

S HOREHAM
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SPRING 2010 NEWSLETTER

Spring and Summer Outings 2010

April 25th (Sun) Goring Seawatch. Meet 08:00 at shelter opposite Alinora Avenue (am only). OS sheet 198 Ref TQ117018. Bring chair.
Leader: John Newnham 01903 247596

May 5th (Wed) Nightingale Walk. Meet 20:00 in Woods Mill car park. O.S. sheet 198. Ref. TQ218138 - Dist. 2K (1).
Leader: Val Bentley 01273 494723.

May 9th (Sun) Dawn Chorus. Meet 05:30 at RSPB car park Pulborough (am only). OS Sheet 197. Ref. TQ059164 - Dist. 3K (1).
Leader: Brianne Reeve 01273 452497.

May 28th (Fri) Anchor Bottom. Meet 19:30 in Beeding Hill car park (evening only). O.S. sheet 198. Ref. TQ208097 - Dist. 3K (2).
Leader: Chris Wright 01903 814859.

June 18th (Fri) Wiggonholt Common for Nightjars. Meet 20:00 in RSPB car park, Pulborough (evening only). O.S. sheet 197. Ref. TQ059164 - Dist. 2K (1).
Leader: Dorian Mason 01903 700456.

July 17th (Sat) Cocking Down. Meet 09:00 in car park on west side of road south of village. O.S. sheet 197. Ref. SU875166 - Dist. 5K (1-2).
Leader: Bernie Forbes 01903 753876.

Sightings for October to January

by
Clive Hope

The first Brent Geese flew west at Worthing on October 1st. On 2nd 600 House Martins and 70 Chiffchaffs were at Cissbury. There was a Bonxie and a Little Gull on 3rd off Worthing and a Pomarine, three Bonxies and two or three Arctic Skuas on 6th off Widewater where another observer recorded two Curlew Sandpipers. Next day a close Manx Shearwater flew west past Ferring. A splendid Hobby gave great views in the Adur valley near Cuckoo Corner on 9th/10th. As with most Octobers, passerine and hirundine passage was sometimes quite spectacular. As an example on the 9th, in two and a quarter hours, the following totals were logged all flying east at Ferring/Worthing:

Pied Wagtail 37; Grey Wagtail 3; Meadow Pipit 216; Goldfinch/Linnet 605 (many too distant to separate); Swallow 281; House Martin 32; Skylark 5.

At Wild Park on this day the counts were:

108 Swallow, 55 Linnet, 94 Goldfinch, 37 Chaffinch, 108 Meadow Pipit, Grey Wagtail, 12 Skylark, 7 Song Thrush, 7 Siskin, 70 Starling, 10 House Martin, 19 Pied Wagtail, 4 Chiffchaff.

A probable Yellow-browed Warbler was in a garden at High Salvington on 11th. On 14th no less than 1175 Goldfinches moved east at Worthing in one and a half hours. Where do they all go? On this day a Bottle-nosed Dolphin was seen moving slowly west well offshore at Worthing and in the afternoon a Greenshank was on the beach near the Bluebird Café at Ferring. One or two Ring Ouzels were elusive visitors to Cissbury in this period and on 17th there 105 Redwings were noted. A flock of ten Little Egrets flying NW over Goring beach on 18th was memorable. Firecrests made a good showing this autumn with birds turning up in several gardens and parks; not so Goldcrests for which our local ringers reported the poorest passage for many years. Chiffchaffs however were numerous in many coastal and river valley areas. At the end of the month Black Redstarts appeared rather later than usual. A surprise in the form of a lone Sooty Shearwater flew west on 27th in an otherwise quiet seavatch

The month ended with a Glossy Ibis in or around Ferring Rife for a couple of hours on 31st, part of a national influx and a welcome addition to our area's annual bird list. November was a good deal quieter with few unusual sightings, possibly due in part to the wet and windy weather deterring some observations, but a Short-eared Owl over Lancing on 2nd and male Hen Harrier at Beeding brooks on 15th were nice birds. A late Sandwich Tern passed Worthing beach on 21st.

Four White-fronted Geese in the upper Adur Levels on December 6th may have been just outside our area. Two Slavonian Grebes were off Worthing on December 15th. Overnight snow on 17th/18th signalled the start of much colder weather and 85 Lapwing flying high NW at Goring Gap on the latter date were seen escaping from more severe conditions in the east.

For the remainder of the year and the start of 2010 Dave Smith has written the following account.

Memorable birding experiences in the Shoreham area, late December 2009 into January 2010.

by
Dave Smith

The period will be long remembered for withering wind-chill, accompanied by sub-zero temperatures and heavy snow. The December freeze was short and produced relatively little hard weather movement but the more protracted spell in early January produced the unusual, together with some significant movements of the commoner species.

