

Scottish Raptor

Bringing you the latest news from the Scottish Raptor Monitoring Scheme

One thing I notice in my job is that breeding seasons seem to follow each other in very quick succession, so much so that despite all my good intentions this year the 2015 annual report wasn't published before the 2016 breeding season got going. Nevertheless analysis of the 2015 data is currently underway and since our last newsletter I have been busy progressing a number of other SRMS work areas. The one that I am most excited about is Raptor Patch – a new survey that we are piloting this season. Please read on to find out more about this survey and updates of other areas of SRMS work in development. This issue also contains some important appeals – from researchers to raptor fieldworkers to collect carcasses and a range of samples and from raptor fieldworkers to other raptor fieldworkers for sightings of marked birds from particular projects.

At the moment we still await confirmation of whether the SRMS will receive ongoing funding, the existing funding period having expired at the end of March 2016. I am currently in post until mid-June and very much hoping that this will not be the last time that I produce a Scottish Raptor newsletter. SRMG will keep you posted with any news.

To all you raptor field workers out there, both old and new, best of luck with your monitoring this season.

Amy (SRMC)

National Hen Harrier Survey 2016

The survey of breeding Hen Harriers in the UK and Isle of Man is now underway, with the survey in Scotland being organised by RSPB, SNH and the Scottish Raptor Study Group. The main survey objectives are: to provide updated estimates of population size; to identify trends, by country and region, since the last survey; and to provide data for further analyses of drivers of change in the Hen Harrier population.

Across Scotland, survey coverage by 10 km square has been organised in coordination with RSPB and the SRSRG. Many thanks to the SRSRG members who are taking



Hen Harrier brood (Kenneth Sludden)



part in the survey this year and to those who are taking on additional survey squares.

In Scotland, RSPB fieldworkers are surveying a stratified random selection of 10 km squares from the remaining range not being covered by SRSB members. Encouragingly, over 300 10 km survey squares have been allocated to SRSB members and RSPB fieldworkers this year, compared to nearly 220 squares during the last survey in 2010. The RSPB fieldworkers started surveying at the end of March. The survey methods are the same as those used in 2010 and follow the well-established two to three visit method between late March and the end of July, giving the advantage of good comparability with previous surveys.

Elsewhere, we are aiming for complete coverage of all 10 km squares containing suitable breeding habitat within the Hen Harrier range in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man. The other survey partners are Natural England, Northern England Raptor Forum, Natural Resources Wales, Manx BirdLife and the Northern Ireland Raptor Study Group.

Best of luck for the survey this year and for some good weather during the breeding season!

Simon Wotton (Senior Conservation Scientist, RSPB)

SRSB wildlife crime awareness course

In February the SRMS was pleased to support a SRSB-led wildlife crime awareness course, organised by Central Scotland SRSB branch.



Braving the elements to learn about raptor persecution from Ian Thomson, Head of Investigations for RSPB Scotland (Amy Challis)

“Wildlife Crime is a subject which enrages us all. This training day pulled together some of the foremost enforcement and investigative agencies involved in this field. As raptor workers, we are uniquely placed to assist in an eyes and ears capacity and play a full and active role in assisting these agencies in the fight against wildlife crime”
(John Simpson, Chair Central Scotland SRSB branch).

The course was conducted at Strone Camp which is within the Garelochhead Army Training Area north of Helensburgh. The day was hosted by the MOD Police and the awareness training was delivered by RSPB Investigations and SSPCA Special Investigations. Despite the fact that it was a bitterly cold day and snow fell throughout, it did not dampen the enthusiasm of either the trainers or the participants. After a short welcome and introduction, the attendees were split into two groups facilitated by a small team of subject matter experts. Each group rotated through a series of wildlife crime scenarios, during which, they discussed recognising the signs of a crime, crime scene preservation and reporting a crime.



Raptor Patch

This spring the Scottish Raptor Monitoring Scheme has launched a new survey – *Raptor Patch* – to get more people involved in monitoring raptors.

