



nature's  
voice

# The Heron



## Newsletter - October 2009

### Happy 30th Birthday, RSPB Macclesfield Local Group

#### FOR YOUR DIARY

#### October 2009

Friday, 23 October -  
Sunday, 25 October

*Weekend Away:* **SOUTHEAST LINCOLNSHIRE**  
Leader: Graham Palmer 01625 420179

#### November 2009

Wednesday, 4 November

*CWT Meeting:* **POLICING CHESHIRE'S WILDLIFE** by Mike Wellman  
7.30 pm. St John's Church Hall, Earlsway, Macclesfield, SK11 8RS

Friday, 6 November

*CAWOS Meeting:* **DISPERSAL OF THE HEN HARRIER IN NORTHERN ENGLAND** by Stephen Murphy  
7.45 pm. The Cranford Suite, Civic Centre, Toft Road, Knutsford.

Sunday, 8 November

*WGBG Coach Trip:* **NORTH WALES including RSPB CONWY**  
Depart at 8.00 am from Wilmslow Guild, Bourne Street, Wilmslow

Tuesday, 10 November

*Indoor Meeting:* **THE HEBRIDES FOR BIRDS** by Charles Brown

Saturday, 14 November

*Special Event:* **FOOD AND HOMES FOR WINTER WILDLIFE**  
Join our RSPB Wildlife Explorers at Bollington Arts Centre, Wellington Road, Bollington, SK10 5JR anytime between 2.00 pm and 4.00 pm to discover all the things that we can do to help our wildlife to survive the winter. This is a family event.  
Contact: Tina Hanak 07870 804413

Sunday, 15 November

*Outdoor Meeting:* **MOORE NATURE RESERVE**  
A favourite site for gulls to test our identification skills as we search for unusual visitors, as well as winter thrushes, wildfowl and all three species of woodpecker.  
Depart at 9.00 am from Duke Street Car Park for an all-day trip.  
Leader: Ray Evans 01625 432635 (*Please note change from previously advertised leader.*)

Friday, 20 November

*Special Event:* **'AN EVENING WITH THE RSPB'**  
7.30 pm at Bollington Arts Centre, 27 Wellington Road, Bollington, SK10 5JR  
'Brushes with Wildlife' Arts Competition Awards followed by RSPB Films and Slide Show. Adults £3.50, Children £1.50  
Tickets available at our Indoor Meetings or by post from Jean Evans, 112 Ullswater, Macclesfield, SK11 7YP. Cheques should be made payable to 'The RSPB, Macclesfield Local Group'. If applying by post, please send a stamped SAE or arrange to collect tickets on the door.

[www.macclesfieldrspb.org.uk](http://www.macclesfieldrspb.org.uk)

## CHAT FROM THE EMPTY CHAIR

Dear Friends,

Many of you will be aware that back in October 2004 we celebrated the Group's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and now, 5 years later, we are marking another milestone, our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The Group has come a long way since its humble but enthusiastic beginnings when Indoor Meetings were held in South Park Pavilion with attendances of 30 – 40. However, whether the Group will see its 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary is in the balance unless someone is willing to take on the leadership role. Furthermore, our hard-pressed Treasurer has already confirmed that he will be standing down at the end of this season and currently there is no obvious and willing successor for this position either. As you will appreciate, it will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the Group to continue in its present form with neither a Leader nor a Treasurer. Therefore, on this, the occasion of the Group's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary can I appeal to you, the members, to earnestly consider firstly whether you could fulfil either role and secondly whether you would be willing to give sufficient time and energy to ensure that the Group continues into the foreseeable future providing a focus for RSPB members and local bird lovers in our area of Cheshire East.

You will probably not have failed to notice that there has been a drastic decline in many bird species that spend the summer with us here in Europe but winter in Africa. More than 40% of all these migratory species have declined significantly in the 30-year period that our Group has been in existence. It is of such conservation concern that a team of RSPB and BTO ornithologists will be travelling to West Africa to count and ring birds such as the cuckoo, nightingale and turtle dove in the hope that they can build a detailed picture of the movements and habitat preferences of these and other migratory bird species that winter south of the Sahara. The habitats that will be monitored range from dense tropical rainforest to semi-desert. Ongoing research is focussed on the potential causes of species declines during the breeding season here in the UK but problems on the wintering grounds are just as likely to be the cause particularly where there is land degradation and changes in rainfall patterns.

