

RARITY DESCRIPTIONS

Example Help file

What kind of description is required?

The essentials are brief details of the circumstances of the sighting and, more importantly, a description of the individual bird as it appeared at the time. It is important that you describe the bird you saw, rather than repeating details from a book. Very often not all the details will have been noted, but this will not invalidate the record if enough was seen and confirmed to make the identification safe. Try to write down exactly what you saw and heard, but don't be tempted to fill in the gaps.

Always try to include:

Circumstances Briefly describe the circumstances of the observation eg how close you were to the bird, how long you watched it, was it seen by others, optical equipment used. Also mention if the bird was photographed or trapped for ringing.

Weather Describe the wind direction and force, cloud cover, light conditions (such as angle to the sun), visibility, rain.

Previous experience Describe your previous experience of the species and other species present for comparison.

Size If possible, judged directly against another bird which is present or, if not, use whatever is available. At worst give some general impression in comparison to species which, although not present at the time, you are familiar with.

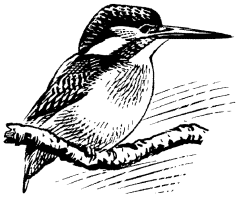
Shape Again, if possible, judged against another species. Try hard to make comparisons all the time. A wader may be "long-legged" but it is much more valuable, if you can say "the legs were longer than the Redshank alongside it". Try to note structural details, which might be useful, such as whether the wings project beyond the tail, or the legs extend beyond the tail in flight.

Actions All movements such as walking, hopping, wading, swimming, diving, soaring, and gliding are useful to note. Try and record such things as whether the bird wagged its tail, did it fly from a perch to the ground and then hop about or did it slip quietly though foliage never keeping still.

Colours Start with the general and move on to the detail. Write down the most striking features first. Try to be systematic, a good approach is to start at the front and work back! Make a special note of specific features such as eye-stripes or rump patches. Don't forget the bill and legs.

Below are examples of Local Rarity Forms for Hampshire and Kent (based on BBRC Rarity Forms).

Dawn Balmer
3 November 2005



Hampshire Ornithological Society – Unusual Record Form

SPECIES:

Number of Birds:

Sex:

Age:

LOCALITY (with 6 fig. grid ref.):

DATE(S) and times of *your* observations:

Earlier/later dates by others, if known:

NAME OF OBSERVER:

Telephone:

E-mail:

Address:

Other observers with you:

Who found the bird(s)?:

Who first identified it/them?:

OPTICAL AIDS USED:

Distance from bird(s):

Total duration of observation:

Was the bird photographed?:

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE OF SPECIES:

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE OF SIMILAR SPECIES:

WEATHER/VIEWING CONDITIONS:

DESCRIPTION: Include account of the relevant circumstances of the observation and a detailed description of the bird(s), preferably based on notes taken at the time of observation, before reference to books. Photocopies of original notes or sketches should be included if available. Any photographs taken would also be appreciated.

And finally, is this record 100% certain?:

Any observer disagree?

The completed form should be posted or e-mailed to the County Recorder, John Clark, 4 Cygnet Court, Old Cove Road, Fleet, Hampshire GU51 2RL or johnclark@cygnetcourt.demon.co.uk. Any digital images should be attached to an e-mail.

Kent Ornithological Society Rarity Panel

Record Form

Species:

Number of birds:

Age:

Sex:

Date(s) of your observation (s):

Time(s):

Total duration:

Observer:

Address & Tel.:

Age (if under 18)

Who first found it ?:

Who first identified it ?:

Observation

What optical aids were used ?

Previous experience of species:

Experience of similar species:

Photographs

Was it photographed ?

Photographer:

Address:

Dead bird

Was it preserved ?

Where ?

Weather

Wind direction & force:

Cloud cover:

Light conditions:

Angle of sun to observer:

Visibility:

Rain:

Place:

County/Region:

Earliest/Latest Dates known:

Other Observer(s):

Who is also reporting it ?

Any who disagree ?

Distance from bird:

Species present for comparison

Alongside:

Nearby:

Ringling

Was it trapped ?

Date ringed:

Ringer:

Ring number:

Seawatching records

Start time of seawatch:

Finish time of seawatch:

State of sea:

Were you sheltered?

Observers height above sea:

Direction of observation:

Please supply a full description of your sighting overleaf: