





# Lincolnshire Bird Club eNewsletter



Lincs Bird Club eNewsletter 02 January 2018

**Lincolnshire Rooks**  
Living in the shadow of Ash dieback  
By Andrew Chick

A Joint LBC / LNU Meeting

  Lincolnshire Bird Club

**2:00pm 20th January 2018, Whisby Nature Park, Lincoln**

A joint LBC/LNU Meeting 20th January 2018 will be;

## **Lincolnshire Rooks; Living in the shadow of Ash dieback by Andrew Chick**

The talk will look at 70 years of rook studies in Lincolnshire, starting with the 1947 LNU Transaction paper and compare the results of the 2017 Lincolnshire Bird Club survey which inspected over 250 rookeries and counted 5959 nests. During the 1980's a detailed survey of the trees utilised by nesting rooks was undertaken to assess the likely impact of Dutch Elm Disease on Lincolnshire birds, some 30 years later we are now assessing the potential impact that *Chalara* dieback will have on Lincolnshire wildlife. The joint Lincolnshire Bird Club/Lincolnshire Naturalists' Union indoor meetings are held in Lincoln at the Whisby Education Centre at Whisby Nature Park. Indoor meetings start at 2pm, with both members and non-members welcome to attend.

# Lincolnshire Bird Club AGM - 20th March 2018

## *British Birds* editor to speak at clubs 2018 AGM

A BUMPER turnout is in prospect for the Lincolnshire Bird Club's AGM at the Admiral Rodney Hotel in Horncastle on March 20.

The guest speaker will be Dr Roger Riddington, long-serving Editor of the authoritative *British Birds* magazine, who is coming back to his home county, Lincolnshire, from the Shetlands where he and his family are based.

The son of a self-employed milk roundsman, Roger grew up and went to school in the Alford area where he discovered the joys and challenges of birdwatching while exploring the fields and woods around his home. He was lucky to receive plenty of encouragement from an old school pal of his father, namely the late Ted Smith, driving force behind the founding of Gibraltar Point Nature Reserve, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and many other nature-associated initiatives.

After impressive A-level results, Roger won a place at Oxford University where his degree subject was Geography. Following graduation, he was poised to take a job in Cambridge with global accountancy firm Arthur Andersen, but decided, instead, to take a PhD second degree, researching movement and dispersal in great tits.

This proved to be the springboard for a career in natural sciences and ornithology which included four years as warden on Fair Isle. To this day, though he has travelled extensively, Fair Isle remains his favourite birding location.

At the annual meeting, Roger will doubtless talk about his life and work as Editor (for the past 17 years) of *British Birds* which is a five-days-a-week job. He also contributes to the annual Shetland Bird Report.

Highlights of his career include unexpectedly encountering what was the third UK record of thick-billed warbler on Out Skerries on September 14, 2001.

Low points include having had his Zeiss Dyalyt 10x40 binoculars, a 21st birthday present, and his Bushnell Spacemaster scope stolen in Seville at the end of the first day of a 1989 holiday in Spain. During his presentation, Roger may perhaps also reveal whether he has yet had the opportunity to realise a long-held ambition - to watch spoon-billed sandpipers in their breeding grounds on the Chukchi peninsula in Russia.

Off duty, he likes the music of Scottish folk-rock singer-songwriter Malachy Tallack, who also lives on Shetland, and books by the food writer, Nigel Slater.

As he confessed to fellow birder Keith Betton in an interview which was published in 2015 in the book *Behind The Binoculars* (co-authored by Mark Avery), Roger is a Manchester United fan.

That's unfortunate, but probably not quite sufficient for the club to withdraw its invitation !

The talk will start at 7:30pm with AGM following straight afterwards.

Come and hear BB Editor Roger Riddington talk about his birding adventures at the Lincolnshire Bird Club AGM

**From Skegnes to Shetland**

Diary date:  
Lincs Bird Club AGM,  
Admiral Rodney,  
Horncastle. 7.30pm, March 20th, 2018



# The Black Guillemot at Witham Mouth

On Fri 7th Dec 2017, I travelled over to the Cut End section of the Wash, for one of my regular seawatching sessions here. There was a good blow on, albeit not from the most favourable direction. However, there are usually one or two notable birds taking shelter in the calm waters of the Witham/Welland mouths.

I'd already enjoyed a decent morning's birding, with 4 Long-tailed Duck south, a Slavonian Grebe, a Great Northern Diver, Shag, Hen Harrier and Merlin. It wasn't until lunchtime that I decided to open the south-facing window of the hide, as the rain and hail had been lashing it for most of the morning. I scanned the rocks for waders, then the Welland (the bits of it I could see).

It was then that I noticed a very white looking bird, very distant and close to the bank. It was immediately obvious to me that I had a Black Guillemot in my sights, even though it was for only a couple of seconds. In that same moment I was struck with just how white it looked. My previous experience of the birds had mostly been of summer plumaged birds off the west coast of Scotland and N Ireland. I was fortunate enough to see a winter plumaged individual a few years back off Norfolk but my bird looked very different indeed from that one.

