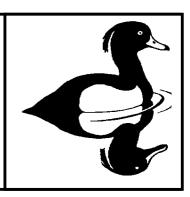
## READING ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB

# **ROC** Newsletter

Spring 2005 No 29



#### Introduction

This is the Spring edition of the newsletter and normally signals the end of the Club's indoor programme. However, this year, in response to member's requests for more activities throughout the year, extra talks and excursions have been added to the calendar - see details later in this newsletter. I hope you will be able to attend some or all of these events. I also hope that you will be able to get out and about and enjoy the Spring weather at what has to be the best time of the year, both for birdwatching and simply enjoying the countryside around us. If you need more to do, there are also the various bird surveys that are both fun and rewarding to take part in – to that end I have enclosed this year's Summer Garden Bird Survey Forms. Following on from the membership questionnaire the Committee have tried to take all views into account and an additional sheet enclosed here details our response and

May I also take this opportunity to welcome the many new members to the Club - new faces are always welcome. I hope your membership will be both long and enjoyable.

Where people have provided email addresses I will send them an electronic version of the newsletter, which provides a better quality copy and also saves the Club valuable funds. However, if you would rather receive a printed copy of the newsletter by post please let me know. As always, all contributions to the newsletter are much appreciated – please get contributions for the Summer edition of the newsletter to me by **Friday 24**<sup>th</sup> **June**.

Ted Rogers (01344 883237) 8, Ranelagh Crescent Ascot SL5 8LW Email: ted.rogers@theroc.org.uk

approach in the various areas.

Many thanks go to all contributors to

this newsletter. Illustrations courtesy of Kingfisher Publications plc and Robert Gillmor, whose picture of Waxwings I just had to include given the "Waxwing –rich" winter we have just had!

#### **Important Additions to the ROC Calendar for 2005**

In response to views expressed in the Questionnaire returns, we have extended our current season by arranging two extra indoor meetings and a coach excursion as outlined below. Please note these new dates and do give us your usual support.

#### 27th April 2005 (at our usual venue)

#### Dickie Duckett will present "My Photographic Year".

This is the programme that was postponed due to technical failure at the AGM. Dickie once again won the Gordon Langsbury Trophy for the best overall entry in the 2005 Photographic Competition, so we can be assured of an evening of quality.

Before this, Renton Righelato will report on the findings of the Questionnaire.

## 25th May 2005 (N.B. at Leighton Park School\*)

Brian Clews will present a talk entitled "Red Kites in the Chilterns – soaring to success, after 150 years of absence."

As co-author of "Where to Watch Birds in the Thames Valley and Chilterns", and organiser of the Berkshire Bird Bulletins, Brian is a well-known figure in local ornithology and has chaired the recent gull identification sessions at ROC.

(\*The University room is not available in May, due to examinations, so we have booked the Main Hall at Leighton Park, which is next door to Whiteknights Park. The entrance is a little further up the Shinfield Road, just past the Pepper Lane traffic lights. The school will help with parking and directions to the Main Hall.)

## 20th August 2005

## Coach Trip to the British Bird Watching Fair at Rutland Water

Following the success of the impromptu trip last year, we will be taking a larger and more comfortable coach, and linking more formally with our friends in Newbury and East Berks. The cost will be £25, which will include entry to the event (normally £10). Details of the trip and booking slips will be available at all forthcoming meetings, or from Ray Reedman, tel. 0118 9864338 email meander2@hotmail.com.

...And we haven't finished there because the 2005/6 season of indoor meetings will be extended by a total of three sessions. We will start earlier than usual, with a special meeting on September 14<sup>th.</sup> Details will be publicised later, but do keep a date in your diary for this one.

Ray Reedman, Programme Secretary

#### **Upcoming Field Trips**

Some of these are new additions to the published programme (\*). More details are on the programme card, on the web site (at www.theroc.org.uk) or via the leader.

