



# THE HOBBY

**Website:** [www.bedsbirdclub.org.uk](http://www.bedsbirdclub.org.uk)

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Editor: Andy Grimsey  
61 Wychwood Avenue  
Luton LU2 7HT  
Tel: 07402 429 312  
E-mail: [editor@bedsbirdclub.org.uk](mailto:editor@bedsbirdclub.org.uk)

## EDITORIAL

Welcome to the summer edition of The Hobby. While many birders are enjoying the peak season for dragonflies, butterflies and moths, we review some recent bird club activities, surveys and discussions along with sharing more of the work on records that is being developed by the Records and Research Committee. Summer is soon over however, the first waders are returning from the north and Don has shared the details of our first indoor meeting of a superb Winter 16/17 program.

Good birding to all...

Andy Grimsey

## MAY – JUNE 2016 BIRD NEWS

Contributors: please phone Steve Blain on 07979 606300 or email [recorder@bedsbirdclub.org.uk](mailto:recorder@bedsbirdclub.org.uk) with any news or records. Records are preferred via the online system BirdTrack, using the Excel file found on the Bird Club Website, singly using the online form ( <http://tinyurl.com/2v6oweh> ), or on paper.

### May 2016

**Garganey** - A drake was at Broom GP on 13th, with two drakes at Meadow Lane GP on 16th

**Eurasian Spoonbill** - One was at Broom GP on 6th-7th (MJS et al)

**Black-necked Grebe** - Two were at Brogborough Lake on 10th, with one present on 13th-17th

**Marsh Harrier** - A pair were present in the Marston Vale throughout, others were at Broom GP on 3rd and 15th.

**Osprey** - One flew over the Lodge on 6th, and another flew over Stopsley on 12th, and over Shuttleworth on 25th.

**Ringed Plover** - A good passage of 'tundra' Ringed Plovers took place with up to 27 at Broom GP on 10th and 51 at Meadow Lane GP on 11th.

**Grey Plover** - One was at Broom GP on 6th-10th, with three present at Meadow Lane GP, one at Derek Whites Eggs pit and four through Broom GP on 10th

**Red Knot** - A summer plumaged bird was at Meadow Lane GP on 13th-14th (DOM)

**Sanderling** - One was at Broom GP on 8th-10th, two on 13th, another was at Meadow Lane GP on 13th-14th, and one at Broom GP on 15th

**Little Stint** - One was at Broom GP on 21st-22nd

**Curlew Sandpiper** - One was at Broom GP on 2nd

**Black-tailed Godwit** - One at MVCP on 1st-3rd

**Bar-tailed Godwit** - One was at Broom GP on 13th

**Whimbrel** - One flew over Stewartby Lake on 3rd, 20 over Broom GP on 10th, seven at Broom GP on 11th. One was at Brogborough Tip lakes on 14th.

**Eurasian Curlew** - At least one pair were at Thurleigh Airfield throughout.  
One was over Broom GP on 7th.



**Greenshank** - One was at Grovebury SP on 1st, one was at MVCP and two at Broom GP on 9th, with one there on 10th. Three were also at Meadow Lane GP on 10th.

**Wood Sandpiper** - One was at Stewartby newt pools on 8th

**Common Redshank** - A passage group of 18 through Broom GP on 10th was unusual.

**Turnstone** - One was at Broom GP on 11th, with another there on 15th-16th

**Kittiwake** - One flew through Stewartby Lake on 13th, and another was there on 14th

**Little Tern** - One was at Broom GP briefly on 10th (SW, AJ)

**Black Tern** - Ten were at Brogborough Lake on 8th, one at Meadow Lane GP and one at Brogborough Lake on 11th, with at least two there on 12th. Three at Broom GP on 12th, with two present on 14th (with presumably the same two later at Derek Whites Eggs pit).

