesn't quite feel right it probably isn't.

Without doubt one of the most distinctive features of all three species is their call. It is this that most often betrays their presence and indeed it is their call that easily separates all three species, particularly in flight. Richard's is huge, long tailed, heavily streaked, leggy, stout billed and, of course, the distinctive 'schreep', mainly given in flight.

There should really be no confusion between Richard's and Tawny. Tawny is still comparatively large to most pipits; however, it is significantly smaller than Richard's, not as leggy, the bill is much shorter and in adult plumage always gives an overall 'sandy' washed-out look with minimal streaking on the breast. First winter Tawny Pipit is more heavily streaked brown on both the mantle and breast; however, never to the same extent as Richard's. Tawny also gives a distinctive Yellow Wagtail-like 'tsscheoo' call.

Blyth's, whilst still a large pipit, is smaller, and again not as leggy, shorter-billed, shorter-tailed and does not show anywhere near the bulk of Richard's and, of course, has a diagnostic call.

This may be an oversimplification and, in reality, we do need to consider the finer feather details particularly when separating Richard's from Blyth's. For these purposes Table 1 illustrates the main diagnostic features of each species.

Another feature of Richard's that was particularly evident in the West Kirby birds was they often hovered for approximately five seconds before landing. Obviously, this feature is useful as supporting evidence rather than a conclusive identification feature. Blyth's and Tawny will tend to simply drop to the ground.

In terms of overwintering Richard's Pipits, the numbers seem to be increasing year-on-year with records across the UK within the last five years coming from south Wales, Norfolk and Somerset to name a few.

Whilst the West Kirby birds are a good local record they are not unique in terms of north-west winter records, indeed, Kinmel Bay (Clywd) hosted a wintering Richard's Pipit during the 2004/05 winter (see *Birding North West* Vol 2:1 pp 18-19), whilst two birds took up residence at an incredible 2,000 feet in a field near Burnley (Lancashire), also during the winter of 2004/05 (see *Birding North West* Vol 1:12 pp 279-280).

Why the UK should be seeing so many overwintering Richard's Pipits may be a combination of any number of factors. These may include climatic change, population change, a change in migration routes or merely a change in land use in their wintering grounds or perhaps a change in land use in the UK that makes it more acceptable for them to stay.

Richard's Pipits have always passed through the UK in good numbers every autumn, but for numbers of birds to remain is, if not a new phenomenon, certainly one that is becoming more and more common. Should this trend continue we can look forward to many more wintering north-west records in the future.

**Table 1:****Summary of the identification features of Richard's, Blyth's and Tawny Pipits**

	<b>Richard's Pipit</b>	<b>Blyth's Pipit</b>	<b>Tawny Pipit</b>
<b>Size</b>	Huge (17-20cm)	Smaller at 15-17cm	Smaller at 15.5-17cm
<b>Upperparts</b>	Generally quite a dark brown with dark streaking	Similar to Richard's	Adult, largely unstreaked. 1st winter show dark streaking on crown and mantle
<b>Underparts</b>	Usually quite heavily streaked on chest and flanks. White belly is distinctive	Generally less streaked often showing distinctive orange / buff wash. Lacks distinctive white belly	Adults show virtually no streaking whilst 1st winter show slight dark streaking to chest
<b>Hind claw</b>	Very long 14.5-23.9 mm	Noticeably shorter at 9-15mm	Noticeably shorter at 9-12mm
<b>Median coverts</b>	Dark centres are usually pointed and less well defined with brownish tips	Dark centres are well defined, with paler tips giving the impression of a distinct wingbar	Fairly rounded centres with palish tips
<b>Bill length / strength</b>	Large and very stout 16.5-21.4mm	Still large but not as stout as Richard's 14.3-17.5mm	Relatively fine compared with the other two
<b>Malar stripe</b>	Strong and well defined	Fairly weak	Present but fine
<b>Face / lore pattern</b>	Strong supercilium giving an 'eyebrowed' appearance. Pale lores give an open faced expression	Also pale lores giving open faced expression	Dark lores giving a more aggressive look
<b>Call</b>	An explosive 'schreeep'	Two calls, one similar but less harsh than Richard's, other a shorter 'chhepp' often given in combination with the first	Yellow Wagtail-like 'tsscheoo'

**References:**Svensson, L. *et al.* (1999) *Bird Guide*Alstrom, P. (1991) *A Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe***Allan Conlin**

# Members' Noticeboard

Do you have any helpful tips; requests for information; small items for sale (ornithological, of course!) etc etc? Well, this is the place for you! Write in with your thoughts or requests.

**For Sale:** *A Guide to the Birds of Costa Rica* by Stiles and Skutch. Brand new, pristine copy - £25. Published at £40. Buyer collects or pays postage. Tel Geoff Lightfoot: 0161 486 0784

**Good Home Wanted:** *Birdwatching* magazines March 1986 to December 1996 - ALL BOUND! Also January 1997 to September 2002, loose, not bound. Tel Sheila Blamire: 01565 830168

# Records & Recording

## Please submit your 2006 bird sightings as soon as possible!

We prefer to receive records in an **electronic format** via email if at all possible. This reduces our workload and also the possibility of errors with manual input. The preferred format is a simple spreadsheet (or table) with the minimum column headings of: Date, Species, Site, Number, plus Comments for extra detail or to put the record in context. Up-to-date 'site' and 'species' lists are available in electronic format, simply email me for the latest versions. Please see below for general hints and advice.

**If you are at all unsure how to send in your records please get in touch - a few minutes on the phone could save both you and us a great deal of time!**

### General hints to save you (and us!) time

- Records sent in as text, either within an email message, or as a Word document, will need to be transferred into a spreadsheet format, so please do use a basic spreadsheet where possible (Reserve Reports are the obvious exception).
- There is no need to put your name and address or other general heading at the top of the spreadsheet; please put your contact details, along with other relevant information, in the main body of the email or letter accompanying the file or disc.
- Please do not type in all your records in capital letters.
- There is no need to add gridlines (cell borders) to the spreadsheet, but it doesn't matter if you do.
- Generally, we will not be importing any electronic records until year end, but if you find it useful to send in your records more frequently than once a year then please continue to do so (this does not apply to paper records which we would want to receive in batches).

### Layout of the spreadsheet

- If using an Excel Workbook for your records, *do not use more than one sheet* (the other sheets will be lost when saving the file into csv format).
- Put headings at the top of each column, e.g. 'Species', 'Site', 'Date', 'Number', 'Comments', etc.
- Please delete blank or unwanted/unnecessary columns, which may occur when 'Recorder' or other commercial programmes or databases are saved as csv files.
- All entries, e.g. 'Comments', must be typed in *on one line only for each record*; it does not matter how wide the column is.
- Do not leave blank lines between the column headings and the first record, or between different records or species.
- Please use the species or site name, rather than the species or site ID number on its own, as it makes it easier to visually check the records and also there is less room for error.

### Site

- For *garden records* put the town or village as the site name and the actual house address (including postcode) under 'Comments', as we do not want to list each member's address as an 'official' site within the *Gazetteer*.
- The name in the 'Site' column should 'conform' where possible to those listed in the *Gazetteer*. A more precise location can always be included under 'Comments'. The precise map ref (if given) will still be held against that record, rather than the more general site map reference.
- A new site can be added if it cannot readily be included under another site already listed, or if it is an important birding location, which was missed off the original *Gazetteer*. You must draw our attention to this new site within the main body of your email and provide the 6-figure map reference and the nearest town or village or well-known landmark.
- If including site ID numbers and/or map references, these must be in a separate column from the 'Site name' column.

## Species

- For common species (particularly garden birds) we would prefer dated (or undated) monthly or weekly maxima rather than daily counts. Comparisons to previous years would be useful to add in under 'Comments'.
- Do not submit duplicate entries for the same species on the same date, e.g. adults and juveniles should be under one record with clarification under 'Comments'.

