



The Harrier

Suffolk Ornithologists' Group

£3.25



Inside:

- SOG's Ruby Jubilee celebration
- Suffolk's 20th Century ornithological events
- Bird & People book review

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Cover photograph - Grey Partridge **Caption** - "Where's my pear tree?"

Photographer: Jon Evans, Harleston area, April 2013, using his car as a hide. Taken on a Nikon D300, with a Nikon 600ml lens, F4, VR, ISO250 @ F4, 1000th sec.

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The Harrier

Suffolk Ornithologists' Group

December 2013 Magazine No.175

Another year...

...is almost under SOG's belt as our 40th anniversary year draws to a close.

Our Ruby anniversary was well celebrated in November and, if you didn't attend, you'll find the full story from John Grant, plus an edited version of Derek Moore's talk later in this issue.

- thinking of the future -

Moving on from celebrating SOG's past, it is no less important for us to be thinking about our future. What should it be? In his address at The Cut Roy Marsh said he "hoped the next 40 years would be just as worthwhile for Suffolk's birds and the county's birdwatchers", i.e. 'for birds & for birders'. Our future and that of Suffolk's birds are closely intertwined and we'd all support Roy's intention. It also chimes well with the members' study we conducted a couple of years ago when quite a number of you entered a plea for us to become more involved with conservation. And the prospect held out by Steve Piotrowski's closing words of his recent history ("But the vital ingredient will be the birds themselves of course! How many species will there be left - or will we be looking at silent fields?") emphasises this point. So also did Derek Moore when during his talk he pointed out that it is the widespread decline in bird densities that is most marked and of greatest concern and, in the closing chapter of his book, '8. What of the future', he calls for action from us all.

But can SOG realistically do anything about this? Well we now have a new Project Officer, Gi Grieco, who you will see in this issue is determined to get us all more involved in conservation. By dint of the Council's (and some members') hard work, SOG's finances have been turned around and we can now again offer bursaries to individuals or groups with projects that "manifestly contribute towards the conservation of birdlife in Suffolk". But we also need to find other ways to be active on Nature's behalf.

- get 'political' -

December's Birdwatch magazine was very instructive in this connection. Not only did it feature Bill Oddie (who disturbingly is increasingly looking like me!) railing against the coalition, but also Mark Avery advocating birders getting much more 'political'.

Why is getting 'political' important? Well there have been several reasons this year alone. Clearly the current government considers the interests of the shooting fraternity and businesses such as energy and insecticide and pharmaceutical companies as more important than Nature. Otherwise why would they permit nests of Buzzards to be destroyed, or authorise the culling of thousands of Lesser Black-backed Gulls in Lancashire, or turn a blind eye to the continuing persecution of the Hen Harrier in the Northern Grouse moors (the latest Bird Study is very revealing in this respect), as well as (according to Bill Oddie) blocking the banning of neonicotinoids that are proven to be detrimental to already beleaguered bees? It beggars belief.

To avoid more scenarios like this each of us needs to be more active, badgering our MPs or contributing to on-line petitions such as the RSPB's current plea to the PM. Only a public outcry will change these anti-Nature decisions. But such activity can be worthwhile. There's no question that the twitter storm raised over the Buzzard issue contributed to the DEFRA scheme for destroying Buzzards' nests being dropped. So you can see Mark Avery is right as well. If we do get 'political' we can help ourselves and

¹ 'The status of the Hen Harrier in the UK' Hayhow et al in Bird Study vol. 60, part 4, 2013

nurture Nature too, rather than letting others get away with destroying it. I'm afraid I plan to return to this need by proposing in the next issue another avenue of action that many members can contribute to.

- Merry Christmas -

Meantime enjoy this issue's articles and look out for our Christmas competition - a quiz of 50 questions scattered throughout this issue. Answer

all correctly and you could qualify for entry into the prize draw. Also the Group's Secretary has asked me to remind you that we still need a lot of members' email addresses. Thanks to those that have already supplied addresses, as it makes the process of getting important messages to you both quicker and easier. Finally, on behalf of the entire Council, we'd like to wish you the compliments of the season.

Views expressed in The Harrier are not necessarily those of the editor or the Suffolk Ornithologists' Group.

John Grant

SOG 40th Anniversary Celebration

In a rather surreal moment during the Suffolk Ornithologists' Group's 40th anniversary celebration night, about 200 people burst into song.

The familiar strains of "Happy Birthday", under the conductorship of Derek "Maestro" Moore, may not have matched the mellifluous warblings of, say, a Nightingale. In fact, they may well have sounded more like the flatulent raspings of a Great Bustard, but it hardly seemed to matter. The thought was there. And, more to the point, the camaraderie was there. That sense of togetherness, that uplifting sense of sharing a common interest with like-minded human beings, that sense of simply enjoying the company of other birders, surely pervades the Group's entire existence - and it certainly pervaded the celebrations that took place at The Cut - an excellent auditorium-cum-bar-cum-coffee-shop-cum-gallery in Halesworth, on November 18.

The Group linked up with the Waveney Bird Club with the aim of making it an extra-special evening with a bumper turn-out, and both targets were hit - exceeded even - in a marvellous milestone for both organisations.

- a special event -

Many elements combined to make it so special but one really stood out. It was one aspect of ornithology that sometimes gets forgotten about in all the somewhat po-faced science of, say, avian taxonomy, or the minutiae of emarginations, as important as they may be. It was the social side of

birding - the simple enjoyment of meeting old friends, swapping stories, reminiscing, simply having a laugh. All of that, thankfully, was there in abundance at The Cut.

It was especially nice to see some very long-standing group members in attendance - among them founder-member Mike Jeanes, who will forever be associated with the Golden Oriole in Suffolk, such has been his dedication to the species.



Derek Moore OBE, our speaker in full flow

Top of the bill, however, was the return of a native. There cannot have been anyone in the audience who had not heard of Derek Moore – the once ‘bashful’ Beccles schoolboy who blossomed to become the director of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust, who went on to lead The Wildlife Trusts after leaving his home county and who then went on to spearhead the merging of three Welsh wildlife trusts into one powerful organisation. His is one of the most influential voices in British nature conservation and, indeed, he was honoured with an OBE in 1998 for services to the cause. Known far and wide as a passionate advocate for wildlife, his closer friends know him as a hugely entertaining raconteur and The Cut was treated to a tour de force.

Now living in Wales and France, Derek keeps strong ties with his native county and his talk outlined Suffolk’s great ornithological events during the 20th Century.

- eventful twentieth century -

It featured all the new additions to the county’s impressive bird list from 1900 to 2000, including such big national events as the discoveries of Britain’s first, and so far only, Houbara Bustard at Hinton in 1962 and the similarly rare White-crowned Black Wheatear at Kessingland in 1984. (Derek took merciless delight in the fact that some in the audience had been on a Scottish adventure when the latter mega turned up – and in the fact that he gave two of their then wives directions as to how they could get to the bird and ‘grip off’ their errant husbands. It must be noted that both are now ex-wives).

- more gains than losses -

Derek also charted some of Suffolk bird-life’s losses and gains – the local extinction as breeding species of Corncrake, Wryneck and Red-backed Shrike, for example, and the addition as breeding species such as Pochard, Greylag Goose, Cetti’s Warbler and Little Egret. A point he was keen to stress was that although the number of species lost as breeders was exceeded by the number gained, the overall numbers of birds – the densities of populations – were dramatically down on those of times gone by.

He also featured events of great environmental significance, including the formation of organisations such as the British Trust for Ornithology and the Suffolk Wildlife Trust as well

as the SOG, and the acquisition by various bodies of now-renowned nature reserves such as North Warren, Minsmere, Orford Ness, Lakenheath Fen and Carlton Marshes.

Perhaps most “gripping” – in more ways than one – of all his tales was his recollection of his personal experience of Britain’s biggest ever recorded “fall” of migrant birds, which famously took place in the Lowestoft and Minsmere area on September 5, 1965. And he paid special tribute to SOG for its “outstanding” work for birds and birdwatchers in the county including its involvement in the formation of the Landguard Bird Observatory, the creation of Trimley Marshes and the return of breeding Peregrines.

- lifetime achievements recognised -

As well as being a night on which to celebrate the Group, it was a night when SOG was to honour the outstanding contribution to Suffolk ornithology of two stalwart SOG members. Group president Steve Piotrowski, who also holds the same post within the Waveney Bird Club, announced Group lifetime achievement awards for two of our county’s most respected ornithologists – Mike Marsh, of Felixstowe, and Philip Murphy, of Ipswich –



Mike and Philip receive their well-earned awards



Cutting the SOG birthday cake

- event organiser thanked -

Waveney Bird Club secretary Kathy Piotrowski was rightly thanked for her Herculean efforts as the event's main organiser. She used her considerable womanly charm (and her formidable powers of persuasion) to set up two grand draws in which five pairs of binoculars donated by Swarovski

and Viking Optics were the main prizes. As if co-finding a White-throated Needletail earlier in the year was not enough for him, SOG's very own Adam Gretton scooped the impressive top prize – a pair of top-of-the-range Swarovskis.

The monies raised by this evening event, a total of about £1400, will be used for conservation projects run by both the group and the club.

So it really didn't matter if our rendition of "Happy Birthday" was more Great Bustard than Nightingale. And if you have never heard what sort of noise a Great Bustard makes, seek out a recording...and have a good laugh.

who were made vice-presidents and life members. Mike's prowess in the field is legendary – he has found several county 'firsts', including Black Brant at a time when its identification criteria were still barely known to most mere mortals. And if there is an ornithologist with a more detailed knowledge of Suffolk's avifauna than Philip, where are they hiding?

Group chairman Roy Marsh told the audience that the Group's first 40 years had been a "great journey" and he hoped the next 40 years would be just as worthwhile for Suffolk's birds and the county's birdwatchers.

Councils' curtain call



Editor: Derek Moore did us all proud at The Cut, delivering a fascinating chronology of the momentous Twentieth Century that neatly capped off Steve Piotrowski's recent history series. It was both a privilege and a pleasure to be on the receiving end of this tour de force by someone who had been so instrumental in many important developments in Suffolk at the back end of the century.

There was no way I could emulate Derek's inimitable style of delivery, nor could I repeat his occasionally risky content (so our lawyers tell us), so I haven't tried. Instead, with a little help from Philip Murphy (who has commented separately on a couple of bird records), I've just kept to the bare facts - which are nevertheless very interesting in their own right. But note that the history has been slightly re-structured by dividing it into three different categories of event - namely human, birding and natural events. So what follows is Derek's fascinating history of Suffolk's birds and birding throughout the twentieth century, plus some comments by the Editor. Enjoy.

Derek Moore

Suffolk's Great Ornithological Events of the 20th Century

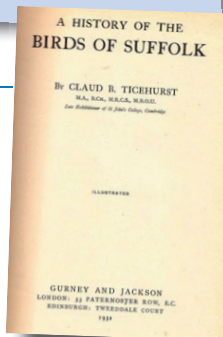
A chronology of Suffolk's birding Twentieth Century:

Human events:

Derek highlighted 36 noteworthy events, including the founding of a steadily growing list of nature/conservation organisations as well as, more importantly, the growing hectareage of quality nature reserves secured for birding:

- 1929 Suffolk Naturalist's Society was founded
- 1932 Ticehurst's Birds of Suffolk published

- 1933 The BTO was founded thanks to Max Nicholson
- 1939 RSPB acquire North Warren as a Nature Reserve
- 1946 Lowestoft Field Club formed
- 1947 Minsmere & Havergate Island become RSPB Reserves
- 1952 Cavenham Heath National Nature Reserve (NNR) designated - the first for England.



