THE PEAK DISTRICT RAPTOR REPORT

2017

SOUTH PEAK RAPTOR STUDY GROUP (SPRSG)
&
PEAK DISTRICT RAPTOR MONITORING GROUP
(PDRMG)
Long-eared Owl, showing the finely barred wingtips and streaked belly of the species (Paul Thomas)

Cover: Merlin, Derbyshire 2017 (Ken Smith)
FOREWORD

This is the seventh joint report of the two Raptor Groups which operate in the Peak District and surrounding areas. A more comprehensive review of breeding success and failures, conservation and persecution news affecting birds of prey, owls and Raven is made possible by the co-operation of both groups, whose members all work as BTO Schedule One licensed operatives within the Northern England Raptor Forum (NERF).

2017 was a disappointing year for many reasons. The headline will no doubt be the failure of Peregrine Falcons to breed successfully in the Dark Peak area for the first time since they recolonised in the 1980s. This, along with the lack of any demonstrable progress being achieved by the work of the Peak District Bird of Prey Initiative, prompted the RSPB to discontinue their involvement with the project. We would like to thank the RSPB and we will continue to work closely with them in trying to stamp out raptor persecution.

We have considered carefully our options regarding our future involvement in the Initiative. It has not been an easy decision and remains an issue of contention. However, we are going to continue (in the short term at least) to support the efforts of the Peak District National Park Authority to continue with the Initiative.

The full 2016-2017 Peak District Bird of Prey Initiative report is included after the Species Accounts; it is followed by the published NERF response to the report.

A further disappointment was the response to the report from a spokesperson representing the local gamekeepers, which was made public after details of a Freedom of Information request were published on the Raptor Persecution UK blog. Contained within the blog is a response made to the Peak District National Park regarding the then imminent publication of the 2016-2017 report, in which they fail to accept that persecution is in any part responsible for the continued poor breeding success and low populations of several key raptor species; this despite working for several years with their representative of the grouse shooting estate owners, the Moorland Association, and even when there are several examples of undeniable illegal persecution which have been publicised by the RSPB’s Investigations Unit.

What this means in practice is that instead of working together to resolve the problem of illegal raptor persecution, it will be necessary to continue to use the raptor groups jointly collated data to highlight the issues that raptor populations are facing in this area. This might well affect relationships on the ground with gamekeepers and shoot owners, but we feel we are left with little choice other than to show how the collation of breeding and persecution data can be used to inform interested parties to ensure that the situation for raptor species improves in the future.

It was however not all bad news and some positives can be taken from the 2017 season. The Merlin population continued to remain stable in the PDRMG area with both the number of successful nests and the productivity of nesting pairs returning to a level similar to the 2012-2015 averages after a poor 2016; there are however concerns for the species in the SPRSG Eastern Moors area. Peregrine numbers in the White Peak and NE Derbyshire continue to grow, despite continued confirmed and suspected nest robberies, while the Goshawk population outside the Upper Derwent Valley also continues to thrive.

There has been some welcome progress made by the raptor groups with regard to increasing their membership numbers and the involvement in several upcoming projects within the study areas - projects aimed at both raising public awareness of issues of persecution and enabling both groups to undertake more detailed scientific study of some species. Nationally there are encouraging signs, in Scotland in particular, that the issues are being taken more seriously. Signs are that change could be
imminent with the strong possibility of the introduction of licensing of shooting estates. This has come after several attempts by the Scottish Government to implement further measures to combat illegal persecution have failed to have any significant impact on the situation.

Members of both our groups continue to put in many hours of fieldwork, not only in the breeding season, but throughout the year, and this enables us to build an ever-increasing database regarding the populations, habits and behaviour of our region’s birds of prey throughout the year. Thanks go to all our members for their continued support, fieldwork and expertise, with particular thanks to members Ken Smith and Paul Thomas for allowing us to publish their excellent photos. Grateful thanks are also given to Rhodri Thomas at Peak Park for his support and financial assistance in the printing of this report. We also thank the following organisations and landowners for allowing access to their land:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ARC Limited  Buxton Lime  Chatsworth Estates  Forest Enterprise
Lafarge Limited  RMC Limited  Severn Trent Water  Tarmac Limited
Sheffield City Council  Yorkshire Water  United Utilities plc  Win Hill Fisheries
T Kirk Forestry  Job Earnshaw Ltd.  Mr & Mrs J White  National Trust
RSPB Dovestone  Peak Park JPB  Derbyshire CC Ranger Service
Derbyshire Wildlife Trust  Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust

and all the others who wish to remain anonymous

Trevor Grimshaw  Coordinator  South Peak Raptor Study Group
Steve Davies  Coordinator  Peak District Raptor Monitoring Group
SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Much of the information in the introduction to each species account has been taken from:

- Holling M. and the Rare Breeding Birds Panel, 2017. Rare breeding birds in the UK in 2015 (British Birds 110: 706 – 754)
- Smith & NERF et al. 2017. NERF Annual Review 2016 (NERF, Heighington)
- and with extra comments from Roy Frost, Mick Taylor and Mike Price

Please note that the species are now arranged in current BOU order.

**RED KITE  *Milvus milvus***
The re-establishment of the Red Kite as a breeding species in Britain has been a major conservation success. From 1989 onwards, Red Kites were reintroduced to the Chilterns in England and the Black Isle in Scotland. By 2011 the Chiltern population had increased to over 800 pairs. From this release area, Red Kites have colonised much of central southern England. Since 1995, six further reintroduction projects have taken place in England and Scotland, and outside these core areas the wide spread of non-breeding records suggests that other populations could appear in time. By far the biggest threat to Red Kites continues to come from illegal poisoning, but shooting is also a problem in some areas. Whilst they may not be the intended target, they are scavengers and will consume poisoned baits placed illegally to kill other species. They are also susceptible to poisoning from second-generation rodenticides, introduced to control rats which had become resistant to first-generation substances such as Warfarin.

The current UK population estimate (including Ireland) is 5000+ pairs, based on figures from the UK & Ireland Red Kite Co-ordination Group, with estimates for Wales & SE England alone totalling 4500+ pairs. The species is now **GREEN** listed.

Sightings of Red Kites in the study areas continue and future breeding remains a distinct possibility within Derbyshire and the Peak District, both areas having plenty of suitable habitat; the Derbyshire Bird Report for 2016 noted that the distribution of records in 1km squares throughout the county showed no obvious habitat or geographical preference, with birds being seen fairly evenly around the county. As in previous years there were a number of sightings of single birds throughout the year, but no breeding behaviour was recorded. A pristine adult was seen in the Brailsford / Kirk Langley area on several dates in late May, whilst in the Beeley Moor / Stone Edge area a moulting adult drifted W in late July, and an adult and a pristine juvenile flew W in early August; possibly the same juvenile was seen again near the same location five days later drifting W.

