



Great-crested Grebes by Terry Laws

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

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

A Spring of sorts seems to have arrived, after an interminably long, uninspiring winter. In the past few weeks sunshine and mild days have brought a few more birds to my garden patch, notably Blackcap and Chiffchaff, while a few butterflies have dared to venture out into the sunshine on warmer days, not least a fine male Brimstone. Unsurprisingly it did not last, for although we have had much less rain in March, the cold nights and grey mornings are with us once more.

The winter has been marked by rather low numbers of small birds around my garden, especially those flocks of Chaffinch and Greenfinch which were once so numerous, and brought stragglers like Brambling, Yellowhammer and occasional Reed buntings, while even tit flocks have been lower, Coal tit in particular becoming only sporadic visitors. Happily, the last week has seen an upsurge in Goldfinches into double figures and pleasingly a half dozen Greenfinches most days with at least one male singing from my boundary trees., March has traditionally been peak time for Siskins revisit, none so far fingers crossed. In spite of the current constraints on my birding, I did manage to catch up with two of the Serins currently around Restharrow, nice birds and not a species I have seen often in Britain

Good birding
Norman

News and announcements

Avian Influenza

In the last few months there has been an increase in reported cases of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in wildfowl, particularly Whooper Swans and geese. Please continue to be vigilant and keep your eyes open for any signs of unusual mortality in any wild bird species and to report these to Defra for testing.

We are only able to track the spread of avian influence with the help of birdwatchers who submit their sightings.

Report dead and sick birds

- Record in the [BirdTrack app](https://www.bto.org/our-science/projects/birdtrack) <https://www.bto.org/our-science/projects/birdtrack> . This allows researchers to follow the disease's geographical spread and rapidly assess potential impacts on populations.
- Report to [Defra](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-dead-wild-birds), so that if needed, dead birds can be collected for testing <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-dead-wild-birds> or call 03459 33 55 77 (call charges may apply)
-

BTO Heathland Bird Survey 2025

A national survey of heathland birds (Nightjar, Woodlark and Dartford Warbler) is taking place this year, in partnership with the RSPB. The previous population estimates made for these species are now almost 20 years old, based on data from surveys undertaken at a time when all three species had undergone a substantial increase in both population size and range. Both Woodlark and Dartford Warbler were at their most northerly recorded UK breeding range extents, while Nightjar was regaining ground in northern England and even into Scotland.



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- In 2004, the Nightjar population was 4,600 territories (churring males).
- In 2006, Dartford Warblers numbered 3,214 territories and the Woodlark population was 3,064 territories.

We urgently need updated population estimates to assess how breeding numbers and range for each of these species have changed throughout the UK and Channel Islands. **The survey is not limited to heathland and the aim is to record all birds of each species in whatever habitat they are in. The Heathland Birds Survey has been designed to cover the current known distribution of Woodlark, Nightjars and Dartford Warblers, but also to pick up recent range expansion or contraction. The data collected will be used to calculate up-to-date population figures.**

Woodlark and Dartford Warbler do not really feature in Kent, mainly due to our lack of heathland, which is generally the preferred habitat (although some areas do exist around Pembury, Hothfield and on the Blean) so there are only a few squares (1km) to be surveyed. However, Kent does have a population of Nightjars, mostly in woodland habitats, which have been the subject of BTO surveys at intervals in the past (1981, 1992 and 2004), and so, after an interval of 20 years, it will be great to survey Nightjar again and get an update on its status in Kent. In terms of the other species, the occasional pair of Woodlark and Dartford Warbler do sometimes breed, but they are RBBP (Rare Breeding Bird Panel) species and survey effort will be mostly directed to a few local observers for the known breeding sites. **For Woodlark, however, there is some evidence that the species may be moving into farmland along the North Downs and greensand ridge, and the Weald towards the Sussex border. Hence some squares are up for survey in these areas to test for this possible range expansion.**

Volunteers should make between two and four visits for each of the species during the species' survey periods:

Woodlark (15 February – 31 May) – two early morning visits between sunrise and 11 a.m.

Dartford Warbler (1 April – 30 June) – two early morning visits between sunrise and 11 a.m.

Nightjar (25 May – 15 July) – two evening visits covering the two-hour period after sunset, or the two hours prior to sunrise.

The main emphasis in Kent will be to survey Nightjars. The species favours areas of clear-felled and freshly replanted conifers and areas of Sweet Chestnut coppice up to about 3 years of age. It is recommended that anyone volunteering to survey Nightjars should make a daytime recce visit before the

survey is undertaken in order to establish if suitable habitat is present, and if so where. This will save time wandering around at dusk during the survey to locate suitable areas.

Sign up

Have a MyBTO account already?

- [Log in and sign up to the survey.](#)
-

Don't have a BTO account?

- [Create a MyBTO account](#) and then sign up to the survey.

Once logged in, you will find the survey sign up for the survey in the 'Sign Up for Projects' section.

Request a site

Once signed up, you can request a square via the survey portal.

- [Log in to the survey portal](#) using your MyBTO account details.

Further details of the Nightjar survey will be given in the May Newsletter. In the meantime, please visit the BTO website for the survey [Heathland Birds Survey | BTO - British Trust for Ornithology](#)

The Eden Valley Farm Cluster – An appeal for volunteer surveyors

The Eden Valley Farmer Cluster is a fairly new group, with a range of farming activities including arable, dairy and beef production, based around Bough Beech Reservoir and along the River Eden in the Chiddingstone area. We have been brought together by concerns for water quality and nature recovery, and we are motivated by balancing the management of a productive farm business with the best possible outcomes for the environment.

