

# Birds in Northumbria

The 2014 Bird Report for Northumberland, Newcastle and North Tyneside

Classified List compiled by

Steve R Barrett, Graeme Bowman, Paul Buskin, Eddie Crabtree,  
Tim Dean, Ian Kerr, Lindsay J McDougall, Andy D Mould & Mike Richardson

Edited by

Mike Richardson

Illustrations by

Phil Allott, Alan Hart, Mike Henry, Stewart Sexton & John Steele

Photographs by

Chris Barlow, Jack Bucknall, Alan Curry, Tim & Janet Dean,  
Jonathan Farooqi, Ian Fisher, Mike S Hodgson, Ian Kerr, David Kinchin-smith,  
Stef McElwee, Andy D Mould & Gary Woodburn

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Kingfisher  
(Ian Fisher)

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## Introduction

The entries in this report cover all species found during 2014 in our recording area, which comprises the county of Northumberland and the districts of Newcastle and North Tyneside.

## Overview

A total of 277 full species were recorded in Northumberland in 2014, equalling the record annual total for the county set in 2013. A Black-winged Pratincole at Hauxley in June, which reappeared at Holywell Pond in July, was the only addition to the county list. Ring-necked Parakeet, formally regarded as an escape or of unknown origin, was awarded full status by the County Rarities Committee (CRC) and was therefore also added in 2014, bringing the official county list to 412 species.

A Lesser Whitethroat of the race *Sylvia curruca blythi* in a Tynemouth garden from January to March was the first confirmed record of this 'Siberian' sub-species.

In addition to the returning Caspian Gull at Amble Harbour there were a further 13 species in the Extremely Rare category (no more than nine records in total); Stilt Sandpiper (second record), Red-eyed Vireo (second record), Eastern Bonelli's Warbler (second record), Cattle Egret (third record), Collared Pratincole (third record), Broad-billed Sandpiper (fifth record), Bridled Tern (sixth record), Blue-winged Teal (seventh record), Bonaparte's Gull (seventh and eighth records), Little Bittern (eighth record), Great Reed Warbler (eighth and ninth records), Lesser Yellowleg (ninth record) and Glossy Ibis (ninth and tenth records).

The list of rare or scarce species recorded in 2014 was long and impressive and included; American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal, Ferruginous Duck, Surf Scoter, Fea's/Zino's Petrel, Cory's, Great and Balearic Shearwater, Leach's Petrel, Great White Egret, Black Kite, White-tailed Eagle, Rough-legged Buzzard, Corncrake, Crane, Dotterel, Temminck's Stint, White-rumped and Pectoral Sandpipers, Sabine's Gull, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Red-footed Falcon, Golden Oriole, Red-backed, Great Grey and Woodchat Shrikes, Bearded Tit, Shore Lark, Greenish, Pallas's, Hume's, Dusky and Barred Warblers, Waxwing, Rose-coloured Starling, Bluethroat, Red-breasted Flycatcher, Siberian Stonechat, Citrine Wagtail, Richard's and Olive-backed Pipits, Common Rosefinch, Ortolan, Rustic and Little Buntings. In addition it was another excellent year for Yellow-browed Warblers.

Breeding records included the first nesting of Little Egrets, with a pair in Druridge Bay. Three pairs of Ospreys nested successfully at Kielder Water, fledging a total of eight young. Four pairs of Mediterranean Gulls bred on Coquet Island, Marsh Harriers were again successful at East Chevington, Avocets had a good season and a pair of Goldeneye raised a brood at a site used since 2010.

Other breeding records included a bumper year for Little Terns (the best for two decades), 93 pairs of Roseate Terns nesting on Coquet Island, Black-necked Grebes at three sites and an excellent Barn Owl season.



## Acknowledgements

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The editor would also like to thank all the illustrators and photographers who have once again produced a range of fine work. Appreciation is also extended to the authors of various papers and to Peter Fletcher, who compiled the 2014 records from monthly bulletins on to individual species sheets. The map of the recording area was prepared by Mike Hodgson.

The compilers of the monthly bulletins, which form the basis of this report, are also acknowledged. An annual report would not be possible without their contribution. In 2014, bulletin data was collated by Dick Myatt and prepared by the following authors; Chris Barlow, Trevor Blake, Graeme Bowman, Eddie Crabtree, Tim Dean, Peter Fletcher, Ian Forsyth, Steve Holliday, Alan Jack, James Littlewood, Lindsay McDougall, Mike Richardson, Mike Smith and Alan Tilmouth. David Sanders provided data from the North Northumberland Bird Club. The bulletin was edited by Steve Barrett and mail distribution was by Paul Stewart.

## Status of Species

### Status Definitions:

Abundant:	10,000 or more individuals per annum
Common:	1,000 to 9,999 individuals per annum
Well-represented:	100 to 999 individuals per annum
Uncommon:	10 to 99 individuals per annum
Rare:	No more than nine individuals per annum.
Extremely Rare:	No more than nine individuals in total.

Breeding species. The same status definitions are used, but in reference to pairs rather than individual birds, therefore 10-99 pairs will be referred to as an 'uncommon' breeding species.



Osprey by Mike Henry

## Black-winged Pratincole at Hauxley Nature Reserve and Holywell Pond: First County Record

By Alan Curry

Pratincoles of any form are an extremely rare commodity in Northumberland and with a cool thirty-one year gap since the last record of a Collared Pratincole at Beadnell (May 1983), any reports were sure to generate a high degree of interest from within the local birding community.

Such a report emanated from the Tern Hide at Hauxley NR just after 11.00hrs on 12th June, when visiting bird watcher Helen Mears located a pratincole resting on the rocky shore opposite the hide. After alerting fellow hide occupant Hector Galley who quickly concurred with Helen's tentative appraisal they set about informing the birding world at large via Alan Tilmouth at the Birdguides news desk. Meanwhile, on the opposite side of the reserve, local birder David Dack who was blissfully unaware of events unfolding in the Tern Hide, had brief distant views of what he too considered to be a pratincole hunkered down on the shore of an island looking towards the Tern Hide. After encountering a quick off the mark Alan Tilmouth in the reserve car park, they both hurried to the Tern Hide where the pratincole was fortunately still present, and offering reasonable telescope views.

With a fundamentally dark bill, black lores, dark forehead and 'long-legged' appearance, the general consensus within the hide was that of Black-winged Pratincole. A potential first record for Northumberland! Further endorsement of the identification soon came in the form of a series of brief flight views, when no evidence of a pale trailing edge to the secondaries could be seen, along with essentially black underwings. However, just prior to the main arrival of would-be observers, the Black-winged Pratincole after receiving some rough treatment from the local Lapwings departed high south just after 13.00hrs, after a paltry two hour stay. With only a collection of gripping digital images to pore over, there still remained optimism amongst the gathering that all was not lost and it was only a matter of time before the pratincole made another appearance at a wetland within the county.

These hopes were dashed however a mere twenty-four hours later, following news of a Black-winged Pratincole at Saltholme RSPB (Cleveland) and although it did not linger for long it surely scuppered any hopes of another Northumberland occurrence.

Fast-forward another three weeks as the Black-winged Pratincole defied all the odds by making yet another public showing in the North-East, this time at Hurworth Burn Reservoir (Co. Durham) on 5th July. Being much more accommodating on this occasion, it at least afforded the opportunity for those who wished to finally connect with this mid-summer rarity albeit on 'foreign territory', and remained on show until late in the evening. The following morning it was again present at Hurworth Burn but departed east just after 08.00hrs and once again dropped off the birding radar.

That is until later the same day, when at 19.00hrs a somewhat incredulous Brian Moorhouse and Sam Hood found themselves musing over an all-too brief flyover pratincole at Holywell Pond (Northumberland). Frustratingly for the observers involved, it continued on its way in a south-westerly direction and with both observers leaning towards Collared Pratincole the news was broadcast as such. Would-be pratincole finders should pay heed, as the first county record of Collared Pratincole was also present at Holywell on 6th July 1966, a date and locality definitely worth noting in the diary.





Photo by Mike S Hodgson

When the news broke of the Holywell sighting, I was well positioned, being a mere ten minute drive away birding in Blyth Bay, so it would have been rude not to go and check it out. I had a hunch about a locality which might just come up with the goods, as I had been regularly checking a small shallow subsidence pool with broad muddy margins located in the corner of a cereal field about half a mile east of Holywell Pond. Pools of this nature are something of a rarity these days locally and are definitely to be cherished, and it had been attracting a reasonable number of loafing Redshank and Lapwing over the previous weeks. Arriving about an hour before dusk, there was little on offer however, other than an assemblage of roosting Curlew and the local Barn Owl.

The following morning I could not resist another bash and immediately on arrival at 08.30hrs discovered a resting Pratincole, sat down on the baked mud head-on amongst a small Lapwing flock. I kept a respectful distance, wary of sending it prematurely skyward, but the viewing was not easy with the pratincole partially obscured by the high bank side vegetation. There were few useful features on offer at this point, but the base of the lower mandible struck me as being notably bright red in the harsh sunlight. Unable to see any structural detail and conscious that the observers the previous evening were favouring Collared, I elected to put the news out as a pratincole sp. for the time being, not ideal but at least galvanising any would be observers.

Remaining inactive for what seemed like an age, the pratincole eventually perked up and began bobbing its head in an agitated manner, before making a short rapid flight to the opposite end of the small muddy island. Although it was little more than a glimpse I did not see anything other than what appeared to be uniform secondary tips and featureless black underwings. After this change of position I could now see the wing structure at last, and the primaries could be seen to be marginally longer than the tips of the tail. The weather was also on the change and in the now overcast conditions its general appearance had become a lot darker, with the red at the bill base appearing much more muted and tricky

to discern. The lores were extensively black and bulging onto the forehead, and with this feature noted I was convinced that this was a Black-winged Pratincole and most likely the individual that had been seen over the previous few days in County Durham.

Over the next hour or so, punctuated by an incredibly heavy downpour, the pratincole continued to rest on the small muddy island. However, as the sun returned it became much more lively making several short flights before heading off low across the fields calling, picking up height and departing north at around 10.30hrs, disappointing a few unfortunate late arriving observers in the process.

Yet another two hour window of opportunity, but at least allowing a reasonable number of local birders a second chance to catch up with it.

## Description:

### Size and shape:

Significantly smaller than the adjacent Lapwings and structurally quite tern-like, with a leggy appearance.

### Head:

Cold dark brown crown that contrasted slightly with the paler nape. The loreal area was sooty black bulging up onto the forehead and back over the eye. The eye itself was dark, with a white indistinct lower eye crescent. A creamy-buff throat was framed by a thin dark border which was incomplete along the lower contour.

### Upperparts and wings:

Again, cold dark brown mantle, upperwing coverts and secondaries with contrasting uniform black primaries. Although only marginal the tips of the primaries fell just beyond the tips of the tail. The underwings appeared uniformly black with no visible white tips to the secondaries.

### Tail:

The uppertail coverts and outermost tail feathers were white, framing a deeply forked black tail.

### Underparts:

Scruffy diffuse buff upper breast, with contrasting white flanks and belly.

### Bare parts:

All dark stubby bill with discreet red base to the lower mandible. The legs were dark greyish.

### Behaviour:

Most of the time spent resting, sat on its belly but occasionally punctuated by periods of running around amongst the roosting Lapwing flock. On a handful of occasions it engaged in a short rapid flight across the pool, usually preceded by some agitated head bobbing.

### Voice:

Called several times as it flew off for the final time a harsh singular 'KEK'.



Photo by Jonathan Farooqi

## Collared Pratincole at Castle Island

By David Dack

On Monday, 28th July 2014 at around 14.00hrs I decided it was time to take the dog for a walk along the River Wansbeck to Castle Island. I had been checking this area every day, and in the process was turning up some good local finds, including Spoonbill, Little Egret, Green and Wood Sandpipers. On arriving at Cambois Rowing Club I began to check through the assembled waders on the exposed mud along the river bank. There was nothing particularly unusual, a few Dunlins, Redshank and a smart Little Ringed Plover. I carried on walking towards another area of mud, and as I scanned the Lapwing flocks noticed a smaller wader, which I thought looked like a Pratincole. I ran on to get a closer look and could clearly see it was indeed a Pratincole species, but it was still a little distant so I couldn't make out much detail.

I immediately assumed it would be the Black-winged Pratincole which had been seen a few weeks earlier at Hauxley and Holywell Pond. As my dad hadn't seen this bird I phoned him first before heading off to the south side of the island, where I could hopefully gain closer views. Upon arriving I started to scan the mud again, but was at first unable to re-find the bird. Thankfully, it suddenly flew into view, when I immediately noted a rich red underwing, and a large amount of red on the bill. This was obviously not the expected Black-winged Pratincole, but either Collared or Oriental!

It was time to make some more phone calls. Within a few minutes my dad turned up and we both watched it feeding and in flight, and after agreeing it was a Collared Pratincole put the news out on Birdguides.

Tim Cleeves, Andy Mclevy and Stewart Sexton soon arrived and agreed with us that it was indeed a Collared Pratincole, and we all enjoyed great views of it walking around and taking short flights. At one point we had it flying directly overhead, and it even started calling. Over the remainder of the afternoon and evening lots of birders turned up and were rewarded with good views of the bird until around 19.00hrs, when it flew off NW, never to be seen again. This was the third record for the county, with the previous birds seen at Holywell Pond from 2nd-6th July 1966 and at Beadnell on 15th May 1983.



Photo by Ian Fisher

## Caspian Gull at Amble Harbour in 2013-14: Second Record for Northumberland

By Ian Fisher

When compiling the Ringing Recovery report for Birds in Northumbria (hereafter BiN), I consult the BTO website, which includes a page of all the notable birds found dead or re-caught during the year in question, the link to which can be found at the end of my recovery report. This page can be searched by County, which enables me to see if there are any notable recoveries of Northumberland ringed birds or birds found dead in the county, which I wouldn't normally have access to. Over the years this search has produced some interesting inclusions that have greatly enhanced my report.

Whilst researching the recoveries on the website for BiN 2013, I came across a report of a Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans* from Amble Harbour in July and September 2013. Not quite believing that a county mega had remained undetected by County birders on my local patch for about two months was hard to take and I had to re-read the recovery several times to make sure I wasn't hallucinating!!

I had to find out more, so on 7th April 2014 I emailed Lee Barber at the BTO to see if it would be possible to gather any further information on this amazing recovery, as it would constitute only the second record for Northumberland. He replied on 10th April with a copy of the recovery slips (minus any contact details for the observers); however he did name the finders as Paul A Ardon and J Turner, who both reported it as a Caspian Gull and Ivor Rackham who reported it as 'Herring Gull Group'. He also stated that this bird had been seen in July 2012 at Cley NWT in Norfolk by Mark Golley, who identified it as a Caspian Gull.





Photo by Alan Curry

The bird was colour ringed as a nestling, with a yellow darvic (with black letters PKCS) on 26th May 2011 at Zb.Kozielno, Paczkow, Dolnoslaskie, Poland (50deg 29min N / 16deg 58min E). There was a little confusion and suggestions that this bird may not have been a pure Caspian Gull as Lee also stated in his email "The ringing species on these recoveries however is 'Caspian Gull Colony' (not in our ringing scheme), due to the fact that there is a possibility of other species being ringed there i.e. some Caspian Gull Colonies have been cited as Herring Gull."

I sent Tim Dean a copy of the recovery slips on 11th April, which he passed around the County Records Committee (CRC) on the same day for comments. There the record rested. I was gutted at having missed a mega on my local patch, but was looking forward to seeing if the record would be accepted as the second for the county.

That a gull had been seen two years running in July (albeit in different parts of the country) gave me hope that the bird may be relocated in 2014. That hope was realised on 9th August 2014 when Michael Frankis *et al.* located a yellow darvic ringed gull at Amble Braid (the bird was also seen on 6th August, but not identified) and managed to read the darvic letters. I imagine they got a shock when this find came back as a Caspian Gull. On 11th August, several birders were out looking for it in the Amble / Warkworth weir area. After several hours of searching with no sightings (although an unidentified yellow darvic'd gull on the North breakwater caused a stir at one point), the light began to fade and searchers were beginning to think of heading home. Alan Gilbertson and I decided to give the harbour one last try. AG arrived first and immediately phoned to say he had the bird in front of him on the quay! I arrived soon after, just as the bird spooked and flew onto a telegraph pole in the NW corner of the quay, next to the chipper. Here everybody got boot filling views and many photographs were taken. Over the next few weeks the bird showed well in the harbour for some and not so well for others (me!) and remained until the end of August at least.

The bird was in heavy wing moult when found, but exhibited the classic dark-eyed and long-legged appearance associated with this species. It was also seen and heard calling a couple of days later. It gave the classic 'wings up, head up' long call display diagnostic of Caspian Gull and the call was described as 'braying like a Donkey'!

The record was subsequently accepted by the CRC as the second for Northumberland.



Photo by Mike S Hodgson



Photo by Gary Woodburn

## Red-eyed Vireo at Low Newton: Second County Record

By Gary Woodburn

On 7th October 2014, I had an hour free for some birding. I thought I'd use it by having a walk around my ringing site at Low Newton, to assess conditions for ringing the following morning.

At around 13.30hrs I came across two Yellow-browed Warblers right next to one of my ringing rides. I scrambled the camera into action in order to try and photograph them. Unfortunately they were just too quick for my reactions and the camera's auto focus.

As I persevered with the 'flitty' Yellow-brows I noticed through the camera's viewfinder a completely out of focus bird in the tree behind. This 'fuzzy blob' seemed to be lumping around the foliage and I assumed that it was probably a Garden Warbler, or something similar.

All my attention remained on the Yellow-brows, which were actually coming closer and closer, although I still didn't manage a decent photograph. Through the camera's viewfinder I noticed that the 'fuzzy blob' seen previously was still present, so with the camera still held up to my eye, I pressed the shutter button to focus in and confirm the bird's ID.

As the camera's auto-focus locked on it became crystal clear that I was way off the mark with Garden Warbler, as I was now staring at a Red-eyed Vireo!! In a moment of complete panic I automatically pressed the button and just held it down until the camera could cope

no longer. With about 20 very shaky record shots secured, and the camera now clogged up with buffering, I lifted my bins to the bird for the first time, just to confirm that I wasn't making a horrible mistake. It was still there and it still appeared to be a Red-eyed Vireo.

I crept a little closer before taking another full burst of around 20 shots. As the camera buffered I lifted my bins and watched it again for a few seconds before, without warning, it flew off through the tree canopy and disappeared.

After a couple of seconds of disbelief I remembered that I had promised my wife I would get back home no later than 14.00hrs, so I had around 15 minutes left to relocate the bird. My 15 minutes elapsed, I had not seen the bird again and was forced to leave.

As I drove home I considered releasing news, but I was apprehensive. My main concern was that two of the three landowners at my ringing site have specifically asked me not to put news out of any rare birds found on their land. Furthermore, the main landowner in question has recently covered all access points to his land with 'private keep out' signs and has fallen out with a number of locals who have chosen to ignore them.

This left me with a dilemma; I normally report rarities swiftly, but this bird was in deep cover and only viewable from the private field side. I could not afford to risk the good relationship I have built up over many years with those who allow me access to their land to carry out my bird ringing activities.

As I drove home I formulated a plan. I would call in help in the form of the nearest birder I knew, Stewart Sexton. Once I had completed my duties at home I would race back and meet Stewart, we would then split up and try to relocate the vireo as quickly as possible. Once this was done and we had a feel for the area the bird was frequenting I would contact the landowners and if need be try and gain wider access for visiting birders.

At approximately 15.20hrs I met up with Stewart near the Tin Church, we split up and scoured the area. I managed to contact one of the landowners who said that they didn't mind so long as people stuck strictly to public rights of way. However, I was unable to contact the main landowner whom I was most concerned about.

Stewart and I continued to search the site but failed to relocate the bird. By 17.00hrs it was looking pretty bleak, no sign of the bird and no contact with the main landowner. Stewart and I had a chat about what to do regarding releasing the news. I was swinging like a pendulum, but with no further sign and difficulty informing the landowner, I decided it was probably best just to come back for another look in the morning. Thirty minutes later the pendulum had swung again and I changed my mind. After another chat with Stewart I decided to put the news out and try to contact the landowner again that evening.

News was broadcast with very clear instructions regarding the private land and paths. That night I eventually managed to contact the landowner by phone. Access to view the scrub from the field edge was not forthcoming, but at least they were informed and I mentioned that there may be a few birdwatchers around the following day. Unfortunately it was all in vain, despite a search by around 30 people the following morning the bird was not seen again.

I'm disappointed that I saw this bird for probably less than 60 seconds in total. Why didn't I pay it more attention earlier? I suppose I should just be thankful that I actually saw it and was lucky enough to be holding a camera at the time to secure a few record shots.



## Description

### Initial Impression:

The bird was first seen as a fuzzy out of focus blob through my camera's viewfinder. It was lumping about in the foliage with clumsy movements reminiscent of a Barred Warbler.

Once in focus I was presented with a stripy headed olive toned bird. It appeared large headed, flat crowned and short tailed; this all gave it a bit of a 'chunky' feel.

### Head:

This bird's most striking feature was its strong supercilium, bordered by a narrow black line along the top edge and a grey crown above. These features combined with dark lores gave it a rather stripy headed appearance.

The sides of the head, ear coverts and nape were olive, merging with a paler off-white throat.

### Upperparts:

Not seen well but appeared uniform olive.

### Underparts:

Off-white with a lemony flush to the undertail coverts.

### Wings and Tail:

Appeared short tailed.

Not seen well but the wings and tail appeared slightly darker than the olive upperparts, but with brighter yellowy green fringes to the feathers.

### Bare parts:

A strong bill, similar to a Barred Warbler but proportionately longer with a slight hook at the tip. Bill appeared grey with a paler cutting edge and paler base to the lower mandible. This bird's legs were grey, not dissimilar to an Icterine Warbler.

Its eye appeared dark in the shade of the tree. When it turned its head and caught the light the iris appeared a dark reddish-brown. Not as bright as adult birds I have seen in North America and similar to a couple of 1st year birds I have seen in the UK, so presumably a 1st year bird.

### Behaviour:

Initially it was moving through the tree canopy with slow clumsy hops from branch to branch (out of focus through my camera and ignored). Then it sat still for a minute or so before flying off through the canopy, never to be seen again.

### Call:

The bird did not call.

The record was accepted by the BBRC and is the second for Northumberland. The first was on Holy Island in October 1988.



Photo by Stef McElwee

## Eastern Bonelli's Warbler at Newbiggin: Second County Record

By Alan Tilmouth

After an early morning sea-watch on 3rd May 2014, I decided to take a walk across Newbiggin Golf Course and Moor. Walking up to the first patch of Ash Lagoon scrub was pretty uninspiring, and with only a few Linnets and a singing Whitethroat to be seen I almost gave up and went home. As I approached the middle scrub on the Ash Lagoon bank I heard an unfamiliar short song 'trill or rattle' coming from within the vegetation. I began to scan with binoculars and after first seeing a Whitethroat, caught a glimpse of a phylloscopus warbler flit across the small mallow tree at the back.

Still hearing the short trilled song I scanned again and realised that it was the phylloscopus warbler which was singing. The bird remained out of view, although continued singing intermittently for a short period before re-appearing, when it could be seen singing with associated wing-quivering. To be honest, at first I had half-expected this unfamiliar short trilled song to be the first few notes of a bird starting to sing and for additional song phrases to be added, but the bird just kept repeating this short trill. I began to work through and eliminate the commoner options in the family. The song and wing-quivering were faintly reminiscent of Wood Warbler, but there was clearly no bright yellow wash to the head and upper breast and the wing length was too short. On plumage, the fairly plain upperparts and white-looking breast and belly were Siberian Chiffchaff-like but the bright yellow/green rump didn't fit with this species, nor did the song. I wanted to double-check the song against recordings, and after making a short recording of the song began to try and access the Xeno-canto website on my Iphone. Frustratingly the site appeared to be closed for maintenance so I was unable to access any songs or calls.

At this point Eric Barnes arrived and we began to discuss the identification, EB had song recordings of both Eastern Bonelli's Warbler *P. orientalis* and Western Bonelli's Warbler *P. bonelli* loaded on his phone and we listened to both. We both agreed that the recording of Western Bonelli's Warbler song was the best match and consequently put out the news. Around seven to eight birders arrived in time to view and hear the bird, and whilst at least one (Jimmy Steele) queried whether we had ruled out Eastern Bonelli's, when the recordings were played there appeared to be a general consensus that the song was a better match for Western.

Over the next hour I was able to make further sound recordings, video and take some images through my Iphone held to the scope eyepiece. The bird fell silent around 09:25-09:30 and was not seen or heard subsequently.

## Description

### General:

A pale, plain looking *phylloscopus* warbler, similar in size to Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler.

### Upperparts:

Crown, nape and mantle were a fairly uniform greenish/brown. Primaries had a faint bright green tinge to edges. Primary projection appeared to be midway between Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler. Tertiaries were dark brown with pale off-white/greyish edges. Greater coverts had obvious pale off-white fringes forming a pale panel. Rump was a bright yellow/green and clearly the brightest part of the upperpart colouration.

### Underparts:

Throat, breast, belly and undertail coverts white providing a striking contrast with upperparts.

### Head:

A thin off-white supercilium extended from in front of the eye to the rear of eye above the ear coverts. A whitish, complete eye-ring was noted. A short dark line behind the eye and under the supercilium bordered the upper edge of the ear coverts. Subsequent review of images noted a dark loreal spot that wasn't noticed in the field.

### Bare parts:

Bill - dark upper mandible, darker toward the tip, pale brown with a pinkish tinge.

Legs - grey/brown.

### Behaviour:

Sang intermittently but regularly for over an hour. Frequent wing-quivering when singing from a static perch. Had periods where it fed actively but also three short periods of one to three minutes where it remained in one place, preening and on one occasion appeared to be looking intently below its perch, frozen in posture, perhaps at a passing predator?

Subsequently recordings and video were posted online and Richard Millington was the first to query the identification, asking whether the bird had been heard to call and suggesting the timing and appearance was possibly better for Eastern Bonelli's, rather than Western. Recordings of the song and sonograms were sent to Magnus Robb and Dick Groenendijk (who co-wrote the Dutch Birding paper on the identification of Eastern and Western Bonelli's Warblers by song) for analysis.

### Comments came back as follows:

Magnus Robb - "I've just been studying your Bonelli's Warbler song, and it's a bit of an unusual one. We have many recordings of both species in our collection, and the guys who wrote to paper in DB had access to them, so I am basically following their conclusions, but can 'nuance' them a bit based on newer recordings that we have.

Shape: the shape of the individual elements in the song of your bird is very typical of Eastern. As far as I know, Western never has elements shaped like this.

Number of elements: with 7, 8 and 9 elements in the songs you sent, Western should be much more likely. However, it is still within the range of variation of Eastern.

Length: at around 0.5 s your songs are very short. According to the DB paper some are even too short for Western.

Pitch range: as you wrote, your bird reaches quite a high pitch, and this should be a pointer towards Western. However, I'd just found an example of Eastern with equally high pitch (for my own reference: 090620.AB.054457), so it cannot be excluded on these grounds.

I would say that your bird was an Eastern, based on the shape of the elements, which I think carries most weight. The pitch doesn't worry me: it can be that high. The unusual number of elements and length surprise me more, but I wonder if the explanation could be that this was a bird still on migration and singing a plastic song. Wood Warblers are well known for singing very short versions of their usual song on spring migration (that can cause confusion with bonelli's). Maybe Eastern Bonelli's can too."

Dick Groenendijk - "For me it is clearly an *orientalis*. The main character for me is the form of the last note in the song, in this case with the form of the backslash. The songphrases are rather short for an *orientalis*. In fact, I have never seen recordings of an *orientalis* with such short song phrases..... Another important pointer is the maximum frequency which is also too low for bonelli. You suggest that this is over 7000 Hz. However, when I look to at the sonograms, only the harmonic shadows of the song notes are reaching over 7000 Hz. The real and clear song notes are reaching about 5800-5900 Hz, which perfectly match *orientalis*. The recording is good enough to judge these details."

The record was accepted by the CRC and BBRC as the second county record, following the first at Whitley Bay Cemetery in September 1995.



## Classified List

This Classified List follows the sequence of the British List (Eighth edition) as published in January 2014 by the British Ornithologists Union Records Committee (BOURC) Taxonomic Sub-committee.



Dotterel (Mike Henry)

Classified List



Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

STATUS: Well-represented resident, passage and winter visitor.  
BREEDING: Uncommon to well-represented.  
The largest gatherings were from four regular sites, where maximum monthly counts were as follows:

Locality	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Capheaton Lake	30	28	9	0	0	38	0	0	51	38	89	51
Killingworth Lake	76	66	57	67	52	83	86	71	31	21	32	33
QEII Lake	130	88	117	0	0	0	36	101	106	81	105	99
Tweed Estuary	14	17	54	92	186	262	280	360	112	144	32	26

Elsewhere, during the first quarter up to 122 were at New Water Haugh (River Tweed), while 10-34 were at Angerton Lake, Bellasis Bridge, Big Waters, Bolam Lake, Caistron, East Chevington, Ellington, Gosforth Park NR, Hartburn Reservoir, Newcastle (Leazes Park), Warkworth Lane and West Ord. Peak concentrations in May involved 14-24 at Big Waters, the Blyth Estuary, Caistron, Capheaton and West Ord, while in June, 51 were at Castle Island and 14-24 at the Blyth Estuary, Bothal Pond, Branton GP, Grindon Lough and Ladyburn Lake.

A total of 26 breeding pairs were reported from 23 widespread localities. The first nesting activity was at Holy Island, where a pair were nest building by the end of March. Two nests were noted at East Chevington, Gosforth Park NR and Marden Quarry, with single nests / broods at Arcot Pond, Bell’s Pond (Cresswell), Belsay Hall, Bothal Pond, Branton GP, Broomlee Lough, Burradon Pond, Bywell, Castle Island, Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Pools, Hauxley NR, Hedgeley GP, Howdon Wetland, Killingworth Lake, Linton Ponds, Newton Pool, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Woolsington Ponds.

In July, there were 33-36 at the Blyth Estuary, Castle Island, and Ladyburn Lake, while 10-21 were at Branton GP, Broomlee Lough, Caistron, East Chevington and Grindon Lough. In August, 12-39 were at Big Waters, Caistron and Castle Island, while in September 14-33 were at Big Waters, Bolam Lake, Broomlee Lough, Caistron, Castle Island, East Chevington, Gosforth Park NR and Ladyburn Lake.

There were 66 birds near the causeway at Holy Island and 53 at Big Waters in October, while 10-27 were at Bolam Lake, Broomlee Lough, Caistron, East Chevington, Gosforth Park NR, North Blyth and Stakeford. During the final two months of the year there were up to 50 at Big Waters and 25-29 between Druridge and Warkworth, while 12-24 were at Caistron, Gosforth Park NR, Holy Island, Hedgeley GP and the Wansbeck Estuary. Smaller numbers were recorded throughout the county during the year.

Bewick’s Swan *Cygnus columbianus*

STATUS: Increasingly rare passage and winter visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2013  
The only report during the first winter period was of a single bird at Loanend (Horncliffe) on the 6th March (MHu).

In the latter part of the year two adults were with Pink-footed Geese at Ellington on 18th October before flying off SW (TB) and a single was at Derwent Reservoir (with 18 Whooper Swans) on 1st December (IFo).

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

STATUS: Well-represented passage and winter visitor.

In January, 14-88 were at Alnmouth, Cresswell Pond, Loanend (Horncliffe), Rayburn Lake, Warkworth and Warkworth Lane, while one to seven were at a further ten localities. During February, 130 flew up the River Tweed at St Thomas’ Island on 22nd, while 15-32 were at Alnmouth, East Chevington, Grindon Lough, Horncliffe, QEII CP and Warkworth Lane, with two to ten at a further 13 localities. Movements became apparent during March, with peak counts including a total of 112 N at Seaton Sluice, 129 N at St Mary’s Island on 8th, 67 N at the Farne Islands on 21st and 70 N at Cullercoats on 23rd, with further N movements of 35-42 noted at Bamburgh, Blyth Harbour, Low Newton and Weetslade CP. Elsewhere during the month numbers at Loanend increased to 176 on 2nd (MHu), 100 were at Beal on 9th, 76 at Bakethin Reservoir on 24th and 20-36 were at Derwent Reservoir, Ellington, Branton CP, Cresswell Pond and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, while one to 17 were reported from a further 21 widespread localities.

Passage continued into April, with 42 N at Corbridge on 5th and 28 N at Tynemouth on 13th; one to six were also noted at Alnmouth, Harper’s Haugh (Budle Bay), St Mary’s Island and West Ord. Singles were at QEII CP on 17th May and at Beal on 26th May. Another was seen at Lindisfarne NNR on 21st July and 3rd-11th August.

Return passage commenced on 30th September when eight flew S at Warkworth Gut. Passage continued in October with two to 14 moving S at Backworth, Boulmer, Druridge Pools, Hadston, Holy Island, Prestwick Carr, Tynemouth, Snab Point (Cresswell), St Mary’s Island and Whitley Bay. Peak gatherings in October were low with counts of ten to 21 at Aln Estuary, Beal, Derwent Reservoir, East Chevington, Holy Island, Horncliffe and Widdrington Moor Lake, while one to eight were at a further ten localities.

Southerly movements on 1st-2nd November included 29 at Tynemouth, 27 at Seaton Sluice, 26 at Bradford Kaims and 24 at Ellington, while later in the month 29 flew S at Fenham Flats on 28th. Peak counts in November were 72 at Horncliffe, 58 at Holy Island, 39 at Cornhill-on-Tweed, 32 at Cresswell Pond and 19 at Hauxley NR, while one to 12 were at a further 15 localities. Finally, in December, a herd at Amble Braid throughout the month peaked at 46 on 9th, while 40 were at Low Newton on 6th, 39 at Rayburn Lake, 21-24 at Warkworth Lane, 18 at Derwent Reservoir and 14 at Fenham Flats, with lesser numbers reported from a further 11 localities.

Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*

Tundra Bean Goose *A.f.rossicus*

STATUS: Rare passage and winter visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2013

There was a small influx during the early months of the year, beginning with three among a large flock of Pink-footed Geese at Maiden’s Hall Lake on 24th January (MSH). Possibly the same birds were involved later that day and through to 26th January at Alnmouth, where they were associating with Whooper Swans (TF/JFa *et al.*). Three, with Pink-footed Geese at Old Hartley on 27th January (JBU *et al.*) and later on the same day at Whittle Dene Reservoirs (AA *et al.*) were again quite possibly the same individuals. They appeared to settle at the latter locality where they remained to 31st March.

February saw another group, as seven were discovered with the regular Whooper Swan flock at Beal on 1st-2nd February (RA). There were no further sightings until 10th March with the discovery of two in a large multi-species goose flock at Hauxley NR (IF *et al.*),





Tundra Bean Geese - Alnmouth - February (Jonathan Farooqi)



Eurasian White-fronted Goose - Cresswell - January (Ian Fisher)

these remaining in the area to 26th. An unusual spring record involved a lone individual which flew onto Grindon Lough on 5th May (PRM).

The only other sightings were two, again at Grindon Lough from 18th-23rd November (PRM/AJR).

## **Pink-footed Goose** *Anser brachyrhynchus*

STATUS: Common passage and winter visitor.

The largest gatherings in January-February involved 3,000-4,000 at Doddington, up to 2,500 in the Druridge Bay area and 1,000 at Fenham Flats. Elsewhere, in January 500-800 were in the Beehive Flash (Earsdon) area, in Budle Bay and at Holywell Dene, while 100-450 were at a further ten localities. In February, there were 800 at Brier Dene (Whitley Bay) and Gloucester Lodge (Blyth), while 300-400 were at the Beehive Flash, Bradford (near Lucker), Fenham Flats, Seaton Sluice and Tughall; 95-280 were at a further ten localities. Peak counts in March involved 1,500 at Bradford, 800 at Widdrington Moor Lake, 700 at West Stobswood Pool and 150-600 at Cocklawburn, Gloucester Farm, Redheugh and the Tyne Estuary.

Numbers declined sharply during April, with 1,750 at Doddington, declining to 14 by 21st. Some 250-400 remained in the Druridge Bay area, 150 were at Holy Island and there were 116 at Hoppen Kiln Flash on 15th. Singles were at Hauxley NR on 2nd May and Hoppen Kiln Flash on 14th. Single birds, perhaps of dubious origin were seen at Derwent Reservoir on 27th June and at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) throughout July until 20th August.

Return passage commenced with three N over the Farne Islands on 6th September, followed on 13th by ten S at Prestwick Carr. Passage continued during September with many flocks moving through the county, most notable of which were 500 over Yearle on 23rd and 560 over Tasset on 24th, while 600 were at East Chevington on 26th; a total of 631 flew S at St Mary's Island between 22nd-27th and 238 moved S at Seaton Sluice from 21st-29th. Further movements during October included 600 S at Low Newton on 8th and 460 NW at Bamburgh on 11th.

By far the largest gathering of the year was at Holy Island, where an estimated 14,500 left the causeway sands during the early morning of 2nd November (ADM). Elsewhere during the month, several skeins totalling 3,000 birds moved S at dawn over Bamburgh on 9th and 2,500 were at Cresswell Pond on the same date. Counts of 800 came from Holywell Pond on 11th and Doddington on 22nd, while a total of 760 moved S over Tynemouth during the month. In December up to 3,000 were gathered in the Druridge Bay area, 900 were at Holywell Pond on 5th, 800 at Doddington on 7th and 480-520 in the Beehive Flash-Old Hartley area throughout.

## **White-fronted Goose** *Anser albifrons*

### **Eurasian White-fronted Goose** *A.a.albifrons*

STATUS: Increasingly rare passage and winter visitor.

In the Druridge Bay area, two were at Cresswell Pond on 21st January and at Druridge Pools on 8th-9th February, while a single bird was at Hauxley NR on 18th and 23rd March. Elsewhere, two were at Budle Bay on 16th January, while in February singles were at Seghill from 6th-8th and at Holywell Pond between 11th-27th. Further sightings in March were two at Bradford on 3rd and three at Low Newton on 13th.

A single bird was at QEII CP on 7th September and at nearby Linton Ponds on 12th October. In November, single birds were at Bothal Pond and East Chevington on 9th and four (two adults and two first winters) were at Big Waters on 24th and at nearby Gosforth Park NR on 27th.

**Greenland White-fronted Goose** *A.a.flavirostris*

STATUS: Uncommon passage and winter visitor.

At the traditional Grindon Lough site, where the species continues to decline, one to two birds were present up to 24th March. In the Druridge Bay area, three were at Woodhorn Flash from 1st-26th January and undoubtedly the same birds visited Maidens Hall Lake on 24th January. In February, two to three were at Druridge Pools from 5th-13th. During April three were again at Woodhorn Flash on 2nd and a first winter bird was at Hoppen Kiln Flash on 15th.

In the final quarter singles were at Widdrington Moor Lake on the 12th October and at Grindon Lough on 21st, the latter remaining until at least 18th November. In December, two to three were at Warkworth Lane from 20th-31st December.

Birds **not assigned to race** included some larger groups, with seven at Maidens Hall Lake on 16th February, while three at Woodhorn Flashes on 2nd were probably A.a.flavirostris and two were at Cresswell Pond on 13th. In March, six were at Bradford Kaims on 11th and three at Widdrington Steads on 26th.

In December one was at Low Newton 23rd and another flew over Holywell Pond with Greylags on 31st.

**Greylag Goose** *Anser anser*

STATUS: Common passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Uncommon and increasing.

The largest gatherings during January involved 220-273 at Budle Bay, Derwent Reservoir, East Chevington and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, while 110-159 were at a further six localities. In February, 250-322 were at Budle Bay, Caistron, Hauxley NR and Lindisfarne NNR with 110-160 at a further five localities. Peak counts in March involved 800 at Bradford Kaims on 11th, 500 at Hauxley NR on 10th, 377 at Harpers Heugh (Budle Bay) on 3rd and 320 at Backworth on 14th, while 109-200 were also noted at Caistron, Branton CP, Holywell Pond and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Up to 500 were present at Budle Bay during April when up to 90 were recorded at over a dozen further sites. Two to 85 were reported from more than 20 localities during May. An unseasonably large group of up to 1,475 was at Derwent Reservoir during June, while 261 were at Caistron and 100 at Marden Quarry. Peak concentrations in July involved 142 at Hauxley NR, 120 at Caistron and 78 at Branton GP.

Breeding was confirmed at 19 localities (14 in 2013). There were 13 pairs on Coquet Island (11 in 2013) where the first eggs were found on 28th March (RSPB). More than eight broods (52 young) were at Calder (Roddam), eight broods (37 young) were noted at Branton GP, and six broods (42 young) were at Derwent Reservoir and four broods (20 young) at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh).

Peak concentrations during August involved 362 at Hauxley NR on 16th, 326 at Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield) on 10th, while 34-197 were at a further 16 localities. The largest gatherings in September involved a flock of 400 S at Lanehead (Tarset), 327 at Hauxley NR and 208-250 at Haughton Strother CP, Low Newton and Widdrington Moor Lake; up to 180 were at a further five localities.

In October, peak counts were 670 at Derwent Reservoir on 4th, 526 at Hauxley NR, 505 at Branton CP on 15th and 381 at Haughton Strother CP on 14th; 80-266 were recorded at a further 13 localities. Peak counts in November involved 397 at East Chevington, 272 at Big Waters and 131-200 at a further eleven sites. Finally in December there were 253 at Big Waters on 14th and 104-200 at Cocklawburn, East Holywell, Harper's Heugh, Haughton Strother GP, Low Newton and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

**Canada Goose** *Branta canadensis*

STATUS: Well-represented resident, passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Uncommon, although continues to increase.

Peak counts from four regular localities were as follows;

Locality	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Grindon	280	561	218	49	2	78	138	102	4	361	265	375
Bothal	0	262	234	28	5	8	58	220	469	1	89	1
Caistron	0	97	200	45	81	67	114	145	240	0	42	17
Killingworth	27	43	28	13	10	87	110	34	14	15	47	22

In addition to the above, larger concentrations in the first quarter involved 50-133 at Derwent Reservoir, Fontburn Reservoir, Gosforth Park NR, Hauxley NR, Hedgeley CP, Lilburn Grange, Lindon Ponds, Rayburn Lake and Widdrington Moor Lake. Elsewhere in April there were 11-26 at over a dozen further localities.

The largest gatherings elsewhere in May involved 26-59 at Castle Island, Hauxley NR, Holy Island and Newcastle (Leazes Park), while in June there were 150 at Colt Crag Reservoir and 78 at Leazes Park. During July, 52-112 were at Castle Island, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Hauxley NR, Leazes Park and QEII CP.

A total of at least 42 breeding pairs (35 in 2013) were reported from 18 localities (19 in 2013). Eleven pairs were noted at Coquet Island (nine in 2013), where the first eggs were found on 26th March (RSPB). Other sites reporting multiple broods included Branton GP with four broods, whilst three or more broods were noted at Castle Island, Hedgeley GP, Linton Ponds and Widdrington Moor Lake.

Further gatherings in August included 505 at Haughton Strother GP on 18th (MR) and 345 at Hauxley NR, while 102-125 were at Derwent Reservoir, Linton Ponds and Widdrington Moor. Up to 302 were at Hallington Reservoir in September, while 140-150 were at Druridge Pools and QEII CP and 76 at the Aln Estuary.

In October, 293 were at Linton Ponds, 192 at Hallington Reservoir, 180 at Capheaton, 160 at Angerton Lake and 150 at QEII CP. During November, 206 were at the Aln Estuary and 120-175 were at Capheaton, Derwent Reservoir and Hedgeley GP. Finally in December, 111-148 were at the Aln Estuary, Derwent Reservoir, Gosforth Park NR and Hedgeley GP.



**Barnacle Goose** *Branta leucopsis*

STATUS: Common autumn passage and well represented winter visitor.  
A group of up to 300 frequented the Lindisfarne NNR area in the first quarter, while there were 200 at East Chevington on 10th March and 15 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 14th February. One to four were at Doddington, Grindon Lough, Hauxley NR and West Stobswood Pool.

The Farne Islands witnessed better than average passage during the spring, with peak movements of 290 on 25th April and 185 on 1st May. Elsewhere, 15-60 were noted at Gosforth Park NR, Holy Island, Low Newton and New Water Haugh (River Tweed) in April, while in May, 35-44 were at Cresswell Pond from 1st-2nd, 130 flew NE at Kielderhead on 6th, three were at Holy Island on the 3rd and singles were at Budle Bay on 8th, Swallow Pond on 12th and the Farne Islands on 18th.

The first autumn arrivals were flocks of 26-30 S at Howden and Tynemouth on 21st September. Widespread passage was evident from 22nd September, when a total of 1,740 flew N at the Farne Islands, 1,350 S at St Mary’s Island and 660 arrived from E at Bamburgh, with lesser numbers arriving elsewhere along the coast. On the same date c.2,500 were in Budle Bay, declining to 900 by 24th, when overland movements were noted, as 170 flew SE at Rothbury, 122 NW at Prestwick Carr and 100 SW at Chapel House. The largest gathering involved c.6,000 at Beal Point (Lindisfarne NNR), also on 24th (AC/GW).

Numbers remained high in the Lindisfarne NNR area during October where up to 1,986 remained, while 70 moved S at Stag Rocks on 23rd. In November-December up to 600 were in the Lindisfarne NNR area to the end of the year. Elsewhere numbers were typically low, with 18 flying SW at Newbiggin on 9th November, nine at New Water Haugh on 14th December and singles at Cresswell Pond, Doddington, Hedgeley CP, Holywell Pond, Stag Rocks and Woodhorn Flashes.

**Brent Goose** *Branta bernicla*

**Pale-bellied Brent Goose** *B.b.hrota*

STATUS: Common autumn passage and winter visitor.  
Maximum counts from the regular and important site at Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay) are as follows;

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr*	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct*	Nov	Dec
1048	904	428	--	0	1	1	1	2300	1707	2449	1489

\* see birds not assigned to race below

Away from Lindisfarne NNR one to eight were noted at Druridge, Lynemouth Flash, Newbiggin, Seahouses and Stag Rocks. A summering individual was noted on Holy Island from June-August.  
There was northerly movement during September, which involved 31 at Stag Rocks on 6th and a total of 41 at Seaton Sluice from 8th-19th; two to 14 were also noted at Annstead Point, Bamburgh, Druridge, Newbiggin, Newton Point, Snab Point (Cresswell), St Mary’s Island and Tynemouth. There were few reports away from Lindisfarne NNR during the final quarter. At Seaton Sluice two to six, mainly N were recorded from October-November.

**Dark-bellied Brent Goose** *B.b.bernicla*

STATUS: Well-represented autumn passage and uncommon winter visitor.  
Maximum counts from the regular and important site at Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay) are as follows;

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr*	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct*	Nov	Dec
110	120	120	--	0	0	0	0	0	429	186	25

\* see birds not assigned to race below

The only reports away from Lindisfarne NNR during the first quarter involved up to nine in the Cresswell-Lynemouth-Woodhorn Flashes area, while one to two were at Berwick, Boulmer, Seaton Sluice and Tynemouth. In May a single bird flew N at Boulmer.  
At Seaton Sluice, one flew N during September and 48 N and eight S on 6th October. Elsewhere in October, a total of 35 moved N at St Mary’s Island during the month while four were in the Coquet Estuary. During November, one chased by a Peregrine at Widdrington Moor Lake on 11th, had earlier been recorded at East Chevington.

Birds **not assigned to race** involved up to 1,000 at Harper’s Heugh and Lindisfarne NNR during February-March. In April up to 69 were on Holy Island.  
In October, 62 un-raced birds flew N at Tynemouth on 6th, while at Lindisfarne NNR 3,000 were present on 11th and 2,000 on 23rd-24th.

**Egyptian Goose** *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2013  
Two sightings were documented this year, with the first being an injured bird with damaged wing and leg at North Shields on 26th February (PRM *et al.*). It was still present the following day but was taken into care due to its poor condition. Elsewhere there was a long staying individual which was seen at many sites in the Druridge Bay area, as well as Castle Island, Blyth, Beadnell and Newton from 6th March. The only submitted description received was from Hauxley NR on 10th March. It was last seen on 19th June again at Hauxley NR (IF /JA *et al.*).

**Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna ferruginea*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2009  
A pair of roving birds was found in July. They first appeared at Gosforth Park NR on 6th (MB), before moving to Yarrow Slake (Berwick) on 9th (MHu), from where they made their way south as they flew over East Chevington on 11th (IF). Although there is obviously speculation as to their origin, it is well known that feral continental birds move into the UK in early summer.

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

STATUS: Common autumn passage and winter visitor. Less numerous in spring.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

Peak numbers (including WeBS counts) at the principal site of Lindisfarne NNR were as follows (counts from the Budle Bay section in parentheses):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1,318 (80)	1300 (180)	437 (120)	300 (125)	46 (119)	138 (147)	189 (80)	69 (8)	205 (75)	341 (427)	1,171 (140)	1,610 (65)

Light coastal passage at Seaton Sluice involved 15 N and one S in January, nine N and five S in February, and four N and three S in March. Away from Lindisfarne NNR, 32 were at the Blyth Estuary in January, 85 in February and 92 in March. Counts of 22-25 came from Elswick and Howdon Wetland, and ten to 18 from Castle Island, Cresswell and Warkworth Lane Ponds, and Howick-Boulmer in the opening three months, when five to eight were at the Aln and Coquet Estuaries, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Hauxley NR and Holywell Pond, and one to four at 15 further coastal / near coastal sites.

Inland, five were at Branton GP and Castron, and one to two at Colt Crag Reservoir and Grindon Lough in January; four to five at Branton GP and Grindon Lough and one at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) in February; and in March, eight to 11 at Branton GP, Castron and Grindon Lough, and one to two at Haughton Strother GP and Kielder Water.

In April, five flew S at Hauxley NR, 70 were at the Blyth Estuary and 26-31 at Alnmouth and Howick-Boulmer; and in May, seven flew N and two S at Seaton Sluice, 68 were at the Blyth Estuary, and 24-36 at the Aln Estuary and Howick-Boulmer. Groups of 11-19 were also at Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Elswick, Hoppen Kiln Flash, Howdon Wetland and Scotswood in April-May, while four to eight were at Branton GP, Castle Island, Castron, East Chevington, the Farne Islands, Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother GP, Hauxley NR, Linton Ponds, Longhirst Flash, Low Newton, West Stobswood and Widdrington Moor Lake, and one to three at 17 further widespread localities

Successful breeding was recorded at nine localities (16 in 2013) between May-July, with the first brood (11 young) at Cresswell Pond on 18th May. Full details were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods/crèches	No. of young
Hauxley NR	6	29
Amble	3	43
Castle Island	2+	24
Cresswell Pond	2+	24
West Stobswood	1	15
Blyth Estuary	1-2	10-17
Branton GP	1	8
Seghill Flash	1	8
The Farne Islands	1	4
Backworth	1	3

In addition, a total of 16 pairs were noted at Coquet Island in the spring (eight in 2013) but no details on productivity were received.

In June, 39 were found between Howick-Boulmer, 20-24 at the Aln and Blyth Estuaries, and four to ten at Branton GP, Castle Island, Howdon and Widdrington Moor Lake; and in July, 12-14 were at the Aln and Coquet Estuaries, and seven at Cresswell Pond. One to three were also at Castron, Gosforth Park NR, Hauxley NR, Lynemouth Flash and West Stobswood in June-July. In August, a total of 14 flew N at St Mary's and seven N and five S at Seaton Sluice, while 28 were at the Coquet Estuary, 12-15 at the Aln Estuary, Boulmer-Alnmouth, Castle Island, Cresswell Pond, Hauxley NR and Warkworth Gut, and one to nine at Bell's Pond, the Blyth Estuary, Branton GP, Druridge Pools, Elswick, the Farnes, Gosforth Park NR, Howdon and Yarrow Slake.

Away from Lindisfarne NNR few were noted in September, with six N at Seaton Sluice, five to nine at the Aln and Blyth Estuaries, Cresswell Pond and Howick-Boulmer, and one to two at Castle Island, Hauxley NR and the Tweed Estuary. In October, numbers at Budle Bay rose to 427 by 23rd, 16 were at the Coquet Estuary, and three to four at the Aln and Blyth Estuaries and Castle Island. Coastal movement in November produced a total of 18 N and seven S at Seaton Sluice, and one to six were at the Blyth Estuary, Castle Island, Cresswell Pond, the Farne Islands, Howick-Boulmer and Howdon. An increase at the core wintering area at Lindisfarne NNR led to 1,171 on 9th November and, the peak for the year, 1,610 from 6th-8th December (ACr). Also in December, five flew N at Seaton Sluice and one N at Tynemouth, while eight to 13 were at the Blyth Estuary, Castle Island and Howdon.

Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata*

STATUS: Uncommon resident.

BREEDING: Uncommon. A population in the North Tyne valley, established from escaped captive stock is now self-sustaining. / FIRST BRED: 1994 / LAST BRED: 2014

In January, five were noted at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 18th, and a drake was at QEII CP on 2nd February. Several records came from the Kielder area in March, with one to two pairs at Bakethin Reservoir, up to three (two drakes) at Tarsset, and a drake at Ridley Stokoe, while a duck was noted at Byrness (Redesdale).

In April, a pair flew over Byrness on 4th and a pair was at Houxty (near Wark). May records consisted of two drakes at Smalesmouth and a pair at Blakehopeburnhaugh.

A total of 33 nests were found in the Tarsset / Redesdale area, 317 eggs were laid of which 217 hatched. Six nests were also found at Kielder but the outcomes were unknown (MD). On the North Tyne, three females or juveniles were at Ridley Stokoe on 6th July and six females / juveniles were at Wark on 6th August; also in August two family parties (six and five juveniles with adult females) were at Bakethin Reservoir on 1st (MD). Away from the above areas, two females were found on nests in tree holes, plus a single drake, at Grasslees Burn (near Hepple) in June.

In September, seven flew over Tarsset on 23rd and three on 26th, while two were at Bakethin Reservoir on 25th and one appeared at Big Waters on 13th. The final reports were in October and involved two at a duck pool in Alnwick Garden on 16th, and one (thought to be the same individual as at Big Waters) at Gosforth Park NR early in the month.



Wigeon *Anas penelope*

STATUS: Abundant autumn passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Rare, although annual.

Peak monthly counts from Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay) were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1000	1000	117	0	0	4	1	500	8000	14141	11601	2387

Away from Lindisfarne NNR, the largest gatherings in January involved 331-468 at the Aln Estuary, Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, Derwent Reservoir and East Chevington; and in February, 312-450 were at Boulmer, Cresswell Pond, Derwent Reservoir and East Chevington. Counts of 200-250 also came from Colt Crag Reservoirs, the Coquet Estuary, Druridge Pools and Hoppen Kiln Flash, and 100-198 at Beadnell-Howick, Bothal Pond, Branton GP, Gosforth Park NR, Grindon Lough, Hauxley NR, Newton Pool, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Widdrington Moor Lake in January-February. In March, 300 were at Beadnell Bay and Hoppen Kiln Flash, and 107-248 at the Aln Estuary, Big Waters, Bothal and Cresswell Ponds, Derwent and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, Grindon Lough and Hauxley NR.

Counts of 50-90 also came from Caistron, Capheaton and QEII CP, Foxton, Linton Ponds, Stag Rocks and Woodhorn Flashes in the first quarter. A drake was carried across Big Waters in the mouth of an Otter *Lutra lutra* on 18th January.

Most large concentrations had dispersed by April, leaving peaks of 58 at Grindon Lough on 10th and 38-50 at Cresswell Pond, Derwent Reservoir and Druridge Pools. Up to 13 were at Grindon Lough during May, when five to ten were at Cresswell Pond and Derwent Reservoir, and one to two at Caistron, Druridge Pools, the Farne Islands, Gosforth Park NR, Hauxley NR, Hoppen Kiln Flash, Prestwick Carr and Swallow Pond.

Breeding was recorded at one site in June-July (none in 2013), namely Grindon Lough, with two broods (15 young).

Numbers at Grindon Lough peaked at 41 in June and 39 in July; and 14 were also at Plennmeller Common, and one to five at Arcot, Bothal and Cresswell, Ponds, Big Waters, Budle Bay, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Gosforth Park NR, Hauxley NR, Holy Island, Hoppen Kiln Flash and the Tweed Estuary in June-July. One N at Seaton Sluice on 10th July was followed in August by 34 N at Berwick, five N and nine S at Newbiggin and Seaton Sluice, and eight W at the Farne Islands between 20th-29th. Also in August, 500 had returned to Lindisfarne NNR by the end of the month, 139 were at Grindon Lough on 26th, and 20-23 at Derwent Reservoir and East Chevington.

September passage totals involved a well-below average 426 N and five S at Seaton Sluice, and 157-350 N at Hauxley NR, Newbiggin and St Mary's. In October, a total of 672 flew N and 409 S at Seaton Sluice including an unusual movement of 339 S on 6th, while a minimum of 626 flew N at the Farnes and 335 N at St Mary's in the month. In November, a total of 284 flew N and 54 S at Seaton Sluice, including 258 N and 39 S on 5th-6th. A late movement on 2nd December concerned 52-91 N at Seaton Sluice and St Mary's.

An estimated 8,000 were at Lindisfarne NNR by the end of September, plus 310 at Grindon Lough, 100-184 at Big Waters, Derwent Reservoir, East Chevington and Hauxley NR, and 50-77 at Bothal Pond, and West Stobswood. In October, 14,141 were counted at Lindisfarne NNR on 12th (ACr), while 5,000-6,000 regularly roosted on sands north of

Pilgrim's Way on the NNR possibly the result of night shooting pressure in the Fenham Mill area. Away from Lindisfarne, peak October concentrations were 650-750 at East Chevington and Grindon Lough, and 300-312 Big Waters and Hauxley NR. In November, 380-463 were at Cresswell Pond and Grindon Lough, and 206-282 at the Aln Estuary, Big Waters and Derwent Reservoir; and in December, 976 assembled at Cresswell Pond on 10th, 510 were at the Aln Estuary, and 218-322 at Capheaton Lake, Derwent Reservoir, Grindon Lough and Widdrington Moor Lake.

Also in the final quarter, counts of 101-169 came from Bothal Pond, the Coquet Estuary, Hoppen Kiln Flash, Newham, Widdrington Moor Lake and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, with 50-90 at Branton GP, Colt Crag Reservoirs, Druridge Pools, the Farnes, Gosforth Park NR, Holywell Pond, Howick-Boulmer, Lesbury and Low Newton.

American Wigeon *Anas americana*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2013

The drake found at Fenham Flats in December 2013 remained until 1st January (ME/JE).

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

STATUS: Well-represented resident.

BREEDING: Uncommon, increasing. / FIRST BRED: 1965

Peak monthly counts were as follows (excludes broods):

Locality	Month	Count
Big Waters	Jan	56
Big Waters	Feb	35
Woodhorn Flashes	Mar	34
Druridge Pools	Apr	27
Cresswell Pond	May	37
Cresswell Pond	Jun	63
Hauxley NR	Jul	26
Hauxley NR	Aug	63
Hauxley NR	Sep	100
East Chevington	Oct	127
Big Waters	Nov	124
Swallow Pond	Dec	56

Additional peak January counts involved 25-31 at East Chevington and Woodhorn Flashes, and ten to 19 at the Blyth Estuary, Caistron, Gosforth Park NR, Holywell Pond and Pegswood Community Park; in February, 22-27 were at the Blyth Estuary and Woodhorn Flashes, and ten to 19 at Bothal, Cresswell and Holywell Ponds, East Chevington, Pegswood CP, West Stobswood, Woodhorn Flashes and Widdrington Moor Lake; and in March, 20-22 were found at Big Waters, Bothal and Cresswell Ponds, and East Chevington, and ten to 19 at Hauxley NR, Ladyburn Lake, Warkworth Lane Ponds and West Stobswood.

Counts of five to eight came from Arcot Pond, Castle Island, Druridge Pools, Gosforth Park NR, Marden Quarry, QEII CP Lake, St Mary’s Wetland and Swallow Pond between January-March, when one to four were also at Backworth and Linton Ponds, Branton GP, East Stobswood Pool, Gosforth Park NR, Grindon Lough, Holy Island, Hoppen Kiln, Howdon Wetland, Ladyburn Lake, Longhirst Flash, the Wansbeck Estuary and West Hartford. One at Chirton Dene (North Shields) on 4th January was more unusual.

In April, 20-26 were at Castron, Castle Island, Cooper’s Kennel flash (Ashington), Druridge Pools and Woodhorn Flashes, and ten to 18 at Bell’s, Bothal and Cresswell Ponds, East Chevington and Hauxley NR; and in May, one flew N at Snab Point, 21-35 at Castron, Castle Island, Druridge Pools and Hauxley NR, and ten to 14 at Bell’s, Bothal and Linton Ponds, Castle Island and East Chevington. Also in April-May, five to six were at the Blyth Estuary, Castron, Longhirst Flash and St Mary’s Wetland, and one to four at Arcot, Backworth and Swallow Ponds, Branton GP, Ellingham, Gosforth Park NR, Grindon and Holy Island Loughs, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Hoppen Kiln and West Stobswood Pools, Howdon Wetland, Longhirst Flash, Low Newton scrape, Lynemouth, Milkhope, Prestwick Carr, the Tweed Estuary, West Hartford and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

A total of 36 localities (excluding coastal passage) held birds between April-July (35 in 2013). Successful breeding was noted at nine sites (seven in 2013) in June-July, with the first brood (nine young) at Druridge Pools on 17th June. Full details were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young
Big Waters	2	15
Ladyburn Lake	2	12
Druridge Pools	2	11
Hauxley NR	2	8
Castle Island	2	6
Bothal Pond	1-2	8-14
Linton Pond	1	8
Holywell Pond	1	5
Swallow Pond	1	4

In June, 30-38 were at Castle Island and Hauxley NR, and 11-23 at Bothal and Linton Ponds, and East Chevington; in July, 16-20 were at Arcot and Bothal Ponds; and in August, 23 were at Arcot Pond, 12-14 at Big Waters, Druridge Pools, and Linton Ponds. Five to eight were also at Castron, Ladyburn Lake and Warkworth Lane Ponds between June-August, when one to four were also at Budle Bay, Cresswell and Swallow Ponds, Gosforth Park NR, Hoppen Kiln Flash, Ladyburn Lake, Longhirst Flash, Low Newton flash, Marden Quarry and West Stobswood.

Additional peak September counts involved 68-89 at Big Waters and East Chevington, 21-36 at Arcot Pond and Hauxley NR, and 11-16 at Bothal, Holywell and Warkworth Lane Ponds, Castron, Castle Island and Marden Quarry. In October, numbers at East Chevington reached 127 on 12th (JL), 111 were at Big Waters, and 28-60 at Druridge Pools and Hauxley NR; and in November, 124 were at Big Waters, and 28-44 at Castron and Swallow Pond. December gatherings included 37 at Castron and 20-25 at Arcot Pond, Big Waters and East Chevington.

Counts of ten to 19 also came from the Blyth and Wansbeck Estuaries, Castle Island, Laverock Hall Farm, QEII CP and Widdrington Moor Lakes, St Mary’s Wetland and Warkworth Lane Ponds during the final three months, when five to nine were at Bothal and Holywell Ponds, Capheaton and Ladyburn Lakes, Hauxley NR, Hedgeley GP, Low Newton and Marden Quarry, and one to four at Backworth, Cresswell, Linton and West Allotment Ponds, Branton GP, Gosforth Park NR, Grindon Lough, Howdon, Longhirst Flash and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Teal *Anas crecca*

STATUS: Common passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

Maximum monthly counts from Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay) were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
300	250	120	14	10	17	12	130	620	900	500	200

Peak monthly counts were as follows (excludes coastal passage):

Locality	Month	Count
Big Waters	Jan	517
Whittle Dene Reservoirs	Feb	268
Hoppen Kiln	Mar	240
Howdon Wetland	Apr	116
Swallow Pond	May	12
Grindon Lough	Jun	39
Grindon Lough	Jul	27
Lindisfarne NNR	Aug	130
Budle Bay	Sep	620
Budle Bay	Oct	900
Holy Island	Nov	500
Whittle Dene Reservoirs	Dec	420

Additional peak first quarter counts involved 300-450 at Colt Crag and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools and Holy Island (Rocket fields), and 209-280 at the Aln Estuary, East Chevington and Grindon Lough in January; 200-250 at Holy Island, Hoppen Kiln, Howdon in February; and 240 at Hoppen Kiln in March.

Counts of 129-175 also came from Arcot Pond, Beadnell-Howick, the Blyth and Coquet Estuaries, Budle Bay and Low Newton between January-March, when 50-96 were also at Big Waters, Derwent Reservoir, Elswick, Hauxley NR, Linton, Middle Ord, Swallow and Warkworth Lane Ponds, Scotswood, St Mary’s, Warkworth and West Hartford.

In April, 116 at Howdon on 4th dropped to six by 12th, 70 at Grindon Lough on 10th fell to 18 by 27th; 40-53 were at Druridge Pools and Hoppen Kiln, and ten to 17 at 11 further sites. In May, ten to 12 were at Holy Island and Swallow Pond, three to seven at the Aln



Estuary, Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Pools, Grindon Lough and West Hartford, and one to two at 11 further scattered sites. There were no reported broods this year (one in 2013).

In June, fluctuating numbers at Grindon Lough included a peak of 39 on 27th, six to 17 were at Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Holy Island and Plenmeller Common, and one to two at eight further sites; and in July, up to 27 were at Grindon Lough, six to 12 at Caistron, Druridge Pools, Hauxley NR, Holy Island, Low Newton, Monks' House Pool, Swallow Pond and West Hartford, and one to four at eight further localities. Above-average numbers in August involved 456-526 N at Seaton Sluice and St Mary's, including 300 N at the former site on 26th, while 100 also moved N at Newbiggin. Also in August, 130 had gathered at Lindisfarne NNR as early as 10th, 43-84 were at Arcot Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Pools, Grindon Lough, Hoppen Kiln and West Hartford, and ten to 25 at nine additional sites.

Coastal movement was again well-above average in September, when 1,541 flew N and 70 S at Seaton Sluice, including a site record day count of 877 N on 1st. Budle Bay held 620 by the end of the month, 500-580 gathered at East Chevington and Grindon Lough, 240-293 were at Castle Island and Derwent Reservoir, and 109-158 at Arcot Pond and Hauxley NR. In October, 442 moved N at St Mary's Island and 216 flew N and, more unusually, 299 S at Seaton Sluice. Peak October concentrations were 900 at Budle Bay on 2nd (CGK/GPK), 395-434 at Derwent Reservoir and Grindon Lough, and 267-292 at Arcot Pond, Castle Island and East Chevington. In November, Seaton Sluice recorded a late movement of 344 N and 29 S, including 230 N on 5th-6th, and 171-232 flew N the Farnes and St Mary's, 430 were at Grindon Lough, and 202-311 at the Aln Estuary, Arcot Pond, Colt Crag and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, East Chevington and Howdon. A large movement on 2nd December involved 786 N and 18 S at Seaton Sluice and 451 N at St Mary's. Peak December gatherings were 330-420 at Grindon Lough and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and 200-278 at the Aln Estuary, Colt Crag and Derwent Reservoirs, Cresswell Pond and Howdon.

Counts of 100-194 came from Big Waters, Bothal and Swallow Ponds, the Farne Islands, Hauxley NR, Newton Pool and Scotswood in the final three months, when 45-94 were at the Blyth and Coquet Estuaries, Branton GP, Caistron, Druridge and Monks' House Pools, Gosforth Park NR, Hallington Reservoir, Haughton Strother GP, Holystone, Holywell and Linton Ponds, Hoppen Kiln, Prestwick Carr and St Mary's Wetland.

**Green-winged Teal** *Anas carolinensis*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2013

The now expected series of sightings continued with a returning male at the 'Rocket field' (Holy Island) from 12th January to 8th March (DS/RA *et al.*). A different male bird to that on Holy Island frequented Druridge Pools from 15th January (TRD/JD *et al.*) to 2nd February, making a brief visit to East Chevington on 20th January. It is probable this individual was then responsible for sightings at Big Waters from 5th February to 2nd March (GB *et al.*), and at Howdon Wetland from 7th-11th March. A different individual was at East Stobswood Pool from 12th-16th April (IJ *et al.*).

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

STATUS: Common resident, passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

Peak monthly counts (including WeBS counts) from Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay) were as follows (counts from the Budle Bay section in parentheses):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
166 (66)	218 (120)	49 (49)	2 (0)	14 (0)	21 (12)	97 (15)	110 (30)	153 (150)	136 (90)	134 (112)	277 (159)

Peak monthly counts were as follows (excludes coastal passage):

Locality	Month	Count
Lindisfarne NNR	Jan	166
Lindisfarne NNR	Feb	218
Tweed Estuary	Mar	82
Newcastle (Leazes Park)	Apr	42
Derwent Reservoir	May	55
River Tweed between A1-Horncliffe	Jun	78
Druridge Pools	Jul	138
Druridge Pools	Aug	218
Derwent Reservoir	Sep	252
Derwent Reservoir	Oct	268
Whittle Dene Reservoirs	Nov	165
Lindisfarne NNR	Dec	277

Additional peak gatherings in January were 105-134 at Derwent Reservoir, Marden Quarry and the Tweed Estuary; and in February, 183 were at Holywell Pond, 109-112 were at Plessey Checks, River Tweed between A1-Horncliffe, and the Tweed Estuary. Counts of 50-96 also came from the Aln Estuary, Big Waters, Cresswell, Linton, Warkworth Lane and West Allotment Ponds, Druridge Pools, Gosforth Park NR, Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother GP, Jesmond Dene, Killingworth, Linnels, QEII CP and Widdrington Moor Lakes, Marden Quarry, Newcastle (Leazes Park) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs in January-February. Fewer were evident in March, with 50-67 at Leazes Park and Marden Quarry.