**MARSH HARRIER  *Circus aeruginosus***
Marsh Harriers have a chequered history as breeding birds in Britain, with a temporary extinction at the end of the 19th century. Numbers subsequently rose before a crash to just one single breeding pair in Suffolk in 1971; however abundance and range have since increased widely as a result of the ban on organochlorine pesticide use, reduced interference from humans and the creation and restoration of wetland habitat.

The Rare Breeding Birds Panel report for 2015 gives a UK total of 343-393 breeding females or pairs, although some ‘pairs’ actually refer to multiple females paired with a polygynous male. There were further signs of range expansion, with the first-ever breeding in Oxfordshire, and the first in Hampshire since 1957. Data submitted to the Panel is however incomplete in the core counties of the range (particularly Essex and Kent, where at least 25 pairs are thought to be unaccounted for), which suggests an encouraging overall picture, with probably 420 – 450 breeding pairs/females in 2015.
The RBBP totals include 39 confirmed breeding pairs, plus 17 probable breeding pairs in Lincolnshire, with comparable figures for Yorkshire of 35 confirmed breeding pairs, with a further four probable breeding pairs; in addition a single pair bred in Nottinghamshire and two pairs bred in Cheshire and Wirral. The species is AMBER listed. The only sighting in the SPRSG recording area reported by one of our members was of an autumn migrant cream-crown flying west over Beeley Moor on 13th August. There were several reports of a number of birds passing through the PDRMG study area during the summer months, suggesting that the upland areas are being used as passage / migration routes. There is potential for this species to breed on moorland as illustrated by the 2017 RSPB video highlighting a persecuted nesting attempt in the North Yorkshire Moors - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6-iyvcvvcBU

HEN HARRIER  *Circus cyaneus*

During the breeding season, Hen Harriers frequent heather moorland, extensive farmland and young forest plantations. In 2010 there were around 662 breeding pairs in Britain; numbers had increased from 630 pairs in 1988 / 89 to 806 pairs in 2004, but a continuous decline has followed. The latest national breeding survey completed in 2016 showed a total of 545 breeding pairs, with the majority in Scotland, 35 in Wales, 46 in Northern Ireland, but just four in England. The principal reason for the decline in the vulnerable English breeding population and its threatened extinction is widely considered to be the continued illegal persecution on, and around, intensively managed northern grouse moors (Stanbury et al. *The risk of extinction for birds in Great Britain*, *British Birds* 110, September 2017). Numbers are now so low and recruitment so poor that it leaves the English population on the brink of being lost entirely. The DEFRA Upland Stakeholder Group Hen Harrier Joint Recovery Emergency Action Plan was issued ahead of the 2016 breeding season, but it did nothing to reverse the decline. Separate reported incidents involving a pole trap, a decoy trap and several satellite-tagged birds suddenly going missing all pointed to the continuance of persecution. There is little evidence of a change in attitude from those who would do harm to the birds in the pursuance of higher numbers of
Red Grouse for shooting, of for any grounds for optimism in the immediate future. The species is **RED** listed.

Given these continuing issues surrounding the very low population levels of Hen Harrier in England, much effort was directed again during 2017 in responding to all sightings of Hen Harriers in and around both groups’ study areas. According to DEFRA only three pairs of Hen Harriers bred successfully in Northern England in 2017; none of these were in the Peak District or on land managed for driven grouse shooting. No sightings were reported during the breeding season from the study areas on the Derbyshire, Staffordshire or South Yorkshire moorlands in 2017. Sporadic sightings of single birds were recorded on the Eastern Moors up to the end of March. A ringtail was seen in late September and a single grey male in October in the same general area.

**GOSHAWK** *Accipiter gentilis*

The Goshawk was almost extinct in Britain by the late 19th century as a result of deforestation and persecution. There were sporadic records of breeding by the species during the 1960s and 70s, many through deliberate releases by falconers. The population has however grown and the RBBP reported over 600 pairs for the first time in 2014. However nationally Goshawks continue to face persecution, particularly in those areas associated with commercial game shooting. The level of persecution can lead to localised extinctions as well as reducing the ability of core populations to expand and colonise new areas. A growing threat is posed by forestry operations and felling of trees in occupied territories during the breeding season, and in some areas recreational activity may also pose a threat. The RBBP reported a further increase in records in 2015 with a total number in the range of 437 – 616 pairs and suggested that in core parts of the range it was likely that not all pairs were found or reported. The species remains **GREEN** listed.

Goshawk were included as a key species in the Peak District Bird of Prey Initiative from 2016 onwards. Peak District Raptor Monitoring Group covered the Upper Derwent Valley area in conjunction with South Peak Raptor Study Group in 2017. To keep the data consistent with previous years, reports from this area have been combined as follows: four traditional sites were monitored throughout the
season; two sites were successful, with six chicks ringed in total from the two sites; at a third site the pair failed, after eggs had been laid, and the pair failed early at the fourth site. Elsewhere in the SPRSG recording area at least 15 sites were successfully occupied and a total of at least 22 young fledged. At two sites pairs bred but failed and at one site a pair was present but the outcome was unknown.

Goshawk were recorded present at six sites in the PDRMG study area in 2017, but sadly there was only one successful breeding attempt. Successful Goshawk nesting attempts remain very low in this study area. With no obvious other explanation for the disparity in breeding success compared with both the neighbouring populations and the historic population, this seems to leave no doubt that illegal and deliberate persecution is the main cause for the continuing low breeding numbers.

**SPARROWHAWK  *Accipiter nisus***

In the breeding season, Sparrowhawks are widespread across most of Britain, with the exception of the northern Scottish uplands. Abundance is highest in lowland areas, such as eastern England, yet particularly low in north-west Scotland and other upland areas. There was a low point in breeding in the early 1960s caused by the widespread use of organochloride pesticides. Some chicks may be predated by Buzzards and other larger raptors, such as Goshawk and Tawny Owl and prolonged cold and wet weather may also have an adverse effect on the species' breeding success. There is also the mistaken belief that Sparrowhawks are responsible for the long-term declines in songbird populations, with the result that there are calls in some quarters for the species population to be controlled, although there is little scientific evidence to support the allegation. Changes in farming procedures may be more relevant.

