



NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2014

www.glamorganbirds.org.uk

Registered Charity 1129684

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Black-necked Grebe in Cardiff Bay © Cliff Woodhead



Water Rail at Parc Slip © Jeff Slocombe



Kingfisher at Forest Farm © Cliff Woodhead



Common Sandpiper in Barry Docks © Hayden Lack

SUBMISSION DEADLINE for the next newsletter is **Saturday 28th June**

EDITORIAL NOTES

It's good to see the first signs of spring following the deluge suffered during the winter. The winter visitors are currently leaving our shores to be replaced with the summer migrants. Let's hope for a good breeding season, particularly for the auks which seemed to have suffered greatly during the winter gales.

We've come to the end of another bird club year and as is the tradition, we shall be holding the AGM on Tuesday April 29th at Kenfig. This is your opportunity to elect new committee members, examine the accounts and have a say in club affairs. The AGM notice is on page 4. Following the formal proceedings there will be a quiz. Refreshments will be available.

There are a couple of "add-ons" with this newsletter. The new programme card is included (for those of you who receive your newsletter via e-mail, the programme is attached separately. If you'd like a hard copy please get in touch.) Please note that the monthly Cosmeston walk, led by John Wilson, has been dropped from the programme. Unfortunately John has a lot of demands on his time at present. You will also find a membership renewal form at the end of this newsletter. There's also a note about Gift Aid in the Members' news section on page 5.

Many club members now contribute to the sightings page of the web site. If you wish to post sightings yourself, you'll need a Wordpress account. John Wilson will be able to advise on this. However you do not need to set up an account if you merely wish to view the sightings page to check "what's about."

A relatively recent addition to the newsletter is the reserve spotlight. To date we've covered Cardiff Bay and Taf Fechan reserves. In this edition we are looking at Parc Slip. Admittedly this site was included in "Birding in Glamorgan" however there have been lots of changes recently and we are indebted to WTSWW's Rob Parry for his article. If you haven't already been there, this reserve is certainly worth a visit. The committee has agreed that GBC should sponsor two of the "new" scrapes created on the reserve.

I attended the SEWBReC Recorders Forum in Pen-y-graig in late February. There were many interesting talks on a variety of wildlife topics. It was good to catch up with fellow wildlife enthusiasts. However the bird club are considering revoking Geri Thomas's membership after he misidentified a bird in the quiz. He was muttering something about colour blindness. I blame his hangover after celebrating Wales's win over France the night before.

Alan Rosney

P.S. Don't forget that club polo shirts, sweatshirts and zip fleeces are still available. They come in bottle green with a gold badge. Prices are: polo £10, sweatshirt £14 and fleece £20. Add £3 if p & p is required. Contact me if you are interested.

RECENT BIRD SIGHTINGS

January 2014

Cardiff: A Bonaparte's Gull arrived at the Heliport for its sixth successive winter (12th), with a Little Gull noted here earlier in the month. Cardiff Bay held Lesser Scaup, Black-necked Grebe, two Bearded Tits, two Black Redstarts, three Yellow-legged Gulls and a Kittiwake. A VC41 record count of 25 Hawfinches was made at Fforestganol. Further significant counts concerned 150 Common Snipe and eight Jack Snipe at Llanishen Reservoir, and 31 Little Egrets leaving the roost at Hendre Lake. A Bittern was at Forest Farm. A Lesser Whitethroat, possibly of an eastern race, was coming to feeders in a Heath garden. Two Short-eared Owls were at Rumney Great Wharf.

Cosmeston: An adult Bonaparte's Gull that called in (25th) was presumed to be the same individual previously noted at Cardiff Heliport. Similarly a drake Lesser Scaup was doubtless the returning bird that also frequents Cardiff Bay. A Yellow-legged Gull and two Pintails were also logged.

Ogmore Estuary: Singles of Dark-bellied and Pale-bellied Brent Geese arrived. The Dark-bellied bird was carrying a GPS logger; it transpired that this Dutch-ringed individual had previously wintered in France and spent a breeding season on the Severnaya Zemlya archipelago of the Russian Arctic. Two Water Pipits were around, but elusive. Two Shags were frequenting the Ogmore-by-Sea Deeps. A Yellow-legged Gull was the only larid of note. Maxima included four Little Egrets, seven Purple Sandpipers, 10 Goosanders and 38 Goldeneye.

Other Sites: An Iceland Gull was found at Dowlais. A Great Northern Diver lingered at Llwyn-on Reservoir. Bitterns were at Kenfig (3) and Parc Slip. Ten Pale-bellied Brent Geese were at Aberthaw and a single of this race was briefly at Newton Point, thought to be the same individual also seen at Ogmore Estuary. The only reports of Merlin came from the Kenfig area. Grey Plovers were observed at Newton Point (8) and Sker (3), where three Purple Sandpipers were also present. A Barn Owl was at Ewenny Moor and a Short-eared Owl turned up at Rhaslas.