December 18th, heavy snow and very cold. I walked to Goring beach where far fewer birds were moving than anticipated but still logged hard weather species in small numbers, e.g. five Gadwall, 26 Shelducks, 37 Teal and a Curlew. On 19th the most interesting record was an incoming Kestrel which was picked up at distance and it flew towards the shoreline. Exhausted, it just avoided pitching into the sea but made it to the beach, scattering the local Carrion Crows. I hope it survived as it had probably undertaken the long journey from the Continent.

A female Peregrine took a Lapwing near Coombes on 22nd, and struggled to both lift it from the ground then carry it back to the Cement Works - encouraged by a vociferous male, no doubt its mate.

A close Great Northern Diver off Worthing on Christmas Day was a welcome find; it stayed until at least 28th. Two Shags were also feeding close inshore. The 27th produced a surprise – a juvenile Red-necked Grebe flying west along the tideline! For me though the best was to come on 28th, when four majestic Whooper Swans passed east at Worthing to then turn south-east towards the Continent.

January 6th, heavy snow, freezing conditions. At Goring beach three Shovelers flying east were overtaken by an unseasonal Great Skua, and a Little Gull passed in the opposite direction, its black underwing stark against the grey sea and falling snow. The first sign of passerine movement was of 184 Skylarks flying west plus 65 Linnets and a few Redwings. Conditions were so harsh that, even wearing full Arctic gear, two hours was the maximum possible for me to remain 'on duty' without hypothermia setting in!

Bernie Forbes, Dorian Mason and myself toured the local area on 7th. Two unexpected Wood Larks appeared briefly on Ferring beach with at least 100 Skylarks and 80 Fieldfares in the immediate area. Four more Wood Larks and 201 Lapwings flew past Widewater where, at 12.15, Bernie received a call from Owen Mitchell at Climping who had just seen a Great White Egret fly past him heading in our direction! Tense were the next few minutes as 'scopes pointed towards Worthing pier. Fifteen minutes elapsed. It should be here by now but maybe it's still following the coast but behind us? We turned to pick up a large egret with long, trailing legs, approaching low over the rooftops. Three 'scopes targeted it as it flew past us to disappear behind the tall block of flats at Widewater's east end. Huge size, long yellow bill, superb! We later heard that it had been seen in the afternoon at Pett Levels. A Jack Snipe and obliging Water Rail at Cuckoo Corner sealed the day.

A memorable seawatch off Worthing on 9th produced two close White-fronted Geese, one Goldeneye, plus Wigeon and Lapwing in three-figure numbers and ten Tufted Ducks, and most unusual passing offshore, a single male Pochard and two Snipe. The hard weather really biting now and I returned home to find 120 Fieldfares in my small garden. In the afternoon Bernie found the only Goosanders of the period, two smart males on the Adur near the railway bridge. Close-by, near the old Toll bridge was a remarkable flock of 10 Wood Larks. 210 Wigeon and eight Gadwall were on the river. Numerous Skylarks were in the Cuckoo Corner fields - Bernie estimated some 2000 birds. The freeze continued with further snow on 13th. Bernie, Dorian and myself re-convened on 14th and went over to Coombes, as a Brambling and Redpolls had been noted in a large

Linnet flock. Early morning and light poor, rain. On impulse we checked the east-west facing ditch here, and towards the river a Grey Heron sat beside the reeds – but what was that behind it? A clump of cryptic Bittern-shaped reeds or a Bittern? It turned its head – Bittern! After some thirty minutes it strode away, disappeared into a ditch and was not seen by us again. No doubt it was the same bird as seen by Chris Wright a few days ago which then flew into Ladywells. A strange animal, birding. Given, between Bernie and myself a collective 80+ (?) years watching in the local area, Great White Egret and Bittern were 'SDOS' firsts for both of us. Two new local area herons in one week? Unthinkable!

Later on 14th Redwings were everywhere on the coast with a minimum of 500 on Goring beach green alone. Thousands must have been strewn along the beaches, desperately foraging for any food available along the high tide line, the only area not frozen. A reminder that, although hard weather is good for we birders, it's life or death for the birds and I must admit it causes me great concern to see so many living on the edge. A thaw slowly set in, many of the passerines moved on and things returned to – well, near normal. Additionally over this period Mike Hall and Clive Hope in or around Ferring Rife recorded Bittern, Jack Snipe, Water Rail, Woodcock and Short-eared Owl. Great 'Rife' birds!

