

The Buzzard

*Shropshire Ornithological
Society's Quarterly Magazine*



Snipe, Jim Almond

No 278 Spring 2025

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Society Officers and Officials

Vice President	Chris Whittles
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Honorary Secretary	Mim Elliot-Smith secretary@shropshirebirds.co.uk
Treasurer	Jean Rickard treasurer@shropshirebirds.co.uk
Membership	Sue Brealey SOSMembership@outlook.com
Website	John Arnfield webmanager@shropshirebirds.co.uk
Management Board	Society Officers, and John Arnfield, Claire Mulvey, Helen J Griffiths, Sue Brealey, Tim Devanney
Conservation Chair	Graham Walker conservation@shropshirebirds.co.uk
Conservation Sub-committee	John Tucker, Allan Dawes, Simon Twigger, Leo Smith, Linda Munday, Jon Groom, Gerry Thomas, John Martin
Development/ Publicity and Field Trips	Vacant post. Anyone interested in the role is asked to contact a member of the Management Committee.
Indoor Programme	Claire Mulvey programme@shropshirebirds.co.uk
Trip Leaders	See the annual programme
County Bird Recorder	John Martin soscountyrecorder@gmail.com
Buzzard Editor	Tim Devanney buzzard@shropshirebirds.co.uk
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Church Stretton Branch Officers and Officials

Chair	Heather Williams 1hawhaw2345@gmail.com
Treasurer	Clive Tong Clivetong@hotmail.com
Secretary	David John poolbrook12@gmail.com
Committee member	Joan Arnfield joanarnfield@gmail.com

Shropshire Ornithological Society
Annual General Meeting 2025
Registered Charity No. 514487

The 69th AGM of the Society will be held on Wednesday, 2nd April 2025 at Bayston Hill Memorial Hall at 7.15pm. Nominations for Officers and Management Committee Members must be made in writing to the Secretary, by any two Members of the Society, at least 14 days prior to the AGM. Any items notified to the Secretary for inclusion on the AGM Agenda are to be in accordance with Rule 7 of the Constitution.

Shropshire Ornithological Society 2005
Annual General Meeting 2025
Company Limited by Guarantee No. 5322294
Registered Charity No. 1108166

**Wednesday 2nd April 2025, Bayston Hill Memorial Hall
(immediately following the Annual General Meeting of
Shropshire Ornithological Society to be held at 7.15pm, and
prior to the Indoor Meeting).**

Agenda

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 3rd April 2024
3. Matters Arising
4. Presentation and Approval of the Accounts for the years ending 31st December 2023 (retrospectively) and 2024.
5. Appointment of Directors
6. Appointment of Independent Examiner
7. Any Other Business

Mim Elliot-Smith
Company Secretary

Membership Corner

As I write this it is the start of February, and I would like to thank those who have paid their renewal payments. Once you have paid, I send out 2025 Membership Cards as receipts. However, there are over 90 members who have yet to pay for 2025, and this after a first reminder. Some members have paid twice (!!) and some people have paid but I have not been able to work out who they are. So, if you have paid but not received the new card, please check your bank records get in contact. I will send out reminders toward the end of the month.

Along with the cards, you may have received a reminder to fill out a verification questionnaire. I continue to receive these and again I thank you for them. The results have been really useful. I would ask members who are yet to fill it in to place the following link into a browser and follow the instructions. Joint members please use the family one and in the section about children just put in N/A if necessary.

www.shropshirebirds.com/membership-questionnaire/

Please ensure when paying, that you are using the correct reference. This is a standard combination of surname and number (**e.g. Surname-999**). Your membership number is visible on your 2025 membership cards, please check you are using your current membership numbers. Using the correct reference makes verifying payments much easier and quicker.

Please remember if you have details and preferences that need changing you can contact me using the details below, or by using the contact form found at the very end of the contact page on the website. Use the following link

www.shropshirebirds.com/index/contact-us/

If members have any other issues, do not hesitate to get in contact.

Sue Brealey Membership Secretary

Email: SOSMembership@outlook.com

☎ 07713 164463 🏠 6 Nobold, Baschurch, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY4 2EA

Shropshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy

The government has set legally binding targets to:

- Halt the decline in species abundance by the end of 2030
- Increase species abundance by the end of 2042 so it is greater than in 2022 and at least 10% greater than in 2030
- Reduce the risk of species' extinction by 2042, when compared to the risk of species' extinction in 2022

Achieving these targets will be driven by a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), which is intended to be a critical new tool for driving the national ambition to increase species abundance and reduce risk of species extinctions. Nationally, there will be 48 LNRSs, including one for Shropshire (including Telford and Wrekin) (See <https://shropshire.gov.uk/environment/ecology-and-biodiversity/shropshire-and-telford-wrekin-local-nature-recovery-strategy/>).

The LNRS will describe opportunities, set priorities, and propose potential measures for the recovery and enhancement of habitats and species. Research from the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) shows that the UK was home to 73 million fewer birds in 2023 than it was in 1970. This staggering number – a decline of almost a third – is almost impossible to comprehend, but it indicates the scale of the challenge for LNRSs.

SOS is leading on producing the Long List of bird species that will be included in the County strategy, based mainly on the Red and Amber Lists of *Breeding Birds of Conservation Concern in Shropshire*.