February 2014

A Caspian Gull was found on the recycling plant at Lamby Tip and a Bonaparte's Gull was sporadically noted at Cardiff Heliport. The returning Lesser Scaup was frequenting Cosmeston. Two Black-throated Divers turned up at Barry Docks, with a Long-tailed Duck nearby on The Knap. A Great Northern Diver dropped in briefly at Kenfig Pool before calling and flying off, while another was still at Llwyn-on Reservoir early in the month. Bitterns were at Forest Farm, Kenfig and Parc Slip. A Glaucous Gull was at Mynydd Ty-talwyn. Water Pipits comprised 16 at Rumney Great Wharf, one or two at Aberthaw and one in atypical habitat on the beach at Sully. Further wintering passerines of note were Bearded Tit at Cardiff Bay Wetlands Reserve, Lesser Whitethroat (race unknown) at Roath and Siberian Chiffchaff at Kenfig Pool. Seabirds wrecked as a result of the storms included deceased Puffins at Kenfig (3) and Gileston, plus a live Guillemot on Kenfig Pool; a most unusual record.

Other Sites: Little Egrets were at Ogmores Estuary (5) and Aberthaw (4). A Razorbill was off Cardiff Heliport, where 100 Pintail were also logged. The Ogmores Estuary Goldeneye flock numbered 37. Hen Harriers were seen at Llanilid and St Mellons. Two Green Sandpipers were on the River Ely at Peterston. A massive count of 197 Common Snipe was made at Llanishen Reservoir. A Merlin was at Sker. Wind blown Little Gulls were at Ogmores Estuary (4 in total) and Sker (2). Yellow-legged Gulls were observed at Lisvane Reservoir and Pentwyn.

Paul Roberts

AGM Notice

Tuesday 29th April 2014 at 7.45 pm, Kenfig NNR

Agenda

1. Minutes of the AGM 23rd April 2013
2. Chairperson's Report on behalf of the Trustees
3. Treasurer's Report and adoption of accounts
4. Election of officers
 - a) Chair: Adrian Murch was elected in 2012 so has 1 further year.
 - b) Secretary: Martin Bailey Wood has opted to stand down this year.
 - c) Treasurer: Anne Wilson was elected in 2012 so has 1 further year.
5. Election of Committee members (Trustees)
6. Appointment of Auditor.
7. Any motions submitted for debate
8. A.O.B.

The committee member statuses are as follows:

Strinda Davies - elected 2011 - 3 years up - must stand down - willing to stand.
Dave Carrington - elected 2012 - 2 years up - 1 to go
Paul Denning - elected 2012 - 2 years up - 1 to go
Alan Rosney - elected 2012 - 2 years up - 1 to go
Graham Powell - elected Apr 2013 - 1 year up – 2 to go
Paul Roberts - elected Apr 2013 - 1 year up – 2 to go
John Wilson - elected Apr 2013 - 1 year up – 2 to go

In accordance with the constitution, nominations for members of the committee can only be made by full members of the Club and if submitted in writing, should be with the Secretary at least 5 days before the AGM. Nominations can also be taken from the floor at the AGM itself. All nominations and any motions, must be proposed and seconded by full members of the Club, in writing if before the meeting, signed by all parties, and sent to the secretary: Martin Bailey-Wood - m Baileywood@hotmail.co.uk, 32, Lawrence Close, Bridgend, CF31 1JY.

Following the AGM a quiz will be held and refreshments will be provided.

Graham Powell

CLUB NEWS

Members' News

Welcome to new members Della and Hayden Lack from Barry, Andy Burns from Dinas Powis, Gavin Moore from Rhiwbina and John Cook from Cowbridge.. You may well have noticed that Hayden has already contributed to the club by supplying a photo for the front cover of this newsletter.

It's that time of year again folks. At the back of the newsletter is a form for membership renewal. We are keeping the subs at the same rate despite large increases in postage costs. (it's going up again at the end of March!) If you are able to receive your newsletters via e-mail, please indicate so on the form, as it will enable us to keep the postage costs down somewhat. As a charity, we can also reclaim 25% of your subs as Gift Aid, giving a further boost to club funds. Currently only about half of the membership has signed the Gift Aid form. (The gaps are mainly the members who pay by standing order). If you are a UK tax payer and are able to donate gift aid, it would be greatly appreciated.

Best wishes go to our chair, Adrian Murch, who has been unwell recently. Martin Bailey-Wood, after a number of years in the post of secretary, has decided to stand down. Many thanks for all your efforts Martin .

