

'The Carl Zeiss Award'

Every year, the sponsor of the British Birds Rarities Committee, *Carl Zeiss (Oberkochen) Ltd*, presents The Carl Zeiss Award for 'the most helpful, interesting and instructive' photograph of a rarity circulated during the previous 12 months to the members of the BBRC with a submitted record. A short-list of candidates for consideration is selected during the year by the ten members of the Committee, and the final judging is carried out by the Chairman of the Committee and the Managing Editor of *British Birds*.



This year's short-list was as follows:

Chimney Swift *Chaetura pelagica*, St Andrews, Fife, November 1991, photographed by D. E. Dickson (plate 180) and Mary Macintyre (plate 181).

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*, St Mary's, Scilly, September 1992, photographed by David Rimes (plate 179).

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor* of the race *pallidirostris*, Cape Cornwall, Cornwall, April 1992, photographed by Ren Hathway (plate 196).

Trumpeter Finch *Bucanetes githagineus*, near Durness, Highland, June 1992, photographed by Dr M. H. Blattner (plates 198 & 199).

The Chimney Swift was found on 8th November 1991 by Dr Jeff Graves, and watched also that day by Dr R. W. Byrne and Professor Peter Branscombe. It was identified jointly by them. Despite its having been watched during its three-day stay by well over 350 birders, the only descriptions submitted were by the finder and RWB. The photographic evidence was, therefore, helpful during assessment of the record.

The Citrine Wagtail was found on the evening of 13th September 1992 by Nigel Benson and Melanie Rose. They were joined the next morning by David N. T. Rimes, and the bird eventually provided good views, sometimes in company with a Grey Wagtail *M. cinerea*. David Rimes's description was the only one submitted, and clinched the identification, but his high-quality photographs were much admired by the members of the Committee.

The Cape Cornwall Great Grey Shrike was originally found and misidentified as a Lesser Grey Shrike *L. minor*, but was reidentified as Great Grey independently by Paul Semmens and John F. Ryan, and then as *pallidirostris* by JFR and Renfred Hathway. Excellent sets of notes by JFR and Andrew Birch, together with paintings by AB (see page 503) and RH (see forthcoming account in 'From the Rarities Committee's files'), established the identification. RH's photographs, however, although not of the quality that would have won Bird Photograph of the Year, were invaluable in establishing the precise extent of white in the wing (especially in the flight shot, plate 196), which is so important in the racial identification as *pallidirostris*.

The Trumpeter Finch was found by Dr Martin H. Blattner whilst on a trip to Scotland with the Ornithological Society of Basle, and was watched for ten minutes by him and other members of the group. He was already familiar with the species from the Cabo de Gata region in Spain, and Dr Blattner's

concise description noted that the bird was 'Near but not associated with House Sparrows [*Passer domesticus*], smaller than House Sparrows, plumage sandcoloured (brighter than on the photos), bill and legs pink, so it was a male. See photos. No vocalizations.' The judiciously obtained supporting photographs were enormously welcomed by the Committee when assessing the record.

After some discussion, this year's three judges unanimously selected Ren Hathway as the winner of The Carl Zeiss Award for 1993 for his instructive photograph of the 'Steppe' Great Grey Shrike in flight. Ren Hathway can now choose either a *Zeiss* 10×40 BGAT*P or a *Zeiss* 7×42 BGAT*P binocular as his prize. All the other contenders, and those whose rarity photographs or documentary drawings have appeared in the 1992 report (or in 'Seasonal reports'), will receive one of the specially woven sew-on badges featuring The Carl Zeiss Award logo.

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