



Shag by Phil Smith

• News & Announcements • Rooks in East Kent • Photo Essay – Water and Rock Pipits • Pine Bunting - Photo study • Bewick's Swan in Kent • Bird Sightings - November and December • Fifty Years Ago •

:KOS Contacts – Committee Members details are available on the society website

Newsletter Editor: Norman McCanch: 01304-813208 **e-mail:** nvmccanch@hotmail.com

Editorial

A new year and a change of format for the newsletter. The previous version was based on an A5 format derived from its origins as a printed booklet. Now that we have moved to an online publication this constraint is removed, so we can now work from an A4 format, allowing more flexibility of page layout and the presentation of photographs at a larger scale.

Last year produced an interesting pattern of weather, with a long relatively hot summer which bordered on drought conditions at times, only to be followed by an autumn and winter of almost unprecedented rainfall. I have been a weather obsessive for years, born out of early training as a lightkeeper and decades of gardening. My rainfall records showed that by the end of September my garden was in a real rain deficit compared to previous years, only for the rainfall total to both catch up and exceed the ten year means for my garden. What does this have to do with birds? Well, there is some evidence from my own birding that it has had some impact; a dry summer seemed to reduce the success of my local nightingales, but as autumn progress, mild and wet it has been marked by low levels of arrivals of our typical winter visitors. Very few Redwing, low numbers of Fieldfare, almost no Brambling, siskins or redpoll and increasing evidence for our more glamorous wildfowl, Smew, Goosander, Goldeneye, Bewick's Swans to be 'short stopping', wintering in the southern Baltic rather than coming to muggy Britain.

Our birding can be a source of impartial data to provide a significant window into these changes in our environment and the evidence building from a wide range of taxa is that climate change will continue to affect our wildlife in future years.

Good birding
Norman

News and announcements

RARE BREEDING BIRDS IN KENT

The Kent Ornithological Society, like other county bird clubs, coordinates records of rare breeding birds and submits them to the national Rare Birds Breeding Panel (RBBP). However, this is not straightforward. At a time when birders are being exhorted to be careful about publishing records of rare breeding birds on social media, we suspect that many observations are not reported. There are several ways in which you can help monitor rare birds and not risk publicising breeding locations.

1. Ensure you follow the bird watchers code, <https://www.bto.org/sites/default/files/u10/downloads/taking-part/health/bwc.pdf> and do not disturb the bird,
2. Always follow the RBBP guidelines for reporting on social media <http://rbbp.org.uk/>
3. Submit to the KOS database, <http://birdgroups.co.uk/kos/default.asp>, there is an automatic filter, which means that the records are not shown on the website but stored in the database,
4. Submit your records to Birdtrack, there is a similar filter and your observations will be secure.
5. You can e mail in confidence the county recorder Barry Wright umbrellabirds66@gmail.com or the county RBBP coordinator Brian Watmough brianrwat@yahoo.co.uk.

The RBBP <http://rbbp.org.uk/> collects data on the rarer species of birds breeding in the United Kingdom. Its records allow the production of annual totals of breeding pairs for each species on its list. It was formed in 1972 by representatives of the RSPB, the BTO, The Nature Conservancy Council and *British Birds*. The present Panel is made up of representatives of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, RSPB, BTO, three independent members, and a Secretary and a report is published each year in *British Birds* and available on their website. Approximately 160 species are monitored by the RBBP, although the list is reviewed and changing so that in 2019 Cetti's Warbler will no longer be recorded but Turtle Dove is now being considered. Each year details of between twenty and twenty-five species are submitted by the KOS. Records from Kent are collated by the Kent Ornithological Society and submitted to the UK RBBP. These records form the basis for relevant sections in the annual KBR.

For more information refer back to the previous KOS May Newsletter.

Brian Watmough
brianrwat@yahoo.co.uk

COLOUR RINGED LAPWING



Picture by Richard Pope

A number of young lapwing were colour- ringed, under license, at Elmley National Nature Reserve this summer as part of a pilot research project to investigate the dispersal of young birds. If you see a colour ringed lapwing please email Brian Watmough brianrwat@yahoo.co.uk.

The number of Lapwing breeding in the UK has declined by 55% during the last 25 years and the species is red listed as a bird of conservation concern. Elmley National Nature Reserve is one of the most important sites for breeding lapwing in southern England.

Brian Watmough

BTO BREEDING BIRD SURVEY IN KENT

The BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) is the main scheme for monitoring the population changes in breeding bird species of the UK. For volunteers in the project BBS is a great way to become familiar with a small area of local countryside whilst contributing valuable data to aid bird research and conservation.

Participation in BBS involves two early-morning visits in the spring to a local 1-km square site, to count all the birds seen and heard whilst walking two 1-km lines across the square. Prior to this there is an initial visit to recce the site and record the habitat of the square, while volunteers also have the option to make later visits in summer to survey for butterflies. Recording forms are sent out to each volunteer or can be downloaded from BBS online, and results of bird counts can also be submitted on the website.

