

# OGSTON BIRD CLUB

AUGUST 2024



## NEWSLETTER



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### NEWS ROUND-UP – WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING AT OGSTON BIRD CLUB?

**WELCOME** to the August newsletter.



All 2023 members should now have received their annual report. If not, please advise: [steveslack26@gmail.com](mailto:steveslack26@gmail.com)

**Plenty to report** by way of interesting bird sightings, Also in this newsletter, an interesting article by Roy Frost on his finds of Clearwing moths .

There has been a good deal of work **on the administration front** during the last quarter. Our lease at the reservoir has been routinely renewed again for seven years.

**The prevailing weather patterns** since our last newsletter in March were not always encouraging for breeding birds. Temperatures were periodically rather cool with persistent rainfall, until the very recent hot spell of early August. There has been a widely reported scarcity of insects during spring and early summer this year, which is the continuation of a trend and is certainly of concern. Our butterfly recorders have seen a relatively quiet period during May to July. There has been a rather low level of records of insect-eating birds such as Swifts (the general decline of which is well documented) and the other hirundines.

Nonetheless we had **some exciting visitors** to the reservoir.



There was a passage Osprey for nine days in May, two Kittiwakes on 29<sup>th</sup> April, and a Brent Goose on 16<sup>th</sup> May. 9<sup>th</sup> June saw the arrival of a Grey Plover and a Sanderling which seemed inseparable for a while and gave good views from the main hide in the scrape area. The Whimbrel in the photograph was one of two down near the main hide on 14<sup>th</sup> May.

Photo Whimbrel Steve Sutcliffe

Cattle Egret is a species which occurs with increasing frequency in the UK and we had only our third record (previously 2007 and 2023) when a single bird was recorded on 23<sup>rd</sup> July and for the subsequent several days.

Photo Cattle Egret John Turner



As I write this on 16<sup>th</sup> August, a Spoonbill has today departed after 26 consecutive days.



Photos of the Spoonbill, Grey Plover and Sanderling, and the Brent Goose by Steve Walker

The new tern raft at the southern end of the reservoir was brought in for improvement in its assembly detail, and with the assistance of the sailing club was refloated in time to host a pair of breeding Common Terns which raised two young. The adults seemed to find suitable food for the young in the scrape and gave pleasure to many observers from the main hide.

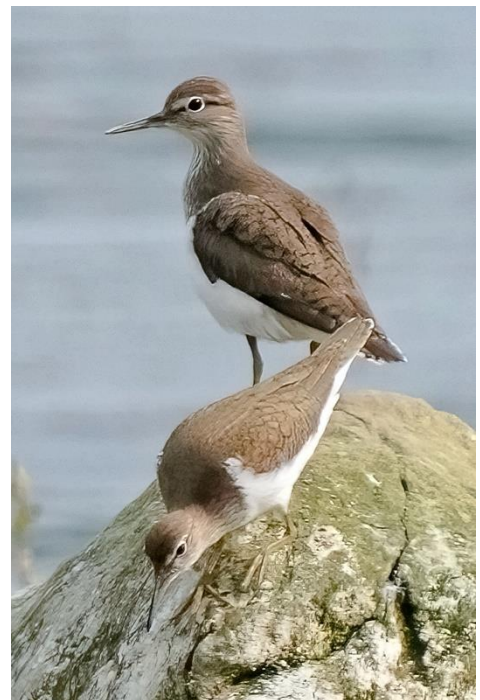


As to breeding records of the rarer species, reservoir levels were not encouraging for breeding Little Ringed Plovers which seem not to have laid eggs this year. Oystercatcher eggs which had been brooded to imminent hatching disappeared co-incidentally with sightings of an American Mink in the immediate vicinity, as did a nearby clutch of Coot eggs.

All was not lost on the breeding front however, with the following successes included:

10 pairs of Black-headed Gulls had young  
Common Tern pair had 2 young ; 1 survived.  
Gadwall 2 broods  
Goldcrest have bred  
Great Crested Grebe – 2 pairs had 1 juvenile each.  
Grey Heron: 25 nests  
Little Grebe broods of 2 and 4  
Mallard 12 broods  
Mandarin 6 broods

Two, and sometimes three, Common Sandpipers ([Photo Steve Walker](#)) were present throughout the breeding season from the beginning of April but there was no evidence of breeding We believe we also had reason to be pleased with “schedule one “successes in the nest box scheme this year. Shh! Further news to follow.



