

KINGFISHER



Hampshire Ornithological Society Magazine

No 160

Autumn 2018



Contents

Editorial	See page 3
Advertising Rates/Wear Kingfisher With Pride	See page 4
Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust by various authors	Page 6
Springwatch Week 2018 with HOS by Patricia Brown	Page 11
Australia – not so far away any more by Keith Betton	Page 13
Southampton's Nesting Gulls – in decline by John Jones	Page 19
A Farmer's reply by Kate Faulkner	Page 21
Rewilding – the Inspiration of Knepp by John Jones	Page 23
HOS Walks and Events by Ted Barnes	Page 26
Reports of Previous HOS walks by Ian Julian and Iain Hainsworth	Page 30
Recent Reports by Tom Jordan	Page 33
Crossword Number 3 by Andy Johnson	Page 39
Subscriptions & Renewals plus HOS contacts	Page 42
Kingfisher no. 160 picture credits	Page 43

Editor

Philip (Phil) Budd
488 Bitterne Road East, Bitterne, Southampton
Mobile: 07748 236666

The Hampshire Ornithological Society is a registered charity (no. 1042309)
President Chris Packham **Chairman Keith Betton**

**Opinions expressed in the Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Society
or of the editor**

DEADLINE FOR WINTER 2018/9 KINGFISHER:

1st October 2018

A pair of Cuckoos.....



Credits see page 43

EDITORIAL

At the time of writing this editorial the temperature is 31°C (88°F) and only 2.3mm rain has fallen in my garden since 31st May. What the effects of this extreme weather will have on our birds remains to be seen, however the birds in my garden are certainly very thankful for the extra nourishment as seasonal berries shrivel up in the hedgerows and some insects become scarce and they are surely even more grateful for the water bath! Lets hope that there aren't too many grass fires on local open spaces and nature reserves, already there has been some bad fires at sites in Southampton such as Peartree Green, Southampton Old Cemetery and Five Acres at Lordshill. It is very likely that late bird nests may have been lost especially from the former location.

Although almost certainly not linked to the hot weather the old Microsoft Publisher package failed to save my work on this issue of Kingfisher, fortunately before I proceeded very far into the task. This has required me to resort to using a Microsoft Open Office program to complete the task and, as consequence, the formatting is somewhat different for this issue. I have also altered the appearance of the title of the cover page to conform with recent suggestions regarding the rebranding of HOS publications. You will see that the Kingfisher is a little slimmer than normal, this is once again due to the fact that the supply of articles has dried up somewhat in line with the weather.

It has always been challenge to fill the 52 pages four times per year but hopefully from the next issue onwards a new person will be helping me with this production before taking it on fully. Infact I will go further than this an announce that a new Kingfisher editor has stepped forward. Please continue sending articles to me for the time being as I may be starting the next issue and the full details and timing of the take over has yet to be worked out. One extra request for photographers, Simon Boswell has stepped down from running HOS Twitter and Olly Frampton has taken over. Please copy in Olly and not Simon if you wish your photographs tp be available for Twitter. Thank you.

Olly's e-mail is: olly.frampton@gmail.com.

Phil Budd.

KINGFISHER

Hampshire Ornithological

Society Newsletter

The Magazine for Hampshire Birdwatchers

Advertising rates

The Newsletter is produced 4 times a year and sent to 1,500 birdwatchers and naturalists primarily in and around Hampshire. Additional copies are sold at outlets. It is A5 format, with 52 pages. You can take a full page, half or quarter page advert, and have it in all four issues with or without photos/artwork.

The rates are £90 full page, £50 half page, £35 quarter page. If two or more issues are required, the rates are reduced by 20%. It may also be possible to do it as a loose insert. If necessary we can make up the advert, if given the required text and pictures.

Adverts can be sent on disc, or emailed direct as attachments, to photos@hos.org.uk



“WEAR THE KINGFISHER WITH PRIDE”

Our HOS emblem appears on all our clothing – Polo Shirts, Sweat Shirts, Fleeces and Baseball Caps.

We carry a stock of different colours and sizes and can order any of your preferences for speedy delivery.

As well as the latest HOS annual Bird Report we have a large stock of back numbers.

Sales Officers: Bryan and Sandy Coates – telephone 02380 252960

e-mail: sandyandbryan@tiscali.co.uk

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

At the forefront of local bird conservation

In the summer 2018 Kingfisher magazine, we highlighted some of the work that the Trust has been carrying out to aid bird conservation throughout the county. The first article focused more on wetland habitats, but across our estate we manage a broad range of habitats for a variety of different bird species. This second article explores some of the other, and perhaps lesser known Trust reserves.

Roydon Woods

Set within the New Forest National Park, Roydon Woods is a 387-hectare reserve comprising a matrix of habitats that in addition to the woodland, includes heathland, grassland and scrub. As would be expected in an area of such high biodiversity, the reserve supports a wealth of wildlife typical of the New Forest. Woodland management can be a slow process, but over the years we have sensitively managed the reserve to create a greater diversity of habitats and this in turn provides for a more varied range of bird species.

Management works have included bringing some parts of the reserve back into rotational coppice, rides have been widened and sheltered sunny glades created. In addition, areas of conifer plantation have been restored to open heathland.

The local avifauna has responded positively to our management, with classic and declining woodland species such as Woodcock, Marsh Tit and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, well represented. The Spotted Flycatcher, a species which has undergone a prolonged and dramatic decline throughout the UK, is still breeding in good numbers within the woodland. The development of scrub habitats has seen an increase in Garden Warblers and Blackcaps, and Redstarts have returned to breed in recent years. The gentling meandering Lymington River flows through the reserve providing breeding space for Grey Wagtails, Kingfishers and the occasional Mandarin.

Restoration of the heathlands has proved to be very successful; Tree Pipits and Stonechats are now regular breeders, as are Reed Buntings and Nightjar.

Woodlark have held the occasional territory, as has the Common Snipe, the latter another species that has undergone a dramatic decline in recent years. Where areas of conifer plantation are still retained Crossbill and Siskin can be found

Pamber Forest and Upper Inhams Copse

Pamber Forest and Upper Inhams Copse comprises over 200 hectares of ancient semi-natural woodland. Like Roydon Woods, the reserve supports a full suite of typical woodland species, with Woodcock, Spotted Flycatcher and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker still holding territories, albeit in smaller numbers than at Roydon.

The woodland is managed under a coppice rotation and different species seek out areas of suitable habitat as it becomes suitable for them. This year the first Garden Warblers arrived on 21st April and by the end of May our reserves officer, Graham Dennis, had recorded 24 territories. The warblers were mostly occupying 5 - 8 year old coppice, although single territories were also recorded in birch and willow scrub. Graham noted how they avoided the younger and older coppice.

This year a pair of Ravens were recorded regularly in one area of the woodland and it is suspected that they bred for the first time. Tawny Owls are a common breeder, but they were notable this year for their diurnal feeding; on at least four occasions they were seen around midday hunting for beetles, suggesting that they were finding it difficult to find their 'normal' nocturnal prey. A surprise sighting this year was that of a Long-eared Owl, roosting on full view on an oak branch on 19th January at 10am.

Bramshot Heath

The Wildlife Trust has been involved in the management of heathland sites in the north-east of the county for over 30 years and currently manage approximately 1,350 hectares across more than 10 sites. Whilst the mix of species using all of these sites are varied, because many of them form part of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA), management work is carried out to provide for the three heathland speciality species, Woodlark, Nightjar and Dartford Warbler.

Bramshot Heath is located in the north-east of the county, and situated centrally between different units of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. It is a small reserve of approximately 30ha, of which 12.5ha is now open heathland. The reserve was formerly conifer plantation but was subjected to extensive heathland restoration works between 2007 and 2012. Being located centrally between larger areas of the SPA it is ideally placed to function as part of the network of sites supporting it, and adding resilience to it.

Since the restoration works were completed the reserve has supported a suite of heathland species, including Tree Pipit, Stonechat, Nightjar and Woodlark. Woodlark chicks breeding on the reserve have been ringed using individually identifiable coloured rings as part of a long-term study, and in 2017 we were pleased to learn that a chick that fledged from Bramshot Heath in 2017 was holding a territory on a part of the SPA to the south at Bourley and Long Valley, thereby confirming a functional link between the SPA and the heath.

The recent decision to build up to 1500 dwellings on land adjacent to the heath will undoubtedly hamper our attempts to restore the heathland and probably impact the success of ground nesting bird species.

Emer and Baddesley

Possibly understated against the larger areas of the New Forest or north Hampshire but this reserve at 52ha is one of the largest remaining areas of heathland, bog, acid grassland and woodland mosaic in Hampshire outside of these areas. Once the northern gateway of the New Forest and forming a landscape of New Forest habitats as far as Ampfield the reserve is a truly remarkable site. Although a relict of such scale it both punches above its weight in terms of bird diversity but more importantly provides a diverse mix of species rich habitats that provide a critical hotspot for wildlife within an increasingly urban and agriculturally modified landscape.

Its wealth of habitats is recognised through the bog being recognised as an SAC for the transition mire. The complex hydrology and mix of acid habitats make this site unusual in lowland England. The Common, a SSSI, includes 'Molinia meadows' (Purple Moor Grass and rush pasture). These acid grasslands intersperse with streams to create sedge rich lawns and rich fen.

