

## 9 Billy goes bird watching

Billy's Grandpa is a very keen bird watcher. He's got a pair of powerful binoculars and lots of books and magazines about birds. He often goes off to cold, remote and usually very windy spots in order to try and see particularly rare types of birds. Grandpa spends hours and hours reading his books and looking at pictures of birds. He can tell the difference between all the birds that come into the garden. He can even tell you how old each bird probably is. He even knows what sort of bird it is just from the way they sing.

Unfortunately, Billy thinks that this is all a big yawn and a bit of a laugh. He would sometimes tease his Grandpa when he came round. Billy would look out of the window and say: "Oh Grandpa, what's that strange looking bird with a long beak and yellow spots and wings that are about four foot long?"

Then Grandpa would jump out of his chair and rush to the window, just as Billy said: "Oh sorry Grandpa, its a sparrow! I really must get my eyes tested."

One day though even Billy got a bit excited when Grandpa came rushing into the house. "Sammy down at the Legion says that there is a lesser-spotted great-tailed king eagle rush warbler up at Clear View Point," he spluttered. "I'm off to see it. Do you want to come Billy?"

Billy thought for a moment, he was a bit bored at home, and Grandpa was very excited. "Oh... alright," he said.

They both jumped into Grandpa's battered old car, which went coughing and spluttering off up the road.

It wasn't far to Clear View Point. It was called Clear View Point because from the top there was a clear view across the whole of Driptown. When it was a really clear day Billy could even see his own house just as if he were looking down from an aeroplane. Grandpa parked the car and they walked the last hundred yards or so. When they got to the top Grandpa found a hiding place in a hollow behind a bush. He got out his binoculars and took a look around.

"Where is it Grandpa?" said Billy rather loudly. "Let me have a look."

"Shush," whispered Grandpa, "We'll have to wait. It'll be along soon I'm sure."

They waited a minute.

"Is it here yet Grandpa?" asked Billy.

"No," said Grandpa, "not yet Billy, be patient!"

They waited another minute.

"Is it here yet Grandpa?" asked Billy.

"No not yet," said Grandpa. "We need to wait quietly, shush."

They waited another minute.

"I'm hungry!" said Billy.

"Oh dear," sighed Grandpa, as he began to wonder why he had brought Billy along with him. "I've got some sandwiches in the car, I'll fetch them."

Grandpa left Billy with the binoculars and he took a good look around. He tried to imagine what the lesser-spotted great-tailed king eagle rush warbler might look like. He imagined a great big eagle type bird with a large hooked beak and a sort of peacock tail and great wings about six feet long. He imagined it swooping down from the sky with a great warbling sound.

"Wow!" he thought, "I hope we see it!"

He looked through the binoculars but all he could see was a little grey bird with a yellow beak and a few spots and long spindly legs.

Grandpa came back with the sandwiches.

"Have you seen anything?" he asked.

"No, nothing," said Billy.

Grandpa looked through the binoculars but just as he did the little grey bird hopped behind a tree.

"Oh dear," said Grandpa, "we'll have to be patient!"

They ate their sandwiches, and waited for a minute.

"Grandpa," said Billy, "Grandpa, I'm thirsty now."

Grandpa put down his binoculars. "Oh Billy," he said, "I've got some drink in the car. I'll go and fetch it."

While he was gone Billy looked through the binoculars again. He looked high up into the sky to see if he could see the lesser-spotted great-tailed king eagle rush warbler swooping down from a great height. But there was nothing. All he could find was that silly boring little grey bird hopping around the tree again.

"Clear off!!" he shouted and the bird jumped back behind its tree.

"Here you are Billy," said Grandpa as he came back with the drink. "Did you see anything?"

"No nothing," replied Billy.

Grandpa had a look, but the little grey bird stayed well hidden behind his tree. He didn't much like being shouted at.

They drank their drink and waited another minute. Billy was getting very bored, very bored indeed. He was beginning to wish that he had never come. He wanted to go home. Suddenly he had an idea:

"Grandpa..." he said.

"Yes Billy?" sighed Grandpa.

"Grandpa..." I need the toilet!"

"Oh no Billy!" exclaimed Grandpa, beginning to lose his patience. "Can't you wait?"

"Not really," said Billy.

"Alright Billy," said Grandpa with a sigh, "we'll go home."

Grandpa turned round to head for the car and just then Billy caught sight of the little grey bird hopping out from behind its tree again.

"Clear off!!" shouted Billy. "We don't want to see you! We want to see a lesser-spotted great-tailed king eagle rush warbler."

This time the bird had had enough, it flew off like a shot way out of sight.

"What are you shouting at Billy?" asked Grandpa.

"That silly boring little grey bird that keeps popping out from behind that tree," said Billy.

"Didn't you see it?"

"Little grey bird," said Grandpa. "Did it have a yellow beak and long legs?"

"Yes, that's it," said Billy.

Grandpa opened a magazine he had in his pocket.

"Did it look like this," he asked as he pointed to a picture.

"Oh yes, just like that," said Billy, and then he noticed what it said under the picture: **'The lesser-spotted great-tailed king eagle rush warbler. Britain's rarest bird!'**

"Oh... " said Billy, he stood there with his mouth open, "I didn't know."

"And you frightened it away!!" groaned Grandpa. "You frightened it away!"

"Sorry, sorry," squeaked Billy. "But now it's gone do you think we could err.... go home?"

Copyright © John Beauchamp/Kingdomstory.net 2010 All rights reserved.

Please refer to [www.kingdomstory.net](http://www.kingdomstory.net) for copyright restrictions and permissions.