Many of the threatened species have been fitted into habitat “assemblages”, where habitat improvements are intended to benefit the species enough. However, several species on the Long List need specific programmes of conservation, because they will not benefit sufficiently from generalised improvements to habitats. These bird species, which are all candidate species for the Short List, are: -

- Curlew
- Dipper
- Pied Flycatcher
- Snipe
- Swift
- Tree Pipit
- Wheatear
- Whinchat
- Willow Tit

The details can be found on the website <https://www.shropshirebirds.com/LNRS1/>.

The website will be updated as the different stages of preparing the draft strategy are completed.

It is hoped to finalise the draft Species Long List and Short List by the end of March, undertake public consultation of the whole plan (not just birds) in the middle of 2025, and finalise it all by the Autumn...

If you've any comments after reading what's on the website, please email them to leo@leosmith.org.uk

Getting Involved

SOS members, and other keen birders, are invited to help with several projects and surveys in the 2025 field season. Everyone welcome!!! If you want to help with any of them, look on the appropriate website, or contact Leo Smith leo@leosmith.org.uk

Community Wildlife Group Curlew Surveys

The foundation of the Save our Curlews campaign (see page 9) is the location of territories by Community Wildlife Group (CWG) surveyors. The survey involves three visits of about three hours each, around 1 April, 1 May and mid-June. See www.ShropsCWGs.org.uk

**All the groups need more helpers,
and SOS members will be especially welcome.**

Red Grouse Survey

Counts will take place on the Long Mynd every Thursday evening between 3 April and 15 May, from 90 minutes before sunset until 15 minutes after it. Please volunteer even if Thursdays are difficult, as counts are often cancelled because of bad weather, and re-arranged for a Monday or Tuesday.

Results in 2023 and 2024 suggest the population has declined by half since 2018, and the species has been added to the Red List of the *Breeding Birds of Conservation Concern in Shropshire*. There are several possible reasons for the decline, and we need to know if it has continued, so this year's survey is especially important.

Most territories are within sight and hearing distance of the road along the top, between the Gliding Station and the Shooting Box car park. The display flight is noisy, conspicuous and unmistakable, and can be observed over long distances, so this is a suitable project for anyone interested in birds or conservation. No special knowledge or skills are needed. A Project Briefing meeting will be held for new participants on Thursday, 27th March, at 7.30pm at the National Trust Tearoom in Cardingmill Valley, and there will be a practical on-the-job training session, explaining how to go about the survey, and record what you see, on the first date, 3 April...

If you've done it before, you will be contacted directly.

Further Information (and Participants form) from shropscwgs.org.uk/strettons-area-wildlife-group/long-mynd-red-grouse-project/ or Joe Gomme (joegommegrouse@gmail.com)

Long Mynd Breeding Bird Survey

The National Trust is recruiting volunteers to help with a survey of the main upland species (including Snipe, Curlew, Grey Wagtail, Tree Pipit, Redstart, Whinchat, Stonechat, Wheatear and Reed Bunting). Maps are provided, and surveyors mark on them the location of each of the target species seen, and a code (similar to Bird Atlas codes) indicating the activity and level of breeding evidence observed.

Records of Whinchat will be particularly useful, as they will be passed on to help a separate conservation project, which involves finding nests, recording habitat in detail, and colour-ringing adults and chicks.

Surveyors take on all or part of one of the main valleys and the immediately adjacent plateau, and cover it thoroughly at least three, preferably five, times between the very beginning of May and the end of June. It involves walking on sheep tracks on the valley sides, as well as footpaths, so a good level of fitness is needed.

Red Kite

The Raptor Group is still trying to find all Kite nests, primarily to look for wing-tags on breeding birds. In 2023, 60 nests were monitored, and 6 additional pairs were found; At least 39 were successful, producing 73 fledged young, the highest annual total yet. A smaller number of nests were found in 2024, but it is unlikely that the breeding population declined.

Several breeding Kites had wing-tags, which were read. A report will be on the SOS website shortly. Each tag is unique, and the colours and letters or numbers tell us the bird's age, and its natal site. Reports are wanted, please, of a pair together in spring, or displaying, or one carrying sticks, or seen several times in the same place, or going into a wood, any time between February and June. Reports of wing-tagged birds at any time are wanted too, please. Photographers are requested to check their Kite photos for wing-tags. All reports will be treated in absolute confidence. Kites are very shy, and they are legally protected. It is an offence to disturb them, but this monitoring is carried out under licence.

Other Raptors

The Shropshire Raptor Group wants to recruit experienced bird watchers who have the necessary identification skills to find Goshawk, Hobby and Kestrel, and who have the commitment and time to be able to search for nest sites, monitor them and record the outcomes. If you're interested, please ask for details of how to apply.

Stepping Stones Project Species Action Plans

Stepping Stones is a nature conservation programme covering over 200km² in the Shropshire Hills including Long Mynd and Stiperstones. It is creating more bigger and better spaces for wildlife and linking them with wildlife 'corridors'. This means working with farmers, landowners, community groups and volunteers to create and connect heathland, flower-rich grassland, woodland and wetland. The project is led by the National Trust but involves a number of partners, including The Wildlife Trusts, Natural England and Shropshire Hills National Landscape.

Stepping Stones has produced 12 species Action Plans, including four bird species – Dipper, Snipe, Tree Pipit and Willow Tit.

