# KINGFISHER

## Hampshire Ornithological Society Magazine

The Magazine for Hampshire Birders

Spring 2023 Issue 175

Inside this issue:

Annual Members' Day

Farlington Marshes

Survey News

# CONTENTS

**Features**


5 Members' Day information
9 My Bird Valentine
11 Bid for an Expert in our auction
13 Not good news - the latest Bird Crime report
16 Red all over - Redwing photo challenge
24 Did You Know? - What's in a ring!
36 Take Five - photographer Chrissie Wiffen
39 HOS surveys


**Regulars**


18 Out (Lady) Birding. A report of the first walk of the Ladybirders
19 Walk the Walk - upcoming HOS walks
22 Out Birding - Brownwich and Hill Head
28 What's Been Spotted - sightings report
32 Focus on Farlington
43 Desert Island Books - Izzy Fry
45 Book Reviews
48 Photo Finish - great photos for you to enjoy


**An apology**
We featured a picture of a Goshawk on page 10 of the last issue of Kingfisher. Unfortunately, this brilliant picture by Richard Jacobs, fell victim to production gremlins and the quality of the picture on the page fell far short of the quality of the image Richard provided. We apologise to Richard and our readers for this mistake, and to show you how good the picture is, we have used it on the front cover of this issue. Enjoy.

**Picture credits**
Front cover picture - Juvenile Goshawk by **Richard Jacobs**
Contents page - Kingfisher by **Rob Porter**
Centrespread - Pintail by **Chris Rose**


FSC www.fsc.org
MIX
Paper from responsible sources
FSC® C021017

**Editorial**

**Editor:** Carol Rawlings
**Email:** hoskingfisher@outlook.com

**HOS Contact Points**

**Web:** www.hos.org.uk
**Email:** photos@hos.org.uk
**Twitter:** @HOSbirding
**Facebook:** Hampshire Ornithological Society

**Sales**
**Sales Officer:** Nicola Whitmarsh
**Email:** hos.nwhitmarsh@yahoo.com

**Walks**: Di Warner
**Email:** warner838@btinternet.com

**MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS AND RENEWALS**

**Please contact**

Membership Secretary Kay Shillitoe, on 01329 833086 or email kay.shillitoe@gmail.com
Westerly, Hundred Acres Road, Wickham PO17 6HY
You will find application forms at www.hos.org.uk

**President:** Chris Packham
**Chair:** Keith Betton
**Honorary Secretary:** David Brookes
**County Recorder:** Keith Betton

**Opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of HOS or of the editor.**

**The Hampshire Ornithological Society is a registered charity (no. 1042309)**

**Kingfisher is printed by Inprint 196 Old Shoreham Road, Hove BN3 7EX.**

# FROM THE EDITOR

Hello and welcome to the Spring Issue of Kingfisher, our first for 2023.

You may well have noticed some changes to the magazine this time around. For starters, we have reduced the number of pages from 60 to 52, but don't worry. We've kept many of our most popular features, and continue to showcase the best work from local photographers throughout the magazine. It may only be 52 pages, but we have managed to pack loads in. Just think of us as the Tardis, more on the inside than you might think!

The other change is that we are printing on slightly thinner paper now. You won't be surprised to hear that we are making these changes to save money. The costs of printing and paper, like so many others, are increasing and we had to take action to stay within our budgets.

However, I'm sure that you won't even notice and will continue to enjoy Kingfisher just the same.

I'm writing this on a crisp, cold, sunny day in January, which is a welcome relief from all the rain we've had since Christmas. It's a perfect day to head to my local, and favourite, reserve Farlington Marshes, which I do whenever I can. Read all about Farlington on Page 33.

**Cheeky Wren - Karen Austin**

And as I'm sitting here a cheeky Wren has just popped into the garden to snack on insects. I bet it won't return for the Big Garden Birdwatch though!

This issue is the last one before our Annual Members' Day on 1 April. We have an absolutely stellar line-up of speakers, including two of the most influential women in nature conservation in this country, RSPB Chief Executive Beccy Speight and

BTO Chief Executive Juliet Vickery. Not only are they speaking to HOS members, they have also chosen their bird valentines for this issue. Have a look on page 9.

They are joined at Members' Day by TV's Urban Birder David Lindo, author of the Rare Birds of Hampshire book John Clark and James Aldred, filmmaker and author of Goshawk Summer. I'm not sure how many other county bird societies could attract such a marvellous set of speakers, and they are sure to make this year's Members' Day one to remember. You'll find more information about the day on page 5 and it would be great to see you there.

**Robin - Brian Cartwright**

In a first for HOS we are running a Bid for an Expert auction where you can bid to spend time out in the field with one of our experts. This is a great opportunity to learn and see first hand what they do for the birds they care so passionately about. Details of how to bid are on page 11 and we aim to announce the winners at Members' Day.

**Grey Heron - Brian Cartwright**

Our survey work is kicking off in earnest over the next few months. You can find details on pages 39 to 42 - and we are always on the look out for volunteers to help with this important work. So, if you can help we'd be delighted to welcome you on board.

HOS young member Izzy Fry has chosen her desert island books in this issue – see her selection on page 43. We also had a great response to our photography challenge when we asked for pictures of Redwing. See some of the best on page 16.

Now for some not so good news. The latest RSPB Bird Crime Report doesn't make good reading with 120 confirmed incidents of raptor persecution in the UK, 80 of those in England - with the finger pointing again at the shooting industry. I'm sure we all agree that it is high time stronger action was taken to stop these beautiful birds being killed to further the interests of game shooting.

Finally Chrissie Wiffen is our featured photographer this month. She has shared five amazing pictures with us and I'm sure you will be blown away when you see them.

I'm off to Farlington now to see if I can get a glimpse of the Short-eared Owls. Enjoy your birding, stay warm and if you see me at Members' Day come and say hi.

Carol

# MEMBERS' DAY 2023

This year's members' day is fast approaching, and, as ever, it promises to be an interesting and informative day.

We have a great panel of speakers lined up once the business of the AGM is done, and, as you will see below, they are covering a wide range of topics. So, there's bound to be something of interest to all our members.

| | |
|---|---|
| 9.30am | Exhibition opens |
| 10.30am | HOS AGM |
| 11am | Beccy Speight, RSPB Chief Executive - Nature is in crisis. Together we can save it. |
| 11.45am | Juliet Vickery, BTO Chief Executive - Using citizen science to understand and conserve birds |
| 12.30pm | John Clark author of Rare Birds of Hampshire |
| 1pm | Exhibition open/lunch break |
| 2.30pm | James Aldred - Goshawk Summer |
| 3.15pm | David Lindo - A world of urban birds |
| 4pm | Close |

If you think an AGM is not for you, hopefully this lineup will make you think again. This is a really good chance to find out how HOS is spending your money, and a brilliant opportunity to meet fellow birdwatchers and swap stories.

You will also hear some of the most important players in nature conservation in this country talk about their work and the task before us if we want to protect nature effectively.

Those of you who were at last year's event and witnessed our brilliant young members talking about their favourite birds across the year, will know that the future of conservation is in safe hands.

But, there is no limit to the talent and enthusiasm of HOS young members, and this year they will be showing their creative side with an art and photography exhibition created especially for this AGM. It will be well worth a look so head to the exhibition space and see for yourself.

And while you are there take a look around the exhibition and pick up a bargain or have a chat with exhibitors about their work for nature conservation.

This year we have expanded the number of exhibitors, which will be split between two separate halls, albeit pretty much opposite each other. There really is a lot to look at during the breaks.

You can also Bid for an Expert in our auction (see page 11 of Kingfisher). Leave your bid at reception by noon to be in with a chance of winning.

There will be plenty of parking, but please do follow the directions given by our volunteer parking marshals, so that we ensure everyone does get a space and we keep all exits clear.

Drawing on feedback from previous years, there will be extra signage at this year's event to aid clearer movement between the registration areas, the exhibitor halls and the main auditorium.

The other feedback we've responded to relates to the raffle, which this year will have a greater range of prizes, so please look out for those selling tickets on the day.

There will be ample spaces both inside, and outside if the weather is good, to eat your packed lunch, which members are encouraged to bring, although this year there will be a mobile tea and coffee vendor onsite for members to purchase refreshments.

The facility for members to purchase refreshments has been secured by HOS, but please be aware that there will be only one vendor on site so it's likely there will be a queue and waiting times during the main breaks.

At this time it's not clear whether the vendor will take card and cash payments, so we suggest that you bring both if you want a coffee or tea.

Finally, please do remember to visit the registration desk, as it's important we have an accurate record of how many members have attended.

So, register, get a drink, grab your raffle tickets and prepare to have a good day. See you on 1st April.

# MEMBERS' DAY SPEAKERS

**We have an amazing speakers' panel for this year's event, Find out a little more about them before you hear them speak.**

**JOHN CLARK**

John had a successful career in teaching, becoming an Assistant Head. His interest in birds started at school and in his teenage years he was already producing a report on birds seen in the Hampshire/Surrey Border and a book on the area in 1984. He was co-editor of Birds of Hampshire in 1993. He was County Recorder for Hampshire from 1992 to 2009, and in 2022 he wrote the HOS book *Rare Birds of Hampshire*, which assessed the status of every rare bird ever seen in Hampshire.

**JAMES ALDRED**

As a keen young climber and wildlife photographer growing up in the New Forest, James became obsessed with exploring the forest canopy. Those formative years defined his future choice of career as a wildlife cameraman. In 1997 he worked on a couple of "normal" films but was missing nature too much so headed to Bristol to enter the world of natural history film-making. He got his first proper break with the BBC in 1998 when they sent him to film in the rainforest canopy of Borneo. Since then he has been lucky to film in dozens of different countries and to spend long periods working in remote wilderness locations.

**BECCY SPEIGHT**

Beccy started her career working in local government in Scotland and then with the management consultants Smythe Dorward Lambert. In 2000 she joined the National Trust, initially as the general manager of the Stourhead Estate and in 2005 became director for the East Midlands and Midlands regions. She moved to be chief executive at the Woodland Trust in 2014 and led expansion of the woodland creation charity and also a review of its priorities. In 2019 she was appointed as the Chief Executive Officer of the RSPB.

**JULIET VICKERY**

Juliet started as a DPhil student at Oxford studying Dippers and going on to complete a post doctorate at the University of East Anglia on Brent Geese before taking up a lectureship at the University of Edinburgh. After a short spell with Scottish Natural Heritage she spent 10 years at BTO as Head of The Terrestrial Ecology Unit, leading their work on the ecology and conservation of farmland birds. Then for 11 years she was Head of International Conservation Science at the RSPB. In 2020 she was appointed Chief Executive of the BTO.

