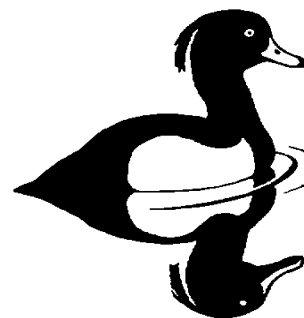


READING ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB

ROC Newsletter

Spring 2002

No 17



Introduction

Spring seems to have sprung very suddenly this year (famous last words - no doubt the weather will be awful by the time this gets to you!). I always think this is the best time of the year, particularly in birdwatching terms – there are so many things to look forward to (although I'm not so sure about all the DIY work that always seems to be awaiting action!). Among other things I have my Berkshire Bird Index survey work to do. Not having done any survey work before, I was a little unsure when I started a couple of years ago, but have thoroughly enjoyed it. If you have never done any survey work don't be afraid to give it a go. For those of you who can't get out and about there is always the option of doing the club's garden bird survey – see later for more details.

In the last newsletter I asked for people who would be happy, or even prefer, to receive the newsletter via email. I received surprisingly few responses last time, so please let me know if you would like to receive it electronically by emailing me at the address shown below.

As always, all contributions to the newsletter are much appreciated – please get contributions for the next newsletter to me by 21st June. Special thanks this month must go to John Farnsworth for all his work with the Garden Bird Survey –you will find further results in this newsletter and a form for the summer is also included.

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Many thanks go to all contributors to this newsletter. Illustrations courtesy of Kingfisher Publications plc.

Resignation of Club Secretary

Sadly Mike Smith has resigned as Club secretary. His personal circumstances have meant that he was unable to find the time needed to perform the duties and felt that a new secretary should be sought. I am sure that everyone will want to thank him for all his efforts and work he has done on behalf of the club over the last few years. The search for a replacement is underway.

Upcoming Walks & Excursions

The popular mid weeks walks programme continues, meeting on the third Thursday of each month, please come along for a pleasant, sociable walk with some nice birds included for good measure.

Thursday 18th April – meet at 10am at the north end of Kings Ride (off A30 near Camberley) at SU875622. Walk around the Wishmoor Bottom area for heathland and woodland birds. Leader Dot Lincoln - 0118 9427563.

Thursday 16th May – meet at 10 am in the car park at Lightwater Country Park (south of Junction 3 of M3) at SU920621. After lunch, if the weather is good, Harry plans to carry on to Thursley Common in search of dragonflies and Hobbies, all are welcome to join him. Leader Harry Matthews – 01628 624440.

Thursday 20th June – meet at 10 am in the Sheffield Bottom Car Park (near Theale) at SU647704. Walk around Hosehill Lake and surrounding area. Leader John Roberts (0118 9482137).

Don't forget that we also have some excellent weekend excursions coming up over the next few months. The membership card gives the details, but trips include Portland on 21st April, Otmoor on 5th May, the New Forest on 19th May, a weekend in Wales and Anglesey on 7th/8th/9th June and an evening walk on 26th June. All trips promise some excellent birds with pleasant company included for good measure. Also don't forget that, on Sunday 28th April, Chris Robinson is leading a survey morning on Breeding Waders of Wetland Meadows.

Photographic Evening

This year's Photographic Evening was a great success, the standard of the entries was extremely high and the evening was much enjoyed by all who attended. Congratulations go to all the winners - unfortunately the names were not available 'at the time of going to press'.

Next years Photographic Evening is now being planned, so to give you an idea of what you should be aiming for the categories will be as follows, with a maximum of 3 entries per category :

- Best Bird Picture
- Creatures in their Habitat
- Art in Nature
- Worst Natural History Picture

Tracking migration on the worldwide web

Many of you may have heard about an ambitious and exciting project started this Spring by the British Trust for Ornithology, with support from Birdwatching magazine and sponsored by Northumbrian Water. It's called "Migration Watch" and the objective is to track the arrival and movement of returning summer migrants as they arrive in the UK. We need **your** help! If you have internet access (or can team up with someone who has) all you have to do is go to the BTO Migration Watch website at www.bto.org/migwatch, register yourself and your preferred migration watch site(s) and you're ready to start submitting your migrant sightings.

