



NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2015

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*** COMING SOON ***

BIG BIRDING DAY 5

Sunday 26th April at Kenfig NNR
10 am - 4 pm



The much photographed Forest Farm
Little Bunting © Richard Smith



Water Rail at Tondu © Paul Denning



Kingfisher at Forest Farm
© Cliff Woodhead



Firecrest in Ogmore © Jeff Slocombe

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

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EDITORIAL NOTES

Welcome to the Spring edition of the GBC newsletter. The big news from the last few months has been the launch of the East Glamorgan Bird Atlas. This has been the result of many hours of work from local birders over the last eight years (in fact the Atlas includes data from the last fifty years!) There are more details on page 4. The maps showing gains and losses are quite thought provoking. The species richness maps may also prove very useful, highlighting birding hot spots.

We had more good news in mid February. Flat Holm island was earmarked for possible sale by Cardiff Council in 2013 to help balance the books. A new leasing arrangement however will mean that public access is to be guaranteed for the next 30 years. The RSPB are to lease it with support from the National Trust and the Flat Holm Society. Cellan Michael, South Wales area manager for the RSPB, said Flat Holm is "a wonderful jewel of an island" and that all the organisations involved aim to find a "sustainable long-term future" for it. Let's hope so!

The next Big Birding Day will be on Sunday 26th April at Kenfig. Why not come along? There'll be guided bird walks, bird ringing demonstrations, a butterfly walk, moth trapping, a book stall, a plant stall, refreshments (featuring Mrs. Wilson's exceedingly good cakes) plus childrens' activities. These events have always been very popular, however we've made a change this year by switching to the spring instead of the autumn. We begin at 10 a.m. but if you wish to watch the ringers at work, they'll be on site in the south west corner of the pool from 7 until 12 (weather dependent).

I recently received a poster from Tony Rees of the South East Wales Rivers Trust. He is very concerned that due to cutbacks NRW have drastically reduced their enforcement teams. His idea is to use the eyes and ears of local people who walk/use rivers (particularly the Taff Fechan, Taff Fawr, Cynon, Rhondda Fach and Rhondda Fawr) to report any items of concern to one of the dedicated numbers: Police 101, The Taff Project 08000556971 or Natural Resources Wales 0800807060.

Rob Parry, the Conservation Manager from the WTSWW reserve at Parc Slip has been in touch. As part of the improvements to the reserve they're hoping to re-instate the Sand Martin bank on the reserve and are seeking funding. If you have ideas for raising funds, please get in touch with the staff at Parc Slip on 01656 724100.

We held a productive day making nest boxes at Kenfig as part of National Nest Box Week. In all we produced 14 "small hole" boxes and two "large hole" boxes. Thanks to John & Anne Wilson, David Carrington, Marlay John and Andrew & Sarah Bevan for their hard work on the day. We have also received some bird and bat boxes from RCT. Several have already been donated to local schools. If you know of any projects that require boxes, please get in touch.

I'm always on the look out for articles, photos, drawings for the newsletter. In particular I'm looking for ideas for the "reserve spotlight" section. Have you got a local reserve, park etc that you'd like to promote? If you think that you can contribute, please get in touch. Alternatively, why not advertise your events or projects in the newsletter? We have a wide readership of between 400—500.

Alan Rosney



RECENT BIRD SIGHTINGS

January 2015

Cardiff: An apparent Caspian Gull was photographed in the roost at Cardiff Bay, where Lesser Scaup, Great Northern Diver and several Black Redstarts were also recorded. 3 Short-eared Owls were at Rumney Great Wharf. The Hendre Lake Little Egret roost held up to 25 birds. A 20+ strong flock of Hawfinches frequented Forest Ganol, with another 2 at nearby Forest Farm, where Bittern, Little Egret and Chiffchaff were also noted.

Kenfig: A Glaucous Gull, initially found at Pink Bay, occasionally wandered over to Sker. A Jack Snipe and 2 Bitterns were at the pool. A Hen Harrier was seen near the saltmarsh.

Ogmore Estuary: A Firecrest, a Chiffchaff and a number of Goldcrests had found a sheltered niche adjacent to the sewage works. 2 Water Pipits were present and a Common Sandpiper was an unseasonal record. Further sightings included 5 Red-throated Divers, Dark-bellied Brent Goose, 5 Little Egrets, Goshawk, Red Kite, 12 Purple Sandpipers and a Green Sandpiper.

Other Sites: Glaucous Gull and Yellow-legged Gull occurred at Cosmeston. Great Grey Shrikes were at Coed Taf Fawr and Fynnon Tyle-teg, just south of Craig y Llyn. A group of 12 Brent Geese was at Aberthaw. A Little Egret was at Sully Island. A Merlin and 2 Hen Harriers were observed at Mynydd Eglwysilan. Two Green Sandpipers were on the River Ely near Peterston-super-Ely. Tir Founder, Aberdare, held a Willow Tit and a Chiffchaff.

February 2015

A wintering Little Bunting was a great find at Forest Farm, where a Lesser Spotted Woodpecker was also noted. The returning Bonaparte's Gull was seen in the vicinity of Cardiff Heliport. Cardiff Bay held Lesser Scaup, Great Northern Diver and four Black Redstarts. A male Long-tailed Duck was at Lisvane Reservoir. A Great Grey Shrike remained at Coed Taf Fawr. A Glaucous Gull roamed around the Sker/Pink Bay area. Sightings from Ogmore Estuary included Firecrest, Water Pipit, Common Sandpiper, Green Sandpiper, Yellow-legged Gull and 2 Little Egrets. Nearby, up to 500 Lapwings were at Norton Farm. A maximum of 23 Brent Geese - of which 20 were Pale-bellied—were at Gileston. The Hendre Lake Little Egret roost held 29 birds, with further singletons of this species at Aberthaw and Sully Brook. Coity Commons had 3 Short-eared Owls, Barn Owl, Hen Harrier and 5 Jack Snipe. Elsewhere, 2 Short-eared Owls were at Rumney Great Wharf and a Hen Harrier roosted at Rhaslas Pond. A Yellow-legged Gull was at Cosmeston. At least 10 Hawfinches were observed at Forest Ganol. An unusual record concerned a Cetti's Warbler in a Cardiff garden.