Work parties are largely suspended during the bird breeding season. Volunteers have however removed quantities of timber from the areas behind the hides where it had been stored since the renewal of the steps and approaches to the Sue Worsley Hide in the latter part of 2023. Thanks to our usual willing contingent of volunteers.

The hides will be painted with preservative during the forthcoming weeks, and a pathway created to access the area of the main reed bed. Running repairs are also in hand involving some of the windows in the main hide.

Trips since our last newsletter have included the Lawrence Field and Padley Gorge outing, extended to include an area of Bar Brook and Big Moor where David Griffin secured this nice photograph of a pair of Whinchats.



A successful Nightjar trip to Matlock Forest on the 19<sup>th</sup> May was followed by Annesley Pit Top on the 12<sup>th</sup> June – highlight as usual the Black-necked Grebes and, a pleasant surprise, a Woodlark on an overhead cable! Frampton on 4<sup>th</sup> August was rewarding as always with especially Wood, Green and Common Sandpipers, and Yellow Wagtail.

Jim Mart Nature Reserve has sprung into life for the summer, the abundant vegetation growth again exercising our work parties of willing volunteers. The Buddleia are in full flower and attracting insects, especially the butterflies.

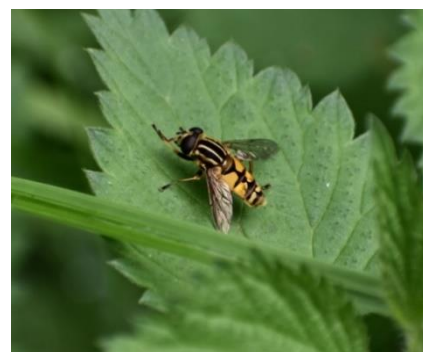
Alan Wragg has been kind enough to position a bat detector for us close to the hibernaculum. to record the species which are present. Further news to follow!

Martin and Carole have been recording some of the invertebrates at JMNR. You might enjoy these photographs.

The insects are a Tiger Hoverfly *Helophilis pendulum* and Green-veined White *Pieris napi* on a mint plant. There are two photos of Nursery Web spider *Pisaura mirabilis*. A



biology student will tell you that insects have six legs and spiders have eight – but did you realise that many spiders have 8 or more eyes? The Nursery Web often sits on top of leaves with its four front legs pulled together into two pairs as shown in one of the photos





The plants are Marsh Woundwort *Stachys palustris* and Broadleaf Arrowhead *Sagittaria latifolia* with Purple Loosestrife behind.

In winding up the news highlights, here is a fine golden female Broad-bodied Chaser dragonfly photographed by Roy Frost.



Bill Padley 15/08/2024



## WOOLLEY MOOR SHOW REPORT



Our stall at the 111th Woolley Moor show on Saturday 17th August to help promote and raise funds for Ogston Bird Club was in summary a great success and the day was enjoyed by all. Member support in terms of prizes donated for the tombola and your attendance on the day was much appreciated.

The show was well attended generally, and a good number of people took time to visit

our stall and showed a great deal of interest in what we had on display both in terms of photographs of some of the birds to be seen at Ogston and the details of the Club and the facilities it offers to members.

Your team (from left to right – Steve Walker, Rob Simmons, Richard Gratton and Val Jones) on the Club's stall. Thanks to all concerned, and to Club member Maureen Shearer whose help on the day was invaluable.



The tombola proved very popular and it raised over £250 for Club funds. Several people expressed genuine interest in becoming a member of our Club and took away with them information and membership application forms. All in all a very worthwhile venture which we would hope to repeat in future years.



Here are some of us at one of our less busy times of the day having a relaxing chat with one of our many visitors.

Steve Walker / Editor 22.8.2024

*Photo courtesy of Martin Kaye*

## Two Clearwing Moths at Ogston Reservoir by Roy Frost

Clearwing moths are small to fairly small moths belonging to the family Sesiidae. There are some 1000 species world-wide, of which about 15 are known in the UK. Although they are day-fliers they are rather inconspicuous and many are readily dismissed as wasps. Most are officially classified as Nationally Scarce.

Our knowledge of the abundance and distribution of clearwings has been radically changed in recent years by the development of pheromone lures, which fool males into thinking they have detected a female to mate with. I duly purchased a set of these lures from an entomological supplier. Three of the lures specifically attract clearwings that are found on willows. One of these, Willow Clearwing, is known only from southern England but it seemed likely, in view of the abundance of willow, that the other two might occur at Ogston.