Cavenham Heath National Nature Reserve





1987 Lackford Lakes Nature Reserve opened
 1988 Lowestoft Harbour Kittiwake Wall completed
 1989 Suffolk Wildlife Trust begin the construction of Trimley Marshes
 1991 Suffolk Wildlife Trust acquired Hazelwood Marshes & The Alde/Ore Saltings
 1993 The National Trust purchase Orfordness as a nature reserve
 1995 Lakenheath Fen is opened as a RSPB Reserve
 1998 Hen Reedbeds is considerably extended and SWT acquire Levington Lagoon

'Bert' Axell arrives

- 1953 The start of Dingle Bird Club at Walberswick
- 1959 Herbert Axell arrives at Minsmere
- 1961 The Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT) was founded
- 1962 Payn's Birds of Suffolk published
- 1966 Roger Tory Peterson visited Minsmere
- 1968 Dunwich Heath acquired by the National Trust
- 1971 Walberswick is declared a National Nature Reserve (NNR)
- 1973 The Suffolk Ornithologists' Group was founded
- 1974 Suffolk Biological Records Centre started
- 1975 SWT buys Carlton Marshes
- 1975 Hen Reedbeds acquired by SWT
- 1976 Lackford Lakes – the first parcel of land is acquired by SWT
- 1977 Alton Water was flooded and became a great birding venue
- 1977 RSPB at last purchase Minsmere
- 1978 Payn's revised Birds of Suffolk is published
- 1978 Bill Payn retires as County Recorder
- 1979 Suffolk Bird Report is published as a stand-alone booklet
- 1979 Benacre & Covehithe NNR designated
- 1982 Oulton Marshes is acquired by Suffolk Wildlife Trust
- 1982 Landguard Bird Observatory launched by Herbert Axell MBE
- 1983 Suffolk Wildlife Trust buys Castle Marshes

1999 Dingle Marshes is acquired jointly between RSPB & SWT

Ed: 2000 Countryside Rights of Way Act (CRoW) passed

Discussion - Human events

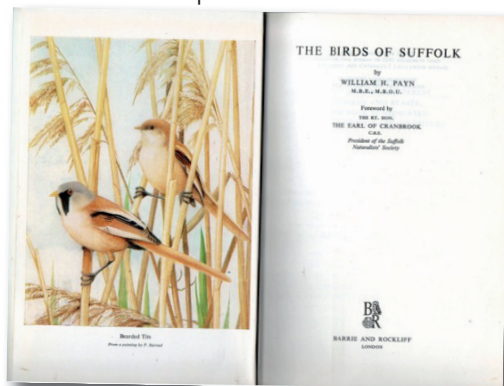
By no means all of the new Suffolk Wildlife Trust sites or additions to established ones were mentioned by Derek - although certainly what we'd regard as the key birding sites were covered.

The growing contribution of SOG towards the latter half of the century was fully commented on and was most gratifying - long may it continue.

Although not mentioned by Derek, as the Editor I thought it also useful to add the CRoW Act 2000 at the very end of the century, which opened up thousands of hectares of land to people to ramble, run, explore or climb over without having to stay on paths. However, the increased levels of disturbance this Act has created since its enactment in 2005 and the problems arising from this 'event' are still being felt.

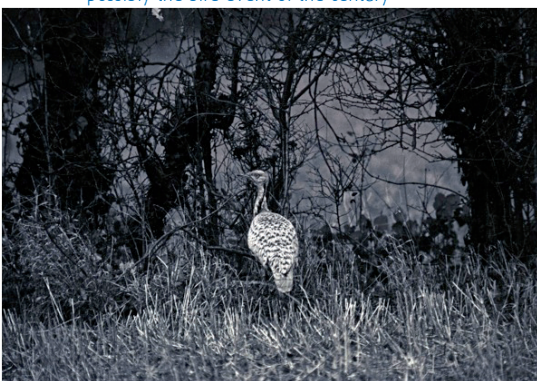
Birding history:

In the course of the century Derek enumerated well over 150 separate bird events:



- 1900 Sooty Tern, Santon Downham – new to Suffolk
- 1901 Pochard started to breed
- 1902 Allen's Gallinule off Hopton-on-Sea – new to Suffolk
- 1910 Whiskered Tern, Shingle Street & Yellow-browed Warbler, Southwold – both new to Suffolk
- 1910 Little Owl first nested
- 1911 Black Stork, Hollesley – new to Suffolk
- 1912 Little Bustard, Wickham Market – new to Suffolk
- 1912 Barred Warbler, Lowestoft – new to Suffolk
- 1913 Tufted Duck first bred

The MacQueen's Bustard 1962,
possibly the bird event of the century



Note the eight-year gap - the Great War meant fewer birders around and no access to the East Coast

- 1922 Honey Buzzard ceased to nest
- 1923 Sandwich Tern began to breed
- 1925 Gull-billed Tern, Breydon Water – new to Suffolk
- 1930s Canada Geese started to nest
- 1932 Little Bittern, Breydon Water – new to Suffolk in the twentieth century, whereas the first was in Suffolk at Oulton Water in 1830
- 1938 Lesser Yellowlegs, Walsingham – new to Suffolk
- 1938 Black Redstart first bred

'Mind the gap' - another eight years gap, this time due to the Second World War's intervention, reducing the numbers of birders and, once more, there was virtually no access to the East Coast outside of the sea front towns

- 1947 Marsh Sandpiper, Southwold – new to Suffolk
- 1947 Curlew first nested
- 1947 Avocets return to nest in Suffolk
- 1948 Little Bunting, Aldeburgh – new to Suffolk
- 1948 Little Ringed Plover first nested
- 1949 Lesser White-fronted Goose, Breydon Water – new to Suffolk
- 1951 Terek Sandpiper, Southwold – new to Suffolk
- 1952 Kentish Plover attempted to nest
- 1953 Arctic Redpoll, Lowestoft – new to Suffolk
- 1956 Collared Dove, Lakenheath & Red-breasted Flycatcher, Pakefield – both new to Suffolk
- 1957 Lesser Black-backed Gull first bred
- 1958 Great Reed Warbler, Minsmere – new to Suffolk
- 1958 Corncrake ceased to breed
- 1958 Herring Gull began to nest
- 1958 Kittiwake started breeding
- 1959 Common Rosefinch, Benacre – new to Suffolk
- 1959 Collared Dove first bred
- 1961 Icterine Warbler, Minsmere & Western Bonelli's Warbler, Walberswick - both new to Suffolk
- 1962 MacQueen's Bustard, Hinton – new to Suffolk, but was the fifth British record with the first having been in Lincolnshire in 1847

- 1962 White-rumped Sandpiper & Rustic Bunting, both Minsmere and new to Suffolk
- 1963 Green-winged Teal, Butley River – new to Suffolk
- 1963 Pallas's Warbler Walberswick – new to Suffolk
- 1964 Siskin first nested
- 1964 Citrine Wagtail, Minsmere & Radde's Warbler, Walberswick – both new to Suffolk
- 1965 The discovery of nesting Golden Orioles in West Suffolk



- 1965 Baird's Sandpiper, Havergate – new to Suffolk
- 1965 The Great Fall - 250,000 Redstarts, 100,000 Wheatears, tens of thousands of Pied Flycatchers, 4000 Whinchats and 3000 Garden Warblers, to list just a few!
- 1967 Montagu's Harrier ceased to nest
- 1968 The astonishing invasion of Nutcrackers – 75 in Suffolk



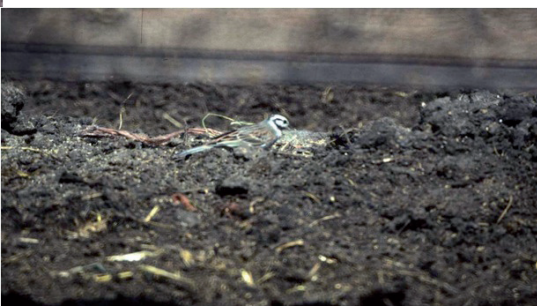
- 1968 Richard's Pipit, Havergate & White-throated Sparrow, Herringfleet – both new to Suffolk
- 1968 Sociable Plover, Havergate – new to Suffolk
- 1968 Savi's Warbler breeds again, following their extinction in the nineteenth century
- 1969 Stilt Sandpiper, Minsmere – new to Suffolk
- 1970 Melodious Warbler, Minsmere & Lesser Grey Shrike, Hollesley – both new to Suffolk
- 1971 Blue-winged Teal, Martlesham & Black Kite, Westleton – both new to Suffolk
- 1971 Wilson's Phalarope & Slender-billed Gull, both Minsmere and new to Suffolk
- 1971 Cetti's Warbler & Trumpeter Finch, both Minsmere and new to Suffolk
- 1971 Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Reydon – new to Suffolk (although it quickly expired)



[Dead parrot sketch opportunity?](#)

- 1971 Cetti's Warbler alleged to breed, although this was not to be confirmed until 1977
- 1971 The recovery of nesting Marsh Harriers begins from a single UK pair
- 1972 Wryneck ceased to breed
- 1972 Common Gull first bred at Minsmere before colonising Orfordness in 1979
- 1973 Egyptian Goose first bred
- 1974 Cory's Shearwater, Dunwich/Lowestoft – new to Suffolk
- 1974 American Wigeon, Minsmere & Ring-necked Duck, Homersfield – both new to Suffolk
- 1974 Firecrest first bred
- 1974 An extraordinary autumn migration of Rough-legged Buzzards
- 1975 Greater Yellowlegs, Breydon Water – new to Suffolk
- 1976 Greylag Goose first bred
- 1976 Aquatic Warbler, Minsmere – new to Suffolk

- 1977 Ring-necked Parakeet nested
- 1977 Spotted Sandpiper, Walberswick & Siberian Stonechat, Benacre – both new to Suffolk
- 1977 Franklin's Gull, Lowestoft – new to Suffolk
- 1979 Glossy Ibis, Benacre – new record for Suffolk
- 1981 Oriental Pratincole, Dunwich – new to Suffolk
- 1981 Greater Sand Plover, Breydon Water & Pacific Swift, Ellough – both new to Suffolk
- 1981 Greenish Warbler, Minsmere & Lark Sparrow, Landguard – both new to Suffolk and the latter to the UK too
- 1981 The Moorhen x Coot Hybrid, or "Moot" as it became known
- 1982 White-crowned Black Wheatear, Kessingland – new to Suffolk & UK
- 1982 Semi-palmated Sandpiper, Felixstowe & Red-throated Pipit, Trimley St. Martin – both new to Suffolk
- 1982 The Sizewell Bunting - possibly a hybrid Pine Bunting/Yellowhammer



The unique *Emberiza nucleari* (sic)?

- 1983 Red-breasted Goose, Deben/Orwell/Stour – new to Suffolk
- 1983 Ruddy Duck first bred
- 1983 Fulmars first nested
- 1983 Goshawk first bred
- 1984 Great White Egret, Covehithe etc. – new to Suffolk
- 1985 River Warbler, Pettistree – new to Suffolk
- 1985 Black-winged Pratincole, Minsmere & Ring-billed Gull, Trimley St. Martin – both new to Suffolk
- 1985 Collared Flycatcher, Lowestoft – new to Suffolk
- 1985 Black-headed Wagtail, Landguard – new to Suffolk
- 1986 Marsh Warbler, Walberswick & Subalpine Warbler, Landguard – both new to Suffolk
- 1986 Southern Grey Shrike, Landguard – new to Suffolk
- 1986 Mediterranean Gull first bred
- 1986 Mandarin Duck bred for the first time
- 1987 Dusky Warbler & Desert Wheatear, both Landguard and new to Suffolk
- 1987 Red-rumped Swallow, Eastbridge – new to Suffolk
- 1987 The Great Bustard Chase
- 1988 Paddyfield Warbler, Landguard & Red-eyed Vireo, Lowestoft – both new to Suffolk
- 1988 Cattle Egret, Minsmere – new to Suffolk
- 1989 Penduline Tit, Minsmere – new to Suffolk
- 1989 The start of colonisation by Little Egrets, although they did not breed in Suffolk until 2002
- 1990 Parrot Crossbills arrive in numbers and may have bred
- 1991 Lesser Crested Tern, Benacre – new to Suffolk
- 1992 Great Spotted Cuckoo, Aldeburgh – new to Suffolk
- 1992 The Pacific Golden Plover at Breydon Water new to Suffolk
- 1992 Black-headed Bunting, Trimley St. Mary – new to Suffolk
- 1992 Red-backed Shrike ceased to breed
- 1993 Blyth's Reed Warbler & Arctic Warbler, both Fagbury and new to Suffolk
- 1993 Yellow-breasted Bunting, Landguard – new to Suffolk
- 1994 Blyth's Pipit & Red-flanked Bluetail, both Landguard and new to Suffolk
- 1994 Pied Wheatear, Fagbury & Sardinian Warbler, Landguard – both new to Suffolk
- 1994 American Robin, Landguard - new to Suffolk
- 1995 Laughing Gull, Sizewell – new to Suffolk
- 1995 Eastern Olivaceous Warbler, Benacre & Pine Bunting, Corton – both new to Suffolk
- 1996 Booted Warbler, Gorleston & Crested Lark, Landguard – both new to Suffolk
- 1996 Dartford Warblers return to nest in Suffolk
- 1996 Red Kite return to breed again
- 1996 Eider bred for the first time
- 1997 Caspian Gull, Wetherden – new to Suffolk
- 1997 American Golden Plover at Walberswick - new to Suffolk
- 1997 Lanceolated Warbler & Spectacled Warbler, both Landguard and new to Suffolk