Committee News

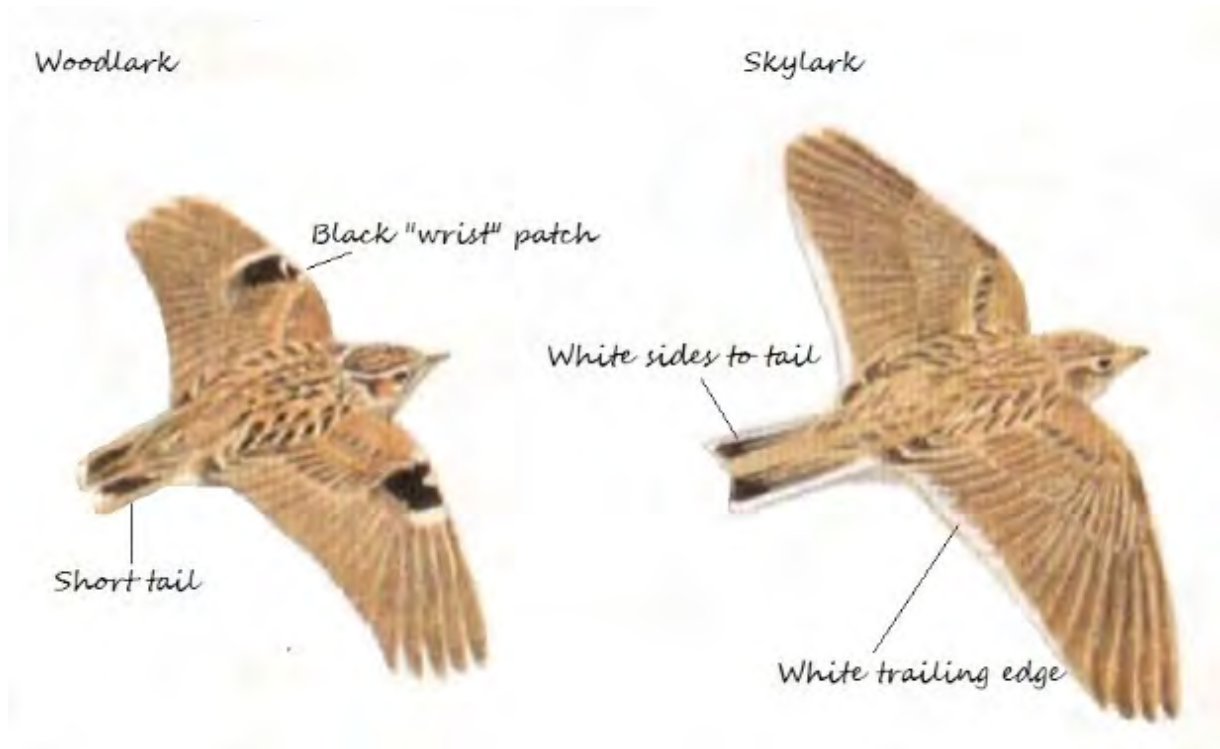
The Committee has met three times since the last newsletter:

- John Wilson reported that 70 000 records have been submitted for the 2013 bird report.
- John has also made some alterations to the home page of the club website.
- We currently have 387 and 158 followers on Twitter and Facebook respectively.
- A nest box making session was undertaken during National Nest Box Week. Some kits were donated to the Gwerin-y-Coed Woodcraft Folk group.
- We shall attend the Out of the Woods Festival in Sophia Gardens on 17th August.
- The format of our local atlas was discussed with a view to publication in the autumn.
- Wayne Morris has been liaising with Ian Spence of WOS regarding the publication of an all Wales breeding Atlas.
- Many thanks to Tony Messinger for his generous donation of an Optolyth telescope and tripod for use at Kenfig.
- Graham Powell has had several contacts, notably Aden Productions about an upcoming film project on Singleton Park, Swansea. He has been liaising with Topstak Chimneys of Cowbridge regarding their nest box wood donation.
- Strinda Davies has stepped in to the breach, leading the Kenfig monthly walks whilst Adrian is recovering from his recent illness.
- A request from WTSWW for sponsorship of the new hide at Parc Slip was agreed.
- Anne Wilson has been busy getting the club accounts in order for the annual audit. In addition she has been processing the Gift Aid forms.
- Communication with members was discussed following a complaint about the cancellation of a couple of recent events. More use of e-mail notifications was agreed.
- Paul Denning has donated his fees for a recent talk to the club.

Alan Rosney

CONFUSION SPECIES – SKYLARK & WOODLARK

This article looks at flight views of two of our lark species. The difference in size is quite marked (Skylark 16-18 cm/Woodlark 13-15 cm). So if you see a small lark it may well be worthy of attention.



The Woodlark is a very rare visitor to our area. It has a short bounding flight, reminiscent of a small woodpecker. The Woodlark's short tail is diagnostic and it has small white corners as opposed to the white sides of the Skylark. Other diagnostic features are the dark wrist patches on the primary coverts. The upper parts are strongly streaked with a clear band of streaking across the breast. Given good views the Woodlark has creamy white supercilia that appear to join at the rear of the nape. The crest is shorter than that of the Skylark. It is more likely to be seen in trees than the Skylark.

Despite being much commoner, Skylark numbers are in decline but there is usually an influx of birds in the winter. Flight views should show a conspicuous white trailing edge to the wing. The flight is "flappy" with periodic wing closures.

The incessant chirruping song of the Skylark embodies spring. Their song, delivered from on high, makes them easily recognisable. However they aren't always easy to pick up in a bright sky. The Woodlark has a very different song. The beautiful melodic lu lu lu song is characteristic.

Recent records of Woodlark in our area show variability in both habitat and time of year. There was one on Mynydd Brombil, Margam in October 2011, with 8 at Southerndown in January 2010. We did see one on a GBC trip to Portland in 2012, picked up by eagle-eyed John Wilson.

Alan Rosney

Ravens in Cardiff West

By the 1920s, Ravens were only found in remote parts of Britain. A childhood nature book, from the late 1950s I think, says they have spread to some cultivated areas. ‘Birds of Cardiff’ (David Gilmore, 2006, pub. GBC) implies that they were rare in Cardiff before the mid-1990s, since when they have bred on buildings in the City Centre.

My impression is that they have increased again since then, at least in my area of Cardiff. I’ve kept bird records since I moved to Fairwater in 1995. Below are all the Raven sightings that I’ve noted from my house or garden, all flying over singly or in a pair, and invariably on an East-West or West-East trajectory:

1999	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
1	1	1	1	3	5	2	5

Nine of the totals of nineteen sightings were in September; the others are spread throughout the year. This is not scientific. There is no constant effort to my recording at home. I just note down “interesting” birds when I happen to see or hear them. I tend not to note down the same bird more than once in a month. There is the possibility that it is the same pair travelling a regular route between a roost or breeding site and a feeding site.