The bird disappeared, out of my view and I was panicking, thinking I might not see it again. I did though, still very distantly and only for a few seconds each time, before it dived or went out of view again. I had to get a photo! Well, I did but they only came out as white 'blobs'. More brief views were had over the next hour or two, including in-flight views. I'd put news out and local birder Paul Sullivan made it down to witness the sighting.

The Black Guillemot proved very popular with Linc's birders over the following few days as most people needed it for their county lists, including myself. The last one in the county was some 11 years ago. A few birders managed to get some good photographs over the weekend. There were some early musings on twitter that the bird could, possibly be of the subspecies *mandtii*, owing to its extremely pale appearance.

More photos were posted, more discussion took place and more references were provided. It was on the Sunday that well known Norfolk birder Steve Gantlett got the 'clincher' photos that showed it appeared to be a Mandt's Guillemot, *Cepphus grylle mandtii*. This subspecies comes from the high Arctic and if proven would be the first record for Britain. I am very grateful for all the input from other birders.

*Dave Roberts, Grantham.*

**Note:** for further discussion on this intriguing bird see Birding Frontiers.

<http://birdingfrontiers.com/2017/12/11/candidate-mandtii-black-guillemot-in-lincolnshire-uk/>





Photo courtesy of Steve Gantlett <http://www.cleybirds.com>

Black Guillemot *Cephus grylle* possibly of the race *mandtii* at the Witham Mouth on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2017



Photo courtesy of Steve Gantlett <http://www.cleybirds.com>

Black Guillemot *Cepphus grylle* possibly of the race *mandtii* at the Witham Mouth on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2017





Photo courtesy of Steve Gantlett <http://www.cleybirds.com>

Black Guillemot *Cephus grylle* possibly of the race *mandtii* at the Witham Mouth on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2017



One of three Great Northern Divers at Cut End 11th November 2017 - Colin Casey





Redhead Smew, River Witham at Dogdyke, 28/11/2017. Image by - Russell Hayes



# Norwegian ringed Bar-tailed Godwit

By *Graham P Catley*

On November 6th I found a colour ringed juvenile Bar-tailed Godwit with a red ring on the left tarsus and a yellow flag on the right tarsus inscribed with NAH; I knew this was likely to be from the Norwegian scheme and sent off the details to Kjell -- I quickly got a reply with the ringing details; listed below.

Since that date I have seen the bird regularly up to December 19th always on the same area of intertidal mudflats at North Killingholme Haven and always feeding within 500m of the same spot; there are only 5 - 10 Bar-tailed Godwits in the area but up to 5000 Dunlin, 400 Redshank, 120 Curlew and in November up to 4500 Black-tailed Godwits. The site is clearly an important one on the Humber and has several designations including SPA status. Regrettably, after a planning refusal, the Government minister concerned gave the go ahead for ABLE UK to destroy this area of mudflats as part of an offshore turbine servicing site; in spite of a lot of opposition, once again money wins and birds lose -- lets hope this Bar-tailed Godwit enjoys it's winter here it may be the last there for so many waders.

Ring no : **Stavanger 7218393**

**Yellow flag NAH** ( Left tarsus : metal . Left tibia red colour ring. Right tibia yellow flag engraved with three black letters NAH).

**:LAR:LBM:RAYN(NAH)F**

Age/sex/ biometric: **M1K (hatched 2017)**. Wing: 201 mm . Weight: 247 g.

Ringing date: **29.09.2017**, 10 hrs.

Ringing place: **Revtangen (58°45'11"N-005°29'24"E) Klepp, Rogaland, Norway.**

Remarks: **Caught in mist net.**

Ringer: **Alf Tore Mjøs / Revtangen OS.**

Finding date: **06.11.2017**, - hrs

Observed : **North Killingholme (53°39'04"N-000°13'12"W) North Lincolnshire, ENGLAND / UK**

Distance : **667 km SSW** . Direction: 214 deg. Time: **0 -1-8** ( 1 month -8 days after ringing).

Remarks: **Photo Documented .**

Observed : **Photo Documented by Graham Catley**





Image by - Russell Hayes





Stonechat, Gibraltar Point NNR, Dec 2017 - Colin Casey



# White-winged Crossbill - Iceland

*By David Cohen*

It's not everyday you get the opportunity to see a "First for the Western Palearctic" but that is what my wife and I managed on a recent long weekend in Iceland with The Travelling Naturalist.



Image by Trausti Gunnarsson



Seeing the Aurora Borealis or the Northern Lights has long been on our bucket lists and a November trip to Iceland seemed an ideal opportunity to tick this one off.