The Glaucous Gull in Pink Bay, Porthcawl
© David Carrington

Paul Roberts



EAST GLAMORGAN BIRD ATLAS GOES LIVE

No doubt you've already heard about (or seen) the East Glamorgan Bird Atlas. Following the BTO survey of 2007—11, the club had amassed a large amount of information that was fed in to the National Atlas. It was decided that we should produce our own local Atlas. The National Atlas maps data at a 10 km² whilst the local Atlas is generally at 2 km² level. Initially we aimed to produce a book but after much deliberation it was decided to publish a web-based production. This has some advantages, notably the fact that we could include all our data, including past surveys. It is much cheaper to produce and is in full colour. It will be possible to edit data and make additions later. Conversely those that haven't got access to the web will miss out and I know that many still prefer to have the hard copy.

The following clip has been taken from the Atlas. It is impossible to highlight all the features here:

Introductory stuff

Hover over a square for geographical details. Click on the square for complete species lists

Shows gains and losses

Shows how many species were in particular tetrads

Toggle between the maps

Data from all surveys

Extra information - rivers, towns etc

The web address is eastglamorganatlas.org.uk There is a link to it from both the GBC and SEWBRcCs websites. Many thanks must go to the following people; Dave Slade from SEWBRcC for handling all the data, Wayne Morris, the BTO Regional Representative, Daniel Jenkins-Jones, the BTO WeBS coordinator, Rob Nottage, former BTO Regional Representative and Chris Dee from Garganey Consulting, who designed the website. It's been a long haul but we got there in the end.

The Atlas Team

EAST GLAMORGAN BIRD REPORT

John Wilson has been working hard on the next bird report. He has recently decided to adopt BTO's BirdTrack for putting records in to the club database. (I believe he only received one set of paper records this year - how things have changed!) Why not investigate BirdTrack? It's not too difficult to use and will mean your records go directly in to the database. Note that the Excel spreadsheet (you can download it from the club website) can still be used for submitting records and paper records are still welcomed of course.



CLUB NEWS

Members' News

It's that time of year again folks - membership subs are due. A renewal form is attached to the back of the newsletter. We've managed to keep the subs at the same level again this year. I think you'll agree that it's good value. Did you realise that gift aid brings several hundred pounds a year to the club? Do you add gift aid to your membership? Around 50% of members already do so but many who renew by standing order have not signed the gift aid form. Another simple revenue generator used by the club is via "easy" fund raising. Simply click on the logos at the foot of the club web page and every time you shop or search, a small donation comes to the club. Included with this edition of the newsletter is the programme for 2015-6. We hope you like what's on offer.

Welcome to new members Walter Christian from Pentyrch, Allen James from Newport and John Goodwin from Cardiff. Also welcome back to Chris Trew and Hazel Peters from Penyfai.

It was with great sadness that we heard of the death of long standing club member, Ron G. Davies from Rhiwbina, on Christmas Day. Ron was a regular around Llanishen/Lisvane Reservoirs, birding there on most days. He will be missed. Condolences to his family.

Committee News

The Committee has met three times since the last newsletter:

- We welcomed Ceri Jones as the new Secretary
- The new Atlas was discussed - see the article on page 4
- Anne Wilson has prepared the Gift Aid forms for the Charity Commission
- Anne has also had to visit the bank to discuss some fraudulent activity in the club account. This has been resolved (we hope)
- Eight RSPB field guides have been purchased from the RCT grant for use on public walks
- Planning for the upcoming AGM was undertaken. See the notice on page 6
- The proposed tidal lagoons on the Severn were examined
- A nest box making session was organised
- John Wilson and Paul Denning have put together the 2015-6 programme (see the attached programme card)
- The next Big Birding Day (on Sunday 26th April) was discussed
- A request for help with the funding of a new Sand Martin bank at Parc Slip was considered

GBC MERCHANDISE

We now offer hooded tops in bottle green with the club logo on the left breast - cost £18.00 (add £3 for p & p). Polos, sweats and fleeces are still available.

Contact Alan Rosney if you're interested

Alan Rosney



AGM NOTICE - The Glamorgan Bird Club's Annual General Meeting will take place on Tuesday 28th April 2015 at 7.45 pm at Kenfig National Nature Reserve centre

Agenda

1. Minutes of the 2014 Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday 29th April 2014
2. Chairperson's Report on behalf of the Trustees
3. Treasurer's Report and adoption of annual audited accounts
4. Election of officers:
 - a) Chair: Adrian Murch was elected in 2012 so must stand down. Adrian can be re-elected if willing to stand
 - b) Treasurer: Anne Wilson was elected in 2012 so must stand down. Anne can be re-elected if willing to stand.
 - c) Secretary: Ceri Jones was appointed by the Committee in February 2015 and must stand down. Ceri can be elected if willing to stand
5. Election of other Committee members (please see note below)
6. Appointment of Auditor
7. Any motions submitted for debate
8. Any Other Business

The membership status of Committee members is as follows:

| Member | Elected | Years served | Note |
|------------------|----------------|---------------------|--|
| Strinda Davies | 2014 | 1 | Two years left of 3 year term |
| David Carrington | 2012 | 3 | Must stand down. Can be re-elected if willing to stand |
| Paul Denning | 2012 | 3 | Must stand down. Can be re-elected if willing to stand |
| Alan Rosney | 2012 | 3 | Must stand down. Can be re-elected if willing to stand |
| Paul Roberts | 2013 | 2 | One year left of 3 year term |
| John Wilson | 2013 | 2 | One year left of 3 year term |

In accordance with the Club's 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 for debate 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, Ceri Jones by email to secretary@glamorganbirds.org.uk or by post to 26, Smithies Avenue, Sully, Vale of Glamorgan CF64 5SS.

