

Winter 2018 No.195



The Harrier

Suffolk Ornithologists' Group

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Contents

Editorial	Gi Grieco	1
Suffolk Bird Group? A new name and a stronger future? ...	John Grant.....	2
New arrangements for administering SOG membership....	Edward Jackson	4
SOG Rook survey - Let's have something to crow about....	John Grant	5
Heronries Census	Mick Wright	6
SOS Swifts – a review of our activities in 2018	Edward Jackson	7
Lesser White-fronted Geese - revisited	Richard Attenborough	10
Autumn Bird Review 2018.....	Eddie Marsh	12
SOG Outdoor Field Trips.....	Gi Grieco	20

Field Trip reports

Fingringhoe Wick	Val Lockwood	21
Shingle Street & Hollesley Marsh RSPB.....	Steve Fryett	22
Orfordness.....	Gi Grieco	23
Landguard Bird Observatory	Dave Pearsons.....	25
The Naze	Ashley Gooding	26
Winter Wordsearch.....		28

Cover photograph: Yellow-browed Warbler (*Phylloscopus inornatus*) by Andrew Moon.

Contact email for articles, photographs, notes and observations is:

harrier@sogonline.org.uk

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Editorial

Welcome to this edition of The Harrier. 2019 promises to be an interesting year for the group, the major point is a proposed name change as detailed in the article by SOG President, John Grant. We welcome your thoughts on this plus please attend the AGM where this motion is put forward. Another major change is the new membership administration; this is detailed by Edward so please read through and see the attached membership and gift aid forms inserted with this edition.

We have an update on a major project run by the group, Save our Suffolk Swifts, which has been growing from strength to strength. A new project for 2019 and 2020 will be a full Rookery survey and details are found within – we hope many of you will participate in this. We also have details on a request to help with one of the oldest BTO surveys – the Heronries Survey. The appearance of four Lesser White-fronted Geese, found due to technology, caused some excitement a few years ago. There were articles both within the Suffolk Bird Report and The Harrier on the occurrence so we're pleased to have an update on the project.

Of our many indoor talks over the years a recent one was on a topic not covered previously. The talk by Joe Harkness titled Bird Therapy detailed his issues with mental health and addiction, the starting of a hobby of being outdoors and enjoying the bird life seen and it's help with his rehabilitation. He has written a book about this and this is to be published next year around June, of which we hope to have a related article in the Harrier at the time. Joe talked about why birdwatching is beneficial and his five ways



Guillemot

Photo: Andrew Moon

to well-birding. One of which was Connect – meeting and sharing with people who have the same interest. This is quite prevalent in our group with our many field trips during the year where not only do we get to enjoy the bird life around Suffolk and beyond but catch up with friends made over the years on these trips. We have a number of field trip reports from this autumn. We have our regular quarterly bird review and it's been a while but a winter wordsearch has been included to keep you occupied over the winter break! Having to decide which image to put on the front cover I decided to list all the front cover photographed images for reference – this was from issue #128 onwards plus the special #100 edition - and from this came the idea to do a wordsearch!

My thanks to all the contributors over the last year; we're very grateful for all your articles and photographs to help the group produce a great magazine. A big thank you also to Alex for his proof-reading during the year. We're always grateful to receive articles and photographs for inclusion so please email in.

Wishing you all a bird-filled 2019.

Gi Grieco

Suffolk Bird Group? A new name and a stronger future?

A rose by any other name would smell as sweet, as Shakespeare's Juliet said of Romeo. But would our group come up smelling of roses if we changed its name? The SOG Council is of the opinion that it would – and that it would actually blossom and thrive still further if the big decision was taken to reach out to Suffolk and beyond under a new moniker.

This has come to the fore, in part, following some views from some members, including new ones, to the group. Our Council, at its meeting on November 15, discussed the matter, which has often been considered formally and informally over the years but which has never before gained such positive traction. Reaction to the suggestion was unanimously favourable and now it will be presented as a formal resolution to SOG members to vote on at our Annual General Meeting to be held on Thursday, February 28th 2019 at the Best Western, Copdock. Around the Council table there was a feeling that the word ornithologists' may well be too "high-flown", if you will pardon the pun. It was thought that it may discourage some people who are thinking of joining us – they may be put off by a perception that we are perhaps a more academic and, dare I say, "stuffy" bunch than they would perhaps like to be associated with. Anyone taking part in any of our group activities would, of course, see that this could not be further from the truth!

Council members agreed that re-naming ourselves Suffolk Bird Group, for example, would be a far more positive and effective

way of "selling" to the general public and prospective new members what we do and what we are all about. In no way whatsoever should it be thought that this amounts to a dumbing down of our activities or principles. We will continue in our well-established ways – our studies, our surveys, our field trips and our indoor meetings – and, indeed, expand them whenever the opportunity arises. But it was thought that our proposed new name would present a more welcoming face to the public at large and so make us a more attractive proposition for prospective new members. After all, in these times of ever-increasing pressures on wildlife and seemingly ever-decreasing human connection with nature, surely we must strive to help foster inclusiveness in groups such as ours in any way that we can.

Such a change may not be acceptable to some members and there will be ample time for discussion at our AGM, but the SOG Council considers that now is the perfect time to take this step. It will hopefully be combined with greater group outreach into the Suffolk community at large, starting with wide public involvement in our forthcoming Rook survey.

A name change will entail some short-term costs relating to our constitution, logo, website, bank account arrangements, etc., but it is considered that we have the resources to be able to tend to these matters – and that such a change will stand the group in very good stead for the years ahead.

A proper process for changing our name

We've checked on the Charity Commission website and the name 'Suffolk Bird Group' is *not* already listed! So here is the resolution that Council will present to you, our members, to discuss and vote on at the 2019 AGM.

Special Resolution: 'That the formal name of this Charity (Number 801466) be changed from 'Suffolk Ornithologists' Group' to 'Suffolk Bird Group' and that Council is directed to take all appropriate steps to register the change and bring it into effect'.

Our wonderful SOG logo of the sky-dancing Marsh Harriers would need a subtle substitution of a 'B' for the 'O' and there would opportunities to freshen up the cover of *The Harrier* and update our website too.

PROPOSAL

**Suffolk
Bird
Group**



Photo: Andrew Moon

New arrangements for administering SOG membership

Kevin Verlander has been our Membership Secretary for the past four years, but will be stepping down from Council at the next AGM. We'd like to thank him warmly for all he has done for us in welcoming new members, confidentially maintaining our spreadsheet list of nearly 400 SOG members and liaising with colleagues inside and outside SOG.

However, the imminent vacancy has given us an opportunity to consider whether things could be done slightly differently. Around two thirds of SOG members already elect to have annual membership of Suffolk Naturalists' Society at the same time. Some people join or renew their memberships through SOG and others do this through SNS. This dual approach does create the need for a significant amount of cross-referencing of membership and subscription information between SOG and SNS.

