DORSET BIRDS

Newsletter of the Dorset Bird Club

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Dorset Bird Club Update

Lytchett Fields Improvements

Things That Go Plik In The Night

Dorset Highlights

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Membership Subscriptions

Annual subscriptions are due on the 1st of January of each year.

The current rates are:

Ordinary Membership	£15
Joint/Family Membership (Living in one household)	£18
Junior Membership (17 & under)	£10

To join or renew your membership, please send your name and address with the appropriate subscription to the **Membership Secretary**:
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From the Editor - Marcus Lawson

It's been an incredibly busy few months culminating in the conference and the publication of the 2014 *Bird Report*. The latter was delayed for several reasons but the overriding one was the time taken making sure as many rarity records were included as possible which had not been formally submitted. This is a very time consuming task which would be made considerably easier if those fortunate enough to find a description species in the county could submit details of the record themselves. In this digital era the vast majority of records are either photographed or sound-recorded. Within the 2014 report of the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC) out of 13 records included for Dorset 12 were photographed and the other one was sound-recorded - a 100% digital return. Of these 13 records 3 were not submitted to the BBRC by the finder. Compare this to the total of 79 Dorset Record Panel records which are included in the 2014 Dorset Bird Report; 51 were photographed and 28 were not. Of the 51 photographed 37 of these were not submitted by the finders which results in the County Recorder having to search the web for photos and complete the paperwork. As well as the time wasted doing this there is also much more risk of these records being missed altogether. Whilst in the grand scheme of things a few missing records from a county annual report is not terribly troubling it is for me as frustrating as discovering the final piece of a jigsaw puzzle is missing. I understand that no annual bird report will ever be 100% complete but with your help we can certainly achieve a far higher return than we are currently.

The Dorset Records Panel (of which I am not a voting member but merely a constant nag) are trying very hard to catch up on the outstanding descriptions which need to be voted upon. If you have any description-required records which you have not submitted from this year, last year, the year before or any other year please consider submitting them as it is never too late to include historic records in the annual report. I know some of you are frustrated that recent records which have been submitted have not yet been voted on but the backlog is slowly being eroded and we are catching up as quickly as time allows for the volunteer panel members.

It would help immeasurably if you could submit any records using the forms available here http://www.dorsetbirds.org.uk/dorset-bird-list/4545548008
Please complete as much information within them as best you can as it helps the panel reach what hopefully will be a positive outcome. However obvious you believe the species to be we still need a description which rules out other species. Size and shape are often very important pieces of information which are left out of descriptions and although other birds may not have been alongside for direct comparison an informed estimate of size is encouraged. Whilst you can probably still visualise the bird in your head the members of the panel cannot, this is why it is so important to try and convey as much information as possible in your description. Please also include how you ruled out all other possible confusion species.

The following is a list of all the non-BBRC species requiring a description in Dorset:

Bewick's Swan
Whooper Swan
Bean Goose
Pink-footed Goose
Snow Goose
American Wigeon
Green-winged Teal
Ring-necked Duck
Ferruginous Duck
Lesser Scaup
Surf Scoter
White-billed Diver
Cory's Shearwater
Great Shearwater
Leach's Petrel
Night Heron
Cattle Egret
Purple Heron
White Stork
Glossy Ibis
Honey Buzzard
Black Kite
White-tailed Eagle
Montagu's Harrier
Goshawk
Rough-legged Buzzard
Red-footed Falcon
Spotted Crake
Corncrake
Crane
Kentish Plover
Dotterel
American Golden Plover
Temminck's Stint
White-rumped Sandpiper
Pectoral Sandpiper
Buff-breasted Sandpiper
Red-necked Phalarope
Long-tailed Skua
Sabine's Gull
Ring-billed Gull
Caspian Gull
White-winged Black Tern
Black Guillemot
Alpine Swift
Bee-eater
Short-toed Lark
Shore Lark
Red-rumped Swallow
Richard's Pipit
Olive-backed Pipit
Bluethroat
Blyth's Reed Warbler
Marsh Warbler
Icterine Warbler
MelodiousWarbler
Barred Warbler
Greenish Warbler
Pallas's Warbler
Radde's Warbler
Dusky Warbler
Red-breasted Flycatcher
Willow Tit
Penduline Tit
Golden Oriole
Woodchat Shrike
Chough
Hooded Crow
Rose-coloured Starling
Twite
Common Redpoll
Arctic Redpoll
Common Rosefinch
Cirl Bunting
Little Bunting

