

DORSET BIRDS

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DORSET BIRD CLUB SUMMER NEWSLETTER

'Bird Nerd' - Samantha Cardinali

'Never Gonna Give You Up' - Guy C. Marshall

'Changing Mindsets & Shifting Baselines' -
Liv Cooper



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Contents

Editorial	<i>George Green</i>	3
Bird Nerd	<i>Samantha Cardinali</i>	4-6
Never Gonna Give You Up	<i>Guy C. Marshall</i>	7-9
Changing Mindsets & Shifting Baselines	<i>Liv Cooper</i>	10-14
Bird Highlights	<i>George Green</i>	15-20

Info & Contacts

Website: www.dorsetbirds.co.uk

Twitter: @DorsetBirdClub

General enquiries: admin@dorsetbirds.co.uk

Membership-related enquiries: membership@dorsetbirds.co.uk

Sending in bird records, rarity forms: recorder@dorsetbirds.co.uk

Back copies of bird reports, other sale items: sales@dorsetbirds.co.uk

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Editorial

Joint Dorset Bird Club/BTO Conference November 2024

The Dorset Bird Club and local representatives of the BTO have agreed to hold a joint conference at Queen Elizabeth's School, Wimborne on Saturday 16th November 2024. The conference will be very similar to the one held in February 2019. The overall theme of the conference will be on 'Regenerating & Rewilding Dorset's Wildlife Habitats'. We hope that many of the bird and conservation – related organisations operating in Dorset will also be involved. Finally and perhaps most important, we intend that the younger generation of birders and naturalists will have a major involvement. Obviously plans are at a very early stage, but once we have a final format for the conference we will update our membership.

Dorset Bird Club Treasurer - A Reminder

Just a reminder that the Dorset Bird Club is looking for a new Treasurer to replace Trevor Buck who has undertaken the role since 2016. The role is vital to the Club's functioning as a charity and in the distribution of funds to support conservation initiatives through the Conservation Fund. The Treasurer is part of a great team who are passionate about birds, conservation and the future of the Club. You don't need to be an accountant – basic numeracy is enough to do the job. The workload is variable but averages a couple of hours per week. If you are able to help, we'd love to hear from you. Please email George Green at gp.green505@gmail.com if you are interested and I can give you more details.

Newsletter Articles

A big thanks to those who have contributed to this Newsletter. In order to provide diverse and interesting Newsletters in the future, we require a constant supply of articles. They can be short or long, serious or light-hearted and on any subject you might like to write about. We would particularly like to receive contributions from members living in the west and north of the county. The deadline for the next Newsletter is 30th October 2023. Please send your contributions to gp.green505@gmail.com

Thanks to All

Finally, I would like to thank the Committee and their support teams for their time, enthusiasm and hard work.

George Green, 21st June 2023

Bird Nerd *Samantha Cardinali*

“So, it’s a little wade-y bird, too small to be a curlew, but sort of yellow and brown, stripey and with an up-y beak not a down-y beak, and it goes ‘eep’. Um... that’s not much help, is it?”

Can you tell what it is yet?

The poor man I was babbling at, in the small pavilion at RSPB Lodmoor, sure didn’t. I’ll resolve the mystery for you: it was a Snipe. Lots of little Snipes. I was looking on the wrong page of ‘What’s that bird?’ (ages six and up), forgetting that just because I was *near* the coast didn’t mean that these were coastal waders. Ten minutes previously I’d



correctly identified Lapwings (easy), Golden Plovers (bit harder), but also confused a Cormorant with a Shag (just call me gifted). A few weeks ago, I would have sworn I’d seen a giant flock of noisy Nightingales. Or, as the birds in question are more commonly known, female Chaffinches. Sigh.



But half an hour after the above conversation, I spotted an Avocet. A real one I promise, the nice man in the pavilion told us to look out for it. I’d never seen one before and it isn’t shown in the adult equivalent of ‘My First Big Book of Birds’ so I had no idea what to look for. I just knew in my bones that here was something different to every other bird I could see or had seen that day. I asked Ben to take a picture so I could look it up later.

