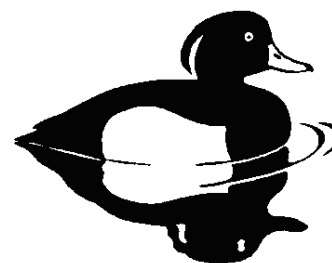


BOC Newsletter

Autumn 2008

No 43



Introduction.....	1
Upcoming Events – News & Updates.....	1
Positions Vacant: Honorary Secretary.....	2
‘Sponsor a species’ for the New Atlas.....	2
A Reminder from the Membership Secretary.....	2
AGM Financial Report – Summary.....	3
BOC Photographic Competition – 25th March 2009.....	3
BTO Council News.....	3
News from the TABCG.....	4
BOC Cruise – Poole Harbour, Saturday 14th June 2008.....	4
Pembrokeshire Weekend– June 2009.....	4

Introduction

This year’s autumn newsletter is somewhat later than normal - it was not ready in time to go out with the annual membership pack. I know it must be late because I now feel that I must take the opportunity to wish you all a very good Christmas and New Year (although presumably, with recession upon us, it will very likely all be cancelled this year!)

I hope that you have been able to attend and enjoy some of the Club’s new season events. As always if you have any ideas for indoor meetings (e.g. good speakers you have heard) or field trips please let us know.

I am sending this newsletter out via email to a growing number of members, so if you would prefer to receive it that way, rather than in the post, please let me know – a simple email to the address below will suffice. Of course if you prefer to receive a paper copy by post we will continue to send it that way.

The next newsletter is due to go out in February next year, so please get any items for inclusion to me by the end of January.

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

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

Upcoming Events – News & Updates

1. **Coach trip to Slimbridge on 18th January:** Bookings are now open, at £18 per ticket, plus small group-rate entrance fee for non-WWT members. With a real wildfowl spectacle, the chance of a rarity, and the famous floodlit feed to crown the day, this is a wonderful day-out.

Contact Ray Reedman on 0118 9862137

2. **Change of date - February Mid-week Walk:** The walk at Shepherd Meadows, Sandhurst scheduled for 19th February has been moved to 26th February to avoid a clash with the Club’s long weekend trip to Norfolk. Please make a note in your diaries and come and explore this easily accessible area with a nice range of habitat, meeting at Sandhurst Memorial Park (where there are toilets and a café). Contact Colin Wilson on 01252 837411

3. **Change in arrangements – Mid-week Walk on April 16th:** The meeting place will not be exactly as advertised in the programme, but will be at the Jubilee River car park at SU 928794. Contact Harry Matthews on 01628 624440

4. **Change of date - May Mid-week Walk:** The walk around Langley Park, Slough scheduled for 21st May has been moved to 7th May. Please make a note in your diaries and enjoy a walk around this excellent area of park, lake and woodland. Contact Bill Nicoll on 01344 455403



Positions Vacant: Honorary Secretary

Looking for an exciting new role? The BOC is looking for a new Secretary. The seven year itch has got me and I feel it is time for a change. Here is the job description - don't worry, it's not that onerous: the Committee is generally well-behaved and the compliance bits are pretty straightforward, there is lots of help available from the Charity Commission and if you want, you can call me.

The Honorary Secretary is one of three Executive Officers elected annually with no limit on the number of years for which the post may be held. The other Executive Officers are the President (currently Gordon Langsbury) and the Honorary Treasurer (currently John Roberts). By convention, the Executive Officers also act as the Trustees of the charity. Although subject to annual re-election, the Secretaryship is expected to be held for a long term, providing a degree of continuity in the management of the Club. The main duties of the Secretary are:

- To organise and minute the statutory General meetings of the Club (generally one per year) and the meetings of the Committee and progress decisions.
- To act as the first point of contact or "post box" for the Club on any matter (directing enquiries to other officers as appropriate).
- To ensure compliance with Charity law and the Club's constitution.
- To prepare and submit Annual Returns to the Charity Commission.
- To act as a co-signatory on Club bank account transactions (advised by the Treasurer).
- To prepare and send out annual and occasional mailings to members.
- To work with the Chair and Committee to evolve and deliver the Club's development strategy.

and, like other Committee members, the Secretary may take a lead in specific initiatives of the Club.

If you are interested, are happy with computers and would like to help, please contact Neil Bucknell or me.