Although we have our own Constitution and separate charity status, SOG was originally set up as a 'daughter' organisation to SNS and has always maintained good links with our 'parent'! Having consulted closely, both SOG and SNS Councils have recommended that for 2019 onwards the actual administration of membership matters for both organisations should be based in one place c/o Ipswich Museum and that the Membership and Gift Aid Declaration forms should be dual purpose to cover both SNS and SOG.

We believe this move should effectively streamline the various processes involved, making financial transfers between SNS and SOG and our respective dealings with HMRC over Gift Aid much easier to handle. Please be assured that both SOG and SNS Councils will keep a watchful eye over the new arrangements, to ensure they are as efficient as possible and adhere to the expected standards of financial probity and data confidentiality.

You will find the new joint Membership Form and Gift Aid Form enclosed with this *Harrier*. Please read them through carefully and please renew your

membership(s) as soon as possible in the New Year. Drawing on the existing systems used by SNS you will see that there are now a number of additional ways in which you can pay your annual subscription. However, whichever way you decide to pay, please ensure that you still also send both paper forms by post to Ipswich Museum. This will enable us to cross-check that all the details we receive are correct.

As part of the review of arrangements we have expanded the option of 'Family' membership to include 'Household' membership as well. This allows one other named family member or partner, living at the same address, to be covered by this type of membership.

We have also added a new category of 'Student' membership to dovetail with the existing offer from SNS. Joint Student memberships attract a similar discount.

A special note for those of you who have joined SOG since 1 September 2018: your membership already runs through to 31 December 2019. However, please will you still return both forms to the Museum with a note to say you joined in autumn 2018. You may also wish to add Gift Aid to your membership or become a member of SNS as well.

The fact that SNS members automatically receive the highly regarded Annual Bird Report *Suffolk Birds* must in itself be easily worth the few extra pounds for dual membership!

If you have any specific queries about your SOG and/or SNS membership, please contact Rosemary Milner at Ipswich Museum on 01473 433547. She normally works there on Tuesday mornings. You can also email queries to enquiry@sns.org.uk

We hope the transfer to these new arrangements runs smoothly, but if you do experience any issues please contact a member of SOG Council or email info@sogonline.org.uk and we will do all we can to help.

SOG Rook survey - Let's have something to crow about

Commonplace and far from glamorous it may be, but the Rook is worth much more than just a look. It's a species that is as fascinating as it is familiar, deserving of far more than simply a cursory glance.

SOG realised this way back in 1975 and carried out an exhaustive and exemplary Rook survey in the county as part of a national British Trust for Ornithology census of the species. The group's painstaking survey work culminated in SOG stalwarts Michael J F Jeanes and Reg Snook producing a booklet - *The Rook in Suffolk* - which was a landmark publication for SOG that brilliantly summarised members' fieldwork.

More than 40 years on, and after a more recent re-visiting of the subject a less extensive but still illuminating work by group chairman Gi Grieco and others, SOG is returning to the Rook in a very big way. In what promises to be one of the group's most extensive projects to date, we are launching our own two-year Rook survey to establish the species' current Suffolk population and distribution. The project is being seen as a golden opportunity to engage with members of the public – individuals, community organisations and especially young people via schools and Scouts and Guides groups – and to inspire them to become more connected with nature.

The survey has been enabled by generous funding from Suffolk resident Jenifer Bridges-Adams and is being established with invaluable support from the highly respected naturalist and conservationist Gathorne Gathorne-Hardy, Fifth Earl of Cranbrook.



Rook

Photo: Ashley Gooding

Gi said: "Rooks enliven Suffolk landscapes that are often bereft of much other wildlife. Our survey will enable people to really connect with nature, perhaps for their first time in a meaningful way, and to enjoy making a valuable contribution to a worthwhile study. It will build on previous national surveys; SOG's first-ever such project that led to its publication of *The Rook in Suffolk* back in 1975, and a subsequent smaller survey the group undertook more recently."

Mike and Reg's data-crunching from the group's 1975 survey established that a total of 15,850 nests in 929 rookeries were recorded back then, with the most densely populated areas lying in the zone between Diss, Haverhill, Ipswich and Saxmundham. There was generally a "marked diminution" in numbers of rookeries and nests in the coastal belt and in the north-west of the county, particularly in Breckland and the Fens, where lighter soils prevailed and fewer suitable nesting trees were found.

The format for our new survey will be similar to that used by Save Our Suffolk Swifts, a partnership involving SOG and Suffolk Wildlife Trust. Easy to use and beginning in January 2019, there will be a rookery survey

webpage hosted by the Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service, allowing the number of nests in each rookery to be recorded, with location mapping down to an accuracy level of 10 metres. Further information will also be available on SOG's website. The results of the work are due to be encapsulated in a SOG publication after the fieldwork has taken place.

It is to be hoped that many SOG members will take part in the survey. We stand to

learn much about the current status of the Rook in Suffolk, but there will hopefully be other great rewards too. We could gain some new members of course, but, more importantly, we could inspire a newfound appreciation of nature in the previously uninitiated. That, in these days when wildlife needs to be cherished more than ever before, really would be something for SOG to crow about.

Mick Wright, BTO RR Suffolk



Heronries Census

This year, 2018, saw the 90th anniversary of the Heronries Census. In Suffolk, fieldworkers surveyed 12 Heronries, which supported around 95 nests. The results included two Heronries that are located in very private grounds, that we have not been able to survey for many years for lack of access.

It will not be long before Herons will be thinking of nesting again, as February 2019 is not far off and I would like to capitalise on the good work of 2018. There are two other Heronries I would like surveyed:

- i. **Stanstead Great Wood, TL853484, (TL84P) near Sudbury.** There is a public footpath through the site but you still need to get permission from the Forestry Commission.
- ii. **Gedgrave Woods** a new Heronry.

I would appreciate it if there is a birder/conservationist that frequents those areas if they would consider contacting the landowners in order to confirm the sites and to survey the number of occupied nests in 2019.

Photo: Gi Grieco



Grey Heron



SOS Swifts – a review of our activities in 2018

Managed jointly by SOG and Suffolk Wildlife Trust, our *Save Our Suffolk Swifts* project is now in its fifth year. Both within the county and also in the wider UK Swift community we're now definitely making an impact though our efforts to raise awareness and take action to help Swifts.

Conservation Status

There's general consensus among those working for Swifts that their current 'Amber List' status set out in *Birds of Conservation Concern 4* (December 2015) significantly fails to address the accelerating decline in population numbers. In the 2018 update of *BTO Bird Trends*, Swift is the only Amber List species recording a decline of more than 50% over the standard time frame. Formal recording of Swift numbers only started with the BTO Breeding Bird Survey in 1996, so longer-term trends don't exist. The 21-year BBS trend does point to a 'potential update' from Amber List to Red List status, but there appears to be no mechanism to do this until the next *BoCC* review, likely due in 2022. However, in September 2017 *British Birds* published a review of breeding birds in Great Britain using IUCN Red List criteria that cites Swift as '**Endangered**'. So this is what we're now using to highlight the urgency of our efforts to help them.

