

SOS Conservation Team

We are looking for someone to take a leading role in the SOS Conservation Team.

The SOS has established a unique niche in conservation matters in Sussex, using our database of over seven million records of birds in Sussex, plus the knowledge of the Society's 2000 members, to work to ensure that development does not occur in the parts of Sussex that are still particularly good for birds. Working with partners such as Sussex Wildlife Trust (SWT), RSPB, Sussex - Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) and the Woodland Trust (a grouping known as the Sussex Planning for Nature Group) we are able to exercise considerable clout on planning issues without having to be qualified planners ourselves.

Our work is two fold:

1) Responding to planning matters and particularly commenting on Local Authority's Local Plans which lay out how many new homes they plan to develop and on where they plan to build them. And also commenting on other planning matters such as Rampion 2, the A27 Arundel Bypass, the proposed Center Parks holiday development in Worth Forest and the South Downs National Park's proposal to create a mini urbanisation around the Shoreham Cement Works, rather than just pulling down some of the buildings and leaving the site to rewild. All the time we use the Society's bird records and the knowledge of our local members to provide the evidence to inform our responses.

2) Proactively seeking to get protection for sites that don't already enjoy some conservation protection and to get improvements to sites that are already good for birds so that they become better for birds. This has included assembling the evidence to get Goring Gap designated as a Local Wildlife Site because of its importance for birds, getting extensions made to the boundary of Littlehampton Golf Course LWS because of the site's importance for birds and working to get Combe Valley Countryside Park improved for birds and other wildlife.

All this requires a sense of purpose that things can be made better for birds.

We are now looking for someone to join us who is a natural communicator and networker and who can make things happen. Someone who is used to project work and can get into plenty of detail whilst keeping a clear picture of what the overall goal is. Someone who is able to work alongside the other members of the SOS Conservation Team as well as form effective teams in external partnerships, and is able to speak cogently, confidently and persuasively in public to a variety of audiences.

You don't need to be a planner nor even an expert birder, but you do need to have a good knowledge of birding sites across East and West Sussex or be willing to acquire such knowledge. (We know where the sites are so help will be given). You should also be computer literate and will need to become familiar with how to use the SOS's bird records – for which training will be given. But above all you should be articulate and prepared to use our records to provide the necessary evidence, so that you have the confidence to speak out and say what is right for Sussex's birds.

If you feel that you are the person who could make this kind of impact, then please contact me on 01903 770259 or at conservation@sos.org.uk

Richard Cowser

(SOS Conservation Officer)