Renton Righelato email renton.righelato@berksoc.org telephone 0787 9812564

'Sponsor a species' for the New Atlas

The Birds of Berkshire Atlas for which the fieldwork is now underway will cost about £30,000. The Berkshire Bird Atlas Group (mainly BOC Committee members) is seeking funds for this and has made good progress. However, this is a massive sum and so, to involve our members and birdwatchers across the County, it has launched a 'Sponsor a species' appeal.

The prices for sponsorship are between £20 and £50 and you can increase the benefit to the project by 25% if you are a taxpayer by making the donation via the BOC and ticking the Gift Aid box. If we manage to find sponsors for the 300 plus species we will have raised well over £6000.

What's in it for me you may ask? Well, if helping to produce this landmark volume with data that will be of value for many years, to help protect the countryside and help ensure farming aid and other grants go to the right places is not enough, you get 20% off the price of a new book and your name will appear in it as the species sponsor.

You can find the details of the Atlas and the offer on our website at <http://www.berksoc.org.uk/atlas/index.shtml> where there is a form to help you sponsor, or pick up a leaflet at Club meetings or ask Neil Bucknell, Renton or Colin if you have any questions.

The BOC is fully behind this project, hence creating an Appeal Fund for it, so we hope you will be able to support it and 'Sponsor a species'!

To give you a flavour, at time of going to press, the following species are still available for sponsorship:-

Arctic Skua - £30, Barnacle Goose - £20, Bearded Tit - £30, Black Tern - £20, Blackbird - £50, Blue Tit - £50, Chaffinch - £50, Chiffchaff - £20, Dunlin - £30, Gannet - £30, Great Grey Shrike - £30, House Martin - £50, Linnet - £30, Long-eared Owl - £30, Mandarin Duck - £30, Magpie - £20, Pied Wagtail - £30, Raven - £30, Redwing - £30, Robin - £50, Scaup - £20, Slavonian Grebe - £20, Snipe - £30, Snow Goose - £20, Sparrowhawk - £30, Tawny Owl - £50, Water Rail - £30, Whitethroat - £20 and many more!

A Reminder from the Membership Secretary

A number of people have yet to renew their BOC memberships for the current year, which was due, as always, on the 1st October. Renewal is simple, either by contacting Dot at one of the indoor meetings or by sending a payment cheque to her at her usual address. Of course, if want to avoid the annual hassle of renewal it can be done simply using a standing order (and don't forget that signing a gift aid form will further boost Club funds, without any extra cost to yourself – thankyou Darling!)

AGM Financial Report – Summary

The Conservation Fund stands at £5,826, an increase of £1,177. Special mention was made of £631 income from the sale of Derrick's Foskett's natural history books, and expenditure of £300 on barn owl nest boxes.

Club Accounts stand at £10,198, an increase of £572. This is a pleasing increase as £2,400 has been spent on the 2004 Report. Income from subscriptions and Gift Aid has been maintained.

The Committee are considering two points and comment on them is invited from members.

1. A possible increase in subscriptions, was last raised in 2003. Although our financial position is quite sound future income is not guaranteed and we anticipate additional expenditure on room hire, speakers and "catch-up" Reports.
2. Removal of the half-rate subscription option for future new members. Current members would retain the option. This consideration arises because at present the cost of a Report and the issue of Newsletters approaches £6 per member, but some only pay £7.50 or £10.

John Roberts

BOC Photographic Competition – 25th March 2009

In 2009, we will again be offering 3 categories in our competition, so get shooting now!

The categories will be as follows:-

- Best digiscoped bird (portrait or action shot)
- Best digital bird portrait
- Best digital bird action photograph



Each of the three categories will be judged and winners chosen by Gordon Langsbury and Dave Cromack who has kindly agreed to support us again. The meeting will then, on a show of hands, choose the overall winner who will win the Gordon Langsbury Cup, currently held by Bill Watts for his action shot of a Grey Heron (seen reproduced here).

Gift vouchers will be given in all categories for first place and second place and the overall winner. Additional prizes may be supplied on the night.

You may enter photographs entered before if you wish, so if you think one didn't get the attention it deserved feel free to try again. We encourage newcomers to show their photographs, an experienced photographer certainly does not win every time! You just might have the picture to catch the judges attention!

Due to time limitations on the night, we have changed the number of entries per section to just four per person, so you still have up to twelve chances to win prizes on the night so have a look through your photos and give it a go!