In addition to these national assessments, our county conservation professionals now refer to Swifts as a **Suffolk Priority Species**. This means that all records of Swift screaming parties, nest sites and nest boxes logged on the Suffolk Swift Survey (hosted by Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service) are forwarded to our District and Borough Planning Authorities on a regular basis for

use in determining planning applications.

In the last 12 months, Suffolk Wildlife Trust staff have provided training to these Authorities in a wide range of biodiversity issues, including Swifts. Planning Committees are increasingly endorsing planning conditions for larger developments that include provision of integral Swift nest boxes. *SOS Swifts* is now advising developers on the best positions to site these boxes in new buildings.

Raising awareness

Our *SOS Swifts* PowerPoint presentation continues to be used to raise public and professional awareness of the amazing lifestyles of Swifts, the reasons for their decline and the actions that can help them. This 'Swift tour of Suffolk' - and elsewhere - included the following places and groups in 2018:

- Shottisham, Wenhaston, Newmarket, Ipswich, Aldeburgh
- RSPB Woodbridge, RSPB Ipswich, Basildon Natural History Society, Essex WT Tending Group
- Suffolk Constabulary Rural and Wildlife Crime Unit - Stowmarket
- Roger Balmer Design (architects) - East Bergholt

Please make Suffolk Wildlife Trust aware if you know of other professional organisations or groups that might benefit from a presentation.



Swift at nestbox

Suffolk Swift Survey

A key project objective is to find out by 2020 whether or not Swifts are breeding in each of Suffolk's 300+ civil parishes and urban wards and record their presence using the online Suffolk Swift Survey. 355 records have been logged so far in 2018 and although the full suite of records acquired since 2014 requires further analysis, it appears that currently around a third of parishes and wards have Swifts recorded as present. We're intending to use the 2019 and 2020 summer seasons to fill in the gaps, as there are still records appearing for places where none have been reported before.

If you have any unlogged 2018 records of Swift screaming parties, nest sites or recently installed nest boxes, please can you add them online at: <https://www.suffolkbis.org.uk/swift>

On a wider note, Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust is actively looking into the possibility of cloning our recording system for use by its three respective Biological Records Centres.

Community Swift groups

The project increasingly focuses on providing support to groups of people who can be active Swift Champions in their own communities. As a result of free training to share information and build capacity we know there are now active Swift groups at least in: Aldeburgh, Beccles, Bungay, Eye, Felixstowe, Hadleigh, Ipswich, Newmarket, Saxmundham, Shottisham, Stutton, Wenhamston, Wickham Market, Woodbridge and Worlington.

We also know informally that in at least another 50 communities across the county - from Bacton to Wrentham - people are taking an active interest in Swifts and installing nestboxes in churches, homes and other buildings.

Please use the contact details below to let us know of any groups or activities we may not be aware of.

National Links

Representing *SOS Swifts*, I attended a meeting on 31 October in Cambridge between RSPB and *Swifts Local Network* -

an informal association of people working for Swifts across the UK. We shared information so we can better understand what we are all doing for Swifts. The overall outcomes were very positive and there is a willingness on all sides to develop better ways of working in partnership, while maintaining our separate identities.

We took a key decision to explore how the online RSPB Swift Survey, our own Suffolk Swift Survey and a new app for Apple and Android devices called 'Swift Mapper' (download it for free at the respective app stores) can be more integrated. I've joined a working party to look at improving ways in which the data these systems collect can be more easily stored, shared and targeted to end-users, especially Planning Authorities. Hopefully the changes will be ready in time for the 2019 Swift season.

Training

Following two previous successful events, we're offering another free training and information morning for people new to helping Swifts:

- Saturday 16 March 2019, 1000 - 1300
SWT Brooke House, Ashbocking
Places are limited and can be booked through:

tracey.housley@suffolkwildlifetrust.org

Swift Awareness Week 2019

Following the nationwide success of the 2018 event organised through *Swifts Local Network*, this will be running again between Saturday 22 and Sunday 30 June, this time involving the Republic of Ireland as well as the UK.

SOS Swifts will be offering several events during the week, but if you wish to arrange activities in your own community to celebrate *your* Swifts, please do let us know.

Contacting SOS Swifts

To find out more or share general information about Suffolk Swifts, please contact Suffolk Wildlife Trust and ask for your message to be passed on to the appropriate staff or volunteers:

Email: info@suffolkwildlifetrust.org

Tel: 01473 890089



Photo: Chris Courtney



Photo: Richard Attenborrow

Lesser White-fronted Geese

Richard Attenborrow

Lesser White-fronted Geese - revisited

In September, Jean and I went on a wildlife trip to Sweden with Great Glen Wildlife whose leader, David Kent, had worked at the Svenska Jägareförbundet (the Swedish Association for Hunting and Wildlife Management) years ago. Because of this connection, he was able to arrange for us to see the breeding pens and accommodation for the Swedish Lesser White-front project at Öster Malma and to have a talk from Dr Niklas Liljebäck, who is in charge of the project. Much of what Dr Liljebäck told us remains unpublished. This prompted me to write a sort of update to John Grant's article in the Spring 2015 Harrier, as the four Lesser White-fronts which turned up at North Warren at the end of 2014 were releases from this project. At least one of them, incidentally, is still in the land of the living, breeding in North Sweden and wintering in the Netherlands.

Just to remind you, the project was set up in the early 1980s because of an alarming decline in numbers, which was put down to problems on the migration route in Western

Asia and Eastern Europe, mostly due to hunting and habitat loss. The radical solution to the problem was to alter the geese's direction of migration so that they wintered in the relative safety of the Netherlands. This was to be achieved by breeding them in captivity and fostering the young to Barnacle Geese with which they would then migrate to the Low Countries. The Lesser White-fronts and Barnacles were taken together to Lapland for release onto lakes, the location of which the Lessers would imprint onto and return to after migration, while the Barnacles would return to Öster Malma.

As Dr Liljebäck was showing us the geese in their accommodation, whose design is based on many other captive breeding projects visited by him, he told us about the current situation, which is largely optimistic. Last year, 81 were released to the breeding grounds and there have been enough generations migrating in the required direction that they are no longer fostered to Barnacles and are released into appropriate habitat mostly

near Ammarnas. The birds love flying and have long wings. They will fly around for miles almost as soon as released. Niklas's theory is that, because they are predated by Ravens and Eagles, they have developed manoeuvrability.

They try to protect breeding areas by restricting shooting and fishing because of disturbance, but this is not the only problem which has been encountered over the years. A natural hazard was a rogue White-tailed Eagle with a nest just outside the breeding grounds, which specialised in predating Lesser White-fronts, when they were moulting and flightless and therefore vulnerable to predation. A lot of rings and even a transmitter were found on the ground below the nest. This meant that numbers were down, but also that the survivors were agitated and restless and migrating too early. They thought of killing the eagle, but others would probably have moved in, so, in the end they opted for re-location of the geese. Fox predation was countered with electric fences. However there have been political as well as natural inhibitors to success. There is a parallel scheme in Norway, but there is little co-operation between the two. In fact they have produced a report suggesting the Swedish project be abandoned and all efforts concentrated in Norway. There was some talk of stopping Swedish funding, but they have been reassured that it has been so successful that it would be foolish to waste the money already spent on it.