If you can identify common birds by sight and sound then please consider taking on a BBS square – it is very rewarding! There are 135 1-km squares pre-selected for BBS in Kent, the vast majority already mapped with transect lines, though many sites require new volunteers for surveys.

Please take a look at the BBS webpages and use the map to find a square near you: <https://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/bbs/taking-part>. Complete the online form that will appear and as regional organiser I will then get in contact to allocate the square to you. Alternatively, just send me an email (rjknight53@gmail.com) to register your interest in BBS for Kent, and suitable squares in your location can then be discussed.

You might carry out a survey in a location such as Boxley Warren which was a vacant site when I signed up for BBS in 2019, and though not all squares are as beautiful as this area they are of equal importance for monitoring breeding birds. I look forward to hearing from you!



Boxley Warren

Bob Knight

Dennis Whittaker

John Websper reports that Dennis Whittaker passed away just before Christmas he would have been 88 on Christmas day. If not a founder of KOS he was a very early member having moved down from Bromley to Herne Bay. He was often seen at Stodmarsh with Jack Hewitt & a great friend of Don Worsfold. He was a long-time volunteer for the Kent Trust at East Blean. John goes on to say “I had some wonderful birding trips with him particularly to Holland & France. Sadly, he had been suffering from dementia for the past seven or eight years.” Our condolences to his family.

Surveys

Current surveys are usually posted on the KOS website, for further information please contact Murray Orchard at murray.orchard@live.co.uk

Kent Breeding Bird Atlas

We still have a modest stock of this useful publication which was well received on its release a couple of years ago. If you do not yet own a copy there will shortly be an opportunity to purchase some of the remainder of the stock at a reduced price. Keep an eye on the KOS web site for further details

Editorial and Records sub-committee

The KOS Editorial & Records Committee would like to hear from any individuals within the membership that would like to join the county rarity panel. Contact Barry Wright or Alan Fossey, (details above)

We like to keep in touch with all our members, so if you change address, email address or phone numbers please remember to inform our membership secretary, Chris Roome. He can be contacted at:

Chris Roome, Rowland House, Station Rd., Staplehurst TN12 0PY

Tel: 01580 891686 e-mail: chrisroome105@icloud.com

We would like to encourage members to contribute items or photographs for inclusion in the newsletter, especially regarding birds in Kent. If you are interested, I am always happy to offer advice or assistance to aspiring authors. To facilitate page composition text needs to be presented as a Word document, photos or illustrations as j-peg files.

Articles

ROOKERIES IN EAST & SOUTH KENT

Starting in 2004 my wife & I have undertaken an annual survey of Rookeries in parts of East & South Kent. While the results would probably not stand up to any scientific scrutiny they do, I think, give a snapshot of the status of the species in this part of Kent. Initially the survey followed on from those undertaken by the late Maurice Davenport in the 1970's covering the area lying to the north of the A2 on a line from Faversham to Whitfield. In the first year (2004) twelve rookeries were found and with three exceptions all have been surveyed every year up to 2018. The three exceptions, a site between Eythorne & Elvington has not been used since 2013 another some two miles to the east close to the Eastry bypass was last used in 2015 and that in Sandwich was abandoned in 2013. In the years 2005 to 2010 a further eight Rookeries were found in the catchment area and from 2011 we have extended our survey to include parts of the Elham valley and the Romney Marsh. This year a total of 49 locations produced 1,097 nests.

The survey period is completely dependent on the emergence of new spring foliage, nests that are clearly visible one week can be obscured a few days later. The earliest date on which we have started is 25th March and the latest 18th April with the last week of March the most favoured period. The sheer logistics of covering what is an increasing area, from Lydd to Stodmarsh, means that the survey takes place over a minimum of two days.

I have insufficient data to compare current figures with those from the surveys conducted by Maurice Davenport. It is worth noting however that in the two years 1970 & 1972 at least 36 Rookeries were in situ in and around a round the Thanet area including Minster & Monkton, today there are six. The Quex Park site

contained 242 nests in 1970, never more than 20 since 2012. A site on Monkton marshes held 160 while a second site in that area held 80 nests. A long-abandoned site at Cleve Court had 70

The largest Rookeries are listed below

| | Grid Ref. | Year first Surveyed | Number of years Surveyed | Min & Max numbers |
|-----------------|-----------|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Lydd Town | 041210 | 2011 | 6 | 120 - 180 |
| West Hythe | 123342 | 2016 | 3 | 70 - 83 |
| Monkton Village | 280653 | 2004 | 15 | 18 - 79 |
| Stodmarsh | 217601 | 2004 | 13 | 30 - 62 |
| Kent Univ. | 143602 | 2010 | 9 | 29 - 47 |

