



# NEWSLETTER

## JULY 2016

www.glamorganbirds.org.uk  
Registered Charity 1129684



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Squacco at the Watermill Flood © Jeff Slocombe



Grasshopper Warbler in Maesteg © Jeff Slocombe



Sanderling at the Kenfig river mouth © Sarah Bevan

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE** for the next newsletter is **Friday 30th September**

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## EDITORIAL NOTE

Welcome to the summer edition of the GBC Newsletter. A lot has been happening on the birding front. The AGM was well attended and went smoothly. Thanks to Adrian Murch for his round up of the year and Anne Wilson for her treasurer's report. We've got a new chairperson; Strinda Davies, and one new committee member; Andrew Bevan. At the end of proceedings, it was decided to grant Adrian honorary membership, in recognition of all the work he has done for the club over the years. A richly deserved accolade. Following the meeting we enjoyed some of Mrs. Wilson's exceedingly good cakes and were entertained by Dave Bush's quiz (which was won by John Wilson's team. See page 13). The minutes of the AGM are now on the club web page.

The Big Birding Day at Kenfig was blessed with good weather. It was well attended and raised a good sum for the club/Kenfig. There is a full report on page 4. Many thanks to all the helpers and to everyone that came along.

Once again, I'm indebted to Lorna Baggett of WTSWW, (with some input from Paul Denning), for providing me with the information to compile the Reserve Spotlight section. I hope you enjoy this section. I'm still looking for more sites, so please don't hold your thinking caps. Do you have a local patch that you could contribute? There are a lot of hidden gems tucked away. Paul Denning took me to a lovely site in the Rhondda a couple of weeks ago (looking for butterflies). I had no idea it was there.

The club trip to the Outer Hebrides went well, with eagles, skuas and divers aplenty. There is a short article on page 11, plus a report of a remarkable sighting that we had on North Uist.

A major protest camp was set up at Rhaslas, to object to the proposals for open-cast mining on the site. Club members, John Williams and Bob Francis were interviewed for BBC Wales news. The camp was timed to coincide with the Assembly elections. I wonder if the appointment of new environment and business ministers might affect the situation? (not to mention the decision to leave the EU). It remains to be seen whether the planned work will go ahead.

The Glamorgan Swift Project is on-going. See the article on page 6. A blog has been set up indicating progress. We really need to know where Swifts are nesting, in order that we can plan where to concentrate our efforts next summer. If you know of any nesting sites or suspect that Swifts are nesting, please let us know. We have set up a database of all the sites discovered to date. Full contact details are on page 6.

Once again it appears that rogue e-mails are being sent from John Wilson and myself. If you receive anything from my freeserve account ([arosney@nantgarw.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:arosney@nantgarw.freeserve.co.uk)), please delete it. I don't use that account any more. Also some messages appear to be coming from John Wilson's old ntl account ([johndwatntlworld.com](mailto:johndwatntlworld.com)). Similarly, delete these. It is probably best to block both of these accounts. Apologies for any inconvenience caused.

Did you see the picture of the gull that fell into a vat of curry - was it a Balti Gull? Sorry couldn't resist it 😊

*Alan Rosney*



## RECENT BIRD SIGHTINGS

### March 2016

The Lesser Scaup was noted at its two regular haunts of Cardiff Bay and Cosmeston, but also made a first fleeting visit to Lisvane Reservoir. A Great Grey Shrike remained at Garwnant, where Willow Tit was also noted. A juvenile Iceland Gull was found in the roost at Col-huw Point, Llantwit Major. Firecrests were present at Aberthaw (2), Cosmeston (2) and Pant Norton. Black Redstarts were seen at Penarth Marina (2), Swanbridge, Sker and near Cwm Nash. A Bittern was at Cosmeston, while Little Egrets were at Roath Park Lake, Ogmere Estuary and Llanishen Reservoir. A Hen Harrier was observed near Gilfach Goch. A pair of Red-legged Partridges was an unusual record from Dunraven. The Newton Point wader roost held 16 Purple Sandpipers and eight Grey Plovers. A wintering Common Sandpiper was still at Ogmere Estuary. A Yellow-legged Gull occurred at Lisvane Reservoir.

### April 2016

A Kentish Plover was at Sker Point (18th). A Bonaparte's Gull was found at Cardiff Bay, where the Lesser Scaup remained. A Blue-headed Wagtail was at Kenfig Pool. An Iceland Gull moved between the Marl Playing Fields, Cardiff Bay and Llanishen Reservoir. A Whooper Swan was a first site record for Parc Slip. An Osprey commuted between Ogmere Estuary and Kenfig. Bittern and Little Egret were both noted at Cosmeston. A Shag was at Ogmere-by-Sea. An early Hobby was reported from Parc Slip. Waders included Spotted Redshank at Llanilid, Green Sandpiper at Parc Slip, Little Ringed Plover at Kenfig and 60 Whimbrel at Sker. Cardiff Bay had a Little Gull, an Arctic Tern and seven Common Terns. A Little Tern was at Kenfig Pool. Ring Ouzels passed through Dunraven and Mynydd Eglwysilan. Migrant Pied Flycatchers were seen at Dunraven and Lamby Way.