Given the arguments against several re-introduction schemes in this country, it will come as no surprise that purists among the conservation community were positing that it is "unnatural" to alter the direction of migration (better to be natural and dead I suppose!). Others were claiming that the captive birds' young had impure DNA by mixing with Greater White-fronts. The initial releases were of Swedish provenance in

which some Greater White-front DNA was detected, but later stock was obtained from Russia, and rigorous testing showed these to be genetically pure. The great thing about all this is that a significant number of geese have had their pattern of migration changed and because of this population levels are rising, which makes for an optimistic story in these gloomy days for conservation.

This brings me to another thing we learned in Sweden, which is that hunting and conservation are not mutually exclusive. The Swedish Association for Hunting and Wildlife Management was founded in 1830 and is the oldest and largest conservation body in the country. Their stated aim is to maintain strong game populations by ensuring access to water, food and shelter and reducing predator populations, while at the same time improving the conditions for all wildlife, encouraging less intensive land use, and creating a varied landscape rich in biodiversity. Hunters are controlled in what and when they can shoot and have to know what is in front of them. They enjoy their hunting and everybody else can enjoy the wildlife, which is borne out by the fact that 80% of the Swedish public are supportive of hunting. Compared with what seems to me to be the situation here, where shooting and hunting organisations seem always to be in conflict with conservation bodies (who often seem to be acting independently from each other as well), in Sweden they believe in speaking openly to one another.

If you want more detail on the Lesser White-front project, it has its own website (with English translation) on: <http://jagareforbundet.se/en/projekt/fjallgas/>

Our sincere thanks go to Dr Liljebäck, who gave up his time to talk to us so informatively and enthusiastically and David Kent for taking us there in the first place.

Autumn Bird Review 2018

The quarterly records section gives a snapshot of birds seen within the county during the period and is compiled by Eddie Marsh, predominately from data received by Suffolk BINS. All scarce and rare birds are subject to submission and acceptance by either SORC or BBRC. Updated lists on Accepted and Outstanding Records for 2017 and 2018 can be found on the SOG website - <http://www.sogonline.org.uk/suffolk-birds/>.

September 2018

Weather:

It was a very dry and warm month with 20 days without rain and 22 days with daytime temperatures over 18C, with a high of 23C on four dates. Night temperatures occurred in double figures on 16 nights; the highest being 16C on the 18th, 19th and 20th, while the lowest being 4C on the 24th, 25th and 30th. Rainfall ranged from 1mm to 7mm on seven days and we had 19mm on the 23rd. Overall it was a very pleasant September.

Birds September 2018:

Garganey sightings continued from East Lane, Bawdsey during the first few days of the month. A **Goosander** on the River Stour was reported on the 1st. **Great White Egret** continued to be reported all month from a number of locations and dates. Two **Common Cranes** south at Minsmere RSPB on the 23rd. Several **Osprey** sightings throughout the month at a number of sites. On the gull front this month, a juvenile **Caspian Gull** on pig fields at Covehithe plus sightings from Minsmere and Sizewell. Small numbers of **Arctic Tern** sightings were reported all month along the Suffolk coastline as were **Black Tern** with two at Corton on the 4th, five at Ness Point Lowestoft on the 5th and eight at Sizewell also on the 5th plus a single at Minsmere on the 16th. There was a **Pomarine Skua** south offshore at LBO on the 2nd and an adult off Thorpeness on the 11th. A **Long-tailed Skua** was also off Thorpeness on the 11th with a juvenile off

Gunton on the 23rd. An **Arctic Skua** flew north at Thorpeness on the 24th and likely the same bird also seen at Sizewell. The only Bonxie record was two north offshore at LBO on the 5th. Some shearwater sightings this month; a **Sooty Shearwater** north from Corton on the 4th, one north off Southwold on the 9th and another north there on the 28th, two off Minsmere RSPB on the 11th and one north off Thorpeness on the 18th. Three **Manx Shearwater** south early morning at Southwold plus two noted at Thorpeness and one south at LBO all on the 18th and finally one south at Minsmere RSPB on the 19th. A **Short-eared Owl** made an appearance at Bawdsey Marshes on the 9th and 19th. On the 26th, four **Ring-necked Parakeets** seen in Cotswold/Cheltenham Avenue area of Ipswich with two juveniles at LBO on the same day.

Scarcer September Sightings:

At Minsmere behind South Hide a **Ferruginous Duck** was found on the 25th and remained until the end of the month.

A **Glossy Ibis** was found at Aldeburgh Town Marshes on the 22nd and remained until the 29th at least. A **Purple Heron** was seen at Minsmere RSPB from the Bittern Hide on the 3rd. The **Cattle Egret** remained in the Carlton Marshes SWT area into September and was present on a number of dates.

At Thorpeness a **Honey Buzzard** was reported in off on the 30th. On the 3rd a mega, being a male **Pallid Harrier**, seen on arable land along the road on A137 to the Tattingstone

White Horse Public House at 12.15hrs before heading towards Holbrook Park. Another mega, this time in the form of a **Pacific Golden Plover**, in summer plumage, was found on Aldeburgh Town Marshes on the 20th, it was found just prior to 09.00hrs and remained to 11.17hrs before flying off towards Hazelwood Marshes, but was not relocated.

A good inland record of a **Grey Phalarope** at Cavenham Pits from the 23rd to the 25th. On the 6th a juvenile **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** was found on Havergate RSPB Reserve mid-morning and remained until the 8th. On Orfordness a **Pectoral Sandpiper** was found on the 16th.



Ferruginous Duck

Photo: David Borderick

Photo: Eddie Marsh

Photo: David Borderick

On Orfordness, a **Hoopoe** for one day on the 29th. A **Wryneck** was seen in the grounds of the Hollies Holiday Resort at Kessingland on the 1st. Then from the 6th lots of sightings; a long-stayer at LBO from the 6th to the 19th, with two present between 8th and 13th. Singles at Kessingland Sluice on the 8th and 9th and at Southwold 13th and 15th. A **Red-rumped Swallow** was seen over Lowestoft North Denes on the 16th.



Barred Warbler

The Lowestoft area had a great run of rare warblers; a **Barred Warbler** was found at Benacre/Kessingland Sluice on the 1st and remained until the 3rd and showed well at times during its stay, plus another at Ness Point on the 26th. On the 6th a cracking **Booted Warbler** was found in the Tamarisk



Booted Warbler



Cattle Egret

Photo: Andrew Easton



Pacific Golden Plover

Photo: Andrew Moon



Wryneck



Red-breasted Flycatcher

Photo: Eddie Marsh

Photo: Craig Holden

on the sea wall in front of the Birds-Eye Factory, Ness Point. It was generally elusive but did show very well at times during the day, particularly in the morning of the 7th. An **Arctic Warbler** was found in the gardens of the Tides Reach Tea Rooms on the 13th but unfortunately it was a brief encounter and not seen again.

