

## Session 6: Speciation

Date: Wednesday 1 November, 2017  
Time: 11:45 – 12:05  
Room: Seminar Room

### **Citizen science for the study of hole-nesting birds: UK examples and emerging opportunities**

Presenting author: **Malcolm Burgess**

Authors: **Malcom Burgess<sup>1,2</sup>, Ken Smith<sup>3</sup>, Dave Leech<sup>4</sup>**

Affiliations: <sup>1</sup>RSPB Centre for Conservation Science, The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, United Kingdom  
<sup>2</sup>PiedFly.Net, Yarnar Wood, Bovey Tracey, Devon, United Kingdom  
<sup>3</sup>15 Roman Fields, Chichester, W. Sussex, United Kingdom  
<sup>4</sup>British Trust for Ornithology, The Nunnery, Thetford, Norfolk, United Kingdom

Some hole-nesting birds are among the most well studied species of passerine in the world, in large part because of the ease of monitoring these during the breeding season in purpose designed nest-boxes. Most hole-nesting bird research originates from nest box schemes at single or small numbers of sites. Because of the challenges of finding nests it rarely involves birds using natural nest sites. The potential for increased participation of citizen scientists, and use of citizen collected data, in relation to studies of hole-nesting bird research is huge. Such involvement can increase our ability to monitor and study both common and rare hole-nesting species over much wider areas than at present. Citizen scientists can also be motivated to collect information for other taxa relating to hole-nesting bird studies, such as recording the phenology of vegetation and invertebrate abundance. To illustrate this potential we highlight several examples from the UK.

The British Trust for Ornithology run several citizen science schemes, including the Nest Record Scheme that monitors several thousand hole-nesting bird nests annually. PiedFly.Net is a regional network that co-ordinates monitoring of 47 nestbox schemes across SW England, using these data in collaborative research across Europe. Woodpecker-network helps citizen scientists monitor hard to find woodpecker nests through loaning specialist nest inspection equipment. These networks also organise monitoring of other taxa that relates to these hole-nesting birds, for example invertebrate phenology and abundance. Many new and emerging techniques and technologies, such as DNA bar-coding for diet studies, provide many new opportunities for involving citizen scientists that will enable us to address new questions over large areas.