**DAVID LINDO**

David was born and raised in London and has loved anything nature-related since he was very young. When he was three he went missing during a family party - the police were called and a search party dispatched and he was eventually found standing outside a graveyard watching Magpies. David's main passion is for urban birds and he spends his time doing as much as he can to promote the appreciation and conservation of the birds that share our city lives. He now travels the world encouraging people to enjoy urban birding. Through his TV appearances, writing, talks and tours he inspires people to re-look at their urban environments.

## SPECIAL OFFER FOR MEMBERS' DAY

The Historic Birdlife Records of Milford-on-Sea by local naturalist, conservationist, birder and author Keith Metcalf will be on sale at Members' Day for a discounted price.

This book is a must for anyone who enjoys delving into the historic life of birds that live and breed or who have passed through our coastal village (including Keyhaven) over the past 220 years.

It includes all records that can be traced back to 1802 and each species is covered in depth in chronological record order right up to summer 2022.

Major contributors include; Marc Moody (Hurst birding specialist), Peter Hobby (who lived on Hurst for many summers), the late and much-missed Tony Locke and Chris Barrass (Keyhaven bird observatory recorder) and of course Keith's own 34 years of collecting bird-diary records specifically for this book and who has lived and worked in the parish for that time (including 17years as Milford's Parish Clerk). The foreword is written by HOS Chair Keith Betton .

If you are not going to be at Members' Day you can order signed copies of this from: keithmetcalf2022@btinternet.com at a recommended retail price of £49. Postage costs depend on your address, details available at time of ordering.

# MY BIRD VALENTINE

**It's that time of year again, red hearts and roses and bird love stories. Juliet Vickery and Beccy Speight, two of our members' day speakers, share their bird valentines with us.**

**Richard Jacobs**

## Enduring love for Dippers - Juliet Vickery

Feisty characters, beautifully adapted to a life along rushing upland streams, Dippers were birds I barely knew until they became the focus of my PhD over 30 years ago. Usually a first encounter is a small brown bird flying away fast and low over the water with a high pitched 'zeet' call, but my enduring love and admiration for these birds is rooted in watching them through the trials and tribulations of three summer breeding seasons.

Building and then raising young in carefully concealed nests of domes of moss and fearlessly plucking aquatic insects from turbulent river-beds. Uniquely equipped to hunt underwater with nostrils that can seal, eyes that can refocus rapidly underwater, long claws that act like crampons and a dense oily plumage that traps air bubbles forming a silvery sheen of camouflage.

I love them for their toughness and their resilience, for the way they 'fit' so perfectly into magical environments and because, more than any other bird, they started me out on a career that has afforded me so much joy for so many years.

## A love affair with Gannets - Beccy Speight

It's some time in the mid 70's. My sun burned arms are pressed to the varnished top of the wooden boat as I throw up for the second time. I don't generally get sea sick, but the tiny fishing boat is making like a funfair swingboat, only side to side.

**Andy Tew**

We're here to look at the gannet colony on Les Etacs, just off Alderney - and my father has insisted we need to do it from a boat, despite the weather. The other family we made friends with on the campsite are on board but clutching each other, looking wild eyed. All talk of the planned evening barbecue has mysteriously ceased.

But the gannets are magnificent up close. Mean, lean killing machines with a piercing gaze, so near and yet so far on their separate island off an island home. Through a haze of sea spray and rain, when I manage to raise my head, my love affair has begun.

# NEW COUNTY RECORDER

Martin Pitt has now succeeded Keith Betton as County Bird Recorder for Hampshire.

Many of you will know Martin. He lives in Basingstoke and is a dedicated patch-watcher in that area. He has a wide knowledge of Hampshire and its birds and has sat on the HOS Records Panel for the last couple of years.

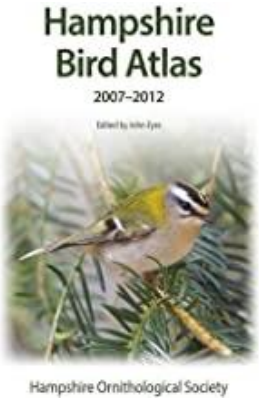
He takes over the role from Keith Betton who became County Recorder in 2010. Keith will still be part of the recording team but will focus more on our rare and scarce breeders, making sure that we have a good understanding of how they are doing and what we can do to help them.

Keith will be dealing with all your 2022 records, working alongside Martin until those have been collected and sorted. So, if you haven't submitted them yet, please send your records to Keith.

Keith is still Chair of HOS  which is growing and we have a big agenda, providing great birding opportunities for everyone while attracting and enthusing the next generation of birders.

In the meantime, good luck to Martin as he takes on his new role!

# ATLAS GOES DIGITAL




The Hampshire Bird Atlas is now sold out, which means many of you will already have bought a copy.

However, if you never quite got around to it and you don't want to miss out on this excellent publication, we have made it available to download from the HOS website.

We are asking for a suggested £5 donation for the download and you can find out how to donate and download at:

hos.org.uk/welcome-to-the-hos-website/join-us/publications/

# BID FOR AN EXPERT

In a first for HOS we are offering members the chance to bid for time out in the field with a bird expert who will share their knowledge and insights with you.

This will be half a day, one on one with our expert on a mutually convenient date, looking for their special birds and understanding their challenges.

Sound good? Then you need to take part in our Expert Auction! It couldn't be easier. Just go to hos.org.uk/bid then choose your expert and place your bid(s).

The money we raise will be used by HOS for conservation and research projects in Hampshire. It's a very good cause, and a fantastic opportunity to expand your birding skill and knowledge. So, don't miss out, make a bid today!

You will also be able to bid in person at the Members' Day. There will be bidding forms at reception as you arrive. Just fill it in and hand it back.

If you are not able to get online and won't be at the Members' Day, you can still bid. Ring 01489 853116 and leave your name, telephone number and bid(s). The winning bids will be announced at the end of the HOS Members' Day on 1 April 2023.

### THE SMALL PRINT

The deadline for submitting online or telephone bids is 11.59pm on 31 March.
Deadline for bids at Members' Day is Noon on 1 April.
You will go out with your expert on a mutually convenient date. The winning bid is for one person only. You must arrange and pay for your own travel If there is a tie for the winning bid we will offer those bidders the chance to increase their bid. If no increased bids are made we will draw lots for the winning bid. This may delay the announcement of the winner.

**Lining up to place a bid! Photo Chris Rose**

# OUR EXPERTS

**Andy Page**

Andy is Head of Wildlife Management for Forestry England in the New Forest and elsewhere. A lifelong birder, Andy is particularly keen on raptors, and spends much of his time monitoring **Honey-buzzards, Goshawks and Hobbies**.

Join Andy as he looks for these birds and learn about how the New Forest is managed for birds.

**Keith Betton**

Keith is Chair of HOS but also a key member of the team that monitors nesting **Stone-curlews** on the Hampshire Downs. These birds are well camouflaged but are also very shy. They nest in places well away from public footpaths.

Join Keith as he checks known areas for these birds, see them in their habitat, and maybe even see them nesting or their chicks (depending on the date), and learn all about them.

**Pete Durnell**

Pete is the warden of the Keyhaven to Lymington nature reserve – arguably our best birding site. Apart from looking after nesting birds on land, Pete also has to monitor nesting gulls and terns.

Depending on the date, Pete will aim to take you out to see the birds – **Common, Sandwich and Little Terns**, along with thousands of gulls. Also learn about how the reserve is managed.

**Steve Egerton-Read**

Steve is the Eagle Officer for Forestry England based on the Isle of Wight. In August he hopes to take delivery of new **White-tailed Eagle** chicks for release on the island. He gets to be their foster parent for the first few weeks and then they are released.

Join Steve looking for his beloved eagles and learn all about their lifestyle and how they live on the island and elsewhere.

# NOT GOOD NEWS

The RSPB's Birdcrime 2021 report, published last November, reveals 108 confirmed incidents of bird of prey persecution in the UK, 80 of which were in England.

The total includes 50 Buzzards, 16 Red Kites, seven Peregrines and three Goshawks. Rare Hen Harriers and White -tailed Eagles continue to be affected. The majority were either shot, trapped or poisoned.

All birds of prey are protected by law under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Scientific papers, intelligence and satellite tagging studies for key species such as Hen Harrier suggest the annual Birdcrime totals are only the tip of a far larger iceberg, and that many killings go undetected and unreported.

In 2021, over two thirds (71%) of all confirmed incidents of raptor persecution related to land managed for gamebird shooting, where birds of prey are seen by some as a threat to gamebird stocks and illegally killed.

**Buzzard - Rob Porter**

In England alone there were 80 confirmed incidents, making it the second-worst year on record. One shocking incident was caught on camera by the RSPB, showing a gamekeeper beating buzzards to death in a trap in Nottinghamshire. Another involved a gruesome mass grave of birds of prey concealed down a well in Wiltshire.

Two of the worst counties based on 2021 data – Norfolk (13 incidents) and Dorset (12 incidents) – are lowland areas, dominated by pheasant and partridge shooting. The third worst county was North Yorkshire (10 incidents), which includes grouse, pheasant and partridge shooting.

Data over 10 years adds Derbyshire and Cumbria to the list of raptor crime 'hotspots'.

Modern technology in the form of GPS satellite tagging continues to reveal suspicious disappearances of young Hen Harriers, including Asta, whose Government-funded tag was later found inexplicably attached to a dead Crow. Her body was never recovered. However the circumstances are highly suspicious.

Mark Thomas, RSPB head of investigations UK, said: “The data in this report clearly show that raptor persecution remains at a sustained high level, especially in England, with over two thirds of the incidents connected to land managed for gamebird shooting.

“The illegal shooting, trapping and poisoning of birds of prey has no place in modern society. In a nature and climate emergency, the deliberate destruction of protected species for financial gain is completely devastating and unacceptable.

“The time for reform is now long overdue. Licensing driven grouse moors is the first step in clamping down on those estates engaged in criminal activity at no loss to those operating within the law.”

In December 2021, a UN assessment on UK wildlife crime, requested by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra), was published. It contained several recommendations on raptor persecution, including stronger regulation of the shooting industry. The RSPB is urging the Government to take these UN recommendations forward urgently, and to follow Scotland’s example in introducing licensing for driven grouse shooting.