I also insisted he took a photo of this cute, curious little brown bird I’d instantly fallen in love with as it hung out by several Tufted Ducks, and a tame rat who was intent on stealing our thermos. I later identified it as a dunnock and was surprised to discover it is also Amber status just like the Avocet.



It seems that this birdwatching malarkey (pun definitely intended) is a bit up and down. I’m either going to be a genius or an idiot at it, and I’m not yet sure which way it’s going to go (ref: Nightingales. flock of. noisy).

Ben, my husband, is all about the photography - the pictures here are all his. He has a sixth sense, like spiderman, for spotting magnificent birds of prey when he is completely unburdened with any sort of camera. I’m pretty good at spotting feathered friends when he has his camera with him, so we make a decent team. But this year is different, because I have finally admitted it: I am a secret bird nerd and I’m going to let my inner twitch fly. I might not have any air of authority whatsoever, and I’m pretty sure I’d confuse a linnet for a parrot, but I can feel early 1990s me, glued to The Really Wild Show, re-awakening.



We moved to Dorset a little less than a year ago, from a town near South London where we would spot Blue Tits, Wood Pigeons, Magpies and Blackbirds in the garden. We nearly lost our minds when a pair of Great Spotted Woodpeckers set up home in the local park, which was otherwise known as a parakeets’ paradise. We also saw a little owl once; another great spot by yours truly that had Himself hot-footing it home to get the camera.

In our new garden it’s truly a different world, though. Nestled amongst fields and woodland in North-West Dorset we see woodpeckers every single day, and it is never less than joyful. There is a constant parade of kites and Buzzards, as well as the occasional Sparrowhawk and Kestrel. We walk up the lane in darkness just to hear the tawny owls calling to each other while we, naturally, ascribe silly anthropomorphic conversations to them. On Christmas Eve a barn owl flew right across our path, a better gift than any that Santa could bring.

During the daytime we listen out for the amusing 'kark!' of our Pheasant neighbours. We have a colony of the most argumentative House Sparrows you've ever met, and almost every type of tit, who argue right back. In summer there were Swallows, Swifts and House Martins, and recently I've seen finches and Fieldfares (as confirmed by Richard - thanks!). We see Wood Pigeons, Robins, Wrens, Blackbirds, Magpies and crows too... no visitor to our garden is loved any less for their familiarity.



I won't go on about it, but we are also mad for the caterpillars, butterflies, moths, damsel and dragonflies, beetles, bats, bunnies, hares, deer, squirrels and various other creatures that we encounter. I definitely won't go on about the oil beetles, but they were very exciting. Just in case you were wondering.

I did the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch in January. Binoculars grasped in one paw and the Ladybird Book of birds (grown up edition) in the other, I took the time to really see all the birds I've never properly identified before. I was delighted the whole time, although I would like to mention that not a single Goldfinch appeared until 15 minutes after I'd submitted my results. At which point an extended family group turned up, along with every auntie, uncle, second cousin and close friend they had, plus five collared doves and a Bullfinch. I was robbed!



What I really wanted to say, though, is that becoming a member of Dorset Bird Club this year is my way of marking the moment I realised how much joy I get from playing games like 'Name That Bird', 'Bet You It's A Crow', and 'Don't Fall Off That Cliff While You're Looking Up'. I am now really looking forward to the year ahead, as a proper, bona fide birder who may, one day, see an actual nightingale.

Never Gonna Give You Up *Guy C. Marshall*

The top-selling 'single' in the UK in 1987 was Rick Astley's catchy 'Never Gonna Give You Up', one of Stock, Aitken & Waterman's impressive catalogue of worldwide hits. Of the many (nearly always tragic) news stories of that year in the UK the 'Great Storm' stands out, almost three weeks after my wife and I got married; I don't believe the two events were linked. A highlight for Dorset in 1987 was the creation of Dorset Bird Club, initially prefaced with the word 'New' but then adopting its current nomenclature by the time the 1990 Bird Report was printed.

But why all the reminiscing, and who am I anyway?

Addressing the first point first, the inspirations for this article really came in Newsletter 105: Stephen Morrison's wonderful tribute to Rees Cox, as well as George Green's evocative description of his early days as a birder in Dorset.

Rather like my efforts at golf, if I live to be 1,000, I doubt I'll get much better as a birder than I am now; I'll never get close to the capabilities of the likes of George, or those who enthused me towards nature conservation such as Rees Cox, Bryan Pickess and Doug Ireland, all eminent wardens of their respective nature reserves during the 1980s.

But what I can say is that I do share one life-experience with George and that is that we both were Chairman of the Dorset Bird Club; as well as his current 'Acting' role, George was the Club's first Chairman, a post he held for three years, until, by rotation, I succeeded him for my allotted term of the same duration. I then was succeeded by either Rees Cox or another stalwart of the Dorset birding scene: Mark Constantine. I know both held the role, I just cannot remember the batting order!

After joining the RSPB in late-1979, I had spent the first half of the 1980s volunteering for its Bournemouth Local Members Group, but after a move with work to Dorchester, I 'inherited' a voluntary role that seemed to come with the post that I took up with the bank I worked for, and found myself Treasurer of the local WWF group, also then switching my local RSPB group to the South Dorset one.

Via some form of osmosis that I cannot recall now, I had gained the role of Treasurer of Dorset Bird Club by 1988, my name thus appearing in the list of Committee members in the 1987 Report; one legacy of my time in post appears to be that the Club still has its bank account at Lloyds in Dorchester.

For reasons best known to the Committee at that time, when it came to a successor for George, I was selected and held that role from 1990-1993, at the same time I was also Chairman of the WWF Dorchester Group.

Amongst the many rewards that I gained from volunteering with Dorset Bird Club was to take part in The Tetrad Survey of Breeding Birds 1987 to 1994, itself a foundation for George Green's 'The Birds of Dorset', published in 2004.

Dorset Bird Club was a major supporter of 'The Birds of Dorset', one small element of which was acquiring a laptop for which I helped secure some of the funding. Sadly, by today's standards the machine had very limited powers and I believe later developed a malfunction that meant all work to that point had to be rekeyed, which must have been heart-breaking; sorry about that George!

Halfway through my term as Chairman of DBC, I was lucky enough to be appointed Marketing Officer for Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, the first of several appointments with The Wildlife Trusts, and which culminated in over 15 years as Chief Executive of Staffordshire Wildlife Trust. As one of my contemporaries on the DBC Committee rightly observed in the 1990s, my experiences with Dorset Bird Club (as well as other voluntary roles over the preceding decade) would almost certainly have been significant factors in gaining my first paid position in nature conservation.

The DBC website suggests many ways to help the Club and other nature conservation bodies in the county (<https://dorsetbirds.co.uk/members-area/get-involved/>), and I would encourage you to think about doing something to help birds in Dorset in your spare time, whether to help with your career development, or just to give something back to birds. (As an employer in the sector later in my career, seeing what voluntary work applicants for posts had done helped them to stand out).

For almost half my time as a member of DBC, I have lived outside the county and so have had little involvement in its fortunes or those of the birdlife it seeks to protect, other than tackling a couple of Tetrad squares in Dorset for the Bird Atlas 2007-2011, in addition to the many I covered in Staffordshire and Derbyshire over those years.

Clearly, the Club has gone from strength to strength over the three decades since my time as Chairman ended, moving from being a club to a Registered Charity in 2011, and averaging c.£7500pa income over last four years, so quite a force for good indeed.

As well as the Club, the Bird Report has changed beyond recognition, both in terms of look, but also in terms of content, the 2021 edition for example running to 250 pages, compared to DBC's first edition for 1986 that had just 98 pages. Along the way, the quality of each Report improved almost on an annual basis, the 1988 edition the first to feature Hamish Murray's lovely illustrations, as well as what was possibly the first scientific paper to appear in a Report, this by Tasie Russell on winter Hen Harrier roosts. The 1991 Report featured colour photos and was the final one to be saddle-stitched, the 1992 edition moving to perfect-bound as it had grown to 150 pages. And so

was set a mould that continues to this day with the wonderful publication for 2021 that arrived with us all at the turn of the year.

Throughout what became 30 years as an employee in the environmental sector, I gained a lot of knowledge about membership of charities. The more local the cause, I would say the greater likelihood of stronger membership retention, but I have no doubt that the majority of the readers of this newsletter now were not members in the 1980s. That said, half of the original Committee contributed records for the 2021 Report, some 30 of those named as contributors to the 1987 Report did so again for 2021, so some reading this article will recognise some of what I have written.

Whether thanks to modern technology helping with submitting bird records, or increasing levels of interest in birds per se, it is wonderful to see that around 1,000 people provided sightings for the current Report, compared to around 150, 35 years ago; wouldn't it be wonderful if all current contributors became members too!

To conclude this retrospective, and whilst acknowledging that a handful of brilliant birders are still influential in the county some 40 years after I started to get involved, I would like to pay a tribute to one person in particular; yes, from myself, but I hope also reflecting the thoughts of what is no doubt hundreds of other members, assuming that as Editor he does not exercise his rights of editorship!

You see, since 1981, whether as Editor of the Bird Report, County Recorder, Chairman (at least twice), Conservation Officer, Trustee, Newsletter Editor and maybe other roles that I have missed, George Green has been at the heart of the Club, your Club, since even before its inception.

George's unbroken ties with the Club have no match and we all owe him a huge debt of gratitude, no doubt hoping that he will continue his tireless involvement with Dorset Bird Club long into the future too. (And all this whilst also fitting in the writing of 'The Birds of Dorset' and the co-authorship of 'Where to Watch Birds in Dorset, Hampshire & the Isle of Wight', the latter with Martin Cade, who for some time has been the longest serving Warden of Portland Bird Observatory).

In terms of 'Never Gonna Give You Up', I fear that gone are the days when I could multi-task as I did, so to concentrate on the birds of my new home county of Cumbria, I am leaving Dorset Bird Club, but do so with much gratitude for all that it has done for me, and I do hope that in its early days, I repaid that with some of my time.

If you have time to give, or are reading this and are not a member, please become a volunteer or subscriber today; you will not regret it!

Changing Perspectives and Shifting Baselines

Liv Cooper

I moved to Dorset four years ago as a novice birdwatcher and keen conservationist, starting an exciting role with a local charity Birds of Poole Harbour working on the Poole Harbour Osprey Translocation Project. I've been fortunate enough to continue working for BoPH since then, regularly leading events with the charity, and continuing my involvement in the Osprey project. The last 18 months have been particularly interesting, with a huge increase in the uptake of our events, seeing more people come from further afield to enjoy Poole Harbour's birdlife. We're also seeing more and more people join us who are new to wildlife-watching, not just seasoned birders, trying out the hobby for the first time. The reason for this spike in interest isn't a mystery - people are booking onto our events with the primary aim of seeing Ospreys and White-tailed Eagles, two species that are being reintroduced locally.

It was momentous last year when we saw the first pair of Osprey breed in Dorset after an absence of c.180 years. Being able to live-stream the nest through online webcams has helped spread the word about the project, and with three chicks



on the nest this year, it has been brilliant to watch them grow knowing that there are hundreds of other people from around the world as equally hooked as I am. For the last 5 years, BoPH have been running Osprey Cruises around Poole Harbour during their peak migration period from mid-August into early September, when migrating birds will be stopping over in the harbour to re-fuel before continuing their long journeys. This year is no exception, but we now have enough interest to run 34 Osprey cruises during this period, rather than the 3 that were originally hosted in 2017. This is remarkable, and with much of the charity's operations and project work being funded by the events that we deliver, the charity has been able to continue to grow.

The chance of now seeing White-tailed Eagles on these trips further adds to the draw, which is all thanks to the work of Roy Dennis Wildlife Foundation (who are also our partners in the Osprey Project) and Forestry England. Since 2019, they have been translocating White-tailed Eagles to the Isle of Wight, which was the last location that the species bred in England before they were persecuted to such an extent that they were lost as a breeding bird in the late 1700s. Records of White-tailed Eagle show that they historically visited Dorset, featuring in the first pages of Mansel-Pleydell's 1888 Birds of Dorsetshire as a "rare straggler", with records in Weymouth, Lulworth and Rempstone, and a Time Team archeological dig in 2004 found remains of the species on Green Island in Poole Harbour. Now, thanks to the Isle of Wight reintroduction project, we are once again seeing White-tailed Eagles in our landscape, and even have a pair establishing a local territory in Poole Harbour.