Groups of 20-49 were found at Airy Holm Reservoir, Bolam, Ladyburn and Rayburn Lakes, Bothal and Middle Ord Ponds, the Blyth Estuary, Branton GP, Byker, Bywell Haughs, Castle Island, Chirton Dene, Cocklawburn, Colt Crag and Hallington Reservoirs, East Chevington, Farnley Haughs, Hauxley NR, Hedgeley GP, Howick-Boulmer, Kielder Water, Longhirst Flash, Newton and West Stobswood Pools, Scotswood, Shield on the Wall, Sweethope Lough and Woodhorn Flashes during the opening quarter.

In April-May, 22-53 were at the Aln and Tweed Estuaries, Budle Bay, Castle Island, Druridge Pools, Killingworth Lake, Leazes Park and the River Tweed between A1-Horncliffe.

The first broods were noted in April, with a party of eight ducklings at Derwent Reservoir on 10th being the earliest. New broods continued to be reported into September (a brood of three tiny ducklings at Leazes Park on 1st) but most were between May-July.

The most productive localities were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young
Farne Islands	21	--
Derwent Reservoir	8	59
Bothal Pond	6	51
Castle Island	6	43
Haughton Strother GP	6	38
Killingworth Lake	6	26
Branton GP	4	19
Big Waters	5	32
Linton Pond	5	28
Grindon Lough	4	24

One to three broods were also found at a further 31 widespread sites. Heavy predation from large gulls was reported at the Farne Islands and few young survived.

In June, 40-61 were at Big Waters, Bothal Pond, Branton GP, Gosforth Park NR, Grindon Lough, Morpeth and the Tweed Estuary; 103 were at Big Waters, and 52-92 at Branton GP, East Chevington, Gosforth Park NR, Grindon Lough, Holywell Pond, Jesmond Dene, Killingworth and Ladyburn Lakes, Leazes Park, Marden Quarry, River Tweed between A1-Horncliffe and Whittle Dene Reservoirs in July; and in August, 170-192 were at East Chevington and Grindon Lough, 105-146 at Bothal Pond, Castle Island, and Derwent and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and 50-93 at Airy Holm Reservoir, the Aln Estuary, Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Branton GP, Caistron, East Chevington, Gosforth Park NR, Haughton Strother GP, Killingworth Lake, Morpeth, Newcastle (Exhibition and Leazes Parks), and the River Tweed between A1-Horncliffe.

Additional September peak counts were 250 at Grindon Lough, 101-150 at Budle Bay, East Chevington, Holywell Pond, Jesmond Dene and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and 50-99 at the Aln Estuary, Arcot and Bothal Ponds, Big Waters, Branton GP, Caistron, Castle Island, Colt Crag and Hallington Reservoirs, Druridge Pools, Haughton Strother GP, Hauxley NR, Killingworth Lake, Leazes Park, Longhirst Flash, Marden Quarry and the River Tweed between A1-Horncliffe. In October, 230-243 were at Cresswell Pond and Grindon Lough, 100-140 at Bothal Pond, Jesmond Dene, Lindisfarne NNR and Lynemouth; in November, 103-156 at the Aln Estuary, Colt Crag and Derwent Reservoirs, Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother GP and Widdrington Moor Lake; and in December, 277 at Lindisfarne NNR between 6th-8th was the largest concentration of the year (ACr), 209 were at Derwent Reservoir, 101-191 at Airy Holm, Colt Crag, Derwent and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, the Tweed Estuary and Widdrington Moor Lake.

Counts of 50-98 came from Caistron, Castle Island, Cocklawburn and Holywell Ponds, the Coquet Estuary, East Chevington, the Farne Islands, Hauxley NR, Howick-Boulmer, Jesmond Dene, Killingworth, Ladyburn, QEII CP and Rayburn Lakes, Leazes Park, Marden Quarry, Monks' House and Newton Pools, Prestwick Carr, River Tweed between A1-Horncliffe, Roddam Bog and Warkworth in the final three months.

**Pintail** *Anas acuta*

STATUS: Well-represented passage and winter visitor. Less numerous in spring.

BREEDING: Historical. / LAST BRED: 1945

Peak monthly counts from Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay) were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
229	200	7	0	0	1	0	0	13	13	96	119

Lindisfarne NNR attracted 229 on 19th January (ACr), the largest concentration of the year. Away from this key site moderate numbers involved four at Druridge Pools-East Chevington in January; up to seven at Druridge Pools and one to two at Caistron, Cresswell Pond and Widdrington Moor Lake in February; and up to four at Druridge Pools and one to two at Cresswell Pond, East Chevington and Grindon Lough in March.

In April, four were at Druridge Pools on 11th and one to two up to 28th, four at Cresswell Pond on 15th and one to two sporadically to 22nd, and a pair at East Chevington on 19th.

One was at Lindisfarne NNR on 15th June and in July, three were at Castle Island on 3rd and one at Hauxley NR. One to two were at East Chevington and Low Newton on 31st August.

An increase in September led to five to seven N at the Farne Islands and Newbiggin and singles N at Seaton Sluice and Snab Point, 13 were at Holy Island on 15th, three to seven at Derwent Reservoir and Grindon Lough, and one to two at Airy Holm Reservoir, Budle Bay, Hauxley NR and Low Newton. The October monthly total at Seaton Sluice was eight N and eight S, while ten moved N at the Farnes on 4th-5th, and one to two N at Spittal, St Mary's and Tynemouth. East Chevington attracted a peak of 28 on 3rd October; three to six were at Grindon Lough, Hauxley NR and St Mary's, and one to two at Budle Bay, Castle Island and Newton Pool. In November, up to five were at East Chevington and one to two at Colt Crag Reservoir, Hauxley NR and Newton Pool; and in December, three flew N at Seaton Sluice on 2nd and one was at Colt Crag Reservoir.

**Garganey** *Anas querquedula*

STATUS: Uncommon spring passage and rare summer visitor.

BREEDING: Extremely rare. / LAST BRED: 2008

The first of the year were two drakes at Buston links on 1st-2nd April (TRD/JD/JPD), followed by two drakes at Cresswell Pond on 17th and one on 18th, a single drake at Druridge Pools on 19th, a pair on the sea off Tynemouth Pier on 27th and a pair at Ashington on 30th. An increase during May led to up to five (one drake) at Hoppen Kiln Flash between 2nd-11th (CPK *et al.*), up to three (one to two drakes) at Bothal, Cresswell and Holywell Ponds, two drakes at Warkworth Lane Ponds, single pairs at Ashington, East Chevington, Holy Island Lough, Newton Pool and Swallow Pond, and single drakes at Druridge Pools, Low Newton scrape and Lynemouth Flash.

Fewer were evident in June, with three (two drakes) at Druridge Pools on 8th and single drakes there on 3rd and 10th, and one to two drakes at Cresswell Pond from 1st-3rd. In July, a female was at Arcot Pond on three dates between 6th-24th and one was at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 27th-28th. The latter remained throughout August when singles were also at Castle Island on 9th and Arcot Pond on 30th. The final record concerned the Haughton Strother GP bird which was last seen on 2nd September (MR).



**Blue-winged Teal** *Anas discors*

STATUS: Extremely rare. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 6 / FIRST: 1948 / LAST: 2006

An excellent find at Castle Island involved a long staying juvenile from 6th September to 1st December (DD/IF *et al.*). Being highly approachable there were originally questions as to its origin, but this Nearctic species is often tame in the United States and a wild individual was felt to be much more likely than an escapee. The sighting was accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee and is the first in the county since a male at St Mary’s Island in April 2006.

**Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*

STATUS: Uncommon resident and well-represented autumn passage visitor.

BREEDING: Rare. / LAST BRED: 2014

Peak monthly counts were as follows (excludes broods):

Locality	Month	Count
Druridge Pools	Jan	25
Swallow Pond	Feb	16
Druridge Pools	Mar	42
Druridge Pools	Apr	32
Druridge Pools	May	15
Druridge Pools/Monks’ House Pool	Jun	6
Cresswell Pond	Jul	8
Cresswell Pond	Aug	11
East Chevington	Sep	30
East Chevington	Oct	50
East Chevington	Nov	20
Swallow Pond	Dec	34

Additional monthly peaks in the first quarter concerned 15-24 at Gosforth Park NR, Killingworth Lake and Swallow Pond in January; ten to 15 at Druridge Pools and Gosforth Park NR in February; and ten to 16 at East Chevington and Swallow Pond in March. Three to four were also at Cresswell and Holywell Ponds, Hoppen Kiln Flash, Warkworth Lane and West Allotment Ponds between January-March, when one to two were at a further six localities. One flew N at Newbiggin on 28th March. Display was noted at Druridge Pools on 5th February.

In April, 13 were at Swallow Pond and five to six at Cresswell and Holywell Ponds, and Monks’ House Pool; and in May, six were at Bothal, Cresswell and Swallow Ponds, and Monks’ House Pool, and one flew S at Tynemouth on 30th. Three to four also visited Bothal Pond, Branton GP, Gosforth Park NR, Hoppen Kiln Flash, Lynemouth, New Water Haugh and Yarrow Slake in April-May, when one to two were also at a further 12 localities.

A total of 27 localities (plus Tynemouth) held the species during April-July (22 in 2013). Broods were noted at two localities (none in 2013), beginning with an unexpected first for the Farne Islands, where a female with five ducklings was found at Inner Farne on 27th May; unfortunately all the young were predated by large gulls the following day. Elsewhere a brood of four was found at Druridge Pools in June.



Blue-winged Teal (above - Ian Fisher / below - Chris Barlow)



One to four were reported from Arcot, Bell's, Cresswell and Swallow Ponds, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Gosforth Park NR, Grindon Lough, Hauxley NR, 'Northumberlandia' (Cramlington), St Mary's Wetland and West Hartford in June-July. In August, singles flew N at Newbiggin and St Mary's, seven were at Swallow Pond, and one to four at Arcot and Cresswell Ponds, Big Waters, Branton GP, Druridge and Monks' House Pools, East Chevington, Hauxley NR, Longhirst Flash, and Woodhorn Flashes, and the brood of four was still intact at Druridge Pools on 18th.

In September, four flew N at the Farne Islands on 22nd, ten to 14 were at Hauxley NR, Holy Island Lough and Swallow Pond, and four to six at Big Waters, Gosforth Park NR, Grindon Lough and Linton Pond. East Chevington attracted 50 on 12th October; the largest single concentration of the year (JL). Additional peak counts in the final three months were 34 at Swallow Pond and six to ten at Big Waters, Druridge and Monks' House Pools, Grindon Lough, and Warkworth Lane Ponds in October; 12-18 at Big Waters, and Linton and Swallow Ponds, and six at Gosforth Park NR in November, when five flew N at the Farnes on 29th-30th; and 16-23 at Holy Island Lough and Killingworth Lake, and six to ten at Bothal, Linton and Warkworth Lane Ponds and East Chevington in December.

Three to four could also be found at Arcot Pond and Holy Island (Harbour pools), and one to two at Bakethin and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, Cresswell, Holywell and West Allotment Ponds, the Farnes, Hauxley NR, Kielder Water, Longhirst Flash, Low Newton and Marden Quarry between October-December. More unusual was a drake, with Mallards *Anas platyrhynchos*, on the River Tyne at Warden on 27th December.

**Pochard** *Aythya ferina*

STATUS: Well-represented resident, passage and winter visitor. Less numerous in spring.  
BREEDING: Rare. / LAST BRED: 2014

Peak monthly counts were as follows (excludes broods):

Locality	Month	Count
Killingworth Lake	Jan	20
Killingworth Lake	Feb	36
Killingworth Lake	Mar	19
Swallow Pond	Apr	16
Swallow Pond	May	11
Killingworth Lake	Jun	19
Bothal Pond	Jul	8
Arcot Pond	Aug	6
Haughton Strother GP	Sep	7
Killingworth Lake	Oct	13
Killingworth Lake	Nov	15
Killingworth Lake	Dec	30

Killingworth Lake was the single most attractive site for this species, hosting the highest count of the year, a moderate 36, on 21st February (LJM). Additional peak counts in January were 15 at QEII CP, and five to nine at Bakethin Reservoir, Greenlee Lough, Swallow Pond and Woodhorn Flashes; in February, 17 were at Swallow Pond, and six to nine at Bakethin Reservoir, Big Waters, Bothal Pond, Grindon Lough and Woodhorn Flashes; and in March, seven to nine visited Arcot, Bothal, Holywell and Swallow Ponds, and Big Waters. One to four were also found at Branton GP, Castle Island, Cresswell, Holywell, Linton and West Allotment Ponds, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Gosforth Park NR, Kielder Water, Ladyburn Lake, Tynemouth Boating Lake and Marden Quarry during the opening quarter.

In April, eight to ten were at Arcot and Hadrian's Ponds, Killingworth Lake and Marden Quarry, and four to six at Bothal and Burradon Ponds; and in May, eight were at Killingworth Lake, and three to five at Arcot, Holywell, Linton and West Allotment Ponds. One to two were also at Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Gosforth Park NR, Grindon Lough, Hauxley NR and Woodhorn Flashes in April-May. More unusual were single drakes off Tynemouth (with Eiders *Somateria mollissima*) on 30th April and at Newcastle (Leazes Park) on 2nd May (the first there for 11 years).

A total of 16 localities (plus offshore at Tynemouth) were occupied at various times between April-July (18 in 2013). Successful breeding was recorded at three localities (two in 2013) in June-July, with the first brood (five young) at Arcot Pond on 8th June. Full details were as follows (GB/JPD/STH/SPP):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young
Swallow Pond	3	8
Arcot Pond	2	9
Holywell Pond	1	2

In June, six to ten were at Arcot, Bothal, Holywell and Swallow Ponds, and Gosforth Park NR, and three to four at Cresswell Pond and Druridge Pools; in July, four to five were at Arcot, Cresswell and Swallow Ponds and Gosforth Park NR; and in August, five were at Bothal, Cresswell and Swallow Ponds. One to two were also noted at Big Waters, Burradon Pond and Hauxley NR between June-August.

In September, one flew N at Seaton Sluice, four were at Bakethin Reservoir, East Chevington, Gosforth Park NR, Holywell Pond and West Stobswood, and one to two at Big Waters, Bothal, Cresswell, Linton and Swallow Ponds, Druridge and East Stobswood Pools, Hauxley NR, Holy Island Lough, Killingworth Lake, Marden Quarry and Newcastle (Exhibition Park). Light coastal movement involved singles S at Seaton Sluice on two October dates, and two N then S at St Mary's on 5th November. Away from Killingworth Lake, peak counts in the final three months were six to seven at Greenlee Lough and Hauxley NR, and three to four at Bakethin and Derwent Reservoirs, Gosforth Park NR, Haughton Strother GP, Holywell and Swallow Ponds, and West Stobswood in October; 12 at Ladyburn Lake, seven at Bakethin Reservoir and East Chevington and three to four at Hartburn Reservoir, Linton and Swallow Ponds, and Widdrington Moor Lake in November; and 29 at Holywell Pond and nine at Ladyburn Lake in December. One to two were also at Big Waters, Bolam Lake, QEII CP, Bothal, Cresswell and West Allotment Ponds, and Marden Quarry in the final quarter.





Ferruginous Duck - Gosforth Park NR - April (Jonathan Farooqi)



Scaup - Killingworth Lake - February (Jack Bucknall)

## Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*

STATUS: Rare visitor / LAST RECORD: 2004

Another popular find was a fine male at Gosforth Park NR from 6th-9th April (DB *et al.*). It proved to be distinctly shy, but was seen by many birders over its four day stay. The finder provided some superb images which helped enormously to prove the bird to be 100% pure with no indications of any hybrid potential. This is the first county record since 2004 when a female was at Bothal Pond, previous to which one has to go back as far as 1991, when another female was at Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

## Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

STATUS: Well-represented resident, passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

Peak monthly counts were as follows (excludes broods):

Locality	Month	Count
Killingworth Lake	Jan	127
Killingworth Lake	Feb	118
Killingworth Lake	Mar	95
Castron	Apr	78
Castron	May	53
Cresswell Pond	Jun	51
Bothal Pond	Jul	62
Branton GP	Aug	55
Killingworth Lake	Sep	53
East Chevington	Oct	176
Killingworth Lake	Nov	102
Killingworth Lake	Dec	164

Other peak January counts were 114 at Branton GP, 60-72 at East Chevington and QEII CP, and 29-35 at Castron, Greenlee and Grindon Loughs, Hedgeley GP and Marden Quarry; in February, 20-46 were at Arcot Pond, Branton GP, Castron, East Chevington, Grindon Lough, Marden Quarry, Newcastle (Exhibition and Leazes Parks), Ladyburn, QEII CP and Tynemouth Boating Lakes, and Woodhorn Flashes; and in March, 54 were at QEII CP, and 22-43 at Arcot, Bothal, Holywell, Swallow and Warkworth Lane Ponds, Big Waters, Branton GP, Castron, East Chevington, Ladyburn and Tynemouth Boating Lakes, Leazes Park and Woodhorn Flashes.

Counts of ten to 20 also came from Airy Holm, Hartburn and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, Bolam, Capheaton, Rayburn and Widdrington Moor Lakes, Castle Island, Cresswell and Linton Ponds, Druridge Pools, Gosforth Park NR, Haughton Strother GP, Hauxley NR and Howdon Wetland during the first three months.

In April, 73 were at Killingworth Lake, and 20-42 at Arcot, Holywell and Swallow Ponds, Calder, Castle Island, Gosforth Park NR, Hauxley NR, Ladyburn and QEII CP Lakes, Leazes Park and Woodhorn Flashes; and in May, 20-30 were at Bothal, Linton and Swallow Ponds, Branton GP, Hauxley NR, Killingworth and Ladyburn Lakes.

Counts of ten to 19 also came from Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother and Hedgeley GPs, Howdon, Jesmond Dene, Shasun Pharma (Dudley), Tynemouth Boating and Widdrington Moor Lakes, and Whittle Dene Reservoirs in April-May.

A total of 51 localities (excluding coastal passage) held the species at various times between April-August (49 in 2013). Successful breeding was noted at 26 localities (17 in 2013) between June-August (most in July), with the first brood (six young) at Holy Island Lough on 8th June. The most productive sites are given below:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young
Bothal Pond	6	36+
Hauxley NR	4	28+
Haughton Strother GP	4	21
Arcot Pond	3	23
Holy Island Lough	3	16
West Stobswood Pool	3	14
Swallow Pond	3	10
Druridge Pools	2-3	13-18

One to two broods were also recorded at Alnwick gardens, Branton GP, Broomlee Lough, Castle Island, Hedgeley GP, Holywell Pond, Grindon Lough, Killingworth Lake, Ladyburn Lake, Linton Ponds, Lynemouth, Marden Quarry, Rothley Lake, Shasun Pharma (Cramlington), Whittle Dene Reservoirs, Wansbeck BP (Ashington), Widdrington Moor Lake and Woodhorn Flashes. In June, 50 were at Castle Island, 21-36 at Bothal and Swallow Ponds, Branton GP, Castron, and Killingworth and Widdrington Moor Lakes; in July, 44-48 at Druridge Pools and Killingworth Lake, and 20-27 at Broomlee Lough, Cresswell and Swallow Ponds, and Hauxley NR; and in August, 35-55 were at Bothal Pond, Branton and Haughton Strother GPs, Castron and Druridge Pools, and 20-30 at Cresswell and Linton Ponds, Hauxley NR, West Stobswood Pool and Widdrington Moor Lake. Counts of ten to 19 also came from Arcot and Holywell Ponds, Castle Island, East Chevington, Grindon Lough, Ladyburn Lake, Newcastle (Exhibition and Leazes Parks), and Whittle Dene Reservoirs between June-August, and one visited the Tweed Estuary.

In September, 43-53 were at East Chevington, Killingworth Lake, and Hallington and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and 23-34 at Bothal, Holywell and Linton Ponds, Castle Island, Druridge Pools, Exhibition Park, Haughton Strother GP, Ladyburn and QEII CP Lakes, Marden Quarry and West Stobswood. In October, 176 at East Chevington on 12th (JL) was the largest gathering of the year, and counts of 54-91 came from Castle Island, Hallington Reservoir and Killingworth Lake, and 30-40 from Branton GP, Castron, Greenlee Lough, Hauxley NR, and Ladyburn and QEII CP Lakes in October. In November, 50-54 were at Big Waters and Ladyburn Lake, and 31-39 at Branton GP, Castron, East Chevington and QEII CP; and in December, East Chevington attracted 83, 48-53 were at Branton GP and QEII CP and 31-41 at Big Waters, Castron and Ladyburn Lake.

Groups of ten to 25 were also noted at Bakethin, Hartburn and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, Bolam, Capheaton, Rothley and Tynemouth Boating Lakes, Bothal, Cocklawburn, Exhibition and Leazes Parks, Holywell, Linton, Swallow, Warkworth Lane and West Allotment Ponds, Haughton Strother GP, Marden Quarry, Stakeford and West Stobswood in the final three months.

Scaup *Aythya marila*

STATUS: Uncommon passage and winter visitor, rare in summer.

In January, three (one drake) were at Castle Island on 24th, twos visited Hauxley NR, Holywell Pond, Ladyburn Lake and Lindisfarne NNR, and singles at East Chevington and Newton Pool on occasional dates. Inland, a pair was at Grindon Lough from 27th to 3rd February, and singles at Big Waters and Killingworth Lake (possibly the same individual), Sweethope Lough and Whittle Dene Reservoirs in January. One commuted between Big Waters and Killingworth Lake during February-March. Also in February, singles were at Castle Island, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington and Sweethope Lough on several dates; and in March, two were at East Chevington on 14th, and singles at Bakethin Reservoir between 2nd-13th and Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 7th.

In April, one remained at Killingworth Lake until 23rd, one was at Cresswell Pond on 27th-28th, and one flew N at the Farne Islands on 28th; and in May Ladyburn Lake held a duck on 2nd and a pair on 30th.

Two were at Hauxley NR on 1st June, and in July, singles were at Druridge Pools on 8th and Cresswell Pond on 26th. August reports concerned two at Cresswell Pond on 13th and one regularly between 3rd-22nd, and one at Hauxley NR on 16th.

In September, three flew N at Newbiggin on 24th and two N at Snab Point on 28th, and singles were at Cresswell Pond on 11th and 26th, and East Chevington on 26th. In October, two moved N at Seaton Sluice on 7th and singles N at the Farnes and Tynemouth, two were at Holy Island on 14th, singles at East Chevington, Hauxley NR and St Mary's, and further singles at Derwent Reservoir on 1st and Gosforth Park NR between 17th-31st. Seven flew N at Seaton Sluice on 5th November (SSWT), two moved S at St Mary's on 8th, and one at Killingworth Lake on 2nd was thought to be the same individual noted at Gosforth Park NR the previous month. The sole December report was a flock of seven N at the Farne Islands on 2nd (DS *et al.*).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

STATUS: Common resident.

BREEDING: Common.

Peak monthly counts from Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay) were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
484	409	316	243	154	400	417	500	372	308	313	261

The core area of Lindisfarne NNR held peaks of 484 on 19th January and 500 on 16th August (IK). Large counts elsewhere along the coast involved 107-115 at Seahouses-Beadnell and Beadnell-Howick, 52-87 at the Blyth and Coquet Estuaries, Boulmer-Alnmouth, Cocklawburn and Howick-Boulmer, and 21-43 at Berwick North Shore, Druridge Bay, Meadow Haven (Berwick), St Mary's Island, the Tyne Estuary and Whitley Bay during January-March. Counts of ten to 15 also came from Newbiggin, Seaton Sluice, Snab Point and the Tweed Estuary during this period. Light coastal movement was evident at Seaton Sluice, with 43-45 N and 28-32 S in both January and February, and 63 N and 48 S in March.

Peak April counts involved 243 at Lindisfarne NNR, 121 between Seahouses-Beadnell and 67-86 at the Blyth Estuary, Boulmer-Alnmouth and Cocklawburn; and in May, 350



adult drakes were off St Cuthbert's Island (Holy Island), 119 at Seahouses-Beadnell and 78 between Budle Point-Seahouses. Counts of 15-34 also came from Amble-Chevington, Berwick North Shore, Budle Bay, Howick-Boulmer, Newbiggin and St Mary's in April-May. More unusual were three on the River Tyne at Howdon on 12th April.

Breeding numbers at the Farne Islands improved on last year, with a total of 639 nesting pairs (552 in 2013). The first prospecting birds were recorded from 19th April and the first eggs on 25th April. Hatching began on 20th May and productivity was good. A total of 916 young were counted from 353 monitored nests, giving a mean of 2.59 young per nest (2.33 in 2013). Late breeders were noted in early July (DS *et al.*). A total of 349 pairs bred on Coquet Island (192 breeding females in 2013), an increase of 82% on 2013. First eggs were noted on 28th April and mean clutch size was 3.5 eggs per female (PM).

On the mainland the first crèches were noted on 31st May, with one of 52 young at the Coquet Estuary and 12 young at Budle Bay. In June, broods / crèches were noted at Hauxley (18 young), Budle Bay (19 young) and Fisherman's Haven, Berwick (four young). All of the above were thought to have originated from Coquet Island or the Farne Islands. Two broods (five young) at the River Blyth-Sleekburn confluence on 14th June were considered by the observer to have been bred on the Blyth Estuary (LJM). A female accompanied three ducklings at Sharper's Head (Berwick) on 11th July.

In June, 400 were at Lindisfarne NNR, 119 at Seahouses-Beadnell and 53 at Newbiggin; in July, 417 were at Lindisfarne NNR, 155-225 were at Alnmouth, Budle Point-Seahouses and Seahouses-Beadnell, and 55-105 at Amble, Cambois and Cocklawburn; and in August, 55-86 were found at Amble, Boulmer-Alnmouth, Budle Point-Seahouses, Seahouses-Beadnell and Spittal-Cocklawburn. Counts of 25-45 came from Berwick North Shore, Cresswell-Newbiggin, Howick-Boulmer and Seaton Sluice between June-August. Three were on the River Coquet at Warkworth in August.

In September, 230 were at the Farnes, 142 at Budle Point-Seahouses and 62-74 at Cocklawburn and Seahouses-Beadnell; and in October, 320 were at the Farnes, 86-106 at Cocklawburn and Stag Rocks. The November total at Seaton Sluice was a below-average 84 N and 17 S, and 46 moved N at St Mary's. Peak November counts away from Lindisfarne NNR were 53-94 at Beadnell-Howick, the Blyth Estuary, Druridge Bay and Seahouses-Beadnell; and in December, 132 were at Berwick North Shore, ad 52-74 at the Blyth Estuary, Cocklawburn, Howick-Boulmer and Seahouses-Beadnell. Groups of 21-35 were at the Aln and Coquet Estuaries, and Boulmer-Alnmouth in the final quarter.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

STATUS: Well-represented passage and winter visitor.

Peak monthly counts from Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay) were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
20	17	15	16	0	0	0	0	0	3	30	36

Light coastal passage in the opening three months involved three N at Seaton Sluice on 6th January, and singles N and S at Seaton Sluice and St Mary's in February-March. Largest counts typically came from the north of the county, with peaks at Stag Rocks of 80 on 14th January (BRS), 20 on 19th February, and 55 on 4th March dropping to two by 17th. Ten to 20 were also at Holy Island and off Ross Back Sands in January, seven at Beadnell Bay in February, and up to 15 at Holy Island harbour throughout March. One to three were

also occasionally at the Farne Islands, Seahouses, Spittal and the Tweed Estuary between January-March. Further south, three were off Tynemouth on 3rd-4th January, and one to two offshore at Cresswell, Druridge, Newbiggin and St Mary's in January-February. One to three regularly visited Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, East Chevington and Ladyburn Lake in January-February, and three remained at East Chevington throughout March. A very unusual inland record involved a first-summer drake at Derwent Reservoir, first noted on 14th March, which remained there for the remainder of the year. Display was noted at Holy Island Heugh on 2nd January and regularly at Holy Island harbour during March.

In April, 13 flew N at the Farnes on 5th, a peak of 16 was at Holy Island on 27th with one to 13 between 1st-25th, three were at East Chevington, and one to two at Newbiggin, Seahouses-Beadnell and the Tweed Estuary. In May, singles flew N at Tynemouth on 14th, two were at Stag Rocks on 18th and one from 19th-23rd.

Apart from the aforementioned Derwent Reservoir individual there were no other reports until one flew N at St Mary's on 13th September. An increase in October brought four N at Tynemouth and two N and two S at Seaton Sluice on 13th, and singles N at Newbiggin and St Mary's, three at Holy Island on 23rd, two at Bamburgh-Stag Rocks from 12th, and singles at Hauxley NR, Snab Point and Tynemouth. More unusual was one on the Long Nanny Burn upstream from the estuary on 12th. In November, six flew N at Seaton Sluice and three N at St Mary's, 30 were at Holy Island on 23rd, 30 at Ross Back Sands on 28th, and 18 at Goswick (where much display was noted) on 25th, and one to three at the Farnes and Stag Rocks. In December, five moved N at Seaton Sluice on 8th, 36 displayed at Holy Island Heugh on 6th, 24-25 were off Ross Back Sands and Stag Rocks, ten were at Beadnell Bay, and one at Seahouses-Howick.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

STATUS: Common passage and winter visitor, present throughout the year.

Peak monthly counts from Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay) were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
20	85	230	300	--	--	200	--	21	496	147	--

Light coastal passage at Seaton Sluice in the opening quarter involved 29 N and 22 S in January, 48 N and 42 S in February, and 30 N and 25 S in March, while 21 moved N at St Mary's in January, 14 S at Old Hartley in February, and 52 N and four S at Snab Point on 20th March. A large concentration centred on Stag Rocks included peaks of 1,200 in January, 1,100 in February and 1,500 on 17th March (RP *et al.*). Counts of 220 came from Beadnell Bay and Cheswick in January-February, when 55-85 were off Cresswell-Druridge, Lindisfarne NNR, and 20-38 off Cocklawburn and Snab Point. In March, 230 were at Lindisfarne NNR, and 20-62 at Beadnell Bay, Cocklawburn and Newbiggin. One to 13 were also at Alnmouth, Blyth Harbour, Boulmer, Hartley, Ross Back Sands, Seaton Sluice, St Mary's, Tynemouth and Warkworth between January-March. Unusually, several visited coastal ponds, with singles at Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools and East Chevington on sporadic dates in January-February. In March, one was at Druridge Pools on three dates and a pair well inland at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) from 30th to 1st April increased to seven (two drakes) on 2nd April with a single drake still present on 5th.

Also in April, one was at Druridge Pools from 11th-13th and an extraordinary record concerned a pair at Branton GP on 27th, the drake of which was seen to display!

Common Scoter - Druridge Pools - February (Ian Fisher)



Elsewhere during the month, five flew N at Druridge Bay and six S at Newbiggin, 300 were at Holy Island, and 100-180 at Cocklawburn and Stag Rocks, and 80 at Cheswick. In May, 122 flew N and five S at St Mary's, and ten to 48 N and 14 S at Newbiggin, Seaton Sluice and Tynemouth, 190-360 were at Cocklawburn, the Farne Islands and Stag Rocks, and 46-80 at Cheswick and Seahouses. Two to 16 were also at Beadnell Bay, Boulmer-Alnmouth, Newbiggin and St Mary's in April-May.

Coastal passage during the summer months involved peaks in June of 260-377 N at the Farnes on 26th and Tynemouth on 15th, and 26-49 N and 58 S at Blyth, Newbiggin and St Mary's between 14th-29th; 298-386 N and 45 S at the Farnes, Seaton Sluice and St Mary's between 8th-27th July, and 47-106 N at Newbiggin and Snab Point between 12th-26th July; and in August, an above-average 498 flew N and 153 S at Seaton Sluice, including 219 N on 1st and 220 N and 130 S on 26th, while a total of 393 flew N at St Mary's, and 68 N at Newbiggin. Offshore, flocks included 800 in Druridge Bay in June; in July, 1,000 were off East Chevington on 6th and 200-302 at Cocklawburn, the Farnes and Lindisfarne NNR; and in August, 228 were at Cocklawburn. Counts of 60-97 came from Beadnell and Newbiggin, and 12-50 off Cheswick, Cresswell, Embleton, Hauxley, Snab Point, Stag Rocks, St Mary's, Tynemouth and Whitley Bay between June-August. Single drakes visited East Chevington on 7th and 15th June and Arcot Pond on 19th July.

In September, monthly totals included 489 N at St Mary's and 486 N and 47 S at Seaton Sluice, while 26-70 flew N and 22 S at Newbiggin, Stag Rocks and Tynemouth. A total of 400 were off East Chevington on 12th, 250 at Cocklawburn, 60-100 at Druridge Bay and Newbiggin, and 21 at Holy Island.

In October, 308 moved N at St Mary's and 282 N and 80 S at Seaton Sluice; and in November, 510 flew N and 203 S at Seaton Sluice, including 169 N and 47 S on 5th and 354 N at St Mary's. Four to 20 also flew N and up to 32 S at Berwick, Holy Island, Snab Point, Stag Rocks and Tynemouth in October-November. Apart from 496 at Lindisfarne NNR, and 70-110 off Blyth, Cocklawburn and East Chevington, few were noted offshore in October, with two to 25 at the Aln Estuary, Beadnell, Druridge, Hauxley and Stag Rocks. Two, with Red-breasted Mergansers *Mergus serrator*, at the River Blyth-Sleekburn confluence on 26th October were more unusual. In November, 266 were between Spittal-Cocklawburn, 147 at Lindisfarne NNR, 25-60 off Beadnell-Howick and Newbiggin, and one to ten off Cresswell, Hauxley and Stag Rocks. Light movement in December concerned ten to 26 N at St Mary's and Tynemouth, and 25 S at Alnmouth, while 284 were at Spittal-Cocklawburn, 100-200 were at Beadnell Bay and Cambois, and 20-50 off Blyth Bay, Ross Back Sands and Stag Rocks.

### **Surf Scoter** *Melanitta perspicillata*

STATUS: Rare visitor / LAST RECORD: 2011

A well-documented sighting of a female / immature S past St Mary's Island on 24th October (JS/PC) provided the only record this year.

### **Velvet Scoter** *Melanitta fusca*

STATUS: Uncommon passage and winter visitor, rare in spring.

January reports consisted of two N at Seaton Sluice and one S at Tynemouth, five at Stag Rocks on 21st and one on 12th, and one off Ross Back Sands; in February, one flew S at St Mary's on 1st and one was in Druridge Bay on 15th, and in March, three flew N there on 1st and one N on 15th, while two were off Druridge-East Chevington on 5th and 20th.

In April, one was with Common Scoters *Melanitta nigra* at Holy Island on 18th; and in May singles flew N at Beadnell on 29th and Budle Point on 30th.

An absence of reports in June was followed in July by singles N at Newbiggin, Seaton Sluice, Snab Point St Mary's and Tynemouth on single dates between 9th-23rd. Light movement in August involved singles N at Hauxley on 15th and Seaton Sluice and St Mary's on 18th, and one S at Tynemouth on 24th, while two were at Cheswick Black Rocks and one at Stag Rocks.

The September total at Seaton Sluice was an above-average 29 N and three S, including 19 N on 20th (SSWT). Most other reports that month were of birds on active passage, with 11 N at St Mary's between 16th-28th, three to six N at Newbiggin and Tynemouth, one to two N at Annstead Point, the Farnes and Snab Point, and two S at Tynemouth. Singles were also at Blyth Bay and Holy Island. In October, a total of 22 flew N and 13 S at Seaton Sluice, including 18 N on 13th-14th and 12 S on 17th, six to nine moved N at Snab Point, St Mary's and Tynemouth, one to two N at Berwick, Spittal and Stag Rocks, one S at Stag Rocks, and one was off Bamburgh. In November, totals of 15 flew N and three S at St Mary's, 14 N and five S at Seaton Sluice, ten N at the Farnes on 5th, plus five N and one S at Tynemouth, while singles were at Bamburgh and Newbiggin on 20th. In December, five flew S at the Farnes on 1st, four N at East Chevington on 9th, and three N at Seaton Sluice on 2nd.





### Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

STATUS: Well-represented passage and winter visitor, uncommon in summer.

BREEDING: Extremely rare. / FIRST BRED: 2010 / LAST BRED: 2014

Peak monthly counts from the Tweed Estuary were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
145	206	127	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	34	56

Peak counts away from the Tweed Estuary in January were 47 at East Chevington, and 21-33 at Castron, Capheaton, Killingworth and QEII Lakes, and Kielder Water. In February, 206 at the Tweed Estuary on 14th (MHu) was the largest concentration of the year, 59-74 were at East Chevington and New Water Haugh (River Tweed), and 20-30 at Beadnell-Howick, Castron, Kielder Water, and Killingworth and QEII CP Lakes; and in March, 56 were at East Chevington, and 20-24 at Bakethin Reservoir, Grindon Lough and Killingworth Lake.

Counts of ten to 19 also came from Berwick North Shore, Bolam Lake, Branton GP, Castle Island, East Ord, Hallington and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, Lindisfarne NNR, Newton Pool, Swallow Pond and West Ord in the first quarter, when five to nine were also at Amble, Big Waters, the Blyth Estuary, Bothal and Cresswell Ponds, Budle Bay, Colt Crag Reservoir, Hauxley NR, Hedgeley GP, Seahouses, Stag Rocks, Tyne Green, Warkworth and Widdrington Moor Lake. Display was noted at Swallow Pond on 21st March.

In April, 24 were at East Chevington on 2nd dropping to four by 26th, ten to 16 were at Colt Crag, Hallington and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, Grindon Lough, Lindisfarne NNR and New Water Haugh, while five to nine were at Branton GP, Killingworth Lake and West Ord, and one to four at a minimum of 14 further sites. A drake with pellet wounds was noted at a site on 2nd April. In May, four were at East Chevington on 2nd and one on 6th, and one to two at Low Newton and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Breeding again occurred, at the site in the north of the county used in previous years. A brood of seven young on 7th May was reduced to five or six by 26th-27th and two by 22nd June. Also in June, singles were at Berwick North Shore and Cocklawburn on single dates and at Cresswell Pond on five dates. In July, six were at Cresswell Pond on 12th and one to two from 4th, and one to two at Bothal Pond, Budle Bay (juvenile), Cocklawburn, Druridge Pools, Holy Island and the breeding site; and in August up to three were at

Cresswell Pond and Lindisfarne NNR, and singles at Bothal Pond, Budle Bay (juvenile), Castle Island and Cocklawburn (injured bird).

September reports consisted of four at the breeding site, one to three at Cresswell Pond between 6th-15th, and singles at Budle Bay, Cocklawburn and Newcastle (Exhibition Park). Numbers increased in October, particularly later in the month, with 25 N at St Mary's, including 23 N on 30th, three N at Seaton Sluice and two S at Newbiggin, three to six at Branton GP, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Hallington Reservoir and Holy Island, and one to two at nine further sites. A below-average 73 flew N and 17 S at Seaton Sluice and 12 N at St Mary's during November, when 32 moved N at the Farne Islands, 47 were at East Chevington north pool, and 20-21 at Big Waters and Bolam Lake. In December, nine flew N at St Mary's on 2nd, 40-52 were at Castle Island and East Chevington, and 23-29 at Capheaton Lake and on the River Tweed (A1-Horncliffe).

Counts of ten to 16 also came from Branton GP, Colt Crag Reservoir, Kielder Water, Killingworth and QEII CP Lakes, Lindisfarne NNR, Newburn, West Ord and Whitley Bay in November-December, when five to nine were at Beadnell-Howick-Boulmer, Berwick North Shore, Castron, Derwent and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, Grindon Lough, Holy Island, Holywell Pond and Low Newton.

### Smew *Mergellus albellus*

STATUS: Uncommon mid-winter visitor, rare in spring and autumn

The trend towards fewer records continued in 2014, with just two reports, both of which concerned 'redheads' in November. One flying S at Tynemouth on 22nd was an unusual sea-watching record (MGK/DRW), and one was at East Chevington north pool on 22nd-23rd (ADMC *et al.*).

### Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

STATUS: Well-represented passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Extremely rare. / FIRST BRED: 1975 / LAST BRED: 2013

Monthly maxima at Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay) were as follows (includes some counts additional to WeBS):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
23	16	20	41	5	13	24	22	10	12	108	12

Aside from Lindisfarne NNR, peak January counts were ten at Berwick Pier, and five to nine at Beadnell, Cresswell Pond, Ladyburn Lake and the Tweed Estuary; in February, 14 were at the Tweed Estuary, 12 at Spittal Bay and East Chevington, and six to seven at Beadnell, Druridge Bay and Ladyburn Lake; and in March, two flew N at Newbiggin, 12 were at Cresswell Pond, and five to six at the Aln Estuary, Druridge Pools and Stag Rocks. Three to four were also at Alnmouth Bay, Berwick North Shore, the Blyth Estuary, Cocklawburn, Hauxley NR, Howick-Boulmer and Warkworth, and one to two at Berwick Little Beach, Castle Island, the Coquet Estuary, St Mary's and on the River Tweed (A1-Horncliffe) in the first quarter. The 'new' wetlands of Widdrington Moor Lake attracted two to four in January-February, while one to two visited East Stobswood Pool and Maiden's Hall Lake (West Chevington) in February. Three were in full display at Holy Island on 29th March.

In April, one to two flew N at the Farne Islands, St Mary's and Tynemouth, 41 were at Holy Island on 2nd, nine to 12 at Budle Point-Stag Rocks, Cresswell Pond and East Chevington, and three to four at the Blyth Estuary and Boulmer-Alnmouth; and in May, ten were at Holy Island, seven at Cresswell Pond on 1st and two to five up to 13th, and three to six at Budle Bay, off East Chevington, Seahouses-Beadnell and Stag Rocks. One to two were also at Berwick North Shore, Castle Island, Druridge Pools, Hauxley NR and Widdrington Moor Lake in April-May. A pair was regularly present at the Farne Islands between 11th May-8th July and the female was seen heading to a previously used nest site several times. The nest could not be located however and the outcome was unknown. A second female was also noted during this period but nesting was not confirmed.

Away from Lindisfarne NNR, few were noted in the summer months. In June, five were at Seahouses-Beadnell; in July, two flew N at St Mary's on 10th; and in August, two to six were at Boulmer-Alnmouth, Druridge Bay and Seahouses-Beadnell.

In September, three flew N at Annstead Point and singles N at the Farnes, Newbiggin and Tynemouth, and twos were at Budle Bay and Cresswell Pond. In October, a total of 12 flew N at Seaton Sluice between 13th-15th, nine flew N and one S at St Mary's, 12 were at East Chevington, and six to seven at the Blyth Estuary and Holy Island. Passage in November involved eight N and three S at Seaton Sluice and four to five N at the Farnes and St Mary's, 108 at Lindisfarne NNR on 9th (ACr) was the largest count of the year, and eight to ten were at East Chevington and Seahouses-Beadnell; and in December, six pairs displayed at Budle Bay and four pairs at East Chevington, while seven to eight birds were at the Aln and Blyth Estuaries, Cresswell and Ladyburn Lake.

Three to five were also at Beadnell, Boulmer-Alnmouth, Budle Bay, Ross Links and Stag Rocks during the final three months, while one to two were at nine further sites, including singles at Monks' House Pool and on the River Wansbeck at Stakeford.

**Goosander** *Mergus merganser*

STATUS: Well-represented resident, passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

Peak monthly counts were as follows (excludes coastal passage):

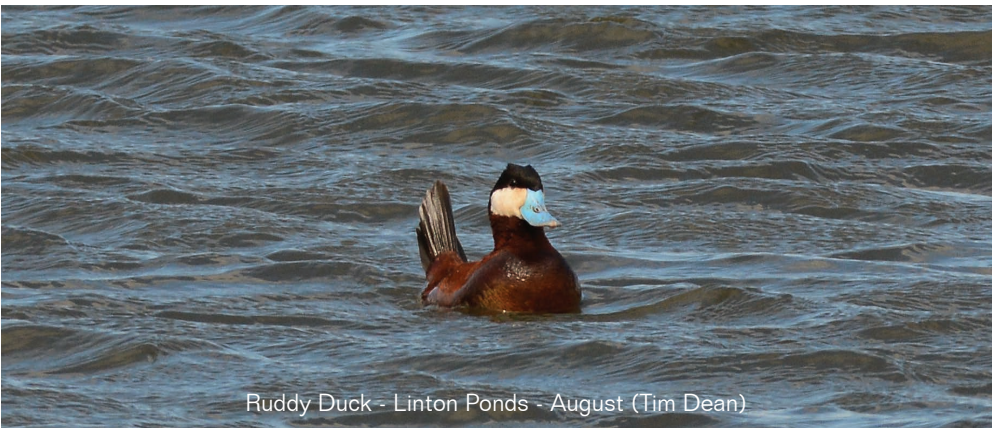
Locality	Month	Count
River Tweed (A1 bypass-Hornccliffe)	Jan	34
River Tweed (A1 bypass-Hornccliffe)	Feb	25
Killingworth Lake	Mar	12
Tweed Estuary	Apr	92
Tweed Estuary	May	264
Tweed Estuary	Jun	52
Berwick North Shore	Jul	452
Spittal	Aug	340
Tweed Estuary	Sep	384
River Tweed (A1 bypass-Hornccliffe)	Oct	59
Tweed Estuary	Nov	68
River Tweed (A1 bypass-Hornccliffe)	Dec	68



Red-breasted Merganser - Druridge Pools - March (Chris Barlow)



Goosander - Killingworth Lake - March (Ian Fisher)



Ruddy Duck - Linton Ponds - August (Tim Dean)



Additional peak January counts were 21 at the Tweed Estuary, 12-16 at Branton GP, Killingworth and Linnels Lakes, and Wylam, and eight at Tyne Green (Hexham); in February, 14-21 were at Branton GP and Greenlee Lough, and eight at Killingworth Lake and Hexham; and in March, five flew N at Seaton Sluice, 11 were on the River Tweed (A1 bypass-Horncliffe) and six to eight at Hallington and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, Wark (North Tyne) and West Ord.

Three to five were also at Bolam and QEII CP Lakes, Dilston, Farnley, Greenlee Lough, Jesmond Dene, Marden Quarry, Melkridge, Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal), Newburn, Newcastle (Leazes Park), Ross Back Sands, Rothbury, Snabdaugh (Tarsset) and Thrum Mill, while one to two were at a range of further localities during the first quarter, including, more unusually, singles at West Hartford and on flood water at Yearle. An injured drake at Thrum Mill, Rothbury, in January came for scraps alongside domestic Mallards *Anas platyrhynchos*.

In April, numbers at the Tweed Estuary rose to 92 on 18th and 22 were on the River Tweed (A1 bypass-Horncliffe); and in May, five were at Castle Island. Three to four were also at the Aln and Blyth Estuaries in April-May.

Birds were recorded at / over a minimum of 49 widespread sites between April-July (about 50 sites in 2013). A total of six nests was located in the Tarsset / Redesdale study area (MD), 44+ eggs were laid, of which 41+ hatched (six occupied nest boxes, 59 eggs, 59 young in 2013). At the Kielder study area (MD), six occupied boxes produced an unknown number of eggs and young (five occupied boxes, 30 young in 2013). Away from these core areas broods were noted at just two sites (six sites in 2013), with two broods at the Blyth Estuary (eight and four young) and a brood of 12 at Dukesfield (Hexham), the latter nest in a Barn Owl nest box from which all young fledged.

In June, 37 were at Holy Island, 11-18 at Berwick North Shore and Cocklawburn, six to nine at Fisherman's Haven (Berwick), New Water Haugh and West Ord, and an unusual record involved a female on Brownsman Pond (Farne Islands) on 30th; in July, 16 flew N at the Farne Islands, and one to five N at Newbiggin and Seaton Sluice, while 452 gathered at Berwick North Shore on 11th (MHu). This represents the largest single concentration yet recorded in the county (previous peak counts being 230-250 at Cocklawburn and Holy Island in July-August 2012). Other large July counts in the north may have involved some overlap; 246 at Cocklawburn, 180 at Holy Island, 102 at Spittal, and 54-60 at Stag Rocks and the Tweed Estuary. In August, flocks of 15 flew N at Seaton Sluice on 1st and 13th, and one to four flew N at Newton and St Mary's, 340 gathered at Spittal (Berwick) on 18th, and 120-156 at Berwick North Shore, Holy Island (juveniles) and the Tweed Estuary. Counts of 11-15 also came from the Blyth Estuary, Budle Bay, Derwent Reservoir and Hartford Bridge, and on the River Tweed (A1 bypass-Horncliffe) in July-August, while five to nine were at Amble, the Coquet Estuary and Seahouses harbour.

In September, 34 flew N at the Farnes, 11 N at Seaton Sluice and seven S at Newbiggin, the Tweed Estuary held 384 on 5th (a site record), 56 were at Branton GP and Spittal-Cocklawburn, 28 on the River Tweed (A1 bypass-Horncliffe), and five to nine at the Blyth Estuary, Budle Bay, Catcleugh Reservoir, Holy Island, Ross, Rothbury and Warkworth. In October, four moved N at St Mary's, 52 were off Budle Point, 42 at Branton GP, 16 at Meadow Haven (Berwick) and West Ord, and six to eight at Greenlee Lough and the Tweed Estuary; in November, an above-average nine flew N and 15 S at Seaton Sluice during the month, five flew N and 15 S at St Mary's, eight flew W at Capheaton, 40 were along the River Tweed (A1 bypass-Horncliffe) and six at Killingworth Lake; and in December, a total of 18 was on the River Tyne between Newburn-Bywell, and ten to 15 at Branton GP, Killingworth Lake and the Tweed Estuary.

Three to five were also at Airy Holm and Derwent Reservoirs, the Aln and Blyth Estuaries, Blakehopeburnhaugh, Corbridge, Greenlee Lough, Harthope Valley, Hedgeley GP, Ingram, Lindisfarne NNR, Marden Quarry, Mitford, Rothbury, Usway Burn and Whittle Dene Reservoirs in the final quarter.

## **Ruddy Duck** *Oxyura jamaicensis*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2011

BREEDING: Rare. / FIRST BRED: 1964 / LAST BRED: 2008

Given the recent nationwide eradication programme, a drake at Bothal Pond on 16th June (TF/JFa) was a surprise. What may have been the same drake was responsible for further sightings; in June at Arcot Pond on 18th-19th and 27th-28th; in July at Arcot Pond on 1st, Bothal Pond on three dates between 8th-30th and at Linton Pond on 15th (when it displayed to Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* ducklings) and 28th-29th; and in August, at the above site on 3rd and 7th (displaying again to an adult female Tufted Duck and six young on the former date), and at Bothal Pond on 15th and 18th (TF/JFa). These are the first records in the county since July 2011.

## **Quail** *Coturnix coturnix*

STATUS: Uncommon to rare summer visitor. Numbers fluctuate from year to year.

BREEDING: Rare. Difficult to prove and certainly overlooked. / LAST BRED: 2013

2014 was again a very poor year for this species in our recording area, with birds only reported from May-July. The earliest arrival was a singing male at Lucker from 1st-15th May, which continued to call sporadically thereafter until later in the month. One was also heard singing at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) during the summer, on 18th and 26th May, 8th June and 6th July. Further singles were heard and seen at Spindlestone on 2nd June, and heard at Whiteadder Point (Berwick) on 15th and in a large wheat field at Humshaugh on 22nd. Another was at Hauxley NR on 15th July.

## **Red-legged Partridge** *Alectoris rufa*

STATUS: Common resident, sustained by frequent releases for sporting purposes.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

In January, 18 were at Wandylaw and ten at Hedgeley, whilst in February, 12 were at Chillingham. In March the peak count of eight was at Keenly (Whitfield). One to five were seen at 11 further widespread sites including the unlikely locality of Newcastle Airport Baggage Hall during the first quarter.

The peak summer counts were 12 in the Harthope Valley in May and 57 at Bolton (Whittingham) and ten at a bird feeder near Greenhaugh in August. One to ten were seen at a further 23 widespread locations.

During the final four months several large gatherings were noted, presumably newly released birds, with the peak counts being 100 at Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay) in September and 36 in the Harthope Valley in November. Up to nine were noted at ten further widespread locations during this period, including one seen in foggy conditions in front of Seaton Sluice Watchtower during September.

## **Red Grouse** *Lagopus lagopus*

STATUS: Common resident.

BREEDING: Common.

The highest January count was 20 in the Harthope Valley. In February the peak counts were from the North Pennines which continues to be the local stronghold for this species with 31 in the Carrshield area, 28 at Paxhill (Allenheads) and 17 on Plenmeller Common. Numbers in March were higher with 46 on Acton Moor, 42 on Carrshield Moor, 31 at Paxhill, 30 at Allendale and 22 at Knockburn, with 20 reported from Simonside. During the first quarter birds were reported from a further eight localities.

More records were received during the nesting season (April-July), than in 2013 with breeding confirmed at Cairn Hill (Cheviots), Kielder, Kielderhead (two broods) and Paddaburn Moor. The peak counts in this period were 34 in the Carrshield area and 28 at Paxhill. Up to 20 adults were seen at 18 further locations.

On the Simonside Hills, 42 were noted in September and 15 in October. In November, very large numbers were reported in the Harthope Valley with 325 on 29th (JPD/MPF/AWS) and 200 on 18th, when 250 were also in the nearby Broadstruther area; up to 63 were in the Cheviot area on three further dates during the month. Large numbers continued to be noted in the Harthope Valley during December, with 154 in the Hawsen Burn area on 2nd and 45 on Burntridge Moor. Up to 16 were noted at nine further localities during the final four months.

## **Black Grouse** *Tetrao tetrix*

STATUS: Well-represented resident.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

The North Pennines again generated virtually all the records for the year. In the first quarter the peak counts were 12 at Kirkhaugh in January, 14 (five females) at Plenmeller Common and 13 males at Kirkhaugh in February and 15 (13 males) at the traditional site at Swinhope Shield in March. Up to six were recorded at ten further localities with the Harthope Valley being the only area away from the North Pennines

During the nesting season (April-June) records were received from 13 locations, including unusually at Grindon Lough. Peak counts were of 12 (11 males) at Carrshield and seven (three males) at Paxhill in April. No records were received for the July-August period, whilst in the final four months the peak counts were 11 males at another traditional site at Sinderhope and six males at Coanwood Pond, both in October. One to five were noted at a further seven sites, all in the North Pennines.

## **Grey Partridge** *Perdix perdix*

STATUS: Common resident.

BREEDING: Common although declining in some areas.

Grey Partridge continued to be well reported throughout the year. In January the peak counts were 25 at Lucker, 18 at Spittal Burn (Newbiggin), 17 at Worrall Bank (Morpeth), 15 at Houghton Strother GP (Humshaugh), 14 at Chesterhill, 13 at Cambois and Ellington and 12 at Scaffold Farm (Wallsend). In February, 25 birds were again at Lucker throughout the month and in March the peak count was eight at Swallow Pond. During the first quarter up to nine were noted at a further 28 predominantly lowland locations.

During the breeding season up to six adults, mainly in pairs, were noted at 51 widespread localities. Breeding was confirmed at Beacon Lane (Cramlington), Budle Bay, Low Horton Farm (Blyth) and Lucker.

In August, 12 were at Charlton Mires and ten at Waren Mill Caravan Park with one to four noted at five further sites, whilst in September 12 were in Budle Bay, ten again at Waren Mill Caravan Park and nine at Alwinton with one to five at four further localities. In the final quarter peak counts were, in October, 26 at Waren Mill, 21 at Low Newton, 11 on Alnwick Moor and ten at Backworth and Ryal; in November, 23 were at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) and in December 16 at Wallbanks, 14 at Beaconhill (Cramlington), 13 in Druridge Bay, 12 at Fenham Flats, 11 at Prestwick and Tyne Riverside Park (Prudhoe) and ten on Burntridge Moor. During this period one to nine were noted at 28 further widespread localities, mainly in the east of the county.

## **Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus*

STATUS: Common resident.

BREEDING: Common.

As in 2013 the species continues to be under-reported, with many records coming from gardens and suburban sites. In the first quarter the highest counts were 11 at Hollin Green (Keenly) and ten at Widdrington Village in January, seven in a Walbottle garden in February and in March 16 at Big Waters, 14 at Hollin Green and 11 at Hauxley NR.

During the breeding season the peak counts were 15 at Arcot Hall GC and 11 at Prestwick Carr in April. Up to six were noted in a Walbottle garden, where breeding was confirmed. Additional breeding records came from Beacon Lane (Cramlington), Bolton and West Hartford.

The highest counts in the September-December period were 32 at Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene) in September, 300 at Mitford, 200 at Fieldhead (Longhorsley) in October, 25 at Ross Farm in November and 28 again at Hartley West Farm in December. Up to 11 were noted at nine further localities during this period including an Old Hartley garden.

## **Red-throated Diver** *Gavia stellata*

STATUS: Well-represented passage and winter visitor, uncommon in summer.

During the first quarter significant passage was noted. In January, at Seaton Sluice 162 flew S and 92 flew N, mainly in the first three weeks. Nearby at St Mary's Island, 17 flew N (in three hours) on 18th and 38 flew past (three hours) on 22nd, with lighter passage noted here on two further dates. A large offshore gathering occurred in the Druridge Bay-Cresswell area in January with a peak count of 257 on 16th (PRM) with up to 100 noted there on seven further dates. Elsewhere, peak counts were 60 at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 5th and 30 at Ross Back Sands on 2nd. More unusual were fresh water records from East Chevington on 11th and Widdrington Moor Lake from 12th-19th. In February, numbers at Seaton Sluice were again high with a total of 135 S and 56 N (in 37 hours). Smaller numbers were seen at St Mary's Island on three dates. The peak offshore counts in February were 34 at Cocklawburn on 4th and 33 at St Mary's Island on 19th. Only average passage was noted at Seaton Sluice in March, with 30 S and 16 N (in 33 hours) and offshore counts were also average and included 18 at Stag Rocks on 4th and 16 at



Holy Island on 11th. Birds were noted at a further 21 coastal locations during the period. During April, 12 flew S and six N at Seaton Sluice from 1st-7th and the largest offshore gatherings were 12 in Druridge Bay and at Holy Island. Another fresh water bird was on the River Wansbeck at Castle Island on 20th. Only light passage was noted in May, when the peak offshore gathering was 20 in Druridge Bay on 17th. Few were noted in June with a peak of only three at St Mary's Island on 20th. Numbers continued low in July-August with one to four noted at Buston Links, Druridge, Newbiggin, Seaton Sluice and St Mary's Island.

Numbers increased in September, with a total of 197 S and 745 N at Seaton Sluice and 122 S and 46 N at nearby St Mary's Island during the month. Peak passage occurred on 20th, with 119 S and 21 N at Seaton Sluice, 50 S and two N at St Mary's Island and 99 S and eight N (in 1 hour 50 mins.) at Newbiggin. The peak offshore count was 21 in Druridge Bay on 29th. One to seven were noted at a further eight coastal locations.

Passage continued in October, with 76 N and 43 S at Seaton Sluice from 1st-8th and at St Mary's Island 33 flew N and 55 S during the month. Lighter passage was noted at Bamburgh, the Farne Islands and Newbiggin. The offshore peak counts were 12 off East Chevington and Tynemouth and 11 at Holy Island. November passage at Seaton Sluice noted 97 N and 111 S during the month (with a peak count of 41 N and 45 S on 5th). At St Mary's Island, a total of 56 flew N and 110 S. The peak movement at the Farne Islands occurred on 5th when 27 flew N and 15 S. Light passage was also noted at Holy Island, Newbiggin and Stag Rocks. The peak offshore counts were 13 at Stag Rocks and 12 at Embleton. One to ten were noted at eight further coastal sites. Only light passage was noted in December, with peak counts on 2nd of six N and 13 S at St Mary's Island and four N and eight S at Seaton Sluice, with ten N and two S there on 5th. Peak offshore counts were six at Cocklawburn and Low Newton, with one to five at a further nine coastal sites.

## Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

STATUS: Uncommon passage and winter visitor, rare in summer.

In January one flew S at St Mary's Island on 18th, up to two were at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) during the month and two were at Snab Point (Cresswell) from 9th-23rd. Singles were also noted at Druridge Bay, Holy Island and Warkworth. In February, one flew S at St Mary's Island on 9th and two flew N at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) on 14th. Four were in Alnmouth Bay on 19th and two were off Stag Rocks on 16th with a single noted there on three further dates. Singles were also noted off Coquet Island and Holy Island. More unusual was an immature which visited several fresh water sites in the Druridge Bay area from 7th February-8th April, mainly being noted at East Chevington North Pool. In March, a single was off Holy Island from 10th-21st.

Few were seen during the summer months. A single was in Coves Haven (Holy Island) on 10th June and one flew N at St Mary's Island on 20th.

In September, singles flew N at St Mary's Island on 8th and Cullercoats on 25th.

Numbers increased in October, with a total of four seen flying N at Seaton Sluice from 4th-17th and singles N at the Farne Islands on 14th and 30th, when one also flew N at St Mary's Island. Singles were also noted on the sea off Snab Point on 3rd and Hauxley on 11th. Passage continued in November, beginning with two S at Tynemouth on 2nd. On 5th, two flew S and one N at St Mary's Island and another N at Tynemouth. Singles also flew N at Seaton Sluice on 8th, at Tynemouth on 9th and at St Mary's Island on 17th.



Black-throated Diver - Druridge Pools - February (Ian Fisher)

Offshore singles were noted at Seaton Sluice on 4th and at the Farne Islands on three dates from 16th-22nd. December passage saw singles fly N at Seaton Sluice on 2nd and Tynemouth on 14th. Offshore, three to four were off Stag Rocks on 2nd and 19th; two were at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 18th and at Cresswell on 26th, with singles also seen at Beadnell Bay and Holy Island.

## Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

STATUS: Uncommon passage and winter visitor, rare in summer.

In January, at Seaton Sluice two flew S on 2nd and one S on 25th, whilst at Snab Point (Cresswell) one flew N on 9th. Offshore two were at Ross Back Sands on 8th and Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 11th, where a single was noted on three further dates; singles were also noted at Blyth Estuary and South Harbour, off East Chevington and at Snab Point. Numbers were lower in February, when a single flew S at Seaton Sluice on 9th and singles were offshore at Stag Rocks on 17th and Cheswick on 28th. In March, the Blyth South Harbour bird was again noted on 13th and 25th and one flew N at Seaton Sluice on 25th.

Two singles were noted in April, in the Blyth Estuary on 5th and in Druridge Bay on 28th. In May, offshore birds were noted at Spittal Bay on 10th and Holy Island on 13th, whilst singles flew N at Newbiggin on 12th and at St Mary's Island on 14th. On 24th, two (one in summer plumage) flew N at Snab Point, while one in summer plumage was also seen flying N at St Mary's Island and Seaton Sluice. A further bird was noted offshore at East Chevington on 6th July.

There were no further reports until 14th September when one flew S at the Farne Islands and one N at Newbiggin, followed by two S at Snab Point on 28th. In October, one flew S at Tynemouth on 4th and three S at the Farne Islands on 13th, whilst at Seaton Sluice singles flew S on 6th and 17th and at St Mary's Island singles flew N on 5th and 24th. The highest numbers were recorded in November, when four flew S and four N at Seaton Sluice from 1st-8th and five flew S and two N at the Farne Islands on 5th; also on 5th



Stewart Sexton

three flew S and two flew N at St Mary's Island and two flew S at Tynemouth. Singles were also noted passing Tynemouth, Holy Island and St Mary's Island on four further dates. Offshore singles were noted at Berwick, Emmanuel Head (Holy Island), the Farne Islands, Goswick, Ross Back Sands and Stag Rocks. The only December records were singles flying N at Seaton Sluice on 5th and 27th and Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) on 14th.

### **Fulmar** *Fulmarus glacialis*

STATUS: Well-represented resident and common passage visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

In January, 210 including a 'blue phase' bird flew S at Snab Point (Cresswell) on 29th, when 66 also flew S at Seaton Sluice. Birds returned to several breeding sites during the month, including 21 pairs at Whitley Bay, 13 birds at Bamburgh Castle, eight at Old Hartley and six at Spittal Bay (Newbiggin), Stag Rocks and Tynemouth Priory. Light passage was noted in February at Seaton Sluice, with a peak of 44 S on 5th. Other breeding sites occupied were at Coves Bay (Holy Island), Howick, Needles Eye (Berwick) and Seahouses. Passage was again noted in March, with 55 N (in one hour) at Berwick on 7th and 47 S (in two hours) at Seaton Sluice on 25th

'Blue phase' birds flew N at Seaton Sluice on 5th April and at St Mary's Island on 14th May. Notable passage during May included 25 N (in three hours) at Seaton Sluice on 22nd, 45 N (one hour) at Spittal Bay and 112 N (two hours) at Snab Point on 23rd and 672 N (nine hours) at St Mary's Island and 200 N (one hour) at Seaton Sluice on 24th.

At the Farne Islands, 298 pairs nested (316 in 2013) with the first eggs being seen on 15th May and the first young hatched on 7th July and at Coquet Island 51 pairs nested with the first eggs being seen on 24th May.

The table below details some sites with apparently occupied nests (AON) during the breeding season (DMT *et al.*)

Locality	No. of AON 2014	No. of AON 2013
Farne Islands	298	316
Coquet Island	51 (30 young)	55 (27 young)
Needles Eye	12	No data
Holy Island (Coves Bay)	c.30	26
Bamburgh Castle	No data	6
Dunstanburgh Castle cliffs	4-8 (Nil young)	8 (1 young)
Cresswell (Snab Point)	11 (3 young)	No data
Old Hartley	15 (3 young)	13 (6 young)
Whitley Bay (High Point cliffs)	4 (1 young)	16 (2 young)
Whitley Bay (Brown's Bay)	3 (1 young)	1-2 (2 young)
Tynemouth cliffs	36 (18 young)	33 (20 young)

Moderate passage was noted in mid-August with 80 (one hour) N at Berwick and 55 N at Snab Point on 18th and 119 N (in two hours) at Seaton Sluice on 19th. The peak September count was 12 offshore at St Mary's Island; a further 'blue phase' bird was noted from a pelagic trip several miles offshore in the Blyth-St Mary's Island area on 14th. The only October records were singles S at Seaton Sluice on 6th and N at Bamburgh on 12th and Seaton Sluice on 14th. During November, ten were on the sea at Collywell Bay on 27th and six flew N and four S at Seaton Sluice and two N at St Mary's Island on 28th. Light passage was again noted in December with 11 N (in seven hours) at Seaton Sluice and eight N at St Mary's Island on 2nd. Birds were beginning to return to breeding sites during the month, with seven to nine at Stag Rocks, High Point and Coves Bay and up to three were noted elsewhere, at Bamburgh Castle, Low Newton, Old Hartley and Sandy Bay (Newbiggin).

### **Fea's / Zino's Petrel** *Pterodroma feae / madeira*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2013

With the easy communication of today's technological age, a bird found flying off the coasts of Yorkshire, Cleveland and County Durham on 21st September was awaited in Northumberland with much anticipation. It was first picked up at Tynemouth at 15:00hrs. (CB) and then St Mary's Island at 15:15 (AC/NPD/ASJ *et al.*), Newbiggin at 15:45 (JFa *et al.*), Beadnell at 17:26 (GW/SS), Annstead Point at 17:35 (CGK), Inner Farne at 17:54 (DR/LS/ET/LB) and finally Holy Island at 18:15 (CDB). All sightings were accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee except for the Farne Islands record, where documentation was not sent in time to be assessed by the BBRC. There were also reports of the same individual off Snab Point and Druridge, but no documentation was received.



## **Cory's Shearwater** *Calonectris borealis*

STATUS: Rare visitor / LAST RECORD: 2012

A good year with four sightings began with one N past St Mary's Island on 20th August (MPF/JPD/ AS), followed by one N past Brownsman (Farne Islands) on 24th August (DR/DKs/EW) and another N past Beadnell on the following day (GW). The final report was of a single S at Seaton Sluice on 14th September (RD).

## **Great Shearwater** *Puffinus gravis*

STATUS: Rare visitor / LAST RECORD: 2008

After a notable gap of six years there were two individuals in 2014. The first was noted heading N at Newbiggin (TF/JFa), Beadnell Point (GW) and the Farne Islands (FIR) on 19th August. Another was identified moving N past Inner Farne on 21st September (DR).

Phil Allott



## **Sooty Shearwater** *Puffinus griseus*

STATUS: Well-represented autumn passage visitor, uncommon in summer.