## Number or count

- Put only a *specific number in the 'Number' column* such as 100, 100+, c100, etc, or even 0 if a zero count; other information, e.g. 1 or 2, many, flock, etc, should go under 'Comments'.
- Any figure in the 'Number' column should refer to the *actual number of birds recorded*, not to the number of nests or number of pairs, though it is okay to put 1pair under 'Number'.
- Leave the 'Number' column blank if it is more appropriate, e.g. year or breeding summaries where the records have already been entered individually; this will avoid doubling up of numbers.
- If you leave the 'Number' column blank without any other individual records entered, please be aware that your record will not appear in any statistics or distribution maps for that species.

## Date

- Always include a date, *do not leave blank*. If the record is a year summary for that species then simply put 2006 under 'Date'. Check the format of the cells if you have any problems.
- Always submit the date in a conventional format if possible, e.g. 31-12-06 or preferably 31-Dec-06. If you are unable to do this please alert us to this problem so that we do not try to import records with American dates mm-dd-yy (12-31-02) or those which put the year first.
- Seasons e.g. winter1, spring, etc, or date ranges e.g. Aug - Sep or Aug to Sep (with spaces), can be used instead of specific dates. Do not use / to separate ranges e.g. Aug/Sep.
- Create separate records for additional dates if these are particularly relevant for the species concerned. Otherwise put as additional information under 'Comments'.

## Finally....

- **Always give your file a quick check before sending it to us - does it 'look right' to you?**

## For further information or advice contact:

**Sheila Blamire, Woodruff Cottage, Clamhunger Lane, Mere, Cheshire, WA16 6QG**  
**Email: [sheilablamire@cawos.org](mailto:sheilablamire@cawos.org) Tel: 01565 830168**

# SUBMISSION OF 2006 RECORDS

## ELECTRONIC RECORDS

**Email to: [submissions@cawos.org](mailto:submissions@cawos.org)**

## PAPER RECORDS

**Send to: Tony Parker, 41 The Park, Penketh, Warrington, WA5 2SG**

## RARITY DESCRIPTIONS

**Send or *preferably* email to:**

**Howard Fearn, 37 Ollershaw Lane, Marston, Northwich, CW9 6ES**

**Email: [howardfearn@cawos.org](mailto:howardfearn@cawos.org)**

# 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 summer period from June to August.*

## SITE REPORTS

### Chester area

A Montagu's Harrier was reported from the Puddington area on Jun 26th, Hobbies were at Farndon on Jun 17th, Hockenhull Platts on 24th and near Chester on Aug 10th. A Quail was calling in the Tarvin area on Jul 18th, a pair of Stonechats were at the Gowy Meadows on Jun 21st.

### Crewe and Nantwich area

Two Little Egrets were at Pump House Flash on Aug 6th, a White Stork was noted over Willaston on Aug 1st and near Crewe the next day. A quiet month for wildfowl; two Wigeon appeared at Hankinstone on Aug 27th whilst a drake Garganey was at Elton Hall Flash during June. Red Kites were noted over Combermere Farm on Jun 8th and Aug 2nd with another over Sound School on Jul 24th, a Marsh Harrier was at Elton Hall Flash on Aug 20th with up to nine Buzzard over this site during late August, a Goshawk was at Edleston on Jul 28th and one or two Hobbies at several sites. A good count of four Quails were calling in the Henhull/Acton area on Jun 9th.

Waders of note included Golden Plover at Sandbach on Aug 12th and Combermere Farm on 31st, a Knot was at Sandbach Flashes on Aug 2nd and a Sanderling on 5th, 271 Black-tailed Godwits were at Elton Hall Flash on Jun 14th, a Spotted Redshank on Jul 1st, nine Greenshanks on Aug 18th, four Turnstones over on Aug 5th and a juvenile Red-necked Phalarope on Aug 14th and 15th. A Ring-billed Gull was at Hurleston Reservoir on Aug 28th with up to four Yellow-legged Gulls present during August. Two Common Terns were noted at Sandbach throughout most of June with three present on Jul 23rd, three Arctic Terns were at Watch Lane Flash on Aug 2nd. Eight Yellow Wagtails was a good count at Railway Flash on Aug 20th.

### Congleton area

A Black-necked Grebe was at Astbury Water Park on Aug 7th, three female Goosanders were on the River Dane on Jul 23rd, with a Common Tern at Astbury on Jun 27th. Three Spotted Flycatchers were noted at Brereton Heath on Jul 19th. c35 Tree Sparrows were in the Dane Valley area on Jul 23rd.

### Ellesmere Port and Neston area

The Little Egret roost at Inner Marsh Farm peaked at 134 on Aug 13th, Parkgate had a max of 22 on Jul 19th. A drake Green-winged Teal was present at Inner Marsh Farm from Jun 11th to 24th with Garganey on Jun 17th, Jul 13th and two on Aug 13th. A Red Kite was over Great Sutton on Jul 28th, Marsh Harriers were regular visitors to the Burton marsh area from mid-July onwards, a Merlin was at Parkgate on Aug 25th whilst Hobbies were noted on several dates at both Inner Marsh Farm and Parkgate. A max of seven Water Rails was at Inner Marsh Farm on Aug 16th including three juveniles. Two Quails were calling in the Neston area from Jul 22nd to 30th with another at Parkgate on Aug 13th.

Wader highlight of the summer was the first successful breeding of Avocet at Inner Marsh Farm where a pair raised three young. Other waders of note included six Little Stints at Inner Marsh Farm on Jun 10th and 11th, with 660 Black-tailed Godwits on Aug 2nd and four Spotted Redshanks on Jun 17th. Greenshank numbers at Parkgate peaked at 22 on Aug 29th, a Wood Sandpiper was at Inner Marsh Farm on Jul 24th and 26th and again on Aug 19th. A Little Gull visited

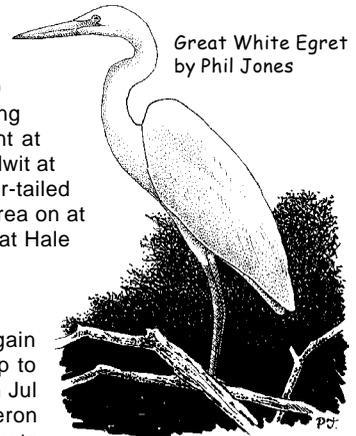


Green-winged Teal by Phil Jones

Inner Marsh Farm on Jun 17th along with two Sandwich Terns there on Jun 16th and 17th. Two Grasshopper Warblers were reeling at Parkgate on Jul 22nd, a Spotted Flycatcher was at Inner Marsh Farm on Aug 20th and four Crossbills flew over Great Sutton on Jun 3rd.

## Halton area

A Little Egret was at Hale Duck Decoy on Jun 8th and again at nearby Hale Marsh on 11th, a Great White Egret was briefly on the Mersey at Wigg Island on Jun 11th. At least 1300 Shelducks were at Hale on Aug 13th along with the first returning Wigeon. The only raptor of note was a Marsh Harrier present at Wigg Island on several days from Jul 28th. A Black-tailed Godwit at Hale on Aug 13th was the only record for the summer, a Bar-tailed Godwit was here on 24th whilst Whimbrel were noted in this area on at least four dates. A juvenile Wheatear was noted on passage at Hale on Aug 4th with Tree Pipit on Aug 13th and 24th.



Great White Egret  
by Phil Jones

## Macclesfield area

Black-necked Grebes were at Rostherne on Jun 8th and again during August, another was at Poynton Pool on Aug 29th. Up to 119 Cormorants roosted at Rostherne during June, with 153 in Jul and 132 during August, all record monthly counts, a Purple Heron was reported NW in flight at Kerridge on Aug 6th. Wildfowl of note included seven Mandarins at Rostherne on Jun 21st, a pair of Gadwall bred at Rostherne for the first time; eight Common Scoters were here during July and a Red-breasted Merganser on Jun 3rd.

A Red Kite was at Gawsworth on Jun 8th, a Goshawk visited a Prestbury garden on Aug 1st with another at Handforth Dean on Aug 22nd and eight Buzzards at Gawsworth on the same date. A Merlin and two Hobbies were at Shining Tor on Jul 4th, two Hobbies were at Rostherne on Aug 19th and 27th. Highlight of August at Rostherne was an immature Long-tailed Skua present on the morning of Aug 5th; elsewhere a Short-eared Owl was at Shining Tor on Jun 10th and seven Ravens at The Quinta on Jul 29th.