#### SUNDAY 10th APRIL 2005

Dorney Wetlands, Jubilee River & Slough Sewage Farm (Morning Only)

Leader: Ted Rogers (01344 883237)

#### SATURDAY 23<sup>rd</sup> & SUNDAY 24<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2005

Weymouth/Portland Area (Two day trip with overnight stay)

Leader: Bill Nicoll (01344 405403) Book early to allow arrangements to be made.

#### \*SUNDAY 1st MAY

**Dinton Pastures (Early Morning Walk)** 

A walk primarily designed for people who want to get to grips with the songs of our various summer visitors, including Nightingales and several warblers. Beginners particularly welcome.

Meet at the car park, Sandford Lane, Hurst (SU786727) at 7.30am

Leader: Ted Rogers (01344 883237)

## WEDNESDAY 4th MAY 2005

Selsey/Pagham Harbour (Day Trip) Leader: John Lakin (01243 268281)

**SUNDAY 15<sup>th</sup> MAY 2005** 

Stodmarsh & Grove Ferry, Kent (Day Trip)

Leader: Bill Nicoll (01344 405403)

SUNDAY 29th MAY 2005

Otmoor, Oxfordshire (Day Trip) Leader: Martin Sell (01189471170)

#### \*WEDNESDAY 1st JUNE

Nightjar Walk (Evening Only)

Walk in collaboration with the TABCG – the venue and meeting time to be announced. Please contact Ted Rogers (01344 883237) for details nearer the time.

## Midweek Walks Report and Reminder

Midweek walks have been well supported this year, with from 12 to 17 members attending, among them both "old hands" and some very recently joined members, all very welcome. Numbers of birds seen have not been vast but there have been some good sightings, including, since Christmas, smew, woodlark and Dartford warbler (two locations).

Already listed in the last newsletter are the next two walks but here is a reminder:

**April 21**<sup>st</sup> – **Snelsmore Common**. Meet at 10 a.m. in the car-park near Mary Hare School (SU464710).

Contact Ray Reedman on 0118 9864338.

May 19<sup>th</sup> Paice's Wood, near Aldermaston (SU587639). Entrance through the Young Industrial Estate. 10 am as usual.

Contact John Lerpiniere on 0118 9426225.

There is no leader available for June, so the next walk thereafter is likely to be Thursday September 15<sup>th</sup> – put the date in your diary now as Newsletter 30 may not be available in time. I am hoping to finish the old season off with a flourish with a whole day trip to the coast (Titchfield Haven) filling a group of cars so that members who don't want to drive can be transported. Hides and a café available so it shouldn't be too tiring ,but it all depends on the availability of drivers. Contact Dot Lincoln (0118 9427563) by the beginning of September.

#### **Skomer Island**

John Roberts is a native of Pembrokeshire and is on holiday there for one week from May 5th. John plans various birdwatching trips within the period 6th -8th May, with a day visit to Skomer Island on Saturday the 7th, cost £14. On Friday the 6th there are boat trips to see the 30.000+ gannet colony on Grassholm (cost £25) and then an evening boat trip around Skomer and out into the bay to see the rafting Manx shearwaters (cost £8). Both of these trips are very dependant on the weather conditions.

John is staying on a caravan site which will also let 2 bedroom (plus sleeping area in lounge) caravans for short breaks of 2, 3, or 4, nights from £30 to £45 per van per night.

The weekend will not offer the variety of birds seen in Norfolk but if you want auks, gannets, shearwaters, and flowers, this would be your opportunity. If interested talk to John on 0118 9482137.

#### Surveys - Help Needed

We are running surveys for Kingfisher sightings in Berkshire and for Rookeries. All records are welcome. Please send all Kingfisher sightings up to 31 July to Chris Robinson or any committee member — details on www.theroc.org.uk or on your membership card. For Rookeries in Berkshire please send the approx. number of nests and map reference to Brian Clews on brian.clews@btconnect.com or to any committee member. This information is valuable and your help would be appreciated, no matter how few records you have.