We are in the process of undertaking baselining surveys to gain information about the cluster on a landscape scale. We will shortly start with soil sampling, following this we hope to investigate water quality and we are also hoping to learn more about the bird species present on our farms.

The map below shows the location of the seven farms in the cluster.

We would love to hear from anyone available to volunteer to do some bird surveys across the cluster, to help us build up a picture of the species currently present. We are hoping to achieve a snapshot across the breeding season so it would be brilliant to hear from anyone able to commit to coming more than once, however if you can offer any time at all it would be wonderful to hear from you.

The map below shows the spread of land associated with the seven farms above, much of the area is around Bough Beech Reservoir. It would not be expected that any one surveyor covered all these areas! but that a selection of fields from one of the larger farms or all from one of the smaller farms might be taken on.

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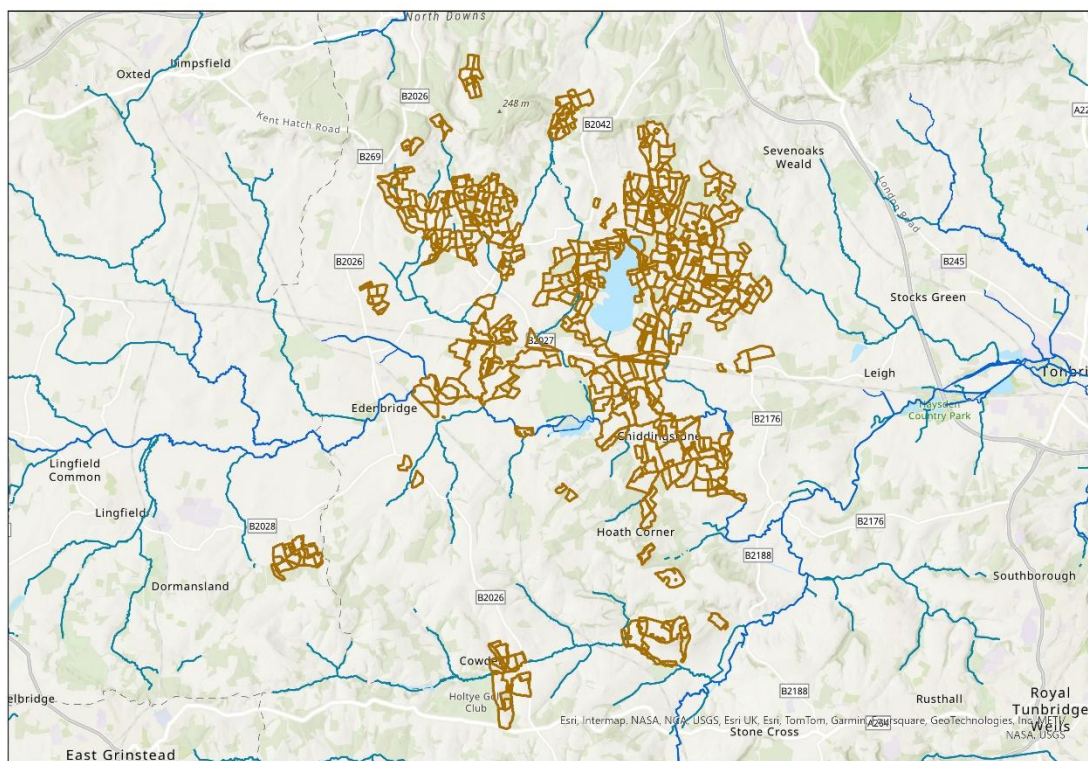
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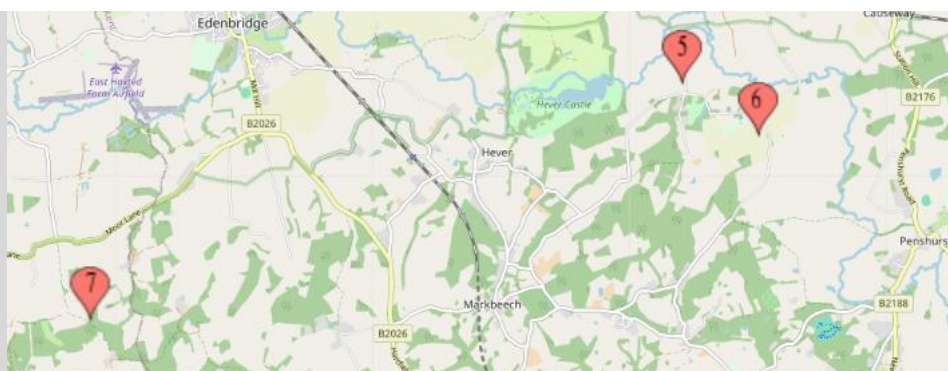
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Please



contact Maya on
07415779256 or

Swifts!



There are many passionate people across Kent taking action for Swifts. With more than half of British Swifts lost since 1995 the time to act is now. *Kent for Swifts* ([About | Kent for Swifts](#)) was formed to bring Swifts groups and individuals together to encourage greater collaboration and support for Swift conservation across Kent. If you are enthusiastic about Swifts and keen to do more please join the group at the <https://kent-planning-network-for-nature.org.uk/>.

If you might be interested in helping with surveying for Swifts this year please get in touch directly with the following contacts:-

Canterbury District Swifts – covering Canterbury District and Sandwich, Dover and Wye – Bob Douthwaite canterburyswifts@gmail.com

Walmer and Deal Action for Swifts - covering Walmer and Deal - Dan Richards walmerdealaction4swifts@gmail.com

High Weald Swifts – covering the High Weald with a focus on Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone – Cheryl Mason trustees@highwealdswifts.co.uk

Swifts for Thanet – covering Thanet district – Kerry Sabin-Dawson ksd.rspbthanet@gmail.com

If you are outside of these areas but keen to get involved, please get in touch with Kent for Swifts. It won't be long before our summer visitors start arrive, we would encourage everyone to record their Swift observations, particularly of active nests, on Swift Mapper [Swift Mapper](#).

