

## Country Notes for August 2021

Nature is never static; creatures and plants that were once rare can become common and vice versa. A whole variety of factors can come into play in changing the dynamic of a particular species. This might include environmental changes, the impact of man, the impact of other species and of course climate change.

Not so long ago, willow warblers could be heard throughout Kent in the summer months and although they have not disappeared altogether, they are certainly a lot rarer. The Hucking Estate still hosts a few, for example. The same can be said of the cuckoo. Further north it is much easier to find these two species, but I wonder how many of you heard a cuckoo in Kent this year. Probably not many!

I can remember as a child visiting mid Wales, and one of the highlights was seeing Red Kites. There were about 20 pairs in the country and they were all in one small area of Wales. Now they are to be seen over much of the country. Just driving down the M40 you very likely to see several and it can sometimes be a difficult to keep your eyes on the road! They can even be seen in our villages from time to time, although breeding is still fairly limited in our area.

The latest bird to make an occasional appearance is the white tailed sea eagle. Just recently they were introduced back to the Isle of Wight and during the winter they can travel quite a distance. This is particularly the case with the juveniles. There was certainly at least one in Kent this winter, feeding on the shoreline at Broadstairs and often travelling quite far inland. I am sure that it must have flown over our villages from time to time – had we been looking skywards at that particular moment!

Should the same happen again this year they are not difficult to identify. They have a wing span of up to 8 feet, are brown all over except for their white tail and look like a flying door! If you are in any doubt at all, it is not a white tailed eagle!

Here's hoping!

Andrew G Snowdon