Smallest Rookeries (Surveyed for a minimum of 8 years)

| | Grid Ref | Year first surveyed | Number of years surveyed | Min & Max numbers | Notes |
|--------------------------|----------|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|-------|
| New Romney Nr Kent Trust | 078261 | 2011 | 8 | 6 - 23 | |
| Upstreet | 230632 | 2010 | 9 | 3 - 16 | |
| Sarre | 258651 | 2004 | 14 | 7 - 22 | |
| Eythorne Village | 283491 | 2010 | 9 | 6 - 22 | |
| Whitfield | 300445 | 2008 | 11 | 0 - 16 | A |
| Acoel | 307672 | 2004 | 13 | 5 - 22 | |
| Minster | 310646 | 2004 | 15 | 2 - 19 | |
| Westgate-on-sea | 315696 | 2010 | 9 | 3 - 23 | |
| Sandwich Town | 327580 | 2004 | 9 | 9 - 23 | B |

A = No nests in 2014; B = Abandoned from 2014. New site nearby from 2016

The number of sites surveyed each year.

| 2004 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 2010 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
|------|----|----|----|----|----|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 14 | 11 | 15 | 12 | 18 | 13 | 20 | 25 | 22 | 25 | 38 | 39 | 43 | 44 | 49 |

Number of nests counted each year.

Top row is the total number for all sites. The bottom row, in red, are the totals for the 12 original sites in East Kent and that with the three exceptions mentioned in the text have been surveyed every year.

| 2004 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 2018 |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| 288 | 240 | 373 | 197 | 348 | 214 | 470 | 646 | 421 | 312 | 746 | 816 | 917 | 939 | 1,097 |
| 233 | 229 | 288 | 172 | 275 | 168 | 308 | 278 | 260 | 251 | 260 | 239 | 211 | 202 | 266 |

John Websper

Photo Essay – Water and Rock Pipits

In a perverse sort of way, pipits have long been among my favourite passerines. Their quiet colouration, complex patterns, subtle songs and song flights and cryptic nesting habits have always made them challenging birds to get to know well and contribute to the problems novice birders sometimes experience in their identification.

Until fairly recently both Water and Rock Pipits were considered to belong to the same species, as subspecies. Today, Water Pipit has full species status and Rock Pipit occurs in the county as two subspecies. Of the two species it is the Water Pipit that is the most sought-after by birders and often provides identification challenges. This photo-essay includes a good series of photos mostly taken in the county recently, along with some others of an earlier vintage.

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

The Water Pipits we see in Kent arrive in mid-autumn from their breeding grounds in the upland zone of central Europe, notably the Alps. They tend to favour lowland wetland habitats in Britain where they remain until springtime. In Kent, the Stour Valley is a key site, with the wetlands of Stodmarsh and Grove Ferry being prime localities. They are a bit variable, but are usually a dull earth-brown on the upperparts with rather pale white to cream underparts. Key features are a prominent pale supercilium, white wing bars on both greater and median coverts, whitish outer tail feathers and variable amounts of dark streaking on the underparts which tends to become fainter on the flanks. They can be told from Meadow Pipits *Anthus pratensis* by their dark legs, while Meadow pipits have rather different, more olive, upperparts colour and different call. Once spring arrives and the birds are getting ready to return to the alpine zone, they undergo a significant moult which converts their rather sombre plumage into something much more striking, with a blue-grey crown, nape and ear coverts and a wonderful peachy wash on largely unstreaked underparts, a treat to behold at Grove Ferry in March!



Water Pipit, Sandwich Bay by Steve Reynaert



Water Pipit, Sandwich Bay by Steve Reynaert



Summer plumage Water Pipit, Norfolk April 2018 by Steve Gantlett/www.cleybirds.com

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Kent is blessed by the presence of two subspecies of Rock Pipit. The nominate race *Anthus petrosus petrosus* breeds in the county in two disjunct populations, one on the chalk cliffs of the Thanet coast from Minnis Bay to the Western undercliff in Ramsgate; the second population occupies the cliffs from Kingsdown to Hythe. Within these areas is a total population of 50 – 60 breeding pairs. This makes the Rock Pipit rarer in Kent than many other more iconic species, such as Cetti's warbler or Nightingale. It is also significant that the next adjacent populations are either at Flamborough Head, Yorkshire to the north and Beachy Head, Sussex to the west. The breeding population in Britain is remarkably sedentary, indeed, the only ringing recoveries from UK ringing of more than 20 km are of birds dispersing from the Northern and Western Isles of Scotland. *Petrosus* is highly adapted to exploit the sub-littoral habitat and consequently the birds are able to remain on territory all year, useful given that rock pipits are highly territorial and inclined to dispute ownership vigorously against any intruders.



Rock Pipit *petrosus*, Kingsdown by Steve Reynaert



Rock Pipit petrosus, Kingsdown by Steve Reynaert



Rock Pipit petrosus, Kingsdown by Steve Reynaert

In winter 'Rock pipits' can frequently be found on shorelines of estuaries and coastal marshes well away from typical breeding habitats notably along the Thames and Medway shores. These birds appear to be practically identical to the nominate race, but are most likely to be of the Scandinavian race ***Anthus petrosus littoralis***. There has been much controversy surrounding whether this taxon can be effectively separated from *petrosus* in the field, but most informed opinion supports the view that, in winter at least, the inherent plumage variability of both subspecies added to ambient light conditions makes the identification of single birds in the field virtually impossible. To my eyes winter *littoralis* seem to often show a hint of a pale supercilium, but I can confirm that even with a row of study skins in a museum setting it is frustratingly difficult to do better than chance in picking a winner! As the name implies, the Scandinavian Rock Pipit breeds across the Nordic countries and Baltic states, migrating across the North Sea to winter in Britain and milder climes along the Channel Coasts.