I've had some truly special birding experiences while I've been living in Dorset; a staff twitch of the Alpine Swift at Old Harry last year, and the excitement of seeing the Forster's Tern on one of our boats this spring are up there with some of my favourite birding moments to date. That being said, there is nothing that comes close to the experience of watching Ospreys and White-tailed Eagles with a boat-full of excited people, many of which are seeing these species for the first time.



Alpine Swift Twitch, Old Harry - Paul Morton

On our boats, I often talk about the concept of "shifting baseline syndrome"; the idea that each generation is accustomed to the species and population numbers that we experience when we are growing up, which

makes it harder to recognise long-term declines. With numbers of many historically abundant species dwindling, like the House Sparrow or Common Swift, there is a sense of grief I frequently feel when I'm out birding, for the loss of the sheer volume of birds that generations older than me would have been able to regularly experience. But what I can now say is exciting, and is somewhat contributing to healing that grief, is the recovery of other species including White-tailed Eagles and Ospreys. During our events at Birds of Poole Harbour, the shared joy that comes from seeing these birds back in our



White-tailed Eagle, RSPB Arne - Seb Haggett

landscape is palpable and offers me reassurance that there are other people who care and value species recovery in the UK, at a time when we so desperately need it. But there is a flip side to that coin; the reintroduction of these species locally has also made me increasingly aware that not everyone shares this view, and I was surprised to find that this was a fairly common perspective within the birding community.

As a brief aside, I've always had difficulty describing myself as a "birder", despite the local birding scene having been largely welcoming and encouraging since I moved to Dorset. But, in spite of my growth in understanding and identifying birds, as well as the fact that my life now pretty much revolves around birds, I still don't feel like I can confidently call myself a birder. There is definitely a sense of imposter syndrome contributing to this disassociation; the feeling that I'm not



obsessed with birds enough and someone will ridicule me for thinking I'm a true birder. There is also the fact that I'm not a keen lister, which for some reason makes me feel I should be in the "birdwatcher" rather than "birder" camp.

Maybe these feelings show that I am too introspective, but there is another key contributor to my disassociation, which is the frequent disparity in the general opinion of birders and conservationists. Of course, there is diversity of opinion within both these groups, but there are some perspectives that arise solely within the birding community which can feel almost jarring to me, because they so strongly differ from what I feel as a conservationist.

One such perspective became apparent to me with the increasing regularity of White-tailed Eagle and Osprey sightings in Poole Harbour. Perhaps naively, I thought that birders would be delighted to see these birds back in our skies - after all, they are being returned to their historical range and were only lost from this region due to human persecution. It was surprising to me, therefore, to discover that there are many birders who do not wish for these birds to be reintroduced, or are at least on some level disgruntled about it, simply because they deem translocated birds "untickable", or make "tickable" birds (i.e. non-translocated individuals of that species) harder to identify.

I'm very familiar with the various debates surrounding reintroductions - there is enough discourse within the conservation sector itself - but I have to admit this particular stance is one that I can't get my head around. As I previously mentioned, I'm not a lister myself (beyond keeping track of lifers), but I do understand the appeal and that everyone has their own reasons for listing. But, to me at least, being so stringent with listing that you think conservation projects like translocations shouldn't be carried out or are a hindrance, shows a lack of awareness of the depth of the biodiversity crisis in the UK.



It feels like there is an opportunity for us, as birders (perhaps I shall start calling myself one now), to become more forward-thinking, at a time when there is minimal funding for nature recovery and greenwashing is rife. There are already plenty of birders whose care for the planet shapes how they birdwatch, which can be seen in the rise of low-carbon birding, for example, and I know many local birders who are very pleased about the return of Osprey and White-tailed Eagle to Dorset, regardless of whether they feel they can tick them or not. But there is also a new wave of birders gathering on the horizon, spanning different generations, who are getting into birding because of conservation projects, and I expect that some of the old-school birding mindsets probably won't sit right with them either.