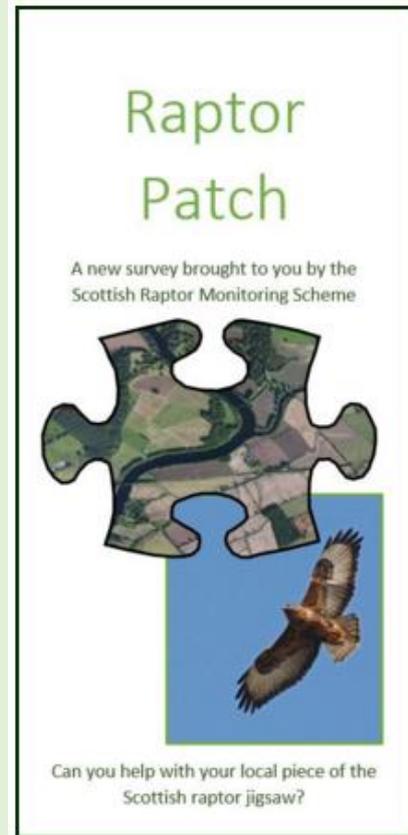
Our new survey *Raptor Patch* is particularly targeting four species – Buzzard, Kestrel, Sparrowhawk & Raven. You might be wondering why we have selected these species. The simple answer to that is that these species are currently under-recorded by the existing SRMS contributors and we would really like to be collecting more information on them. Many of these species are too sparsely distributed to be covered well by general bird surveys such as the Breeding Bird Survey but at the same time are too widespread and abundant for complete coverage to be achievable as is attempted for some of the rarer species such as Golden Eagle.

Through *Raptor Patch* individuals are encouraged to take on the monitoring of a defined geographic area (or “patch”) of their choosing where they will ultimately get to grips with all the breeding raptors within it. Patches can be squares based on the OS national grid or irregular shapes based on features in the landscape.

With *Raptor Patch* we want to be sampling areas that are representative of the wider landscape, as this information is going to be most useful to the SRMS when we try to produce trends in breeding numbers and productivity. We also want to encourage people to focus on trying to get complete coverage of the area, i.e. to find every breeding pair of their chosen species within the area, so are suggesting that people keep the size of their patch manageable – a tetrad is probably ideal.

With *Raptor Patch* volunteers are not expected to get to grips with everything straightaway. We are producing lots of information and training materials on the SRMS website. In March we also held our first *Raptor Patch* training event (see below).

If you want to help increase our knowledge of raptors in Scotland through taking part in *Raptor Patch* why not take a look at <http://raptormonitoring.org/raptor-patch> for more information.



SRMS 2015 Annual report

Many thanks to everyone who contributed data to the SRMS in 2015. We are currently working on the analysis of the data for the 2015 report. We are hoping to make some changes to the style of the annual report from previous years and to start to make better use of the SRMS website for reporting, so please bear with us while we make these changes. We hope to publish the report later in the Spring.



Appeal for raptor samples

Gaby Peniche of the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, University of Edinburgh, who some of you have met at the SRSB conference, is working on her PhD project assessing raptor health and using this as an indicator of ecosystem health. This project will want to examine as many raptor carcasses as possible of **all species of raptors** found in Scotland in order to perform detailed post-mortem examinations on them. **This will provide information on any pathogens, diseases or other environmental factors affecting health.**

We are collaborating with several organisations (SNH, SASA, SRUC, RSPB, CEH, UHI), and together our appeal for bodies and samples is as follows:

- **Any raptor carcass** found where persecution is suspected should be reported to the **Police**: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Environment/Wildlife-Habitats/paw-scotland/what-you-can-do>, with SSPCA and RSPB helping with the collection of carcasses. These will then be examined by SASA or the SRUC. This should continue to be the norm, and Gaby is endeavouring to work with these bodies to carry out post mortems (PMs) to study the health of the birds.
- **Any failed eggs** (taken under licence) and discarded raptor feathers are sent to the **Predatory Bird Monitoring Scheme, PBMS**: <https://wiki.ceh.ac.uk/display/pbms/Home>.
- **Any raptor carcass** that is a non-suspicious case (e.g. trauma, electrocutions, chicks dead in the nest) is requested by Gaby. She will then coordinate distribution of samples to other collaborators.
- **From all raptor nests**:
 - a. Any raptor carcasses found in nest
 - b. Fresh faeces - if obtained when handling chicks
 - c. Any left-over fresh feathers (this year's) (after PBMS samples)
 - d. Egg shells
 - e. Pellets / castings