I’ve also noted ravens on 5 occasions in St Fagans and Canton (i.e. to the East and West of Fairwater) between 2008 and 2012, and in Fairwater Park, where I noted 5 sightings from 2009-2011. I have no records prior to those dates in those areas.

All of this supports my impression of seeing more Ravens in Cardiff West in recent years, which is why I checked my records.

What have other bird club members observed across our region and in urban areas in particular?

Paul Seligman @PaulSeligNature

Footnote on Ravens:

Many of you will be aware of the monitoring work being undertaken by Mark Evans at the Blaencanaid Raven roost. He has undertaken a monthly count, getting on site before dawn, monitoring the number of birds leaving the roost. Mark has been concerned that the felling of Larch to counter the spread of Phytophthora, might be affecting the numbers of birds at the roost. To date this does not appear to be the case. Mark has also discovered that his counts may have been an underestimate, as he has noticed that some birds were using alternative exit routes from the roost.

At the recent SEWBReC Conference, Mark was recognised for his tremendous efforts in wildlife recording (not just birds). This was a well deserved accolade. Well done Mark.



RESERVE SPOTLIGHT

Parc Slip Nature Reserve

Ownership:	Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales
Location:	Tondu, Bridgend, CF32 0EH
Area:	c.125ha
Access Notes:	Car parking and network of paths to most areas of the reserve.
Facilities:	The Visitor Centre has café and toilets, as well as wildlife displays and bird feeders.
Notable Habitats:	Wader scrapes, wet meadows, hay meadows and mixed woodland
Notable Species:	Breeding Lapwing, sky lark, wildfowl, reptiles and amphibians as well as Odonata and Lepidoptera.

Parc Slip Nature Reserve is one of over 90 nature reserves owned and managed by the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales (WTSWW). Formerly a site of open cast mining, the reserve today comprises of mixed woodland, scrub, meadows and wetlands. Over the past two years WTSWW have been working to increase the number and extent of wildlife habitats on the nature reserve, including the creation of arable crops, wildflower meadows and wader scrapes.

Visitors to Parc Slip last year would have seen one of the agriculturally improved fields being transformed into an arable crop of dwarf sunflowers, with arable weeds such as common poppy, corn marigold and corn cockle. (see the photo below)

The new arable habitat provided a nectar rich source of nutrition for a host of invertebrates as well as small mammals such as field vole and harvest mice. To fully assess the crop's impact on attracting wildlife, WTSWW have employed a Cardiff University Ecology Student who has spent the autumn and winter mapping and monitoring the field to determine what bird species are using it, where in the field they go and how long they spend feeding. From the results, WTSWW will be able to see if there are any correlations between bird species / numbers and the vegetation. The arable field will again be created this year and will have a greater diversity of seed producing plants for overwintering passerines.



Also to be created in 2014 are two fields (c.6ha) of wildflower hay meadow (MG5 Grassland) which will again be created through the restoration of two of the current improved sheep grazed pastures at Parc Slip.

The plan for Parc Slip is to transform the nature reserve to something that resembles traditional mixed farming habitat, with small crops, wetlands, meadows and grazing animals. The most recent additions to the conservation team have been three Highland Cattle, which apart from spending most of their time finding weaknesses in our livestock fencing; have been helping in our management for Lapwing. The cattle have been introduced to the 'Lapwing Field' to create a diverse sward structure, helped through rough grazing and hoof marks in the ground. Further benefits will hopefully be seen for Lapwings in the form of insect attracting dung which will attract invertebrates for adult birds and chicks. Researchers will again be monitoring the lapwings on a weekly basis throughout the breeding season to assess how the species responds to the management.

Lapwing remains one of WTSWW's target species for conservation at the nature reserve and it is hoped that with the introduction of cattle grazing, creation of meadows and arable crops as well as scrub clearance, the breeding population can expand in future years. Part of the planned expansion of lapwing habitat has been the recent creation of a network of wader scrapes, encompassing an area of 3ha. The wader scrapes have been created in partnership with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and have been designed to form shallow water bodies with plentiful edge habitat and islands. The new scrapes were completed in January 2014, so are unlikely to provide suitable breeding habitat this year, but will hopefully provide foraging habitat for Lapwing as well as other waders, Hirundines and wintering wildfowl as well as freshwater invertebrates, amphibians and Odonata species.

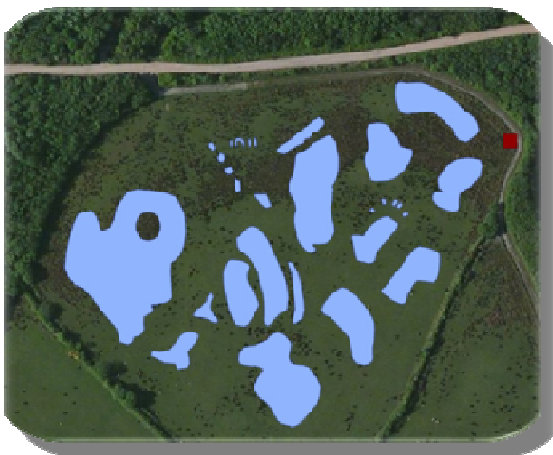
Key to the new wetland habitat is the creation of an elevated bird hide, which will stand 3.3m off the ground, facing west to overlook the scrapes. The elevated hide, which will be named the Mary Gillham Hide, will be used by visitors, recorders and future researchers who can monitor the changes in habitat and species over time.

Please report your wildlife sightings at the Parc Slip Wildlife Trust Visitor Centre as the more information we have the better we can manage the land for wildlife.

For further details on Parc Slip, please contact:

Rob Parry 01656 724100 r.parry@welshwildlife.org

The aerial image shows the layout of the scrapes



New scrapes at Parc Slip



***** STOP PRESS: GBC has now sponsored two of the scrapes*****

TRIP REPORTS

Unfortunately January's trip to Whiteford Point had to be cancelled due to the atrocious weather. I believe that this is the third year in a row that this trip has been cancelled, a great shame as a winter trip to this beautiful area can be very rewarding.

Thursday February 6th - Cosmeston & Cardiff Bay

Only 6 participants for this one - not surprising considering the forecast. The rain began just as we met up in the car park at Cosmeston, although thankfully it wasn't too heavy. We scanned the gulls on the East Lake and found the putative Yellow-legged Gull that had been there for a couple of weeks. The mantle colour, wing and head pattern all looked good for YLG but the legs were pink. One thought was that it might be a hybrid. A Water Rail was heard squealing in the reed bed. There were 16 Pochards on the far side of the lake, apparently the highest count of the winter.

On the West Lake we quickly got on to the Lesser Scaup, which was with a group of male Tufted Ducks. Also here there was a pair of Great Crested Grebes that were performing their elaborate courtship dance. On the far side of the Lake were several Gadwall, a Little Grebe and a couple of Cormorants.

A tramp across the muddy paddocks was rewarded with Song Thrush, Mistle Thrush and a group of 7 Redwings. In the flooded paddock we saw 2 Snipe and a Green Woodpecker was heard nearby. In Cogan Wood, we were lucky to see a Marsh Tit. (perhaps it wasn't all down to luck, Jeff Curtis had spread some seed on the *Dragon Tree*). Other birds here included Nut-hatch, Dunnock, Wren, Treecreeper, Great, Coal, Long-tailed and Blue Tits. Many birds were in full song, despite the persistent drizzle. Back at the car park, we decided to miss Cardiff Bay and opted to try for the imm/fem Long-tailed Duck that had been frequenting the Knap in Barry. We were in luck, it was in full view, consorting with the Tufted Ducks. It was surprising to see how much smaller it was than the other ducks. Rain then stopped play.

Alan Rosney

Saturday 22nd February - Chew & Blagdon

A very low turn-out for this trip with just myself, Colin Stevenson and young Matthew Binding. As we were heading over 'the bridge' and it was not a big detour we decided to call in at the site near Marshfield in Glocs, to see the long-staying Red-flanked Bluetail. We arrived at the very picturesque little valley to be met by the news that the bird had not been seen for quite a while and had disappeared 'over the wall'. We scanned and scanned and were beginning to give up hope when activity from the ranks of cameras near it's favoured tree, indicated its return. We soon had pretty good views of this little gem although it preferred to keep in cover for most of the time. The light was poor but I managed a record shot (attached).

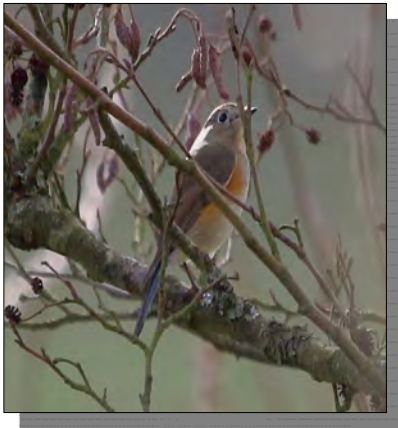
Back at the car we had three Yellowhammers on a hedge including a stunning male. We then headed back towards Bristol and onwards to Chew Reservoir, hampered somewhat by heavy traffic down the Avon gorge road.

At Chew, permits bought, we had our picnics by Herriot's Bridge. The main 'attraction' here was huge numbers of gulls on the small lake, including three almost full summer plumaged

Mediterranean Gulls.

Also here were three 'redhead' and a single male Goosander. All ages of Common Gull could be seen too. The water level in the main reservoir was very high and wildfowl were very thin on the ground, surprisingly. We then visited the Stratford hide which normally has shallow pools and wet areas in front of it. At present though, the reservoir comes right up to the front of the hide, so no Water Pipits or waders. We did see a few Goldeneye including a frisky male displaying, and also a distant Red-breasted Merganser. A couple of Great Crested Grebes were displaying too.

At the Heron's Green Bay location wildfowl were still not numerous and we just managed a few Teal. Other dabbling ducks were noticeable by their absence, and Tufted Duck and a few Pochard were the only other ducks present [apart from Mallards]. Overall a little disappointing but an enjoyable day out nonetheless.