Birding in the Baltic by **Russ Tofts**

Having a brief chat with Bernie on an SDOS walk late last winter regarding a proposed exploratory trip to Estonia and Latvia, I expressed some interest but left thinking "It probably won't get off the ground". Little did I realise how quickly Shena would get the bit between her teeth and suddenly it was "Where shall we stay?", "What would be the best hire-car?" and "How many days do we need?". Tony Fenton had already shown interest and so, on a pleasant Friday in mid-May, the four of us assembled at Stansted for the flight to Tallinn, the Estonian capital. Sadly, we had all forgotten that Friday is 'Stag and Hen Day' and so the airport, and indeed our flight, was well-populated with strangely-attired (and indeed inebriated) guys and gals; thankfully it was only a short flight !! Arrival saw us clear immigration and customs quickly and we were soon in our hire-care heading westwards to our first night's hotel. The journey was uneventful but did produce a single Hazel Grouse before we arrived at the delight-

fully named Roosta Cabins. A quick meal and we were off to bed anticipating our first full day's birding. Sadly, I let the team down that night; despite using earplugs I was awoken by owl calls which I put down to being Pygmy Owl, rolled over and went back to sleep. It took 3 or 4 days to realise the culprit was actually a Tengmalm's Owl, a bird I have still never seen !

Our first full day saw us up early, greeted by cold but very clear and sunny weather, and off to Poosaspea, a well known Arctic migration hotspot. Hundreds of divers, mostly Red-throated, were passing by along with many Long-tailed Ducks and Barnacle Geese. Common and Velvet Scoters plus Estonia's 4th record of Great Skua, and single Peregrine, Merlin and Oortolan Bunting kept us on our toes. When passage started to ease off we left the area and headed south to our next hotel on the shores of Matsalu Bay. En route we visited Sutelepa Meri, an inland reed-fringed lake and, from one of its tower hides, we were able to see Red-necked Grebes, plenty of Little Gulls, Black Terns and a showy singing Savi's Warbler. Sadly, the calling Penduline Tit remained hidden. Saare Mansion provided us with a very pleasant mid-afternoon 'tea-and-cake' stop in lovely warm, sunny conditions; singing Icterine Warblers and Pied Flycatchers plus a single Wryneck at its nest-hole entertained us. Arriving at Haapsalu we were greeted with cold late afternoon conditions and a howling wind which effectively put paid to further birding. Upon checking into our hotel it transpired that my room had a great balcony with sunset views over the bay which I took full advantage of !!

Day three saw us up and away with several sites to check out prior to meeting up with Mati, our Estonian guide . First stop was yet another splendidly sturdy tower hide on the shores of Matsalu Bay. Plenty of Barnacle Geese flew in and numerous other species were seen. Later in the morning we arrived at Tuhu Soo, a raised bog, but sadly we were a little late in the day and birds were thin on the ground; a hunting Golden Eagle, shimmering in a heat haze, was an exception. Disused fish ponds at Pikla resounded to the song of Great Reed Warblers and a few White-winged Terns added to our ever expanding bird list. Our final stop added single Caspian Tern, Osprey and Citrine Wagtail.

Late afternoon with Mati was spent on and around his 'home patch' at the Kabli bird reserve; Black, Lesser-spotted and White-backed Woodpecker plus a smart Hobby and a Nightjar churring from the top of a conifer completed the day's birds.

Early morning at the Lapanina Hotel near Kabli in the south-western corner of Estonia saw us split into three groups with Shena and Bernie, ever the professionals, heading off before first light with the local guide. I chose to have a more leisurely start to the day and explore the hotel grounds, whilst Tony spent some quality time examining the back of his eyelids!! The hotel grounds produced super views of several Thrush Nightingale and a singing Bluethroat, the only one of the trip. An Icterine Warbler, a bird well-known for its mimicry, started off with Oystercatcher and moved via Swallow to Wryneck effortlessly. So good in fact that I thought there really was a Wryneck calling; when I double-checked there was indeed a Wryneck sounding identical to the warbler ! The hotel beach was quiet except for a couple of Little Ringed Plovers. Off-shore a delightful female Goosander sailed by with three chicks tucked up on her back whilst the by now ubiquitous Scoter, Long-tailed Ducks and divers moved north in small numbers. Bernie and Shena returned to meet Tony and I for a late brunch with tales of Three-toed Woodpeckers, superb views of Hazel Grouse and Nutcracker. Maybe I should have gone with them after all!

Our final destination in Estonia was Tartu, an old city in the south which has access to some good birding areas. A close roadside Lesser Spotted Eagle en route and some Temminck's Stint at Ilmatsu fishponds were nice. After an early evening meal we headed off to Karevere Meadows for a rendezvous with our target bird for the entire trip - Great Snipe. We did not have to wait too long before three or four of these birds started their lekking display—lots of strange clicking and squeaking noises and jumping about. Five Jack Snipe chased each other round the sky whilst a single unseen Corncrake, a fly over Black Stork and good numbers of Ruff rounded off the evening (along with a few mozzies). Attempts at celebrating our success were hampered by the local laws which prevented us from buying alcohol after 10 p.m.

Next day dawned with damp grey miserable weather and then we were off to Latvia not a phrase that rolls off the tongue too often!!

But that's a story for the next newsletter.

