

through the bushes appearing in the branches as close as it could get to the tape, and only a few feet from the nearest people. It then flew at and over the speakers again. By then it had made its point, and so had we, so we left it alone.

Discussion

These are different in more than just song. Whilst subtle, this bird looked quite different from nominate Chiffchaff with a suite of distinctive features, most of which you might find individually on the odd Chiffchaff but not together. The most striking differences were the lack of a distinct eye ring, the very white underparts, the rather bright green area on the rump area, the predominantly pale and very fine bill, the rather pale legs, the strongish facial pattern and the neat yellow wash on the undertail/vent as well as the (to my eye) Willow Warblerish structure and a long(ish) primary projection. The call was also very distinctive indeed. Finally the territorial song was very striking. I had been worried about the quieter "Chiffchaffish" song, but it is in line with normal vocalisation of Iberian Chiffchaff and exactly the same sort of variations were reported for the Verne Common bird in 1999 (see Richards C, BW 12(5):193-200). Indeed the photographs and description of that bird are also almost identical to this one.

THE HONEY BUZZARD *Pernis apivorus* REVIEW

By the County Records Committee

Reason for the review:

During a County Records Committee (hereafter CRC) meeting in June 2003 doubts were raised over the identity of the birds in some photographs that had been submitted as Honey Buzzards taken at breeding localities in Northumberland. The publication of more photographs on a website, also purporting to be breeding birds in Northumberland did little to allay the CRC's concerns (although many of these photographs refer to dates after the review period), so a review of all records was deemed necessary. The review could have been confined to just the disputed breeding birds, but the CRC felt that because we were unsure about how widespread the problems of misidentification might be, or how much consistency existed in the past assessment of records, it was better to review them all.

Methodology:

55 records of Honey Buzzards (from 1984 to 2003) were reviewed (the records of breeding for the years of 2000 (sightings from five localities), 2001 (nine localities) & 2002 (17 localities) are classed for the purposes of this document as one record, as they were all dealt with at the same time). A further eight records from 1971 to 1997 were unavailable for review. There are also four older records from the period 1953 to 1962 which are also untraceable and were not reviewed, though they may never have been fully documented. Six records that were reviewed had previously been found unacceptable. Another eight records (all from 2003, but not including any breeding records) were submitted after the review process had started.

So the total number of submissions examined was 63 (out of a possible 75) with 12 (16%) from 1953-97 not available for review.