There was also the small matter of Barrow's Goldeneye and Gyrfalcon to add to our life lists alongside further views of Harlequin Duck and a number of winter birds, that we do not see too often in the U.K. – for example, Iceland and Glaucous Gulls side by side, Great Northern Divers, Long-tailed Ducks and Black Guillemots in the harbours, large flocks of Snow Buntings around the coast and Ptarmigan in the lava fields.

Throw in a recent fall of snow to enhance the exceptional scenery, the unusual geo-thermal springs and geysers and a knowledgeable leader - who could ask for anything more?



Image by Susanne Cohen

The following is extracted from a BirdGuides article dated 16 November:

*On 14 November 2017, Gummi Falk found and photographed a male [Two-barred Crossbill](#) (*Loxia leucoptera*) at Seltjörn, South-west Iceland. Gummi's photographs showed the bird to be distinctively pinkish in colour and seemingly quite lightweight in structure, albeit with no other birds for direct comparison. Quite strikingly, it possessed a very long, slender and tapering bill, with the tip of the upper mandible apparently extending well beyond the tip of the lower mandible.*

*These features, as well as the relatively fine white tips to the tertials, are all highly indicative of the Nearctic subspecies *leucoptera*, or '[White-winged Crossbill](#)' – a taxon not previously recorded in the Western Palearctic. Returning on 15 November, Gummi and Gunnar Hallgrímsson were able to relocate the bird and obtain better photos and, crucially, sound recordings. These were sent to Magnus Robb, who confirmed the identification.*

For the full article please go to:

<https://www.birdguides.com/articles/white-winged-crossbill-in-iceland-a-western-palearctic-first>

On 18 November we spent the day around the South-west coast, seeing good numbers of Long-tailed Ducks, a single Harlequin, 3 Barrow's Goldeneye, 3 Red-throated and 4 Great Northern divers plus 4

Black Guillemots and a couple of Ptarmigan before we paused at Hardisarvik to scan for more wildfowl.

Large numbers of duck took to the sky in panic as a large female Gyrfalcon made several passes through the massed throng, creating havoc for several minutes before flying off high to the west.

Elated by our success with the Gyrfalcon, we were further encouraged to learn that **the** “Crossbill” had been relocated in the conifer plantation and set off on a 35 minute drive to the site. Upon arrival, we met a local birder, who confirmed that the bird had been seen twenty minutes earlier. However, despite much searching it could not be relocated and, as the light started to fade, we headed back to our guesthouse to drown our sorrows.

On 20 November, our last day, we explored a number of birding sites around the capital, Reykjavik, before heading back to Seltjörn for a picnic lunch. A major Icelandic twitch was underway, with three cars in the car park and three birders (including Gummi Falk) photographing a large group of Redpoll, whilst waiting for the Crossbill to appear. At this stage, we were told that the White-winged Crossbill had joined up with a small flock of Red Crossbills, so we scanned the treetops and soon picked up small numbers of the more common species.

After a short wait, we picked up **the** bird feeding in a close tree. The good news was we found it quite quickly; the bad news was it was feeding on a cone and offering limited views of its white underside. We waited for what seemed like ages but was probably only a few minutes before the bird turned round, assumed an upright position and showed off its pinkish plumage, double wing bar and white-tipped tertials! Having displayed all its key features, the bird hopped into the greenery and was lost from view – just as our leader suggested that it was time for us to depart for the airport and our flight home!

And so the long weekend came to an end with c50 species on our list, just two lifers, as we had seen White-winged Crossbill in Canada in 2009, and some excellent memories. We learned a lot about the geology of the area from our guide, Trausti Gunnarsson, who also delivered a magical sighting in the early hours of 18 November. We had spent the previous two and a half hours staring into the Icelandic darkness, looking for solar activity but were thwarted by the cloud cover. Having decided to give it best and return to our guesthouse, our luck changed as we approached town. The clouds parted for the first time and the Aurora Borealis was revealed in all its glory for just fifteen minutes – another bucket list item ticked off!

All in all, this was a fabulous trip and we would like to express our thanks to The Travelling Naturalist, who made all the arrangements and to Trausti, who looked after us so well whilst we were in Iceland.



Images by Gummi Falk



# Possible Joint LBC/LNU visit to NHM Tring

The Lincolnshire Bird Club and Lincolnshire Naturalists' Union are considering a joint trip to the NHM Tring (<http://www.nhm.ac.uk/visit/tring.html>) to look behind the scenes at the bird skin collection with particular reference to birds in the collection from Lincolnshire.

This follows the recent donation of bird skins from the LNU collection. At this stage we do not have a date and/or a cost but would like members to register an interest, to see if such a trip was likely to be worth organising.

To register YOUR interest please email [info@lincsbirdclub.co.uk](mailto:info@lincsbirdclub.co.uk).



# Lincolnshire MP proud to fly flag for the Redshank

BOSTON and Skegness MP Matt Warman has agreed to be the RSPB's "species champion" for the Redshank.

