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# Birds in Wales Online

## e-news from the Welsh Ornithological Society

**In this issue, scroll down for:** Lifetime Achievement and Student Research Award winners +++ WOS Small Grant Scheme +++ Young Conservationist Bursaries +++ Tracking Greenland White-fronts +++ How oil spills hit Skomer's auks +++ Win Iolo Williams' new book



### Lifetime Award for Steve Roberts

At the recent WOS Conference, President Iolo Williams awarded Steve Roberts with the Society's lifetime honour. Steve, from Gwent, has spent a lifetime using his nest-finding skills to study secretive raptors, such as Hobby, Honey-buzzard



### Award for Cardiff graduate

Cathryn Tyrrell was given the [Derek Moore Student Research Award](#) at the recent WOS



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### e-news

keeps you in touch with news of *Birds in Wales* between the journal landing on your doormat and the annual conference.

Visit the [website](#) for news on the latest rare birds, media coverage of birds in Wales, and lots of other information for birdwatchers in Wales

Key dates

and Goshawk, and has been an integral behind-the-scenes presence at BBC Springwatch, enabling the cameras to bring viewers an insight into the nesting behaviour of Britain's birds.

Read more about why Steve was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award [here](#).



## Outstanding in our Field

Our National Conference in Myddfai earlier this month was fully booked (indeed, some people left it too late and were unable to attend). Delegates enjoyed a wide range of talks celebrating the role of fieldwork, often by volunteers, in our knowledge and the conservation of birds in Wales.

A [summary report](#) of the event is on our website, along with the results of a [survey of delegates](#) completed shortly after the event. The comments are really valuable, were

Conference. Cathryn, now living in the Channel Islands, used DNA of invertebrates to study the diet of Pied Flycatchers, a technique described by one of her tutors, Dr Rob Thomas, in his climate change talk.

Cathryn was awarded £200 and invited to publish her work in *Birds in Wales*. If you know of a student working on birds in Wales, let them know that we will be launching the 2017 Award early next year.



## Grants and bursaries '17

The **WOS Small Grant Scheme** is open to anyone planning to undertake research or a conservation project to benefit birds in Wales. Full details and an application form are [on our website](#), and the closing date is 28 February 2017.

We are also launching **Young Conservationist Bursaries**, for students and those early in their careers, to provide a financial contribution towards costs incurred

1 January: closing date for [Assistant Warden vacancy](#), Bardsey Bird and Field Observatory

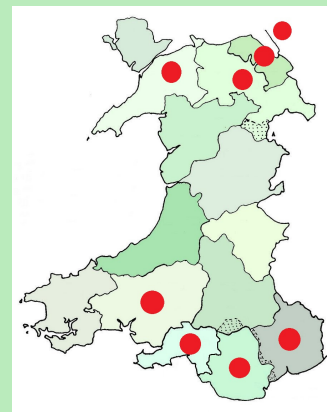
8 February: [Liverpool Bay SPA extension](#) consultation closes.

28 February: closing date for [WOS small grant scheme](#).

6-8 May: BTO [Bird Identification course](#), Dale Fort FSC, Pembrokeshire.

8-10 September: BTO [Bird Survey course](#), Dale Fort FSC, Pembrokeshire.

4 November: [Welsh Ornithological Society Conference](#), Monmouth.



## Bird Club affiliates

[Bangor Bird Group](#)  
[Cambrian Orn Society](#)  
[Carmarthenshire Bird Club](#)  
[Clwyd Bird Record Group](#)  
[Glamorgan Bird Club](#)  
[Gower Orn Society](#)  
[Gwent Orn Society](#)  
[Merseyside Ringing Group](#)

Is your local Club affiliated? Contact our [treasurer](#) to find out more.

reviewed by Council at our most recent meeting and are already helping to shape our next Conference - in Monmouth, Gwent, on 4 November 2017.

Conference [tweets](#) were widely shared, reaching over 40,000 people, and some have suggested that we look at how we might share parts of the event live, via the web, next year.

Thanks also to everyone who generously supported the raffle and the book sale, raising over £300 and £110 respectively.



## Tracking White-fronts

Sharp-eyed WOS member Marc Hughes spotted four Greenland White-fronted Geese flying west over the Great Orme, Caernarfonshire, on 29 October. Two carried neck collars and the group arrived in Co. Wexford, Ireland, later the same day.

However, one of the adult females also carried a satellite transponder and scientists at the University

while volunteering or gaining experience of, studying or conserving birds in Wales. This is a rolling programme, with no deadline for application. See [our website](#) for full details.

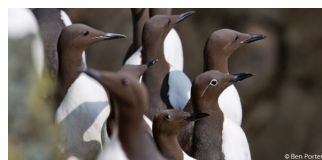


## Rare Autumn

Red-flanked Bluetail and Booted Warbler on the Great Orme, a Black-browed Albatross off Bardsey, and a Hume's Warbler in Gower were among the rare birds featured in Robin Sandham's [monthly rarity roundup](#) for October.

His latest summary, for November, will be published next week, and will include up to 10 *tristis* Siberian Chiffchaffs, a form occurring in increasing numbers, yet with only 23 Welsh records prior to 2015.

Our [RarityTracker](#), drawn from reports to [Birdguides](#), is updated throughout the year.



## Member Zone

The Members' Area on the website contains exclusive content, including the archive of *Welsh Birds/ Birds in Wales* and the Welsh Records Panel annual report, *Scarce and Rare Birds in Wales*, which is published exclusively on the web. This area is password-protected.

Your username is your surname and your postcode (the one you registered when you joined/renewed your WOS membership), and the password is 'wosmember'.

Click [here](#) for more information.



## Subs 2017

Members at the AGM agreed that from 1 January, membership subscriptions would increase to £20, the first increase for a decade. This price includes up to two people at one address.

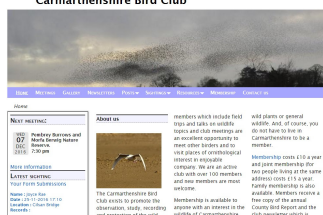
Because we are not able to use Direct Debit facilities, we will shortly be writing to you to ask you to alter your Standing Order to the new price, or, if you pay using debit/credit card or Paypal on the website, to alter the amount you pay.

We will also offer the first year's membership free to

of Missouri were quickly able to tell Marc that it had still been in Southern Iceland the previous morning. As they passed over the Orme at around 9am, that means they flew 950+ miles in 24 hours, averaging 40 miles per hour!

It is, perhaps, telling that the few hours these birds spent in Welsh airspace were the only part of their migration journey that they were not fully protected. The Welsh Government continues to [refuse to give full legal protection](#) to these birds, the only range state to fail to do so.

Carmarthenshire Bird Club



## New website for Carm birders

Terry Wells has produced a new website for WOS-affiliated Carmarthenshire Bird Club, with a new domain name [Carmarthenshirebird.club](http://Carmarthenshirebird.club).



## Congratulations Bangor Bird Gp

WOS-affiliate Bangor Bird Group is celebrating its

## Wartime oil spills almost wiped Skomer's Guillemots

A new study, published in the journal [British Birds](#), suggests that major oil pollution in the 1940s had a major impact on breeding seabirds around Skomer, Pembrokeshire.

Tim Birkhead from Sheffield University used photographs of the island's cliffs taken in 1934 to estimate there were 100,000 Guillemots before World War II. By the 1960s there were fewer than 5,000. Professor Birkhead used the annual number of shipwrecks off western Britain as an index of oil pollution, to which auks such as Guillemots are very susceptible.

Not surprisingly, there was a big increase in shipwrecks in the early 1940s (350 in 1940-41 alone). These would have released oil as they sank, and many would do so for a decade or more. Even today, Guillemot numbers on Skomer have climbed to only 24,000, just a quarter of the pre-war total.

For more on this story, read [this article](#) by Tim Birkhead.

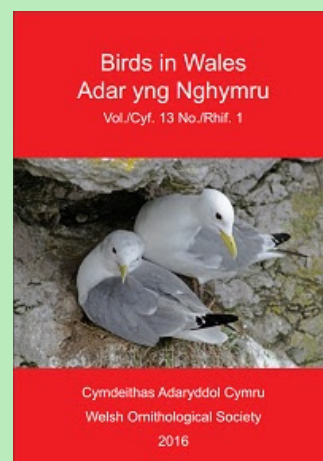
members age 26 and under who sign up on a standing order.

## Council membership

At the AGM, Steve Sutcliffe was elected as Treasurer, and Alan Williams as Membership Secretary (Alan had previously combined both roles). Steve has been a trustee since last year, and is heavily involved with birding and conservation in Pembrokeshire, while Alan is a former chairman of the Gwent Ornithological Society.

There were no nominations for the role of Secretary, so at a recent Council meeting, Ian Spence (county bird recorder Denbigh & Flint) was co-opted into the role for a year. Heather Crump, from Ceredigion, has also been co-opted onto Council. For more information on your trustees, see [our website](#).

Anne Brenchley and Carlton Parry's terms of office end in 2017. If you'd like to join Council and further support the work of WOS, please contact Chairman Mick Green or Vice-chair, Julian Hughes.



70th anniversary this year.

With [weekly meetings](#) in Bangor University during the Autumn and Spring terms, speakers in the coming months include BTO boss (and former BBG member) Andy Clements, travelling ecologist Dan Brown, and Biggest Twitcher Alan Davies.



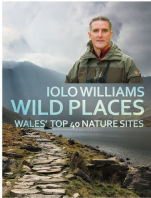
Win a **signed copy** of

## Wild Places

Iolo Williams

Follow  
[@SerenBooks](#)  
& tweet your top  
nature place in  
Wales using  
[#WildPlacesWales](#)  
(with a photo for  
extra points).  
Our favourite  
comment wins!

ENDS 16/12/16



## Win Iolo's new *Wild Places*

Twitter users who follow [@SerenBooks](#) can win a copy of Iolo's new book, which features Wales' 40 top nature places. If you don't win, we'd still recommend you put this [lavishly illustrated book](#) on your Christmas list.

 Crowdfunder [Start crowdfunding](#) [Find project](#) [How it works](#)

**Welsh rainforest reserve**  
An online crowdfunding project by Seren Books, Bangor, Gwynedd

## Save a Welsh rainforest

Cardiff University lecturer and Conference speaker, Dr Rob Thomas, has launched an ambitious crowd-funding programme to raise £79,500 to purchase 12 acres of Welsh oak woodland in Brecon. As well as protecting and managing the woodland, it would be used as a study site into the effects of climate change on Wales' woodlands.

Over £10,000 has already been pledged, but if the total is not raised by 10 January, the plan will fold. If you'd like to contribute, visit his [Crowdfunder webpage](#).

## Welsh Bird Report

The 2015 Welsh Bird Report will be published early in 2017, posted to you, and available on the members' area of our website. The *Scarce and Rare Birds Report 2015* was published online in October.

You can access our journals back to 2005 on the members' area of the website (see above), and there is also an [up to date index](#) of all the papers and articles back to 1988.



## Liverpool Bay SPA extension

Natural Resources Wales and Natural England are consulting on proposed changes to the Liverpool Bay Special Protection Area, which would add Little Tern, Common Tern and Little Gull to the designation and extend the boundary to the west and north of the current SPA, from Flintshire north to Morecambe Bay. Closing date for [the consultation](#) is 8 February 2017.

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