Red-flanked Bluetail at Marshfield



Displaying Goldeneye at Chew

John Wilson

INDOOR MEETINGS

Tuesday February 4th Burma - John Wilson

John Wilson was the guest speaker for this re-arranged indoor meeting. He presented us with memories of his trip to Burma (or is it Myanmar?) in 2012. The talk consisted of a mix of videos and stills, not only showing the stunning birdlife of the region but also some spectacular views of the Buddhist temples of the region, bedecked with gold and precious stones. The beauty of this rarely visited region certainly came across, whetting the appetite of those in attendance. Thanks John for all your hard work in putting the talk together.

Regrettably the March meeting was cancelled. Paul Denning who was due to lead the ID night had to work nights on the due date. The April meeting is of course the AGM.

National nest box week: 14th - 21st February

We held a nest box making session at Kenfig on 16th February. Twenty boxes were constructed (mainly 29mm hole boxes, although Wayne Morris had a crack at producing a Red-start box). We are very grateful to Topstak Chimneys for the wood donation. A conveyor belt system was set up with John Wilson on the chop-saw, Marlay John drilling the holes, myself drilling pilot holes and nailing boxes together. Daniel and Gethin Jenkins-Jones added the lids and drainage holes.

Most of the boxes are to be used in the BTO nest box recording scheme with Dan and Wayne monitoring progress. In addition we produced some kits, which were donated to the Gwerin-y-Coed group in Taffs Well.



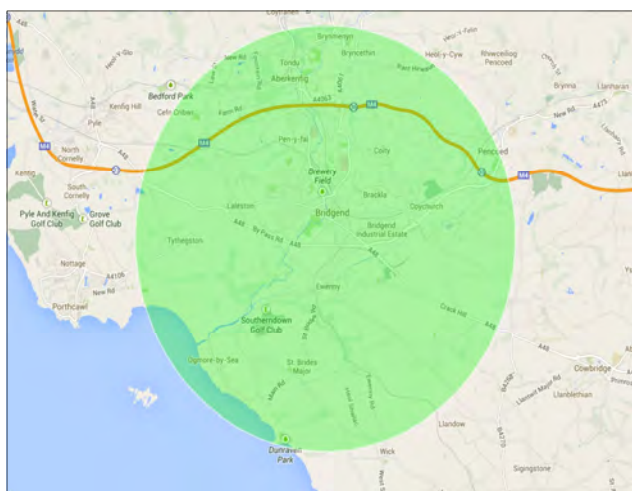
Marlay John, Alan Rosney John Wilson, Wayne Morris, Gethin Jenkins-Jones and Daniel Jenkins-Jones

Foot it challenge

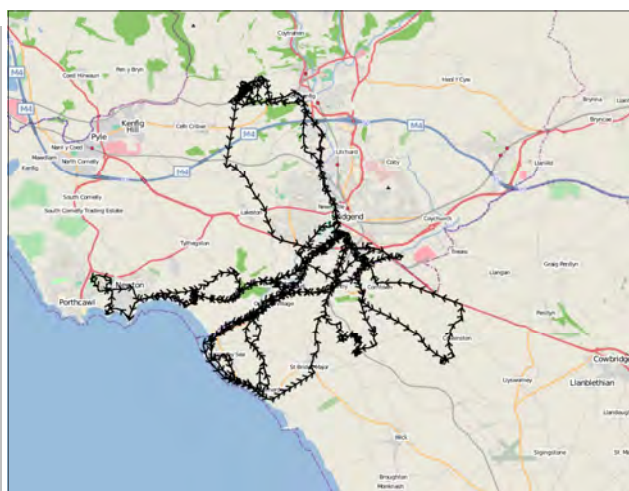
For the past two Januarys, Paul Roberts has undertaken the Foot it challenge. It involves listing all the bird species within walking distance of his home. Paul set himself a target of 100 species (he's lucky that he lives near the Ogmor - I think If I did the same I'd be lucky to see 25 species Ed.) Here is a short account of his experiences.

I decided to limit my walks to a four mile radius from home. This I kept to with the exception of a foray to Newton Point/Porthcawl, brought on as a result of desperation when things seemed to be drying up (it worked – seven additions were made). The majority of my effort was not surprisingly made in the Ogmor/Merthyr Mawr/Southerndown area, although Parc Slip also played its part. Map 1 shows where the productive effort was put in whilst Map 2 shows the routes taken:

Map 1



Map 2



A pair of Choughs at Ogmore-by-Sea today neatly brings my Foot It (bird species seen in January walking from home and back) score to 100, the target I had set myself at the beginning of the month. That's probably going to be that for the challenge this year.

I would say that compared with 2013 – when I first had a go at this and recorded 103 species – birds were generally harder to come by, probably largely as a result of this year's unrelenting wet and mild conditions, unlike in 2013 when a cold snowy spell mixed things up. However, I'm pleased to have reached my target and appreciate how lucky I am to live in such a relatively bird rich location.

Some noteworthy birds seen in both years: Little Egret, Red Kite, Goshawk, Peregrine, Water Rail, Purple Sandpiper, Mediterranean Gull, Yellow-legged Gull, Kingfisher, Water Pipit, Chiffchaff and Chough.

Birds seen in 2014, but not 2013: Brent Goose, Pochard, Great Crested Grebe, Shag, Bittern, Grey Plover, Barn Owl and Cetti's Warbler.