Most current heathland relics comprise the least productive elements of a heathland landscape, namely the drier dwarf shrub dominated communities. Emer and Baddesley differ from this as some of the more productive lawn and grassland habitats have survived and it is the drier acid grasslands and dwarf shrub communities which are the scarce elements.

Management includes ongoing removal of encroaching scrub into the mire and open wetland features, but more recently has taken a more ambitious approach to re-meander streams and reverse the legacy of post war drainage attempts. Areas with significant birch encroachment are being restored into a mix of heathland and wood pasture .

Bird interest is notable. The reserve periodically support breeding Nightjar and Woodlark, but in recent years been inconsistent. Despite improving habitat extent and quality it is thought that increasing recreational use of the reserve, particularly dog walking, has had an impact. The Trust is putting measures in place in attempt to manage this.

Within the Baddesley Common landscape this is still a place where once common 'farmland birds' can be encountered with ease, such as Yellow hammer, Linnet, Meadow Pipit, Skylark and Stonechat, with Whinchat regularly seen during migration. In winter large, mixed groups of thrushes will be seen on the short lawns. The wet, inaccessible areas of the bog and alder carr yield more than observed by most visitors. Large numbers of Teal seek sanctuary of the mire and pond with Woodcock utilising the woodland edges. In fact a number of notable 'flying overhead' records of various species are known to have sought the open mire as a place.

During migration the reserve is worth a visit. Spotted, & sometimes Pied, Flycatchers pass through while Wheatear is a staple.

Pewit Island

During the autumn of 2017 the HIWWT Solent team and volunteers started a project to turn around the fortunes of one of the Trusts smallest reserves. Pewit Island, situated in the north of Portsmouth harbour was once a thriving Black-headed Gull colony until it was over harvested in the 1800's. Given the significant pressure within the Solent on secure and undisturbed roosting sites

and potential seabird breeding colonies, it was decided that pursuit of certain improvements would be a priority.

During the autumn the large areas of gorse which had accumulated were removed so as to open up the site and make it suitable for waders to roost on. A significant number of Oystercatchers and Curlew were seen here throughout the winter, with 300 of each species regularly seen on a high tide.

Early spring of 2018 saw the team return with the hope of improving the site again. By adding shingle to the higher ground the aim is to attract nesting seabirds, primarily terns. A large area was covered and it is hoped that within the next few years a colony can be established. We hope that this will not only provide a safe nesting area for the near future but will remain suitable for the longer term becoming an important breeding site within Portsmouth Harbour.

Christopher Lycett, Martin De Retuerto and Trevor Codlin



Picture credits: See page 43

HCS at Embley Park celebrates its.....

Spring Watch Week 2018 with HOS

With our 2018/19 'Blashford' Bird Trail moving to April 2019 we have not stood still. HOS Education has been working closely with HCS [Hampshire Collegiate School] at Embley Park for three years and with their inspirational teacher, Fiona Walker, have collaborated to develop their Spring Watch Week. This, too, has moved, from early March in the past two years, to late April, which is a good move especially with this year's unusual weather patterns. For the first time every pupil in their junior school took part in a HOS-related activity which is no mean feat.

The week began with the tried and tested format of a themed assembly led by the HOS education officer. This year the theme we decided on was nests and nesting habitats and certainly set the week up well. As the pupils entered the hall there was a live webcam feed to the active Nuthatch nest box. Previously we have had the live feeds from their bird feeding stations as it was too early for nest-cams. By Wednesday the pupils had set up a nest blog and there had been a reported three eggs laid by the end of that school day.

For perfectly good reasons it has proved difficult to get schools to bring small groups for our Blashford Bird Trail run on a Sunday. To break this barrier, we set up a trail in the magnificent school woods. These have unique vegetation with both native and 'exotic' species. The RHS has visited for species only found in the ground - formerly Florence Nightingale's home. On the Tuesday, accompanied by their teachers, years 3, 4 and 5 [ages 7 to 10] came in separate groups for the trail led by Ted Barnes and Andy Broadhurst with support from me. Pupils were well prepared with observation sheets [including both visual and audio 'spots'] plus a separate sheet for our HOS 'Find the Bird' trail [using models of birds]. The two 'trails' ran simultaneously on the same route and worked very well. All pupils received guidance in using the binoculars and basic bird observation and recording methodology. In addition to the spring woodland birds we would expect, the first group found a male Peacock, which must have come into the woods from a neighbouring property. It was half way up a large tree and, for such a large bird, surprisingly difficult to see. Pupils and staff were surprised that the peacock could fly in to a tree and that it was so well camouflaged. The pupils had excellent views through Ted's telescope and could see the exotic, colourful markings. During each of the three trails we had several 'silent' stops to listen to the many wild birds which, of course, our leaders could identify for them. We also had a spectacular display of acrobatics by a Treecreeper running along the underside of a branch.

On Wednesday, Lynda Springate brought her NASA flight launcher and we gave two flight workshops to year 6 [aged 10 - 11] pupils. They, too were well prepared having already made paper birds to 'fly'. They then made new paper birds to our specifications and wrote their 'Message for Nature' and what they think is important for it. These were then launched by Lynda to look at different forces and flight patterns and we related these to real birds' flight. Lastly, they modified their designs having seen what happened in their first launch.

In the afternoon we returned to another tried and tested exercise of bird-related badge making with years 1 and 2 [ages 5 - 7]. The pupils had drawn their badge designs onto the template and came in pairs to be 'interviewed' by Fiona and myself. They talked about why

they chose their particular design and why nature is important to them. During these workshops another boy came to show me his poem about Spring and Nature, which was part of the designated school participation. He talked about his poem, clearly very special to him. He had used excellent vocabulary to create his inspired work. I hope this passion stays with him and the other pupils later in life.

'Reception' [age 4-5] took part in a nest building competition in the woods. Two teams worked together to collect sticks, twigs, roots, mud and leaves to build their own nests. They used the week's learning to choose and discuss different materials. There was some wonderful and enthusiastic work and some important lessons in teamwork and competition!

During the week there are activities in many areas of the curriculum as an integral part of school life and congratulations should be offered to the school and staff for all the extra work this means for them. Enriching the curriculum makes it worthwhile and helps the young people to see a wider picture.

We hope to continue to build on the good relations and practice - already this is being shared with other schools, notably in the Tadley area of North Hampshire at their upcoming 'bird week'. Andy Broadhurst and I are visiting the Head of the whole school, Cliff Canning, in October to explore further possibilities for next year. The crucial ingredient for success is 'buy in' from the school leadership to support the hard work of the rest of the staff. Certainly, events at any level would never be possible without enthusiastic and inspired staff willing to go the extra mile, but with the best ideas and willingness they do need senior staff backup.

Congratulations to HCS at Embley Park for developing a wonderful week of birding and wider natural history study.



Australia – not so far away any more

Well, OK – it hasn't actually moved, but if you ask people whether they are likely to go to Australia they often reply with something like: "No. It takes too long to get there". Yes, it is a long way to go, but with Qantas having just launched direct flights from London to Perth taking only 17 hours the whole issue of getting there is now much less of an ordeal.

Such is the draw of Australia that over 250,000 British people visited last year. The cheapest air fares start at around £700 in the Australian winter and when you get there you'll find that many things are good value although £1 only buys you \$1.8 compared to \$2.5 ten years ago.

The big lesson that you need to learn is that Australia is much larger than you can easily comprehend. Even people who live in Australia never quite get used to the fact that it takes five hours to fly from one side to the other! A successful birding trip needs to be planned carefully giving you enough time to enjoy everything.

Perhaps the best way to assess the country is to divide this article into each of the main regional states as you are unlikely to have time to visit more than three in any holiday.

Queensland

This is the best state for birding and is a great place for a UK visitor to start their trip. If you only visit Australia once, make sure that Queensland is your main focus. I make no apology for devoting a big slice of my article to praise it.

If you fly into Brisbane I suggest you head straight for the Lamington National Park for about three nights. About 100 km south-west of Brisbane, this is a fantastic hilly area rising to 700 m. The whole area is a mixture of subtropical and temperate rainforest with huge ferns and marvellous old trees. In the forest areas there are noisy species such as Green Catbird; aptly-named as its shrill call sounds like a cat being strangled! Up in the canopy is the unobtrusive Paradise Riflebird. If you see a male sitting in the sunlight, look for the iridescent green in his otherwise blackish plumage. On the forest floor is the chicken-like Albert's Lyrebird with its amazing tail which is fanned during displays. Here also is one of Australia's scarcest species - the Rufous Scrub-bird. You can consider yourself lucky if you see this wren-like skulker as most visitors simply hear it. I recommend staying at O'Reilly's guest house which is in the heart of the forest and has tour guides who are knowledgeable about the forest birds. Around the accommodation blocks are flocks of raucous Rainbow Lorikeets with a few gaudy King Parrots as well.

From Brisbane I would fly to Cairns – the tourism centre of northern Queensland. There are hundreds of places where you can stay here, but unless you are constrained by family requirements I would spend about three days at Cassowary House near Kuranda. This is the home of Phil and Sue Gregory and is right in the centre of the rainforest. Their garden is probably the best place in Australia to see

Southern Cassowary. The birds breed in the nearby forest and bring their chicks to feed in the garden – but don't expect to see them straight away!

