



BTO Training Courses 2010 Bird Identification Information Sheet



Jill Pakenham

Bird Identification One-day Workshops

These courses are designed to help you identify and find out more about the birds that you are likely to encounter in the course of a day's birdwatching. You will be guided on how to identify birds by sight and sound and learn about the differing habitats that they frequent. As a group, we will also explore how our records can feed into BTO surveys.

As well as being very informative, we aim for our courses to be relaxed to encourage you to feel comfortable enough to ask questions and join group discussions throughout the day.

During the day we will divide our time between both watching and listening to birds out in the field and working indoors reviewing and discussing what we have collectively learned. You will observe as many species as possible and we will use the latest DVD identification guides to cover those species which may have eluded us on the day, or that need further clarification, to ensure that your day has been as interesting and informative as we can possibly make it. There are two courses to choose from:

Beginner's Course

This course is suitable if you are a complete beginner to birdwatching, but it is also valuable if you are a little more experienced as it will help to increase your confidence in bird identification, and perhaps add new species to your repertoire. The main focus will be identifying birds by sight, and concentrates on the 50 most familiar (garden/farmland/woodland) birds, helping you to separate confusing species.



Luke Delve

Improver's Course

This course can stand alone and is ideal for anyone with a working knowledge of common British birds by sight and who is looking to increase confidence identifying the more challenging species, paying more attention to identification by song, and in particular, calls. This is also the logical next-step from the Beginner's course, and is a brilliant second course for anyone who has attended the Beginner's course and wishes to progress further.

Classic song confusion pairs, such as Blackcap/Garden Warbler and Reed Warbler/Sedge Warbler will be tackled, along with familiar and not so familiar calls. The repertoire of species will also be expanded.

Dates for 2010

- Fri 9 April. Minsmere RSPB, Suffolk. Improver's Workshop.*
- Tues 20-Thurs 22 April. Dale Fort, Pembrokeshire. Residential.*
- Wed 28 April. Cotswold Water Park, Wilts. Beginner's Workshop.*
- Tues 4 May. Leighton Moss RSPB, Lancs. Improver's Workshop.*
- Wed 5- Fri 7 May. Malham Tarn, N. Yorks. Residential.*
- Thurs 13 May. BTO HQ, Norfolk. Beginner's Workshop.*

What's included in the price?

You will be provided with pre-course information including directions on how to find your venue, and at the venue Bird Identification CDs (both lowland and upland habitats) and all course materials, including a course booklet, to take away. For the One-day Workshops tea, coffee and biscuits will also be provided, but you will need to bring your own packed lunch (some venues may offer a café facility, please check availability on booking).

The Residential Course offers this with the addition of full board, from dinner on the first night through to lunch on the final day, although it is also possible to attend as a non-resident, please contact us for prices.

SWAROVSKI OPTIKS UK JOIN US ON BEGINNER'S WORKSHOPS

This year we are delighted to welcome Swarovski Optiks UK to our Beginner's ID 1-day workshops at The Nunnery (BTO HQ) and Cotswold Water Park. Swarovski binoculars will be available for you to use during the practical sessions, and you can try telescopes and photographic equipment during the breaks. A short talk will help demystify how binoculars work, and what to look for when buying your own optics - of whatever brand.

Your tutor

Steve Piotrowski lives in Suffolk and started bird watching in the late 1960's and over the years has become one of the most experienced birders in the region. Steve has gone on to write several literary pieces including his recently published book 'Birds of Suffolk'. He currently works as an associate tutor for the Field Studies Council and has been involved with a variety of BTO surveys since the early 1970s. Steve when asked said, "I like nothing more than to spend a day with fellow enthusiasts sharing with them my experiences of what is a wonderful hobby, and hopefully hearing about some of theirs".

Other information

It is important that you bring your own pair of binoculars. If you are borrowing a pair from a friend, 8x30 or 8x40 are ideal for general birdwatching - the first figure is the magnification and the second the diameter of the larger lens in millimetres. Do not bring a pair with magnification over 10x - these are too heavy. Most importantly, check that you can see clearly through them and there is no distortion.



Sedge Warbler, Dawn Balmer

The courses will involve some walking around the venue, but will not be strenuous. However, it will be along footpaths and tracks on occasions. Strong, comfortable walking boots or wellies are therefore important, as is a good selection of warm and weatherproof clothing in natural colours please: no bright reds or yellows! Hats, scarves and gloves may be useful, especially for optional early morning birding.

A notebook and pen/pencil is also recommended.

If you would like any more information about any aspects of the courses please contact Su Gough (su.gough@bto.org or 'phone 01842 750 050).

If you would like to book a place on one of our courses, or inquire about costs please contact Robin Anderson at BTO Scotland (robin.anderson@bto.org or 'phone 01786 466 560). Information on the Field Studies Centres used as venues for the residential courses can be found on www.field-studies-council.org

British Trust for Ornithology, The Nunnery, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 2PU.

Registered Charity Number 216652

The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) is the UK's leading bird research organisation. Its unique partnership of volunteer birdwatchers and scientific staff bring together information that forms the basis of conservation action in the UK. BTO training courses are designed for BTO members, volunteers and surveyors to help them get the most out of their fieldwork but anyone - amateur or professional - is welcome.