**Arctic Tern** - Four were present on Brogborough Lake on 8th, four were at Meadow Lane GP, two were at Brogborough Lake, and two at Derek Whites Eggs pit on 10th, eight at Southill Lake and three at Brogborough lake on 11th, and one at Brogborough Lake on 13th. 32 went through Stewartby Lake and one was at Derek Whites Eggs pit on 14th

**Firecrest** - Singles were at Palmers Wood and Maulden Wood on 1st

**Common Nightingale** - Singing birds were noted at Brogborough Lake, Stewartby Lake, Coronation CIP (2), near Everton (2) and Knotting Green (6)

**Black Redstart** - A male was in Ickwell on 4th

**Common Stonechat** - An unseasonal male was at Meadow Lane GP on 14th.

**Brambling** - One was still present in a Sandy garden on 1st

**Common Crossbill** - A small number were seen around the Lodge in May and June with a peak count of nine.

## June 2016

**Goosander** - A female with ten young was again seen on the river Ouse at Harrold on 4th (DH) - just the second breeding record ever in Beds after the first last year.

**Common Quail** - Birds were recorded over Luton and Barton on 18th, at Sewell on 18th-21st, and two near Warden Hill on 19th

**Great White Egret** - One flew over the A507 near Henlow on 1st (JS)

**Honey-buzzard** - One was reported flying over Everton on 5th (per Birdguides)

**Kittiwake** - An adult was at Priory CP on 2nd

**Hoopoe** - One was present in a Little Odell garden on 18th (AB)

**Rose-coloured Starling** - A wonderful adult turned up in gardens in Caddington from 2nd-6th (LJ, PG). Just the fifth accepted record for the county this bird attracted a lot of attention during its stay. Many thanks must go to the house owners for being so accommodating and patient with the varying numbers of birders descending on their quiet street.

**Redwing** - An unusual record was one in farmland near Ravensden on 21st (RB, BJN), perhaps just the second ever June record in Beds.

### Observers:

MJS - Martin Stevens; DOM - Darren Oakley-Martin; SW - Stuart Warren; AJ - Andy Jackson;  
DH - David Howes; JS - Jack Stevens; AB - Alan Beresford; LJ - Liz Jones;  
PG - Peter Graham; RB - Rosemary Brind; BJN - Barry Nightingale

We thank all contributors who have submitted their records directly to the Recorder, or via Bedsbirds Email Group as well as other sources.

Compiled by Steve Blain  
recorder@bedsbirdclub.org.uk

## **PROGRAMME MATTERS**

As always I give details of the first indoor meeting of our forthcoming Winter Programme in this edition of *Hobby* as the September edition may give members insufficient notice. The full programme of monthly indoor talks plus many field events, both local and further afield, will be published with the next *Hobby*.

Date: **Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2016** starting at 8.00pm.  
Venue: Maulden Village Hall (MK45 2DN)

Subject: **'Amazing Birds' by Chris Collins.**

Chris works as a freelance tour guide and is fortunate enough to travel extensively around the world. This talk discusses various amazing facts from the avian world gleaned from his travels. Topics covered include endemism, feathers, migration and how modern tracking devices have allowed researchers to learn so much more, and species new to science.

This is a varied and popular talk full of top quality photos covering species as diverse as Jocotoco Antpitta, Bristle-thighed Curlew, Greater Bird-of-Paradise and Wandering Albatross. You can be sure of an interesting and entertaining evening as Chris is a most accomplished lecturer.

Don Green

## **BNHS CONFERENCE 2016**

Another Bedfordshire Natural History Society Conference of interest to specialists and enthusiastic naturalists alike.

Venue: The Forest Centre, Millenium Country Park, Marston Moretaine, MK43 0PR ,  
Date: Saturday 5 November 2016 Open at 09:30 for 10:00 prompt start – finish at 16:00hrs

The BNHS website now has full details about the 2016 Conference entitled **"Amazing Insects and Spiders in Beds - some neglected, others not"**. There is also a link to the booking form. Following the success of the 2014 Conference we have had many enquiries and bookings are already coming in. We have another superb line up of specialist speakers and some fascinating groups are being covered.

The cost is: £15 for **BNHS & Beds Bird Club members**. £20 for non members. This includes a buffet lunch as well as other light refreshments.

The conferences are not expected to make a profit but are organised to try and inform and encourage interest among delegates. For the last conference BNHS made a substantial contribution but by raising the price a little we are hoping that this time this will be reduced. Most of our speakers are very kindly not charging a fee but it is of course reasonable that we reimburse them for expenses especially as some travelling some distance. The big cost however is the hire of the venue and the cost of refreshments.

Alan Outen

## **SPECIES CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY: BEDFORDSHIRE BIRD CLUB.**

This policy covers the confidentiality of bird records held by the Bedfordshire and Luton Biodiversity Recording & Monitoring Centre (BLBRMC). The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

The species listed below are considered to be at risk from persecution, disturbance and egg theft.

### **Year-round sensitive species**

Lady Amherst's Pheasant  
Long-eared Owl

### **Breeding-season sensitive species**

|                    |                           |                  |
|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| Garganey           | Northern Goshawk          | Bearded Tit      |
| Eurasian Bittern   | Hobby                     | Woodlark         |
| Little Egret       | Peregrine Falcon          | Dartford Warbler |
| Black-necked Grebe | Eurasian Curlew           | Black Redstart   |
| Honey Buzzard      | Short-eared Owl           | Common Redstart  |
| Red Kite           | European Nightjar         | Tree Pipit       |
| Marsh Harrier      | Lesser Spotted Woodpecker | Tree Sparrow     |
| Montagu's Harrier  | Firecrest                 | Hawfinch         |

### **NBN Gateway and data requests at the BRMC**

All bird records will be sent to the NBN Gateway at the resolution they were entered on BirdTrack.

All records of species in the year-round sensitive list will be marked as sensitive to block them from public access.

Records dated 1st March to 31st August (for all years) of species in the breeding-season sensitive list to be marked as sensitive to block them from public access. Records outside this period will not be marked as sensitive and so will be accessible by the public at the recorded resolution.

All other records will be accessible by the public at the recorded resolution.

Consultants and conservation organisations may be sent data on **all** species, however it will be emphasised that records for sensitive species must not be disclosed.

All requests for enhanced access to records (including those for sensitive species from the public and students that come via BRMC) will be referred to the County Recorder.

[ This policy is also maintained on the Bird Club website on the Records Submission page ]

Records & Research Committee; Bedfordshire Bird Club, BNHS. May 2015.

## LAKENHEATH & CAVENHAM HEATH FIELD TRIP 12<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2016

We were instructed to meet at the Barton Mills Café for 08.30 for a day out in the Brecks by team leader John Tomlin. Prior to arrival we took a sneaky trip down to Foxholes about 2 miles away to see if we could get a close views of Stone Curlews, but we couldn't connect with any, however the day did start well with good close views of Yellowhammer, Stonechat and Red Kite amongst other species. We then headed off to the Café where during coffee, bacon sarnies etc. we all decided that it would be a great idea if we went to Cavenham Heath first, to see if we could get some good close up views of the Stone Curlews without the usual heat haze and atmospherics that plague this site in the afternoons, so we packed up and headed off to the reserve.

On arrival we parked up at the top of the track past the car park so we didn't have too far to walk and immediately after getting out of the cars the first bird I saw & heard was a Woodlark, which is pretty much one of the best starts to a day you can get. As we all trekked off down the pathway towards the river we saw plenty of the usual corvids with the pig farm being so close and also had good views of 3-4 Shelduck and a male and female Yellowhammer feeding on the ground. Eventually at the usual spot about halfway down the track we got really good but distant views of the lovely Stone Curlews some with young, it seemed a little more difficult to spot them this year as the grass areas were a lot higher than in the past, probably as the area hadn't been grazed but we saw them all the same.

Everybody happy and content we started back to the cars when we noticed a pair and probably an additional male Woodlark singing and displaying in the heather and a lone silver birch tree not more than 20 meters away, everybody got fantastic views of these lovely birds and at last I also managed to catch up with them with the Camera, which made up for the Stone Curlews being so distant.