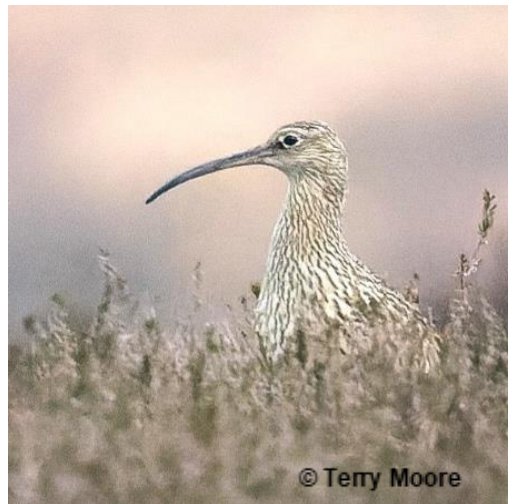
- If you see a colour-ringed Dipper any time or hear a drumming or chipping Snipe in May or June, please report it to me.
- Simon Cooter (Stiperstones NNR manager) is planning a targeted Tree Pipit (including other ffridd species such as Stonechat and Cuckoo) survey, including a training day, probably on 2 or 4 May. For more information contact Simon.Cooter@naturalengland.org.uk
- Jonathan Groom is continuing with a Willow Tit survey. For more info, please email bto.shropshire@gmail.com

Leo Smith

SOS Save our Curlews Campaign

The last issue of the *Buzzard* summarised the results of project work in 2024. The Tanat to Perry, Three Parishes and Strettons area Community Wildlife Groups worked with the SOS *Save our Curlews* campaign, to find nests, protect them with electric fences, and radio-tag and track chicks, to find out what happens to them. Failure of chicks to fledge is a major cause of the decline, and we need a better understanding of the reasons so we can develop effective conservation measures.

We have analysed the results of the Campaign and project work since it started in 2018. In summary, fencing



nests is effective, saving 74% of all fenced nests from predation in the years 2018-22, but predation rates have been higher in the different areas where we worked in 2023 and 2024, so the overall success rate since 2018 is now 56%. However, once chicks leave the protection of the fence, within 36 hours of hatching, they are vulnerable to predation, and most last for less than eight days.

**A report of the Campaign 2018-22, and
the results of project work in 2023 and
2024,
can be found on the SOS website
[www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-
curlews/](http://www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews/)**

Community Wildlife Group surveys

There are 10 Community Wildlife Groups altogether, including the three that have been directly involved in the SOS Campaign last year. They all monitor their local Curlew populations (around 100 pairs each year) and have done so since before the SOS Campaign started. Between them they cover more than three-quarters of the County population.

Plans for 2025

It is vital that we continue with the project work in the same three areas as we covered in 2024, if we are to have any chance of halting the decline. It appears that productivity is even lower in these areas than the disastrous productivity levels we found in the south of the County in 2018-22.

Further information can be found about the work of the Campaign and Appeal, current plans and reasons for the decline, on the SOS website

Save our Curlews Campaign Appeal

We have raised most of the money we need to carry out the project work in these areas in 2025, from SOS itself, donations to the Appeal, and some grants, but we still need to raise more to do all that we would like to.

SOS members, volunteers in Community Wildlife Groups, and the general public are therefore encouraged to donate to the SOS Appeal, if they feel able to.

The Campaign leaflet is included in this Buzzard mailing, along with the donations page. It can also be viewed or downloaded on the SOS website.

If, like us, you think that Shropshire will be a much poorer place without Curlews, please support the appeal

If you know anyone else who might donate, please pass the Appeal leaflet on to them

Bird Surveys in 2025

The 10 Community Wildlife Groups will all continue with their bird surveys to monitor the Curlew population, and several other target species. These surveys locate the Curlew breeding territories for the nest-finders in the project areas and provide evidence of the lack of breeding success across the rest of the County, so they are vitally important. A map showing the areas covered by each group, overlain on the Curlew breeding distribution map from the 2008-13 Bird Atlas, can be found on the SOS website.

More information about each CWG, a map showing the area covered by each CWG, and the results of their individual bird surveys, can be found on the CWGs' website, www.ShropsCWGs.org.uk

**All the Groups need more helpers, please.
We are particularly keen to recruit helpers around Oswestry,
to locate territories for the nest-finding project.**

Each CWG is planning to hold a Bird Group meeting next February or March to plan the survey. The 10 Community Wildlife Group areas, in order of formation, together with the date of their planned meeting, and venue, are: -

- 1 Upper Onny (Monday 10 March, Bishop's Castle Town Hall)
- 2 Upper Clun (no meeting – contact Leo Smith)
- 3 Clee Hill (Monday 17 March, Recreation Rooms, 22A, Clee Hill High Street)
- 4 Rea Valley (Tuesday 18 March, Minsterley Parish Hall)
- 5 Camlad Valley (Tuesday 11 March, The Horse and Jockey, Chirbury Road, Churchstoke)
- 6 Strettons area (Joint meeting with Church Stretton SOS branch: Friday 14 March, Methodist Church Hall, Watling St., Church Stretton)
- 7 Three Parishes (Weston Rhyn, St. Martin's and Gobowen) - no meeting – contact Leo Smith
- 8 Tanat to Perry (Oswestry south – Wednesday 12 March, Morda Social Club, Pleasant View SY10 9NS)
- 9 Severn-Vyrnwy Confluence (No meeting – contact Tony Comley 07940 817300 or [email svccwg@shropscwgs.org.uk](mailto:svccwg@shropscwgs.org.uk))
- 10 Abdon (meeting in February– contact Leo Smith)

To volunteer to help with one of the CWG surveys, come to the meeting, contact the relevant group via the website, or email Leo Smith (leo@leosmith.org.uk).

