

# The Hoopoe



Dorset Bird Club Newsletter

No.67

Winter / Spring 2009



Lapwing Slaughter  
Disappearing Little Owls  
Hungry Gap for Farm Birds  
Robins Rue Soggy Summer

# Contents

Editor's Chat	Nick Hull	3
Chairman's Chat	Jackie Hull	4
Conservation	Jol Mitchell	4-5
Operation Black-tailed Godwit	Jol Mitchell	5-6
Dorset Database	Neil Gartshore	7
Dorset Report Sales	Nick Hull	7
Dorset Records	Kevin Lane	8-9
Poole Harbour Little Owls	Shaun Robson	9-12
Hungry Gap for Farmland Birds	BTO	12-13
Robins Rue Soggy Summer	BTO	14-15
Advertising Page		16
Advice to Contributors		17
Dorset Bird Club A.G.M. Agenda	Notice	18
Club Outdoor and Indoor Meetings		19
BTO Atlas Survey	Mike Pleasants	20
Book Review	Alan Snook	20-21
Birding Highlights	Phyl England	21-22
Passing Knowledge On	Peter Orchard	22-23
Christmas Crossword winner	Jackie Hull	23
Birding Highlights		24-25
Members Letters		26
Membership Subscriptions		27
Bird Photographs from the period		28

## Acknowledgements

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### **Cover Photograph:-**

Waxwing - Kevin Lane

### **Inside Photographs:-**

Lapwing, Yellowhammer Robin & Little Owl - Nick Hull

Black-tailed Godwit - Courtesy **Astrid Kant** Operation Godwit

Great Bustard & Iceland Gull - Nick Hopper

Glaucous Gull - Phyl England

Cattle Egret & Raven - Wikipedia

### **Backcover Photographs:-**

Spoonbill - Simon Johnson

Merlin, Greenshank, Slavonian Grebe - Tony Adamcik

Black Brant - Eric Lloyd

Siberian Chiffchaff - Chris Courtaux

Glaucous Gull - Kevin Lane

## Editor's Chat

Continuing my rant on the slaughter of our European birds, via a internet forum that I subscribe too, I clicked on a link that referred to a YouTube video clip produced by CABS (Committee against bird slaughter) and I was appalled at what I saw. For those of you who have access to the internet you may want to see this clip for yourselves before you make comment so go to the following URL.

[http://www.komitee.de/online/index.php?youtube\\_france](http://www.komitee.de/online/index.php?youtube_france)

In the clip it shows the trapping and killing of Northern Lapwing a species that has declined in the EU by 51%, a species that is on the amber list in Britain. It goes on to state that 500,000 Lapwing were killed annually between 1980 and 2005, perhaps the countries will not surprise you they



are France, Italy and Spain, but when you think this is with the permission of the respective countries governments after they have signed European directives to protect wildlife. To me it's an outrage and if you watch the clip and if you feel as strongly as I did, write to the European Commission Environmental Directorate 200, rue de la loi, B-1049 Bruxelles, or e-mail [stavos.demas@ec.europa.eu](mailto:stavos.demas@ec.europa.eu) and make your voice heard.

Also write or e-mail your MEP, MP and ask why this is happening and why is it allowed to continue if enough people voice there objection it will be a start to get things changed.

## **Chairman's Chat**

Jackie Hull

After ten years as Treasurer, Ian Southworth is standing down and Paul Levey has been nominated by the Committee to take over. Our sincere thanks go to Ian for all his hard work over the last ten years. He will be very much missed on the Committee. Many thanks to Paul for volunteering to step into Ian's shoes.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Wendy Adams who for many years has looked after Bird Report sales for the Club, but has decided to step down. We are very grateful to Neil Gartshore who has offered to look after Report sales for the Club in future.

Our speaker at the AGM this year is Ian Lewis on 'The Sub-Antarctic Islands of New Zealand'. Ian's talks are always entertaining with excellent photographs, and are certainly not to be missed. We look forward to seeing you at The Methodist Church Hall, Wareham on the 28th March at 7p.m.

## **Conservation News**

Jol Mitchell

### **Wind Farm Update**

The original planning application for the six turbine wind farm at Puddletown Road, East Stoke near Wareham has been withdrawn by the applicants. However, at the time of writing, it is understood that a revised planning application will be submitted to Purbeck District Council shortly. The applicants have modified the layout and reduced the number of turbines to four, primarily to address concerns raised by Natural England and the RSPB. As before, I will be scrutinising the new application and its accompanying documentation and liaising with Natural England and the RSPB to devise an appropriate response on behalf of the Dorset Bird Club. Also of potential interest to the Club and Dorset birders are emerging plans for an offshore wind farm in the "west of the Isle of

Wight” area. The Crown Estate, who own the seabed off the UK out to the 12 mile limit, have identified nine zones that offer “significant economic potential” for future offshore wind farms. One of these, the west of Isle of Wight zone, is around 10 miles off Poole Harbour. The response of Bournemouth Borough, Christchurch Borough, Poole Borough and Purbeck District Councils can be seen at [http://www.bournemouth.gov.uk/textonly/News/press\\_office/Press\\_Releases/February2009/offshore\\_windfarm.asp](http://www.bournemouth.gov.uk/textonly/News/press_office/Press_Releases/February2009/offshore_windfarm.asp).

As with the East Stoke development, I will be following the offshore proposals and will report back in future Newsletters.

## **Colour-ringed Black-tailed Godwits**

Jol Mitchell

Dorset is an important wintering and passage site for Black-tailed Godwits; Poole Harbour is of international importance for the species. Careful scrutiny of the flocks can reveal colour-ringed birds. This winter, I have recorded three colour-ringed birds in Poole Harbour – one at Middlebere and two at Holes Bay. More impressively, Shaun Robson has recorded over 70 sightings of 23 individual colour-ringed birds at Lytchett Bay since 1997, with the majority since 2000.



Birds wintering in Dorset are of the Icelandic race *islandica* (birds of the nominate Siberian and European race *limosa* that breed in the UK winter in part in southern Europe and south-west Asia, but mainly in Africa north of Equator). It is not surprising that of the birds

seen in Dorset, around half were ringed on their breeding grounds in Iceland; others were ringed during winter or on passage primarily on the South coast of the UK, but also in Brittany.

Icelandic Black-tailed Godwits are being studied by Operation Godwit, an international association of people studying the species. The aim of the project is to unravel the population dynamics and migration strategies of the subspecies throughout its range. Currently, around 2% of the total population is individually colour-ringed. The project has over 8000 sightings of colour-ringed Godwits on file; over 90% of adult Godwits ringed in Iceland are seen in other countries. Unfledged Godwit chicks are also ringed in Iceland and around 20% of these birds are seen in other countries. Almost 25% of the Godwits ringed on the wintering grounds are seen in Iceland every year.

The number of birds wintering in Poole Harbour varies from year to year but is around 1500-2000. If 2% of the population is ringed, this would imply that around 30-40 coloured-ringed birds spend the winter in Poole Harbour. So why aren't more reported? One reason might be that Black-tailed Godwits often feed or roost in water that obscures the majority of their legs, and the colour-rings are therefore difficult to see. Even when a colour-ringed bird is seen, it can often be difficult to 'nail' the precise colour-ring combination. Tracking an individual bird in a dense feeding or roosting flock, determining the exact colour combination of the rings and their position (relative to one another and to the tarsus, and of course what leg they're on! Is not as easy as it sounds. Nevertheless, it can be done.

**To find out more about this project you can go to their website at <http://www.uea.ac.uk/~b026515/> or <http://www.scoiliosaefnaofa.com/GodwitLatest.htm>**

**Eds\_**

## **Dorset Bird Database**

Neil Gartshore

### **Volunteers Still Wanted!!**

The inputting of the historical bird records held by the Club continues. We made a great start to the project over the 2007-08 winter but progress over this last winter has slowed. Many of the key species (Red and Amber Listed) are now logged on to the database for the years 1957 to 1993 (a total of 40,802 records for 65 species). A further 45 species are currently with volunteers to be input and returned.

There are a fair few additional key species to input (before we even think about the Green Listed ones). If you are interested in helping, please contact me and I will be happy to run through what is involved before you commit yourself.

### **DBC Annual Bird Reports Sales**

Eds

After many years Wendy Adams has now stepped down from the role of storing and selling the annual Bird Reports for the Club. This role has now been taken over by Neil Gartshore who will hold the remaining surplus stock and deal with any enquiries for back issues.

If any of you have any Bird Reports that you no longer want (especially older ones) Neil would be pleased to receive them for resale to raise additional funds for the Club.

If you want to buy or offer any back issues contact Neil on 01929 552560 or by e-mail [neil@onaga54.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:neil@onaga54.freeserve.co.uk)

Neil Gartshore

Moor Edge, 2 Bere Road, Wareham, Dorset, BH20 4DD

01929 552560

## **Dorset Records 2008**

Kevin Lane

The 2008 DBC database now contains 31,000 individual records, sent in by over 450 observers, so many thanks to everyone who has contributed this year. 2008 was an outstanding year for rare and scarce birds in Dorset, and hopefully many of you managed to see at least some of the good birds that turned up.

Work will soon start on the 2008 Dorset Bird Report, this promises to be an excellent record of the last year. If anyone has any remaining records, please could they e-mail them to me as soon as possible at [dorsetbirdclub@hotmail.com](mailto:dorsetbirdclub@hotmail.com), or alternatively post them to 42 Twin Oaks Close, Broadstone, Dorset BH18 8JF. Additionally, if anyone has any photos available, particularly of any of the rarer visitors during the year, I'd be pleased to consider them for inclusion in the Report. Again, please send these to the addresses detailed above.

