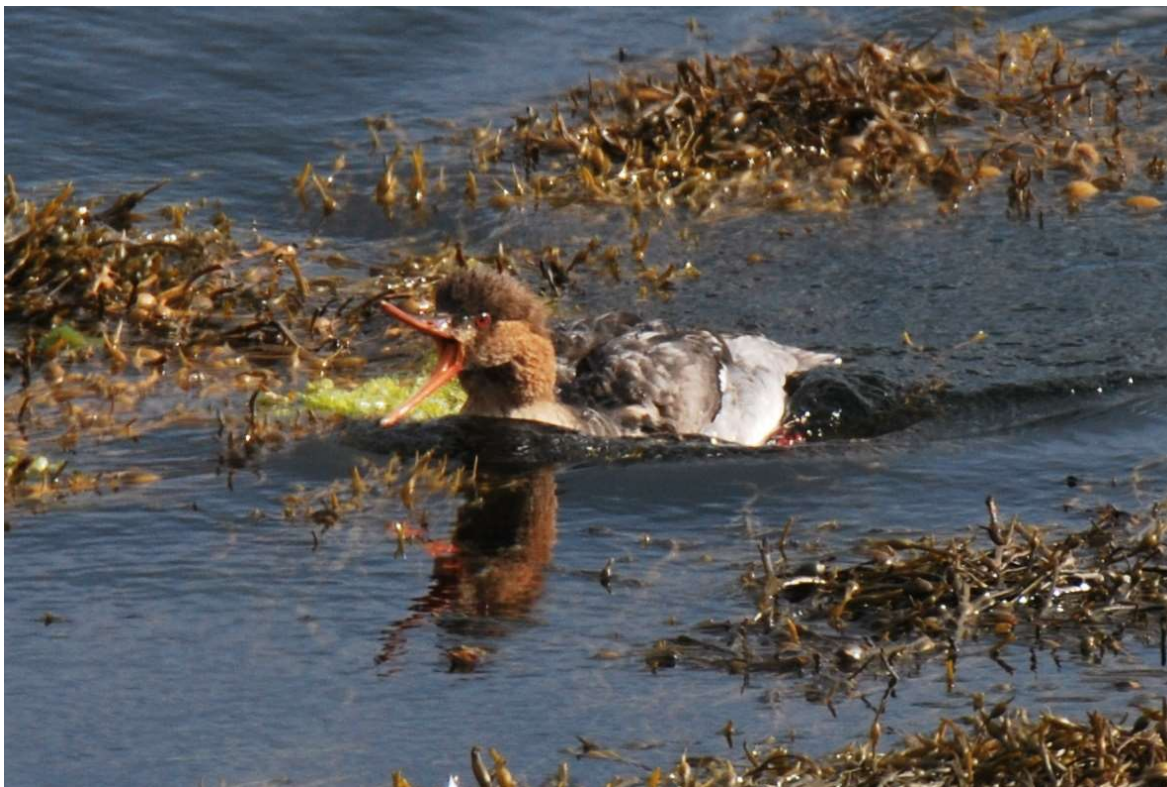


Perthshire Society of Natural Science
Ornithological Section
Newsletter June 2021



“Oyez....Oyez.....”

The consultation on the sections structure in PSNS

We received some responses to the consultation regarding a possible re-alignment of the structure of sections within the PSNS, but with the range of views and less than full response there was no clear indication of how we should proceed. However, despite a reluctance to lose the support of a group specialising in bird study, there was recognition of the difficulties we face in trying to maintain such a group as well as the potential to improve the situation by working closely with the botanists, so that there could be scope to attract a new membership by expanding the range of activities under a broad banner such as ‘Natural History’ or ‘Nature and Conservation.’

This will be worked through in the next few months and meanwhile I can only say that I hope that there will be a programme of talks next year, particularly as we have already been informed that subscriptions should actually become due following the close of the previous year and the AGM, rather than when

subs have historically been paid, which was conveniently in person at the first meetings of the winter programme. With virtual meetings most likely to continue and a single payment for PSNS membership to be made to our PSNS treasurer, not a section treasurer, that option is not available anyway. We still face difficulties in putting together a programme, which would normally have been done by now before the distractions of summer activities take precedence over writing letters. (I am writing at last this because it is raining!) Please help, by suggesting suitable topics for a talk, or, better, finding or suggesting a speaker. We need to make a lot of effort to prepare a programme; let us know what you want in it.

Curious Minds on Fridays

Members have joined the section with a variety of backgrounds, representing the spread from avid and informed bird watchers to beginners wishing to find out more, but the Society always represented the broadest range of interests, catered for in the general interest Friday meetings, rather than the Wednesday specialist group meetings, now continued in our Curious Minds series of talks. At first sight some of the topics, from university specialists, appear somewhat esoteric but I would encourage attendance. Past talks have shown that presentations of complex subjects have been well tailored to suit the needs of a non-specialist audience. Council is looking into how our the talks should be mounted including the possibility of having a small, live audience in the Soutar theatre with a live relay on 'zoom' to the wider membership. If this looks likely to succeed then perhaps it is an option for our group talks, or is that too ambitious?

Doors Open days

After a break last year, we have again asked to be part of the city Doors Open Day weekend, 14/15th September. The aim is to open the library to public view, and publicise our existence, and although the prime aim of the event is to facilitate access to closed premises, we are also considering an on-line presence if the situation renders that necessary. Any help would be welcome, offering to cover a shift in the library or offering or preparing display material for the Ornithological Section - or maybe for a launch of a Natural History Unit.

And now some newsy light relief.



The Red-breasted Mergansers, F and M, were photographed on S Uist. I had offered to do a one-off Breeding Bird Survey for BTO while I was there. I arrived at the start of my transect to find 3 Shelduck; in the course of the walk I disturbed a Hooded Crow and a Short-eared Owl that had been busy together about some business. The hoodie flew away, the Short-eared Owl flew up, looked around, and, just as I had been wondering what they had been doing, it began wondering what I was doing so flew directly towards me, only turning away 2 or 3m from me. (Too anthropomorphic?) They made a change from counting Meadow Pipits on my regular transects. Oh, also Red-throated Divers and a White-tailed Eagle being harassed by a Raven.



2 of those Shelduck - also M and F

Good luck with accumulating your own birding tales.

Jeff Banks