

**SOUTH PEAK RAPTOR STUDY GROUP
(SPRSG)**

&

**PEAK DISTRICT RAPTOR MONITORING GROUP
(PDRMG)**

ANNUAL REPORT 2012



FOREWORD

This is the second joint report of the two Raptor Groups which operate in the Peak District and surrounding areas. A more comprehensive review of breeding success and failures, conservation and persecution news affecting birds of prey, owls and Raven is made possible by the co-operation of both groups, whose members all work as licensed operatives within the Northern England Raptor Forum (NERF).

2012 was the wettest year since the two groups began collecting records. The extreme wet weather and heavy April snow at key times during the breeding season appeared to have an impact on the success of many of our breeding raptors. Heavy rainfall would have affected the accessibility of prey items, making it difficult for birds to hunt; consequently breeding success was often low.

As in all previous years, there were continued reports and suspicions of persecution of raptors in both groups' areas. The conviction, after appeal, of the gamekeeper, Glenn Brown, in January 2012 was welcomed by both groups. Brown was originally convicted of seven offences under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and Animal Welfare Act 2006 in June, 2011 at Chesterfield Magistrates Court. He was originally sentenced to 100 hours community service and he had been ordered to pay £10,000 costs.

At a lengthy hearing at Derby Crown Court – which began on 3rd January 2012 – Brown's defence brought a blistering attack upon the integrity of the RSPB, claiming evidence had been planted to incriminate Brown. The judge dismissed the appeal commenting that all the RSPB staff were credible witnesses. Brown was ordered to pay a further £7,000 costs on top of the £10,000 he was ordered to pay at his original trial in 2011. Estimates placed Brown's overall legal bill at £100,000.

Brown was originally arrested by Derbyshire Police in May 2010, following a covert surveillance operation by an RSPB investigations team. RSPB officers filmed Brown using a cage trap baited with a live domestic pigeon. Although cage traps are legal when trying to trap some species, such as Carrion Crows, it is illegal both to use a pigeon as bait and to capture birds of prey.

Mark Thomas, an investigations officer with the RSPB, commented from Derby Crown Court: "With so much evidence, convicting Brown during the first trial, we are stunned that his defence felt comfortable mounting an appeal suggesting the RSPB had framed him. Bird of prey persecution remains a top wildlife crime priority in the UK, and it is one that we are determined to help the police reduce. The problem remains particularly severe in upland areas dominated by grouse shooting, where crimes have a direct impact on the conservation of some of our rarest birds of prey. With his appeal failing, Brown will now have to face the consequences for his crimes. Since 1990 there have been over 100 gamekeepers convicted of crimes relating to the despicable persecution of birds of prey."

Martin Harper, RSPB's Conservation Director, added: "Crimes such as these illustrate links between driven-grouse shooting and the illegal killing of birds of prey. This is why industry leaders and employers need to do more to stamp out these crimes. We believe that land managers and owners should be held legally accountable for any wildlife crimes that are committed by their staff, as is the case in Scotland."

In a letter to the SPRSG co-ordinator from the National Trust in February 2012, the General Manager for the Peak District, Jon Stewart, shared the deep concern expressed by the

group and confirmed that the National Trust is wholly opposed to the illegal killing of birds of prey and adheres to all relevant legislation and expects its tenants to similarly comply. He outlined the major project which the National Trust was currently embarking on to review the management of the moors owned in the High Peak. This project has subsequently been put out to consultation and both raptor groups have responded to that process, as has NERF.

In 2012 the Peak Park organised a monitoring project to be undertaken within the Dark Peak between April and September to determine number of breeding Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*), Short-eared Owls (*Asio flammeus*) and Merlin (*Falco columbarius*). Co-operation between the Peak District Raptor Monitoring Group (PDRMG), the South Peak Raptor Study Group (SPRSG), landowners and keepers was vital to gain information on sites and to this end communication between the groups of people was successful in providing and exchanging information regarding the species. A short article on this monitoring project (written by Mike Price of PDRMG) appears within this report.