Last year, he joined RSPB staff in monitoring the breeding population of the species on the saltmarsh at the society's Frampton Marsh reserve which is within his constituency.

This deed earned him the RSPB 'Muddy Welly Award'!

Mr Warman said afterwards:

*"I really enjoyed my visit to Frampton Marsh to watch redshank and other waders in their natural habitat."*

*"Winning an award for my efforts was a bonus!"*



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## New nature reserve will provide mitigation habitat for estuary's under-pressure waders and wildfowl

A NEW nature reserve is on the cards for the South Bank of the Humber Estuary. North East Lincolnshire has earmarked up £6.84-million for this project which will involve creation of lagoons, ponds and other habitat on land off South Marsh Road in Stallingborough, near Grimsby. The approximate breakdown is:

- Up to £4.56-million for land acquisition - either purchased outright or leased for 25 years
- £1.39-million to create appropriate habitat
- £894,000 for ongoing management

It is understood that the reserve, to be known as Cress Marsh, will consist of four different sites so as to provide diversity for waders - including curlew, redshank, lapwing and golden plover - as well as ducks and geese. The council is required to create the reserve to provide mitigation for habitat which will be lost during development of industrial land and provision of infrastructure as part of its South Humber Gateway employment initiative. This part of the Humber Estuary is annually thought to provide feeding habitat for at least 175,000 birds - chiefly waders and wildfowl.

Despite the pressure on local authority budgets, NELC is confident that - aided by grants - it has the resources to ensure the reserve is appropriately and effectively managed once it has been created. Contractors will be engaged to carry out this work. Ensuring the authority meets its responsibilities will be Natural England who have signed off the project as have partner-organisations such as sisters-councils, the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, the RSPB and the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership. The RSPB has insisted that there must be guarantees that mitigation measures will be in perpetuity and not allowed to lapse at the expiry of 25-year leases which landowners might not wish to renew. What access, if any, the public, including birders, will have to the site has yet to be determined. The project is subject to approval from councilors once they have assessed the planning application later this winter.



# Lincolnshire Birding Site Guides

There are a number of **Birding Sites** reference pages on the new LBC website (see [lincsbirdclub.co.uk/site/index.php/information/birding-sites](http://lincsbirdclub.co.uk/site/index.php/information/birding-sites) for details), None members only see selected sites, by logging in members see more! They are all set out in a standard format and to date we have:

Brickyard Lane Covenham Reservoir  
Cut End (Boston)  
Donna Nook  
Gibraltar Point NNR  
Marston STW  
Manby Wetlands  
Paradise Pool (Saltfleet)  
RSPB Frampton Marsh  
RSPB Freiston Shore

We would welcome a few more sites! If anyone would like to compile the required data and forwarding to us for use would be most welcome. We need to know the following;

1. Nearest postcode
2. Site address
3. Site grid reference (not essential)
4. Basic directions to get there by car (plus any other useful information if you have it)
5. A couple of paragraphs on the site, such as what you might see and when it's best to go....
6. Any website links to the site (not essential)
7. Some photos (not essential but useful)

Send the above information to me ([info@lincsbirdclub.co.uk](mailto:info@lincsbirdclub.co.uk)) and Andrew Chick will do the rest...

The screenshot shows the Lincolnshire Bird Club website interface. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for Home, Sightings, Information, Forum, Sales List, and Text. A 'Sign In / Sign Out' link is also present. Below the navigation is a list of birding sites, with 'Cut End (Boston)' selected. The main content area for 'Cut End (Boston)' includes:

- Nearest Postcode:** PE22 0QX
- Address:** Cut End Road, Rainton
- OS Map:** NGR TF 58049 39159 - Lat/Long 52.951828 0.0522856
- How to get there:** A detailed paragraph describing the route from Rainton Road onto Gayfield Road, then onto Cut End Road, and following the River Witham to the site.
- What to see:** A section for site details, footpaths, and viewpoints.
- Site Images:** A small gallery of three photographs showing the site's landscape.
- Acknowledgements:** A section stating that the information is a general guide and users are responsible for their own safety.
- Date:** Dec 2017

# RSPB Scotland's alert on continuing Corncrake decline

2017 has been another disappointing year for one of Scotland's rarest breeding birds - the Corn Crake.

According to the RSPB, numbers have fallen for the third consecutive year. Over the past summer, only 866 calling males were recorded in Scotland. This is a drop of 17% from 2016, and down 33% from the 2014 high of 1,289 males.

There were glimmers of positive results seen in some areas, such as Barra and Vatersay, with a 47% increase from last year, but these were outweighed by losses elsewhere. Benbecula's population was down 64%, and Durness saw a 53% drop.

The overall sharp decline has prompted concern from RSPB Scotland that the long-term survival of these birds as a breeding species is now under increased threat. Numbers haven't been this low since 2003 when only 836 males were recorded. The RSPB is calling for renewed action to ensure that Scottish Government, and the conservation community do all they can to work with landowners and crofters to protect the species.