Birds seen in 2013, but not 2014: Wigeon, Pintail, Golden Plover, Lapwing, Jack Snipe, Green Sandpiper, Bonaparte's Gull, Little Owl, Black Redstart, Blackcap and Brambling. On the minus side it was especially frustrating to not see any Lapwing or Golden Plover, both of which can be present in their hundreds with a bit of a cold blast. Gulls were a tad disappointing overall – no Bonaparte's like last year, none of the hoped for white-wingers, no Little Gull or Kittiwake despite all the gales, although a pristine adult Yellow-legged Gull was some compensation. I searched in vain for Little Owls at three known sites – two were apparently abandoned and the other had been taken over by Barn Owls.

I would certainly recommend a go at a walking list in January. It's a great way to gain a greater appreciation of your local area and its birds, while any pounds lost in weight or saved in fuel can't be a bad thing! Will I be doing it again in 2015? Hmm, let me get back to you on that.....

Paul Roberts



BTO News : Nest Record Scheme

For 75 years, volunteers of the Nest Record Scheme have been finding and following the progress of individual birds' nests, <http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/nrs/>. Collecting this vital breeding performance data across the UK, helps measure the impacts of factors such as climate change on our bird populations.

We have 11 volunteers in Glamorgan and recruitment is going well across Wales, with recorder numbers increasing faster than in any other UK country, but the national pool of volunteers is still fewer than 50, so there is much scope for improvement. Anyone can be a nest recorder, and by carefully following the NRS Code of Conduct monitoring does not influence a nest's outcome, <http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/nrs/coc>. Some people watch a single nest box in their back garden while others find and monitor nests of a whole range of species, even the Blackbird in your garden can provide valuable data for conservationists.

For Dipper and Redstart, Wales is a NRS stronghold, providing a significant proportion of the UK total each year. There are many gaps in coverage, however, even for common species, so why not join the Welsh revival and make 2014 the year you become a nest recorder? It's enjoyable, you'll learn a huge amount about the birds around you and, vitally, you'll provide information to support conservation efforts that can't be gathered any other way.

Visit the Nest Record Scheme for more info, <http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/nrs/>.

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Mute Swan*	4					1
Canada Goose	5					
Great Crested Grebe					1	
Buzzard	2	1	1	2		1
Moorhen*	1					2
Coot	9				13	1
Woodpigeon	1	4	1	7	6	6
Collared Dove	4		1	1		
Nightjar	2	1		4		1
Swift			2	1	1	
Great Spotted Woodpecker	1	1	1	1	36	
Skylark*	1					
Sand Martin	52		12	43	19	
Swallow	9	20	10	15	24	13
House Martin				2		
Meadow Pipit*	1	3		1	1	1
Grey Wagtail*	1					
Pied Wagtail*		1		3	2	2
Dipper*			1	9	2	3

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Wren*	5		1	1	8	4
Duncock	3	2	4	3	5	4
Robin	3	4	2	2	6	4
Redstart*	3	2	3	6	6	7
Whinchat*						1
Stonechat*				4	10	
Wheatear*				2		
Blackbird*	23	20	13	15	43	30
Song Thrush*	10	19	3	7	24	13
Mistle Thrush*	1				2	3
Grasshopper Warbler				2		3
Blackcap		4			3	4
Garden Warbler			1			
Whitethroat	1			2		1
Wood Warbler*						1
Chiffchaff					1	1
Willow Warbler*	2	1	2	6		3
Pied Flycatcher*	47	38	39	51	48	22
Long-tailed Tit	6	2	7	6	10	2
Blue Tit	121	100	120	153	136	134
Great Tit	96	84	97	74	87	84
Coal Tit				3		
Nuthatch	19	16	9	16	15	6
Treecreeper	1		1	4		4
Jay				1		
Magpie*	2			7		
Jackdaw				2		
Carrion Crow*		1	1	2	2	
Raven	2	1	1		1	
Starling*				1		
House Sparrow					2	1
Chaffinch*	3	2		2	2	2
Greenfinch*		3		1	2	
Goldfinch		1		1		1
Siskin	1					
Linnet*	2	1	1	2	3	4
Bullfinch*		2	2			
Yellowhammer*				2	1	1
Reed Bunting*				3		4
Total	453	344	349	487	513	391
* priority species < http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/nrs/taking-part/nrs-priorities >						

Wayne Morris, BTO Representative in Eastern Glamorgan eastglambto@gmail.com

<http://eastglambto.wordpress.com/>



BTO Garden BirdWatch

Welcome to Garden BirdWatch. I'm one of two Ambassadors for the BTO Garden BirdWatch Scheme in South Wales. This time my focus is the Bullfinch.

Species of the Month: Bullfinch

The Bullfinch is a very distinctive bird and is unlikely to be confused with any other. It has a stocky build with a stumpy black beak designed to peel seeds. The male has a reddish pink breast with a black cap and grey back; the female also has a black cap but her breast is pinkish grey and her back a grey-brown. Both sexes have a white rump, mostly clearly seen when flying away from you and, given the shy nature of this bird, this may well be the only view of a Bullfinch visiting your garden! They are a woodland bird and thus more likely to be found in gardens with nearby patches of trees or hedgerows. Between the 1950s and mid 1970s Bullfinches were far more abundant in southern Britain than they are today. Their fondness for the flower buds of commercial orchard trees made them a serious pest in some areas resulting in them being controlled under licence; this had no significant impact on the population size. Orchard owners could sleep easily when there was a bumper Ash crop as this kept the birds in the woodlands and out of the orchards. The more recent decline of Bullfinch numbers, highlighted by BTO surveys, is thought to be linked to the loss of arable weeds and changing agricultural practices.

