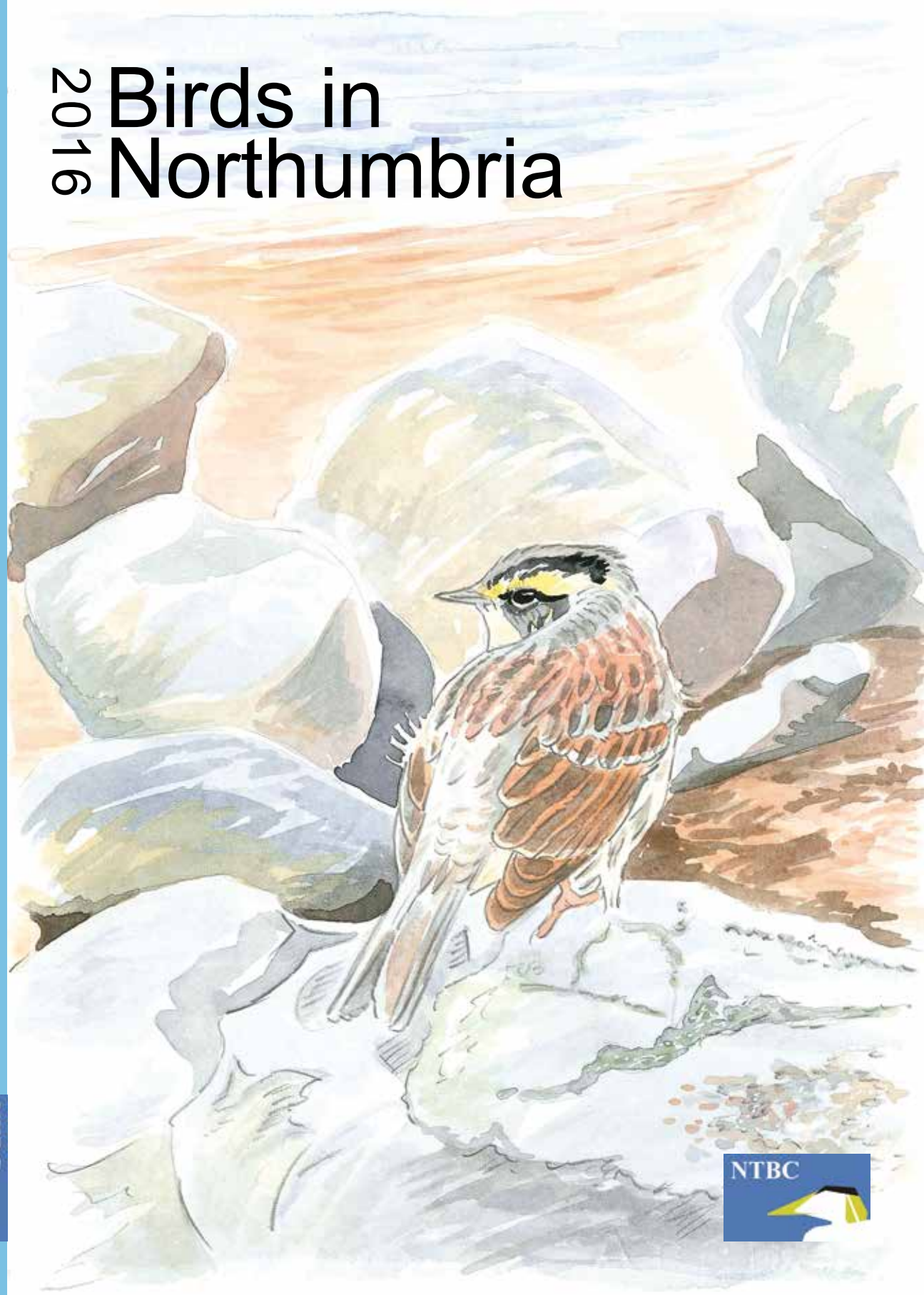


Birds in 2016 Northumbria



NTBC



BIRDS IN NORTHUMBRIA 2016

NTBC



Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

The Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club, formerly the Tyneside Bird Club, was formed in 1958. Membership currently stands at 230 and is open to anyone who has a beneficial interest in ornithology. The club aims to provide members with news of local ornithological interest through monthly bulletins, this annual report (Birds in Northumbria) and other occasional publications. All members are encouraged to submit their records to the County Recorder for inclusion in these publications.

The club also undertakes to encourage and instruct members in various ornithological activities by means of indoor meetings from September to April, and field outings throughout the year. Although ringing is not an official club activity, some members operate ringing stations at Bamburgh and Hauxley, providing additional information for these publications.

Various subscription rates for membership exist, including junior, family and institutional categories. Further details may be obtained from the Honorary Secretary.

Website: The club website is a relatively recent and excellent resource. There are numerous interesting sections, which include a photographic gallery, site information, trip reports, a county check list and progress reports on recent rarities.

The site can be accessed at **www.ntbc.org.uk**

Sightings page: The club sightings web page gives listings of birds seen locally. Adding a sighting is simple, a short email is all that is required (ntbcorg@gmail.com).

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TONY CRILLEY

Steve Anderson, Steve Barrett, Trevor Blake and Steve Lowe also served on the club Committee during 2016. Tom Cadwallender acted as BTO representative, Lindsay McDougall as Conservation Officer, Paul Buskin as Website Manager and Muriel Cadwallender as Breeding Bird Survey Regional Organiser. Tom Brewis acted as Data Manager and John Day acted as Club Archivist.

Birds in Northumbria

The 2016 Bird Report for Northumberland, Newcastle and North Tyneside

Classified List compiled by

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

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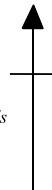
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NT

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BORDERS

N



Land above 183 metres (600 feet)

Carter Bar

Berwick-upon-Tweed

*R. Tweed**Holy Island**R. Till**Farne Islands*

Wooler

Seahouses

R. Aln

Alnwick

Rothbury

R. Coquet

Amble

• *Coquet Island**Druridge Bay**R. Rede*

Otterburn

R. Wansbeck

Newbiggin

Morpeth

R. Blyth

Blyth

*Kielder Resr.**North Tyne***CUMBRIA**

Haltwhistle

Hexham

Newcastle

Tynemouth

*South Tyne**West Allen**East Allen**Derwent Resr.**R. Tyne**R. Tyne***Co. DURHAM**0 kms 20

NY

NZ

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Introduction

A very warm welcome to Birds in Northumbria 2016. This is our 57th annual report, the 46th under the guise of 'Birds in Northumbria'. The entries in this report cover all species found during 2016 in our recording area, which comprises the county of Northumberland and the districts of Newcastle and North Tyneside. We hope you enjoy reading the report.

Regular readers will notice the change to a new all-colour, B5 format this year. Thanks must go to our new printer, Robson Print, for achieving this at a cost saving over recent reports.





Introduction

Overview

A total of 274 full species were recorded in Northumberland in 2016 (six more than in 2015). The year will long be remembered by many for the incredible run of autumn rarities, including Siberian Accentor and Eyebrowed Thrush, two additions to the county list, which now stands at 415 species (of interest, 2016 was the eighth year running in which the county list has grown).

In addition to the two new species, and the returning Black Scoter, this time visiting Goswick (second record), the returning Long-billed Dowitcher in Druridge Bay (eighth record) and the returning Caspian Gull at Amble Harbour (second record), there were a further 11 species in the Extremely Rare category (no more than nine records in total): Pallid Harrier (second record), Franklin's Gull (second record), Isabelline Wheatear (second record), Caspian Tern (third record), White's Thrush (third record), Spotted Sandpiper (fourth record), Isabelline Shrike (fourth record), Broad-billed Sandpiper (sixth record), Baird's Sandpiper (seventh record), Bonaparte's Gull (eighth record) and Red-flanked Bluetail (eighth record).

Equally outstanding, and 'hot on the heels' of the first, came the second and third Siberian Accentors (only recording area Shetland can match Northumberland) and the third to ninth Caspian Gulls.

Species and sub-species regarded as rare or scarce in 2016 included: 'Tundra Bean Goose', 'Taiga Bean Goose', Ruddy Shelduck, American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal, King Eider, Smew, Cory's Shearwater, Great Shearwater, Leach's Petrel, Great White Egret, Glossy Ibis, Honey Buzzard, Red Kite, Rough-legged Buzzard, Crane, Stone Curlew, American Golden Plover, Dotterel, Temminck's Stint, White-rumped Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Red-necked Phalarope, Grey Phalarope, Lesser Yellowlegs, Sabine's Gull, Turtle Dove, Hoopoe, Wryneck, Hobby, Red-backed Shrike, Lesser Grey Shrike, Great Grey Shrike, Hooded Crow, Firecrest, Shore Lark, Greenish Warbler, Dusky Warbler, 'Siberian Chiffchaff', Barred Warbler, Subalpine Warbler, Icterine Warbler, Rose-coloured Starling, Thrush Nightingale, Bluethroat, Red-breasted Flycatcher, Siberian Stonechat, 'Grey-headed Wagtail', Richard's Pipit, Water Pipit, Common Rosefinch, 'Northern Bullfinch', Arctic Redpoll and Little Bunting.

Other highlights included at least four to five Bitterns at Gosforth Park NR, representing the highest gathering in the county since at least 1956, a second best-ever year for Yellow-browed Warblers, with an estimated 89 individuals (including one inland at Newcastle Business Park), three Hoopoes in one year was notable, it was the largest Goldcrest influx for a decade and Chevington Burn mouth played host to the largest Shore Lark flock for 13 years. Black Redstarts were recorded in good numbers (and in all but three months of the year) and it was a good 'Waxwing year', with the highest count being 225 at Ashington in November. The early winter period saw good numbers of Great Northern Divers.

Raptor breeding results included the first successful Red Kite nesting since 2010, four pairs of Ospreys fledged a record 11 young, Marsh Harriers reared four young at East Chevington, Hen Harriers raised six young from two sites (and at a time when there was only one other successful English breeding pair) and it was another good year for Goshawks and Merlins; the latter with some re-occupation of former breeding areas.

Amongst other species, Avocets bred at two to three sites, there was a potential second-ever breeding attempt by Firecrest (at Kielder), Dippers showed good productivity linked to favourable weather and water conditions during the breeding season, and other species enjoying a good season included Goldeneye, Little Grebe, Little Ringed Plover, Great Black-backed Gull and Pied Flycatcher. Breeding by Little Egret was strongly suspected in the Druridge Bay area, although not confirmed, and a joint highest-ever count of 22 birds was made on 7th September at Cresswell Pond.

Against these successes, it was a poor year for Peregrines, with some nest disturbance recorded, and there was no confirmed breeding by Black-necked Grebe. Tawny and Long-eared Owls suffered one of the worst years on record, probably due to a crash in the vole population, and it was a well below average year for Guillemot and most tern species, perhaps linked to wet and cold spring weather. An estimated 17 Wood Warblers was worrying.

Several expected species failed to put in an appearance in 2016, including Spoonbill (the first blank year since 1995), Bearded Tit (after a good run of records in 2015 and having nested in that year) and Hawfinch. Red-necked Grebe numbers were again well below average, it was a generally poor year for skuas and, having just been dropped from the CRC description list, and despite the prolonged easterly autumnal airflow, Barred Warbler numbers were disappointingly low.

Acknowledgements

The following are all thanked for providing essential data for this report: Ed Tooth, Lana Blakely and other Rangers of the National Trust (Farne Islands), Paul Morrison and the RSPB (Coquet Island), the Northumbria Ringing Group (raptor and owl breeding data), Ian Fisher (Ringing Report) and Steve Holliday, Kathy Evans and Dan Turner (Wetland Bird Survey-WeBS).

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 2016 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 2016, bulletin data was collated by Tom Brewis and prepared by the following authors: Trevor Blake, Graeme Bowman, Tom Brewis, Eddie Crabtree, Tim Dean, Kathy Evans, Peter Fletcher, Ian Forsyth, Clive Hampton, Steve Holliday, Alan Jack, Steve Laing and Mike Richardson. David Sanders provided data from the North Northumberland Bird Club. The bulletin was proof read by Mike Smith, edited by Steve Barrett and mail distribution was by Paul Stewart.

Thanks must also go to the observers who contributed records in 2016. A total of 27,340 records were submitted electronically to the club, plus around 1,000 paper submissions, as well as 65,000 records via Birdtrack. Other records came from WeBS visits, the Farne Islands, Coquet Island, Long Nanny Estuary and Lindisfarne Reports, various Breeding Data submissions etc. It would be greatly appreciated if all records, including description species, could be submitted punctually, in order to facilitate the timely production of our monthly bulletins and this annual report.

I am grateful to the many people who have answered queries during production of this report; in particular, I would like to thank Tim Dean, Steve Holliday and Mike Carr. Finally, I would like to thank Graeme Bowman and Tim Dean for proof reading the report.

Status of Species

Status Headings:

- STATUS:** Describes the current status of a species.
- BREEDING:** Where appropriate, describes the current breeding status and year the species
LAST BRED (including the current year). This heading may also be used to refer to recent changes in breeding status, and in some cases the year the species
FIRST BRED, and any historical data.

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 to 99 pairs will be referred to as an 'uncommon' breeding species.

Irruptive species: The status of some species can fluctuate greatly between years e.g. Little Auk and Waxwing. The status illustrated signifies the norm; any irruptive behaviour during the current year will be referred to in the text.

Species Accounts

Tables: Where appropriate, tables are included to illustrate maximum monthly counts, breeding success, ringing group data and nest box data.

Observer Initials and the use of '*et al.*': Selected records within the Classified List are accompanied by observer initials. Since BiN 2005, the following simplified guidelines have been issued to section authors to maintain consistency in the use of observer initials:

1. All Category A, B and scarce sub-species, i.e. those requiring written notes
2. Annual peak counts
3. Long-term studies such as monthly counts, nest box schemes, significant breeding data etc.

Within **Guideline 1**, readers are referred to the County Records Committee paper in the Reference Section of this report for an up-to-date list of species, sub-species, age classes etc. considered by the CRC (or see the club's website at www.ntbc.org.uk). Initials used in parentheses after sightings of some rare or scarce birds are not always fully understood. BBRC place them in alphabetical order, however we haven't followed this rule. Up to four sets of initials will continue to be used. From BiN 2015, the following criteria will also be applied:

If just one person sees a bird, theirs are the only initial, e.g. (TRD); if one person finds and identifies a bird, and then more than three other people see the bird, it will be (TRD *et al.*); if one person finds and identifies a bird and just two or three other observers see the bird, then all three/four initials will be used, e.g. (TRD/JD/STH); if one person finds a bird and another identifies it, the finder's initials will always be used first, followed by the identifier and any other observers or *et al.*, i.e. (JD/TRD *et al.*).

Within **Guideline 2**, a further explanation may assist readers. A small number of species may be classified as 'Rare' but are not considered by the CRC (e.g. Hoopoe, Wryneck, Red-backed and Great Grey Shrikes) and in some years initials may be applied. These are to reflect maximum counts and not rarity status of the species. Guidelines were introduced from BiN 2015 to determine when initials are to be used under Guideline 2:

1. Up to three sets of initials per species will be used to denote annual peak counts
2. Initials will not be used where there are four or more joint highest annual counts.

Andy Mould
Editor

Siberian Accentor on Holy Island - First for Northumberland

By Peter Munro

In October 2016, we rented a cottage on Holy Island with the intention of some birding for me and sightseeing and walks for my wife. This was the second time we had spent a week on the island in October and my expectations for some good birding were high.

The first three days birding on the island were very quiet and, apart from a few common migrants, my only noteworthy sighting was a Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor* at the back of the Chare Ends car park. The classic 'fall' conditions for east coast birding in autumn were non-existent, the winds being mainly light and southerly.

During the evening of Monday 17th, I checked the weather forecast for the following day, which was dry overnight with a light westerly wind. In view of this forecast, I didn't see any point in bush-bashing along the lonnens again. After studying the OS map, I decided to explore the north shore of the island the following morning, this being an area I had not covered previously. My plan was to walk north from Chare Ends to the beach and then seawatch in the hope of seeing some sea duck, grebes or divers.

On the morning of Tuesday 18th, I left the cottage at around 07:15hrs and headed north. The weather was cool, mainly cloudy, with a west wind, as the forecast had predicted, so I didn't hold out much hope of seeing anything unusual. I checked every bush by the cow field but only found a Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* and a Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*. Moving farther north to the dunes, I spent some time trying to pin down a crest in a bush, which eventually turned out to be a Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*. Not only was the land virtually devoid of birds, but the skies were empty as well.

Eventually, I arrived at the north shore. Looking west along the beach, I couldn't see any birds at all but looking east, in the distance, I could see a few passerines on the edge of the dunes and also along the wrack line. I decided to walk east. As I got closer to the birds, I could see some Pied Wagtails *Motacilla alba yarrellii*, Rock Pipits *Anthus petrosus* and a wheatear sp. The wheatear didn't look quite right for Northern *Oenanthe oenanthe*, so I got the scope on it, but after about ten minutes studying it, I still wasn't sure about its identity and as I couldn't get a good look at the tail pattern, I decided to leave it and walk on.

I now came to a rocky area and set the 'scope up to check the sea. This also proved to be fruitless and after about 20 minutes I came to the conclusion that this was going to be just another quiet day's birding. I decided to move farther along the shore. Just as I started to fold the tripod away, I noticed a small passerine shuffling around on the edge of the path about 10m to my right. My immediate impression, with the naked eye, was a pale Dunnock *Prunella modularis* with a distinctive head / face pattern. Siberian Accentor *Prunella montanella* then came to mind but, as I never expected to find a major rarity, this was quickly ruled out. It then became almost completely obscured by some low vegetation and, being unable to put a name to it, I set the tripod down and lifted my bins to get a better look. Within a few seconds it was back out in the open and I was now looking at Britain's fifth Siberian Accentor and my first self-found mega-rarity in just over 40 years of birding. The feeling was indescribable. Not only was this bird extremely rare, it was also very striking in appearance.

In disbelief, I watched the bird feeding just metres from where I was standing and fortunately had the presence of mind to look at the throat in order to rule out Black-throated Accentor *Prunella atrogularis*. The throat was definitely plain, and the same colour as the long, broad, yellowish-buff supercilium, which extended from the base of the bill to the nape. The crown was a very dark brown and there was a broad dark brown / black mask across the cheeks, which ran from in front of the eye to the nape. The underparts were buff and the upperparts were streaked grey, buff and brown. I had been watching the bird for maybe a minute or so when it suddenly flew into the dunes and was lost to view.

I looked around to see if any other birders were nearby, but I was alone. I quickly phoned BirdGuides and then set off to try and re-locate the bird. After 45 minutes of searching the immediate area, I had not managed to find it and, as there were still no other birders present, I decided to set off back to the cottage. I was worried that the bird had slipped through the net and, in the absence of any photographs, may not get accepted.

Siberian Accentor - Holy Island - October (Gary Woodburn).



On the way back to the cottage I bumped into Alan Hall, one of the Lindisfarne regulars, and told him exactly where I had seen the bird.

Much to my relief, the bird was eventually re-located and I couldn't resist another look, so set off back to the north shore.

A small crowd had gathered and were getting views down to around 3m. Congratulations and handshakes were exchanged. I was just pleased that other birders had managed to see the bird. The cloud had now lifted and I spent another hour enjoying the bird.

I went to look for the bird again the following morning, but there was no sign of it. However, an Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina* was identified by other birders in almost exactly the same spot I watched yesterday's wheatear, which left me wondering if I had actually stumbled on two very rare birds within about 100m of each other. I don't suppose I will ever know.

Editor's Note

In a remarkable year for the county, a further two Siberian Accentors were found later in the month – another on Holy Island on 25th October and one at Newbiggin-by-the-Sea on 29th October (see Classified List).



Siberian Accentor - Holy Island - October (Alan Curry)



Eyebrowed Thrush - Bolam Lake - November (Ross Moore)

Eyebrowed Thrush at Bolam Lake – First for Northumberland

By Ross Moore

As I headed back to Newcastle on the train from Sheffield, I started to plan my four-day trip there visiting my family (from 3rd–6th November 2016).

I'm a keen photographer who has only recently become interested in wildlife, mainly shooting birds. I recently joined the RSPB and attended my first trip with my local group in Sheffield, to Frampton Marsh RSPB, Lincs. I had a great day out and even managed to get some good photos of the Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*.

I am lucky enough that my parents are based in a lovely part of the country just west of Newcastle, in Northumberland, in a town called Prudhoe. It was decided that on Friday afternoon we would head up to Bolam Lake CP to walk the dog. I had spent the earlier part of the day photographing a Redwing *Turdus iliacus* in the garden and then some Mute Swans *Cygnus olor* and Tufted Ducks *Aythya fuligula* at my local pond.

We arrived at Bolam Lake at 14:15hrs, with my parents' dog in tow, and spent the next hour walking a loop around the park photographing many Robins *Erithacus rubecula*, with the intention of having my own Christmas cards printed for family and friends. At around 15:25hrs, we approached 'Pheasant Meadow' on the north side of the park lake. On top of a hawthorn in the centre of the meadow I spotted a bird. It was positioned almost like an angel would be on top of a Christmas tree. I pointed the bird out to my dad and he viewed it through the binoculars he was carrying, saying that it was some kind of thrush *Turdidae* sp.

The bird was by itself and wasn't feeding, and the way it was perched looked like it might make a nice image, so I brought my camera up to my eye to fire off a few shots. As I did this, the bird flew off to my left slightly and I had to recompose my shot. I managed to get ten images before it took off south over the lake. My dad noted that the bird also flew like a thrush as it passed over our heads towards the lake.

I then went to review the images on the back of the camera, and it was only then that my dad noticed that he'd never seen a bird like it before. As it had flown off, we decided to finish our loop of the park and then return to the site ten to 15 minutes later to see if it had returned. To our good fortune it had, but it was 'spooked' and took off again before we got as close as we had the first time.

With the light fading badly, we decided to call it a day and return home, where I straightaway looked at the bird books I have to try and identify it, but with no luck. I was recently made aware of a group on Facebook that helps with the identification of birds, so I posted the photo on that group. It was only then that the enormity of what I had seen became apparent. I had photographed an Eyebrowed Thrush *Turdus obscurus* in Britain.

I was immediately inundated with messages asking for the location of my sighting. As I wasn't aware of what I should do in this situation, I contacted Danny Fardell, who has recently been helping me after I joined the local RSPB group in Sheffield. He informed me that he'd never reported a rarity before, but that he would make a phone call to someone that would know. He then got back in touch and told me which relevant parties I needed to contact and I did this straight away. He also told me I needed to put the location of the sighting out, as I couldn't suppress a sighting of this magnitude.

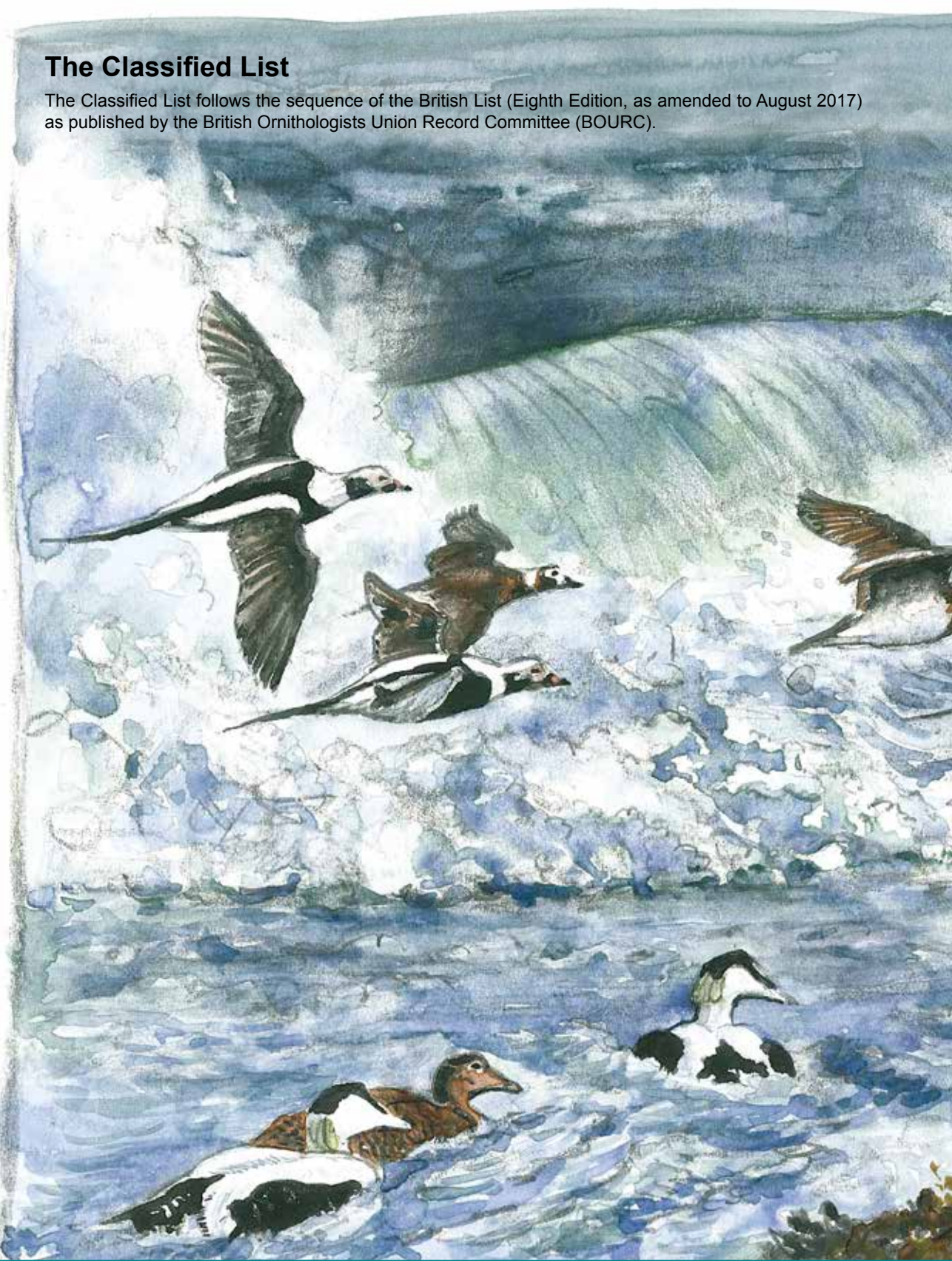
As the evening progressed, more and more interest was shown and the scale of my find hit me hard. After a few celebratory beers, I retired home and set my alarm for 06:30hrs. My dad and I set off at 07:00hrs on Saturday morning, so we could arrive at Bolam Lake not long after first light. When we arrived, we were met by well over 50 birders.

As the morning progressed the weather worsened, but it was made better by the joy shown by people about the find. People came and went all morning, and at its peak I think around 100 were there. However, after no sightings, I called it a day around 13:00hrs, with only about a dozen wet and cold birders still on site.

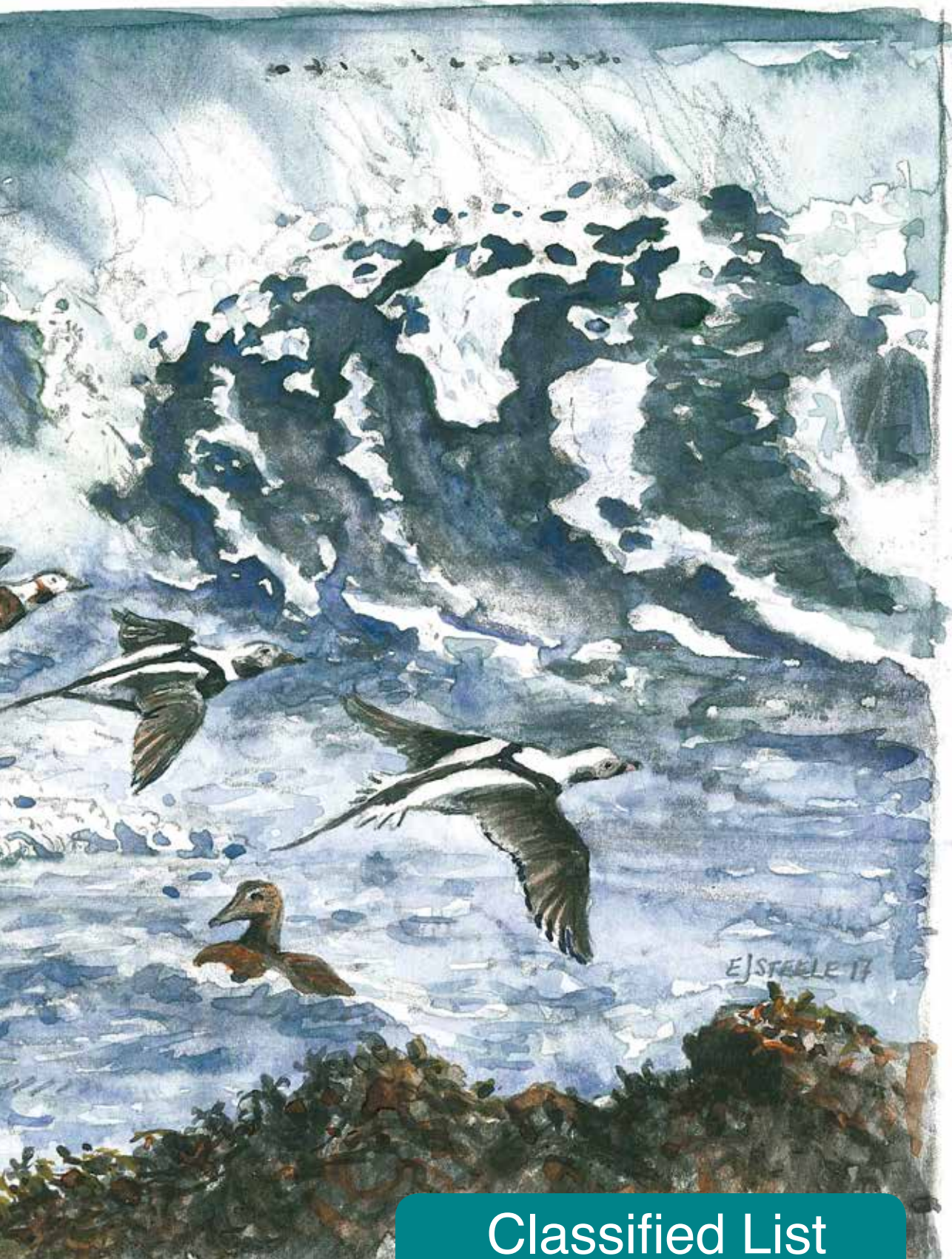
I returned to Sheffield after a crazy few days but I hoped that someone would be lucky enough to see the bird again, as I understood there were still hundreds of thrushes in the area.

The Classified List

The Classified List follows the sequence of the British List (Eighth Edition, as amended to August 2017) as published by the British Ornithologists Union Record Committee (BOURC).



Long-tailed Duck and Common Eider (John Steele)



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	87	31	57	51	-	-	-	82	69	76	93	75
Killingworth Lake	47	48	43	54	43	53	76	60	30	14	24	23
QEII CP Lake	150	96	147	110	111	-	68	-	101	70	57	43
Tweed Estuary	52	30	32	136	288	334	282	406	170	57	47	22

Elsewhere, during January-April, there were ten to 41 at Birling Carrs, Bolam Lake, Branton GP, Caistron, East Chevington, Gosforth Park, Howdon, Lindisfarne NNR, Rayburn Lake, Shortridge Hall, Warkworth and Warkworth Lane. Additional peak concentrations in May-June involved 76 at New Water Haugh (Berwick), 56 in the Wansbeck Estuary and 23 at Warkworth.

A total of 34 breeding pairs were recorded from 31 widespread localities. Three broods were noted at East Chevington and two broods at Castle Island, while single broods were reported from a further 29 sites.

Numbers built up in July-August and included the largest gathering of the year from a WeBS visit to the Tweed Estuary on 18th August, when 406 were counted (MHu). Elsewhere during the period, away from the main sites, ten to 60 were at Amble, Big Waters, Branton GP, Caistron, Castle Island, East Chevington, Howdon, the Wansbeck Estuary, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Widdrington Moor Lake. In September, 16-33 were at Amble, Big Waters, Bolam Lake, Caistron, Castle Island, East Chevington, Lindisfarne NNR and Whiteadder Water.

During the final quarter, 16-46 were at Amble, Big Waters, Caistron, East Chevington, Holy Island Causeway, Loanend (Berwick), the River Tyne at Howdon and the Tyne Estuary, West Ord, Whiteadder Point and Widdrington Moor Lake.

Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus*

STATUS: Increasingly rare passage and winter visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2015

There were two records in the first quarter; two adults arrived from the NW at East Chevington at 13:30hrs on 3rd January (SW) and an individual was amongst 28 Whooper Swans *Cygnus Cygnus* flying N at Holy Island on 10th April. In the second winter period, an adult was at Backworth on 26th November, whilst a single juvenile was at Whittle Dene Reservoirs from 8th to the end of December.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

STATUS: Well-represented passage and winter visitor.

In January, a large group of 74 (14 juveniles) was at Loanend (Berwick) on 31st (MHu), 49 were at Alnmouth on 9th, 22-36 were at Lindisfarne NNR and in the Warkworth area, while one to ten were at a further 28 localities. During February, 46 were noted in the Horncliffe and Warkworth areas from 2nd-4th. Elsewhere, up to 65 were at Lees Haugh (near Coldstream), 34 at Wark, 25 at Alnmouth and two to 19 at a further 12 localities.

Spring passage became apparent during March and included peak movements of 120 high W over High Brunton on 26th, 63 N at the Farne Islands on 27th (the third highest-ever count for the islands), 60 (of a total of 101) flying over Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 25th and 58 over Branton on 12th. Elsewhere, 80 were at Wark (North Tyne) on 10th, 44-65 at Cresswell Pond, Lindisfarne NNR, Longhorsley Moor and Whitley Bay, 20-40 at the Aln Estuary, Bothal Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Bay, Embleton, Grindon Lough, Longhoughton, Seashouses-Beadnell and Widdrington Moor Lake and six to 14 at a further 25 localities.

The largest group of the year involved 152 N (in three flocks) at Holy Island on 1st April (MJC). Passage NW involved 30-35 at East Chevington and St Mary's, while 28-56 were at Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield), Cresswell Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Farnley, Grindon Lough and Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh). Elsewhere in April, one to 20 were at a further 14 localities.

In May, two adults were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 6th and a single at East Chevington on 14th, whilst

four adults were on the River Tweed on 10th July, with two remaining to 18th August.

Return passage commenced in September, with one on the River Tweed on 27th and nine adults at Budle Bay on 30th. Southerly movement in October included 36 at Tynemouth on 20th and 20 at Holy Island on 28th, while 20 flew E at Bowsden on 28th. Elsewhere in October, 48 were at Lindisfarne NNR on 28th, ten to 20 were at Big Waters, Branton GP, East Chevington, Low Newton, Newbiggin and St Mary's, with one to eight at a further 17 localities.

Numbers were unusually low in November, with highest counts of 45 at Derwent Reservoir on 1st and 30 at Warkworth on 12th. Elsewhere, 11-16 were at the Coquet Estuary, Fenham Flats and Widdrington Moor Lake and one to nine at a further 29 sites. Counts remained disappointing into December, with 51 on the River Tweed on 14th, 22 at Lindisfarne NNR, 19 at Newton Pool, 15 at Cresswell Pond and ten at Loanend and Warkworth Lane. Elsewhere in the final month, one to 12 were at a further 15 sites.

Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*

'Tundra Bean Goose' *A. f. rossicus*

STATUS: Rare passage and winter visitor. / FIRST RECORD: HISTORICAL / LAST RECORD: 2015

There was a widespread influx into the county both early and late in 2016, so the County Records Committee have opted to include all sightings regardless of documentation, as many observers have not documented their sightings. This is not without precedent as a similar decision was made in 2012. It seemed better to take this route rather than see obvious influxes not highlighted properly. Only the documented individuals are attributed to observers, with other sightings from known observers included. Virtually all sightings were within Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus* flocks, except where stated.

The initial January sightings were at Newton, where one was found on 8th, with two on 13th and one which stayed through to 15th (PRM/JGS *et al.*). Three were at Cheswick on 15th (DF) and singles at Holywell Pond-Earsdon from 17th-23rd (MSH *et al.*) and probably the same individual at Big Waters on 24th-25th. The final January sighting involved four at the Long Nanny Estuary on 31st. Further sightings followed in February, with three at Weetwood on 3rd (DF) and birds present on fields south of Beadnell from 4th February-11th March, with peaks of nine on 4th and eight on 14th February (JGS *et al.*). The final sightings of the early winter period were singles at Blyth on 2nd March, Harper's Heugh on 5th March (IBDa/KDa) and Grindon Lough on 11th March and 3rd April (PRM/DA *et al.*).

The autumn influx commenced on 10th October, with four calling at dawn over Holy Island (The Snook), but the only other October sighting was at Widdrington village on 21st. None were then noted until December, when a widespread movement resulted in records mid-month at a wide number of locations. Two were on fields around Cresswell Pond from 17th-23rd (MSH/TF/JFa *et al.*). A lone bird on rocks on Brownsman (Farne Islands) on 19th (DS) was hugely significant as only the second record of Bean Goose for the islands, with the previous being two birds un-raced in 1988!; a fitting reward for the outgoing head Ranger on a visit around the islands. Three were noted at Big Waters from 20th-31st and two on fields south of Beadnell on 20th. At Druridge, five were noted from 21st-23rd, with a single through to 27th (TF/JFa *et al.*). Three were at Longhirst Flash on 22nd-23rd (TF/JFa *et al.*) and five at Backworth Pond-Holywell from 26th-29th. Two were noted at Waren Mill on 27th and three on fields at Snab Point from 29th-31st (HG). Finally, five were found at Ellington on 31st.

From 1st January 2018, the British Ornithologists Union will be following the International Ornithological Congress species list and hence 'Tundra Bean Goose' and 'Taiga Bean Goose' will be split into separate species. At this juncture, the County Records Committee will drop 'Tundra Bean Goose' from species requiring descriptions for acceptance. 'Taiga Bean Goose', being much rarer in Northumberland, will still require descriptions for acceptance.



'Taiga Bean Goose' *A. f. fabalis*

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

Interestingly, the first accepted record in the county since 2013 involved one in a Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus* flock in fields north of High Newton on 11th March (JGS). Unusually, it was also with a 'Tundra Bean Goose' *A. f. rossicus*, so could be directly compared. It was well described and photographed, showing all the typical features of this race.

An **un-raced bird** was seen in fields around Bothal Pond on 22nd December (RA).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

STATUS: Common to abundant passage visitor and common winter visitor.

The largest gatherings in the first two months involved a maximum count from Druridge Bay of ca.4,000 on 19th January, up to 2,000 at Lindisfarne NNR on 23rd January and Doddington on 4th and 27th February, and 1,200 in Beadnell Bay in early February. Elsewhere, there were up to 900 in the Blyth-Old Hartley-Holywell-Brier Dene (Whitley Bay) area and 240-500 at East Ord, Haggerston, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Hauxley NR, Low Newton and Melkridge. Northerly movement in March involved flocks of 270-650 at Budle Bay. Peak counts included 2,500 at Milfield on 19th, 1,500 at Beadnell on 18th, 1,200 at Doddington on 31st, 700 at East Chevington on 6th and 250-400 at Beehive Flash (Earsdon), Cocklawburn, Elwick and Holywell Dene.

Further northerly movement in April involved 68-140 at East Chevington, East Ord, High Hauxley, Holy Island and Prestwick Carr. Elsewhere, numbers declined sharply, with up to 500 at Budle Bay-Harper's Heugh the highest count.

During May, up to six were at Grindon Lough and two at Haughton Strother GP and Woodhorn Flashes, while single birds were at Bothal Pond and the Tweed Estuary. Two were found at the Tweed Estuary on 21st July; while, in August, one was with Greylag Geese *Anser anser* at Hoppen Kiln Pool on 29th.

Return passage, involving numerous flocks, commenced in September and continued through to December. The Farne Islands day-count record was broken with 2,061 S in 48 skeins on 29th September and a total of 57 flew N and 725 S at Seaton Sluice on 29th-30th September. Numbers at Lindisfarne NNR increased from 2,100 on 30th September to 7,000 in October. Other notable groups in October included 8,000-9,000 N at Cocklawburn on 24th (MHu), 7,000 S at East Ord on 19th, 5,300 at Goswick Sands on 23rd, 5,000 at West Ord on 27th, 3,500 at Doddington on 29th, 3,000 at Low Cocklaw on 24th, up to 2,300 in the Druridge Bay area, and 1,000 W at Shiellow Woods on 26th and S at Seaton Sluice on 30th.

Peak counts in the final two months included 3,500 at Lindisfarne NNR on 11th November, up to 3,000 in Druridge Bay, 1,300 at Outchester, 1,100 at Longhirst Flash, 820 at Backworth, 550 at Cheswick and 442 in Whitley Bay. Northerly movement in November included two flocks of 500 and one of 560 at East Ord in the first fortnight and 100 at Tynemouth on 19th. Southerly movement included 500 at Seaton Sluice on 2nd, 300-320 at Newton and Snab Points on 16th-17th respectively and 100-150 at Alnmouth, Bedlington, Druridge, East Ord and Newbiggin on various dates. Additionally, 330 flew SW at Linton Ponds and 150 W at Alnmouth mid-month. Northerly movement in December included 450 at Berwick on 30th and 100-120 at Cramlington, Morpeth and Newbiggin. Additional late movement included 200 SW at Nunnykirk and 80-120 S at Newbiggin and Tynemouth.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

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

STATUS: Increasingly rare passage and winter visitor.

Peak counts in the first quarter involved 16 at West Ord on 13th January and up to 15 in the Druridge Bay area in January-February. Up to four birds were also recorded in the Backworth-Holywell area. Elsewhere during January, six were at Gloucester Lodge (Blyth) on 12th and Low Newton on 15th and five at Beadnell on 20th and 30th. During February, seven were at Cocklawburn between 16th-29th and Beadnell on 21st; three were at Budle Bay on 18th, while two were at Woodhorn Flashes on 19th. Only four remained in the Druridge Bay area in March, when the same number were with 500 Pink-footed Geese *Anser brachyrhynchus* at Newton Links on 11th; two were also noted at Beadnell and Bothal and Linton Ponds. The only April record involved two at Holywell Pond on 7th-8th.

The second winter period started with three records in October; one was noted at Branton GP during a WeBS count on 17th, a calling adult flew SW over Inner Farne (Farne Islands) with four Pink-footed Geese on 19th and two were found in a mixed goose flock at Holywell Pond on 30th. Backworth attracted the largest numbers, with a maximum 25 on 31st December, including six to seven first-winters (MSH). Elsewhere in December, up to 22 were present at Gosforth Subsidence Pond between 21st-29th, while 14-18 were at Longhirst Flash between 22nd-24th, ten adults were at Grindon Lough on 22nd, eight were near Derwent Reservoir on 29th, up to seven were in the Druridge Bay area, five (including four adults) were at Outchester on 27th and two adults visited Big Waters on 22nd, with two at Lindisfarne during the month.

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

STATUS: Uncommon passage and winter visitor.

In the first quarter, seven were at Woodhorn Flashes on 12th February (JGS); although, from age submissions, a minimum of seven to eight (including four to five adults) were noted in the Newbiggin-Woodhorn-Druridge Bay-Warkworth Lane area. Three adults remained faithful to the traditional Grindon Lough winter site; three adults with Canada Geese *Branta canadensis* at Plenneller Common on 16th March may well have been the same birds. Two adults were at Bothal Pond on 25th March.

In the second winter period, two were again at Grindon Lough on 19th November, with a single at Woodhorn Flashes on 24th. During December, seven (including one first-winter) were at Cresswell Pond on 22nd (IRD) and one to two at Longhirst Flash between 23rd-24th.

Birds **not assigned to race** included various wandering groups in the first quarter, at sites where Eurasian race birds had been noted. On 28th December, 21 un-raced birds were at West Holywell and three at Prestwick Carr.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

STATUS: Common passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Uncommon, although the feral population continues to increase.

The largest gatherings during the first quarter involved 502 at Lindisfarne NNR, 240-500 at Beadnell-Howick, Cocklawburn, Colt Crag and Derwent Reservoirs, Druridge Bay, Elwick and Yarrow Slake and 100-230 at Backworth, Beehive Flash (Earsdon), Big Waters, Branton GP, Caistron, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Hauxley, Holywell Pond, Low Newton, Spittal-Cocklawburn and Woodhorn Flashes.

Breeding was confirmed at 14 localities (15 in 2015). There were 11 pairs on Coquet Island (14 in 2015) (RSPB). Elsewhere, six broods were noted at Derwent Reservoir (33 young), five broods at Branton GP (24 young) and Haughton Strother GP (27 young), four broods at Roddam Quarry Pond (nine young) and two broods at East Chevington (four young).

Numbers remained high during the period April-July, with maximum counts of 1,100 (including 100s juveniles) at Derwent Reservoir on 22nd June (IFo), 271 at Hauxley, 239 at Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield), 196 (including at least 50 juveniles) at Merryshields Farm GP (Stocksfield), 187 at Caistron and 152 at Lindisfarne NNR.

Peak concentrations in August-September involved 700 still at Derwent Reservoir, 500 at Widdrington Moor Lake, 464 during a WeBS count at Hallington Reservoir, 250-321 at Haughton Strother GP and Lindisfarne NNR and 79-220 at Arcot and Bothal Ponds, Branton GP, East Chevington, Hauxley NR, Hedgeley GP, Holywell Pond, Merryshields Farm GP, Newton Pool, Plenmeller Common, the Tweed Estuary and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

In the final quarter, peak counts were 1,000 at Derwent Reservoir and 900 at Haughton Strother GP in October, 400-580 at Big Waters, Caistron, Lindisfarne NNR and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, 200-300 at Backworth, Big Waters, East Chevington, Hauxley, Hedgeley GP, Holywell Pond, Newton Pool, Outchester and Prestwick Carr and 88-185 at Branton GP, Cramlington and Woodhorn Flashes.



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 Lough	565	386	79	12	70	102	17	263	8	265	427	400
Bothal Pond	162	158	57	26	12	1	92	375	137	182	104	200
Caistron	102	150	85	80	70	55	144	140	17	35	30	100
Killingworth Lake	70	122	13	7	9	35	65	65	89	104	104	41

In addition to the above counts, larger concentrations in the first quarter involved 46-182 at the Aln Estuary, Angerton Lake, Big Waters, Bolam Lake, Colt Crag and Derwent Reservoirs, Druridge Pools, Hauxley NR, Hedgeley GP, Holystone Grange, QEII CP, Rayburn Lake, the Tweed Estuary and Widdrington Moor Lake. In April-May, away from the main sites, there were 44-67 at Castle Island, Hauxley NR and Linton Ponds; while in June-July, the Castle Island flock built up to 126 and 57-97 were at Derwent Reservoir, Hauxley NR, Ladyburn Lake and the Tweed Estuary. The Farne Islands recorded their third highest-ever flock when 153 flew N on 5th June; less usual, 65 moved S through Staple Sound on 19th June.

A total of at least 29 breeding pairs (46 in 2015) were reported from 15 localities (18 in 2015). On Coquet Island, nine pairs bred (ten in 2015). Others sites reporting multiple broods included Hedgeley GP (five), Widdrington Moor Lake (four), Castle Island (three) and Marden Quarry and Roddam Quarry Pond (two each).

Numbers increased in early autumn, with 144-148 at Foxton Bend and Widdrington Moor Lake and 39-72 at Big Waters, Hauxley and New Water Haugh (Berwick) in August. The largest count of the year was recorded during a WeBS visit in September, with 826 at Hallington Reservoir on 18th (RF). Elsewhere in September, 514 were at QEII CP Lake and 362 at the Aln Estuary, with 89-98 at Capheaton and Killingworth Lake.

Peak counts in the final quarter, in addition to those tabulated above, included 325-455 at Alnmouth, Angerton Lake, Grindon Lough and Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), 179-223 at Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield) (220 being a new site record there), Angerton Lake, Derwent Reservoir, Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal), QEII CP and Widdrington Moor Lakes and 82-158 at Big Waters, Capheaton, Druridge Pools, Gosforth Park, Hedgeley GP, Longhirst Flash, Rayburn Lake and West Ord.



Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

STATUS: Common autumn passage and well-represented winter visitor.

The largest gathering of the year involved up to 1,200 in the Budle Bay-Harper's Heugh area on 18th February (CDB); many other counts of up to 810 came from the same area, and the wider Lindisfarne NNR, during January-February. Elsewhere during the first two months, 68 were with Pink-footed Geese *Anser brachyrhynchus* in Beadnell Bay on 30th January and 48 were at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) in January, with one to 14 at a further 11 localities. During March, up to 18 at Harper's Heugh on 5th reduced to eight by 18th; these birds remaining to 3rd April. Elsewhere in April, 24 flew SW at Holy Island on 29th, while one was found on the sea at St Mary's on 21st.

In May, two flew W at Cresswell on 5th and a single was at Hedgeley GP on 1st. An unseasonal flock of 31 flew N at East Chevington beach on 5th June, while two were off Holy Island Causeway the day before. Singles were at Hauxley on 6th June and 29th July and Castle Island on 24th-26th July, while two were at Bothal Pond regularly between 14th-30th August.

Autumn arrivals started to gather again at Budle Bay in September, with 25 on 26th. Two birds remained at Bothal Pond on 6th, while a single bird was at QEII CP Lake on 19th. Numbers were much lower in the second winter period at Budle Bay-Harper's Heugh and Lindisfarne NNR, with 500-600 reported, peaking at 850 on 8th October and 900 on 18th December. Away from Lindisfarne NNR, in October, 84 flew N at the Farne Islands on 19th, 77 were at Newbiggin on 7th, 60 flew S at Berwick on 18th, 45-50 were at Boulmer and Haughton Strother GP and up to 37 at the Aln Estuary, Berwick, Cresswell, East Chevington, Old Hartley, Snab Point, St Mary's Wetland and Warkworth Gut.

In November, 12 flew into Holywell Pond on 2nd and one to two were at the Aln Estuary, Derwent Reservoir, the Farne Islands, Grindon Lough, QEII CP Lake and the River Tweed. There were further records at Grindon Lough in December, with five present on 8th, while one to two also visited Cresswell, QEII CP Lake and Snab Point during the final month.

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) were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1,500	1,300	1,000	35	2	4	2	-	2,100	2,800	2,800	1,094

Away from Lindisfarne NNR, there were only a few records in the first quarter, with nine flying N at Seaton Sluice between 4th-6th January and a single during a WeBS count between Boulmer-Alnmouth on both 20th January and 20th February. Five were at Druridge Pools on 14th May.

Return passage started on 28th August, when four flew N past Tynemouth, Seaton Sluice and Newbiggin. Further movement was recorded during September, with 70 N at Newbiggin and 40 N at Tynemouth on 4th, 46 N at Seaton Sluice from 4th-19th, 19 at Boulmer on 4th, 31 at Newton Links on 14th, 17 N at Newbiggin on 17th and five to eight at Snab Point and Tynemouth. The main arrival at Lindisfarne NNR was noted mid-month. During October, the Lindisfarne flock peaked at 2,800 on 12th, with the same number counted on 11th November (ACr), four flew N at Newbiggin from 1st-5th, five moved N at Seaton Sluice on 20th and four S at Hauxley on 22nd. Elsewhere, the maximum count at Newton Scrape was four on 1st, 19 were between Seahouses-Beadnell on 4th and singles were noted at Cocklawburn, QE II CP and Widdrington Moor Lake.

In November, away from Lindisfarne, one to two flew N at Seaton Sluice and Tynemouth and one was at Cresswell Pond on 20th; while, in December, 30 were at Monks House on 2nd, and 70 at Bamburgh and 48 from Seahouses-Beadnell on 18th.

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) were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
15	30	122	-	1	-	-	-	32	225	181	60

Elsewhere during January, five flew S at Cocklawburn on 1st, while up to ten were at Druridge Pools between 10th-11th, with one to two at Backworth and Gloucester Lodge (Blyth).

Three at Newbiggin on 19th September increased to 11 the following day. In October, 225 at Lindisfarne on 16th was the highest annual count (ACr), nine were at St Mary's on 4th, three at Alnmouth from 15th-17th and singles at Cambois, Cresswell Pond, the Long Nanny Estuary and N at Tynemouth. In the final two months, one to two were at Cresswell, with two S at Seaton Sluice on 15th December and two in the Tweed Estuary on 16th.

Birds **not assigned to race** included 20 at Cambois on 21st January and up to 14 at St Mary's during the month. In September, 45 moved N at Howick on 4th and 11 were at Newbiggin on 20th, with five to eight at Cresswell and Newbiggin. October singles were at Cambois and Cresswell and, during November, six flew N at Newbiggin on 2nd, with a single at Amble.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / FIRST: HISTORICAL / LAST: 2014

A female or immature was found at Bothal Pond on 21st August (DD/TRD/JD *et al.*). It was not present the following day. A spell of SE winds was assumed to have brought this bird in from the continent. There is an increasing feral population now in Western Europe so further sightings are to be expected, especially in late summer when there is regular dispersal. The brief stay also gives credence to a continental bird, rather than an escape.

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
1,608 (270)	455 (220)	776 (240)	346 (125)	125 (78)	322 (189)	104 (80)	24 (--)	1,042 (213)	809 (565)	1,822 (36)	1,700 (140)

The only recorded movement in the opening quarter involved one to four N at Ellington and St Mary's in February. Away from Lindisfarne NNR, the Blyth Estuary held respective peaks of five, 49 and 67 in the opening three months, while Howdon attracted 23, 52 and 52 over the same period. Counts of ten to 24 also came from the Aln Estuary, Boulmer, Cresswell Pond, Howick-Boulmer, North Shields, West Stobswood and Widdrington Moor Lake, plus five to nine at Backworth, Bothal Pond, Castle Island, Druridge Pools, East Holywell and Elswick. One to four were at a further 12 coastal/near-coastal sites; while, further inland, one to seven were at Branton, Castron, Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) and Hedgeley GPs, and Rayburn Lake.

The Blyth Estuary held 60 in April and 30 in May, while 20-37 were at the Aln Estuary, Bell's Pond (Cresswell), Elswick-Scotswood, Howdon and Howick-Boulmer in April-May. Ten to 16 were also at Alnmouth, Castle Island, Cresswell Pond, Foxton and Hauxley NR in the same period, plus three to nine at Backworth, Branton, Castron, the Coquet Estuary, Druridge Pools, Elswick, Greenlaw, Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother and Hedgeley GPs Holywell Pond, Newbiggin, the Tweed Estuary, West Stobswood and Widdrington Moor Lake. One to two were at 18 further widespread sites during this period, including, more unusually, two at Derwent Reservoir.

Successful breeding was recorded at 12 localities (15 in 2015) between May-July, with the first brood (11 young) at Cresswell Pond on 23rd May. Full details were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods/crèches	No. of young
Cresswell Pond	4+	37+
Hauxley NR	3	21+
West Stobswood Pool	2	19
Castle Island	2+	18+
Budle Bay	2	14
Blyth Estuary	2	10
East Chevington	1	10
Newton Scrape	1	9
Coquet Estuary	1	8
Druridge Pools	1	4
Howdon	1	3
Farne Islands	1	2

In June, six flew S at St Mary's on 21st, 24 were at the Aln Estuary, 14-18 at Howdon and Elswick-Scotswood, and six to nine at Boulmer, Hauxley NR and Hoppen Kiln; and in July, eight flew S at the Farne Islands, and eight to 11 were at Castle Island and Howick-Boulmer. Away from breeding sites, one to six were at 12 further localities in June-July. A total of 14 flew N at Seaton Sluice during August, when nine to 11 were at Amble and Cresswell-Newbiggin, four at Newton Point and one to two at six further sites, including a juvenile at Big Waters that fed on bread.

Seven flew N and six S at Seaton Sluice in September. Away from Lindisfarne NNR, few were recorded elsewhere in September, with three to four at the Aln Estuary, Bothal Pond and Castle Island and one to two at Beadnell, the Blyth Estuary and Druridge Pools. In October, one flew N at Boulmer, three to seven were at Cresswell Pond and East Chevington and one to two at five further coastal sites, while two remained inland at Grindon Lough. Numbers at Lindisfarne NNR reached a peak of 1,822 on 13th November (ACr). Few were noted elsewhere in the final two months, with 15 at Howdon, four to six at Amble, the Blyth Estuary, Cresswell Pond and Elswick and one to two at the Aln Estuary, Arcot Pond, Druridge Pools, Howick and Monks House Pool.

Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata*

STATUS: Uncommon to well-represented resident.

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

A drake was reported occasionally at Holywell Pond between 8th-21st January and again on 13th March, when it displayed to Mallards *Anas platyrhynchos*, and one was at Farnley Haughs on 3rd and 6th January. Also in March, two to three were at Catcleugh Reservoir, Farnley Scar (River Tyne), Kielder Water, Redmire (near Falstone) and on the River North Tyne at Ridley Stokoe-Smalesmouth, while a pair were noted mating at Bakethin Reservoir and a drake was at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh). April reports consisted of three at Kielder, single pairs at Glen Ridley and Low Angerton (River Wansbeck) and two birds at Redmire and Sharperton. One to two were at Kielder in May.

Breeding data was as follows (with 2015 figures in parentheses) (MD):

Locality	No. of nests	No. of eggs	No. of young fledged
Tarset/Redsdale	33 (33)	310 (303)	260 (174+)
Kielder	5 (--)	42 (--)	31 (--)

Seven large juveniles were at Bakethin Reservoir on 3rd July (TRD/JD).

There were no more reports until September, when two were at Catcleugh Reservoir and three at Kielder Water. In October, single drakes were at Holywell Pond on 3rd, Newsham Pond on 9th-10th and Haughton Strother GP between 12th-20th. In November, single drakes (perhaps the same wandering individual) were at Howdon on 2nd and Holywell Pond on 11th-12th, and a single was at Newton Pool on 13th. A drake was at Tyne Green (Hexham) on 27th December.

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

STATUS: Abundant autumn passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Rare. / LAST BRED 2016

Peak monthly 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
2,300 (650)	220 (220)	348 (310)	-- (1)	5 (5)	--	--	--	11,131 (1,600)	17,000 (2,100)	12,500 (--)	1,753 (1,250)

Away from the core area of Lindisfarne, other peak concentrations in the first quarter were 930 at Grindon Lough in February, 723 at Cresswell Pond in January, 624 at Big Waters (a site record) in January, 618 at Derwent Reservoir in March and 320-532 at the Aln Estuary and Druridge Pools, with 200-266 at Bell's and Bothal Ponds, Capheaton, Warkworth Lane Ponds and Widdrington Moor Lake and 100-185 from Amble, Colt Crag Reservoir, Gosforth Park NR, Hauxley NR, Hoppen Kiln Flash, Low Newton, Seahouses-Beadnell and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. In addition, 50-81 were at Howick-Boulmer and Linton Ponds. Display was noted at Big Waters in February.

In April, 107 were at Derwent Reservoir on 4th, 70 at Grindon Lough and 24-48 at Bothal Pond, Druridge Pools, East Chevington and Gosforth Park NR; and in May, up to 24 were at Grindon Lough, five to ten at Budle Bay, Druridge Pools, Plenmeller Common and the Tweed Estuary and one to two at four coastal and two inland sites.

Breeding was recorded at one site in May (none in 2015), with the first brood (eight young) noted on 22nd:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young
Derwent Reservoir	2+	10+

In June, 20 were at Grindon Lough and eight at Hoppen Kiln; and in July, one flew N at Tynemouth on 29th, 54 gathered at Grindon Lough on 25th, and 14 were at Derwent Reservoir. One to five were noted at eight further localities in June-July. In August, three flew N at Seaton Sluice and 19 S at Blyth, Grindon Lough held 75 on 26th and 13-18 were at Derwent Reservoir, Gosforth Park NR and Plenmeller Common. Coastal movement quickened during September, when 1,334 flew N at Seaton Sluice between 13th-22nd and 200-234 N at the Farne Islands and Newbiggin. Numbers quickly built-up at Lindisfarne NNR in September and, elsewhere, 388 were at Shield on the Wall, 281 at Grindon Lough and 84-100 at Big Waters, Derwent Reservoir and Gosforth Park NR.

An estimated 17,000 were at Lindisfarne NNR by late October (IK). Elsewhere, peak counts were 800 at Cresswell Pond in October and again in November, when 514-728 were at the Aln Estuary, Big Waters, Derwent Reservoir and Grindon Lough; and in December, 300-557 were at the Aln Estuary, Amble, Beadnell, Capheaton Lake, Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Pools, Grindon Lough, Warkworth Lane Ponds and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. An above-average 550 flew N at Seaton Sluice during November, including 492 between 3rd-8th, followed by just four N in December. Counts of 200-260 also came from Bothal Pond, Branton GP, Gosforth Park NR, Linton Ponds and Newton Scape in the final quarter and 50-165 were at Colt Crag Reservoirs, the Coquet Estuary, East Chevington, the Farne Islands, Hauxley NR, Holburn Moss, Howick-Boulmer, Outcheater, Rayburn Lake, Seahouses-Beadnell, Shield on the Wall, Warkworth and Widdrington Moor Lake. More unusual, were eight at Linden Hall GC and singles at Tynemouth boating lake and Northumberland Park (North Shields).

American Wigeon *Anas americana*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / FIRST RECORD: 1951 / LAST RECORD: 2015

The returning male was again found at Grindon Lough, this time on 3rd January, where it stayed through to 15th March (PRM *et al.*). Faithful to its chosen wintering area, it returned on 10th November and was last noted on 25th November (SJH/PRM *et al.*). The large wintering Wigeon *Anas penelope* flock at this location is undoubtedly a reason for the attraction to this site.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

STATUS: Well-represented resident.

BREEDING: Uncommon but increasing. / FIRST BRED: 1965

Peak monthly counts were as follows (excludes broods):

Month	Locality	Count
January	Big Waters	42
February	Bothal Pond	31
March	Bothal Pond	49
April	Bothal Pond	39
May	Bell's Pond	17
June	Bothal Pond / Cresswell Pond	37
July	Bothal Pond	18
August	Linton Ponds	57
September	Big Waters	51
October	Gosforth Park NR	84
November	Big Waters	54
December	Swallow Pond	28

Additional peak counts of 20-37 in the first quarter came from Arcot Pond, the Blyth Estuary, Caistron, Castle Island, East Chevington, Holywell and Swallow Ponds, Widdrington Moor Lake and Woodhorn Flashes, with 11-19 at Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Ladyburn and QEII CP Lakes, St Mary's Wetland and Widdrington Moor Lake and one to nine at 22 further widespread sites. Display was noted at Arcot Pond in January. Four flew S at Seaton Sluice on 26th March.



Gadwall - Howdon - December (Colin Bradshaw).

In April, a pair flew N at the Farne Islands on 24th and, in April-May, ten to 18 were at Bothal Pond, Caistron, Castle Island, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Hauxley NR, Lynemouth Flash, Newton Pool and Scrape, West Stobswood Pool and Woodhorn Flashes, with five to nine at seven further localities. A pair also visited the Farne Islands on 9th and 20th May. More unusual was a pair on the River Tyne at Tynemouth, later noted flying N and then S at Whitley Bay, on 6th May. A total of 34 localities (excluding coastal passage) held birds between April-July (41 in 2015). Successful breeding was noted at nine sites (seven in 2015) between June-August, with

the first brood (eight young) at Druridge Pools on 5th June. Full details were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young
Ladyburn Lake	2	10
Bothal Pond	1	12
Castle Island	1	9
Branton GP	1	8
Cresswell Pond	1	8
Druridge Pools	1	8
West Stobswood	1	7
Hauxley NR	1	6
Holywell Pond	1	1

In addition, and unusually, four nests were found offshore on Coquet Island.

In June, one flew N at Newbiggin, 25 were at Castle Island (where nine large juveniles were noted in July) and ten to 16 were at Branton GP, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Hauxley NR, Holy Island and Linton Ponds. In August, singles flew S at Seaton Sluice on two dates, 50 gathered at Hauxley NR and 13-21 were at Bothal Pond, Castle Island and Gosforth Park NR. Five to seven were also at Big Waters, Castron, Hedgeley GP, Holywell Pond, Lynemouth and Marden Quarry between June-August, when one to four visited 24 further scattered sites. In September, one flew N at Seaton Sluice and 20 S at Ellington on 11th, 21-36 were at Castle Island, East Chevington, Gosforth Park NR, Linton Ponds and Widdrington Moor Lake and ten to 12 at Druridge Pools and Holywell Pond.

In October, two flew N at Seaton Sluice and 84 at Gosforth Park NR on 24th was the largest concentration of the year (NHSN); other peak counts included 62 at Big Waters and 20-37 at Castron, East Chevington and Swallow Pond. In November, singles flew N at Seaton Sluice and Tynemouth, 51-52 were at East Chevington and Gosforth Park NR and 26-41 at the Blyth Estuary, Swallow Pond and Widdrington Moor Lake; and in December, 20-23 were at the Blyth Estuary and Widdrington Moor Lake. Final-quarter counts of one to 19 came from 25 further sites, the only 'new' locality for the year being Killingworth Lake.

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
500 (385)	430+ (430)	550 (350)	138 (110)	13 (--)	5 (1)	47 (30)	250+ (250)	1,200+ (1,200)	2,062 (1,950)	508 (--)	800 (650)

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

Month	Locality	Count
January	Big Waters	1,493
February	Big Waters	581
March	Lindisfarne NNR	550
April	Lindisfarne NNR	138
May	Grindon Lough	29
June	Druridge Pools	25
July	Lindisfarne NNR	47
August	Budle Bay	250
September	Budle Bay	1,200
October	Lindisfarne NNR	2,062
November	Lindisfarne NNR	508
December	Lindisfarne NNR	800

Big Waters held a new site record of 1,493 on 21st January and other peak first quarter counts, away from Lindisfarne, included 457 at Grindon Lough in January and 400 at Cresswell Pond in February. The first quarter also produced counts of 211-249 at the Aln Estuary, Druridge Pools, Howdon and Whittle Dene Reservoirs and 100-183 at Arcot and Bothal Ponds, Elswick-Scotswood, Hallington Reservoir, Low Newton, Newton Pool and Prestwick Carr, with 51-94 at Backworth, the Blyth Estuary, Bolam Lake, Castle Island, Colwell, Hoppen Kiln Flash, Middle Ord Pond, Monks House Pool, Ray Estate, Swallow Pond, the River Tweed between A1-Gainslaw House, Widdrington Moor Lake and Woodhorn Flashes. The only evidence of coastal passage in the opening quarter involved 22 N at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 5th January.

In April, four flew N at Seaton Sluice and several were noted at the Farne Islands; 132 at Howdon on 1st fell to one by 30th, 56-57 were at Elswick-Scotswood and Grindon Lough, and 20-33 at the Aln Estuary, Big Waters, the Blyth Estuary, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Low Newton and West Hartford. Away from Grindon Lough, one to eight were at 15 further sites in May. As in 2015, breeding was not recorded this year; although, unusually, active display was noted at Woodhorn Flashes on 11th June.

Coastal movement in June involved 11-12 N at Newbiggin and Seaton Sluice on 9th; and in July, 178 flew N and six S at Seaton Sluice. The pace quickened in August, when a monthly total of 582 moved N and 157 S at Seaton Sluice, including 385 N and 73 S between 17th-19th. Also in June-July, 12-24 were at Derwent Reservoir and Grindon Lough and, in August, 222-230 were at East Chevington and Grindon Lough, 40-92 at five sites and an unusual record involved five flying around Newcastle (Exhibition Park) on 25th. At Seaton Sluice, a notable 2,663 flew N and 227 S in September, including 548 N on 4th, when 196-307 moved N at the Farne Islands, Newbiggin and Tynemouth. Also in September, numbers at Budle Bay rose to 1,200 by 23rd, 210-252 were at the Aln Estuary, Derwent Reservoir and Grindon Lough and 105-115 at Arcot Pond, Castle Island, Derwent Reservoir, East Chevington and Holy Island (Rocket Field Pools).

Coastal passage was light in October, with just six to 26 N at Newbiggin and St Mary's; in November, a total of 213 moved N and 58 S at Seaton Sluice, including 195 N and 46 S between 3rd-8th; and in December, 61 flew N and six S at Seaton Sluice. Also in the final quarter, 2,062 were counted at Lindisfarne during a WeBS visit on 16th October (ACr), 525 were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs in December, 508 at the Aln Estuary in November and 500 at Holburn Moss in October. Other peak counts during the period included 410-486 at Big Waters and Grindon Lough, 200-317 at Bothal Pond, Colt Crag Reservoir, Cresswell Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Pools, Hallington Reservoir and Howdon Wetland. Counts of 50-191 came from 14 previously mentioned sites, plus Amble, Branton GP, Caistron, Capheaton, the Coquet Estuary, Hauxley NR, Plenneller Common and St Mary's Wetland. In November, a Harris Hawk *Parabuteo unicinctus* flushed 30 birds from Callerton subsidence area on 12th and display was noted at Big Waters on 19th.

Green-winged Teal *Anas carolinensis*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / FIRST RECORD: 1952 / LAST RECORD: 2015

Two sightings this year, with a male at Backworth Pond from 7th–13th January (GPK *et al.*), which was also noted on 14th January at Swallow Pond (GPK *et al.*) and another male on 8th January at Alnmouth (CS/TAC *et al.*). The long stays of past years seem to be over.

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
382 (170)	110 (100)	173 (150)	26 (10)	6 (0)	25 (20)	10 (0)	116 (110)	224 (210)	134 (125)	49 (--)	505 (400)

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

Month	Locality	Count
January	Lindisfarne NNR	382
February	Derwent Reservoir	178
March	Lindisfarne NNR	173
April	Lindisfarne NNR	26
May	Whiteadder Point, Berwick	59
June	Big Waters	56
July	Big Waters	140
August	Grindon Lough	154
September	Lindisfarne NNR	224
October	Derwent Reservoir	185
November	Derwent Reservoir	228
December	Lindisfarne NNR	505

Additional peak counts in January involved 324 at Big Waters, 105-196 at Branton and Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Marden Quarry and the Tweed Estuary but, apart from 178 at Derwent Reservoir in February, there were no other three-figure counts in February-March. During the first quarter, gatherings of 50-96 came from Alnmouth, Beadnell-Howick, the Blyth Estuary, Bolam Lake, Bothal Pond, Boulmer-Alnmouth, Capheaton, Castle Island, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Grindon Lough, Hallington, Howick-Boulmer, Killingworth Lake, Lynemouth Flash, Middle Ord Pond, QEII CP, the Tweed Estuary, Whittle Dene Reservoirs, Widdrington Moor Lake and Woodhorn Flashes.

During April-May, counts of 20-38 came from six of the above sites, plus Druridge Pools, Greenlee Lough, Hauxley NR, Ladyburn Lake, Newcastle (Leazes Park), Swallow Pond and the River Tweed between A1-Gainslaw House.

An early brood (two young) was at Leazes Park on 21st March and broods continued to be reported into August (with the majority between April-July). A very late fresh brood was noted at the Farne Islands on 8th November (but not thereafter). The most productive localities were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young
Farne Islands	20	--
Holywell Dene/Estuary	9	29+
Derwent Reservoir	6	54
Arcot Pond	5	22
Castle Island	4	36
Newcastle (Leazes Park)	4	23
Big Waters	4	22-23
Ladyburn Lake	4	17
Gosforth Park NR	3+	28
Newcastle Civic Centre	3	18
Linton Ponds	3	14
Grindon Lough	2-3	16-24
Bothal Pond	2+	17+
Hedgeley GP	2	17
Druridge Pools	2	14
Greenlee Lough	2	8
Killingworth Lake	2+	8
Marden Quarry	2	8

Single broods were also found at a further 22 widespread localities.

Maximum counts in the period June-September, in addition to those in the table above, included 110-144 at Castle Island and Derwent and Whittle Dene Reservoirs and 50-95 at the Aln Estuary, Alnmouth, Bothal Pond, Branton GP, Budle Bay, Castron, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Gosforth Park NR, Hallington Reservoir, Ladyburn Lake, Linton Ponds, Marden Quarry, Newcastle (Exhibition Park), Newton Pool, St Mary's Wetland, Swallow Pond and the River Tweed between A1-Gainslaw House and at Whiteadder.

During the final quarter, a total of 89 flew N at Seaton Sluice in November, including 75 N between 2nd-8th, and ten to 15 flew N at the Farne Islands. The largest count of the year concerned 505 at Lindisfarne NNR on 18th December (ACr). Additional counts during the period included 110-202 at the Aln Estuary, Big Waters, Colt Crag Reservoir, Cresswell Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Farnley Haughs, Grindon Lough, Hallington Reservoir, Haughton Strother GP, the Tweed Estuary, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Widdrington Moor Lake. Groups of 50-91 were noted at nine sites already mentioned, plus Ellington, Morpeth, Newsham Pond, Old Hartley, Warkworth Lane Pond and West Ord.

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
253	207	150	13	1	--	--	20	34	150	160	318

Away from the core area at Fenham Flats, three to five were at Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, East Chevington and Grindon Lough in January-February, when one to two were at Arcot Pond, Berwick, Swallow Pond and the Tweed Estuary. More unusual were singles at Bolam Lake (drake displaying to female Mallards *Anas platyrhynchos*), Derwent Reservoir and Grindstonelaw (near Matten). In March, three to six were at Broomlee Lough, Druridge Pools, Grindon Lough and Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), plus one to two at six further, mainly coastal, sites, including Backworth and Bothal Ponds.

In April, 13 remained at Lindisfarne NNR on 15th, four were at Cresswell Pond on 7th, one to three at Druridge Pools up to 23rd, one to two at East Chevington until 24th, and two at Grindon Lough to 10th. One at Fenham Flats on 8th was the sole sighting in May.

The next reports were in July, involving a moulting drake at Druridge Pools on 5th, followed by an intriguingly early juvenile there on 10th. In August, 20 were at Fenham Flats on 19th, seven at Druridge Pools on 17th, and two at Hauxley NR on 13th increased to six on 20th. In September, a total of 21 flew N at Seaton Sluice between 4th-19th, eight to 14 moved N at St Mary's, Tynemouth and Whitley Bay and four N at Newbiggin. Also in September, 31 gathered at East Chevington on 11th (a notable count away from Lindisfarne NNR), 12 at Big Waters was a site record, three to four were at Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Pools, Hauxley NR and Widdrington Moor Lake and one to two at eight further sites, including one at the more unusual locality of Newcastle (Exhibition Park).

In October, numbers at East Chevington peaked at 23 and nine were at Branton GP; in November, one to three flew N at Newbiggin and St Mary's, eight were at East Chevington and three to four at Boulmer, Colt Crag Reservoir, Druridge Pools, Grindon Lough, Hallington Reservoir and Low Newton; and in December, one moved N and four S at Seaton Sluice, 318 were at Lindisfarne NNR on 18th (ACr) and three were at Druridge Pools. One to two were also found at Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Exhibition Park, the Farne Islands, Gosforth Park NR, Haughton Strother GP, Holywell Pond, the Tweed Estuary, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Widdrington Moor Lake in the final quarter.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

STATUS: Uncommon spring passage and rare summer visitor.

BREEDING: Extremely rare. / LAST BRED: 2008

The first arrivals were in April, when three (two drakes) were at Swallow Pond on 2nd (GPK *et al.*) and one at Gosforth Park NR on 4th. The three remained at the former site until 22nd, with a pair until 28th, but more unusual were two in Budle Bay on 24th. In May, a drake flew N at Tynemouth on 1st, twos were at Alnmouth on 13th and Druridge Pools on 15th and single drakes at Castle Island, Cresswell Pond and Newton Scrape on occasional dates between 7th-31st. A drake remained at Druridge Pools until 4th June, when a duck was also at Linton Ponds.

One was noted occasionally at Gosforth Park NR between 29th August-15th September and one was at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 9th September. A late individual was at Big Waters on 13th and 15th November.

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

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

BREEDING: Rare. / LAST BRED: 2016

Peak monthly counts were as follows (excludes broods):

Month	Locality	Count
January	Swallow Pond	55
February	Swallow Pond	40
March	Druridge Pools	32
April	Druridge Pools	29
May	Druridge Pools	6
June	Branton GP/Druridge Pools	3
July	East Chevington	4
August	Druridge Pools	12
September	East Chevington	78
October	East Chevington	63
November	Swallow Pond	56
December	Swallow Pond	49

In the first quarter, peak counts additional to those in the above table involved ten to 17 at Bothal Pond, Cresswell Pond, Holy Island (Lough), Ladyburn Lake and Newton Pool and one to eight at Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield), Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Budle Bay, Dinnington, Gosforth Park NR, Grindon Lough, Holy Island (Rocket Field Pools), Holywell Pond, Hoppen Kiln Flash and Monks House Pool.

In April, two flew S at the Farne Islands, 11 were at Low Newton and three to six at Arcot, Bothal and Cresswell Ponds, Holy Island (Lough) and Swallow Pond and, in May, four were at Cresswell Pond. One to two were also at the AIn Estuary, Grindon Lough, Hauxley NR, Howdon, Linton Ponds, West Hartford and Widdrington Moor Lake in April-May. More unusual was a pair at Derwent Reservoir on 27th April.

A total of 19 localities held the species during April-July (27 sites in 2015).

Breeding occurred at a single site, with young (two broods) from 26th May (breeding not recorded in 2015). Full details were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young
Druridge Pools	2	14 (9,5)

Three flew S at the Farne Islands on 11th June. One to two were at Big Waters, Holy Island and Monks House Pool occasionally in June-July. In August, nine flew N at Seaton Sluice between 21st-28th and three to nine were at Arcot, Bothal and Cresswell Ponds, Derwent Reservoir, East Chevington, Grindon Lough and Monks House Pool, plus one to two at three further sites. In September, four flew N at Seaton Sluice and one N at Newbiggin; 78 at East Chevington on 25th was the highest count of the year (JL), nine to 15 were at Cresswell Pond, Gosforth Park NR, Grindon Lough and Holywell Pond and one to four at 12 further sites, but more unusual were two at the Blyth Estuary.

Swallow Pond held a peak of 52 in October, when 18 were at Gosforth Park NR; in November, 38 were at East Chevington, 22 at St Mary's Wetland, and 13-14 at Budle Bay and Grindon Lough; and in December, a notable 30 were at Budle Bay, and ten to 17 at Big Waters, Druridge Pools and Gosforth Park NR. Counts of six to nine also came from Arcot and Bothal Ponds, Branton GP, Derwent Reservoir, the Farne Islands, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Holywell Pond, Killingworth Lake, Linton Ponds, Marden Quarry, Monks House Pool, Newton Pool and Scrape, West Allotment Ponds and Widdrington Moor Lake.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

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

BREEDING: Rare. / LAST BRED: 2016

Peak monthly counts were as follows (excludes broods):

Month	Locality	Count
January	Widdrington Moor Lake	23
February	Holywell Pond	23
March	Holywell Pond	21
April	Swallow Pond	23
May	Big Waters/Swallow Pond	10
June	Bothal Pond	17
July	Holywell Pond	15
August	Bothal Pond	10
September	Whittle Dene Reservoirs	6
October	Bothal Pond	7
November	East Chevington	42
December	Widdrington Moor Lake	15

Additional peak counts during the first quarter involved ten to 17 at Big Waters, Bothal Pond, Druridge Pools, Killingworth and QEII CP Lakes and Swallow Pond, with one to nine at Arcot Pond, Branton GP, Capheaton Lake, East Chevington, Embleton-Newton Point, Gosforth Park NR, Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) and Hedgeley GPs, Kielder Water, Ladyburn Lake, Maiden's Hall Lake, Marden Quarry, Warkworth Lane Ponds and West Stobswood Pools.

In April, nine to ten were at Arcot Pond and Gosforth Park NR. One to four were also at Bank's and Bothal Ponds, Capheaton, Druridge Pools, Holywell Pond, Killingworth Lake and Marden Quarry in April-May, when display/copulation was noted at Big Waters.

A total of 15 localities were occupied at various times between April-July (14 localities in 2015). Successful breeding was recorded at three localities in the south east (one in 2015) in June-July. The first brood (six young) was noted at Swallow Pond on 10th June. Full details were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young
Swallow Pond	1	6
Bothal Pond	1	3
Holywell Pond	1	3

In the period June-September, five flew N at the Farne Islands on 24th August, 12 were at Holywell Pond in June, ten were at Bothal Pond in July and one to six were at Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Gosforth Park NR, Grindon Lough, Kielder Water, Killingworth and Ladyburn Lakes, Linton and Swallow Ponds, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Widdrington Moor Lake.

Numbers were generally low in the final quarter. One flew N at the Farne Islands on 2nd November and 42 at East Chevington on 12th November was the highest concentration of the year (ME), while 21 were at Widdrington Moor Lake. Elsewhere, five to 14 were at Bothal Pond, Broomlee Lough, Capheaton Lake, Kielder Water, Killingworth Lake and Swallow Pond, with one to four at Big Waters, Branton GP, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Gosforth Park NR, Holywell Pond, QEII CP Lake, and Warkworth Lane Ponds.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

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

BREEDING: Uncommon.

Peak monthly counts were as follows (excludes broods):

Month	Locality	Count
January	Grindon Lough	150
February	Killingworth Lake	106
March	Grindon Lough	90
April	Killingworth Lake	72
May	Branton GP	43
June	Branton GP	48
July	Cresswell Pond	59
August	East Chevington/Widdrington Moor Lake	42
September	Newcastle (Exhibition Park)	56
October	Newcastle (Exhibition Park)	49
November	East Chevington	96
December	Ladyburn Lake	76

The largest single concentration of the year occurred on 19th January, when 150 were at Grindon Lough (MRS). Other peak counts in the first quarter included 117 at QEII CP Lake in January, 106 at Killingworth Lake in February and 20-54 at Big Waters, Bothal Pond, Branton GP, Caistron, Capheaton Lake, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Holywell Pond, Howdon Wetland, Ladyburn Lake, Newcastle (Exhibition and Leazes Parks), Rayburn Lake, Swallow and West Allotment Ponds, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Woodhorn Flashes.

One to two were noted on seven dates between 10th April-2nd May at the Farne Islands. Additional peak counts in April-May involved 20-48 at Bothal Pond, Branton GP, Caistron, Capheaton Lake, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Haughton Strother and Hedgeley GPs, Holywell Pond, Ladyburn Lake, QEII CP Lake and West Stobswood Pools. More unusual was a pair in Holywell Dene on 22nd May and a duck at Killingworth Lake that appeared to have a bracelet trapped around its neck.

A total of 46 localities (excluding coastal passage) held the species at various times between April-August (51 in 2015). Successful breeding was noted at 11 localities (six in 2015) in July-August, with the first brood (ten young) at Howdon Wetland on 4th July. Full details were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young
East Chevington	4	--
Hauxley NR	3+	20+
Bothal Pond	2+	14
Arcot Pond	2	14
Alnwick (River Aln)	2	4
Mootlaw Quarry	1+	7
Howdon Wetland	1	10
Middle Ord Pond	1	6
Swallow Pond	1	6
Wansbeck Business Park, Ashington	1	4
Woodhorn Flashes	1	4

In addition, and unusually, five nests were noted offshore at Coquet Island.

At Seaton Sluice, five flew N in June and three N in July. In June-August, 20-55 were at Bothal Pond, Branton GP, Caistron, Castle Island, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Killingworth Lake, Marden Quarry and Widdrington Moor Lake. In September, two to four flew N at the Farne Islands, Newbiggin and Seaton Sluice on two dates, 43 were at Widdrington Moor Lake, and 23-30 at Big Waters, Bothal Pond, Branton GP, Castle Island, East Chevington, Hallington Reservoir and Ladyburn and QEII CP Lakes.

During the final quarter, further movement was noted with two S at Seaton Sluice in October and ten N at

the Farne Islands and one N at Seaton Sluice in November. Counts, additional to those in the table above, included 81 at Branton GP in November and 20-66 at Bothal Pond, Branton GP, Caistron, Castle Island, Holywell Pond, Hallington Reservoir, Killingworth Lake, Newcastle (Leazes Park), QEII CP Lake, Rayburn Lake, Spittal-Cocklawburn, Swallow Pond, Widdrington Moor Lake and Woodhorn Flashes.

Scaup *Aythya marila*

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

In January, up to six were at East Chevington north pool, two at Druridge Pools and singles at Holywell Pond and Widdrington Moor Lake and, in February, one to two were at East Chevington. Inland, three were at Grindon Lough on 14th and 27th February, and one to two there and at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Howdon and Killingworth Lake on several further dates in January-February. March reports consisted of singles at Druridge Pools, Grindon Lough and Haughton Strother GP on occasional dates, and one remained at Killingworth Lake all month.

In April, singles were at Killingworth Lake on 1st and East Chevington between 2nd-17th. One was again reported at Killingworth Lake from 4th-6th May.

There were no further reports until September, when one was at East Chevington on 17th and 25th, two at Lindisfarne NNR on 18th, one at Grindon Lough on 23rd and 28th, one flew N at Cocklawburn on 29th and three were at Widdrington Moor Lake on 30th, when one was at Budle Bay. An increase in October involved one N at the Farne Islands and two S at Tynemouth, five were at East Chevington, threes at Druridge Pools and Lindisfarne NNR and one to two at Budle Bay, Cresswell Pond and Ladyburn Lake. Three visited Big Waters briefly on 13th, two were at Bothal Pond and singles at Grindon Lough and Killingworth Lake.

In November, ten flew N at Seaton Sluice between 22nd-28th and two N at the Farne Islands; nine at East Chevington north pool on 1st increased to 17 on 12th and a notable 20 on 13th (TF/JFa), three to four were at Druridge Pools, Hauxley NR, Lindisfarne NNR and Spittal Bay, one to two at Castle Island, Cresswell Pond, Killingworth Lake, Newton Links and Widdrington Moor Lake, while one was further inland at Whittle Dene Reservoirs. In December, parties of five were at Hauxley NR and Holy Island, two to three at East Chevington and Widdrington Moor Lake and one at Newton Links. Well inland, one at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 4th increased to four by 13th.

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

STATUS: Common resident.

BREEDING: Common.

Peak monthly 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
475	163	400	206	112	243	219	340	329	230	422	350

Peak counts at the core Lindisfarne NNR included 475 on 17th January (ACr). Other large concentrations in the first three months were 118-126 between Beadnell-Howick and Seahouses-Beadnell, 78-85 at Amble and Budle Point-Seahouses and 20-51 at Berwick North Shore, the Blyth Estuary, Boulmer-Alnmouth, Cocklawburn, Druridge Bay, Meadow Haven (Berwick), Newbiggin, St Mary's, the Tweed Estuary and Whitley Bay. Much display was noted at the Farne Islands when the wardens returned on 18th March.

During April-May, away from Lindisfarne and the Farne Islands, 280 were between Budle Point-Seahouses in April and 74-106 at the Blyth Estuary/North Blyth, Cocklawburn and Seahouses-Beadnell, with 22-38 at Boulmer-Alnmouth, Howick-Boulmer, Newbiggin and St Mary's.

A total of 593 nesting pairs (570 in 2015) were noted at the Farne Islands, including 351 on Inner Farne and 156 on Brownsman. The first nest was noted on 9th April and hatching began on 5th May. A total of 941 young (935 in 2015) were counted from 353 monitored nests, giving a mean of 2.67 young per nest (2.45 in 2015). A total of 329 breeding females were noted on Coquet Island (365 in 2015). First eggs were noted on 27th April (27th April in 2015) (RSPB). Monitoring of ducklings in Amble Harbour-Coquet Estuary resulted in a peak of 131 on 14th June (79 in 2015), with the first noted on 24th May.

Away from the above sites, crèches were noted at six localities between May-July, with the first in May, at



Scaup - Killingworth Lake - November (Alan Curry).



King Eider - Beadnell Point - October (Gary Woodburn).

Holy Island on 26th and Budle Bay on 28th. Full details were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods/crèches	No. of young
St Aidan's Dunes, Seahouses	2	13
Blyth Estuary	2	5
Budle Bay	1	23
Holy Island	1	20
Seahouses Harbour	1	5
Cocklawburn	1	4

Most or all of the above records were thought to have originated from Coquet Island or the Farne Islands.

In the period June-August, 205 were counted between Seahouses-Beadnell in June, 340 at Lindisfarne NNR in August consisted mainly of drakes, and counts of 138-168 came from Budle Point-Seahouses, Cresswell-Newbiggin, North Blyth and Seahouses-Beadnell, with 28-92 at six further sites. In September, 27 flew N and 45 S at Seaton Sluice, 142 were at Cocklawburn, 92 at Seahouses-Beadnell and 21-25 at five further localities.

Passage in the final quarter included a below average 204 N and 24 S at Seaton Sluice in November, when 140 flew N at Newbiggin on 8th and 31-35 N at Newbiggin and Tynemouth on 27th, and 39 N and 11 S at Seaton Sluice in December. Away from Lindisfarne, counts in the final quarter were unexceptional, with 50-101 at Beadnell-Howick, Blyth Harbour, Howick-Boulmer, Seahouses-Beadnell and Spittal-Cocklawburn and smaller groups of 26-40 at Amble Harbour, Berwick (Meadow Haven, Needles Eye and North Shore), North Shields Fish Quay, St Mary's and the Tweed Estuary.

King Eider *Somateria spectabilis*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 15 / FIRST: 1861 / LAST: 1997

News of a sub-adult male flying N past Whitburn (Co. Durham) on 23rd October at 08:39hrs soon led to many observers stationing themselves along the coast. The first views were obtained off Newbiggin at 09:03hrs (TF/JFa *et al.*), where it flew past at the back of a small group of Eider *Somateria mollissima*. Next it was found still moving N past Cullernose Point (BS) at 10:28hrs and then photographed past Newton at 10:42hrs (GW) and seen off Newton Links at 10:44hrs (JGS). The sightings continued, with views through Inner Sound (Farne Islands) at 10:57hrs (TH) and finally, on Holy Island, off Broad Stones at 11:08hrs (CGK/GPK/ADM *et al.*) and Emmanuel Head at 11:10hrs (MJC). The latter records were all with a group of six Eider and a single Wigeon *Anas penelope*.

A sign of the times with modern communications meaning anyone close to the coast for a fly-past, always has the chance of connecting. A welcome county tick for many, with the last individual seen in the county being an eclipse male in September 1997 at Newbiggin. The sightings were accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

STATUS: Well-represented passage and winter visitor.

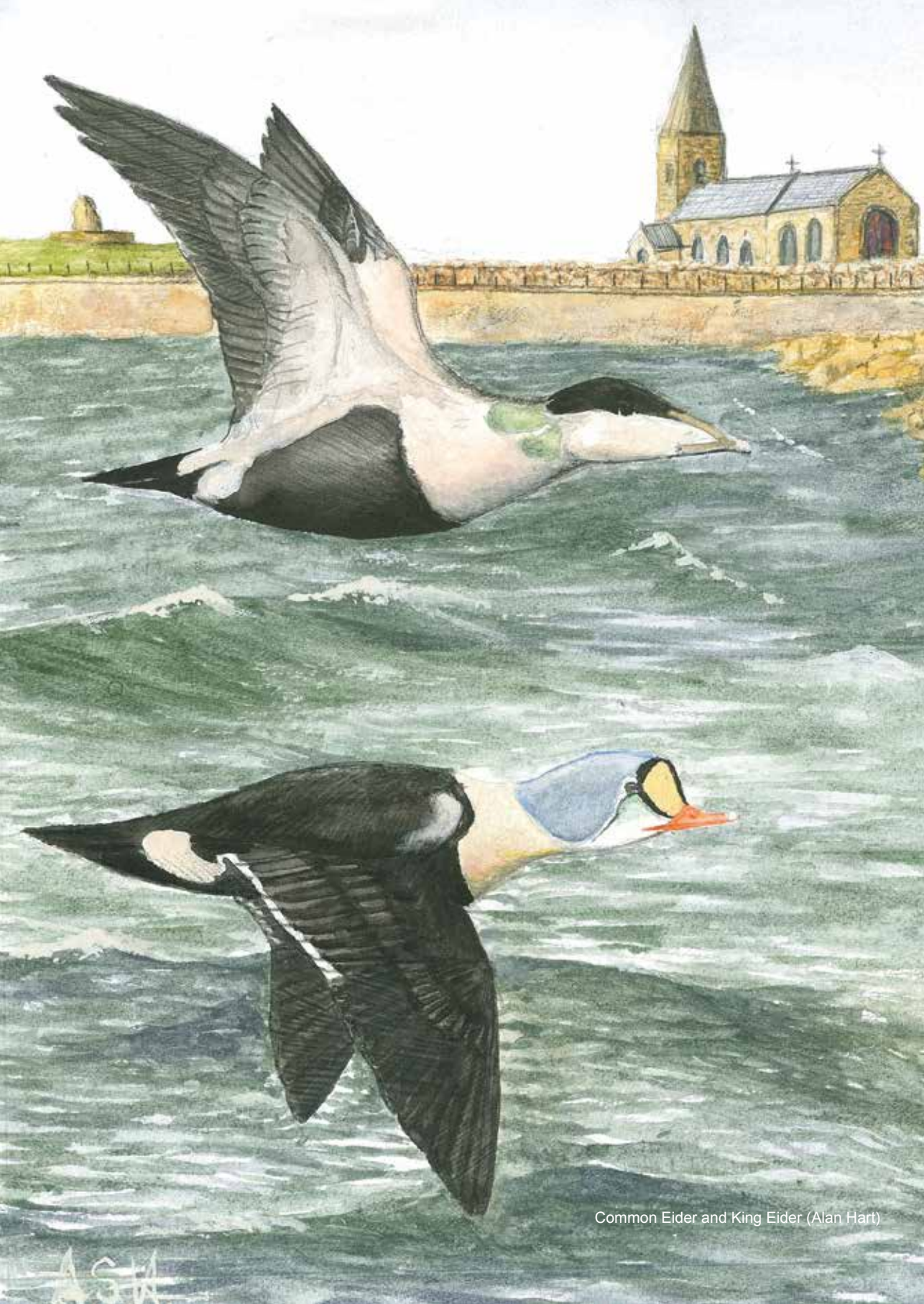
Peak monthly counts from Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay) were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
28	20	15	1	--	--	--	--	--	4	21	11

The favoured Stag Rocks (Bamburgh)-Budle Point area held the greatest numbers in the first quarter, with peaks of 35 in January, 60 in February and ca.100 (in three flocks) on 4th March (TD). Also in the north, 30 were at Goswick Sands and 30 were noted on a boat trip off Seahouses-Bamburgh-Ross in January, 20 were at Holy Island in February and 12 at Cheswick and two at Cocklawburn in March. Many of the above flocks contained a majority of drakes. Active display was noted at Holy Island on 14th February.

In April, 30 were at Stag Rocks on 3rd, one to two at Berwick North Shore and Holy Island and, in the south of the county, one to two were at Cullercoats and Seaton Sluice on single dates. One flew N at Seaton Sluice on 13th May.

There were no further reports until October, when singles flew N at Snab Point on 9th and the Farne Islands on 13th; singles were at Castle Island on 16th and Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) and QEII CP Lake



Common Eider and King Eider (Alan Hart)

ASH

on 17th, two flew N at Seaton Sluice on 20th, four were at Fenham Flats on 21st and one flew N at Newton Point on 22nd. Numbers rose in November, when a total of 58 flew N at Seaton Sluice, including 13 N on 28th, and 30 moved N and one S at Tynemouth. Three to 12 also flew N and five S at Cullercoats, Newbiggin and St Mary's. The Ross-Guile Point area attracted 25; 22 were at Budle Point, 21 at St Cuthbert's Island (Holy Island) included many displaying birds, ten to 15 were at Goswick and Newton Links and four to seven at Cheswick, the Farne Islands and Howick. One to four were also noted farther south off Brier Dene (Whitley Bay), Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Ladyburn Lake, Newbiggin and Snab Point and singles were at Bothal Pond, Castle Island and QEII CP Lake. Further inland, two were found at Branton GP and singles at Derwent Reservoir and Kielder Water.

Finally, in December, seven flew N at Seaton Sluice, numbers at Stag Rocks peaked at 87 on 27th, 15 were off Ross Back Sands, three to five at the Farne Islands, Football Hole, Howick-Boulmer and Whitley Bay and singles at Bothal Pond, Druridge Pools, Newbiggin and North Blyth. Farther inland, a drake was at Grindon Lough on 18th-19th.

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
9	--	18	--	--	--	5	--	158	--	1,039	575

Relatively low numbers in January-March involved peaks of 110 at Budle Point-Stag Rocks (Bamburgh), 92 at Cocklawburn, 50 at Amble and one to nine at Cocklawburn, Druridge Bay, East Chevington north pool, Ladyburn Lake, Low Newton, Meadow Haven (Berwick), Newbiggin, Seaton Sluice, Warkworth and Whitley Bay.

In April, 34-60 were at Cocklawburn, Holy Island and Stag Rocks and two on the freshwater Widdrington Moor Lake on 10th and, in May, 82 moved N at Seaton Sluice, 15 were at Cullernose Point and one to seven at four further coastal sites.

Northerly passage quickened during June, when 551 passed Seaton Sluice, including 435 on 29th (one of which was a melanistic bird with white wings); 400 flew N at Newbiggin on the same date. In July, a total of 1,957 flew N and 391 S at Seaton Sluice, including 875 N and 40 S on 5th. Smaller numbers flew N at five sites between Tynemouth-the Farne Islands. Offshore, flocks of 20-64 were noted off Berwick North Shore, East Chevington, the Farne Islands, Fenham Flats and Stag Rocks in June-July, when five to ten were at three sites and, more unusually, one was noted in the Tyne Estuary. In August, 535 flew N and 103 S at Seaton Sluice, including 215 N on 28th, 250 were off Druridge, 96 at Cocklawburn and 20 at North Blyth. The September total at Seaton Sluice was 1,034 N and 125 S, 112-161 moved N at Beadnell and the Farne Islands, 185 were off Cheswick and 42-90 off Blyth-Seaton Sluice and Druridge.

Passage was light in October, with 25-37 N at Cheswick and Hauxley, while Lindisfarne NNR held 1,039 on 13th (ACr), 229 were at Cheswick-Cocklawburn, 100 at Newbiggin and two visited Big Waters on 16th. Strong movement in November involved a total of 1,604 N and 212 S at Seaton Sluice, including 488 N on 28th, while 125-201 flew N and 67-86 S at Newbiggin and Tynemouth, and groups of 300-338 were off Cheswick-Goswick and East Chevington. In December, 98 flew N and 47 S at Seaton Sluice, 700 were at Goswick on 31st, with 156 at nearby Cocklawburn and 55 at North Blyth. Final-quarter counts of 12-15 came from Beadnell-Howick and Whitley Bay and one to seven were at eight further sites, with a duck much farther inland at Hallington Reservoir on 27th November.

Black Scoter *Melanitta americana*

STATUS: Extremely rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 2 / FIRST: 2011 / LAST: 2015

Any Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra* flock in winter is nowadays grilled for the possibility of another species lurking in the flock and keen eyes again revealed the presumably returning male, this time at Goswick on 29th December (RA *et al.*). It remained into February 2017 and was widely appreciated by many observers. As seaduck are long lived there seems every possibility that the same individual, first found in 2011, is still being relocated. The bullish nature of this individual is often revealed and it seems to dominate the flock. The record was accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee.

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

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

In January, a total of five flew N at Seaton Sluice on 6th-7th, when one to three flew S at Snab Point and St Mary's, and singles were off Boulmer, East Chevington, Embleton and Stag Rocks (Bamburgh), but much more unusual was a drake that visited Swallow Pond on 6th. In February, one to two flew N at Hadston Carrs, Seaton Sluice and Tynemouth on 15th and one was at Stag Rocks; singles were also at Stag Rocks on 2nd March and 6th April. One at the Farne Islands on 11th April was one of only three records from there between late March-early December; one of the poorest seasons on record.

The next report was of one off East Chevington on 5th June; and in July, singles flew N at Seaton Sluice, Tynemouth and Whitley Bay on three dates and two were at Howick-Boulmer. In August, one to two flew N at Newbiggin and Seaton Sluice on two dates and one was at Holy Island.

A total of nine moved N at Seaton Sluice in September, when five flew N at Beadnell and one to two N at Boulmer, the Farne Islands, Newbiggin and Tynemouth. In October, five moved N at Newbiggin and two to three N and two S at St Mary's and Tynemouth, four were off Cheswick Sands and one at Holy Island. More unusual was one at East Chevington north pool between 16th-23rd October. Stronger passage in November concerned 16 N and one S at Seaton Sluice and one to four N at Cullercoats, Newbiggin, St Mary's and Tynemouth. Also in November, six were at Newton Links (JGS) and one to two off Goswick and Seaton Sluice. In December, two flew N at Seaton Sluice, singles were at Low Newton and North Blyth and one lingered at North Shields Fish Quay between 3rd-31st.



Velvet Scoter - North Shields Fish Quay - December (Ian Fisher).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

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

BREEDING: Extremely rare. / FIRST BRED: 2010 / LAST BRED: 2016

Peak monthly counts from the Tweed Estuary were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
174	94	73	12	--	--	--	--	--	2	17	72

A count of 174 at Tweedmouth on 23rd January was the largest concentration noted during the year (MHu). East Chevington held respective monthly peaks of 90, 77 and 85 in the first quarter, when 41-60 were at Berwick North Shore, Castle Island, Grindon Lough and Widdrington Moor Lake and 20-33 at Big Waters, Bolam Lake, Druridge Pools and Killingworth and QEII CP Lakes. Groups of ten to 19 were also at Bakethin Reservoir, Beadnell Bay, the Blyth Estuary, Bothal Pond, Branton GP, Broomlee Lough, Caistron, Capheaton Lake, Hallington Reservoir, Hornccliffe and Swallow Pond, while five to nine were at Greenlee Lough, Hartburn Reservoir, Hauxley NR, Hedgeley GP, Ladyburn Lake, Marshall Meadows, Tyne Green (Hexham) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Display was noted at East Chevington, Grindon Lough and Killingworth Lake in February-March.

In April, four flew N at the Farne Islands on 17th, 55 were at East Chevington on 10th, 19 at Branton GP and Whittle Dene Reservoirs and six to 12 at Bothal Pond, Broomlee Lough, Caistron, Capheaton Lake, Castle Island, the Tweed Estuary and Widdrington Moor Lake. Most had dispersed by May, when singles were at Widdrington Moor Lake on 6th, Caistron on 9th and Cresswell Pond until 27th. Breeding took place at the same site as used in recent years and at least four breeding females were noted (two broods, 17 young in 2015):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young
North Northumberland	3	25 (9,8,8)

The first brood (eight young) was noted on 2nd May, declining to two young by 8th. Also in May, a female which bred in 2015 had nine young on 25th (later reduced to four), and a third brood of eight young on 16th fell to six young by 21st. The fourth female laid eggs but failed to incubate them. Three of the four breeding females were fitted with geo-loggers as part of a research project (PH). Up to two drakes were also present during May.

There were no June reports but three were at Widdrington Moor Lake on 25th July. In August, one flew N at Snab Point on 10th and, in September, six were at the breeding site. During August-September, one to two were at Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Hedgeley GP and Kielder Water.

Goldeneye - Branton GP - February (Mike Carr).



In October, one to five flew N at the Farne Islands, Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) and Tynemouth, four to seven were at Branton GP, Budle Bay, Colt Crag Reservoir, East Chevington and Whiteadder Point and one to three at ten further sites. The November total at Seaton Sluice was 226 N and 20 S, including 180 N between 2nd-8th, and 44-62 flew N at the Farne Islands and Tynemouth. Also in November, 108 gathered at East Chevington and 58 were at Castle Island. In December, 14 flew N at Seaton Sluice on 3rd, 104 were at East Chevington north pool, 51 on the River Tweed (Whiteadder Point-Coroner's Meadow) and 30-40 at Bolam Lake, Castle Island and New Water Haugh. The final two months also produced counts of 11-20 at Branton GP, Capheaton Lake, Colt Crag Reservoir, Derwent Reservoir, Football Hole, Grindon Lough, Kielder Water, Killingworth and QEII CP Lakes, West Ord and Whittle Dene Reservoirs; five to nine were at 12 further sites.

Smew *Mergellus albellus*

STATUS: Rare passage and winter visitor.

Single 'redheads' (perhaps involving just one or two mobile individuals) were at Big Waters, Gosforth Park NR, Holywell Pond, Killingworth Lake and Swallow Pond at various times during the opening quarter, being finally noted at Killingworth Lake on 29th March and Big Waters on 31st. One was also at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 11th-12th January. A duck was at Tughall pool briefly on 20th April.

An interesting seawatching record involved a 'redhead' flying N amongst a flock of seven Eiders *Somateria mollissima* at Newbiggin on 8th November. On the same day, a 'redhead' was found at Bolam Lake and remained there until 10th December.

Smew - Killingworth Lake - January (Jack Bucknall).





Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

STATUS: Well-represented passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Extremely rare. / FIRST BRED: 1975 / LAST BRED: 2016

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

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
9	6	41	15	15	29	17	21	20	16	54	15

Away from Lindisfarne NNR, peak counts between January-March involved 12-15 at the Blyth Estuary and East Chevington north pool and five to ten at the Aln Estuary, Beadnell-Howick, Druridge Pools, Ladyburn Lake, Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) and the Tweed Estuary. Three to four were also at Boulmer, Cresswell Pond, Lesbury, Spittal Bay, Warkworth and Widdrington Moor Lake and one to two at Berwick North Shore, Castle Island, the Farne Islands, Horncliffe, Low Newton, Seahouses-Beadnell, the Wansbeck Estuary and Whitley Bay. Display was noted at Budle Bay in February-March.

In April, three flew N and two S at Seaton Sluice, 11 were at the Blyth Estuary, three to six at the Aln Estuary, Boulmer, Castle Island, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, the Farne Islands, Hadston, Stag Rocks and the Tweed Estuary and one to two at seven further sites, including a drake on the River Wansbeck at Furnace Bridge. In May, four to five were at the Blyth Estuary and East Chevington and one at Druridge Pools.

Breeding was confirmed at the Farne Islands, the first time since 2013. Two pairs displayed on 20th May and, on 26th July, a duck emerged from vegetation accompanied by five ducklings. In addition, a pair with seven young were in Budle Bay on 25th July, but all young were missing by 12th August, presumed taken by a predator.

In June, seven flew N at the Farne Islands and two N at Seaton Sluice, and two were at the Blyth Estuary and the Farne Islands. Apart from the breeding records, there were no more July reports (away from Lindisfarne NNR) but in August, one to four flew N at Holy Island and Snab Point, and one to three were at Amble, Newton Point and Stag Rocks. In September, nine were between Beadnell-Howick and one to two at Boulmer, Druridge Bay and Ladyburn Lake.

Coastal passage in the final quarter involved four N at St Mary's in October and eight N and one S at Seaton Sluice in November. The highest annual count involved 54 at Lindisfarne NNR on 13th November (ACr); elsewhere, only moderate numbers were recorded, with peaks of 25-30 at Goswick and Ross-Guile Point and five to ten at Berwick North Shore, the Blyth Estuary, East Chevington, Druridge Pools, Newbiggin, Stag Rocks and the Wansbeck Estuary. Counts of three to four came from Boulmer-Alnmouth, Cheswick, Cresswell Pond and the Tweed Estuary, with one to two at nine further coastal/near-coastal sites, including Castle Island and Ladyburn and Widdrington Moor Lakes.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

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

BREEDING: Well-represented.

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

Month	Locality	Count
January	Tweed Estuary	22
February	Killingworth Lake	26
March	Newburn-Wylam	14
April	Horncliffe	21
May	New Water Haugh	92
June	Horncliffe	55
July	Tweed Estuary	182
August	Meadow Haven	148
September	Holy Island	228
October	Branton GP	25
November	Carham-Sprouston (River Tweed)	60
December	Whiteadder Point	24

Additional peak counts in the first quarter involved ten to 21 at Branton GP, Broomlee Lough, the River Tweed between A1-Gainslaw House and Whiteadder Water. Counts of three to nine came from Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield), Bolam Lake, Branton GP, Catcleugh Reservoir, Chirdon Bridge, Close House, Greenlee and Grindon Loughs, Hedgeley GP, Kielder Water, Kilham, Newcastle (Exhibition and Leazes Parks), Newsham Pond, Rothbury, Thrum Mill, Warden, Wark, Warkworth, West Ord, Whitley Bay and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

In April, one to two flew N and two S at the Farne Islands and Seaton Sluice, 20 were at the Tweed Estuary and seven to eight at Corbridge and New Water Haugh and, in May, five flew N at the Farne Islands, 92 at New Water Haugh consisted of 90% drakes, while 23 were at Horncliffe and six to 11 at Berwick Little Beach, Holy Island, the Tweed Estuary and Whiteadder Point.

Birds were recorded from a minimum of 57 widespread sites between April-July (53 sites in 2015). A total of four nests (six in 2015) were located in the Tarsel/Redesdale study area, 38 eggs were laid (55 in 2015), of which 34 fledged (all fledged in 2015). An additional three clutches were found mixed with Mandarin *Aix galericulata* clutches (MD). At the Kielder study area, six monitored nests contained 41 eggs, of which 38 young fledged (MD). Away from these core areas, broods were noted at nine sites in May-August (six in 2015), with most in June-July, with the first brood (two young) at Low Angerton on 8th May. Full details were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods/crèches	No. of young
Low Angerton	2	5
Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh)	1	8
Bywell Bridge	1	7
Castle Island	1	6
Wansbeck Estuary	1	6
Blyth Estuary	1	4
Derwent Reservoir	1	4
Harthope Valley	1	3
Langleeftord	1	1

Light coastal movement at Seaton Sluice involved four N in June and two N and eight S in July. Peak counts from June-August, in addition to those in the table above, involved 150 at Holy Island in July (consisting mainly of full-winged juveniles), 92-143 at Berwick North Shore and Spittal-Cocklawburn, 50-76 at Amble, the Blyth Estuary and New Water Haugh and 22-46 at Budle Bay, Hauxley and the River Tweed-Whiteadder Water. Counts of seven to 16 came from seven further localities. In September, two flew N and 12 S at Seaton Sluice and 228 were at Holy Island (Sandham Bay) on 10th (SR/AH), while 60 were at Budle Point,

22-39 at Branton GP and the Tweed Estuary and 12-17 at Bedlington-Blyth, Cocklawburn, Longhoughton Steel and Whiteadder Water.

Light coastal movement in the final quarter involved three N and one S in November and two N in December at Seaton Sluice, and four S at Newbiggin in December. Counts, in addition to those in the table above, involved ten to 17 at the Blyth Estuary, Broomlee Lough, Close House, Holy Island, Killingworth Lake, New Water Haugh, Thrum Mill and Whiteadder Water and five to nine at Airy Holm Reservoir, Alnmouth, Berwick, Bolam Lake, Castle Island, Foxton Bends, Warden and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*

STATUS: Rare visitor / LAST RECORD: 2014

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

A drake was at Cresswell Pond on 22nd-23rd May (MSH *et al.*); only the second record since 2011 following the UK cull.

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

It was again another poor year for this species. The first calling bird was heard in a cereal field north of Big Waters on 15th May. Singles were also heard at Cornhill-on-Tweed on 20th and Swinhoe on 21st. In the Cheviots, two were at Middleton Hall and a single in the Harthope Valley on 28th May. No further birds were reported until July, when two were calling at Christon Bank on 12th, with a single heard there on 11th and 14th. Two were also calling at Warenton on 14th, with one present on 16th, and one was heard at Lowick on 15th, with two calling on 16th-17th. In the second half of July, singles were heard at the Long Nanny, Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal), Newton and Old Mousen, with one flushed at Mill Farm (Tweedmouth). Others were heard at Lucker during the summer. One at Tughall on 10th August was observed crossing the road.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

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

BREEDING: Uncommon.

The peak counts in the first quarter were 21 at Ridley Common in March, 14 at Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene) in February and eight at Hedgeley and Kimmer Lough in January and Fell House Farm (Plenmeller Common) in February. Up to seven were reported from eight other localities.

The peak breeding season counts were 40+ in the Carey Burn area in May and 15 between Chatton and Holburn in June. Up to nine were noted at eight further localities, although no confirmed breeding records were received.

In the final four months, 47 were at Derwent Reservoir in September (GT), with a similar high count in the Upper Breamish Valley, 35 were at Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay) in October and at Earle in November, when 20 were at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) and four in the Harthope Valley. In December, 17 were at Barhaugh Burn and Middle Stobswood and 11 at Preston Tower. One to ten were noted at seven further localities.

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

STATUS: Common resident.

BREEDING: Common.

In January, an intrepid observer had a very high count of ca.180 in thick snow at Simonside on 15th (AJH). In February, the peak count was 30 at Allendale and Coldcleugh (Hawsen Burn) and in March the maximum counts were 27 at Hedgehope and 26 in the Carrshield area. Up to 23 were recorded at 17 further localities during the first quarter, predominantly in the North Pennines.

During the breeding season (April-July) at least 100 were on the moors at Harwood Shield in April, 80 at Coalcleugh in July and, in May, 40+ on Allendale Common and 30+ on Swinhope Moor. Up to ten birds were

reported from seven other localities, mainly in the North Pennines, although no reports were received of confirmed breeding. In August, the only record was of 15 on Plenmeller Common.

In the final four months of the year, the peak counts were 75 on Blanchland Moor in September and 33 at Hedgehope and 26 on Plenmeller Common in October.

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

STATUS: Well-represented resident.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

The North Pennines remain the stronghold for this species. In the first quarter, the peak counts were 12 males at Swinhope Shield in March (SJH), with ten there in February, and eight at Derwent Reservoir and Knockshield in February; one to seven were noted at eight other localities in the North Pennines.

During the breeding season (April-June) the peak counts were three displaying pairs at Westburnhope (Hexhamshire Common) and five at Derwent Reservoir in April. One to three were noted at four other localities.

Few records were received in the second half of the year with a peak of four at Spartylea in December. One to two were noted at six other locations, all in the North Pennines.



Black Grouse - High Knockshield - January (Tim Dean).

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

STATUS: Common resident.

BREEDING: Common, although declining in some areas.

In 2016, this species continued to be well-reported. In January, the peak counts were 16 at Chugdon Wood (Ellington), 14 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), 13 at Laverock Hall Farm (Blyth) and 12 at Holywell Pond. In February, 21 were at Goswick Farm (BWG) and, in March, 16 (eight pairs) were at Beal Point (Lindisfarne NNR). Up to ten were noted at 31 further localities predominantly on the coast and in the south east.

The peak counts during the breeding season were 11 at Backworth and West Hartford in August, with up to four reported from 42 other widespread localities, mainly in the south east. Family parties were reported from Big Waters, Brenkley, Chugdon Wood (Ellington), Heatheridge, Holy Island (where breeding is rare) and Newbiggin.

In the final four months of the year, the peak counts were 14 at Chugdon Wood in September and October, 19 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs, 18 at East Holywell, 14 at Beal and 12 at North Highmoor, Old Mousen and Stobswood in October, and 16 in the Callerton subsidence area and at Pegswood in December. One to 11 were noted at 29 further localities.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

STATUS: Common resident.

BREEDING: Common.

The under-recording of this species continued in 2016. In the first quarter, the peak counts were 35 at Mitford in February and 12 at Fawcett Hill (Hexham) and ten at Horton Grange (Blagdon) in March. Six, including a melanistic female, fed in a Fulbeck (Morpeth) garden in February.

At Blagdon Hall, 11 were present in April and eight were at Acomb. In May, eight were at feeders at Nunnykirk and three nests with eggs were found at Holywell Dene.

Higher counts were recorded in the second half of the year, with 50 in the Upper Breamish Valley in September (PDR), 33 at Derwent Reservoir in December, 30 at Simonburn in September and 25 in the Salters Lane area of Gosforth in August.

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

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

Light passage was noted in the first quarter. On 4th January, the peak movement at Seaton Sluice was five N and 17 S (in two hours), whilst in March 15 flew N and ten S (in a total of 19 hours). The largest offshore gatherings were 17 at Snab Point and 12 at Goswick Sands in January, when ten were noted from a boat trip in the Seahouses-Bamburgh-Ross area, and 12 off Budle Point and ten off Cresswell in February. The peak March count was just six at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh). During this period, one to seven were noted at 15 other coastal locations.

April passage was light, with birds noted at the Farne Islands on 13 dates, and six N and six S at Seaton Sluice from 4th-18th. The peak coastal counts were eight at Cocklawburn and three at Meadow Haven (Berwick). Passage numbers remained low in May, with 16 N (in 28 hours) at Seaton Sluice, the majority occurring from 24th-27th. During this period, three flew N and two S at St Mary's and birds were noted on four dates at the Farne Islands. The peak coastal count was three at Snab Point, with one to two at many other coastal locations. In June, eight flew N and two S (in 20 hours) at Seaton Sluice. Three in breeding plumage flew N at Newbiggin on 4th, two flew N at St Mary's on 17th and singles were noted at East Chevington, the Farne Islands and Snab Point. Four flew N at Seaton Sluice from 1st-8th July, where three flew N and five S (in 33 hours) in August, when singles were noted at four other coastal locations.

Numbers increased significantly in September, when passage was well above the average at Seaton Sluice, with 43 N and 188 S (in 70 hours). At Newbiggin, 11 flew S on 18th, where ten were noted the previous day. During the coastal WeBS count, 12 were noted from Howick-Boulmer, with one to six at many other coastal localities. In October, 17 flew S at Newton Links on 2nd, where 17 flew S and three N on 22nd. Passing birds were noted on 11 dates at the Farne Islands. The most significant offshore concentration was 40+ birds between Cocklawburn Beach-Cheswick Sands on 30th (PHi/SSc), with nine noted on the WeBS count from Chevington-Cresswell and one to eight at many other coastal locations.

Passage at Seaton Sluice was above average in November, with 121 N and 90 S. On 8th, 27 flew past St Mary's. At Newbiggin, 26 flew N (in 90 minutes) on 21st and 17 passed (in 2 hours 35 minutes) on 27th. Birds were noted on 17 dates at the Farne Islands, with a peak count of 23 N on 6th. Offshore peak counts were 29 at Druridge Links on 18th, 17 at Cheswick on 3rd, 16 at Newton Links on 27th and 15 at Goswick. One to eight were reported at widespread locations along the coast. The December total for Seaton Sluice was 11 N and 25 S. Offshore peak counts were 23 at Newton Links on 28th, 17 at Lindisfarne NNR, 14 in the Embleton area, ten at Cocklawburn and eight between the Tyne Estuary piers; one to five were reported widely along the coast.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

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

In January, one flew S at Beadnell Bay on 1st, two were noted at Holy Island on 31st and singles at Beadnell, Berwick, Newbiggin, Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay), Snab Point and Stag Rocks (Bamburgh). Two were offshore at Budle Point on 26th February, with singles during the month at Holy Island and Low Newton. In March, only singles were noted, with one N at Castle Point (Holy Island) on 10th and others at Cresswell, Guile Point (Lindisfarne NNR), Seaton Sluice and the Tweed Estuary.

A winter-plumaged bird flew N at the Farne Islands on 19th April and, unusually, a summer-plumaged adult was in Druridge Bay on 17th July.

No more were seen until 25th September, when one was on the sea at Druridge Bay. All October records came from the north of the county. A single flew N at the Farne Islands on 20th October. Two were in a mixed raft of birds between Cocklawburn-Cheswick on 30th, with singles in the Lindisfarne NNR area on 21st, 24th and 27th. At Seaton Sluice, seven flew N during November and at the Farne Islands singles flew N on 21st and 24th. Four were noted between Spittal-Cocklawburn during a WeBS count on 10th November (MHu), with singles at seven other localities. The only December record involved one flying S at Seaton Sluice on 7th.

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

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

In January, passage birds included two S, close inshore in Druridge Bay, on 10th, two S at Birling Links (Warkworth) on 15th and singles N at Seaton Sluice on 2nd and Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 5th. The bird first seen in late December 2015 remained at Widdrington Moor Lake until at least 9th January. One circled Holywell Pond on 10th before flying off S. Singles were also seen at Holy Island Harbour, Ross Back Sands, during a 'Serenity' boat trip off Seahouses and at Stag Rocks. In February, singles flew N at St Mary's and Hadston Carrs on 15th and others were at Lindisfarne on 21st, in Budle Bay on 24th and off Budle Point on 26th. The March Lindisfarne NNR WeBS Count on 14th noted five, while the only other record of the month was a single at Stag Rocks on 14th.

One flew N at the Farne Islands on 10th April. In May, at Seaton Sluice, four flew N from 12th-14th and two flew N together on 25th, all of which were in summer plumage. One to two were also seen flying N at the Farne Islands, Newbiggin and St Mary's on several dates during the month. A single was seen off Coquet Island on 7th June. One flew N at St Mary's on 6th July and two were at the East Chevington Burn mouth on 3rd. Two were at Lindisfarne NNR on 21st August.

Numbers increased in September, with six in Druridge on 9th, two between Howick-Boulmer and one at Alnmouth. Singles flew N at the Farne Islands on 2nd (with singles recorded there on four subsequent dates) and one moved S at Seaton Sluice on 29th. In October, two flew S at the Farne Islands on 30th and singles were noted passing three coastal locations, including one heading SW inland at Newbiggin on 29th. Three winter-plumaged birds were found in a diver flock in the Cocklawburn-Cheswick area on 30th and two, possibly three, were at Alnmouth on 28th.

Significant passage in November involved 12 N at the Farne Islands on 6th (FIR; with records on nine further dates), ten N and one S at Seaton Sluice, six N at Snab Point and one to three at many other coastal localities, including one of two at Cheswick Sands on 3rd still in partial summer plumage. A first-winter bird was well inland at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 23rd. Numbers were lower in December, with two N and two S at Seaton Sluice, four at Stag Rocks on 27th and singles at the Farne Islands and Lindisfarne NNR.

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

STATUS: Well-represented resident and common passage visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

Significant passage was noted at Seaton Sluice in early January, with 120 S (in one hour) on 2nd and 75 S (in three hours) on 6th; 119 were also at Marshall Meadows (Berwick) on 20th. Birds started to return to breeding colonies with 97 (63 on ledges) between Howick-Dunstanburgh on 16th, 42, mostly in pairs, on the

cliff at Holy Island on 1st, 12 pairs at Marshall Meadows on 20th, 13 at Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) on 17th and eight flying on to cliffs at Inner Farne on 9th. A boat trip around the Farne Islands on 17th noted a minimum of 30. In February, 56 were at Beadnell, 27 (including ten pairs) were at Tynemouth Priory cliffs on 27th, six pairs were at Dunstanburgh Castle cliffs on 25th and 13 were again at Rockcliffe. In March, the peak count at Old Hartley cliffs was ten on 14th with one to two noted at four other localities.

Notable passage occurred at Berwick Pier in April, with 140 (per hour) N on 26th. At breeding sites, 20 pairs were at Whitley Bay cliffs, four pairs on ledges at Snab Point and Dunstanburgh Castle and three pairs at Cullercoats. Significant passage occurred on 25th May, when 240 moved N (in three hours) at Seaton Sluice, dozens flew N at Newbiggin and 32 at St Mary's, where 15 were noted on 30th; 40 were also at Cullernose Point on 28th-29th. In June, the peak passage at Seaton Sluice was 160 N (in four hours) on 2nd.

At the Farne Islands, there was a welcome increase in breeding pairs to 244 (209 pairs in 2015), the first chick was noted on 6th July and 94 chicks fledged from 168 monitored nests, giving a productivity rate of 0.56 (FIR). At Coquet Island, 42 pairs nested (down from 54 pairs in 2015), although productivity was relatively high with 0.74 chicks fledged per pair (RSPB).

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

Locality	No. of AON 2016	No. of AON 2015
Farne Islands	244	209
Coquet Island	42 (31 young)	54 (37 young)
Needles Eye (Berwick)	22	12
Dunstanburgh Castle cliffs	12 (3 young)	7 (1 young)
Old Hartley	13 (2/3 young)	20 (4 young)
Whitley Bay (High Point cliffs)	7 (3 young)	7 (2 young)
Whitley Bay (Brown's Bay)	1 (1 young)	3 (1 young)
Tynemouth cliffs	39 (minimum 12)	22 (17 young)

No further significant movement was noted until 4th September produced 300 at Boulmer, 66 N (in two hours ten minutes) at Newbiggin and 38 N (in one hour) at St Mary's. Coastal counts included 14 at Dunstanburgh on 5th and Spittal Point on 12th, and an unusual inland sighting involved one circling Swallow Pond on 3rd. The sole October record was of two 'blue phase' birds at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 14th. In November, 33 moved N (in one hour) at Snab Point on 22nd and birds began to return to nests on the Farne Islands by the end of the month. On 20th December, 21 flew S (in one hour 30 minutes) at Seaton Sluice, whilst 90 were offshore at Holy Island on 19th and 26 were at Howick cliffs on 18th, with two to three returning to several other breeding locations.

Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris borealis*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / FIRST RECORD: 1962 / LAST RECORD: 2014

Once seen past Whitburn (Co. Durham) on 5th September at 11:10hrs, observers were in place along the coast to view as it moved N. The first documented records in Northumberland were off Newbiggin at 11:58hrs (ADMc *et al.*) and then past Hauxley at 12:08hrs (IF), with a further documented sighting through Staple Sound (Farne Islands) at 12:54hrs (TH *et al.*). There were apparently other sightings of the same individual past Cresswell and Beadnell Point, but no documentation was received.

Great Shearwater *Puffinus gravis*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / FIRST RECORD: 1936 / LAST RECORD: 2015

In similar circumstances to the Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris borealis*, two flew N past Whitburn at 16:05hrs and 16:55hrs on 17th September, so observers were in place to watch them pass along our coast. The first individual was seen off Seaton Sluice at 16:30hrs (MHp). The second individual was picked up at 17:30hrs at St Mary's, also moving N (AC). Both individuals were noted off Newbiggin, with one at 16:55hrs, which hung around offshore for a while, and another at 17:20hrs, which passed straight through (JGS *et al.*). One of the birds was then noted from Inner Farne flying through Staple Sound (Farne Islands) at 18:48hrs (LBI/THi).

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

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

As in 2015, numbers of this ocean wanderer were low. None were noted until August, when six flew N (in one hour) at Snab Point on 9th, followed by three N there (in two hours) on 10th, with singles at four other localities. Numbers increased in September, especially on 17th, when a significant N movement occurred with 174 at Boulmer (ME), 140 (in two hours ten minutes) at Newbiggin, 113 at the Farne Islands and 33 at Seaton Sluice. Five were seen during a North Sea pelagic trip on 18th. During the rest of the month no more than five flying N were reported at four locations.

Few were noted in October, apart from 2nd, when 17 flew N at Newton Links, 14 at Seaton Sluice, 11 at the Farne Islands and Newbiggin and five at St Mary's. The remainder of the month produced only one to three at Boulmer, Snab Point and Newton Links. Unexpected numbers moved N in November, when northerly winds on 6th produced 31 at Newbiggin, 22 at Seaton Sluice (surpassing by a wide margin, the previous peak November count there of two) and ten at Boulmer and the Farne Islands. Singles also flew N at the Farne Islands on 2nd, 5th and 21st and at Snab Point on 22nd.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

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

No birds were seen until May when, at Seaton Sluice, a total of 111 N and two S were recorded (in 28 hours), the majority on 12th-14th and 24th-27th. At Snab Point, 13 flew N (in one hour) on 24th, with nine noted there on 26th. On 14th, six flew N at Tynemouth, four at Snab Point, three at Cullercoats and one at the Farne Islands. Six flew N at Newton Links on 25th and one to two were noted on five further dates at Boulmer, Druridge Bay, Holy Island and Stag Rocks (Bamburgh). In June, passage was low for this time of year, with 62 N (in one hour 30 minutes) at Newbiggin on 16th, 43 N at Seaton Sluice from 1st-5th, 32 N at the Farne Islands on 25th, 15 N at Annstead Point on 2nd and 13 N at Druridge Bay on 26th. Elsewhere, only singles were noted.

As in July 2015, the monthly total at Seaton Sluice of 308 N and 58 S was well below the average for the month; this included 132 N (in three hours) on 5th. At Stag Rocks, 13 flew N on 15th, with only single-figure counts elsewhere. On 9th August, 201 flew N (in one hour) at Snab Point, with 44 N there (in two hours) the following day and eight S on 28th. Newbiggin recorded 35 N on 5th and 33 N on 29th. Seaton Sluice reported 'an extremely low total for the month' of 30 N and 33 S (in 33 hours of seawatching). On 31st, 14 were noted at St Mary's.

The largest movement of the year was recorded on 17th September, with 315 N (in three hours) at Seaton Sluice (SSWT), 150 N (in two hours ten minutes) at Newbiggin, 113 N at Boulmer and 63 at the Farne Islands. Only a further 35 N and nine S were recorded during the rest of the month at Seaton Sluice. A pelagic trip from Whitley Bay-Newbiggin on 18th produced 214 N in groups of one to three; elsewhere, 31 flew N at Tynemouth (in two hours 30 minutes) on 4th and 24 flew N at Newbiggin on 19th, with one to eight noted at five further localities. The only double-figure count in October was 12 N at Newbiggin on 2nd, when eight were at Newton Links; one to two were noted at several other locations during the month. In November, two flew N at Seaton Sluice on 6th, one N at the Farne Islands on 21st and another single N at Seaton Sluice on 22nd; the same date and location as the final bird of 2015.

Balearic Shearwater *Puffinus mauretanicus*

STATUS: Uncommon visitor. / FIRST RECORD: 1860 / LAST RECORD: 2015

The now regular northerly movement commenced on 25th August, with one past Newbiggin (JGS). In September, a single passed N through Seaton Sluice on 8th (MHP), with a dark individual close inshore past Newbiggin on 17th (JGS). A paler bird was also seen the same evening past Seaton Sluice (MHP) and then moving N off Boulmer (ME). Finally, there were late records of two through Staple Sound (Farne Islands) on 6th November; one moved N in the morning and another in the afternoon (ET/THi); the latter bird had also been seen previously, moving N, off Boulmer (ME). There was one further claim but no documentation was received.

Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

STATUS: Uncommon on passage in summer and autumn, rarely seen from land and possibly overlooked. A single was feeding off Longstone (Farne Islands) on 2nd June, with another feeding low over the sea at Seaton Sluice on 12th July before moving off N. Back at the Farne Islands, five were trapped and ringed on 15th July (FIR) and a single on 19th July. Finally, one flew N past Church Point (Newbiggin) on 6th October.

Leach’s Petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / FIRST RECORD: 1828 / LAST RECORD: 2015
A fascinating record involved a bird ringed at the Farne Islands in 2014, which was recaptured on Inner Farne on 20th (ET *et al.*) and then, astonishingly, captured again at Druridge on 30th (JF/IDR). There is always the intriguing possibility that it is to be found each year offshore, but only seen when captured.

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

STATUS: Abundant passage and non-breeding summer visitor, uncommon in winter.
Passage was very light in January, with five N and 23 S at Seaton Sluice from 2nd-7th. The first significant movement of the year occurred on 28th February, when 150 adults flew N at Holy Island. Increased movement in March saw 180 N (in one hour) at Seaton Sluice on 9th, and 170 N (in two hours) there on 5th, plus 30 S at Berwick on 18th and three to ten at several other locations.
Significant passage occurred in April, with 1,593 moving N (in one hour) at the Farne Islands on 24th and 1,200 (per hour) N at Berwick Pier on 26th. Other high counts included 675 adults N at Seaton Sluice on 16th, 200 N at Cullernose Point on 8th, 80 at Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) on 24th, 57 N at Snab Point on 22nd and 40 N at Newton Point on 8th. Significant movement continued into May, with 630 (per hour) N at Berwick Pier on 25th and a maximum count of 160 N (in one hour) at Seaton Sluice on 27th. Up to 70 were also noted flying N at East Chevington, Newbiggin, Snab Point and St Mary’s. The only sizeable counts in the period June-August came from Seaton Sluice, with 345 N (in two hours) on 1st June, and similar numbers over the following three days, 200 (per hour) on 14th July and 70 N and 45 S on 29th August. Also noteworthy was a single adult on rocks and cliffs at Inner Farne (Farne Islands) on 7th-8th June.
September started well, with 900 N (in two hours) at Seaton Sluice on 2nd before the most significant passage of the year occurred on 4th, when northerly movement included 2,000 at Boulmer (ME), 1,700 (in five hours) at Seaton Sluice, 442 (in two hours) at Newbiggin and 153 (in one hour) at St Mary’s. Numbers were lower in October, with passage counts of 1,000 N (per hour) at Newton Links on 2nd, 570 S (per hour) at Berwick Pier on 23rd, 49 N (in one hour) at Newbiggin on 10th and 30 N (in ten minutes) at Hauxley on 22nd, together with feeding parties of 200 at Bamburgh Wynding on 11th, 60, mainly juveniles, off Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) on 13th and 50 fishing in Budle Bay on 6th.
Large numbers were seen in November at Seaton Sluice, with a monthly total of 1,166 N and 79 S (in 55 hours), including a peak day count of 310 N on 6th, when 360 N (per hour) were also recorded at Berwick Pier and 40+ at St Mary’s. Very few were noted in December, with a total of 33 N and four S at Seaton Sluice and only one to five at other coastal locations.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

STATUS: Well-represented resident and winter visitor.
BREEDING: Well-represented.
Peak monthly counts at favoured coastal sites were as follows (DMT/STH/LJM *et al.*):

Locality	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lindisfarne NNR	31	32	29	20	12	31	32	22	18	45	12	26
Coquet Estuary	-	6	-	-	-	-	40	64	-	-	-	-
Blyth Harbour	46	42	37	6	10	9	46	17	137	63	57	69
Tyne Estuary	86	65	20	15	6	9	19	45	62	45	45	119

In addition to the main roosts tabulated above, the peak coastal counts in the first quarter were 25 at St Mary's, 15 at Berwick North Shore and Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) and 12 along the stretch from Seahouses-Beadnell. Inland, 16 were at Derwent Reservoir and 14 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs. One to ten were noted from 19 further coastal waters and 31 inland locations, including one being chased repeatedly by an angler in a rowing boat at Newcastle (Leazes Park) on 1st March!

In April, the peak counts, many from WeBS visits, were 53 at New Water Haugh (River Tweed), 30 along the River Tweed from A1 bypass-Gainsford House, 22 at St Mary's, 13 on the coastal stretch from Seahouses-Beadnell and 11 at Berwick North Shore. May peak counts were 16 at Berwick North Shore and 12 at the Tweed Estuary and Meadow Haven (Berwick); whilst, in June, 51 were between Castle Island-River Wansbeck mouth, 18 at East Chevington and 12 at St Mary's. In April-June, one to ten were noted at a further 11 coastal and 14 inland localities.

At the Farne Islands, there was a welcome increase to 96 breeding pairs (81 in 2015); still only a third of the total 30 years ago (FIR).

Light movement was recorded at Seaton Sluice in July, with a typical count of 24 N and 14 S (in three hours) on 5th. The peak counts were 72 at Castle Island, 60 at East Chevington, 41 in the Wansbeck Estuary and 16-30 at Meadow Haven, Newbiggin, Seahouses-Beadnell, Spittal-Cocklawburn, the Tweed Estuary and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. In August, in addition to the main roosts, 128 were at Castle Island on 22nd, 32 at Berwick North Shore and 15-30 at Derwent Reservoir, East Chevington, Newbiggin-Cambois, Seahouses-Beadnell and St Mary's; in the period July-August, one to 14 were noted at ten further localities. In September, 137 were counted in the Blyth Harbour roost on 7th (STH) and peak passage at Seaton Sluice occurred on 30th, when ten flew N and 40 S; elsewhere, 60 were at Castle Island, 57 at East Chevington, 50 in the Newbiggin area, 37 in the Tweed Estuary, 35 from Seahouses-Beadnell, 31 at Derwent Reservoir and one to 18 at 12 further coastal and 21 inland localities.

In the final quarter, in addition to those tabulated above, 75 were off Berwick Pier on 30th October, 52 at Norham on 3rd December, 46 in the Tweed Estuary, 37-39 at Berwick North Shore, Spittal and St Mary's and one to 25 at a further 15 coastal and 36 inland localities. Unusual records involved two flying around Exhibition Park Lake (Newcastle) on 5th October and one that landed in a winter wheat field at Ancroft in December.

'Continental Cormorant' *P. c. sinensis*

STATUS: Uncommon winter visitor.

In January, singles were noted at Holywell Pond on 9th and on the River North Tyne at Wark on 17th. One was at QEII CP on 4th February, with two at North Shields Fish Quay on 10th. In April, an immature was at Holywell Pond on 21st.

No further birds were seen until 28th July, when two immatures were present in the Blyth Estuary. Three, including two juveniles, were at the western end of Derwent Reservoir on 3rd August (PRM) and an adult was at Cresswell Pond on 17th November.

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

STATUS: Common resident and well-represented passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

Light passage at Seaton Sluice in the first quarter involved ten S from 2nd-6th January, two N on 15th February and three N from 8th-9th March (the latter from a total of 19 hours of seawatching for the month). Elsewhere, the Meadow Haven (Berwick) roost held 19 on 24th January, ten were at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 13th January, nine at Berwick North Shore on 18th February and one to eight at many other coastal localities.

During April, only one was noted flying N at Seaton Sluice, three pairs were at Dunstanburgh Castle on 17th and five were seen on the coastal stretch from Spittal-Cocklawburn and at Lindisfarne NNR. In May, six flew N at Seaton Sluice from 24th-26th, ten were at Berwick North Shore on 3rd and seven at Meadow Haven on 1st. At Seaton Sluice, three flew N on 5th June. Eight were noted on the coastal stretch from Budle Point-Seahouses.

On the Farne Islands, 688 pairs nested (720 in 2015). The first egg was discovered on 27th March, the first chicks on 1st May and fledglings from mid-June. The breeding population has now halved in 15 years

and productivity at 1.19 was again poor (FIR). Elsewhere, two nests were found at both Dunstanburgh and Needles Eye (Berwick).

Numbers away from breeding sites increased in July, with 36 at the Meadow Haven roost on 31st, 14 at Berwick North Shore, 12 between Seahouses-Beadnell and four to eight were at two further coastal localities. During August, small numbers started to appear at Seaton Sluice from 19th, with a maximum count of 16 N and six S on 28th. In the Berwick area, 30 were at North Shore on 16th and 14 at the Meadow Haven roost on 3rd. At Seaton Sluice in September, birds were reported on most days, with a peak count of eight N on 17th; similar numbers to August were at Berwick and one to nine were reported at nine further localities.

The highest count in the final quarter (and for the year) came from Stag Rocks, where a long line of at least 406 was noted offshore on 31st October (BRS). The only significant movement at Seaton Sluice involved 24 S (in one hour) on 24th November, when one leucistic bird flew past Beacon Point (Newbiggin). Birds remained in the Berwick area to the year end and the peak site counts were 25 at Little Beach on 4th November, 22 at Meadow Haven on 27th October and 17 at North Shore on 14th December. One to eight were noted at many other coastal locations in the final quarter.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

STATUS: Uncommon winter visitor, rare in summer.

BREEDING: Historical. / LAST BRED: 1956

An excellent year for the species began with a single seen at Gosforth Park NR on three dates in January, with two present in February-March and one remaining until mid-April. Elsewhere, one was seen flying from East Chevington north pool into the reedbed on the south pool on 8th January and stalking prey at East Chevington on 12th February.

One returned to Gosforth Park NR on 7th July but remained elusive there during the month and throughout August. However, by the end of September, two, and possibly three, birds were present at this site. Numbers increased here during October, with a minimum of four, and possibly, five birds present by the end of the month; the highest count in Northumberland since at least 1956 (NHSN/AJ/TW/GPK). Elsewhere, one provided prolonged views at St Mary's Wetland on 18th, a possible first record here, and one was at East Chevington on 30th. At least two were present at Gosforth Park NR throughout November, with singles creeping through the reeds close to the hide at Cresswell Pond on 1st and at East Chevington north pool on two dates. At Gosforth Park NR, numbers increased to three on 13th December, with two birds often showing well fighting and squawking at times. The bird at East Chevington, seen the previous month, remained throughout December.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

STATUS: Uncommon resident and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Extremely rare. / FIRST BRED: 2014 / LAST BRED: 2015

Numbers present in the county continued to rise in 2016. In January, eight were at Lindisfarne NNR, seven in the Castle Island/Wansbeck Estuary and four in the Shankhouse Bridge/Horton Burn area (Cramlington). The February peak count was lower, at three in Budle Bay and roosting at Warkworth. In March, five were at Lindisfarne NNR. One to two were noted at 23 localities, mainly in the south east and on the coast, in the first quarter.

In April, four were at Cresswell Pond and three at Lindisfarne NNR; whilst, in May, five were at Castle Island. Eight were at Fenham Flats in June, with numbers at Castle Island increasing to seven and three birds returning to Budle Bay. One to three were seen at more than 15 further localities during the quarter, including a first record from Howdon Wetland. Breeding was strongly suspected again in the Druridge Bay area but was not confirmed and a pair attempted to breed nearby.

Numbers further increased in July, with 13 at Lindisfarne NNR and up to ten present at Castle Island, one of which was ringed as a nestling at North Cotes (Lincolnshire) in 2015. In August, numbers at Fenham Flats peaked at 18, 17 were at Cresswell Pond, 15 were seen flying to roost over Warkworth and 13 were at Castle Island. Counts continued to increase into September, with 22 at Cresswell Pond on 7th equaling the county record count (TB); 21 were at Fenham-le-Moor, 13 at Castle Island and seven on the River Blyth between Furnace Bridge-Kitty Brewster. One to six were noted from 15 further localities during the period.

The Lindisfarne WeBS count in October again produced a total of 21; otherwise numbers reduced in the final quarter, with a peak count of ten at Castle Island on 9th October, six at Cresswell Pond in October and one to five at a minimum of 20 further locations, including first-ever sightings from two sites in the Cramlington area and a first sighting by the observer at Prestwick Carr.

Great White Egret *Ardea alba*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / FIRST RECORD: 1977 / LAST RECORD: 2015

Increasingly regular in the county, the first sighting was typically in March, with one at Backworth on 13th (CGK). It flew over heading towards Holywell and comprises the second earliest record for the county, only beaten by one at Cresswell on 6th February 2015. Probably the same individual was relocated at Bothal Pond from 14th-18th March and was widely viewed (TD/IF *et al.*).

Next came a sighting at Alnmouth on 6th April, where one was seen from the Duchess Bridge (TAC). The next spring record was at Druridge Pools, where a fine summer-plumaged individual was seen flying in from the north and landing on 13th May (TRD *et al.*). It obviously found conditions to its liking as it stayed through to 14th July, commuting between East Chevington, Hauxley, Cresswell and Druridge. Another summer-plumaged adult was photographed in flight, inland at Merryshields (Stocksfield) on 8th June (ED).

Autumn sightings started with another at Druridge Pools on 30th August, which stayed until 10th September (AJH *et al.*). Another inland sighting comprised one perched in trees at Gosforth Park on 8th September (CW). Finally, Druridge Pools showed its pulling power, with its third record of the year involving one on 22nd-24th October (TF/JFa *et al.*). It is obviously very difficult to be sure of how many individuals were involved during the year, but an educated guess of at least six seems fair.



Great White Egret - Druridge Pools - September (Jonathan Farooqi).

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
11	20	11	12	10	13	11	20	24	20	22	26

In the first quarter, especially large additional counts were 17 at Druridge Pools in January, with ten there in March, and nine at Gosforth Park NR in February and at the AIn Estuary in March. One to seven were noted at 36 other localities. In April, away from breeding sites, the peak count was only seven at Lindisfarne NNR. One to four were noted at 22 further localities.

Breeding details were received from five sites: ten were present on nests at Wark (North Tyne), six nesting platforms were at Yarrow Haugh (Tweedmouth), three recently fledged young were at Gosforth Park NR, at least two broods were noted at Howdon Wetlands and recently fledged young were also at Druridge Pools.

Larger gatherings were reported in the summer months (May-August) with 27 at Howdon, 17 at Cresswell Pond, 15 at Castle Island, 12 at Druridge Pools and between the A1 road bridge at Berwick and Gainsford House and 11 on the coastal stretch from Howick-Boulmer. One to nine were recorded at 33 widespread localities during this period.

In the final four months some large counts were noted, with a peak of 28 at Howdon on 31st October (CB), with 21 here in November and 18 in December, 15 were at Castle Island in September, 14 on North Blyth staithes in October, 13 at Widdrington Moor Lake in December and ten on the coastal stretch from Boulmer-Alnmouth in December. One to nine were noted at 42 further localities during this period.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 9 / FIRST: 1829 / LAST: 2014

Two were located at Newton Scrape on 27th May and remained the next day to at least 10:10hrs (GW/TRD *et al.*). They were then relocated at Druridge Pools from 11:40hrs to 13:10hrs (TF/JFa *et al.*) before moving S and being picked up in Cleveland, East Yorkshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. The fifth sighting since 2009, but exceptionally scarce before that, with one at Bothal Pond on 10th May 1989 and three historical records (involving seven immatures) in the 19th and early 20th centuries. It again shows the attraction of Druridge Bay, as most recent sightings have been in the area.



Glossy Ibis - Newton Scrape - May (Frank Golding).

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

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

BREEDING: Uncommon.

As in 2015, Castle Island held significant numbers in the first quarter, with 26 noted in January and 12 in February. At Caistron, the peak count was 13 in January, with eight there in March. Elsewhere, five were noted at Ladyburn Lake in January, East Chevington and Hedgeley GP in February and Bothal and Swallow Ponds in March. One to four were noted at 28 further locations, predominantly in the south east, with 'trilling' heard at many of these sites.

In April, the highest counts were seven at Arcot Pond and six at Swallow Pond whilst, in May, the peak count was five at Druridge Pools.

A total of 54 sites were occupied during the breeding season (45 in 2015) with breeding confirmed at 18 sites (14 in 2015). Those with two or more reported broods are tabulated below:

Location	No. of broods	No. of young
Arcot Pond	4	8
Ladyburn Lake	4	8
Holywell Pond	4	No data
Linton Ponds	3	8
Bothal Pond	3	7
East Chevington	2+	No data
Druridge Pools	2	3

Single broods were also reported at Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield), Bank's Pond (Dinnington), Blyth GC, Fallowlees (Harwood Forest), Gosforth Park NR, Grindon Lough, Holy Island Lough, Laverock Hall Farm (Blyth), Monks House Pool, Mootlaw Quarry, Swallow Pond, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Woodhorn Flashes.

The highest counts in August were 28 at Holywell Pond, 26 at East Chevington, 16 at Bothal Pond, 12 at Hauxley NR and Whittle Dene Reservoirs and ten at Airy Holm Reservoir and Gosforth Park NR. Numbers peaked in September, with 38 at East Chevington (SW), 29 at Holywell Pond, 17 at Bothal Pond, 13 at the Aln Estuary and Linton Ponds, 11 at Airy Holm Reservoir and nine at Angerton. Numbers remained high in October, with 30 at East Chevington, 28 at the Aln Estuary, 24 at East Chevington, 20 at Castle Island, 19 at Hauxley, 16 at Bothal Pond and 15 at Caistron. November counts were lower, with peaks of 22 at East Chevington, 14 at Castle Island and nine at Angerton whilst, in December, 12 were at Castle Island and 11 at East Chevington north pool. In the period, August-December, one to eight were noted at 37 further sites.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

STATUS: Uncommon resident, passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

In January, two were noted offshore between Boulmer-Alnmouth and singles were at Derwent Reservoir and QEII CP Lake, and offshore at Newbiggin and Stag Rocks (Bamburgh). Numbers increased in February, with five at Derwent Reservoir and two in breeding plumage at Killingworth Lake. Two were offshore between Boulmer-Alnmouth and singles were noted at Bothal Pond, Hartley Bay, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) and Spittal Bay. In March, seven were at East Chevington and five at Derwent Reservoir and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. One to four were found at nine other likely breeding sites including, unfortunately, one found dead at Newcastle (Leazes Park) constituting the first record for this site.

During April-May, the peak counts were eight at Derwent Reservoir (IFo/PRM), seven at East Chevington north pool and four adults at Haughton Strother GP, Killingworth Lake and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

A total of 14 potential breeding sites were occupied (18 in 2015). However, breeding success was much higher this year, with two broods noted at East Chevington north pool and Killingworth Lake and single broods at Big Waters, Bothal Pond, Caistron, Druridge Pools and Widdrington Moor Lake.

A single flew N at Seaton Sluice on 20th July and, in the June-September period, the peak counts were eight at Whittle Dene Reservoirs (SR), seven at East Chevington and Widdrington Moor Lake and six at Killingworth Lake. One to four were noted at 11 other inland waters, as well as on the sea in Druridge Bay; additionally, light passage of one to two birds was noted at the Farne Islands on three dates.

Numbers were lower in October, with counts of three at Big Waters and Killingworth Lake and one to three at seven other locations. Five were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs in November and three remained until mid-month at Big Waters. Two were at Lindisfarne NNR and at East Chevington Burn mouth and singles were at six other inland waters. Six remained at Whittle Dene Reservoirs in early December, three were in the Blyth Estuary and a late remaining bird was at Derwent Reservoir on 17th.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

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

As in 2015, very few records were received. At Monks House Pool, one provided very close views from 9th-15th January and one was at Berwick on 10th. In February, one was well inland at Grindon Lough; it, or another, was at Farnley GP on 6th March.

No further birds were seen until 22nd October, when one heading N at Newton Links pitched into the sea. On 5th November, one flew N at Seaton Sluice providing the only sighting there for the year. Another was at Holy Island (Sandham Bay) on 25th. The final record of the year came on 18th December, when one was present at St Mary's for just 20 minutes.

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	20	11	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	5	4	7
Stag Rocks (Bamburgh)	2	10	15	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	9

The highest count of the year involved 20 during a WeBS visit to Lindisfarne NNR on 17th January (ACr). The above numbers were slightly higher than in 2015. Away from these core wintering sites, single birds were seen in January at Druridge Bay, East Chevington, Holywell Pond, QEII CP, Royal Quays Marina (North Shields) and offshore at Druridge Bay and Snab Point. In February, singles occurred in the Berwick area (Meadow Haven, North Shore and Pier), at Black Rocks (Cheswick), East Chevington north pool and Spittal Bay. In March, a single was noted coming into breeding plumage at East Chevington and, in April, one was off Holy Island on 7th.

No further birds were noted until 13th September, when two were offshore between Boulmer-Alnmouth. One was present at the inland site of Branton GP from 17th-31st October, with another at Saltpan Rocks (Cocklawburn) during the month. Light passage in November produced one S at the Farne Islands and one N at Newton on 23rd. Two were at Saltpan Rocks during the month, with singles noted at Seaton Sluice, Spittal and on the River Coquet at Warkworth. In December, numbers built up at the two main wintering areas (see table), with no records from elsewhere in the county.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

STATUS: Rare passage, summer and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Rare. / LAST BRED: 2015

Singles were noted at Ladyburn Lake on 7th January and at East Chevington north pool from 24th January until at least 22nd February, by which time this latter bird was starting to acquire breeding plumage.

Numbers at a site in the south east of the county increased from one on 5th April to four by 24th. In May, pairs were noted at three sites in the south east and at Grindon Lough on 11th. A pair remained at a site in the south east until July, although no confirmed breeding records were received this year.

Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / FIRST RECORD: HISTORICAL / LAST RECORD: 2015

A sign that it is possible to see this species in the county was shown by a phenomenally well documented account of a male at Slaley Forest on 6th June (KB *et al.*). The finder was leading a trip for the Natural History Society of Northumbria and all ten members were treated to a view down to 80m of a species that many keen county birders have never seen locally. It flew in from the NE and circled before dropping into the forest. The potential as a breeding bird is a definite possibility, but no further sightings were made in the area on further visits.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

STATUS: Rare, although increasingly regular, visitor.

BREEDING: Extremely rare. / LAST BRED: 2016

Localities close to the core population in the Derwent Valley provided most early sightings. A single was at Derwent Reservoir on 17th January, with two there on 13th February. Elsewhere during February, singles were recorded over Newcastle (Chapel House) and Wylam; while, in March, two were at Low Waskerley and Whittonstall and singles at Corbridge and Oakwood. One flew S at Druridge Pools on 28th March. April sightings involved singles at Milkwell (Corbridge) and South Snods (Allensford) and, farther afield, at High Brunton and Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh).

A highlight was the first known successful breeding in the county since 2010. During May, a nesting pair was discovered while a Scots Pine *Pinus sylvestris* plantation was being felled at Stocksfield. The driver of the harvesting machine noticed a kite slipping away from a nest only 50m from where he was felling. He recognised the species, having taken his children to a Kite Watch event organised by Friends of Red Kites (FoRK). The landowners were alerted and, much to their credit, immediately stopped work and called in FoRK. Two young fledged in early August, by far the latest brood since regional breeding resumed in 2006. The accompanying nest photograph was taken, one-handed, by a climber dangling 60ft up; among all the plastic debris surrounding the chicks is a blue glove. As the location was on a dairy farm, it's probably best not to think where it might have been before it was taken as a nest decoration! The second photograph shows one of the chicks at ringing about five weeks later (IK). During the breeding season, singles were at Corbridge, Derwent Reservoir, Hexham, Lowick, Snods Edge and Winnows Hill (Slaley), but without evidence of local breeding.

Post-breeding dispersal in August-September produced two at Carterway Heads and Snods Edge and singles at Blanchland, Derwent Reservoir, Mosswood, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Whittonstall.

During the final quarter, records again involved individuals wandering short distances from the core area. Another was overhead at Chapel House in October, with one to two at Derwent Reservoir on three dates, and singles at Low Waskerley in both November and December, when two were also at Snods Edge.



Red Kite chicks - Stocksfield - June (per Ian Kerr).

Red Kite youngster - Stocksfield - July (Ian Kerr).

Harrier sp. *Circus sp.*

A juvenile 'ringtail' flew N at Druridge Pools on 1st September.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

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

BREEDING: Extremely rare. / LAST BRED: 2016

The county's first wintering individual, an adult female present in late 2015, provided regular sightings at Cresswell Pond and East and West Chevington during January-February.

The first spring arrival in March was at the AIn Estuary on 7th followed by a male at East Chevington on 12th. Other females were at Druridge Bay on 21st, 25th and 29th, Warkworth Lane on 26th and Cresswell Pond on 27th-28th. Arrival continued in April, with two males and two females at East Chevington (MH/AA *et al.*) accounting for other sightings in the Druridge Bay area, and singles passed through Gosforth Park NR on 17th, 18th and 30th, Prestwick Carr on 20th and Big Waters on 22nd. Migration continued on 8th May with an adult male circling Inner Farne (Farne Islands).

The first indication of breeding involved a pair food-passing at East Chevington on 14th May. Singles were also noted there on several dates, while others were at Cresswell, Ellington and New Mills (Berwick). In June, a female appeared to roost in reedbeds at Gosforth Park NR. Successful breeding again occurred at East Chevington, with a female and three juveniles noted on 21st July (IF) and four juveniles flying over the pool and surrounding fields on 24th July (ASH/IK). Another juvenile was at Holy Island Lough on 31st July.

During August, regular sightings of the family party continued at East Chevington and passing migrants were at Arcot Pond, Budle Bay, Cramlington, Grindon Lough, Haltwhistle, Hauxley NR, Plenmeller Common, Prestwick Carr and Widdrington Moor Lake. Regular sightings continued at East Chevington during September, with two interesting observations from Druridge Pools. A juvenile female successfully drove off an adult male and a juvenile also attempted to attack a Brown Hare *Lepus europaeus*. The hare reared into a 'boxing' stance and the harrier backed off swiftly. The only September sighting away from Druridge Bay involved a juvenile at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 10th. During October, a juvenile and a female remained at East Chevington and another juvenile flew SW over Quarry House Moor on 18th. Wintering was again evident. During November, an adult female and a sub-adult individual were at East Chevington on 28th-29th. The female was again at East Chevington on 1st December and it, or perhaps another female, was at nearby Maiden's Hall on 5th.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

STATUS: Uncommon passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Rare. / LAST BRED: 2016

During January, an adult male and a 'ringtail' male were at a confidential site and 'ringtails' were noted at two other inland localities. An adult male was at Low Newton on 12th. During February-March, an adult male was regularly around Harwood, where a female or 'ringtail' male was seen on two dates. Another individual flew NW over the River Tyne from Ryton on 28th March. A sub-adult male was on Holy Island on several dates in May, when a single bird was at Brownieside.

A highlight of spring again involved successful local breeding by two pairs. They produced clutches of five and four eggs respectively and went on to fledge a total of six young (MD). Four chicks were fitted with satellite tags by the RSPB and Natural England. The only other successful English breeding involved a pair which raised a single chick across the Cumbria border at RSPB Geltsdale. At another site, a male regularly 'sky-danced' but failed to attract a female.

Late summer coastal movements involved two 'ringtails'. One was flushed on Brownsman (Farne Islands) on 28th August and the other flew N at Druridge Pools on 1st September.

During the final quarter, individuals continued to be seen both inland and on the coast. In October, an adult male and a satellite-tagged juvenile female were at a confidential site. A 'ringtail' was also watched on 9th October as it spiralled to great height over Holy Island (The Snook) and departed northwards; another 'ringtail' and a male were at different sites on 20th and 28th respectively. During November, a juvenile frequented Widdrington Lake and Druridge Bay, providing numerous sightings hunting coastal fields and



Hen Harrier on nest (Mike Henry)

Incubating ♀ Hen Harrier drawn
from hide under licence 31 May



Hen Harrier - East Chevington - November (Heiko Peters).



Pallid Harrier - Holy Island - September (Frank Golding).

were at two other localities and a first-year male, female and juvenile frequented Druridge Bay throughout December.

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus*

STATUS: Extremely rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 1 / FIRST: 2015

After the first county record last year it did not take long for a second bird to be found. This is an indication of the westward spread of the species, which is now regularly seen in the UK. It was suitably satisfying for a stalwart observer of Holy Island to be the finder. A juvenile male was photographed flying over the Vicarage Garden on 15th September before heading out over the village (MJC *et al.*). It was seen briefly and photographed again the following day. The resultant photographs, together with a detailed description, were easily enough to clinch the identification, and the sighting was accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee. This is certainly a species now on everyone's radar and surely more sightings will be made in future years.

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

STATUS: Uncommon resident.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

Early display commenced at the regular stronghold of Harwood Forest from 23rd January. The only other report involved a single at a confidential locality on two dates early in the month. Display intensified at Harwood during February and on 23rd a soaring male prompted three others, including a juvenile male, into the air (MH/AA). Singles were near Derwent Reservoir and at another locality.

Display continued at Harwood through March and early April, when singles were also at Coupland, Harthope Valley and Kielder. Much more unusual was a single moving slowly N in fog and drizzle over Newcastle (Chapel House) on 12th April (amazingly, the third the observer has seen over west Newcastle in recent years).

During the breeding season, monitoring by the Northumbria Ringing Group showed that 37 forest sites were occupied. A total of 31 pairs laid eggs, of which 23 hatched young and 19 pairs then fledged at least 35 young (19 pairs and 41 young in 2015) (NRG).

During September, a male was over Grindon Lough and one was at Wark Forest. During October, a female and a juvenile were seen over different moorland areas, while the only sighting in November was a single near Ryal. The final record involved a single flying east across the A1 at Scremerston on 4th December.

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

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

BREEDING: Well-represented.

During the first quarter, birds were widespread and once again many hunted through gardens, attracted to feeding stations. Most reports involved singles, although four were at Harwood Forest on 25th March (ME), with three at Crooked Oak and two at Derwent Reservoir, East Chevington, Holywell Dene, Howdon, Newcastle (Kenton), Northburn (Cramlington) and Old Hartley.

Numerous sightings continued in April, with three at Heddon-on-the-Wall and Swallowship Wood (Hexham) and sightings of singles from 15 other widespread localities. At Heddon, a female with a kill was trapped between a hedge and a garden shed by two Magpies *Pic pica*. The battle continued for ten minutes until the hawk escaped.

The only detailed breeding data came from Northumbria Ringing Group for the Border Forests. Pairs were at 14 sites, with six pairs fledging 11 young. Another nest with three week-old chicks was predated by a Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis* (NRG). Elsewhere, a nest with young was found in a Scots Pine *Pinus sylvestris* plantation on an industrial estate at Cowpen. A pair and large young were at Bolam Lake and two juveniles were at Simonburn.

Sightings increased in August with the post-breeding dispersal, including a juvenile on Inner Farne (Farne Islands) on 23rd. By September, individuals were back in coastal areas hunting autumn migrants. During



Sparrowhawk chasing Willow Tit (Alan Hart)

October, an adult male and juvenile female regularly roosted in a Holy Island garden and a single was on Inner Farne on 1st. Other coastal sightings included two at Brier Dene (Whitley Bay) and Woodhorn.

By November, reports were again both numerous and widespread, with singles at 18 localities, including an immature female on Inner Farne on 7th. Two were at Ashington and at least two remained on Holy Island, where a female was attacked by a Peregrine *Falco peregrinus* on 20th. At Cramlington, a juvenile female fed on a Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*. Singles were reported during December from 17 lowland localities and an upland individual was on the Otterburn Training Area.

Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

STATUS: Well-represented resident and a passage visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

Typical winter concentrations in good feeding areas were a feature of the first quarter with impressive counts. The highest involved 11 at Slaley-Blanchland Moor on 6th March (PC), with at least ten at East Chevington, eight at Hulne Park and between Ingram Glidders-Shilmoor (Cheviots) and seven at Grindon Lough included three displaying pairs. Seven were also at Alnwick Moor and Low Cockburn (Berwick), six at Harwood Forest and Halton Red House and five at Gosforth Park NR and Slaley Forest. There were sightings of one to four at numerous widespread localities, including coastal reports from Cresswell Pond-Hemscott Hill, Holy Island, Low Newton, Lucker and Ross Back Sands.

Sightings reduced in April as birds settled to breed. The most detailed breeding data from the Northumbria Ringing Group covered mainly upland localities. In the Border Forests, 21 pairs laid eggs, with 15 pairs fledging 48 young. In the South Cheviots and Otterburn Training Area, 55 sites were occupied, 35 nests were found and ten pairs fledged 12 young. In the North Cheviots, pairs occupied 23 localities (NRG). Further success was shown by a pair with three fledged young at Simonside and a pair plus two fledged young at Stamfordham.

Post-breeding dispersal led to increased sightings in August-September, no doubt including some family parties. Six were at Harwood Forest, five at Prestwick Carr and Swallow Pond, four at Derwent Reservoir, Gosforth Park NR, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Widdrington Moor Lake and one to three at numerous other localities.

During the final quarter, birds remained both numerous and widespread. In October, seven were seen from Winter's Gibbet (Harwood Forest), five were at Prestwick Carr and four at Aydon (Corbridge) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. In November-December, counts of four came from Crookham, Prestwick Carr and West Chevington. Gatherings of one to three were well-reported during the quarter.

Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus*

STATUS: Rare winter visitor. / FIRST RECORD: 1831 / LAST RECORD: 2015

There were two documented sightings this year, beginning with a juvenile found in a field near Howick on 28th January (STE/IC). Initial views were obtained whilst travelling on the B1339; the observers were then able to stop and get views down to 30m as it stayed on the ground before being mobbed by a Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*, which made it move off W. The second record involved one flying through West Chevington with a Common Buzzard on 15th November (PC). There was only one other claim, with the observer not being able to submit on the views seen, so a typically sparse year for the species.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

STATUS: Uncommon summer and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Rare. / FIRST BRED: 2009 / LAST BRED: 2016

Spring arrival began on 21st March, when one flew W along the South Tyne and another was at East Ord. Numbers increased during April, with singles N at Bakethin on 3rd, at Branton GP on 6th, Kielder Dam on 9th, Wark-on-Tweed on 11th, Old Berwick on 16th, N at Humshaugh on 17th, NW at Derwent Reservoir on 18th and again at Humshaugh on 28th. One took a fish from the River Tweed at West Ord before flying off NW on an unspecified date.

Breeding areas around Kielder were occupied from 22nd April, when two were at Leaplish. During May, singles occurred at Derwent Reservoir and Horsley Woods and on several dates at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh).

Coastal passage in April saw singles at Budle Bay on 5th, Alnmouth on 15th and Ross Links on 17th.

Four pairs were successful at Kielder, with one pair producing four eggs, the largest clutch so far recorded in the county. A total of 11 young were fledged; the best results since breeding began in 2009 (MD).

Elsewhere, non-breeders frequented rich feeding areas, particularly Derwent Reservoir, which held one from June and up to three during August, when return migration was evident. Sightings included singles over the Farne Islands and at Fenham-le-Moor on 3rd, Budle Bay on 6th, Haughton Strother GP on 13th and SW at Druridge Pools on 22nd August. Another was at Holy Island (Pilgrims' Way) from 13th until the end of the month. Movement continued during September, when a juvenile was at the Pilgrims' Way on 10th. At least four passage birds at Derwent Reservoir up to 14th (IFo) included one which had been colour-ringed as a nestling at Tain (Easter Ross) in June 2010. The final record involved a single at Hedgeley GP on 17th October.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

STATUS: Uncommon resident, passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Rare, although undoubtedly overlooked.

Ponds and lakes providing feeding and seclusion held most of the wintering population during the first quarter. At least six were at Gosforth Park NR, five at East Chevington, three+ at Cresswell Pond and two at Big Waters, Holywell Pond, Whiteadder Point (River Tweed) and Woodhorn Flashes. Singles were seen or heard at eight other localities.

Breeding was again difficult to prove, but a survey in mid-April at Gosforth Park revealed at least seven pairs and two individuals, with two young seen on 26th (NHSN). During the period April-June, up to three were at Cresswell Pond, with singles seen or heard at Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Branton GP, Cresswell and Swallow Ponds and West Hartford, probably also indicating local breeding. Further evidence of success at Gosforth Park came in July with two more chicks, possibly from a second brood; a juvenile was also with adults at Cresswell in July-August and two adults and a juvenile were at Wydon Water (Hexham). During the latter month, two pairs had young at East Chevington and an adult was accompanied by a fledged juvenile at Big Waters. The continued presence of birds at Arcot Pond, Backworth, Druridge Bay CP, Greenlee Lough, Holy Island Lough, Holywell Pond, Prestwick Carr and Swallow Pond also indicated possible breeding.

Immigration was shown in October with singles on Inner Farne (Farne Islands) on three dates, including a bird caught at the top of the Pele Tower stairs on 4th. On Holy Island, on 15th, a bird arrived from high,

landed in the coach park and ran into cover under a wall. Elsewhere, sightings of one to three at Backworth, Big Waters, Boulmer, Cambois, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Gosforth Park, Hauxley, Holywell Pond, Low Newton and Swallow Pond indicated wintering birds settling in.

During November, singles were present on three dates on Inner Farne, while another on Staple Island quickly disappeared down a Puffin *Fratercula arctica* burrow. Four birds were at Big Waters, three at East Chevington and Gosforth Park NR and one to two were reported from 11 other suitable localities. Widespread reports in December involved six at East Chevington, four at Holy Island Lough, three at Gosforth Park NR and one to two at eight other lowland localities, including an urban individual at Chirton Dene Park (North Shields).

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

STATUS: Common resident.

BREEDING: Well-represented, but very much under-recorded.

Regular wintering waters held the main populations during January-February, with peaks of 24 at Druridge Bay CP, 23 at Castle Island and East Chevington, 21 at Killingworth Lake, 20 at Backworth Pond, 18 at Woodhorn Flashes, 16 at Newton Scrape and 15 at Wallington Hall. Smaller groups were at numerous other widespread localities. Apart from a count of 30 at Castle Island in mid-March, numbers generally fell during March-April as birds dispersed to breed.

The first young were seen at Bothal Pond on 23rd April. Successful breeding followed at Big Waters, Grindon Lough, Hauxley NR, Holy Island Lough, Jesmond Dene, Killingworth Lake, Newcastle (Exhibition and Leazes Parks), QEII CP, Wallsend Dene, Walltown Quarry and Warden (River Tyne). Birds were present at numerous other waters where breeding almost certainly occurred.

Numbers at favoured localities rose with post-breeding gatherings during August-September with, for example, 29 at Big Waters, 26 at Hauxley, 21 at Charlton Mires Pond, 19 at Castle Island and Newton Pool, 18 at Druridge Bay CP, 17 at Gosforth Park NR and smaller groups at many other localities.

During the final quarter, many were settled back in regular wintering waters. The largest groups involved 36 at Castle Island during a WeBS count on 13th November (STH/DM), 24 at Newton Scrape, 21 at Druridge Bay CP and Swallow Pond, 20 at Big Waters, Chirton Dene Park (North Shields) and Woodhorn Flashes, 19 at West Allotment Pond, 18 at Gosforth Park NR and Royal Quays (North Shields), 15 at Bothal Pond and Marden Quarry and lesser numbers at other widespread and numerous waters.

Coot *Fulica atra*

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

BREEDING: Well-represented, but under-recorded.

The largest gathering of the year involved 230 at QEII CP Lake during a WeBS count on 17th January (CDH). Other substantial groups during January-February, often from WeBS counts, included 80 at Capheaton Lake, 79 at Woodhorn Flashes, 62 at Branton GP, 58 at Bothal Pond and Killingworth Lake, 52 at Swallow Pond and 41 at Big Waters. The departure of wintering birds led to numbers dropping during March and by April most were concentrated in breeding areas.

In the period June-August, six nests were found at Bothal Pond and two pairs fed young at Holy Island Lough. Two broods, totalling five chicks, were at Newcastle (Exhibition Park), a pair had four chicks on a small pond near Cresswell and a pair had three chicks at Druridge Pools. Further broods were noted at Arcot Pond, Cresswell Pond, Howdon, Killingworth Lake and Newcastle (Leazes Park).

Post-breeding gatherings swelled numbers during August-September to provide maximum counts of 116 during a WeBS visit to Widdrington Moor Lake, 115 at Bothal Pond, 95 at Big Waters, 79 at East Chevington, 67 at Caistron, 63 at Killingworth Lake, 60 at Woodhorn Flashes, 52 at Killingworth Lake and 46 at Linton Ponds.

The arrival of presumed continental visitors increased numbers during the final quarter, when the biggest concentrations were 200 at East Chevington on 13th November, 117 at Swallow Pond, 103 at Big Waters and 61 at Branton GP; smaller groups were at many other widespread, mainly inland, localities.

Crane *Grus grus*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / FIRST RECORD: HISTORICAL / LAST RECORD: 2015

It was another quiet year, with only two documented sightings. Two were noted flying N over Holystone on 20th May, with the calls giving them away (DRo). The other report was unusual, with one found in a dishevelled state in a field at Lowick on 19th November (DK). It was taken into care at Berwick, where photographs were taken as it looked rather incongruous on the operating table. It recovered sufficiently to be released on 29th November, hopefully to live another day.

Stone Curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 15 / FIRST: prior to 1883 / LAST: 2010

A surveyor on behalf of AONB in Northumberland was undertaking a survey on farmland at Longbank Farm (Longhoughton) when he discovered one on 17th June (RW/IDR). He contacted the survey organiser (IDR) and he managed to locate the bird the next day. Unfortunately, due to the bird being on private land and not visible from public roads, the news had to be kept confidential. The first county record since the surprise birds on Holy Island in May 2010 and on the Farne Islands and Holy Island in December 2010.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

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

BREEDING: Rare. / FIRST BRED: 2011 / LAST BRED: 2016

Spring arrival began with a single at Cresswell Pond on 15th March, rising to ten four days later. Numbers then fluctuated there between two to eight for the remainder of the month.

Birds remained at Cresswell throughout April, with another peak of ten on 15th. Elsewhere, three were at Castle Island on 1st, a peak of nine in the Blyth Estuary on 5th, while three circled Bothal Pond without landing on 10th. During May, up to four continued to frequent Cresswell Pond, with up to three, possibly involving the same birds, at the River Wansbeck on 30th. Others were found at three confidential localities in the south east.

By late June, two pairs incubated at Cresswell Pond, with a third pair chased off on 23rd. Three pairs were suspected of nesting at one of the confidential sites in early June but, by mid-month, breeding behaviour had ceased. Up to two birds were still being noted at other sites in the south east.

Broods of two and three were at Cresswell Pond on 12th and 19th July respectively; an adult with four young was then noted on 20th. At another site, an adult was seen with two juveniles, whilst five birds visited Low Newton on 23rd. Proof of survival came during August, with at least four juveniles accompanying five adults at Cresswell Pond. Elsewhere, two birds were at Castle Island on 17th.

On 1st September, 11 individuals were still at Cresswell (MJC/ASH/TW/AJN), but only three juveniles were noted there on 5th. Four were found at the Aln Estuary during a WeBS count on 16th September. Eight were present at Cresswell on 24th September, with two on 2nd and 14th October. A single, with an injured leg, remained and may have been the individual which was then present until 18th November.



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
396	228	402	317	323	147	240	930	2,167	862	628	705

During the first quarter, large concentrations also occurred in coastal areas away from Lindisfarne, including a WeBS count of 259 at Beadnell-Howick in January, 225 at Brotherton’s Hole (Berwick) in January and 183 at Berwick North Shore in February. Elsewhere, early peaks included 121 at St Mary’s, 100 at Alnmouth, 90 at Hauxley NR, 78 between Howick-Dunstanburgh, 73 at Cresswell Pond and lesser numbers at many other localities. In mild conditions in the second half of February there was an early return inland, with large groups at regular staging localities; these included 90 at Caistron and 40 at Coanwood. A much more general movement inland followed during March, with peaks of 174 at Derwent Reservoir, 108 at Melkridge, 80 at Branton GP and smaller groups in at least 26 other inland localities.

The first indications of breeding came in April, with three pairs settled at Hedgeley GP and single pairs at Beacon Hill and the local High School (both Cramlington). The most detailed breeding data was from the Farne Islands where 27 pairs nested (32 in 2015), with high success rates at a locality where predation is usually severe. The Coquet Island population continued to fall, with ten pairs noted (13 in 2015). At Lindisfarne, six pairs fledged 13 young. Other breeding reports included broods at Bothal Pond, Branton GP, Castle Island, Cramlington (Southfield Green), Derwent Reservoir, Hauxley NR, Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal), Redesmouth and Widdrington.

Many non-breeders remained on the coast, with 250 regularly roosting on St Cuthbert’s Island (Holy Island) and smaller summering parties at Berwick North Shore, Cresswell, Newbiggin, North Blyth Staithes, St Mary’s and the Tweed Estuary. Post-breeding movement and the first influxes of migrants was evident in July with, for example, 172 S at Seaton Sluice from 20th-22nd. Passage increased during August-September,

peaking at 2,167 at Lindisfarne NNR on 18th September (ACr). Elsewhere, there were counts of 244 from Cresswell-Newbiggin, 203 from Howick-Boulmer, 180 from Seahouses-Beadnell, 165 in the Blyth Estuary, 157 from Cresswell-Newbiggin, 144 on the Farne Islands, 142 at Berwick, 125 at Longhoughton Steel, 115 at Tynemouth and 100 at Boulmer.

Numbers remained high into the final quarter, with flocks settled in regular wintering areas. Peaks away from Lindisfarne included WeBS counts of 328 at Berwick North Shore, 240 from Howick-Boulmer, 208 from Beadnell-Howick, 204 at St Mary's, 184 from Seahouses-Beadnell, 183 from Cresswell-Newbiggin and 167 at Tynemouth.

American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 10 / FIRST: 1982 / LAST: 2013

A scan through waders on Newton Scrape on 20th October did not reveal the anticipated Baird's Sandpiper *Calidris bairdii* immediately, but did reveal a moulting adult American Golden Plover instead! (AM/JM/GBR). It was only seen by the finders as only present for 25 minutes, but was well photographed. This is the second 'yankee' double-bill for Newton Scrape, with a Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* and a Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* together at the same locality in 2015. A sign that this type of habitat is in great demand by passage waders.

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
1,500	1,300	350	116	46	20	500	2,000	2,000	2,000	1,740	1,200

Away from Lindisfarne, other large winter concentrations during January included 1,501 at Newbiggin on 21st, an interesting movement of 1,365 S (in one hour) at Seaton Sluice on 3rd, 1,000 at Seahouses, 800+ at Brier Dene (Whitley Bay) and 400-500 at Grindon Lough, Newton Scrape and West Stobswood. Coastal and lowland numbers remained high in February, with 1,000 at St Mary's, 360 at Backworth and 320 at Druridge Bay. In generally mild conditions, many moved inland to provide counts of 1,000 at Grindon Lough, 250+ at Prestwick Carr, 220 at Blanchland Moor and smaller groups in four other localities towards the North Pennines.

During March-April, as local breeders took up regular upland territories, particularly in western strongholds, migration of Northern race birds was prominent. During March, 1,800 visited Longhorsley Moor and up to 520, many coming into breeding plumage, lingered at Plenmeller Common. Similarly, during April, 1,200 Northern birds in breeding dress were in East Allendale. Elsewhere, numbers at Prestwick Carr swelled to 450, whilst 310 were at Grindon Lough. Migration continued into mid-May, with eight Northern birds in full plumage on Holy Island and one at Druridge Pools.

As usual, there was a very early return to coastal areas of local breeders and Northern migrants. By late June, 20 Northern birds, still in full plumage, were back on Holy Island and 19 were at Beacon Point (Newbiggin). Return movements increased sharply in July, with peak counts including 500 on Holy Island, rising to 2,000 during August. Also in July, 350 were at St Mary's and 318 at Beacon Point, with smaller groups in many other coastal localities. By August-September, the largest flocks, excluding Lindisfarne, involved a WeBS count of 1,200 from Howick-Boulmer in September, 940 on Longstone (Farne Islands), 780+ at Backworth, 610+ at Derwent Reservoir, 600 at St Mary's and 370 between Howick-Craster.

Many large flocks continued to frequent coastal areas during the final quarter. They provided peak counts of 2,000 still on Holy Island and also at Druridge Bay, 1,500 at St Mary's, 700 at Amble, 600 at Boulmer and Blyth Links and 500 at Monks House Pool. Inland flocks included 848 at Grindon Lough, 650 at Derwent Reservoir and 400+ at Big Waters; many of these birds lingering into November-December.



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
175	125	98	44	80	0	0	156	509	257	222	183

Once again, Lindisfarne held most of the population, with comparatively few elsewhere. During the first quarter, for example, 55 at Alnmouth, 53 at Seahouses, 25 at Boulmer, 21 at Newbiggin, 19 at Hauxley, 12 at Newbiggin, 11 at Beadnell and ten in the Blyth Estuary were the only double-figure counts. One to nine were at ten other coastal localities.

Spring passage was typically very light, apart from at Lindisfarne, where the 80 shown in the table above for May was a flock in full breeding plumage moving N from the Black Law on 2nd. On 11th, three summer-plumage birds on Knoxes Reef provided the first spring sighting for the Farne Islands since 2011. Another group of 48 was in Budle Bay on 14th May.

One at Boulmer on 25th July and one in full breeding plumage at the Blyth Estuary on 29th July may have been early returning individuals. During August, 11 were at Alnmouth by 21st. A more general return to Lindisfarne followed during September, with a highest annual count of 509 on 18th (ACr), but the only other sightings involved one to seven at Amble-Chevington, Beadnell-Howick, the Blyth Estuary, Boulmer-Alnmouth, Hauxley, Howick-Boulmer, Seahouses-Beadnell, Seaton Sluice and St Mary's.

During October, 39 were at Boulmer-Alnmouth and up to 20 were at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh); otherwise, 12 or fewer were at Beadnell-Howick, Berwick, the Blyth Estuary, Cocklawburn, Cresswell-Newbiggin, Howick-Boulmer, Low Newton, Seahouses-Beadnell, Tynemouth, Warkworth and Whitley Bay. Birds continued to disperse from Lindisfarne in November-December, whilst peaks elsewhere included 54 at Boulmer-Alnmouth, 30 at Cresswell, 20 at Seahouses-Beadnell and Stag Rocks, 13 at Howick-Boulmer, ten in the Blyth Estuary and one to nine at more than a dozen other localities.

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
207	60	98	30	30	45	21	44	304	331	350	1,216

Numbers at Lindisfarne were low in the first quarter. Most other concentrations were inland and, by February, involved birds moving back into upland breeding areas. The largest gatherings involved 1,200 at Grindon Lough, 780 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), 600 at Derwent Reservoir, 565 at Caistron, 502 at St Mary's and 500 at Earsdon and Prestwick Carr. Smaller groups were at numerous other localities.

During March, large flocks split up as birds occupied breeding territories, with many reports of display. Once again, the highest concentration of breeding activity was in the North Pennines with, for example, 120 pairs and more than 30 already on eggs at Acton Fell during April. On Blanchland Fell, 25 pairs represented a reduction on previous years, whilst eight nesting pairs were near Grindon Lough and smaller numbers were found in many other upland and moor-edge areas. Breeding also occurred at numerous lowland and farmland localities. Six pairs were at Backworth and Hedgeley GP and pairs with young were at Arcot, Ashington, Backworth, Big Waters, Bothal Pond, Hauxley NR, Howdon, Lynemouth Flash and St Mary's. An adult on Holy Island mobbed and chased off a Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* and a Roe Deer *Capreolus capreolus* in quick succession when chicks were approached.

Post-breeding flocks began to form in June-July, most noticeably at Derwent Reservoir, with a peak count of 800 on 23rd July. By August, 413 were also at Bothal Pond, 350 at Corbridge, 328 at Charlton Mires, 240 at Hedgeley GP, 155 at Holywell Pond and 150 at Druridge Bay CP. Numbers continued to swell during September, with 1,200 at Derwent and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, 513 at Haughton Strother GP, 500 at Broomlee Lough, 350 at Charlton Mires, 345 at Castle Island and 100-240 at the Aln Estuary, Big Waters, Branton GP, Cocklawburn, Cresswell Pond, Grindon Lough, Hedgeley GP, Howick-Boulmer, Newcastle and the Tweed Estuary.

Birds gravitated towards the coast during the final quarter, although numbers in October were unusually low. Immigration was suggested by 28 flying W past Inner Farne on 12th November; the highest Farne Islands count since 2012. Flocks noted between November-December included 1,216 during a WeBS count at Lindisfarne NNR on 18th December (ACr), 750 at East Chevington, 675 at Cresswell Pond and a large gathering at Widdrington Moor Lake on Christmas Day. In mild conditions during the same period, inland localities also held substantial gatherings, including 1,000 at Derwent Reservoir, 595 at Grindon Lough, 470 at Bothal Pond, 319 at Colt Crag Reservoir and 240-250 at Haughton Strother and Hedgeley GPs.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

STATUS: Uncommon passage and summer visitor.

BREEDING: Uncommon. / FIRST BRED 1968

An early spring arrival was at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 28th March. It was quickly followed on 1st April by two at Cresswell Pond and one at Derwent Reservoir. Numbers rose during April, with three at Haughton Strother and two at a central locality on 3rd. Four were near Ryal on 8th, two at Stobswood Pond on 10th and four at Haughton Strother on 14th; many of these birds lingered at their chosen localities. One to two also occurred at Blagdon, Druridge Pools and Prestwick Carr.

Five potential nesting localities in the west of the county held pairs during May, with numbers reaching five at one location, while two were seen at Druridge Pools and Castle Island and singles at Blagdon, Brenkley, Cresswell Pond, Gosforth Park NR and Lynemouth Flash. Evidence of successful breeding followed in June-July from three localities. At one site it was thought that four broods had been produced. At a second locality, 11 adults were noted on 7th July (ASJ) and two pairs reared three young, with another pair failing when the nest site was trampled by Greylag Geese *Anser anser*. At the third locality, two juveniles indicated success.

Passage occurred in August, with a maximum of 11 (ten juveniles and an adult) at Derwent Reservoir on 17th (IFo). Two were at Castle Island on 14th and singles occurred at Bothal Pond, Budle Bay, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. The final reports, in September, involved two at Bothal Pond on 4th and two juveniles at Castle Island on 10th.

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
39	32	8	116	201	14	7	120	230	41	45	33

Numbers at Lindisfarne were generally low during the first quarter and were exceeded by counts elsewhere. For example, a peak of 94 occurred at the regular factory roof roost at Blyth in February and 68 were between Cresswell-Newbiggin and 57 at Monks House Pool in January; elsewhere, 34 were at Berwick North Shore, 27 at Beadnell-Howick, 22 at St Mary’s and 20 at Newbiggin. Birds started returning to inland breeding sites in late February, with two at Derwent Reservoir on 24th increasing to three the following day. Inland movement continued in March-April, with one to six at Backworth Pond, Brenkley Opencast, Haughton Strother and Hedgeley GPs, Stobswood and West Hartford.

Spring passage northwards during May was lighter than usual; 307 at the Blyth Estuary on 8th (LJM) and ca.130 at the Tweed Estuary on 27th being the only substantial counts away from Lindisfarne.

During the breeding season, 14 nests were recorded at Lindisfarne. Four failed from predation or being washed out, while the remaining ten scrapes produced 27 fledglings (11 pairs and ten young in 2015). Four pairs nested on the Farne Islands, the joint lowest total on record (six pairs in 2015). During the season, three juveniles at Blagdon and a single at Derwent Reservoir also indicated success. Pairs were also present at several other potential nesting areas.



Ringed Plover - Druridge Bay - January (Heiko Peters).

By August, return passage was underway, with counts of 107 at Cresswell-Newbiggin, 92 at Berwick Little Beach, 81 at Seahouses-Beadnell, 62 at East Chevington, 59 at Longhoughton Steel, 52 at the Tweed Estuary and 31 at Amble. Strong passage continued in September; as well as the high count at Lindisfarne, 150 were at Boulmer, 123 at Beadnell-Howick, 91 at Seahouses-Beadnell, 84 at Cocklawburn, 62 at St Mary's and several flocks of up to 40 elsewhere.

As usual, numbers reduced into October, when the largest groups involved 53 at Seahouses-Beadnell, 52 at the Blyth Estuary and 41-47 at Boulmer-Alnmouth, Snab Point and St Mary's. Parties were settled into regular wintering areas during November-December, when again numbers at Lindisfarne were low. Elsewhere, the Blyth roost peaked at 97, while 84 were at Cocklawburn, 83 at Cresswell-Newbiggin, 62 at Beadnell-Howick, 59 at the Long Nanny Estuary and counts of 40-45 at a further four localities.

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / FIRST RECORD: HISTORICAL / LAST RECORD: 2014

An adult male was located on Holy Island (Crooked Lonnen) on 14th-15th May (MJC/ADM *et al.*). It was well-watched, as might be expected, over its two day stay, as it fed in a short grass field with Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*. Always a prize find in the county and especially so on the coast, with the only recent coastal sightings in 2012 and 2014 on Holy Island, plus a well-watched bird at Newbiggin in 2008.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

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

Spring passage began late, with the first record, involving seven off Seaton Sluice, coming on 14th April. Singles followed at Holy Island on 17th and Cresswell and Prestwick Carr on 20th. Numbers then increased sharply, with 20+ at Druridge Pools on 23rd and 37 at East Chevington on 27th. One to three also occurred during the final week of April at Budle Bay, the Farne Islands and Tynemouth.

Movement northwards continued during May, with peaks of 41 at Druridge Pools, 17 at East Chevington, 15 at West Stobswood Pool, nine at Druridge Pools, six at St Mary's and five in Budle Bay. One to four were recorded at 12 other coastal localities and inland at Derwent Reservoir and Prestwick Carr. During June, one to nine continued to pass up the coast, with sightings from eight localities.

The usual early return passage was evident during July, when 24 lingered in the Tweed Estuary on 4th, with a further 12 S at nearby East Ord the same day, although the main movements came later in the month, being particularly prominent between 20th-22nd, when 136 moved N and 82 S at Seaton Sluice (SSWT). A modest peak of six was at the Farne Islands on 21st, while 13 were at Hauxley on 23rd and 11 at St Mary's on 21st and Boulmer on 28th. Steady passage continued during August, with 22 counted on Fenham Flats on 21st and groups of one to five at 17 further coastal localities.

Numbers fell during September, with four at Seaton Sluice, two on Brownsman (Farne Islands) and at Newton Links and singles at the Blyth Estuary, Boulmer, Budle Bay, Hauxley, Holy Island Causeway and nearby Longbridge End, and St Mary's. The final sightings were in October, with singles at Holy Island on 5th and Cambois on 30th; the latter being the latest county record for 11 years.

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
553	823	610	342	98	220	1,103	320	1,273	558	450	707

Away from Lindisfarne, some large concentrations occurred in coastal fields and at high-tide roosts during January-February. These included 318 in the Aln Estuary, 270 at Long Nanny Burn, 253 at Boulmer, 209 from Seahouses-Beadnell, 185 at Druridge Pools, 178 at St Mary's and 170+ at Hemscott Hill (Cresswell). Smaller groups were both numerous and widespread along the coast and the immediate hinterland. Some wintered inland with, for example, 126 roosting in heather at Plenneller Common, up to 40 at Allendale and

Curlew - Howdon - May (Colin Bradshaw).



Black-tailed Godwit - Howdon - April (Colin Bradshaw).



Heddon-on-the-Wall and 14-15 at Grindon Lough and Prestwick Carr.

A return to upland breeding areas, particularly in the North Pennines, was evident from early March, with 140 in Allendale, 36 at Derwent Reservoir and up to 25, many displaying, at Carrshield, Grindon Lough, Ridley Common and Slaley. Similar groups were found in two areas of the Cheviots, at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) and on Longhorsley Moor. Meanwhile, coastal movements continued during March-April, with peaks of 254 at Howick-Boulmer, 222 at Beadnell-Howick, 193 in the Aln Estuary, 160 at Druridge Pools, 109 at Hauxley NR, and 50-61 at Amble, Howdon, Prestwick Carr and Yarrow Slake. Smaller groups were in at least 12 other, mainly lowland, localities.

In prime western breeding areas, up to 20 pairs displayed on Acton Moor and 15 pairs were on Blanchland Fell during April, with large numbers also displaying on Hexhamshire Common. Pairs were also on territory at Bewick Moor, Grindon Lough, the Harthope Valley and Twice Brewed, with birds in many other suitable areas from April-June. Pairs had young at Acton Moor by 9th June and a pair reared two young on lower ground in Cramlington, most likely on the Shotton opencast site (near Plessey Hall Farm) in July.

Post-breeding dispersal and coastal passage began in July and built up during August. Peaks included 377 at Longhoughton Steel, 213 in the Aln Estuary, 160 in fields at Seaton Sluice, 144 in the Tweed Estuary, 140 at the Farne Islands, 92 in the Blyth Estuary and smaller groups in numerous other coastal localities. The only substantial inland group involved up to 70 summering non-breeders at Castron. Onward passage kept numbers high into September, with 1,273 at Lindisfarne during a WeBS count on 18th (ACr), 269 in the Aln Estuary and 258 at Boulmer.

During the final quarter, parties were settled in regular, predominantly coastal, wintering localities. Away from Lindisfarne, larger counts involved 430 at Boulmer and 173-201 at the Aln Estuary, Beadnell-Howick, Cresswell Pond, the Farne Islands and St Mary's. Inland, the WeBS count in December recorded 110 at Castron. Parties of 30 were settled around Big Waters, Callerton, Elswick riverside and West Stobswood.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

STATUS: Uncommon passage visitor, rare in winter.

Druridge Bay provided most records during January-February, with a peak count of 12 in the Cresswell Pond-Hemscott Hill area. Individuals from that group probably accounted for sightings of up to four at Druridge Pools and East Chevington. Elsewhere, one to five were at the Blyth Estuary, Budle Bay, Howdon and Stag Rocks (Bamburgh).

Early spring passage during March produced one at Fenham Flats on 13th, two at Grindon Lough on 24th and ten at the Blyth Estuary on 28th, when three were at Howdon and one on Holy Island (Rocket Field) where, unusually, they had been absent during winter. Light passage continued during April, with four moving W at Warkworth Lane on 23rd and 20 in breeding plumage flying N, far offshore, at Newton Links on 29th. Elsewhere, five to nine at the Blyth Estuary, Druridge Pools and Sleek Burn included birds in breeding dress. One to three visited Holy Island, Hoppen Kiln Flash, Howdon and Newton Scrape. During May, a peak of 45 were in the Aln Estuary and ten were at Druridge Pools, with single-figure counts at other coastal sites, as well as three inland at Grindon Lough and one at Gosforth Park NR. Numbers remained generally low during June, with a maximum of 12 at Druridge Pools on 28th, while 18 flew S over West Wideopens (Farne Islands) on 30th.

Numbers rose sharply during July, with further return passage indicated by 71 moving S at Seaton Sluice between 6th-27th and 54 adults at Newton Scrape on 20th; 31 which arrived on Brownsman (Farne Islands) on 27th included a male colour-ringed as an adult on the Tagus Estuary (Portugal) in February 2011. This individual provided a fascinating insight into the origins of some visitors. It wintered annually at the Portuguese estuary from 2012-2015, was identified on spring passage in Holland from 2013-2016 and was also recorded on breeding grounds in north east Iceland in 2013 (FIR). Parties were also present at Cresswell Pond throughout July, with a peak of 45 on 5th, many in breeding plumage. Other records during the period July-September included a maximum count of 72 at Castle Island on 28th September (STH/IFo), 50 at Druridge Pools, 40 at Lynemouth Flash, 25 at the Blyth Estuary, 21 at Low Newton, 20 at Druridge Pools and smaller numbers at many other coastal localities. One to three visited seven near-coastal and inland sites, including Grindon Lough in September.

Onward passage reduced numbers during October, when peak counts of 26 were at the Blyth Estuary on 2nd and 24 at Monks House Pool on 3rd. Other parties included 12 at Howdon, 11 at Druridge Pools, ten

at Hauxley and single-figure counts at ten further localities, including three at Newcastle Business Park. Unusually, numbers rose during November-December, presumably with further late influxes. This provided peaks of 64 at Amble Braid, 25 at Howdon, 18 at Druridge Pools and East Chevington, 16 at Boulmer, 13 on Holy Island and eight at the Blyth Estuary and Newcastle Business Park.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

STATUS: Common passage and winter visitor. Lindisfarne NNR supports a 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
1,107	1,160	350	300	135	225	164	479	1,191	1,097	923	630

Numbers at Lindisfarne were again modest, reflecting the recent declines from the average 3,000 which formerly used the reserve. Elsewhere, numbers were typically low during the first quarter, with only five localities providing counts into double figures. These involved 41 at Beadnell, 37 from Boulmer-Alnmouth, 20 from Seahouses-Beadnell, 18 at Boulmer and 16 at the Blyth Estuary. One to nine were recorded at Bell's Pond (Cresswell), Berwick North Shore, Cresswell Pond, the Farne Islands, Hadston, Hauxley NR, Low Newton, Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) and the Tweed Estuary.

Northward passage led to the big decline at Lindisfarne during March, leaving the usual summering non-breeders. Elsewhere, birds were very scarce, with a maximum of nine at Boulmer in April and singles at Boulmer, Cresswell-Newbiggin, Druridge Pools, East Chevington and Hauxley in May.

Early return passage occurred at Lindisfarne in mid-July, when four individuals still in breeding plumage joined summering birds in the high-tide roost on St Cuthbert's Island. Numbers then rose steadily through August-September, peaking at 1,191 on 18th September (ACr). Elsewhere, 300+ roosted on Knoxes Reef on 10th September, providing the second highest-ever day count for the Farne Islands, 25 were at Warkworth, 23 at St Mary's, 13 at Boulmer, ten at Berwick North Shore and Cresswell-Newbiggin and single-figure counts at Amble-Chevington, the Blyth Estuary, Cresswell Pond, Hauxley NR, Howick-Boulmer, Newbiggin, Newton Pool, Ross Back Sands, Seahouses-Beadnell, Seaton Sluice, the Tweed Estuary and Tynemouth.

Numbers remained high at Lindisfarne into the final quarter, but counts elsewhere were comparatively low. The only significant late gatherings involved 35 at Boulmer, 16 at Berwick North Shore and 15 in the Coquet Estuary.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

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

Prime rocky and muddy feeding areas held most of the population during the first quarter. By far the biggest concentration, shown by WeBS counts, was at Berwick North Shore with 176 on 18th February. Elsewhere during the period, 114 were at Seahouses-Beadnell, 105 at Boulmer, 74 from Budle Point-Seahouses, 73 at St Mary's, 72 from Beadnell-Howick, 50 from Howick-Boulmer, 41 from Boulmer-Alnmouth and 30+ at Cresswell Pond.

Movement back towards Arctic breeding areas began to reduce numbers during April, although 247 between Seahouses-Boulmer on 5th was a decent count. Passage continued during May, with peaks of 76 at Lindisfarne and 72 from Seahouses-Beadnell. Non-breeders remained in only six areas in June, with 36 at Seahouses-Beadnell the highest count.

Return passage was evident in late July, when 43 moved S at Seaton Sluice between 21st-24th. By the end of the month, 178 were at the Farne Islands, 36 from Cresswell-Newbiggin and 31 at Hauxley NR, with smaller numbers at numerous other sites. Passage peaked with a total of 411 across the Farne Islands on 4th August (FIR), reducing to 263 in September. Elsewhere in September, 200 were at St Mary's, 119 at Howick-Boulmer, 99 at Cresswell-Newbiggin, 90 at Seahouses-Boulmer and 68 at Berwick North Shore.

During the final quarter, wintering flocks were settled in favoured feeding and roosting localities, the highest count involving 350 on the Farne Islands in October. Elsewhere, the highest counts were 218 from Beadnell-Howick, 201 from Howick-Boulmer, 164 from Seahouses-Beadnell, 142 at Berwick North Shore, 114 from Boulmer-Alnmouth, 83 from Cresswell-Newbiggin, 81 at St Mary's and from Budle Point-Seahouses.



Knot *Calidris canutus*

STATUS: Well-represented passage and common, but decreasing, 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
1,000	1,140	326	198	400	230	55	51	1,060	1,470	441	1,090

Again, Lindisfarne attracted most of the population during the first quarter. Away from the reserve, the only double-figure counts involved 64 in the Coquet Estuary, 50 at Boulmer, 20 at Seaton Sluice, 17 in the Blyth Estuary and 11 in the formerly favoured St Mary's area. Much more unusual were three at Prestwick Carr on 4th January.

Departure for Arctic breeding grounds reduced numbers at Lindisfarne in March-April although, as usual, there was a substantial summering population as shown, for example, by the June count which involved non-breeders at the St Cuthbert's Island high-tide roost. Another unusual inland record involved an immature at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) on 21st June; a first for the site.

Return passage began in July with Farne Islands' peaks involving 168 on Longstone on 7th and 123 on Knoxes Reef on 21st. Newbiggin attracted 46 on 29th. During August, 67 were at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 15th and 70, mainly adults, passed S at Seaton Sluice from 19th-20th, with Cresswell Pond attracting 42 on 28th. There were inland sightings of singles at Bothal Pond on 24th and Derwent Reservoir on 25th August. Arrivals increased sharply during September, as indicated by the Lindisfarne table, when 800 of the total roosted at St Cuthbert's Island. Elsewhere, 225 were at Stag Rocks and 63 from Cresswell-Newbiggin, with 54 moving N at Seaton Sluice on 2nd and ca.50 at Hauxley.

During the final quarter, 1,470 were counted at Lindisfarne during a WeBS visit on 16th October (ACr), there were peaks of 185 in the Coquet Estuary, 82 from Budle Point-Seahouses, 63 at Amble, 40 at Cocklawburn and 30 at Cresswell Pond.

Ruff *Calidris pugnax*

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

BREEDING: Historical. / LAST BRED: 1850s

Following the pattern of recent winters, a single wintering individual probably accounted for sightings on 19 dates around Druridge Bay between January-March.

Light spring passage began in April, with two at Druridge Pools on 1st, singles at Cresswell Pond on 3rd and 9th (with one to six on eight further dates to 27th), three at Druridge Pools on 17th and two at Hauxley NR on 19th. Up to five remained around Druridge Bay throughout May, two flew N at the Farne Islands on 3rd, a single was inland at Grindon Lough on 15th and three visited Newton Scrape on 27th. In June, five males and two females were at Druridge Pools and display took place, although by 17th only two males remained. Singles were also seen at Bell's Pond (Cresswell) and Derwent Reservoir on 3rd and Monks House Pool on 19th. Two remained at Druridge Bay throughout July, with two at Newton Scrape on 16th reducing to one on 17th and 20th.

Return passage led to a big increase in sightings during August. The highest numbers were at prime feeding localities, with 27 at Bradford Kaims on 29th (GPK), 22 at Druridge Pools on 21st, 19 at Fenham Flats on 21st and 13 at Charlton Mires Pond on 29th. An estimated 13 individuals passed through the Farne Islands. One to six were at Berwick, Bothal Pond, Boulmer, Budle Bay, Castle Island, Cresswell Pond, Grindon Lough, Hauxley, Holywell Pond, Low Newton, Lynemouth Flash and Widdrington Moor Lake. Numbers remained high into early September, with maxima of 22 at Charlton Mires, 18 at East Chevington, eight at Druridge Pools and one to four at 14 coastal or near-coastal localities. One at Castron was the furthest inland record.

Small numbers lingered into October, with a maximum of four at Druridge Pools on 1st, when singles were at East Chevington and Foxton. One visited Holy Island on 2nd, two remained at Charlton Mires to 5th and a single was at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 20th. The final individual clung on at Druridge Pools until 30th.

Broad-billed Sandpiper *Calidris falcinellus*

STATUS: Extremely rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 5 / FIRST: 1961 / LAST: 2014

A visitor to the county came across one at Druridge Pools on 31st May (TA *et al.*). It was eagerly watched until early evening, when it retreated into dense rushes and out of view. Apart from a single observer record at Holy Island in 2014, the previous sightings were in 1999, so a major find for Northumberland. The record was accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee.



Broad-billed Sandpiper -
Druridge Pools - May
(Frank Golding).

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

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

Spring passage involved only one individual, compared with four during the same period of 2015. The sole sighting was at the Blyth Estuary on 3rd June.

As usual, the species was much better represented on late summer returning passage. Arrival began with an adult at Cresswell Pond from 25th-27th July, followed by a juvenile at Berwick Little Beach on 30th. An influx, mainly of juveniles, occurred during August and involved at least 44 birds (three in August 2015). An adult, still partly in breeding plumage, was at Bewick Little Beach on 3rd. The main arrival occurred from 17th and involved nine, possibly 11, at Druridge Pools (TF/JFa), ten at Boulmer (NFO), seven at St Mary's, five at Berwick Little Beach and four at Cresswell and Holy Island. One to three were at Amble, Castle Island, the Coquet Estuary, Druridge Pools, Longhoughton Steel, Lynemouth Flash, Newbiggin, Newton Links and Scrape, the River Tweed and Warkworth Gut.

Numbers fell into September. Two remained at Druridge Pools on 1st, three were at Holy Island Causeway on 4th, when three were also at Boulmer, two were in Budle Bay on 5th, four on Hauxley beach on 6th, two at Castle Island on 9th, three at Longhoughton Steel on 10th, two again at Castle Island on 28th and additional singles during the month at Boulmer, Cambois, Newton Scrape, St Mary's and flying N with Dunlin *Calidris alpina* at Seaton Sluice. During October, singles were at the Aln Estuary on 1st and Boulmer on 1st-2nd, with two at the latter site on 6th. The final individual was at Berwick Pier on 16th.

Curlew Sandpiper - Cresswell Pond - July (Mike Hodgson).



Curlew Sandpiper - Low Newton - August (Gary Woodburn).

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / FIRST RECORD: 1832 / LAST RECORD: 2015

The only sighting of the year comprised a moulting adult at Newton Scrape from 11th-14th July (GW/STH *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
17	165	106	34	130	9	22	200	57	220	105	150

Open beaches and rocky roosting areas away from Lindisfarne also held significant wintering concentrations during the first quarter. Peaks involved ca.230 roosting at Seaton Point (Boulmer) (NFO), 115 at Alnmouth, 111 at St Mary's, 109 from Amble-Chevington, 96 from Cresswell-Newbiggin, 80 at Berwick and smaller groups in at least 15 other localities.

Numbers remained high at Boulmer, but began to fall elsewhere during April, with migration of local wintering birds towards Arctic breeding grounds. Passage movements then provided some high counts in late May, perhaps involving flocks from farther south. These included 130 in breeding plumage on Holy Island (Sandham Bay) on 25th and 137 flying N at Seaton Sluice on 31st. A much more unusual May record was a single at Grindon Lough on 7th. Migration continued in June with, for example, 62 moving N off Seaton Sluice on 1st-2nd. Elsewhere, 70 were at Boulmer on 1st.

The usual early return passage began from 20th July, when 222 (16 N, 206 S) were logged at Seaton Sluice. By 27th, 69 were at Newbiggin. Passage strengthened in August, with 144 at St Mary's on 6th, 50 flew S at Seaton Sluice on 8th and by the end of the month 200 were on Holy Island (Sandham Bay and Coves Haven). Arrival continued in September, when numbers at St Mary's increased to 173 and parties of 20-87 were at six other localities.

During October, Lindisfarne remained attractive, with peaks elsewhere of 170 at St Mary's, 100 at Amble-Chevington and 62 at Boulmer. During November-December, flocks settled into favoured wintering beaches provided more high counts, several from WeBS visits. These included 137 from Amble-Chevington, 130 at Boulmer-Alnmouth, 110 at Newton (Football Hole), 100 at Berwick, Holy Island (Sandham Bay) and Low Newton, 79 from Seahouses-Beadnell, 75 at St Mary's, 71 in Newbiggin Bay and 15-40 in five other localities.

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
1,296	1,100	588	163	237	10	1,053	700	971	1,580	2,000	1,270

The decline at Lindisfarne was again apparent, although the reserve still held the county's largest numbers in both winter periods. Elsewhere, between January-March, WeBS counts included ca.400 at Boulmer, 365 in the Blyth Estuary, 314 from Cresswell-Boulmer, 250 at the regular rooftop roost at Blyth, 230 at Cresswell and 100 in the Coquet Estuary and at Seahouses. At Tynemouth, 80 included, unusually, one in full breeding plumage in January. The only inland occurrence involved three at Prestwick Carr.

Spring passage was particularly light, with none of the usual April-May concentrations. Inland sightings involved four at Grindon Lough, two at Derwent Reservoir and singles at Gosforth Park NR and Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh).

Late summer arrivals commenced towards the end of July, with the Lindisfarne build-up detailed above. The Coquet Estuary held 100 and 91 were at Cresswell Pond.

Autumn passage at Seaton Sluice included 346 S from 14th-16th September. Numbers generally rose

rapidly in August-September, with larger counts involving 400 at Boulmer and 116 at Berwick Little Beach. The Lindisfarne totals included 400 frequenting Budle Bay and 300 on Holy Island (Sandham Bay and Coves Haven); 215 were also at Howick-Boulmer and 201 at Cresswell-Newbiggin. Gatherings of 40-128 were at Amble, Beadnell-Howick, the Blyth Estuary, Boulmer-Alnmouth, Cambois, Castle Island, Cocklawburn, Knoxes Reef (Farne Islands), Longhoughton Steel and Low Newton.

During the final quarter, the year's highest count of 2,000 occurred during a WeBS count at Lindisfarne on 13th November (ACr). Away from Lindisfarne, the highest concentrations, again mainly from WeBS counts, were 440 in the Blyth Estuary, 292 from Boulmer-Alnmouth, 200 roosting at Cresswell Pond, 175 in the Coquet Estuary, 150 at Beacon Point (Newbiggin), 149 from Howick-Boulmer, 110 on the River Tweed (New Water Haugh), 106 at Amble and 104 at Cocklawburn. Elsewhere, 30-86 were recorded at a dozen other localities.



Dunlin - Newbiggin - September (Heiko Peters).

Baird's Sandpiper - Boulmer - October (Heiko Peters).



White-rumped Sandpiper - Amble - August (Heiko Peters).

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

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

Rocky feeding areas held the main populations during the first quarter. The biggest concentrations, often from WeBS counts, involved 224 from Seahouses-Beadnell in March, 196 from Budle Point-Seahouses and 150 in Seahouses Harbour, both in January, and 123 on Coquet Island in March. Elsewhere, peak counts involved 53 at Low Newton, 30 at the Farne Islands and 12-26 at Amble-Chevington, Beadnell-Howick, Berwick North Shore, Craster, Cresswell-Newbiggin, Holy Island, Howick-Boulmer, Spittal-Cocklawburn and Tynemouth.

Numbers remained high in April, with peaks of 236 from Seahouses-Beadnell during a WeBS count on 5th (MLC), 165 on the Farne Islands, 150 at Annstead (Seahouses), 146 from Budle Point-Seahouses and 39 roosting on Tynemouth Pier. Northward migration during May reduced numbers at the Farne Islands to 60; elsewhere, 113 were still at Seahouses-Beadnell, with 90 at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh), 18 at Tynemouth, 14 at Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) and six to seven at Low Newton and Newbiggin.

The species was then absent until very light return passage in July produced 14 on the Farne Islands. During August, numbers on the island group rose only slightly to 22, while 102 from Budle Point-Seahouses was the highest count elsewhere. Stag Rocks held 100 on 11th September, but few were noted elsewhere during the month.

During the final quarter, 234 were noted on a WeBS count from Seahouses-Beadnell in December, 116 were at Stag Rocks in December, 87 was the peak at the Farne Islands and other larger groups included 52 at Berwick North Shore, 40 from Beadnell-Howick, 30 from Howick-Boulmer, 24 at Cocklawburn, 23 at Beacon Point (Newbiggin) 18 at Blyth Harbour, 14 at St Mary's, 13 at Tynemouth and ten at Cullercoats.

Baird's Sandpiper *Calidris bairdii*

STATUS: Extremely rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 6 / FIRST: 1967 / LAST: 2012

A juvenile was found at Boulmer feeding at low tide on the sandy/muddy beach on 30th September (BS *et al.*). It continued to show well until 6th October, when it moved up to Newton Scrape, where it was seen on 7th and stayed through to 21st October (TRD *et al.*). The distinctive jizz of a Baird's was well appreciated over its long stay. The sightings were accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

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

Typically light spring passage produced three May sightings: an adult in breeding plumage at Derwent Reservoir on 16th and singles in the Blyth Estuary on 22nd and at a roadside pool at Druridge Bay on 25th-26th.

An influx occurred with return passage during August. Three at Cresswell Pond on 4th included an adult which, from a combination of colour rings, had been marked in Norway; one of these birds remained until 10th. One at Newton Scrape on 4th increased to three (juveniles) on 5th, two remaining to 10th and one to 19th, with an increase to four on 20th (ME). At the Farne Islands, singles were on Brownsman on 4th and Knoxes Reef on 20th. At Druridge Pools, a single arrived on 7th and by 17th four were present (NFO *et al.*), two of which stayed until 30th. One to two were also recorded on Holy Island during the influx, while a single at Tynemouth on 25th was only the third record for the locality.

During September, singles remained at Newton Scrape on 1st and from 9th-18th, with another on 26th, and at Druridge Pools a juvenile remained to 7th; elsewhere, singles visited Holy Island (Rocket Field Pools) on 10th and St Mary's from 16th-29th. Juveniles were at Newton Scrape on 1st October and East Chevington from 18th-21st.

A single on Fenham Flats from 11th December-March 2017 was the county's first instance of wintering.

White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 19 / FIRST: 1963 / LAST: 2015

This species is now regularly anticipated in the county, with annual sightings in recent years. An adult was located in the Coquet Estuary at Amble on 21st August and remained until 29th (JFa/TF *et al.*). It fed with Dunlin *Calidris alpina* on the estuary mud amongst the boats in the harbour. An excellent find, as viewing is often difficult at this locality. A moulting adult was found at Castle Island on 6th September (AC). This individual proved less co-operative due to a low flying helicopter spooking all the waders and it was not re-found.

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / FIRST RECORD: 1853 / LAST RECORD: 2015

Unfortunately, only three of six claims during the year were documented. One was found on Newton Scrape on 26th July (ISD/TRD *et al.*), where it remained until 28th. The plumage heavily resembled a juvenile, being bright and with 'tramlines', but the early date suggests it would more likely be an adult, hence it was accepted as un-aged. An unusual sighting involved one flying in off the sea at Boulmer on 4th September (ME). It flew close over the rocks, in front of the observer, and gave its diagnostic call, deemed by the observer to be close to Budgerigar *Melopsittacus undulatus*! It moved off SW and was not relocated but was well documented. The final report involved a juvenile at East Chevington from 22nd September-2nd October, which mostly stayed on the western edge of north pool and at distance (JFa/TF *et al.*).

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / FIRST RECORD: 1828 / LAST RECORD: 2015

A female at Grindon Lough from 19th May-17th July was thought very likely to be the same individual seen in June 2015 (PRM *et al.*). Its extended stay does seem to indicate that if a male happened to turn up breeding would be a possibility at this ideal site. Unfortunately, the chance of a pairing does seem remote, with so few individuals moving through the county.

Grey Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius*

STATUS: Rare passage and winter visitor. / FIRST RECORD: 1823 / LAST RECORD: 2015

Two sightings during the year, with the first from a boat trip out to the Farne Islands on 17th January, where it was seen twice in flight off Bamburgh (JL). The only other report involved one moving N off Sharpness Point (Tynemouth) on 6th November (MK). Sightings fluctuate annually, with prolific years in 2011 and 2014, but only a few in 2013, 2015 and this year.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

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

BREEDING: Well-represented.

The first spring arrival was at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 30th March. There was then a gap until 10th April, when two were in the Ingram Valley and one on Harthope Burn. Arrival then quickly increased, with two at Whittle Dene Reservoirs and one at Derwent Reservoir on 13th and three at Branton GP on 14th, and by the end of the month birds were established in at least 14 inland localities, including ten pairs along the River Coquet (ASJ) and four pairs in the Breamish Valley.

Spring passage produced one to two at 11 coastal localities during May, while inland more breeding areas were occupied. Nine pairs frequented Upper Coquetdale, two pairs were along the Alwin Burn at Clennel, in the Harthope Valley and at Slaggyford and a single pair was at Bakethin. Elsewhere, during May-June, up to ten were at Caistron and one to three were in other suitable breeding habitats at Branton GP, Bywell, the College Valley, Cupola Bridge, Humshaugh, Ingram, Merryshields GP, Ninebanks and Rothbury.

Typically, early post-breeding dispersal and passage began during July, with high counts including 16 around Derwent Reservoir. In more coastal localities, 12 were in Budle Bay, nine at Castle Island and five to seven

at Cresswell Pond, Foxton, Hauxley NR, Holywell Pond, Seaton Sluice, St Mary's, Tynemouth and Whitley Bay. One to four were on the Farne Islands on 26 dates between late July-mid-September. Six visited Big Waters on 19th August. During September, few remained inland, with three at Whittle Dene on 10th and the last individual at Derwent Reservoir on 14th. Coastal numbers also fell, with only one to two at six localities. More unusual was a single at Newcastle (Exhibition Park) on 22nd.

A late single was at Tynemouth on 1st October. Very late individuals were at Hallington Reservoir on 27th November and crossing the Tyne from North Shields Fish Quay on 5th December; the latter represents the latest record in the county since a presumed returning wintering individual at Yarrow Slake in December 2001.

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius*

STATUS: Extremely rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 3 / FIRST: 2001 / LAST: 2013

A pristine adult in summer plumage, complete with spots, was found at Hauxley on 4th August (PT *et al.*). Arrangements were made for birders to view as the reserve was closed due to building work. This was accomplished and many people were able to see the bird until its departure on 19th August. There have only been three previous sightings in Northumberland and all since 2001. The record was accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee.



Spotted Sandpiper - Hauxley NR - August (Ian Fisher).

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

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

Wintering birds were at six localities between January-March. Up to four were at the favoured Whittle Dene Reservoirs (SR), up to three at Hedgeley GP and singles at gravel pits at Branton and Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh). Singles were also on the River Wansbeck at Middleton and River Tweed near Horncliffe.

Spring passage in April produced individuals at Blagdon from 3rd, Hedgeley GP on 7th, Caistron on 9th and Cresswell Pond on 17th. The only other indications of passage during May were three at Swallow Pond on 4th and a single in Budle Bay on 5th.

Returning individuals occurred in July, with singles at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 4th, followed by two at Cresswell Pond on 12th. From 15th, other singles arrived at Bothal Pond, Budle Bay, Cocklawburn, Gosforth

Park NR, Holy Island (Rocket Field Pools), Newton Scrape and on the River Wansbeck at Ashington. Two were also at Castle Island on 24th and three at Charlton Mires Pond on 31st. Numbers rose in August, with three at Whittle Dene Reservoirs and two at Big Waters, Bothal Pond, Brenkley, Castle Island, Charlton Mires, Gosforth Park NR and Hauxley. Singles were at Amble, Arcot Pond, Backworth, Budle Bay, Derwent Reservoir, Hedgeley GP, Inner Farne (Farne Islands), Morpeth, Newton Scrape and Wooler. During September-October, three remained at Whittle Dene Reservoirs, two were at Big Waters, Bothal Pond and Hedgeley and singles at Branton, Brenkley, Charlton Mires, Gosforth Park NR, Haughton Strother GP and on the River South Tyne at Lambley.

Birds started to occupy regular winter haunts from November. Twos were at Gosforth Park NR and Whittle Dene Reservoirs and singles at Arcot Pond, Big Waters and Haughton Strother GP. Up to three wintering birds were noted in December at Whittle Dene Reservoirs, with singles at Haughton Strother and Hedgeley GPs and on the River Coquet at Thropton, whilst a calling bird flew off from Longhirst Flash on 23rd.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

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

A summer-plumaged adult in Budle Bay from 14th August was joined by a juvenile on 23rd (GPK/DM *et al.*). Both remained until 20th September, with at least one sighting at Fenham Flats during this period. Two adults were then present in the bay from 22nd August-18th October (GPK). During September, one calling bird flew over Holy Island (Vicarage Garden) on 17th, a juvenile appeared at East Chevington north pool on 22nd, when it, or another, was at Druridge Pools until 24th, and a single was at Beal Point on 30th.

The two adults in Budle Bay were probably involved in further October sightings at Beal Point and Holy Island Causeway from 1st-8th. A single was also seen at Cresswell Pond and Druridge Pools in early October, with further singles at Holy Island Causeway and Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 24th.

The first December record since 2008 involved a late, or possibly wintering, individual in Budle Bay on 2nd.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

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

Two, presumed wintering birds, were at Newton Pool on 22nd February. Singles calling over Holywell Pond on 13th March, and in Budle Bay the following day, may have been early spring migrants. Passage was very light and slow, the only April sightings being singles at Newton Scrape on 5th and Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 28th. Movement increased during May, particularly between 5th-16th, with two at Bell's Pond (Cresswell) and on Holy Island. Singles visited Beal, Branton GP, Budle Bay, Corbridge, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools and Hauxley NR; on 28th four were at Holy Island Causeway.

A presumed failed breeder from farther north was responsible for an unusual June record at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 25th.

Typically, return passage was much more obvious. During July, singles were at Derwent Reservoir on 12 dates from 7th and at Cresswell Pond on five days from 25th, as well as 11 other localities, including the Farne Islands. A noticeable increase occurred from 27th, when 12 were at Fenham Flats; five were also at Druridge Pools on 31st. During August, ten to 11 were in the Budle Bay-Fenham Flats-Holy Island area, seven at Cresswell Pond, five at Bradford Kaims, Foxton and Widdrington Moor Lake, four at Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Newton Scrape and Whittle Dene Reservoirs and one to three at Big Waters, Charlton Mires Pond, Derwent Reservoir, the Farne Islands, Gosforth Park NR, Hedgeley GP, Holburn Moss, Newbiggin, St Mary's Wetland, Tynemouth, Warkworth and West Hartford. Numbers remained high in September, with a Lindisfarne peak of 13 at Longbridge End from 10th-17th (SR/AH/GB), seven in Budle Bay, five at Cresswell, three at Whittle Dene and one to two at 13 other coastal, and three inland, localities.

Although numbers reduced during October, the species continued to be well-reported. On 13th, five roosted at Coroner's Meadow and were seen at Whiteadder Point (both River Tweed). A maximum of four were on Holy Island on 2nd, three remained at Cresswell until mid-month and two were at Beal, Bothal Pond, Castle Island and West Ord, with singles at Boulmer and Druridge Pools. Inland singles were at Gosforth Park NR and Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal). The final records involved two at Cresswell Pond on 1st and one on 2nd November.

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 10 / FIRST: 1977 / LAST: 2015

Another sighting of this American wader, with one well located at Lindisfarne on the Beal saltmarsh on 28th September (RA). It was photographed at range and the find was a testament to the observer's efforts as he had specifically earmarked Lindisfarne for an American wader and had spent the previous eight hours looking for one! It was not relocated, which is understandable given the locality.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

STATUS: Uncommon passage visitor.

BREEDING: Historical. / LAST BRED: 1853

Spring passage began in May, with singles at Hoppen Kiln Flash on 8th and Backworth Pond on 11th. Further singles quickly followed at Hedgeley GP on 12th, Beadnell Flash on 14th-15th, Monks House Pool on 19th, Lynemouth Flash on 23rd-24th, Newton Scrape on 27th and Druridge Pools from 28th-31st. June was quiet, with the only reports involving singles at Druridge Pools on 1st, 3rd and 15th, Newton Scrape between 14th-16th and Monks House Pool on 14th; two were at Bothal Pond on 24th (TF/JFa).

Early return passage during July produced singles at Newton Scrape on 16th and 20th, Cresswell Pond on 26th and an adult at Derwent Reservoir from 30th-8th August. Elsewhere in August, individuals were at Charlton Mires Pond on 4th, Bothal Pond on 7th and 21st, a juvenile at Newton Scrape on 16th-17th and Druridge Pools from 19th-21st.

During September, singles at Bothal Pond on 3rd, Druridge Pools from 17th-18th and East Chevington on 25th were the only sightings. The first October records since 1998 involved singles at East Chevington north pool on 1st, Druridge Pools on 4th and Bothal Pond on 4th and 16th; the latter representing the latest county record since 1976.

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
641	441	314	342	6	4	791	320	1,208	933	597	250

The species was also prominent away from Lindisfarne, with first-quarter peaks of 342 at Howdon, 226 in the Tweed Estuary, 200 in the Coquet Estuary, 192 in the Blyth Estuary and 120-151 at Boulmer, Cambois, Cresswell Pond, Howick-Boulmer and St Mary's. A very early individual was back at Derwent Reservoir by 12th February while, from mid-March, small numbers also appeared in western breeding localities at Allendale, Coanwood, Derwent Reservoir, Grindon Lough, Melkridge and Plenmeller and Ridley Commons.

Large coastal gatherings continued into early April, with maximum counts of 233 in the Tweed Estuary, 194 at Howdon and 191 in the Blyth Estuary, before numbers fell sharply as winter visitors departed and local breeding pairs moved inland. Display was seen at Allendale, Grindon Lough, Rowley Burn and Westburnhope. During May, other pairs were found in additional areas around Derwent Reservoir, Slaggyford and Slaley.

Early return towards the coast occurred from late June, with groups of four to six at the Aln and Blyth Estuaries, Druridge Pools, Hauxley NR, Howdon and Newbiggin.

Return increased sharply during July, as shown by the Lindisfarne table. Seaton Sluice Watch Tower reported 55 S during 22nd-24th, the first indication of passage there. A roost at North Blyth Staithes attracted 280, 96 were in the Aln Estuary and 80+ at Amble. Numbers continued to swell in August, with the North Blyth roost peaking at 480. Up to 350 roosted on Holy Island (Rocket Field Pools), 170 were at Berwick and 150 in the Coquet Estuary. As expected, the highest annual count came from Lindisfarne, with 1,208 noted during a WeBS visit on 18th September (ACr). Elsewhere, 300 at North Blyth and 210 in the Tweed Estuary were the highest counts.

As the final quarter progressed, flocks became settled into favoured winter feeding and roosting localities.

Long-billed Dowitcher - Cresswell Pond - January (Frank Golding).



Long-billed Dowitcher - Cresswell Pond - February (Jack Bucknall).



Long-billed Dowitcher - Cresswell Pond - April (Helko Peters).

Peak counts involved 316 at Howdon, 314 at North Blyth, 214 in the Tweed Estuary, 200 on Holy Island, 164 from Beadnell-Howick, 154 at St Mary's, 152 from Howick-Boulmer and 135 in the Aln Estuary. Exceptionally, in December, up to nine remained at Derwent Reservoir. An individual ringed on the Humber on 29th October 2016 was identified at Newbiggin on 29th December.

Jack Snipe *Lymanocryptes minimus*

STATUS: Uncommon passage and winter visitor.

Wet feeding areas provided sightings during the first quarter, with individuals settled in favoured wintering areas. Two were at Woodhorn Flashes in January and Backworth Pond throughout February, with singles in the first quarter at the Aln Estuary, Beadnell, the Blyth Estuary, East Chevington, Ellington, Fenham Flats, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Newbiggin, St Mary's Wetland, Swallow Pond, Warenton, West Hartford and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Spring passage during April produced a total of at least four on Holy Island during the month and singles were at Backworth, Druridge Pools and Inner Farne (Farne Islands). Further passage during May produced singles on two dates on Brownsman (Farne Islands).

Return movements began from mid-September, with one at Gosforth Park NR and, as usual, arrival increased into October. This produced at least four at Gosforth Park (NHSN) and a total of four were on Holy Island during the month. Three were at St Mary's Wetland, one to two on six dates on the Farne Islands, two at Haughton Strother GP and singles at Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Gosforth Park NR, Hauxley, Holywell Pond and Woodhorn Flashes. One fed on a manure heap at Swallow Pond. A light November influx was apparent on Holy Island, with three present on 14th, singles were at Backworth on five dates and others were at Big Waters and Doddington Bridge. During December, singles were settled into winter haunts at Boulmer, Haughton Strother GP, Howdon, Newburn Riverside CP, the River Tweed at Chainbridge, West Hartford and West Ord.

Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus*

STATUS: Extremely rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 8 / FIRST: 1959 / LAST: 2015

The individual first located at Cresswell Pond on 9th November 2015 (ADMc *et al.*) wintered and was last seen on 27th April, when it had assumed summer plumage; unsurprisingly, it became the first to over-winter in Northumberland. It moved between Cresswell Pond-Bell's Pond-Druridge Pools throughout its stay. This record has been accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

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

BREEDING: Well-represented.

Cold conditions on the continent caused a light influx during January, when one arrived from the E at Tynemouth on 10th and another flew W at Birling on 17th. Elsewhere, some records were undoubtedly fresh arrivals. Two were at Hauxley RS, Howdon and Newbiggin and singles at 13 other lowland localities. Other singles were on higher ground in the Harthope Valley and Harwood Forest. Sightings during February involved four at Prestwick Carr, two at Arcot GC and Backworth Pond and singles in seven other areas. During March, five were found on Bewick Moor, three at Rothbury, two at Harwood and Kielder Forests and singles in 13 widespread localities, including an individual caught in the information centre on Inner Farne (Farne Islands). It was released and flew strongly towards the mainland.

'Roding' began in April at Westburnhope and increased during May with display at Allen Banks, Beanley Wood, Derwent Reservoir, Grindon Lough, Plankey Mill and Slaley. Singles were also in suitable breeding woodlands at Broomhaugh, Dipton and Thrunton. In June, as pairs were breeding, the only sightings involved four at Slaley and one to two at Beanley Wood, Edlingham Crag, the Harthope Valley and Stobswood.

Immigration was shown by an exhausted individual in a ditch on Holy Island (Crooked Lonnen) on 30th September. Arrival during October was lighter than usual, with peaks of 12 on the Farne Islands (FIR) and nine on Holy Island, both on 15th. Three were at Hauxley on 16th, two at Boulmer on 15th and Eglington Moor and Newbiggin on 30th, and singles at nine other coastal localities, including one arriving from the E at St Mary's.

Further light influxes followed in November, with a peak of four at Newbiggin on 3rd, when three came 'in-off' at Seaton Sluice. On Holy Island, three were in the Straight Lonnen on 4th, followed by two at The Snook on 11th. One to two occurred on seven dates on the Farne Islands; elsewhere, coastal singles were noted at seven sites. Two were at Harwood Forest and Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) and singles at 15 other widespread inland localities. During December, three were at Colt Crag Reservoir, two at East Chevington, Gosforth Park NR and Prestwick Carr and singles at Beanley, Bewick Moor, the Blyth Estuary, Cramlington (Valley Park), Mootlaw Quarry and Swallow Pond.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

STATUS: Common resident, passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

Rich muddy feeding areas attracted large parties during the first quarter, with peaks of 56 at Backworth Pond, 40 at Weetslade Community Park and on Holy Island, 32 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) and 24 at Branton GP. Groups of up to 20 were at numerous other lowland localities. One to two on the Farne Islands on four dates between 24th March-18th May suggested emigration.

The first two displaying birds were in Allendale on 7th March, with display noted at ten further localities in the western uplands from 16th. Many sites were occupied during April, with 11 in Allendale, including 'drumming' males. Display was again noted at Allendale Common in May, and elsewhere at Grindon Lough, Pithouse Fell, Plenneller Common, Sipton Burn and Slaley. In June, six males displayed on Acton Moor, three 'drummed' at Garleigh Moor and Lambley and singles at Broomlee Lough, Debdon, Ingram and Rothley Lake. Lowland display in suitable breeding habitat occurred at Druridge Pools and Prestwick Carr.

The usual post-breeding movements towards the coast followed in July, with eight at Hoppen Kiln Flash, five to six at Cresswell Pond and Druridge Pools, three at Backworth and Bothal Ponds and two at Howdon. Numbers rose slowly during August to 15 at Druridge Pools, ten at Bothal and three to five at seven other localities. Arrival was evident in September, with ten 'in-off' at Budle Bay, six N at Tynemouth and two N at Seaton Sluice. Numbers swelled during the month, with 54 at Castle Island, 39 at Weetslade Community Park, 30 at Monks House Pool, 17 at Charlton Mires Pond and up to 12 at numerous other feeding areas.

Further movement during October brought the year's largest concentration of 92 to Haughton Strother GP on 17th (MR). Elsewhere, 36 were at Castle Island, 33 at Cresswell Pond, 32 at Big Waters and 30 at St Mary's and Weetslade Community Park; the same number were flushed by a Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* at Druridge Pools on 14th. A run of autumn records on 19 dates at the Farne Islands peaked with four on 15th October. During November-December birds were settled in winter haunts. Larger concentrations involved 77 on floodwater at Newburn Riverside, while 67 used subsidence pools at Callerton. Other big counts included 58 still at Haughton Strother GP, 50 at Weetslade Community Park, 40 at Backworth, 35 at Low Newton and 30 at Arcot Pond, Gosforth and Holy Island.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

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

One in the River Tweed Estuary was chasing Herring Gulls *Larus argentatus argenteus* on 5th January.

Low numbers were seen in the late summer/early autumn period. An adult with full tail 'spoons' flew N at Tynemouth Pier at 08:30hrs on 9th July and one was in Druridge Bay on 17th July. Two passed N at Newbiggin on 28th August and two dark phase juveniles N through Staple Sound (Farne Islands) on 4th September. In October, an adult flew N at Newton Links on 2nd, with another there on 6th, one was also at Boulmer on 6th, a single flew N off Snab Point on 9th, with one N at Seaton Sluice on 11th, another dark juvenile N through Staple Sound on 14th and a juvenile N at Newton Links on 22nd.

The autumn ended in spectacular fashion on the Farne Islands, with 17 birds passing through Inner Sound and Staple Sound on 6th November, comprising a stunning pale morph adult with 'spooned' tail, an intermediate adult and 15 juveniles (FIR). On the same day, 11 were counted at Boulmer, six flew N at Seaton Sluice and two N at Tynemouth then Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay). A further light movement was noted on 21st-22nd November, when two juveniles flew N at Newbiggin (in one hour 30 minutes) on 21st, with a further two N there (in one hour 45 minutes) on 22nd, and two flew N at Seaton Sluice and Snab Point.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

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

Mid-winter records are highly unusual, so a single at Newbiggin on 21st January was a notable find. More typically, a dark phase bird flew N at Seaton Sluice on 13th May, with a single N at Newton Links on 25th May. Four flew N at Seaton Sluice between 2nd-9th June and other, mostly northbound, singles were at Boulmer, the Farne Islands, the Long Nanny Estuary, Newbiggin, Seahouses, St Mary's and Tynemouth to 20th June. In July, a total of seven, involving five N and three S, were logged at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower on three days to 27th, two pale phase morphs on the sea at St Mary's on 20th later flew N, two moved N off Tynemouth on 31st and singles were at Tynemouth on 5th, the Farne Islands and Whitley Bay on 20th and East Chevington on 31st.

An extremely low August total at Seaton Sluice involved only 13 N and 23 S (in 33 hours). Elsewhere in August, seven flew N at Newbiggin on 25th and one to four were noted at Amble, Budle Bay-Stag Rocks (Bamburgh), Hauxley, Low Newton, Newbiggin, Snab Point, Tynemouth and Warkworth Gut. Fourteen were noted over six dates at the Farne Islands from 6th-31st August. Things didn't improve at Seaton Sluice in September, with a very disappointing 13 N and 19 S (in 70 hours). Other September sightings involved seven at Warkworth on 11th, three N at Newbiggin on 4th, with five there on 5th, seven on 19th and two on 20th, three dark phase birds seen on a pelagic off Tynemouth and singles at Druridge Bay on 1st, 3rd and 5th, Ross Back Sands on 2nd, Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) on 5th, Amble on 10th and flying N at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 12th. Groups of one to four passed the Farne Islands on ten days between 1st-22nd September.

In October, one was at Boulmer on 1st, three off Holy Island and N at Newton Links (in two hours) on 2nd and, on 6th, ten passed Newton Links (in one hour 20 minutes) (JGS), two passed Boulmer and single pale and dark phase birds moved N at Holy Island. One flew E at Holy Island on 7th October, with two there on 8th, two flew S at North Blyth on 11th October and northbound singles were at Cresswell and Newbiggin on 5th and 20th respectively. Passage declined at the Farne Islands in October, with an adult on 2nd and a juvenile on 14th, both N through Staple Sound. Singles passed the Farne Islands on 2nd and 6th November, one flew S on 5th and two N on 6th at Seaton Sluice, with two at Boulmer on the latter date. The final records involved four that flew N at Seaton Sluice on 2nd-3rd December.

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*

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

Another very disappointing year began with an adult S, close in, at Tynemouth on 18th June and a juvenile flew N there on 28th August (DRW). In October, a juvenile flew directly above the Rangers' heads whilst in their Zodiac boat in Staple Sound (Farne Islands) on 1st (FIR), an adult was at Newbiggin on 2nd and two passed N at Seaton Sluice on 14th (SSWT).

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

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

A noteworthy five records were received in January. What was considered the same individual went S at Holy Island on 1st, S at Tynemouth then N at Seaton Sluice on 2nd and rested with Eiders *Somateria mollissima* in the River Tweed Estuary on 3rd. One flew S at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 21st January.

In spring, one was reported at Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) on 24th April and two moved N at Newton Links on 29th April. One killed a gull sp. on the Farne Islands on 21st May, singles flew N on 25th May at Dunstanburgh, Newton Links, Seaton Sluice and Tynemouth and one flew N at Newbiggin on 30th. In June, further singles flew N at Seaton Sluice on 3rd, St Mary's on 4th, Snab Point on 5th and Druridge Bay on 26th, with July singles N at Rockcliffe on 11th and Berwick on 13th; one moved S after resting on Knoxes Reef (Farne Islands) on 28th July.

August proved to be a very quiet month, with the only reports involving singles at the Farne Islands on 18th and 28th, one flying N at Tynemouth on 28th and two passed Newbiggin on 29th; no records from Seaton Sluice was considered exceptional. Reports in September involved one flying N at Tynemouth on 3rd, six at the Farne Islands on 8th (the highest single count there from a total of 22 over nine dates between 4th September-2nd October), one during a pelagic off Whitley Bay on 18th and two passed Newbiggin on 19th.

Numbers continued to increase into October. At Tynemouth, three flew S on 1st and five flew N and three 'lingered' on 2nd. The latter date also produced seven N (in two hours) and four N (in one hour) at St Mary's, five N at Newton Links, four at Newbiggin and three very high NW with another three S (in 45 minutes), both also at Newbiggin, and singles off Holy Island and Stag Rocks. At Newton Links, another group of five passed (in one hour 20 minutes) on 6th, three moved N (in one hour) on 11th, with four N (in one hour 30 minutes) on 22nd and seven N (in two hours 40 minutes) on 23rd October. Singles were seen at Boulmer on 6th, Snab Point on 8th, Stag Rocks on 14th and flying S at the Farne Islands on 19th and N at Holy Island on 23rd October. In November, 20 flew N at Seaton Sluice on 6th (SSWT), when eight passed Boulmer and singles were at Cullercoats, Newbiggin and Tynemouth, with two N at Snab Point the following day. Singles were still being seen off the Farne Islands and, later in the month, two flew N (in one hour 30 minutes) at Newbiggin on 21st and five N at Seaton Sluice on 22nd, when one was off Cresswell. Two flew N at Tynemouth on 23rd and one was off Newton Links on 27th November. Finally, eight moved N at Seaton Sluice during December.

Auk sp. *Uria / Alca / Fratercula*

Some large movements N at Seaton Sluice in May, the vast majority Guillemots *Uria aalge*, included up to 2,200 (per hour) from 12th-14th and up to 500 (in one hour) from 27th-31st. Otherwise, highest counts were between 100-239, before some significant movement occurred in November. During three periods at Seaton Sluice, maximum counts were 275 N (in one hour 30 minutes) from 1st-2nd, 770 N (in seven hours) from 6th-8th and 300 N (in two hours) from 22nd-23rd; the majority of birds were considered to be Guillemots (SSWT). Elsewhere in November, 190+ (per hour) moved N at St Mary's on 7th and 160 N at Snab Point on 21st.

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

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

BREEDING: Abundant.

Small numbers were recorded during the first quarter, including an unfortunate individual killed and eaten by a Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus* at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 8th February.

With the next census due in 2018, no population count was made at the Farne Islands this year. Spring cleaning was noted on 23rd March and by 30th March numbers on land were in their thousands. The first egg was spotted with the use of the islands' new burrow cameras on 30th April and, on 1st June, a Puffin being mobbed by a Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* for its beak full of fish told the Rangers that the first chick was hatched. After the washout last year, with productivity at just 0.46, this somewhat drier year was a considerable improvement at 0.70 chicks per pair. Sandeels seemed to be in plentiful supply and Rangers observed pufflings above ground from 8th July-3rd August (FIR). No census of breeding Puffin was undertaken on Coquet Island this year, although they did provide a food source for large gulls during the breeding season (RSPB).

The only sizeable movements of the year came from Seaton Sluice and involved 150 N (in one hour) on 27th May, 500 N on 1st June, 230 N on 5th June, and 26 N and 42 S on 5th July. Thereafter, away from the Farne Islands, few were noted before the last record of a single at Budle Point on 19th November.

Black Guillemot *Cephus grylle*

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

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

It proved a poor year for this inhabitant of rocky shores and islets, which continues to winter around the Farne Islands in small numbers. The first sighting of the year was quite unusual, involving a summer-plumaged adult seen from a boat in Inner Sound (Farne Islands) on 7th May (FIR). Another adult, presumably a different individual, flew N at Newbiggin the same day (AP).

The third, and final, record was a typical autumn sighting of one off Inner Farne Lighthouse Cliff (Farne Islands) on 12th November (FIR).



Puffin - Farne Islands - July (Andy Mould).

Razorbill *Alca torda*

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

BREEDING: Well-represented.

The highest count in the first quarter involved just 14 at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 14th March. In April, 50 gathered at Needles Eye (Berwick) on 26th, 30 were on the cliff at Dunstanburgh Castle on 17th and 22 were at Stag Rocks on 3rd.

Birds were present on cliffs at the Farne Islands during an early visit by the Rangers on 12th March, with the first egg discovered on 4th May and the population increasing to 491 pairs (476 in 2015). However, it was a poor breeding season in terms of productivity, with a ten year low of 0.45 chicks per pair (FIR). At Needles Eye, 88 nests were counted in early June (27 in 2015) (MHu). The majority of 90 birds counted at Dunstanburgh in the first week of July were on the cliffs.

Summer movement at Seaton Sluice included 125 N (in two hours) and 290 N (in two hours) on 31st and 30th May respectively and 1,110 N (in four hours) and 1,370 N (in two hours) on 2nd and 5th June respectively (SSWT). After the breeding season, small numbers occurred in autumn and winter around the Farne Islands, with odd birds noted elsewhere into November.

Little Auk *Alle alle*

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

A strong south east wind with squalls on 5th January brought good numbers into the North Sea and 300 moved S (in three hours) at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) (AA/MH), with 15 recorded at Beadnell. The following day, 25 moved S (in three hours) at Seaton Sluice and counts of one to six came from Beadnell Bay, Blyth, Boulmer, Cambois, Cresswell, Howick, Low Newton, Stag Rocks, St Mary's and Tynemouth on several dates from 2nd-15th. Eleven were off Dunstan Steads (Embleton) on 17th January and two flew N at Tynemouth on 19th March.

There were no further records until one sheltered from rough seas in the lee of the pier at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 11th October. The year ended with a scatter of records in November, involving a single at the Farne Islands on 5th, ten N at Seaton Sluice from 5th-7th, with two N at Cullercoats, Newbiggin and Tynemouth during the same period, eight N through Staple Sound (Farne Islands) on 6th, four N (in 3 hours 30 minutes) at Newbiggin and one at Cambois on 8th, one within 4m of the Farne Islands' Rangers' Zodiac on 8th, one at Stag Rocks on 15th, three N at Staple Sound and Tynemouth on 21st, two N (in one hour 45 minutes) at Newbiggin on 22nd and a single N at Tynemouth on 23rd.

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

STATUS: Abundant resident and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Abundant.

The only sizeable counts in the first quarter involved a movement of 500 S at Rockliffe (Whitley Bay) on 13th February, 85 S (in five hours) at Seaton Sluice on 2nd January and 40 on the sea at Tynemouth on 24th January; all other counts numbered from one to 22.

Rangers at the Farne Islands described the cliffs as 'heaving' during a boardwalk repair outing on 12th March. However, this was only the ninth year since 1971 that the Guillemot population on the islands did not increase and numbers fell from a record high of 53,461 individuals in 2015 to 49,037. The first egg was found on 19th April, the first chick was discovered on 23rd May and 'jumplings' were noted on the sea from 14th June. Star of the show was a probable breeder with an orange darvic, originally found on Lighthouse Cliff (Inner Farne) on 24th May, and originally ringed as a nestling in Gotland (Sweden) on 23rd June 2004, making it 11 years and 335 days old (FIR). No breeding data was received from Needles Eye (Berwick) this year.

Some sizeable summer movements included 800 N (in two hours) and 185 N (in two hours) at Seaton Sluice on 30th and 31st May respectively. Earlier in the month, a total of 200 were counted passing N at East Chevington on 13th and 780 (per hour) moved N at Berwick Pier on 14th. Even larger passage was observed in early June, with 2,750 N (in four hours) and 4,000 N (in two hours) at Seaton Sluice on 2th and 5th respectively and 150 N (in two hours) at Newbiggin on 4th; smaller numbers were logged at many other coastal points.

With the exception of 110 in Druridge Bay on 10th September, small numbers and light passage dominated the early autumn period before 70 flew N (in ten minutes) at Hauxley on 22nd October. Strong northerly winds in early November brought hundreds streaming past the Farne Islands and 40 were at Cheswick on 4th, with 60+ off Snab Point on 17th.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

STATUS: Well-represented summer visitor.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

The first returnees were six at the pre-breeding roost at St Cuthbert's Cove (Farne Islands) on 28th April, increasing to 13 on 30th April, 44 on 1st May and an impressive 82 on 5th May. On 6th May, three blue-ringed birds, originating from a colony near Hartlepool, were seen in the roost. At the Long Nanny Estuary, the first sighting was on 30th April, with four on 2nd May increasing to a maximum of 68 adults on 14th. Elsewhere in May, 14 were noted at Lindisfarne NNR during a WeBS count on 8th, three at the Aln Estuary during a WeBS count on 7th, two at Beadnell from 13th and singles at several sites.

A very poor breeding season was reported from the Long Nanny Estuary colony. Mating was first observed on 15th May, with the first egg noted on 20th May, the first hatching on 14th June and the first fledgling on 7th July. A minimum of 17 pairs nested, producing 65 eggs, but only five chicks were known to have fledged, giving a lowly productivity figure of 0.29 (NT). One found dead in the colony on 23rd June had been ringed as a pullus at Newburgh (Aberdeenshire) in June 2009. By contrast, an impressive 37 pairs nested at the two Lindisfarne colonies, producing 51 chicks, 42 of which fledged to give a high productivity figure of 1.14 (NE).

Breeding data 2012-2016 was as follows (with adjusted totals for some years at Lindisfarne):

Locality	Pairs in 2016	Pairs in 2015	Pairs in 2014	Pairs in 2013	Pairs in 2012
Long Nanny	17	27	30	17	40
Lindisfarne NNR	37	17	35	18	14

Towards the end of the breeding season, the high tide roost counts at Lindisfarne showed more adults than the whole known population in Northumberland, peaking at 112 on 23rd July (NE). Elsewhere, as with 2015, summer counts were very low this year, with only six individuals moving past Seaton Sluice from 20th-23rd July, seven at Budle Bay during the month and one to five at eight other sites. The final record of the year, and the only one in August, involved a single N at Snab Point on 3rd.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*

STATUS: Extremely rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 2 / FIRST: 1880 / LAST: 2007

A surprise find was an adult well photographed in flight at Big Waters on 27th July (BB). It was only present for eight minutes and was initially picked up being mobbed by Common Terns *Sterna hirundo* at the north end of the lake, but flew past the observer and moved off S. This sighting was accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

STATUS: Uncommon passage visitor.

Spring records all appeared in the month of May, with three S at Whitley Bay on 6th, a single off Tynemouth that then headed N on 8th and, on the same date, a fascinating record involving a group of four, later joined by others to give a maximum of ten, 'hawking' over the lake at Big Waters, before heading off E later that evening (MM *et al.*). The first of two at the Farne Islands this year, involved a summer-plumaged adult in the evening tern roost on Inner Farne south rocks on 11th May.

Autumn began with a juvenile N through Staple Sound (Farne Islands) on 16th August. It was followed by a well-watched juvenile at QEII CP Lake on 21st-24th August and probably a different bird at Newbiggin north beach on 22nd, with probably the same bird feeding offshore at Beacon Point (Newbiggin) the following evening. These were followed by three juveniles N and one S at Seaton Sluice on 27th-28th August, a juvenile on the Battery Rocks (Tynemouth) on 27th, with probably the same individual off Tynemouth Pier the following day, and a juvenile off Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) on 28th. The final sighting of the year involved a juvenile S at Hauxley on 10th September.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

STATUS: Common summer and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

The first sighting of the year involved two N at Tynemouth on 25th March, followed by one at Bamburgh the following day, eight to nine at the Farne Islands on 27th, two at Bamburgh on 29th and six at Berwick on 31st. Movement was noted at Seaton Sluice from 7th April and included totals of 102 N and 53 S (in nine hours) from 14th-18th April; elsewhere, numbers were modest with 31 from Budle Point-Seahouses during a WeBS count on 10th and a maximum of 24 at Goswick in the second half of the month.

Summer movements were light, with maximum counts from Seaton Sluice of 90 N (in one hour) and 60 S (in one hour) on 24th and 19th May respectively and 230 N (in three hours) and 100 S (in two hours) on 4th and 29th June respectively. Away from the breeding colonies, the maximum count was 120 at Budle Point on 15th May.

The colony on Coquet Island saw a 16.9% reduction to 1,349 pairs and the first egg date was 8th May. Ring-readings of adults revealed local birds, together with others from the Ythan Estuary (Aberdeenshire) and several Dutch birds (RSPB). A similar population reduction (16.2%) was noted at the Farne Islands, where the first egg date was rather late, at 16th May, the first chick was seen on 5th June and the first fledglings on 11th July (FIR).

Common Terns - Cresswell Pond - July (Frank Golding).



Black Tern - QEII CP - August (Colin Bradshaw).



Arctic Tern - Farne Islands - July (Andy Mould).

Breeding data 2012-2016 was as follows:

Locality	Pairs in 2016	Pairs in 2015	Pairs in 2014	Pairs in 2013	Pairs in 2012
Coquet Island	1,349	1,624	1,754	670	1,289
Farne Islands	629	750	959	824	966

Modest movement in July included 260 S (in one hour) at Seaton Sluice on 8th, with 60 S and 15 N on 19th August and 106 N and 159 S from 1st-4th September at the same site. The maximum gatherings during this period involved 300 off Ross Back Sands on 2nd September and, during July, 110-180 at Cocklawburn Beach, Newbiggin, the Tweed Estuary and Tynemouth. Smaller numbers occurred elsewhere, including late records of a single one nautical mile E of Longstone (Farne Islands) on 14th November, two fishing at Newbiggin on 18th November, one fishing off Low Newton on 19th November and four N at Seaton Sluice between 1st-3rd December.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

STATUS: Common summer and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

A very early single at Knoxes Reef (Farne Islands) on 6th April was followed by one at Swallow Pond on 14th, up to five at East Chevington from 17th and two N at Seaton Sluice and three at Inner Farne (Farne Islands) on 18th; numbers quickly grew at the Farne Islands towards the end of the month. One to two were also at Arcot Pond, Gosforth Park NR and Whittle Dene Reservoirs in late April. Numbers increased rapidly during May, with maximum counts of 62 on the raft at the Royal Quays (North Shields) on 12th, 31 at East Chevington during a WeBS count on 6th, 26 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 14th and 22 at Lindisfarne NNR during a WeBS count on 8th.

The colony on Coquet Island reached a new six year peak at 1,201 pairs. The first egg was noted on 13th May. From the sampled nests, productivity was again low this year at 0.6 chicks per pair (RSPB). In a poor season at the Farne Islands, fewer pairs bred than in any year since 2003 and only one fledgling was noted on 22nd July (FIR).

Breeding data 2012-2016 was as follows:

Locality	Pairs in 2016	Pairs in 2015	Pairs in 2014	Pairs in 2013	Pairs in 2012
Coquet Island	1,201	1,160	1,196	1,041	1,158
Farne Islands	87	98	88	94	88

Elsewhere, the first young hatched in mid-June at Gosforth Park NR, where around eight pairs fledged 13 young in July, two pairs were still feeding young to mid-August and the last chick fledged on 22nd August (NHSN). At Whittle Dene Reservoirs, at least six broods totalled 15 young in July, although some young drowned on their first flight, being unable to regain access onto the vertically-sided raft, and five fledged juveniles and two chicks were still on the raft on 1st August. Also in July, a pair at Big Waters raised one young but a pair at Holywell Pond had the nest predated. Away from the main breeding colonies, the largest summer gatherings involved a maximum of 190 at East Chevington on 28th July and 160+ at Tynemouth from 24th-26th August.

Notable passage began with 210 S at Seaton Sluice on 23rd July and 200 S at Whitley Bay the following day. Also at Seaton Sluice, 450 moved mostly S, from 19th-31st August, with a peak day count of 125 (in one hour) on 22nd, and 883 passed during the first week of September, including 582 S. Thereafter, smaller numbers were noted at Seaton Sluice and elsewhere along the coast, as well as at Derwent Reservoir, to the end of September. The only October records involved three in Budle Bay on 17th and one during a WeBS count from Amble-Chevington on the same date.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

STATUS: Uncommon summer and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

The first returnee was on Coquet Island on 24th April; none were seen elsewhere until two visited Inner

Farne (Farne Islands) on 17th May, followed by singles at Hauxley, three at Castle Island on 28th and two N at Seaton Sluice on 24th, where a total of six flew N from 3rd-4th June. Elsewhere in June, singles were at Amble on 5th and 17th and two lingered at Beacon Point (Newbiggin) late in the month.

The decline at Coquet Island from the record high of 111 breeding pairs in 2015 was disappointing and perhaps linked to poor weather and foraging conditions. The first egg was noted on 17th May and, with a mean of 1.2 eggs per nest, clutch size was the second lowest on record. Overall productivity was 0.88 (0.92 in 2015), representing 91 fledged chicks, all but one of which were ringed. Throughout the season, 197 unique rings were recorded, including a Spanish-ringed bird returning from last year. The proportion of breeding birds originating as chicks from Coquet Island exceeded that of birds from elsewhere for the first time on record, suggesting that the colony is becoming self-sustaining (RSPB). There were no confirmed breeding attempts at the Farne Islands, but two birds were seen copulating in the roosts around South Rocks and Ladies Path in late May, and displaying around South Rocks on 10th June, though no further breeding indications were noted. Two pairs were also present on Brownsman from 22nd June-1st July, where, despite sightings of flight display, courtship dancing and exploring for presumed nesting sites, no breeding attempts were confirmed (FIR).

Breeding data 2012-2016 was as follows:

Locality	Pairs in 2016	Pairs in 2015	Pairs in 2014	Pairs in 2013	Pairs in 2012
Coquet Island	104	111	93	78	71
Farne Islands	0	1	0	0	0

A peak count of eight was recorded on the Inner Farne South Rocks roost on 21st May, with smaller counts of four on 23rd May and 22nd June. The first juvenile from Coquet Island was seen on Inner Farne on 23rd July, among three adults, and was seen again the following day, with a single adult on 24th July.

During July, 15 moved past Seaton Sluice from 14th-23rd, the majority S, including eight on 23rd. Five were at Chevington Burn mouth on 3rd July, five were noted during a WeBS count from Cresswell-Newbiggin on 23rd and nine adults and three juveniles were at Beacon Point (Newbiggin) on 29th, with one to three, including juveniles, at eight additional localities during the month. Passage was again noted at Seaton Sluice in August, with three N and 11 S from 11th-28th. A maximum count of 41 came from Newbiggin on 22nd August; elsewhere during the month, eight were feeding off Newton Links on 5th, eight (including three juveniles) were at Snab Point on 28th, five were at Budle Point to the end of the month, two were at Alnmouth on 18th and adults with juveniles were noted on many dates at Lynemouth Bay, St Mary's and the Tyne Estuary, with additional singles at Amble and Hauxley.

In September, six passed Seaton Sluice between 2nd-3rd, 15 were at Ross Back Sands on 2nd, one to three were recorded on a number of dates from 2nd-14th at Coquet Island, Druridge, the Farne Islands, Newbiggin, Snab Point, St Mary's, Tynemouth and Warkworth and a peak count of 21, including 15 adults, came from Budle Bay on 8th, with the last there on 15th. The final report involved two still at Newbiggin on 20th September.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

STATUS: Common summer and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

The first of the year involved a party of four in Druridge Bay on 15th April, followed by one at the Farne Islands on 16th and four at Druridge and a single at St Mary's on 17th. Twos followed at East Chevington and Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 20th and 26th respectively, with a single at Whitley Bay on 24th. Light passage continued into May, when ca.1,000 were on Coquet Island and 3,300 roosted at Knoxes Reef and Ladies Path (Farne Islands) on 4th. An estimated 300 at the Long Nanny Estuary breeding colony on 5th May increased to 1,000 on 14th, with ca.1,200 by early June.

On Coquet Island, the first egg was noted on 12th May and the colony continued its steady increase, with 1,490 pairs breeding. Productivity was again low, at 0.6 chicks fledged per pair (0.59 in 2015). Despite the low productivity and poor weather conditions, the body condition of chicks was rather better than last year (RSPB). Birds were scraping and mating at the Farne Islands on 5th May and the first egg was discovered on 14th May. Total breeding pairs dropped by 10.7% to 1,508, the lowest number since 2002. Productivity was again low at 0.23 chicks fledged per pair (0.21 in 2015) (FIR).

A catastrophic breeding season was reported from the important Long Nanny Estuary colony, where only two young were known to have fledged; the lowest productivity since Arctic Terns started nesting here in 1980. Several factors were likely to blame, including very poor spring weather, high tides washing out many clutches and heavy predation by Stoats *Mustela ermine* and Kestrels *Falco tinnunculus* late in the breeding cycle (NT).

Breeding data 2012-2016 was as follows:

Locality	Pairs in 2016	Pairs in 2015	Pairs in 2014	Pairs in 2013	Pairs in 2012
Coquet Island	1,490	1,471	1,464	1,224	1,275
Farne Islands	1,508	1,688	2,212	1,921	1,923
Long Nanny	ca.1,100	1,957	2,443	1,504	ca.1,500

Summer passage was extremely light, with maximum counts of 32 S at Seaton Sluice and 50 S at Whitley Bay on 22nd July, 20 S (in two hours) at Seaton Sluice on 29th August and a monthly total of 55 past Seaton Sluice in September. Other than a gathering of 449 at Lindisfarne NNR from a WeBS count on 24th July, counts elsewhere during this period were equally unimpressive, with a maximum of 45 at Bamburgh and 15 at High Newton on 9th July, ten at East Chevington on 25th July, 48 in the Tweed Estuary on 14th August and 29 at the Farne Islands on 23rd August.

Birds generally departed early this year, with only a scattering of September records, the last record being four in the Tweed Estuary on 15th, and one October record, a single S at Newbiggin on 11th.

Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / FIRST RECORD: 1920s / LAST RECORD: 2014

Just the one documented sighting this year, with an adult flying with Kittiwakes *Rissa tridactyla* on 6th November through Staple Sound at the Farne Islands (THi/ET/TH). There was only one other claim, but no documentation was forthcoming. Sightings appear to have declined, with a complete absence last year and only two individuals in both 2013 and 2014.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

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

BREEDING: Common.

One to two birds were noted from a handful of coastal localities during the first few days of the year. A SE blow on 5th brought a sizeable influx into the North Sea, with 251 moving S (in three hours) at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) and on the following day 150 moved S at Seaton Sluice. In February, Seaton Sluice posted a movement of 57 N (in one hour) on 23rd, while a single bird had returned to a nest at Newcastle Quayside by 26th. The maximum count from Seaton Sluice in March was 65 N and 170 S (in one hour) on 4th. Breeding sites were well attended by mid-March, when, in addition to 213 birds on the Tyne Bridge, around 60 pairs were at Dunstanburgh Castle on 20th and 177 birds were on cliff ledges at Tynemouth Priory by 30th.

A substantial passage was witnessed off Berwick Pier on 26th April, when 770 moved N (in one hour), while at Seaton Sluice numbers were more modest with 110 N (in one hour) on 16th; in breeding areas 800 were on the sea off Cullernose Point on 8th and 60 at Dunstanburgh Castle. Maximum hourly counts at Seaton Sluice in May numbered 85-150 N on three dates, while 120 moved N at Snab Point on 26th.

At the Farne Islands, the first egg was discovered on 17th May and the first chick on 9th June. Many nests were abandoned during a storm in April and even prior to this there were many birds on the cliffs which did not lay, all of which contributed to a population decline of 11% and low productivity at 0.58 fledged chicks per nest (FIR). A similar situation was apparent on Coquet Island, where the population declined slightly and productivity was affected by poor weather, at 1.06 young fledged per breeding pair (RSPB). Approximately 400 pairs also bred at Cullernose Point and 300 adults and 72 chicks were at Tynemouth Priory in July.

Breeding data from monitored colonies was as follows (FIR/MHu/RSPB/DMT):

Locality	Pairs in 2016	Pairs in 2015	Pairs in 2014	Pairs in 2013	Pairs in 2012
Farne Islands	3,527	3,956	4,175	3,443	4,241
Needles Eye (Berwick)	820	1,120	1,130	880	960
Coquet Island	317	326	288	185	215
Tyne Bridge – North tower and bridge	338	378	377	312	300
Newcastle Guildhall	56	--	--	--	--
Newcastle Quayside	43	159	80	55	67
Newcastle Dean Street	30	--	--	--	--
Newcastle Red House (NEW SITE)	8	--	--	--	--
* Tyne Bridge – South tower and bridge	188	--	--	--	--
* Baltic Centre	100	--	--	--	--

* Although counts from the south side of the river lie outside our recording area, they are given here for reference and as an indication to the overall size of the important Newcastle city centre colony.

Significant N movements were witnessed at Seaton Sluice from 1st-5th June, with a maximum count of 750 (in three hours) on 4th; a sandbank roost at Spittal (Berwick) held 186 on 12th. Further movements from Seaton Sluice in July peaked at 320 N (in three hours) on 5th and 330 S (in two hours) on 20th, while counts of 280 and 340 came from the Tweed Estuary on 10th and 21st respectively. Very heavy passage was a feature of early September, with 2,000 moving S (in one hour) at Seaton Sluice on 5th (SSWT); 615 were at Dunstanburgh, 357-400 at Boulmer and Newbiggin and 80+ at St Mary's.

The only October count of note was 70 off Newbiggin on 1st. In November, 1,600 moved N (in four hours) at Seaton Sluice on 6th, with a similar rate of passage witnessed at Newbiggin and St Mary's, and 334 moved N (in four hours) at the Farne Islands. The following day, 145 moved N at Snab Point, where 400 (per hour) also moved N on 21st; 150 passed N (in one hour 45 minutes) at Newbiggin on 22nd.

Bonaparte's Gull *Chroicocephalus philadelphia*

STATUS: Extremely rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 7 / FIRST: 1955 / LAST: 2015

Diligent searching through Black-headed Gulls *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* finally paid off for the observer with a first-summer located at the Wansbeck Estuary and Castle Island on 24th May (RA *et al.*). It stayed through to 9th August, so was a summer highlight for many birders and was often to be found east of the road bridge at the Wansbeck Estuary. There was at least one foray during the period, as it was photographed at Newbiggin on 17th June (AP). This record was 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
287	1,100	550	388	--	302	3,326	1,500	2,100	333	118	374

Several notable first-quarter counts, in addition to those tabulated above, included a large roost of 2,000 gathered at Grindon Lough on 12th February, a peak roost count from the Farne Islands of 750 on 25th March, 700 between Chevington Burn-Hadston on 13th January, up to 560 in the Tweed Estuary in January and 500-600 at the Plennmeller Common breeding colony by late March. Additionally, 408-477 were at the Blyth Estuary, East Howdon, QEII CP, River Tyne (Newcastle) and Whitley Bay-Tynemouth and 220-400 at the Aln Estuary, Backworth, Boulmer, Cambois, Castle Island, Derwent Reservoir, Melkridge, Newcastle (Jesmond Dene) and Prestwick Carr.

At least 800 were at Druridge Pools on 9th April and 700 at Grindon Lough on 19th; 206 were in the Aln Estuary on 8th, however wintering flocks had largely dispersed by mid-month. In early May, there were



counts of 100-106 from the Aln Estuary and Amble; while in June, 180 were at Hauxley.

On Coquet Island, the population reached its highest-ever level, at 5,348 pairs (4,627 pairs in 2015), surpassing the previous best in 1987. The first egg date was 17th April and high mortality was noted due to adverse spring weather (RSPB). On the Farne Islands, 506 pairs bred (475 pairs in 2015), with the first eggs noted on 1st May, the first chick on 27th May and the first fledglings from 28th June onwards (FIR). At Gosforth Park NR, four pairs nested on the platform, hatching at least nine young, all of which were predated by Otters *Lutra lutra*, and a total of two young fledged from two nests at Big Waters. There was no breeding data from Hauxley NR, Plenneller Common or Swallow Pond in 2016.

Post-breeding dispersal began in earnest by late July, with the highest Lindisfarne count of the year (see

table), as well as 647 (all but one adult) at Howdon on 24th, 457 (only four juveniles) at the Blyth Estuary, 336 at the Tweed Estuary, 335 at the Aln Estuary, 302 in Newcastle (Redheugh-Scotswood Bridges), 234 at Castle Island and 200 at Boulmer. The largest August gathering, away from Lindisfarne, involved 488 in the Tweed Estuary on 18th; 245 were at the Blyth Estuary and 200 at Corbridge. Notable September counts of 300-600 came from Bedlington-Blyth, Big Waters, Elswick Wharf-Newcastle Business Park and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Numbers were much reduced at Lindisfarne in the final quarter; elsewhere, the evening gull roost at Derwent Reservoir peaked at 1,300+ on 2nd December, a WeBS count of 1,064 came from Seahouses-Beadnell on 4th October, with 600 there on 28th November, 1,000 were at Big Waters on 10th October, 710 from Beadnell-Howick on 19th December and 300-450 at the Aln Estuary, Howdon, QEII CP and the Tweed Estuary.

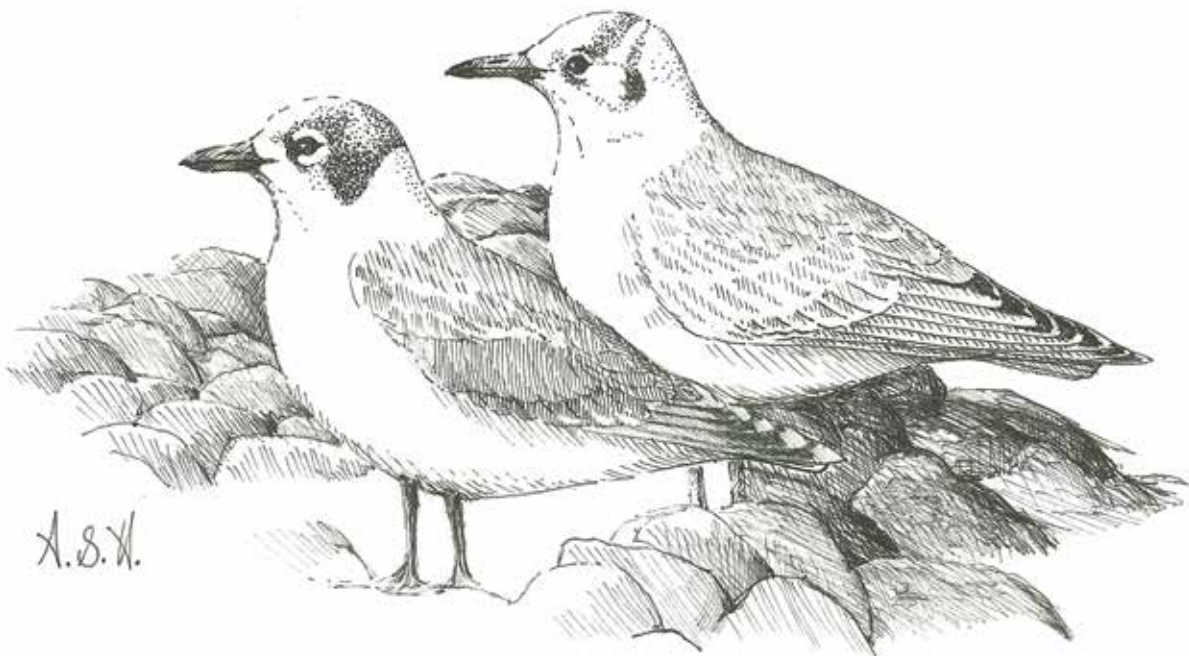
Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

STATUS: Uncommon to well-represented non-breeding summer and passage visitor, uncommon in winter.

A prevailing SE wind during the first week of January produced a notable early influx. Passage at Seaton Sluice from 2nd-7th produced a total of 36, mainly S, almost all of which were adults. The peak day appeared to be on 5th, when nine adults also moved S at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) and six were at Beadnell. Elsewhere, 11 were at St Mary's on 6th, six at Brier Dene (Whitley Bay) on 7th and one to four at a further 19 coastal localities until 10th. More unusual was an adult inland at Prestwick Carr on 2nd.

Spring passage commenced with an adult at Druridge Pools on 17th April, followed by another adult at Gosforth Park NR on 25th. A light summer influx occurred in May, centred as usual on the Druridge Bay area. Six immatures were at East Chevington on 19th, with three there on 22nd; one to four were also noted at Cresswell Pond and Druridge Pools on various dates from 7th-29th. Elsewhere, five first-summers were at Widdrington Moor Lake on 24th, three immatures at Budle Bay on 14th and singles at the Aln Estuary, Beadnell, Castle Island and Newbiggin. Inland, an immature was at Grindon Lough on 5th and an adult at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 21st. A disappointing summer ensued, with a peak June count

Franklin's Gull and Black-headed Gull (Alan Hart)



Franklin's Gull - Whittle Dene - September (Ian Fisher)



Mediterranean Gulls - Newbiggin - March (Jonathan Farooqi).



Little Gull - Druridge Pools - June (Frank Golding)



Mediterranean Gull - St Mary's - July (Alan Jack).



of seven at Widdrington Moor Lake on 5th; four were at Druridge Pools on 1st, three at Cresswell Pond on various dates and singles at Bamburgh, Big Waters, East Chevington, the Long Nanny Estuary and Newbiggin.

In July, a single was inland at Branton GP on 3rd and another was at the Farne Islands on 7th. On 12th, four were at St Mary's and single adults flew S at Seaton Sluice and Cresswell Pond; singles were also at the latter site on 15th and 17th. All August sightings were of single birds, mainly juveniles, at Embleton Bay on 6th, Snab Point on 9th and 28th, Bamburgh on 17th, Tynemouth on 25th and Budle Bay on 28th. Nine passed Newbiggin on 19th September, three first-winters flew S at the Farne Islands on 24th September and singles, mostly juveniles, were at Budle Bay, Newbiggin and Seaton Sluice from 4th-20th.

A large movement was witnessed at Seaton Sluice from 24th-25th October, with 117 N on 24th, followed by 250 N and 20 S on 25th (SSWT). In November, one was at Boulmer on 8th, three flew N at Tynemouth on 23rd and a single flew N at Newbiggin on 27th.

Franklin's Gull *Larus pipixcan*

STATUS: Extremely rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 1 / FIRST: 2005

Yet another superb find in a vintage year, with a winter-plumaged adult discovered at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 16th September (SR *et al.*). It showed sporadically through to 1st October and was normally to be found on fields near the Great Northern Reservoir. With the only other county sighting, at Woodhorn in April 2005, being fairly brief, this gave many birders the chance to view this American gull in Northumberland. This record was accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

STATUS: Uncommon resident, passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Extremely rare. / FIRST BRED: 2009 / LAST BRED: 2015

Maximum monthly counts from Newbiggin were as follows:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2	12	14	0	0	2	61	35	65	3	13	42

The favoured locality of Newbiggin remains a reliable site; however, there is evidence of a shift to the north with some large counts in 2016 from the wider Druridge Bay area. Four were at Lynemouth Flash on 7th January, with one to two at a further 18 localities during the first quarter. Away from Druridge Bay, these sites included Backworth, Big Waters, Bothal Pond, Branton GP, Brier Dene (Whitley Bay), St Mary's, Swallow Pond and Tynemouth. More unusual was an immature at Newcastle (Leazes Park) from 29th February-12th March.

In April, a maximum of ten were reported from Druridge Pools on 9th, with one to three also noted at Cresswell Pond, East Chevington and the Farne Islands; the latter site recording a Polish ringed bird on 23rd. A gap followed until summering birds were reported from Cresswell Pond, Linden Hall GC (the observer's first site record) and Morpeth in June.

Although a pair began building a nest on Coquet Island, and three other birds showed interest, all breeding attempts were abandoned due to adverse weather (RSPB).

The usual summer influx began in July, with the majority of sightings from Druridge Bay sites, inevitably involving some overlap. Higher counts from Newbiggin included 47-48 on 22nd-23rd, rising to 61 by 26th. An earlier gathering of 41, mainly adults, near Chibburn Farm (Druridge) on 17th was an example of the earlier mentioned shift north, away from Newbiggin; nearby as many as 60 were near Bell's Farm (Cresswell) on 28th, with 13 there the following day, again the majority being adults. Elsewhere, one to four were reported from sites in the Howdon-Whitley Bay-Cullercoats area, while in the far north at least ten different birds were identified in Budle Bay during the month and two were at Holy Island on 31st. A first-summer, colour-ringed as a nestling on Coquet Island in 2015, was at Cresswell Pond on 12th July; it had previously been recorded at Preston Docks (Lancs) in February and Saltholme RSPB in June. An updated and comprehensive paper 'Origins of some Mediterranean Gulls in Northumberland' can be found on the NTBC website.

August was another good month and, away from Newbiggin, 29 were at Cresswell Pond, up to four in the

Budle Bay roost on seven dates, four at Ellington and singles at Amble, Backworth, Big Waters, Gosforth Park NR, Holy Island, Holywell Pond and Widdrington Moor Lake. Numbers at Newbiggin peaked at 65 on 4th September (HG), 20+ were at Snab Point on 5th, 11 at Ellington on 3rd and one to two at seven coastal sites, plus Arcot Pond, Backworth and Holywell and Swallow Ponds.

In October, up to ten were reported from Ellington, seven at Cresswell, five at Boulmer, four at Big Waters and QEII CP and one to three at seven coastal localities, plus Holywell Pond. Good numbers remained at Newbiggin during the final two months of the year and up to 12 passed Seaton Sluice in November and five in December. Elsewhere, four were noted between Spittal (Berwick)-Cocklawburn on 10th November and one to two, mostly adults, were seen at eight regular sites, including a Danish-ringed bird at Swallow Pond; more unusually, a single was at Newton Links on 19th November.

Common Gull *Larus canus*

STATUS: Abundant passage and winter visitor, less numerous in summer.

BREEDING: Historical. / LAST BRED: 2000

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

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
4,000	1,800	300	103	6	54	50	4,000	188	197	2,200	150

Additional first-quarter counts included an impressive 5,000 in the gull roost at Derwent Reservoir on 12th February, 200-500 at Blanchland, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Longhorsley, Otterburn and West Newton and 100-200 at Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield), Chirdon Bridge, Flotterton (Coquetdale), Grindon Lough and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Typically, numbers began to decline through April as birds moved towards their northern breeding grounds. The largest gatherings involved 500 at Low Leam (Redesdale) on 3rd, 400 at Low Newton on 17th and 315 at Widdrington Moor Lake on 10th; 210 flew N (in two hours) at Seaton Sluice on 15th and 200-250 were noted at Branton GP, Fontburn and Haughton Strother GP. A sizeable count of 130 came from Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 18th May; elsewhere, the only double-figure count in the period May-June involved 14 at Airy Holm Reservoir on 3rd June. Very few were noted in July, until an influx from 30th-31st produced flocks of 50-150 at Budle Bay, Kirkheaton and West Ord (Berwick).

A flock of 900 had assembled at Alnmouth by 5th August, 900 were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 26th and over 4,000 in the roost at Budle Bay on 28th. Numbers remained high in September, with 1,300 at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) on 23rd, 800 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs, 320 at Hedgeley GP, 300 at Caistron and 230 at West Ord; 180 flew S at Seaton Sluice on 30th.

There was a degree of under-recording during October, as local birders were preoccupied with impressive falls of scarce and rare coastal migrants, the only count of note being 400 at Haughton Strother GP on 12th. The evening roost at Budle Bay was well attended in November, when 600 were at Airy Holm Reservoir and 240-270 on the Tweed Estuary. A massive roost of 8,600+ was at Derwent Reservoir on 2nd December (PRM), while numbers elsewhere were modest, with 100 at Rochester on 22nd the largest count.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

STATUS: Common passage and summer visitor, uncommon in winter.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

The trend towards a small number of birds wintering in the area continued, with two at the Blyth Estuary on 2nd January and singles, perhaps involving some overlap, at Arcot Lane, Coldstream, Druridge Bay, Holywell Pond, Jesmond Dene, Newbiggin, Newcastle (Business Park, Elswick, Forth Banks and Jesmond) and Seaton Sluice. A light influx occurred towards the end of February, involving up to four at Budle Bay and three at Wallsend, with one to two at a further 13 localities. Numbers continued to increase during March, with 25 at Budle Bay by 11th, ten at West Hartford and up to eight at a further 22 localities. In April, 61 were at Branton GP and 26 at Hedgeley GP on 7th, 36 at Swallow Pond on 12th and 25 again in Budle Bay on 19th; a total of ten moved N at Seaton Sluice from 9th-18th.

A below average number of pairs nested on the Farne Islands, with eggs noted from early May (FIR). The

first egg date on Coquet Island was 15th May and productivity was 0.19 from 21 study nests (RSPB). One of the Coquet Island juveniles, ringed on 18th August 2016, was photographed at a landfill site at El Jadida (Morocco) on 9th January 2017. Further breeding was confirmed during May, with three occupied nests on a factory roof at Blyth Riverside Industrial Estate, while in June two nests were at Wallsend (Davy Bank). Data from the principal breeding sites was as follows (FIR/RSPB):

Locality	Pairs in 2016	Pairs in 2015	Pairs in 2014	Pairs in 2013	Pairs in 2012
Farne Islands	572	No data	799	765	744
Coquet Island	26	28	26	22	29

Elsewhere during May-June, 31 were at Branton GP, 25 at Swallow Pond, 23 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), 17 at Branton GP, 16 at Jesmond Dene and Swallow Pond, 13 (all immatures) at Derwent Reservoir, 12 at West Hartford and one to eight at a minimum of 12 further localities. Ten juveniles were at the Blyth (Wimbourn Quay) colony on 24th July, with one to seven at six further localities during the month; up to five daily moved mainly S at Seaton Sluice.

A total of 28, mainly juveniles, moved S at Seaton Sluice from 15th-28th August. The Budle Bay roost held 75 on 28th August and 21 adults were at Newcastle (Exhibition Park) on 2nd. Further movement was witnessed off Seaton Sluice in September, with a total of 13 N and 20 S. Numbers at Branton GP increased from 50 on 1st September to an unseasonably large gathering of 90 on 1st October. On the River Tyne, a maximum of 35 were recorded from Elswick Wharf-Newcastle Business Park in September. Elsewhere during this period, 12 were at Killingworth Lake and one to seven at a further 11 localities. During November-December, two were at Corbridge, with singles at Big Waters, Cramlington, Derwent Reservoir, Grindon Reservoir, Killingworth Lake, North Seaton, North Shields Fish Quay, Swallow Pond, the Tweed Estuary, Tynemouth, West Hartford and Woodhorn.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argenteus*

STATUS: Common resident, passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented to common.

Maximum counts from regular localities, including some favoured coastal stretches, were as follows:

Locality	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Tweed Estuary	264	274	228	278	410	265	710	620	458	516	782	292
Lindisfarne NNR	74	120	1,342	485	75	140	533	1,540	807	552	23	59
Seahouses-Beadnell	62	67	200	389	322	195	96	143	70	110	30	32
Beadnell-Howick	130	140	222	--	--	--	--	--	116	350	391	785
Blyth Estuary	116	262	134	192	141	215	390	135	235	122	98	258
N/Shields FQ - Tyne Estuary	73	420	178	93	211	156	364	896	--	500	220	184
Redheugh-Scotswood Bridges	140	151	115	84	136	194	108	83	104	87	13	13

The highest count in the first quarter involved a huge flock, estimated at 1,500, attracted to flooded fields at Warenton (Belford) on 9th January, when a further 300+ were noted on the River Tyne at Scotswood. Elsewhere during the quarter, in addition to the tabulated counts above, 200 were at Derwent Reservoir on 22nd January and 155 at QEII CP on 17th January, with counts of 20-100 coming from Acomb, Berwick, Castle Island, Cramlington, Cullercoats-Tynemouth area (seven sites), Gosforth Park NR, Hadston, Holburn Moss, Kielder, Monks House Pool, Newcastle (Leazes Park and Town Moor), QEII CP, Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay), Swallow Pond, Warkworth, Widdrington Moor Lake and Wooler; a steady movement N was also witnessed off Holy Island on 28th February.

There was a peak count of 112 at Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) during April and, in addition, some large early April gatherings of 100 at Castle Island on 1st, 92 at Berwick on 6th and 70 at Swallow Pond on 4th, as well as 100 at Holburn Moss on 21st.

Breeding numbers were down at the Farne Islands this year, where the first eggs were discovered in late April (FIR). Breeding was also confirmed at Blyth Riverside Industrial Estate, where 37 pairs were nesting on a factory roof in May and a total of 86 young were raised; elsewhere, there were four nests at North Blyth

staithes and two well grown young were at Davy Bank (Wallsend) and one at Bates staithes (Blyth).

Data from offshore breeding sites was as follows (FIR/RSPB):

Locality	Pairs in 2016	Pairs in 2015	Pairs in 2014	Pairs in 2013	Pairs in 2012
Farne Islands	660	No data	937	874	882
Coquet Island	No data	1	2	2	1

Away from the regular localities, high counts during the period May-July included 110 at QEII CP on 3rd May and, in June, 204 between Scotswood-Newburn, 200 at Roddam, 130 at Holburn Moss, 105 at Berwick North Shore and 100 at St Mary's and Stocksfield. The highest count of the year came in August, when 1,540 were at Lindisfarne NNR during a WeBS visit on 21st (ACr); elsewhere during the month, more modest flocks of 50-120 came from nine further sites, in addition to those in the table above. Numbers on the River Tyne built up during September, with 203 between Elswick Wharf-Newcastle Business Centre, and up to 100 were in the Cullercoats-Whitley Bay area, while 120 were at Newton Pool on 16th.

In the final quarter, a large inland gathering of 300 was at Stagshaw (Corbridge) on 11th October, 208 were at Tynemouth Boating Lake on 20th November, with 200 at Warenton the following day, and 50-100 were reported from Arcot Pond, Berwick, Castle Island, Newbiggin, North Shields Fish Quay, Swallow Pond, Tynemouth and Widdrington Moor Lake.

'Northern race Herring Gull' *L. a. argentatus*

STATUS: Uncommon winter visitor.

In January, at least five were at Scotswood on 9th (JL), four at QEII CP on 7th and two at Amble Harbour on 16th. There were no further reports until 17th September, when a single was at Whittle Dene Reservoirs, followed by another at Widdrington Moor Lake on 17th November.

Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans*

STATUS: Extremely rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 2 / FIRST: 2007 / LAST: 2015

A stunning year for the species, with seven accepted individuals, when previously there were only two county records.

The first sighting involved a first-winter at QEII CP on 8th January (ME), but with unusual circumstances! The observer was concentrating on photographing an Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoideus* at the time and only three weeks later, when he reviewed his photos, did he find this Caspian Gull in the same frame! A different first-winter was found on a freshwater drainage pool west of Newbiggin on 17th January (AP). It was well photographed but only stayed for 15 minutes. Another first-winter was located at North Shields Fish Quay on 16th February (AC). It was photographed on the roof, alongside Herring Gulls *Larus argentatus*, but soon flew off and was not relocated.

The returning adult was back at its summer haunt of Amble Harbour on 18th August and remained until 11th September (IF *et al.*). This Polish ringed bird has a yellow ring on its right leg 'PKCS', which has enabled it to be traced back to breeding grounds in Poland, where it was ringed as a pullus in May 2011.

Next came a juvenile moulting to first-winter plumage at the Blyth Estuary on 4th September (AC). This again proved to be short-lived as it was only seen for 30 minutes before flying off but was well photographed. The same observer obviously had his eye in by now, as another first-winter was located at St Mary's on 27th September (AC *et al.*). This individual sported a yellow colour ring 'X106', which is from a German scheme. Finally, another first-winter was located at St Mary's on 12th October, this time un-ringed (JBU). It was only found late evening and was not present the following day. Again, it was well photographed.

All the sightings of first-winter birds have been accepted as different individuals, with various plumage differences apparent in the photographs. The year definitely shows that first-winters especially should be looked for as individuals must go unnoticed amongst gull flocks.



Iceland Gull *Larus glaucooides*

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

One of the highlights for the regions' photographers was a very confiding second-winter bird at QEII CP from 1st January-26th April. It remained for long spells, becoming more intermittent towards the end of its stay. Elsewhere, first-winter birds (or the same) were at Tynemouth and Druridge Bay CP on 10th January and an adult was at Swallow Pond on 4th, 20th and 28th February; a second-winter, possibly the QEII bird, was at North Shields Fish Quay on 7th February and an un-aged bird flew S at Tynemouth on 10th. In March, a first-winter was seen briefly at Swallow Pond on 1st, an un-aged bird was at Seahouses on 10th and a second-winter, again probably the QEII bird, was at Bothal Pond on 17th and Widdrington Station on 7th April. More unusual, was an inland record of a first-winter bird at Branton GP on 6th and 30th March and 3rd and 7th April. A worn first-winter bird was noted in the Knoxes Reef (Farne Islands) gull roost on 8th-9th April, with further first-winter birds seen here on 19th and 22nd. An adult flew N at Cullercoats and nearby St Mary's on 17th April.

Only two birds were reported during the latter winter period, a juvenile at Newbiggin on 23rd November and a first-winter roosting with other gulls at Warkworth weir on 29th December.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

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

This increasingly rare Arctic visitor was again rather scarce in 2016. Four reports during the first winter period were all un-aged birds, beginning with one at the Blyth Estuary on 20th January. In February, singles were at Newburn Riverside on 5th and, more unusually, well inland at Branton GP on 27th. The final bird was at Bothal Pond on 17th March.

A juvenile flew N at Tynemouth on 2nd November, with others (or the same) again seen flying N at Cullercoats on 3rd, Seaton Sluice on 5th and Tynemouth on 6th; it, or another juvenile, was at Tynemouth Boating Lake on 22nd and at Black Middens Rocks (Tynemouth) on 3rd December, while another juvenile was found in the Knoxes Reef (Farne Islands) gull roost on 22nd November. A juvenile was reported from Woodhorn Flashes on 2nd December and another, un-aged bird, was at Boulmer on 23rd.

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 monthly counts from four regular localities were as follows:

Locality	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Tweed Estuary	38	4	22	6	8	5	7	10	10	26	26	11
Lindisfarne NNR (incl. B/Bay)	28	14	24	8	3	30	12	45	40	150	26	12
Blyth Estuary	6	55	--	5	--	--	--	--	19	68	38	116
Tyne Estuary - N/Shields FQ	30	78	28	30	22	25	31	121	--	80	76	70

The largest count in the first quarter involved 50+ on the River Tyne at Scotswood on 9th January. Elsewhere, in addition to the tabulated counts, WeBS visits produced 40 from Beadnell-Howick on 14th March and 36 from Whitley Bay-Tynemouth on 17th January, and 15 were at Warkworth on 4th February. Well inland, up to 14 were noted at Grindon Lough and five to six near Humshaugh, both in January.

With only small numbers on the coast during April, interest was centred on some light overland movements involving 13 at Derwent Reservoir on 18th and ten at Grindon Lough on 19th. A WeBS count from Seahouses-Beadnell produced a notable 32 on 6th May, while on Holy Island a bird caught and killed a Lumpsucker *Cyclopterus lumpus*, before swallowing it whole.

The breeding population at the Farne Islands rose for the seventh consecutive year to 22 pairs (20 in 2015). Although the Farne Islands is the county's only regular breeding site, there was another successful nest at Needles Eye (Berwick) in 2016, where a pair with four young was noted on 8th June.

Sizeable gatherings towards the end of June included 50 at The Long Nanny on 28th; while, inland, Grindon Lough was a continued attraction, with up to ten noted during the month. A ringed first-summer bird at The Long Nanny in July had been marked as a pullus on the Isle of May in June 2015. High counts, reaching several hundred, were reported from the Farne Islands after the breeding season. In addition to the tabulated counts (above), 84 were at Amble Braid on 20th August, with lesser numbers at a further ten widespread, mainly coastal, localities. An obvious increase was evident in September, with Seaton Sluice watchers logging a total of 325 N (in eight hours) on 14th; 78 were between Amble-Chevington on 24th, 77 at Newbiggin on 4th and up to 39 at Cullercoats.

Further passage at Seaton Sluice, in the final quarter, included 275 N (in six hours) on 22nd November. Numbers at the Coquet Estuary increased from 160 on 5th to 700 on 12th November (ME); other notable counts, in addition to those in the table above, included 200 at the Wansbeck Estuary on 30th October, with 100 still present on 2nd December, 103 at nearby Castle Island on 18th December, 90 at North Blyth on 30th October and 75 during a WeBS count from Whitley Bay-Tynemouth on 18th. Inland, four were feeding on 'spent' Salmon *Salmonidae* sp./Sea Trout *Salmo trutta* at Warden on 26th.

Rock Dove [Feral Pigeon] *Columba livia*

STATUS: Common resident.

BREEDING: Common.

The highest first-quarter counts were made in January, with a maximum of 91 at Blyth Harbour on 10th. The next large gathering involved 85 feeding at Big Waters on 30th October and several hundred were around the Farne Islands in late autumn. The final month produced a total of 438 leaving roosts on the High Level, Swing and Tyne Bridges (Newcastle) at dawn on 2nd (DM). Additional December counts included 100 at Low Hall Farm (Hadston) on 11th and 104 at Blyth South Harbour/Quayside on 13th.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

STATUS: Common resident.

BREEDING: Common.

Highest first-quarter counts involved a maximum of 72 at Howdon on 4th January, 35 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 9th February and 20 at Backworth on 13th March. Counts of 11-18 also came from Big Waters, Carrshield, Gosforth Park, and High Knock Shield and Low Acton Farms (Allendale).

Numbers at Howdon declined to 28 on 1st April and 24 on 16th May. Ten were at Derwent Reservoir on 10th April, with 12 at East Cramlington on 19th May; otherwise, all other counts during this period were single-figure, although six pairs were noted nesting in old or derelict buildings between Ninebanks and Allendale during May. Two pairs were also noted near Grindon Lough and Haltwhistle Common. Four at Linden Hall during May was notable for being the highest count there in 13 years. No further breeding reports were received but some high summer counts included 38 at Howdon on 10th June, with 20 there on 24th August, and ca.40 on rough farmland at Stamfordham on 22nd July.

Some large pre-roost gatherings were noted at Howdon in October, with 48 on 2nd, increasing to 55 on 23rd and 118 on 31st. Elsewhere, the highest count was nine at Prestwick Carr on 9th October. The Howdon roost peaked at 137 on 27th November (CB), before declining to 66 by 19th December. Elsewhere during the final two months, the only double-figure count involved 14 at Big Waters on 18th December.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

STATUS: Abundant resident and a passage visitor.

BREEDING: Abundant.

The first quarter produced some large flocks, including 1,600+ near Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 10th January (CDB) and 1,000 at Bamburgh (perhaps the same flock) on 9th January, North Charlton on 17th January, Warkworth on 4th February and Lynemouth Dene on 14th March. Flocks of 500-750 occurred at Belsay, Close House, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), High Newton and Spindleston during the first quarter. A decent count of 750 came from Eglington on 17th April and an unusual record involved one flying out to sea at Seaton Sluice on 14th April.

Unusually, one flew in off the sea at Seaton Sluice on 14th July. As usual, numbers remained low during summer and early autumn.

Easterly winds produced an unusually high count of six individuals at the Farne Islands during October. Strong SW movement of 500-600 was noted at Holy Island on 29th October; otherwise, the largest flock in the final quarter was a lowly 320 at Seaton Sluice on 27th December.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

STATUS: Common resident.

BREEDING: Common.

Poorly reported throughout the year, with the highest count from the first eight months being 20 at Cullercoats-Whitley Bay during April.

Breeding reports came from a few, mostly urban, localities, with a pair nesting in the platform roof of Longbenton Metro Station (Newcastle) being the most unusual.

The final four months produced counts of 21 at North Blyth on 17th September, 28 at Druridge Lane on 12th November (TB), 25 leaving a roost at Callerton on 13th November, and 20 at Dinnington on 6th November and 4th December.

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

STATUS: Rare summer and passage visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2015

BREEDING: Historical. / LAST BRED: 1992

Only two records this year: a single at Bulbeck Common (Slaley Forest) on 17th May (GSI) and another in Embleton Quarry on 6th June (GW).



Collared Dove (John Steele)

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

STATUS: Well-represented summer visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

The first arrivals were heard at Eglington on 13th and 17th April, with further April singles at Newton Scrape on 24th, Harwood Forest on 28th and Blanchland Moor (Slaley), Cresswell Pond and Simonside on 30th. As usual, reports soon picked-up in May, with a peak count of seven males in full song at Bewick Moor from 17th to the end of the month (MJC), four chasing each other at Allendale on 8th and three calling at Slaley and Healey on 10th. Twos were at Alnwick Moor, Beanley Wood, Carey Burn, Cartington, Debdon (Rothbury), Derwent Reservoir, Edlington, Grindon Lough, Lordenshaw and Simonside, with singles at many of these sites and at a minimum of 28 further widespread localities.

In June, three calling males were at Harthope Valley on 9th and The Wanneys (Ridsdale) on 19th, with two at Harthope on 7th and 14th, and Chester Hope (Simonside) on 8th; single reports came from ten other sites. Singles at ten localities in July included juveniles reported from Big Waters, Castron, Holy Island, Newton Point, flying S at Snab Point and 'in off' at Tynemouth. A single was at Fenwick on 1st August; all other August reports were of juveniles, with two on Brownsman (Farne Islands) on 25th and singles at Plessey Hall (Cramlington) on 2nd, Druridge Pools on 7th, 14th and 17th, Inner Farne (Farne Islands) on 15th, Low Newton on 16th and Holy Island from 19th-28th. The final record involved a juvenile at Newbiggin on 8th September.

Cuckoo - East Chevington - July (Heiko Peters).



Cuckoo - Newbiggin - September (Heiko Peters).



Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

STATUS: Well-represented resident.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

Four were on Holy Island on 10th January, with three still there on 24th, and the resident pair were at the regular nest site mid-month. Five were at Maiden Hall Lake (West Chevington) on 12th February (JSp), a maximum three were at East Chevington on 22nd January and twos were at Chatton, Fowberry and Lilburn in January. All other reports during the first quarter were of single birds only; singles occurred at over 25 localities in January and at least 32 in February. In April, twos were at Eglingham on 2nd and Longhorsley on 26th, with singles at 16 localities, including road casualties on the A1 on 8th and the A69 on 20th.

Northumbria Ringing Group checked 125 sites, of which 44 were occupied, with 42 pairs laying eggs, 35 pairs hatching eggs and 32 pairs fledging a total of 89 chicks (NRG). A separate study in the north of the county found 23 successful nests (seven failed) and 73 owlets were ringed. Some adult pairs occupied nest sites/boxes for much of the year without actually breeding and Jackdaws *Corvus monedula* and Kestrels *Falco tinnunculus* occupied some sites, preventing owls from nesting; a paper concerning this study can be found at the back of this report (PH). Additionally, two nesting in a natural nest hole in a Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* at Humshaugh on 1st May were noted, with at least one fledged young in August (Twi). The regular Holy Island pair fledged three young from a nest box in June, but another three young in a second, late breeding occurrence in early September were presumed predated in October by a Stoat *Mustela ermine* seen in rafters nearby (IK). An adult found long

dead on the Island in August was ringed there as a pullus in May 2014. One with grey, rather than golden, back and wings was noted carrying prey to a nest at Bothal Pond on 24th July.

Away from the above breeding sites, all reports from May-December inclusive involved singles only at no more than a dozen localities in any one month, apart from two road casualties on the A1 near Alnwick on 15th October. Other A1 casualties were found at South Charlton on 5th October and near Eshotthugh on 21st November.



Little Owl *Athene noctua*

STATUS: Well-represented resident.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

In a poor year for the species, the only reports of two during the first six months involved the regular pair at Shiremoor. Single reports during the first quarter came from Derwent Reservoir in all three months, East Holywell (Whitley Bay) and Prestwick Carr in January, Backworth and Harlow Hill in February and near Big Waters and at Derwent Reservoir in March.

In April, singles were noted at Druridge hamlet and Pools, with the only May reports involving a single at Low Newton on 7th and a nocturnal encounter when one flew up off the road at Stannington Station at 23:30hrs on 18th. From June-July, singles were reported at Berwick Hill, Derwent Reservoir, Druridge, High Newton, Ponteland and Stannington, with territories found in July at Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay), East Holywell, Murton Village and Shiremoor; an unknown number of young were fledged from at least the Brier Dene Farm site. Reports also came from near Gloucester Lodge (Blyth Links) and Seaton Sluice, both just over the North Tyneside border.

During August, an adult and juvenile were regularly seen in the Druridge area to 22nd, one remained at Derwent Reservoir and a single hunted at Shiremoor on three evenings. A late nesting pair was discovered at Lowick in September, when singles were at Druridge Pools on five dates to 22nd and at Derwent Reservoir on 29th.

October singles were at Woodhorn Church on 8th and near Big Waters on 30th. Two were at Derwent Reservoir on 6th and 30th November, with singles there on two dates, and one at East Ord (Berwick) on 10th was the first record there since April 2004. Two were again noted at Derwent Reservoir from 24th-31st December, with singles there on 7th and from 20th, and other single reports in December came from Meggie's Burn (Seaton Sluice), Prestwick Carr, Rugley (Alnwick) and West Stobswood.

Birds were recorded at just 21 localities, the same number as last year, and the lowest annual total since the 19 sites in 1991.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

STATUS: Well-represented resident.
BREEDING: Well-represented.

Two regular birds remained at a garden nest box in Stamfordham throughout January-February, with other first-quarter twos at Bolam Lake on 28th February and Rothley on 2nd March. Elsewhere, singles occurred at 15 additional localities during the first quarter.

Breeding was suggested by a pair at a garden nest box at Bellingham on 28th April and a female and three young were in a nest box at Hauxley RS on 3rd May. Further pairs reared two young apiece in nest boxes at Budle Bay and Spindlestone in mid-May and a family group of two adults and two young were heard calling at Fulbeck (Morpeth) on 5th June. Northumbria Ringing Group checked 218 nest boxes in five study areas, of which 32 were occupied, with 32 pairs laying eggs, 25 pairs hatching eggs and 20 pairs fledging 31 chicks. It was reported as the worst breeding season in the main two study areas since the mid-1980s; with the vole population having crashed, most breeding adults just had a year off and moulted instead! (NRG).

Data from Northumbria Ringing Group's long-term study (fledged young in parentheses):

Locality	Pairs in 2016	Pairs in 2015	Pairs in 2014	Pairs in 2013
Wark-Tarset-Redesdale	7 (9)	29 (72)	37 (91)	17 (31)
Kielder	8 (8)	32 (72)	34 (84)	16 (34)
Slaley-Healey	2 (0)	10 (12)	16 (34)	7 (11)
Linnels (Hexham)	1 (2)	1 (2)	1 (2)	--

Additional records in the period April-June, involved five calling at Allen Banks on 11th May (SW), three males at Slaley Forest on 17th May, more than two in dispute at Hexham on 24th May and numerous widespread singles, many calling, plus a road casualty at Bareless on 1st April. In July, two were calling in central Alnwick, with three further singles recorded. Birds became more conspicuous in August, with two calling regularly at Cupola Bridge, together with singles, some calling, at seven sites. Three were calling at Ewart Park (Wooler) on 1st September, two were calling regularly in the Fulbeck garden during the month, when two males were at East Ord (Berwick) on 17th and singles at six further sites.

The final quarter produced at least four calling at Ellington on 29th December, with three calling there on 13th, two males and a female calling at Halton Shields (near Stagshaw) on 5th October, two calling in October at Fulbeck and Humshaugh, a pair at Prestwick Carr on 4th November and singles at a further five to six localities.

Long-eared / Short-eared Owl *Asio otus / flammeus*

An *Asio* owl species passed over Whitley Bay Community Wildlife Garden on 15th October.



Long-eared Owl - Low Newton - October (Gary Woodburn).

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

STATUS: Uncommon resident, passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

A very quiet year for the species began with two or more birds using a North Tyneside roost throughout January, remaining to 21st February (CGK/PGK), with a January single at Rothbury on 21st. Further singles, in February, roosted in dunes at Holy Island on 5th and called at Bolam Lake on 28th.

The next reports came in April, with singles roosting in hawthorn at Askews Walk (Berwick) on 4th and at a confidential site on 14th, as well as one at Horncliffe on 23rd. In May, one flew across the road at Shield on the Wall Dam on 15th, whilst another called in the Ladycross area of Slaley Forest on 17th. A single male was at Swallow Pond on 28th June.

Northumbria Ringing Group reported a disastrous season in the Kielder Border Forest study area where, for the first time in 20 years, no pairs were thought to have nested. Four occupied sites were found, but no nests discovered; at one site an adult female was found in May predated by a Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*. As with Tawny Owls *Strix aluco*, the complete lack of voles was the likely cause (NRG).

In a dismal second half of the year, the only reports received involved one flushed from Brownsman (Farne Islands) on 27th August, a juvenile calling at Wark (North Tyne) on 14th September, one at St Mary's on 20th September, one on Holy Island on 5th, 10th and 21st October and a confiding individual on Inner Farne (Farne Islands) from 11th-17th October.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

STATUS: Uncommon resident, passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

The first quarter produced a peak count at Prestwick Carr of four on 3rd January, with regular counts of two to three throughout the period. Elsewhere, three to four hunted the roadside between the Gibbet-Elsdon on 20th March, two were at Backworth over five days from 7th January, with other twos during the month at Berwick Walls, Druridge and Holy Island; two were also at Plenmeller Common on 28th February and between Ingram Gidders-Shilmoor (Cheviot) on 13th March and Bewick Moor on 30th March. Singles at many widespread sites included displaying birds.

Spring migrants were noted at the Farne Islands on three dates from April-May; the islands enjoying a superb year, with 35 individuals recorded over 14 dates. Birds remained at Prestwick Carr during this period, with a maximum count of three on 22nd April; up to three also lingered on Holy Island during May. Elsewhere, two were at Prestwick Carr on 3rd May, with singles at nine other localities during April-May. Unusually, two to three stayed on Holy Island throughout June, although there was no indication of breeding. A late bird moved through Brunswick (Wideopen) on 8th June and an unusual sight on 1st July involved one S over the sea at Seaton Sluice being mobbed by Sandwich Terns *Sterna sandvicensis*. The only reports in August-September involved singles on Holy Island on three dates.

Reports increased in October, with one at the Farne Islands on 1st increasing to a second highest-ever day count for the islands of nine on 15th (FIW). Elsewhere, there was a maximum of three on Holy Island on 7th, two (one 'in off') at Warkworth Gut on 15th and coastal singles at Bamburgh Castle, Cambois, Church Point (Newbiggin), Druridge Pools, Snab Point and St Mary's, plus two singles at Tynemouth, including one 'in off' on 5th. The only inland record involved one at Plenmeller Common on 20th. In November, maximum counts involved five to six on Holy Island on 13th and three at Prestwick Carr from 25th, with singles at four localities, including one 'in off' at Snab Point on 7th. Three remained at Prestwick Carr into December, with a single at Cresswell Pond on 27th.

Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

STATUS: Uncommon summer visitor.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

Unlike 2015, the majority of records once again came from the favoured breeding area of Sleafy, beginning with a male and female, and possible third bird, at Winnows Hill on 29th May. Five at Sleafy Forest in June consisted of a male, female and two to three other 'churring' birds (PC). Three were at Edlingham Crag on 7th June, with two there on 23rd. Two were at Beanley Wood on 18th June, where a male and female were 'churring' and seen in flight on 21st June, and two were again seen on 6th July. Two males began 'churring' at 21:55hrs on 19th July at Winnows Hill and three were 'churring' in Sleafy Forest on 24th July. A pair and two 'churring' males were near Sweethope on 26th July.

On the coast, a single male was found on Staple Island (Farne Islands) on 13th June. Having being flushed from rocks, it offered excellent views as it flew around the south of the island as it was mobbed by the breeding gulls. This constituted the twelfth record for the islands.

Swift *Apus apus*

STATUS: Common summer visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

The first arrival was at Farnley (River Tyne) on 21st April. Further singles were at Big Waters and Swallow Pond on 22nd, followed by three at Druridge Bay CP and East Chevington on 23rd, including an aberrant bird with extensive white markings, with one at Arcot Pond. Singles followed at Arcot Pond, Castle Island, Humshaugh, Prestwick Carr, Tynemouth and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, with two at Holywell Pond on 30th. As usual, numbers built up in May. Big Waters attracted 50 on 8th, with 40 there on 22nd, 35 were at Lynemouth on 5th and Ovingham on 26th, whilst 30 were at Marden Quarry on 28th and Walltown Quarry on 30th. One to 20 were at a further 24 widespread localities, including the aberrant April bird again at East Chevington on 2nd May.

Swift - East Chevington - April (Jonathan Farooqi).



Around 140 fed over the River Tweed at West Ord on 5th June, 100 over fields at Old Hartley on 29th June, 60 went N at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower the same day, with 50 at Castle Island on 5th June and the same number brought down by mist at Branton GP on 10th. Up to 45 were on territory at Hillheads (Whitley Bay) on 20th June, 40 were at Killingworth Lake on 15th and Cullercoats on 20th, with 16 at East Chevington on 25th June; up to 15 were seen regularly at Holywell Dene. Some large counts in July involved 200 at Ellington on 25th (TB), 150 at St Mary's on 11th, 100+ at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 12th and 55 at Hillheads. Elsewhere, 40-53 gathered at Gosforth Park NR during the month and at West Ord on 3rd, Spittal (Berwick) on 17th, Haltwhistle on 22nd, Waren Mill on 23rd and Cullercoats on 28th. Limited movement S was noted at Seaton Sluice, the peak count being 42 on 13th. One to 15 were at eight other localities.

In August, 80 suddenly appeared at Jesmond (Newcastle), probably attracted by a hatch of flying ants in warm conditions, 70 were still on territory at Hillheads on 14th, 60 at Yearle on 6th, 50+ at Shiremoor on 2nd, 50 at Coldstream (River Tweed) on 15th, 45 at Lynemouth on 21st, 30 at Ellington on 15th, 22 at East Ord (Berwick) on 21st and one to 20 at a minimum 15 further locations. September stragglers involved singles at Druridge Pools and S at Ellington on 3rd, two S at Cresswell Pond and Newbiggin on 6th and further singles at Budle Point on 9th, Swallow Pond on 10th, Tynemouth on 11th, Derwent Reservoir and Tweedmouth Dock on 12th, Holy Island on 18th and Budle Bay on 25th.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / FIRST RECORD: HISTORICAL / LAST RECORD: 2015

There were three records this year, equalling the three in 1995, 1996 and 1998. The first was flushed from a roadside verge at Haltwhistle Common on 8th May (SW). Another was photographed in the Harthope Valley on 20th May by a Spanish lady visiting Northumberland; she sees Hoopoes on a regular basis at home and didn't think much of it, presuming Hoopoe to be common in the UK too! (EBa). An autumn individual was found at Warenford on 12th October (JHa).

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

STATUS: Uncommon resident.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

During the first quarter, two were regularly noted in Jesmond Dene, with another pair at Branton GP in January and singles reported from numerous lowland water courses, including one at Bolam Lake being the observer's first there since 1994. During the period April-June, three were noted at Low Angerton on 15th May (IRD) and at Branton GP on 3rd June (IBDa/KDa).

Breeding confirmation came with two juveniles seen together at Gosforth Park NR during May and nesting was reported at the River Wansbeck in early June.

A more unusual record concerned one in the tidal area at the Long Nanny Estuary on 15th June. There was a noticeable increase in coastal records from late July onwards, with two at Whiteadder Point (Berwick) on 22nd July and 12th December, the Blyth Estuary on 17th October and the Wansbeck Estuary on 17th December and singles at many other localities including Alnmouth, Amble, Budle Bay, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Bay CP, East Chevington, Hartley Bay, Hauxley, Howick, Seaton Sluice (on the rocks), St Mary's, Tynemouth and Waren Mill. A key contender for bird of the year at the Farne Islands involved one present on Inner Farne on 9th August that represented only the third-ever record for the islands. A Ranger heard the unmistakable call and looked down Ladies Path to see the characteristic blue flash. The bird perched obligingly for 15 seconds before it flew across The Kettle and beyond the Wideopens, leaving behind several observers who could not quite believe their eyes.

Further records of two came from Gosforth Park NR in the period August-December, Thrum Mill (Rothbury) on 3rd September, Big Waters on 27th October and Branton GP on 13th November. Three were at Bolam Lake on 13th November (TRD/JD).

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

STATUS: Rare visitor.

BREEDING: Historical. / LAST BRED: 1975

There were two records of this classic drift migrant during the year. One was on Holy Island (in dunes between Snook House and the 'Half Moon Slack') on 28th May (MK). On the Farne Islands, one flitted from Brownsman to Staple Island, then back to Brownsman again, on 28th August (FIR).

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

STATUS: Well-represented resident.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

A regular bird flew into a garden at Rothbury on 14th January and was seen in most months of the year. Elsewhere during the first quarter, singles were seen at Bolam Lake CP, Callaly, Close House (Wylam), Crooked Oak (Derwent Gorge), Farnley, High House Woods (Morpeth), Kielder, Killingworth Lake, Letah Wood (Hexham), Prestwick Carr, Shilla Hill, Slaley, Swallowship Wood (Hexham), Tyne Riverside CP (Newburn) and Whittingham, with one or more regularly at Gosforth Park NR and Rothbury.

In the period April-June, three called over a wide area at Slaley-Healey on 10th May (AJN), two were at Farnley and Swallowship Wood (Hexham) in April, with two at Stonehaugh on 14th May, and more than one was at Gosforth Park NR throughout. In addition to many sites already mentioned, singles were noted at Arcot Pond, Beacon Hill (Longhorsley), Big Waters, Blagdon Hall, Derwent Reservoir, Dinnington, Dipton Wood, Dukesfield, Falstone, Fontburn, Heathery Lane (Gosforth), Muggleswick (Derwent Gorge), Nunnykirk, Riding Mill, Rothley Lake, Shiellow Wood, Wallington, Wark, Weetslade Community Park, Whitley Mill (Hexhamshire) and Wingates.

Breeding evidence involved an adult with two juveniles at Netherwitton on 8th July (TRD/JD) and a juvenile at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 1st August. Singles were noted in different areas of Hexham and Slaley Forest, with new localities in the third quarter being Broomleyfell Plantation (Healey), Harwood Forest and Redesdale Forest.

Records are always fewer in the final quarter, but four reports represented a very poor return. Nevertheless, birds were reported from a minimum of 44 widespread localities during the year (34 in 2015), with the majority once again in the southern half of the county.

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 county and was well-reported throughout the year from a minimum of 60 sites. Multiple reports were made of resident birds in most months, with three or four often noted together. Birds were located in a wide range of woodland settings, including several observers' gardens, typically at feeders.

The highest counts during the first quarter came from Gosforth Park NR, with six reported on 8th February and seven on 26th February (PMJ). Elsewhere, four were at Lynemouth Dene on 14th March and Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 29th March, with three noted at Arcot Pond, Harwood Forest, Ha'ppeney Woods (Blyth), Jesmond Dene, Killingworth Lake, Kirkley Hall and Prestwick Carr and one to two at numerous other localities. Three were also at Eachwick and drumming at Shiellow Woods in April.

Breeding evidence involved six counted from four nest sites in Holywell Dene in May, several pairs feeding young at Gosforth Park NR in June, where seven were noted (NHSN), and one to two pairs feeding young at Jesmond Dene, Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal), Preston Cemetery (North Shields) and in a Tynemouth garden during May-June. In July, family parties of two adults and a juvenile were noted at Holywell Dene and in an Old Hartley garden, with single juveniles at Dinnington and Newcastle (Leazes Park).

Further notable counts involved seven at Farnley on 28th May (DA) and five at Heathery Lane (Gosforth) in June and Chugdon Wood in August. There were few obvious passage birds reported. At Bamburgh, a British race juvenile was trapped and ringed on 3rd and an adult on 8th October. A single juvenile, most likely of the

Kestrel - Druridge Bay - July (Colin Bradshaw).



Peregrine - Newbiggin - August (Colin Bradshaw).



Northern European race *D. m. major*, was found on Brownsman (Farne Islands) on 24th October.

The final two months of the year saw a large count of six at Wallington on 12th November, with three again at Shiellow Woods on 16th. Otherwise, one to two were reported from many sites, including a first garden feeder record in 27 years at Northburn (Cramlington) on 6th December.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

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

BREEDING: Well-represented.

Birds were typically widespread during January and February. Three were at Prestwick Carr and East Woodburn, two at Bothal Pond, Hebron, Old Hartley, Pegswood, and St Mary's, with singles at numerous localities. By March, at least four were in the Cheviots between Shilmoor-Ingram, with three at Harwood Forest, two at Burradon, East Chevington, Fieldhead (Longhorsley) and West Hartford and singles in 21 other localities.

One flew in off the sea at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower on 18th April and spring movements at the Farne Islands involved a female flying W at Inner Farne on 19th April and another over North Wamses on 10th May.

During April and May, pairs were in numerous potential breeding areas with prolonged and noisy display at Lindisfarne Castle. The Northumbria Ringing Group reported a very poor year in the uplands with few voles available. Although 16 sites were occupied, only eight pairs laid eggs. Six pairs went on to fledge at least 14 young (NRG). Lowland sites fared better with, for example, three pairs raising young in the Budle Bay-Spindleston area. Success was also shown by two fledged young at Chugdon Wood near Ellington. The pair continued to frequent Lindisfarne Castle but failed to produce chicks.

Post-breeding dispersal produced numerous sightings during July-August, including an individual at Longhoughton which mobbed a Buzzard *Buteo buteo* and was then harassed in turn by Swallows *Hirundo rustica*. Coastal movements commenced on the Farne Islands with a female on 3rd August followed by three further records in the remainder of the month, three in September and nine in October, when a female remained on Brownsman for a week. Elsewhere during September-October, up to four frequented Holy Island, three were at Coldwell and Gosforth Park, the latter party comprising an adult and two juveniles, with two at Chugdon Wood, Derwent Reservoir, Grindon Lough. Plenneller and Whittle Dene.

Good grassland hunting areas produced most sightings during November-December, with four at East Chevington, Holy Island and Widdrington Moor Lake. Three were also at West Chevington and two hunted together at East Cramlington LNR, with two at Horncliffe and singles at many other widespread localities, including a male feeding on earthworms at Blyth.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

STATUS: Uncommon resident, passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

As usual, coastal areas produced most early sightings, with singles hunting prime localities holding winter gatherings of finches, buntings and small waders. Between January-March, coastal singles were seen at Bamburgh, Beadnell, Birling Cays, Druridge Pools, Dunstanburgh, East Chevington, Elwick, Fenham Flats, Holy Island, Low Newton, Tynemouth and Warkworth. Singles were seen on the Farne Islands on six dates in March-April. Others were inland at Prestwick Carr and Simonside. A female was on moorland near Whitfield in late February and another was back in suitable breeding habitat in late March.

A more general return to breeding areas occurred during April, while singles remained on the coast at Holy Island and Elwick. Monitoring by the Northumbria Ringing Group indicated a much improved breeding season. One heather moorland site was re-occupied by a successful pair after a gap of 27 years. In total, 21 pairs produced eggs, of which 17 pairs hatched young and 15 went on to fledge 48 young (nine successful pairs and 26 young in 2015) (NRG).

The usual early post-breeding movements to the coast occurred in August, with a juvenile male frequenting Holy Island. A first-year bird was at Cresswell Pond on 18th when a single hunted over Knoxes Reef (Farne Islands). Two were at Craggside (Rothbury) on 25th September, whilst further movement during the month provided singles at Linkhouse Farm (High Newton) on 13th, Holy Island on 18th and 30th, a female near

Alnwick on 24th, one flying S offshore at Seaton Sluice on 28th and a juvenile male at Ancroft on 29th.

During October, birds were settling into wintering areas. A male and female were at Cheswick and singles were at Beal Point, Boulmer, Cresswell, Elwick, Holy Island, Longhoughton, North Sunderland, Ross Back Sands and Snab Point. A female remained at an inland locality on 20th. As usual during November-December, most sightings were coastal. A juvenile female and a sub-adult male were regularly on Holy Island, the latter usually at The Snook. There were regular sightings of singles on the Farne Islands, although two were seen fighting over a Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus* on Staple Island on 8th November. Other singles on or near the coast were at Budle Bay, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Elwick, West Ord and Widdrington Moor Lake. Inland records involved a single at Swinhope on 13th November and December singles at Clifton (Morpeth) on 18th and Quarry House Moor on 26th.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

STATUS: Rare to uncommon, although annual, summer visitor.

BREEDING: Rare. / LAST BRED: 2011 (?)

Only four documented sightings were accepted this year, which is disappointing considering there were at least 13 claimed records during the year. Three of the claims were submitted, but all were deemed 'Not Proven' due to insufficient detail. It does show that typical sightings are often of short duration and, although the jizz of a Hobby is there, the diagnostic features are often not seen.

The first accepted sighting was an adult at Links House (High Newton) on 6th June (IF). Views were brief, but it was seen chasing hirundines, which is a classic feature of Hobby. Another adult was watched at Newbiggin on 24th June (AP). It was observed for several minutes over the golf course and was well described. Another adult was scoped flying though the dunes at Cresswell on 17th July (JFa/TF). Typically, it was only in view for ten seconds, but was well documented. Finally, a late adult was seen at Leaplish (Kielder) on 10th September (PRM). This was at unusually close range down to 10m overhead.

Most autumn sightings relate to juveniles, but there has been the occasional adult in September in past years. The County Recorder would welcome the other claims in 2016 being documented, so that they can be assessed by the County Records Committee.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

STATUS: Uncommon resident, passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

Birds were typically widespread during the first quarter, particularly in coastal hunting areas, but also at inland localities. Two birds were regularly on the Farne Islands, with two at Harwood and individuals at Alnmouth, Ashington, Backworth Pond, Bamburgh, Beadnell, Big Waters, the Blyth Estuary, Budle Bay, Cambois, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Fenham Flats, Gosforth Park NR, Goswick Sands, Harthope Valley, Hartley cliffs, Holy Island, Holywell Pond, Horncliffe, Humshaugh, Monks House Pool, Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal), Morpeth, Newcastle (Elswick), North Sunderland, Seaton Sluice, Swallow Pond, Tynemouth, Wallington Hall, West Loanend, Whitley Bay and Widdrington Moor Lake. Also during the first quarter, singles were at regular breeding sites.

During April, pairs were at confidential breeding localities and a single was on Holy Island on 3rd and 10th. Monitoring by the Northumbria Ringing Group (NRG) showed a very poor breeding season. Although 16 sites were occupied, only seven pairs produced eggs and five pairs went on to fledge 12 young (11 pairs and 26 young in 2015). A very worrying feature was the occupation of regular sites where pairs failed to lay eggs. Disturbingly, young were stolen from one site which had been successful annually for two decades. At another long-established breeding site, a bird-scaring device was placed directly above the nesting ledge where a pair was present but did not lay. Northumbria Police, aided by the RSPB, NRG and Natural England, launched an investigation and removed the device. A gamekeeper claimed it had been placed there the previous summer to protect 'second-broods' of Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus* from gulls, even though that species is single-brooded. A file was submitted to the Crown Prosecutions Service which, despite clear concerns over the motive, decided there was insufficient evidence to take the case to court. Natural England issued a warning to the landowner for failing to obtain consent to use such devices on a Site of Special Scientific Interest.



Isabelline Shrike - Holy Island - October (Frank Golding).



Red-backed Shrike - Holy Island - May (Mike Carr).

The only sightings in June, away from breeding areas, involved singles at Budle Bay on 6th and Lynemouth on 22nd. Two adults that arrived in Budle Bay in July remained until late September. Elsewhere, singles drifted back to the coast during August at Cresswell Pond, Holy Island, Longhoughton Steel, Newbiggin, North Blyth and Seaton Sluice. During September, others followed at Ellington, the Farne Islands and St Mary's, while individuals were inland at Blanchland, Derwent Reservoir, East Cramlington, Grindon Lough, Humshaugh, Mootlaw Quarry and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

During the final quarter, birds were settled in widespread wintering localities, mainly coastal, but with some remaining inland. Two were at East Sleekburn and Mootlaw Quarry, with two resident on the Farnes Islands and Holy Island and singles at 23 other coastal localities, including new sites for the year at Boulmer, Chugdon Wood (Ellington), Howick Dene, Newton Point, Ross Back Sands, Snab Point, Spittal cliffs (Berwick), Warkworth and West Chevington. Observations included a bird stooping in off the sea and flushing the wintering Shore Larks *Eremophila alpestris* at East Chevington and an individual which flew within 30m and completely ignored a drone being used for filming on Holy Island. Late inland records involved singles at Branton, Derwent Reservoir, Farnley, Grindon Lough, Prestwick Carr, Muckle Moss, Newcastle, River Tweed and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Ring-necked Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

STATUS: Added to the official county list in 2014; previously regarded as an escape, or of unknown origin.

A small resident colony appears to be well-established in and around Newcastle upon Tyne. The first sighting of the year involved four over Shieldfield on 15th February. One feeding in lakeside trees at Exhibition Park on 22nd March was a county first for the observer.

In April, a small flock of six was in Byker on 3rd, three were at Ouseburn on 18th and two at Walker Cemetery on 23rd. Two at Heaton Park on 23rd May were followed by singles at Exhibition Park on 10th June and over Walker on 24th and 26th June.

The next record involved a single over Gosforth High Street on 3rd August. In September, birds were noted moving over Exhibition Park on several dates, with peak counts of nine on 20th and eight on 22nd; all were moving E, possibly towards Heaton Park, where six were present throughout the month. Five were seen with crows mobbing a Buzzard *Buteo buteo* at Nuns Moor (Fenham) on 21st and one flew W over the Royal Grammar School on 6th. Five were still at Heaton Park and at Jesmond Dene on 2nd October, while at Exhibition Park, two were seen on 5th and five on 13th; singles were at Jesmond Dene on 3rd and a little farther afield at Whitley Bay Cemetery on 4th. A count of 16 at 'Gosforth Subsidence Pond' on 30th December (PMJ) gives some indication as to the numbers present in the Newcastle area to date, with every indication of continued expansion.

Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus*

STATUS: Extremely rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 3 / FIRST: 2000 / LAST: 2006

Part of the exceptional autumn influx of eastern vagrants involved a first-winter found on Holy Island ('Half Moon Slack') on 18th October (BS *et al.*). It was seen the following day, but not subsequently, and proved very flighty and difficult to view. This sighting has been accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

STATUS: Rare passage visitor. / FIRST RECORD: HISTORICAL / LAST RECORD: 2015

BREEDING: Historical. / LAST BRED 1977 (?)

An influx in May began with a female at Woodhorn Flashes on 11th. Males were at Annstead on 12th, Embleton Quarry from 12th-14th and Holy Island (Vicarage Garden) from 13th-15th May. Later in the month, a male was at St Mary's on 26th, two females on Brownsman (Farne Islands) on 28th (FIR) and a male on an inland moor on 29th.

The only autumn bird was at Howdon on 29th August.

Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 11 / FIRST: 1952 / LAST: 2013

A strange tale involved a first-winter at Newton Links on 13th September (JGS/GW *et al.*). It was found sitting on a barbed wire fence and both legs were ringed, with a White 'EE' on its left leg. Investigation showed it had been ringed in the Lleida Steppes in NE Spain, where it had last been seen on 24th August, three weeks before the Northumberland sighting. It had been raised in captivity and released into the wild in August. Due to the artificial aspect to this record, it has only been accepted into Category E of the British List by the British Birds Rarities Committee. Of extra interest is the fact that this is the third Lesser Grey Shrike to have been found in the same area at Newton, with others in 2008 and 2013.



Lesser Grey Shrike - Newton Links - September (Mike Hodgson).

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*

STATUS: Rare winter visitor. / FIRST RECORD: HISTORICAL / LAST RECORD: 2015

One found at Redpath Farm (Harwood Forest) on 4th February remained in the area to at least 5th April; on 30th March it was seen to catch and impale a Common Lizard *Zootoca vivipara*. Another was at Archy's Rigg (Falstone) on 3rd March.

There was a welcome influx in October, beginning with one on Inner Farne (Farne Islands) on 4th. Two were on Holy Island from 7th-12th (RA *et al.*), one remaining to 17th, and a popular bird was at Prestwick Carr from 8th October until the end of the year. One was at Bewick Moor from 10th-30th October, with another at Newbiggin GC on 15th. A potential wintering bird was again at Harwood Forest on 12th November.

Magpie *Pica pica*

STATUS: Common resident.

BREEDING: Common.

There was a large gathering in excess of 40 at Scotswood (River Tyne) on 9th January, while elsewhere 24 were reported from Valley Park (Cramlington) on 30th and ten at Big Waters on 1st; seven to eight were noted at Jesmond Dene in January-February. The Blyth Estuary attracted up to 25 in February while, in March, a group of 16 were at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 20th, with up to ten in a garden at Fulbeck (Morpeth).

Flock sizes decreased thereafter, with counts of five to six at Cullercoats and in the Hartley West Farm-Holywell area in April-May. Numbers at Jesmond Dene included three in June and six to seven in July-August. Elsewhere, larger summer gatherings involved six at Gosforth Park NR and five at St Mary's Wetland in July, with eight at Scremerston in August. The largest September count was six at Alnwick on 26th.

Flocks began to assemble again from October, when 16 were at Howdon on 9th. In November, 15 were noted at Beacon Hill (Cramlington) on 2nd and nine were at Jesmond Dene on 13th. Further gatherings in the Cramlington area during December included 52 at Whitelea Chase (STH) on 16th and 33 at 'Northumberlandia' on 17th and Valley Park on 31st, when ten were also at Prestwick Carr.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

STATUS: Well-represented resident.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

This species was reported from 80 widespread, mainly woodland, localities. Gosforth Park NR attracted up to four from January-April and six in May-June. Other high counts during the first half of the year were nine at Harwood Village on 13th February (JR), five at Swallow Pond in March and at Eachwick in April, four at Stonehaugh in May and five at Lordenshaw (Simonsides) in June, the latter a family party on 5th.

Further indications of breeding included a bird with nest material at Holywell Dene on 4th May, an adult with three juveniles at Ellington in July and three juveniles at Gosforth Park NR in August.

Six were at Harwood Forest in July-August, while up to four were at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) in September, Gosforth Park NR from September-October, Bedlington and East Sleekburn in October and Dukeshouse Wood (Hexham) in November. Five were at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) in October, while counts of three during the latter half of the year came from Bolam Lake, Derwent Reservoir, East Cramlington LNR, Ellington Dene, Eshott and Letah Wood (Hexham).

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

STATUS: Common resident.

BREEDING: Common.

A pre-roost flock near Whittle Dene Reservoirs numbered around 1,000 on 23rd January, while 650 were at QEII CP the following day. Another pre-roost gathering at Red House Farm (Gosforth) contained 500+ on 19th February. Elsewhere during this period there were counts of 250-300 at Alnwick, Embleton Bay, Lynemouth Flash, QEII CP and Warkworth and 100-180 at Cramlington, Kiln Pit Hill, Plenmeller Common, Seaton Burn and Shipley. At Prestwick Carr 300 were noted on 18th March, while an evening roost count at Gosforth Park NR reduced from 500+ in March to 300+ in April.

A rapid decline was evident in May as birds dispersed to breeding areas. The only sizable June count was 88 at Howdon on 23rd, with the same number present on 13th July; 51 were noted at Beacon Hill (Cramlington) on 24th July.

Large gatherings began to re-form around mid-August, including 500 flying to roost at Dukeshouse Wood (Hexham) on 29th and 100-120 at Flodden Field, Howick Scar and Widdrington. In September, 400 were at Big Waters and 130 at Beacon Hill (Cramlington), while Big Waters produced a reduced count of 200 in October. A large roost at Lambley held 200-320 throughout November, when 110 were also at Prestwick Carr. The final counts of the year included 2,000 at Gosforth on 3rd December (PMJ) and, at Whittle Dene Reservoirs, 700 were in a mixed *corvid* flock at dawn on 8th and 350 there on the afternoon of 17th.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

STATUS: Abundant resident.

BREEDING: Abundant. Some colonies have declined in recent years.

Early counts included 250 at Embleton Bay in January and 300 at Warkworth in February, while 100-150 were reported from Amble, Chevington Moor, Falstone Shipley and Widdrington during the same period. With birds dispersing to local nesting sites, the largest March gathering was 50 at Widdrington on 7th.

Very little nesting data was received, however there is little doubt that 'Rookeries' have declined in both number and size in recent years; the only reports in 2016 were of 15 nests at Cramlington Hall and six at Seaton Burn in March.

In May, counts of 50 came from Derwent Reservoir on 2nd and Beadnell on 5th. Larger post-breeding gatherings began to form from early June and included 150 at West Chevington on 2nd and 100 at Roddam

on 6th; 150 were also at Fourstones on 25th. By late August, around 500 were in a mixed flock with Jackdaws *Corvus monedula* at Dukeshouse Wood (Hexham) on 29th (AJH); elsewhere, 80-100 were also noted at Flodden Field, Milfield and Warkworth.

In Upper Coquetdale there were counts of 250 at Hepple and 150 at Sharperton on 3rd September whilst, in October, 300 were at Derwent Reservoir on 3rd, and 120 near Berwick and 75 at Bilton on 30th. No large counts were reported in November but 200 were noted at dawn in a mixed *corvid* roost at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 8th December.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

STATUS: Common resident.

BREEDING: Common.

In January, frozen flood water near Gosforth Park NR attracted 59 on 21st and a pre-roost gathering of 52 was at Prestwick Carr on 25th, with 30 at Northumberland Park (North Shields) on the same day; 20-26 were also noted at Beal saltmarsh and Hemscott Hill (Cresswell). The pre-roost gathering at Prestwick Carr numbered 24 on 26th February and 24 were also at North Shields on 2nd, with a further 13 at Newbiggin on 27th.

A new nest at the regular nest site at Holy Island Lough in April was constructed almost entirely from seaweed; 18 also flew E at Holy Island on 10th April. On the Farne Islands, one to five were noted almost daily in April-May, with peak counts of 17-18 on 20th and 28th April and 16 on 4th May. A large gathering of 40 was at Whiteadder Water on 24th May. In the Blyth area, 22 were at Kitty Brewster on 22nd May and 60 at the Blyth Estuary on 5th June (LJM); 30 were at The Wanneys (Ridsdale) on 19th June. North Shields Fish Quay was an attraction throughout the summer to autumn period, with peak counts of 30 in April, 40 in May, 50 in July and 20-25 from August to October.

At Beacon Hill (Cramlington), there were counts of 32 in September, 18 in October and 27 in November. Elsewhere during this latter period, 20 were at Alnwick Moor on 1st September, 38 flew E at Holy Island (The Snook) and 30 were at Hauxley on 13th October; in November, 58 were at Whiteadder Water on 13th and 36 at the Blyth Estuary on 2nd. Finally, 17 were noted at Highshaw Farm (Otterburn Training Area) on 30th December.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

STATUS: Rare and declining passage and winter visitor. / LAST RECORD: 2015

BREEDING: Historical. / LAST BRED: Hybrid pair 1979

Singles were noted at Holy Island Causeway from 9th-21st January and Chatton on 21st February. Further singles were at Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) on 16th April, Holy Island on 1st May and arriving 'in-off' at Newbiggin on 12th May. Sightings from the Cresswell Pond area between 26th April-5th May probably referred to the same individual. Finally, one was at Albermarle (Stamfordham) on 29th November.

Raven *Corvus corax*

STATUS: Uncommon resident.

BREEDING: Uncommon, but increasing.

This species continues to occupy all suitable upland habitats. In complete contrast to last year there were very few coastal reports. In January, two were at Holy Island on 21st, with two also noted feeding on a sheep carcass at Grindon Lough and in the Breamish Valley, and singles at Eglington and Plenmeller Common. Two flew N at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) on 3rd February, two were at The Cheviot on 12th and at Old Berwick on 22nd, while singles were again in the Breamish Valley and at Grindon Lough. In the Cheviot Hills, seven were located during a 6km walk from Ingram Gilders-Shillmoor on 13th March and five during an 11km walk from Biddlestone-Bloodybush Edge on 25th; one to two were in a further 11 typical upland areas during the month and, more unusually, a single was at Stamfordham on 29th.

Data from the Northumbria Ringing Group revealed the presence of 24 occupied sites (26 in 2015), at which 21 pairs built nests. Of these, 19 pairs laid eggs and 16 nests fledged a total of 40 young (16 nests and 36+ young in 2015) (NRG).

In April, ten were at Shillmoor (Upper Coquetdale) on 9th (JR), two sub-adults flew N at Holy Island (Sandham Bay) on 17th, display was noted at Kielder Burn on 19th, two were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 30th and singles were at Branton GP, Falstone, Hawsen Burn and Kielder Castle. One flew over the observer's garden at Eachwick on four occasions on 1st May, while one to three were noted at seven upland localities. Family parties of seven and six were noted at Biddlestone and Carey Burn respectively in June, while four were over Broomlee Lough and two at Kielder. One to two were in the College Valley, Kershope and Redesdale Forests, Upper Coquetdale area and Wooler Common in July-August, with eight found at Hethpool-Yeavinger Bell on 29th August. Eight were also at Willeyshrake (Irthing Valley) on 14th September, with two in the Cheviots, Upper Breamish Valley and Whittle Dene Reservoirs during the month.



Raven - Mike Henry.

There were further widespread reports of one to four from upland areas throughout the period October-December, including Branton GP, Featherwood, Harbottle, Harthope Valley, Hepburn Woods, Lady's Bridge (Rothbury), Linnshield, Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal), Mozie Law (Border Ridge), Otterburn Training Area, Plenmeller Common, Ros Castle (Chillingham), Widehope and Winter's Gibbet (Harwood Forest).

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

STATUS: Abundant resident and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Abundant.

Very few reports were received during the first quarter, although there were some notable records from Newcastle, with one to two at Chapel House, Exhibition Park, Jesmond Dene and Quayside. Elsewhere, one to three were noted at Bamburgh, Bolam Lake, Cramlington, Grindon Lough, Holywell Dene, Howdon, Killingworth Lake, Prestwick Carr, Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) and Wark. Four migrants were at Melkridge on 14th March.

A light coastal 'fall' in April brought 26 to Holy Island on 1st, three at St Mary's Wetland on 2nd, a peak of 11 on the Farne Islands on 4th and 16 at Holy Island on 10th; eight were inland at Bolam Lake on 16th. A further six passage birds were at Holy Island on 1st May, with a single at Hauxley on 11th.

In breeding areas there was a high count of 33 singing birds from a BBS at Kyloe Woods on 9th May and family parties of six at Morpeth on 13th and three+ at Prestwick Carr on 27th July. Ringing sessions at Corbridge Common produced a total of 17 first-year birds and two adults in August; a scattering of records also came from coastal sites. In September, at least ten were at Grindon Lough on 14th and six at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 17th; on the coast, five were at Holy Island on 4th and Cambois on 6th, with two to four at Bamburgh and one to three at the Farne Islands..

A notable influx in October was the largest for a decade, with Holy Island and the Farne Islands featuring strongly. Holy Island recorded seven to 12 during the first three days; thereafter, several waves of new arrivals passed through in prolonged easterly winds, as illustrated in the table below, peaking with 393 on 15th (MJC).

Arrivals on Holy Island from 5th-30th October were as follows:

5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	12th	13th	14th	15th	16th	20th	22nd	23rd	25th	30th
23	52	271	100	68	37	87	301	274	393	201	12	62	12	17	1

Meanwhile, at the Farne Islands, visible migration increased from 4th-19th October, with 13-231 birds recorded, including a seasonal high of 265 birds on 15th October; the third-highest day count for the islands. Passage died down towards the end of the month, with one to six noted daily until the final record of three on 29th October. Elsewhere, 250 were at Hauxley RS and 100 at St Mary's on 15th, 85 at Budle Point on 13th,

75 at Craster on 17th and 30-50+ at Bamburgh, Boulmer, Cresswell, Cullercoats, Howick, Newton Links, Ridley Park (Blyth), Ross Links and Tynemouth. A total of 80 were trapped and ringed at Bamburgh during the month and 96 at Hauxley on 15th-16th alone. There were two unusual observations from Holy Island on 8th, when one sat on the shoulder of a local fisherman on a boat off Emmanuel Head and another was found snuggled down in a pair of fur boots in a house porch. In November, 20 were noted at Bolam Lake on 5th and five at Hallington Reservoir on 27th. An unusual December record concerned a bird in full song under a street light in Jesmond at 01:20hrs on 22nd.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*

STATUS: Rare, although regular, passage migrant and extremely rare winter visitor.

A visiting birder's first trip to the region was well rewarded with the discovery of a singing male photographed near Kielder Campsite on 30th May. Although a potential breeding record, the possibility of it attracting a mate was highly unlikely.

Normal service in October produced single migrants at Low Newton from 6th-8th, Holy Island (Vicarage Garden-Churchyard) and St Mary's on 15th, Druridge Pools and West Wideopens (Farne Islands) on 16th and Holy Island (The Snook) from 18th-20th

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

STATUS: Abundant resident.

BREEDING: Abundant.

In January, 24 were trapped and ringed at Spindlestone on 20th, 23 were at Tyne Green (Hexham) on 13th and ten at Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) on 24th. There was a large count of 35 at Gosforth Park NR on 8th February (PMJ), while the peak count from Holywell Dene was ten in February, with five to seven here to August and four to seven in a nearby Old Hartley garden. Good numbers in March included 24 at Humford Mill (Bedlington), 17 at Furnace Bridge (Blyth) and nine at Bothal Village. Up to six on feeders at Bolam Lake in March increased to 14 by mid-April.

Details from nest box study areas were as follows:

Locality	Nests	Eggs laid	Young fledged	Productivity	Observer
Linnels	17	137	117	6.9	AM
Whittle Wood	9	--	47	5.2	DWN
Dye House	9	78	37	4.1	RMH
March Burn	7	59	39	5.6	RMH
Dipton Wood	6	--	27	4.5	SWA
Kirkley Hall	3	--	22	7.3	IK
Wallington Hall	3	22	15	5	JCD
Tarset	2	12	7	3.5	JR
Hall's Hill (Chesters)	1	11	10	10	JCD
Colwell Hill (Chesters)	1	9	9	9	JCD
Letah Wood	1	10	8	8	RMH

Results from the above nest box study areas reveal mixed fortunes, with productivity ranging from 3.5 young per pair (Tarset) to ten young successfully fledged from a single pair at Hall's Hill (Chesters). New Mills Wood (Berwick) produced a count of 18 on 7th May, while elsewhere numbers were disappointingly low and breeding success was again poor following yet another cold spring. In addition to the above, only one of three nest boxes at Old Hartley produced young, with one nest abandoned and the other box empty; all three boxes are usually productive. Three family parties were at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 19th June.

Sparse reporting during the latter part of the year included 13 at Hauxley RS on 27th August. Eight at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 15th November was a low count for this North Tyne site and a further reflection of the poor breeding season. By contrast, 27 were trapped (23 ringed and four re-traps) at Spindlestone on 18th December.

Great Tit *Parus major*

STATUS: Common resident.

BREEDING: Common.

In January-February, counts of up to 20 came from Gosforth Park NR (PMJ), 12 at the Aln Estuary and Humford Mill (Bedlington), 11 in Jesmond Dene, ten at Holywell Pond and eight at Bolam Lake, Cramlington, Prestwick Carr and Spindleston (the latter trapped and ringed). Two regularly seen in gardens at Holy Island during January was an unusual winter record for the island. Another unusual report came from the Farne Islands on the day the Rangers arrived on 19th March, when a bird found in the lighthouse compound on Inner Farne remained for two further days; only the 15th year the species has been recorded since 1882. Elsewhere in March, 17 were at Humford Mill and 13 at Bothal Village on 10th and 7th respectively, and ten were at Bolam Lake on 16th April.

Details from nest box study areas were as follows:

Locality	Nests	Eggs laid	Young fledged	Productivity	Observer
Wallington Hall	28	142	68	2.4	JCD
Linnels	15	88	66	4.4	AM
March Burn	12	89	51	4.3	RMH
Tarset	10	53	47	4.7	JR
Rothley Lake	9	51	30	3.3	JCD
Whittle Wood	9	--	28	3.1	DWN
Dye House	7	42	12	1.7	RMH
Colwell Hill (Chesters)	6	37	28	4.7	JCD
Dipton Wood	5	--	22	4.4	SWA
Kirkley Hall	4	--	18	4.5	IK
Hall's Hill (Chesters)	4	15	14	3.5	JCD
Low Carriteth	4	18	13	3.3	JR
Fallowlees	3	18	12	4	JCD

Results from the above nest box study areas reveal mixed fortunes, with productivity ranging from 1.7 young per pair (Dye House, Hexham) to 4.7 young per pair (Colwell Hill and Tarset). Also of note were two albinos, eight from a brood of eight, in a nest box at The Linnels. A pair fledged young from a nest box at Kenton on 29th May.

Peak monthly counts of five to ten came from the Holywell Dene-Old Hartley area from May-August and eight were trapped and ringed at Hauxley RS on 27th August. Finally, six were noted at Guyzance Mill on 15th November and 14 were trapped (12 ringed and two re-traps) at Spindleston on 18th December.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

STATUS: Abundant resident.

BREEDING: Abundant.

This obviously under-recorded species remains abundant in its favoured coniferous woodland habitat. In January, nine were trapped and ringed at Spindleston on 20th; five were at Wallington Hall and four at Derwent Reservoir. March produced counts of 30 at Ladycross Quarry (Slaley Forest) on 8th (GSI), nine at Humford Mill (Bedlington) and seven at Bothal Village; while, more unusually, a pair were noted regularly on Holy Island during the month. One to three were recorded from a lowly seven additional sites during the first quarter.

A family party of six at Kirkhill (Morpeth) on 6th June was the only record of note during the summer period. By September, the species was noted as numerous at a Wallington Hall feeding station. Some coastal movement was apparent in October, with five at Hauxley on 8th and six at Craster on 24th. In December, another ringing session at Spindleston on 18th produced eight trapped and ringed and four re-traps (BRS), while six were noted at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 4th and four at Jesmond Dene on 18th.

Willow Tit *Poecile montana*

STATUS: Well-represented resident.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

Although described here as well-represented, in the far north and west of the county, the Willow Tit is uncommon at best. However, with reports from 45 localities in 2016, distribution would appear to remain stable, as illustrated in the table below:

Year	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
Localities	45	40	37	45	41

The most reliable site remains Prestwick Carr, where up to four were noted throughout the year (PCF). The feeding station at Big Waters attracted up to three during the year, one to two were noted regularly from Weetslade Community Park throughout the year and the Holywell Dene-Old Hartley area between January-August. Other well-watched sites at Backworth, Derwent Reservoir and Linden Hall (Longhorsley) continued to attract the species on a regular basis.

During the first quarter, three were at Lynemouth Dene on 14th March, with one to two reported from a further 12 localities, including Beggars Rigg (Rothbury), Branton GP, East Cramlington Pond NWT, High Warden, Linton Ponds, Newburn CP, Rising Sun CP and Twizell. An interesting ringing recovery concerned a nine year old bird controlled at Craster on 29th March and originally ringed at Low Newton, 4km to the north in 2007.

A pair was excavating a nest hole at Prestwick Carr on 2nd April, which was being defended from Blue Tits *Cyanistes caeruleus* on 23rd. Singing males were reported from Linden Hall in March and June and Fox Covert Wood (Ulgham) in April. Elsewhere during the breeding season, two were at County Hall (Morpeth) in April and August, at Longhorsley Moor in May, East Cramlington Pond NWT in June and Ellington in August, with two juveniles at Big Waters in July, while singles were also noted at Acklington, Beacon Hill (Longhorsley), Beanley GP, Brier Dene (Whitley Bay), Eachwick and Lynemouth Dene. One at Blyth GC in August was the observer's first record there in eight years. Elsewhere in coastal areas, singles were at Druridge Bay CP and Newton Pool in August, while up to three were at Craster and a single at Hauxley RS in October.

In addition to birds at the regular haunts referred to earlier, two were at Ellington Dene in September, while singles were also at Arcot Lane and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Singles (or the same) were at Swallow Pond from September-November, while singles were also reported in November from Branton GP, East Cramlington Pond NWT and Smallburn (Longhorsley). In December, three were feeding together in a hedgerow at Warkworth Lane on 20th, while elsewhere two were at Longhirst and a single at Felton.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

STATUS: Well-represented resident.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

After an apparent contraction in earlier years, sightings from 27 localities in 2016 would appear to suggest distribution has levelled, as illustrated in the table below:

Year	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
Localities	27	24	24	26	35

The stronghold of the species remains the Morpeth area, where there were regular reports of one to two from woodland at Abbey, Brough, High House, Postern and Scotch Gill. Nearby at Linden Hall (Longhorsley) there were regular sightings of up to two throughout the year.

During the first quarter, two were also at Acomb, Low Cocklaw (Berwick), Pauperhaugh (Coquet Valley), Rothbury Village, Spindleston, Thrum Mill (Rothbury) and Warkworth, with singles at Bickerton Village, Bolam Lake, Chugdon Wood (Ellington), Craggside, Humshaugh, Mitford, Stobswood and Wallington.

Encouragingly, there were some signs of recovery, with singles in April at Hexham (Middle School Dene), this the observer's first sighting here in 45 years, and at Bolam Lake, the observer's first here since 1999; at the latter locality singles were again noted in March and November-December.

Breeding success for such a sparsely distributed species is often difficult to prove; however, singing males were noted at Linden Hall in February-March and a bird was seen carrying food at Morralee Wood on 15th May.

The final six months of the year produced counts of no more than one to two from several of the above localities, together with a single at Prestwick Carr on 26th July.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

STATUS: Abundant resident, passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Abundant.

During the first two months of the year, benign weather conditions, with an absence of any periods of snow cover, ensured that birds wintered in good numbers. Small flocks of up to 31, including birds in song, were present at some 12 widespread coastal locations and flocks of up to 18 were also inland on arable fields and at a few elevated upland sites such as Quarry House Moor (Chillingham) and Allendale.

Throughout the breeding season, March-July, numerous singing birds were recorded, with the largest upland counts in March-April comprising 240+ in 33km on the Otterburn Training Area (ASJ), 85 in 20km in the Cheviots and 22 in the Simonsides; numbers at coastal and lowland sites included 85 on Holy Island and 38 in a AONB survey at Goswick Farm, indicative of a density of 35 per sq.km. Many other widespread localities held populations of ten to 17, including Buteland Fell (Redesmouth), Carey Burn, Great Wanney Fell, Longhorsely Moor, Newton, Sweethope, Weetslade Colliery and Wingates, with two to ten noted at 26 other rural, urban and suburban sites, including Newcastle (Town Moor).

Few birds remained on the breeding grounds by August and visible migration became evident from mid-September, with pre-migration gatherings of up to 50 at Holy Island, Ingoe and Prestwick Carr and 50 (per hour) heading SW at Backworth, 14 W at Derwent Reservoir and small parties flying W and SW at Big Waters.

Autumn passage peaked in mid-October, when many groups were seen moving S, with up to 103 at Holy Island, 90 at St Mary's, 19-40 on four dates at Hauxley and up to 30 at 16 other widespread locations. Throughout November, continued movement was witnessed at Arcot Pond, Cramlington, Felton, Morpeth, Newbiggin and Town Moor, albeit in smaller groups than during the previous month. However, good numbers of either resident birds or winter arrivals were present throughout December, encouraged by persistent mild conditions, and counts involved 35 at St Mary's, 30 at Backworth, 22 at Ryal and up to eight at five other lowland sites.

Shore Lark *Eremophila alpestris*

STATUS: Rare winter visitor. / FIRST RECORD: HISTORICAL / LAST RECORD: 2015

The early winter period saw a single bird in the River Aln Estuary on 7th March and presumably the same individual, a male, was in nearby Alnmouth dunes from 10th-26th.

October produced further welcome sightings of this rare visitor, starting with a single in fields at Cresswell-Lynemouth on 15th, three at Wideopen (Ross Back Sands) on 21st and calling singles over St Mary's Wetland on 23rd and 29th. At Goswick, five came in off the sea on 1st November and on 23rd a small flock of seven, the largest seen in the county for 13 years, was found at East Chevington Burn mouth (TB/HG *et al.*), staying to the year end, sustained by seed provision, and seen daily by scores of enthusiasts. On 4th December, three were recorded from farther south in Druridge Bay, possibly a temporary split from the nearby gang of seven.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

STATUS: Common summer and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

Cold weather in March delayed the spring arrival until three appeared at Gosforth Park NR on the late date of 24th. They were followed by two at Big Waters and one at Holywell Pond on 25th. Thereafter, numbers built up quickly towards the month end, with peak counts of 25 at East Chevington on 27th and 24 coming in to

roost at Gosforth Park NR on 28th. Numbers at East Chevington increased to 120 by 1st April, but adverse conditions until mid-month delayed significant further arrivals and created difficult feeding conditions, with very large concentrations seen feeding over water, including 380 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 13th, 350 at Branton GP on 21st and 125-220 at Corbridge, Gosforth Park NR, Swallow Pond and on the River Tweed at West Ord. Some 30 other widespread coastal and inland waters attracted smaller feeding flocks of up to 70 during the second half of the month. In May, 150 fed over water at West Ord on 7th.

Colony counts in May-June were 120 AON at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), 50 individuals at Barrowburn, 30 at Bulby Wood (Breamish Valley), 20 at High Park (Felton) and Wark (North Tyne), and a successful small colony on Priory cliffs (Tynemouth) was the first record there.

Pre-migration gatherings were already apparent by mid-July, the largest being 800 on the beach at Alnmouth on 9th (NFO), 350+ grounded by showers at Budle Bay on 17th, 200 at Brenkley, 150 over the River Tweed at West Ord and 100 at Widdrington Moor Lake. The onset of the return passage became evident on 15th with moderate movement S at Budle Bay; 20 also moved S at Seaton Sluice on 18th and groups of up to six moved through East Chevington on 19th. In August, 200+ fed at dusk over Big Waters on 9th, with 50-80 at Brenkley, Hauxley and St Mary's and 35, the majority juveniles, on wires at Holystone (Coquetdale); 26 moved S (in one hour) at Newbiggin on 29th and up to eight were at four other localities.

Apart from 90 S (in one hour) at Cresswell on 6th, numbers in September were much reduced as the exodus continued and migration S-SW was again witnessed at Brenkley and Derwent Reservoir and 25 at Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) on 10th declined to six by 26th. Elsewhere, one to six were at Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, Holy Island, Low Newton, Newcastle (Town Moor) and West Chevington. A single was on Holy Island on 8th October and nine at Hedgeley GP on 17th, the last of the year, represented the latest sighting since 2004.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

STATUS: Common summer and abundant passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

Early singles in March were at Brandon (Breamish Valley) and Big Waters on 27th and the following day at East Chevington and Gosforth Park NR. A period of cold weather seriously delayed many further arrivals until around mid-April, when 25+ fed over the River Blyth at Plessey Mill Farm on 12th, 100+ were at Swallow Pond on 15th and 60+ were at Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth) on 16th. From 23rd-28th March, groups of 14-100 were at Arcot Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Gosforth Park NR, Holywell Dene and West Ord, with up to ten at 31 other widespread localities; gatherings in early May included 150 feeding over water at West Ord, 40+ at Arcot Pond and Derwent Reservoir and up to ten at 12 other locations. A male found dead on Holy Island had been ringed from a nest only a short distance away in 2011 (IK).

Throughout June-July, more favourable conditions, and the priority of nesting duties, reduced the size of feeding flocks and, apart from 100 at Howick, 50+ grounded by showers at Budle Bay and 40 at Widdrington Moor Lake, only a few small groups were recorded. Successful nesting at a natural cave site at Stonehaugh represented only the second county record of Swallows using a natural site (ASJ), whilst other pairs nested in a skip at Alnwick tip and in the public hides at Druridge Pools and Holywell Pond. Elsewhere, six pairs nested at Foxhunters Estate (Whitley Bay), five pairs at Holywell Dene and two family parties frequented Newcastle (Exhibition Park). For the second year running, the ringing study at Holy Island reported a poor breeding year, with fewer birds than normal returning in the spring and some failing to breed; 19 monitored pairs produced at least 71 young and 12 pairs outside the study area also successfully fledged young (IK). Six pairs bred successfully on the Farne Islands (ten in 2015), but some second broods were raised.

The usual large post-breeding roost in the reedbed at Gosforth Park NR peaked at ca.2,000 in mid-August (NHSN), somewhat less than in recent years and indicative of the poor breeding season, due to largely unfavourable summer conditions. The only other significant reedbed roost, at Big Waters in September, peaked at 1,500 on 14th-15th, reducing quickly thereafter to 200 on 16th. Many smaller gatherings throughout August included 50-150 at Amble, Brunton Bridge, Holystone (Coquetdale), Howick Hall, Old Mousen, Plennmeller Common and Prestwick Carr, with 20-50 at 17 other locations; on 5th, four young in a nest at Newcastle (Town Moor) were still being fed by adults. Return passage was first noted on 31st August at Druridge Pools, when 100 (per hour) moved S. Southerly movement increased significantly in early September and included 1,000+ (per hour) at St Mary's on 5th and 700 (per hour) there on 6th, when 620 (per hour) also passed Cresswell; 293 (in one hour) moved S at Newton Links on 13th. Pre-migration

flocks of 100-300 were noted at Bamburgh, Big Waters, Derwent Reservoir, Ogle, Wallridge, Whalton and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, with up to 80 at some 25 other localities.

In early October, gatherings of 15-75, mainly juveniles, were at Derwent Reservoir, Elwick, Humshaugh, Prestwick Carr and Whittle Dene Reservoirs; passage birds moved S at Budle Point and Cresswell-Druridge pools on 17th and, thereafter, one to nine were seen at many other inland and coastal sites up to the month end. Late birds in November involved two at East Chevington on 15th and singles, or possibly the same individual, at St Mary's on 18th and in Cullercoats Bay on 20th.

House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

STATUS: Common summer and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

The earliest returnee for seven years was an individual at East Chevington north pool on 27th March. Although other birds were present from 1st April, sightings were few, with three at Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Swallow Pond on 11th and 15th respectively and one to two at a handful of other locations. Cold weather during the first half of April delayed any significant arrivals until 22nd, when 30+ were at Swallow Pond, followed by 40+ at Arcot Pond on 23rd and 45 at Haughton Castle on 24th. May records included 200 feeding with other hirundines at West Ord (BWG), 120 at Gainslaw Hill (River Tweed), 40 in the Upper Breamish Valley and at Whiteadder Water, 30 at Derwent Reservoir and one to 22 at 11 other widespread sites. Nesting was confirmed at a number of locations, including Alnwick, Blanchland, Cramlington and Leaplish (Kielder).

In June-July, further nesting activity included 30 AON at Canty's Brig (Berwick), 11 pairs at Great Tosson, young in ten nests at Shillmoor, nine birds collecting mud at Belsay and four nests at Needles Eye (Berwick). Many feeding flocks of 20-95 were seen over fields and water at Arcot Pond, Breamish Valley, Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Pools, Holywell Pond, Howdon, Jesmond Dene, Old Hartley, St Mary's and Upper Coquetdale. Post-breeding flocks during the last week in August included 70+, mainly juveniles, which gathered on the church tower at Stamfordham, 64 in a tight feeding flock at East Ord (Berwick), 24 at Cresswell village and 22 at Old Hartley, with ten to 20 at around eight other localities; 29 flying S at Newbiggin on 29th and 26 past Inner Farne on 30th were the first signs of return migration, but a late breeding record was of a second brood fledging at Cramlington on 27th.

Southerly migration was again evident in September at Cresswell, when 160 moved S (in one hour) on 6th, at Humshaugh, where 200, in loose groups, moved just after dawn on 10th (SW) and at Newton Links on 13th; elsewhere, pre-migration gatherings during the first half of the month included 160 at Ellington, 80 at Derwent Reservoir, 60 at Whalton, 55 at Wallridge, 50 at Chollerford and Thrunton and 40 at Wark, with one to 25 at many other sites. Young were still in nests at Cresswell, Holywell and Tynemouth on 27th and a pair fed newly-fledged young at Holy Island on 30th. In October, 16 flew S at Humshaugh on 1st and one to six were at Alnwick Garden, Branton GP, Ellington, Hauxley, Holy Island, Lynemouth, Prestwick Carr, Priors Park (Tynemouth) and Wark (North Tyne) on various dates up to 15th, with a single flying W over Inner Farne on 17th being the last record of the year.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

STATUS: Common resident.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

Roving feeding groups were typically widespread during the first quarter. Larger parties included 20 attracted to feeders at East Chevington, 14 at Prestwick Carr, 13 at Backworth, Holywell Dene and West Hartford, 12 at Eachwick and Tweedmouth and ten to 11 at Budle Bay, Humshaugh, Lesbury, Rothbury and Tynemouth. Smaller groups were at numerous other widespread localities.

In April, most reports involved singles and pairs in breeding habitats. During May, large gatherings of 29 and 20 were noted at Waren Mill on 14th and East Chevington on 19th respectively and fledged young were recorded at Lynemouth Dene on 24th. Another family party was at Cramlington (Valley Park) in June, when three juveniles were noted at Rothbury. In the period July-August, others were widespread and included four family parties totalling ca.30 birds at Holywell Waggonway (ASJ). Family groups were also at Cramlington (Alexander Park) and in Newcastle (Elswick, Exhibition and Leazes Parks and Lower Ouseburn). Another

party was at North Seaton Colliery. Groups of six to 12 at nine other localities may also have involved family groups.

With the population swelled by youngsters, counts between October-December were generally higher than during the first quarter. Larger groups included 30 at Swin Hope (Edlingham) on 13th November (ME), 22 at Ellington Dene on 21st September, 21 trapped and ringed at Bamburgh on 21st October, 20 at Newcastle (Exhibition Park) and Wark (North Tyne), 19 at Hauxley and 16 at Cramlington, Humshaugh, Newcastle (Elswick) and Spital (Newbiggin). There were counts of ten to 15 from a further 15 localities, including some of the above sites, as well as Berwick, Blyth Estuary, Coldwell, Colt Crag Reservoir, East Sleekburn, Gosforth Park NR, Hadston Links, Hallington Reservoir, Howick Dene, North Shields and Warden.

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

STATUS: Rare autumn passage visitor; extremely rare in spring. / FIRST RECORD: 1965 / LAST RECORD: 2015

Only the one sighting this year, after a run of good years, with one seen on Holy Island (Vicarage Garden) on 17th September (PRM). It proved elusive in early evening and was not present the following day. Autumn sightings have all been within the period 13th August-21st September.

Pallas's Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus*

STATUS: Rare autumn passage visitor; extremely rare in spring. / FIRST RECORD: 1951 / LAST RECORD: 2014

After a blank year in 2015, it was a welcome return for this increasingly rare Siberian gem that was noted in good numbers in October, during an extraordinary arrival of eastern vagrants. Holy Island hosted at least six, beginning with two (Snook House and the Vicarage Garden) on 8th (TF/JFa *et al.*). The Snook House bird remained until 9th, when another was found on the Straight Lonnen. Another was discovered at Chare Ends car park on 12th, with a new arrival in the 'Half-Moon Slack' from 14th-16th. Another new arrival was in 'Snook Plantation' from 15th-16th. Elsewhere, singles were reported from Inner Farne (Farne Islands) on 5th, Howick on 7th, Low Newton (Tin Church) from 11th-12th, Budle Point, Craster and Inner Farne again on 14th, East Chevington, Hauxley and Tynemouth on 15th and Cresswell Pond on 16th. Reports of singles from the St Mary's-Old Hartley area from 14th-16th may have involved two birds.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

STATUS: Uncommon autumn passage visitor, extremely rare in spring.

It was another superb autumn for this charismatic Siberian species, which was present in excitingly high numbers along the coast from mid-September until late October. There was also a single inland record.

Once again, Holy Island attracted the highest numbers, beginning with four on 15th September. Two were present on 17th and one on 18th, when the Farne Islands' first of the autumn was on Brownsman, followed by another on 22nd on Inner Farne. A single was at St Mary's on 21st-22nd, one to two followed on Holy Island daily from 22nd-24th, one was at Whitley Bay Cemetery on 24th, two at Budle Point on 25th and another single on Holy Island on 29th.

A significant arrival during the first week of October produced counts on Holy Island of at least six on 2nd, five on 5th, eight on 6th, nine on 7th (MJC/ADM), seven on 8th and five on 9th. Singles followed on 10th, 12th-16th and on 22nd, perhaps involving new arrivals. The Holy Island influx was mirrored along the coast. One on Inner Farne on 1st rose to three on 4th, with one to two noted on seven further dates. Two were at Howick Dene on 3rd-4th, six at Craster on 4th and one at Newton Links on 6th. Four were present and three ringed at Bamburgh from 6th-8th, five at Hauxley on 8th and three+ at Budle Point from 8th-10th. Farther south, two to four were at Tynemouth on 2nd and two at St Mary's on 2nd, followed by singles on 3rd and 5th. One was in nearby Whitley Bay Cemetery on 3rd, with two present on 9th. Two more were at Tynemouth on 8th, when the year's sole inland sighting was a single at Newcastle Business Park. One remained at Tynemouth on 9th, when two were in Chugdon Wood (Ellington). During this influx, singles were also at Berwick (Flagstaff Park), Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay), Cambois, Druridge Bay CP, Druridge Pools, Low Newton, Newbiggin, Priors Park (Tynemouth) and Woodhorn Church.

Pallas's Warbler - St Mary's - October (Alan Curry).



Yellow-browed Warbler - Holy Island - October (Jonathan Farooqi).



Onward movement reduced numbers into mid-October. Singles were at Alnmouth on 12th and at Craster, Newbiggin, Tynemouth and Woodhorn Church on 15th. Three at Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) and a single at Hauxley on 16th were followed by singles at Priors Park on 19th, Beal on 23rd and Longstone (Farne Islands) during the same period. Two at St Mary's on 25th-26th were the final records.

An unprecedented level of submissions in October, many of multiple counts, makes it extremely difficult to accurately judge the numbers involved. However, allowing for duplication, a conservative total of 89 individuals, consisting of seven on Holy Island and five elsewhere in September, and 18 on Holy Island and 59 elsewhere in October, would seem a reasonable estimate.

Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 28 / FIRST: 1980 / LAST: 2015

In the wonderful easterly passage of October it was to be expected that there would be sightings. One turned up at Priors Park (Tynemouth) on 14th October and proved very popular throughout its long stay, with sightings through to 20th October (DRW *et al.*). It kept to the hedgerow by the cricket pitch, with additional sightings in woodland on the edge of the allotments. Another individual was, typically, found on Holy Island on 22nd October (MJC). It was very well documented, but proved elusive, and only brief views were obtained.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

STATUS: An increasingly uncommon summer and rare passage visitor.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

The rapid decline of this delightful and formerly well-represented visitor to deciduous woodlands was again starkly apparent, with records from only ten localities involving perhaps as few as 17 individuals. During May, one was at the Derwent Gorge on 5th, with three in song there on 8th and one to two reported on five further dates to 31st. One was singing at Lynemouth Dene on 6th May and two were along the River Breamish on 9th. Four birds, including three singing males, were on the Tarsset Burn at Sidwood on 14th (ASJ), while, on the same date, two were at Allen Banks and a single was at Bellingham. Other reports involved a single near Kielder in May and a dull individual at Blakehopeburnhaugh on 17th June.

The final records, and the only indicators of coastal passage, were singles at Cresswell Pond on 25th August and Inner Farne (Farne Islands) from 28th-30th August.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

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

BREEDING: Common.

Four wintering individuals involved singles at Morpeth and Howick in January and at Gosforth Park NR and a garden at Fulbeck (Morpeth) during February. The latter bird was still present into early March. Spring arrival began in March, with singles at Alnmouth and East Ord on 12th, a singing male at Linden Hall on 13th and individuals at Gosforth Park and Swallow Pond on 17th. A substantial influx then followed, with many singing males, including at least ten at Branton GP by 30th, seven at Gosforth Park and Holywell Dene, five at Bewick Moor, four at Derwent Reservoir and one to three at 34 other localities.

Coastal passage commenced during March, with one on Inner Farne on 24th, four on Holy Island on 26th, rising to seven on 27th, and three at



Chiffchaff (John Steele)

Dusky Warbler - Priors Park - October (Frank Golding)



Wood Warbler - Sidwood - May (Alan Jack).



Bamburgh on 29th. Movement increased rapidly in April on Holy Island with peaks of 23 on 12th, 17 on 17th and one to eight on a further five dates. A further wave of arrivals brought a peak of 20 on the island on 1st May and 15 at Berwick on 7th. On the Farne Islands, one to six were noted daily, with a peak of 12 on Inner Farne on 11th April, and sightings, including singing birds, continued into late June.

Meanwhile, numerous breeding localities were occupied during April, with high counts, mainly of singing birds. These included 26 along a 2.5km stretch between Whiteadder Point-New Mills (Berwick), 20 at Haggerston, 19 at Derwent Reservoir, 14 singing in Plessey Woods, 13 at Blagdon Hall and the Blyth Estuary, 12 in Holywell Dene and ten at Branton GP and Jesmond Dene. During May, ten were singing in Gosforth Park and eight were in Jesmond Dene with one to six settled in a further 50 localities. The first fledged youngster was noted at Brunswick Green on 5th June.

The first signs of coastal passage began with singles on the Farne Islands on 6th and 11th July. More general movement followed in August, with day counts of six at Craster, three at Bamburgh and twos at several coastal sites. During September, many remained inland, while on the coast there was a peak of 17 on Holy Island on 15th and 11 at Cambois on 22nd. Numbers rose steeply in October, particularly on the Farne Islands, with a peak of 66 on 6th; the second highest day count for the islands (FIR). Numbers on Holy Island also suggested rapid passage southwards. At least 20 were present on 8th and 50+ on 15th, declining to 27 the following day. At Hauxley there were peaks of 16 on 8th and nine on 15th. During this period, there were day counts of nine at Craster, six at Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) and four at Priors Park (Tynemouth) and St Mary's-Old Hartley.

Much lighter passage continued into November, with three at Berwick on 11th and singles during the month at Alnmouth GC, Druridge Pools, East Chevington and Holy Island, while individuals lingered inland at Cramlington (Southfield Lea), Gosforth Park NR, Hexham and Rothbury. Wintering birds were settled in during December, with two at St Mary's Wetland and Tynemouth and singles at Cramlington (Horton Park), Druridge Pools and East Chevington.

There is still ongoing debate as to which eastern sub-species occur in the UK, which will probably continue for the foreseeable future. Birds probably of other races do undoubtedly occur in the county and two Eastern-type individuals were on Holy Island on 14th October (ADM), with one on 15th (ASJ).

'Siberian Chiffchaff' *P. c. tristis*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 33 / FIRST: 1923 / LAST: 2014

An excellent year for this eastern sub-species, with six sightings accepted. An indication of the marvellous 'easterly' autumn, but also a tribute to observers prepared to document their sightings fully.

The first individual was found on Holy Island (The Snook) on 13th October (MJC), which was a slightly atypical individual, with a buffy tint to the supercilium. On 15th October, another was located on Holy Island, this time at the 'Half Moon Slack' (TF/JFa). Sightings continued, with one the following day on Holy Island (Crooked Lonnen) (MJC). The next bird was away from Holy Island, at Craster on 24th October (MJC). A gap ensued before the next individual, with one at Hauxley on 7th December (TM *et al.*) and finally another in December at Tynemouth on 17th (MK/DRW/CB *et al.*). All of the above birds gave the typical *tristis* call. Two further reports received late have been pended.

There were two individuals that were thought to be *tristis*, but did not call, hence remain unidentified to sub-species, but plumage details were still of eastern origin. These were at Inner Farne (Farne Islands) on 14th October (ET/Thi) and at East Chevington by the coastal pool, east of the main south pool, on 23rd November (TRD/JD *et al.*).

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

STATUS: Abundant summer and common passage visitor.

BREEDING: Abundant.

The first spring arrivals were at Lynemouth on 4th April and Branton GP and Low Newton the following day. A widespread influx followed from 8th-12th April, with up to three at 16 widespread, mainly inland localities. By 19th, birds were numerous throughout, with many singing males. The largest concentrations included 49 at Wingates on 30th, 46 along 7km between Heighleygate-Todburn on 20th, 34 at Derwent Reservoir and 20+ at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley). Ten to 13 were at Arcot Pond, Blagdon Hall, Gosforth Park NR, Howdon and between Whiteadder Point-New Mills (Berwick).

Coastal passage was prominent on Holy Island, with 15 feeding in the Vicarage Garden during brief sunshine on 29th April; 33 were at Cresswell Pond on 30th. A considerable 'fall' occurred on 1st May when 123 were on Holy Island (MJC/ADM), reducing to just one over the whole island on 7th, followed by 24 on 8th. On the Farne Islands, May passage was also prominent, with peaks of 13 on 5th and 16 on 11th.

Many more breeding localities were occupied during May; Wingates and Beacon Hill again featured, with counts of 53 and 22 respectively, including many singing males. In the Breamish Valley, 23 were singing mid-month, and 11-13 were noted in the College Valley, Happy Valley, New Mills Wood (Berwick) and at Prestwick Carr. Counts of ten came from Bellingham, Dipton Wood and Gosforth Park NR, with eight at the Carey Burn and Rising Sun CP. Widespread singing continued into June. During July, the first pairs with fledged young were noted at Arcot Pond, Backworth, Beacon Hill and Wingates.

The first signs of return passage came in July, with a single on Brownsman (Farne Islands) on 29th and a juvenile on Holy Island on 31st. As usual, coastal movements increased in August to provide peaks of 31 on the Farne Islands on 22nd, 30 on Holy Island on 28th, and 20 at St Mary's, 15 at Hauxley RS and ten at Tynemouth during the same period. Many remained inland with, for example, 18 ringed at Mickley Square on 20th. Lighter passage in September produced 25 on Holy Island on 15th, eight on 17th and one to five on four other dates. Coastal records of one to three came from Bamburgh, Boulmer, Druridge Pools, the Farne Islands and the St Mary's-Whitley Bay area. During October, passage continued on Holy Island with at least three individuals from 2nd-10th. Elsewhere, singles were at Druridge Bay CP on 2nd, Prestwick Carr on 10th (the last inland record), Budle Point on 14th, Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) on 15th, St Mary's on 17th, Inner Farne on 18th and Holy Island on 20th.

Two autumn singles showed characteristics of the Eastern form *P. t. acredula*. The first was on Inner Farne (Farne Islands) on 25th August (FIR) and the other on Holy Island (The Snook) on 30th October (MJC/ADM).

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

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

BREEDING: Common.

Wintering birds were in eight localities, including five gardens, during the first quarter. At least two, comprising a male and female, were in an Alnwick garden throughout the period. In January, a female was at Gosforth Garden Village all month, with a male there on 15th, a female frequented a Tynemouth garden from 8th-14th, an unsexed bird was at Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) on 24th and a male at East Ord on 30th. A single was at Lowick on 10th February and a male in a South Gosforth garden from mid-February to 29th, when two males were present. All March reports were considered to be over-wintering birds, with one to two again in the South Gosforth garden, a single at North Sunderland on 8th and a singing male at Hexham from 27th-29th.

Normal spring arrival commenced with a male on Inner Farne (Farne Islands) on 4th April, followed by one to six on Holy Island on five dates, peaking on 12th. Six were also at Hauxley NR on 19th. Passage increased in early May with 20 on Holy Island on 1st, while 14 in New Mills Wood (Berwick) on 7th may have included migrants. Seven were in Marden Quarry on 8th. On the Farne Islands, peaks of five were present on both 5th and 8th May, while two on 15th ended local spring passage.

Inland, five were singing at Rising Sun CP on 13th April, with the same number at Ellington on 24th. Many singing males in May included nine in Happy Valley (Wooler), eight+ at Gosforth Park, seven at Branton GP and Cramlington (Valley Park) and six at Horsley Wood, Jesmond Dene and Rising Sun CP. One to four were noted in a further 37 and 33 localities in April and May respectively. Singing continued in June, including



eight at Kirkley Hall, four in Jesmond Dene and three at Eshott and Howdon. During July, a family party was at Marden Quarry and six were in Jesmond Dene.

Light return passage commenced in August, with two at Bamburgh on 10th, six at Low Newton on 28th and three at Howick Haven on 30th. During September, peaks of three+ were at Bamburgh on 1st and seven at Cambois on 21st, with three at Woodhorn Church on 15th and Coupland on 25th and one to two at several other localities. October began slowly, with nine at Bamburgh and seven at Cambois on 6th and one to four at a further 12 coastal sites during the first fortnight. Heavy passage mid-month produced peak counts on Holy Island of 11 on 14th, 38 on 15th and 19 on 16th. On the Farne Islands, 42 were spread across Inner Farne and Brownsman on 15th; the third highest day count for the islands, although well below the 250 in 1981 and 129 in 2001 (FIR). Elsewhere, ten were at Boulmer on 15th and Hauxley on 16th, nine at Budle Point on 15th, eight at Craster, seven between Old Hartley-St Mary's and five at Cambois. A pair was found trapped in lobster pots at Blyth on 15th. Singles remained inland at Branton GP, Derwent Reservoir, Gosforth Park and Newcastle (Exhibition Park).

Probable late migrants involved two at St Mary's on 1st November and a female at Craster on 12th, with December singles at Berwick on 1st, Tynemouth on 17th and 26th-28th and a regular male in gardens at Chare Ends on Holy Island.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

STATUS: Well-represented summer and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

Spring arrival was marked in April by singles at Castlehills (Berwick) on 20th, Doddington on 21st and Blagdon Hall on 23rd before the main influx occurred in May. Light coastal passage in May involved three singles on the Farne Islands between 5th-28th and one trapped and ringed at Bamburgh on 6th.

Woodland breeding areas were occupied in May, producing counts of five singing males at Whittingham and four at Gosforth Park NR and Wingates. Five were at Longhorsley Moor (including a bird with nest material), three were at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) and the Harthope Valley, with two noted at Bakethin, Branton GP, Cartington, Derwent and Fontburn Reservoirs, Holystone, Nunnykirk and Walltown Quarry and singles at a further 26 localities.

Singing males remained prominent in June, with six at Wingates on 5th and at least three between Beacon Hill-Benridge Moor. Elsewhere, four were on Longhorsley Moor on 5th, three at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) on 23rd and one to two at Big Waters, Cramlington (Valley Park), Dinnington, Ellington, Linden Hall and Rothbury. On 10th July a pair with three fledged young was at Wingates, where five males were also still in song (ASJ).

Typical very light coastal passage occurred in late August, with three at Cresswell Pond and the Farne Islands and singles at Howick Haven, Newton Links, St Mary's Wetland and Waren Mill. During September, one visited Inner Farne on 14th and singles were at Bamburgh on 8th and 18th and Holy Island on 15th. Passage ended in October with singles on Inner Farne on 5th, Bamburgh on 6th, Holy Island on 6th and 8th, Newbiggin on 15th and Hauxley on 16th.

Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / FIRST RECORD: 1913 / LAST RECORD: 2015

It proved a quiet autumn with only eight individuals compared with around 15 found in both 2014 and 2015.

An early first-winter was on Holy Island (The Snook) on 20th August. The others occurred during October: at Priors Park (Tynemouth) on 5th, Craster, Holy Island and St Mary's on 15th, Cambois on 22nd, St Mary's on 24th and, finally, Tynemouth on 25th.



Barred Warbler - St Mary's - October (Alan Curry).

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

STATUS: Well-represented summer, and uncommon to well-represented passage, visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

A singing male at Linton Ponds and another single at Sleekburn on 22nd April heralded spring arrival. They were followed by others in potential breeding localities, with one at East Chevington on 23rd, followed by two there the following day, and individuals at Holywell Pond on 28th and Cramlington on 30th.

Coastal passage was evident in April, with two on Holy Island on 29th and a single on 30th. Island passage increased during May, with one on 1st, two on 7th-8th, four on 13th and singles on 22nd and 27th. During May, singles were seen on 12 dates on the Farne Islands and two were on Brownsman on 11th. Other coastal singles were at Bamburgh, Blyth Estuary, Cullernose Point, Hauxley, St Mary's Wetland and Tynemouth.

More breeding territories were occupied during early May. Six were between Longhirst-West Chevington on 4th (ADMc) and two sang at Cramlington (Brockwell-Westwood Grange). Singles were at Arcot Pond, Cramlington (Whitelea Chase), Dinnington, East Chevington, Longhorsley, Linton Ponds, Morpeth, Ponteland, Rising Sun CP, Stocksfield and West Hartford. Singles followed in six additional localities in June: Bank's Pond (Dinnington), Budle Bay, Druridge Bay CP, Howdon, Little Mill and Powburn. During August, a family party of five was in the College Valley and singles were at Backworth and Swallow Pond.

Light return passage began on 28th August when a single was on the Farne Islands in what was to prove a good season; records involved 14 individuals up to 30th October, plus two on Brownsman on 8th October. Meanwhile during September, singles were on Holy Island from 17th-18th and at Budle Point between 21st-

23rd. Numbers rose during October, with one to two daily on Holy Island from 6th-16th. Elsewhere, singles were at Cambois on 5th and 9th, Bamburgh on 8th, when two were at Hauxley, Budle Point on 13th, Druridge Pools on 14th and 20th, Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) on 15th, when two were at Newbiggin, Hauxley on 16th, Craster on 17th and 24th and Druridge Pools on 20th. November records are unusual and one at St Mary's on 1st November became the latest in the county for eight years.

One of the two birds at Hauxley on 8th October showed many features of 'Central Asian Lesser Whitethroat', *S. c. halimodendri* (MJC/IF/MD).

Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans*

'Western Subalpine Warbler' *S. c. Iberia/inornata*

STATUS: Rare passage visitor. / FIRST RECORD: 1976 / LAST RECORD: 2011

A first-summer female was found on Holy Island (Chare Ends willows) on 14th May (PHi/SSc/MJC/ADM *et al.*). It was found by Scottish visitors to the county, who soon managed to get their thoughts confirmed by MJC and ADM. Satisfyingly, the bird remained in the Chare Ends area until 16th May, enabling many birders to connect. The sighting was accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

STATUS: Common summer and uncommon passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

The first spring arrival was singing at High Callerton on 20th April and was quickly followed by others at Druridge Pools and Prestwick Carr on 23rd. By the end of the month, birds occupied at least nine other potential breeding areas. Further arrivals during May increased the number of displaying males, including 16 at Wingates, 14 at Prestwick Carr, 12 at Backworth, nine at Morpeth, eight at Bewick Moor and seven at Cartington and Cramlington (Brockwell). Five pairs were also noted in the St Mary's area and one to five were settled in 28 other widespread localities.

Coastal passage during May produced two females on Inner Farne (Farne Islands) on 1st, with one to three then recorded on 19 other dates to 18th June. Elsewhere, two were trapped and ringed at Bamburgh on 6th, with at least four there on 19th, and a substantial 'fall' on 8th May involved 21 across Holy Island (ADM).

The first indications of breeding success came in June, with a female carrying food to young at Arcot Lane. During July, family parties of four were at Backworth and St Mary's; the latter comprising 20 birds. Another family group was at Arcot Pond. Singing continued during July, with eight males still displaying at Wingates. A single male continued to sing on Holy Island without attracting a female.

During August, many were still in breeding areas, while a single on the Farne Islands on 13th marked the start of return passage. On the islands, one to two were then recorded on a further 17 dates. Two were on Holy Island on 25th August, with singles on 19th and 28th. Elsewhere, passage involved a single at Cullercoats, with others near the coast and still inland. Light movement in September produced singles at Boulmer on 4th, Cambois on 6th, Big Waters on 10th and 15th, Druridge Pools on 13th and Newcastle (Chapel House) on 14th. Two on Holy Island on 14th increased to six the following day. A single followed at Beal on 17th and three were at Cambois on 22nd. The final record was a single on the Farne Islands on 6th October.

Western Subalpine Warbler - Holy Island - May (Ian Fisher).



Western Subalpine Warbler - Holy Island - May (Andy Mould).



Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

STATUS: Well-represented summer and uncommon passage visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

Spring arrival began early, with one at the Blyth Estuary on 10th April, followed by singles at West Hartford on 12th and Ovingham on 15th, with two at Prestwick Carr and one at Gosforth Park on 19th. Singles moved into East Chevington, Gosforth, Harwood Forest, St Mary's and Weetslade Community Park by the end of the month. By then, three were 'reeling' at Ellington, two were at the Blyth Estuary and 'reeling' at Newbiggin and, in the Cramlington area, 17 were 'reeling,' including seven to eight at West Hartford and four at Arcot Pond.

An indication of coastal passage was a single on Brownsman (Farne Islands) on 2nd-3rd May.

The most detailed breeding data came from the long-running Cramlington study area. It showed a minimum of 29 territories (perhaps as high as 35), including 13 (maximum 15) at Arcot Pond and nine (maximum 12) at West Hartford (STH/GMi/DM/LJM). The same observers recorded a peak day count of 12 birds on 5th May.

Many other wet and scrubby breeding areas were occupied during May, with numbers at Prestwick Carr rising to eight. Three were at East Chevington and two at Backworth, Bamburgh, Beal Point, Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay), Druridge Pools, Gosforth Park NR (including a trapped female with a brood patch) and Weetslade Community Park. Singles were at a minimum of 22 further localities. During June-August, counts at additional sites included seven 'reeling' males at Ellington, six birds at West Hartford and one to two at Bellasis Bridge, Blakehopeburnhaugh, Castle Island, Chugdon Wood (Ellington), Cresswell Pond, Dinnington, Greenlee Lough, Linton Ponds, Low Newton, Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) and Sleekburn.

The final records, during September, comprised singles at the Bates Minewater Treatment Works (Blyth) on 6th and Big Waters on 10th.

Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / FIRST RECORD: 1889 / LAST RECORD: 2015

A spell of spring easterlies carried at least two to our shores, with one relatively obliging adult at Druridge Pools which performed well by the start of the entrance track to the two hides on 27th May (DE/TRD *et al.*). The next day saw one, unusually, on Staple Island (Farne Islands) (AWe/MA/AD). It was incongruously on rocks and the close-up photos were suitably galling for the Farne Islands' Rangers as it was only identified later.

Autumn saw a first-winter at Cresswell Pond on 21st August (MJC). It was feeding in the willows behind the hide, but only showed briefly and was not relocated.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

STATUS: Common summer and well-represented passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

Two prime wetland breeding areas attracted the earliest arrivals. The first was in Gosforth Park NR on 15th April, followed by a single at East Chevington on 17th. By the end of the month, three were at both localities. Elsewhere, two were at Branton GP on 27th and singles had arrived at Arcot Pond, Backworth, Hauxley NR, Prestwick Carr, Tynemouth and Woodhorn Flashes.

Coastal passage was noticeable at the Farne Islands, with three singles between 3rd-10th May.

Many more arrived in early May to provide high counts of singing males. These included 26-27 along a 2.5km stretch of the Whiteadder Water, 15 at Prestwick Carr, 12 on territory in Gosforth Park and seven at Holy Island (The Lough). Six to seven were in Bamburgh dunes, six sang at St Mary's Wetland and five at Branton. Four were in moorland rushes at Stonehaugh and three were at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, with one to two in a further 13 localities. As usual, prolonged singing continued during June-July, with six displaying males at Arcot Pond, five at St Mary's, four at West Hartford and three at Arcot and Linton Ponds.

The first fledged young were at Newton Pool by 23rd July and a pair fed young at Holy Island (The Snook) in August, when one to three were in at least eight other regular nesting localities. A total of 89 were ringed

Grasshopper Warbler - Druridge Pools - July (Frank Golding).



Sedge Warbler - Holy Island - August (Mike Carr).



at East Chevington during August, with peaks of 47 on 5th and 19 on 29th (IF).

The usual early departure occurred with September sightings of singles at Bamburgh on 8th, Cresswell Pond on 10th and two on Brownsman (Farne Islands) on 13th. The final individual was at Cresswell Pond on 17th.

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

STATUS: Uncommon summer and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Uncommon.

The important breeding site at Gosforth Park NR provided the first record on 18th April, the local population then increasing to eight by the end of the month (NHSN). Elsewhere in April, two were at East Chevington on 24th and one at Killingworth Lake on 25th.

The only indication of coastal passage was a single on Brownsman (Farne Islands) on 1st May.

A more general occupation of potential breeding localities occurred during May, providing counts, mainly of singing males, of eight along the Whiteadder Water, seven in Gosforth Park, five at Holy Island Lough, four at Cresswell Pond, three at the Bates Minewater Treatment Plant (Blyth) and one to two at Caistron, Druridge Bay CP, East Chevington, Hauxley NR, Newbiggin and St Mary's Wetland. Additional localities provided records in June-July, with three territories at Ladyburn Lake and three singing males at Linton Ponds. Nine were at Gosforth Park NR on 13th July and one to two were at many of the above sites, as well as Big Waters, the Blyth Estuary, Low Newton, the now well-established *Phragmites* beds at QEII CP, Rising Sun CP, Weetslade Community Park and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Breeding success was shown during August, with a total of 63 ringed at East Chevington, including peaks of 20 on 5th and 19 on 26th (IF); at St Mary's Wetland, a pair fed young in the nest on 12th and an adult fed two fledglings on 16th, when a pair also fed two fledged young at Ladyburn Lake. During the month two were at Cresswell and Holywell Ponds, with singles at Big Waters, Holy Island and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Return passage reduced numbers in September, when singles were at East Chevington on 1st, Newcastle (Exhibition Park) on 2nd (the observer's first site record), St Mary's on 15th and Cresswell Pond on 17th. Twos were also at Druridge Pools on 17th and at Gosforth Park throughout the month. The final records, in October, were singles at Holy Island (Snook House) on 12th and Howick and Inner Farne (Farne Islands) on 15th.

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

STATUS: Uncommon winter visitor. Given to irruptive behaviour when, in such years, it may become more numerous.

Very few arrived in autumn 2015, or in the early winter of this year. In January, up to four were at the Blyth Estuary from 2nd-4th, with one at Gosforth Central Park on 14th, five at East Chevington on 17th and two at Druridge Pools on 31st; in February, a single stayed at Widdrington from 6th-16th.

A trickle of birds arrived during the last week of October, one on Holy Island on 24th, two flying W at Shiellow Wood on 26th and singles at three other sites. The second week in November then produced the beginnings of a good 'Waxwing year', with an influx of large flocks reported mainly from the southern half of the county. Starting with 35 at Morpeth on 6th and 60 at Bedlington on 7th, the largest flock of ca.225 was seen at Ashington on 8th (JGS), with 110-120 at Blyth Community Hospital from 11th-15th and thereafter, during the week of 20th-27th, flocks of 60-110 were at Hexham, 98 at Walker, 90+ at Shiremoor and 60-70 at Bedlington and Corbridge. Many reports of 35-55 came from other localities in the suburban south east, namely Ashington, Cramlington, Elswick, Gosforth, Morpeth and Whitley Bay, with smaller groups of ten to 25, largely from the same areas, but including sightings from farther west in Bellingham, Hexham, Prudhoe, Wark (North Tyne) and small numbers to the north at Branton GP, Doddington, East Ord and Howick.

The first two weeks of December produced few sightings, with maxima of only 20-40 from Hexham, Humshaugh and Morpeth, indicative of the majority of the first influx having departed. However, from 18th, numbers again increased temporarily, seemingly another small influx either from farther north in the country, or perhaps directly from the continent, with flocks of 100+ at Byker and 20-50 at Gosforth Garden Village, Prestwick and Tynemouth. The peak counts were 135 at Manors Metro Station and 130 at nearby Walker (Newcastle) on 24th; these almost certainly being sightings of the same flock. These large numbers were not recorded again and during the last week of the year only three sightings of five to seven were received from Jesmond Dene, Morpeth and Tynemouth.



Waxwing - Ashington - November (Frank Golding).



Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

STATUS: Well-represented resident.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

This often vocal, conspicuous and largely sedentary species was again well-reported throughout the year. During January-April it was recorded in at least 45 localities, the majority being in rural and suburban lowland habitat, but extending along the major river valleys and tributaries as far west as Haltwhistle and Kielder Castle and north to Spindleston-Waren Mill. The peak counts were eight at Furnace Bridge (Blyth) on 9th March (JR), seven at Bolam Lake and Holywell Dene, six at Hareshaw Linn and Howick, four at Humford Mill (Bedlington), Kielder Castle, Newburn-Wylam and West Moor and three at Arcot Hall, Chugdon Wood (Ellington), Gosforth Park NR and Jesmond Dene. One to two were at Bellingham, Bothal, Capheaton, Cramlington, Derwent Reservoir, Ellington, Ha'penny Woods (Blyth), Harthope Valley, Hexham, Horncliffe, Humshaugh, Kirkley Hall, Longhoughton, Melkridge, Newcastle (Kenton), Plessey Woods, Ponteland, Rothbury, Spindleston, Ulgham, Wallington Hall, Wallsend and Wark. A single at Newcastle (Leazes Park) on 1st February was the observer's first record there for 26 years; a pair also prospected for a tree nesting hole in the park in March, an unusual record for this city centre site.

In the summer months, May-August, many birds were heard in full song and successful breeding was confirmed at Gosforth Park NR, Jesmond Dene, Letah Wood (Hexham), Stamfordham, where young fledged from a nest in a brick wall cavity, and Wallington Hall; the pair in Leazes Park, first seen in March, were also seen feeding young. In addition to the many sites mentioned above, the species was recorded at Blanchland, Denwick, East Ord, Ford, Hulne Park, Newbrough, Newcastle (Exhibition Park), Simonburn and Wooler Common.

From September until the year end, birds were seen at the following nine further localities: Aydon (Corbridge), Bebside, Bywell Bridge, Castlehills (Berwick), Coldwell, Hallington Reservoir, Haughton Castle, Nunwick Hall and Thrunton, re-affirming the successful range expansion of this species which, less than 30 years ago, was described as an uncommon breeding resident in the county.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

STATUS: Common resident and uncommon passage visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented to common.

From January to March, sightings came from 22 localities, including three birds at Chirdon Bridge, with one to two at seven sites within the Tyneside conurbation and farther afield at Bolam Lake, Budle Bay, Derwent Reservoir, Humshaugh, Kielder Castle, Kirkley Hall, Lesbury, Letah Wood (Hexham), Morpeth (three sites), Redmire, Rothbury, Sidwood, Spindleston, Tweedmouth, Wallington Hall and Whitley Chapel. Of particular interest was a bird in the company of migrant Goldcrests *Regulus regulus* which showed characteristics of the Northern race *C. f. familiaris* on 26th-27th March, the first spring record of Treecreeper for Holy Island (IK).

During the summer season, April-August, singing birds were heard at a number of sites, including three at Capheaton, pairs prospected at Castlehills and New Water Haugh (both Berwick), with nesting activity and successful fledging noted at Gosforth Park NR, Holywell Dene and Lordenshaw; a party of seven at Holywell Dene on 1st July included juveniles (RJP). Other sites where birds were recorded and will have bred included Allen Banks, Big Waters, Bolam Lake, Dilston, Ellington, Glen Ridley, Hareshaw Linn, Harthope Valley, High Warden, Housesteads, Humshaugh, Jesmond Dene, Pauperhaugh, Rothbury, Simonburn, Wallington, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Widehope.

During September-December, one to two were recorded from many of the above localities, as well as from Bebside, Branton GP, Colt Crag Reservoir, Corbridge, Hallington, Haughton Castle (North Tyne), Hepburn Woods, Howick, Newcastle (Leazes Park), Prestwick Carr, QEII CP, Thrunton, Wark (North Tyne) and Woodhorn Church. In October, perhaps indicative of autumn coastal passage, Hauxley RS had a re-trap on 1st, with singles ringed on 9th and 16th.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

STATUS: Abundant resident and common passage visitor.

BREEDING: Abundant.

This abundant and ubiquitous species was again seriously under-recorded, with sightings reported in the first two months of one to three at only six localities: Bolam Lake, Cresswell Pond, Gosforth Park NR, Holywell Dene, Jesmond Dene and Whitley Bay. With the onset of spring from mid-March onwards, birds became far more conspicuous when in song, with peaks of seven at Longhorsley Moor, six at Longhorsley, four at Holywell Dene and influxes of eight to ten passage migrants were recorded on the Farne Islands on three dates in late March. During April, a BBS visit to Blagdon Hall recorded 20 and, elsewhere, 13 were at Prestwick Carr, ten at Holywell Dene and seven at Bolam Lake.

The summer period, May-August, produced few records and, apart from a family party at Cramlington on 14th August, the only counts came from Holywell Dene and Jesmond Dene, where up to five were present in each month.

In September, eight were on Holy Island and two in Jesmond Dene, but in October coastal numbers increased significantly as autumn migration took place, with peak day counts on Holy Island of 14 on 7th, 21 on 16th, 25 on 25th and 43 on 30th (MJC/ADM), with four to 11 on many other dates. Elsewhere, a peak of 21 were on the Farne Islands on 15th, 18 at Ross Back Sands-Guile Point on 21st, 15 at Bamburgh on 6th, 11 at Craster on 24th and five to nine at Hauxley on three dates; an inland record involved 13 at Prestwick Carr on 29th. Further coastal influx in the north occurred during November, with seven on Holy Island on 6th rising to 30 on 11th and 25 present on 20th; at nearby Ross Back Sands-Guile Point, 12 were noted on 13th. The few December sightings comprised six at the Callerton subsidence area, five at West Hartford and two in Jesmond Dene.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

STATUS: Abundant resident, passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Abundant.

In the south west of the county during the first quarter of the year, a number of good-sized flocks assembled at reedbed roosts providing peak monthly counts of 3,500 at Lambley Farm minewater treatment plant in

January, 6,000 at Whitchester (Haltwhistle) and 3,000 at nearby Melkridge in February and an increase to 5,000 at the Lambley Farm locality in March. Elsewhere during this period, smaller concentrations were 2,000 at Widdrington, 1,000 at Fawdon, 650 at Prestwick Carr, 500 at Chibburn (Widdrington), 400 at Low Acton Farm (Allendale) and 100-250 at Big Waters, Derwent Reservoir, Grindon Lough, Hartington Hall, Plenmeller Common, Ulgham, Wallsend and Whitley Bay, with up to 100 at 11 other sites.

Breeding data from The Riding (Acomb) involved 80 young ringed from 44 nests (down from 181 young from 44 boxes in 2015) (SCE). Flock sizes reduced during the breeding season, April-June, with monthly maxima of 200 at Boulmer and 100 at Cullercoats in early April, 20-60 at Big Waters, Shiremoor, Tynemouth and Whitley Bay links in May and, in June, flocks of 30-75, including many juveniles, fed at five localities.

An impressive 3,000 came in off the sea in a broad band at Tweedmouth in the early morning of 13th July and post-breeding gatherings of 360-400, mainly juveniles, were recorded at nearby Berwick during the month, with 100-250 at Boulmer, Monks House Pool, Prestwick Carr and Stannington. In August, 600 adults and juveniles were feeding on seaweed at Holy Island and 100-250 were noted on Berwick shore, Druridge Bay CP, Grindon Lough, Newbiggin and Seaton Sluice, with up to 90 at seven other localities; mid-month, small groups of migrants regularly passed over the Farne Islands. September flocks of 400-450 were at Bothal Pond and Grindon Lough, with 70-200 at Cullercoats, Ewart Park (Wooler) and Newbiggin.

During October, small groups to a maximum of 46 were recorded over the Farne Islands, whilst the important Holy Island Lough roost grew to 25,000 by 26th (NM); several flocks of 1,000-2,500 in adjacent areas were attributed to these birds. Elsewhere in October, 5,000 roosted in a conifer plantation at Haltwhistle on 28th and 3,000 gathered in a field at Doddington the day after. The Holy Island roost declined to 6,000 by late November, before increasing slightly and then reducing to 8,000 at the year-end. Elsewhere during November-December, movements included 10,000 E over Widdrington Moor Lake on 3rd December, 4,000+ NW at Budle Bay on 19th November and 3,500 E at Prestwick Carr on 27th November, and roost counts included 10,000 at West Chevington (perhaps the Widdrington birds), 5,000 at Stamfordham, 4,900 at East Chevington, 3,800 at Lambley and 3,000 at Doddington. Other large gatherings were 2,000 at Middle Stobswood, 1,000 at Blenkinsop Castle, Elsdon, Forestburngate, Goswick, Grindon Lough and Otterburn, with 300-600 at Alnwick, Bolam Lake, Brocolitia, Derwent Reservoir, Heddon-on-the-Wall, Prestwick Carr, Rochester, Seahouses and Seaton Burn and 50-200 at nine further localities.

Rose-coloured Starling *Pastor roseus*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / FIRST RECORD: 1818 / LAST RECORD: 2015

A local resident of Roseden found a juvenile there on 21st September (BSw/MSH *et al.*) and managed to make local birders aware. This enabled many people to view through to 29th September as it fed with Starlings *Sturnus vulgaris* in the local area, with the best views being when it crossed the road into some shrubbery by a British Telecom substation.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

STATUS: Well-represented resident.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

The first two months of the year produced sightings of one to three from at least 15 locations on many streams and rivers, including Cramlington (Horton Burn), Dissington Bridge, Hedgeley, Holywell Dene, Hulne Park, Lesbury, Ponteland, Thrum Mill (Rothbury) and Wark. Four pairs held territory in the Happy Valley/Carey Burn area, with one to two pairs at Beggars Rigg (Rothbury), Coupland, Jesmond Dene and Medburn. In March, a total of eight, including three singing males, were counted in Cheviot valleys (Ingram and Glidders-Shilmoor), with one to two pairs at Bothal, Hartford Bridge (Bedlington), Holywell Dene, Jesmond Dene and Weldon Bridge and single birds at Furnace Bridge (Blyth), Melkridge, Morpeth and Rowley Burn. Further likely breeding birds were seen in April at Berwick Hill Bridge, Bywell Bridge, Plessey Woods and Stamfordham.

In the Upper Coquetdale on-going study area, 14 nests were monitored, in which 84 eggs were laid, including 17 from second clutches, and an encouraging 79 young were hatched and fledged (44 fledged from 12 pairs in 2015); very good productivity due to largely favourable weather conditions and water levels during the breeding season (JR). In addition, five chicks were ringed from one nest at Birkey Burn (Acomb)

Rose-coloured Starling – Roseden - September (Ian Fisher).



Dipper - Thropton - April (Colin Bradshaw).





White's Thrush - Holy Island - October (Tim Dean).

(SCE). In May-June, breeding was also confirmed in the Harthope Valley, Holywell Dene, Ingram, Rothbury and Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth); sightings also came from Blakehopeburnhaugh, the Breamish Valley, Canongate Bridge (River Aln), the Carey Burn, Dilston Mill, New Mills (Berwick), Sills Burn (Redesdale) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

The species continued to be well-reported during the second half of the year, with one to three at 35+ widespread localities, including many sites already mentioned, as well as Aydon, Bellingham, Corbridge, Fontburn, Fourstones, Guyzance, Hagg Bank (Wylam), Hallington Reservoir, Howick Hall, Lambley Viaduct, Mitford, Nunwick Hall, Ponteland and Warden; a pair displayed on the River Tyne on 29th December at the latter site.

White's Thrush *Zoothera dauma*

STATUS: Extremely rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 2 / FIRST: 1914 / LAST: 2012

One of the finds of an incredible autumn and, unsurprisingly, on Holy Island. A visitor, on a birding holiday to the area, was investigating the willow patch at the end of the Straight Lonnen on 5th October when his bins rested on a large thrush staring back at him. From past experience he knew full well this had to be a White's Thrush (PR *et al.*). He managed to get other birders on to this apparition and news was quickly put out enabling most local birders to quickly drop all plans for the day and arrive in numbers. Luckily, the tide was convenient for a mass 'twitch' of a species that many thought would never linger long enough in a suitable area. It stayed faithful to its chosen willow patch, which presumably made it feel at home, as it only ever flew around the edge of the willows, obviously unable to see any other suitable habitat. The resultant photos when this thrush perched in the open will be a fond reminder of a fantastic bird. The sighting was accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

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

BREEDING: Uncommon.

The first of the year were two in the Upper Breamish Valley on 18th March, the earliest arrival date for 26 years. They were followed by a single in the Harthope Valley on 29th and a male at Hawsen Burn on 30th March. The latter site produced a remarkable 'flock' of 11 on 21st April (TRD/JD) and counts of one to three on five other dates during the month. One at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 5th April was a site first, while further reports from upland breeding areas included four at Yearle on 29th and one to two at Alwinton, Carey Burn, Ford, Holburn Moss, Makendon and Sipton Burn. A female was on the summit of Simonside on 23rd April. Meanwhile, on the coast, single males were on Inner Farne (Farne Islands) on 5th-6th and 12th-13th April and Holy island produced one on 12th, three on 15th, seven on 17th and four on 29th April. A single migrant was at Low Newton on 2nd May.

Up to nine were again noted at Hawson Burn and three to four in the Upper Breamish Valley in May and a single male was singing at Sipton Burn on 7th-8th May. Four in the Harthope Valley in June included a well-grown juvenile and four were at Coalcleugh on 3rd June, with birds at two nest sites in Jesmond Dene and singles at Blakehopeburnhaugh, Rothbury and Thrum Mill.

A 'fall' in early October involved an estimated eight to 11 on Holy Island from 4th-15th, with a maximum count of three on 13th and 15th. Elsewhere, two were at the Farne Islands on 4th and Budle Point on 7th, with singles at Gosforth Park NR on 3rd, Tynemouth on 5th, Hauxley and St Mary's on 8th, Lynemouth on 9th, Backworth and Budle Point on 12th, Brownsman (Farne Islands) on 13th, St Mary's on 14th, Ellington and Newbiggin on 15th and Widdrington on 18th. The final bird of the year was another discovered on Holy Island on 29th October.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

STATUS: Abundant resident, passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Abundant.

A winter influx produced 23 at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 31st January. Elsewhere during the first quarter, 15 were at Hauxley RS in January, 14 at Furnace Bridge (Blyth) and Humford Mill (Bedlington) in

March, 13 at Bothal Bridge in March and 12 at Howdon in January-February and Prestwick Carr in March. One to ten at many other localities included birds in full song at Chapel House (Newcastle) on 9th and East Ord (Berwick) on 18th January and nest building at Alnwick and Kenton in mid-March.

A peak count of 36 singing males was noted during a 4km circular walk in the Horton Burn area (Cramlington) on 11th April. Up to 20 were noted at Cullercoats during the month, 14 were recorded during a BBS visit to Blagdon Hall on 23rd and eight were at Holywell Dene, where nest building and feeding young was noted. Other breeding evidence included a pair that abandoned two newly hatched young at Gosforth early in April and a female incubating eggs in a nest situated on an upturned broom head, in an outhouse at Prudhoe on 26th May. Some sizable counts in May included 25 in Jesmond Dene on 19th and 45 at the River Aln Estuary on 25th.

The usual autumn influx began with eight on Holy Island on 23rd September, followed by counts of 45-53 from 7th-10th October, rising to a peak of 235 on 15th, with a similar increase at Hauxley, from 67 on 8th to 220 by 15th. Elsewhere in October, peak counts included 56 at the Farne Islands on 15th, 40 at Priors Park (Tynemouth) on 9th, 40+ at Bamburgh on 12th, 32+ at Newbiggin on 8th, a maximum of 27 at Humshaugh on 24th, 25 at Cambois and 20 at Woodhorn Church on 15th and 17 at Harwood Village on 9th and Ross Back Sands-Guile Point on 21st.

An influx on 3rd November brought 250+ to Newbiggin (PRM), 60 'in off' at Seaton Sluice and 31 on Inner Farne (Farne Islands); 20+ were at Bamburgh the following day. Elsewhere, 83 were at Whiteadder Point (Berwick) on 13th, 34 at Cramlington (Horton Burn) on 19th, 30 at Cambois on 8th, 26 at Cramlington (Alexandra Park) on 3rd and 20-25 at Budle Bay, Howdon and Humshaugh on various dates. A count of 17 from a Gosforth garden was the highest there in 29 years and 13 were at Priors Park on 13th. December counts included 30 at West Alnwick on 7th, 23 at the River Blyth Estuary on 2nd and 12-16 at Howdon, Prestwick Carr, Priors Park and Spital (Newbiggin), with one to ten at many other localities, including singles in song at Chapel House on 24th and West Chevington on 26th.

Eyebrowed Thrush *Turdus obscurus*

STATUS: Extremely rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 0

The intriguing tale of this first for Northumberland is now firmly established in local folklore as a young visiting birder out with his parents decided on a visit to Bolam Lake on 4th November to try some bird photography at this local country park (RM/AMo/MMo). He found a thrush perched on a hawthorn and managed to get ten images before the bird flew off S over the lake. Neither he nor his dad could ever remember seeing anything quite resembling this thrush before, so put the photos on Facebook that evening to ask for help with identification. The resultant deluge of inquiries, as people quickly managed to solve the mystery, led to a mass gathering the next morning, but sadly no further views were obtained. Most birders felt that another 'mega' for the autumn would have been greedy, but it was gratifying to see the finder given many congratulations on an awesome find. The sighting was accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee. A paper documenting this remarkable record can be found at the front of this publication.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

STATUS: Abundant passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Extremely rare. / LAST BRED: 2012

The largest gathering in January was 200 at Grindon Hill on 23rd, while 100-150 were reported from six further localities. A large flock of 1,000 was at Doddington on 4th February; elsewhere in the month, 270 were at Shadfen on 15th, flocks of 200 were at Druridge on 16th, Ingoe on 29th, Spring House (Slailey) on 7th and Wark (North Tyne) on 6th, while 150 were at Widdrington Lane on 18th, 140 at North Charlton on 16th and 100 at Kirkley Hall on 29th.

In early March, 200 gathered at Hott (West Allendale) on 3rd. Signs of return passage through the county were evident at the end of March, with 650 at Bewick Moor on 30th the largest gathering, followed by 400 at Elsdon and 200 at Otterburn on 28th and 180 at Coanwood Burn on 29th. Elsewhere, 100-160 were noted at five additional sites. In April, 300 at Wallington Hall on 17th was the largest gathering, with 250 at Prestwick Carr on 3rd, 200 at Brocolitia on 1st, Lowick on 9th and Longhorsley on 29th and 80-150 at seven further localities. Eight were on Holy Island and a single at Ellington on 1st May, two at Gosforth on 9th and a late migrant on Holy Island on 14th May.

Eyebrowed Thrush - Bolam Lake - November (Ross Moore).



Eyebrowed Thrush - Bolam Lake - November (Ross Moore).



A presumed early arrival was well inland at Grindon Lough on 30th September. In October, a single flock of ca.1,000 heading SW at Holy Island on 15th was part of an island total of 2,000+ (ASJ); elsewhere, 800 were at Doddington on 29th, with 200 at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) the day before. Also on 15th October, 200 were at Portgate (Corbridge), 100 flew SW over Kenton (Newcastle) and 50 were at two sites in the south east.

In November, the largest flocks were at Prestwick Carr and Callerton with 400+ on 10th and 12th respectively. Elsewhere, flocks of 300 were at Pigdon on 12th and Humshaugh on 27th, with 250 at Derwent Reservoir on 1st, and 200 at Guyzance on 15th. At Derwent Reservoir, 160 moved SW on 3rd and flocks of 100-150 were at two other localities. Some large gatherings were noted on the Otterburn Training Area on 30th December, with 300 at Silloans Farm (Rochester), 195 at Dudlees Farm and 184 at Featherwood. Elsewhere during the month, flocks of 100-130 were at three sites.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

STATUS: Common resident and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

Birds in full song were well-reported from Newcastle city centre, at Armstrong, Exhibition, Heaton and Leazes Parks from the beginning of January. Elsewhere during the first quarter, a gathering of 16 at Hethpool on 8th March was of particular interest, six were noted at Furnace Bridge (Blyth) on 9th March and five were at Prestwick Carr on 14th February. Four were in Jesmond Dene on 21st February and one to three, some in song, were at a further 19 localities.

Breeding evidence included a nest with young found in Holywell Dene on 20th April, with two fledged young seen near the nest on 30th, and four singing males and three recently fledged juveniles at Carey Burn on 5th May. In a poor spring on the Farne Islands, 11 on 13th April was the maximum count, followed by five the next day. A total of 12 were noted at Ingram (Breamish Valley) on 19th April, with 11 singing males there on 6th May. Nine were at Whiteadder Point (Berwick) on 7th May and four were also singing at Jesmond Dene and Rising Sun CP during the month. In June, seven were in Jesmond Dene on 5th and five sang at High Newton on 29th.

Numbers remained low until a sudden, although brief, influx of at least 12 possible migrants fed on ripe Yew *Taxus baccata* berries in a Stamfordham garden on 7th September. Coastal migrants included four at Holy Island on 15th September, with eight there on 22nd. Prolonged easterly winds in early October produced 92 on the Farne Islands on 5th, a peak count for Holy Island of 261+ grounded across the island on 6th (PRM), rising from a more modest 55 the previous day, with 43 there on 7th, 50+ on 8th-9th and 200+ on 15th; at nearby Budle Point, 45+ were noted on 7th and, back at the Farne Islands, ten to 33 were present from 10th-17th. Another 'fall' resulted in 149 at Holy Island on 15th and 46-54 at Hauxley on 15th-16th October. Smaller numbers passing through elsewhere included 20+ at Bamburgh on 8th, 15 at Cambois on 15th, ten+ at St Mary's on 14th and ten at Cambois on 5th, Woodhorn Church on 15th and Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) on 16th.

In the last two months of the year, reports were few; however, four were at Howdon on 2nd November, ca.20 were at Prestwick Carr on 3rd and five in the dunes at Boulmer on 25th November. All December reports were of one to two birds, but singing males were noted at Callerton and Spital (Newbiggin) on 16th, Chapel House (Newcastle) on 17th and Tweedmouth on 28th.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

STATUS: Abundant passage migrant and common winter visitor.

BREEDING: Extremely rare. / LAST BRED: 1985

A large flock of 220 was at Eglingham on 31st January, with 150 at Haughton Castle on 6th and 100 at Hexham on 18th January. In February, 200 were at Spring House (Slaley) on 7th, with at least the same number near Capheaton on 22nd March. Elsewhere during the first quarter, counts of 50-100 came from Backworth, Corbridge, Cramlington, Druridge, Ealingham Rigg, Elsdon, Gosforth Garden Village, Gosforth Park NR, Hartleyburn Common, Ryal, Shadfen, Stanegate, Swallow Pond, Wark (North Tyne) and Woolsington Park, with lesser numbers at dozens of other localities.

Numbers declined rapidly into April, with the highest counts being 24 at Airy Holme Reservoir (Shotleyfield) and 20 at Capheaton on 3rd, 17 at Inner Farne (Farne Islands) on 4th, including 16 heading N, and 12 at Ellington on 1st. Two late singles were on Holy Island during the month, with another on Brownsman (Farne

Islands) on 29th and another two late migrants were on Holy Island on 1st May.

An early returning bird was also at Holy Island on 15th September. It was followed by counts of 129 and 118 at the Farne Islands on 5th and 6th October respectively and 653 on Holy Island on 7th, with 200-216 there from 8th-14th. A passage of 120 moved S-SW over Newcastle (Exhibition Park) on 7th, 144 were at the Farne Islands on 13th and hundreds were noted moving SW over Marden Estate (Cullercoats) on 14th October. A large influx on 15th brought 1,500+ to Holy Island (ASJ), 510 were at Hauxley, 506 at the Farne Islands, 470 at Boulmer, 380+ at Budle Bay, 204 in the Bywell-Stocksfield area, 200 moved W at Brunswick Green and the same number were noted at Farnley, at least 150 were at East Cramlington LNR and 100 at Cambois. The following day, 450 were still at Holy Island, with 300 at Hauxley and 180 at Derwent Reservoir. Later in the month, 200 were at Doddington on 29th, 180 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 24th and 109 at Holy Island on 30th. Elsewhere, flocks of up to 96 were reported from 32 widespread sites.

In November, the hedgerows at Prestwick Carr were popular, attracting 200-222 from 3rd-10th, rising to a peak of 300 on 25th, with 100 still present the following day. Elsewhere, 120+ were at Bolam Lake on 5th November, 80-100 in the Humshaugh area from 8th-27th and flocks of up to 75 at 24 sites. The largest December gatherings were 115+ at Swallow Pond on 13th and 100 at Corbridge on 17th, with one to 45 noted at 15 additional localities.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

STATUS: Common resident and uncommon passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

Strangely, the four highest counts from the first quarter all involved 11 birds; at Druridge Lane and Low Newton on 12th-13th January, Derwent Reservoir on 15th February and Jesmond on 22nd February. Seven flew over Fulbeck (Morpeth) on 21st February, six singing males were noted along the 6km stretch from Ingram Glidders-Shilmoor (Cheviots) on 13th March and four were at Hartside Village (Ingram) on 31st January and Swallowship (Hexham) on 25th February, with one to three at numerous other widespread localities, including several singing birds.

Breeding evidence included a pair that mobbed a Magpie *Pica pica* near a nest at Newcastle (Leazes Park) on 6th April, a pair nest building at Harwood Forest on 23rd April, a family party of five (four juveniles) at Langleeford on 9th May and a pair feeding young at Morpeth three days later. In June, most of ten birds at Swallow Pond were newly fledged juveniles and a family party with at least two fledged juveniles was at Newcastle Civic Centre in July. At least one adult was feeding a juvenile at Blagdon as late as 5th August.

Post-breeding flocks in the period June-August included 24 at Linden Hall on 14th August, 19 at Whitley Chapel on 7th July, 12 at Plessey Hall Farm (Cramlington) on 2nd August, 11 at Derwent Reservoir on 25th June and nine at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) and Stocksfield in July. Four were at Jesmond Dene in June. Additionally, 30 were counted in the Cheviot Hills from Hethpool-Yeavinger Bell on 29th August.

In September, 32 were near Acomb on 6th (MR), 16 were at East Bolton on 24th and 12 at Wilkwood East (Upper Coquetdale) on 10th. The Byrness area of Kielder Forest held 28 birds on 11th October. Otherwise flocks of four to seven were recorded from Backworth, Chugdon Wood, East Chevington, Newcastle (Exhibition Park) and Silloans Farm (Rochester) to the year end, with one to three at a further 26 sites, including a single passing W over Inner Farne (Farne Islands) on 13th October; the only record in 2016 of what is a scarce species for the islands.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

STATUS: Common summer and well-represented passage visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

An influx at the start of May began with a single at Branton GP on 5th and two at Backwoodburn (Harthope Valley) on 6th. On 8th May, two were at Derwent Reservoir, four at Bamburgh and Juniper and a May peak of 23 on Holy Island (ADM). Higher counts later in the month produced four at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) and Lordenshaw on 20th, six to eight in another influx at Holy Island from 26th-28th and ten+ in the Harthope Valley on 29th. One to three were reported from a further 30 localities during the month. In June, three were at Blakehopeburnhaugh and Letah Wood (Hexham), with two at Derwent Reservoir, Harthope Valley, Holy Island, Juniper (Hexhamshire), Linden Hall, Lordenshaw and Rothbury and a single at Ingram.

Successful breeding was confirmed at several sites. At least three adults, each with a juvenile, were noted at Tarsset Burn on 12th July. A family party of five was at Linden Hall on 31st July and an adult and a juvenile were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 4th July. In August, a pair with three fledged young were at Stamfordham, four young were noted at Corbridge, a pair with two fledged young were near Windyhaugh, an adult and two fledged young were at Linden Hall, two juveniles were at Haughton Castle and one juvenile at Humshaugh. Elsewhere in July-August, six were at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) on 21st July, with one to two at Branton, Breamish Valley, Druridge Pools, Ellington, the Farne Islands, Gosforth Park NR, Holy Island (three dates from 19th August), Newcastle (Exhibition Park), Newton Links and St Mary's (four dates from 21st August). Six were at Holy Island on 15th September, with singles there on 4th, 14th and 17th September, one was on the Farne Islands from 7th September, with another on 13th, two were at Swallow Pond on 10th and Budle Point on 14th and singles at Tynemouth on 14th and Brier Dene (Whitley Bay) on 15th September. A breeding pair was still at North Sunderland during September. October records are unusual; the last birds of the year were singles at Holy Island on 6th and Woodhorn Church on 9th October.



Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

STATUS: Abundant resident and common passage visitor.

BREEDING: Abundant.

The highest counts during the first quarter involved 12 at Humford Mill (Bedlington) on 10th March and ten singing at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 14th March. There were counts of up to eight in Holywell Dene during January and from Furnace Bridge (Blyth) and Prestwick Carr in March, with six at Bolam Lake and Bothal Village and four at the Farne Islands and Jesmond Dene during the quarter. Holy Island held seven on 12th April and 15 on 29th April. Elsewhere during the month, 13 were at Blagdon Hall on 23rd, eight at Bolam Lake on 16th and two to four at a further four localities. A light influx at Holy Island produced 14 'Continental birds' on 1st May.

An early nest at Gosforth Garden Village held the first egg on 14th March, with a complete clutch of five eggs by 19th, and five newly hatched young were being fed by 31st March. Elsewhere, breeding was confirmed at Fulbeck (Morpeth), where four eggs were laid in an open fronted nest box, at Morrale Wood, and at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) and Wylam where fledged juveniles were noted.

An adult and four juveniles were at Blanchland on 4th September, nine were at Whitley Bay on 10th and five in Jesmond Dene on 12th, before a 'fall' at Holy Island produced a peak of 33 on 15th September, with 12-14 from 17th-18th. A second influx later in the month peaked at ca.50 scattered across the island on 24th. Elsewhere, 12+ were at Bamburgh on 15th, ten at Prestwick Carr on 27th and seven at Bamburgh on 18th September. In October, Holy Island witnessed a large influx, when 20-25 during the first few days increased to 62+ on 6th, 99 on 7th and up to 150 on 8th. Later in the month, a second wave of migrants included 200 at Hauxley on 15th (HRS), reducing to 45 the following day, and 135 on the Farne Islands on 15th, with 116-139 on Holy Island daily from 14th-16th; lesser numbers were on the island on various dates to the month end. At total of 50 were ringed at Bamburgh during the month, where the highest day counts were 17 on 6th and 15+ on 12th and 16th. More widely, 28 were at the Blyth Estuary on 25th October, 25 at Newton Links on 5th, increasing to 40 the following day, 24 at Craster on 24th, 22 at Howick Dene on 3rd and 21 at Cambois on 9th and Ross Back Sands-Guile Point on 21st. Three to 20 were reported from a further ten localities.

An early November influx produced 53+ at Newbiggin on 3rd, 36 at Whiteadder Point (Berwick) on 13th and up to 23 at Holy Island on 6th; further counts from the latter locality included 14 on 11th and 16 on 20th, while five were at Jesmond Dene on 8th, with four there on 4th December.

Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 11 / FIRST: 1965 / LAST: 2015

The Farne Islands' Rangers came across one on 10th May on Brownsman which proved highly obliging giving close views and allowing all Rangers to connect (TH/ET *et al.*). Interestingly, some of the photos appeared to be too rufous, whereas others gave a colder grey appearance. This was put down to light conditions, as the bird was very well documented and photographed.

Birders glum at missing out at this 'untwitchable' locality were soon to be pleasantly surprised by an autumn occurrence as well. The migrant hot spot of Holy Island saw a first-winter behave admirably on the north shore at Sandham Bay. It was found early on 18th September (SR *et al.*) and many birders were able to arrive during the day, as it unusually showed out in the open taking a liking for the high tide zone. It was photographed by many and heavily appreciated by those who missed the one also on Holy Island in 2013.

These sightings were accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee.

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / FIRST RECORD: 1826 / LAST RECORD: 2014

A mini-influx in May brought three to the Farne Islands: a stunning male on Longstone on 10th was followed by two females on 12th; one remaining on Brownsman until 13th and a first-summer female remaining on Inner Farne to 15th (FIR). On Holy Island, a skulking first-summer male of this colourful species was on the Straight Lonnen from 13th-16th May (GS *et al.*) and a more showy first-summer female at Chare Ends from 14th-15th May (ADM *et al.*). A remarkable record involved a male found in a garden at Killingworth on 13th May. It remained until 21st May and was occasionally heard in sub-song (JDa). All identifiable individuals were of the red-spotted *L. s. svecica* race.



Bluethroat (Mike Carr)



Red-flanked Bluetail (Alan Hart)

Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus*

STATUS: Extremely rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 7 / FIRST: 1960 / LAST: 2015

A search through the nets at a ringing station at Bamburgh revealed a surprise in the form of a first-winter on 4th October (JCD/MSH). It was duly processed and released into willow scrub, but quickly flew 100m and was lost to view and not relocated. Hence, the recent run of records continues, with five of the eight county sightings being seen since 2008.

Thrush Nightingale - Holy Island - September (Frank Goding).



Thrush Nightingale - Holy Island - September (Tim Dean).

Bluethroat - Holy Island - May (Frank Golding).



Red-breasted Flycatcher - Holy Island - October (Chirs Barlow).

Red-breasted Flycatcher

Red-breasted Flycatcher (Mike Carr)

Ficedula parva

STATUS: Rare visitor. / FIRST RECORD: 1883 / LAST RECORD: 2015

An excellent year with at least 12 accepted individuals. Interestingly, passage started with a rush, with five birds being located on 15th September on Holy Island. A first-winter was found early morning at The Snook (ADM *et al.*), with another located at the 'Half Moon Slack' a few hours later (ADM/MJC *et al.*). This latter bird was one of only a few to stay any length of time, with sightings through to 2nd October. In the afternoon, one was found at the 'excavations' (MJC *et al.*), with two more located along the Straight Lonnen in the evening (ADM *et al.*). The possibility of birds moving around is always there, but it was felt by local observers that at least five individuals were involved.

A gap then ensued with the next first-winter found at Whitley Bay cemetery on 3rd October (ASJ *et al.*). Holy Island continued its run, with

another first-winter found along the Straight Lonnen on 6th October, with two there on 8th (TF/JFA *et al.*). As expected, the Farne Islands joined in on the bounty, with a first-winter on Brownsman on 7th October (THi/ET). Passage was still strong on 8th October, with further single first-winters found at Tynemouth (DRW/MK *et al.*) and Woodhorn Church (GB/DM/LAR). The latter bird remained the following day. The final sighting concerned a first-winter on Inner Farne (Farne Islands) on 15th October (ET *et al.*).

There have been more prolific influxes, with 25 found in 1976 and 14 in 1965, but 2016 ranks next, though how many more were hiding along the coast is anyone's guess.



Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

STATUS: Well-represented summer and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

The first birds of the year were two at Derwent Gorge on 19th April, followed by seven (five males and two females) at Letah Wood (Hexham) on 21st April. Passage birds were noted on Holy Island in May, with singles on 7th and 10th, a peak of five on 13th and two on 14th. In breeding areas, four singing males were at Plankey Mill (Allen Banks) on 8th May and Nunnykirk on 18th May, up to four birds were at Derwent Gorge in May-June, three were at Letah Wood on 8th May and Dipton Wood on 13th May and one to two were reported from Bellingham, Crooked Oak (Shotley Low Quarter), Dipton Wood, Fontburn Reservoir, Harthope Valley, Holystone and Morrale Wood.

A very good breeding season was reported at Linnels Wood, where, unusually, all 12 nests were successful, fledging 73 young. The first egg date was 10th May and all 73 pulli were ringed, as well as eight adults; an additional 11 adults were recaptured (AM).

Data from nest box study areas was as follows:

Locality	Pairs	Eggs laid	Young fledged	Productivity	Observer
Linnels	12	83	73	6.1	AM
Dipton Dene	10	61	55	5.5	SCE
Kingswood Burn	7	Not known	29	4.14	JS
Briarwood Banks	1	Not known	8	8	JS
March Burn	3	16	11	3.67	RMH
Low Carriteth	6	37	19	3.17	JR
Dye House	4	27	20	5	RMH
Letah Wood	8	54	49	6.1	RMH
Rothley	1	6	0	0	JR
Wallington	2	14	11	5.5	JR

Autumn passage began with one to two at Newton Links on 20th-21st August, whilst one on Holy Island on 20th August increased to ten there on 28th (MJC/ADM). August singles were also noted at Newbiggin GC on 22nd, St Mary's on 24th, Druridge on 25th, Tynemouth on 26th, Budle Point on 28th and Newbiggin on 29th. On Holy Island, one was present on 4th September and two on 15th September. A late migrant was at Hauxley RS on 8th October.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

STATUS: Uncommon passage visitor, rare in winter.

The bird first seen on 13th December 2015 at Tynemouth was still present on 1st January before reappearing from 24th-31st and staying throughout February. In an excellent year for the species, another was at Holy Island from 17th-21st January, with probably the same over-wintering bird at the Castle lime kilns on 5th March. Other wintering birds were at Seahouses from 21st-22nd February and Tynemouth from 13th-25th March.

In April, five were noted on Holy Island on 12th (ADM), two on 17th and a single on 30th; elsewhere, singles were reported from Bates Minewater Treatment Works and Dunstanburgh Castle on 3rd, East Chevington on 6th, Lowick on 7th, well inland at Corbridge on 8th, Snab Point on 10th, Cullercoats on 11th, St Mary's Wetland from 12th-15th and Tynemouth on 16th. Up to six birds were on the Farne Islands during the month. Singles were noted at Holy Island on 8th May and Sandy Bay (Newbiggin) on 14th May. Four were on the Farne Islands during May and a male was on the islands from 13th-14th June.

In the autumn, one found at Holy Island (The Snook) on 7th October was followed by two (possibly three) in the Vicarage Garden on 15th October, when four were at Boulmer and a single at Snab Point, with a smart adult male at Newbiggin GC the day before and two at Budle Point the day after. The final record at Holy Island came on 26th. No autumn birds were seen on the Farne Islands.

At Cullercoats Bay, an immature/female was present from 5th-8th November, with possibly the same bird at nearby St Mary's on 10th, and an adult male was seen from 12th-20th November. More unusually, a male was in Newcastle city centre (St Nicholas Cathedral) from 10th to the end of November, another male was found at Berwick on 21st November and a female/immature was at Newbiggin two days later. A single female/immature was noted at Cullercoats throughout December, with a female at North Blyth on 10th and a male was on the roof of the 'Rockcliffe Arms' (Whitley Bay) on 27th.



Black Redstart - St Mary's - December (Alan Jack).

Black Redstart - Tynemouth - February (Alan Curry).



Black Redstart - Seahouses - February (Gary Woodburn).



Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

STATUS: Common summer and well-represented passage visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

Rather late to arrive this year, with the first at Holy Island on 17th April followed by males inland at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 18th and Simonsides on 19th April. Up to four singing males were at Haughton Strother by 24th April and at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) by 30th April. One to three were also reported from Benridge Moor, Harwood Forest, Letah Wood (Hexham), Slaley, South Charlton and Swallowship (Hexham) during April. The Farne Islands enjoyed a good run of records in May, with singles on 3rd and 5th, two on 10th, four on 11th and late migrants on the outer group on 24th and 28th.

A total of 12 singing males were noted over 6km of roadside trees from Beacon Hill-Wingates on 20th May (ASJ), six were at Holystone on 22nd May, four were singing at Callaly and Cartington and up to four were noted regularly at Derwent Reservoir. Counts of three singing males were made at Harthope Valley, Haughton Strother, and Thrunton Wood, with three also noted at Nunnykirk and Plankey Mill, and one to two at a further 25 widespread localities.

In addition to the data presented in the table below, breeding evidence in the period June-early August included a pair using a nest box at Haughton Strother, a pair feeding four fledged young at Lordenshaw and two juveniles at Doddington; one to four birds were also suspected of breeding in suitable habitat at Allen Banks, Beacon Hill, (Longhorsley), Belsay Castle, Branton, Debdon, Kirkley Hall, Plessey Hall Farm, Prestwick Carr, Tweedmouth and Whitechapel.

Data from nest box study areas was as follows:

Locality	Nests	Eggs laid	Young fledged	Productivity	Observer
Tarset	2	12	7	3.5	JR
Rothley	1	6	0	0	JR
Wallington	3	18	17	5.7	JR
Fallowlees	1	6	6	6	JR
Hall's Hill	1	7	7	7	JR
Briarwood Banks	3	Not known	11*	5.5	JS

(*11 young fledged from two pairs; the third nest was also successful, but not accessible).

One to three passage birds were noted in August at Big Waters on 3rd, 21st and 23rd, Holy Island on 5th, 25th and 28th, Druridge Pools on 21st-22nd, Hadston Carrs on 24th and the Farne Islands on 28th-29th. Four were at Holy Island on 15th September, with one to three during the month at Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, the Farne Islands, Hauxley NR, Newcastle (Exhibition Park) and St Mary's. In October, singles were noted at Holy Island on 5th and 6th, with up to three daily from 7th-9th and one to two from 12th-18th. One at the Farne Islands on 6th-9th October was followed by two on 15th, one of which was possibly the bird that lingered from 16th-18th. Elsewhere, singles were at Craster on 4th and Snab Point on 8th, with a final record of two at Big Waters on 19th October.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

STATUS: Common summer and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

The first arrival was a stunning male at Hawsen Burn (Harthope Valley) on 24th April. Further males were seen at Windyhaugh (Upper Coquetdale) on 27th and Cresswell Pond and Simonside on 30th April. The bulk of arrivals were in May, when coastal records involved a pair at Low Newton on 2nd, one on the Farne Islands on 7th, increasing to two on 8th, four on Holy Island on 8th, with three there on 14th and a single on 27th, and singles at Boulmer, Dunstanburgh, East Chevington and Tynemouth. A total of 17 (one female) were in the Breamish Valley on 6th (ASJ) and 15 singing males in Upper Coquetdale on 10th May. Elsewhere in May, in breeding areas, eight+ were found in the Harthope Valley on 8th, four singing males at Tosson Hill on 20th and Cartington on 22nd and one to three were noted at six further localities.

Breeding records were few, but a total of 16 in Upper Coquetdale on 10th July included a pair feeding three fledged young. Two adults and a juvenile were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 19th July.

As usual, coastal movement began early, with two to three in the St Mary's-Hartley area from 7th-21st July and a juvenile on the Farne Islands on 22nd. August produced a good sprinkling of coastal records, with a peak count of four at St Mary's on 18th-20th, three at Chugdon Wood on 20th, one to three on seven dates at the Farne Islands from 17th-28th and singles at Budle Point on 11th, Holy Island on 14th, 19th and 28th, Hadston Carrs on 24th, Beal Point on 26th and Woodhorn on 29th. Inland, one to two were on the move at Big Waters, Prestwick Carr and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

In September, three to four were at Cresswell Pond from 5th-6th, three at East Chevington on 4th, with two on 11th and a single on 18th, one to three at the Farne Islands on nine dates from 5th-17th, one to two at Holy Island from 15th-17th, two at Backworth on 30th and singles at Boulmer, Cambois, Cocklawburn, Druridge Pools, Newton Links and well inland at Great Standrop (Cheviots). The final records came in October and involved two on Holy Island on 2nd, with one remaining to 5th, and late singles at Inner Farne (Farne Islands) on 6th and 8th, Newbiggin GC on 8th, Gosforth Park NR on 14th and Budle Point on 16th.

Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola maurus*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / FIRST RECORD: HISTORICAL / LAST RECORD: 2014

A first-winter was discovered on Inner Farne (Farne Islands) on 20th October (THi *et al.*). It was well photographed and considered to be potentially a candidate for *stejnegeri*. However, it was submitted as a Siberian Stonechat and accepted as such by the British Birds Rarities Committee. It was present for a few hours before dusk, and gave excellent views, but was not relocated the following day.

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

STATUS: Well-represented and increasing resident and uncommon passage visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

In the first quarter, peak counts were six at Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools and between Druridge-East Chevington, with one to four at some 32 other coastal and inland localities; the latter including many traditional sites such as Alnwick Moor, Beanley and Bewick Moors, Great Whittington, Harwood, Hawsen Burn, Kielder, Longhorsley, Prestwick Carr, Ryal and Slaley. A large number of reports in May included seven pairs at Bewick Moor on 17th (MJC), three pairs at Bamburgh-Budle Bay during the month and many pairs settled in upland breeding areas.

Breeding evidence in the period May-August included three pairs with young in The Wanneys area (Ridsdale), a female with four fledged young at Old Hartley, family parties of four at Budle Bay and Coquetdale, four juveniles at St Mary's, pairs with three fledged juveniles at Cocklawburn, Druridge Pools, East Chevington and Winnowshill Common, pairs with two fledged young at Bewick Moor and West Hartford, a pair feeding young in the nest at Holy Island, two juveniles at Low Newton and Whittle Dene Reservoirs and an adult and one juvenile at Druridge Pools. Further confirmation of breeding came from Bamburgh Dunes, Grindon Lough, Howick Haven, Low Newton, North Blyth, Old Hartley, Simonside, West Hartford and Winter's Gibbet (Harwood Forest). One to two, including singing birds, were noted at several other localities.

The final quarter produced peak counts of ten from The Long Nanny-Newton in November, eight from Ross Back Sands-Guile Point in October and from St Mary's-Old Hartley in November, six from Amble-Hauxley and Goswick-Cheswick in October and at Cocklawburn in December and five at Druridge Pools, Prestwick Carr and Stag Rocks (Bamburgh)-Budle Point. Counts of four came from Boulmer, Cresswell Pond, Embleton, Holy Island, North Blyth, Quarry House Moor, and Warkworth Gut and threes were noted at Arcot Pond, Newbiggin and Whitley Bay, with one to two at a further 21 localities, including a female on Brownsman on 15th October representing the only record of the year for the Farne Islands.

In another excellent year for the species, birds were reported from 46 coastal sites (40 in 2015) and 35 inland sites (24 in 2015). Hopefully the continued range expansion of the species augurs well for this attractive chat, which suffered a significant population reduction after the harsh winters of 2009-10 and 2010-11.



Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

STATUS: Common summer and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

The first arrival was on the Farne Islands on 24th March, with further singles at Horsley on 27th and Backworth on 29th March. A total of 59 records in April included peak counts of 12 in Upper Coquetdale on 21st, eight at Prestwick Carr on 16th and up to ten on Holy Island during the month. Counts of six came from Beal, Blanchland and Derwent Reservoir, with one to four at a further 26 localities. In May, 13 on Holy Island on 1st declined to six on 5th-8th, and 13 were at Newbiggin GC on 5th. The Farne Islands produced records on 44 dates in spring, with peaks of 12 on 1st May and eight on 5th May. Five passage birds were at Budle Bay on 2nd May and one to two were in a further nine coastal areas until 19th May.

In breeding areas, 12 (eight males) were in Upper Coquetdale on 10th May, with six+ (some nest building) in the College Valley on 6th. Elsewhere in May, one to three were noted at Brenkley, Carey Burn, Edlingham, Grindon Lough, Lanehead (Tasset) and Swinehope Moor. Many juveniles were seen from June onwards, including three at Ingram on 11th June, a majority of juveniles amongst 19 birds between Shillmoor-Fairhaugh (Upper Coquetdale) on 3rd July and juveniles on passage at Derwent Reservoir in July comprising one on 1st, two to four from 23rd-26th and three on 30th. Other juveniles were at Budle Bay from 10th July, with a peak of four on 22nd July, and one to two juveniles were at Newbiggin on three dates in June-July.

In August, six to seven were at Derwent Reservoir on 3rd-4th and 12th; 11 at Corsenside Common (Bellingham) on 31st probably related to two family parties. On the coast, 48 were at the Farne Islands on 29th August (FIR), with up to ten on many other dates during the autumn, and nine were noted at Boulmer, eight at Newbiggin and five to six at Holy Island during the last week of the month. Elsewhere, four were at Plenmeller Common on 3rd, St Mary's on 24th and Beal Point on 26th August, with one to two at a further nine coastal and eight inland localities. Three juveniles were at St Mary's on 10th September and Seaton Sluice on 26th, with two juveniles at Cocklawburn, Bennetsfield and Grindon Lough and singles reported from a further 11 coastal and three inland localities on various dates.

Isabelline Wheatear - Holy Island - October (Frank Golding).



Isabelline Wheatear - Holy Island - October (Alan Curry).



Isabelline Wheatear - Holy Island - October (Colin Bradshaw).

Siberian Accentor – Holy Island - October





(Gary Woodburn).

(Ian Fisher).

Siberian Accentor - Holy Island (second individual) - October (Andy Mould).



Siberian Accentor - Newbiggin Ash Lagoons - October (Jonathan Farooqi).



The final records, in October, involved inland singles at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 2nd, on the summit of Hedgehope on 5th and at Derwent Reservoir on 6th. On the coast, singles were at Newton Pool on 7th and Newbiggin on 13th, with birds recorded at the Farne Islands to 15th. Two to three were on Holy Island on four dates, with a peak of six present on 16th, when three were at Budle Point and one at Boulmer. Two were at Boulmer the following day, with a single at Holy Island on 19th October.

‘Greenland Wheatear’ *O. o. leucorhoa*

STATUS: Uncommon passage visitor.

Two at the Long Nanny Estuary on 29th April were positively identified as birds of this race (JGS). One on Brownsman (Farne Islands) on 27th August showed characteristics of ‘Greenland Wheatear’ and one of two Wheatears at Boulmer on 30th September was considered to be a ‘Greenland’ bird.

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina*

STATUS: Extremely rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 1 / FIRST: 1980

Part of the exceptional autumn and, amazingly, at the time took second billing as most birders were eager to see the recently discovered Siberian Accentor *Prunella montanella* that was present along the same stretch of shore a mere 150m away. With its true identity not being confirmed until after most birders had departed the island ahead of the rising tide (AC *et al.*), it meant an anxious overnight wait for most apart from a lucky few present on the island at the time. Luckily, the bird stayed through to 20th October and it was much admired, especially as the previous, and only, county record was way back in 1980 at Bamburgh GC. The sighting was accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee.

Siberian Accentor *Prunella montanella*

STATUS: Extremely rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 0

With the first-ever UK records of this far eastern accentor occurring earlier in October, there was eager anticipation that one might turn up in Northumberland, especially as the influx was so marked across Western Europe. Amazingly, through to the end of the month, three made it to our shores.

A visitor checking the north shore of Holy Island on 18th October came across one on the edge of the path just inland of the dune system (PM *et al.*). News was put out and a constant flurry of birders managed to connect before dusk. The area was consistently searched over the following days, with no success, hence a second individual found in the same general area on 25th was thought to be a different bird (ADM). The British Birds Rarities Committee also came to the same conclusion and it was accepted as a separate bird. This seems perfectly logical, given the ongoing influx and the amount of coverage between the two birds being found. This one, though, proved to be a supreme skulker, with brief views at 15:15hrs over 20 minutes, to the finder only, and then nothing through to dusk.

To those of us who thought we would miss out on one in Northumberland, a third ‘bite of the cherry’ ensued, with another found at Newbiggin on the ash lagoon bank on 29th October (AT/IF *et al.*), which thankfully stayed through to the following day and allowed many people to view as it fed unconcernedly on the path.

A remarkable passage, which may not be repeated, as the breeding area is so far east and conditions must have been perfect to allow an easterly air stream to move these birds into Western Europe.

A paper documenting the first record can be found at the front of this publication.

Dunnoek *Prunella modularis*

STATUS: Common resident and well-represented passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

Even fewer reports than usual were received this year for this unobtrusive and much overlooked species which is common throughout the county.

During the first six months, one to three were noted monthly at both Holywell and Jesmond Denes, but, elsewhere, records of one or two came from only eight other suburban localities, all in the Newcastle conurbation. Farther afield, ten were at Birling Carrs in January and at Fenham-le-Moor in February, 12 in

the River Aln Estuary in March and eight to nine at Prestwick Carr in March-April. On the Farne Islands, a trickle of spring migrants of the nominate race *P. m. modularis* occurred, with one or two seen on 17 dates from 27th March-30th April.

Reports for July-August were equally sparse, but included monthly sightings in Holywell and Jesmond Denes and from gardens at Marden Estate (Cullercoats) and Old Hartley. Three newly hatched chicks at Mickley was the only breeding record submitted for the year.

Coastal passage became evident in late September, with four on Holy Island (Straight Lonnen) and six trapped and ringed at Bamburgh. Migrant numbers increased in October, when 12-21 were counted on four dates at Hauxley, of which seven birds were ringed (HRS), a total of 13 were also trapped and ringed at Bamburgh, a peak of 15 were on the Farne Islands on 15th and 11 were present at Ross Back Sands on 21st; in November, 16 were at Whiteadder Point (Berwick) on 13th. Also during these last four months, one to five were reported from only five other localities, both coastal and inland, including the Farne Islands, where a handful of singles were present throughout November into December.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

STATUS: Abundant resident.

BREEDING: Abundant.

The species was poorly reported; the nationwide decline of this sparrow is well documented and, although birds in the county are now fewer than formerly, they are still widespread throughout, though probably overlooked.

In January, flocks of 30-60 were at the Aln Estuary, Beacon Hill (Cramlington), Berwick Pier, Lesbury, Low Cocklaw (Berwick), Marden Estate (Cullercoats) and Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay), with four groups of ten to 20 at Chapel House, either at garden feeders or in hedgerow roosts, described by the observer as a welcome 'comeback to the estate'. Elsewhere during the first four months, around 100 were to be seen throughout April in the Whitley Bay/Cullercoats area and groups of ten to 40 were noted at Alnwick Garden, Battlesteads Hotel (Wark), Forest Hall, Monkseaton, Newbiggin and Southfield Green (Cramlington), with up to ten at eight other sites.

Few reports came in May-June, the majority relating to groups of up to ten at garden feeders at Marden and Tynemouth, where young were also being fed in nests; elsewhere, a flock of 41 was at Holywell Pond in late June.

Post-breeding flocks gathered in July-August, although records came only from a limited number of localities. The largest flock, in hedgerows adjoining a stubble field at St Mary's Wetland, increased from 180 in July to 220 in August (ASJ/SPP) and included many juveniles. A similar-sized flock also built up at Holywell Pond during this period. Smaller groups of 15-30 were noted at Alnwick, Cramlington, Old Hartley, Newbiggin (Spital), Prestwick Carr and Tynemouth. In September, 100 gathered at Cullercoats and 30-50 at Dinnington, Druridge, Lindisfarne and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, with ten to 25 at seven other localities, mainly attracted by feeders.

During the last quarter, numbers remained encouragingly high, with peak monthly counts of 150 at Elwick in October, 73 at Cramlington in November and 70 at Cullercoats in December. Other groups of 40-70 were recorded at Annstead dunes, Holy Island (Straight Lonnen and Village), Holywell, Low Cocklaw, North Shields and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, with ten to 25 at Alnwick, Berwick, Chapel House, Cramlington (Southfield Green and Valley Park), Harwood Forest and Marden Estate.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

STATUS: Well-represented resident.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

The numbers recorded throughout the year were again indicative that the population level is being maintained, having recovered from a marked decline some two or three decades ago. In the first quarter, flocks of 20-50 were noted at Chugdon Wood (Ellington), Corbridge, Cresswell Pond, Fenham-le-Moor, Hazelrigg Mill, Lesbury, Linden Hall, Low Cocklaw (Berwick) and Pegswood; smaller gatherings of up to 20, some at garden feeders, were recorded at a further 30 widespread localities, the majority being within the south east

conurbation or at the well-watched coastal reserves. Flocks were still to be seen in April, with 45 at Chugdon Wood, 30 at Cresswell Pond and 18 at Haughton Strother, as well as one to nine at a further 16 sites, but peak counts in May-June reduced to around ten at Cresswell Pond, Linden Hall, Low Cocklaw and Waren Mill, with one to five at 18 further sites.

A nest box at Morpeth held five large young on 23rd May and family parties were seen at Dinnington in June and July. Due to the building works on the Hauxley reserve, few boxes were checked or young ringed this year. No boxes around the visitor centre were monitored but 17 pulli were ringed from boxes in the willow carr on the east side of the reserve.

Breeding data from the important nest box colonies at Big Waters (JCD/AJJ) and Hauxley NR (RMH) was as follows (with 2015 figures in parentheses):

Locality	Boxes used	Clutches	Eggs	Hatched	Fledged
Big Waters	34 (39)	66 (63)	313 (*263)	209 (158)	188 (124)
Hauxley NR**	3 (17)	- - (- -)	- - (81)	15 (- -)	13 (65)

(*Note revised figure from that previously published. **Incomplete coverage due to reserve closures).

Records in July-September included birds of all ages in post-breeding flocks, with a maximum of 80 at Chugdon Wood, 70 at Haughton Strother, 40 at Roseden and 30 at Waren Mill caravan park and one to five at Boulmer, Cresswell Pond, Cullercoats, Druridge Pools, Ellington, Holywell Dene, Mitford, QE II CP Lake and Plessey Hall Farm (Cramlington).

Evidence of the usual October autumn passage was apparent at St Mary's, where small southbound groups totalling 33 and 16 were noted on 17th and 26th respectively. The largest gatherings in October were 120 feeding at a field edge in Elwick on 22nd (ASJ), 60 around Hauxley and 40 at Chugdon Wood, with one to 14 at 18 further localities as widespread as Cambois, Goswick, Holy Island, Low Newton, Rothbury, Tynemouth, Wark (North Tyne) and Woodhorn. The final two months provided monthly maximum counts of 35 at Fenwick Lodge (Stamfordham) in November and 55 at Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay) in December, with ten to 15 at Cresswell, Dinnington, Druridge Bay CP, Holywell and Longhorsley, and one to ten at 12 localities, including Capheaton, Cocklawburn Pond, East Chevington, East Ord, Gosforth, Humshaugh, Linden Hall and Longbenton.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava flavissima*

STATUS: Well-represented summer and uncommon passage visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

The first returning birds were singles at Cresswell Pond and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 9th April. A peak of 14 were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 30th April, eight individuals moved through Newton Scrape throughout the day on 24th, six individuals flew N during the month at St Mary's, similarly four at Tynemouth on 30th, and one to three were recorded at Carham On Tweed, Corbridge, Cresswell, Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) and Hedgeley GPs, Monks House Pool, Tynemouth and West Ord.

The peak count in May was an encouraging 16 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 18th (SR) and, on various dates throughout the month, maxima of four were seen at Boulmer, Hoppen Kiln Flash and Newton Scrape, three at Haughton Strother GP and Widdrington, with one to two at the Aln Estuary, Corbridge, Cresswell Pond, Devil's Water, Hallington Reservoir, Hauxley, Hedgeley GP, Monks House Pool, Tynemouth, Warden and West Ord. Few reports came in June but a pair was seen near Ingoe and singles were noted at Beal, Corbridge, Druridge Pools, Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) and New Water Haugh (Berwick).

Successful breeding was apparent in July-August, with family parties of 11 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs, six at Newton Scrape, five at Druridge Pools and three juveniles at Derwent Reservoir. Three to five were at many other sites, including numerous reports from Cresswell Pond and Lynemouth Flash, with one or two at Amble, Beal, Boulmer, Embleton Bay, Howick, Newbiggin, Newcastle (Town Moor) and Ryal. Three flew S in late August at St Mary's and, in September, five were at Boulmer on 4th and four at Ross Back Sands on 2nd, with one to three, mainly in the first half of the month, at Alnmouth, Cresswell, Haughton Mains, Inner Farne (Farne Islands), Newton Scrape, Ross Back Sands and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Three late migrants in October involved singles at Lynemouth Flash on 9th, St Mary's on 30th and Branton on 31st.

Yellow Wagtail - Tynemouth - April (Alan Curry).



White Wagtail - Creswell - April (Chris Barlow).



Pied Wagtail - Holy Island - May (Andy Mould).



Blue-headed Wagtail *M. f. flava*

STATUS: Rare passage visitor, which appears in small numbers in most springs and has bred. / FIRST RECORD: 1880 / LAST RECORD: 2014

Singles were at Newton Scrape from 24th-26th April and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 6th May. A male was singing on arable fields at Morpeth on 7th June and one - or possibly a 'Channel' hybrid (*flava* x *flavissima*) - was at Christon Bank on 13th July.

'Grey-headed Wagtail' *M. f. thunbergi*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / PREVIOUS RECORDS: 30 / FIRST: 1923 / LAST: 2015

A male was found and photographed at Beadnell Pool on 13th May (JGS). This sub-species is still rare in the county, with sightings in only five years since 2000.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

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

BREEDING: Well-represented.

The majority of sightings in the first two months came from the south east conurbation and comprised four in Jesmond Dene and one to two at another 12 localities, including the Bigg Market and Exhibition Park in Newcastle; outside this area, five were at Great Whittington and three at Cockshaw Burn (Hexham), with one to two at Blyth, Branton, Kirkley Hall, Medburn, the River Tweed Estuary, Rothbury, Wark, Whitley Bay and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. In March, six were counted between Ingram-Shillmoor, seven pairs were back on territory in Upper Coquetdale, with two pairs at Derwent Reservoir, and one to two were reported at 14 further sites, mainly in the Tyne and Cheviot Valleys, but also in Jesmond and Holywell Denes.

During the breeding season, April-July, a minimum of 18 pairs were in Upper Coquetdale, with a maximum count of 19 individuals on 21st April (ASJ), three pairs were at Hareshaw Linn (Bellingham) and a pair fed young in a nest at Bywell Bridge. Five chicks were ringed from one nest on Birkey Burn (Acomb) (SCE).

Elsewhere, ten were in the Upper Breamish Valley, with one to four at many riverine sites, including Belsay, Budle Bay, Caistron, Corbridge, Ellington, Grindon Lough, Newbiggin, Plessey Woods, Redesdale, the River Wansbeck (Ashington), Rothbury and Wark. In suburban areas, pairs were in Holywell and Jesmond Denes and birds were widespread in Newcastle (Bigg Market, Exhibition Park, Grainger and Northumberland Streets and Town Moor). In July, small numbers moved S past Seaton Sluice watch tower up to 20th with a maximum of seven on 6th. Peak counts in the late summer months were seven at Whittle Dene Reservoirs in August and four in Jesmond Dene in September, with one or two at around 20 localities, mainly at lower elevations, reflecting the seasonal movement eastwards as birds returned from their breeding strongholds.

The species was extremely well-reported in October-December, with one to three at numerous locations, although there were no reports to suggest any significant autumnal coastal movement and benign conditions allowed birds to remain widespread throughout the county. Four were at Spital (Newbiggin), three at Hauxley, Humshaugh, Jesmond Dene and Ouseburn and one to two at numerous coastal and inland sites, including Bedlington, Big Waters, Blyth, Bywell Bridge, Corbridge, Cramlington, Grindon Lough, Hethpool (College Valley), Hexham, Housesteads, Morpeth (River Wansbeck), Newbiggin, Nunwick Hall, Rothbury, Wallsend Dene, Warden, Wark, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Woolsington; additionally, single birds were occasionally seen wintering in Newcastle (Exhibition Park, Scotswood Business Park and Town Moor).

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

STATUS: Common resident, well-represented in winter.

BREEDING: Common.

In January, up to 31 frequented Prestwick Carr throughout the month and 12 on sheep fields at Shipley (Alnwick) remained there until February. Elsewhere during these first two months, ten to 15 were recorded at Backworth, Cramlington and St Mary's, with one to three at five other localities. Increasingly in March, many birds moved towards their summer quarters in upland areas and 16 were at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 28th, with one to four at Coanwood, the Harthope and Ingram Valleys and on Ridley Common. Sightings of ten to 15 also came from Gosforth Park NR throughout the month, Linden Hall and QEII CP Lake, with one to four at ten other localities, including Holy Island where the first birds returned on 6th after a winter's absence.

The onset of the breeding season in April was marked by 18 pairs established in the favoured Upper Coquet Valley on 21st and, in May-June, pairs were seen in Gosforth Park NR, Newcastle (Exhibition Park) and Whitley Bay. On Holy Island, a pair successfully raised five young in a natural nest site on a low sea cliff, first used by Swallows *Hirundo rustica* in 2014. Six pairs nested on the Farne Islands, fledged chicks being seen in early June, with second broods also recorded and, elsewhere, successful fledging of a brood of five was noted at Whitley Bay mini-GC. Maximum counts during this period were 18 at Stobswood, 12 at Haughton Strother GP and ten at Bamburgh and Whiteadder Point (Berwick), with one to four seen at five other sites.

Post-breeding flocks containing many juveniles were recorded in July-September, indicative of a good breeding season, with monthly maxima of 21 at Cresswell Pond in July, 51 at Bothal Pond in August (TFa/JFa) and 45 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs in September. Other counts of 15-45 came from Backworth, Beal, Berwick, Druridge Pools, Ingram and St Mary's, with one to ten at 15 other widespread localities, including a family party in August at Exhibition Park.

Flock sizes were maintained during October-December, with a maximum of 50 at Prestwick Carr in late November and smaller groups of ten to 30 throughout the period at Backworth, Berwick GC, Bothal Pond, East Chevington, Gosforth, Hauxley and St Mary's and four to ten at Cullercoats, Grindon Lough, Holy Island village, Killingworth Lake, Newbiggin, Quarry House Moor (Chillingham), Stobswood, Whitley Bay and Wylam.

White Wagtail *M. a. alba*

STATUS: Uncommon passage visitor, mainly in the spring, although autumn birds may be overlooked.

Early passage birds appeared in March, with six at Mill Farm (Berwick) on 19th, three at Cresswell on 30th and singles at Branton GP, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Inner Farne (Farne Islands) and Newton Links from 27th-30th. Small numbers arrived in April, starting with three at Cresswell Pond and two at Lynemouth Flash on 1st and thereafter, from 4th-30th, birds were widely reported with a maximum of seven at the Long Nanny on 29th (JGS), four at Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Bay and Haughton Strother GP and one to two at around 18 mainly coastal sites, including Bamburgh, Bothal Pond, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, the Farne Islands, Gosforth Park NR, Hauxley, Holy Island, Howick Hall, Low Newton, St Mary's Wetland, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Widdrington Moor Lake. Numbers in May declined rapidly, with three still at Haughton Strother GP on 3rd and singles on various dates at Cresswell Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Pools, Holy Island, Howick and Low Newton, before the final sighting at Grindon Lough on 25th.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / FIRST RECORD: 1831 / LAST RECORD: 2015

One called and was seen well at close range in flight on Holy Island (The Snook) on 5th October (MJC). Typically, it could not be relocated, but was well documented. The only other sighting involved another calling bird at East Chevington on 13th November (JFa/TF/ADMc). It passed low over the south hide at north pool and again the sighting was well documented. There was one other claim during the autumn, but no documentation was received, though the fact the observer is highly experienced almost certainly made this claim genuine.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

STATUS: Well-represented summer and uncommon passage visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

The first sighting in April was an early arrival, seen in display flight at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) on 8th, and further records involved a single at Druridge Pools on 19th, eight singing in Harwood Forest on 23rd (STE) and singles at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley), Blanchland Moor, Cresswell Pond, Simonside and Slaley. In May, single migrants were at Bamburgh on 8th, Brownsman (Farne Islands) on 11th and Beadnell Harbour on 27th but all other records were from typical open woodland breeding sites, including five in display flight at Wingates, four at Blanchland Moor and Harthope, three at Beacon Hill and Holystone, two at Dipton, Longhorsley Moor, Nunnykirk, Simonside, Sweethope, Swinhope and Thrunton and singles at Alwinton, Beanley Wood, Catcleugh, Chugdon Wood (Ellington), Corbridge Common, Dukefield Woods, Kielder Forest, Scots Gap, Slaley Forest, three further sites in Upper Coquetdale and Widehope. June sightings

were mainly at the above-mentioned localities, where birds were still in display flight, and a pair at Simonside fed young in the nest; a single on Lindisfarne on 18th was probably an early departing migrant bird.

Few records came in July as birds fell silent and moved out of breeding areas but singles were still on territory at Blakehopeburnhaugh, Broomleyfell Plantation, Harthope, Mootlaw Quarry, Netherwitton and Thrunton. In late August, single migrants were at Holy Island and St Mary's, with three on Inner Farne (Farne Islands) on 25th and singles on the Farnes on at least 16 dates from 18th August-9th September. Elsewhere in September, four and two were at Old Mousen on 4th and 18th respectively. The last sightings of the year, in October, were migrants on the Farne Islands on 5th, on Holy Island (The Snook) on 6th and another in Holy Island village on 9th.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

STATUS: Abundant resident and passage visitor, less numerous in winter.

BREEDING: Abundant.

Mild winter conditions encouraged good numbers to remain in the county during January-February, when small groups of 15-35 were seen at Backworth, Gloucester Lodge Farm (Blyth), Goswick Farm, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Prestwick Carr and St Mary's. One to nine were recorded at a further ten localities, the majority being at or near the coast, and by 27th February, eight had returned to Holy Island after a winter's absence. Return passage boosted populations in March, with a count of 30 at 'Northumberlandia' (Cramlington) on 8th, up to 11 at six other localities and, by the last week, 30 were on breeding territory at Stewartshiel (Otterburn Training Area) and 25 singing birds were observed in 11km of Cheviot Hills (Biddlestone-Bloody Bush Edge). Migration peaked in April and birds were seen moving W in the Harthope Valley and N over the Farne Islands and Gosforth Garden Village on various dates. On Holy Island, 120 on 3rd increased to 160 on 10th and 100+ pairs were counted on the Otterburn Training Area, with 38 in the Harthope Valley; on lower ground, 60 were on a newly ploughed field at Stobswood, 23 fed in fields at Lincoln Hill and 12 were noted at Eachwick.

A breeding survey at Goswick in early May revealed a density of 20 per sq.km and elsewhere, in May-July, display and successful breeding was witnessed at many favoured sites in the Cheviots, Simonsides, Wingates and, more unusually, two were song-flighting in Newcastle (Town Moor) in mid-June. Peak monthly counts during this period were 80 on Holy Island and 45 in the Carey Burn in May, 70+ on the Otterburn Training Area in June and 35 at 'Northumberlandia' in July, with smaller numbers at three other sites.

Post-breeding flocks started to assemble in early August, including 20 on the Town Moor on 2nd increasing to 30 on 10th, 50 at Derwent Reservoir on 15th and 35+ arriving on Holy Island ahead of a shower on 20th. Small parties departed central moorland breeding areas on 27th and 33 flew S at Newbiggin on 29th, with 38 S and 127 S at Gosforth Garden Village on 30th and 31st respectively. Migration became even more conspicuous in September, with huge numbers S at St Mary's, including 750+ on 5th, 1,000+ (in one hour) on 6th (ASJ) and 550+ (in two hours) on 7th. Elsewhere, 691 passed East Cramlington NR (in two hours 30 minutes) on 7th, with 573 over the same site on 30th, 550 moved S (in one hour 30 minutes) at Tynemouth on 11th, 520 were at Gloucester Lodge Farm on 10th, 270 fed on a manure heap at Howick on 9th and 100-300 passed over Big Waters, Cambois, Cresswell Pond, Ellington, the Farne Islands, Gosforth, Newton Links and Seaton Sluice.

Visible passage declined in October and November, although migratory groups were still seen moving S, including 120 and 126 at Holy Island on 1st and 13th September respectively; 20-60 were at Backworth, Hauxley Prestwick Carr, St Mary's and over the Town Moor, with up to 15 at ten other, mainly coastal, sites but with inland sightings also at Grindon Lough and Langleeford. A mild December allowed numbers to remain well inland and 24 were reported from the Alwin Valley on 30th, an area usually vacated throughout the winter, with smaller numbers recorded at Grindon Lough, Plenneller Common and Quarry House Moor (Chillingham). Groups of ten to 27 were at East Chevington, Prestwick Carr and West Stobswood, with one to five at three other sites.

Meadow Pipit - East Chevington - November (Colin Bradshaw).



Water Pipit - Monks House Pool - November (Alan Curry).



Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

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

BREEDING: Uncommon.

In January, a peak monthly count of 20 came from Holy Island (Sandham Bay), 12 were at Seaton Point (Boulmer), six at Low Newton and the River Tweed Estuary and one to five at five further sites. In February, as mild weather prevailed, six to ten fed around tideline seaweed at Low Newton and St Mary's and a single was noted at Blyth Harbour. During March, eight associated with two 'Scandinavian' birds at St Mary's on 17th, four were seen throughout the month at Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) and Tynemouth and, in April, nine were present all month at Rockcliffe, the only other report being a single at Boulmer.

The species was under-recorded throughout the summer months, May-August, with sightings of one to six, often displaying and song-fighting, at Berwick Little Beach, Cullercoats, Cullernose Point, Hauxley, Low Newton, Rockcliffe, St Mary's and Tynemouth. However, on the Farne Islands, a healthy 21 pairs nested and the first fledged chicks were ringed on 19th May; successful breeding was also apparent at Rockcliffe where juveniles were recorded in July and August. The breeding population on the Farne Islands was, as usual, supplemented by migrant birds in late summer, represented this year by a peak of 16 on Inner Farne on 30th August.

The reporting rate improved a little during September, with six at Hadston Carrs and St Mary's mid-month and one to two at four other localities. An influx from mid-October was indicative of the usual autumnal passage as birds returned to their wintering territories from farther north; a maximum of 35 were on Holy Island, with 16 at Berwick Pier, 13 at Ross Back Sands-Guile Point, 12 at St Mary's, ten at Boulmer and Hauxley and one to six at eight further localities. The high counts continued into November, with an impressive 52 at Seaton Point on 20th (ME), a monthly peak of 23 across Holy Island and ten to 12 at Berwick Little Beach, Newbiggin and St Mary's. Elsewhere, six to nine frequented several of the above sites, where populations had reduced somewhat by the month end as birds continued to move through; one to three were at three further sites. The December sightings comprised 14 at the favoured Boulmer locality, up to 12 on St Mary's-Whitley Bay beaches, ten at Berwick, four at Beacon Point (Newbiggin), three at Blyth South Harbour and one or two at a further three sites.

'Scandinavian Rock Pipit' *A. p. littoralis*

STATUS: Uncommon visitor, mainly in the spring.

In March, two were at St Mary's on 17th (ASJ/MSH), with singles at Fenham-le-Moor on 15th and East Chevington on 30th. The only other record involved a single at Boulmer on 6th April.

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / FIRST RECORD: 1956 / LAST RECORD: 2015

A productive collection of records, compared with recent years, marked by a late autumn passage. The two birds previously seen in 2015, at East Chevington and Druridge Pools, continued to winter through to 3rd February (DE/TF/JFa *et al.*). Another two were found at Monks House Pool on 12th January (AC *et al.*). These proved popular, keeping to the pool edge and along the roadside until 29th January.

After the above winter sightings, the next was an unusual spring record in the Alwin Valley (Cheviots) on 11th May (MM). This bird, in summer plumage, and with the habitat, must have been reminded of its breeding grounds in Switzerland!

Autumn passage commenced with one with Rock Pipits *Anthus petrosus* at Beacon Point (Newbiggin) on 8th October (AP). In November, one was found at St Mary's on 4th (AC *et al.*) and remained through to at least 18th December. It was in typical habitat for recent times, being on the high tideline. However, only sporadic sightings were obtained during its long stay. Again at the high tideline, this time at Boulmer, was one from 20th-23rd November (SS/CB *et al.*). Finally, two were again found at East Chevington and Druridge Pools from 25th-26th November (JFa/TF *et al.*). The year saw a welcome upsurge in sightings from 2015, with only single birds from 2011-2013 and a complete blank in 2014.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

STATUS: Well-represented passage and winter visitor.

Only two sizable flocks were located during the first winter period, 60 at Yearle from 10th-12th January and 30+ in stubble fields at Knowesgate on 11th February. Elsewhere during the first two months, up to six visited the regular wintering site at Wallington Hall and one to two were noted at Branton, Cresswell Pond, Gosforth, Humshaugh, Pegswood and North Charlton. Ten were at Belford on 6th March, while singles were also noted at Newton Links, Rothbury and Scots Gap.

Passage birds in April included one at the Farne Islands on 4th, three at Holy Island on 10th and two to three at the Farnes from 14th-15th. A Rothbury garden attracted up to four during the month, while one to two were noted at Bamburgh, Bingfield, East Ord (Berwick), Harwood Forest, Humshaugh, Linden Hall (Longhorsley), North Seaton, Spindleston, Tynemouth and Yearle. A late bird was at Low Newton on 1st May.

The first autumn arrivals were at Holy Island and Whitley Bay on 2nd October, with 11 on the Farne Islands by 4th. Holy Island witnessed a significant influx from 13th, when 90 were present; further arrivals the following day included 50+ in the strawberry field, 30+ at Chare Ends and many smaller groups scattered across the island. Numbers peaked on 15th, with 480-500 present, including a flock of 200-220 feeding on stubbles near the car park and 80 arriving from the E to settle briefly in the Vicarage Garden, before heading off SW towards the mainland (ASJ/MJC/JFa/TF). A similar pattern was evident on the Farne Islands, where numbers peaked at 128, again on 15th; on the same day, 31 were noted at Hauxley RS and 15+ at Tynemouth. Well inland, at least 100 were feeding on beech mast at Great Whittington by 21st, with one to six reported from a further 31 localities throughout the county.

In November, 34 were at Stamfordham on 22nd and 20 at Guyzance Mill on 15th, with one to six at a further six localities. Holywell Dene attracted a large gathering in December, rising from 25 on 9th to 120 by 27th; 25 were at Longhirst on 1st and one to 14 at a further nine localities.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

STATUS: Abundant resident, passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Abundant.

There were several large early gatherings, including 200 on a game crop at Quarry House Moor on 11th January (MH), 80 at Hazelrigg Mill on 19th January and 150 on a set-aside field at Bradford Kaims on 9th February. Elsewhere during this period, 30-40 were noted at Knowesgate, Ross Back Sands, Spindleston and Widdrington.

In March, over 100 were at Leaplish (Kielder) on 12th and around 40 at Elsdon on 19th, with a similar number at Redmire Bridge on 3rd April. More than 60 were noted at Wark (North Tyne) on 6th April, 33 were at Haggerston on 19th and up to 26 continued to attend a feeding station at Nunnykirk during May. The species was typically under-reported during the summer period, a trend which continued to the end of the year.

A notable 120+ were again at Leaplish (Kielder) on 10th September, while 20-30 were noted at East Cramlington LNR, North Charlton and Tynemouth during September-October. Light passage was noted at the Farne Islands in October, with one to nine on 20 dates and a peak of ten on 15th. The largest reported gathering during November was 40 at Whiteadder Point (Berwick) on 13th.

Common Rosefinch *Erythrina erythrina*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / FIRST RECORD: 1913 / LAST RECORD: 2014

Spring passage commenced on Brownsman (Farne Islands) on 25th May with a first-summer male which dropped out of the sky into the dead trees and gave excellent views and sporadic song to all of the Rangers up to 28th May (ET *et al.*). The only other spring passage bird was another immature male which was found along the entrance track to Druridge Pools on 27th May (DE/TRD *et al.*). It proved elusive, but did occasionally break into song and was seen throughout the day.

The only autumn sighting was typically at the Farne Islands, with a first-winter found on Brownsman on 15th October (THi *et al.*).

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

STATUS: Well-represented resident.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

This attractive finch continues to be well-reported. Peak monthly counts for the first quarter were 15 at Etal in January, 12 at Rothbury in February and eight pairs at Longhorsley on 3rd March (AB/LB). Elsewhere, six to nine frequented an Old Hartley garden and nearby Holywell Dene throughout the period, seven were at Arcot Pond in January, nine at Fawcett Hill (Hexham) in March and five to six at Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Cramlington, Eglington Moor, Ellington and Hexham. More unusual was a female attending a garden pond at Holy Island on 10th March.

Up to three pairs were noted in the Holywell Dene-Old Hartley area from April-June and three pairs were at Bakethin in May. A Rothbury garden continued to attract up to five, and five were at Bolam Lake on 16th April. One to six in the Old Hartley garden in July included a single juvenile, while two pairs visited a Morpeth garden on 30th July.

Eleven were ringed on Corbridge Common during August and four were at Howdon on 31st; four to five continued to frequent the Holywell Dene-Old Hartley area during August-September.

Prestwick Carr held up to six in October, 11 in November and 12 in December. Five were in a Morpeth garden on several October dates and at Howick Dene on 3rd. In November, 12+ were at Newbiggin on 3rd, 12 at Shiellow Wood on 16th, eight at Wallington on 12th and six at Dukeshouse (Hexham) on 29th, with one to four at a further 12 localities. A good count of 16 came from Swallow Pond on 5th December (SPP), while elsewhere during the month, ten were at Gosforth Park NR and at Ingram, six were reported from Arcot Pond, Boghouses (Cramlington) and Holywell Dene and one to four from a further 15 widespread localities.

‘Northern Bullfinch’ *P. p. pyrrhula*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / FIRST RECORD: 1937 / LAST RECORD: 2010

During the easterly influx of migrants in the autumn, there were two sightings of this continental race. The first was an adult female located at St Mary's Wetland on 23rd October, with continued views throughout the day (PC *et al.*). Another was seen and heard briefly on Holy Island (Straight Lonnen) the following day (TF/JFa). The distinctive trumpeting call and the sheer size was very apparent.

Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*

STATUS: Common resident and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

It was another poor year for this common species, records of which have been declining steadily for several years. The only sizable gathering during the first quarter was 40+ on a game crop at Ellington on 13th January, this flock declining to ten by 7th February. Elsewhere during this period, there were counts of nine from Beacon Hill (Cramlington) in January, and eight at Camperdown Moor and Kielder Castle and seven on feeders at Linden Hall (Longhorsley) in March, with one to three reported from only 11 further localities.

Feeding stations were again an attraction during April, with up to nine at Linden Hall and six at East Ord (Berwick); eight were reported from Castle Island and five at Walkerville, with one to three at a further nine localities. Reports were extremely sparse during the summer period, with three at Alnwick Garden and at Swallow Pond and a pair in a Marden Estate (Whitley Bay) garden in May, the latter accompanying three juveniles in June-July; ten were at Haughton Mains (Humshaugh) on 30th June, while only six other localities recorded the species during this early summer period. A small flock feeding on rose hips at St Mary's in July peaked at 12+ in August, with nine here and at Whittle Dene Reservoirs in September; five were also at Newcastle (Town Moor) in September.

In October, flocks of 21-35 were at Hauxley NR throughout, with an encouraging peak count here of 100 birds on 8th (HRS). The scarcity of recent records from the Farne Islands continued, with two leaving W from Inner Farne on 7th and a further two W later the same day; ten were at Snab Point on 9th, 30 at Budle Bay on 12th and two flew S at Craster on 24th. Up to eight were noted at Cullercoats in November, with one to four at a further four localities. The final report was a notable 60 at West Ord (Berwick) on 21st December.

Linnet *Linaria cannabina*

STATUS: Common resident and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

In January, 150 were near Budle Bay on 9th, 120+ were feeding in a game crop at Ellingham on 13th and 100 were at Druridge Bay links on 1st, with 30-50 also reported from Cramlington, Monks House and Newcastle (Exhibition Park). Flocks of 70-80 were at Bradford Kaims and Goswick in February, while a large gathering of 200 was at Littlemill (Howick Hall) on 2nd March; numbers at Big Waters had increased from 40 on 6th February to 120 by 6th March. On Holy Island, 61-69 were noted throughout April to 1st May.

Breeding records included six to seven pairs at St Mary's and a nest in a Marden Estate garden (Cullercoats) in May. Several pairs with fledged young were near Holywell in June and three pairs raised ten young from gorse bushes at Newbiggin in July.

Post-breeding dispersal resulted in a flock of 30 at Ellington on 20th June rising to 130 by 1st August. Up to 400 were at Newton Point by 4th August and, by the end of the month, 71 were at Derwent Reservoir and 50 at Corbridge. In September, 160+ had gathered at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 19th and, by 28th, 120 were feeding on stubbles at St Mary's and the Derwent Reservoir flock had increased to 110; 50-75 were also reported from Newbiggin and Ryal.

There were some typically large gatherings during the final quarter, the largest of which was at Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay), where numbers increased from 320 on 7th October to 720 by 14th (MNC). Other impressive October flocks included 420+ on set-a-side at Elwick and up to 300 at Holy Island (Chare Ends); 140-200 were noted at St Mary's during the month and 100 at Boulmer and Prestwick Carr. The flocks at Elwick and Brier Dene Farm declined to around 200+ and 160 respectively in November, while 180 were reported from East Chevington and 100 from Big Waters and Stag Rocks (Bamburgh). A flock of 75 at Swallow Pond was the largest December count.

Twite *Linaria flavirostris*

STATUS: Well-represented passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Rare. / LAST BRED 2008 (?)

In January, a large flock of 160+ was at Cocklawburn on 18th (MHu), while elsewhere there were counts of 30-42 from Cresswell Pond, Dunstan Steads (Embleton), Fenham-le-Moor and Holy Island and up to 12 at East Chevington. The largest February gathering was 60 at Hauxley NR on 22nd, with 40-50 at Hemscott Hill dunes (Cresswell) on 12th and 30+ remaining in the Fenham-le-Moor area; 12 were at Spittal (Berwick) on 20th and perhaps more unusual was a single well inland at Eglington on 12th. A large inland flock of 70 was found at Mount Carmel (Norham) on 6th March. Five were in Druridge Bay on 17th April and singles at Holy Island on 1st April and 8th May.

Return passage commenced with five at Boulmer on 30th September. Four had returned to Holy Island on 10th October, numbers here increasing to 64 by 25th. A flock of 24 was at Goswick on 28th, ten were at The Long Nanny on 29th and 14 at Druridge Pools on 30th, when four were again inland at Eglington Moor. Chevington Burn mouth attracted the largest flock in November, with around 100 feeding along the tideline on 28th and 42 there on the following day, while elsewhere, 40 were at Howick on 1st, up to 38 on Holy Island and 16 at Fenham-le-Moor. The Long Nanny flock increased to 54 during November, before declining from 25 on 3rd December to only three by the end of the year. A flock of 25 was found at Widdrington Lake on 11th December, when eight were also at Spittal (Berwick). The only other report of the month was 17 at Teal Hole Point (Lindisfarne NNR) on 13th.

Lesser Redpoll *Acanthis cabaret*

STATUS: Common resident and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

A flock, variously reported as 12-44, was present at Birling Carrs (Warkworth) throughout January and into early February; a further 40 were noted at Woodhorn on 8th January. A large gathering of 100 was at Holburn on 23rd February, while, elsewhere during the month, 20-27 were reported from Heddon-on-the-Wall, Toft Hill and Widdrington Moor Lake, with ten at Beggars Rigg (Rothbury) and at Knowesgate and up to seven at a further seven localities.

Twite - Goswick - October (Tim Dean).



Coues's Arctic Redpoll - Warkworth -
February (Alan Curry).



Coues's Arctic Redpoll -Warkworth -
February (Ian Fisher).



Breeding activity was noted from typical habitat from mid-March, when three were displaying at Slaley Forest. A total of 12 were ringed at Humshaugh during April and a feeding flock of 23 was at Derwent Reservoir on 27th. In May, 12+ were at Detchant on 7th and 12 at Corbridge on 8th, while smaller numbers occupied breeding habitat at Grindon Lough, Harthope Valley, Humshaugh, Rothbury, Simonside and Wark (North Tyne); more unusual was a pair in potential breeding habitat on the coast at Newbiggin. Young conifer plantations at The Wanneys (Ridsdale) held many singing and displaying males in June and a family party was at Simonside at the end of the month. There were no reports in July and only two reports in August, including 12 at Grindon Lough on 31st.

In September, light coastal passage was evident with three W over Holy Island Lough on 18th, and another on the island, and three at Bamburgh on 20th and one W at the Farne Islands on 23rd; 16 were at East Cramlington LNR on 23rd. More obvious movement was noted in October, with 20+ at Bamburgh on 3rd, three at the Farne Islands on 7th, four to seven at Holy Island (The Snook) on 12th and 14th, four N at Druridge Bay on 20th and eight S at St Mary's on 30th.

The conifer plantation at Grindon Lough held 30-40 during November, 40 were at West Hartford on 17th November, 18 at Derwent Reservoir on 29th and up to 12 at Bolam Lake and Prestwick Carr. The largest gathering of the year was an impressive 120 at Colt Crag Reservoir on 17th December (SW), while elsewhere the only flock of note was 22 at Prestwick Carr on 3rd.

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.

The only records during the first winter period came from Birling Carrs, where one to six were reported on nine dates from 11th January-16th February.

An influx occurred during October, beginning with two SE over Holy Island (The Snook) on 1st. Another appeared in Holy Island village on 2nd, two flew S over the island on 7th and two were at The Snook on 9th, when three were also noted over Inner Farne (Farne Islands). On 12th, 18 came in to roost on Inner Farne, ten flew S at Holy Island (with three located elsewhere on the island), six were at St Mary's and a single at Tynemouth. Inner Farne held 15 from 13th-14th, when two were also on Holy Island and nine were at Holy Island on 15th. Numbers peaked at Holy Island on 16th, with 12 in the village and a total of ten at various localities across the island (IK/MJC). There were no further reports until 22nd, when seven flew S over The Snook; two were at Craster on 24th, three well inland at Shiellow Wood on 26th and two flew W at The Snook on 30th.

The final record from the Farne Islands was a single on 8th November, while one was at Mitford on 20th November and at least one was identified in a mobile redpoll flock at Colt Crag Reservoir on 17th December.

Arctic Redpoll *Acanthis hornemanni*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / FIRST RECORD: 1962 / LAST RECORD: 2011

Diligent searching through a redpoll flock on the northern edge of Warkworth GC revealed a first-winter male. It was first seen on 3rd January (JWR/SS *et al.*) but it was not until 10th January that better views were obtained and news put out. A week of debate then ensued, as the finer points of redpoll identification were tussled over. In retrospect, this seemed unnecessary as the bird resembled a snowball rather than a dull Lesser Redpoll *Acanthis cabaret* or even a Common *Acanthis flammea*. Luckily, the bird stayed at its favoured game seed crop until 14th February and all doubts were eventually dismissed. The sighting was submitted, and accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee, as an Arctic Redpoll of ssp. *exilipes* ('Coues's Arctic Redpoll').

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.

Ten flew over Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 4th January and eight to nine were in breeding habitat at Thrunton Wood and Blakehopeburnhaugh (Kielder) on 16th and 24th respectively; on the coast, seven moved N at Whitley Bay GC on 26th and four were in Druridge Bay on 31st. In February, 12 were at Carey Burn on 2nd and at least eight flew S over East Cramlington on 18th; six were at Shilla Hill (Bellingham) and two pairs at Hepburn Woods, while seven were again at Whitley Bay GC on 26th. The species was quite widely reported in March, with 15 at Craggside (Rothbury), 12 (including several singing males) at Winnows Hill (Slaley) and five to eight at Darden Lough, Harwood Forest, Kielder Castle and Swallowship (Hexham).

Three flocks, totalling 20 birds, were in Harwood Forest on 6th April and eight were at Druridge Bay CP on 17th. In May, 17 were at Craggside, 16 at Thrunton Wood, 15 (including juveniles) at Stonehaugh, 12 at Dipton Wood, ten at Edlingham and six at Callaly. The Craggside flock increased to 37 by 4th June, while elsewhere during the month, 21 were seen at Stonehaugh on 10th and 12 dropped into trees at Holy Island (Heugh) during foggy conditions on 12th. Nine over Corbridge Common was the highest July count, with up to four noted at a further seven, mainly coniferous, woodland localities. Thrunton Wood held 36 birds by mid-August, 20 were at Harwood Forest on 27th, 13 flew over Corbridge Common on 29th and 12 were at Craggside on 12th.

Some coastal movement was noted in late October, including a total of 75, apparently arriving 'in-off' the sea and heading W over Shiellow Wood on 26th (MJC), nine were at Ross Back Sands on 29th and two flew W at Bamburgh on 31st; inland, up to ten were noted at Craggside by 28th and seven were at Big Waters on 30th. During the final two months of the year, 68 at Harwood Forest on 27th November had declined to only eight by 27th December. Elsewhere during this period, 15 were noted at Shiellow Wood on 16th November, seven to eight were at Hepburn Woods on 17th and 26th December, six were at Derwent Reservoir on 7th December and one to four at a further ten localities.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

STATUS: Common resident and well-represented passage visitor.

BREEDING: Common.

A large 'charm' of 100 was at Druridge Links on New Year's Day, while at East Ord (Berwick) numbers rose from 66 on 21st January to 134 by 5th February. Elsewhere during the first two months, 25-36 were reported from Arcot Pond, Capheaton, Corbridge, Northumberland Park (North Shields), Percy Main, Prestwick Carr, Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) and St Mary's. In March, 40 roosted at Wallsend Metro on 4th and up to 21 remained in the Prestwick Carr area until early April. A total of 83 were ringed at Humshaugh during April and 32 were still visiting feeders at East Ord on 6th; coastal passage at the Farne Islands peaked at 13 on 19th April.

In May, 18 were at Alnwick Garden on 2nd, while in the Cullercoats-Holywell-Whitley Bay area nine or ten pairs were nesting along the waggonways and many were noted singing in local gardens; a pair with five young visited feeders in a Marden Estate garden (Cullercoats) throughout June-July. Numbers began to increase noticeably by the end of July, with flocks of 40 at Backworth on 20th, 27 (including juveniles) at St Mary's on 27th and 100 at Weetslade Community Park and 30 at Newcastle (Town Moor) on 29th. The flock at Backworth increased to 150+ by 24th August and a similar number was at Gloucester Lodge (Blyth) on 30th. Up to 110 were at St Mary's on 26th, while the Weetslade flock remained at 100 at the beginning of the month, declining slightly to 80 by 19th; 30-50 were also reported from Ellington, Newbiggin, Newcastle (Exhibition Park) and 'Northumberlandia' (Cramlington).

Large numbers continued to frequent St Mary's and Gloucester Lodge during September, with peak counts of 180 and 150+ respectively. Elsewhere, there were further impressive gatherings of 170 at Derwent Reservoir on 12th, 160+ at Cocklawburn on 13th and 160 at Newbiggin on 24th, while 70+ were at Cresswell Pond.

A flock at Bamburgh throughout October numbered around 200 on 4th (BRS), while, elsewhere, flock sizes were more modest, with 52 at Prestwick Carr, up to 48 at St Mary's, 40 at West Hartford and 37 at Howdon. In November, the largest flock was at Berwick Holiday Park, where 126 were feeding in Alders on 15th. Around 110-120 were also at East Chevington and Swallow Pond during the month, with the East Chevington flock declining to 60 by early December, when 52 were also at Derwent Reservoir.

Little Bunting - Low Newton -
October (Gary Woodburn).



Reed Bunting - St Mary's -
June (Alan Jack).

Snow Bunting - Holy Island - October (Frank Golding).



Siskin *Spinus spinus*

STATUS: Common to abundant resident, passage and winter visitor.

BREEDING: Common to abundant.

Several modest flocks were reported in January, the largest of which was 60 at Branton GP on 1st, with 40 noted at Farnley (Corbridge), 30 at East Chevington and 20 at Berwick. Two flocks, totalling 60+, were at Ha'penny Woods (Blyth) in March, when 50+ were also noted at Wark (North Tyne). A transient flock at Humshaugh increased from 20 on 2nd April to 200 by mid-month. At the latter locality, 321 were ringed during the month, some of which were controls and re-traps from 2013; 20-45 remained in the Wark area.

The species appeared to be common in typical upland forest areas at Harwood, Kielder, Redesdale and Wark during May, while on the coast six passed through Holy Island on 27th. Records were sparse during the period June-August, although a single male visited Brownsman (Farne Islands) from 16th-17th June. The only report of any note in September was 26 S at East Cramlington on 30th.

Numbers had increased significantly by late October, with 80 near Humshaugh on 20th, an impressive 300, newly arrived, at Craggside (Rothbury) on 28th (JD) and 25 at East Sleekburn on 29th. Some coastal passage was evident with 15 S at Hauxley on 8th, five arriving from the E at Holy Island on 15th, 20 S at Holy Island on 30th and 29 NW at Bamburgh on 31st. A foraging flock at Bolam Lake in November peaked at 80-100, while 40+ were at Wark, 30+ at Ladyburn Lake and 25 at Big Waters. A minimum of 50 were at Derwent Reservoir on 6th December, 40 were at Fontburn at the month end and 25-30 at Gosforth, Grindon Lough and Swallow Pond.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

STATUS: Well-represented autumn passage and winter visitor.

On Holy Island there was a peak count of 35 on 16th January (IK), while elsewhere 13-14 at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) and ten at Budle Point on 31st were almost certainly the same birds. In February, 27 were at Holy Island on 17th, 13 were seen in flight at nearby Ross Back Sands on 7th while, of particular interest, was a flock of 12 well inland at Cottonshopeburn (Otterburn Training Area) on 1st. The final birds of this first winter period were two at Cocklawburn on 12th March, one at the Farne Islands on 18th March and a single male at Blyth South Beach on 14th April.

Return passage commenced with a single S over Holy Island (The Snook) on 6th October; one to three were reported from the island on a further six dates in October, while, elsewhere, three to four were at Ross Back Sands on 21st and 29th, two at Embleton on 26th and singles at the Farne Islands on 20th and 28th, Budle Point on 24th and Cheswick on 30th.

A hard climb to the summit of Hedgehope Hill (Cheviots) paid dividends in November, with 30 found on 11th. Another inland record came from Westwood Moor (Wooler) where two were noted on 15th, while seven were discovered at a more typical coastal locality at Goswick on 3rd; four were noted at Howick on 1st, up to two between Ross-Guile Point, two at Druridge Links and singles at Blyth, the Farne Islands and Holy Island. A flock of 13 flew S at East Chevington on 1st December and 25 were at Cresswell on 28th; one was found in Harwood Forest on 27th December and, finally, two were at Cottonshope Head (Otterburn Training Area) on 30th in what was a very good year for inland sightings.

Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*

STATUS: Uncommon autumn passage and winter visitor.

The only records during the first winter period were singles at Holy Island on 31st January and Birling Carrs on 20th March. One at St Mary's on 15th September was the first returning migrant. Another was at Holy Island on 17th, with two there on 20th (SR) and one at Beal from 30th-2nd October. Also in October, one was at Holy Island (The Snook) from 6th-9th and again on 22nd, with two there on 29th (IBDa/KDa). Elsewhere, singles were at St Mary's on 4th and 15th, the Farne Islands on 8th and 15th, Dunstanburgh Castle and flying over Newbiggin headland on 14th and Goswick and Longhoughton on 25th; the latter heading off S. In November, one was found between Ross-Guile Point on 13th and, much more unusual, was another well inland at Plenmeller Common on 24th.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

STATUS: Common resident.

BREEDING: Common.

A flock of 40 was at Lowick on 19th January and 30 were at Woodhorn Flashes on 1st, while 30-31 were noted at Backworth throughout January and on several dates in February. Elsewhere during this period, 15-20 were reported from Aydon (Corbridge), Birling Carrs, Fenham Mill, Fishwick Mains and West Howden. In March, a flock at Longhorsley increased from 15 to 35 by the end of the month, while 15 were also at Low Cocklaw.

In April, 20 visited garden feeders at Ulgham Lane on 27th and some encouraging counts of singing males were made, increasing through May when 31 were heard during a 22km cycle ride from Black Heddon-Ingoe-Matfen, 17 from Glanton-Whittingham, 16 from Bellasis Bridge-Tranwell, 15 at Flodden Hill and eight in the Breamish Valley. In June, 12 were singing at Callaly, nine at Whitley Chapel and seven at Holywell, while a four sq.km area at Whiteadder Point (Berwick) held 20 singing males in July. Elsewhere during the summer period, counts of two to six singing males came from Alwinton, Beacon Lane (Cramlington), Corbridge, Low Newton, Ogle, St Mary's and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

October flocks included 25 at Holywell and 24 at Backworth on 16th, 20 at Elwick on 18th and Little Mill on 20th and 16 at Craster on 25th; 13 at Beacon Lane on 16th had declined to five by 25th. In November, 30 were at Low Newton on 19th, while the Beacon Lane flock had returned, with a good local count of 16 on 2nd. Finally, an impressive flock, by recent standards, of 83 was attracted to stubble fields at Callerton on 16th December (MH), while on the following day 15 were on stubbles at Hepburn Woods. Four at Derwent Reservoir on 12th December was a notable local record.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

STATUS: Well-represented resident and passage visitor.

BREEDING: Well-represented.

Some notable gatherings were reported in January, with 40 at East Holywell-Backworth (MNC/ASJ) and 20-25 at Aydon (Corbridge), Birling Carrs and Low Newton. The Backworth flock remained into February, with up to 21 noted on several dates and 12 were at Cresswell Pond by the end of the month. In March, the first returning males were in Upper Coquetdale by 6th and six were at West Moor Farm (Longhorsley) on 19th. Light coastal passage was evident on the Farne Islands, with singles on 9th April and 9th and 26th May.

Counts of singing males during the summer included, in May, 13 in the St Mary's-Hartley area and 12 males holding territory along the river in Upper Coquetdale, while in July, 20 singing males were located in a four sq.km area of Whiteadder Point (Berwick). Four singing males were also reported from Low Newton during this period, two at Cramlington (Valley Park) and Grindon Lough and a single at Broomlee Lough. In other breeding areas, up to 20 birds were at East Chevington, 17 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs, ten+ at Gosforth Park NR, up to five at Derwent Reservoir and Prestwick Carr and one to four at Arcot Pond, Holywell Pond and Howdon; in addition, 20 were reported from Dunstanburgh on 11th May.

In September, 26 were noted across Holy Island on 19th and 15 were at St Mary's on 28th. A large number remained on Holy Island during October, with counts from various localities including 22+ at The Snook on 12th and 17 at The Lough on 7th. Elsewhere in October, 35 were at Old Hartley and 30+ at Budle Point on 9th, 30 at Boulmer from 15th-16th and 19 at St Mary's on 20th; more unusual was a single at Newcastle (Exhibition Park) on 6th. Passage at the Farne Islands peaked at ten on 13th October and 14 on 15th, with a final bird on 16th.

Peak counts for the final two months of the year were 14, with Yellowhammers *Emberiza 'citrinella'*, on stubble fields at Hepburn Woods on 17th December, 12 at Earsdon on 27th December, ten at Big Waters on 27th November and up to seven at numerous other coastal and a few inland localities.

Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*

STATUS: Rare visitor. / FIRST RECORD: 1920 / LAST RECORD: 2015

One of the highlights of a hugely impressive autumn was a record-breaking influx of these dapper buntings. Eleven sightings over a 12 day period may not be seen again.

The first sighting was typically at the Farne Islands, where most records have come from. One was on Inner Farne on 4th October, where it proved quite elusive all day (ET *et al.*). Another was also found that day on the Farne Islands, this time on Brownsman, where it proved happy with its surroundings and stayed through to 9th October, calling and showing well (ET *et al.*).

Holy Island was always likely to score and the first bird was noted on 7th October near the 'excavations' (RA). On 8th, one was located at St Mary's, where it was much appreciated by the finder who managed to photograph it well during its brief stay of a few minutes (AC). Another was also located that day at Hadston Links which, although well seen, was again only present for a few minutes (JR/NA). The 8th was obviously a peak date as another individual was heard and seen at Hauxley RS, which again was only present for a couple of minutes! (IF/MJC). On-going passage produced one at Longstone End (Farne Islands) on 9th October; it gave views down to a few feet as it was obviously keen to feed (THi *et al.*). Another individual was found on Holy Island (Straight Lonnen) the same day, again only seen briefly, but documented well (RA). Also on 9th, one was located at Newton, east of the tin church (GW *et al.*). This individual proved more obliging, for some observers at least, as it stayed to 12th October. The 10th proved a blank, but another was found on 11th October on Inner Farne, which also only stayed briefly (THi). Finally, on 15th October, the last bird was located, again on Inner Farne (THi *et al.*); another brief bird and astonishingly the fifth at the Farne Islands for the year. The previous best year was 1991, when seven turned up in October.

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 they are presented as a record as to what is being found in Northumberland.

Escapes:

Black Swan *Cygnus atratus*

One was found with 80 Mute Swans *Cygnus olor* at Calot Shad (Tweed Estuary) on 22nd May and remained on the Tweed to the end of August. Almost certainly the same individual was located in Budle Bay on 17th September. There was also another bird seen during the year at Shield on the Wall Dam on 25th July, which was seen sporadically to 15th September.

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*

A prolific year for this ever-increasing escapee. Four adults were at Derwent Reservoir on 30th June; almost certainly the returning birds from previous years. Three of these were back there again on 24th July. Next to be seen was one flying S at Cocklawburn on 5th July, with maybe the same individual at the Tweed Estuary on 18th August. A party of four were noted at Hauxley on 20th August, with two of them being seen at Widdrington Moor Lake on 21st September. The Tweed bird then seemingly moved down to Holy Island, where it was located on 7th October and, nearby, in with wild Barnacle Geese *Branta leucopsis* at Goswick on 28th October and again at Lindisfarne on 13th November. Possibly two of the Derwent birds were found at Humshaugh on 19th October and nearby Lincoln Hill on 21st October. They stayed at Humshaugh to 2nd November and then moved to Grindon Lough on 10th, staying to 13th November. The final sighting of the year was in the north of the county, again seen from Harper's Heugh on 27th December.

Muscovy Duck *Cairina moschata*

Early in the year, one was noted during WeBS counts at QEII CP Lake on 17th January, 22nd February and 20th March. A drake was noted at Bothal Pond on 27th March, with further sightings on 10th April and 10th and 21st May, and the same individual was at QEII CP Lake on 19th May, where it was seen sporadically to 1st June, with it, or another, on 17th October. A single was recorded during WeBS visits to Ladyburn Lake on 18th September and 13th November.

Harris's Hawk *Parabuteo unicinctus*

Very unusually, two birds were noted together at Swallow Pond on 24th January, which poses the possibility of potential breeding of this regularly seen escapee. One was also seen with Buzzards sat Prestwick Carr on 7th April. Later in the year, another report concerned one at Newcastle (Forest Hall) on 26th December.

Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus*

A male was found on 11th June displaying to residents of Valerian Drive (Heddon-on-the-Wall) at 06:00hrs!

Pale-headed Rosella *Platycercus adscitus*

One was photographed on a feeder in the observer's garden in Manor Road (Tynemouth) on 4th December; a colourful addition to the regular garden birds.

Cockatiel *Nymphicus hollandicus*

One was seen over fields to the west of St Mary's Wetland on 22nd October.

Hybrids:

Canada Goose x Greylag Goose *Branta canadensis x Anser anser*

A regularly occurring hybrid and probably now under-reported. One was present at Bothal Pond on 14th February and seen again on 26th March. Another individual was found at Marden Quarry on 13th and 27th March. Two more were noted at Druridge Pools on 31st July. Finally, three were found in the goose haven of Hauxley NR on 12th August, with four also seen at Bothal Pond on 29th August.

Tufted Duck x Pochard *Aythya fuligula x Aythya ferina*

The hybrid seen at Howdon Wetland in December 2015 was still present, at least until 8th February. Another was found at Druridge Pools from 8th-16th January and a female-type was at Killingworth Lake on 18th January, with sporadic sightings to 6th April. Another individual was located at Tynemouth on 6th February. Later in the year, the regular hybrid was again picked up, with sightings at Swallow Pond throughout November and again at Killingworth Lake on 5th December.

Scaup x Pochard *Aythya marila x Aythya ferina*

A female hybrid was seen at Big Waters on 4th December, which was thought to possibly be this pairing, but it had a flared black bill tip and the small size of a Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*.

Saker / Gyr *Falco cherrug / Falco rusticolus*

A large Saker-like falcon was seen bombarding a Curlew *Numenius arquata* at Lindisfarne on 30th September. Later it flew towards Longbridge End, when close views and photos revealed a large bell on a leg and possibly a transmitter on its back. The plumage was intermediate between Saker and Gyr, presumably as a result of cross-breeding in captivity. It then moved S and was located at Tynemouth on 15th October and Cambois on 22nd October.

Herring Gull x Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus argentatus x Larus fuscus*

One of these probable parentages was noted at Swallow Pond on 8th March.

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Bamburgh Ringing Station, Berwick Wildlife Group, Hauxley Ringing Station, National Trust, Natural England, Natural History Society of Northumbria, North Northumberland Bird Club, Northumbria Ringing Group, Seaton Sluice Watch Tower.

Apologies for any accidental omissions

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First and Last Dates of Summer Visitors 2016

Species	First Date	Last Date
Garganey	2nd April	15th November
Quail	15th May	30th September
Marsh Harrier*	7th March	5th December
Osprey	21st March	17th October
Little Ringed Plover	28th March	10th September
Common Sandpiper	30th March	5th December
Little Tern	28th April	3rd August
Sandwich Tern	25th March	3rd December
Common Tern	6th April	17th October
Roseate Tern	24th April	20th September
Arctic Tern	15th April	11th October
Cuckoo	13th April	8th September
Swift	21st April	25th September
Sand Martin	24th March	17th October
Swallow	27th March	20th November
House Martin	27th March	17th October
Wood Warbler	5th May	30th August
Willow Warbler	4th April	20th October
Garden Warbler	20th April	16th October
Lesser Whitethroat	22nd April	1st November
Whitethroat	20th April	6th October
Grasshopper Warbler	10th April	10th September
Sedge Warbler	15th April	17th September
Reed Warbler	18th April	15th October
Ring Ouzel	18th March	29th October
Spotted Flycatcher	5th May	9th October
Pied Flycatcher	19th April	8th October
Redstart	17th April	19th October
Whinchat	26th April	16th October
Wheatear	24th March	19th October
Yellow Wagtail	9th April	31st October
Tree Pipit	8th April	9th October

*Winter record 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 2016

Species	Last Date	First Date
Bewick's Swan	10th April	26th November
Whooper Swan*	31st May	27th September
Bean Goose	11th March	10th October
Pink-footed Goose*	31st May	3rd September
White-fronted Goose	8th April	17th October
Barnacle Goose*	5th June	19th September
Pale-bellied Brent Goose	14th May	28th August
Dark-bellied Brent Goose	14th March	19th September
Long-tailed Duck	13th May	9th October
Black-throated Diver*	19th April	25th September
Great Northern Diver	6th July	21st August
Red-necked Grebe	6th March	22nd October
Slavonian Grebe	7th April	13th September
Jack Snipe	15th May	15th September
Black Guillemot	7th May	12th November
Little Auk	19th March	11th October
Iceland Gull	22nd April	23rd November
Glaucous Gull	17th March	2nd November
Waxwing	16th February	24th October
Fieldfare	14th May	30th September
Redwing	1st May	15th September
Brambling	1st May	2nd October
Twite	8th May	30th September
Snow Bunting	14th April	6th October
Lapland Bunting	31st January	17th September

*Obvious summering records omitted (see Classified List for specific records)

Additions and Corrections to Previous Reports

Additions 2010

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

Additional record received of one at Woodhorn Church pool on 23rd May (SJM/RL), which was briefly seen on the edge of the pool before flying off and giving its diagnostic call. It circled overhead briefly before heading N. This is the only record for Newbiggin.

Corrections 2015

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*

The location of the bird on 24th August was omitted; it was seen at Haggerston.

Bonaparte's Gull *Chroicocephalus philadelphia*

The 'Previous Records' statistic should have read seven, not six, as the bird seen at Swallow Pond on 29th November 2014 was deemed to be a different individual from the Farne Islands bird on 23rd November.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

The sighting of four Greenshanks at Lindisfarne on 19th March was erroneous.

BBRC decisions and records under review

2016

‘Todd’s Canada Goose’ *Branta canadensis interior*

Farne Islands / Budle Bay / Goswick - 19th–28th October

Decision Awaited

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor homeyeri*

Newbiggin – 15th October

Decision Awaited

Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus*

Amble Marina – 9th October

Decision Awaited

2015

Ross’s Goose *Anser rossii*

East Chevington / Widdrington – 24th January–8th March

Decision Awaited

2014

‘Northern Eider’ *Somateria mollissima borealis*

Amble Harbour – 27th–28th August

Decision Awaited

2013

‘Northern Eider’ *Somateria mollissima borealis*

Seahouses (2) – 15th March–2nd April

Decision Awaited

‘Ashy-headed Wagtail’ *Motacilla flava cinereocapilla*

South Newsham Flash – 28th April–1st May

Not Proven

2012

Ross’s Goose *Anser rossii*

Budle Bay (2) – 2nd–23rd September

Unknown Origin

2010

Ross’s Goose *Anser rossii*

Doddington – 8th–10th March

Decision Awaited

‘Ashy-headed Wagtail’ *Motacilla flava cinereocapilla*

St Mary’s – 29th April

Decision Awaited

2009

Cackling Goose *Branta hutchinsii*

Grindon Lough – 3rd–12th April

Decision Awaited

‘Central Asian Lesser Whitethroat’ *Sylvia curruca halimodendri*

St Mary’s – 17th October

Decision Awaited

2007

Cackling Goose *Branta hutchinsii*

Linton Ponds and Bothal Pond – 6th January–24th March

Decision Awaited

2006

Cackling Goose *Branta hutchinsii*

Woodhorn Flashes – 22nd–24th November

Decision Awaited

Same East Chevington – 20th–30th December

2005

Cackling Goose *Branta hutchinsii*

Holy Island and Budle Bay – 6th–13th October

Decision Awaited

‘Eastern Whitethroat’ *Sylvia communis rubicola / volgensis*

Brownsman (Farne Islands) - 2nd November

Decision Awaited

2002

Ross’s Goose *Anser rossii*

Budle Bay - 5th October

Decision Awaited

1994

Siberian Common Tern *Sterna hirundo longipennis*

The Long Nanny (two) – 6th–24th June

Decision Awaited

1992

Siberian Common Tern *Sterna hirundo longipennis*

The Long Nanny (two) – 25th May

Decision Awaited

1986

Macaronesian Shearwater *Puffinus baroli*

Tynemouth – 8th August

Under Review

Although the identification is not in doubt, Ross’s Goose has yet to be accepted onto Category A of the British List by the British Ornithologists Union, hence it is not included in the official County List. The BOURC are still debating as to whether these records are of wild origin. Progress has been made with Lesser Canada Geese and several county records are now awaiting assessment as Cackling Goose.

Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) 2016

By Steve Holliday, Kathy Evans and Daniel M Turner

The following tables summarise Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts for selected species in 2016.

Coverage in 2016 is shown below:

WeBS coverage	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland waters	47	46	48	24	23	23	21	22	46	45	48	49
Open coast, (max 84.5km)	58.9	43.0	41.8	33.8	27.9	26.1	29.3	33.8	62.5	72.5	57.5	79.5
Tweed Est., no. of sections	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Aln Est.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Coquet Est.	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y
Blyth Est.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Tyne Est., no. of sections	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	3	4	4

Mute Swan

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	385	315	338	137	114	141	249	197	411	352	372	368
Lindisfarne	14	6	29	4	2	4	2	0	21	22	4	6
Open coast	2	2	2	0	3	1	0	4	0	1	0	6
Estuaries	61	45	48	153	325	372	303	416	198	88	73	46
Total	462	368	417	294	444	518	554	617	630	463	449	426

Bewick's Swan

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Whooper Swan

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	28	13	8	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	16	32
Lindisfarne	28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	22
Open coast	0	0	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Estuaries	3	6	45	3	4	0	4	2	1	1	3	9
Total	59	19	85	4	4	0	4	2	1	6	21	63

Pink-footed Goose

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	1,280	546	1	5	7	0	0	0	150	63	307	352
Lindisfarne	420	375	139	46	0	0	0	0	0	16	0	1,110
Open coast	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	34	0
Estuaries	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	92	31	0	0
Total	1,701	925	140	51	8	0	2	0	242	123	341	1,462

White-fronted Goose (Greenland)

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Greylag Goose

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	805	793	497	278	338	464	622	655	1,833	870	1,604	1,027
Lindisfarne	0	502	347	152	0	0	5	0	305	400	0	0
Open coast	5	158	340	3	6	0	0	0	1	1	2	0
Estuaries	2	2	0	1	0	0	10	0	160	8	2	2
Total	812	1,455	1,184	434	344	464	637	655	2,299	1,279	1,608	1,029

Canada Goose

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	1,565	1,313	771	444	370	516	477	1,184	1,786	1,275	1,401	1,565
Lindisfarne	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
Open coast	0	0	0	0	0	28	0	0	30	0	34	0
Estuaries	89	36	20	20	14	46	110	29	503	457	216	53
Total	1,654	1,349	791	464	384	600	587	1,213	2,319	1,732	1,651	1,618

Barnacle Goose

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	5	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	2	1	1
Lindisfarne	5	850	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	32	450	900
Open coast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	0	0
Estuaries	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Total	11	850	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	50	451	901

Dark-bellied Brent Goose

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lindisfarne	5	1	122	0	0	0	0	0	32	225	181	28
Total	5	1	122	0	0	0	0	0	32	225	181	28

Light-bellied Brent Goose

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Lindisfarne	682	1,263	648	35	2	4	2	0	1,632	1,947	2,500	1,094
Open coast	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	19	0	48
Estuaries	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total	683	1,264	648	35	2	4	2	0	1,637	1,967	2,500	1,144

Shelduck

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	15	66	59	51	49	27	8	3	0	5	1	5
Lindisfarne	1,608	455	776	346	47	133	104	0	1,042	809	1,822	1,700
Open coast	5	4	20	49	39	3	11	9	1	1	1	1
Estuaries	35	102	93	83	101	58	10	1	6	4	9	16
Total	1,663	627	948	529	236	221	133	13	1,049	819	1,833	1,722

Wigeon

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	3,013	1,854	1,188	178	28	25	55	62	868	1,917	2,556	3,042
Lindisfarne	1,255	200	348	0	0	0	0	0	11,131	15,042	4,697	1,753
Open coast	176	6	81	14	0	0	0	0	16	104	195	116
Estuaries	318	473	241	13	5	0	0	0	47	284	637	649
Total	4,762	2,533	1,858	205	33	25	55	62	12,062	17,347	8,085	5,560

Gadwall

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	161	104	204	131	84	99	32	102	246	267	183	183
Open coast	0	13	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	12	16
Estuaries	35	19	11	4	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	11
Total	196	136	217	138	86	101	32	102	246	269	197	210

Teal

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	2,973	1,169	675	224	3	11	42	218	1,044	1,972	2,001	2,396
Lindisfarne	265	384	550	138	13	5	47	0	211	2,062	43	687
Open coast	6	58	25	6	0	0	0	58	106	6	22	40
Estuaries	723	528	261	136	4	6	0	0	367	484	742	792
Total	3,967	2,139	1,511	504	20	22	89	276	1,728	4,524	2,808	3,915

Mallard

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	1,954	863	645	205	231	313	526	598	1,254	1,237	1,585	1,437
Lindisfarne	382	110	173	26	6	25	10	0	224	134	49	505
Open coast	164	131	47	20	13	3	4	7	15	21	132	118
Estuaries	460	220	179	136	137	170	158	97	176	257	501	304
Total	2,960	1,324	1,044	387	387	511	698	702	1,669	1,649	2,267	2,364

Garganey

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0

Pintail

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	2	2	13	4	0	0	0	0	30	23	11	2
Lindisfarne	253	117	92	0	1	0	0	0	5	115	63	318
Estuaries	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	256	120	105	4	1	0	0	0	35	138	74	321

Shoveler

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	73	33	42	22	6	4	4	20	107	106	70	70
Lindisfarne	7	2	4	4	2	0	2	0	2	2	2	7
Estuaries	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	80	35	46	26	10	4	6	20	109	108	72	77

Pochard

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	39	73	40	16	12	9	18	14	11	17	31	40
Total	39	73	40	16	12	9	18	14	11	17	31	40

Tufted Duck

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	835	686	633	345	275	194	184	267	443	403	617	612
Lindisfarne	5	0	0	3	4	1	3	0	4	3	0	0
Open coast	4	5	3	0	2	0	1	1	6	22	20	5
Estuaries	30	20	2	2	4	2	0	0	1	0	0	5
Total	874	711	638	350	285	197	188	268	454	428	637	622

Scaup

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	8	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	5	7
Lindisfarne	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	4	5
Estuaries	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	9	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	4	9	12

Eider

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lindisfarne	475	163	400	206	112	243	219	0	329	230	422	350
Open coast	346	381	405	595	181	413	474	308	249	337	437	433
Estuaries	31	60	41	100	18	44	25	21	25	67	29	65
Total	852	604	846	901	311	700	718	329	603	634	888	848

Long-tailed Duck

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	7	3
Lindisfarne	28	14	15	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	11
Open coast	7	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	11
Total	35	14	15	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	29	25

Common Scoter

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Lindisfarne	0	0	18	0	0	0	5	0	158	0	1,039	675
Open coast	57	2	100	49	4	24	7	96	57	25	25	189
Total	57	3	118	51	4	24	12	96	215	25	1,065	864

Velvet Scoter

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Lindisfarne	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Open coast	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0

Goldeneye

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	278	328	341	112	2	0	3	2	10	27	237	248
Lindisfarne	10	7	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	11
Open coast	74	17	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	34
Estuaries	159	103	92	16	0	0	0	0	0	8	17	114
Total	521	455	454	128	2	0	3	2	10	35	272	407

Smew

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Red-breasted Merganser

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	8	13	9	5	3	0	0	0	4	5	6	6
Lindisfarne	9	6	41	5	15	29	17	0	20	16	54	15
Open coast	18	9	8	7	0	0	0	0	11	7	14	21
Estuaries	11	18	9	16	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	6
Total	46	46	67	33	18	29	17	0	35	29	80	48

Goosander

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	11	61	17	8	1	0	1	8	10	18	42	28
Lindisfarne	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	1	0	1
Open coast	0	0	0	0	1	10	236	30	8	0	0	0
Estuaries	31	17	33	39	8	43	247	154	69	22	25	22
Total	42	78	50	47	10	53	490	192	87	41	67	51

Red-throated Diver

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lindisfarne	0	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	17
Open coast	11	17	10	2	1	0	0	0	18	20	10	29
Estuaries	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	1
Total	11	19	16	4	1	0	0	0	21	20	16	47

Great Northern Diver

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lindisfarne	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1
Open coast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Total	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	1

Black-throated Diver

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lindisfarne	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Open coast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	0
Total	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	0

Cormorant

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	45	47	49	17	19	29	130	145	161	100	113	69
Lindisfarne	30	15	29	20	12	31	32	0	18	25	12	26
Open coast	56	52	48	60	32	33	67	94	148	124	127	122
Estuaries	56	90	62	67	40	30	104	77	148	159	176	196
Total	187	204	188	164	103	123	333	316	475	408	428	413

Shag

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lindisfarne	8	6	3	5	5	0	4	0	5	2	0	3
Open coast	14	24	14	16	11	11	34	32	39	21	30	30
Estuaries	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	25	31	17	21	16	11	38	32	44	23	30	34

Bittern

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	4	2
Total	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	4	2

Little Egret

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	6	2	5	2	1	3	9	13	14	11	6	2
Lindisfarne	3	3	4	2	0	3	13	0	12	21	6	3
Open coast	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2
Estuaries	0	0	2	2	1	1	1	0	7	5	0	3
Total	11	6	13	6	2	7	23	13	33	39	14	10

Grey Heron

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	30	39	35	23	21	18	31	35	68	37	26	35
Lindisfarne	6	5	6	7	6	8	11	0	3	7	4	6
Open coast	38	9	7	12	10	10	27	9	25	35	24	40
Estuaries	21	28	34	20	29	34	41	30	49	34	42	61
Total	95	81	82	62	66	70	110	74	145	113	96	142

Little Grebe

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	57	42	50	30	39	29	53	88	198	149	81	63
Lindisfarne	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Open coast	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	1
Estuaries	6	13	1	2	2	2	1	1	13	28	9	6
Total	63	58	52	33	41	31	54	89	213	177	91	70

Great Crested Grebe

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	0	1	18	25	14	13	23	22	27	18	9	3
Lindisfarne	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Open coast	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Estuaries	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Total	2	3	19	25	16	13	23	22	27	18	11	6

Red-necked Grebe

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Open coast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Slavonian Grebe

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Lindisfarne	20	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
Open coast	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	1
Total	23	5	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2

Black-necked Grebe

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Water Rail

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	8	12	8	2	0	1	1	1	8	10	9	13
Open coast	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Total	8	12	8	3	0	1	1	1	8	11	9	13

Moorhen

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	173	150	154	71	46	34	53	93	237	231	224	231
Lindisfarne	3	2	3	3	2	1	3	0	0	3	5	21
Open coast	0	5	7	4	2	0	2	2	5	1	6	8
Estuaries	6	8	26	14	13	15	21	3	22	25	33	40
Total	182	165	190	92	63	50	79	98	264	260	268	300

Coot

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	707	512	340	174	163	127	230	332	642	480	609	489
Lindisfarne	2	3	3	4	1	2	2	0	2	1	2	1
Open coast	0	4	4	3	0	2	0	1	4	5	2	4
Estuaries	1	4	6	2	2	2	4	0	3	0	0	4
Total	710	523	353	183	166	133	236	333	651	486	613	498

Oystercatcher

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	90	205	260	131	65	88	73	48	0	27	30	55
Lindisfarne	396	228	402	317	323	147	240	0	2,167	862	628	705
Open coast	1,216	1,200	815	311	194	122	199	627	1,042	1,381	1,534	1,309
Estuaries	104	265	187	88	50	47	159	150	187	223	259	180
Total	1,806	1,898	1,664	847	632	404	671	825	3,396	2,493	2,451	2,249

Golden Plover

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	61	100	0	45	0	0	0	0	60	218	40	0
Lindisfarne	1,183	1,300	40	116	17	0	13	0	338	941	1,740	1,200
Open coast	376	1,358	408	17	0	0	205	92	1,975	1,637	1,556	1,252
Estuaries	34	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	38	0
Total	1,654	2,758	448	178	17	0	218	92	2,373	2,796	3,374	2,452

Grey Plover

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	6	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Lindisfarne	175	130	98	44	45	0	0	0	509	257	222	183
Open coast	83	56	18	15	5	0	0	0	22	73	110	58
Estuaries	10	0	48	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	27	7
Total	274	186	166	60	50	0	0	0	531	333	359	248

Lapwing

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	596	1,687	409	150	119	139	788	1,163	2,470	2,182	1,319	2,016
Lindisfarne	207	221	28	11	15	15	21	0	304	331	350	1,216
Open coast	251	747	31	31	9	0	86	22	277	621	284	578
Estuaries	139	321	72	35	24	68	470	189	687	361	709	1,122
Total	1,193	2,976	540	227	167	222	1,365	1,374	3,738	3,495	2,662	4,932

Little Ringed Plover

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0

Ringed Plover

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	0	0	4	2	4	3	0	1	16	0	0	0
Lindisfarne	39	31	8	9	201	14	7	0	166	41	45	33
Open coast	163	90	55	57	54	19	1	265	417	139	253	262
Estuaries	42	96	15	8	307	0	7	15	59	54	36	115
Total	244	217	82	76	566	36	15	281	658	234	334	410

Whimbrel

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	0	0	0	0	25	0	2	1	0	0	0	0
Lindisfarne	0	0	0	0	2	2	17	0	0	0	0	0
Open coast	0	0	0	4	1	0	2	5	0	0	0	0
Estuaries	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	4	28	2	23	6	1	0	0	0

Curlew

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	158	200	349	201	2	14	185	100	95	101	97	252
Lindisfarne	553	823	610	342	98	220	1,103	0	1,273	558	450	707
Open coast	772	683	794	134	25	5	127	183	360	718	555	677
Estuaries	214	510	347	245	31	19	406	93	305	164	206	291
Total	1,697	2,216	2,100	922	156	258	1,821	376	2,033	1,541	1,308	1,927

Black-tailed Godwit

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	0	3	0	0	0	0	7	16	2	16	18	0
Lindisfarne	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	2	1	0	7
Open coast	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	11	0	0	0
Estuaries	0	0	0	5	0	20	0	17	5	23	16	0
Total	0	3	1	5	2	20	8	33	20	40	34	7

Bar-tailed Godwit

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	4	3	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	7	1	3
Lindisfarne	1,107	1,159	110	38	27	141	164	0	1,191	1,097	923	630
Open coast	84	59	22	8	3	0	1	0	32	60	25	26
Estuaries	8	16	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	2	23
Total	1,203	1,237	132	46	31	141	165	2	1,226	1,165	951	682

Turnstone

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	6	0	3	0	0	0	31	16	0	3	0	13
Lindisfarne	50	25	132	29	76	13	29	0	47	47	54	52
Open coast	313	541	494	475	133	40	43	208	686	665	1,110	715
Estuaries	66	32	38	32	5	0	14	19	2	24	53	27
Total	435	598	667	536	214	53	117	243	735	739	1,217	807

Knot

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lindisfarne	300	1,000	326	198	60	0	55	0	1,060	1,470	441	1,090
Open coast	29	17	25	12	8	0	27	5	108	27	118	51
Estuaries	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	9	1	185
Total	329	1,017	351	210	68	0	82	7	1,170	1,506	560	1,326

Ruff

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	0	2	2	2	0	1	0	4	4	1	0	0
Open coast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Estuaries	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
Total	0	2	2	2	0	1	0	4	8	1	0	0

Curlew Sandpiper

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lindisfarne	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Open coast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0

Sanderling

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lindisfarne	17	165	106	34	8	9	22	0	57	40	105	38
Open coast	553	361	147	110	82	0	60	99	422	351	417	383
Estuaries	13	15	67	55	16	0	0	0	17	0	2	5
Total	583	541	320	199	106	9	82	99	496	391	524	426

Dunlin

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	96	81	50	14	2	2	20	22	30	24	3	26
Lindisfarne	1,296	1,100	586	163	237	10	1,053	0	971	1,580	2,000	1,270
Open coast	459	391	79	18	29	0	54	159	708	337	590	814
Estuaries	388	293	1	0	168	0	49	39	77	120	215	521
Total	2,239	1,865	716	195	436	12	1,176	220	1,786	2,061	2,808	2,631

Purple Sandpiper

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Open coast	364	121	318	416	136	0	0	102	3	17	321	330
Estuaries	0	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	364	126	323	416	136	0	0	102	3	17	322	331

Common Sandpiper

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	0	0	0	0	11	3	17	7	1	0	1	0
Lindisfarne	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Open coast	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Estuaries	0	0	0	3	2	2	12	2	2	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	3	15	5	31	9	3	0	1	0

Green Sandpiper

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	4	5	0	2	0	0	2	3	4	1	2	5
Total	4	5	0	2	0	0	2	3	4	1	2	5

Greenshank

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	2	5	2	0	0
Lindisfarne	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Open coast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Estuaries	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	9	0	0	0
Total	0	2	0	0	2	0	4	5	15	2	0	0

Wood Sandpiper

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0

Redshank

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	201	50	178	68	16	8	66	46	18	44	37	37
Lindisfarne	641	441	314	397	6	4	791	0	1,208	933	250	597
Open coast	669	541	342	306	15	6	57	282	592	610	838	901
Estuaries	450	483	457				260	263	572	461	493	386
Total	1,961	1,515	1,291	1,349	48	23	1,174	591	578	11	5	1,921

Jack Snipe

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	3	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	1
Lindisfarne	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Total	3	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	1

Woodcock

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2
Open coast	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Total	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2

Snipe

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	73	46	62	15	0	1	10	15	52	150	113	84
Lindisfarne	4	11	1	4	0	0	2	0	10	2	21	3
Open coast	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	17	3
Estuaries	0	0	8	2	0	0	0	0	64	12	12	10
Total	78	58	73	21	0	1	12	15	127	166	163	100

Kingfisher

WeBS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inland	2	0	4	0	0	1	1	2	7	6	4	5
Open coast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3
Estuaries	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	4	1	0
Total	2	0	4	0	0	2	3	3	7	11	5	8

Acknowledgements

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Little Egret - Beal causeway - October 2017 (Mike Carr).



Black-headed Gull - Tynemouth Park -
February 2014 (Mike Hodgson).

Ringing Recoveries reported in 2016

By Ian Fisher



Coot - QEII CP Lake - December (Steve Holliday).

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

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Z87568	5 F	05/08/1996	Berwick-upon-Tweed
	VV	11/12/2007	Shorts Corner, Boston, Lincolnshire
	VV	05/03/2016	Shorts Corner, Boston, Lincolnshire
Z88734	1 F	18/08/1996	Crag Lough
	VV	11/08/2016	Hart Burn, Angerton Lake

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

5267834	8	24/06/2015	Killingworth
	XF	25/03/2016	Stakehill, Middleton, Greater Manchester

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

FP66752	1	07/08/2005	Inchkeith, Firth of Forth, Fife
	XF	01/06/2016	Newbiggin-by-the-Sea

Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

2649484	4	28/06/2012	Eilean An Taighe, Western Isles
	R	30/07/2016	Druridge Links
2630841	4	21/07/2014	Inner Farne, Farne Islands
	R	09/07/2016	Eilean An Taighe, Western Isles
2703114	4	26/07/2015	Malin Beg, Donegal, Rep. of Ireland
	R	12/08/2015	Inner Farne, Farne Islands
2633322	4	13/08/2015	Calf of Man, Isle of Man
	R	15/07/2016	Inner Farne, Farne Islands

Leach's Petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

BX91489	4	29/07/2014	Inner Farne, Farne Islands
	R	01/08/2014	Inner Farne, Farne Islands
	R	20/07/2016	Inner Farne, Farne Islands
	R	30/07/2016	Druridge Links

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

1343178	1	03/07/1997	Staple Island, Farne Islands
	VV	22/07/2015	Brownsman, Farne Islands
1465997	1	09/06/2015	Inner Farne, Farne Islands
	XL	19/01/2016	Rapness, Westray, Orkney
1486042	1	18/06/2015	Inner Farne, Farne Islands
	XF	07/02/2016	Stewartby, Bedford, Bedfordshire
1490576	1	26/06/2016	Staple Island, Farne Islands
	VV	18/11/2016	Ramsgate, Kent

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

GR08375	1	18/05/2014	Besthorp GP, Newark, Nottinghamshire
	VV	15/08/2014	Tayport Bay, Fife
	VV	08/02/2015	Skinflats, Grangemouth, Falkirk
	VV	03/02/2016	Lindisfarne Causeway
	VV	25/10/2016	Lindisfarne Causeway
	VV	18/12/2016	Lindisfarne
GR37103	1	20/05/2015	North Cotes, Lincolnshire
	VV	24/09/2015	Kinneil Lagoon, Grangemouth, Falkirk
	VV	01/03/2016	Vane Farm, Perth & Kinross
	VV	23/07/2016	Wheldrake Ings, Yorkshire
	VV	18/08/2016	Waren Mill
	VV	24/08/2016	Kinneil Lagoon, Grangemouth, Falkirk
	VV	26/11/2016	Loch leven, Perth & Kinross
GR37108	1	20/05/2015	North Cotes, Lincolnshire
	VV	16/07/2015	Cresswell Pond
	VV	01/02/2016	Horton Bridge
	VV	16/05/2016	Hauxley
	VV	29/07/2016	Castle Island

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

DA54580	3 M	19/11/2011	Bardsey Island, Gwynedd
	XF	29/06/2016	Valley View Farm, Carterway Heads

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

1408746	1	11/07/2009	Balnagown, Highland
	VV	03/04/2016	Kielder Water
1439554	1	26/06/2010	Tainfield, nr Tain, Highland
	VV	02/05/2015	nr Kielder Water
	VV	05/09/2016	Derwent Reservoir

Coot *Fulica atra*

Gr34822	3	17/11/2012	Killingworth
	VV	13/12/2015	Southport Marine Lake, Merseyside
GR36911	3	09/03/2014	Nosterfield, North Yorkshire
	VV	14/01/2016	Druridge Bay CP
	VV	25/01/2016	Druridge Bay
GF83281	4	24/01/2016	Nosterfield, North Yorkshire
	R	21/02/2016	Nosterfield, North Yorkshire
	VV	08/04/2016	Druridge Pools

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

EY98063	1	02/06/2015	Seal Sands, Teesmouth
	VV	19/07/2015	Alkborough, Lincolnshire
	VV	20/04 & 15/08/16	Cresswell Pond
EY98072	1	10/06/2015	Seal Sands, Teesmouth
	VV	20/09/2016	Stear Point, Steart, Somerset
	VV	07/10/2016	Cresswell Pond
EY98305	1	23/06/2016	Greenabella Marsh, Hartlepool
	VV	07/10/2016	Cresswell Pond

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

8B45398	3	18/08/2015	Makkevika, Giske, NORWAY
	VV	28/02/2016	Newbiggin-by-the-Sea

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

ET65383	4	15/10/2016	Low Hauxley
	XF Shot	29/12/2016	Longhorsley

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

EY13496	1	27/07/2013	Brownsman, Farne Islands
	XF	16/02/2016	Oosterend, HOLLAND
ER08476	1	05/07/2015	Brownsman, Farne Islands
	XF	09/02/2016	Hojen Strand, Skagen, NORWAY
ER08284	8	10/07/2015	Inner Farne, Farne Islands
	XF Shot	19/11/2016	At Sea, off FAROE ISLANDS

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

AAL666	1	23/06/2004	Stora Karlso, SWEDEN
	VV	23/05/2016	Inner Farne, Farne Islands
N02654	1	14/06/2010	Isle of May, Fife
	VV	01/06/2015	Inner Farne, Farne Islands

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

NW31330	1	12/06/2009	Newburgh, Aberdeenshire
	XF	23/06/2016	Long Nanny Estuary

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

DB12502	1	23/06/1996	Coquet Island
	R	14/08/2016	Seal Sands, Teeside
DB20870	1	26/06/1996	Brownsman, Farne Islands
	VV	07/06/2005	Heist, BELGIUM
	R	29/07/2015	Thyboron Kanal, DENMARK
DD92430	1	17/07/2013	Inner Farne, Farne Islands
	VV	12/08/2013	Ythan Estuary, Aberdeenshire
	R	20/09/2016	Ynyslas, Borth, Ceredigion
DD83246	1	22/06/2014	Inner Farne, Farne Islands
	VV	09/08/2014	Findhorn, Moray
	VV	28/08/2016	Sandy Bay, Larne, Antrim

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

99Z22750	6	20/04/2006	Zeebrugge, BELGIUM
	VV	04/08/2015	Coquet Island

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

SX02965	1	19/06/1992	Carn Liath, Highland
	XF	22/05/2016	Lindisfarne
SX77547	3	25/07/1994	Long Nanny Estuary
	R	28/05 & 13/06/16	Inner Farne, Farne Islands
SX85528	1	23/06/1996	Coquet Island
	R	18/07/2015	Isle of May, Fife

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

ST274143	4	18/04/2009	Porvoo, FINLAND
	VV	04/02/2016	QEII CP
6215050	8	29/06/2011	Mosvartnet, NORWAY
	VV	08/03/2016	Chirton Dene, North Shields
K00082	8	10/04/2012	Molledammen, NORWAY
	VV	03/09/2016	St Mary's
6153473	8	19/04/2013	Lokketangen, NORWAY
	VV	07/03/2016	Druridge Bay CP
K03055	8	29/04/2013	Ostensjovannet, NORWAY
	VV	04/11/2016	Druridge Bay CP
IA144927	4 M	17/05/2013	Riether Werder, GERMANY
	VV	29/09/2016	Brier Dene (Whitley Bay)

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

3X00281	8	26/05/2007	Palic lake, Subotica, YUGOSLAVIA
	VV	19/08/2016	Amble
EY13776	1	14/06/2015	Coquet Island
	VV	26/02/2016	Preston Dock, Lancashire
	VV	01/06/2016	RSPB Saltholme, Teeside
	VV	12/07/2016	Cresswell Pond

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

EA204106	1	06/06/2016	Reddern, Oberspreewald-Lausitz, GERMANY
	VV	27/09/2016	Whitley Bay
	VV	26/12/2016	Heaton Park Res., Greater Manchester

Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans*

(the regular returning bird)

DN27681	1	26/05/2011	Zb.Kozielno, Paczkow, POLAND
	VV	03/07/2012	Cley Marshes, Norfolk
	VV	27/07/2013	Amble
	VV	21/08/2016	Amble

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

HEL397	3 M	13/11/2014	Bamburgh
	XL	01/04/2015	Awg Gas Platform, Ameland, HOLLAND

Willow Tit *Poecile montana*

(this bird was also caught at Low Newton on 28/10/07 & 02/11/08)

V709707	3	09/09/2007	Low Newton-by-the-Sea
	R	29/03 & 08/04/16	The Heughs, Craster

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

7828128	3	18/08/2015	Pk 19, Saint-Vigor-D'ymonville, FRANCE
	XF	04/05/2016	Monks House Pool

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

DYL757	3	13/09/2014	Low Hauxley
	R	22/09/2016	Much Marcle, Herefordshire
HEL428	3	14/07/2015	Bamburgh
	R	04/10/2015	Oorderen, Antwerp, BELGIUM

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

V876039	4 M	08/08/2008	Low Hauxley
	R	24/04/2011	Saltholme, nr Teesmouth
	R	26/04 & 05/07/15	Hargeaves Quarry, Port Clarence, Stockton-on-Tees
7351084	3 F	14/04/2014	Dunes du Fort Vert, Marck, FRANCE
	R	01/05/2016	Derwent Res. NR

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Z745171	3	05/08/2016	East Chevington
	R	13/08/2016	Mechelen, BELGIUM

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

V364185	3 M	08/07/2007	Gosforth Park NR
	R	05/06/2016	Gosforth Park NR
Y417026	3 F	18/09/2011	Holme Bird Obs., Norfolk
	R	05/08/2016	East Chevington
Y857853	4 F	08/06/2014	Wicken Fen, Cambridgeshire
	R	03/07/2016	Gosforth Park NR
13423129	3	01/08/2014	Lommel, BELGIUM
	R	26/05/2016	East Chevington
Z152073	3 F	27/08/2014	East Chevington
	R	24/06/2016	The Lurgies, Angus
Z686316	4	22/07/2015	Hauxley NR
	R	16/08/2015	Noyant, Soulaire-Et-Bourg, FRANCE
S017542	3	24/07/2016	Gosforth Park NR
	R	25/08/2016	Veurne, BELGIUM
Z112380	3	15/08/2016	Druridge Links
	R	27/08/2016	Litlington, East Sussex

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

LA27726	4 M	03/08/2007	Bamburgh
	X	14/03/2016	Bamburgh
LA88331	3	14/11/2010	Mickley Square
	R	04/09/2015	Halstead, Leicestershire
LJ43964	3 F	21/10/2016	Fair Isle, Shetland
	XF	30/10/2016	Druridge Bay

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

RF03388	3	11/10/2015	Bamburgh
	XF	19/03/2016	Escalos, Fundeiros, PORTUGAL

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

D025959	3 M	29/03/2013	Humshaugh
	R	27/11/2016	Dunmurry, Antrim
Z204327	3 F	29/10/2014	Nr Acomb
	Alive disease	12/03/2016	Heswall, Merseyside
S239856	3	24/06/2016	Derwent Res. NR
	R	30/10/2016	Mullock, Pembrokeshire

Siskin *Spinus spinus*

Z023053	4 M	02/04/2014	Branch End, Stocksfield
	R	26/02/2016	Hamme Sint Anna, BELGIUM
Z399500	3 F	31/10/2015	East Sleekburn
	XF	20/03/2016	Rijmenam, BELGIUM

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. (2017) The Online Demography Report: Bird ringing and nest recording in Britain & Ireland in 2016. BTO, Thetford (<http://www.bto.org/ringing-report>, created on 5-September-2017).

Barn Owls - An out of control hobby

By Phil Hanmer (Natural History Society of Northumbria Ringing Group)



Barn Owl - Cresswell Pond - February (Ian Fisher).

This project started when I was looking for a suitable ornithological project which would combine conservation with my BTO ringing licence. I had a chance meeting at the Coquetdale (Rothbury) Group of the Northumberland Wildlife Trust with Longhorsley farmer, David Wood, and a mutual interest in owls was discovered. It quickly became apparent that David already had a lot of contacts with other farmers and ideas of places to put boxes; also, the Coquetdale Group was prepared to grant aid us, hence the project was born, or should I say hatched.

Not wanting to re-invent the wheel, we bought some flat pack boxes from an ornithological supplier in York. David, my son Hugh, and I set about putting these up between Longhorsley and Netherwitton, in 2005. We had help from a number of farmers and friends, necessary because the boxes were very large and required much agricultural ingenuity to place in large Oak trees *Quercus robur* and a barn. I soon realised that these boxes were somewhat over-engineered (certainly a health and safety hazard) and after studying a couple of smaller, existing (successful) old boxes on David's farm, I designed something more sensible. The idea was to make boxes that were efficient to assemble and could be put up quickly by two people using a modest ladder and ordinary tools. They would be of the same basic design, whether erected in trees or 'barns' (any suitable building in the countryside) and would be safe for both owls and people alike. The only change made, a year or so later, was to replace the original fixed lids with 'lift-off' ones and dispense with annoying little access doors. We rapidly found that small doors were a pain as they easily got blocked with debris generated by owls themselves and, even worse, Jackdaws *Corvus monedula*. The simple 'oblong' Northumberland Barn Owl Box design has now been drawn accurately by my wife, Alison (and is available, as a plan, for anyone to easily follow). Donations towards the cost of wood have gratefully been received from a number of clubs and societies, the Northumberland Coast AONB and other organisations and individuals.

Barn Owl - Earsdon - April 2008 (Colin Bradshaw).



Barn Owl - Cresswell - April 2017 (Colin Bradshaw).



Barn Owl - Cresswell - February 2010 (Colin Bradshaw).

We then started to acquire boxes from other sources, some found languishing in sheds, others in the countryside, but not being looked after. We took on several on tall poles along the River Till. This was part of a misguided Environment Agency project, where boxes (of an old Hawk and Owl Trust design) had been bizarrely placed on old telegraph poles. I say bizarrely because, although such boxes are routinely used in parts of England without any trees or barns, they are really unnecessarily problematical in north Northumberland. I would not advocate putting boxes on tall 'wobbly' poles, as they are a health and safety danger to both man and owl (of which more later) and a beacon for Jackdaws. Boxes can be put on square (to facilitate the safe use of a ladder) posts if *no* alternative is available; a height of 2.5m is quite sufficient.

However, it was ringing pulli Barn Owls *Tyto alba* (chicks) from one of these boxes that put Hugh and I on television in July 2006. Before such boxes could actually be used, it proved necessary to clean out years of Jackdaw debris. In fact, all boxes need servicing annually, with a layer of wood-shavings added.

Some of the acquired boxes were of an 'A' frame design; again, from experience, we would not now recommend using these. Much worse is the box made by the over-enthusiastic carpenter, who enjoys making 'palatial' bird boxes. I must also mention the traditional 'tea chest', which, when placed on its side on a shelf in a barn, can be perfectly serviceable, especially when improved by restricting the entrance hole with a couple of wooden boards, thus making the inside of the box darker. The likelihood of any box being used in a barn seems to correspond with their location in the building. Those placed on a relatively low beam (3.5m) 'half way up' a wall being more often used than those placed high up in the inside peak of a roof, which seem to attract Feral Pigeons *Columba livia*. The owl likes to be able to 'see' its escape route in almost level flight.

The study area

The combined study area covers some 1,810 sq.km which, for the purpose of comparing different geographical areas, is divided into five sub-Areas (see Table 1); outside the National Park, these are shown below:

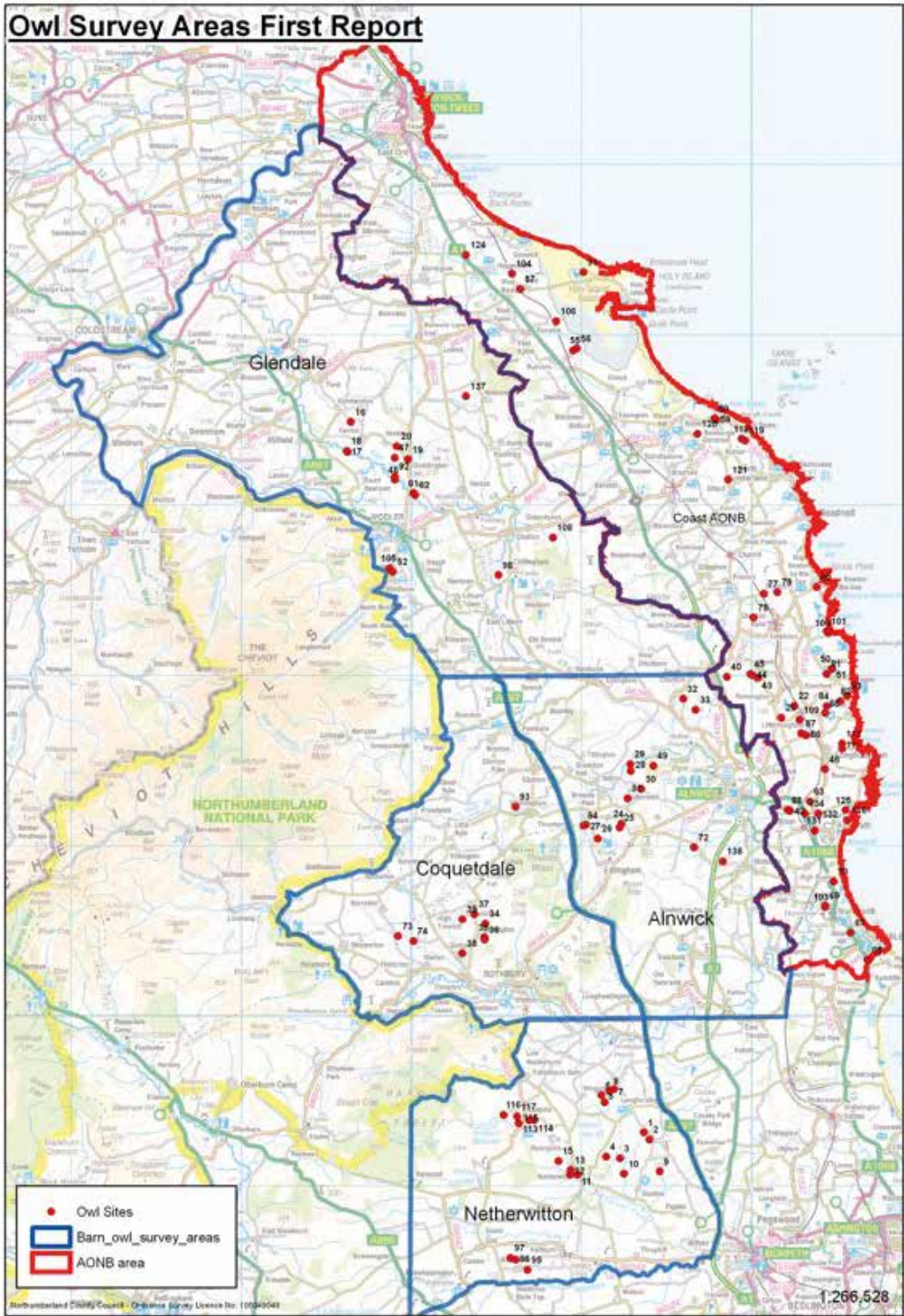


Table 1: No. of boxes and size of each area:

Area	No. of boxes	Size (sq.km)
Coast	44	464
Glendale	22	490
Alnwick	7	235
Coquetdale	7	220
Netherwitton	20	401

We made a big effort to get approximately 100 boxes in place by 2008 and have maintained this number since. It's quite surprising how many boxes can be lost in a winter, or because a barn or tree falls down. Also, two boxes located exceptionally close to one another are generally counted as one site for all practical purposes (where one box is often 'sacrificed to the Jackdaw').

When we started, the national Barn Owl Monitoring Programme was in operation and I was asked to document numerous parameters by sites. These included: whether located in a tree or building, or on a post/pole, the height and altitude, the orientation of the entrance hole (if outside) etc. While the programme itself folded, due to lack of funding, I have continued to note many factors relative to successful nesting. To date, an examination of the data indicates that the very best sites are in quiet, easily accessible, relatively open buildings.

It is a commonly held belief that 'boxes should be placed as high as possible', to encourage owls to use them. This is completely unnecessary from 'the owls' point of view', although it might be done to put them out of reach of mischievous people! Successful nesting can, in fact, occur at anything from 2m upwards. It is also generally believed that 'natural' cyclical fluctuations in the supply of Field Voles *Microtus agrestis* is the reason for the success of Barn Owl breeding from one year to another, and many journalists and authors constantly make reference to this. However, based on the data gathered in this study area, it is not food availability that is crucial, but the weather, particularly in winter and spring. Or, to be precise, the weather impacting on the owls' ability to hunt (particularly for females to put on weight prior to breeding). Two good friends of this project regularly collected and analysed owl pellets over many years. In summary, this work showed that while the Field Vole is the preferred prey, they also eat shrews and mice. Because the average shrew weighs half the weight of a vole, it will be necessary for an owl to catch more shrews than voles. However, in good hunting conditions, Barn Owls are quite capable of doing this and they can clearly nourish owls quite successfully.

Furthermore, recent correspondence with the Devon-based Barn Owl Trust has revealed that the strong three-year Field Vole cycle was derived from a study in south west Scotland in the 1980s, but has not been found in subsequent studies in England. My own theory is that when food is particularly plentiful, brood sizes tend to be larger, but the basic determinant of whether breeding actually takes place (particularly early in the year) is the weather.

Annual summaries

The annual success of the owls is summarised in Table 2 (see Appendix), with the weather summaries taken from the Met. Office website (www.metoffice.gov.uk). It should be noted that the statistics don't really stand-up until 2008, when we were monitoring 100 boxes/sites. Before this, in **2006**, three nests produced four young from 18 sites. This was a good start for the project, in a year with slightly above average temperatures in April. In **2007** we were up to 50 sites in an exceptionally warm and dry April. However, this good start was followed by above average rainfall as the summer progressed; 12 nests produced 33 young.

2008 started with 100 boxes and 22% were initially used, although only 14% of sites were successful. Here the link to the weather was implicated, as we experienced a very cold April, followed by much rain. Some birds failed to lay eggs (even though taking up residence as a pair); others failed to incubate their eggs, while others abandoned young or failed to feed them in the wet. Barn Owls can't hunt in the rain or over flooded ground.

One success was on Holy Island, following an initiative with Natural England staff. Barn Owls had often been seen in the winter (hunting in the day in the maritime micro-climate), but always seemed to disappear in the

spring, presumably because of a shortage of suitable nest sites. Following discussions and a tour around with Phil Davey (Warden), and discussions with residents, several boxes were erected in 2007. The result was that one of the new boxes was used in 2008, probably the first successful nesting of Barn Owls in 50 years on Lindisfarne (*Ian Kerr – personal communication*).

2009 was the year when I felt I really started to understand how Barn Owl success was so closely linked to the weather in north Northumberland (and I make no claim to understand exactly how important this is in other areas, or across the rest of the British Isles). Nesting did not start until the second half of May, but the birds were more successful in a warmer, drier and sunnier period from April-July. 28% of sites were used and 26% were successful (74 pulli were ringed). This, of course, begs the question as to why most of the birds did not start laying eggs until the second half of May. The explanation probably involves heavy snow in February, followed by an unsettled March; consequently, birds (particularly females) were delayed in gaining body weight to over 400g, essential for egg laying. Interestingly, there were exceptions, notably at two nest sites very close to the coast, where the local micro-climate almost certainly helped these pairs to start laying eggs earlier.

It is perhaps worth emphasising why the weather (and access to food) *over so many months* is significant. Barn Owl breeding is a long, drawn out affair; incubation can take up to 32 days (and that's just the first egg), followed by a period when the pulli may be in the nest for another 60 plus days. Or, put another way, a total period of over three months!

2010 started with heavy snow in late winter and early spring. 29% of sites were initially used, but only 22% were successful and only 59 pulli were ringed.

2011 also started with snow in winter, but the spring was better and, although only 20% of sites were used (probably because adult birds had died during the winter), 18% were successful and 63 pulli were ringed. Most successful birds nested on the coastal strip, while few were successful in the Netherwitton or Glendale areas.

2012 started well, with 33% attempting to nest, but only 26% were successful, with above average rainfall causing problems as the year progressed. Having struggled to get to a box south of Rothbury, in June, we found two adult owls and two well grown, but dead, owlets; emaciated, they had clearly died in the wet from lack of food. Examination of the two adults revealed not a pair, but two females; one was a three year old, a likely parent of the dead offspring. The other was an older female, perhaps seven years old, from a neighbouring farm, that I knew had already failed to breed. She was probably the mother of the younger female. Coastal owls were again more successful than those inland.

2013 was poor, with only 20% attempting to nest and 16% successful (40 pulli were ringed). This was in a very cold spring, until late June.

2014 was much better, with 33% nesting attempts and, amazingly, 33% successful (with a high average of four pulli or owlets being raised from each brood). This was following a mild winter, warm spring and fine summer.

2015 started well, after a benign winter, although May was cool, with above average rainfall and the summer was similarly cool and wet. Nesting was attempted in 22% of sites and 21% were successful (52 pulli were ringed).

2016 started with the second wettest winter since 1910. April was cool and wet and the summer only gradually became settled. Consequently, it was a difficult year and only 23% were successful, with early nests failing and later ones being more successful. At least two failing pairs were later successful at the same site, with pulli not fledging until September/October.

Second and replacement broods

Theoretically, Barn Owls can have a second brood, but this is not a regular occurrence in north Northumberland. In one instance of a nest being discovered with young in September 2007 (near the coast), the young were not ringed until the start of October. However, local knowledge suggested that the adults had probably been disturbed earlier in the year and failed at another site about 1km distance away. In another instance, three small pulli were alive in a box near Netherwitton in May 2007, but had died by mid-June. Subsequently, a replacement, brood was laid and four pulli were successfully ringed towards the end of August.

To have a successful second brood, the first needs to be started and successfully fledged early in the year. One pair nesting near Amble raised one pulli in June 2012 and three more in September. Amazingly, the

same pair had produced three pulli in a very late nest in November 2011! Similarly, near Howick, a pair of owls raised four pulli in June 2014 and then another five in September. In fact, this is an exceptional pair, both now over ten years old (October 2017).

First nesting of young birds

Owls are particularly faithful to their nest sites and hence will re-use them *if they can*. Therefore, it's generally believed that any new sites will tend to be used by young, 'new' birds attempting to nest for the first time in their second calendar year. It is not straightforward to test this view because not all birds can be caught and aged at the nest (*sometimes they are roosting out, or hunting, and sometimes they are just cleverer than the bird ringer!*). However, an analysis of captured birds shows very little evidence to support this commonly held view; indeed, a rough analysis of the eight 'new' female owls captured that were occupying eight 'new' boxes for the first time in 2008 found that only two were young birds. An explanation for this finding is that while an owl may wish to continue to use a nest site for a number of years, the reality is that an old tree will eventually collapse (particularly Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* trees); similarly, a little used agricultural building may become busier (or be converted into a house).

Also, unless cleaned out, nest boxes (and even worse tree holes) become quite unusable for nesting in after only a few years because of the excessive accumulation of sticks and debris, aided and abetted by Jackdaws. Owls are not capable of cleaning out their nest sites. Sometimes such sites may continue to be used just for roosting (because the space required for roosting is considerably less than that required to raise a brood). Indeed, members of the public seeing an owl coming out of a hole often assume it is a nest site, when it is only being used as a roost.

Longevity and movements

Barn Owls can live to 15 years of age, but this is very unusual and a more typical lifespan is three to five years, with many dying in their first year. The oldest owl discovered during this project to date is 12 years of age and this finding clearly illustrates the value of both ringing pulli in the nest and recapturing ringed adults. Incidentally, both males and females spend a lot of time in boxes, whether breeding or not.

Table 3 (see Appendix) is just a sample from the returns I have via the BTO; GF74013 was discovered roosting in a box near Thropton in 2008 and the original ringer from Cumbria was overjoyed to hear of the owl he last saw in 1996 (74km away). More often, such large movements are discovered when a dead bird is picked up on the A1, such as GN56368 from Rutland, found near Warendon, 332km distant, but less than a year old. Similarly, AJ57073 from East Yorkshire was found dead at Fallodon, having travelled 183km and was similarly less than a year old. A bird from the Duke of Northumberland's Medieval Deer Park at Alnwick travelled to East Yorkshire (233km) and was less than two years old when it was a road casualty. Movements from south west Scotland are not unusual, with GC66295 coming 207km to die on the A1 south of Berwick-upon-Tweed.

However, some general tentative conclusions can be indicated:

- Birds that stay close to home do seem to live longer
- Birds tend to disperse from inland towards the east coast, especially in bad weather
- There is a drift of birds from Cumbria and south west Scotland into Northumberland
- There is an exchange of birds in the north of the county with the Scottish Borders.

Some interesting pairings have also been discovered, with female GC83232 coming to the Dunstan area in 2012 from Dumfries, to pair with GR20043, who only came from Longhoughton (and they are still together at the time of writing; October 2017).

Fledging success

A question often asked is how is it possible to be sure if ringed chicks actually fledge successfully? In fact, a remarkable number of observations are made around nest sites, particularly by farmers. The positive ones are when a number of owlets are seen a few weeks after they have been ringed 'sitting on top of the box', 'sitting in a tree', or 'flying around in the barn'. Negative information can involve a dead bird found in a box when it's checked the following winter, or when it's found dead near the nest.

An interesting observation in this respect followed from the ringing of pulli in July 2006 at one of the dreadful pole boxes in Glendale (when Hugh and I were filmed by the BBC). What actually happened *several weeks later* was reported to me as follows: “*One bird flew away successfully; another tried to fly but hit the ground and was killed; the last one ‘jumped’ hit the ground and ‘bounced’. It was taken into captivity and was eventually released*”.

This sort of risky behaviour is ‘encouraged’ by the natural habit of Barn Owls to lay their eggs one at a time over a number of days. Thus, a clutch of five eggs can take over nine days to complete. Subsequently, the eggs hatch at staggered intervals and the gap in development between the youngest and oldest in a brood can be considerable. This also leads to a consideration which should be applied to the design of owl boxes: there should always be a lip on the box aperture, which will help keep the younger chicks in the box for a longer period than the older ones.

Problems encountered

Problems encountered in operating this project have been interesting and include:

- Boxes on very tall, wobbly, round poles
- Farmers who forget to tell you (until the following spring) that the box blew down in the winter (or the tree collapsed)
- Folk who don’t tell you that the building has collapsed/been demolished
- New housing on farmland
- Farm tracks that become impassable
- Farmers who hide a box with machinery, rubbish and even a new carpentry workshop
- Quiet Hemmels that suddenly get very busy as a Horse Livery
- Panic by well-meaning people who rush an owlet, that’s prematurely got out of its box, to the local vet. Luckily, the vet usually says ‘go and put it back’ in the box!
- Clay Pigeon Shoots who, because ‘*it’s for charity*’, don’t understand that the neighbouring owl box is important; and is protected by law
- Estates who see an owl box as a public relations exercise, rather than a conservation initiative, and block access to monitoring, or even cleaning out the old Jackdaw nest
- The A1 trunk road
- Landowners who move boxes (and look inside them) in spring!

The future

I am not purposefully trying to increase the total number of boxes monitored. However, I am trying to replace worn-out boxes with better quality ones that will last longer (i.e. with more water-proof lids) and put them in better sites (especially when an owl has clearly never shown any interest). I want to train more ringers and others to assist me and undertake similar activities themselves. I have always nest recorded for the BTO, but have started to put more time into studying adult birds and reporting this to the BTO’s RAS study (Retrapping Adults for Survival). I particularly want to encourage the exchange of information with other owl workers, including those operating over the Scottish Border.

Acknowledgements

Practical help from David Wood, Dr Hugh Hanmer, Maurice McNeely and Iain Robson. Also, Alison Hanmer (who is good with a net), several ringing trainees and birders (who have become accredited agents under my Schedule One permission). Also Martin Davison who showed Hugh and I how to handle Tawny Owls *Strix aluco* and said that Barn Owls would be easy by comparison.

Table 2 – Results:

Hanmer & Wood Owl Boxes - Results

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Nesting attempts	22%	30%	22%	28%	29%	20%	33%	20%	33%	22%	30%
Successful nesting	17%	24%	14% (14)	26% (26)	22% (22)	18% (18)	26% (26)	16% (16)	33% (33)	21% (21)	23% (23)
Average eggs per clutch	4	5	4	5	4	4	3.5	3.3	4	3	3.5
% eggs hatched	44%	59%	53%	69%	68%	96% (69)	73% (85)	83% (55)	93% (127)	92% (57)	69% (73)
Average hatched	2	3	2	3	3	4	2.5	2.8	4	3	2
Average fledged.	1	2	1	3	2	3	2	2	4	2	2
% eggs 'ringed'	25%	42%	32% (24)	59% (74)	55% (59)	88% (63)	66% (73)	61% (40)	89% (121)	84% (52)	84% (61)
Eggs mostly laid	Second half of April	First half of April	Second half of May	Second half of May	April, May & June	April to May	April and later	May but some much later	March & April	April	May but many in other months
Weather	Slightly above average temperature April onwards.	Exceptionally warm April temperatures, but followed by above average rainfall.	Coldest April since 2001 and above average rainfall; the weather deteriorated further in June.	Warmer, dryer and sunnier than average in April & May. June was warmer and dryer than average.	Heavy snow in late winter & early spring.	Heavy snow in early Winter (Nov & Dec 2010).	Exceptionally warm March & April, but followed by above average rainfall, which continued all summer.	Very cold March, April & May. Below average temperature in June. Fine weather from July.	A mild winter followed by a very early warm spring, with hardly any frosts. Fine summer weather only declining in Aug.	A benign winter followed by a short period of dry sunny and warm weather in April. However, May was cool with above average rain. Summer was cool and wet.	Winter 2015/16 was the second wettest since 1910; Jan was exceptionally wet in NE England. April was cool and wet and summer did not become settled until April.

Table 3 - Barn Owl Controls and Recoveries:

Ring no.	Ringing details	Further sightings	Age	Distance travelled
GF74013	Ringed in the nest, July 1996, Castle Carrock, Cumbria	Controlled roosting, Feb. 2008, Thropton	12 yrs.	74km
GN66786	Ringed in the nest, June 2004, Acklington	Controlled roosting, Feb. 2009, Fallowdon	5 yrs.	23km
GC23059	Ringed in the nest, July 2006, Fenton	Found dead, Jan. 2007, Wooler	1 yr.	5m
GC26525	Ringed in the nest, Aug. 2006, Acklington	Controlled as a breeding F, May 2007, Todburn	1 yr.	14km
GC32218	Ringed in the nest, June 2007, Redesdale	Road casualty, Feb. 2008, A1 Felton	1 yr.	32km
GN56368	Ringed in the nest, July 2007, Manton Bay, Rutland	Road casualty, March 2008, A1, Wareford	<1 yr.	332km
GC47002	Ringed as a breeding F, June 2008, Longhorsley	Recaptured most yrs. since in same sq.km	10 yrs. +	-
GC47010	Ringed as a breeding M, June 2008, Howick	Controlled, last seen 2015 at Howick	10 yrs.	-
GC47011	Ringed as a breeding F, June 2008, Howick	Controlled, pair with GC47010 but did not breed in 2016	10 yrs. +	-
GC32286	Ringed in the nest, June 2008, Upper Coquetdale	Controlled as a breeding F, July 2009, Hulne Park, Alnwick, roosting Dec 2016	1 yr. +	26km
GC48588	Ringed as an adult in a box, July 2008, Innerleithan, Peebles	Controlled as a breeding F, June 2009, Foxton GC	3 yrs. +	93km
GC42945	Ringed in the nest, July 2008, Langleeford	Found dead in snow, Jan. 2010, Ilderton	2 yrs.	7km due west
GC70823	Ringed as a breeding F, June 2009, Lesbury	Controlled, last seen 2014, near Lesbury	8 yrs.	-
GC70828	Ringed as a breeding F, June 2009, Coltpark	Found dead in snow, Dec. 2010, Rookhope, Co. Durham	2 yrs. +	54km
GC47093	Ringed as a breeding second yr F, June 2009, Lee Moor Farm	Controlled regularly, last seen June 2015, Rock	8 yrs.	3km
GC47096	Ringed in the nest July 2009, Rock	Roosting near Fallowdon 2010, then breeding F near Howick. Last seen July 2016, Howick	7 yrs.	6km

Ring no.	Ringing details	Further sightings	Age	Distance travelled
GC70828	Ringed as a breeding F, July 2009, Netherwitton	Found dead in snow, Dec. 2010, Rookhope, Co. Durham	2 yrs +	54km
GC70873	Ringed in the nest, July 2009, Fenton	Controlled roosting, Feb. 2012, Houghton-le-Spring GC	< 3 yrs.	93km
AJ57073	Ringed in the nest, July 2009, Driffeld, East Yorks	Found dead in cold weather, Dec. 2010, Fallodon	> 1 yr.	183km
GC70880	Ringed in the nest, July 2009, Hulne Park, Alnwick	Road casualty, March 2011, Kilnsea, East Yorks	< 2 yrs.	233km
GR03139	Ringed in the nest, June 2010, Castington Prison	Road casualty, Jan. 2011, Chathill	< 1 yr.	29km
GR10858	Ringed in the nest, June 2010, Ingram	Controlled roosting, then breeding, Jan. 2012, 2013, Rock	< 2 yrs.	19km
GC66295	Ringed in the nest, June 2010, Strachur, nr Bute	Road casualty, Jan. 2012, A1 south of Berwick	< 2 yrs.	207km
GC80460	Ringed in the nest, July 2010, Castle Carrock, Cumbria	Found dead in a barn, Dec. 2010, south of Berwick	< 1 yr.	105km
GR03192	Ringed in the nest, Aug. 2010, Beal	Found dead, Dec. 2010, Low Newton	<1 yr.	26km
GC83232	Ringed in the nest, May 2011, Dumfries	Controlled as a roosting F. Breeding most yrs. since 2012. Last seen Sept. 2016, Dunstan	5 yrs.	89km
GR20043	Ringed in the nest, June 2011, Low Stead	Controlled as a breeding M, with Dumfries F. Last seen, July 2016, Dunstan	5 yrs.	4km
GR20021	Ringed in the nest, June 2011, West Fenton	Controlled as a roosting F, Feb. 2013, Holy Island	< 2 yrs.	19km
GR44085	Ringed in the nest, July 2011, Fraisethorpe, East Yorks	Road casualty, Jan. 2012, nr. Berwick	< 1 yr	226km
GR20071	Ringed in the nest, Nov. 2011, Warkworth,	Road casualty, Feb. 2012, Amble	< 1 yr.	3km
FP78243	Ringed in the nest, May 2012, Lesbury	Recently dead, May 2013, Whitley Bay GC	1 yr.	39km
FH69411	Ringed in the nest, July 2012, Netherwitton	Dead in cold weather, Mar. 2013, Bardon Mill	< 1 yr.	41km

Ring no.	Ringling details	Further sightings	Age	Distance travelled
FH69471	Ringed in the nest, July 2013, Highburn, Wooler	Road casualty, May 2015, Oxenrig, N. of Coldstream	< 2 yrs.	19km
GR10757	Ringed in the nest, Aug. 2013, Redesdale	Controlled as a roosting F, Mar. 2014, Fallowdon	< 1 yr.	47km
FH92015	Ringed in the nest, June 2014, Allerdean	Controlled as a breeding (F?), June 2015, NW of Paxton, Borders	1 yr.	11km
FH92028	Ringed in the nest, June 2014, Lee Moor	Controlled as a breeding (F?), June 2013, Horndean, Borders	1 yr.	46km
FH92011	Ringed in the nest, June 2014, Allerdean	Road casualty, Apr. 2016, A1 Alnwick-By-Pass	<2 yrs.	42km
GR81307	Ringed in the nest, June 2014, East Chevington	Controlled as a breeding F (3 pulli also ringed), Jun. 2015, near Linden Hall	1 yr.	11km
GR95031 Guttata type?	Ringed in the nest, July 2014, Holystone	Controlled F with a mate, June 2015, Lamberthill. Did not nest in 2015, but did in 2016.	1 yr.	21km
GR41689	Ringed in the nest, June 2015, Abberwick	Road casualty, Oct. 2015, A1 Cockburnspath	< 1 yr.	67km
GV23140	Ringed in the nest, July 2015, Longhorsley	Road casualty, Oct 2015, A1 Belford	< 1 yr.	43km

Holy Island's Incredible Autumn

By Ian Kerr

When I was putting the finishing touches to the hardback edition of *The Birds of Holy Island* during summer 2016, I was fully aware of the possibility of the classified list quickly becoming out of date.

As my escape clause, in the final paragraph of the introduction, I mentioned that one of the frustrations of such a publication was that no sooner had it appeared, then something new was bound to turn up. Prophetic words as it turned out.

During the past two decades, on average, one new species a year has occurred on the island and surrounding Lindisfarne National Nature Reserve. All of that suddenly changed, with an unprecedented run of megararities within days of the book going on sale on the Internet, and at the village Post Office, the Lindisfarne Centre and the Drift Cafe at Cresswell.

They included four new species for the island, amazingly three of them within two days, and a host of other rarities leading myself and the publishers, NatureGuides, to rush out an autumn supplement downloadable free from the company website, to keep the species list up to date.

The four new species, occurring within such a short period, were more than enough to reinforce Holy Island's reputation as one of the leading places to be for autumn rarities. But they turned out to be only the cream of the most exciting autumn most county birders had ever experienced.

I have known the excitement - and occasional disappointment when migration was poor - of autumn on the island for almost 50 years and had certainly never known anything like it for the sheer range of species involved.

The island's incredible autumn went as follows:

- 15th-16th September: Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus*, the county's second, a juvenile hunting the fields mainly between the Castle road and Crooked Lonnen.
- 18th September: Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia*, a very obliging individual fed most of the day completely in the open on banked seaweed in Sandham Bay.
- 28th September: Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*, third for the reserve, was on the South Low near Beal Point.
- 5th October: White's Thrush *Zoothera aurea*, the county's third, which spent the day in the willow patch at the north end of the Straight Lonnen. Little did I imagine when years ago I helped my neighbour, Robert Brigham, to plant some of those saplings that we'd be providing a stopover spot for a species not recorded on the island for 102 years.
- 18th October: Siberian Accentor *Prunella montanella*. For the previous fortnight, the birding world had been highly excited about this species never previously recorded in Britain. A bird at Scousburgh (Shetland) was quickly followed by others at Easington (East Yorkshire), Saltburn (Cleveland) and then, much closer to home, in the unlikely urban setting of Hendon Docks (Sunderland). On the afternoon of 17th October, I had to leave the island as my wife had a hospital appointment in Newcastle. During a morning check along the Straight Lonnen, I chatted with a holidaying birder. In view of what had occurred farther south, I jokingly commented: 'The next thing here's going to be a Sibe Accentor'. Imagine my feelings the following morning when, sitting in a hospital waiting room, a text from BirdGuides reported that species on a track in the north dunes. It was the first for Northumberland and fifth for Britain and, unfortunately, had vanished by next day.
- 18th October: Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina*, the island's first, and only the second for the county, was discovered on the north shore, only a short distance from the accentor, and remained until 20th.
- 19th October: Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus*, fourth for the county and another island first, was found less than a mile away at the 'Half Moon Slack' on The Snook. It also quickly moved on.
- 23rd October: King Eider *Somateria spectabilis*, sixth for the island, a sub-adult drake flew N with Common Eiders *Somateria mollissima* and a Wigeon *Anas penelope* after being tracked up the coast from Whitburn.
- 25th October: Siberian Accentor, this time in bushes at Greenshiel excavations, only a short distance from the original sightings. This supreme skulker was accepted as the second for Northumberland by the County Records Committee and the tenth national record by British Birds Rarities Committee.

The undoubted highlights were the four new species for the island, which were enjoyed by many from the region and much farther afield. They brought the island and reserve species list up to 336. However, just as important to many, was also the unrivalled opportunity to watch, at leisure, Thrush Nightingale, normally such a skulking species, and the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to get White's Thrush on many a county list.

As if they were not enough, the island had its best autumn on record for other rarities. These included six or seven Red-breasted Flycatchers *Ficedula parva*, at least six Pallas's Warblers *Phylloscopus proregulus* and many of the much more regular and expected Yellow-browed Warblers *Phylloscopus inornatus*. There were also two long-staying Great Grey Shrikes *Lanius excubitor*, one of them particularly showy and regularly on the wires at St Coombs Farm, plus a single Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus* in the nettle beds near the Vicarage Garden, providing the fifth record for the island.

The future

As far as *The Birds of Holy Island* is concerned, a second run is due to be printed in late 2017 and the species list will be fully updated. But I wonder how long it will be before we have to hastily produce another of those supplements; perhaps even before you've had the chance to read this article?

Thrush Nightingale - Holy Island - September (Frank Golding).



White's Thrush - Holy Island - October (Frank Golding).



Siberian Accentor - Holy Island - October (Gary Woodburn).



Isabelline Wheatear - Holy Island - October (Andy Mould).





Red-breasted Flycatcher - Holy Island - October (Mike Carr).



Pallas's Warbler - Holy Island - October (Andy Mould).

The County Records Committee in 2016

By Tim Dean

In 2016, the County Records Committee (CRC) consisted of the following members: Tim Dean (Chairman), Duncan Watson, Gary Woodburn, Graeme Bowman and Martin Kerby. 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). Gary Woodburn, at the end of his term, stepped down after his stint and was replaced by Paul Massey in December 2016.

The CRC meets three times a year and discusses all records of rare and scarce birds that have been supported by written notes/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/habitat.

During 2016, 197 records of 70 species/sub-species were considered for publication in *Birds in Northumbria*. Of these, 173 (88%) were accepted, with 19 (10%) found to be not proven and five pending awaiting assessment by the British Birds Rarities Committee. 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 61 records were not submitted for adjudication by the CRC. The majority of the non-submitted claims this year appeared to be mainly due to views not being conclusive enough for submission. A wide variety of species were involved. This was a similar situation to last year. However, it has been noted again that a number of major rarities in 2016 were only accepted due to them being documented by observers other than the finder. Descriptions are always welcome, even if the observer is not the finder, to make the report comprehensive. A full list of all records considered in 2016 is available via the club website www.ntbc.org.uk under the Recording subsection of Members' Resources. The right-hand column gives links to all CRC Work in Progress files from 2013 onwards. Those records not submitted are shown as 'Awaiting Description', where the observer(s) are known. However, an increasing problem for all County Recorders are 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 if no observer details could be verified. The County Recorder would gratefully receive any outstanding descriptions from 2016 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 have requested full notes.

The following: 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, White Stork, Glossy Ibis, Honey Buzzard, Black Kite, White-tailed Eagle, Montagu's Harrier, Rough-legged Buzzard, Golden Eagle, Spotted Crane, Corncrake, Crane, Stone Curlew, American Golden Plover, Kentish Plover, Temminck's Stint, White-rumped Sandpiper, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Red-necked Phalarope, Grey Phalarope, White-winged Black Tern, Sabine's Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Yellow-legged Gull (all races), Caspian Gull, Alpine Swift, Bee-eater, Red-footed Falcon, Hobby, Woodchat Shrike, Chough, Crested Tit, Woodlark, Short-toed Lark, Red-rumped Swallow, Cetti's Warbler, Greenish Warbler, Radde's Warbler, Dusky Warbler, Subalpine Warbler, Melodious Warbler, Aquatic Warbler, Marsh Warbler, Rose-coloured Starling, Nightingale, Richard's Pipit, Red-throated Pipit, Water Pipit, Parrot Crossbill, Serin, Ortolan Bunting and Little Bunting.

2. Schedule B

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 and Holy Island), Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Bluethroat (autumn only), Icterine Warbler, Pallas's Warbler (inland or spring birds only), Yellow-browed Warbler (inland or spring birds only), Red-breasted Flycatcher, Golden Oriole, Common Rosefinch and Corn Bunting.

3. Sub-species

'Taiga Bean Goose' - *A. f. fabalis*, Lesser Black-backed Gull - sub-species **other than** *L. f. graellsii*, Herring Gull – sub-species other than *L. a. argenteus* and *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* and *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.

Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club Development Fund Grants 2016

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. The club's committee welcomes applications from members to support projects that they are involved with.

During 2016, the club committee approved grants to a variety of projects. We were pleased to contribute to the BTO Curlew appeal, especially as the Curlew is the emblem of the Northumberland National Park.

Also close to home, we supported the Flexigraze scheme with a grant to facilitate the movement of stock around St Mary's Wetland to enhance the management of the habitat.

Significantly farther away, we made a donation to a small scale project in the Gambia. The creation of a small fresh water pool should benefit local birds and some of our migrant species such as Chiffchaff, Redstart and Whinchat. The grant will also help to involve local people in conservation work.

The Atlas project has been a significant success for the club and we only have a small number of copies left that are earmarked for local birdwatchers in the next few years. We would like to use the funds raised by sales to contribute to a local conservation project. We are currently exploring a range of options to celebrate our 'Atlas Legacy'.

Applications for grants should be addressed to the Honorary Secretary.

Secretary's Report 2016

By Andrew Brunt

The trustees of the charity forming the club committee during 2016 were Martin Davison (Chair), Jo Bentley (Treasurer), Tim Dean (Recorder), Steve Lowe (HLF Rep.), Trevor Blake (Sales), Steve Anderson (Field Trips), Steve Barrett (Bulletin Editor) and Andrew Brunt (Secretary). The committee functioned with a member short for the year and Martin Davison took on the work of planning and booking speakers for the Indoor Meetings.

At the first Indoor Meeting of 2016, Tom Cadwallender used his experience of 'Birding in Retirement' to give prospective retirees guidance on how to deal with attacks by ants and Cory's Shearwaters (but not at the same time), steamy optics and immigration problems in communist countries. In February, the interest was aural, rather than visual, when Geoff Sample transported us to many superb birding locations with his sound recordings. Our planned speaker for March postponed at short notice and we are grateful to Martin Kitching for giving us a much appreciated talk on 'Storm Petrels, White-beaked Dolphins and the NE Cetaceans Project'. Sharing the bill, and equally appreciated, was Ian Fisher, who informed us about the demise and fragile recovery of the Cahow – or Bermuda Petrel - and explained the work of David Wingate in the Cahow Recovery Programme. In April, a full tour of the habitat types and spectacular birds in West Papua was a treat for us all, courtesy of Brian and Margaret Sykes. After the summer break, RSPB Investigations Officer, David Hunt, used case studies based in the north of England to illustrate the geographical correlation between sporting shooting and raptor persecution, and highlighted the difficulties investigators sometimes face in attempting to gather evidence for a successful prosecution. After the October AGM, Martin Davison showed us an unfamiliar aspect of his local patch, and gave us information on sightings of seabirds around Kielder, the Irthing Valley and Catcleugh. In November, Mark Holling presented a summary from the SE Scotland Bird Atlas. This contains masses of information and some startling findings, and these were explained with very professional slides and an authoritative commentary. The motives for, and difficulties encountered during, the re-establishment of the Bird Observatory on Skokholm was the engaging subject of a talk by Giselle Eagle and Richard Brown in December.

This year, field trips to the Kielder and Deadwater area, Langholm and RSPB Geltsdale have all been well attended, with the latter enjoying the assistance of the Reserve Warden. In September, a trip to the Aln Estuary had good conditions and sightings of typical birds of the area, and an October visit to Holy Island at a prime time for migrants was also popular.

A major part of committee business during the first part of 2016 has been taken up with the production, storage, distribution and sales of the Northumbrian Bird Atlas, which was reviewed at a final meeting of the Atlas Committee in April. Thanks have already been made elsewhere to this Committee and all others involved, but Steve Barrett displayed much initiative and energy and took on coordination of the distribution and promotion of the Atlas. At the end of the year, less than 300 remained from a print of 2000 and 34 copies were donated to local libraries, six copies to the British Library and other National Libraries, and 77 to local schools. It was agreed not to pursue further retail sales beyond 2016.

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 Andy Mould, is much appreciated, for achieving a high production standard and managing a shorter publication deadline. The monthly bulletin continued to be produced regularly by a dedicated team of writers under the guidance of Steve Barrett, and Steve also recruited new writers to the cause, and has successfully developed a 'pool' of reserve writers. An essential part of both publications is the role of Data Manager; our warm thanks to Alan Tilmouth for his role in managing the monthly input of records in the past, and we are grateful to Tom Brewis for volunteering to take over this role and working to improve publication deadlines.

Several queries for survey data for use in development planning continue to result in administration charges contributing to club expenses; thanks are due to Dick Myatt, the lynchpin of this process, who is managing the survey database for us. Data for non-statutory local sites was provided to Northumberland Wildlife Trust, with no administration charge.

The Development Fund has assisted with habitat management costs at St Mary's Wetland, additional funding for Swift nest boxes in the Morpeth area and a camera box was purchased for a primary school. The BTO Curlew appeal was supported, as was a small conservation project in Gambia, a data logging project for Goldeneye and partial funding to Flexigraze for transporting livestock for conservation grazing at nature reserves.

Species on the County List not recorded in 2016

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.

Species	Latin name	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	-	1891	-
Red-breasted Goose	<i>Branta ruficollis</i>	1991	2	1818	-
Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>	2014	-	1974	-
Blue-winged Teal	<i>Anas discors</i>	2014	7	1948	-
Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>	2015	-	1857	-
Ring-necked Duck	<i>Aythya collaris</i>	2010	-	1977	-
Ferruginous Duck	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>	2014	-	pre-1827	-
Lesser Scaup	<i>Aythya affinis</i>	2012	3	1999	-
Harlequin Duck	<i>Histrionicus histrionicus</i>	1886	1	1886	-
Surf Scoter	<i>Melanitta perspicillata</i>	2015	-	1946	-
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	-
Fea's / Zino's Petrel	<i>Pterodroma feae / madeira</i>	2014	-	1993	-
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	-
Little Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>	2014	8	1810	-
Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	2013	-	1870	-
Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	2010	4	1874	-
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	2014	3	1986	-
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	2013	7	1963	-
Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	2015	7	1959	-
White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	2000	-	1766	-
Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	2015	-	1857	-
Pied-billed Grebe	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>	1994	1	1992	-
Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	2014	-	1866	-
White-tailed Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>	2015	-	1819	Historical
Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>	2011	-	1800s	1992
Spotted Eagle	<i>Aquila clanga</i>	1885	1	1885	-
Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	2013	-	1700s	?

Species	Latin name	A Last	B Total	C First	D Bred
Spotted Crane	<i>Porzana porzana</i>	2013	-	1800s	Historical
Little Crane	<i>Porzana parva</i>	1956	1	1956	-
Baillon's Crane	<i>Porzana pusilla</i>	1942	1	1942	-
Corncrake	<i>Crex crex</i>	2014	-	1800s	1992
Sandhill Crane	<i>Grus canadensis</i>	2011	1	2011	-
Little Bustard	<i>Tetrax tetrax</i>	1937	5	ca.1820	-
Great Bustard	<i>Otis tarda</i>	1871	1	1871	-
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	1993	4	1954	-
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	-
Stilt Sandpiper	<i>Calidris himantopus</i>	2014	2	2012	-
Red-necked Stint	<i>Calidris ruficollis</i>	1995	1	1995	-
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	8	1964	-
Terek Sandpiper	<i>Xenus cinereus</i>	2015	6	1986	
Greater Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>	2011	1	2011	-
Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	1999	4	1955	-
Great Snipe	<i>Gallinago media</i>	2008	-	1822	-
Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>	2014	3	1966	-
Black-winged Pratincole	<i>Glareola nordmanni</i>	2015	2	2014	-
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>	1979	1	1979	-
Sooty Tern	<i>Onychoprion fuscatus</i>	1988	2	1966	-
Bridled Tern	<i>Onychoprion anaethetus</i>	2014	5	1988	-
Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>	2015	-	1955	-
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	8	pre-1874	-
Ross's Gull	<i>Rhodostethia rosea</i>	2008	-	1960	-
Laughing Gull	<i>Larus atricilla</i>	1999	4	1975	-
Ring-billed Gull	<i>Larus delawarensis</i>	2006	-	1985	-
Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>	2015	-	1955	-
Kumlien's Gull	<i>L. g. kumliemi</i>	2007	3	1993	-
Pallas's Sandgrouse	<i>Syrrhaptes paradoxus</i>	1969	-	1863	-
Great Spotted Cuckoo	<i>Clamator glandarius</i>	1870	1	1870	-

Species	Latin name	A Last	B Total	C First	D Bred
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>	2015	8	2001	-
Alpine Swift	<i>Apus melba</i>	2010	-	1882	-
Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	2015	-	1879	-
Roller	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>	2006	-	pre-1831	-
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates minor</i>	2014	-	1988	1999 (?)
Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>	1963	1	1963	-
Red-footed Falcon	<i>Falco vespertinus</i>	2015	-	1857	-
Eleonora's Falcon	<i>Falco eleonorae</i>	2006	1	2006	-
Gyr Falcon	<i>Falco rusticolus</i>	1845	1	1845	-
Red-eyed Vireo	<i>Vireo olivaceus</i>	2014	2	1988	-
Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	2015	-	1821	1999 (?)
Woodchat Shrike	<i>Lanius senator</i>	2015	-	1859	-
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	-
Bearded Tit	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>	2015	-	1965	2015
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	-	1977	-
Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	2011	2	2010	-
Arctic Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus borealis</i>	2012	-	1924	-
Hume's Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus humei</i>	2014	-	1970	-
Radde's Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus schwarzi</i>	2015	-	1976	-
Western Bonelli's Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus bonelli</i>	2006	4	1967	-
Eastern Bonelli's Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus orientalis</i>	2014	2	1995	-
Iberian Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus ibericus</i>	2004	1	2004	-
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	-
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	-

Species	Latin name	A Last	B Total	C First	D Bred
Blyth's Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i>	2013	-	1912	-
Marsh Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>	2015	-	1963	2013 (?)
Great Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	2014	9	1990	-
<i>Black-bellied Dipper</i>	<i>C. c. cinclus</i>	1989	2	1987	-
Black-throated Thrush	<i>Turdus atrogularis</i>	2006	2	1979	-
Brown Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa dauurica</i>	1956	1	1956	-
Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	2015	-	1893	-
<i>White-spotted Bluethroat</i>	<i>L. s. cyaneacula</i>	2012	7	1953	-
Collared Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula albicollis</i>	2013	1	2013	-
Desert Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe deserti</i>	2012	6	1997	-
Pied Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe pleschanka</i>	2012	5	1979	-
<i>Spanish Wagtail</i>	<i>M. f. iberiae</i>	2010	1	2010	-
<i>Ashy-headed Wagtail</i>	<i>M. f. cinereocapilla</i>	1998	3	1983	-
<i>Black-headed Wagtail</i>	<i>M. f. feldegg</i>	2009	2	1985	-
<i>Syke's Wagtail</i>	<i>M. f. beema</i>	1992	1	1992	-
Citrine Wagtail	<i>Motacilla citreola</i>	2014	-	1967	-
Tawny Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>	1998	6	1954	-
Olive-backed Pipit	<i>Anthus hodgsoni</i>	2014	-	1986	-
Red-throated Pipit	<i>Anthus cervinus</i>	2009	-	1963	-
Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>	2015	-	pre-1831	2005 (?)
Pine Grosbeak	<i>Pinicola enucleator</i>	1975	1	1975	-
Trumpeter Finch	<i>Bucanetes githagineus</i>	1987	1	1987	-
Two-barred Crossbill	<i>Loxia leucoptera</i>	2001	4	1972	-
Parrot Crossbill	<i>Loxia pytyopsittacus</i>	1991	4	1954	-
Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	2002	5	1956	-
White-throated Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i>	2007	1	2007	-
Black-headed Bunting	<i>Emberiza melanocephala</i>	2013	7	1971	-
Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>	2012	-	-	2005
Ortolan Bunting	<i>Emberiza hortulana</i>	2015	-	1945	-
Pine Bunting	<i>Emberiza leucocephalos</i>	1992	3	1990	-
Yellow-breasted Bunting	<i>Emberiza aureola</i>	2013	-	1972	-
Rustic Bunting	<i>Emberiza rustica</i>	2014	-	1903	-
Black-faced Bunting	<i>Emberiza spodocephala</i>	1999	1	1999	-
Brown-headed Cowbird	<i>Molothrus ater</i>	2009	1	2009	-

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
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
a.s.l.	above sea level
BBS	Breeding Bird Survey
BBRC	British Birds Rarities Committee
BTO	British Trust for Ornithology
BP	Business Park
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 5km from the locality where it was first ringed.
CRC	County Records Committee
<i>et al.</i>	and others
FIR	Farne Island Rangers
GC	Golf Course
GP	Gravel Pits
km	Kilometre
m	metre
NEWS	Non-Estuarine Waterbird Survey
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
NWT	Northumberland Wildlife Trust
Pullus	A nestling or chick
RS	Ringing Station
WeBS	Wetland Bird Survey

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	Red-throated	48		White-fronted	21
Dotterel		73	Goshawk		63
Dove	Collared	110	Grebe	Black-necked	58
	Rock	109		Great Crested	57
	Stock	110		Little	57
	Turtle	110		Red-necked	58
Dowitcher	Long-billed	87		Slavonian	58

Greenfinch		185	Merlin		121
Greenshank		84	Moorhen		66
Grouse	Black	47	Nightingale	Thrush	160
	Red	46	Nightjar		117
Guillemot		92	Nuthatch		149
	Black	90	Osprey		65
Gull	Black-headed	99	Ouzel	Ring	154
	Bonaparte's	99	Owl	Barn	113
	Caspian	107		Little	113
	Common	105		Long-eared	116
	Franklin's	104		Short-eared	116
	Glaucous	108		Tawny	114
	Great Black-backed	109	Oystercatcher		68
	Herring	106	Parakeet	Ring-necked	124
	Iceland	108	Partridge	Grey	47
	Lesser Black-backed	105		Red-legged	46
	Little	101	Peregrine		122
	Mediterranean	104	Petrel	Leach's	52
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Harrier	Hen	60	Phalarope	Grey	82
	Marsh	60		Red-necked	82
	Pallid	63	Pheasant		48
Heron	Grey	56	Pintail		32
Hobby		122	Pipit	Meadow	181
Hoopoe		118		Richard's	180
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Kingfisher		118		Golden	69
Kite	Red	59		Grey	70
Kittiwake		98		Little Ringed	71
Knot		77		Ringed	72
Lark	Shore	132	Pochard		34
Lapwing		71	Puffin		90
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Magpie		125	Rail	Water	65
Mallard		30	Raven		127
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				Lesser	186

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	Common	82	Stonechat	Siberian	168
	Curlew	78	Swallow		133
	Green	83	Swan	Bewick's	18
	Pectoral	82		Mute	18
	Purple	81		Whooper	18
	Spotted	83	Swift		117
	White-rumped	82	Teal		29
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Scoter	Black	40		Black	93
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	Cory's	50		Sandwich	93
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Notes

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