Members of both groups continue to put in many hours of fieldwork, not only in the breeding season, but throughout the year, and this enables us to build an ever-increasing database regarding the populations, habits and behaviour of our region's birds of prey throughout the year. Thanks go to all our members for their continued support, fieldwork and expertise, with particular thanks to Ken Smith for his photos. We also thank the following organisations and landowners for allowing access to their land:

ARC Limited	Buxton Lime	Chatsworth Estates	Forest Enterprise
Lafarge Limited	RMC Limited	Severn Trent Water	Sheffield City Council
Tarmac Limited	Yorkshire Water	United Utilities plc	Job Earnshaw & Bros Ltd
	T Kirk Forestry	Mr & Mrs J White	National Trust
Peak Park Joint Planning Board		Derbyshire CC Ranger Service	
	and all the others who wish to remain anonymous		

Trevor Grimshaw (SPRSG)

Steve Davies (PDRMG)

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SPECIES' ACCOUNTS

RED KITE *Milvus milvus*

By the start of the 20th century the Red Kite had been persecuted to extinction in England and Scotland and only remained in a very small remnant population in mid-Wales. Low level persecution continued in Wales and although the population was slowly increasing, productivity was low and by the mid-1980s it had only risen to c40 breeding pairs and the population did not colonise suitable habitat outside of the mid-Wales area as had been hoped. Accordingly action was instigated to re-introduce the species to suitable habitat in England and Scotland. The first releases of birds took place in the Chilterns in England and on the Black Isle in Scotland between 1989 and 1994. Further releases took place in the English East Midlands in 1995, in Central Scotland during 1996, in Yorkshire during 1999 and in southern Scotland in 2001. In 2004 the Northern Kites Project was commenced in the Lower Derwent Valley, Gateshead, the first urban release scheme, and 94 birds were released by project staff between 2004 and 2006. The latest release scheme was initiated in 2010 on Forestry Commission land in Grizedale Forest in the west of Cumbria. By far the biggest threat to Red Kites comes from illegal poisoning. Whilst they may not be the intended target they are scavengers and will consume poisoned baits placed out illegally to kill foxes and crows. They are also susceptible to secondary poisoning from the new generation of rodenticides intended to control rats.

Sightings of Red Kites in both study areas are increasing and successful breeding remains a distinct possibility in the future within Derbyshire and the Peak District, both areas having plenty of suitable habitat. Roy Frost reports that Red Kites bred in western Nottinghamshire in 2012.

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

Marsh Harriers can now be found breeding in the eastern counties of Kent, Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire, with occasional sightings in Yorkshire. They can also be found on the Somerset Levels and on the RSPB Reserve of Leighton Moss in Lancashire. Recent records show that more individuals, predominantly females, are remaining in the east and south of England during the winter months. The UK population of Marsh Harriers is more secure now than at any other time during the last hundred years, yet significant habitat loss could easily reverse this trend.

Birds on spring and autumn passage were again noted from both study areas, mainly in April and May and from late July through to September. There remains little likelihood of any breeding in our study areas, yet it is interesting that the upland areas are used on migration.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

The overarching determinant to the Hen Harrier population density and breeding range in England is illegal persecution at the breeding and wintering grounds. There are no obvious ecological reasons why the species should not be widespread across suitable upland habitats. It is incontestable that Hen Harriers readily take gamebirds and in high densities can deplete Red Grouse stocks, hence reduce the amount of surplus birds available to the guns. In recent years, and particularly in 2011, several of the English grouse moors have yielded the highest grouse bags since the war, a probable response to investment, increasing medication and lack of predators. Given the Hen Harrier's close association with grouse moors and Red Grouse, one would perhaps have expected their population to have

responded positively. In fact, in 2012, there was only one confirmed successful breeding pair of the Hen Harrier in England. These local breeding extinctions are concurrent with declining numbers of wintering birds.

Several sightings of individual birds were followed up and given a high priority in 2012, given the precarious breeding status of Hen Harrier in England; unfortunately no breeding behaviour was noted. In particular, a second-summer male frequented the north Staffordshire moors, roaming far and wide and was last seen in mid to late June.

GOSHAWK *Accipiter gentilis*

Nationally Goshawks continue to face persecution in many areas, particularly those associated with commercial game shooting. Egg collecting and theft of young also continue to threaten the species and these activities undoubtedly have a significant impact. A growing threat is posed by forestry operations and the felling of occupied territories in the breeding season. There are large areas of suitable habitat and food availability across our joint recording areas which can and should support healthier populations than we currently enjoy. Goshawks are successful in some areas and fail in others with very similar habitat and food supply. Taking these factors into consideration it is very difficult to find any reasonable explanation other than human interference to account for these anomalies.