Subspecies:
Greenland White-fronted Goose
Black Brant
Kumlien's Gull
Grey-headed Wagtail
Siberian Lesser Whitethroat

See here for a list of BBRC species http://www.bbrc.org.uk/main-information/

RSPB Lytchett Fields improvements – Shaun Robson

Lytchett Fields has had a very patchy history. The heyday of the late 70s & early 80s was reduced to records in old bird reports by the time I first visited the site in 1992. The winter flooding had ceased and well-maintained sluices meant that the fields remained dry throughout the year. In 1998 these failed and the site briefly revealed its future potential. However, repairs during 2000 ensured that the fields would remain largely dry for another 12 years…

In early 2013 the sea defences were again breached and since then the habitat has improved year on year. Thanks to annual management by the RSPB we have been able to maintain open mud flats behind the seawall. These have proven very attractive to waders and waterfowl throughout the year. In spring 2015 thanks to a partnership between The Birds of Poole Harbour and the RSPB we were able to introduce a permissive path to view the site, which had previously been private. Everyone could now enjoy the spectacle.

By early 2016 we were beginning to better understand the site, and how birds used it. Whilst high tide attracted the most birds, too high a tide or too much rainfall meant that all of the available mud and potential roost areas were under water and birds left the site. We needed a new solution and after some monitoring we decided to experiment with the creation of simple islands on each of the fields. Having developed the idea the next issue was funding. An application was made to the Dorset Bird Club. After an enthusiastic response and a site visit with Club officials we received a £3000 grant from the Eileen Bowman legacy fund. Members will remember Eileen's commitment to the club and the many years of service that she gave. Eileen's friends were asked if she would have approved of her generous legacy being used in such a way and the answer was a resounding yes. This grant together with a small amount of top up funding from the RSPB enabled the installation of three profiled islands in early October 2016. These were positioned to maximise shelter from the wind for roosting birds, with enough height to withstand the deepest flooding and at an angle to enable observers to see the birds from the viewpoints. Some additional habitat management and the creation of a small raised observation area were also included in the package.

Waders using the newly created islands - Shaun Robson

Profile showing fingers of new islands - Shaun Robson

A great partnership between birders, the RSPB & your Bird Club and we hope that you will agree - the birds certainly do.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

OUTDOOR FIELD VISITS

Saturday 10th December 2016
Shell Bay and Middle Beach 09:30 – morning only.
Meet in the car park on the Shell Bay side of the Sandbanks Chain Ferry (SZ 034863).
Category A.

Sunday 8th January 2017
Bird Crawl 09:30 – 15:00 approx.
Just for fun, a more sedate version of a bird race. How many species can you find around Upton Country Park and Holes Bay?
Meet in the main car park at Upton Country Park (SY 992929).
Category A – but can be muddy in places.

For more details visit **http://www.dorsetbirds.org.uk/our-events/**
or email Richard Charman **walks@dorsetbirds.org.uk**

INDOOR TALK

Spurn Bird Observatory - Its Work & its Birds
Rob Adams, Paul Collins & Nick Whitehouse.
7pm Friday 20th January 2017
BNSS, 39 Christchurch Rd, Bournemouth, Dorset BH1 3NS.

Around a third of the membership now receive this newsletter via email as a pdf file. This saves the club money on printing costs & postage and you benefit by receiving it sooner than by post. The photo quality is far superior and are all in colour plus you are able to click on the links rather than type them in manually. If you would like to receive a pdf copy of the newsletter then let me know by email admin@dorsetbirds.org.uk Please also specify if you would like to receive it as a 3mb file (higher resolution) or 1mb file (still ok but photos not as sharp).