Overhead wires and birds.

In February two birds ringed on Sheppey by the Swale Ringing Group were reported to BTO found dead under power lines 15 kilometres away in north Kent. They were a 11 year old Marsh Harrier, ringed under license as a nestling, and a 16 year old Shelduck. These are notable longevity records and this is the third Marsh Harrier ringed by Swale Ringing Group which has been found dead under wires.

These deaths highlight the risk posed to birds by power lines and are especially relevant now as new power lines are required for national infrastructure.”

Brian Watmough

BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey (BBS)

BBS is the principal scheme for monitoring the population changes of the common and widespread breeding birds in the UK. The survey involves two early-morning spring visits to an allocated 1-km square, to count all birds seen or heard while walking two 1-km lines (transects) across the square.

Thank you very much to all volunteers who completed a BBS in 2024. Thanks also to those who carried out the Waterways Breeding Bird Survey (WBBS). WBBS extends the methodology of BBS to linear waterways in the county, although carried out on a much smaller scale in terms of the number of sites surveyed.

2024 results summary for BBS in Kent:

A total of 69 one km squares were surveyed in 2024 for BBS, with 59 of these receiving both early (April-mid May) and late visits (mid-May to late June). In 2024 the total number of species recorded from all BBS squares in Kent was 112, compared to 116 the previous year.

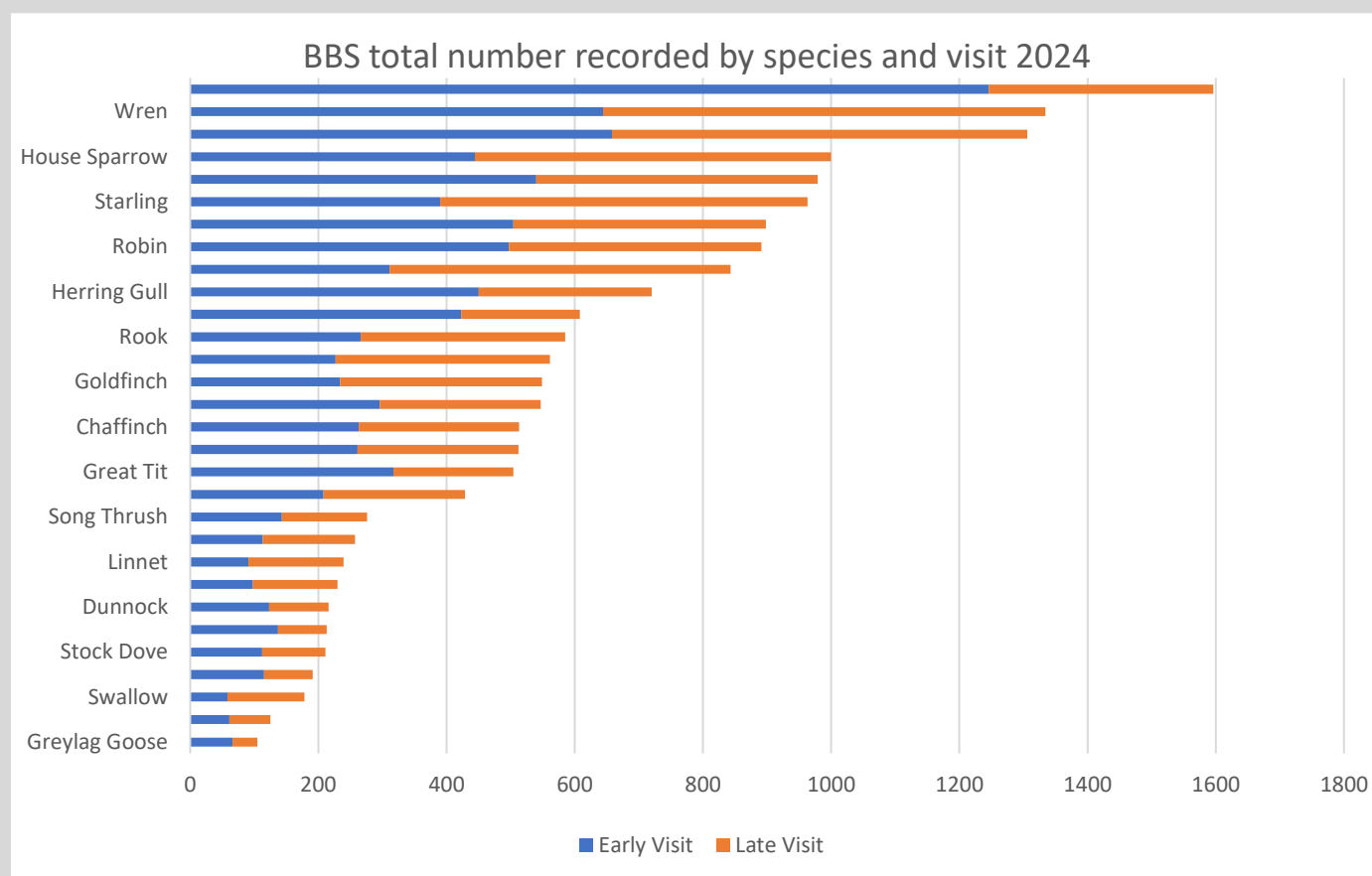


Whitethroat by Bob Knight

The graph below shows the total number of individual birds recorded in both early and late visits for the 30 most abundant species in BBS for Kent last year.

The range of species in the top 30 proved to be the same as that for 2023. Relative positions of individual species are also generally similar to the previous year, a notable exception being Wren which is ranked second in 2024 compared to eighth the previous year. Woodpigeon was again the most numerous species

in 2024, with a grand total of 2673 individual sightings from both early and late visits in Kent (the line graph as been truncated in this case).



In the case of warblers, Chiffchaff, with 547 recorded from both visits, was more numerous than either Blackcap or Whitethroat. For more scarce warblers there were single records in 2024 for both Grasshopper Warbler and Wood Warbler in Kent BBS.

In the case of finches Goldfinch was slightly more numerous than Chaffinch. Sadly, the formerly common Greenfinch does not feature in the graph of the top 30 species, the species having undergone a nationwide population decline since the mid-2000s.

BBS also gives the opportunity to record mammals during the survey, and it will perhaps be no surprise that Rabbit was the most frequently encountered species, followed by Grey Squirrel then Red Fox. BBS in 2025:

67% of BBS squares in Kent are currently allocated to surveyors, this representing a slight increase compared to the previous year. The squares in the following table are vacant and new volunteers are therefore sought, starting in the coming BBS season if possible:

1 KM BBS SQUARE & NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	1 KM BBS SQUARE & NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE
TQ5077 - Erith	TQ9269 - Elmley
TQ6067 - Hartley	TQ9374 - Minster
TQ6248 - Tonbridge	TQ9672 - Minster
TQ6558 - Addington	TQ9861 - Faversham
TQ6846 – Paddock Wood	TQ9872 - Eastchurch
TQ7061 - Snodland	TQ9941 - Ashford
TQ7450 - Coxheath	TR0038 - Kingsnorth
TQ7567 - Chatham	TR0118 - Lydd
TQ7658 - Boxley	TR0129 - Brenzett

TQ8036 - Sissinghurst	TR0172 - Warden
TQ8443 - Headcorn	TR0242 - Willesborough
TQ8452 - Kingswood	TR0438 - Mersham
TQ8754 - Harrietsham	TR0529 - Newchurch
TQ8953 - Lenham	TR0637 - Aldington
TQ9060 - Sittingbourne	TR0835 - Aldington
TQ9137 - High Halden	TR1350 - Petham
TQ9235 - Woodchurch	TR2544 - Lydden

BBS is a very rewarding survey in which to take part, and only requires two visits of approximately two hours each per year. Further details can be obtained via:

<https://www.bto.org/our-science/projects/bbs/taking-part>.

Alternatively, if interested to take on any of the 1 km squares shown in the table please contact Bob Knight for further details: rjknight53@gmail.com

Bob Knight

KOS Thanks to Andrew Henderson

It was with great pleasure that I recently travelled to north Lincolnshire to visit Andrew Henderson at his home at Island Farm, close to Blacktoft Sands RSPB, in order to make a special presentation. Many will know Andrew from his time in Kent, and more recently from his excellent species reviews in this newsletter. However, many may not be aware of the huge contribution that he has made to the successful publication of the Kent Bird Report, from editing and clarifying records to producing wonderful graphs and trend plots in the species accounts. Andrew also produced the 1988-94 Kent Atlas together with Tim Hodge. In recognition of his invaluable contribution to the recording of Kent birds, the KOS presented Andrew with a picture of Tree Sparrows by Stephen Message. These wonderful birds are commonly found at Island Farm, where Andrew is doing his best to keep them going, along with other species like Lapwing and Curlew. Much of the farm is now under the ownership of the RSPB who are managing the land as a reserve.

Thank you Andrew.

Murray Orchard



Help Monitor Kent's Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers in 2025



Image credit: Heather Mathieson

Have you ever been lucky enough to encounter one of these little woodpeckers as it flits through the tree tops, or heard its rapid *keek keek keek* call or soft drumming? A little bigger than a House Sparrow, the Lesser Spotted Woodpecker is the smallest woodpecker species in Europe, weighing on average only 20g. These incredible birds are usually seen high in the canopy of old woodlands, parks, and other areas with mature trees and dead wood where they forage for insects and establish their territories. They differ from the Great Spotted Woodpecker, not only in size, but also in plumage. Lesser spots have a distinct white horizontal barring across their back and wings and lack the large white shoulder patches of Great Spotted Woodpeckers.

The Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (*Dryobates minor*) is one of the UK's most elusive and threatened bird species in the UK. Restricted to England and Wales, the species has suffered a rapid decline in the UK since around 1980. According to the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), there has been an 81% decrease in population (1997-2022) with significant range contractions, leading to its classification as a red-listed species of high conservation concern. The BTO Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) data for Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers in the UK shows there was a 41% contraction in their breeding distribution between 1968-72 and 2008-11

(<https://www.bto.org/understanding-birds/birdfacts/lesser-spotted-woodpecker>).

To better understand their status and distribution in Kent, we are asking for your help in recording sightings this year, particularly during the pre-breeding and active breeding season (February–June). Your observations are crucial to helping us gain a better understanding of the distribution of this species in Kent and could help with future conservation efforts for this species.

What to Record

When you see a Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, please provide as much detail as possible, including:

1. **Number of birds seen:** Were there single individuals, a pair, or a small group?
2. **Sex:** Males have a red crown, while females do not.
3. **Location:** Use precise GPS coordinates or a *what3words* location using the app on your smartphone.
4. **Activity:** Note whether the bird is:
 - **Foraging:** Searching for insects on branches or bark.
 - **Drumming:** Rapid, repetitive pecking used to communicate.