Leo Smith

Shropshire Rookeries 2025 SOS/Citizen Science Project

**I want to know how many Rookeries
I'm missing, and the total, in Shropshire!**

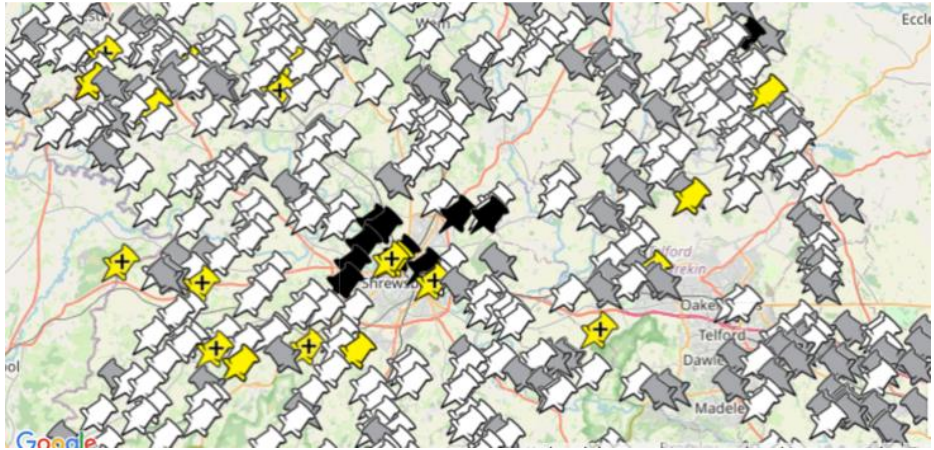
Nearly two decades of work on rookeries projects, with me asking “How can I find out about the rookeries I don't know about?” has come to **Rookeries Survey 2025**.

The question is – where are all our rookeries and (in April) how many nests are there? The individual answers are simple, and the website makes reporting them equally so - hence extending it to the public as a *Citizen*

Science project – anyone/everyone can contribute. You just need to know of a rookery and go online to report it. It is all explained on the website.

The developing map is updated daily, diagram 1 is a screen shot of as it was on 31 January, before any Phase 2.

Diagram 1 Overview of Rookery sites 31 January 2025.



Black pins: - are sites are known to be dead this year

Grey pins: - are suspected dead: are they? – they need visiting.

Yellow pins: - have been reported alive in Phase 1,

Orange pins: - in Phase 2

White pins: - so far unreported.

Sites marked “+” are newly discovered this year.

The project’s objective is to have all sites either confirmed black, or green Phase 3 (April) = confirmed active and nest counted, by 31 April.

Watch out for *Rookery Weekend*, 19/20 April, for expeditions to nest-count any remaining uncounted yellow or orange sites. Let me know if you would be willing to help in that task.

The results of the survey should be known in May; thanks for your help – every site counts.

Thanks to the unstinting technical work of my brother Peter and his friend Ashley Allerton, and the adoption - and support of the SOS – we present the result:



Shropshire rookeries over the years

Over many years, a number of surveys have been undertaken of Rookeries in Shropshire, in 1975, 2008 and 2020.

This new expanded survey is being conducted online in 2025.

Rookeries Survey 2025

The Survey takes place in three distinct Phases:

Phase 1: **Autumn/Winter** – November to end of January

Autumn/Winter: Socialising – November to January. At this time of year it is easy to spot nests as there is no foliage and Rooks may be seen socialising. Please report sightings of activity, either at an existing site, or at what appears to be a new site.

Phase 2: **Nest Building & Incubating** – February & March

Nest Building & Incubating – February & March. The rooks return full-time and begin preparing their nests and raising young. This will be very apparent and it is important to note the occupied sites for later detailed survey.

Phase 3: **Breeding Nest Counting** – April

Nest Counting – Nest numbers will have stabilised and the second last weekend in April is the ideal opportunity to count all nests.

The project's aim is to have every rookery recorded and coloured green, or black by the end of April.

We are promoting the second last weekend of April (19th/20th) as 'Rookery Weekend.'

We look forward to you taking part in the 2025 survey.

Continue to the [Reporting Page](#).

[Rookeries](#)

[Take Part](#)

[Contact](#)

[Return to Lanius](#)



John Tucker

Great Rookery Survey 2025

Underway is the *Rookeries 2025 (RO25)* project. **The first Shropshire single-species study recorded entirely on Smart Phone, tablet or online: no paperwork!**

The Rook, a wood engraving by Thomas Bewick (1753-1828) Thanks to the Natural History Society of Northumbria



RO25, a Shropshire Ornithological Society (SOS) and Citizen Science project, will precisely position and in April nest-count every known, and previously unknown, rookery in the county – around 400 of them.

Report your observations in the field on your *Smart Phone* or tablet and the records are secure.

To spread the workload and ensure whole-county coverage the project is phased. Live progress will be visible onscreen to ensure no wasted effort visiting sites already surveyed and reported.

<https://ianlus.org.uk/rookeries/>



Supported by:
Design: Peter Tucker

Rookeries Survey 2025

Some rookeries on the map are believed to be no longer active – dead – and this needs confirming. Such sites can be reported at any stage, when they will turn black – No further action required.

The survey has three Phases:

Phase 1: Autumn/Winter – November to end of January

At this time of year it is easy to spot nests as there is no foliage. Rooks may occasionally be seen socialising too. Please report such promising signs, either for an existing site or what appears to be a newly discovered one.

Phase 2: Nest Building & Incubating – February & March

The rooks return and begin preparing nests and laying eggs – It is important to note occupied sites ready for later nest counting

Phase 3: Nest Counting – April

Nest numbers will have stabilised and the on the weekend of 19/20 April is the ideal opportunity to count all nests.