## Gift Aid

Gift Aid donations via your subscriptions are now a vital part of the Club's finances, and I have recently claimed £512 from the Inland Revenue. The process of Gift Aid is very easy; all you need to do is sign the relevant declaration which is readily available within the Club. It is never too late to sign this declaration and I can still seek tax refunds in respect of 2004/5 subscriptions. Extra income becomes more important now that your Committee has responded to the recent survey and arranged three additional meetings. These additional costs will effect our annual finances and if they become the norm our subscriptions will need to reflect these costs, and other general increases. More of this at the AGM in November.

John Roberts

#### **News from the TABCG**

The club continues its excellent work around the Theale area, with an impressive 163 man-hours of work having been completed during February's work parties. As always, further volunteers are most welcome – if you have never been involved in conservation work parties the Group provides plenty of opportunities – please contact Brain Uttley if you need more information.

**Upcoming events** will include the annual Berkshire Bird Race, which is scheduled for Saturday May 7<sup>th</sup> (contact Andy Horscroft on 0118 9479771 if you are interested in taking part). The Group also leads a monthly bird walk around the Theale area on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month, with the May walk concentrating on the warblers and nightingales around Pingewood - meeting at the Fox and Hounds car park at 9.00am.

The Theale Area Bird Conservation Group always welcomes new members and anybody who can help out at work parties - please contact Brian Uttley for further info. (tel. Work - 01189 783783, Home - 01189 832894). The TABCG also meet on the first Tuesday of every month at the Englefield Social Club, a chance to meet other club members and listen to guest speakers

Information courtesy of TABCG (with thanks to Cathy McEwan)

#### Moor Green Lakes Group Work Party - 24th May 2005

Meet at 10.30 am at the main reserve car park on the Lower Sandhurst Road. Tools and tea and coffee are provided. Please bring a packed lunch if staying for the full day. New volunteers very welcome! Contact Robert Godden (01252 872503) for further details.

## ROC Trip to Barnes WWT - Sunday November 5th 2004

A total of 14 ROC members turned out on a dreary late autumn morning, not cold enough to bring the wildfowl to the reserve and not warm enough to be pleasant. As we waited at the entrance for the stragglers, numerous ring necked (pink ringed?) parakeets flew over or perched in nearby trees.

The reserve itself is small, the furthest hide is not much more than a quarter of a mile from the entrance, and it can only described as luxurious as birding venues go, with shops, restaurants, exhibition rooms, huge hides and even a warm, well equipped toilet. Consequently, this trip was as much a club social as a birding trip.

We started with a slow walk round the wildfowl collection, where the world birders among us were able to practice the identification of Chiloe widgeon, Baikal teal, hooded merganser and other exotics and to admire black necked swans and red breasted geese, which present few identification problems.

We ambled as far as the 'wildside' hide on the western extreme of the reserve, where we sought the reported bittern without success, before returning to the centre for refreshments. After that, we made our way slowly to the Peacock Tower hide on the east side, where the best birding of the day was to be found. The scrapes and wet meadows were held a reasonable number of common ducks and waders, but in among them was the undisputed bird of the day, a perfectly plumaged green winged teal, which came out in the open and was well seen by everyone. Apart from that, the group saw nothing noteworthy, though the leader was lucky enough to see a water rail in flight between reedbeds.

Finally, we admired the exhibition of watercolours and limited edition prints by our very own President Emeritus, Robert Gilmour. I was tempted to buy a striking print of avocets and a Japanese-style watercolour of a cherry branch with a chiffchaff, but how would I explain that to my wife?

Considering that the group entry fee at Barnes is a hefty £5.50 per person for non-members of WWT (£1 less than the individual fee), a turnout of 14 ROC members was rewarding, and a sign of their commitment both to the ROC and wildlife conservation.

Bill Nicoll

#### **ROC Trip to the Warburg Reserve - November 2004**

14 members met in the Reserve car park on a damp and misty morning, with an ominous quietness over the woods. However, bird sounds were soon heard and several of the common woodland species were seen.

The woods and surrounding areas of chalk grassland amount to over 600 acres and comprise the flagship reserve of the Berks Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT). Much of the woodland is oak and beech with many of the alien planted conifers taken out. There are two hides overlooking small ponds, where birds often come to drink, but today were not productive. However, we soon caught



up with Marsh Tit, Green Woodpecker, Redwing and Fieldfare and halfway round the wood the sun made a brief appearance. On the way we heard local Tawny Owls still hooting as though in the dead of night. Chaffinches and Bullfinches

called, and then raptors materialised as it got brighter with Sparrowhawk and Kestrel, then Buzzard and Red Kites, the latter with their almost human whistling; these gave very good views, as one nowadays tends to take for granted when in the heart of the Chilterns.

Some of the regular birds did not put in an appearance — we did not see Willow Tit, for example, and there were no Bramblings with the Chaffinches, but the area is superb habitat, and even so close to civilisation, man-made noise is something rarely heard; a Spring visit should prove very rewarding in terms of birdsong. However, on this visit we probably spent more time trying to identify species of fungi, which have had a prolific season this year, due to the wet summer! A very interesting morning visit!

Martin Sell

#### A Quick Look at the Danube Delta – 16/17<sup>th</sup> May 2004

In mid May, I had a business meeting in Bucharest on to which I managed to add a couple of days to visit the Romanian part of delta of the Danube. It is a huge area, the biggest wetland in Europe, and not easy to access without a guide. So I made contact with Dragos Onciulenciu (www.finesse,ro) who runs a fishing and birdwatching tour business in the Delta and arranged to spend a couple of days based on his "floating hotel", moored near Tulcea. I was the only guest, lavishly entertained by Dragos on what turned out to be a converted prison hulk that predated even Ceaucescu. The conversion was actually quite good, with the exception of the narrow board beds, and the site, in a quiet spot on the St Georges Channel, was lovely.

The Delta is huge and it takes at least a week to see it properly. I had a day and a half, so I planned an itinerary with Dragos to see the birds I was most interested in – my key targets were Slender-billed Gull and Paddyfield Warbler. Wherever we went, Lesser Grey Shrikes, Rollers, Bee-eaters covered telephone wires and any other suitable perch; Red Footed Falcons outnumbered kestrels. Herons were ubiquitous: I saw Grey, Purple, Night, Squacco, Little Egret, Great White Egret, Bittern, Little Bittern; and White Storks were as tame as Robins.

We took off first around the southern side of the Delta, to an area of lagoon which White and the rather dirty Dalmation Pelicans frequent. They were there, but more



importantly, in the reeds with a Marsh Warbler-like song, were several Paddyfield Warblers; much more distinct than the field guides would have you believe, with their capped appearance, sandy bodies and long tails.

A few kilometres further, beside a derelict shoe factory (post Ceaucescu much of the manufacturing economy collapsed, leaving derelict factories and

towns full of unemployed people), in what was probably an old waste water reservoir, were hundreds of Black Headed and Mediterranean Gulls breeding and standing out among them a few giraffe-like, Slender Billed Gulls! Great! Ticks ticked, I could go on and enjoy the hundreds of Collared Pratincoles mobbing me, the Black-winged Stilts, Black, Whiskered and White-winged Black Terns and many of the other birds of southern European marshes. In scrub a little inland, singing Barred Warblers took me by surprise and it was a delight to see plentiful Red Backed Shrikes.

In my day and a half, I saw some 120 species and there were around 120 more species that I would probably have seen if I had spent a week there and done the area properly. Although it is internationally recognised as a habitat of global importance, this is an area under threat. Much of the Romanian part of the old Delta is privately owned (by powerful establishment figures) and is gradually being eroded by development (the growing part of the delta is in the Ukraine whose environmental credentials I know

nothing of). Hunting and fishing are major businesses in Romania – I was told that the Prime Minister is also President of the Hunting association – and so I was disturbed to find the carcass of a White-tailed Eagle on a beach in my wanderings, cause of death unknown (we collected it to take to the Biosphere Reserve's laboratory). Although there was much I found difficult to accept in the country – all the Romanians I spoke to complained of the corruption, there is clearly a lot of racial intolerance, there are gross and growing inequalities in wealth and the central plain is a hedge-less agricultural desert – the Delta and the forests are still spectacular and I would love to spend enough time to see them properly.

