



Welcome to eNews 06

The year 2018 is drawing to a close, all too soon some might say, leaving quite a lot of questions about the weather and its effects on the autumn migration, in particular. Many migrants seemed scarcer on the ground with many fewer Common Redstarts and Pied Flycatchers, and (to be confirmed) no Barred Warblers for the third year in a row. Wrynecks and Red-backed Shrikes were also hard to find. On the plus side, most birders in the county have never seen so many Hawfinches in the wake of the UK invasion which began in mid-October 2017 with Hawfinches remaining all winter in unusual numbers. The state of play with regard to bird populations and their migrations will be comprehensively covered by Professor Ian Newton when he addresses our joint meeting with the LNU in January - don't miss it!

On a different note, our first draft of the LBC Annual Bird Report for 2017 has recently been completed and is being proofread and edited as I type. Many thanks to all the writers for enabling us to get a little bit ahead this year.

Forthcoming Events

Saturday January 5th, 2pm Joint meeting with LNU at Whisby Education Centre:

Professor Sir Ian Newton will give a talk on **Birds and Migration**



Northern Wheatear, still a familiar early spring migrant (Photo © Phil Hyde)

Professor Newton is the doyen of the UK's birding scientists. He lives in Lincolnshire and we are honoured that he has accepted our invitation to speak to us, so please turn out to hear him if you can, it's sure to be an interesting afternoon,

Saturday January 26th 09.30 to 16.00 Joint LBC/BTO conference at Whisby Education Centre

Celebrating 40 years of Lincolnshire Bird Club with a focus on Water and Farmland birds. Everyone is welcome. Cheap at £15 per head including tea, coffee and lunch book online at www.bto.org/lincolnshire19 or call the BTO support team on 01842 750050. Our conferences are usually sold out several weeks ahead of the date so to avoid disappointment don't delay booking.



Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, now a real Lincolnshire rarity (Photo © Graham Catley)

Programme

Chair **Phil Espin BTO RR Lincs East, Chair LBC**

9.55	Welcome	
10.00	40 years of LBC	Nicholas Watts
10.20	Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers	Andy Sims
10.40	Birds of Covenham	John Clarkson

11.00	Protecting and Enhancing Wildlife for Eastern England	Mike Drew
11.30	WeBS BTO	Teresa Frost
12.00	Lunch	

Chair **Mike Daly BTO RR Lincs West**

1.30	Planting Woodlands and Hedges for Birds	Hugh Dorrington
2.00	Lincs Grey Partridges	David Bird
2.30	Nest Record Scheme	Carl Barimore
3.00	Farmland Bird Recovery	Kirsty Brannan
3.30	Raffle and close	

LBC AGM Tuesday April 9th, 7pm at The Golf Hotel, Woodhall Spa (venue to be confirmed).

LBC are pleased to announce that the speaker at our 40th anniversary 2019 AGM will be local birder made good, Dr Alex Lees, Senior Lecturer in Biodiversity at Manchester Metropolitan University. He will be talking about “Rewilding in Britain”. It will be a great evening so please make a diary note to attend.



(Above: Dr Alex Lees and an English “rewilded” site. Photos © Dr Alex Lees)

There have also been proposals to radically reshape our membership basis which we plan to debate at the AGM to get member feedback, so watch out for more detail on this in forthcoming newsletters. Owing to upper floor access, poor projection facilities and car parking issues we have decided to change the venue from The Rodney at Horncastle to The Golf Hotel at Woodhall Spa. We hope this will provide a better experience.

Deadlines for submission of records

At the most recent LBC Committee meeting (Oct 9th) it was agreed to set deadlines for both record submissions (for 2018 and each year after) and for species accounts (from now onwards). These are as follows:

Submission of sightings records by 1st June (so for 2018 records that 1st June 2019)

Submission of species accounts 1st November (includes the 2017 species accounts)

We hope this will promote a speedier report write-up from now on.