**White-tailed Eagle - Chris Rose**

Strong enforcement partnerships, a robust RSPB Investigations team and a passionate body of supporters (including HOS members) are creating a force to be reckoned with against raptor persecution. But only Government action will ensure birds of prey are kept safe from illegal persecution for good. The RSPB is calling for:

- an introduction of licences for all driven grouse shooting
- better enforcement of existing regulation and additional regulation for pheasant and partridge shooting
- better, enforceable General Licence conditions.

HOS Chair Keith Betton said: “Our President Chris Packham is one of the leading voices against raptor persecution and HOS will continue to work with Chris and to build on our good links with Hampshire Police to tackle this problem. It is unthinkable that in this day and age, where there is so much interest in, and enjoyment of, nature and wildlife, these criminals think they can just destroy our natural heritage like this. As HOS members we can play our part by putting pressure on politicians and police forces alike to take real and meaningful action against the criminals and stamp out this problem once and for all.”

# KESTRELS AND MOUSE PEE!

In my article about how birds use their senses I mentioned how Kestrels can see UV light. This is true for many birds as it helps them to find prey and it enhances some plumage characteristics.

**Kestrel - Rob Porter**

However, despite many authors (me included) stating that Kestrels use this ability to detect rodent urine it now seems that this may not be the case after all.

Several scientists have set out to prove or disprove the theory, and it seems that the amount of reflection from the urine would be too small for the Kestrel to detect. So that story has been debunked. However, it does not take away from the fact that birds have amazing abilities.

I used to be nicknamed "Bird Brain" at school as a friendly insult. Now I reckon it is actually a compliment!

**Keith Betton**

**Goosander - Rob Porter**

# RED ALL OVER

**In the last issue we challenged our members to get photographs of Redwing, a popular winter visitor to Hampshire. And boy did they deliver. Here are some of the pictures we received.**

**By seven year old Kosta Schismenos**

**Brian Cartwright**

**Andy Tew**

**Rob Porter**

**Dick Shepley**

**Dave Levy**

**Brian Fairbrother**

# OUT (LADY)BIRDING

**Report by Janice Beck**

Optimistically booked back in December, Saturday 14 January was to be our first 'official' Ladybird(ers) walk. The aim was to give us all the chance to kick start our year list at Keyhaven Marshes. But the weather forecast for Saturday was awful so we postponed the walk to Sunday. This meant half of group couldn't join us so we were down to 10.

Leaders Chris Barrass and Keith Metcalf met us at the Milford Conservation Hide where we saw flocks of 300 plus Lapwings and around 250 Golden Plover being mobbed by a female Marsh Harrier. Right in front of the hide there were 20 pairs of Gawall and 30 Coot, together with lots of Mallards now in full breeding plumage. The Little Grebes defied our attempts to count them with their constant diving.

Our walk started on the seaward side of Keyhaven. The tide was still high so the Turnstone flock had to make do with picking through the seaweed. Our first Brent Geese were swimming among the moored yachts and Curlews were feeding on the mud islands.

**Gadwall - Brian Cartwright**

A keen cold wind was keeping the birds out of sight and it took a while for us all to see a Dartford Warbler in the gorse bushes.

The first lagoon gave us Pintail, Sheduck, Shoveler, Tufted Duck, Wigeon, Black-headed gull and more Lapwings. There were just four Teal huddled down together with a single Oystercatcher and three Redshank.

It had been our intention to walk a circular route around Keyhaven but the footpath inland was under deep floodwater. We were all keen to try and see Eider so we braved the strong cold wind and headed towards the open water. There we saw Grey Plover and Dunlin but no Eiders. The wind was fierce and the skies darkening so we decided to return by the same route, hoping to pick up a few more species on our return. We did finally see a Little Egret and a Meadow Pipit.

A final look in the hide rewarded us with close views of a Goldcrest and a quick glimpse of a Wren. Our final total for the day was 44 species. It was really rotten weather but it was lovely to meet some of the other Ladybirders.

# WALK THE WALK

## New for 2023!

**Song Thrush**
**Brian Cartwright**

This year we are running a series of Bird Song walks in addition to the main walks programmes. Places are limited to 10 people per walk so if you want to apply for a place please contact Di Warner (warner838@btinternet.com). If your place is confirmed you will be sent details of where to meet in advance.

Because of the teaching element there is a £10 charge per person which is payable on the day in cash. This money will be used to support conservation and research projects in Hampshire.

The tutors will teach you about bird songs and calls and the locations are designed to offer a variety of different species and sounds. We will see birds too, but the big focus is on sound. The Bird Song walks are listed below with *.

## General HOS walks

If you want to come along on a HOS walk you generally don't need to book, However, there are some exceptions - please check on the HOS website. To book you need to call or text walks co-ordinator Di Warner on 07883 344724 or email warner838@btinternet.com

Please do not just turn up where booking is required as you will be turned away.

We have only put the dates and times of the walks here. There is more detailed and up to date information on the HOS website (hos.org.uk).

It's also worth checking the website to make sure there have been no changes since Kingfisher was published. If you can't access the internet please contact Di . Extra walks will also be on the web pages if they have been arranged after Kingfisher has been printed. Walk leaders should also check the details of their walks on the website and let Di have any amendments.

The walks are for HOS members, but non-members are welcome.

For general queries about the walks programme please contact Di. For questions about a specific walk please contact the leader direct.

**Sunday 12 March**
Warblington Shore to Hayling Oysterbeds (3 miles)
Leader Kevin Stouse. 9.30am - 1.30pm

**Saturday 18 March**
Dur Hill near Burley (3 miles)
Leaders Tina and Brian Vaughan. 9.30am - 1.30pm

***Saturday 25 March**
Bird song walk at Fishlake Meadows
Leader Andy Lester. 7.30 - 10.30am

**Sunday 26 March**
Normandy Lagoon & Oxey Marsh (3 miles)
Leader Ian Packer. 9.30am - 1.30pm

**Wednesday 29 March**
Kilmeston, Hinton Ampner, Winchester (4 miles)
Leader Nick Wiley. 10am - 1.30pm

**Sunday 2 April**
Edenbrook Country Park, Fleet (3 miles)
Leader John Blithe. 2.30 - 4.30pm

**Sunday 9 April**
*Bird song walk at Crab Wood
Leader Tom Jordan. 7 - 10am

**Sunday 16 April**
*Bird song walk at Lucy Hill, New Forest
Leader Keith Betton. 7 - 10am

**Saturday 22 April**
Durlston Country Park, Swanage (5 miles)
Leader Julian Mosely.10.30am - 3.30pm

**Sunday 23 April**
*Birdsong walk at Keyhaven
Leader Nigel Matthews. 7 - 10am

**Thursday 27 April**
Fleet Pond and Bramshot Heath, Fleet (5 miles)
Leader John Clark. 9am - Noon

**Saturday 29 April**
Portland Bill (5 miles)
Leader Ian Packer.10am - 3.30pm

**Little Grebe - Brian Cartwright**

**Sunday 30 April**
*Bird song walk in Alice Holt Forest
Leader Keith Betton. 7 - 10am

**Friday 12 May**
Evening walk at Hockley Meadows, Shawford, Winchester (2.5 miles)
Leader Tom Jordan. 7 - 9.15pm

**Saturday 13 May**
*Bird song walk at Winnall Moors
Leader Tom Jordan. 7 - 10am

**Sunday 14 May**
Shatterford Bottom, Bishop Dyke and Denny Wood, New Forest (5 miles)
Leader Ian Hampson. 10am - Noon

**Saturday 20 May**
*Bird song walk at Lucy Hill, New Forest
Leader Nigel Matthews . 7 - 10am

**Sunday 21 May**
Fielders Farm, Hall Lane, Selborne (5 miles)
Leaders Chris Piper/Kate Faulkner. 9.30am - 1.30pm

**Saturday 27 May**
Hook with Warsash and Chilling, Southampton
(3 to 4 miles)
Leader David Wallace. 10am - 2pm

**Long-tailed Tit - Brian Cartwright**

**Sunday 28 May**
Keyhaven (4.5 miles)
Leader Ian Packer . 9.30am - 1.30pm

**Wednesday 31 May**
Cheriton, Ganderdown (4 miles)
Leader Nick Wiley 10am - 2.30pm

**Saturday 3 June**
Magdalen Hill Down Butterfly Reserve (1.5 miles)
Leaders Dave and Anna Stewart. 10am - 1pm

**Saturday 10 June**
Blashford Lakes HWT (2 miles)
Leader Ian Packer. 9.30am - 1.30pm

**Sunday 25 June**
Whitchurch (3 miles)
Leader Felicia Green. 9am -12.30pm

# OUT BIRDING!

## Hill Head and Brownwich 17 December 2022. Report by Dave Wallace, pictures by Bob Wright

The 16th December had been icy and bitterly cold and 18th produced heavy rain all day. Sandwiched in between two weather systems the HOS walk took place in fine, dry conditions – what a stroke of luck.

A select group set off from Hill Head with the all too familiar sight of a dog on the beach seemingly being encouraged by its owner to disturb as many shore birds as possible. Worse was to come on the canine front.

**Turnstone**

A raft of Eider close in gave good views and Dunlin Oystercatcher, Redshank, Turnstone, Sanderling and Ringed Plover were soon ticked. By the reedbed close to the Visitor Centre both Kingfisher and Water Rail were on show as was a drake Pochard on the river.

On reaching the Barista coffee van we stopped for a short snack break and one of our group placed his lunch on the sea wall to scan the beach. Before you could say "Dark-bellied Brent Goose" a Labrador appeared from nowhere and wolfed down his sandwiches. There ensued a heated conversation between a hungry birder and an embarrassed dog owner.

Moving slightly inland we checked the fields at Brownwich and had a female Marsh Harrier flying east as well as six Golden Plover. Various regular local birds were now on our list: Song Thrush, Pied Wagtail, Common Pheasant, Meadow Pipit, Stock Dove and Lapwing. The lunch stop was at Brownwich Pond with its welcoming electric fence. It was still largely frozen over but Little Grebe, Shoveler and Mute Swan were all present.

**Ringed Plover**

As we made our way south along the eastern edge of the Chilling fields, swirling flocks of Starling and Linnet came into view and soaring above them was a Peregrine. Returning via Brownwich cliffs we saw a single Reed Bunting, fly-over Black-tailed Godwits and two more Marsh Harriers over Titchfield Haven. The total species count was 56 plus Jay, only seen by one of our number.