### May 2016

The Watermill flood, Ogmere Estuary, hosted a Squacco Heron (29th). Also there this month was a Mandarin, with two Little Egrets, nine Bar-tailed Godwits, 70 Sanderling and 100 Dunlin. Cardiff Bay weighed in with some rare heron action as well, with two Cattle Egrets flying over north-east (6th), while the Lesser Scaup stayed until early in the month and a Black Redstart was seen. The best sightings from the Kenfig area were Turtle Dove, Marsh Harrier, Garganey and Great Northern Diver. Another Garganey was at Llanilid, where Spotted Redshank, Whimbrel, Black-tailed Godwit and Yellow Wagtail were also noted. At least six Storm Petrels were off Porthcawl. Inclement weather dropped two Little Stints, Turnstone and Arctic Tern in at Rhaslas Pond. An Osprey was observed at Caerphilly. A ringtail harrier species and two Grey Partridges were at Aberthaw.

### June 2016

A Gull-billed Tern and a Temminck's Stint were brief visitors to Kenfig Pool (5th). A male Honey Buzzard flew west at Mawdlam (18th). A Turtle Dove was reported from a Llanishen garden (28th). Sightings at Ogmere Estuary included Little Ringed Plover, Little Egret, Grasshopper Warbler and a pair of Spotted Flycatchers. Four adult Choughs were at Southerndown, but no young have been noted so far. A Greenshank at Kenfig near the month end was a sign of wader passage yet to come.

*Paul Roberts*



## CLUB NEWS

### Members' News

Many thanks for all your membership renewals. There are still some subs outstanding. If it's slipped your mind, please renew a.s.a.p. (Non-renewers will have a membership renewal form with this newsletter. If you receive your newsletters on-line, you should get an e-mail reminder). A club member approached me recently saying that he hadn't received a receipt for his membership. Generally I don't send out receipts unless requested (to cut down on admin and postage costs). If however you want one, please indicate it on your membership form. Membership numbers are falling somewhat, please pass on the club details to fellow birders that you think might be interested.

Sadly we recently heard of the death of Arthur Robins. Arthur has been a GBC member since the very early days of the club. Condolences to Pamela, his wife.

### Committee Update

- The AGM was in late April. Strinda Davies was elected as the new chair, replacing Adrian Murch and Andrew Bevan was elected on to the general committee. Otherwise the composition of the committee remains the same
- Paul Denning and Alan Rosney gave a talk to the Porthcawl Harbourside group. Sadly it was sparsely attended
- Alan Rosney led a dawn chorus walk at Dyffryn Gardens with 15 participants
- Rob & Linda Nottage helped with a dawn chorus walk at Parc Slip
- Several bird boxes have been donated to Ty Hafan Children's Hospice. It's too late for them to be used this season but they may well be used for roosting
- An evaluation of the Big Birding Day was undertaken with suggestions for future improvements being made
- An enquiry about the Kittiwakes at Mumbles not using the purpose built nesting platforms was discussed. As it is outside our jurisdiction, the query was passed on to the Gower Ornithological Society
- John Wilson has now received most of the sections for the bird report

*Alan Rosney*

## GBC CLOTHING

NEW just in - Round neck T shirt in bottle green with gold GBC badge - £7.50 plus p & p. Don't forget that we also have GBC polo shirts, sweat shirts, hoodies and fleeces. For details contact Alan Rosney.

## EASY SEARCH & EASY FUNDRAISING

Don't forget that you can raise extra funds for the club, at no extra cost to yourself. If you use *Easy Search* for on-line searches or *Easy Fund Raising* for on-line shopping, a small amount goes to GBC. There are links to firms such as John Lewis, House of Fraser etc. Why not give it a go? - It's easy.



## BIG BIRDING DAY 6 - Kenfig 8th May 2016

Luckily we had sunny weather for this, our sixth "Big Birding Day". Unfortunately strong winds meant that the bird ringing demonstration had to be cancelled. The rest of the activities went ahead as planned however. John Wilson and Paul Denning led two bird walks. The morning walk went down to the pool. The highlight was a flock of nine Whimbrel on the east shore. The afternoon walk, with nineteen participants, went down to Sker. The putative American Golden Plover had disappeared however. Jeff Curtis and Tony Messenger undertook their WeBS count on the day and contributed to the daily total of birds seen. The species total for the day was 55.

Dave Carrington opened the moth trap. The catch was limited but there were a Setaceous Hebrew Characters and Common Quaker to examine. Anne Wilson and granddaughter Lara, looked after the cake stall, Jean Haslam provided teas and coffees and Alan Rosney manned the plant stall. Ceri Jones ran the raffle, which was won by Nick Hanford. Nick, a former club member, who now resides in Cornwall, was visiting for the day and kindly donated his cash prize to the club. Many thanks. Graham Holmes ran the ever popular children's bird quiz. (Flynn Aitken, John and Anne's grandson, was banned because he was too good!) Amy Schwartz had to set up indoors, as some of her skulls and skeletons were very delicate and might have been damaged by the wind. Rod Haslam kept the children entertained making bird feeders.