DORSET HIGHLIGHTS-
JULY TO OCTOBER INCLUSIVE

The majority of the following records have been taken from the Dorset Bird Club sightings page http://dorsetbirds.blogspot.co.uk/ and inclusion here does not constitute acceptance by the relevant rarity panel. This is not an exhaustive list & if you notice any errors or omissions please email admin@dorsetbirds.org.uk
If you were lucky enough to find a description species please submit details as soon as possible after the sighting to recorder@dorsetbirds.org.uk

WILDFOWL

Whooper Swan in October 2 were at Abbotsbury on 19th with 1 at Lytchett Bay the following day.
Dark-bellied Brent Goose first returning birds were 2 on 16th September at Stanpit.
Pale-bellied Brent Goose 34 were at Ferrybridge on the very early date of 4th September.
Black Brant 1 at Ferrybridge from 26th October.
Garganey in July 1 on Brownsea Lagoon on 23rd with 1 on Lytchett Fields 24th-25th. A juv took up residence at Radipole Lake from 20th August until 5th October when 2 were present. Singles were seen in the Christchurch Harbour area on 24th August, 7th September, 16th September, 19th & 20th September and 3rd-8th October. 1 juv was at Abbotsbury on 7th October.
Scaup in October the first bird was back at Abbotsbury on 12th rising to 10 on 27th. 1 was in the Wareham Channel on the 16th and 6 were at Lodmoor on 21st.
Eider 1 off Hengistbury Head on 7th October.
Red-breasted Merganser a drake past Hengistbury on 5th October was the first report received of the winter.

GALLIFORMES to HERONS

Quail 1 was flushed near Reap Lane, Portland, on 18th September.
Red-throated Diver 1 past Christchurch Harbour on 21st October.
Red-necked Grebe 1 off Mudeford Quay 4th & 6th October.

Black-necked Grebe 3 in Poole Harbour on 5th October with 19 in Studland Bay on 26th October.
Cory's Shearwater 4 past Charmouth and 1 past West Bexington on 20th August with 1 past Portland Bill the following day.
Sooty Shearwater singles flew past Portland Bill on 9th & 24th July, 2nd, 3rd, 20th & 24th August, with 2 on 12th & 15th September. 1 past Hengistbury on 5th October.
Manx Shearwater 800 past Portland Bill on 1st August was highest count received of the period.
Balearic Shearwater 20th August witnessed a big day with up to 532 past Portland Bill and 294 past St Aldhelm's Head.
Storm Petrel several were trapped overnight at Portland in July.
Bittern singles at Radipole Lake on several dates from 18th September and at Lodmoor from 7th October.
Black Stork 1 north over Portland on 7th September.
White Stork 1 on Coward's Marsh in the evening of 8th August then over Sandsfoot Castle the next day.
Great White Egret singles at Abbotsbury Swannery on 13th July, in Middlebere area from 16th July, Lodmoor on 18th July, Christchurch Harbour 8th & 9th August and 12th September. Six flew NW over West Bexington on 5th October whilst 2 were in Christchurch Harbour the next day.
Spoonbill 60 were at Arne on 8th October representing the highest UK count to date.

RAPTORS TO COOT

Honey Buzzard singles over Dorchester on 18th July, Verne Common on 24th August and Christchurch Harbour on 20th September.
Hen Harrier first of the autumn was a ringtail over Portland on 15th September.
Osprey last recorded on 22nd October over Lytchett Bay & Longham Lakes. 2 or 3 spent the late summer in the west of Poole Harbour and were seen resting on the purpose built nesting platform - fingers crossed for future years!
Merlin 1 on 14th Hartland Moor was the first of the season whilst 7th October saw the peak arrival day with 3 at Hengistbury Head, 2 at Durlston CP and 1 at St Aldhelm's Head.
Spotted Crake 1 on Lytchett Fields on 19th September and 1 at Radipole Lake the following day.