- | | | | |
|------|--|------|---|
| 1997 | Isabelline Shrike, Boyton – new to Suffolk | 1999 | Ivory Gull, Aldeburgh – new to Suffolk |
| 1998 | Cormorants begin nesting in the county, again at Loompit Lake | 1999 | Great Black-backed Gull began nesting |
| 1998 | Balearic Shearwater, Sizewell & Isabelline Wheatear, Southwold – both new to Suffolk | 2000 | Olive-backed Pipit, Southwold & Siberian Blue Robin, Minsmere – both new to Suffolk |
| 1999 | Pallid Harrier, Bramford & Pallid Swift, Covehithe – both new to Suffolk | | |

Discussion - Bird history

Whatever the final total actually is, the list nevertheless impressively contains far more gains than losses. In all Derek documents a surprising 104 bird species new to the county in the course of the century (however five of those he showed in his talk were arguably already on the Suffolk List - see Philip Murphy's addendum right). Additionally there were 28 new breeders and 6 returning breeders, whilst only five species ceased to breed in the county during the century. This is clearly a rosier picture than might have been instinctively imagined. Despite this, an abiding cause for concern remains - the decline in densities of even common birds.

The record also shows two prominent gaps, each lasting eight years marking the Great War and the Second World War, when access to the coast was somewhat restricted and the population of birders was 'culled'.

Equally it is instructive to note that, as the numbers of birders increased and the physical area open for quality birding was enlarged, so the rate at which new birds were located increased commensurately. In the century's first 50 years the total of new birds added to the list was eight, whilst in the second half of the century this increased to 90+, with almost two-thirds added in the last two decades as birdwatching rapidly evolved from being a specialist pursuit to a mass hobby and ID skills and knowledge coming on a pace courtesy of better books, magazines, cameras etc. becoming more readily available.

Philip Murphy

Some further thoughts on the Suffolk Records

Whenever records are reviewed or examined there are always going to be arguments and some controversial comments. Derek largely used *The Birds of Suffolk* by Steve Piotrowski as the latest work and to facilitate speed in putting together his presentation. Derek admits to maybe missing some very old records in his haste to get his presentation completed and, in more recent cases, was not aware of any controversies. If you survey the more historical literature there are a few anomalies that crop up compared with the presentation and these are as follows:

1911 Black Stork – The first was probably at Otley in 1832

1912 Little Bustard – The first was at Newmarket prior to 1797.

1925 Gull-billed Tern – There is a record from Breydon 1849

1949 Lesser White-fronted Goose – There is no proof that this bird ever occurred on the Suffolk shore.

1979 Glossy Ibis – A record from 1849

1992 Pacific Golden Plover – the bird noted was not proven to occur in Suffolk but was added to the Suffolk list in 2005.

1994 American Robin – This record was a freshly dead bird that was not submitted, so it's not on the Suffolk List.

1997 American Golden Plover – This record was also a freshly dead bird and was never submitted to BBRC either, so it did not appear on the Suffolk List in 1997. Although it was subsequently added in 2007.



A frozen 1947!

Natural events:

- 1947 One of the coldest winters on record.
- 1963 Another winter of prolonged cold
- 1965 The Great Fall - 250,000 Redstarts, 100,000 Wheatears, tens of thousands of Pied Flycatchers, 4000 Whinchats and 3000 Garden Warblers, to list just a few!
- 1968 The astonishing invasion of Nutcrackers
- 1976 One of the hottest, driest summers for years
- 1974 An extraordinary autumn migration of Rough-legged Buzzards
- 1987 The Great Hurricane of late October
- 1987 The Great Bustard Chase (November)
- 1990 Parrot Crossbills arrive in numbers

Discussion - Natural events

Weather steadily became a more dominant force as the century progressed. It either periodically drove migrants or vagrants to the county, or harsh winters placed many of our resident species under life-threatening pressure.

However, it was not until the present century that global warming has come to be seen as a more ominous long-term threat to Suffolk's coastal habitats as well (see the 'Tidal surge' story later in this issue). At some point in the future it seems inevitable that the county must expect to suffer some sort of climatic double-whammy, when both birds and habitats could suffer together!

Acknowledgements

First, very many thanks to Derek Moore for permitting the editor to take such liberties with his PowerPoint presentation. Second, thanks to Steve Piotrowski for originally producing *'The Birds of Suffolk'*, which allowed Derek to draw on extensively when creating his presentation. And third, thanks to Philip Murphy for his reviewing Derek's efforts as he sought to pursue (we suspect?) a total of over one hundred new species for the Twentieth Century - as it is Philip believes we fell just short of this target with 96 new species - but that is still very impressive and a testament to Suffolk birders' ID skills.

BINS Autumn Jamboree

September

The last few days of September produced some notable birds, which included good numbers of **Yellow-browed Warblers** along the coast, a **Red-rumped Swallow** seen to go south over Landguard on the afternoon 26th. Nearby a **Red-breasted Flycatcher** was seen on Marcus Road, Felixstowe 28th. A Raven was noted on numerous occasions throughout 28th at Minsmere, and a **Cattle Egret** was present on the Konik field before moving to the south levels on 29th.

October

The month got off to a flyer with the discovery of a **Siberian Stonechat** at Trimley Marsh SWT on 1st-7th; this is the first occurrence of this species since being a recognised spilt by the relevant authorities. Also present on this day was a presumed **Red-backed Shrike** which was seen on the golf course at Felixstowe Ferry and the **Red-breasted Flycatcher** remained on Marcus Road, Felixstowe.

Yellow-browed Warblers were almost being seen daily, with up to 31 birds reported between 1st- 17th. The three **Great White Egrets** continued in residence on Island Mere, Minsmere whilst the **Raven** seen last month was again noted over Island Mere 3rd as was a **Hooded Crow** 24th.

A **Little Bunting**, a major scarcity in the county, was reported from the beach at Minsmere 6th, also seen on this day was a first-winter **Red-breasted Goose** amongst Wigeon at Abbey Farm Marsh, Snape until 8th and a **Hawfinch** at Landguard.

A juvenile **Rose-coloured Starling** was seen on the afternoon 7th by the sluice at Benacre. The first **Great Grey Shrike** of many to follow was also noted 7th on Westleton Heath and a **Baltic Gull** (un-ringed) was noted in pig-fields at Great Livermere also 7th.

Two **Lapland Bunting** flew over East Lane, Bawdsey 8th, the 10th saw a huge influx of thrushes into the county with a reported circa 10,000 **Redwing** being seen at Landguard alone!

Favourable sea-watching conditions prevailed over a two-day period 11-12th that resulted in numerous sightings of **Leach's Petrel** offshore from many locations, along with the odd **Long-tailed Skua**, **Puffin** and **Balearic Shearwater** also being seen.

The 12th proved to be a classic 'birdie' day with the east wind still blowing and some great birding to be had, highlights for the day included a male **Red-footed Falcon** north over the cliffs at Bawdsey and what was presumed the same bird later over Shingle Street, four **Great Grey Shrikes**, 72 **Ring Ouzel** (twenty two in the Bawdsey area alone), the first **Pallas's Warbler** of the autumn at Southwold campsite and a very showy first-winter **Caspian Gull** feeding on chips at Southwold!

Crossbill - male left and female, right



Further **Pallas's Warblers** were seen at Orford Quay 13th, Lowestoft North Denes 17th and Minsmere sluice bushes 18th which turned out to be a good year for this Asiatic gem. Additional **Great Grey Shrike** were seen at Landguard 12th-21st, although very mobile, Sizewell 15-18th and Minsmere 17-19th.

Belated news of an **Olive-backed Pipit** at Thorpeness 13th was forthcoming several days after the event, unlike the first-winter female **Red-flanked Bluetail** that was present 14-17th at Sizewell in the small copse by Dower House. A **Glossy Ibis** was also seen 14th over Lakenheath Fen RSPB.

A **Rough-legged Buzzard** was tracked down the coast on 15th being seen at Southwold, Minsmere and finally North Warren. Another **Rough-legged Buzzard** was seen over the levels at Minsmere, then south over Sizewell 25th. A **Raven** was also seen over Southwold 15th. **Parrott Crossbills** have been erupting in huge numbers on the continent and a large billed **Crossbill sp** south over Landguard 15th could well have been a **Parrot**, or was it just a large billed **Common Crossbill**?

A **Radde's Warbler** was found at Shingle Street 16th, though it was as elusive as would be expected.

Shorelarks were seen at Corton with three birds present 17-18th and a single bird at Landguard 17-20th. A **Rough-legged Buzzard** took up temporary residence on Orfordness from 19th. The first returning **Bewick's Swans** of the autumn were present with six birds on the scrape at Minsmere 19th.



A probable **Pallid Swift** was reported early morning over Lower Abbey Marsh, Sizewell 21st and it, or another **Swift sp**, was seen nearby over the west end of Minsmere reedbed 27th. This was followed by a late **Common Swift** that was seen to fly past Undercliffe, Felixstowe 29th. A **Red-throated Pipit** went over Landguard 29th calling as it did and continued on its journey south and a **Glossy Ibis** flew south over the old caravan park at Thorpeness the same day.

Two humongous sea-birds were claimed on the afternoon of 27th in the north of the county, the first being a probable **Black-browed Albatross** north off Hopton, this was then followed with the



report of two juv/fem **Surf Scoters** north off Ness Point!

Then a juvenile **Surf Scoter** was seen drifting slowly south offshore between Minsmere – Sizewell on the afternoon 29th - if accepted it will constitute the first sighting of this species in the county.

Towards the end of the month, a **Great White Egret** spent several days at Lakenheath Fen RSPB. 150 **Tree Sparrows** were noted in the village of Ampton. A late **Willow Warbler** was trapped at Thorpeness 30th.

Two **Short-eared Owls** were at Shingle Street and the Stour Estuary produced two **Velvet Scoter** and one **Long-tailed Duck** from Stutton Mill, that were still present in November along with a **Great Northern Diver**.



November 2013

A **Glossy Ibis** was noted south over the reserve at Minsmere 1st and what was presumably the same bird later seen on the marshes at Hollesley and remained until 9th. Further **Glossy Ibis** were seen with two birds south over the scrape, Minsmere late morning 7th then a single bird south at the same location on 9th and 13th. The **Rough-legged Buzzard** continued to be seen on Orfordness throughout the month and looks set to over-winter with us?

Lapland Buntings were seen briefly on the beach at Pakefield 1st before flying south, on the beach at Southwold 10-12th and three were noted along the cliff face adjacent to the old sewage works at Corton 19th with a single bird still present 24th.

Small numbers of **Snow Bunting** began to gather on our coast early month, with several sightings

noted; amongst the highest were 30 seen to come in off at Southwold 6th and 50 on the beach by the *Cefas* building, Pakefield 21st.

Shorelarks were present along the promenade on Lowestoft North Denes with three birds on 3rd, two birds were noted on the beach at Pakefield 6-7th, three individuals were seen south along the beach at Landguard 8th, two birds at Southwold 10-14th and finally two birds to the north of the sluice at Benacre 12-21st.

A late **Arctic Tern** was present in the dock basin at Felixstowe 3rd, nearby a **Glaucous Gull** was noted south off Landguard 5th along with 3 **Sooty Shearwater** that travelled north and two **Waxwing** (the first of the early winter) were seen to come in off.