## Vale Royal area

A juvenile Black-necked Grebe was at Neumann's Flash on Jul 14th with up to three birds noted at Frodsham Marsh on Aug 5th, 6th, 12th and 20th. Wildfowl of note included a Ruddy Shelduck at Frodsham Marsh on Aug 12th, Mandarin at Marbury CP on Aug 31st, 23 Common Scoters at Marbury CP on Jun 24th with three at Frodsham Marsh on Aug 6th, a male Scaup was at Frodsham Marsh on Jul 25th and 26th. Red Kites were noted over Sproston Green on Jun 3rd and Higher Whitley on Jul 3rd, Marsh Harriers were reported at Frodsham Marsh on Jul 25th, Aug 6th and 12th. Hobbies were reported from several sites throughout the period.

Waders of note included 10 Little Ringed Plovers at Neumann's Flash on Jul 11th, Golden Plover at Frodsham Marsh on Jul 29th and two Grey Plovers on Aug 5th. Three Sanderlings were at Neumann's Flash on Aug 4th and 5th, at least four Curlew Sandpipers at Frodsham Marsh on Aug 6th, over 1000 Black-tailed Godwits were at Frodsham Marsh on Jul 23rd. Wood Sandpipers were noted at Frodsham Marsh, Marbury No. 1 tank and Neumann's Flash on numerous dates. Two Common Terns were at Marbury CP on Jun 9th whilst on Aug 11th a pair and a juvenile appeared, others were at Frodsham Marsh on Jul 26th and Aug 5th, Marston on Aug 9th and 21st and Vale Royal Locks on Aug 11th. An Arctic Tern was at Marbury CP on Aug 31st and a White-winged Black Tern at Neumann's Flash on Aug 9th.

## Warrington area

A Black-necked Grebe was at Houghton Green Pool on Aug 7th. A Great White Egret was seen over Woolston Eyes on Jul 10th, a Little Egret was at Fiddler's Ferry during August. A Garganey was at Fiddler's Ferry during August, nine Common Scoters were at Houghton Green Pool on Jun 17th, two Red-breasted Mergansers were unusual visitors to Fiddler's Ferry in early August. A Red Kite flew over Woolston Eyes on two dates in June, a Marsh Harrier was at Gatewarth on Aug 5th and Hobbies noted at Fiddler's Ferry, Lymm, Moore, Risley Moss and Woolston. An Eleanor's Falcon was reported attacking Sand Martins at Fiddler's Ferry on Jul 23rd. A Grey Plover was at

Gatewarth on Aug 5th, 18 Black-tailed Godwits were over Woolston Eyes on Jun 30th, Spotted Redshank and Wood Sandpiper were at Fiddler's Ferry during August with an impressive 25 Greenshanks at Woolston Eyes.

A Common Tern was at Woolston Eyes on Jul 1st, another was at Frodsham Marsh and four Arctic Terns were at Wigg Island, both during August with Black Tern at Fiddler's Ferry. A Turtle Dove was a rare visitor to Woolston Eyes on Jul 14th, a possible Pallid Swift was at Lymm on Jul 23rd and a Tree Pipit was in this area the previous day. A Cetti's Warbler was ringed at Woolston Eyes on Jul 22nd, a Spotted Flycatcher was an unusual visitor to Gatewarth on Aug 5th and another was at Moore on Aug 24th.

## Wirral area

A Black-necked Grebe was at the north end of Heswall marsh on Jul 15th. Seabirds included 50 Fulmars off Hoylake on Jun 22nd, 136 Manx Shearwaters at Hilbre on Aug 1st, a Sooty Shearwater off Wallasey on Aug 10th, 26 Storm Petrels off Hilbre on Aug 3rd, three Leach's Petrels off New Brighton on Aug 29th, 150 Gannets off Hoylake on Jun 22nd and 195 off Hilbre on Jul 11th. Six Mandarins were at Raby Mere on Jul 1st, a pair of Eider was at Red Rocks on Jun 9th and c120 Common Scoters at Red Rocks on Jul 10th. Red Kites were noted over West Kirby on Jun 9th, Thurstaston on Jun 14th and Leasowe on Jul 25th. Three Marsh Harriers were at Heswall on Jul 24th, with others at Hilbre and West Kirby. Waders of note included 82 Grey Plovers at Hoylake on Aug 18th, 45 Sanderlings at Wallasey on Aug 3rd, two Curlew Sandpipers at Heswall on Aug 15th, Purple Sandpiper at Hilbre on Aug 25th, Wood Sandpiper over West Kirby on Jun 14th and Hilbre on Aug 26th.

A Pomarine Skua was at Hilbre on Aug 1st, three Arctic Skuas off Red Rocks on Jul 24th and a Great Skua at Hoylake on Aug 27th. Four Mediterranean Gulls were at Heswall on Jul 9th, whilst three Little Gulls were at Red Rocks on Aug 10th and a Sabine's Gull at New Brighton on 29th Aug. Peak counts of terns included 1130 Sandwich, 560 Common and 271 Little Terns at West Kirby on Jul 24th, 11 Arctic Terns were here on 25th, a Black Tern was seen from the RSPB cruise into Liverpool Bay on Aug 7th, others were at Hoylake on Aug 27th and New Brighton on 29th. 27 Guillemots were off Red Rocks on Aug 10th. Autumn passage included Redstart at Hilbre on Aug 25th, otherwise a Spotted Flycatcher was at Red Rocks on Jun 8th and a Siskin over Hoylake on Jul 3rd.

**Tony Parker, 41 The Park, Penketh, Warrington, Cheshire, WA5 2SG. Tel: 01925 726986  
Email: [tonyparker@cawos.org](mailto:tonyparker@cawos.org)**

Thanks/acknowledgements to: Birdcall, Birdguides, *Birdwatching* Magazine, Dee Estuary website, Jack Canovan (Rostherne Mere), Moore NR website, Keith Massey (Fiddler's Ferry), Macclesfield RSPB, SECOS, NNHS and anyone else who passed records on.

## BIRD REPORTS - BACK COPIES AVAILABLE

The following *Cheshire and Wirral Bird Reports* are still available at a cost of £1.25 + p&p (negotiable for several copies).

1969	1972	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982
1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1997	1999	2000

Do you have any spare copies of any of the years missing from the above table? **We are particularly looking for 1996 and 1998.**

2001 onwards are also available - please contact me for prices.

**Ray Scally tel: 01663 765377 between 8pm and 9pm  
or email: [scallyray@hotmail.com](mailto:scallyray@hotmail.com)**

# 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.

## GARDEN BIRDS DYING

Since my article in the last *Bird News* there have been some developments regarding the deaths of so many garden birds.

I have had two phone calls, the first from David Taylor of Pikelow Farm, Marton and the second from Mike Cook at Chelford, telling me that they too had experienced the distressing deaths of finches and doves around their feeders. Both had never witnessed such an event, as I hadn't before.

David Taylor had sent his birds off to Liverpool University Pathology Laboratory and they had diagnosed a disease called *Trichomoniasis* (see below for a fuller description of the symptoms and causes). He had also been in touch with Carol Coupe of the RSPB. She had taken an interest because the outbreak appeared to be countrywide.

Then, on September 13th, a full article on the subject appeared on the front and inside pages of *The Times* newspaper, which appears below.

Do participate in the garden bird surveillance programme. If you see signs of disease (e.g. lethargy, fluffed-up plumage, inability to fly), or dead birds, call 0207 449 6685 (Institute of Zoology). You will also find further information about the disease, the Garden Bird Health Initiative and sources of information on best practice on feeding garden birds at [www.ufaw.org.uk/gbhi.php](http://www.ufaw.org.uk/gbhi.php). Do make sure you take precautions as advised.

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

## GARDEN FINCHES FALL PREY TO DEADLY VIRUS

**The following article appeared in *The Times* on September 13, 2006:**

Hundreds of finches, including Greenfinches and Chaffinches, are being wiped out by a deadly disease spreading throughout Britain. Wildlife vets are investigating the outbreaks across England, Scotland and Wales, after scores of reports from birdwatchers and householders about mysterious bird deaths in their gardens. Experts believe that the scale of the deaths could be much higher than the cases reported, which appear to be concentrated mainly in the south-west and Midlands.