For details of packaging/courier and forms to submit with the samples please contact: Gabriela.Peniche@roslin.ed.ac.uk . Office telephone: 0131 650 7683; Mobile: 07847 170997. **Gaby can provide these in advance of the field season – please just ask.**

Gaby Peniche (University of Edinburgh)

SRMS website

Remember that you can keep up to date with SRMS news on our website: <http://raptormonitoring.org/>



Raptor Patch training day

Sunday 13th March saw 31 enthusiastic individuals turn up for our first *Raptor Patch* training day at Argaty Red Kite Centre near Doune. Participants attended from all over Scotland. The event was led by Amy with support from five lead trainers sourced from Scottish Raptor Study Group – Brian Etheridge (Highland), Tony Lightley (Lothian & Borders, Dumfries & Galloway), Clive McKay (Tayside), Mike Thornton (Lothian & Borders) and Dave Anderson (Argyll, Central Scotland).

During a classroom-based session in the morning participants were introduced to *Raptor Patch* and the four focal species – Buzzard, Kestrel, Sparrowhawk & Raven, given an overview of the importance of monitoring raptors and a brief outline of the raptor monitoring season. Time was also spent discussing different theoretical raptor patches in a variety of landscapes, then we considered the relative merits of different configurations of *Raptor Patch* (both size and shape) that would be possible using the area centred Argaty as an example.

In the afternoon, participants were split into four groups and taken on a walk focussed on allowing them to experience and discuss how they might go about ensuring complete coverage of our theoretical Argaty *Raptor Patch*. Participants got to experience undertaking a vantage point watch, looking for signs of occupation including displaying birds and field signs. We were fortunate to see three of our four *Raptor Patch* species during the course of the afternoon. The experiences of each group were then consolidated back in the classroom and we discussed what the next steps would be in terms of further coverage that would be required and what subsequent monitoring visits would entail.



Looking for raptor signs (David Palmar)



Feathers on plucking post of Sparrowhawk (David Palmar)



Looking for raptor activity (Amy Challis)



Looking for raptor signs (Amy Challis)

Following this event a number of participants have set up their own *Raptor Patch* and will receive



ongoing support throughout the breeding season. The SRMG will hopefully look to support similar events in future years.

Oot and about

Things have finally quietened down for a bit after a busy Autumn and Winter of scheduled meetings and other events. Late October saw me attending the SOC conference in Pitlochry where I shared a stand with SRSR, November saw me attending the Scottish Ringers' conference in Carrbridge and February and March saw me giving presentations at the SRSR conference and Scottish Birdwatchers' conference in Peebles, respectively. In March I also gave my first invited talk to the Scottish Wildlife Trust's Strathkelvin Group about raptor monitoring.

I've just completed a round of attendance at SRSR branch spring meetings hearing how folks are gearing up for the season ahead. I'm afraid Storm Gertrude put a stop to my planned trip to visit the Uist SRSR branch (I'm sure these storms having being causing more trouble since we've started giving them names!) and enjoyed representing the SRMS at the SRSR Wildlife Crime Awareness course (see above).

I had a very enjoyable day out with George Smith of Lothian & Borders Scottish Raptor Study Group branch accompanying him on early March checks at a number of known Raven and Peregrine sites, a great opportunity for me to learn a little more about both of these species and get to learn more of George's work. If you would similarly like to invite me out for a day this breeding season then I would be open to offers!

Later this month I will be attending Scotland's Big Nature Festival at Musselburgh where I will be hoping to raise the profile of the SRMS and get more people interested in getting involved in raptor monitoring through taking part in *Raptor Patch*.