It was good to catch up with so many club members, as well as lots of interested passers-by. We raised £275.12 on the day, which was split 50/50 between the Bird Club and Kenfig Reserve.



A couple of pictures taken at the Big Birding Day © John Wilson

## COFFEE BREAK QUIZ

*Answers are on page 13 - sadly no prizes.*

Here's a copy of Dave Bush's AGM quiz, for those of you who couldn't attend. The winners, I believe, got 20/25. Can you beat that? (taken from the book based upon the Radio 4 series "Tweet of the day")

Which birds are these? 1. Bonxie 2. In Scotland - the tourist Eagle 3. Clown of the sea 4. Goatsucker 5. Warden of the marshes 6. Furze Wren 7. French Yellowhammer 8. Musselcracker 9. Halcyon 10. Bumbarrel 11. In Wales - Screamer of the woods 12. St Cuthbert's Duck 13. Woodcock Pilot 14. Horned Lark 15. Mountain Linnet 16. Stormcock 17. Ringtail 18. Hedge Sparrow 19. Pyewipe 20. Bull o'the Mire 21. Yaffle 22. Dive Dapper 23. Goggle-eyed Plover 24. Seven Whistler 25. In Gaelic - Peat Bog Fool



## SWIFT PROJECT UPDATE

The Swifts are back (by the time we go to press, some may well be on their return journey!)

- A blog has been set up (URL is: <http://glamorganswiftchampions.blogspot.co.uk>) giving up to date information. If you wish to post, you'll need an invite – please get in touch.



Our Swift Champions blog

- Some of the Swift boxes built by Bridgend College (Pencoed Campus) are being placed at Parc Slip. Thanks to Lyn Evans and his volunteer group.
- Contact has been made with the dedicated RSPB Swift Officer, Rebecca Pitman, who has provided us with a batch of leaflets about Swifts.
- Radio Wales interviewed some of the children at Bedwas Junior School about “their” Swifts. Incredibly the Swifts made a pass just as the interviews were taking place. A recording of the interviews can be accessed from the blog. Some Swift badges were distributed - thanks to Dan Jenkins-Jones at RSPB for supplying these. Lastly a booklet was presented to the school library. A follow up visit is planned. Another school project is under discussion.
- Julia Barrell and Linda Newton led a training event in Llantwit Major on 26th May. Ten Swifts were observed swooping over the old town. One definite nest site was found, with other potential sites identified near the church. Three boxes were donated to Gareth Roberts (a Llantwit resident) and two call systems are on order. Let's hope we can build up numbers here.
- Our Swift Champions have been out and about, monitoring their local areas. Tim Adcock and Amanda Brand have found several nest sites in Ely. A nest site was found in Pontypridd by Richard Wistow. Other reports came from Penarth, Bridgend, Pontyclun, Aberthin, Nantyffylon and Cowbridge. Sadly some former nesting sites in Splott appear to have been lost due to re-roofing, although “new” ones were found nearby.
- Alan Rosney attended a Heritage Lottery Fund workshop to investigate potential funding and a sub-committee has been formed to put a bid together.
- A display/information board has been placed at Kenfig.
- Articles have appeared in the local press and a talk was given to a group in Porthcawl.

Contact Alan Rosney ([alan.rosney@glamorganbirds.org.uk](mailto:alan.rosney@glamorganbirds.org.uk)), Julia Barrell [jsbarrell@hotmail.com](mailto:jsbarrell@hotmail.com) or Linda Newton ([wyverne.linat@gmail.com](mailto:wyverne.linat@gmail.com))



# RESERVE SPOTLIGHT - BRYNNA WOODS & LLANHARAN MARSH (SS 9882)

This area has an industrial past. Coal mining started at Brynna Woods in the early 1840's. It wasn't particularly successful as a mine because the marshy nature of the site with water seeping into the workings. This colliery probably closed in the 1880's. Drift mining was then started at Brynna in the 1890's and by the early 1920's it was reported that there were 400 men working underground on there. Mining stopped altogether at Brynna Woods in 1933. The Wildlife Trust took over management of the site in 2009. There are still structures in the woods to remind us of this past – including some of the mine shaft entrances and buildings.

**1. Pwll a'r**  
Ponds are incredibly important for hundreds of plants and animals, they also absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

**2. Saffi pwll glo**  
Mae Coed Brynna'n lleoedd tawel lawr heddiw, ond ar un adeg roedd cyrhaedd 400 o ddynion yn gweithio yn y pylau drifft yma. Dechreuwyd cloddio am lalein 1861 a daeth y gwaith i ben yn y 1930au.

**2. Shaft**  
Brynna woods is now a very tranquil place but there was once up to 400 men employed in the drift mines here. Mining started in 1861 and ceased in the 1930's.