Following the AGM there will be a quiz and refreshments will be provided. We look forward to seeing as many members as possible at the AGM.

Ceri Jones

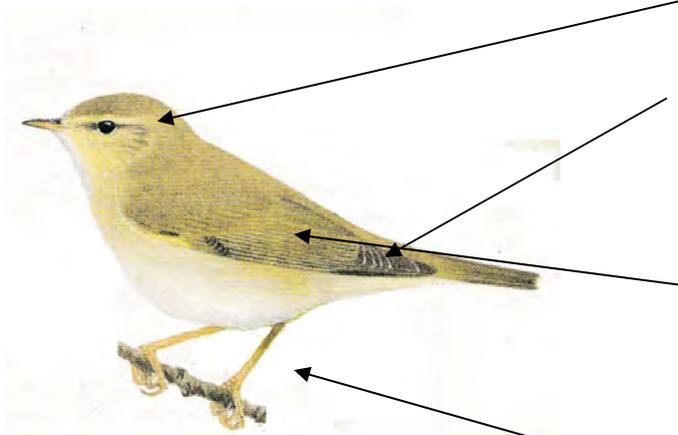


CONFUSION SPECIES – WILLOW WARBLER & CHIFFCHAFF

As thoughts turn to summer, I thought we'd look at a couple of migrants in this edition. Our two commonest *Phylloscopus* warblers are the Willow Warbler and the Chiffchaff. They are easy to tell apart if they are singing but can cause problems if skulking. Chiffchaffs generally arrive earlier than Willow Warblers (indeed many now over-winter in the British Isles). This article looks at spring birds. These species undergo a double moult, consequently autumn birds can appear very yellow, similar to juveniles.

Spring Willow Warblers always appear "cleaner" than Chiffchaffs. Their white underparts often stand out (beware confusion with Wood Warblers however) The following pictures give some hints to help separate the species.

Willow Warbler



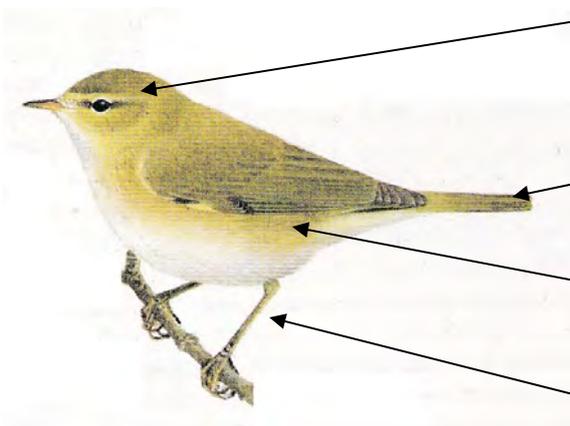
Willow Warblers generally have longer supercilia than Chiffchaffs

The primary feathers on Willow Warblers project more than on Chiffchaffs, making it appear more attenuated. Willow Warbler's wings appear more pointed

Often show a better marked green panel on tertials/secondaries than the plain-winged Chiffchaff

Willow Warblers usually have paler legs than Chiffchaffs (don't rely on this one)

Chiffchaff



Chiffchaffs have shorter supercilia than Willow Warblers. They often show a pale area beneath eye. The head shape sometimes appears more rounded

Chiffchaffs often pump their tails up and down

Underparts often buff coloured, compared with cleaner underparts of Willow Warbler

Generally have darker legs

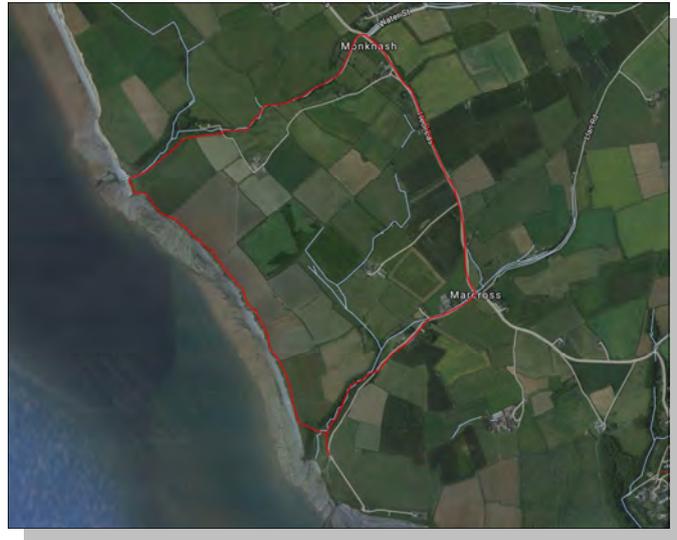
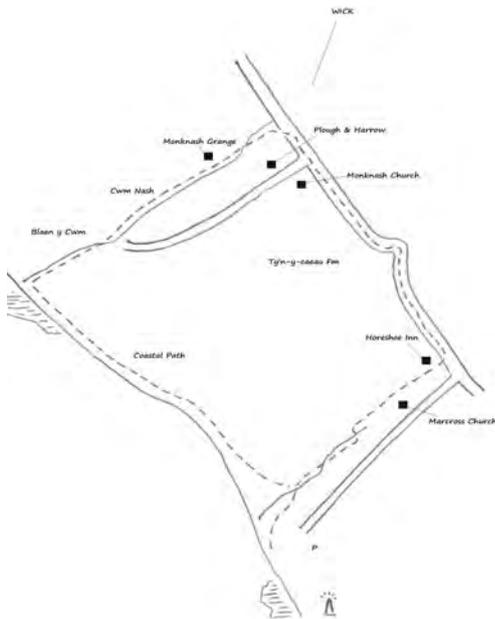
You should be able to find these species quite easily in Glamorgan - especially Kenfig. Despite being quite common, I haven't seen a Willow Warbler in my Cardiff BBS square for several years.