SDOS Summer Picnic

For the past few years we have had a very successful SDOS picnic at which everyone contributes food for a shared meal. The idea is that you just bring anything you like: savoury, sweet, salad, vegetable or fruit and everything will be put on tables for a gentle free-for-all!

On these occasions the tables were groaning with good stuff, there was plenty for everyone and very little wastage and no one person was burdened with providing the food. Some soft drinks will be provided but if you would like anything stronger please bring your own. Brianne and Robin Reeve have offered to host this Summer Picnic Lunch in their garden at

The Old Rectory, Coombes
on Sunday, July 11th 2010 from 12.30pm

Please contact Brianne by Saturday July 10th if you would like to come.

There will be a marquee in the garden so the weather should not be a problem. We have room to park quite a lot of cars but do car-share if you can. The Old Rectory is exactly 1.5 miles from the traffic lights by Lancing College in the direction of Steyning. If coming from Steyning take the road which runs on the west side of the River Adur down to Lancing College, our drive is the turning on the right after Church Farm, Coombes. SDOS signs will be on the gates.

Any queries please contact Brianne on 01273 452 497 or
email briannereeve@yahoo.com

**I/ We would like to come to the Summer picnic lunch on Sun.
July 11th**

Name(s).....

Telephone/ email.....

Garden Birdwatching – September to December 2009
by
Val Bentley

Thanks to all who are continuing with their garden recording. I have enjoyed perusing the forms, particularly the additional notes, and now have quite a pile to collate for the next Report.

Stanley Allen at Mill Hill commented that it was the first quarter when they had no Starlings at all even on the fat feeders, and there was a dramatic reduction in Goldfinch numbers, though 16 Greenfinches turned up in the final week. Both their visiting Great Spotted Woodpeckers preferred hanging fats to peanuts.

Reg Bradbury had 23 starlings in the week of 22nd November and 19 Goldfinches in the week of 25th October, but also saw numbers drop to single figures in December. There were seven Moorhens in John Cooper's Steyning garden in December and ten Magpies in late November. Laurie Keen found 14 Blue Tits during the week of 13th December, presumably a flock moving through.

Hazel Jackson's 30 House Sparrows in November was the quarterly record for this species and the highest number of Starlings was 30 in Gordon and Vera Tickler's garden, just beating Roy Sandison's 28.

Redwings were seen in seven gardens, Grey Wagtail in three and wintering Blackcaps in seven, with three of these records being of two individuals. The Ticklers reported their first "garden" Great Spotted Woodpecker since moving to their current house in Shoreham 21 years ago, and two more "garden ticks" were another Great Spot for Audrey Wisdom and Jays for David Tomalin. A Black Redstart seen by Roy Westwater at Ferring during the week of 25th October is an excellent garden record.

Of the 27 forms to hand, 12 reported no Starlings in their recording time, and seven failed to find any House Sparrows, whereas Blue Tits, Blackbirds and Robins were recorded in every participating garden.

The John Stafford Awards

Details of this years competition/s will be sent out separately after the rules have been finalised at the next committee meeting towards the end of May.

Bird Atlas 2007-11

Mapping Britain and Ireland's birds



The Breeding Season Survey (Number 3).

It hardly seems possible that this four year national survey is now more than half way through and, as we read this, the third and unexpectedly cold, winter season will have finished and thoughts will have turned to the forthcoming breeding season. Coverage across the county for this survey has been fantastic and there is great confidence that all the survey work will be completed. This progress and the presentation of the results at a county level can be seen on the Sussex Ornithological Society website at www.sos.org.uk where different species distribution maps are displayed each week.

Both the specific surveys (Timed Tetrad Visits) and general recording in the winter season are reasonably straight forward but during the breeding season the recording of breeding status adds another, more complicating, dimension to atlas fieldwork. The very precise recording of breeding status is a challenge which will keep the county's birdwatchers busy until the very end of the survey in July 2011. The table below (fig 1) shows the allowable codes and how these will be interpreted in the final analysis. Originally it was felt that the old, and traditional, breeding status markers merely representing the column headings would have been allowable but it appears these will now not be permitted. The major advantage of the current, and internationally recognised, coding system is that surveyors actually record precisely what is seen rather than making an interpretation of their observation

Across the county about 260 species have been recorded between April and July; from these about 180 have been recorded in our recording area. Of these 105 have been recorded as breeding with 77 species noted in the "confirmed" category, an additional 15 in the "probably" category and the remainder as being merely recorded in appropriate habitat or as a singing bird. The first map below (fig ii) shows the number of species recorded with a positive breeding status in each of the 96 tetrads (2km x 2km grid square) in our society's recording area. There are, fortunately,

no tetrads which are blank but the figure shows several tetrads with fewer than twenty species recorded as breeding. The range in our “patch” is, in fact, quite wide stretching from 54 in TQ10Y (Applesham) to just a single species in TQ21R (Newtimber Hill). Of course squares with low numbers may be ornithologically poor areas, dense urban development or, like TQ10F & W or TQ30B, only contain a small area of land. Furthermore some of the areas with smaller symbols may not yet have