Overall rules

- Photographs will be of wild, non captive birds only
- The competition is open to paid up members of the BOC. New members may join on the night if they wish.
- No more than four entries per category per entrant.
- Entrants agree to any entered photographs being displayed by the BOC on it's website and used for publicity purposes, at the Club's discretion. The BOC will make reasonable attempts to ensure acknowledgement is given to photographers whose work is used in this way.
- Photographs will be judged on all factors including exposure, colour cast, focus, composition and form. The decision of the judges is final.
- To qualify as a digiscoped picture the photograph must have been taken through a telescope.
- Limited image manipulation is permissible e.g. removal of a twig or blade of grass, but no major changes to the bird image itself. Adjustment to exposure, sharpening, colour correction, sensor dust spotting and cropping and resizing is acceptable.
- The images, regardless of file size, image size and resolution will be adapted by the BOC for presentation as they see fit but without responsibility for the results.

Closing date for entries is 18 March 2009.

Images should be emailed to colin.wilson@berksoc.org.uk or sent on a CD to his home address: Blakeney, St. Catherine's Road, Frimley Green, Surrey, GU16 9NP. Any questions please telephone 01252 837411.

BTO Council News

Those of you who are BTO members may have noticed in the September-October 2008 issue of BTO News, while others may be interested to know, that our Chairman Neil Bucknell has been proposed as a new Ordinary Member of the BTO Council. I'm sure that the description of him as "ordinary" does not do him or the role justice, and I'm also sure you will join in sending him our best wishes in both the election (at the AGM on December 6th) and in his future involvement with the BTO.

News from the TABCG

Breeding season news from around the area has been somewhat mixed. At Hosehill the terns on the island lost their eggs/young chicks due to the high water levels in June and left early. Sadly, this is the first time in many years that the terns have not managed to raise any chicks in the Theale area as the ones on Main Pit also lost their eggs/chicks. On a happier note about 17 pairs of Sand Martins have bred in the wall at Hosehill.

Maintenance work is always ongoing, especially at Hosehill, where refurbishment of the Sand Martin wall has been started with vegetation being cleared and the roof removed to allow the sand to get wet. Other preparatory work has been carried out by the Dragonfly Pond in readiness for the annual clearance work. Also of interest, is the new "Insect Hotel" consisting of pallets and pipes and a variety of different sizes of vegetation, on the Butterfly Bank, to provide shelter for some of the smaller residents. Plans are being developed to create a wader scrape on the front of the island at Hosehill, assuming that it gains approval from the Environment Agency. This work will require some funding and also good timing as it will need to be done outside the breeding season when the water levels are relatively low.

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. The Group has its own Web site, which can be visited at <http://www.freewebs.com/tabcg/>

Information courtesy of TABCG (with thanks to Cathy McEwan)

BOC Cruise – Poole Harbour, Saturday 14th June 2008

(To be sung to the tune of "Drunken Sailor")

What shall we do for a club excursion? (3x)
On a sunny evening

Seabirds, a few nice waders (3x)
All around the area

Seabirds, a few nice waders (3x)
All around the area

What did we see along the sea cliffs? (3x)
Sailing to the headland

Take a cruise around Poole Harbour (3x)
To go and see the birdlife

Seabirds, a few nice waders (3x)
All around the area

Seabirds, a few nice waders (3x)
All around the area

Gannets, auks and several puffins (3x)
As we neared St Alban's

What did we see when we left the Harbour? (3x)
Passing close to Sandbanks

Seabirds, a few nice waders (3x)
All around the area

Seabirds, a few nice waders (3x)
All around the area

Saw the birds, returned to harbour (3x)
Thanks go to Ray Reedman!

Cormorants, shags and views of fulmar (3x)
As we sailed past Durlston

Seabirds, a few nice waders (3x)
All around the area

(Traditional-ish, Ted Rogers)

Editor's note: And hardly a drop passed our lips all day - honest!

Pembrokeshire Weekend– June 2009

We have a long weekend trip arranged for 4th to 7th June 2009. If you are interested feel free to register your interest now, there will be no commitment until nearer the time. No final plans have been fixed for the trip but we would expect to have a few special days birding in the area and hopefully, some spectacular seabird experiences to remember. Our preference will be to minimise the number of cars travelling for carbon footprint reasons, so lifts will be made available where possible and practical. Email colin.wilson@berksoc.org.uk or phone 01252837411 to make sure you're kept up to date with the plans.