**3. Yr Hen Dderwen**  
A hâu tua 300 mlynydd oed, dyma un o'r coed hynaf yn yr ardal.

**3. Ancient oak tree**  
At approximately 300 years old, this oak tree is one of the oldest trees in the area.

**4. Dôl fach**  
Y ddôl fach yw un o'r dolydd mwyaf amrywiaethol yng Nghoed Brynna, gan ei bod yn gartref i lu o wahaniaol fathau o fiodau gwylt. Cwytwch y pipisod Mantell Goch yn ymorthu ar neithdar y mien.

**4. Small meadow**  
The small meadow is one of Brynna woods' most diverse meadows, supporting many different species of wild flowers. Spot the Red Admiral butterflies feeding on the nectar of brambles.

**5. Y Berllan**  
Mae'r berllan draddodiadol hon a sefydlwyd yn y 1950au yn fan arbennig o addas ar gyfer natur wyllt, gan ei bod yn cynnwys clyweith o wahanol gymffnoedd yn agos at ei gylid. Mae'n gartref i lawer o invertebrata ac adar pŵn megis Coch y Berllan a'r Gwybedwr Smetog.

**5. Orchard**  
This traditional orchard, dating back to the 1850s, is a particularly good place for wildlife, containing a mosaic of habitats in close proximity. It is home to many rare invertebrates and birds such as the bullfinch and spotted Flycatcher.

**6. Coed Cyll**  
Coed cyll yw'r rhai mwyaf cyffredin yng Nghoed Brynna. Maent yn arbennig o bwysig i nai o'r tingolion, ac yn enwedig y Pathaw sy'n ymorthu ar y onau cyll.

**6. Hazel**  
Brynna Wood is mainly composed of Hazel trees. These are very important for some of the inhabitants, especially the Dormouse which feeds on hazelnuts.

**6. Large meadow**  
This meadow has a large amount of blue bells in the spring, this is replaced by bracken in the summer.

**7. Pont y Rheilffordd**  
Cofwyd y bont hon i ddal i dda bwy groes i'r porffeydd a wahanwyd oddi ar y fflam pan gloddodd theilffordd Owri Ogwr-Caerdydd ei hadeddu yn y 1880au.

**7. Railway bridge**  
This bridge was built to give livestock access to grazing land that was cut off by the construction of the Ogmore-Cardiff railway line in the 1890's.

**8. Coed Cyll**  
Coed cyll yw'r rhai mwyaf cyffredin yng Nghoed Brynna. Maent yn arbennig o bwysig i nai o'r tingolion, ac yn enwedig y Pathaw sy'n ymorthu ar y onau cyll.

**8. Hazel**  
Brynna Wood is mainly composed of Hazel trees. These are very important for some of the inhabitants, especially the Dormouse which feeds on hazelnuts.

**9. Ystafell ddoesbarth awyr agored**  
Adeladwyd hon yn 2010 gan yr Ymddiriedolaeth Natur a gwirfoddolwyr lleol, i gael ei defnyddio gan blant yr ardal ar gyfer addysg a difyrwch.

**9. Outdoor classroom**  
This was built in 2010 by the Wildlife Trust and local volunteers, for use by the local children for education and recreation.

**Key**  
----- Community Route (7 km / 7 local)  
----- Shorter Route (2 km / 2 local)  
----- Line of old Ogmore-Cardiff Railway

**Dail a chnau cyll**  
Hazel leaves and nuts

**Dechreuwch Yma**  
Start Here

**Coch y Berllan**  
Bullfinch

**Gwybedwr Smetog**  
Spotted Flycatcher

Gwarchod Natur ar gyfer y Dyfodol / Protecting Wildlife for the Future

The site is a SINC (Site of importance for nature conservation) and Llanharan Marsh used to be an SSSI (Site of special scientific interest) but was de-notified in 1990. This is because the marshland used to be home to the Marsh Fritillary butterfly, a rare species, which affords special protection. Due to a lack of management (grazing) of the marsh, willow and wetland scrub encroached and altered the habitat, shading out the food plant of the butterfly (Devil's-bit Scabious). A survey in 2008 showed only 11 suitable patches of habitat left for the Marsh Fritillary butterfly. Since the Trust took over, they have been cutting down scrub to try and restore it, to encourage the right habitat for the butterfly and other marshland wildlife. They are working with a local grazier, who puts his Highland cows (photo overleaf) on in the spring to graze the marsh.



Photos © WTSWW

Seventy eight bird species have been recorded on the site. The usual woodland species are recorded plus some sought after birds such as Woodcock, Spotted Flycatcher, Brambling, Garden Warbler, Cuckoo, Water Rail and Dipper. Rarer birds that have been seen include Willow Tit, Marsh Tit and Firecrest. A Grasshopper Warbler was reeling there this spring. Ring Ouzel has been recorded on passage and five different raptor species have been seen.

Other wildlife can be seen. The woodland is home to the dormouse and there have been past records of Otter on site, both of which are European protected species. The woods are active in the spring and summer with bats, particularly the Lesser Horseshoe. There are also slow worms, lizards, grass snakes and adders on site. Violet Oil Beetle has been recorded, as has a rare fungus, Cobalt Crust.