WADERS

Crane 1 over Hartland Moor on 2nd July. 2 (ad + juv) over Portland and Littlesea (The Fleet) on 4th October then 2 over Weymouth on 9th October.
Stone Curlew singles at Stanpit Marsh on 9th October & Durlston CP the next day.
Little Ringed Plover 12 on Lytchett Fields was the highest count of the period. The last of the year was past Hengistbury Head on 11th September.
Ringed Plover 186 at Ferrybridge is a very good count for the county.
Golden Plover 250+ were at Maiden Castle on 29th October.

Little Stint first of the autumn was 1 at Stanpit on 27th July. Peak counts for the autumn were 8 at Lodmoor, 3 at Lytchett Fields, 2 on Brownsea Lagoon, 2 in Christchurch Harbour, 2 at Herbury Gore and 2 at West Bexington. Last of the period was on Brownsea Lagoon on 17th October.
Curlew Sandpiper peak site counts were: 11 Brownsea Lagoon, 9 Lytchett Fields (1 until 29th October), 7 Lodmoor, 6 Stanpit Marsh, 4 Abbotsbury Swannery, 3 Ferrybridge and singles at Brand's Bay & Radipole Lake.
Purple Sandpiper first of the season was on Portland Bill 24th October.
Ruff peak site counts: 6 Brownsea Lagoon, 5 Lytchett Fields, 2 Lodmoor, 2 Stanpit Marsh and 1 Radipole Lake.
Jack Snipe 1 on Stanpit Marsh 27th October.
Black-tailed Godwit 1031 on Lytchett Fields set a new site record count on 21st August.
Whimbrel 31st July was the best day of the autumn with 25 at Stanpit Bight, 23 at Ferrybridge and 2 in Brand's Bay.
Common Sandpiper peak site counts: 16 Stanpit Marsh, 10 Lytchett Fields, 7 Lodmoor, 3 Longham Lakes.
Green Sandpiper highest count of autumn was 22 at Lytchett Fields.
Spotted Redshank 15 on Brownsea Lagoon was best count for the period.
Greenshank Brownsea Lagoon again produced the goods with a high count of 28.

Lesser Yellowlegs 1 took up residence at Lytchett Fields from 18th September to end Oct at least.
Photo by Ian Ballam

Wood Sandpiper 1-2 were on Lytchett Fields between 18th August & 15th September, elsewhere singles were on Brownsea Lagoon, Radipole Lake and Cutcleaves Cove.

SKUAS TO TERNS

Pomarine Skua singles past Portland Bill on 12th July and West Bexington on 20th August.

Long-tailed Skua singles past Chesil Cove on 11th July & 20th August and Durlston CP on 12th August.
Little Gull 5 on Brownsea Lagoon 10th September was the only notable count whilst a juvenile at Longham Lakes on 11th September was a good inland record.
Mediterranean Gull 342 were counted at Ferrybridge on 4th August.
Yellow-legged Gull only count in double figures received was 10+ at Portland Bill on 21st July.
Iceland Gull 1 past Durlston CP on 16th October.
Black Tern a poor autumn with 1 past South Haven on 31st July, a juv on Brownsea Lagoon from 2nd-4th August, singles past Christchurch Harbour on 10th & 20th August and one past Portland Bill on the latter date. Further singles in August past West Bexington on 28th and at Lodmoor on 31st. In September singles past Hengistbury Head on 7th and St Aldhelm's Head on 29th.
Roseate Tern singles were at Abbotsbury Swannery on 9th & 25th July with 1 at Stanpit on 13th July and 1 on Brownsea Lagoon on 4th August.
Arctic Tern just three were recorded: a 1st-summer at Lodmoor on 9th July, a juv past Mudeford Quay on 27th September and in the mouth of Poole Harbour on 5th October.

