



WOS Lifetime Achievement Award 2015

Dr Stephanie Tyler

Until very recently, there were too few women in conservation or the natural sciences. Steph Tyler was one of the few, a pioneer. Today she stands down after eight years as a trustee of WOS and editor of our journal *Birds in Wales*. But this is just the latest chapter in a lifetime of championing bird science.

Growing up in Lincolnshire, a PhD at Cambridge took her to the New Forest where Steph discovered bird-ringing and fell in love with Grey Wagtails. In the 1970s, with her family, Steph lived in the Middle East then Ethiopia, where they were kidnapped and held hostage by rebels in Tigray for eight months. Since their return, home has been in Monmouthshire, from where Steph has worked hard for bird conservation in Wales, especially of river habitats.

Steph's professional career took her from Gwent Wildlife Trust to the RSPB as Wales Conservation Officer, but she has been involved with the Gwent birding scene continuously since 1981: on the Committee of Gwent Ornithological Society, as BTO Regional Rep, as co-organiser and author of both Atlases of breeding birds in Gwent, chairing the Monmouthshire Meadows Group and joint plant recorder for Monmouthshire and of course studying the county's birds, particularly Dippers and Grey Wagtails.

With Professor Steve Ormerod, Steph authored *the* standard volume on Dippers, and wrote numerous papers that highlighted the impact of acid rain and forestry on water quality, insects and Dippers in the Welsh uplands. That was a huge environmental issue in the 1970s and '80s, and Steph was central to gathering the evidence that brought about change for the better.

Steph is such a modest person, but has influenced conservation and many people, in Wales and in Africa, especially Botswana, and today joins the annals of those who richly deserve a WOS Lifetime Achievement Award.