Glaucous Gull

News of a **Humpback Whale** off Dunwich late in the day 5th had observers scanning the sea the next morning; no sign of the whale, but a **Little Auk** was seen to come in off with Starlings. A **Hooded Crow** was seen to come in off at Benacre 7th to settle on pig fields just south of the broad for the remainder of the day.

Great Grey Shrikes were present on Berner's Heath, Elveden 8th and along the Shottisham – Alderton Road at TM318431 on the afternoon 9th only.

Offshore, a juvenile **Glaucous Gull** was seen south off Ness Point, Lowestoft early afternoon 10th, and what was presumably the same bird present and showing extremely well in Hamilton Dock from 16th-24th. A **Black Brant** north off Hopton 10th and then the next day another, or the same **Black Brant**, was seen south off Southwold as well as a **Grey Phalarope**. A late **Arctic Tern** was seen south off Southwold 9th and what is presumed to be the same bird was spotted off Dunwich 10th.

Just one **Great White Egret** remained on Island Mere, Minsmere come the 9th, with another being seen intermittently at Lakenheath Fen RSPB mid-month. **Twite** at Dunwich began to gather, with up to 100+ birds being noted 26th by the shore pools. Both **Little Auk** and **Red-necked Grebe** were reported off Thorpeness 11th, two further **Red-necked Grebes** were seen off Landguard 12th.

A **Raven** was noted north over Undercliffe Felixstowe 16th and what was most definitely the same bird was seen the next day on the Deben

Estuary at Ramsholt. Adult **Caspian Gulls** were noted at both Hollesley and Minsmere 17th. A count of at least four **Firecrest** at Gunton church was noteworthy on the 18th.

Probably the most bizarre report during this period was that of a **Snowy Owl** seen by a golfer on the golf-course at Felixstowe Ferry 19th, the golfer stated 'it was a huge beast' but, despite being looked for, there was no further sign, however there was an unconfirmed report of an escaped **Snowy Owl** in the area that subsequently came to light!

The onset of cold northerly winds from 20th resulted in some nice wildfowl being seen offshore, this included **Velvet Scoter**, **Long-tailed Duck** and good numbers of **Common Scoter** and **Eider**. As well as the good wildfowl on offer, three **Pomarine Skua** were noted from Southwold 21st and several were reported from Thorpeness throughout the month.

Without doubt, the most exciting event of the month was the discovery of ten **Parrot Crossbills** on Tunstall Common on 23rd. The flock was probably present from the 16th, although certain identification could not be made owing to the flock being highly mobile. By the 25th this flock had increased to as many as sixteen birds! This invasion of **Parrot Crossbills** is the first since 1990 so therefore a welcome 'grip back' for the majority of the younger generation of birders in the county.

Editor: Let's hope December proves to be just as interesting.

Field Trip Report

Gi Grieco

At sea with SOG North Sea Pelagic

21st September 2013

Leader: Ashley Gooding

I've long wanted to do a pelagic, and specifically off Suffolk, and the opportunity duly arrived this year.

Previously I'd found a boat to take us out (the one that we've been on for SOG trips on the Deben), but had had trouble with sourcing chum so it never materialised. I then noted in early 2012, that Danny Porter, the well-known digiscoper from Lowestoft, had organised a pelagic so I got in contact and we then arranged for another trip in September of that year, with Danny being able to source the essential chum. Unfortunately the weather on the selected day was not conducive to a sea excursion, so this pelagic was cancelled, although ironically the following day I had my

Aboard



best ever sea watch from Suffolk, spotting three species of Shearwater including two Cory's, four Leach's Petrel, lots of Fulmars and several Skuas.

Plans were put in motion to try again in 2013 and, with a team assembled and Danny again sourcing the chum, we waited for the day to arrive, again in September, to finally embark on the pelagic. Unfortunately we had to start later than planned as the skipper, who also worked taking crew out to the tankers that are moored off the Suffolk coast had a job to do, so we didn't leave until 8.45. We noted a few gulls around the harbour as well as Sandwich Tern, before the skipper put the throttle down and we sped out to sea to about five miles out from Lowestoft.

- five miles out -



We started putting chum over board attracting some Herring Gulls and then a close Great Skua. This species normally chases other birds like the gulls to steal food but this time there was no need as it gorged itself on the chum we supplied. It was fantastic to see the species up so close. We found that as the boat sped through the waves it felt quite stable but when we came to a stop the



Herring Gull and Bonxie



Juvenile & Adult Arctic Skua



boat rolled a lot in the swell making it difficult to stand up and a couple of those present started to feel unwell. As the Great Skua moved off we decided to move on ourselves when the skipper announced that he had a call for a job to take two crewmen from one of the big ships to another. As he needed an assistant this would mean going back to shore but would then give us a chance to go twelve miles out. We agreed, so after that was done, we then slowly motored south

- twelve miles out -

The shoreline almost disappeared from view and Danny continued throwing chum over board but bird life was scarce seeing only a couple of Gannets, and a diver species, probably Great Northern, but we then did have a Fulmar follow the boat showing really well for a while.

Getting down towards Sizewell we had a superb Arctic Skua around the boat with several Common and Sandwich Terns too. They put on a great aerial display diving down to pick up bits of chum and sprats. We drifted towards the shore where near the rigs we started to see Little Gulls amongst their larger cousins and another Arctic Skua. This one didn't come close to the boat and instead it

chased gulls and eventually landed on the beach.

For those that had been poorly from the rocking motion of the boat, being inshore there was less swell, which gave them a bit of respite. We decided to head back to Lowestoft following the coast and it was great to see the shoreline from a different perspective. Lots of gulls followed us as we passed sites like Southwold and Benacre, and we began to note more ducks, especially Teal and Wigeon, the latter on occasion in large rafts on the sea, along with Brent Geese flying south, all birds newly arrived from more northern and eastern quarters.

We arrived back to Lowestoft, having spent over seven hours out to sea, thanking the skipper and especially Danny for his sterling work dispensing the chum. Although bird numbers were low, with none of the scarcer potential seabirds seen, it was nevertheless an enjoyable day and one we would all like to repeat next year. I was glad to have done my first Suffolk pelagic and, as is so often the case with seawatching in Suffolk, luck and good timing is needed [Ed: And everywhere else!] to be able to connect with a good seabird passage.



Common Tern



Little Gull

Book Review

Editor: Mark first talked to SOG about the book reviewed below in November 2008. It was a mammoth task and not surprisingly has taken some time to arrive. But was it worth the wait? Here's what David Tomlinson has to say:

David Tomlinson

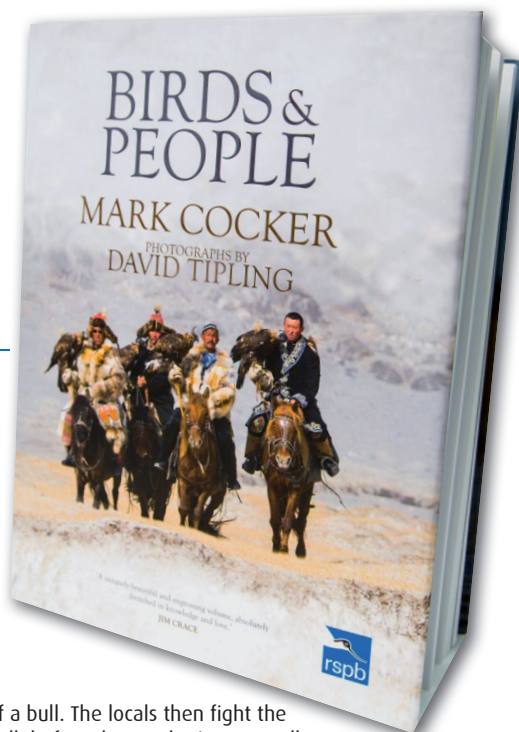
***Birds & People,*
by Mark Cocker
with photographs by David Tipling
(Jonathan Cape, £40)**

While Derek Moore's book, which I reviewed in the last issue is an easy read, I doubt if anyone will ever consume Mark Cocker's *Birds & People* from cover to cover. It's a hefty tome, tipping the scales at over 3kg, or about as much as an adult Gannet, and contains 400,000 words. It's a handsome production, stoutly bound and with an eye-catching cover of mounted Mongolian hunters with their Golden Eagles. It's a timeless shot except for the Ray-Bans that one of them is wearing.

- a weighty tome -

Though the title is a politically correct *Birds & People*, it might equally well have been called *Birds & Man*, for it is chiefly about man's (rather than woman's) relationship with birds. It's men, not women, who were responsible for exterminating the Passenger Pigeon and the Dodo, who ambush the migrants as they attempt to cross the Mediterranean, or who dress up in the feathers of birds of paradise in New Guinea. We are reminded that twitchers are predominately male in a picture of "a heaving melee of birders who made pilgrimage to Cley to see a White-crowned Sparrow in 2008". Just two rather embarrassed-looking women can be spotted.

Birds & People contains personal anecdotes and stories from more than 650 individuals in 81 different countries. Many of these make compelling reading. I was fascinated, for example, with the account of the Yawar Festival in Peru, when a live Andean Condor is tethered to the back



of a bull. The locals then fight the bull, before the Condor is eventually released. "Before I went to Cotabambas I was sure that, as a conservationist, I would hate being there and hate the people doing this, yet it was not like that" we read. "It is, however, one of the weirdest spectacles I have ever witnessed... I suspect that the villagers are some of the best allies for saving this magnificent bird."



You will find lots of equally fascinating stories within the pages of *Birds & People*, reflecting the huge amount of research undertaken by Mark, plus researchers Jonathan Elphick and John Fanshawe. Mark travelled to numerous countries to gather stories, but it's clear from his description of grouse shooting that he has never been to Yorkshire to watch driven grouse shooting, which he describes as "a carefully choreographed ritual about social dominance".

- the OED, a useful aid? -

Surprisingly, few other reviewers of *Birds & People* have remarked on Mark's curious enthusiasm for using strange words that many readers will be unfamiliar with. An *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) is a handy companion when reading this book. Mark displays equal enthusiasm for adjectives and adverbs, not to mention purple prose, never using one word when ten will do. A good sub-editor could have easily cut the wordage down to a more readable 300,000, not only making this volume much more digestible, but also allowing more space for David Tipling's stunning photographs.

- plus stunning photography -

Almost all the photographs are David's, and there's not a duff one among them. I have to admit to a touch of bias here, for I accompanied David to India for one of his trips gathering material for the book. I was with him when he took the picture of Black Kites on a New Delhi tip (page 159), not a site on the itinerary of many visitors to India. It was on the same trip that David photographed the winking Spotted Owl (page 279). I photographed the same bird, but soon got bored and moved on to find other subjects. David stayed with it, and was rewarded with the wink. Great photographers do work for their pictures. Rumour has it that David is working on a book describing the adventures he undertook while taking pictures for *Birds & People*. It will, I promise you, be a great read.



Spotted Owllet

Editor: There have, of course been many positive reviews of Mark's and David's book. While I've only managed to dip into it so far, a good deal of what I've read covers some important conservation matters well, so much so that I feel the stylistic points raised by David, while to a degree valid, are perhaps a little harsh. It is true that Mark has a more poetic than a drier scientific style which some are averse to but, speaking personally, I believe nature writing is a broad church and there's certainly room for both. That said, I'd like to have seen more of David's shots too. But the present (sic) offering is excellent as it is - so buy it if you can.

Field Trip Report

Steve Fryett

Boyton RSPB and Shingle Street

14th September 2013

Leader: Steve Fryett

Unrelenting overnight rain threatened the possibility of a large attendance for this autumn field meeting. Still raining with a temperature hard to contemplate following our splendid summer, just six members stepped onto Boyton Marsh without much of a flourish.

We did not stay long but noted a Marsh Harrier from the car park with just a handful of Mallard, Teal and Gadwall on the flashes. On the river we noted a single Black-tailed Godwit and Great Crested Grebe flying up stream. There were also many feeding Swallows and House Martins heading north into the weather that brightened things up a little.