Phil Hyde (recorder_south@lincsbirdclub.co.uk) and John Clarkson (recorder_north@lincsbirdclub.co.uk)

Stilt Sandpipers in Lincolnshire and an enviable hat-trick

The long-staying Stilt Sandpiper at Frampton Marsh drew admirers from all over the UK. Just to remind most of us, especially the younger faction, this year's bird was Lincolnshire's third, the previous two occurring before most of us had even acquired The Observer's Book of Birds:

Lincolnshire Stilt Sandpiper (*Micropalama himantopus*) records as reported in the

BBRC reports on Rare Birds in Britain for 1963 and 1965

1. Lincolnshire/Norfolk/Cambridgeshire: Wisbech sewage-farm, adult, trapped, 19th July to 7th August (G. Gould, J. A. Hardman, Dr. C. D. T. Minton et al.) (Brit.Birds, 57: 125-126).
2. Lincolnshire/Norfolk: Wisbech sewage farm, 12th to 26th August (D. G. Bell, G. M. S. Easy, J. A. W. Moyes et al.).

Thanks to one of the county's regular WeBS counters, Richard Caney of Gedney, I was made aware of one veteran local birder who has now seen all three birds: John Moyes, mentioned in the details of record number two in the BBRC report, above. John was kind enough to correspond with me about his memories of the two early records as follows:

Stilt Sandpiper 1 - July 1963

I saw an adult in summer plumage at Wisbech sewage farm on July 17th 1963, remaining until August 7th. The finders were two Cambridgeshire teachers, one of whom filmed the bird. Sadly both are now deceased and no photographic evidence is available. It was caught and ringed by Clive Minton et al on 19th July and was largely solitary during its stay.

Stilt Sandpiper 2 - August 1965

An adult moulting into winter plumage was found on August 12th 1965 at Wisbech sewage farm, remaining until August 26th. This bird consorted with a flock of 15 Dunlin and 6 Curlew Sandpipers. This bird was unringed.

Both of these birds were seen to fly into the Lincolnshire section of the sewage farm during their stay, laying to rest any fears that they might not actually be Lincolnshire records. One of them crossed the river to Foul Anchor, thus providing a “tick” for Cambridgeshire birders.



Stilt Sandpiper, Frampton Marsh RSPB reserve, August 2018 (Photo © Phil Hyde)

Stilt Sandpiper 3 - August 2018

John and his friend Richard Caney saw this bird along with hundreds of other birders during its extended stay from 22nd onwards. They enjoyed a very fulfilling shorebird afternoon and he notes that they also saw Long-billed Dowitcher, Curlew & Wood Sandpipers, Knot and Greenshank, among others.

A very unique set of records spanning fifty-five years! Congratulations to John and here's hoping you continue to enjoy your shorebirds on the Wash and elsewhere.

Phil Hyde (recorder_south@lincsbirdclub.co.uk)

Outstanding Lincolnshire BBRC and LBRC description species for 2017

BBRC

Peregrine (Arctic/N American group) calidus/tundrius	Donna Nook	05/02/17
Black Stork	Healing	28/05/17
Black Stork	GPBO	08/05/17
Roller	Holbeach Marsh	16/06/17
Lesser Yellowlegs	Saltfleetby/Thedd. NNR	16/07/17
Broad-billed Sandpiper	GPBO	18/07/17
Semipalmated Sandpiper	Alkborough	09/08/17
Baird's Sandpiper	Wroot	16/09/17
Semipalmated Sandpiper	Whitton	04/11/17

LBRC

Marsh Warbler	Huttoft	09/09/17
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These records are in the LBC archive for 2017 but remain unconfirmed as they require submission to BBRC. If the observers concerned intend to submit, or indeed if they don't, **could they please contact LBRC via info@lincsbirdclub.co.uk** to let us know the progress/fate of these records. The records will remain in our "Pending" file until we have been notified.

Lincolnshire 2017 and earlier BBRC descriptions in progress

Out of interest, the following records are still in circulation, from the BBRC WIP file (as at November 2018,

<https://www.bbrc.org.uk/main-information/work-in-progress>).

24/07/2013 - 31/07/2013	Baltic Gull	<i>L. f. fuscus</i>	North Hykeham
22/07/2016 - 22/07/2016	Baltic Gull	<i>L. f. fuscus</i>	Norton Disney Quarry
07/12/2017 - 10/12/2017	Mandt's Black Guillemot	<i>C. g. mandtii</i>	Witham Mouth
06/11/1975 - 06/11/1975	Pallid Swift	<i>Apus pallidus</i>	Rimac
15/10/2016 - 15/10/2016 Dunes	Northern Treecreeper	<i>C. f. familiaris</i>	Theddlethorpe
12/10/2016 - 14/10/2016	Red-flanked Bluetail	<i>Tarsiger cyanurus</i>	Gibraltar Point

The Birdwatchers' Code of Conduct

The Birdwatchers' Code of Conduct was produced in 2004 by a partnership of The Association of County Recorders, RSPB, British Trust for Ornithology, British Ornithologists Union, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust and others. It is a comprehensive document that can be found on the RSPB and BTO websites and elsewhere.