So on 24th June 2023 I duly hung the Red-tipped Clearwing lure in a small muslin bag on willows by the Members' Hide, and in a few other places by the west bank without success before finally finding one at the roadside by Milltown Inlet. It investigated the lure but quickly left. The Red-tipped Clearwing is a small insect with a forewing length of 9-11mm, which could easily be taken for a parasitic wasp.

Photo: John Atkin



Far more impressive is the Lunar Hornet Moth, which is yellow and black with a forewing of 17-21mm. I had never used its specific lure previously but on 10th July this year I hung it on a willow twig outside the north window of the Members' Hide. It was definitely a case of beginner's luck, as a Lunar Hornet arrived maybe five minutes later, giving me and Kevin Grayston excellent views and staying for maybe a minute before losing interest and departing.

Photo: Roy Frost

## BIRDING ON THE ISLE OF ISLAY by Martin Kaye

Islay (pronounced Eyela) is the southern most of the larger Inner Hebridean Islands with a population of about 3200 'Ileachs' as the locals are known and loads of wildlife waiting for you to find it. Unlike Mull, there aren't any hot spots where birding visitors congregate to spot the iconic resident raptors but there is a Whatsapp Group that you can ask to join. Islay is renown for its whisky with many famous distilleries around the island. However, if you want a quiet birding holiday, avoid Whisky Week (last week of May) and you can still visit the distilleries. Outside of this week, it's quieter even than Mull, perhaps because it's not so straight forward to get to. A quick look at the map leaves you pondering on how best to make the trip. The quickest would be to book a flight from Glasgow airport then hire a car on Islay. For those self catering, you may prefer to go in your own car and then the simplest way is to drive the 370 miles (distance from Chesterfield) to Kennacraig ferry terminal via Glasgow and Inverary. However, it's more interesting to drive to Gourock, west of Glasgow, take the ferry to Dunoon, then drive through gorgeous countryside to Portavadie for the ferry to Tarbet on the Kintyre peninsular, a stone's throw from Kennacraig (325 miles). Both ferries are turn up and go so you don't have to commit by booking up front. In contrast, it is essential to book the 2 hour ferry journey to Islay from Kennacraig (Calmac Ferries).



Great Northern Diver in Port Ellen Harbour – photo M Kaye

Check timings because you might need to arrange an overnight stay on the mainland before catching the ferry. In addition, it's important to book your accommodation well in advance – 12 months beforehand for a cottage is wise and register with Calmac for early warning of release of their summer sailings timetable.

Before going, do your research – there's a list of references at the end of this article. When you go also has a massive impact on what you're likely to see. Winter time would be excellent for over-wintering wildflower but we have only ever gone mid-May when statistically, the weather is better.

Birding starts in earnest on the first part of the Islay ferry trip as it sails down West Loch Tarbet; in the middle of May this year, we recorded 4 Red-throated, 2 Black-throated and 30 Great Northern Divers.

Where to go to on the island? Everywhere could turn up something but must go to places are:

Loch Gruinart RSPB reserve and nearby Ardnave Point where we've seen Hen Harriers, White-tailed Eagles, Chough, Arctic and Common Terns and Whimbrel along with a wide variety of more common species. The loch can host huge numbers of waders and the marsh has plenty of wildfowl. Corncrake are usually present during late spring and summer and their distinctive rasping call heard, though the birds are rarely seen.

The Mull of Oa, the southern most tip of Islay, sports huge sea cliffs where it is likely that a resident pair of Golden Eagles nest. In addition, we've seen Whinchat, Twite and the usual moorland birds on the spectacular walk from the RSPB car park. The road to the Mull from Port Ellen deteriorates from tarmac to gravel part way along but is fine to drive along.



Twite in the RSPB car park on Mull of Oa – photo M Kaye

A trip down the length of the Rhinns through Port Charlotte down to Portnahaven gives a fair chance of seeing several Cuckoos while at the picturesque village at the southern tip, there are several conveniently placed benches to bird in comfort and see common sea birds plus Common and Arctic Terns that loaf on the rocks of the islands just off shore. It is then worth returning along the minor road that skirts the west coast where we've seen more Cuckoos, Ravens and a Golden Eagle.

For beach waders a trip to Machir Bay is worthwhile – evening is very quiet so in mid-May there'll probably be Dunlin and lots of Ringed Plover running around the north end of the bay and if you're lucky, Turnstones in stunning full breeding plumage. Just back from the bay is a turn off to the ruined Kilchoman Church where there's another chance to hear/see Choughs (swot up their flight wing shape and distinctive call to be able to distinguish them from the more common Jackdaws).