An enjoyable day was had by all despite the group leader exceeding the scheduled walk duration by 45 minutes and the estimated distance by over a mile. Apparently we managed 10,000 steps. Special thanks are due to Ian for the use of his scope and expertise, Amanda for acting as scribe and Bob for some excellent photos.

# WATCHING JACK SNIPE

## Report and Pictures by Tom Jordan

It's perhaps one of the paradoxes of birding that weather conditions which are hardest for birds are often those that give us birders the most exciting sightings. Storms, hurricanes and sudden downpours can all produce falls of migrants or lost vagrants, while unusually cold or snowy weather can force birds out of their usual haunts as they search for food.

In Hampshire the most conspicuous feature of hard weather birding is probably Fieldfares and Redwings coming into gardens, something that many HOS members observed during the 'Beast from the East' of early 2018.

On my local patch around Winchester hard weather typically sees Water Rails become far more visible, Lapwings arriving into the water meadows and Snipe congregating in any unfrozen areas. On occasion locally unusual species move into the area such as a flock of eight Dunlin that visited Winchester Sewage Farm during the 'Beast'. However the holy grail of hard weather birding is one of the most enigmatic of British birds, the Jack Snipe.

I have been lucky enough to find Jack Snipe a couple of times during previous cold snaps, but this December I had greater success, helped by a conveniently timed loan of the HOS thermal imager! Over a couple of days I found eight Jacks in three locations, with the best location proving to be a ditch in the St Cross area, which hosted up to four Jacks for at least four days, along with several Common Snipe and two Water Rails. In normal times this ditch is used only by Grey Wagtails and the occasional Little Egret, however the running water emerging from an underground stream was clearly providing a lifeline to the new visitors. Unsurprisingly, once temperatures rose on the 19th, both Common and Jack Snipe vanished, probably not to be seen again until the next cold snap.

A thermal imager is by no means essential for locating Jack Snipe during hard weather and one may experience success using binoculars to scan the edges of shallow streams or other unfrozen areas such as watercress beds. However, having the thermal imager on this occasion certainly enabled me to locate a higher number of birds than I would otherwise have done. Most pleasingly, it also ensured the birds could be easily relocated on each visit to the ditch without the risk of flushing them.

# DID YOU KNOW?

## WHAT'S IN A RING?

**By Carol Rawlings**

We've been ringing birds in the UK and Ireland for over 100 years. So, why do we do it and what does it show us?

The British and Irish Ringing Scheme is organised by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO). Over 900,000 birds are ringed in Britain and Ireland each year by over 2,600 trained ringers,

Ringing generates information on the survival, productivity and movements of birds, helping us to understand why populations are changing.

The Ringing Scheme in Britain started in 1909. Back then it was actually two schemes: one run by British Birds and one at Aberdeen University. A third scheme, organised by Country Life magazine also started at this time, but the rings were not uniquely numbered. The Aberdeen Scheme ended during the First World War, and in the 1930s, following the founding of the BTO, the British Birds scheme was transferred to its current home.

In the early years the aim was to answer some of the more basic biological questions of the day. Where do our summer visitors spend the winter, and where do our winter visitors breed?

We now know the answer for many, but not all, species. But at the time, migration routes were only known from observations of birds on spring and autumn migration, and the legend of Swallows spending the winter in pond bottoms was not long dead.

The first ring recovery of a Swallow in South Africa came in December 1912. Identifying that Swallows spend the winter in South Africa was outstanding at the time, and the importance of this shouldn't be forgotten.

**Swallow - Dawn Balmer**

These migrations are awe-inspiring journeys. Even after 100 years, the wonder still exists; a Sand Martin ringed at a Hampshire colony was recaught by the same ringer the next winter in Morocco, only for the two to be reunited again the next summer back at the same colony!

Distant recoveries also illustrate these amazing, but regular, journeys. An Arctic Tern that flew into a Japanese whaler off the Antarctic pack ice is the only BTO-ringed bird found at a southern latitude higher than the northern latitude where it was ringed.

We'd be foolish to think we know it all now, and there are several species for which we still don't have answers to these simple biological questions. Wintering areas of declining species such as Swift and Pied Flycatcher remain a mystery, and while we know so much about Swallows, we know next to nothing about House Martins, with just two recoveries south of the Sahara (in Senegal and Nigeria).

**Greenfinch - Dawn Balmer**

Migration patterns change as well, and can do so remarkably quickly. We all know that Blackcaps winter around the Mediterranean, but the late 1970s saw an increasing winter population in Britain. Obviously these were our own birds choosing to stay put and risk the winter weather!

But ringing showed that this was far from the truth, and that our wintering birds were actually from the Continent. These were birds that had migrated west instead of south and milder winters and better food availability made this a successful strategy.

As the scheme grew (in age and size), then so did the record ages recorded in birds. Very few wild birds reach anything like their maximum potential age as there are too many factors working against them – predators, accidents, weather, disease, starvation and plain bad luck. Even so, the top five longevities are staggering.

The oldest is a Manx Shearwater aged 51 years, Nine years behind is a Razorbill aged 42, followed by a 41 year old Fulmar fand a  40 year old Oystercatcher. Last, but not least, is a 39 year old Pink Footed Goose.

These records are even more remarkable when you consider the vast distances these birds will have covered in their lifetimes. Our 51 year old Manx Shearwater from West Wales will have spent 51 winters off the coast of southern Argentina, covering 1.5 million kilometres just getting there and back!

A little closer to home, the species ringed the most in Hampshire in 2021, with a staggering 111,058 fitted with rings, was Blue Tit. At the other end of the scale, in the same year, six Little Buntings were ringed.

If you find a ringed bird please report it via the BTO website at bto.org. You will also find advice on health and safety around Avian flu.

**Ring in situ - Photo RSPB**

# WHAT'S BEEN SPOTTED

## September to December 2022 by Tom Jordan

Around 220 species were seen during the period. This summary focuses on larger counts, scarcer species and unexpected localities reported throughout the period (capitals indicating national rarities or species with less than annual occurrence in Hampshire).

Most records are from Birdguides and Goingbirding websites: a much more complete picture will eventually appear in the Hampshire Bird Report. Regular site summaries appear monthly in *Birdwatching* magazine and on the HOS website. Sightings refer to single birds unless otherwise stated. Inclusion in this list does not indicate that sightings of rarities have been considered by the appropriate records committee.

**Russian White-fronted Goose:** Farlington Marshes 5 30/11 - 27/12; Testwood Lakes 5 16/12, 21/12
**Black Brant:** Farlington Marshes 18/11 - 21/12
**Pink-footed Goose:** Tundry Pond 1/9, 2/9, 20/9; Fleet Pond 6/9; North Ripley 16/10; Ripley Farm Reservoir 17/10; Somerley Park 29/11
**Garganey:** Fleet Pond 3/9, 18/9; Farlington Marshes 7/9 -19/9, 8/10 - 11/10; Titchfield Haven 15/9, 18/9, 19/10
**AMERICAN WIGEON:** Efford Lake, Pennington 15/12 - 24/12
**Red-crested Pochard:** Rooksbury Mill 11/9, 2/10, 22/10, 11/11; Ivy Lake, Blashford Lakes 9/10; Rockford Lake, Blashford Lakes 11/11; Ibsley Water, Blashford Lakes 14/11 - 29/12
**RING-NECKED DUCK:** Wellington Country Park 2 7/10 - 10/10

**American Wigeon - Andy Tew**

**Scaup:** Langstone Harbour 20/12
**Velvet Scoter:** Chilling 11/11; Lee-on-the-Solent 3 27/11; 3 4/12 - 9/12; Hill Head 3 28/11; Langstone Harbour 5 14/12, 5 24/12, 4 29/12; Chichester Harbour 20/12
**Long-tailed Duck:** Langstone Harbour 12/11 - 24/12; Chichester Harbour 21/12
**Red-breasted Merganser:** [Inland records] Fleet Pond 6/11; Ibsley Water, Blashford Lakes 13/11
**Swift sp:** Hayling Island, Northney 24/10, Trigpoint Hill, Timsbury 29/10; Stoneham 2 29/10; Nursling 30/10; Old Basing 8/11; Pennington, Milford Road 10/11
**Cuckoo:** Keyhaven Marsh 17/9
**Spotted Crake:** Farlington Marshes 3/9; Titchfield Haven 5/9
**Slavonian Grebe:** Hayling Bay 22/11 - 26/11; Lymington-Keyhaven 12 26/11 - 29/12; Weston Shore 10/12

**Red-crested Pochard - Brian Cartwright**

**Black-necked Grebe:** Ibsley Water, Blashford Lakes 26/10, 7/12 - 28/12; Langstone Harbour max. 6 12/11 - 24/12; Portsmouth Harbour 10/12
**Avocet:** [Records away from regular sites] Hook-with-Warsash 24/9; Lepe 4 12/10, 8/12 - 24/12; Aldershot 24/11; Hythe Marina 3/12; Sinah Warren. Hayling Island 13/12
**Whimbrel:** [Winter records] Hayling Oyster Beds 2 12/11; Bury Marshes 22/12, 30/12
**Ruff:** Pennington Marsh 1-5 1/9 - 29/12; Alresford Pond 6/10, 12/10
**Curlew Sandpiper:** Lymington-Keyhaven 1-15 1/9 - 10/10, 2 29/10; Chichester Harbour 2/9, 6/9; Farlington Marshes 1-10 2/9 - 8/10, 29/10; Lepe 2 7/9; Titchfield Haven 1-3 13/9 - 6/10; Alresford Pond 18/9; Hook-with-Warsash 22/9, 6/10
**BAIRD'S SANDPIPER:** Farlington Marshes 8/10
**Little Stint:** Lymington-Keyhaven 1-7 1/9 - 4/11, 29/12; Black Point, Hayling Island 4/9, 3/10; Farlington Marshes 1-2 4/9 - 12/9, 4 11/10, 22/10, 28/10; Ibsley Water, Blashford Lakes 13/9, 24/10, 2 30/10; Titchfield Haven 13/9 - 22/9, 25/10
**Pectoral Sandpiper:** Pennington Marsh 1/9 - 5/9
**Jack Snipe:** Eversley Common 25/10, 3 25/11; Pig Bush, NF 2 24/11; Titchfield Haven 10/12; Farlington Marshes 12/12; Ibsley Common 13/12; Ibsley 2 15/12; St Cross, Winchester 2-6 15/12 - 18/12; Headbourne Worthy Watercress Beds 2 16/12; Blashford Lakes 22/12