Overall the message is "The interests of the bird come first".

The Nature Photographers' Code of Practise was first produced in 1997 by the Nature Group of The Royal Photographic Society and updated in 2007 in consultation with the RSPB and the three national countryside agencies. This eight-page Code includes birds, and all animals, plants and fungi.

Both codes were a reaction to an increasing number of incidents definitely not in the interests of wildlife and now many countries have followed suit with similar codes in China, USA, Canada, New Zealand and Australia amongst others. The problems are worldwide.

The RSPB summarises the Birdwatchers' Code:

- Avoid disturbing birds and their habitats – the birds interests should always come first.
- Be an ambassador for birdwatching.
- Know the law and the rules for visiting the countryside and follow them.
- Send your sightings to the County Bird Recorder and Birdtrack website.

Think about the interests of wildlife and local people before passing on news of a rare bird, especially during the breeding season.

The following is from the **Radnorshire Wildlife Trust's newsletter** from Oct of this year, but is applicable at all sites in the country. I'm sure we can all cite examples from Lincolnshire of similar irresponsible behaviour. The message is simple - the interests of the bird comes first.

"Unfortunately a small but significant percentage of birdwatchers, bird photographers and self-styled "ornithologists" take little if any notice of these Codes. Even here in Radnorshire we have had Firecrests disturbed by a photographer at the nest site. Whooper Swans deliberately flushed off Craig Goch Reservoir . Little Ringed Plovers and their young repeatedly disturbed. Great Grey Shrikes chased. Curlew and young harassed. A photogenic male Redstart given dried mealworms in the nesting season killing its brood in each of 2-3 years. And just over the border, the Desert Wheatear at Clee Hill pursued at the gallop by a camouflaged photographer, a similar incident at the Kington Cream-coloured Courser and a Wryneck in Ceredigion. And the incident just into Breconshire at a Hen Harrier's nest which ended up with the RSPB and the Police (diary entry: "... caught by the warden, must go back and finish off later.")

Also there have been many instances of general/total disturbance of several of our best wetland and moorland sites where important daytime and nighttime roosts of waders etc are found. Also bannings from three large estates and other incidents of trespass. Neither the art of bird photography, nature conservation or scientific knowledge are being in any way significantly advanced. But there has been damage to several long-term relationships with landowners, long-term censuses and the reputation in some quarters of the ordinary, law-abiding birdwatcher.

These are just some of the incidents that I have personally witnessed by chance when the perpetrator(s) thought they were not seen or that I have been told about. So this is very probably the tip of an iceberg. Just a few individuals are involved, driven it seems, as elsewhere, by "what can I put on the/my blog site/facebook etc etc today".

So, if you find a rare bird apply The Birdwatchers' Code of Conduct before telling anyone. If it is sat out in the middle of Llandrindod Lake or an Elan reservoir it shouldn't be a problem. If it is a rare bird on private land (all land is owned by someone) or is a rare breeding bird in the nesting season do think very carefully. It is often best to resist temptation and the excitement of the moment and say nothing these days until the bird has gone. Just keep lots of notes and take photos if possible, however poor quality, and if it is in your garden perhaps get a neighbour or two round if the bird stays.

Pete Jennings, Radnorshire (VC43) Bird Recorder (radnorshirebirds@hotmail.com)"

Oct 2018 article for the Radnorshire Wildlife Trust's newsletter

Phil Espin adds "Of course if you are lucky enough to find a rare bird and find yourself in a quandary about what to do, why not consult one of our county recorders John Clarkson (recorder_north@lincsbirdclub.co.uk) and Phil Hyde (recorder_south@lincsbirdclub.co.uk). They are both highly experienced and will be able to advise on the best way to manage the situation in line with the code of conduct. If you wish they will confirm the identity of your bird and make sure it is fully recorded."

