

Thomas, C. 2014.

BOU Proceedings – Ecology and conservation of birds in upland and alpine habitats

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Proceedings of the BOU's 2014 Annual Conference

Ecology and conservation of birds in upland and alpine habitats

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Some of nature's changes in response to climate

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Empirical evidence is clearly showing latitudinal and elevation changes of species over the past 40 years. These observed changes, together with a good correspondence between the projections and observed distribution shifts of arctic-alpine bird species over the past 15,000 years (for two grouse, alpine chough and snow finch), make credible the future potential range shifts extinctions of many high latitude and elevation species under climate change. However, the details are complicated. Consideration of the responses of species to local (microclimatic) variation in moisture availability and temperature can identify potential conservation options. However, these local conservation options become increasingly intractable at higher levels of global warming.

Chris Thomas is an ecologist at the University of York, known for his work on metapopulation dynamics, identifying the impacts of climate change on biodiversity, and developing conservation strategies to protect threatened species and ecosystems. He has written ~250 scientific articles and he has co-edited nine international scientific journals. Most of his research has been on butterflies and other insects, but he has also produced a smattering of papers on birds. His work has been widely quoted in the media and he has influenced the development of national and international policies for conservation and climate change.