To round off, I want to mention one of my favourite projects that Birds of Poole Harbour delivers - our School Bird Boat Project. This project has been running for many years, where we offer free boat trips to local schools, giving pupils the opportunity to learn about the industry, habitats and wildlife that they can find on their doorstep. How wonderful is it that they are now able to watch White-tailed Eagles on these boat trips, enabling them to see a species that many of us couldn't have dreamed of watching in Dorset when we were younger. The pupils are now experiencing different birding baselines to older generations, providing hope that we can recover some of what has been historically lost. And, if any of the children on our trips should become birders, I hope we wouldn't deny them the excitement of ticking White-tailed Eagle off their lists...



Osprey Ringing 2022, Birds of Poole Harbour

Bird Highlights: January to April

NB: these records are largely taken from the Dorset Bird News sightings blog on the Dorset Bird Club's website. Records of national and county rarities will need to be verified by the British Birds Rarities Committee/Dorset Records Panel.

National Rarities

Blue-winged Teal: 1 probable at Abbotsbury Swannery on 21st April.

Ross's Gull: a 1st winter bird at Dorchester water-meadows late afternoon on 13th February was a great surprise and the 4th record for the county, the previous records being in 1967, 1974 and more recently 2018. It was seen briefly again at Lodmoor NR on 19th March.

Elegant Tern: 1 briefly at Lodmoor NR and then flew into Weymouth Bay on 24th April.

Forster's Tern: a 1st-winter bird was found at Lytchett Bay and seen later at Brownsea on 23rd April. Subsequently the bird wandered around various sites in Poole Harbour favouring Lytchett Bay and Brownsea into early May.



Forster's Tern, Lytchett Bay - Clive Hargrave

County Rarities & Other Uncommon Birds

Game, Wildfowl & Bustards

Whooper Swan: 1 at Swineham GPs on 2nd March and 1 at Abbotsbury Swannery on 6th March with 2 there from 18th to 20th March.

Ruddy Shelduck: 3 at Hengistbury on 28th February.

Green-winged Teal: a male at Stanpit Marsh on 22nd and 23rd January and 9th, 15th and 17th February.

Ring-necked Duck: An apparent hybrid Ring-necked Duck/Tufted Duck at Silverlake on 4th February.

Gulls, Terns & Seabirds including Grebes & Divers

Black-necked Grebe: 1 in partial summer plumage at Longham Lakes on 16th March was a notable inland record.

Kittiwake: an astonishing flock of 17 well inland at Silverlake on 25th March was followed by further inland records at Longham Lakes involving 2 on 26th March with 1 remaining to 1st April which was presumably the same bird found dead on 7th April. Earlier 1 at Lytchett Bay on 4th January was an unusual site record.

Glaucous Gull: a 1st winter bird at Silverlake on 12th March.

Iceland Gull: a 2nd calendar-year bird at Portland Bill on 15th March.

Caspian Gull: 1 at Ferrybridge on 11th March and 1 at Longham Lakes on 18th March with 3 there on 10th April.

'Baltic' Gull: a Finnish ringed adult bird at West Bexington on 8th April.

Sandwich Tern: 2 at Jerry's Point, Poole Harbour on 2nd January.

Pomarine Skua: 1 at Portland Bill on 22nd April followed by 1-2 on 23rd April and 1 on 28th April. Elsewhere 1 at Chesil Beach on 22nd April.

Little Auk: a moribund bird found on the Chesil Beach at Ferrybridge on 14th January.

Storm Petrel: singles at Chesil Cove and Portland Harbour on 1st January and 1 at Portland Harbour on 4th January.

Leach's Petrel: 1 at Portland Bill on 1st January and 1E at West Bay on 3rd January.

Manx Shearwater: an unseasonal bird at Portland Bill on 1st January.

Hérons, Egrets & Allies

Common Crane: 2 at Witchampton on 13th January, 2 at Middlebere which flew towards Wareham on 16th January, 2 at Lytchett Fields which flew west on 22nd February and 1 at Swineham GP and then at Middlebere flying east on 17th March, 1 flying over at Lodmoor NR and Abbotsbury with 2 at Todber on 6th April and 1 flew north at Weston, Portland on 9th April.