- **Calling:** Vocalizations to attract mates or defend territory.
- **Displaying:** Territorial or courtship behaviours.
- **Perching or flying:** Resting or moving between locations

How to Submit Your Records

Please enter your sightings into one of the following platforms:

- **BirdTrack:** The BTO's free app accessible on your smartphone.
- **eBird:** Free recording App, accessible on your smartphone.
- **Kent Ornithological Society (KOS) website:** If you are based in Kent you can submit your records directly to the KOS database via their website www.kentos.org.uk

Share Your Photos!

If you're lucky enough to capture a photo of a Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, please email the image along with the location, time and date of your sighting to **lesserspotsinkent@gmail.com**.

*All images will remain the copyright of the photographer. Images will only be used for conservation and survey purposes, with full credit given to the photographer.

Learn about how to spot Lesser Spots

For further information and guidance on identifying Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers, please visit the links below.

- Woodpecker Network website <https://www.woodpecker-network.org.uk/index.php/species>
- Dr Ken Smith of the Woodpecker Network – Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers (lecture to the RBBP) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l1NeKBkZvWk>
- Greater and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker - identification video (BTO) www.bto.org/develop-your-skills/bird-identification/videos/bto-bird-id-great-lesser-spotted-woodpeckers
- BTO - UK Woodpecker identification guide https://www.bto.org/sites/default/files/shared_documents/gbw/associated_files/bird-table-63-woodpecker-identification.pdf
- Examples of Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers drumming and calls <https://xeno-canto.org/species/Dryobates-minor>

Get in touch

If you would like more information about the survey, please email Heather Mathieson (Survey Coordinator) (heathermathieson@outlook.com).

Happy woodpecker spotting!

KOS branded clothing.

Just a friendly reminder that our branded clothing is available for purchase through LogoThatPolo. You can find the link on the KOS website or search for Kent Ornithological Society on www.logothatpolo.co.uk. As the weather starts to cool down, it's the perfect time to pick up a hat, fleece or hoodie for yourself or as a Christmas present and don't forget a portion of the proceeds is given back to the society.

Martin Collins

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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.

Norman McCanch (Editor) : nvmccanch@hotmail.com

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

Woodcock conundrums



Winter Woodcock by Norman McCanch

It always puzzles me when people profess to having a favourite bird, for it seems an impossible challenge to narrow it down to one species in a career of birding. Different species occupy my heart at different times, some just in passing, others for the long term. I have always had a weakness for seabirds and I suppose that Storm Petrel and Shags have been in pride of place for longest in my life, as I first met both in my early teens and have had many opportunities to study them at length. Other special birds for me include Nightjar and Stonechat, while the first Wheatear of the year is always a delight.



Woodcock Calf of Man 1992 by Norman McCanch

One outstanding species which is always special is the **Woodcock**. I first encountered it as an autumn and winter bird in West Wales, a rustling explosion in the bracken in the early morning then that quick, agile escape through the trees. I grew to know them as a summer bird in the Sussex Weald and Thetford Chase in Suffolk, where they enchanted me with their evening roding flights along with the growling and “twissick”

call. In the Weald I was fortunate to find nests on several occasions, and even to find and ring some chicks, as well as adults on lighthouses and on the Calf of Man. In East Kent they are mostly winter visitors. Some sites such as Seaton Pits can hold good numbers, although it is hard to decide which are new birds and which birds already flushed. Indeed, there is much more to Woodcock than simply ticking them off a list or taking a photograph. They are mysterious and even through decades of study they throw up odd questions which puzzle and confuse.

Probably the most enduring question is **whether Mother Woodcock carry their young when disturbed**. There are many accounts of birds reputedly gathering chicks between their legs and carrying them away to safety. It is hard to decide what else may be happening, but my sole experience of what might have been this behaviour was in Sussex one summer when I was roe stalking in a familiar woodland where I knew Woodcock bred. Waiting quietly at dusk I noticed the typical roding flights of a couple of birds passing overhead, when I noticed a bird flying down the ride in a slightly unfamiliar and ungainly way, heading towards a small clearing on the path. It landed on the ground and through my binoculars I am certain I saw a trio of downy chicks tumble out of the adult bird's belly feathers and scuttle away into the bracken, followed by Mum. I am certain the chicks were not on the path before Mums arrival, but had I imagined it??



Woodcock carrying Young, Roland Green 1920

Another question which puzzled me for some years **deals with the length of a Woodcock bill**. This came about as a result of my early life as a game shooter and wildfowler. I grew out of this regrettable habit over thirty-five years ago and never looked back. However, it gave rise to the question about Woodcock bill lengths. Within a few weeks in 1975 I handled a normal Woodcock and another with a strangely shorter bill. Although textbooks gave a range of sizes for Woodcock bills the really short ones seemed to be rather uncommon, until a trip to France in 2000 provided a copy of a French hunting magazine which also had a short piece about a Woodcock with a short bill, including a photograph. This bird's bill was even shorter than the one I had encountered



Woodcock bills by Norman McCanch

A perusal of the **BTO Guide to European Non-Passerines (2nd Edition)** shows there is some, but quite minor variation. Bill length range for males is 64- 80mm, for females 63 -81mm, so not much difference. However, the mean bill length for males is 71.5mm, while for females it is 74.7mm. This suggests that males can have slightly shorter bills, although further research suggests that juveniles have marginally shorter bills than adults. The "normal" bird I encountered in 1975 had a bill length of 72mm, close to the mean for adults, while the short-billed bird had a bill length of only 59mm well below the range for adults of either gender. By comparison, the bird in the French photograph below had a bill of only 45mm and truly earns the epithet "short-billed"



Very short-billed Woodcock, French Hunting Magazine 2004

The final Woodcock conundrum is the one which puzzles me the greatest, as unlike the previous two accounts, I have not been able to find any corroboration as yet. This puzzle **is whether, or how often, Woodcock choose to perch in low bushes.** Several years ago in a snowy winter I was walking a path on a local site which ran along a small stream on one side and a stand of Alders bordering a lake on the other. There was snow laying and I stopped occasionally to check on flocks of finches coming down from the trees to feed on the ground. As I watched some Chaffinches about fifty yards ahead, I noticed a dog Fox coming down the path 'towards me some fifty yards beyond the finches. It was wandering towards me, clearly checking various clumps and brush patches for scent. When it was about seventy yards away it flushed a Woodcock which flew briskly towards me at waist height, only to turn and drop into the Alder trees about forty yards away. The fox saw me and decided to head off across the stream, so I walked slowly towards the spot where I assumed the Woodcock had dropped in, hoping to see it on the ground. To my surprise when I reached the crucial point there was no Woodcock on the ground, instead it was perched on a cluster of low branches about a yard above the ground. We stared at each other for about a minute, then the bird flipped into the air and flashed away across the stream. I made a quick sketch of the birds' posture in my notebook and later tried to find any other records of Woodcock perching, but to this day I have never succeeded in finding anything similar.



Woodcock perching , a field sketch by Norman McCanch

While this might all seem a bit academic, it reflects my own interest in birds and their behaviour. There is a great deal more to watching birds than simply accumulating a long life list, or even taking endless photos. There are questions to ask and answers to find and that can be endlessly fascinating.

Norman McCanch

KENT BIRD SIGHTINGS FOR JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2025 - Chris Hindle

Species printed in **red** require descriptions or good quality photographs to be accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee (species in capital letters) or the KOS Rarities Committee (species in lower case). The results of these committees' deliberations are regularly published in this newsletter.

WEATHER

January started with an Arctic airmass bringing cold temperatures to the UK with some precipitation. High pressure then brought more settled conditions in the second week although temperatures remained below average with frost and fog. Warmer air moved in on the 13th with high pressure persisting for about a week. On the 24th, the fifth named storm of the season, Eowyn, brought destructive winds to parts of the country. After this further wet and windy weather followed as Storm Herminia brought heavy rain and strong winds to southern England. Temperatures during January were below average.

February began with a blocking high pressure system to the east producing overcast but settled conditions with below average temperatures with some scattered showers. Around the 19th the weather turned more unsettled as low pressure in the west led to frontal systems bringing rain. The end of February saw high pressure building again with widespread frost and foggy conditions. There was a monthly rainfall total of 36 mm at Bishopstone.

PARTRIDGE TO WILDFOWL

A **Pale-bellied Brent Goose** was seen at Swalecliffe on Jan 21st and at Reculver on Feb 29th with one seen at Leysdown-on-Sea on Jan 29th and Feb 4th and at Swale NNR on Feb 8th.



Pale-bellied Brent Goose by Andy Taylor

As many as 10 **Barnacle Geese** were seen at Seaton, Grove/Stodmarsh, Sandwich Bay, Harty, Worth Marshes and Brooksend and single **Pink-footed Geese** were seen intermittently at Sandwich Bay from Jan 2nd-17th and at Shalmsford Street from Jan 4th-7th with six at Dungeness RSPB from Jan 29th-Feb 1st.

Two or three **Tundra Bean Geese** were identified at Capel Fleet on Jan 21st and seen there until the 28th and again on Feb 25th whilst there were four at Scotney GPs from Jan 25th-30th and single birds at Elmley NNR on Feb 1st and Worth Marshes from Feb 14th-17th.

As many as 667 **Russian White-fronted Geese** were seen on Sheppey with smaller counts at Dungeness RSPB, Worth Marshes, Brooksend, Stodmarsh, Cooling Marshes, Whetsted GPs, Reculver Marshes, Staplehurst, Deal, Seaton, Sandwich Bay, Graveney, Capel Fleet, Swale NNR, Cliffe Pools, Goodnestone, Elmley NNR, Walland Marsh, Swalecliffe, Kingsdown, Grove Ferry, North Foreland, Chislet Marshes, Conningbrook, Seasalter, Higham, Cliftonville, Eastchurch and Herne Bay.

Up to 49 **Bewick's Swans** were seen at Walland Marsh and Dungeness RSPB with five at Eastchurch and seven on Grain Marshes on Jan 10th and up to four at Capel Fleet on the 27th and 28th. Two **Whooper Swans** were still at Walland Marsh on Jan 7th.

As many as seven **Egyptian Geese** were seen at Bough Beech, Penshurst Place, Nickolls Quarry, Shalmsford Street, Sandwich Bay, Elmley NNR, Brooksend, Seasalter, Reculver, Godmersham, Seaton GPs, Grove Ferry/Stodmarsh.

A **Ruddy Shelduck** was seen at Elmley NNR on Feb 1st and as many as 11 **Mandarin Ducks** were recorded from Chesterfield Wood, Furnace Pond, Sellindge, Bough Beech and Hythe.

There was a record easterly movement of 994 **Pintail** at Dungeness Observatory on Feb 21st.

The male **Scaup** was seen at Collard's Lake until at least the end of February and a female was seen at Scotney GPs from Feb 22nd-28th.

Up to seven **Velvet Scoter** were recorded from DBO, Foreness, Hythe, Minnis Bay, Cliftonville, Seasalter and Tankerton whilst the **Long-tailed Duck** first seen at Dungeness RSPB in 2024 was still there on Feb 26th.

