

The CRC discussed and voted on all records of migrants. Where a unanimous verdict could not be reached, four ex members of the CRC were asked to assess and comment upon those records. The comments by this tier two assessment level were then discussed by the CRC and a final decision taken.

With regard to the breeding records; it was felt that it would be prudent to seek outside advice regarding breeding behaviour etc. Honey Buzzard workers in Wales and Scotland were contacted and asked if they would review the submissions (from a breeding perspective) that had been provided to the CRC. Another Honey Buzzard worker from Kent kindly provided information on Honey Buzzard behaviour throughout the breeding season. The CRC also reviewed the breeding records from an identification point of view. A bird sound recordist was contacted for comments on the Honey Buzzard sound files on the above website. It should be stated though, that the latter referred to data that had not been formally submitted to the CRC (as they were recorded after the review period), and that while the comments received were interesting (and the CRC were made aware of them), they did not play any part in the review.

Summary of review findings:

Of the 55 records reviewed, 36 (plus the breeding records for 2000 & 2001 = 69%) were previously accepted; the breeding records for 2002 being pended at the time the review started. Of the six records not accepted at the time of the review, none have subsequently been accepted, and of the eight new 2003 records assessed four (50%) were accepted during the review.

Of the 36 previously accepted records from between 1984 to 2002, only 15 (41%) remain accepted.

None of the breeding records (i.e. pairs reportedly fledging young) have been found to be acceptable on review (although two sightings of birds in suitable breeding habitat were accepted).

It is our conclusion that there are no confirmed instances of Honey Buzzards breeding in Northumberland during the review period (1984-2003).

The following records remain accepted after the review:

Holywell Pond	04/07/92
The Snook, Holy Island	27/05/95
Hauxley	25/05/96
Juv - Scotswood	25/09/96
Ad M - Cresswell Pond	03/07/00
Site confidential (N of county)	19/07/00
Ad - Gosforth Park	23/09/00
Juv - Big Waters	24/09/00
2 Juv - Farne Islands	25/09/00
Wydon Eals Farm	01/10/00
1 Juv dead - Wansbeck Estuary	01/10/00
Ad M - site confidential (SW of county)	16/05/01
Newbiggin	27/05/02
Juv - Inner Farne & Bamburgh	10/09/02

The following records were not available for review. There was sufficient evidence of confusion and misidentification in those records that were assessed to suggest that some of the records not available for review may have been misidentified.

Parson's (Heaton)	14/09/53
Gosforth Park	16/10/55
Kyloe	03/11 to 31/12/57
Tranwell (nr Morpeth)	04/11/62
Ellington	30/05/71
Alnmouth	18-20/06/75
Holystone	02/07/77
West Monkseaton	07/05/81
Scremerston	18/06/85
Newton Pool	05/05/87
W of county	19/05/88
Newbiggin	05/09/97

The first fully documented and accepted record of a Honey Buzzard (that was available for review) is therefore the bird at Holywell Pond in July 1992, others may well have preceded this date but there is no convincing documentation to support this and the Honey Buzzard should be regarded as a rare passage migrant in the county, some summer records perhaps relating to wandering non-breeding immatures although it is perhaps a potential colonist.

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WHO GIVES A DUCK?

By Jon Coleman and Andy Rickeard

Introduction

Well you might actually, once you've read this short article on the North East's apparently tame and plastic ducks. It's very easy to dismiss the melee of bread feeding ducks and geese in our local parks as uninteresting, particularly when the duck is a more unusual species for a local park. One time served local birder was even once heard to remark that many of these ducks were so large they required a hinge in their midriff in order to turn corners. However, there is more to our local, bread tame ducks than meets the eye as hopefully this short article demonstrates.

Methods

Since 1989 ducks at Killingworth lake, Marden Quarry, Saltwell Park, South Shields Marine Park and Tynemouth Boating Lake have been ringed by the Northumbria Ringing Group under the auspices of the British Trust for Ornithology ringing scheme. All the birds captured have been hand-caught, using bread as bait, and ringed with a standard