In Upper Derwentdale three pairs were present. At the first site eggs were laid but the nest was pulled down from the tree and the eggs were found on the ground. At a second site the pair failed in strange circumstances; after failure was confirmed, the nest was visited and found to contain nine eggs; these were analysed and found to come from the same female. It would appear likely that this bird had 'lost' two male partners during the season, a probable sign of persecution. At the third site a pair was present early in the season and display was seen, but no nesting attempt was discovered and the birds were not seen later in the season.

Elsewhere in the SPRSG recording area four pairs fledged nine young, but birds were unsuccessful at four further sites, including one where unwitting forestry operations during the spring and summer appear to have contributed to the failure of the pair, which was present early in the year.

In the PDRM group area there were a number of reports of Goshawk around the study area, (including a pair seen displaying over suitable habitat early in the breeding season) but no confirmed breeding attempts.

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

The national increase in Buzzard numbers may be having an impact on this species, as chicks may be predated by Buzzards and other larger raptors, such as Goshawk and Tawny Owl. Prolonged cold and wet weather also has an adverse effect on the species. There is also the belief, held by some people, that Sparrowhawks are responsible for the long-term declines in songbird populations. As a result of this belief there are calls from some quarters for the Sparrowhawk population to be controlled, although there is little scientific evidence to support this allegation.

As in previous years, no specific studies of the species have been undertaken in the SPRSG area, but sightings are regular and the Sparrowhawk continues to thrive in urban areas.

The PDRM group recorded 33 breeding attempts, of which five failed at the egg / early young stage; this was thought to be due to adverse weather conditions. However, from the remaining sites, 28+ young were confirmed as fledged, but it was thought that this number was probably underestimated, as weather conditions made monitoring very difficult.

BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

Nationally the Buzzard remains the most widespread of the UK's raptors and range extensions particularly into eastern and lowland England continue. However despite the healthy populations in some areas, there is a lack of breeding success or the absence of adult birds adjacent to grouse rearing areas where the habitat is otherwise most suitable for the species. This is strongly suggestive of human interference. Furthermore, gamekeeping interests, associated with the rearing of Pheasants for shooting, have sought to persuade the government to introduce controls on 'problem' Buzzards near pheasant release pens. DEFRA initiated a 'Buzzard Stakeholder Group' and conservation organisations, including NERF, vigorously insisted that good science should be the only criterion by which the situation should be judged and that there was no evidence that Buzzards presented a demonstrable problem. The control proposals were withdrawn amidst much publicity at the end of May 2012.

SPRSG no longer systematically monitors the species as it is so widespread, although continued lack of successful breeding adjacent to the Upper Derwentdale grouse moors points towards persecution as the likely cause.

In the PDRM group area the Buzzard population continues to expand overall, with the exception once again in areas of perfectly suitable habitat adjacent to heather moorland managed for game shooting, where only two breeding attempts were recorded and four young fledged. In total 33 sites were monitored. At five sites the nests were not found, despite pairs being present; the assumption was made that either there was a failure to lay or an early failure for reasons unknown; eight further sites failed at the egg / small young stage. Members of the group ringed 28 young (plus 2 foster young from a rescue centre) from 18 nests, but found it difficult to get an accurate figure of fledged young due to the weather limiting both the activity of the group and the activity of the birds. However the weather undoubtedly had an impact with several pairs failing and brood sizes down on previous years.

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

Nationally the Kestrel population fluctuates and the fluctuation is linked closely to the availability of prey, largely voles and other small mammals, which contribute c75% of their main food supply. When vole numbers are low a significant percentage of Kestrels may not breed. The main threat to the species, evinced by the 2011 British Bird Breeding Survey which reported a 32% reduction in the Kestrel population between 1995 – 2010 in the UK, seemed to be associated with incompatible farming practices that reduce available habitat and adversely affect food supply. Ironically, the ubiquitous presence of Kestrels seen hovering or perched on grass verges may induce Raptor Workers and birdwatchers alike to divert attention from this species whilst concentrating on other more vulnerable species and a decline in the local population may go unnoticed for some time. The Amber conservation status has been awarded to the species by BTO in light of these concerns.

SPRSG does not monitor the species in any widespread way but accepts that further study is warranted given this national decline.

In the PDRM group area no detailed study of Kestrel was undertaken in 2012. Four sites however are known to have been successful and 13+ young fledged; the exact number of fledged young was difficult to ascertain due to the weather conditions limiting the group's activity and the activity of the fledged young. Five young were ringed from one of the successful sites. One site definitely failed, due to predation by corvids. A number of historic sites were noted to be unoccupied again, as in 2011.