Data Sharing

Work on data sharing is steadily progressing. The SRMS is looking to improve the flow of data to and from the SRMS so that it get mobilised to support raptor conservation much more efficiently than it does at present. Three documents are currently **in draft** and with the SRMG for initial feedback. These documents include:

- ***Scottish Raptor Monitoring Scheme: Data Sharing & Use Policy*** which is designed to be an overarching document to help others understand our position on data sharing.
- ***Protocol for sharing Scottish Raptor Monitoring Scheme data with the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Gateway.***
- ***Data usage agreement between SRMS & SNH.*** This is the first of a number of agreements between the SRMS and its partners. This document will hopefully provide a useful template to be able to develop similar agreements with all other partners.

Once SRMG are satisfied with the latest draft these will be put out for consultation with all SRMS partners.



The Donald and Jeff Watson Raptor Award 2016

The CSRSG nomination for the Donald and Jeff Watson Award is Dave Anderson. From his formative years supporting the efforts of others in the Borders and Northumberland forests, Dave has gone on to define, challenge and develop new ways of raptor fieldwork. His unquestioned enthusiasm is matched by his dogged determination to progress and develop new techniques and fresh thinking in this field. His work spans the complete suite of raptors, species like Goshawk, Osprey, Tawny Owl and as most of us have seen over the years and this year in particular, Golden Eagle.

Being something of a leading light within Forest Enterprise Scotland belies that fact that the bulk of Dave's work is done in his own time. Many of us have benefitted from him giving his time and expertise in assisting and training new and experienced members of the SRSRSG over the years. His involvement in each of our specialist groups is invaluable and has encouraged others to take on the mantle of co-ordinator, and the Kestrel and buzzard sub groups would be great examples.

His wider knowledge of Scottish conservation shows depth and an understanding of wider conservation practice, particularly the 'dark side' has made him an invaluable expert witness, a role which he relishes and excels in. He's not intimidated by the judicial environment and has been instrumental in the successful prosecution of some of Scotland's most recent offenders.

However, the talk he gave at the 2013 conference gave us a hint to the future success of the innovative field techniques he is pioneering and over the last twelve months his contribution to a number of television productions has demonstrated this and he has been instrumental to their success. Satellite tracking, ringing and use of trail cameras has enlightened us and his work with production companies and done that for many on sofas all over the UK. From Landward, Loch Lomond, Griff Rhys Jones and nothing short of a triumph, this year's BBC Winterwatch, his contribution has been fantastic!

It is not all plain sailing, he comes into conflict with people who don't share his vision within conservation and whilst he takes the blows, he is supported by many SRSRSG members who wish to see him succeed. The hard graft that does with a demanding job, an active family life where he is supported by his wife Katy and the commitment he shows to all of the projects which are frankly too numerous to mention, is a great testament to his passion, commitment and dedication.

He is a wonderful advocate for our subject and would be worthy and thoroughly deserved recipient of the Donald and Jeff Watson Award.

John Simpson (Chair Central Scotland Raptor Study Group)

SRMS online data entry

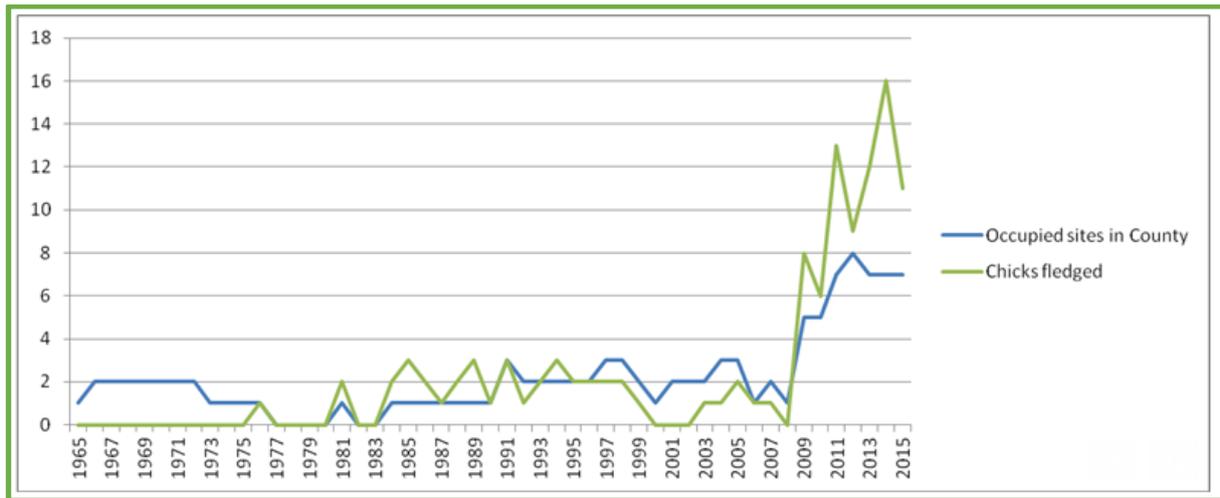
The new SRMS online data entry system is still being built. We are anticipating it being ready towards the end of the coming breeding season for a small number of SRMS contributors to pilot it ahead of rolling it out more widely for the 2017 breeding season.



