

SHOREHAM DISTRICT ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 1994

From the Editor

The first thing I must do is to thank Richard Ives on behalf of everyone in the Society for the sterling work he has put in as our Editor for the last Six years, the quality of our annual report has been maintained throughout his tenure of office.

I must also bring to everyone's attention the sterling back-room work undertaken by Brian Clay, who having been Richard's predecessor as Hon. Editor for the Society still continues as type-setter, layout artist and publisher of our various printed offerings. He has recently retired from duties on our council.

Well done both of you and many thanks.

Suddenly its half-way through another year and we haven't done half as much bird-watching as we'd promised ourselves we'd be doing in 1994. How many of us are kicking ourselves for the missed opportunities? Just to encourage you to put down the gardening tools and pick up the binoculars there's a list on page three of some mouth-watering venues that your Society wishes to tempt you with, if the locations are not enough to tempt you then see what you missed by not partaking of Bernie's trip to the New Forest.

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RECORDS

Don't leave it 'til the end of the year and bury our hardworking Recorder in bump! - keep sending the records forward on a regular basis and make his job easier:-

ROD SHAW
1, FORGE CLOSE,
PORTSLADE, BRIGHTON
BN41 2GP.

BIRDS ON OUR PATCH - SPRING 1994

Not a great Spring, but then again, not bad! Some nice birds to be seen if you got out and about.

Spring passage off Worthing beach this year was a mixed offering - very poor numbers of waders throughout the period with the exception of some interesting numbers of Ruff seen. Latter part of April produced some respectable Skua passages with some Pomarine Skuas amongst the Arctics and Greats and satisfactory numbers of 'Commic' Terns, best day being 24 th. April with 3000 Commics, 60 Black Terns/7 Pomarine Skuas and several Little Gulls, April also produced the usual sprinkling of Mediteranean Gulls and 3 Black Necked Grebes and a Red Necked Grebe. May saw 4/6 Roseate Terns past as well. Sea-watching at Worthing also produced 2 Hobbys in off the sea and a large flock of Manx Shearwaters passed one evening in early May.

Early May also produced a wayward Black Kite over Lancing clump. Significant numbers of Chiff-Chaffs and Blackcaps were a note worthy feature of March and April in the area. A Merlin was watched over Lancing on 18th. March and a Wheatear at Shoreham Harbour on 18th. March is not particularly early for our coastline. One of the highlights of this Spring was a little flurry of Serins at Goring Gap, fairly long staying and well watched, there were certainly 2 males at one site on 19th and 20th March whilst the same site on 25th produced a singing male plus a female. This spring also produced a flock of 24 Stock Doves at Lancing a significant flock for these parts. There was still at least 1 of the wintering Jack Snipe remaining at Ferring Rife on 21st March and a Peregrine over Lancing on 21st of the month. Passerine movements showed with Tree Pipit and Ring Ouzel at Lancing on 21st April, 3 Yellow Wagtails at New Salts Farm on 22nd April. 26th of the month produced a singing Grasshopper Warbler on the north side of Shoreham Harbour with 3 Swifts over Lancing on 30th April.

We still had Quail calling at Cissbury into June. And a cheering note to finish on - early reports indicate a strong presence of Corn Buntings all along our part of the Downs this year.

LOST AND FOUND

AFTER THE AGM AT ST. GILES CHURCH HALL 18TH APRIL SOMEONE WALKED OUT AND LEFT BEHIND THEIR ANORAK - MARKS & SPENCER - FAWN COLOUR - SIZE 43/44 - OUR HON. SEC. BRIANNE REEVE IS LOOKING AFTER IT - 0273 452497

FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS :-

<i>VENUE /MEET AT</i>	<i>WHEN</i>
<i>Waltham Brooks and Nightjars</i> Greatham Bridge	Friday 8th July at 20.00
<i>Summer Barbeque</i> Storrington (see enclosed note)	Saturday 16th July at 1930
<i>Hollingbury Camp</i> Ditchling Rd. car park	Saturday 10th Sept at 0800
<i>Cissbury Ring (Ringing Demo)</i> C/park N. of Cissbury Ring	Sunday 3rd Oct at 0800
<i>Sidlesham & Pagham</i> Reserve c/park Sidlesham Ferry	Sunday 27th. Nov at 0930
<i>Adur Walk - Shoreham</i> S.of Footbridge (Waterside Arms)	Tuesday 27th Dec at 0900