### **Accepted Records**

The following records have now been accepted by BBRC or the Dorset Records Panel. They are listed below by the month in which the bird was first seen. These have already been published on the website (at [www.dorsetbirdclub.org.uk/bbrc.htm](http://www.dorsetbirdclub.org.uk/bbrc.htm)), but are reproduced here for the benefit of members who are unable to access the Internet.

#### **January 2008**

Cattle Egret – Frampton – 21<sup>st</sup> Jan & 9<sup>th</sup> Feb – M. Adams





## **February 2008**

Long-billed Dowitcher – The Fleet – 1<sup>st</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> Feb – D.J. Chown et al

## **April 2008**

Cattle Egret – Lytchett Bay – 19<sup>th</sup> Apr to 1<sup>st</sup> Jun – S Robson et al

## **May 2008**

Whiskered Tern – Radipole – 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> May – A .Taylor et al

Thrush Nightingale – Portland – 18<sup>th</sup> May – M. Barrett, R. Newton, G. Walbridge et al

## **July 2008**

Cattle Egret – Lodmoor & Radipole – 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> Jul – J. Lowther et al

## **August 2008**

Cattle Egret – Poole Harbour – 10<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> Aug – S. Robson, M. Smith, S.W. Smith et al

## **September 2008**

Honey Buzzard – St. Catherine's Hill – late Sep – G. Lambe & J. Main

Barred Warbler – Hengistbury Head – 15<sup>th</sup> Sep – K. Sayer

Over 30 records are currently in circulation with the Dorset Records Panel, whilst several others are being assessed by BBRC. It is hoped that almost all of these will have been completed by the time of the next Newsletter, and details will be published then.

## **Poole Harbour area Little Owls - Hard to Find**

Shaun Robson

Desperate Poole Harbour year listers are looking for hints and tips on finding Little Owls and wondering about their movements and apparent decline.

The ringing atlas (2002) starts the Little Owl account with the

statement that the species 'presents a familiar sight over much of lowland Britain'.

When I arrived in Dorset in 1991 the species was widespread in Poole Harbour. Birds could be relied upon at Lytchett Bay, Upton CP, Swineham, Arne; these were just the obvious sites.

Later, when access to Middlebere Farm was granted, birds were there too. Then at the turn of century finding Little Owl started to become more difficult. The last sighting of birds that had been around the cottage at Lytchett for more than 30 years occurred on 6th Jan 2003. Suddenly all the sites above seemed to lose their birds.

The only Poole Harbour records in the last five years are as follows.....

2003 - Upton CP on 17th Aug and 17th Oct

2004 - no records

2005 - Middlebere on 28th Apr

2006 - no records

2007 - Upton Heath on 29th Jul (just outside recording area) and Holes Bay on 17th Oct

In 2008 - Two records Upton CP and Bushey, (both calling birds on single dates).

Ringling recoveries suggest that the species shows a low degree of mobility. Given that both of the above recent records refer to early autumn, they may have been birds from breeding locations further afield. Data suggests that dispersion is limited, median movements being 6km in the fourth month after hatching and 3.5km in the fifth. Overall median recoveries for birds in the South West is just 2km (In the South East only 1km). Searches of both sites at regular



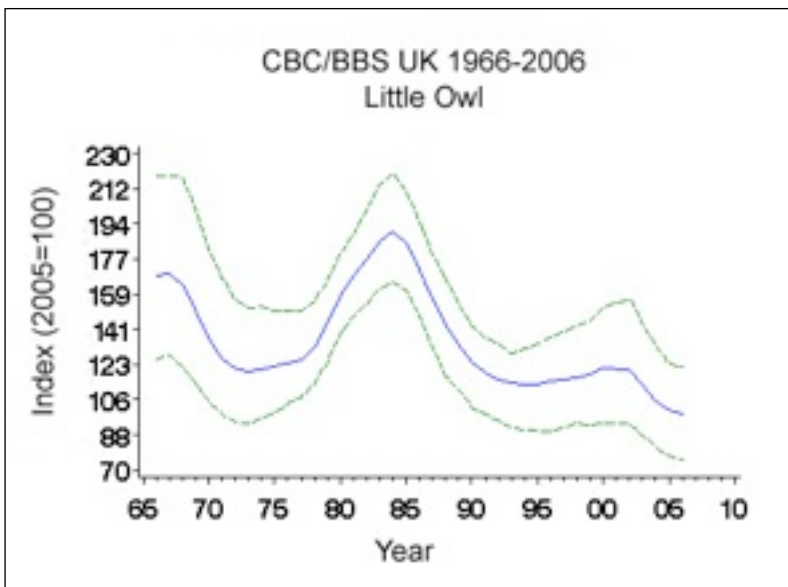
intervals since then have drawn a blank. It seems inconceivable that Little Owls have declined to the point of near extinction around the Harbour but the evidence suggest that they have.