A **Blyth's Reed Warbler** was discovered late afternoon in bracken at North Denes on the 30th and remained until dusk although it was very elusive later on. The first **Yellow-browed Warblers** arrived in Suffolk on the 27th with singles at Ness Point and the Sparrows Nest, Lowestoft. On the 29th one at Shingle Street and another at Bawdsey Quay, plus two at LBO and the following day singles at Gunton, Kessingland sewage works and LBO. An **Ortolan Bunting** was at LBO on the 13th, but not reported. It was found by an Essex birder and photographed and the bird was identified later. Information has been sent to the SE Recorder including photograph.

October 2018

Weather:

The weather was generally good for October; there were 17 dry days and 14 days where rain fell. The month produce 11 days with temperatures of 18C or above with the highest being 23C on the 13th. Highest rainfall produced 13mm on the 15th. The night-time lows produced 23 nights in single figures with two nights of 1C on the 29th and 31st while the night-time high for the month was 17C on the 13th.

Birds October 2018:

The first returning winter swans arrived in the month with three **Whooper Swan** at Livermere Lake and one Island Mere, Minsmere on the 22nd. The latter site also had two in off on the 24th. Three **Bewick's Swans** arrived in off and landed near Boyton Dock on the 25th. Up to 12 **Pink-footed Geese** at Boyton Marshes RSPB between the 26th and



Greater Scaup

Photo: Andrew Moon

31st. Three **Greater Scaup**, including a drake, off Minsmere RSPB on the 23rd, two off Hopton on the 26th and one Livermere Lake on the 27th. A few **Velvet Scoter** late in the month; one north off Minsmere on the 23rd, two off North Denes Lowestoft and one off Kessingland on 26th and two off Aldeburgh on the 27th. A **Great Northern Diver** south off Aldeburgh on the 27th and one south off Benacre on the 29th. **Great White Egret** continue to be reported all month; there was a high count of four at Island Mere, Minsmere on the 5th and a good record from Lackford Lakes of one on the 18th. A **Slavonian Grebe** off Southwold on the 28th and possibly the same bird off Minsmere on the 31st. Two **Sooty Shearwater** off Slaughden on the 28th and a **Manx Shearwater** off Southwold on the 28th.

The only **Osprey** sighting this month was one over Peewit Hill on the 7th. An adult **Honey Buzzard** flew south over Peewit Hill, Felixstowe on the 5th. A **Rough-legged Buzzard** reported from Pipp's Ford on the 10th and another bird from Theberton on the 28th. Three **Common Cranes** over London Road, Lowestoft on the 12th. Two **Pomarine Skua** south off Corton, five south off Hopton and one lingering off Thorpeness all on the 26th. Three **Bonxie** off Southwold and four off Minsmere RSPB on the 23rd, five off Aldeburgh on the 27th and 16 off Southwold the 28th. A juvenile **Glaucous Gull** south off Dunwich on the 28th. A late **Black Tern** was found on Hollesley RSPB reserve on the 14th and 15th. A bit of **Little Auk** movement late in the month with sightings from Kessingland, Minsmere, Aldeburgh all on



Long-eared Owl

the 27th. The following day further records at Hamilton Dock, Southwold, Benacre and Slaughden. One off Southwold on the 29th, one off Benacre on the 30th and one off Ness Point on the 31st. Good numbers of **Short-eared Owl** arrivals during October, let's hope it's a good year for them; on the 27th up to 16 seen coming in offshore in the Lowestoft area. The odd **Long-eared Owl** were turning up on migration as well; two at Kessingland on the 27th, one Aldeburgh in off the same day, one LBO on the 28th, Havergate RSPB on the 29th and there was a very poorly LEO at Minsmere RSPB near south hide on the 31st but unfortunately it was found passed away the next morning. It shows how much migration can take its toll.

At Kessingland just north of Sluice two **Shorelark** on the 20th, these two birds showed very well until the 29th, also a single bird at the point at LBO on the 21st.



Shorelark



Snow Bunting

Photo: Andrew Moon

A **Waxwing** report from the Hollies Kessingland on the 24th. It seemed a poor Autumn for **Ring Ouzel** with sightings from LBO on three dates, one at Gunton and one ringed at Trimley SWT on the 10th, a single on the 19th in the Aldeburgh area, another noted at North Warren on the 26th and Covehithe on the 27th seen to come in off. A brief **Great Grey Shrike** at the Old Caravan Park, Thorpeness on the 7th and another bird at Great Barton on the 29th and 30th, the latter presumed to have been present for three weeks! At Dunwich on the 28th, 10 **Twite** and two also seen by the fishing huts near Moot Hall at Aldeburgh. A **Hawfinch** was seen in a Broomheath garden and then flew towards Woodbridge town on the 1st and another bird in Aldeburgh churchyard on the 28th

Photo: Andrew Moon

and 29th. **Snow Buntings** started to arrive with three at Gunton Beach on the 13th, six on the 14th, five on the 15th and 16th. Five at Benacre and two Dunwich on the 28th, then eight at Benacre on the 29th and 30th. Single **Lapland Bunting** reports came from Benacre on the 13th, south at Southwold on the 14th and Kessingland on the 21st.



Lapland Bunting

Scarcer October Sightings:

At Minsmere RSPB behind South Hide the **Ferruginous Duck** continued to show well and remained until the 19th. A mega bird for Suffolk was found early afternoon along north wall Minsmere RSPB on the 24th, this being a juvenile **Little Bittern** that showed well at times and remained until dusk but unfortunately only seen the one afternoon.



Little Bittern

Photo: Andrew Moon

The **Glossy Ibis** at Aldeburgh Town Marshes remained until the 6th. There was also one reported from Minsmere RSPB on the 3rd, presumed the same individual, and again on the 29th. A single **Cattle Egret** remained in the Carlton Marshes SWT area throughout the month. Another individual at Minsmere from the 1st to the 25th, that spent a lot of time at Island Mere but also seen regularly at Eastbridge meadows. Maybe the Minsmere bird was the one seen at Trimley SWT on the 28th. At Woodbridge, on a WeBS Count on the 14th, a possible **Laughing Gull** on a pontoon near yacht club that then flew towards Kyson Point. A very nice juvenile **Lesser Yellowlegs** was found on the shore pools south of the Martello Tower at Shingle Street on the 3rd and stayed up to the 6th when it flew off and was relocated on Hollesley Marshes RSPB. It remained there until the 18th. A Puffin was off Southwold on the 26th.