In down town Cairns a visit to the waterfront Esplanade is usually interesting at low tide. Between November and February you can see an impressive selection of waders on the exposed mud including Greater and Lesser Sand Plovers, Sharp-tailed and Terek Sandpipers, Grey-tailed and Wandering Tattlers and Great Knot. In addition there are often Royal and Yellow-billed Spoonbills. There is a daily meet up of local birders on the from at 1600 hrs – don't miss it!

Two other essential birding sites in the town are the Centenary Lakes and nearby Botanical Gardens. An early morning walk here can result in you seeing flocks of Wandering Whistling Ducks, Magpie Goose and possibly White-browed Crake. A boardwalk in a small area of rainforest gives you a reasonable chance of seeing a Red-necked Crake along the edges of a small creek. It is more likely that you will hear its "clock, clock, clock" call. Another ground-dweller is the Noisy Pitta which calls out "walk-to-work". In the canopy areas are Barred Cuckoo-dove and Wompoo Pigeon, while on the lawns are the colourful Galahs and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos. Other parrot species here include the huge Red-tailed Black Cockatoo and noisy Scaly-breasted Lorikeet.

To the west of Cairns the Atherton Tablelands is a large area of forests and plain centred on the small town of Mareeba. Not far from Mount Molloy, the Maryfarms area has groups of Australian Bustards on the open grasslands. Also look out for Brolgas and Sarus Cranes in this area between November and March. They are huge and can be located by their trumpeting calls which are accompanied by displays. Mount Hypipamee National Park is about 30 km south of Atherton. This park presents a good chance of seeing Golden Bowerbird. The male is unmistakable being bright yellow, but even more impressive is the bower that he rebuilds every year to a metre high to attract a mate. Also present is the Spotted Catbird which, like its close relative, also creates a loud cat-like scream. Victoria's Riflebird is found in these forests and can be seen displaying with its wings fanned. Other species here include two amazing vocalists – the Cicadabird and Chowchilla, together with Atherton Scrubwren and Fernwren.

A great place to stay is the Kingfisher Park at Julatten. This is ideally placed for birdwatchers and the owners are very happy to provide guidance on the best sites. They also lead guided walks. In the grounds of the park are Sooty Owls which the owner will find for you at night using a spotlight. The most gaudy bird here is the Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher which migrates from New Guinea. With its long white tail the male reaches a length of 35 cm and then has to cram itself into a hole in a tree in order to nest.

My final recommendation for the Cairns area is to join one of the fast catamarans that will quickly get you out to the Great Barrier Reef - the world's largest living thing! There are many such trips to choose from but the best birding site is Michaelmas Cay. This small sandy atoll is covered in breeding Sooty and Bridled Terns and Brown Noddies. All around you these birds will be calling and the noise is stunning. You can approach their nests to within just a few feet without causing disturbance.

Patrolling the area for unattended eggs or chicks are Lesser and Greater Frigatebirds, while other birds in the immediate area include Pacific Reef Egret, Brown Booby, Crested Tern, Osprey and Torresian Imperial Pigeon,

South Australia

So having had a few days birding in Queensland it is now time to head south to the next game. South Australia is home to some of Australia's most famous vineyards, and beyond this is an area known as the "mallee". This is where you will find many dry-country species such as Southern Scrub-robin, Elegant Parrot, Striated Grasswren and Redthroat. This is the best area to look for three types of Whiteface - Southern, Chestnut-breasted and Banded. The bushy areas are also home to two of Australia's most sought-after birds - Red-lored Whistler and Black-eared Miner. A great destination for few days' excursion is Kangaroo Island. About the size of the Isle of Man, this is a popular choice for long weekends, so maybe try to visit mid-week. Among the species to seek out is the Glossy Black Cockatoo which can be found in the Latham Conservation Park. This also offers a second chance to see Cape Barren Geese.

Western Australia

This is by far the biggest state, covering an area four times the size of the UK. You will start to realise this when you take the flight from Adelaide to Perth! Most birdwatchers only visit it once they have seen the majority of Australia's birds. WA's birds are interesting but are often found in remote places requiring a mini-expedition simply to add a few species. Personally I would recommend taking the triangular drive from Perth to Margaret River and then across to Albany, returning to Perth. This allows you to visit Two People's Bay which is home to the Noisy Scrub-bird. Early English explorers to the region reported that they could hear Nightingales singing from the scrubby areas. They were mistaken, for this bird sounds exactly the same – but is, of course, completely unrelated. Other birds to look out for include Red-capped Parrot, Long-billed Black Cockatoo, Carnaby's Cockatoo, Rock Parrot, Western Bristlebird, Red-winged Wren, Rufous Treecreeper and Blue-breasted Wren.

I would also suggest making a visit to the area around Broome. Here, in the north-west corner of the country, there are colossal flocks of migrating waders at certain times. In addition you may be lucky and see a Yellow Chat – a nomadic species that appears like a locust after the rains. There is a bird observatory at Broome, but be warned – it has some of the fiercest mosquitos I have experienced anywhere!

Victoria

So now it is a fairly big slog back across Australia again! In Melbourne the climate is much more British with wet and windy winters and fairly pleasant summer temperatures. Melbourne is a quieter city and has a much more British feeling about it. Every weekend thousands of city-dwellers head south to Phillip Island to enjoy the sunshine – but birders head here too. This is the best place to see Little Penguin, but to do so you must join the mass of tourists that watch the "penguin parade" as the birds return to their nesting burrows in the evening. This is a real tourist spectacle and is not to everyone's liking. However the birds walk up the beach without fail and

do not seem to have too much of a problem with everyone “cooing” and taking their photograph. During the day the island is worth exploring for a small population of the Cape Barren Goose whose population is now supported with introduced birds. Also around the coastline are small numbers of Hooded Plovers and Kelp Gulls.

A very special trip is to join local birdwatcher, Phil Maher in the small town of Deniliquin. Phil is probably the only person who can show you the Plains Wanderer. This restricted-range species is very peculiar, almost being like a cross between a quail and a wader – and consigned to a genus of its own. Because of its nocturnal habits you need to use a spotlight to find it in the grass, and that’s where Phil is the real expert. Other birds in his local area include Australian Bittern, Inland Dotterel, Australian Pratincole, Superb and Regent Parrots, Gilbert’s Whistler, and both Chestnut and Cinnamon Quail-thrushes. Another amazing bird is the Malleefowl, which lays its eggs in the ground and then covers it with a huge pile of earth and vegetation. The parents remain in the area around the mound checking that it is not disturbed and ensuring the temperature is 32-34°C. Eventually after 60-90 days the chick hatches from the egg and fights its way out of the mound to freedom, where its parents are waiting for it.

New South Wales

By Australian standards we now take a quick hop to Sydney. This is in the second-best state for birding. Most people fly into Sydney at some point during a holiday in Australia and many trips start here. There are many great tourist attractions – including the chance to climb up the outside of the Sydney Harbour Bridge! About 32 km south of Sydney is the Royal National Park. This is a popular place for the city-dwellers so try to avoid making your visit over the weekend. An early-morning arrival gives you the best chance of hearing the Superb Lyrebird giving its stunning display, with quivering wings and a fanned tail accompanied by an impressive range of imitations of other birds. Another impressive species is the Satin Bowerbird which builds a fairly small bower but decorates it with any blue items it can find – including plastic pegs! The park has a great network of marked trails across woodland and heathland and it also has a rugged coastline.

Australia hosts more species of seabird than anywhere else in the world with over 120 species recorded. The Sydney and Wollongong pelagic boat trips have recorded over 75 species, which is over a third of the world’s seabirds. To join one of these trips is a great birding experience. Every month a boat leaves Sydney Harbour for the deep waters along the continental shelf. Here the cold waters attract hundreds – sometimes thousands – of seabirds. At an agreed point a mixture of rotting shark gut and other stinking items is tipped over the edge of the boat and within just a few minutes the seabirds start to follow the boat. Birds that are regularly seen include four main albatross species – Indian Yellow-nosed, Shy, Wandering and Black-browed. In addition there is likely to be a good scattering of Southern and Northern Giant Petrels, White-chinned and Great-winged Petrels and several types of Prion, backed up by good numbers of Sooty and Hutton’s Shearwaters. In case you miss the monthly pelagic trips from Sydney there are also monthly boat trips from Wollongong, about 80 km south of Sydney.

To the west of Sydney are the Blue Mountains. These great ranges get their name from the fact that at certain times of the year eucalyptus trees exude fumes which, from a distance, give the scenery a blue tint. One of the best birding areas in the region is the very rural Capertee Valley, not far from Lithgow. This wonderful valley is teeming with birds and eventually reaches a picnic area called Glen Davis. This is one of the few places where you can hope to see the endangered Regent Honeyeater. The birds breed in a few places nearby and to see them you need to find flowering trees. I had to make five visits to the area in different years before I was lucky enough to see this bird as they are fairly nomadic.