Rock Pipit littoralis, North Kent by Barry Wright



Rock Pipit littoralis, North Kent by Barry Wright

Although they are virtually impossible to separate in winter, by the time the *littoralis* birds are getting ready to depart they have mostly moulted into the beginning of breeding plumage, when they are more easily separable from the nominate race. They show some similarities to breeding plumage Water pipits, and indeed it has been said that *littoralis* is intermediate between Water and Rock, being most like a *petrosus* in winter, but more like a *spinoletta* in summer. Some show noticeably grey crown, ear-coverts and nape, and a pale supercilium, with a tendency to a greyish suffusion over olive green mantle and scapulars. Some can show some pink suffusion on the upper breast, but the few I have seen in this plumage in Northumberland seem to show a malar stripe and more breast streaking than *spinoletta* in spring.



Rock Pipit littoralis spring plumage, Sandwich Bay by Tony Morris



Rock Pipit littoralis spring plumage, Sandwich Bay by Tony Morris

My thanks to the photographers who provided the images, Steve Reynaert, Barry wright, Tony Morris and Steve Gantlett.

References

Pipits & Wagtails by Alstrom & Mild (Helm)
 BTO Migration Atlas (Poyser)
 BTO Breeding Atlas 2007-11(Poyser)
 Kent Breeding Atlas (KOS)
 Handbook of Bird Identification by Shirihi and Svensson (

Pine Bunting - Photo study

On November 4th Matt Hindle caught a fine Pine Bunting on Reculver Marshes. Incredibly this is the second of this species caught at this site in the past couple of years and the third in Kent. It is a truly enigmatic species, always with the caveat of potential hybrid parentage involving Yellowhammers. With that in mind it is good to be able to present some excellent photographs which might help to inform future records and provide a useful text book exercise with your favourite identification guide to check up on the salient characteristics.



Chris & Matt Hindle

Kent Bewick's Swan Age Assessment December 2019.

North Kent Recording More Than Walland/Romney Marsh.

The second of three counts for the WWT Whooper and Bewick's Swan Age Assessments took place in December 2019 and produced a very disappointing total of seventeen adults and zero Juveniles in Kent. Although during early December, Bewick's Swans were being reported in the county, not many were staying in Kent as the December census proved.

The December totals being:

Walland/Romney Marsh eight adults down from thirteen from previous December.

Cliffe Pools seven adults, initially two which were joined by another five. The first two which may be returning birds from previous winters up by five (although five joined shortly after December 2018 count).



Five Bewick's Swan arriving at Cliffe Pools December 2019.

Harty and Elmley two adults between the two sites.

Although the total of seventeen is low, it is a slight improvement on the previous December by two adults with zero juveniles.



Seven Bewick's Swan at Cliffe Pools.

What does make the alarm bells ring is North Kent recording more than Walland/Romney Marsh, by one.

This is not good news for North Kent or Kent as a whole because this should not be happening and this should be recorded.

Our neighbours in Sussex fared worst for the Age Assessment with none recorded. The County of Wexford in Ireland currently have twelve, and at the current rate it may be inevitable that they lose the Bewick's Swan as a regular visitor and potentially the same may happen to Sussex and Kent.

On a brighter note I was very happy to hear after the Age Assessment count a small party of Bewick's arrived at Arun Valley and going into the New Year more have been recorded on Walland/Romney Marsh.

As I pen this report the third Age Assessment is fast approaching on the 11th and 12th January to coincide with the International Swan Census 2020. There will be many WeBs counters and volunteers the length and breadth of the UK and Ireland hoping for the sight and sound of this winter visitor to our shores.

We have over the past five winters kept an extensive photographic record of the Bewick's Swan in North Kent with a particular interest in the Bill Pattern, shape, profile of the head, general characteristics and geometric record of the yellow culmen. It looks at the moment that one particular pair may have returned to North Kent during the last five winters, arriving for the most part to within a day or so on each occasion.

We are still working on this winter's visitors and look forward to having a conclusion for a later date, hopefully.



John Whitting

KENT BIRD SIGHTINGS FOR NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2019 - Chris Hindle

Where necessary the acceptance of records within this report is subject to ratification by the "British Birds" Rarities Committee (species in capital letters) or the KOS Rarities Committee. The results of their deliberations are regularly published on the KOS Website.

Species that fall into these two categories and therefore need descriptions or good quality photographs to be accepted are highlighted in red.

WEATHER

November began with low pressure to the west of Britain giving mild and wet weather but there was a cooler spell from the 8th followed by a quieter interlude from 15th to 20th. The month ended with northerly winds that brought colder and brighter conditions. During the month 82.5mm of rain was recorded at Bishopstone.