Did you know?

It is the only finch to have a special food sac in the bottom of its mouth for storing food to take back to its young.

The collective noun for Bullfinch is a 'bellowing'.

Bullfinches were once prized caged birds due to their good looks and ability to mimic tunes. The Welsh name is *Coch y Berllan* (literally *red of the orchard*).

How to attract them to your garden:

Bullfinches are seed eaters and will readily take sunflower hearts from a feeder or bird table. Their natural diet includes the seeds of Ash, Elm and Common Nettle. During the breeding season (April to September) they will take insects to feed to their young but adults remain strict seed eaters.

Conservation status: Amber in the UK, although only recently downgraded from red (unfortunately in Wales they are still on the red list). However GBW data show that Bullfinches are more likely to be seen in Welsh gardens than in English or Scottish ones. The maximum number I've seen in my garden at any one time was six – it was truly delightful to see three pairs at once.

Make Your Garden Count

If you enjoy watching the birds and wildlife in your garden why not take part in BTO Garden BirdWatch – the largest year-round survey of garden birds in the world? Please contact me for a free enquiry pack or to book a talk.

Amanda Skull, Garden BirdWatch Ambassador 07952 758293 (evenings & weekends only)
gbw@hiafi.co.uk www.bto.org/gbw Follow me on Twitter @amanda_skull

FUTURE EVENTS

Field trips

Thursday 27th March	Kenfig & Sker
Sunday 13th April	Craig Cerrig Gleisiad
Sunday 11th May	Silent Valley Nature Reserve
Thursday 29th May	Cwm Claisfer Nature Reserve
Sunday 15th June	Somerset Levels
Wednesday 11th June	Llanwonno
Thursday 10th July	Parc Slip WTSWW Reserve

Contact John Wilson at least seven days before the due date. Departure times vary but John will be able to give information for each trip. These trips are suitable for birders of all levels.

Indoor meetings

Tuesday 29th April AGM & quiz

Monthly walk - Kenfig NNR

These take place on the third Saturday of each month. Meet at the Reserve Centre at 9 a.m. For details please contact David Carrington, 01656 743386

***** PLEASE NOTE *****

The Cosmeston/Lavernock walks have been discontinued.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE for the next newsletter is **Saturday 28th June**

CONTACT DETAILS

See the GBC website for further e-mail addresses etc.

Chair	Secretary	Treasurer	Bird Report Editor/Field Trips
Adrian Murch 30, Lewis Avenue, Bridgend CF31 4JJ 01656 768155/0785156287	Position vacant	Anne Wilson 122, Westbourne Road, Penarth VoG CF64 3HH 02920 339424	John Wilson 122, Westbourne Road, Penarth VoG CF64 3HH 02920 339424/07999801645
Membership Secretary/Newsletter	Indoor Meetings Organiser	Publicity Officer	Mapmate Hub
Alan Rosney 10, Parc-y-Nant, Nantgarw, RCT CF15 7TJ 01443841555/07906558489	Paul Denning 17, Maes Maelwg, Beddau, RCT CF38 2LD 01443 202607	Graham Powell 13, Clos Penglyn, Pencoed, Bridgend CF35 6NX 07414813853	David Carrington Kenfig National Nature Reserve Tonkenfig, Bridgend CF33 4PT 01656 743386
BTO Representative	BTO WeBS Organiser	Bird Recorder (East)/Chair of GRC	Bird Recorder (West)
Wayne Morris, 8, Hughes Street, Pen-y-Graig, RCT CF40 1LX 01443 430284 eastglambto@gmail.com	Daniel-Jenkins Jones 18, St. Margaret's Road, Whitchurch, Cardiff CF14 7AA 02920 621394 eastglamwebs@gmail.com	David Gilmore 116, Donald Street Cardiff CF24 4TN d.gilmore2@ntlworld.com	Mark Hipkin 6, Holly Road, Neath 01639 638475/07875431917

GLAMORGAN BIRD CLUB MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Name :

Address :

.....

Postcode : Telephone :

E-mail :

Additional family members :

Do you wish to receive your newsletters by e-mail or by post ?

The membership year runs from 1st April. If you join between 25th December and 31st March, your first year's membership will be extended to include the following full year. E-mail addresses may be used for the purpose of sending newsletters, club notices etc., unless requested otherwise. We will not share your details with any third parties without your permission.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Categories: Single £12 Family £15 Concession £7

Payment method: Cash Cheque/PO Standing Order Bank transfer

If you opt to pay by Standing Order, please contact the Membership Secretary. To pay via bank transfer the club account number is 91395351 at HSBC bank plc, Aberdare Branch, sort code 40-08-03

GIFT AID

If you haven't already done so, please consider donating Gift Aid to the club.

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Gift Aid makes every £1 you give worth 25p more to the GBC at no extra cost to you.

I want the Glamorgan Bird Club (Reg Charity 1129684) to treat all gifts of money or subscriptions that I have made since April 22nd 2008 and all donations and subscriptions made from the date of this declaration as Gift Aid donations until I notify you otherwise. I confirm that I am a UK tax payer.

Signature Date

Print name

Return to Membership Secretary: Alan Rosney, 10, Parc-y-Nant, Nantgarw, RCT CF15 7TJ