

Chough on the Malverns

The presence of Chough on the Malvern Hills at the end of July 2019 commuting between Herefordshire and Worcestershire caused excitement amongst bird watchers and Mel Mason took these beautiful photographs. The first records for Worcestershire since 1826 but see Graham Hill's note following the photographs.



01. Chough on the Malvern Hills. Mel Mason.



02. Chough on the Malvern Hills. Mel Mason.



03. Chough on the Malvern Hills. Mel Mason.

Choughs in the Malverns

Graham Hill

British Wildlife (Volumes 31 no.1) reported sightings of two Choughs *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* at British Camp in the Malvern Hills between 28th July and 2nd August 2019, the first record in Worcestershire since 1826. Although the Chough is considered to be a bird of the coastal cliffs the article reports several sightings are in inland England.

During the early summer of both 2006 and 2007 I made regular visits to the Knapp and Papermill Nature Reserve at Alfrick Pound as part of a programme of fieldwork there. During one of those visits I saw a small black bird with distinctive red, slightly downturned, bill and red legs. As I was driving at the time, I only had a quick view, my first thought was that I had just seen a Chough and that was really unusual, although on further reflection I persuaded myself that I hadn't – after all they are coastal birds aren't they? The bird certainly *looked* like a chough but it was in the wrong place. I concluded that my initial identification was wrong.

However, the sightings on the Malvern Hills 12 years later suggest that, perhaps, my initial instinct was right after all!



Another unusual photograph. A Stoat *Mustela erminea* swimming in Kemerton Lake August 2019. Mike Averill