Pictures adapted from the Macmillan Bird Identification Guide

Alan Rosney



RESERVE SPOTLIGHT - CWM NASH



This site, which is part of the Glamorgan Heritage Coast, lies about four kilometres west of Llantwit Major and is signposted off the B4265. Parking is possible at two points; in a field at New Mill Farm, just below the Plough and Harrow pub (voluntary donation) or in the car park at Nash Point (parking fee). There are toilets at the latter site. Please note that the cliff edges are potentially dangerous. This walk starts at Nash Point.

The walk is approximately six kilometres in length. Boots are recommended as some parts are uneven. It will take 2 - 3 hours to complete the circuit. Heading out of the car park drop down into the valley. There are stepping stones to get across the small stream. It is well worth spending some time here as the bushes here can hold quite a few birds, especially at migration time. Look for Linnets, Stonechats and pipits plus commoner species such as Blackbird, Greenfinch, Wren, Dunnock and Goldfinch. In summer Whitethroats are likely. From here head up through the dunes on to the cliff top path towards Cwm Nash. Assuming a morning start the sun will be behind you (if it's sunny of course).

Check the fields on the cliff top for finches and buntings. Scanning from here you may see Fulmars drifting past on their stiff wings. Several gull species are possible. As you reach Cwm Nash valley different bird species are likely. Particularly listen out for the mew of the Chough. Other corvids are likely to be around this area. It is worth scanning the skies for patrolling birds of prey - Buzzard, Kestrel and Peregrine are possible. On a sunny summer day this is an excellent place to do a bit of butterfly watching. At the coast, the rocky shoreline may hold some waders such as Curlew and Oystercatcher.

Cwm Nash is a lovely secluded valley that is particularly productive in autumn. Flycatchers, crests and warblers in particular like the stands of Sycamore at the head of the valley. Wagtails should be evident in/on the stream. At the top end of the valley, take the footpath along the stream into Monkash. (rather than the lane to the Plough & Harrow) Migrants often gather here. Look out for warblers, Redstarts, Spotted Flycatcher and Yellow Wagtails. At Monkash, turn right and take the road towards Marcross.



Roughly half way between Monknash and Marcross is Ty'n y caeau Farm. For some years now, farmer, John Evans has kindly aided the bird club with a project to protect farmland bird species. Initially the aim was to help preserve the rapidly declining Tree Sparrow but alas this species has not been seen here for several years. That is not to say that they won't occur. Tree Sparrow populations are notorious for abandoning former haunts, we know not why. Please do not go in to the fields, Scanning is quite easy from the road. In the past we have seen Grey Partridge and Merlin here. With luck you may encounter Yellowhammer and Reed Buntings and in season, winter thrushes are likely. In summer, Swallows and House Martins should be hoovering up insects in the fields. Once through Marcross, near the end of the walk, you can decide whether to take the path through the wood or continue on the road (depending on your energy levels). For some reason this area of woodland can seem rather disappointing for birds. But who knows what might be in there?

Back at the car park, if time permits, the area around the lighthouses is worth investigating. On the left are grazing fields. These can be good for pipits, finches and wagtails. In autumn, check for Yellow Wagtails 'following' any grazing animals. Also at migration time Wheatear, Whinchat and Redstart may be found here. Around the lighthouses there are often pipits and wagtails and in winter Black Redstart is a possibility. In summer check the cliffs for the House Martins that nest there.

Paul Roberts and Alan Rosney

TRIP REPORTS (All reports by Alan Rosney, unless stated otherwise)

Cosmeston & Cardiff Bay - January 21st 2015

Twelve participants for this one (plus Lol and Andy who were already on site - sounds like a sketch from Little Britain). We began by scanning the gull flock on the East Lake. On the boardwalk we heard but didn't see Water Rail, however a very confiding Fieldfare allowed us to approach within a few feet. In the same tree a pair of Goldcrests was displaying. On the West Lake we were delighted to see a splendid male Pintail. Our next port of call was the "Snipe" Field. En route we saw a flock of Redwings, plus more Fieldfares. A male Bullfinch put in an appearance, as did a couple of Green Woodpeckers. Disappointingly only one Snipe was seen. The only raptors of the day were seen in this location - a Buzzard flapped slowly across and a Sparrowhawk caused a mild panic amongst the smaller birds. In Cogan Wood we eventually caught up with Marsh Tit, plus Blackcap, Nuthatch, Treecreeper and Dunnock. Some Teal were heard whistling from the adjacent reed bed.

After lunch we headed for the Cardiff Bay barrage, where we were quickly on to the Great Northern Diver in front of St. David's Hotel. The other bird we were hoping to see here was Black Redstart. A male duly showed on the roof tops in Penarth Marina. My trip list for the day was 49 species.

