



01. Shore Lark on the Malvern Hills 20th October 2018. Andy Warr

Shore Lark *Eremophila alpestris* on the Malvern Hills.

Andy Warr

Photo of Shore Lark copyright Andy Warr

A winter visitor to our shores from breeding grounds in the Eurasian arctic, the Shore Lark is a bird most often encountered along the North Sea coasts of Britain, though unlike Snow Buntings, rarely assembles in large numbers. A few individuals venture inland each year and its status in Worcestershire is rare, with just 12 birds from nine historical records between 1920 and 2018.

On 19th October 2018 a Shore Lark was photographed on the Malvern Hills (01) near the summit of Sugarloaf Hill (the ridge between North Hill and Worcestershire Beacon) and news of the sighting relayed by a bird information service. A few local birders obtained views that same evening and early the following morning, when it proved quite approachable, favouring the low cropped grass paths along the ridge of Sugarloaf Hill. As the morning progressed, with escalating numbers of walkers and runners passing, the bird became easily spooked and henceforth proved mobile and elusive at times but was occasionally well-observed on North Hill, Table Hill and Worcestershire Beacon throughout its stay. It was last reported on 23rd October and constitutes the fourth record for the Malvern Hills. The first record was on 14th January 1920; another on North Hill from 31st March to 18th April 1987, and one on Worcestershire Beacon on 1st November 1996.

All historical records of Shore Lark in Worcestershire

- 14th January 1920 – one on Malvern Hills.
- 31st March – 18th April 1987 – one on North Hill, Malvern Hills.
- 15th October 1996 – three at Upton Warren Worcestershire Wildlife Trust (WWT) Reserve (Flash Pools).
- 1st November 1996 – one on Worcestershire Beacon, Malvern Hills.
- 14th November 1996 – one at Caunsall.
- 29th October – 3rd November 2003 – two at Upper Bittell Reservoir.
- 18th – 23rd October 2008 – one at Upton Warren WWT Reserve (Flash Pools).
- 12th October 2016 – one on Bredon Hill.
- 19th – 23rd October 2018 – North Malvern Hills.