

YNU Birds Section adopts BirdTrack

At a specially convened meeting with the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) earlier this year, the YNU Birds Section has taken the decision to encourage all birders, whether lone or members of clubs, groups or societies, to submit future bird records via [BirdTrack](#) – the free, on-line resource developed by the BTO, for the monitoring of the UK's bird populations and which was instrumental in gathering data for the *Bird Atlas 2007-2011*.

BirdTrack is very straightforward to use – a user is asked for a site, date (time in the field is optional) followed by a full list or casual observations made for that site (including indications of breeding), which can be anywhere in the UK. Obviously it is far more useful to enter counts for species recorded, but this is optional.

The YNU Birds Section has four County Recorders (for North, East, South and West Yorkshire) who are given special access to all Yorkshire records gathered via *BirdTrack*, for verification (if required), for gathering specific information, such as that required by the Rare Breeding Birds Panel and for the compilation of the Yorkshire Bird Report. Several Yorkshire clubs/groups already use *BirdTrack*, e.g. Flamborough and Top Hill Low and their data is password protected, so only members of these clubs can access the club's data.

Any *BirdTrack* user has access to their own data at all times, and it is thus a very useful way of keeping all your bird records together in one place. It is also possible to enter historical data and some dedicated users have uploaded everything from their old notebooks, which is a wonderful resource for the BTO's scientists, who are continually analysing all data to plot species' population trends etc.

It would be possible to arrange some demonstrations on how to use *BirdTrack* and how to extrapolate data for your club, at a suitable venue, with a member of the BTO's *BirdTrack* team, if a number of clubs wished to do this. Perhaps you could contact the Birds Section Secretary, who will make the necessary arrangements.

(19th September 2016)