

THE DIPPER



THE GWENT ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
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COMMITTEE COMMENTARY

Trevor Russell

The April meeting heard that remedial work has been carried out in Goytre House Wood. Thanks to generous co-operation from the Gwent Wildlife Trust, a professional team from GWT Ebbw Vale cleared a swathe of bramble from a long fence line adjoining the neighbouring farmer's field. At the same time a Health & Safety inspection was carried out by a professional tree surveyor (GOS owns the Wood which not only has a public footpath running through it, but it also backs onto a canal towpath; we would be liable if people were injured due to falling trees). Several trees will need attention but work will be postponed until September/October, safely beyond the breeding season for birds and bats.

Lack of support from GOS members continues to jeopardise GOS's attendance at Summer Shows. At a time when we need to boost membership

by promoting ourselves at Summer Shows, it is very disappointing to find so few volunteers willing to spend just a couple of hours at our stand. We have had to decline many invitations simply because we cannot generate sufficient volunteers. If you are unsure what is involved, just give a Committee member a call!

In celebration of this, our 50th Anniversary year, a small team has been compiling a book, to be called "Best Birdwatching Walks in Gwent". Road testing has been done to check the narrative for accuracy (for directions, not to guarantee bird presence!). Launch date will be November 2nd, when GOS and WOS (Welsh Ornithological Society) will be hosting a day-long Anniversary Conference at the Bridges Community Centre, Monmouth. The guest speakers will include Al Venables, Steve Roberts and Jerry Lewis. Make a note in your diary!

Declining membership numbers continues to concern the committee, so much so that a special meeting was convened simply to discuss ideas and initiatives that might reverse the trend. Look out for renewed publicity in the future. Meanwhile if you have any ideas to bolster our numbers please let us know. Even better, invite a friend to one of our events, they might enjoy it enough to want to join!

Recent Gwent Sightings for March 2013

Highlights

A Lesser Scaup was present at Parc Bryn Bach Lake, Tredegar (from 27th). A Great White Egret was seen at the Nedern (13th), whilst a Spoonbill was at Newport Wetlands (22nd). An Osprey was reported from Llandegfedd reservoir (23rd-24th). Two Black Redstarts were recorded at Sudbrook (from 14th).

Newport Wetlands Reserve

Single Merlins were reported on a number of occasions (1st, 18th, 30th). A female Marsh Harrier was recorded (29th). Up to 70 Avocets were present (27th).

Other sites

Waxwings continued to be reported, with sightings from Newport (nine on 2nd), Blackwood (three on 15th), Gobion (15 on 19th) and Pontypool (two on 23rd). Single Barn Owls were recorded at Caldicot (5th), Llandegfedd (28th) and Sudbrook (31st). Two Pink-footed geese were reported from Gobion (17th). Other sightings of note included a Mandarin drake at Wentwood reservoir (1st), a Mediterranean Gull at Ynysfro reservoir (1st), a Short-eared Owl near Newport (4th), a male Hen Harrier at Brynmawr (10th), a Hawfinch at Llanishen (11th), 10 Goldeneye at Usk (20th) and a Yellow-legged Gull at Llandegfedd reservoir (23rd). Migrants were reported from a number of locations and

included Wheatears, Sand Martins, Chiffchaffs and Whinchats. Red Kites were reported from a number of sites.

Recent Gwent Sightings for April 2013

Highlights

A pair of Black-winged Stilts was present at Newport Wetlands (from 26th). A Spoonbill was reported from the same site (from 6th). Single Ospreys were recorded at Newport Wetlands (2nd) and Llandegfedd reservoir (26th). A Hawfinch was reported from The Moorings, Newport (23rd) and Black Redstarts were recorded at Caldicot Pill (1st) and Tredegar (25th). The Lesser Scaup was still present at Parc Bryn Bach throughout the month.

Newport Wetlands Reserve

A female Hen Harrier was reported (from 5th), with a Merlin present (3rd) and seven Snow Geese were seen (15th).

Other sites

Ring Ouzels were reported from a number of sites, including Trefil (five on 4th), Brynmawr (one on 7th), Pwlldu (two on 10th) and Cwmsychan (five on 14th). Hobbies were recorded at Black Rock (18th) and Pant y Goitre (two on 21st). Two Water Pipits were seen at Sluice Farm (5th), two Mandarin ducks were present at Llantarnam ponds (from 8th) and ten Goldeneye were recorded on the River Usk at Llanllywel (2nd). Red Kites were reported from a number of locations and sightings of incoming spring migrants were reported throughout the month.

Recent Gwent Sightings for May 2013

Highlights

A Woodchat Shrike was present at Newport Wetlands (from 28th). A Great White Egret was reported from Sudbrook (25th). Sea watching from Goldcliff point produced a Long-tailed Skua (11th) and five Pomarine Skuas (4th). Two Red-breasted Mergansers were recorded at Newport Wetlands (from 11th).

Newport Wetlands

Seawatching produced a Black Tern and 20+ Arctic Terns (4th), an Arctic Skua, two Great Skuas and a Storm Petrel (9th), six Arctic Skuas and two Great Skuas (10th) and 10+ Arctic Skuas and several Great Skuas (11th).

Other sites

A Hawfinch was seen at St. Pierre Woods (11th). Good numbers of Wood Warblers were reported from several locations, with five at Abercarn (12th), five south of Blaenafon (12th) and six in Wentwood (31st). Other sightings of note included a Barn Owl at Parc Seymour (5th), a Black Swan at Llandegfedd reservoir (6th), a male Mandarin at the same site (6th) and a female Common Scoter at Peterstone (29th). Red Kites and Hobbies were reported from several locations.

Chris Hatch

Can you hear the Goldcrest song?

The following item 'Can you hear Goldcrest song?' was received on 9th March in a circular to all County Bird Recorders. This request recently appeared on the *British Birds* website and was circulated among the bird-news networks within Shropshire and Oxford, producing around 270 responses. It is due to appear in *BTO News* in the May-June issue.

I am following up Richard Porter's comments in *British Birds* 105(3):152 and gathering data on the age-related loss in the ability to hear Goldcrest song. I have close to 300 responses so far but need more data to fill in the gaps.

Please help: I just need your gender, age and whether or not you can hear Goldcrest song. You can let me know at goldcrest@lanius.org.uk or if you prefer to, Oakerley, Clun Road, Aston on Clun, Shropshire SY7 8EW. Thank you.

I try to reply personally to every submission but if I receive too many replies to this, being sent to every county in Britain, I may not be able to keep up so my apologies now if I don't get back to you with thanks.

The results will appear later this year in *British Birds* and online at <http://www.lanius.org.uk/goldcrest>

John Tucker, <http://www.lanius.org.uk>

Nine days in Trinidad: Sapphires, Emeralds and Rubies

Although I started birding six years before my caving adventures, commenced it was only a matter of time before an interest in the two subjects converged. True, the first bird I located in a cave was a Dipper roosting on a ledge about 4 metres inside the entrance of Hospital Cave opposite Craig y Nos Castle, and I guess the Feral Pigeon nesting in the sea caves at Port Eynon on the Gower didn't count. Of all the birds related to caves throughout the world one struck out as a bird I just had to see one day, the Oilbird, a cousin to my favourite British bird, the Nightjar. In my earlier birding days I had

much more enthusiasm, fitness, and good health than now, but lacked the finance. The dream remained and on my 50th Birding Anniversary year, 2012, we had to do something very special.

Although I knew roughly the year of my first birding adventure I had no idea of the month. So I contacted my old friend, David Eynon, who first took me birding. I remember he had the habit of keeping a detailed birding diary at that time and he was able to tell me my very first day birding was 18th August 1962. But the optimum time of year to visit Trinidad was their breeding

season, February, our winter. Leaving my wife to organize the trip, and reading various reviews on the internet, she opted for 'Wild Wings' tour operator. I did not disagree as I read that the guide they offered in Trinidad was Kenny Calderon. Kenny featured as the guide to Bill Oddie, in one of the episodes, 'Birding with Bill Oddie: Trinidad'. If Kenny was good enough for Bill, he was good enough for us, and our choice turned out not to be wrong.

During the wait at the airport we met the other lady on the trip, just three of us. The 10 hour uncomfortable flight was only tolerable due to a good choice of recent film productions that had not been released onto DVDs, including Contagion, The Big Year, and so on. Landing briefly on St Kitts to refuel, out of the window I noticed my probable first lifer of the trip, Cattle Egrets. At Trinidad airport a taxi picked us up to take us to our first hotel, the famous Pax Guest House. During the journey we noticed about 12 birds we were unable to identify but only the Carib Grackle with any confidence. Leaving my wife to unpack (as usual), although very tired, I visited the numerous feeders on the veranda, ordered a cold beer, and sat just 2 metres from the feeders where lifer after lifer followed. Now this is what I call Bird Watching! About 20 lifers in 30 minutes including, Tropical Kingbird, Tropical Mockingbird, Common Blackhawk, Crowned Ant Tanager, Orange Winged Amazon Parrots, Crested Oropendola, Bananaquits, Ruddy Ground Dove, Bare-eyed Thrush, Green Honeycreeper, Yellow Oriole, Palm Tanager, Purple Honeycreeper, Blue Grey Tanager,

Copper Rumped Hummingbird, Great Kiskadee. I also heard White Headed Manakins calling close below the hotel. Like a toddler towards the end of Christmas day, I was happy, tired and grizzly, bed called.

Day One: Following a good night's sleep, we met our guide for the week, Kenny, a very skilled birder, quite a sense of humour and like me a rather big guy; I just knew we were going to get along. Mount St Benedict around the hotel was on the agenda that day, the summit area in the morning, and the lower slopes after lunch. I tried to keep up with our list of birds seen, just too much for a notebook, but transferring on to my portable Dictaphone was sometimes inaudible. Kenny suggested he took the master list home in the evening, and tick off what was seen. Ideal and it worked. On the very leisurely day's stroll, although hot I found it not uncomfortably so, I guess too busy and excited to feel the effects.

Day Two: Off at 08.35hrs for a morning at the Aripo livestock station but stopping at the road side to admire Ringed Kingfisher on the way. Lifers noted at the station included, Pearl Kite, White-winged Swallow, Redbreasted Blackbird, Shiny Cowbird, Grass Landa Yellowfinch, Striped Cuckoo, Savannah Hawk, Grey Breasted Martin, Wattled Jackana, Yellow Trimed Spinetail, Solitary Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Pied Water Tyrant, Giant Cowbird, Spotted Sandpiper, Southern Lapwing, Yellow Hooded Blackbird, White Headed Marsh Tyrant, Striated Heron, Yellow-bellied

Seedeater, also noted Peregrine Falcon, and Common Snipe. We had lunch at the Manzinall beach, and noted two Magnificent Frigatebirds while having a paddle. We spent the afternoon at the Navaria Swamp, netting Yellow headed Caracara, Grey Lined Hawk, Common Black Hawk, Anhinga, Zone tailed Hawk, Grey Kingbird, Osprey, Little-blue Heron, Green Rumped Partlett, Plain-breasted Ground Dove, Pinnated Bittern, Red Bellied Macaw, Wilson's Snipe and Great White Egret. Returned to Pax at 1935hrs.

Day Three: The Northern range including part of the extensive Asa Wright reserve and about 20 new birds seen today including Bellbirds, though these were heard but not seen. Lifers included Collared Trogon, Golden Fronted Greenlet, Bay Headed Tanager, White Necked Jacobin, Golden Olive Woodpecker, Little Tinamou, Tropical Peewee, Yellow Tropical Pulau, White Necked Thrush, Broad Winged Hawk, Spectacled Tanager, Blue Headed Parrot, Channel Billed Toucan, Olive Striped Flycatcher, Red Legged Honeycreeper. We lunched between 12.38 and 13.58hrs observing White Tailed Hawk. Returned to Pax we briefly observed a House Wren on the way.

Day Four: An early start at 0700 to visit the Arena forest, when we hoped to break the 100 lifers barrier. Lifers followed quickly, and we reached 99 within the first hour before Kenny announced, "Ruby Topaz Hummingbird", a bird I really wanted to see, and a personal 100th lifer. All bins went up to notice a small black unspectacular

hummingbird. Put my bins down rather disappointed, but Kenny advised to look again and wait. Again, nothing, but the bird came closer, then the sun caught the bird and a spectacular display of various iridescent blood reds followed with the bird's every move, truly wonderful. Although Kenny took us to a White Headed Manakin lek, we all missed the bird. So we visited two leks but no activity. Before leaving the forest we were hit by a very heavy shower, and were soaked to the skin in minutes. My first experience of warm rain, and a rather pleasant one. Before returning to Pax for lunch we had a brief stop off at the sewage works adding two lifers, Purple Gallinule and Snowy Egret. After a quiet afternoon resting, picked up again by Kenny at 1630hrs for a drive to Wallerfield to view dusk birds, including Ferruginous Pygmy Owl, and Pauraques, a form of Nightjar very close sitting on the road in front of the headlights. As a bonus there were numerous fireflies darting about.

Day Five: We awoke after a good nights sleep to the sound of reggae music far below in the valley. This was Carnival Day, so drove through the mayhem to the Point a Perrie wildfowl trust. We were fortunate enough to stop to admire three Ospreys fishing, and while at the refuge, lifers included Eared Dove, Saffron Finch, Olivaceous Cormorant, Black Bellied Whistling Duck, Cocoa Thrush, Red Caped Cardinal, Black Crowned Night Heron, Green kingfisher, and Ringed kingfisher, and various Caymen. First part of the afternoon we drove up in sweltering heat to 'Yerette', a recently opened facility,

a private house with several dozen honey feeders designed to attract humming birds. There we were virtually guaranteed a display of eight or nine species of hummingbirds just feet away, with Rufous Breasted Hermit, Blue Chinned Sapphire, Green Hermit, Black Throated Mango, Tufted Cocquette and Blue Tailed Emerald. We met a group of birders who had driven down especially to see a Long Billed Starthroat, after three hours they left disappointed, and a few minutes after, we were entertained by a display of three Long Billed Starthroats. The highlight of the day however was a boat trip at 1600hrs on the Caroni Swap, and while waiting for the boat we were delighted with fine views of a Screech Owl. New birds seen during the boat trip were: Green Throated Mango, Common Potou, Tri Coloured Heron, and a fine display of thousands of roosting Scarlet Ibis.

Day Six: Our last day with Kenny, who picked us up at 0840 and we drove to the Caroni Rice Fields for grebes, but out of luck due to human disturbance but did add 2 lifers with Greater Yellowlegs and Lesser Yellowlegs, Drove onto Felicity, a badly polluted area of scrub with stagnant river, where we added several more birds Bi-coloured Cornbill, Northern Water Thrush, Straight Billed Woodpecker, Red-rumped Woodcreeper. We spent the afternoon at Waterloo on the west coast, and while eating our packed lunch, we heard loud Indian music. A Hindu cremation in the open air, a haunting experience with the music becoming increasingly poignant as the process continued.

The advancing tide brought in several new lifers with Brown Pelican, Laughing Gull, Whillett, Semi-Palmated Plover, Black Skimmer, Royal Tern, Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Western Sandpiper, Semi-palmated Sandpiper. Also saw several old favourites including Whimbrel, Grey Plover, Lesser Black Backed Gull. We returned to Pax where we said goodbyes to our guide. Kenny knew Trinidad well including sites of breeding birds. His greatest skill however was talking you to a particular bird that was hidden in the canopy. Starting at the base of the tree he could invariably talk you to the bird, or used an electronic laser pointer. During his five days with us, he had got us to see 152 birds of which 146 were lifers for me, I had feeling we were going to miss him during our second week.

Day Seven: The taxi for the Asa Wright Centre was to pick us up at following breakfast, time enough to have a final hour or so on the Pax veranda (and as we learned later, where Stephen Moss proposed to his wife). During the drive up thorough the mountains we heard many Bellbirds, a sound which I came to associate with the Asa Wright centre. We spent the morning settling in, exploring the centre's gardens, and in the afternoon we completed the Mot-mot Trail, but sadly no Mot-mots.

Day Eight: The morning our guide for the Discovery Trail was Molly, Kenny's younger sister, and although a strong family resemblance, she was far more attractive. Our first stop was to see Golden Headed Manakins, but at the White Headed Manakin lek like Kenny, no birds were present. I

guess just after first light would be the best time to see the birds displaying. While admiring some leaf cutter ants, we disturbed a Tarantula; we were informed it was just a baby. The size of my palm, some baby! Towards the bottom of the walk we heard about 5 or 6 Bellbirds calling very close which proved very difficult to see in the canopy. Eventually with skills which she must have picked up from Kenny, the entire group got to see the elusive bird. Following lunch Gill and I followed the Bellbird Trail, which according to the map passes very close to Dunston's Cave. Although described as easy/moderate walk, it turned out to be very difficult. Tracks followed several cliff ledges with some collapsed paths and hand rails in a very poor state of repair, very steep and slippery in parts, and frequent heavy showers. Although we heard many Bellbirds being so preoccupied with the difficult terrain we focussed very little on the birds. The highlight however was the sound of harsh shrieks coming from below the footpath, yes Oilbirds. We must have been just above Dunston's Cave, but due to dense vegetation we could see nothing down the ravine. After three hours we got back, exhausted, dishevelled, muddy, and wet, and recovered by having a shower and lying on the bed.

Day Nine: This was to be my red letter day, the big one, the Oilbird Trail. No guest is allowed onto the trail unless accompanied by a guide. Gill and I were horrified to notice the trail started to follow the Bellbird Trail, but much to our relief it quickly veered off in the opposite direction to a much more stable path. There was a great deal of

climbing and scrambling up and down, as the path zigzagged, but the handrails and steps were in a far better state of repair. The pace was slow and casual, frequently resting to admire birds. After getting on for about an hour and a half, the path dropped down into a ravine which narrowed considerably towards the bottom. We rested at a seating area where we could see the mouth of the cave. There, the guide took our party of 9 into the cave in groups of 3. Progress though the cave was brief, easy boulder hopping through the stream way. Although we were still within the light zone, darkness surrounded us. When our eyes adjusted to the gloom there they were, 'diablotins' as our guide called them or 'little devils,' Oilbirds. Not 4 metres distant, and quite content to sit there while the guide picked the birds out with the spotlight. We were fortunate to notice two birds squabbling which resulted in several birds flying around the cave screaming as they went. We were informed Oilbirds are very sensitive to disturbance at the cave, so the continually increasing amount of visitors is actually a problem. Asa Wright carefully manages access to the cave, only a limited number of visitors are actually able to see the birds. There are currently plans to install an infra-red oilbird observation system. A remotely controlled infrared camera installed at Dunston Cave could be controlled from one of the buildings of the park.

The end of a really memorable holiday or rather part one as we now had a few days on Tobago to look forward to. **Keith Jones**

Walk and picnic at Graigwith, Llangybi on Sunday 5 May

Mike Read's generous offer to lead a walk over his land followed by a picnic in the garden enabled us to offer a field meeting with a difference during GOS's 50th anniversary year. It proved an enticing offer: 26 people turned out to walk the woods and fields in glorious sunshine.

We divided into two groups, setting off in opposite directions and meeting roughly halfway round the circular route. Tallies and species were compared before each party continued, determined to find missing species on the return sections. Final results for the two groups were remarkably similar.

One group was treated to an explanation of the development of woodland over many years by Patrick while the other had the benefit of Steph's discovery of over 130 plant species (trees, shrubs, ferns and grasses as well as flowers). The bird total (30) was not as high as usual here – something to do with the late spring?

Cold drinks and a really delicious spread, prepared by Lizzie Read, met us on our arrival back at the house. We picnicked in the open, still in bright sunshine, and made the most of the opportunity to chat at length.

It was different and it was fun. Huge thanks go to Mike and Lizzie for such an enjoyable day.

Verity Picken

'Weather 1, GOS 0'

A trip to Craig Cerrig Gleisiad NRR

After a hearty start to the day, a good group of birders met to see whether spring had "sprung" or not? Moving to a small car park area nearby, "all weather gear" was donned and we set off into the gloom of the uplands. With a few small showers at first, the birds slowly appeared and included Red Kite, Pied Wagtail, Carrion Crow and a small flock of Starlings flitting from field to field. The landscape began to open up and good views of Sennybridge were seen; the more common species such as Blackbird, Great tit, Meadow pipit and Magpies flew into view. Scanning of the newly fertilised fields brought up a small flock of Fieldfares, Skylarks, a Hare and the surrounding conifers contained a very vocal mix of Song Thrush, Chaffinch, Wren and Goldfinch. Carrying on, the weather started to deteriorate and heavy rain began to fall and it was decided to return to the cars. So spring had not "sprung" and it seemed that the weather was following last year's trend – I hope not!

Rob Parsons

Newport Wetlands Winter Report 2012/13

Birds

A record winter for Teal, the peak count was 1,655 which is well over twice the five year average for this species. It has also been a record year for Spotted Redshank and Snipe. Pintail, Pochard and Shoveler were slightly above average. All the species closely associated with mudflats, Dunlin, Curlew, Shelduck etc. were well below average, I don't yet know what the reason for this is. Surprisingly, Wigeon numbers were below the five year average. It's possible with this extremely wet winter and so much tightly grazed and flooded grassland, that Wigeon had abundance of suitable habitat to choose from. We will have to wait for the WeBS counts for this winter to be published to find out.

As mentioned in the last report, Water Rail have made a dramatic recovery from the cold winters of 2010 and 2011.

Management

All the wet weather has made the access around the lagoon hides very difficult. As soon as the ground froze hard enough for us to drive a tractor on, we laid stone in the gateways and the worst effected areas. Unfortunately the ground didn't stay frozen long enough for us to cover all the soft areas. This work will have to be completed when the ground dries up, assuming the sun will shine again!

We have experimented in the saline lagoons this year and created two floating rafts covered in small stone. We hope these rafts will attract Tern to nest, but I will be quite pleased if Black-headed Gull or Little Ringed Plover use them. Nesting Common Tern or Black-headed Gull will help drive avian predators away from the area, benefiting all the nesting waders.

The fox fence has been tested and repaired ready for another season. An Otter who managed to get in when the grid on the tidal flap broke, on a large tide, has been coaxed back out with tasty sprats.

A crack had developed along the edge of the coastal path. Although the crack didn't look like much, the bund it was on formed the reservoir bank and it sat on top of the sea defence. When the Panel Engineer looked at it he prescribed digging the bank down to the foot of the sea defence and compacting new material on top. This work was carried out in February and we were fortunate to have dry conditions.

Events

The last CCW council was held in Cardiff on the 19th of February. In the afternoon the council visited Newport Wetlands to hear about the partnership work and to see the reserve. They saw flocks of Dunlin, Curlew and Shelduck as well as a very good view of two Little Owls in the winter sunshine.

The Mesolithic footprints and submerged forest on the mudflats to the south of Goldcliff point were filmed once more on the 10th of February. Professor Martin Bell accompanied the film crew.

Fifteen people attended the World Wetlands day walk on February the 2nd.

A delegation from DeltaNet was given a guided tour of the reserve on the 9th of January. DeltaNet is a European Union Regional Development Fund Project that seeks to help its partners work together and share experience and good practice in a number of key areas, such as: industry; innovation; the knowledge economy; the environment; and risk prevention. The eight EU Member states involved as partners in the project are as follows: Rhine, Meuse and Scheldt (BE/NL); Elbe (DE); Vistula (PL); Severn (UK); Tagus (PT); Ebro(ES); Minho (ES/PT) and Danube (RO).

SNIPPETS

Welcome to our new members

Our membership secretary Lesley Watson has recently reported a welcome influx of new members to our society and we would like to give a warm welcome:

Mrs D R M Boardman & family, Mr A Roper & family, Mr R Russ, Mr C Dyson, Mr H Hebden, Mr & Mrs R & M Lewis, Mr & Mrs M & D Oxford, Mr C Brown, Mr & Mrs A & J Cormack and Mr Neville Davies. Neville Davies would like to give his thanks to Mike and Jackie Pointon who encouraged him to enrol as a member of GOS. In addition, new member Neville has recently published a book 'Bird Watching in Mallorca', Price £10. It is a complete guide covering the main and lesser sites and includes maps and directions. Also landscape and colour bird images, full species check list and year round guide to residents and migrants. There are tips on vehicle hire, local flora and fauna and much more. Neville has very kindly donated a copy to the GOS library. This will be a useful addition to the library as the two such similar books on Mallorca published in 1983 and 1999 are both out of print and not in our library. For copies please email ecologycymru@gmail.com

Peregrine Breeding Population

In a 2002 study to estimate any changes in the current Peregrine breeding population it was found that:

'The UK is of international importance for the Peregrine, holding between 12% and 14% of the estimated European breeding population. Population increases identified in the UK by this survey are reflected across continental Europe, now producing a 'secure' evaluation of conservation status. This stability is in marked contrast to the fortunes of the species throughout much of the 20th century'.

The breeding status of Peregrine Falcons Falco peregrinus in the UK and Isle of Man in 2002. Bird Study Vol 57 Part 4; November 2002.

Off Coloured Birds

Keith Roylance located this Snippet in the Daily Telegraph of 15th January 2012, 'Looking Off Colour: The Birds Turning The Rules of Nature Upside Down', by Jasper Copping. The article focused on bizarrely coloured birds from brilliant white Blackbirds to shocking pink House Sparrow. Among the other variations mentioned include Crows, Red Kite, Coot, black-headed Blue Tit, and yellow rather than red flanked Great Spotted Woodpeckers. The account reports a study by the BTO which suggests environmental factors and diet maybe the cause, citing pink House Sparrow as an example. House Sparrows at a Salmon farm in Kinlochbervie who ate fish pellets used to turn 'salmon pink'. They also claim that coloured birds display changes in normal behaviour, timid Robins as an example. People wishing to participate in the study are asked to contact the BTO at www.bto.org/gbw or telephone 01842750050.

Tweet of the Day

GOS member Rob Parsons recently reminded us of Radio 4's 'Tweet of the Day', daily at 5.58 – 6.00 am which includes calls and a small introduction on the bird, narrated by David Attenborough and will run for about a year.

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