Shingle Street

Next we headed off south to Shingle Street parking at the Coastguard cottages, then walked

towards the tennis courts. Nearby in a group of elders, brambles and gorse we quickly noted a number of migrants; Whinchats were perched on the brambles with a brief appearance of Black Redstart and two Common Redstart. A female Reed Bunting, several Linnets and Dunnocks made up the species here. We had further views of the Black Redstart and located another Common Redstart nearby. The Whinchat probably numbered five or six and often moved across to the round bales of hay on Oxley Marsh. As with our previous venue hirundines were abundant, all still heading north, feeding, keeping low over the ground as they passed through.

East Lane

To complete our day we headed off to East Lane where conditions began to improve although we could find no warblers here at all. The lagoons held several Dabchicks, Wigeon, Teal and a single Snipe with a few Sand Martins noted amongst the hirundines. The recent Greater Scaup could not be found, but we did manage to see three juvenile Yellow Wagtails as we returned to finish the meeting.

Editor: Here's a way to while away some of those long winter evenings with a general knowledge prize competition compiled by Clive. Unless you're a Google whiz, this is an excellent opportunity to exercise your 'little grey cells'. There are 50 questions in all scattered throughout this issue.

Send the full set of your answers to the Editor by 31 January for marking, and we'll announce the result of the prize draw during the February AGM. All of the answers will be published in the March Harrier. Editor's decision will be final.

In view of the desultory response to the last couple of prize-less quizzes we decided there'd be a generous one this time. Specifically a signed copy of Mark Cocker's excellent tome.

Clive Collins

Christmas Prize Competition

1. What is the ornithological connection between Sheffield, Newcastle, Swindon and The Great Exhibition of 1851?
2. Which famous lover confused a lark with a Nightingale?
3. Where could you see Great Bustards in Cambridgeshire?
4. Which is the only bird to have appeared on an English coin?



5. Which bird did Aristotle claim produced its call by farting?
6. What links pheasants, plovers, eagles and the number 79?
7. Which brother and sister lived at Dove Cottage?
8. How is the wife of a Governor-General of India commemorated by a British bird?
9. In which novel does Moses the Raven tell of a mysterious country called Sugar-candy Mountain?
10. Whose punishment was to be turned into a screech owl?
11. Whereabouts do the Western Meadowlark and the Ring-necked Pheasant travel in opposite directions?
12. Which pair of mythological birds symbolised "Thought" and "Memory"?
13. What is the association of the Kingfisher with calm weather?
14. Which notorious prison is named after a bird? (It's not "Sing-Sing"!)
15. In theory all swans on the River Thames belong to the Queen. But which bird is appropriate for a King?
16. What was the significance of Wallace's Fruit-Dove on 19th August 2012 on Yamdena in the Tanimbar Islands?
17. Which pesky corvid was celebrated in opera by Rossini?
18. Which British bird is a spelling mistake?
19. Why is it a sin to kill a Mockingbird?
20. Who paid his rent with 300 birds called Puffins?
21. Which bird was beaten to death on St. Kilda in 1840 in the belief that it was a witch, and was seen no more in Great Britain?
22. Which American birds reappeared in 1994, having disappeared for fourteen years?
23. Which museum curator has birds from Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America named after him, despite never having himself left Europe?
24. In which medieval poem do the Goshawk, the Crane, the Chough, the Starling, the Peacock and the Fieldfare, among others, choose their mates on St. Valentine's Day?
25. Among British birds, what do the following have in common: Magpie, Dipper, Wheatear, Bullfinch and Lapwing?
26. Which English county has provided names for three British birds?
27. Translate: "An eagle gules addorsed and inverted armed argent".
28. Which bird links a poem by Shelley and a piece of music by Vaughan Williams?
29. Whereabouts on the Isle of Wight would you find "the nook of land frequented by buzzards"?
30. Who warns housewives not to leave their washing drying on hedgerows when the Kite is nest-building?
31. Which raptor first saw the light of day in 1927 in Hartford, Wisconsin, USA?
32. Which crepuscular bird was believed to have fed by suckling on a nanny-goat's teat?
33. Who sailed over the swan's road to kill a monster?
34. The mythological bird the Phoenix is supposed to rise again from the flames, but which winter visitor to Britain has come through fire?
35. Which sparrow had no painful memories, despite being raised in a brothel?
36. How did a dove make history on 1st. July 1845?
37. Which bird's head and foot constitute OUM 11605?
38. In what way can the Bar-headed Goose and Brännich's Guillemot form a contrasting pair?
39. Which is the only standard British bird name to have originated in the ancient Celtic language of Cornwall?
40. If an Oystercatcher catches oysters (which of course it doesn't, at least in Europe), what does a Bee-eater eat – in France?

Craig Fulcher

SORC greeting and records needed

Once again, seasonal greetings from the SORC!

As we did last year at this time, we now look back on the last two years of records of Suffolk's rarities. Overleaf we publish the updated lists of the records submitted in 2012 and the incomplete record for 2013. With regard to this last, as usual, can you pay particular attention to the outstanding descriptions list and see if you can fill some of the gaps? It's always a shame to see good records fall by the wayside due to a lack of descriptions, so please email us with whatever you can (craigfulcher@btinternet.com).

OUTSTANDING RECORD STATUS FOR 2012

DATE	SPECIES	LOCATION	OBSERVER	STATUS	NOTES
JANUARY					
01/01/2012	Blue Fulmar	Minsmere	J H Grant	A	
01/01/12 - 30/01/12	Green-winged Teal	Alton Water	L G Woods	A	
04/01/2012	Hooded Crow	Beccles Marsh	C Buttle	A	
13/01/12 - 25/01/12	Black Brant	Hollesley / Gedgrave	D Fairhurst	A	
15/01/2012	Ferruginous Duck	Lakenheath	C Puttock	NP	
FEBRUARY					
01/02/12 - 04/02/12	American Wigeon	North Warren	T Hodge	A	1st winter Male
04/02/12 - 20/02/12	Hooded Crow	Minsmere/Eastbridge	S Rutt	A	
07/02/12 - 31/3/12	Greenland White-fronted Goose	Gedgrave / Boyton	D Fairhurst	A	Male
20/02/12 - 29/02/12	Greenland White-fronted Goose	North Warren	D Fairhurst	A	Female
21/02/2012	Rough-legged Buzzard	Butley / Boyton	S Pitrowski + S Abbott	A	
March					
11/03/12 - 20/03/12	Hooded Crow	Boyton	N Sillett	A	
11/03/2012	Raven	Kings Forest	C Jakes et al	A	
12/03/2012	Raven	Covehithe	C Buttle	A	North at 11.20am
25/03/12 - 31/03/12	Green-winged Teal	Minsmere	D Fairhurst	A	Male
April					
08/04/2012	Hooded Crow	Lowestoft	A Easton	A	Different to Boyton bird
10/04/2012	Serin	LBO	J Zantboer + N Odin et al	A	
11/04/12-12/04/12	Serin	Lowestoft	S Jones	A	
24/04/2012	Little Bunting	LBO	N Croft	A	
28/04/12-29/04/12	Alpine Swift	Lowestoft	P Ransome	A	
30/04/12-13/07/12	Serin	LBO	P J Holmes, G Bennet + N Odin et al	A	Assumed to be same female throughout the spring
May					
04/05/2012	Serin	LBO	W J Brame	A	Male singing at customs
04/05/2012	Grey-headed Wagtail	Trimley	P J Holmes	A	Male
06/05/2012	Tawny Pipit	LBO	E W Patrick + M Piotrowski	A	
07/05/2012	Honey Buzzard	Ipswich	L G Woods + J Woods	A	
07/05/2012	Montagu's Harrier	Orfordness	M Marsh + D Crawshaw	A	(Photo)
10/05/2012	White Stork	Sudbury	P Rowe	A	
12/05/2012	Red-rumped Swallow	Minsmere	P Green	A	2 birds
13/05/2012	Red-rumped Swallow	East Lane	L G Woods	A	
25/05/2012	Rose-coloured Starling	LBO	P J Holmes + G Bennet	A	1st summer
26/05/2012	Marsh Warbler	Orfordness	M Marsh + D Crawshaw	A	(Photo) + Trapped and Ringed
26/05/2012	Marsh Warbler	LBO	R Duncan + G Bennet	A	Trapped and ringed
26/05/2012	Greenish Warbler	LBO	J Zantboer et al	A	Trapped and ringed
26/05/2012	Icterine Warbler	Corton		A	
27/05/12 - 29/05/12	Marsh Warbler	Gt Livermere	M Wright	A	
28/05/2012	Marsh Warbler	LBO	G Bennet et al	A	Dutch control
29/05/2012	Marsh Warbler	LBO	G Bennet et al	A	Trapped and ringed
30/05/12 - 31/05/12	Red-footed Falcon	Minsmere	A Lees	A	Female
June					
01/06/2012	Raven	Wangford	B J Small	A	
08/06/2012	Rose-coloured Starling	Hollesley Heath	E W Patrick + G Button	A	
10/06/2012	Woodchat Shrike	Walberswick	C Buttle	A	

10/06/2012	Bee-eater	Dingle	C Buttle	A	
11/06/2012	American Golden Plover	LBO	P Oldfield + W J Brame	A	
19/06/12 - 20/06/12	Woodchat Shrike	Gunton		A	
28/06/2012	Raven	Melton	S Abbott et al	A	
JULY					
02/07/2012	Red-necked Phalarope	Minsmere	G Driver	A	Male (Photo)
05/07/2012	Honey Buzzard	Minsmere	T Harris	A	(Photo)
22/07/2012	White-rumped Sandpiper	Havergate	D Fairhurst	A	(Photo)
28/07/2012	White-winged Black Tern	Minsmere		A	(Photo)
29/07/12 - 30/07/12	White-winged Black Tern	Alton Water		A	Same as Minsmere (Photo)
29/07/2012	White-winged Black Tern	Orfordness	M Marsh + D Crawshaw	A	(Photo)
31/07/12 - 22/08/12	Ferruginous Duck	Minsmere	Gi Grieco + D Pearsons	A	(Photo)
24/07/2012	Honey Buzzard	Westleton	J A Rowlands	A	
AUGUST					
12/08/2012 Holland	Montagu's Harrier	Sizewell	R Chittenden	A	(Photo) Wing tagged from
20/08/2012	Honey Buzzard	Hen Reedbeds	C Fulcher	A	
31/08/2012	Honey Buzzard	Thorpeness	P Whittaker	NP	Dark Morph Juv
SEPTEMBER					
01/09/2012	Common Rosefinch	Orfordness	M Marsh + D Crawshaw	A	Juv (Photo)
02/09/2012	Montagu's Harrier	Havergate	D Fairhurst + K Alexander	A	Juv (Photo)
10/09/12 - 15/09/12	Montagu's Harrier	Minsmere	M Riley et al	A	Juv (Multi Observed)
12/09/12 - 23/09/12	Montagu's Harrier	Boyton/Gedgrave	P Whittaker + S Abbott	A	Juv (Photo)
21/09/12 - 22/09/12	Dotterel	Havergate	P Gallagher	A	Juv (Photo)
23/09/2012	Cory's Shearwater	Southwold	Gi Grieco + A Gooding	A	2 North at 8.05
23/09/2012	Cory's Shearwater	Sizewell	D Pearsons	A	1 North 13.20
23/09/2012	Cory's Shearwater	Thorpeness	S Mayson	A	2 North 7.53
23/09/2012	Sabine's Gull	Thorpeness	S Mayson	A	North 9.50
23/09/2012	Sabine's Gull	Thorpeness	L G Woods	A	North 8.05
23/09/2012	Cory's Shearwater	Sizewell	S Abbott	A	2 North 7.58
23/09/2012	Cory's Shearwater	Sizewell	S Abbott	A	North 8.40
23/09/2012	Cory's Shearwater	Sizewell	S Abbott	A	North 13.20
OCTOBER					
07/10/2012	Hooded Crow	LBO	W J Brame, P Oldfield et al	A	South (Multi Observed)
11/10/2012	Red-breasted Flycatcher	Southwold	C Fulcher, S Mayson + L G Woods	A	(Photo)
20/10/2012	Hooded Crow	Benacre	E Lucking	A	(Photo)
20/10/2012	Common Rosefinch	Orfordness	M Marsh + D Crawshaw	A	Trapped (Photo)
24/10/2012	Red-breasted Flycatcher	Hopton	A Easton	A	(Photo)
25/10/12 - 29/10/12	Barred Warbler	Minsmere	E W Patrick et al	A	Sluice Bushes (Photo)
28/10/2012	Red-breasted Flycatcher	Alton Water	J Glazebrook	NP	
30/10/2012	Radde's Warbler	Hollesley	R Duncan, O Slessor et al	A	(Photo)
31/10/2012	Richard's Pipit	Dingle	B J Small	S	
NOVEMBER					
02/11/2012	Barred Warbler	Minsmere		A	North Bushes (Photo)
08/11/12 - 11/11/12	Richard's Pipit	Covehithe	C Fulcher	A	(Photo)
DECEMBER					
14/12/2012	Surf Scoter	Minsmere	R Drew	NP	Imm Male