Appeals for sightings of marked birds from raptor projects across Scotland

Orkney wing-tagged Buzzard project

Before 2005 Buzzards were restricted to the island of Hoy. A fledged chick and a pair of adults were seen at a potential nesting site on the Mainland. Birds were again present at this site in 2007 and 2008 but no chicks were raised. In 2009 two mainland sites along one on Hoy and the first nesting attempt on the island of Rousay, meant five sites were occupied with eight chicks fledging.

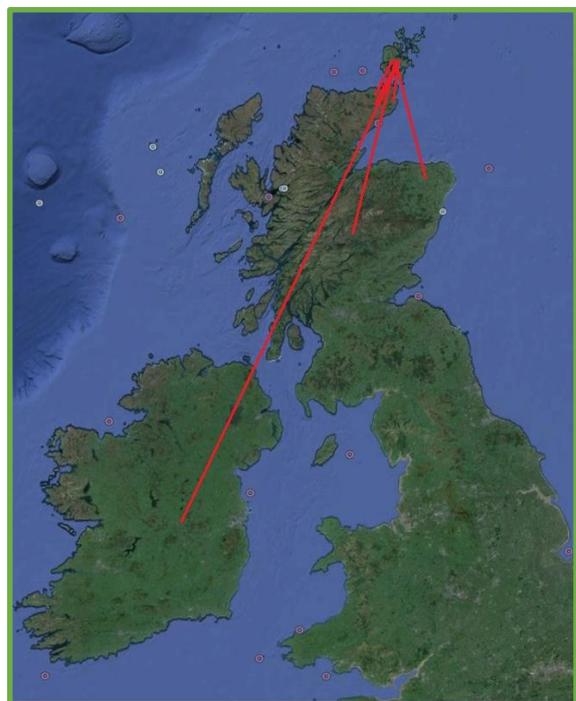


Stuart Williams sought permission from BTO Permission and received their approval and the wing tagging project began in 2010, since when all Orkney-raised Buzzard chicks have been wing tagged, to monitor the colonisation of the County, the first Orkney raised chick as a breeding adult was in 2012. To-date 62 chicks have been tagged 32 individuals have been sighted away from their natal area.

Orkney birds have a red tag on both wings with white letters or numbers same combination on both wings.

Please report all sightings to Stuart Williams, Crafty, Firth, Orkney. Tel 01856 761742 email stuart@craftyfirth.freeserve.co.uk

Stuart Williams (Orkney Raptor Study Group)



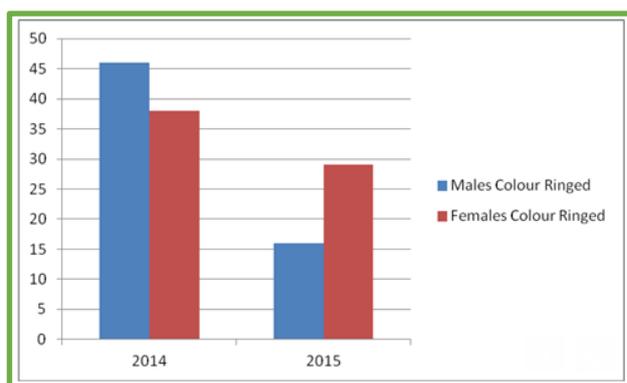
National Buzzard movements of Orkney wing-tagged Buzzards.