Merlin

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

The aspect of Merlin biology which most concerns Raptor Workers nationally is the decrease in numbers of principal prey items such as Meadow Pipits, Skylarks and Starlings, which can affect survival rates of young. Also a further trend of the last few years that has serious potential implications for the welfare of chicks is that of unseasonal heavy rainfall at key times of the breeding cycle. If spells of cold protracted wet weather occur when the chicks are still in down and too large to be brooded effectively, death from hypothermia is likely to ensue. Overall, the future does not look too rosy for the species in northern England. If global warming continues, the Merlin as a sub-Arctic species might well be forced to retreat northwards leading to the extinction of populations on the southern limit of its geographical range in Britain.

In the Upper Derwentdale area three sites were occupied by pairs, two of which failed; the third site was successful, although the actual number of fledged young could not be ascertained. In other parts of SPRSG's recording area six sites were monitored, of which three were successful, with nine young fledged. At two of these sites no breeding attempt was made, although birds were sporadically seen and at the third site the breeding attempt failed. At one site in Staffordshire an additional immature male bird was photographed and showed part of a ring combination, which suggested it was ringed at an Upper Derwentdale site in 2011.

In the PDRM group's area 12 sites were recorded as occupied in 2012; of these, five sites were fully monitored, ten young were ringed and at least eight young fledged. Three further sites were successful, although detailed outcomes were not ascertained. Two sites failed due to predation – one at the egg stage, where the male bird was found plucked, and the second at the small young stage, where predation was due to a stoat or weasel. At two sites breeding was never confirmed despite a pair being in attendance. A further four sites were not fully monitored in 2012. Habitat management may be a contributory factor in the decline of breeding Merlin in the northern part of the Peak District. There appears to be a very aggressive burning regime on some of the local grouse moors and large unbroken tracts of old heather are now becoming scarce on the more intensively managed moors.



Hobby

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

There are no specific national threats associated with this species at the present time; however, whilst the population has increased significantly in recent years, it still remains relatively low and one should be mindful of the continuing threat posed by egg-collectors. A considerable amount of work is undertaken by NERF members across the north of England and this species is undoubtedly colonising new areas as it extends its range further north, as evidenced by first proved breeding in Greater Manchester and recolonisation after 43 years in Northumberland (both in 2011).

Anthony Messenger confirms that in his study area 26 sites were occupied by pairs, plus two sites apparently occupied by single birds. Of the 26 pairs, 21 were successful in fledging a minimum of 43 young (2.05 young per successful pair – slightly below the average of 2.30 for the previous 22 years). There was one definite failure, but the outcome for the remaining four pairs was uncertain, although it remains likely that one or two of these were also failures. A further 12 sites received insufficient coverage to be able to confirm if these sites were occupied or not. 17 young were ringed from seven of the successful broods.

Over the past five or six years Anthony has strongly suspected that Hobbies have increased in density, as well as spreading northwards, but he was unable to prove this until he disciplined himself to concentrate more in a "core area" and drop some of the more outlying traditional sites which he had monitored in previous years. In 2010, 2011 and 2012, Anthony spent most of his time in a particular 100 square km and was able to prove his suspicions by comparing the breeding density during the past 3 seasons with findings in the same area in 1999 to 2001. These conclusions are to be found in table 1 at the end of this species' report.

In NE Derbyshire and the Peak District, at least 16 further pairs were proved to breed and at least 30 juveniles were seen at these sites in late August and early September.

The PDRM group report that, although they don't have sufficient data to make any firm conclusions, they saw two very different trends in the areas monitored in 2012 away from the Peak District. In Cheshire five sites were monitored, two of which were successful with

five young fledged; three sites failed. In south and west Yorkshire six sites were monitored, all were successful and 13 young fledged. The number of sightings continues to increase in these areas, but proving breeding for this elusive species is often difficult. They report fewer sightings in their upland study area in 2012 compared to 2011, probably due to the wet weather.

Table 1

Increase in number of pairs of Hobbies in core 100 square km study area	
Year	No pairs
1999	5
2000	3
2001	3
Mean 1999 to 2001	3.67
Estimated min. county population 2001 (known)	40
2010	7
2011	10
2012	9
Mean 2011 to 2012	8.67
Estimated min county population 2012 (extrapolated)	110
% Increase (Core area)	136%
% Increase (County)	175%

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus*

Nationally the greatest threat to this species was undoubtedly the use of DDT in the 1950s. When this chemical was banned that particular threat was removed. Regrettably this is not the case with persecution, which is now the largest threat faced by Peregrines. They are targeted by four groups: egg collectors, gamekeepers, those taking eggs on the point of hatching or chicks and pigeon fanciers. Although research shows that racing pigeon losses to Peregrines are extremely low, in some parts of the country, particularly at sites close to the urban fringe, it is apparent that pigeon fanciers are responsible for persecuting pigeons. However, those pairs increasingly nesting in boxes or trays on public buildings in city centres are generally safe from interference. The threats faced by Peregrines on some grouse moors continue unabated and it is clear that the large number of breeding attempt failures can only be attributed to human interference.

In the SPRSG recording area 26 sites were monitored this year. Of these, five sites were unoccupied, including three sites in Upper Derwentdale, although at the Alport Castles site a pair was observed copulating on 27 March, but not subsequently seen. At the 21 sites

where pairs were present and bred, only six sites were successful, raising 11 young. Of the remaining 15 sites most failed because of the poor weather conditions, although at one site in mid-Derbyshire the birds were again robbed when two small young were in the nest, and at a second site with a long history of presumed disturbance, the adult pair was again unsuccessful. Four of the six successful sites raised only one young each, whilst the remaining two sites raised four and three respectively. A paper published this year by Sarah Pye, a volunteer at the successful Roaches site, for the Open University, entitled **Relationship between Peregrine Falcon breeding success and April precipitation rates in the UK**, to which SPRSG provided substantial data, supported the thesis that the relatively poor success in our area this year was primarily caused by poor weather. Included in the totals above was a new natural site in Derbyshire, where an adult male paired with an immature female; the pair was unsuccessful, but remained in the area for the remainder of the season. In NE Derbyshire, two sites were occupied, one raising three young, whilst the other site failed. At a third site in the same general area a pair attempted to nest at a pylon site but was thought to have failed. City centre pairs in Derby and Sheffield were successful and birds were regularly seen at the Crooked Spire in Chesterfield, with a pair there at the end of the year. The four young at the Derby Cathedral site were ringed and colour ringed. A nesting attempt was made at the DWT East Mill site in Belper, but was unsuccessful; the male bird was retrieved dead from the River Derwent at Belper and after scientific examination it was found to have succumbed naturally due to starvation; a second male was seen later in the season at the site, but no further clutch was laid.

In the PDRM group's area nine sites were checked, but only two breeding attempts were monitored throughout 2012. Three young were ringed (a two and a one), but unfortunately no birds were confirmed as fledging when the group undertook follow up visits. In addition, a pair of Peregrines on the northern boundary of the study area was found with three young on the verge of fledging.

BARN OWL *Tyto alba*

Nationally loss of habitat and therefore reduced food supply are the greatest threat to this species. Global warming, which appears to be making summer rainfall heavier and more unpredictable, may make farmers' profit margins tighter and thus restrict any spending on conservation and as old brick-built barns disappear through dereliction or conversion, new ones are often metal-sided and unsuitable for Barn Owls. The effect of two cold winters 2009/10 and 2010/11 was particularly marked in some areas of the UK.

In one part of the SPRSG recording area only 75% of regular sites were checked because of the poor weather; six broods were ringed - 11 chicks ringed out of 14 which fledged; in addition five adults were also ringed. Two further broods of four chicks were ringed in another area, whilst at least two young fledged from the same natural Ash tree nest hole as in 2011 in mid-Derbyshire.

Although the species has not been confirmed breeding in the Glossop area for more than 20 years, an early visit to a Tawny Owl box (barrel) revealed a pair of Barn Owls with evidence that they may have been successful at rearing young at least once in recent years; unfortunately they failed to lay in 2012, but they remained faithful to the barrel throughout the season.

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

Little Owls prefer lowland, open arable habitat with old trees, mature hedgerows or farm out-buildings for nesting and they remain a relatively common species, particularly at lower

elevations. Agricultural intensification presents the greatest threat nationally to Little Owl populations. Year on year severe winters also adversely affect numbers. Neither group made any specific study of this species in 2012; however one site was monitored by PDRM, but this failed at the small young stage. It was noted that a number of historical sites were unattended.

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

The species is widespread on the UK mainland and is rarely found on the Isle of Man and is absent from the whole of Ireland. Tawny Owls are predominantly a woodland species, preferring broadleaved woods, but are also found in coniferous woodland. They are equally at home in urban areas and will take up residence in parks and large gardens containing mature trees. Together with other raptor species the Tawny Owl was a victim of secondary poisoning during the 1960s with the population only recovering after the organochlorine pesticides were banned. There is evidence that the species is once again declining in some areas of the UK and this decline may be linked to secondary poisoning from the new generation of rodenticides.