OUTSTANDING DESCRIPTIONS FOR 2013

DATE	SPECIES	LOCATION	STATUS	NOTES
JANUARY				
23/01/2013	Black Brant	Gedgrave		
FEBRUARY				
23/02/2013	Ring-billed Gull (1st winter)	Lackford		
MARCH				
05/03/2013 - 21/03/2013		Hooded Crow		Covehithe
15/03/2013	Rough-legged Buzzard	Benacre		
APRIL				
06/04/2013	White Stork	Breydon/Kessingland		
10/04/2013	Raven	Orfordness		
11/04/2013	Black Kite	Bramfield		
17/04/2013	White-tailed Eagle	Thorndon		
23/04/2013	Serim	LBO		
28/04/2013	Honey Buzzard	Knoddishall		
29/04/2013	Honey Buzzard	Felixstowe		2 Birds
MAY				
01/05/2013	Hooded Crow	Easton Bavents		
10/05/2013	Honey Buzzard	St Olaves		
15/05/2013	Honey Buzzard	LBO		In Off
JUNE				
02/06/2013	Honey Buzzard	Martlesham		
16/06/2013	Raven	Flatford		
30/06/2013	Honey Buzzard	Hollesley		
JULY				
AUGUST				
14/08/2013	Marsh Warbler	Hollesley		Trapped and Ringed
20/08/2013	Raven	Dedham		2 Birds
24/08/2013	Dotterel	LBO		
25/08/2013	Greenish Warbler	Lowestoft		North Denes
25/08/2013	Greenish Warbler	Corton		New sewage works
25/08/2013	Greenish Warbler	Corton		Corton Church
25/08/2013	Montagu's Harrier	Minsmere		
27/08/2013	Red-footed Falcon	Felixstowe Ferry		Female
29/08/2013	Barred Warbler	LBO		
29/08/2013	Honey Buzzard	Needham Market		
31/08/2013	Corncrake	Orfordness		
31/08/2013	White-rumped Sandpiper	Havergate		
SEPTEMBER				
05/09/2013	Honey Buzzard	Rushmere		
12/09/2013	Sabine's Gull	Thorpeness / Sizewell		
26/09/2013	Red-rumped Swallow	LBO		
29/09/2013	Cattle Egret	Minsmere		
OCTOBER				
07/10/2013	R C Starling	Benacre		
12/10/2013	Red-footed Falcon	Bawdsey / Shingle St		
15/10/2013	Raven	Southwold		
29/10/2013	Surf Scoter	Sizewell		
29/10/2013	Red-throated Pipit	LBO		
NOVEMBER				
01/11/2013	Glossy Ibis	Minsmere		
01/11/13 - 09/11/13	Glossy Ibis	Hollesley		(Photo)
07/11/2013	Glossy Ibis	Minsmere		2 South at 11am
07/11/2013	Hooded Crow	Covehithe		(Photo)
10/11/2013	Black Brant	Hopton		North with 6 Brents
11/11/2013	Black Brant	Southwold		South with 6 Brents
13/11/2013	Glossy Ibis	Minsmere		South at 9.35am
16/11/2013	Raven	Felixstowe		
17/11/2013	Raven	Ramsholt		
17/11/13 -	Parrot Crossbill	Tunstall		10 birds (Photo)

RECORD STATUS FOR 2013

DATE	SPECIES	LOCATION	STATUS	NOTES
JANUARY				
03/01/13 - 20/02/13	Black Brant	Orwell Estuary	A	First at Chelmondiston
FEBRUARY				
09/02/13 - 01/03/12	Black Brant	Felixstowe Ferry	A	Adult
18/02/13 - 05/03/13	Black Brant (1st winter)	Felixstowe Ferry	A	1st county record of this age
MARCH				
02/03/2013	Raven	Westleton Heath	NP	2 Birds
29/03/12 - 30/03/12	Hooded Crow	Lowestoft	A	
APRIL				
06/04/13 - 11/04/13	White-tailed Eagle	Minsmere/Boyton/Covehithe	A	
14/04/2013	Green-winged Teal	North Warren	A	
14/04/2013	Raven	Minsmere	A	
17/04/13 -	Ferruginous Duck	Minsmere	A	Female
17/04/13 - 23/06/13	Raven	Stoke by Nayland	A	
18/04/13 - 19/04/13	Red-rumped Swallow	Kessingland SW	A	
23/04/13 - 29/04/13	Rose-coloured Starling	Orford	A	
26/04/13 - 27/04/13	Subalpine Warbler	LBO	A	Eastern race 'Albistriata'
27/04/2013	Black-bellied Dipper	Liston	A	
MAY				
01/05/13 - 06/06/13	Purple Heron	Lakenheath RSPB	A	
03/05/13 - -5/06/13	Red-footed Falcon	Lakenheath RSPB	A	Male
05/05/2013	Montagu's Harrier	Orfordness	A	Female
07/05/13 - 08/05/13	Purple Heron	Minsmere	A	
08/05/2013	Honey Buzzard	Lower Hollesley Common	A	2 Birds
08/05/2013	Montagu's Harrier	Lakenheath RSPB	NP	Male
09/05/2013	Montagu's Harrier	Lakenheath RSPB	A	Ringtail
11/05/2013	Cattle Egret	Minsmere	A	Later seen at North Warren
14/05/2013	Marsh Warbler	LBO	A	Trapped and ringed
14/05/2013	Raven	Lakenheath RSPB	NP	
18/05/13 - 22/05/13	Montagu's Harrier	Breydon South Wall	A	
19/05/2013	Woodchat Shrike	Lowestoft	A	
19/05/2013	Raven	Boyton/Butley	A	
26/05/2013	Raven	Gifford's Park	A	
JUNE				
03/06/2013	Red-breasted Flycatcher	Lowestoft	A	
05/06/2013	Montagu's Harrier	Minsmere	A	
09/06/13 - 11/06/13	Marsh Warbler	Southwold	A	
14/06/2013	Red-necked Phalarope	Minsmere	A	
25/06/2013	Red-necked Phalarope	Southwold	A	
AUGUST				
14/08/2013	Marsh Warbler	Hollesley	A	
25/08/2013	Icterine Warbler	LBO	A	
29/08/2013	Balearic Shearwater	Lowestoft / Swold / Sizewell	A	
SEPTEMBER				
28/9/13 - 3/10/13	Raven	Minsmere / Sizewell	A	
30/09/13 - 01/13/13	Red-breasted Flycatcher	Felixstowe	A	
OCTOBER				
06/10/2013	Little Bunting	Minsmere	S	
12/10/2013	Pallas's Warbler	Southwold	A	
13/10/2013	Pallas's Warbler	Orford	A	
14/10/13 - 15/10/13	Glossy Ibis	Lakenheath	A	
15/10/2013	Rough-legged Buzzard	Swold / Minsmere / N Warren	A	
16/10/2013	Radde's Warbler	Shingle Street	S	
17/10/2013	Pallas's Warbler	Lowestoft	A	
18/10/2013	Pallas's Warbler	Minsmere	A	
20/10/13 -	Rough-legged Buzzard	Orfordness	A	
25/10/2013	Rough-legged Buzzard	Minsmere	A	

Looking Back – October to December 1963 and 1988

Selected highlights from the 1963 and 1988 Suffolk Birds reports for the period October to December.

50 years ago

An easterly wind at any time between mid-October and mid-November in the 21st century has usually brought at least one Pallas's Warbler to Suffolk [*Editor: And 2013 has been no exception*]. Many of today's younger birders might not be aware just how rare this species was in Britain prior to 1982, when arrivals started to increase dramatically. Suffolk's first record of Pallas's Warbler occurred in this period when one was found at Walberswick on 16th November.

- dowitcher sp. not a first -

What was also considered, at the time, to be an addition to the Suffolk List was a species of dowitcher on Havergate Island between 13th October and 20th December. However, just over 30 years later, Steve Piotrowski's research for his book *"The Birds of Suffolk"* unearthed a much earlier record on Breydon Water in October 1840.

Southerly passage of Brent Geese off Suffolk has sometimes involved several thousand per day in the 21st century but 50 years ago the maximum day-count was of 480 south off Minsmere, 31st October. Seabird observations peaked on 23rd and 24th November when totals in Sole Bay included 30 Arctic Skuas, five Pomarine Skuas, 4000 Kittiwakes and 25 Razorbills.

Notable wader sightings were few and far between but did include twenty-five Sanderlings south off Minsmere, 24th December, an Avocet that lingered on Havergate Island until 30th December and a Grey Phalarope at Minsmere, 1st November.

Laggard summer visitors included Common Tern, Walberswick, 3rd November; Sandwich Tern, 2nd November; Cuckoo, Polstead, 1st October; Swift, Minsmere, 6th November; Swallow, Lowestoft, 28th November; House Martin, Dunwich, 30th November and Redstart, Sudbourne, 4th November.

Shore Larks were noted at five coastal sites from 27th October (Walberswick) with maxima of eighteen, Walberswick, 16th November to 5th December, fourteen, Minsmere, early December and six, Lowestoft, 12th December.

A small influx of Waxwings occurred from 20th October (seven, Aldeburgh); the largest gatherings were of twenty-five, Lowestoft, December, twenty, Aldeburgh, 19th November and twenty, Trimley, 9th December.



Common Tern



Waxwing



Crane

25 years ago

This was an outstanding period for interesting birds in Suffolk, especially in the coastal region.

Oiling was still a problem for seabirds 25 years ago. On 27th December an oiled Black-throated Diver was on Easton Broad and an oiled Slavonian Grebe was on a dyke at Walberswick. On a happier note, a Great Northern Diver in full breeding plumage on Oulton Broad, 23rd to 26th October was very popular with the county's birders.

- 2-star petrel! -

Cold northerly winds were responsible for an occurrence that had never been recorded before in Suffolk when on 21st November singles of both Storm Petrel and Leach's Petrel were seen off Southwold. Perhaps equally surprising was the discovery of a freshly dead Storm Petrel well inland at Gedding, 24th November, the first in west Suffolk since 24th May 1966 when one was found, also freshly dead, at Culford.

Notable southerly passage off Landguard included 13,689 Brent Geese in October, 36 Scaup, 3rd November and 54 Red-breasted Mergansers in October. Further north, the same winds which brought Storm and Leach's Petrels off Southwold also induced a record northerly movement of Eiders on 21st November off Lowestoft and Kessingland involving 161 of these large sea ducks. In the 21st century, Long-tailed Ducks have been scarce in Suffolk but in November and December 1988 up to 70 of these exquisite ducks were noted at coastal and estuarine sites;

the largest gatherings were of six on the Orwell Estuary, 17th to 24th November and up to six in Sole Bay throughout December.

This period's outstanding raptor was a White-tailed Eagle that was originally present inland at Helmingham, 27th November to 10th December. It then moved to the Butley/Boyton area on the coast where it was present from 12th December onwards into 1989.

A Corncrake was found dying on a road at Heveningham, 14th October, while at Landguard a migrant Moorhen was present, 12th November and three Cranes flew south offshore, 29th October.

Fagbury on the Orwell Estuary is now part of the Felixstowe Docks complex but in 1988 it was still an excellent site for waders, and attracted 29 Sanderlings on 7th December. Ness Point at Lowestoft was far and away the best site in Suffolk for Purple Sandpipers – 34 of these confiding waders were present on 10th November. On the previous day, 9th November, a county record day-total of four Grey Phalaropes was noted, also at Ness Point – one was on the sea and three flew south.