Orkney Hen Harrier colour-ringing project

Orkney Raptor Study Group started this project in 2014, to monitor site fidelity. The project is in its infancy, nevertheless a red 2014 female bred in 2015, unfortunately by the time this nest was discovered she was in process of failing and her ring was not read.

To date 129 chicks have been colour ringed in the county. Fewer birds were ringed in 2015 compared to 2014 due to much poorer breeding success. Since the project began, 12 colour-ringed birds have been seen and, of these, five have been identified as individuals.



Above: Number of Hen Harrier's colour-ringed in 2014 & 2015.

Right: Colour-ringed Hen Harrier sightings. Lines indicated identified individuals. Dots identify individuals whose rings were not read.



Orkney Males have blue rings on the right leg with white letters and numbers. Orkney Females have red rings on the right leg with white letters and numbers

Please report all sightings to **Stuart Williams, Crafty, Firth, Orkney. Tel 01856 761742**
email stuart@craftyfirth.freeserve.co.uk

Stuart Williams (Orkney Raptor Study Group)

Edinburgh Sparrowhawk colour-ringing project

We have been colour ringing Sparrowhawk chicks in Edinburgh for the last four years, 124 from 14 nest sites. The birds are ringed on the right leg and the rings are white with two black vertical alphanumeric characters. They can be read with binoculars at 20 metres or 75 metres with a scope, but most of our sightings have been with digital photographs which can be enlarged. As looking for the birds ourselves would be like looking for a needle in a haystack we are almost entirely dependent on garden sightings by the public. So far we have had sightings of 16 individuals and a similar number of recoveries. Most birds have remained in Edinburgh, but one went as far as Cheshire. Unfortunately the ring could not be read.

Please report any sightings to alan.leitch1@virgin.net

Alan Leitch (Lothian & Borders Raptor Study Group)



Klaus Dietrich Fiuczynski (1938 – 2014)

With the death of Dr. Klaus Dietrich Fiuczynski in Berlin on June 23rd 2014 ornithologists, especially raptor enthusiasts, have lost an inspirational colleague. He was especially well known for his pioneering population studies of the Hobby. He gave the Derek Ratcliffe memorial lecture on his research on the Hobby at the Scottish Raptor Conference in 2005. This inspired me to visit Berlin to work with him on several occasions, and a return visit by Dieter to help with Merlin studies. He also contributed to 'Raptors, a field guide to survey and monitoring' as a principal advisor on the Hobby.

Dieter, as he liked to be known, was born on February 21st 1938 in Berlin. His earliest interests in nature were with edible plants, something which sustained him throughout his life and only much later did he discover the joy of watching raptors. He went to school in Berlin and later studied Biology, Chemistry and Geography at the Freie Universitat Berlin, where he obtained a PhD in Biology, with major subject Zoology. On graduating he became a teacher in Berlin. In 1982 he married Ilona von Zweyendorf who was also a teacher and they had two daughters: Joana and Julia.



Dieter (Germany, 2010)

In 1990-1996 Dieter was appointed by the Goethe-Institute as Headmaster of the Escola Corcovado in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. His approach to education was egalitarian and his ability to remember names was remarkable. He enjoyed his time in Rio with musicians, colleagues and biologists (e.g. Waltraut Tirlor, expert on sloths) all regular visitors to the Fiuczynski house. Dieter also managed to visit Helmut Sick in Rio, who was a foremost expert on the Brazilian avifauna, just before his death in 1991. In 1996 he returned to Germany to become Headmaster of the Ruckert-Gymnasium in Berlin-Schöneberg where he implemented the German-French European Baccalaureate. Retiring from teaching in 2003 he worked for the Examination Committee for non-school A-level graduates.