The project's aim is to have every rookery recorded and coloured green, or black by the end of April. We are promoting the weekend of 19/20 April as 'Rookery Weekend.'

John Hugh Owen's Lantern Slides and the last breeding Red-backed Shrikes.

Part 2 - The material is archived.

John Tucker

In 2023, in *The Buzzard* 270:12-14, I placed on record the receipt of some glass lantern slides made by John Owen, kindly forwarded to me by David Shiress of Portsmouth.

Those slides are now on deposit at Shropshire Museums with the acquisition Number 2024.001 942 002 45. The images have been scanned and are available from Shropshire Museums.

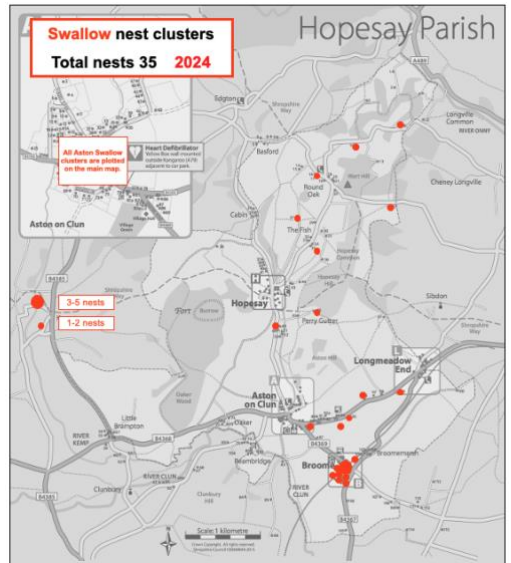
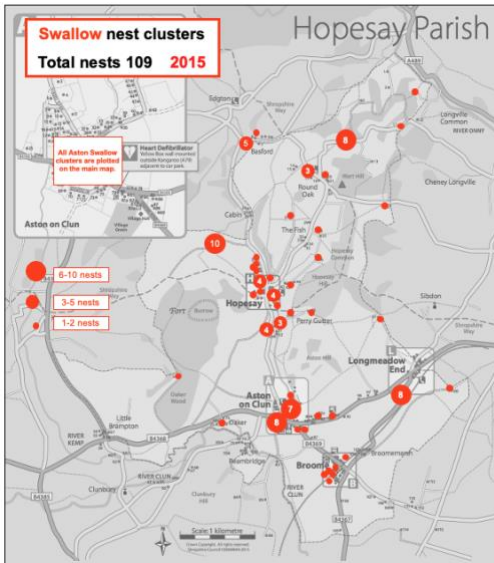
John Tucker

Swallows and House Martins of Hopesay Parish - 2015 to 2024

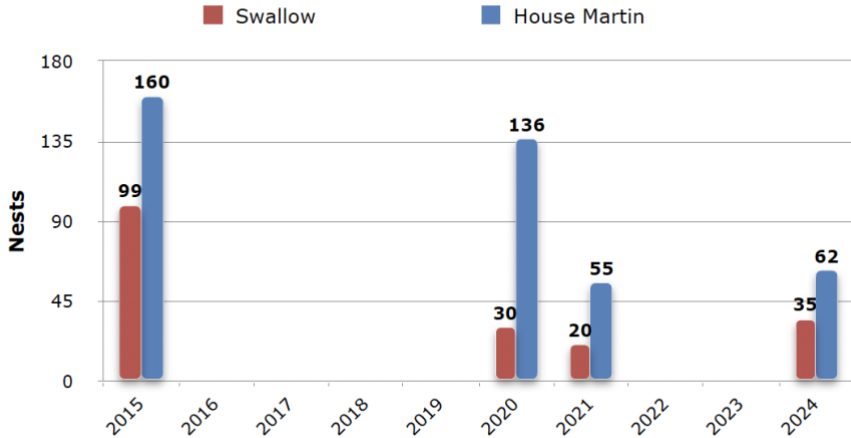
By 2015 there was casual evidence, from looking around, of recent falls in the numbers of both Swallows and House Martins in the parish of Hopesay, as elsewhere in the county and nationally. So, in 2015 I carried out a whole-parish baseline survey and mapped every nest of both species; I logged 109 Swallow and 161 House Martin nests.

I left it five years and in 2020 I did the same again. I was so alarmed by the results, fearing they might be unusually low, I repeated the exercise in 2021 only to find the numbers were even lower - House Martins at 59 nests so by then down by 63% and Swallows at 26 nests down by 76%, in six years.

The trend for Swallows 2015 to 2021 was dramatically downwards, so it was with some apprehension that I repeated the exercise this year. I anticipated bad news, but it was not so. Both species are now up by a few on 2021 figures though the overall trends since 2015 are clearly down. Compared to 2015, this year the Martins are down by 60% and Swallows by 68% - see the block graph. While the overall reduction is self-evident, so is the high survival in Broome. The survival there of House Martins is also high.



Swallow and House Martin nests, Hopesay parish 2015, 2020, 2021 & 2024



The numbers of nests of the two species in three of the four surveys, in the three major settlements spanning nine years are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Swallow and House Martin Nests in Broome, Aston on Cleve and Hopesay

Village nest count	Swallow 2015	Swallow 2021	Swallow 2024	House Martin 2015	House Martin 2021	House Martin 2024
Broome	9	9	9	18	12	13
Aston on Clun	18	1	1	23	8	11
Hopesay	11	0	0	3	1	5

The Broome anomaly

There is a possible reason for the high numbers remaining in Broome. Two sizeable areas of abandoned, non-agricultural and undeveloped ground at (a) the abandoned *Engine and Tender* (perhaps 1.5ha; so, 3 or 4 acres) and (b) similarly undeveloped ground south of the railway, opposite the platform between that and the housing established a few decades ago (perhaps 2ha; so, 4 or 5 acres).

These areas are popular feeding areas for both species, and other birds. The two patches may, by the nature of their weedy and scrubby vegetation structure, generate the aerial insect food beloved of hirundines. The latter patch is currently being developed for housing, which may affect numbers in the future, as will, potentially, the development of the *Engine and Tender* ground at some stage.

What can we do to slow the losses?

Hirundines are not birds you can put out bird food for as they eat flying insects, but you can encourage such food in your garden. If the birds nest with you, please don't discourage them. You could buy and fit artificial nest boxes for House Martins and avoid plastic soffits, which Martin nests often can't stick to. You could leave car ports and garden sheds open for Swallows to get in and nest on ledges.

Bird Notes October to December 2024

These summaries come almost exclusively from BirdTrack records, so are not comprehensive, and some of them may represent unconfirmed reports.

Pink-footed Goose One reported at Venus Pool (VP) on 26 Oct with it or another on 24 Nov. 27 flew west at Wall Farm on 11 Nov and 39 over Sinker's Field on 13 Nov. Finally, one was with two Tundra Bean Geese at Bridgwalton Quarry on at least 29-30 Dec.

Tundra Bean Goose An adult was at VP on 26-27 Oct, the same bird that had been at Belvide (Staffs) 21 Sep - 20 Oct (unusually early for a wild bird), followed by two at Bridgwalton Quarry with a Pink-foot from 29-30 Dec and again in early 2025.



White-fronted Goose One at Chelmarsh Reservoir on 16 and 19 Nov was of the nominate race as usual.

Egyptian Goose Reports of one-five at seven sites, plus up to eight at VP spread throughout the quarter.



Whooper Swan One at World's End on 11 Oct; an adult dropped in to VP at 1220 on 15th; two at Park Farm Floods on 22nd; four on the fishing pool at VP on 27th; 14 over Whixall the same day; 30 at Cae Howell on 29 Nov with a similar number on 1 (34) and 3 Dec; and smaller numbers on our side of the border there (Milverley area) until the end of the year; three to SE over VP on 10 Dec; and two over Cole Mere on 15 Dec.



- Pintail** Sinker's Field was the best site and after two singles in October there were up to 32 in Nov and 30 in Dec. Usually rather scarce at VP but there were regular reports throughout, with peaks of nine on 25 Oct, and 14 on 3 and 14 Dec. Birds were often absent and were thought to be using nearby floods as well as VP. Elsewhere one-five reported at seven sites.
- Pochard** Decidedly scarce with a pair at VP on 10 Nov and one there on 29 Dec.
- Goldeneye** The first returning bird was at Pam's Pools on 24 Oct with another at VP on 11 Nov (both were female/immatures). At the meres, where they are most regular, four were at Cole Mere on 12 Nov with 11 on 11 Dec; and Ellesmere had a peak count of five on 24 Dec.
- Common Scoter** Sound recorded over Hollinwood on 2 Oct.
- Velvet Scoter** Two first-winters, a male and female, at Chelmarsh from 19 Dec into early 2025.
- Goosander** Widely reported with the largest counts as follows: 27 at Newport (Avondale) on 3 Dec; 42 at Wide Waters Little Dawley Pools on the same day; and 36 at Chelmarsh on 24 Dec.
- Grey Partridge** One was at Bridgnorth Sewage Works on 31 Oct; and Penisarllan, Oswestry on 11 Nov; six near Telford on 13 Nov; and two at Hardwick on 28th.
- Black-necked Grebe** One was photographed at Chelmarsh Res on 7 Nov.
- Oystercatcher** Singles at Bishop's Castle on 22 Oct, Moss Lane, Whitchurch on 25 Oct and Cockshutt Floods on 16 Nov were unusual.
- Curlew** Crose Mere and nearby Cockshutt again held the best numbers with double figures in early October peaking at 22 on 17 Oct but thereafter just four on 20 Oct and one on 24 Nov; two at Whixall on 5 Nov; an adult at VP from 10-14 Nov; and late in the year four at Cae Howell on 24 Dec and one at Wood Lane on 27.
- Black-tailed Godwit** Single birds were noted at VP on 2 Nov, Cockshutt Fields next day and VP again on 6 Dec and again on 28-29 Dec.
- Green Sandpiper** One lingered at VP, being noted on eight dates in October and was last seen on 2 Nov. At Wood Lane one appeared to be wintering again with records in each month to 10 Dec. Finally, two were at Bridgwalton Quarry on 30 Dec.
- Common Sandpiper** A very late juvenile was photographed at VP on 13 Nov.
- Redshank** One was at VP on 4 Nov.