South Gower - February 1st 2015

Eleven club members gathered at Blackpill. Unfortunately the tide was well out, making wader ID very difficult. We did however pick out Shelduck, Brent Goose, Great Crested Grebe and Oystercatcher. An unusual sighting here was a Goldcrest in one of the shoreline trees. At Mumbles a Mediterranean Gull was added to the list, plus Turnstone and Curlew. More Mediterranean Gulls were observed in Bracelet Bay (20+).



We then decided to head for Oxwich. Here we immediately got on to a Great Northern Diver and Colin Stevenson picked out a distant flock of Common Scoter. We also saw Shag and Sanderling at this site. After a brief stop in the hide on the marsh, where we saw Shoveler, Teal, Gadwall, Mallard and Little Grebe, we were delighted to see a Red Kite over the trees. This was then joined by Peregrine, Sparrowhawk and two Buzzards.

On to Overton hoping to see Woodlark (again no luck). We got on to a sizeable flock of Chaffinch, which included at least one Brambling and several Linnets. A male Kestrel caught a vole and consumed it atop a telegraph pole. Next a Red-legged Partridge was observed as it scuttled across the stubble field. Remarkably there were at least six Song Thrushes in the field. All in all a good day, despite the cold northerly winds.

Ogmore-by-sea - February 12th 2015

A good turn out for this one. We met at Portobello, where several hundred gulls were gathered. The majority were Black-headed (some coming into breeding plumage) and Herring Gulls. Downstream at least 20 Goldeneye were gathered with some of the males beginning their courtship displays. Also here were Gadwall, Teal, Redshank, Shelduck and Curlew. Upstream we saw Little Egret, Goosander, Little Grebe, Mute Swan, Canada Goose and lots more gulls. We searched for the Water Pipit that had been reported but could only locate Meadow Pipits. On the gorse bushes several Stonechats were evident.

Our next port of call was the rocky foreshore. We were hoping to see Purple Sandpipers here. A couple of Turnstones poking about in the rocks got the pulse racing but eventually Ceri Jones got us all on to a couple of Purple Sandpipers. They gave superb views, probably the best I have ever had. Next we decided to walk up Pant Norton. In the valley we saw a lovely male Yellowhammer on one of the bushes. To our right we noticed a lot of smoke billowing from the bracken. It soon became clear that the whole area was in danger of going up in flames. The wind quickly spread the flames, until the whole hillside was alight. (Edna Murley did try to stem the flames by spreading some sand - the story of King Canute came to mind). A 999 call brought out the fire brigade and they quickly extinguished the blaze. After all the excitement we got back to the birding. At Norton Farm around 500 Lapwings were resting in one of the ploughed fields. Their green plumage sparkled in the afternoon sunshine.

Goldcliff & Uskmouth - Sunday 8th March 2015

The forecast for this one wasn't good, however ten hardy souls braved the elements. We began the day in the hide at Goldcliff. Many waders were present including Avocet, Black-tailed Godwit, Lapwing, Dunlin, Ruff, Greenshank, Spotted Redshank, Knot, Grey Plover, Curlew, Snipe and Redshank. In the hedgerow both Fieldfare and Redwing were seen. Duck species included Wigeon, Shelduck, Shoveler, Teal, Tufted Duck, Gadwall and of course, Mallard.

At Uskmouth we were delighted to see a female Marsh Harrier quartering the reeds. Water Rails were squealing in the reeds and Cettis Warblers were very vocal. The only duck species added to our list was Pochard. In addition there were quite a few passerines visiting the feeders. John Duffy and Tim Adcock were lucky enough to see a Chiffchaff as they made their way back to the centre.



Forest of Dean - Wednesday 18th March 2015

The day dawned misty but the sun soon burned through. Eventually we were lucky to see a pair of Goshawks soaring above us at New Fancy View. Siskins were displaying in the trees below us. From here we went to Parkend Church woods where some of the group caught sight of a female Hawfinch.

At Cannop Pools we saw several pairs of Mandarin Ducks, plus Little Grebe, Mute Swan, Tufted Duck, Grey Wagtail, Marsh Tit and another distant Gos. Our next port of call was Speech House where another Goshawk made an appearance but little else showed here, apart from some common woodland species.

After lunch we headed for Crabtree Hill where we caught up with a cracking Great Grey Shrike which was catching lizards and caching them in nearby trees. (Thanks to finder: Colin Stevenson). Wayne Strong picked out another Hawfinch here. Finally at Worgreens Lake we were treated to the sight of 25+ Goosanders, plus a Snipe and numerous Canada and Greylag Geese.

INDOOR MEETINGS

ID Night - Herons, Rails & Crakes - February 3rd 2015

This was a re-arranged event having been postponed last year. Paul Denning got things underway by showing a few video clips (courtesy of Paul Doherty's DVD). It is remarkable to note how the range of herons has changed since the DVD was produced in the mid noughties. Several times the commentary stated "*this species does not breed in Britain*" - e.g. Little Bittern, Cattle Egret, Great White Egret, Purple Heron; all of which have bred in recent years.

The second half of the evening was a Q & A session hosted by John Wilson, using his computer version of BWP. Calls, flight views and juveniles were examined. I think all present learnt more about these particular families. I can now differentiate between a Little Egret and a Snowy Egret (I think!)

Photographing birds in Thailand - March 3rd 2015

Hugh Lansdown was our guest speaker for this one (not High Lansdown as John Wilson mistakenly tweeted). We were treated images of not only the birdlife of Thailand but also mammals, reptiles, amphibians, insects and even underwater life. Hugh once lived in Thailand and knows the country well. For his talk, he divided the country in to four climate/habitat zones, highlighting the differences between them. Being 1200 miles from north to south the habitats range from equatorial forest in the south to drier areas in the north. The Andaman Islands off the coast add to the variety.