Confirmed Breeding	Probably Breeding	Possibly Breeding	Non-Breeding
(large filled or red symbol)	(middle filled or red symbol)	(small filled or red symbol)	(small open or green symbol)
DD Distraction display or injury feigning	P Pair in suitable habitat	H Observation in suitable habitat	M Migrant record
UN Used nest or recent broken egg-shell	T Territory holding 1+ week apart	S Singing male or breeding calls	U Non-breeding summering record
FL Recently fledged young	D Display observed in habitat		F Flyover and not using tetrad
ON Occupied net	N Visiting probable nest site		
FF Faecal sac or food carrying to nest	A - Agitated behaviour suggestive of nesting		
NE Nest with eggs	I Incubation patch (mainly for ringers)		
NY Nest with young	B Nest building or hole excavation		

fig i

received much surveying attention.

Looking at some species reveals more closely how well breeding status is being recorded. It is likely that Blackbirds breed in each of the local tetrads. Furthermore it is a conspicuous species and finding strong evidence

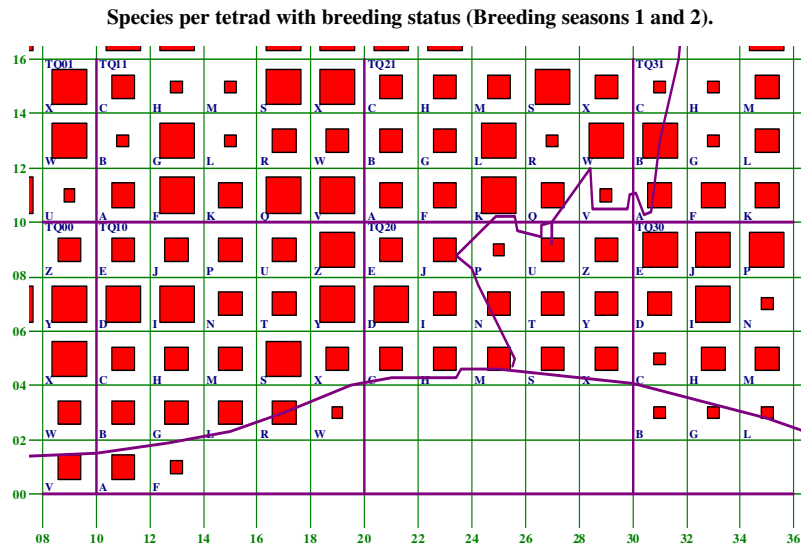


fig ii

for local breeding is fairly easy. Indeed this species, at 91%, has the highest number of tetrads with positive breeding and only Wren, Dunnock, Robin, Song Thrush, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Carrion Crow, Chaffinch and Greenfinch, the last perhaps rather surprising, exceed 80%. The first of the following maps (fig iii) shows Blackbird and in this figure the large red symbol indicates breeding has been confirmed, the medium sized symbol shows probable breeding in the tetrad and the small red symbol notes that breeding is possible. The small green circle indicated that the species has been recorded but no breeding codes have been assigned to the record.

Some of the maps for scarcer, and more secretive, species reveal large holes. Bullfinch (fig iv), for example, is certainly not found regularly along the coastal strip and the empty squares here probably represent the species absence. However, it is not so scarce north of the downs yet in only six tetrads has breeding been confirmed. Bullfinches often only reveal their presence by their soft calls or seeing a white rump flit away and finding more definitive evidence of breeding can be difficult and time consuming. There are certainly many similar species which, like Bullfinch, are under recorded and amongst the most widespread of these, each with less than 10% of tetrads recording confirmed breeding, are Pheasant (2.1%), Collared Dove (6.3%), Swift (4%); Skylark (1%),

Blackbird breeding (seasons 1&2).

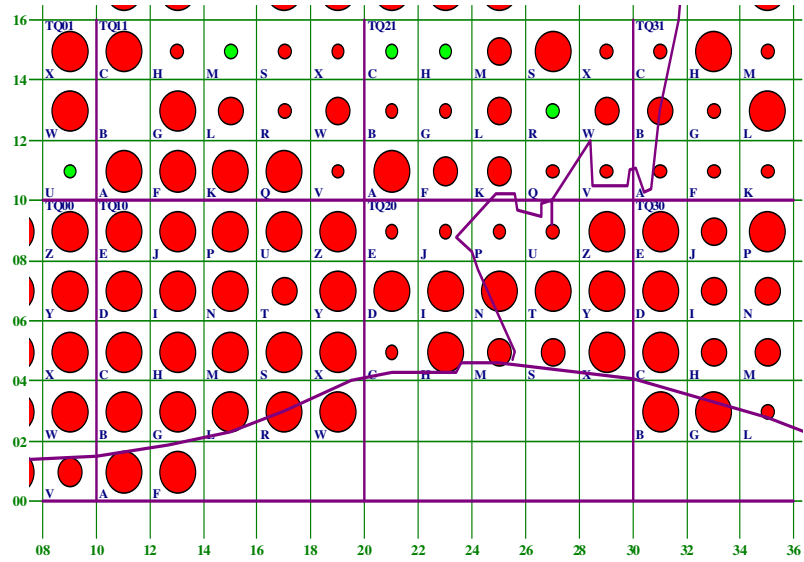


fig iii

Bullfinch breeding (seasons 1&2).