The RSPB has a new President. Kate Humble who is best known for her anchor role in the BBC's 'Springwatch' and 'Autumnwatch' was appointed to the role at the Society's AGM in London on 3<sup>rd</sup> October. Surprisingly, she is only the second female president in the Society was founded 120 years ago. I'm sure that Kate's passion for nature and wildlife combined with her infectious enthusiasm will be an inspiration to us all.

*Ray Evans*

### **A MESSAGE TO ALL MACCLESFIELD RSPB GROUP MEMBERS FROM LAURENCE ROSE, RSPB NORTHERN ENGLAND REGIONAL DIRECTOR.**

Congratulations on your 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary!

You should be very proud that the Macclesfield RSPB Local Group is one of the most successful and best supported local groups in our region, and long may it continue.

A big thank you for all that you do for the RSPB, not only raising considerable funds for the Society each year, but also organising fabulous events like WOW! and attending 'Big on Begonias', amongst others. Thank you too for supporting a packed indoor meeting, guided walk and field trip programme, which continues to encourage people of all ages to watch birds, get in touch with nature and support wildlife conservation.

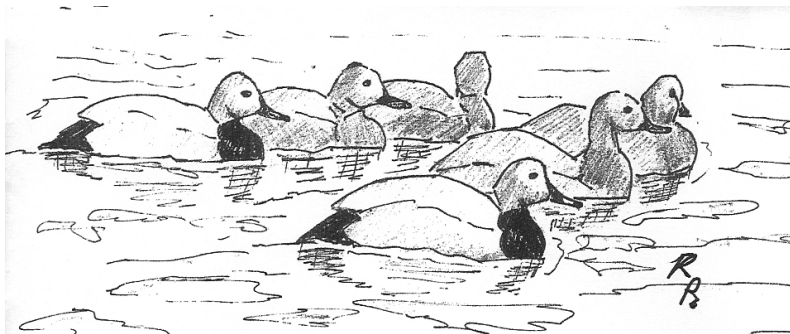
Finally, may I say a very big thank you to your Committee for their continued support and dedication to the RSPB, successfully organising and producing the events, programmes, and newsletters, which must have given a lot of pleasure to thousands of people over the years.

My very best wishes and thanks for all that you have achieved for the RSPB.

*Laurence Rose*

## A CRASH OF RHINOS AND A FLUTHER OF JELLYFISH!

What has this to do with birds? The above are collective nouns for rhinos and jellyfish. There are collective nouns for all animal species. Some are very familiar to us including – a flock of birds, a litter of cubs, a herd of cattle, a pack of hounds, a gaggle of geese, a swarm or cloud of flies/insects, a shoal of fish, a pride of lions, a litter of pigs, a pod of porpoises, a litter of pups, a school of whales, a skein of geese and a pack of wolves.



wildcats and a zeal of zebras.

There is more! A shrewdness of apes, a sloth of bears, a sward/drift/ hive/erst of bees, a drove of bullocks, a bask of crocodiles, a herd/mob of deer, a herd/parade of elephants, a mob/troop of kangaroos, a leap of leopards, a string of race-horses, a stud of mares, a bevy of roe deer, a knot of toads, a hover of trout, a rafter of turkeys, a bale of turtles, a dout/destruction of

Let's have a look at the birds. A bellowing of bullfinches! Such a quiet species, it is difficult to imagine why such a description. Also of note: a chattering of choughs, a covert of coots, a herd of cranes and a murder of crows. I saw a crow mercilessly attacking a starling, apparently killing it, so the description is apt! To continue: a herd of curlew, a trip of dotterel, a flight/piteousness of doves, a paddling of ducks (on water), a safe of ducks (on land) and a fling of dunlin. Is this the Highland fling or something more amorous? A pack/covey of grouse, a bevy/exaltation of larks, a desert of lapwings, a tiding of magpies, a sort/suit of mallards, a watch of nightingales and a parliament/stare of owls. The last is interesting. Yes owls stare at us if we encounter them close to. The owl is considered a wise bird (not really true) but compared to our MP's behaviour of late is far better behaved! There is more! A pandemonium of parrots, a covey of partridges, a muster of peacocks, a kit of pigeons, a congregation of plovers, a rush of pochards, a covey of ptarmigan, an unkindness of ravens, a hill of ruff, a dopping of shelduck, a wisp of snipe, a host of sparrows, a murmuration of starlings, a herd of swans (on land), a wedge of swans (in flight), a spring of teal, a rafter of turkeys, a bunch/knob of wildfowl, a company/trip of wigeon, a fall of woodcock, a descent of woodpecker and a herd of wrens.