40 sites were monitored by the PDRM group. At 21 sites eggs were laid, but of these only 13 were monitored to the ringing stage. Due to personal circumstances the group was not able to complete the intended increased effort on Tawny Owls in 2012, however 18 young were ringed from 9 sites, and in addition 3 adult birds were ringed too.

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*

The main threat nationally to Long-eared Owls appears to be competition for habitat with Tawny Owls and predation from larger raptors. Breeding attempts are affected by prey availability and in poor vole years large numbers of adults do not breed and those that do breed produce smaller clutches.

Despite visits to many areas that historically held successful pairs of breeding Long-eared Owls, the groups had little luck locating active nests and there was no evidence of successful breeding.

Five site sites were monitored by PDRMG, but only one site was recorded as having laid eggs, this attempt failing after high winds felled the surrounding trees.



Short-eared Owl

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

Short-eared Owls breed throughout the UK on moorland and rough grassland in both the uplands and the lowlands. They prey on rodents and small birds with the Short-tailed Field Vole being their primary food source. Breeding success invariably fluctuates with vole abundance. The species' failure to fully exploit suitable habitat and the current suggestions of decline are not fully understood. Prey abundance is likely to be the dominant factor but winter survival and even persecution may play a part. That birds are now absent or scarce in several traditional areas of apparently still suitable habitat is of considerable concern.

On the north Staffordshire moorlands, three pairs bred, but only one pair was successful, fledging an unknown number of young. Two pairs were present in the Upper Derwentdale area, but there was no direct evidence of any young being fledged.

Five sites were monitored by PDRM group in 2012, all being within a few sq miles; three nests were confirmed to contain the following: site 1 - seven eggs, site 2 - six eggs, site 3 - four eggs. All activity stopped on the three confirmed nests, all in similar circumstances, and around the same time, with the male bird of the pair disappearing in each case. It is believed that all sites had been subject to human persecution. At the other two sites birds were seen to be defending a territory and carrying food but nests were not located before the activity stopped (around the same time as at the confirmed sites).



Raven

RAVEN *Corvus corax*

Although persecution of the Raven has reduced and the population is expanding in both number and range, the threat of persecution remains a danger in some areas, particularly where the species comes into conflict with the game shooting community; in some parts of the UK they are both shot and poisoned.

In the SPRSG area the species appears to be expanding, including in the north-eastern lowland areas where two sites were monitored, with successful breeding at one site and a pair at a second site, where breeding was not proved. In the south of the recording area two new tree nest sites were located, indicating a further increase in this part of Derbyshire. In the Upper Derwentdale area a pair was successful at Alport Castles and raised one,

possibly two, young. In the Dovedale area two regular sites were unsuccessful due to the heavy snowfall in early April: at one regular site the nest tree, an old Larch, fell down and at a second regular cliff site the nest, which had grown over the years to more than one metre high, collapsed and fell onto the river bank. At a site in a DWT reserve, young birds were heard calling from the nest which was seemingly covered by snow in early April; four youngsters subsequently fledged from this site.

Six sites were monitored in 2012 by the PDRM group, five were occupied, but only three were successful in fledging young; a total of at least 12 young fledged from these successful nests. Once again the number of traditional sites unoccupied leads the group to believe that persecution is the main factor limiting the success of Raven in the study area.

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The Peak Park Birds of Prey Monitoring Project 2012

2012 saw the start of a new initiative in the Peak District National Park. Five leading land management and conservation organisations have got together in a bid to try and boost birds of prey populations in the Dark Peak.

The organisations involved are the Moorland Association (which represents Grouse Moor owners), the National Trust, Natural England, Peak District National Park Authority and RSPB - and they have set five-year targets for healthy sustainable breeding populations of Merlin, Peregrine Falcon and Short-eared Owl. It is our hope that other protected raptor species will be included in the project in the near future.

Together the five organisations have funded an independent field worker (Jamie Horner) to help ascertain accurate breeding data and to facilitate co-operation between raptor workers and shooting interests. South Peak Raptor Study Group and Peak District Raptor Monitoring Group are working together closely to monitor and record breeding success of all raptor species in and around the Peak District and both groups are committed to offering Jamie Horner (and the five organisations listed) our full support and co-operation with the project.

