



## SBBOT Conservation – Rare Birds Policy

### Rare birds identified in the area of Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory and the release of information

SBBOT policy is that we wish observers to be able to enjoy the birds of Sandwich Bay and we will broadcast news of rare birds wherever possible. However, we need to recognise that:

- a significant amount of our Recording Area is on private land where access is limited or, from the landowners' point of view, undesirable.
- parking in the area is limited. There will be circumstances under which it may be necessary to delay/withhold the release of news whilst access arrangements are made.
- there may be circumstances where rare breeding birds are at risk from disturbance and egg-collectors and access to these areas needs to be controlled.
- care and attention are required in the release of information as it may have an impact on the reputation of SBBOT and relationships with local landowners, neighbours and organisations.

#### **Decision to release news of a rarity**

The great majority of rare birds will be identified by experienced SBBOT members and ringers. In these cases, the information should be forwarded to the SBBOT Warden who will decide to release or restrict news after verification and make an evaluation considering factors that include:

- species
- location of sighting
- persons impacted (landowners, property owners etc.)
- time of year
- terrain
- impact on other flora and fauna
- access routes and parking
- impact on, or from, any pre-planned events or SBBOT activities in the area
- other events in the area.

The Warden's decision to release or withhold news is final.

#### **Releasing news of the rarity by the SBBOT Warden**

- a) If the Warden considers that there is a good case for posting news of the rarity then the Warden will consult with the property owner/landowner (and neighbours if appropriate). If there is agreement to allow access then a plan must be made that provides details on the management of a likely influx of people, their access, needs and parking.
- b) The SBBOT Chair (or the Chair's nominee(s)) should be involved to assist the Warden in the development and application of the plan.
- c) The plan must include provisions to manage visitors safely and minimise disturbance and disruption to neighbours and other users of the area. The plan should include:
  - identification of impacted people, services and organisations
  - safe access and egress to the sighting location (a risk assessment taking into account location, terrain and weather conditions)
  - vehicle routes and parking
  - advice to visitors on services – such as toilets
  - an SBBOT contact to manage complaints/disputes.
  - SBBOT representatives available at the SBBOT Field Centre, sighting area and car parks to advise and manage visitors
  - Contact details of persons, organisations and services that SBBOT needs to liaise with/contact.
- d) The management plan must be agreed with the property owner and any other relevant persons/organisations before the rare bird sighting is posted.

### **News released by the public**

- There will be occasions when rare bird sightings are alerted to social media directly by members of the public. This is likely to result in a sudden/unannounced influx of people. Whilst this will be difficult to manage, SBBOT can assist in mitigating disruption by working with the landowner.
- This may include:
  - providing SBBOT resources to work with the landowner to limit, control or prohibit access as far as reasonably possible.
  - providing car parking and services at the SBBOT Field Centre
  - discussing with local landowners the potential for overspill car parking, emphasising the exceptional nature of the request.

### **The Warden's contact details are:**

Address: Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory, Guilford Rd, Sandwich Bay, Sandwich CT13 9PF

Tel: [01304 617341](tel:01304617341)

Email: [info@sbbot.org.uk](mailto:info@sbbot.org.uk)

Contact Details for publicising Rare Bird alerts is provided in **Appendix 1**.

### **General notes**

- Identification of the bird should be the prime consideration, taking precedence over the release of information to the wider public. Accurate notes or photographic record shots should be taken to support verification of the observation.

- Our policy regarding the presence of rare breeding birds is that, given the danger from disturbance and egg thieves, maximum care must be taken to ensure that news does not leak out to such people. Finders of rare birds in spring/summer must take into account any possibility of breeding and notify the Warden before any news is released.
  - Birds trapped for ringing should only be kept for a minimum safe length of time, which is the decision of the Ringer in charge on the day, in accordance with BTO guidelines. A call should be made to the Warden to determine the extent to which news should be released. Such news should contain the time when the bird is to be released and this time should be adhered to.
  - In the event of long-staying rarities, or mobile birds, the dissemination of news should be reviewed regularly.
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## APPENDIX 1

Information on rare bird sightings will be made by the Warden to preferred social media and news services. For example;

- Rare Bird Alert
  - Email: [admin@rarebirdalert.co.uk](mailto:admin@rarebirdalert.co.uk)
  - Telephone: 0207 038 2820
- Birdguides, via:
  - [online submissions form](#)
  - Email: [sightings@birdguides.com](mailto:sightings@birdguides.com)
  - Telephone: 0333 577 2473 or
  - Text: BIRDS RPT followed by your message to 01915 804228
- SBBO Telegram application

Details of the alert should include advice on any sensitivities or considerations that visitors will need to make, particularly if private property is involved.