The reserve lies between the Llanharan to Brynna Road and the railway line. From the east follow the A473 through Llanharan. In Llanharan, take the minor road to Brynna. Before reaching Brynna, take a side street on your left - Park Terrace. At the bottom of the hill take a left turn, looking for Bethlehem View on your right. The entrance to the reserve is at the end of this street.

*Lorna Baggett*

## BIG GARDEN BIRDWATCH RESULTS 2016

The results of the 2016 RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch are in. The following table shows the top ten garden birds recorded in the East Glamorgan area (there were no results for RCT or VoG on the RSPB website). As you can see there are regional variations. Goldfinch only appeared in Caerphilly's top ten, whilst Coal Tit only appeared in Merthyr Tydfil. Cardiff was alone in recording Feral and Wood Pigeon.

<b>Bridgend</b>	<b>Caerphilly</b>	<b>Cardiff</b>	<b>Merthyr</b>
House Sparrow	House Sparrow	House Sparrow	House Sparrow
Starling	Blue Tit	Blue Tit	Blue Tit
Blue Tit	Blackbird	Blackbird	Great Tit
Blackbird	Starling	Starling	Blackbird
Chaffinch	Jackdaw	Magpie	Chaffinch
Jackdaw	Great Tit	Wood Pigeon	Jackdaw
Magpie	Long-tailed Tit	Great Tit	Long-tailed Tit
Great Tit	Chaffinch	Feral Pigeon	Robin
Long-tailed Tit	Robin	Robin	Coal Tit
Robin	Goldfinch	Long-tailed Tit	Magpie



## PHOTO GALLERY



Wheatear at Sker © Gary Light



Yellow Wagtail on the Cardiff Barrage © Pete Howlett



Cormorant at Lamby Lake © John Wilson



Greenshank on the River Ogmore © Gary Light

## PHOTO COMPETITION

In the last newsletter a photo competition was launched, to provide the cover photo for the new GBC promotional leaflet. And the winner was - extremely long pause, as per X factor, Bake off etc .....

erm well - unfortunately, there were NO entries, so It'll have to be held over until the next issue. Dig out those photos, (taken in East Glamorgan), that would suit the tri-fold leaflets that we use, i.e. portrait rather than landscape. It needn't be a rare bird but it must eye-catching. The idea is to attract new members to the club. Send entries to Richard Smith at [memberatbirdpix.freereserve.co.uk](mailto:memberatbirdpix.freereserve.co.uk)

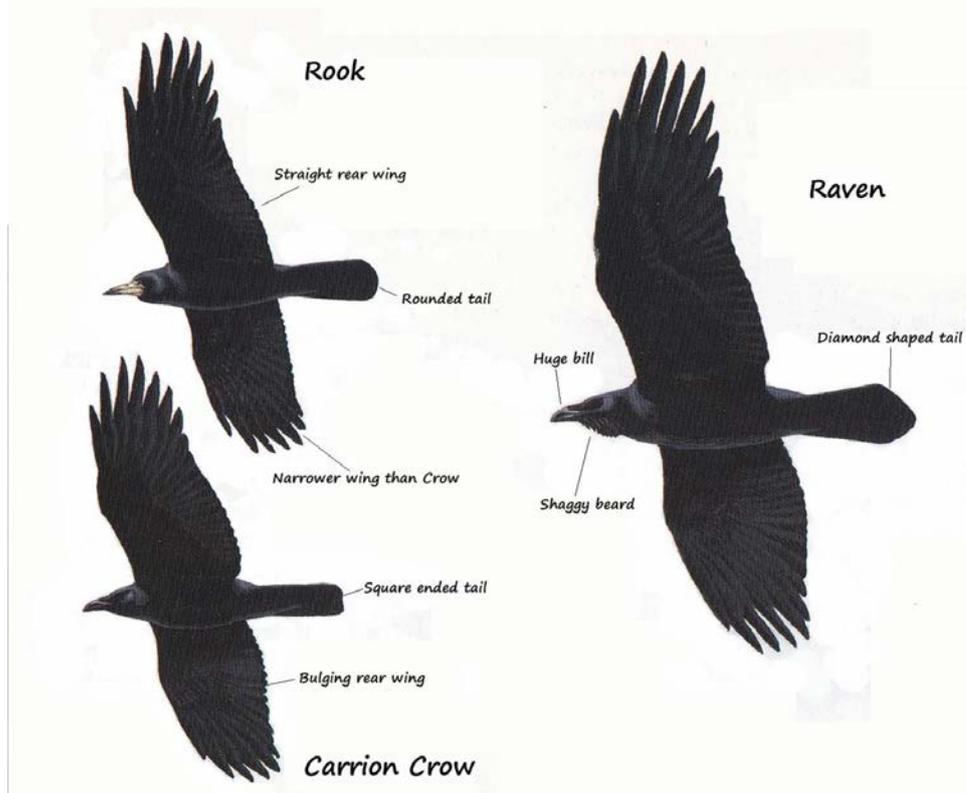


## CONFUSION SPECIES - CROWS IN FLIGHT

In this edition we are looking at the larger members of the Crow family. All three are regularly seen in our region, with Raven increasing its range in recent years.