The disease, known as *Trichomoniasis*, poses no threat to human health and is not connected to avian flu, but infected birds suffer a painful death lasting many days or even weeks. The parasite is transmitted through water, infects the throat and crop of the birds, which then dribble saliva. They also regurgitate food and have difficulty swallowing and breathing. The birds show signs of general illness such as fluffed-up plumage and become so lethargic that they find it hard to fly. It is thought that the disease is spreading by birds sharing feeders and baths that have become infected by their saliva.

One vet alone has so far received more than 60 calls in the past few weeks and feared that it was likely to be the tip of the iceberg. An appeal is now being made for people to clean up their garden bird tables and feeders to prevent spread of the disease and also to help to monitor the scale of the outbreak.

The parasite is common in pigeons and Collared Doves and can also affect birds of prey, which feed on sick pigeons and doves. But vets from the Garden Bird Health Initiative (GBHi) now fear that without urgent research into the reasons for the outbreak other bird species may be at risk. All birds are susceptible to the parasite and some incidence of disease has been found in other species of the finch family, including Goldfinches, Linnets and Siskins.

Vets from the GBHi have issued an alert in the latest edition of *The Veterinary Record* because they want to be in a position to collate the number of deaths and conduct post-mortem examinations. One possible theory is that the recent hot summers, and in particular the scorching weather

in July, may have been a factor. The species affected are also sociable birds that like to live in large groups.

Becki Lawson, a wildlife vet at the Institute of Zoology, which is part of London Zoo, which coordinates the GBHi, said: "We are trying to establish the scale of the mortality in these favourite garden birds. There have been many calls in the past few weeks, which show there is an outbreak on a national scale. We first spotted infection in Greenfinches last year but on a low scale. This was confirmed by the usual disease surveillance tests conducted by the Veterinary Laboratory Agency. But this year there is a significant increase in the number of incidents."

She issued a warning, however, that people should not handle or touch dead or suspect birds directly. Wild birds carry salmonella and *E.coli* bacteria, which can affect human health.

#### **Garden hygiene can stop the spread:**

- Do not touch or handle any sick or dead birds
- Contact the Garden Bird Health Initiative via [www.ufaw.org.uk](http://www.ufaw.org.uk) or phone 01582 831818
- Some carcasses will be needed for post-mortem examinations
- In the event of a death, stop all watering and feeding for at least two weeks
- Clean bird baths and feeders regularly using a brush dipped in a 10% solution of detergent or domestic bleach. Dry thoroughly because lack of moisture is the best way to kill the parasite
- Always wear rubber gloves
- Move feeders around a garden to prevent infection hotspots

**Valerie Elliott, Countryside Editor**

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM THE RSPB WEBSITE**

*Trichomonias gallinae* (canker) is a protozoan parasite of the upper digestive tract, and primarily affects doves and pigeons, though any bird can catch the infection, and confirmed cases have been found even in birds of prey that have fed on infected birds. This disease does not pose a threat to the health of humans, cats or dogs.

The disease is spread via food particles picked up by a sick bird which, unable to swallow, will spit it out complete with the infection or, possibly, from droppings of an infected bird. The higher the concentration of birds at a feeding station, the greater the chance of another bird picking up the infected food particle and exposing itself to the infection. However, the parasite is vulnerable to desiccation (drying out) and cannot survive for long periods outside the host.

If a number of birds show symptoms of *Trichomoniasis* it is recommended to stop putting out food, except in tit feeders, and also water, for at least a month. This will help to disperse the feeding birds and with it reduce the contact between sick and healthy individuals, thus slowing down or halting the outbreak.

The RSPB is a member of the Garden Bird Health Initiative and can give information and advice, and arrange for a post mortem if appropriate. Please email their Wildlife Enquiries team at [wildlife@rspb.org.uk](mailto:wildlife@rspb.org.uk), or you can ring 01767 680551 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5.15pm).

## **A SPARROWHAWK AND A WOODPIGEON**

At 7pm on August 12th my son arrived to visit us, and came in saying that "a bird of prey" (I never did make a birder of him - though at least he said it wasn't a Kestrel) had been eating a Woodpigeon in the drive as he parked his car. It had carried the bird a few feet away, under the hedge, and sat looking at him with "a big yellow eye".

That sounded like Sparrowhawk; I went out to investigate, and found the hawk (a cock) still sitting on the pigeon, about seven or eight feet from me. After a minute or so, it flew off through the hedge into the next garden. It seemed to me that a Woodpigeon was a pretty big prey item for a male Sparrowhawk, so I went back indoors to consult the books. Having done so, and confirmed my idea about size, I returned to the drive to collect the body - and found the hawk had come back (twelve minutes after the initial disturbance) and was again plucking at the corpse. It was sufficiently undisturbed for me to call my wife and son out to see it; again, it glared at us for a minute or so

before flying off. On this occasion, it took the carcass away but dropped it within a few feet - possibly because it had to execute a tricky turning manoeuvre to get through the gap between the car and the gatepost, but probably too because the prey was too heavy for it carry.

All this led to an interesting bit of research into weights and relationships of the two species.....

The body was still warm - obviously a fresh kill (a scatter of feathers on the lawn showed likely point of first impact); it was decapitated and partly plucked but not eviscerated. The breast was largely bare of feathers, though no flesh had been taken, and my first reaction was that there wasn't much eating on this bird (I'm quite partial to Woodpigeon, you understand....). This was confirmed when I weighed it - minus the head and some feathers, it fell just short of 200 grams.

I didn't examine the plumage that evening (a certain amount of pressure, what with dinner being nearly ready and being expected to clean up the kitchen scales first), and by next morning the carcass had gone - presumably a meal for one of the local foxes. However, from looking at the feet when I picked it up and at some of the plucked feathers the next day, I decided this was a young bird. Now, *BWP* gives the weight of an adult Woodpigeon at this time of year as about 470g (Murton's UK figures); "exhausted adults" (not defined; after long migration?) can go as low as 290/350g. Young birds in autumn weigh about 70g less than adults. No precise data are given for weight at fledging, but nestlings reach about 275g at 16/17 days from hatching, average fledging time is 28 days, so I would guess at 300g or upwards as typical weight at fledging. Making every allowance, the bird that met its end in my drive seems to have weighed not more than, probably less than, one just leaving the nest, and therefore to have been an undersized, possibly sickly, specimen.

Ian Newton (*The Sparrowhawk*, 1986) says that "Females often kill Woodpigeons, but they cannot lift them well" and that "It seems.... that females can carry, with relative ease, items as heavy as themselves..... As Woodpigeons normally weigh more than 500g, Sparrowhawks probably could not carry even severely emaciated ones." He makes no direct reference to cock birds killing Woodpigeons (though offers some circumstantial evidence of them doing so, in terms of prey found at nests), but writes that "Male Sparrowhawks, which weigh about 150g, can probably also carry prey as heavy as themselves. Their range certainly includes Mistle Thrush and Fieldfare, which weigh around 120g."

So - I would guess that in this case the cock Sparrowhawk had killed an undersized, possibly weak, young Woodpigeon. Even so, the body was probably too heavy for it to carry away, especially as it could not do so by direct flight. Whatever, I'd had a very close encounter with a smart little hawk and also educated myself a bit about both him and about Woodpigeons.

**Bob Anderson, 102 Crewe Road, Nantwich, Cheshire, CW5 6JD**

Could this Woodpigeon have been suffering from *Trichomoniasis*? In which case the worry is - could the Sparrowhawk have caught the disease from its prey? Hopefully, being disturbed of its kill may have saved its life.... Eds.

## **THIS IS COUNTRYSIDE STEWARDSHIP**

With all the publicity about the new incentive schemes for farmers, this article, which appeared in *The Times* on 26 August, 2006, says it all.....

You are no doubt familiar with the traditional greeting of the countryman to a visitor: "What the f\*\*\* are you doing on my land?" It was, then, a fairly remarkable thing that I did yesterday. I walked all round a neighbouring farm and there was not a thing the farmer could do. And, in fact, he said welcome, walk, enjoy, come again, bring your horse.