After a month of operation, the project is really starting to show results and the website now has animated maps showing week-by-week progress of migrational arrivals. At the time of writing, many species have still not arrived back in the UK but the maps for the early arrivals, like Chiffchaff, are really good. Do take a look and start submitting your sightings if you possibly can; also please encourage your birdwatching friends (especially those in more remote areas like Wales and Scotland) to take part too. The more people who take part, the better will be the picture we build up.



Chris Robinson

Bird Books for Sale (10% of proceeds to ROC)

Frontiers of Bird Identification £3.00
Best Days with British Birds £3.00
Birdwatchers Year, Poyser - first edition £10.00
Greenshanks, Desmond & Maimie Nethersole Thompson, Poyser - first edition £10.00
Bird Habitats in Britain, R J Fuller, Poyser - first edition £10.00
BWP RSPB Edition, all 9 volumes, with dustjackets (spines faded) – offers please.
CF Tunnicliffe, Sketches of Bird Life, edited by Robert Gillmor, signed by Robert Gillmor. £15.00
Eric Hosking's Birds (50 years of Bird Photography), signed by Eric Hosking. £15.00
All with dust jackets, and excellent condition, except my name written inside front cover.

Any offers, please email me on mike@taylormj.freereserve.co.uk or telephone 01635 248382

Mike Taylor

Trip - Selsey Bill and Pagham Harbour 16th Sept 2001

The first week-end birding trip got under way at 7:30am Selsey Bill car park in fair weather although the NW wind was brisk as usual on this point. Six of us sea-watched until about 9:15 during which time we saw Gannets and Sandwich Tern; we were surprised to watch House and Sand Martins flying straight and just above the sea towards the shore. No acceptable reason was found for this behaviour bearing in mind the NWerly. We understood that had we started at 7am we may have seen the passing G N Diver, Bonxie and Siskin.

High tide in the harbour was at 11:15am and in an effort to beat this we regrouped at Church Norton, working our way along the West Path. This was all in vain: too much water and no waders of note. We understood that Arun District Council were repairing the West Path and the previous day I had been asked to refrain from using it! The walk back through the churchyard produced a Green Woodpecker only of any note.

We then drove to Pagham Harbour LNR Centre and decided to view the Ferry Pool from the pavement, rather than the hide. (As a local birder at Pagham, it has always amused me why people watch from the hide across what is a busy road and usually over the heads of people on the pavement).

On this occasion we were rewarded with fine close-up views of Dunlin, Reeve and Little Stint. The light was very good and Mike hopefully got some good pics. Other birds on the pool included Peewits Black-tailed Godwits, Teal and Shelduck.



To give the tide a chance to recede, we decided to find the juvenile red necked phalarope on a gravel pit at Drayton House near Oving (pronounced Ooving by the locals). This bird was very obliging and gave excellent views as it waded and pirouetted closer to the increasing body of watchers. This was another good opportunity for Mike to take a few pics and indeed, after some 45 minutes, we left him to it.

The rest of us returned to Pagham Harbour, this time to the North Wall where we found the usual crop of waders including Curlew Sandpiper. The scrub woodland to the north of the wall was disappointing producing a couple of Wheatear only. The west field edge of the harbour gave good views of the usual flocks of Peewits and Wigeon with a sprinkling of Curlew, Dunlin, Grey Plover, Redshank, Little Egret and Pintail.

Other items spotted from this area were a kite, capable of towing someone on a small 'cart', a Lancaster, Spitfire and two Mustangs doing their thing for the Goodwood Revival Motor Race meeting.

John Lakin