If seen clearly, it is easy to separate Rook and Crow by the bare, whitish face of the former. Crows always have fully feathered faces. However it isn't as easy to separate them in flight. The Rook tends to have straighter rear edges to the wings, which appear narrower and more pointed than those of a Crow. In flight, Rooks tend to have faster, deeper wing beats than the Crow. Crows always seem to have slower (lazier) wing beats. Crows have a bulging rear edge to the wing. Tail shape is another factor to note. The tail of the Rook usually appears more rounded than the square-ended tail of the Crow. The hoarse call of the Rook is another good separation feature.

Compared with both Rook and Crow, the Raven is much larger. (L 54-67 cm cf. 41-51 cm.) If seen high up however, its size isn't always apparent. One must concentrate on shape. The Raven is long-winged with tapered "hands". The diamond-shaped tail is often the clinching feature. They can be observed soaring on flat wings, as per Buzzard. The head is longer than both Rook and Crow and the huge bill is usually evident, as is the shaggy beard. Their presence is often given away by call, with a very loud, raucous "kronk". The sight of a pair displaying is an unforgettable experience.



There are a couple of other corvids that might be encountered in our area. The Chough is confined to coastal areas, particularly on the Heritage Coast (if you're unlucky there, try south Gower). The Hooded Crow is very rare in South Wales but they do occasionally occur, presumably drifting over from Ireland, where they are resident.

Pictures adapted from the Macmillan Bird Identification Guide



## TRIP REPORTS

### Kenfig - Saturday 16th April

A good turn out of twenty-five for this combined monthly walk/field outing. Our main aim was to look for migrants, however a switch in wind direction to the north, had obviously slowed things down a bit. Nevertheless there were Swallows, Sand Martins and House Martins over the pool. Following a brief and unsuccessful visit to the east shore to seek out Grasshopper Warbler, we headed off on the long trek to the river mouth via Sker point. A couple of Whitethroats were seen en route, as well as Stonechat and Sparrowhawk. Sker was very quiet, although Graham Powell reported nine Purple Sandpipers there. On the haul road we saw a couple of Wheatears and lots of Skylarks and pipits. Our best find was a pair of Little Ringed Plovers on one of the road side pools. At the river mouth there was a flock of about fifty Sanderling, plus a group of seven Common Gulls. A couple more Sparrowhawks and three Buzzards were seen. On our return journey we only added Mistle Thrush and Stock Dove to the day list. It was quite a long walk (about 7.5 miles according to my smart phone pedometer) and we saw 60 species in total.

P.S. Best wishes to Edna Murley who took a tumble on the dunes and injured her ankle.

### Goldcliff - Wednesday 27th April

Fifteen participants met at Goldcliff. The early sunshine wasn't to last very long. From the platforms and hides, we were treated to great views of the waders; Avocets, Ringed Plover, Little Ringed Plover, Dunlin, Oystercatcher, Lapwing (with chicks), Common Sandpiper, Redshank and Greenshank. Unfortunately the conditions turned very wintry with cold winds and hail storms. Good job there are hides there. Marlay John and Ken Fifield got on to a distant Yellow Wagtail and there were several White Wagtails here too. Four or five Whimbrel were spotted on the sea wall. The duck species included Gadwall, Shoveler, Shelduck, Teal, Wigeon, Tufted Duck and of course Mallard. (A Pochard was seen from Red House Barns later).

After lunch we headed for Red House Barns in the hope of seeing the long-staying Glossy Ibis. Our first bird here was a male Marsh Harrier. Graham Powell got us all on to the Glossy Ibis, which was feeding on the side of one of the pools. Then the heavens opened again - this proved terminal. After an hour watching stair rods, we called it a day.

### Outer Hebrides - 14th - 21st May

The GBC trip to the Outer Hebrides went well. Our accommodation was first class and all of the travel arrangements went smoothly. Pity the weather didn't play ball, with two days of rain. The bird highlights were Corncrake, Golden Eagle, White-tailed Eagle, Short-eared Owl, Merlin, Common Crane, three skua and diver species, Red-necked Phalarope and Common Redpoll. Our most remarkable sighting however wasn't a bird but a mammal. Whilst scanning a hillside for raptors, Stuart Hardcastle spotted a large black cat. It was duly scoped and it appeared to have all the hallmarks of a Black Panther. Several photos were obtained. The locals were sceptical at first but most were eventually convinced. It appears a chap reported one fifteen years ago but wasn't believed. See the newspaper article overleaf. A full trip report has been posted on the club website.



## GBC hits the headlines



Thanks to Adrian Meredith for supplying a copy of the local newspaper - Am Pàipear

## Dinas RSPB - Sunday 29th May

A glorious day for a visit to this lovely reserve. If you've never been, put a note into your diary for next spring. Having gathered in the car park, almost immediately we were treated to a view of a pair of Marsh Tits visiting the feeders. Just down the road, a Tree Pipit on top of one of the nearby birch trees was a good find. House Martins were busy nest building on the lych-gate of the church and Spotted Flycatchers were catching insects over the stream. A Grey Wagtail was seen here also. We could hear both Redstarts and Pied Flycatchers but took a while to locate them. Eventually everyone had good views of both males and females.