The BTO data supports the perception of a decline since 2003, though not as severe as that witnessed around Poole Harbour.....

### **Status summary**

The CBC/BBS trend for Little Owl shows very wide fluctuations, but a downturn in recent seasons suggests a possible moderate decline long-term in the UK. Trends are poorly known, however, because the species has large territories and is difficult to detect except by dedicated surveys. A population estimate of c. 7,000 pairs from the BTO/Hawk & Owl Trust's Project Barn Owl (Toms et al. 2000) is the first replicable estimate for Little Owls in the UK. No trends are evident in productivity, but few nest records are available.

### **Population changes**



Interestingly the BTO note that this species is difficult to detect away from dedicated sites.

In theory the current national Atlas work should provide us with an up to date picture of the species status in the county. However, I suspect that many birds which are present will be missed. Is it therefore time to conduct a specific survey of the species, if not across the county, then in the Poole Harbour recording area? If so, what survey techniques should be employed? Is the use of tapes effective? What months offer the best chance of success? Odd questions perhaps for a species that is normally the most visible of all the owls.

**On the receipt of the above letter from Shaun, the Club has decided to ask all Members to send in all their sightings and breeding records of Little Owls in Dorset in 2009. Shaun has volunteered to write up the results for the 2009 Bird Report. Eds.**

## **‘Hungry Gap’ for Farmland Birds**

Courtesy Of British Trust for Ornithology

Farmland birds could be going hungry for several weeks at the start of the breeding season due to the early ploughing of stubble fields, government-funded research has shown. Despite conservation schemes where farmers are paid to leave fields unploughed until the spring, sufficient seed is probably still not available for birds such as Yellowhammer and Reed Bunting when they need it most.



Scientists at the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) have found that birds already at risk of disappearing from the countryside are

going hungry between mid-February and the start of nesting in April because most stubble and seed-bearing crop fields can be ploughed at this time under Environmental Stewardship rules.

The Defra-funded research found that for Yellowhammer (whose numbers have declined by 55% since 1967) and Reed Bunting (down 21% since 1967) the demand for food peaked between mid-February and early April, and for Dunnock (down 34% since 1967) the need for seed peaked in the second half of February.

Environment Minister Huw Irranca-Davies said: The health of our farmland birds is a good indicator of the overall health of our environment, and we are serious about tackling the significant decline in farmland birds seen over the last 30 years. This new research funded by Defra is important and will help us to identify some of the most effective ways to help farmland birds thrive – which will in turn support farmers in their efforts to produce food while also protecting the environment on which we depend.

Dr Gavin Siriwardena, Head of Land-use Research at the BTO, who has been undertaking research into ways to help declining farmland birds, said: ‘Conservation organisations, government agencies and farmers are working together to try to give species of conservation concern – birds like Yellowhammer and Reed Bunting – a helping hand. This has produced schemes like Environmental Stewardship (ES), which were based on the best evidence available at the time, but could always potentially be improved as we learn more. Our research has shown that the current rules for the retention of stubbles and seed-bearing crops under ES probably mean that there will still be a ‘hungry gap’ at the end of winter when not enough food is available to allow bird populations to recover. We are working with Defra and others to recommend refinements to Environmental Stewardship, both to give farmland birds the best chance to thrive and to give taxpayers the maximum value-for-money, in terms of biodiversity benefits from payments to farmers’.

One refinement to Environmental Stewardship has already been agreed. In a recent change to management rules for seed-bearing crops, this valuable food resource can now be left in place until at least 1st March.

## Robins rue soggy summer

Courtesy Of British Trust for Ornithology

Scientists from the British Trust for Ornithology have highlighted the effect that a second wet summer in a row has had on one of our favourite birds. Dr. Rob Robinson, Principal Ecologist, reports that the Robin had its worst breeding season since the Trust began collecting records in 1983.

The Robin, arguably Britain's favourite bird, suffered during 2008's cool wet summer, with the number of young birds recorded down by 22% on normal, meaning that almost a quarter of all young Robins were lost. The Robin wasn't alone in this; Great Tit and Garden Warbler also experienced their worst breeding season, with productivity down by 35% and 34% respectively on normal.



Song Thrushes and Blackbirds (at 35% and 32%) fared badly too, but it was not their worst ever year.

The timing of the wet weather was crucial. Nationally, the 2008 breeding season was wettest towards the end, during July and August, affecting those birds that have later broods. Worryingly, this followed a very wet summer in 2007. It wasn't all doom and gloom. Two species that breed early in the season posted healthy rises in breeding populations, with Chiffchaff numbers 22% above average and Long-tailed Tit 16% above normal. Both these species nest earlier in the season and managed to miss the worst of the weather.

Twelve species suffered as a result of the weather. See table below.

