

I was speaking with my friends Cath and Mike from local wildlife rescue charity CityWildlifeCare the other day and they mentioned that they have had a spate of calls to pick up birds that had been caught by sparrowhawks.

Could I make an appeal to readers not to intervene if they see a sparrowhawk, or any other bird of prey, catch it's dinner: These birds need to eat and when they catch a smaller bird they inflict a lot of damage to them very quickly. 'Shooing' them off means that you are invariably left with a badly injured bird which will have to be put down, plus the still hungry sparrowhawk will have to go and kill another bird - In effect two birds will have died to provide the hawk with one meal!

I know it's not nice to see birds killed, especially those you have been feeding, but the presence of apex predators such as a sparrowhawk is something you should welcome as it indicates a functional foodchain and healthy population of smaller birds.



## Look Out for Migrants

The floodgates have started to open – At present the arrival of summer visitors is just a trickle, but soon they will be sweeping in en masse.

Sand martin, swallow, willow warbler and wheatear have already been seen and more species are expected imminently - Keep abreast of whats happening, and record the birds you have seen, on the sightings page at [www.gwentbirds.org.uk](http://www.gwentbirds.org.uk)

## Birdwatching Events

Gwent Ornithological Society continue their programme of walks and talks with the following events;

On Saturday 2nd April Chris Grady will be giving a talk entitled 'Birding Down Under' which, unsurprisingly, focusses on the bird life of Australia.... why not come along and find out a bit more about some very unfamiliar feathery faces?

The talk is being held at Goytre Village Hall (just off the A4042 Newport to Abergavenny road SO 323 406) and starts at 7.30pm. Entry, including tea and biscuits is £1.50.

On Saturday 16th April you are invited to come on a short out of county trip to Craig Cerrig Gleisiad. This Nature Reserve, situated between Merthyr and Brecon off the A470, is a great place to see elusive upland birds such as ring ouzel. The 3 – 4 hour walk is being led by affable local birder Rob Parsons and starts at 8am from the second layby after leaving Libanus on the A470 (SN 989 249) - There is no need to book, just turn up.

New faces (especially Argus readers) are always welcome at GOS events.

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](http://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.

For those who fancy something a little closer to home, The Countryside Council for Wales have arranged a free two hour walk at Newport Wetlands Reserve on Saturday 16th April to check out breeding wading birds. The reserve is an important site for lapwing, avocet, redshank

and oystercatcher and if you would like to see how they are faring, meet the Wardens at the Farmers Arms car park at 9.30am. For more details please call 01633 636363

## **Keep in Touch**

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