Unfortunately 2012 proved to be a frustrating year in more ways than one. Firstly the weather played a significant part, both in limiting the opportunity for monitoring activities and in the limited breeding success that some species encountered. Secondly a small minority of the shooting estates appeared not to be fully supporting the initiative with regards to monitoring the raptors nesting on and around the land they are responsible for managing. It will take time for trust to be built back up between some shooting interests / estates and the raptor fieldworkers, and Jamie has an unenviable but key role to play here, which will be crucial to the success or failure of the initiative. However, that is why he was appointed in the first place. Obviously Jamie is lacking in some of the skills required to carry out independent raptor fieldwork, but hopefully he will remain enthusiastic and will learn fast. A key part of this process will be having usable and verified data, to ensure that the project meets the needs of all those involved. This should include clear definitions of each stage of breeding cycle. Multi-visit reports should be written with these definitions in

mind to enable production of both a clear overview and, most importantly, useable data sets.

Many positives can already be taken from the new initiative such as the ongoing excellent relationships with keepers on the south side of Glossop and also the improving relationship with the Broomhead Moor Estate to the east. The early signs are that the initiative has made a positive start and with a little more willingness and co-operation from all parties could lead to the positive outcomes hoped for. Only time will tell, but we need to give it our full support, so blame cannot be apportioned to the raptor workers if things do not work out as planned.

Mike Price / PDRM Group

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SORBY BRECK RINGING GROUP

RINGING RECOVERIES AND REPORTED SIGHTINGS – 2011-2012

SPARROWHAWK

EL61869	05/07/2010	1F	Wharncliffe Woods, S Yorks (SK3904)	
	08/03/2012	X	Stainborough, S Yorks (SE3203)	10 km, 1 yr 247 days
EX36239	28/06/2011	1F	Ravenfield, S Yorks (SK4896)	
	06/01/2012	XF	Swinton, S Yorks (SK4699)	4 km, 192 days <i>entered warehouse</i>
EL61920	03/07/2011	1F	Greno Wood, S Yorks (SK3295)	
	12/08/2011	XF	High Green, Sheffield (SK3397)	3 km, 40 days
DA32920	18/02/2012	7M	Whirlow, Sheffield (SK3182)	
	07/06/2012	XF	Totley, Sheffield (SK3079)	4 km, 110 days <i>hit glass side to bus stop</i>
EY19901	30/05/2012	1	Haigh Greave, W Yorks (SE2912)	
	04/10/2012	XF	Thurlstone, S Yorks (SE2303)	11 km, 127 days <i>hit glass (conservatory)</i>
DD47894	08/07/2012	1M	Wharncliffe Woods, S Yorks (SK2998)	
	01/10/2012	XF	Thurgoland, S Yorks (SE2801)	3 km, 85 days <i>road casualty</i>

BUZZARD

GC98430	16/06/2011	1	Bentley Spring, W Yorks (SE2713)	
	20/12/2011	XF	Barnsdale Bar, N Yorks (SE5014)	23km, 187 days
GR38840	14/06/2012	1	Long Clough, Derbys (SK0392)	
	11/09/2012	XF	Lytham St Anne's, Lancs (SD3828)	75km, 89 days <i>railway casualty</i>
GR61882	18/06/2012	1	Arnfield, Tintwistle, Derbys (SK0298)	
	27/10/2012	XF	Tintwistle, Derbys (SK0297)	2km, 131 days

KESTREL

ET63878	18/06/2004	1	Turner Wood, Shireoaks, Notts (SK5481)	
	16/09/2011	XF	Killamarsh, Derbys (SK4580)	9km, 7 yrs 90 days
EH11476	11/06/2010	1	Palterton, Derbyshire (SK4768)	
	24/01/2011	XF	Glapwell, Derbys (SK4766)	2 km, 227 days
EX36234	01/06/2011	1	Ulley Beeches, S Yorks (SK4787)	
	08/07/2012	XF	Kilham Farm, Branton, N Yorks (SE6502)	24 km, 1 yr 38 days <i>hit power lines</i>

EH11361	14/06/2011	1	Near Glossop, Derby (SK0491)	
	27/05/2012	XL	Greenfield Res, Saddleworth Moor, Gtr Manchester (SE0305)	13 km, 348 days
EY03721	02/06/2012	1	near Todwick, S Yorks (SK5085)	
	22/08/2012	XL	Yr Eifl Quarry, Trefor, Gwynedd (SH3646)	217 km, 81 days <i>remains only</i>