Rob Robinson, Principal Ecologist at the BTO said, 'Birds are used to coping with one or two wet summers, but several in a row can cause real problems. Bird ringers will be going out to monitor birds again this summer and are hoping for a more normal year, particularly following this winter's cold snaps'.

	Reduced Productivity in 2008
Dunnoek	-21%
Robin	-22%
Blackbird	-32%
Song Thrush	-35%
Sedge Warbler	-15%
Whitethroat	-18%
Garden Warbler	-34%
Blackcap	-24%
Willow Tit	-21%
Blue Tit	-25%
Great Tit	-35%
Chaffinch	-27%

The information to determine productivity is collected by volunteer bird ringers; some 400 take part across 120 sites around the country, putting up nets to ring birds in the same position within a site from year to year. Using this method, scientists at the BTO can determine the percentage of young and adult birds that are caught from one year to the next and can calculate abundance and productivity for 25 core species through what is known as the Constant Effort Sites Scheme.

The above two articles were reproduced with permission from the British Trust for Ornithology. To find out more about these issues and the BTO, see the BTO website at <http://www.bto.org.uk>

**The above articles show how important it is for us all to try and help with reporting our sightings and taking part in survey work. This leads on nicely to the following article. Eds**

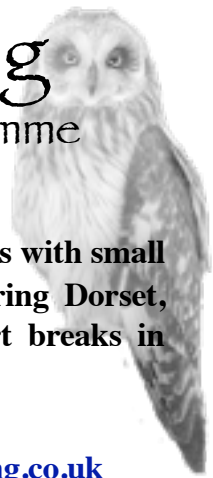


# TWO Owls Birding

## New Spring/Summer programme

### Out now

We offer a wide range of birdwatching experiences with small friendly groups and expert local guides. Covering Dorset, New Forest and the Hampshire coast and short breaks in Britain and Normandy, France.



Please visit our website at [www.twoowlsbirding.co.uk](http://www.twoowlsbirding.co.uk)

or contact Jackie Tel: 01425 656841

Email: [twoowls.birding@virgin.net](mailto:twoowls.birding@virgin.net)

### Bournemouth Natural Science Society

39 Christchurch Road, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH1 3NS.  
Tel: 01202 553525  
Charity no: 219585  
[www.bnss.org.uk](http://www.bnss.org.uk)



Welcomes all to lectures, donations in lieu of admission charge.

Of special interest to DBC members  
Tuesday April 7th at 7.30pm  
Speaker: Ian Lewis  
'The Subantarctic Islands of New Zealand'.

We have a wide programme of lectures/field trips please see website for full details.  
<http://www.bnss.org.uk>



### Calluna Books

Moor Edge, 2 Bere Road, Wareham. Dorset. BH20 4DD

01929 552560

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# Advise to Contributors

**Next Newsletter Deadline is 20th May**

## **Sending Articles**

By e-mail to the Editor - [sapeur.pompier@virgin.net](mailto:sapeur.pompier@virgin.net)

Microsoft Word PC or Mac Format.

Text Arial 12

Digital photographs should be a minimum of 300dpi/ppi if possible with a width of 500 pixels, but if you cannot do this I can size to suit.

All photographs will be produced in black and white except for those on the cover and in the electronic version which will be all colour.

## **Sending Handwritten Articles**

Please write clearly, if you wish to send a copy of a photograph or an illustration to accompany your article please do, as I can scan these for printing.

## **Advertising**

**All adverts will be in black and white**

If you wish to advertise your business we charge £20 for a page and £10 half page and £5 quarter page.

For personal adverts, we charge £2 for a twenty word advert.

Send to Nick Hull via e-mail to [sapeur.pompier@virgin.net](mailto:sapeur.pompier@virgin.net) or by post to 11, Pealsham Gardens, Fordingbridge, Hampshire. SP6 1RD.

Telephone enquiries on 01425 656841

# Dorset Bird Club Agenda

For the  
Twenty Second Annual General Meeting  
To be held at  
The Methodist Hall Wareham  
On  
Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2009 at 7.00 p.m.

1. **Introduction and Apologies**
2. Minutes of the twenty first AGM held at The Methodist Hall Wareham, on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2008.
3. Chairman's Report.
4. Treasurer's Report.
5. County Recorder's Report and/or County Editor's Report.
6. Election of Officers and Committee for 2009-2010.  
Nomination from the committee.

## **Officers:**

Chairman - Jackie Hull; Vice-chairman - Nick Urch

## **Honoary Posts:**

Secretary - Phyl England; Membership sec - Diana Dyer; Treasurer - Paul Levey; Recorder & Database Manager - Kevin Lane; Report Editor - Mark Andrews.

## **Committee:**

Conservation - Jol Mitchell; BTO rep (ex-officio) Mike Pleasants; Newsletter Editor - Nick Hull; Indoor Meeting - Ian Lewis; Outdoor Meetings - Trevor Thorpe / Andy Humber and Publicity - Chris Chapleo.