Tasmania

For its size you might imagine that Tasmania demands a week of your Australian holiday, but if you are concentrating on seeing just its endemic birds you can spend just 2-3 days here. Bruny Island, which is about 30km south of Hobart, is the best place to see these birds, including Yellow Wattlebird, Scrub-tit, Tasmanian Thornbill, Forty-spotted Pardalote and Dusky Robin. There are three Honeyeaters to look for - Yellow-throated, Strong-billed and Black-headed.

On the west side of the island is Cradle Mountain with its famous lodge. The scenery here is spectacular and is reminiscent of Scotland. This is one of the best places to see the endemic Black Currawong. This huge black crow-like bird is not difficult to find – in fact several of them will probably assault you for food as you walk from the lodge to your cabin!

Northern Territory

If you think of the driest places in the world, then much of NT should be included. But it is a state of contrasts as on the coast, Darwin is, at times, one of the wettest places. Starting at Darwin I would recommend a 2-3 day trip to the Kakadu National Park. This is a wetland wilderness with very limited access. However, focusing on the area called Yellow Waters it is possible to join a boat trip to explore the creeks and swamps. Despite the need to go along with about twenty other people, this still provides great opportunities to get close views of Comb-crested Jacana and White-bellied Sea-eagle – not to forget the freshwater crocodiles. Other species that will be seen include Black-necked Stork, Radjah Shelduck and Pied Heron.

The park also includes some great outback walking, and if you can get into some of the craggy areas you might find Chestnut-quilled Rock Pigeon, while walks on the flatter areas might reveal Hooded Parrot, Black-tailed Treecreeper and Gouldian Finch.

A visit to NT is simply not complete without a trip to Ayers Rock. This giant monolith has a circumference of 8 km, and is best visited at dawn and dusk – but I'm afraid that it rarely looks as spectacularly golden-red as in all the post cards. This really is the heart of the Outback and is best visited at dawn in the winter. Birds that you might see across this area include Square-tailed Kite, Black-breasted Buzzard, Grey Falcon, Spinifex Pigeon, Pink Cockatoo, Budgerigar, Black-eared Cuckoo, Crested Bellbird, Dusky Grasswren, Gibber Chat and three Honeyeaters - White-fronted, Black and Pied. However the number of birds (with exception of occasional flocks of

Budgerigars) is very small. I once spent three hours in the Outback and did not see a SINGLE bird!

Take care!

Although I really do love Australia I do have several words of warning. Australia can be dangerous. In many of the vegetated areas I have mentioned there are venomous snakes that can kill you. The reality is that you will probably not encounter any but if you do it is wise to keep well clear. Also, Australia is a MASSIVE country. It is so easy to underestimate how long it will take to drive from A to B, so be realistic and give yourself plenty of time, don't overextend yourself and take extra water in case you get lost! A three week trip will allow you to see around 350 species of birds – most of which will probably be new to you. If you have never visited Australia then you have missed out on something very special.



Keith Betton

Above: Flame Robin (top) and Plains Wanderer (bottom)

Southampton's Nesting Gulls - on the decline?

It is the end of June and I have just completed the biennial survey of large gulls nesting within the boundaries of Southampton. The provisional results are both interesting and worrying. For the City (excluding the Docks) they show a marked decline in the nesting Herring Gull population over the last two surveys. This year I found 89 pairs compared with 103 in 2016 and 123 in 2014, a 28% decline over the four years. One can only speculate as to the reasons. A warehouse near Northam Bridge which hosted a mixed species colony of 18 pairs in 2014 has declined to only one pair of Herring Gulls this year and it seems likely that the owners may have done something to deter nesting. Elsewhere across the City a lot of sites which had one pair of occupants have now become vacant. So why haven't the original occupants returned? Has there been a greater level of winter mortality in recent years and, if so, might it be a local problem or part of a national trend? Given that the Herring Gull is a red-listed species this is of more than academic concern. (I covered the same areas of the City with a similar intensity of effort as in previous surveys but I can't know whether there are hidden biases in my data which may make the results 'not statistically significant'. So these results should be considered as tentative.)

Other species in the City include Lesser Black-backed Gull with 12 pairs (eight pairs in 2016 and 17 pairs in 2014) and Great Black-backed Gull with two pairs (four pairs in 2016 and five pairs in 2014).

In early June I had access to part of the eastern Docks at Dock Head where it was possible to look down on the roof of the Cruise Liner Terminal. Beforehand I was told that there might not be much to see as the eggs of the nesting gulls had all been smashed about a month previously. However I counted 45 pairs of Herring Gulls; 40 were sat on nests, presumably having re-laid, while the other five had recently-hatched young. There were also a Lesser Black-backed Gull and a Great Black-backed Gull, both on nests. Later reports from observers on Weston Shore suggest that the nests of all these gulls were subsequently removed. The destruction of nests within the Docks is not new and has been witnessed by observers from Weston Shore in previous breeding seasons. It raises the issue of legality which is covered by a Natural England 'general licence to kill or take certain species of wild birds to preserve public health or public safety' (see internet link below). For Lesser Black-backed Gull it is permitted to destroy eggs and nests and kill the birds themselves. For Herring Gull it is permitted to destroy eggs and nests but not kill any birds. Great Black-backed Gull is not listed in the licence so should be deemed to be fully protected.

Unfortunately elements of the British press print highly misleading and incendiary articles about the 'problems with seagulls' from time to time thereby conditioning public consent to their persecution. Even if we were to challenge a misuse of the general licence whether on grounds that public health or safety were sham reasons or that it involved the illegal killing of Herring Gulls or Great Black-backed Gulls, Natural England would not be interested. We seem to be into an age of official

hostility towards any wildlife that causes a 'nuisance' to farmers, field sports organisations or business. The 50,000 dead Badgers, and still counting, are testimony to this as is Natural England's recent approval of the shooting of Ravens by sheep farmers. It is disconcerting to have the government's wildlife protection agency engaging in so much wildlife persecution.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/669161/gl05-birds-phs-licence.PDF

John Jones

Below : Herring Gull Warsash 3.4.18 Dave Levy (top)

Lesser Black-backed Gulls Anton Lakes 3.4.18 Brian Cartwright (bottom)



A Farmer's reply:

Introducing the Selborne Landscape Partnership — a 'Farmer Cluster'

Being a farmer member of the Hampshire Ornithological Society (HOS), I have read with interest the articles in the Society's magazine.

Over the past decade more than 70% of British farmers have entered into agri-environment schemes, which encourage them to create and manage areas on their farms specifically for the benefit of wildlife. A more recent initiative is the formation of 'Farmer Clusters', of which there are several examples located in Hampshire.

Here in Selborne, 16 farmers with a total of 10,000 acres have joined together in a cluster group to coordinate the environmental work that is being undertaken on farms locally. With Gilbert White's Selborne at its heart, the cluster group's aim is to adopt a joined-up approach to nature conservation, building on the existing environmental work that is already being successfully carried out alongside conventional, modern-day farming activities.

In addition to the 16 farmer members, there are three other group members: the National Trust, at Selborne Common and the Lythes; The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust at Noar Hill; and Gilbert White's House Museum. We also receive tremendous support from our partners The South Downs National Park Authority, Natural England and the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust.

The countryside in which we either live, work or visit is primarily a managed and farmed landscape. With a more joined-up approach to individual farm conservation activities, our cluster group — the Selborne Landscape Partnership — plans to create wildlife corridors and restore the interconnectivity between habitats across an entire landscape. This work includes hedgerow management; the establishment of field margins; the planting of seed mixes for winter bird feed and wildflowers for insects; winter supplementary feeding; and the management of ponds and woodlands etc.

The farmers within our cluster have selected a number of flagship bird, mammal, insect and reptile species on which they intend to focus their conservation efforts. By monitoring these species we hope to demonstrate that our conservation work is achieving positive results, whilst also enabling us to better target our future conservation work.

Positive stories tend not to be regarded as newsworthy, but in 2016 we did hit the headlines with national press coverage on one of our target species — the Harvest Mouse. With only one Harvest Mouse nest recorded in the Selborne area since the 1990s, it was feared that the species was locally extinct. This prompted our farmer members to conduct a harvest mouse survey, resulting in over 470 nests being recorded during 2014 and 2015. Nests were predominantly found in arable field margins created and managed specifically for wildlife. On-going surveys will enable

us to continue to monitor this species and, again, to more effectively focus our future management strategies.

Arable field margins are also of particular value to the Barn Owl, with successful broods recorded last year in nest boxes in 10 of the 15 x 1km squares monitored across the partnership. This monitoring is ongoing in 2018, and the results so far have been very positive.

Another of our flagship species is the Lapwing. With numbers still declining nationally, the group is targeting particular conservation effort on this species, encouraged by the fact that there are still known to be breeding lapwing pairs within the Selborne cluster area. With this in mind, on a freezing Friday in February, a number of our farmer members met Francis Buner, of GWCT, and Bruce Fowkes, of the RSPB, to discuss the management of Lapwing nesting plots at Rotherfield Park Estate. The aim of these plots is to provide suitable nest sites within arable fields. Strategically positioned, the 1ha plots are cultivated in autumn/winter and then left unsown in the spring. Recent studies have shown the importance of planting a cover crop adjacent to these plots to supply foraging habitat and protective cover from predators. Group members are experimenting with this concept, siting plots where Lapwing are either known to breed or have bred in recent years.