Della Lack found the nest hole of a Great Spotted Woodpecker, which gave some good photo opportunities. As we walked through the reserve we could hear Wood Warblers giving their spinning coin song. Sadly we weren't able to see any. After a scramble over the riverside rocks we broke for lunch alongside the River Tywi - here a Dipper flashed past and a Red Kite soared overhead. After lunch we took the boardwalk and saw several Treecreepers, one of which was entering a nest site.

Our last port of call was Llyn Brianne Reservoir. Following a slight mix up the group ended up in different parking spots, nevertheless we added Greylag, Sand Martin, Whinchat and Yellowhammer to the trip list here.

## Llanwonno - Wednesday 8th June

We were blessed with ideal conditions for Nightjar watching - warm and still. (also ideal conditions for midge spotting too). After admiring the House Martins flying around the pub, twenty one club members set off on a walk along one of the tracks alongside the clear fell. En route we saw Great Spotted Woodpecker, Tree Pipit, Meadow Pipit, Swift, Mistle Thrush (20) and Kestrel. We had to wait quite a while before the Nightjars started churring. Then just as dusk fell we saw three Nightjars hunting, accompanied by a Cuckoo. A fourth bird was heard churring but not observed. Another successful trip. I think the midges enjoyed it too!



Dinas: a leisurely lunch by the River Tywi  
© Paul Seligman



Llanwonno: "This week I'll be mainly wearing a mosquito net." © Graham Powell

### Somerset Levels - Wednesday 15th June

Sadly there were no takers for this one - a shame, as this can be one of the best outings of the year. As it turned out however, the weather wasn't great. Maybe next year.

### GBC LIBRARY

Over the years many books have been donated to the club library, (which is available to view at our indoor meetings). We have a large selection of books, ranging from field guides, species accounts, travel guides, local bird reports, as well as many academic tomes. However we've encountered a problem, in that we haven't enough room to house all the books. Some duplicates were sold at the Big Birding Day and out of date publications have been re-cycled. We really need a good sort out in the near future and may need to sell/donate any spares. Ideally we'd like a volunteer or volunteers to spend a couple of hours sorting things out. If you can help, please contact David Carrington at Kenfig.

Quiz answers from page 5 : 1. Great Skua 2. Common Buzzard 3. Puffin 4. Nightjar 5. Redshank 6. Dartford Warbler 7. Cirl (accept Ortolan) Bunting 8. Oystercatcher 9. Kingfisher 10. Long-tailed Tit 11. Jay 12. Eider Duck 13. Goldcrest 14. Shorelark 15. Twite 16. Mistle Thrush 17. Hen (accept Montagu's) Harrier 18. Dunnock 19. Lapwing 20. Bittern 21. Green Woodpecker 22. Little Grebe 23. Stone Curlew 24. Whimbrel 25. Dotterel



## BTO NEWS



### GLAMORGAN BTO NEST RECORD SCHEME TASTER DAY

The number of birders taking part in the BTO's long-running Nest Record Scheme is on the increase. Volunteers find and follow the progress of individual birds' nests across the UK, collecting vital data which are used to produce population trends in breeding performance. These data help identify species that may be declining because of problems at the nesting stage and they can also help measure the impact of factors such as climate change on our bird populations.

Despite a recent increase in volunteers, far more are needed and there's a real 'call to arms' for more people to take up nesting, particularly here in Wales, where more data is desperately needed.

In Glamorgan there are currently only a dozen active nest recorders, submitting c. 800 records annually. Keen to increase these numbers and put the scheme on a more sustainable footing in the county, along with Trevor Fletcher (Rudry Common Trust), we trialled a *Nest Record Scheme Taster Day* at Rudry Common on 8th May this year. Five local birders, new to the scheme, joined us for a day of nest monitoring.

After a short indoor session, where participants were presented with a *free* hazel 'tapping stick' (an essential tool of the nest recorders' trade), introduced them to the *NRS Code of Conduct* and to some basic nest finding techniques, we were soon out in the field. We spent the morning working through woodland, finding plenty of old, or this year's Song Thrush, Blackbird and Robin nests, but sadly no active ones. Nevertheless, it was still a useful session because we were able to show the participants the best places to look for the nests of these species. A Song Thrush on eggs was found later in the afternoon.

We spent the afternoon on Rudry Common, where we found a couple of active Long-tailed Tit nests, a very recently predated Linnets nest (which was in pristine condition but contained only broken egg shells) and a Great Tit in a natural nest cavity. The latter allowed Trevor to show off his skills with an endoscope. We also watched a Willow Warbler busily building a nest, which Trevor went back to a week later to find that it contained eggs.

The highlight of the day was finding a Stonechat nest with 5 chicks. The participants were blown away by this nest and hopefully it'll be the one that gets them hooked on nesting.

We found a Robin on eggs on our walk back to base and rounded the day off with another short indoor session, where we shared information on how to plan nest visits and complete nest records and had a quick game of "name the nest." This involved showing images of various nests, a quick shout out to name the species that had built them and then sharing some tips on how to find that species' nest.