December began with high pressure close to the UK, but by the 4th low pressure and the regular passage of frontal systems resumed with some large daily rainfall totals during the next three weeks. The final week brought mild and drier weather. Overall the month was rather mild with above average rainfall that brought 80mm of rain to Bishopstone during the month.

WILDFOWL

A juvenile **Whooper Swan** was seen on the sea off Deal on Nov 28th and two adults were found on Walland Marsh on Dec 4th and were seen there and at Dungeness RSPB until the end of the year. Ten **Bewick's Swans** flew over Swale NNR on Nov 6th and two flew east at Oare Marshes on Nov 17th whilst four were seen at Sandwich Bay on the 20th. In December up to 28 birds were recorded from Walland Marsh, Dungeness RSPB, Capel Fleet, Elmley, Cliffe Pools, Egypt Bay, Halstow Marshes and Oare Marshes.

Two **Pale-bellied Brent Geese** were reported from Grain on Dec 9th.



Tundra Bean Geese, by Mark Chidwick

The two **Tundra Bean Geese** first seen at Grove Ferry/Stodmarsh in October stayed in the area until Dec 3rd and one or two were also present at Swale NNR during December. Two unidentified Bean Geese flew over Worth Marshes on Nov 16th. Five **Pink-footed Geese** were identified at Swale NNR between Nov 13th and Dec 23rd with six at Capel Fleet on Dec 16th and single birds at South Foreland on Dec 17th and Pegwell Bay from the 22nd-27th with three at Seaton GPs on Dec 30th.

After 17 **Russian White-fronted Geese** were found at Swale NNR on Nov 11th up to 20 birds were recorded from Dungeness RSPB, Harty Marshes, Worth Marshes, Foreness, Halstow Marshes, Allhallows, Capel Fleet, Swalecliffe, Pegwell Bay, Hoo and Stodmarsh/Grove Ferry whilst at Swale NNR numbers built up from Dec 2nd and reached 105 by the end of the month.

As many as 13 **Egyptian Geese** were recorded from Edenbridge, Dungeness RSPB, Hayesden, Reculver Marshes, Sandwich Bay, Burham, Stodmarsh, Halstow Marshes, Conningbrook, Furnace Pond, Hinxhill, Cliftonville and Finberry and two **Ruddy Duck** flew over Dungeness RSPB on Dec 16th whilst up to 22 **Mandarins** were recorded from Bough Beech, Horton Priory, Hunton, Pegwell Bay, Sissinghurst Castle and Hayesden.

A male **Red-crested Pochard** was reported from Bough Beech on Nov 25th and 26th.

During these two months up to seven **Velvet Scoters** were seen at DBO, Deal, Swalecliffe, Reculver, Foreness, North Foreland, Sandwich Bay, Minnis Bay, Shellness, Copt Point, Mill Point and Hythe.

A **Long-tailed Duck** flew past DBO on Nov 9th and others were seen at Scotney on Nov 14th and Swalecliffe and Mill Point on Nov 15th. In December two arrived at Scotney GPs on 16th and remained there until 30th and were joined by a third individual on 31st.

A male **Smew** arrived at Dungeness RSPB on Dec 31st.

Up to ten **Goosanders** were seen at Dungeness RSPB, Lade, Wouldham, Stodmarsh, Sandwich Bay, Bough Beech, Swalecliffe, DBO, Cliffe Pools, Hayesden, Foreness North Foreland, Reculver and Grenham Bay.

PARTRIDGE TO CORMORANT

One or two **Black-throated Divers** were recorded from Dungeness, Bockhill, Reculver, Walmer Beach, Sandwich Bay, Shellness, Grenham Bay, Deal and Foreness and during these two months up to three **Great Northern Divers** were reported from DBO, Sandwich Bay, Grenham Bay, Shellness, Walmer Beach, North Foreland, Oare Marshes, Uplees, Conyer, Deal and Swalecliffe.

A **Sooty Shearwater** was reported from Foreness on Nov 9th.

The **Red-necked Grebe** first seen at Cliffe Pools in October remained there until at least Dec 28th and one was also seen at Swalecliffe on Nov 15th.

Single **Slavonian Grebes** were seen at Oare Marshes and Lower Halstow on Nov 16th and 19th, at Sandwich Bay on Nov 18th and Dec 29th and at Scotney GPS from Dec 2nd-25th whilst during November and December one or two **Black-necked Grebes** were recorded at Dungeness RSPB, Whetsed GPs, Cliffe Pools and Scotney.



Black-necked Grebe by Ray O'Reilly

A **Glossy Ibis** was seen at Stodmarsh, Sandwich Bay and Worth Marshes between Nov 22nd and Dec 7th and then flying S at Walmer Beach on 8th and arriving at Dungeness RSPB later in the morning and remaining there until Dec 9th.



Glossy ibis by Mark Chidwick

A **Spoonbill** flew E over Mereworth on Dec 28th.

Single **Bitterns** were seen at Dungeness RSPB, Stodmarsh/Grove Ferry, Swale NNR and Oare Marshes.