Glossy Ibis: 1 flew from Peveril Point, Swanage towards Durlston CP on 9th March and 1 flying SW over Sturminster Marshall GP and 1 at Shipstal Point, Arne NR on 28th April may have involved the same bird.

Bittern: singles at Radipole Lake on 9 dates from 9th January to 15th February with 1 possibly 2 birds leaving at dusk on 18th March. Nearby at Lodmoor NR 1 on 31st January. Elsewhere 1 flew over Fontwell Magna heading NW on 19th January and 1 booming at Swineham on 18th March.

Black-crowned Night Heron: 1 to 2 birds present by the River Stour at Iford from 8th to 22nd April with 3 reported there on 10th. These were part of a national wide invasion.

Waders

Black-winged Stilt: 1 at Christchurch Harbour on 18th April and 2 at Lodmoor NR from 24th to 28th April.

Avocet: 1 at Longham Lakes from 20th to 23rd January was a notable inland record.

Dotterel: 1 at St Aldhelm's Head on 29th April.

Whimbrel: a wintering bird at Arne NR on 24th January.

Grey Phalarope: several records during the first half of January involving 1 at Chesil Cove on 3rd with another there from 8th to 10th and singles at the Bridging Camp, The Fleet on 13th, Tidmoor Point on 14th and Ferrybridge on 16th possibly involving the same wandering individual.



Black-winged Stilt, Lodmoor - Clive Hargrave

Raptors & Owls

Goshawk: 1 between Hartland Moor and Wytch Causeway on 1st January, 1 at the Wareham Channel on 14th and 20th January, 1 at Middlebere on 7th February and 25th March and 1 at Lytchett Bay on 15th March.

Black Kite: 1 at Winterborne Kingston on 26th February, 1 possible at Tarrant Rushton Airfield on 27th February and 1 at Maiden Castle on 28th February.

White-tailed Eagle: as usual frequent reports from the IOW reintroduction scheme in Poole Harbour and nearby areas in the SE of the county mainly involving 1-2 individuals but 4 on 21st January and 23rd February. Further afield 1 at Broadwindsor on 13th January, 2 at Fontmell

Down on 30th January, 2 at Kimmeridge Bay on 13th February, 2 at Hambledon Hill on 15th February, 1 at Iwerne Minster on 16th February, singles at Christchurch and Stourpaine on 19th February and 3 at Abbotsbury Swannery on 23rd February.

Passerines & Other Landbirds

Turtle Dove: 1 at Easton, Portland on 15th April, 2 at Avalanche Rd, Portland on 17th April, 1 at Portland Bill on 28th April and 1 at Weston, Portland on 29th April.

Alpine Swift: there was an exceptional influx into the British Isles from mid-March onwards.

The first Dorset sighting was 1 at Lodmoor NR on 17th March followed on 18th March by an amazing 6 at Christchurch/Stanpit Marsh with singles elsewhere at Bournemouth and Swanage. On 19th March 2 were still in the Riversmeet/Christchurch Priory area with 2 at Oxford Point, Bournemouth and 1 in Poole. Subsequently 1 was seen over Bournemouth town centre on 20th March with a probable at Portland Bill on 21st March. There were no further reports until 1 at Peveril Point, Swanage on 6th April.

Hoopoe: there was an excellent series of records this spring with the first birds in a private garden in Poole on 28th March and at Quarr Farm, Harman's Cross from 1st to 5th April. These were followed by frequent reports from Portland during April involving 1 at the Tradecroft Industrial



Hoopoe, Swanage - Mark Wright

Estate on 5th, 1 at Weston on 7th, 3 on Portland on 8th, 1 at The Verne on 9th, 1 at Weston Street/Coombeheld from 10th to 16th and 1 at Southwell/Avalanche Rd on 17th. Elsewhere 1 at Days Park, Swanage on 17th April, 1 at Worth Matravers on 26th April, 1 in the St Aldhelm's Head area on 29th April and 1 in a Christchurch garden on 30th April.

Woodchat Shrike: 1 at Cogden on 20th April and 1 at Herston on 24th & 25th April.

Hooded/Carrion Crow: 1 possibly a hybrid bird at Barleycrates Lane, Portland on 19th January with presumably the same bird at The Nothe, Weymouth on 21st March and back at Portland on 27th March.