AUKS TO WOODPECKERS

Turtle Dove 1 at Hengistbury Head on 9th August. In September singles were at Christchurch Harbour on 7th, Coombe Fields on 8th, Portland Bill on 10th & Barleycrates Lane on 16th. A showy individual was on Reap Lane from 24th-30th October.
Cuckoo last of the year was at Portland Bill on 14th October.
Long-eared Owl singles in October at Portland on 23rd & Durlston CP on 27th.
Short-eared Owl an unseasonal bird was at Portland Bill on 26th July. The next record wasn't until another one there on 15th September. Singles were recorded at several other sites but Portland West Cliffs was the only site with multiple records with 4 on 7th October.

Nightjar
this day-roosting individual showed well from the new Arne cafe between 9th & 24th July.
Photo by Peter Moore

Hoopoe 1 briefly at Portland Bill on 24th August.
Wryneck a very good autumn for this species, the first was seen at Lytchett Bay

on 19th August and last was St Aldhelm's Head on 10th October. Away from the coast birds were seen at Morden Bog on 26th August, in Puddletown from 8th-10th September, Parkstone on 29th September. 5 were across Portland on 15th September, representing the highest day count at one site.

LARKS TO WHEATEARS

Sand Martin a late bird was at Lodmoor from 25th-30th October.
Swallow peak passage was on 16th September when 16,750 were logged at Christchurch Harbour along with 4,500 **House Martin.**
Richard's Pipit 1 at St Aldhelm's Head on 8th September.
Tawny Pipit 1 in Portland Crown Fields on 14th September.
Tree Pipit highest day count was 48 over Portland Bill on 24th August and the last record of the year came from there on 21st October.
Meadow Pipit 1,100 over Christchurch Harbour was the only four-figure count of the autumn.
Red-throated Pipit 1 over Portland Bill on 29th October.
Water Pipit in October singles at Priory Marsh on 28th & Lytchett Fields on 29th.
Yellow Wagtail only 3 figure count received was of 138 at Cogden Beach on 24th August when 23 were at Briantspuddle WMs, which represents a good inland count.
Blue-headed Wagtail 1 in Pirate's Cove, Wyke Regis on 15th September.
Citrine Wagtail a juv at Radipole Lake on 1st September.
'alba' Wagtail on 6th October 569 were counted over Durlston CP with 173 over Christchurch Harbour and 100+ over Lodmoor on the same day.
Waxwing 4 flew over Christchurch Harbour on 20th October.
Red-flanked Bluetail 1 was extracted from a mist net at PBO on 25th October.
Black Redstart 25+ were on Portland on 30th October.
Whinchat on 24th August 31 were at West Bexington/Cogden Beach and on 15th September 30 were at Portland Bill.
Wheatear best day of the autumn was on 16th September when 150 were at Portland Bill with 100 at nearby Barleycrates Lane, 81 in Christchurch Harbour & 37 at White Nothe.

THRUSHES TO STARLINGS

Ring Ouzel 30 were around Portland on 8th October when there was also 18 at Hardy Monument, 15 at Durlston CP & 7 at St Aldhelm's Head making this the best day of the autumn for this species.
Grasshopper Warbler 103 were ringed at Durlston CP this autumn and an amazing 18 were caught at Lytchett Bay on the morning of 27th August.
Aquatic Warbler 1 was at Lytchett Fields on 31st August & 1st September.
Sedge Warbler 150 were on Priory Marsh on 25th July.
Blyth's Reed Warbler 1 was found in the mist nests at PBO on 6th & 8th of October.
Icterine Warbler 1 at Southwell on 25th September.
Melodious Warbler 1 trapped and ringed at Durlston CP on 26th July and briefly at Portland Bill on 16th August.