A birding career is born - first encounters with British Birds and the autumn of 1974

By Graham Catley

The *British Bird* centenary issues have brought back memories of my first encounter with the august journal in my student days at University of East Anglia in autumn 1974 but it was the spring of that year which provided the backdrop to the later encounter.

In early April 1974 a soil science field course was planned on South Uist, and of course having an outline knowledge of the rather good birding which was available the birders on the Environmental Sciences course were first in the line up. Meeting up on Glasgow station we enjoyed an encounter with the local police due to our student enthusiasm but were soon on board the Oban-bound train. A couple of hours in Oban harbour produced views of two Iceland Gulls, a lifer for us all, followed by an excellent long boat trip out to South Uist with huge numbers of Manx Shearwaters and other seabirds followed by another Iceland Gull in Oban harbour.

Our tutor Dave Dent and his assistant had driven up before us and set up our camp site in the dunes on the west side of South Uist. Being a perceptive type Dave knew of our deep interest in the course and had staked out Golden Eagles and Peregrines for us! The campsite was idyllic in the open machair with waders calling all around all day and all night; the weather was balmy and tee shirts and shorts were the order of the day. We enjoyed some great birding with Golden Eagles and Peregrine added to my life list plus wild Greylags and abundant other waders and wildfowl. Early morning jaunts located lots of wader nests on the machair and sightings of Great Northern Divers (30+), Raven, Golden Eagle, Hooded Crow, Northern Wheatear (50+), Rock Dove (88), and Long-tailed Duck (20). The week ended with the long return journey to Oban; in student fashion most people got drunk on Scottish whisky but then it was back to the grind of study.

At weekends, if we couldn't get a lift or borrow the student minibus our Saturday routine was a train from Norwich to Sheringham and then the short walk along the coast to Cley. Sometimes we hitched and got the odd lift! June 18th turned out to be a mega day with three lifers at Cley. The day started with Spoonbill, followed by an obliging Red-necked Phalarope and then just as we were leaving for the trek back to Sheringham Richard (Richardson) shouted back that the Kentish Plover had just landed on Arnold's Marsh. He had also told us about the Cetti's Warblers in the Broads which we managed to pop out and see two days later, and the Honey Buzzards at Felbrigg. It was only a week to my second year exams so I ended up on the back of Duncan Brookes' motorbike loaded down with revision papers enroute to Felbrigg on the 23rd. We had amazing views of my fifth lifer in five days and I even managed to pass the exams.

So where does BB come into it? Sometime in November 1974 I bumped into Jeff Clarke, who had been on the Uists course and was another key member of the UEA bird club that we were running at the time. Jeff had just subscribed to BB and had received the Report on Rare birds in 1973, which he was devouring with all the enthusiasm of a fledgling twitcher. Looking at the grainy black and white photos Jeff pointed out that there had been a drake Steller's Eider on South Uist, no less, for two years and it was still there at somewhere called

Peninerine (or *Peighinn nan Aoireann* if you speak Gaelic). Out came the atlas and there was Peninerine; and where was it we camped? Well if we had looked in the right direction and thrown a cricket ball we could have knocked out the stunning Arctic duck! We had spent a whole week within spitting distance of one of the rarest birds in the UK and had managed not to look at it!

Such was birding in the days of no information or communication by postcard, but at least it meant that I had to go back there someday. I duly managed this in late May 1978 dragging the understanding girlfriend to the outer realms of the UK in less than favourable weather which did produce 48 Pomarine Skuas, some superb Corncrakes and some long discussions with Charlie Pickup in the old RSPB cottage at Balranald and the local pub, where Julia's presence appeared to be somewhat frowned upon. Charlie regaled us with talk of a place in Israel called Eilat where he had been that spring and my first long haul birding trip was already in the planning stages. And amazingly Julia is still putting up with my obsession 44 years later; must go back to the Uists soon!



Winter birding at Cleethorpes, c.1977. Is that a telescope ?! (Photographer unknown!)

(Editor's note: This is the first in an occasional series of how LBC members got started in the hallowed pastime of birding! If you would like to tell us about your "first steps" please submit in a Word document to Phil Espin at chairman@lincsbirdclub.co.uk)



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The Lincolnshire Bird Club, supporting the recording & conservation of wildlife in Lincolnshire