Numbers were again low in 2014 with the first bird being seen on 26th July flying N at St Mary's Island. In August, six flew N at the Farne Islands on 20th, and at Seaton Sluice a total of four were noted flying N from 19th-25th. Two flew N at Newbiggin on 19th, with singles being seen here on four further dates; other singles flew N at St Mary's Island and Tynemouth. Higher numbers were seen in September, with peak counts on 21st of 57 N at the Farne Islands 42 N at Snab Point (Cresswell), 38 N at Newbiggin 27 N at St Mary's Island and 26 N at Annstead Point, followed by 40 N at the Farne Islands on 22nd. At Seaton Sluice only 14 were noted during 62 hours of sea-watching. Up to 12 were seen at Hauxley, Newbiggin, St Mary's Island, Snab Point and Tynemouth on four further dates.

Numbers dropped in October with peak counts of 29 N at the Farne Islands, ten N at Tynemouth Pier and six N at Seaton Sluice, all on 13th. One to four were noted at Beadnell, Holy Island, St Mary's Island and Snab Point. The only November records were of singles flying N at Seaton Sluice and Holy Island on 5th.

## **Manx Shearwater** *Puffinus puffinus*

STATUS: Well-represented to common passage visitor, more numerous in summer.

The earliest birds of the year were singles at Newbiggin on 27th March and flying N at the Farne Islands on 18th April. In May, light passage was noted at the Farne Islands from 22nd-28th with a peak count of 17 N on 23rd. Light N passage continued in June with peak counts of nine at Newbiggin on 9th, seven at Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) on 15th, 17 at St Mary's Island on 20th and up to five at Hauxley, Snab Point (Cresswell) and Tynemouth.

Numbers increased in July, with peak counts N at the Farne Islands of 241 on 5th and 115 on 10th. At Seaton Sluice the maximum counts were 50 N (in one hour) on 5th and 53 (four hours) on 11th and at Newbiggin 22-36 were noted daily from 9th-11th and 40 (in

two hours) on 21st. Moderate passage N was noted in August, when a total of 557 were logged at St Mary's Island during the month, with a peak day count of 326 on 20th, when 507 were also reported from the Farne Islands. The total count for the month from Seaton Sluice was 461 N and 16 S, with peaks of 268 from 18th-20th and 99 on 23rd. Elsewhere, at Newbiggin 205 flew N (in five hours) and 50 were seen feeding offshore on 19th, 89 were noted at Annstead on 22nd and at the Farne Islands 164 were observed on 25th.

In September a huge passage was observed at Tynemouth on 8th, when 100 per minute flew N, for a brief 30 minute period between 15:00-15:30hrs, before settling to a modest trickle. Numbers at Seaton Sluice were above average with a total of 611 N and 33 S, with peak movements of 171 N on 8th and 239 N (in 2 hours 30 minutes) on 16th. At the Farne Islands the peak N movements were 107 on 8th and 147 on 9th. The peak count at St Mary's Island was 73 N (in 1 hour 15 minutes) on 8th and at least 100 were observed from a pelagic trip out of Tynemouth on 14th. Offshore, loafing flocks of 250 were noted at the Farne Islands on 16th-17th and 200 at St Mary's Island on 16th.

Only light passage was witnessed in October, with 32 N and 11 S from 4th-14th (including 23 N on 13th) at Seaton Sluice, whilst at St Mary's Island 15 flew N and five S on 4th. Other double figure counts were 14 N at Beadnell on 13th and 10 N at Snab Point on 14th. Movements of one to seven were observed at Beadnell, Holy Island, St Mary's Island, Seahouses and Tynemouth. Offshore, lingering groups of 15 were noted at Budle Point on 4th with eight at Stag Rocks on 1st. The final bird of the year was a single N at the Farne Islands on 6th November.

## **Balearic Shearwater** *Puffinus mauretanicus*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2013

An unprecedented winter occurrence for the county involved a bird first seen off Newbiggin on 19th January (ADMc), where it lingered for ten minutes, occasionally resting on the sea. What was almost certainly the same individual was noted the following day off Druridge (BDK), where again it rested on the sea. Both observers noted it as a dark individual.

The now expected early autumn passage started with one N off Newbiggin on 21st August (AT), followed by two there on 16th September (ADMc) and another off Brownsman (Farne Islands) the following day (DR). These were the only documented sightings, which together with only two other claimed birds during the autumn represented a marked reduction in records on recent years.

## **Storm Petrel** *Hydrobates pelagicus*

STATUS: Uncommon on passage in the summer and autumn, rarely seen from land and possibly overlooked.

In 2014 all reports resulted from sightings during tape-luring sessions. At the Farne Islands, 24 birds (21 ringed and three 'controls') were caught in eight sessions from 20th July-1st September. At Annstead, three were caught on 23rd July and at Hadston Carrs, two were trapped with a further two being observed on 4th August.



Bittern - Gosforth Park NR - February (Chris Barlow)



Little Egret - Cresswell Pond - September (Ian Fisher)



Little Bittern - a lucky record shot from Gosforth Park NR in June (Andy Mould)



Glossy Ibis - Tynemouth - February (Alan Curry)



**Leach’s Petrel** *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2013

An exceptional series of records were notable on Inner Farne where tape luring led to three separate individuals being trapped on 21st, 23rd and 28th July (CR/DS). The latter was re-trapped on 31st July and what was likely to have been the same individual was heard singing near the nets on 7th and 20th August. As only one bird has previous been trapped on the Farne Islands (in 2012) this trio were most unexpected.

**Gannet** *Morus bassanus*

STATUS: Abundant passage and non-breeding summer visitor, uncommon in winter.

In January, 20 flew S at Spittal (Berwick) on 4th, five passed St Mary’s Island on 22nd and seven flew N at Snab Point (Cresswell) on 29th. Light passage was noted at Seaton Sluice with 62 S and 21 N during the month, with a peak of 29 S (in two hours) on 29th; the peak offshore counts were 30 at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 2nd and 16 in Spittal Bay on 16th. In February, light N passage was seen in the north of the county and only seven S and six N were noted at Seaton Sluice during the month; ten were offshore at Newbiggin on 26th. Larger movements were noted in March, with 380 N (one hour) at Berwick Pier on 20th, 500 N (one hour) at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) on 21st and 119 N (four hours) at Seaton Sluice on 26th.

In April, at the Farne Islands 10,205 flew N in seven hours on 14th, with a new Farne Islands one hour count of 4,585 being achieved from 17:30-18:30. (FIR) Other significant counts here were 1,045 N (one hour) on 15th and 850 N (one hour) on 18th. Peak movements elsewhere were 300 S (one hour) at Berwick Pier on 6th and 300 N (two hours) at Seaton Sluice on 14th. In May, peak movements were 150 N at Newton Point on 2nd, 134 N (30 minutes) at St Mary’s Island on 22nd, and at Seaton Sluice 400 flew N (three hours) on 22nd and 275 N (one hour) on 23rd, when 120 also flew N at Tynemouth. In June, 700 flew N (one hour) in a strong northerly gale at Berwick Pier on 29th, whilst at Cheswick 140+ were feeding close inshore on 16th.

There was a large offshore feeding frenzy of 500 in Spittal Bay on 6th July; the largest movements were 350 N (one hour) at Seaton Sluice on 11th and 450 S on feeding trips at Emmanuel Head on 19th. Sizable August movements included 950 N (one hour) at Berwick Pier, 475 N (eight hours) at Seaton Sluice and 109 N (one hour 30 minutes) at Snab Point on 18th and 200 N (one hour) at Seaton Sluice on 23rd. The only large N movements in September were 360 (two hours 30 minutes) at Seaton Sluice on 8th and 527 (one hour) at the Farne Islands on 21st.

Some large movements were noted in October, with 326 N (15 minutes) at Hauxley on 3rd, 1,000 N (two hours) at Seaton Sluice, 600 N (one hour) at Holy Island and 188 N at St Mary’s Island on 13th and finally, at Berwick Pier 330 S on 16th and 650 N on 21st. Numbers were reduced in November with a total of 246 N and 196 S at Seaton Sluice during the month and nine (eight juveniles) at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 4th. In December, 27 flew N and two S at Seaton Sluice, with a peak count of 16 N on 2nd.

**Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

STATUS: Well-represented resident and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

Peak monthly counts at favoured coastal sites were as follows;

Locality	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lindisfarne NNR	14	20	13	16	19	33	6	32	50	54	75	16
Coquet Estuary	28	19	13	-	-	-	22	59	32	15	76	40
Blyth Harbour	43	48	64	24	14	38	26	138	129	77	49	52
Tyne Estuary	75	74	14	19	14	10	22	30	64	93	69	76

In addition to the main roost counts tabulated above, during the first quarter peak coastal counts included, in the Berwick area, 34 at Meadow Haven, 26 at Sandstell Point, 19 at North Shore and 14 in the Tweed Estuary, with up to 25 also at St Mary’s Island. Inland, 15-26 were at Colt Crag, Derwent, Hallington and Whittle Dene Reservoirs and 14 in a roost at Bywell. One to ten were noted at a further 14 coastal and 35 inland localities.

In April, peak counts included 42 at New Water Haugh (Tweed Estuary) and 15 at Berwick North Shore. The peak May counts were 24 at East Chevington, 18 from Seahouses-Beadnell, 11 at Derwent Reservoir and from Spittal-Cocklawburn and ten at Berwick North Shore. In June there were peak counts of 26 at the Blyth Offshore wind turbines, 18 from Seahouses-Beadnell and East Howden, 17 at East Chevington, 16 at Berwick North Shore and in the Tweed Estuary and 13 at Widdrington Moor Lake. During this quarter one to nine were noted at a further seven coastal and 23 inland waters.

On the Farne Islands there was a small increase in breeding numbers with 93 pairs present (87 in 2013). Large chicks were seen from 15th May and the first fledglings on 4th June.

Additional peak counts during July-August were 56 at Derwent Reservoir, 48 at Sandstell Point, 34 in the Longbridge End-Beal Point area, 31 from Seahouses-Beadnell, 30 from Spittal-Cocklawburn and at Meadow Haven and 29 at Castle Island. Elsewhere, ten to 23 were observed at Alnmouth, Bakethin Reservoir, Berwick North Shore, Castle Island, East Chevington, East Howden, Horncliffe area, Newbiggin, Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay), the Tweed Estuary and Widdrington Moor Lake. One to nine were noted at a further 11 coastal and three inland localities.

In September, the largest gatherings were 55 at Sandstell Point, 53 in the Tweed Estuary, 42 at Castle Island and Derwent Reservoir, 38 at Meadow Haven, 36 from Amble-Chevington, 35 from Spittal-Cocklawburn, 27 at Berwick North Shore and 11-18 at Castle Island, East Chevington, East Howden and Kielder Reservoir and on the coastal stretches from Boulmer-Alnmouth, Seahouses-Beadnell and Newbiggin-Cambois. One to nine were noted from a further seven coastal and 23 inland localities during this period.

Peak counts during the period October-December were 53 in the Tweed Estuary, 43 at Berwick North Shore, 39 at Derwent Reservoir, 38 at Hallington Reservoir, 32 at Colt Crag Reservoir and St Mary’s Island, 31 in the Horncliffe area, 28 at Castle Island and from Seahouses-Beadnell, 27 from Redheugh-Scotswood Bridges, 25 at Berwick North Shore and 22 at West Ord, with ten to 17 noted from Beadnell-Howick, Big Waters, East Chevington, East Howden, Gosforth Park NR, Meadow Haven, Newburn-Bywell, Spittal-Cocklawburn and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. In the final quarter one to nine were noted at a further ten coastal and 29 inland localities.

### **‘Continental’ Cormorant** *P.c. sinensis*

STATUS: Uncommon winter visitor.

One to two were at North Shields Fish Quay on 21st-22nd February. In March an adult was at Warkworth Weir and a first-winter at Bakethin Reservoir on 12th.

A ringed juvenile was observed at Cresswell Pond on 9th June, three immature birds were at Hauxley NR on 20th July and on 12th August two juvenile / first-winter birds were present in Blyth South Harbour.

December was the peak month for records with three at QEII Lake on 13th, two at Ladyburn Lake on 15th and singles at NSFQ on 13th, Linden Hall Lake on 25th and QEII Lake on 30th.

### **Shag** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

STATUS: Common resident and well-represented passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

In January, the peak count was 150+ off Stag Rocks (Bamburgh), while in the Berwick area 40+ were off Spittal, 18 at Meadow Haven and 14 at Sandstell Point. The peak February count was again at Stag Rocks with 20 noted, and 15 were at Berwick North Shore. The far north of the county was again dominant in March with peak counts in the Berwick area of 14 at North Shore and 12 at Meadow Haven. Light passage was noted at Seaton Sluice throughout the period and one to six were noted at 13 further coastal localities.

Light passage was again noted in April from Seaton Sluice and St Mary's Island. In May, only three were seen flying N at Seaton Sluice during the month, six were observed from Budle Point-Seahouses and five at Berwick North Shore. Seven were noted at Berwick North Shore in June. One to four were noted in four other coastal locations.

On the Farne Islands there were 795 nesting pairs (582 in 2013). The first chicks hatched on 6th May and the first young reached flying stage on 28th June; 378 monitored nests produced 665 fledged young, a productivity of 1.76, and the highest in Farne Islands recorded history. Late breeders were seen fledging young in early October (FIR). On 11th June three nests were located at Needle's Eye (Berwick).

In July, very few were seen away from the breeding sites, with one N at Seaton Sluice and one to two at three other coastal locations. Light passage was again noted in mid-August at Seaton Sluice with seven S and three N. In the Berwick area, 22 roosted at Meadow Haven and 14 were at Sandstell Point, while three to four were also noted at Amble, Berwick North Shore and from Spittal-Cocklawburn. Passage was more noticeable in September with 46 S and 27 N at Seaton Sluice with a peak movement from 1st- 3rd of 18 S and 18 N, and at St Mary's Island 32 flew S on 24th. Peak counts were 42 at Sandstell Point, 37 in an offshore feeding flock at St Mary's Island, and in the Berwick area 20 at North Shore, 18 at Meadow Haven and 16 from Spittal-Cocklawburn; 17 were also observed from Budle Point-Seahouses and one to seven at six further coastal locations.

Only light movement was again observed from Seaton Sluice in October-November. Gatherings during the period included at least 818 between Budle Point-Bamburgh on 9th November (BRS), while in the Berwick area up to 18 were at Meadow Haven, 14 at North Shore and five in Spittal Bay. Elsewhere, nine were noted from Budle-Alnmouth and eight from Beadnell-Howick. No passage was recorded at Seaton Sluice during December, when at least 250 were offshore at Stag Rocks on 3rd, 14 were at Meadow Haven and

ten from Spittal-Cocklawburn. In the final quarter one to four were noted at seven further coastal localities.

### **Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris*

STATUS: Uncommon winter visitor, rare in summer.

BREEDING: Historical. / LAST BRED: 1956

Three were present throughout January at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN). Singles were at Big Waters from 16th-18th and at East Chevington on 19th. Two were still present at Gosforth Park NR on 9th February and singles were seen at Cresswell Pond on 4th and Whiteadder Point (Berwick) on 12th. In March, two were again noted throughout the month at Gosforth Park NR and one was at Warkworth Lane on 15th.

Birds continued to be reported from Gosforth Park NR throughout the summer period. A single was seen in May, and in June one was heard 'booming' on 24th and two were present on 28th, with one remaining throughout July-August. A single was also noted at East Chevington on 1st August.

In September the peak count from Gosforth Park NR was of three together on 28th (NHSN), with this number being seen here on at least two occasions in October. Two and possibly three birds remained throughout November and although only a single bird was seen in December, observers thought two birds may still be present. One was seen in flight at Eat Chevington on 8th November, where two were noted on 7th December. A single was also present at Swallow Pond from 14th-27th December.

### **Little Bittern** *Ixobrychus minutus*

STATUS: Extremely rare. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 7 / FIRST: 1810 / LAST: 2000

A planned gentle guided walk at Gosforth Park NR on 22nd June was interrupted with views of an adult male flying across the main lake (JL et al.). News was released and sporadic sightings were obtained over the next five days. This was the first in the county since one at St Mary's Island on 18th March 2000 and was accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee. Prior to that there was only one county sighting in the 20th century with one at Etal in October 1962 and five 19th century sightings.

### **Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*

STATUS: Extremely rare. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 2 / FIRST: 1986 / LAST: 2013

It has been assumed that other sightings would arise in the county with the ongoing increase in sightings in the UK, but not in such strange circumstances. The observer was nearly home at Whitley Bay on 1st July (TRC/ACI) when one was noted flying slowly E over the houses at a height of only ten metres. This is the third county record following one on Holy Island in 2013 and the first near Barrasford (North Tyne) in 1986.

### **Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*

STATUS: Uncommon resident and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Extremely rare. / FIRST: 2014

In the first quarter only singles were noted, most of which were in the north of the county.



January birds were seen at Berwick, Blyth Estuary, Budle Bay, Doddington, Goswick GC, Horncliffe, New Water Haugh (Tweed Estuary) and Paxton, while another remained for at least three weeks on the Horton Burn (Cramlington). One in Budle Bay was the only February record, whilst in March birds were noted at Blyth Estuary, Budle Bay, Caistron, Coquet Estuary, Cresswell Pond, Fenham Flats and Yarrow Slake (Tweed Estuary).

In April, singles were noted at Holy Island, Long Nanny Burn and the Tweed Estuary, whilst in May again only singles were noted at Alnmouth, Budle Bay, Coquet Estuary and Cresswell Pond. Numbers increased in June, with a peak count of five at Druridge Pools on 2nd and up to three on 12 further dates in the Druridge Bay area. Four were in Budle Bay from 27th-29th and one on Holy Island on 5th and 13th.

A new county record count was set on 30th July, when 21 were present on Holy Island Causeway (per CGK). Other peak counts during July included 12 in Budle Bay on 24th and up to seven at Cresswell Pond. Four were noted in the Tweed Estuary, three at Druridge Pools and one to two were seen at Blyth Estuary, Castle Island, East Chevington, the Farne Islands, Low Newton Flash, Wansbeck Estuary, Warkworth Gut and West Stobswood Pool. Numbers remained high in August with a peak count of 17 at Lindisfarne NNR on 20th, with up to 14 noted here on eight further dates. Counts of four came from Branto GP, Caistron, Wansbeck Estuary, Warkworth Gut and Yarrow Slake, while three were at the Aln Estuary, Coquet Estuary and Cresswell Pond. Passage was noted on 13th with three N at St Mary’s Island and singles at Seaton Sluice and Amble Harbour.

The first successful breeding in the county was confirmed with a pair fledging two young at Druridge Pools.

In September, 19 were at Fenham Flats on 8th and 17 were seen regularly in a tree roost at Fenham-le-Moor. Seven were at Castle Island on 30th, four were noted at Cresswell Pond, Tweed Estuary and Warkworth Gut and three were at Branton GP and Blyth Estuary, with one to two at ten further locations. Numbers declined in October, with a peak of ten at Lindisfarne NNR on 12th. Three were at Warkworth Gut, two at Cresswell Ponds and singles at eight coastal and near-coastal localities and at one inland site at Tughall Mill (Ford). Ten were again at Lindisfarne NNR on 9th November and seven were in the Wansbeck Estuary on 8th. Four were in the Blyth Estuary on 29th and one to two at 15 further locations, including a first record for Swallow Ponds and another moving through the Farne Islands. In December, the peak count at Lindisfarne NNR was seven and up to four were present along the Horton Burn (Cramlington). Two were regularly seen in Holywell Dene and singles were noted at Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Tweed Estuary and Warkworth.

**Great White Egret** *Ardea alba*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2013

The increase in records continued with at least six sightings. The first was found at Cresswell Pond on 25th April (HG *et al.*), remaining in the Cresswell-Druridge area until 21st May. It is quite possible that the individual found at Foxton on 22nd May (TAC) was the same bird. A gap ensued before the next sighting, with one at Hauxley NR on 12th June (HG).

Further singles were seen in September, with one at Prestwick Carr on 1st (PCF *et al.*) and another at Alnmouth 11th (TAC).

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*

STATUS: Well-represented resident, passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

Peak counts for the Tweed Estuary were as follows (MHu):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
15	7	18	6	8	15	19	32	34*	24	26	18

\*This count equalled the record estuary count.

In addition to the above the first quarter produced counts of nine at Hauxley NR in January and 11 at Druridge Pools in March. One to seven were noted at 63 further widespread localities.

Away from breeding sites, the peak count in April was only six in the Tweed Estuary and on the River Tweed from Horncliffe to the A1 road bridge. One to three were noted at a further 24 sites, including an individual raiding a garden pond at Southfield Green (Cramlington).

Breeding details were only received from two sites. Ten nests were in the Hauxley area and three nests at Gosforth Park NR. The number of young fledged at each location was not reported.

Larger gatherings occurred during the summer period (May-August) with 18 at Howden Wetland, 14 at Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene) and ten in the Aln and Coquet Estuaries and at Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Passage was noted in September when nine flew N and three S at Seaton Sluice during the month, seven flew W at the Farne Islands on 9th and five flew S accompanying Barnacle Geese at Bamburgh on 22nd. Peak counts in September were 36 at Howden Wetland, 13 at North Blyth Staithes and ten at Whittle Dene Reservoirs. One to nine were noted at 45 further widespread localities in May-June and 61 localities from July-September.

During the final quarter, Howden Wetland NR continued to attract large numbers with 21-31 throughout, and ten were on the River Tweed from Horncliffe to the A1 road bridge in October. One to nine were noted at 73 further widespread localities during the period.

**Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus*

STATUS: Extremely rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 7 / FIRST: 1829 / LAST: 2013

One was seen briefly for ten minutes at Cresswell Pond on 9th January (BDK) as it flew in from the north and circled before landing. It reappeared at Cresswell on 17th January before finding Lynemouth Flash to its liking, where it remained until 23rd. Another individual was found incongruously at Tynemouth in February where it fed happily next to a main road and near a housing estate from 19th-24th (IF/MSH *et al.*).

**Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia*

STATUS: Rare passage visitor mainly in the spring. / LAST RECORD: 2013

Considerably more records were received than in 2013. A single at Druridge Pools from 25th-26th April was seen briefly at nearby Cresswell Pond on the latter date. In May, a Dutch-ringed adult seen at Druridge in 2011 and Hauxley NR in 2012 was in the Druridge

Pools-Cresswell Pond area from 15th-28th; two flew N at Alnmouth on 19th and an unringed bird was at East Chevington on 27th.

In June, two to four were noted at Cresswell Pond from 5th-9th and up to six were at nearby Druridge Pools from 9th to the month end (TRD/JD/TRC); two were at Hauxley NR on 14th and 24th.

Three, second-third calendar year birds remained at Druridge Pools until 17th July, when three were also noted at Cresswell Pond. Three (two third calendar year birds and one fourth calendar) flew in from the south at Cresswell Pond on 20th, two remaining to the month end. Two were at Druridge Pools on 30th and in Budle Bay on 13th, where one was present on 24th.

Two adults were at Cresswell Pond on 1st-2nd August and Druridge Pools on 7th, whilst in September singles were at Castle Island on 2nd, 4th and 6th, Cresswell Pond on 2nd and 23rd and in Budle Bay on 7th.

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

STATUS: Uncommon to well-represented resident passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

In the first quarter peak counts were low. In January-February, up to ten were at Hauxley NR, six at Whittle Dene Reservoirs, five at Creswell Pond and four at Castron, Hedgeley GP and QEII Lake. In March, seven were at Swallow Pond, six in the Aln Estuary and at Castron, Gosforth Park NR and Swallow Pond, five at Linton Ponds and four at Holywell Pond and Woodhorn Flashes; one to three were noted at 30 further predominantly lowland localities during the period.

In April the highest counts were 11 at Swallow Pond and six at Gosforth Park NR, whilst in May eight were at Swallow Pond.

A total of 50 sites were occupied during the breeding season (48 in 2013) with breeding confirmed at 21 sites (16 in 2013). Those with two or more reported broods are tabulated below:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young
Arcot Pond	5	14
Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh)	4	9
Bothal Pond	3	8
Hauxley NR	3	6
Duke's Pond (Wallsend)	2	4
Grindon Lough	2	4
Linton Pond	2	4
Swallow Pond	2	3

In addition, single broods were also noted at Banks Pond (Dinnington), Big Waters, Branton GP, Gosforth Park NR, Heighley Gate Garden Centre (Morpeth), Holywell Pond, Holy Island Lough, Ladyburn Lake, Laverock Hall Farm (Blyth), Longhirst Flash, Middleton Hall, Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

The highest August counts were 20 at Castron, 15 at Arcot Pond, 14 at Big Waters and Hauxley NR, 12 at Druridge Pools and 11 at Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield) - a new site record count and at Linton Ponds. In September, 25 were at East Chevington and Hauxley NR, 19 at Big Waters, 18 at Holywell Pond, 15 at Arcot Pond, 14 at Branton GP, 12 at Angerton Lake, Castron and Haughton Strother GP, 11 at Airy Holm Reservoir and Whittle Dene Reservoirs and ten at Castle Island and Rothley Lake.

In October the highest counts were 30, grouped together in the presence of an otter, at Castle Island (SPP), 25 at Castron, 18 at East Chevington, 16 at Big Waters and Druridge Pools, 15 at Hauxley NR, 14 at Holywell Pond, 13 at Branton GP, ten in the Aln Estuary and nine at Airy Holm Reservoir, Angerton Lake and Haughton Strother GP. The November peak counts were 16 at Castle Island, 13 at Hauxley NR and nine in the Aln Estuary and at Castron, whilst in December, 11 were at Cresswell Pond and ten at Stakeford Bridge. In the final quarter one to eight were noted at 41 further sites.

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*

STATUS: Uncommon resident, passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

In 2014 numbers were slightly higher than in the previous five years. In January, two were noted offshore at Alnmouth and Druridge Pools and singles were noted off Cresswell, Meadow Haven (Berwick), Ross Back Sands and Seaton Sluice and on inland waters at Cresswell Pond and Killingworth and QEII lakes. Numbers increased in February, with peak counts of four in the Coquet Estuary and three off Warkworth beach; twos were noted at Alnmouth Bay, Bothal Pond, Derwent Reservoir and offshore in Druridge Bay, while singles were seen at six other inland and four coastal locations. In March, numbers rose to eight at Whittle Dene Reservoirs and six were at Derwent Reservoir. Six were also present at East Chevington and three at Bothal Pond and QEII Lake. Pairs were at Bakethin Reservoir, Big Waters, Branton GP and Killingworth Lake and singles at Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield) and Cresswell Pond.

During April-May, the peak counts were ten at East Chevington, seven at Whittle Dene Reservoirs and six at Killingworth Lake. Three were seen at Arcot Pond and Widdrington Moor Lake and pairs at Bothal Pond, Branton GP, Castron, Colt Crag Reservoir, Cresswell Pond, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Hallington Reservoir, Holywell Pond and QEII Lake, with singles at Airy Holm Reservoir and Warkworth Lane.

At total of 18 potential breeding sites were occupied in 2014 (14 in 2013). Successful Breeding was confirmed at seven localities as tabulated below;

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young
Derwent Reservoir	3	5
East Chevington	2	5
Haughton Strother GP	1	4
Bothal Pond	1	3
Killingworth Lake	1	3
Whittle Dene Reservoirs	1	2
QEII Lake	1	1



In addition, a nest with three eggs at Druridge Pools was either abandoned or predated although an adult and a juvenile were seen there on 18th August.

In June-July, the peak counts were 13 (adults) at Whittle Dene Reservoirs, eight at Derwent Reservoir and seven at East Chevington. Numbers increased to 16 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs in August, when six adults were also at Branton GP and Derwent Reservoir. In September ten remained at Whittle Dene Reservoirs, nine were at Derwent Reservoir and four at Branton GP, with coastal birds noted at Budle Bay, the Tweed Estuary and moving S off Seaton Sluice.

Light passage was noted in October with singles N at Seaton Sluice on 4th and 13th and N at St Mary's Island on 7th. The peak counts were seven at Derwent Reservoir, five at Whittle Dene Reservoirs and four at Branton GP and Maiden's Hall Lake; one to two were noted at 12 further locations both coastal and inland. In November, three flew N at St Mary's Island and two N at Seaton Sluice on 5th. The peak count for the month was four at Whittle Dene Reservoirs; two were at East Chevington, Killingworth Lake and Lindisfarne NNR and two juveniles were noted at Widdrington Moor Lake. Singles were noted offshore near Boulmer and at QEII Lake. Very few were seen in December with four again present at Whittle Dene Reservoirs and singles at Derwent Reservoir, QEII Lake and on the sea at Tynemouth and near North Shields Fish Quay.

**Red-necked Grebe** *Podiceps grisegena*

STATUS: Uncommon autumn passage and winter visitor, rare in spring and summer.

As in recent previous years the species remained scarce. In January, singles were noted offshore at Warkworth Gut on 4th, Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 8th, Newbiggin on 10th, the Farne Islands on 14th, Ladyburn Lake and Stag Rocks on 21st and again at Stag Rocks on 30th. Singles were seen in February at Stag Rocks on 1st and 7th, in Spittal Bay (Berwick) on 5th and at Lindisfarne NNR on 15th. Another, first seen at East Chevington North Pool on 7th, remained there until 6th April by which time it had acquired summer plumage. One to two were at Stag Rocks from 1st-11th March and one flew N at the Farne Islands on 22nd May.

No further birds were seen until 6th September, when one flew N at St Mary's Island. A single flew N at Seaton Sluice on 4th October and one was in Holy Island harbour on 12th. The final record of the year was a single at Lindisfarne NNR on 9th November.

**Slavonian Grebe** *Podiceps auritus*

STATUS: Uncommon passage and winter visitor.

Peak counts from the regular wintering sites in the north of the county were as follows;

Locality	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lindisfarne NNR	9	5	6	6	-	-	-	-	-	5	6	7
Stag Rocks (Bamburgh)	12	5	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	5

These numbers were significantly lower than in 2013. Elsewhere, in January, two were at Ross Back Sands on 8th and singles at Hauxley NR from 4th-5th and offshore at Druridge Pools on 16th. At East Chevington a single from 10th January increased to two at the end of the month, both birds remaining here to 12th March. In February further singles were at

Widdrington Moor Lake on 14th, Elwick on 16th, Warkworth Weir on 21st-22nd and 26th, Spittal Bay (Berwick) on 23rd and Cheswick on 28th. Two of the birds present at Holy Island on 6th April were observed displaying; the first occurrence of this activity by the observer in 40 years (IK).

No further birds were seen until October, when two were at Widdrington Moor Lake from 12th-25th, with one remaining to 3rd November. Other singles noted in October were at the unusual location of Branton GP on 18th and offshore at Howick on 25th. In November, the bird at Branton GP was seen again on 1st and two were on the sea off the Farne Islands on 25th. There were no further reports away from the traditional sites (see table above) during the final quarter.

**Black-necked Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis*

STATUS: Rare passage and winter visitor; rare away from breeding sites in summer.

BREEDING: Uncommon. / LAST BRED: 2014

A single, probably a first-winter bird, was at Colt Crag Reservoir on 19th January. A winter-plumaged adult was at Snipe Point (Holy Island) on 11th March and in April a single was at East Chevington North Pool.

During the breeding season three pairs were present at one locality fledging seven young, a single pair at another site abandoned their nest and at a third site a pair was seen displaying. A former regular breeding locality in the centre of the county was not occupied this year.

A juvenile was at West Stobswood Pool on 22nd August. In December, one remained throughout the month at QEII Lake and another provided very close views at Seahouses Harbour from 28th-30th.

**Black Kite** *Milvus migrans*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2013

A chance sighting whilst travelling south on the A697 at Weldon Bridge on 21st May (MJC) resulted in very close views of an adult flying by the roadside. It could not be relocated but was well documented.

**Red Kite** *Milvus milvus*

STATUS: Rare, although increasingly regular visitor.

BREEDING: Extremely rare. / LAST BRED: 2010

Once again there were numerous sightings along the Tyne Valley from Throckley to Hexham and from areas between their breeding stronghold and Derwent Reservoir. Away from these favoured foraging areas, sightings remained irregular and infrequent.

During February a single flew over Gosforth Park NR. In March, two were in the Whitfield area, a former breeding locality during the early stages of re-introduction and a single roamed the Weetslade, Big Waters and Prestwick Carr areas.

By April, most pairs were in breeding areas, mainly in the Derwent Valley and adjacent areas of County Durham. One particularly interesting record involved a bird arriving off the sea at East Chevington on 6th with, presumably, the same individual at Linden Hall later that day. From the date and arrival direction, it may have been a north-bound migrant

rather than a local bird. Another single was over the A1 at Morpeth on 30th.

During May, singles were at Bewick Moor, Haltonlea Fell and in the Harthope Valley. The species had its best breeding year so far in County Durham, but disappointingly, there was no confirmed nesting in Northumberland, although one pair fledged three young just yards across the county boundary. Friends of Red Kites (FoRK) reported up to 22 pairs fledging around 40 young, almost twice as many as in 2013. An injured breeding male taken into care was found to have old lead shot in its body, indicating the persecution the local population still faces.

During June, a single was at High Brunton (Chollerford), while in July there was another sighting at Gosforth Park and a single was near Cresswell Pond. During the remainder of the year the only sighting away from the favoured areas was a single at Chipchase (North Tyne) in December.

### **White-tailed Eagle** *Haliaeetus albicilla*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2011

BREEDING: Historical

An un-tagged immature was picked up off the Vicar's garden (Holy Island) on 12th October (ADM/MJC *et al.*) where it had managed to panic a flock of Brent Geese before being sighted overhead. It moved to the mud flats off the causeway where it was admired by a Natural History Society field trip! It soon moved off north and its stay of a few hours was suitably appreciated by those lucky enough to have been on the island. Sightings have increased in recent years with reintroduction schemes underway; however, due to the locality and the lack of wing tags it is quite possible that this was a genuine migrant from Scandinavia.



Mike Henry

### **Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*

STATUS: Uncommon passage and summer visitor, extremely rare in winter.

BREEDING: Extremely rare. / LAST BRED: 2014

The county's first February records were provided by very early females at Holy Island Causeway on 6th and at Cresswell Pond and East Chevington on 9th. Two were at Maiden's Hall Lake by 16th and other sightings involved singles in the general Druridge Bay area by the end of the month.

During March, singles continued to be seen in the East Chevington area, and by 27th an adult male and a female were present, with a third individual arriving during April. Elsewhere in April, north-bound migrants provided sightings at Gosforth Park NR, Holy Island and Rothbury. Other singles followed during May at Grindon Lough, Holywell Pond, again at Gosforth Park, Haltonlea Fell and Prestwick Carr. During June, three remained at East Chevington and there were sightings of males from Ashington, Cresswell Pond and Druridge Pools and females from Ashington and Linton.

The East Chevington pair fledged five young in July and the family party was regularly reported with singles, perhaps wanderers from the group, at Cresswell and Linton ponds, Druridge Pools, Low Hauxley and Widdrington Lake, while another flew NE at St Mary's Island on 29th. Two or three juveniles remained around Druridge Bay in August-September. Elsewhere, during late August singles were at Corbridge and Berwick (Middle Ord Pond), while in September singles visited Castron, Gosforth Park, the Tweed (New Water Haugh) and West Hartford.

A cream-crowned bird flying S at Budle Point on 13th September was identified by green wing tags as having been marked at Sculthorpe Moor NR, Norfolk, indicating that our autumn passage birds are not necessarily from northerly populations. The final sighting was a juvenile at Cresswell Pond on 7th October.

### **Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*

STATUS: Uncommon passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Rare. / LAST BRED: 2013

During January-February wintering individuals were in widespread foraging areas and up to seven occupied a roost in one upland locality. Singles were on the coast at Bamburgh and Holy Island and in suitable inland hunting areas, including Prestwick Carr. Once again due to the severe threat of persecution, most observers kept upland information confidential.

By the end of March most had disappeared, presumably towards Scottish or continental breeding areas, but occasional individuals spent time in potential breeding habitats. A single male was seen around the sites where nesting occurred from 2006-2008 and in 2010 and 2013. At the latter site, the male was 'sky dancing' on 7th May and 8th June, but no females were present. Females were occasionally recorded in this area but, crucially, never at the same time as the male.

There were no further sightings until September, when a female was in the south west on 16th, a female or juvenile spent three days on Holy Island from 18th and a 'ringtail' flew W over the Farne Islands on 30th. Records increased slightly in October, with a male near Glanton, a female at Cresswell and two juveniles at confidential localities.



During November, an adult male was on Holy Island, two 'ringtails' were at a confidential site and singles were seen in two other areas. Records in December from confidential sites involved an adult male, two 'ringtails' and a single watched attempting to hunt Red-legged Partridges.

## **Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis*

STATUS: Uncommon resident.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

Once again large forested areas provided most records of this large raptor which is normally secretive, except during periods of early spring display. Two adult males were seen at Kielder Forest in early January and a single bird hunted Woodpigeons at another locality. During February one was near Coupland and there was an unusual lowland single at Haggerston.

The first indication of spring flight display was seen over Harwood Forest on 28th February. Further display followed in March at several forested and upland sites, while in April there were sightings of singles from Hepple, Upper Coquetdale and Hexhamshire.

Typically, birds were much less obvious during the breeding season, with the only May sighting from Debdon. The Northumbria Ringing Group reported an improved situation with 32 sites occupied. A total of 26 pairs produced eggs, 19 of which went on to fledge 44 young, compared with 14 pairs and 26 young in the poor season of 2013.

There were no June or July sightings. During August, a juvenile was seen in the Border Forest and other singles were in the Harthope Valley, at Wooler Common and Cartington Hill. The only September record involved a single near Humshaugh.

There were only three records during the final quarter, all from the Cheviots. These involved an adult mobbing a Rough-legged Buzzard and another hunting Red Grouse during November and another single near Broadstruther in early December.

## **Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*

STATUS: Common resident, also a passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

The species was typically widespread both in rural and urban areas during the first quarter. Birds hunted through gardens at Dinnington, Newcastle (Chapel House) and Tynemouth. Three were regular at Gosforth Park NR and Swallow Pond and two were seen at Ellington, Morpeth, Kielder, Prestwick Carr, Tynemouth, Warkworth Lane and West Hartford, with singles frequenting at least 20 other localities.

With the start of the breeding season in April birds remained prominent in urban areas, with pairs resident at Bedlington, Cramlington, Gosforth Park and Whitley Bay (Marden Quarry). During May-June there were numerous reports from lowland rural and upland breeding areas and from typical forested habitats.

Breeding data was received from three study areas. In the Border Forest, 21 occupied sites were identified, with 16 nests found, producing at least 24 young. A new study area in Slaley Forest held three pairs fledging at least six young and in the Otterburn Training Area-South Cheviots there were two occupied sites with outcomes unknown (NRG).

During July- August, post-breeding dispersal led to an increase in coastal sightings, including birds at Bamburgh, Cresswell, the Farne Islands, Holy Island and St Mary's Island, some perhaps from fairly local breeding sites. Coastal sightings increased during September-October, when at least three were on Holy Island and two were around Cresswell Pond. Immigration was suggested by an immature on the Farne Islands on 30th October.

They also remained typically widespread inland, one pair regularly hunting a Walbottle garden, taking two Collared Doves and a Blue Tit during September. Singles were reported from 22 widespread localities during this period.

The pattern remained the same during the final quarter with, for example, in October reports of one to two from 34 localities. In November, three were at Ellington and three remained on Holy Island hunting incoming Starlings, thrushes and other small migrants. Reports continued to be widespread during December with pairs at Belford Moor and Morpeth (Howburn Woods) and singles at 17 other localities.

## **Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*

STATUS: Well-represented resident and a passage visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

Large local concentrations were a feature throughout the year, demonstrating once again just how common this formerly rare species has become. During the first quarter there were peaks of 15 at Grindon Lough, 12 over Kielder Forest, ten at Derwent Reservoir and Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), nine around Bardon Mill and parties of eight at Alnwick (Hulne Park) and Rothbury. Gatherings of between four and seven were also found at Alnwick Moor, Big Waters, Bywell, Harwood Forest, Melkridge, Newcastle Airport and West Hartford, with one to three recorded at numerous other widespread localities.

Sightings decreased as pairs settled to breed during April-May, when the largest counts involved six in the Breamish Valley and at Prestwick Carr and Wark (North Tyne) and five at Grindon Lough. Breeding has become so widespread it is now difficult to keep track of local populations. However, data was submitted for three areas by the Northumbria Ringing Group. In the Border Forest, there were 75 occupied sites, 61 nests were found of which 42 pairs fledged 60 young. There were also 51 occupied sites in the Otterburn Training Area-South Cheviots study area and 36 occupied sites in the North Cheviots.

The peak count during June and July was seven along the Beamish Valley. Sightings increased in August with family parties becoming a feature. Seven were at Humshaugh, six at Allen Banks, five at Alnwick and Grindon and four at Arcot Pond and Prestwick Carr. Post-breeding gatherings peaked during September, when 21, the year's largest concentration was in the Kirkhaugh-Towbanks area (MN) and four to six were recorded in six other areas.

During the final quarter birds were again widespread across both upland and lowland foraging and hunting areas. Peak counts involved ten at West Chevington, nine in the Quarry House Moor (Berwick) area, eight soaring together over Corbridge, six at Grindon Lough, Felton (Rosebrough) and Humshaugh and sightings of five at Alnwick Moor, Melkridge and the Harthope Valley. They remained similarly widespread at the end of the year with one to two recorded from more than 25 localities during December.

## **Rough-legged Buzzard** *Buteo lagopus*

STATUS: Rare winter visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2013

A small passage of Rough-legged Buzzards through Scotland and NE England resulted in an unusual late spring record, with an immature bird found in the Ingram Valley on 26th May (ASJ).

There were late autumn sightings with an immature at Widdrington Moor Lake from 22nd-24th October (JS/DE/ADMc *et al.*) and at least two in the Harthope Valley from 8th November to 8th December (ADMc/IF *et al.*).

## **Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*

STATUS CHANGE: Uncommon summer and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Rare. / FIRST BRED: 2009 / LAST BRED: 2014

The first very early arrivals circled Bakethin Reservoir on 25th February and another was at East Chevington the following day (JSB/EC/DLo). There were no further sightings until early April, when two were on one of the nesting platforms at Kielder on 4th, quickly followed by singles at Derwent Reservoir and Melkridge on 6th. A single, perhaps the same bird, was again seen at Derwent Reservoir on 9th and a migrant was over Steel Rigg on 20th.

Movement continued in May, with a single at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 2nd and at Derwent Reservoir on several dates. Two were at Derwent from 10th June with probably the same birds being seen flying towards Slaley Forest on 26th. At least one then remained through until late August.

At our only breeding site, Kielder Water, three pairs were successful, fledging a total of eight young, the best outcome since colonisation.

Other records during June-July probably also involved summering individuals, with sightings from Castron, Catcleugh, Colt Crag and Whittle Dene reservoirs, Crag Lough, Lindisfarne NNR and Melkridge. Return passage was evident during August with singles at Cresswell Pond on 1st and Fontburn Reservoir on 21st. One at Lindisfarne from 31st-7th September used poles along the favoured Pilgrims Way; on one occasion taking such a large fish it had great difficulty rising to carry it to its perch. Other passage birds during September visited Warkworth Lane on 7th, Byrness on 13th and Branton GP on 19th.

One moved W over the Farne Islands on 17th October. The final very late record was of a single passing S over St Mary's Island and Tynemouth on 16th November.

## **Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus*

STATUS: Uncommon resident, passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Rare, although undoubtedly overlooked.

Typical favoured reedbed areas provided refuge and feeding for wintering birds during January-February with early peaks of three at Gosforth Park NR, Holy Island Lough and Prestwick Carr. One to two were in at least ten other areas, including a bird trying to kill at Dunnock at Hauxley NR. Numbers increased in March when three pairs were at Gosforth Park, at least four individuals at Prestwick Carr and three at Cresswell and Swallow ponds. One to two frequented additional localities including Arcot Pond, East Chevington, St Mary's Wetland, Warkworth Lane and West Hartford.

The only suggestion of spring emigration was a single on Inner Farne on 1st April. Between April and September birds continued to be seen and more frequently heard in at least 12 widespread suitable breeding localities but, as usual because of their secretive nature, evidence of success was scant. The only firm data was from Gosforth Park, where six birds in June included juveniles of varying ages, indicating different broods. By August it was estimated that over 15 were present (NHSN), evidence of a successful season. September peaks included six at Swallow Pond and Low Newton.

During the final quarter immigration was indicated with two on the Farne Islands in October and one in November. They remained prominent at many wetland locations, with up to four at Swallow Pond and three at Arcot Pond, East Chevington, Gosforth Park and Low Newton. One to two were settled in at least 12 other localities, including Brenkley, Castron, Cramlington (Valley Park), Goswick, Holywell Dene and QEII CP.

## **Corncrake** *Crex crex*

STATUS: Rare summer and passage visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2013

BREEDING: Historical / LAST BRED: 1992

A calling bird was located at Beal on 9th-10th July (GM). There have been annual records in recent years, possibly due to the re-introduction scheme in Cambridgeshire, with over-shooting birds appearing further north.

## **Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*

STATUS: Common resident.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

Lowland waters held the main population during the first quarter with peak gatherings of 35 at Swallow Pond, 30 at Druridge Bay CP, 29 at Lynemouth (Lyne Burn), 18 at Howdon Wetland and 16 at North Shields (Chirton Dene). Lesser numbers were at many other widespread localities.

The larger concentrations broke up during April with the start of the breeding season. Movement was shown by one on the Farne Islands in late April-early May. Once again breeding data was very limited with records from only four localities. Five pairs fledged eight broods comprising 25 young at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), 18 young were noted at Howdon, four pairs fledged around 12 young at Holy Island Lough and one pair had four young at Newcastle (Exhibition Park).

Numbers rose during July, August and September when the major post-breeding concentrations included 37 at Arcot Pond, 35 at Big Waters, 26 at Killingworth Lake, 25 at Backworth Pond, 20 at Bothal Pond, 17 at Hauxley NR and 15 at North Shields Royal Quays.

There was little change during the final three months as birds settled in winter quarters. The favoured pond was Arcot with a peak of 47 in October (LJM), the year's highest count, with other typical localities, including Backworth, Druridge Bay CP, Haughton Strother GP, Killingworth Lake and Wallington Hall all holding over 20 birds during the period. Smaller groups frequented at least 30 other widespread localities. The only suggestion of immigration was a juvenile on the Farne Islands during easterly weather on 30th October.



## Coot *Fulica atra*

STATUS: Well-represented to common resident and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

Larger lowland waters in the south east held the largest concentrations during the first quarter. A peak of 107 was on Killingworth Lake, while 55 were at QEII CP, 54 at Big Waters, 47 at Woodhorn Flash and lesser numbers at many other localities. Numbers fell from March with the departure of winter visitors and the start of the breeding season.

As usual, breeding data was sparse. Three pairs at Holy Island Lough had broods, a pair with four young was at Bothal Pond and breeding undoubtedly occurred, but went unrecorded at many other localities.

The largest mid-summer gatherings involved 84 at Killingworth Lake and 80 at Bothal Pond during July, when 34 were at Hauxley NR and 43 at Linton Ponds, while in the west, 21 were on Grindon Lough. Much more unusual was a juvenile which appeared at the Farne Islands on 30th July. Post-breeding concentrations swelled during August-September, when 129 were at QEII CP, 91 at Killingworth, 84 at Swallow Pond, 40 at Arcot Pond and 33 at Big Waters, with numerous smaller parties occupying many other localities.

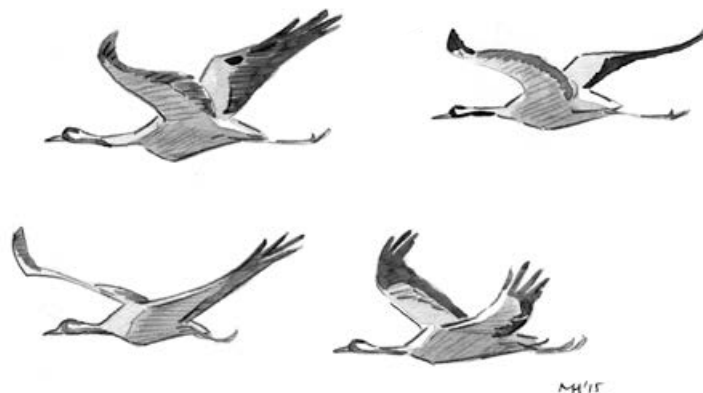
The arrival of wintering birds increased numbers during the final quarter when three-figure counts involved peaks of 190 at QEII CP, 165 at Swallow Pond, 155 at East Chevington, 107 at Big Waters and 102 at Killingworth, while 42 were at Whitley Bay (Marden Quarry). Smaller gatherings were reported from 16 other localities.

## Crane *Grus grus*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2013

The first, an early find at Bothal Pond on 22nd March (TAC) was followed by two flying over the observer's house in Gosforth on 20th April (MJC). One flew over Newbiggin on 3rd May (ADM/JFa *et al.*) and another was noted from a train as it passed marshland near Warenford on 20th May (SY).

Finally a group of four were seen late in the year on 17th December (IH *et al.*) as they moved over Hartley. There were at least five other claimed sightings during the year but no documentation forwarded.



Mike Henry

Avocet - Cresswell Pond - August (Ian Fisher)



## Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

STATUS: Uncommon summer and passage visitor, rare in winter.

BREEDING: Rare / FIRST BRED: 2011 / LAST BRED: 2014

Two early arrivals were at Cresswell Pond from 23rd-25th February. A single visited the same locality in early March, three were present on 11th and two were then seen on several dates later in the month. Two also circled over East Chevington on 29th before moving S.

An influx followed in April, with a peak of nine at a confidential site and five at Cresswell Pond on 11th. Druridge Pools also attracted one to two from 6th-9th, a single circled Bothal Pond on 11th and two were at Warkworth Gut on 19th. Some of these sightings probably involved the same wandering individuals.

Pairs and singles frequented two confidential sites during May, when up to five remained around Cresswell. Numbers at Cresswell increased to ten by 10th June and three pairs settled to breed, with one nest near the water's edge washed out on 18th. Singles visited Castle Island on 15th and Bothal Pond on 29th.

One of the remaining two pairs at Cresswell was successful and hatched three young. By late July 13 adults and seven juveniles were at Cresswell, three young from the local nest and four others from elsewhere. Other evidence of success was provided in mid-month when 21 chicks were found around several south east sites (ADM).

Up to 14 birds continued to frequent Cresswell Pond during the first half of August. Thereafter, numbers dwindled and the last three, an adult and two young, departed after 26th. Four birds were found at Budle Bay on 31st August, three of them, two adults and a juvenile, lingering until 7th September. The final record was a single at Cresswell Pond on 15th September.

**Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*

STATUS: Common passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

Maximum counts from Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay) were as follows;

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
974	705	508	404	153	285	304	600	1497	505	625	946

Away from Lindisfarne, high counts during January included 388 at Berwick North Shore, 205 at Cresswell Pond, 102 at Whitley Bay Links and 84 at Bamburgh (Stag Rocks). In mild conditions at the end of the month a few birds also moved towards inland breeding areas with, for example, four at Bywell, three at Branton GP and singles at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) and Kielder.

These movements increased in February when one high tide roost at Holy Island (St Cuthbert's) fell from 600 to 200 during the month. Other coastal concentrations also dwindled with a big surge in inland sightings, included 29 at Derwent Reservoir by mid-month, 12-20 at Branton, Bywell, Haughton Strother GP, Norham, Pegswood and Whittle Dene Reservoirs and single-figure counts at ten other localities.

Movement inland increased still further in March, with new peaks of 91 at Derwent Reservoir, 55 at Branton, 20-40 at Haughton Strother GP, Melkridge and Whittle Dene Reservoirs and one to six in 40 other potential breeding areas.

During April the highest remaining coastal count was at Lindisfarne, 70 were at Cresswell, 56 at Berwick North Shore, 48 at Cocklawburn and 37 at Tynemouth. By then many were on breeding territories, including seven pairs at Ridley Common, four pairs at Plenmeller (Fell House Farm), three at Carrshield and Coanwood Common and two pairs at Allenheads (Paxhill), the Alwin Valley, Hedgeley GP and Redesmouth.

Success was recorded between May and August with young at riverside localities, reservoirs, gravel pits and on moorland. More unusual was a pair nesting on the roof of the Newcastle Airport terminal building and others with young at Morpeth (Heighley Gate Garden Centre) and Cramlington (Northumberland Business Park). On the Farne Islands, 39 pairs bred (41 in 2013), with good numbers of chicks fledging and low predation by gulls. Numbers on Coquet Island were the same as 2013, with 15 pairs nesting.

In July return passage and post-breeding movements increased coastal numbers. During August-September there were peaks of 600 roosting at one Lindisfarne site (Guile Point), 190 were at North Blyth staithes, 120 at Berwick North Shore, 103 at St Mary's Island, 95 at Tynemouth and 86 at Hauxley.

A peak of 165 was at the Farne Islands during October. Elsewhere, numbers fell in some areas during the final quarter, perhaps due to onward movement. In generally good weather conditions, one to two lingered inland with sightings during November and December from Haughton Strother GP and Whittle Dene Reservoir.

**Golden Plover** *Pluvialis apricaria*

STATUS: Abundant autumn passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

Maximum counts from Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay) were as follows;

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1500	2500	1000	35	5	0	200	1100	2000	5000	2500	2003

Away from Lindisfarne NNR, the only other large flocks during January-February were 800 at St Mary's Island, 130 at Swallow Pond and 120 at Ellington and Pegswood Community Park. In the generally mild conditions, many were inland with, for example, 83 at Hollin Green, 60 at Plenmeller Common, 50 at Wideopen and smaller groups at other good feeding localities. During March, by far the largest gathering peaked at 1,200 at Plenmeller Common, where most appeared to be 'Northern race' birds. Other sizable flocks included 700 at Lynemouth wind farm, the St Mary's gathering reduced to 500, a similar number were in the Annitsford-Seghill area and 400 were at Druridge Pools. By late month many were back on breeding territories, particularly in the North Pennines, with displaying pairs at Acton Moor, Allenheads and Coanwood Common. Display was also noted on the Simonsides.

Reduced numbers of 'Northern' birds lingered at Plenmeller with 500 remaining in early April. Other major groups during April included 320 at Carterway Heads, 260 near Allenheads, 200 at Nedderton and Prestwick Carr and 75 at Backworth. Meanwhile, more breeding areas were occupied at Carrshield, Hexhamshire Common and Redesdale. During May two males displayed near the summit of Cheviot.

A few non-breeders remained on the coast in June, including 35 at St Mary's Island. The first signs of post-breeding dispersal occurred during July, with 200 at both Holy Island and St Mary's. By August, 1,100 returning 'Northern' birds were on Holy Island, 600 birds were at St Mary's, 360 at Boulmer and 200 at Newbiggin (Beacon Point). Inland gatherings included 45 at Thirlwell Common and 31 at Grindon Lough.

During September numbers rose again, with 2,000 on Holy Island, 1,900 at St Mary's, 1,200 on the Farne Islands, 1,000 at Newbiggin, 400 at Annstead Point and up to 300 at Alnmouth, Low Newton and Pegswood. The largest inland concentration was 520 at Grindon Lough.

Autumn numbers peaked in October, with up to 5,000 near Holy Island Causeway, 2,000 at St Mary's and Grindon Lough, 800 at Beadnell, 500 at East Chevington and 300 at Boulmer. Onward passage led to a decline in November, with numbers at Holy Island falling to around 2,500 while 1,100 remained at St Mary's. By far the largest late inland counts involved 1,224 at Grindon and 1,120 at Derwent Reservoir. The year ended with coastal numbers stable, the largest flock being 2,500 over the Newbiggin ash lagoons, 400 at nearby Beacon Point and in the Coquet Estuary, with similar numbers frequently drinking and bathing at Holy Island (Rocket Field Pools).



**Grey Plover**
*Pluvialis squatarola*

STATUS: Common passage and winter visitor, some birds lingering into summer.

Maximum counts from Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay) were as follows;

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
194	217	305	62	45	25	6	30	452	276	282	386

Numbers were again low, even in the favoured stronghold at Lindisfarne NNR, during the first quarter. Elsewhere, peaks included 21 at Newbiggin (Church Point), 20 at Boulmer and 18 at Beadnell, with only single-figure counts from other suitable localities including Amble Braid, Berwick (Little Beach), Cocklawburn, Cresswell (Snab Point), Hauxley and St Mary’s Island.

With departure to Arctic breeding grounds, numbers fell in April, when away from Lindisfarne the only sighting was a single flying N at St Mary’s on 14th. In mid-May, 45 summer-plumaged birds were in Budle Bay and the only other indications of passage were one to two at Cresswell Pond and St. Mary’s between 19th-30th. The only report for June involved 25 in breeding plumage still at Budle Bay on 7th.

Early return passage was noted from 20th July, when one fading out of breeding dress was at Holy Island, with five present the following day. Light return was also evident during August with singles at Amble Braid, Blyth Estuary, Druridge Pools, Seaton Sluice, St Mary’s and Tynemouth. A light increase occurred in September when ten were at Alnmouth by 6th, although the only other sightings away from Lindisfarne were singles at Boulmer and Tynemouth.

Arrivals increased during October to provide peaks away from Lindisfarne NNR of 23 at Boulmer, 14 at Berwick (North Shore) and singles at Blyth Estuary, Cresswell (Snab Point) and St Mary’s. During November, 34 at Alnmouth (Buston Links) was a good local count. November also produced the year’s only inland occurrence, involving a single calling over Capheaton on 16th. Numbers remained low in December when, away from Lindisfarne, the only double-figure count involved 11 at Newbiggin.

**Lapwing**
*Vanellus vanellus*

STATUS: Abundant passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

Maximum counts from Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay) were as follows;

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1000	2000	140	30	30	46	61	426	37	1673	37	333

In mild conditions during January-February, flocks were extremely widespread, both on the coast and inland. Away from Lindisfarne NNR, by far the largest concentration was 1,200 at Derwent Reservoir. Other sizable flocks involved 600 at Annstead, 500 at Bradford Kaims, 400 at St Mary’s Island, 380 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) and 360 at Cresswell Pond. Smaller groups occupied numerous other widespread localities.

By late February many coastal birds started moving inland, producing some large pre-breeding gatherings, particularly in prime areas in the North Pennines. For example, 200 were at Allendale and 100-120 at Coanwood Common and Spartylea, with smaller displaying groups frequenting Plennmeller Common and Grindon Lough as well as many lowland localities.

Breeding followed during April-May. The most productive areas were, as usual, in the North Pennines with 92 pairs, some with young, found at Allendale (Acton Moor) and 31 pairs at Blanchland (Acton Fell) on 3rd May (ASJ). Smaller concentrations were reported in other upland areas. Lowland breeding, which has declined sharply in recent years, included only ten pairs on Holy Island, once a stronghold. However, five pairs were at Hoppen Kiln Flash and four pairs at Wooslington Hall were the first here for more than a decade. Pairs also raised young at well-watched areas including Backworth, Big Waters, Dinnington, Druridge Pools, Hedgeley GP, Lynemouth, Newbiggin GC and Wallsend (Scaffold Hill and Swallow Pond).

Post-breeding flocks quickly formed during late June, with 140 near Slaley, 120 at Grindon Lough and 110 at Coanwood Pond. Numbers rose steadily during July-August, with high counts including 1,100 at Grindon Lough, 600 at Cresswell Pond, 500 at Derwent Reservoir, 375 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs, 260-350 at Bamburgh (Monks House Pool), Bothal Pond, Cocklawburn, Druridge Pools, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) and Hauxley NR and 100-140 at Backworth, Big Waters and East Chevington.

Numbers remained high during September and rose at some sites with, for example, 750 at Grindon Lough, 550 at Haughton Strother GP, 465 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs and 412 at Bothal Pond. Other localities also attracted sizeable flocks, including 440 at Old Hartley and 340 on low tide mud on the River Tyne at Elswick.

Numbers remained similarly high during October, when the peak concentrations included 1,500 at Derwent Reservoir and Grindon Lough and 500-550 at Broomlee Lough and Haughton Strother GP, as well as smaller flocks at numerous other localities both inland and coastal.

During November-December with a lack of real wintery weather, inland numbers remained relatively high with, for example, up to 450 at Grindon Lough until after Christmas and 250 at Derwent and Hallington reservoirs. The usual coastal wintering areas were well-occupied, with over 400 at Cresswell Pond, 300 at Blyth, 250 in the Coquet Estuary and 210 around Holywell Pond.

**Little Ringed Plover**
*Charadrius dubius*

STATUS: Uncommon passage and summer visitor.

BREEDING: Rare, although annual. / FIRST BRED 1968

Arrival began in March when one was at a confidential site on 11th. Another single followed at a roadside flash near Linton on 21st, two were at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 24th and an individual was at Cresswell Pond on 29th.

Sightings increased during April, when one to four frequented seven potential breeding localities. In addition, one to two visited Cresswell Pond from 2nd-6th and, later in the month two were at Bothal Pond and Seghill Flash and a single at Lynemouth Flash.

Between May-July birds were recorded at a dozen localities as far north as Hoppen Kiln Flash and westwards at Derwent Reservoir and Grindon and Greenlee loughs. Success

was indicated by adults and young at two breeding localities. The appearance of family groups at other ponds undoubtedly resulted from undetected breeding elsewhere, with for example, in July two adults and five juveniles at Cresswell Pond, three juveniles visiting Bothal Pond and two at Grindon Lough. Two adults and three juveniles were at Castle Island in early August, when an adult and three juveniles were at Derwent Reservoir.

Passage during late August produced two at Budle Bay on 21st, the first for the observer in 36 years of regular watching, two visited West Hartford from 21st-22nd and singles were at Druridge Pools and Ryal (Mootlaw Quarry) on 30th. Juveniles lingered during September with singles at Bothal and Cresswell ponds. The final record involved a late juvenile at Haughton Strother GP from 4th-8th October.

**Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*

STATUS: Well-represented passage and winter visitor.  
BREEDING: Uncommon.

Maximum counts from Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay) were as follows;

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
6	196	18	99	650	80	54	51	53	200	93	28

Away from Lindisfarne NNR, where numbers were exceptionally low, groups were thinly spread along the coast during the first quarter, and included a peak of 66 at Cocklawburn in January. Elsewhere, 26 were at Berwick, 25 at Tynemouth, ten on Hauxley beach and nine at Cresswell. One to five frequented beaches at nine other localities.

As usual, numbers rose in April-May as more southerly wintering birds passed through en route to Arctic and other northerly breeding areas and local pairs occupied regular nesting localities. The first display was noted at Holy Island (Ouse) on 1st April and later in the month, inland at Caistron. Other inland breeding areas were also occupied, including Derwent Reservoir, the Cheviot valleys, Grindon Lough, Hedgeley GP and Milkhope Lake. Passage north peaked in mid-May with 650 near Holy Island Causeway, 187 in the Blyth Estuary, 96 in the Tweed Estuary, 67 at Warkworth Gut, 50 at Boulmer and ten to 22 at Chevington Burn, Cocklawburn and the Coquet Estuary.

Six pairs bred on the Farne Islands, the same as in 2013. Pairs with young were also found on the coast in June-July at Budle Bay and other Lindisfarne sites and at Chevington and Long Nanny Burn, and also inland, at Cramlington (Northumberlandia), Hedgeley GP, Grindon Lough and West Stobswood.

The usual post-breeding gatherings and the first indications of southerly passage occurred during August, when the largest concentrations involved 116 at Berwick Little Beach, 99 roosting on a factory roof at Blyth South Harbour, 45 at Chevington Burn and 44 at Cocklawburn. Passage declined in September when the peak count involved 52 around St Mary's Island.

During the final quarter, Lindisfarne NNR was again the favoured area. In addition, 66 were at Berwick North Shore, 60 at St Mary's, 57 at Snab Point (Cresswell), 56 at Long Nanny, 51 at Newbiggin and smaller groups at more than a dozen other coastal localities.

**Dotterel** *Charadrius morinellus*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2013

It was an unusually productive year for this scarce migrant, with the first seen during a Breeding Birds Survey at Tosson Hill (Simonsides) on 30th April (MJC). The Cheviot summit is always a likely spot for groups to be found, with five noted here from 6th-11th May (ADMC/RD).

Autumn passage birds are always scarcer, with an immature at Annstead on 26th September (DF) being noteworthy and finally two more were found in the north dunes on Holy Island on 7th October (MJC).

**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*

STATUS: Well-represented passage visitor, usually more numerous in the spring.

Although an early calling bird flew N over Ellington on 5th March, it was late April before strong spring passage commenced. After further singles at Boulmer, Linden Hall and St Mary's Wetland on 21st-22nd and the Farne Islands on 26th, large numbers then arrived to provide a spring peak of 55 at Druridge Pools by 28th (ADMc). Six were also at East Stobswood Pools and four to five at Cresswell Pond, Holy Island and Warkworth Lane.

Onward passage during early May quickly reduced numbers at Druridge Pools from 36 on 6th to 14 on the following day. Elsewhere, 20 were at Cresswell Pond on 2nd and 13 flew N (in one hour) at Seaton Sluice on 6th. Much smaller numbers passed through during the remainder of May and there were inland sightings over Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Prestwick Carr and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Passage tailed off during June with only one to three noted from five localities.

The usual very early return occurred from the second week in July and peaked between 20th-25th. The largest daily movements involved 13 over Cresswell Pond, ten at Holy Island, nine at Newbiggin and St Mary's and smaller numbers at 14 other coastal localities and inland over Cramlington. Birds continued to move through during August, with a party of 24 over the Farne Islands on 7th and day peaks of five to six at Cocklawburn, Druridge Pools and Holy Island and lesser numbers elsewhere.

Numbers declined further during September, when the largest group involved six at Lindisfarne NNR on 8th, with one to three at Alnmouth, Annstead, Berwick Little Beach, Bothal Pond, Cheswick, Cramlington, Cresswell, Hauxley, St Mary's and Tynemouth between 5th-16th. The last individuals were seen in October, at the Farne Islands on 8th and Holy Island (Rocket Field Pools) on 21st.

**Curlew** *Numenius arquata*

STATUS: Common resident, passage and winter visitor.  
BREEDING: Common.

Maximum counts from Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay) were as follows;

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
479	1400	961	440	241	297	931	949	600	1184	578	1088

Although Lindisfarne NNR held the greatest early numbers, there were also other sizeable coastal wintering concentrations with January-February peaks of 170 at Hauxley NR, 150



at Whitley Bay links and St Mary’s Island, 105 at Cresswell Pond and smaller groups in at least 14 other localities. Inland groups involved 30-40 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Howdon, Prestwick Carr and West Ord and smaller parties in several other lowland localities.

Although coastal numbers remained high, there was a steady movement inland from early March, with big pre-breeding gatherings of 90 around Spartylea, 65 at Coanwood Common and 60 at Plenmeller Common. Smaller groups were at other upland localities and passage westward occurred at Derwent Reservoir.

Many were settled and displaying on breeding territories during April, with counts from prime North Pennine localities, including 11 pairs on Acton Moor, ten displaying at Grindon Lough and smaller groupings elsewhere. Coastal movements continued and emigration was noted from Holy Island on 21st when five parties of eight to 30 birds climbed high, called excitedly, and departed over the eastern horizon. Breeding activity continued in many moorland areas during May, when 24 at Acton Common included 13 displaying males. Lowland breeding was indicated by two displaying males at Prestwick Carr.

As usual, small numbers of non-breeders remained on the coast in May, as indicated in the Lindisfarne NNR table, and 22 frequented Widdrington. The first early post-breeding gatherings formed in June, with 65 in Budle Bay and at Druridge Pools and 63 at Brenkley. The build-up gathered pace in July-August with larger flocks including 200 at Hauxley NR, 100 at Whitley Bay (Briar Dene Farm), 98 in the Tweed Estuary, 90 at Amble Braid and 80 roosting at Snab Point (Cresswell). By September, peaks involved 175 at Alnmouth, 160 at Long Nanny Burn, 120 at the Blyth Estuary and 20-50 at Berwick North Shore, Cresswell Pond and St Mary’s Island.

During the final quarter, away from Lindisfarne, other regular wintering areas were occupied. Among higher counts were 484 on the Farne Islands, 170 on winter cereals at Boulmer, 150 in the Coquet Estuary and Warkworth, 130 at Old Hartley, 104 in the Tweed Estuary with groups of under 100 regularly in at least 20 other, mainly coastal, localities. Small numbers remained inland at Grindon, Newburn and Prestwick Carr.

**Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa*

STATUS: Uncommon passage visitor, rare in winter.

Coastal areas held small parties during the first quarter, with ten at Druridge Pools, eight in the Blyth Estuary, seven regularly on Holy Island (Rocket Field Pools) and three at Hoppen Kiln Flash, Cresswell Pond and Hauxley NR.

Light spring passage commenced in April and led to a small rise in numbers with peaks of nine at Cresswell Pond and Druridge Pools, five flew N at St Mary’s Island, two to three visited Bothal and Swallow ponds and West Hartford and singles were seen at Doddington, East Chevington and Hoppen Kiln Flash. Passage increased sharply during May to provide much larger gatherings which included 74 in the Blyth Estuary, 47 at Cresswell, 18 at Holywell Pond, 16 at St Mary’s Wetland, 14 at Seghill Flash, three at Stobswood Pools and singles at East Chevington, Prestwick Carr and Bothal Pond.

June-July was notable for large numbers, many in breeding plumage, which remained instead of moving on to northern or continental nesting areas. The Cresswell flock peaked at 59 on 18th June (ADMc) with 43 still present into July. Good counts at Druridge Pools may well have involved these birds. Elsewhere in July, 43 visited Hoppen Kiln Flash after heavy rain, 35 passed the Farne Islands, 33 visited Budle Bay, 22 were at Low Newton Scrape and smaller numbers occurred at ten other localities. Numbers remained high in

August, with peak counts including 32 at Castle Island and 23 in the Blyth Estuary.

As a result of the large summering numbers, it was difficult to know if September and October sightings involved autumn passage or merely dispersing flocks. During this period there were peaks of 18 on Holy Island, 16 at Low Newton, 13 in Budle Bay, 12 at East Chevington and ten at Warkworth Lane with lesser numbers elsewhere.

During November a good spread of sightings included nine at East Chevington, eight at Woodhorn Flashes, seven at Cresswell Pond and Holy Island and one to four at Druridge Pools and Holywell Pond. Most had departed by December when the only remaining group was five at the regular Holy Island wintering site.

**Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica*

STATUS: Common passage and winter visitor. Lindisfarne NNR supports a significant non-breeding summer population.

Maximum counts from Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay) were as follows;

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1053	1179	414	385	400	43	86	550	2170	700	1545	1024

Typically, the favoured area, Lindisfarne NNR, held the bulk of the population, although numbers were well below normal, possibly an indication of fewer birds now wintering in Britain. Small groups occurred elsewhere during the first quarter, the only double-figure counts involving 60 at Boulmer, 36 at Berwick Little Beach, 20 in the Blyth Estuary, 17 at Hauxley NR and ten at Hauxley and Low Newton Scrape.

Passage north occurred during April-May when, away from Lindisfarne, the largest group involved 20 at Boulmer. One to five also visited Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools (one in full breeding plumage on 1st May) and Low Newton.

During June-July the regular non-breeding flock remained at Lindisfarne, as shown in the table. By July early return movements produced nine S past St Mary’s Island and five N at Seaton Sluice, with only singles noted from four other localities.

Much stronger return movements occurred during August, when on 15th the regular high-tide roost at Holy Island (St Cuthbert’s) held 550 birds, including 60 newly-arrived in full breeding red. Numbers continued to increase at Lindisfarne during September but elsewhere only seven were seen at Beadnell, three at Cocklawburn, two at Blyth and St Mary’s and one at Hauxley, further demonstrating their uncommon status away from the favoured area.

During the final quarter there were no double-figure counts away from Lindisfarne. Singles and small groups frequented Cresswell beach, Berwick North Shore, Blyth Estuary, Boulmer, Cocklawburn, Hauxley, Newbiggin (Beacon Point) and St Mary’s Island.

**Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*

STATUS: Common passage and winter visitor, smaller numbers remaining in summer.

Two favoured feeding areas attracted high concentrations during the first quarter. Peaks of 94 at Whitley Bay Links in January and 58 at Berwick North Shore in February were by far the highest totals. Groups of 15-30 occurred at Bamburgh (Stag Rocks), Cresswell Pond, Cocklawburn, Low Newton, Newbiggin, North Shields, Tynemouth and lesser numbers at a dozen other localities.

Northward passage produced 100 at Boulmer on 28th April, the year's highest count, and 37 were at Cresswell Pond and 35 at Newbiggin. Numbers reduced in May, when 30 at Stag Rocks was the highest count. Summering non-breeders were probably involved during June with 17 at Cresswell Pond.

Return passage began during late July, with parties of 33 at North Blyth, 29 at Boulmer and 20 at St Mary's Island. Numbers rose again in August with 73 at North Blyth staithes and 53 at St Mary's. Onward passage meant that numbers in September were modest, with peaks of 205 at the Farne Islands, 42 at Stag Rocks, 39 at Tynemouth and 31 at Hauxley, while at Blyth staithes numbers fell to 37.

During the final quarter birds were once again settled in favoured winter areas, although numbers were typically modest. Maximum counts involved 64 at Berwick North Shore, 54 at Berwick Little Beach, 41 at Boulmer, 40 at Stag Rocks, 22 at St Mary's and 20 at Boulmer. Smaller groups frequented nine other localities.

**Knot** *Calidris canutus*

STATUS: Well-represented passage and common winter visitor.

Maximum counts from Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay) were as follows;

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1660	1390	373	350	3	0	8	70	1552	1539	26	870

Once again during the first quarter most were concentrated at Lindisfarne NNR. Elsewhere, very few occurred with just 28 at Newbiggin, 16 in the Tweed Estuary and one to eight at six other coastal localities.

During April, the only records were from Lindisfarne with 250 roosting on the Black Law and 100 at St Cuthbert's Island. Three at the latter high-tide roost was the only May record and the species was absent during June.

The usual early return passage commenced from 24th July, when 17 were at Stag Rocks; 19 followed at the Farne Islands on 27th, when 26 flew S at Snab Point (Cresswell), ten were at Cresswell, eight in Budle Bay and six at Hauxley. Very light passage continued in August, when away from Lindisfarne there were counts of fewer than ten at ten localities, including a single a short distance inland at Charlton Mires Flash. Modest numbers continued to occur during September, with 11 at St Mary's Island being the only double-figure count away from Lindisfarne.

Apart from Lindisfarne numbers remained very low during the final quarter, with gatherings of 30 at Warkworth Gut, 15 at Newbiggin, ten at Boulmer, eight at Cresswell and a scattering of smaller groups and singles at Druridge Pools, St Mary's Island and Tynemouth. Another inland single provided a scarce record at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 26th November.

**Ruff** *Calidris pugnax*

STATUS: Well-represented passage visitor, mainly in the autumn, uncommon in winter.

BREEDING: Historical. / LAST BRED: 1850s

Light spring passage began on 5th April with a single at Druridge Pools, rising to four on 8th. Two were at Cresswell Pond the following day. Three arrived at Low Newton Scrape

on 15th, followed by singles later in the month at Beadnell Flash, East Chevington and Warkworth Lane. Very light arrival continued in May with further singles at Beadnell, Creswell Pond, Hoppen Kiln and Seghill flashes. There were no further sightings until typically light return passage commenced in July, with singles on Holy Island on 6th and Hoppen Kiln on 13th. By the end of the month three had visited Druridge Pools and Low Newton Scrape and another single was at Lynemouth Flash.

Much more impressive arrival occurred during August, with peaks of 60 at Low Newton on 31st, 21 at Charlton Mires Flash on 25th, 17 at Druridge Pools on 31st, 12 at Cresswell Pond from 9th-11th and 11 at Bothal Pond on 24th. Smaller groups visited the Farne Islands and 11 other coastal localities, while inland four were at Grindon Lough and West Hartford, two at Gosforth Park NR and one at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh).

Further arrivals increased numbers during September to provide a new peak of 104 at Low Newton on 6th (TF/JFa). New localities also attracted parties, including 16 at Castle Island, 12 at Hauxley NR and eight at Linton Pond. Inland up to seven were at Grindon Lough on several dates. Groups of two to three visited Ashington, Boulmer, Budle Bay, Holy Island and Tynemouth. Onward passage led to a sharp decline in October when only one to four were noted at Cresswell Pond, Grindon Lough, Low Newton, Monks' House Pool and the Tweed Estuary. Single were still present in November at Cresswell Pond on 4th and at Grindon Lough until 9th. The only evidence of wintering was an individual at Boulmer on 8th December.

**Broad-billed Sandpiper** *Calidris falcinellus*

STATUS: Extremely rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 4 / FIRST: 1961 / LAST: 1999

An early morning scan of waders near Holy Island causeway on 30th May revealed this excellent county rarity (GB). It was well documented and photographed before it disappeared on the receding tide, not to be seen again. This sighting was accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee. Exceptionally rare in the county with only four previous records with singles at Holy Island and East Chevington in 1999, one at Druridge Pools 1989 and the first county record at Big Waters in 1961.

**Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*

STATUS: Uncommon to well-represented passage visitor, usually more numerous in the autumn.

Light spring movement in May provided three records with singles at Boulmer on 19th, Cresswell Pond on 27th and Holy Island Causeway on 29th.

No more were seen until return passage commenced during July, when an adult was at Lynemouth Flash on 22nd with perhaps the same individual at Cresswell Pond from 23rd-30th. Arrival increased slightly during August with four adults on Hauxley beach on 9th, three at Beal Point on 10th, singles at Budle Bay, Long Nanny, St Mary's Island and Grindon Lough on 26th and three juveniles at Low Newton on 31st.

Numbers peaked during September, with up to nine at Low Newton (TF/JFa) and seven in Budle Bay, including one which had been ringed and tagged in southern Norway in late August (CGK/GPK), giving an indication of the route taken by some of our autumn individuals. Three were also at Cresswell Pond, two at Fenham Flats and St Mary's Island and singles on the Farne Islands, Holy Island and at Kitty Brewster. The final sightings were in October when singles were at Seahouses on 4th and Budle Bay on 5th.

Stilt Sandpiper Calidris himantopus

STATUS: Extremely rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 1 / FIRST: 2012

One of the year’s highlights was an adult found at Cresswell Pond on 29th-30th July (SR *et al.*). It was re-located at Druridge Pools from 3rd- 5th August before returning to Cresswell Pond where it remained until 14thAugust. Its extended stay rendered it very popular and follows on from the first county record at Low Newton in 2012. The record was accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee.

Temminck’s Stint Calidris temminckii

STATUS: Rare visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2013

There were only two individuals this year, with one at Hoppen Kiln Flash from 17th-22nd May (MSH/GPK *et al.*) and another at Derwent Reservoir from 26th June to 5th July (IFO *et al.*).

Sanderling Calidris alba

STATUS: Well-represented passage and winter visitor, smaller numbers remaining in summer.

Maximum counts from Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay) were as follows;

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
76	114	100	50	120	15	42	30	530	159	300	253

As usual during the first quarter flocks were spread right along the coast using open beach feeding areas. Away from Lindisfarne NNR, peak counts involved up to 100 at Beadnell and St Mary’s Island and 30-50 at Berwick Little Beach, Boulmer, Cocklawburn, Druridge Bay, North Shields, Spittal (Berwick) and Low Hauxley with smaller parties in a dozen other localities.

Numbers remained steady during April before reached a spring peak in May, with passage flocks moving up the coast. These movements produced two substantial counts, 150 at Bamburgh and 90 at Beadnell Bay. Numbers in Budle Bay peaked at 85 on 19th May before dropping to 40 by the end of the month. Smaller groups passed through ten other coastal localities. Four at Long Nanny Burn and 15 in Budle Bay in the first half of June ended northerly passage.

By late July return passage produced 75 at St Mary’s Island, 32 were at Chevington Burn, 21 at Boulmer, 16 at Hauxley and ten at Long Nanny Burn. Numbers at St Mary’s rose to 200 during August, when 90 were at Hauxley, 60 at Chevington Burn mouth and 30 at Newbiggin. Numbers remained high during September before onward passage led to a reduction in October.

During the final quarter, Lindisfarne NNR again held the highest population. Elsewhere, high counts of flocks settled for winter included 115 at Boulmer, 100 at Hauxley, 90 around St Mary’s, 56 at Berwick North Shore and 39 at Newbiggin.

Dunlin Calidris alpina

STATUS: Abundant passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

Maximum counts from Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay) were as follows;

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
913	1037	164	532	1200	79	150	421	557	2614	1813	1456

The dramatic reduction in wintering numbers was again demonstrated. While Lindisfarne NNR remained the stronghold, its figures were a fraction of those in the past, and the same was true elsewhere. Away from Lindisfarne, the only three-figure counts during the first quarter involved 384 at the Blyth Estuary, 310 at Boulmer, 205 at Newbiggin, 140 at Cresswell Pond and 120 at St Mary’s Island.

Departure northward reduced numbers sharply by April, when away from Lindisfarne, the only groups were 25 at Cresswell Pond and ten at Boulmer. A flock of 500 moving N at Lindisfarne on 19th were in breeding plumage. Inland movement, either of migrants or birds moving to local breeding localities, produced 19 at Coanwood Common and four at Grindon Lough.

Passage of birds which had wintered further south was evident during May when, away from Lindisfarne, by far the highest count was 100 at Boulmer and 22 were at the Farne Islands. The only evidence of potential breeding was a male singing in May at Grindon Lough, where numbers rose to 11 in June, and three at Derwent Reservoir which may also have been local breeding birds.

Early return movement in July was best demonstrated at Cresswell Pond, where seven on 6th increased to 230 on 23rd, before onward movement reduced numbers to 70 by 27th; a peak of 45 was at the Farne Islands on 31st. Other much smaller groups fed at Castle Island, Druridge Pools, Low Newton and North Blyth. Inland, 13 at Grindon Lough included three juveniles.

Passage increased during August, when there were several three-figure counts around the edges of Lindisfarne. Cresswell Pond attracted 110 and 20-40 frequented Amble Braid, Berwick, Blyth Harbour, Castle Island and Chevington Burn mouth. Onward passage then reduced numbers during September.

During the final quarter the highest numbers were settled at Lindisfarne. Elsewhere, peak counts involved 200 at Newbiggin, 150 at Boulmer, 112 at Tynemouth (Battery Rocks) and 106 at North Blyth staithes. There were double-figures counts from 12 other widespread localities.

Purple Sandpiper Calidris maritima

STATUS: Well-represented passage and winter visitor, a few remaining in summer.

Once again by far the most important localities were the Farne Islands and the prime mainland wintering area at Bamburgh (Stag Rocks). Stag Rocks held an early peak of 60 in February, while similar attractive feeding areas also attracted smaller groups with, for example, 43 at Newbiggin, 42 at Berwick North Shore, 30 at Seahouses and smaller groups at a dozen other localities.





Curlew Sandpiper - St Mary's Island - September (Jack Bucknall)



Little Stint - Cresswell Pond - August (Jonathan Farooqi)



Stilt Sandpiper - Druridge Pools - August (Ian Fisher)



White-rumped Sandpiper - Cresswell Pond - July (Tim Dean)

Return movement towards Arctic breeding grounds produced an April peak of 158 at the Farne Islands, while 90 were at Holy Island in May. Numbers reduced at mainland sites with counts of 21 at Newbiggin and Tynemouth and 11 at Seaton Sluice. During May, 20 at Stag Rocks dwindled to seven by 18th, the final group of spring. There were no June or July sightings of summering individuals.

Very light return passage began in mid-August, involving only two to four birds at Newbiggin, Seaton Sluice, Tynemouth and Whitley Bay. Similar very light movements involving only six individuals continued in September.

Numbers increased in October, when 213 were at the Farne Islands, 39 were back at Stag Rocks, 15 at Tynemouth, 12 at Boulmer and one to six at Berwick, Boulmer, Craster, Newbiggin and St Mary's Island. During November-December peaks involved 312 at the Farne Islands and 120 at Stag Rocks. Numbers elsewhere were very low, with groups of 13 at St Mary's, 12 at Newbiggin and 11 at Tynemouth being the only double-figure counts.

### **Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*

STATUS: Uncommon passage visitor, usually more numerous in the autumn.

Typical very light spring passage occurred in April, with four records involving six birds. Two were at Boulmer on 19th, followed by one in Budle Bay on 27th and an individual in breeding plumage at Holy Island Causeway on 29th; two followed at the causeway on May 14th.

Return passage commenced on 13th July, when one arrived at Hoppen Kiln Flash following heavy rain and remained until 15th. Another was at Grindon Lough on 28th. There were no further reports until 29th August when a juvenile at Cresswell Pond and two there the following day, signalled a light influx. Numbers increased in September, with a confiding juvenile visiting the Farne Islands from 3rd-9th, while on 5th-6th two were at St Mary's Island, rising to four on 9th. Two remained at Cresswell throughout the month being joined by a third on 17th and a fourth two days later. At Low Newton, a single was present on 2nd and two from 4th-9th. Singles also occurred at Castle Island on 2nd, Kitty Brewster on 7th and Boulmer on 14th, while Grindon Lough provided the year's second inland record on 25th.

During October, two remained at Cresswell from 4th-11th. The final record was a single at Low Newton on 17th.

### **White-rumped Sandpiper** *Calidris fuscicollis*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2013

A very obliging adult was found at Cresswell Pond on 26th July (ADMc *et al.*). It preferred the northern edge near the causeway and was well photographed during its stay. Increasingly regular in the county, this is the thirteenth sighting since 2000, with only six previously.

### **Pectoral Sandpiper** *Calidris melanotos*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2013

It was an average year with five sightings, thankfully all documented. The first individual was another spring bird with one at Hoppen Kiln Flash from 7th-10th May (GPK *et al.*).

The first autumn individual was an adult at Charlton Mires from 27th-30th August (AH *et al.*) a just reward for diligent local patch watching. The next was an unprecedented county event with three juveniles found together at Grindon Lough. The first bird there was found on 7th September (PRM *et al.*), with three present from 13th-16th and two remaining until 25th. Further autumn individuals were noted, with a juvenile briefly at Cresswell Pond on 17th September (ADMc) and one flying E at The Snook (Holy Island) on 19th September (MJC/ ADM).

### **Grey Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius*

STATUS: Rare passage and winter visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2013

The two individuals located in the last days of 2013 were seen together at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 3rd January, with one remaining in the area to 17th February (CDB *et al.*). This long staying bird performed admirably and was extensively photographed at close range. Another early winter bird was found at Buston Links on 15th February (TAC).

The next individual was an unusual inland bird at Big Waters on 15th October (JCD/ISD *et al.*) which unfortunately succumbed to a Sparrowhawk a few hours after being found. On the same day another was located on Inner Farne. In November there was a flurry of observations, with one at Boulmer on 6th-7th (TAC), a first-winter at Tynemouth on 14th (MK), one moving N and alighting on the sea at Newbiggin on 17th (ADMc), one by the causeway at St Mary's Island on 24th (AH) and finally a first-winter moving S close inshore at Newbiggin on 29th (ADMc).



Grey Phalarope - Stag Rocks - February (Chris Barlow)



## **Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*

STATUS: Well-represented summer visitor and passage migrant, rare in winter.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

The first spring arrivals were found on 11th April, when two were at Rothbury and one at Hedgeley GP. Other singles quickly followed, at Twizell on 13th and Derwent Reservoir on 15th. Arrival then increased with birds rapidly occupying favoured upland stream and riverside breeding areas. Four were at Eals (South Tyne) by 18th, five at Ingram by 19th, four in Upper Coquetdale on 26th and one to two were found in a further 12 localities.

Other breeding areas were occupied during May, with counts of nine at Eals and on the Upper Coquet, eight at Ingram and Hepple, six at Derwent Reservoir and one to four at 24 other, mainly riverside localities. Elsewhere during the month, two to four migrants visited Budle Bay and Bothal and Cresswell ponds. Further increases occurred in June, when eight pairs were in Upper Coquetdale, and 12 birds, mainly in pairs, were on the River Breamish. Eight were at Derwent Reservoir, where a nest with three newly-hatched young and one egg was found on a public footpath on 20th, the first indication of successful breeding. Two to four were at seven other regular breeding localities, while further single migrants were at Budle Bay, Hauxley NR and Holy Island. Pairs remained around breeding sites during July, and by the end of the month the usual early movement back to the coast was evident, when six gathered at Castle Island, four at Budle Bay and Cresswell Pond and three at East Chevington, with one to two at a further 16 localities.

Movement continued during August, providing peaks of 18 on the Farne Islands on 6th, nine in Budle Bay, five at Cresswell Pond, four at Hauxley and lesser numbers at many other feeding areas on or near the coast. Others remained inland with four at Derwent and Whittle Dene reservoirs, three at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) and two at Big Waters.

Onward passage led to a decrease in September, when three were at Castle Island and Druridge Pools, two at Budle Bay, the Farne Islands and Whittle Dene Reservoirs and singles passing through Bamburgh, Hauxley and Tynemouth; one at Castron on 6th was the last inland sighting. The final record involved a juvenile at Boulmer on 4th October.

## **Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*

STATUS: Uncommon passage visitor, rare, although increasing in winter.

Favoured wintering areas were occupied during January-February, with two along the channels at Whittle Dene Reservoirs throughout and singles at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) and on the River Breamish during January and at Branton and Hedgeley GPs in February.

Light arrival was evident during March, when three were at Whittle Dene and singles were on the River Coquet between Rothbury and Thropton on 15th and at Lynemouth wind farm on 20th; one also remained at Hedgeley GP. Spring passage continued in April when other singles were at the Farne Islands, Haughton Strother GP and at Seghill and Woodhorn flashes. The only May record was of two at Hoppen Kiln Flash on 6th.

Return passage began in June, when three were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 24th and singles at Druridge Pools two days later and at Castle Island on 30th. During late July, eight were at Whittle Dene on 26th, four fed at Hoppen Kiln, two were noted at Backworth, Castle Island, Doddington, Gosforth Park NR and Haughton Strother GP and singles visited seven other waterside localities as far west as Grindon Lough. Passage

peaked in August, when ten were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 12th (SR), six at Charlton Mires Flash, up to five at Gosforth Park NR and one to two at 11 other localities, including the Farne Islands, where there were two on 6th, followed by singles on ten further dates. In September, five were at Castle Island on 2nd, while three remained at Whittle Dene and three were at Castron, with one to two at a further five localities.

Most had departed by October, when records involved only singles at Gosforth Park NR, Linton Pond, Longhirst Flash and Whittle Dene. During November-December, three were settled for winter at Whittle Dene and singles occupied other good feeding areas at Arcot Pond, Castron, Doddington, Haughton Strother GP and Morpeth (Fulbeck).

## **Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus*

STATUS: Uncommon passage visitor, more frequent in the autumn and rare in winter.

After a first quarter without wintering records, very light spring passage in April produced singles at Warkworth Gut on 2nd, Cresswell Pond on 9th and 23rd-24th and at Alnmouth on 28th. There was then a gap until 1st June when a single in winter plumage was on Holy Island (Rocket Field Pools).

They were then absent until early August when the first indication of return passage produced a juvenile at Budle Bay on 9th. It was followed by other singles later in the month, one moving between Cresswell and Druridge Pools, and others at Amble Braid, Bothal Pond and Warkworth Gut. During September, three were at Castle Island, two on Holy Island and on Fenham Flats and one to two frequented Budle Bay all month. Singles occurred on the Farne Islands on two dates.

During early October two, an adult and a juvenile, were in Budle Bay, one remaining until 11th. One was on Holy Island from 23rd-27th and singles appeared at Cresswell and Druridge Pools on 30th-31st. The final record involved a single at East Chevington from 2nd-4th November.

## **Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*

STATUS: Well-represented passage visitor, more numerous in the autumn, rare in winter.

There were no records during the first winter period. Typically light spring passage commenced from 9th April, when one arrived at Cresswell Pond. It was followed by singles at Holy Island on 14th, West Ord on 18th and East Chevington on 24th, when another was at Cresswell. By 28th, further singles were at Branton GP, Druridge Pools, the Farne Islands and Warkworth Lane. Another was at Lindisfarne NNR on 29th. Very light movement continued in May and involved singles at Cresswell Pond from 22nd-26th and at Prestwick Carr on 25th. The final spring records were in the first week of June with singles at Seghill Flash and West Stobswood Pool.

Return passage began in July, with singles between 3rd-9th at Cresswell Pond, Hauxley NR, Hoppen Kiln Flash and Swallow Pond. Another single was well inland at Grindon Lough from 10th-12th. Later in the month, two were at Cresswell and further localities which attracted singles included Castle Island, Gosforth Park NR, Holy Island, Lynemouth Flash and West Hartford. Passage rose steadily during August, when peaks at Lindisfarne NNR involved 11 in the Beal Point and South Low area (SJH) and six in Budle Bay. Five were at Druridge Pools and Gosforth Park, three at West Hartford, two at Arcot and Cresswell ponds, the Farne Islands, St Mary's Island and the Tweed Estuary and singles at 15 other localities on or near the coast. One at Howdon Wetland was considered rare



for the locality. Further inland, one to two were at Derwent and Whittle Dene reservoirs. Numbers at Budle Bay peaked at nine in early September. Three were at Castle Island and Derwent Reservoir and two at Druridge Bay, Elswick, Long Nanny Burn and the Tweed Estuary, with singles at 13 other coastal localities. Inland singles were at Corbridge and Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh). Coastal sites remained popular in October, with seven lingering at Budle Bay until 5th. Later in the month two were at Beal and singles at Castle Island, Holy Island and the Tweed Estuary. Inland, one to two were present at Derwent until 11th and singles were at Arcot Pond and Charlton Mires Flash. A late single was on the Farne Islands on 16th. Records diminished in November with singles at Budle Bay on 4th and 11th and at Brenkley on 15th.

**Lesser Yellowlegs** *Tringa flavipes*

STATUS: Extremely rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 8 / FIRST: 1977 / LAST: 2008  
There was another spring sighting with a popular find at Beadnell Flash from 8th-10th May (GW *et al.*). Of the previous eight county records half have been found in spring or early summer. The record was accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee. The last county record was at Druridge Pools in May 2008.

**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*

STATUS: Uncommon passage visitor.  
BREEDING: Historical. / LAST BRED: 1853  
Spring passage began on 3rd May when one arrived at Hoppen Kiln Flash, a regular and favoured site for the species. Two were then noted there daily from 6th-10th before rising to a peak of six on 21st (GPK). Elsewhere, singles were at Castron, Druridge Pools and Cresswell Pond. During June, Hoppen Kiln held two on 1st-2nd, the final record of spring. The usual very early return was evident in July, when singles were at Hoppen Kiln on 2nd, 16th and 23rd-24th. Other coastal localities also attracted passage individuals during July with singles at Big Waters, Bothal Pond, Druridge Pools, the Farne Islands and Holywell Pond. Similar light arrivals continued during August, with two at Druridge Pools and Hoppen Kiln and singles at Big Waters, Cresswell and Druridge Pools. The final record was provided by three at Charlton Mires Flash on 25th.

**Redshank** *Tringa totanus*

STATUS: Common passage and winter visitor.  
BREEDING: Well-represented.  
Maximum counts from Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay) were as follows;

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
564	392	264	500	17	11	57	332	975	1235	396	538

Away from Lindisfarne NNR, other big gatherings during the first quarter involved 380 at Cresswell Pond, 350 in the Tweed Estuary, 220 at St Mary’s Island, 203 at Howdon, 138 at Cullercoats and 100 in the Blyth Estuary and two-figure counts for at least a dozen other widely scattered localities.

Movement towards regular upland breeding areas occurred during March, with birds at Derwent Reservoir, Grindon Lough and Melkridge by 9th-10th, after which they became widespread as pairs occupied localities around Allendale, Coanwood Common, Hollin Green and Ridley Common. Other areas including Blanchland, Carrshield, Grindon Lough and Plenmeller held displaying birds in April and May.

As usual, movement inland and the departure of wintering northern flocks led to a decline on the coast, although in early April substantial numbers remained at Lindisfarne NNR, 200 were still in the Tweed Estuary and 98 at Howdon. By May most had departed.

The first indication of breeding success came on 29th May when a pair with young was at Seghill Flash. Other juveniles were seen at Grindon in June, indicating local success, which also occurred over a wide swathe of upland areas.

A return to coastal areas and the arrival of early passage groups was evident by late July, when 243 were at North Blyth, 80 at Amble, 75 at Hauxley NR and smaller groups elsewhere. Numbers rose rapidly in August-September to provide peaks of 547 at North Blyth, 400 at Amble, 350 in regular high-tide roosts at Holy Island (Rocket Field Pools), 225 in the Tweed Estuary, 148 at Tynemouth, 120 at Cresswell Pond and 111 at Elswick, with many smaller counts elsewhere.

Onward movement led to decreases in October, as other flocks settled in for winter in prime feeding and safe roosting areas. During the final quarter these favoured localities attracted the largest groups, with peaks including 250 at Howdon, 213 in the Tweed Estuary, 190 at St Mary’s Island, 106 on the River Tyne at Scotswood and 100 at Cullercoats and in Amble Harbour. Many other localities attracted smaller wintering groups. One to two were still inland, with early November sightings at Grindon Lough and at Big Waters, where the species is now regarded as scarce.

**Jack Snipe** *Lymnocyptes minimus*

STATUS: Uncommon passage and winter visitor.  
Typical boggy feeding areas provided records during the first quarter. In January, lowland singles were at Backworth, Hoppen Kiln Flash and Prestwick Carr and another was found feeding at 380m on Hexhamshire Common. During February, two were at Grindon Lough and further singles were at St Mary’s Wetland and West Hartford. Two were at Howdon in March when singles were found at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) and Woodhorn Flashes. Emigration was shown by a single at the Farne Islands on 31st March. Singles at Howdon on 4th-6th April and another at Hadrian Pond on 12th were the final winter sightings.

Return passage in September produced one, found dead on the Farne Islands on 20th and two arriving from the east at Hauxley on 30th, when another was at Warkworth Gut. A light influx continued during October when two were on the Farne Islands and on Holy Island and singles at Bamburgh, East Chevington, Gosforth Park NR and St Mary’s Island. During the final two months individuals were settled in favoured feeding areas. In November two were at Haughton Strother GP and St Mary’s Wetland and singles were at Goswick and Tughall. During December one was at Arcot Pond and another was recorded on seven dates at Backworth.

## Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

STATUS: Well-represented resident, passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

A hard-weather influx from the continent occurred in the second half of January. This produced five on Holy Island, four of them sheltering in dunes, three arrived from the east at Seaton Sluice, a single flew in at Bamburgh and one was killed by a Peregrine on Inner Farne. Inland, sightings of four at Arcot Hall GC, Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) and Fontburn Reservoir may have been involved in this arrival. Elsewhere, sightings during the first two months involved one to two in 15 typical widespread wintering localities.

During March, one was back in a regular breeding area on the Otterburn Training Area by 7th and other singles were at Cramlington, Ellington and Gosforth Park NR. One on the Farne Islands on 22nd March and a single flushed from the dunes on Holy Island on 31st suggested emigration. Other single migrants followed at the Farnes on 2nd and 3rd April.

During April-May 'roding' display occurred at Grindon Lough and Slaley (Pithouse Fell) and others were in typical breeding habitats at Allendale Common, Derwent Reservoir, Dipton, Gosforth Park, Harthope Valley, Longhorsley Moor and Rothbury. Four were 'roding' in Slaley Forest during June, when breeding habitat was also occupied at Blakehopeburnhaugh. Perhaps due to their secretive nature when with young there were no August reports.

The first indication of coastal movement came on 23rd September, when one flew from under the hide at Cresswell Pond. The situation remained quiet until 28th-30th October when an influx produced 32 at the Farne Islands, ten on Holy Island, two to three at Newbiggin, two from the east at Tynemouth and singles at Bamburgh, Cresswell Pond, Snab Point (Cresswell) and St Mary's Island.

A second arrival followed between 4th-11th November, when seven were on Holy Island and at St Mary's, four at Hauxley and one to two at Newbiggin, Seaton Sluice and Tynemouth. In Newcastle one was picked up near St James' Park and handed in at the Great North Museum: Hancock. It seemed unharmed and was later released in Gosforth Park. Further arrival was suggested on 27th when two were in Whitley Bay Cemetery.

Much lighter arrival continued in December, with singles on Holy Island and at North Shields. Elsewhere, wintering birds were settled in, with five at Longhorsley Moor, two in woodland at Harbottle and singles at Arcot Lane, Fontburn Reservoir, Gosforth Park, Hartside, Howdon, Shaftoe Craggs and Wallsend.

## Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

STATUS: Common resident, passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

Substantial winter concentrations formed in prime feeding areas, with first quarter peaks of 58 at Howdon, 38 at Grindon Lough, 28 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), 23 at Bothal and Druridge Pools, 21 at St Mary's Wetland, 20 at Gosforth Park NR and eight to 15 at Backworth Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Holywell Pond, New Hartley and West Hartford and lesser numbers at many other widespread localities.

By March many were back in North Pennine breeding areas with display at Acton Moor from 5th. A more general return occurred from 11th, after which 'drumming' birds were widespread on moorland around Allendale, Carrshield, Coanwood, Hollin Green, Kielder, Plennmeller, Ridley and Spartylea. During April breeding areas were occupied at Blanchland and Longframlington and small groups lingered around lowland waters, with ten at Arcot and seven to eight at Gosforth Park and Swallow Pond.

By May-June most records involved breeding. Lowland areas involved included Druridge Pools and Prestwick Carr, while other typical upland localities held breeding pairs at Broomlee and Greenlee loughs, Housesteads, Lambley, Shield-on-the-Wall and Sweethope Lough, as well as sites in Upper Coquetdale.

A general return to coastal areas commenced in July, with gatherings of 40 at Druridge Pools, 35 at Cresswell Pond and 30 at Low Newton, while inland 28 were at Derwent Reservoir. Movement increased during August, with new late summer peaks of 81 at Cresswell and 35 at Hoppen Kiln Flash and many smaller groups at other suitable feeding localities. Onward passage resulted in reduced numbers during September, when the highest counts were 24 at Haughton Strother GP, 20 at Stakeford and 16 at Castle Island.

Arrival from the continent of wintering groups was probably involved in October counts of 33 at Monks' House Pool and 30 on Holy Island. During November-December parties were once again settled in prime wintering areas, the highest counts involving 56 at Haughton Strother GP, 30 at Arcot Pond, 27 at St Mary's, 22 at Backworth, 20 at Cresswell Pond and smaller groups at 15 other mainly lowland localities.

## Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola*

STATUS: Extremely rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 2 / FIRST: 1966 / LAST: 1983

Another major surprise in 2014 was the sight of one in flight near Castle Island on 28th July (DD *et al.*). A superb find which remained for only four hours before flying off NW. Interestingly the same observer was also present for the Black-winged Pratincole find in June! This sighting was accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee. There have been only two previous county records, with singles at Holywell Pond in July 1966 and one at Beadnell in May 1983, hence a new county bird for most of the happy birders present.

## Black-winged Pratincole *Glareola nordmanni*

STATUS: Extremely rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 0 / FIRST: 2014

A new county record with one found at Hauxley NR on 12th June and present for an hour before flying off south (DD/HG/AT *et al.*). Almost certainly the same individual was at Saltholme RSPB (Cleveland) where it was found on the following day. It was in County Durham on 5th-6th July before making its way back to Northumberland where it was reported late on 6th July at Holywell Pond, and re-located at the nearby 'obelisk flash' on 7th July (AC *et al.*), where it was observed for two hours before flying off north. Both sightings were accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee.



Phil Allott

## **Pomarine Skua** *Stercorarius pomarinus*

STATUS: Uncommon passage visitor mainly in the autumn, rare in spring.

One flying N at Newbiggin on 23rd July was the first record of the year. In August, two flew N at Seaton Sluice on 15th, and singles, also flying N, were noted at the Farne Islands, Newbiggin and St Mary's Island on 20th, the Farnes on 22nd and Newbiggin on 27th. Passage increased in September, beginning with four N during a pelagic trip off the St Mary's-Blyth area on 14th. A sub-adult was reported S off St Mary's Island on 16th and single adults moved N past Seaton Sluice on 17th and 19th; back at St Mary's Island, two adults flew N on 21st and an adult and two juveniles flew S on 22nd. On the latter date another juvenile moved N at Cullercoats and one was at the Farne Islands, and a single bird was seen off Newbiggin on 25th.

In October, singles were noted off Hauxley, Stag Rocks (Bamburgh), St Mary's and Tynemouth from 3rd-6th and the Farne Islands recorded one to six on four dates from 10th-15th. Numbers increased from mid-month, with 31 N and two S off Seaton Sluice between 13th-17th (most of which were seen on 13th), six were off Tynemouth on 13th, six flew N at Newbiggin and at Snab Point (Cresswell) on 14th, two were off Newbiggin on 17th and eight flew S at St Mary's Island on 21st.

Early November movements included 12 passed the Farnes and St Mary's on 5th. Peak passage occurred on 17th, when 104 juveniles moved N at the Farne Islands, 55 flew N at Seaton Sluice, 36 (again all juveniles) were reported off Newbiggin, 17 at St Mary's Island and four at Tynemouth. Singles were noted at Hadston on 21st, Ross Back Sands on 28th and the Farne Islands on 26th and 29th.

## **Arctic Skua** *Stercorarius parasiticus*

STATUS: Well-represented passage visitor, mainly in the autumn, rare in winter.

The first records were in April, when singles were at Budle Bay on 17th and off Newbiggin on 21st. At the end of May one flew N at Newbiggin on 28th and two moved N at Snab Point (Cresswell) on 29th. Further movement occurred in mid-June, with a total of six seen off Newbiggin between 15th-18th and six off St Mary's Island from 17th-20th. Two were off East Chevington on 22nd and singles at the Farne Islands on 15th, 25th and 26th, with another off St Mary's on 29th.

Passage was described as 'very low' in July, with a total of only eight at Seaton Sluice during the month. Four flew S at Newbiggin on 21st and one to three were noted at Druridge Bay, the Farne Islands, Snab Point, St Mary's Island and Tynemouth. There was little change in August with Seaton Sluice posting a low total of 68 (56 N / 12 S) for the month. Some lengthy sea-watches at St Mary's produced counts of ten on 18th, 19 on 20th, 16 on 26th and 14 on 27th. At Newbiggin, 11 moved N (in 3.5 hours) on 26th, while elsewhere one to eight were reported from a further seven coastal headlands. The September count at Seaton Sluice was again disappointing, with a total of 46 N and 14 S. St Mary's logged 26 from 6th-28th, 11 flew N at the Farne Islands on 17th and 12 N at Annstead Point on 21st. Up to eight were reported from a further eight localities.

A total of 42 flew N and ten S at Seaton Sluice in October, when the 'big' day appeared to be on 13th, with 28 at Seaton Sluice, eight N at St Mary's, seven at Tynemouth, three at Beadnell and two at Holy Island. One at Hauxley on 3rd flew in off the sea before heading inland SW. Nine individuals were reported in November, with the final bird off St Mary's on 17th.

## **Long-tailed Skua** *Stercorarius*

*longicaudus*

STATUS: Uncommon to rare passage visitor, mainly in the autumn.

The first record was an adult moving N at Seaton Sluice on 27th May. Another adult was seen off Newbiggin on 15th June. In August, an adult flew N at Seaton Sluice on 25th, while on 26th another adult flew N at Tynemouth. Another adult was noted off Newbiggin on 21st September, while the final record was an adult N off St Mary's on 4th October.

There were at least a further nine reports of juveniles and sub-adults for which no documentation was forthcoming.



Mike Henry

## **Great Skua** *Stercorarius skua*

STATUS: Well-represented passage visitor, mainly in the autumn, rare in winter.

The first sighting was off Newbiggin on 21st April followed by another eating a juvenile Herring Gull at the Farne Islands on 26th. One flew N at the Farnes on 3rd May, but there were no further sightings until the end of the month, when one flew N at Seaton Sluice on 27th. In June, singles were noted off the Farnes on 14th, Newbiggin and Snab Point (Cresswell) on 15th, Newbiggin and St Mary's Island on 17th and Tynemouth on 29th, with further singles (all moving N) off the Farne Islands, Hauxley, Newbiggin, Snab Point and St Mary's in July.

A total of ten passed St Mary's and eight were seen at Seaton Sluice in August, with a further three at Newbiggin and one at Snab Point. A pelagic trip out of the Tyne on 14th September recorded ten+ on 14th, a total of 19 off St Mary's during the month included 14 N on 20th and the peak monthly count from the Farne Islands was 15 N on 22nd. The monthly total of ten at Seaton Sluice was described as 'extremely poor' and one to three were reported from a further five localities.

A notable passage was witnessed on 13th-14th October. On 13th, 34 flew N at Seaton Sluice, 30 were seen off the Farne Islands, 11 were at St Mary's, ten at Tynemouth and three at Holy Island. The 14th produced a further 29 at Seaton Sluice, ten N at the Farnes, ten at Snab Point, six at Berwick Pier, four at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) and at Fenham Flats, three at Beadnell and two at Holy Island. In November, 15 moved N at the Farne Islands, seven S at Tynemouth and four N at Seaton Sluice on 5th and three were reported from Newbiggin on 17th. The final record was three N at the Farnes on 18th.

## **Auk sp.** *Alca torda* / *Uria aalge*

The first significant N movements of the year were noted in May with Seaton Sluice recording 675 (in one hour) on 12th, 650 (three hours) on 22nd and 500 (one hour) on 23rd. Elsewhere, 201 moved N (in half an hour) at St Mary's Island on 22nd and 250 moved N (almost two hours) at Tynemouth on 23rd. Seaton Sluice again dominated in September with 220 N (in one hour) on 17th, 1,500 N (one hour) on 21st and 700 S (two



hours) on 27th, while at Snab Point (Cresswell), at least 400, mainly Razorbills, were on the sea on 24th. Notable movements at Seaton Sluice in October involved 660 N and 480 S (in one hour) on 1st, 700 N (two hours) on 13th and 600 S (one hour) on 18th. The final large movement of the year saw 320 N (in one hour) on 5th November at Seaton Sluice.

### **Puffin** *Fratercula arctica*

STATUS: Abundant summer and passage visitor, rare in winter.

BREEDING: Abundant.

Only a few individuals were reported before 21st April, when 39 were noted during a sea watch at Newbiggin. In May, small numbers moved N with 53 at St Mary's Island on 22nd the highest count, whilst hundreds returned to the Coquet Island colony on 11th.

Good numbers returned to the Farne Islands by 25th March, with 'spring cleaning' noted from 7th April and first eggs on 19th April. No counts were made this year following the full census in 2013. The first chicks hatched from 26th May, with the first fledgling noted walking down the boardwalk on Inner Farne on 3rd July. Many adults had departed by 23rd July, with most birds gone by early August, although late fledgers were noted on 9th and 17th August (FIR). No Puffin data was available from Coquet Island this year following the full census in 2013.

Numbers remained low during the summer and early autumn until 300 (per hour), mainly juveniles, moved S at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) in a NE gale on 14th October.

### **Black Guillemot** *Cephus grylle*

STATUS: Uncommon passage and winter visitor, rare in summer.

BREEDING: Historical. / LAST BRED: 17th and possibly 18th centuries.

A reasonable year for the species began with a single wintering around Gun Rock, Staple Island (Farne Islands) in January (DS), when one was at Berwick Pier on 9th (MHu).

A summer-plumaged adult was noted on the sea off North Wamses (Farne Islands) on 3rd June (FIR).

In October, single reports came from Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 8th (TM), with a partial summer-plumaged adult N through Inner Sound (Farne Islands) on 12th (FIR) and a single which flew N with an Eider at St Mary's Island and Tynemouth on 26th (JBU/DRW). A first-winter flew N at Church Point (Newbiggin) on 5th November before dropping out of sight onto a rough sea (ADM). All remaining records came from the Farne Islands, where an individual was observed daily around the Outer Group from 5th November, remaining until the Rangers departed in early December. Two were noted on 15th, three on 17th and two on 18th November, suggesting small numbers were once again wintering around the islands (FIR).

### **Razorbill** *Alca torda*

STATUS: Uncommon to well-represented resident and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

The only reasonable number in the first quarter was 50 N at Snab Point (Cresswell) on 10th January; all other counts were of a dozen or less. A sea watch at Newbiggin on 21st April produced a count of 162.

The first main arrival at the Farne Islands occurred on 6th April, the first eggs were laid in early May and a healthy total of 501 pairs bred (down only slightly from the record 505 pairs in 2013). The first chicks hatched on 30th May, with the first 'jumplings' on the sea on 25th June; most birds had departed by mid-July (FIR). At Needles Eye (Berwick), 26 nests were counted on 11th June, when 30 birds were on the sea (MHu) and 120 were on the sea at Dunstanburgh Castle on 5th June.

The only sizeable autumn gatherings were at least 20 on the sea at St Mary's Island on 4th October and at least 40 at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 9th November. Thereafter, one to five were seen to the year end at Bamburgh, Low Newton, Newbiggin and St Mary's Island, with smaller numbers wintering around the Farne Islands.

### **Little Auk** *Alle alle*

STATUS: Uncommon winter and autumn passage visitor. Weather dependant, can occur in large numbers after northerly gales.

A poor start to the year produced three singles N (in 5.5 hours) at Snab Point (Cresswell) on 29th January and a single at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 10th February.

In September, further singles moved N at Seahouses on 21st and Newbiggin on 24th. October produced three N at Church Point (Newbiggin) on 14th and singles on the sea at St Mary's Island on 16th and in Inner Sound (Farne Islands) on 27th.

Despite the absence of northerly gales usually associated with the species, some significant movements were noted in November, especially in the period 5th-7th. At the Farne Islands, 2,921 moved N on 5th (FIR), with 404 N the following day. At St Mary's Island, 507 moved N on 5th and the period 5th-6th produced c.600 N at Seaton Sluice and 620 N at Newbiggin. A notable 1,000 moved N at Boulmer on 6th and, elsewhere, 50-70 were seen at St Mary's Island and Tynemouth, with ten+ off Beadnell on 6th. The Farne Islands produced one to 14 daily from 7th November-4th December. A second, smaller passage was noted on 17th November when 862 moved N at the Farne Islands and counts of up to 87 N came from Newbiggin, St Mary's Island and Tynemouth. Elsewhere in November, many counts of one to ten came from several coastal localities between Holy Island and Tynemouth, with the last sighting at St Mary's Island on 27th. The period 2nd-13th December produced 12 N at Seaton Sluice, with a maximum five on 8th, and five N (in five hours) at St Mary's Island on 2nd. Singles were recorded at Low Newton, St Mary's Island and Tynemouth, with two at Stag Rocks on 27th. Finally, a very tame, but fit, bird fed avidly in Seahouses harbour on 28th December.

### **Guillemot** *Uria aalge*

STATUS: Abundant resident and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Abundant.

Unusually high numbers were reported in January, perhaps associated with persistent stormy conditions on the open sea. At Snab Point (Cresswell), 500 moved N on 10th and the monthly count at Seaton Sluice was 44 N and 236 S, including a peak of 101 on 22nd. Other significant counts were c.450 feeding close inshore at Berwick (Meadow Haven) following stormy weather on 2nd, over 400 in the Berwick area on 4th and 100-500 at Cocklawburn, Cresswell Pond and Spittal (Berwick) on various dates from 4th-16th. Elsewhere, counts of up to 90 came from at least six further sites. A count of 95 S

(in two hours) at Seaton Sluice was the maximum count in February; otherwise no further large numbers were reported during the remaining winter period.

The first main arrival at the Farne Islands was on 25th March but it was not until 16th April that birds eventually settled. The first eggs were discovered on 20th April and a record 51,883 pairs bred (a 3.6% population increase over last year's record count of 50,048 pairs). The first chicks hatched on 30th May, with the first 'jumping' on the sea on 15th June. After a very good breeding season the majority of the cliffs were abandoned by 2nd July and all birds were gone by 23rd July (FIR). The breeding colony at Needles Eye (Berwick) contained 166 nests on 11 June, with 70+ birds resting offshore (MHu). A good summer count of 200 came from Newbiggin on 29th June, with 70 at Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) the day before.

Numbers remained low until October, when 200 moved N at Holy Island on 13th, with 120 N at Berwick on 14th and 86 N at nearby Spittal Bay on 15th. As usual, small numbers returned to winter around the Farne Islands. In late autumn, fewer than 20 were seen at various sites until the last record of two at Stag Rocks on 2nd December.

**Bridled Tern** *Onychoprion anaethetus*

STATUS: Extremely rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 5 / FIRST: 1988 / LAST: 2013  
A repeat performance from last year with the returning individual from 2013 back at Inner Farne on 20th June, where it was seen regularly through to 12th July (DR et al.). The record was accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee.



Bridled Tern (David Kinchin-smith)

**Little Tern** *Sternula albifrons*

STATUS: Well-represented summer visitor.  
BREEDING: Uncommon.

The first arrival involved 12 at the traditional evening roost at St Cuthbert's Cove (Farne Islands) on 28th April, increasing to 14 on 30th. In May, the roost held 40 on 2nd and peaked at 68 on 9th, with most departing by 18th. Four were at Low Newton on 2nd and eight pairs were at the Long Nanny breeding colony by 8th. Elsewhere, one to four were reported from Beadnell, Beal, Boulmer, Budle Bay, Holy Island and St Mary's Island during the month.

Little Terns enjoyed their best breeding season on the Northumberland coast in 20 years. At Lindisfarne NNR, several pairs lost early nests due to high tides, but the colony still saw a maximum scrape count of 35, with 27 breeding pairs producing 49 chicks, 43 of which fledged. It was the best year in terms of productivity in the Senior Reserve Manager's 12 years at the site (ACr). At the Long Nanny, 30 pairs bred (of 41 present), fledging 45 young (KR/NT).

Our two breeding colonies produced the highest productivity rates of the 17 EU Life+ Little Tern Recovery Project sites nationally. Lindisfarne recorded 1.59 and the Long Nanny 1.50 chicks fledged per pair, ahead of Crimdon Dene and South Gare (Teesside) at 1.44, Easington Lagoons (Humber) at 1.33, Gibraltar Point (Lincs) at 1.30, Benacre to Easton Bavents (Suffolk) at 1.25 and Pagham Harbour (Sussex) at 1.0; all other sites recorded productivity under 1.0 chick per breeding pair. The Northumberland Little Tern Project, part of the EU Life+ Project, and a partnership between the National Trust, Natural England, the RSPB and the Northumberland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership, provided funding for extra seasonal staff, as well as additional fencing to protect established and potential breeding areas. This close partnership working, together with good weather and few predators, contributed to the bumper year.

Breeding data 2010-2014 is as follows:

Locality	Pairs in 2014	Pairs in 2013	Pairs in 2012	Pairs in 2011	Pairs in 2010
Long Nanny	30	17	40	38	31
Lindisfarne NNR	27	11	14	6	Unknown

Away from the breeding colonies, 12 were counted from Seahouses-Beadnell during a WeBS count on 12th July. Otherwise, only single figure counts were made during the summer and autumn periods, with the highest being three adults and two juveniles over Warkworth Gut on 9th August and five on Fenham Flats on 7th September; the latter also represented the final record of the year.

**Black Tern** *Chlidonias niger*

STATUS: Uncommon passage visitor.

Three feeding over Grindon Lough on 28th April represented a rare inland spring occurrence (BG). Two adult singles occurred in May, one N at St Mary's Island on 13th and another feeding over Whittle Dene Reservoirs in the late evening of 20th; the latter bird had departed by the following morning. A summer-plumaged adult was found on rocks on Brownsman (Farne Islands) on the afternoon of 5th June before relocating to the tern roost on Inner Farne that evening.

As usual, the late summer to autumn period produced the majority of records, beginning in August with a juvenile at Big Waters on 6th and un-aged singles N at Snab Point (Cresswell) on 18th and Church Point (Newbiggin) on 26th. Another juvenile was noted at Budle Point on 6th September and singles fed over the Bondi Pool (Hauxley NR) on 5th and 10th September. In October, a first-winter moved N through Inner Sound (Farne Islands) on 1st, two were at Seaton Sluice on 4th, one moving S and a second lingering offshore for most of the day. One to two, possibly the birds from Seaton Sluice, were recorded on the same day at St Mary’s Island.

**Sandwich Tern**    *Sterna sandvicensis*

STATUS: Common summer and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

Following on from last year’s first ever over-wintering record for the county (at the Farne Islands in December), another, or perhaps the same bird, provided the first ever January record at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 19th and 21st. The first returning birds arrived in March, with one on Knoxes Reef (Farne Islands) on 23rd, another there on 27th, two on 28th and four on 29th, and one moved N at St Mary’s Island on 28th. Numbers soon picked up in April, with peak passage at Seaton Sluice of 50 N from 10th-14th and the Farne Islands roost peaked at 420 on 17th. In May, 140 S (in one hour) on 6th and 440 N (three hours) on 22nd were notable records from Seaton Sluice, and 110 were counted during a WeBS survey in the River Tweed Estuary on 12th June.

The first eggs on the Farne Islands were found on 11th May and the population increased to 959 pairs. The first chicks hatched in early June and 181 of 514 ringed were again fitted with uniquely-lettered plastic colour rings. The first fledglings were seen on 29th June and numbers declined sharply from early August, with a complete absence of birds from 20th August (FIR).

The first egg date on Coquet Island was 4th May and 1,754 pairs bred (a 161.8% increase on 2013 and the highest total since the late 1990s; RSPB).

Breeding data 2010-2014 is as follows:

Locality	Pairs in 2014	Pairs in 2013	Pairs in 2012	Pairs in 2011	Pairs in 2010
Coquet Island	1,754	670	1,289	1,717	1,069
Farne Islands	959	824	966	544	1,019

Seaton Sluice produced some large movements in late summer and autumn, including 300 (in one hour) N on 8th July and 850 S (one hour) on 9th, 143 S (1.5 hours) on 13th August and, in September, monthly totals of 185 S and 37 N. During the same period, sizeable roosts included 780 in the River Tweed Estuary on 9th and 13th July, 220 at Sandstell Point (Berwick) on 6th July, 300, including many juveniles, at Guile Point (Lindisfarne) on 24th August, 230 at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 24th August, a maximum count of c.200 at Beal Point (Lindisfarne) on 11th August and 134 at Cocklawburn on 15th August. The highest single day count in September involved 118 from Budle Point-Seahouses during a WeBS survey on 2nd. Smaller numbers were counted at other sites before a late adult was at Stag Rocks on 4th November and two sightings, of possibly the same bird, came from Cresswell Pond and nearby Snab Point on 15th November.

**Common Tern**    *Sterna hirundo*

STATUS: Common summer and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

The first of the year was on Coquet Island on 11th April and, elsewhere, four were at East Chevington on 21st April (increasing to eight on 24th), four on Ladies Path (Farne Islands) on 23rd April (increasing thereafter in the evening roost), and two at Gosforth Park NR, two at Tynemouth and one NE over Cramlington on 24th April. Elsewhere, Killingworth Lake held ten on 29th April, with one to four at Arcot Pond from 27th-29th. Passage was noted in May with 34 N (in five hours) at Seaton Sluice on 22nd.

The first eggs on the Farne Islands were found in mid-May, a total of 88 pairs nested and the first chicks hatched on 14th June. The first fledglings took to the wing on 6th July and the nesting areas were abandoned by 3rd August (FIR). The first egg date on Coquet Island was 14th May and 1,196 pairs bred; a welcome increase of almost 15% (RSPB).

Breeding data 2010-2014 is as follows:

Locality	Pairs in 2014	Pairs in 2013	Pairs in 2012	Pairs in 2011	Pairs in 2010
Coquet Island	1,196	1,041	1,158	1,193	1,358
Farne Islands	88	94	88	101	112

Other breeding records included 30 pairs at Royal Quays Marina (North Shields) which, by the end of May, had settled onto a new nesting pontoon having lost their former nesting site to redevelopment (the pontoon held 40 AON by 6th June). Gosforth Park NR and adjacent pool held 17 pairs in May and June, the first young hatched on 12th June and 50 birds, including 18 juveniles were noted in July. Three pairs, possibly nesting, were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs in May. The raft at Swallow Pond (Wallsend) held five nesting pairs by 27th June, with a young bird noted there on 17th June from an earlier nest, and two chicks on 9th July. At Big Waters, up to nine adults and six well-grown young were on the island on 29th June and five broods were recorded in July, but other predation possibly accounted for the loss of all. In July, one juvenile was at Blyth Power Station staithes and two broods were reported from Shasun Pharma (Dudley).

The maximum counts late in the season were 60 S (in two hours) at Seaton Sluice on 10th August, 60 N (two hours) at Seaton Sluice on 18th August, 100 at Budle Point on 6th September and monthly totals of 76 N and 33 S at Seaton Sluice in September. Unusually large numbers remained into October, with a total of 18, including many juveniles, past Seaton Sluice from 1st-16th, 35 still at Budle Point on 4th and one to three at Bamburgh, the Farne Islands, Hauxley, Holy Island, St Mary’s Island, Seahouses-Beadnell and Tynemouth. A very late record involved three juveniles S at Seaton Sluice on 3rd-4th November.

**Roseate Tern**    *Sterna dougallii*

STATUS: Uncommon summer and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

One at Coquet Island on 13th April became the earliest ever county returnee, beating birds at the same locality in 2012 and 2013 by a massive ten days (RSPB). Inner Farne (Farne Islands) recorded its first on 10th May and another was at St Mary’s Island on



12th, followed by singles N past Cullernose Point on 16th and S at Seaton Sluice on 22nd, and at least one pair on Inner Farne in late May. Away from the breeding colonies, only one was noted in June, at Hauxley NR on 14th.

The first egg on Coquet Island was noted on 19th May and 93 pairs nested (a 19.2% increase over 2013 and only one less than the record 94 pairs in 2006; RSPB). Despite encouraging signs, with display and copulation observed, there was no breeding attempt at the Farne Islands (the last was in 2009; FIR).

Breeding data 2010-2014 is as follows:

Locality	Pairs in 2014	Pairs in 2013	Pairs in 2012	Pairs in 2011	Pairs in 2010
Coquet Island	93	78	71	78	80

Few were noted in July, although at least five fed offshore at Amble on 4th, four were on the Farne Islands on 2nd, with small family parties from 14th, and one to two were recorded at the Long Nanny, St Mary’s Island and Seaton Sluice from 14th-23rd. In August, numbers built up in the roost at Inner Farne, peaking at 69 on 14th and ending with eight on 21st, five flew N at Seaton Sluice from 10th-19th, with one to three noted during the month at Beal Point (Lindisfarne), Holy Island, Meadow Haven (Berwick), St Mary’s Island and Tynemouth. Budle Point held birds throughout September, peaking at 12 on 20th, 15 roosted on Longstone (Farne Islands) on 3rd with two through the Islands on 16th. In October, four were feeding in Inner Sound (Farne Islands) on 1st and an adult and juvenile were at Budle Point on 2nd, with an adult there on 4th.

**Arctic Tern**    *Sterna paradisaea*

STATUS: Common summer and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

An early returnee was roosting on Knoxes Reef (Farne Islands) on 13th April, with two present on 15th and numbers increasing steadily thereafter. Elsewhere, two were at Newbiggin on 21st April, with the only other April records being a single at Berwick Little Beach on 27th and two on the Black Middens (Tynemouth) on 28th. In May, an unusual inland record came from Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) where, following heavy rain, four flew NE on 9th. Also in May, 382 on the beach at the Long Nanny on 8th increased to 1,000+ on 10th, an impressive 9,000 were on Ladies Path (Farne Islands) on 12th and 30 flew N (in two hours) at Tynemouth on 23rd. On 21st June, 31 first-summer birds rested on the beach at the Long Nanny with breeding adults.

All of the counties breeding sites recorded increased populations. The first eggs were discovered on the Farne Islands on 15th May and the population grew to 2,212 pairs. The first chicks hatched on 6th June and the first fledglings took to the wing on 2nd July. Productivity was the highest since 2009 (FIR). The first egg date on Coquet Island was 14th May and a record 1,464 pairs bred (RSPB). On 1st July, the wardens at the Long Nanny counted approximately 2,400 pairs, which is also a new site record (NT).

Breeding data 2010-2014 is as follows:

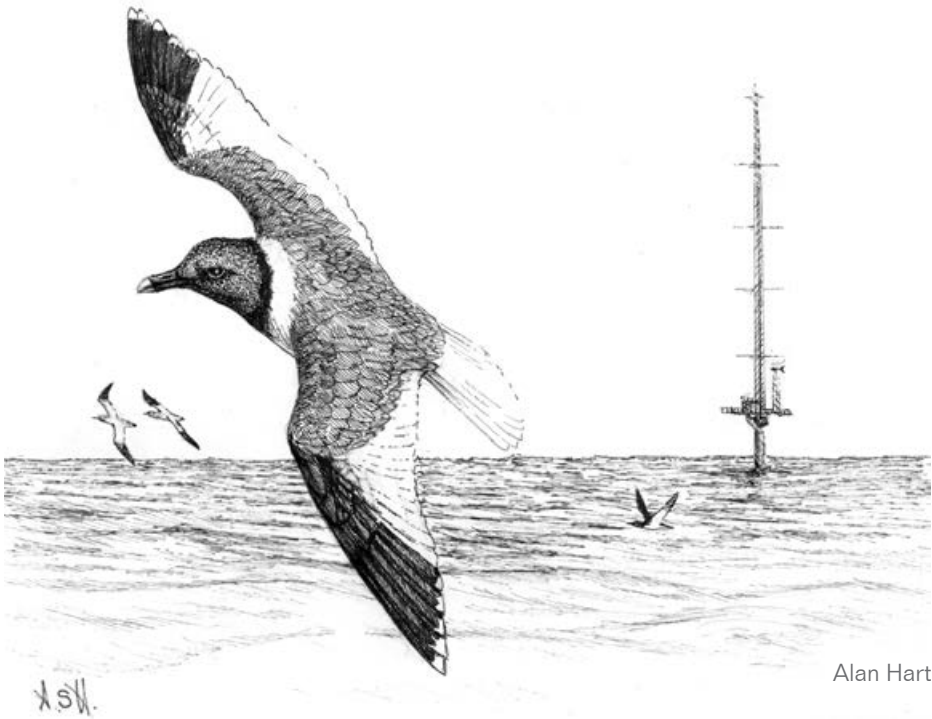
Locality	Pairs in 2014	Pairs in 2013	Pairs in 2012	Pairs in 2011	Pairs in 2010
Coquet Island	1,464	1,224	1,275	1,140	1,046
Farne Islands	2,212	1,921	1,923	1,830	2,199
Long Nanny	c.2,400	1,504	c.1,500	c.1,400	c.900

In July, 260 birds roosted at the River Tweed Estuary on 9th and 13th. Post breeding movements at sea watch points were very low this year, but some large August gatherings included 162 at Lindisfarne NNR during a WeBS count on 10th, 310 at Budle Point on 23rd and 184 at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 31st and, in September, 400 were at Budle Bay on 4th with 140 still at Budle Point on 6th. Records at the Farne Islands involved one to three daily from 1st-14th October, a maximum gathering of 65 were at Budle Point on 4th October, before numbers declined rapidly, and late migrants involved one to four at Beadnell, Berwick, Cocklawburn and St Mary’s Island, with the last N through Staple Sound on 27th October.

**Sabine’s Gull**    *Xema sabini*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2013

Single adults were noted passing Newbiggin on 21st September at 14:15hrs (DD/GB et al.), 17:35hrs and 17:40hrs (IF et al.). The only other documented observation was an adult moving N close inshore at St Mary’s Island on 13th October (NPD/AC). There were another five claimed sightings but no documentation forwarded.



Alan Hart

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

STATUS: Abundant summer and passage visitor, uncommon in winter.

BREEDING: Common.

January produced some unusually large mid-winter numbers, with feeding flocks of 40 off Ross Back Sands and nearby Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) during the first week of the month and 35 off Cocklawburn on 14th. In addition, a total of 255 moved S during a five and a half hour sea-watch off Snab Point (Cresswell) on 29th. More typically the species was rather scarce in February, with only 13 noted past Seaton Sluice during the month and singles at Berwick and Blyth Harbour. More unusual were singles well inland at Kielder Water on 9th and Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 18th.

Birds returning to breeding colonies included 17 at Tynemouth cliffs on 10th March, one at Tyne Bridge on 11th, rising to 29 by 18th and another at Guildhall, also on 18th. Numbers at these sites increased during April and by the end of the month up to 300 were noted off Tynemouth.

Coastal passage was evident during May, with peak counts of 150 S at Seaton Sluice on 6th, 40 N at St Mary’s Island on 11th, 34 N at Newbiggin on 28th and 200 N at Seaton Sluice on 29th. On the latter date 100 were engaged in a feeding ‘frenzy’ off Spittal Bay (Berwick).

Breeding data from monitored colonies was as follows (NT/MHu/RSPB/DMT);

Locality	Pairs in 2014	Pairs in 2013	Pairs in 2012	Pairs in 2011	Pairs in 2010
Farne Islands	4,175	3,443	4,241	3,976	4,025
Needles Eye (Berwick)	1130	880	960	1310	1210
Coquet Island	288	185	215	193	183
Tyne breeding colonies (North)	A.O.N. 2014	A.O.N. 2013	A.O.N. 2012	A.O.N. 2011	A.O.N. 2010
Tynemouth cliffs (natural site)	234	147	197	208	189
N Shields Ferry Landing	10	7	7	8	13
River Tyne (Quayside)	80	55	67	46	53
River Tyne (Guildhall)	32	20	13	27	26
River Tyne (Tyne Bridge-North)	377	312	300	317	302

The Farne Islands reported an excellent year, with an increase of 21%. Nest building commenced on 9th April and good numbers of young fledged.

Numbers in a Tweed Estuary gull roost rose from 84 on 1st June to 256 by 12th, while 100 were at Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) on 15th. Further passage was noted with counts of 72 and 124 off Newbiggin on 15th and 16th June respectively, and a peak July count of 125 (in one hour) off Seaton Sluice on 17th.

Large numbers were on the move past Seaton Sluice by the end of August, including counts of 650 N (in 2.5 hrs.) on 25th and 2,000 N (in one hour) on 26th, by which time the Tweed Estuary roost had risen to 340. Movements peaked in September, with 750 N (in one hour) at Seaton Sluice on 19th, followed by a massive 5,000 N (in one hour) at Tynemouth on 24th (CB). Seaton Sluice again witnessed movements during October with 300 S on 7th and 180 N on 9th. At least 500 roosted on the sea off St Mary’s Island on 16th and 360 flew N (in one hour) at Berwick Pier on 21st. Much more unusual was a flock

of 15 (three adults and 12 juveniles) well inland at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 26th.

Passage of 600-700 was noted off Seaton Sluice and St Mary’s Island on 5th November and thereafter only small numbers were noted. The final birds were two at St Mary’s Island on 7th December.

Bonaparte’s Gull *Chroicocephalus philadelphia*

STATUS: Extremely rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 6 / FIRST: 1955 / LAST: 2013

The presumed returning individual from last year was found at Knoxes Reef (Farne Islands) on 23rd November (DR/DS/Dks/LS/EW). Unfortunately documentation was not received in time for assessment by the British Birds Rarities Committee. Conceivably the same individual was found inland at Swallow Pond, where it lingered for seven minutes on 29th November (SPP). It was well documented and accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

STATUS: Abundant resident passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

Maximum monthly counts from Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay) were as follows;

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
640	227	210	215	116	144	572	1300	1242	530	108	680

In January, the evening gull roost at Colt Crag Reservoir held 1,200 on 15th and another roost in Budle Bay supported 640 on 27th (see above). The peak February count was 1,000 at New Water Haugh (River Tweed) on 2nd and 23rd. On the latter date a further 680 were at West Ord (Berwick) and on 17th, 615 were counted during a WeBS walk from Howick-Boulmer. A Norwegian colour-ringed individual was again at Amble on 1st February; this bird having been noted here since 2005. The largest count during the month was 394 from Whitley Bay-Tynemouth on 16th. In March, 500+ were at East Howden on 8th, 474 at Branton GP on 15th and 450 at West Ord on 9th, while inland at Grindon Lough, 55 on 6th increased to 400 by 20th. Elsewhere during the first quarter, 200-328 were noted at the Aln Estuary, Blyth Estuary, Farne Islands, Killingworth Lake, Paddy Freeman’s Lake (Jesmond Dene), QEII Lake, Swallow Pond and the Tweed Estuary. An impressive concentration of 1,000+ was at Druridge Pools on 2nd April, with other significant gatherings of 468 at Branton GP and 350 at Grindon Lough.

Breeding birds on Coquet Island increased to 4,740 pairs (4,124 in 2013) and the first eggs were laid on 17th April, a full week earlier than last year. The Farne Island colony also increased, to 610 pairs (565 in 2013). There was no census of the large inland colony at Plennmeller Common; however at least 800 birds were present by 23rd March and many pairs were on-site during June, with a large number of juveniles in attendance. A colony of 25 pairs at Swallow Pond produced 15 young. At Gosforth Park NR, 14 pairs hatched c.31 chicks, many of which fell victim to Otter predation as they left the nesting platform. A small colony of up to 12 pairs was re-established at Holy Island Lough after an absence of ten years, again due to Otter disturbance; fledged young here were on the water by 19th June. Elsewhere in June, 300 were feeding along the tideline at Hauxley on 15th.

Dispersal was noted from mid-July, with counts of 106-223 reported from Arcot Pond, Berwick North Shore, Morpeth, Tynemouth-NSFQ and West Hartford. Roosts at Budle Point and West Ord in August contained 1,300 on 21st and 1,000 on 24th respectively, while 860 were at Bothal Pond on 15th. Elsewhere, 447 were in the Aln Estuary on 7th, up to 350 were gathered daily at Haughton Strother GP and 287 were in the Tweed Estuary and 250 at Thrunton. In September, 500-576 were reported from Budle Bay, Low Newton and the Tweed Estuary. Smaller gatherings of 130-250 were noted at Bothal Pond, Castle Island, the Coquet Estuary, East Chevington, Kiln Pit Hill, Lemington Hall, River Tyne (Redheugh-Scotswood bridges), West Ord and Whittonstall. Two ringed birds were noted, the first at Cresswell Pond on 26th had been marked as a chick in the Moorfoot Hills (Borders) on 14th June and the other had returned to St Mary's Island for its third year, having spent the summer in Klepp (Norway).

Larger gatherings in October included 425 at Bothal Pond, 385 at the Tweed Estuary, 286 at Longhirst and 200 at Big Waters and at Haggerston; another Norwegian ringed bird was at Ladyburn Lake on 29th. An estimated flock of 2,000 was at Tynemouth on 10th November, whilst elsewhere during the month 250-350 were reported from Hauxley NR, QEII Lake and Silverlink LNR. A significant roost of 3,000 was gathered at Longsands (Tynemouth) on 8th December (CB) and 1,026 were counted in the Tweed Estuary on 5th. Flocks of 100-350 were widespread, including Blanchland, Bothal Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Jesmond Dene, Killingworth Lake, Kiln Pit Hill, Leazes Park, NSFQ, River Tyne (Redheugh-Scotswood bridges) and QEII Lake.

**Little Gull**    *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

STATUS: Uncommon non-breeding summer and passage visitor, rare in winter.

It was an excellent year for this species, with an unusual mid-winter influx, and some periods of heavy autumn passage. The first notable movement was of seven S at Newbiggin on 4th January, followed by an influx at the end of the month when 23 moved S at Snab Point (Cresswell) on 29th and a total of 22 passed S at Seaton Sluice from 29th-31st; in addition eight were at Low Newton and two at the Tweed Estuary on 31st and singles at a further four coastal localities during the month. A total of nine passed Seaton Sluice in February, and during the first week of the month (1st-6th) five were seen at Berwick, four at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh), three at Newbiggin and singles at North Shields and St Mary's Island; singles were also at Cresswell Pond on 14th and Beadnell on 20th.

There were no further reports until April, when one was at the Farne Islands on 6th and singles (or the same) visited Cresswell Pond, East Chevington and Warkworth Lane from 26th-29th. May was a good month for sightings, with numbers at Cresswell Pond rising from one to three on many dates to a peak of 16 from 25th-31st. Elsewhere one to four were reported from Budle Bay, East Chevington, the Farne Islands, Holy Island Lough, the Long Nanny and St Mary's Island. In June, a gathering of 19 first-summer birds at West Stobswood on 6th was a good local count, however Cresswell Pond continued to be the favoured locality, where the species was recorded almost daily, numbers here ranging from up to 12 during the first half of the month to a peak of 20-26 from 22nd-27th; almost all were first-summer birds. Elsewhere sightings were scarce, with singles at East Chevington, Holy Island and Newbiggin. Numbers began to decline at Cresswell Pond in July, from 14 on 1st to six on 11th and only one to two by the end of the month. Three adults flew N at St Mary's Island on 10th and one to two birds were reported from the Farne Islands, Holywell Pond, Newbiggin and Seaton Sluice. In August, singles were

at Holy Island on 10th and Berwick on 17th and a total of three flew N at Seaton Sluice between 20th-26th.

Exceptional numbers were reported during the final week in September, beginning on 23rd with a group of 40, which came in off the sea to circle Cresswell Pond before moving off N. Significant N passage was witnessed from several headlands on 24th, with no-doubt, some overlap between sites. A total of 96 passed Tynemouth, while a little further up the coast an impressive 402 were noted at St Mary's Island, 174 (in two hours) were at Seaton Sluice and 100 at Snab Point. On the following day, 55 moved N at Tynemouth and 150 lingered offshore at Cullercoats. St Mary's Island witnessed further passage on 27th-28th with counts of 117 N and 77 N respectively, while 54 moved S at Seaton Sluice on 27th. Finally this month, ten were seen off Stag Rocks on 29th.

Large numbers continued to be seen throughout October. The total passing Seaton Sluice during the period 1st-8th numbered 435 N and 316 S, peaking on 4th-5th (SSWT). Elsewhere on 4th, 276 moved N (in three hours) at Tynemouth, while a further 250 were offshore (CB/DRW). The Farne Islands witnessed record numbers during this period, with counts including 177 on 8th, 2,184 on 10th, 791 on 11th and 170-196 from 13th-16th (FIR). At Beadnell, 300+ flew N on 13th and 282 passed (in two hours) on 14th. At St Mary's Island, up to 100+ were offshore from 21st-26th, with 61 still present on 30th. The first few days of November continued to deliver impressive numbers, with Seaton Sluice posting a total of 465 S from 1st-3rd, this the largest November movement for the site. The Farne Islands logged counts of 405 on 4th and 142 on 5th. At St Mary's Island, 50-60 feeding offshore on 1st had declined to 12 by 9th and at Stag Rocks there were groups of 13-46 daily from 4th-9th. Nine were at Bondicarr and three at Swallow Pond on 9th and ten at Snab Point on 18th. The final records of the year were in December, with two moving N at St Mary's Island on 2nd and two at Stag Rocks on 19th.

**Mediterranean Gull**    *Larus melanocephalus*

STATUS: Uncommon resident, passage and winter visitor

BREEDING: Extremely rare. / FIRST BRED: 2009 / LAST BRED: 2014

Maximum monthly counts from Newbiggin were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
10	10	7	2	5	2	22	46	63	20	31	3

One of ten seen at the favoured Newbiggin site in January had been colour-ringed as an adult at Great Yarmouth in November 2013; the bird was seen again in February. Elsewhere during the first quarter one to two were seen at Amble Harbour, Beadnell Bay, Brier Dene (Whitley Bay), Cresswell Pond, the Farne Islands, Howden, Lynemouth Flash, Prestwick Carr (February), Seaton Sluice, Shiremoor, St Mary's Island, Swallow Pond, West Ord (March) and Woodhorn Flashes.

In addition to Newbiggin, single immatures were at Cresswell Pond and St Mary's Island on 5th-6th April and two adults were at Boulmer and an adult and second-summer flew W at West Stobswood on 13th. An adult was at Cresswell Pond on 2nd May and an adult and a first-summer were at the Farne Islands Black-headed Gull colony on 17th, but there was no evidence of breeding. Two adults flew in off the sea at East Chevington on 27th June, while elsewhere during the second half of the month Cresswell Pond attracted an adult and a first-summer, and single adults were at Hauxley NR and St Mary's Island. A French ringed bird, returning for its sixth year was one of up to 22 at Newbiggin in July;



one to two were also at Cresswell Pond, Hauxley NR, Holy Island and St Mary’s Island on various dates during the month.

At the now regular breeding site on Coquet Island, four pairs bred (four pairs in 2013). There was no further data, although two chicks were ringed.

The regular autumn influx was apparent at Newbiggin in August, where a maximum count of 46 on 24th included six juveniles. Elsewhere, up to 45 were noted at Snab Point (Cresswell) throughout the month, eight were at Budle Bay on 21st and one to three at a further ten localities, including well inland at Whittle Dene Reservoirs. A further two colour-ringed birds were located, at Newbiggin and St Mary’s Island, having been marked in Belgium and Poland respectively. Numbers at Newbiggin peaked at 63 on 4th September (ADMc). The six juveniles reported from Newbiggin last month where almost certainly the same birds seen within a mixed-age flock of 15 on Ellington football field on 21st. At Cresswell Pond up to nine were noted regularly on various dates throughout the month and up to eight were at nearby Warkworth Lane.

Numbers declined somewhat during October, with regular counts of 14-20 at Newbiggin during the month and a maximum of 16 at Cresswell Pond on 3rd. One to three were also reported from Castle Island, Druridge Pools, the Farne Islands, Howick, Low Newton, Long Nanny, St Mary’s Island, Swallow Pond and Widdrington Moor Lake; an adult was well inland at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 20th. The Polish ringed bird from August was seen in Sandy Bay (Newbiggin) on 8th November, when six birds were at Ellington and at least eight were at Snab Point on the following day; one to two were also at the Farnes, Hauxley NR, St Mary’s Island and Swallow Pond. A sharp decline was noted in December, with a maximum of only three at Newbiggin, three were also at the Farne Islands on 5th and singles at Holywell Pond, Monks’ House Pool, Swallow Pond and Tynemouth.

**Common Gull**    *Larus canus*

STATUS: Abundant passage and winter visitor, less numerous in summer.

BREEDING: Historical. / LAST BRED: 2000

An evening roost at Derwent Reservoir held 2,700 on 15th January, significantly less than last year, while in Budle Bay another roost contained 1,300 by the end of the month. There were fewer reports than usual in February, a month when return passage north usually commences in earnest. The largest gathering was another roost at Kielder Water, which held 3,000 on 9th; there was a pre-roost gathering of 500 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 10th and 200 were at Pegswood Community Park on 24th. In March, the largest concentration was 1,200+ at Hexham on 7th, 419 were at Lindisfarne NNR, 400+ were at Haughton Strother GP, 200-250 at nearby Wark (North Tyne) and at Branton GP and Scots Gap and 144-150 at Hartington Hall and Grindon Lough.

Numbers typically declined during April, although a total of 300 flew S (in two hours) at Seaton Sluice on 7th. Elsewhere 100 were at Elsdon on 5th and 42 at Grindon Lough on 16th. By early May the species had become very scarce with 16 at the Aln Estuary and 13 at West Stobswood by far the largest counts of the month, with one to eight at a further eight localities. WeBS counters provided the highest numbers for June, with 92 at Lindisfarne NNR and 77 at East Chevington, both on 15th and one to 15 at a further eight localities. Apart from 103 at Lindisfarne NNR on 13th, there were no sizable gatherings during July, with only one to eight at a further nine localities.

With birds returning from northern breeding grounds in August numbers began to build up, particularly at traditional roost sites, including at least 5,000 at Budle Bay on 21st and 2,000 at Derwent Reservoir on 31st; lesser numbers of 300-760 were reported from Haughton Strother GP, Lindisfarne NNR, West Ord (Berwick) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Three-figure counts during September were 600 at Haughton Strother GP and 460 at West Ord. In October, the roost at Budle Bay contained 4,600 on 3rd, numbers at Haughton Strother GP increased to 900 and 180 were still at West Ord. Smaller gatherings were noted in November, with 100-142 noted at Akeld Steads, Hebron and the Tweed Estuary, while in December a gull roost at Longsands (Tynemouth) held 2,000 on 8th, up to 864 were in the Tweed Estuary, 240 at Lindisfarne NNR and 173 at Bolam Lake.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull**    *Larus fuscus*

STATUS: Common passage and summer visitor, uncommon in winter.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

Wintering now appears to be regular feature in the county, albeit in small numbers. The regular wintering adult in the Cramlington area was seen on several dates in January and three birds were at Bothal Pond on 1st. Elsewhere, a first-winter was at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 5th and at the nearby Colt Crag Reservoir roost, seven, comprising two adults and five first-winters were noted on 15th; nine were at Lindisfarne NNR on 19th, when singles were also at Greenlee Lough and Grindon Lough. Singles at Cramlington, Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother GP and Swallow Pond were the only sightings in early February, followed by a noticeable increase thereafter when three to eight were reported from Haughton Strother GP, Lindisfarne NNR, Newburn and Swallow Pond from 16th-27th and one to two at a further nine localities, mainly in or close to the Newcastle conurbation. Return passage was in full swing by mid-March and included gatherings of 40 at Lindisfarne NNR on 16th, 18 at Elswick Wharf on 20th, 44 in Budle Bay on 21st, 30 in Jesmond Dene on 23rd, 40 at West Hartford on 25th and 34 at Swallow Pond on 26th; a total of 31 passed N at Seaton Sluice during the month, where the peak count was 11 on 15th.

Swallow Pond was again a favoured locality during April, where the maximum count was 53 on 23rd. On the River Tyne, 38 were between Redheugh-Scotswood bridges on 27th, West Hartford held a maximum of 26 on 15th and eight were in the Tweed Estuary gull roost on 5th and at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 11th. Numbers at Swallow Pond had declined to 28 by 19th May and there were also 21-35 at Big Waters, Elswick Wharf, Redheugh-Scotswood bridges and the Tweed Estuary with a further 14-15 at the Blyth Estuary and Lindisfarne NNR. In June, 70 were gathered in a high tide roost at Budle Point on 29th, while elsewhere there were counts of 11-20 from the Blyth Estuary, Jesmond Dene, Lindisfarne NNR, Swallow Pond, the Tweed Estuary and West Hartford.

Data from the principal breeding sites was as follows (NT/RSPB);

Locality	Pairs in 2014	Pairs in 2013	Pairs in 2012	Pairs in 2011	Pairs in 2010
Farne Islands	799	765	744	582	611
Coquet Island	26	22	29	31	22

In addition to the above there were two occupied nests at the Blyth Riverside Industrial Estate in June and 16 juveniles were visible in a colony at Wimbourne Quay (Blyth) in July (LJM).

WeBS counts during the period 12th-14th July produced reports of 65 at Lindisfarne LNR, 38 along the coastal stretch from Seahouses-Beadnell, 29 in the Blyth Estuary and 23 at Swallow Pond. A very impressive gathering of 240 was well inland at Callaly on 19th August (JD), while 20-25 were also reported from the Blyth Estuary, Lindisfarne NNR and Thrunton. Numbers were much reduced by September when peak counts included 45 at Caistron on 6th, 16 at Branton GP on 16th and 12 at Lindisfarne NNR on 7th; one to seven were noted at a further 18 widespread localities.

By far the largest October gatherings were 95 at Branton GP on 11th and 53 at Lindisfarne NNR on 12th, while 23 were in the Budle Point roost on 3rd and 19 on the River Tyne (Elswick-Newcastle Business Park) on 2nd. In November, eight moved SW over Haughton Strother GP on 4th, 14 were at East Chevington and 12 at Lindisfarne NNR on 9th and one to four were reported from a further five localities, including Cramlington, where the regular over-wintering adult had returned. Single wintering birds of various ages were reported from seven sites during December.

**Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus argenteus*

STATUS: Common resident passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

Maximum counts from four regular localities were as follows;

Locality	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Tweed Estuary	128	312	282	467	184	145	586	820	320	840	122	310
Lindisfarne NNR	110	101	304	194	90	650	381	648	1600	1440	203	110
Blyth Estuary	109	68	108	153	83	152	102	132	196	61	118	82
Tyne Estuary-NSFQ	110	404	235	193	89	248	746	478	473	1154	--	528

The Colt Crag Reservoir gull roost held 630 on 15th January, 110 were roosting in Budle Bay on 27th and 100 were at Fontburn Reservoir on 5th. In February there were two large site counts during the first week, with 51 at Bothal Pond being described as ‘unprecedented’, likewise a count of 88 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 6th was by far the highest count to date for that site. March counts in addition to the above included, 69 on the River Tyne (Elswick-Newcastle Business Park) on 5th and 49 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 8th. Other than the sites listed above the only notable gathering in April was 111 at Swallow Pond on 12th. The largest May concentration was at Airy Holm Reservoir, where there were at least 260 on 14th. Elsewhere 158-184 were noted at Berwick (Tweed Estuary and North Shore), 100 were at Elswick and 80 at Ryal.

Data from offshore breeding sites was as follows (NT/RSPB);

Locality	Pairs in 2014	Pairs in 2013	Pairs in 2012	Pairs in 2011	Pairs in 2010
Farne Islands	937	874	882	759	768
Coquet Island	2	2	1	2	2

Additional breeding data included, 26 occupied nests at Needles Eye (Berwick), while in the Blyth area there were 20 nests (25 young) on Blyth Industrial Estate and single nests (all two young) at Blyth Harbour, Master’s Office and PV Technology Building.

By far the largest gathering in June was 650 in the Budle Point roost on 29th, while 145-210 were again in the Berwick area. Several large gatherings were reported in August as illustrated in the table above; in addition counts included 560 at Ord Moor (Berwick) on 10th and 250 at Callaly and Thrunton on 7th. Numbers in Budle Bay increased significantly during September with counts of 1,200-1,600 on two dates. Elsewhere, 450 were reported from Rye Hill, 250 were at Amble and 200 at Whittonstall. On the Tweed Estuary numbers declined from 840 in October to 310 in December. The Budle Bay roost-Budle Point area witnessed a similar decline with 450-550 during October, whilst elsewhere during the final quarter there were counts of 100-250 from Amble, NSFQ, Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) and Swallow Pond.

**‘Northern race’ Herring Gull** *L. a. argentatus*

STATUS: Well-represented winter visitor.

At least 11 were in the Colt Crag gull roost on 15th January. In February, five were at Newburn on 26th and singles at Killingworth Lake and North Shields Fish Quay.

Three were at Castle Island on 25th September. In December there were counts of 14 from Newburn, up to ten at Swallow Pond, three at NSFQ and one to two at East Chevington and West Hartford.

**Caspian Gull** *Larus cachinnans*

STATUS: Extremely rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 2 / FIRST: 2007 / LAST: 2013

The Polish ringed individual (PKCS) reported last year from Amble Harbour returned to the area, being first noted on 9th August and remaining to 4th October (MPF/JPD/AWS *et al.*). The only other county record was an immature at Grindon Lough on 1st June 2007.

**Iceland Gull** *Larus glaucoides*

STATUS: Uncommon passage and winter visitor, rare in summer.

An adult moving N at Seaton Sluice on 13th February was the first sighting of the year. On 16th, an un-aged bird was reported from Newbiggin and an immature was at Tynemouth Boating Lake, the latter rediscovered in the Tynemouth-North Shields Fish Quay area on 21st-22nd. In March, a first-winter was at St Mary’s Island on 2nd and another un-aged bird was found at the Long Nanny on 16th. A second-summer was at Tynemouth on 7th April. The Farne Islands had an excellent year with five spring records of perhaps five different individuals, beginning with a first-winter on 28th-29th March; an adult was present on 7th April, a first-year bird on 15th April and a second-winter on 23rd. The final islands record was a first-year bird which went to roost on West Wideopens on 2nd May. A late immature was at Beadnell Harbour on 13th May.

The first autumn arrival, a fourth calendar-year bird, flew over the main car park at Holy Island on 17th September. Thereafter the species remained distinctly scarce, with no further sightings until December, when a first-winter was at the Black Middens (Tynemouth) on 2nd and a popular duo (first-winter and second-winter) frequented the Tynemouth-NSFQ-St Mary’s Island area from 27th-31st.

**Glaucous Gull**    *Larus hyperboreus*

STATUS: Uncommon passage and winter visitor, rare in summer.

It was another poor year for this larger 'white-winged' Arctic gull. The only report during the first winter period was in February, when a second-calendar year bird moved S at Seaton Sluice on 27th. In May, a juvenile was at Beadnell on 24th.

There were three reports of first-winter birds in November. The first was at Boulmer on 6th, followed by one arriving with fishing boats at North Shields Fish Quay on 22nd and another was at Newbiggin on 30th before moving off N. In December, a first-winter bird was at Budle Bay and a second-winter at NSFQ on 2nd, a first-winter was seen at the Black Middens (Tynemouth) on 2nd, 7th and 31st and another first-winter was at Blyth Harbour on 7th. Finally a first-winter was on the sea off Ross Back Sands on 28th.

**Great Black-backed Gull**    *Larus marinus*

STATUS: Common passage and winter visitor, well-represented non-breeding summer visitor.

BREEDING: Uncommon, regular at only one site.

Maximum counts from regular sites were as follows;

Locality	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Tweed Estuary	5	43	11	10	12	10	11	15	15	8	27	29
Lindisfarne NNR*	80*	1	15	4	5	115*	250*	65*	8	15	42	9
Seahouses-Beadnell	6	6	55	13	19	19	42	57	22	42	17	60
East Chevington	11	2	22	11	2	32	9	38	205	70	--	43
Blyth Estuary	32	15	1	36	--	4	1	2	39	42	81	101
Tyne Estuary-NSFQ	20	146	12	26	9	29	55	32	81	121	--	77
Redheugh-Newburn	22	19	11	6	11	--	--	--	15	8	4	13

\* The Lindisfarne NNR counts include Budle Bay

Most of the larger gatherings are to be found within the table above. Elsewhere, in January, 13 flew S at Big Waters on 1st, 35 were in Amble Harbour on 4th and 24 at Colt Crag Reservoir on 15th. There were no other significant counts until April, when 25 were at Grindon Lough on 17th.

At the counties only breeding site on the Farne Islands, the population increased to 17 pairs (15 in 2013).

A ploughed field at Newbiggin attracted 300 on 20th September and nearby at Woodhorn an impressive 700 were on a field of winter wheat on 3rd October (IFo). Counts of 150 came from Howden (River Tyne) on 6th October and the Coquet Estuary on 30th. A favoured coastal stretch from Beadnell-Howick produced counts of 42-45 in September-October, rising to 175 in November, with 61 present in December. Numbers also rose sharply on the Coquet Estuary in November, to a peak of 400 on 6th, with 185 still present in December. The usual increase was apparent at the Farne Islands, where numbers rose to 273 by 3rd December. The peak count from the River Blyth was 203 at Blyth South Harbour on 7th December, when 21 were also at Castle Island and 17 at Ladyburn Lake.

**Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon)**    *Columba livia*

STATUS: Common resident.

BREEDING: Common.

Notable counts in January involved 67 on the Environment Agency roof (Newcastle Business Park) on 7th and 300 at Derwent Reservoir on 15th and 19th. Numbers remained low until mid-summer counts of 92 at Blyth South Harbour on 14th June and 400 at Heddon Haugh Farm (Heddon-on-the-Wall) on 7th July (SRB). In August, 83 were at Morpeth on 23rd and in September, 146 were at Stakeford Railway Bridge (Ashington) on 9th. Some good counts in October included 102 at Eldon Square and 80 at Elswick Shopping Centre (both Newcastle) on 1st, 68 on the Environment Agency roof on 2nd and 82 at Stakeford Road Bridge on 5th. On 25th November, 59 were counted on a rooftop at Killingworth. Finally, 80 were recorded at Warkworth on 6th December.

**Stock Dove**    *Columba oenas*

STATUS: Common resident.

BREEDING: Common.

The year started well with 80 at 'Shooters Field' (Big Waters) on 1st January, increasing to 110 on 19th (GB) and 45 at Howdon Wetland on 6th, growing to 68 by 30th. Howdon remained popular during the first quarter, with a maximum of 56 in both February and March. Elsewhere in the first quarter, counts included 30 at Hartley on 29th March, 28 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 22nd March, 23 in the Knockburn area (Allendale) on 11th March, 15 at Houghton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 29th January (with 32 there on 8th April) and at Big Waters on 2nd February, 13 at Marden Quarry (Whitley Bay) on 9th February, at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 2nd March and at Paxhill (near Allenheads) on 11th March and ten at Gosforth Park NR in January.

In May, a notable record involved 31 pairs nesting in derelict farm buildings around Shieldbridge (Allendale Common) on 17th and 49 were still at Howdon on 31st (dropping to a maximum of 14 in June and 16 in August, before increasing to 34 on 25th September). Also in September, a pullus was ringed at Hauxley on 7th and 20 were at Lincoln Hill (Humshaugh) on 28th. The maximum counts in October were 96 at Howdon on 18th, with 56 there on 4th, 35 at Tughall Mill (near the Long Nanny Burn) on 7th, 23 at Chugdon Wood on 25th and 19 at Big Waters on 5th. Other than 54 at Chugdon Wood on 2nd November, the final two months were dominated by counts from two sites. At Big Waters, 15 on 9th November increased to 30 on 30th, with 20 still present on 25th December. At Howdon, 22 on 26th November increased in December to 26 on 6th and 40 on 14th.

**Woodpigeon**    *Columba palumbus*

STATUS: Abundant resident and a passage visitor.

BREEDING: Abundant.

The largest count of the year involved 3,300 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 16th February (SR). Other large counts in the first quarter included ca.1,000 at Brenkley on 25th January, 750 going to roost over the A1 at Adderstone Mains on 22nd February and, in January, 700+ spooked by a Buzzard at Bywell on 24th, 560 in two flocks at East Ord on 12th and 500+ at Prestwick Carr on 31st. First quarter counts of 400 or more also came from Big Waters, Cramlington and Whiteadder Water (Berwick). Light spring passage



was again noted at the Farne Islands, with singles recorded on 12 dates from 31st March-6th June, and two on rocks at Inner Farne on 12th May.

Numbers remained low during the summer until a large September count of 1,200 came from Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay) on 17th. Thereafter, in a quiet end to the year, the only three figure counts involved 200 at Scremerston on 30th October, Hartley West Farm (Seaton Sluice) on 18th December and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 28th December, and 150 at Amble on 6th December.

### **Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

STATUS: Common resident.

BREEDING: Common.

In January, a roost at Slatyford (Newcastle) held 42 just before sunset on 22nd, 27 were at Fenham-le-Moor on 4th and 15 were at Beaconsfield (Cramlington) on 11th. The next double figure counts of the year came in August, when ten were at Dinnington on 23rd and Cramlington on 28th. Numbers increased at Dinnington to 22 on 30th September and 40 were at Hauxley and 16 at Widdrington on 28th September. October produced counts of 45 at Newton on 9th and ten in a garden at Northburn (Cramlington) during the month, whilst two were predated by a Sparrowhawk in a garden at Walbottle. The highest count of the year involved around 60 at North Moor Farm (Seaton Delaval) on 4th November, with 18 at Bedlington on the same date (JR), and 11 at Cramlington on 29th November. In December, a gathering at Horton Burn (Cramlington) peaked at 25 on 23rd and 14 were at Fenham-le-Moor Farm on 16th.

### **Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus*

STATUS: Well-represented summer visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

A good start to the year began with calling birds at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) and Longhorsley Moor on 23rd April, with two at Simonside and one at Grindon Lough on 24th, singles at Catcleugh and Derwent reservoirs and Wingates on 29th and Snods Edge (near Shotley Field) on 30th; also on 30th, five were counted from Tosson Hill-Simonside. Cuckoos were very well reported in May as birds sang, the peak count being ten in the Winnows Hill-Derwent area on 31st (JPD), with four at Harthope Valley on 11th and Simonside on 31st, three still at Harthope Valley on 14th and three at Beanley Moor on 17th. In addition to these locations, twos were at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley), Blanchland, Debdon (Rothbury), Holystone, Kyloe Hills, Slaley, Spartylea and Westburnhope and singles were seen or heard at more than 30 other widespread localities. In June, five was the peak count at Simonside on 19th, three were at Slaley Forest on 3rd, twos at Great Wanney Fell, Longhorsley Moor and Tosson Hill on 8th, Eals on 16th and Devil's Water (Corbridge) on 20th, with singles at 17 other inland and two coastal locations.

No reports were received in July, but August juveniles were noted at East Chevington South Pool on 1st, Cresswell Pond from 6th-12th, and Gowk Hill (Rothbury) and Holy Island on 28th. As expected, the final records came in September, with un-aged singles at Druridge Bay on 2nd and Holy Island on 14th, and an adult at Bondi Pool (Hauxley NR) on 26th.

### **Barn Owl** *Tyto alba*

STATUS: Uncommon resident.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

Poorly reported during the first quarter, with two on Holy Island in January, increasing to three in the village during February and singles at Branton, Catcleugh Reservoir, Druridge Pools, East Ord (Berwick), Ellington, Forestburn Gate, Haughton Strother (Humshaugh), Haydon Bridge, Keel Row (Seaton Delaval), Park End (North Tyne), Prestwick Carr and Slaley Hall. The A1 claimed two road casualties in March; north of Alnwick and at Belford.

In an exceptionally good year for the species, Northumbria Ringing Group (NRG) monitored 51 successful broods producing at least 205 fledged young. Two other pairs raised an unknown number of young and at least ten pairs produced second broods (NRG). A large study in the north of the county covered over 100 nest sites and found 33 were successful with a healthy average of four young per nest and 121 owlets were ringed (PHH/MWo). In a study area at Slaley village, two pairs were found in April; one in a tree hole had five eggs on 23rd and went on to hatch four young and fledge three, the other pair in a nest box laid five eggs, hatching and fledging five young (RMH). In the Morpeth-Longhorsley area, six nest box pairs were studied with clutches of six (all hatching and fledging), six (six hatched and five fledged), six (six hatched and four fledged), five (all hatching and fledging), four (three hatching and fledging) and three (two hatched and one fledged); one clutch in late February became the earliest ever recorded by the British Trust for Ornithology (PR). In the Druridge Bay area, three first broods totalled 14 young and two second broods produced ten chicks, with three other pairs known to have produced two broods and another pair a single brood (IDR). Other successful broods were reported from



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Whitley Chapel and Wallington. On Holy Island, two pairs in May nested only 250m apart, each producing three large young and representing only the second multiple breeding on the island in modern times. In the most successful year on record, both pairs bred again in August, with broods of three and five fledging by the end of October (IK). A full paper by NRG can be found towards the end of this report.

Elsewhere in May, a single bird was feeding young at a tree nest near Alnwick on 13th and a breeding pair was noted at Yearle on 30th. Further breeding reports in June involved an adult with young at a tree nest site at Ponteland on 15th and an adult carrying food to two juveniles at a nest box in the south east of the county on 26th. In July, a pair at Holywell Dene was seen with three young during the first week and a pair in the south east had two fledged young on 7th.

Away from the above breeding areas, summer records involved two at Cocklaw Walls and singles at Boulmer, Branton, Cawledge (Alnwick), Cornhill-on-Tweed, Dinnington, Earsdon, East Stobswood, Harehope Hill, Hartley, Haughton Strother GP, Linden Hall (Longhorsley), Maiden's Hall (West Chevington), Matfen, Stanton, West Hartford and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Further road casualties came from the A69 at Bardon Mill, the A1 at Morpeth, and at Stanington.

The final quarter produced singles or twos from the following 22, mostly new localities: Backworth, Bolton, Branton, Christon Bank, Embleton, Fenham Flats, Greenshaw Plain (Hexham), Hazelrigg, Holy Island, Longbenton (Newcastle), Longhorsley Moor, Lowick, Northumberland Park (North Shields), Ouston Fell, Rennington, Rothley Craggs, St Mary's Island, Simonburn, Warenford, Waren Mill, Whitley Bay and Wooler.

**Little Owl**   *Athene noctua*

STATUS: Well represented resident.  
BREEDING: Well represented.

In a second consecutive poor year for the species, birds were recorded at a lowly 28 localities. A pair was on territory at Shiremoor throughout the first quarter, two were at Big Waters on 2nd March and singles were at Beaconhill and Beacon Lane (Cramlington), Birtley, Buteland, Carrawbrough, East Holywell, East Stobswood Pool and Pegswood. The established pair at Shiremoor was seen regularly from April-June, a pair was at Beacon Lane on 13th April, two were at East Stobswood Pool on 15th April and singles were also seen during this period at Beaconhill, Bell's Pond (Cresswell), Chevington Moor, East Holywell, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Hoppen Kiln Flash (Lucker), Ingoe, Paxhill (near Allenheads), Slaley Forest and Waren Mill Caravan Park (near Bamburgh).

The pair at Shiremoor remained on show throughout July with young seen from 17th; July singles were seen at Belford, Dinnington and West Stobswood Pool. Further breeding records in August involved two pairs at High Mickley that produced six eggs and fledged two young, whilst another pair failed at the egg stage. Two pairs fledged three young in the Stocksfield study area this year (NRG).

In September-October, three were present all month at Shiremoor, with two at Derwent Reservoir and singles at Dinnington, High Chibburn and Ryal, and, on 1st October, a road casualty at Pegswood by-pass. November produced singles at Big Waters on three dates, with others on the Widdrington-Druridge road on 2nd and at Halton Shields (near Corbridge) on 18th. Two remained at Shiremoor throughout December and one was at Derwent Reservoir on 29th December.

**Tawny Owl**   *Strix aluco*

STATUS: Well represented resident.  
BREEDING: Well represented.

In a quiet start to the year, three were calling at Capheaton and two were at East Wood (Harbottle) on 5th January but otherwise singles only were recorded in the first quarter at a further 14 localities.

At least three nesting pairs were found around Powburn in April, with one pair at Gosforth Park NR and an adult with four young was ringed at Hauxley RS. Also in April, two males called at Wark (North Tyne) on 9th and Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 19th, with a single roosting in a nest box at Stamfordham on 14th and singles at a further four sites. In May, a pair fledged four young at Gosforth Park NR, single adults fed three large juveniles at Holywell Dene and two large juveniles at Warkworth Lane on 12th, twos were at Slaley Forest and Northumberland Park (North Shields), with singles at 14 other locations. The Gosforth Park birds were seen throughout June, when a pair with three young were in a Stamfordham garden, two or more were at Fulbeck (Morpeth) on 24th and on the road at Brunton (near Chollerford) on 28th and singles were at nine other sites, with road casualties at Hepscott Park and Gubeon (near Morpeth). In July, twos were at Gosforth Park and Waren Mill Caravan Park (near Bamburgh), with singles at five sites. Singles were reported from five sites in August, including a juvenile at Holywell Dene.

Data from Northumbria Ringing Group's long-term study (fledged young in parentheses):

Locality	Pairs in 2014	Pairs in 2013	Pairs in 2012	Pairs in 2011
Wark-Tarset-Redesdale	37 (91)	17 (31)	37 (84)	36 (72)
Kielder	34 (84)	16 (34)	67 (46)	35 (51)
Slaley-Healey	16 (34)	7 (11)	11 (11)	12 (15)
Linnels (Hexham)	1 (2)	--	1 (2)	--

The final four months of the year produced four calling at Capheaton on 16th November and threes at Gosforth Park NR during September and November and at Rothbury during November. Two males and a female were calling at Ellington on 20th September and at Wark on 4th October, twos called at Waren Mill from 1st-12th October, Bedlington on 10th October, Dinnington on 15th October, Northumberland Park throughout October and at Wark on 4th December, with a pair jousting at Prestwick Carr on 30th December and singles at a further 25 localities.

**Long-eared / Short-eared Owl**   *Asio otus / flammeus*

An *Asio* owl species hunted after dark at Prestwick Carr on 4th and 11th February and singles flew in off the sea at Tynemouth on 5th and 12th November.

## Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

STATUS: Uncommon resident, passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

In March, a pair was on territory at a confidential site in the south east of the county (Site 1) from 16th and one roosted by the River Tweed at East Ord (Berwick) on 12th. One hunted successfully at a second confidential site in the south east of the county (Site 2) on 24th April. In May, an adult was seen at Site 1 on 1st and 14th, with young heard during the last week of the month; singles were also at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 30th and at Simonside on 31st. An adult at Site 1 on 8th-9th June was joined by three juveniles on 10th (JPD), with an adult hunting nearby. Other June records involved singles on Holy Island on 10th and Catcleugh Reservoir on 13th, a juvenile calling at Chipchase (Wark - North Tyne) on 23rd and two to three juveniles calling from a conifer plantation near Big Waters on 26th. The latter site produced an adult and at least three well grown juveniles on 1st July (GB), when more than two were heard at Slaley Forest. On 11th July, an adult was feeding a juvenile at East Chevington, the adult having been seen on three dates prior to this, once in altercation with a juvenile Marsh Harrier. In a shelter belt in the west of the county, a pair successfully fledged four young from a basket supplied by the observer.

Northumbria Ringing Group reported six occupied sites in the Border Forest, four pairs from which were known to fledge at least six young. On the Northumberland / Tyne and Wear border, three pairs fledged a total of five young (NRG).

No reports were received in August but a single was at Fontburn Reservoir on 18th September. In October, singles were on Holy Island on 16th, mobbed at St Mary's Island before flying west on 19th and hunting the Wanneys (near Ridsdale), also on 19th. One flew in off the sea at Seaton Sluice on 6th November and, in December, a male called at Wark on 25th and one was at Swallow Pond on 30th. The Farne Islands witnessed their first blank year since 2007.

## Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

STATUS: Uncommon resident, passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

A single on Holy Island in January increased to three on 16th and 19th February. Elsewhere in January, singles were at Woodhorn on 8th, West Stobswood Pool on 9th and Wark (North Tyne) on 23rd. February singles were reported from Adderstone and West Hartford on 4th, East Chevington on 9th, Woodhorn on 14th and Prestwick Carr on 24th and 28th. Two were at Coanwood Common on 23rd March, with March singles at Prestwick Carr on 8th and 12th-13th, and West Chevington on 18th. In April, one was mobbed over the Farne Islands on 1st before landing on Knoxes Reef, two were at The Snook (Holy Island) on 4th, with one found dead there on 20th, probably the result of a raptor strike, and singles were at West Hartford on 1st-2nd, Howdon on 2nd, Prestwick Carr on 26th and Holy Island on 27th and 29th. Two were at Stobswood Pools on 2nd May and elsewhere in the month single reports came from Bamburgh on 1st, Druridge Pools on 2nd, Arcot Pond on 2nd-6th, Budle Bay on 3rd and Shieldbridge (Allendale) on 11th. Disappointingly, no birds were noted during June-July and no breeding records were received by Northumbria Ringing Group.

The only August record involved a tired migrant sheltering from a westerly gale at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) on 29th. Autumn passage remained sluggish with one W over Inner Farne (Farne Islands) on 14th September and another probable migrant was flushed from the dunes at Hauxley on 28th September. As expected, October produced a surge in records with three on the Farne Islands on 16th, two in off the sea at St Mary's Island on 30th, singles 'in off' at The Snook on 14th and Emmanuel Head on 15th and other singles hunting at St Mary's Island on 14th, The Snook on 16th and 26th and Backworth on 31st. Further singles occurred on the Farne Islands on eight dates from 7th October-26th November. The highest count of the year came from Holy Island, where four roosted in dunes on 9th November (BG), with two at the excavations (Holy Island) on 7th and singles on 8th and 19th. Elsewhere in November, one was at Hauxley NR on 5th and 11th and another came in off the sea at Seaton Sluice on 17th. All December records came from Prestwick Carr, where two were observed hunting and heard arguing just after dusk on 27th and 30th, and singles were reported on 23rd and 29th.

## Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

STATUS: Uncommon summer visitor.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

Reports in 2014 were chiefly from the favoured breeding areas, with the first record of four to five from Winnows Hill (near Derwent Reservoir) on 31st May (JPD/MPF/AS). A passage bird was at Brownsman (Farne Islands) on 2nd June (FIR) and another bird in potential breeding habitat was found at Sweethope Lough on 20th June (PRM). Surveys in Slaley Forest produced counts of five (four 'churring' males and a female) on 28th June (SW) and eight (including a minimum of seven churring males) on 4th July (JL). Another was at Ridsdale on 18th July (IF).

## Swift *Apus apus*

STATUS: Common summer visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

The first returning birds were all in the north of the county, with three at West Ord (Berwick) and singles at Branton GP and Rothbury on 4th May. A light influx occurred over the next three days with peak counts of 20 at Corbridge and ten at Seahouses on 6th. Large numbers arriving on 8th included 130 at Killingworth, 60 at Lynemouth and 50 at Arcot and Swallow ponds.

In June, 76 drifted NW over East Ord during heavy rain on 10th, 65 were at a nesting colony at Lynemouth on 14th and 50 were at Castle Island and Chapel House. In July, 76 were again at East Ord on 7th, 21 flew S at the Farne Islands on 14th and counts of 50 came from Alnwick, Cramlington and Shiremoor.

The species was well reported throughout the month of August, with 85 noted at Whitley Bay on 8th, 60 at Alnwick on 7th and at Lynemouth on 9th and 40 moving S at Woosington Ponds on 5th. Later in the month 20 were still at Alnwick on 23rd and 15 moved S at Tynemouth on 28th. The final records of the year were in September, with a single S at Tynemouth on 7th and eight W over Inner Farne (Farne Islands) on 23rd.



## **Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*

STATUS: Uncommon resident.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

There was a thin distribution of records for this popular and conspicuous species in each month of the year, and as expected the bird was observed throughout the county in suitable riverine and wetland habitats. There was a predominance of records from the well-watched south of the county, of typically one or two birds in each locality.

During the first quarter records were received from 14 sites with regular reports from Branton GP, Gosforth Park NR, Haughton Strother (Humshaugh), Jesmond Dene and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Coastal sightings came from Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) in January-February and Druridge Bay CP on 27th February.

There were reports from 25 localities during the summer months (April-August), with regular sightings again from Gosforth Park NR, Haughton Strother and Jesmond Dene, and also at Holywell Dene, Low Angerton and Thrum Mill (Rothbury). Singles were on the coast at Seaton Sluice on 22nd June, Hauxley NR on 17th July and Howick Burn mouth in August. A bird was seen carrying fish to a probable nest site at Chollerford in June and up to three at nearby Haughton Strother in August also suggested local breeding.

In September the NTBC bulletin stated that they were 'very well reported indicating a very good year for the species' with records noted for some 25 locations during the month, of which four were coastal.

There were reports from 36 localities during the final quarter, including all of the aforementioned regular sites. In addition, birds were noted at a number of widespread inland and many coastal localities, including Alnmouth, Backworth, Big Waters, the Blyth Estuary, Byker, Derwent Reservoir, Fourstones, Kirkley Hall, Tynemouth, St Mary's Island and Warkworth Gut.

## **Wryneck** *Jynx torquilla*

STATUS: Rare visitor.

BREEDING: Historical / LAST BRED: 1975

It was a good year for this cryptic 'woodpecker'. The first bird of the year was a single on the Farne Islands on 21st April (FIR). A well-watched individual was in Whitley Bay Cemetery from 26th-28th April (JBu/AC *et al.*) with a second bird there (AS/JPD/MPF), and singles also at the Farne Islands (FIR) and St. Mary's Wetland (SPP) on the latter date. One at West Monkseaton on 27th April (JE) was more unusual and another was at Holy Island (Chare Ends) on 30th (SR). The final spring sighting was at Newbiggin on 21st May (AT).

In the autumn a single was found on Holy Island on 31st August (ADM). In September, singles were at Hadston Carrs on 7th (JFa), the Farne Islands on 14th (FIR) and Holy Island on 17th (MJC/PRM).

## **Green Woodpecker** *Picus viridis*

STATUS: Well-represented resident.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

Birds were reported in areas of suitable habitat from 44 localities during the year (32 in 2014). Records were received from throughout the area with the majority of reports from the southern half of the county. The Tyne and North Tyne Valleys were well represented; as was the well-watched south east of the county.

Calling was first reported with a single at Craggside (Rothbury) on 8th January and later during the same month at Bakethin Reservoir (where up to four were noted in March), Swallowship (Hexham) and Warkworth. The peak month was April with reports from 16 widespread sites including three at Wark (North Tyne) and a pair at Gosforth Park NR; singles were also noted at Allen Banks, Arcot, Bellingham, Bywell, Craggside (Rothbury), Crooked Oak (near Derwent Reservoir), Gosforth Garden Village, Haughton Strother (Humshaugh), Hepburn Woods, Rothbury, River Derwent, Slaley Hall, Slaley Forest and Steel Hall (Hexhamshire).

There were no confirmed breeding records, although there is no reason to suppose breeding was less successful than in a typical year.

## **Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopus major*

STATUS: Well-represented resident and uncommon passage visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

This conspicuous and noisy species was present in all suitable habitats in the area, and was well reported from a minimum of 82 sites during the year. Multiple reports were made of resident birds in each month with three or four birds often noted at favoured localities.

April was a typical month with multiple sightings of four at Gosforth Park NR and Swallow Pond and up to three at a further twelve localities on various dates throughout the month. Breeding was confirmed in June-July, chiefly by observation of young birds at Arcot Pond, Armstrong Park (Newcastle), Gosforth Park NR, Harthope Valley, Holywell Dene, Jesmond Dene, Morpeth, Old Hartley, Rothbury, Tynemouth and Valley Park (Cramlington).

There were few coastal reports this year. Presumed migrants were at St. Mary's Island on 4th and 16th September, the latter appearing to arrive from NE before dropping into cover at the Wetland. In October, a further two were noted at St Mary's on 15th and two were at Bamburgh on 29th; another possible immigrant was at Newbiggin on 30th. Two were at Craster on 6th November and three at Hauxley RS and gardens on 15th November.

## **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopus minor*

STATUS: Rare resident. / LAST RECORD: 2012

BREEDING: Rare. / LAST BRED: 1999 (?)

A welcome sign that the species is hanging on in Northumberland was the sighting of one which flew from a peanut feeder in a garden at Corbridge on 13th December (MR). It entered an area of adjacent woodland where the species has occurred historically.

## **Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*

STATUS: Common resident also a passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

Open grassy areas providing good hunting held small groups during the first quarter with six at Prestwick Carr, four around Big Waters, three at Belford and on Holy Island and two at Blyth (Laverock Farm), East Chevington, Grindon Lough, Holburn, Howdon, Linton, Maiden's Hall Lake, Pegswood, Sleekburn, Warkworth, Widdrington Moor Lake and Woodhorn. Singles were at numerous other widespread localities.

The only indication of spring passage was from the Farne Islands where three were present on 21st April and a single in early May.

During April-May, pairs settled in widespread nesting localities in both lowland and upland areas although, as usual, breeding was very much under-reported. However, the Northumbria Ringing Group located 16 occupied sites; 12 pairs were known to have laid eggs and five pairs where known to have fledged a total of 16 young. Breeding records were received from four other areas, Holy Island where a pair fledged three young from a ledge at Lindisfarne Castle, Wallington with five fledged young from a nest box which was then successfully used by Barn Owls, Kirknewton where a pair raised five young from a box and Grindon Lough where two pairs were accompanied by four juveniles.

Post-breeding dispersal occurred during July-August and by September birds were concentrated in areas with an abundance of prey and with 2014 proving to be a particularly good year for vole species, hunting was made very easy. This was particularly noticeable on Holy Island where seven Kestrels were present in September, including the three local youngsters who often hunted in close proximity. Also during September, there was a noticeable surge of sightings on the Farne Islands with at least 11 present on 19th, the highest count so far for the group. Five were at Prestwick Carr, four around Druridge Pools, three at Cresswell and Ellington and one to two in numerous other areas.

Mild conditions, which maintained vole populations in the final quarter, were reflected in concentrations in prime areas. Eight were in the Featherstone and Thirlwall Common area, six to seven, including the local juveniles, remained on Holy Island and four were at Grindon Lough, North Shields (Cobalt Business Park), Prestwick Carr and Widdrington Moor Lake. Three were at Blyth, Cresswell, Harthope Valley, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and West Chevington and one to two were found in more than 30 other localities.

## **Red-footed Falcon** *Falco vespertinus*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2012

An adult female found over the River Tweed at Cornhill on 27th May (DK) was watched for ten minutes and very well photographed. A further visit three hours later revealed no sign. Although there are eleven historical records, there have been only three this century, with individuals at the Farne Islands in September 2001, Ellington in May 2004 and Fenwick in September 2012.



Nightjar - Farne Islands - June (David Kinchin-smith)



Green Woodpecker - Rothbury - September (Janet Dean)



## **Merlin** *Falco columbarius*

STATUS: Uncommon resident, passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

Singles were widespread, both along the coast and inland during the first quarter. As usual, areas around Bamburgh, Beadnell Bay, Druridge Bay and Lindisfarne NNR were frequented by one to two during the period. Inland, singles were seen at Akeld, Corbridge, Doddington and Swallow Pond. One at Holy Island Causeway mobbed a Marsh Harrier on 6th February.

During April, with the start of breeding, singles were noted at seven inland localities and individuals lingered on the coast at Holy Island, St Mary's Island and Tynemouth. During May all records involved inland localities.

The species' enjoyed a good breeding season with data from the Northumbria Ringing Group showing that 65 territories were checked, of which 20 were occupied, with 13 pairs fledging 45 young. This success followed poor seasons in 2012 and 2013 when in each year only 11 pairs fledged c.30 young.

The usual early return to coastal areas occurred in August, when a juvenile female was heavily mobbed by Swallows over Holy Island Village on 14th and another youngster was at Cresswell Pond from 21st. Others were on the coast in September when two were on Holy Island and singles were at Fenham-le-Moor, Hauxley, Seaton Sluice and Snab Point (Cresswell). Singles remained inland at Grindon Lough and Humshaugh.

During the final quarter birds were established in the usual coastal wintering areas. Up to four were on Holy Island, including a juvenile female which had a narrow escape hitting a wire fence while chasing Starlings. It sat stunned for a moment before flying off apparently uninjured. At least three were resident on the Farne Islands where prey included Turnstone, Rock Pipit, Starling, Song Thrush, Blackbird and Goldcrest. Singles were seen at Bamburgh, Boulmer, Budle Bay, Cresswell, Druridge Bay, Holywell Pond, Newton (Long Nanny Burn), Newbiggin, Tweed Estuary and Tynemouth. In mild conditions, others were inland in the Cheviots and at Doddington, Grindon Lough and Prestwick Carr.

## **Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*

STATUS: Rare, although annual summer visitor.

BREEDING: Rare. / LAST BRED: 2011?

With only five accepted records and few other undocumented claims it was a quiet year for the species. The first, an adult, was seen at close range flying over the road towards Darras Hall (Ponteland) on 29th May (MR). Further adults were found at Lordenshaw (Simonside Hills) on 31st May (ASJ) and at Gosforth Park NR on 1st June (ASJ). In August an adult was seen over Warkworth on 3rd (JC) and one was being mobbed by a Cuckoo at Druridge Pools on 16th (TRC).

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## **Peregrine** *Falco peregrinus*

STATUS: Uncommon resident, passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

As usual, birds were widespread during the first quarter with most sightings from typical coastal localities with wintering waders and other prey species. Two sub-adults were on Holy Island throughout and singles occurred at Alnmouth, Berwick, Budle Bay, Cresswell, Lucker, Maiden's Hall Lake and Tynemouth. Singles were also inland at Cramlington, over Newcastle City Centre and at Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Typical early occupation of breeding areas occurred during February, when a pair was at one crag site and a male was at a nesting locality in the south-west. Other pairs returned during March. During April several lingered on the coast with sightings from seven localities. Late passage was shown by singles at the Farne Islands on 7th and 14th May.

Inland records in April came from Otterburn and Upper Coquetdale and there was another Newcastle City Centre sighting of a bird soaring over Grey Street. Peregrines have occupied high buildings in several major cities, so 2014 was notable for long-anticipated urban breeding on Tyneside, the first attempt since a pair was unsuccessful on the old Blyth Power Station in 1999, when eggs were washed out by torrential rain.

In this new attempt, a pair laid two eggs at a site on the Gateshead side of the River Tyne, just outside the N&TBC recording area. They were incubating by 8th May and regular observations showed that they did so for the normal period of around four weeks. When eggs failed to hatch they continued until 14th July, by which time the female had become increasingly restless and finally deserted the clutch (JF). The outcome was complicated by reports of a pair with one youngster nearby. Also in July, a juvenile female was watched mobbing Herring Gulls over Newcastle East Quayside, a short distance away. In the event, she may simply have been a passing individual attracted by the presence of the failed adults.

A national BTO survey, the first since 2002, was carried out. The Northumbria Ringing Group reported a rather poor season with 19 occupied territories from which 12 pairs went on to fledge 25 young (15 pairs and 32 young in 2013). Two nests in the Border Forest were robbed of eggs. During the last national survey, Northumberland had 26 occupied sites, but in poor weather conditions only 12 pairs fledged 25 young. The 2014 results seem to indicate that Peregrines have made little progress. The recurring problem of egg thefts has certainly not helped.

Post-breeding dispersal to coastal areas occurred during July with two at Budle Bay by 16th and one on Holy Island on 21st. Movement increased during August when the two in Budle Bay were seen to kill a Teal and a Redshank. A female at Lindisfarne NNR regularly raided a mixed tern colony, killing at least three, including a ringed juvenile Little Tern. By September birds were noted in other areas including Boulmer, Blyth, Castle Island, Cresswell, Ellington, Low Newton, Seaton Sluice and St Mary's Island, while others were inland at Branton, Elswick and on the South Tyne.

The pattern remained similar during the final quarter with two remaining at Budle Bay and two regular on Holy Island and at Widdrington Moor Lake. An adult female and two juveniles were at the Farne Islands on 22nd October. Singles were in at least five other typical coastal areas but others remained inland, including individuals on Alnwick and Bewick Moors and at Capheaton, the Cheviots, Derwent Reservoir, Grindon Lough, Humshaugh and Wideopen. At Newcastle Quayside one preyed on Feral Pigeons and a single was seen a short distance away on flats at Cruddas Park.





Woodchat Shrike (Stewart Sexton)

### Ring-necked Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

STATUS: Added to the official county list in 2014; previously regarded as an escape or of unknown origin.

This was perhaps an appropriate year in which to re-instate Ring-necked Parakeet to the full county list, as it was possibly the best year to-date for this increasingly regular visitor (resident). Almost all county records are within the south-east municipalities of Newcastle-upon Tyne and surrounding suburban areas. There were regular sightings from the Heaton-Walker-Jesmond areas of the city. At Heaton Park singles were reported in January and February, up to six in September (DHWB) and four in December. Nearby, five flew NW over the Royal Grammar School (Jesmond) on 21st March and at Walker three to four were noted in June and up to six or seven in November (SPP).

At another favoured area in Ponteland a bird regularly visited a garden feeder from 22nd April-29th May; one was at Darras Hall on 16th July and four were found at Ponteland Sports Centre on 27th July. More unusual was a single bird at Matfen on 12th September. At the end of the year singles were reported from a Whitley Bay garden and at nearby Brier Dene and Earsdon Cemetery between 23rd-28th December.

### Red-eyed Vireo *Vireo olivaceus*

STATUS: Extremely rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 1 / FIRST: 1988

Any record of a Nearctic passerine in the county is a major surprise. This first-winter bird, found near the 'tin church' at Low Newton on 7th October (GW) was watched for only a minute before disappearing into the canopy. Intriguingly it was first seen through a camera lens whilst the observer was photographing a Yellow-browed Warbler. The sight of it as the camera focussed must have been quite overwhelming and the resultant photos were a testament to a still steady hand. Although efforts were made to relocate the bird it never reappeared. This sighting was accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee. The only other county record was on Holy Island in October 1988.

### Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2013

BREEDING: Extremely rare. / LAST BRED: 1999 (?)

A first-winter bird found on Brownsman on 17th September was only the third record for the Farne Islands (DKs/DR *et al.*), with previous island sightings as long ago as August 1976 and May 1992. It stayed for several hours and showed well for all the wardens.

### Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

STATUS: Rare passage visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2013

BREEDING: Historical. / LAST BRED 1977?

There was an influx at the end of May. The first, a male at Bamburgh on 25th (SM) was followed by another male, inland near Bothal Pond on 26th (TB/AT). On Holy Island, a male on 28th (GB) increased to three males from 29th-30th (ADM). Females were found in June, on the Farne Islands on 4th and at St Mary's Island on 11th (JBu).

In September, first-winter birds were at Cambois on 14th (STH), Holy Island (Lough) from 14th-20th (ADM/MJC *et al.*) and the Farne Islands from 16th-19th (FIR).

## **Great Grey Shrike** *Lanius excubitor*

STATUS: Rare winter visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2013

One was at Stelling Hall (near Corbridge) on 15th October (MR), with further unconfirmed reports in this area to the end of the year. The only other report was a bird at West Hartford, which remained from 14th December until the end of the year, and into 2015 (PHH/DM *et al.*).

## **Woodchat Shrike** *Lanius senator*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2009

One found along a hedgerow north of Bell's Farm (Druridge) on 5th-6th May (MSH *et al.*) was an overdue county species for many. Another was seen distantly at Prestwick Carr on 31st August (NT *et al.*) and firmly identified on the following day.

## **Magpie** *Pica pica*

STATUS: Common resident.

BREEDING: Common.

The regular roost at Swallow Pond held 77-83 throughout the first quarter (JPD). Larger gatherings elsewhere during the same period included up to 34 at Big Waters, 23-29 at the Freeman Hospital (Newcastle), Holywell Dene and Howden and ten to 17 at Arcot Pond, Derwent Reservoir and Prestwick Carr.

There were 15 at Valley Park (Cramlington) in April and 14 were at Howden throughout the period April-June. Other sizable mid-summer gatherings included 30 at Byker and ten at Prestwick Carr in June, 12 at Kingston Park (Newcastle) in July and ten at Jesmond Dene in August.

The Howden flock increased to 21 in October, when 11 were also at the Wansbeck Estuary and ten at Hauxley. Numbers at Kingston Park increased to 19 in November and ten to 11 were also reported from Jesmond Dene and a Walbottle garden. This species is still regarded as a good find on Holy Island; therefore reports of one in the Lonnen's on 6th November and two there on 16th were of particular local interest (ADM/MJC/IK). There were no further counts from the Swallow Pond roost until December, when 63 were present. Elsewhere during the month, 60 were at Marden Quarry (Whitley Bay), 22 at Valley Park and 17 at Howden.

## **Jay** *Garrulus glandarius*

STATUS: Well-represented resident.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

Gosforth Park NR posted regular counts of three to six throughout the year and a peak of seven in October (NHSN). During the first three months of the year six were at Linnels Wood (Hexham) in January, four at Ewart in February and a flock of seven flew S at Dally Castle on 16th March.

During the summer period (April-August) birds were reported from 39 widespread localities, including three to four at Linden Hall (Longhorsley) in July-August. More unusual was a single at East Chevington on 8th June. A family party of six was at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 25th August.

Seven flying high and S over Backworth on 28th September were considered to be migrants, as there are only two previous records for this well-watched site; elsewhere in September five were at Bolam Lake and four at Prestwick Carr.

One to two were reported from 38 localities in October, including six sites in the Cramlington area. In November, four were at Ellington and two were at Fourlaws Plantation (Ridsdale), where the species is regarded as scarce. The highest December count was four at Derwent Reservoir.

## **Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula*

STATUS: Common resident.

BREEDING: Common.

Highest counts during the first quarter were 500 at QE II CP in January, 400 foraging in a winter wheat field at Beacon Hill (Cramlington) in February and 200 at Bothal Pond in March. Elsewhere during the period were gatherings of 100-210 at Amble, Colt Crag Reservoir, Cresswell, Deanmoor, Linton Pond, Tyne Riverside CP, Walbottle and Whitfield; 84 at Howden in March had declined to 26 by the end of April.

The peak count for May was 44 at Howden, with a similar number at this site in June. An evening roost at Big Waters held 100 on 7th July and 25-41 were reported from Bolton, Dinnington and Howden in August. The Big Waters roost had increased to 250 by 10th September, while elsewhere during the month 130 were noted at Whitelea (Cramlington) and 100 at Hauxley and Kiln Pit Hill.

In October, 132 were gathered on fields at Beacon Hill (Cramlington) on 18th, while around 50 trying to cross to the mainland from Holy Island (Heugh) on 19th were repeatedly driven back by a strong SW gale. Larger counts during the final two months included, 500 at Holywell Dene and 120 at Budle Bay in November, and 200 at Kiln Pit Hill and 100 at Wideopen in December.

## **Rook** *Corvus frugilegus*

STATUS: Abundant resident.

BREEDING: Abundant. Some colonies have declined in recent years.

By far the largest reported gathering of the year was 1,000 at QEII CP on 27th January (ASJ), numbers here declining to 121 by mid-March. In February, 50+ attended a 'rookery' at Widdrington on 7th and a similar number was at Seghill on 8th. Another count of 121 came from Longhirst in March, when 34 were also at Woodhorn and 22 occupied nests at Holywell Dene. In April, ten nests were noted at Ponteland and 23 at Walbottle. A post-breeding gathering of 110 were feeding in harvested silage fields at Druridge Pools on 23rd June, whilst in August there were flocks of 20-75 at Cornhills, Bolton, Edlingham, Fenrother, Low Leam (Bellingham), Longframlington, Longhorsley, Otterburn and West Woodburn. Flock sizes increased from September when 120 were at Harbottle and 65-70 at Newtown and Warton. This species is now something of a rarity in Newcastle City since the demise of the last few nests a couple of years ago; therefore a lone bird over Exhibition Park on 25th September was a local highlight. In October, 100 gathered at Alnham and at Stocksfield and 75 were at Alnwick. The final two months produced counts of 200 at Acton Farm, Chathill, Holywell Dene, Juniper and Longhirst and 100-120 at Budle Bay and Pegswood, with 80 at Alnwick Moor and 35-40 at Elwick and Warkworth.

## **Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone*

STATUS: Common resident.

BREEDING: Common.

There were some very large gatherings during the first two months of the year. In January, 130 (in two flocks) were at Grindon Lough on 8th, a pre-roost flock of 118 was at Newcastle (Town Moor) on 29th and 30 were at Corby Craggs on 19th, while February produced a count of 136 at Swallow Pond on 4th. In March, 61 were gathered at Windmill Lane (Cramlington) on 15th and 30 were on the Otterburn Training Area on 7th.

Movement was noted at Seaton Sluice on 10th April when 33 flew N and 32 was the peak count from Howden on 12th. On the Farne Islands an impressive 56 W on 5th May was the second highest count for the islands, and for the second consecutive season a nesting attempt was made on Brownsman. Mid-summer counts included 38 at the Blyth Estuary in May, 39 at Beaconhill (Cramlington) in June and 20 at Elsdon in July, with further counts of 14-28 from Howden, Jesmond Dene and Whitelea Chase (Cramlington) during the same period.

Up to 90 were noted at Hauxley in September and 50 in October. North Shields Fish Quay hosted 30 on 5th September, increasing to 40 by 24th October. Also in October, 75 were gathered on the Co-op roof in Alnwick on 2nd and 35-41 were noted at Beaconhill (Cramlington), Howden and Tynemouth. A peak of 28 were feeding on sea-buckthorn berries at the Wansbeck Estuary in November, and in December 137 were gathered on the rocks below Tynemouth on 1st and 45 were at nearby NSFQ on 11th.

## **Hooded Crow** *Corvus cornix*

STATUS: Rare and declining passage and winter visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2013

BREEDING: Historical. / LAST BRED: Hybrid pair 1979.

There were only two reports this year, both in the spring. The first flew across the River Tyne at Tynemouth on 21st April, landing briefly on the North Pier (DRW). The other was at Cresswell Pond on 1st May (TRD).

## **Raven** *Corvus corax*

STATUS: Uncommon resident.

BREEDING: Uncommon, increasing.

During the first quarter peak counts were ten at Plenmeller Common on 7th February and 14 at Harwood Forest on 7th March. Five flew W at Grindon Lough on 21st February, four were at Doddington on 18th and three were noted at Deadwater (Kielder) on 12th March. Elsewhere during this period reports of one to two were widespread across almost all suitable upland habitats, including nesting activity from no less than five localities.

Northumbria Ringing Group reported 27 occupied sites (28 in 2013), 21 pairs laid eggs (24 in 2013) of which 18 pairs fledged 49+ young (50 in 2013).

One to two were reported on Holy Island from 3rd-4th April and again on 11th and 15th and one landed on the beach at Beadnell on 10th May. Flocks began to assemble again in upland areas from mid-May, when nine were at Hedgehope. In Upper Coquetdale, seven

to 12 were noted at Shillmoor and Usway Burn in June. In July, peak counts were 11 in Upper Coquetdale, seven at Haltonlea Fell and six on the Otterburn Ranges. Five at Greenhaugh was the highest August count. The largest gathering of the year was 19 on the border ridge at The Schill on 5th September (IRD).

Further coastal sightings occurred in October, with two at Holy Island from 13th-27th and more unusually, one to three at Tynemouth from 20th-28th, with a peak from 24th-26th. Six, including tumbling display were noted in the Harthope Valley on 23rd November and in December a trip from Linhope to Harthope produced a count of nine on 2nd. Away from the usual upland localities, which were well represented throughout the year, there were reports of twos in December from Berwick, Dunstanburgh Castle and Holystone (Wallsend), as well as singles on Holy Island on 16th November and 6th December.

## **Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus*

STATUS: Abundant resident and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Abundant.

Typical coniferous woodland habitat produced the largest numbers during the first quarter, with counts of ten from Bakethin Reservoir in January and at Kielder Water in March; elsewhere five to six were reported from Prestwick Carr, Rising Sun CP (Wallsend) and Wark Forest.

Coastal movements were noted from 1st-4th April, with 25 at Newbiggin on 2nd, 17 at Holy Island on 4th and two to six at Cresswell Pond, Tynemouth and Woodhorn Flashes. More than six were in song at Dipton Woods on 11th May, there was a peak count of five from Jesmond Dene in June and a family party was at Valley Park (Cramlington) in July.

In September, there was a high count of 60+ from Bakethin Reservoir on 13th, whilst coastal movement was evident mid-month with daily counts of 14-22 at Holy Island from 15th-20th, 20 at St Mary's Island on 15th and lesser numbers at Bamburgh, Cambois, Craster, Hauxley RS and Woodhorn during the same period.

Fall conditions in October resulted in 40 at Low Newton on 8th, before a more substantial influx deposited large numbers on Holy Island from 15th-18th, with a peak of 98 on 16th (MJC/ADM), on which date 30 were also at the Farne Islands and at Hauxley RS. Movement inland was apparent later in the month as 40 were found in Wark (North Tyne) on 24th. Passage continued into November, with peak counts of 25 at Druridge Bay CP on 9th, 17 on Holy Island on 19th, 33 at the Farne Islands on 20th and ten at Bamburgh on 23rd, while inland 15 were at Allen Banks and ten at Wark. Ten at Bellingham and at Grindon Lough were the highest December counts.

## **Firecrest** *Regulus ignicapilla*

STATUS: Rare although regular passage migrant and extremely rare winter visitor.

The first was at St Mary's Island on 22nd April (SPP). A singing male was heard, and eventually seen, in Sycamores in the Vicars garden (Holy Island) on 30th May (GB).

Another was at Holy Island Lough from 19th-21st September (ADM *et al.*) and more unusual was a rare winter record of a single moving with Long-tailed Tits at North Seaton Colliery on 19th December (CDB).



Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

STATUS: Abundant resident.

BREEDING: Abundant.

In January, a total of 28 were ringed during two sessions at Spindlestone and up to 21 were noted daily at Gosforth Park NR. Elsewhere, 12-14 were reported from Bedlington and Humford Mill (Bedlington) in January and 15 from Prestwick Carr in February; counts of seven came from Eachwick, Furnace Bridge (Bedlington) and gardens at Old Hartley and Walbottle during the first quarter.

Details from nest box study areas were as follows:

Locality	Nests	Eggs laid	Young fledged	Productivity	Observer
Linnels	21	211	153	7.3	AM
Dipton Wood	11	120	110	10	SWA
Dye House	10	80	57	5.7	RMH
Marchburn	9	90	61	6.7	RMH
Whittle Wood	6	--	70	11.7	DWN
Wallington Hall	6	45	42	7	JCD
Low Carriteth	6	49	34	5.6	JR
Letah Wood	3	30	24	8	RMH
Rothley Lake	3	28	23	7.6	JCD
Ladycross	3	22	11	3.6	RMH
Hauxley NR	2	18	17	8.5	RMH
Coldwell Hill (Chesters)	1	8	8	8	JCD
Hall's Hill (Chesters)	1	8	0	0	JCD

In addition breeding was confirmed at Woolsington where nest building had begun by 23rd March, Fulbeck (Morpeth), Haughton Strother GP and from an Old Hartley garden. Family parties were reported from Longhorsley Moor, Parish Haugh (Morpeth) and Walbottle, where nine juveniles were seen in July. In August-September, counts from Hauxley RS included up to 38 and 30 respectively.

In September, a total of 35 at Prestwick Carr on 6th included a flock of 26, while 20 were at Newsham (Blyth) on 18th; six in the dunes at Holy Island on 13th were out of context and may have suggested coastal movement. A large mixed flock at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 14th October included at least 48 of this species (MR), whilst in November, 15 were at East Sleekburn on 15th, 11 at Routing Lyn (Ford) on 9th and ten at Prestwick Carr. A total of 36 were trapped and ringed at Spindlestone on 16th December and 17, likewise at Eshott on 27th; elsewhere six to seven were reported from Eachwick, Holywell Dene, Holywell Pond, Valley Park (Cramlington) and Whitley Bay Cemetery.

Great Tit *Parus major*

STATUS: Common resident.

BREEDING: Common.

In January, a total of 22 were ringed during two sessions at Spindlestone and up to 20+ were noted at Prestwick Carr on 1st. Elsewhere during the first three months of the year, seven were at Humford Mill (Bedlington) in January and 12 at Gosforth Park NR and Prestwick Carr in March, with six to eight reported from Jesmond Dene throughout the period.

Six were on garden feeders at Tynemouth during April and up to four were at Jesmond Dene and Prestwick Carr. More unusually, a single on the Farne Islands from 1st-2nd April was the first record in nine years.

Details from nest box study areas were as follows:

Locality	Nests	Eggs laid	Young fledged	Productivity	Observer
Wallington Hall	31	199	117	3.7	JCD
Linnels	19	167	109	5.7	AM
Marchburn	18	144	108	6	RMH
Tarset	15	102	65	4.3	JR
Rothley Lake	14	92	49	3.5	JCD
Dye House	12	85	58	4.8	RHM
Dipton Wood	7	50	42	6	SWA
Hauxley NR	7	53	36	5.1	RMH
Whittle Wood	5	--	26	5.2	DWN
Colwell Hill (Chesters)	5	43	23	4.6	JCD
Fallowlees	4	24	21	5.25	JCD
Hall's Hill (Chesters)	3	26	26	8.6	JCD
Low Carriteth	2	12	10	5	JR
Ladycross	1	8	0	0	RMH

Elsewhere breeding was confirmed from Gosforth and Old Hartley gardens, Haughton Strother GP (seven pairs), Longhorsley Moor and Walbottle, and three family parties, totalling 18 birds were at Prestwick Carr in June; 18-20 were also at Hauxley RS in August-September.

