

CLUB ANNOUNCEMENTS

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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

See also BOC website: <http://www.boc-online.org>

The next meeting is a Zoom event. It is free to attend, but pre-registration is essential: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/abernethy-forest-its-history-and-ecology-tickets-138519045193?ref=estw>

Monday 29 March 2021—6.30 pm—Ron Summers—*Abernethy Forest: its history and ecology*

Abstract.—Abernethy Forest is a nature reserve managed by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. The forest has more Caledonian pinewood than any other area in Scotland. The trees in these remaining fragments are lineal descendants of an ancient forest that once spread across the Highlands of Scotland. Since the Bronze or Iron Age, the forest has been used by people for hunting, exploitation of timber, farming and now nature conservation. This talk will describe the changes caused by people and the natural processes that have shaped the forest, providing an environment for an astonishing diversity of wildlife (3,800 species of plants, fungi and animals). The lives and status of the 'big three' birds of pinewoods will be described: Western Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus*, Crested Tit *Lophophanes cristatus* and crossbills (*Loxia* spp.). Comparisons will be drawn with natural forests in continental Europe, revealing the conservation measures that need to be taken to restore lost features in an attempt to create a present-natural forest.

Biography.—Dr Ron Summers is a Principal Conservation Scientist at the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and, over the past 30 years, has been involved in studies of a range of Highland birds, particularly in pinewoods. Having attained a Ph.D. at the Univ. of Aberdeen on the ecology of European Flounder *Platichthys flesus*, he undertook post-doctoral work at the Univ. of Cape Town, where he studied sandpipers on Langebaan Lagoon, providing data that supported the case to designate the area a national park. Subsequently, he studied the effects of Upland Geese *Chloephaga picta* on sheep farming in the Falkland Islands, followed by work with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, initially on the movements of European Starlings *Sturnus vulgaris* in relation to the spread of pig diseases, and latterly on the effect of grazing by Brent Geese *Branta bernicla* on fields of winter wheat. He further outlined a hypothesis about the role of lemmings in determining the breeding success and population growth of these geese; this link also applied to the waders he had studied in South Africa, and he subsequently travelled to Siberia to help test his theory on the birds' breeding grounds. The Arctic has always held an appeal and he has made many trips there, notably as part of a long-running study of Purple Sandpipers *Calidris maritima*, which will culminate in a forthcoming monograph.

Friends of the BOC

The BOC has from 2017 become an online organisation without a paying membership, but instead one that aspires to a supportive network of Friends who share its vision of ornithology—see: <http://www.boc-online.org/>. Anyone wishing to become a Friend of the BOC and support its development should pay UK£25.00 by standing order or online payment to the BOC bank account:

Barclays Bank, 16 High Street, Holt, NR25 6BQ, Norfolk
Sort Code: 20-45-45
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Account name: The British Ornithologists' Club

Friends receive regular updates about Club events and are also eligible for discounts on the Club's Occasional Publications. It would assist our Treasurer, Richard Malin (e-mail: rmalin21@gmail.com), if you would kindly inform him if you intend becoming a Friend of the BOC.

The *Bulletin* and other BOC publications

Since volume 137 (2017), the *Bulletin* of the BOC has been an online journal, published quarterly, that is available to all readers without charge. Furthermore, it does not levy any publication charges (including for colour plates) on authors of papers and has a median publication time from receipt to publication of five to six months. Prospective authors are invited to contact the *Bulletin* editor, Guy Kirwan (GMKirwan@aol.com), to discuss future submissions or look at <http://boc-online.org/bulletin/bulletin-contributions>. Back numbers up to volume 136 (2016) are available via the Biodiversity Heritage Library website: www.biodiversitylibrary.org/bibliography/46639#/summary; vols. 132–136 are also available on the BOC website: <http://boc-online.org/>

BOC Occasional Publications are available from the BOC Office or online at info@boc-online.org. Future BOC-published checklists will be available from NHBS and as advised on the BOC website. As its online repository, the BOC uses the British Library Online Archive (in accordance with IZCN 1999, Art. 8.5.3.1).