For anyone interested in seeing the Danube Delta properly, Dragos has sent me a proposal for a week tour for a small group (no more than 10), using in his ship hotel as a base for going around the area; best time May to mid June. Contact me if you are interested (renton.righelato@theroc.org.uk).

Renton Righelato

#### **Book Review:**

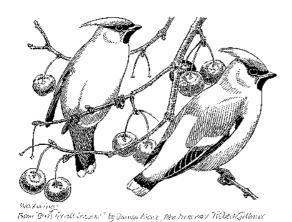
## "A Bird in the Bush:a Social History of Birdwatching" by Stephen Moss, published in 2004 by Aurum Press

This widely-ranging book covers all aspects of birding and the differing attitudes towards birds over the centuries, as life styles have changed, from prehistoric cave paintings to the present day. A glance at the contents page, which includes chapters on the protection of birds, birding during the two World Wars, global birdwatching and "Twitching: how birding becomes an obsession", shows how this activity has now become accessible to large numbers of people. We see how regarding birds as a source of food or decorative feathers for ladies' hats, evolved through shooting birds for specimens and collecting eggs, with the help of a developing transport system, increased leisure and modern equipment, into birding as we know it today. Stephen Moss writes in a clear, lively style, using apposite quotations from a multitude of sources, and with frequent touches of humour. He cites evidence of the American Rogers Peterson's "single-minded absorption with birds" while out with a group of British birdwatchers in 1952 in Cordoba, Spain: "The scene was one of almost medieval beauty in a superb settings. We visited the thousand year old cathedral, with its strange mixture of ornate Moorish, Byzantine and classical Corinthian architecture......We returned outside to gaze up at the ancient spires. Roger silently gazed upward with us. Finally he pronounced judgement, "There are Lesser Kestrels nesting in that tower", he said."

With its brief, but fascinating biographies of leading birdwatchers and the way of life of their times in Britain and the USA, I enjoyed the book immensely and thoroughly recommend it.

Carol Gibson

#### **Berkshire Bird Sightings**



#### **December**

The Bittern was present throughout December at Lavell's Lake and another was at Moor Green Lakes on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. A Waxwing in Forest Park, Bracknell the following day heralded the start of the biggest invasion ever recorded in Berkshire. By Boxing Day the flock had built up to seventeen. A different flock of 11 was at Hawthorne Hill on 19th. On the same day a Little Egret was at Moor Green Lakes (till 28<sup>th</sup>). On the 6<sup>th</sup> an adult Caspian Gull was at Lea Farm Pit. On the 13<sup>th</sup> 17 Bean Geese were at Cold Harbour (till 14th) including one with a yellow neck collar that had been trapped at Lith Noord-Brabandt in the Netherlands on December 24th 2002. The same flock was seen 110 miles north-west at Whitemoor Haye (Staffs) on 15<sup>th</sup>. On the 14<sup>th</sup> two Merlin were at Cold Harbour with one there on 16<sup>th</sup>. Also on the 14<sup>th</sup> an Avocet was at Theale GP and a Slavonian Grebe was at Moor Green Lakes (till 17<sup>th</sup>). On the  $22^{nd}$  a Brent Goose was at Queen Mother Reservoir. On the  $24^{th}$  a Raven flew over Snelsmore Common. On the 26<sup>th</sup> a Little Egret and a Scaup were at Theale GP. The following day another Little Egret was at Remenham.