Also in 2018, the Selborne Landscape Partnership cluster group took part in the South Downs Farmland Bird Initiative's lapwing survey — a project that has been monitoring lapwings on the South Downs for several years and more recently started to collect data on chick survival. Our thanks go to RSPB volunteer Mark Pirie, who undertook this survey for us. Of the four farms that took part in the survey, one farm had a pair of adults successfully fledge chicks within a crop of oilseed rape. Two other group members reported successful nest sites — one within a crop of spring barley and the other in a purposely cultivated lapwing plot. The aim is to reverse the local decline in lapwing numbers through a better understanding of their needs and, as a result, even more effective land management practices.

Mark Pirie commented "Whilst carrying out the Lapwing survey I have been encouraged by the support the Partnership's members have given me and their real interest and commitment to making their conservation efforts work.

We would like to say a special thank-you to HOS members, who, along with local people, have responded to a recent request from the group to set up a Yellowhammer survey this summer. If anyone else is interested in assisting with the group's future survey and monitoring work, please contact either our group facilitator, Debbie Miller debbie.ar.miller@gmail.com or me, kate.faulkner@keme.co.uk

We are convinced that a collaborative and mutually supportive approach to nature conservation across the Selborne Landscape Partnership's area will deliver what we're seeking — a diverse and vibrant wildlife population.

Kate Faulkner, Selborne Landscape Partnership

Rewilding – the inspiration of Knepp

In recent years the concept of rewilding has raised hopes for restoring the fortunes of our wildlife which has been forced out of the majority of our countryside where normal ecological processes have been largely suspended. In addition to species reintroductions such as Red Kites, White-tailed Eagles and Cranes rewilding ventures have included habitat re-creation such as at Lakenheath Fen in Suffolk where the RSPB re-created a rich wetland on former farmland that had been drained centuries before and which now hosts a rich assemblage of birdlife. More locally in the 1990's, Hampshire Butterfly Conservation acquired and re-sowed farmland at Magdalen Hill Down to re-create chalk grassland conditions perfect for butterflies and other chalkland wildlife. However the most radical rewilding project so far in the UK must be that at Knepp Estate in West Sussex where a 3500-acre farm has been handed over to nature.

We were fortunate at our members' day in March to have one of the joint founders of the project, Charlie Burrell, to speak to us about it and in the summer a group of us from HOS were welcomed by him for a tour of the estate. In 2001 he and his wife, Isabella Tree (a), decided the prospects from continuing to farm their difficult land were poor and instead opted to use it for nature conservation. They modelled their project on a Dutch experiment set up by the ecologist Frans Vera whose own studies led him to believe that prehistoric landscapes would have been shaped by the behaviour of large grazing and browsing animals, leading to open 'savannah' rather than closed canopy woodland. Following this model they fenced the farm boundary, removed internal gates and fences and stocked their land with Longhorn cattle, Exmoor ponies, deer and Tamworth pigs, as proxies for the now extinct prehistoric herbivores, and left them to wander as wild animals with minimal intervention.

Usually nature reserves are managed according to objectives which define habitat specifications and the work needed to attain them in order to provide for the species on the reserve. At Knepp there are no such objectives and the plants and animals are left to interact however they choose and with whatever consequences this might have. So unlike the human-controlled farmlands outside, where wildlife just has to fit in, if and where it can; within the boundaries of Knepp ecological processes have free reign. This has had spectacular results as the newly growing scrubby vegetation has been continuously sculpted by the herbivores into a myriad of configurations while the pigs have torn up areas of turf enabling herbaceous plants to either reappear from dormancy or to colonise from elsewhere. The new habitat niches that have been created have not only enabled the existing wildlife to increase in abundance but have also been a magnet for colonisation from outside.

All wildlife groups have benefited from the new conditions at Knepp whether it be insects, flora, bats or birds and their success has made Knepp a focal point for experts in all these fields who, no doubt, see the possibilities for learning more, particularly about species' behaviour when there are no man-made ecological constraints. The fortunes of Nightingale, Turtle Dove and Purple Emperor are of

particular resonance. Both Nightingale and Turtle Dove are heading for extinction in the UK but both have increased significantly at Knepp. There were no Nightingales at Knepp in 2001 but they now number up to 40 territories. Most of them nest in overgrown thorn hedges between 25 and 45 feet deep, a habitat rarely available in the UK where they are traditionally found in woodland with a dense under storey. Turtle Doves were also absent from Knepp when it was a farm but in 2017 there were 16 singing males. Purple Emperor butterflies moved into Knepp after the transformation and it now has the largest breeding colony in the UK.

The farming community around Knepp was negative about the transformation which they considered to be a 'wild mess', 'wanton vandalism' and a 'ruination of farmland'. Their negativity deepened when ragwort started to proliferate throughout the reserve. Such attitudes powerfully underline the difficulties in any attempt to rewild farmland. However rewilding farmland also has to be limited by our need for food. The organisation Rewilding Britain (b) which is chaired by Charlie Burrell is campaigning for discrete areas of land, some of them in the uplands, to be returned to nature in the same way as Knepp. But what about the majority of the countryside which must continue under cultivation? There has to be scope for small-scale habitat re-creation across most of our countryside be it the restoration of healthy hedgerows, field margins or the re-creation of wild flower meadows but the future possibilities will depend on the post-brexit settlement of agricultural subsidies and whatever legislation replaces the EU's Birds and Habitats Directives.

Longer term, human dietary demands on the land are a serious constraint on the prospects for wildlife. It is clear that animal farming, which uses 83% of the world's farmland while providing only 18% of our calories is incompatible with saving wildlife and many conservationists (c) advocate that we should lower the amount of meat and dairy in our diets. This would reduce the amount of wild land being destroyed for cultivation and provide spare farmland for rewilding. If we continue to base our diet on animals we will be unable to improve the countryside for wildlife because there won't be sufficient land to do it. While many will be reluctant to accept this it seems inevitable that our demands on the land will be a growing future conservation issue.

The rewilding experiment at Knepp highlights what we have lost and by learning from it we might find ways of repairing some of the damage of the past. It carries the case for rewilding a long way even though it might be opposed by conservative attitudes, particularly within official bodies, in defence of the *status quo*.

(a) 'Wilding' by Isabella Tree (published by Picador) is an excellent account of the rewilding of Knepp.

(b) <https://www.rewildingbritain.org.uk/>

(c) www.monbiot.com/2018/06/13/butchery-of-the-planet/

John Jones



Credits: See page 43

HOS WALKS AND EVENTS

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 2018

IF YOU ARE WILLING TO LEAD A WALK, PLEASE CONTACT

Ted Barnes

Ted Barnes: 07811049281 or 02380266774 or ted.barnes@talktalk.net

You do not need to be a birding expert

**Remember: Everyone is invited to these walks,
whatever your age and knowledge**

Strong footwear is advisable for all walks, as is clothing appropriate for the weather conditions. A packed lunch is recommended for walks that span mid-day. Participants are requested to inform the leader if leaving the walk early, or if they have a medical condition that might compromise their ability to complete the walk.

The distance covered is shown for each walk, together with a 'walk category', as follows:

A) Easy – a fairly short walk over relatively flat ground with no/few stiles; **B) A little more demanding** – longer distance and/or gentle hills but with no/few stiles; **C) Medium difficulty** – moderate distance and/or moderate hills and/or some stiles; **D) Strenuous** – long distance and/or steep hills and/or many stiles

Do please take care and enjoy the walks programme, but remember, responsibility for personal safety lies with the individual, not the society

Enjoy the free walks, the scenery, the company, the wildlife, the many pairs of eyes, the shared knowledge, the flora and the birds.

Saturday 1st September – Tidgrove Warren Farm, near Kingsclere

Leader Keith Betton (01252 724068 or 07809 671468) 10.00am until 1.00pm

Entrance to the farm is at SU516538 (RG25 3EN). Drive through the gate, continue for 500m and follow directions to parking in the field on the left. This is at the invitation of the landowner, Raleigh Place, who farms organically and manages areas of his farm to encourage breeding down land birds and uncommon arable plants.

Walk category A.

Saturday 15th September – Twyford, Owslebury and Hensting

Leader Julian Moseley (02380 779850) 10.30 am until approx. 4.00pm (5.5 miles)

Meet at SU483242 (OS Land ranger 185) – Hunters Park car park – off Park Lane Twyford. We will walk up Park Lane along Love lane and thence along the Monarch's Way to Owslebury continuing on to Hensting Farm and returning over the High ground to Twyford. There should be plenty of migrant activity and the remnant flora and Lepidoptera of late summer/early autumn. Bring coffee/lunch.

Walk category B/C.

Sunday 23rd September – Migrant Birds at Farlington Marshes

Leader Kev. Stouse (023 9248 2770)

9.30am until 2.00pm (3 miles)

Meet at the Broadmarsh car park (SU699055) for this walk round the marshes in search of winter birds. NB the new road layout means you have to do a U-turn to enter the car park as there is no right hand turn into the car park entrance – continue up Harts farm way and where it widens you can turn and come back to the car park entrance. Bring coffee/lunch.

Walk category A.