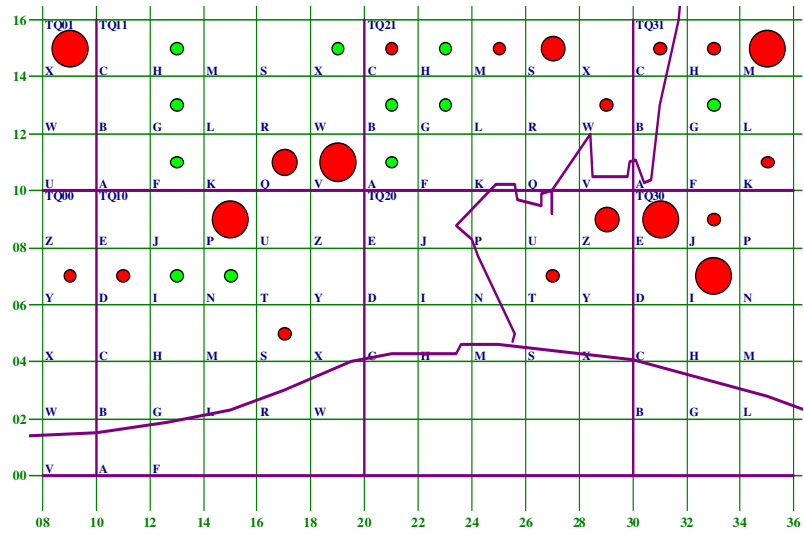


fig iv

Blackcap (9.4%), Chiffchaff (5.2%), Goldcrest (2.1%), Coal Tit (5.2%) and Treecreeper (4.1%).

So how can you help? There is still plenty of time to contribute. The methodology of the survey has been described in previous Newsletters and can be found on the BTO website (see below). All of the local Timed Tetrad Visits (TTVs), however, have already been done or allocated to observers. Despite this there are massive gaps in the records particularly in finding evidence for breeding. I have lodged an Excel file containing the details of the breeding records on the society's yahoo site; do have a look at this and see where you may be able to "plug a hole". Often records from a garden or something seen whilst out and about not necessarily whilst bird-watching may fill a space.

Why not consider spending some mornings bird-watching in one of the local squares with fewer breeding species recorded rather than travelling to one of the county's well watched sites such as Pagham Harbour or Pulborough Brooks; you may see fewer birds but what you see (and record) will be of more value to the Atlas.

The essence to achieve the most complete distribution maps is to encourage as many observers as possible to assiduously record and log their observations for common, scarce and rare species. Ensuring that an appropriate breeding status code is entered in the correct place rather than a text note confirming breeding will guarantee the breeding record will be recognised during the analysing of the final plethora of records. Realistically this can be done in two ways:-

1. Entering Roving Records on-line into the Atlas or species lists or casual records into the BTO's BirdTrack recording system. Please ensure, however, your sites are defined at a tetrad or 1 km square level. Both are found at the BTO's website at <http://www.bto.org.uk/>.
2. Enter your sightings into the SOS's data-base by using the "Record Capture" software. This can be obtained, with instructions, by downloading from the SOS website at <http://www.sos.org.uk/forms/index.php>.

John Newnham January 2010

Photos for 2009 SDOS Report

We would like photos of the following species for consideration when compiling the 2009 SDOS Report. They should preferably have been taken in the SDOS area in 2009 (with the date and location supplied).

Any Divers, any Grebes, Bewick's Swan, Egyptian Goose, Teal, Pintail, Glossy Ibis (the Ferring Rife bird), Raptors (other than Kestrel and Sparrowhawk), Common Sandpiper, Purple Sandpiper, other waders (except Oystercatcher), Sandwich Tern, Iceland Gull (the Southwick bird), Tawny Owl, Yellow Wagtail, Redstart, Waxwing (the Goring birds), Red-backed Shrike (the Cissbury male), Reed Warbler, Whitethroat, Lesser Whitethroat, Brambling, Tree Sparrow (the Mill Hill birds), Yellowhammer, Corn Bunting.

Bird Records for 2009

Please send in your records for 2009 without delay to the Recorder Clive Hope or via the SOS recording method (see their webpage).