An exhausted Pomarine Skua frequented the jetty at Landguard, 14th to 17th October. Four Sabine's Gulls were noted offshore in October and an Iceland Gull, first noted at Felixstowe in January 1984, had returned there on 18th October for its sixth successive winter. A relatively light movement of Little Auks peaked at twenty north off Benacre, 29th October; "wrecked" individuals were located in a garden at Levington, 30th October and well inland at Sudbury, 30th and 31st October.

There were several notably late summer migrants including Swift, Lowestoft, 13th November; Yellow Wagtail, Southwold, 12th November; Redstart, Benacre, 30th October; Whinchat, Iken, 13th November; Whitethroat, Lowestoft, 12th November; Garden Warbler, Lowestoft, 13th November and Spotted Flycatcher, Minsmere, 20th October.

A Hoopoe frequented the Piper's Vale area of Ipswich, 24th October. Scarce passerines included single Richard's Pipits at Pakefield, 5th October and Landguard, 21st October; Dartford Warbler,



Tree creeper

Minsmere Sluice Bushes, 3rd December (only the second Suffolk record since about 1939, following the trail-blazing Felixstowe Ferry bird in late November 1987); twenty Yellow-browed Warblers in October and Red-breasted Flycatchers at Lowestoft, 29th September to 2nd October and Landguard, 14th October.

- exceptional fall -

Easterly winds and rain in mid-October produced an exceptional "fall" of passerine migrants at coastal sites. Robins featured prominently, especially on 16th when there were estimated to be 1000 at Landguard, "exceptional numbers" at Bawdsey and a "very large fall" at Benacre. It was considered that there could have been as many as 10,000 Robins on the Suffolk coast on that date. Other species to feature at this time included Black Redstart with seventeen, Landguard, 17th October, Ring Ouzel with 40 at eleven coastal sites, probably thousands of Blackbirds, Song Thrushes and Redwings, and Goldcrest with an estimated 1000 at Benacre, 17th October.

Landguard's first record of Bearded Tit occurred on 12th October and second record of Treecreeper on 18th and 19th October. Migrant Hawfinches were at Landguard, 16th October, Southwold 28th October and Benacre, 11th November. Thirteen Lapland Buntings were at Sudbourne, 24th December while just across the Alde Estuary a gathering of 326 Snow Buntings at Slaughden, 11th December was described as "Suffolk's largest gathering of modern times".

A further remarkable record was that of an aberrant Whinchat with an all-dark tail at Landguard, 20th and 21st October.

Christmas Prize Competition continued

41. Which resplendent bird can be divided into a hundred?
42. When did the snatching of a goose by an eagle predict the return of a husband to a faithful wife?
43. Which bird looks out to sea, watching for returning sailors?
44. Where does a dirty duck look across to a swan?
45. When did an eagle finish off little boots?
46. Why did the Ancient Greeks think that the male Buzzard was lucky?
47. Which bird nested on the walls of Macbeth's castle?
48. What distinction is shared by 32 pigeons?
49. Which innocuous songbird is threatened with having its feet plucked?
50. Emus are flightless, but which famous battle caused an Emu to fly?



Mike Taylor

Cavenham Heath Stone Curlew

- 2013 pre-migratory roost

Cavenham Heath NNR is one of several places in Breckland where Stone Curlews traditionally gather post-breeding and prior to migrating south.

Usually the Cavenham roost begins to develop around the middle of July and reaches a peak between late-August and mid-September. Numbers then drop sharply in October so that only a few remain by the end of the month, and very few are seen after early-November. The table below summarises roost information for the years 2000-2013:

Table 1: Roost maxima 2000 - 2013

Year	Max Count	Date	Date last seen
2000	49	27 September	-
2001	28	2 September	-
2002	28	Late July	-
2003	30	2 October	20 October
2004	47	17 September	3 November
2005	38	21 September	13 November
2006	60+	Late August	Early November
2007	42	25 August	Late October
2008	105	10 September	-
2009	70	16 August	Early November
2010	94	18 September	27 October
2011	157	23 September	Early Jan 2012
2012	109	4 September	3 November
2013	90	Late August	27 October

The cold, wet summer of 2012 was a major factor in the generally poor breeding season in Breckland that year and this may have had an impact on the numbers of returning birds in 2013.



Part of the record 2011 ‘Stonie’ roost

- problematic spring weather -

But of bigger impact was this spring’s weather. In 2013 the ‘Stonies’ arrived at Cavenham at around the usual date, with the first sightings on 17th March (unconfirmed report) and at least one definitely seen on 18th. However, the prolonged cold weather throughout the rest of March and into April meant that invertebrate food was in short supply for far too long and, as a consequence, a number of birds were found dead across Breckland following this period (see Harrier #172).

As per usual, the Cavenham roost began to build up from mid-July and the table overleaf summarises the known counts through late summer. Achieving accurate counts this year proved difficult due to the thick heather cover on the north side of the heath. In addition the heath was very grassy this year, in part because of the recent significant decline in the rabbit population. Further, the roost appeared to be more dispersed this year as well; while many birds still favoured the heathery bank just east of Roper’s Heath, yet others were regular on the shorter turf nearer Temple Bridge and on the flood meadows adjacent to the river, as well as north of the River Lark.

Table 2: 2013 roost numbers end July - end October

<i>Date</i>	<i>No. of Birds</i>	<i>Observer</i>
26 July	13	J. Jones (RSPB)
30 July	37	S. Bishop
7 August	40	P. Batchelor (RSPB)
12 August	70	J. Jones (RSPB)
18 August	47	T. Humpage
24 August	70+	D. Underwood
Late August	90	J. Jones (RSPB)
4 September	60+	M. Wright
12 September	68	D. Cawdron
24 September	56+	M. Taylor
4 October	57	D. Cawdron
6 October	21	D. Cawdron
11 October	6	W. Sutherland
17 October	7	S. Bishop
27 October	4	M. Wright

Despite the difficulties in observing the birds it is apparent that there has been a significant drop in numbers, especially since 2011's record count. The poor breeding season in 2012, followed by significant mortality in spring 2013 and a second consecutive poor breeding season has clearly impacted on the local population, which is sadly reflected in the reduced size of this year's roost.

A number of observers have also commented that, as soon as the CRoW access restrictions are removed on 1st December, disturbance levels then increase so much that the 'Stonies' tend to vanish almost completely soon thereafter (a few stayed on in the bumper 2011 roost year).

Note: We should not overlook the fact there has been a Suffolk coast 'Stonie' roost for some time too. This year it reached maxima of 28 individuals. However, its location shifts and, as in the Brecks, the birds can be difficult to see and have mostly departed by the end of October.

Editor: The 2013 Red Kite saga continues.

Geoff Woodard

Red Kites on the east coast

Having read your article on Red Kites breeding and you waiting on the East coast, I thought you would be interested to hear what happened here in April and May this year.

In April I received many local reports of Red Kites in Hacheston, Marlesford and Parham, sometimes one, sometimes a pair and I saw them myself. I duly offered a 'good(!)' bottle of red wine to the first to find the nest. Then all went quiet for

a couple of weeks until we saw one, or a pair, virtually everyday for two weeks in May. The pair was seen over a wood in Marlesford where buzzards first nested in 2002. But, sadly, it then all went quiet again and they were not seen further.

If you remember, I think in 1996 a pair was seen regularly in Charsfield, not far from here, but that came to nothing. I think it might have been the same year that they nested near Lowestoft.

Phil Brown

People who live in wooden houses shouldn't...

...feed birds? This was the conclusion I was arriving at during the summer just past. Why? Well because of a rogue Great Spotted Woodpecker. Let me explain.

Like most birders I feed our garden's birds all year round with a mixture of seeds and suet. We have a regular set of species dining, including Blackbird,

Chaffinch, Collared Dove, Dunnock, Goldfinch, House Sparrow, Pheasant, Red-legged Partridge, Starling, plus the usual mixture of common tits.



- attacking man-made structures -

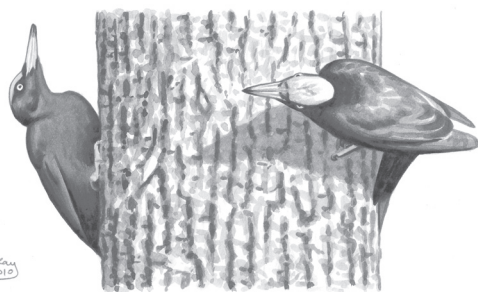
Drumming on trees and man-made structures is a typical 'pecker' trait, whilst actual attacks on wooden structures by woodpeckers are not an especially uncommon occurrence either. Aside from the usual suspect, Great Spotted Woodpeckers, regular attacking species include Black Woodpeckers, which are a problem across Fennoscandia, while Syrians increasingly frequenting urban areas in Germany (as they advance westwards across Europe) are known to do it too, along with several US species throughout the southern states that are notorious for this damaging behaviour as well.

We can only speculate as to their precise reasons for attacking structures, presumably these vary. Gerard Gorman in *'Woodpeckers of Europe'* observed that woodpeckers might use their ears to detect insect prey. He then notes the tendency to excavate telegraph poles across Europe and writes: "The majority of such holes are clearly not intended as nesting cavities. Furthermore such poles are often made of sound, treated timber and clearly do not contain prey. I have noted that most of the poles attacked by woodpeckers in this way have transformers or other electrical devices mounted on their sides. It may be that woodpeckers indulge in this work because they mistake the high-frequency sounds emitted by electrical equipment for the sounds made by insects.²"

Then, when the weather gets harsh, Bullfinch, Marsh Tit, Siskin and Tree Sparrow infrequently join the regular patrons. No real surprises there.

Another species typically feeding here throughout the year is Great Spotted Woodpecker and, in particular, one male appeared to develop a very strong appetite for suet.

I must admit keeping these feeders topped up is well down my list of chores so, from time to time, some of them run dry. But during the summer I came to realise I could no longer afford to let this happen with the suet, as the male Great Spot took to announcing his dissatisfaction over any interruption to his suet service by tapping vigorously on our cottage's largely wooden fascia, presumably to attract our attention. I say vigorous, but in point of fact it was actually damaging, with sizeable chips from the wooden frame removed when the favoured suet had been unavailable. Fortunately this habit fell away as autumn approached and, presumably, feeding pressures on him declined. One pair regularly nests nearby and, as their chicks fledged (I have assumed he was feeding his brooding mate with the suet - as she seldom appeared), the drive for suet diminished.



In the case of Black Woodpeckers in Norway the removal of large trees in their territories has been deemed to lead to wooden buildings being selected for nesting sites by frustrated birds.

Despite all of these eminently rational reasons, I still think my Dalham GS was just being objectionable!

² *'Woodpeckers of Europe'*, Gerard Gorman, published by Bruce Colman, 2004, page 29

Interaction between Little Owl and Great-spotted Woodpecker juveniles

While walking the dog off Lings Lane, Chelmondiston at 09.00 on 14th July we became the object of some abuse from a juvenile Little

Owl sitting on a bare branch of a dead tree just off the footpath. As I was watching the owl, a juvenile Great-spotted Woodpecker alighted on the branch some two-foot away from it. It then began to call at the owl and approached to within a few inches of it with its wings splayed part open. The owl just stared at it and never moved. The woodpecker then flew up to the trunk of the tree briefly before coming down again and having another go. Once again the owl just sat there watching it. This sequence was repeated twice more before the woodpecker flew higher up the tree to search for grubs. Then the owl resumed its abuse of the dog and I.

Announcements

Phil Brown

SOG Surveying retained by Viridor for another year

Late in 2011 the Group learnt that Viridor were requesting help with biodiversity monitoring at one of their recently capped Suffolk landfill sites. Following discussions SOG's not-for-profit surveying resource was duly appointed to survey Lackford's bird life in 2012.

- biodiversity monitoring -

SOG were commissioned not only to conduct a BBS style survey of the site, paying special attention to three of the site's BAP targets (Barn Owl, Brown Hare and Skylark), but also undertook a dragonfly survey and a botanical review.

