



GUIDELINES ON WHAT TO DO IF YOU FIND A RARE BIRD IN THE COUNTY

The finding of a Rose-coloured Starling in a small village close to Derby in June 2020 caused a few problems due to the then current COVID 19 regulations. We therefore thought a general guide to finding a rare bird under any prevailing circumstances would be a good idea.

First what is classed as a Rare Bird in Derbyshire? This can be split into four categories as follows:

1. Any National Rarity as considered by The British Birds Rarity Committee (a downloadable spreadsheet of species can be found on their website

<https://www.bbrc.org.uk/main-information/species-taxa>

This would obviously include any bird new to Britain.

2. Any species not listed in the current Derbyshire Bird Report, i.e. a new species for Derbyshire.
3. Any species currently on the Derbyshire Rare Bird List as published in the current Derbyshire Bird Report or on the DOS website here

<https://www.derbyshireos.org.uk/recording.php> or at

<https://www.derbyshireos.org.uk/TBYCD.pdf>.

4. Certain sub-species like the many variants of Yellow Wagtail etc. not covered in the above categories.

If you are lucky enough to find a county rarity, please take the following into consideration before releasing the news and always remember that what goes out on social media always stays out there. Please follow the DOS mantra - "Think before you click".

1. The welfare of the bird: if the bird does not look to be in peak condition then think about the effect that a big influx of birders would have.
2. Site location: please consider whether the site can handle an influx of birders, especially if it is on private land with no access via public footpaths. Please make sure that you obtain permission from the landowner before releasing the news and be sure to explain to the landowner, and/or nearby residents, what they may expect. Consider car parking.
3. Safety: a lot of rarities are found at well watched public sites and should cause no problems. However, please remember that most county Gravel Pits are completely private for health and safety reasons and the safety of birders should be taken into consideration. Please also follow any regulations in force at the time e.g. social distancing.



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4. Keep your distance: please stay a safe distance from the bird when watching it so as not to alienate your fellow birders by flushing it or causing it discomfort. Follow the Birdwatcher's Code of Conduct.
5. Rare Breeding Birds: think very carefully before releasing news of any rare breeders. Most may well be Schedule 1 Breeders which means it is illegal to approach the nest without the required licence. A full list of Rare Breeding Birds in the county can be found on the DOS Website. If the bird is not a Schedule 1 breeder (e.g. Long-eared Owl) it is still covered by the Wildlife and Countryside Act and getting too close would be harassment. Also do not forget that egg collectors and some unscrupulous falconers do look at bird watching web sites to glean information.
6. Photography: the bird's welfare must always come first – photography should not disturb their normal activity – approaching too close for that perfect shot may put the bird under duress especially if it is trying to feed. It may also force the bird to vacate the site to the dismay of other birders who are following the rules and keeping their distance. This link is written to help photographers:

<https://www.birdguides.com/articles/british-birds-bird-photography-a-new-code-of-practice/>
7. If the current regulations allow, showing and explaining the bird's occurrence to locals makes you an ambassador for birdwatching and may help to alleviate concerns. Try to give something back: sometimes it may be possible to arrange a bucket collection for donations to a favourite charity.

Finally, remember that all three County Recorders and the DOS Chairman are always available to give help and advice, as are the moderators of the Derbyshire Birders Facebook Group.