We all then headed off to the lovely Lakenheath Fen RSPB reserve, which would only be about 8-10 miles down the road from Cavenham Heath with high expectations given the site always gives you something to treasure.

At this point I must confess I sneaked away from the group as I was after photos and tend to find I am much more successful when on my own rather than in a large group. Talking of large groups there were a number of other Birding groups on site on the day with gangs from Bucks Birders, Hants Birders and a huge coach load 20-25 from Guildford so the reserve was quite busy, but the site is so large it easily absorbs the numbers. Anyway I digress I peeled off from the main group after the first viewpoint where birds seen of note were Cuckoo, Hobby, Heron, Little Egret, Marsh Harrier, Sedge, Reed Warblers, Reed Bunting and Whitethroat, plenty which remained throughout the day as I wandered around the site. I headed for the Hide as today was the day that I was on a mission to get some decent shots of a Kingfisher which I had failed miserably to do during countless visits to the site previously.

To my surprise as I stepped into the hide I heard the call, looked out the open window and a female Kingfisher landed on a perch not more than 10 feet away, I panicked as usual as I scrambled to get the camera on the bird with all my clobber still attached, thinking as usual this was going to be only a very quick fleeting visit from the bird, but to my surprise she lingered and gave me some time to compose myself, de clobber and get a few shots. She made a few dives from the perch for some small morsels and had a wash and preen then went on her way.

At this point I was well happy and had achieved the main aim of the day. I was however in for another treat when about 10 mins later she returned to the same spot, just as the hide was filling up with 25+ excited and very noisy birders from Guilford, she stayed again for quite a while 2-3 mins which surprised me given the decibel levels in the hide, long enough for me to get some more cracking views and give a bit of tuition to a lady from Guilford who couldn't seem to get her camera to focus on the bird. (She was so excited to see it so close that she couldn't keep still, so the auto focus wouldn't connect with the bird!!)



At this point I was chuffed and decided to stay in the hide for another hour or so to see if my luck continued but unfortunately a Bittern didn't appear in front of me at the hide, but I did have good views of Wren, Stonechat, a Family of 3-4 Beardies, various dragonflies and demoiselle flies, a Cetti's Warbler kept teasing me with glimpses as usual but no photos and a family of noisy and beautiful?? baby Coots passed by.

At this point I wandered up to the top viewpoint to see what was about, I got a few brief but good views of the Cranes which seemed to be nesting/feeding in an area to the left of the hide in the meadow, a couple of pairs of Marsh Harriers were active in front and to the side of the viewpoint and I had two booming male Bitterns in front with one very close. I stayed about an hour at the top and was eventually rewarded with a brief Bittern & Heron flypast at distance and a failed but very high octane Hobby attack on a bunch of swifts above the hide.

I headed back to the car at this point as the weather was now starting to look ominous and made it back just in time before we had a massive downpour. I met back up with the gang and headed home feeling that it had been yet another memorable great day out with the Beds Bird Club

Thanks to all who organise and run these great events.

Sean D'Arcy

## WILDLIFE SITE BIRD CRITERIA DOCUMENTS

The Records & Research Committee have produced new bird criteria to support the county Wildlife Site system. County Wildlife Sites (CWS) are important because the habitats at these sites support most of our wildlife; both plant and animal, including birds.

The new **criteria** consist of two documents:

- Appendix 8a. Qualifying Thresholds for Passage and Winter Birds.
- Appendix 8b. Breeding Bird Indices by Habitat.

### Use of the Criteria

Most bird species have specialised requirements that can only be met in certain locations and regularly used sites are probably familiar in terms of habitat, food resources, disturbance and predator risk. The size of a site and the number of habitats (quality) it has will influence the number of species it is able to support and it is reasonable to presume that large-scale habitat mosaics will support the most species (Fuller, 2012). The more species a site supports, the more important it is.

The **criteria** are supported by two further documents:

- Bedfordshire Red List of Breeding Birds.
- Rare Breeding Birds in Bedfordshire.

You can find all four documents on the Bird Club website on the Surveys and Research Projects page.

The complete CWS Selection Guidelines can be found on the Bedfordshire & Luton Biodiversity and Monitoring Centre website at [www.bedscape.org.uk](http://www.bedscape.org.uk) by clicking on Sites, then CWS; the document is on the left side of the web page.

Graham Goodall.  
Hon. Research Officer.

## BEDFORDSHIRE HOUSE MARTIN AND SWIFT SURVEY 2016

The House Martin breeding population in England has fallen by nearly 70% in the last 50 years yet is increasing in Scotland and north England. Reasons for the decline and differences across the country are unknown, prompting the BTO 2015 survey and 2016 nest study. As with other common birds, breeding House Martins tend to be under recorded in Bedfordshire, e.g. in 2014, nest building was recorded from 8 locations but breeding only confirmed from four and in 2015, when records were augmented by data from the BTO survey and the Wrestlingworth parish survey, nest building was reported from 18 locations and breeding confirmed from 14 of those. Most of these records are from rural locations, villages or isolated farm buildings. The only urban or suburban breeding House Martins were recorded as part of the BTO survey. For comparison, during fieldwork for the most recent atlas (2007 – 2011) House Martins were confirmed breeding in 175 of the 378 tetrads that comprise Bedfordshire with probable breeding in a further 42 tetrads.

A county-wide breeding House Martin survey is being run this summer. Please record all nesting House Martins, making a note of date, location (with a grid reference or postcode if possible) and number of nests and submit the results to the BedsBirds email group or to Roger Hicks by email (see below). If you have time, extra details of the nest sitewould be appreciated, e.g. number of nests per building, age of building etc. It would also be interesting to receive negative returns from areas where

House Martins have nested previously but are absent in 2016. A recording sheet is available to download from the website.

The House Martin nesting records received can be viewed on a Google Map at:

<http://tinyurl.com/BedsHouseMartin2016>

So far records have been received from 15 locations (blue markers); nesting records from previous years but with no records, as yet, for this year are shown with orange markers (19 locations); tetrads where breeding was confirmed during atlas fieldwork, but for which no nesting records have so far been received this year, are shown with yellow markers (151 tetrads).

Swifts, like House Martins, are declining in number and are now included on the Birds of Conservation Concern amber list. Graham Bellamy has started a Swift Action Group for Bedfordshire, details of which will appear on the website and on the BedsBirds email group. In the meantime, we would like to start collecting information on where birds are breeding in the county. As House Martins and Swifts nest in similar locations, it seems sensible to combine the surveys.

For further information on any of these surveys or submitting results, please contact Roger Hicks by email at [rogerkhicks@hotmail.com](mailto:rogerkhicks@hotmail.com) or on 01462-816028.

Roger K. Hicks

## WHINCHAT COLOUR RINGING PROJECT

Whinchats have now been colour rung in the north of England for 5 successive years. We have yet to have a sighting of a colour rung bird or recovery anywhere. Wouldn't it be great if the first one was from Beds. Right legs have a metal ring and a colour ring, left legs have two colour rings. Please record colours from the body down. Coloured rings do not show until the bird is quite close so do please look carefully.

Please share details of any sightings with [amanda\\_proud@hotmail.com](mailto:amanda_proud@hotmail.com) and [recorder@bedsbirdclub.com](mailto:recorder@bedsbirdclub.com)

## MIMICRY BY WHITETHROAT

The hedges have mostly been removed from the field boundaries to the north-east of Henlow Grange. Those that remain support between five and ten pairs of Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*, their scratchy song forming a background to spring and early summer walks around the area. Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*, in contrast, are much less frequently recorded with only one or two birds noted each spring, possibly only on passage, and then in denser bramble thickets rather than hedgerows.

In the summer of 2014, the rattle of a Lesser Whitethroat song was heard from a hawthorn hedge alongside a ditch (map ref. TL189396) on several occasions. Common Whitethroats were regularly recorded in this area throughout the summer while a Lesser Whitethroat was never seen. At the time I wondered if the rattle was Common Whitethroat imitating the song of Lesser Whitethroat.

Between 8 May and 11 June 2015, the rattle of a Lesser Whitethroat song, likened by a Swedish friend to dropping a handful of dried peas onto a tin plate, was heard on several occasions from brambles on the east bank of the fishing lakes (map ref. TL183396), although the songster was never seen (or,

possibly more accurately, was not recognised as such). I now think these records may refer to a Common Whitethroat mimicking Lesser Whitethroat song (sorry Mr. Recorder). On 22 June 2015, a male Common Whitethroat was seen singing from an exposed perch in the same area. It finished its normal song with the flourish of a Lesser Whitethroat rattle. The song post was about 600m west, along the same ditch, of where the possible mimic was heard in 2014, so possibly the same male or one of its offspring. This mimicry was recorded on each subsequent visit until 14 July and several video recordings were obtained over this period. The Lesser Whitethroat rattle, when performed, was always at the end of the normal Common Whitethroat song and was only performed while the singer was perched; it was not produced after every song and was not included in the song flight.

The calls of the following species were also recognised in the song of this Common Whitethroat, some were noted in the field and others when subsequently reviewing the videos: Swallow calls, Robin 'ticking', Blackcap song, Great Spotted Woodpecker 'kik' call, Green Woodpecker call and Magpie chatter. These calls were less obvious than the Lesser Whitethroat rattle, were heard less frequently and were given when the bird was singing from cover.

Once I had noted this behaviour, I listened more carefully to other Common Whitethroats both locally and further afield but no other examples of mimicry were noted.

I had not previously realised that Common Whitethroats included mimicry in their songs, but there are several reported cases of so-called 'mixed singers' described as 'birds incorporating elements of song (or calls) of other species (usually *Sylvia*) .... commonly Blackcap, sometimes Lesser Whitethroat or Garden Warbler' (Cramp 1992).

Cramp, S. (ed). 1992. The Birds of the Western Palearctic Vol VI p.472

Roger K. Hicks



## **AN ARMCHAIR TICK ?**

In the last edition of "The Hobby", David Anderson put forward the point of view that taking "Armchair Ticks" of species seen before, but ticked after, being split was not acceptable except in ignorance of the split being in place, and requested feedback to "The Hobby" of others thoughts on the matter.

This majority response was that birders take a different approach and that a species split in whatever circumstances did lead to an "Armchair Tick" and another on the list if there was no doubt that the split species had been seen at any time regardless of when the official split took place.

Let the debate then continue on which list you follow as to what are real species !

Best keep a list of subspecies seen just in case...

Andy Grimsey

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I have just read the latest Hobby and David Anderson's short note on armchair ticks, i.e. a species added to your list as the result of splitting subspecies into species after you have seen it. Apparently the consensus was that such a tick could not / should not be claimed. However, it is not always that easy nor, possibly, desirable.

In these days of online/electronic world bird lists, the species that you originally saw may no longer be in the list, e.g. many of the species that I saw while living in Papua New Guinea (PNG) in the late 1980s have undergone numerous revisions and name changes, some have even changed families, e.g. the numerous island races of the species I knew as Blue-breasted Pitta (at the time also known as Red-bellied Pitta) have recently been raised to species level, with the nominate being restricted to the Philippines and known as Philippine Pitta while the races I saw are now known as Papuan Pitta and New Britain Pitta. It would not make any sense for me to retain my records as belonging to the nominate race which now only occurs in a country I have not visited.

Similarly, the species I knew as Collared Kingfisher has also been split with the mainland race now considered a different species from that occurring on the islands to the north. The regional reviewer for ebird has asked me to amend my records accordingly, so even if I wanted to maintain my list with the name of the species at the time I actually saw it, I cannot.

