

## **PUFFIN AND TURTLE DOVE JOIN LIST OF BIRDS FACING GLOBAL EXTINCTION**

Four of the UK's bird species, including the puffin and turtle dove, have been added to the list of birds considered to be facing the risk of global extinction.

The latest annual revision of birds on the Red List, announced by BirdLife International, doubles the number of UK bird species considered to be facing the risk of extinction to eight.

A further 14 UK species are considered to be Near Threatened, meaning that any further deterioration in their status could see them added to the red list too.

Examining the list of changes among the UK's birds to this year's red list, several themes emerge, including: deterioration in the fortunes of some seabirds, such as puffin and razorbill; an ongoing and increasingly intense threat to wading birds, such as godwits, curlew, oystercatcher, knot and lapwing; and an increasing deterioration in the status of marine ducks, such as common eider, joining velvet scoter and long-tailed duck as species of concern.

A selection of this year's changes in more detail:

**Turtle dove:** formerly it was a familiar summer visitor to much of Europe including south-east England. Declines across Europe exceeding 30 per cent over the past 16 years have seen its threat status rise from Least Concern to Vulnerable. The decline in the UK has been particularly high, with more than nine out of every ten birds being lost since the 1970s.

**Atlantic puffin:** Globally, the puffin is concentrated in Europe. Although its global population remains in the millions, breeding failures at some key colonies over recent years have been worryingly high, with many fewer young birds being recruited into the breeding population. These declines mean the species has been assessed as Vulnerable. In the UK, there have been significant losses on Fair Isle and the Shetland Islands, but elsewhere in the UK it seems to be doing well.

**Slavonian grebe:** The bulk of its population occurs in North America where it has undergone a large and significant decrease. This decline has triggered the inclusion of the Slavonian grebe on the list of species evaluated as Vulnerable. New information collated from across Europe suggests it is declining here too. In the UK, the number of nesting birds, all in the Scottish Highlands, have declined although those wintering round the UK's coasts have increased.

**Pochard:** It occurs widely across Europe and Asia. In the UK, the numbers of nesting pochard and the number of wintering individuals have declined markedly.

## TRIP TO MARTIN MERE AND PLANS FOR 2016

We had a successful visit to Martin Mere and Marshside on 18<sup>th</sup> October. The weather was good, enabling us to see plenty of birds. Pink footed geese were everywhere and there was a good number of whooper swans at Martin Mere. As usual, there was a wide range of ducks, waders and other wildfowl on the pools. We arrived at Marshside just after high tide and some people went to the shoreline and got some good views of knot. In total we saw 69 species during the day.

At a recent committee meeting, we discussed coach trips for 2016. We decided we would not have a winter trip in February. A number of people in the group have expressed an interest in visiting RSPB Bempton Cliffs, so we have decided to go there on 26<sup>th</sup> June which is the peak time to see all the nesting sea birds, including of course the puffins. Bempton also has the largest mainland breeding colony of gannets. You can get close to the action from six, safe cliff-edge viewing platforms. Inside the seabird centre, which has been rebuilt in 2015, there's an exhibition area and large TV screens screening live images from the cliffs. There is a café and decked area overlooking the reserve with tables and chairs.

In response to requests to go somewhere different, we are going to visit the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust reserve at Whisby near Lincoln on 16<sup>th</sup> October. This is a large reserve with a number of pools created from former gravel pits and diverse habitats. There are several nature trails and six hides with a visitor centre and café.

### SPONSORSHIP

At this time of the year I have been contacting our sponsors detailing the group's activities over the last year, thanking them for their support and hoping they will continue sponsorship for the next 12 months. Each sponsor gives us £1 a week.

We have added a new sponsor this year, Prince Farm Feeds, Rugeley Road, Kings Bromley, who supply all kinds of bird seed and pet supplies at very competitive prices and is well worth a visit.

In my letters to sponsors I have expressed the gratitude of the group for their support and promised to circulate any advertising material they provide. I would like to encourage group members to use our sponsors if possible and, if appropriate, mention the group and add your thanks.

### NEXT MEETING: 8<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER

#### **Christmas Social with a short presentation by Ken on Gambia, Photo Display, Food and Drink**

Please bring your favourite wildlife photographs from the last 12 months to display at the December meeting. Please make sure the subject matter is wildlife or landscape based and mounted on card so they can be presented on our display boards. Please note this year that we would like photographs to be no larger than 8" x 12" (A4 size).

Please bring a plate of food. We will provide squash but of course you can bring your own drinks.

If you can't make December, the first meeting of 2016 is on 12<sup>th</sup> January when we will welcome back Craig Round from Speyside Wildlife who will talk about the birds and wildlife of Shetland and Orkney.

### SUTTON COLDFIELD RSPB GROUP NOVEMBER COACH TRIP

Sutton group are running a coach trip to RSPB Rye Meads, Hertfordshire on 15 November. For further information and to book please contact Tony Green on 01827 750633 or [tonygreen777@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:tonygreen777@hotmail.co.uk)