Hugh's photographs were of high quality and showed us many exotic and colourful species, which certainly wetted the appetite. Surprisingly he said that the Bangkok area was perhaps the best for birding, although the other areas looked very interesting, with numerous National Parks to explore. Many thanks to Hugh for his excellent talk.



LOCAL PATCH BIRDING : COED BYCHAN - ST FAGANS (ST1277)

Thanks to Steve Young (former County Recorder) for this article. Here's a great example of a local patch being studied over many years. Such studies make a great contribution to our understanding of bird populations in our area. (Ed)

In September 1998, the GBC Newsletter published my observations from 1967-1997.

In spring 1966 I carried out a sample survey of the breeding birds of this 14 hectare deciduous woodland site, which was then completed thoroughly in 1967. This was repeated in 1988, 1997 and again, 47 years after the first counts, in 2014, following exactly the same original routes and methods. Pairs of birds breeding were estimated on the presence of singing males holding territory on five weekly visits (average) between 28th April and the end of May (occasionally early June) in each year. Confirmed breeding was recorded for some species but not possible with the majority of species due to time restrictions. The woodland has, perhaps not unsurprisingly, changed over the 47 year period. Whereas in the late 1960's and into the 1970's I recall that the woodland was managed periodically to ensure a healthier tree growth and overall environment. Today there are fewer small shrubs within the woodland than there were many years ago and the boundary hedges have been damaged or removed entirely. Beyond the area, as I described in 1998, a large housing complex has been long established (Pentrebane) on land which was formerly open field/rough ground/farmland. There appears to be considerably less use of the wood by youngsters than in earlier visits.

The variety and number of species recorded has not been "remarkable" but of interest in respect of the 47 span of years covered:

In 1967, 27 species were recorded.

In 1988, 17 species were recorded.

In 1997, 22 species were recorded.

In 2014, 21 species were recorded.

30 years after the original counts in 1967, and by 1997, considerable **reduction** in numbers of several species had occurred and were listed in the Sept. 1998 article as follows:

Wren: estimated 14 pairs reduced to 8 pairs (43% fall)

Dunnock: estimated 5 pairs reduced to nil (100% fall)

Blackbird: estimated 10 pairs reduced to 4 pairs (40% fall)

Song Thrush: estimated 4 pairs reduced to a pair (75% fall)

Common Whitethroat: 3 pairs reduced to nil (100% fall)

Blackcap: estimated 9 pairs reduced to 2 pairs (78% fall)

Chiffchaff: 6/7 pairs reduced to 2 pairs (72% fall)

Willow Warbler: 7 pairs reduced to nil (100% fall)

Spotted Flycatcher: 1 pair reduced to nil (100% fall)

Long Tailed Tit: 3 pairs reduced to one pair (66% fall)

Marsh Tit: 3 pairs reduced to nil (100% fall)

Willow Tit: 2 pairs reduced to nil (100% fall)

Greenfinch: 1 pair reduced to nil (100% fall)

Bullfinch: 1 pair reduced to nil (100% fall)



Some species had **increased** by 1997 as follows:

- Buzzard: a pair compared with nil in 1967
- Wood Pigeon: 6 pairs compared with 3 pairs
- Great Spotted Woodpecker: 1 pair confirmed breeding c/w nil
- Robin: 10 pairs compared with 6 pairs
- Blue Tit: 6 pairs compared with 3 pairs
- Magpie: increase in birds present from 1 to 3 birds
- Carrion Crow: increase from 1 to 6 birds

Between 1997 and 2014 decreases had occurred in the following species:

- Wood Pigeon: fall from 6 pairs to 3 pairs
- Robin: fall from 10 pairs to 6 pairs
- Blackcap: fall from 11 pairs to 5 pairs
- Blue Tit: fall from 6 pairs to 4 pairs
- Carrion Crow: fall from 6 regular birds to 1 – 4 birds
- Chaffinch: fall from 6 pairs to 2 pairs
- Bullfinch: fall from 1 pair to nil

Between 1997 and 2014 increases had occurred in the following species:

- Great Spotted Woodpecker: 2 pairs confirmed breeding c/w with 1 pair.
- Wren: 18 pairs compared with 8 pairs
- Blackbird: 5 pairs compared with 4 pairs
- Song Thrush: 3 pairs compared with one pair
- Chiffchaff: 3 pairs compared with 2 pairs

The variation of species and numbers during the 47 year period (*pairs unless otherwise stated*)

| | 1967 | 2014 |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Buzzard | nil | 1 |
| Wood Pigeon | 3 | 1 |
| G S Woodpecker | nil | 2 prs bred |
| Wren | 14 | 18 |
| Dunnock | 5 | 1 |
| Robin | 6 | 6 |
| Blackbird | 10 | 5 |
| Song Thrush | 4 | 3 |
| Mistle Thrush | 1 | 1 |
| Whitethroat | 3 | nil |
| Garden Warbler | 1 passage | nil |
| Blackcap | 9 | 5 |
| Chiffchaff | 6 or 7 | 3 |
| Willow Warbler | 7 | nil |
| Goldcrest | 1 or 2 | 1 |
| Spotted Flycatcher | 1 | nil |

| | 1967 | 2014 |
|-----------------|--------|--------|
| Long Tailed Tit | 3 | 1 |
| Marsh Tit | 3 | nil |
| Willow Tit | 2 | nil |
| Coal Tit | 1 | nil |
| Blue Tit | 3 | 4 |
| Great Tit | 3 | 3 |
| Tree Creeper | 1 | 1 |
| Jay | 1 | 1 |
| Magpie | 1 bird | 1 to 4 |
| Carrion Crow | 1 | 1 to 4 |
| Chaffinch | 6 or 7 | nil |
| Greenfinch | 1 | nil |
| Bullfinch | 1 | nil |
| Pheasant | nil | 1 bird |

Steve Young



BTO NEWS

Can you help the Swallow of the Eaves?