In October, single birds were at two Holy Island locations on 10th and a large mixed flock at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 14th included at least 18 of this species (MR). Nine to 11 were reported from East Sleekburn, Haughton Strother and Shiremoor in November, while in December a total of 29 were trapped and ringed at Eshott on 27th (MSH) and 25, likewise at Spindlestone on 16th (BRS); in addition, up to eight were at Prestwick Carr during the month and six at Eachwick, Holywell Dene, Holywell Pond and Whitley Bay Cemetery.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

STATUS: Abundant resident.  
BREEDING: Abundant.

At least ten were noted at Grindon Green (Wark Forest) on 1st January and from East Chevington-Druridge Bay CP on 4th February, whilst in March there was a peak count of 20+ at Wallington Hall on 1st (ASJ). Elsewhere, gardens at Tynemouth and Old Hartley held four to six throughout the period and four to five were also reported from Humford Mill (Bedlington), Jesmond Dene and Spindleston. Six continued to visit the Tynemouth garden during April and up to four were noted at Jesmond Dene and Prestwick Carr in April-May.

Single pairs occupied nest boxes at Dipton Woods, Hall’s Hill (Chesters), Ladycross, Linnels Wood, Marchburn and Wallington Hall. The nest at Marchburn failed at the egg stage; all other pairs were very successful, with 100% productivity. In addition, breeding was confirmed at Chapel House (Newcastle) where a pair, present since April, escorted recently fledged juveniles in June.

Typical coniferous habitat at Bakethin Reservoir held 20 on 13th September (PRM). On the coast, seven were at Hauxley RS on 1st November and four at Bamburgh Castle Wood on 23rd November. Eight were trapped and ringed at Eshott on 27th December.

Willow Tit *Poecila montana*

STATUS: Well-represented resident.  
BREEDING: Uncommon.

The species was reported from 37 localities in 2014.

The chart below would suggest distribution remains relatively stable, given that 2010 and 2011 were BTO Atlas years.

Year	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Localities	37	45	41	48	51

Predictably, Prestwick Carr remained the favoured locality, with counts of two to four throughout the year and a peak of six in November (PCF). Other sites regularly reporting one to two birds were at Big Waters, Derwent Reservoir, Linden Hall and the Old Hartley / Holywell Dene area.

During the first quarter one to two were also noted at Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield), Arcot Pond, Beacon Lane (Cramlington), Branton GP, Brier Dene (Whitley Bay), Castle Island, Clennel Wood (Hexham), Eachwick, Eshott, Linton Lane, Longhoughton Quarry, Plessey Woods CP, Swallow Pond, Ulgham and Warkworth Lane. In addition two pairs were reported from Longhorsley Moor on 13th March.

Breeding was confirmed at the latter locality in May, when a bird was seen carrying food on 13th (AB/LB) and also at Prestwick Carr where a pair escorted three juveniles on 13th July (PCF). Elsewhere during the breeding season one to two were reported from Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield), Beacon Hill (Longhorsley), Branton GP, Brier Dene (Whitley Bay), East Chevington, Snod’s Edge, Swallow Pond, Rothbury, West Hartford and at Warkworth Lane where there were three in July.

Singles were noted on the coast at Low Newton on 1st September, Craster on 21st September and Newbiggin (Ash Lagoons) on 17th October. Additional September records included twos at Backworth, Carlisle Park (Morpeth) and Ulgham, whilst in October three were at Dinnington. Two were at Lucker in November, while Big Waters held a peak of three in December, when one to two were also reported from Castle Island and Eshott.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

STATUS: Well-represented resident.  
BREEDING: Well-represented.

The species was reported from 24 localities in 2014, slightly less than the previous year and significantly fewer than 2010 and 2011.

The chart below highlights an apparent contraction in distribution within the county:

Year	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Localities	24	26	35	44	48

Although 2010-2011 were BTO Atlas years, when coverage of potentially favourable habitat would have been more extensive, there would still appear to be a genuine decline, given the previous species has remained relatively stable under similar circumstances.

During the first quarter up to four were noted at Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth) and three at Thrum Mill (Rothbury), with one to two also reported from Big Waters, Castle Island, Hedgeley, Linden Hall, Morpeth GC, a Rothbury garden and Whorrel Bank (Morpeth).

Two singing males were heard at Scotch Gill Woods in March. Breeding was confirmed at Ordley in April, when one of two pairs present was feeding young on 23rd (AJR). A family party of four was at Whiteadder Water (Berwick) on 8th June (BWG/TBr) and another family of six was found at Morpeth on 19th September (TB). Elsewhere during the breeding season one to two were reported from Linden Hall, Nunnykirk, Thrum Mill, near Ulgham and at Rothbury.

Sightings were more widespread from September-December, with up to four again reported from Scotch Gill Woods and three in the Ulgham area and at Wallington Hall. One to two at Spindleston in October was only the second record for the site, while two at Letah Wood (Hexham) in November were the first seen here in more than a year. Elsewhere during this latter period one to two were also noted at Borough Wood (Morpeth), Branton GP, Craster, Fontburn Reservoir, Linden Hall, Mitford Castle, Prestwick Carr, Thrum Mill, a Rothbury garden and Wark (North Tyne).

Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2013  
BREEDING: Extremely rare. / FIRST BRED: 1999 / LAST BRED: 2000

Further confirmation of its spread north is a sequence of records throughout the first half of the year. The first sighting was a male at East Chevington which was seen sporadically from 19th January to 25th March (ADM<sub>c</sub> *et al.*). There were a number of sightings from Holy Island Lough with at least two males and a female from 6th April to 23rd May (ADM/



Bearded Tit - Cresswell Pond - June (Ian Fisher)

JF/TFa *et al.*). Cresswell Pond was also frequented by two males, present from 11th May to 8th June (ADMc *et al.*). Finally, East Chevington again proved popular with at least three males from 15th June to 11th July (IF/ADMc *et al.*). As the species is increasingly regular in the county the CRC have removed it from the 'description required list'.

### Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

STATUS: Abundant resident, passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Abundant.

The generally mild weather with minimal amounts of snow throughout the first three months of the year enabled birds to remain in the county, albeit in small numbers in January, when apart from a flock of 26 on Alnwick Moor on 4th, only one or two were noted at four other localities. In February, at least 30 were at Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay) on 24th, up to ten at Cramlington, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) and Weetslade and one to four at around 20 other localities with many birds recorded singing and displaying and birds noted moving N. Numbers increased significantly in March, with 15 to 20 singing at favoured breeding sites in the uplands at Allendale, Rowley Burn and the Simonsides and, at coastal sites, ten were at Spital Burn (Newbiggin) and six flew N at Tynemouth; one to five were recorded from at least 12 other widespread localities.

During the breeding season (April-July) peak counts of singing birds in May-June were 45 on the Otterburn Ranges, 30 at Simonside, 22 at Buteland Fell (Redesmouth) and 20 at Green Rigg (all ASJ). Elsewhere, counts of ten to 12 were recorded at Acton Moor (Allendale), Carey Burn, Potland Burn (Ashington), Prestwick Carr, St Mary's Wetland and Whittle Dene Reservoirs with one to ten at 12 other inland and coastal localities.

Visible autumn migration was witnessed from mid-September onwards with a high count of 103 at Haughton Strother GP on 12th (MR) and, on many subsequent dates until

month end, 20 S (per hour for three hours) at Druridge Pools, 60 S at Hauxley and St Mary's Island, 50 SW at East Cramlington and Greenhaugh, 42 N at Cheswick, 36 S at Backworth, 25 SW at Hexham and 20-22 over Big Waters, Ellington, Marden Quarry and the Straight Lonnen (Holy Island). Significant passage continued throughout October as birds moved out of the county, with peaks of 60-78 S on four dates in late October on Holy Island, 68 S (in one hour) at Derwent Reservoir, 63 at St Mary's Island and 45 (two hours) at Spital (Newbiggin). Elsewhere, 30-50 were recorded at Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotley Field), Beal, Cramlington and Ellington with three to 30 at many other widespread sites.

In November, continuing movement S was noted at Hauxley RS with 20 on 1st and 15 on 8th with gatherings of 20 at Holywell, 16 between Shiremoor-Murton and in fields at St Mary's on various dates; eleven moved S at Ross Back Sands on 16th and seven came in off the sea at Seaton Sluice on 4th. Up to six were noted at Corbridge on 3rd, some in full song, with one to three at four other localities. During December, 23 were present at Cramlington on Christmas Day, 12 in fields at Holywell Dene on 31st and one or two elsewhere, at Forestburn Gate, Newbiggin and West Chevington.

### Shore Lark *Eremophila alpestris*

STATUS: Rare winter visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2013

It was another disappointing year for this much sought-after visitor with only two reports of almost certainly the same individual. One was found at Druridge beach on 7th October (JPD/MPF/AS) and probably the same individual was at nearby East Chevington Burn mouth on 10th (GB/IJ).

Mike Henry





## **Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia*

STATUS: Common summer and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

The earliest sighting was a single passing through East Chevington on 15th March with the next arrivals not until 21st, comprising singles at Big Waters and Swallow Pond; on 22nd, six were at Branton GP and two at Big Waters, followed by two at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 23rd. Thereafter, numbers built rapidly with records from 11 sites from 24th until the month end, most notably 244 over Branton GP on 25th and 50 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Many high counts came in April as birds gathered to feed over water prior to breeding, with peaks of 450 at East Ord (Berwick) on 22nd (MHu), 250 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs, 100 over Alnmouth sewage treatment works, 80 at Capheaton Lake and 20-50 at Arcot Pond, Branton GP, the Breamish Valley, Eals Village, Haughton Strother GP, Low Newton, Lynemouth Flash and Twizel (nr. Ogle).

Although no breeding colony counts were made this year, in May flocks of more than 180 were at Haughton Strother GP, 50+ at Lynemouth Flash and 30 at Branton GP with up to 20 at eight other potential breeding sites.

As early as 20th June, 50 passage birds were gathered at Gosforth Park NR with at least 30 at Lynemouth Flash and Ingram. In July, a pre-migration roost in excess of 400 gathered in the reedbed at Cresswell Pond on 6th (MSH) and 250 were at Ellington on 7th, all indicative of a successful breeding season during the warm dry, summer. Large concentrations in August, which peaked by mid-month and fell rapidly beyond that date, included 250 at Big Waters on 18th, with elsewhere, 70-150 at Arcot Pond, Bothal Pond, Cresswell Pond, Haughton Strother GP and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Only three sightings in September comprised a single at Big Waters on 1st, ten at Bothal Pond on 7th and one at Newbiggin on 24th. The final record of the year was a single at Tynemouth on 10th October.

## **Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*

STATUS: Common summer and abundant passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

The first returning birds in March were singles at Branton GP on 25th and another flying N at Kielderburn on 30th. In April, peak counts from 22nd onwards, were 150 at West Ord (Berwick), up to 100 at Swallow Pond, 50 at Arcot Pond and 25 at Prestwick Carr; on other dates throughout the month, ten to 20 were also at Holy Island, Marden Quarry (Whitley Bay), Tyne Riverside Park (Prudhoe) and Wark (North Tyne) with one to eight at 27 other locations. Passage was still on-going as late as 14th May when 125 were counted moving N at Goswick.

The maximum recorded gatherings in May were 150+ at Killingworth Lake, 50 at Arcot Pond and 35 at Langleeford (Harthope Valley) and nest building was reported from locations as varied as Belsay Hall, Foxhunters Industrial Estate (Whitley Bay), the hide at Holy Island Lough and Wellfield Allotments (Holywell Dene).

The Holy Island study area (IK), now on-going for more than a decade, recorded the best breeding season yet with at least 77 broods, involving a minimum of 260 fledged young (150 in the previous record year of 2009). Many pairs produced second broods and a small number of nests held third broods. Notably, and possibly due to intense pressure for other nest sites on the island, a pair fledged young from a natural site in a low boulder-clay sea cliff near Emmanuel Head, this being a first record of its kind for Northumberland. An



Firecrest - St Mary's Island - April (Alan Curry)



Marsh Tit - Wallington - February (Chris Barlow)

equally successful breeding season was reported from the Upper Coquetdale study area (JR) where 30 pairs (17 in 2013) fledged 186 young (97 in 2013), these figures including 21 pairs with second broods. The small Farne Islands breeding population was maintained at a total of six pairs with one pair on Inner Farne successfully raising two broods (FIR). Breeding success was also noted at Ponteland Leisure Centre with nine nests containing 23 young.

The warm, dry summer provided optimum nesting and feeding conditions for all the hirundine species and from mid-July a nightly roost in reed beds at Gosforth Park NR held 1,000-2,000 birds. On 20th July over 120 were recorded at Backworth and elsewhere, gatherings of 30-80, including many juveniles, were present at Blakemoor Farm, East Chevington, East Matfen, Holywell Dene and Northumberlandia (Cramlington). Light passage S was witnessed at Budle Point and Newbiggin on 27th July.

In August, huge reedbed pre-migration roosts built up with the largest being c.5,000 at Cramlington A&E Hospital on 15th, a peak of 2,000 at Gosforth Park NR and a similar number at Newton Pool on 28th. Other large concentrations in late August were 400 feeding on an insect hatch at Cresswell Pond, 250 over High Newton, 200 at West Hartford, 180 at Holy Island and up to 100 at 22 other locations; significant movement was noted on 28th-29th, when 600 moved NE at Cramlington, 520 S (in one hour) at Seaton Sluice and 400 S (in two hours) at Tynemouth. This heavy passage continued into September, peaking around mid-month and including daily peaks of 1,000 S (in under one hour) at Newbiggin on 1st, 800 (500 S, 300 N) passing Seaton Sluice Watch Tower on the same day, 500 S at West Hartford and Holy Island village, 300 S at Budle Bay, 200 S at Hauxley and 100-170 from Houghton Strother GP, St Mary's Island and Tynemouth, with one to 75 at 25 other widespread localities.

The first week in October saw good numbers still moving S with a peak of 50 (per hour) at Backworth, 32 at Craster, 18 at Cresswell Pond, 16 at Holy Island and elsewhere up to 19th, one to eight at ten coastal and three inland locations; the final record of the month was a single moving along the dunes at Hauxley on 25th. Three records in November comprised singles over a Wallsend garden on 1st, and at Holy Island on 2nd and 11th

## House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

STATUS: Common summer and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

The first arrival was a single in the Harthope Valley on 11th April with the next sightings being singles at Holywell Dene on 14th, Branton and Low Newton scrape on 17th and three at Cramlington and two at Arcot Pond on 19th. Numbers increased rapidly from 25th with 40+ at Killingworth Lake, 36 at West Ord (Berwick), 30 at Swallow Pond and one to six at 14 other widespread locations. May saw numbers boosted as the main influx of migrants arrived and 200-250 fed over Killingworth Lake from 22nd-24th, 50 were at West Ord (Berwick), 41 at Bothal Pond, 30 at Arcot Pond, 20 at St Mary's and 15 at Langleeferd (Harthope Valley) on dates from 1st-28th.

Throughout June-July, gatherings reduced in size as nesting activities became a priority; 20 were seen collecting mud from beneath Telford Bridge (Morpeth) and elsewhere four to 15 were at Exhibition and Leazes Parks (Newcastle), Holywell Dene, Howdon and Walbottle. Ten active nests were counted at St George's Park, five at Belsay Hall, four at Needles Eye (Berwick) and three at Walbottle. As young fledged from nests, larger concentrations of feeding adults and juveniles became more frequent and in August, 64 were at East Ord (Berwick) and 50 at St Mary's Island and Snab Point (Cresswell) with

40 at Whitley Bay and 30 at Big Waters, Holywell Dene, Meadow Riggs (Alnwick) and Wooler. One to 20 were recorded at 12 widespread localities and nests were still active at Alnwick Leisure Centre and Newcastle Airport in the second half of the month.

Pre-migration flocks in September included a maximum of 120 over Holy Island Village on 15th and elsewhere, on dates from 8th-26th, 73 were on wires at Seaton Sluice, 65 over Newcastle Town Moor, 50 over Heddon-on-the-Wall and 30 at Bamburgh, Houghton Strother GP (Humshaugh) and Hauxley. One to 15 were at 11 other locations and active nests were still reported on 13th at Cresswell Village and Tower Knowe (Kielder Water).

In October, a flock of 46 prepared for migration at East Ord (Berwick) on 3rd and also during the first week, six to ten frequented Fullers Walk (Alnwick), Gosforth Park NR and Seaton Point, with a pair still attending young in a nest at Cramlington on 4th. Later records in October comprised singles at Tynemouth on 10th, Ellington on 17th and Holy Island on 18th.

## Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

STATUS: Common resident.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

Roaming feeding groups were typically widespread across lowland areas during the first quarter; 17 were trapped and ringed at Spindleston on 20th January, while elsewhere the largest groups involved ten to 12 at Bedlington, Gosforth, Humshaugh, Kirkley Hall, Lambley Viaduct, Stannington and Walbottle. Smaller groups frequented at least 20 other widespread localities.

As usual, early breeding activity was observed in March, with pairs nest-building in a Walbottle garden on 2nd and at Longhorsley Common on 13th. The first family parties were evident during May with eight to 11 at Arcot Pond, Cramlington, Holywell Dene, Rothbury and Snod's Edge. A pair fed young in a nest at Corbridge and one with fledglings at St Mary's Wetland was probably that locality's first breeding record (MSH). Further family parties of nine to 13 were at Cramlington, Longhorsley Moor and Morpeth during June.

Wandering feeding groups were widespread during summer, with peaks of 20 at Tynemouth (Priors Park), 16 at Houghton Strother, 15 at Hadston Carrs, Minsteracres and Tynemouth and smaller parties in numerous other localities.

Coastal movements occurred during October, with 17 at Hauxley RS and five on Holy Island. Elsewhere, during the final quarter parties were again widespread, particularly in coastal and lowland localities where the largest groups included 22 at Backworth, 18 at Earsdon Cemetery, 17 at Budle Bay, 16 at Cramlington and 15 at Tynemouth. Further inland, peaks involved 30 at Wark (North Tyne), 20 at Allen Banks, 14 at Hexham and Longhorsley and smaller groups at 15 other localities.

## Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

STATUS: Rare autumn passage visitor. Extremely rare in spring. / LAST RECORD: 2013

One singing near the 'mound' at Newbiggin on 29th May was only the second spring record for the county (SJM/JGS). The first was also from Newbiggin on 17th May 2009.

The only other sighting was a popular bird at Chare Ends (Holy Island) from 14th-19th September (JWR/SS *et al.*).





Greenish Warbler - Holy Island - September (Tim Dean)



Hume's Warbler - Brier Dene - November (Ian Fisher)

### **Pallas's Warbler** *Phylloscopus proregulus*

STATUS: Rare autumn passage visitor. Extremely rare in spring. / LAST RECORD: 2013  
There was only a single record of this increasingly rare Siberian vagrant, from Whitley Bay GC (Astley Track) on 15th November (AC/JPD).

### **Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus*

STATUS: Uncommon autumn passage visitor, extremely rare in spring.

It was another very good year for this Siberian species, although not quite on the scale of the record autumn invasion of 2013. At least 70 individuals were recorded compared with 80-90 the previous year.

As often occurs, Holy Island proved the prime location with two distinct influxes. The first began from 14th September when a single was in the Vicarage garden. One to three were then present daily until 20th with a peak of five on 19th (MJC/ADM *et al.*). Elsewhere, two were at St Mary's Wetland and one in Whitley Bay Cemetery on 15th, two at Low Newton on 17th and one at Tynemouth from 17th-19th. One which arrived on Inner Farne on 17th remained until 29th, the group's longest recorded stay. Singles were seen on 18th at Brier Dene (Whitley Bay), Brownsman (Farnes), Marden Quarry, Woodhorn Church and, much more unusually, inland at Longbenton. Others followed, with two at Bamburgh on 19th and singles at Low Newton on 20th, Castle Island on 25th and one was ringed at Bamburgh on 29th.

Onward passage led to a lull until a second bigger influx commenced on 7th October when 15 were on Holy Island, including five in the Straight Lonnen and four at the Snook (MJC/ADM/SR). One to four continued to be seen daily until the end of the month. On the Farne Islands, three on Brownsman on 7th were followed by at least three on other islands between then and 15th. Elsewhere, five were between Bamburgh GC and Budle Point and three at Low Newton on 8th. Two were at Hauxley on 11th-12th. Between then and 17th singles appeared at Bamburgh, Beadnell, Berwick, Craster, Cresswell Pond, Longhoughton Steel, St Mary's Island, Tynemouth and the Wansbeck Estuary. Two were on Inner Farne and singles were at Bamburgh and Tynemouth on 30th and St Mary's from 31st-1st November. The final records involved singles in November at Low Newton on 2nd and Bamburgh on 4th.

### **Hume's Warbler** *Phylloscopus humei*

STATUS: Rare autumn passage visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2011

A typically late individual was at Brier Dene (Whitley Bay) from 22nd-24th November (NPD *et al.*). It was very well documented and a just reward for many hours of local patch work. The record was accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee.

### **Dusky Warbler** *Phylloscopus fuscatus*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2012

Continuing the recent run of records one was on Brownsman (Farne Islands) from 30th October to 1st November (DR *et al.*).



## Eastern Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus orientalis*

STATUS: Extremely rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 1 / FIRST: 1995

One of the birds of the year, found on the Ash Lagoon bank (Newbiggin) on 3rd May (AT *et al.*). It was at first thought to be a Western Bonelli's Warbler but later proved to be an Eastern, as the song, although slightly atypical was a match. This was only the second for the county, with the first at Whitley Bay Cemetery in September 1995. The record was accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee.

## Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

STATUS CHANGE: Uncommon summer and rare passage visitor.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

The steady decline in population was again reflected in the small number of records received. Two very early males were singing at the prime locality, Allen Banks, on 19th April and another was at Ordley on 23rd. A coastal passage individual was at Tynemouth (Priors Park) on 26th.

As usual, Allen Banks remained the favoured locality during May, with up to five males singing on 5th. On the same date another sang at nearby Langley Castle. One was also singing on the Tarsset Burn at Sidwood on 17th. The only other record involved a single at Wallsend on 5th. During June there were no records from Allen Banks, although two singing males were at Sidwood on 8th and one was well away from the usual western localities at Byrness on 28th.

There were no July or August sightings. The final records were in September when passage singles were at Whitley Bay Cemetery from 15th-18th and on Holy Island (Greenshiel excavations) on 17th and in the Vicarage garden on 21st.

## Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

STATUS: Well-represented summer and passage visitor, rare in winter

BREEDING: Well-represented.

As usual, a small number of wintering individuals were present in January-February. During January, singles were recorded in a Seghill garden on two dates and other individuals were at Beadnell, Tynemouth and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. In February, singles were in Newcastle (Lower Ouseburn) and at Warkworth.

Spring arrival began from mid-March and birds quickly occupied many localities with males immediately singing. Peak counts included eight at Swallow Pond, seven in song at Bedlington (Furnace Bridge), six in Hartford Woods and Holywell Dene and five at Branton GP, Plessey Woods, QEII CP and Wallsend Dene. At the two Wallsend sites, the comment was made that birds were heard three weeks earlier than in the cold spring of 2013.

Coastal passage occurred in late March, with four on the Farne Islands and at Holy Island by 29th. On Holy Island passage rapidly increased in early April with 26 on 4th, before quickly declining with onward movement. Similarly, 17 were at Bamburgh on 5th. Influxes later in the month produced 24 on the Farne Islands on 21st and 25 on Holy Island on 24th, where passage continuing into early May with 17 on 2nd.

Elsewhere, by late April many pairs were settled in breeding territories with high counts in prime localities. These included 19 at Swallow Pond, 12 at Longhorsley (Beacon Hill), ten at Allen Banks and Bolam Lake and smaller concentrations in many widespread localities. During May, 16 singing males were along 4km of roadside at Beacon Hill.

In June, late northern migrants passed through Holy Island on 1st and 9th when numerous local birds were already feeding broods. As usual, many continued to sing in June and some into July with records from Alnwick (Hulne Park), Arcot Pond, Blagdon, Bothal, Cramlington (Valley Park) Cresswell, Druridge Bay, Linton Ponds, Morpeth (Castle Park), Jesmond Dene and Simonside Forest.

Post-breeding dispersal occurred during August when ten were near Humshaugh. Return passage followed in September with higher coastal counts including 27 at Hauxley, 20 between Bamburgh GC and Budle Point, 18 on Holy Island, 12 at Craster, ten at Bamburgh and six on the Farne Islands. Many remained inland with seven still around Derwent Reservoir on 21st.

Numbers declined in October with onward movement and the only double-figure count was from the Bamburgh-Budle Bay stretch with ten to 15 present on 7th-8th. Six to seven were at Low Newton and Tynemouth and three to four at Gosforth Park NR, Holy Island and St Mary's Island.

During November one to three passed through Holy Island on ten dates and two were at Bamburgh, Hauxley and Whitley Bay (Brier Dene). Singles were recorded on nine dates on the Farne Islands and other singles were at Blyth Riverside Industrial Estate, Cresswell Pond, Lynemouth, St Mary's Island and Tynemouth and inland at Brenkley, Gosforth Park and Longbenton. In December, one was still on the Farne Islands on 2nd. Other singles were noted at Bamburgh, again at Blyth Riverside and at Branton GP, Holywell Dene, Howdon, Longbenton, Marden Quarry and North Seaton.

## 'Siberian' Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita tristis*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 29 / Last Record 2013

There were two January records, with one at Beadnell from 3rd-5th (GW) and another at St Mary's Island from 4th-22nd (NPD).

More typical were two late autumn individuals, with one at The Snook (Holy Island) from 5th-9th November (ADM MJC *et al.*) and the other at Bamburgh on 23rd November (ADM). All these individuals were well documented and fitted the classic 'tristis' model; however there remains ongoing discussion as to Chiffchaff taxonomy.

## Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

STATUS: Abundant summer and common passage visitor.

BREEDING: Abundant.

The first, a very early arrival was at Prestwick Carr on 1st April, although it was towards mid-month before they became widespread in breeding areas. Numbers at Prestwick Carr increased to 23 by 11th and a similar rapid build-up occurred at Longhorsley (Beacon Hill) where 12 singing males on 14th rose to 43 by the end of the month. Other substantial counts involved 25 at Swallow Pond and 11-20 at Branton, Cramlington (Village Green and Windmill Lane), Tosson Hill and Wingates. Smaller numbers of singing males were at many other widespread localities.



'Siberian' Chiffchaff - Holy Island - November (Andy Mould)



Great Reed Warbler - Cresswell Pond - June (Ian Fisher)

Coastal passage northwards also occurred in late April on Holy Island with 23 on 24th-26th, before peaking at 47 on 29th. One to four were then noted on many dates until the end of May with two final birds on 1st June. On the Farne Islands, 26 on 27th declined to 18 the following day.

Meanwhile, further impressive counts from breeding areas were also made in May, the largest being 37 singing males along 4km of roadside at Beacon Hill. Elsewhere, 23 sang at Wingates, 21 at Branton, 20 in the Harthope Valley and 18 at Ingram, with smaller counts in numerous other wooded nesting localities. They remained prominent during June, with higher counts including 11 at Prestwick Carr and Longhorsley Moor. During July, as males fell silent, they were typically unobtrusive.

Return passage was quickly underway during August, the first indication of which was five on Holy Island on 12th, followed by ten at Druridge Pools on 22nd and one on the Farne Islands on 25th. At the latter locality one to ten were then noted on 51 dates until October. Passage continued during September with birds present daily on Holy Island with a peak of 25 on 16th. Other coastal counts included ten at Alnmouth, Bamburgh and Craster. A few remained inland with five still at Gosforth Park NR and four at Longhorsley Common.

Nearly all had departed by October when the only records involved singles at Low Newton on 8th, Farne Islands on 10th and Holy Island on 17th. The final record involved a very late individual at Hauxley RS on 5th November.

### **Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla*

STATUS: Common summer and well represented passage visitor, uncommon in winter.

BREEDING: Common.

Garden feeding stations proved the main attraction for a small number of wintering individuals. During January gardens at Christon Bank and Old Hartley attracted females. A male also visited the Old Hartley garden, another was regularly at Walbottle and unsexed birds were at South Gosforth and Tynemouth. During February, a female was noted on three occasions in a Whitley Bay garden and another at Jesmond Dene, the Walbottle male remained while other males were at East Ord and in another Whitley Bay garden. The Walbottle male remained in March when the only other sighting was a single at Monkseaton.

Spring arrival rapidly increased numbers during April, when more than 30 singing males were at Allen Banks on 19th. Other typical deciduous and mixed woodland localities also held good numbers, with 11 around Swallow Pond, ten at Morpeth (Scotch Gill Woods), eight at Gosforth Park NR, six singing males at Prudhoe (Tyne Riverside CP) and counts of five from Arcot Hall, Berwick (Castle Hills), Cramlington (Crowhall Lane), Farnley Haughs, Jesmond Dene and Linden Hall. One to four were in a further 41 widespread localities.

Coastal passage commenced in April with a male on Inner Farne on 2nd. Nine were on Holy Island on 24th and eight on the Farne Islands on 28th. Movements at the Farnes continued in May, with three on 2nd and late migrants still present on 29th-30th and on 1st June.

More breeding areas were also occupied during May, when 13 males sang in Holywell Dene and six were in Jesmond Dene and Marden Quarry where early successful breeding was indicated by two females collecting food on 19th. Singing males and pairs continued to be widely reported in June. Additional localities included Branton GP with five present, four singing males at another Cramlington site (Valley Park) and three at Alnwick (Hulne



Park) and Derwent Reservoir. A few continued to sing during July with two at Matfen and singles at Druridge Pools and three Newcastle localities (Heaton Park, Jesmond Dene and Leazes Park).

Return passage in September produced ten at Bamburgh on 13th. Other coastal localities attracted smaller groups, including six at Cambois, five on Holy Island, two to three at Druridge Pools and Woodhorn Church and singles at Castle Island and Low Newton. Small numbers continued to pass through in October, when seven were grounded at Budle Point during heavy rain on 4th and on the Farne Islands there was an autumn peak of 23 on 30th. Four to five continued to be reported from Holy Island, Low Newton and St Mary's Island with one to three in ten other coastal localities.

Light coastal passage continued in early November with four on Holy Island and two at Bamburgh, Whitley Bay (Brier Dene and Cemetery) and singles at Hauxley RS, Holywell Dene, Tynemouth and Wansbeck Estuary. The last Farne Islands bird was seen on 28th. Other singles remained inland at Killingworth, Morpeth and Walbottle.

A male at Howick Haven on 5th December may have been a very late migrant. Elsewhere in December, four wintering individuals occupied gardens. A male was at Morpeth throughout the month, males were in two different Whitley Bay gardens and a female was at nearby Marden Estate.

## **Garden Warbler** *Sylvia borin*

STATUS: Well represented summer and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Well represented.

The first spring arrival was at Berwick (West Ord) on 20th April. Other singles quickly followed at Corbridge (Farnley), Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) and Prudhoe between 21st-23rd. Three were at Branton GP by 27th and as the month ended further singles were at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley), Berwick (Ord garden centre), Rothbury and Wingates. One on the Farne Islands on 22nd was the only indication of coastal passage.

Many more breeding areas were occupied during May, with reports from 31 widespread localities, ranging from lowland sites in the south-east at Arcot and Prestwick Carr, to the Cheviot valleys and Upper Coquetdale in the north, and westwards to Grindon Lough. Most records involved singles or singing males although four were at Lambley and three at Derwent Reservoir, the Harthope Valley and Haughton Strother. At the latter locality, very early breeding was shown with a pair feeding young by 30th.

During June one to two continued to be reported from nine scattered localities. During July adults were watched feeding a juvenile at Linden Hall and a late singing male was at Big Waters on 11th. During August the only sightings involved a single at Hauxley on 31st.

Return passage in September produced peaks of seven on the Farne Islands on 16th and five on Holy Island between 15th-19th. During the same period, one to three were noted daily at St Mary's Island and two were at Budle Point with singles at Druridge Pools, Tynemouth and Woodhorn Church.

The final records were in October, when one was at Budle Point on 7th, two at Cresswell Pond on 9th, and further singles at Low Newton on 11th and Holy Island on 17th. The last individual was still inland at Gosforth Park NR on 28th.

## **Barred Warbler** *Sylvia nisoria*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2012

An influx in September began on Holy Island with a first-winter in the Vicar's garden on 5th (MJC), followed by another first-winter at the Half Moon Slack from 6th-7th (MJC/ADM *et al.*). One was found dead in the garden on Brownsman (Farne Islands) on 6th (DR *et al.*) with another bird there lingering from 6th-10th (ET *et al.*). Two birds were noted on Holy Island on 7th with one on the Crooked Lonnen and another on the Straight Lonnen (AH/SR *et al.*). There was a short gap before the next birds appeared, again at Holy Island, with one at the lough from 15th-21st (MR/ADM/MJC) and another at the Snook from 16th-20th (MJC/ADM *et al.*). Elsewhere during the month, one was in the Low Newton area from 17th-20th (GW *et al.*), one was at St Mary's Island on 17th (NPD), a first-winter was found at Woodhorn on 18th (MJC), and another was on Brownsman on 19th (DR *et al.*) and one at Budle Point on 20th (CGK/GPK). Finally, late birds were noted at Hauxley NR on 27th October (CDB) and Holy Island on 1st-2nd November (MW/CDB).

## **Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca*

STATUS: Uncommon summer and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

Spring passage commenced with a single at Low Newton on 15th April. Other singles were at the Farne Islands on 21st and Swallow Pond on 23rd, after which there was a much bigger arrival from the 26th when up to nine were on Holy Island and two at High Newton. On 27th, numbers on Holy Island rose to a peak of 20, while four at Tynemouth included one taken by a Sparrowhawk; four followed at St Mary's Island on 29th. Elsewhere, singles were seen or heard at Arcot Pond, Castle Island, Cramlington (Northburn, Village Green and Whitelea), East Chevington, Holywell, Holywell Dene, Howdon, Laverock Hall, Newbiggin and Rothbury.

Further coastal passage occurred at Holy Island during May with singles on three dates rising to three on 30th. Singles also visited Newbiggin and Tynemouth (Priors' Park).

During May a male held territory at Budle Point. Others were in potential breeding areas with two at Holywell and Howdon and singles at Arcot Lane, Arcot Pond, Ashington, Backworth, Berwick Castle, Branxton, East Chevington, Pegswood, Ponteland, Whitley Bay (Brier Dene Farm) and Woodhorn Flashes. During June, two singing males were at Linton Ponds and Spindlestone and singles were at Dinnington, East Chevington and Howdon. A singing male at Arcot Pond on 16th July was the month's sole report.

Return passage produced one on Holy Island (Snook) on 31st August. Typical very light movement followed in September when a single at Alnmouth on 6th showed characteristics of the Siberian blythi race. Further singles followed at Snab Point (Cresswell), Hadston and Bamburgh during the first half of the month. Two were on Holy Island between 16th-20th and singles were at St Mary's Wetland on 17th, Tynemouth on 18th, Woodhorn on 20th and again at St Mary's on 29th. One to two were on the Farne Islands on 16 dates in September-early October.

The final records in October were two at Low Newton on 8th and a single at Bamburgh GC on 12th.



### **‘Siberian’ Lesser Whitethroat** *S.c. halimodendri / blythi*

STATUS: Extremely rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 0 / FIRST: 2014

A fascinating record with one found in the observer’s garden in Tynemouth on 4th January which remained faithful to the area until 24th March (CB *et al.*), and unsurprisingly was extremely popular. When first found it was thought likely to be of eastern origin and DNA testing from feathers obtained in the garden proved it to be of the *halimodendri / blythi* group.

### **Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis*

STATUS: Common summer and uncommon passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

The first early arrival was at Newcastle Great Park on 9th April. No more were recorded until 18th when singles were near Holywell and at Woodhorn Flashes. Others were at Berwick and Prestwick Carr from 20th and on the Farne Islands on 23rd. Thereafter, they occupied numerous widespread localities.

Arrival continued in May, with high counts of singing males in prime lowland breeding areas. These included 41 along 6km of the Holywell Waggonway, 16 at Swallow Pond, 15 at Prestwick Carr, 11 at Backworth and Cramlington (Whitelea) and ten in song along 1km of Holywell Dene. Nest-building was underway at Prestwick Carr by 15th. Smaller numbers were found in many other areas. In one regular upland breeding locality, three were singing on heather slopes on the Simonsides.

Coastal passage occurred during May and early June on Holy Island where individuals often sing and where breeding has occurred in recent years.

Males in song and display-fighting remained prominent during June when the first family party was found near Corbridge on 6th. Family parties were prominent during July, when nine at Prestwick Carr were mainly juveniles and family groups were also at Arcot Pond, Cramlington (Beacon Lane and Valley Park), Cocklawburn and Matfen. Others followed in August, when three family groups were at Tynemouth with others at Derwent Reservoir and Newbiggin.

Return passage was underway by late August, with one on Holy Island on 31st followed by two to four on three dates in September, when two to three visited Budle Point, Hadston Carrs and St Mary’s Wetland. A total of 12 were at Newbiggin on 9th and singles were at Alnmouth, Castle Island, Cocklawburn, Craster, Druridge Pools, Tynemouth and Woodhorn. Inland, singles lingered at Backworth, Humshaugh and Longhorsley Common.

Passage ended with a single at Bamburgh GC on 12th October.

### **Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella naevia*

STATUS: Well represented summer and uncommon passage visitor.

BREEDING: Well represented.

The first spring arrival was at Arcot Pond on 10th April and another was at Prestwick Carr the following day. Further early arrival produced two ‘reeling’ males at Arcot Pond by 13th, while numbers at Prestwick rose to five by 21st. Thereafter during April, many other wetland areas were occupied with, for example, four singing males at Cramlington (Beaconhill), three to four visited St Mary’s Island, three sang at East Chevington and

Swallow Pond and one to two were found at 13 other localities as far west as Grindon Lough.

As usual, numbers increased in prime breeding areas during May. In the Cramlington warbler study area 21 territories were identified. This eventually rose to 25 territories during the season, including at least seven pairs at both Arcot Pond and West Hartford (STH *et al.*). Five ‘reeling’ males were also at East Chevington and Prestwick Carr, three at St Mary’s Wetland, two at Ford Moss and singles at seven other localities. Two were at Cresswell Pond in June, while elsewhere singing birds were in four other lowland localities and also at Greenlee and Sweethope loughs and at Kielder Water.

They continued to be well-reported during July with ‘reeling’ males in additional areas including Castle Island, East Chevington, Druridge Pools, Linhope Spout, Shillmoor, Spindleston and St Mary’s Wetland.

Some males continued to sing into August at Backworth, East Chevington, Druridge Pools and West Hartford. The final records involved singles at Backworth on 24th August and on the Farne Islands on 14th and 19th September.

### **Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

STATUS: Common summer and well- represented passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

Singles at Gosforth Park NR and Woodhorn Flashes on 18th April heralded spring arrival. Two were at East Chevington and one at Berwick (East Ord) on 19th. Two males were singing at Hauxley NR by 21st, four at Cresswell Pond on 25th and five at Backworth Pond and four at Holy Island Lough by 29th. Singles also appeared at seven other widespread localities.

The rapid build-up continued in May in prime breeding areas, with 23 singing along 2km of track at Prestwick Carr on 2nd, Gosforth Park had 12 singing males, nine were on Holy Island and six to eight were heard at Backworth, Welton (near Whittle Dene) and Woodhorn Flashes. One to four were at 18 other localities.

Successful breeding was evident during June, with family parties or fledged young noted at Newsham GC, Cocklawburn, Cramlington (Valley Park), Holy Island and St Mary’s. Two singing at Grindon Lough during June were the first records there for one observer in almost 50 years of regular visits (SJH). During July, males continued to sing at Cresswell Pond and Grindon Lough. During August, late breeding was indicated by two newly-fledged young at Yarrow Heugh (Berwick), a juvenile was at Linton Ponds and an adult was still carrying food at Foxton on 7th.

At East Chevington, 14 adults and 194 young were ringed and four adults were controlled. There appeared to be fewer than usual breeding pairs with very little song. Most of the young may have been passage migrants rather than from local nests (IF).

Return passage was also underway in August. A party of nine near Holy Island Lough on 14th, including some juveniles, could have been migrants, or may have been raised locally. Eight were also at Cresswell Pond and six were trapped and ringed at Bamburgh.

Onward movement led to sightings quickly fading out through September, with the final records in early October involving singles at Big Waters on 1st, Druridge Pools on 3rd and Holy Island on 6th.

## **Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

STATUS: Uncommon summer and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

The first returning bird was at the favoured Gosforth Park NR on 18th April. Further singles arrived at Holywell Pond on 23rd, Holy Island Lough on 26th and Cresswell Pond on 28th. More unusual was a singing male at Derwent Reservoir on 29th, which was considered to be a passing migrant as there was no suitable nesting habitat (IFo).

More arrived during May when Gosforth Park held at least six singing males. Reedbeds at Cresswell Pond and East Chevington each supported three males, while two sang at Blyth (Bates Minewater Treatment Works), Holy Island Lough and Linton Lane NR. Singles were at Holywell Pond and Woodhorn Flashes.

At Gosforth Park, ten were present in June with four each at Cresswell and East Chevington. Two to three also sang at Killingworth Lake, two at Holywell Pond and singles at Burradon Pond, Druridge Bay CP, Druridge Pools, Hauxley NR, Linton Ponds, St Mary's Wetland, Warkworth Lane and Whitley Bay (Rockcliffe). During July records included a juvenile at Druridge Bay CP on 15th. A male continued singing at Holy Island Lough through into August but without any evidence of breeding. At East Chevington 18 adults and 119 young were ringed during the season, in addition to which, 14 adults and two young were controlled (IF).

Return passage was evident during September when sightings included singles at Hadston, Holy Island (Lough, Snook and Ionnens on five dates) and at St Mary's Island on two dates. The final record was a single at Gosforth Park on 17th October.

## **Great Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

STATUS: Extremely rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 7 / FIRST: 1990 / LAST: 2013

Two very different sightings this year with a typical spring bird at Cresswell Pond on 4th June (ADMc *et al.* ) followed by a very late autumn individual at St Mary's Island on 14th November (NPD/AC/MSH). The latter is the latest bird to be found in the UK and was an unusually pale individual. Both sightings were accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee.

## **Waxwing** *Bombus garrulus*

STATUS: Uncommon winter visitor. Given to irruptive behaviour, when, in such years it may become more numerous.

Very few birds were recorded during the first four months of the year following an almost complete absence of this irruptive species at the end of 2013. In January, two were at Bedlington on 1st with a single there on 17th and elsewhere, singles were at Corbridge and Cramlington in mid-month. There were no sightings in February, while in March a flock of 21 flying SSW at Bywell Bridge on 31st comprised the only record. A single at Prestwick Carr on 3rd April was the last bird of the winter.

No significant late autumn / winter influx took place and the first of few birds seen in November was a single at Bamburgh on 7th, with four flying in off the sea at Newbiggin on 8th; three frequented Brier Dene (Whitley Bay) from 23rd-24th and a single flew over Newbiggin on 30th. The only December sighting was four at Willington Quay on 24th.

## **Nuthatch** *Sitta europaea*

STATUS: Well-represented resident.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

The species was very well reported throughout the year, with records from at least 70 widespread woodland and garden localities, both in rural and suburban areas, and including all the main river valleys and their associated tributaries.

During the first four months, peak counts of five came from Bolam Lake, Hareshaw Linn, Mitford and Wark (North Tyne), four at Plessey Woods, Ulgham Lane and Wallington Hall and three at Belsay Hall, Gosforth Park NR and Linden Hall, but the majority of sightings were of one or two birds from around 35 localities across the county, apart from the narrow coastal strip and high ground to the west where suitable woodland is not found.

Confirmed breeding was recorded during the summer months (May-August) at Gosforth Park NR, Henshaw, Jesmond Dene and Stamfordham; in addition nest boxes were occupied at Letah Wood (Hexham), where one pair fledged four young (RMH) and at Wallington Hall where a total of 12 young were fledged from two boxes (JCD). Birds were also recorded from some 20 other widespread and suitable sites where probable nesting is likely to have occurred, namely, Alnwick, Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Capheaton Lake, Cramlington, East Ord, Eshott, Falstone, Hareshaw Burn, Hesleyside, Holywell Dene, Hulne Park, Ingram, Matfen Hall, Morpeth, Ponteland, Rothbury, Todburn (Longhorsley), Walbottle and Wark. Records from the final four months of the year confirmed the widespread range of this highly sedentary species throughout the county, with sightings coming from at least 30 localities, including peaks of five in Jesmond Dene and four at Brenkley, Carrycoats Hall, Gosforth Park and Wallington Hall.

## **Treecreeper** *Certhia familiaris*

STATUS: Common resident and uncommon passage visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented to common.

An unobtrusive species, but widespread in small numbers, throughout mixed, deciduous and coniferous woodland and in mature hedgerow trees, it was reported this year from at least 60 locations across the county, at elevations of up to around 200m a.s.l. During the first quarter, one to two were seen at 25 sites with three at Linden Hall on 1st March and elsewhere in March, a pair displayed at Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth) and one was in song at Backworth.

During the summer period (April-September) apart from three at Ellington and Scotch Gill Woods in April all other records were of one or two at many potential breeding sites namely Allendale, Alnwick, Bakethin Reservoir, Beacon Hill (Longhorsley), Big Waters, Blakehopeburnhaugh, Clennell, Cramlington, Darras Hall, Dipton Wood, East Hartford, Ellington, Eshott, Furnace Bridge (Bedlington), Grindon Lough, Holystone, Holywell Dene, Hulne Park, Ingram, Morpeth, Nunykirk, Rowlington Dene (Ashington), Scotch Gill Woods, Wallington and Whittle Dene Reservoirs; however, only one juvenile bird was noted during the breeding season, at Blakehopeburnhaugh.

During October-December, the highest counts of four came from Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) and three at Hauxley and Spindlestone in October with one to two at 18 other localities. Birds at Craster, Hauxley and Woodhorn Church in October and two at Hauxley RS on 1st November were perhaps indicative of autumn coastal passage.

## **Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

STATUS: Abundant resident and uncommon passage visitor.

BREEDING: Abundant.

Although the species is ubiquitous, very vocal and abundant throughout the county, in a wide variety of habitats, the monthly records were surprisingly few. During January-March, one to three were reported from only seven mainly urban / suburban localities, but with an encouraging total of 21 over a 2km stretch at Prestwick Carr in early-March (PCF), with six at Longhorsley Moor and four at Jesmond Dene later in the month. Display and singing birds were noted from 7th February. Up to four were on Inner Farne during the early spring with an influx bringing 13 to the islands on 30th March, numbers gradually dwindling in April with the last record of one on Brownsman on 4th May.

At the start of the breeding season in April, Prestwick Carr held 22 (over 2km) whilst ten singing males at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) was the highest count there since the harsh winter of 2009-2010, indicative of a recovery in the reduced breeding population following that very cold winter; elsewhere eight singing males were at Longhorsley. Peak counts in May were seven from the Hawsen Burn (Harthope Valley) and Longhorsley Moor and in June 15 were at Prestwick Carr. Successful breeding was confirmed in June when six young were raised in an old House Martin's nest at Kielder and a family party was at Parish Haugh (Morpeth). Other records during the summer months included six at Hauxley, five at Holy Island, Holywell Dene and Jesmond Dene with one to three at a further 14 widespread localities.

Coastal numbers increased markedly in September-November as autumn weather induced local movements and immigrants arrived. On Holy Island in September, two peaks were noted of 17 and 21 on 17th and 30th respectively, with five from Stag Rocks-Budle Point on the latter date and nine at Hauxley on 13th. In early October, 18 were noted on Holy Island and thereafter throughout the month the species was prominent across the island with peaks of 45 on 15th and 62 on 30th (MJC); a peak count of ten came from Hauxley RS on 25th. Further influxes occurred on Holy Island in November with three peaks of 40, 42 and 22 from 5th-23rd. Elsewhere on the coast in November, 25+ were at Druridge Pools, nine at Bamburgh and six at Hauxley RS. Other coastal and inland records over the same three-month period (September-November), included a maximum 15 at Prestwick Carr and six at Holywell Dene, St Mary's Island and Woodhorn Church with one to five at a further 15 sites. It was an exceptional autumn on the Farne Islands, with high numbers reported, especially on Inner Farne, where peaks of 28 and 27 were noted on 31st October and 15th November respectively. In December, the continuing monthly counts at Prestwick Carr found 18 (over 1km) and ten were at Low Newton, with three found roosting in an old Swallow's nest on Holy Island and one to two at eight other localities. Numbers wintering on the Farne Islands suggested up to ten on Inner Farne, four on Brownsman and a single on Staple Island.

## **Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*

STATUS: Abundant resident passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Abundant.

Impressive winter flocks were seen during the first four months, the largest being at the East Chevington roost which increased in numbers from 4,000 to 10,000 from 4th-

11th January, before falling to 6,000 near to month end. At Allendale, 5,000 gathered on 13th March and at Great Whittington a flock of 2,000-3,000 was seen almost daily from early March through to late April, this pre-roost murmuration being a continuing strong attraction for a pair of Peregrines. Other large flocks of 1,000-2,000 were reported from Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) in January, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Ellington and Haltwhistle in February and Linden Hall and Ridley Common in March, with smaller gatherings of 500-1,000 at Allenheads, Grindon Lough, Plenneller Common, Prestwick Carr and Yellow Rigg during the quarter. Flocks of up to 500 were seen at many widespread localities including a number of upland areas where pastures used for stock grazing created ideal feeding conditions for this species.

Small summer flocks in May-June, nowhere greater than 200 and generally including many juveniles and family parties, were recorded at Airy Holm Reservoir (nr. Shotleyfield), Gosforth Park NR, Holy Island, Longhorsley Common, Slaley, St Mary's Wetland, Warkworth, West Hartford, Whitley Bay and Widdrington. Post-breeding concentrations again gathered in July at East Chevington where 7,000 were present on 7th with 1,000 noted at Whittle Dene Reservoirs. In August, up to 500 were at Cocklawburn and Big Waters, while at East Chevington the flock had decreased to 1,000 by the month end; flocks of 20-300 were reported from several other localities during July-August.

Roosts began to increase in size as immigrants arrived from the continent towards the end of the year; passage birds were recorded on many days on the Farne Islands with peak daily counts of 130 W on 30th October and 250 W on 8th November. Maximum flock sizes of 500 in September at Budle Bay, Cresswell, Earsdon Moor, Low Newton and St Mary's Island were overtaken during the following three months. A notable concentration at the regular Holy Island Lough roost, numbered 5,500-6,000 in October rising to 26,000 in late November and peaking at 40,000 on 1st December before declining to 6,000 by Christmas (IK/PRM). Elsewhere during the final quarter, monthly maximum counts of 600 came from Grindon Lough and Palmersville in October, 1,000 at Lambley in November and 700 at Longhorsley in December. Many smaller flocks of 100-200 were also reported during this period.

## **Rose-coloured Starling** *Pastor roseus*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2012

Mid-summer sightings are often the case in the county, but an adult at Byker on 24th June (RD) was definitely abnormal as one was seen by the observer as a passenger in a car, feeding unconcernedly with nine Starlings on a grass verge.

An autumn sighting of an adult on Holy Island on 4th September (CH *et al.*) was another fascinating example of a normal scene, with picnic tables in a cafe garden, enlivened as it fed happily. It was noted sporadically on the island until 7th.

## **Dipper** *Cinclus cinclus*

STATUS: Well-represented resident.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

The first two months of the year produced sightings of up to four from at least 25 locations on all the major river systems and males in full song were heard early in January



at Blakehopeburnhaugh, Linnels Wood, Ponteland Park and Shillmoor. Nesting activity was in full swing by the end of March at Hedgeley, Holywell Dene and Village, Jesmond Dene, Tarset Burn and Upper Coquetdale. Elsewhere in March, three were found in the Harthope Valley, two at Plessey Woods and Rothbury with singles at Corbridge, Farnley (nr. Corbridge), Hartford Bridge, Highford Bridge (Morpeth), Melkridge, Ridley Stokoe and Whitfield. Further breeding records came in April from Allenbanks and Alwinton where broods were being fed and in May-June, where newly-fledged juveniles were seen on the Carey Burn (Harthope Valley) and at Rothbury with a second brood being fed in Jesmond Dene.

In the Upper Coquetdale study area (JR), which now covers around one third of the sites in the whole of the upper catchment of the River Coquet, 12 pairs with nests were located and productivity was high with an encouraging 73 young fledged, including 23 from second broods, due to favourable weather and water levels during the breeding season. In the Rivers North Tyne and Rede study area (JR), three nests were monitored and 19 young fledged, including 10 from second broods, again indicative of a high productivity of eggs and young.

The species continued to be very well reported in the second half of the year with six on a one-mile stretch of the River Coquet at Rothbury in September and four at Barrowburn with one to three at 30+ locations elsewhere, including sightings of wintering birds on the Ouseburn, Throckley Dene and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

## **Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus*

STATUS: Uncommon summer and passage visitor, rare in winter.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

A male on breeding territory at Sipton Burn (Allendale) on 25th-26th March was the first arrival, followed by a passage male at Holy Island on 31st. Further traditional upland breeding areas were occupied during early April, when up to eight were noted in the Harthope Valley and singles at sites in Upper Coquetdale; one at Grindon Lough on 19th was more unusual. Passage birds were at Woodhorn Flash on 2nd April and the Farne Islands on 5th, with a more significant coastal arrival occurring during the final week of the month. On Holy Island one to four from 23rd-25th rose to eight by 26th and peaked at ten on 28th (MJC). During this latter period one to two were also noted at the Farne Islands and singles at High Newton and St Mary's Island on 26th, Newbiggin on 27th and Howden, St Mary's Island and Warkworth Lane on 28th.

Further passage birds were reported from the Farne Islands on 1st May and Holy Island on 2nd. Although successful breeding was not confirmed, small numbers remained resident in upland breeding areas in the Cheviot valleys, North Pennines and Upper Coquetdale throughout the summer months.

Autumn passage commenced in October with one to three at Holy Island on seven dates from 10th-19th. Elsewhere, one was heard moving W over Willington Quay on 15th and another was at Tynemouth on 16th. Four were at Holy Island on 30th when singles were also noted at Bamburgh, the Farne Islands, Lynemouth and Tynemouth. The final report of the year came from the Farne Islands where two flew W over Brownsman on 6th November.

## **Blackbird** *Turdus merula*

STATUS: Abundant resident, passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Abundant.

A remarkable occurrence in January concerned a successful nest at Hexham, where a pair were feeding a recently fledged juvenile on 22nd-23rd (ALT). High counts during the month included a total of 67 between Beaconhill-Northburn (Cramlington), a distance of 5km, on 10th and 38 at Horton Burn (Cramlington) on 4th; up to 30 were at Swallow Pond in January and 21-24 at Prestwick Carr from January-March. Light coastal passage was noted at Holy Island with 35-40 daily from 28th-31st March and 30+ on 4th April.

A 4km walk at Horton Burn produced an impressive count of 73 (90% males) on 26th April, and further breeding was confirmed with nest building at Walbottle on 7th, at Whitley Bay, where there were three fledged juveniles on 18th and Kenton where adults were collecting food, also on 18th. In May, 41 singing males were at Marden Estate (Tynemouth) throughout the month, and six singing males were at Longhorsley Moor in June. Warren Mill held a roost of 42 on 22nd August and 17 were in a single Rowan tree at Holywell Dene on 17th August.

Coastal passage was a feature in September, with daily arrivals at Hauxley RS, where the peak count was 30 on 13th. Holy Island posted counts of 29 on 15th, 43 on 17th and 30 on 29th, followed by a more significant arrival of 200+ on 30th.

Passage continued throughout October with 160-277 counted daily at Holy Island from 15th-18th and at Hauxley RS peak arrival dates were 45 on 16th and 53 on 25th. A substantial influx occurred at the end of the month as 1,372 moved W over the Farne Islands on 30th (FIR), when 722 were also counted on Holy Island.

Up to 70 per day were noted moving W over the Farne Islands throughout November, 216 were at Hauxley RS on 1st November, and at Holy Island there were counts of 62 on 5th, 96 on 6th, 61 on 16th and 185+ on 20th. Elsewhere, to mid-month, there were counts of 25-45 at Craster, Brier Dene, Druridge Pools and Marden Quarry (Whitley Bay). Movement inland was indicated by reports of 25 at Reaveley on 13th, 'large numbers' in hedgerows between Birtley-Barrasford (North Tyne) and 20 near Humshaugh on 19th and 21 at Thrunton Woods on 22nd. The regular walk at Horton Burn produced 45 on 23rd December, while elsewhere during the month 15-18 were noted at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh), Longhorsley Moor and Prestwick Carr.

## **Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris*

STATUS: Abundant passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Extremely rare. / LAST BRED: 2012.

The largest gatherings in January were from the south west of the county, with 750 at Grindon Hill on 27th and 490 at Plenmeller Common on 29th. Elsewhere, 200 were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs and 100-150 at a further eight localities. In February, 290-300 were at Kingswood Burn (Allen Valley) and Ridley Stokoe (North Tyne), 200 remained in the Grindon area and 100 were at Highmoor and Fontburn Reservoir. As usual, in March there was a significant increase, as birds began moving through the county toward Scandinavian breeding grounds. Two very large gatherings were noted in the west, with 1,262 at Coanwood Common on 19th and 1,000+ at Ridley Stokoe on 13th. In the Grindon Lough area there were counts of 500 on 18th, 720+ on 22nd and 450 on 23rd,

perhaps indicative of onward movement through the area. Two flocks totalling 600 were at the Wanneys on 18th and there were reports of 100-200 from a further ten widespread localities.

On the coast small flocks of up to 50 moving through Holy Island on 31st March increased during early April, from 120 on 3rd to 600+ on 4th, with many birds arriving on a strong SE wind; over the next couple of days numbers declined to 200 on 5th and 123 by 6th. Inland movement produced flocks of 70-76 at Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield), Ingram, Ridley Common and Wark (North Tyne). Holy Island witnessed a further influx later in the month, with 200+ noted on 26th. Late passage birds were noted in May, at the Farne Islands, Holy Island and Prestwick Carr on 2nd; ten were at Longhorsley on 8th and another single at Holy Island on 11th.

The first autumn birds were a single at the Farne Islands on 16th September, two on Holy Island on 17th, a single at Holy Island on 20th and another well inland with Song Thrushes and Blackbirds at Lanehead (Tarset) on 23rd. Small numbers continued to trickle through during October, but it was not until 30th that the first significant influx occurred, when a total of 8,245 moved W over the Farne Islands during the day (a new islands record), 1,300-1,500 were at Holy Island, 900 arrived in-off the sea at Cullercoats, 270+ were at St Mary's Island, 250+ flew inland at Tynemouth and 126 did likewise at East Ord (Berwick); birds were obviously moving quickly inland, as 140 were noted flying SW at Blanchland on the same day.

Although smaller numbers continued to arrive at the coast during November, most of the larger flocks were to be found inland, these including 140 at Coanwood Burn on 18th, 120 at Prestwick Carr on 16th and 110 in the Harthope Valley on 23rd and 100+ in the Birtley-Barrasford Park (North Tyne) area, Doddington and near Humshaugh. Larger gatherings were reported in December, with 400 at Forestburn Gate, 240 at West Ord (Berwick), 200 at Longhorsley and 100-150 at Belford Moor, Longridge Towers and Prestwick Carr.

## **Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos*

STATUS: Common resident and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

Ten at Swallow Pond on 1st January included some singing birds; others in song included three at Hexham on 11th and two at Monkseaton on 14th. This early songster was in full voice throughout February-March, with up to six at Linden Hall, four at Gosforth Park NR, three at Bywell and two at Aydon (Corbridge). Six were noted at Prestwick Carr during March, five were at Jesmond Dene and four at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal). One to two were present at a further 22 localities during the first quarter.

Coastal passage at the Farne Islands included ten on 30th March and 13 on 2nd April. On Holy Island there were counts of ten on 4th and 26th April. During the summer period (April-August) up to nine were noted in the Harthope Valley, eight at Ingram, five at Arcot Hall GC, four to five at Jesmond Dene throughout and four at Newcastle (Leazes Park), with one to two at a further 11 localities. The apparent demise of this once very common species was highlighted by comments in August from Old Hartley 'the first for a very long time', and Walbottle 'the first for over a year'.

There was a light coastal influx in mid-September, with 18 at Holy Island on 17th, 17 at Woodhorn Church on 18th and 12 at Hauxley RS on 20th. Inland, 14 were at Lanehead (Tarset) on 23rd and 12 at Linden Hall on 10th.

More significant passage was witnessed in October, with the first notable movement on 7th, when 66 were on Holy Island and 30 moved W over Rothbury, with 31 at Low Newton on the following day. Mid-month there were a further 21 and ten at Hauxley RS on 11th and 16th respectively and 21 were at Holy Island on 18th. The heaviest influx occurred on 30th, when 200 moved W over the Farne Islands, 69 were on Holy Island and 15 at Newbiggin. Small numbers continued to arrive at the coast in November, with peak counts of ten at Hauxley RS on 1st and 12 at Holy Island on 16th. During the final month of the year there were reports from 12 localities, including four at Jesmond Dene and at Prestwick Carr and a bird in full song at Wylam on 1st.

## **Redwing** *Turdus iliacus*

STATUS: Abundant passage migrant and common winter visitor.

BREEDING: Extremely rare. / LAST BRED: 1985.

In January, 150 were at Grindon Lough on 15th, with 90-100 at Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield) and Brenkley. Numbers declined slightly during February-March, with counts of 75 at Borough Woods (Morpeth), up to 60 at Prestwick Carr and 30-38 at Backworth, Harwood Forest, Humshaugh and Rising Sun CP (Wallsend). Further flocks of up to 20 were widespread.

In April 30 at Holy Island on 4th had declined to ten by 6th and 46 passed over the Farne Islands on 7th. Elsewhere, 12-15 were reported from Branton GP and Woodhorn on 2nd and nine flew E over Fulbeck (Morpeth) on 5th with one to eight at a further seven localities. The final bird of this first winter period was at Holy Island on 28th April.

The first autumn arrivals were on 14th September when three flew SW over Holy Island and one over the Farne Islands; one to two were again at Holy Island on 19th-20th. A large influx was noted at Holy Island in mid-October, where counts included 1,341 across the island on 18th, with many more passing over SW towards the mainland. Inland during this period flocks of 100-120 were noted at Derwent Reservoir, Gosforth and Wark (North Tyne). A much more substantial and impressive influx occurred at the end of the month, and particularly on 30th, when 9,407 flew W over the Farne Islands (FIR), 3000+ were on the move at Holy Island, 2,000 at Cullercoats, 1,300 at St Mary's Island, 1,000 at Tynemouth and 300-400 at Newbiggin. Evidence of birds moving quickly inland came from the Tyne Valley, where large numbers were heard over Hexham at 18.00hrs and likewise at Wark where birds were heard from 19.00hrs onwards.

In November 1,240 flew W over the Farne Islands on 6th and small flocks continued to arrive at Holy Island, where fluctuating numbers were reported throughout the month, with peaks of 56-57 on 6th and 20th. Inland, 100 were at Allen Banks on 1st, 60 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 4th and 41 at Arcot Lane on 23rd. A good berry crop resulted in some sizeable flocks remaining in the county during December, the largest of which was 300 at Sharperton on 4th. Elsewhere 60-100 were noted at Forestburn Gate, West Hartford and West Ord (Berwick), with 46-48 at East Ord and Wallsend.

## **Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus*

STATUS: Common resident and uncommon passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

The largest January gatherings were ten at Belford on 11th and six to seven at Backworth,

Gosforth Park NR and Jesmond Dene. Birds in full song by late February included two at Grindon Lough and two at Sipton Burn (Allendale) on 24th. Nest building was noted at Harbottle and Newcastle City Centre by mid-March, when there were counts of six at Jesmond Dene and four at Coanwood Common.

Birds were attending a nest at Ellington on 13th April and another was collecting food at Swallow Pond on 18th. In May, a bird was carrying food at Comb (Falstone) on 3rd, two juveniles were at Cocklawburn on 12th and a pair was building a second nest at Tynemouth on 19th. A gathering of 12 at Allendale on 3rd no doubt included juveniles, and six were again reported from Jesmond Dene. A family party of six was at Quickenhoughton on 15th June, seven were at Slaley on 20th and 14 at East Cramlington LNR on 29th.

Numbers increased significantly from early August, with post-breeding gatherings of 32 at Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield), 23 roosting at Linden Hall, 18 at Forestburn Gate and 13 at Derwent Reservoir. The roosting flock at Linden Hall remained at 20-25 throughout September, while elsewhere 17 were at Swallow Pond, 15 at Benton, East Cramlington LNR and Newcastle (Exhibition Park) and 11 at Kirkley Mill.

Signs of immigration were apparent in October, when singles were on Holy Island (where the species remains scarce) on 7th and 14th and five flew W, in off the sea at East Ord (Berwick) on 30th. The largest gatherings during the month were 12-18 at Hauxley and 11 at Birtley (North Tyne). A flock of 30 had gathered in the Harthope Valley by 18th November, 12 were at Corbridge on 25th and further passage produced one W over the Farne Islands on 20th. Numbers were much reduced in December, with seven at Jesmond Dene on 2nd being the highest count and one to three noted at a further 15 widespread localities, including a bird in full song at Wylam on 1st.

## **Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata*

STATUS: Common summer and well-represented passage visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

The first arrivals were singles on 11th May at Hartburn, Lucker and Stamfordham. Up to ten singing males were in the Harthope Valley by 18th May (CGK/GPK), six migrants on Holy Island on 20th rose to nine on 21st and four were at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) and at Lordenshaw on 31st. Elsewhere during the month, three were at Linden Hall (Longhorsley) and Spindleston, with one to two at a further 18 localities.

In June, a further light influx at Holy Island produced six on 1st. Inland, two pairs were at Linden Hall and Sidwood (Tasset) and three to four in the Breamish Valley and at Glanton Pike and Simonside. Two pairs were in and around a Stamfordham garden from June-August, with newly fledged young noted at the end of June. A total of about ten birds here in July comprised two family parties and a successful second brood of three fledglings left the nest on 16th August (EC). Further reports of successful breeding (June-August) included two family parties at Fontburn Reservoir, a family party of six at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal), an adult and two juveniles near Humshaugh, an adult feeding a juvenile at Linden Hall and a bird carrying food near a regular nest site at Ridsdale; a juvenile was also watched catching butterflies at Great Whittington.

The first indication of return passage was three at Holy Island on 14th August, followed by two here on 4th September and one to three daily from 15th-21st September.

Elsewhere during September one to two were at the Farne Islands on several dates from 3rd-19th and singles at Bamburgh, St Mary's Island, Tynemouth and Whitley Bay. Many however, remained inland, with counts of four at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 1st, six near Humshaugh on 2nd, three juveniles at Lincoln Hill (Chollerford) on 14th and singles at Alwinton, Castron, Newcastle (Exhibition Park), Fontburn, Prestwick Carr and finally Mootlaw Quarry, where one remained to 28th.

## **Robin** *Erithacus rubecula*

STATUS: Abundant resident and common passage visitor.

BREEDING: Abundant.

The Cramlington area produced some notable counts in January, with a total of 30 between Beaconhill-Northburn (a distance of 5km) on 20th and a further 18 at Horton Burn on 4th. Nine were at Whitley Bay Cemetery at the end of the month and five to six were noted at Jesmond Dene throughout January-February. Six-seven singing birds were in the Longhorsley Moor area by mid-March and nine were singing at Furnace Bridge (Bedlington) on 27th. Early movement was indicated by eight 'greyish' continental birds at Holy Island on 30th March.

The latter were at the head of a more substantial influx over the next few days, when 20-25 were on the Farne Islands from 1st-4th April and numbers at Holy Island increased to a peak of 25 on 4th. Longhorsley Moor held 11 singing birds from mid-April to the middle of May. As usual there was a paucity of records during the summer period; regular observations from a Walbottle garden, where the species is usually a daily visitor, noted only one sighting in June.

Prestwick Carr held 11 on 22nd August, and by the end of the month eight where on Holy Island, where numbers increased to 13-14 on 5th-6th September. A further coastal influx later in the month produced peak counts of 14 at the Farne Islands from 15th-18th, 21 at Craster on 15th, 35 at Holy Island on 17th and 45 at Hauxley RS on 20th, with nine to 12 at Bamburgh, Cambois, Whitley Bay Cemetery and Woodhorn Church during the same period. Inland, 18 were at Prestwick Carr on 6th and 13 at Longhorsley Moor on 29th.

Further coastal arrivals were a feature of October, when peak counts early in the month included 36 at Holy Island on 7th and 16 at Low Newton 8th. The species was prominent on Holy Island from 10th-19th, when the peak day count was 90 (excluding the western dunes). Elsewhere the peak count at Hauxley RS was 30 on 16th and 22 were at the Farne Islands on 30th. Inland 21 were at Prestwick Carr on 5th. Holy Island again witnessed a series of sizable influxes during November, including 29-36 from 2nd-5th, 45 on 16th, 32 on 19th and 139+ on 20th (PRM). Elsewhere, ten to 13 were noted at Bamburgh, Hauxley RS and St Mary's Island during the first week of the month, 20+ were at Druridge Pools on 17th and 19 at the Farne Islands on 20th. The only notable December record was a count of 16 at Cramlington (Horton Burn) on 23rd.

## **Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2013

The only record of the year was a stunning male on Inner Farne on 20th May (FIR).



Red-breasted Flycatcher Ficedula parva

STATUS: Rare visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2012

The year began with an unusual spring sighting of one on Brownsman (Farne Islands) on 27th May (AD).

A marked passage occurred in mid-September with two first-winters arriving on Brownsman (Farne Islands) on 14th (DS/DR et al.) and another on Inner Farne from 18th-20th (DS et al.). At Low Newton, the first of three first-winters was trapped and ringed on 14th (RA/GW et al.), three were present from 17th-19th with one remaining to 20th. Further first-winters were noted on Holy Island and at St Mary’s Island on 15th-16th (MJC/AC et al.) and another was at Tynemouth from 15th-19th (DRW et al.). A late individual was at Brier Dene (Whitley Bay) on 15th October (NPD).

Pied Flycatcher Ficedula hypoleuca

STATUS: Well-represented summer and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

The first arrival was at the Farne Islands on 20th April. Another was on Holy Island from 25th-27th and one to two were on the Farne Islands from 28th-29th. The first return to breeding areas was a male at Nunnykirk on 28th. Numbers at Nunnykirk increased to four males by 8th May and up to eight singing males were holding territory at Allen Banks by the end of the month (EC). Elsewhere four (three males) were at Morralee Wood on 2nd, two at Hollybush (Dipton Woods) on 4th and two singing males at Sidwood (Tarsset Burn) on 18th, while coastal migrants appeared on Holy Island on 21st and 27th.

Details from nest box study areas were as follows:

Locality	Nests	Eggs laid	Young fledged	Productivity	Observer
Dipton Dene	16	83	79	4.9	SCE
Linnels	15	102	46	3	AM
Letah Wood	9	63	53	5.8	RMH
Dipton Wood	6	40	35	5.8	SWA
Low Carriteth*	6	43	25	4.1	JR
Marchburn	2	14	13	6.5	RHM
Dye House	1	7	6	6	RHM

\* A female ringed as a nestling at Greenhaugh in 2010 was found nesting at Low Carriteth in 2011 and has since fledged a total of 28 young (JR).

Return passage commenced from 28th August, when three were on Holy Island and another at Tynemouth; two were on Holy Island and one at the Farne Islands on 30th. An influx occurred in September, when there were peak counts of eight at the Farne Islands on 4th, six at the same locality on 15th and 14 at Holy Island on 17th (MJC). Seven to eight were noted on Holy Island from 13th-15th and one to five on the Farne Islands on a further twelve dates to 20th. One to two were also reported from Bamburgh GC, Cresswell Pond, Druridge, Low Newton, Snab Point (Cresswell), St Mary’s Island, Tynemouth and Whitley Bay Cemetery between 4th-19th.

Black Redstart Phoenicurus ochruros

STATUS: Uncommon passage visitor, rare in winter.

One at Ellington from 27th-28th March was followed by further singles at the Farne Islands from 28th-31st, Holy Island on 29th (to 4th April), Whitley Bay Cemetery on 29th and Druridge on 31st. Numbers on the Farne Islands increased to two on 1st April and to three from 2nd-4th, with at least one remaining to 8th. Elsewhere in April, singles were reported from Chibburn links (Druridge) and Buston links (Alnmouth) on 2nd, Tynemouth on 3rd, Blyth Estuary and Lynemouth on 5th, St Mary’s Island and Whitley Bay Cemetery on 26th and Holy Island from 29th to 2nd May. The only other May record was a single at the Farne Islands on 25th.

Autumn passage commenced at Holy Island with a male from 12th-14th September and a juvenile from 13th-14th. On the Farne Islands there was a single from 15th-16th October and five on 30th October, when three were also noted at St Mary’s Island and a single was on Holy Island, where two were present on 1st November; thereafter one to two were present daily at the Farnes until 21st November.

Three were at Dunstanburgh on 1st November and singles at Blakemoor Farm (Cresswell Pond) on 2nd and Hauxley and North Blyth on 9th. A mid-month influx produced singles at Tynemouth Priory on 15th, Newbiggin on 17th, Holy Island from 18th-23rd and Bamburgh on 25th. The month ended with four at Newbiggin on 29th remaining to 1st December, one of which was still present at the end of the year. Another late bird was at Seahouses on 3rd December and more unusual was a female / immature in the grounds of the Great North Museum (Newcastle City Centre) on 12th.

Redstart Phoenicurus phoenicurus

STATUS: Common summer and well-represented passage visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

An early male was well inland at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 8th April. By the end of the month birds were holding territory in 14 localities, including three males at Bolam Lake. In May, 11 singing males were located in 4 km of roadside trees at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley), eight were singing at Holystone Woods, six were at Wallington and four males at Allen Banks, Harthope Valley, Haughton Strother, Lambley and Sidwood (Tarsset Burn); a further 17 potential breeding areas were occupied during the month. There was only light coastal passage during the spring.

Details from nest box study areas were as follows:

Locality	Nests	Eggs laid	Young fledged	Productivity	Observer
Low Carriteth	3	19	18	6	JR
Fallowlees	3	14	11	3.6	JCD
Dipton Wood*	2	12	12	6	SWA
Dye House	1	7	7	7	RMH
Tarsset	1	7	0	0	JR

\* These were the first pairs to use nest boxes at Dipton Wood in at least 13 years (SWA)

In addition to the above, breeding was confirmed at Allen Banks, Haughton Strother, Longhorsley, Prestwick Carr and Thrunton Woods in June, and a male was near a nest box

at Whittle Dene Reservoirs. In July family parties were noted at Matfen and Stiddlehill Common (Ridsdale).

Singles were still inland at Prestwick Carr on 6th September and Haughton Strother to 8th. Light coastal passage in September produced four at Holy Island on 14th, increasing to a peak of nine on 19th. The highest count from the Farne Islands was seven on 16th, while singles were noted at Bamburgh, Craster, Low Newton, St Mary's Island, Tynemouth and Woodhorn Church. The final bird of the year was at Holy Island on 24th.

### **Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra*

STATUS: Common summer and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

The first arrivals were two on breeding grounds in the Harthope Valley on 21st April. Two were at St Mary's Island on 23rd and one at Acomb Fell on 26th. Further singles were noted at Holy Island the Farne Islands, St Mary's Island, Tughall and West Hartford from 27th-29th.

There were numerous reports from upland breeding areas in May. A total of 23 singing males were noted in Upper Coquetdale on 15th, including nine in a 1km transect of moorland at Alwinton (ASJ). In The Cheviot Hills, 17 birds in the Breamish Valley on 26th included 14 singing males and a pair with a nest containing six eggs (ASJ). Elsewhere in the Cheviots up to five + were noted in the Harthope Valley. A male was seen on the Simonside Hills at the end of the month and at nearby Hepple Whitefield a juvenile on 26th suggested early breeding success. More unusual was a singing male at Burradon (Cramlington) on 2nd. Coastal passage produced singles at Cresswell Pond on 2nd, Cocklawburn on 8th, the Farne Islands on 16th-17th and Holy Island on 21st.

The Breamish Valley featured strongly again in June with a count of 14 at Ingram on 28th. Seven at Hawsen Burn (Harthope Valley) on 17th included a pair feeding fledged young. In Upper Coquetdale there were counts of six at Barrowburn, five at Shillmoor and three at Usway Burn, while elsewhere a pair was at Tosson Hill and a singing male at Catcleugh Reservoir. In July, two were at Widehope (Edlingham) on 7th and a male with young at Shillmoor on 6th. Early coastal movement produced singles at Cresswell Pond on 15th and Cocklawburn on 17th.

The only report from inland breeding areas in August was a male and three juveniles at Usway Burn on 5th. Return passage was well underway by mid-month with one to two at ten coastal localities and singles near Humshaugh on 13th and at Newcastle (Town Moor) on 18th.

Two at the Farne Islands on 3rd September increased to 17 by 4th, with seven to eight present from 5th-6th. Birds were reported from Holy Island on 11 dates, with peak counts of six on 6th, nine on 17th and ten on 20th, while seven were at Snab Point (Cresswell) on 6th. Elsewhere three to four were noted at Newbiggin, Prestwick Carr and St Mary's Island on nine dates to the month end and one to two were at a further eight localities, including Newcastle (Town Moor) on 3rd and Newcastle (Exhibition Park) on 22nd. The final record was at Brownsman (Farne Islands) on 8th October.

### **Siberian Stonechat** *Saxicola maurus*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2007

After the popular bird at Howick last year two more were found in 2014. A first-winter male was at Holy Island Lough from 15th-22nd September (MJC/ADM/MR/JFa *et al.*), while a less obliging individual was at Spittal (Newbiggin) on 8th November (LR/GB *et al.*). Both birds were very well documented and accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee.

### **Stonechat** *Saxicola rubicola*

STATUS: Well represented and increasing resident and uncommon passage visitor.

BREEDING: Well represented.

There was a marked improvement in the distribution and numbers of Stonechats in 2014, with the species reported from 33 coastal and 33 inland localities during the year. During the first quarter up to seven were noted in Druridge Bay (three at East Chevington and pairs at Cresswell Pond and Druridge Pools) and four at Warkworth Gut, whilst up to three were in Budle Bay and one to two at a further 14 coastal sites. Inland pairs were at Alnwick Moor and Blawearie (Berwick Moor) in January, Alnwick Moor, Holywell Pond and Prestwick Carr in February and three were on Simonside on 1st March.

Singing males were at Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools and Newbiggin in March and the first indication of breeding came from Cresswell Pond, where a female was carrying nest material on 22nd March. In April, one of two pairs at East Chevington was feeding fledged young by 28th. Four were again at Warkworth Gut and there was an encouraging increase from upland areas, with pairs at Carey and Hawsen Burns (Harthope Valley) and Whitelee Moor (Redesdale) and singles at Simonside and nearby Tosson Hill. Inland breeding was confirmed at Halon Lea Gate, where a pair was seen with at least two juveniles on 2nd May. Further successful coastal breeding was noted during May-June at Budle Bay, Cheswick, Cocklawburn, Cresswell Pond, Cullernose Point, Druridge Pools, Embleton GC, Hauxley, Stag Rocks (Bamburgh), St Mary's Island and Warkworth Gut. Inland during this period a male was seen at Cartington (in June); two males were at Debdon (Rothbury) and pairs at Hexhamshire Common, Holystone Common and Kylvoe Hills. A pair with three juveniles was inland at Widehope (Edlingham) in early July and further inland breeding was confirmed at Addycombe Moor (Rothbury) and Simonside in August. In all, successful breeding was noted at 13 coastal and four inland localities.

On the coast in August six were at Druridge Pools, five at Bamburgh GC and four at Buston Links. After a successful breeding season higher counts in September included nine at Warkworth Gut, eight at Bamburgh GC, seven at Budle Point and Cresswell Pond and five (a family party) at Hartley and at Holy Island. Inland, four were at Lordenshaw, two to three at Prestwick Carr and Selby's Cove (Simonside) and singles at Gosforth Park NR, Otterburn Ranges, Thorngraston Common and Spylaw (Simonside).

The species remained conspicuous, particularly in coastal areas, during the final quarter. In October up to seven were noted on Holy Island and two to three pairs were at Cresswell Pond, East Chevington and Newbiggin. Nine (four pairs and a male) were counted between Chevington Burn-Hadston in November and six from Stag Rocks-Budle Point. Numbers diminished in December with a peak count of three from Cocklawburn. Inland during this final period up to four were at Quarry House Moor (Berwick) and one to two at Addycombe Moor, Broadstrother (Cheviots), Carey Burn, Harwood Forest, Hepburn Moor, Longhorsley Moor, Sweethope Lough, Thirlwell Common and West Hartford.

## **Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe*

STATUS: Common summer and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

A male at Coanwood Common on 13th March was the first bird of the year, followed by another inland male in the Alwin Valley on 15th. By the end of the month birds had been reported from inland breeding areas in Upper Coquetdale and at Sipton Burn (Allendale), while on the coast peak counts were three to five at the Farne Islands from 29th-30th and six at Holy Island on 30th, with one to two at Cresswell Pond, Newbiggin, St Mary's Island and Tynemouth.

A sizeable coastal influx occurred from mid-April, with peak counts of 53 between Lynemouth-Druridge and 20 at St Mary's Island on 24th, 32 from Druridge-East Chevington and 16 at Newton links on 26th and 34 at Holy Island, 17 at Amble and 17 at the Farne Islands on 27th. Inland, 18 were at Swallow Pond on 17th and in breeding areas counts included ten at Usway Burn (Upper Coquetdale) and five to six at Alwinton, East Woodburn and Grindon Lough. Holy Island witnessed almost continued passage during May, with peak counts of 20-21 from 2nd-4th, ten on 9th, 31 on 11th and ten on 18th. Elsewhere five to seven were noted at Budle Bay, Cramlington, Cresswell Pond, Doddington and Prestwick Carr, with four at Backworth and Warkworth Gut and one to three at a further 24 widespread coastal and inland breeding areas.

A total of 25 were counted between Shillmoor-Fairhaugh (Upper Coquetdale) on 22nd June and adults accompanied three juveniles at Clennel on 25th. At Cramlington (Northumberlandia) three, including a juvenile were noted on 15th July.

The first passage birds were noted at the Farne Islands on 11th August, while eight migrants were at Newcastle (Town Moor) on 14th. Two to four were still in breeding areas at Derwent Reservoir, Simonside and Usway Burn to 14th and six were at St Mary's Island on 30th. Further light passage at the coast in September included 14 at Holy Island on 21st and four to five at Alnmouth, Boulmer, the Farne Islands, St Mary's Island and Tynemouth.

One to two were at nine coastal localities to 19th October and a single was inland at Hepburn Moor on 11th. Late individuals were noted at Newbiggin on 30th October and on the Farne Islands from 29th to 3rd November.

## **'Greenland' Wheatear** *O.o.leucorhoa*

STATUS: Uncommon passage visitor.

In April, birds showing characteristics of this large and conspicuous race, where three at Holy Island on 17th and two here on 26th, two inland at Grindon Lough on 27th and one at Newbiggin on 28th. Four were noted at Warkworth Gut on 9th May.

Autumn individuals were noted in October, at Snab Point (Cresswell) on 5th and Holy Island on 15th.

## **Duncock** *Prunella modularis*

STATUS: Common resident and well-represented passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

During the first two months this widespread but unobtrusive species was poorly reported with only seven records, including three in an Old Hartley garden and one to two at six other locations. In March, as singing males drew attention to their presence, 15 were noted from a 2km stretch at Prestwick Carr (PCF) with eight in a half-km walk at Cramlington and four at Kenton Bank Foot with one to three at six other sites. Small numbers overwintered on the Farne Islands, supplemented by passage birds in spring as one to three were present on many dates throughout April and a peak of five on 2nd.

During the breeding season (April-August), family parties of up to five were recorded from four urban gardens and reports from elsewhere comprised one to three at Druridge Pools, Holywell Dene, Jesmond Dene, Old Hartley, St Mary's Wetland, Walbottle, Welton (Whittle Dene Reservoirs) and Whitley Bay Cemetery.

Coastal passage became evident during the autumn when 14 were trapped and ringed at Bamburgh on 14th September, with an October total there of 32 ringed (BRS). At Hauxley, counts throughout September-November showed daily totals of six to 15 with a peak of 22 on 1st November and a total of 14 ringed during the period (HRS). On the Farne Islands, the first autumn migrants arrived on 10th September and there was a daily presence of up to six until the end of the season with peaks of nine and ten on 12th and 30th October respectively. As usual, two wintered on Inner Farne and one on Brownsman. Elsewhere, during the last four months, one to four were noted at some eight sites, the majority of which were inland.

## **House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*

STATUS: Abundant resident.

BREEDING: Abundant.

In January, 55 were at Cullercoats throughout the month, 50 were at Corbridge and 30-40 at Tynemouth, Wark (North Tyne) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Elsewhere during the first four months gatherings of up to 20 were noted at Budle Bay, Dinnington, Eachwick, Newbiggin, a Newcastle beer garden, St Mary's Wetland, Tynemouth and Walbottle.

Flock sizes changed little during May-June, the largest being the regular gathering at the Battlesteads Hotel (Wark) comprising 30 on 8th June; up to 27 were at Prestwick Carr during June and 16, including five juveniles, were in a Walbottle garden on 1st. Large post-breeding flocks started to assemble from early-July and included 350 on the foreshore at Chare Ends (Holy Island) on 5th. In August, a maximum of 400+ was at St Mary's Wetland (ASJ), 200 remaining at Chare Ends, 150 at Elwick, 120 at Fenham-le-Moor and 40-100 at Amble, Boulmer, Cramlington, Holy Island Village and a Tynemouth garden. During September, numbers at Holy Island Village rose to 400 (ADM), 150 were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs and 40-75 at Backworth, a Cramlington garden, Hauxley and Newbiggin.

During the last quarter numbers remained encouragingly high, with peak monthly counts of 200+ at Holy Island Village in October, 61 in a roost at Cramlington in November and 100 at Cullercoats Bay in December. Throughout this final quarter, other flocks of 25-50 were noted at Alwinton, Amble, four sites at Cramlington, Corbridge, Tynemouth and Whitley Bay links.



Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

STATUS: Well-represented resident.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

The species was, as usual, extremely well reported throughout the year and healthy flock sizes were indicative of an encouragingly high and possibly increasing population within the county. The largest flocks during the first two months were, in January, 90+ at the Beehive Flash (Earsdon) on 5th and 55 at Hauxley on 25th with 35-40 at Bothal, Elwick, High Cocklaw (Berwick) and High Newton and 20-25 at Bamburgh, Big Waters, Cresswell Pond and Whorral Bank (Morpeth). In February, 52 were at Hauxley, 40+ at Big Waters and 45 at Bywell Home Farm, with 10-25 at Brier Dene Home Farm (Whitley Bay), Cresswell, Druridge links, East Chevington, Hemscott Hill, Holywell Grange, Newton links and a Walbottle garden; up to 15 were noted at around a further 15 widespread locations during this period. Flock sizes declined in March with 50 at the Beehive Flash on 2nd reducing to 30 by 24th and elsewhere, 28 were at Chugdon Wood (Ellington), 21 at Branton and up to 15 at Cresswell Pond, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) and Walbottle.

During April, peak counts of 22 came from Haughton Strother GP and 19 from Cresswell Pond, where six breeding pairs were located on 26th. Counts from new locations this month included 12 at Ancroft and eight at Swallow Pond. In May, at least six nests were found at Haughton Strother GP and a small flock of ten was present throughout the month at Waren Mill Caravan Park, with ten at Berwick Hill, Brier Dene Farm and Walbottle. A flock of 20 in an observer's garden at Walbottle on 11th June included two family parties and, in the same garden, a third brood was raised in a nest box during July. Also in June-July, one to 15 were recorded at a further 15 locations.

Breeding data from the important nest box colonies at Big Waters (AJJ) and Hauxley NR (RMH) were as follows;

Big Waters	Boxes used	Clutches	Eggs	Hatched	Fledged
2014	42	69	309	207	184
2013	36	65	312	226	181

Nest boxes were erected at Big Waters in 1987 and first used in 1990 (one pair). There were three blank years to 1993, four pairs nested in 1994, two pairs in 1995 and since then 21-53 boxes have been occupied. An impressive 3,472 young have fledged from the site during this period (AJJ).

Hauxley NR	Boxes used	Clutches	Eggs	Hatched	Fledged
2014	22	--	100	69	69
2013	21	--	99	46	40

Post-breeding flocks increased during August, with 102 at Haughton Strother GP on 22nd, 43 at Hauxley on 31st and up to 12, including juveniles, at five other sites. Further increases were seen in September when a notable 120 were in Jesmond Dene, 82 at Haughton Strother GP, 80 at Brier Dene Farm, 60 at Hauxley, 42 at Chugdon Wood and 40 at East Cramlington LNR. On 27th August the first signs of the usual autumn passage were noted at East Chevington when 23 were observed moving S, and in September

coastal passage was recorded at St Mary's Wetland on 12th and 29th where 30 and 16 flew S in small flocks. An unexpected and very unusual record was of 26 juveniles, arriving on Brownsman (Farne Islands) on 2nd September which, however, were mobile and quickly moved on leaving only one which stayed for a further four days; this was a record count for the islands.

Passage flocks were again recorded in October, when on 11th, at least 215 moved S (in two hours) at Tynemouth (CB) and on the following morning, at Spital (Newbiggin), 92 passed in small groups. Observers on other dates throughout October recorded coastal passage of groups up to 35 moving at Newbiggin, Tynemouth and the Wansbeck Estuary, and further north at Bamburgh, 40 were trapped and ringed during the month with 12-30 seen there on three other dates from 5th-9th; counts of up to 50 were also reported from Hauxley and Low Newton. Inland the species was well reported during the month with 42 at Prestwick Carr, 35 at Ellington, 12 at Haughton Strother GP and one to three at eight further sites.

Coastal movement was again witnessed in November when 28 were noted flying S at Spital (Newbiggin) on 9th and 23 at Tynemouth on 16th, with 19 trapped and ringed at Bamburgh during the month. Elsewhere, in November-December, numbers remained high with maximum flocks of 50 at Seahouses and 40 at Birling links (Warkworth) with 10-30 at the Beehive Flash, Cresswell Pond, Eachwick, Ellington, Eshott, Haughton Strother GP, Holywell, Longhorsley, Roseden and Walbottle. One to ten were at more than 20 other widespread localities.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava flavissima*

STATUS: Well-represented summer and uncommon passage visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

Spring passage began on 15th April with two at Hoppen Kiln Flash and one over Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) (MSH/TF/JFA), followed by one or two at Beadnell Flash, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools and Holy Island on 16th-19th. Also on 19th, eight were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs, rising to 12 on 23rd, and nine other sites recorded one to three by the end of the month. During the first week in May, eight frequented Whittle Dene Reservoirs, at least five were at Bell's Farm (Hemscott Hill) and four at Hoppen Kiln Flash and later in the month, one to two were at Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Dilston Haughs (Corbridge), Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Low Newton and West Ord (Berwick). In June, a maximum count of 11 came from the favoured Whittle Dene Reservoirs and four were at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) on 5th where two were seen carrying food on 14th; all other reports were of one to two at five localities including Wark (North Tyne) and Beal shore.

Successful breeding, as expected as a result of the warm, dry summer, was evidenced throughout July-August by high counts including many juveniles, from a number of locations. At least 12 were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 17th July and at Cresswell Pond counts peaked at 15 on 31st. In August, maximum counts included 17 at East Chevington, 14 at Cresswell Pond, nine at Haughton Strother GP, eight at Whittle Dene Reservoirs and seven at Druridge Pools. Smaller counts of one to three came from at least 15 other sites during the two high-summer months.

Numbers declined rapidly throughout September as birds vacated the county for warmer climes, with two seen flying S at Druridge Pools on 3rd and three there on 12th. Four were on the Farne Islands on 3rd and a maximum of six were at Cresswell Pond on 11th.

Elsewhere during the month, two were noted at Grindon Lough on 4th-5th and Bothal Pond on 7th, with singles at Hauxley, Low Newton, Newbiggin and St Mary's Island; the final record was a juvenile at Cresswell Pond on 27th.

### **Blue-headed Wagtail** *M.f. flava*

STATUS: Rare passage visitor which appears in small numbers in most springs.

A male at Lynemouth Flash on 23rd April (TRC) was the only record.

### **Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2013

One was initially found on Brownsman (Farne Islands) on 27th August (DR/DKS/EW *et al.*) before relocating to Inner Farne where it stayed until the following day. The record was accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee.

### **Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*

STATUS: Well-represented resident and uncommon passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

The great majority of records for the first two months were from the Newcastle conurbation, with three on the Wallsend Burn in January and one to two at Byker, Holywell Dene, Horton Burn (Cramlington), Jesmond Dene, Newburn and twelve other locations including eight records from Newcastle City Centre, a regular wintering site for the species; sightings of singles at Longhorsley and Thrum Mill (Rothbury) were the only records away from the south-east of the county. By mid-March, birds were returning to breeding territories on the upland rivers and from 12th were noted at Coanwood Common, Kielder, Redesmouth, Upper Coquetdale, Wallington Hall and Wark (North Tyne); ten flew N in low fog on 30th at Kielderburn. Elsewhere, a further 12 sites held two individuals and singles were at 16 localities.

During the summer season from April onwards, many counts came from breeding areas with, in April-May, ten pairs in Upper Coquetdale, six birds at Allen Banks and the Harthope Valley, four on the Carey Burn and Jesmond Dene with pairs noted from Blakehopeburnhaugh, Craggside, Holywell Dene, Lilburn, Newcastle City Centre and Wallsend; fledged young were seen at three of these sites. Elsewhere, one to two were recorded at 11 other localities. The period June-August produced sightings of nine at Whittle Dene Reservoirs and along the Usway Burn (Upper Coquetdale), eight on a stretch of the River Wansbeck, four at Holywell Dene with family parties and juveniles frequenting Allen Banks, Budle Bay, the Harthope Valley, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Longhorsley and Morpeth. One to two were noted at around 30 other sites, with breeding activity also noted in the Breamish Valley and Leazes Park (Newcastle).

The large number of September-October records reflected the seasonal movement eastwards away from breeding areas in the higher elevations of the county, and accordingly sightings from the coastal plain and the south-east of the county predominated. Passage of up to five moving S or E during this period was noted from Ashington, Boulmer, Castle Island, Low Newton, Seaton Sluice and Tynemouth. Maximum counts in September were

seven in Jesmond Dene and at Fourstones. In October, an impressive 50 birds roosted with Pied Wagtails at Tapee Fen (Berwick) on 2nd (BWG) and 12 were in Whitley Bay Cemetery on 6th. One to two were seen at around 50 other widespread sites during September-October, including Inner Farne and many suburban areas and town and city centres.

In November-December, one to two were reported widely from many sites, mainly coastal and suburban and again including Newcastle City Centre. The maximum count during this period was four in Jesmond Dene on 15th December.

### **Pied Wagtail** *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

STATUS: Common resident, well-represented in winter.

BREEDING: Common.

In January, 29 in a field at Lynemouth and ten at Ashington were the only double-figure flocks, with one to two at six other locations, including Newcastle City Centre. The peak count in February was 35 on Prestwick Carr on 1st, declining to 11 by 19th, whilst elsewhere one and two were seen at Jesmond and Exhibition Park (Newcastle). The first sign of spring movement was 30-40 moving N (in four hours) at Kielderburn on 30th March (MD) and ten had returned to Upper Coquetdale by 23rd. Smaller flocks in March included 12 at Prestwick Carr and ten at Bothal Pond with one to seven at nine other sites, including the Farne Islands. During the first week in April, 22 were on Holy Island and at mid-month ten to 12 were present at Gosforth Park, Tynemouth Park and West Stobswood Pool with one to eight at a further ten localities.

The onset of the breeding season was marked by 28 pairs established in Upper Coquetdale by 30th April (JR) and three pairs were on the Carey Burn. In May, 12 pairs were around Holy Island village and two birds were carrying food at Prestwick Carr. Whittle Dene Reservoirs saw a peak monthly count of 18 on 18th June. The breeding population on the Farne Islands remained strong as six pairs nested successfully with newly fledged young present on the islands from 5th June.

Flock sizes increased during July with post-breeding gatherings of adults and juveniles which included, at Grindon Lough a flock which peaked at 34 by 28th, whilst 29 were recorded at Whittle Dene Reservoirs and ten at Northumberlandia (Cramlington). Several large mixed adult and juvenile flocks were counted in August, ranging from 15-36 at Bothal Pond, Flagstaff Park (Berwick), Foxton Hall, Grindon Lough, Lynemouth, Longhorsley, Seghill Flash, West Hartford and Whittle Dene Reservoirs with one to 12 at a further 14 widespread sites. By far the largest flock of the year was at Bothal Pond on 2nd September where 160 were present in the evening (TB), with at least 50 remaining there on the following day and at Tapee Fen (Berwick), a roost containing 50 birds was observed on 9th September (BWG). Elsewhere, 20-50 were at Cresswell Pond, Grindon, Hauxley, Longhorsley Common, St Mary's Island, Wark (North Tyne) and Whitley Bay, with five to 15 at a further six sites, including seven flying SW at East Cramlington.

During the final two months, notable counts in November were 48 in a rooftop roost at Eldon Square (Newcastle), 37 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), 22 at Chevington Burn mouth and 20 at Bothal and East Chevington. In December, nine at a farmhouse at Thirlwall Common on 20th was an unprecedented mid-winter record while elsewhere, one to seven were noted at around 15 sites, mainly in the south-east of the county.

### **White Wagtail** *M.a alba*

STATUS: Uncommon passage visitor mainly in the spring, although autumn birds are undoubtedly overlooked.

Early passage birds first appeared in March, with three at Cresswell (ASJ) and a single at Druridge Pools on 22nd and further singles seen the following day at Long Nanny, Low Newton and Tynemouth and another at Holywell Grange on 24th. An influx occurred in April, when following a single at Druridge Pools on 8th, four were at Cresswell Pond on 13th and 17th and at St Mary's Island on 14th, six at Tweedmouth on 16th and eight at Holy Island on 18th and 26th, with one to three at a further 16, mainly coastal localities. The final spring arrivals in May were singles at Warkworth Gut on 4th and West Ord (Berwick) on 11th.

### **Richard's Pipit** *Anthus richardi*

STATUS: Rare visitor / LAST RECORD: 2013.

One was flushed from marram grass at Low Newton Point on 16th November (GW *et al.*) and remained in the area to 18th.

### **Olive-backed Pipit** *Anthus hodgsoni*

STATUS: Rare visitor / LAST RECORD: 2013.

There was yet another record for the Farne Islands with one on Brownsman from 15th-18th October (AD *et al.*). It showed extremely well at times and often gave its short raspy call. The record was accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee. Of ten individuals since 2000 only one (at Newbiggin in October 2009) was away from the Farne Islands, although interestingly all four previous records, from 1986-1990 were elsewhere.

### **Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis*

STATUS CHANGES: Well-represented summer and uncommon passage visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

The first arrival was an individual displaying at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) on 19th April (ASJ) following which, singles were recorded at Slaley Forest and Steel Hall (Hexhamshire) on 23rd, at Catcleugh Reservoir, Nunnykirk, Holy Island and Inner Farne on 27th-29th and eight recorded displaying on the latter date in the Wingates area. Later migrants in May included three+ at Wallsend on 5th and a single on Holy Island (Snook) on 22nd.

During May-June, five displayed at Holystone, four were at Simonside and Slaley and three at Beacon Hill and in the Harthope Valley. In addition, one to two were noted on breeding territory at Acton Fell, Byrness, Kellas Plantation, Old Park Wood (Hartburn), Slaley Forest and Tilhill Plantation (Dipton). A single bird at Blakehopeburnhaugh on 9th was the only report in July.

Return passage was noted at Swallow Pond with a single on 25th August, and in September two were seen to fly in off the sea at Holy Island Lough on 20th with six more coastal migrants recorded at Bamburgh and Tynemouth on three dates and Holy Island again on two further dates. Autumn passage on the Farne Islands produced one to five on 13 dates from mid-August to 1st October with a peak of 6 on 19th September. Inland sightings involved passage S of nine birds from 3rd-8th September at Greenhaugh. Another late record involved a single, flying S and calling, at Cresswell Pond on 1st October.

### **Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis*

STATUS: Abundant resident and passage visitor, less numerous in winter.

BREEDING: Abundant.

The mild winter, with an almost complete absence of snow, ensured that birds stayed in the county and in January good numbers were present during the first half of the month, including 11 from Eglingham Moor and at Prestwick Carr, 10 at Backworth, six scattered across Chatton Sandfords and five at Chatton Moor, with one to three reported at a further 11 widespread locations. In February, 18 were at West Hartford, 17 at Prestwick Carr and five near Woodhorn Flash, with singles at Arcot Pond and one seen flying N at Cramlington.

Passage movements and a return to breeding habitats became very apparent from mid-March onwards with 'many' displaying on Holy Island, 20 in song at Allendale and a flock of 28 at Derwent Reservoir. Coastal movements included 63 N at Snab Point (Cresswell) on 20th and a total of 51 N from 10th-26th at Seaton Sluice. Inland passage was reported from Upper Coquetdale where 20 moved through Shillmoor and 30 through Old Quickening Cote on 23rd; by 30th, passage had intensified as 300 moved N (in four hours) at Kielderburn (MD). Several reports in April concerned birds on passage, with 100+ counted at St Mary's Island and 70 at Newbiggin on 2nd, and elsewhere 20-30 (per hour) were seen moving NW at Gosforth Garden Village and Plessey Woods CP during 10th-16th. On the Farne Islands the species is one of the most numerous passage migrants and a good influx was recorded this year with the peak count totalling 128 W during 31st March-1st April.

Inland, on breeding territories during April, 40 were on Coanwood Common and 30 on Ridley Common by mid-month, many in display flight, and 25 were counted at Gimmerknowe (Rothbury). Numbers in May-June included a maximum of 63 displaying on the Otterburn Ranges on 15th May and ten to 25 were at Buteland Fell (Redesmouth), Longhorsley Moor and the Simonsides, with nest-building seen at Longframlington and on 29th May and four young fledged from a nest on Holy Island. June records included nine at Prestwick Carr, eight at Longhorsley Moor and four at St Mary's Wetland and in July, ten to 15 were reported from Low Newton, Northumberlandia (Cramlington) and Holy Island (Snook). Small post-breeding flocks of ten to 30 were recorded from a number of coastal and inland sites during the last week of August and on Newcastle Town Moor an adult carried food and faecal sacs indicating breeding activity on 14th.

The first passage birds were recorded moving on the last day of August, when 220 flew SW (in just over one hour) at East Cramlington and 20+ S over the River Blyth Estuary. Several large counts of coastal migrants throughout September included 400 after heavy overnight rain at Low Newton and 300 S at Tynemouth on 1st (JEd/ASJ), 200+ flew S at St Mary's Wetland on 5th, 400 S at Tynemouth on 7th (DRW) and 150 S at Druridge Pools on 12th, together with light coastal passage at Hauxley, North Shields and St Mary's on various dates. On the Farne Islands good numbers were reported passing through from mid-month, including a total of 170+ on 16th-17th. Inland records in September included 500 grounded birds in misty conditions at Lanehead on 3rd, 300 moving S at Greenhaugh on 4th, 110 at Grindon Lough on 11th and 280 SW at East Cramlington on 27th, with ten to 40 at many other locations. These records will constitute just a small fraction of the huge numbers passing through the county during this period, en route to wintering grounds further south in the UK and Europe. Visible migration declined considerably in October but was still on-going with smaller numbers, up to 60, recorded moving S and SW



at East Cramlington, the Farne Islands, Holy Island, Lynemouth, Newbiggin, St Mary's and Tynemouth and birds were still present at upland sites such as Grindon Lough and Harbottle.

The last two months of the year remained relatively mild and good numbers were recorded, including many small groups of ten to 30 at coastal and inland sites, with smaller numbers still remaining at higher elevations in the Harthope and Ingram Valleys during November. In December, up to 15 were at Prestwick Carr and West Hartford with one to five at nine other mainly coastal locations.

### **Rock Pipit** *Anthus petrosus*

STATUS: Well-represented resident passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

During the first quarter of the year the peak count was 12 in the favoured area of Sandhan Bay (Holy Island) in early-January. Three to five were at Beacon Point (Newbiggin), Berwick Little Beach, Fenham-le-Moor, Low Newton, Spittal (Berwick) and St Mary's Island during the period and one to two frequented Stag Rocks (Bamburgh), Beal Point, Blyth South Harbour, Hauxley, the Heugh (Holy Island), Newbiggin, Seahouses and Snab Point (Cresswell). Displaying birds were noted at five sites on Holy Island during late February and throughout March and on the Farne Islands from 22nd March.

Numbers declined in April as birds moved to more northerly breeding grounds, however three males displayed at Holy Island Castle on 1st and a single was reported from Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) throughout the month. Four at Dunstanburgh Castle in mid-May included a fledged juvenile, with two elsewhere at Cullernose Point and singles at Craster, Rockcliffe, Seahouses and Stag Rocks during the month. Only a few mainland records were received in June-September, none of which reported evidence of successful breeding but included maximum counts of six at Hauxley, Holy Island and St Mary's Island and one to three at Alnmouth, Blyth South Harbour, Cresswell Pond, Cullernose Point, Low Newton, Newbiggin, St Mary's Island, Tynemouth and Whitley Bay. A total of 28 pairs nested across the Farne Islands and experienced a good breeding season with fledged young noted from 27th May; post-breeding flocks there included 27 on Brownsman in mid-July, whilst autumn passage produced a peak count of 43 on 29th September.

Numbers swelled in October-November as birds returned to wintering territories. On Holy Island ten were noted on 14th October, whilst in November, 17 on 7th increased to an impressive 51 on the following day, before declining to ten on 14th (ADM). The highest monthly counts elsewhere were 20 in the Hauxley area in October and 14 at St Mary's in November and, throughout this two-month period, one to five were noted at a further 11 county-wide locations including an unusual inland record of a single bird on the North Tyne at Wark on 22nd October.

In December, Sandham Bay again held the highest number with 12 on 14th and 11 were at the other favoured locality of St Mary's Island on the same day. Seven frequented Boulmer and four were at Fenham-le-Moor throughout the month, with one or two at nine other localities.

### **'Scandinavian' Rock Pipit** *A.p. littoralis*

STATUS: Uncommon visitor, mainly in the spring.

Spring sightings came in March, when a single was at Tynemouth Pier on 4th (CB), three at Low Newton on 13th (TRD/JD) and a further three at Whitley Bay on 14th (MSH). Two were noted at St Mary's Island on 24th (JBu) and 31st (KWY) and a single was at Whitley Bay on 31st (MSH).

### **Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla*

STATUS: Well-represented passage and winter visitor.

In January, a flock of 35 fed on beech-mast at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) on 31st, 23 were in stubble fields at Carterway Heads on 4th and 12 were at Capheaton throughout the month. Numbers at a favoured locality near Grindon Lough increased from 12 on 19th January to 60 by 2nd February (PRM), with 20 still in the area to mid-March. Wallington Hall attracted 25-30 during February-March, whilst elsewhere during the period 14+ attended feeders at Featherstone Park Station on 22nd February, up to 12 visited a Corbridge garden and 17 were at Borough Woods (Morpeth) on 13th March.

Numbers were much reduced in April, with counts of six at Wallington Hall on 14th and one to two at a further four inland localities to 24th. On the coast, one to two were at Holy Island from 21st-26th, eight were on the Farne Islands on 25th and singles at Tynemouth on 26th and at Whitley Bay on 28th. A very late individual was found on Holy Island on 23rd May.

Small numbers began arriving from 15th September, when four were at St Mary's Island and two at Whitley Bay Cemetery, with another at Tynemouth on the following day. Four were on the Farne Islands on 17th and a light influx at Holy Island produced one to three on five dates from 19th to month end. Further migrants arrived at Holy Island from 7th October, when 20 were present, followed by ten on 17th and 11 on 30th. Birds were present on the Farne Islands on fifteen October dates, with a peak of 41 W on 30th. Elsewhere during the month, two to five were noted at Bamburgh, Ellington, Newbiggin, St Mary's Island, Tynemouth and inland at Kielder Castle with singles at a further nine localities. Numbers remained very low during the final two months of the year with the largest gathering reported from the traditional Grindon site, where 11+ on 1st December increased to 22 by 15th. The scarcity of the species during the latter winter period was highlighted at The Riding (Hexham), where no birds were ringed during the period; by contrast a total of 232 were ringed here during the spring (SCE).

### **Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs*

STATUS: Abundant resident, passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Abundant.

Flocks sizes were relatively small during the first two months of the year, with 50 at Elwick, 40 on a game crop at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) and 25 at Widdrington Moor Lake in January and 30+ at Hemscott Hill in February. The flock at Haughton Strother increased to 85 in March, when up to 80+ (mostly males) were on feeders at Kielder Castle and 50-60 at Harwood Village and Wallington Hall.

Haughton Strother continued to attract numbers of birds into early April, with 70+ noted on 8th. Some 23 were counted over a 2km stretch at Prestwick Carr on 18th and 18 were

still at Wallington Hall on 14th. Apart from a gathering of 40 at Gatehouse (Tarsset Burn) on 3rd May numbers were generally low during the summer period, as flocks dispersed and breeding territories were established.

Feeders at Greenhaugh attracted an impressive 150 during August-September (MD), while ten to 20 were also reported from Baybridge (Blanchland), Bellingham and Howden during the same period. Migrants appeared on the Farne Islands from 15th September, when 14 were present and up to 15 were reported here over the following twelve days; two migrants appeared at Holy Island on 17th. Light coastal passage was again noted in October, with a peak of ten at the Farne Islands on 9th and ten at Bamburgh on 24th.

Flock sizes were again low during the final two months of the year, although 60 were gathered at Quarry House (Berwick) on 31st December. Elsewhere in December, 26-30 were noted at Longhorsley, QEII CP and Spindleston.

### **Hawfinch** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

STATUS: Rare resident, passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Rare. / LAST BRED: 2005?

There were only two sightings of this fast declining species, the first of which was a single seen in trees by Felton War Memorial on 25th January (DR). Another flew N at Grindon Lough on 11th October (PRM).

### **Common Rosefinch** *Erythrura erythrura*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2013

The only records this year concern single first-winters on Inner Farne from 17th-18th September (DS *et al.*) and Brownsman (Farne Islands) from 17th-19th September (DR *et al.*).

### **Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

STATUS: Well-represented resident.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

This species was well reported during the year, with some sizeable gatherings. In January, 12 were noted at Alnwick, seven at Druridge Bay CP, six at Branton GP, Derwent Reservoir and Humford Mill (Bedlington) and five on feeders in a Rothbury garden and at Darras Hall. Ten were at Swallow Pond in February, when seven were also at Longhorsley and the peak March counts were eight at Cramlington and six at Plessey Woods.

The most significant April count was six at Holywell Dene, where two nests were found in May. Elsewhere during April-May, four to five were noted at Cramlington, Spindleston and Wark (North Tyne). Family parties were noted from June-August, at Holywell Dene, Marden Quarry (Whitley Bay), Old Hartley, Prestwick Carr, Walbottle and Waren Mill. The largest gatherings (including young) during this period were ten at Prestwick Carr and eight at Holywell Pond, Old Hartley and Swallow Pond.

The highest counts during September-October were eight at Bakethin and Derwent Reservoirs and at Prestwick Carr, while six to seven were reported from Cambois and Old Hartley. On 10th October a single accompanied migrant Meadow Pipit as they flew S at Tynemouth. The peak November count was 12 at Longhorsley Moor, while six to eight were at Big Waters, Branton, Howick, Linden Hall, Old Hartley, QEII CP and Swallow Pond during November-December.

### **Greenfinch** *Chloris chloris*

STATUS: Common resident and a passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

During the first quarter there was a good count of 104 from Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 8th February (PBU). Regular counts from a Walbottle garden included monthly peaks of 24 in January and 14-18 in February-March. Elsewhere however, numbers were worryingly low, with six to nine only, reported from Cramlington, Dinnington, Ellington, Lynemouth, Prudhoe and Seahouses, these figures perhaps reflecting the well documented decline of this species due to trichomonosis disease which first started to affect Greenfinches in 2005. Counts were slightly more encouraging during the second half of the year, beginning with 24 at Howden on 28th August. Bamburgh RS attracted 20-30+ during September-October. Elsewhere in September, eight to 16 were reported from East Cramlington, Howden and Newcastle (Town Moor). There was a large gathering in October, when 90+ were feeding on Rose Hips at King Edward's Bay (Tynemouth) on 22nd, while 30 were also at Linden Hall and 12 at Newcastle (Exhibition Park). The Walbottle garden recorded a peak of 12 in November, while elsewhere very few were reported during the final two months of the year.

### **Linnet** *Linaria cannabina*

STATUS: Common resident and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common

The largest count in January was an inland flock of 300 on stubble fields near Carterway Heads on 4th. Elsewhere, 100 were gathered at Elwick at the end of the month and 30-65 were noted at Big Waters, Holywell Grange Farm and Rising Sun CP (Wallsend). A flock of 70 at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) in February increased to 160 by early March, when 100 were at Mill Farm (Tweedmouth). Another large inland flock of 300, found on a game crop near Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 28th March had declined to 40 by mid-April. Large gatherings were still apparent in early April, with 200 at Buston Links on 1st and 110 at Holywell on 8th. Lesser numbers reported during the period February-April included 35-60 at Backworth, Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay), Swallow Pond and Widdrington Moor Lake.

Breeding territories were well established by May, with for example eight pairs noted at Holywell. A post-breeding flock of 120 had formed at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) as early as 14th June. Numbers increased during August with gatherings of 220 at Brada Quarry (Bamburgh), 120 at St Mary's Island and 55 at East Chevington. The St Mary's flock increased significantly in September with regular counts of 250-350+ throughout the month and a peak count of 600 on 5th (ASJ); elsewhere in the area 240 at Brier Dene Farm may have been mobile birds from this larger gathering. Further large gatherings in September included 120-200 at Budle Bay, Holy Island, Lincoln Hill (Humshaugh) and Stag Rocks and 80 at both Cheswick and Cocklawburn.

In October, 500 were at Beal Farm on 11th and 18th, while numbers in the St Mary's area fluctuated from 120-300. Other notable flocks were 150 at Boulmer on 4th, and the peak count from the Farne Islands was 120 on 27th, while 45-50 were also noted at Berwick GC, Humshaugh and Longhorsley. The only notable gatherings in November were of 210 at Holywell on 20th, declining slightly by the end of the month and 150 at Chevington Burn mouth on 9th. A stubble field at Mill Farm (Tweedmouth) held a modest flock of 65 on 20th December.

## **Twite** *Linaria flavirostris*

STATUS: Well-represented passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Rare. / LAST BRED 2008?

In January, 100+ were at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 5th, 40 at Holy Island (Snook) on 12th and 19 at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 19th. On 12th February, 46 were at Scremerston Station and 26 at Cocklawburn. The favoured Druridge Bay area produced counts of 30-87 throughout January-February, with 40+ still present to mid-March and 13 on 21st.

The first autumn individual was well inland at Grindon Lough on 16th September, followed by four at Holy Island on the following day. In October, 15-18 were at the Farne Islands on 12th-13th, with lesser numbers thereafter to 7th November. In the Lindisfarne NNR area, numbers increased from two at Holy Island on 18th October to 85 at Beal Point by the end of the month, in addition to which eight were at Berwick Little Beach on 23rd. In November, 120 were at Stag Rocks on 14th and 60+ were at the Long Nanny on 10th and at Hemscott Hill (Druridge Bay) on 23rd, while up to eight at six further sites included two at Holywell on 3rd. Lindisfarne NNR remained popular to the end of the year, where the flock, centred on the Beal Point area, peaked at 130 during November-December (IK/ADM). Also in December, 40 were in Druridge Bay on 16th, the Long Nanny flock had declined to 30 and five were at Berwick Little Beach on 11th.

## **Lesser Redpoll** *Acanthis cabaret*

STATUS: Common resident and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

Numbers were relatively small during the first quarter, although there was a flock of 60 at Melkridge on 5th February. A feeding station at East Chevington was an attraction with peak counts of 13 in January, 20+ in February and 30 in March, when 20 were also at nearby Widdrington on 26th. Elsewhere during this early period, five to ten were reported from Castron, Castle Island, Ellington, Haughton Strother (Humshaugh), Holystone and a Rothbury garden.

A flock of 22 was at Prestwick Carr on 8th April and a large gathering of 100 was attracted to Alders at Haughton Strother on 26th, with at least 60 remaining on 1st May. Breeding areas in the Harthope Valley held up to 27 in April, ten in May and seven (including juveniles) in June, while elsewhere during the spring and summer periods five to ten were reported from potential breeding localities at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley), Castron, Derwent Reservoir, Greenlee and Grindon Loughs, Holystone, Melkridge, Nunnykirk, Simonside and Wallington Hall.

In September, a flock at Greenhaugh increased from 80 on 4th to 100 by 12th, 70 were at Castron on 6th and five (including a juvenile being fed) were at Grindon Lough on 5th; at the coast four migrants were noted at St Mary's Island on 22nd.

Passage in October produced four S at Low Newton on 8th and 15+ at Bamburgh on 24th. Inland, 50-60 were at Grindon Lough during the month, 20 at Wark (North Tyne) on 20th and ten at Harwood Forest on 14th.

An impressive flock of 300+ had gathered in the Harthope Valley by mid-November (JPD/MPF/AWS), while elsewhere during November flocks of 40-75 were noted at Bakethin

and Derwent Reservoirs, Grindon Lough and Thrunton Woods. A good sized flock of about 80 birds was at Longhorsley on 4th December, up to 50 were still in the Grindon Lough area during the month and 30 were at Derwent Reservoir and 18 at Gosforth Park NR.

## **Common Redpoll** *Acanthis flammea*

STATUS: Uncommon to rare passage and winter visitor. Given to irruptive movements from Northern Europe, when, in such years it may become more numerous.

Two were attracted to feeders at East Chevington on 16th March, with one there on 20th, rising to 13 on 3rd April (IRD). A female / immature was on the Farne Islands from 31st March-2nd April and a male was seen here on 3rd April. Another was on feeders at Corbridge on 14th April and at least two were with a large flock of Lesser Redpolls at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 26th. Further singles were at the Farne Islands from 27th-28th April and on 6th May.

There were only five records during the latter part of the year, all of singles, at Grindon Lough on 11th October, the Farne Islands on 16th October and 15th and 27th November and at Swallow Pond on 5th December.

## **Crossbill** *Loxia curvirostra*

STATUS: Common to well-represented resident passage and winter visitor. Given to irruptive movements from Northern Europe, when, in such years it may become very numerous.

BREEDING: Common to well-represented.

Very few were reported during the first two months, with two to four at Blakehopeburnhaugh, Byrness and Wark Forest in January, whilst in February, ten flew W at Ridsdale on 19th, and in the Kielder area ten were at Kielder Castle and two at Lewis Burn. Numbers increased during March, when a total of 45 were along forest edge at Acton Fell (Slaley Forest) on 5th, 20 at Thrunton Woods on 14th, 11 at Druridge Bay CP on 16th and six to eight at Harwood Forest, Kielder Forest, Ray Fell (Woodburn) and Swallow Pond.

A flock of 60 in Slaley Forest on 23rd April proved to be the largest gathering of the year (RMH); seven flew S at Prestwick Carr on 6th and 15 were still in Thrunton Woods at the end of the month. There was a slow build up in numbers at Kielder Forest during May, including a party of 35 at Hawkhope on 14th and several groups of two to ten throughout the wider area. Small numbers were noted in other typical coniferous habitats during the period May-June, with 17 at Holystone on 11th May, seven at Kyloe Hills on 25th May and family parties reported from Blakehopeburnhaugh, Hepple and Simonside. Many pairs and groups of up to 20 were in the Border Forests during July.

Two to four were noted at four localities in September and 15 were at Harwood Forest and ten at Bakethin Reservoir during October. Several sizeable groups were reported during November, including 29 at Thrunton Woods, 24 at Blakehopeburnhaugh, 20 at Bakethin



Stewart Sexton



Reservoir and ten at both Middleton and Ridsdale. Perhaps more unusual were several reports from the Morpeth area, where at Lancaster Park, two flew W on 7th, seven W on 17th and eight flew over the observer's garden at Fulbeck on 30th; in addition two were also seen flying SW at Brunton Park (Gosforth) on 8th. The only notable December count was of 15 at Harwood Forest on 4th.

## **Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis*

STATUS: Common resident and well-represented passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

A roost at Cobalt Business Park (North Shields) held 80 on 22nd January and 60+ on 2nd February, declining to 35 by the end of the month. Another sizable concentration was noted on feeders at East Ord (Berwick) during the same period, with 54 in January, 64 in February and 42 in March. In addition a 'charm' of 80 was reported from Druridge Bay on 31st March, while elsewhere during the first three months flocks of 40-55 were reported from Carterway Heads, Corbridge, Cresswell Pond, Hemscott Hill, Humshaugh and Silverlink Biodiversity Park.

Numbers were much reduced during the summer months (April-July) as birds dispersed to establish breeding territories, although 36 were still at Humshaugh on 13th April. Counts of ten to 15 were received from Alnwick, Holy Island, Holywell, Melkridge, Newbiggin, Prestwick Carr, Walbottle and Woodhorn Flashes during this period and a modest gathering of 30 had assembled at Newton Links by 2nd July.

In August, a flock of 150-200 was at Swallow Pond throughout the month (JPD/MPF) and gatherings of 100-122 were reported from East Chevington, Holy Island and Prestwick Carr during September. Elsewhere in September, 90 were at Hauxley and 70 at Derwent Reservoir on 20th and 50-53 were at St Mary's Island and West Hartford.

The largest October flock, of 70+ at Bamburgh on 5th, had declined to only ten by 9th; a total of 35 flew S (in two hours) at Tynemouth on 11th and 23 headed S at Newbiggin on the following day. During the final two months a flock of 200 was near Chevington Burn mouth on 9th November, 120 were at Widdrington on 13th December and 130 near Warkworth at the end of the year. Further large gathering during this final period included flocks of 40-75 at Branton, Cresswell, Druridge Pools, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Holywell Pond, Howden and Longhorsley.

## **Siskin** *Spinus spinus*

STATUS: Common to abundant resident, passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Common to abundant.

Numbers were relatively small during the first half of the year, with flocks of 20-30 noted at Big Waters, Linton Lane, Netherwitton, Thrum Mill (Rothbury) and Wark (North Tyne) during January-February. At the latter locality numbers increased to 40-50 from mid-March. Elsewhere in March, 20 were at Thrunton Woods on 19th and up to 37 were attracted to a Walbottle garden.

Up to 65 were reported from Humshaugh during April, when more modest gatherings included ten to 15 at Berwick, Caistron and Melkridge. The flock at Humshaugh declined to 21-24 during May, while elsewhere during the period May-August there were no further counts of more than five, from ten typical and potential breeding areas.

A flock of 120 was at Baybridge (Blanchland) during September and another flock of 50 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 23rd had increased to 120 by mid-October. Coastal movements produced 20 at St Mary's Island on 18th September and one to three at Holy Island from 19th-20th. At Bamburgh, 40+ were noted on 5th October, while 20 moved S at the Wansbeck Estuary on 11th and likewise, 20 S at Newbiggin on 12th. Passage at Tynemouth peaked at 13 S on 11th October and 50 S on 9th November.

The flock at Haughton Strother GP reached 200+ on 15th November (MR) and a further 100 were in the Harthope Valley on 18th. A large December flock of 200 was at Blakehopeburnhaugh on 27th and 120 frequented Gosforth Park NR throughout the month. At Haughton Strother, numbers dwindled to 70 by the end of the month and 70 were also at Cragside on 6th. Lesser numbers during the final two months included flocks of 20-36 at Derwent Reservoir, Marden Quarry, QEII CP, Wark and Wooler Common.

## **Snow Bunting** *Plectrophenax nivalis*

STATUS: Well-represented autumn passage and winter visitor.

In the north of the county, a flock of up to 40+ was noted at Holy Island in January (MSH) with 20 still at the Snook on 2nd February. Elsewhere in the area, 22 were near Bamburgh on 4th February, 25 at Ross Back Sands on 16th and two at Spittal (Berwick) on 18th. Further down the coast three at Blyth South Harbour from 6th January, increased to 11 by 28th February. One flew S at Cresswell on 16th January and four N at Seaton Sluice on 13th February. Inland a flock of 11 was on the border ridge at Windy Gyle on 20th January. In March, seven were still at Blyth South Harbour on 1st, when six were also at Beadnell Bay. Two at East Chevington on 4th increased to 11 by 9th. Two flew N at St Mary's Island on 2nd, one to two were on the Farne Islands from 22nd-25th and two flew N past Snab Point (Cresswell) on 25th. Inland a male was on the Otterburn Ranges on 9th. The final record of this first winter period was three at the Long Nanny on 1st April.

The first returning individual was at Cheswick on 25th September. In October, singles were at St Mary's Island on 2nd, Holy Island on 14th and Boulmer on 19th, before a light influx late in the month produced two well inland at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 24th, two at Stag Rocks on 26th, seven at Hemscott Hill Links on 29th and another at Holy Island on 30th.

Numbers increased in November, with flocks of 15 on stubbles at Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay) on 27th, 14 at East Chevington on 16th, 12 at Stag Rocks on 7th, nine at the Farne Islands on 5th and eight at Ross Back Sands on 16th and at Holy Island on 17th. Six were at Newbiggin GC on 20th and one to three at a further six localities during the month. In December, nine were at Newbiggin briefly on 1st before moving S; another was at Berwick Little Beach on 1st and three were at Holy Island on 7th. The largest gathering was 13 at Guile Point on 28th, when two flew N at Seaton Sluice and a single was at Dunstanburgh Castle. One was at Ross Back Sands on the final day of the year.

## Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*

STATUS: Uncommon autumn passage and winter visitor.

It was another disappointing year for this species, with singles at Alnmouth on 21st January and Holy Island on 21st April being the only reports during the first winter period. Singles were at Monks' House Pool on 9th October, Holy Island on 15th and the Farne Islands on 16th. In November, one flew N at Tynemouth on 9th, another flew over Holy Island on 16th, two were on the island on 20th and one flew S at East Chevington on 23rd. The only December record was of four at Holy Island on 7th (IK).

## Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

STATUS: Common resident.

BREEDING: Common.

The largest gathering of the year was 100+ at Elwick on 21st January (TRD/JD). Elsewhere during the month 50 were at the Beehive Flash (Earsdon) and at High Cocklaw (Berwick), while 20-40 were reported from Bamburgh, Ellington and Holywell Grange Farm. The largest February flock was 60 at Easington on 9th; the Elwick flock had declined to 50 by 6th and 50 were also at Warton (Coquetdale) on 7th, with 20-22 reported from Aydon Castle, Bywell Home Farm, Cresswell Pond and Woodhorn. A return to the North Tyne was noted at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) during early March, where 34 had gathered by 3rd; 20-26 were also reported from the Cramlington area, Beehive Flash and Shilvington. At West Ord, eight, feeding around sheep troughs on 6th April had increased to 18 by 22nd.

Singing males were heard from mid-February, when two were at Aydon (Corbridge) on 17th and another at Beacon Hill (Cramlington) on 28th. Up to nine were heard in the Holywell area during May-June, six were singing at Longhorsley in May and five in the Harthope Valley in June, when three pairs were noted on Longhorsley Common. Elsewhere during the breeding season (April-August) up to seven were reported from at least a further 23 potential breeding localities.

Reports were received from only five sites in September and six in October, with 22 at Bamburgh GC and 12 at Elwick the respective maxima. A flock of 30-36 was at Holywell from 20th November to early December. Elsewhere during the final two months, 25 were at Ellington and 15 at Buston Links in November and 24 at Ovington and 20 at Longhorsley in December, when up to 13 regularly visited a Corbridge garden.

## Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2013

A typical record was a single on Brownsman (Farne Islands) on 11th September (DR/DS *et al.*), however this was the first there since 2010. There have only been three sightings away from Holy Island and the Farne Islands since the 1980s.

## Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2013

There has been a definite run of records in recent years, as following on from individuals in 2012 and 2013 another was on Brownsman (Farne Islands) from 15th-19th September (DKS/DR *et al.*). The record was accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee.

## Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2013

The Farne Islands posted yet another record, with one on Brownsman from 14th-19th September (DR *et al.*). It was trapped and ringed on 17th and was occasionally seen alongside the Rustic Bunting. The Farnes has been a favoured locality in recent years, with records in nine years since 2000.

## Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

STATUS: Well-represented resident and a passage visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

Peak counts during the first quarter were 25+ at Beehive Flash (Earsdon) in January, 30 at Bywell Home Farm (Stocksfield) in February and 65 at Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay) in March, the latter the largest gathering of the year (MNC). The flock at Beehive Flash numbered 30 on 2nd March, declining to 15 by 24th. Elsewhere during this early period eight to 15 were noted at Cambois, East Chevington, High Cocklaw (Berwick) and Prestwick Carr. At Arcot Pond a male was in song as early as 22nd February.

In April, a total of 17 at St Mary's Island on 28th included 13 males, whilst nine at East Chevington was the only other notable record. Counts of singing males during the period April-May included, 11 at St Mary's, eight in Upper Coquetdale and at East Chevington, seven at Prestwick Carr, West Hartford and Wingates, six at Gosforth Park NR, four at Simonside, three at Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) and Whittle Dene Reservoir and two at Goswick and Howden Wetland NR, while nine birds were at Holy Island (Snook) on 22nd May. The highest June counts were 20 at Cresswell Pond on 5th and 15 at St Mary's on 15th.

By the end of August a notable 60 were gathered on Holy Island, declining to 40+ by 17th September and still further to 22-24 during October-November. Elsewhere, during October the peak Farne Island count was of ten on 9th, at least eight were at Cocklawburn Pond and St Mary's Wetland, seven at Haughton Strother and Prestwick Carr and six at Sweethope Lough. In November, 22 were gathered at Holywell on 12th, twelve were counted between Shiremoor and Murton on 8th and ten were at Buston Links on 22nd. The species kept a low profile during December, with peak counts of six at Holywell Pond, five at Longhorsley Moor and four at Belford Moor.

## Birds of unknown (although presumed not wild) origin, Escapes and Hybrids.

The identity of some of the species below has not been verified by the CRC and are presented as a record as to what is being found in Northumberland.

### Escapes:

#### **Black Swan** *Cygnus atratus*

One was seen on the River Tweed just inland from the railway bridge at Berwick on 16th and 26th May.

#### **Bar-headed Goose** *Anser indicus*

A group of seven were seen with sightings at Hauxley NR on 13th June and Cresswell Pond on 18th. They were then presumed to have moved to Derwent Reservoir where seven turned up on 1st July. Conditions there were obviously to their liking as they were noted regularly in the area until 14th-23rd August when they made a brief return to Hauxley NR. The flock had reduced to five by the time they moved back to Derwent Reservoir on 20th September and were often to be found at nearby Airy Holm Reservoir. Almost certainly the same individuals were responsible for a sighting of five at Whittle Dene Reservoir on 22nd September and they were last seen at Derwent Reservoir on 11th October.

There were further sightings of two from Widdrington Moor Lake on 24th September, Hauxley NR from 29th September to 18th October and Woodhorn from 29th October to 9th November and Druridge on 18th November.

#### **Lesser White-fronted Goose** *Anser erythropus*

The adult seen in 2013 at East Chevington was found again at Druridge Pools on 1st January and later back at East Chevington with Greylag Geese on 28th. It continued to frequent the Cresswell-East Chevington-Hauxley area until 26th April.

After a long gap it was re-located in early October at East Chevington and Hauxley NR.

#### **Red-breasted Goose** *Branta ruficollis*

A first-summer in June proved very popular, with sightings as it moved south at Warkworth and Snab Point (Cresswell) on 8th and at Hauxley NR from 9th-13th. This was presumably the offspring of a feral pair somewhere in the UK.

#### **Harris's Hawk** *Parabuteo unicinctus*

One was seen at Swallow Pond from 30th November to 29th December.

#### **Eagle Owl** *Bubo bubo*

The long staying escapee was again heard throughout February in gardens along Burnham Avenue (Walker). Interestingly it was reported again there in December though not in the intervening months. How such a large owl can remain incognito in such a built up area is something of a mystery though shows its nocturnal habit.

#### **Gyr Falcon** *Falco rusticolus*

An adult white morph bird with jesses must have been a spectacular sight at Swallow Pond on 23rd June. It was seen in flight and alighted on a fence post.

#### **Alexandrine Parakeet** *Psittacula eupatria*

The long staying individual at Hauxley NR was again seen from 4th January to 6th March and again on 5th December.

#### **Cockatiel** *Nymphicus hollandicus*

An escapee was present at East Ord (Berwick) on 27th September.

#### **Canary** *Serinus sp*

A domestic escape was found at Hadston Carrs on 16th August.

### Hybrids:

#### **Canada Goose x Greylag Goose** *Branta canadensis x Anser anser*

Single hybrids were noted at Hedgeley GP on 5th January and at Killingworth Lake from 22nd January to 27th February. Further individuals were at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 9th April and at Hauxley NR on 16th August.

#### **Canada Goose x Barnacle Goose** *Branta canadensis x Branta leucopsis*

Two hybrids were seen at Swallow Pond on 12th May in company with a Barnacle Goose.

#### **Tufted Duck x Pochard** *Aythya fuligula x Aythya ferrina*

Single hybrids were located at Howdon Wetland on 2nd February, Killingworth Lake on 27th February and Swallow Pond on 8th March.

It or another was at Swallow Pond on 5th April and presumably the same individual at Killingworth Lake from 10th-14th April. It also visited Gosforth Park NR during the month.

#### **Tufted Duck x Pochard** *Aythya fuligula x Aythya ferrina*

A hybrid drake at Tynemouth Boating Lake on 21st October was presumed to have been of this parentage.

#### **Aythia hybrid** *Aythya sp*

A hybrid at Killingworth Lake on 29th December could not be tied down to any two species but was superficially Scaup like.



Aythya hybrid - Killingworth Lake - February (Ian Fisher)





Barn Owl (Tim Dean)



## Swallows in a natural nest site – a first for Northumberland

By Ian Kerr

A thriving Swallow population has long been a feature of my regular patch on Holy Island, and 2014 proved by far the best year since I started monitoring and ringing the species more than a decade ago.

At least 77 broods, involving a minimum of 260 young, fledged around the village, harbour, St Coombs Farm, Snook House and the Lough. Many pairs produced two broods and a small number of nests produced third broods, although it was impossible to say if the same pairs were involved. Whatever the circumstance, the 2014 breeding season far surpassed the previous record year of 2009, when 56 pairs fledged around 150 young.

The most productive site was the complex of fishing sheds at the pier, where two linked buildings had 16 nests, about half inside and the others on the outside, including for the first time, the use of ledges installed by fishermen to help the Swallows.

Elsewhere, pairs also used the refuge box on the Causeway, World War Two bunkers near Beal Point, the sluice gates at Longbridge End and the double-decker hide at Lowmoor Point, all within Lindisfarne National Nature Reserve. These latter sites are not included in my totals as I had insufficient data on their success.

Excitingly, for the first time a pair used a natural site, the first record of its kind for Northumberland. This nest was in a crevice under an overhanging turf at the top of an eroding low boulder clay bank near Emmanuel Head, the eastmost point of the island. At high tides the waves would be just eight feet below the nest.

The nest was discovered by a friend, George Moody, summer warden for Lindisfarne's Little Tern colony, who noticed it while doing his 'day job,' collecting shellfish on the local rocks. A family party of five Swallows was nearby. When I visited the site a few days later these birds had disappeared. The nest was well-concealed, its mud almost the same colour as the background. There was heavy splash underneath indicating its success. When I climbed up I found a fully-feathered dead chick in the cup which must have perished at about the time its siblings fledged.

As high tides wash the base of this bank the nest would not have survived a good easterly blow, which often sends waves crashing against it, washing out large chunks of clay and rock. Fortunately, the weather during the breeding season was kind and mainly westerly.

The nest was the first I had ever seen in a natural site and so I circulated the pictures and details widely to seek comment.

Sharrock (1976), Gibbons *et al.* (1993) and Turner (2006) all state that natural sites are very rare in Britain, although obviously at one time, in the remote past this must have been normal. However, two north east birders and ringers were able to come up with other instances of natural sites.

Keith Bowey recalled that in the early 1970s in County Durham a pair nested on the side of a horizontal branch on a large Beech tree on the outskirts of Sunderland. There were also claimed to be instances of cliff sites near Marsden being used but no details, dates or circumstances appeared to be available.

Also in the 1970s, Martin Davison found Swallows nesting near the entrance to a sea cave north of Oban on the west coast of Scotland. Shag and Rock Dove were nesting further inside.

Angela Turner has speculated that the very high population on Holy Island in 2014 may have forced this pair to resort to using a natural site. The nest was about 350m from the nearest more normal site, the wooden hide at the Lough, which this year produced five broods of Swallows and two broods of Pied Wagtails. As a result of her comments, I searched the rest of the sea banks at Emmanuel Head and also the cliffs at Coves Bay just to the north. This search revealed nothing apart from a very tired Short-eared Owl, which may have arrived against strong westerly winds.

It is possible that there was intense competition for nests at the Lough. In early August, I found a brood of four young about ten days old, dead on the floor under one nest. The nest itself was not damaged and the young had been left intact. Two other Swallow broods a few feet away were untouched, all of which seemed to rule out a predator. Perhaps this was a case of an aggressive male attempting to take over the nest by evicting the young.



I will certainly be checking the bank site next spring in case these birds return. Finally, following Angela's thoughts, I wonder if we are missing other Swallows using the many miles of cliffs around Britain, particularly in good breeding years.

I was asked to write a short report on this unusual nest site for the British Trust for Ornithology's ringer's blog site. This resulted in the additional information that two Swallow nests had been found during 2014 on sea-cliffs in Devon.

House Martins seem much happier than Swallows to use cliff sites. Many members will remember the thriving colony at Howick which faded out during the 1990s. Mark Holling tells me that there are still small sea-cliff colonies of House Martins between Berwick-upon-Tweed and North Berwick.

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## Record year for breeding Barn Owls in 2014

By Ian Kerr

Barn Owls, one of our most iconic and best-studied species, enjoyed a record-breaking breeding season in 2014, both nationally and in Northumberland.

The county had the year's earliest clutch recorded by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) when one pair began to lay in the final week of February. The year was also notable for large numbers of fledged young and at least 18 pairs in our recording area were doubled-brooded.

The success of the season gave a much-needed boost to populations which suffered heavy mortality during the severe winters of 2010-11 and 2011-12 and which had very limited success in the 2013 breeding season, with its prolonged cold spring and wet summer.

#### The main results from study areas during the 2014 season show:

- The Northumbria Ringing Group (NRG) monitored 51 successful broods producing at least 205 fledged young; 175 young were ringed, just short of the group's previous best total of 182 in 2008. Two other pairs produced an unknown number of young. Ten pairs raised second broods, some not fledging until late October-early November.
- Philip Hanmer and his team with their study area of over 100 nest sites in north Northumberland, had their best-ever season with 33 successful nests and ringing 121 young, including one second brood.
- Iain Robson, working mainly around Druridge Bay, had three first broods totalling 14 young and two second broods totalling ten chicks. Three other pairs were also known to have raised two broods of unknown size. Another pair had a single brood.



- Peter Rose, operating in the Morpeth and Longhorsley areas, had six pairs which fledged 24 young. He also had England's earliest recorded clutch with the pair which laid in late February.

The overall total of the above, where the definite outcome was known is 95 broods comprising 374 young. As these details show, there were other pairs; some double brooded, which fledged an unknown number of chicks. There was also bound to have been undetected pairs elsewhere, which means these totals represent the absolute minimum.

Philip Hanmer, in his team's 2014 report, emphasised the importance of weather, even over food supplies, for the success of Barn Owls. He said that spring 2014 was in marked contrast to 2013 and, according to the Meteorological Office, mean temperatures from March to May were above the long-term average. May was the sixth consecutive month of above average readings. Nights were mild with hardly any late frosts and the north of England escaped some spells of exceptionally wet and stormy weather which affected the south of England and Wales, all of which helped Barn Owls get off to an early start and an excellent breeding season.

During 2014 large broods were a feature and there were two instances of pairs nesting in close proximity, something which only happens in years of good weather and abundant food supplies.

These good conditions, allied to a super abundance of small mammals, particularly Field Voles, allowed owls to get off to a very early breeding season. One pair as already mentioned started laying in late February; others had eggs in March, although nationally, the average date for the first egg was in early April.

The largest recorded brood, and certainly the strangest nest site, was near Alnmouth, where a pair fledged a brood of seven young in an old wooden canoe slung for storage between the roof trusses of a farm building.

The most productive pair was in a Cheviot valley site, fledging two broods totalling 11 young (first brood of six, followed by a second of five). The next most productive pairs were around Druridge Bay where two pairs each produced two broods totalling ten young. Close proximity breeding occurred on Holy Island where two pairs used boxes just 250m apart. Each was double-brooded, one producing a total of eight young and the other six chicks. The other close pairs were at Slaley, where one pair fledged three young in a tree hole near to the Rose and Crown Inn and the second fledged five from a box in a barn 600m away.

At Whitley Chapel, a pair raised an unknown number of young on a barn ledge after being unable to use a nearby box, this having been taken over by a Goosander which raised 12 young.

At Wallington, one box was used first by a pair of Kestrels which fledged five young. It was then occupied by Barn Owls which went on to fledge at least three young.

Further breeding was confirmed from Alnwick, Holywell Dene, Ponteland, Yearle and at least one confidential site in the south east of the county.

Several people commented on the abundance of food. The most plentiful prey at most sites was Field Vole, while John Steele also recorded a few Common Shrews and, unusually, two Water Shrews, a first occurrence for him. On Holy Island, Field Voles were so abundant that they spread into village gardens, one trundling over my wife's feet as she sat on the patio having a cup of tea. Many islanders reported that their dogs were

catching and bringing in voles almost on a daily basis. One was found very much alive and squeaking at the harbour nest box when the second clutch was checked.

The 2014 success in Northumberland was reflected nationally, with data from the BTO's Nest Record Scheme showing that the average brood of four was the highest since records began in 1966. The previous best was around 3.5 per brood in 1996.

Colin Shawyer, founder and co-ordinator of the Barn Owl Conservation Network (BOCN) who monitors 3,000 nest sites annually, also confirmed that it was a record year. He reported that the network estimated Britain now has a population of around 9,000 pairs which, based on ringing returns, could have produced around 30,000 young during 2014.

Back in the 1980s, using annual ringing data, he was able to show that Barn Owl breeding productivity peaked roughly every four years; 2007 was the last big national peak but, given severe winters after that, it was perhaps unsurprising that seven years elapsed before owls once again reached a peak.

He said that by early 2014 vole plagues, the like of which were commonly seen in the late 1880s and early 1900s, were being reported from many areas and as a consequence Barn Owls performed daytime courtship rituals particularly early, some in late January.

Studies had shown that the average first egg laying date during 2014 was 4th April, 24 days earlier than the 20-year average and the earliest so far experienced by the network.

The size of first broods averaged more than four from clutches of seven or eight eggs, something which was very rare in Britain. First broods of six or more young were not uncommon.

The network also compiled data on the ages of breeding adults. Of the 98 which were trapped and examined by its members during the season, one third proved to be first-year birds while the rest ranged in age from two to 13 years.

## Acknowledgements;

Local data for this report was provided by; Richard Barnes, Keith Brooks, John Day, Martin Davison, Janet Fairclough, Bryan Galloway, Alison & Philip Hanmer, Michael Holmes, Ian Kerr, Brian Little, Maurice McNeely, Iain Robson, Peter Rose, John Steele, David Wood and Ian Yoxall.

## First and Last Dates of Summer Visitors 2014

Species	First Date	Last Date
Garganey	1st April	2nd September
Quail	1st May	15th July
Marsh Harrier	6th February	7th October
Osprey	25th February	16th November
Little Ringed Plover	11th March	8th October
Common Sandpiper	11th April	4th October
Little Tern	28th April	7th September
Sandwich Tern*	23rd March	15th November
Common Tern	11th April	4th November
Roseate Tern	13th April	4th October
Arctic Tern	13th April	27th October
Cuckoo	23rd April	26th September
Nightjar	31st May	18th July
Swift	4th May	23rd September
Sand Martin	15th March	10th October
Swallow	25th March	11th November
House Martin	11th April	18th October
Wood Warbler	19th April	21st September
Willow Warbler	1st April	5th November
Garden Warbler	20th April	28th October
Lesser Whitethroat	15th April	12th October
Whitethroat	9th April	12th October
Grasshopper Warbler	10th April	19th September
Sedge Warbler	18th April	6th October
Reed Warbler	18th April	17th October
Ring Ouzel	25th March	6th November
Spotted Flycatcher	11th May	28th September
Pied Flycatcher	20th April	20th September
Redstart	8th April	24th September
Whinchat	21st April	8th October
Wheatear	13th March	3rd November
Yellow Wagtail	15th April	27th September
Tree Pipit	19th April	1st October

\*winter records omitted (see Classified List for specific records)

Some obvious species such as Blackcap and Chiffchaff have been omitted from this table as the presence of wintering birds may obscure the first and last dates of summer visitors.

## Last and First Dates of Winter Visitors 2014

Species	Last Date	First Date
Bewick's Swan	6th March	18th October
Whooper Swan*	26th May	30th September
Bean Goose	5th May	18th November
Pink-footed Goose*	14th May	6th September
White-fronted Goose	15th April	7th September
Barnacle Goose	18th May	21st September
Pale-bellied Brent Goose*	--	6th September
Dark-bellied Brent Goose	27th April	11th September
Long-tailed Duck*	23rd May	13th September
Black-throated Diver	20th June	8th September
Great Northern Diver	6th July	14th September
Red-necked Grebe	22nd May	6th September
Slavonian Grebe	6th April	12th October
Jack Snipe	12th April	20th September
Black Guillemot	3rd June	8th October
Little Auk	10th February	21st September
Iceland Gull	13th May	17th September
Glaucous Gull	24th May	6th November
Waxwing	3rd April	7th November
Fieldfare	11th May	16th September
Redwing	28th April	14th September
Brambling	23rd May	15th September
Snow Bunting	1st April	25th September
Lapland Bunting	21st April	9th October

\*obvious summering records omitted (see Classified List for specific records)

# Additions and Corrections to Previous Reports

2013

## Corrections:

### Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

The report of 14 at Branton GP on 22nd August was erroneous as these were **Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*. Observer sighting incorrectly transcribed to NNBC.

**Ringing Report** - The first table on page 215 refers to Canada Goose *Branta canadensis* and not Brent Goose as stated.

## Additional Records:

### Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

14 at Branton GP on 22nd August.

### Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

One at the Excavations (Holy Island) on 28th September was struggling to remove Piri piri Burr from its tail (MWi).

### Raven *Corvus corax*

An unusual lowland record of one calling as it flew over Felton on 16th October (MWi).

2008

## Additional Record:

### Leach's Petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

One flew past St Mary's Island on 12th June (MPF). This was the only sighting of the species in that year and was accepted by the CRC. It was seen earlier that evening moving north off Whitburn (County Durham).

# Ringing Recoveries Reported in 2014

By Ian Fisher

Key to symbols and terms used:

- Age: terminology as applied at the time of ringing
- 1 – nestling or chick not yet able to fly
  - 2 – fully grown, year of hatching quite unknown (current year not necessarily excluded)
  - 3 – definitely hatched during current year
  - 4 – hatched before current calendar year, exact year unknown
  - 5 – definitely hatched during last calendar year
  - 6 – hatched before last calendar year, exact year unknown
- Sex: M – male  
F – female
- Manner of recovery:
- R – caught and released by ringer
  - VV – sight record (ring read in field, or a colour-ringed bird)
  - + – shot or killed by man
  - X – found dead or dying
  - XL – long dead
- () – caught or trapped alive and not released, or released but with ring removed  
/?/ – manner of recovery unknown

Canada Goose <i>Branta canadensis</i>			
5262772	4	08/01/11	QE 2 CP
	X Shot	02/09/14	Beaully Firth, Highland
5262793	4	04/07/11	Marden Quarry
	X	05/10/14	Newton Aycliffe

Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>			
EX35519	4 M	19/12/10	Slimbridge, Gloucestershire
	XF	08/01/14	Prudhoe



<b>Storm Petrel</b> <i>Hydrobates pelagicus</i>			
2594963	4	15/08/12	Isle of May, Fife
	R	05/08/13	Isle of May, Fife
	R	07/08/13	Brownsman, Farne Islands
	R	31/07/14	Isle of May, Fife
	R	08/08/14	Druridge Links
2379649	4	08/07/14	Kilnsea Clays, East Yorkshire
	R	29/07/14	Eyemouth, Borders
	R	08/08/14	Druridge Links
2661126	5	22/07/14	Eyemouth, Borders
	R	23/07/14	Annstead Point
640893	4	01/08/14	Inner Farne, Farne Islands
	R	21/08/14	Skokholm Island, Pembrokeshire

<b>Shag</b> <i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>			
1452046	1	19/06/10	Isle of May, Fife
Blue TUZ	X	09/01/13	Hauxley

<b>Little Egret</b> <i>Egretta garzetta</i>			
GR37165	1	09/05/14	North Cotes, Lincolnshire
Red F, Yellow T	VV	22/07 & 02/08/14	Cresswell Pond
GR37169	1	09/05/14	North Cotes, Lincolnshire
	VV	04/08/14	Alnmouth
	VV	14/09/14	Montrose Basin, Angus

<b>Osprey</b> <i>Pandion haliaetus</i>			
White YA	1	Summer 2007	
	VV	Summer 2013	Kielder Forest
Yellow 37	1	Summer 2009	Glaslyn, Wales
	VV	Summer 2013	Kielder Forest
1156085	1	12/07/10	Kielder Forest
	VV	Summer 2013	Foulshore Moss, Cumbria
1156088	1	19/07/11	Kielder Forest
	VV	06/07/13	North York Moors, N Yorkshire
1156089	1	19/07/11	Kielder Forest
	VV	11/08/14	Derwent Reservoir
1174462	1	19/07/12	Kielder Forest
	VV	14/11/13	Todde Marshes, SENEGAL

<b>Coot</b> <i>Fulica atra</i>			
GR10945	4	18/12/11	Killingworth
White BBH	VV	17/05/12	Big Waters NR
	VV	18/02/14	Stockton, Cleveland

<b>Sanderling</b> <i>Calidris alba</i>			
BX91455	3	07/12/08	Low Newton-by-the-Sea
	X	06/06/14	Sydri-Rotarey, ICELAND

<b>Dunlin</b> <i>Calidris alpina</i>			
3442398	4	27/07/93	Ottenby, Oland, SWEDEN
	R	05/02/97	Elm Bush, Hauxley

<b>Woodcock</b> <i>Scolopax rusticola</i>			
PS17298	4	08/11/13	Novosaratovka, St Petersburg, RUSSIA
	XF shot	15/11/14	South Charlton Bog

<b>Puffin</b> <i>Fratercula arctica</i>			
EY13489	6	27/07/13	Brownsman, Farne Islands
	XL	21/06/14	La Gree Penvins, FRANCE

<b>Little Tern</b> <i>Sternula albifrons</i>			
NV68297	1	05/07/92	Long Nanny
	R	16/05/14	Inner Farne
NV95538	1	24/07/98	Great Yarmouth, Norfolk
	R	01/06/11	Rue Point, Point of Ayre, Isle of Man
	XF	25/05/14	Lindisfarne NNR

<b>Sandwich Tern</b> <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>			
DK31429	1	15/05/93	Maplin Bank, nr Shoeburyness, N Sea
	R	11/07/14	Inner Farne, Farne Islands
1435123	1	15/06/09	Griend, HOLLAND
	VV	26/06/14	Coquet Island
V00680	1	17/06/10	Hirsholm, Frederikshavn, DENMARK
	VV	14/07/14	Inner Farne, Farne Islands
DD44574	3	09/09/10	Ythan Estuary, NE Scotland
White ESC	VV	30/06/13	East Chevington
DD44587	4	09/09/10	Ythan Estuary, NE Scotland
White ETB	VV	30/06/13	East Chevington
DD76892	1	12/07/13	Inner Farne, Farne Islands
	VV	27 & 29/06/14	Mile 4 Saltworks, NAMIBIA

<b>Sandwich Tern</b> <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i> (continued)			
DD92419	1	17/07/13	Inner Farne, Farne Islands
	XF	18/02/14	Spiekeroog, GERMANY
DD92425	1	17/07/13	Inner Farne, Farne Islands
	VV	29/06/14	Mile 4 Saltworks, NAMIBIA

<b>Common Tern</b> <i>Sterna hirundo</i>			
4H51221	5	17/04/10	La Somone, SENEGAL
	VV	04/08/10	Seal Sands, Teeside
	XF	09/06/14	Coquet Island

<b>Roseate Tern</b> <i>Sterna dougallii</i>			
SX81865	1	18/07/99	Coquet Island
	VV	15/04/10	La Somone, SENEGAL
1V015109	4	12/08/10	Cadiz, SPAIN
	VV	05/07/14	Coquet Island

<b>Arctic Tern</b> <i>Sterna paradisaea</i>			
CE94161	1	11/07/83	Brownsman, Farne Islands
	R	27/06/14	Brownsman, Farne Islands
SX35142	1	15/06/92	Long Nanny
	X Fox	24/05/13	Long Nanny
SV85416	1	03/07/01	Long Nanny
	X	07/07/14	Inner Farne, Farne Islands
ST58457	1	07/07/14	Long Nanny
	X	23/08/14	Aarre, Ribe, DENMARK

<b>Kittiwake</b> <i>Rissa tridactyla</i>			
ET68366	1	12/07/99	Inner Farne, Farne Islands
	XF	24/03/14	Lake Sandfordsdammen, SWEDEN

<b>Black-headed Gull</b> <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>			
6142906	8 M	05/04/05	Nidarø, Trondheim, NORWAY
White J72J	VV	01/02/14	Amble Harbour
HA00288	1	26/06/06	Kalviai, Klaipeda, LITHUANIA
	VV	01/12/14	St. Mary's Island
6H5211	1	18/06/09	Frederikshavn, DENMARK
	VV	27/01/14	Big Waters
6H8073	1	05/06/10	Frederikshavn, DENMARK
	VV	12/01/14	Big Waters

<b>Black-headed Gull</b> <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i> (continued)			
6215050	8	29/06/11	Mosvatnet, Stavanger, NORWAY
White	VV	17/02 & 02/12/14	Chirton Dene, North Shields
S2640	8	27/03/12	Riga, LATVIA
	VV	19/11/13	Brier Dene CP
5154623	1	12/06/12	Brunnavika, Sola, NORWAY
White J5HJ	VV	16/02/14	Killingworth Lake
6227761	8	12/06/12	Breiavatnet, Stavanger, NORWAY
	VV	16/02/14	Tynemouth Park
6153473	8	19/04/13	Lokketangen, Baerum, NORWAY
White J6CZ	VV	13/12/14	Druridge Bay CP
K03055	8	29/04/13	Ostensjovannet, Oslo, NORWAY
White J1TL	VV	20/11/13	Druridge Bay CP
IA144927	4 M	17/05/13	Riether Werder, GERMANY
Black X3C1	VV	From 08/08/14	Brier Dene CP
IA144964	4 F	20/05/13	Riether Werder, GERMANY
X7C1	VV	25/01/14	Big Waters
5154623	1	20/06/13	Brunnavika, Sola, NORWAY
White J5HJ	VV	08/12/14	Killingworth Lake
EY21752	1	14/06/14	Moorfoot Hills, Borders
White 2ALS	VV	28/09/14	Cresswell Pond NR

<b>Mediterranean Gull</b> <i>Larus melanocephalus</i>			
3893873	1	24/06/10	De Kreupel, HOLLAND
	VV	23/10/10	Big Waters
PNNG	4 F	23/05/13	Wielkopolskie, POLAND
	VV	28/10/13	Newbiggin
	VV	01-05/12/13	Big Waters
EY77110	6	30/11/13	Great Yarmouth, Norfolk
Yellow 2H62	VV	26/12/13 & 20 & 25/01/14	Newbiggin-by-the-Sea
	VV	30/11 & 14/12/14	Great Yarmouth
FS86613	1	22/06/14	Jablines, FRANCE
	VV	14/08/14	Cresswell Pond

<b>Common Gull</b> <i>Larus canus</i>			
5154623	1	17/07/92	Isle of May, Fife
	VV	08/12/14	Killingworth

<b>Lesser Black-backed Gull</b> <i>Larus fuscus</i>			
GG84641	1	17/07/92	Isle of May, Fife
	XL	07/10/14	Holy Island

<b>Herring Gull</b> <i>Larus argentatus</i>			
GN77911	8	10/03/05	Ellington Road Landfill
	VV	05/12/11	Sandshamn, Sande, NORWAY
GC05712	6	15/10/11	Blackborough End, Norfolk
	VV	27/03/13	R Tyne at Newburn

<b>Caspian Gull</b> <i>Larus cachinnans</i>			
DN27681	1	26/05/11	Zb.Kozielno, Paczkow, POLAND
Yellow PKCS	VV	03/07/12	Cley Marshes, Norfolk
	VV	27/07/13	Amble
	VV	From 09/08/14	R. Coquet & Amble

<b>Great Black-backed Gull</b> <i>Larus marinus</i>			
HT81135	1	30/06/02	Ramsraigs, Dunbeath, Highland
Yellow A91	VV	23/10/14	Budle Bay
HW57261	1	07/07/13	Bullers of Buchan, Aberdeenshire
Yellow T:017	VV	01/08/14	St Mary's Island

<b>Tawny Owl</b> <i>Strix aluco</i>			
GN65035	1 M	28/04/07	Rufford Abbey CP, Nottinghamshire
	R	07/05/14	Kielder Forest

<b>Great Spotted Woodpecker</b> <i>Dendrocopos major</i>			
LA81951	3 M	17/10/14	Druridge Links
	R	29/10/14	Bamburgh

<b>Peregrine</b> <i>Falco peregrinus</i>			
GF51673	1 F	08/06/95	Wark Forest
	VV	24/04/13	Trapain, Lothian
GR18831	1 F	21/05/12	Norwich, Norfolk
	VV	19/05/14	Newcastle upon Tyne

<b>Goldcrest</b> <i>Regulus regulus</i>			
ENN073	5 F	12/04/13	Bardsey Island, Gwynedd
	R	19/07/14	Howick Hall

<b>Sand Martin</b> <i>Riparia riparia</i>			
D127444	4 M	30/06/13	Broadoak Quarry
	R	11/08/14	Hiers-Brouage, FRANCE
Y540800	4 F	20/05/14	Lynemouth Sewage Works
	R	24/08/14	Étang de la Horre, FRANCE

<b>Swallow</b> <i>Hirundo rustica</i>			
Y988168	1	16/06/13	Quickening Cote, Coquetdale
	R	03/09/13	Icklesham, Sussex
Z037166	1	09/08/14	Humshaugh West
	R	22/09/14	Rye Meads, Hertfordshire

<b>House Martin</b> <i>Delichon urbicum</i>			
D781169	4 M	23/05/14	Birtley Sewage Works, Durham
	R	24/05/14	Big Waters
D920538	1	31/07/14	Upper Breamish Valley
	R	20/09/14	West Bexington, Dorset

<b>Chiffchaff</b> <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>			
AY6595	4	10/10/10	Antwerpen, BELGIUM
	X	30/10/13	Coquet Island

<b>Blackcap</b> <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>			
X970640	3	05/09/10	Bamburgh
	R	01/10/11	Uebersyren, LUXEMBOURG
D544711	3 F	04/08/13	Mickley Square
	R	28/04/14	Blavand Fuglestation, DENMARK
Y540945	3 M	27/08 & 05/09/14	Druridge Links
	R	25/09/14	Arjuzanx, FRANCE

<b>Sedge Warbler</b> <i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>			
X962375	3	31/08/11	Cardiff Wetland Res, Cardiff
	R	31/07/12	Bamburgh
	R	28/07/14	Bamburgh
Z016630	3	08/08/14	East Chevington
	R	14/08/14	Woumen, BELGIUM
Z016711	3	08/08/14	East Chevington
	R	27/08/14	Titchfield Haven, Hampshire



<b>Reed Warbler</b> <i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>			
T639326	3 M	20/08/06	Gosforth Park
	R	01/06/14	Gosforth Park
X917380	3 F	12/09/09	Cauldwell Hall Farm, Suffolk
	R	06/07/14	Gosforth Park
Y417026	3 F	18/09/11	Holme Bird Observatory, Norfolk
	R	23/06/14	East Chevington
Y390425	3	21/08/13	East Chevington
	R	17/05/14	Eccles-on-Sea, Norfolk
Y635658	4 F	15/06/14	Marsworth Res, Hertfordshire
	R	23/06/14	East Chevington
D112690	3	21/07/14	East Chevington
	R	20/08/14	Reserve Naturelle de la Maziere, FRANCE

<b>Blackbird</b> <i>Turdus merula</i>			
7462802	3 F	30/09/09	Bjugn, NORWAY
	R	04/02/14	Long Benton
LC08075	4 M	26/10/11	Bamburgh
	XF	15/03/14	Herning, DENMARK
LE14752	3 F	21/11/11	Holy Island
	R	08/10/12	Holy Island
	XF	10/11/14	Burwarton, Shropshire
L425809	4 M	05/11/13	Vinkenbaan, HOLLAND
	R	12/03/14	Holy Island

<b>Pied Flycatcher</b> <i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>			
V989552	1	01/06/11	Penpont, Dumfries & Galloway
	R = F	09/06/13	Dipton
X184925	1 F	15/06/12	Linnel Hill, nr Hexham
	R	09/06/14	Pandy, Wrexham
Y989884	1 F	08/06/13	Nr Ystradowen, Powys
	R	21/05/14	Netherwitton

<b>Brambling</b> <i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>			
L965925	4 M	21/01/13	Welshpool, Powys
	VV	01/03/14	Gilsland
Y988314	4 F	22/02/13	Fell Cottages, Slaley
	XF	06/03/14	Aston, Staffordshire
D614924	4 M	26/12/13	Nr Acomb
	XF car	11/03/14	Edmundbyers, Durham

<b>Common Redpoll</b> <i>Carduelis flammea</i>			
D654691	5 M	23/03/14	Clay Bank, North Yorkshire
	R	02/04/14	Branch End, Stocksfield

<b>Siskin</b> <i>Carduelis spinus</i>			
90017952	5 M	06/04/13	Hilden-schonholz, GERMANY
	R	28/04/13	Branch End, Stocksfield
Y880531	5 M	19/04/13	Swarland
	R	07/05/14	Tved, DENMARK
D251293	6 M	22/04/13	Lemington Hall
	R	26/04/14	Sore Merkeskog, NORWAY

<b>Snow Bunting</b> <i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>			
SY27928	3 M	15/12/13	Calais, FRANCE
White M7	VV	03/03/14	Druridge Bay
	VV	05/03/14	Chevington Burn
SY042928	3 M	15/12/13	Calais, FRANCE
	VV	03/03/14	Billsleuch Moor, Dumfries & Galloway
	VV	12/03/14	How Moor

### Acknowledgements:

Most of the above was gleaned from the British Trust for Ornithology's website (link below) and the work of the Northumbria Ringing Group and Mike Hodgson/Bamburgh Ringing Station. My thanks are due to all the observers who keep reporting colour ringed birds – please keep it up!

### References:

Robinson, R.A., Leech, D.I. & Clark, J.A.(2015) The Online Demography Report: Bird ringing and nest recording in Britain & Ireland in 2014. BTO, Thetford ([www.bto.org/ringing-report](http://www.bto.org/ringing-report), created on 1-September-2015)



Curlew (Ian Fisher)

## Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) 2014

By Daniel M Turner and Steve Holliday

The following tables summarise Wetland Bird survey (WeBS) counts for selected species in 2014.

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
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<b>Mute Swan</b> <i>Cygnus olor</i>												
Inland	452	322	369	178	144	187	218	206	470	401	421	371
Lindisfarne	0	2	12	21	7	10	4	5	40	62	64	12
Open coast	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	2	5	3	2	1
Estuaries	56	52	113	143	265	307	299	428	144	180	49	49
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>521</b>	<b>641</b>	<b>659</b>	<b>646</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>433</b>

<b>Whooper Swan</b> <i>Cygnus cygnus</i>												
Inland	64	30	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	20	41
Lindisfarne	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	32	0
Open coast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0
Estuaries	88	22	41	3	0	0	0	0	0	17	1	48
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>89</b>

<b>Pink-footed Goose</b> <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>												
Inland	6	543	805	2	0	0	0	310	2879	5	605	
Lindisfarne	919	0	156	0	0	0	0	0	1580	110	320	
Open coast	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	260	0	
Estuaries	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>925</b>	<b>545</b>	<b>961</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>4459</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>925</b>	

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Greylag Goose</b> <i>Anser anser</i>												
Inland	284	715	867	178	222	344	402	1181	1469	1728	1097	934
Lindisfarne	128	250	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	60	10	0
Open coast	0	7	12	7	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Estuaries	1	2	1	3	2	0	0	146	0	6	6	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>974</b>	<b>884</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>1327</b>	<b>1469</b>	<b>1794</b>	<b>1113</b>	<b>937</b>

<b>Canada Goose</b> <i>Branta canadensis</i>												
Inland	801	1130	771	244	235	449	594	1057	1202	1373	659	774
Lindisfarne	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Open coast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Estuaries	52	51	25	14	10	19	21	18	124	305	206	156
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>853</b>	<b>1181</b>	<b>796</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>1075</b>	<b>1326</b>	<b>1678</b>	<b>865</b>	<b>930</b>

<b>Barnacle Goose</b> <i>Branta leucopsis</i>												
Inland	0	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	5	1	1
Lindisfarne	250	210	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1986	512	0
Open coast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>1</b>

<b>Pale-bellied Brent Goose</b> <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>												
Lindisfarne	1048	904	157	0	0	0	0	0	340	1707	2449	1489
Open coast	5	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1053</b>	<b>911</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>1707</b>	<b>2449</b>	<b>1489</b>

<b>Dark-bellied Brent Goose</b> <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>												
Inland	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lindisfarne	67	84	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	429	186	25
Open coast	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Estuaries	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>25</b>

<b>Shelduck</b> <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>												
Inland	15	24	64	44	39	18	8	21	2	3	4	5
Lindisfarne	1318	756	437	300	46	138	189	69	205	341	1171	1610
Open coast	0	12	34	59	26	39	0	15	8	0	4	0
Estuaries	48	85	112	23	108	46	26	48	14	23	1	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1381</b>	<b>877</b>	<b>647</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>1180</b>	<b>1623</b>

<b>Wigeon</b> <i>Anas penelope</i>												
Inland	1709	2163	949	14	9	28	17	62	516	1324	1548	2162
Lindisfarne	868	552	117	0	0	5	1	8	1214	14141	11601	2387
Open coast	77	750	8	0	0	0	0	0	27	10	142	97
Estuaries	499	425	130	13	0	1	0	2	6	219	446	674
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3153</b>	<b>3890</b>	<b>1204</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>1763</b>	<b>15694</b>	<b>13737</b>	<b>5320</b>

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Gadwall</b> <i>Anas strepera</i>												
Inland	130	105	199	137	108	75	55	75	296	406	326	215
Lindisfarne	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Open coast	0	0	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	1	13	14
Estuaries	7	0	18	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>234</b>
<b>Teal</b> <i>Anas crecca</i>												
Inland	1145	1030	684	92	8	21	45	139	1304	1902	2114	1965
Lindisfarne	63	175	52	14	10	17	11	130	81	76	308	145
Open coast	50	176	21	23	0	0	0	2	45	31	57	53
Estuaries	490	485	446	18	6	0	1	4	103	396	586	653
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1748</b>	<b>1866</b>	<b>1203</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>1533</b>	<b>2405</b>	<b>3065</b>	<b>2816</b>
<b>Mallard</b> <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>												
Inland	1575	1039	724	226	248	401	638	1207	1876	1697	1665	1868
Lindisfarne	166	218	49	2	14	21	37	110	153	133	134	277
Open coast	82	86	49	23	3	6	1	1	32	77	116	186
Estuaries	349	353	188	110	133	148	140	199	212	307	253	395
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2172</b>	<b>1696</b>	<b>1010</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>816</b>	<b>1517</b>	<b>2273</b>	<b>2214</b>	<b>2168</b>	<b>2726</b>
<b>Pintail</b> <i>Anas acuta</i>												
Inland	3	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	11	3	1
Lindisfarne	229	67	7	0	0	1	0	0	1	13	96	66
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Pochard</b> <i>Aythya ferina</i>												
Inland	62	81	45	21	13	35	15	12	28	43	35	32
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Tufted Duck</b> <i>Aythya fuligula</i>												
Inland	699	575	649	376	258	206	267	325	665	819	565	631
Lindisfarne	3	3	0	3	5	2	4	5	5	6	5	6
Open coast	2	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	12	20	9
Estuaries	0	3	2	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>704</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>651</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>671</b>	<b>837</b>	<b>590</b>	<b>646</b>
<b>Scaup</b> <i>Aythya marila</i>												
Inland	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lindisfarne	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Eider</b> <i>Somateria mollissima</i>												
Lindisfarne	484	409	316	243	154	400	417	278	372	308	313	261
Open coast	329	520	409	381	269	189	673	357	573	300	311	447
Estuaries	157	117	74	116	28	30	87	43	32	118	93	132
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>970</b>	<b>1046</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>740</b>	<b>451</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>1177</b>	<b>678</b>	<b>977</b>	<b>726</b>	<b>717</b>	<b>840</b>

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Long-tailed Duck</b> <i>Clangula hyemalis</i>												
Inland	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lindisfarne	20	17	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Open coast	26	16	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Estuaries	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Common Scoter</b> <i>Melanitta nigra</i>												
Inland	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lindisfarne	0	85	230	0	0	0	200	0	21	496	147	0
Open coast	437	1175	1586	150	189	5	88	288	350	0	337	297
Estuaries	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>1266</b>	<b>1816</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>521</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>297</b>
<b>Goldeneye</b> <i>Bucephala clangula</i>												
Inland	229	256	191	18	0	0	2	0	6	13	164	197
Lindisfarne	14	12	10	13	0	0	0	3	0	1	12	3
Open coast	10	35	21	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	6	21
Estuaries	175	236	138	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	49	85
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>306</b>
<b>Red-breasted Merganser</b> <i>Mergus serrator</i>												
Inland	16	14	8	9	2	0	0	0	0	2	12	1
Lindisfarne	23	16	14	9	3	13	24	22	10	12	108	11
Open coast	11	20	12	7	11	5	0	10	0	8	15	2
Estuaries	18	23	7	6	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	15
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Goosander</b> <i>Mergus merganser</i>												
Inland	39	55	24	7	5	0	0	0	18	46	16	20
Lindisfarne	0	0	0	0	0	14	0	0	9	0	3	0
Open coast	0	0	0	0	1	34	562	284	58	0	0	0
Estuaries	55	30	15	121	18	49	67	153	422	74	106	78
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>507</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>Red-throated Diver</b> <i>Gavia stellata</i>												
Inland	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lindisfarne	2	2	2	5	0	0	0	1	0	0	6	3
Open coast	89	84	22	5	2	0	0	0	12	18	26	23
Estuaries	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Cormorant</b> <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>												
Inland	81	46	70	20	26	31	53	38	83	102	106	80
Lindisfarne	14	20	13	16	19	33	6	32	50	54	47	18
Open coast	73	64	59	54	41	39	76	101	176	94	109	103
Estuaries	150	118	70	44	39	47	54	104	229	237	137	174
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>538</b>	<b>487</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>375</b>



WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Shag</b> <i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>												
Lindisfarne	4	25	1	6	2	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Open coast	47	29	25	5	14	7	2	14	70	17	46	51
Estuaries	1	13	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	4	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Little Egret</b> <i>Egretta garzetta</i>												
Inland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	0	5	1
Lindisfarne	0	0	1	0	0	0	5	17	4	13	10	7
Open coast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Estuaries	1	0	1	0	0	0	5	8	5	4	7	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Grey Heron</b> <i>Ardea cinerea</i>												
Inland	46	35	39	14	20	19	21	34	63	38	38	32
Lindisfarne	5	7	3	8	8	19	5	6	12	9	5	8
Open coast	14	7	9	6	4	9	3	8	26	13	24	14
Estuaries	25	20	24	15	19	34	36	46	50	54	47	26
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Little Grebe</b> <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>												
Inland	31	28	52	23	22	27	50	124	254	217	99	53
Lindisfarne	0	0	0	2	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	2
Open coast	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	1
Estuaries	8	10	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	17	14	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Great Crested Grebe</b> <i>Podiceps cristatus</i>												
Inland	0	1	24	21	17	15	20	20	26	12	8	5
Lindisfarne	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	0
Open coast	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
Estuaries	0	4	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Slavonian Grebe</b> <i>Podiceps auritus</i>												
Inland	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Lindisfarne	9	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	6	2
Open coast	3	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Water Rail</b> <i>Rallus aquaticus</i>												
Inland	7	6	6	1	1	2	1	2	15	13	11	11
Lindisfarne	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Open coast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Moorhen</b> <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>												
Inland	211	192	143	66	43	38	95	154	321	429	301	194
Lindisfarne	1	0	0	2	2	1	2	2	3	4	2	1
Open coast	9	8	7	8	0	0	0	0	7	7	9	8
Estuaries	24	14	13	3	1	9	4	13	7	13	31	33
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>236</b>
<b>Coot</b> <i>Fulica atra</i>												
Inland	617	521	410	212	115	186	331	366	847	890	802	748
Lindisfarne	1	0	1	3	2	2	4	4	5	4	3	3
Estuaries	1	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	1
Open coast	0	0	4	3	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>522</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>854</b>	<b>899</b>	<b>807</b>	<b>752</b>
<b>Oystercatcher</b> <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>												
Inland	42	145	345	70	60	76	110	5	1	0	21	34
Lindisfarne	974	705	508	404	153	285	304	322	1497	505	625	946
Open coast	1508	1549	721	344	151	123	260	649	1322	786	1262	990
Estuaries	195	227	166	75	109	49	97	92	200	220	257	158
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2719</b>	<b>2626</b>	<b>1740</b>	<b>893</b>	<b>473</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>771</b>	<b>1068</b>	<b>3020</b>	<b>1511</b>	<b>2165</b>	<b>2128</b>
<b>Golden Plover</b> <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>												
Inland	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	775	63	0
Lindisfarne	23	2500	0	0	0	0	0	641	1200	3250	0	2003
Open coast	469	336	30	15	0	0	160	0	2605	1730	3252	1375
Estuaries	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	29	222	1230	550
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>492</b>	<b>2843</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>641</b>	<b>3845</b>	<b>5977</b>	<b>4545</b>	<b>3928</b>
<b>Grey Plover</b> <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>												
Inland	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lindisfarne	194	217	305	62	32	0	1	12	452	276	282	386
Open coast	50	67	120	24	0	0	0	0	9	75	83	43
Estuaries	0	2	0	0	0	0	9	1	0	2	33	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>429</b>
<b>Lapwing</b> <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>												
Inland	288	1595	183	110	96	184	555	1326	2726	3456	2539	1759
Lindisfarne	428	401	4	9	11	46	61	426	27	1673	37	333
Open coast	522	526	201	103	2	0	10	134	683	488	1036	303
Estuaries	432	198	18	17	21	22	215	439	826	1084	848	478
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1670</b>	<b>2720</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>841</b>	<b>2325</b>	<b>4262</b>	<b>6701</b>	<b>4460</b>	<b>2873</b>
<b>Curlew</b> <i>Numenius arquata</i>												
Inland	258	344	216	12	17	8	127	39	21	105	103	163
Lindisfarne	479	1400	961	440	241	297	931	949	600	1184	578	1088
Open coast	887	911	365	122	30	28	22	46	665	253	268	489
Estuaries	430	311	320	88	11	49	325	177	398	268	275	213
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2054</b>	<b>2966</b>	<b>1862</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>1405</b>	<b>1211</b>	<b>1684</b>	<b>1810</b>	<b>1224</b>	<b>1953</b>

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Bar-tailed Godwit</b> <i>Limosa lapponica</i>												
Inland	0	10	22	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lindisfarne	1053	1179	414	273	51	43	86	466	2170	536	1545	1024
Open coast	117	165	43	39	0	0	0	3	22	15	10	34
Estuaries	10	26	12	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1180</b>	<b>1380</b>	<b>491</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>469</b>	<b>2192</b>	<b>551</b>	<b>1555</b>	<b>1058</b>

<b>Turnstone</b> <i>Arenaria interpres</i>												
Inland	9	1	7	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	4
Lindisfarne	44	59	23	43	30	35	32	4	35	46	82	67
Open coast	419	614	501	232	119	7	16	185	376	568	489	474
Estuaries	23	20	26	18	3	1	2	8	7	27	16	49
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>694</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>641</b>	<b>589</b>	<b>594</b>

<b>Knot</b> <i>Calidris canutus</i>												
Inland	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Lindisfarne	1660	1390	373	7	0	0	2	18	1552	1539	26	870
Open coast	9	6	0	9	0	0	0	15	17	5	24	3
Estuaries	38	10	0	1	0	0	0	3	1	12	0	62
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1711</b>	<b>1406</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>1570</b>	<b>1556</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>935</b>

<b>Sanderling</b> <i>Calidris alba</i>												
Inland	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lindisfarne	76	114	52	11	0	0	42	19	530	159	69	253
Open coast	285	277	268	88	2	0	0	27	247	168	434	476
Estuaries	0	5	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>777</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>738</b>

<b>Dunlin</b> <i>Calidris alpina</i>												
Inland	8	16	18	0	7	3	14	29	54	10	2	1
Lindisfarne	913	1037	164	532	186	79	33	421	557	2614	1813	1456
Open coast	631	677	170	101	0	0	5	83	117	235	168	496
Estuaries	114	442	56	18	0	0	3	108	57	256	163	164
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1666</b>	<b>2172</b>	<b>408</b>	<b>651</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>641</b>	<b>785</b>	<b>3115</b>	<b>2146</b>	<b>2117</b>

<b>Purple Sandpiper</b> <i>Calidris maritima</i>												
Open coast	120	280	110	28	11	0	0	0	45	20	178	253
Estuaries	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>257</b>

<b>Green Sandpiper</b> <i>Tringa ochropus</i>												
Inland	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	7	7	3	4
Lindisfarne	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Open coast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Estuaries	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Greenshank</b> <i>Tringa nebularia</i>												
Inland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	7	0	0	0
Lindisfarne	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	0	0	0
Open coast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Estuaries	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	4	9	2	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>

<b>Redshank</b> <i>Tringa totanus</i>												
Inland	65	52	97	28	8	23	11	18	26	28	22	37
Lindisfarne	564	392	264	419	17	11	57	332	975	1235	396	538
Open coast	803	846	520	295	0	0	50	202	601	719	796	657
Estuaries	793	662	399	515	1	6	195	704	661	747	591	538
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2225</b>	<b>1952</b>	<b>1280</b>	<b>1257</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>1256</b>	<b>2263</b>	<b>2729</b>	<b>1805</b>	<b>1770</b>

<b>Snipe</b> <i>Gallinago gallinago</i>												
Inland	37	18	42	3	2	4	15	71	70	121	141	84
Lindisfarne	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	7	8	4	6
Open coast	6	9	19	6	0	0	0	0	1	3	21	4
Estuaries	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	4	0	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>95</b>

Slavonian Grebe (Chris Barlow)



# Species on the County List not recorded in 2014

The following table contains details of the species currently on the county list which do not appear in the Classified List in this report. They are included here to make each Birds in Northumbria as complete a record of the county's birds as possible

Column A           The year the species was LAST recorded.

Column B           TOTAL number of records in the extremely rare category.

Column C           The year the species was FIRST recorded.

Column D           The year the species LAST BRED.

		A Last	B Total	C First	D Bred
Lesser White-fronted Goose	<i>Anser erythropus</i>	1978	2	1886	-
Snow Goose	<i>Anser caerulescens</i>	2012	-	-	-
Red-breasted Goose	<i>Branta ruficollis</i>	1991	2	1818	-
Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>	2010	-	1857	-
Ring-necked Duck	<i>Aythya collaris</i>	2010	-	1977	-
Lesser Scaup	<i>Aythya affinis</i>	2012	2	1999	-
King Eider	<i>Somateria spectabilis</i>	1997	-	1861	-
Harlequin Duck	<i>Histrionicus histrionicus</i>	1886	1	1886	-
Black Scoter	<i>Melanitta americana</i>	2011	1	2011	-
Hooded Merganser	<i>Lophodytes cucullatus</i>	2002	1	2002	-
White-billed Diver	<i>Gavia adamsii</i>	2010	-	1829	-
Black-browed Albatross	<i>Thalassarche melanophris</i>	1973	2	1965	-
Macaronesian Shearwater	<i>Puffinus baroli</i>	1989	2	1986	-
Wilson's Petrel	<i>Oceanites oceanicus</i>	2002	1	2002	-
Swinhoe's Petrel	<i>Oceanodroma monorhis</i>	1994	3	1989	-
Night-heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	2013	-	-	-
Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	2010	4	1874	-
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	2013	7	1963	-
Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	2013	6	1959	-
White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	2000	-	-	-
Pied-billed Grebe	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>	1994	1	1992	-
Honey-buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>	2012	-	-	1841
Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>	2011	-	-	1992
Spotted Eagle	<i>Aquila clanga</i>	1885	1	1885	-
Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	2013	-	-	?
Spotted Crane	<i>Porzana porzana</i>	2013	-	-	Historical
Little Crane	<i>Porzana parva</i>	1956	1	1956	-
Baillon's Crane	<i>Porzana pusilla</i>	1942	1	1942	-
Sandhill Crane	<i>Grus canadensis</i>	2011	1	2011	-

		A Last	B Total	C First	D Bred
Little Bustard	<i>Tetrax tetrax</i>	1937	5	-	-
Great Bustard	<i>Otis tarda</i>	1871	1	1871	-
Stone-curlew	<i>Burhinus oedionemus</i>	2010	-	-	-
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	1993	4	1954	-
American Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis dominica</i>	2013	-	1982	-
Pacific Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>	2009	3	1991	-
Sociable Plover	<i>Vanellus gregarius</i>	1971	1	1971	-
Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	2012	-	1918	-
Upland Sandpiper	<i>Bartramia longicauda</i>	1879	1	1879	-
Red-necked Stint	<i>Calidris ruficollis</i>	1995	1	1995	-
Baird's Sandpiper	<i>Calidris bairdii</i>	2012	6	1967	-
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	<i>Calidris subruficollis</i>	2012	-	1968	-
Semipalmated Sandpiper	<i>Calidris pusilla</i>	2009	3	1992	-
Wilson's Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus tricolor</i>	2008	7	1964	-
Red-necked Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>	2013	-	-	-
Terek Sandpiper	<i>Xenus cinereus</i>	2011	5	1986	-
Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularius</i>	2013	3	2001	-
Greater Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>	2011	1	2011	-
Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	1999	4	1955	-
Long-billed Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus scolopaceus</i>	2012	7	1959	-
Great Snipe	<i>Gallinago media</i>	2008	-	1822	-
Cream-coloured Courser	<i>Cursorius cursor</i>	1870	2	1846	-
Great Auk (Extinct)	<i>Pinguinus impennis</i>	1767	-	-	-
Brunnich's Guillemot	<i>Uria lomvia</i>	1977	4	1883	-
Aleutian Tern	<i>Onychoprion aleuticus</i>	1976	1	1976	-
Sooty Tern	<i>Onychoprion fuscatus</i>	1988	2	1966	-
Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>	2006	-	1955	-
Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	2007	2	1880	-
Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>	1997	5	1938	-
White-winged Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>	2013	-	ca.1879	-
Lesser Crested Tern	<i>Sterna bengalensis</i>	1997	1	1984	1997 Hybrid
Ivory Gull	<i>Pagophila eburnea</i>	2013	7	-	-
Ross's Gull	<i>Rhodostethia rosea</i>	2008	-	1960	-
Laughing Gull	<i>Larus atricilla</i>	1999	4	1975	-
Franklin's Gull	<i>Larus pipixcan</i>	2005	1	2005	-
Ring-billed Gull	<i>Larus delawarensis</i>	2006	-	1985	-
Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>	2011		1955	



		A Last	B Total	C First	D Bred
Kumlien's Gull	<i>L. g.kumliemi</i>	2007	3	1993	-
Pallas's Sandgrouse	<i>Syrhaptes paradoxus</i>	1969	-	1863	-
Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	2013	-	-	1992
Great Spotted Cuckoo	<i>Clamator glandarius</i>	1870	1	1870	-
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus americanus</i>	1995	1	1995	-
Snowy Owl	<i>Bubo scandiacus</i>	1973	6	1823	-
Tengmalm's Owl	<i>Aegolius funereus</i>	1995	7	1812	-
Red-necked Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus ruficollis</i>	1856	1	1856	-
Chimney Swift	<i>Chaetura pelagica</i>	2005	1	2005	-
Pallid Swift	<i>Apus pallidus</i>	2005	6	2001	-
Alpine Swift	<i>Apus melba</i>	2010	-	1882	-
Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	2013	-	-	-
Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	2010	8	1879	-
Roller	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>	2006	-	-	-
Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>	1963	1	1963	-
Eleonora's Falcon	<i>Falco eleonora</i>	2006	1	2006	-
Gyr Falcon	<i>Falco rusticolus</i>	1845	1	1845	-
Isabelline Shrike	<i>Lanius isabellinus</i>	2006	3	2000	-
Lesser Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius minor</i>	2013	-	1952	-
Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>	1976	1	1976	-
Nutcracker	<i>Nucifraga caryocatactes</i>	1958	2	1819	-
Crested Tit	<i>Lophophanes cristatus</i>	1984	1	1984	-
Calandra Lark	<i>Melanocorypha calandra</i>	1999	1	1999	-
Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>	2012	-	1976	-
Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>	2010	-	1827	-
Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>	2012	-	177	-
Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	2011	2	2010	-
Arctic Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus borealis</i>	2012	-	1924	-
Radde's Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus schwarzi</i>	2012	-	1976	-
Western Bonelli's Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus bonelli</i>	2006	4	1967	-
Iberian Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus ibericus</i>	2004	1	2004	-
Subalpine Warbler	<i>Sylvia cantillans</i>	2013	-	1963	-
Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler	<i>Locustella certhiola</i>	2001	2	1985	-
Lanceolated Warbler	<i>Locustella lanceolata</i>	2009	3	1984	-
River Warbler	<i>Locustella fluviatilis</i>	1996	2	1996	-
Savi's Warbler	<i>Locustella luscinioides</i>	1992	2	1977	-
Booted Warbler	<i>Iduna caligata</i>	2013	5	1990	-
Sykes's Warbler	<i>Iduna rama</i>	2010	1	2010	-

		A Last	B Total	C First	D Bred
Icterine Warbler	<i>Hippolais icterina</i>	2013	-	1889	-
Melodious Warbler	<i>Hippolais polyglotta</i>	2010	1	2010	-
Aquatic Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus paludicola</i>	1958	1	1958	-
Paddyfield Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus agricola</i>	1981	2	1974	-
Blyth's Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i>	2013	-	1912	
Marsh Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>	2013	-	1963	2013 (?)
Black-bellied Dipper	<i>C.c.cinclus</i>	1989	2	1987	-
White's Thrush	<i>Zoothera dauma</i>	2012	2	1914	-
Black-throated Thrush	<i>Turdus atrogularis</i>	2006	2	1979	-
Brown Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa dauurica</i>	1956	1	1956	-
Thrush Nightingale	<i>Luscinia luscinia</i>	2013	-	1965	-
Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	2009	-	1893	-
White-spotted Bluethroat	<i>L.s.cyanecula</i>	2012	7	1953	-
Red-flanked Bluetail	<i>Tarsiga cyanurus</i>	2010	6	1960	-
Collared Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula albicollis</i>	2013	1	2013	-
Isabelline Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>	1980	1	1980	-
Desert Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe deserti</i>	2012	6	1997	-
Pied Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe pleschanka</i>	2012	5	1979	
Spanish Wagtail	<i>M.f.iberiae</i>	2010	1	2010	-
Ashy-headed Wagtail	<i>M.f.cinereocapilla</i>	1998	3	1983	-
Black-headed Wagtail	<i>M.f.feldegg</i>	2009	2	1985	
Syke's Wagtail	<i>M.f.beema</i>	1992	1	1992	-
Tawny Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>	1998	6	1954	-
Red-throated Pipit	<i>Anthus cervinus</i>	2009	-	1963	-
Water Pipit	<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>	2013	-	-	-
Pine Grosbeak	<i>Pinicola enucleator</i>	1975	1	1975	-
Trumpeter Finch	<i>Bucanetes githagineus</i>	1987	1	1987	-
Arctic Redpoll	<i>Acanthis hornemanni</i>	2011	-	1962	-
Two-barred Crossbill	<i>Loxia leucoptera</i>	2001	4	1972	-
Parrot Crossbill	<i>Loxia pytyopsittacus</i>	1991	5	1954	-
Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	2002	4	1956	-
White-throated Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i>	2007	1	2007	-
Black-faced Bunting	<i>Emberiza spodocephala</i>	1999	1	1999	-
Pine Bunting	<i>Emberiza leucocephalos</i>	1992	3	1990	-
Yellow-breasted Bunting	<i>Emberiza aureola</i>	2013	-	1972	-
Black-headed Bunting	<i>Emberiza melanocephala</i>	2013	7	1971	-
Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>	2012	-	-	2005
Brown-headed Cowbird	<i>Molothrus ater</i>	2009	1	2009	-

# The County Records Committee in 2014

By Tim Dean

In 2014 the County Records Committee (CRC) consisted of the following members:

Tim Dean (Chairman), Duncan Watson, Gary Woodburn, Alan Curry and Colin Bradshaw. Each member (apart from the Chairman) serves on the committee for a maximum of four years (and is ratified by the main committee each year). Colin Bradshaw at the end of his term stepped down after his stint and was replaced by Martin Kerby in December 2014.

The CRC meets three times a year and discusses all records of rare and scarce birds that have been supported by written notes and / or photographs. They also look at any record of a common species in an unusual context, i.e. large numbers at an unusual time of year, early or late dates or a species well out of its normal range or habitat.

During 2014, 189 records of 76 species / sub-species were considered for publication in Birds in Northumbria. Of these, 167 (88%) were accepted with 21 (11%) found to be not proven and one left pending awaiting a British Birds Rarities Committee decision. Those reports not accepted fall into many categories, with some just falling short of acceptance, some by non-birders with inadequate detail, but increasingly a number via experienced birders, but with too brief a plumage description. In these latter cases the identification is rarely in doubt but the historical record will only show the details given, which need to be comprehensive enough to support the identification.

A further 100 records were not submitted for adjudication by the CRC. This is an astonishing increase on 2013 and extremely worrying. It is interesting that many fall into two categories, (1) species such as Crane and Great White Egret, where observers may consider descriptive notes superfluous and (2) seabirds such as Balearic Shearwater, Sabine's Gull and juvenile Long-tailed Skua. However all of these species are often rare in some years and notes are still deemed necessary for acceptance into the annual report. The majority of undocumented records though were due to observers not wishing to write up their finds, which is a shame as undoubtedly many were genuine sightings. Even after email prompts there was no sign of observers wishing to register their sightings in the annual report. It also has to be noted that a number of major rarities in 2014 were only accepted as a result of documentation by observers other than the finder. Descriptions are always welcomed even if the observer is not the finder, in order to make the report comprehensive.

A full list of all records considered in 2014 is available via the club website [www.ntbc.org.uk](http://www.ntbc.org.uk) under the Recording sub-section of Members Resources. The right hand column gives links to all CRC Work in Progress files from 2012 onwards. Those records not submitted are shown as 'Awaiting description' where the observer(s) are known. However an increasing problem for all County Recorders is those sightings which are only submitted to the Bird News Services e.g. Rare Bird Alert and Birdguides, without any follow up to the County Recorder. These are listed separately at the end of the report where no observer details could be verified. The County Recorder would gratefully receive any outstanding descriptions from 2014 for future deliberation by the CRC and possible inclusion in future Annual Reports.

The following is a list of species for which documentation is required. Schedule A species require full notes (preferably on a record form – available from the County Recorder), Schedule B species brief notes and for scarce sub-species we require notes as appropriate to confirm the identification of the race concerned.

## 1. Schedule A

All species and sub-species considered by the BBRC.

Any species or sub-species removed from the BBRC list after publication of these notes.

Any species or sub-species not previously recorded in Northumberland.

Any record for which the CRC has requested full notes.

The following: Egyptian Goose, American Wigeon, Ring-necked Duck, Ferruginous Duck, Surf Scoter, White-billed Diver, Cory's Shearwater, Great Shearwater, Balearic Shearwater, Wilson's Petrel, Night Heron, Cattle Egret, Great White Egret, Purple Heron, Honey Buzzard, Black Kite, White-tailed Eagle, Montagu's Harrier, Rough-legged Buzzard, Hobby, Red-footed Falcon, Spotted Crake, Corncrake, Crane, Stone Curlew, Kentish Plover, American Golden Plover, Temminck's Stint, White-rumped Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Red-necked Phalarope, Grey Phalarope, Sabine's Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Yellow-legged Gull (all races), Caspian Gull, White-winged Black Tern, Alpine Swift, Bee-eater, Short-toed Lark, Woodlark, Red-rumped Swallow, Richard's Pipit, Tawny Pipit, Red-throated Pipit, Water Pipit, Nightingale, Aquatic Warbler, Marsh Warbler, Subalpine Warbler, Greenish Warbler, Radde's Warbler, Dusky Warbler, Crested Tit, Woodchat Shrike, Chough, Rose-coloured Starling, Serin, Arctic Redpoll, Parrot Crossbill, Oortolan Bunting, Rustic Bunting and Little Bunting.

## 2. Schedule B

Bean Goose (both races), Snow Goose, Ruddy Shelduck, Green-winged Teal, Leach's Petrel, Goshawk (coastal records only), Dotterel, Long-tailed Skua (juvenile birds only), Black Guillemot (away from Farne Islands & Holy Island), Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Bluethroat (autumn only), Icterine Warbler, Barred Warbler, Pallas's Warbler (Inland or Spring birds only), Yellow-browed Warbler (Inland or Spring birds only), Red-breasted Flycatcher, Bearded Tit, Golden Oriole, Common Rosefinch and Corn Bunting.

## 3. Sub-species

Lesser Black-backed Gull *L.f. intermedius* & *L.f. fuscus*, Herring Gull – sub-species other than *L. a. argentatus* & *L. a. argentatus*, Kumlien's Gull - *L.g. kumlieni*, 'Northern' Great Spotted Woodpecker - *D.m. major*, Yellow Wagtail - Sub-species other than *M.f. flava* & *M. f. flavissima*, White Wagtail - *M.a. alba* (Autumn only), 'Black-bellied' Dipper - *C.c. cinclus*, 'White-spotted' Bluethroat - *L.s. cyanecula*, Lesser Whitethroat - Sub-species other than *S.c. curruca*, Chiffchaff - Sub-species other than *P. c. collybita*, Northern Willow Warbler - *P.t. acredula*, 'Northern' Treecreeper - *C.f. familiaris*, Jackdaw - Sub-species other than *C.m. spermologus* and 'Northern' Bullfinch - *P. p. pyrrhula*.

Note: The County Recorder can ask for documentation of any record at any time for species not listed above.

# BBRC decisions and records under review

## 2013

<b>Todd's Canada Goose</b> <i>Branta canadensis interior / parvipes</i> Newton - 20th October	Accepted
<b>Fea's / Zino's Petrel</b> <i>Pterodroma madeira / feae</i> Newbiggin / Beadnell Pt / Farne Islands – 22nd July	Accepted
<b>'Northern' Eider</b> <i>Somateria mollissima borealis</i> Seahouses (2) – 15th March to 2nd April	Decision Awaited
<b>Ashy-headed Wagtail</b> <i>Motacilla flava thunbergi</i> South Newsham Flash – 28th April to 1st May	Decision Awaited
<b>Two-barred Crossbill</b> <i>Loxia leucoptera</i> Grindon Lough – 14th September	Not Proven

## 2012

<b>Ross's Goose</b> <i>Anser rossii</i> Budle Bay (2) - 2nd to 23rd September	Decision Awaited
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## 2010

<b>Black-headed Wagtail</b> <i>Motacilla flava feldegg</i> Cresswell Pond – 18th to 21st April	Not Proven
<b>Ashy-headed Wagtail</b> <i>Motacilla flava cinereocapilla</i> Whitley Bay – 29th April	Decision Awaited

## 2009

<b>Lesser Canada Goose</b> <i>Branta hutchinsii</i> Grindon Lough – 3rd to 12th April	Decision Awaited
<b>Steppe Lesser Whitethroat</b> <i>Sylvia curruca halimodendri</i> St Mary's Island - 17th October	Decision Awaited
<b>Black-headed Wagtail</b> <i>Motacilla flava feldegg</i> One Holy Island - 26th April	Not Proven

## 2007

<b>Lesser Canada Goose</b> <i>Branta hutchinsii</i> Linton Pond / Bothal Pond – 6th January to 24th March	Decision Awaited
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## 2006

<b>Lesser Canada Goose</b> <i>Branta hutchinsii</i> Woodhorn Flashes – 22nd to 24th November	Decision Awaited
East Chevington (same) – 20th to 30th December	

## 2005

<b>Lesser Canada Goose</b> <i>Branta hutchinsii</i> Holy Island / Budle Bay – 6th to 13th October	Decision Awaited
<b>Eastern Whitethroat</b> <i>Sylvia communis rubicola / volgensis</i> Brownsman (Farne Islands) - 2nd November	Decision Awaited

## 2002

<b>Ross's Goose</b> <i>Anser rossii</i> Budle Bay - 5th October	Decision Awaited
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## 1994

<b>Siberian Common Tern</b> <i>Sterna hirundo longipennis</i> Long Nanny (2) – 6th to 24th June	Decision Awaited
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## 1992

<b>Siberian Common Tern</b> <i>Sterna hirundo longipennis</i> Long Nanny (2) – 25th May	Decision Awaited
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Although the identification is not in doubt both Ross's Goose and Lesser Canada Goose have yet to be accepted onto Category A of the British List by the British Ornithologists Union, hence are not included in the official County List. The BOURC are still debating as to whether these records are of wild origin.





## Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Development Fund Grants 2014

By Jo Bentley

The Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club's Development fund was set up to support the development of the club, not including its day to day running. The fund is intended to promote education and ornithological studies. It is also intended to support conservation activities linked to ornithology and related aspects of natural history.

Following the successful bid for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund work on the Northumbria Bird Atlas was continued. A publication date of April 2015 was set and the development fund supported the costs of design and printing. The Atlas has proved to be an excellent example of the dedication and hard work of an army of volunteers involved in bird watching in the Northumbria region and NTBC extends its grateful thanks to everyone who has contributed.

The Northumbria Ringing Group celebrated its 50th birthday in 2013 and NTBC supported the publication of their 'History of NRG'. In 2013 the Northumberland & Tyneside Bird Club commissioned local film-maker Cain Scrimgeour to make a documentary about the Kittiwakes on the Tyne which was premiered in March 2014. The club also supported the purchase of a new telescope for the Kielder Osprey project for use at their Osprey Watch. Applications for grants should be addressed to the Honorary Secretary.

## Secretary's Report 2014

By Andrew Brunt

The trustees of the charity forming the club committee during 2014 were Martin Davison (Chair), Jo Bentley (Treasurer), Tim Dean (Recorder), Steve Lowe (NWT & HLF Rep.), Trevor Blake (Sales), Steve Anderson (Field Trips), Steve Barratt (Bulletin Editor) and Andrew Brunt (Secretary). The committee functioned with a member short for the year so Martin Davison took on the work of planning and booking the indoor meetings speakers. The membership of the club peaked at 214 during this period.

The programme of Indoor Meetings began in January with the Kittiwake colony on the Tyne Bridge, stunningly filmed by local photographer and member Cain Scrimgeour. In February, Speyside wildlife was the subject of guide Chrissie Nicholson. In March, the work of the Rare Breeding Birds Panel was described and some recent findings presented by Mark Holling, the full time secretary of the RBBP. Our own members provided the interest in April, Richard Barnes with a summary of ringing in our area, and Jack Bucknall with an account of his local patch. After the summer break Tim Dean updated us on the progress of the Northumbrian Bird Atlas with some example pages, and his own experiences of surveying his tetrads. In October, Martin Kitching from North Sea Wildlife was able to add to our regrettably sparse knowledge of where seabirds and cetaceans are to be found off our coast. Appropriately in November the subject was a year in the life of a Whooper Swan researcher, Kane Brides, who explained where our east coast Whoopers come from, and highlighted the worrying extent of shooting affecting Bewick's Swan. Our own member Janet Dean showed us in December the startling landscape and wildlife of Ethiopia with many impressive pictures, often of that region's big list of endemics.

A Field trip to Holy Island was organised by Steve Anderson in March, and was joined by 12 members. In April, Martin Davison pointed out the birds of Kielder to five members and encouraged two others to join the club. In May a trip to Geltsdale saw over 60 species with the aid of Warden Steve Westerburg. Autumn trips to Saltholme RSPB in August and local sites in September and October also took place.

Other club business included the work of the Atlas Sub-Committee and especially that of Steve Lowe for sourcing funds for the Atlas production. Progress with data sharing with other conservation organisations has been made and an agreement signed with the Environmental Records Information Centre. The club website and Facebook page are discussed monthly and we are grateful to Paul Buskin for its development.

Progress with the production of the current BIN is always an agenda item and the work of a team of authors and the editorship of Mike Richardson ensured Birds in Northumbria 2013 was published to a very high standard. The monthly bulletin continued to be produced regularly by a dedicated team of writers under the enthusiastic guidance of Steve Barratt. Several queries for survey data for use in development planning resulted in administration charges contributing to club income. Martin Davison has represented the club at several meetings with Banks group regarding the proposed Highborn development.

## List of Contributors

R.Ahmed, A.Allen, P.J.Allott, J.M.Almond, S.W.Anderson, D.Astins (DAst), C.Baillie, C.D.Barlow, R.Barnes, S.L.Barratt, S.R.Barrett, D.G. & R.H.Bell, R.J. & M.Bentley (RB/MB), D.H.W.Blair, T.Blake, L.Blakely, D.Boorman, J.S.Booth, G.Bowman, C.Bradshaw, T.Brewis (TBr), C.Bridge, A. & L.Brunts, J.Bucknall (JBu), T.A. & M.L.Cadwallender, M.J.Carr, P.Clark, T.R.Cleeves, M.N.Coates, A.Cohen (ACH), J.Coleman, J.Common, M.J.Cook (MJCo), E.Crabtree, A.Craggs (ACr), A.Curry, D.Dack, R.Dack, N.P.Dales, T.Daley, I.Davidson, I.B. & K.Davison (IBDa / Kda), M.Davison, J.C.Day,T.R.& J.Dean, A.Denton, B.Dickson-Kerr, J.P.Dobinson, I.R.Douglas, R.Dunn (RDu), J.Eaton, J.Edwards, M.Eccles, D.T.Elliott, S.T.Elliott, S.C.Enderby, J.Fairclough, P.R.Fairhurst, T. & J.Farooqi (TF/JFa), I.Fisher, P.C.Fletcher, D.Forshaw, I.Forsyth (IFo), M.P.Frankis, H.Galley, B.Galloway, P.Gilbert, D.Gilhespy, D.Haley, A.Hall, D.Hall, J.Hall, C.D.Hampton, E.Harrison (EHa), R.M. & P.M.Harrison (RMHa/PMHa), A.S.Hart, C.Head, M.Henry, M.A.Hanmer, P.Hanmer, Hepple (Mhp), A.J.Hewitt, J.Hewitt, P.H. & J.Heyland, T.Hibbert, S.J.Hingston, M.S.Hodgson, S.T.Holliday, R.M.Holmes, P.Howard, I.Hunter, M.Hutcheson (MHu), A.S.Jack, A.Janes, R.Jay, A.Jobling, A.J.Johnston, I.Johnson, M.G.Kerby (MK), I.Kerr, D.Kinchin-Smith, A.Kinghorn, M.S.Kitching, D.Knight, C.G.Knox, G.P.Knox, W.Legg, B.Little, J.Littlewood, D.Lockstone, J.D.Lough, D.Lovatt (DLo), J.P.Lumby,C.Macleod-Nolan, J.Malloy, P.R.Massey, S.V. & A.J.McCormick, L.J.McDougall, S.McElwee, D.McGibbon (DMcG), D.McKeown (DM), A.D.Mclevy (ADM), M.McNeely, H.Mears, A.Middleton, T.Middleton, D.Miller, S.Milsom, T.Mitcham, A.D.Mould, C.Murray, M.Nattrass, A.J.Newson, D.W.Nicol, N.F.Osborne, R.J.Pannell, J.Parkinson, S.P.Parnaby, R.Poppleton, M.Potts, J.W.Proudlock, K.Redgrave (KRe), A.J.Richards, J.Richardson, M.Richardson, A.Rickeard, S.Rippon, I.Robson, J.Robson, L.Robson, D.Roche, D.Roger (DRo), G.Rogers (GRo), M.P.Rogers, P.Rose, G.Russell, K. & L.Russell, J.W.Rutter, C.Scrimgeour, S.Sexton, L.Shearer, M.R.Smith, M.H.Snaith, J.Spencer, D.Steel, J.G.Steele, P.Stewart, J.Strowger, A.W.Swan, K.Telford, A.Tilmouth, N.Tinlin, A.L.Todd, E.Tooth, D. & S.Ward, D.R.Watson, P.A.Watson, V.Watson, M.Webb, S.Westerberg, T.Wiffen (TWi), N.Wilkie, M.Winter (MWi), E.Witcutt, D.Wood, G.Woodburn, C.Wright, K.W.York, S.Younger, D.Yoxall.

Bamburgh Ringing Station, Berwick Wildlife Group, Farne Island Rangers, Hauxley Ringing Station, Natural History Society of Northumbria, North Northumberland Bird Club, Northeast Cetacean Project, Northern Experience Wildlife Tours, Seaton Sluice Watch Tower.

Apologies for any accidental omissions.

## Glossary of Terms

A number of standard abbreviations and terms have been used throughout this report to avoid any confusion their meanings are described below:

AON	Apparently Occupied Nests
a.s.l.	above sea level
BP	Business Park
BTO	British Trust for Ornithology
CP	Country Park
Controlled	a ringing term – a ringed bird is a control, rather than a retrap, when caught again at a point more than 5 km from the locality where it was first ringed.
<i>et al.</i>	and others
FIR	Farne Island Rangers
GC	Golf Course
GP	Gravel Pits
km	kilometre
m	metre
NNBC	North Northumberland Bird Club
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NR	Nature Reserve
NSFQ	North Shields Fish Quay
NT	National Trust
NTBC	Northumberland & Tyneside Bird Club
Pullus	a nestling or chick
RS	Ringing Station
WeBS	Wetland Bird Survey