MERLIN

DB68011	27/06/2009	1	Site Confidential, near Bamford, Derbys (SK28)	
	27/03/2011	X	Dale Head Farm, Wheston, Derbys (SK1276)	15 km, 1 yr 273 days

HOBBY

EL13188	04/08/2007	1	Site Confidential, Derbys (SK23)	
	25/09/2011	XF	Pfizer Monks Wall Nature Reserve, Kent (TR3259)	272 km, 4 yrs 52 days

BARN OWL

GJ42586	25/05/2005	6F	Edensor, near Bakewell, Derbys (SK2569)	
	15/03/2011	XL	Roach House Farm, Derbys (SK3166)	8 km, 5 yrs 294 days
GN13059	18/06/2006	1	North Anston, S Yorks (SK5284)	
	18/02/2011	XL	Lodge Farm, Hodsock, Notts (SK5986)	7 km, 4 yrs 245 days
GC55005	08/07/2007	1	Old Somerby Lodge, Grantham, Lincs (SK9632)	
	28/05/2011	XL	Elmton, Derbys (SK5073)	62 km, 3 yrs 324 days
GC47387	08/09/2009	1	Elmton, Derbys (SK5073)	
	20/07/2011	XF	Upper Langwith, Derbys (SK5169)	4 km, 1yr 315 days
GN80027	13/07/2010	1	Worksop Manor, Notts (SK5678)	
	15/01/2011	X	Rhodesia, Worksop, Notts (SK5679)	1 km, 186 days
GR22651	29/09/2011	1	Rowland, nr Bakewell, Derbys (SK2172)	
	09/09/2012	R	Toadpool Farm nr Staveley, Derbys (SK4377)	23 km, 346 days

TAWNY OWL

GP95471	11/06/2005	1	Melton Wood, Doncaster, S Yorks (SE5103)	
	09/03/2011	XF	Listerdale Wood, Rotherham, S Yorks (SK4692)	12 km, 5 yr 271 days
GC43770	09/05/2011	1	Palterton, Derbys (SK4768)	
	07/04/2012	XF	Palterton, Derbys (SK4768)	0 km, 334 days

LONG-EARED OWL

GC98433	05/05/2007	1	Winscar Reservoir, S Yorks (SE1502)	
	07/01/2012	XL	Ingbirchworth Res, S Yorks (SE2105)	6 km, 1 yr 247 days

Age/Sex Codes.

1 = ringed as nestling
2 = born anytime including present year
3 = born present year
4 = born anytime but not present year
5 = born previous year

6 = born anytime but not this year or previous year
7 = born two years before
8 = hatched three or more years ago.
F or M = sexed male or female.

Recovery symbols are as follows:

R = caught & released, by ringer
RR = sight record by ringer
V = caught and released (non ringer)
VV = sight record (non-ringer)
X = found dead
XF = freshly dead
XL = long dead

+ = killed by man
+F = killed by man – fresh
B = caught and released by ringer – nesting
S = sick or injured, not known to have been released
SR = sick or injured, released with ring
// = finding circumstances unknown

Members of the groups in 2012:

SPRSG

Trevor Grimshaw: Co-ordinator

John Atkin
Roy Frost
Mick Lacey
Geoff Mawson
Anthony Messenger
Stephen Moores
Steve Samworth

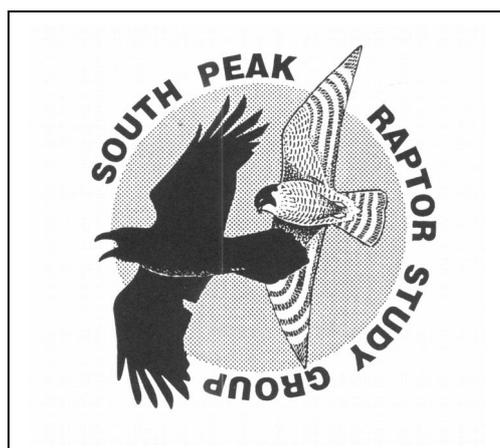
Ken Smith
Jack Street
Mick Taylor
Paul Tooley

PDRMG

Steve Davies: Co-ordinator

Carl Ashford
Nick Corley
Andy Platts

Mike Price
Paul Stafford
Mark Watson



PEAK DISTRICT RAPTOR MONITORING GROUP
*Monitoring Birds of Prey and Owls in the Peak District
and surrounding areas*