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## Corn Crake and Skuas



*Anyone fancy a trip? Dates: 12th - 18th May 2018 !!*



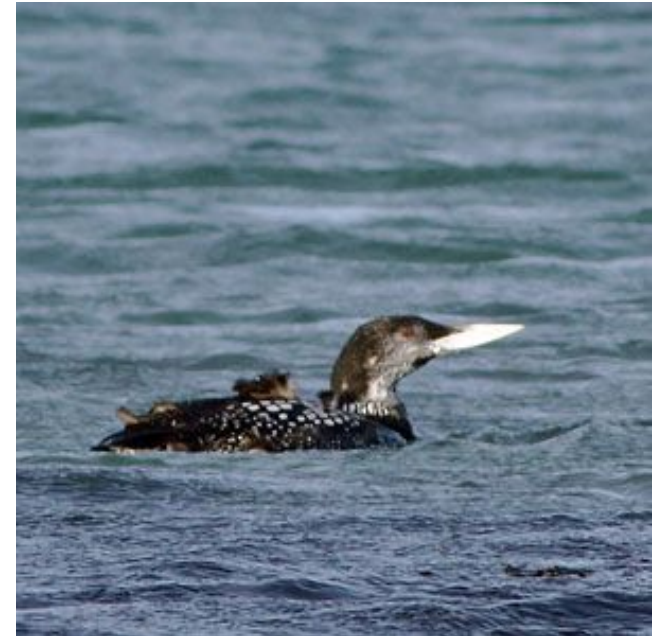


On-shore winds from the west or north-west accompanied by showers will bring both Long-tailed and Pomarine Skuas close in-shore providing us with the opportunity for some superb views of these stunning birds. Visible passage varies each year but with a bit of luck and some wild weather, sea-watching from the headland of Aird an Runair is not to be missed. This is one of, (if not) the premier place in the UK to see these birds in spring. Other species of seabird will also be passing and besides all 4 species of skua, will include Manx Shearwater, Kittiwakes, Arctic Terns and Gannets. If you're really lucky then we may even see a summer plumage Sabine's Gull or Leach's Petrel although conditions do have to be wild to bring these inshore. Divers will also be on the move and both Great Northern Diver and Red-throated Diver will be seen. We have also witnessed passage White-billed Diver on more than one occasion from here in May.

The Uists are also one of the best places in the UK to see the enigmatic Corn Crane. They start arriving from their African wintering grounds in late April although May is the best month to catch up with them as they are very active at this time of year with males competing for the best territories.

Vegetation is often quite low and limited to stands of iris and nettles which the Corn Crakes use for early cover. The distinctive call can often be heard emanating from these patches but with a bit of patience and using the vehicle as a hide we often gain superb views of these normally secretive birds.

Another spectacle at this time of year is the huge numbers of waders bound for the Arctic that throng the beaches and machair with summer plumage Sanderling, Turnstone and Purple Sandpipers amongst masses of Dunlin and Ringed Plover. Some of the bays are so alive with north-bound birds feeding up, that the ground appears to be heaving and the sheer numbers is almost overwhelming. Whimbrel also pass through in good numbers in the first half of May whilst there's also the chance of a wayward Dotterel or possibly something rarer. Small birds are represented with passerines typical of more open habitats such as Meadow Pipit and Skylark as well as Corn Bunting and Wheatears which can appear to be everywhere as numbers of local breeders are enhanced by migrants heading for Greenland. Summer migrants include Sedge Warbler, Willow Warbler and the odd Chiffchaff although most years we also pick up stray Wood Warbler and possibly Redstart.





All this is backed up with a supporting cast of raptors and breeding divers. 8 species of diurnal birds of prey are available including White-tailed Eagle, Golden Eagle, Hen Harrier, Peregrine and Merlin whilst in addition, Short-eared Owls can regularly be found quartering rough grass and moorland. Add to that, breeding plumage Red-throated, Black-throated and Great Northern Diver and you can't fail to have a good time.

**Short list of species:** Whooper Swan, Eider, Garganey, Whimbrel, Black-tailed Godwit, Golden Plover, Dotterel, Purple Sandpiper, Glaucous Gull, Great Skua, Arctic Skua, Long-tailed Skua, Pomarine Skua, Corncrake, Short-eared Owl, Golden Eagle, White-tailed Eagle, Hen Harrier, Peregrine, Merlin, Red-throated, Black-throated and Great Northern Divers. Manx Shearwater, Black Guillemot, Corn Bunting, Twite, plus hordes of waders in summer plumage. Red Deer, Grey and Common Seals, Otters. If the weather's calm enough we will set a moth trap to have a peek at some of the local nightlife.