Alternative nominations for any of these posts should reach the secretary - Mrs P. England Amberley Russell Drive Swanage BH19 2HD, in writing at least 14 days before the AGM. The nominee must be a club member who has agreed to serve, and be proposed and seconded by club members.

7. Appointment of Auditor.
8. Any other business.

## **Speaker Ian Lewis**

(approx. 8.00 pm.)

"The Sub-Antarctic Islands of New Zealand.  
The best seabird Odeysson in the world

*There will be an interval before the talk when refreshments will be available. A raffle will also take place.*

## **Outdoor Field Visits** Trevor Thorpe & Andy Humber

### **Sun March 29th 2009**

New Forest ( SU186156 ) 09.30hrs Meet at Ashley Walk car park, one mile east of Godhill village on the B3078, Fordingbridge to Bramshaw Telegraph Road. All day. Leader John Vickerman.

### **Sat April 18th 2009**

Corfe Castle ( SY958824 ) 09.30hrs From A351 take turning for Church Knowle, park immediately on right hand side. Morning only. Leader Phil Read.

### **Sun May 10th 2009**

White Nothe ( SY759824 ) 09.30hrs From A353 east of Weymouth, take minor road turning through Upton village and continue to National Trust carpark. Morning only. Leader Trevor Thorpe.

### **Fri June 12th 2009**

Sherford Bridge ( SY919927 ) 19.30hrs Evening walk for Nightjars. Meet at carpark by bridge. Leader Andy Humber.

### **Outdoor Secretary**

Trevor Thorpe tel. 01202 849089

e-mail : [TREVBIRDMAN@aol.com](mailto:TREVBIRDMAN@aol.com)

Address : 31 Harness Close, Colehill, Wimborne, Dorset, BH21 2UF.

## **Indoor Meetings** Ian Lewis

### **Saturday 28th March 2009**

19.00hrs Dorset Bird Club A.G.M.

20.00hrs Ian Lewis - The sub-antarctic islands of New Zealand

### **Indoor Secretary**

Ian Lewis - tel. 01202 623200 e-mail - [gryllo.poole@tinyworld.co.uk](mailto:gryllo.poole@tinyworld.co.uk)  
20 Heights Road, Upton, Poole, Dorset BH16 5QL.

Remember you can keep abreast of what's happening with meetings and important announcements by logging on to the Bird Club's Website. at <http://www.dorsetbirdclub.org.uk>

## **BTO Alas Survey**

Mike Pleasants Dorset BTO Representative

First an apology – for not doing this and getting it into the Newsletter at the end of last year. Second – thanks to all those of you who have completed Timed Tetrad Visits and Roving Records for the fieldwork for the Atlas.

Dorset consists of 36 10k squares, which gives 700 tetrads in total and 253 tetrads to be covered using the BTO minimum requirement of 8 tetrads per square. Using the BTO minimum requirement, 18 10k squares have been covered by tetrad allocation, whilst 15 still have some tetrads left to be allocated. At this point, with some winter results still to come in, 154 tetrads or 61% have been visited, and following the first breeding season, 85 tetrads or 34% have been visited. For Roving Records, there have been 267 breeding and 353 winter records entered with 176 tetrads being covered in both seasons.

So much for the past, now for the future! Yes, I am going to ask for your assistance! The areas that need more coverage are the West and North of the region. Just to confirm, each Tetrad only requires 2 Timed Tetrad Visits in each season, Winter and Breeding, and is then complete. If you visit the Survey page of my web site [www.btorepdorset.org](http://www.btorepdorset.org) which I update weekly with Tetrads to be allocated, Tetrads covered and Roving Records.

## **Book Review**

Alan Snook & Phyl England

**The Birds of Gwent by W.A.Venables, et al**

**Published by Christopher Helm 2008 @ £40 ISBN 978-0-7136-7633-4**

The first Birds of Gwent was only published in 1977 but a lot has happened in the intervening thirty years and this book does much to bring all the available information into line with the current trends for avifaunas. Produced by the Gwent Ornithological Society and written by a fine team of writers who are to be congratulated on the

outcome. The first few pages are devoted to the history and geology of the area, then comes a section on habitats which is really rather informative. I particularly liked the next part which comes under the heading Where to Watch Birds in Gwent, giving the casual visitor a sound grounding on how to get the best that Gwent can offer bird wise. There is then a brief chapter on breeding bird Atlases before we come to the main systematic list, which runs to some 312 pages and includes a mass of data, many graphs and some good line illustrations. There is then a chapter on conclusions and comparisons, several appendices and a good bibliography. The book also has a large section of colour photographs depicting habitats and both common and rarer birds in the region. This book has a nice feel to it and I like the fact that the bird names are also given in Welsh.