The House Martin – known as Gwennol y Bondo (“The Swallow of the Eaves”) in Welsh – is well known to many people. From April to September it lives cheek by jowl with those lucky enough to have this energetic little bird nest under their eaves. In recent years however, the numbers breeding in the UK have fallen by two-thirds, leading to the species being amber listed as a bird of conservation concern and in need of some help.

Although the decline hasn't been quite as severe in Wales as it has been in England, we've also seen a substantial drop in numbers here too. The species was confirmed as breeding in only 98 tetrads in Eastern Glamorgan between 2007-11, down from 173 tetrads between 1984-89 – that's a drop of 43% (source: East Glamorgan Atlas <http://www.eastglamorganbirdatlas.org.uk/>) This recent decline has prompted the BTO to launch a **House Martin Survey in 2015** to estimate the current UK population.

How can I help?

We need volunteers to carry out two or three visits to a randomly selected (i.e. pre-selected) 1-km square between late May and mid-July, to look for House Martins and their nests. By surveying random squares, we will be able to assume that our results are representative across a wider area and produce a robust population estimate against which changes in the future can be measured.

How long will each visit take?

The survey visits will involve walking around the square looking for House Martins and their nests and mapping and recording a few details about any nests that you find. In most squares each visit will normally take around one to two hours - however, the visit length depends on the habitats within the square: visits to urban squares may take longer, whereas visits to squares with only a small number of buildings may take less than half an hour.

The 1km squares currently available in Eastern Glamorgan:

SO0901(Bedlinog) SS8178(Nottage), SS8977(Ewenny), SS9273(Wick), SS9368(St Donats), SS9495(Cwmparc),

ST0885(Llantwit Fardre), ST0890(Pontypridd), ST1166(Barry Island), ST0899(Merthyr Vale/Ynysowen)

What do I do next?

You can register for the survey by visiting the BTO House Martin website www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/house-martin-survey You'll then be able to request a vacant 1km square near you. Alternatively, please contact me directly and let me know which one (or more) of the 1km squares listed above appeal to you. If your choice hasn't already been allocated to another volunteer by the time I hear from you, then that square will be all yours! If you need more information before you volunteer, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me for a 'no obligation chat'.

Daniel Jenkins-Jones, 2015 House Martin Survey coordinator, Eastern Glamorgan eastglam-webs@gmail.com / 07828 093 613



Rediscover a Lost Art

One of the joys of birding is that you're constantly learning something new. We've been birding for well over 30 years and during that time we've been on a few twitches, we've been on birding trips all over the UK and other parts of the world and we've enjoyed taking part in several BTO surveys. But, over the last couple of years we've been bitten by a new bug which has added a totally new dimension to our birding . . . we've discovered the BTO's Nest Record Scheme (NRS). The NRS celebrated its 75th anniversary last year and over that period volunteers for the Scheme have been finding and following the progress of individual birds' nests, collecting vital breeding performance data across the UK, helping measure the impacts of factors such as climate change on our bird populations.

Finding birds' nests became a bit of a dying art in the UK since legislation was quite rightly passed in 1954 to make it illegal to take the eggs of most wild birds. But, tracking the fortunes of birds' nesting attempts is vital to collect data which are used to produce trends in breeding performance. These data help identify species that may be declining because of problems at the nesting stage. After years of decline there's been a recent upturn in the number of nest records being submitted to the BTO. But far more are needed and there's a real 'call to arms' for more people volunteer for the Scheme. Of course, the welfare of birds should always come first and anybody volunteering for the NRS must adhere to the **BTO Nest Recording Code of Conduct** (<http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/nrs/coc>), which is a protocol designed to ensure that monitoring a nest does not influence its outcome.

So how have we got on over the last couple of years? Well, it's certainly been a steep learning curve – but a highly enjoyable one. We erected nestboxes– some of which were generously donated by the Glamorgan Bird Club – around Coryton, Radyr, Glyncornel LNR and Treforest. We also monitored some of the nestboxes at the *South and West Wales Wildlife Trust's* reserve at Coed y Bedw. Nestboxes are the easiest way of contributing NRS data. Nevertheless, it's still a privilege to monitor these nests and to watch the fate of those chicks unfold – the pleasure of seeing a large number successfully fledge or the disappointment when a short period of cold or wet weather has a devastating effect on them. Despite receiving thousands of nest records annually for Great and Blue Tits, the BTO still needs more to learn how populations across various parts of the country are faring as our climate changes.

But it is finding 'open' nests which brings the greatest excitement and sense of achievement to a Nest Recorder. No matter how many you've found, it's always a thrill to find the nest of a Blackbird or a Song Thrush. Better still is finding the nests of Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler or even Wood Warbler. These warblers' nests can be found by observing their intriguing off nest behaviour - to find out what we mean, you'll have to become a Nest Recorder! Waterbirds' nests are slightly less challenging to find and we've certainly had a lot of luck with Coots, Mute Swan and Great Crested Grebes. Finding our first Mallard nest though still eludes us – they're a greater challenge than you may think! The good news is that you don't need a lot of kit to be a Nest Recorder: a stick to 'tap' vegetation in your search for birds; a mirror-on-a-stick is useful to look into nests above head height, a notebook to record your data and a pair of bins. And that's pretty much all you need. The other key thing that's required is a little patience.



