

## Beacon Hill LNR

# Newsletter No 18

Winter 2016/17

### Note on Beacon Hill Birds, December 2016 to March 2017

8 Dec An odd report of a dead Red-legged Partridge found along the Undercliff today. It was in poor condition and could possibly have been the dropped prey of a Peregrine?

16 Dec An early afternoon walk around the reserve produced 3 Stonechat along the west slope, and a mixed feeding flock of approx. 10 Meadow Pipits and 8 Goldfinch. Also seen was a female Sparrowhawk belting through the old allotment area.



1 Jan 2017 A great sighting this morning - Jay watched a **Merlin** hunting and skimming low over the reserve. This is the first record for Beacon Hill LNR.

6 Jan 300 Starlings were feeding on the reserve and 30 Brent Geese flew east overhead. Thanks to Bob for these sightings.

11 Jan Lel reported 2 Buzzards over the woods this morning; also 2 Meadow Pipits and a group of Pied Wagtails.

15 Jan A pair of Stonechat were seen by Cliff near the windmill this morning.

21 Jan Lel confirmed the two Stonechats were still on the hill - seen near the picnic tables at midday.

27 Jan On his way to assist with scrub clearance this morning, Bob saw 15 Goldfinch, 4 Greenfinch and Chaffinch through Hog Plat. He also noted a Buzzard calling and a fly-over Grey Heron, and the Rookery was particularly noisy. He reported that a Sparrowhawk had taken a Collared Dove near North Wood.

17 Feb How apt for the pair of Stonechats that were seen just 30 yards from the observation post depicting one. A Skylark was singing above the windmill appreciating the warm sunshine.



Stonechat on allotment fence

11 Mar Cliff confirmed that the pair of Stonechats had been seen regularly and wintered on the Hill.

17 Mar Bob watched a **Peregrine** flying north over the reserve. Later I made a quick visit to see how the Skylarks were doing. About five or more singing males heard. A group of 4 **Ravens** flew NW over but I was not quick enough with the camera!

24 Mar Amanda reported the sighting of 3 noisy Buzzards today, possibly the adults and the young bird from last year.

News of sightings from Steven Munday in Autumn 2016 were received too late for inclusion in the Annual Report, but here are the highlights:

7 Sep 7 Yellow Wagtail, 4 Whinchat

25 Sep Spotted Flycatcher, Reed Warbler, 3 Whinchat

16 Oct **Yellow browed Warbler**, 40+ Chiffchaff, 4 Goldcrest, Stonechat

17 Oct **2 Yellow browed Warbler**, still lots of Chiffchaff

19 Oct 4 Brambling overhead, Firecrest in woods and 5 Stonechat

23 Oct 2 Golden Plover as fly-overs - a new species for the reserve.

With grateful thanks for contributions from Jay Butler, Amanda Connolly, Atlanta Cook, Libby Darling, Lel Meyall, Steven Munday, Cliff Nankervis, Bob Webzell and compiled by Peter Whitcomb

## Miscellaneous News

8 Dec Libby spotted a family of Stoats dashing into South Wood this morning. This is likely to be the first sighting of this species on the Hill.

17 Feb A few plants in flower today included Red Dead-nettle, Daisy and Spring Starflower.

15 Mar A little respite from some scrub bashing, this Small Tortoiseshell was seen enjoying the Spring sunshine. Thanks Atlanta for the photo.



Also today Jay spotted some 'Egg Yolk' Mushrooms, aka Yellow Fieldcap on the Hill:



17 Mar A few plants in flower around the reserve including a patch of Three cornered Leek, by the southern boundary wall, which I had overlooked in previous years. The patch of Spring Starflower by the allotments were well out. Dandelions and a few Lesser Celandines were alongside South Wood. A Small Tortoiseshell and a couple of Honey Bees were noted, again on Dandelions. I also had the opportunity to see Charlie's second seat - what a lovely creation with a carved bee, and nicely situated.



Lesser Celandine



One of the new benches



Spring Starflower

24 Mar Amanda was pleased to find a good number of butterflies today. With a few days of cold winds this was the first warmth of the week. About 10 Peacocks and Commas were counted mainly from the sheltered section along the east side of the Hill. Incidentally this day's totals were higher than the whole of 2016. Here is Amanda's excellent photo of one of the Commas:

