

The RSPB are offering a £1000 reward for information leading to conviction of the person(s) responsible for killing a buzzard and two ravens near Blaenavon in July. All the birds had been poisoned with the banned pesticide carbofuran. Two dead pigeons, also laced with carbofuran and probably used as bait, were found nearby.

Readers might recall that two dead peregrine falcons were found poisoned at the same site last year.

All birds of prey and ravens are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and this locally persistent problem needs to be stamped out.

The RSPB and Police are hoping that the reward will lead to them receiving information and I wouldn't be surprised if someone reading this column knows who is responsible. If so, call 0845 466 3636 – All information will be handled in strict confidence – And you will be doing your bit to help protect our wonderful wildlife from persecution.



Sightings Update

There have been numerous sightings of red kite around the county over the past few weeks, with reports coming in from Abergavenny, Blaenavon, Usk, Trellech and Abertysswg. Elsewhere, small groups of crossbill have been noted at Abertillery and Peterstone. Winter visiting redwing and fieldfare have been widely recorded and a single brambling was seen

among a flock of chaffinch at Peterstone (no doubt this little bird will be making the most of this year's sizeable crop of beech mast). A few summer visitors are leaving their departure very late; four house martin were seen at Shirenewton on the 16th, a single swallow at Llanwenarth on the 18th, and a hobby at Magor on the 19th.

More unusual sightings include a woodlark at Peterstone on the 16th and a wryneck, which was picked up by Mike and Cath of City Wildlife Care from St. Julians on the 12th.

Incidentally, Mike would like to inform readers that the injured wheatear recovered fully and was released at Goldcliff to join other wheatears on their passage South. Keep up to date with the latest local bird sightings at www.gwentbirds.org.uk

Birdwatching Events

GOS's excellent season of indoor talks continues at Goytre Village Hall (just off the A4042 by the Goytre Arms) on Saturday 29th October when Peter Howells will be presenting his talk, 'Bird Observatories of the UK'. Most UK bird observatories are situated on headlands that jut out into the sea. These sites act as resting places for weary migrant birds that are flying along the coast – and are great places to see birds that you would normally be very unlikely to encounter. I went to Portland Observatory in Dorset a few autumns ago and it was brilliant; ring ouzel, turtle dove and firecrest were among the highlights – and the local pub was smashing too!

The next GOS guided walk takes place on Sunday 13th November when Rob Parsons will lead a leisurely two hour stroll around Cwmtillery Lakes. If you are interested, join Rob at the car park next to the lakes (SO 218 061) at 8.00am.

There is no need to book places on GOS walks and talks - just turn up. New faces (especially Argus readers) are always very welcome.

Talks start at 7.30pm and entry is £1.50 - including tea and biscuits.

Walkers should remember to bring suitable clothing (boots essential), food and drink – and

binoculars if you have them.

For more information visit www.gwentbirds.org.uk or give me a call on the number below. Likewise, if you want me to send you a copy of GOS's programme of walks and talks, just let me know.

Keep in Touch

Thank you to all readers that have taken the time to get in touch.

I always enjoy hearing from you and can be contacted at m.stevens@webster.uk.net or on 01633 866470.