#### January

The Bittern was present throughout January at Lavell's Lake. A Little Egret flew over the same site on 1<sup>st</sup>. Waxwing numbers continued to increase during January to a peak of 270+ at Forest Park, Bracknell on 19<sup>th</sup>. Smaller flocks around Bracknell and in Binfield, Furze Platt, Maidenhead, Slough and Wokingham may have been the Forest Park flock dispersing. Another flock in Thatcham peaked at 78 on 30<sup>th</sup>. On the 5<sup>th</sup> a Merlin was at Cow Down. The same day three Little Egret were at Moor Green Lakes peaking at four on 9<sup>th</sup> then one or two present throughout the month. On the 9<sup>th</sup> a Water Pipit was on the floods at Bottom Lane, Theale (till 17<sup>th</sup>). On the 20<sup>th</sup> three Curlew flew over Woolley Down. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> a Blackthroated Diver was at Wraysbury GP (till 23<sup>rd</sup>). The next day a Merlin was at West Ilsley. On the 30<sup>th</sup> a pair of Ravens flew over Lavell's Lake.

#### **February**

The Bittern was present throughout February at Lavell's Lake. Up to three Little Egret were at Moor Green Lakes all month. Large numbers of Waxwings were still present with peaks of 200 in Wokingham on 1st, 114 in Thatcham also on 1st, 120 in Thatcham on 13th, 200 in Bracknell on 25<sup>th</sup>, 70 in Slough on 24<sup>th</sup>, 130 in Maidenhead on 16<sup>th</sup>, 35 in Newbury on 14th, 30 in Ruscombe on 25th, 172 in Tilehurst on 27<sup>th</sup>, 35 in Caversham on 27<sup>th</sup>, 100 in Southcote on 28<sup>th</sup>, 1 in Spencers Wood on 23<sup>rd</sup>, 12 in Twyford on 12<sup>th</sup>, 20 in Finchampstead on 8<sup>th</sup>, 17 in Windsor on 8th, 1 in Sunningdale on 7th, 60 in Binfield on 3<sup>rd</sup>. On the 11<sup>th</sup> a Shag was found dead at Bray GP. It had been ringed as a chick on the Isle of May in 2003. Four live birds were reported there the previous day. The next day a Goshawk flew over Walbury Hill. On the 14<sup>th</sup> a firstwinter Glaucous Gull was at Burghfield GP. The next day an Iceland Gull was at Queen Mother Reservoir. On the 20<sup>th</sup> a Rough-legged Buzzard flew over Bagnor Cressbeds. On the 26<sup>th</sup> a first-winter Glaucous Gull – possible the same bird that was at Burghfield GP - was at Queen Mother Reservoir. The next day two Little Egret were at Donnington GC.

#### March

The Lavell's Lake Bittern was last seen on 14<sup>th</sup>. Up to three Little Egret were at Moor Green Lakes all month. Waxwing numbers started to tail off during March but there were still flocks at Virginia Water (180 on 20<sup>th</sup>), Binfield (60 on 8<sup>th</sup>), Bracknell (60 on 22<sup>nd</sup>), Sandhurst (50 on 20<sup>th</sup>), Warfield (50 on 30<sup>th</sup>), Theale (44 on 3<sup>rd</sup>), Tilehurst (30 on 2<sup>nd</sup>), Maidenhead (20 on 31<sup>st</sup>), Aldermaston (25 on 8<sup>th</sup>), Wokingham (15 on 1<sup>st</sup>) and Crowthorne (11 on 12<sup>th</sup>). On the 3<sup>rd</sup> a Little Egret was at Theale GP (till 12<sup>th</sup>). On the 5<sup>th</sup> two Raven flew over Decoy Heath. On the 7<sup>th</sup> a Water Pipit was on the floods at Bottom Lane, Theale. Further records there on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> may have related to the same bird. On the 8<sup>th</sup> a firstwinter Kittiwake was at Lower Farm GP. On the 11th an adult Ring-billed Gull was at Theale GP and on the same day a Great Grey Shrike was at Wickham. The next day a Curlew was at Moor Green Lakes and a first-winter and adult Kittiwake were at Theale GP. An incredible find was a Pale-bellied Brent Goose at Theale GP on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. It was the first record of this race in Berkshire. On the 12<sup>th</sup> a female Scaup was at Sandhurst GP (till 15th) with possibly the same bird at Theale GP on the 18<sup>th</sup> and at Woolhampton GP on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. On the 20<sup>th</sup> a Merlin was at Lower Farm GP. On the 24th an Osprey flew over Hungerford Marsh and another flew over Theale GP on 26<sup>th</sup>. On the 25th a ring-tail Hen Harrier was at Theale GP. On the same day a Curlew flew over a Crowthorne garden, two Little Egret were at Lower Farm GP and an adult/third-summer Ring-billed Gull was seen flying into Berkshire from Little Marlow GP (Bucks). On the 29<sup>th</sup> a Hoopoe was found at the Berkshire Brewery in Reading. The Brewery kindly allowed access to this private site allowing many birders to see it before it departed on 31st. On the same day a Little Egret was at Lower Farm GP.

