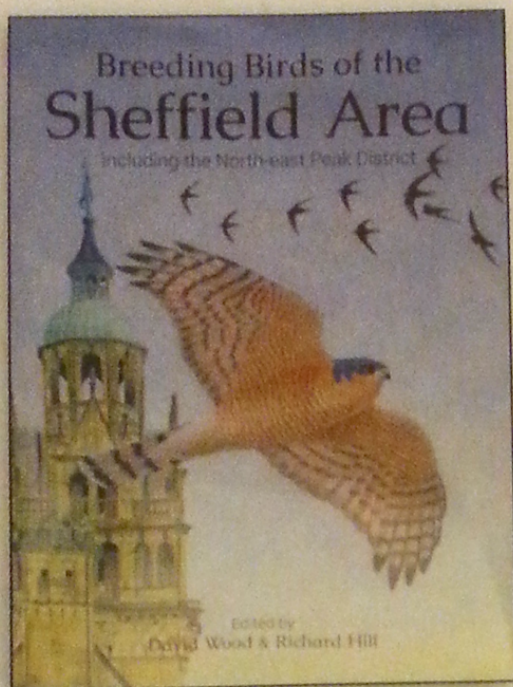


# An excellent atlas



**SOUTH** Yorkshire has an illustrious tradition of natural history and citizen science dating back to the early 19th century. The Sheffield Bird Study Group, founded in 1972, is an exemplar of that amateur passion for wildlife recording. The SBSG team has built on the census work conducted for the British Trust for Ornithology's *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (2013) and produced a much more detailed up-to-date inventory of their region's birds. This atlas covers bird distribution in an area of 40x30 km<sup>2</sup> roughly centred on Sheffield, but extending into the wider hinterland of the Peak District and as far east as the floodplains of the Rivers Don and Rother.

The book measures the fortunes of 135 breeding species,

and with a simple colour-coded system of graphics its authors have indicated a bird's breeding presence or absence at tetrad level (the basic unit of 2x2km<sup>2</sup>). They have also included a clear statement of changes in bird abundance and distribution through a comparison with the SBSG's earlier 1985 atlas. Preliminary chapters cover related subjects such as habitat, climate change and an overview of avian communities, but it is the detailed species accounts that are this book's cardinal virtue.

For anyone interested in birds in the Sheffield area the book is an absolute must. To those familiar with British avian atlases there will be few surprises. We see in detail the expansion of many waterbirds, the heartening rise in birds of prey (even the much-persecuted Goshawk has increased substantially) and the parlous range shrinkage of farmland birds like Grey Partridge and Northern Lapwing. If the environmental community is ever going to be able to reverse such losses – and in his foreword, Professor Tim Birkhead reminds us of the 54,000,000 breeding birds that disappeared in the late 20th century – then simple, accurate, detailed inventories such as this exemplary book will be of fundamental importance.

**Mark Cocker**