- Dunlin** Singles at VP on 3, 17 and 19 Nov and 1 Dec; and at Park Farm Floods on 14 Nov.
- Jack Snipe** Up to five reported from Black Hill, Clun; Pam's Pools and Sinkers Field from 11 Nov onwards.
- Little Gull** Three reported at Ellesmere on 13 Oct (details requested for this county rarity).
- Common Gull** At VP, where it is an occasional visitor, one-three reported on nine dates from 5 Oct – 19 Nov, a good showing. The main site is usually Ellesmere where roost counts were of three on 1 Oct and 350 on 24 Dec.
- Caspian Gull** A 2nd winter roosted at The Mere, Ellesmere on 1 Oct with three there on 4th and another on 22nd. Priorslee Lake, another regular site for this scarce species, produced reports on 7 and 11 Nov with two on the latter date.
- Great Black-backed Gull** Singles were at Stockton on 9 Dec and at Ellesmere on 17th and 24th.
- Herring Gull** 95 roosted at The Mere, Ellesmere on 1 Oct rising to 300 by 24 Dec. Elsewhere widely reported but only three counts reached double figures - max 30 at Bayston Hill Quarry on 21 Nov.
- Yellow-legged Gull** Eight roosted at Ellesmere on 1 Oct with six there on 24 Dec.
- Lesser Black-backed Gull** A remarkable 8370 roosted at Ellesmere on 1 Oct reducing to 1050 by 24 Dec. Elsewhere 1800 on receding floods at Eyton on Severn on 14 Dec was a very high count too.
- Gannet** Perhaps the most remarkable record of the quarter, although with some stiff competition, a juvenile circled over then headed to N over VP in calm sunny conditions on 27 Oct!
- Little Egret** One-six widely reported from at least 21 sites but with an exceptional 25 at Maesbrook, Oswestry on Dec 29.
- Cattle Egret** One was at VP on 20 Oct and then seen on most days until 16 Nov. 4 were seen here on 25 Oct, but the other sightings related to one bird with a distinctive gap in the primaries on the left side. Thereafter there were sightings on 16, 27 and 29 Dec, which might have related to the same bird.

Great White Egret Prior to this quarter the record count for the county was four. On 4 Oct this was exceeded by five together at VP followed by an outrageous eight in one view there on 11th, small beer for other counties perhaps but this was a rare bird with us less than a decade ago. They were recorded from 22 sites during the quarter with three still regular at VP into December and four on receding floods at Eyton on Severn on 14th.



Purple Heron A juvenile was found at Wood Lane on the early morning of 17 Oct. It was seen again in late afternoon and on the following two days but could be elusive.



Marsh Harrier Single birds, all female/immature where stated, were reported from Whixall and surrounding area on 10 occasions on October, five in November, and six in December. Elsewhere, one was at Wall Farm on five dates between 21 Oct and 5 Dec, one at VP on 6 Dec and another reported from Aston on Clun on 19 Nov.

Hen Harrier One was on the Long Mynd on 10 Oct; a ringtail at Stiperstones on 15 Oct and a female at Wall Farm from 8 Nov to the end of the year and into 2025.

Little Owl One regular site in the south but otherwise only a single record received.

Short-eared Owl Just one report from Whixall area on 22 Oct.

Merlin One was on the Long Mynd on five dates in October from 7th and again on 25 Nov. Other reports from Pasford on 3 Oct, Whixall on 16 Dec and Grigg's Lane on 23rd.

Hobby The last of the year was a late bird at Craven Arms on 8 Oct.

Ring-necked Parakeet One flying to N calling on 13 Oct was thought to be the first record for VP. 2 at Wrekin College on 17 Dec.

Willow Tit Reported again from just three sites, two in the hills as usual, Crossways and Climbing Jack, and the third a more unusual record was of two at Montgomery Canal, Redwith, near Llynclys on 15 Dec.

House Martin Last were three at Dobson's Bridge on 10 Oct.

Swallow The last of the year were three at Cantloprogre and one at VP on 18 Oct.

Cetti's Warbler Up to two singing at VP more or less throughout, with other reports of one or two at Aston Locks, Chelmarsh, Sinker's Field area at Whixall, and along the River Severn between Atcham and Wroxeter.

Chiffchaff A total of 63 BirdTrack records, with 46 of them in October when migrants were still passing through (peaks of six at Whixall, five at VP and four at Aston Locks all in the first week). Thereafter only ones and twos reported with just four records in November (all VP) and an increase to 13 in December (at six different sites).

Fieldfare Arrived later than usual with first reports on 13 Oct including 90 to W over Stow Bridge, Milebrook; and a peak of passage at the end of the month and the start of November with movements over Cantloprogre including 310 on 30 Oct, 630 next day and 280 on 3 Nov. Later in the year there were no counts of more than 80.

Redwing One at Choulton on 4 Oct was the first of the autumn followed at 80 at Selattyn next day after which they were widely reported. The biggest movements were from diligent early morning counts of movements from Cantlopgrove where they included 650 on 17 Oct, 250 on 18th, 670 on 30th, 570 next day, 320 on 1 Nov, 160 on 2nd and 150 on 3rd. Other three figure counts were from Ellesmere on 12 Nov (100), Atcham Bridge to Wroxeter on 15 Nov (205), and Aston on Clun (100) on 22 Dec.

Ring Ouzel At least one on the Cleeton St Mary side of Clee Hill on 9 Oct with two by the old quarries on Titterstone Clee on 21 Oct. A very late bird was photographed at Maesbury, nr Oswestry on 20 Nov.

Black Redstart Two seen on Titterstone Clee Hill on 2 Nov included a singing male. One was seen in central Shrewsbury on 18 Dec.

Wheatear Two late birds on Earl's Hill on 24 Oct.

Water Pipit One was at Sinker's Field from 14-28 Nov but could be elusive. It was reported again on 25 Dec.

Brambling A rather poor autumn began with one at Choulton on 10 Oct, after which low single figures were reported at 12 sites until the end of the year with a maximum of six over Titterstone Clee on 21 Oct. Nowhere seemed to have a settled flock with mostly just one or two records per site.