The above are just a few examples of collective names of animal species. Quite enchanting really!

*Ray Perry*

## COMBINED CHARITIES CHRISTMAS CARD SHOPS

### Combined Charities Christmas Card Shops

The RSPB Macclesfield Local Group will have cards and calendars for sale at only two venues this year:

Wilmslow Library	31 October – 12 December
Macclesfield Town Hall	27 October – 25 November

Volunteers from the participating charities look after the 'Shops' on a daily basis with each charity being allocated a specific day.

The RSPB Macclesfield Local Group will be responsible for providing volunteers at the named venues as follows:

**Wilmslow Library on Wednesday, 2 December**  
**Macclesfield Town Hall on Friday, 30 October**

If you can help by giving 4 hours of your time in the morning or afternoon on either of the above dates please contact **Tricia Thompson 01625 526546** (Wilmslow) or **Jen Tolliday 01625 432105** (Macclesfield). You will not be alone but part of a team of five volunteers from the Group at each session. It presents an ideal opportunity for you to meet new and sometimes interesting people.

Organisers of the Combined Charities Christmas Card Shops would welcome volunteers to help on other days also.

## BRUSHES WITH WILDLIFE EXHIBITION

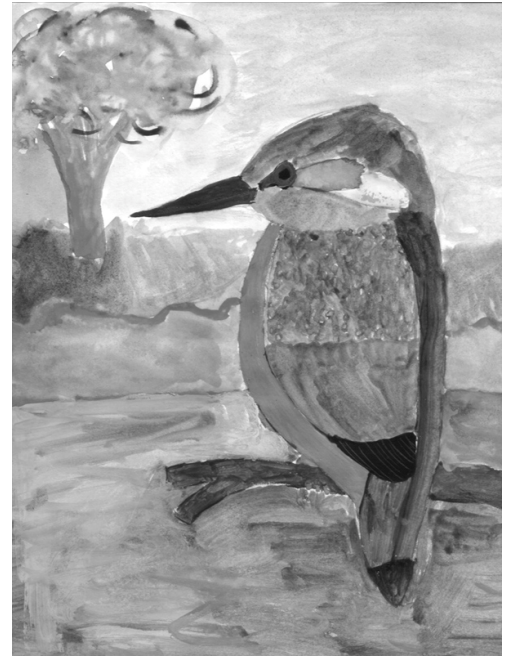
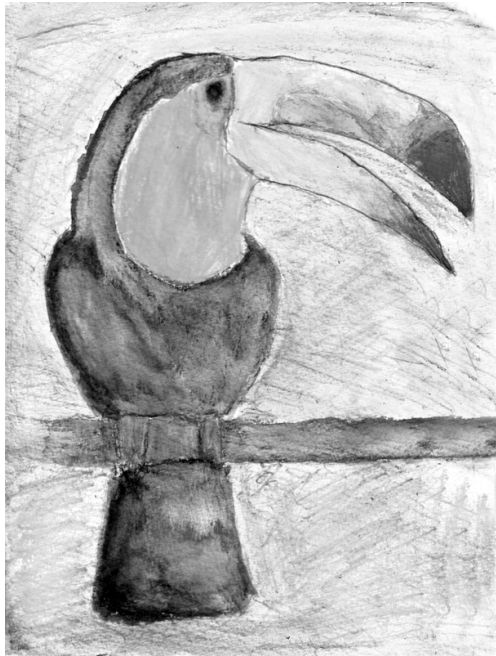
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**Two of the entries for the Brushes with Wildlife competition: Keel-billed Toucan by Imogen Walsh (on the left) and Kingfisher (on the right) by Katherine Mayer both age 11.**



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**Please pass on a copy of this newsletter to any member or non-member of the Group that you know who may be interested**

#### Health and Safety

In the event of fire or other emergency necessitating evacuation of the building, please leave in an orderly manner via the nearest available Emergency Exit or as instructed by a designated Committee member. Emergency Exits, indicated by the internationally recognised symbol of a 'running man' on a green background, are situated through the door at the rear of the hall either straight down the corridor or directly on the right through the main entrance with further exits to the right and through the door to the left of the stage.

If required, there is a first aid kit in the kitchen off the entrance corridor. (If you do have an accident, however minor, while here tonight please report it directly to a Committee member who, amongst other things, will ensure that details are logged in the Accident Report Book.)