

# Cheshire and Wirral Ornithological Society

www.cawos.org

Reg. Charity No. 702484

## GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PAPER RECORDS

### Introduction

CAWOS is now storing all Bird Sightings Records sent in by members on a computer. While we prefer to receive records in electronic format we realise that many of you will still be submitting your records on paper *Record Forms*. We have therefore trained a team of people to enter your records from these forms into our computer. The fact that we are using a database means that all the hard work of sorting and printing is done electronically, no more 'cutting and pasting' for the *Bird Report* compilers. This is really good news for you since you no longer have to sort all your sightings into Voous order. All you have to do is copy them straight from your notebook!

### The New Record Form

- Since we have now abandoned cutting and pasting, the restraints we used to put on you, such as listing the species in systematic order as in the *Bird Report*, no longer apply. However do not forget that the records need to be clear enough to be read by our inputters so please continue to use black or blue pens. Further, in the interests of both cost and the environment, we encourage you to use both sides of the form.
- We have printed lines on the form to help you keep your writing horizontal and so aid the inputter. However if your record demands the use of two or more lines use them but make it clear to the inputters that the record extends over more than one line. There is no longer a need to leave blank lines between records.

### Page Number

- Please fill in both the page number and the total number of pages on each form i.e. 'page 2 of 4'.

### CAWOS ID Number

- This is your CAWOS ID number and is useful since it is unique to you and helps us to separate the Smiths from the Smiths and the Browns from the Browns. If you do not know your number you can get it from the Membership Secretary (contact details on page 4). In future it will appear on the address label on any of our mailings. We will, of course, accept forms that do not have an ID number as long as they have your name and address.
- CAWOS ID numbers will be allocated to non-members of the Society as well as members - you do not have to be a member of CAWOS to submit records!

### Name and Address

- Your name and address **MUST** appear on the first *Record Form*, and preferably your phone number as well in case of a query. Please also put either your name or CAWOS ID number on any continuation forms.

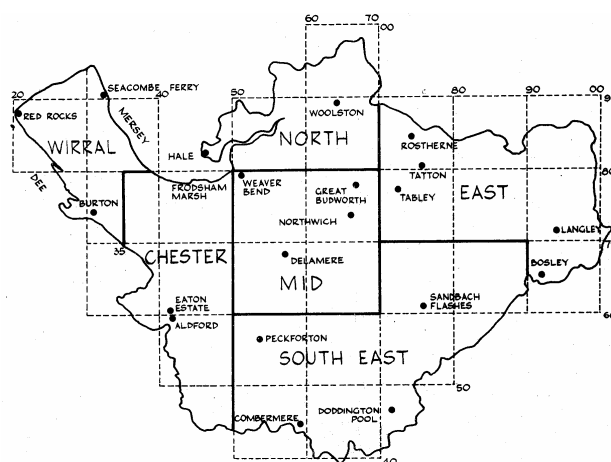
## Date

- We would prefer the date in the form dd/mm/yy (e.g. 18/10/06 or even better 18-Oct-06). We will also accept date ranges, e.g. "all summer", "Jan to Mar", but adding a range, e.g. "1/6 to 2/8", is much more helpful. This also applies to monthly maxima or similar summaries; please be as accurate as you can with dates. A word of explanation from you in the Comments column would also be desirable, possibly essential.
- If you do a full day's birdwatching then the date will stay the same for many records. To save you unnecessary writing (and to make the inputters' job easier) we would ask you not to repeat the date or to use ditto marks. It is better to use a vertical line starting at the date and finishing with an arrowhead pointing at the next change in date. This will alert the inputter that the date has changed. A thick line across the page under the last record for that date could also be used. The belt and braces approach would be most acceptable.

## Site

- We have recently published the *Cheshire and Wirral Gazetteer*, which lists the site name, site ID number and the grid reference of more than 3000 locations used by birdwatchers in Cheshire. It would make our job much easier if you could use the site name **and** ID number or grid reference from this list. To illustrate this point we know of at least 11 "Big Woods" in Cheshire - without further information we will have no idea which site you are referring to!
- If you see many species from the same locality then the information in this column will not change. Do not repeat the Site Name or use ditto marks but use the same technique here as explained above for sightings recorded under the same date.
- If where you bird watch is not on this list it will still be accepted as long as we can identify exactly where it is. The best way is to supply the new name (plus alternative names if known) and the name of the nearest town, village or major natural feature in the locality, as well as the Ordnance Survey grid reference (if known). However, please first check that your new name and/or grid reference is accurate.
- Some sites in the *Gazetteer* cover a large area. If you think a more precise location is **relevant to the observation** supply the six figure grid reference which more accurately identifies this. Accurate grid references are particularly helpful for breeding records of relatively uncommon species.
- If you are unwilling to give an accurate description of the site or need a general location for another reason, the following are listed in the database:

Location	Grid Ref
Chester	SJ450650
East Cheshire	SJ850770
Mid-Cheshire	SJ600700
North Cheshire	SJ600870
South East Cheshire	SJ750570
Wirral	SJ300820



## Species

- We would prefer you to use the name in the *Cheshire and Wirral Bird Report* but we can cope with various alternative names. We can accept subspecies and also unidentified records such as 'commic tern', 'diver sp', etc.