I was in PNG at about the time that Sibley & Monroe's ground breaking work on DNA-DNA hybridisation studies was re-writing the classification of birds, so we were aware that there was a lot of potential splits in the PNG avifauna and tried to record at the sub-species level where possible; the older handbook, Rand & Gilliard, including descriptions of subspecies, although the (at the time) new field guide was less useful in this respect. The tour groups, or at least the tour guides, were also aware of the potential splits and would also try and see those as future 'armchair ticks' for their clients. It was regarded as an insurance policy against such splits, as not many people could afford to make more than one trip to PNG.

Splitting a species can also have an impact on that species conservation status. A wide-ranging species, such as Red-bellied Pitta may be of least conservation concern, but a single small-island endemic subspecies raised to species level may go straight on the vulnerable list. In this instance, it would be useful for the conservation bodies to have records of the 'new' species rather than have those records lumped under the 'old' wide-ranging species.

This is probably a moot point anyway, as the online world lists, probably 'enforce' any officially recognised splits (and lumps).

Roger Hicks

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I agree with Roger that the proposal that you have to see a newly split species again before you can count it doesn't always make sense. How about this as an example - the New World Moorhen has recently been split from the Old World. It is a widespread and easily seen species in most of the New World - a quick check of my records reveals I have seen it in 15 countries in the New World some of them multiple times. It would be kind of silly to decide that I should not count it until I see it yet again.

And taking Roger's example of the recently split Collared Kingfisher, I was very puzzled by the 'Collared Kingfishers' of the race *tristrami* that I saw on New Britain some years ago as they looked much more like Sacred Kingfisher to me (I know both species well from many visits to Australia). Sacred is a non-breeding visitor to New Britain but should not have been present when I was there. When I came home I read them up and even looked at skins at Tring and concluded the birds I had seen were indeed the *tristrami* race of Collared Kingfisher, even though they looked nothing like the Collared Kingfishers in Australia. Now they are split and called Melanesian Kingfisher *Todiramphus tristrami*. Again, would it not be a bit silly not to count this new species, given the time I spent watching and researching it before the split?

But where it becomes really complicated is when a species such as Arctic Warbler is split into three (as has recently happened - into Arctic, Kamchatka Leaf and Japanese Leaf) and the wintering ranges probably overlap (this isn't fully known as yet). I have seen wintering 'Arctic' Warblers in Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines, but I don't know for certain what any of them were in regard to the new split. I have been to Japan subsequently and seen and photographed Japanese Leaf Warblers singing on Mount Fuji, so I'm counting that one on my world list. And I'm counting the 'new' Arctic Warbler because of the birds I've seen in Britain. But I'm not yet counting Kamchatka Leaf Warbler because I can't be sure that I've seen it.

So it is far from straight forward!

David Fisher - Sandy

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My level of interest in splits etc is some way below David's (I'm ashamed to say since David was my birding mentor securing many lifers for me on various YOC trips in the 1970s).

Until a few weeks ago, I'd no idea how many species of bird I'd seen as I'd long since given up compiling a list. I really couldn't remember if any of the birds I'd seen in Thailand in 2012 and 2013 I'd seen in India in 1998 etc. As I neared my half century in April, I thought I'd enter it all onto BUBO listing website which takes care of all the boring splits etc. for the casual lister like myself...

I was hoping I'd reached 2,000 species but shocked to find my total was only 1890. However a week or two of armchair ticking with the likes of Moorhen and Magpie in the states and Blackbird in China (which weren't ticks when I saw them), and I'm now 1,907! Need a nice trip somewhere to crack the 2,000 before I'm 51!

Richard Bashford

## OUR STAR BIRD OF JUNE



## IMAGES BY:

**Steve Blain:** Rose-coloured Starling, Whitethroat  
**Sean D'Arcy:** Kingfisher (2), Woodlark (2), Rose-coloured Starling  
**Richard Bashford:** Curlew



### Binoculars, Telescopes & Accessories



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*The Bedfordshire Bird Club is the ornithological section of the Bedfordshire Natural History Society  
Registered Charity Number 268659*