The SOG input that first year benefited Viridor as well as several pairs of nesting Skylarks, due to a SOG-inspired alteration to the site's mowing regime. As a consequence SOG were not only invited to continue to monitor this site into 2013, but now it's on into 2014 as well, but with a wider remit to also determine the site's small mammals' population and devote more time to monitoring its Skylark population.

- reasonable rates a financial benefit -

Not only contributing to the area's biodiversity through its recommendations, but this SOG activity has also significantly benefitted the Group financially. The Group actually charges our time out at a very reasonable £80.00 per surveyor day, plus expenses - which go to the surveyor. The fact that SOG is a charity means there's an additional tax benefit to commercial organisations.

So SOG Surveying is naturally keen to extend this worthwhile service to other potential customers. Should any members be willing to act either as a SOG surveyor and/or know of any potential projects, please contact either Phil Brown or Phil Whittaker (oakbarn@hotmail.com).



SOGonline re-vamped

Anyone who has visited the SOG web site, www.sogonline.org.uk, lately will have noticed a bit of a change. Following feedback from members and discussion by Council, it was decided that a re-vamp of the website was in order. A sub-group was formed and they met several times over the last year to build up a plan of what content should be on the web site and its layout and look.

- user-friendlier, more easily navigable, plus extra content -

Various aspects included making the site user-friendlier, clearer to navigate around and have content such as a photographic gallery incorporated, further bird sites listed and some of Suffolk's iconic bird species detailed. The site also had to show how the Group encourages birding, as well as act as a resource for both members and for birders visiting the county who required information.

Another major factor was to move over to a different (Ed: i.e. **more flexible and much less frustrating to use**) site creation system – the old one had proved difficult to update and was never easy to use. Following discussions with Phil Ling, a work colleague of The Harrier editor Phil, we were recommended to employ WordPress as the creation platform for the new site. Although WordPress is principally a blog-based system, it has the capacity to be used as a Content Management System (CMS), where the site can be built up from a basic set-up with additional extras, known as widgets to enhance it. As WordPress is so popular there is a lot of support and many



widgets available and these have been used for the gallery, events calendar and maps, living up to its easier to use reputation.

Phil Ling sorted the template and layout, as we wanted to match the new site's design to our publicity styling that the Group has recently adopted. The site was built up with information and photos added to become live in early November.

More work still needs to be done, particularly adding more bird site details, so we'd like to ask our members if they would contribute to this project by sending in details of sites they bird regularly. Those descriptions that are already on the site will give you an idea of what information is required, or you can also contact me if you would like further information.



A showcase for members' shots

- help needed -

I'd like to thank the sub-committee for the time and work they've put in to the new site along with members who have supplied photos including Bill Baston, Ashley Gooding, Brian Buffery and Barry Woodhouse. We welcome further photos from members to add to the gallery, so please email them in.

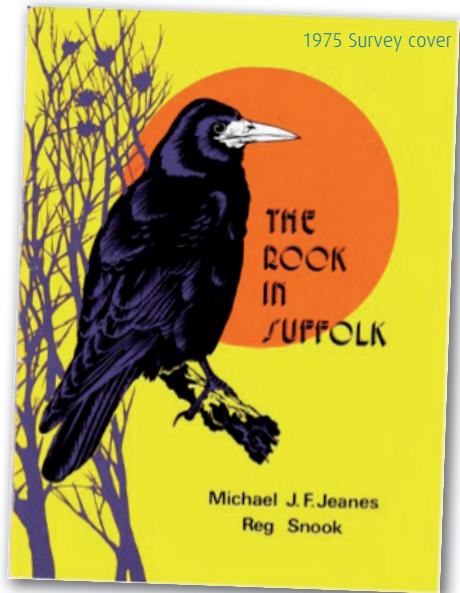
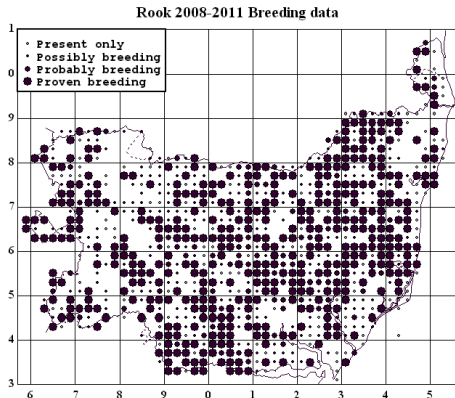


Help needed to compile birding site list and descriptions

New Projects Officer role

Having been administrating the SOG website for the last six years and with the new site up and running, Gi Grieco decided to have a change in role within Council. He is now our new Projects Officer, a post that became vacant when Mick Wright stepped down. Mick did an excellent job for many years, although he remains the BTO representative for Suffolk. Gi will liaise with him on the BTO projects that SOG members assist with, as well organising any projects that SOG Council are or will become involved in.

Atlas map data



- a future project? -

One early project will be to undertake a Rook survey, something that was mentioned by Derek Moore in his excellent talk celebrating SOG's 40th anniversary. SOG organised a Rook Survey nearly 40 years ago in 1975 and produced a booklet 'The Rook In Suffolk'.

The idea is to undertake a survey of rookeries in the county in 2015 and, along with data from the 2007-2011 BTO Atlas, do a comparison with the previous survey all those years ago. More details will appear in a future Harrier and on the re-vamped web site.

Mick Wright

Suffolk Atlas Update

A small working group consisting of Margaret Regnault, Nick Mason, Dr Peter Lack and myself, along with help from Martin Sanford, are working towards publishing the Suffolk Atlas Data in web format via the Biological Records Centre website. The Bird Atlas website is a work-in-progress with the Distribution Maps for both winter and summer to be published over this winter period, followed by Change Maps between the 1988 - 93 and the 2007 - 11 breeding bird Atlases, then Abundance Maps and brief Species Accounts.



Gi Grieco

Outdoor events

As the organiser of the outdoor events for the group I would also like to thank all the leaders who have kindly led trips this last year. Their support of an important aspect of the Group's activities is much appreciated by very many members. And everyone is welcome to come along to a full and interesting programme in 2014, which will include a digiscoping day to be held at Lackford Lakes in June.

Phil Brown

Tidal surge hits east coast

At the end of the first week in December, everyone in the East of England was aware that the impending tidal surge scheduled to arrive overnight Thursday 5th/Friday morning had the potential to inflict enormous damage to the Suffolk coastline. In the event, even though the conditions were perfect for flooding (low pressure over the North Sea making it bulge, combined with the funnel effect rendering tides higher, then driven ashore by strong winds), the water levels were reportedly above those of 1953, but just within the Environment Agency's computer predictions and, as the sea defences mostly held, the damage was not as great as expected.



Dingle Marsh 13:00 Friday 6 December
[The North Sea assailing the shingle bank](#)

That said, turning to the coastal reserves, the dunes fronting Minsmere took quite a battering and access to the East and Public hides was initially impossible. But the punishment meted out was not as bad as the 2007 surge and the North Wall was not breached.

**- perfect flood conditions,
but sea defences held -**

However Havergate Island fared less well. Whilst the sea walls generally held up here too, though suffering some holing, they are thought repairable, the good news was the lagoon habitats were safe so long as there is not another unusually high tide in the near future. But, the hides, boardwalks and bridges have all been moved and some appeared badly damaged, while the new 'arboreal plumbing system' was reportedly spectacular.



[Once more unto the beach...](#)

Quite by chance members of SOG Council, accompanied by ace junior birder Finlay Marsh, had scheduled a visit to Dingle Marsh on the Saturday after the event and were able to view the damage at Dunwich first hand.

[The first breach - view inland](#)



The shingle bank had been breached at several points and the grazing marsh flooded. The wide breach that halted the team's walk north looked chillingly reminiscent of a Scottish burn in full spate. The site's Environment Agency personnel we encountered were sanguine and regarded this as superficial damage, as they expected the Dingle breaches would seal themselves in a couple of weeks - as before. But the same cannot be expected elsewhere.

- danger UXB -

But it was not only masses of gravel, sand and sea lettuce that had been washed up. The team stumbled across a piece of jetsam - a heavily corroded mortar bomb (see below) and notified



the police about it at around 11:00 - as it was deemed an emergency, the police managed to pitch up almost two hours later. Finally, mid-afternoon, the bomb disposal squad checked it

out and determined it didn't pose any threat to the public. A relief, but it's always better to be safe than sorry so, if you find yourself in the same position, dial 999 and report it.

Fortunately, shortly after this 'emergency' interlude, the team got back down to some serious birding and, in due course, the rumoured Hooded Crow was picked up - all got good views as it showed well between the gorse bushes.



There was even time for a little birding

A flock of around 25+ Twite had been sighted earlier and the day closed with a Med. Gull, Spotted Redshank and possible Firecrest in the conifers around the ruins of Greyfriars above the cliffs. This eventful beach exercise then closed with lunch at the Ship Inn, much enjoyed by all of the participants.

SOG Bursaries - update

The Bursary Committee has had its inaugural meeting at which it was agreed that the requirements specified in the Harrier #173 article required being added to. Thus the qualifying requirements now read:

- The project must manifestly contribute towards the conservation of birdlife in Suffolk
- The initial submission must include a detailed breakdown of expenditure
- The work concerned should be completed within one calendar year of the Council's decision
- A full write-up of the project (consisting of an overview/brief scientific findings paper quantifying the results) be submitted upon completion for publication in the Harrier or Suffolk Birds report.

While the Committee only meets quarterly, you can rest assured that any requests for a bursary will be dealt with speedily.

Photo credits:

Rob Barton (pages 18 & 19); Bill Baston (pages 31, 32 & back cover); Phil Brown (page 5); Trevor Charlton (page 9); Gavin Durrant (page 13); Jon Evans (front cover); Ian Goodall (page 26, 27 & 28); Ashley Gooding (pages 17 & 26); Gi Grieco (pages 16, 35 & 36); Isabella Grieco (pages 2, 3 & 4); Robin Harvey (page 15 & 35); Eric Hosking (pages 6 & 7); Allan King (page 13); Scott Mayson (page 4); Derek Moore (page 8); Malcolm Raines (page 8); Harry Read (page 14); John Richardson (page 13); Mike Taylor (page 29); David Tipling (pages 18 & 19); Stephen Whayman (page 12); Ian Whitaker (page 16)

Note: Should either of the un-credited shots in Derek Moore's article require a photo credit, we will happily rectify matters in the next issue.

Map Image:

Atlas MapMate courtesy of Margaret Regnault (page 34)

Illustration credit:

Szabolcs Kokay (page 31)

Council for 2013:

Officers

Honorary President: **Steve Piotrowski**
Chairman: **Roy Marsh**
Vice-Chairman: **Steve Abbott**
Secretary: **Phil Whittaker**
Treasurer/Membership Secretary: **Matthew Deans**
Projects Officer: **Gi Grieco**
Magazine Editor: **Phil Brown**
Website Co-ordinators: **Gi Grieco/Phil Brown**
Publicity: **Eddie Bathgate**
Food Monitor: **Eddie Bathgate**
Bird Report Editor: **Nick Mason**
Outdoor Events Organiser: **Gi Grieco**
Indoor Events Organiser: **Adam Gretton**

Members

Jean Garrod [to 2014]
Craig Fulcher [to 2015]
Robin Harvey [to 2014]
Scott Mayson [to 2015]

Honorary Vice-Presidents

Jean & Ken Garrod
Mike Jeanes
Mike Hall
Robin Hopper
Mike Marsh
Philip Murphy



Bird Recorders

North-east Area Recorder:

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Tel: 07766 900063 Email: andrew@waveney1.fsnet.co.uk

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Scott Mayson, 8 St Edmunds Close, Springfields, WOODBRIDGE IP12 4UY
Tel: 01394 385595 Email: smsuffolkbirder@gmail.com

West Area Recorder:

Colin Jakes, 7 Maltwood Avenue, BURY ST EDMUNDS IP33 3XN
Tel: 01284 702215 Email: colin@jakes.myzen.co.uk

Treasurer/Membership Secretary

c/o 49c Oak Hill, Hollesley, Suffolk IP12 3JY



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, the Nightingale and Woodcock surveys and WeBS
 - Provides surveys for environmental waste companies



Suffolk Ornithologists' Group

For birds & for birders

SOG Registered Charity No. 871446

www.sogonline.org.uk