Tree Sparrow One-two regular at Crossways near Rhos Fiddle.

Hawfinch It was a good autumn for this species nationally and Shropshire managed a few as follows: Two at Climbing Jack on 29 Oct; nine over Cantlopgrove on 30th; two at Meaton Lane on 10 Nov; five south over Choulton on 15th; three reported at Wyke on 20th; a popular bird at Newport Cemetery from 27 to 3 Dec; one between Avondale and Newport on 1 Dec; 1 at Shakenhurst on 12 and 24 Dec; and 1 at Ludlow on 30 Dec.

Lesser Redpoll 13 records in October from 5th with 12 at Cefn Coch on 22nd; 11 in November with 10 at Ryton on 27th and Haughmond Hill next day; and 28 in December with 15 at VP on 16th where they were mostly mixed with Goldfinches in the crops and favouring Mugwort.

Crossbill Records evenly spread though the period. Counts much higher than previous quarter came from (peak counts for each site in brackets): Black Hill (16), Blakeridge Wood (5+), Burwarton Park, Bury Ditches (9), Buttonoak (3), Cefn Coch (24), Churchmoor Hill (5), Minsterley (16), Long Mynd Forestry (22), Meaton Lane (1), Nesscliffe (2 to SE 19 Oct), Thorn Lane (12 including 3 begging juveniles on 13 Oct), and Venus Pool (1 to NW 18 Oct).

Snow Bunting One on the top of the Wrekin on 30 Oct – 1 Nov; one on the Long Mynd on 15 Nov with it or another reported from a different part of the Mynd on 26 Nov and 3 Dec; and finally, one on the Stiperstones on 6 Dec.

Corn Bunting Regular reports came from Tibberton with an impressive 20 on 14 Nov; Wall Farm with 10 on 23 Dec; and VP where the now expected winter flock arrived from mid-November and reached 15 by the end of the year. Elsewhere two at Howle on 30 Dec.

Some sightings are subject to acceptance by the Records Committee.

Records for Bird Notes are extracted from the quarterly Birdtrack report for Shropshire. Due to the volume of records produced, common species are not normally included. Please ensure your Records are accompanied with a sensible and accurate place name. Locations such as ‘My Garden’ or ‘personal codes’ may not be useable in these notes. All records must be recorded by observers in Birdtrack by the 10th of the month following the end of each quarter to ensure consideration for inclusion. Given the short timescale for processing ‘Bird Notes’ it is not always possible to process personal lists. All rarities should either be entered into Birdtrack or submitted to the County Recorder.

**Compiled John Martin
Shropshire County Bird Recorder
and images - Jim Almond**

Indoor Meetings

Shropshire Ornithological Society

Wednesday 2 April 2025. 7:15pm Bayston Hill Memorial Hall,

Annual General Meeting, followed by Kevin Thornton (‘Low Carbon Kev’):

- Why You’re Lucky not to have an Inland Estuary: a Decade Stuck on the Man-made Flats of the Medway.

The avian history of the Medway, interwoven with the highs and lows of patching one shore of a very large estuary. Kev is very passionate about climate change action and low carbon birding.

Shropshire Ornithological Society (Church Stretton)

The Methodist Church Hall, Watling St. South, Church Stretton SY6 7BG
Meetings commence at 7:30pm, doors generally open around 7:00pm.

Monday, March 24th, 2025 – “Magic Moments” by Allan Heath.

Monday, October 27th, 2025 – “Far North, Far South” by Nigel Spencer.

Field Trips

Sunday, 27 April: MARTEG VALLEY/GILFACH FARM, Radnorshire (Full day) (Joint visit with RSPB Shrewsbury Group) – Leaders: Ian Baggley (07833 647109) & Helen J Griffiths (07800 880445)

- Radnorshire Wildlife Trust reserve three miles north of Rhayader, just off the A470. Turn off the A470 at the large bend at Pont Marteg (Marteg Bridge) and cross the cattle grid into the reserve. Parking is on the right just beyond the reserve entrance.
- Looking and listening for spring migrants and more, in a Radnorshire valley so far largely unspoilt by human activity.
- Meet at 10am in the reserve car park.
- Grid Ref: SN952715 Postcode LD6 5LF
- w3w: exclusive.aspect.science

Sunday, 1 June: CORS DYFI/Dyfi Osprey Project & YNYS HIR RSPB (Full day)
– Leader: Martin George

- Visits to two nature reserves on the south side of the Dyfi estuary, just off the A487 south of Machynlleth.
- **Cors Dyfi/Dyfi Osprey Project** (Montgomeryshire), for a very good chance of seeing the resident pair of breeding ospreys and their newly hatched chicks. Other wetland birds and summer migrants also likely.
- **There will be a charge to visit this site (£7 in 2024), and we have been asked to make just one payment for all, in cash ... so ... please check the cost before you come and meet me (Helen) in the car park with your payment before you go in.**
- **Ynys Hir RSPB** (Ceredigion) for summer migrants, coastal and woodland birds and more.
- Meet at Cors Dyfi (car park) at 10am AND/OR at Ynys Hir (car park) at 12.30pm
- Cors Dyfi
 - Grid Ref: SN703984 Postcode SY20 8SR
 - w3w: octagonal.swatting.workouts
- Ynys Hir
 - Grid Ref: SN682961 Postcode SY20 8TA
 - w3w: vanilla.with.represent

Please send contributions for *The Buzzard* to buzzard@shropshirebirds.co.uk
Copy deadline for the Summer 2025 issue is: 1 May 2025

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