A day trip to Jura is also worthwhile and easily reached by a 10 minute ferry trip from Port Askaig. Jura is a large island with a population of only 200, lots of wildlife and one single track road along the east coast which deteriorates dreadfully towards its end. There's a fair chance of seeing Hen Harriers especially in the first 4 miles to Craighouse. We also saw lots of Cuckoos, various warblers and on the short walk from Tarbert to the west coast, Whinchat and a Golden Eagle. Jura is also famous for the Corryvreckan whirlpool at its northern end and George Orwell lived on the island for 4 years during which time he wrote '1984'.

### References and Sources: Books

*Where to Watch Birds in Britain* – S Harrap & N Redman (good basic source of where to go).  
*Inner Hebrides from Skye to Gigha* – K Featherstone (Bradt Guide) – useful general guide.

**Digital:** <http://islaybirds.blogspot.com/2024/> with a link to joining the Whatsapp Group.  
 Where to Watch Birds in Scotland APP – has useful up to date info.



White-tailed Eagle beside Loch Gruinart – photo C Nelson



Osprey with fish near Loch Gorm photo C Nelson

## ARTICLES OF TOPICAL INTEREST

### White-tailed eagle pair still tending to injured chick in its second year – RSPB

2nd July 2024

By PA News Agency

A pair of white-tailed eagles are still caring for their injured youngster, a year after it was hurt in a nest fall, conservationists have said. The actions of the eagles, who are still feeding their chick and have skipped breeding this year on the Isle of Mull on the west coast of Scotland, have astonished experts.



The RSPB said the youngster injured its wing when its nest fell to the ground during stormy weather last July, in an incident which its sibling survived unscathed and fledged soon after. While the parents supported the chick, its wing continued to heal and it finally took flight with a wonky wing in the autumn, but locals did not hold out much hope for it surviving the winter, the wildlife charity said.

But on a boat trip with Mull Charters for an early season white-tailed eagle monitoring check, RSPB Mull officer Dave Sexton saw a male scavenging a fish from the vessel as it approached the territory of the pair. *Here we were watching their chick, now over a year old, still in close company with its parents and still being fed. Dave Sexton, RSPB*

While this is normal behaviour for the birds – Britain’s largest bird of prey – he then heard the sound of a young eagle calling for food, something normally heard in August after eaglets fledge but are still reliant on their parents. Then he saw the juvenile white-tailed eagle chasing its father, which flew to a new nest and gave up the fish for the youngster to feed on.

He said: “I looked at the skipper in astonishment and we both watched on, unable to quite believe what we’d just witnessed. I was astounded to see this behaviour which was new to me despite four decades of watching white-tailed eagles in the field. Normally, in the autumn and certainly by the winter, all fledged young have naturally wandered away from their parent’s territory and if they’re still loitering when the next breeding season approaches, they aren’t made very welcome.”

“But here we were watching their chick, now over a year old, still in close company with its parents and still being fed.” He said that for the adults to be tolerating and tending to the youngster well into a new breeding season was “unprecedented” in his experience.

“Each day they share fish from Mull Charters with their injured offspring and it seems to show a previously unseen type of white-tailed eagle behaviour. We normally think of eagles as ‘hard-wired’ and unemotional but clearly there might be another side to their nature,” he added.”

*I loved white-tailed eagles before. Now I think I love them just a little bit more*  
Dave Sexton, RSPB

Mr Sexton said it would be fascinating to see how long the behaviour continued for, but said: “For now, we’re just enjoying watching this unusual white-tailed eagle family doing what they want to do and caring for their youngster which can’t yet fend for itself.” White-tailed eagles, nick-named flying barn doors because of their 8ft wingspan, became extinct in Britain in the early 20th century due to human persecution but were successfully reintroduced in Scotland from the 1970s, and in the last few years have been released the Isle of Wight. The RSPB said the UK population has now reached more than 150 pairs, with Mull the best place to see them in Scotland.