Blackcap a total of 842 were trapped and ringed at Durlston CP from July-end October.
Garden Warbler 67 were trapped and ringed at Durlston CP over the period.
Siberian Lesser Whitethroat birds suspected of being of the subspecies *blythi* were at PBO from 11th-31st October at least and 1 was at Highcliffe from 25th October.
Subalpine Warbler in October singles were briefly on the West Cliffs (Portland) on 5th and Easton on 9th.
Greenish Warbler 1 at PBO on 22nd August.
Pallas's Warbler singles at PBO on 23rd October and nearby Avalanche Road the following day.
Yellow-browed Warbler the first of the autumn were at PBO and Charmouth on 20th September. Away from the coast during October 3 were in the PC World Drain (Poole) on 3rd, with 1 in a nearby Oakdale garden the following day, 1 was at Chard Junction GP on 10th, 1 was trapped and ringed at Longham Lakes on 17th, up to 3 were in the Stour Valley LNR from 15th, 1 was trapped and ringed at Corfe Castle on 26th when 1 was also in Puddletown. A peak day total of 15 were scattered across Portland on 9th October.
Dusky Warbler 1 was in a Southwell garden from 26th-30th October.
Siberian Chiffchaff singles were seen in October at Kinson sewage works, PBO, Sherborne sewage works and Church Ope Cove.
Spotted Flycatcher 20 were at Hengistbury Head on 8th September with 30 on Portland on the 15th.
Red-breasted Flycatcher 1 at PBO on 15th September.
Pied Flycatcher best return of the autumn was 4 at Portland on 27th August.
Isabelline Shrike 1 at the Verne (Portland) on 30th October.
Red-backed Shrike singles in Christchurch Harbour on 26th August and 18th September.
Great Grey Shrike 1 on Morden Bog from 18th October and on Hartland Moor on 25th October.

Woodchat Shrike 1 juv at Pirate's Cove (Wyke Regis) on 11th September.
Photo by Brett Spencer

Rose-coloured Starling 1 juv on the Haylands Estate (Portland) from 17th-29th September. It or another was at Overcombe between 6th-20th October and then in Dorchester on 22nd October.

SPARROWS TO BUNTINGS

Tree Sparrow 1 over Hengistbury Head on 23rd September.
Red-eyed Vireo 1 was trapped and ringed at PBO on 14th October.
Brambling 14 over Hengistbury Head on 19th October.
Serin singles at PBO on; 4th July, 6th August, 21st and 28th-30th October.
Goldfinch 1120 were counted over Durlston CP on 6th October.
Siskin Durlston CP logged 102 on 6th October.
Linnet on 3rd October 505 over-flew Hengistbury Head with 340 over Durlston CP whilst 500 were at Turnerspuddle.
Twite 1 at Hengistbury Head on 21st October.
Lesser Redpoll 31 were recorded over Hengistbury Head on 19th October.
Common Rosefinch 1 at Coombefield Quarry (Portland) on 7th October.
Lapland Bunting in October singles flew over Durlston CP on 13th, Hengistbury Head on 19th, Reap Lane on 26th and Blacknor on 28th.
Snow Bunting 1 in the docks at Poole Harbour on 22nd October.
Pine Bunting 1 was found in a mist net in the Crown Estate Fields at PBO on 26th October.
Ortolan Bunting during August & September an amazing combined total of 31 birds were detected via night-time sound-recordings over Poole Old Town and

Portland Bill. 1 was at Hengistbury Head on 25th August and several were seen on Portland between 26th August & 18th September with a peak of 3 at Coombefield Quarry on 13th September when 1 was also present at Pirate's Cove (Wyke Regis).
Little Bunting singles on Portland in October on 5th & 29th.

Things that go *plik* in the night: Nocturnal autumn migration of Ortolan Bunting in Dorset & southern Portugal by Magnus Robb, Nick Hopper, Paul Morton & The Sound Approach.

Ortolan Bunting is not an easy migrant to observe in Britain. Most birders would be delighted to find just one during any given autumn. The majority of records come from well-watched migration hotspots in early autumn, especially on the eastern and southern coasts of England. These days it is very unusual for any site to host more than one on the same day. The *Dorset Bird Reports* (2008-2013) show that the annual total in recent years has ranged between 3-9 birds. However, our all-night sound recording of nocturnal migration paints quite a different picture. In August & September 2016, we detected Ortolan Bunting a total of 31 times at two sites in Dorset: Poole Old Town centre & Portland Bill. Most of these were likely to have involved different individual birds, except perhaps during one particularly inclement night where there may have been some repeat captures from potentially disoriented birds. What does seem clear however is that Ortolan Bunting is a more regular visitor than we had previously thought.