What is happening to our countryside, when traditional values are being trampled underfoot? It is a sea change - no it's not, it's an earth change. My neighbour Richard Symes has established grass tracks around his fields. These follow his tall and luxuriant hedges. Most of the tracks are a good 6m across: the inside part near the fence is unmown and shaggy, the outside short and perfect to walk along. Or ride along.

There are 6km of track, and a total of six hectares (15 acres) taken up by these tracks. In these places, he is not growing corn: he is growing nice places for wildlife and nice places for people and nice places for horses. Why does he do it? Has he gone mad? Everybody knows that a farmer's job is to plant endless prairies of wheat and huge garish tundras of oilseed rape, to bank a million subsidies and to whinge a lot.

This is Countryside Stewardship, a scheme that has been in operation since 2000. Stewardship farmers are paid not just to produce crops, but also to cherish the land. There are all sorts of ways you can enter Stewardship, and all sorts of levels, and Symes has gone wholeheartedly for wide field margins and public access. Where once farms were distinguished by ploughed footpaths and 'accidentally' knocked down footpath signs, there are now map-boards telling you where to walk, friendly explanations of what goes on the farm and an invitation to take the air.

IT IS THE most colossal change in attitude. The scheme has 17,000 participants, and has produced 44,500 miles of grass tracks, and the restoration of 17,500 miles of hedgerow and 1,300 miles of drystone walls. Not all Stewardship farmers have gone for the public access, but there is more money in it for those who have.

After the war, the call was for productivity at the expense of everything, and the farmers did brilliantly. They succeeded not wisely but too well. Now they have been asked to make a U-turn and farm the land less productively, more harmoniously, in a way that is more friendly to butterflies, Barn Owls and humans. And many have taken up the challenge with the same enthusiasm with which they once whacked hell out of the landscape.

Politicians, journalists, farmers: we all know what it is to be seen as spoilsports, rotters and cads. With farmers, at least, this is not necessarily the case. The countryside - the country - is richer for farmers like Symes: for Stewardship. Our countryside is changing.

**Simon Barnes**

## **£20 MILLION CONTRIBUTION BY UK BIRDWATCHERS**

### **BTO Press Release, August 2006:**

BTO Director, Professor Jeremy Greenwood will today tell 1,300 of the world's leading ornithologists, gathered in Germany, that "Britain leads the World" in bird research, largely because British birdwatchers spend 1.6 million hours each year contributing to bird surveys. He will also urge these bird experts to make full use of volunteer birdwatchers when monitoring changes in bird populations and setting conservation agendas. In an hour-long lecture to the 24th International Ornithological Congress in Hamburg he will talk about "Citizens, Science and Bird Conservation".

Writing about his lecture prior to his departure for Germany, Professor Greenwood praised the achievements, as well as the efforts of birdwatchers:

"Amateurs make a major contribution to ornithology and bird conservation science. They always have and there is no sign of their contribution diminishing. They do between one and two million hours of work in the UK alone each year. Though they may have no formal qualifications, they have considerable expertise, gained from many years of devotion to the subject. Areas to which they have contributed include:

- the study of migration – by observation and through bird ringing
- distributional atlases
- censuses, monitoring and demographic studies
- breeding biology – through the BTO's Nest Record Scheme

Their work has not only identified the declines of many species but has also helped to discover the causes of those declines and how they can be reversed."

Professor Greenwood gave an example of the conservation benefits of counting birds: "The information obtained by British amateurs has assisted Government in devising schemes to benefit birds and other wildlife on farms. It has fed into reform of the Common Agricultural Policy and is used to produce one of the UK Government's Quality of Life indicators. Although similar monitoring goes on in many countries around the world, Britain leads the world in the involvement of birdwatchers in such serious scientific work."

Writing in the *State of the UK's Birds 2005*, published by RSPB/BTO/WWT/CCW/EN/EHS/SNH yesterday (18 August), Graham Appleton (BTO) wrote: "Given that 2005 was the 'Year of the Volunteer', it seems appropriate to quantify just how much volunteer effort goes into modern-day survey work. ....even rough calculations suggest a value into the millions of pounds. This monitoring, and the benefits it brings to bird conservation, simply would not be possible without the generous contribution of time, effort and expertise by volunteer birdwatchers throughout the UK."

## '50,000 HOURS OF FIELDWORK - FOR WHAT?'

### INDOOR MEETING AT KNUTSFORD CIVIC CENTRE ON FRIDAY 2nd MARCH 2007

Graham Appleton's quote from the above BTO press release: "Given that 2005 was the 'Year of the Volunteer', it seems appropriate to quantify just how much volunteer effort goes into modern-day survey work....." is particularly appropriate as, following on from the CAWOS AGM on 2nd March 2007, David Norman, the Cheshire and Wirral Bird Atlas Coordinator, will be giving a talk entitled '50,000 hours of fieldwork – for what?'. This is the amazing estimate of the number of hours Atlas volunteers will have put into this project. It must be remembered though, that this figure does not include a significant number of hours spent, and to be spent, organising the project, seeking sponsors and grants, inputting and analysing data, any artwork and photographs which will feature in the final publication, and then actually writing the Atlas of course! Absolutely mind-boggling.....

# Cheshire and Wirral Atlas

## Breeding and Wintering Atlas

The 2006 breeding season is now over and we are keen to get all remaining records into the database as soon as possible. Thank you to all those who have already sent in breeding records for the 2006 season.

**If you have some records and have not already sent them in, especially for tetrads which have been covered for the first time in 2006, we would be grateful if you could do so as quickly as possible.**

If you are sending paper records, send them to your Area Coordinator (and keep a copy for yourself in case of losses in the post); if you are sending electronic records, send a copy to your Area Coordinator and another to [atlassubmissions@kawos.org](mailto:atlassubmissions@kawos.org).

**When you read this, the final winter season's recording will soon be starting. It is very important, if you are unable to do your winter recording for any reason, that you inform your Area Coordinator and also David Cogger (01606 832517) or Steve Barber (01260 224161) as soon as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made.**

## Atlas Sponsorship

**The following species have yet to be sponsored:**

Fulmar	Bewick's Swan	Greylag Goose
Barnacle Goose	Common Scoter	Coot
Grey Plover	Knot	Little Stint
Spotted Redshank	Greenshank	Green Sandpiper
Common Gull	Herring Gull	Great Black-backed Gull
Kittiwake	Common Tern	Razorbill

Sponsorship of a single species costs £25. The name of the sponsor will appear at the foot of the page on which the species being sponsored has been described. It is quite acceptable for two or more people to join together to sponsor a species.

### **If you wish to sponsor:**

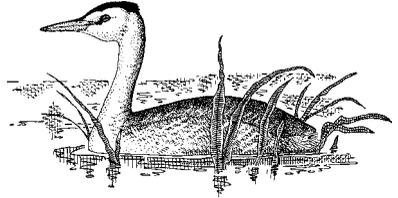
- contact David Cogger on 01606 832517 or at [memsec@kawos.org](mailto:memsec@kawos.org) to check if the species is still available.
- if it is, send a cheque for £25, made payable to CAWOS, to David at 113 Nantwich Road, Middlewich, Cheshire, CW10 9HD. Your cheque will be acknowledged.

# One Man's Birding

## A WEEK IN JUNE

When I look back on the summer of 2006, I think it will be defined by the first week of June.

I was helped by the weather, and by Charles Hull. The cold, windy spell had given way at last to settled high pressure; it was worth getting out again. And this year Charles had handed me four appealing tetrads for the Atlas, lying between Bunbury and the Peckforton ridge. There's nothing especially spectacular about this country, but it's a very pleasant, open rural landscape, with the low line of hills always there as a backdrop.



It's mostly intensive agriculture, of course: cereals, beans, the inevitable silage, but there are thick hedges, old oaks, occasional scrubby bits, and damp little streams (the map tells me that the ditch I crossed on the plank bridge is the beginnings of the River Gow). It is never monotonous. The woodlands are small and scattered, but most can be reached by using the excellent network of footpaths which criss-crosses the whole area. Often, the best way to a wood in one tetrad involves walking in through another - which makes for some fun in recording both the location of species and time spent in the tetrad. It is popular walking country, but early in the day and mid-week I have it to myself.