Red-rumped Swallow: 1 at Lytchett Bay on 25th April.

Wood Warbler: 1 in a Southwell garden, Portland on 16th April, 1 at Charmouth on 20th April, 1 at Easton, Portland on 27 April and 1 at Littlesea on 30th April.

Yellow-browed Warbler: 1 at Chickerell on 14th and 22nd January.

Rose-coloured Starling: 1 at Milborne St Andrew on 5th February.

Ring Ouzel: 1 at Tower Park, Poole on 17th February was presumably a wintering bird.

Bluethroat: a female at Abbotsbury Swannery on 29th and 30th April.

Nightingale: 1 at Tinctleton on 15th April, 1 at Longham Lakes on 20th April, 1 possible at Lodmoor NR and 1 at Alner's Gorse on 29th April.

Dipper: the regular pair on the River Lim at Lyme Regis on 25th February and 8th March with 1 there on 27th February and 18th March.

Blue-headed Wagtail: 2 at Reap Lane, Portland on 17th April.

Richard's Pipit: 1 at Pirate's Cove, Wyke Regis from 26th to 19th February.

Hawfinch: 1 at Iwerne Courtney on 26th January and 1 at South Perrott on 25th February.

Common Rosefinch: 1 at Littlesea, Weymouth on 16th and 23rd January.

Serin: a good series of records from 1 Portland Bill during April with 1 on 8th and 9th, 1 on 15th and 2 on 18th and 19th.

Snow Bunting: 1 heard at St Aldhelm's Head on 18th March.

Cirl Bunting: from 2022 a male remained at Reap Lane, Portland with sightings on 1st, 2nd and 5th January and again on 19th, 20th and 21st January. Elsewhere at a private site in west Dorset 2-3 birds on 5th February. In April there were a series of records from Portland Bill in April involving 1 on 8th, 2 on 16th, 1 on 18th, 19th and 20th and 2 on 25th. Elsewhere there were singles at Durlston CP on 17th and 28th April.

First Dates of Spring and Summer Visitors

20th February:	House Martin at Peveril Point, Swanage.
24th February:	Sand Martin at Lodmoor NR.
4th March:	Osprey north at Wick, Christchurch.
6th March:	Common Sandpiper at Abbotsbury Swannery.
8th March:	Sandwich Tern 3 at Whitley Lake, Poole Harbour.
10th March:	Whimbrel at Brownsea.
12th March:	Wheatear at The Fleet.
15th March:	Swallow at Hog Hill.
17th March:	Garganey 5 at Portland Bill and 1 at Stanpit Marsh.
17th March:	Little Ringed Plover at Lytchett Fields.
17th March:	Willow Warbler at Langton Matravers.
19th March:	Hobby 1 at Longham Lakes was followed by 3 more early birds in March at Ferndown NR on 23 rd , Hartland Moor on 25 th and Swineham on 28 th .
22nd March:	Ring Ouzel at The Verne, Portland.
27th March:	Yellow Wagtail at Stanpit Marsh.
28th March:	Arctic Skua 2 at Chesil Cove.
28th March:	Pied Flycatcher at Moors Valley CP.
29th March:	Sedge Warbler at Longham Lakes.
31st March:	Common Tern at Longham Lakes.
31st March:	Arctic Tern at Weymouth Bay.
4th April:	Grasshopper Warbler at Portland Bill.
4th April:	Redstart singles on Portland at Culverwell and The Verne.
8th April:	Cuckoo at Oakers Bog, Muscliff, Bournemouth.
9th April:	Little Tern 2 at Chesil Beach.
9th April:	Garden Warbler at Holes Bay.
11th April:	Whitethroat at Maiden Castle.
13th April:	Swift at Dancing Ledge.
14th April:	Lesser Whitethroat at Portland Bill and Wyke Down.
16th April:	Whinchat at Portland Bill.
26th April:	Spotted Flycatcher at Avalanche hump, Portland.

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Richard Charman, 24 Widworthy Drive, Broadstone, Dorset, BH18 9BD

Email: membership@dorsetbirds.co.uk

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