There are a variety of ways of finding your nest - it very much depends on your target species – but in a nutshell, the methods split into two ways of working: ‘arsing’ and ‘legging’. ‘Arsing’ involves sitting on your . . . erm, arse, and watching birds back to the nest as they carry nesting material or food. Having nailed the vicinity of the nest you can then ‘hot search’ for it.

‘Legging’ calls for a bit more action, where you actively search for nests (‘cold searching’), narrowing your odds by searching in suitable habitat. ‘Legging’ invariably involves a lot of sticking your head into bushes! So, no matter what type of birder you are, there’s a method of nesting to suit you. In reality of course, you end up doing a bit of both.

Anyone can be a nest recorder and it’s entirely up to you how much time you want to dedicate to the Scheme. 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.

We have c.12 volunteers in Glamorgan at the moment and the good news is that recruitment is picking up across Wales, with recorder numbers (in percentage terms) increasing faster than in any other UK country. However, the national pool of volunteers is still fewer than 50, so there is much scope for improvement because more nest data from Wales are desperately needed.

Now you may say “I haven’t got the time” or “isn’t nest recording for specialists?”, and to be honest, that’s just how we felt in 2013 when we first became interested in the NRS. To give ourselves a head start, we enrolled on a BTO Nest Record Scheme Course in Norfolk. Here we were blown away by loads of fascinating tips on how to find different species’ nests and monitor them safely. Of course, you don’t have to take part in a training weekend to take part in NRS. You can learn a lot about nesting through trial and error and most birders will have a good knowledge of which areas of habitat will host particular species of nesting birds. Why not join the Welsh revival and make 2015 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.

If you think you might be interested in taking part please visit the BTO’s Nest Record Scheme website, <http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/nrs>. Or you’re more than welcome to contact either of us for an informal chat. We’d be delighted to hear from you.

Wayne Morris (eastglambto@gmail.com) & Daniel Jenkins-Jones (eastglamwebs@gmail.com)



BTO GARDEN BIRDWATCH

Bird of the Month: Pied Wagtail

The Pied Wagtail, with its distinctive black and white colouring and long bobbing tail, will be a familiar bird to many. It's not entirely clear why it constantly wags its tail although several explanations have been suggested. These include: as a means of signalling to others, to flush out insects, or to camouflage the bird whilst it is hunting next to flowing water and riverside vegetation. The Pied Wagtail is often seen searching for insects along our roads and pavements, perched on rooftops (they rarely settle on tree branches except to roost), or on the short grass of playing fields. This is a bird that walks, rather than hops, and nods its head like a chicken as it moves forwards in fits and starts or darting runs. Nodding with each step, whilst the body moves, keeps the head fixed relative to the bird's surroundings, thus making it easier to spot food or danger. Males and females are of similar appearance, the female having a greyer, rather than black, back and smaller bib. The throat of breeding males is black whilst that of non-breeding birds is white.

Did you know?

- Pied Wagtails are highly territorial in spring; they have been seen attacking their own reflections in the wing mirrors of parked cars!
- In the colder months, hundreds of them roost together in trees, reed beds or buildings.
- On average, they eat a small prey item every 3 - 4 seconds during winter daylight hours.
- Their Welsh name is *Siglen Fraith*.

Conservation status: Green listed. Whilst there seems to have been a slight decline in numbers in recent years, the longer-term trend is favourable.

BTO Garden BirdWatch data show that Pied Wagtails regularly visit around 10% of gardens, favouring those with ponds or larger lawns. During cold winters this increases to around a third of gardens. Whilst I recorded Pied Wagtails during 21 weeks of the year in my garden in 2005, I've hardly ever seen one since.

Make Your Garden Count!

If you enjoy watching birds and other creatures in your garden, and want to help track their fortunes, then BTO Garden BirdWatch could be perfect for you. Please contact me for a free enquiry pack or to book a talk (Swansea and surrounding areas).

Amanda Skull, Garden BirdWatch Ambassador

Evenings and weekends only: 07952 758293 gbw@hafi.co.uk www.bto.org/gbw

Follow me on Twitter @amanda_skull



FUTURE EVENTS

Field trips

Sunday 12th April - Kenfig & Sker
 Sunday 26th April - Big Birding Day at Kenfig
 Saturday 2nd May - Craig Cerrig Gleisiad
 Saturday 30th May - Cwm Claisfer
 Wednesday 10th June - Llanwonno
 Sunday 14th June - Somerset Levels

Contact John Wilson at least 7 days before the due date. Departure times vary but John will be able to give information.

Indoor Meetings

Tuesday 28th April - AGM & Quiz. Held at Kenfig Reserve Centre, beginning at 7.45 p.m.

Monthly walk - Kenfig NNR

This takes 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

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

CONTACT DETAILS

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

| Chair | Secretary | Treasurer | Bird Report Editor/Field Trips |
|--|--|--|--|
| Adrian Murch 30, Lewis Avenue, Bridgend CF31 4JJ 01656 768155/0785156287 | Ceri Jones 26, Smithies Avenue, Sully, VoG CF64 5SS 02920 531769 | Anne Wilson 122, Westbourne Road, Penarth VoG CF64 3HH 02920 339424 | John Wilson 122, Westbourne Road, Penarth VoG CF64 3HH 02920 339424/07999801645 |
| Membership Sec/Newsletter | Indoor Meetings Organiser | Publicity Officer | Mapmate Hub |
| Alan Rosney 10, Parc-y-Nant, Nantgarw, RCT CF15 7TJ 01443 841555/07906558489 | Paul Denning 17, Maes Maelwg, Beddau, RCT CF38 2LD 01443 202607 | Position currently vacant | 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 markhipkin1@gmail.com |



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

To pay by Standing Order or Bank Transfer, please contact the Membership Secretary.

GIFT AID

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



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