Saturday 6th October – Portland Bill

Leader Ted Barnes (02380 266774/078110 49281)

10.00am until approx.3.30pm (4.5 miles)

Meet in the Cheyne Weares car park at SY694705 (OS194) just off the Southwell road for this circular walk around the Portland Bill area looking for late returning summer migrants, sea birds and Peregrine Falcon. Bring Coffee/ lunch. Alternatively a reasonably priced meal/snack is available at the Lobster Pot cafe at the Bill. Phone leader the evening before to confirm especially if bad weather is forecast.

Walk category B.

Tuesday 9th October – Brownwich

Leader Richard Carpenter (01329 661856/07849 184316)

10.00am until 1.30 pm (3-4 miles)

Meet at SU531023 (OS Landranger 196) on the shore road to the west entrance to Titchfield Haven. There should be waders on the shore and some autumn migrants. If there has been rain the paths will be muddy. Bring coffee/lunch.

Walk category B.

Sunday 21st October – Migrant Birds at Titchfield Haven

Leader Kev. Stouse (023 9248 2770)

9.30am until 2.00pm (4 miles)

Meet at the lay-by at SU549043 on West of Titchfield – Stubbington road (B3334), Take the A27 through Fareham and turn left on the B3334 at the roundabout just before Titchfield village. After the glass houses continue past Crofton farm on the right then turn right into a disused section of the road. Bring coffee/lunch.

Walk category A.

Wednesday 24th October – Pagham Harbour

See over page

Wednesday 24th October – Pagham Harbour

Leader Nick Wiley (01489 893886 or 07747 151160) 10.00am until 2.30pm (4 miles)

Park at the RSPB car park off the B2145 Selsey road (SZ856966 – OS Landranger 197 & Post Code PO20 7NE) for a walk along Pagham Harbour and Church Norton looking for winter migrants, waders and wildfowl. Bring coffee/lunch.

Walk category B.

Wednesday 31st October – Warsash & Bunny Meadows

Leader Dave Munday (01489 576641) 10.00am until 2.00pm

Meet in the Passage Lane car park at SU489062 (OS Landranger 196) for this walk along the coastal path looking for winter migrants. We will continue into Wendleholm Nature reserve and the broadleaf woodland of Holly Hill. Bring coffee/lunch.

Walk category A.

Sunday 4th November - RSPB Arne

Leader John Clark (02380 618604) 10.00am until approx. 3.30pm

Meet by the information centre at SY971876 for this walk around the reserve to see many species to include Marsh Harrier, Dartford Warbler, Avocet, and Spoonbill. Entrance is free to RSPB members and the reserve has an onsite cafe. Bring lunch/coffee if preferred. This is a joint walk with the Winchester RSPB group.

Walk category A.

Sunday 18th November – Warblington Shore to Hayling Oyster beds.

Leader Kev. Stouse (023 9248 2770) 9.30am until 1.30pm (4 miles)

Meet at Warblington Church car park (SU728054) for this walk in search of winter birds. Bring coffee/lunch. Walk category A.

Saturday 24th November – Riverside Park, Swaythling and Mansbridge

Leader Phil Budd (07748 236666) 9.30am until 1.00pm (3 miles)

Meet at the car park at Manor Farm road near junction with Woodmill Lane at SU141150 (OS Landranger 196). Birds and other late autumn wildlife of river, wet woodland, a cemetery and suburban parkland expected. There are a couple of busy roads to cross. It may be muddy in places.

Walk category B.



Picture credits: See page 43

Reports of previous HOS walks

Holm Hill, New Forest for breeding waders: 19th May 2018

8am, Holm Hill in the New Forest with the 'HOS Curlew walk', led by Russell Wynn, supported by Marcus Ward, Andrew Colenutt, Brian Tarnoff, each a conservationist specialist in their own subjects. 25 set off in early morning mist, heads bowed in shame, bitterness, resentment and let's be honest - deep-felt disgust, as not one of us had been invited to that wedding.

This is a quiet spot in the Forest. Despite the blue skies, in 3 hours we saw virtually no one, apart from dog walkers; only 2 dogs on leads.

Curlews declining, maybe as low as 300 pairs in the entire south, and hardly surprisingly in the Forest with human disturbance, dogs, a doubling of grazing animals, Ravens, also, this year major Fox predation, and the 'Beast from the East'. This has inflicted devastating effects, especially to inland waders, seemingly out of proportion to the few days of snow. Possibly something to do with the date, but it also affected mammals, thousands of dead frogs were reported, dead Lapwings and declines in small bird numbers.

Russell questions the effectiveness of signage on the dog walkers. It seems that there are areas where nearly all dogs are kept on leads, such as Stanpit Marsh, and other areas, such as here, where it is ignored. The walkers probably just follow what the others do. Most are probably unaware of the damage they do to ground-nesting birds. We also saw a group of youngsters on a map-reading exercise, going off-path, and headed straight for a known Curlew's nest.

No wedding invite, but we saw 34 species, a good total for a hot day in New Forest heathlands - Skylarks, Woodlarks, Hobbies, Red Kite (rare in the Forest), Curlews, Ravens squabbling with Buzzards, Cuckoo, Stonechats, Dartfords.

Footnote: As for Marcus – he was up at 3.30 as usual to do his daily Hawfinch survey in the NF, followed by 3 hours with us. In the afternoon he was taking his children out for butterflies and picnic - and since you ask - to the New Forest of course.

Ian Julian



Gander Down and Longwood Warren: 6th June 2018

Eleven HOS members joined this walk led by Ted Barnes who stood in for the indisposed Nick Wiley. We were lucky with the weather which was dry, sunny and, later in the day, rather hot. The area is chalk down now arable farmland, this year growing mainly oil-seed rape and wheat. There is some grassland and wide, uncultivated field margins. It is a good site for Corn Bunting, Skylark and a variety of raptors, so these were our target species. Before we had left the car-park, we logged Buzzard, Raven and Kestrel. Goldfinch was the first of our “heard but not seen” birds – of which there were to be many that day.

As we walked across Longwood Warren, there were plenty of Skylark in song and soon the sharp-eared among us heard the song of Corn Bunting but, despite many pairs of binoculars trained on the vegetation where the bird was, it did not show. During the day, three more Corn Bunting were heard but none were seen. Rather surprisingly, two were singing from oil-seed rape crops. Bullfinch, Whitethroat, Blackcap and Firecrest joined the “heard but not seen” list. However, Red-legged Partridge, Linnet, Yellowhammer, Swallow and House Sparrow did show themselves as did large numbers of Herring and Lesser black-backed Gulls attracted by a rubbish-strewn camp site which had been occupied the previous weekend.

We had more luck with the local raptors. Good numbers of Buzzard and Red Kite were present, often mobbed by the local Ravens, plus the occasional Kestrel. Best bird of the day was a falcon which came low over the roadside hedge and then quickly turned back and dropped out of sight behind the hedge. The scythe-shaped wings and underpart coloration identified it as a Hobby. More-prolonged views were obtained later, and its identity confirmed.

At least three Brown Hare were seen. Invertebrates included a Beautiful Demoiselle (damselfly) miles away from its usual riverside habitat.

Ted's timing was perfect. We arrived at the car park at the advertised time. A long and strenuous walk, category C at least, but an enjoyable and rewarding day.

Ian Hainsworth

Recent reports - April to June 2018

Around 216 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.

Bewick's Swan: Harbridge 2/4

Ruddy Shelduck: Farlington Marshes 23/6; Pennington Marsh 24/6

GREEN-WINGED TEAL: Keyhaven 1/4 - 13/4

Garganey: Titchfield Haven 4/4; Ibsley Water, Blashford Lakes 7 6/4, 4 7/4, 3 9/4 - 11/4; Milford-on-Sea 6E 6/6, 3E 27/4; Hill Head 2 13/4; Pennington Marsh 19/4

Scaup: Farlington Marshes 1/4 - 1/5

Long-tailed Duck: Weston Shore 1/4 - 21/4; Langstone Harbour 1/4, 12/4; Hill Head/Stubbington 30/5 - 2/6

Velvet Scoter: Farlington Marshes 1/4 - 1/5; Milford-on-Sea 4E 14/4; Hill Head 4 15/4, 16/4 - 28/4, 1E 25/5; Portsmouth Harbour 15/4; Weston Shore 4 15/4; Stokes Bay 20/4

Quail: Fishlake Meadows 2/6

Red-throated Diver: Weston Shore 1/4, 9/4; Milford-on-Sea 1E 4/4, 7E 7/4, 4E 15/4, 3E 18/4, 4E 21/4, 2E 22/4, 4 27/4; Hill Head 3E 6/4; Sandy Point, Hayling 1E 6/4, 6E 7/4, 2 17/4, 1E 24/4; Stokes Bay 1E 22/4, 27/4, 5/5

Black-throated Diver: Milford-on-Sea 1E 2/4, 1E 15/4, 3E 18/4, 1E 27/4, 11/5; Stokes Bay 2E 2/4, 4E 6/4, 1E 17/4; Sandy Point, Hayling Island 3E 6/4; Lepe 1W 17/4

Great Northern Diver: Weston Shore 1/4; Langstone Harbour 1/4, 5/4; Pennington 14/4; Hill Head 8/6