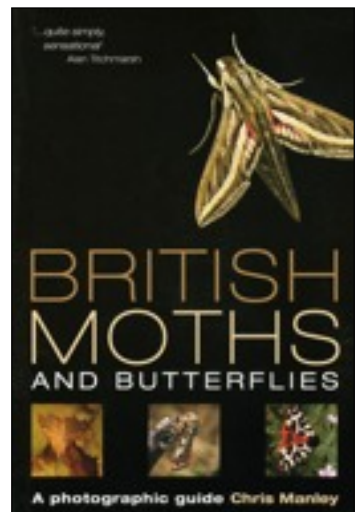
## **British Moths and Butterflies by Chris Manley**

**Published by A & C Black 2008 @ £24.99 Pbk.**

**ISBN 978-0-7136-8636-4**

My apologies for reviewing a book about moths, but I know that many of you are all round naturalists and several of the county's birders also study moths. This book has been produced by a Dorset man, Chris Manley who produced the short but colourful book on 'Moths of Trigon'.

This book is a much more daunting work covering all the macro moths, even those recently extinct in the British Isles. It also includes photographs of quite a few of the commoner micro moths, butterflies and some larva photos. All the pictures are fine quality photographs, not only the author's work, but many taken by other enthusiasts. It is very good as an



identification guide and helpful to have the micros in the same book. It also has useful information on each individual moth. This is a book not only for the keen moth-trapper but also for anyone who enjoys the beauty of the natural world. I would have liked to have seen a few more micros included but identification of these moths often needs more than just a photograph.

The book can be obtained from Portland Bird Observatory book shop, the RSPB shop at Radipole, Weymouth and most good book shops.

## **Passing Knowledge On**

Peter Orchard

When I first became interested in wildlife (birds initially) I was extremely fortunate to meet the Goodalls. David took early retirement from his job in a local bank when Madge retired as a teacher and they then devoted their lives to their hobby, natural history. Every waking moment was spent giving talks, leading walks, doing surveys, serving on committees, in their study with microscopes and books, writing newsletter articles, writing journal papers, answering correspondence in the local paper, rearing injured bats, and much more. They lived for wildlife.

Despite this busy life they always had time. They always had time particularly for newcomers to natural history. They were always available to answer questions and pass on their knowledge, and more importantly, their enthusiasm. I cannot tell you how much I learnt from David and Madge. They became close friends but sadly they are both no longer with us and I miss them.

Over thirty years on and I find myself with more time on my hands and a desire, just like David and Madge, to help people with a developing interest in wildlife but, unfortunately, I do not have a fraction of the knowledge they had. To compensate for this I have a vision of bringing together people with a hunger for knowledge with

people who have knowledge and experience and who are prepared to pass it on, hence the launch of the Nature of Dorset forum.

This is not just another birders message board, there are enough of those already and they serve a very useful but different purpose. No, the Nature of Dorset forum is intended to be a repository of information about where to go and what to see in Dorset, where to find out more and how to develop skills. The simple idea is that we “who know” input snippets of information and those that “want to know” can take this and build on it. There is a main discussion board where people can ask questions and hopefully get answers, but the forum is intended to be much deeper than that.

So, please take a few minutes to visit

<http://www.natureofdorset.co.uk> and see for yourself what has been created so far. Could you add to it? Could you benefit from it? If so, please get involved. Thanks.

## **Answers to the Christmas Crossword**

### **Across**

1. Wood Warbler 6.Snipe 7.Rat 8.Smew 9.Roller  
11.Braces 12.Reel 14.Lek 15.Larks 16.Redbreasted

### **Down**

1. Wisps 2. Olivebacked 3.Wren 4.Little Egret 5.River  
7.Rook 10.Lesser 13.Alba

**The winner of a free year's membership is**

**Mrs Val Duffield of Broadstone.**

## Birding Highlights

Phyl England

### November

In a quiet month there were still Yellow-browed Warblers around with up to 3 noted at various locations with one at Portland remaining until 17<sup>th</sup>. Up to 2 Black Brants have been in the Fleet throughout and a Whooper Swan returned there (9<sup>th</sup>). A Grey Phalarope was in Chesil Cove (8<sup>th</sup>) and another flew over Poole Harbour (24<sup>th</sup>). The Great Grey Shrike formerly at Hartland Moor moved to Arne and there have been occasional sightings, with another appearing at Throop (27<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>). The Cattle Egret at Studland remained for one more day. A Little Auk passed Portland (2<sup>nd</sup>). Lapland Buntings were reported from East Bexington (12<sup>th</sup>) and Durlston and West Bay (13<sup>th</sup>) and a Snow Bunting was near Dancing Ledge (23<sup>rd</sup>). Mealy Redpolls were found at Stanpit (1<sup>st</sup>) and Portland (8<sup>th</sup>). A Siberian Chiffchaff was at Portland (4<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>). Four Pink-footed Geese and 4 White-fronted were around Christchurch (23<sup>rd</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup>). The adult drake Hooded Merganser remained at Radipole