#### **ROC Garden Bird Survey**

## **Summer 2004 (the 5<sup>th</sup> summer period survey)**

38 gardens were surveyed (76% urban/suburban, 24% rural), a slightly higher percentage of urb./sub. gardens than our average. A total of 65 bird species were recorded (53 in urb./sub., 59 in rural) of which three (all in rural gardens) are new to the GBS list in the ten years of operation: Reed Warbler on 29<sup>th</sup> May and *Woodcock* in lucky MT's garden in Winterbourne, the latter appearing for a couple of minutes at 8.00am on his lawn (!) amd a fairly astonishing report of Wryneck on one day during the week beginning 1<sup>st</sup> August in very lucky AC's garden in Sherfield on Loddon, although this would represent a Hampshire rather than a Berkshire county record (perhaps more fascinating than AC's 2003 garden sighting of two peacock!). This brings the ROC GBS total to 101 species as at September 2004. Whilst it is intended to publish more details of summer 2004 occurrences in a later newsletter I have done a preliminary analysis of garden bird breeding from participants' notes, see the table below.

A high percentage of both urb./sub. and rural gardens were provided with nestboxes although utilisation was somewhat lower particularly in urb./sub. gardens. Perhaps not surprisingly the most common species by far for breeding in nest boxes was Blue Tit (only 3 species bred in nest boxes). In addition a much higher percentage of rural compared to urb./sub. gardens had species breeding other than in nest boxes. Nevertheless for both garden types the most common breeding species, other than in nest boxes (on a percentage basis) was Blackbird, followed by Robin and Great Tit, but only for urb./sub. gardens.

## Summer 2005 (the 6<sup>th</sup> summer period survey)

Please use the enclosed survey forms, don't forget that this enjoyable data collection activity is free of charge (!)

#### **General**

It is intended that a summary review of the first 10 years of the ROC GBS will appear in the 2003 annual report of the Birds of Berkshire.

John (with more than a little help from Fiona) Farnsworth

#### **ROC GBS Breeding Attempts in Gardens (Summer 2004)**

Garden Type		Urb./sub.	Rural	All
Gardens with nestboxes (%)		79	78	79
Nestboxes used for breeding (%)		57	71	60
Species breeding in nestboxes (%	Blue Tit	85	83	84
of total number of breeding pairs)	Great Tit	8	17	11
	House Sparrow	7	-	5

Breeding other than in nestboxes (%)		31	78	42
Species breeding other than in	Blackbird	38	23	32
nestboxes (% of total no of	Robin	21	-	14
breeding pairs)	Great Tit	13	-	8
	Blue Tit	4	-	3
	Coal Tit	4	-	2
	Chaffinch	4	8	5
	Wren	4	7	5
	Dunnock	4	8	5
	Song Thrush	4	-	2
	House Sparrow	4	7	5
	Wood Pigeon	-	23	8
	Jackdaw	-	8	3
	Goldcrest	-	8	4
	Spotted Flycatcher	-	8	4