At LBO a **Hoopoe**, for one afternoon on the 19th, between the Cottage and the compound. A late **Wryneck** at Southwold on the 8th, along footpath to sewage works. A **Barred Warbler** was found in an Oulton Broad garden before flying to the railway track on the 9th. In woods near the Clubhouse at Felixstowe Ferry Golf Club a **Siberian Chiffchaff** on the 13th. **Yellow-browed Warblers** continued

to arrive into October, then with favourable weather conditions we had a big fall on the 7th, this is a taster:- in the Lowestoft area there were 39 sightings, Southwold seven, Minsmere RSPB two, Sizewell one, Thorpeness one, Aldeburgh two, Shingle Street three, Bawdsey Cliff two and LBO one. Of this total of 58 sightings it seems the north of the county had the bulk of numbers. Birds were still being reported until the 29th; my estimated total for October is 162 reported sightings and must be one

of Suffolk's best ever years! On the 15th, a jewel from the east turned up, this being Suffolk's first **Pallas's Warbler** of 2018, with one in the bushes by East Hide, Minsmere and another bird at Gunton Warren. Then on the 20th, another **Pallas's Warbler** was discovered at Southwold Caravan/Camp Site by the toilet block and showed well for the one day. A cracking first-winter **Red-breasted Flycatcher** was found on the 28th by the BINS team at the Southwold Caravan/Campsite, the bird showed extremely well that afternoon and remained up to the 31st. A **Little Bunting** was seen early afternoon at Ness Point on the 6th, but mobile and another south over LBO on the 17th.

Of interest: during the latter part of October, Vagrant **Emperor Dragonflies** arrived in Suffolk with individuals seen at Kessingland, Minsmere and Havergate.



Photo: Malcolm Pate

Gi Grieco

SOG Outdoor Field Trips

SOG has had a selection of over 20 great trips this year and a big thank you goes to all the leaders of these field trips who volunteer to lead them, without whom SOG wouldn't be able to run the programme of events. What has been fantastic is that one of our younger members, Ellie Zantboer, now jointly leads a couple of trips with dad, Justin. Thanks to our other leaders Steve Fryett, Richard Smith, David Walsh, Paul Gowen, Scott Mayson, Nigel Odin, Eddie Bathgate, Ivan Lockwood and not forgetting Ashley Gooding, who, despite moving out of the county, has led three meetings including two in Essex allowing members to explore areas we don't visit that often.

We look forward to trips in 2019 and are keen to hear from members of any areas that they would like to visit. A couple of members have already expressed a wish to have trips further afield which may entail an overnight stay or longer. Please get in touch if you would be interested in this or if you have any further ideas.

A big thank you must also go to all our members who attend, making it a nice social occasion, exploring our birds and wildlife and also making new members welcome.

Contact details can be found on the inside cover of The Harrier.

Field Trip Reports

Val Lockwood

Fingringhoe Wick

Saturday, 8th September 2018

Leader: Ashley Gooding

The group assembled in the car park just after 9, most had arrived early but had to be patient and wait for the barrier to be unlocked to gain entry into the reserve. Ashley said that we would start the morning in Margaret Hide where we would be able to take full advantage of the highest point of the tide (which would be mid-morning), as this would push the birds closer to the hide.

The first bird seen was a Ringed Plover followed by several Grey Plovers, the latter we took time to admire as a few of them were still in their resplendent summer plumage. A Little Egret was spearing its prey and the first of many Greenshank, Curlew and Golden Plover were picked out. The initial count for Avocets seen was 24, which by the time we had left the hide had increased to 150. There was a marked increase in bird movement as the high tide approached and we all appreciated the large numbers of waders and close proximity of some of the birds which had dropped in near to the hide. Ashley pointed out the difference between Black-tailed and Bar-tailed Godwits to two new members. The weather had taken a turn for the worse so we were quite happy to remain in the hide for most of the morning to shelter from the rain and admire the amazing spectacle of the slightly frenzied feeding foray of waders. This gave us time to see Little Grebes, Lapwings, Redshanks, Knot, Turnstones and overhead to see Swallows and a Buzzard. We were considering moving on to the next hide when

Photo: Gi Grieco



Avocet

two Spoonbills obligingly dropped in and we were all privileged and slightly bemused to see the juvenile bird begging for food from a rather reluctant adult bird.

The rain had stopped by the time we moved on to Robbie's Hide where we had closer views of the Spoonbills. We then stopped off at the viewpoint which affords excellent views down river (River Colne) where we were able to appreciate the movement of groups of waders seeking optimum places to feed and a Green Sandpiper was added to our growing list of species seen.

After lunch we moved on to Abberton Church; two Kestrels were hovering over the fields and there were very large numbers of Mallard, Cormorant and Teal on the water. A Marsh Harrier was seen overhead as we returned to the car park and we were pleased to hear, and then see, two Yellowhammers in the hedgerow in amongst a mixed tit flock.

We ended the day at Layer de la Haye where we saw two Ruff, Tufted Ducks and approximately 300 Pochard. One of the group said that they had picked out a Great White Egret, then another member said they could also see it. It wasn't long before they realised that they were actually looking in different directions so there must be two birds. As we all eagerly scanned for the egrets we realised that there were in fact three of them and there were discussions as to how long it would be before Great White Egrets

became as common as Little Egrets. On closer examination with our scopes a Red-crested Pochard was seen together with Wigeon and Pintail. As we admired the Red-crested Pochard another was picked up and before we left, the total had amazingly risen to five.

A thanks to Ashley for another excellent day's birding across the border.

Steve Fryett

Shingle Street & Hollesley Marsh RSPB

Saturday, September 15th 2018

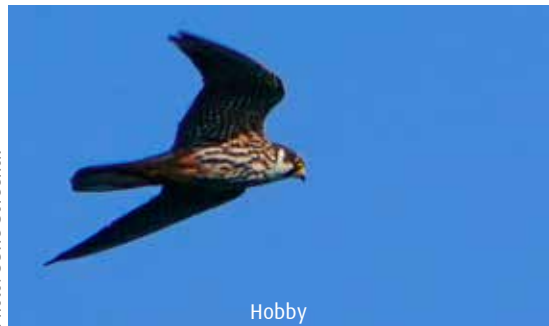
Leader: Steve Fryett

Another lovely warm day unfolded from the long hot summer of 2018 for this meeting at Shingle Street. Eleven members started at the coastguard cottages quickly finding several Whinchats close by on Oxley Marsh with a large number of Swallows and House Martins making their way south high over the marsh. Around the tennis courts Meadow Pipit, Linnet, Goldfinch, Greenfinch (3) and Lesser Whitethroat (3) were noted. Further Whinchat were recorded making a total of nine in all. The allotments are somewhat over grown these days making observations difficult in favoured areas, however we did manage Blackcap. Continuing south, six Little Egret flying south was noteworthy along with Stonechat (family of five), Kestrel, Common Whitethroat (2), Reed Bunting and a male Sparrowhawk that had alighted on brickwork on the disused Martello. No new species were added on the return journey back to the car park. Non-avian species noted at Shingle Street were Migrant Hawker, Speckled Wood (3), Small White, Small Heath (2), Comma and Small Copper.