In 2013 the UK population was estimated at 33,000 – 35,000 pairs; the BTO’s Breeding Bird Survey report for 2016 showed a 22% decrease in England during 2015/16 and overall a 21% decrease in the period 1995 - 2015. The species is **GREEN** listed.

As in previous years, no specific studies of the species have been undertaken in the SPRSG area, but sightings are regular and the Sparrowhawk seemingly continues to thrive in both urban and rural areas.

Other commitments once again resulted in a lower than usual effort expended on this relatively common species in the PDRMG area. However, work continued as usual in the long-term study site in South Yorkshire, where six sites were occupied. Two pairs failed before laying, one pair failed at the egg stage and three nests were successful fledging a total of seven young.

**COMMON BUZZARD  *Buteo buteo***

Nationally the Buzzard remains the most widespread of the UK’s raptors and range extensions particularly into eastern and lowland England continue. However despite the healthy populations in
some areas, there is a lack of breeding success or the absence of adult birds adjacent to grouse rearing areas where the habitat is otherwise most suitable for the species. This is strongly suggestive of human interference. The BTO Population Trend graphs show a marked decrease in NW England from a peak around 2010 and the overall trend masks a more local situation where in some areas numbers remain below the habitat carrying capacity. The RSPB’s Birdcrime 2015 report published an analysis of 176 individuals convicted of bird of prey persecution over the period 1990 – 2015, which showed 68% were gamekeepers and a further 6% were game-related. The Birdcrime report confirmed the shooting of 16 Buzzards and the poisoning of another 15 during 2015.

In 2009 the population was estimated to be between 57,000 and 79,000 pairs, and the BTO’s BBS report for 2016 for England showed a 2% increase in 2015 – 16 and a 194% increase in the period 1995 – 2015. The species is GREEN listed.

SPRSG no longer systematically monitors the species as it is so widespread, although continued lack of successful breeding adjacent to the Upper Derwentdale grouse moors points towards persecution, yet again, as the likely cause.

In the PDRMG study area Common Buzzard continues to thrive away from the grouse moors with all known sites occupied early in the season; failures continue to be common in areas adjacent to the grouse moors. Again, due to time constraints, the species was not monitored as a priority in 2017. Outside the Peak District, but still with the PDRMG study area, an injured bird was found by a member of the public near to Stainborough. An x-ray revealed that the bird had a broken wing and shotgun pellets lodged in the wing [https://www.rspb.org.uk/about-the-rspb/about-us/media-centre/press-releases/buzzard-shot-in-barnsley-sparks-investigation/]. There was a further incident close to above which was also reported to the police: a nest failed when the young starved due to the apparent disappearance of the adult birds. Tyre track, cigarette butts and fresh shotgun cartridges were discovered under the nest tree.

OSPREY  *Pandion haliaetus*

Ospreys became virtually extinct as a breeding species in Britain during the early 1900s, due to persecution and egg collecting. With increased protection, there has been a steady increase in numbers and range in Scotland and a spread into Cumbria and Northumberland in the 21st century. A translocation programme to re-establish a breeding population in England began at Rutland Water in 1996, and the first successful breeding took place in 2001. Birds from this programme have also settled at two sites in Wales and records of non-breeding Ospreys are widely distributed throughout Britain. Ospreys are generally liked or at least tolerated by most people, and as the population has expanded they have had to move into more areas closer to people, nesting in country parks and near footpaths etc. This has brought about new threats, disturbance by birdwatchers, photographers, fishermen, farmers and walkers. There is still concern about egg-collcting and potential persecution, but the threats are perhaps minor as the popularity of the Osprey with nest-cameras, blogs, and live-viewing continues to grow.

The RBBP assessed the 2015 UK population at 219-245 pairs, with a minimum of 347 young fledged. This represents a small gain in most areas, apart from Wales, where the number of confirmed breeding pairs remained at four. The species is AMBER listed.

Ospreys are seen quite frequently in the spring and the autumn months, the increase in populations around the UK resulting in sight records throughout both study areas. Although Ospreys did not breed in the Peak District in 2017, there continue to be signs that colonisation may soon occur and action is being taken to try to encourage this.

BARN OWL  *Tyto alba*

Year round, the species is widely distributed in Britain, avoiding only high-altitude and urban areas but being absent from the remoter islands of Scotland. The usual ever-present threats of habitat destruction, barn conversions and reductions in many agri-environmental schemes, together with deaths due to traffic collisions and other accidents due to the human environment, affect the spread of the population; however, nestbox provision, captive release programmes and the provision and management of field margins, as well as some milder winters, may have facilitated breeding population recovery in some areas of the UK.
The Barn Owl Trust estimated the national population prior to the 2013 breeding season to be around 4,000 pairs. The work done by the many Barn Owl groups around the country to increase the number of boxes, especially those at higher altitudes where they were not thought to breed in any numbers, may have resulted in a considerably higher population today. The species is **GREEN** listed. No monitoring of the species was undertaken by SPRSG members in 2017, but photographs of an individual at a roost site within the SPRSG recording area were taken by member Ken Smith early in the year.

Barn Owls were recorded in occupation at three sites within the PDRMG area in 2017, but only two pairs were recorded actually breeding. It is possible that there may have been some late breeding attempts, which were unable to be followed up due to time constraints and weather conditions. With the support of the Derbyshire Ornithological Society, the groups are continuing to construct and erect a number barn owl nest boxes for use within the study areas.

**LITTLE OWL  *Athene noctua***  
The British population of the Little Owl derives from introductions made during the late 1800s. By 1900, Little Owls were regular breeders in several English counties and a period of rapid expansion followed, lasting into the 1930s. There has been a downturn in breeding success in recent decades, but little direct evidence to explain the losses in the UK, but continental studies suggest poor survival rates for juveniles to be a primary driver linked to changes in farming practices and habitat. The BTO’s Breeding Bird Survey report gives a 57% decrease during the period 1995 – 2015. The similar decline in mainland Europe has resulted in its listing as a Species of European Conservation. The species is not monitored on a regular basis by either group but remains a fairly common resident.