## **LINKS TO A VARIETY OF OTHER ARTICLES OF INTEREST (Ctrl+click to follow link)**

### **CUCKOOS:**

[https://www.rarebirdalert.co.uk/v2/Content/Cuckoos\\_evolve\\_to\\_look\\_like\\_their\\_hosts\\_and\\_form\\_new\\_species\\_in\\_the\\_process.aspx?s\\_id=165390829&applefix=true](https://www.rarebirdalert.co.uk/v2/Content/Cuckoos_evolve_to_look_like_their_hosts_and_form_new_species_in_the_process.aspx?s_id=165390829&applefix=true)

### **REDPOLLS:**

[https://www.birdguides.com/news/redpolls-to-become-one-species/?utm\\_campaign=1240488\\_Weekly%20News%20from%20BirdGuides%2029%2F07%2F2024&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=dotdigital&dm\\_i=73DM,QL60,ZVD5U,3JV2D,1](https://www.birdguides.com/news/redpolls-to-become-one-species/?utm_campaign=1240488_Weekly%20News%20from%20BirdGuides%2029%2F07%2F2024&utm_medium=email&utm_source=dotdigital&dm_i=73DM,QL60,ZVD5U,3JV2D,1)

### **REWILDING:**

[https://www.birdguides.com/news/rewilding-begins-at-derbyshire-farm/?utm\\_campaign=1240488\\_Weekly%20News%20from%20BirdGuides%2029%2F07%2F2024&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=dotdigital&dm\\_i=73DM,QL60,ZVD5U,3JV2D,1](https://www.birdguides.com/news/rewilding-begins-at-derbyshire-farm/?utm_campaign=1240488_Weekly%20News%20from%20BirdGuides%2029%2F07%2F2024&utm_medium=email&utm_source=dotdigital&dm_i=73DM,QL60,ZVD5U,3JV2D,1)

### **BREEDING SEA EAGLES:**

[https://www.rarebirdalert.co.uk/v2/Content/Two\\_White\\_tailed\\_Eagles\\_fledged\\_successfully\\_in\\_England.aspx?s\\_id=563609311](https://www.rarebirdalert.co.uk/v2/Content/Two_White_tailed_Eagles_fledged_successfully_in_England.aspx?s_id=563609311)

### **VACCINATING BADGERS:**

[https://www.rarebirdalert.co.uk/v2/Content/Vaccinating\\_badgers\\_more\\_effective\\_than\\_culls\\_in\\_stopping\\_bovine\\_TB.aspx?s\\_id=563609311](https://www.rarebirdalert.co.uk/v2/Content/Vaccinating_badgers_more_effective_than_culls_in_stopping_bovine_TB.aspx?s_id=563609311)

## HOW WE CAN HELP SWIFTS – PART 2

In the April newsletter, I wrote an article about installing swift boxes with a view to encouraging others to do the same. Well, this is the second year that we've had them up but again, sadly no takers. However, at the beginning of July we started to get close 'flybys' to the boxes which we guess are by second or third year birds seeking out potential breeding sites for future years. On 25<sup>th</sup> July, I was watching the Swifts fly low over the house, when one flew within a few cm of the box with a flick of its wings, almost a hesitation, as it passed the hole. A minute or so later, to my astonishment, one bird entered one of the boxes to be followed 30 seconds later by a second. Both birds were still in the box when I gave up watching 5 minutes later. My other half, who has driven this project, was overjoyed when she heard what I'd seen.

Our conclusion is that these are probably third year birds that have paired up but not yet bred and are prospecting for an unoccupied nest site for next year. So we are now tremendously optimistic that we will have nesting Swifts next year.

For an informative read, *Swifts and Us* by Sarah Gibson, Pub William Collins

Martin Kaye 1/8/24

## REPORTING YOUR OGSTON BIRD SIGHTINGS



My name is Richard Gratton and from May 2024, I'm the Recording Secretary for Ogston Bird Club.

I've been bird-watching for nearly 40 years and visited Ogston since I was 10 years old, so it's a real honour to now take up this position in the club!

Recording sightings at Ogston is really important to us and whether you are an experienced bird-watcher or a novice we really want you to share your sightings with us.

### How can you record and share your sightings?

- 1.) Record them in the hide diary – remember to include your name / initials and the time of your visit
- 2.) Send your sightings directly to me via email – [richg76@gmail.com](mailto:richg76@gmail.com)

### What do we do with your sightings?

- 1.) All sightings are added to the daily log on the Club's website
- 2.) All sightings are also recorded on the club's database and used to create the Annual Report. They are also shared with the Derbyshire Ornithological Society, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and Natural England.

**\*\* Please note that for obvious reasons we do not publish sightings of rare or sensitive breeding birds during the breeding season. We may also avoid publishing details of county or country rarities to safeguard the interests of the bird. \*\***

I'll look forward to hearing from you or seeing you during your visit!