Four tetrads, four mornings: it became almost a routine. Rise early (by my standards at least), a quick breakfast and out into the field while it is still pleasantly cool and the thin mist hasn't quite cleared from the hills. Two or three hours walking and waiting, usually well away from roads and without anybody else in sight, feet soaked by the overnight dew. (I never learn; in this sort of weather it seems daft to wear wellies, but my walking boots leak in a few hundred yards. If anyone knows of a genuinely waterproof membrane that will withstand wet grass, please let me know.) As the sun burns through, the shade of woodland or an old oak tree is welcome: by mid-morning, thoughts of home, fresh coffee, a shower and change of clothes are uppermost in my mind. A good time, and a good place, to be out and about.

It was a time for young birds. As I sat on a stile to smoke a pipe, a Treecreeper alighted on a big oak, no more than ten feet away. It looked somehow odd; then another joined it, and I realised that they were very young birds, still with traces of down, soft pink feet and gapes, squeaking and begging from the two adults which quickly followed them. For some minutes, before they moved on, I had a close and intimate view of their family life. Next day, no more than half a mile away, it was the turn of the woodpeckers. The anxious calls of the adult Great Spots were followed by the appearance of a young bird, clinging desperately to the bark of a tree on the edge of a wood, peering downwards in horror at the ground below: if ever I have seen a woodpecker scared stiff, this was it. An hour later, and the Wrens calling anxiously around a cottage suggested a brood close at hand: sure enough, the hedge was full of fledglings, just out of the nest, still demanding to be fed while the parents panicked at my presence.

Then there were the Spotted Flycatchers: two in a morning was quite an event (though even better was returning to one site, a month later, and spending half an hour watching the pair taking food to a nest hole). After two years of failing to find Yellowhammers in six tetrads, several singing males represented a bit of a triumph (even if it was only low-level proof-of-breeding, which won't satisfy David Norman).

And, of course, there were the Buzzards: circling, mewing, hanging in the summer air over just about every wood and covert in the wide stretch of land I was covering. Somehow, they were what it was all about: drifting across the open spaces below the hills. Sure, I was doing some Atlas recording; more than that, though, I was enjoying perfect summer mornings in a lovely and relatively undisturbed part of Cheshire. Rural birdwatching at its best.....

\*\*\*\*\*

Which is a far cry from my activities half a century ago. In 1956, I was involved in the start of Hilbre Island Bird Observatory; we produced our first annual report in 1957 and this November (if we're spared, as an old Irishman of my acquaintance always used to say) I will attend an event to celebrate fifty years of the Observatory's existence. It's a close call as to which is the more important date of the year: this, or my seventieth birthday.

Of the nine 'regular observers' named in that first report, four are no longer with us: George Richards, John Craggs, John Gittins and (most recently, this summer) Geoff Pass have passed away. That 'The Obs' still survives and flourishes (more so than we could have hoped, all those years ago) is due largely to the Williams family - Peter, who was an early recruit and is still the mainstay of the organisation, Doreen who provides tireless support, and their sons Christopher and Stephen, who (unlike my own offspring, I am sad to say) have followed their father's enthusiasm for birding and for ringing. Look through the *Cheshire and Wirral Bird Reports*, and you will see that they have made a major contribution to the county's records.

Isn't there a saying about his first love being his last love? I will never get Hilbre entirely out of my system - but on a sunny, dew-soaked morning in June I'll settle for the sweep of Cheshire countryside below the ridge as a decent alternative.

**Bob Anderson, 102 Crewe Rd., Nantwich, Cheshire, CW5 6JD**

## **GUIDED WALK**

**Greenhills Farm, Lower Whitley, Warrington**

**Saturday 11th and Sunday 12th November 2006**

**Arrival: 10.00 - 11.00am Depart: 2.00pm**

The aim of the walk is to raise awareness of farm production methods and how the land is managed to encourage birds and other wildlife. The visit is organised by Myerscough College, sponsored by Natural England and supported by Cheshire FWAG Office.

The farmer, David Johnson, and experts from the Cheshire Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) will be on hand to answer questions about farming and the countryside and take visitors on a guided walk around the farm. There will also be displays and information about local food, access in the countryside for learning and enjoyment, information about other farms you can visit and some children's activities.

Visitors will learn about the crops that are grown on the farm to feed the cows and how milk produced by the cows is used when it leaves the farm. The milk goes to a co-operative dairy which is owned and run by dairy farmers to provide sustainable business for local farmers.

The farmer is very keen to encourage birds and other wildlife on the farm and has constructed several ponds and has established areas around the farm with flowering plants that produce pollen and nectar to encourage insects and wild bird seed mixes to provide food for birds in the winter. Birds that visit the farm include Skylarks, Yellowhammers and Tree Sparrows.

Light refreshments will be provided (FREE) and visitors can bring a packed lunch if they wish. Please come dressed in appropriate footwear and waterproof clothing.

Please contact me if you would like further information and/or to book a place.

**Gerri Potts email: [gpotts@myerscough.ac.uk](mailto:gpotts@myerscough.ac.uk) or telephone: 01995 642255**

**Connecting Farming and Food in England's North-West**

# The Tunncliffe Exhibition

A long-running exhibition of Charles Tunncliffe's art is on show at the West Park Museum, Macclesfield. The first phase ran from 1<sup>st</sup> May until 31<sup>st</sup> July, concentrating on his wide range of wildlife illustrations and commercial work, but also showing details of his working methods in picture construction and composition. This phase was a joint venture between Macclesfield Silk Museums and the newly formed Charles Tunncliffe Society.

The second phase began on 1<sup>st</sup> August and runs until the end of the year. Macclesfield RSPB Group has collaborated with the museum service for the second phase exhibition entitled "**Moorlands to Shorelands**". It concentrates on bird portraiture, measured drawings and Tunncliffe's links with the RSPB, for example, through his cover illustrations for the RSPB's former magazine *Bird Notes*. A good number of large original paintings have been loaned to the museum and are on display alongside selected bird illustrations from Tunncliffe's books. All the printed books, sketchbooks and cards displayed are collector's items.

Many members are familiar with Charles Tunncliffe's work and his links with Macclesfield, but for those who know little or nothing, here is a potted history of the man and his works.

Charles was born in Langley in 1901 but spent his childhood at Sutton Lane Ends Farm with his parents and three sisters. His emerging artistic talent was noted by Buckley Moffat, the headmaster at Sutton village school, who helped him secure a place at the former Macclesfield School of Art in 1916. He continued his studies at Manchester School of Art before winning a scholarship to the Royal College of Art in London. Charles obtained a teaching diploma but before leaving London he studied etching and engraving producing many of his finest etchings of the Cheshire countryside and farm animals with which he was so familiar.

In 1928 he returned to Macclesfield. He taught art at the Manchester Grammar School but in 1932 he had the opportunity of providing illustrations for Henry Williamson's *Tarka the Otter*. He subsequently illustrated more books for Williamson including *The Lone Swallow*. Now established as a wildlife illustrator he went on to decorate well over 100 books by many well-known authors including Alison Uttley.

Charles wrote and illustrated several books of his own, the first being *My Country Book* in 1942. His classic works *Mereside Chronicle* (1948) and *Shorelands Summer Diary* (1952) are now recognised as two of the best in the countryside genre.

Charles left Macclesfield in 1947 to spend the rest of his life at 'Shorelands', Maltraeth, an idyllic location by the Cefni estuary on the island of Anglesey.

Tunncliffe was a major contributor to the RSPB, producing dozens of cover illustrations for the society's magazines, some of which are shown in the exhibition. He undertook commissions in oil and watercolour and frequently exhibited at the Royal Academy.

Charles' beloved wife, Winifred, died in 1969 but although he found his remaining years lonely he continued to produce first-class work - including his famous 'measured drawings' (actually paintings) of birds, until his death in 1979.