Cattle Egrets continue to increase with up to eight seen at Stoke Marshes, Stodmarsh/Grove Ferry, Worth Marshes, St Mary's Bay, Lydd, Cooling Marshes, Elmley, Kingsferry Bridge and Dungeness RSPB.

During November and December up to six **Great White Egrets** were recorded from Reculver, Dungeness RSPB, Grove Ferry/Stodmarsh, Walland Marsh, Oare Marshes, Foreness, Luddenham Marshes, Cooling Marshes, Halstow Marshes, Brooksend, Ham Street, Scotney, Whetsted GPs, Fowlmead CP, Bough Beech, Wittersham, Appledore, Tonbridge, Walland Marsh, Bonnington, Chillenden, West Hythe and Botolph's Bridge.

Up to four **Shags** were seen at Dungeness, Seabrook, Dover Harbour, Folkestone Harbour, Mill Point, Deal, Sandwich Bay, Copt Point, Walmer Beach, Swalecliffe, Reculver, Aycliff and Chatham with as many as 14 birds on Thanet.

BIRDS OF PREY

An adult male **Goshawk** was reported from Dartford Marshes on Dec 18th.

Up to three **Hen Harriers** were recorded from Stodmarsh/Grove Ferry with one or two seen at Dungeness, Sheppey, Oare Marshes, Pegwell Bay, Naccolt, Bockhill, Swalecliffe, Horton Priory, Temple Ewell, South Swale LNR, Longbeech Wood, Reculver Marshes, Sellindge, Pegwell Bay, Conyer, Funton Creek and Worth Marshes.

Single **Rough-legged Buzzards** were reported from Dungeness RSPB and Lydd on Nov 1st and Queenborough on Dec 1st. In addition, a juvenile roosted at Funton Creek between Dec 7th and the 30th.

A **Red Kite** flew past Swale LNR on Nov 12th and others were seen at Netherhale, Godmersham, Penshurst Estate and Elmley on Dec 15th.

RAILS TO WADERS

Three **Common Cranes** flew S over Sheppey and Sandwich Bay on Nov 2nd and a **Stone-curlew** was found on the beach at Greatstone-on-Sea on Nov 17th.

There was still a **Curlew Sandpiper** at Oare Marshes on Nov 2nd and another was reported from Allhallows on Dec 14th.



Curlew Sandpipers by Chris Bond

At the end of the year as many as 14 **Purple Sandpipers** were recorded at Sandwich Bay, Reculver, Minnis Bay, Foreness, Broadstairs, Hythe, Margate Harbour, Ramsgate Harbour, Folkestone Harbour, Swalecliffe and Herne Bay.

One or two **Little Stints** were identified at Cliffe Pools and Hoo Peninsula until the end of the year.

During November and December up to three **Jack Snipe** were seen at Sandwich Bay, Wouldham, DBO, Dungeness RSPB, Egypt Bay and Bough Beech and up to five **Spotted Redshanks** were seen at Cliffe Pools, South Foreland, Lower Halstow, Hoo Peninsula, Oare Marshes, Milton Regis, Otterham Creek and Riverside CP.

AUKS TO GULLS

Single **Little Auks** were reported from Foreness on Nov 9th and DBO on Nov 11th.

During November and December up to 12 **Little Gulls** were seen at DBO, Sandwich Bay, Eastry, North Foreland, Deal, Shellness, Mill Point, Lydd, Dartford Marshes, Walmer Beach, Swalecliffe and Kingsdown.

There was a record count of 3,000+ **Mediterranean Gulls** at Copt Point on Dec 2nd.

During November and December up to 11 **Caspian Gulls** were identified at Dungeness with smaller numbers at Lade, Dover, Dartford Marshes, Cliffe Pools, Purfleet, Foreness, Walmer Beach, Worth Marshes and Sandwich Bay and as many as seven **Yellow-legged Gulls** were identified at DBO, Reculver, Foreness, Scotney, Bough Beech and Sandwich Bay.

Up to eight **Great Skuas** were seen at DBO, Reculver, Swalecliffe, Shellness, South Foreland, North Foreland, Deal, Mill Point, Seabrook and Sandwich Bay and in November as many as three **Pomarine Skuas** were reported from DBO, Reculver, Swalecliffe, Shellness and Foreness and during December one was recorded from Oare Marshes on the 1st with another flying W at DBO on 13th.

DOVES TO RING-NECKED PARAKEET

A **Long-eared Owl** was seen briefly at DBO on Nov 10th and other were recorded from Lydd Ranges on Nov 16th and Cliffe Pools on Dec 17th whilst up to three were seen at Elmley.

During November and December up to 20 **Short-eared Owls** were recorded on Sheppey with up to four seen at Dungeness, Foreness, Samphire Hoe, Oare Marshes, Lydd Ranges, Copt Point, St Mary's Hoo, Conyer, Chetney Marshes, Romney Marshes, Halstow Marshes, Reculver, Pegwell Bay and Sandwich Bay.

Single **Merlins** were seen at DBO, Dungeness RSPB, Faversham, Oare Marshes, Egypt Bay, Capel Fleet, South Foreland and Reculver.