Schedule I Species

It seems appropriate at the start of the breeding season to remind SDOS members of the following list of Schedule I species i.e. those species afforded special protection under the Wildlife Protection Act 1981.

Whilst most of the species below do not occur as breeding birds in our areas some do and some may do in the future; others occur just outside our region in Sussex, Hampshire, Kent etc.

It is an offence to disturb any of the following species at or near the nest. Special permits, issued by Natural England, are required for the surveying,

photographing, or ringing of these species.

Full details of the act can be found at www.jncc.gov.uk

Avocet	Red Kite	Serin
Bee-eater	Merlin	Shorelark
Bittern	Golden Oriole	Red-backed Shrike
Little Bittern	Osprey	Spoonbill
Bluethroat	Barn Owl	Black-winged Stilt
Brambling	Snowy Owl	Temminck's Stint
Cirl Bunting	Peregrine	Bewick's Swan
Lapland Bunting	Leach's Petrel	Whooper Swan
Snow Bunting	Red-necked Phalarope	Black Tern
Honey Buzzard	Kentish Plover	Little Tern
Chough	Little Ringed Plover	Roseate Tern
Corncrake	Common Quail	Bearded Tit
Spotted Crake	Black Redstart	Crested Tit
Crossbill spp.	Redwing	Short-toed Tree
Stone Curlew	Scarlet Rosefinch	Creepers
Diver spp.	Ruff	Cetti's Warbler
Dotterel	Green Sandpiper	Savi's Warbler
Golden Eagle	Purple Sandpiper	Dartford Warbler
White-tailed Eagle	Wood Sandpiper	Marsh Warbler
Gyr Falcon	Scaup	Whimbrel
Fieldfare	Common Scoter	Woodlark
Firecrest	Velvet Scoter	Wryneck
Garganey		
Black-tailed Godwit		
Goshawk		
Black-necked Grebe		
Slavonian Grebe		
Greenshank		
Little Gull		
Mediterranean Gull		
Harrier spp.		
Purple Heron		
Hobby		
Hoopoe		
Greenshank		
Kingfisher		

During the close season

Goldeneye
Pintail
and
Grey-lag Goose (in Outer Hebrides,
Caithness, Sutherland and Wester Ross only)

Field Outings Reports
by
Noranne Biddulph

Adur Valley Walk on Saturday 5th December

On a grey day 13 members met Chris Wright at 1pm on the east side of the River Adur just north of the old Cement Works. While waiting for everyone to gather Jake and Nick saw a female Sparrowhawk and a Raven and Chris found a Peregrine on the Cement Works chimney. We walked over the footbridge and found Common and Black-headed Gulls, Starlings and two Stonechats in a flooded field. Continuing south on the west side of the river Meadow Pipits and Pied Wagtails were found. Near the line of poplars, a Green Woodpecker was spotted feeding on the ground behind a Carrion Crow. On the pylons we could see a small group of Cormorants which have moved into this area recently.

As we approached the Brook fields at Coombes we saw at least ten Moorhens and a Grey Heron. We crossed the fields leading towards Cuckoo Corner where Bernie picked up two rather pale Great Black-backed Gulls amongst a few Herring and many Common Gulls.

We added a Little Grebe and a Common Sandpiper before getting our first fleeting glimpse of a Kingfisher as it disappeared along the dyke. At Cuckoo Corner many of the more common birds were taking advantage of the food which is put out for them each day. A rat was also spotted but perhaps it was a Water Vole!

There was a pleasing sight of about 300 Lapwings near the boat-houses and a good view of a Mistle Thrush flying towards the trees at Cuckoo Corner where a pair bred this year. In the fields below the A27 were several Little Egrets and a 'siege' of ten Grey Herons. The rain had become persistent by this time and it was a long way back but we saw Song Thrush and a Redshank and two more views of a Kingfisher. Everybody was exceedingly wet by the time we reached the cars but it had been a cheerful, pleasant outing with a good mix of members and 37 species were seen.

Post Christmas Outing on December 29th 2009

In chilly and damp, later very wet, weather eighteen stalwart members assembled at the Shoreham Fort car-park for the annual post Christmas

meeting. Considering the conditions we did rather well to clock up 23 species with at least two close Purple Sandpipers, several Gannets, a party of five Great Crested Grebes, a Red-throated Diver and a Razorbill heading east and the usual Turnstones on the beach. Moving on to Widewater several Little Grebes, a Coot, a Redshank and an obliging Kingfisher were seen. The Water Rail that has been a regular feature of this locality in winter for several years could not be found. Watching from the beach as the rain started, five Wigeon on the sea and half a dozen Dunlin were added to our tally. A cheerful group made yet another enjoyable couple of hours to end 2009.