If you love wildlife, then please go along to the West Park Museum and admire the work of a master craftsman and artist. The museum is open each afternoon from Tuesday to Sunday: 1.30-4.30pm until 31<sup>st</sup> October and then 1-4pm until the end of the year. Admission is free.

## The Charles Tunncliffe Society

If you are a fan of Tunncliffe's work, then please consider joining **The Charles Tunncliffe Society**, established in 2005 "To promote greater awareness of the life and work of Charles Frederick Tunncliffe OBE, RA 1901 - 1979". Information is available from the society's website: [www.thecharlestunncliffesociety.co.uk](http://www.thecharlestunncliffesociety.co.uk) or contact the society's Secretary and Treasurer, Gordon Wilson, 6 Priors House, Priors Haven, Tynemouth, North Shields, NE30 4EB or email: [gordonjenny@wilsonholland2443.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:gordonjenny@wilsonholland2443.fsnet.co.uk).

# Conservation News

A round-up of news from the CAWOS conservation representatives, who aim to keep an eye on what is going on in their area. If you have any issues or concerns then do contact your local representative (by letter or email preferably). They may be able to help or should know someone who can! The relevant contact information is listed at the end.

## HALTON AREA

rECOrd, the biodiversity information system for the Cheshire area, are undertaking biological recording work in Halton, as part of Halton Borough Council's programme of Biodiversity Action Plans. They are looking at specifically, Redshank *Tringa totanus*, Skylark *Alauda arvensis*, Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*, Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus* and salt marsh habitat. Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the work will consist of some in-house recording as well as collecting data from other sources around the area, such as local nature enthusiasts.

"To help us gain a better understanding of Biodiversity in Halton we require any records of species together with the number of individuals spotted, location and spatial grid references and a date when the record was taken. Any records you could provide will be gratefully received, and if you think you can help please contact Tom Hunt on tom@record-lrc.co.uk or rECOrd, Oakfield House, Chester Zoological Gardens, Upton, Chester, CH2 1LH. Visit [www.record-lrc.co.uk](http://www.record-lrc.co.uk) for more information."

**Tony Parker, Halton Area Representative**

## WIRRAL AREA

**Tree Sparrows:** The RSPB have set up three feeding/nesting stations at Thurstaston Hall Farm. Each station comes with 25 nest boxes.

**Reed Bed project:** There is a SITA funded (landfill tax credit scheme) reed bed project starting this year at Inner Marsh Farm RSPB involving 5ha of reed bed creation over a three-year period. Water levels will be managed on the fields.

**Burbo Bank Wind Farm:** Construction of 25 turbines has been under way during the summer off north Wirral. Cables have already been laid into Leasowe, thus avoiding disturbing the large flocks of wintering waders which feed there. The effect this wind farm will have on seabirds and wader movements within Liverpool Bay remains unknown.

**Hilbre Island airspace:** After much disturbance from low flying microlights (and other aircraft) within the Dee estuary over the past 12 months an agreement in principle has been reached with CAA for a height limit of 500ft over Hilbre, West Hoyle Bank and most of West Kirby shore. Unfortunately, the height limit will not be mandatory but will be marked on future aeronautical maps. There is also a problem with helicopters using the Dee estuary marshes as a training ground. Wirral Rangers (WBC own Heswall marsh) are currently trying to deal with the problem.

**Richard Smith, Wirral Area Representative**

## OLD CAWOS PRINTER

**Good home wanted** for HP Deskjet 980cxi printer, complete with a new black cartridge and a new colour cartridge.

Do you know a 'worthy cause' we could donate this printer to?

**Please contact: [sheilablamire@kawos.org](mailto:sheilablamire@kawos.org) or phone on 01565 830168**



# Membership News

**Welcome to the following new member:** Frank Duff

**At a Council meeting held on July 13th:**

- Council supported the Executive's decision to resubmit the Heritage Lottery Fund Application to fund the Atlas in partnership with Cheshire Wildlife Trust and Halton Borough Council.
- It was noted that members' contact details should not be placed on the CAWOS website without their permission.
- It was noted that members of Council were automatically Trustees of the Society; they, and prospective members, would be informed of exactly what that entailed.
- Recently purchased equipment would be insured.

**At a Council meeting held on September 14th:**

- Council agreed that CAWOS would fund Part One of the Abundance Survey as part of the Atlas project.
- Membership for 2006 had now reached 378, a new record.
- CAWOS had been present at the RSPB Extravaganza at Marton on September 10th and officers of the Society had made contact with several members and Atlas fieldworkers.
- Good progress was being made on the 2005 *Bird Report*.
- Concern was expressed about the poor response to the recent appeal for help in running the Society's affairs.
- The new system of using Smartstamp for our postage had proved easier than expected. The new postal rates should benefit CAWOS as both *Bird News* and the *Bird Report* would probably go at a lower rate than previously.

**David Cogger, 113 Nantwich Road, Middlewich, Cheshire, CW10 9HD**  
Tel: 01606 832517 Email: [memsec@kawos.org](mailto:memsec@kawos.org)

## CAWOS Indoor Meetings

**3rd Nov 2006 'BIRDING LA MANCHA & EXTREMADURA' by Allan & Susan Parker**

This talk looks at the bird rich areas of Central Spain, just a 2.5 hour flight from the UK. As well as the fantastic birdlife and superb scenery, much of the flora and fauna will be covered as well

**1st Dec 2006 'IN PURSUIT OF PENGUINS' by Tom Lawson**

We're very pleased to welcome back Tom, who will focus tonight on the amazing birdlife (especially penguins!) and the incredible scenery of the Subantarctic Islands of New Zealand - a truly wild place.

**5th Jan 2007 'BIRDS OF A WELSH MOORLAND' by John Lawton Roberts**

This 'Welsh moorland' is one of Wales' richest heather moors, intriguingly different from those even a short distance to the west, and is home to several birds now considered to be under threat.

**2nd Feb 2007 'THE RIVER' by Paul Hobson**

Water is a very important habitat for birds and Paul's talk tonight looks at the life of a river, starting off as a tumbling, upland stream, and ending up in the vastly different world of the estuary.

**2nd Mar 2007 AGM - to be followed by Prof David Norman**

**50,000 HOURS OF FIELDWORK – FOR WHAT?**

Fieldwork for the bird Atlas has just finished, and analysis and publication now gets into full swing. What are the records telling us? For some preliminary findings, come along and find out!

# Diary

## NOVEMBER

- 2 CADOS 'THE MAGIC OF SWANS' by David Cummings
- 3 **CAWOS** '**BIRDING LA MANCHA AND EXTREMADURA**' by Allan and Susan Parker
- 5 Birdwatch, Riverbank Rd car park, Lower Heswall, meet 9:00am (HW 10.38, 9.8m)
- 7 ADNHS 'FACE TO FACE WITH OWLS' by Bill Higham
- 8 HO 'A LANE IN A POLISH MARSH' by Mike Lane
- 12 HPRSPB Blithfield Resr, meet at the Memorial Car Park, Marple at 8:00am
- 12 KOS Clocaenog Forest, meet at the Sessions House, Knutsford at 9:00am
- 14 MRSPB 'BIRD HABITATS OF THE PENNINES AND SCOTLAND' by Gordon Yates
- 17 NCRSPB 'THE RSPB IN NORTH WALES' by Mike Duckham
- 19 NCRSPB Marshside and Southport, contact John Drake 01928 561133
- 19 WGBG Attenborough Nature Reserve by coach, contact Marjorie Mason 01625 525781
- 19 MRSPB Attenborough Nature Reserve by coach, ring for details
- 20 HPRSPB 'BIRD HABITATS OF THE PENNINES AND SCOTLAND' by Gordon Yates
- 21ADNHS 'A SLICE OF OZ – THE BLUE MOUNTAINS' by T.W. Barkley
- 24 WGBG 'A WILD LIFE PHOTOGRAPHER'S DIARY' by John Power
- 24 KOS 'ISLAND BIRDS' by Andy Hirst
- 25 Birdwatch, Banks Road car park, Lower Heswall, meet 10:30am
- 26 MRSPB Neumann's and Ashton's Flashes, depart Duke Street car park at 9:00am