SHRIKES TO HIRUNDINES

A **Great Grey Shrike** found at Bockhill on Nov 3rd remained there until the 12th whilst another bird was found at Pegwell Bay on Nov 10th.



Great Grey Shrike by Chris Bond

A **Waxwing** flew N at Bockhill on Nov 3rd and others were recorded from Whitstable on 6th and Northdown Park on 10th and subsequently one or two birds were reported from East Malling, Margate, Leysdown and Kingsgate.

As many as six **Ravens** were seen at Dungeness, Oare Marshes, Wouldham, Foreness, North Foreland, Aycliff, Dover, Conyer, Wye, Benenden, Canterbury, Brooksend, South Foreland, Longbeech Wood, Penshurst Estate, Chetney Marshes and Reculver Marshes.

A juvenile **Penduline Tit** was seen at Grove Ferry on Nov 16th and 30th.

Two **Woodlarks** were seen at Newington, Folkestone on Nov 12th and the **Shore Lark** first seen at DBO in October remained there until Nov 6th with another bird flying W at Swalecliffe on Nov 12th.

Two late **Swallows** were seen at Walmer on Nov 30th with one at Langdon on Dec 3rd, two flying N at Sandwich Bay on 5th and one at North Foreland on 8th whilst a late **House Martin** was seen at Walmer Beach and Worth Marshes also on Dec 8th.

CETTI'S WARBLER TO WHEATEARS

Single **Siberian Chiffchaffs** were identified at Grove Ferry on Nov 3rd, Willop Sewage Works on Nov 7th and Dungeness RSPB on Dec 15th and 16th.

A **Pallas's Warbler** was discovered at Northdown Park on Nov 10th and another was seen briefly at DBO on Nov 17th whilst during the first half of November one or two **Yellow-browed Warblers** were identified at DBO, Margate Cemetery, Botolph's Bridge, Willop Basin and Sandwich Bay with the final one seen at Oare Marshes on the 20th.

During these two months single **Dartford Warblers** were identified at DBO, Sandwich Bay, Lade, Lydd, Halstow Marshes and Seasalter.



Dartford Warbler by Mark Chidwick

Up to five **Firecrests** were recorded from Dungeness, Sandwich Bay, Samphire Hoe, Folkestone, Reculver Marshes, Aycliff, Copt Pont, Grain, Newnham, Shuart, Mill Point, Nickoll's Quarry, North Foreland, Hythe, Northdown Park, Blean Woods and Lydd.

A **SHORT-TOED TREECREEPER** that appears to be the same bird first seen in the area on Sept 21st and Oct 6th was still at White Cliffs CP on Nov 3rd.

Single **Ring Ouzels** were seen at Dungeness RSPB on Nov 1st, Worth Marshes on 3rd, Tenterden on 4th, Aycliff on 9th and Dartford Marshes on 11th with a late female at Samphire Hoe on Nov 28th that was reported again on Dec 13th and 17th.



Ring Ouzel by Brendan Ryan

As many as three **Black Redstarts** were recorded from DBO, Thanet, Swalecliffe, Church Hougham, Sandwich Bay, South Swale LNR, Seaton, Samphire Hoe, St Margarets-at-Cliffe, Seasalter, Reculver, Benenden, Botolph's Bridge, Canterbury, Bockhill and Lydd.

DUNNOCK TO BUNTINGS

A **Richard's Pipit** flew S at Bockhill on Nov 3rd and another was found at Cooling/Halstow Marshes from Dec 22nd-31st whilst during November and December up to 39 **Water Pipits** were recorded at Grove Ferry/Stodmarsh with smaller numbers at Dartford Marshes, West Hythe, Wouldham, South Swale LNR, Dungeness RSPB, Worth Marshes, Oare Marshes, Seaton and Sandwich Bay.

During November and December up to three **Hawfinches** were recorded from Benenden, Barming and Selling whilst a **Serin** flew S at Bockhill on Nov 3rd



Pine Bunting by Matt Hindle

A first winter male **PINE BUNTING** was trapped and ringed on Reculver Marshes on Nov 4th and was a different bird to the bird seen in February 2018. This bird also had pale yellow edgings to primaries 3,4 and 5 and may only be accepted as a Pine Bunting /Yellowhammer hybrid by BBRC. If accepted as a pure Pine Bunting it will be the second record for Kent.

During November and December one or two **Lapland Buntings** were recorded from Reculver Marshes, Worth Marshes, South Foreland, Faversham Creek, Worth Marshes, Hope Point and Oare Marshes.

Up to 30 **Snow Buntings** were seen at Sandwich Bay with as many as seven recorded at Kingsdown, Reculver Marshes, Egypt Bay, South Swale LNR, Abbotscliffe, Foreness, Ramsgate, Swalecliffe, North Foreland, Shellness, Oare Marshes, Samphire Hoe, Halstow Marshes, South Foreland, Hampton, Bockhill and Grenham Bay.

