



British Birds

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Past, present and future

Ever since its inception in 1907, *British Birds* has served the birdwatching community by providing a balanced mixture of items covering almost all aspects of ornithology. We shall be continuing this record of service by introducing a number of exciting new developments in the near future; you will find 'BB' more valuable than ever.

Under the benevolent auspices of the publishing firms H. F. & G. Witherby (1907-72) and Macmillan (1973-80), *British Birds* provided the opportunity for serious amateurs as well as professional scientists to publish their work, ranging from papers on long-term studies carried out by an individual or team, and comprehensive summaries of the observations of many observers, to short notes on single observations. Many birdwatchers have seen their first words in print within the pages of *British Birds*; the same helping hand has been given to many young artists and photographers.

British Birds is now held in trust by members of the Editorial Board, being published by a non-profit-making company. It has been our aim to continue *British Birds*' long tradition of service. We aim to ensure that *British Birds* remains the journal of record, documenting for posterity—as well as for its current readers—the changing patterns of the birds of Britain and Ireland, within a European or West Palearctic context.

Papers on topics such as the irruption of Jays *Garrulus glandarius* in 1983 and the recent invasion of Little Egrets *Egretta garzetta* (*Brit. Birds* 78: 611-637; 85: 16-21), the identification of marsh terns *Chlidonias* (*Brit. Birds* 82: 296-319) and the life of the Swallow *Hirundo rustica* (*Brit. Birds* 84: 555-569), together with the official annual reports of the Rarities Committee and the Rare Breeding Birds Panel, make up the essence of *British Birds*. We also aim to use our influence to continue to encourage the very best in bird photography and bird illustration, through the annual competitions 'Bird Photograph of the Year' and 'Bird Illustrator of the Year'.*

British Birds will be developing in line with the changing interests of birders, and the changes which are 'in the pipeline' will make 'BB' essential reading over the next few years. At the same time, we aim to maintain our reputation for being authoritative and reliable—the journal of the official record—whilst also being accessible and readable for the ordinary birdwatcher. The answers to our questionnaire in the June issue have been collated and form the basis for the directions in which 'BB' will develop. Certain less-popular items will be severely pruned, the more popular features expanded, and new ones introduced. Watch these pages! EDS

*The sponsorship from Carl Zeiss—Germany (the Rarities Committee), Christopher Helm Publishers and Harper-Collins Publishers (Bird Photograph of the Year) and Kowa telescopes (Bird Illustrator of the Year) provides extra pages within *British Birds* for these features.