

Perthshire Society of Natural Science
Ornithological Section
Newsletter March 2021

Thank you to contributors who responded to the last newsletter. Articles have been written for the PSNS 40 year Review project and you will have seen recently a last request for any contributions to complete the project. Think about having a voice. In connection with that project, it is worth noting that there has been no Perth and Kinross Bird Report prepared since 2006. Our County Recorder is busy remedying that. He is keen to explore ways in which we might help to correct that situation as well. Do you think a local report would be of interest? Our data is fed into BTO Bird Track but is that the best way to get a picture of what is happening in our own area?

AGM
will be held by zoom on Wednesday, 31st March
2021
at 7:30pm.
An invitation will be sent out near the time

The committee met recently, by zoom, of course. The matters discussed will be raised at our AGM so please attend to present your views on the following.

A programme of activities: no programme of outings will be arranged but depending on the prevailing Covid19 related guidelines there may be some scope for small groups to make ad hoc arrangements.

Would you wish to attend zoom talks through the coming winter season? It is considered still unlikely that live meetings would be viable. We would like to ensure the section functions for all of us so consider how we could do this, and how to attract prospective members.

Re-structuring within PSNS was discussed last year but presentation to the 2020 AGM was deferred pending a full discussion. It was deferred again this year. A second re-structuring as been suggested, an amalgamation of Botanical and Ornithological sections into the Perthshire Nature and Conservation. Your views on such a change are important. Do you think this would be useful or a bad thing?

As always we must have office bearers. The present committee are tired and would welcome a break. Please consider putting yourself forward.

No entertainment post-AGM is planned but the zoom platform will remain available for chat ± until everyone has gone to bed. (but no tea is provided)

We will be using the Zoom platform for this. If you're new to Zoom, you may want to watch this [video tutorial on joining a meeting](#). Lots more advice about using Zoom can be found on their '[Getting started](#)' [page](#). Note that when you first run Zoom it will prompt you to install a small programme on your computer. You can do this beforehand if you prefer ([Download Centre](#) – click 'Zoom client for meetings'). An app for mobile devices is also available. If you still want help, I can try to help; get in touch soon rather than later (Jeff Banks).

Be surprised by the web site.

If you haven't looked in recently there's been a few changes giving a needed face-lift.

Good bird photos are always required to replenish the banners, which are to be regularly replaced.

Look for the 40 year project articles

Goosander

The first British record of proven breeding, in 1871, came from Perthshire. Interestingly, this record is described in full in "A Fauna of the Tay Basin and Stathmore," 1906, J A Harvie-Brown –

The nest was on Loch Ericht side with 8 eggs. It is not stated whether all 8 eggs were taken, though perhaps implied, as there is no note of fewer being taken. They were taken by an agent who sent them to Harvie-Brown. Goosander were shot at the time, increasingly so as they competed with the fishing interests. Despite all that, breeding pairs became established.



River Earn at Earmouth. Latest sightings, 2 promptly flew off when I appeared but later 3 fished and one had great difficulty in swallowing a small flatfish.

Staggering Statistics - but what we all knew already

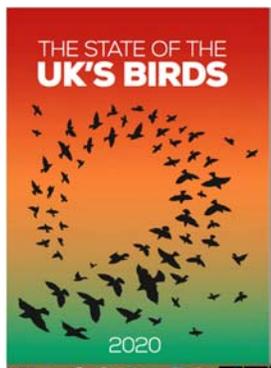
19million pairs of breeding birds lost since late 1960s

New figures from the Avian Population Estimates Panel (APEP) suggest that there are 83 million pairs of native breeding birds in the UK. This is 19 million pairs fewer than when widespread monitoring began in the late 1960s. However, this figure is similar to that presented in *The state of the UK's birds 2012*, based on the previous APEP report, suggesting that, in terms of total breeding bird numbers, the period of relative stability that began in the 1990s is continuing.

And introduced species -

57 million birds released for shooting

- Increase by a third since 2004
- (47 million pheasants, 10 million red-legged partridges)
- 15 million pheasant shot!*And the rest?*



The State of the UK's Birds

The RSPB, BTO, WWT, DAERA, JNCC, NatureScot, NE and NRW, Sandy, Bedfordshire.

Burns F, Eaton MA, Balmer DE, Banks A, Caldow R, Donelan JL, Douse A, Duigan C, Foster S, Frost T, Grice PV, Hall C, Hanmer HJ, Harris SJ, Johnstone I, Lindley P, McCulloch N, Noble DG, Risely K, Robinson RA, Wotton S (2020)

OR

For Europe, between 1980 and 2018

Common farmland birds decreased by 57%

“All common breeding birds” decreased by 14%

PanEuropean Common Bird Monitoring Scheme, see www.pecbms.info

Woodcock

During my recent talk to you I mentioned that I had not got a photo of a woodcock. I was emailed with the information that a friend had posted pictures on Facebook of one taken in his garden in Burghmuir on 22nd February.



I can't complain, I've been getting visits from a red squirrel. It manages to shin up the smoothly painted clothes line support to throw down the bird food dispensers.

Scottish Charity Number: SC 012718