We had some very positive feedback from all who attended. An email from one of the participants really does sum up being part of the Nest Record Scheme, *"I thoroughly enjoyed yesterday - it added a whole new dimension to monitoring bird behaviour, Brilliant!"*

The group were keen to keep in touch to share our experiences and any tips. We shall create an informal NRS email group amongst us. We'd like to thank the Rudry Common Trust for its support and last but not least, the event raised £50 for the BTO.

An enjoyable day all round and fingers crossed that some, if not all, of the participants turn out to fully fledged nesters in years to come. We'd like to repeat the course in 2017, so please get in touch if you'd like to receive information nearer the date.

## Reports published

The latest Wetland Bird Survey report was published in May and summarises the efforts of thousands of volunteer counters at 2,799 wetland sites between July 2014 and June 2015. With data available online for species and sites from 1966/7 onwards, you can explore how water bird numbers are changing at a wetland site near you. Research, using WeBS data and data from other countries tells us that wintering water birds are changing their distributions across north-western Europe in response to climate and land-use change.

The Breeding Bird Survey report will be published on the 7th July - look out for the press releases on Twitter and Facebook. Paper copies of the report will be sent to BBS and Waterways Breeding Bird Survey volunteers that have opted for paper copies.

Comprehensive data are more important than ever and only possible with the help of our dedicated volunteers. Thanks to all our local volunteers for their continued support with all these surveys.

## Links

Nest Record Scheme (NRS), <http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/nrs>

Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS), <http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/webs>

Breeding Bird Survey (BBS), <http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/bbs>

Waterways Breeding Bird Survey (WBBS), <http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/wbbs>

*Wayne Morris: BTO Regional Representative in East Glamorgan*

*Dan Jenkins-Jones: Assistant BTO Regional Representative in East Glamorgan & Local WeBS organiser*

<http://eastglambto.wordpress.com>



## BTO GARDEN BIRDWATCH - HOUSE SPARROWS

Young birds are leaving the nest and becoming independent this month, so you may well see fledgling House Sparrows in your garden. Pairs mate for life and often return to the same nest site each year. House Sparrows are closely associated with human habitats, often living close to (or even in) the homes of people. Whilst the stout bill is designed for eating seeds, young birds are fed on insects. The crown and nape of adult males is grey, the sides of the head are brown and a wide black bib extends down onto the chest. Dominant males have larger bibs. The back is a warm brown, streaked with black, with a few white wing feathers. Adult females, and the juveniles of both sexes, are a light sandy brown with brown and grey streaks on the back and wings. Look out for House Sparrows enjoying a dust-bath; the precise reason for dust-bathing is unclear but it probably removes stale preen-oil and other debris from the plumage.

### Did you know?

- House Sparrows have been recorded living and breeding in coal mines
- The more feathers there are in the nest, the more eggs the female will lay
- They are adaptable at finding new food sources and have been seen plucking insects from spiders' webs and dead insects from cars
- The Welsh name is *Aderyn y To*, literally 'bird of the house-top'

### How to attract them to your garden:

This is one species which doesn't turn its beak up at cheap seed mixes - they have a preference for grain. They feel more comfortable feeding as a group, so hang your feeders close together. They will also eat peanuts (always feed from a metal mesh feeder) and kitchen scraps.

### Conservation status: **Red**.

The House Sparrow population has roughly halved in recent decades in both rural and urban areas. Various causes for the decline in urban areas have been suggested such as loss of nest sites under roof tiles; increased predation; increased competition for food from species such as Wood-pigeon; and fewer insects due to increased use of pesticides in gardens. House Sparrows are a sedentary species, so the reasons for their decline in rural areas could be quite different. Garden BirdWatch data show that the rate of decline has been more pronounced in London and South-East England than in Wales and Scotland.



House Sparrow and young  
© Richard Calvert

### Make Your Garden Count

If you enjoy watching the birds and in your garden, why not take part in BTO Garden BirdWatch? Please contact me for a free enquiry pack or to book a talk. (Swansea and surrounding area)

Amanda Skull, Garden BirdWatch Ambassador  
07952 758293 (evenings & weekends only)

[gbwathiafi.co.uk](http://gbwathiafi.co.uk) [www.bto.org/gbw](http://www.bto.org/gbw)  
Follow me on Twitter @amanda\_skull



## FUTURE EVENTS

### Field trips

- Sunday 10th July - Cotswold Water Park (Leader: Alan Rosney)
- Wednesday 20th July - Lanlay Meadows
- Sunday 14th August - Kenfig
- Wednesday 21st September - Collister Pill (Leader: Ceri Jones)

Contact John Wilson at least 7 days before the due date. Departure times will vary. Details will be posted on the club website. John will be able to give more information.

### 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 743386/07779978738

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE** for the next newsletter is **Friday 30th September**

## CONTACT DETAILS

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Membership Sec/Newsletter	Indoor Meetings Organiser	Publicity Officer	Mapmate Hub
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