The full study, available here: https://soundapproach.co.uk/things-go-plik-night-part-one/ explains how we reached such a conclusion. We have divided it into two parts. The first is about identification and how & where we became familiar with Ortolan Bunting calls. When analysed, recordings of migrants during the day turned out to contain eight distinct call-types, six or possibly seven of which we have also recorded during the night. We give many examples from both night & day, and also of potential confusion species. The second part will tell the story of each author's listening station and how certain we can be about nocturnal recordings with only one or two calls in them. Ortolan Bunting is after all a species that some local rarity committees in Britain have the task of assessing. We will conclude part 2 (in prep.) by sharing with you our astonishment at this phenomenon, and ask why Ortolan Bunting should be so prominent among nocturnal migrants despite being so difficult to detect during the day.

The following is an extract from part 1 of the study:

Five call-types commonly heard from migrants

Plik is the commonest call of migrating Ortolan Buntings both day and night. It is distinctive; nothing else sounds quite like it. While there is considerable variation in pitch the shape in a sonogram is remarkably consistent. What all *plik* calls have in common is their short duration and narrow frequency range, making the call sound to human ears as if it has a single pitch, not rising or falling. In sonograms, however, it appears as an arched shape with mean peak frequency of 4.4 kHz and a mean total duration of 35 mS (38 mS in our nocturnal examples).

The call starts with a steep descending line of variable length and strength. Where this ends, it forms an acute ‘angle’ with the arch to its right.

The rising ‘left side’ of the arch – a fairly straight line sloping up to the right – is the call’s most prominent and least variable feature. From the top of the arch – the call’s second ‘angle’ – a more gentle slope descends to a greater or lesser degree, forming its right side. The first angle is always sharp, and the second may be sharp or more rounded. Listen to an example of a diurnal call sequence with several *plik* calls via . Below it is a sonogram and corresponding sound file showing six variations of this call type recorded during the day.

Ortolan Bunting: Six variations of *plik* calls recorded by day. 1) Cabo Espichel, Setúbal, Portugal, 08:02, 17 September 2010 (*Magnus Robb*) 2) Sagres, Vila de Bispo, Portugal, 08:22, 17 September 2008 (*Magnus Robb*) 3) Ponta de Erva, Vila Franca de Xira, Portugal, 07:55, 22 September 2010 (*Magnus Robb*) 4) Vedi, Ararat, Armenia, 15:37, 14 May 2011 (*Magnus Robb*) 5) Planalto de Mourela, Montalegre, Portugal, 10:35, 22 May 2015 (*Magnus Robb*) 6) IJmuiden, Noord-Holland, Netherlands, 07:51, 29 August 2007 (*Magnus Robb*)

Listen to the calls here: https://w.soundcloud.com/player/?url=https%3A//api.soundcloud.com/tracks/288616931%3Fsecret_token%3Ds-Ri9m0&color=ff5500&inverse=false&auto_play=false&show_user=true

At night, *plik* is by far the commonest Ortolan Bunting call we have recorded. *Plik* was present in 83 out of 141 recordings of nocturnally migrating Ortolan Bunting. Listen to an example of a nocturnal sequence. Below it is a sonogram and corresponding sound file showing six variations of this call-type recorded at night.