A redhead **Smew** was found at Seaton GPs on Jan 6th and remained there until Feb 2nd and one was then seen at Dungeness RSPB from Feb 12th-27th.



Goosander by Neil Burt

As many as 22 **Goosanders** were seen at Hayesden, Dunorlan Park, Hythe, Foreness, Swanscombe, Botolph's Bridge, Sevenoaks WR, Tankerton, Conningbrook and Bough Beech.

NIGHTJAR TO WADERS

At DBO a **Red-necked Grebe** was seen on Jan 2nd and one flew W there on the 26th whilst another was reported from Cliffe Pools between Jan 16th and 19th. During February one was seen at Hythe from the 7th-9th and there was one at Oare Marshes from the 8th-9th whilst singles flew E at DBO on the 18th and 20th.



Red-necked Grebe by Mark Chidwick

Single **Slavonian Grebe** was reported from Oare Marshes on Jan 4th and 13th with two at Swalecliffe on Feb 3rd and as many as three **Black-necked Grebes** were seen at Dungeness RSPB, Swalecliffe, Cliffe Pools, Scotney, Motney Hill and New Hythe.

A **Stone-curlew** was heard flying over at DBO at 1925 on Feb 25th.

During January and February up to 27 **Purple Sandpipers** were recorded from Foreness, Swalecliffe, Dover Harbour, Broadstairs Harbour, Minnis Bay, Grenham Bay and Plumpudding.

During these two months one or two **Jack Snipe** were recorded from Dungeness, Swalecliffe, Westenhanger, Nethergong, Swanscombe, Willop Basin, Foreness, Richborough, Conningbrook and Grove/Stodmarsh.

A **Spotted Redshank** was seen intermittently at Cliffe Pools.

GULLS TO SHEARWATERS

As many as five **Little Gulls** were seen at DBO, Burmarsh, Dover, Samphire Hoe and North Foreland.

A second winter **Glaucous Gull** flew along the river at Stodmarsh on Jan 25th and a juvenile **Iceland Gull** discovered on the beach at Deal on Jan 9th was still there the next day and seen at North Foreland on the 13th whilst a juvenile was also seen at Swalecliffe on Feb 28th.

It was a very good winter for **Caspian Gulls** with up to 10 seen at DBO, Dungeness RSPB, Pegwell Bay, Deal, Dover, Foreness, St Margarets, Greenhithe, Grenham Bay, Minnis Bay, Seasalter, Oare Marshes, Sandwich Bay, Kingsdown, Worth Marshes, Minster Marshes, Elmley NNR, Cliftonville, Bockhill, Samphire Hoe, Walpole Bay and **Sevenoaks WR**.



Caspian Gull by Russ Blackman

As many as three **Yellow-legged Gulls** were recorded at DBO, Foreness, Palm Bay and Reculver.

An early **Sandwich Tern** flew E at DBO on Feb 18th.

A **Great Skua** flew E at DBO on Jan 26th.

One or two **Black-throated Divers** were reported from DBO, Dover, North Foreland, Foreness, Shellness, Tankerton, Birchington and Swalecliffe and one or two **Great Northern Divers** were seen at DBO, Dungeness RSPB, Sandwich Bay, Oare Marshes, St Margarets, Foreness, North Foreland, Palm Bay, Minnis Bay, Tankerton and Swalecliffe.

Three **Sooty Shearwaters** flew W at DBO on Jan 28th with two on Feb 20th whilst a **Balearic Shearwater** was reported flying S at North Foreland on Jan 17th.

WHITE STORK TO WOODPECKERS

A **White Stork** flew over Godmersham on Feb 23rd.

Up to four **Shags** were seen at Samphire Hoe, Foreness, North Foreland, Palm Bay, Walpole Bay, Mill Point, Ramsgate Harbour and Dover Harbour.

A **Glossy Ibis** was seen at Dungeness RSPB on Jan 10th and two were seen at Oare Marshes on Feb 5th whilst up to six **Spoonbills** were seen at Oare Marshes, Harty Marshes, South Swale LNR, Elmley NNR, Ham Road GPs and Faversham Creek.

One or two **Bitterns** were recorded from Dungeness RSPB, Oare Marshes, Worth Marshes, Elmley NNR, Collard's Lake and Grove Ferry/Stodmarsh.

As many as 34 **Cattle Egrets** were recorded from Grove Ferry/Stodmarsh, Nethergong, Collard's Lake, Seaton, Dungeness RSPB, Seasalter, Appledore, Sandwich Bay, Ham Marshes and Lydd Airport.

One or two **Great White Egrets** were seen at Dungeness RSPB, Reculver, Seaton, Worth Marshes, Donkey Street, Grain Marshes, Sturry, Stodmarsh, Minster Marshes, Oare Marshes, Postern Park GPs and Sandwich Bay.

As many as seven **Hen Harriers** roosted at Grove Ferry/Stodmarsh with smaller numbers seen at Dungeness RSPB, Worth Marsh, Elmley NNR, Sandwich Bay, Shellness, Seaton, Sarre, Oare Marshes, Hoath, Leysdown-on-Sea, Minster Marshes, Preston Marshes, Chislet Marshes, Seasalter, Scotney GPs, Graveney Marshes, Swale LNR, Molash, Bockhill, Chillenden, Wade Marsh, Conningbrook and Capel Fleet.

The **SCOP'S OWL** first seen in Broadstairs in December 2024 was still there on Jan 9th.

During these two months as many as three **Long-eared Owls** were seen at Elmley NNR, DBO, Reculver Marshes and Stour Valley and as many as three **Short-eared Owls** were seen at Sandwich Bay, North Foreland, Swale LNR, Foreness, Shellness, Harty, Elmley NNR and Seasalter.