**Spotted Redshank - Chris Rose**

**Grey Phalarope:** Ibsley Water, Blashford Lakes 8/11; Sandy Point, Hayling Island 25/11; Southsea 26/11, 29/11; Farlington Marshes 28/11 - 8/12

**SPOTTED SANDPIPER:** Farlington Marshes 3/10 - 6/10
**Wood Sandpiper:** Pennington Marsh 1-2 14/9 - 21/9
**Spotted Redshank:** Pennington Marsh 1-3 5/9 - 29/12; Hamble Point 12/9; Farlington Marshes 19/9, 15/10; Fishlake Meadows 7/10
**Little Gull:** Hill Head 7/9, 19/11, 20/11; Ibsley Water, Blashford Lakes 8/9; Titchfield Haven 21/10, 19/12; Farlington Marshes 21/10; Sturt Pond, Milford-on-Sea 6/11, 3 27/11, 28/11;

Hayling Bay 1-12 7/11 - 28/11; Chilling 8/11; Lee-on-the-Solent 8/11; Southsea Canoe Lake 16/11, 1-5 25/11 - 29/11; Weston Shore 4 21/11, 27/11; Langstone Harbour 26/11; Mayflower Park (Southampton) 27/11; Chichester Harbour 20/12, 24/12, 30/12; Stokes Bay 31/12
**Ring-billed Gull:** Ibsley Water, Blashford Lakes 4/12
**Caspian Gull:** Titchfield Haven 17/10; Ibsley Water, Blashford Lakes 9/11, 13/11, 18/11, 27/11, 4/12, 2 6/12, 28/12
**Yellow-legged Gull:** Hamble Estuary 3/9, 10/9, 25/9, 29/9; Southsea Castle 10/9, 13/9, 28/11; Lower Test Marshes 12/9; Ranvilles Lane 18/9; Brownwich 2 25/9; Ibsley Water, Blashford Lakes max. 11 6/11 - 28/12
**Arctic Tern:** Weston Shore 25/9, 27/9, 1/11; Normandy Lagoon 28/9; Keyhaven Lagoon 22/10; Mayflower Park (Southampton) 3/11
**Black Tern:** Hook-with-Warsash 9/9; Keyhaven 9/9
**Pomarine Skua:** Hurst Beach 2 28/11

**Arctic Skua:** Hill Head 8/9, 19/9, 2/11; Chichester Harbour 12/10, 15/10; Milford-on-Sea 31/10; Chilling Cliffs 2 4/11
**Long-tailed Skua**: Milford-on-Sea 8/11
**Red-throated Diver:** Sandy Point, Hayling Island 16/9, 14/11, 16/11, 12/12; Barton-on-Sea 20/10; Stokes Bay 14/11; Brownwich/Chilling 16/11, 17/11, 20/11, 27/11; Gilkicker Point 26/11; Inchmery 27/11; Eastney 27/11; Southsea 11/12; Hill Head 8 26/12
**Black-throated Diver:** Sandy Point, Hayling Island 29/11
**Great Northern Diver:** Keyhaven/Pennington 15/10, 2/11, 7/12; Hook-with-Warsash 29/10, 9/11, 6/12, 11/12; Weston Shore 1-4 5/11 - 26/12; Sandy Point, Hayling Island 1-3 7/11 - 12/12; Langstone Harbour 1-3 14/11 -1/12, 24/12, 29/12; Chichester Harbour 14/11; Netley 16/11, 20/11 2 28/11 3 30/11; Hill Head/Brownwich/Chilling 16/11, 26/11 - 28/11, 11/12; Hamble Cliff 19/11; Kingfisher Lake, Blashford Lakes 26/11, 29/11, 1/12, 4/12; Mayflower Park (Southampton) 27/11; Redbridge Wharf 27/11; Tanners Lane (Lymington) 3/12; Cracknore Hard 3/12; Taddiford 4/12; Lee-on-the-Solent 11/12; Eastney 3 20/12, 2 24/12, 3 29/12
**Leach's Petrel:** Milford-on-Sea 1/11, 3 8/11, 24/11; Hill Head 3 1/11; Lee-on-the-Solent 8/11; Chilling 8/11; Sandy Point, Hayling Island 26/11
**Fulmar:** Milford-on-Sea 1/11
**CORY'S SHEARWATER:** Sandy Point, Hayling Island 4/9; Tweseldown 4/11
**Sooty Shearwater:** Hill Head 26/11
**Shag:** Netley 17/10; Eastney 3/11, 29/11; Sandy Point, Hayling Island 12/11, 17/11; South Parade Pier (Portsmouth) 29/11; Barton-on-Sea 4 10/12
**Glossy Ibis:** Hook-with-Warsash 1-5 2/9 - 31/10; Titchfield Haven/Titchfield Canal Path 1-4 12/9 - 22/10, 4 20/11, 4 29/12; Lepe 4 20/9 - 21/9, 23/9; Chilling 3 29/10, 31/10
**Spoonbill:** Hook-with-Warsash 2/9, 7/9; Milford-on-Sea 7/9; Barton-on-Sea 2 17/9; Inchmery 29/9, 8 27/11, 2 17/12; Keyhaven-Normandy Marsh 6 3/12, 10 11/12, 6 14/12, 3 15/12, 3 17/12, 24/12, 4 26/12; Tanners Lane (Lymington) 2 3/12, 10 10/12; Lepe 16/12; Lymington River Estuary 5 21/12
**Bittern:** Fishlake Meadows 1-2 1/11 - 20/12; Titchfield Haven 17/11, 19/11, 27/12
**Cattle Egret:** Titchfield Haven 1/9, 18/9; Farlington Marshes max. 9 7/9 - 28/10, 12/12; Normandy Marsh 13/9; Titchfield Canal Path 17/9, 21/9, 4 22/9; Lower Test Marshes 2 19/9; Trigpoint Hill, Timsbury 10 23/9; Fishlake Meadows 10 24/9; Langstone Mill Pond 5 19/10; Warblington 15 17/11; Taddiford 15/12; Barton-on-Sea 16/12; Southsea 2 16/12; Bransbury Common 24/12 - 29/12; Keyhaven 30/12
**Purple Heron:** Farlington Marshes 11/10

**Great White Egret - Chris Rose**

**Great White Egret:** Tundry Pond 1/9, 2/9, 12/10; Dogmersfield Lake 1/9; Blashford Lakes 1-3 1/9 - 14/12; Fishlake Meadows max. 10 4 2/9 - 6/11; Fawley Refinery 2 12/10; Brownwich

19/10; Trigpoint Hill, Timsbury 7 25/10; Skidmore 29/10, 3/11, 10/12, 11/12, 14/12; Testwood Lakes 2/11, 9/11, 11/11, 1-2 16/12 - 29/12; Edenbrook CP, Fleet 4/11; Fleet Pond 4/11, 14/11; Southmoors 19/11; Eastleigh 22/11; Bishopstoke 26/11; Hightown (Ringwood) 3/12; Titchfield Haven 8/12; Lower Test Marshes 16/12; Longparish 17/12; Oxey Marsh 17/12; Ringwood 20/12; Nursling 20/12; Broadlands Lake 20/12; Moorcourt Farm 21/12; Setley Pond 27/12 28/12

**Osprey:** Eling 1/9 - 5/9, 21/9 - 24/9; Fishlake Meadows 1-2 2 2/9 - 5/9, 25/9, 29/9, 9/10, 15/10; Lower Test Marshes 1-2 2/9 - 19/9; Langstone Harbour/Farlington Marshes 7/9, 2 11/9, 14/9, 29/9; Hook-with-Warsash 8/9, 15/9, 22/9, 26/9; Portchester 10/9; Titchfield Haven 10/9, 12/9, 18/9; Fawley 10/9, 22/9, 29/9, 3/10, 24/10, 2 30/10, 31/10; Leigh Park 11/9; North End, Avon Valley; 11/9; Skidmore 12/9, 18/9; Bishopstoke 15/9; Southsea 16/9; Sandy Point, Hayling Island 16/9; Weston Shore 19/9; Inchmery 20/9, 24/9, 29/9; Lepe 21/9; Ivy Lake, Blashford Lakes 21/9; Trigpoint Hill, Timsbury 22/9; Lymington 25/9; Kings Hat 16/10; Peartree Green LNR, Southampton 17/10; Netley 31/10

**Honey-buzzard:** Fort Widley 11/9; Bourley South, Bricksbury Hill, Caesar's Camp 12/9; Hook-with-Warsash 13/9

**Hen Harrier:** [Records away from roost sites] Farlington Marshes 9/10; Tweseldown 12/11; Barton-on-Sea 14/11; Pig Bush, NF 20/11 - 30/11, 27/12, 29/12; Woolmer Pond 27/11, 4/12; Fawley Refinery 30/11; Burbush Hill, NF 8/12; Widden Bottom 13/12; Greatham 17/12; Titchfield Haven 19/12; Chichester Harbour 20/12; Tidpit Down 29/12

**Short-eared Owl:** Titchfield Haven 14/9; Farlington Marshes 17/9, 2 19/9 - 20/9; 1-3 28/11 - 24/12; Keyhaven Marsh 4/11; Hayling Oyster Beds 13/11; Southmoors 13/11, 28/11; Hamble Estuary 2/12; Bransbury Common 23/12

**Wryneck:** Havant Thicket 2/9, Peartree Green LNR, Southampton 2/9 - 9/9; Rowbarrow, NF 3/9 - 4/9; Sway 14/9; East End, Sowley 15/9; Hook-with-Warsash 17/9; Lepe 1-2 21/9 - 24/9; Woolston, Southampton 25/9

**Merlin:** Lymington-Keyhaven 11/9, 16/10, 29/10; Langstone Harbour/Farlington Marshes 15/9, 20/9, 24/9, 17/12; Leaden Hall, NF 27/9; Posbrook Floods 5/10; Barton-on-Sea 9/10, 13/11, 16/11; Hill Head/Brownwich 15/10, 18/10, 20/10; Dur Hill Down 18/10; Tweseldown 19/10; Black Gutter Bottom 22/10; Bramshaw Telegraph, NF 24/10; Pitts Wood Inclosure 25/10; Ranvilles Lane 2/11 20/11; Trigpoint Hill, Timsbury 7/11; Lyndhurst 7/11; Picket Post 15/11; Fishlake Meadows 18/11; Ibsley 24/11; Moorcourt Farm 24/11; Milford-on-Sea 25/11; Lockerley 25/11; Denny Wood 26/11; Exbury 30/11; Middle Wallop Airfield 9/12; Slufters Inclosure, NF 9/12; Shatterford Bottom, NF 10/12; Bergerie Farm (near St. Leonards) 10/12; Morestead 10/12; Adanac Park 12/12; Paultons Park 17/12; Northney, Hayling Island 21/12; Hayling Oyster Beds 24/12; Testwood Lakes 29/12; Ipley, NF 29/12