Dieter's first ornithological studies were of the Kestrel, but in 1954 he encountered Hobbies, in the heavily used forests of Berlin and this population was to become his lifelong project. In 1956 he was authorized to ring birds in West Berlin by the Vogelwarte Radolfzell (Bird Ringing Centre); which was responsible for West-Berlin. In 1956 he became a member of the Deutsche Ornithologen-Gesellschaft e.V., producing a constant flow of data on Hobbies in West-Berlin and also, later on, for Red and Black kites. Gradually his research and contacts enabled him to work freely in East Berlin something he was immensely proud of.

He sustained a long friendship with Dr. Victor Wendland (1886-1990), a father figure, who was the 'founder' of the birds of prey studies in the surrounds of Berlin. He corresponded widely, notably with Otto Schnurre (the East-Berlin; ornithologist, herpetologist and scientific librarian) and his son, the author Wolfdietrich Schnurre (1920-1989). He had a long lasting friendship and intensive correspondence with Dr. Desmond Nethersole-Thompson (1908-1989) who had studied Hobbies in the South of England and in 1980 they published a joint paper in *British Birds*. In 1975 a friendship



began with Erwin Gerth who published “*Berliner Milanchronik*” (Berlin Chronicles of Red and Black Kites). In 1977 he became a member (and later, Board member) of the Gesellschaft der Naturforschenden Freunde zu Berlin e.V (Berlin Society of Friends of Natural Science, established in 1773).

His field work, such as site checks and tree climbing, was carried very early morning before going to work in school. He provided the first artificial nesting sites for Hobbies near Berlin Muggelhiem and since 1983 there has been extensive use of these. With the help of Konrad Banz (1914-1980) who worked in the Tierpark Berlin-Friedrichfelde and Prof. Dr. Heinrich Dathe (1910-1991) (Director of the Tierpark) he got to know adept tree climbers: Volker Hastadt and Paul Soummer; both members of the youth group of the Tierpark With the help of his mother-in-law Dieter managed to avoid the restrictions on East-West travel to maintain trans-boundary contacts and take Volker and Paul on field excursions to study Hobbies and kites in the GDR and East Berlin.

In 1990 before he went to teach in Brazil, Dieter familiarized Paul with all the nesting sites in former West Berlin and together with Horst Ulrich continue his work there. When in Brazil, owing to the lack of Hobbies, his ornithological interest was directed towards a falcon of the Neotropical avifauna - *Falco femoralis*, which he studied in and around Rio. Later on he discovers *Falco rufigularis* as the ecological equivalent to the Hobby in this region. On returning from Rio Dieter returned to his Hobby study and in April 1997 co-organized an international conference about the Hobbies in Lychen/ Brandenburg.SR.

In 1998 he became a member and since 2006 a Board member of Aquila e.V (Working Group for the protection of birds of prey and owls). Everywhere he went he tried to enthuse people about Aquila’s work. The excursions Paul and he conducted always attracted many participants. Tree climbing remained a passion. Soon after retiring he had hip surgery but within six months he was climbing trees again. For his birthday he got a new state-of-the-art climbing harness, he never used it, instead trusting his old one.

Dieter wrote many ornithological papers as sole author and as co-author. He wrote a chapter on the European Kestrel and the Eurasian Hobby in the forests of Berlin in Ecology and Conservation of Forest-Dwelling Raptors. The first edition of his monograph “*Der Baumfalke*” was published in 1987, and a reprint appeared in 1995 (published by Westarp Wissenschaften, Magdeburg without his agreement). In 2011 a comprehensively revised edition of “*Der Baumfalke*” was published by Wissenschaften-Verlagsgesellschaft, Hohenwarsleben (co-authored by Paul Soummer), and he had begun work, with Ron Downing, on an English language edition, shortly before his death.

Dieter was a highly cultivated individual and had wide musical tastes, ranging from formal classical to the more informal as with the free expression of traditional jazz. He enjoyed concerts with friends and family. Musical ‘parties’ with his two daughters bore testament to great talent. Dieter was an inspirational teacher, a gifted biologist and a versatile linguist. Yet it is as the doyen of Hobby studies in Berlin and Brandenburg that raptor enthusiasts know him.