For more details contact [steveduffield70@gmail.com](mailto:steveduffield70@gmail.com) or visit

[http://www.western-isles-wildlife.com/Templates/corncrake\\_skuas\\_tour.html](http://www.western-isles-wildlife.com/Templates/corncrake_skuas_tour.html)

Please mention the Lincs Bird Club if you contact them.

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## Website update

*By Colin Casey*

Well, after some long nights answering emails for members who had not received the automatic email giving them their Username and Password all seems to be going OK. I think as the club had no system to update members details many email addresses were way out of date.

We have had a lot of positive comments and a few luke warm ones mainly from people who don't like change. We had one **non-member** say that he would no longer be posting on our Forum, my answer to him was "you are correct" as it's now members only, as it should have been all along.

As a club our membership was rather static with a few joining and sadly a few passing away. We are lucky that most of the LBC members are very loyal and considering as part of the membership you get a Lincs Bird Report valued at £15 and the membership is just £15 (£12 for us older ones) it's a no brainer.

As at the time of writing we have had 26 new members which is very encouraging and it does show the power of an internet site where you can pay by credit card. I would like to send out a warm welcome to all our new members.

Andrew Chick is now adding details of birding sites around the county and Phil Hyde and Andrew Henderson have taken on the massive task of the Lincs List. Both are huge undertakings but the results are really great and very useful. Active member, Russell Hayes has been keeping us all on our toes by emailing me with all my errors, Thanks Russell.

I do hope no one has been kept waiting too long for answers, but strangely I found I needed some sleep from time to time.



At the start we counted this eNewsletter as part of the website and would like to thank anyone who has contributed but ask that we will quickly run out of stuff to add so please write something to help me fill up the space, after all it's your bird club.

As at 01/01/2018 over 100 members had still not logged in to the new site.

Here are the stats for December 2017.

And now for all you technical whizz kids out there, here is what they mean.

For the nontechnical, that's almost all of us, just don't bother with this bit.

**Hits** are the total number of requests made to the server during the given time period (month, day, hour etc..).

**Files** are the total number of hits that actually resulted in something being sent back to the user.  
NB. Not all hits will send data, such as "404-Not Found" requests and pages that are in the browser's cache.

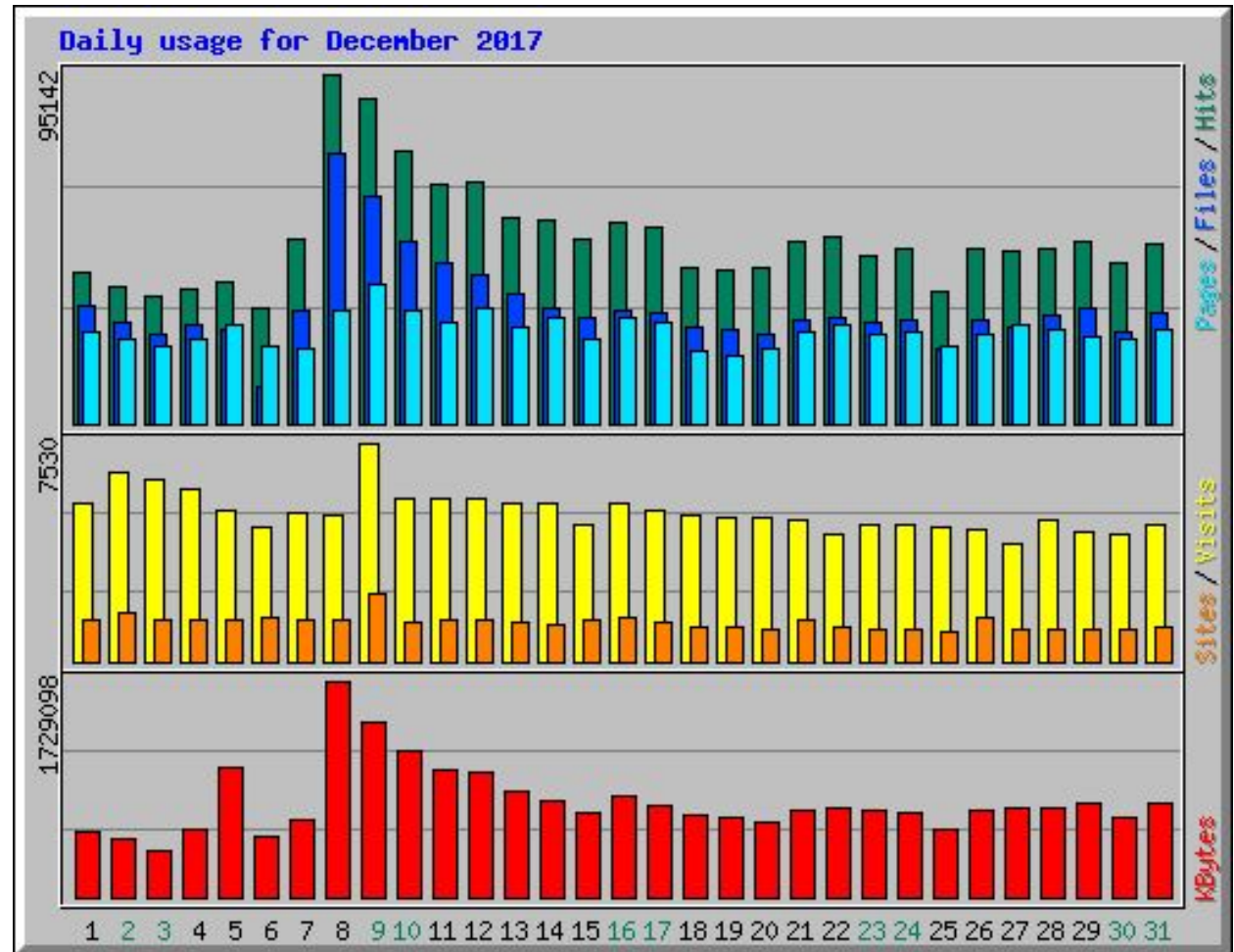
**Tip:** By looking at the difference between hits and files, you can get a rough indication of repeat visitors, as the greater the difference between the two, the more people are requesting pages they already have cached (have viewed already).