We then moved to Hollesley Marsh RSPB where we were treated to excellent views of a Hobby over the car park. From the hide there was a small amount of water on the scrape for waders to feed in although the only wader present were resting Curlew, an

impressive count of 50 was made. We noted a female Kestrel before deciding that it would be best to view the marsh from the river wall. On route Common Whitethroat was seen with another unidentified warbler. From the river wall one has a panoramic view of the marsh and sky - although we could find no other waders a few Mallard and Teal were present with Grey Heron, Linnet, several Meadow Pipit and 33 Goldfinch. Amongst the dozen or so Herring Gull were two with red leg rings. A series of raptor sightings kept the members excited with at least five Common Buzzard noted above and a female Marsh Harrier seen on Orfordness. Lastly a Cetti's Warbler sung briefly nearby, a species nowhere as common as it used to be. New butterflies added to the list at Hollesley Marsh were Red Admiral and a Clouded Yellow, for the lucky three who saw it.

Photo: David Borderick



Hobby

Orfordness

Saturday 28th and
Sunday 29th September 2018

Leaders:

Gi Grieco and Eddie Bathgate

Our annual trip to this remote part of Suffolk, with shingle ridges, marshes and derelict buildings of Orfordness, is always eagerly anticipated, more so now that we stay over on the Saturday night and feel that you are miles from anywhere. We arrived at 5.00pm, to be met by National Trust warden Dave Fincham, in order to board the boat for the short journey across the River Ore. Optical equipment out and overnight bags loaded on to the electric vehicle, Eddie kindly went with them to unload at the dormitory base before re-joining us. The remainder of us started to walk, scanning the pools on the old airfield. A number of waders were present including 14 Dunlin, 16 Ringed Plover, 34 Redshank, 12 Lapwing and 2 Curlew. A large number of Black-headed Gulls were also there, a count of 250 was made along with a few Herring and Common Gulls. Further along other pools held 8 Shoveler, 3 Gadwall and 6 Teal, with 2 Little Egrets further out. Raptors are often a feature of Orfordness, the large open areas making ideal hunting ground for them, and we saw at least three Kestrels plus singles of both Marsh Harrier and Peregrine. Whilst scanning we noted Hare and two Chinese Water Deer, the latter seen on most recent trips to the area. In the grassland we counted up to 50 Linnets, their chattering calls always a delight, while around some of the old buildings over 30 Jackdaw had congregated.

Honorary SOG vice-President Mike Marsh who, along with some other volunteers, carries out bird-ringing on Orfordness throughout the



Photo: Gi Grieco

year, drove up to ask if we'd like to go see a Hoopoe before the light faded too much. The bird had been found earlier in the day on the track towards the old BBC building so we all jumped in his vehicle and slowly drove to the area where it had been seen. Being in a vehicle we had a chance to get relatively close to see this beautiful Mediterranean species. It was feeding along the gravelly track before settling down and as it was closing its eyes we presumed it was going to roost. After a few minutes it become more alert and then carried on feeding, moving further up the track and lost to view. We were pleased to get great views along with obtaining some reasonable photos even though the light was fading. We just hoped the Hoopoe would still be present the following day when the rest of the group arrived. We headed back to the dormitories, settled in, cooked food, took notes on the trip so far and looked forward to the next day when we had a full day on the reserve.

Up early, a quick cuppa and some breakfast, before we headed down towards the jetty to meet the rest of the group. We had good views of a Barn Owl with a second one that flew out of a building circled round and back in. We watched a Grey Heron perched on the river bank when it was spooked by a Sparrowhawk, the former headed away while the latter flew over crossing to Orford. There were 10 further members joining the initial group and with all off the boat we congregated as Dave gave us a Health and

Safety talk. We walked back along the tracks with a Chiffchaff heard briefly in some trees. Checking the pools that had all the waders in the day before we found it was a lot quieter but two smaller waders were spotted and identified as Little Stints. In addition there were Redshank, Lapwing and a single Dunlin. We had Skylark and Meadow Pipit fly past on migration plus 4 Green Sandpipers calling as they flew behind us. We had several groups of Shelduck fly over totalling 109 birds, these were flying over the site and up river. Viewing the pools from a different angle we had further views of the Little Stints in addition to 6 Avocet, 3 Curlew, 6 Black-tailed Godwits along with a Snipe that flew over us.

Passerines were few and far between, we noted Stonechat, with at least 6 in total, 3 Reed Bunting, 1 Blackcap, 2 Common Whitethroat, 1 Wheatear and several flocks of Linnet. Signs of another quiet Autumn – either because the winds were not favourable, a decline in the number of birds as populations decrease across Europe or a combination of both. We briefly stopped at the ringing station, we'd been shown a Grasshopper Warbler earlier by the ringing team and saw a couple of birds ringed plus a selection of moths caught in the overnight trap. Normally the group heads off towards the lighthouse after the ringing station but this time we carried along the track to where the Hoopoe had been present the previous day. News from the ringing team was that it had not been seen so far but we were hopeful. We did have excellent views of a Short-eared Owl as it came out of the grass just ahead of us. Unfortunately no luck with the Hoopoe but while there we scanned across and noted Buzzard, Marsh Harrier and a Peregrine.

We retraced our steps to then head out to the lighthouse, to have lunch while scanning the sea. Sea-watching proved quiet as well, noting 6 Gannet heading north, 8 Common Scoter south, 1 Red-throated Diver north

and another south, one Mediterranean Gull north and 10 Great Black-backed Gulls loafing around. With patience we all spotted 2 Harbour Porpoise and a Common Seal. Last year our visit coincided with a movement of Brent Geese when we counted over 1000 birds, this year not a single one!

After a restful lunch we made our way back, first stopping at the lookout building noting several Wigeon and Shoveler on the large pool. Previous years we've been lucky to encounter Spoonbill there but not this year, a few Little Egrets and a Grey Heron were present. Back past the old buildings and the dormitory it was again very quiet on the passerine front though we did see another Chiffchaff and Blackcap. Back at the jetty we said our goodbyes as it would take two boat-loads to get us all across. As always a pleasure to visit Orfordness, a nice long walk to explore some of the site and we look forward to next year.



Photo: Chris Courtney

Hoopoe

Photo: Amon Szocs



Dave Pearsons

Landguard Bird Observatory

Saturday, 27th October 2018

Leader: Nigel Odin

It was the first really cold day of autumn but 12 members assembled for our annual visit to the observatory. While regular birders might say it was quiet on the bird front, 5 new members to outdoor meetings found the morning very interesting.

Someone once said to me "there is no such thing as a bad bird just better ones", in fact it may have been our President, and so we all enjoyed seeing migration, opportunism and birds that are quite happy to spend the winter months at Landguard.

The cold wind meant that many nets were closed, birds come first, and so the ringing demonstration by Nigel was limited to just 2 Blackbirds. In fact one Blackbird caught in the Heligoland, a re-trap, was considered underweight and was immediately let go to enable it to continue to feed and was not processed.

It was interesting to see the melee (estimated at around 1000) of large gulls following

the ships as they churned up Whiting & Whitebait. In that throng, the group looked for birds other than gulls and just one Bonxie was spotted trying to get a gull to disgorge its fish. The Bonxie settled back on the sea and unfortunately was not seen by all those present.

Cormorants, a regular bird at Landguard but under threat elsewhere, were seen going out to their feeding grounds and coming back hopefully with a full stomach. Regular counts are made of their movements from the Observatory.