Fulmar: Milford-on-Sea 3E 4/4, 2 15/4, 1E 21/4, 2 22/4, 24 27/4, 10 11/5; Sandy Point, Hayling Island 11/4, 17/4, 1W 22/4, 3 24/4, 27/4; Stokes Bay 1W 17/4; Southsea 1W 22/4

Manx Shearwater: Milford-on-Sea 60 15/4, 1E 22/4, 51 27/4, 70 11/5; Sandy Point, Hayling Island 8 22/4, 2 23/4, 1W 24/4, 3W 24/4, 42 11/5; Hill Head 2W 24/4

Shag: Milford-on-Sea 2 2/4, 4/4, 2 7/4; Weston Shore 2 17/4; Southsea 22/4, 11/5; Pennington Marsh 2/5; Hill Head 11/5

Great White Egret: Fishlake Meadows max. 4 1/4 - 19/4; Moorcourt 2/4; Testwood Lakes 5/4 - 7/4, 3/5 - 6/5; Lower Test 10/4; Keyhaven 3E 13/4; Calshot 15/4; Titchfield Haven 15/4, 7/5; Copythorne 10/6

PURPLE HERON: Hayling Bay 12/5

WHITE STORK: Farlington Marshes 24/4; Titchfield Haven 24/4 - 27/4; Curbridge 26/4; Testwood Lakes 26/4; Portsdown Hill 26/4; Botley 26/4; Woodlands, NF 29/4 - 30/4; Avon Causeway 3/5; Bedhampton 2 15/6

Spoonbill: Farlington Marshes 1/4, 3/4, 2 5/4, 13/6; Keyhaven/Pennington 6/4, 13/4, max. 3 1/5 - 31/5; max. 4 2/6 - 30/6; Hill Head 2E 12/4; Hook-with-Warsash 1/6; Titchfield Haven 13/6

Red-necked Grebe: Pennington/Oxey 1/4 - 15/4

Black-necked Grebe: Langstone Harbour 4 1/4, 12/4

Marsh Harrier: [Non-breeding records] Old Alresford 3/4; Hook-with-Warsash 16/5, 22/5

Osprey: Titchfield Haven/Hill Head 1/4, 28/4, 29/4, 10/5, 13/5; Lower Test 1/4, 2/5, 3/5; Keyhaven/Pennington 2/4, 21/4, 6/6; Portsdown Hill 5/4; Hook near Basingstoke 10/4; Ibsley Water, Blashford Lakes 11/4, 2/5; Blackfield 15/4; Milford-on-Sea 21/4; Woolston 28/4; Fishlake Meadows 4/5, 10/5, 16/5, 28/5; Hamble Cliff 5/5; Bickton 6/5; Langstone Harbour 9/5; Portchester 13/5; Ranvilles Lane 13/5; Braishfield 20/5; Testwood Lakes 28/5

Avocet: [Non-breeding records] Sandy Point, Hayling Island 10/5; Hook-with-Warsash 12 30/6

Common Crane: Martin Down 2 3/6

Great Bustard: Holmsley Airfield, NF 10/6

Ruff: Titchfield Haven 1/4, 7/4, 21/4, 28/4, max. 3 3/5 - 19/5; Pennington Marsh max. 5 2/4 - 15/4; Farlington Marshes max. 3 8/4 - 11/4

Curlew Sandpiper: Pennington Marsh 13/5 - 14/5, 22/5

Purple Sandpiper: Southsea Castle max. 15 3/4 - 8/5

Little Stint: Titchfield Haven 24/5

Spotted Redshank: Keyhaven/Pennington max. 4 1/4 - 29/4, 12/6 - 23/6;
Gosport 2 14/4

MARSH SANDPIPER: Pennington Marsh 10/6

Wood Sandpiper: Fishlake Meadows 23/4, Pennington Marsh 3/5, 6/5

Jack Snipe: Newlands Farm, Stubbington 1/4; Farlington Marshes 11/4;
Woolmer Forest 13/4; Hook-with-Warsash 23/4

Pratincole sp. : Ibsley Water, Blashford Lakes 15/6

Pomarine Skua: Hill Head 5E 11/5; Milford-on-Sea 4E 11/5; Sandy Point,
Hayling Island 6E 11/5

Arctic Skua: Stokes Bay 3 2/4, 2 6/4, 3E 10/4, 2E 15/4, 3 17/4, 19/4, 1E 22/4,
2E 27/4, 1E 3/5, 1E 8/5, 11/5; Hill Head 2E 3/4, 4E 4/4, 2 6/4, 2 7/4, 2E 18/4,
1E 19/4, 3 21/4, 2E 5/5, 5 6/5, 10E 11/5, 2E 18/5, 3 31/5, 2 8/6; Milford-on-
Sea 2E 4/4, 8E 15/4, 1E 16/4, 2E 18/4, 6E 21/4, 1E 22/4, 2E 27/4, 1E 7/5, 11
11/5; Sandy Point, Hayling Island 2E 6/4, 3E 17/4, 3E 19/4, 3E 22/4; 3E 27/4,
16E 11/5, 4/6; Southsea 2 22/4, 1W 6/5; Weston Shore 12/5

Great Skua: Milford-on-Sea 1W 7/4, 1W 22/4, 1E 27/4, 3E 11/5; Sandy Point,
Hayling Island 17/4, 19/4, 2 27/4; Stokes Bay 1E 27/4; Hill Head 27/4;
Southsea Castle 1E 6/5, 1E 11/5

Guillemot: Milford-on-Sea 15/4, 2 27/4, 27 11/5; Pennington Marsh 3/5

Black Tern: Milford-on-Sea 2W 16/4; Southsea Castle 3E 11/5; Hill Head 5E
12/5; Ivy Lake, Blashford Lakes 24/5

Roseate Tern: Sandy Point, Hayling Island 9/5

Arctic Tern: Milford-on-Sea 6/4, 5E 18/4, 13E 27/4; Sandy Point, Hayling
Island 7/4, 9/5; Ibsley Water, Blashford Lakes 25 15/4; Stokes Bay 7E 17/4, 6
27/4; Titchfield Haven/Hill Head 6 19/4, 2E 27/4, 3 28/4, 4/5, 2E 11/5;
Southsea 1E 22/4, 5E 29/4; Tundry Pond 28/4; Fleet Pond 30/4, 4 2/5, 5/5,
11/5

Kittiwake: Hill Head 1E 1/4, 1E 4/4, 1E 6/5, 6E 11/5; Riverside Park,
Southampton 2/4 - 3/4; Milford-on-Sea 8E 4/4, 4E 15/4, 26 16/4, 1E 21/4, 1E
22/4, 28 11/5; Lepe 1W 6/4; Sandy Point, Hayling Island 2E 6/4, 6E 7/4, 2W
24/4, 1W 27/4; Stokes Bay 4 27/4; Weston Shore 4/5, 9 24/5;

Little Gull: Milford-on-Sea 2E 2/4, 11E 4/4, 1E 7/4, 11E 15/4; Ibsley Water, Blashford Lakes max. 5 2/4 - 16/4; Pennington Marsh max. 3 3/4 - 15/4; Hill Head 10E 4/4, 10 6/4, 2 27/4; Stokes Bay 10 6/4, 2E 17/4, 2E 27/4; Weston Shore 11/4, 11/5; Fleet Pond 12/4 - 13/4, 2 25/4; Keyhaven 15/4; Farlington Marshes 2 19/4; Sandy Point, Hayling Island 27/4; Hook-with-Warsash 5/5, 26/5; Titchfield Haven 7/5 - 11/5, 31/5; Langstone Harbour 8/5;

Yellow-legged Gull: Pennington Marsh 6/4; Hook-with-Warsash 20/5 - 22/5, 29/5, 4/6 - 27/6

Iceland Gull: Pennington Marsh 1/4; Chilling 6/4; Stokes Bay 15/4 - 17/4; Southsea Castle 25/4

Turtle Dove: Casbrook Common 20/4

Short-eared Owl: Farlington Marshes max. 3 1/4 - 11/4; Pennington/ Oxey Marsh 22/4, 7/5; Beachlands, Hayling Island 2/5; Weston Shore 13/5; Sandy Point, Hayling Island 2/6

ALPINE SWIFT: Compton 1/5

Bee-eater: Needs Ore 11/5

Wryneck: Titchfield Haven 20/4; Holm Hill, New Forest 20/4; New Forest 10/5

RED-FOOTED FALCON: Noar Hill 13/5

Merlin: Stubbington 1/4, 5/5; Farlington Marshes 1/4; Workman's Lane 2/4; Fishlake Meadows 6/4; Keyhaven 10/4; Holmsley, NF 11/4; Weston Shore 13/4

Ring-necked Parakeet: Southampton 3/4, 7/5, 9/5, 21/5, 15/6, 22/6; Basingstoke 2 5/4, 8/4; Aldershot 2 5/4; Sandy Point, Hayling Island 8/5

SAVI'S WARBLER: Farlington Marshes 18/4 - 29/4

ROSE-COLOURED STARLING: Hook-with-Warsash 29/5

Ring Ouzel: Long Valley, Bourley 3/4; Ocknell Plain, NF 6/4; Lower Test 7/4 - 13/4; Beacon Hill, Highclere 13/4, 14/4