### December

Waxwings arrived with one at Bournemouth (18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>) and two brief sightings of 2 at Bournemouth Hospital and 5 flying over Christchurch. A Ring-necked Duck

found at Swineham has been seen occasionally as has the Great Grey Shrike found on Throop Heath. A Siberian Chiffchaff was at Weston, Portland (28<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>). At Ferrybridge a juvenile Glaucous Gull flew over (21<sup>st</sup>) and an Iceland Gull was off the East Cliffs Portland. Two seldom seen Dorset birds were found with a Willow Tit at Arne (10<sup>th</sup>) and Hawfinches discovered at Purse Caundle. A Great Bustard from the Wiltshire re-introduction scheme was in the East Holme area (29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup>). The Hooded Merganser stayed at Radipole.



### January

Both the 4 Whooper Swans and the 2 Black Brants have remained around the Fleet area. A further Black Brant was off Goathorn (16<sup>th</sup>). A Tundra Bean Goose was present on the Hampshire border near Ringwood (4<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>) though elusive. Seven White-fronted Geese were discovered at Longham (4<sup>th</sup>). Siberian Chiffchaffs were on Portland (5<sup>th</sup>), with 2 occasional at Lodmoor. Two Serins were



rediscovered at Herbury Gore (17<sup>th</sup>) and Waxwings were seen at Dorchester (5<sup>th</sup>) and Easton, Portland (11<sup>th</sup>). A Great Grey Shrike was at Great Ovens Heath (15<sup>th</sup>). Iceland Gulls passed Portland (11<sup>th</sup>), Chesil Cove (18<sup>th</sup>), Durlston (24<sup>th</sup>) and Studland (25<sup>th</sup>). A



Glaucous Gull was at Hengistbury (25<sup>th</sup>) and Abbotsbury (26<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup>). Cattle Egrets were at East Holme and Abbotsbury (3<sup>rd</sup>). At Stanbridge a Red Kite was seen. The Hooded Merganser remained at Radipole.

## February

The month started with a Glaucous Gull at West Bexington (1<sup>st</sup>) and an adult at Swanage old pier 5<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> also seen off Durlston (8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup>). A second bird was present at Swanage between (18<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup>). An Iceland Gull flew past Portland Bill (1<sup>st</sup>) there was also an immature bird at Sturminster Gavel Pit on (14<sup>th</sup>) and a slightly out of season Sandwich Tern was seen at Poole Quay on the (1<sup>st</sup>). 10 Waxwing over Canford Heath (3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>) Hengistbury had 12 on (8<sup>th</sup>). A

Great Grey Shrike was seen at Chamberlaynes Heath on the (12<sup>th</sup>).

Of the scarcer long staying wintering birds which remained all month were Black Brant, 22 Pale-bellied Brent and 4 Whooper Swans on the Fleet the drake Hooded Merganser which now looks smart in his adult plumage at Radipole, Bitterns at Radipole, Lodmoor and Hatch Pond Poole, a drake Velvet Scoter in Studland Bay, Siberian Chiffchaff at Lodmoor and Black Redstarts on Portland and at Durlston.

## Hot off the Press News

Female Ring-necked Duck at Little Sea Studland, (1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> March). The first Wheatears arrived at Portland (1<sup>st</sup> March). Iceland Gull was found on Kerry Foods roof Poole (2<sup>nd</sup> March). The first Sand Martins were seen at Radipole and single at Longham Lakes (4<sup>th</sup> March).



## Members Letters

Dear Mr Hull

Ornithologically 1978 was an eventful year. It saw the Amoco Cadiz oil spill which killed many sea birds and an extraordinary blizzard on February 18th. But to suggest that, that storm or other "bad weather" affected Raven numbers is, in my opinion, somewhat improbable.

What we do know is that before and during the early 1970s at least one, sometimes more, pairs of Ravens bred on Purbeck cliffs. They were almost certainly the eastern most in southern England. In 1976 the sole remaining pair disappeared and it transpired that a coastal estate game keeper was putting out poisoned bait. He certainly killed one Raven, probably many. A dead rabbit strategically placed on a cliff top is virtually certain to be found by passing Ravens. He also killed Owls, Buzzards and, what got him into trouble, dogs. He departed and Ravens duely reappeared. They probably came from Devon where they had remained generally distributed. The spread continues both inland and along sea cliffs eastwards. Purbeck's coastal cliff



population has stabilised at five pairs or so (plus other tree nesters). These breeding pairs are territorial and highly aggressive to other Ravens, especially during late winter when running battles that extend other miles are common place. It seems unlikely that their numbers will now alter much whatever the weather. Were they to do so other factors should surely be looked for.

Yours sincerely

Treleven Haysom

Thank you for your comments the archive article was taken from the Dorset Bird Report of 1978 and reflected the thoughts of the editor at the time. Eds

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