A bird sitting on a nest

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**Ogston Bird Club: General Code of Conduct**

**Welfare of birds must always come first**

Whether your particular interest is photography, ringing, sound-recording, scientific study or just bird-watching, remember that the welfare of birds must **always** come first.

**Habitat protection**

A bird's habitat is vital to its survival and therefore we must ensure that our activities do not cause any damage.

**Keep disturbance to a minimum**

Birds' tolerance of disturbance varies between species and seasons. Therefore, it is safer to keep all disturbance to a minimum at all times. No birds should be disturbed from the nest in case the opportunities for predators to take eggs or young are increased. In very cold weather, disturbance to birds may cause them to use vital energy at a time when food is difficult to find. Wildfowlers impose bans during cold weather: bird-watchers should exercise similar discretion.

**Rare breeding birds / sensitive species**

If you discover a rare breeding bird and feel that protection is necessary, inform the appropriate RSPB Regional Officer, or the Species Protection Department at the RSPB, The Lodge, Sandy, Beds SG19 2DL. Otherwise it is best in almost all circumstances to keep the record strictly secret to avoid disturbance by other bird-watchers and attacks by egg-collectors. Never visit known sites of rare breeding birds unless they are adequately protected. Even your presence may give away the site to others and cause so many other visitors that the birds may fail to breed successfully. Disturbance at or near the nest of species listed on SCHEDULE 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 is a criminal offence.

Due to their status, various species of birds are regarded as ‘sensitive’ particularly from a reporting perspective. Please familiarise with the Club’s ‘Sensitive Species’ list – this can be found on the club website. Whilst reporting of all sightings to the Reporting Secretary are vital, it may be that certain sightings are not published on the club website for example (but will be recorded on the club’s database). Therefore consider where and how you publicise information about species on this list.

**Rare migrants**

Rare migrants or vagrants must not be harassed. If you discover one, consider the circumstances carefully before telling anyone. Will an influx of birdwatchers disturb the bird or others in the area? Will the habitat be damaged? Will problems be caused with the landowner? If you want any advice in regard to this, please contact a member of the Committee directly.

**The Law**

The bird protection laws, as now embodied in the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, are the result of hard campaigning by previous generations of bird-watchers. As bird-watchers we must abide by them at all times and not allow them to fall into disrepute.

**Respect the rights of landowners**

The wishes of landowners and occupiers of land must be respected. Do not enter land without permission. Comply with permit schemes. Always obey the Country Code.

**Keeping records**

Much of today's knowledge about birds is the result of meticulous record-keeping by our predecessors. Make sure you add to tomorrow's knowledge by sending your records to the Club’s Recording Secretary (Richard Gratton: [richg76@gmail.com](mailto:richg76@gmail.com)). All sightings will be recorded in the club’s database and subsequently shared with agencies such as the Derbyshire Ornithological Society (DOS) and Derbyshire Wildlife Trust (DWT). Unless there is good reason not to (e.g. sensitive species), sightings will also reported on the club’s daily sightings page on the website.

A bird sitting on a nest

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**Ogston Bird Club: Social Media code of conduct**

Ogston Bird Club members will also have the opportunity to join our various groups based on social media such as Facebook and WhatsApp. Whilst these groups offer a great opportunity to become more aware of things such as recent sightings, club trips and events, it’s important that all members use these in a positive and sensible manner:

1. **Be kind and courteous**

We’re all in this because we enjoy birds and bird-watching so we all have a responsibility to ensure that each of our social media groups has a welcoming environment. Let’s treat everyone with respect. Healthy debates are natural but kindness is required at all times.

1. **No hate speech or bullying**

Makes sure everyone feels safe. Bullying of any kind isn’t allowed and degrading comments about things such as race, religion, culture, sexual orientation, gender or identity will not be tolerated.

1. **No promotions, spam or advertising**

Give more to our groups than you take. Self-promotion, spam and irrelevant links aren’t allowed. Advertising of anything for personal or commercial gain is not allowed.

1. **Respect everyone’s privacy**

Being part of our groups requires mutual trust. Authentic, expressive discussions make groups great, but may also be sensitive and private: what’s shared in our groups should stay in the groups and not shared outside of them.

1. **Stay on topic**

Only post and discuss issues relevant to the particular group. All posts should be relative to Ogston Bird Club, club trips and events and the recording area. NEVER POST SENSITIVE INFORMATION SUCH AS THE EXACT LOCATION OF SCHEDULE 1 NESTING / BREEDING BIRDS and familiarise yourself with our list of ‘sensitive species’ (this can be found on the club website).

1. **All contributions are welcome**

Whether you are a novice or an expert, your contributions are welcome, and your level of contribution is entirely your choice; whether that is posting photos on the Facebook page, sharing your sightings on the WhatsApp, or simply liking a post.

1. **For your information**

If you are using our groups for information on what’s out and about then that’s great but post your sightings and comments back on the group page for others to see and enjoy.

1. **Rule breakers**

If you flaunt the rules your posts may be removed, or you may be excluded from the group.

1. **Self-promotion**

If you take photos, record sightings or see something interesting at Ogston then please share in our groups. Anyone using the group to post on other sites or for self-aggrandisement will be removed.

1. **Enjoy and share**

Enjoy and share your experiences. Please tell other Club members about our groups. The more members we have, the more information can be shared, and the more great birding can be experienced and shared across our membership.