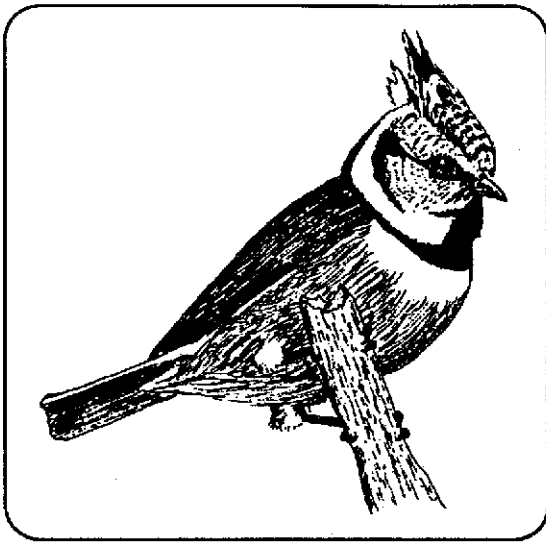
See **PROGRAMME 1994** for Details

First indoor programme date for the Autumn :-

3rd Oct. "Sussex Wildlife" - Alan Malpass (Hon. Sec. Sussex Wildlife Trust)

FIELD OUTING - NEW FOREST - 5TH JUNE

As usual an excellent turn-out of 22 Members at Pig Bush Enclosure south of Beaulieu Road BR Station for a days New Forest Birds with our Chairman Bernie Forbes. Those who attended were well rewarded with good weather and excellent birds - count for the day 69 species. This all day outing achieved a circular walk including the area around Beaulieu Road station. Highlight of the day for those that were quick enough or looking in the right direction was a brief overhead glimpse of a male Goshawk but everyone was treated to views of displaying Wood Warblers and close-up Dartford Warblers. Several Hobby's were about on the day as well as 3 pairs of Common Buzzard - distant views also suggested Honey Buzzard or two but I understand Bernie wasn't sure enough to commit himself. Cormorant was a more unusual species for the forest whilst the usual woodland species were in evidence - Redstart, Spotted Flycatcher, Willow Warbler, Treecreeper, Nuthatch and Green Woodpecker. Heathland birds were also well represented with sightings of Redshank, Snipe, Stonechat, Skylark and Woodlark. The overall total for the day was helped along by Turtle Dove, Stock Dove, Tree Pipit, Cuckoo, 2 female Crossbills, Redpoll and Siskin.
A highly satisfying day for all concerned.



Highland Fling by Richard Ives

Having tried East and West in Autumn we decided to head North in April this year to find the highland specialities which grace the average birdbook. Dave Smith, Bernie Forbes and myself chose the Abernethy forest as our base camp to explore this wonderful area. Having travelled up overnight we reached Aviemore around three o'clock on Saturday afternoon to find a foot of snow covering the area.

The small roads around Loch Garten had been cleared of snow and indeed we actually came face to face with a snow-plough along a single track road - white knuckles matching the snow! We encountered our first Scottish speciality within a few minutes: a Crested Tit calling as it fed among the snow laden branches of the Fir trees. Tulloch Moor produced another with a Black Grouse looking resplendent against the white background. Even amidst this mid-winter scene there were signs of spring with 2 Ring Ouzels cackling away at the top of a tree.

The following day we began birding in earnest with a search for Capercaillie amongst the Caledonian Pine forests - no luck. The atmospheric area did yield Britain's only endemic species, the Scottish Crossbill - much duller than its close relatives and a heavy bill very close to that of a Parrot Crossbill. We travelled up to the Findhorn valley so that we could get to grips with the birds of prey. We met a group on a birding tour and were encouraged to hear that both Golden Eagle and Goshawk had been seen a few minutes before we arrived. The omens were good. Six hours later with no sign of either - the spirits were flagging. We spent another 24 hours in that valley before we saw a Golden Eagle. The landlady said that all her tenants see Eagles during their brief stays in Scotland - we soon put her right on that score! How many Buzzards have had their status raised to the symbol of Scotland?

Every day brought exciting moments and it is difficult to summarise which were the best. Walking across the Cairngorm plateau with a razor sharp wind tugging at your clothes is worthwhile when, after half a mile, you have a pair of Ptarmigan walking around your feet. A long tour of NE Scotland is made something special when a superb male King Eider can be observed from a distance of thirty feet. Four species of Auk in two day days is wonderful and 4 species of Diver in a day is probably something which cannot be repeated anywhere else in Europe. A montane area with displaying Hen Harrier, Goshawk, Peregrine & Buzzard together with a patrolling Golden Eagle is just something which must be seen. A Capercaillie strutting around the forest at six o'clock in the morning and the sound of lekking Blackcock, Ospreys hunting over deserted lochans, incredibly beautiful landscapes, empty roads, the clarity of the light plus the other wonderful birds make the Highlands the place to be. The weather? - Seven days of sunshine and only 15 minutes of rain! That week in Sussex was dreadful so we made the right decision to head North for the first time; it wont be the last & that is for sure!