Fiuczynski. D. 1978. The population ecology of the Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*) L., 1758. Zoo. Jb. Syst. 105: 193-257.
Fiuczynski. D. Fienddruck und Nistplatzangebot als limitierende Faktoren für Siedlungsplätze und Bruterfolg beim Baumfalken (*Falco subbuteo*). Birds of Prey Bull. 4: 63-71. Lentz Druck. Berlin.
Fiuczynski. D. & Nethersole-Thompson. D. 1980. Hobby studies in England and Germany. *British Birds* 73: 275-295.

Ron Downing (Tayside Raptor Study Group)



Raptor monitoring photos/video footage

Please bear in mind that the SRMS is always interested in receiving good quality images/video footage from your own raptor monitoring. These materials can be really helpful in the production of SRMS products including the SRMS website, the annual report and presentations.

Photos of *Raptor Patch* focal species – Buzzard, Kestrel, Sparrowhawk and Raven – will be particularly useful in helping with the development of further training materials for new volunteers.

Please send any good quality photos/video footage of the following to Amy:

- useful bird id images.
- various nest sites (close up, local setting and in a wider landscape setting). Ideally groupings of photos – the nest in a landscape-scale setting, the nest in its immediate environs and the nest close up. It would be really valuable to be able to show the breadth of variation in the sites that these raptors use. A raptors eye view of nests from the ground in tricky situations would be also helpful.
- field signs including plucks, droppings, pellets, moulted feathers.
- birds exhibiting key behaviours in various settings (display, defence etc.).

If you are a keen photographer or home-video maker and involved in monitoring any of the *Raptor Patch* focal species (Buzzard, Sparrowhawk, Kestrel and Raven) please bear this request in mind over the forthcoming breeding season.

CMS Raptor MoU

To give it the full title, the **Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MoU)** covers 93 species of migratory birds of prey and extends to 131 Range States in the African-Eurasian Region (with the European Union one of the signatories). Des Thompson was re-elected Chairman of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG), with Andre Botha (co-chair of the IUCN Species Survival Commission Vulture Specialist Group) elected Vice chair. The second meeting of Signatories took place in Trondheim in October last year, and agreed to raise the number of species covered from 76 to 93 (based on emerging evidence of movement patterns consistent with the definition of ‘migratory species’ in the Raptors MoU). Most of the species added are Globally or Near Threatened species according to the IUCN Red List (2015) and listed on BirdLife International’s World Bird and Biodiversity Database. In addition, the Meeting took decisions relating to the listing of internationally important sites for raptors, and Range States included in the geographical range of the MoU: <http://www.cms.int/raptors/en/news/raptors-mou-second-meeting-signatories-more-threatened-species-listed>. On 7th March India signed up to the CMS Raptors MoU, bringing the total number of signatories to 56: <http://www.cms.int/raptors/en/news/india-signs-international-agreement-protect-migratory-birds-prey>. Much of what we do in Scotland feeds into the wider work, with the founder meeting of the TAG held in Edinburgh in 2014.

Des Thompson (SNH)



The future of the SRMS

Funding for the SRMS ran out at the end of March 2016 but Amy is currently in post until mid-June. SRMG are working hard to secure the future of the SRMS. As explained in the previous issue, the SRMS is a major project for SNH requiring a business case to be submitted to the Scottish Government. While £125K has been approved internally from SNH for 2016-17, it is dependent on sign-off of the business case extension from the SNH Chief Executive and Scottish Government. Scottish Government currently have a moratorium on reviewing such business cases in place which is unlikely to be lifted until after the election. SRMG remain optimistic but we will keep you posted once we have more definite news.

Heads up for Harriers



Male Hen Harrier (Amy Challis)

Work is on-going with this project: <http://snh.presscentre.com/News-Releases/Public-asked-to-report-rare-hen-harrier-sightings-248.aspx>, which is linking with other initiatives in Britain.

Fuller details are given here: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Environment/Wild-life-Habitats/paw-scotland/what-you-can-do/hen-harriers>. Special thanks to Wendy Mattingley and Brian Etheridge in the SRSB for all their hard work, and to the eleven estates who have agreed to participate this year.

Des Thompson (SNH)

Scottish Raptor Monitoring Scheme (SRMS) contact

Amy Challis: Scottish Raptor Monitoring Coordinator (SRMC)

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