**TAWNY OWL  *Strix aluco***  
The UK breeding population has fallen by about a third in the last 25 years and this decline may be linked to secondary poisoning from the new generation of rodenticides; road casualties occur, whilst some broods in the larger forests are undoubtedly predated – most probable at the fledgling stage – by Goshawks that might be nesting close by; the increasing population of Buzzards might also now create conflict between the two species. The BTO’s *Breeding Bird Survey Report 2016* gives a 29% decrease during the period 1995 – 2015. The species is now **AMBER** listed. The species is not monitored on a regular basis by the SPRSG but remains a fairly common resident. Seven sites were checked in the PDRMG area and six pairs were recorded breeding. Six young were ringed from three pairs, with brood sizes being better than in 2016.
The Long-eared Owl breeds at scattered locations in Britain and throughout Ireland, where it is the most abundant owl, probably benefitting from the absence of the competitively dominant Tawny Owl. Breeding distribution is acknowledged to be subject to under-recording owing to the species’ discreet nature and preference for dense woodland. The main threat to the species appears to be competition for habitat with Tawny Owls and predation from larger raptors. Breeding attempts are affected by prey availability and in poor vole years large numbers of adults do not breed; those that do breed produce smaller clutches.

The RBBP give a total of 239 – 314 pairs in 2015, with fewer pairs reported from Wales and southern Scotland – but no data were available from Northern Ireland, where the species is the commonest owl and greatly under-recorded. The species is **GREEN** listed.

Once again this was a poor year for the species in 2017, with only one pair proved to have bred in the SPRSG area; at least two juveniles fledged, but four – possibly five – young were reported but not confirmed.

Long-eared Owl were present throughout the study area in 2017, but due to an apparent later breeding season they were not fully monitored by PDRMG. Three young were ringed from one nest in the Glossop area.

The core breeding range of the Short-eared Owl is the open rough country of northern England and Scotland, where heather moorland, rough grassland, bogs and young forestry plantations are favoured. Elsewhere breeding records are widely scattered and involve small numbers of pairs in lowland coastal marshes and extensive grasslands. Breeding numbers and success fluctuate with prey abundance, predominantly determined by the local vole population, but possibly also by late winter and early spring weather conditions. The difficulties of surveying this species always affect any accurate assessment of populations and even in good vole years sightings can be hard to come by and interpret.

The RBBP give a total of 110 – 290 pairs for 2015 and stress that the data presented are heavily dependent on incidental records provided by raptor specialists working on the uplands. It was a poor year for productivity in Scotland, yet one of the best years for the species in northern England, with NERF data giving 39 successful pairs producing at least 46 young. However the NERF report for 2016 gives a total of only 11 territorial pairs, of which only five were known to lay eggs and no actual young were known to fledge successfully. The species is **AMBER** listed.

SPRSG reported that on the North Staffordshire moorlands, at least two sites were occupied during the breeding season but the outcomes at both were unknown. In the Upper Derwentdale area only one site seems to have been occupied and again the outcome was unknown. On the Eastern Moors possibly two pairs were present, one of which bred and fledged two young. There is also some evidence of persecution on some grouse moors.
In the PDRMG study area there were several birds recorded in suitable breeding habitat throughout the breeding season; one nesting attempt was recorded in the north of the study area, from which four young were ringed. Short-eared Owls remain a difficult species to study due to their mainly nocturnal habits and breeding in areas that are not easily and safely accessible late in the evening.

KESTREL  *Falco tinnunculus*  
The Kestrel is one of the most abundant raptors in Britain, although it is absent from areas of south-west and central Wales and some upland areas of western Scotland. Densities are highest in central and eastern England, although the British Breeding Bird Survey of 2016 reported a 24% reduction in the Kestrel population between 1995 and 2015 in the UK. Based on material from the BTO Bird Atlas 2007 – 2011, in Britain the Kestrel has lost its position as the most widespread raptor to the Buzzard. The most recent UK population estimate of the species, reported by Musgrove *et al.* [2013], was 46,000 individuals. The BBS report 2016 gave figures which showed that numbers in England decreased by 25% in 2015 – 16. The Kestrel remains however widespread and is perhaps the raptor species most readily identified by the general public. The species is AMBER listed. SPRSG did not monitor the species in any widespread way during 2017 but accepts that possible further study is warranted; similarly in the PDRMG area no detailed monitoring took place, but indications suggested that populations are still on a slow decline.

MERLIN  *Falco columbarius*  

The Merlin's breeding preference is for uplands, especially heather-dominated moorland. The breeding population in Britain has been the subject of three recent national surveys, which showed that, although numbers increased from 1983-4 to 1993-4, figures from a 2008 survey suggested a subsequent 13% decline to 900 – 1,500 pairs. Possible reasons suggested for this decline include changes in prey availability and in nesting habitat through more frequent heather burning and the maturing of forest plantations. Perhaps the aspect of Merlin biology which most concerns raptor workers in some areas is the decrease in numbers of principal prey items, such as Meadow Pipits, Skylarks and Starlings, which can affect the breeding condition of the adults and the survival rates of the young. Another trend of the last few years that has serious potential implications for the welfare
of chicks is that of unseasonal heavy rainfall which can threaten brood survival. Direct persecution in all the usual ways by gamekeepers etc. is generally minimal, although it still occurs on some shooting estates. Direct poisoning from carrion sources is not an issue, but absorption of contaminants in the environment via prey consumption is potentially an increasing problem.

The RBBP states that almost the same numbers of Merlin pairs were monitored in 2015 as in 2014, covering about a quarter of the population based on the results of the latest national survey (Ewing et al. 2011), who estimated the population to be in the region of 1,160 breeding pairs. The figure for 2015 was given as 282 – 381 breeding pairs, although 17 possible breeding pairs were omitted from the table, since these referred to single sightings or signs of occupation in suitable habitats with no further evidence. The species remains RED listed.

Within the SPRSG areas no breeding pairs were located on the Staffordshire moorlands in 2017, whilst in the Upper Derwent area just two pairs were located, one of which fledged four young from four eggs – these were all ringed and two of the young were pit-tagged; the second pair failed, the reason being unclear, with only the female present in late June. As in 2016, there was no breeding on the Eastern Moors, with only sporadic sightings of single birds up to late February and from the end of August. Despite there still being plenty of suitable habitat, the lack of any breeding pairs on the Eastern Moors needs further in-depth study.

In the PDRMG area 21 sites were occupied by pairs and two sites had at least a single bird in attendance. Thirteen pairs were successful, fledging 46 young. Productivity of successful nest sites returned to the levels in line with the 2012-2015 average after suffering a decline in 2016.

The project to tag Merlin using Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) Tags under the umbrella of the Northern England Raptor Forum continued in 2017. PIT tags work in a similar way to microchips for a dog or cat except that they are mounted externally (on a ring) rather than being inserted under the skin and are read by a receiver placed by the nest. If sufficient birds are tagged, the data collected would enable a better understanding of dispersal of Merlin that have fledged in both areas, allowing more to be learned about breeding recruitment and site fidelity.