**Great Grey Shrike - Andy Tew**

**Red-backed Shrike:** Gang Warily Pond 19/9; Vales Moor 25/9

**Great Grey Shrike:** Pig Bush, NF 19/11 - 26/12; Liphook 24/11; Furzy Brow 28/11

**Yellow-browed Warbler:** Gilkicker Point 22/10; Sarisbury Green 26/10; Lymington River Estuary 27/10; Staunton Country Park 28/10; Titchfield Canal Path 28/10,

31/10; St Cross, Winchester 11/11
**Siberian Chiffchaff:** Eastleigh Sewage Farm 26/11; Titchfield Haven 30/11
**Lesser Whitethroat:** Hill Head 9/12 - 11/12
**Ring Ouzel:** Tweseldown 1/10, 3 19/10, 2 20/10; Portsdown Hill 2 4/10; Queen Elizabeth Country Park 6/10; Hook-with-Warsash 4 19/10; Butser Hill 1-5 19/10 - 24/10, 13/11; Titchfield Haven 19/10, 29/10; Brownwich 19/10; Leaden Hall, NF 22/10; Titchfield Canal Path 2 23/10; Black Gutter Bottom 23/10; Marlpit Oak, NF 1-2 24/10 - 2/11; Farley Mount 27/10; Gander Down 28/10; Barton-on-Sea Golf Course 2 3/11; Lower Test Marshes 4/11

**Black Redstart**
**Chris Rose**

**Bluethroat:** Farlington Marshes 2/9 - 4/9, 10/9
**Pied Flycatcher:** Peartree Green LNR, Southampton 1-2 2/9 - 5/9; Crofton Cemetery 2/9 - 10/9; Southampton Old Cemetery 5/9; Meonstoke 16/9, 17/9
**Black Redstart:** Tweseldown 16/10, 17/10; Hamble Point 19/10; Eastoke, Hayling Island 2 24/10; Meon Shore 25/10, 27/10; Daedalus Airfield (Lee-on-the-Solent) 26/10, 2 29/10, 2 12/11, 27/11, 8/12, 27/12; Southsea Castle 2 29/10 - 14/11; Lee-on-the-Solent 31/10, 6/11, 14/11; Sarisbury Green 2/11; Woolmer Pond 3/11; Calshot 6/11; Twyford 8/11; Sandy Point 12/11. Hayling Island; Barton-on-Sea 12/11; Netley 13/11, 16/11; Eastney 17/11, 9/12; Abbotswood 18/11; Everton 19/11, 2 20/11; Redbridge 22/11 - 7/12; Milford-on-Sea 25/11; Fort Cumberland 27/11; Fawley Power Station 27/11; Woolston, Southampton 3/12, 6/12, 7/12, 29/12; Southsea 4/12; Lymington 14/12

**Tree Sparrow - Rob Porter**

**Tree Sparrow:** Tweseldown 31/10; Chilling Cliffs 8/12 - 29/12
**Water Pipit:** Lower Test Marshes 12/10; Titchfield Canal Path 15/10 - 30/10, 3 26/12; Titchfield Haven 18/10; Farlington Marshes 23/10, 12/12, 27/12; Pennington Marsh 29/10, 2/11, 7/12, 10/12, 10/12; Fishlake Meadows 1/11; Ibsley Water, Blashford Lakes 13/11, 14/12; Pinglestone Watercress Beds 10/12, 2 11/12; Moorcourt Farm 20/12, 23/12
**Snow Bunting:** Milford on Sea 25/11 - 27/11; Hill Head 30/11

Please send records to the County Recorder so that they can be included in the HOS database and the Hampshire Bird Report. Send your records to:

**Martin Pitt**
**35 Clere Gardens,**
**Chineham,**
**Basingstoke, Hants RG24 8LZ**
**mjpitt35clere@hotmail.com**

Records can be submitted as an email attachment using the recording form available from the home page of the HOS website at hos.org.uk/

# FOCUS ON FARLINGTON

**By Carol Rawlings**

My love affair with Farlington Marshes began when I moved to Portsmouth back in 2015. But, it really wasn't love at first sight!

My first impression was of the noise of the busy A27 that runs alongside part of the reserve. It seemed like it would be a huge distraction while birding, especially the lorries making their way to Portsmouth International Port.

**Brent Goose - Chris Rose**

How wrong I was! After 10 minutes walking along the seawall overlooking Langstone Harbour I'd forgotten all about motorways and was revelling in the sight of hundreds of Brent Geese in the meadow. My heart was stolen that day and remains so.

Farlington Marshes is a Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust (HIWWT) reserve and you can often see staff and volunteers out and about on the site managing it for the different species of birds that live there or visit.

The reserve is between Portsmouth to the west and Hayling Island to the east. It really is a reserve for all seasons as it has so many different habitats that attract amazing birds throughout the year.

You can walk along the seawall overlooking Langstone Harbour on one side, with reed bed and pools on the other.

**Short-eared Owl - Andy Tew**

You can also stroll through meadows and past scrub and brush where we often see the Kestrel perched or feeding.

At this time of year we enjoy great views of the Short-eared Owls that winter on the reserve. Watching them glide above the reedbed at dusk on a chilly January afternoon is very special and worth braving the bitter winds that come across the open water behind you.

There is also a possibility of seeing Black-necked Grebe in Langstone Harbour, together with Little and Great-crested Grebes and Red-breasted Merganser.

We also have wintering Brent Geese with their soft gabbling cry and their formation

flying across the whole of the reserve and off to Tipner and beyond. If you like gulls and waders then Farlington has a lot to offer. All the common waders are present across the year and there are plenty of ducks to admire.

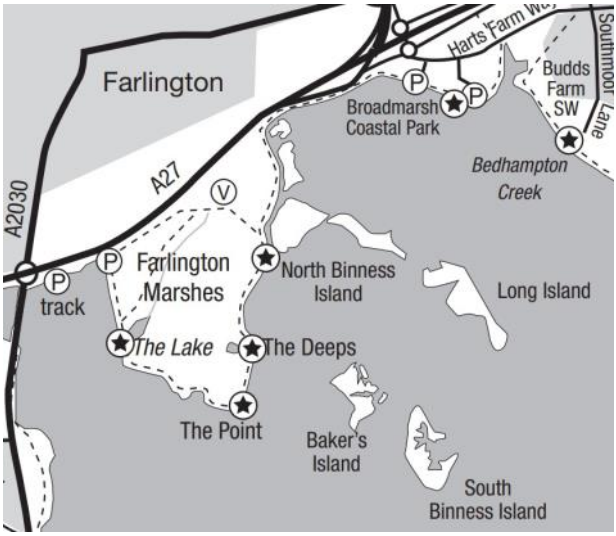
In spring/summer it's great to watch the Common and Sandwich Terns fishing and enjoy the Sedge and Reed Warblers singing. Oystercatchers, Redshank and Ringed Plovers breed here, along with raucous colonies of Black-headed and Mediterranean Gulls . In the autumn there is always the possibility of seeing Osprey on passage to Africa.

**Bearded Tit - Chris Rose**

And of course, it's a brilliant place to see Bearded Tits – you get really good views from the seawall, just look for a large group of photographers and you will find the birds!

The beauty of Farlington is that you never quite know what you might see as it attracts a host of migrating birds every year. I remember one autumn morning seeing a Wryneck which took me by surprise. And it's always lovely to see Whinchat and Stonechat in the brambles and on the fence posts.

For its variety of habitat and iconic birds, I think Farlington is one of the best reserves in the county. I would need a whole book to list all the species that you might see, but here is a quick trip through the year courtesy of **Where to Watch Birds in Dorset, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight** by HOS Chair Keith Betton. It's well worth getting a copy.




**All year:** Canada Goose, Shelduck, Tufted Duck, Great Crested Grebe, Little Grebe, Cormorant, Little Egret, Grey Heron, Peregrine Falcon, Water Rail, Avocet, Oystercatcher, Ringed Plover, Redshank, Mediterranean Gull, Cetti's Warbler, Bearded Tit, Reed Bunting.

**November–March:** Dark-bellied and Pale-bellied Brent Geese, Eurasian Wigeon, Gadwall, Common Teal, Pintail, Shoveler, Pochard, Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser,

Great Crested, Slavonian and Black-necked Grebes, Merlin, waders including Knot, Jack and Common Snipe, Black-tailed and Bar-tailed Godwits, Common and Green Sandpipers, Spotted Redshank and Greenshank, Kingfisher, Rock and Water Pipits, Common Chiffchaff, Firecrest

**Kestrel - Chris Rose**

**April–June:** Garganey, Marsh Harrier, Osprey, Hobby, migrant waders including Little Ringed Plover, Ruff, Whimbrel, Common and Green Sandpipers, Spotted Redshank and Greenshank, Little Gull, Little, Sandwich and Common Terns, Sedge and Reed Warblers, common migrant landbirds including Yellow Wagtail and Northern Wheatear.

**July–October:** Garganey, Marsh Harrier, Osprey, Merlin, Hobby, migrant waders including Little Ringed Plover, Little Stint, Curlew Sandpiper, Ruff, Whimbrel, Common and Green Sandpipers,
Spotted Redshank, Greenshank and Wood Sandpiper, Little Gull, Little, Black, Sandwich, Common and Roseate Terns, Short-eared Owl, migrant landbirds including Wryneck (almost annual), hirundines, Yellow Wagtail, Whinchat, Northern Wheatear, Ring Ouzel, *Acrocephalus* warblers and Spotted and Pied Flycatchers.

But whenever I think of Farlington, the first birds that comes to mind are Brent Geese. There is no better accompaniment to a winter's walk than their soft calls as they fly overhead when the tide is up. If you haven't been, give it a try.

**Woodpigeon - Andy Tew**

# TAKE 5

## Our focus on local photographers – Chrissie Whiffen

I am Chrissie Whiffen. I am sure I know quite a few of you from various locations but mostly I just know your names as, maybe, you know mine? I have only been interested in birds since 2016 when I returned from an African Safari tour having used a bridge camera, and realising that, because my shots were blurry and atrocious, I knew absolutely nothing about camera settings.