Later we were treated to a very close Red-throated Diver and a Common Scoter. Migration was also observed, 3 late Swallows going south was very pleasing for all of us, other migrating birds included Goldfinch, Meadow Pipit, Skylark and Starling. Both the latter coming in off the North Sea from the continent. A Red Admiral was also seen to join in with the migration.

A distant skua species could not be positively identified but it is always good to test your knowledge of the flight and shape of distant birds. A Common Snipe was seen to fly up from the beach after being disturbed near the old sea-watch hide and dropped in by the concrete blocks but we did not encounter it on our walk round later.

During the walk round the reserve we searched through the cottage House Sparrow flock to see if the Tree Sparrows that had been there a few days previously were still

present, no luck. It was evident during our walk that there were big numbers in the Linnet and Starling flocks.

Our final bird of the day was a male Sparrowhawk that was harassing the birds assembled on Icky Ridge.

Our thanks go to Nigel for leading this meeting and to those Landguard Conservation Trust members who supplied coffee, tea and biscuits in a very warm kitchen.

Ashley Gooding

The Naze

Saturday, 17th November 2018

Leader: Ashley Gooding



Jackdaw

Photo: Gi Grieco

It was a somewhat windy and chilly day that greeted the eight of us as we met on the cliff at Walton-on-the-Naze, having parked our vehicles on the road to avoid the car parking charges/fines as we did not know how long we would be there.

On the exposed beach there were 100+ Brent Geese feeding and we moved further along to get a closer view so that we could check

through them for Black Brant that often turns up at this location - no luck on the latter but we did pick up a few Grey Plover and Turnstone. We then moved inland slightly to check the Sycamores and hedgerow between Walton Hall and the sewage works. This area can be very productive, as it was three weeks ago, but most of the foliage had now gone leaving little cover and so was very quiet. A Cetti's Warbler gave its familiar loud burst of song and showed briefly to a few of the group; this was the first of four separate birds we heard in the area so the 'beast from the East' didn't wipe them all out. Moving on again to the large open area dotted with scrub and mature trees we had Jay, a couple of Redwing and small groups of Goldfinch, Greenfinch, Linnet and several Goldcrests which were moving through a patch of Sycamore. At this point news of a Pallas's Warbler in the area came via mobile phone to those in the know but we decided to continue and hopefully catch up with the bird on the way back.



Wigeon

We then moved out of the scrubby area and on to the sea wall. I was really looking forward to this part of walk as the tide was on the way out and would give us the opportunity to walk to Stone Point, something I had never done before and was keen to explore as the area regularly turns up good birds. There were several Skylarks about over the dune scrub and it was not long before I picked up the call of the first of at least three Rock Pipits, there were also several Meadow Pipits, Pied Wagtails and Linnets, the whole area looked good for Shore Lark and Snow Bunting but not today. In an area known as Pennyhole Bay there was a nice group of nine Red-breasted Merganser on the water with Sanderling, Redshank and Turnstone on the beach. Moving on towards the point there were five Little Egrets, more Redshank and Mallards on Stone Marsh. We stopped here to view the channel towards Harwich and were rewarded with a male and female Eider, good numbers of Brent Geese, Slavonian Grebe and a good count of fifty-six Bar-tailed Godwit.

Back at the area strangely known as the 'cricket pitch', a small grassy area surrounded by trees and bushes, we eventually caught up with the Pallas's Warbler amongst a large group of Goldcrests, a very smart bird indeed. One of the group also saw a Firecrest.

We headed off back to the cars for lunch but unfortunately this was the end of the day for me as my car refused to start; the rest of the group went on to Holland Haven and I waited several long cold hours for the breakdown services. Those that went on visited the hide and saw several Wigeon, Teal, Black-tailed Godwit and a single Dunlin. On the fields beyond, many Lapwing, a handful of Golden Plover plus a Buzzard that flew in and landed. Along the beach they managed to find one Purple Sandpiper plus a Rock Pipit.

Many thanks to all who attended the meeting and making the effort to cross the border.

Winter Wordsearch

All the birds in the wordsearch have been on the front cover of The Harrier. The remaining letters reveal two further covers. Please email in the answers to harrier@sogonline.org.uk or call/text to 07951 482547. The first name 'out of the hat' will win a £25 book token.

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

Avocet

Barn Owl

Bittern

Blue Tit

Carmine Bee-eater

Crossbill

Cuckoo

Dartford Warbler

Dotterel

Duncock

Firecrest

Grasshopper Warbler

Hawfinch

Hen Harrier

Herring Gull

Hobby

Kestrel

Kingfisher

Kittiwake

Little Egret

Little Owl

Little Owl

Long-tailed Tit

Nightingale

Nightjar

Osprey

Osprey

Red-backed Shrike

Red-flanked Bluetail

Red-necked Grebe

Short-eared Owl

Siskin

Snow Bunting

Storm Petrel

Swift

Swift

Turtle Dove

Waxwing

Wheatear

Whinchat

Wryneck



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South-east Area Recorder:

Scott Mayson, 8 St Edmunds Close, Springfields, WOODBRIDGE IP12 4UY
Tel: 01394 385595 Email: bird-se@sns.org.uk

West Area Recorder:

Colin Jakes, 7 Maltwood Avenue, BURY ST EDMUNDS IP33 3XN
Tel: 01284 702215 Email: bird-w@sns.org.uk

Memberships

c/o SNS, The Museum, High Street, Ipswich, Suffolk IP1 3QH



Suffolk Ornithologists' Group



Who we are

- Founded in 1973 by a group of Suffolk birdwatchers
- Associated with the Suffolk Naturalists' Society
- SOG remains an independent birding group and is a registered charity

What we do

Networking

- A voice for Suffolk birdwatchers
- With established links to many naturalist and conservation organisations

Media

- Strong web presence - www.sogonline.org.uk
- Active Twitter feed - [@suffolkbirds1](https://twitter.com/suffolkbirds1)
- Quarterly magazine - **The Harrier**
- Annual review - **Suffolk Birds** report

Trips and talks

- Annually (20+) field trips - ideal for novices or experts and young or old alike
- Opportunities to visit hot spots and receive practical ID tips in the field
- Programme of talks and presentations - variety of topics (county, national, or international) with quality speakers



Protecting birds

- Actively lobbies to protect habitats and birding amenities
- Provides a county-wide field force of bird surveyors (50+)
- Organises and promotes bird surveys
- Inspires and undertakes conservation projects
- Bursaries available
- Numerous conservation achievements:
 - Contributed to several species breeding successes (Barn Owls, Peregrines, etc.)
 - Undertakes monitoring and ringing
 - Involvement on community and education projects
 - Organises and hosts dawn chorus walks
 - Assists with fund-raising for bird hides
 - On-going participation in key bird surveys for the BTO, such as BBS, the Bird Atlas, various species surveys and WeBS
 - Provides surveys for commercial organisations, such as environmental waste companies etc.



Suffolk Ornithologists' Group

For birds & for birders

SOG Registered Charity No. 801446

www.sogonline.org.uk