**Sites** is the number of unique IP addresses or hostnames that made requests to the server. Care should be taken when using this metric for anything other than that. Many users can appear to come from a single site, and they can also appear to come from many IP addresses so it should be used simply as a rough gauge as to the number of visitors to your server.

**Visits** occur when some remote site makes a request for a *page* on your server for the first time. As long as the same site keeps making requests within a given timeout period, they will all be considered part of the same **Visit**. If the site makes a request to your server, and the length of time since the last request is greater than the specified timeout period (*default is 30 minutes*), a new **Visit** is started and counted, and the sequence repeats. Since only *pages* will trigger a visit, remotes sites that link to graphic and other non- page URLs will not be counted in the visit totals, reducing the number of *false* visits.

**Pages** are those URLs that would be considered the actual page being requested, and not all of the individual items that make it up (such as graphics and audio clips). Some people call this metric *pageviews* or *page impressions*, and defaults to any URL that has an extension of *.htm*, *.html* or *.cgi*.

A **KByte** (KB) is 1024 bytes (1 Kilobyte). Used to show the amount of data that was transferred between the server and the remote machine, based on the data found in the server log.



# Electronic record of “The Lincs List”

## Progress to date, photographs, and museum specimens.

by Phil Hyde

LBC has adopted the new IOC taxonomic order and revised scientific names. The common names are not all in line with IOC for various reasons, especially the IOC's frequent use of American names for which we prefer the BOU alternatives. Complete harmony may never occur, but as long as these common names are firmly anchored to the correct scientific names, all should be well (Note that “Corncrake” is now “Corn Crane” under the new notation, for example).

The information behind each species in the Lincs List is slowly being compiled. The majority of species have a photograph; some have full accounts with data displayed in histograms; a few have – so far – nothing at all.

Members, having logged in, can see all of this information. Non-members will just see a green strap line with a summary of the status of that species in the county. The ultimate aim is to provide a complete electronic record of all the species that have occurred in the county. This will be updated year by year.

All photographs are taken somewhere in Lincolnshire. The quality is largely excellent, but for some rarities there are what would be termed “record shots” these days. This reflects the photographic equipment at the time and difficulty of snapping an elusive or distant rare bird. Some of the older photographs though have captured excellent details – see the 1972 Gull-billed Tern photograph by the late Keith Atkin, for example. We should emphasise that, in the context of this new electronic archive, *we are not building a photo gallery* but just aim to have 1-3 representative photographs per species. Thanks once again to all of the photographers whose photographs we have used so far.

There are inevitably some species for which we have no photographs, and there probably never will be. For example, the rarer shearwaters, including Balearic. We are also missing photographs for the following species; if you have any of these in your archive that you are willing to share *and which were taken in Lincolnshire*, please let me know. For completeness, I have included the unrepeatably species that will remain unobtainable because of extreme rarity, extinction or photographic difficulty.

These are as follows:

Lesser White-fronted Goose	Whistling Swan	Puffin	Black Grouse
Cream-coloured Courser	Storm Petrel	Leach's Petrel	Fulmar
Laughing Gull	Franklin's Gull	Great Spotted Cuckoo	Great Snipe
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Cory's Shearwater	Sooty Shearwater	Great Shearwater
Balearic Shearwater	Solitary Sandpiper	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	Stilt Sandpiper
Pallas's Sandgrouse	Feral Pigeon (!)	Goshawk	Golden Eagle
Bustards	Scops Owl	Tengmalm's Owl	Pallid Swift
Little Swift	Corn Crane	Greater Sand Plover	Little Crane



**Note:** To date I have completed uploading photographs, where they are available. There are a few random species after that which have either a photograph or full species account or both (e.g. Red-breasted Flycatcher). The process will continue on (almost) a day-by-day basis.