I then made a decision to try to improve my photography and bought an Olympus - lovely and light to carry around all day long and it takes fabulous photos. Since then, I have been back to Africa and to many other countries as well, and, thank goodness, I managed to get some good shots. I have carried on with Olympus since then. I am now on my third camera - it is the turn of the OM1 and I have a variety of lenses.

To try to whittle down my photos to just five was practically impossible but there has to be a limit. I enjoy looking at other people's photos and some I wish I had taken myself. I live for my photography: I adore birds and I am very happy being out all day with my camera.

**Red-throated Diver. September 2019. Titchfield Haven Sea Front**

One from some years ago but one that I have never forgotten. This one came in really close to the shoreline and I was amazed that it took no notice of me. The sea was choppy and it never turned its head fully towards me but I was deliriously happy that I had finally seen a diver still with its beautiful red throat.

Since then, I have seen them at

Portland but none in summer breeding plumage.  That will be one of my goals: to see them again with young, somewhere, sometime.

**Great-crested Grebe in full display.  March 2021. Lakeside Country Park.**

When I am intent on getting an image, I will spend as long as it takes waiting for the right time. I have unlimited patience for the things I love to do.  I spent five consecutive days, each and every day for six and a half hours waiting to photograph one of my most favourite birds: the Great-creste Grebe.

Suddenly he spread all his feathers, puffed out that beautiful red halo and displayed to the female.

I wanted to move to get him more square-on but I was afraid to even breathe, let alone move, in case I spooked him.  It was all over in a minute and the 30 plus hours I had spent waiting for this moment had finally happened.

What a thrill.  What a privilege.  What a bird.

**Fieldfare. November 2018. New Forest**

I was lucky to be able to get some fabulous shots of a flock of Fieldfare devouring these berries.  I see them each year but I haven't managed to get as good a shot as this one since then.  This is one of my favourites as this one was much more orangey than the others.

**Little Tern. July 2022. Keyhaven**

Another species of bird high up there on my list of favourites are terns. It was a toss-up between Common, Sandwich or Little. I remember this day clearly.

As is my way, I will spend day after day, hour after hour, possibly weeks, trying to get a shot that is different. I saw two of them way ahead of me so I whizzed round to where I thought they would hover and they did.

I love the concentration on its face and it reminds me of a bird that is fleeting and will leave so I have to take as many photos as I can of them to remember just how beautiful they are.

**Rufous Motmot. November 2022. Costa Rica**

And now for my one that can be from anywhere. It was hard to select which country to choose from, let alone which bird. But as Costa Rica has been my latest trip abroad, I thought to select one from there.

The amount of species I saw were phenomenal and the colours were truly wondrous and the abundance of them, they were everywhere, still has me gasping even now. This Motmot was out in the open as there was another one around and they were calling to each other.

This was a fabulous opportunity to get lots of photos of this beautiful bird. I love the tail feathers.

Thank you for looking and for reading. May see you out on a path somewhere one day. Bye for now.

# HOS SURVEYS

**Every year HOS undertakes surveys of various species or takes part in national surveys, to help collect valuable data about numbers of birds and where they roost and breed etc.**

**We have lots of help from volunteers who get involved. And this year is no different. So, if you fancy helping out with any of the surveys featured on the following pages, just contact the relevant person. Thanks.**

## 2023 Marsh Tit Survey

HOS is organising a survey of Marsh Tits in Hampshire during 2023. The Marsh Tit is red listed as a declining species and is not well covered by annual monitoring schemes. The aim of the HOS survey is to count Marsh Tits in a randomly selected sample of 1km squares across Hampshire using standard and repeatable methods. In this way we can establish a good baseline to allow future monitoring of the species in the county. The selection of squares to survey is based on the area of broadleaved and mixed woodland within them.

**Rob Porter**

We are using the well-tried playback method which has been proved to be a very effective way of detecting the species. For instance, in Sussex a survey of Marsh Tits in 2020/21 found the species to be widespread in many parts of the county (see the 2021 Sussex Bird Report for the full write up).

**Close up! Andy Tew**

Following the example of the 2022 HOS Lesser Spotted Woodpecker survey we are setting up a website where you will be able select squares to survey and download survey instructions, recording forms and playback files, plus a map of the selected 1km square. Go to: http://hantsmarsht.birdsurvey.org.uk. Or via the planned survey page on the HOS website at hos.org.uk

The Marsh Tit is an early season species so the survey will run from mid-February until mid-April with March being the key month. What a great way to kick off spring.

**Ken Smith**

**2023 Woodcock Survey**

Your help is needed this year for the third nationwide survey of breeding Woodcock. Our Woodcock population seems to have declined in recent years, and the species is amber-listed. But routine surveys such as the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) are of little use for monitoring Woodcock numbers. The BTO and GWCT are therefore this year repeating the 10-yearly national survey, previously undertaken in 2003 and 2013. The aim is to assess population and range changes of Woodcock since the previous surveys.

The survey is based on randomly selected 1km squares of suitable habitat, with priority to the squares surveyed in the 2003 and 2013 surveys. Hampshire is one of the most important areas in the Woodcock's breeding range, and there are 124 sample squares in the county! Ideally, we would like to cover all of them, but 80 squares are of the highest priority in the national sample. We need a lot of volunteers please!!

**Shane King**

The survey method will be same as used in previous years, requiring point-counts of roding Woodcock at dusk. Each square ideally needs three 75-minute visits during the May-June period, counting Woodcock that are seen or heard.

Visits where no Woodcock are present will be vitally important for this survey (though only two visits are needed for such places); unless someone has looked, there's no way of telling!

Much more information about the survey is available on the BTO website at www.bto.org/our-science/projects/woodcock-survey/woodcock-survey-methods .

Please contact me if you would be willing to cover one of the randomly selected squares. Or go to the interactive map on the BTO website, and select whichever square you would be willing to do. I hope a large number of HOS members will help with this survey of a bird that is quite different to most!

But please be prepared to be out in the middle of nowhere to just after dark, and, if previous surveys are anything to go by, to have plenty of good insect repellent !

**Glynne Evans - hantsbto@hotmail.com**

**2023 Dartford Warbler Survey**

HOS is organising a survey of Dartford Warblers in Hampshire this year. We know that Dartford Warbler populations fluctuate widely as a result of winter weather conditions but this survey will also help us monitor long-term trends and identify their preferred habitats.

The last countywide survey was done in 2018 which followed a hard winter, so it will be fascinating to see the current situation.

All 1km squares where Dartford Warblers have been seen in April, May and June between 2017 and 2022 are being surveyed. This includes over 180 New Forest squares and 40 squares on the coast between Barton-on-Sea in the west and Hayling Island in the east.

Dartford Warblers are easier to find than many other species and we are keen to expand our pool of surveyors. We are setting up a website on which volunteers can request to survey one or more squares in the New Forest and download the instructions and recording forms. If you would like to help please check out the website linked from the HOS 'Planned Surveys' webpage. Sites in north and east Hampshire and along the coast are being coordinated directly with current volunteers by John Eyre, John Clark and Keith Betton.

**Chris Rose**

The minimum time requirement would be two visits to check all suitable habitats within your 1km square, but one or two additional visits would be needed if you find Dartford Warblers. The first visits are to be done between 1 April and 15 May; additional visits between 16 May and 30 June.

**Nigel Matthews**

## Results of the HOS Lesser-spotted Woodpecker survey

Thank you to everybody who took part in the 2022 HOS Lesser Spotted Woodpecker survey – having now looked at the data we think it was a great success. The aims were to survey samples of monads (1km squares) in the New Forest and the rest of Hampshire to establish a baseline and enable us to estimate the county population. The full results will be published in the Hampshire Bird Report at the end of the year but we thought some early feedback would be appropriate.

**Andy Tew**

We used exactly the same survey methods in the Forest and elsewhere – it was the way we selected

the squares for survey which differed to reflect the status of the species in the two areas. We covered a high number of monads in the New Forest based on our assessment of suitable Lesser Spotted Woodpecker habitat.

Richard Jacobs

Elsewhere in Hampshire we based the survey on monads with lesser Spotted Woodpecker records over the last five or ten years (www.hants.lesserspots.birdsurvey.org.uk ).

Take up for the survey was pretty good with data received from 199 monads (135 in the New Forest and 64 in the rest of Hampshire). A total of 181 territories were found – 174 in the New Forest and seven elsewhere.

Allowing for the areas not surveyed we estimate the total Hampshire population as just over 300 territories with 295 in the Forest and 17 elsewhere. Outside the New Forest the numbers have declined even since the last breeding bird atlas. In the New Forest the numbers we found were similar to those reported from previous surveys in the 1980s and earlier but as the methods were not exactly the same, we are less clear about trends. In the south and central Forest Lesser Spots were found in just about every monad with suitable habitat but they were less widespread in the north. We wonder whether the Lesser Spots are already starting to thin out in the north following the trend in the rest of the county.

What is absolutely clear is that Hampshire and the New Forest in particular is the best place in the whole of Britain for Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers with probably 15% of the national population. We are drafting a full paper on the results to be published later this year in the Hampshire Bird Report.

In 2015 we started woodpecker-network.org.uk to promote the studies of woodpeckers, especially Lesser Spotted, in Britain. One of the focusses has been understanding the low breeding success of Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers which is thought to be the driver of their population decline.

Just to give an indication of the importance of the New Forest, since the project started we have monitored 114 nests distributed over England and Wales but 40 of these have been in the New Forest.

There is obviously a bias because there are so many Lesser Spotted Woodpecker enthusiasts in the Forest but none the less this is an impressive total.