**HOBBY  *Falco subbuteo***

The Hobby is a breeding migrant occupying a wide range of habitat throughout southern Britain and its wide-ranging behaviour can make breeding evidence difficult to come by. There has been a large-scale expansion in range from southern England to the north, west and east and the species is widespread south of a line from the Humber to the Mersey, with the exception of west Wales and Cornwall. North of this line, they are thinly distributed as far north as southern Northumberland, although there is some evidence of recent breeding in the Scottish Highlands. The Hobby is difficult to detect at breeding sites leading to under-recording, and further local studies such as those described in Clements et al. (2016) could provide the foundation for more accurate county population estimates. Member, Anthony Messenger, was a joint contributor to this paper, which suggested that a figure of 3,000 breeding pairs for the UK would be a reasonable estimate.

The RBBP gave a figure of 225 – 899 breeding pairs in 2015 and highlighted the strong increase of +172% over 25 years. The panel accepted that continued low coverage of the species in its core range reduced the value of the panel’s figures to inform population estimates accurately. The species is **GREEN** listed.

SPRSG member Anthony Messenger confirmed that in his main 10k square core study area in South Derbyshire seven pairs were present and six of the pairs were successful, with one pair definitely failing. 13 young fledged in total, of which ten were ringed (2.17 per successful pair, 1.86 per breeding pair present).

Across the whole of Anthony’s southern study area there were 24 pairs present (including the core area). There were 22 successful pairs, one definite failure and one pair where the outcome was unknown, although failure was suspected; 49 young fledged (2.23 per successful pair, 2.04 per breeding pair present); a total of 29 young were ringed.

An interesting observation was recorded as follows by Anthony: at one site two young were, perhaps surprisingly, successfully reared in a fairly exposed ash tree nest, despite regular disturbance from corvids (mainly Jackdaws) that were roosting in a small wood about 80 metres away from the nest. On a number of occasions prior to and post-roosting, several Jackdaws were seen perching on the
edge of the nest both during incubation, whilst female was actually sitting, and also during the young stage.

In NE Derbyshire and the Peak District, at least eight further pairs bred successfully; two pairs were thought to have nested but failed at an early stage and six other pairs were present in the recording area, but there was no confirmation that they had bred; at two regular sites no birds were seen in 2017.

In the Yorkshire study area, PDRMG recorded ten nesting attempts fledging 21 young, whilst in the Cheshire study area, the group recorded 6 nesting attempts. Seven young fledged from 3 nests, one nest failed due to infertile eggs, the female sitting well beyond the expected hatching date for the second year in a row. Two nests in woodland were not located, but birds were present and displaying all the expected behaviour of pairs feeding young. There were a number of sightings at historic territories, but the nests failed to be located, nor were any fledged young observed. As always with this elusive species it cannot categorically be said if breeding occurred or not.

**PEREGRINE** *Falco peregrinus*

Following the ban on organochlorine pesticides in agriculture, there has been a remarkable recovery in the Peregrine population and the species is now widespread in Britain. It breeds in upland and coastal areas with suitable cliffs, and across much of the lowlands, where it utilizes quarries and man-made structures and is the only species of rare breeding bird which nests in all recording areas. Regrettably the threat to the Peregrine has not disappeared: persecution is now the largest threat facing the species. They are targeted by four groups: egg collectors, gamekeepers, those taking eggs on the point of hatching or chicks, sometimes to be smuggled overseas, and pigeon fanciers. Over the last two years this last threat has been increasing at a significant rate. Whilst research shows that racing pigeon losses to Peregrines are actually low, in some parts of the country, particularly at sites close to the urban fringe, it is apparent that pigeon fanciers are responsible for persecuting Peregrines. Those pairs nesting in boxes or trays on buildings in town and city centres are however generally safe from interference. The threat faced by Peregrines on driven grouse moors continues unabated and it is clear that the large number of breeding failures here can only be attributed to human interference.

The RBBP report for 2015 gave a figure of 733 – 997 pairs and suggested that there was some element of under-recording in that year after the sixth UK breeding survey of the Peregrine carried out in 2014, which will provide a new total of 1,701 pairs. Full survey results will be published by Wilson *et al.* (in press.): *The breeding population of Peregrine Falcon in the UK, Isle of Man and Channel Isles in 2014 (Bird Study).* The species is GREEN listed.

In the SPRSG recording area 40 home ranges were checked in 2017, including four traditional sites in the Upper Derwent Valley, where two were found to be occupied in the early part of the season. Further repeat visits found both these territories to be vacant, and in one case – at Alport Castles - where the pair had previously consisted of two adult birds, one of the pair had been replaced by an immature bird (a classic sign of persecution); the eventual failure at this site follows three consecutive successful years in 2014 – 2016 after a run of six failures since the last breeding success in 2007. Of the remaining 36 sites checked, five sites were thought to be unoccupied, but reports from a quarry worker at one of these sites suggested that an adult pair was in fact present and may have bred; at a further site initially logged as untenanted, an adult female and two calling juveniles were seen in July by a member engaged in other conservation work in the dale, suggesting possible successful breeding here for the first time. At one site in NE Derbyshire – thought to have been robbed last year-only single birds were seen early in the season and a pair in late June, although no breeding was suspected.

Pairs were seen to be present at 30 sites outside the Upper Derwent area; at two locations pairs were seen early in the season only: the installation of a nest camera at the Roaches may have contributed to the lack of a successful outcome for the Peregrine nesting attempt at this site, as the camera was seen to be highly conspicuous; whilst a pair seen regularly over Longstone Edge was assumed to have moved to a crag in a nearby dale and was not seen again at Longstone Edge – this pair bred for the first time at this new location and raised three young. At a further site in Dovedale (where adults were seen on three visits) the nest site couldn't be confirmed, but the pair probably bred.
Of the remaining 27 confirmed breeding pairs, two sites were suspected of having been robbed (one of chicks, one of eggs) and a further seven failed - some suspiciously, others perhaps not. There were three urban sites as usual: Derby Cathedral, Sheffield St. George's Church and Belper East Mill; a total of ten young fledged from these sites, with the three young in Sheffield being ringed by member Steve Samworth. The male at the Derby site was a new BTO ringed bird. These ten young are not included in the totals below. From the remaining 15 successful sites at least 36 chicks fledged successfully. The two NE Derbyshire quarries were successful, with three young reared at each. At one site in the SPRSG area Steve Downing and RSPB rehomed two youngsters rescued from Clee Hill in Shropshire, after the adult pair were found poisoned; three chicks were rescued: one went to Salisbury Cathedral and featured on BBC Television’s Springwatch, while the other two came to a successful site in our area and joined the three original chicks; all five youngsters fledged successfully in late June.