### Museum specimens

Some old mounted specimens that were rescued from the infamous clear out at Lincoln Museum were photographed. In due course, some of these may be used in the Lincs List archive, either within the full species account or in a separate appendix to the list. Not all of these specimens were obtained within Lincolnshire so careful checking will ensue before using any.

**Finally.....**if you spot any errors **PLEASE** let me know. What's there is essentially a "first draft" so it may not be entirely error free. Thanks already to **Russell Hayes** for some errors he has spotted so far.

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## French pledge crackdown on illegal trapping of Ortolan Buntings for the restaurant trade

TOUGHER approach to illegal trapping of the Ortolan bunting has been pledged in France.

The country's Minister of Ecology, Nicolas Hulot, has said he is committed to ending a practice in which victims are trapped, blinded, plumpened and drowned in brandy before being served in restaurants or sold in shops as a "delicacy".

Custom demands that the diner wears a napkin over the head in the belief that rich aromas are not lost while the dish - bones and all - is being chewed.

The bird was said to have been the last dish of former French president Francois Mitterrand.

Around 30,000 Ortolan buntings are captured - either in nets or on glue-smearred twigs and branches - every autumn as they migrate through France from eastern Europe to West Africa. This practice is particularly widespread in the Landes region of South-west France and also claims collateral victims such as many finch and warbler species. The Ortolans are blinded and kept in cages where they are force-fed on millet seed to fatten them.

Technically, the activity has been illegal for the past 18 years, but authorities have tended to disregard the breaches on the grounds that it is a long-established cultural tradition. In December 2016, the European Commission announced that it was taking France to the EU Court of Justice for failing to address violations of the EU's Birds Directive - with a potential fine running into millions of euros.

In response, M. Hulot put out a statement in August in which he stated his intention to put an end to the poaching of Ortolan buntings in the Landes region.

"Preserving biodiversity is essential to the future of our humanity. Protection of a natural heritage is a legacy we must pass on to future generations. The practice of poaching Ortolans is illegal, it must stop....it poses a significant risk to the survival of a species whose future is threatened by climate change and urbanisation which destroys its habitat." The announcement has been welcomed both by bird conservation groups in France and by Bird Life International.

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# 2017 Records

**Sorry to remind you all but we need everyone to submit their 2017 records as soon as possible. Delayed submissions means a delayed Lincolnshire Bird Report.**

Please submit in your usual format, although we prefer submissions via BirdTrack, eBird or Excel spreadsheet. Those who use BirdTrack and eBird please try to use the same site name as we do in the LBC as there seems to be users adding sites that are for “My Garden” and “The Gravel Pit”.

Download the LBC Sightings template at [http://www.lincsbirdclub.co.uk/site/media/LBC\\_Template\\_import.zip](http://www.lincsbirdclub.co.uk/site/media/LBC_Template_import.zip)

Please take care when defining sites and site names. There are 46 different names in BirdTrack for Barton Pits and over 60 for RSPB Frampton Marsh including one that has a Map Reference for RSPB Frampton that’s just south of Lincoln. These cause Colin and Sheila Jennings huge problems when entering.

Correct and timely submission of records is vital to enable an accurately validated annual bird report to be written. Data from the report is used by various external agencies in environmental assessments as well as providing year-on-year population data for long-running national surveys.

Each year, there are a very large number of unattributed records that we have to chase up. These inevitably come from the national information services – Rare Bird Alert has now agreed to send us their records and Birdguides did enter all their records on Birdtrack but have decided to stop doing this while they update their systems, however neither provides us with the full data set for any one record that we need to check the validity of a sighting.

The BTO’s BirdTrack database, from which we obtain many records, does have a facility to input a description for scarce/ rare county records, so please continue to do so, but better still use the website online form.

To help managing the workload I would reiterate, what we need from observers (and as soon as possible after the sighting(s)) are the following:

- Species**
- Date of sighting**
- Site**
- Observer name**

This applies to both “routine” sightings as well as to LBRC description species. *Please do not leave it until the end of the calendar year.* Try to be as timely as your own circumstances allow. The time taken in checking sightings from unknown sources delays publication of the report year after year. On the new website, please use the online facility for records submission for scarce/ rare species (there is a full list of LBRC species we need descriptions for). In the current digital age, many people have a camera or phone that can provide invaluable information. Please submit photographs with descriptions whenever possible *however poor you think they are*. So-called “record shots” nearly always have value.

Lincs Bird Club





*RSPB Frampton Reedbed 15/10/2017*

Red-crested Pochard - RSPB Frampton Oct 2017 - Colin Casey



Shining Honeycreeper - Costa Rica Jan 2017 - Colin Casey





Yellow-billed Shrike and Red-cheeked cordon-bleu, The Gambia Nov 2017, Colin Casey



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