## DECEMBER

- 1 **CAWOS** '**IN PURSUIT OF PENGUINS**' by Tom Lawson
- 3 WGBG Marshside and Martin Mere by coach, contact Marjorie Mason 01625 525781
- 3 MRSPB Marshside and Martin Mere by coach, ring for details
- 7 CADOS 'FLOOD PLAINS OF THE ORINOCO' by John Raines
- 8 WGBG 'GOA, WHERE BIRDS OF THE EAST & WEST MEET' by Tom Gibbons and Michael Thompson, followed by Christmas social
- 9 NCRSPB Wigan Flashes, contact Tony Parker 01925 726986
- 9 ADNHS Marbury walk and pub lunch, ring for details
- 10 KOS Marshside and Martin Mere, meet at the Sessions House, Knutsford at 9:00am
- 10 HPRSPB Cromford Canal, meet at the Memorial Car Park, Marple at 8:00am
- 10 SRSPB Llanfairfechan/Conwy RSPB by coach, ring for details
- 10 HO Llanfairfechan/Conwy RSPB, ring for details
- 11 SRSPB 'THE SECRET LIFE OF THE NIGHTJAR' by Phil Palmer
- 11 HPRSPB CHRISTMAS PARTY
- 12 ADNHS 'THE NATURAL HISTORY OF MARBURY COUNTRY PARK' by Chris Moseley
- 12 MRSPB 'BIRDING AROUND THE PYRENEES' by Allan and Susan Parker
- 13 HO 'A TASTE OF ISLAY' by Gordon Yates
- 15 KOS CHRISTMAS PARTY
- 24 Raptor Watch, Old Baths car park, Parkgate, meet 2:30pm
- 26 HPRSPB Walk in Lyme Park, meet at Disley Station car park at 10:00am

## JANUARY 2007

- 4 CADOS 'SOUTH AMERICAN ODYSSEY' by Steve Holmes
- 5 **CAWOS** '**BIRDS OF A WELSH MOORLAND**' by John Lawton Roberts
- 7 CADOS North Wales coast, contact Neil Friswell 01829 770463
- 8 SRSPB 'ROADRUNNER COUNTRY' by Keith Offord
- 9 ADNHS 'DRAGONFLY QUEST' by Mike Taylor
- 9 MRSPB 'COSTA RICA – GEM OF CENTRAL AMERICA' by John Mather
- 10 HO 'HABITAT-UALLY BIRDS' by John Power
- 14 KOS Light Hazzles Resr, meet at the Sessions House, Knutsford at 9:00am

- 14 MRSPB North Lancashire coast, depart Duke Street car park at 9:00am
- 16 ADNHS New Year Dinner, ring for details
- 21 WGBG North Wales (by car) for Hawfinch depart from Guild at 8:00am
- 23 ADNHS 'MANCHESTER – THE BIG FREEZE' by Hugh Beggs
- 26 KOS 'THE ART OF BIRD MISIDENTIFICATION' by Tim Melling
- 26 WGBG 'GOLDEN PLOVERS AND RECREATIONAL DISTURBANCE' by Derek Yalden

## FEBRUARY

- 1 CADOS 'BULGARIAN BLACK SEA COASTLANDS' by John Lawton-Roberts
- 2 CAWOS 'THE RIVER' by Paul Hobson
- 2-4 WGBG Solway weekend by coach, contact Marjorie Mason 01625 525781
- 3-4 CADOS Norfolk weekend, contact Dave King 0151 327 7212
- 10 KOS Witton/Marbury/Anderton, meet at the Sessions House, Knutsford at 9:00am
- 10 ADNHS Dibbinsdale and the Wirral coast, contact Anne Mason 0161 980 8645
- 12 SRSPB 'WHAT'S IN A NAME?' by Tim Melling
- 13 ADNHS 'FLOWERS OF SIKKIM' by Marion Bray
- 13 MRSPB 'FIFTY YEARS OF BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY' by Clifford Heyes
- 14 HO 'BENEATH THE DARK CANOPY' by Michael Leach
- 17-18MRSPB Teesside Weekend, ring for details
- 23 WGBG 'WILDLIFE OF THE PENNINES' by Gordon Yates
- 23 KOS 'ALASKA - VANCOUVER TO GLACIER BAY' by Jeff Clarke
- 24 CADOS Forest of Dean, contact Don Pawlett 01244 677477
- 25 SRSPB Leighton Moss RSPB Reserve by coach, ring for details
- 27 ADNHS 'LIFE ON THE SEASHORE' by Hugh Jones

## MARCH

- 1 CADOS AGM + MEMBERS' EVENING
- 2 CAWOS AGM followed by '50,000 HOURS OF FIELDWORK – FOR WHAT?' by David Norman
- 6 ADNHS Supper and social, ring for details
- 11 CADOS Moore/Marbury, contact Nick French 01978 856522
- 11 WGBG Fairburn Ings & Old Moor RSPB by coach, contact Marjorie Mason 01625 525781
- 11 MRSPB Fairburn Ings & Old Moor RSPB by coach, ring for details

## AFFILIATED SOCIETIES

- ADNHS Altrincham & Dist. Natural History Soc, mtgs Hale Methodist Church Hall 7.30pm, contact Sec. Anne Mason 0161 980 8645
- CADOS Chester & Dist. Ornithological Soc, mtgs Caldy Valley Community Centre 7.30pm, contact Prog. Sec. Nick French 01978 856522
- CAWOS Cheshire and Wirral Ornithological Soc, mtgs Knutsford Civic Centre 7.45pm, contact Sheila Blamire 01565 830168
- CRSPB Chester RSPB Group, mtgs St Mary's Centre, Chester 7.30pm, contact Prog. Sec. John and Tracy Langley 01244 678781
- HO Hale Ornithologists, mtgs St Peter's Assembly Rooms 7.45pm, contact Prog. Sec. Beryl Peel 0161 980 8606
- HPRSPB High Peak RSPB Members' Group contact Peter Griffiths 0161 427 5325
- KOS Knutsford Ornithological Soc, mtgs Jubilee Hall, Stanley Road 8.00pm, contact Tony Usher 01565 873508
- LOG Lymm Ornithological Group, mtgs Lymm Village Hall 8.00pm, contact Prog. Sec. Hilary Unsworth 01925 860155
- MCOS Mid-Cheshire Ornithological Soc, mtgs Hartford Village Hall 7.45pm, contact Paul Kenyon 01606 77960
- MRSPB Macclesfield RSPB Members' Group, mtgs Senior Citizens' Hall 7.45pm, contact Ray Evans 01625 432635
- NCRSPB North Cheshire RSPB Members' Group, mtgs St Matthew's CoE Primary Sch, Stretton 7.45pm, contact Olive Giles 01928 733405
- NNHS Nantwich Natural History Soc, mtgs The Gables at 7.30pm, contact Sec. Mike Holmes 01270 611577, mike@uimprove.com
- SECOS South-East Cheshire Ornithological Soc, mtgs St Peter's Church Hall, Elworth 7.30pm, contact Sec. Colin Lythgoe 01270 582642
- SRSPB Stockport RSPB Members' Group, mtgs Stockport College of Technology, Lect Theatre B 7.30pm, contact Peter Hugo 0161 485 4024
- WGBG Wilmslow Guild Birdwatching Group, mtgs Wilmslow Guild HQ 7.45pm, contact Indoor Prog. Sec. Judith Rees 0161 980 5034

Will affiliated societies, who wish to advertise meetings of relevance to CAWOS, please send their programme to:- **Sheila Blamire, Woodruff Cottage, Clamhunger Lane, Mere, Cheshire, WA16 6QG or, preferably please, by email: sheilablamire@kawos.org**

**For further information on Outdoor Events within the county see  
the Birdwatcher's Diary at: [www.deeestuary.co.uk](http://www.deeestuary.co.uk)**



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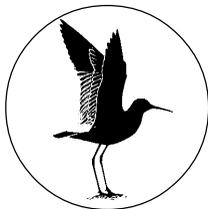
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The next indoor meeting is on Friday 3rd November 2006 at Knutsford:  
 'BIRDING LA MANCHA & EXTREMADURA' by Allan & Susan Parker

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