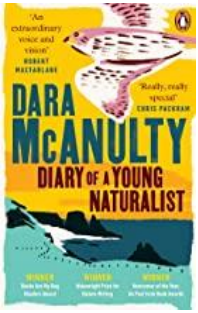
**Rob Clements, Ken Smith, Linda Smith**

# DESERT ISLAND BOOKS

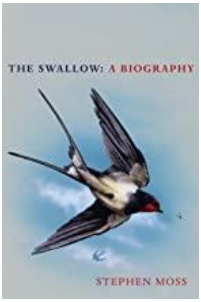
**Our castaway this issue is Izzy Fry, a 17 year old aspiring wildlife conservationist living just on the border between Wiltshire and Hampshire! Here Izzy tells us a bit about herself and which books she has chosen to take with her to a desert island.**

I am currently studying Biology, Geography and Environmental Science for A levels and after them hope to go on to study wildlife conservation and ecology at uni. Outside of school I do lots of volunteering with various organisations including bird ringing on my family's farm and different local nature reserves for the BTO, working with the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust to inspire a love for nature in more young people and leading and organising wildlife events and activities for my own small local nature group called Young Nature Watch. I also have a great interest in wildlife photography and have done ever since I was a child borrowing my grandparents big lenses! I share all of my photographs and nature experiences on my social media pages and blog: @izzyfryphotography/youngnaturalistizzyfry.com

**Wilding by Isabella Tree (Published 2019 by Picador)**
In Wilding, Isabella Tree tells the story of the 'Knepp experiment', a fantastic rewilding project in West Sussex, using free-roaming grazing animals to create new habitats for wildlife and restore their natural characteristics. I loved this book as it really inspired my interest in rewilding and looking at how we can reverse the UK's biodiversity loss by using methods such as those the author talks about in her book.




**Diary of a young Naturalist by Dara McAnulty (Published 2021 by Ebury Press)**
This book shines a light on what nature and being outdoors can do for your mental health as well as your physical health. The book is from a teenager's perspective and talks about the benefits and effects the natural world has on people who are struggling with mental health problems such as anxiety and how, being surrounded by greenery, can help you overcome them.




**The Swallow: a biography by Stephen Moss (Published 2020 by Square Peg)**
With around 700,000 breeding pairs, the Swallow is one of the most familiar birds in Britain. Though we consider the Swallow to be 'our' bird, we also share this beloved creature with millions of others across the globe. This book documents a year of observing the Swallow close to home and in the field to shed light on the secret life of this extraordinary bird! We follow the swallow's life cycle and journey, including the epic 12,000-mile round trip it takes every year, to enable it to enjoy a life of sunshine all year round, and the key part the Swallow plays in our traditional and popular culture!

**Forget Me Not by Sophie Pavelle (Published 2022 by Bloomsbury Wildlife)**
When climate change has driven dozens of our most charismatic species to extinction, will they be forgotten? Like many of her generation, Sophie Pavelle is determined to demand action on climate change and in her book shines a light on some of the most incredible British species and, by doing this, shows why we should protect them.

**Wonderland: A year of Britain's wildlife by Brett Westwood and Stephen Moss (Published 2018 by John Murray)**
Every day of the year – summer or winter – there are wonderful things that we can all see and experience if only we knew what to look for. This book takes you through the year, day by day, sharing the delights that you can experience in Britain's skies, seas, rivers, fields, forests and back gardens. I read this book a day at the time for a whole year and loved looking for the things that it mentioned!

## KINGFISHER ISSUE 176

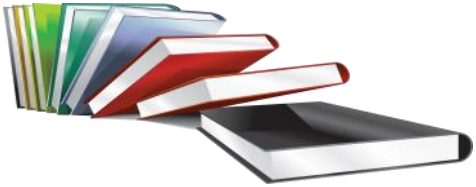
The next issue of Kingfisher will be out in June 2023. If you would like to submit an article please send it to **hoskingfisher@outlook.com**

Deadline May 5, 2023. Let the editor know in advance if you plan to submit an article.

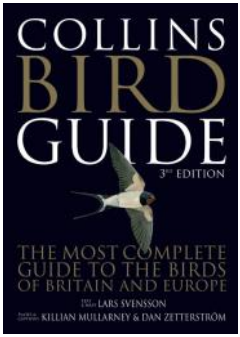
### Calling all photographers and artists

Keep those amazing photos coming in, and if there are any artists out there we'd love to see your work. If you are submitting photographs please make sure the file name includes the species, where it was taken and your name.

# BOOK REVIEWS
# BOOK REVIEWS
# BOOK REVIEWS



**Collins Bird Guide (3rd edition)**
**By Lars Svensson illustrated by Killian Mullarney & Dan Zetterström**
**William Collins. 2022.**
**476 pages. 3,500+ illustrations.**
**Hardback. £30**
**ISBN 978-0-00-854745-5**




It was way back in 1999 that birders all over the UK were anxiously anticipating the arrival of the first edition of this revolutionary book, which was first published in Swedish before being translated. A sign of its continuing success is that 23 years later the same excitement has surrounded the arrival of the third edition! Back in 1999 it cost £25 and at 400 pages it contained around 3,500 paintings and 700 distribution maps.

My guess is that most people reading this review will have the first and/or second editions of this book and many will have it as a smartphone app too. So will you spot many differences in the third edition?

Firstly the good news – the price has only moved up to £30. The second edition had 448 pages and now we are up to 476. Collins have done well on that price - they need to persuade us to buy a second (or third copy). But is much else new?

The answer is yes. The new edition uses those extra pages well, allowing several groups more space. More than 50 plates are either new or have been repainted completely or partly. Hans Larsson has painted some of the vagrants and introduced species. I found changes to illustrations and/or text for the grouse, divers, several groups of raptors, terns, owls, swifts, woodpeckers, swallows, redstarts, flycatchers, tits, finches and buntings. Apart from this, a few new vignettes have been added. The section with vagrants has been expanded to accommodate more images and longer texts for several species. The entire text and all maps have also been revised. For example, very helpfully the details for Marsh Tit now mention the white spot to look for on the base of the upper mandible – a game-changer for anyone trying to rule out Willow Tit. There are plenty of useful tips like that.

Like any book, it's not without typos – and the one worth noting is that the species introductions on waders and gulls are on pages 136-137 and 182-183 and not as stated in the text. The latest BOU taxonomy places falcons just after woodpeckers, and in the Hampshire Bird Report we feel obliged to follow that – but I am pleased to say that in this field guide falcons are still placed just before rails – which is where

you would naturally expect to find them. The reproduction of the plates is good and in each edition these have been improved.

The previous editions eventually appeared in addition as softbacks, so we can expect that to arrive in a few years, and I am told that the app will be updated sometime in the first half of 2023. The first edition also appeared as a superb full-size (31cm x 21cm) “coffee-table” book - and these have become a real collector’s item. Sadly Collins have no plans to repeat that venture - a real shame.

If you’ve never bought the Collins Bird Guide before then you really should. It includes a lot of birds that you’ll never see in Hampshire but the illustrations and text are the best available anywhere. If you’ve already got one or both of the earlier editions, then like me, the cover is probably falling off or has gone already! You won’t be disappointed with this new one.

**Keith Betton**

**RSPB Great British Birdwatcher's Puzzle Book Dominic Couzens & Gareth Moore**
**Gaia 2022**
**Softback 256 pages**
**978-1-85675-496-5**
**£14.99**

Put together a well-respected birder and a renowned puzzle-setter and you’ve got a great birding quiz book.

Whether you’ve been birding all your life or just started out, this book is challenging and also fun. It contains over 150 brain teasers and other types of challenge – both mental and visual. Crosswords, word circles, missing words, anagrams, multiple choices – they are all here.

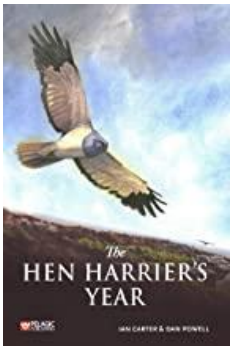
**Keith Betton**

**The Hen Harrier’s Year by Ian Carter and Dan Powell**
**Pelagic Publishing 2022.**
**Paperback 172 pages**
**978-1-78427-385-9**
**£26**

In my younger days I lived in the Cotswolds and never saw a Hen Harrier. My first encounter with the species was when I moved to Southampton and began birding in the New Forest in the 1970s. I saw them mainly in wintertime, where the male in particular became a real favourite when hunting over the dark heathland. The old

Hampshire name ‘blue hawk’ aptly described the colour contrast. Having spoken to Dan at the HOS AGM I knew this book was in the pipeline and couldn’t wait to get my hands on a copy. You don’t have to delve far into this book before you too will become hooked on this magnificent raptor, the introduction alone by Ian and Dan will entice you into the fascinating world of harriers.

You then enter a year in the life of the Hen Harrier where detailed observations over many years are condensed into this fascinating look at the species’ behaviour, beginning in January and communal roosting, something that, despite a decline in wintering numbers, can still be observed in the New Forest and on Salisbury Plain.




February provides us with an insight into hunting behaviour and foraging techniques. Before we proceed into spring, a chapter is devoted to the history and status of the species in Britain, which makes for depressing reading about decline in England, although I believe that 2022 may have brought hope in the form of improved breeding success, particularly on the grouse moors.

March arrives and we move north to the upland breeding areas on moorlands in Britain, however mention is also made of nesting in arable crop fields in Europe and interestingly nesting harriers in conifer plantations in Northern Ireland.

The arrival of April summons nest building, copulation and if you are extremely lucky the aerial spectacle of a skydancing male bird; so brilliantly described and illustrated.

May moves us to incubation, hatching and polygynous nesting. Here perhaps I should mention the contrast between Dan’s artwork, which is more expansive and shows movement and behaviour in great detail and his wife Rosie’s more technical artwork, taken from her notebooks, but I digress.

In June we learn all about the food pass where the male comes in with food for his mate and the nestlings, often a hit and miss affair! Then follows a chapter entitled “Conflict on the Grouse Moors” and we all know what that is about.

We are now halfway through the year and I could continue picking out snippets from July to December, but I want you the reader to be drawn into the world of this enigmatic species without spoiling your enjoyment of what is a truly great read.

So many species accounts that are published these days are very technical and hard to read, this is not. The narrative draws you in and wants you to progress rapidly to the end or is it merely the beginning? Believe me, this book will inspire you to get out into the countryside, not only to watch the harriers, but also to wonder at the marvels that British nature has to offer.

**Alan Michael Snook**

# PHOTO FINISH

**Running on water!**
**Coot by Brian Cartwright**

**Flight! Marsh Harrier by Adam Court**

**Well hello!**
**Otter by Brian Cartwright**

# PHOTO FINISH

**Incoming! Buzzard by Chris Rose**

**Stepping out! Redshank by Stephen Payce**

# PHOTO FINISH

**Follow me! Curlew Sandpiper by Peter Hyde**

**What's Up?**
**Cormorants by Brian Cartwright**

**It's behind you! Snow Bunting by Linda Fuller**

# PHOTO FINISH

**Leaping! Dartford Warbler by Sue Marshall**

**Lookout!**
**Barn Owl by Rob Porter**

# WE’RE GOING!

# Are you?

**HOS MEMBERS’ DAY**
**1 APRIL 2023**
**Details inside**