Three new breeding sites were discovered this year: the dale site previously mentioned fledged three young; a new quarry site had a breeding pair which may have moved from one of two nearby unoccupied sites - but the birds unfortunately failed; in the Manifold Valley the birds were assumed to have moved from the previous traditional site and fledged three young on another natural crag, after the National Trust closed the climbing face there.

Thanks are given to Vic Pearson, who supplied breeding data from a number of sites in the Buxton area.

Six territories were found to be occupied by pairs in the PDRMG study area and another with at least one bird present. Of the territories known to be occupied by pairs, disappointingly just one pair was proven to have laid eggs; this pair however failed at the egg stage and so for the first time since 1984, when the species first recolonised the area, there were no successful Peregrine Falcon breeding attempts in the Dark Peak.

RAVEN *Corvus corax*

The Raven is now as much a bird of pastoral or mixed lowland farmland and forestry as it is of the uplands, having massively expanded its range eastwards. The present distribution includes most of Britain and Ireland. Expansion into the lowlands has been accompanied by the use of quarries for nesting, although the majority of birds in these areas nest in trees. Although persecution has reduced nationally and the population is expanding in both number and range, the threat of persecution remains a danger in some areas, particularly where the species comes into conflict with the game shooting community and some shepherds; in some parts of the UK they are both shot and poisoned.

In recent years there has been a proliferation of gas guns being used in the uplands, including on and adjacent to SSSIs and SPAs which are designated as such for rare and vulnerable birds; justification for the use of these indiscriminate bird scaring devices is often given on the grounds of protection for wader chicks and new born lambs.

In 2009 the population was estimated at 7,400 pairs in the UK (Musgrove *et al.* 2013) and the 2016 BBS report showed a 5% increase 2015 – 2016 for England, and a 130% increase in 1995 – 2015. The species is **GREEN** listed.

The SPRSG recording area contains a healthy population of breeding Ravens, with most White Peak quarries and those in NE Derbyshire having successful breeding pairs with broods of three or four young. In the south of the recording area (south of Carsington Water) 23 tree nests were located, all of which were successful, but brood numbers were not always ascertained. Seven pairs nested in Scots Pine, six in Corsican Pine, three in Cedar, two in Oak, two in Wellingtonia, one in Larch, one in Norway Spruce and one in Sycamore.

Raven, in common with the larger raptor species, appears to be seriously underrepresented as a breeding species in the PDRMG study area. Three successful nests were recorded in the study area and a further successful nest was recorded just outside the area.
**PEAK DISTRICT BIRD OF PREY INITIATIVE - 2016 & 2017 REPORT**

**Project Overview**

Five leading land management and conservation organisations in the Peak District National Park got together in 2011 to develop a 5-year initiative in a bid to try and boost birds of prey populations in the Dark Peak.

The organisations involved - the Moorland Association, the National Trust, Natural England, Peak District National Park Authority and RSPB - set five-year targets for healthy sustainable breeding populations of three target species- Merlin, Peregrine Falcon and Short-eared Owl- based on population levels in the 1990s, and from 2016 extended to include Hen Harrier and Goshawk.

Together the five organisations have funded an independent field worker (Jamie Horner) to help ascertain accurate breeding data and to facilitate co-operation between raptor workers and shooting interests.

The two raptor groups in the Peak District work together to monitor and record the breeding success of raptors in the Peak District. The Peak District Raptor Monitoring Group (PDRM) and South Peak Raptor Study Group (SPRSG) are both committed to offering Jamie (and the five funding organisations listed above) their full support and co-operation in trying to achieve the described aims and objectives.

The survey methods being used are in line with the methods documented in *Raptors: A field guide for surveys and monitoring*, Jon Hardey, Humphrey Crick, Chris Wernham, Helen Riley, Brian Etheridge and Des Thompson- Section 2.2.1 Counts of occupied home ranges and active nests.

**Overview of Results**

It is widely agreed that in terms of increased raptor populations in the Dark Peak, the Peak District Bird of Prey Initiative 2012-2015 failed to meet its targets.

One area where the Initiative has made improvements is in the relationships between raptor fieldworkers and gamekeepers. However, this fragile relationship is currently under pressure with continued evidence of raptor persecution incidents, a lack of progress with regards to increasing successful breeding populations of the target species, and gamekeepers’ concerns about the portrayal of their work in the media and on social media.

Had the Initiative shown any reasonable success in boosting bird of prey populations, it could have been upheld as an example of how raptor conservation and shooting interests could work together to the benefit of all parties. Unfortunately, this has not been demonstrated to date.

All the partners of 2011-15 Initiative agreed to continue the work in 2016 & 2017. It was agreed that the project should be widened to include the South West Peak District Area and to include Goshawk and Hen Harrier in the project objectives. No targets have been set for Goshawk or Hen Harrier.

With the wider scope, the Initiative needs to reconsider the initial agreed targets for the species and the revised area now being monitored. This should include two additional Peregrine Falcon sites and five additional Merlin sites to remain consistent with previous years reporting.
Several proven and suspected persecution incidents have come to light since the 2015 project review and some areas have suffered a catastrophic failure of larger breeding raptors.

The very low numbers of larger raptors breeding successfully in the Dark Peak and surrounding area- in particular the lack of any successful breeding by Peregrines in the Dark Peak in 2017, the first time since they recolonised the area in 1984- continues to give real cause for concern. By comparison, we are offered an insight into what success could be witnessed by looking at the population growth and breeding success that species such as Peregrine, Goshawk and Buzzard achieve in the areas away from the Dark Peak.

**2016 SEASON- OVERVIEW**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Territories checked</th>
<th>Territories occupied by pairs</th>
<th>Territories occupied by single birds</th>
<th>Pairs known to have laid eggs</th>
<th>No. of pairs known to have fledged young</th>
<th>No. young fledged</th>
<th>Agreed Targets (based on figs. at SPA designation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peregrine</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15 prs by 2015 (+2 SW Peak)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-eared Owl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5-yr ave. 25 prs by 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merlin</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>27 prs by 2013, 32 by 2015 (+5 SW Peak)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goshawk</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>None set</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hen Harrier</td>
<td>Vast areas</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Sporadic sightings of single birds</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>None set</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2016 Peregrine Falcon (Falco peregrinus)**

Nine territories were found to be occupied, eight by pairs and one by at least a single bird.