DBO = Dungeness Bird Observatory **BBRC** = British Birds Rarities Committee

RSPB = Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

"The Patch" = the warm water outflow from Dungeness Nuclear Power Station

NNR=National Nature Reserve **NR**=Nature Reserve **LNR**=Local Nature Reserve

FC = Field Centre **WR** = Wildlife Reserve **GP** = Gravel Pits **CP** = Country Park

CONTRIBUTORS

This summary owes much to the contributors to the various sites in "Latest Sightings" on the KOS Website at www.kentos.org.uk, KOSForum, Twitter and the RBA Hotline.

Records have been contributed by A. Appleton, G. Barker, B. Benn, J. Birkett, Bockhill Birders, Bough Beech (per A. Ford), E. Brown, N. Burt, G. Burton, F. Cackett, B. Caffarey, R. Carr, M. Casemore, J. Chantler, R. Collins, G. Coultrip, K. Cutting, DBO (per D. Walker), R. Dean, K. Derrett, R. Dubbins, D. Eade, B. East, R. Elvy, D. Faulkener, D. Feast, Folkestone and Hythe Birds (per I. Roberts), C. Gibbard, S. Ginnaw, R. Gomes, F. Grant, V. Green, J. Guiver, J. Hall, P. Hawkins, A. Hindle, C. Hindle, M. Hindle, M. Hollingworth, B. Hunt, M. Kennett, T. Laws, O. Leyshon, A. Lipczynski, A. Malone, J. Massey, N. McCanch, S. Message, P. Milton, R. Morris, D. Morrison, S. Mount, L. Muirhead, J. Neighbour, M. Norman, D. Oates, R. O'Reilly, M. Orchard, M. Paice, G. Parry, A. Perry, J. Perry, K. Privett, M. Puxley, R. Rackliffe, S. Reynaert, B. Ring, G. Roe, M. Roser, K. Ross, Samphire Hoe (per L. Collins, P. Holt, D. Smith, and P. Smith), SBBO (per A. Lipczynski and S. Walton), D. Scott, I. Shepherd, D. Smith, South Foreland (per Ian Hodgson), W. Stoneham, M. Sutherland, Swale NNR (per R. Smith, D. Faulkner, I. Davidson), T. Swandale, D. Taylor, R. Taylor-Jones, P. Trodd, C. Turley, D. Tutt, M. Varley, M. Wilson, T. Wilson, J. Woolgar, B. Woolhouse, B. Wright, M. Wright and J. Young.

Please send records for this review to:

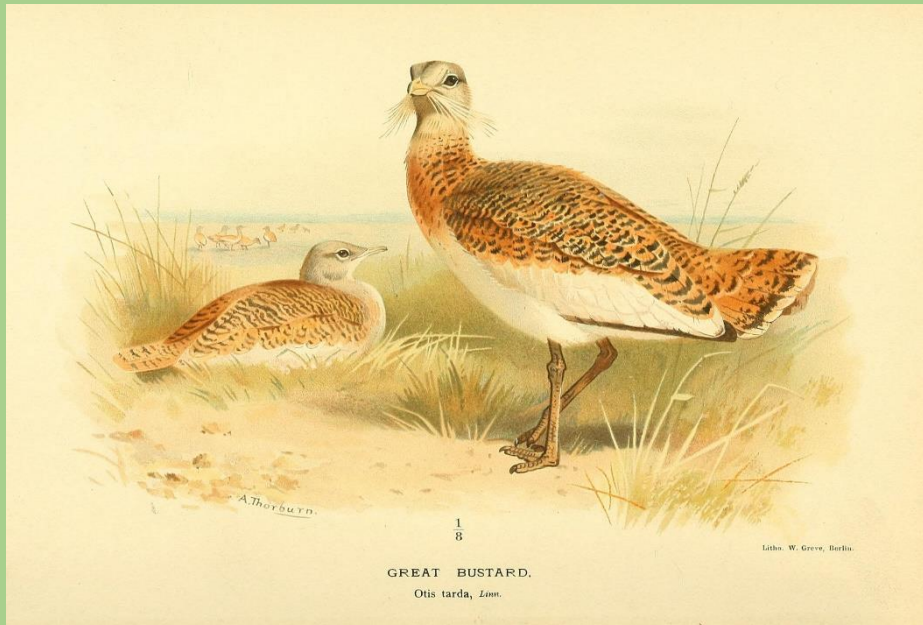
Chris Hindle, 42, Glenbervie Drive, Herne Bay, Kent. CT6 6QL

Email: christopherhindle@hotmail.com

Records sent to me may not all be used for this report as I try to extract the more interesting sightings, however all records are equally important as I forward them to the appropriate Area Recorders who enter them all onto the KOS database.

Fifty Years Ago

128. Great Bustard



Great Bustard by Archibald Thorburn (PDI)

Two birds of this species were observed for about fifteen minutes near St. Margaret's Bay on Jan. 11th (Dr & Mrs PSW) before they flew off.

This is the first record for Kent this century and it is of interest to note that one was also seen on Fair isle on the same date. During this period there was an extremely large invasion of this species in NW Germany and the Netherlands. There were also single birds seen in France and Denmark.

KBR 1970

Norman McCanch