Henfield Farmland and River Walk Sunday 10th January or 'the Walk that wasn't but was'

Due to very inclement weather this walk was cancelled but Val Bentley and Nigel decided to meet at the Downslink Car Park at 9.30 just in case anyone did turn up. Not finding anyone else there they set off along the Downslink and saw plenty of Tits, including Long-tailed and nice views of a male Bullfinch. A small pile of feathers indicated that something had reduced the local Wren population by one. Along the river there were two Herons, a few Mute Swans and sadly a dead, half eaten juvenile Swan on the edge of the water. They saw a single Snipe and flocks of Lapwing, with one of 30 birds. The highlight of the walk was a great view of a Kingfisher whizzing along the river! Peter Casebow also turned up for the walk but missed Val and Nigel. He decided to walk along the river and had an excellent view of a Common Sandpiper feeding on a grassy patch for at least 20 minutes. There were also a lot of individual Song Thrushes along the old railway with some Redwing and Fieldfare on the other side of the river.

Beeding Brooks on 17th January

On a glorious day of winter sun Terry Goble was joined by thirteen members in Pound Lane at 2pm. The route was a circular walk over the main grazing fields and the east bank of the Adur, finishing at a small copse, before heading back. Walking up the lane past the former RDA stables a number of common urban and woodland birds were seen. A white ball of fluff spotted by Shena in a distant hedgerow turned out to be the first of many sightings of a Barn Owl. In the horse field on the left many Fieldfare and Redwing looked resplendent in the winter sunshine.

Heading north up the fields we saw a few Snipe and had distant views of Buzzards, we also added to the list Skylark, common Finches, Meadow Pipits and a Heron. Whilst studying the Buzzards we were treated to the flash of a Kingfisher streaking across our view. Waterfowl were spotted on the floods across the river, Mute Swan, Mallard, Shoveler, Teal and a handsome Gadwall. A bird on a distant pylon was finally identified as a juvenile Peregrine. Later six members enjoyed the sight of a Peregrine chasing a flock of small birds around a pylon on which 40 Cormorants were perched, it circled three times but no prey was taken. Further down the river towards Bramber we had our best views of the Barn Owl drifting over the river. The group then made their way back towards Pound Lane stopping at a small copse for the regular Tawny owl. Unfortunately the owl remained out of sight but its 'kwick' calls were heard. By this time it was dark and everyone enjoyed a torch-lit procession back to Pound lane. A total of 42 birds were logged during a most enjoyable afternoon.

Impromptu Bittern Watch at Burton Pond on 27th January

Jean Carder was responsible for this impromptu meeting. Its aim was to see at least one Bittern on Burton Pond. Russ Tofts offered his help. Several members, and indeed some non-members, assembled at Burton Pond at about 3pm. As they waited for the Bittern a Crossbill flew over, four Mandarin Duck arrived and a Little Egret perched up near the Cormorant roost. One, possibly two Bitterns were glimpsed at the far end before a more obliging bird was picked up in the low vegetation near the concealed bench. It was seen by all, on and off for an hour. A second bird went to roost in the reeds near to the road before two others were spotted in a similar pose, nearby in the reed bed. So, a successful meeting with four Bitterns observed and probably another bird at the far end. A male Hen Harrier, Grey Wagtail and a Kingfisher were also seen by some.

Dungeness on Sunday 14th February

Unfortunately Dave Smith had to cancel this meeting due to freezing weather conditions.

Teal, Shoveler and a few Pintail but what made the lashing rain and very cold start worthwhile was a party of 16 Bewick Swans close by, in the flooded meadows, their bugling calls carrying in the wind.

New Forest on Sunday 21st March

A splendid Spring day greeted Russ Tofts and 13 members in the New Forest. A Raven en route was a good start and two more were seen during the morning. Several groups of Hawfinch flew past, seven being the maximum number of individuals. Plenty of Buzzards were on show whilst a Woodlark could be heard but proved elusive. Mistle Thrushes, Marsh Tit and a single Grey Wagtail were heard. At Blashford Lakes 8 Goosander were seen along with all the usual duck 'suspects'. Two of the four Black-necked Grebes were seen, albeit distantly, and two Little Ringed Plover were fairly close to the hide. Two Dunlin and 75+ Black-tailed Godwit were present. Ten to twenty Sand Martins were overhead and earlier in the day they had been photographed investigating the new nest wall. In the Woodland hide there were still a few Siskin, Lesser Redpoll and Brambling to entertain us close by. Finally, a visit to one of the hides overlooking Ivy Lake produced a Bittern for one member, it proving just too elusive for the rest of the group. Final day total of 77 species for the group.

Reminder

The last indoor meeting of the season is April 13th and is titled:-
Farming and Wildlife Conservation on the Norfolk Estate
By
Dicks Potts and Peter Knight

Newsletter Changes

The next Newsletter, in August, will hopefully have photos/artwork included. Please feel free to contact me if you feel you have or could produce something, especially if it is pertinent to the SDOS area and the summer months. Thanks.

Russ Tofts (Newsletter Editor)