Ortolan Bunting: Six variations of *plik* calls recorded by night. 1) Cabriz, Sintra, Portugal, 01:19, 8 September 2012 (*Magnus Robb*) 2) Portland Bill, Dorset, England, 23:27, 25 August 2016 (*Nick Hopper*) 3) Cabriz, Sintra, Portugal, 03:02, 26 September 2011 (*Magnus Robb*) 4) Cabriz, Sintra, Portugal, 23:21, 3 September 2012 (*Magnus Robb*) 5) Cabriz, Sintra, Portugal, 04:35, 6 September 2012 (*Magnus Robb*) 6) Sagres, Vila do Bispo, Portugal, 23:12, 3 October 2009 (Magnus Robb)

Listen to the calls here: https://w.soundcloud.com/player/?url=https%3A//api.soundcloud.com/tracks/288618790%3Fsecret_token%3Ds-YQQbV&color=ff5500&inverse=false&auto_play=false&show_user=true

Conclusion

The analysis in the full study shows that the nocturnal flight calls we have identified as Ortolan Bunting are fully compatible with six or seven of the eight call-types previously recorded from migrants during the day. Nocturnal Ortolan Bunting can be identified with higher confidence when we hear more than one of these call-types, and this is in fact what nearly always happens. When we only hear *plik*, we can still identify the bird with a high degree of confidence. When we only hear one of the other three common nocturnal call-types, we have to be more cautious, considering the possibility of confusion with several other species that occur regularly as nocturnal migrants.

In eastern-Europe, there are several other species of bunting that deliver their flight calls in a similar 'medley' style. These include Red-headed Bunting, Black-headed Bunting, Cinereous Bunting, Cretzschmar's Bunting and Grey-headed Bunting. The Sound Approach has recordings of flight calls of all these species, and none appear to match any of Ortolan Bunting's eight flight call types exactly. However, we do not know them nearly so well, as they are vagrants in our own countries. We hope that in future we will be able to gain more experience of these species in a migration context, to help exclude the highly unlikely possibility that we have been recording any of them at night in Dorset or Portugal.

Which of their eight flight calls were the Ortolan Bunting in Dorset in 2015-16 using? On which dates are those birds occurring, and at what time of night? Was 2016 a freak year? Are there any particular weather conditions when more Ortolan Bunting can be heard? What might explain why these birds are being detected in greater numbers during the night than during the day? We will discuss these questions in part two, which is currently in preparation.

If you have any suggestions for articles for future inclusion in the newsletter then please forward them to admin@dorsetbirds.org.uk for consideration. These can range from a review of a book, your best days birding or a scientific study.

The Daily Sightings blog http://dorsetbirds.blogspot.co.uk is updated by an ever dwindling group of volunteers and we need at least two more people to help maintain it. This involves collating information from around the county and uploading it to the blog which takes roughly half an hour or so (sometimes quicker on quiet days). Depending on the number of people on the rota you will update the blog on 3 or 4 day shifts every 3 or 4 weeks so it isn't really an overly onerous task - please let me know if you can help.

Lastly, if you are lucky enough to photograph a rare or scarce bird in the county then please consider forwarding a copy to dorsetbirdclub@hotmail.com for inclusion on the blog.

We are also very grateful for any top quality photographs of commoner species and if space and time allows these will also be added to the blog.

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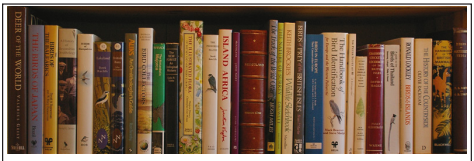

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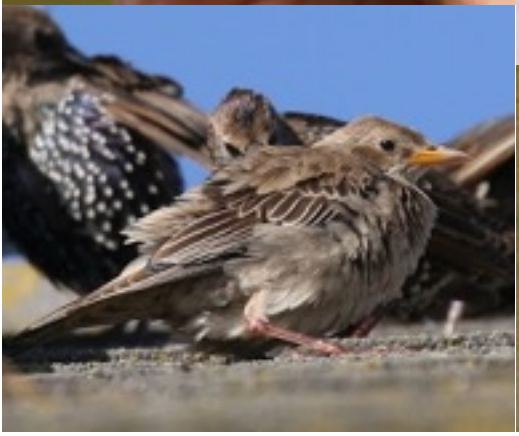
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