Repeat visits found most of the unsuccessful territories had been vacated during the season.

Of the eight territories known to be occupied by pairs, four pairs are known to have laid eggs three of which were successful and fledged a total of eight young. At the fourth site the eggs or small young were missing from the scrape with the reason for failure unknown. However, there were a large number of reported thefts of peregrine falcon eggs/small young elsewhere in the North of England in
2016. The lack of evidence of natural loss leads to the suspicion that this nesting attempt may have suffered the same fate.

The addition of the South West Peak District to the project area resulted in one additional successful Peregrine nesting attempt at the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust site, the Roaches.

**2016 Short-eared Owl** (*Asio flammeus*)

No Short-eared Owls were recorded breeding in the Peak District in 2016, the weather and the suspected low vole productivity are thought to be the main reason behind the lack of breeding birds.

Several pairs were recorded displaying early in the season prior to the snow in March; after the cold spell, sporadic sightings of single birds were recorded.

**2016 Merlin** (*Falco columbarius*)

The number of occupied territories continues to be stable at around twenty-four pairs. In 2016 there was a larger than usual disparity between the numbers of sites initially occupied and the number of actual nesting attempts when compared to an average to the previous 4 years of the study. There were also several failures to report (see below). Productivity was lower in 2016, which we believe this was principally down to adverse weather at key stages of the breeding cycle.

The number of young per occupied site dropped from a project average of circa 2.3 to 1.6 in 2016. It is worth mentioning that that the number of young per successful site remains good with an average 3.45 young fledging per successful nest.

**2016 Goshawk** (*Accipiter gentilis*)

Goshawks were recorded at ten sites, eight pairs and two sites with at least a single bird in occupation.

At least seven pairs were known to have laid eggs and behaviour suggested a further pair may have also laid eggs but the nest was not located before the birds disappeared.

Four Pairs were successful fledging nine young.

The remaining four pairs failed in circumstances unexplainable by natural occurrence with evidence of direct persecution at three sites and disappearance of the birds at the fourth.

**2016 Hen Harrier** (*Circus cyaneus*)

Single birds were recorded on very few occasions during the early part of the season but there was no evidence of any birds pairing up. The number of reported sightings was much lower in 2016 than in previous years.

The picture for the whole of England was of a very poor breeding season with just three successful nests, none of which were on grouse moors.
# 2017 SEASON- OVERVIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Territories checked</th>
<th>Territories occupied by pairs</th>
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<th>Pairs known to have laid eggs</th>
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<th>Agreed Targets (based on figs. at SPA designation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peregrine</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15 prs by 2015 (+2 SW Peak)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-eared Owl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Please see the species summary below</td>
<td></td>
<td>5-yr ave. 25 prs by 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merlin</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>50+</td>
<td>27 prs by 2013, 32 by 2015 (+5 SW Peak)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goshawk</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>None set</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hen Harrier</td>
<td>Vast areas</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Few sightings of single birds</td>
<td>ON/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>None set</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 2017 Peregrine Falcon

Eight territories were recorded to be occupied by pairs, a further site had a single bird in occupation. Repeat visits found most of the territories were vacant or in some cases where pairs had previously consisted of two adult birds one of the pair had been replaced by an immature bird.

Of the eight territories known to be occupied by pairs, four pairs are known to have laid eggs, there were no successful breeding attempts recorded in the BOPI study area in 2017. This is the first year that Peregrines have not nested successfully in the Dark Peak since they first recolonised the area in 1984.

The installation of a nest camera may have contributed to the lack of a successful outcome for the Peregrine nesting attempt at one site, as the camera was seen to be highly conspicuous.

## 2017 Short-eared Owl

Short-eared Owl activity was very limited in 2017, despite there being an apparent upturn in small mammal abundance (this may have come too late for many pairs). Other species that depend on
small mammal prey (Long-eared Owl, Tawny Owl, Barn Owl and Kestrel) responded better to the reported increase in small mammal populations with a good breeding seasons recorded in many areas of the UK. Two pairs of Short-eared Owl were recorded breeding and birds were recorded at two other sites but breeding could not be proven.

2017 Merlin

The number of occupied Merlin territories remains stable.

The number of occupied sites recording a breeding attempt returned to a similar level to the rest of the study period (after a dip in 2016).

Productivity of successful nest sites also returned to the levels in line with the 2012-2015 average in 2017 after suffering in 2016.

The number of young fledging per successful site remains good, with an average 3.57 young per successful nest.

As in 2014, 2015 and 2016 there was no proven breeding for the Eastern Moors area. Various theories for the lack of breeding Merlin in these areas have been discussed and all are worthy of further investigation. However, it is likely that multiple factors have contributed to their failure to breed successfully in recent years. To better understand the issues a funded scientific study may well be required. Perhaps more worrying is that in the last few years pairs of birds do not appear to be returning to this area to enable them to breed.

2017 Goshawk

Goshawk were recorded at seventeen sites, thirteen pairs and four sites where a single bird was in occupation.

Six pairs were known to have laid eggs and three pairs were successful fledging nine young. Three nests failed, two with the apparent loss of one of the adult birds.

2017 Hen Harrier

Given the continued low number of successfully breeding Hen Harrier in England, it is unsurprising that we can only report a handful of Hen Harrier sightings in the study area in 2017 breeding season. Sightings included a late sky-dancing grey male in the north of the study area.

RECORDED PERSECUTION AND OTHER INCIDENTS SINCE THE 2015 REVIEW

Reported Incidents

- **Osprey** found grounded, died before being recovered, injuries consistent with being caught in an illegally set trap.
- **Common Buzzard** found dead with visual damage, sent for x-ray, contained a large amount of lead shot (heavy gauge cartridge used).
• **Goshawk** nest containing eggs failed, a shotgun cartridge wad was discovered under the nest and damaged Goshawk feathers close by (damage indicating that the bird had been shot).
• RSPB reported one failed **Goshawk** nest containing eggs in 2015, with video/audio evidence of persecution at night.
• **Peregrine** found injured in the SW Peak (later died), x-ray by vet proved bird was shot.
• Tarra, a young female **Hen Harrier** tagged as part of the Langholm study in Scotland, recorded her last known fix in the northern part of the study area.
• **Merlin** young missing from nest; no evidence of predation. Nest was OK one week earlier.