- Any breeding records of 'Schedule One Breeding Species' will be automatically marked as confidential by the database. In addition you can mark any of your records as confidential; these will then be marked as confidential in the database. CAWOS **will not release** these records to any third party (e.g. The Raptor Study Group) without your prior written approval.

## Number

- As well as accepting the number of birds in this column you can also indicate more information regarding the number such as "about", "more than", "+", "approx.", "Males", etc. Again, do not forget the inputter has to know what you mean, if in doubt add a note in the Comments column.
- One type of number the CAWOS database cannot accept is a vague number such as "a few", "many", "dozens". In this case you need to make an 'educated guess', put that number in the column, then in the Comments column say it was an estimate.
- Please also remember that **negative records can be as important as counts**, e.g. if recording the absence of a species from a usual location. Simply put 0 (the number zero) in the number column and the appropriate comment, e.g. "no birds bred at this site for the first time since 1990" under Comments.

## Comments

- This is where you put in anything you feel may be interesting and relevant to the sighting, e.g. the local significance of the record, comparisons to previous years' records, also explanations to the inputters, confidentiality, etc. Observers' anecdotes are often useful in preparing a readable *Bird Report*.
- Use as many lines as necessary for your comments but make sure that the inputters know where the comment finishes. A thick line will probably suffice.

## Additional Information

- Detailed descriptions of rare or unusual birds, sketches, etc. should be entered on separate sheets, bearing your name and address and submitted with your *Record Forms*. See also notes about Rarities below.
- Notes and short articles are always welcomed for possible inclusion in the *Bird Report* or in the Society's quarterly newsletter *Bird News*. Such articles could describe the circumstances in which a rarity was found or interesting behaviour observed.

## Submission of Paper Records

- Please return your forms to reach the Records Secretary **by 31 January if possible**.
- Records received after 28 February may not be published in the *Bird Report* as from 1 March the records have to be reviewed and the report written in order to meet the deadline for publication.
- We encourage you to send your forms to us on a regular basis (say monthly) throughout the year since it helps us to avoid a last minute rush in February and spreads the inputters' workload throughout the year.
- If acknowledgement of receipt is required please include an sae or postcard. For replacement *Record Forms* send a large sae.
- Send your *Record Forms* (preferably stapled together) and other requirement requests to the Records Secretary:

**Tony Parker, 41 The Park, Penketh, Warrington, WA5 5SG. Tel: 01925 726986**

## County Rarities

- A complete list of county rarities is published in the *Bird Report*.
- Full descriptions must be written on a *CAWOS Rarity Form* (unless submitted electronically).
- Send these *Rarity Forms* **as soon as possible after the sighting** to the Rarities Secretary:

**Howard Fearn, 37 Ollershaw Lane, Marston, Northwich, Cheshire, CW9 6ES.**

**Tel: 01606 330358. E-mail: howardfearn@cawos.org**

## National Rarities

- Records of national rarities have to be accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC) before they are accepted for publication in the *Bird Report*. A list of these species is periodically published in *British Birds*.
- Full descriptions must be written on a *CAWOS Rarity Form* (unless submitted electronically).
- Send these *Rarity Forms* **as soon as possible after the sighting** (particularly important to allow time for circulation and approval of the record by the BBRC) to the County Recorder:

**Hugh Pulsford, 6 Buttermere Drive, Great Warford, Cheshire, SK9 7WA.**

**Tel: 01565 880171. Email: countyrec@cawos.org**

**Note:** When sending in national or county rarity descriptions at the same time as *Record Forms* you may want to send them all to the Records Secretary, who will then pass the *Rarity Forms* on to the County Recorder or Rarities Secretary as appropriate. However it is preferable that rarity descriptions are sent in **as soon as possible after the sighting** rather than at the end of the year.

**Note:** A *Data Transfer Agreement Form* is no longer required to be filled in, as the decision was taken by Council that all records sent in to CAWOS after 1 January 2006 would be reproduced and used in any form deemed appropriate within the scope of the Society's published policies, unless the provider specifically opted for their records not to be released to a third party. In this case data should be clearly marked as confidential and will not then be released without prior consultation. All requests for data by a third party will continue to be thoroughly screened, taking particular care over sensitive records.

**Sheila Blamire, Database Chairman**  
**(updated April 2007)**