FALCONS TO HIRUNDINES

One or two **Merlins** were seen at DBO, Eastry, Reculver Marshes, Walland Marsh, Hythe, Chislet Marsh, Grove Ferry/Stodmarsh, Horsmonden, Elmley NNR, Selling, Shellness, Oare Marshes and South Swale LNR.

Single **Woodlarks** flew over North Foreland on Feb 21st and 25th and one **Sand Martin** was seen at Bough Beech on Feb 21st with two at Stodmarsh on the 23rd and 24th.

WARBLERS TO WHEATEARS

A **Siberian Chiffchaff** was reported from Pegwell Bay on Jan 2nd.



Dartford Warbler by Russ Blackman

During these two months one or two **Dartford Warblers** were seen at DBO, Dungeness RSPB, Lade Marshes, Swalecliffe, Sandwich Bay, Willop Basin, North Foreland and Foreness.

A **Ring Ouzel** was reported from Brooksend on Jan 13th and as many as three **Black Redstarts** were seen at Dungeness, Willop Outfall, Dover Harbour, Faversham, Epple Bay, Folkestone, Westgate-on-Sea, Penshurst, Scotney, North Foreland, Lympne, Samphire Hoe and Hythe.

SPARROWS TO BUNTINGS

Up to seven **Water Pipits** were seen at Grove Ferry/Stodmarsh, Oare Marshes, Minster Marshes, Elmley NNR, Worth Marshes, Botany Bay, Graveney, Dungeness RSPB, Staplehurst, Capel Fleet, Fordwich and Pegwell Bay.

During these two months up to 44 **Hawfinches** were seen at Eastling with smaller counts at Godmersham, Marden, Chislet, Penshurst Place, Boughton Street, Hockley, Kingston, Ulcombe, Lamberhurst and Sellindge.



Hawfinches by David Rumsey

Eight **Twite** were reported from Coldharbour on Jan 25th and a **Crossbill** was seen at Denge Wood on Jan 4th and Feb 27th.

Three or possibly four **Serins** were found in bushes by Restharrow hide at Sandwich Bay on Feb 18th and were still there the next day.



Serin by David Langham

As many as eight **Snow Buntings** were seen at Plumpudding, Coldharbour, Pegwell Bay, Swalecliffe and Reculver.



Snow Bunting by Chris Hindle

The American male **YELLOW WARBLER** first seen in December 2024 was still at New Hythe until Jan 3rd.

DBO = Dungeness Bird Observatory **BBRC** = British Birds Rarities Committee
RSPB = Royal Society for the Protection of Birds **BOU** = British Ornithological Union
"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, KOS Forum, Twitter and the RBA Hotline and BirdGuides.

Records have also been contributed by A. Appleton, Bockhill Birders, R. Bonsor, Bough Beech (per A. Ford), E. Brown, D. Bunday, N. Burt, G. Burton, F. Cackett, J. Cantelo, J. Carnell, P. Carr, R. Carr, M. Casemore, J. Chantler, P. Chantler, M. Chidwick, R. Collins, G. Coultrip, K. Cutting, DBO (per D. Walker), B. East, A. Edwards, P. Eerdmans, D. Ellingworth, A. Farrar, D. Faulkner, Folkestone and Hythe Birds (per I. Roberts), C. Gibbard, M. Gould, R. Heading, J. Headley, A. Henderson, A. Hindle, C. Hindle, M. Hindle, G. Hollamby, M. Hollingworth, P. Holt, G. Honey, M. Kennett, S. Kennett, J. King, R. Knight, G. Lee, O. Leyshon, A. Lipczynski, K. Lord, A. Malone, J. Massey, N. McCanch, S. McMinn, S. Message, A. Millar, S. Mills, S. Mount, R. O'Reilly, M. Orchard, J. Partridge, K. Privett, C. Powell, M. Puxley, R. Rackliffe, B. Ring, M. Roser, K. Ross, B. Ryan, Samphire Hoe (per P. Holt and P. Smith), SBBO (per A. Lipczynski and S. Walton), G. Segelbacher, Sevenoaks WR, I. Shepherd, D. Smith, P. Smith, R. Smith, W. Stoneham, B. Summerfield, M. Sutherland, Swale NNR (per D. Faulkner, B. Whatmore, T. Hilsden), A. Swandale, D. Taylor, P. Trodd, C. Turley, J. Turner-Moss, D. Tutt, M. Watts, A. Wells, C. White, M. Wilson, T. Wilson, J. Woolgar, B. Woolhouse, B. Wright, M. Wright and J. Young.

Send any records for this review to Chris Hindle at 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 and I forward them to the appropriate Area Recorders and they are then entered onto the KOS database.

Please also send to me any descriptions or photos of rare birds so that they may be assessed by the relevant committee.

The following 2024 KOS Rarities have recently been accepted by the KOS Rarities Panel based on published photos or from descriptions submitted.

Black Brant	Leysdown-on-Sea	December 10th
Smew (redhead)	RSPB Worth Marshes	October 21st-29th
Night Heron	Worth Marshes	May 9th
Black Kite	Gravesend	August 4th
Melodious Warbler (ringed)	DBO	May 7th
Melodious Warbler	DBO	May 14th-15th

Fifty Years Ago

Red Kite



Red Kite by Archibald Thorburn (PDI)

One flew NW over Dungeness on Mar. 13th (NR). This is only the twelfth record for the county this century, all of them since 1958. The monthly summary of these records shows that this is the first March occurrence.

KBR 1975