**Other Incidents**

• **Goshawk** site failed despite a pair of birds seen displaying and male carrying food into a wood indicating a probable breeding attempt, nest not located. Birds disappeared.
• **Goshawk** nest containing eggs failed, extensive camp built nearby.
• **Merlin** eggs/small young disappeared, evidence of nest location being marked by persons unknown for ease of relocating.
• **Merlin** pair (adult birds) failed without explanation after laying eggs, birds no longer in attendance.
• **Merlin** several pairs disappeared from occupied sites pre-laying, despite breeding behaviour being recorded.
• **Peregrine** failed nesting attempt West Yorkshire, scrape empty despite female being observed brooding and turning eggs for over 10 days.
• Complete breeding failure of **Peregrine Falcon** in the Dark Peak in 2017.

In addition a number of other incidents, such as publicly released footage allegedly of a gamekeeper with a decoy raptor on National Trust land, attracted significant media and/or social media attention.

**NB** These are collated from raptor groups’ data and publicly available press releases. There may well be ongoing investigations from either/both the RSPB and the Police.

-00-
The Current Status of the Peak District Bird of Prey Initiative

Recent social media publications have referred to the Peak District Bird of Prey Initiative which is in disarray after the members failed to agree a joint statement following the publication of their latest report. The Peak District, including the National Park, has a justified reputation as a raptor persecution hotspot. The laudable aim of the initiative was to find a new way of parties working together to increase the number of raptors breeding within the National Park. Unfortunately the initiative has failed spectacularly with the numbers of breeding pairs of key species falling and not increasing as planned.

NERF members, the Peak District Raptor Monitoring Group, have worked tirelessly within this initiative and we fully support their frustration both with initiative in general and with the response of the Moorland Association (MA) in particular. Once again the MA has nailed it’s colours to mast by refusing to acknowledge the true extent of the problem and at the same time continuing their tactics of discrediting the RSPB, volunteer raptor workers and now they have turned their attention to the Police. According to FOI responses the MA are refusing to accept that an Osprey found in the area with two fractured legs was not the subject of a crime and want the incident expunging from the record. This incident was thoroughly and professionally investigated by Derbyshire Police and the post-mortem results concluded that the injuries were consistent with being caught in an illegal spring trap.

What will it take for those in authority, including the Government, to wake up to the fact that the MA is a lobbying organisation committed only to benefitting their members’ interests. Of course it is not just this group where they seek to spread their influence, they are members of PAW and use the same tactics in that forum. It id NERF´s opinion that unless they demonstrate a change in attitude towards species’ protection they should no longer be treated as equals in BoP protection forums.

NERF fully understands the reasons why the RSPB has withdrawn from the initiative and we look forward to working with them in their Upland Skies project. As for the Peak District BOP Initiative, 2018 is likely to be make or break year. Further failure to achieve its stated goals will inevitably lead to a withdrawal of co-operation from NERF members. Whilst this would be regrettable continuing with the status quo is no longer acceptable.

31 Jan 2018
SORBY BRECK RINGING GROUP
RINGING RECOVERIES AND SIGHTINGS REPORTED IN 2017

KESTREL
EY03738  23/06/2012  1  Thorpe Salvin, S Yorks (SK5381)
03/07/2017  S=F  Sheepbridge, Chesterfield, Derbys (SK3775)
18 km, 5yrs 10 days
road casualty, now released

EY19821  09/06/2014  1  Oakerthorpe, Derbys (SK3855)
11/11/2017  XL  Stonebroom, Derbys (SK4159)
5 km, 3yrs 155 days
drowned in water butt

EY19824  09/06/2014  1  Oakerthorpe, Derbys (SK3855)
19/09/2015  XF  Higham, Derbys (SK3959)
4 km, 1yr 102 days
road casualty, a late report

EZ54079  09/06/2017  1  Ulley Beeches, S Yorks (SK4787)
26/08/2017  XL  near Ulley, S Yorks (SK4787)
0 km, 78 days
at site of wind turbine

PEREGRINE
GF88390  17/07/2004  1M  Site Confidential, Derbyshire (SK09)
15/04/2017  //  Retford, Notts (SK7080)
68 km, 12yrs 272 days
ring only found

GV25294  27/05/2017  1  Wakefield Cathedral, W Yorks (SE3320)
20/07/2017  VV  Swillington Ings, W Yorks (SE3828)
11 km, 54 days

BARN OWL
GR46835  04/07/2012  6F  Greasley Estate, near Greasley, Notts (SK4849)
08/05/2017  R  Hardwick Hall, Derbys (SK4564)
16km, 4yrs 308 days

GR31567  31/08/2012  1  Toadpool Farm, near Staveley, Derbys (SK4377)
04/07/2017  RB  Site Confidential, Disley, Cheshire (SJ98)
48km, 4 yrs 307 days
at artificial nest box

GC43756  17/09/2012  1  Site Confidential, Sheffield (SK49)
30/01/2017  XL  Sunnyside, Rotherham, S Yorks (SK4893)
7km, 4yrs 135 days
possibly shot

GV25016  13/06/2016  1  Letwell, S Yorks (SK5587)
23/02/2017  X  Worksop, Notts (SK5879)
8 km, 255 days

GV25365  15/06/2016  1  Rough Wood, Derbys (SK2479)
09/08/2017  XF  Hathensage, Derbys (SK2282)
5 km, 55 days

GV25028  23/09/2016  1  Slade Hooton, S Yorks (SK5289)
22/06/2017  R  Hardwick Wood, S Yorks (SK4886)
6 km, 272 days

GC20738  13/06/2017  1  Woodhead Farm, Handleby, Derbys (SK3662)
11/11/2017  XF  Gratton, Bakewell, Derbys (SK2161)
15 km, 151 days

LITTLE OWL
EN50906  27/05/2011  4F  Pilsley, Derbys (SK4261)
02/05/2017  R  Pilsley, Derbys (SK4261)
0km, 5 yrs 340 days

Age/Sex Codes.
1 = ringed as nesting
2 = born anytime including present year
3 = born present year
4 = born anytime but not present year
5 = born previous year
6 = born anytime but not this year or previous year
7 = born two years before
8 = hatched three or more years ago.
F or M = sexed male or female.

Recovery symbols are as follows:
R = caught & released, by ringer
RR = sight record by ringer
V = caught and released (non ringer)
VV = sight record (non-ringer)
X = found dead
XF = freshly dead
XL = long dead
# = killed by man
+F = killed by man – fresh

[Data compiled by David William]
It appears that there are a number of people posting on @ChrisGPackham facebook, that are either to blind to see what's happening and that they are being used to try to defend the indefensible or they are complicit apologists for the criminals. They are doing as much for shootings reputation as the criminals themselves.