Black Redstart: Pennington 5/4; Hill Head 9/4; Sandy Point, Hayling Island 2 11/4; Fort Cumberland 15/4; Winnall Moors 26/4; Farnborough 4/6

Pied Flycatcher: Keyhaven 14/4; New Copse Inclosure, NF 20/4

Water Pipit: Titchfield Haven 7 1/4; Farlington Marshes 1/4 - 6/4; Alresford Cress Beds max. 11 1/4 - 14/4; Lower Test 2 13/4

Serin: Havant 9/5

LITTLE BUNTING: North Baddesley 8/4

PLEASE SEND RECORDS TO THE COUNTY RECORDER SO THAT THEY CAN BE INCLUDED IN THE HOS DATABASE AND HAMPSHIRE BIRD REPORT. SEND TO:

Keith Betton, 8 Dukes Close, Folly Hill, Farnham, GU9 0DR (Tel. 01252 724068) Email: keithbetton@hotmail.com

Records can be submitted as an email attachment using the Recording Form available from the home page of the HOS website: <http://www.hos.org.uk/>

Thank you

Tom Jordan



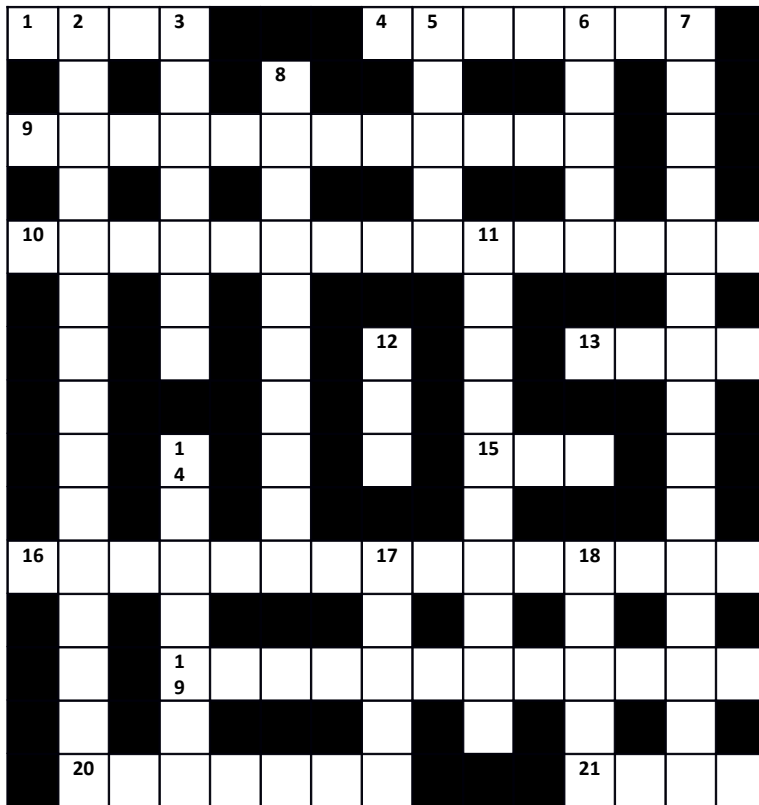
The above picture of a male Ring Ouzel was taken by Jim Bennett at Lower Test Nature Reserve on 10th April 2018 but I would also like to thank Andy Tew, Mike Duffy and Andy Holding for sending other pictures of Ring Ouzels.



Credits: See page 43

HOS Cryptic Crossword No.3 by A. Johnson

Another crossword specifically designed for Hampshire birders. Most of the answers are bird names, but rather than simply put 'bird' or similar as the meaning, many of the descriptions require rather more lateral thinking! Others may be more or less related to natural history (or just fill the gaps), including some very specific Hampshire references



Across

- 1 Is this singer quiet? No, has gone loud! (4)
- 4 Extreme rough-up loses tail feather – part of murmuration (7)
- 9 Migrant moths not softly taken to pieces by birds of prey (7,5)
- 10 Moving earth to fill fissure takes ages in the winter (5,4,6)
- 13 see 12
- 15 see 12
- 16 Over the Atlantic, awesome weather's a problem, right? (5,10)
- 19 Mediterranean singer's microphone catches vacant speech, right after being questioned (6,6)
- 20 see 5
- 21 Overwinters by choice, initially, in South America (4)

Down

- 2 High-calibre autumn migrant is mixed-calibre winterer (8,7)
- 3 Pirate's destiny is outside his control? (7)
- 5 & 20 Not a bird! Horrid, broadly pale version of a more familiar species (5,7)
- 6 Geese generally pick up sounds (5)
- 7 Loud drummer is quiet in court floor – more threatening surroundings (5,10)
- 8 Combines with 6 for energy on the water (10)
- 11 Boy George's first hit; finally you go for a singer (4,6)
- 12, 15 & 13 Draw a particular shorebird without a hitch? Quite the opposite (3,3,4)
- 14 Captivated like a number of finches? (7)
- 17 Sounds like you left essential salts near Epsom (5)
- 18 Cares about birding, down in th Forest (5)

Solution to HOS Crossword no. 2

B	U	F	F	L	E	H	E	A	D		F	R	O	G
L		E		I			V			B		I		Y
U		N		T	R	E	E	C	R	E	E	P	E	R
E				T			N			T		E		S
G		M		L	I	T	T	L	E	T	E	R	N	
R		A		E				I		O				G
O	A	S	I	S		B		T	A	N	A	G	E	R
S		K		T		U		T				U		A
B	E	E		I		G		L	O	E	R	I	E	S
E		D		N				E				L		S
A	L	B	A	T	R	O	S	S		S	P	L	I	F
K		O				U		W				E		I
S	N	O	W	B	U	N	T	I	N	G		M	A	N
		B		O		C		F				O		C
F	L	Y		G	R	E	A	T	K	N	O	T		H

This years young.....



Credits: See page 43

Membership Subscriptions & Renewals

Please contact the Membership Secretary:

Kay Shillitoe, 'Westerley', Hundred Acres Road, Wickham,
PO17 6HY. Tel: 01329 833086 E-mail: kay.shillitoe@gmail.com

All renewals and subscription enquiries should go to Kay Shillitoe at the address above. Please encourage your friends to join – see the **web site** for further details or contact Kay for an application form. Please include your name, or names, and address in any correspondence and send cheques with the appropriate subscription rates to **HOS**.

Current Subscription Rates:

Ordinary member: £12

Membership for household: £12

Junior members (under 18): £5

Application forms can also be downloaded from our **web site**:

www.hos.org.uk

HOS Contacts

County Recorder

Keith Betton (Tel: 01252 724068)
8 Dukes Close, Folly Hill, Farnham, GU9 0DR
keithbetton@hotmail.com

Honorary Secretary

John Shillitoe (Tel: 01329 833086)
'Westerley', Hundred Acres Road, Wickham, PO17 6HY
jshillitoe@gmail.com

Sales Officer

Bryan Coates (Tel: 02380 252960)
8 Gardner Way, Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh, SO53 1JL
sandyandbryan@tiscali.co.uk

Kingfisher No.160 Pictures

Front Cover Bullfinch Anton Lakes 20.5.2018 Brian Cartwright

Page 3 (top) Cuckoo Setthorns New Forest 8.5.2018 Terry Jenvey

Page 3 (bottom) Cuckoo Fritham Plain New Forest May 2018 Alan Forder

Page 10 (top) Dartford Warbler New Forest 21.5.2018 Andy Holding

Page 10 (bottom) Yellowhammer Martin Down 9.5.2018 Andy Tew

Page 25 (top) Common Sandpiper Blashford 1.5.2018 Bruce Hargreaves

Page 25 (bottom) Common Sandpiper Keyhaven 11.5.2018 Geoff Norquoy

Page 29 (top) Wheatear Hamble Point 1.4.2018 Dave Aburrow

Page 29 (bottom) Whitethroat Keyhaven 4.6.2018 Andy Holding

Page 38 (top) Pied wagtail Down Grange, Basingstoke 30.5.2018

Page 38 (bottom) Grey Wagtail Setthorns, New Forest 8.5.2018

Page 41 (top) Blackbird youngster Anton Lake Brian Cartwright 28.6.2018

Page 41 (bottom) Sand Martin youngster Blashford Lakes 13.5.2018 Terry Jenvey

Back page (top) Starling Basingstoke 5.4.2018 Dave Levy

Back page (bottom) Blackcap juveniles Anton Lakes 30.6.2018 Brian Cartwright

Note: Any otherwise non-credited photographs are by the authors of the respective articles

Please continue to send your articles and observations, by email or letters, however short or lengthy to: photos@hos.org.uk

All pictures could subsequently be sent to the Hampshire Bird Report and for future HOS publications. We welcome and enjoy all of your pictures and articles, even those we may not use immediately.

If possible, right click then 'rename' the JPEG file giving the species, where and when and do not forget your name.

DO NOT FORGET OUR FORUM – 'holist' – and our sightings programme – 'going birding'.

See www.hos.org.uk for easy access to these.

DEADLINE FOR WINTER 2018/2019 KINGFISHER:

1st October 2018

