

# Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

<http://www.ntbc.org.uk/>



## Bulletin 2009 No 1 MONTHLY SUMMARY – JANUARY

4th March 2009

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Bewick's Swan – Six roosted at East Chevington on 25th, the first county records for 3 years.
- Taiga Bean Goose - One was at Hauxley in the first two days
- Eurasian White-fronted Goose - Five at Hauxley in first two days
- Greenland White-fronted Goose - One was at Hauxley and nine at Greenlee Lough
- Pintail – Huge count of 710 at Fenham Flats, a new record for the county
- Smew - Singles were at several sites
- Bittern – Two were at Cresswell Pond throughout with singles at East Chevington and Hauxley.
- Little Egret - Two showed well either by Holy Island causeway or Budle Bay
- Iceland Gull – Two at Blyth South Harbour, three singles elsewhere
- Glaucous Gull – Long-staying birds at Blyth and Linton
- Water Pipit - The wintering bird was present all month at St Mary's
- Waxwing – Many groups were in the county with 107 at Longbenton
- Great Grey Shrike - A one day bird was at Blae Wearie near Old Bewick
- Hawfinch – Single near Walwick

### NEWS

The next fieldtrip is to **Kielder** on **Sunday 15th March 2009**, see later in this bulletin for full information.



The wintering Water Pipit at St. Mary's  
by Chris Barlow

## WEATHER

The first 10 days were mostly dry but very cold with some unusually prolonged and severe frosts. Thereafter, the weather became much more unsettled with rain at times. It remained generally cold, but with some brief milder interludes. Mean temperatures were below normal, especially across the south, and it was the coldest January since 1997. Rainfall was generally close to normal. Sunshine was above normal, and it was the sunniest January since 2003.

1st to 10th: High pressure covered the UK and much of Europe. Across England, there were variable amounts of cloud, but also clear or sunny spells. With very little wind, temperatures were able to fall away very quickly under clear skies to bring some unusually severe frosts. Temperatures locally fell below -10 °C on some nights.

11th to 16th: High pressure declined southeastwards into Europe, and with low pressure becoming dominant over the Atlantic, south-westerly winds brought in milder air. There was also rain, some being heavy and prolonged; Shap (Cumbria) recorded 100 mm on 11th. However, the nights were generally frost-free, but there was a widespread sharp frost on the morning of the 14th. Between bands of rain, there was some sunshine. Winds were occasionally strong, especially in the west.

17th to 18th: This was perhaps the most disturbed spell of the month as a very deep area of low pressure moved northwards to the west of Scotland. It became very windy later on the 17th and into the 18th, and gales were quite widespread, especially in the west. A band of squally rain and hail also moved through on the evening of the 17th, bringing a temporary covering of hail to some areas.

19th to 21st: Colder westerly winds brought a mixture of clear or sunny spells and scattered wintry showers.

22nd to 29th: More typical January weather occurred during this period. Areas of low pressure moving eastwards across the UK brought very unsettled conditions to the whole of England. Some of the rain was heavy, bringing localised flooding to some areas, and winds were occasionally strong. Between the bands of rain, there were some spells of sunshine, but also a scattering of showers.

30th to 31st: High pressure built strongly to the northeast of the UK with a ridge extending across England. Rain across some western areas was pushed away westwards with easterly winds developing. However, these became progressively colder, especially on the 31st when they increased to become strong in many places.

## CLASSIFIED LIST

The following account consists of unchecked reports. The species/subspecies marked \* require descriptions. A complete list of all sightings which need notes is included in the NTBC website [www.ntbc.org.uk](http://www.ntbc.org.uk) under the County Records Committee section and in Birds in Northumbria 2007 page 251.

The Inland and Coastal Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) tables are at the rear of the bulletin. These contain additional counts to those in the Classified List.

## TARGET SPECIES

The target species for 2009 are **Marsh Tit**, **Spotted Flycatcher** and **Tree Sparrow**.

**Please report all records for these species.**

### Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Two flew N at Manor Drive, Longbenton on 26th (AJ). QEII Lake yet again provided the largest count with 78 on 21st; colour-ringed WAU was present here the following day (LJM/PRM). Other large gatherings were 58 at Castron on 17th, 24 at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 12th, 16 in the Tweed Estuary on 14th 14 at Angerton Lake on 2nd and 12 feeding in a kale field at Newburn (Norham) on 25th (TRD/DM/MHu/MNC). Nine were at Low Newton Flash on 27th and eight at Hauxley NR on 7th/16th (PRM/HRS). Counts of seven came from Cresswell Pond on 1st, Tweedmouth on 15th, Highthorn on 21st, Druridge Pools on 22nd, Woodhorn Flashes on 25th and Newcastle Great Park Pools on 31st. (DM et al./JMA/MJCo/MSK/PRM/AHB). One to six were noted from Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Blyth Estuary, Bothal Dam, Broomlee Lough, Capheaton Lough, Catcleugh Reservoir, Cullercoats, East Chevington, Exhibition Park (Newcastle), Halleypike Lough, Haughton Strother, Hemscott Hill, Grindon Lough, Linton Pond, Lower Ouseburn (Byker), Lynemouth, Monk's House Pool, Paddy Freeman's Pond (Jesmond Dene), Shield-on-the Wall, South Newsham (Blyth), Warkworth Lane, West Hartford and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

### Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus*

The first record since 2nd November 2006 occurred at dusk on 25th when six (one juvenile) flew into East Chevington North Pool (PRM).

**Whooper Swan** *Cygnus cygnus*

At Cocklawburn one flew S on 6th (TRD/JD). The largest concentration was in the Druridge Bay area with a maximum of 76 flying in to roost at East Chevington on 22nd (MSK). Birds from this group regularly frequented Chibburn Farm Widdrington where a maximum of 67 (22 juveniles) were noted on 24th (IRD *et al.*). Presumably birds from this flock accounted for 62 in a stubble field north of Ellington on 24th and 59 at Cresswell Pond on 1st (PCF/DM/STH/PA). In the Tweed Valley 52 (nine juveniles) were at Mount Carmel, Norham on 4th whilst 42 (11 juveniles) had moved 2kms to SE at Battle Moor, Norham by 25th (MHu). Other concentrations were 40 at Angerton Lake on 2nd/3rd (MNC/DM/STH/GB/LAR) and 18 (four juveniles) at Catcleugh Reservoir on 21st (PRM/TRD/JD). The peak count at Hauxley was nine (four juveniles) on 1st/7th (HRS) whilst six were at Grindon Lough on 27th (MT/NT). Five (one juvenile) were at Colt Crag Reservoir on 15th and two (adult and juvenile) were at Castron on 17th (MR/TRD).

**Grey Goose species** *Anser sp.*

On 13th a widespread movement SE was noted in the Bebside - Bedlington area involving ca.200 birds in four skeins. (RHAr/Mar)

**\*Bean Goose** *Anser fabalis*

The wandering *fabalis* race bird was again at Hauxley NR on 2nd and High Hauxley on 3rd. (JA/DM/STH/GB/LAR).

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

500 flew overhead at Lucker on 24th (JHa) 140 flew W at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 25th and 120 flew N at Low Newton on 27th (MR/PRM). At Cheswick 94 flew S on 28th (MHu). Big Waters saw 32 fly W on 13th and seven S on 10th (AJJ/ISD). 20 flew over Fenham-le-Moor on 5th (TRD/JD). Singles also flew over Rothbury on 13th, Doddington on 22nd and N over Ross Back Sands on 29th. The largest concentration was in the Druridge Bay area with c4,000 near Cresswell Pond on 22nd being the highest count (MSK *et al.*). Nearby at Linton 1,500 were present on 2nd and 720+ were in fields near QEII Lake on 4th (PRM/TRD). At Doddington 2,000 were present on 1st/2nd (DGB/AI/DI). There was a large gathering present throughout the month in the Brier Dene Farm/ Crow Hall Farm area adjacent to Holywell Dene peaking at 415 on 1st, sometimes wandering to nearby Holywell Pond (MNC/AJ/SPP *et al.*). 120 were at Highbury on 21st, 50 at Druridge Pools on 28th and 20 at Budle Bay on 10th. One to nine were noted from Blyth Estuary (where scarce), Castron, Hauxley NR, Hedgeley GP and Scremerston Hill.

Pink-footed Geese at Cresswell  
by Colin Bradshaw

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

The family party of two adults and three juveniles of the European race *albifrons* continued to be noted was near Linton Pond roundabout on 1st moving to Hauxley NR on 2nd where two remained on 16th (DM/STH/PA/TRD/JA/HRS).

A single Greenland race *flavirostris* bird was at Hauxley NR on 2nd (JA/TRD).

**Greylag Goose** *Anser anser*

200 flew over Holywell Dene on 2nd (MT/NT). 50m flew E at Prestwick Carr on 1st, 41 flew S at Linton Pond on 18th and 25 flew E at Haughton Strother on 28th (PCF/DM/STH/MR). Large gatherings were 700 at Derwent Reservoir on 16th 460 at Mount Carmel, Norham on 4th, 375 at Castron on 17th and 255 at Colt Crag Reservoir on 18th (IFo/MHu/TRD). Elsewhere 210 were at Beal Sluice on 8th, 200 at East Chevington on 24th, 187 at Hauxley NR on 16th including ringed 7HB, 162 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 9th and 150 at Beehive Flash, Earsdon on 3rd, Budle Bay on 1st/16th and Farnhammoor on 22nd (MHu/HRS/PCF/DM *et al.*/JPL *et al.*/IRD). Smaller flocks were 73 at Big Waters on 3rd, 70 at Cresswell Pond on 6th, 52 at Grindon Lough on 21st, 50 at Brierdene Farm (Whitley Bay) on 1st and Dunstan on 15th, 33 at Brandon (Ingram

Valley) on 24th, 28 at Woodhorn Flashes on 22nd, 17 at Slaley and 13 at Plenmeller Common on 24th. Three were at Linton Pond on 3rd and a single at Mount Pleasant Farm, Blyth Estuary from 1st -6th, an unusual sighting for this location.

**Greater Canada Goose** *Branta canadensis*

The highest counts came from Grindon Lough with peaks of 626 on 21st and 600 on 18th (PRM/PCF *et al.*), Angerton Lake where 168 were present on 2nd, 96 at Castron on 17th and 92 at Hedgeley GP on 26th (TRD/PT). 65 were at Linton Pond on 4th, 43 on QEII Lake on 22nd and 42 at Bothal Pond on 25th (PRM). Hauxley NR hosted 40 on 7th and 36 at Killingworth Lake on 12th was a site record (HRS/LJM) 18 were at Marden Quarry on 11th, 16 were at Learmouth Lake on 26th and the Leazes Park (Newcastle) flock peaked at 14 on 2nd /26th (KWY/MHu/DM). One to nine were noted from Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, Highthorn and Ladyburn Lake

**\*Lesser Canada Goose** *Branta hutchinsii*

One flew S with seven Canada Geese at Ellington on 1st (TB).

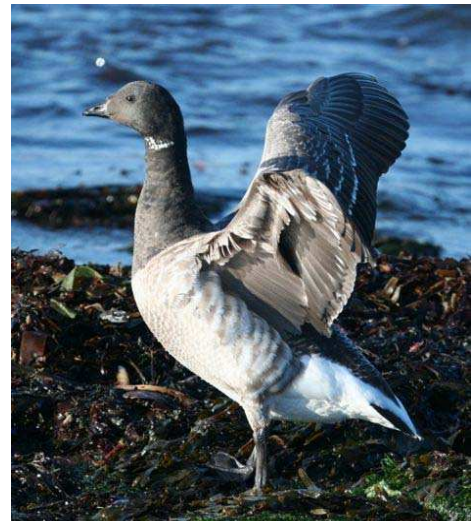
**Barnacle Goose** *Branta leucopsis*

As in December 2008 the only sizeable counts came from the Lindisfarne NNR area with 66 in Budle Bay on 8th and 47 in Elwick Fields on 1st (ASJ/CB) being the highest counts. Two were at Grindon Lough from 17th -21st with one present until 29th (MRS/PRM *et al.*).

**Pale –bellied hrota Brent Goose** *Branta bernicla hrota*

Up to 800 were in the Holy Island area during the month especially in the Fenham Flats area (TRD *et al.*). The two noted at St Mary's Island in late 2008 remained until at least 22nd (MT/NT *et al.*) and a single was at Hauxley NR on 5th (JA).

Brent Goose  
St. Mary's  
21st January by Peter Tapsell



**Dark-bellied bernicla Brent Goose** *Branta bernicla bernicla*

42 were at Ouse, Holy Island on 27th and a ringed bird FJ on white ring left leg was at Lindisfarne NNR on 23rd (TRD/JD).

11 unraced birds flew N at Stag Rocks on 8th (MT/NT) and 30 were in Budle Bay on 1st/16th (JPL *et al.*).

**Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna*

The Fenham Flats area of Lindisfarne NNR held 600 on 5th (TRD/JD) and 435 on 11th (PRM) and a total of 120 were at Holy Island causeway on 15th (JMA). Typically smaller numbers were at other sites, with peaks of 20 at Kitty Brewster, Blyth on 24th (GB), 18 at Hauxley Reserve on 26th (JA), five at Budle Bay on 15th (JMA), four at Cresswell Pond on 14th (MT/NT), four at Longhirst Flash on 25th (PRM) and four at Newcastle Business Park on 27th (GB). One to two were also at Alnmouth, the *Beehive* flash (Eardson) and Longhirst Flash. One was well inland at Branton GP on 16th (IBDa/KDa).

**Mandarin** *Aix galericulata*

A flock of 14 at Ridley Stokoe on 21st consisted of 13 drakes and one duck (TRD/JD) and a duck was at Big Waters on 4th (AJJ/ISD).

**Wigeon** *Anas penelope*

The largest concentration was of 1,350 at Fenham Flats on 11th (PRM). Other peak counts were 340 offshore at Beadnell on 27th (PRM), 300 at Cresswell Pond on 7th (IF), 300 at nearby Hemscott Hill on 8th (MJCo), 220 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 5th (MR), 160 at Grindon Lough on 22nd (SJH), 150 at Swallow Pond on 1st (JPD), 120 at Budle Bay on 15th (JMA), 115 at Bothal Pond on 25th (PRM), 108 at QEII Lake on



22nd (PRM), 106 at Hauxley Reserve on 16th (HRS), and about 100 at Horton Grange Flash on 15th (AHB). Counts of 54-76 came from Colt Crag Reservoirs, Highthorn, and Warkworth Lane Ponds, 20-39 from Big Waters, Capheaton Lake, Haughton Strother and Middle Ord Pond, and two to 14 at Cocklawburn and Linton Ponds, Halleypike Lough, Plenmeller Common, Newton Pool, Rothley Lakes and Stag Rocks. More unusual were 18 feeding in Amble harbour on 25th (TW).

#### **Gadwall** *Anas strepera*

Most were found in the south east of the county, with peaks of 22 at Earth Balance, Bomarsund on 24th (GB), ten at Caistron on 17th (TRD), ten (seven drakes) at Holywell Pond on 20th and ten (eight drakes) there on 31st (SPP), nine at QEII Lake on 16th (CDH), eight at Woodhorn Flashes on 22nd (PRM), eight at East Chevington on 24th (IRD), and seven at Hauxley Reserve on 16th (HRS). Three to four were at Linton, Swallow and Warkworth Lane Ponds, and one to two at Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Ladyburn Lake and Marden Quarry.

#### **Teal** *Anas crecca*

Peak counts were 250 at Holy Island 'rocket field' on 27th (MR), about 200 at Holy Island Lough (IK), about 200 at Colt Crag Reservoirs on 115th (MR), 195 at Grindon Lough on 22nd (SJH), 177 at Cresswell Pond on 6th (JRT), 150 at Newcastle Business Park on 10th (AHB), 131 at Big Waters on 10th (AJJ/ISD), 125 at Kitty Brewster, Blyth Estuary on 6th (a site record count; LJM), 122 at St Mary's Wetland on 7th (MT/NT), 90 at Derwent Reservoir on 4th (IFo), 80 at Linton Ponds on 18th (DM/STH), 70 at East Hartford on 31st (STH et al.), 56 at Middle Ord Pond on 4th (MHu), 52 at Warkworth Lane Ponds on 25th (PRM), and 22-40 at Arcot and Bothal Ponds, Hauxley Reserve, Haughton Strother and Horton Grange Flash, Monk's House Pool, Newton Pool, Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Ten to 18 were at Capheaton and Rothley Lakes, Fenham Flats, Highthorn and Plenmeller Common, and one to six at eight further sites.

#### **Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

Largest counts were 173 at Derwent Reservoir on 22nd (IFo), 140 at Colt Crag Reservoir on 15th (MR), 140 at Grindon Lough on 22nd (MR), 137 at Big Waters on 10th (AJJ/ISD), 120 at Middle Ord Pond on 25th (a large count for this small pond; MHu), 102 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 9th (PCF), 78 at Ladyburn Lake on 15th (IFo), 63 at the Tweed Estuary on 14th (MHu), 61 at Newcastle Leazes Park on 6th (DM), 55 at Hauxley Reserve on 16th (HRS), 52 at QEII Lake on 16th (CDH), 31-45 at Cresswell Pond, Halleypike Lough, Haughton Strother and Rock, and ten to 29 at Ashington Riverside and Wansbeck Business Parks, Bell's, Bothal and Warkworth Lane Ponds, Byker, Cullercoats Park, Highthorn, Ladyburn Lake, Linton Pond, Monk's House Pool, Newcastle Exhibition Park, St Mary's Wetland, Sweethope Lough, Willimoteswick, Willington Gut and Woodhorn Flashes. Four to five were at seven further sites.

#### **Pintail** *Anas acuta*

A massive 710 were counted at the Fenham Flats area of Lindisfarne NNR on 11th (PRM), and 196 were noted there on 7th (MH/AA) and 180 on 29th (ASJ). Four were at Cresswell Pond on 25th (TW) and one to two on 6th-7th, 15th and 31st (TRD/JRT/IF/IFo). Singles were at Big Waters on 1st (GB/AIB), Budle Bay on 5th (TRD/JD), and St Mary's Wetland on several dates between 5th-21st (SPP/MT/NT/TRD).

#### **Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*

The species was present all month at Holy Island Lough all month, with a peak of ten in the first week (IK). Six were at West Allotment Pond on 13th, five at East Chevington on 2nd (TRD), five (four drakes) at Bothal Pond on 25th (PRM), four at Bell's Pond on 8th (MJCo), four at Budle Bay on 3rd (CGK), four at Holy Island harbour pools on 23rd (TRD/JD), four at Linton Pond on 2nd (TRD), three at Big Waters on 10th (AJJ/ISD), three at Swallow Pond on 3rd (DM et al.), and one at Cresswell Pond.

#### **Pochard** *Aythya ferina*

Swallow Pond held peaks of 41 on 16th and 40 on 25th (SPP), and 40 were at Holywell Pond on 10th (STH et al.). Other peak counts were 20 at Killingworth Lake on 9th (IF), 11 at Ladyburn Lake on 24th (JMA), and six to seven at Branton GP, Grindon Lough, Linton Pond, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Woodhorn Flashes. Three to five were at Arcot and Bothal Ponds, Capheaton and Ladyburn Lakes, Hedgeley GP, and one to two at Big Waters, Caistron, Derwent Reservoir, Hemscott Hill, Monk's House Pool, Newcastle Great Park Pools

#### **Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*

East Chevington held 62 on 6th (JRT), 51 were at Newcastle Leazes Park on 19th (DM), 51 at QEII Lake on 22nd (PRM), 39 at Linton Ponds on 8th (PRM), 37 at Holywell Pond on 31st (SPP), and 20-22 at Cullercoats Park and QEII Lake. Counts of ten to 19 came from Bywell (Cottagebank/Short Wood GP), Capheaton Lake, Grindon Lough, Hartburn Reservoir, Hauxley Reserve, Highthorn, Jesmond Dene (Paddy Freemans) and Woodhorn Flashes. One to eight were also at Arcot, Bothal, Cocklawburn, Cresswell and Warkworth Lane Ponds, Colt Crag Reservoirs, Grindon and Sweethope Loughs, Hemscott Hill, Holy Island Lough, Ladyburn

and Learmouth Lakes, Newcastle Exhibition Park, Newcastle Great Park Pools, Wansbeck Business Park (Ashington) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. More unusual was a drake on the River Tyne at Newcastle Business Park on 5th (GB).

#### **Scaup** *Aythya marila*

At Holy Island, four (two first-winter drakes and two ducks) were at Coves Bay on 27th (MR) and two at Snipe Point on 18th (IK). Three were at Monk's House Pool on 4th (JPL) and two pairs there on 5th (TRD/JD). Cresswell Pond held a peak of four on 21st (ASJ) and one to two were frequently present all month (ADM/TrD/IFo et al.), and two (first-winter drake and a duck) at Newton Pool on 27th (PRM).

#### **Eider** *Somateria mollissima*

Fenham Flats hosted 160 on 11th (PRM), 80 at Cheswick on 23rd (MHu), 76 were at Stag Rocks on 11th (PRM), 59 at Blyth South Harbour on 24th (DMT), 54 at Cocklawburn on 29th (PRM), 50 at Sharper's Head, Berwick on 13th (MHu), 43 at St Mary's on 21st (ASJ), 38 at Beadnell on 27th (PRM), 32 at the Tweed Estuary on 14th (MHu), 20-26 at the Long Nanny Estuary, Seahouses harbour and the Tyne Estuary-North Shields Fish Quay, and 11-16 at Meadow Haven (Berwick), North Blyth, and Spittal. Two to nine were also at Lynemouth and Ross Back Sands. One was at Holywell Dene on 2nd (MT/NT).

#### **Long-tailed Duck** *Clangula hyemalis*

Two flew S at Holy Island on 31st (IK). About 80 at Stag Rocks on 18th dropped to 40 by 29th (JPL/RNa/IBDa/KDa). Smaller numbers were noted there throughout the month, 25 were at Ross Back Sands on 18th and 29th (TB/PRM), 21 at Holy Island harbour on 27th (MR), four at Cheswick on 28th (MHu), and two at Beadnell on 27th (PRM). Display was noted at Stag Rocks on 7th (MH/AA).

#### **Common Scoter** *Melanitta nigra*

The largest concentration was 140 off Cheswick on 12th (MHu), 65 were at Stag Rocks all month (DGB/JPL) and 63 (perhaps the same?) at nearby Ross Back Sands on 29th (PRM). Other peak counts were 58 at Cocklawburn dunes on 29th (PRM), 40 at Cresswell on 20th (TRD), 32 at North Blyth on 8th (PCF), and 12 at Holy Island on 27th (MR). Two to nine were off Beadnell, Druridge, East Chevington and Lynemouth.

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

Three flew N at Boulmer on 23rd (AL). Three at Stag Rocks on 10th included one very small individual (TRD/JD), and one was noted there throughout the month (NNBC/TRC/TB et al.).

#### **Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula*

A total of 114 flew N in 30 minutes at Berwick pier on 2nd (MHu). A WeBS count at the Tweed Estuary on 14th involved 245 on 14th (MHu). Other peaks were 35 at Beadnell Bay (JPL), 29 at QEII Lake on 22nd (PRM), 29 at Tweedmouth on 15th (JMA), 21 at East Chevington north pool on 28th (IFo), 21 at Holy Island on 27th (MR), 20 at Wylam on 10th (JMA), 18 at Capheaton Lake on 4th (PRM), 16 at Castron on 17th (TRD), 15 at QEII Lake on 16th (CDH), and ten to 14 at Big Waters, the Blyth Estuary, Grindon Lough, Howick and West Ord. Six to nine were at Meadow Haven (Berwick), the Long Nanny Estuary, Newton Pool, Norham and, three to five at the Aln Estuary, Bothal and Cresswell Ponds, Big Waters, Broomlee and Halleypike Loughs, Castle Island, Derwent and Hartburn Reservoirs, Druridge Pools, Hauxley Reserve, Holy Island, Ladyburn Lake, Newcastle Business Park and Prudhoe. One to two were also at Arcot, Bothal and Linton Ponds, Catcleugh and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, Cocklawburn, Grindon and Sweethope Loughs, Monk's House Pool, Newcastle Great Park Pools, QEII Lake, Stag Rocks and Woodhorn Flashes.

#### **Smew** *Mergellus albellus*

A drake was at Grindon Lough on 3rd (RMH). Single 'redheads' were at Big Waters on 6th-7th (AJJ/ISD), Colt Crag Reservoirs on 15th (MR), 18th (AA/TRD) and 23rd-31st (RSF) and one the River Blyth at Kitty Brewster on 3rd (GB/STH/DM/LAR).

#### **Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator*

Peak gatherings were 30 at Holy Island all month (IK), 12 at Ladyburn Lake on 23rd (TB) and nine to 11 there between 20th-28th (IFo/ASJ/PT et al.), ten at Sharper's Head, Berwick on 13th (MHu), seven at the Tweed Estuary on 14th (MHu), seven at the Wansbeck Estuary on 31st (GB), five to six at Cresswell Pond between 6th-16th (MJCo/IRD/PCF et al.) and three to four on various dates up to 31st, six at Cheswick on 28th (MHu), five at Beadnell on 20th (PRM), five at the Blyth Estuary on 18th (PRM), five at Spittal on 7th and 15th (JMA/MHu), and three to four at Cocklawburn, Druridge, Hauxley Reserve and Howick. One to two were also at Amble Braid, Blyth South Harbour, Boulmer, the Long Nanny Estuary, Meadow Haven, Newton Pool, Ross Back Sands and Stag Rocks. One was feeding at Stakeford bridge on 24th (GB). Display was noted at Cresswell Pond on 2nd (MH/AA) and 15th (PCF).

**Goosander** *Mergus merganser*

Two flew W over Ray Estate on 8th (MH). Branton GP held 24 on 4th (IBDa/KDa), a peak of 21 was at Killingworth Lake on 3rd (DM et al.), 16 (nine drakes) were at Roddam Sandpits on 19th (MH), 14 at Hedgeley GP at 26th (PT), seven at Wylam on 10th (JMA), and five to six at Big Waters, Haughton Strother, the Tweed Estuary, Warkworth and West Ord. Six drakes at Burradon Pond on 24th were unusual in being the first records of the species in 20 years of visits to this site (LJM). Three to four were at Greenlee Lough, Hulne Park, Newburn, Newcastle Leazes Park, and Thropton, and one to two at Beadnell, Caistron, Colt Crag and Derwent Reservoirs, Haltwhistle, Holystone, Jesmond Dene, Marden Quarry, Morpeth, Newcastle (River Tyne, near the Baltic), Norham, Northumberland Park (North Shields), QEII Lake, Rothbury, Shankfoot, Tweedmouth, Wark and Weldon Bridge.



Four photographs of Goosanders at Cresswell  
by Colin Bradshaw

**Red Grouse** *lagopus lagopus*

The highest counts were 42 at Newbiggin Fell (Blanchland) on 14th and 35 at Fellhouse Fell-Aytonhill Fell on 5th (MH). 16 were on Plenneller Common on 24th, 14 at Addycombe (Rothbury) on 17th and 12 in the Harthope Valley on 4th (SJH/JD/TRD). One to four were noted from Bewick Moor, Little Ward Fell, Longframlington Common, Ray Fell, Ridley Common (Shankhead), Winter's Gibbet (Elsdon), Yardhope (Holystone) and Yarnspath Moor.

**Black Grouse** *Tetrao tetrix*

Only two records were received. Three were at Sipton Shield on 17th (ACo) and a male at Langleeford Hope on 4th was the observer's first record for the Harthope Valley (TRD/JD).

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

On 18th 35 were at Ridley Common (Shankhead) and ten were at Lanehead, Bellingham on 4th (SJH/MR). Seven were in the Shankfoot area on 28th (SJH). One to four were noted at Benkshill, Melkridge, Plenneller Common, Widehaugh (Hexham) and Willimoteswick.

**Grey Partridge** *Perdix perdix*

As in December 2008 most large counts came from the coastal area of the county. On 17th 20 were north of Boulmer with 18 of these at Longhoughton and two at Rumbling Kern (NFO). Counts of 12 came from Howick on 5th, Cresswell Pond on 6th/22nd, Hemscott Hill, Cresswell on 15th and Boulmer on 30th (JAR/JSB/EC/TB/IFo/IRD). At Widehaugh, Hexham 11 were present on 24th 11 were also at Snab Point,

Cresswell on 3rd (MR/DM/STH/GB/LAR). Nine were at East Chevington on 24th (IRD) and eight were at Lowmoor Crossing on 3rd (TRC). Counts of seven came from White Cross (Alnwick) on 3rd, Bell's Dunes (Cresswell) on 11th, Druridge Pools on 20th, Bellasis Farm (Blagdon) on 21st and Big Waters on 31st (TRC/ADMc//PT/MRS/AJJ/ISD). Six were at Branton GP on 24th and five at Newbiggin on 1st, Woodhorn on 8th, Prestwick Carr on 21st and near Longhirst Flash on 24th. One to four were noted from Beal, Bothal Pond, Doddington, Lucker and Midstead (Rock).

#### **Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus*

*Bird Atlas 2007 -2011* visits resulted in more records than usual at this time of year. The peak count was 47 in the Chipchase tetrad on 5th (PC). 16 were present in the Willimoteswick area on 28th and 14 were at Big Waters on 24th (SJH/AJJ/ISD). Up to six visited an Old Hartley garden daily throughout the month and six were at Belsay Hall on 26th (RJP/KR/LR). Five were in the Esp Mill tetrad on 12th and four in the Pit House tetrad on 5th (PC). One to three were noted from Batailshielhaugh, Birtley tetrad Chester's Walled Garden and House, Coal Houses, Cresswell, Forestburn Gate, Highburn Little Tosson Low Moralee, Nethererton Park Netherwitton, Norham, Peigh Hills tetrad Pittland House tetrad, Slaley, Stobswood, Tritlington, Ulgham, a Walbottle garden, Watergate and Wingates.

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

At Boulmer 15 flew N in 5 minutes on 9th (EC/JSB). Seven flew S at St Mary's Island on 18th with two S there on 9th/13th and singles N there on 7th and S on 22nd (MT/NT). A single flew N at Newbiggin on 1st (LJM). Offshore the peak count was 30 at Stag Rocks on 1st (CB), however no more than six were seen in this vicinity throughout the rest of the month (MH *et al.*). The only other double-figure count was 16 off Ross Back Sands on 21st (MH). Eight were off Druridge on 9th and five off St Mary's Island on 18th (TRD/JD). Four were off Cheswick on 23rd and three off Cresswell on 9th and Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 25th (MHu/TRD/JD). One to two were noted at Annstead, Beadnell, Blyth South Harbour, Cocklawburn, East Chevington, Holy Island Harbour and North Shore, Long Nanny, Newbiggin, North Blyth, Snab Point (Cresswell) and Tweed Estuary.

#### **Black-throated Diver** *Gavia arctica*

One flew N at Beadnell on 27th (PRM). Singles were noted off Stag Rocks on 1st/7th/28th (CB/AA/MH/ACo), Spittal Bay on 9th (MHu) and Budle Point on 26th (MH).

#### **Great Northern Diver** *Gavia immer*

Two were off Stag Rocks on 3rd (CGK) with singles noted there on 5th/7th/17th/18th (AA/MH/TRD/JD/IBDa/KDa/JPL). Singles were also noted at Ross Back Sands on 2nd/3rd (MR/NNBC), Cheswick on 16th (MHu) and Budle Point on 25th (MH).

#### **Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Frozen ponds probably accounted for some sightings at more unusual locations. The maximum counts were nine at Angerton: Lake and seven in the Blyth Estuary on 24th and six flushed by an Otter from the reeds at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 26th (TRD/GB/MR). Five were counted in the Wansbeck Estuary on 31st and four were at QEII Lake on 22nd, Ladyburn Lake on 25th and Hauxley NR on 28th (PRM/IFo). Counts of three came from River Coquet at Warkworth on 7th and Linton Pond on 1st (JMA/DM/STH/PA). Two were at Ashington Riverside Park, Blyth South Harbour, Derwent Reservoir, Highburn, Seaton Burn Estuary and singles were at Amble Marina, Big Waters, Druridge Pools, *Earth Balance* (Bomarsund), Haughton Strother (Humshaugh), Kirkley Mill, Marden Quarry, Warkworth Lane and Willimoteswick.

#### **Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*

Sightings increased from the previous month but still only singles were recorded. These were offshore at Church Point, Newbiggin on 1st, Derwent Reservoir from 2nd- 8th, Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 19th, in transitional plumage at Arcot Pond on 22nd/23rd and off Holy Island on 27th (LJM/IFo/MR/STH).

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

Singles were noted off Stag Rocks on 1st (CB) and at Holy Island off the Castle on 5th and in the harbour and Coves Bay on 27th (ADMc/MR)

#### **Slavonian Grebe** *Podiceps auritus*

Excellent numbers were recorded this month with 35 off Stag Rocks on 1st and 32 offshore at Ross Links on 21st being the highest counts with 28 still present at the latter location on 29th (CB/AA/MH/PRM). At Stag Rocks up to 13 were recorded on 11 further dates (AA/MH *et al.*). At Ross Back Sands up to 12 were recorded on three further dates (TB/MR/NNBC). At Holy Island two were off The Heugh on 7th, one near St Cuthbert's Island on 17th and one in the harbour on 27th (MH/DWS/MR).



**Fulmar** *Fulmarus glacialis*

Light movement was noted with 15 S into a strong wind at Emmanuel Head, Holy Island on 31st with one S there on 23rd and one S at Church Point, Newbiggin on 2nd. At Berwick Pier 12 flew S in 30 minutes on 25th (IK/TRD/JD/AA/MH/MHu). Birds were more obvious this month at breeding sites with 74 on ledges in Coves Bay, Holy Island on 27th and ten to 14 at Old Hartley Cliffs on 13th/24th/25th ((MR/MT/NT/SPP/EC/JSB). Three pairs were at Tynemouth Priory Cliffs on 9th, five were also back on the ledges at Bamburgh Castle on 22nd and two pairs were at Union Bridge, Berwick on 14th(AA/MH/JPL/MHu). At Bamburgh 28 were noted offshore on 26th with five later flying inland (MH/AA). Four were offshore at Newbiggin on 22nd, two at St Mary's Island on 9th and one at Ross Back Sands on 29th.

**Gannet** *Morus bassanus*

At Emmanuel Head, Holy Island 12 moved S into a strong south east wind on 31st (IK), and two flew N and one S at Holy Island on 27th (MR). Two also flew N at Hauxley on 3rd (TRC). Singles flew S off Druridge Pools on 1st and at Berwick Pier on 25th and N at Ross Back Sands on 3rd (RSF/MHu/MR).

**Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

The peak roost counts during the month were 96 in Blyth Harbour on 24th and 55 at North Fish Quay on 18th (DMT). Inland 12 were at QEII Lake on 1st and Big Waters on 31st and ten at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 19th (DM/STH/PA/AJJ/ISD/MR). Six were in Newcastle between Millennium Bridge and the Ouseburn mouth on 7th and five were at Elswick Wharf on 15th (DM). Four were roosting at Close House on 8th (MH). Counts of three came from Bywell Bridge, Spittal and Wark. One to two was noted at Angerton Lake, Arcot Pond, Cresswell Pond, Holystone, Holywell Dene, Jesmond Dene (flyover), Linton Pond, Norham, Redheugh Bridge, flying E at West Hartford and Wylam. Based on gular patch angles at least 24 *sinensis* race were at Blyth South Harbour on 18th and one was at Linden Hall on 25th (PRM/NFO).

**Shag** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

At Stag Rocks 40 were offshore on 5th (TRD/JD). The Blyth South Harbour roost peaked at 23 on 11th with colour –ringed “white LDT red HTH” present on 20th (DMT/TRC). Ten were at Holy Island on 23rd and Ross Back Sands on 29th (TRD/JD/PRM). Eight were at Meadow Haven, Berwick on 25th, six at Beadnell on 27th and five at Cheswick on 23rd (MHu/PRM). One to three were noted at Cocklawburn, Cresswell, Druridge, Spittal Bay and Tyne Estuary.

**Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris*

Two birds were present at Cresswell Pond on 29th (PAT) with singles noted there on 28th (PCF/IFo), Singles were also at Hauxley NR on 4th and East Chevington on 25th/28th/31st (CDB/TPMW/ACo/MSK).

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*

Despite the harsh weather two were seen on Holy Island causeway on 23rd and within 4 yards of each other in Budle Bay on 28th (TRD/JD/ACo). Singles were also noted in Budle Bay on 1st/3rd and 10th and Holy Island causeway on 5th (NNBC/DWS/TRD/JD).

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*

The largest counts were 24 in the Tweed Estuary on 14th and seven at North Blyth staithes on 1st (MHu/LJM). Five were at Spittal cliffs on 16th and four at Cresswell Pond on 6th and Howick on 31st (MHu/MJCo/JAR). Counts of three came from Alnmouth on 16th, East Hartford on 31st, Norham on 24th and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 5th. One to two were noted at Arcot Pond, Bankhead, Benkshill, Catcleugh Reservoir, Derwent Reservoir, Greenhaugh Marsh (Westmoor), Harbottle Peels, Hauxley, Holywell Dene, Leazes Park (Newcastle), Longhirst Flash, Longlee, Long Nanny, Mitford, QEII Lake, Sweethope Lough, Warkworth, West Hartford, Woodhorn Flashes, and most enterprisingly at Gloster Hill, Amble where visiting daily to feed on cat and dog food left overs.

**Red Kite** *Milvus milvus*

All records this month came from the Bearsbridge (Whitfield) area with three possibly four birds there on 22nd (SJH). Up to two tagged birds and two untagged birds were seen on several dates (AA/SWA/IFo/MH/JSB/EC)

**Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*

Up to four or five ringtails were at a confidential site throughout the month (SJH), single ringtails were seen at Old Berwick on 11th (IBDa/KDa), Greenlee Lough on 17th (MRS) and near Rothbury also on the 17th (TRD/JD). A male was noted at Howick throughout the month (IK), and other males were noted at Prestwick Carr between the 22nd - 24th (GB/PCF/MH) and at Ros Castle on 11th (JPL).

**Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis*

A pair was seen displaying near Sweethope Lough on 31st (MH). Single bird sightings came from Debdon Wood, Harwood Forest, Hepburn Woods, Longwiton, Park Dam and Twizle (Ogle) (MNC/ADMc/IBDa/KDa/JHa).

**Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*

A male and a female were regularly hunting around a feeding station at Scotland Gate throughout the month (SLB/MSK). Two birds were also in the Bearsbridge (Whitfield) area on 25th and in the Shankfoot area on 28th (SJH). Single birds were noted from over 30 sites during the month.

**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*

Well recorded again this month with over 90 records. Nine birds were up in the air together at Whitfield Hall on 24th and eight were at Roddam on the 20th (MH). Up to seven birds were in the Bearsbridge (Whitfield) area on 25th (SJH), six birds were at Featherstone Castle on 9th (SW) and five at Blanchland on 14th (MH). Up to four birds were noted from a wide variety of sites during January.

**Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*

Up to four birds were present on Holy Island during the month were possibly attracted by a high vole population (IK). Three birds, two males and a female were in the Druridge/ East Chevington area on 14th (MT/NT). Two's were at Caufield, Derwent Reservoir, Haydon Bridge, Park Dam and Whittonstall (STH/PRM/IFo); singles were noted from over 40 sites.

**Merlin** *Falco columbarius*

Up to three juveniles were seen on Holy Island during January (IK/AA/MR/ADMc); two birds were at Cresswell Pond on 12th (CB). Singles were at Annstead, Arcot Pond, Bamburgh, Fenham-le-Moor, Harthope Valley, Lucker, Monk's House, Plenmellor, Prestwick Carr, Ross Back Sands and Whittle Den Reservoirs.

**Peregrine** *Falco peregrinus*

An adult female and a juvenile female were present throughout the month on Holy Island, with the adult mobbing and playing with a Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* on 16th (IK), two birds were also an adult and a juvenile were at Budle Bay on the 2nd with the adult killing a Redshank *Tringa totanus* (MR). Two birds were at Rothbury on 16th (TRD/JD) and at a confidential site in the south west of the county on the 14th (EC). Single records came from over 20 sites.

**Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus*

Cresswell Pond had up to four birds on several dates with four seen on 3rd (ADMc/TW etal). Three were at Holywell Pond on 26th (SPP), two at Big Waters on 2nd (AJJ/ISD) and St Mary's Wetland on 9th (MT/NT). Single birds were also seen or heard at Arcot Pond, Druridge Pools, Gosforth Park NR, Linton Pond and Swallow Pond during the month.

**Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*

24 birds were at Druridge Bay CP on 25th (PRM), 22 were at Big Waters on 3rd (AJJ/ISD). Low Newton Flash had 18 on 27th and Linton Pond had 13 on 4th (PRM). The QEII CP had 12 birds on 16th & 24th (CDH/JMA), Leazes Park (Newcastle) peaked at eight birds on 9th (DM). One to five birds were at another 12 sites on several dates.

**Coot** *Fulica atra*

The QEII CP peaked with 76 birds on 22nd (PRM/CDH/JMA); Linton Pond peaked with 65 birds on 16th (IFo/DM/STH/PA). 15 birds were at Woodhorn Flash on 22nd and 13 were at Bothal Pond and Druridge Bay CP on 25th (PRM). Leazes Park (Newcastle) had 12 birds on the 19th (DM), one to nine birds were noted at Capheaton Lake, Exhibition Pak (Newcastle), Highthorn, Park Dam, St Mary's Wetland, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Warkworth Lane.

**Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*

Top counts at the coast were 276 at Berwick GC on 13th (MHu), 83 at Beadnell on 27th, 81 at Blyth on 24th and 80 at Bamburgh on 11th (PRM/GB). The peak at Briar Dene Links reached 45 on 25th and that at St Mary's 40 on 9th (JMA/MT/NT) with 35 at Druridge Pools on 21st and 20 at Hauxley NR on 7th. Inland, 12 were at Featherstone Castle on 9th (SW) and one to seven appeared at Bellingham, Hexham, Norham, Shankfoot, Willimoteswick and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

**Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*

The roost at Blyth South Harbour held 58 on 17th rising to 104 on 24th (DMT/TRC). Otherwise ten to 35 were noted at suitable places along the length of the coast at Beadnell, Berwick, Boulmer, Cocklawburn, Cresswell, Holy Island, Newbiggin, St Mary's and Tynemouth.

**Golden Plover** *Pluvialis apricaria*

The peak at St Mary's was 1500 on 28th and 1000 were at Town Moor, Newcastle on 9th (ASJ/GB). Also 482 were at Cresswell Pond on 14th and 300 at times at Cullercoats, Newcastle Business Park and Tynemouth (MT/NT/KWY/GB). A few places had 60-264: Amble Braid, Blyth, Morpeth, Plenmeller Common, Rock and Ross village and three to 50 appeared at ten other locations.

**Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*

Budle Bay held 55 on 2nd, 17 were along the stretch Boulmer to Longhoughton Steel on 23rd, 14 at Beadnell on 27th and ten at Holy Island on 23rd (MR/KAS/PT/PRM/TRD/JD). Otherwise there were up to five at Berwick, Blyth, Cocklawburn, Cresswell Pond and Hauxley.

**Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*

In Budle Bay around 1000 were noted on 16th after 600 the previous day (JPL/JMA). Some of 800 at St Mary's on 28th (ASJ) were paired and display was noted. The WeBS count at the Tweed estuary produced 548 on 14th, 452 were at Bothal Pond on 25th, 400 at Hexham, Widehaugh on 24th, 380 at Castron on 17th and 350 at Cresswell Pond on 15th (MHu/PRM/MR/TRD/IFo). 100-210 were seen at the Blyth estuary, Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother, Horton Grange Flash, Morpeth, Rock, Ross, Seaton Sluice and Walbottle. At a host of other places, both inland and near the coast, 63 or less were recorded.

A Lapwing flock at Cresswell  
by Colin Bradshaw

**Knot** *Calidris canutus*

The peak number at Lindisfarne, Fenham Flats was 1300+ on 11th (PRM) with 900 noted in Budle Bay on 2nd (MR). Elsewhere, 37 were at Stag Rocks on 8th, the most at St Mary's was 34 on 10th (MT/NT) and five or less were noted at R Blyth, Cresswell and Tynemouth.

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba*

Again present throughout at St Mary's with a peak of 130-140 on 21st (SPP *et al*), also 72 at Little Beach, Berwick on 13th (MHu) and 48 at Ross Back Sands on 2nd (MR). Counts of 12-30 were received from Bamburgh, Cresswell, Druridge, East Chevington, Goswick and Newbiggin and one to five at six other coastal localities.

**Purple Sandpiper** *Calidris maritima*

The number at Bamburgh, Stag Rocks peaked at 142 on 8th, with still 85 there on 26th (DGB/MH *et al*). Elsewhere numbers were relatively low: maxima of 16 at Holy Island and between Boulmer-Longhoughton Steel, 15 at each of Beadnell and St Mary's, 12 at North Blyth and Berwick and up to six at five other coastal locations.

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*

Fenham Flats held 500 on 5th with 120 at Budle Bay the same day (TRD/JD). It was present at Cresswell Pond all month, increasing to 125 on 31st and 102 were at Tynemouth on 18th (TRD/JRT). Peaks at other favourite haunts were 91 at Hauxley on 12th, 76 at Little Beach, Berwick on 13th, 74 in the Tweed estuary on 7th, 70 in the Blyth estuary on 1st, 42 at Newcastle Business Park on 27th and 40 at Beadnell on 27th. Also 85 were at Linton Pond on 8th (ASJ). Up to 24 were recorded at six other coastal locations.

**Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*

After one on 10th-11th two were at Cresswell Pond on 12th (ADMc/CB). Earlier one was noted at Bothal Pond on 1st/3rd (IRD/TB).

**Jack Snipe** *Lymnocyrtus minimus*

Three were at a small marsh near Backworth Pond on 3rd with two there on 6th (CGK/SPP) and two were at Cresswell Pond also on 6th (JSB/EC). Singles were found at Greenhaugh Marsh (Westmoor) on 2nd (AJ) and Kirkley Mill on 4th (AHB).

**Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*

Reports were widespread throughout the month with largest concentrations of c.30 at Cresswell Pond on 6th, 28 at Big Waters on 25th and 27 at Hauxley NR on 12th (JSB/EC/AJJ/ISD/JA). Backworth held 12 on 13th, four to seven appeared at Arcot Pond, Plenmeller Common, Shankhead and West Hartford and one to three were recorded at a further 16 localities.

**Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola*

Doddington again featured strongly with 12 on 12th and 14 on 24th (JHa), nine were in a small area of blackthorn scrub near Ulgham on 13th (MJC) and five at Colt Crag on 15th (MR). Two appeared at Bellingham, Grindstonelaw, Harwood Forest, Haydon Bridge and Holywell Dene and singles at another 17 places.

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

The Rocket Field pools at Holy Island held one throughout (IK *et al*), occasionally joined by a second individual and one was noted in Budle Bay on 1st-2nd and 16th (NNBC).

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

Fenham Flats held 400 on 5th (TRD/JD). The stretch from Boulmer to Longhoughton Steel produced 37 on 26th, 19 were at Beadnell on 27th, 15 in the Blyth estuary on 24th and 15 at Berwick on 18th. One or two were noted at a further six sites, including singles in almost full summer plumage at Old Hartley on 21st and St Mary's on 24th.

One of the summer plumaged Godwits at St. Mary's  
Photograph by Peter Tapsell

**Curlew** *Numenius arquata*

At Holy Island 272 were in the Rocket Field at high tide on 27th (MR) and the peak at Hauxley NR reached 210 on 23rd (JA). Other higher counts were 140 at Cresswell Pond on 25th, 128 at Ross Back Sands on 29th, 123 at St Mary's on 25th, 120 at Howick on 5th and 100 in the Blyth estuary on 24th (TW/PRM/MT/NT/JAR/GB). Ten other sites had 28-81, including 45 well inland at Caistrion on 17th (TRD).

**Green Sandpiper..***Tringa ochropus* Several singles were reported: at Bywell S on 2nd, Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 5th, R Breamish on 9th, along the R Coquet at Thropton on 13th and 16th, Haughton Strother on 14th and Woosington Ponds on 20th and 26th (BNR/MR/IBDa/KDa/JD/SRB).

**Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus*

One was at Newton, Long Nanny on 12th (RNa) and one in Budle Bay on 16th (JPL *et al*).

**Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*

One was seen in Budle Bay on a few dates from 3rd to 22nd inclusive (CGK/DWS *et al*).

**Redshank** *Tringa totanus*

The WeBS count at the Tweed estuary produced 267 on 14th (MHu), 164 were at St Mary's on 28th (ASJ) and 146 at Hauxley NR on 21st (JRT). Other higher counts included 60 at Tynemouth on 13th, 48 on the Tyne at Elswick on 15th, 28-32 at Beadnell and Cresswell Pond and a maximum of 15 at Bothal Pond on 28th (TRD/DM/PRM/IFo).



**Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*

The peak at St Mary's was 72 on 2nd (MT/NT), 60 were at Little Beach, Berwick on 13th (MHu) and also 60 at Spittal on 15th (JMA). Elsewhere 42+ were at Fenham Flats on 11th, 28 in the Tyne estuary on 11th and eight to 13 at times at Beadnell, Blyth, Cheswick, Cullercoats and Holy Island. Small numbers were noted at seven other coastal sites.

**Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla*

Interestingly after a negative report last month all sightings this month were after the 22nd indicating a return to the coast after feeding at sea. A single adult was noted at Newbiggin on 22nd (PRM) followed by one at the normally regular site of Blyth South Harbour on 24th (DMT) increasing to two on 29th (LJM). Two were seen at Beadnell on 27th (PRM) and a single at Cocklawburn Dunes on 29th (PRM). Finally the other main wintering locality at North Shields Fish Quay saw one on 31st, the first since early November (DMT)

**Black-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

The sea roost between Tynemouth and Cullercoats eclipsed all other sites with a peak of 4,200 there on 25th (DMT). The other regularly watched sites saw peaks of 396 at the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay but only 33 at Blyth South Harbour on 24th (DMT). The Tweed Estuary roost saw 560 present on 2nd but 1,160 were noted nearby feeding amongst seaweed on Little Beach, Berwick on 13th (MHu). Other high counts included 400 at Budle Bay on 15th (JMA), 316 at QE II CP at Ashington on 16th (CDH), 200 at Wylam on 10th (JMA), 170 at Jesmond Dene on 11th (MJCo) and 125 at Haydon Bridge on 17th (PRM). Groups of up to 90 were noted at many sites.

**Note:**

The ringing details regarding a white-ringed bird (E1KC) mentioned in last month's bulletin seen at North Shields Fish Quay on 25th December were incorrectly transcribed from the original submission. This was a Dutch ringed bird which was first seen at North Shields in January/February 2007 and then noted in the Netherlands at its breeding area in June 2007 and again there from March to June 2008 before returning to North Shields where it was seen again in November 2008. Details on the Finnish ringed bird which was also present at North Shields on 25th December are still awaited.

**Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus*

Newbiggin continues to be the species winter stronghold with at least ten birds present all month on the main beach comprising of six adults, two second-winters and two first-winters (TRD/JD/KAS/LJM et al). Two adults (both ringed) frequented Amble Harbour all month (IF/TRC). All other reports featured single adults with a popular bird in Brierdene car park all month giving extremely close views (ASJ/IF/KWY et al). Other single adults were at the Tweed Estuary in the gull roost on 2nd (MHu), Swallow Pond on 12th (SPP), St Mary's Island on 13th (TRD/SPP), North Shields on 18th (MT/NT), and Castle Island on 31st (GB).

Three views of Mediterranean Gulls; flying at Newbiggin by Tim Dean and birds at Newbiggin by Peter Tapsell (L) and Colin Bradshaw at Brier Dene (R)



### **Common Gull** *Larus canus*

The sea roost between Tynemouth and Cullercoats provided the highest count with 2,850 on 18th (DMT). Large counts were received for a few sites with 1,100 at Haughton Strother near Humshaugh on 28th (MR) and at least 600 at Haydon Bridge on 17th (PRM). 200 were found S of Alnwick near the A1 at Snipe House on 15th with 114 at Peppy in the S of the county on 24th (SWA). The regularly watched sites saw low numbers with only peaks of 35 at the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay on 25th and a single at Blyth South Harbour throughout (DMT). Groups of up to 70 were recorded at a wide mix of localities. The increase in records is primarily due to BTO Atlas work with this species being found inland in winter in large numbers.

### **Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus graelsii*

Wintering individuals were again scarce with the only multiple count being two adults at Blyth South Harbour on 24th (DMT). The regular over-wintering bird was again noted in the Cramlington area on several dates. Otherwise single adults were found at Featherstone Castle on 9th (SW), Big Waters on 11th (GB), Monkseaton on 13th (LJM) and Walker NC, Newcastle on 21st (SPP). A second-winter at Linton Lane NR on 8th was a good find and shows that immature birds are to be found by the dedicated gull devotee (PRM).

### **Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus argenteus*

Two big concentrations were noted, both near tips with 2,500 counted at Linton on 10th and 1,800 at Backworth Pond on 16th (ASJ). The regularly watched sites provided peaks of ca.700 at Blyth South Harbour on 24th and 322 at the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay on 4th (DMT). Smaller groups of up to 45 were noted at a variety of sites. A leucistic bird at Linton Lane NR was found on 8th (PRM).

### **Northern Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus argentatus*

Several reports were received of this northern race with at least 20 noted at Linton Lane NR (PRM), seven at Blyth South Harbour on 18th (PRM) and at least one at North Shields Fish Quay on 11th (DMT).

### **Iceland Gull** *Larus glaucoideus*

A first-winter was at the Blyth Estuary on 1st (CGK) but no further reports there until 24th when another first-winter was found at Blyth South harbour (DMT) and two first-winters together there on 31st (TRD/CDB). One of these birds showed a dark tip to the bill but still had a dark eye hence a juvenile/first-winter. A first-winter first seen at Tynemouth on 1st and 2nd (JRT/CB) was later found dead on 14th and the skin retained (STH). A further first-winter was discovered at North Shields Fish Quay on 3rd (DMT) with probably the same individual at the Black Midden Rocks, Tynemouth the same day (MT/NT). A first-winter was at Holywell Pond for only 30 minutes on 7th (SPP/MT/NT). Finally a second-winter was at Potland near the QEII CP roundabout on 23rd (IRD).

Iceland Gulls at Blyth South Harbour by Tim Dean on 31st (right) and at Linton Pond on 7th by Neil Foggo.



**Glaucous Gull** *Larus hyperboreus*

The adult was still being found at Linton Lane NR through to at least the 16th (PRM/JR/CDH). A juvenile frequented Tynemouth on 2nd (CB) and a first-winter was found at Blyth South Harbour on 18th (PRM/DM/STH) with further reports through to 29th (LJM/TRC).

**Great Black-backed Gull** *Larus marinus*

A large concentration of at least 1,000 birds were in fields near the Linton roundabout on 10th (ASJ). The regularly watched sites showed peaks of 176 at Blyth South Harbour on 11th with 163 at the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay on 3rd (DMT). Otherwise numbers were small with up to 16 at a number of localities both coastal and inland.

**Guillemot** *Uria aalge*

A movement was noted on 18th at St Mary's island when 18 moved S late morning (MT/NT). 17 were off Beadnell on 27th with eight at Cocklawburn Dunes and three at Ross back Sands on 29th (PRM). Ten were off Emmanuel Head, Holy Island on 31st (IK) with two at Newbiggin on 22nd (PRM) and two at Druridge on 28th (TRD/JD).

**Razorbill** *Alca torda*

All reports concerned singles with the only movement being one S at St Mary's Island on 18th (MT/NT). Other sightings were at Ross back Sands on 2nd, Lynemouth on 4th with a batch of reports at the end of the month including two at Stag Rocks, Bamburgh on 28th (Aco) and singles at Beadnell on 27th and Ross Back Sands on 29th (PRM).

**Rock Dove / Feral Pigeon** *Columba livia*

An amazing 22 records this month. The highest count came from Newcastle City Centre with at least 400 roosting there on 4th (DM), 250 were recorded at a much more rural location with at least 250 on Holy Island on 17th (DWS). Other notable counts included 180 at Seahouses Harbour on 17th, 160 at North Shields Fish Quay on 4th, 150 at Morpeth 19th, 85 at Blyth Bus Station on 21st and 81 at nearby Blyth south Harbour on 24th. 60 were reported from Cresswell (Hemscotthill Farm) with 40 at the nearby pond. Atlas workers recorded 16 at Wark (North Tyne), 13 at Esp Mill and five at Pit House.

**Stock Dove** *Columba oenas*

Whittle Dene Reservoir held the highest concentration 18 there on 5th (MR), 12 were at Norham (Mount Carmel) on 25th (MHu) and 11 were in the Willimoteswick area on 28th (SJH). Five to ten were in the Bearsbridge (Whiffeld) area, Bellingham, Eshott, Jesmond Dene, Shankfoot area and Woodhorn. One to five were reported from Big Waters NR, Chesters Walled Garden, Cramlington (Dam Dykes), Cresswell Pond NR, Haggerston, Hartburn, Jesmond, Norham, Pit House and Walwick.

**Woodpigeon** *Columba palumbus*

There was some huge flocks reported this month including at least 2000 feeding on a un-harvested barley *Hordeum sp* field at Saley (High Kellas) on 14th (RMH), 1500 at Blagdon and Matten on 20th (MRS/EC) and 1000 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 5th (MR). 806 were at Rock on 9th and 600 in the Whittonstall tetrad on 25th. 100-500 were reported from Alnwick, Arcot Pond, Bothal Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Ellington (Warkworth Lane Ponds), Earsdon (Peigh Hills), Norham, Ordley, Plessey Woods, Prestwick Carr, Unthank, and Walwick.

**Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

An enormous roost of 102 was counted at Slatyford (west of Newcastle) on 13th (MH). A 'dole' of 24 were on power lines in Hipsburn on 18th (PCF) and 23 were found in one hour of timed tetrad visit at Annitsford on 5th (LJM). In the north of the county, 19 were at Lucker and 18 at Bamburgh on 20th and 17 were on Holy Island on 27th and 15 were Ulgham, 13 at Kirkley Mill and ten at Waren Mill.

**Barn Owl** *Tyto alba*

69 records were received this month. Largest counts, of three, came from Holborn (Kyloe) on 3rd (CGK) and Hepple on 13th (MNC). Twos were present throughout the month on Holy Island (IK) and Druridge Bay CP (MJC) and at Widdrington on 1st, Belford on 3rd, Cresswell on 20th and East Chevington and Plenmeller Common on 25th. All other records were of single birds, predictably the coastal strip around the Druridge Bay area attracted several records as did the Wooler/Millfield Plain/Chatton area in the north of the county (NNBC *et al.*), singles were also seen in Coquetdale at Rothbury and Sharperton. There were fewer records from the south and west of the county, singles were reported from Haughton Strother (dead – apparently predated), Plenmeller Common, Shanksfoot and Whitfield. One observer counted four individuals on a single journey between Howick and Scremerston (JAR).

**Little Owl** *Athene noctua*

Two were at Doddington on 22nd (TRD/JD). Singles were reported from Backworth, Big Waters NR, Catton, Dinnington, Hepple, Kirkley (Startup and Carter Moor), Mickley (Mount Pleasant) and Slaley.

**Tawny Owl** *Strix Aluco*

Most records were of calling birds including four at Howick on 2nd (JAR), three males at Great Whittington (ALT) and a pair at Bywell (BNR). Singles were seen or heard throughout the month at Kirknewton, Rothbury and Stamfordham (where it was on a garden nestbox daily (EC) ).

**Long-eared Owl** *Asio otus*

Three roosted together in a Holy Island Garden during the month, probably kept on the Island by an abundance of voles (IK), one was seen near Sweethope Lough on 28th (MJC).

**Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus*

Holy Island attracted between two and three throughout the month (IK *et al.*) (three noted on 5th (ADMc). Singles were noted at Backworth in the first half of the month, East Chevington NR on numerous dates and at Ross Back Sands on 18th (TB *et al.*).

**Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*

Two were noted at Branton Gravel Pit on 24th (NNBC), one was noted at Big Waters NR on ten different dates (AJJ/ISD) and Jesmond Dene on four different dates between 4th and 25th (DHWB). Singles were also noted at Cresswell Pond NR, Holywell Dene, Morpeth (Scotch Gill Woods LNR) and Wallsend Swallow Pond NR.

**Green Woodpecker** *Picus viridis*

One was heard calling all month at Holystone (DRo) and between 4th and 10th at Rothbury (TRD/JD) and Longhirst Hall between 20th and 23rd (TB). Singles were also seen or heard at Berwick upon Tweed (Railway Station), Big Waters, Hepburn Woods, Kylee, Longlee and Rothbury (Addycombe).

**Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major*

58 records were received for this species in January. Four were at Featherstone Castle on 9th (SW), at Chesters Walled Garden, three were drumming throughout the month (ALT) and three were also noted at North Shields (Northumberland Park) on 13th, Haughton Strother on 14th and in a Slaley garden on feeders on 25th. Twos were on garden feeders regularly throughout the month at Longbenton and Stannington, two were also noted at Capheaton, Derwent Reservoir, Horton Grange, Melkridge, Norham, Plessey Woods CP, Rennington and Rothbury.

**Skylark** *Alauda arvensis*

The largest gathering was 30, found in a stubble field at Longhirst during an atlas visit on 24th (GB) and 16 were in stubble at Cresswell on 3rd (DM *et al.*). Nine were counted at Humshaugh on 12th and eight in stubble at Howick on 9th. One to six were at Big Waters NR, Ellington and West Allardean.

**Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis*

The unusually large flock noted last month at Prestwick Carr was still present this month, peaking at 130 on 24th (TRC *et al.*). One other large flock (33) was reported from near Bellingham during an Atlas visit (MJC). One to five were noted at Great Whittington, Howick, Longhirst Flash, Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Town Moor), Pit House, Slaley, West Hartford and Whitley Bay (St. Mary's Island).

**Rock Pipit** *Anthus petrosus*

St Mary's Island at Whitley Bay attracted the highest number with a peak of 12 there on 18th (DM/STH *et al.*) with smaller counts made on other dates. Elsewhere, seven were counted between Boulmer and Howick Haven on 30th (IRD), two were noted at Cheswick and Beadnell and singles were at Blyth (South Harbour), Budle Bay and Holy Island.

**Water Pipit** *Anthus spinoletta*

Two were at St Mary's Island (Whitley Bay) on 20th (MT/NT) with a single being noted there on numerous dates between 2nd and 31st.

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*

Three were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 5th (MR), two were at Ellington on 1st (TB) and Slaley on 2nd (RMH) and a pair at Howick (Rumbling Kern) on 17th (NFO). All other records were of single birds including the usual city centre haunts, on the shore at Boulmer and a singing male at Wark (North Tyne) on 9th (PRM).



**Pied Wagtail** *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

The large gathering at Bewick Drift Pools (Lynemouth) was still evident this month with at least 50, probably more, there on 13th (EC/JSB). Smaller counts included six in the Shanksfoot area on 28th and four at Melkridge on 21st (SJH). Three were recorded at Cresswell on 8th, Whitley Bay (St. Mary's Island) and Cawfields on 22nd and Norham on 24th. One was noted as being 'tame' in Newcastle City Centre on 30th and as being 'unusual in winter' on Holy Island.

**Waxwing** *Bombycilla garrulus*

St Bartholomew's Churchyard in Longbenton attracted a large flock which peaked at 86 on 4th, 20 were there on 1st, 48 on 3rd and 68 on 5th (ASJ *et al.*), 40 were at nearby High Heaton on 24th (SPP). 40 were also at Prudhoe on 14th (TWi), 30 at Kirkley Hall on 20th and presumably the same flock of 27 just north of Ponteland on 22nd and 26 were at West Moor on 2nd. Ten to 20 were at Broomhill, Gubeon (Nr Morpeth), Snod's Edge and the A1058 at High Heaton. One to ten were noted at Berwick-upon-Tweed, Big Waters NR, Bingfield, Blyth, Chollerford, Colt Crag, Hauxley, Hebron, North Shields, Scotland Gate, Warkworth.



A feasting Waxwing at Gubeon on 24th by Tim Dean and a flock of this attractive visitor on power lines at Ponteland by Chris Barlow

**Dipper** *Cinclus cinclus*

Six were counted in the Rothbury/ Thropton area on 16th (TRD/JD) and two here on numerous dates, three were again at Shanksfoot on 28th (SJH) and at Haltwhistle on 29th (SW). Two males were singing near Bellingham on 2nd (MJC) and Hexham on 9th (PRM). Two were also at Alnwick (Hulne Park), Featherstone Castle, Mitford, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Willimoteswick. Single singing birds were noted at Prudhoe and Holystone.

**Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Five was the peak count at Chesters Walled Garden on 1st (ALT), five were also at Slaley on 24th (RMH). Atlas workers found four at Peigh Hills (Earsdon) and Ulgham and three at Ellington (Highthorn) and Yarnspath Law.

**Dunnoek** *Prunella modularis*

Atlas workers recorded the highest totals with six at Slaley (RMH) and five at Tritlington (MJCo) on 24th. Four were in the Chipchase tetrad and three at Unthank.

**Robin** *Erithacus rubecula*

Winter Atlas workers submitted the highest counts this month. 18 were near Bellingham on 2nd (MJC), Slaley on 24th (RMH) and Walwick on 31st (PRM). Ten were found at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 5th (MR), and eight at Chesters House and Walled Garden on 31st (ALT). Elsewhere there were seven in Jesmond Dene on 25th and six at Ulgham on 29th (MJCo). Four to five were at Chipchase, Holywell Dene, Humford Mill, Peigh Hills and a Walbottle garden, and one to three at a further 18 localities.

**Stonechat** *Saxicola torquata*

Very well reported this month. Records were received from 16 coastal and 28 inland sites. Six were found near Bellingham on 2nd (MJC) and in the Druridge / East Chevington area on 14th (MT/NT). Five were on Berwick Moor on 3rd, four near Whitfield on 5th (MH) and three on Holy Island on 23rd, and Batailshielhaugh on 31st. (TRD/JD/JR). Birds specifically identified as a pair / pairs were recorded at nine coastal sites (nine pairs) and seven inland sites (eight pairs). One to two were reported from a further 24 localities.

**Blackbird** *Turdus merula*

The highest counts came from the south west of the county. 33 were in the Willimoteswick area on 28th, 32 north of Melkridge on 21st, 27 at Chesters House and Walled Garden on New Years day, and 19 at Cawfields on 22nd (SJH/ALT). Elsewhere 24 were found at Prestwick Carr on 10th (PCF), and 24 at Slaley on 24th (RMH). The spell of hard weather may have been responsible for some above average garden counts, with 23 in a Corbridge garden on 5th by far the highest count here in ten years of residence (MR). Numbers peaked at 21 in a Walbottle garden on 18th, ten frequented a Mount Pleasant garden on 7th / 12th and there were seven in a small Dinnington garden on 6th (KR/LR/SWA/PCF). 11-14 were noted at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh), Holywell Dene, Ulgham and Unthank, and nine to ten at Chipchase, Peigh Hills and Walwick. One to seven were reported from a further 14 localities.

**Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris*

Typically some of the largest mid-winter counts came from higher ground with 800 at Harwood on 2nd by far the most impressive (MNC). 500 were found at Sharperton on 24th and 350 in the Cawfields area on 21st (DRo/SJH). 300 at Big Waters on 24th was the largest lowland flock, followed by 160 at Prestwick Carr on 25th (AJJ/ISD/STH). 100-150 were noted at Alnwick Moor, Alwinton, Carrycoats Hall, Hartley burn Common, Holywell Grange, Plenmeller Common and Ridley Common. Smaller counts in the range 50-92 were received for Backworth, Elsdon, Grindon Lough, Holy Island, Melkridge, Mindrum, Plashetts, Slaley, Swallow Pond, Watergate and Widehaugh (Hexham). A count of 60 at Holy Island on 16th was considered unusual (IK). Flocks of 20-45 were reported from 14 localities and one-18 from a further 19 sites.

**Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos*

A much better month for this species with birds reported from 22 localities (compared with only four in December 2008). Six were noted at various locations in the Prestwick Carr area on 3rd, and at Willimoteswick on 28th (PCF/SJH). Five were north of Melkridge on 21st (SJH), and four in full song at Monkseaton on 2nd (ASJ). Three were at Jesmond Dene throughout the month (MJCo) and two at Brunswick, Mount Pleasant, Newcastle (Beatty Ave), Norham and Shankfoot. Whether this increase in records is the result of an improvement in observer contributions, or a genuine increase in the number of birds is unclear, however a number of observers commented on the apparent scarcity of this species in winter, i.e. single birds at Netherton Park (only bird noted here this month RWM/MIM), Kenton (first time for months! MRS) and a Walbottle garden (first record here since June 2008 KR/LR). Single birds were noted at a further nine sites.

**Redwing** *Turdus iliacus*

500 at Carrycoats Hall on 16th was the largest flock (EC/JSB). 250 were at Harwood on 2nd (MNC) and 200 at Big Waters on 24th (AJJ/ISD). 170-175 were reported from Holystone and Tranwell (DRo/GB) and 100-101 in the Cawfields area and north of Melkridge on 21st (SJH). Lesser numbers in the range 40-58 were noted at Angerton Lake, Colt Crag Reservoir, Cramlington, Elsdon, Featherstone Castle, Kirkley Hall, Prestwick Carr and Slaley. Counts of 15-37 came from Arcot Pond, Blagdon, Eglingham, Jesmond Dene, Linton Lane, Melkridge, Ordley, Peeply, Ridley Common, Shankfoot, Shield on the Wall, Snods Edge and Watergate. One to ten were noted at a further 22 localities.

**Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus*

Widely reported again this month, the highest count 16 at Ross Village on 2nd (MR) while in the south west, 12 were in the Shankfoot area and nine at Willimoteswick on 28th and eight north of Melkridge on 21st (SJH). Seven were in Exhibition Park on 9th (GB) and six at Cawfields, Hauxley, Howick and Slaley. Returning to the south west, five were found in the Benkshill area, and four at Shield on the Wall and Walwick. Four were feeding with Fieldfares at Bothal Pond on 21st, and one to three reported from a further 28 sites. Singing birds were noted from the 13th at Bellister Haughs (Haltwhistle), Chesters House and Walled Garden, Kirkley Hall, Longhirst Flash, Leazes Park, Spital Tongues, and Whitfield Hall.

**Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla*

A single male visited a garden at Heddon-on-the-Wall on 7th and 18th-19th (JSB)

**Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*

The only record was a single bird in a Gosforth garden on 8th (AJN).

**Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus*

A Timed Tetrad Visit near Bellingham produced a count of 26 on 2nd, the only double figure count received (MJC). Seven to eight were found at Batailshielhaugh, Little Ward Law and Willimoteswick (JR/SJH). Counts of four to six were received for Chesters House and Walled Garden, Chipchase, QEII CP and Shankfoot, and one to three at a further 22 sites.

**Long-tailed Tit** *Aegithalos caudatus*

Well recorded throughout month. Largest flocks involved 50 at Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 13th (MNC), 21 at Haughton Strother near Humshaugh on 1st (MR), 19 near Bellingham on 2nd (MJC), 14 at Hauxley NR on 3rd (DM/STH/GB/LAR), Swallow Pond on 16th (SPP) and (DM/STH/PA), near Melkridge on 21st (SJH) and Scotland Gate on 24th (SLB/MSK), 11 at Haydon Bridge on 17th (PRM). One-ten were at a further 39 widespread localities including gardens at Blyth, Cramlington, Gosforth, Longbenton, Melkridge, Old Hartley and Walbottle.

**Blue Tit** *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Atlas visits produced 43 near Bellingham on 2nd (MJC), 25 at Wark on 31st (PRM), 20 at Bankhead on 14th (PC), 16 at Holywell Dene on 2nd (MT/NT), 15 at Highthorn on 21st (MJCo), 14 at Slaley on 24th (RMH), 13 at Haughton Strother on 14th (MR) and 12 at Chesters Walled Garden on 1st (ALT). One to two were noted at a further 20 widespread localities.

**Great Tit** *Parus major*

17 were at Holywell Dene on 7th (MT/NT), 12 at Ulgham on 29th (MJCo), 11 at Prestwick Carr on 2nd (PCF) and Jesmond Dene on 25th (MJCo), nine at Chesters Walled Garden on 31st (ALT), seven at Highthorn on 21st (MJCo), six at Chipchase on 5th (PC), Humford Mill (Bedlington) on 23rd ((RMAr/MAR) and Slaley on 24th (RMH). One to five were at a further 12 widespread localities.

**Coal Tit** *Periparus ater*

31 were near Bellingham during an Atlas visit on 2nd (MJC), 12 in the Willimoteswick area on 28th (STH) and Little Wardlaw on 31st (JR), nine at Chesters Walled Garden on 14th (ALT), Colt Crag on 15th (MR) and Jesmond Dene on 25th (MJCo), seven at Shield On The Wall area on 29th (SJH) and six at Chipchase on 5th (PC). One to four were at a further 11 widespread localities.

**Willow Tit** *Poecile montanus*

Two visited gardens at Grindstonelaw and Scotland Gate all month (JSB/SLB/MSK). Two were also at Ellington on 1st (TB), Addycombe (Rothbury) on 27th (MJC) and Willimoteswick on 28th (SJH). Singles were observed at a Linden Hall garden all month (NFO), Linton Pond on 2nd (TRD), Prestwick Carr on 2nd (PCF), a Tranwell Woods garden between 8th-22nd (PAT), Ilderton Moor on 10th (IBDa/KDa), Backworth on 13th (TRD), Swallow Pond on 16th (SPP), a Dinnington garden on 18th (PCF), Slaley on 24th (RMH) and Walwick on 31st (PRM).

**Marsh Tit** *Poecile palustris*

Two were at Bywell on 2nd (BNR), a Linden Hall garden on several dates throughout month and Burgham Park on 24th (NFO). Singles were at a Rothbury garden all month (JD/TRD), Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth) on 3rd and 23rd-24th (TB/DM/EC *et al.*), Hartburn on 3rd (DM/STH/GB/LAR), Haughton Strother and Low Moralee on 14th (MR/PC), Mitford on 17th (JAT), a Stamfordham garden on 20th (EC) and QE II CP on 24th (JMA).

**Marsh Tit is a target species for 2009. Please report all records.**

**Nuthatch** *Sitta europaea*

Six were found near Bellingham during an Atlas visit on 2nd (MLC) and Harbottle on 26th (DRo), four at Chesters Walled Garden on 1st (ALT), three at Featherstone Castle on 9th (SW), Hartford Bridge (Plessey) on 25th (LJM), Belsay Hall on 26th (KR/LR), Twizell near Ogle on 28th (JHa) and Walwick on 31st (PRM). One-two were also at Allen Banks, Arcot Hall, Armstrong Park (Newcastle), Barrasford, Battlesteads Hotel, Bears Bridge, (NNBC).Blagdon, Capheaton, Chipchase, Featherstone, Hartburn, Holystone, Holywell Dene, Humford Mill (Bedlington), Humshaugh, Jesmond Dene, Kirknewton, Mitford Castle, Northumberland Park (North Shields), Old Moor, Peepy, Powburn, Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth), The Sele (Hexham), Spindlestone Woods, Warden, Wark, Willimoteswick and Yearle.

**Treecreeper** *Certhia familiaris*

Six were observed at Chesters Walled Garden on 1st (ALT), five near Bellingham on 2nd (MJC), two at Ellington on 1st (TB), Haughton Strother on 5th (MR), Broome Hill Farm (Alnwick) on 13th (NNBC), Colt Crag on 15th (MR), Haydon Bridge on 17th (PRM) and Prestwick Carr on 24th (PCF). Singles were also at Allen

Banks, Alexandra Park (Cramlington), Arcot Hall, Bank Head, Big Waters, Capheaton, Cawfields, Druridge Bay, Exhibition Park (Newcastle), Featherstone Castle, Haltwhistle, Hauxley NR, Highthorn, Holywell Dene, Hulne Park, Humshaugh, Jesmond Dene, Langleeford Hope (Harthope Valley), a Nedderton garden, QE II CP, Ridley Stokoe, a Rothbury garden, Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth), Shankfoot (Slaley), Spindleston, Swallow Pond, Warden and a Warkworth garden.

**Great Grey Shrike** *Lanius excubitor*

One was at Blawearie near Old Berwick on 8th (NNBC).

**Jay** *Garrulus glandarius*

Five were found in the Willimoteswick area on 28th (SJH), four at Ellington on 1st (TB), three at Arcot Pond on 18th (LJM) and Gosforth Park NR on 18th (AJ), two at Capheaton on 4th (PRM), Abbey (Morpeth) on 6th (ADM), Snods Edge on 17th (AJ), Bellasis Farm (Blagdon) on 21st (MRS), Howick on 22nd (JAR), Ashington Riverside Park on 24th (LJM) and Shankfoot on 28th (SJH). Singles were also at Arcot Hall, Barrasford, Big Waters, Chesters, Ellington, Haughton Strother, Holystone, Humshaugh, Jesmond Dene, Mitford Castle and Steads, Newbrough, Peepy, Ponteland, Postern Burn (Morpeth), Ridley Common (Shankhead), Snods Edge and Walwick.

**Magpie** *Pica pica*

Large winter roosts involved 54 at Whitelea Chase (Cramlington) on 4th increasing to 74 on 10th (STH *et al.*), 54+ at Walbottle Brickworks on 8th (MH). A cycle ride along Hadrian's Way found 29 between St. Anthony's (Byker)-North Shields and 37 between North Shields-Lemington on 9th (MH). 18 were at Seaton Delaval on 11th (JR). One to nine were at a further 13 widespread localities.

**Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula*

400+ were at a roost at Rising Sun Farm, Wallsend on 25th (SPP). 380 came into roost at Haughton Strother on 28th (MR), 300 south over Beacon Hill (Cramlington) on 4th (STH), 270 at Chipchase on 5th (PC), 250 at Gosforth on 27th (PCF). 200 at Mount Pleasant on 16th (SWA) and Walbottle on 31st (KR/LR), 150 on the Town Moor (Newcastle) on 20th (DM), 188 at Cawfields on 22nd (SJH), 122 at Walwick on 31st (PRM), 121 at Benkshill on 19th (SJH) and 110 at Belsay Hall on 26th (KR/LR). One to 100 were also noted at a further 28 widespread localities.

**Rook** *Corvus frugilegus*

1000 were leaving a roost at Warenford on 13th (JAR), 480 came into roost at Haughton Strother on 28th (MR), 300 were found in the Chipchase tetrad during an Atlas visit on 5th (PC), 250 at Wylam on 10th and A1 at Scremerston on 15th (JMA), 123 at Cawfields on 22nd (SJH) and 100 at A1 at Clifton on 15th (JMA). One to 91 were at a further 18 widespread localities.

**Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone*

Gatherings involved 45 at Walwick on 31st (PRM), 28 at Watergate on 12th (PC), 20 at Peigh Hills on 13th (MJCo), 16 at Hemscott Hill (Cresswell) on 8th (MJCo) and one to 11 at a further 21 widespread localities.

**Raven** *Corvus corax*

Birds were regularly observed at Plenmeller Common all month with a maximum of 15 (13 displaying over roost wood and another pair one mile west at Todhill Wood Farm) on 25th (STH *et al.*). Elsewhere, five were at Kingswood Common on 17th (MH), four at Yarnspeth Law on 31st (JR), pairs at Harthope Valley on 4th (TRD/JD), Keenleyside and Whitfield on 16th (JSB/EC), Ridley Common (Shankwood) on 18th (SJH), Queen's Crag near Broomlee Lough on 21st (PC) and Holystone on 22nd (DRo). Singles were at Grindon Lough on 4th (AA), Blawearie near Old Berwick on 11th (IBDa/KDa), Sipton Shield (Allendale) on 17th (ACo) and Cawfields on 22nd (SJH).

**Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*

2,000 assembled in a stubble field at Moot Law on 14th (PCF). 450 went to roost near Prestwick Carr on 25th (STH), ca. 200 at Combhills (Slaley) on 15th (RMH), 175 at Plashetts on 17th (PCF) and 110 at Longlee on 13th (PC). One to 100 were at a further 31 mainly urban localities.

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*

67 were noted during an Atlas visit to the Burradon/Dudley area on 24th (LJM), 60 came to feeders at Battlesteads Hotel on 23rd (CB), 54 at Beadnell on 20th (PRM), 50 at Peepy on 24th (SWA), 43 north of Melkridge on 21st (SJH), and 22 at Unthank on 24th (JR). Ten to 18 were also noted at Birtley, Cawfields, Longlee, Shankfoot, Slaley, Tritlington, Ulgham, a Walbottle garden and Willimoteswick. One to nine were at a further 12 widespread localities including a pair early nest building at Park Village, Featherstone.



**Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*

30 came to feed at East Fleetham on 10th (TRD/JD), 29 at Broome Hill Farm (Alnwick) on 13th (NNBC), ca. 20 at Great Whittington on 14th (ALT), 14 at Warkworth Lane Ponds on 25th (PRM), 12 at Beal Station on 8th (MHu), ten at Hauxley on 2nd (TRD), Highthorn on 21st (MJCo) and Cat Inn, Oxford on 27th (MHu), nine were at Low Moor Crossing on 3rd (TRC), eight at Matfen on 8th (EC) a Warkworth garden on 25th (JMA) and seven at Horton Grange (Blagdon) on 20th (MRS). One to five were at a further 22 widespread localities including gardens at Corbridge, Dinnington, Netherton Park, Old Hartley and Saltwick. One seen at Sharperton on 24th was the observers second ever record in Coquetdale (Dro).

**Tree Sparrow is a target species for 2009. Please report all records.**

**Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs*

Ca.100 were found at Netherwitton and Thrunton Farm on 27th (AL/PT). 61 were near Bellingham on 2nd (MJC), 60+ at Bell's Farm, Cresswell between 18th-31st (SLB/MSK), 51 at West Ditchburn on 30th (MLC), 43 at Tritlington on 24th (MJCo), 39 at Slaley on 24th (RMH) and 25 at Walwick on 31st (PRM). One to 20 were at a further 20 widespread localities.

**Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla*

Ca.400 feeding on rape stubble near Carr Edge, Frankham on 5th was by far the largest flock (RSF). Elsewhere, 14 were at Capheaton on 4th (PRM), nine at a Corbridge garden on 24th (MR), six+ near Fenwick on 4th (ALT), three at a Tranwell Woods garden on 23rd (PAT) and Sharperton on 24th (DRo), two visited a Rothbury garden all month (TRD/JD), two at Holywell pond on 7th (SPP), Battlesteads Hotel on 23rd (CB) and Netherwitton on 27th (AL). Singles were also at Addycombe (Rothbury), Bell's Farm (Cresswell), Benkshill, Branton, Colt Crag, Fell cottages (Slaley), Kirknewton, Nunriding and Whittle Dene.

**Greenfinch** *Carduelis chloris*

110+ were roosting in laurels at Scotswood, Newcastle on 9th (MH), 50+ at Holywell Pond feeding station on 7th (SPP), 31 at a Corbridge garden on 30th (MR), 25 at South Charlton on 15th (MLC), 18 at Hall Close (Cramlington) on 2nd (DM/JJM) and 17 at a Walbottle garden on 11th (KR/LK). One to 15 were at a further 17 widespread localities.

**Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis*

Largest flocks involved 90 (three flocks) in the Longbridge End area on 4th (IK), 55 at North Blyth on 8th (PCF), 50 at Haggerston on 15th (JMA), 40 at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 6th (DM), 30 at Brandling Park (Newcastle) on 20th (DM) and 20-30 at West Hartford on 1st (DM/STH/PA). 25 were at Howick on 9th (JAR) and Woodneuk Farm (Slaley) on 15th (RMH). One to 20 were at a further 29 widespread localities including gardens at Dinnington, Walbottle and Whitley Bay.

**Siskin** *Carduelis spinus*

60 gathered at Holystone on 4th (DRo), 48 at Netherton Park between 2nd-6th (RWM/MIM), 40 at Humshaugh on 8th (SW) and Scotland Gate on 20th (MSK), 35 at a Rothbury garden on 22nd (TRD/JD), 22 at Holywell Dene on 2nd (MT/NT), 20 at Linton Pond on 24th (GB), 11 at Haughton Strother on 14th (MR), ten at Big Waters on 1st (GB), on feeders at Battlesteads Hotel on 23rd (GB), Swallow Pond on 16th (SPP) and Harbottle on 25th (TRD/JD). One to five were at a further 15 widespread localities including gardens at Beaconhill (Cramlington), Hipsburn, Newcastle, Pegswood, Rothbury and Tranwell Woods.

**Linnet** *Carduelis cannabina*

Ca.1,000 were at West Hartford on 23rd (EC/JSB) with 200 at nearby East Hartford on 31st (STH *et al*). 160 were at Burradon on 24th (LJM), q120 at Big Waters on 5th (AJJ/ISD), 60 at Chare Ends, Holy Island on 27th (MR), 44 at Pithouse on 5th (PC), 40 at Cheswick on 6th (TRD/JD), 30 at Holywell Dene on 2nd (KWY) and Newton Underwood on 3rd (DM/STH/GB/LAR). Three to 20 were at a further eight widespread localities.

**Twite** *Carduelis flavirostris*

The main Druridge Bay flock was present at Hemscott Hill Links all month with a peak of 200 on 23rd (EC/JSB *et al*). Elsewhere, 120 were at Beal Sluice on 8th (MHu), 75 at Ross Point on 2nd (MR), 40 at Monk's House on 20th (SRB), 29 at East Chevington on 14th (MT/NT), 24 north of Druridge Pools on 2nd (AA/MH), 20 at Fenham-le-Moor on 9th (JHa), six at Holy Island Causeway towards Fenham Mill on 5th (ADMc) and two at the Long Nanny on 20th (PRM). Inland, 18 were with Yellowhammers and Reed Buntings at Doddington on 22nd (TRD/JD).

**Redpoll Sp.**

Three were at Prestwick Carr on 4th (AJN), two E at Newcastle Business Park on 27th (GB) and one at Big Waters on 1st (GB).

**Lesser Redpoll** *Carduelis caberet*

Nine were near Bellingham on 2nd (MJC) and Langleeford Hope on 14th (TRD/JD), eight at Prestwick Carr on 1st (PCF), seven at QE II CP on 14th (MT/NT), six at Shankfoot on 28th (SJH). Four at Blawearie near Old Berwick on 13th (NNBC), three at Whittle Dene on 5th (MR), two at Haughton Strother on 1st (MR), Linden Hall on 1st (NFO) and Willimoteswick on 28th (SJH) and one at Hauxley NR on 3rd (DM/STH/GB/LAR).

**Crossbill** *Loxia curvirostra*

Present at Swallow Pond between 1st-18th with a peak of 18 on 18th (JPD *et al.*) and Druridge Bay CP between 2nd-2nd with a maximum of 17 on 5th (JA) and 13th (EC/JSB), 15 were at nearby Hauxley on 6th (EC/JSB). Six were at Scotland Gate on 9th (SK), four at Fenham Mill on 3rd (TB), High Chibburn (Widdrington) on 13th (EC/JSB) and Big Waters on 21st (AJJ/ISD), three at Ponteland GC on 31st (PCF), two at Green Letch near Bedlington on 7th (MJC) and singles at Linden Hall on 1st and 11th and Burgham Park on 24th (NFO).

**Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Ten were at Blawearie near Old Berwick all month (NNBC) and along Hadrian's Way between St. Anthony's (Byker)-Low Walker/Wallsend on 9th (MH), eight visited a Scotland Gate garden all month (SLB/MSK), seven at Brizlee Wood on 16th (NNBC), six at Prestwick Carr on 1st (PCF) and Linton Pond on 20th (PT), five at Green Letch near Bedlington on 8th (MJC), a Newcastle garden on 10th and 17th (MJCo) and Haughton Strother on 14th (MR), four daily on feeders at a Rothbury garden all month (TRD/JD), Arcot Pond and Thrunton Woods on 18th (LJM/NFO). One to three were at a further 42 widespread localities.

**Hawfinch** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

One was discovered at Walwick during an Atlas visit on 31st (PRM).

**Lapland Bunting** *Calcarius lapponicus*

One was heard as it flew over Blakemoor Farm, Cresswell on 9th (TRD/JD).

**Snow Bunting** *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Only records involved one flying SW over Widehaugh, Hexham on 24th (MR) and one over Holy Island Lough on 27th (MR).

**Yellowhammer** *Emberiza citronella*

55 were at Doddington on 2nd (TRD/JD), 54 at Boulmer on 27th (PT), 43 at South Charlton on 15th (MLC), 20 at Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay) on 18th (MNC), 15 at Sharperton on 24th (DRo), 12 at Hemscott Hill, Cresswell on 8th (MJCo), 12 at Woodhall Farm (Barrasford) on 18th (TRD) and one to ten at Big Waters, Butterlaw (West Newcastle), Chipchase, Cresswell Pond, Dinnington, Elswick, Holywell Dene, Horton, Humshaugh, near Longhirst Flash, Monk's House Pool, Norham, Nunriding, Peigh Hills, Saltwick, Slaley, Tritlington, Wark and Widdrington.

**Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Large gatherings involved 65 at Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay) on 18th (MNC), 60 at Doddington on 22nd (TRD/JD), 40 at Holywell Dene on 2nd (KWY), 25 at Linton Pond on 8th (ASJ), 18 at East Chevington on 24th (IRD), 11 at Chare Ends, Holy Island on 27th (MR) and one to eight at Beadnell, Big Waters, Cawfields, Chipchase, Cresswell Pond, Hemscott Hill (Cresswell), Holy Island Lough, Holystone, Humshaugh, Langleeford Hope (Harthope Valley), near Longhirst Flash, Netherton Park, Norham, Pittland House, Saltwick, St. Mary's Wetland and West Hartford.

**ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN****Escapes****Bar-headed Goose** *Anser indicus*

A fine addition to the goose collection at Newton comprised one consorting with Greylags on 3rd (TB).

**Harris's Hawk** *Parabuteo unicinctus*

The bird reported over the last two months at Swallow Pond was again seen on 1st (JPD).

**Hybrids****Canada Goose x Greylag Goose** *Branta canadensis x Anser anser*

A single was at Hauxley on 16th (HRS).

**Mallard x Eider** *Anser platyrhynchos x Somateria mollissima*

The regular hybrid was again found at Amble Harbour on 1st (IF).

**LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS**

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Those observers marked with an asterisk after their name(s) have submitted records on-line using the club spreadsheet, copies are available by emailing Dick Myatt at [dick@dickmyatt.co.uk](mailto:dick@dickmyatt.co.uk).

**Apologies for any accidental omissions****BULLETIN COMPILATION AND PRODUCTION**

This bulletin was compiled by Lindsay McDougall (Swans to Geese, Game birds, Divers to Herons), Graeme Bowman (Ducks), Trevor Blake (Birds of Prey to Rails), Ian Forsyth (Waders to Skuas), Tim Dean (Gulls to Auks, Escapes, Hybrids and Unknown Origin, List of Contributors, Highlights), Iain Robson (Doves to Dunnock), Mike Richardson (Robin to Warblers), Dee McKeown (Flycatchers to Buntings), Julie Roper/Dan Turner (WeBS Coastal Counts) and Steve Holliday (WeBS Inland Counts). Thanks again to Ann McKeown for typing the section Flycatchers to Buntings.

Edited by Steve Barrett [Sscmagpie@aol.com](mailto:Sscmagpie@aol.com)

Distributed by Alan Watson [apusx@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:apusx@blueyonder.co.uk)

**RECORD SUBMISSION**

**Cards:** Please send all record cards to Tim Dean, 2 Knocklaw Park, Rothbury NE65 7PW, to arrive on, or preferably before, the 8th of the month following that in which the records were collected.

**E-mail:** Members are encouraged to e-mail their records on an Excel-style spreadsheet. Please e-mail Dick Myatt at [dick@dickmyatt.co.uk](mailto:dick@dickmyatt.co.uk) for a copy of the standard spreadsheet and other details.

**Location names and Grid references:**

The use of standard location names and the inclusion of grid references greatly increases the value of records in subsequent analyses. A 1km square grid reference is the ideal e.g. NY8067 for Grindon Lough, but 2km square references (Tetrads) are also acceptable e.g. NY86D in this case. A list of localities and their tetrad grid references (Tetrad/Locality List) can be downloaded from the 'Resources & Downloads' section of the Club website at <http://www.ntbc.org.uk> – the use of these names, wherever possible, would be highly appreciated.

**Please write cards legibly to ensure that your sightings are correctly recorded.**

**PHOTOGRAPHS AND ILLUSTRATIONS**

Please keep submitting your articles, photographs, sketches and illustrations for the bulletin. Thanks again to those who have supplied the excellent photographs.

Please send to Steve Barrett at [Sscmagpie@aol.com](mailto:Sscmagpie@aol.com)

**ELECTRONIC BULLETIN**

The NTBC bulletin can be received electronically or as hard copy. The electronic bulletin arrives earlier than the printed version, it is in colour and we save all that printing and stamps. Ask for an e-mailed bulletin from [jo.bentley@waitrose.com](mailto:jo.bentley@waitrose.com).

**MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS**

For membership enquiries please contact [jo.bentley@waitrose.com](mailto:jo.bentley@waitrose.com).

**NTBC WEBSITE**

A reminder. The excellent club website is available at [www.ntbc.org.uk](http://www.ntbc.org.uk). Chris Knox is the link person to the club committee for the website and you can contact him at [christopher.knox@o2.co.uk](mailto:christopher.knox@o2.co.uk)

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<b>Vacancy</b> There is currently a vacancy on the committee - please contact Honorary Secretary	



### **FIELD TRIPS**

The next trip is to Kielder on Sunday 15th March 2009, meeting at Ridley Stokoe car park at 09:00am.

For full information contact Trevor Blake the Field Trip organiser - Telephone 01670 862635

[Trevor.1958@live.co.uk](mailto:Trevor.1958@live.co.uk)

### **INDOOR MEETINGS**

The committee are currently organising the schedule for 2009-2010. If you have any suggestions for speakers or topics please contact any committee member.

### **JANUARY BIRD RACE FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY APPEAL**

On Saturday 5th January, 2009 seven teams of NTBC members took part in the annual 'winter' bird race, attempting to record as many species as possible within the county in a 24-hour period. This year participants were given the option of using the day to raise money for the Fair Isle Bird Observatory appeal. All teams agreed this year's race was going to be hard work with most suggesting that perhaps 100-105 species would be enough to take the spoils. It is thus noteworthy that five teams scored over 100 species on a day when species such as Grebes, Seaduck, Auks, and Winter Thrushes, were generally scarce or absent. The winning total was an excellent 113, achieved by the so called 'casuals' of Tom & Muriel Cadwallender, Neil Anderson and John Richardson. Tom has commented "We thoroughly enjoyed the day and it was great to have fun with the 'pitch and twitch' scenario, which makes a pleasant change after all the tramping over moors and through muddy farmland, 'Atlasing or Websing'.... these big days out give us a good chance to relax, not to take things seriously and to have a bit of banter with all we meet on the day".

In total £105.00 was raised for Fair Isle, so a big thanks to all who contributed and thanks also to Steve Holliday for co-ordinating the race and the declaration of results in the pub at the end of the day.

In early February a further cheque for £192.50 sponsorship was received from a team comprising RSPB & retired RSPB staff who also took part. Well done to them for such a sterling effort.

### **BIG WATERS**

Poltross Enterprises (Tel. 01434 321111) has donated a three months supply of bird food to Northumberland Wildlife Trust for use at Big Waters Reserve. The Company based in Haltwhistle in Northumberland has given almost a quarter of a tonne of seed, grain and nuts.

My understanding is this could be on a long term basis and I think it is a marvellous gesture and they deserve any publicity we can give them.

Incidentally the feeding station is buzzing and is attracting about 20 different species including siskins and willow tit.

**Andy Cowell**

## COASTAL WEBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

January 2009

Site	Tweed Estuary		Spital - Cocklawburn		Bude Pt - Seahouses		Seahouses - Beadnell		Beadnell - Howick		Howick - Boulmer		Ain Estuary		Coquet Estuary		Amble - Chevington		Cresswell - Newbiggin		Newbiggin - Cambois		Blyth Estuary		Blyth Estuary - Seaton		St Mary's Island		Whitley Bay - Tynemouth		Tyne North Pier - Fish Quay		Wallsend, (north bank only)		Redhugh - Scotswood Bridge, (north bank)		Scotswood - Newburn Bridge, (north bank)	
	MHu	RP	MLC	KR	JAR	TAC	EC	TW	MSK	MGA	RC	LJM	KVB	SP	MK	DMT	DMT	DMT	DMT	DMT	DMT	DMT	DMT	DMT	DMT	DMT	DMT	DMT	DMT	DMT	DMT	DMT	DMT	DMT	DMT	DMT	DMT	
Counter	14	16	16	24	20	21	17	25	6																													
Date	13																																					
Red-throated Diver	1	3																																				
Great Northern Diver	1																																					
Little Grebe	15	3	2																																			
Great Crested Grebe	1																																					
Slavonian Grebe	3																																					
Cormorant	221	5	2	13	3	2	6	39																														
Shag	28	2	1	11																																		
Grey Heron	48	24	5			1	2	3																														
Mute Swan	24	16					2																															
Light-bellied Brent Goose	2																																					
Shelduck	23		4				2	1																														
Wigeon	887						150	27	452	240	18																											
Teal	563		19		16			258																														
Mallard	190	63	8	2		19		32																														
Pintail	1																																					
Shoveler	4																																					
Scaup	5		5																																			
Eider	527	32	82	63	79	52	36			29	27	25	12	7	45	14	3	9	12																			
Long-tailed Duck	6			6																																		
Common Scoter	145		34	28								60	5			18																						
Goldeneye	311	245				10	12	9	6	9																												
Red-breasted Merganser	20	7	6	1	3	1	2			5																												
Goosander	11	6					8		1																													
Moorhen	23		2																																			
Coot	1																																					
Oystercatcher	1,249	18	106	54	146	200	65	2	19	76	11	103	30	83	18	80	174	64																				
Ringed Plover	300		35	55	62	15	8			32		10	3	44																								
Golden Plover	438			40						70			1																									
Grey Plover	34		3	2	4	17				1			2		5																							
Lapwing	2,158	548				295	88	400							18																							
Knot	89		1	6		8	16			4		50																										
Sanderling	321	2		10	27	5				84	80	11	4																									
Purple Sandpiper	126		4	44		30	5			13	2	2																										
Dunlin	544		4		19	50	39			65	29		15		4																							
Snipe	2																																					
Bar-tailed Godwit	71			7	30	2	28								4																							
Whimbrel	2														2																							
Curlew	544	17	94	1	9	85	87	20	10	3		5	13	3	38																							
Redshank	1,529	267	7	5	31	50	60	32	47	119	8	25	22	103	21	250	251	16	132																			
Turnstone	495	6	17	25	91	45				1	32	12	10																									
Black-headed Gull	3,054	286	32	nc	35	223	95	169	500	110			nc	nc	325																							
Common Gull	329	12	7	nc	20	35	52	112			32		nc	nc	9																							
Lesser Black-backed Gull	1																																					
Herring Gull	976	214	22	nc	47	161	27	49	80	26			nc	nc	46																							
Great Black-backed Gull	239	22	3	nc	5	17	2	6	5	19			nc	nc	6																							
Mediterranean Gull	2																																					
Kingfisher	0																																					
ADDITIONAL SPECIES																																						
Fulmar	2	2																																				
Water Rail	2																																					
TOTALS - WILDFOWL	3,073	403	144	158	105	244	97	766	328	45	93	17	7	207	32	103	10	53	31	183																		
- WADERS	7,902	858	254	189	374	562	670	142	612	393	168	192	64	299	43	1,745	611	195	441	87																		
- GULLS & TERNS	4,601	534	64		107	436	176	336	586	187		0	0	0	386	0	1	685	530	266	182																	



**2008 SIGHTINGS****Descriptions Wanted**

Given below is a full list of sightings in 2008 where no documentation has yet been forwarded to the County Recorder. These are all species where the County Records Committee has deemed it pertinent to have a description due to the species rarity in the county. The Birdguides website has been gleaned for any rare sightings together with all submissions to NTBC via email submissions or record cards. The many sightings with no observer attributed are all Birdguides reports. Unfortunately recorders are no longer privy to the original submitter giving rise to a complete inability to follow up these records.

All sightings given need written documentation for the County Records Committee to pass judgement and for the records to pass into the official annual report Birds in Northumbria 2008. Descriptions need to be forwarded by early May to allow the records committee meeting in June time to vet them. A complete list of all species needing notes is included in the NTBC website [www.ntbc.org.uk](http://www.ntbc.org.uk) under the County Records Committee section. This is also replicated in Birds in Northumbria 2007 on page 251. A copy of the Rarity report form can be downloaded from the website and is also printed below.

Many of these outstanding records may well be due to the observers feeling that they are unable to document the sighting in full due to the brevity of the sighting which is particularly a problem with sea birds and birds of prey.

Hopefully many of these records will be written up in order for them to appear in Birds of Northumbria 2008 as the observers may only now be aware that I am still waiting for a description. Included here are many of 2008's major highlights and it would be disappointing if the Annual Report was incomplete. I have given the initials of those observers who I know were involved in the sighting (although not necessarily the finders) but would welcome descriptions from anyone who happened to see the bird in question.

March is a good time for people to buckle down to writing. No Atlas work and Spring still over the horizon!

The Report Form is attached.

Thanks  
Tim Dean

Species	A/S/Nu	Place	Date 1	Date 2	Obs	Comments	Page 29
Bean Goose	1st Win	Newbiggin	07/10/08		AA/MH	North. Card details only	
Tundra Bean Goose	1	Linton Lane NR	15/11/08		?		
Taiga Bean Goose	1	Linton Lane NR	20/11/08		?		
Bean Goose	1	Newton Pool	30/11/08		?		
Snow Goose	White	West Hartford	22/11/08		?		
Snow Goose	White	East Chevington/ Druridge Pools	29/11/08	30/11/08	CDB et al		
Ross's Goose	1	Hauxley	02/05/08		JA/JM/TB/MJC et al		
Cory's Shearwater	1	Seaton Sluice	13/06/08		GRH		
Cory's Shearwater	1	St Mary's Island	13/06/08		ASJ		
Great Shearwater	1	Newbiggin	24/09/08		MSK/ACo/MS		
Balearic Shearwater	1	Newton Point	05/09/08		GW		
Leach's Storm Petrel	1	St Mary's Island	12/06/08		MPF		
Leach's Storm Petrel	1	Emmanuel Head, Holy Island	15/06/08		?		
Great White Egret	1	Ellington / Cresswell	25/07/08	26/07/08	TB		
White Stork	1	Morpeth / Newcastle Gt Park	27/03/08		ADMc/ SRB		
White Stork	1	Hauxley / Bockenfield	28/04/08		JA/IF/TB		
White Stork	1	Long Nanny	06/06/08		?		
Honey Buzzard	1	Ellington	14/05/08		TB		
Honey Buzzard	1	Hauxley	12/09/08		RE		In tree at 13:24. Same as Woodhorn
Honey Buzzard	1	Newbiggin	13/09/08		SJM		
Honey Buzzard	Juv	North Seaton	13/09/08		SLB/MSK		
Honey Buzzard	2	Low Newton	13/09/08		GW		S at 13:55
Honey Buzzard	1	North Shields Fish Quay	13/09/08		?		S at 12:50
Honey Buzzard	1	Palmer'sville	13/09/08		?		
Honey Buzzard	1	Throckley	13/09/08		AA		
Honey Buzzard	1	Palmer'sville, Newcastle	13/09/08		SPP		13:10:00
Honey Buzzard	4	Bywell	13/09/08		?		11:38 & 13:17
Honey Buzzard	1	Prestwick Carr	14/09/08		?		15:55:00
Honey Buzzard	1	Longbenton	14/09/08		?		S at 10:30
Honey Buzzard	1	Newcastle Airport	14/09/08		?		
Honey Buzzard	1	Cresswell	19/09/08		?		
Honey Buzzard	1	Ellington	20/09/08		TB		
Honey Buzzard	2	Belford Moor	20/09/08		GL/ TL		
Honey Buzzard	M	Newcastle, Scotswood	21/09/08		ASJ		
Honey Buzzard	1	Bywell	28/09/08		?		Probable
Rough-legged Buzzard	1	Snope Common	05/01/08		RC		
Rough-legged Buzzard	1	Wooler	07/01/08	13/01/08	IBD/KD		
Rough-legged Buzzard	1	Denwick	31/05/08		RWM		
Rough-legged Buzzard	1	Causey Park Bridge	01/11/08		JM		
Red-footed Falcon	Imm F	Lynemouth	03/09/08		TB		
Hobby	1	Bedlington	21/04/08		JR		
Hobby	1	Druridge Bay CP	03/05/08		?		
Hobby	1	Marden Quarry	29/05/08		?		
Hobby	1	Blagdon, Horton Grange	07/06/08		PC		



Hobby	1	Ponteland	06/07/08	SLB/MSK	
Hobby	1	Emmanuel Head, Holy Island	27/08/08	?	
Hobby	1	Gosforth	12/09/08	?	
Hobby	1	Holy Island	13/09/08	MW/DR	
Hobby	Juv	Widdrington	13/09/08	SLB/MSK	
Hobby	1	Newbiggin GC	15/09/08	Ifo	Silhouette
Hobby	1	Big Waters	18/09/08	AJJ/ISD	
Hobby	1	Ellington	20/09/08	TB	
Spotted Crane	1	Swallow Pond	31/08/08	PA	
Common Crane	1	Bamburgh	13/11/08	?	
Common Crane	ad & subad	QEII CP	19/03/08	03/04/08	?
Common Crane	2	Warkworth	12/04/08	Per JMA	
Common Crane	1	Ovington	30/04/08	SAS	
Common Crane	1	Holy Island	29/05/08	Per IK	
Dotterel	1	Newbiggin	06/09/08	08/09/08	JGS/AA/MPPF/IF/TB et al
American Golden Plover	1	Beacon Pt, Newbiggin	may 08	EB	
Temminck's Stint	1	Holy Island harbour pools	10/05/08	16/05/08	?
Temminck's Stint	2	Druridge Pools	24/05/08	28/05/08	?
Temminck's Stint	1	Druridge Pools	04/06/08	& 19/06/0	IDR/JF
Pectoral Sandpiper	2	Cresswell Pond	10/09/08	19/09/08	ASJ/AC et al
Pectoral Sandpiper	1	Beehive Flash, Earsdon	12/09/08	ASJ	
Pectoral Sandpiper	1	Newton	03/10/08	?	
Grey Phalarope	1	Holy Island	13/10/08	Visitor per IK	
Grey Phalarope	1	Cullernose Point	15/10/08	PRM	
Grey Phalarope	1	Longstone, Farne Islands	22/10/08	FI boatman	
Grey Phalarope	2	Hadston Carrs	30/10/08	?	
Grey Phalarope	1	Newbiggin	30/10/08	ADMc	
Grey Phalarope	1	St Mary's Island	31/10/08	JM/AC/MSH/BMe	
Grey Phalarope	1	St Mary's Island	01/11/08	?	Probable
Grey Phalarope	1	Newbiggin	02/11/08	?	
Grey Phalarope	2	Newbiggin	25/11/08	Ifo	
Long-tailed Skua	Imm	Newbiggin	05/09/08	AA	
Long-tailed Skua	Juv	Newbiggin	23/09/08	MSK	
Sabine's Gull	Ad	Emmanuel Head, Holy Island	28/08/08	?	
Sabine's Gull	1	Tynemouth	09/09/08	?	
Yellow-legged Gull	Ad	Linton Pond/ Longhirst Flash	19/03/08	& 6/4/08	?
Kumlien's Gull	1	Linton Pond	19/03/08	ADMc	Possible
Dark-breasted Barn Owl	1	Embleton	07/11/08	MSK	
Alpine Swift	1	Woodhorn	23/05/08	AP	
Tawny Pipit	?	St Mary's Wetland	01/05/08	?	
Tawny Pipit	1	Bamburgh	26/09/08	?	Probable
Red-throated Pipit	1	Priors park, Tynemouth	06/09/08	?	
Water Pipit	1	Bothal Pond	31/03/08	01/04/08	ADMc/SS et al
Water Pipit	1	St Mary's Island	29/10/08	26/11/08	MSH et al
Grey-headed Wagtail	1	St Mary's Island	28/05/08	?	

Grey-headed Wagtail	1	Holy island , Crooked Lonnen	04/06/08	MJS	Flew N	card details	page 31
Grey-headed Wagtail	1	Long Nanny, Newton	04/06/08	GW	Probable	– flight only	
Grey-headed Wagtail	1	Newbiggin	06/09/08	?			
<b>Desert Wheatear</b>	1	Cresswell	30/08/08	?		Possible	
Marsh Warbler	1	Cambois	28/05/08	29/05/08	SS/ST/GB et al		
Marsh Warbler	1	Tynemouth	29/05/08	?			
Marsh Warbler	1	Druridge Pools	30/05/08	01/06/08	IDR et al		
Icterine Warbler	2	St Mary's Wetland	28/05/08	01/06/08	BS/MT/NT/ASJ et al	Two on 29th	
Icterine Warbler	1	Holy island Straight Lonnen	30/05/08	MJS			
Icterine Warbler	1	Druridge Bay CP	06/09/08	?			
Icterine Warbler	2	Tynemouth	06/09/08	07/09/08	JPD/SPP/CB/KWY		
Icterine Warbler	1	Holy Island	07/09/08	?			
Icterine Warbler	1	Whitley Bay	07/09/08	?			
Barrèd Warbler	1	Tynemouth	06/09/08	07/09/08	JPD/TT		
Barrèd Warbler	1	Briar Dene	07/09/08	08/09/08	ASJ		
Barrèd Warbler	1	Blyth	07/09/08	ASJ			
Barrèd Warbler	1	Holy Island	07/09/08	08/09/08	MW/DR		
Barrèd Warbler	1	Whitley Bay	07/09/08	08/09/08	ASJ		
Barrèd Warbler	1	Newbiggin	08/09/08	Ifo			
Barrèd Warbler	1	East Chevington	08/09/08	TRD/JD/IK/MH/TRC	Not enough detail to submit		
Barrèd Warbler	1	Low Newton	14/09/08	?			
Greenish Warbler	1	Druridge Pools	07/09/08	IDR/JF			
Greenish Warbler	1	East Chevington	07/09/08	?			
Greenish Warbler	1	Briardene	08/09/08	NPD			
Yellow-browed Warbler	1	Swallow Pond	01/04/08	SPP et al	Spring sighting. Notes needed		
Scandinavian Chiffchaff	1	Holy Island	31/10/08	ADM			
<b>Siberian Chiffchaff</b>	1	Beadnell	08/11/08	?	Possible		
<b>Siberian Chiffchaff</b>	1	Straight Lonnen, Holy island	09/11/08	?	Possible		
<b>Siberian Chiffchaff</b>	1	Newbiggin	12/11/08	?			
Northern Willow warbler	1	Tynemouth	07/09/08	?			
Red-breasted Flycatcher	1	Whitley Bay	07/09/08	?			
Red-breasted Flycatcher	M/Juv	Newbiggin	07/09/08	EB/STH/IFo			
Red-breasted Flycatcher	2	Holy Island	08/09/08	?			
Great Grey Shrike	1	East Chevington	09/04/08	ADMc			
Great Grey Shrike	1	Snod's Edge	09/11/08	Ifo			
Woodchat Shrike	1	Bamburgh Castle	09/05/08	15/05/08	?		
Nordic' Jackdaw	1	Bothal Pond	02/03/08	19/03/08	PRM		
Nordic' Jackdaw	1	Wideopen	30/03/08	?			
Nordic' Jackdaw	1	Cramlington	01/04/08	?			
Nordic' Jackdaw	1	East Chevington	15/05/08	TB			
Rose-coloured Starling	Ad	Long Nanny	08/06/08	per KR			
Rose-coloured Starling	1	Hipsburn, Alnwick	14/08/08	?			
Ortolan Bunting	1	Tynemouth	07/09/08	?			



# Northumberland & Tyneside Bird Club

## RARE or SCARCE BIRD REPORT FORM

A list of species requiring documentation by the County Records Committee is available in the annual report *Birds in Northumbria* and also on the club's website at [www.ntbc.org.uk](http://www.ntbc.org.uk)

<b>Species :-</b>	
<b>Date &amp; time first seen :-</b>	<b>Date last seen :-</b>
<b>No. of Birds :-</b>	<b>Age/Sex :-</b>
<b>Location :-</b>	<b>County :-</b>
<b>Finder :-</b>	
<b>Identifier (if different) :-</b>	
<b>Submitter (if different) :-</b>	
<b>Other Observers :-</b>	
<b>Any who disagree with identification? :-</b>	
<b>Your name :-</b>	
<b>Address :-</b>	
<b>Telephone No. :-</b>	<b>Email address :-</b>
<b>Was it trapped for ringing? :-</b>	<b>Ringer :-</b>
<b>Was it Photographed? :-</b>	<b>Photographer(s)? :-</b>
<b>Optical aids :-</b>	
<b>Distance from bird :-</b>	
<b>Species present for comparison :-</b>	
<b>Your experience of this species :-</b>	
<b>Your experience of similar species :-</b>	
<b>Weather conditions (Please include light conditions, wind strength &amp; direction, visibility, rain, etc.) :-</b>	

# Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

<http://www.ntbc.org.uk/>



## Bulletin 2009 No 2 MONTHLY SUMMARY – FEBRUARY

1st April 2009

### HIGHLIGHTS

- A **Taiga Bean Goose** was at Catcleugh Reservoir.
- Five **Eurasian White-fronted Goose** were at Linton and four at Newton flash
- A **Snow Goose** flew N at Spittal Cliffs.
- The drake **Green-winged Teal** returned to Bothal Pond
- A red head **Smew** was at Bolam Lake
- There was a total of six **Bitterns** with three at Cresswell and singles at Druridge, East Chevington and Hauxley.
- Three first-winter **Iceland Gulls** were together at Blyth South Harbour
- A **Little Auk** was in Holy Island Harbour for one day
- A huge flock of 1,000 **Skylarks** was north of Warkworth on coastal fields
- The wintering **Water Pipit** was present all month at St Mary's
- Many groups of **Waxwings** were still in the county with flocks at Newcastle and Cramlington
- A surprise wintering male **Ring Ouzel** was at a dung heap at Newton Links Farm
- There were three flocks of **Lapland Buntings** on Holy Island totalling 23 birds

### NEWS

See later in the bulletin for full information on the following;

- The next field trip - Harthope Valley on 17th May.
- Hen harrier nest watch is about to start.
- The deadline for submission of 2008 rare bird descriptions is approaching.



A reminder of the snow in February  
A cock bullfinch in Tranwell Woods  
by Peter Tapsell

## WEATHER

The first half of the month was very cold with some heavy snowfalls. Thereafter the weather became much milder and more settled. The mean temperature for the month was close to normal. Sunshine duration was also close to normal

**1st to 7th:** It was very cold during the first part of the month with snowfalls in many areas. This was the most widespread snowfall as a whole since February 1991. Frequent snow showers affected many eastern areas on the 2nd, and in the evening the heaviest snowfall moved northwards into north-east England. Overnight there were some sharp frosts.

**8th to 16th:** A mixture of rain, sleet and snow spread eastwards on 8th. The 11th saw sunshine and wintry showers. On 12th snow gradually spread southwards across north-east England with accumulations of 5 to 10 cm over higher ground. Daytime temperatures were very cold or cold across eastern parts of England, with maximum temperatures of 1 to 3 °C. From 13th the weather became more settled with no further widespread snow, but it remained cold. It wasn't until the 16th that daytime temperatures rose above 10 °C.

**17th to 22nd:** High pressure was established in the second half of the month bringing milder and generally dry conditions for all, although mainly weak fronts brought occasional light rain and drizzle to many parts at times. It was generally mild.

**23rd to 28th:** A mild period with temperatures generally above the monthly average. Little in the way of any significant rainfall.

## CLASSIFIED LIST

The following account consists of unchecked reports. The species/subspecies marked \* require descriptions. A complete list of all sightings which need notes is included in the NTBC website [www.ntbc.org.uk](http://www.ntbc.org.uk) under the County Records Committee section and in Birds in Northumbria 2007 page 251.

The Inland and Coastal Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) tables are at the rear of the bulletin. These contain additional counts to those in the Classified List.

## TARGET SPECIES

The target species for 2009 are **Marsh Tit**, **Spotted Flycatcher** and **Tree Sparrow**. Please report all records for these species.

### Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Killingworth Lake took pole position this month with a peak of 74 on 13th (PCF *et al.*). Other large gatherings were 69 at QEII Lake on 11th, 65 at Bolam Lake CP on 28th, 51 at Caistron on 22nd, 43 at West Learmouth 32 in the Tweed Estuary on 20th, 28 at Leazes Park Lake (Newcastle) on 9th and 31 at Ladyburn Lake on 11th (MSH/STH/TRD/JR/MHu/DM/DM). Ten were at Norham on 14th and Blyth Quayside on 25th, nine at Rayburn Lake on 17th and counts of seven came from Grindon Lough and High Newton. One to six were noted from Ashington, Bedlington, Big Waters, Brierdene Farm W (Whitley Bay), Castle Island, Duke's Pond (Wallsend), Greenlee Lough, Haughton Strother, Linton Pond, , Newcastle Great Park Pools, Monk's House Pool, North Seaton, Old Dryburn Pits, Otterburn (River Rede), Paddy Freeman's Pond (Jesmond Dene), Shield-on-the Wall, Warkworth Weir, West Hartford, Weetslade Colliery CP and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

### Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

At Hemscott Hill Links, Cresswell 16 flew S on 28th and at Riding Mill on 27th eight flew N high calling (TRD/JD/BNR). The largest concentration this month was 133 (12 juveniles) at Norham on 14th (JR). The maximum in the Druridge Bay area was 85 (22 juveniles) inland from Druridge Pools on 18th, whilst 78 including 25 juveniles were at Cresswell Ponds on this date (TRD/IRD). Numbers from this group were noted at Widdrington with a peak of 29 on 15th (NFO/MT/NT). The peak count at Rayburn Lake was 36 on 21st (NFO *et al.*). Catcleugh Reservoir hosted 18 on 21st whilst 16 were on Tumbleton Lake, Craggside on 26th, 15 at Holy Island on 28th and 14 near High Newton-by-the-Sea on 13th (PRM/TRD/JD/IK/MSH). One to five were noted from Bakethin Reservoir, Bothal Pond, Greenlee Lough, Hauxley NR, Longhirst Flash, and Monk's House Pool (Bamburgh) and West Learmouth.



**Bean Goose** *Anser fabalis*

Presumably what is the regular wandering *fabalis* race bird was at the north end of Catcleugh Reservoir on 21st (PRM).

The Catcleugh goose on 21st January  
by Paul Massey

**\*Pink-footed Goose** *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Return movement was obvious during the month with a peak of 1,000 N at Spittal Cliffs on 18th (MHu). At Holywell Pond 720 moved N in two skeins on 14th, whilst 650 flew N at Druridge Pools on 8th and at Howick 550 flew N during the month (SPP/TRD/JD/SS). Smaller N movements were 460 at Blyth and 400 at Newbiggin on 19th, 350 at Ellington Colliery on 15th and at *Beehive* Flash, Earsdon on 19th, 300 at Amble on 20th, and East Chevington on 28th, 250 at Bedlington on 19th, 200 at Bywell on 14th, 180 at East Sleekburn on 19th, 150 at Holy Island on 14th and Backworth on 15th, 120 at Alexandra Park (Cramlington) on 28th, 98 at Scotland Gate on 19th, 95 at Staward on 28th 90 at Hyons Wood (Prudhoe) on 14th, 56 at West Moor on 21st, 50 at High Newton-by-the-Sea on 17th and ten at Shilford on 14th (MSK/IDR/MSH *et al.*). The largest gatherings were of 2,500 at Elwick on 22nd and a minimum of 2,000 in the Cresswell Pond area on 15th/20th where high numbers remained all month (DRW/TRD/JD/SWA *et al.*). 1,500 were also at Low Moor, Ashington on 20th (SWA). At Lowick 1,000 were present on 23rd /24th (EHa). At Hartley West Farm, Holywell Dene numbers reduced from 500 on 15th-17th to 200 by 21st (RJP). Counts of 300+ came from Hauxley NR on 20th and East Chevington on 28th (JA/AJH). The peak count in the Budle Bay area was 150 on 28th (JPL *et al.*) and 127 were grazing in fields at Cheswick Buildings on 17th (MHu). Elsewhere seven were at Newton Flash on 11th (TRD/JD).

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

Four adults of the European race *albifrons* were found at Newton Flash accompanying Greylags on 11th, where they remained on 13th and were joined by a further adult from 15th-17th (TRD/MSH/AA *et al.*). The family party of five were again noted at Potland, Linton on 1st (IRD)

The regular wintering flock of Greenland *flavirostris* birds, not having been noted in January were at Greenlee Lough on 1st and Grindon Lough from 16th-18th with nine being noted on all occasions (PRM/ADMc/JRT/PH).

**\*Snow Goose** *Anser caerulescens*

A single white phase flew N at Spittal Cliffs on 18th with the large flock of Pinkfeet (MHu).

**Greylag Goose** *Anser anser*

On 17th 40 flew N at New Delaval, Blyth (RHAr/MAR). Light movement was again noted on 23rd with 70 NW at Startup and 39 NW at New Delaval, Blyth (MRS/RHAr/MAR). The highest concentration was of 1,800 at Harper's Heugh, Budle Bay on 15th with 1,000 still present on 21st (DGB/JPL *et al.*). 370 including neck-collared DZU were at Hauxley on 9th/13th (JA). Other concentrations were 250 at Castron on 22nd, 221 at Low Newton on 13th, 200 at Derwent Reservoir on 17th and 150 at Cresswell Pond on 11th (TRD/MSH/IFo/RHAr/MAR). Smaller flocks were 86 at Big Waters on 8th, 84 at *Beehive* flash, Earsdon on 5th, 50 at Hepple Heugh on 24th and 33 at Whitehouse, Slaley on 14th. Two to nine were noted from Ancroft, Blanchland, Carham, Castle Island, Grindon Lough, Killingworth Lake, Monk's House Pool (Bamburgh), Newcastle Great Park Pools, Plennmeller Common and Woodhorn Flashes.

**Greater Canada Goose** *Branta canadensis*

Grindon Lough was again the site with the largest counts of 470 on 20th and 373 on 18th (JSB/EC/PRM) with 250 -313 present on several other dates. Castron hosted 145 on 22nd with 84 on Plennmeller Common on the same date (TRD/DM *et al.*). Other concentrations were 54 at QEII Lake on 11th, 52 at Haughton Strother on 9th, 40 at Castle Island on 22nd, 37 at Druridge Pools on 8th, 36 at Killingworth Lake on 1st, 30 at West Allotment Pond on 6th, and 27 on Cresswell Pond on 8th. Linton Pond hosted 24 on 20th, whilst 18 were at Marden Quarry on 1st and Big Waters on 27th. 16 were at Hedgeley GP on 20th and 15 at Leazes Park Lake, Newcastle on 23rd. One to six were noted from Ashington, Crookham, Ladyburn Lake, Newcastle Great Park Pools, Swallow Pond, Weetslade Colliery CP and West Ord.

**Barnacle Goose** *Branta leucopsis*

The only sizeable group was in the Harper's Heugh area of Budle Bay with a peak of ca. 60 on 8th (DM/STH/PA/GB *et al.*). Elsewhere two were at Grindon Lough on 18th with a single on 1st (PRM).

**Pale-bellied hrota Brent Goose** *Branta bernicla hrota*

.Up to 700 were in the Harper's Heugh area of Budle Bay on 15th with 400+ noted here on 8th (DGB/JPL *et al.*). 200 were at Elwick on 28th (DGB/JPL *et al.*).

**Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna*

Budle Bay held about 300 on 15th (ASJ), 17 were at Cresswell Pond on 21st (GB), ten at Druridge Pools on 15th (IDR), ten at Hauxley NR on 14th (PCF), eight between Boulmer-Longhoughton Steel on 9th (KAS), three at Alnmouth on 10th (MLC), and one to two at Amble, Castle Island, Meadow Haven (Berwick), St Mary's Wetland and Yarrow Slake. Movement inland brought 11 to Branton GP by 20th (IBDa/KDa), six at Bedlington on 13th (JR), five at Newcastle Business Park on 14th-15th (AHB), and one to two at the *Beehive* Flash (Earsdon), Big Waters, Grindon Lough, Newcastle Great Park pools and West Hartford between 18th-27th.

**Mandarin** *Aix galericulata*

The Smalesmouth-Ridley Stokoe area produced 23 (18 drakes) on 28th (AA), and ten (eight drakes) on 24th (JSB/EC). A well-reported drake was at Killingworth Lake on 20th-21st (ASJ/KWY *et al.*). On 21st it was noted as being un-ringed, nervous and avoiding 'bread handouts' (CDB) and showing aggression to both Mallard and Goosander (LJM), (Right in biting mode with a goosander by Tim Cleaves).

Below - two views of the drake Mandarin in more calm mood by Alan Janes

**Wigeon** *Anas penelope*

About 400 were at Cresswell Pond on 7th (TRC) and about 600 on 27th (RHAr/Mar). Other peak counts were 196 at Swallow Pond on 5th (SPP), 180 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 4th (MR), 173 at East Chevington on 11th (JRT), 160 at the Long Nanny Estuary on 17th (TRD/JD), 138 at Derwent Reservoir on 24th (IFo), 137 at Druridge Pools on 22nd (IDR/JF), 121 at Bothal Pond on 28th (IRD), 113 at Hauxley Reserve on 25th (JRT), and 102 at Caistron on 22nd (TRD). Counts of 53-75 came from QEII Lake, Tughall Links and Woodhorn Flashes, 20-44 from Alnmouth, Amble, Big Waters, Boulmer to Longhoughton Steel, Crookham, Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother, Holywell Pond and Newcastle Great Park pools, and two to ten at Middle Ord Pond, Monkridge, Plenmeller Common, St Mary's and Warkworth.

**Gadwall** *Anas strepera*

QEII Lake attracted 22 on 5th (PRM), 22 were at Caistron on 22nd (TRD), 18 at East Chevington on 25th (JRT), 17 at 'Earth Balance' (Bomarsund) on 19th (LJM), 16 at West Sleekburn on 19th (JR), 14 at Bothal Pond on 21st (GB), 13 at St Mary's Wetland on 12th (MSH), 12 at Ellington Pond on 22nd (IDR/JF), eight at Linton Pond on 20th (CDH), and six offshore at St Mary's (wetland frozen) on 5th (MSH). Three to four were at Bolam Lake, Cresswell and Swallow Ponds, and Woodhorn Flashes, and one to two at Arcot, Holywell and West Allotment Ponds, Big Waters, Newton Pool, and Stakeford Bridge. A more unusual record was of four at Kitty Brewster (Blyth Estuary) on 7th (LJM).

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

A drake was at Bothal Pond between 14th-17th (ADM *et al.*) and on 19th (LJM). On 14th, it was noted actively displaying with a small group of Teal (GB).

**Teal** *Anas crecca*

Budle Bay held 315 on 15th (IRD), 168 were at Holy Island 'rocket pools' on 12th (ADM), 155 at Druridge Pools on 28th (TRD/JD), 127 at St Mary's Wetland on 16th (MSH), 100 at Cresswell Pond on 7th (TRC), 100 at Newcastle Great Park pools on 14th (AHB), 72-86 at Big Waters, Derwent Reservoir, Grindon Lough, Holystone and Newton Pool, 40-61 at Kitty Brewster (Blyth Estuary), Linton Pond, Monk's House Pool and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and 20-39 at Arcot and Middle Ord Ponds, Bedlington, Castle Island, East Holywell, Hexham-Tyne Green, and West Hartford. Counts of 14-17 came from Amble, Eshott and Haughton Strother, and one to seven from the *Beehive* Flash, Chollerford, Plenmeller Common, and Woodhorn Flashes.



A drake Teal  
February  
by Norman Tuck

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

Peak concentrations were 155 at Big Waters on 7th (AJJ/ISD), 103 at Hexham-Tyne Green on 8th (BNR), 80 at Derwent Reservoir on 10th (IFo), 67 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 4th (MR), 61 at Newcastle Leazes Park on 9th (DM), 60 at Slaley (Whitehouse) on 14th (RMH), 56 at Cresswell Pond on 8th (DM), and 38-43 at Eshott and West Allotment Pond. Counts of 24-39 came from Arcot, Ellington and Linton Ponds, Ashington, Haughton Strother and Wark on Tweed, ten to 19 from Castle Island, Crookham, Grindon Lough, Newcastle Civic Centre, QEII Lake and Tindal House, and two to four at 11 further sites.

**Pintail** *Anas acuta*

About 50 were at Fenham Flats on 8th (DM *et al.*), six (three pairs) at Cresswell Pond on 28th (TRD/JD) and three to five there regularly between 1st-25th (TRC/IRD/JRT *et al.*), four (two pairs) at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 19th (PCF), three at Hoppen Kiln (JHa), two at Budle Bay on 4th (MSH), and two at East Chevington on 13th (TRD). Singles were at Druridge Pools, St Mary's Wetland and Swallow Pond.



**Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*

Peak counts were 18 at East Chevington north pool on 25th (JRT), 16 at Druridge Pools on 28th (TRD/JD), 14 at Linton Pond 11th (JRT), 14 at West Allotment Pond on 26th (MSH), ten at Swallow Pond on 9th (TRD), six at Bothal Pond on 14th (GB), six at Cresswell Pond on 22nd (PCF), and three at Monk's House Pool on 4th (MSH). One to two were at Budle Bay, Hadrian Pond (Wallsend), Hoppen Kiln and Newton Pool.

**Pochard** *Aythya ferina*

Killingworth Lake held 43 on 11th (JRT), 23 were at Bothal Pond on 16th (TRC), 23 at Swallow Pond on 23rd (RA), nine at Arcot Pond on 27th (LJM), seven at Branton GP on 24th (PT/IW) and six at Bakethin Reservoir on 19th (TRD/JD). Three to four were at Grindon Lough, Linton Pond and Woodhorn Flashes, and one to two at Cresswell Pond and Shield on the Wall.

**Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*

Peak gatherings were 60 at Newcastle Leazes Park on 4th (DM), 44 at Druridge Pools on 15th (IDR), 44 at QEII Lake on 5th (PRM), 40 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 9th (MR), 35 at Caistron on 22nd (TRD/JRT), 34 at Killingworth Lake on 22nd (DM), 32 at Hedgeley GP on 20th (LJM), 31 at Ladyburn Lake on 11th (MSH), 21-29 at Hartburn Reservoir, Linton Pond, Tynemouth Park and Woodhorn Flashes, and ten to 13 at Coanwood Pond and Paddy Freeman's Pond (Jesmond). Five to nine were also at Arcot and West Allotment Ponds, Bedlington and Old Dryburn Pits, and one to three at Big Waters, Newcastle Great Park Pools and West Sleekburn.

**Scaup** *Aythya marila*

Two were at Cresswell Pond on 1st and 4th (IRD/JRT) and three to four frequently from 7th-28th (CDB/TRC/TR/JD et al.). Two were at Newton Pool on 24th (per NNBC) and one there on 11th (TRD/JD), and singles at East Chevington north pool (duck) on 4th (JRT) and QEII Lake (drake) on 21st (DWS). A drake was at Killingworth Lake on six dates between 11th-22nd (JRT/RA/GB/LJM et al.). Further inland, a female was at Hartburn Reservoir (Angerton Lake) on 16th (TRD/JD).

**Eider** *Somateria mollissima*

About 230 were at Holy Island on 12th (ADM), 88 at Seahouses harbour on 12th (ADM), 72 at Blyth South Harbour on 21st (TRC), 61 at Amble on 8th (PRM), 52 at Cocklawburn on 17th (MHu), and 30-43 off Fisherman's Cove (Berwick), Hauxley, Newton, Seahouses-Monk's House, the Tyne Estuary-North Shields Fish Quay, and the Tweed Estuary. Counts of 12-21 came from Alnmouth Bay, Berwick pier, Howick and Tynemouth, and six to eight at Embleton and Football Hole. A female was again noted in Holywell Dene on 13th (RJP) and 26th (MT/NT); on 13th it was noted 2.5 km upstream.

**Long-tailed Duck** *Clangula hyemalis*

One flew S at Newton Point on 8th (PCF). Variable numbers in the Budle Bay-Stag Rocks area included peaks of 40 on 4th (MSH) and 73 (males outnumbering females) on 18th (AA/MH). Three were off Bamburgh beach on 4th (MSH), at Seahouses on 12th (ADM) and at Islestone, Bamburgh on 15th (MSH), twos at Holy Island, the Long Nanny Estuary, Ross Back Sands and Seahouses-Monk's House, and one at Cheswick.

**Common Scoter** *Melanitta nigra*

Peak counts were low, with 70 at Stag Rocks on 15th (DGB), 54 at Cheswick on 16th (MHu), 38 at Spittal cliffs on 18th (MHu), 35 at Ross Back Sands on 27th (TRD), 32 at Newton on 17th (TRD/JD), and ten to 17 at Alnmouth Bay, Druridge and Islestone (Bamburgh). Two to eight were also at Cresswell, Embleton Bay and the Long Nanny Estuary.

**Velvet Scoter** *Melanitta fusca*

Two were at Islestone, Bamburgh on 15th (MSH) and one off Druridge on 28th (TRD/JD).

**Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula*

The largest concentrations were in the north, with 154 at the Tweed Estuary on 20th (MHu) and 120 at Berwick on 3rd (MHu). Other peak counts were 34 at QEII Lake on 5th (PRM), 29 at East Chevington north pool on 25th (IFo), about 25 at Beadnell Bay (JPL), 24 at Bolam Lake on 20th (KWY), 19 at Caistron on 22nd (JRT), 17 at West Ord on 15th (MHu), 14 at Kitty Brewster on 24th (LJM), and ten to 12 at Grindon Lough, Killingworth Lake, the Long Nanny Estuary and Newton Pool. Six to nine were at Amble, Big Waters, Castle Island, Cresswell Pond, Howick, Ladyburn Lake, Seahouses and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and three to five were also at Arcot Pond, Bakethin, Hartburn and Derwent Reservoirs, Druridge Pools, Farnley, Football Hole, Horndcliffe, Islestone (Bamburgh) and QEII Lake. One to two were at Bedlington, Boulmer-Longhoughton Steel, Bothal and West Allotment Ponds, Budle Bay, Catcleugh Reservoir, Crag Lough, Ladyburn Lake, Monk's House Pool, Newcastle Great Park Pools, Newton, Shield on the Wall and Stag Rocks. Three drakes displayed at Newton Pool on 18th (MT/NT).

**Smew** *Mergellus albellus*

A 'redhead' was noted regularly at Bolam Lake between 15th-28th (PCF/AL *et al.*). It was also noted there on 20th January ( per CDB).

**Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator*

Ladyburn Lake held 19 on 11th (MSH), seven were at Cresswell Pond on 15th (STH), six at the Aln Estuary on 15th (ASH), six at Cheswick on 16th (MHu), six at the Long Nanny Estuary on 22nd (PRM), six at Kitty Brewster (River Blyth) on 28th (GB), and four at Howick on 9th (JAR). One to two were at Amble, Beadnell Bay, Blyth South Harbour, Budle Bay, Druridge Bay, Holy Island, Newton Pool, Seahouses, Spittal Bay, Stag Rocks and Warkworth.

**Goosander** *Mergus merganser*

Killingworth Lake held a peak of 17 on 21st (GB), 13 were at Hedgeley GP on 20th and 23rd (LJM/PT), 12 between Prudhoe-Hagg Bank on 8th (SWA), ten at Hagg Bank (Wylam) on 7th (BNR), 11 between Ryton-Bywell on 9th (MH), nine at Greenlee Lough on 18th (JRT), eight at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 18th (MR), seven at Warkworth on 3rd (MJC), seven at Hexham-Tyne Green on 9th (BNR), five at the Aln Estuary on 15th (ASH), and three to five at Bedlington, Branton GP, Catcleugh Reservoir, Farnley, Horncliffe, Old Dryburn Pits, Rothley Lakes, Thrum Mill (Rothbury), Whiteside, and one the Tyne between Ellringham House-Merryshields. One to two were also at Arcot Pond, Bakethin and Derwent Reservoirs, Bellingham, Big Waters, Blyth Harbour, Bolam Lake, Budle Bay, Featherstone Castle, Ford, Greenlee Lough, Holystone, Jesmond Dene, Marden Quarry, Newcastle Business Park, Newcastle Leazes Park, QEII Lake, St Mary's, Wark on Tweed and Weldon Bridge.

**Red Grouse** *lagopus lagopus*

The highest counts were 64 at Haltonlea Fell E on 11th, 56 in the Whitfield area and 41 at Plenmeller on 6th (PH/MH). Humble Dodd hosted 29 on 15th whilst 24 were on Ayle Common on 21st (BNR). In the Cheviots 16 were on Hedgehope on 27th (IRD). Ten were at Hepple Heugh on 9th and eight at Derwent Reservoir on 20th (PC/RMH). Counts of six came from Cairnhill, Dargueshope (Redesdale), Kirkside, and Sipton Burn. One to five were noted at Bellingham, Blanchland, Butt Roads Eglington Moor, High Green (Redesdale), Langlee Crags, and Windy Gyle.

**Black Grouse** *Tetrao tetrix*

More were noted than in January with a total of 11 (eight males) 5kms north of Coalcleugh on 20th (JSB/EC). Eight (three males) were at Halton-Lea-Gate on 11th whilst seven males were at Swinhope Shield on 16th (PH/ADM). Six (three males) were at Halton lea Fell on 15th (DO), whilst three to four males were noted at Swinhope Shield on 22nd/25th. A single young male was at White Ridge (Swinhope) on 18th.

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

On 4th 21 were at Newstead (MSH). Elsewhere one to four were noted from Beacon Hill, Carrshield, Dargueshope (Redesdale), Duddo, Ordley, Rock and Whitfield Hall,

**Grey Partridge** *Perdix perdix*

Although no longer a target species it continues to be well reported. The largest count was 15 moved by hard weather on to the coast at Low Steads, Longhoughton on 2nd (SS). Ten were at Druridge Pools on 8th, eight between Longhoughton Steel – Boulmer on 9th and six at Ancroft on 14th and Prestwick Carr on 19th (IDR/JF/KAS/JR/PCF). One to four were noted from 27 further sites predominantly on the coast in the centre and north of the county. Birds were scarce in the south east with records only received from Bedlington, Bothal Banks and Nedderton.

**Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus*

The highest counts were 17 at Ancroft North Farm on 14th and Park Head, Whitfield Hall on 28th (JR/BNR). Ancroft Moor hosted 16 on 14th whilst 13 were at Derwent Reservoir on 20th (JR/RMH). Seven were at Tindale House on 2nd, six at Chesters House & Walled Garden throughout the month and five regularly in an Old Hartley garden and at Swallow Pond on 16th (JR/ALT/RJP/CDH). One to four were noted from Ashington, Bedlington, Blanchland, Callally, Netherton Park, Prestwick Carr, Slaley Forest, Ulgham, a Walbottle garden, West Sleekburn, Whitelea (Cramlington) and notably a male was in Leazes Park, Newcastle on 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Diver species** *Gavia sp.*

Ten unidentified divers were in Alnmouth Bay on 20th (SWA).



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

One flew N at St Mary's Island on 1st (MSH). The largest concentrations were in Alnmouth Bay on 20th when six were present and the same number was offshore at Hauxley on 8th (SWA/PRM). Counts of five came from Stag Rocks on 8th and East Chevington on 20th (DM *et al.*/TRD). Four to five were present throughout the month in Holy Island Harbour and four were off Bamburgh beach on 4th and in Spittal Bay on 18th (IK/MSH/MHu). Three were on the sea off St Mary's Island on 4th and off Ross Back Sands on 27th (MT/NT/JPL *et al.*). One to two were noted from Druridge Bay, Embleton Bay, Howick, Long Nanny, Newbiggin and Snab Point (Cresswell).

**Black-throated Diver** *Gavia arctica*

The species was noted more than Great Northern Diver this month. Singles were noted at East Chevington on 4th, Hauxley on 8th, Alnmouth Bay and Tweed Estuary on 20th and Stag Rocks and Holy Island Harbour on 28th (AA/MH/PR//SWA/MHu/IK/CGK/PS).

**Great Northern Diver** *Gavia immer*

Two were off Stag Rocks on 18th (AA/MH/RSF) with singles noted there on 4th/8th (MSH/DM *et al.*). Two were in Alnmouth Bay on 20th (SWA).

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

A high count of 12 was noted at Hartburn Lake on 16th (TRD/JD). A flock of eight was in the Blyth Estuary at Kitty Brewster on 24th (LJM). Six were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 9th and five at Swallow Ponds on 28th (MR/PCF/SPP). Birds had returned to may breeding waters and other lowland sites from mid-month onwards with one to two noted from Amble, Bakethin Reservoir, Big Waters, Caistron, Cresswell Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Farnley (Corbridge), Haughton Strother (Humshaugh), Holywell Dene, Killingworth Lake, Ladyburn Lake, Newcastle Great Park Pools, QEII Lake, Rothbury, Stakeford Bridge, Tweed Estuary, Tyne Green (Hexham) and Woodhorn Flashes.

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*

Groups of three were noted on at Hallington Reservoir on 16th, the sea at Stag Rocks on 17th and at Derwent Reservoir on 24th (RSF/PT/IW/IFo). Two were in Alnmouth Bay on 20th and at Swallow Pond on 28th, a single being first noted here on 22nd (SWA/SPP). Singles on the sea at St Mary's Island on 4th/15th, Whittle Dene Reservoir on 4th/24th, Big Waters on 24th, QEII Lake on 25th and Holywell Pond on 26th.

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

Two were off Stag Rocks on 17th (PT/IW) with singles noted here on 15th/21st (ASJ/NNBC). One was present in the Holy Island Harbour area all month (IK *et al.*).

**Slavonian Grebe** *Podiceps auritus*

Again this was a good month with 22 off Stag Rocks on 3rd, 21 on 8th, 20 on 18th and 18 on 17th (JRT/DM/AA/MH/PT/IW *et al.*). Up to eight were noted here on seven further dates. 11 were off Ross Back Sands on 27th (TRD), six in Druridge Bay on 19th (PT/IWE) and a maximum of three at Holy Island on 1st with singles seen on three further dates (IK *et al.*).

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

An adult in almost full breeding plumage put in a one day appearance at the now regular breeding site on 25th.

**Fulmar** *Fulmarus glacialis*

Three flew S at Berwick Pier on 1st, three flew N at St Mary's Island on 10th and one flew inland at Budle Bay on 27th (MHu/MSH/TRD). There was an obvious return to breeding sites during the month with a peak count of 75 on ledges in Coves Bay, Holy Island on 14th (IK). Elsewhere 50 were back on breeding ledges at Cullernose Point on 17th, 30 at Coquet Island on 21st, 20 at Dunstanburgh Castle Point on 10th, 14 at Old Hartley on 4th, 12 at Bamburgh Castle on 4th, ten at Brada Quarry (Bamburgh) on 20th, eight at Tynemouth cliffs on 14th and five at Union Bridge Berwick on 22nd (TRD/JD/IDR/MLC/MT/NT/MSH/DMT/MHu). At Stag Rocks 30 were present on 4th (MSH).

**Gannet** *Morus bassanus*

Light passage was noted with a peak of 15 N at Stag Rocks on 28th (CGK/PS). Seven passed Long Nanny on 22nd, two flew S at Berwick Pier on 1st and singles flew N at St Mary's Island on 9th/10th and at Ross Back Sands on 27th (PRM/MHu/MT/NT/MSH/TRD).

**Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

The peak roost counts during the month were 97 in Blyth South Harbour on 8th, 74 at Amble staithes on 22nd, and 40 at North Shields Fish Quay on 23rd (DM/STH/GB/PA/PCF).

The Meadow Haven, Berwick roost hosted 16 on 22nd (MHu). Inland 14 were at Big Waters on 3rd and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 4th and ten were at Close Wylam on 18th (AJJ/ISD/MR/MH). Ten were also in Alnmouth Bay on 20th (SWA). Seven were at Elswick Wharf on 5th (DM). One to four were noted from Hagg Bank (Wylam), Killingworth Lake, Low Prudhoe, Newcastle Great Park Pools, Otterburn, Ovingham and Tyne Green (Hexham). Singles showing characteristics of the *sinensis* race were noted in Jesmond Dene on 8th and Big Waters on 18th (CGK/PRM).

**Shag** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

The Blyth South Harbour roost peaked at 20 on 22nd when 12 were at the Meadow Haven (Berwick) roost (DMT/MHu). Six were offshore at Druridge Links on 8th and at Long Nanny on 22nd (IDR/PRM). Five were in Spittal Bay on 2nd, four off Tynemouth on 14th and three at East Chevington on 20th and at Football Hole on 22nd (MHu/JRT/TRD/PRM). One to two were noted at Cresswell, Embleton Bay, Newton, Ross Back Sands and St Mary's Island.

**Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris*

Two lucky observers saw three birds at Cresswell Pond on 29th (TRC/IRD), where one to two were noted on seven further dates up to 18th. A single was also seen at Hauxley NR on 6th (JA/JSB/EC).

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*

The largest count was 13 flushed by a Buzzard at Grindon Lough on 24 h (TRD). At Druridge Pools 11 were present on 28th and ten on 24 h (IRD/ACo). Nine were at Yarrow Slake on 20th and six on the north west side of Ashington on 28th (MHu/GB). Four were at Big Waters on 12th and three in Budle Bay on 8th (AJJ/ISD/DM *et al.*). One to two were noted from Akeld, Amble, Arcot Pond, Beadnell, Blyth South Harbour, Bolam Lake, Catcleugh Reservoir, Cawledge Woods (Alnwick), (Craster Towers, Glen Aln, Haughton Strother, Hauxley, Leazes Park (Newcastle), Prestwick Carr, St Mary's Wetland, Swallow Pond, Sweethope Lough, Whitehouse (Slaley), Whitley Bay and Woodhorn Flashes. Two pairs were noted nest building in the Tweed Valley on 24th (MHu).

**Red Kite** *Milvus milvus*

Up to two birds were seen in the Whitfield area and near Wylam on several dates throughout the month (MH/ASH/ADM<sub>c</sub> *et al.*). Single birds were also seen at Derwent Reservoir on 17th & 19th (IFo), Plenmeller on 20th (MH) and at Prudhoe on 22nd (BNR).

**Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*

Up to three birds were at a site in the south west of the county, and a male was in the west of the county on 15th (MR). A ring tail was seen hunting on Holy Island on 13th & 14th (IK/ACo), with another bird noted in the north of the county on 11th (MLC).

**Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis*

Two birds were seen at Harbottle Crag on 6th (DRo) and one or two were at Harwood Forest on several dates (NFo/ADM<sub>c</sub>/STH *et al.*). Single birds were observed at Deadwater (Kielder), East Ditchburn, Harelaw, Kingswood Common, Staward and Wark Forest during the month.

**Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*

Pairs were at Choppington Wood (SLB/MSK), East Ord (AHu/MHu) and at Marden Farm (MN) throughout the month. Single birds were noted from over 30 sites including one with a Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*) as prey at Bothal on 20th (AL).

**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*

Once again this ever expanding species was well reported this month with 109 records. Eight birds were seen at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 21st (MR) and at Hepple Haugh on 24th (PC), six were at Plenmeller on 2nd (PA/GB/STH/DM) and at Whitfield on 22nd (MH). One of the birds at Plenmeller had gunshot wounds (MH). Five birds were at Mitford Castle on 9th & Prestwick Carr on 23rd (ADM<sub>c</sub>), and five were noted at Stonehaugh on 10th (PC). One to four birds were noted from a wide variety of habitats throughout the county.

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

There was a single report of a bird E over Dipton Mill being mobbed by a Carrion Crow (*Corvus corone*) on 21st (PCF).

**Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*

At Shilford on 14th three birds 2 males and a female were present (BNR). Two birds were at Marden Farm all month (MN) and at Rennington on 13th (MSH). Single bird sightings came from over 40 sites this month again.

**Merlin** *Falco columbarius*

Two birds were at Holy Island on 25th (PRM), single bird sightings came from Beadnell & Lucker all month (JPL/JHa). Other singles were seen at Druridge on 13th (JSB/EC), Hauxley on 116th (JAx), Haughton Strother on 9th (MR), Kingswood Common on 21st (PH) and Whitfield Common on 15th (BNR). A more unusual sighting came from the Balliol Business Park (Newcastle) on 8th (AJ).

**Peregrine** *Falco peregrinus*

Three birds were at one inland site on 6th (MH); two birds were on the Brownsman Island (Farne Islands) on 20th (DS) and at another inland site on 10th (PC). Single birds were noted at Alnmouth, Bamburgh, Beadnell, Berwick Hill (Ponteland), Big Waters, Bomarsund, Bothal Pond, Boulmer, Budle Bay, Coquet Island, Cresswell Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Elwick, Harwood, Holy Island, Old Hartley, Rennington, Ross, Sleekburn, St Mary's and Stannington. One observer saw his first bird in Newcastle in many years of birding when he saw one at the Royal Grammar School (Jesmond) on 27th (GB).



A splendid Peregrine  
Old Hartley on 9th February  
by Mike Hodgson

**Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus*

Cresswell Pond had four birds with possibly five on 7th (CDB/TRC/IRD) with two birds seen there on 8th (PA/GB/STH/DM). Single birds were also seen at Cresswell Pond on several dates (TRD/CDH/ADM). Other singles were seen or heard at Druridge Pools on 8th & 16th (JF/IDR), Holywell on 4th & 26th (ACo/MSH) and Swallow Pond on 9th, 12th & 22nd (TRD/SPP).

**Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*

Peak counts this month were 15 birds in the field to the East of Swallow Pond on 9th (TRD), 13 were at Killingworth Lake on 18th (PRM), 12 at Newton Pool on 13th (MSH), 11 were at the Silverlink Park LNR on 6th (MSH) and at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 9th (DM). One to ten birds were seen at 14 sites including two birds on a garden pond in Stannington from the 26th with one of the birds perched on the living room windowsill (RWM/MIM).

**Coot** *Fulica atra*

Killingworth Lake had the highest count this month, peaking at 76 on 16th (PT/GB/PCF/PRM). Linton Pond had a count of 56 on 19th (PT) and the QEII CP had 55 on 5th (PRM). Leazes Park (Newcastle) had 19 birds on 16th (DM), 14 were at Woodhorn Flash on 5th (PRM) while the Silverlink Park LNR had 12 birds on 7th (MSH) and Whittle Dene Reservoir 12 birds were there on 9th (PCF). One to ten birds were noted from Arcot Pond, Bedlington, Big Waters, Bothal Pond, Castle Island, Grindon Lough and Monk's House Pool.

**Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*

At the coast 100+ were in the high tide roost at Longhoughton Steel on 28th (SS), 84 at Hauxley NR on 15th (PCF), 60 at Cresswell Pond on 13th (TRD) and 20-42 at Bamburgh, Budle Bay, Dunstanburgh, Howick and Seahouses. After singles on 4th at Haughton Strother and on 5th at Prudhoe there was a pronounced increase of birds filtering inland from 13th, notably 135 at Caistrone on 22nd (TRD) and also 28 at Bedlington on 13th, 13 at Haughton Strother on 21st, 12 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 28th and 11 in the Allen Valley on 26th. During this latter period small numbers appeared at Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Bothal Pond, Bywell, Castle Island, Crookham, Hexham, Holystone, Swallow Pond, Wark (North Tyne), Wark on Tweed and Whitfield Hall.

**Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*

The roost at Blyth South Harbour held 57 on 1st and 76 on 24th (DMT/LJM), 44 were at Little Beach, Berwick on 22nd, 37 at Long Nanny on 22nd and 30 at Seahouses (Monks' House) on 4th. Away from the coast one visited Newcastle Great Park Pools on 21st and two were at Bothal Pond on 26th.

**Golden Plover** *Pluvialis apricaria*

Plenmeller Common held good numbers mid month: 360 on 17th, 500+ on 20th and 615 on 24th (PC/MH/TRD). About 500 were in a field between Blyth and Seaton Sluice on 14th (DMT), the flock at St Mary's peaked at around 450 on 23rd (MT/NT) and 400 were at Rock South farm on 27th (TRD). Cresswell Pond, High Newton, Holy Island, Newcastle (Town Moor) and Spartylea held 300-320 at times. Also 157 were at Howick on 3rd and 120 at Druridge Pools on 13th with up to 63 at a further 21 locations. Six were in Redesdale at over 300m a.s.l on 21st, a pair was already on territory on Ayle Common also on 21st and a pair displayed at Harwood Forest on 28th.

**Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*

Few were reported, with 14 on 9th and 19 on 22nd along the stretch Boulmer to Longhoughton Steel (KAS), six on R Blyth on 21st, three at Amble on 8th, two at Berwick on 3rd and singles at Boulmer and the Tweed estuary.

**Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*

The regular Cresswell Pond flock peaked at 560 on 18th (IRD), 470 were at Haughton Strother on 21st (MR), 450 at Caistrone on 22nd (TRD) and 399 at Druridge Pools also on 22nd (IRD). Several places held 100-260 at times: Bedlington, Big Waters, Harper's Heugh (near Budle Bay), Plenmeller Common, Spartylea and the Tweed estuary. Some 37 other places had 70 or less at times, including signs of early potential breeding at Kirkley Hall and Newton Links House.

**Knot** *Calidris canutus*

The largest of the few counts received concern 82 at Meadow Haven, Berwick on 22nd (MHu), 41 at Longhoughton Steel on 28th (SS), 32 at Brierdene, Whitley Bay on 18th (PRM) and 20 at Amble on 8th (PRM). Five were at Cresswell on 13th and one at Long Nanny on 22nd.

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba*

At St Mary's the flock peaked at a high count of 245 on 4th (ASJ). Elsewhere 27 were at Little Beach, Berwick on 22nd (MHu), 25 at Low Newton on 11th (TRD/JD) with three to eight at Bamburgh, Druridge and Ross Back Sands.

**Purple Sandpiper** *Calidris maritima*

Around 200 were noted at Stags Rocks on 1st (AJH) with much lower numbers thereafter. At Low Newton 40 were feeding on the beach at high tide on 11th (TRD/JD), 24 were at Beadnell on 19th, 17 at Longhoughton Steel on 28th and a maximum of 12 at St Mary's on 4th and 9th. Two to eight were reported from another eight coastal places.

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*

The highest count was 220+ at Amble on 8th (PRM) followed by a peak of 122 at Cresswell Pond on 18th (ACo). Tynemouth held 68 on 28th (JRT), Berwick 52 on 22nd (MHu) and St Mary's a maximum of 43 on 16th. 15-30 appeared at times at Blyth, Hauxley NR and Long Nanny.

**Jack Snipe** *Lymnocyrtus minimus*

Three singles were discovered in the latter half of the month: at West Hartford on 15th (STH), High Newton on 22nd (PRM) and Hauxley on 26th (PT/IW).

**Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*

Big Waters produced a count of 42 on 1st (AJJ/ISD/GB), 24 were at West Hartford on 15th (STH), 21 at Bothal Pond on 14th (GB) and 18-22 at Swallow Pond on 12th (SPP). Arcot Pond, Callerton subsidence pools, Haughton Strother, Hauxley NR and Holywell Pond each held ten to 19 at times and seven were at Longhoughton, Low Steads on 12th as the hard weather pushed some birds to the coast. One to five were noted at a further 15 places.

**Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola*

Five were flushed from a plantation at West Sleekburn on 28th (GB), three were at Bomarsund on 7th (GB), two at Hampeth Burn on 6th (KVB) and at Hauxley NR on 20th (JA). One was noted on four dates at Big Waters from 13th and singles appeared at another 18 widespread localities.

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

The Rocket Field pools at Holy Island held one throughout (IK *et al.*), occasionally joined by a second individual. In Budle Bay two were seen on a few dates from 4th with three on 23rd (MSH/RA) and one appeared at the Holy Island causeway on 12th (ADM).

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

The coastal stretch from Boulmer to Longhoughton Steel produced 48 on 9th (KAS) and 42 were in Budle Bay on 15th (IRD). Movement was noted on 25th when a flock of 22 flew N at Hauxley (IFo). Three areas at Berwick held at least 14 in total during the month and five were at Low Newton on 18th and at Blyth on 28th.

**Curlew** *Numenius arquata*

Records of around 200-250 came from several coastal sites: at Alnmouth and Long Nanny on 4th (MH/AA), Hauxley NR on 6th (JA), at Newton Links on 11th (RWM/MIM) and near the R Aln at Foxton on 20th (AL). Also near the coast 100-181 appeared at Harper's Heugh, Holy Island, Howick, Newton, St Mary's and the Tweed estuary with 48-74 at Blyth, Cocklawburn, Cresswell Pond, Holywell Dene, Marden Farm, Ross Village and Whitley Bay. The flock at Castron numbered 80 on 22nd and smaller numbers also moved inland, including 17 at Plenmeller Common on 22nd, 10 in the Allen Valley on 26th, 14 at Derwent Reservoir on 27th and 16 at Prestwick Carr on 28th.

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*

Two were at Haughton Strother on 17th and 25th (MR) and two on the R Blyth at Carter Moor on 26th (MRS). One was seen at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 9th, 16th and 18th (MR/ADM/JRT).

**Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus*

One was in the Rocket Field, Holy Island on 28th (IK).

**Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*

The winterer in Budle Bay was noted on five dates from 11th (RA *et al.*).

**Redshank** *Tringa totanus*

Most were in the north east: 370 in Budle Bay on 15th (IRD) and 262 in the Tweed estuary on 20th (MHu). Further south 60+ were at Longhoughton Steel on 28th (SS) and 45 at Druridge Pools also on 28th (TRD/JD). Inland, 30 were at Bedlington on 13th and 30 at Bothal Pond on 21st.

**Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*

The high tide roost at Longhoughton Steel held 150+ on 28th (JMA/SS), 63 were at Little Beach, Berwick on 22nd (MHu), 50 at Boulmer on 28th (JMA) and 43 at St Mary's on 8th (MT/NT). Amble, Blyth, Cresswell, Dodd's Well at Berwick, Low Newton, the Tyne estuary and Whitley Bay all had 10 to 30 at times.

**Great Skua** *Stercorarius skua*

Two rare winter sightings may have involved the same individual, off Ross on 8th (JRT) and Inner Farne on 17th (DS).

**Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla*

Again, as in other months this winter, numbers have been very low. The two regular wintering localities saw only one or two present with one at Blyth South Harbour on 9th, two on 16th and singles on 21st and 22nd (ASJ/TRD/GB/CDB). At North Shields Fish Quay only one report was received of a single individual on 1st (MSH). The only other sighting received was of one off Stag Rocks, Bamburgh on 9th (DM/STH/GB/PA).



**Black-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

The prime roost again was the sea between Tynemouth and Cullercoats where the peak count noted was 2,650 (DMT). The regularly watched area of the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay saw a maximum count of 592 on 22nd (DMT). The other regularly watched area of Blyth South Harbour only saw 68 as a peak on 22nd (DMT). Other large flocks this month included 400+ at Elswick Wharf on 5th (DM), 350+ at Druridge Pools on 22nd and 300 at Howick on 26th (JAR). Smaller flocks of between 130 and 250 were at Haughton Strother, Hexham, Jesmond Dene and QE II CP, Ashington. Groups of up to 90 were noted at Bedlington, Castle Island, Leazes Park (Newcastle), Seahouses and Walbottle. Three different ringed birds were found at St Mary's Island/ Briardene on 26th with birds from Sweden, Finland and Germany involved (MSH).

**Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus*

Newbiggin remained the focus with up to five adults, three second-winters and two first-winters present throughout (KAS/IFo/TRC/AL). One of the adults bore a green colour ring which was ringed as a pullus in the Elbe Estuary, Germany (KAS). Amble Harbour had two adults from at least 8th to 21st (TRD/PRM/IDR/NFO) with one of these seen at the Warkworth weir on 28th (IBDa/KDa). The Briardene car park at Whitley Bay saw an adult and a second-winter present on 21st (TRC) with the adult also seen on 9th (TRD). Otherwise single adults were found at St Mary's on 13th and 20th (SPP) and at Woodhorn Church flash on 5th (PRM). Finally a second-winter was noted at Swallow Pond on 3rd (SPP).

Mediterranean Gull at  
Briardene

9th February

by Tim Dean

**Common Gull** *Larus canus*

The sea roost between Tynemouth and Cullercoats provided the peak count with 2,100 present on 21st (DMT). The only other large count was of 800 at Haughton Strother near Humshaugh also on 21st (MR). Medium size flocks of 85 to 158 were noted at Arcot Pond, Bellingham, Haydon Fell and Juniper. The regularly watched areas of the Tyne Estuary to North Shields Fish Quay saw only a peak of 44 this month on 1st and Blyth South Harbour only two also on 1st (DMT). Up to four were found at a number of localities.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus graelsii*

The only passage sightings were a third winter N at St Mary's Island on 10th and four N at Stag Rocks Bamburgh on 20th (MSH). Early in the month only single wintering birds were present with birds seen at Briardene, Cramlington, Holy Island and Monkseaton. Evidence of a return came from 8th with one at Swallow Pond increasing to two from 21st (SPP) and at Bothal Pond and Amble with singles on 14th (GB/NFO). Most reports came from 21st onwards with single birds at Allen Valley, Grindon Lough, Holywell Pond, Leazes Park (Newcastle), Newcastle Great Park, Ordley, West Hartford and Whitfield. Four at Budle Bay on 27th were the only sighting at this popular site on 27th (TRD). The only first-winter noted was at Holywell Pond on 14th (SPP).

**Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus argenteus*

The only passage sighting was 80 per hour N at Stag Rocks, Bamburgh on 15th (MSH). The regularly watched sites provided the peak counts with 213 at the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay on 7th and 136 at Blyth South Harbour on 22nd (DMT). Other flocks were noted at QE II CP lake in Ashington (CDH) with 204 seen on 20th (CDH) and 101 at Linton Pond on 20th (CDH) and 100 on the sea at Howick on 26th (JAR). Up to 45 were seen at a number of sites.

**Northern Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus argentatus*

The only report received this month of this clearly bulkier subspecies was of two at Linton Pond on 20th (TRD). Clearly a 'battleship' amongst 'frigates'.

**Iceland Gull** *Larus glaucoideus*

The two first-winters present last month at Blyth South Harbour remained and were joined by another first-winter from 17th. This multiple occurrence proved highly popular. Single first-winters were also found at Amble braid on 23rd (RA) and at St Mary's on 3rd (ASJ). A second-winter at Linton Pond and surrounding area from 4th to at least 20th showed its characteristic pale eye well (TRD/TRC/AL).

**Glaucous Gull** *Larus hyperboreus*

Interestingly this normally more frequent of the two 'white-winged' gulls was only seen on specific days with none lingering long. The only report from the gull haven of Blyth South Harbour was of an adult and a first-winter on 17th (MSK). Single first-winters were at East Chevington on 4th (ACo/AA/MH/JRT) and off the North side of Coquet Island on 21st (IDR) and at Cresswell Pond on 27th (ADMc). An interesting report of a first-winter at the Black Middens in the Tyne Estuary on 21st concerned its tongue which was protruding through a hole in the base of the bill (DMT). Finally a second-winter was noted at Linton Pond on 6th (RA).

**Great Black-backed Gull** *Larus marinus*

The peak count was at the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay with 107 on 7th with the other regularly watched site of Blyth South Harbour gathering 56 on 22nd (DMT). Surprisingly the only other records received were 12 at Castle Island on 22nd (DM/STH/PA) and two at Grindon Lough and Haydon Fell on 1st (PRM). This frequent winter visitor is often accepted as such especially on the coast but inland birds are considerably scarcer and often immature birds.

**Guillemot** *Uria aalge*

The Farne Islands saw over a thousand back on the cliffs and on the sea at the West Wideopens on 15th and 16th. They then vanished out to sea again until another return on the 20th (DS/MSH). This erratic start to the breeding season is often witnessed as birds tentatively return to the main breeding cliffs. Numbers elsewhere were unsurprisingly small with up to seven seen at Blyth Harbour, Cullernose Point, Hauxley, Ross Back Sands, St Mary's Island and Spittal Bay.

**Razorbill** *Alca torda*

Only small numbers reported with three at Stag Rocks, Bamburgh on 4th (MSH) and singles at Druridge, Hauxley, Newton and Seahouses.

**Little Auk** *Alle alle*

A single in Holy Island harbour after a period of easterlies on 1st (AJH) was only the second of the winter after one in early December 2008 at St Mary's.

**Rock Dove / Feral Pigeon** *Columba livia*

A flock of 170 was on shop roofs in Amble-by-the-Sea on 21st (DWS) and 110 were at Stakeford on 7th (GB). 81 were counted at North Shields Fish Quay on 22nd, 67 at Blyth South Harbour on 15th and 54 at Crookham on 22nd.

**Stock Dove** *Columba oenas*

The highest counts came from urban and rural areas with six in Jesmond Dene on 1st (MJCo) and at Carrshield on 22nd (EC/JSB), Cresswell Pond attracted three on 28th. A pair occupied a Tawny Owl *Strix aluco* nestbox in a Stamfordham garden and a pair were displaying at the Wanney Craggs on 24th. Two were also recorded at Ashington, Blanchland, Bothal, Chesters Walled Garden, Grindon Farm (Tynedale), Haydon Fell (near Haydon Bridge), Hepscott and Plenmeller Common.

**Woodpigeon** *Columba palumbus*

At least 1000 were counted either side of the A69 in the Bywell/Newton area on 18th (MH), 900 were at Carter Moor 26th (MRS) and an accurate count of 601 was made during a farm survey at Middle Newham near Belsay (TAC/MLC). At least 600 were at Swallow Pond on 22nd and 350 were at West Sleekburn on 19th. 200-300 were at Ancroft, Ancroft Moor, Bedlington, Walbottle and West Hartford. 100-199 were at Aydon, Haydon Fell, Hepscott, Hepscott Manor, Shilford and Ulgham Grange.

**Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

18 were counted in three different tetrads to the north west of Bellingham on 28th (ADM) and 13 'territorial pairs' were recorded along the R. Tyne between Peepy (Bywell) and Newburn on 9th (MH). An atlas surveyor found 14 at Crookham on 22nd, eight at Ancroft Manor on 14th, six at Ancroft and four at Ulgham Grange.

**Barn Owl** *Tyto alba*

76 individual records were received for this increasing species. Three were seen in daylight at Hipsburn on 5th (MLC). A pair were reported from Holy Island throughout the month, two were also noted at Cresswell and Cresswell Pond, Haughton Strother, Sharperton, West Chevington and Widdrington Village. Singles were widespread, from the Scottish border to the south west of the county and from the Cheviot Hills to the coastal plain, with several noted hunting during daylight hours. A roadside casualty was noted on the A69 near Bywell (TWi).



A Barn Owl hunting in day light at Cresswell  
9th February  
by Peter Tapsell

**Little Owl** *Athene noctua*

Two's were reported from East Coldcotes on 2nd (AHB), Merryshields on 6th (SWA) and Fulbeck on 13th (ADMc). Singles were at Backworth, Bellingham, Dipton Mill and Prestwick Carr.

**Tawny Owl** *Strix Aluco*

Noted as 'vocal' throughout the month at Howick (JAR) with at least four present, two were calling at Riding Mill on 13th (BNR). Singles were noted at numerous locations including a male watched for 1 hour in the observer's garden at East Ord (AHu/MHu), calling at midday from Rothbury and Whitfield, perched on a wall during the day at Halton Shields and in car headlights at Howick and Ordley.

**Long-eared Owl** *Asio otus*

A single was noted at Seaton Delaval on 2nd (JR).

**Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus*

Three were present throughout the month on Holy Island (IK). One was at Wingates on 4th and at Widdrington on 28th (TD/JRD).

**Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*

28 records were received this month from 12 locations including Big Waters NR, Bolam Lake Country Park, Blyth Harbour (on numerous dates) (RA/ASJ *et al.*), Corbridge, Cresswell Pond, Haughton Strother, Holywell Dene, Jesmond Dene (on numerous dates), North Shields (Northumberland Park), Scotch Gill Woods LNR (Morpeth) and Seaton Sluice.

**Green Woodpecker** *Picus viridis*

Two were noted during atlas work at Blanchland on 19th (RMH), singles were seen or heard at Allendale, Big Waters NR, Havannah Nature Reserve, Hexham, Holystone (all month) (DRo), Longframlington, Newcastle Great Park, Riding Mill, Rothbury, Stocksfield, West Kirknewton and Yarrow Heugh/Castle Hills (Berwick-upon-Tweed).

**Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major*

Six, including three drumming males, were recorded on a timed tetrad visit to Newbrough on 20th (PRM). At least four visited feeders at Grindon Farm (Tynedale) throughout the month (JF), four were also reported from Chesters Walled Garden on 15th and Spindleston on 20th. Three were heard or seen at Bellingham, Blanchland, Holywell Dene (where an individual drums against a metal box) and Longbenton. Drumming males were heard at Beacon Hill (near Morpeth), Corbridge, Gosforth, Haughton Strother, Howick, Jesmond Dene and Prestwick Carr.

**Skylark** *Alauda arvensis*

Many birds were noted as being in full song throughout the month. An incredible flock of about 1000 were counted at feeding in deep stubble at Birling Carrs near Warkworth on 13th (EC/JSB). 220 were counted in stubble during heavy snow at Callerton (subsidence area) on 2nd (MH), 204 were at Ancroft Moor on 14th (JR) and St. Mary's Wetland (Whitley Bay) attracted about 200 on 13th and on the same date 150 were attracted back to Holy Island after heavy snow on the mainland. 30-100 were reported from Amble, Belsay, Cramlington, Glororum (Bamburgh), Howick, Longhoughton, West Longridge, Whitley Bay and Whittle Dene. Many were noted as being displaced by heavy snow around the 13th.

**Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis*

Callerton subsidence area attracted 55 on 5th (MH), 43 were counted feeding in a flooded field at Prestwick Carr on 21st (PCF). On 15th 25 were counted on Holy Island presumed arrivals due to hard weather on the mainland, inland, 21 were at Haughton Strother on 9th and at Druridge Pools, 18, including a single flock of 12 were counted on 8th. 14 were at Elford on 20th, at the coast, seven were at Low Newton-by-the-Sea and four were at Howick and nearby Low Steads.

**Rock Pipit** *Anthus petrosus*

A flock of 25 were noted on the north shore of Holy Island on 14th (IK). At St. Mary's (Whitley Bay), between one and 11 were noted during the month, peaking at 11 on 11th (ASJ *et al.*). In the north of the county, three were at Spittal on 2nd, three at Boulmer on 6th and two at Yarrow Slake on 2nd. Singles were noted at Alnmouth, Bamburgh, Blyth, Cullernose Point, Fenham, Inner Farne (Farne Islands) and Newton-by-the-Sea.

**Water Pipit** *Anthus spinoletta*

The regular over-wintering bird at St. Mary's Island (Whitley Bay) was noted between 1st and 20th (AL/SPP *et al.*).

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*

A timed tetrad visit to Blanchland produced a count of three on 19th (RMH), twos were reported from Bamburgh, Big Waters NR, Haughton Strother, Jesmond Dene and Whittle Dene. Records of single birds came from 18 locations including Budle Bay, Hexham, Grindon Hill, Spindleston and Whittle Colliery.

**Pied Wagtail** *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

Not many records this month, ten were reported from Boulmer on 10th (AL) and nine were at Low Newton-by-the-Sea on 18th (MT/NT), Four were at Howick on 26th and singles were at Bedlington, Ulgham Grange and Walbottle.

**Waxwing** *Bombus garrulus*

At least 50 flew N at Scotland Gate on 27th (MSK). At least 35 were noted feeding on Greenfly at Heaton (Newcastle-upon-Tyne) on 16th (SPP) and the Cramlington area attracted between four and 29 between 2nd and 15th, peaking at 29 on 15th (JA). Elsewhere 17 were at Bedlington on 13th, 14 at Kenton on 26th, eight at Walker on 15th and one to three at Chapel House Estate (Newcastle-upon-Tyne), Gosforth, Ponteland and Warkworth.

**Dipper** *Cinclus cinclus*

Two were on the R. East Allen at Sipton Shield on 20th and R. North Tyne at Ridley Stokoe on 24th (EC/JSB), also on 24th two were at Rothbury and Cawfields. Singles were noted regularly in Jesmond Dene and at Catcleugh, Cupola Bridge, Greenhaugh, Greenhead, Ponteland, Rothbury, Upper Coquetdale, Waren Mill and Whittle Dene.

**Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Four at Ancroft, Neddeerton and Tiptoe Farm during atlas visits were the highest counts (JR). Threes were noted at Ancroft, Chesters Walled Garden, Holywell and Ulgham.

**Dunnock** *Prunella modularis*

12 counted in one km at Prestwick Carr on 14th was the highest count of the month (PCF), seven in a Walbottle Garden and at Shilford and five at Haydon Fell (Haydon Bridge) made up the other significant counts.

**Robin** *Erithacus rubecula*

Winter Atlas workers again submitted the highest counts, several of which are accumulated totals from adjoining tetrads. In the Bedlington area six tetrads were counted on 13th and 19th producing a total of 22 birds (JR). 19 were found over 1km at Prestwick Carr on 14th (PCF) and 18 in three adjacent tetrads in the Hepscott / Nedderton area on 25th (JR) and at Slaley Forest on 21st (RMH). 16 were found at Ancroft and Newbrough, 13 at Duddo and Haydon Fell (Haydon Bridge) and 12 in the Bellingham area and at Blanchland. Elsewhere nine were found in the Whitfield Hall / Park Head area, eight at Druridge Pools and up to eight in Jesmond Dene. One to six were reported from a further 15 localities, including a bird inspecting a nest box in a Kenton garden, another which flew into the hide at Cresswell Pond during a hail storm, and finally a bird singing to the customers at 21.00hrs on 18th, from the bakery stand at Tesco Hexham!!

**Stonechat** *Saxicola torquata*

Reports were received from 14 coastal and 13 inland sites. Many observers, no doubt in search of the wintering Ring Ouzel submitted reports for the Newton-Long Nanny-Beadnell area, where the peak count was six (three pairs) on 23rd (JPL). Four were found at Boulmer on 22nd (KAS), Blyth beach on 7th (STH) and Seaton Sluice on 14th (DMT). Three+ were at Tughall Links on 27th (MSH) and threes at Cresswell Pond (IRD), Druridge Links (IDR) and East Chevington (JSB/EC). One to two were also reported from coastal sites at Bamburgh, Brier Dene Farm, Hepscott Hill Links, Howick, Marden Quarry and south of Cresswell Village, and inland at Alnwick Moor, Belford Moor, Callerton, Eglington Moor, Elsdon, Haughton Strother, Plenmeller Common, Rothbury, Stannington, Wanney Crag, West Chevington, Whitley Pike (Redesdale) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Carrying on from last months theme, birds specifically identified as a pair / pairs were recorded at eight coastal sites (13 pairs) and four inland sites (four pairs). A late record concerns a male at Styford junction (Corbridge) on 8th January.

**Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus*

A major surprise, and timely addition to the Winter Atlas, was the discovery of a wintering male at Newton Links House (High Newton-by-the Sea) on 8th remaining to at least 22nd (GW *et al.*).

**Blackbird** *Turdus merula*

Atlas work again provided some high counts in certain areas. Six adjacent tetrads in the Bedlington area produced a total of 49 birds on 13th / 19th (JR), 40 were found in the Bellingham area (six tetrads) on 22nd / 28th (ADM) and 26 in the Ancroft area (three tetrads) on 14th (JR). Gardens were an attraction to some above average numbers including 23 at Walbottle on 8th (KR/LR), 20 at Fell Cottages (Slaley) on 6th (RMH) and smaller concentrations in gardens at Newcastle, Stannington and Whitley Bay. Elsewhere during the month 17 were found at Ellington House, 14 at Newton Links House and Newbrough, 13 at Nedderton, 12 at Crookham and Chesters House & Walled Garden, 11 at Ashington and Haughton Strother and nine at Blanchland and Ulgham Grange Farm. One to six were reported from a further ten localities.



A Fieldfare in the snow at Cresswell  
13th February  
by Tim Dean

**Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris*

Several of the highest counts received this month were from coastal areas, as birds responded to the harsh winter weather. 250 coming in off the sea to feed on stubble fields at Howick on 9th was an intriguing record, suggesting some movement from the near Continent (JAR). At the same time 200 were a little further up the coast at Beadnell on 10th (per NNBC) and 120 at Longhoughton Low Steads on 12th (SS). Inland a large flock of 235 was found on high ground at Whitelee (Redesdale) on 27th (JCD) and 150-158 in the

Bellingham area and at Haydon Fell (Haydon Bridge) on 28th and 1st respectively (ADM/PRM). 150 were at Linden on 1st (NFO) and 100-130 at Corbridge, Cramlington, Derwent Reservoir, Hepscott Manor, Kirknewton, Plenmeller Common and Yearle from 5th-17th. Smaller flocks were noted both inland and on the coast, although the coastal counts tended to be earlier in the month, birds moving back inland as conditions improved. These included 81 at Haughton Strother on 14th, 80+ at Hauxley on 13th, 80 at St Mary's Island on 8th, 71 at Druridge Pools (15 of these coming in off the sea) on 13th, 55 at Millfield on 22nd, 52 at Elsdon on 28th, and 50 at Ridley Common on 26th and Smeafield on 5th. Counts of 30-47 were received from Bamburgh, Bedlington, Brier Dene Farm, Earsdon, Ellington Colliery, Middle Newham (Belsay), Scotland Gate and Swallow Pond, and one to 28 from a further 18 localities.

### **Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos*

One observer submitted a series of counts, the result of cycle trips from his home in the Morpeth area. The longest journey, a 25km "marathon" from Morpeth-Prestwick Carr-Blagdon and home on 24th, produced a total of 33 birds. On 23rd, 16 were found between Morpeth-Mitford Castle and return, a journey of 9km, and 11 from Morpeth-Beacon Hill (10km) on 28th. In total, seven trips, 20th-28th, produced 89 birds over a combined distance of 73km.; presumably many of these birds were in song (ADMc). Elsewhere birds were no less conspicuous, particularly from mid-month. Nine were found over three Timed Tetrad Visits in the Bellingham area on 22nd (ADM), when six were also at Chesters House & Walled Garden (ALT). Six were at Whitfield Hall on 28th (BNR) and five at Jesmond Dene on 23rd (MJCo). Three to four were also reported from Blanchland, Druridge Pools, Haughton Strother, Newbrough and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and one to two from a further 25 localities. Several sites recorded their first singing birds of the year, including Holy Island from 13th, and Great Whittington from 17th.

### **Redwing** *Turdus iliacus*

The vast majority of records this month came from lowland areas, no doubt a result of the hard winter weather. Inland sites were also favoured, although there was at least one significant coastal record. The highest counts came from Stocksfield Station with 171 on 5th (BNR) followed by 121 at Close House on 3rd (MH) and 102 at Prestwick Carr on 14th (PCF). Up to 100 were feeding, presumably with the Fieldfares, on stubble at Howick on 7th and 9th, birds coming in off the sea on the latter date (JAR). Inland 100 were at Alnwick on 8th (JMA) and Linden on 1st (NFO), 64 at Hepscott Manor on 25th (JR) and 60+ Killingworth Lake on 6th (MSH). 56 came in to roost at Beaconhill (Cramlington) on 13th, 53 were at Holywell Dene on 12th and 50 from Birtley-Wark (N. Tyne) on 1st. 30-40 were noted at Aydon (Corbridge), Cramlington, Hauxley, Marden Farm, Marden Quarry, Newbrough, Scotland Gate and Yearle, and 20-29 at Byker Bridge, Druridge Pools, Haydon Fell (Haydon Bridge), Leazes Park, Slaley Forest, Warkworth and Wylam. One to 17 were reported from a further 16 localities.

### **Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus*

Well reported again this month. 13 at Whitfield Hall on 28th, was the highest number reported (BRN). 12 were found in Slaley Forest on 17th (RMH), seven at Hagg Bank (Wylam) on 7th (BNR) and six at Swallow Pond on 16th (CDH). Three to four were also noted at Blanchland, Carter Moor, Cresswell Pond, Gosforth, Jesmond Dene and Marden Farm and one to two at a further 26 mostly inland sites, many of these the result of Winter Atlas work. Singing birds were heard at Bedlington, North Walbottle, Leazes Park and Lower Ouseburn (Byker).

### **Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla*

Five wintering birds were found during the month, at North Sunderland on 9th (per NNBC), in a Wylam garden on several dates to 9th (DRW), in a garden adjacent to Jesmond Dene on 14th (MPF), another garden bird at Woosington on 22nd (SRB) and at Corbridge, again on 22nd. The latter bird was present throughout January (DS). Two birds were males, two females and one unspecified.

### **Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*

Two wintering birds were found, at Gosforth on 13th (AJN) and Cobalt Business Park on 19th (CGK).

### **Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus*

Reported from only ten sites this month compared with 30 sites in January, perhaps a consequence of the relatively harsh winter weather. Highest counts were four at Crookham and Duddo on 22nd (JR). Two were noted at Chesters House & Walled Garden, Haydon Fell, and Newbrough, and single birds at Jesmond Dene, Kenton, Newcastle Business Park, Red House Farm Estate (Gosforth) and Rothbury. The latter two birds were feeding in gardens, on fat balls and peanuts respectively, again suggesting feeding conditions may have been difficult for local populations. The Kenton bird also passed through the observer's garden, "the first record here for a long time".



**Long-tailed Tit** *Aegithalos caudatus*

Well recorded throughout month. Largest gatherings involved 26 at Shiremoor on 28th (GK), 24 at Newcastle Great Park Pools on 28th (AHB), 14 at Newcastle Business Park on 22nd (PCF), 12 at Marden Quarry on 28th (KWY), 11 at Bywell on 22nd (BNR and Prestwick Carr on 28th (PCF), ten at Bothal Pond on 14th (GB) and Scotch Gill Woods on 23rd (ADM). Five to nine were also observed at Ancroft, Bedlington, Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Links, Exhibition Park (Newcastle), Greenhead, Heaton Park, Holywell Dene, Jesmond Dene, an Old Hartley garden, Rothbury and Whitfield Hall. Up to four were at a further ten widespread localities including gardens in Gosforth, Walbottle and Whitley Bay.

**Blue Tit** *Cyanistes caeruleus*

109 were found in the Bellingham area during Atlas visits on 22nd and 28th (ADM), 24 at Whitfield Hall on 28th (BNR), 30 at Newbrough on 20th (PRM), 28 at Low Prudhoe on 8th (SWA), 23 at Ashington on 7th (JR), 22 at Bedlington on 19th (JR) and Blanchland on 19th (RMH), 17 at Ellingham on 6th (SWA), 15 at Haughton Strother on 9th (MR) and (MJCo) and Holywell Dene on 23rd (MT/NT), one at Chesters Walled Garden on 22nd (ALT), 12 at Ulgham Grange Farm on 18th and Nedderton on 25th (JR), 11 at Ancroft on 14th (JR) and one to nine at a further 16 widespread localities.

**Great Tit** *Parus major*

22 were at Low Prudhoe on 8th (SWA), 20 in the Bellingham area on 22nd (ADM), 14 at Bywell on 22nd (BNR), 14 at Whitfield Hall on 28th (BNR), 13 at Newbrough on 20th (PRM), 12 at Holywell Dene on 23rd (MT/NT), ten at Chesters Walled Garden on 1st (ALT) and Marden Quarry all month (MN), nine at Jesmond Dene between 11th-15th (MJCo) and Blanchland on 19th (RMH), eight at Ashington on 7th (JR) and Nedderton on 25th (JR), seven at Bedlington on 19th (JR). One to five were at a further 12 widespread localities.

**Coal Tit** *Periparus ater*

25 were noted at Slaley Forest during an Atlas visit on 17th (RMH), 18 at Byrness on 21st (JCD), 15 at Bywell on 19th (ASJ), ten at Blanchland on 19th (RMH), nine at Shilford on 14th (BNR), eight at Bedlington on 13th (JR) and Ancroft Moor on 14th (JR), seven at Chesters Walled Garden on 15th (ALT), six at Jesmond Dene on 1st (MJCo), Uswayford and Nedderton on 25th (JR). One to five were at a further 13 widespread localities.

**Willow Tit** *Poecile montanus*

Three were at Greenleech near Bedlington on 6th (MJCo), two at a Grindstonelaw garden all month (JSB/EC), a Scotland Gate garden all month (SLB/MSK), and a Dinnington garden on 18th and 28th (PCF). Singles were also observed at Bellingham, Big Waters, Comb hills (Slaley), Hagg Bank (Wylam), a Linden Hall garden, Nedderton, Prestwick Carr and Quarry House (Slaley).

**Marsh Tit** *Poecile palustris*

Three were next to Warkworth Castle on 3rd (MJC), two at Haughton Strother on 9th-25th (MR), Dipton Mill on 21st (PCF), Tiptoe Farm on 22nd (JR), Mitford Castle on 23rd (ADM) and Scotch Gill Woods on 23rd-26th (ADM). One to two were at Linden Hall all month (NFO). Singles were also found at Hampeth Burn, Hazon, Howick, Letah Wood (Hexham), Mitford Village, a Rothbury garden and Warkworth.

Marsh Tit is a target species for 2009. Please report all records.

**Nuthatch** *Sitta europaea*

Six were observed at Chesters Walled Garden on 1st (ALT), five at Whitfield Hall on 28th (BNR), three at Bolam Lake CP on 16th (TRD/JD), two at Kirknewton all month (ACox/BCox), Heaton Park (Newcastle) on 1st (MJCo), Wark on 1st (MNC), Holywell Dene on 4th-5th and 21st (MT/NT/RJP), Jesmond Dene between 11th-15th (MJCo), Bywell on 16th (SWA), Newbrough on 20th (PRM) and Stocksfield on 22nd (BNR). A single was found at a farm 300m a.s.l. on Whitelee near Carter Bar on 27th (JCD). Singles were also noted at Arcot Hall Golf Course, Bellingham area, Greenhead, Hagg Bank, High Staward, Howick, Otterburn, Shilford, Spindleston, Whitfield and Whittle Colliery.

**Treecreeper** *Certhia familiaris*

Three were at Prestwick Carr on 14th (PCF), two at Big Waters on 15th and 22nd (GB/AJJ/ISD), Tiptoe Farm on 22nd (JR), Chesters Walled Garden on 22nd (ALT), Greenhead on 24th (TRD) and Whitfield Hall on 28th (BNR). Singles were also noted at Ancroft North Farm, Bedlington, Blanchland, Bothal, Derwent Reservoir, Eshott, Fell Cottages (Slaley), Hexham, High Green (Redesdale), Holywell Dene, Langleeford (Harthope Valley), a Longhoughton garden, Spindleston and Tindal House.

**Jay** *Garrulus glandarius*

Four were at Bedlington on 13th (JR) and Shilford on 14th (BNR), three at Dukeshagg Wood on 7th (BNR), Slaley Forest on 21st (RMH) and Arcot Pond on 22nd (LJM), two at Haydon Fell near Haydon Bridge on 1st (PRM), Choppington Woods on 4th (MSK), New Ridley on 8th (AJ), near Morpeth on 9th (ADM) and Hyons Wood (Prudhoe) on 22nd (BNR). Singles were at Big Waters, Dukeshagg Wood (Prudhoe), Gosforth Park NR, Haughton Strother, Howick, Jesmond Dene, Shilehope, Stannington Hospital, Tranwell and West Moor.

**Magpie** *Pica pica*

53 were noted at an evening roost near Ashington on 28th (GB), 47 at Big Waters on 14th (AJJ/ISD), 40+ at Marden Farm all month (MN), 31 at Bothal on 14th (GB), 29 at Beacon Lane, Cramlington on 14th (LJM), 16 at West Sleekburn on 19th (JR), 15 at Ashington on 7th (JR) and ten at Low Hauxley on 25th (IFo). One to nine were at a further 14 widespread localities.

**Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula*

1,000 were with a few Rooks in a Walbottle field on 11th (KR/LR), 530 coming into roost at Haughton Strother on 21st (MR), ca. 450 flying NE over Hexham Hospital on 18th (ALT), 235 at Whitfield Hall on 28th (BNR), 213 at Hagg Bank, Wylam on 7th (BNR), 144-213 in the Bellingham area between 22nd-28th (ADM), 137 at Tyne Green, Hexham on 8th (BNR), 120 at New Delaval (Blyth) on 9th (RHAr/MAR), Whittle Dene on 14th (PCF) and North Walbottle on 19th (KR/LR) and 101 at Newbrough on 20th (PRM). Two to 79 were at a further 25 widespread localities. Single Nordic race, *Corvus monedula* birds were observed at Killingworth Lake on 7th (GB) and Newbrough on 20th (PRM).

**Rook** *Corvus frugilegus*

360 came into roost at Haughton Strother on 21st (MR), 250 at Howick Hall on 28th (JMA), 220 north and east of Bellingham on 22nd (ADM), 105 at East Ditchburn on 11th (MLC), 100+ in the Elford area on 20th (MSH), 94 at Ancroft Moor on 14th (JR), 93 north and west of Bellingham on 28th (ADM), 91 at Raylees (Elsdon) on 28th (JF/IDR), 82 at Ross Village on 20th (MSH), 60 at Druridge Pools on 8th (IDR) and 56 at Harper's Heugh near Budle Bay on 15th (MSH). Six to 50 were at a further ten widespread localities.

**Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone*

55 were found during an Atlas visit to north and west of Bellingham on 28th (ADM), 41 were north and east of Bellingham on 22nd (ADM), 34 were at Haydon Fell near Haydon B ridge on 1st (PRM), 29 at Hyons Wood (Prudhoe) on 22nd (BNR), 24 in the New Shoreston area on 20th (MSH), 20 at Ayle Common on 21st (BNR), 16 at Ashington on 7th (JR) and 15 at Harper's Heugh near Budle Bay on 15th (MSH). One to 14 were at a further 25 widespread localities.

**Raven** *Corvus corax*

Eight were at Sipton burn, Allendale on 16th (ADM), seven at Plenmeller Common between 16th-20th (ADM/MH), six at Brownley Hill, Kevelin Moor on 21st (RWM/MIM), two at Allerhope Burn on 4th (IRD), Holystone on 7th (DRo), Kielder Forest Drive on 15th (MR), pairs displaying at Ayre Common and Kirkside on 21st (BNR), Fulhope on 23rd (TRD), Great Wanney Crag near Sweethope Lough on 24th (PC) and Linhope Spout on 27th (IRD). A rare coastal record involved one being mobbed by two Carrion Crows before flying off 'high' to the south at Howick on 28th (SS/JWR). Other singles were observed at Catcleugh Reservoir, the summit of the Cheviot, Greystone Brae, Grindstonelaw near Great Whittington, Harwood forest, Kimmer Lough, Wark Forest and Wolf Hills (Whitfield Moor).

**Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*

1,000 coming into roost at Westerhope on 5th increased to 2,500 by 20th (PLF), 1,000 were at Plenmeller Common on 26th (SWA). 500 flew S over Prestwick Carr at dusk on 15th (PLF). 468 were at Whitfield Hall on 28th (BNR), ca. 350 at Spartylea on 21st (RWM/MIM) and the Bellingham area on 28th (ADM), 290 at Druridge Links on 13th (IDR/IRD), 233 east of Bellingham on 22nd (ADM), 190 at Middle Newham near Belsay on 8th (TAC/MLC), 151 at Bedlington on 13th (JR) and 150 at Dukeshagg Wood (Prudhoe) on 22nd (BNR). One to 97 were at a further 13 widespread localities.

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*

Atlas visits to the Bellingham area produced 66 to the north and west on 28th and 38 to the north and east on 22nd (ADM). 39 were noted at Ulgham Grange Farm on 18th (MJLo), 28 at Dukeshagg Wood on 7th (BNR), 27 at Ancroft Moor on 14th and Crookham on 22nd (JR), 25 at Harper's Heugh near Budle Bay on 15th (MSH), 23 at Stannington Station on 25th (JR) and 15+ at Bothal Pond on 21st (DWS). One to ten were at a further 12 widespread localities.

**Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*

40 were at Big Waters on 8th (AJJ/ISD) and East Fleetham on 18th (AA/MH), 25+ at Netherton Park, Stannington late in month (RWM/MIM), 20 at Hauxley NR on 20th (J to ), 13 at Beacon Hill (Cramlington) on 13th (STH) and 12 at a Warkworth garden on 7th (JMA). One to ten were at a further 20 widespread localities including gardens at Corbridge, Dinnington, Old Hartley and Ordley.

Tree Sparrow is a target species for 2009. Please report all records.

**Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs*

200 were at Belford Moor on 23rd (RA), 150 at bird feeders at Rothbury all month (TRD/JD), up to 80 on feeders at Grindon Farm all month (JF), 77 at Blanchland on 19th (RMH), 70 north and east of Bellingham on 22nd (ADM), 66 (mostly males) on the edge of Quarry House Moor on 10th (MH), 51 at Ancroft Moor on 14th (JR) and 50 at Big Waters on 16th (AJJ/ISD). One to 40 were at a further 33 widespread localities.

**Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla*

40 were at Belford Moor on 23rd (RA), 19 in an observer's garden at Corbridge on 2nd (MR), nine at Grindon Farm all month (JF), eight at Ancroft Moor on 14th (JR), six+ at Eshott on 23rd (MSH), four at Ellingham all month (per NNBC) and Branton GP between 3rd-15th (IBDa/KDa). One to three were also at 13 widespread localities including gardens at Linden Hall, Mount Pleasant, Rothbury, Stamfordham and Tranwell Woods.

**Greenfinch** *Carduelis chloris*

A pre-roost flock of 100 was noted at Slaley Hall Hotel grounds on 22nd (RMH), 41 in a Corbridge garden on 2nd (MR), 32 at feeders at Holywell Pond on 10th (ASJ), 24 visited an Alnwick garden on 12th (JMA) and Shilford on 14th (BNR), 19 at Bedlington on 19th (JR) and one to 12 at a further 17 widespread localities.

**Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis*

80 at Old Hartley on 18th (ASJ), 27 at Hirst, Ashington on 27th (SS), 25 at Bedlington on 19th (JR), 18 at Amble on 8th (PRM) and Broomlee on 21st (TWi), 15 at Big Waters on 15th (GB), 13 at Ashington on 7th (JR), 12 at an Alnwick garden on 5th and 12th (JMA), 11 at Crookham on 22nd (JR) and Holywell Dene on 23rd (MT/NT). One to ten were at a further 19 widespread localities.

**Siskin** *Carduelis spinus*

Ca. 80 were at Bedlington on 13th (JR), 50+ at Scotland Gate on 2nd (MSK), 30 at Corbridge on 17th (TWi), 20 at Bywell on 19th (ASJ), 20+ at Wark on 19th (PRM), 13 at Bolam Lake CP on 15th (PCF), ten at Rothbury all month (TRD/JD) and one to three at a further 12 widespread localities including gardens at Dinnington, Longbenton, Netherton Park (Stannington), Newcastle, New Kennels (Blagdon) and Tranwell Woods.

**Linnet** *Carduelis cannabina*

Between 1,200-1,500 were perched on overhead power lines at East Hartford on 10th (JSB/EC) with 150 at nearby West Hartford on 15th (STH). 200 arrived on Holy Island after heavy snow on the mainland on 13th (IK). Numbers increased to 300 by 15th (ASJ) then declined to 50 on 28th (CGK). 230 were at Birtley-Wark on 1st (MNC), 90 at Druridge Pools on 8th (IDR), 75 at Stag Rocks, Bamburgh on 4th (MSH), 73 at Ancroft North Farm on 14th (JR), 71 at Ulgham Grange Farm on 18th (MJCo) and two to 40 at a further 13 widespread localities.

**Twite** *Carduelis flavirostris*

The Hemscott Hill Links, Cresswell flock was observed throughout month with a maximum of 200 on 3rd (EC/JSB). 60 at Druridge Links on 8th (IDR) and 50 at Cresswell Pond on 17th (CDB) were probably part of this flock. Ten were at Chibburn mouth, East Chevington on 20th (TRD). Elsewhere, ten were at Elwick on 22nd (DGB/IBDa) and nine at Long Nanny between 4th-22nd (AA/MH/PRM).

**Lesser Redpoll** *Carduelis cabaret*

20 were feeding at the roadside at Prestwick Carr on 14th (PCF), four at Addycombe (Rothbury) on 13th (TRD) and two at Big Waters on 15th (GB).

**Crossbill** *Loxia curvirostra*

20+ were at Druridge Bay CP on 4th (ACo). Four at Scotland Gate on 5th increased to 20 on 17th (MSK). 12 were at nearby Choppington Woods on 4th (MSK), 11 were at Big Waters on 1st (AJJ/ISD), eight (five males) at Swallow Pond on 16th (SPP), five at Winnows Hill (Slaley) on 20th (RMH) and one to two also at Bolam Lake CP, west of Elton and Green Letch near Bedlington.

**Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Nine were at Dukeshagg Wood on 7th (BNR) and Scotland Gate all month (SLB/MSK), seven at Plenmeller Common on 10th (PH), six at Harbottle Crag on 6th (DRo), Bedlington on 7th (ASH), Ellingham on 13th (per NNBC), Bellingham area on 22nd (ADM), five at Shilford on 14th (BNR) and Slaley Forest on 17th (RMH), four at Rothbury all month (TRD/JD), Haughton Strother on 4th (MR), Berwick Hill on 14th (MRS), Holystone on 16th (DRo), Whitelea (Cramlington) on 18th (DM), Shillhope on 21st (per NNBC), Newcastle on 26th (MJCo) and Mount Pleasant on 28th (SWA). One to three were at a further 24 widespread localities.

**Lapland Bunting** *Calcarius lapponicus*

23 were at favoured Holy Island (14 near Lough, six at Chare Ends, two-three in Straight Lonnen fields) on 15th (IK) with four on a recently ploughed field at Chare Ends on 25th (PRM). Five were at Long Nanny on 4th (AA/MH).

**Snow Bunting** *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Inland, 26 were at Wholhope Hill (Cheviot Hills) on 4th (IRD). Coastal records involved, 20+ at Cresswell Pond on 21st (DWS), five at nearby Hemscott Hill Links (Cresswell) on 21st (RSF) and one to two at Berwick Little Beach, Inner Farne and the Long Nanny.



Two views of a Snow Bunting at Long Nanny  
Last week of February  
L by Paul massey and R by Mike Hodgson

**Yellowhammer** *Emberiza citrinella*

264 were found during a farm survey at Middle Newham near Belsay on 8th (TAC/MLC), 55 at Haydon Fell near Haydon Bridge on 1st (PRM), 31 in the Elford area on 20th (MSH), 29 at Whitehouse (Slaley) on 14th (RMH), 28 at Hartley West Farm, Holywell Dene on 4th (RJP), 20+ at East Fleetham on 18th (AA/MH), 41 at Ancroft North Farm on 14th (JR), 40 at Ancroft on 14th (JR), 32 at Bothal Banks on 25th (JR), 21 at Ancroft Moor on 14th (JR), 13 at Sharperton on 14th (DRo), 11 at Bolam Lake CP on 15th (PCF) and Ulgham Grange Farm on 18th (MJCo) and ten at Whitelea (Cramlington) on 18th (DM). One to nine were at a further nine widespread localities.

**Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus*

38 were found at Middle Newham near Belsay during a farm survey on 8th (TAC/MLC), 23 at Bothal Banks on 25th (JR), 20 at Birkin Carrs, Warkworth on 13th (EC/JSB), 19 at Ancroft on 14th (JR), 13 at Ancroft North Farm on 14th (JR), 12 at Arcot Pond on 22nd (LJM) and one to nine at a further 21 widespread localities.

## ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN

### Escapes

#### Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*

This smart escape apparently has been present since December 2008 and was noted throughout the month at Newton Flash amongst Greylags (TRD/MSH/PAT/NNBC).

Photographed by Mike Hodgson  
13th February



### Hybrids

#### Canada Goose x Greylag Goose *Branta canadensis* x *Anser anser*

A single was at Hauxley on 14th (PCF).

#### Mallard x Eider *Anser platyrhynchos* x *Somateria mollissima*

The regular hybrid again remained at Amble Harbour throughout (TRD/PRM).

Photographed by Tim Dean  
20th February



## LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

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Bamburgh Ringing Station, Berwick Wildlife Group, Hauxley Ringing Station, North Northumberland Bird Club.

Those observers marked with an asterisk after their name(s) have submitted records on-line using the club



spreadsheet . Copies are available by emailing Dick Myatt at [dick@dickmyatt.co.uk](mailto:dick@dickmyatt.co.uk).

Apologies for any accidental omissions.

#### **BULLETIN COMPILATION AND PRODUCTION**

This bulletin was compiled by Lindsay McDougall (Swans to Geese, Game birds, Divers to Herons), Graeme Bowman (Ducks), Trevor Blake (Birds of Prey to Rails), Ian Forsyth (Waders to Skuas), Tim Dean (Gulls to Auks, Escapes, Hybrids and Unknown Origin, List of Contributors, Highlights), Iain Robson (Doves to Dunnock), Mike Richardson (Robin to Warblers), Dee McKeown (Flycatchers to Buntings), Julie Roper/Dan Turner (WeBS Coastal Counts) and Steve Holliday (WeBS Inland Counts). Thanks again to Ann McKeown for typing the section Flycatchers to Buntings.

Edited by Steve Barrett [Sscmagpie@aol.com](mailto:Sscmagpie@aol.com)

Distributed by Alan Watson [apusx@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:apusx@blueyonder.co.uk)

#### **RECORD SUBMISSION**

**Cards:** Please send all record cards to Tim Dean, 2 Knocklaw Park, Rothbury NE65 7PW, to arrive on, or preferably before, the 8th of the month following that in which the records were collected. Please write cards legibly to ensure that your sightings are correctly recorded.

**E-mail:** Members are encouraged to e-mail their records on an Excel-style spreadsheet. Please e-mail Dick Myatt at [dick@dickmyatt.co.uk](mailto:dick@dickmyatt.co.uk) for a copy of the standard spreadsheet and other details.

**Location names and Grid references:** The use of standard location names and the inclusion of grid references greatly increases the value of records in subsequent analyses. A 1km square grid reference is the ideal e.g. NY8067 for Grindon Lough, but 2km square references (Tetrads) are also acceptable e.g. NY86D in this case. A list of localities and their tetrad grid references (Tetrad/Locality List) can be downloaded from the 'Resources & Downloads' section of the Club website at <http://www.ntbc.org.uk> – the use of these names, wherever possible, would be highly appreciated.

#### **RARE & SCARCE BIRD DESCRIPTIONS 2008**

Members are reminded that they should submit any outstanding descriptions/notes now for records relating to 2008 (and earlier). Unfortunately, any descriptions received after 14th May 2009 cannot be guaranteed to be assessed by the County Records Committee for inclusion in Birds in Northumbria 2008.

The standard Rare Bird report form is available as a download from the club's web site or, alternatively, from the County Recorder.

#### **COUNTY LIST**

The County Check-list is available on The Resources and Downloads page of the club web-site. The list is in the correct scientific order and gives current Latin names.

#### **PHOTOGRAPHS AND ILLUSTRATIONS**

Please keep submitting your articles, photographs, sketches and illustrations for the bulletin. Thanks again to those who have supplied the excellent photographs.

Please send to Steve Barrett at [Sscmagpie@aol.com](mailto:Sscmagpie@aol.com)

#### **ELECTRONIC BULLETIN**

The NTBC bulletin can be received electronically or as hard copy. The electronic bulletin arrives earlier than the printed version, it is in colour and we save all that printing and stamps. Ask for an e-mailed bulletin from [jo.bentley@waitrose.com](mailto:jo.bentley@waitrose.com).

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

For membership enquiries please contact [jo.bentley@waitrose.com](mailto:jo.bentley@waitrose.com).

#### **NTBC WEBSITE**

The excellent club website is available at [www.ntbc.org.uk](http://www.ntbc.org.uk). Chris Knox is the link person to the club committee for the website and you can contact him at [christopher.knox@o2.co.uk](mailto:christopher.knox@o2.co.uk)



## WEB SITE CONTENT

Since the inception of the club's new website, the bird club committee has laid down certain conditions for subject matter on the site. There have been a number of enquiries from club members about why local 'Blogs' have not been included on the Links page. The committee and others recognise that there are a number of interesting and relevant locally-based blogs, some run by club members, and whilst these contain information of interest/use to birders there are unfortunately a further number that contain language considered offensive and web links to sites deemed inappropriate and not in keeping with the club's constitutional aims. One problem is that blogs are moderated only by their owners and the club, quite rightly, has no control over their content. This is particularly important as we wish to present the club in its most professional manner and it has an important aim to encourage younger members. The committee would find it difficult to justifying one blog but not another and so, unfortunately for the foreseeable future, blogs will continue to be excluded. Members of course are free to visit and support these local blogs if they wish. The website links (as distinct from blogs) provided on the club site are considered to provide useful information to both club members and any interested members of the general public and the club will continue to provide others in a similar vein in the future.

## FIELD TRIPS

The next field trip is to the Harthope Valley on 17th May. Please meet in the car park at Middleton at 09:00.

Contact is Trevor Blake;

Email: [trevor.1958@live.co.uk](mailto:trevor.1958@live.co.uk)

Tel: 01670 862 635

## INDOOR MEETINGS

The committee are currently organising the schedule for 2009-2010. If you have any suggestions for speakers or topics please contact any committee member.

## SEATON SLUICE WATCH TOWER

The local council recently issued a yellow card to the club with a warning that the watch tower at Seaton Sluice was becoming an eyesore due to its poor condition. A red card for the much loved building was a possibility unless it was brought up to scratch quickly. As a result club members laboured to refurbish the building on a sunny but windswept Saturday. You can see from the accompanying photograph that the hut is now resplendent in a new coat of paint as are the clothes of the workers. The reward for their work was a well deserved fish and chip meal (with mushy peas) at the local chippy. The first record for the smart new building was an Iceland Gull which landed on the rocks during a tea break (for the workers not the gull).

If you want to use the tower please contact Alan Watson and he will provide you with a key for a small charge. You never know you may see a Sabine's Gull like the regulars did last year.



## Hen Harrier Nest Watch 2009

Following from the hugely successful Hen Harrier Nest Watch last year organised by the RSPB and Forestry Commission with tremendous support from NTBC members, the 2009 Nest Watch is now live! This important project could not be run without the support of volunteers to monitor the hen harrier nest every day throughout the breeding season. There was just one successful hen harrier nest in Northumberland in 2008 and ten in the whole of England.

If you would like to get involved (we work in 2 shifts: 8am-2pm and 2pm-8pm with 2 volunteers present at each shift) please contact Gemma Hall on 07751550611; [gemma.hall@rspb.org.uk](mailto:gemma.hall@rspb.org.uk) or come to the volunteer induction evening at 7pm on 8th April at the Gun Inn, Ridsdale, Northumberland NE48 2TF.

Past volunteers have found the experience very enjoyable and a great opportunity to view and help protect these magnificent birds. We ask that volunteers commit to 2 shifts per month.

### **Newcastle-upon-Tyne RSPB Local Group 40th Anniversary Celebrations**

Our local RSPB Group have issued an invitation to it's 40th anniversary celebration on Saturday, 6th June 2009 (11.00am – 3.00pm) at the Rising Sun Country Park.

Attractions include

- talks from representatives of RSPB Geltsdale Reserve and the Northern Red Kite Project
- a talk on digital photography
- a display of wildlife photographs from Tynemouth Photographic Society
- a demonstration of dry stone walling
- bird watching walks led by local volunteers
- a guided botanical walk
- pond dipping
- sales of RSPB goods
- home produce and plant sales
- a tombola and raffle
- activities for children

All schools in North Tyneside, and hopefully Newcastle and beyond have been invited, to take part in an art competition. Some of this artwork will be on display. If you are aware of any children who would like to take part in the art competition please see the Local Group website where details may be found. [www.RSPB.org.uk/groups/newcastle](http://www.RSPB.org.uk/groups/newcastle).

The new RSPB International Reserve at Saltholme has opened to the public during the same year that the group is celebrating this significant milestone. The Saltholme Reserve will be well represented.

There will be several RSPB staff and members of the Local Group available on the day to assist you and answer any queries that you may have about the RSPB and its vital conservation work.

This will be a day for the whole family to enjoy! If you have any questions about the event or would like to find out more about the Newcastle-upon-Tyne RSPB Local Group contact Brian Moorhead on 07903 387429.

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# Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

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## Bulletin 2009 No 3 MONTHLY SUMMARY – MARCH

6th May 2009

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Whooper Swan – An impressive movement from mid month onwards
- Green-winged Teal – The male remained at Bothal Pond until the 15th
- Garganey – The first of the year was at St Mary's wetland on 30th and 31st
- Smew – The female toured various inland waters
- White Stork – A ringed individual of dubious origin turned up at various sites
- Marsh Harrier - An early migrant flew past St Mary's on 31st
- Spotted Redshank - Sightings were at Budle Bay and Holy Island
- Little Gull – An adult was at Holywell Pond on 17th
- House Martin - An early migrant at St Mary's from 24th
- Water Pipit - Singles noted at St Mary's and Lynemouth Flash
- Dipper – An early brood was found at Alwinton on 29th
- Black Redstart – One was found at North Blyth on 22nd
- Wheatear – First migrants noted from 15th
- Ring Ouzel - The wintering bird remained and early migrants were noted from 7th
- Great Grey Shrike - Two were seen in the county

### NEWS

See later in the bulletin for full information on the following;

- The next field trip is to the Harthope Valley on 17th May.



A hungry Grey Heron in a garden pond at Stannington  
by Dick Myatt  
see later for the gruesome story



## WEATHER

An unsettled first half of the month was followed by a fine, mainly sunny week before turning less settled and cloudier towards the end. The mean temperature for the month was above normal. Sunshine duration was well above normal. Rainfall was well below normal, especially over parts of the north-east, making it the driest March since 2003.

1st to 14th: The first half of the month was changeable as weather systems spread bands of rain and showers eastwards. The most notable event during this spell occurred early on the 5th, with snow followed by a very cold night. Atlantic fronts spread an area of heavy rain eastwards late on the 9th and early on the 10<sup>th</sup>.

15th to 22nd: High pressure brought settled conditions. The days were often sunny in many areas, although it was dull and cloudy at times, especially near eastern coasts. In general the nights were chilly, with frosts occurring in many areas. The afternoons were warm where the sunshine broke through.

23rd to 28th: A return to more unsettled conditions as weather fronts brought further rain and showers at times. This spell was often characterised by windy, gusty conditions with sunshine and heavy, blustery showers, which were occasionally wintry on the higher ground. There was also some hail and thunder in places. Afternoon temperatures were quite close to the average for March, but strong winds made it feel significantly colder, especially near the east coast on the 28th.

29th to 31st: A quieter few days, with generally high pressure. Some weak fronts did edge in from the west on the 30th, bringing a little drizzle to northern areas.

## CLASSIFIED LIST

The following account consists of unchecked reports. The species/subspecies marked \* require descriptions. A complete list of all sightings which need notes is included in the NTBC website [www.ntbc.org.uk](http://www.ntbc.org.uk) under the County Records Committee section and in Birds in Northumbria 2007 page 251.

The Inland and Coastal Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) tables are at the rear of the bulletin. These contain additional counts to those in the Classified List.

## TARGET SPECIES

The target species for 2009 are **Marsh Tit**, **Spotted Flycatcher** and **Tree Sparrow**.

Please report all records for these species.

## Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

The highest counts were 70 at QEII Lake on 15th with 68 here the previous day and in the Tweed Estuary on 13th (DM/STH/CDH/MHu) with Bolam Lake hosting 66 on 16th (SRB). The maximum at Leazes Park Lake, Newcastle was 22 on 9h (DM). At Alnmouth 17 were present on 19th and 13 were at Birling Carrs on 22nd (PRM/DM). Ten were 1.5km north of Warkworth on 6th (RHAr/MHAr). One to six were noted from Arcot Pond, Backworth, *Beehive* Flash (Earsdon), Bothal Pond, Broomlee Lough, Cresswell Pond, Elswick Wharf, Exhibition Park (Newcastle), Gosforth Park, Hauxley NR, Holy Island Lough, Linton Pond, Monk's House Pool, Paddy Freeman's Pond (Newcastle), Rayburn Lake, Rothley Lake, Shield-on-the-Wall, Shoreswood, South Newsham (Blyth) and Woodhorn Flashes. Two early breeding records were a pair nest building at Howick on 29th and a bird incubating at *Shasun* Dudley on 30th.



Flocks of Whoopers

left - on the sea off Annstead by Paul Massey



right - at Druridge Pools by Tim Dean

## Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Movement was noted during the month with 145 N at Hexham on 17th in groups of 80 and 65, 80 at Cresswell Pond on 24th, 55 N at Howick on 29th, 45 N at Hauxley Haven on 12th, 38 N at Low Hauxley on



17th and Rothbury on 19th, 34 N at Holy Island on 14th, 14 N at Amble on 2nd, 12 N at Boulmer on 20th, nine N at Holywell Pond on 17th, eight flew N at Chevington on 25th, seven NW at Rothbury, five N over Tynemouth on 22nd, four flew N at Blagdon on 29th and two W at Rothbury on 11th. (AJR/EC/JSB/JAR/PT *et al.*). At Beal the regular flock of ca.40 increased to a peak of 136 on 28th, presumably augmented by migrants flying N. (JMA/IK/RNa/DRW). At the end of the month there was a large gathering at High Hauxley peaking at 128 on 28th (PCF/HRS *et al.*). At Rayburn Lake the peak count was 94 on 29th (NFO). 50 were at the Long Nanny on 29th, the peak count at Cresswell Pond was 45 on 19th, whilst at nearby Druridge Pools the maximum count was 42 on 15th. A maximum of 32 were at Hauxley NR on 30th (MRo/AT/DM/STH/ADM/HRS). In the Linton roundabout area 25 were present from 23rd-25th (IRD/PCF/TB). A party of 20 adults was seen in a roadside field near Felton on 7th (DWS). Counts of 17 came from Shoreswood on 1st and on the sea at Cocklawburn on 30th. A group of 16 was offshore at Annstead Links on 22nd. Counts of 15 came from Catcleugh Reservoir on 10th, East Chevington on 24th and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 31st. At Big Waters 14 on 29th had previously been seen in flight over Hazlerigg. 12 were noted at Grindon Lough on 6th and Holy Island on 30th and 11 at Moorhouse Farm, Amble on 19th. Counts of one to six came from Arcot Pond, Bakethin Reservoir, Bothal Pond, Branton GP, Derwent Reservoir, Felton aerodrome, Fenham-le-Moor, Fontburn Reservoir, Hedgeley GP, Newcastle Great Park Pools, near Swarland, Sweethope Lough, West Ord and Woodhorn Flashes.

**\*Bean Goose** *Anser fabalis*

Presumably what is the regular wandering *fabalis* race bird appeared at Beadnell Caravan Site pond on 30th (RNa).

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

Return movement continued during the month. At Holy Island on 1st 200 flew high N, whilst on that day 90 flew N at Horncliffe and 74 N at Berwick, 64 N at Harwood Close Cramlington and 32 flew NW at Arcot Lane (IK/MHu/GW/DM). At Cresswell 54 flew SW in two skeins on 29th (DM/STH). Approximately 1,000 were still in fields adjacent to QEII Lake on 14th, whilst 650 were in two flocks at Doddington on 29th and 350 were at Hauxley on 2nd reducing to 100 by 31st (CDH/TRD/JD/SRB/Al/DI/HRS). At Budle Bay numbers reduced from 200 on 13th to 150 by 29th (TRD/JD/MSH). At East Chevington 90 were present on 25th and 65 at Derwent Reservoir on 24th (TRD/IFo). 50 were at Lowick on 1st and 45 in the Rocket Field at Holy Island on 10th (EHa/MR). 21 were at Woodhorn Flashes on 14th, 17 at Castron on 15th and 14 at West Hartford on 24th (LJM/TRD). One to seven were noted from Angerton Lake Cresswell Pond and Grindon Lough.

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

The regular wintering flock of Greenland *flavirostris* birds was again at Grindon Lough on five dates from 4th-31st (ACo/DHH/PRM/MRS/EC/JSB). Two birds were also at Rayburn Lake from 14th -28th (TAC/MLC/MSH).

**Greylag Goose** *Anser anser*

Light movement was noted with 70 N at Prestwick Carr on 7th and 50 N at Spindlestone on 12th (PCF/MSH/JCD). The peak count was 1,000 in Budle Bay on 9th with 650+ still present on 29th (DGB/MSH). A site record of 686 was present at Hauxley NR on 29th (HRS). At Castron 550 were present on 15th, 350 were in fields at Derwent Reservoir on 11th and 180 at Newton Pool on 4th (TRD/IFo/JMA). Rayburn Lake hosted 85 on 28th, 55 were at Greenlee Lough on 15th, 38 at Grindon Lough on 4th and 35 at Big Waters on 6th (TLC/MLC/MRS/AJJ/ISD). 15 were at Monk's House Pool on 14th and 12 at Plenmeller Common on 12th (STH/SJH). Two to eight were noted from Arcot Pond, Black Lough (Edlingham), Bothal Pond, Cresswell Pond, Dipton Wood, Marden Quarry, Woodhorn Flashes and flying over the Bywell-Stocksfield Guessburn area and Southfield Green, Cramlington.

**Greater Canada Goose** *Branta canadensis*

Much lower numbers were noted than in February with a peak of 258 at Grindon Lough on 6th (DHH). Plenmeller Common hosted 76 on 5th (SJH). 41 were at Bothal Pond on 15th, 32 were at Bolam Lake and 26 at Capheaton on 16th, 28 at Hauxley NR on 29th and 20 at Big Waters on 4th (DM *et al.*). Counts of 18 came from Castle Island on 15th, 17 from Cresswell Pond on 8th, 15 from Linton Pond on 14th, 14 from Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 9th and ten from QEII Lake on 14th (DM/STH/CDH). One to five were noted from Arcot Pond, Backworth, Exhibition Park (Newcastle), Holystone, Rayburn Lake, Shasun (Dudley), Sweethope Lough and Woodhorn Flashes.

**Barnacle Goose** *Branta leucopsis*

The only sizeable group was in Budle Bay with 40 present on 21st (IK). Elsewhere two were at Branton GP on 2nd (IBDa/KDa). A single was at Arcot Pond on 1st and was almost certainly the bird at Killingworth Lake from 7th-13th (DM/GB/CGK/LJM). Singles were also noted at Grindon Lough on 6th/15th/24th (DHH/MRS/PRM), Linton Pond on 18th (MRS), Plenmeller Common on 20th (JSB/EC), Bothal Pond from

22nd-27th (TB *et al.*) and Hauxley NR from 20th-31st (TRD *et al.*).

**Pale –bellied hrota Brent Goose** *Branta bernicla hrota*

The only record was of 18 at Fenham-le-Moor on 14th (KWY).

**Dark-bellied bernicla Brent Goose** *Branta bernicla bernicla*

Again only one record was received of 39 on Holy Island on 10th (MR).

**Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna*

Four flew N at Cocklawburn on 29th (MHu) and one N at Howick on 21st (PRM/EAW). The Fenham Flats area held 138 on 25th (PRM) and 101 were at Budle Bay on 18th (MSH/JRT). Other peak counts were 43 at the Blyth Estuary on 5th (TRC), 24 at Cresswell Pond on 10th (PCF), 24 at Hauxley Reserve on 19th (SRB), eight to nine at Boulmer and the Long Nanny Estuary, and four to six at Alnmouth, Castle Island, Elswick Wharf, Lynemouth and Monk's House Pool. One to two were also at Backworth, Bothal and Linton Ponds, Holy Island Lough, Newcastle Great Park Pools, St Mary's Wetland, West Hartford, Woodhorn Flashes and Yarrow Slake. Further inland twos were at Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother, Holystone and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on occasional dates.

**Mandarin** *Aix galericulata*

Six (three drakes) were at Ridley Stokoe on 24th (MSK) and four (two drakes) on 15th (BCFT), with a pair at nearby Smalesmouth on 28th (JR). Five (four drakes) were at Bakethin Reservoir on 21st (SPP) and a pair there on 15th and 24th (MJC/MSK/BCFT). A drake was at Haughton Strother (near Humshaugh) on 11th (MR).

**Wigeon** *Anas penelope*

Peak counts were 185 at Cresswell Pond on 8th (IRD), 174 at Grindon Lough on 21st (PRM), 148 at Derwent Reservoir on 11th (IFo), 110 at the Long Nanny Estuary on 13th (TRD/JD), 104 at Druridge Pools on 22nd (IDR), 86 at Woodhorn Flashes on 19th (TRC), 71-77 at Bothal Pond, Budle Bay and Hauxley Reserve, and 56-66 at Fenham Flats, Linton Pond and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Counts of 29-37 came from Capheaton Lake, Colt Crag Reservoir and Newcastle Great Park Pools, 11-14 at Alnmouth and Shield on the Wall, and one to six at Arcot and Backworth Ponds, Boulmer, and Broomlee and Holy Island Loughs.

**Gadwall** *Anas strepera*

Bothal Pond held a peak of 22 on 23rd (AT), 21 were at Caistron on 28th (NNBC), 16 at Woodhorn Flashes on 19th (TRC), 15 at Linton Pond on 21st (TRD), 14 at Ellington Pond on 22nd (IDR), ten at St Mary's Wetland on 15th (SPP), eight at Hauxley Reserve on 23rd and 29th (TRD/JD/HRS), five at Big Waters on 11th (AJJ/ISD), and four at Arcot Pond from 15th (LJM/DM/STH). One to two were also at 'Earth Balance' (Bomarsund), Castle Island, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Monk's House Pool, North Seaton, QEII Lake and Warkworth.

**Teal** *Anas crecca*

190 at Grindon Lough on 11th (SJH) increased to 308 on 21st (PRM). Other peak concentrations were 130 at Druridge Pools on 22nd and 25th (TRD/IDR), 110 at Holy Island ('rocket field') on 10th (MR), 90 at Colt Crag Reservoir on 9th (MR), 61 at Budle Bay on 22nd (PRM), 60 at the Blyth Estuary on 5th (TRC), 54 at Arcot Pond on 5th (LJM), and 50 at Bradford Kaims/Hoppen Kiln on 5th (31st (JPL), and 44-49 at Bothal and Cresswell Ponds, and West Hartford. Counts of 30-39 came from Backworth Pond, Harwood Gate, Hauxley Reserve and Holystone, 24-29 at Alnmouth, Castle Island, Derwent Reservoir and Holy Island Lough, and 13-18 at Arcot, Linton and Middle Ord Ponds, Haughton Strother, North Seaton, West Hartford, West Ord and Woodhorn Flashes. Two to seven were also at Broomlee Lough, Monk's House Pool, Oxford Pits and Plenmeller Common.

In February, 100 were at Newcastle Business Park on 14th (AHB) not at Newcastle Great Park as stated in the February 2009 bulletin'

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

Apart from 80 at Grindon Lough on 11th (SJH), there were few notable gatherings; 38 at Newcastle Leazes Park on 9th (DM), 37 at Colt Crag Reservoir on 9th (MR), 22 at Hauxley Reserve on 29th (HRS), and ten to 18 at Arcot, Bothal and Cresswell Ponds, Castle Island, Lynemouth Flash, Newcastle Civic Centre, QEII and Rayburn Lakes, Sweethope Lough and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. One to seven were at 14 further localities.

**Pintail** *Anas acuta*

Five were at Fenham Flats on 14th (KWY), single pairs at Cresswell Pond on three dates between 17th-25th (PCF/IRD/TRD/JD) and Rayburn Lake on 14th (TAC/MLC). Singles were at Cresswell Pond on several

further dates between 5th-29th (MJCo/DM *et al.*) and St Mary's Wetland on 15th (SPP).

**Garganey** *Anas querquedula*

A drake was at St Mary's Wetland on 30th-31st (AC/MSH/SPP *et al.*).

**Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*

Peak counts were 19 at West Allotment Pond on 16th (CGK), 16 at Druridge Pools on 17th (PCF), 11 at Swallow Pond on 24th (SPP), eight at Cresswell Pond on 19th (PT), four at Bradford Kaims/Hoppen Kiln on 20th and 24th (JHa), and four at Bothal Pond on 25th (TRD). One to two were also at Arcot and Linton Ponds, East Chevington, Grindon Lough, Holy Island, and Monk's House and Newton Pools.

**Pochard** *Aythya ferina*

Arcot Pond held 19 on 13th (STH) and seven to 17 on three further dates between 1st-15th (DM/LJM), 14 were at Swallow Pond on 6th (SPP), six at Shield on the Wall on 15th (MRS), three to four at Bothal Pond and Woodhorn Flashes, and singles at Broomlee and Grindon Loughs, and East Chevington.

**Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*

The largest congregations were 37 at Newcastle Leazes Park on 9th (DM), 33 at Linton Pond on 21st (TRC), 27 at Holywell Pond on 10th (SPP), 27 at Marden Quarry on 14th (KWY), 25 at Newcastle Exhibition Park on 18th (GB), 20 at Rayburn Lake on 14th (TAC/MLC), 17-19 at Bothal and West Allotment Ponds, and QEII and Rayburn Lakes, and ten to 14 at Broomlee and Grindon Loughs, Monk's House Pool, Paddy Freeman's Pond (Jesmond Dene) and Woodhorn Flashes. Five to nine were also at Arcot and Bank's Ponds, Dudley, Hauxley Reserve, Rothley Lakes and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and one to three at Cresswell Pond and Haughton Strother.

**Scaup** *Aythya marila*

A drake flew S at Monk's House on 22nd (PRM). One was at Newton Pool on 5th (CL/DEJ/DGB) and one was again inland at Hartburn Reservoir, on 16th (TRD).

**Eider** *Somateria mollissima*

66 were at Stag Rocks on 12th (PCF), 41 at the Tyne Estuary-North Shields Fish Quay on 7th (DMT), 36 at Fenham Flats on 25th (PRM), 32 at Boulmer on 19th (PRM), 21-23 at Alnmouth, Annstead, Blyth Harbour and Monk's House, 13 at Howick and four on the River Coquet at Warkworth.

**Long-tailed Duck** *Clangula hyemalis*

One flew N at Monk's House on 22nd (PRM) and one S at St Mary's on 1st (SPP). Numbers at Stag Rocks varied from 25 (15 drakes; much display) on 11th (AA/MH), 30 on 13th (TRD/JD), 15 on 29th (MSH) and four on 30th (RB/MB). Much display was noted in a group of 30 off St Cuthbert's Island, Holy Island on 28th (IK), 14 were off Cheswick on 2nd (MHu), nine at Fenham Flats on 11th (MH/AA), and three off Seahouses on 14th (STH).

**Common Scoter** *Melanitta nigra*

Two flew N at Boulmer on 19th and one N at Annstead on 22nd (PRM). A count of 62 at Cheswick on 2nd increased to 122 by 30th (MHu). Stag Rocks held peaks of 110 on 13th (TRD/JD) and 80 on 21st (JPL), with 20-75 regularly between 9th -21st, 60 were at Holy Island on 29th (IK), 40 at Cocklawburn on 30th (MHu), 29 at Beadnell Bay on 7th (GW), 20 at Cambois on 22nd (CGK/PS), five to nine off Druridge and St Mary's, and one to two at Alnmouth and Newton Haven.

**Velvet Scoter** *Melanitta fusca*

A pair was at St Mary's on 7th (DHH).

**Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula*

One flew N at Boulmer on 19th (PRM). The Tweed Estuary attracted 152 on 13th (MHu), 35 were at Castron on 15th (TRD), 32 at Bolam Lake CP on 16th (TRD), 17 at the Blyth Estuary on 14th (JR), 17 at East Chevington on 11th (PCF), 14 at Grindon Lough on 15th (MRS), 14 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 16th (MR), and ten to 12 at Capheaton and QEII Lakes, Holy Island and New Water Haugh. Six to eight were at Big Waters, Broomlee Lough and West Ord, three to five at Arcot Pond, Catcleugh and Derwent Reservoirs, Greenlee Lough and Killingworth Lake, and one to two at Alnmouth, Castle Island, Cresswell Pond, Hauxley Reserve, Oxford Pits, St Mary's, Warkworth and Wylam.

**Smew** *Mergellus albellus*

Single 'redheads' were at Bolam Lake on 2nd, 4th and 7th-9th (TB/IK/LJM *et al.*), Colt Crag Reservoir on 9th (MR) and Capheaton Lake on 16th (MSH).

**Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator*

Four flew N at Hauxley Reserve on 31st (HRS). A group of 18 (eight drakes) at Holy Island Heugh on 11th included much display, and were noted at Fenham Flats later the same day (MH). Other peak counts included 12 at Cheswick on 2nd (MHu), eight at Low Newton on 31st (TRD/JD), seven at Alnmouth on 19th (PRM), six at Annstead on 22nd (PRM), five at Cresswell Pond on 10th (PCF), five off Druridge on 17th (TRD/JD), five at Howick Haven on 22nd (AT), and three to four at Boulmer, Hauxley Reserve and Stag Rocks. One to two were also at Annstead, Beadnell Bay, North Seaton and West Ord. Two pairs displayed at Cresswell Pond on 25th (MH).

**Goosander** *Mergus merganser*

On 24th, 15 (seven drakes) were at Ryton Haughs/Close House and 19 (seven+ drakes) at Wylam, and later in the day a total of 33 (16 drakes) were counted from Wylam bridge (MH). Other peak counts were seven at Killingworth Lake on 7th (GB), six at Airy Holm Reservoir, seven at the Tweed Estuary on 13th (MHu), five at Hedgeley GP on 2nd (PT), five at West Ord on 1st (MHu), and three to four at Big Waters, Morpeth (Oldgate Bridge), and Dilston. One to two were also at Arcot Pond, Broomlee Lough, Caistron, Derwent Reservoir, Holystone, Jesmond Dene, Ridley Stokoe, Rothbury, Todstead, Warden and Wark.

**Ruddy Duck** *Oxyura jamaicensis*

A pair was at Swallow Pond on 4th (ACo) and 30th (TRD/JD).

**Red Grouse** *lagopus lagopus*

The highest counts were 26 in 16 territories at Thornhope and 19 at Grey Nag on 21st (BNR). Counts of seven came from Plenmeller Common on 5th, Simonside on 6th and Cowbyers-Blanchland on 15th (SJH/IRD/BNR). Five were at Paxhill, Allenheads on 10th and three were at Flow Moss, Dryburn Moor on 6th (SJH).

**Black Grouse** *Tetrao tetrix*

The highest counts were nine males at Swinhope Shield on 6th, six at Wellhope on 8th and five males at Flow Moss, Dryburn Moor on 6th (SJH/JMA). Four males were in the Hollin Green area on 6th, three birds were at Sipton Burn on 4th with two males here on 29th and three (one male, two females) at Rowley Burn on 15th/29th (SJH/ACo/ASH). One to two were noted from Dryburn Moor, Paxhill (Allenheads) and Sinderhope.

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

Six at Heighley Gate was the largest count for the month (TB). Four were in the Hollin Green on 10th (SJH). One to three were noted from Allerdean, Benridge (Morpeth), Big Waters, Hepple, Killingworth, and Wandylaw. Elsewhere one to four were noted from Beacon Hill, Carrshield, Dargueshope (Redesdale), Duddo, Ordley, Rock and Whitfield Hall,

**Grey Partridge** *Perdix perdix*

With the break up of flocks much lower counts were recorded than in February with a peak count of four at Lucker all month (JHa). Three were at North Middleton on 8th (CGK/PS). Two mostly in pairs were at Beal Boulmer, Cheswick Dunes, Doddington, East Holywell, Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene), Howick, Killingworth-Holystone area, Low Acton Farm (Allendale), Lowick, Rowley Burn, Woodhorn Flashes and Woosington.

**Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus*

The highest counts were 30+ at Hauxley on 29th and 28 at Haughton Strother on 11th (HRS/MR). Up to six were seen daily at Hartley west Farm (Holywell Dene) and up to three daily in an Old Hartley garden (RJP). Two frequented a Walbottle garden all month and were at Chesters House and Walled Garden on 1st (KR/LR/ALT). Singles were seen near Blagdon and Harlow Hill and in the unusual locations of Northumberland Park, North Shields and flying low down a Chapel House (Newcastle) street.

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

At St Mary's Island three flew N and one S on 31st and one flew N here on 5th (MT/NT). One flew S at Church Point, Newbiggin on 4th (TRC). The highest counts were eight at Cheswick on 18th and seven off Druridge on 17th (MHu/TRD/JD). Counts of three came from Annstead on 9th and Stag Rocks on 29th (CGB/MSH). One to two were noted from Alnmouth, Beadnell Bay, Cocklawburn, Fenham Flats, Football Hole (Newton), Holy Island (Sandon Bay and The Heugh). Howick, Meadow Haven (Berwick) and Newton Haven.

**Black-throated Diver** *Gavia arctica*

Two were off Stag Rocks on 21st with a single here on 13th (DRW/JD) and one was off Holy Island on 1st (IK).

**Great Northern Diver** *Gavia immer*

One flew S at Church Point, Newbiggin on 4th and singles flew N at St Mary's Island on 5th and Beadnell on 24th (TRC/MT/NT/MSH).

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Birds returned to breeding waters with a peak count of four (two trilling pairs at Arcot Pond on 26th, where the first returning bird was noted on 5th (LJM). Counts of three came from Shield-on-the-Wall on 15th, Linton Pond on 25th and Big Waters on 29th/30th (where a pair were using a breeding/displaying platform from 21st) and Swallow Pond on 30th (MRS/MSH/AJJ/ISD/TRD/JD). Two were noted at Killingworth Lake on 7th, Howick on 9th, Bakethin Reservoir on 15th, Angerton and Rothley Lakes on 16th, Aln Estuary on 27th and Banks Pond (Dinnington) on 29th. Singles were at Caistron, Cresswell Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Hauxley NR, Holy Island Lough, Longhirst Flash, Monks House Pool, Nelly's Moss Lake (Craggside) and Woodhorn Flashes.

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*

The principal site this month was Whittle Dene Reservoirs where numbers peaked at nine on 15th (RGW *et al.*). Four were at Derwent Reservoir on 11th/31st (IFo/PRM). Two were on the sea at Stag Rocks and displaying at Holywell Pond on 10th and at Big Waters on 21st, where singles were seen on five further dates (TRD/JD/SPP/AJJ/ISD). Singles were at Colt Crag reservoir on 9th, Catcleugh Reservoir on 10th, QEII Lake on 14th/25th and East Chevington on 17th (MR/PRM/CDH/TRD/JD).

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

Six were off Stag rocks on 18th with three here on 7th/13th and two on 21st (RNa/TRD/JD/DWS/JPL). A single was with the Slavonian Grebe flock off Holy Island on 28th (IK).

**Slavonian Grebe** *Podiceps auritus*

Holy Island saw its largest gathering of the winter on 28th-30th when 15 were present, mostly in full breeding plumage, up to four had been present earlier in the month (IK *et al.*). The maximum at Stag Rocks was ten on 21st with up to nine, some in breeding plumage on 12 further dates (DRW/AA/MH). Six were present in Spittal Bay on 16 h (MHu). Two were also in Beadnell Bay on 12th (GW).

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

An adult in summer plumage was at a previously regular site on 16th.

**Fulmar** *Fulmarus glacialis*

At Boulmer on 19th 720 flew N early morning in 1 hour and at Berwick Pier 230/hour flew N on 28th (PRM/MHu). At least 50 were off Stag Rocks on 18th (MSH). The highest count at the Old Hartley breeding colony was 22 on 19th (MT/NT). At least four were on Tynemouth Cliffs above King Edward's Bay on 29th (DMT) and two pairs were at Union Bridge, Berwick throughout the month (MHu). Two were at Alnmouth and Boulmer on 20th.

**Gannet** *Morus bassanus*

Some large movements were noted with 800/hour S at Berwick Pier on 22nd, 786 N in 30 minutes at Beadnell on 24th, 750/hour N at Low Hauxley on 24th, 550/hour N at Berwick Pier on 28th, 480 N in one hour at Boulmer on 19th and 440 N in 1 hour at Holy Island on 10th (MHu/MSH/EC/JSB/PRM/MR). Smaller movements of 100/hour N at Hauxley on 29th, 47 N at Howick on 21st and 22 N in 45 minutes at North Blyth on 28th were noted. Birds were also seen flying N in significant numbers throughout the month at Beadnell (JPL). One to 12 were noted from Cheswick, Snab Point and Spittal.

**Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

The peak roost counts during the month were 70 in Blyth South Harbour on 11th and 35 at North Shields Fish Quay on 21st (TRC/DMT *et al.*). Inland 21 were at Ryton Haughs on the Tyne just east of Close House on 24th, the observer's highest count for this area in Northumberland (MH), 19 at Derwent Reservoir on 11th, 11 at Big Waters on 6 h and nine at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 15th (IFo/AJJ/ISD/RGW). Eight were at Colt Crag Reservoir on 9th and six at Bakethin Reservoir on 15th (MR/MJC). One to three were noted from Castle Island, Cresswell Pond, Elswick Wharf, Fontburn Reservoir, Millennium Bridge (Newcastle), Warkworth and the first record for Woolsington Pond. At Blyth South Harbour five *sinensis* race were identified on 29th and a single at Alnmouth on 19th (PRM).



**Shag** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

The highest count was 20+ off Stag Rocks on 29th (MSH). The numbers at the Blyth South Harbour roost declined with a maximum of six on 13th (STH). One to three were noted from Alnmouth, Druridge Links, Newton Point, St Mary's Island and Tynemouth.

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*

A single was seen at Holy Island causeway on 1st and presumably the same bird in Budle Bay on 7th/9th/21st (GP/ACo/DWS/DGB/DRW).

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*

The largest concentration was at Druridge Pools where 20 were present on 22nd and up to 13 on six further dates (IDR *et al.*). Elsewhere the highest counts were five at Backworth on 22nd, and four at Prestwick Carr on 5th, in the Tweed Estuary on 13th (very low count for here) and at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 15th (MNC/MHu/PCF/MR). Three were at the Howick nest site on 4th and Boulmer on 19th (JAR/PRM). One to two were noted from Arcot Pond, Cresswell Pond, Grindon Lough, Hauxley, Netherton Park (Stannington), Newsham (Blyth) and Shield-on-the Wall.

A Grey Heron feasted on great crested newts in Dick Myatt's garden pond at Stannington on March 16th. And here they are – going, going, gone.

**\*White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia*

One was found at Burgham Park, Felton on the afternoon of 16th (ACo). A bird with a small metal ring on its left foot landed in the horse field on the south west side of Big Waters in the early evening on 29th. Next morning it was relocated at Dinnington and was seen later flying NW over Weldon Bridge. On 31st it was present at the pool by the new clubhouse at Rothbury Golf Course at 09:00 not to be seen again later (GB/PCF/TRD/JD).

**Red Kite** *Milvus milvus*

Three birds were at Wylam on 25th (AJo), up to two birds were also at Wylam on several dates (ASH/MH/AJo). Two birds were also seen at Whitfield on 4th (ACo) and two were feeding on a Rabbit carcase at Broken Moss (near Keenley) on 15th (SJH). Single birds were at Shilford on 10th, Derwent Reservoir on 15th, Shotley Fell on 17th (BNR), Heddon on the Wall (AA) and at Derwent Reservoir on 24th (IFo).

Correction for the January bulletin, it was stated that all records this month came from the Whitfield area, however two tagged birds were seen at Derwent Reservoir on 14th (IFo).



**Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*

On the 31st a female flew N well offshore at St Mary's Island (MPF/MT/NT).

**Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*

A pair was back at Hepple Haugh on 17th & 20th (AA/MH). An immature male was seen hunting over the salt marsh at Fenham Mill on 11th (AA/MH) and a female was seen at Beal on 25th (RNa).

**Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis*

10 + birds were seen in the Kielder area during the NTBC field trip on 15th (CGK/PS *et al.*). Up to four birds were in the Hardwood Forest area on several dates (ASG/ADMc/AT *et al.*), three birds were observed in Wark Forest on 6th (AA). One to two were seen at a further 12 sites during the month.

**Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*

Three birds were displaying at Marden Quarry on 21st (KWY) and two birds were in Choppington Woods throughout the month (SLB/MSK), Hagg Bank (Wylam) on 4th (AJo), Howick on 16th (JAR), Jesmond Dene on 11th (MJCo) and Seaton Sluice on 28th (MN). Single birds were seen from over 30 sites including one taking a Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus* on the 1st at Rothbury (TRD/JD).

**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*

Well reported again this month with 120 records. 21 birds were in the Kielder area on 15th (MJC/BCFT *per* CGK), 15 were seen between Bellingham & Kielder on 24th (MSK), 13 were in the Wylam area on 10th (MH), 12 were between Allen Banks & Staward Peel on 19th (MJC). Nine birds were over Blagdon Estate on 15th (STH/DM/ADMc), eight were at Harwood Forest on 3rd & 6th (ADMc) and in the Sweethope area on 24th (AJo), and seven birds were at Keenleyside Hill on 10th (PTa/IW). One to five birds were noted from a variety of sites throughout the County during the month.

**Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*

Six birds were in the Sweethope area on 24th (AJo), four at Rothley Lake on 16th (MNC). Two birds were at Bertram Hill, Blanchland, Callerton, Chester's House, Hepple Haugh, Holywell Dene, Long Nanny, Prestwick Carr, and Warkworth & Woolsington. Single birds were noted from another 20 sites during the month.

**Merlin** *Falco columbarius*

Two birds were seen at Tosson Hill on 19th (DRo) and in the Cheviots on 20th (ADMc). Single birds were seen at Arcot Pond on 15th (LJM), Chatton Moor on 19th (JHa), Debdon on 10th (MNC), Holy Island on several dates (AA/MH/IK *et al.*), Kidland Forest on 7th (JR), Lucker on 1st-8th (JHa), Newton on 19th (NNBC), Ridley Stokoe on 14th (SLB/MSK), Stag Rocks on 21st (DRW), Whittle Dene on 16th (AJo). A bird was seen chasing Pied Wagtails *Motacilla alba yarrellii* at sunset at Tapee Fen on the River Tweed at Berwick on 12th (PJ).

**Peregrine** *Falco peregrinus*

Two birds were seen in the Harthope Valley on 8th (CGK/PS), Harbottle on 26th (MNC), Haughton Strother on 22nd (MR) and near Sweethope Lough on 12th (MNC). More unusual was two birds on the ground at Holy Island on 12th (IK). Single birds were noted at a further 20 sites including one chasing Herring Gulls *Larus argentus* at Berwick Old Bridge on 12th (GP).

**Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus*

Single birds were seen or heard at Backworth Pond on 10th (SPP), Big waters on 14th (GB), Holy Island Lough on 25th (PRM), Holywell Pond on 25th (SPP), St Mary's Wetland on 12th & 31st (MPF/SPP/MT/NT) and at Swallow Pond on 29th (SPP). A bird was found dead at Caistron (*per* DGB).

**Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*

21 at Gosforth Park NR on 6th was the highest count this month (*per* SRB), 14 were at Alnmouth on 19th (PRM). Eight were at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 2nd (DM); seven were at the QEII Lake on 14th (CDH). One to four birds were at Arcot Pond, Castle Island, Cresswell Pond, Holy Island Lough, Jesmond Dene and at the Lower Ouseburn.



A Moorhen at Wallington  
16th March by Tim Dean

**Coot** *Fulica atra*

Bothal Pond had 40 birds on 15th (STH/DM), 19 were at Woodhorn Flash on 29th (PRM), 15 were at Gosforth Park NR on 6th (*per* SRB) and the QEII Lake on 14th (CDH). 14 were seen at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 9th (DM), 12 were at Linton Pond on 14th (CDH), 11 were on Holy Island on 10th (MR). One to ten birds were at Alnmouth, Arcot Pond, Broomlee Lough & Monk's House Pool.

**Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*

Pre-breeding gatherings inland featured as the month wore on with 24 at Holystone on 7th (DRo), 15 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs and 22 at Haughton Strother on 15th (RGW/MR), 21 at West Hartford on 22nd (LJM) and 41 at Derwent Reservoir on 31st (PRM). It was noted at regular breeding sites, including three pairs at Paxhill, two pairs in Allendale at Low Acton Farm, Capheaton, Low Alwinton, Sinderhope and Warden and also present at Cramlington, Dinnington and Shasun Dudley. Two to five were seen at Bertram Hill, Blanchland, Carrshield, Catcleugh Reservoir, Colt Crag Reservoir, Fontburn, Grindon Lough, Hammershield, Linbriggs, Linton Pond, Newcastle Airport, Newcastle Great Park Pools, Rayburn Lake, Shilford, Stannington and Swallow Pond. At the coast 52-55 were at Cresswell Pond for most of the month (PCF/DM/IRD), 22 at Wellhope on 8th and 22 at Alnmouth GC and 21 at Druridge Pools on 22nd.

**Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*

The first one was seen at Haughton Strother on 22nd and 25th (MR) followed by one at Doddington on a river sandbank on 29th (TRD/JD).

**Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*

The roost at Blyth South Harbour held a maximum of 43 on 11th on the roof of No.17 warehouse and 27 were in the Blyth estuary on 5th (TRC). Six were at Lynemouth Flash on 23rd and two at Boulmer and Low Newton. Inland, eight visited Newcastle Business Park on 31st; three were at Caistron on 15th and one at Elswick on 19th.

**Golden Plover** *Pluvialis apricaria*

The most were mainly in western areas: 800 in Allendale on 8th, 600 at Plenmeller Common at 4th, 600 at Hammershield and 350 in the Knockburn area on 10th (SJH). Also 190 were near Spartylea on 8th and 130 on Dryburn Moor on 6th. St Mary's held around 400 on 17th (MSH), 290-300 were at Prestwick Carr on 5th (PCF/MRS) and the peak at Cresswell Pond was 217 on 10th (PCF). A few places had 12-78, including Haggburn Gate, Haltonlea Fell, Hollin Green, Holy Island and Sinderhope and smaller numbers appeared at Blanchland, Jesmond and Tosson Hill. On 21st five pairs were displaying at Grey Nag, seven were in five territories at Thornhope and three in two territories at Bertram Hill (BNR).

**Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*

Again relatively few reported with 27 at Howick on 1st (JAR) and 26 at Boulmer on 19th (PRM) leading the way. Six were at Alnmouth on 19th and at Warkworth Gut on 22nd and one to three occasionally at Annstead, Blyth, Hauxley and Low Newton.

**Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*

Inland pre-breeding flocks featured early in the month with 450 in Allendale and 300 at Sinderhope on 8th, 280 at Hammershield on 10th, 250 at Shankhead (Ridley Common) on 6th and 140-180 at Carrshield, Dryburn Moor, Hollin Green, Knockburn and Plenmeller Common (all SJH). Many were noted displaying in these areas and display was also witnessed at Arcot Pond, North Gosforth, Paxhill, Shilford and Sweethope Lough. Ten territories were noted at Bertram Hill and four pairs were at Broomlee Lough. Other higher counts include 145 at Cresswell Pond on 17th, 141 at Druridge Pools on 4th and 120 at Derwent Reservoir on 17th and 14 other places held 100 or less at times.

**Knot** *Calidris canutus*

Only four records were received: 175 at Fenham-le-Moor on 14th (KWY), 34 in the Blyth estuary on 14th (JR), one at Cresswell Pond on 29th and a scarce inland single at Grindon Lough on 31st (PRM).

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba*

In the Tweed estuary there were 64 on 20th and 42 at Cocklawburn on 30th (MHu). The Whitley Bay/St Mary's area held 25 on 1st and 41 on 29th (KWY/MT/NT), 29 were at Boulmer on 19th (PRM) and 24 at Druridge Links on 4th (IDR). Hauxley produced 17 on 28th; five were at Annstead on 22nd and two at Newbiggin on 29th.

**Purple Sandpiper** *Calidris maritima*

The flock at Stag Rocks peaked at 67 on 14th (STH *et al*), 40 were at Low Newton on 13th (TRD/JD) and 30 in Blyth Harbour on 11th (TRC). Annstead, Berwick, Cheswick Black Rocks, Hauxley, Howick and Newton Haven each held ten to 14 and one to six appeared at Boulmer, Dunstanburgh, Holy Island, Newbiggin and St Mary's.

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*

A paucity of records and from just three locations: up to 20 at Cresswell Pond, eight at Boulmer on 20th and one at Hauxley on 23rd.

**Jack Snipe** *Lymnocyrtus minimus*

Five were seen at West Hartford on 15th (DM/STH) and one at Cresswell Pond also on 15th (ADMc). One was near Backworth on 24th (PT *et al.*).

**Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*

At Swallow Pond a flock of 28-32 flew over on 13th (SPP), on 1st Arcot Pond held 32 with four nearby on a flash pool (DM/STH) and 18 were still at the former location on 22nd (LJM). Maxima at the following locations were 21 at Hauxley on 12th, 18 at West Hartford on 26th, 11 at Cresswell Pond on 22nd, 11 at Druridge Pools also on 22nd and ten at Rowley Burn on 15th (PT/DM/LJM/STH/IRD/IDR/AJH). Display/calling was noted at Bertram Hill (4 birds), Broomlee Lough (4) and Plenmeller Common (5). Another ten widespread places had one to seven at times.

**Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola*

Two were at Edlingham on 21st (DRW). Otherwise singles appeared at Arcot GC, Bakethin Viaduct, Bewick Moor, Colt Crag Reservoir, Fontburn, Horsley, Howick, Longhorsley Moor, Newton and Sweethope Lough.

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

The Rocket Field pools at Holy Island held two until 20th (IK *et al*). In Budle Bay one was seen on 3rd (DGB) and singles were at Grindon Lough on 20th-21st (EC/JSB *et al*) and in the Blyth estuary on 27th (DRW). One flew N calling over Shiremoor at 2130 hrs on 18th (CGK), illustrating nocturnal movement.

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

The few records reveal 14 in the Blyth estuary on 5th (TRC), one to two occasionally in Budle Bay and at Low Newton.

**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*

Two exceptionally early records, from the Blyth estuary, possibly relate to the same individual: on 5th (TRC) and 27th (DRW).

**Curlew** *Numenius arquata*

The emphasis was very much on a return to inland areas with a multitude of records. On 8th, 275 at Sinderhope and 122 in the Carrshield area were suspected of being grounded because of gale force NW winds (SJH). At Plenmeller Common a roost built up to around 200 on 4th and early in the month 38-70 were at Allendale, Hammershield, Haughton Strother, Hollin Green, Knockburn (SJH/MR), with much display in these areas. Later, display was also noted near Blanchland, Derwent Reservoir, Dryburn Moor, Hepple Heugh, Kiln Pit Hill and Sweethope Lough and nine territories were established at Bertram Hill on 21st (BNR). The largest coastal flocks were 110 in the Tweed estuary on 13th (MHu), 102 at Cresswell Pond on 10th (PCF) and 98 at St Mary's on 5th (MT/NT). Also 75 were at Holy Island on 25th and 70 in the Blyth estuary on 5th. Up to 60 were recorded in a wide variety of other places both inland and at the coast.

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*

Hedgeley proved to be attractive with five on 15th, three on 22nd (ADMc per Denis Allan) and three on 29th (ADMc). Two were on the R. Breamish at Brandon on 22nd and one there on 24th (IBDa/KDa), one regularly at Haughton Strother 7th-29th (MR) and singles at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 7th (TAC/MLC) and Doddington on 29th (TRD/JD).

**Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus*

One was still in the Rocket Field, Holy Island on 1st (IK) and one was in Budle bay on 7th (DHH).

**Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*

The winterer in Budle Bay was noted on four dates to 18th (DGB *et al.*).

**Redshank** *Tringa tetanus*

Large numbers on the Tyne included 400 at Howdon on 15th (RA) and 154 at Elswick Wharf on 19th (DM), also 348 were in the Tweed estuary on 13th (MHu) and 120 in the Blyth estuary on 5th (TRC). Also 60+ roosted at St Mary's on 17th and 62 were at Cresswell Pond on 29th. Inland sightings at breeding areas increased, including five at Hammershield on 10th, two at Derwent Reservoir on 11th, seven at Plenmeller Common on 13th, five at Holystone on 14th, nine at Grindon Lough and three at Haughton Strother on 15th and two at Airy Holm reservoir on 17th.

**Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*

Low numbers were reported: 35 at Annstead on 22nd, 29 at Newbiggin on 29th (PRM), the most in the Cresswell area was 11 on 29th, three at Hauxley, two at Boulmer and one at St Mary's.

**Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla*

Passage was limited to the last few days of the month with the only large count noted being an impressive 670 per hour on 28th off Berwick Pier (MHu). Four N at Newton Point on 31st and a single N at St Mary's Island on 30th (TRD/JD) were the only other movements. Birds returned early with the first four back at the Tyne Bridge, Newcastle on 5th (DMT). Numbers increased rapidly with 16 there on 11th, 29 on 17th and 80 on 31st (DM/DMT). At Howick 100 were in a raft on the sea on 19th (JAR) with a significant count of c220 feeding offshore between Tynemouth and Cullercoats on 29th (DMT). The only other records were from the main loafing areas of North Shields Fish Quay with a peak there of five on 8th and 21st (DMT) and at Blyth South Harbour with a peak of four on 31st (LJM) both counts being the most seen at either site this year.

**Black-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

The only passage observation was of 38 N at Howick on 21st (PRM/EAW). The peak counts were at Airy Holm Reservoir near Shotleyfield with 1,500 on 17th (IFo) and 950 on the sea roost between Tynemouth and Cullercoats on 7th (DMT). The roost at the Aln Estuary held significant numbers with 700 counted on 26th (AT). At the regularly watched areas of the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay and Blyth South Harbour there were peaks respectively of 295 on 7th and 107 on 15th (DMT). The Plenmeller Common colony had at least 200 present on 12th (SJH) with 270 at Hedgeley GPs and 360 at Branton GPs on 2nd (PT). Gatherings of between 75 and 117 were at Castle Island, Hauxley NR, Kiln Pit Hill, Leazes Park (Newcastle) and QE II CP with smaller numbers at many other locations.

**Little Gull** *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

The only sighting concerned a single adult in winter garb which graced Holywell Pond on 17th (SPP).

**Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus*

The only report from the main wintering site at Newbiggin concerned five adults and one second-winter on 14th (LJM). Two adults at Alnmouth were displaying at the estuary on 19th (PRM). All other reports were of single birds with the long staying adult at Briar Dene on 1st (SPP/KWY), another adult at Beadnell caravan site pond on 31st (JPL) and a further adult in summer plumage at Amble Braid also on 31st (TB). Single

second winters were at St Mary's Island on 1st and at Holywell Pond on 10th (SPP). The only first-winter was at Woodhorn Flash on 19th (TRC).

**Common Gull** *Larus canus*

The peak count was at Whittle Dene Reservoirs with a minimum of 2,000 on 20th (JSB/EC). 1,000 were at Airy Holm Reservoir on 17th (IFo) and Haughton Strother on 22nd (MR). The Aln Estuary roost held 800 on 26th (AT) with 395 on 7th being the peak count at the sea roost between Tynemouth and Cullercoats (DMT). Gatherings of 100 to 300 were recorded at Alnwick, Kiln Pit Hill, Low Newton, Warden and Whittle Dene with small numbers at several localities.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus graelsii*

Well recorded this month. Budle Bay continued to be the main gathering point with a peak of 60 there on 21st (IK). The only other places to have double figure counts were West Hartford with a peak of 21 on 30th (LJM), Swallow Pond with 14 on 20th (SPP), Shipley near Alnwick with 20 on 18th (MRo) and 12 at Westerhope on 24th (IK). Three to eight were at Blyth South Harbour, Kiln Pit Hill, Leazes Park, Linton Pond, Newcastle Business Park, Plenmeller and West Hartford with one or two at a wide spread of localities both coastal and inland.

**Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus argenteus*

The only passage movement noted was 110 N at Howick on 21st (PRM/EAW). The main counts came from the regularly watched localities with peaks of 291 at the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay, ca. 250 at the sea roost between Tynemouth and Cullercoats both on 15th and 80 at Blyth South Harbour on 7th (DMT). Inland there were 60 at Colt Crag Reservoir on 9th and 30 at Haughton Strother on 15th (MR). Up to 19 were noted at various localities. An interesting individual at Linton Pond on 25th resembled a Kumlien's Gull in its wing pattern but the bill and general structure suggested either a leucistic Herring Gull or some kind of hybrid.

**Iceland Gull** *Larus glaucooides*

The three first-winter birds seen last month at Blyth South Harbour remained there but were only seen together on 29th (PRM). One or two of these birds were seen on a number of dates. Two first-winters were on Linton Pond on 26th and a second-winter was seen briefly there on 25th (MSH). A first-winter was at Holywell Pond on 25th and another frequented the St Mary's area and Briar Dene on 30th (SPP/AC/MSH).



Two views of an Iceland Gull at Blyth South Harbour

29th March

By Paul Massey



**Glaucous Gull** *Larus hyperboreus*

A first-summer wandered between Amble and Low Hauxley from 14th to 22nd (CGK/PS/PCF) with another first-summer at Blyth South Harbour on 11th (TRC). Considering the interest generated by the multiple Iceland Gulls it was surprising that this last individual was not picked up more often presumably showing a tendency to feed at sea rather than in the harbour.



The Glaucous Gull at Blyth on 11th March  
By Tim Cleeves

**Great Black-backed Gull** *Larus marinus*

Astonishingly under recorded compared with the other gulls this month presumably showing a general lack of birds. The only reports came from three observers with a peak of 112 at Blyth South Harbour on 13th (STH), 45 at Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay on 29th (DMT), ten at Castle Island on 15th and two at the Millennium Bridge on Newcastle Quayside on 12th (DM). Primarily a winter visitor to the county so a general fall in sightings during March is to be expected.

**Sandwich Tern** *Sterna sandvicensis*

Only reported in the last two days with one at Stag Rocks, Bamburgh on 30th (RB/MB) and five at St Mary's Island on 31st (MT/NT/MPF).

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

A large movement was noted on 19th with 1,380 moving N at Boulmer on 19th (PRM).

**Guillemot** *Uria aalge*

An early exploration of the breeding ledges on the Farne Islands was visible from Monk's House with ca.2,000 present on 13th (TRD/JD). These early visits are often followed with a move back out to sea depending upon weather conditions. Passage movements were noted at Beadnell with 40 N on 24th and at Boulmer with six S on 20th (TRD/JD). 40 were also noted off Stag Rocks, Bamburgh on 18th (MSH). Otherwise the only other observations were three at Spittal Bay on 19th and five at Cocklawburn on 20th (MHu).

**Razorbill** *Alca torda*

The only passage movement noted was 12 N at Holy Island on 10th (MR). 19 were on the sea off Dunstanburgh Castle on 1st with one to six found at Bamburgh, Berwick Pier, Cocklawburn, Holy Island and St Mary's Island.

**Puffin** *Fratercula arctica*

Several hundred birds could be seen on the Farne Islands flying around the islands on 13th visible from Monk's House. There were also at least 20 offshore at Monk's House on 22nd (PRM). Otherwise three were off Emmanuel Head on Holy Island on 27th and singles noted at Bamburgh, Beadnell and Howick from 18th onwards.

**Rock Dove / Feral Pigeon** *Columba livia*

Highest counts this month came from North Shields Fish Quay with 111 there on 1st and 91 on 3rd (DMT/RHAr/MAR). 90 were at Tyne riverside Country Park (Newburn) on 5th and Blyth, 44 were counted at the South Harbour and 32 at the Bust Station.



**Stock Dove** *Columba oenas*

Low Acton Farm at Allendale attracted a large group of 34, feeding in a field on 6th, with 14 there on 15th, 14 were also in the Knockburn area on 6th (SJH). Six were in Jesmond Dene on 11th and Whittle Dene on 15th (feeding in stubble), four were at Bearsbridge and two pairs were noted displaying at Warkworth on 17th. Three were at Arcot Pond and Rowley and two were in a Rothbury garden most days, a pair were courting at Hepple Heugh on 6th.

**Woodpigeon** *Columba palumbus*

180 were counted at Howick on 2nd (JAR) and about 130 were feeding in a field at Sinderhope on 8th (SJH). At least 100 were at Marden Farm all month (MN), 60 were counted at Low Acton, 50 at Hauxley, 38 at Paxhill, 36 at Druridge Pools and 14 at Chesters Walled Garden.

**Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

Very few records this month, four (two pairs) were in a Stannington Garden throughout the month (RWM/MIM) and at Hauxley on 29th (HRS). An eggshell from a freshly hatched egg was found in Bedlington Station on 5th (JR) and a pair were nest building in Kenton (Newcastle-upon-Tyne) on 7th and another was sitting on a nest in North Shields on 11th.

**Barn Owl** *Tyto alba*

Two were noted at a breeding site on Holy Island during the month (IK) and two were at Ellington (Chugdon Wood) on 13th (TB). All other records were of single birds and came mostly from typical locations, some of the more interesting locations included Killingworth Village, Newcastle Airport and Holystone. Again many records came from the Wooler/Cheviot fringe area (NNBC).

**Little Owl** *Athene noctua*

Two were reported emerging from farm buildings at Wooden on 6th (AT), two were also at Doddington on 29th (TRD/JD) and Dinnington on 30th (MPF). Singles were reported from Backworth, Dissington Lane, Ellington (Chugdon Wood) and, dead, as a road casualty at Adderstone Mains (A1) on 14th (DWS).

**Tawny Owl** *Strix Aluco*

Two were calling at Bywell (different locations) on 16th (BNR) and Howick on 25th (JAR) and a pair were at Arcot Hall Golf Club on 31st (STH). Singles were reported from Allen Banks, Cramlington, Ellington (Chugdon Woods) and Riding Mill. Road casualties were noted at Bolam Lake, Longhoughton Quarry and near Bridge of Allan crossroads on A697 (all ADMc).

**Long-eared Owl** *Asio otus*

Up to three were on Holy Island, with two being present throughout the month, joined by a third from 27th (IK).

**Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus*

West Hartford attracted up to three on 22nd, with two seen there on 24th and 26th and a single on 4th (LJM/DM *et al.*). Two were on Holy Island on 10th (MR) with a single there on 11th, two were also seen between Killingworth and Holywell on 13th (CGK) with singles in the same area on 11th and 13th. A single was spotted in car headlights at Housesteads on 8th.

**Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*

Pair were noted on the R. Breamish at Branton on 2nd (PT) and by Fisherman's Lodge in Jesmond Dene on 11th (MJCo). Singles were reported from Big Waters, Bothal, Castron, Haughton Strother, Hedgeley, Holywell (Dene and Pond), Mitford, Morpeth (Scotch Gill Woods LNR), Ridley Stokoe and Whitley Bay (St. Mary's Island).

**Green Woodpecker** *Picus viridis*

Presumably the same pair were noted in Harwood Forest on 11th and 21st (ACo/SPP), a pair were also at Addycombe in Rothbury on 24th, where yaffling had been heard since 7th (TRD/JD). Yaffling birds were reported from Allen Banks, Corbridge, Edlingham, Hexham (Letah Wood), Longhirst Hall, Newbiggin, Ordley, Riding Mill, Ridley Stokoe, Woosington and Wylam.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major*

Eight were showing territorial behaviour at Chesters Walled Garden on 1st (ALT) and six (including five drumming) were at Bedlington CP on 24th (LJM), at least five were drumming at Spindlestone on 5th (MSH/JCD) and five were also counted between Allen Banks and Staward Peel on 20th and at Northumberland Park in North Shields on numerous dates. Four were counted between Morpeth and Bothal and at Gosforth Park, three were in Holywell Dene, a minimum of three visited feeders at Grindon Farm (Tynedale) throughout the month and three were noted at Horsley. Drumming was noted at Bywell, Corbridge, East Kielder, Howick, Middleton, Sheepwash, Stakeford, Wark (North Tyne) and Warkworth.



Two views of Great spotted Woodpeckers

Left at Wallington by Tim Dean and Right at Tranwell Woods by Peter Tapsell

**Skylark** *Alauda arvensis*

17 singing birds were counted over 1km at Prestwick Carr on 21st (PCF) and 12 (eight singing) were counted at Kiln Pit Hill on 31st (BNR). In Whitley Bay six were counted at Brier Dene Farm and St Mary's Island. Five were singing in East Kielder Valley on 19th and four sang at Druridge Pools on 22nd. One to three singing birds were noted at numerous locations throughout the month.

**Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia*

The first returning bird was noted at Ridley Stokoe on 14th (SLB/MSK) (13 days earlier than in 2008), other early arrivals were noted from Haughton Strother and Wylam on 18th, High Newton-by-the-Sea (three) on 20th and Bakethin Reservoir on 21st. Many records were received between 22nd and the end of the month with peak concentrations at Caistron (35 on 28th (NNBC)) and 18 along the R. Coquet at Rothbury on 31st. Six appeared to come in off the sea at Hauxley on 31st (RB/MB).

**Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*

A very early returning bird was at the Harbour Commission Buildings in Blyth on 22nd, where the security guard had commented that two had in fact arrived (RHAr/MAR). A single was at Beadnell on 27th and two were at Silverlink Park LNR on 31st (CGK/MIM) and a single at Newsham on the same day.

**House Martin** *Delichon urbica*

St Mary's Island in Whitley Bay attracted the very early returning birds with singles noted there on 24th (PT/LM/IW), 26th (CB) and 30th (SPP), possibly involving the same individual.

**Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis*

A significant movement on the 30th and 31st saw birds returning to the uplands on a broad front, small flocks or individuals, possible involving hundreds (MH), also on the coast 120 per hour moved N at Cocklawburn on the morning of 30th (MHu) and a large scale return took place at Holy Island on 21st (IK) At Prestwick Carr a minimum of 200 were in one field on 17th (JSB/EC) and 100+ were there on 15th (MN). 20 were counted at East Kielder on 15th, West Hartford on 22nd and Prestwick Carr on 25th, 14 were at Big Waters on 29th.

**Rock Pipit** *Anthus petrosus*

Six, including two *littoralis* race birds were at Annstead on 22nd (PRM), five were at Hauxley on 29th (HRS). Three were singing on Holy Island on 15th and two were at Boulmer and St. Mary's Island (Whitley Bay) on 19th. *littoralis* race birds were also noted at High Newton-by-the-Sea and St. Mary's Island (Whitley Bay).

**Water Pipit** *Anthus spinoletta*

Single birds were noted at St Mary's Island Wetland (Whitley Bay) on 6th and then on 30th (MT/NT/SPP). A single bird was on the beach at Annstead Point on 22nd (PRM).

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*

Very well reported this month, the highest concentration, nine, was counted between Allen Banks and Staward Peel on 19th, including five singing males (MJC). Six were counted at Rothbury on 12th, vying for breeding sites (TRD/JD) and five were between Morpeth and Bothal on 7th and at Bedlington Country Park on 24th. Birds were again noted in Newcastle City Centre on numerous dates, including a singing male. Pairs were on territory at Bygate, Byker, Cupola Bridge, Ninebanks, Low Alwinton, and Warden.

**Pied Wagtail** *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

Data from the regular roost site at Tapee Fen, Berwick-upon-Tweed was as follows (PJ/DEJ):

Date	Count	Remarks
05/03/09	6	sunrise; heavy ground frost
06/03/09	40	sunrise; clear sky and ground frost
06/03/09	13	sunset
07/03/09	22	sunset; Goldfinches also present
07/03/09	11	sunrise
08/03/09	26	sunrise; calm & clear after heavy rain in night
09/03/09	140	sunrise
10/03/09	22	sunrise; calm, light cloud; finches also rise
11/03/09	100	sunset; wagtails seen dancing over fen
11/03/09	22	sunrise
12/03/09	42	sunrise; wind drops after sunrise
12/03/09	30	sunset
13/03/09	100	sunset; some dancing
13/03/09	57	sunrise
14/03/09	14	sunrise; heavy low cloud, viewing difficult
15/03/09	107	sunrise; calm; several Starlings also rise from fen
15/03/09	30	sunset; dancing observed over fen
16/03/09	50	sunset; some observed dancing
16/03/09	28	sunrise
17/03/09	52	sunrise; calm with some mist
18/03/09	106	sunrise; mist over fen and sea
18/03/09	20	sunset; arrive and go down to fen in 2 groups
19/03/09	59	sunrise
19/03/09	50	sunset; Starlings flying in formation over Links to E
20/03/09	84	sunrise; frost; Haar moves in as wagtails rising
21/03/09	67	sunrise; calm with mist over sea
23/03/09	20	sunset; still very windy (from W NW & N)
23/03/09	1	sunrise; fierce wind
24/03/09	10	sunrise; calm, clear, cold
25/03/09	15	sunrise; Calm, clear, cold; 3 finches also
25/03/09	12	sunset; some dancing
25/03/09	11	
26/03/09	20	sunset; windy all day, few birds about
26/03/09	17	sunrise; night rain clearing; also 1 finch
27/03/09	2	sunrise; strong wind
27/03/09	0	sunset; Merlin spotted in SW corner of fen
28/03/09	0	sunrise; fierce N wind, rain squalls
29/03/09	4	sunrise; freezing during night heavy frost
30/03/09	9	sunrise; steady W wind, heavy cloud cover
31/03/09	18	sunrise

The peak count at Prestwick Carr was 78 on 15th (PCF *et al.*), many smaller counts were made during the

month, at nearby Newcastle Airport 60 roosted by the terminal on 23rd (IF). At Lynemouth, a flash pond attracted 28 on the 3rd with smaller numbers noted on numerous other dates and 18 roosted in a reed bed at Howick on 24th.

**White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba alba*

The flash pond at Bewick Drift, Lynemouth, attracted eight on 29th (PRM) with two there on 25th and 28th. One was at Prestwick Carr on 10th (IK) and Big Waters NR on 26th (ISD).

**Waxwing** *Bombycilla garrulus*

Harwood Close, Cramlington attracted the largest flock with 64 there on 1st (GW), 41 were at Woodhorn Lane, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea on 19th (TRC) and 24 were at Stannington on 4th (per NFO). 19 were in Bedlington on 21st, 18 were at Whitley Bay on 30th, five were counted at Newcastle University on 10th and two were in Morpeth on 25th.

**Dipper** *Cinclus cinclus*

Four pairs were found in Upper Coquetdale where breeding was confirmed at Low Alwinton, where five young were ringed on 29th (JF) and three pairs were in the Alwin Valley. Two or a pair were also noted at Bothal, Cottonshope Foot, Elsdon, Harthope Valley, Haughton Strother, Ninebanks, Ridley Stokoe, Rochester, Rothbury, Simonburn, Staward Gorge and Wylam.



The hazards of being an urban Dipper  
Ouseburn Jesmond Dene  
by Simon Elliott

**Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

At least 15 were counted at Hauxley on 29th (HRS), six were in Holywell Dene on 19th and five were at West Hartford and Chesters Walled Garden on 15th.

**Dunnock** *Prunella modularis*

The highest count was four in Jesmond Dene on 15th (MJCo), three were at Chesters Walled Garden and Holywell Dene.

**Robin** *Erithacus rubecula*

Ten at Hauxley on 29th was the highest count (HRS). Seven were at Jesmond Dene (MJCo) and Chesters House and Walled Garden (ALT). Five were noted in Holywell Dene on several dates, and three in a Wallbottle garden on 8th. One to two were reported from a further three sites, including Kenton, where a pair were nest building in a nest box used last year.

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*

An early arrival was found at North Blyth on 22nd (CGK/PS).



**Stonechat** *Saxicola torquata*

The highest count was five at Callerton on 6th, where previously two birds had been present all winter (AJ). Four were at Long Nanny on 15th (MT/NT), and up to three at Druridge Links, Newcastle Great Park Pools, Newton and St Mary's Island. One to two was also reported from a further five coastal and 14 inland sites, including a pair at Ingo, the observer's first record of the species in this tetrad (EC).



Stonechat at Druridge Links  
6th March by Iain Robson

**Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe*

The first arrivals were a single bird at Collywell Bay on 17th (AC) followed by two at St Mary's Island on 18th (SPP). Count of three was received from Blyth beach on 29th (STH), Cocklawburn on 30th (MHu) and Cullercoats Bay on 31st (MNC). Elsewhere, from 20th, one to two birds were reported from coastal sites at Bilton Dunes, Boulmer, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Links, Hemscotthill Links (Cresswell) Holy Island, Long Nanny and Newton Point. An early inland bird was at Redesmouth on 21st (AA). The only other inland record was from Broomlee Lough on 31st.

**Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus*

An early male was in the Alwin Valley on 7th (JR), followed by two males in the Harthope Valley (Hawsen Burn) on 24th (SVM/AJM). The wintering male reported from Newton Links last month remained in this area until at least the 12th (GW).

**Blackbird** *Turdus merula*

12 at Chesters House and Walled Garden on 15th was the only sizable count received (ALT). One to two were reported from a garden at Beatty Avenue (Newcastle) on various dates, and reported as "present" at Cresswell Pond and Hauxley NWT. A partial albino male was at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 2nd (DM). Early breeding activity was noted at Gosforth Garden Village where a bird was carrying nest material by the 13th (MJC).

**Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris*

Very conspicuous this month as birds began moving back through the County on route to Scandinavian breeding grounds. The highest count was at a traditional gathering site near Otterburn Mill, where 900-1000 was found on 21st (SPP). Also on 21st, two flocks totalling 652 were counted in the Plashetts area (PCF). 500-550 were noted at Eldon and Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 15th-16th (TRD/MR) and around 300 at Capheaton on 6th, Thrunton Woods on 14th and Wallhouses (Corbridge) on 30th. Smaller, although no less significant flocks included 200-250+ at Doddington, Grindon Lough, Heavenfield, Plenmeller Common and Powburn, and 100-190 at Elishaw, Hepple Whitefield, Lowick, near Morpeth, Ord Moor, Sidwood, Sinderhope and West Ord. 40-90 were reported from Kiln Pit Hill, Old Bewick, Prestwick Carr, Rayburn Lake, Slaley Forest, Stamfordham, and Wark (North Tyne). Elsewhere one to 35 were recorded from a further 12 inland localities. Interestingly the only coastal reports received were of single birds at Berwick, Hemscotthill Links (Cresswell) and Holy Island.

**Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos*

A cycle route from High Church (Morpeth) to Bolam Lake on 1st produced a total of 23 birds, including five at Bolam Lake itself. A further six were found between here and Wallington Hall and also from Wallington to Broomfield Fell, and four between Longwiton and Mitford, a total of 39 birds. A similar journey on 6th, from Morpeth to Harwood produced a total of 22 birds (ADM). Six were reported from Chesters House and Walled Garden on 15th (ALT) and five from Jesmond Dene on 1st and Hauxley on 25th (MJCo/HRS). Three

were also at Cowbyers (Blanchland) and Prestwick Carr, and elsewhere one to two at Bertram Hill, Dipton Woods, Long Nanny, Shilford, Staward and Warden. Nest building was noted from the 17th at Holywell Dene, Kenton and Netherton Park.

**Redwing** *Turdus iliacus*

Once again there was a distinct paucity of records from coastal areas. Highest counts were 140 at Holystone on 23rd (DRo) and 100 at Sidwood on 16th (JMA). 60-80 were noted at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 15th, Killingworth Lake on 7th and Milbourne on 8th. Counts of 40-50 were received for Big Waters, Bolam Lake, Grindon Lough, Longhirst Hall and Otterburn and ten to 21 from Derwent Reservoir, Harwood, Marden Farm, Mohope, Ordley and Prestwick Carr. One to four were noted at a further eight localities.

**Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus*

A total of five were reported from four sites at Staward on 1st (BNR) and four were in Harwood Forest on 7th and 16th (MT/NT/MNC). Elsewhere one to two were reported from Bearsbridge, Chesters House and Walled Garden, Cresswell Pond, Hauxley, Hepple Heugh, Howick, Jesmond Dene (four sites), Hemscott Hill Links, Killingworth Lake and Sinderhope.

**Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla*

Wintering birds were reported from a garden adjacent to Jesmond Dene on 13th and 17th (MPF) and at Lucker on 17th (JHa).

**Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*

At this time of the year it is always difficult to distinguish between genuine early spring migrants and over wintering birds. The two earliest records at Swallow Pond on 13th (SPP) and Warden on 14th (BNR) could fall into either category. However given the dearth of winter records this year it would seem reasonable to assume that both were early arrivals. Many observers reported birds from 16th; reports becoming widespread by 21st-22nd. Highest counts were seven in Holywell Dene on 25th (SPP), six at Farnley (Corbridge) on 23rd (RB/MB), five at Kilham on 24th (EHa) and five on a four mile walk at Whittle Dene also on 24th (AJR). Count of two to three+ were received for Arcot, Bedlington CP, Big Waters, Brierdene (Whitley Bay), Choppington Woods, Cobalt Business Park, Holywell Pond, the Langley area, Linden Hall, Marden Quarry, Postern burn (Morpeth), Swallow Pond and Woolsington Ponds. Single birds were noted at a further 36 localities

**Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus*

It was another poor month for this species. Up to six were noted in Jesmond Dene (MJCo) and four were at Bearsbridge on 6th (SJH). Coastal migrants included three at Bamburgh on 29th and one on Holy Island on 25th. Elsewhere one to two was reported from a further nine localities.

**Long-tailed Tit** *Aegithalos caudatus*

11 visited garden feeders at Stamfordham on 19th (EC). Four were regularly observed in village gardens on Holy Island all month, with one of them at Straight Lonnen on 10th – first late winter/spring records for the island (IK/MR). Four were also at Exhibition Park, Newcastle on 3rd (DM) and Shilford on 10th (BNR), up to three daily at an Old Hartley garden (RJP), Jesmond Dene on 1st (MJCo) and Holywell Dene on 10th (MT/NT). Pairs were also at Elswick Wharf, near Heighley Gate, Leazes Park (Newcastle), Lower Ouseburn (Byker), Mitford Castle (completed nest), Morpeth Promenade, Wark and Warkworth Lane.

**Blue Tit** *Cyanistes caeruleus*

18 were at Holywell Dene on 6th (MT/NT), 12 at Hauxley on 19th (HRS), 11 at Chesters Walled Garden on 1st (ALT) and one-two were at a further six widespread localities. 26 were ringed at Spindlestone between 5th-12th (MSH/JCD).



**Great Tit** *Parus major*

16 were at Hauxley on 29th (HRS), 13 at Jesmond Dene on 15th (MJCo), eight at Chesters Walled Garden on 1st (ALT), five at Haughton Strother near Humshaugh on 15th including a bird with no yellow pigment, all underparts off white, as Coal Tit (MR). A pair investigated a nest box in a Walbottle garden on 7th (LR/KR). 17 were ringed at Spindleston between 5th-12th (MSH/JCD).



A Great Tit at Tranwell Woods  
The bird has an elongated upper mandible  
Photograph by Peter Tapsell

**Coal Tit** *Parus ater*

Five were noted at Jesmond Dene between 1st-29th (MJCo), and Chesters Walled Garden on 1st (ALT). One to three were also at Blakehopeburnhaugh Kielder), Harwood Village, Holywell Dene, Newcastle, New Delaval (Blyth, an Old Hartley and a Walbottle garden. Nine were ringed at Spindleston between 5th-12th (MSH/JCD).

**Willow Tit** *Poecile montanus*

Two were present in gardens at Grindstonelaw and Scotland Gate all month (JSB/SLB/MSK), two at Priestclose Wood, Prudhoe all month (JSB), Prestwick Carr on 4th (PCF) and a Dinnington garden on 12th (PCF). Singles were also at Humford Mill on 6th (JR), Addycombe (Rothbury) on 21st (JD), a Rothbury garden patio on 22nd (TRD/JD) and a Linden Hall garden on 25th (NFO).

**Marsh Tit** *Poecile palustris*

Two pairs were found between Allen banks-Staward Peel on 19th (MJC), three at Dipton Mill on 22nd (AJH), two at Letah Wood (Hexham) on 1st (AJH), Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth) on 4th-5th (TB/IDR), Howick on 9th (JAR), Humshaugh on 15th (ALT), Warkworth on 17th (MJC) and Haughton Strother between 18th-25th (MR). Singles were also noted at High Hedley Wood, Hirk House Bank Bottom, Linden Hall, Mitford Castle and Peth Foot.

**Marsh Tit is a target species for 2009. Please report all records.**

**Nuthatch** *Sitta europaea*

Seven were observed at Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth) on 5th (IDR), six at Bolam Lake CP on 9th (LJM) and Bedlington CP on 24th (LJM), five at Chesters Walled Garden on 15th (ALT), three at Jesmond Dene on 11th (MJCo), Gosforth Park on 12th (MSH) and one to two at Allen Banks, Armstrong Park (Newcastle), Arcot Hall, Attlee Park (Bedlington), Bedlington Cemetery, Blanchland, Bywell, Chillingham, Haughton Strother, Heaton Park (Newcastle), Holywell Dene, Northumberland Park (North Shields – a pair displayed at a nest hole used for last four years), Shilford, Spindleston, a Stamfordham garden, Staward Gorge, Wark and a Walbottle garden. One trapped at Spindleston on 12th had been ringed here in February 2007 (MSH/JCD)

**Treecreeper** *Certhia familiaris*

Up to three were at Big Waters all month (AJJ/JSD), three were singing between Allenbanks-Staward Peel on 19th (MJC), two at Prestwick Carr on 4th (PCF), Haughton Strother on 15th (MR), Chesters Walled Garden on 15th (ALT), Bedlington CP on 24th (LJM), Whittle Dene on 24th (AJR), Jesmond Dene on 29th (MJCo) and Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 31st (MNC) and singles at Attlee Park (Bedlington), Bolam Lake CP, Caistron, Craggside, Hauxley, Heaton Park (Newcastle), Heddon-on-the-Wall, Holywell Pond, Humford Mill, Otterburn, Spindleston and Stakeford. Two were ringed at Spindleston on 5th (MSH/JCD).

**Great Grey Shrike** *Lanius excubitor*

A well observed individual was at Black Lough, Edlington between 1st-7th (IRD *et al.*). Another was present at Harwood Forest between 4th-15th (SPP/ASUJ/MPF *et al.*).



The Black Lough Shrike  
by Tim Dean

**Jay** *Garrulus glandarius*

Three were at Heighley Gate on 29th (ADMc) and Humford Mill on 6th (JR), two at Mitford Castle between 8th-16th (AT/ADMc) and singles at Beanley Plantation, Jesmond Dene, Postern Wood (Morpeth), Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth) and Thrunton Woods.



A Jay at Tranwell Woods  
by Peter Tapsell

**Magpie** *Pica pica*

40+ were present at Marden Farm all month (MN), 13 at Jesmond Dene on 1st (MJCo), 12 at Hauxley on 29th (HRS), eight visited a Walbottle garden on 8th (KR/KR) and seven at Brierdene Farm (Whitley Bay) on 19th (MT/NT). A pair was nest building in a Kenton Street (Newcastle) from 21st (MRS).

**Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula*

130 were at Newburn on 9th (KR/LR), 124 at Shilford on 10th (BNR), 118 at Staward on 1st (BNR), 117 at Dukeshagg Wood on 22nd (BNR), Ca.80 were at Damdykes Farm (Cramlington) on 1st (DM), 75 at Allendale on 8th (JMA), 50 at Spartylee on 8th (JMA) and 40 at Hauxley on 29th (HRS). One to 14 were at a further four widespread localities.

**Rook** *Corvus frugilegus*

129 were in the Staward area on 1st (BNR). Early rookery counts involved 23 nests at Simonburn on 28th (JR), 13 nests at Sun Hotel, Warkworth on 22nd (DM) and two nests at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 16th (DM).

**Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone*

35 were in the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay on 15th DMT), 11 at Dukeshagg Wood on 22nd (BNR), eight on exposed mudflats at Elswick Wharf on 19th (DM) and seven at Jesmond Dene on 15th (MJCo).

**Raven** *Corvus corax*

13 were observed in the East Kielder Valley on 15th (MJC), six (including four displaying) at Plenmeller Common between 5th-13th (PH/SJH), three at Windy Gyle on 13th (IRD), pairs at Kimmer Lough on 1st (IBDa/KDa), Berwick Moor on 4th (MH/AA), Hepple Heugh on 6th (PC), Great Wanney Crag near Sweethope Lough on 12th (MNC) and 17th-31st (MH/AA), Stang Moss Charwood on 29th (NFO) and Harthope Valley on 29th (SVM/AJM). Singles were also at Whitfield and Sipton Burn, Allendale on 4th (ACo), Chesterhope Common on 10th (JSB/EC), Paxhill near Allenheads on 10th (SJH), Dryburn Moor and Kingswood Common on 15th (SJH/MH/A), Deadwater Fell (Kielder) on 15th (BCFT) and Wolf Crag on 28th (JR).

**Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*

2,300 were feeding at Low Acton Farm, Allendale on 8th (SJH), 1,500 at Carrshield area between 8th-10th (SJH) and 1,200 in Knockburn area on 10th (SJH). 100+-450 were observed at Bellingham, Boulmer, Brocken Moss near Keenley, Exhibition Park (Newcastle), Hammershield near Allenheads, Haughton

Strother, Hollingreen area, Holy Island, Mohope, Plenmeller Common, Ridley Common, St. Nicholas's Cathedral (Newcastle), Sinderhope, Swinhope Shield (Allendale), Whitfield and Whittle Dene. One to 80 were at a further 11 widespread localities.

**House sparrow** *Passer domesticus*

Eight+ regularly visited a Netherton Park, Stannington garden all month (RWM/MIM) and Leazes Park, Newcastle on 16th (DM).

**Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*

60 were at Big Waters on 14th (AJJ), 32 at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 20th (TB), 30+ were in the Hauxley area on 29th (HRS) 25+ at Netherton Park (Stannington) all month (RWM/MIM), ten+ at Bothal Pond on 15th (DM/STH) and Haughton Strother on 29th (MR), eight at Benridge Moor on 15th (ADMc), seven near Stamfordham on 6th (EC/JSB), six at Kiln Pit Hill on 17th (BNR) and six at Newton Red House on 18th (ADMc). One to five were at a further 18 widespread localities including gardens at Corbridge, Dinnington, Hipsburn, Old Hartley and Rothbury.

**Tree Sparrow is a target species for 2009. Please report all records.**

**Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs*

100 moved S past Black Middens Bastle, Greenhaugh on 16th (IFo) and 100 were on feeders at Grindon Farm on 30th (JF). 32 were at Blanchland village on 15th (BNR) and 30+ at Spindleston on 5th (MSH/ICD). One to ten were at a further eight widespread localities.

**Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla*

Ca.20 at Needless Hall Moor near Longwitton on 9th increased to 40 on 10th (ADMc). 19 visited a Corbridge garden between 1st-8th (MR). Up to five were observed at a Rothbury garden all month (TRD/JD) and on feeders at Grindon Farm between 1st-16th (JF). One to two were also noted at Doddington, Dukeshagg Wood, near Highford-Mitford road, Holywell Pond, Wallington Hall and Wooler.



A Brambling at Wallington  
16th March  
by Tim Dean

**Greenfinch** *Carduelis chloris*

50 were at Fenwick Wood on 14th (KWY), 20+ at Bamburgh on 14th (BRS), 15 in the Hauxley area on 29th (HRS) and one to ten at a further five localities.

**Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis*

50 were at Holy Island on 5th (JMA) and Wallridge on 6th (EC/JSB), 42 visiting East Ord gardens on 22nd increased spectacularly to 104 on 28th (MHu), 18 at Bilton Banks on 7th (JMA) and one to 15 at a further 12 widespread localities.

**Siskin** *Carduelis spinus*

Birds visited a Rothbury garden all month with peak of 52 on 28th (TRD/JD). Ten to 15 were at Swallow Pond on 13th (SPP), eight at Highford Bridge (Mitford) on 4th (TB) and seven at Grindon Farm on 23rd (JF). Nine flew N over Bamburgh between 18th-24th (BRS). One to five were at a further 15 widespread localities including gardens at Cramlington, Dinnington, Newcastle, Ponteland, Stamfordham and Walbottle.

**Linnet** *Carduelis cannabina*

73 were at Killingworth Moor on 15th (MSH), 42 at Boulmer on 19th (PRM), 25 at Howick on 28th (JAR), 20 at Haughton Strother on 7th (MR) and Long Nanny on 15th (MT/NT), 15 at Dukeshagg Wood on 22nd (BNR) and 14 on Holy Island on 25th (PRM). One to ten were at a further ten widespread localities.

**Twite** *Carduelis flavirostris*

200 at Hemscotthill Links, Cresswell on 4th (MSK), declined to 80 on 8th (STH) and 50 by 29th (DM/ADM/STH) as birds dispersed to breeding grounds. Eight were also noted at Elwick on 15th (DGB) and five at Fenham-le-Moor on 4th (JHa).

**Lesser Redpoll** *Carduelis caberet*

Five were at East Kielder Valley on 15th (MJC), two at Edlingham Woods on 18th (MJC) and singles at Broomlee Lough and Rothbury on 31st (PRM/JD).

**Crossbill** *Loxia curvirostra*

Six were at Thrunton Woods on 14th (NFO), five at Monk Wood (Bearsbridge) on 6th (SJH), two at East Kielder Valley on 15th (MJC), Harwood Forest on 16th (MJC) and Addycombe (Rothbury) on 24th (TRD/JD). One was at Bywell on 18th (ASH/TW).

**Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Six were at Hagg Bank (Wylam) on 7th (DRW), four at Rothbury and Scotland Gate all month (TRD/JD/SLB/MSK) and Holystone on 25th (DRo). One to three were at a further 11 widespread localities including gardens at Newcastle, Ponteland and Walbottle.

**Lapland Bunting** *Calcarius lapponicus*

One was on Holy Island on 1st (IK).

**Snow Bunting** *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Up to six were present at Hemscotthill Links, Cresswell between 4th-21st (TRC). Three were at Fenham-le-Moor on 4th (JHa), two at Long Nanny on 12th-15th (GW/TRD/JD/MT/NT) and singles at Boulmer on 10th (JAR), St. Mary's Island on 12th (SPP) and Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 12th-14th (MJC/KWY). Inland, one was discovered on Hedgehope (Cheviot Hills) on 22nd (GP).

**Yellowhammer** *Emberiza citronella*

18 were in stubble at Big Waters on 26th (GB), 14 came into roost at Arcot Pond on 29th (DM/STH), 13 at Haughton Strother on 11th (MR), 12 at Howick on 29th (JAR) and ten+ at Bamburgh on 29th (BRS). One to six were at a further four typical farmland localities.

**Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus*

24 were noted at Doddington on 29th (TRD/JD), 19 at Prestwick Carr on 4th (PCF), 13 at Arcot Pond on 15th (LJM) and Holy Island on 25th (PRM), 11 at Boulmer on 19th (PRM) and one to five at a further 11 widespread localities including a Dinnington garden.

**Corn Bunting** *Emberiza calandra*

One observed north of Linden Hall between 21st-29th was the same individual as last year (NFO).



## ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN

### Escapes

#### Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*

The bird seen last month at Newton presumably relocated to Hauxley NR where it was seen on 27th and 31st (EC/JSB/PCF/HRS).

#### Harris's Hawk *Parabuteo unicinctus*

There were two sightings of this impressive raptor on the same day with sightings at Hole House, Dipton (AJR) and at Seaton Delaval Hall (MG) both on 17th.

### Hybrids

#### Canada Goose x Greylag Goose *Branta canadensis* x *Anser anser*

Two of these frequent hybrids were at Hauxley on 31st (HRS).

### Birds of Unknown Origin

#### Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

A single bird was still being seen at Prestwick visiting a garden and being fed on apples on 10th (*per* PCF).

## LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

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Bamburgh Ringing Station, Berwick Wildlife Group, Bird Club Field Trip, Hauxley Ringing Station, North Northumberland Bird Club.

## BULLETIN COMPILATION AND PRODUCTION

This bulletin was compiled by Lindsay McDougall (Swans to Geese, Game birds, Divers to Herons), Graeme Bowman (Ducks), Trevor Blake (Birds of Prey to Rails), Ian Forsyth (Waders to Skuas), Tim Dean (Gulls to Auks, Escapes, Hybrids and Unknown Origin, List of Contributors, Highlights), Iain Robson (Doves to Dunnock), Mike Richardson (Robin to Warblers), Dee McKeown (Flycatchers to Buntings), Julie Roper/Dan Turner (WeBS Coastal Counts) and Steve Holliday (WeBS Inland Counts). Thanks again to Ann McKeown for typing the section Flycatchers to Buntings.

Edited by Steve Barrett [Sscmagpie@aol.com](mailto:Sscmagpie@aol.com)

Distributed by Alan Watson [apusx@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:apusx@blueyonder.co.uk)

## RECORD SUBMISSION

**Cards:** Please send all record cards to Tim Dean, 2 Knocklaw Park, Rothbury NE65 7PW, to arrive on, or preferably before, the 8th of the month following that in which the records were collected. Please write cards legibly to ensure that your sightings are correctly recorded.

**E-mail:** Members are encouraged to e-mail their records on an Excel-style spreadsheet. Please e-mail Dick Myatt at [dick@dickmyatt.co.uk](mailto:dick@dickmyatt.co.uk) for a copy of the standard spreadsheet and other details.

**Location names and Grid references:** The use of standard location names and the inclusion of grid references greatly increases the value of records in subsequent analyses. A 1km square grid reference is the ideal e.g. NY8067 for Grindon Lough, but 2km square references (Tetrads) are also acceptable e.g. NY86D in this case. A list of localities and their tetrad grid references (Tetrad/Locality List) can be downloaded from the 'Resources & Downloads' section of the Club website at <http://www.ntbc.org.uk> – the use of these names,



wherever possible, would be highly appreciated.

### **PHOTOGRAPHS AND ILLUSTRATIONS**

Please keep submitting your articles, photographs, sketches and illustrations for the bulletin. Thanks again to those who have supplied the excellent photographs.

Please send to Steve Barrett at [Sscmagpie@aol.com](mailto:Sscmagpie@aol.com)

### **ELECTRONIC BULLETIN**

The NTBC bulletin can be received electronically or as hard copy. The electronic bulletin arrives earlier than the printed version, it is in colour and we save all that printing and stamps. Ask for an e-mailed bulletin from [jo.bentley@waitrose.com](mailto:jo.bentley@waitrose.com).

### **MEMBERSHIP**

For membership enquiries please contact [jo.bentley@waitrose.com](mailto:jo.bentley@waitrose.com).

### **NTBC WEBSITE**

The excellent club website is available at [www.ntbc.org.uk](http://www.ntbc.org.uk). Chris Knox is the link person to the club committee for the website and you can contact him at [christopher.knox@o2.co.uk](mailto:christopher.knox@o2.co.uk)

### **FIELD TRIPS**

The next field trip is to the Harthope Valley on 17th May. Please meet in the car park at Middleton at 09:00h.

Contact is Trevor Blake;

Email: [trevor.1958@live.co.uk](mailto:trevor.1958@live.co.uk)

Tel: 01670 862 635

### **INDOOR MEETINGS**

The committee are currently organising the schedule for 2009-2010. If you have any suggestions for speakers or topics please contact any committee member.

### **Wader Study Group project on Sanderlings**

Recently a new project of the International Wader Study group has been initiated on Sanderling and as part of that a new website has been launched.

The Sanderling Project of the International Wader Study Group aims to learn more about migration routes, phenology and population dynamics (survival and recruitment) of Sanderling in Europe, Africa and Asia, specifically by use of colour-rings.

We have now colour-ringed almost 2,000 individuals in Ghana, Mauritania, Oman, Netherlands, Iceland and Greenland. Soon Scotland, Sweden, Svalbard, Poland, France, Russia and Kenya will be added to this list.

So watch out for them and send us your sightings. It will greatly aid us to answer our research questions.

More information of this project, and how you can (continue to) help us with learning more about Sanderling, can be found on our new Webpage: <http://www.waderstudygroup.org/res/project/sanderling.php>.

The WebPages are currently available in English and Dutch. We are working on a translation in French. In the future we also hope to have a Russian, German, Spanish and Portuguese version. We would appreciate it very much if you would be able to help us translating, also in languages not mentioned here.

Do you have a ringing license and are you interested in starting colour-ringing Sanderling yourself, for example during expeditions abroad? Please get in touch with us about a possible collaboration.

Happy spring!

We wish you a nice time outside. Sanderlings have started migrating northwards and their numbers will peak in Europe between mid May and early June. With several hundred more Sanderling colour-ringed in Ghana and Mauritania, there is an even better chance to observe one or more the coming weeks.

on behalf of the Sanderling project team,

**Jeroen Reneerkens**

### The Icelandic-breeding Goose Census in Northumberland – 2008

This long-running annual monitoring scheme run by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust counts wintering Icelandic Greylag, *Anser anser*, and Pink-footed geese, *Anser brachyrhynchus*. It is based primarily on roost counts, with target dates in 2008 of 4/5th October, 1/2nd November and 6/7th December. The counts have now been re-arranged to meet current arrival dates, so Pinkfoot sites are counted in October and November and Greylag, due to their later arrival, in November and December. Sites holding both species are counted in all three months. Visits were generally at either dawn or dusk, although some daytime counts took place. Fortunately, most observers recorded geese, with nil counts only at the Long Nanny, Holburn Moss, Gosforth Park, Whittledene and Kimmer Lough. There were no counts received from Norham Bridge, Hedgeley or Branton GPs.

#### The Icelandic-breeding Goose Census - 2008 Results

	Tweed Estuary	Lindisfarne NNR	Newton Pool	Hedgeley GPs	Branton GPs	Caistron	East Chevington	Holywell	Big Waters	Prestwick Carr	Hallington Reservoir	Colt Crag Reservoir	Grindon Lough	Derwent Reservoir	Monthly Total
Oct	-	5	6	-	-	-	4	5	-	5	-	-	-	-	
Nov	9	1	2	-	-	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	
Dec	10	7	7	-	-	-	7	7	7	6	7	7	7	6	

#### Pinkfoot

Oct	-	3500	0	-	-	0	0	0	-	1	-	-	-	-	<b>3501</b>
Nov	0	2000	0	-	-	0	84	1	0	0	211	0	0	0	<b>2296</b>
Dec	0	850	0	-	-	0	0	120	1	0	18	0	0	0	<b>989</b>

#### Greylag

Oct	-	42	0	-	-	-	44	1	-	3	-	-	-	-	<b>90</b>
Nov	0	140	0	-	-	8	166	5	4	0	232	2	0	512	<b>1069</b>
Dec	73	550	138	-	-	-	31	36	87	64	314	0	1	286	<b>1580</b>

#### Pinkfooted Goose

The total for the county is well down on that for 2007. The main reason for this is the virtual absence of birds during the roost counts at East Chevington, thought to be due to disturbance. Birds were present in the Bay area all winter and several large counts of between 3000 and 5600 were made by several observers. In addition, the numbers counted at Lindisfarne NNR and Holburn Moss were somewhat lower than previous years. There are two populations of Pinkfeet. The Svalbard population winters in the Low Countries and our population, which breeds in Iceland and Greenland, winters only in the British Isles. From 1960 to 1990, the UK count totals increased from around 50,000 individuals and reached a new peak of 302,774 in 2005 and the latest estimate for the Icelandic and Greenland population is 287,563. <sup>1</sup>

#### Greylag Goose – the Icelandic-breeding population

The November count in 2008 produced 1069 birds, slightly down on the figure for 2007, (1378), and well down on that for 2006 (2032), but similar to that for 2005, (1368). As in 2006, the December count was larger at 1580. The size of the re-introduced population, (see below), suggests that well over half of this December figure were our local, re-introduced birds, and so perhaps only a few hundred birds were from Iceland. We lie on the southern fringe of their wintering range, the main part of which lies to the north, in Eastern Scotland and Orkney.

#### The UK Greylag Goose Census

In 2008, breeding reports were received from 13 sites, with pairs at a further two sites. Approximately 51 broods and a total of 297 young were noted, although these were at different ages and fledging success is

generally not known. At Hauxley for example, 66 hatched but only 52 fledged. These figures are similar to those of 2007 when there were 51 broods from 13 sites reported and up to 271 young observed. They are though, somewhat down on the figures for 2006. The major sites were Caistron, (73 young), Hauxley, with 66 young hatching from 12 broods and 52 young fledging, and the Derwent Reservoir, (59 young from 9 broods). Hedgeley Gravel Works produced 34 young from a minimum of 7 broods.

#### **Post-breeding numbers**

There was no post-breeding count in 2008. The September population in the county in 2006 and 2007 was estimated to be 1441 and 1410 respectively.

**Acknowledgements.** This summary was assembled from the fieldwork of many individuals, who contributed either directly, by WeBS, or via club record cards: R.H & M. Armitage, A.H. Banks, S.L. Barratt, G. Bowman, K. Brooks, A. Craggs, P.R. Davey, I.S. Davidson, J&T.R. Dean, I. Fisher, P. Fletcher, R. Forster, M. Hutcheson, M. Kitching, J. Martin, P.R. Massey, T. Mitcham, R. Norman, K. Redgrave, M. Richardson, P. Tapsell, G. Tuthill, K. W. York, Hauxely Ringing Station all contributed, either breeding/summering records, or roost counts. Thank you to everyone who counted and filled in forms, without whom of course, there would be nothing to report. My apologies for any accidental omissions.

Roger Norman.

#### **Reference**

Mitchell, C. 2008. *Status and distribution of Icelandic-breeding Geese: results of the 2007 international census*. Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust Report, Slimbridge.



## INLAND WeBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

<b>Year: 2009</b>
<b>Month: March</b>

Version: Interim

[illegible]

# Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

<http://www.ntbc.org.uk/>



## Bulletin 2009 No 4 MONTHLY SUMMARY – APRIL

19th June 2009

### HIGHLIGHTS

- A **Taiga Bean Goose** was at Catcleugh Reservoir.
- A **Cackling Canada Goose** One at Grindon Lough stayed for several days
- An **Egyptian Goose** was at Grindon Lough on one day only
- A **Quail** calling near Budle Bay on 24th was extremely early
- A **Great White Egret** was briefly at Arcot Pond on 24th
- **Avocet** there were several sightings in the Druridge bay area
- Single **Hoopoes** were in Harthope Valley and Mitford
- The St Mary's **Water Pipit** stayed until at least 2nd and another was found at Lynemouth
- A **Black-headed Wagtail** on Holy Island on 26th was only the second county record
- A flock of up to 45 **Waxwing** stayed at Jesmond Dene until the 19th
- A **Firecrest** was at St Mary's on 13th



A splendid Black-headed Wagtail at Holy Island  
by Colin Pears

### NEWS

See later in the bulletin for full information on the following;

A field trip to **Wykeham Forest** is planned for Sunday 28th June – Honey Buzzards are expected

A field trip to **Slaley for nightjars** and other night birds is on Friday 3rd July

The first **indoor meetings** have been organised for the autumn.



## WEATHER

Plenty of fine settled weather with warm days, especially in the first and third weeks. Cool and misty at times along the east coast. Overall, the month was warmer, drier and sunnier than average,.

1st to 5th: A fine settled start to the month with high pressure close by, although a front moving east did give a little rain during the early hours of the 4th. Warm days were followed by chilly nights with a touch of frost.

6th to 17th: During this period fronts from the Atlantic moved into the UK and often became slow-moving, occasionally returning westwards. Spells of rain or showers affected all parts but much of the rain was light with some drier interludes. During the 16th and 17th pressure gradually rose from the north with drier conditions slowly extending southwards.

18th to 24th: A return to settled conditions as high pressure over the north continued to extend southwards. As with the settled spell at the beginning of the month, warm days were followed by chilly nights with local ground frost. The east coast was cool with north-east winds from the North Sea.

25th to 30th: An unsettled end to the month. Heavy rain and showers affected all parts for the remainder of the month. Although eastern areas continued to be quite warm during the day, it became generally colder.

## CLASSIFIED LIST

The following account consists of unchecked reports. The species/subspecies marked \* require descriptions. A complete list of all sightings which need notes is included in the NTBC website [www.ntbc.org.uk](http://www.ntbc.org.uk) under the County Records Committee section and in Birds in Northumbria 2007 page 251.

The Inland and Coastal Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) tables are at the rear of the bulletin. These contain additional counts to those in the Classified List.

## TARGET SPECIES

The target species for 2009 are **Marsh Tit**, **Spotted Flycatcher** and **Tree Sparrow**.

Please report all records for these species.

### Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

The highest counts were 90 in the Tweed Estuary on 17th, 74 at Killingworth Lake on 11th and 55 at QEII Lake on 15th (MHu/LJM/ADM). The maximum at Leazes Park Lake, Newcastle was 22 on 1st and 20 were at Castle Island on 19th (DM/STH). The only other double figure count was 11 at East Chevington North Pool on 17th/19th (GB/DM/STH). Counts of four came from Belsay Hall, Cresswell Pond Hauxley and Woodhorn Flashes. Three were in Budle Bay and at Hemscott Hill, Cresswell. Nesting pairs were noted at Annitsford Pond, Arcot Pond, Bell's Pond (Cresswell), Big Waters, Burradon Pond, Howick, Swallow Pond and Woodhorn South Flash. Elsewhere one to two were reported from Bothal Pond, Bothal Barns Shooting Pond, Broomlee Lough, Exhibition Park (Newcastle), Grindon Lough, Haydon Letch pond (Ashington), Longhirst Flash, Lynemouth, Norham, Paddy Freeman's Pond (Jesmond Dene, Riding Mill and Shield-on-the-Wall Dam



Mute Swans 21st April

on the Tyne at Newcastle Business Park

by Eddie Douglas

The numbers on the river show how the water quality has improved over the years

**Whooper Swan** *Cygnus cygnus*

Light movement was noted during the month with 14 SW at Hauxley on 11th, six S at Druridge Pools on 1st and four flew over Hepple Heugh on 1st (TRD/JD/IDR/PC). The largest gathering was 23 at East Chevington on 1st (MSH). Counts of ten came from Cresswell Pond on 16th and Hauxley NR on 18th (PAT/ADM/HRs). Six were near Rayburn Lake on 5th (ADM). One to two were noted from Bakethin Reservoir, Cresswell Pond, Grindon Lough, Longhirst Flash, the Tweed Estuary and Woodhorn South Flash.

**\*Bean Goose** *Anser fabalis*

The regular wandering *fabalis* race bird was noted at Catcleugh Reservoir on 4th/5th (PRM/ACo/CGK/PS)

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

The largest return movement noted during the month was 100 N over Craggside on 23rd (TRD), 89 flew S at Druridge Pools on 1st (IDR). At Hauxley on 18th 81 dropped in from the south (HRS) and three passed Monk's House Pool on 11th (DWS). Cresswell Pond hosted 50 on 7th (TB). Six were at Woodhorn Flashes from 8th-11th and singles were noted at Bothal Pond on 1st and Spittal Cliffs on 20th.

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

Two birds remained were near Rayburn Lake on 5th (ADM).

**Greylag Goose** *Anser anser*

At Druridge Pools 70 flew S on 16th and 17 flew N over East Ord on 9th (IDR/MHu). 200 were present at Hauxley NR from 4th-6th with 112 remaining on 18th (HRS). At Ross 137 were present on 7th (PRM). The peak count at Grindon Lough was 51 on 2nd with 24 still present on 13th (ADM/SJH *et al*). Smaller gatherings were 29 at Whittle Dene reservoirs on 12th, 21 at East Chevington on 14th, 18 at Monk's House Pool on 3rd, 13 at Haughton Strother on 19th and ten in the Tweed Estuary on 17th (STH/PA/DM/PRM/MR/MHu). One to eight were noted at Ancroft, Arcot Pond, Bakethin Reservoir, Bothal Pond, Broomlee Lough, Cresswell Pond, Leazes Park (Newcastle), Longhirst Flash (a leucistic individual present here), Sweetthope Lough, Warkworth lane Ponds, West Hartford and Woodhorn South Flash.

Breeding records are detailed below:

Locality	No .of broods	No. of young	Observer/Comments
Newcastle Great Park Pools	1-2	11	AHB on 25th very close-knit group
Haughton Castle	2	8	TWi On 25th
Hauxley NR	1	7	HRS on 20th reduced to six by Lesser Black-backed Gull predation
Monk's House Pool	1	6	TM/NNBC from 19th

**Snow Goose** *Anser caerulescens*

Three white phase birds flew N at Druridge Pools on 25th (IF).

**Greater Canada Goose** *Branta canadensis*

The highest count was 56 at Bothal Pond on 1st (GB). 41 were at Rockhouse Fell (Plenmeller) on 9th and 30 at Coanwood on 12th (SJH). Other gatherings were 29 at Castle Island on 19th, 27 at Hauxley on 18th, 22 at Grindon Lough on 16th, 20 at Whitfield on 12th, 16 at Linton Pond on 8th and Bothal Pond on 19th and 15 at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 1st (DM/STH/PA/HRS/PRM/BNR/CDH). One to nine were noted from Arcot Pond, Bakethin Reservoir, Banks Pond Dinington (nest), Budle Bay, Catcleugh Reservoir, Cresswell Pond, Dilston (Corbridge), Druridge Pools Dykerow Fell (Whitfield Moor), East Chevington North Pool, Exhibition Park (Newcastle), Fourstones, Halton-le-Gate (two nests), Longhirst Flash, Marden Quarry, Swallow Pond (nest first nesting attempt here), Warkworth Lane Ponds and Woolsington Ponds (where female shot on nest for second consecutive year)..

Breeding records are detailed below:

Location	No .of broods	No. of young	Observer/Comments
Marden Quarry	1	7	KWY on 26th
Shasun Dudley	1	2	Per LJM on 30th

**\*Cackling Canada Goose** *Branta hutchinsii*

A single was seen at Grindon Lough on 10th/12th (SJH).

**Barnacle Goose** *Branta leucopsis*

Two were with Canada Geese at Bothal Pond on 12th (TB/AA). Singles were at Hauxley from 4th-11th (HRS/TRD/JD), Rock House Fell, Plenmeller on 10th-13th (SJH) and with a Pink-footed Goose at Spittal Cliffs on 20th (MHu).

**Dark-bellied** *bernicle* **Brent Goose** *Branta bernicla bernicla*

The only record received was of a single on the shoreline at Hauxley on 24 h (TRD/JD).

**Egyptian Goose** *Alopochen aegyptiacus*

One at Grindon Lough on 2nd was the observer's first sighting in the county (TRD).

**Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna*

Budle Bay held 87 on 29th (PRM), 28 were in fields at QEII CP on 8th (AT), 18 at Castle Island on 1st (GB), 18 at Cresswell Pond on 25th (IRD), 12 at Hauxley NR on 25th (HRS), and ten at East Chevington on 19th (DM/STH). Eight to nine were at Bell's Pond, Druridge Pools and Howick, and five to six at Bothal Pond and the Tyne Estuary to North Shields Fish Quay. Three to four were also at Beadnell and the Long Nanny Estuary, and one to two at Backworth, Bothal and Warkworth Lane Ponds, Blyth South Harbour, Boulmer, Cambois, Cheswick, Longhirst Flash, Lynemouth Flash, Monk's House Pool, Newcastle Great Park Pools, West Hartford, West Ord and Wylam (prospecting pair on 9th; MH). Further inland, two to three were at Grindon Lough on several dates between 11th-30th (PRM/SJH/RMH et al.) and two at Holystone on 7th (DRo).

**Mandarin** *Aix galericulata*

A pair was at Bakethin Reservoir on 2nd (JMA) and three drakes and a duck there on 12th (GB/STH/PA/MLo). Single pairs were also at Greenhaugh and Redheugh on 13th (JR). Single drakes were on the North Tyne at Smalesmouth on 2nd (JMA) and Ridley Stokoe on 12th (GB). Single ducks were at Catcleugh Reservoir on 4th (PRM) and Jesmond Dene (Paddy Freeman's Pond) on 19th (MJCo).

**Wigeon** *Anas penelope*

At Grindon Lough, 47 on 10th (SJH) dropped to 11 by 30th (PRM), 42 at Hauxley Reserve on 4th fell to six by 23rd (HRS), 30 were at Derwent Reservoir on 1st (IFo), 23 at Cresswell Pond on 8th (MJCo), and 18 at East Chevington on 11th (DM/GB). Five to eight were at Newcastle Great Park Pools, Plenmeller Common and Woodhorn Flashes, three to four at Beadnell, Druridge Pools, Gosforth Park and Longhirst Flash, and one to two at Arcot, Holywell and Middle Ord Ponds, Broomlee and Whitfield Loughs, Monk's House Pool and the Tweed Estuary.

**Gadwall** *Anas strepera*

East Chevington held peaks of 47 on 8th (JRT) and 44 on 14th (KWW). Other peak counts were 25 at Bothal Pond on 10th (ADM), 17 at Woodhorn Flashes on 8th (PRM), 16 at Druridge Pools on 13th (IDR/IF), 14 at Castle Island on 18th (GB), 12 at Hauxley Reserve on 23rd (HRS), ten at Bell's Pond on 23rd (STH et al.), six to seven at Castron, Longhirst Flash and Warkworth Lane Ponds, and fours at Arcot and Linton Ponds, Big Waters, Grindon Lough and Monk's House Pool.

**Teal** *Anas crecca*

Largest concentrations were 150+ at Budle Bay on 14th (MSH) falling to 21 by 29th (PRM), 118 at Grindon Lough on 11th (SJH) dropping to 11 by 30th (PRM), 88 at Druridge Pools on 1st (IDR) dropping to six by 26th (GB), 30 at Bothal Pond on 11th (GB/DM), 22 at Middle Ord Pond on 2nd (MHu), and ten to 19 at Arcot and Linton Ponds, Big Waters, Colt Crag and Derwent Reservoirs, Haughton Strother, Holy Island, Kilham, Monk's House Pool and West Ord. Five to eight were also at Cresswell Pond, Halton Red House and Plenmeller Common, and two to four at Beadnell, Castle Island, Catcleugh Reservoir, Hauxley Reserve, Longhirst and Woodhorn Flashes, Lynemouth, Rubbingstob Hill, Warkworth Lane Ponds, West Hartford and Whitfield Lough.

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

Counts of adults included 39 at Grindon Lough on 11th (SJH), 32 at Newcastle Leazes Park on 6th (DM), 22 at Arcot Pond on 11th (DM), 17 at Killingworth Lake on 16th (GB), and ten to 11 at Longhirst Flash and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Five to nine were at Arcot Pond, Chipchase Castle, Bell's and Cresswell Ponds, East Chevington, Haughton Strother, Linton and Warkworth Lane Ponds, Lynemouth, Morpeth, Newcastle Civic Centre and Tynemouth Boating Lake, and one to four at thirteen further sites. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Newcastle Exhibition Park	2	13	GB. Brood of five on 22nd and brood of eight on 29th (later down to three)
Newcastle Civic Centre	1	12	GB. On 28th
Sharperton	1	6	JR. On 26th
Derwent Reservoir	1	5	RMH. On 22nd
Druridge Pools	1	5	IF. On 20th
Newcastle Leazes Park	1	5	DM. On 20th
Jesmond Dene	1	4	MJCo. On 19th
Slaley Hall	1	3	RMH. On 21st
Arcot Pond	1	2	STH. On 12th
Haughton Strother	1	1	MR. On 30th

A female was on a nest with six eggs at Batailshielhaugh (JR).

#### **Pintail** *Anas acuta*

A drake was at Cresswell Pond on 29th (TB/JRT).

#### **Garganey** *Anas querquedula*

Three (two drakes) were at Holywell Pond on 4th-5th (CGK/SPP *et al.*), with a pair there on 17th (SPP) and two drakes on 24th (MT/NT). A pair was at Druridge Pools regularly between 7th-19th (AA/TB/IDR *et al.*). Two flew off S from East Chevington on 10th (STH), a pair was at Swallow Pond on 24th (MNC), and single drakes were at St Mary's Wetland on 1st (DMT/KWY) and Arcot Pond on 24th-25th and 28th (AA/LJM *et al.*). One (not sexed) was reported at Gosforth Park on 16th (per SRB). Display and copulation was noted at one locality on 13th (MSH).



A drake Garganey at St. Mary's wetland  
30th March  
by Tim Dean

#### **Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*

Nine were at Swallow Pond on 8th (SPP), eight at Cresswell Pond on 19th (DM/GB), eight drakes at East Chevington on 19th (DM/STH), six at Bell's Pond on 24th (MNC), five at Holywell Pond on 5th (LJM), four at Druridge Pools on 1st (IDR), and threes at Warkworth Lane Ponds on 17th (PRM) and Woodhorn Flashes on 8th (PRM). Singles were also at Bothal and Linton Ponds, Caistron, Hauxley Reserve and Monk's House Pool.

#### **Pochard** *Aythya ferina*

Nine were at Swallow Pond on 8th (SPP) and five at Arcot Pond on 2nd (LJM), with two there on 11th (DM). Singles were at Bothal and Linton Ponds and East Chevington.

#### **Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*

Peak counts were 42 at Newcastle Great Park Pools on 10th (AHB), 35 at Woodhorn Flashes on 8th (PRM), 32 at Ladyburn Lake on 29th (JRT), 31 at Newcastle Leazes Park on 6th (DM), 27 at Killingworth Lake on 24th (LJM), 26 at Linton Pond on 8th (PRM), 25 at Bothal Pond on 11th (GB/DM), 25 at Holywell Pond on 4th (CGK), and 21 at Monk's House Pool, West Allotment and Woodhorn Flashes. Counts of ten to 13 came from Druridge Pools, Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother, Hauxley Reserve and Norham, five to nine from

Castle Island, Coanwood, Cocklawburn and Cresswell Ponds, Colt Crag and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and Jesmond Dene (Paddy Freeman's), and one to three at Arcot Pond, Belsay Hall and Corbridge.

**Eider** *Somateria mollissima*

At least 300 were at Stag Rocks and 125 at Seahouses on 26th (ADM). Elsewhere, 20 were at Beadnell on 3rd (PRM), 17 at Hadston Carrs on 8th (MT/NT), 12 at Howick and the Tyne Estuary to North Shields Fish Quay, eight at Blyth Harbour and one at Holy Island.

**Long-tailed Duck** *Clangula hyemalis*

Stag Rocks held nine on 12th (CGK/PS/TS), eight on 14th (BRS), five on 20th (TM), and one to two on several further dates until 29th (DGB et al.). Five were off Ross on 7th (PRM), four at Cocklawburn on 8th (TM) and one there on 24th (MHu), and three at Seahouses on 5th (TRD).

**Common Scoter** *Melanitta nigra*

At Newbiggin, 33 flew N on 9th and 16 N on 30th (AT), 13 flew N at Druridge Links on 20th (IDR), eight to 11 N at Boulmer Steel, Hauxley and St Mary's on 18th-19th (HRS/AT/MT/NT), and six N at Hauxley on 11th (TRD/JD). Good numbers appeared in the north of the county and included 200 at Cocklawburn on 12th (PHa) increasing to 740 by 24th (the highest numbers there for eight years; MHu), 260 at Cheswick Black Rocks on 1st increasing to 620 by 26th (MHu), and about 500 at Stag Rocks on 26th (ADM). Stag Rocks also held 200 on 11th-12th (JBe/CGK et al.) and smaller numbers on several further dates, 120 at Greenhill Rocks on 21st (TM), and one to six off Cresswell and Holy Island. Two pairs were inland at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 14th (SR).

**Velvet Scoter** *Melanitta fusca*

Two at Stag Rocks on 11th (JBe) was the sole report.

**Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula*

One flew N at Hauxley on 18th (HRS). Peak counts were 25 at Capheaton Lake on 2nd (TRD), 20 at East Chevington north pool on 19th (DM/STH), 13 at QEII Lake on 2nd (TRD), ten at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 12th (GB), nine at Grindon Lough on 11th (SJH), and six at Greenlee Lough on 18th (MRS). Three to four were also at Bakethin Reservoir, Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, Haughton Strother and the Tweed Estuary, and one to two at Broomlee Lough, Caistron, Castle Island, Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Pools, Kitty Brewster, Newcastle Great Park Pools and Rothbury.

**Smew** *Mergellus albellus*

A 'redhead' at Capheaton Lake on 2nd may have been present for ten days (TRD). Perhaps the same individual was at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on several dates between 5th-25th (SR/DRW et al.). More unusual was a 'redhead' sat on the sea, with a drake Red-breasted Merganser, off Newbiggin Church Point on 15th. After a few minutes both flew off N (GB/LAR).

**Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator*

One flew N at Seahouses on 18th (TM). At Holy Island 13 were noted on 24th (STH) and 21 on 25th (CGK). Other peak counts were 12 at Cheswick Black Rocks on 1st (MHu), 12 at Ross Back Sands on 5th (DRW), nine at Budle Bay on 20th (TM), five at Kitty Brewster, Blyth on 18th (GB), and three to four at Castle Island, Cocklawburn, Cresswell Pond and Hauxley Reserve. One to two were also at Druridge Links, Druridge Pools and East Chevington. An unusual inland record concerned a female/immature bird at Coanwood Pond on 12th (BNR).

A drake Red-breasted Merganser  
at Cresswell Pond on 9th April  
by Tim Dean





**Goosander** *Mergus merganser*

12 were at West Ord on 26th (MHu), 11 at Wylam on 5th (JSB), eight at Thropton on 27th (TRD), five at Warden and Wark on 2nd (MNC), and three at Weldon Bridge on 16th (MT/NT). One to two were also at Airy Holm and Derwent Reservoirs, the Blyth Estuary, Broomlee Lough, Bygate, Caistron, Cartington, Chipchase Castle, Dilston, Doddington, Farnley, Harthope Valley, Holywell and Linton Ponds, near Humshaugh, Kilham, Killingworth Lake, Lanton Mill, the Long Nanny Estuary, Otterburn, Rochester, Rothbury, Snope Burn and Tarsset Bridge.

**Ruddy Duck** *Oxyura jamaicensis*

A pair was at Bothal Pond on 10th (JSB/TF/ADM Mc *et al.*) and a drake at Swallow Pond on 8th-9th (ACo/CDH) and 24th (MNC).

**Red Grouse** *lagopus lagopus*

The highest counts were 20 at Dykerow Fell, Whitfield Moor on 10th, 17 at Whitfield Lough on 12th 15 at Rockhouse Fell, Plenmeller on 10th, 12 in Carey Burn, Harthope Valley on 9th and ten in the Snope Common-Eals Fell area on 12th (BNR/SJH/AJ). Counts of six came from Morleyhill Fell (Whitfield Moor) and Paxhill (Allenheads). Five were at Bowden Doors (Belford) and Snope Burn. One to three were noted at Alnwick Moor, Asholme, Barhaugh Burn, Longframlington Common Lord's Rigg (Whitfield Moor) and Parson Shields.

**Black Grouse** *Tetrao tetrix*

The highest counts were only three, all males at Dryburn Moor on 11th/13th, Paxhill (Allenheads) on 11th/14th and Swinhope Shield on 11th and a male and two females were at Hollin Green Farm (Keenley) on 14th (SJH). Three birds were on the Otterburn Ranges on 25th (NNBC). Two males were at Hollin Green Farm (Keenley) on 11th/13th, in the Knockburn area on 11th and at Meadow Cottage on 17th (SJH/JSB/EC). A male was in the Harthope Valley between Langleeford and Langleeford Hope on 7th/20th and at High Knockburn on 17th, a female was in Upper Redesdale on 26th and a lekking male was at Haltonlea Fell on 27th (TRD/JD/JSB/EC/JCD/SW).

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

Six at Dryburn Moor on 11th and in the Cawfields area on 14th was the largest count for the month (SJH). Four were at Rockhouse Fell, Plenmeller on 13th (SJH). One to three were noted from Alnham, Beacon Hill (Whitfield Moor), Beacon Hill (north of Morpeth), Carey Burn, Eshott, Great Whittington, Hawsen Burn, Holywell Dene, Keenleyside, Kingswood Burn, Shield-on-the-Wall, Tritlington, Wark, Warkworth Lane Ponds and Widdrington.



A Red-legged Partridge at Middleton on 20th April  
by Tim Dean



**Grey Partridge** *Perdix perdix*

The highest counts were six (three pairs) at Druridge Pools Links on 13th and in the Hauxley area on 23rd (IDR/JF/HRS). Counts of four (two pairs) came from Hemscott Hill on 3rd, Prestwick Carr on 18th and Howick on 20th (JSB/EC/PCF/JAR). Three were at Beaconhill (Cramlington) on 3rd and Bothal Barns on 11th (STH/DM/GB). Two, mostly in pairs, were at Allen Banks, Ancroft, Backworth, Blagdon (Bellasis Farm and Make me Rich), Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay), Doddington, Druridge Pools, Dryburn Moor, Hemscott Hill (Cresswell), Holborn, Low Acton Farm (Allendale), Lucker, Morleyhill Fell (Whitfield Moor), Newton Pool, Powburn, Startup, Weetslade CP and West Ord. Singles were noted at Blakemoor Farm (Cresswell), Linden Hall, Low Hauxley, Middle Dukesfield (Juniper) and Thrunton Woods.

**Quail** *Coturnix coturnix*

A very early arrival was calling in a cereal field at Outchester Farm from 20:55-21:10h on 24th (TMi).

**Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus*

A total of 27 were counted in three tetrads in the Ancroft area on 19th (JR). Counts of 18 and 15 respectively came from tetrads at Chipchase Castle and Pit House on 1st/17th (PC). Belsay Hall hosted 12 on 20th, whilst 11 were at Norham on 24th (LR/KR/JR). Nine were at Druridge pools, six at Tritlington and five at Hemscott Hill (Cresswell) and Unthank. One to three were noted from Chesters House and Walled Garden, Northumberland Park (North Shields), Rubbington Hall and a Walbottle garden.

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

At Craster six flew N in one hour on 17th, four flew N at Dunstanburgh on 20th and one flew N at Hauxley on 18th (AT/TM/HRS). The largest offshore gathering was at Druridge Links peaking at 15 on 25th, with 13 on 12th and 11 on 20th and smaller numbers on two further dates (IDR/JF *et al*). At Ross 11 were offshore on 7th and nine were off Cheswick Dunes on 1st (PRM/MHu). Four were at Middle Skerr, Cocklawburn on 24th and three offshore at Church Point, Newbiggin on 11th (PRM/MHu). One to two were noted from Boulmer Steel, Hauxley, Holy Island, St Mary's Island and Stag Rocks.

**Great Northern Diver** *Gavia immer*

The only report was a single offshore at Ross on 7th (PRM).

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Birds became established on breeding waters with peak counts of seven at Holywell Pond on 4th, six at Castron on 21st and four throughout the month at Arcot Pond (SPP/TRD/LJM). Three were at Linton Pond on 8th and Bothal Pond on 26th (PRM/GB). Pairs were noted at Belsay Hall (nesting), Broomlee Lough, Cocklawburn Pond (nest building), Farnley (displaying), Gosforth Park NR, Howick Hall, Monk's House Pool and Woodhorn Flashes. Singles were at Big Waters NR, *Drift Inn* Pools (Seaton Burn), Capheaton Lake, Cragside, Hauxley NR, Hayden Letch Pond (Ashington), Middleton Hall, Shield-on-the-Wall and Warkworth Lane Ponds.



Dabchick at Gosforth Park  
by Chris Knox

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*

The principal site this month was again Whittle Dene Reservoirs where numbers peaked at six on 20th (MR *et al.*). Two pairs were displaying at Derwent Reservoir on 22nd (RMH). Pairs were also noted at QEII Lake on 8th and Killingworth Lake on 16th (AT/GB). During the month singles were noted at Bakethin Reservoir, Bothal Ponds, Catcleugh Reservoir, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, East Chevington North Pool and Holywell Pond.

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

Only one report was received, that of a single off Stag Rocks on 8th (RNa).

**Slavonian Grebe** *Podiceps auritus*

Holy Island saw its largest gathering of the winter on 28 th-30 th when 15 were present , mostly in full breeding plumage, up to four had been present earlier in the month (IK *et al*).. The maximum at Stag Rocks was ten on 21st with up to nine, some in breeding plumage on 12 further dates (DRW/AA/MH). Six were present in Spittal Bay on 16 h (MHu). Two were also in Beadnell Bay on 12th (GW).

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

The maximum count at the now regular breeding site was three on 8th with a pair present there on 16th and a single on 24th. Two were present at a second site from 13th-17th and two were at a former breeding site on 24th.

**Fulmar** *Fulmarus glacialis*

Few reports were received. At Hauxley 70 flew N on 18th and two S on 11th and one flew N at Snab Point on 17th (HRS/TRD/JD/MH). Two were off Cresswell on 9th and off Hauxley on 24th.



A Fulmar gliding past St. Mary's  
by Norman Tuck

**Manx Shearwater** *Puffinus puffinus*

Light N passage was noted with six at Newbiggin on 28th, singles at Newbiggin and Snab Point on 17th, Boulmer Steel on 18th and one at Newbiggin on 30th (AT/PRM/MH).

**Gannet** *Morus bassanus*

Some large movements were noted with 1,400/hour S in a strong NE wind at Berwick Pier on 24 th 200 N in 1 hour at Craster on 17 th, 179 in 1 hour at Newbiggin, 130/hour N at Snab Point on 17 th and 100 N at Hauxley on 18 th (MHu/AT/AA/MH/HRS). At Berwick 30 flew S on 22nd and 27 flew N in 1 hour at Newbiggin on 30th (TRD/JD/AT). One to 15 were noted from Cresswell, Druridge, Hadston Carrs and St Mary's Island.

**Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

The peak roost counts during the month were 48 in Blyth South Harbour on 17th and 14 at North Shields Fish Quay on 12th/19th (STH/DMT). Inland 10 were at Derwent Reservoir on 22nd (PRM). Five were at Bakethin Reservoir on 2nd (JMA) and counts of four came from Beadnell, Cresswell Pond and Farnley (Corbridge). One to three were noted from Arcot Pond, Craster, Dunstanburgh Castle, Castle Island, East Chevington North Pool, Colt Crag Reservoir, Holy Island, Linton Pond, Riding Mill, Swallow Pond, Wark, Warkworth Lane Ponds and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. At Linton Pond a *sinensis* race bird was identified on 8th (PRM).

**Shag** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Very few were reported with a maximum of six off Cheswick Dunes on 1st (MHu)). The numbers at the Blyth South Harbour roost declined further with a maximum of three on 17th with an immature present on 18th (STH/DMT). One to three were noted from Beadnell and Stag Rocks.

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*

A single was seen at East Chevington North Pool on 2nd and reappeared at Druridge pools on 5th remaining there until at least 27th. (ADMc/IDR) Presumably this was the bird seen at Cresswell Pond on 23 rd (TB/STH *et al.*). An interesting sighting was of one flying along a Kenton (Newcastle) street chased noisily by a Common Gull on 14th (MRS).

**Great White Egret** *Ardea alba*

One flew into Arcot Pond from S on the morning of 25th having flown behind the writer of this bulletin section as he searched for a Whitethroat! It remained for a total of nine minutes before being chased off N by a Grey Heron.

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*

The largest concentration was at Druridge Pools where 12 were present on 28th with six occupied nests (IDR/JF/IF). Six were in the Tweed Estuary on 17th and at least six were present at the west end of Ashington on 21st with four nests containing young (ADMc). Four (two nesting pairs) were at Howick Hall on 23rd /26th and four were at Cresswell Ponds on 19th and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 20 th (TM/JAR/DM/STH/PRM). Two-three occupied nests were in Scots Pine at Riding Mill on 25th (BNR). Three including two occupying nests, were in the Benks Hill area on 14th and three flew E over Southfield Green (Cramlington) on 20th (SJH/DM). One to two were noted from Alnwick Moor, Arcot Pond, Beacon Lane (Cramlington), Bell's Pond (Cresswell), Bothal Pond, Castle Island, Catcleugh Reservoir, Farnley (Corbridge), Gosforth Park, Grindon Lough Haydon Bridge, Holywell Pond, Linton Pond, Longhirst Flash, Lynemouth, Pit House, Redesmouth, Riding Mill, Ross, Sweethope Lough, Thrunton Woods, Wark, Warkworth Lane Pond and Woodhorn Flashes.

**\*White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia*

A wandering escapee was seen flying S over Big Waters at noon on 9th (IF).

**Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia*

One was in Budle Bay on 26th (EG/JG)

**Red Kite** *Milvus milvus*

Two birds were displaying over Prudhoe on 3rd when they were joined by a third (MH), and two were at Dinnington on 10th (*per* GB). A single bird was at Beaconhill (Cramlington) then it flew over Arcot Pond and was seen later on at Newcastle Airport (STH/PA/IF). Other singles were noted at Beal Farm, Bearsbridge, Bothal Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Harlow Hill, Newburn, Prestwick Carr, The Lee (Rothbury), Whitfield, Whittonstall and Wylam.

**Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*

Birds were seen at several locations from the 8th, including Backworth, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Holy Island and Holywell Pond (EG/ADMc/JRT *et al.*)

**Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*

Only two sightings this month from the Hepple area. On 12th (GB/STH/PA).

**Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis*

Singles were seen at Holystone on 11th (DRo), Sweethope on 13th (PRM) and in the Harthope Valley on the 14th (EC).

**Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*

Three birds including a pair were soaring together at Gosforth Park NR on 12th (MSH). Pairs were at Carshope on 5th (JR), Fawdon on 4th (AHB), Howick on 21st (JAR) and at Marden quarry on 5th and 12th (KWY). Single birds were seen at a further 30 locations including a male taking a House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* out of a garden hedge (IDR).

**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*

10+ birds were at Bewick Moor on 4th (MH) and at Whitfield on 12th (MJC). Eight birds were soaring high over Newcastle Great Park Pools on 11th (AHB); seven birds were at Sweethope Lough on 13th (PRM). Six birds were noted at Bakethin Reservoir. Other records involved one to five birds during the month.

Common Buzzard  
31st March by Tim Dean



**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*  
One flew N at Mitford on 18th (JR).

**Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*

Three birds were at Grindon Lough. On 21st and two birds were seen at Sweethope Lough on 13th, Newbrough on 25th (PRM), Cresswell Pond on 11th, Arcot Pond on 19th (DM/GB) and at Parson shields on 26th (BNR). Single birds were noted from Broomlee Lough, Chesters House, Cresswell, Dilston, Druridge Pools, Holy Island, Holywell Dene, Linton, QEII Country Park, Ross, Snope Burn, St Mary's Island, West Hartford and Whitfield.

**Merlin** *Falco columbarius*

Single birds were seen at Alnwick Moor on 20th (IBDa/KDa), near Alnwinton on 7th (IFO), Forestburn Gate on 13th (AJ), Harthope Valley and Holy Island on 7th (TRD/JD/PRM), Makedon on 5th (JR) and at Whitfield on 12th (BNR).

**Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*

Two were seen at Corbridge on 25th and single birds were seen at Barhaugh Burn, Parson Shields on 26th and at Tows Bank on 12th (BNR).

**Peregrine** *Falco peregrinus*

Two birds were at Holystone on 2nd (DRo), Catcleugh Reservoir on 5th (ACo) and at a further two sites. Away from potential breeding sites singles were seen at Grindon Lough, Hauxley NR and Ross Links (TRD/JD/JRT/JWP/JMA).

**Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus*

Three birds were seen or heard at Gosforth Park NR on 12th and 16th (MSH/*per* SRB). Singles were at Holy Island (STH), Prestwick Carr (PCF) and St Mary's Wetland (MSH).

**Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*

Breeding was noted at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 20th with a brood of two young (DM), a pair with two young were at Longhirst Flash on 25th (PCF) and at Marden Quarry on 26th (KWY). The highest count came from Gosforth Park NR on 10th with 18 birds present (*per* SRB), 10 birds were at Castle Island on 19th (DM/STH). Nine birds were at Linton Pond on 8th (PRM) and Druridge Pools on 12th (IDR/JF), seven were the Silverlink Park LNR on 8th (MSH). One – five birds were at a further 17 sites during the month.

**Coot** *Fulica atra*

A pair was feeding five young at Killingworth Lake on 19th (LJM). Peak counts this month were 40 birds were at Capheaton on 10th (MSH), 26 were at Bothal Pond on 11th (DM/GB). 18 birds were at Woodhorn Flash on 8th (PRM) and 16 were at Linton Pond on 18th (CDH). One to ten birds were noted at a further 17 localities.

**Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*

The emphasis was largely on breeding with pairs noted in suitable habitat, often with display observed, at Alnham Moor, Capheaton, Cawfields, Dyke Nook, Fourstones, Grindon Lough, Harthope Valley, Haughton Strother, Haydon Bridge, Hexham, Ingram Valley, Keenley, Melkridge, Norham, Otterburn, Redesmouth, Ridley Stokoe, Sharperton Bridge, Shasun Dudley, Snope Burn, Tarsset Bridge, and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Larger groups inland were 31 at Plenmeller on 11th (SJH), 24 at Holystone on 4th and 15 at Caistrion on 2nd and small numbers were noted at a further 14 locations. Coastal congregations included 200 at Fenham Flats on 21st (JMA) and peaks of 54 at Hauxley NR on 25th (HRS) and 45 at Cresswell Pond on 23rd (STH *et al.*).

An Oystercatcher at  
Harthope  
7th April by Tim Dene



**Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta*

On 12th two alighted briefly at East Chevington, South Pool (ADMc/AT) before continuing S to Cresswell Pond (AA/JRT). Two were again at Cresswell Pond on 20th (ADMc) and then on 23rd three were feeding on the North Pool at East Chevington (PAT) before flying S to Cresswell Pond (STH *et al.*).

**Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*

Two at Grindon Lough on 2nd (ADMc) were noted several days to the month end and two were at Haughton Strother all month. Singles appeared at Bothal Pond on 7th, 18th and 28th ((TB/ADMc/TF *et al.*), at Longhirst Flash on 8th (PRM) and Druridge Pools on 13th, 26th and 28th (IDR/GB/ADMc).

A late record for March involves one at a confidential site in the south east on 17th, which becomes the earliest County record by one day.

**Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*

Three pairs were at Long Nanny on 22nd (TM), display was noted at Grindon Lough on 30th (PRM), Newcastle Great Park Pools on 4th and distraction display at Blyth South Harbour on 22nd (LJM). An *Atlas* visit to R Blyth, Kitty Brewster on 18th resulted in 33 (GB) and one to two were found at Berwick, Caistrion, Druridge Pools and Holystone.

**Golden Plover** *Pluvialis apricaria*

The largest inland flocks remarkably involved exactly the same number: 374 at Prestwick Carr on 11th (PCF) and 374 at Hammershield on 14th (SJH). Also 126 were at North Highmoor on 10th and 91 at Paxhill on 11th. Nine displayed at five sites on Whitfield Moor on 9th and 13 were in seven other territories there on 10th (BNR) and two singing males were heard at Carraw Farm on 11th (JF/IDR). Some 12 other places, mainly inland, had one to 70. The regular flock at St Mary's peaked at 500 on 13th (JDH).

**Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*

One flew N at Hauxley on 25th (HRS) and a single was in Budle Bay on 29th (PRM).

**Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*

At Blanchland Moor 30 pairs were established, 15 pairs were nesting at Holystone Moor, nine pairs at St Mary's (all ASJ), eight territories noted at Druridge Pools (IDR), seven pairs at Beacon Hill (ASJ), six pairs at Grindon Lough (PRM) and Hauxley NR (HRS), three pairs at Broomlee Lough, two at Hareshaw Common and one on Wooler Common. Also, many seemed to be brooding mid month in the Benks Hills area, the Cawfields area, and near Keenley. Potential breeders were noted in another 13 places. The first young were three downy chicks at Annitsford on 25th and three at Druridge Pools on 29th.

**Knot** *Calidris canutus*

Only three records were received: at Cresswell Pond two on 19th and three on 23rd (DM/STH) and one at Holy Island on 5th (MJCo).



**Sanderling** *Calidris alba*

At St Mary's there was a maximum of 154 on 20th (SPP), 110 were at Ross Links on 21st (JMA) and 80 at Cheswick Black Rocks on 26th (MHu). The other records received relate to 29 at Druridge on 14th and four at Snab Point on 11th.

**Purple Sandpiper** *Calidris maritima*

Ten at St Mary's on 13th (JDH) proved to be the top count; eight were at Berwick on 24th and seven at Cheswick Black Rocks on 1st. One to five appeared at Colywell Bay, Hauxley and Stag Rocks.

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*

Most reports came from Grindon Lough with a maximum of eight there on 30th when display was noted (PRM). Elsewhere six at Druridge Pools on 25th, four at Cresswell Pond on 19th and singles at East Chevington, Hauxley and Holy Island.

**Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*

Four reports, conceivably involving the same individual: at Druridge Pools on 25th (IF/IDR/JF) and at East Chevington on 26th-27th (NFO/TF).

**Jack Snipe** *Lymnocyrtus minimus*

One was in St Mary's Wetland on 7th (SPP) and 10th (AC/MSH).

**Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*

Those displaying included ten of 34 at Carraw Farm on 11th (JF/IDR), 14 at Paxhill on 14th, 12 in the Knockburn area, nine at Hammershield, seven at Low Acton Farm (Allendale) on 11th, seven at Rock House Fell (Plenmeller) on 10th and six at Dryburn Moor on 11th (all SJH). Five displayed near Keenley on 11th and five did so in the Benks Hill area on 14th. Display/calling was also noted at Barhaugh Burn, Cawfields, Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother, Langleeford, near Rothbury, Shield on the Wall, Snope Burn and Whitfield Moor. Elsewhere 12 were at West Hartford on 12th, 11 at Druridge Pools on 20th and up to six occasionally at Arcot Pond, Bothal, Bowden Doors, Broomlee Lough, Castron, Capheaton Lough, Castle Island, Cawfields, Cramlington, Cresswell, Doddington, Hauxley, Holywell Pond, Newcastle Great Park Pools and St Mary's.

**Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola*

Singles were found at Thruton Wood on 1st (TRD/JD), Arcot Hall GC on 3rd, West Hartford on 5th (STH *et al.*) and Ulgham on 11th (AT), the latter one roding.

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

Five appeared at Cresswell Pond on 23rd (ADMc) and two were at Grindon Lough on 2nd and 4th (TRD *et al.*). Singles were at Holy Island on 5th, Druridge Pools 5th-7th and 9th (the latter was colour ringed), East Chevington on 8th, Grindon Lough 9th-10th, Branton GP on 24th, Castle Island on 26th and Hauxley and Monks' House Pool on 29th.

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

Hauxley NR held five on 20th and 11 on 25th (HRS) with two on the R Blyth on 18th and two at Druridge Pools on 25th. Singles were noted at Beadnell, Cresswell Pond, Hauxley and Lynemouth Flash and also inland at Hedgeley GP on 25th (IBDa/KDa).

**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*

After early singles at Ellington on 5th (TB) and at Monks' House on 10th (RA) passage was light from 17th with maxima of seven at East Chevington on 21st (EC/JSB) and three at Druridge Pools on 20th and Tynemouth on 22nd. One or two were noted at Bamburgh, Branton GP, Cambois, Hauxley, Holy Island, Howick, Warkworth Lane and West Hartford.

**Curlew** *Numenius arquata*

On the breeding front 17 were in ten territories on Whitfield Moor on 10th (BNR) and 15 were on territory in the Cawfields area on 14th (SJH). Other positive signs of breeding were noted in the Benks Hill area, Broomlee Lough, Carraw Farm, Grindon Lough, Halton Red House, Hareshaw Common, Haydon Bridge, Snope Burn and Walwick. Those on passage included 86 at Cheswick Dunes on 1st (MHu), 60 at Long Nanny on 3rd (PRM), 58 at Backworth on 11th (CGK) and 24 at Boulmer on 6th.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*

The first was one at Long Nanny on 11th (RA) followed next day by two at North Shields Fish Quay and at Ridley Stokoe and one at Snope Burn (DMT/DRW/BRN). It soon became widespread, including five at Haughton Strother on 19th (MR), five at Wooler Water on 25th (JR), six in Upper Coquetdale on 26th and four at Thropton on 27th (TRD/JD). Two or three were noted at Alnham Moor, Bendor, Corbridge, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Doddington, Grindon Lough, Holywell Pond, Jenny Bell's Bridge, QE11 CP, Rothbury, Sharperton, Tasset Bridge and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Singles were at a further ten localities.

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*

One was reported regularly at Haughton Strother 1st-21st (MR) and other singles were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 5th (DRW), Linton Lane on 11th (ACo), Cresswell Pond on 12th (AA/JRT), Bothal Pond on 18th (GB/CGK/LAR) and near West Sleekburn on 26th (GB).

**Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*

The winterer in Budle Bay was noted on five dates to 18th (DGB *et al*) and two were there on 23rd and 29th (TM/DGB). Other singles were at Lynemouth Flash on 24th (MNC) and Bradford Kaims (near Lucker) on 29th (PRM).

**Redshank** *Tringa totanus*

Signs of breeding were noted at Allendale, Cawfields, Dryburn Moor, Paxhill, Plenmeller and Shield on the Wall (SJH) and also at Carraw Farm, Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother and Whitfield Lough (JF/PRM/MR). Up to 18 were present at Grindon Lough and two to eight at the other places mentioned and at another eight potential breeding areas. Migrants at the coast included 254 in the Tweed estuary on 17th (MHu), 180 at St Mary's Wetland on 1st (KWY), 136 in Budle Bay on 12th (CGK) and 76 at Cresswell Pond on 10th. At Longhirst Flash a count of 38 on 15th was unusually high; probably, they had been forced down in heavy fog (GB).

**Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*

Berwick, Little Beach, held a maximum of 34 on 19th (MHu), 20 were at St Mary's on 18th (MT/NT), 17 at North Shields Fish Quay on 12th (DMT) and 15 at Hauxley NR on 18th (HRS). Eight were at Blyth South Harbour on 26th, five at Stag Rocks on 5th and one at Cresswell Pond on 9th.

**Arctic Skua** *Stercorarius parasiticus*

One N at Snab Point on 16th (ADMc) and two N at Hauxley on 18th (HRS).

**Great Skua** *Stercorarius skua*

One flew N at Snab point on 16th (ADMc); next day two went N off Craster and one N at Foxton (AT).

**Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla*

Only two passage movements were noted with 19 adults and six first-summer birds N at Snab Point, Cresswell on 17th in 90 minutes (MH/AA) and 85 N at Hauxley on 18th (HRS). North Shields Fish Quay saw its peak count of the year so far with 32 there on 12th but only a peak of three were noted using the other main loafing site at Blyth South Harbour on 5th (DMT). The Tweed Estuary gull roost continued to draw in birds with a peak of 26 on 1st (MHu). The only other localities to report sightings were Stag Rocks, Bamburgh with 10 on 5th (TRD) and Beadnell with three on 3rd (PRM).

**Black-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

The colony at Rock House Fell, Plenmeller was in full swing with c1,200 noted mid month (SJH). The only other counts over fifty reported were 58 at Chipchase Castle on 1st (PC) and again 58 at Haydon Bridge on 12th (PRM). Otherwise up to 23 found at various localities. The sea roost between Tynemouth and Cullercoats was devoid of birds this month as was Blyth South Harbour with only two found at the Tyne Estuary on 5th (DMT). Of interest was a leucistic individual at Swallow Pond on 8th (SPP).

**Little Gull** *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Passage was slight with four lone individuals at three sites. At Swallow Pond an adult in full breeding plumage on 16th was only noted briefly before being chased off by a Black-headed Gull and a first-summer bird was noted there on 26th (SPP/AC). An adult was also found at East Chevington on 10th (STH) with another adult at Killingworth Lake proving popular as it stayed from 17th to 19th (MSH/GB/IF *et al*).

**Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus*

Numbers reduced further this month with none found after 20th. Two were at East Chevington on 11th (ACo) and two adults at Hauxley landed on an island and stayed for 20 minutes on 20th (JWP). Otherwise single first-winters were found at Holywell Pond on 4th (SPP) and at Newbiggin on 15th (GB).

**Common Gull** *Larus canus*

The peak count noted was 350 at Haughton Strother near Humshaugh on 4th (MR). Other high concentrations noted were 250 at Lanton Mill on 1st (JD) and 130 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 20th (MR). Otherwise up to 40 found at various sites inland. On the coast the peak count at the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay was only five on 12th with none at Blyth South harbour (DMT).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus graelsii*

Well recorded again this month. Budle Bay continued to be the main gathering point with a peak of 60 adults there on 14th (MSH). An impressive 49 gathered at Swallow Pond on 8th all being adults bar two second-winters (SPP). The only other localities to have double figure counts were West Hartford with a peak of 22 on 3rd (LJM), Whitfield Lough with 15 on 12th (BNR) and ten at Jesmond Dene on 12th (MJCo) and also ten at Blyth South Harbour on 18th (DMT). Up to nine were reported at a variety of sites both on the coast and inland.

**Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus argenteus*

The regularly watched area of the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay saw the peak count with 308 noted on 25th (DMT). At the Tweed Estuary 108 were found on a WEBS count on 17th (MHu). Blyth South Harbour peaked at 35 on 26th (DMT) with 37 noted at Castle Island on 19th (DM/STH). Otherwise up to 27 at a variety of sites.

**Iceland Gull** *Larus glaucooides*

An immature on 1st was watched flying inland near Lynemouth Flash on 1st (ADMc). Otherwise sightings were concentrated between 19th and 26th with single first-winters at Warkworth Lane on 19th (ADMc), Old Hartley on 20th (SPP), Holywell Pond on 21st (SPP) and Blyth South Harbour on 26th (DMT).

**Glaucous Gull** *Larus hyperboreus*

Single first-winters were found at Holywell Pond on 4th (SPP) and at the Black Middens near Tynemouth on 22nd (KWY).

**Great Black-backed Gull** *Larus marinus*

Again few reports received with the regularly watched localities showing that birds were still present. 45 were found at the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay on 25th with 3 at Blyth South Harbour on 18th (DMT). At the Tweed Estuary 23 were located on a WEBS count on 17th (MHu). The only other sightings received were six at Castle Island on 11th with two there on 19th (DM/STH) plus two at Longhirst Flash on 11th (DM/GB).

**Little Tern** *Sternula albifrons*

An earlier return by a few days was witnessed at the Long Nanny on 22nd with two present (TM). Further singles were noted by the end of the month with individuals at Guile Point on 26th (DGB) and Holy Island on 29th (PRM).

**Sandwich Tern** *Sterna sandvicensis*

Well reported this month. Passage observations were limited though with 13 N at Newbiggin an hour on 17th (PRM) with 12 N at Hauxley on 18th (HRS). Numbers increased rapidly with 17 at Seahouses on 5th (TRD) rising to 34 at St Mary's on 23rd (MT/NT) and 120 at Holy Island on 24th (STH). Further counts over 20 were noted at Coquet Island with 20 on 11th (TRD/JD) plus 25 at Ross Links on 21st (JMA). Otherwise up to 15 were at many coastal localities from 6th onwards.

**'Commic' Tern** *Sterna hirundo/ Sterna paradisaea*

Four flew E over Ellington in mist on 15th (TB).

**Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo*

Return passage was concentrated in the last week with the first noted at Gosforth Park on 23rd (per SRB). One or two were found over the next few days at Backworth Pond, East Chevington, Hauxley, Horton Grange, St Mary's Island and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Peaks noted were six at Big Waters on 27th (GB) and an impressive 22 at Killingworth Lake on 30th (MJC).

**Arctic Tern** *Sterna paradisaea*

Only two sightings reported with three near Inner Farne on 21st (TM) and 15 at the Long Nanny on 30th (IF).

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

The only movement reported was 150 N at Hauxley on 18th (HRS).

**Guillemot** *Uria aalge*

The single passage movement noted was a marked 170 per hour at Snab Point, Cresswell on 17th (MH). Sightings otherwise were mostly concentrated near the breeding areas with 25 at Beadnell on 3rd (PRM), 24 at Spittal Bay, Berwick on 23rd, and 18 at Cheswick Dunes on 1st and at Cocklawburn on 8th (MHu). The only other observation was of six at Druridge on 14th (KWY).

**Razorbill** *Alca torda*

The only passage observation was of five N at Newbiggin on 30th (AT). Sightings otherwise were again mostly restricted to the far north of the county. Eight were noted at Spittal Bay, Berwick on 23rd with six at Cocklawburn on 8th and four at Cheswick Dunes on 1st (MHu). The only other observation was of two at Druridge on 14th (KWY).

**Puffin** *Fratercula arctica*

Few observations noted with at least five near Coquet Island on 11th (TRD), three at Druridge on 14th (KWY) and two at Seahouses on 5th (TRD).

**Rock Dove / Feral Pigeon** *Columba livia*

64 were counted at North Shields Fish Quay on 4th and 62 were at Blyth South Harbour on 5th (DMT), 40 were at Cresswell on 22nd (MJCo)

**Stock Dove** *Columba oenas*

The highest count was eight at Whitfield Moor on 9th (BNR), five were in Jesmond Dene throughout the month (MJCo). Three were counted in South Gosforth on 9th and Cresswell Pond NR on 11th. Pairs or two's were noted at Arcot Pond, Aydon, Bothal Pond, Debdon, Gosforth Park NR (pair at nest), Haydon Bridge, Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Exhibition Park and Kingston Park), Rothbury, Weetslade Colliery CP, West Hartford and Whitton (Rothbury).

**Woodpigeon** *Columba palumbus*

An atlas tetrad visit at Pit House produced a total of 91 on 17th (PC), 46 were at Acton Farm (Allendale) on 11th, 37 were at Norham on 25th and 34 were at Druridge Pools on 16th. In the Tyne Valley 32 were counted at Haydon Bridge and Newbrough and 31 were in an atlas tetrad at Ancroft Moor on 19th.

**Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

Very few records this month, four (two pair) were at Ancroft on 19th and two were at Nearby Ancroft Moor (JR), one was on Holy Island on 5th and at Hauxley, a single fledged juvenile was caught and ringed on 30th (HRS).

**Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus*

The first returning bird was heard at Debdon on 23rd, apparently being present since 20th according to a local farmer (TRD). The highest count of the month came from Kielder Forest with three heard there on 30th (IFo). Between 24th and the end of the month, singles were heard or seen at Beacon Hill (near Morpeth), Doddington, Eglington, Holystone, Otterburn (Ranges) and Rothbury.

**Barn Owl** *Tyto alba*

Singles were seen at Alnwick, Bamburgh, Cawfields, Chatton, Druridge Links, Holy Island, Ponteland, Ulgham, Wark, West Hartford, Yearle. A road casualty was noted at South Rock on 11th (JCD).

**Little Owl** *Athene noctua*

A pair were reported from the Cawfields area according to a local farmer (per STH) and a second pair were at Startup Farm (Ponteland) on 26th (AHB). Singles were reported from Aydon, Backworth, Dinnington, Doddington, Ellington (Chugdon Wood, all month), Harlow Hill, Ingoe and Matten,

**Tawny Owl** *Strix Aluco*

Three were hooting at Humshaugh on 6th (TWi). Three juveniles were in a nest box at Woolsington on 30th (SRB) and a single juvenile was in a nest at Linton Lane on 19th (ADMc). At Stamfordham, a pair called and attended a nest in a garden throughout the month (EC). Two were also at Melkridge and Ulgham.

**Long-eared Owl** *Asio otus*

On the Farne Islands, a single was in the lighthouse compound on Inner Farne on 21st (TM), on the 29th a single was on the Snook, Holy Island on 29th (PRM).

**Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus*

Two were on Holy Island on 26th, all other records were of singles and came from Beadnell and Long Nanny (Newton), Druridge Pools (on 24th and 29th), East Hartford, Harthope Valley, Plenmeller, West Hartford and Whitfield Moor.



Short-eared Owl  
Long Nanny on 3rd April  
by Paul Massey

**Swift** *Apus apus*

The first returning bird was seen on 25th at Norham (JR), on the 26th, seven were counted at Gosforth Park (MPF) and two were at Bothal Pond (ADMc). About 20 were at Holywell Pond by 27th (MT/NT).

**Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*

Records came from only three locations this month, a single was seen at Haughton Strother on several dates (MR), at Byker and at Warden.

**Hoopoe** *Upupa epops*

One was seen at Great Moor, near the Harthope Valley, on 16th (PM) and another was reported from Nunridding Plantation near Mitford on 26th (LC).

**Green Woodpecker** *Picus viridis*

At least five yaffling males were noted in the Harthope Valley/Carey Burn on 2nd (MJC) with one to tow noted there on other dates. Two were yaffling at Belsay Hall on 20th (LR/KR) and two were at Crowden Hill near Ulgham on 28th. Singles were noted at Arcot, Bothal, Corbridge, Craggside, Debdon, Ordley, Riding Mill, Rothbury, Simonburn, Thrunton Woods, Whitfield, Woolsington, Wylam and Yearle

**Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major*

At Grindon Farm in Tynedale, at least four visited feeders throughout the month (JF), on the 26th, four were heard drumming at Howick Hall (JAR). Three drumming birds were also heard at Prestwick Carr on 4th and two at Belsay Hall on 20th. Three were noted at Gosforth Park NR and Haydon Bridge, twos were at Earsdon (North Tyneside), Eshott, Rothbury and Walwick.

**Skylark** *Alauda arvensis*

65 singing males were counted on a farm survey at Carraw Farm on Hadrian's Wall on 11th (JF/IDR). In the Cresswell Pond area, 21 were counted on a timed atlas visit on 22nd (MJCo), 16 were in the Shield on the Wall area on 11th and on a 25 mile cycle ride between Ponteland and Ingoe 16 were also counted. Five to eleven were counted at Ancroft area, Beacon Hill, Druridge Links, Harthope Valley, Howick, Rubbingstob Hill, Whitley Bay (St. Mary's Island) and Whitfield Moor.

**Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia*

Large gatherings were noted at Killingworth Lake with 60 there on 6th (GB), 60 were also at Rothbury, on the R. Coquet on 26th (TRD), about 50 were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 23rd, 46 were at Haughton Strother on 13th and 40 were at East Chevington on 8th. 20-30 were noted at Arcot Pond, Hauxley NR, Hexham, Sharperton Bridge and Wark.



**Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*

About 40 per hour flew N at Spittal Cliffs on 20th (MHu). The highest count of the month, of about 50, came from Killingworth Lake on 24th (LJM), about 30 were on Holy Island on 26th (ADM) and ten were at Lynemouth Flash on 17th and Hauxley NR on 18th. Many observers recorded their 'first sightings' in their localities between 1st and 12th. On 10th, one was noted at Bothal Pond with quite rufous underparts, which the observer considered reminiscent of the S sp *transitiva* (JSB).



Two views of Swallows on wires at Backworth  
Photographed by Chris Knox

**House Martin** *Delichon urbica*

After last months very early arrival, early returning birds were noted at Ross (PRM) and Berwick-upon-Tweed on 7th (MH), East Chevington on 8th and Cresswell Pond on 9th. The highest count of the month came from Killingworth Lake with about 20 there on 24th (LJM) and up to ten were at Holy Island on 26th.

**Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis*

A very early returning bird was noted on the coast at Beadnell on 1st (JPL). At Kielder, one was back on territory, singing, on 5th (CGK/PS). Two coastal records came from Cresswell Pond on 23rd and Holy Island on 25th. Birds were back in breeding areas at Shield on the Wall on 11th, Sharperton on 13th, Debdon on 23rd, Harthope Valley on 25th and Hexhamshire on 30th.

**Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis*

At least 70, presumed migrants, fed along the dam at Catcleugh Reservoir on 4th (PRM), at least 70 were also counted on a farm survey at Carraw Farm on 11th (JF/IDR). 47 were at Whitfield Moor on 12th, 44 at Barhaugh Burn on 26th and 32 in Upper Coquetdale on 16th. On the Coast up to 21 were at Druridge Links on 9th with 20 there on 1st.

**Rock Pipit** *Anthus petrosus*

Two were at Beadnell on 3rd (PRM) and Berwick on 22nd (TRD/JD). Singles, all singing males were at Seahouses Harbour on 18th, Dunstanburgh Castle on 20th, Bamburgh (Stag Rocks) and Cullernose Point on 23rd (all TM).

**Water Pipit** *Anthus spinoletta*

The wintering bird at Whitley Bay (St. Mary's Island) was noted on 2nd, now almost in summer plumage (MSH) and a summer plumage turned up at Lynemouth (Bewick Drift Flash) between 6th and 9th (IF/AT/NFO/IDR)

**Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava flavissima*

The first returning birds were at Cresswell Pond, three males and Prestwick Carr, a male on 11th (ADM *et al*), Cresswell Pond continued to attract one to five for the remainder of the month. Another early returning bird was at Haughton Strother on 13th. The highest count of the month came from Whittle Dene Reservoirs, where up to eight were counted on 17th (PCF *et al*). Away from Whittle Dene and Cresswell Pond, Corbridge attracted three on 23rd as did Haughton Strother on 30th. One or two were at Berwick-upon-Tweed Golf Course, East Chevington, Halton, Hauxley NR, Newbrough, Seahouses (Monk's House Pool) and Widdrington.

**Blue-headed Wagtail** *Motacilla flava flava*

On 11th, a male was at Cresswell Pond (ADMc) and again on 23rd. Singles were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs (EC/JSB) and Newton Church on 17th (CP).

**Black-headed Wagtail** *Motacilla flava feldegg*

An adult male was on Holy Island on the Rocket Field on 26th (SR/AH).



Black-headed Wagtail at Holy Island  
Photographed by Colin Pears

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*

Very well reported this month with 56 individual records! The highest count came from the Harthope Valley with eight (four pairs) noted there on 2nd (MJC), four were in the Ingram Valley on 14th (AT) and three were in Jesmond Dene on 7th and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 20th. Pairs were noted at Bothal, Chirdonburn Bridge, Glen Ridley, Haughton Strother, Low Carrieth, Netherton, Newcastle, Quickenincote, Rothbury and Shillmoor.

**Pied Wagtail** *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

Data from the regular roost site at Tapee Fen, Berwick-upon-Tweed was as follows (PJ):

Date	Number	Comments
01/04/09	41	sunrise calm with low cloud & some mist.
02/04/09	23	sunrise calm, misty. wags mostly >NW
04/04/09	50	sunset wags bathing & drinking on sidings.
04/04/09	21	sunrise calm with mist over sea
05/04/09	120	sunrise cold, visib. sharp, wind from NW.
05/04/09	80	sunset wags congregate NE of fen (puddles)
06/04/09	21	sunrise total low cloud cover.
07/04/09	50	sunset clear and cool with almost full moon.
07/04/09	11	sunrise heavy rain thru night. Merlin present.
08/04/09	59	sunrise cold n cloudy with strong S/SW wind.
14/04/09	60	sunset
16/04/09	40	sunset
20/04/09	20	sunset
22/04/09	0	sunset clear sky, chilly.
24/04/09	0	sunset Haar. puddles NE of fen dried up now.
25/04/09	0	sunset 3 swallows circling. Sparrowhawk.
26/04/09	0	sunset calm, clear, cool. 6 starlings.
30/04/09	0	sunset songthrush with beakful S end fen.

Elsewhere the highest count came from Upper Coquetdale, where 22 counted were counted on 16th (MT/NT), also in the Cheviot Hills, 12 were in the Harthope valley on 2nd. 12 were also at Catcleugh Reservoir on 4th, Bamburgh on 14th and Holy Island on 26th.

**White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba alba*

Cresswell Pond attracted variable numbers between 11th and 19th, peaking at 19 on 13th (TB/BBi). Three were at Lynemouth (Bewick Drift Flash) on 3rd. Away from Lynemouth and Cresswell singles were noted at Beadnell, Boulmer, Druridge Links, East Chevington, Grindon Lough, Holy Island, Linden Hall, Low Newton-by-the-Sea, Spittal, Tynemouth Park and Whitley Bay (St. Mary's Island).

**Waxwing** *Bombycilla garrulus*

Newcastle and North Tyneside attracted most of the flocks this month. A flock at Shiremoor present between 3rd and 12th peaked at 55 at Shiremoor Metro Station on 11th (JDH). A Jesmond Dene Garden held a flock between 1st and 20th, which peaked at 45 between 11th and 13th (MPF). 34 were noted in Whitley Bay on 3rd (MT/NT/ASJ) and 18 in Exhibition park, Newcastle-upon-Tyne on 1st. In the north of the county, 16 passed through East Ord on 8th.

**Dipper** *Cinclus cinclus*

Six (three pairs) were in the Harthope Valley on 2nd (MJC), three were in Rothbury on 28th and two were at Warden on 2nd.

**Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Newbrough held 15 on 25th (PRM), atlas workers counted eight at Chipchase and Pit House. Six were in Jesmond Dene throughout the month and six were in the Unthank tetrad on 25th. Four were caught and ringed at Druridge Links on 26th (JF/IDR)

**Dunnock** *Prunella modularis*

A Walbottle Garden held six on 12th (LR/KR), Five were at Hauxley (three caught and ringed) (HRS) and four were in the Ancroft Moor tetrad on 19th. Three were caught and ringed at Druridge Pools on 26th (JF/ID)

**Robin** *Erithacus rubecula*

An Atlas count of 15 was returned from a total of five tetrads in the Ancroft-Norham area on 19th and 25th (JR). 13 were reported at Newbrough on 25th (PRM), Seven at Chesters House and Walled Garden on 12th and six at Chipchase Castle on 1st. Elsewhere four to five were noted at Belsay Hall, Jesmond Dene, Pit House and Tritlington, and one to two at Druridge Pools and South Gosforth. The breeding birds reported last month in a Kenton garden nest box were feeding young during the month.

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Two were reported from Holy Island on 17th (MJC) and one bird here on 18th-19th (CP). Others were noted at Newton church on 19th and Craster harbour on 20th (NNBC/PT)

**Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

The first were two singing males at Black Heddon on 13th (ASJ). Birds were well reported during the final week of the month, the highest count eight singing males at Halton Shields on 26th (ALT). Elsewhere there were three at Debdon (Rothbury) on 23rd and near Matfen on 27th. One to two were also reported from potential breeding areas at Abshiel-Beacon Hill road, Cartington, Harthope Valley, Haughton, Haughton Strother (Humshaugh), Hedley Hill near Linden Hall, Hexham (Letah Wood), Kirkheaton, Parson Shields and Stamfordham

**Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra*

An early male was found at Bamburgh Dunes on 18th (BRS).

**Stonechat** *Saxicola torquata*

A pair at Druridge Links had a nest containing three young by 26th (IDR/JF). Three males were at Beadnell on 3rd and Druridge Links on 9th (PRM/IDR), and three's were also noted at Bamburgh GC, Holy Island and West Chevington. Pairs were reported from Backworth, Craggside, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Howick, Newbiggen, Newcastle Great Park Pools, Prestwick Carr, Seaton Sluice and West Hartford, and two's also from Benks Hill, Ross, Rubbingstob Hill and St Marys Island. Single birds were noted at a further eight inland and five coastal sites.



Stonechat at Druridge Links  
by Iain Robson  
20th April

**Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe*

An influx occurred on Holy Island from 24th-26th with a minimum of 21 on the latter date (ADM *et.al.*). Smaller numbers were noted at other coastal sites during the same period, including ten+ at Cresswell Pond, and seven at Druridge Links on 29th. Elsewhere six were at Backworth also on 29th and at East Chevington on 11th, and five at Holywell Pond on 12th and Buckhams Burn on 5th. Counts of three to four were received from coastal sites at Berwick, Dunstanburgh, Howick, Lynemouth flash and Seaton Sluice and inland at Barhaugh Burn, Doddington, Parsons Shield, Upper Coquetdale and Whitfield Moor. One to two were noted at a further 27 localities, including two *Greenland leucorhoa race* birds at St Mary's Island on 29th.



Wheatear at Druridge Links  
by Iain Robson 25th April

**Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus*

A coastal migrant was at Cresswell Pond briefly on 24th before flying off inland (JSB). Inland birds were noted in typical upland breeding areas. In the Harthope Valley a pair were at Hawsen Burn on 1st (MT/NT), increasing to three (two male / one female) on 14th (EC), two (a pair) at Langleeford Hope on 20th (TRD/JD) and a singing male at Carey Burn on 2nd and 9th (MJC/AJ). In the south west three males were at Sipton Burn on 17th (EC/JSB) two on Whitfield Moor on 12th and a pair at Parsons Shield on 26th (BNR).



**Blackbird** *Turdus merula*

A number of sizeable counts were presented as Atlas work recommenced. 48 were counted during a two hour TTV at Southfield (Cramlington) on 25th (LJM), 26 at Haydon Bridge on 12th and 24 at Newbrough on 25th (PRM) and a total of 24 in the Ancroft area on 19th and 25th (JR). Elsewhere there were 12 at Tritlington, nine at Chesters House and Walled Garden and five, (a pair feeding fledged young) at Gosforth Garden Village. One to four were noted at a further five localities, including at Hauxley, an interesting retrap from 2002.

**Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris*

There were some sizeable inland flocks during the first two weeks, followed by a noticeable decline after 18th. Highest counts were 250+ at Otterburn Mill on 5th (NFO), 200 at Stamfordham on 13th (ASJ), c.200 at Wark Common on 4th (JR) and 150-200 at Big Waters on 3rd (SPP). 100-175 were reported from Cambo, Harthope Valley, Heddou-on-the-Wall, Longhorsley and Meldou. Smaller flocks included 33-76 at Aydon, Buckhams Burn, Carraw Farm, Grindon Lough, Halton Red House, Kilham, Middleton Hall, Prestwick Carr, Walwick and Whitfield. The final report was a single bird near Biddlestone on 27th.

**Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos*

The highest counts were from the south west where 14 singing males were reported from Haydon Bridge on 12th and a further 14 from Walwick on 18th (PRM). Five were found in three Ancroft tetrads on 19th and four at Chesters House and Walled Garden on 12th. One to three were noted at a further 12 localities, including a pair feeding young in a nest at Kenton during the final two weeks of the month.

**Redwing** *Turdus iliacus*

100+ were at Otterburn Mill on 5th (NFO) and 70 at Wark Common on 4th (JR). Elsewhere 20-40 were noted at Buckhams Burn, Cambo and Yearle from 3rd-5th. The only late reports were of six at Longhirst Hall on 20th and one at Byrness on 30th, the latter perhaps more significant than may first appear.

**Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus*

Eight were at Parson Shields on 26th, five at Thrunton on 1st, four in Upper Coquetdale on 16th and three at Newbrough on 25th. All other reports referred to one or two birds from 13 localities, including birds carrying nest material at Holywell Dene on 27th and a pair gathering food for young at Fenham on 14th.

**Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella naevia*

One at Backworth on 11th was the first arrival (SPP) followed by singles at Prestwick Carr and West Hartford the following day (PCF/LJM). At the latter site a total of five territories were occupied by 27th. Birds were widespread by the final week of the month with up to five singing males at Druridge Pools on 26th and 29th (IDR/JF) and four at Chevington Pools on 23rd (ADMc). Four "reeling" birds were heard at Arcot Pond on 25th where approximately ten territories were identified in the Arcot Pond-Beaconhill area (STH/LJM/DM). Two were heard at Newham Fen on 19th and 24th and single birds at A19 (Earsdon turn off), Alnmouth Common, Backworth, Bamburgh GC, Broomlee Lough, Castle Island, Cresswell Pond, Drift Inn pools (Seaton Burn), Gosforth Park NR, Holy Island, Howick, Kielder Forest, Lynemouth flash, Newcastle Great Park Pools, Newton Pool, Prestwick Carr, St Mary's Island, Swallow Pond and West Sleekburn.

Grasshopper Warbler reeling at East Chevington

9th April

by Chris Knox

**Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

One at Big Waters on 19th was the first (GB), followed by another at Chevington Pools on 20th (ADMc). At the latter site numbers had increased to nine singing birds by 25th (IF) and up to six were at Backworth by 29th (CGK). Two to three were reported from Arcot Pond, Holywell Pond and Prestwick Carr during the final week of the month when singles were also noted at Branton GP, Coanwood Pond, Cocklawburn, Doddington, Druridge Pools, Hauxley NR and Holy Island.



**Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Three singing males at Gosforth Park on 26th was the only record (MPF).

**Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla*

Birds were first reported from 5th, when a singing male was at Eshott (MSH), followed by further singles at Dilston and Ross on 7th and Hexham on 8th (RB/MB/PRM/AJR). Nine at Riding Mill on 25th was the highest count received (BNR). Up to eight were reported at Holywell Dene from 22nd (MT/NT) and five at Haydon Bridge on 12th and Norham on 25th. Three to four were noted at Belsay Hall, Big Waters, Castle Island, Cramlington, Druridge Pools, Farnley, Gosforth Park, Letah Wood (Hexham), Marden Quarry, Morpeth, Newbrough and Wooler Water and one to two at a further 30 localities.

**Garden Warbler** *Sylvia borin*

Single birds were reported from East Ord on 24th (MHu), Wooler Water on 25th (JR) and Newcastle Town Moor on 30th (PCF).

**Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca*

A very early migrant was singing at Lynemouth Sewage Works on 11th (DM/GB), followed by another at Wylam on 19th (DRW). Two were reported from Arcot Pond on 25th, Druridge Pools on 29th and near Holywell on 27th, and from 20th singles at East Chevington, Hauxley, Holy Island, Holywell Pond, Linton Pond, Marden Quarry, Newcastle Great Park Pools, Pegswood and St Mary's Island and Wetland.



Whitethroat at Prestwick Carr  
27th April  
by Alan Janes

**Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis*

Very well reported this month particularly in the Holywell Pond area where numbers increased from one on 24th to nine by 29th (ASJ *et al.*). One singing at Linton Pond on 18th was the first arrival (CDH), followed by another at Holywell Dene on 22nd (MT/NT). Up to three were reported from Arcot Pond, Druridge Pools and Prestwick Carr and two at Backworth, Cocklawburn, Cramlington (Whitelea Chase), Ellington, Startup and Unthank. One of the Cramlington birds was already collecting nest material by 26th. Elsewhere single birds were noted at Alnmouth Common, Bamburgh Dunes, Carter Moor, Cramlington (Valley Park), High Chibburn, Holy Island, Linton Pond, Stephenson Railway Museum, St Mary's Island and West Sleekburn.

**Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*

Numbers at Holywell Dene rose from seven in March to a peak of 15 by 15th (MT/NT). 12 singing males were heard at Beacon Hill on 27th (ASJ) and seven at Farnley on 8th (RB/MB), Haydon Bridge on 12th (PRM) and Riding Mill on 25th (BNR). At least six were heard at Chipchase and Eshott on 1st and Newbrough on 25th and four to five at Cramlington (Valley Park), Harthope Valley (Carey Burn), Howford Banks, Jesmond Dene and Walwick. Passage birds were noted on Holy Island from 7th, with a peak here of four on 29th. Count of three were received for Ancroft, Arcot Pond, Brierdene (Whitley Bay), Gosforth Park, Jesmond Vale-Heaton Park and Linton Pond. One to two were noted at a further 33 inland sites and on or near the coast at Bamburgh Dunes, Druridge Bay CP, Druridge Pools, East Ord, Hauxley NR & RS, Howick, Marden Quarry, Ross, St Mary's Island and Warkworth Lane Ponds.

**Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus*

The first arrivals were on the coast on 7th, when two were at Holy Island (PRM) and singles at Druridge Pools (TB) and St Mary's Island / Wetland (TF/MT/NT/SPP). At Beacon Hill numbers increased from 31 on 25th to 40 by 27th (ASJ). 33 singing males were heard during a two hour TTV at Rothbury on 26th (TRD) and 31+ on a 24 mile cycle ride from Morpeth to Chevington, via Stobswood on 12th (ADM), the latter observer also reporting 19 in seven miles from Morpeth to Beacon Hill on 19th. Counts of ten-18 were also received for Barhaugh Burn, Druridge Pools, Hauxley (10 on 25th), Haydon Bridge, Holy Island (13 on 24th), Holywell area and Prestwick Carr, and five to eight from Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Chesterhill, Corbridge, East Chevington, Gosforth Park, Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother (Humshaugh), Linton Pond, Parson Shield, Pit House, Shield on the Wall, Sweethope Lough and Walwick. One to four were reported from a further 43 widespread localities.

**Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus*

It was yet another poor month for this species. Up to five were noted in Jesmond Dene throughout the month (MJCo) and three at Ancroft Moor and Chesters House and Walled Garden. Four passage birds were on Holy Island on 7th and singles at Cresswell Pond on 10th and Hauxley on 18th. Elsewhere the only report was a single at Cramlington.

**Firecrest** *Regulus ignicapillus*

A female was discovered at St Mary's Island on 13th (JDH/AC/MSH).

**Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula hypoleuca*

The first arrival was a singing male at Wooler Water on 25th (JR), followed by singles at Allen Banks on 26th and 29th (AA/AJR), and two at Letah Wood (Hexham) on 30th (RMH). A migrant was in the Vicar's garden, Holy Island on 29th (PRM)

**Long-tailed Tit** *Aegithalos caudatus*

Up to five were reported from Jesmond Dene West on 12th (MJCo), three at Haydon Bridge and one to two at a further 15 inland localities.

**Blue Tit** *Cyanistes caeruleus*

The highest counts were all from the south west. 31 were at Newbrough on 25th, 19 at Haydon Bridge and Walwick on 12th and 18th respectively (PRM), 12 at Chipchase Castle on 1st (PC), nine at Pit House and Riding Mill and seven at Chester House and Walled Garden. In addition seven were reported from Ancroft Moor and Ancroft North Farm and one to three from a further six localities.

**Great Tit** *Parus major*

Up to 16 frequented Jesmond Dene throughout the month (MJCo), 13 were counted at Haydon Bridge on 12th and ten at Newbrough on 25th (PRM). One to six were reported from a further six localities.

**Coal Tit** *Periparus ater*

The highest counts were seven at both Chesters House and Walled Garden and Jesmond Dene on 12th (ALT/MJCo). One to four were reported from a further five localities.

**Willow Tit** *Poecile montanus*

Birds visiting gardens during the month included up to three at Linden Hall and one at Gosforth (NFO/AHB). Elsewhere two were at Beacon Hill, Dinnington (visiting a possible nest site) and Felton Lane, and singles at Linton Pond, Prestwick Carr and Stobswood.

**Marsh Tit** *Poecile palustris*

Up to three were reported from Beacon Hill during the month (ADM/ASJ), and singles at Haughton Castle, a Linden Hall garden, Longhorsley, Prudhoe and Rothbury. A report of a bird at Holy Island on 19th is a potential first for the island (CP).

Marsh Tit is a target species for 2009. Please report all records for the species.

**Nuthatch** *Sitta europae*

Five at Chesters House and Walled Garden on 12th was the highest count submitted (ALT). Three were noted nearby at Walwick on 18th (PRM) and at Bolam Lake on 2nd and Jesmond Dene on 19th (PCF/MJCo). Elsewhere one to two were reported from Alnwick, Beacon Hill, Belsay Hall, Bothal Castle, Bywell, Darras Hall, Farnley, Hexham (Letah Wood), Holystone, Holywell Dene, Howick Hall, Humshaugh, Morpeth, Newbrough, Newcastle (Armstrong and Heaton Parks), Norham, Northumberland Park (North Shields), Ordley, Parsons Shield, Pit House, Riding Mill, Rothbury (Pauperhaugh Bridge and Whitton), Snope Burn, Spindlestone, Stannington and Wark and more unusually on the butts at St Mary's Island on 3rd (MT/NT).

**Tree Creeper** *Certhia familiaris*

Six (three pairs) were identified at Beacon Hill on 27th (ASJ) and five singing males in the Harthope Valley on 20th (TRD/JD). One to two were noted at a further 22 potential breeding localities.

**Jay** *Garrulus glandarius*

Six were noted at Wylam on 19th (DRW) and five mobbed a perching Sparrowhawk at Gosforth Park NR on 12th (MSH). Three were at Longhirst Hall on 1st and twos at Allen Banks, Bothal Woods, Bassington NR (Cramlington) where this species was considered unusual, Howick, Linden Hall, Morpeth, Ridley Stokoe, Twizell and Walwick. Elsewhere single birds were reported from a further nine localities including Northumberland Park (North Shields) where this was the observers first record for the site in 50 years of bird watching. In addition there was a very interesting record from a fishing boat in the North Sea, 50 miles out of North Shields early in the month (DMT).

**Magpie** *Pica pica*

Eight were reported from a Walbottle garden on 25th (KR/LR) and up to seven in Jesmond Dene throughout the month (MJCo). One to two were also at Cresswell Pond, South Gosforth and Tritlington.

**Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula*

The highest counts received were 28 at Chipchase, 23 at Tritlington and 19 at Norham, smaller numbers reported from eight further localities.

**Rook** *Corvus frugilegus*

Rookery counts included 58 nests in Castle Wood (Bamburgh), 48 at Newbrough, 46 at Cramlington Hall, 33 at Holywell Dene, ca.30 nests at Norham, ca.20 nests at Ancroft and six in St Thomas's Churchyard (Newcastle City Centre).

**Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone*

19 were counted at West Hartford on 12th (LJM) and the Tyne Estuary up to North Shield Fish Quay on 19th (DMT). Elsewhere one to nine were reported from a further 13 localities.

**Hooded Crow** *Corvus cornix*

One flew S over the reed bed at Cresswell Pond on 11th (TRD/JD).

**Raven** *Corvus corax*

Maximum numbers were in the north of the County. Six were at Cottonshope Head (Cheviot Hills) on 5th, when four were also at Linbrigg in the Upper Coquet Valley (JR). Five at Berwick Old Moor on 6th included three young in a nest (SRB) and four were at Kielder on 5th (CGK/PS). Elsewhere one to two were reported from Bakethin Reservoir / Raptor Viewpoint, Grindon Lough, Hawsen Burn (Harthope Valley), Lord's Rigg (Whitfield), Melkridge, Simonside and Snope Common(Whitfield).

**Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*

115 were feeding on Newcastle Town Moor on 30th (PCF) and 40-50 at Cambo and Wark Common on 4th (JR). Two to 15 were reported from a further ten localities.

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*

51 were in the Burradon / Dudley area on 19th (LJM), 18 at Benks Hill (north of Haltwhistle) on 14th (SJH) and 17 in a Corbridge garden on 9th (MR). Elsewhere one to 11 were reported from a further 11 localities.



A cock House Sparrow at St. Mary's  
by Norman Tuck

**Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*

Well reported from the usual areas. 30+ were at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) all month (TB), a total of 28 in the Matfen area on 21st (EC) and 22 at Warkworth Lane Ponds on 17th (PRM). Elsewhere c.15 was reported near Longhorsley (ADM), up to 14 at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh), 12 at Molesden and eight at Blakemoor Farm (Cresswell). Three breeding pairs at Bothal Pond included two pairs using nest boxes and at Blagdon birds were seen entering a hole in a roof with nest material on 13th. Counts of three to six were received from Backworth, Blagdon, Bothal Bank Top, Corbridge, Dinnington, East Coldside, Meldon, Stamfordham and West Moor and one to two at Alnham, Ancroft, Ancroft North Farm, Black Heddon, Fulbeck, Prestwick Carr, Tritlington, Unthank and Wark.

Tree Sparrow is a target species for 2009. Please report all records for the species.

**Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs*

By far the highest count came from Grindon Farm where 80+ were on feeders all month (JF). 49 were reported from nearby Newbrough on 25th (PRM) and 35 at Haydon Bridge and Tritlington on 12th and 18th respectively (PRM/MJCo). 30 were noted in Kielder Forest on 2nd and 25 in Jesmond Dene on 19th. One to 14 were reported from a further 12 localities.

**Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla*

At Corbridge 14 in the observer's garden on 9th declined to one by 19th (MR). Up to eight were reported from a Rothbury garden, where the last birds were seen on 12th (TRD/JD). Three were noted at Aydon (Corbridge) on 15th (RB/MB) and two at Eglingham until 19th (DGB/JBe). Single birds were also reported from Addycombe (Rothbury), Beacon Hill, Grindon Farm and Chugdon Wood (Ellington). The final record of the year was a returning migrant on Holy Island on 29th (PRM).

**Greenfinch** *Carduelis chloris*

20+ at Bamburgh on 14th was the largest gathering (BRS) followed by 15 at Ancroft and 13 at Ancroft Moor during Atlas work on 19th (JR). Elsewhere there were 12 at Tritlington, up to ten in a Walbottle garden and one to nine at a further nine localities including two at Grindon Farm where this species is considered unusual.

**Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis*

The highest counts received were 20 at Brierdene (Whitley Bay) on 27th (MNC), 17 at Shieldfield (Newcastle) on 28th (GB), 16 at Grindon Farm, 14 at Ancroft and Walwick, 13 at Ancroft North Farm, 12 at Swallow Pond and 11 at Stobswood. One to nine were reported from a further 14 localities.

**Siskin** *Carduelis spinus*

40+ were at Grindon Farm on 27th (JF) and 30+ at Lemmington Hall all month (JMA/PHa) and at Aydon near Corbridge on 15th (RB/MB). Smaller flocks included 18+ at Wark (North Tyne) on 11th, 16+ at Sweethope Lough on 13th, 13-14 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 12th and ten to 12 at Eglington, and Walwick. Light coastal passage was observed at Bamburgh where 6+ flew N. on 11th and two N on 14th and Holy Island where a single bird flew W. on 7th. Elsewhere one to seven were noted at a further 27 widespread localities including gardens at Alnwick, Corbridge, East Ord, Longbenton, Monkseaton, South Gosforth and Walbottle.

**Linnet** *Carduelis cannabina*

Some sizeable flocks were still to be found on the coast, the largest of which was 100 on fields at Stag Rocks on 11th (MR). 70+ were at Holy Island (Chare Ends) on 29th, 42 at Beadnell on 3rd (PRM) and 30 at Howick on 19th (JAR). Smaller coastal gatherings included 20 at Druridge Links and Ross and inland at Ordley, 12 at Norham and ten at Woodhorn Flash. One to four were reported from a further ten localities.

**Twite** *Carduelis flavirostris*

The only flock reported this month was in the Hemscotthill Links / Druridge Links area where 70+ on 9th declined to 15 by the 11th (MSH/DM/GB/IDR).

**Redpoll (sp.)**

Single Redpolls, not specifically identified to species flew W. over Big Waters on 10th and over Sweethope on 12th (GB).

**Lesser Redpoll** *Carduelis cabaret*

A return to breeding localities was apparent, as most records were from traditional upland areas. 14+ at Sweethope Lough on 13th was the largest gathering (PRM) followed by 12 at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 30th (MR) and 11 at Fell Cottages (Slaley) on 21st (RMH). Six were found at Broomlee Lough on 26th and up to three at Fontburn Reservoir on 12th. Three passage birds visited feeders in a Corbridge garden for one day only on 6th and one to two were also reported from Allen Banks, Beacon Hill, Castron, Craggside, Grindon Lough, Harthope Valley, Haydon Bridge, Holystone, Newbrough, Rothbury, Thropton, Walwick and Wooler.

**Common Redpoll** *Carduelis flammea*

A single bird possibly of this species was reported from Eglington on 27th (DGB/JBe)

**Crossbill** *Loxia curvirostra*

15 were at Craggside on 30th (JMA) and two males at Hepple Whitefield on 5th (TRD). Elsewhere were singles at Debdon (near Rothbury), Hollybush (Hexham) and Simonside Forest.

**Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Three pairs were found at Beacon Hill on 12th (AJ) and two pairs at Tyne Riverside CP (Newburn) and at Rothbury (PCF/TRD). One to two were noted at a further 20 widespread inland sites including in the north at Ancroft, Castron, Holystone and Spindleston, west as far as Haydon Bridge and at a number of sites in the south east of the County.

**Yellowhammer** *Emberiza citrinella*

Atlas work in the Matfen area produced a count of 33 (15 males and nine pairs) on 27th (EC). 15+ were noted at Bamburgh on 14th (BRS) and 14 singing males on a cycle route from Ponteland – Black Heddon on 13th (ASJ). On the coast 12 were at Boulmer on 6th and ten at Howick on 3rd, while ten were also at Unthank on 25th. Counts of seven to eight were received for Ancroft, Ancroft Moor, Ancroft North Farm and Norham and five to six at Arcot Pond and Tritlington. One to four were noted at a further 13 localities.



**Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus*

On the coast up to 16 were at Holy Island on 29th (PRM) and 15+ at Bamburgh Dunes on 14th (BRS). A return to breeding area was evident with for example 14 at Arcot Pond by 11th (DM), eight at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 20th (MR), seven at Big Waters on 1st (IF) and seven singing males at St Mary's Island also on 1st (ASJ). The maximum count at Druridge Pools was five on 13th, and five were also at Norham on 25th. Three to four were reported from Ancroft Moor, Bothal Barns, Carraw Farm, Howick, Ross and Upper Coquetdale and one to two from a further five coastal and nine inland localities.



Male and female Reed Buntings  
Left at Backworth by Chris Knox and  
Right at Druridge Links by Iain Robson on 13th April

**Corn Bunting** *Emberiza calandra*

The only report was a singing bird north of Linden Hall on several dates during the month (NFO).

**ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN****Escapes****Bar-headed Goose** *Anser indicus*

The bird present last month at Hauxley stayed until at least the 25th (HRS).

**Lesser Snow Goose** *Anser caerulescens*

One at Hedgeley GP was found on 21st and stayed to at least 23rd (NNBC).

**Red-tailed Hawk** *Buteo jamaicensis*

One soaring over Barrow Scar near Alwinton on 26th (JD) was presumably the long staying individual last reported in 2007.

**Hybrids****Canada Goose x Greylag Goose** *Branta canadensis x Anser anser*

One of these frequent hybrids was at Hauxley from 6th to at least 18th (HRS).

**Ring-necked Duck x Tufted Duck** *Aythya collaris x Aythya fuligula*

An interesting hybrid male was noted at Hauxley from 4th to 8th (HRS)

**Birds of Unknown Origin****Rose-ringed Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri*

A single bird was still being seen in the Ponteland area where one flew towards Prestwick from Ponteland on 20th (PCF).

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Those observers marked with an asterisk after their name(s) have submitted records online using the club spreadsheet, copies are available by emailing Dick Myatt at [dick@dickmyatt.co.uk](mailto:dick@dickmyatt.co.uk).

### **Apologies for any accidental omissions**

### **BULLETIN COMPILATION AND PRODUCTION**

This bulletin was compiled by Lindsay McDougall (Swans to Geese, Game birds, Divers to Herons), Graeme Bowman (Ducks), Trevor Blake (Birds of Prey to Rails), Ian Forsyth (Waders to Skuas), Tim Dean (Gulls to Auks, Escapes, Hybrids and Unknown Origin, List of Contributors, Highlights), Iain Robson (Doves to Dunnock), Mike Richardson (Robin to Warblers and Flycatchers to Buntings), Julie Roper/Dan Turner (WeBS Coastal Counts) and Steve Holliday (WeBS Inland Counts).

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Distributed by Alan Watson [apusx@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:apusx@blueyonder.co.uk)

### **RECORD SUBMISSION**

**E-mail:** Members are encouraged to e-mail their records on an Excel-style spreadsheet. Please e-mail Dick Myatt at [dick@dickmyatt.co.uk](mailto:dick@dickmyatt.co.uk) for a copy of the standard spreadsheet and other details.

**Cards:** Please send all record cards to Tim Dean, 2 Knocklaw Park, Rothbury NE65 7PW, to arrive on, or preferably before, the 8th of the month following that in which the records were collected. Please write cards legibly to ensure that your sightings are correctly recorded.

**Location names and Grid references:** The use of standard location names and the inclusion of grid references greatly increases the value of records in subsequent analyses. A 1km square grid reference is the ideal e.g. NY8067 for Grindon Lough, but 2km square references (Tetrads) are also acceptable e.g. NY86D in this case. A list of localities and their tetrad grid references (Tetrad/Locality List) can be downloaded from the 'Resources & Downloads' section of the Club website at <http://www.ntbc.org.uk> – the use of these names, wherever possible, would be highly appreciated.

### **PHOTOGRAPHS AND ILLUSTRATIONS**

Please keep submitting your articles, photographs, sketches and illustrations for the bulletin. Thanks again to those who have supplied the excellent photographs.

Please send to Steve Barrett at [Sscmagpie@aol.com](mailto:Sscmagpie@aol.com)

### **ELECTRONIC BULLETIN**

The NTBC bulletin can be received electronically or as hard copy. The electronic bulletin arrives earlier than the printed version, it is in colour and we save all that printing and stamps. Ask for an e-mailed bulletin from [jo.bentley@waitrose.com](mailto:jo.bentley@waitrose.com).

### **MEMBERSHIP**

For membership enquiries please contact [jo.bentley@waitrose.com](mailto:jo.bentley@waitrose.com).

### **NTBC WEBSITE**

The excellent club website is available at [www.ntbc.org.uk](http://www.ntbc.org.uk). Chris Knox is the link person to the club committee for the website and you can contact him at [christopher.knox@o2.co.uk](mailto:christopher.knox@o2.co.uk)

### **BIRDING SITES IN NORTHUMBERLAND**

Between 1997 – 2004 the county annual bird report, Birds in Northumbria, included a series of back papers on Birding sites in our recording area. In total 14 sites were covered by various authors and the club would like to reciprocate and expand this coverage to the web site. We are therefore asking the original authors of the papers if they'd like to adapt their accounts for this use (a broad template of what is required is available upon request). We are also appealing to other members who watch an area in the county on a regular basis to consider if they would like to produce a site account for inclusion. Further details available from [christopher.knox@o2.co.uk](mailto:christopher.knox@o2.co.uk)

## INDOOR MEETINGS 2009-2010

The first meetings have now been scheduled;

Thursday 10th September  
Thursday 8th October –

**Goose Ringing**  
**Sea Eagles in Poland**

by Phil Bone  
by Terry Pickford.

The NTBC AGM will be held during the 8th October meeting.

## FIELD TRIPS

The next field trips are;

**Wykeham Forest & Teesmouth.** Sunday 28th June 2009. Honey Buzzards and other raptors.

An **Evening with Nightjars at Sleaford Forest** on Friday 3rd July 2009.

Contact is Trevor Blake;

Email: [trevor.1958@live.co.uk](mailto:trevor.1958@live.co.uk)

Tel: 01670 862 635

## CLUB GUIDE TO RECORD SUBMISSION

**Description Writing for Bird Records**

**Guide to Submitting Bird Records**

The above documents have recently been uploaded to the club web site and are on the RECORDING page. They have been available for a number of years but have recently been updated.

The website is available at [www.ntbc.org.uk](http://www.ntbc.org.uk).

These documents are also available as paper copies on request from the club secretary Alan Watson [apusx@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:apusx@blueyonder.co.uk)

## MYSTERY PHOTOGRAPH

This splendid bird came to the garden of an Old Folks Home in Whitley Bay in May. But what is it? Answer next month.



Mystery Bird

Whitley Bay

photographed by Karen Topping on her way to work

## FOR SALE

Angled Kowa 613 telescope with Skua stay-on case. Excellent condition, fluorite lens coatings & very lightweight.

£390.

Please contact Phil Charleton 0191 251 3023.

## COASTAL WeBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

APRIL	2009
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TAC T. A. Cadwallender

122

[illegible]

INLAND WEBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

Year: 2008

Month: APRIL

Version: Interim

Site	Arctot Pond																									Backworth Ponds										Big Waters										Broomlee Lough										Calstron										Castle Island										Catebough Reservoir										Durridge Pools										East Chevington										Ellington Pond										Greenlee Lough										Grindon Lough										Hauxley NR										Killingworth										Ladyburn Lake										Leazes Park										Linton Pond										Shield on the Wall										Swallow Pond										Sweethope Lough										West Allotment Pond										Woodhorn Flashes																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																		
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# Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

<http://www.ntbc.org.uk/>



## Bulletin 2009 No 5 MONTHLY SUMMARY – MAY

16th July 2009

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Spoonbill – Two were at Druridge Pools
- Honey-buzzard - One at Tynemouth on 15th was taken into care and released the following day.
- Wood Sandpiper – Two in the month at Druridge Pools
- Iceland Gull – A first-summer all month at St Mary's Island & Blyth Harbour
- Black Tern – Two at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 31st.
- Turtle Dove – Singles at Newbiggin and Howick
- Bluethroat – Mini influx with two at Holy Island plus singles at Newbiggin & East Ord
- Icterine Warbler – Another good Spring with singles at Holy Island & Newbiggin
- Greenish Warbler – The first Spring county record at Newbiggin on 17th.
- Firecrest - One at Newbiggin on 16th.
- Red-backed Shrike - A male at Beal Farm on 20th.
- Corn Bunting - One singing with Yellowhammer phrases near Linden Hall
- 



A Bluethroat on Holy Island  
Straight Lonnen 14th May  
by Tim Dean

### NEWS

See later in the bulletin for information on the following;

- Ospreys nesting at Kielder for the first time in 200 years
- New venue for indoor meetings
- Late report of a Brown-headed Cowbird in north Northumberland

## WEATHER

The start of May was unsettled with low pressure dominant and showers or longer spells of rain. . This was followed by a brief spell of more settled weather in the middle of the month before a return to generally unsettled conditions. However, high pressure re-established over the last few days of May with warm, sunny weather and increasing temperatures. Overall, May was warmer than average, particularly across eastern parts. Sunshine was also above normal across most of England.

1st to 3rd: A generally unsettled westerly flow, with showers and longer spells of rain.

4th to 10th: The unsettled theme continued, with low pressure dominant, bringing windy conditions and frequent outbreaks or longer spells of rain. A set of fronts progressed southwards during the night of the 4th. Outbreaks of rain continued on the 5th, with strong gusty south-westerly winds, . It remained unsettled on the 6th and 7th. On the 8th a band of rain moved southwards across England, followed by heavy thundery showers across northern England; the 8th was a windy day with widespread gusts of 40 to 50 m.p.h. Further rain and showers affected northern England on the 9th, but it became drier and more settled on the 10th.

11th to 17th: High pressure became established on the 11th and 12th. It was dry and largely clear overnight across northern England on the 13th with a ground frost. Thereafter conditions became cyclonic and unsettled. Heavy and thundery showers on the evening of the 15th moved across northern England..

18th to 28th: Staying generally unsettled. A heavy downpour on 19th caused local flooding in Doncaster. It continued showery until the 23rd when temperatures increased under a brief ridge of high pressure: It was unsettled on the 25th and further rain fell on 26th. This was followed by a gradual return to more settled conditions during 27th and 28th.

29th to 31st: High pressure re-established itself, with warm, dry, sunny weather and unbroken sunshine over most of England.

## CLASSIFIED LIST

The following account consists of unchecked reports. The species/subspecies marked \* require descriptions. A complete list of all sightings which need notes is included in the NTBC website [www.ntbc.org.uk](http://www.ntbc.org.uk) under the County Records Committee section and in Birds in Northumbria 2007 page 251.

The Inland and Coastal Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) tables are at the rear of the bulletin. These contain additional counts to those in the Classified List.

## TARGET SPECIES

The target species for 2009 are **Marsh Tit**, **Spotted Flycatcher** and **Tree Sparrow**.

Please report all records for these species.

### Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

The highest counts were 79 at Castle Island on 31st, 71 at Killingworth Lake on 5th and 29 at Caistron on 2nd (STH *et al.*/LJM/KWY). The maximum count of adults at Leazes Park Lake, Newcastle was 16 on 12th (DM). Seven were in the Blyth Estuary on 29th, six at Hauxley NR on 11th and Highthorn on 14th (STH/HRS/MJCo). Four (two pairs ) were at Belsay Hall and two, mainly pairs, were at Bothal Pond ,Capheaton Lake, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Paddy Freeman's Pond (Jesmond Dene), Shield-on-the-Wall, Whittle Reservoirs and Woodhorn Church Flash. An immature was at Otterburn. Broods were noted at Arcot Pond (six), Gosforth Park (ten), Howick (four), Killingworth Lake (eight), Leazes Park Newcastle (five), Linton Pond (five), Marden Quarry (six), Silverlink CP (three), *Shasun*, Dudley (four), Swallow Pond (four) and Woodhorn Flashes (seven). Additional nesting pairs were seen at Halton and Linton Pond. A pair built a nest in a flowerbed at Tynemouth Boating Lake but did not lay any eggs and a nest was abandoned at Ashington spoil heap.

### Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

A single adult was noted at Longhirst Flash on 2nd and Woodhorn Flashes on 5th/6th (PCF/AT/PRM). A tame, possibly feral, bird was in the Tweed Estuary on 11th (MHu).

### Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

At Hauxley NR 11 were present on 4th with smaller numbers here until 12th/15th when only one remained (JA/HRS *et al.*). A "pricked" bird was at Beal Point on 13th and a single was at Haughton Strother from 17th-31st (MR).

### Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

At Slaley Forest 27 flew N at 21:55h on 29th and 25 flew over Dinnington early in the morning that day (STH *et al.*/PCF). The peak counts were 150 at Hauxley NR on 15th, 79 at Derwent Reservoir on 30th and 36 at Acton (Blanchland) on 29th (HRS/RMH). Grindon Lough hosted 15 on 30th whilst 12 were at Beal Marsh on 27th and nine at Arcot Pond on 29th (PRM/MHu/LJM). One to six adults were noted from Houghton Strother,

Oxford pits, Sweethope Lough, Tiptoe Farm (Duddo ) and West Allerdean.

Breeding records are detailed below:

Locality	No .of broods	No. of young	Observer/Comments
Hauxley NR	10	49	HRS on 15th
Derwent Reservoir	5/6	25	BNR on 4th
Woodhorn Church Flash	2	9	PRM on 22nd
Woodhorn Roadside Flash	1	8	PRM on 6th
Haughton Strother	1	6	MR on 17th
Marden Quarry	1	5	KWY on 20th
Newcastle Great Park Pools	1	5	GB on 16th additional brood to April
Druridge Pools	1	4	IDR/PCF on 10th

**\*Snow Goose** *Anser caerulescens*

An adult was at Hauxley NR on 19th (EC/JSB).



Snow Goose at Hauxley NR  
19th May by Ed Crabtree



Canada Goose and gosling at Wallington  
2nd May by Steve Barrett

**Greater Canada Goose** *Branta canadensis*

On 30th 23 flew N at Backworth, nine flew N at the Blyth Estuary on 25th and three possibly on moult migration flew N at Holy Island on 24th (CGK/STH/IK). The highest counts was 93 at Grindon Lough on 24th, 76 at Castle Island on 31st, 46 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 31st and 31 adults, many with goslings, at Plenmeller Common on 25th (PRM/STH *et al.* PCF/SJH). Other gatherings were 21 at Bothal Pond on 6th, 20 adults at Leazes Park, Newcastle on 12th, 19 adults at Hauxley NR on 11th and 17 at Linton Pond on 16th (PRM/DM/HRS/CDH). One to four were noted from Capheaton Lake, Cocklawburn Pond, Druridge Pools, Highburn, Longhirst Flash (on nest), Otterburn and Woodhorn Flashes.

Canada Geese breeding records are detailed below:

Location	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/Comments
Castle Island	4	17	DM/STH on 17th
Hauxley NR	4	16	HRS on 11th
Fontburn Reservoir	2	11	SRB on 26th
Marden Quarry	2	10	MN all month
Rothley Lakes	2	5	JCD on 25th
Coquet Island	1	8	JMA on 4th
Leazes Park Newcastle	1	6	GB on 5th
Weetslade Colliery CP	1	5	GB on 10th
Linton Pond	1	5	PRM on 6th
Holywell Pond	1	5	STH on 21st
Wallington	1	5	JCD on 23rd
Banks Pond Dinnington	1	4	PCF on 6th
East Chevington North Pool	1	4	STH on 22nd
Newcastle Great Park Pools	1	4	AHB on 23rd

#### **Barnacle Goose** *Branta leucopsis*

Three flew N at East Chevington where eight were present on the north pool on 5th (JRT/ADM). Four were at Hauxley on 21st with two present on 4th/10th/11th (PRM/JA/HRS). A single was at Grindon Lough on 24th (PRM).

#### **Pale-bellied hrota** **Brent Goose** *Branta bernicla hrota*

The only record received was of a single at Holy Island on 24th (RA).

Single un-raced birds were at Beal Point with the Pink-footed Goose on 13th and at Hauxley NR on 30th (Mhu/IRD).

#### **Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna*

Three flew S at Cheswick on 15th and nine S on 18th (MHu). Peak counts were 58 at Budle Bay on 12th (CGK), 28 at Cresswell Pond on 17th (JRT), 21 at the Blyth Estuary on 21st (STH et al.), 13 at Hauxley Reserve on 11th (HRS), ten at Castle Island on 17th (DM), nine at Howick on 17th (JAR), nine at Lindisfarne NNR on 13th (MHu), nine at Newcastle Business Park (Elswick) on 12th (GB), and four at Longhirst Flash on 25th (PRM). Single pairs were at Druridge Pools, Elwell Quarry, Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother, Holywell Dene, the Long Nanny Estuary, Needles Eye and Woodhorn Flashes, and one at West Hartford. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Blyth Estuary	1	9	STH <i>et al.</i> On 22nd
Cresswell Pond	2+	9+	PCF/STH <i>et al.</i> Brood of 3 on 21st and brood of 6 on 25th
Holywell Dene	1	1	RJP. On 17th

**Mandarin** *Aix galericulata*

At Wallington a pair was present on 13th, two drakes ('very approachable') on 26th and one drake on 26th (TRD/JCD). Single drakes were at Tarsset on 17th (JR) and Whitelee (Redesdale) on 7th (JCD). Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Falstone	1	3	TRD. On 30th



Splendid Mandarin drakes  
Wallington Hall on 26th May  
by Tim Dean

**Wigeon** *Anas penelope*

At Grindon Lough, 16 (eight drakes) were present on 2nd and three to six regularly up to 30th (PRM). Five were at Hauxley Reserve on 7th (MSH), three there on 11th and one on 15th (HRS), three at Plenmeller Common on 24th (SJH), and one to two at Castle Island, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Gosforth Park, Longhirst Flash and the Willimoteswick area up to 18th. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Shankhead, Ridley Common	1	2+	SJH. On 25th (tiny ducklings)

**Gadwall** *Anas strepera*

At least 31 were at East Chevington on 5th (ADM), 18 at Hauxley Reserve on 7th (MSH), 12 at Druridge Pools on 22nd (PRM), ten at Woodhorn Flashes on 6th (PRM), ten at Bothal Pond on 6th (PRM), four to six at Castle Island, Linton Pond, Longhirst Flash and Swallow Pond, and one to two at Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Castron, Cresswell Pond, Highthorn, Hoppen Kiln Pool and Whittle Dene Reservoirs

**Teal** *Anas crecca*

Eight were at Druridge Pools on 4th (IDR) and two to three there on several dates up to 30th (PRM/TRD/JD/DM et al.), four to five at Grindon Lough on 2nd-3rd and two there on 16th and 30th (PRM), a pair at the *Drift Inn* Pools, Seaton Burn on 2nd-3rd (GB), and one at Linton Pond on 6th (PRM).

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

Peak counts were 26 at Grindon Lough on 24th (PRM), 22 at Newcastle Leazes Park on 12th (DM), and 12-15 at Castle Island, Hauxley Reserve, Longhirst Flash and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Four to seven were also at Arcot Pond, Byker, Cockle Park Farm, Highthorn, Newcastle Exhibition Park, Tindal House and Tiptoe Farm.



Mallard breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Richardson Dees Park, Wallsend	4	32 (10, 10, 7 & 5)	CDH. On 25th
Hauxley Reserve	3	24 (9, 8 & 7)	HRS. On 11th
Plessey Woods-Hartford Hall	3	27 (12, 11 & 4)	LJM/GB. On 1st and 3rd
Arcot Pond	3	13 (7, 4 & 2)	LJM
Druridge Pools	2-3	19- 21 (11, 9 & 2)	IDR/STH. Brood of 10 on 1st, brood of 9 on 14th, & brood of 2 on 30th
<i>Drift Inn</i> Pools, Seaton Burn	2	19 (11 & 8)	GB. Brood of 11 on 3rd and brood of 8 on 19th (later down to 5)
Swallow Pond	2	13 (7 & 6)	SPP. On 6th
Newcastle Great Park Pools	2	14+	AHB/GB. From 9th
Whittle Dene Reservoirs	1	11	MR. On 31st
Prestwick Carr	1	9	PCF. On 1st
Catcleugh Reservoir	1	8	PRM. On 23rd
Derwent Reservoir	1	7	RMH. On 30th
Grindon Lough	1	6	PCF. On 22nd
Standrop Burn	1	6	IFo. On 14th
Thorney Burn	1	6	JR. On 9th
West Allotment Pond	1	6	LJM. On 13th
Holywell Pond	1	5	STH et al. On 21st
Hexham	1	4	PCF. On 22nd
Bothal Pond	1	3	GB. On 23rd
Killingworth Lake	1	3	LJM. On 9th
Jesmond Dene	1	3	MJCo. On 16th
Otterburn	1	3	PRM. On 25th
Bygate	1	2	JR. On 10th
Middle Ord Pond	1	2	MHu. On 24th
Howick	1	--	JAR. On 25th

#### **Pintail** *Anas acuta*

A drake was at Budle Bay on 12th (CGK) and 23rd (ACo).

#### **Garganey** *Anas querquedula*

A pair was at Cocklawburn Pond on 15th (MHu). Single drakes were at Capheaton Lake on 3rd (TRD), Cresswell Pond on 2nd (IRD), the *Drift Inn* Pools (Seaton Burn) on 3rd, Druridge Pools on four dates between 1st-23rd (IRD/IDR/DM/ACo *et al.*), and Hauxley Reserve on 8th (JSB). One (unsexed) was at Cheswick Black Rocks on 10th (EHa).



A pair of Garganey at Druridge Pools  
by Iain Robson

**Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*

Four drakes were at Cresswell Pond on 18th-19th (TRD/JD/STH), and single pairs at Hauxley Reserve on 11th (HRS) and West Allotment Pond on 28th (CDH). One to two birds were also at Druridge Pools, East Chevington, and Monk's House Pool. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Druridge Pools	1	5	IDR. On 14th

**Pochard** *Aythya ferina*

Three were at Arcot Pond on 17th (DM/STH/PA) and two on 13th (TRD), three at Cobalt Business Park on 13th (LJM), two at Swallow Pond on 6th (TRD), and a drake at Bothal Pond on 6th and 16th (GB/PRM).

**Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*

Peak counts were 31 at Cresswell Pond on 12th (PRM), 27 at Castle Island on 17th (DM), 23 at Newcastle Great Park pools on 16th (GB), 23 at Swallow Pond on 6th (LJM), 20 at Newcastle Leazes Park on 8th (DM), 18 at Hauxley Reserve on 15th (HRS), and ten to 14 at Linton Pond and Woodhorn Flashes. Five to nine were also at Arcot, Bothal n Ponds, Capheaton Lake, Druridge Pools, Grindon Lough, and Haughton Strother. Two to four were also at Cocklawburn Pond, Jesmond Dene and Park Dam.

**Scaup** *Aythya marila*

Five (three drakes) flew S at Newbiggin on 15th (CGK/PRM *et al.*). A drake was with Tufted Ducks at Dukes Pond (Rising Sun CP) on 6th (LJM/SPP).

**Eider** *Somateria mollissima*

Peak gatherings were 110 at Cocklawburn on 30th (MHu), 110 off Hauxley on 25th (TRD/JD), 96 at Wellhaugh Point. Amble on 17th (DM *et al.*), 31 at Newbiggin on 25th (PRM/EAW), and 16 at St Mary's on 22nd (MT/NT). Two to three were also at Blyth South Harbour and the Tyne Estuary to North Shields Fish Quay. Three were at Warkworth weir on 17th (DM/STH/PA). Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of 'creches'/broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Holy Island	1	1	IK. On 25th
Howick	1	2	JAR. On 25th

**Common Scoter** *Melanitta nigra*

Light northerly movement involved 12 at North Blyth on 3rd (STH), five at Hauxley on 25th (TRD/JD) and one at Druridge on 22nd. At Cocklawburn, 340 were noted on 22nd and 180 on 30th (MHu), 130 were at Cheswick on 4th (MHu), and 120 at Alnmouth on 15th (AT). An unusual inland record concerned four (three females and a first-summer drake) diving around the west end of Colt Crag Reservoir on 29th (TRD).

**Velvet Scoter** *Melanitta fusca*

An immature drake was with 180 Common Scoters at Cocklawburn on 30th (MHu).

**Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula*

An immature drake at Arcot Pond on 12th was the only report (LJM).

**Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator*

A pair flew N at Hauxley on 14th (HRS) and one flew N at St Mary's on 21st (MSH). The largest count was of 18 at Holy Island on 24th (ADM), five were at Fenham Flats on 10th (DGB/IBDa), two at Budle Bay on 12th (CGK), a drake at Hauxley Reserve on 2nd and 15th (HRS), and one at Castle Island on 16th-17th (GB/DM/STH/PA).

**Goosander** *Mergus merganser*

Nine were at West Ord on 17th (MHu), two pairs at Rothbury on 2nd (TRD/JD), three birds at Derwent Reservoir on 12th (IFo) and near Snitter on 18th (TRD/JD), and one to two at Allen Banks, Bellingham, Bygate, Castle Island, Corbridge, Highford-Mitford, Killingworth Lake, Lanehead, Oldgate (Morpeth), Plessey Woods, Scotch Gill (Morpeth), Warden, Wark and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. A drake was regularly at Cresswell Pond between 5th-30th (IRD/ADM/MSH *et al.*) and a duck at the Black Middens, Tynemouth on 9th (JR).

**Ruddy Duck** *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Two pairs were at Swallow Pond on 22nd (CGK/SPP) and a drake there on 30th (KWY). A drake was at Bothal Pond regularly between 5th-16th (JSB/EC/AT/JRT *et al.*).

**Red Grouse** *lagopus lagopus*

The highest counts were 10 in the Harthope Valley on 23rd, eight at Flow Moss (Dryburn Moor) on 23rd and seven on Plenmeller Common on 24th (ASJ/SJH). Four were at Threestoneburn where a nest containing three eggs was found (JF). One to two were noted at Acton Fell (Allendale) Coe Craggs (Thrunton Woods), Hanging Stone, Langleeford and Yarnspath Law

**Black Grouse** *Tetrao tetrix*

The highest counts were five at Paxhill, Allenheads (four males) on 9th and at Carrshield (four males) on 23rd (SJH). Four males were at Swinhope Shield on 9th and two males were perched on a wall in Allendale on 30th (SJH/JMA). Single males were at Hollin Green Farm (Keenleyside), Langleefordhope and Knockburn.

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

A large count of 39 came from Shankhead (Ridley Common) on 25th (SJH). Four were at Middleton Hall on 17th (DM/STH/PA) One to three were noted from Abshields, Alnham, Cockle Park Farm (Tritlington), Harthope Valley, Peigh Hills, Ulgham Grange Farm and West Thirston.



A pair of Grey Partridges at Druridge  
14th May by Peter Tapsell

**Grey Partridge** *Perdix perdix*

Two pairs were noted at Blakemoor Farm (Cresswell), Druridge Pools Knockburn, Lucker and Whitley Chapel (MJCo/PCF/SJH/JHa/JF). Three were at Linden Hall on 24th and at Prestwick Carr on 30th (NFO/PCF) Two, mostly in pairs, were at Billylaw (Ord Moor), Cheswick Dunes, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools Links, Derwent Reservoir, East Cramlington LNR, Ellington, Howick, Knockburn,, Linton Lane, Newbiggin, Newsham (Blyth), Rothbury, Ryehill (Slaley), Stannington and Whittonstall. Singles were noted at Caistron, Chatton, Cockle Park Farm (Tritlington), Glororum (Bamburgh) and Staward.

**Quail** *Coturnix coturnix*

Singles were noted singing behind the school at Holy Island at 11:45 on 13th (PRM), East Chevington on 22nd (ACo), near Fulbeck (Morpeth) on 23rd (ADM), opposite Brenkley Landfill site on 28th (GB/LJM) and at Langleeford (Harthope Valley) on 31st (JF).

**Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus*

A total of 21 were counted in three tetrads in the Duddo area on 11th (JR). Eight were counted in BBS square NZ0567 (MJCo). Six were at Cockle Park Farm Tritlington (JR) and five at Highthorn and Ulgham Grange Farm (MJCo). A family party was noted at Howick on 29th (JR). One to four were seen at Chesters House and Walled Garden, Cresswell, Harthope Valley, Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene) Peigh Hills, Slaley Forest, Stobswood, Ulgham and a Walbottle garden.

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

At Druridge Links seven were offshore on 4th, five were offshore on 21st and one on 22nd (IDR/TRD/JD). Three were at Cocklawburn on 18th (MHu),

**Great Northern Diver** *Gavia immer*

One flew N at Newbiggin on 15th and an adult in summer plumage was offshore at Druridge Links on 21st (PRM/IDR).

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

The highest count of adults was five at Swallow Pond on 5th (LJM) Three including a nesting pair were at Capheaton Lake on 3rd/ 28th. Counts of three also came from Arcot on 28th, Gosforth Park and Marden Quarry on 8th and Linton Pond on 6th (LJM/per SRB/PRM). A nesting pair was at Cocklawburn Pond on 22nd (MHu). Two were also noted at Angerton Lake, Belsay Hall, *Drift Inn* pools (Seaton Burn), Druridge Pools, and Woodhorn Church Flash. Singles were seen at Ashington spoil heap, Hadrian Pond (Wallsend), Longhirst Flash and Otterburn.

Breeding data is as follows:

Location	No. of broods	No .of young	Observer/Comments
Swallow Pond	1	2	SPP on 17th
Banks Pond Dinnington	1	2	PCF on 24th

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*

Seven (three pairs and a single) frequented Derwent Reservoir during the month (IFO). Five were at East Chevington North Pool on 22nd (ACo). Four including a nesting pair were at Killingworth Lake on 29th (LJM). A nesting pair was at Capheaton Lake on 23rd/26th, the first breeding attempt here for at least 20 years (EC/TRD/JD *et al.*). Singles were noted at Catcleugh Reservoir, Colt Crag Reservoir, Holywell Pond, Linton Pond and, Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

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

Up to six were noted at a site occupied in the past. A pair was seen on several dates at the now regular breeding site. A pair was seen at a further site.

**Fulmar** *Fulmarus glacialis*

At St Mary's Island 18 flew N on 12th in 1 hour and 16 flew N and four S in 30 minutes on 15th (MSH). At Hauxley three were noted over the reserve on 29th (JA). One to two flew passed Druridge on 12th, Long Nanny and Wellhaugh Point (Amble) on 17th, Hauxley on 18th/25th and East Chevington and Druridge on 22nd. At Needle's Eye (Berwick) 17 nests were located on 25th (MHu). Two were off Cresswell on 9th and off Hauxley on 24th

**Manx Shearwater** *puffinus puffinus*

At Newbiggin 12 flew N and two S in 1 hour on 12th (PRM) and four flew N at St Mary's Island on 28th (MSH/AC). Two also flew N at Newbiggin and St Mary's Island on 12th (AT/MSH).



Fulmar at St. Mary's  
30th May  
by Norman Tuck

**Gannet** *Morus bassanus*

The largest movements occurred on 15th, when 440/hour flew S in a strong southerly wind at Cocklawburn, 215 flew S in 40 minutes at Bamburgh and 24 flew N and eight S in 30 minutes at St Mary's Island (MHu/PCF/MSH). Passage was also noted on 12th/14th at St Mary's Island when 48 flew N and two S and five flew N and six S respectively (MSH). One to two were noted on four dates from Druridge and Hauxley.



**Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

The peak roost counts during the month were 44 in Blyth South Harbour on 15th and 17 at North Shields Fish Quay on 17th (STH/DMT). Inland six were at Derwent Reservoir on 30th (RMH). One to three were noted from Arcot Pond, Castle Island, Cresswell Pond, Elswick Wharf, Hauxley Linton Pond, Newbiggin and Wark.

\*Single *sinensis* race birds was identified at Woodhorn Flashes on 6 th, Newbiggin on 12th, and Beacon Point, Newbiggin on 25 th on 8th (PRM/EAW).

**Shag** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Only two records were received. One was incubating on a nest at Needle's Eye, Berwick on 25th (MHu). A bird ringed as a juvenile on the Isle of May in July 2008 was found dead on Holy Island.

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*

A single flew S at Cockle Park Farm (Tritlington) on 9th (JR). Two were at Hauxley NR on 8th with singles there on 25th/26th (JSB/JA *et al.*) A singles was at Druridge Pools on 5th-10th (JSB/IRD/JF/IDR) One was present at Arcot Pond on the evening of 19th for 30 minutes before being chased off by a Grey Heron (STH *et al.*). This was probably the bird seen the same day being mobbed by terns and corvids at Gosforth (*per* SRB).

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*

The largest concentrations were at Holywell Pond where seven including juveniles were present on 23rd and at Druridge Pools where five were present on 12th (SPP/PRM). Counts of four came from Arcot Pond on 10th and Hauxley NR on 11th (LJM/HRS). Three were seen at Cresswell Pond on 19th and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 3rd (MJCo/PRM). Birds were seen feeding young in the nest at Howick on 10th (JAR), One to two were noted from Broccolis, Highthorn, Longhirst Flash, Otterburn, Stobswood, Tiptoe Farm (Duddo) and Woodhorn Flashes.

**\*White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia*

A bird was reported as present throughout the month at Haggerston Caravan Park (NNBC). This is probably the bird which flew NW over Murton (Berwick) on 9th (RMH *et al.*).

**Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia*

Two were seen flying off N from the Budge Screen at Druridge Pools on 24th (AHB). One was here on 17th/18th IDR/JF *et al.*)



Spoonbill at Druridge Pools  
by Iain Robson on 13th May

**\*Honey Buzzard** *Pernis apivorus*

On the 15th one was picked up after heavy rain on Tynemouth Beach, it was kept overnight and released the next day by the RSPCA at Morpeth (MCa *per* IF).

**Red Kite** *Milvus milvus*

All sightings came from the Derwent Reservoir area this month, with a single bird there on 4th and 27th and two on 25th.

**Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*

Single birds were seen at Callerton Pond, Capheaton, Catcleugh Reservoir, Hauxley NR, Holy Island, Plenmeller Common and Derwent Reservoir.



**Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis*

Only three records this month. On the 1st one was at Thrunton Woods (TRD/JD), and one was displaying at Staward on 2nd (BNR). A bird was at a nest site in the North of the County on the 8th (PG).

**Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*

A pair were soaring together near Barden Mill on the 7th (SJA). All other sightings were of single birds including one with a juvenile Blackbird *Turdus merula* at Stannington (MIM).

**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*

Nine birds were up in the air at Melkridge Village on 24th (SJH), seven birds were at Grindon Lough on 19th (PRM), six birds were in the Simonside Hills on 2nd (KWY). One to five birds were at over 40 locations during the month.

**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*

A single bird was fishing at Chatton Trout Fisheries on 5th (SM). A single female was noted at Holy Island on 9th & 13th (CP), and a male was also noted there on 10th & 15th (CP/ADM). Other single birds were at Hedgley GPs on 13th (IBDa/KDa), Big waters on the 17th (GB), Derwent reservoir on the 19th (IFo), Slaley Fell on 24th (RMH) and at Sidwood (Tarset Burn) on 31st (ASJ).

**Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*

Two birds were seen at Grindon Lough on 19th, Harthope Valley on 17th, Ridlees on 24th and at Woodhorn on 17th. Single birds were at a further 17 sites during the month.

**Merlin** *Falco columbarius*

Very few records this month, with sightings from Chatton Moor on 19th (JHa), Hauxley NR on 16th (JA) and Holy Island on 2nd (DCh). A juvenile on Holy Island had been dead along time, this bird was ringed at a nest near Otterburn in June 2008 (IK).

**\*Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*

Single birds were noted at Annstead Point on 24th, Grindon Lough on 19th, Haltwhistle on 10th, Hexham on 17th, Slaley on 9th, Staward on 2nd, Wark (N Tyne) on 20th and at Whittle Dene Reservoir on 4th.

**Peregrine** *Falco peregrinus*

Pairs were near nest sites in the South of the County on 12th (per PCF), and in the North of the County on 28th (PG). Single birds were at the Harthope Valley on 17th, Holy Island on 9th & 24th, Kitty Brewster (Blyth) on 16th (GB), West Hartford on 22nd (STH *et al.*). A bird attempted to take a Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus* at Lewis Burn (Kielder) on 24th (AJ).

**Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus*

Only two records this month, two birds were at Gosforth Park NR on 4th (per SRB) and a single there on 9th (CGK).

**\* Corncrake** *Crex crex*

A belated record of a bird in full song in a rough pasture field at Newburn on 24th April (CW per PWM)

**Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*

Highest counts this month was 10 birds at Marden Quarry (Whitley Bay), with seven adults and three young. Eight birds were seen at Gosforth Park NR on 10th (per SRB) and at Hauxley NR on 11th (HRS), six were at Leazes Park on 1st (DM), Bothal Pond on 6th and at Otterburn on 25th (PRM). One to five birds were at a further 16 locations.

**Coot** *Fulica atra*

The highest counts were at Bothal Pond with 30 there on 31st (PCF), Capheaton Lake with 27+ on 19th (PRM) and at Wallsend Swallow Pond 20 birds were there on 6th (LJM). One to 14 birds were at over 14 locations including two at Haughton Strother (near Humshaugh) were a new species for that location for the observer (MR).

Coot Breeding data for the month were:

Location	Max No of Broods	Max No of young	Observers
Blyth Golf Course	1	6	LJM
Bomarsund (Earth Balance)	1	1	GB
Dukes Pond	1	1	SPP
Holywell Pond	1	4	STH et al
Killingworth Lake	1	6	LJM
Leazes Park	2	5	DM
Newcastle Great Park Pools	1	3	GB
Silverlink Park LNR	2	8	LJM/CDH
Wallsend Swallow Pond	7	21	SPP et al
Woodhorn Flash	1	3	PRM

#### **Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*

Three broods totalling ten young were noted at Shasun Dudley on 30th (LJM) and chicks were seen at Shankhead, Ridley Common on 25th (SJH). In addition to those places mentioned in April, actual or potential signs of breeding came from Alwin Valley, Alwinton Bridge, Bardon Mill, Derwent Reservoir, Garretshields, Hepple, Knockburn, Ordley, Park Dam, Paxhill, Shankfoot, Shilford, Wark and Yeavinger. At, or near, the coast 33 were at North Blyth staiths on 3rd, 20 in the Blyth estuary on 21st and 16 at Cresswell Pond on 19th (STH/MJCo).

#### **Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*

The pair at Houghton Strother produced eggs by 13th and incubation was still taking place at the month end (MR). Two were at Druridge Pools on 10th (IK) and at Derwent Reservoir on 27th (IFo). One, presumably of a breeding pair, was noted at Grindon Lough on several dates and singles appeared at Hauxley NR on 4th/8th, Newcastle Great Park pools on 2nd and West Hartford on 9th, the latter after rain.

#### **Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*

A pair with three juveniles was at Cheswick beach on 22nd (MHu), the only positive breeding information reported, although pairs at Long Nanny had risen to six by 30th. Coastal passage was in full swing with 383 at Holy Island off Chare Ends on 14th (ADMc) and the number in the Blyth estuary increased to 241 by 25th (STH). Also 150 were in the Wansbeck estuary on 12th (AT), 78 at Berwick on 14th and 76 in the Tweed estuary on 17th. Counts of 19 were made on 10th at Druridge Pools and St Mary's and one to eight were seen at some eight other locations. A flock of 150 in Budle Bay on 12th were considered to be *A. h. tundrae* (CGK), as were passage migrants at Derwent Reservoir, four on 19th and 15 on 24th (IFo), the latter in company with a Sanderling.

#### **Golden Plover** *Pluvialis apricaria*

There was a group of 15 plus one displaying near Keenley on 7th, four to seven were displaying on 9th at Carrshield, Knockburn and Paxhill and six displayed at Dryburn Moor on 23rd (all SJH); two displayed at Blanchland Moor on 31st. Also two were near the summit of The Cheviot on 9th, one was at Holy Island on 16th and it was heard at Acton Fell on 29th.

#### **Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*

Some 500 at Holy Island on 2nd (DCh) were in breeding plumage and 137 were in the old causeway area on 14th (ADMc). In Budle Bay 135 roosted on 13th, reducing to 18 on 24th (CGK). Four were at Beal Point on 13th and one at Castle Island on 31st was the only one away from the north east.

#### **Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*

On 3rd, Acton Fell held 85 nesting pairs, Blanchland Moor 55 pairs, Allenheads 34 pairs and 15 pairs were at Holystone Moor on 10th (all ASJ). Early in the month 14 pairs were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs, eight pairs at Haydon Fell and six pairs at Grindon Lough (all PRM). Reports of newly hatched and older young were numerous and widespread: at Arcot Lane, Druridge Pools, Dryburn Moor, East Chevington, Halton Red House, Hauxley NR, Keenley, Knockburn, Langleeford, Paxhill, Plenmeller Common, Ridley Common and West Moor. In addition many were on nests near Bardon Mill, near Henshaw and in the Shankfoot area (all SJH) and seven juveniles were ringed at Whitley Chapel on 21st (JF).

#### **Knot** *Calidris canutus*

On 14th in Budle Bay 105 roosted on the north shore (CGK), about 20% in full breeding dress. Five were at East Chevington on 25th (NFO) and two at Hauxley on 23rd.

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba*

Cheswick Black Rocks held 47 on 1st, St Mary's 40 on 10th, 32 in Budle Bay on 14th, 25 at Berwick on 31st and 24 at Long Nanny on 11th (MHu/MSH/CGK/IF). One to five were seen occasionally in the Blyth area, at Newbiggin and Druridge Links. One on overland migration paused to preen and bathe at Derwent Reservoir on 24th (IFo).

**Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*

One visited Druridge Pools on 18th (TRD/JD/IDR).

**Purple Sandpiper** *Calidris maritima*

A high tide roost on the east pier of Blyth Harbour contained 31 on 15th (STH). Elsewhere eight were at Berwick on 3rd, seven at Tynemouth on 10th and six at Cocklawburn on 4th.

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*

The largest coastal flocks involved some 500 at Holy Island on 2nd (DCh) and 100 roosting in Budle Bay on 14th (CGK). Other maxima near the coast were 26 in the Blyth estuary on 22nd, 13 at Druridge Pools on 10th, ten at St Mary's on 10th, ten in the Tweed estuary on 17th with two to eight at Berwick, Cheswick, Cresswell Pond, Hauxley and Tynemouth. Inland, it was present at Grindon Lough all month with a peak of 18 on 20th; six were at Derwent reservoir on 24th, three at Castron on 17th and one at Haughton Strother on 10th.

**Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*

Six were at Druridge Pools on 14th-16th and one on 19th-20th (IDR *et al.*).

**Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*

Some of 16 counted at Shankhead, Ridley Common on 25th had chicks (SJH) and a nest with two eggs was found at Langleeford on 31st (JF). Display or singing was witnessed at Allendale, Blanchland Moor, Brocolitia, Carraw Farm, Dryburn Moor, Harthope Valley, Haughton Strother, Hollin Green Farm, Kielder (Deadwater), Knockburn and Plenmeller Common. Other records concern one to three occasionally at Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Otterburn, Shildon and Yarnspeth Law.

**Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola*

Singles were in the Harthope Valley on 3rd and 6th and at Slaley Forest and Eshott on 29th, the latter two roding.

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

After one to three early in the month at Druridge Pools there were 42 on 8th (IDR/JF/PS), 34 flew N there on 13th and 16 were present on 18th (IDR); also one on 22nd-23rd. Elsewhere, 20 dropped into East Chevington during a downpour on 1st (SPP), 34 were at Longhirst Flash on 10th down to 27 on 12th (JRT/JSB) and 29 visited Hauxley NR on 4th (JA). The most at Cresswell Pond was 11 on 11th; three were at East Chevington on 7th, two at West Hartford on 9th, two at Holy Island on 10th and two at Hauxley NR on 25th-26th.

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

Of 200 in Budle Bay on 13th (CGK) 90% were in non-breeding plumage. The only others reported were singles in the Blyth estuary on 16th and 25th.

**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*

The bulk of the passage occurred in the first ten days, including 29 at East Chevington on 4th (NFO), eight at both Embleton and Holy Island on 10th (NFO/CP), six at Holy Island on 2nd and five at Cresswell Pond on 10th. One to four were noted at Berwick, Blyth estuary, Boulmer, Budle Bay, Druridge Pools, Fenham Slake, Haughton Strother, Hauxley, Howick, Linden Hall, Low Newton, Newbiggin, North Blyth, St Mary's, Swallow Pond, Tynemouth and Wansbeck estuary.

**Curlew** *Numenius arquata*

Of 54 at Shankhead, Ridley Common on 25th many were with chicks and several had young at Plenmeller Common on 31st (SJH); also one nest was found at Carraw Farm on 23rd (JF/IDR). Seven pairs were at Blanchland Moor on 3rd, three pairs at Brocolitia on 2nd, three pairs near Otterburn on 25th and two pairs at Acton Fell on 29th and potential breeding was noted at another 12 sites. There were no coastal reports of any significance.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*

Eight were scattered along the north 'shore' of Derwent Reservoir on 27th (IFo), not obviously paired whereas three pairs were involved in display in both the Shankfoot and Willimoteswick areas on 7th (SJH). Three pairs were noted at Redesdale on 7th (JCD) and two pairs at Batailshielhaugh, Bygate, Garretshields, Otterburn, Wedder Leap and Windyhaugh (JR/JCD). One or two were noted at some 30 other locations.



Common Sandpiper  
by Mike Hodgson

**Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*

Singles were at Druridge Pools on 4th and 10th with two there on 11th (IDR). Singles were found at Branton GP on 2nd, East Chevington on 4th and 31st, Grindon Lough on 6th, West Hartford on 15th and 17th, Holy Island on 16th, Cresswell Pond on 22nd and the Blyth estuary on 25th.

**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*

All occurred at Druridge pools: one on 14th-16th (IDR/CGK *et al.*), one on 30th with two on 31st (STH/PCF).

**Redshank** *Tringa totanus*

Display was witnessed at Druridge Pools, Dryburn Moor, Paxhill, the Shankfoot area and near Sinderhope (IDR/SJH). Up to 14 were present at Grindon Lough, 11 at Shankhead on 25th and 11 at Derwent Reservoir on 27th (PRM/SJH/IFo) and one to five noted at Garretshields, Hauxley NR, Otterburn, Seaton Burn, Silverlink Park LNR, Weetslade Colliery CP and Whitfield Monk.

**Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*

Hauxley NR held at least 40 on 8th (JSB) and still about 20 were at St Mary's on 10th with ten to 14 at Cheswick, Cocklawburn, Seahouses and Tynemouth. One to six appeared at the Blyth estuary, Boulmer, Cresswell, Newbiggin, North Shields Fish Quay and the Tweed estuary.

**Arctic Skua** *Stercorarius parasiticus*

One moving N created temporary panic in the tern colony at Long Nanny on 29th (EC/JSB).

**Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla*

Passage movements were noted at St Mary's Island with 259 N & 16 S on 12th, 57 N on 14th & 31 N & 4 S on 15th (MSH). Single birds were noted S at Druridge on 22nd and Hauxley on 25th (TRD/JD). The Needles Eye colony at Berwick continued to grow with 850 nests counted on 25th. A full count was undertaken on 14th at the Tyne Bridge with 350 birds seen and 205 nests occupied (MPF). At the Tweed Estuary 42 were found in the gull roost on 11th (Mhu). The regularly used harbours at North Shields and Blyth saw peaks of ten at North Shields Fish Quay on 3rd and two (including one first-summer) at Blyth South Harbour on 16th (DMT). Otherwise only singles were noted at Newcastle Business Park on 12th (GB) and at East Chevington with one noted still in juvenile plumage on 25th (NFO).

**Black-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

The Plenmeller Common colony continues to flourish with 2000 counted on 24th with three breeding colonies established. One of these has increased from 40 nests last year to 350 this season (SJH). Large counts were few with 500 at Ingram on 14th notable (IfO). At Amble 205 were feeding on shoreline on 10th (PCF) with ca.150 flycatching high above Druridge Bay CP on 31st (ADMc). At Pennypie near Blanchland 200 were noted on 23rd (JMA). The only other breeding assemblage was at Swallow Pond where 29 nesting pairs were noted on 12th (SPP). Otherwise only small numbers found with one to six at various sites with the regularly watched sites only noting a peak of four at Blyth South Harbour on 16th (DMT) with none in the

Tyne Estuary or on the sea roost between Cullercoats and Tynemouth. An interesting leucistic bird was noted at East Chevington with very white wings reminiscent of a Mediterranean Gull but with a partial brown hood (ADMc).

**Little Gull** *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

The regular gathering of first-summer birds built up at East Chevington with one on 19th increasing to ten by 28th (ADMc et al.). Two first-summers were present at Cresswell Pond from 25th to 28th (TRD/JD/SRB) and two first-summers were also at Holywell Pond on 20th (SPP).

**Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus*

A single summer plumaged adult was possibly responsible for all this month's sightings with records at Newbiggin on 15th and 25th (PRM/EAW), East Chevington on 16th (MN) and Cresswell beach and Hauxley on 25th (TRD/JD/HRS).

**Common Gull** *Larus canus*

Counts were low with most adults back on breeding grounds. 40 first-summers gathered at West Hartford on 21st with ten first-summers at Budle Bay on 14th. Otherwise only one to four noted at Grindon Lough, Shilford and West Hartford. The only adult was reported at West Hartford on 23rd with all the regularly watched gull sites recording none at all this month.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus graelsii*

A large count of 140 at Ingram on 14th (lfo) eclipsed the normal gathering point of Budle Bay where 60 adults were present on 12th (CGK). At least 30 gathered at Elswick Wharf on 13th (DM). A peak of 17 adults were noted at Blyth South Harbour on 2nd (DMT) and 15 were at Davy Bank, Wallsend on 25th (CDH). Otherwise one to eight were found at various localities.

**Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus argenteus*

The sea roost between Tynemouth and Cullercoats still held substantial numbers with 517 there on 31st (DMT). The other large count this month involved 440 at Cheswick Beach feeding in wrack on 22nd with 80% of these involving immature birds (Mhu). The Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay peaked at 142 on 16th with a smaller peak of 40 at Blyth South Harbour on 31st (DMT). A flock of 100 fed in fields near QE II CP, Ashington on 16th (CDH). 45 were noted at Castle Island on 17th (DM) with 35 at Houghton Strother near Humshaugh on 20th (MR) and at least 20 at Elswick Wharf on 13th (DM). Otherwise one to eight were at various localities.

**Iceland Gull** *Larus glaucoides*

A long staying first-summer frequented St Mary's Island all month (ASJ/MSH/AC/MT/NT). The same bird in active primary moult frequented Blyth South Harbour from at least 16th to 31st (MSH/DMT). A juvenile briefly settled on Holywell Pond on 30th before flying off West (SPP).



A first summer Iceland Gull  
28th May by Mike Hodgson

**Great Black-backed Gull** *Larus marinus*

Again few reports received with the regularly watched localities showing that birds were still present. Peaks of 47 were found at the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay on 16th and 53 at Blyth South Harbour on 16th (DMT). The only other reports received were five at Castle Island on 17th and singles at Elswick Wharf on 13th (DM) and at Sweethope Lough on 19th (PRM).



**Little Tern** *Sternula albifrons*

At the Long Nanny colony at Newton 13 on 11th had increased to ten pairs nesting by 30th (IF). Surprisingly widely spread elsewhere with one to three noted at Blyth, Boulmer, Embleton Bay, Hauxley and Holy Island between 8th and 18th with two at East Chevington North Pool on 31st (ADMc).

**Black Tern** *Chilidonias niger*

Two at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 31st (MR/ASJ) were the only Spring sightings so far this year.

**Sandwich Tern** *Sterna sandvicensis*

Two passage movements were noted with 26 N at North Blyth on 3rd (STH) and 21 N at St Mary's Island on 12th (MSH). Budle Bay held a notable 150 on 14th (CGK) with 114 counted in the gull roost at the Tweed Estuary on 11th (Mhu). Several other high counts were recorded with 81 at Newbiggin on 22nd (PRM), 74 at the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay on 3rd (DMT) and 64 at Cocklawburn on 18th (Mhu). One to 32 were found at Blyth Estuary, Cresswell Pond, Druridge, East Chevington, Hauxley, Howick, St Mary's Island and Tynemouth.

**Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo*

The main breeding sites all featured with 15 pairs at Gosforth Park on 29th (AJ) and a peak of 12 birds at Swallow Pond on 22nd (SPP). 11 were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 31st (MR) but only four noted there on other dates (PRM/MR/TRD) and three were noted at Hauxley all month (HRS/TRD/JD). A large count of 18 were feeding at Killingworth Lake on 5th (LJM). Ten were feeding offshore at Druridge on 22nd (TRD/JD). Two or three were also to be found at Arcot Pond, Backworth, Cresswell Pond, Holywell Pond, Horton Grange and Redheugh bridge (Newcastle).



Common Terns at Druridge Pools  
10th May by Iain Robson

**Arctic Tern** *Sterna paradisaea*

The Long Nanny colony built up from at least 650 on 17th (DM/STH/PA) to 1000 on 30th (IF). Elsewhere sightings were few with only one or two at Cresswell, East Chevington and Newbiggin (TRD/JD/PRM)

**Guillemot** *Uria aalge*

The colony at Needles Eye, Berwick continued to flourish with 54 nests found on 25th (Mhu). Otherwise only single birds reported at Druridge on 12th & 22nd (TRD/JD)

**Razorbill** *Alca torda*

Eight nests were found at Needles Eye, Berwick, a distinct drop in numbers from previous years. Otherwise the only sighting was of three N at St Mary's Island on 14th (MSH).

**Puffin** *Fratercula arctica*

The Coquet island birds were noticeable from the mainland on 30th when 100s were flying around (ASJ).

**Rock Dove / Feral Pigeon** *Columba livia*

98 were at North Shields Fish Quay on 24th and 53 at Blyth South Harbour on 31st (DMT).

**Stock Dove** *Columba oenas*

A flock of 15 were counted feeding on a recently sown field just south of Gosforth Park on 11th (MPF). Five came into Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 16th (PCF) and three were at New Shoreston on a timed tetrad visit on 2nd. Twos were noted at Arcot Pond, Cresswell, Druridge Pools, Jesmond Dene, Rothbury, Trewitt, Warrenton, Whittle Dene and Woolsington Pond.

**Woodpigeon** *Columba palumbus*

Between 100 and 160 grazed daily throughout the month on the school filed at Heaton School (MPF). Atlas surveyors found 30 at Threestoneburn and Tiptoe Farm and 26 at Coupland, 22 were counted at Druridge Pools and 20 were on a BBS survey at Cockle Park (JF/IDR/JR). 18 were at Tindal House, 15 at Slaley and Ulgham and 13 at Stobswood and Peigh Hills.

**Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

Seven were counted on a BBS visit to Cockle Park on 9th (JR). Three were in a Dinnington garden including a freshly fledged juvenile on 6th (PCF), two's were at Chesters, Cresswell, Ellington, Peigh Hills, Stobswood, Ulgham and Walbottle

**Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia turtur*

One was at Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, on the football pitch by 'The Mound' on 10th (SJM) and one was at Howick on 17th (JAR).

**Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus*

Most records were of single calling males. Concentrations included four calling in the Simonside area on 10th (ASJ), three on the River Derwent on 11th (SRB) and in the Harthope Valley on 17th, two were at Beacon Hill and Longhorsley Moor. A single calling at Tranwell Woods on 18th and 23rd were the first the observer had heard at this location in 10 years,

**Barn Owl** *Tyto alba*

All records were of singles and came from Bamburgh (present all month), Blagdon, Chatton, west Chevington, Cresswell Pond, Lamb Shield, Langleeford, Linden Hall, Longhirst, Lucker, Powburn, Sharperton and Waren Mill.

A Barn Owl next to the A697 at Powburn

Photographed at 3pm by Peter Tapsell on 11th  
May

**Little Owl** *Athene noctua*

A pair had young in an nest box at Doddington (PHa). Singles were at Blagdon, Capheaton, Dissington, Harlow Hill, Shiremoor and Turpin's Hill (EC *et al.*).

**Tawny Owl** *Strix Aluco*

In a Stamfordham garden, a pair had at least one young (EC) and two young had left a box in Woolsington by 28th (SRB). On 26th, a juvenile was in a box at Fontburn Reservoir (SRB) and two were at Slaley.

Pulli Tawny Owls were ringed at the following sites (PHa):

Powburn, R Breamish Caravan Site	2 pulli ringed
Rennington, Lee Moor	3 pulli ringed
Lesbury	2 pulli ringed
Ingram	2 pulli ringed
Edlingham, near Lemmington Hall	2 pulli ringed
near Stanton	2 pulli ringed



A Tawny Owl in Whittle Wood on 17th May by Michael Holmes (L) and a curious young tawny in a garden nest in Stamfordham by Ed Crabtree on 25th May

**Owl species** *Asio sp*

An *Asio* owl species was at Druridge Pools on 16th (IDR)

**Long-eared Owl** *Asio otus*

One was Holy Island on 10th (CP) and one was at Blagdon on 19th (GB).

**Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus*

Between two and four were on Holy Island 3rd with one to two present there all month (ADM *et al*). One was at Plenmeller Common between 24th and 31st (SJH).

**Swift** *Apus apus*

An impressive 80 - 100 were feeding at Holywell Pond on 9th (SPP), nearby 100 were feeding at Holywell on 11th (ASJ), Marden Quarry in Whitley Bay attracted up to 80 on the 15th with 70 reported there on 20th (MN/KWY). 50 were reported from Branton Gravel Pit on 27th, 40 were at Gosforth Park on 9th, 32 were at Bothal Pond on 6th. Ten to 30 were reported from Blyth, Druridge Pools, Gosforth, Holy Island, Killingworth Lake, Rothbury, Shilford and Whitley Bay.

**Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*

Two pair were on the Ouseburn/Jesmond Dene between 3rd and 20th (DHWB *et al.*), two were at Hexham on 22nd and Newcastle Great Park Pools on 31st. Singles were reported from Haughton Strother, Holywell Dene, Ponteland, Wallington and Wark (North Tyne).

**Hoopoe** *Upupa epops*

In April one was reported at Nunriding Plantation, Mitford on 25th (LC *per* RWM).

**Green Woodpecker** *Picus viridis*

The Harthope Valley contained up to three birds, seen or heard throughout the month (AJ *et al.*). Singles were seen or heard at Corbridge, Dinnington, Hethpool Linn, Letah Wood Mitford Castle, and Lickar Dene.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major*

Four (two pair) were at Grindon Farm (Tynedale) throughout the month, where a nest was found (JF). On 31st two pair were noted feeding young in nests at Redesdale (ASJ) and four were counted on a tetrad visit to Slayley Forest on 6th (RMH). Three were at Nunnykirk and pairs feeding young or young in nests were noted at Cramlington (Valley Park), Haughton Strother, Holywell Dene, Newcastle upon Tyne (Armstrong Park and Jesmond Dene) and Wylam.

**Skylark** *Alauda arvensis*

66 singing males were counted on a farm survey at Carraw Farm on 23rd (JF/IDR). Other surveyors counted 23 at Ellington (Highthorn), 21 at Bellingham and Saughty Hill, 16 in the Harthope Valley and 13 at Threestoneburn and Windy Gyle (MJCo/JF/JR *et al.*).

**Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia*

An incredible 300 were over Holywell Pond during heavy Rain on 9th (SPP) and at least 67 were counted at Otterburn on 25th (PRM). At Haughton Strother, 60-70 nest holes were counted on 20th increasing to a healthy 215 by 31st (MR). At least 40 were counted around Beacon Point (Newbiggin-by-the-Sea) on 22nd where 18 nesting holes were counted. Smaller nesting colonies were noted at Garretshields (five and eight) Howick and Makendon (three).

**Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*

Heavy rain brought at least 200 into Holywell Pond on 9th (SPP), 35 were also at nearby Killingworth lake at the same time. On 15th 40 were at both Marden Quarry (MN) and Hauxley (HRS). Passage was noted at East Chevington where ca.100/hour moved through on 10th (IK) and at Holy Island on 13th when 24 moved N, northerly movement was also noted Newbiggin-by-the-Sea when 20 moved through there on 6th. Nest building was noted from 1st at numerous sites.

**House Martin** *Delichon urbica*

On Holy Island 'many' were noted moving N throughout the day on 10th including one tight flock of over 100 (ADM). At Druridge Pools, 37 were noted coming in off the sea in a NW direction on 22nd (PRM). Up to 20 were noted at Holywell Dene during the month (RJP), 17 were at Blanchland on 26th and 15 at Killingworth Lake on 9th. Nesting activity was noted at Stannington, where birds had arrived back by 19th; six nests were occupied by the month's end (RWM/MIM). 10 were noted collecting mud at Holywell Pond 23rd.

**Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis*

The highest concentration was seven at Slaley Forest on 6th (RMH). In suitable habitat, three were noted at Beacon Hill, Towsbank and Ridley Common between 10 and 24th. Twos were noted at Harthope Valley, Kidland Forest, Thrunton Woods and Unthank. Singing or displaying males were recorded at Halton, Hethpool Linn, Lewisburn (Kielder), Threestoneburn and Tows Bank. On the coast migrants were on Holy Island on 13th and 16th.

**Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis*

At least 54 were counted during a farm survey at Carraw Farm on 23rd (JF/IDR), atlas workers recorded 45 in three tetrads in the Bellingham area on 22nd (ADM), 31 at Threestoneburn and 30 in the Harthope Valley on 31st (JF), 28 at Saughty Hill, 18 at Windy Gyle and 13 at Yarnspath law, all on 23rd (JR).

**Rock Pipit** *Anthus petrosus*

Only one report this month, a single at Newbiggin-by-the-Sea on 22nd (PRM).

**Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava flavissima*

The highest count again came from Whittle Dene Reservoirs where six were noted on 4th (SR), one to four were noted there on other dates. Haughton Strother attracted three to four between 4th and 31st (MR). Pairs were noted at Scremerston on 4th, Monk's House (Seahouses) on 12th and Beal on 13th. Two were at Budle Bay and Druridge Pools on 13th-14th. Away from previously mentioned locations, singles were noted at Adderstone, Linton Lane NR, Pegswood, Wark (North Tyne) and Willimoteswick.

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*

Six (three pairs) were noted at Whitlee in Redesdale on 19th (JCD). A family part of two adults and three fledged young were in the Harthope Valley (KWY) and young were in a nest with a pair at Blindburn (JR) on 30th. Nesting activity was also noted at Great Park, Batailshielhaugh, Linbriggs, Riddlees and Wallington Hall. Newcastle city centre birds were still being noted including singing birds at Higham place.

**Pied Wagtail** *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

No data was received from the regular roost Tapee Fen this month so the highest count came from Holy Island with 20 there on 3rd (ADM). 18 were counted in three tetrads in the Bellingham area on 22nd (ADM) and five were at Otterburn on 25th. Breeding was noted at Haughton Strother by 20th where three juveniles were noted and at North Shields Fish Quay, where 2 juveniles were being fed away from the nest on 24th. By 30th juveniles were seen at Grindon Lough, Howick and a nest of five young at Carshope.

**White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba alba*

Three were at Beacon Point (Newbiggin-by-the-Sea) on 22nd (PRM), Singles were at Holy Island on 3rd (CP), Haughton Strother on 10th (MR) and Druridge Pools on 13th (IDR).

**Waxwing** *Bombicilla garrulus*

Three were in treetops on the edge of Leazes park in Newcastle-upon-Tyne on 5th (GB).



**Dipper** *Cinclus cinclus*

In Hulne Park, Alnwick, there were three definite nests (fourth suspected). Five chicks ringed from one on the **19th April**. Another had three chicks on the 10th but only one viable young ringed on 9th (PHa). Breeding activity was also noted at Rothbury on 9th where adults fed a juvenile, Jesmond Dene on 13th (one juvenile being fed by adults), Upper Coquetdale on 14th (two fledged young), Allen Banks on 14th (one juvenile), Bellingham and Bothal on 20th (both one young).

A young Dipper answering a call of nature at Bellingham. By Tim Dean

**Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

31 singing males were counted in Plessey Woods on 1st (LJM) and 30 were noted in Holywell Dene on 22nd (KWY), 17 were at Havannah NR on 27th and Wallsend Dene on 29th and 16 were singing in East Cramlington NR on a timed tetrad visit on 3rd.

**Duncock** *Prunella modularis*

Atlas workers counted 12 at Cockle Park Farm on 9th and Slaley on 17th (JR/RMH). A juvenile was in a Walbottle garden on 31st.

**Robin** *Erithacus rubecula*

The highest counts were the result of Atlas work, Timed Tetrad Visits producing 22 at East Cramlington NR on 3rd (LJM) and Slaley on 17th (RMH). 19 singing birds were located in Plessey Woods CP on 1st (LJM) and in Slaley Forest two adjacent tetrads produced a total of 34 (RMH). At Prestwick Carr 14 birds represented at least three family parties on 30th (PCF), 13 were singing in Holywell Dene on 22nd and 10 were at Chesters House and Walled Garden on 31st. Elsewhere nine were at Cockle Park Farm, seven fledged young in Jesmond Dene on 18th, and six at Tiptoe Farm and Duddo. A pair had fledged at least two young from a nest box in a Kenton garden by 3rd, this site used for the second year. One to four were reported from a further 12 localities.

**Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica*

A mini influx occurred mid month. On Holy Island two birds were found, the first a very obliging male on the Straight Lonnen on 13th, remaining to 14th at least (PRM/CP/TRD/JD). What was considered to be a second individual (distinguished from first bird by lack of yellow at the bill base) was located on cliffs below the school from 15th to 16th (RA/CP). Again on 15th another was found at East Ord CP (BWG per Mrs G Nelson) and on 22nd an elusive female appeared at Newbiggin GC (PRM).

A Bluethroat on Holy Island  
by Colin Pears

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*

What was almost certainly two (although never seen together) female type birds were at St Mary's Wetland on 13th (ADM).

**Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Well reported this month, all bar one of the records from breeding / potential breeding areas. Eight singing males were identified during a TTV in the Yetlington area on 21st (TRD) and six in the Beacon Hill area on 1st (ASJ). Two pairs were found at Fallowlees on 25th (JCD) and three's at Harthope Valley, Haughton Strother, Howlett Hall (singing males-only one here in previous years), Thrunton Woods and West Raw (nr Rothbury) and two singing males were at Barhaugh Burn. Elsewhere singles were reported from Allen Banks, Bakethin, Black Middens, Blakehopeburnhaugh, Dipton Foot, Falstone, Felton, Follions, (Rothbury



area), Haltwhistle, Hareshaw Linn, Haydon Bridge, Hollybush, Holystone Common, Kingswood Burn, Langleeford, Mitford Castle, Nunnykirk, River Derwent (North), Unthank, Warton, Willimoteswick (Bardon Mill). Confirmed breeding included six birds close to fledging from a nest box at Fontburn Reservoir on 26th (SRB) and at Prestwick Carr nest building on 2nd was followed by the pair feeding at the nest on 30th (PCF). The only migrant was at Ross Village on 9th (MSH).

#### **Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra*

The majority of records were from upland areas in the Coquet and Cheviot valleys. A total of 11 pairs were noted in Upper Coquetdale on 14th (ASJ), several other observers reporting birds more specifically in this area at Clennel, Fulhope, Makendon, Shillmoor and Quickeningcote. In the Cheviot Hills two singing males were north of Linhope on 2nd (IFo), two at Hawsen Burn (Harthope Valley) on 6th (EHa), a pair at Langlee on 17th (DM/STH/PA) and singles north west of Alnham, and at Carey Burn (Harthope Valley). Elsewhere singles were found in the south west of the county at Edges Green on 24th and in the south east at Holywell Pond on 14th. One to two migrants were noted on Holy Island from 13th to 17th.

#### **Stonechat** *Saxicola torquata*

Confirmed breeding was reported from seven inland and 13-14 coastal sites as outlined in the chart below.

Site	Date	Adults	Young	Notes	Observer
Backworth	11th May	2		Plus fledged young	CGK
Budle Bay	14th May	2		Pair feeding young	CGK
Cheswick Dunes	1st May	2	3		MHu
Cocklawburn	18th May	2	3		MHu
Cresswell Pond	29th May	4	6	2 pairs with fledged young	ASJ
Druridge Links	13th May	4	3	Juveniles from one pair	IDR
Druridge Pools	13th May	2	3	Probably same as above	PRM
East Chevington	25th May		1		STH
Embleton Links	10th May	3	5		NFO
Harthope Valley	30th May	1	5		KWY
Holy Island	23rd May			6 birds. First fledged broods	IK
Howick	8th May	2	1		JAR
Langleeford	31st May	2		Feeding young	JF
Linhope (west of)	14th May	1	4		IFo
Long Nanny	29th May	4		One pair carrying food for young	JSB/EC
Newbiggin	17th May	1	1	A pair here on 12th	PRM
Newcastle Great Park Pools	23rd May	2	3	Minimum three young	AHB
Redesdale (Arks Edge)	7th May	2		Pair feeding young	JCD
Seaton Sluice	25th May	2	2		CDH
Warkworth Gut	31st May		1		NFO
West Hartford	27th May	1	3		LJM

In addition single birds were noted at Rothbury (Addycombe), Rothley Craggs and Shillmoor (Upper Coquetdale).

A Stonechat at Druridge Links  
23rd May  
by Iain Robson





A male Wheatear (L) on 9th May by Mike Hodgson and,  
(R) a Wheatear at Druridge Links on 10th May by Iain Robson

### **Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Continued passage was noted during the first ten days, mainly on the coast. On Holy Island 20 were reported on 2nd, ten on 3rd, seven on 9th and 12 on 10th (DCh/ADM/CP). 15+ at Prestwick Carr on 2nd (RWM/MIM), six at Weetslade Colliery CP on 10th (GB) five at Halton Red House on 9th (ALT) and four at Allerdean Mill on 8th (RMH) were no doubt examples of Inland Passage, while back on the coast one to four were reported from Cheswick Dunes, Chevington, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Links, Hauxley NR, Howick, Long Nanny, Newbiggin, Tynemouth and Wansbeck Estuary. In breeding areas 14 pairs were noted in Upper Coquetdale on 14th (ASJ), and four's at Clennel, Low Acton Farm (Allendale) and Paxhill (Allenheads). Elsewhere there were three at Harthope Valley, Hollin Green Farm (nr Keenly) and Stobswood and one to two at a further 17 mainly upland localities.

Birds showing characteristics of the **Greenland race** *O.o.leucorhoa* included on Holy Island, one of the birds reported on 3rd, four to six from 10th and two on 13th (ADM/PRM). All three birds at Cheswick Dunes on 1st were considered to be of this race (MHu) and singles were also on the beach at Druridge Links on 4th and 8th (IDR/JF), at Druridge Pools on 12th and perhaps more unusual at Grindon Lough on 2nd (PRM).

### **Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus*

Several observers reported birds from the Harthope Valley. A broad observation reported five here during the month (DGB/RHB/EHa). More specifically up to four were reported from Hawsen Burn on 23rd (ASJ), three singing males at Carey Burn on 11th and a pair here on 10th (PAT/ADMc) and a single male at Langleeford Hope on 17th. The only other report was a pair at Makendon (Upper Coquetdale) on 25th (JR).

### **Blackbird** *Turdus merula*

Atlas work again produced the highest counts. 44 were counted in a two hour TTV at Killingworth / West Moor on 9th (LJM), 35 over three tetrads in the Bellingham area on 22nd (ADM), 30 at Havannah NR / Hazlerigg on 27th (LJM/PA), 29 at Slaley on 17th (RMH) and 21 over three tetrads in the Tiptoe / Duddo area on 11th (JR). 12-18 were also reported from Cockle Park Farm, Haydon Fell, Highthorn, Stobswood and Ulgham, and seven to ten at Chesters House and Walled Garden, Jesmond Dene, Peigh Hills and a Walbottle garden. Elsewhere one to three were noted at a further eight localities.

### **Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris*

Single birds were noted at Dinnington on 5th (PCF), Conundrum on 11th (DGB/RHB) and Linden Hall on 16th (NFO).

### **Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos*

This species was reported as quite common at Happy Valley (Wooler), with a total of 14 on 23rd (ASJ). Elsewhere numbers held up well in the south west of the county with nine in the Willimoteswick area (Bardon Mill), and seven at Shankfoot (near Unthank) on 7th (SJH) and six at Haydon Fell (singing males) and Chesters House and Walled Garden. Six were also found over three tetrads in the Tiptoe Farm / Duddo area, five at Lanton and four at Cockle Park Farm, Jesmond Dene and Slaley Forest. One to two were noted in a further five localities. Successful breeding was noted in gardens at Kenton where young fledged some time after 3rd and Great Whittington where two young fledged from a nest in Clematis.

### **Redwing** *Turdus iliacus*

Two late returning migrants were noted at Holy Island on 24th (ADM).

**Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus*

An impressive 19 pairs were located in the Allendale area on 3rd (ASJ). Seven were at Shankfoot on 7th (SJH) and six at Langleeford and Prestwick Carr, the latter a family group. Reports of five were received from Jesmond Dene, Slaley Forest and Willimoteswick and one to four from a further 12 localities.

**Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella naevia*

A survey of the Cramlington area produced a total of 13 territories, this compared with 11 in 2003 (STH/LJM/DM). Three reeling birds were heard at Prestwick Carr on 2nd (PCF) and two's at Branton GP during the month (IBDa)/KDa), East Chevington on 1st (SPP) and St Mary's Island on 10th and 15th (MSH/AJ). Elsewhere single birds, mostly reeling were heard at Bellasis Bridge, Corbridge, Drift Inn Pools, Gosforth Park, Hauxley, Holy Island, Holywell Pond, Horton Grange, Howick, Kitty Brewster, Linton Lane NR, Newcastle Great Park Pools, Old Hartley, Rising Sun Farm, Shiremoor / Backworth, Swallow Pond, Wansbeck Estuary, Warenton, West Hartford and Woolsington Ponds.

**Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

30 territories were identified in the Cramlington Survey area during the month, compared with 18 in 2003 (STH/LJM/DM). 11 were found over 2km at Prestwick Carr on 30th (PCF) and 10 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 13th included eight singing birds (MR). On 11th nine were at Hauxley NWT, eight at Backworth and seven at Cresswell Pond and Druridge Pools, while seven were also in the Monks House area the following day. Elsewhere four to six were noted at Bamburgh, Carraw Farm, Elford area, Highthorn, Holy Island, Linton Pond, St Mary's Island and in the Warenton area, and one to three at a further 20 localities including new sites for the observer at Silverlink CP and West Allotment Pond (LJM).

**Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Gosforth Park NR supported the largest numbers with up to eight singing males by 29th (AJ). Elsewhere there were three at East Chevington on 18th and 19th (TRD/JD/JSB/EC) and at Seghill NR on 25th (LJM). Singles were also reported from Castron, Druridge Pools and Holywell Pond.

**\* Icterine Warbler** *Hippolais icterina*

Two birds were reported during a light coastal fall around mid month. The first was at Holy Island from 14th-16th (CP/RA/CGK/PS) and another at Newbiggin Mound from 16th-17th (JGS/SJM *et.al.*) the latter occasionally bursting into song.

**Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla*

The Cramlington Survey area produced a total of 34 territories, a very significant increase on the previous total of 15 in 2003 (STH/LJM/DM). Seven singing males were at Plessey Woods CP on 1st (LJM) and seven's also at Chesters House and Walled Garden on 10th (MT/NT) and Holywell Dene on 9th (ALT). Elsewhere there were counts of six from Blanchland on 26th and Wallsend Dene on 29th, and five at Tiptoe Farm on 11th. Three to four were reported from Derwent Reservoir, Duddo, Gosforth Park, Haughton Strother, Haydon Fell, Haltwhistle, Hauxley NWT, Hexham, Leazes Park, Newbiggin, Shilford, Slaley, Tindale House, Willington Gut and Woodhorn Church and one to two from a further 24 localities.



A Garden Warbler at Ridley Stokoe on 19th May by Tim Dean

**Garden Warbler** *Sylvia borin*

Some light coastal passage was noted from 15th-16th when three+ were reported from St Mary's Island (MSH), three on Holy Island (CGK/PS *et.al.*) and up to three at Newbiggin. Two were also reported from



Bamburgh on 16th and singles at Hauxley NR on 2nd and 15th. Three territories were identified in the Cramlington Survey area, compared with nine in 2003 (STH/LJM/DM). About 15 were discovered in a 6-7kl cycle ride between Benridge Hagg and Beacon Hill on 25th (ADM), where at the latter locality five singing males were heard on 1st (ASJ). Six singing males were found at Trewitt on 18th and five at Hareshaw Linn on 20th (TRD/JD). Four were singing at Linden Hall by the end of the month, at least four at Mitford Castle on 9th, and three+ in the Harthope Valley by 10th. Elsewhere one to two were reported from a further 40 widespread localities.

#### **Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca*

Light coastal passage was noted mid-month when three+ were at Bamburgh on 16th (BRS), up to three on Holy Island from 14th-17th (PRM/RA/IBDa/CP et.al) with one here earlier in the month on 2nd and singles at Hauxley on 2nd, 11th and 15th, Newbiggin (Ash lagoon) on 15th, Newbiggin (Mound) 17th-19th and Tynemouth on 22nd. In the Cramlington study area a sharp decline was noted from eight territories in 2003 to only four this year (STH/LJM/DM). Three singing males were at Holywell on 2nd (ASJ) and Waren Mill-Spindlestone area on 13th (CGK). Elsewhere single birds were reported from Bomarsund, Bothal Pond, Brier Dene Farm, Castle Island, Coupland, Havannah NR, Highthorn, Laverock Hall Farm (Blyth), Linton Lane NR, Marden Quarry, Oxford, Pegswood, Rising Sun Farm and Silverlink Park.

#### **Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis*

Well represented in most areas this month although reported as scarce in others. An impressive 48 territories were identified in the Cramlington survey area during the month, an increase of six since 2003 (STH/LJM/DM). Elsewhere singing birds included 24 in the Holywell area on 2nd (ASJ), 18 over 2km at Prestwick Carr on 9th (PCF) and 13 in the Halton Castle / Aydon Castle (Corbridge) area included 11 singing males (MR). 12 were noted in the Woodhorn Church and Newbiggin areas on 17th and ten were singing at the latter locality on 12th (PRM). Nine at Elford on 23rd were all singing birds (MSH) as were eight at Swallow Pond on 6th (LJM). Eight were also reported from Holywell Pond E. on 23rd (MT/NT), and seven at Highthorn (Warkworth Lane) on 14th and the Laker Hall / Whittle Dene Reservoirs area on 10th (MJCo). Six at Bamburgh on 16th coincided with a coastal fall, as did five at St Mary's Island on 15th. Counts of four to five were received from ten sites including four territories in ½ km between Swan Hunters and Davy Bank (Wallsend) and one to three from a further 25 widespread localities.

#### **\* Greenish Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

An extremely rare spring record was reported from Newbiggin Mound, where a single bird was watched feeding in the canopy for ten minutes on the morning of 17th (PRM), the record coinciding with a period of easterly winds and a coastal fall of more common and some scarce drift migrants.

#### **Wood Warbler** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Single coastal migrants were noted at Holy Island on 16th (NFO/RA) and Newbiggin Mound on 16th-17th (STH/AT/PRM/TW). In breeding areas six were found at Sidwood (five singing) on 31st (ASJ), up to two singing at Allen Banks on various dates from 1st. Two were at Langley Castle on 6th and Morrale Wood on 1st, two singing at Rothbury (Addycombe) on 24th and a pair at Tows Bank (Eals) on 22nd. Elsewhere singles were at Blakehopeburnhaugh (Kielder), Cupola Bridge, Langley Station, Middleton Hall and River Derwent (North).

#### **Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*

49 territories in the Cramlington Survey area compared with 28 in 2003 (STH/LJM/DM). 16 were singing in Plessey Woods CP on 1st (LJM) and ten were found in the Tiptoe Farm tetrad on 11th (JR). Seven to eight were reported from Holywell Dene, Jesmond Dene, Slaley Forest and Wallsend Dene and five to six from Duddo, Silverlink Park, Stobswood and Tindale House. Four passage migrants were singing at Holy Island on 25th and reports of four were also received from Belsay Hall, Chesters House and Walled Garden, Shankfoot (Unthank) and Ulgham. Elsewhere one to three were reported from a further 19 localities.

A Chiffchaff at Backworth  
by Chris Knox



**Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus*

50 territories in the Cramlington Survey area, was the same as 2003 (STH/LJM/DM). Many other areas supported healthy populations, including 45 at Hethpool Linn on 2nd (IDR/JF), a total of 43 from two adjacent tetrads in Slaley Forest (RMH) and 40 singing males at Beacon Hill on 1st (ASJ). Other reports from the Cheviot valleys included 29 at Langleeford (Harthope Valley) and 24 at Threestoneburn on 31st (JF), while counts of 15-18 were received from Blanchland, Prestwick Carr and Simonside / Harwood Forest area. Elsewhere 11-14 were noted at Derwent Reservoir, East Cramlington NR, Havannah NR, Haydon Fell, Lanton, Silverlink CP and Swallow Pond. Up to 11 passage birds were at Holy Island on 10th (ADM). Counts of seven to ten were recorded at Ashington spoil heap, Catcleugh Reservoir, Grindon Lough, Stobswood, Tindale House, Tiptoe Farm and the Warenton area and one to six from a further 37 localities. In the Morpeth area a partial leucistic bird with lots of white in the wings was noted in Bluebell woods on 21st April (ADMc).

**Willow / Chiff** *Phylloscopus (sp)*

A bird at Scotch Gill on 13th May showed characteristics of a Willow Warbler, but sang both types of song, a Willow Warbler song followed by three elements of Chiffchaff at the end. This is the observer's third experience of such behaviour over the years (ADMc).

**Cramlington warbler survey results 2009** (STH/LJM/DM)

Species	Territories in 2009	Territories in 2003
Grasshopper Warbler	13	11
Sedge Warbler	30	18
Blackcap	34	15
Garden Warbler	3	9
Lesser Whitethroat	4	8
Common Whitethroat	48	42
Chiffchaff	49	28
Willow Warbler	50	50

**Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus*

It was yet another poor month for this species which appears to have suffered more than most from the relatively harsh winter weather. Up to five were noted in two Slaley Forest tetrads during the month (RMH). Three to four were reported from Chesters House and Walled Garden, Tiptoe Farm, Usway Ford and Usway Forest and one to two at Cramlington (Valley Park), Haydon Fell, Jesmond Dene (three sites), Tindale House and Ulgham Grange Farm.

**Firecrest** *Regulus ignicapillus*

The mid-month coastal fall produced a single bird at Newbiggin Mound on 16th (JGS/SJM).

**Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata*

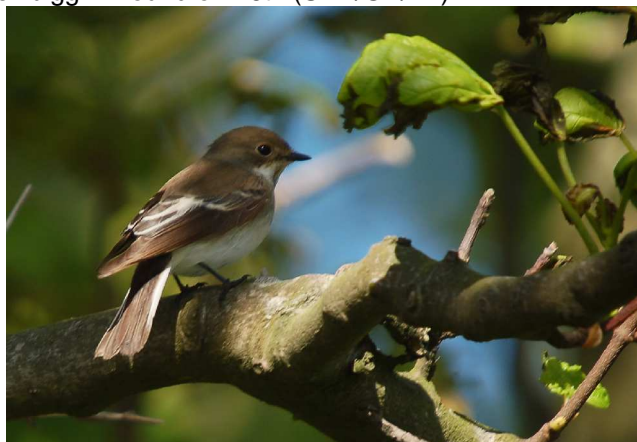
Four pairs at Beacon Hill on 10th (ASJ) were the first arrivals. Incoming migrants involved two on Holy Island between 14th-16th (CP/RA/NFO) and one there on 24th (IK). A single was also at Newbiggin Mound on 16th (ADMc/TW). By 30th eight were found in a small area of the Lewis Burn, Kielder Forest (AJ), five singing at Hareshaw Linn (Bellingham), on 20th (TRD), three at Chesters Walled Garden on 31st (ALT), two at Park Burnfoot on 22nd (EC/JSB), Melkridge on 24th SJH), Benridge Hagg and Haughton Strother on 25th (ADMc/MR), Hartburn Glebe on 26th (TRD), Derwent Reservoir on 30th (RMH), Linden Hall and Nunnykirk on 31st (NFO/IRD). Singles were also observed at Acomb Fell, Alnham, Bakethin, Barhaugh Burn, Bellasis Bridge, Belsay gardens, Blanchland, Bolam Lake CP, Carraw Farm, Carshope (Upper Coquetdale), Dye House (Hexham), Glanton, Hesleyside, High Staward, Kielder, Langleeford (Harthope Valley), Langley Castle, Shildon near Blanchland, Stamfordham, Trewhitt Hall, Warton, Whitfield, Whitle Dene and Wooler Common.

**Spotted Flycatcher is a target species for 2009. Please report all records.**



**Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Five males were on territory at Nunnykirk on 1st (ASJ), four (three males) at Moralee Wood (Allen Banks) on 14th (EC) and singles at Rothbury on 2nd (TRD/JD) Willimoteswick area near Bardon Mill on 7th (SJH), Thrunton Woods on 14th (TRD/JD) Beaufront Kennels (Hexham) on 21st (RMH), Barhaugh Burn on 22nd (EC/JSB), Happy Valley on 23rd (ASJ) and Shildon (Blanchland) on 23rd-27th (JMA). Coastal passage was indicated by two on Holy Island on 14th (CP) increasing to six there on 16th (RA) and singles at Cresswell Pond on 16th (JRT) and Newbiggin Mound on 16th (STH/GB/AT).



A Pied Flycatcher in the vicar's garden Holy Island  
14th May by Tim Dean

**Long-tailed Tit** *Aegithalos caudatus*

14 were at Prestwick Carr on 30th (PCF), eight at Holywell Pond on 28th (MT/NT), and one-five at a further 12 widespread localities. Breeding was confirmed at Coronation Wood (Harthope Valley), Exhibition Park (Newcastle), Hauxley RS, Holywell and Prestwick Carr.

**Blue Tit** *Cyanistes caeruleus*

A pair at High Chibburn Farm (Widdrington) laid 12 eggs in a nest box by 2nd (IDR/JF). Ten were at Chesters Walled Garden on 10th (ALT), nine at Stobswood on 5th (MJCo) and Ulgham on 7th (MJCo), six at Tiptoe Farm on 11th (JR) and one to five at eight widespread localities.

**Great Tit** *Parus major*

Nine were at Jesmond Dene on 11th (MJCo), eight at Chesters Walled Garden on 10th (ALT), four at Ulgham Grange Farm on 12th (MJCo) and one-three at a further five widespread localities.

**Coal Tit** *Periparus ater*

14 were noted at Slaley Forest during an Atlas visit on 6th (RMH). Four were at Usway Forest on 23rd (JR). Breeding was confirmed at Havannah NR, Hauxley RS, Newsham (Blyth) and Shildon (Blanchland). One-three were at a further ten widespread localities.

**Willow Tit** *Poecile montanus*

A family party (four juveniles) was observed at Swallow Pond on 25th (MPF). A pair was at Beacon Hill on 1st (ASJ) and singles at a Gosforth garden on 1st and 9th (AHB), Weetslade Colliery CP on 10th (GB) and Tindal House on 11th (JR).

**Marsh Tit** *Poecile palustris*

Singles were noted near Felton on 9th (NFO), a Linden Hall garden on 14th-17th (NFO), Beacon Hill on 19th (STH), Hartburn Glebe on 26th (TRD) and March Burn on 28th (RMH).

**Marsh Tit is a target species for 2009. Please report all records.**

**Nuthatch** *Sitta europaea*

Breeding was confirmed at Howick (JAR), Linden Hall (NFO), Nunnykirk (Two Broods – IRD) and Wallington Hall Walled Garden (SRB). Two were at Low Carrith on 2nd (JR), Bolam Lake CP and Hartburn Glebe on 3rd (TRD), Chesters Walled Garden on 10th (ALT) and Bellingham area on 22nd (ADM). Singles were also at Cupola Bridge, Hareshaw Linn, Hartford Hall, a Holywell Dene, Jesmond Dene, Mainsrigg, March Burn, Shankfoot area near Unthank, Staward and Willimoteswick area (Bardon Mill).



Nuthatch at nest hole at Holystone Common  
19th May by Peter Tapsell

**Treecreeper** *Certhia familiaris*

A family party was observed at Barhaugh Burn on 22nd (JSB/EC) and an active nest was noted at Hareshaw Linn on 20th (TRD). Two were at Chesters Walled Garden and Tows Bank on 10th (ALT/BNR). Singles were also at Allen Banks, Bellasis Bridge, Bellshiel, Bolam Lake CP, Harthope Valley (Coronation Wood and Langleeford), Ninebanks, Tindal House and Wallington Hall.

**Red-backed Shrike** *Lanius colluris*

A male was noted at Beal Farm on 20th (CL/DEJ).

**Jay** *Garrulus glandarus*

Five were noted at Slaley Forest during an Atlas visit on 6th (RMH). Three were observed at 300m a.s.l. at Chartners (Charwood Forest) on 2nd (KWY) and pairs at Tranwell on 2nd PCF), Comb near Falstone on 5th (IFo), Willimoteswick on 7th (SJH) and Towsbank on 10th (BNR). Singles were also found at Catcleugh Reservoir, Colt Crag, Hartburn Glebe, Jesmond Dene, Linden Hall, Plessey Woods CP, Slaley Forest and Woodend. Two were at Bothal Woods on 11th April (DM/GB).

**Magpie** *Pica pica*

12 visited a Walbottle garden on 17th (KR/LR) and five at Jesmond Dene on 10th (MJCo).

**Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula*

126 were found in the Bellingham area during Atlas visits on 24th (ADM). 39 were at Stobswood on 5th (MJCo), 37 at Cockle Park Farm on 9th (JR), 32 at Ulgham Grange Farm on 12th (MJCo) and one to 15 at a further ten widespread localities.

**Rook** *Covus frugilegus*

Rookery counts included 67 nests at Elford (MSH), 41 at New Shoreston (MSH), 34 at Yeavering (IDR/JF), 25 at Scremerston Hill Farm (MHu) and 15 at Ross Village (MSH). A pair bred in the wood at Hauxley RS – the first for many years (HRS). 102+ were at Haydon Fell near Haydon Bridge on 4th (PRM), 77 near QE II CP on 25th (CDH), 45 at Tiptoe Farm on 11th (JR), 38 at Ulgham Grange Farm on 12th (MJCo), 35 at Bellasis Bridge on 24th (PCF) and 30 at Cockle Park Farm on 9th (JR). One to 25 were at a further five widespread localities.

**Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone*

25 were foraging on the R. Tyne mudflats at Elwick Wharf, Newcastle on 13th (DM). Eight were at Ulgham Grange Farm on 12th (MJCo), seven at Blakemoor Farm, Cresswell on 19th (MJCo). A pair successfully nested inside the old limekiln at Grindledykes Quarry (PRM). One to five were at a further 11 widespread localities.

**Raven** *Corvus corax*

One-two were noted throughout the Harthope Valley all month (Housey Craggs on 3rd – DCh), Langleeford on 3rd (AJ) and 10th – ADMc, Carey Burn on 30th – KWY). Elsewhere, two were near Wanny Crag on 8th (ADMc), Deadwater (Kielder) on 19th (JD), and Sheel Law near Bellingham on 24th (ADM). Singles were also at Gleadscleugh on 9th (IBDa/KDa), Grindon Lough on 19th (PRM), Plenmeller Common and Sidwood on 31st (SJH/ASJ). On the coast, one flew over Longhoughton on 17th (RL).

**Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*

43 were at Ulgham Grange Farm on 12th (MJCo), 31 (including juveniles) visited a Walbottle garden on 31st (KR/LR), 30 at Jesmond Dene on 18th (MJCo) and 22 at Stobswood on 5th (MJCo). Breeding was confirmed at Chesters Walled Garden (ALT) and Linton (IDR/JF). One to 13 were at a further five widespread localities.

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*

179 were found in five tetrads around Bellingham between 22nd-24th (ADM), 30 at Ramshaw Field on 7th (SJH), 26 at Cockle Park Farm on 9th (JR), 18 at Linton on 2nd (IDR/JE) and at Ulgham Grange Farm on 12th (MJCo). Confirmed breeding was reported from Holy Island (PRM), Howick 9JAR), Netherton Park (RWM/MIM) and Walbottle (KR/LR). An albanistic bird visited a Lemington garden on 30th (JMc). One to 15 were noted at a further ten widespread localities.

**Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*

At Allerdean Mill ten nest boxes were occupied with eggs or very small young on 10th (RMH *et al.*). Breeding was also confirmed at Budle (CGK), Elford (MSH), Haughton Strother (MR), Netherton Park (RWM/MIM), Stanton Hall (NFO), Waren Mill Caravan Park (CGK) and Whittonstall (AJ). Ten were at New Shoreston on 2nd (MSH), four at Alnham on 2nd (KWY), Bothal Pond on 6th (PRM), Bellasis Bridge on 16th (RWM/MIM) and a Warkworth garden on 30th (JMA). One to three were also observed at Blakemoor Farm (Creswell), Bothal Stepping Stones, a Dinnington garden, Highthorn, Pigdon near Morpeth, Tranwell, Turpin's Hill, Ulgham Lane and Wark.

**Tree Sparrow is a target species for 2009. Please report all records.**

**Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs*

Atlas visits produced 45 in the Bellingham area on 22nd (ADM), 35 at East Chevington on 3rd (LJM), 26 at Haydon Fell near Haydon Bridge on 4th (PRM), 24 at Ashington spoilheap on 16th (CDH), 23 at Slaley Forest on 6th (RMH) and Langleeford (Harthope Valley) on 31st (JF), 22 at Prestwick Carr on 9th (PCF) and Whitley Chapel on 9th (BNR), 20 at Ulgham on 7th ((MJCo), Peigh Hills on 16th (MJCo) and Threestone Burn on 31st (JF). One to 16 were at a further 21 widespread localities.

**Greenfinch** *Carduelis chloris*

21 visited feeders at Stanington on 31st (JMA), 20 at Holy Island on 3rd (ADM), 15 at Ulgham on 7th (MJCo), 11 at Cockle Park Farm on 9th (JR) and one to eight were at a further nine widespread localities.



A singing male Greenfinch  
at Backworth by Chris Knox

**Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis*

20+ were noted on Holy Island on 3rd (ADM), 15 in the Elford area on 23rd (MSH), 13 at Cockle Park Farm on 9th (JR), ten in the Warenton area on 9th (MSH), Hauxley RS on 15th (HRS) and Slaley on 17th (RMH). One to eight were at a further 15 widespread localities.

**Siskin** *Carduelis spinus*

33 were ringed at Fell Cottages, Slaley on 3rd (RMH). Four at Spindlestone on 13th showed evidence of colonising the area and probable breeding (CGK). 20+ visited feeders at Grindon Farm all month (JF), eight at Kielder on 30th (TRD), seven at Slaley Forest on 6th (RMH), six at Coronation Wood (Harthope Valley) on 17th (DM/STH/PA) and Yarnspeth Law on 23rd (JR). One to four were also at Blakehopeburnhaugh (Kielder Forest), Brocohtia, Bygate, Catcleugh Reservoir, Haltwhistle North Wood, Haydon Fell, Hexham, Nunnykirk, a Rothbury garden, Rothley, Saughy Hill, Thrunton Woods, Towsbank, Usway Forest, Wark, Whitelee (Redesdale), Whitley Chapel, Woodhorn Church and Woosingham Ponds.

**Linnet** *Carduelis cannabina*

40 were at Halton/Aydon on 11th (MR), 36 at Haydon Fell near Haydon Bridge on 11th (PRM), 27 at Woodhorn Church on 22nd (PRM), 20 at Druridge Links on 10th (IDR), 16+ at Howick all month (JAR) and Newbiggin on 12th (PRM). One to 12 were at a further 17 widespread localities including family parties at Netherton Park and Newcastle Quayside.

**Twite** *Carduelis flavirostris*

One flew S calling west of Linhope on 14th (IFO).

**Lesser Redpoll** *Carduelis cabaret*

Ten in a wintering flock were at Fourlaws Forest on 6th (IK), nine at Haydon Fell on 4th (PRM), four pairs in the Simonside area on 10th (ASJ), six at Haughton Strother on 4th (MR), Lordenshaw on 10th (ASJ), Linhope (including a pair collecting fur from the underside of a dead rabbit on the road for nest lining – IFO), Harthope Valley on 17th (DM/STH/PA) and Melkridge on 25th (SJH). Five were at Derwent Reservoir on 30th (RMH), four at Grindon Lough on 2nd-16th (PRM) and Yarnspeth Law on 23rd (JR). One-three were also observed at Abshiels, Angerton Lake, Beacon Hill, Ferny Chesters, Garretshields, Hareshaw Linn, Kingswood Burn, Linden Hall, Monks House area, Otterburn, near Rothbury, Saughy Hill, Shankfoot area, Shildon near Blanchland, Sweethope Lough, Thrunton Woods, Whitelee (Redesdale) and Windyhaugh (Upper Coquetdale). On the coast, one was on Holy Island on 16th (RA). Two were ringed at Fell Cottages, Slaley on 3rd (RMH).

**Crossbill** *Loxia curvirostra*

Six were at Lordenshaw on 10th (ASJ) and singles at Thrunton Woods on 1st (TRD/JD) and Simonsides on 3rd (NFO).

**Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Four were at Rothbury all month (TRD/JD), three were singing at Lanton on 2nd (IDR/JF), three at Stobswood on 5th (MJCo), Ashington spoilheap on 16th (CDH), Bakethin on 19th (TRD/JD) and Arcot Pond on 23rd (STH). One to two were at a further 18 widespread localities.

**Yellowhammer** *Emberiza citrinella*

11 were at Duddo on 11th (JR), ten males singing at Haydon Fell on 4th (PRM) and Longhorsley on 10th (ASJ), six at Tindal House on 11th (JR), five at Tiptoe Farm on 11th (JR), four at Highborn on 14th (MJCo) and Slaley on 17th (RMH) and one to three were at a further 16 widespread localities.

**Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus*

19 were noted on Holy Island on 10th (ADM), 18 at Cresswell Pond on 30th (ASJ), 14 males singing at St. Mary's Island on 1st (PRM), nine at Otterburn on 25th (PRM), seven at Druridge Pools on 10th (IDR), six at Blakemoor Farm, Cresswell on 19th (MJCo), four singing in the Monk's House area on 12th (MSH), Highborn on 14th (MJCo), Peigh Hills on 16th (MJCo) and Newbiggin on 17th (PRM). One to three were at a further 21 widespread localities.

**Corn Bunting** *Emberiza calandra*

One singing like a Yellowhammer near North Highmoor, north of Linden Hall was well observed between 1st-25th (ASJ/TRD *et al.*).

**Brown-headed Cowbird** *Icterus galbula*

One was observed at Belford on 1st . It was believed to have been present in the last week of April but only photographed on 1st May. Photo email'd to DG Bell which he opened on Saturday afternoon 2nd May. He went round immediately and confirmed the sighting but the bird flew 30 minutes after he arrived (15.30). It was not seen again by any of the neighbours. The County Recorder was advised via a two line email on 3rd May and phone conversation resulted in him being advised that if the bird re-appeared he would be notified. This unfortunately never happened. County Recorder also not advised of even the town (only North Northumberland). A full report and photo only sent to him on 3rd June! – DGB *et al.*).



Two views of the Brown-headed Cowbird  
Sadly, seen by few - May 2009

**ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN****Escapes****Bar-headed Goose** *Anser indicus*

The bird present last month at Hauxley stayed and was joined by another on 11th (HRS/JA). This second bird has been reported flying over the Farne Islands on 11th.

**Muscovy Duck** *Cairina moschata*

Two joined the wildfowl gathering at Hauxley on 8th (JA)

**Hybrids****Canada Goose x Greylag Goose** *Branta canadensis x Anser anser*

One of these frequent hybrids was at Hauxley on 15th (HRS).

**Black Kite x Red Kite** *Milvus migrans x Milvus milvus*

A confusingly plumaged bird was present at Hartford Hall, Bedlington on 16th with features of both species and was thought to be a hybrid falconers bird due to the closed rings. It readily came for dog food put out by the owner and was thought to have been in the area for at least a week (KWR).

This bird may be the same mystery bird seen in Whitley Bay and featured in last month's bulletin. No resolution of the identity has been made but it has been suggested that it was a Cape Verde Kite *M. milvus fasciicauda* the island race of Red Kite. Several are thought to have escaped from captivity (ed.).

**Birds of Unknown Origin****Rose-ringed Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri*

A single bird was still being seen in the Ponteland area where one flew E at Clickemin on 19th (PCF).

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### **BULLETIN COMPILATION AND PRODUCTION**

This bulletin was compiled by Lindsay McDougall (Swans to Geese, Game birds, Divers to Herons), Graeme Bowman (Ducks), Trevor Blake (Birds of Prey to Rails), Ian Forsyth (Waders to Skuas), Tim Dean (Gulls to Auks, Escapes, Hybrids and Unknown Origin, List of Contributors, Highlights), Iain Robson (Doves to Dunnock), Mike Richardson (Robin to Warblers), Dee McKeown (Flycatchers to Buntings), Julie Roper/Dan Turner (WeBS Coastal Counts) and Steve Holliday (WeBS Inland Counts). Thanks again to Ann McKeown for typing the section Flycatchers to Buntings.

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### **RECORD SUBMISSION**

**Cards:** Please send all record cards to Tim Dean, 2 Knocklaw Park, Rothbury NE65 7PW, to arrive on, or preferably before, the 8th of the month following that in which the records were collected. Please write cards legibly to ensure that your sightings are correctly recorded.

**E-mail:** Members are encouraged to e-mail their records on an Excel-style spreadsheet. Please e-mail Dick Myatt at [dick@dickmyatt.co.uk](mailto:dick@dickmyatt.co.uk) for a copy of the standard spreadsheet and other details.

**Location names and Grid references:** The use of standard location names and the inclusion of grid references greatly increases the value of records in subsequent analyses. A 1km square grid reference is the ideal e.g. NY8067 for Grindon Lough, but 2km square references (Tetrads) are also acceptable e.g. NY86D in this case. A list of localities and their tetrad grid references (Tetrad/Locality List) can be downloaded from the 'Resources & Downloads' section of the Club website at <http://www.ntbc.org.uk> – the use of these names, wherever possible, would be highly appreciated.

### **PHOTOGRAPHS AND ILLUSTRATIONS**

Please keep submitting your articles, photographs, sketches and illustrations for the bulletin. Thanks again to those who have supplied the excellent photographs.

Please send to Steve Barrett at [Sscmagpie@aol.com](mailto:Sscmagpie@aol.com)

### **ELECTRONIC BULLETIN**

The NTBC bulletin can be received electronically or as hard copy. The electronic bulletin arrives earlier than the printed version, it is in colour and we save all that printing and stamps. Ask for an e-mailed bulletin from [jo.bentley@waitrose.com](mailto:jo.bentley@waitrose.com).

### **MEMBERSHIP**

For membership enquiries please contact [jo.bentley@waitrose.com](mailto:jo.bentley@waitrose.com).

### **NTBC WEBSITE**

The excellent club website is available at [www.ntbc.org.uk](http://www.ntbc.org.uk). Chris Knox is the link person to the club committee for the website and you can contact him at [christopher.knox@o2.co.uk](mailto:christopher.knox@o2.co.uk)

### **INDOOR MEETINGS – CHANGE OF VENUE**

The club is moving its meeting venue for the 2009/2010 winter session to the Newcastle Falcons Rugby Club at Kingston Park Stadium, Brunton Road, Kenton Bank Foot, Newcastle upon Tyne NE13 8AF. Indoor meetings will be held, as usual, starting at 7pm on the second Thursday of every month between September and April.

Detailed travel directions to the new venue can be found on <http://www.newcastle-falcons.co.uk>

The first meeting of the new season will be on Thursday 10th September 2009 and free tea and coffee will be available prior to the commencement of the meeting. A bar will be available in the meeting room afterwards. Topics are varied and are guaranteed to be of the usual high standard.

When	What	Who
September 10th	The Goose Detective	Dr Philip Prosser
October 8th	White-tailed Eagles in Poland	Terry Pickford
November 12th	TBA	
December 10th	Winter Birds in Japan	Ian Fisher
January 14th	Conservation, Birds and Northumberland Wildlife Trust	Steve Lowe
February 11th	TBA	
March 11th	Northern Kites Project	Keith Bowey
April 8th	Members Night	You

### BRITISH BIRDWATCHING FAIR

If you're visiting Rutland Water between August 21st to 23rd 2009 look out for the 'Birdwatching Northumberland' stand in Marquee 1 where you will almost certainly recognise some familiar faces.

Quote from the Fair's programme - 'Birdwatching Northumberland is a consortium of organisations promoting nature-based tourism across the splendid county of Northumberland. We will have birding advice, general advice and brochures and guide books for anyone wishing to visit.' More information about the Bird Fair is at <http://www.birdfair.org.uk>

### BADGER SETTS

A plea for your assistance - help find badger setts when you are out and about.

Northumberland Badger Group is a small but committed band. New members are always welcome. No previous knowledge of badgers is required, just an enthusiasm for them, as training in field craft and natural history of badgers is available upon joining.

How YOU can help -The Group monitors badger setts throughout the County and works with land agents and others to preserve the natural habitat for badgers. If you do know of the whereabouts of any setts or indeed find new ones then please visit our website [www.northumberlandbadgergroup.org.uk](http://www.northumberlandbadgergroup.org.uk) and complete the report form. With your help we can record more setts. Don't assume we already know about the sett you have found but complete the form on the website [www.northumberlandbadgergroup.org.uk](http://www.northumberlandbadgergroup.org.uk) and return it to us at one of the addresses below. If you're not sure it is a badger sett tell us and we will check it out, but we need YOUR help to know where the setts are. All data is treated as confidential. We are also interested in recording road casualties so should you see any; please email us with the details at [enquiries@northumberlandbadgergroup.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@northumberlandbadgergroup.org.uk). If you would like to become a member of the Northumberland Badger Group, please visit our website for further details, call us on (07901) 951565 or write to us at PO. Box 416, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 9AR.

### FOR SALE

Birds in Northumbria 1971 75 pages, scarce year and in perfect condition £5

**Birds of the Tynemouth Area** by Mary Carruthers & Ken Shaw 41 pages, c.1985 £5

**British Birds** Unbound copies, 1957 to 1967 £5 each year, 1971 and 1982 to 1993 £4 each year

**Birds of the Grand Canyon Area: An Annotated Checklist** by B.T.Brown and others, 1978 £5, Lane's **Guides to Southeastern Arizona (1977) and Southern California (1979)** - £3 each, or £10 for all three titles

Steve Holliday 01670 731963

**Where to Watch Birds in Spain & Portugal Hamlyn Guide** by Lawrence Rose £3

**Where to Watch Birds in Switzerland Helm Guide** by Mario Saachi, mint condition £3

**Field Guide to the Birds of North America** National Geographic 2nd edition, mint condition £5

**Collins Field Guide to Birds of South East Asia** By Ben King, mint condition £5

**Birdwatch Magazine** Complete years 1994 to 1999 inclusive, all in binders £5 per year or £25 the lot

Chris Knox 0751 5825024

# COASTAL WeBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

TAC T. A. Cadwallender  
MGA M. G. Anderson  
DMT D. M. Turner  
PF P.Fletcher

**MAY**

**2009**

MHu M. Hutcheson  
PRD P. R. Davey

Site	TOTAL	<i>Tweed Estuary</i>	<i>Spittal - Cocklawburn</i>	<i>Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay)</i>	<i>(Budle Bay)</i>	<i>Aln Estuary</i>	<i>Cresswell - Newbiggin</i>	<i>Tyne North Pier - Fish Quay</i>	<i>Wallsend, (north bank only)</i>	<i>Redheugh - Scotswood Bridge, (north bank)</i>	<i>Scotswood - Newburn Bridge, (north bank)</i>
Counter		MHu	MHu	PRD	PRD	TAC	MGA	DMT	DMT	PF	PF
Date		11	5	10	10	10	10	16	24	16	16
Red-throated Diver	1		1								
Little Grebe	2		2								
Cormorant	45	11	18	6		1		5	4		
Shag	6		6								
Grey Heron	15	4	3	5	1	1			2		
Mute Swan	188	140		8	6	40					
Whooper Swan	1	1									
Barnacle Goose	3			3							
Shelduck	237	2		218	104	6			4	5	2
Teal	2									2	
Mallard	59	19	1	11	7	5				9	14
Tufted Duck	4		4								
Eider	203	2	64	110	7	20	4	3			
Red-breasted Merganser	49			49							
Moorhen	1		1								
Coot	1			1							
Oystercatcher	135	12	35	54	15		21	11	1	1	
Ringed Plover	58		2	52			4				
Lapwing	15		2	13							
Knot	250			238			12				
Sanderling	11		11								
Dunlin	72			31			41				
Bar-tailed Godwit	3			3							
Whimbrel	6			6							
Curlew	303	6	6	291							
Redshank	7			6			1				
Common Sandpiper	1			1							
Turnstone	108		6	14			88				
Black-headed Gull	245	23	14	5		120	nc		78	4	1
Common Gull	33	4	28	1							
Lesser Black-backed Gull	60	19		4					1	35	1
Herring Gull	1,476	744	359	92		11	nc	142	75	44	9
Great Black-backed Gull	79	11	3			4		47		12	2
Kittiwake	49	42	2					4		1	
Mediterranean Gull	1						1				
Sandwich Tern	418	114	95	122			71	16			
Roseate Tern	4						4				
Common Tern	21			6			11			3	1
Arctic Tern	16	6		10							
Little Tern	7			7							
Kingfisher	0										
<b>ADDITIONAL SPECIES</b>											
Fulmar	3	2	1								
TOTALS - WILDFOWL	817	179	100	411	125	73	4	8	10	16	16
- WADERS	969	18	62	709	15	0	167	11	1	1	0
- GULLS & TERNS	2,409	963	501	247	0	135	87	209	154	99	14



# Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

<http://www.ntbc.org.uk/>

## Bulletin 2009 No 6 MONTHLY SUMMARY – JUNE

16th August 2009



### HIGHLIGHTS

Mute Swan – The Tweed Estuary moulting flock reached 477 on 12th  
 Long-tailed Duck – Breeding plumage male seen at Seaton Sluice on 5th & 6th.  
 Eider – Large moulting flock of up to 700 at Holy Island mid month  
 Common Scoter – 735 moving past Seaton Sluice in 3 hours on 26th.  
 Quail – start of influx late in month  
 Manx Shearwater – Good numbers moving during month  
 Little Egret - At least three birds in county  
 Spoonbill – Singles at Cresswell Pond and Newton  
 Honey Buzzard – Single at Wark on 7th.  
 Montagu's Harrier – Single ringtail briefly at Beal on 10th  
 Curlew Sandpiper - Breeding plumaged bird at Grindon Lough on 8th.  
 Spotted Redshank - Breeding plumaged bird at East Chevington on 27th  
 Pomarine Skua – Two pale phase birds off Snab Point on 6th.  
 Iceland Gull - A first summer commuted between Cullercoats and Seaton Sluice  
 Roseate Tern - One at Swallow Pond on 28th was a new site record.  
 Blue-headed Wagtail – Possibly breeding in Wark area  
 Nightingale - Highly unusual singing male at Bolam from 23rd onwards  
 Marsh Warbler – Singing well at St Mary's on 7th & 8th.  
 Great Reed Warbler – One singing for several weeks at Gosforth Park was trapped and ringed



Corn Bunting near Linden Hall giving Yellowhammer song  
14th May Tim Dean

### NEWS

- Osprey - Breeding at last by Kielder Water. A pair have fledged three young
- Marsh Harrier - A pair has bred in the county at last
- Two pairs of Mediterranean Gulls bred on Coquet Island
- Field trips scheduled for Saltholme, Mersehead and Holy Island
- Indoor meetings start on September 10th at Newcastle Falcons
- Appeal for bulletin writers
- Appeal for Webs co-ordinator



## WEATHER

**1st to 5th:** High pressure dominated the weather, keeping it largely dry with a good deal of sunshine through this period, particularly in the south. .

**6th to 11th:** The weather became more unsettled through this period as the high pressure retreated northwards. The showery weather continued through this period, with other areas catching heavy ones. Also it was a much cooler period. **12th to 16th:** A mostly showery period of weather, with all parts enjoying some drier sunny periods as well. The showers did become heavy at times with again some parts recording exceptionally heavy, thundery ones. **17th to 21st:** This was the most unsettled and windiest part of the month with some gales. A period of rain swept eastwards on the 17th. The rain was light and more patchy further south and east. This led into a showery period, with the heaviest and most frequent showers in the north and west, while parts of the south remained dry. **22nd to 26th:** High pressure dominated the weather through this period, but it was not entirely settled. Showers were the dominant force in the weather, with some particularly heavy ones. **27th to 30th:** Very warm weather edged in from the south and east through this period. It brought with it some high temperatures, the highest for three years, but also some very heavy and intense thunderstorms with hail. North Sea coasts were quite a bit cooler with onshore breezes and low cloud or fog at times.

## CLASSIFIED LIST

The following account consists of unchecked reports. The species/subspecies marked \* require descriptions. A complete list of all sightings which need notes is included in the NTBC website [www.ntbc.org.uk](http://www.ntbc.org.uk) under the County Records Committee section and in Birds in Northumbria 2007 page 251.

The Inland and Coastal Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) tables are at the rear of the bulletin. These contain additional counts to those in the Classified List.

## TARGET SPECIES

The target species for 2009 are **Marsh Tit**, **Spotted Flycatcher** and **Tree Sparrow**. Please report all records for these species.

### Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

The highest counts were 477 in the moult gathering flock in the Tweed Estuary and 96 at Castle Island on 12th (MHu/AT). Other notable gatherings were 59 at Castron on 14th, 39 at QEII Lake on 21st and 20 at Bolam Lake on 29th (TRD/JD/CDH). Further broods were noted at Annitsford Pond (three), Belsay Hall (seven), Bolam Lake (two broods), Broomlee Lough (six), Burradon Pond (seven), Castron (six broods 33 young), Druridge Pools (five), Duke's Pond, Rising Sun CP (four), East Chevington (three), Halton Castle Corbridge (one), Marden Quarry (six), Lee Moor Farm, Rennington (seven) and Monk's House Pool (seven). The breeding pair with five young relocated from Leazes Park (Newcastle) to nearby Exhibition Park. Five adults were at Greenlee Lough. One to four were noted from Bell's Pond (Cresswell), Budle Bay, Capheaton Lough, Cresswell Pond, Highborn, Paddy Freeman's Pond (Jesmond Dene), Shield-on-the-Wall and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

### Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Singles were noted at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 1st and in the early morning of 9th on the River North Tyne at Wark before flying off S (MR/PRM).

### Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Eight flew SW over Chollerford on 21st and seven flew N over Wark on 9th (PRM). The peak count at Derwent Reservoir was 264 on 22nd. Grindon Lough hosted 27 on 12th, whilst 26 adults were at East Chevington on 19th (PRM). One to five were noted at Ancroft, Monk's House Pool and Yarrow Slake. Breeding records are detailed below:

Locality	No .of broods	No. of young	Observer/Comments
Castron	75 adults	80	TRD on 14th
Hedgeley GP	2	13	TRD/LJM by 16th
Allerdean Grange	1	4	TRD on 10th
Castle Island	1	2	STH/DM on 21st
East Chevington	1	2	PRM on 19th
Woodhorn Church Flash	1	2	CDH on 21st

### \*Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens*

Two flew in from S and landed on East Chevington North pool where they remained for 30 minutes before departing N on 29th (ADMc).

**Greater Canada Goose** *Branta canadensis*

On 11th ten flew N at Arcot Pond, on 10th five flew NE at Ordley and on 12th three flew N at Cocklawburn (STH/BNR/MHu). The highest counts were 204 at Castle Island on 17th, 104 at Grindon Lough on 4th and 58 at Derwent Reservoir on 24th (GB/PRM). Other gatherings were 24 including several goslings at Rock House Fell (Plenmeller) on 7th and nine at Capheaton Lough on 26th (SJH/PRM). One to five were noted from Catcleugh Reservoir, Haydon Bridge and West Ord.

Breeding records are detailed below:

Location	No .of broods	No. of young	Observer/Comments
Castron	35 adults	37	TRD on 14th
Linton Pond	3	9	CDH on 21st
Wansbeck Business Park Ashington	2	10	LJM on 21st
Greenlee Lough	2	9	MRS on 16th
Hedgeley GP	1	8	TRD on 10th
Derwent Reservoir Winnows hill	1	2	BNR on 11th

**Barnacle Goose** *Branta leucopsis*

Two flew S at Seaton Sluice on 6th (PCF).

**Pale-bellied hrota Brent Goose** *Branta bernicla hrota*

Five flew at Druridge Links on 22nd (IDR/JF). One flew N at Church Point, Newbiggin on 7th (GB),

**Dark-bellied bernicla Brent Goose** *Branta bernicla bernicla*

One flew N at Church Point, Newbiggin on 7th (GB). A single was at Hauxley NR on 1st (JA).

A single which appeared to be an intermediate race bird accompanied the two mentioned above at Church Point, Newbiggin on 7th (GB).

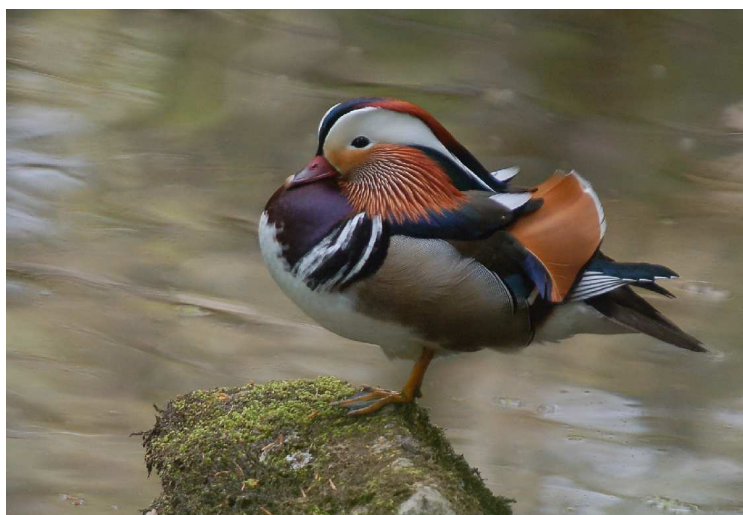
**Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna*

Budle Bay held peaks of 60 on 9th (MSH), 179 (adults) on 25th (MSH) and 174 on 30th (PRM). Other peak counts of adults were 19 at Castle Island on 7th (GB), five at Cresswell on 2nd (MJCo), and five at Fenham Flats on 17th (PRM). One to two were also at Berwick Little Beach, Boulmer, Castron, East Chevington, Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother (near Humshaugh), Hauxley Reserve, Lowick (Eel well) and Monk's House Pool. Breeding data (additional to May unless otherwise stated) were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods/'creches'	No. of young	Observer/notes
Castle Island	3	21 (13, 6 & 2)	AT. On 12th
Boulmer	--	25	PCF. On 9th
Castron	1	8	TRD. On 14th
Hauxley Reserve	1	7	PCF. On 6th
Monk's House Pool	1	2	PRM. On 17th
East Chevington	1	2	TRD/JD. On 11th

**Mandarin** *Aix galericulata*

A female was at Catcleugh Reservoir on 7th (PRM).



A splendid drake Mandarin at Wallington

29th May by Tim Dean

**Wigeon** *Anas penelope*

Eight drakes were at Grindon Lough on 4th and five drakes on 8th (PRM). One to three birds were noted there on three further dates between 12th-30th (PRM/MR). Four were at Plenmeller on 7th (SJH), two at Highborn on 9th (MJCo), a pair at Woodhorn Flashes on 28th (GB), and one at Newton Pool on 2nd (GW).

**Gadwall** *Anas strepera*

Peak counts of adults were 15 at Castle Island on 7th (GB), 13 at East Chevington on 19th (PRM), 11 at Linton Pond on 21st (CDH), four at Highborn on 9th (MJCo), three at Bothal Pond on 13th (GB), and one to two at Bell's Pond, and Longhirst and Woodhorn Flashes. Breeding data (additional to May unless otherwise stated) were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Hauxley Reserve	3	23 (10, 8 & 5)	TRD/JD. On 25th
Bothal Pond	1	10	GB. On 28th
Caistron	1	7	TRD. On 14th
Cresswell Pond	1	6	STH et al. On 11th
East Chevington	2	8 (6 & 2)	MSH/PRM. On 19th-20th
Druridge Pools	2	9	(5 & 4) IDR. Brood of 5 on 14th and new brood of 4 on 27th
Linton Pond	1	2	CDH. Fully grown juveniles on 21st

**Teal** *Anas crecca*

Three flew N at Newbiggin on 22nd (TRC). Largest counts were 22 at Muckle Moss on 30th (MR), 19 at Grindon Lough on 30th (MR), and five at Druridge Pools on 9th (TRD/JD) increasing to 15 by 24th (IDR). Grindon Lough held up to eight between 4th-28th (PRM), three to four were at Arcot Pond, Caistron, Hauxley Reserve, Holburn Moss and Monk's House Pool, and one to two at Big Waters, Budle Bay, Cheswick Black Rocks and Longhirst Flash. Four were in the Bellingham area on 7th May (MJC).

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

Big Waters held 75 on 24th (SPP), 47 were at Budle Bay on 17th (PRM), 36 (adults) at Derwent Reservoir on 1st (IFo), 31 at Grindon Lough on 12th (PRM), 30+ at Holywell Pond on 16th (MSH), 20-25 at Arcot, Bell's and Linton Ponds, Highborn and Wansbeck Business Park (Ashington), and ten to 17 at Broomlee Lough, Castle Island, Cresswell Pond, West Ord and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. One to four were also at five sites.

Mallard breeding data (additional to April-May unless otherwise stated) were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Arcot Pond	4	30+	STH/LJM. Various dates, including well grown young on 24th. May include broods from May
Castle Island	3	21+ (10, 7 & 4+)	GB. Brood of 4+ on 6th and broods of 10 & 7 on 28th
Cresswell Pond	2	21 (12 & 9)	IFo/STH. Brood of 9 on 11th and brood of 12 on 12th
Ellington Pond	2	14 (8 & 6)	IDR. On 14th
QEII Lake	2	11 (8 & 3)	LJM. On 14th
Cocklawburn Pond	2	10 (7 & 3)	MHu. On 30th
Monk's House Pool	2	10 (6 & 4)	MSH/PRM. Brood of 4 on 17th and new brood of 6 on 25th
Bothal Pond	2	9 (6 & 3)	GB. On 13th. May include brood from May
Linton Pond	2	7 (5 & 2)	CDH. On 21st
Druridge Pools	2	6 (4 & 2)	STH On 11th, includes brood of 2 large young from <u>30th May</u>
Berwick	1	12	PRM. On 25th
Killingworth Lake	1	8	LJM. On 20th
Newcastle Exhibition Park	1	8	GB. New brood on 29th
Aydon Castle, Corbridge	1	6	MR. On 22nd
Bygate	1	6	JR. On 20th
Hadrian Pond, Wallsend	1	6	LJM. On 24th
Wark bridge	1	6	PC. On 27th
Weetslade Colliery CP	1	6	GB. On 14th
West Ord	1	6	MHu. On 3rd
Wark	1	5	PRM. On 2nd
Woodhorn Flashes	1	5	GB. On 7th
Haughton Strother	1	4	MR. On 1st
Oakpool/Hollybush	1	2	BNR. On 25th

Fledged young (no counts) were also noted at Jesmond Dene and Rock.

**Pintail** *Anas acuta*

A drake was at Budle Bay on 5th-6th (RA/ACo) and a duck was noted there on 17th and 30th (PRM).

**Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*

A pair was at Hedgeley GP on 10th (TRD), two drakes at the *Drift Inn* Pools (Seaton Burn) on 13th, and singles at Bell's and Cresswell Ponds, Highborn and Longhirst Flash on single dates. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Swallow Pond	1	10	SPP. On 28th

**Pochard** *Aythya ferina*

A drake was at Castle Island on 28th (GB) and a duck at Swallow Pond on 24th (LJM). Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Swallow Pond	3	15 (8, 4 & 3)	SPP. Brood of 4 on 12th, brood of 8 on 16th and new brood of 3 on 21st
Arcot Pond	1	4	LJM/PA <i>et al.</i> On 12th. Down to 2 young by 28th

**Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*

One flew N at Newbiggin on 26th (TRC). The largest concentrations were 47 at Castle Island on 6th (GB), 22 at Ladyburn Lake on 12th (IFo), 22 at QEII Lake on 14th (LJM), and 12-16 at Newcastle Exhibition Park and Norham. One to five were also at Annitsford, Arcot, Cocklawburn and Cresswell Ponds, Capheaton Lake, Derwent Reservoir, Dudley, Grindon Lough, Highborn, Park Dam, Rock, Roddam GP, Monk's House Pool and West Ord. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Holly Bush, Hexham	1	8	MR. On 26th
Woodhorn Flashes	1	7-8	GB. On 28th
Newcastle Leazes Park	1	6	DHWB. On 17th but down to 2 by 24th (possibly due to predation by Lesser Black-backed Gulls)
Haughton Strother	1	5	MR. On 21st
Lee Moor Farm, Rennington	1	5	IDR. On 26th
Spindleston	1	5	MSH. On 25th
Swallow Pond	1	3	SPP. On 29th

**Eider** *Somateria mollissima*

Counts of moulting drakes at Lindisfarne NNR included 480 on 13th (IDR) and 700+ on 16th (MSK), and a flock of 148 at Cheswick on 1st included 90% drakes (MHu). About 200 were off Hadston on 5th (JSB/EC), nine at Newbiggin, and one to three at Berwick and the Tyne Estuary-North Shields. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods/'creches'	No. of young	Observer/notes
Budle Bay	1+	27	MSH. On 9th. Accompanied by 7 females
Beal Point, Lindisfarne NNR	1+	15	TRD. On 10th
Boulmer	1	12	PCF. On 9th

**Long-tailed Duck** *Clangula hyemalis*

An adult drake was offshore at Seaton Sluice on 5th-6th (SSWT). .

**Common Scoter** *Melanitta nigra*

A strong movement at Newbiggin on 22nd involved 595 N and 140 S in three hours, and 40 flew N there on 26th (TRC) when 24+ flew N at St Mary's (MSH). Other northerly movement concerned 34 at Druridge Links



on 15th (IDR), and four to nine at Newbiggin, Seaton Sluice, Snab Point and St Mary's on 3rd and 6th-7th, and five flew S at Snab Point on 6th. About 220 were off Druridge Links on 25th, with 67-140 off Druridge-Hadston between 5th-22nd (JSB/EC/IDR/JF), 86 were at Cheswick on 1st (MHu), 52 at Cocklawburn on 10th (MHu), 35 at Newbiggin on 27th (AT) and six to ten off Bamburgh, Coquet Island and East Chevington. A drake was at Cresswell Pond on 22nd (ADMc).

**Velvet Scoter** *Melanitta fusca*

A drake was with Common Scoters off Druridge Links on 25th (IDR).

**Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula*

An unusual record (for the time of year) concerned a group of five (adult drake, adult female and three probable first-summer drakes) at Castle Island on 28th, where an adult drake had been noted on 12th (AT). Single drakes (perhaps the same wandering individual?) were also at Ladyburn Lake on 12th (IFo), Cresswell Pond on 21st and 23rd (IRD/RWM/MIM) and Hauxley Reserve on 22nd (PCF/MSH).

**Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator*

Singles flew N at Snab Point on 11th (STH *et al.*) and Newbiggin on 22nd (TRC). A group of 12 was off Chare Ends, Lindisfarne NNR on 30th (PRM) and one was at Budle Bay on 6th and 30th (ACo/PRM).

**Goosander** *Mergus merganser*

At Snab Point, two ducks flew N on 4th and a drake N on 6th (ADMc). Peak counts (presumed adults) were 14 at Yarrow Slake (Berwick) on 6th (MHu), 11 at Holy Island on 1st (RA), 11 in the Melkridge area on 4th (SJH), ten at Spittal Cliffs on 10th (MHu), and nine at the Tweed Estuary on 5th (MHu). Singles were also at Bygate, Castle Island, Cresswell Pond, Eals, Killingworth Lake, Morpeth and Ovingham-Prudhoe. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Eals	1	14	MSK. On 22nd
Castron	1	9	TRD. On 14th
Derwent Reservoir	1	8	EC/JSB. On 23rd
Berwick	1	9	PRM. On 25th
Kielder Water	1	6	ACo. On 15th
Corbridge	1	5	RB/MB. On 30th

**Red Grouse** *lagopus lagopus*

Very few were reported; however breeding was confirmed by the sighting of a female with six fledged young near Linhope on 23rd (IFo). One to seven were noted from Blanchard Moor, Langleeford and Ramshaw Burn (Ingram).

**Black Grouse** *Tetrao tetrix*

On 20th five males were at Coalcleugh and Swinhope Shield (MSK). In May three males were in the Harwood Shield area on 31st and a single at Sundaysight, Bellingham (MJC).

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

Two, mostly reported as pairs, were noted from Brownridge (Lowick), Cockle Park, Ewe Hill (Cheviots), Halton Castle (Corbridge), Hepple, Hulne Park, Longwitton and North Middleton. Singles were seen at Cresswell, Druridge Links, Howlett Hall (Bolam), Shipley (Alnwick), South Charlton, Tritlington, and Widdrington.

**Grey Partridge** *Perdix perdix*

Two pairs were noted at Old Dryburn on 3rd (MHu). Three were at Tritlington on 11th (MJCo). One to two were seen at Ancroft Moor, Bolam, Castron, Druridge Pools, Newbiggin, Norham and Rowley Ford. Breeding was confirmed at Druridge Links where a nest with ten hatched eggs was found on 24 h, at Holywell Dene where an adult accompanied two young on 11th and at Middle Newham (Belsay) on 21st (IDR/RJP/TAC/MLC).

**Quail** *Coturnix coturnix*

Singles were noted singing near Bamburgh on 21st (CGK/PS), near Gubeon Golf Course on 24th/26th (ADMc), near Elford on 25th (MSH), near Bolam in an arable field on 27th and in a rushy field by Brocolitia

car park on 28th (PRM).

**Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus*

The highest counts were nine including fledged young at Rock Midstead on 23rd, eight at Ancroft on 6th and seven at Welton (Whittle Dene) on 7th (MLC/JR/MJCo). Counts of six came from Duddo and Pit House and of five from Cresswell, Ulgham Grange Farm and Wooler. One to four were noted at 17 further widespread localities.

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

At Druridge Links three were offshore on 14th and a single was at Church Point, Newbiggin on 5th (IDR/AT).

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

The highest count of adults was six at Holywell Pond on 16th (MSH). Four were at Highthorn on 9th, Bothal Pond on 13th and Big Waters on 14th (MJCo/GB). Three were at Swinhoe Lake on 10th and a further pair to that recorded breeding in the table below was at Newcastle Great Park pools on 27th (TRD/AHB). Singles were on Woodhorn Church and Roadside Flashes on 21st (CDH).

Breeding data is as follows:

Location	No. of broods	No .of young	Observer/Comments
Castron	2	2	TRD on 14th
Capheaton Lough	1	4	TRD/JD on 29th
Duke's Pond Rising Sun CP	1	3	SPP on 19th
Newcastle Great Parks Pools	1	3	AHB on 27th
Middleton Hall	1	2	GB on 8th
Rock	1	2	MLC on 9 th
Halton Castle Corbridge	1	1	MR on 22nd
Humblehaugh Alnwick	1	1	MLC on 16 th

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*

Numbers at Derwent Reservoir peaked at five on 24th (PRM *et al*). Four including a nesting pair were at Killingworth Lake on 20th. (LJM) Pairs were also noted at Ladyburn Lake on 12th, QEII Lake on 14 h and nesting at Capheaton Lough on 15th (IFo/LJM/EC). Two at Castle Island on 28th were unusual for this site (GB). Singles were at East Chevington North pool on 5th and Big Waters on 14th (GB).

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

Up to four were noted at a site occupied in the past. A pair was seen on several dates at the now regular breeding site but there was no evidence of breeding.



A Fulmar on Whitley Bay promenade  
3rd June by Mike Hodgson

**Fulmar** *Fulmarus glacialis*

At St Mary's Island 79 flew N on 9th in one hour and birds were seen passing Church Point on 7th

(MSH/ASH). At Cullernose Point 25 were on the sea 100 metres offshore on 20th (PCF). Two were off Hauxley on 25th and singles off Druridge and East Chevington on 9th (TRD/JD). Singles were noted at the unusual locations of Marden Quarry on 7th, Longhirst Flash on 13th and flying W at Hazlerigg at 19:40 on 22nd (KWY/GB/SJ).

Breeding details for fulmar are as follows;

Location	No. of apparently occupied nests	Observer/Comments
Howick	26	ASJ on 11th
Whitley Bay South Promenade cliffs	23	MSH/ASJ on 3rd
Berwick A167 road bridge	2	PRM on 25th

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

Significant movement was seen at Druridge Links where 73 flew N on 20th, 53 flew N in 10 minutes on 21st and again on 22nd and 27 flew N on 24th (IDR/JF). Annstead saw 68 fly N in 1.5 hours on 5th and ten pass on 21st (RA/CGK/PS), whilst at Seaton Sluice 60 flew N in 2 hours on 5th and 45 N in 2.5 hours on 6th (SSWT/TRC). At St Mary's Island 40 flew N in a tight group on 23rd, with 20 N in 2 hours on 4th, nine on 5th, eight N on 6th six N on 3rd and three N on 26th (SPP/MPF/MSH/MT/NT). The highest count at Newbiggin was 12 N on 5th with nine N on 7th, eight N on 22nd, seven N on 5th, six N on 23rd and two N on 27th (AT/GB/TRC).

#### **Gannet** *Morus bassanus*

The largest movements occurred on 6th, when 1,000 flew N in 2.5 hours at Seaton Sluice (SSWT). At St Mary's Island 63 flew N in one hour on 3rd, 36 N in one hour on 25th and 14 S in one hour on 3rd (MSH). One to 20 were noted from Druridge - East Chevington and Hauxley on three dates.

#### **Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

The peak roost counts during the month were 37 in Blyth South Harbour on 16th and 25 at North Shields Fish Quay on 26th (STH/DMT). Ten were on the rocks at St Mary's Island on 3rd, where three flew N and three flew S (MSH). Three flew S towards Derwent Reservoir at Dukeshagg Wood, Prudhoe on 7th (BNR). Singles were noted at Cresswell, East Chevington, Hagg Bank (Wylam), Linton Pond and Seghill NR (first record).

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

The only record was of five at Meadow Have, Berwick on 14th (MHu).

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

A single flew S over Holywell Pond on 10th (ASJ). Two were at East Chevington South pool before flying off N on 25th (ADMc). Singles were noted at Hauxley NR on 1st (JA), Cresswell Pond on 2nd (AA/MJCo), Budle Bay on 21st/25th/30th (CGK/PS/MSH/PRM) and at East Chevington South Pool on 28th (ADMc).

#### **Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*

The largest concentrations were 14 in the Tweed Estuary on 12th, 11 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 16th and East Chevington on 22nd and nine including five juveniles at Holywell Pond on 10th (MHu/MR/MSH/ASJ). At least eight were at Druridge Pools on 21st (IDR/JF) and counts of seven came from Hauxley NR on 20th and Holywell Dene on 26th, which included five juveniles (MSH/RJP). Six were at Arcot Pond on 29th (STH). In the Benkshill area two nests each contained two young on 13th (SJH). Counts of four came from Castle Island and St Mary's Island and counts of three came from Slaley Fell Cottages where flying N and from Wooler. A nest was located at Farnley (Corbridge) on 1st (RB/MB). One to two were noted at 15 other widespread localities.

#### **Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia*

A single flew N at Newton Church on 1st (GW). A single was also at Cresswell Pond on 26th/27th (JA/AA/AT).

#### **\*Honey Buzzard** *Pernis apivorus*

An adult male was seen north of Wark Village (N Tyne) at 07:20h on 7th (PRM).

#### **Red Kite** *Milvus milvus*

A late record for May involved a single bird which flew E then S over the river from Heddon on the Wall towards Ryton Woods on 30th (AA).

Two birds were seen soaring towards Bradley Hall (Hagg Bank) & another two were seen over Horsley Wood

(Wylam) on 7th (BNR). Single birds were at Broomley on 2nd (JMA), Derwent Reservoir on 4th (IFo), over the A69 at Horsley on 8th (AJH), Beldon Burn (Newbiggin) on 9th (BNR), Blagdon on 20th (*per* PCF), Blanchland and Newbiggin Fell on 23rd (JSB/EC) & at Broadoak Quarry on 24th (PRM).

**Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*

A pair has successfully bred in the County for the first time since the 19th Century.

**\*Montagu's Harrier** *Circus pygargus*

On the 10th at North Beal a 1st year female was observed quartering fields, before flying out of sight (TRD).

**Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis*

In the Slaley area two young were heard calling from a nest on 21st (BNR), with a female seen in the same area on 9th (AA). The only other sighting was of a female hunting at Minsteracres on 10th (BNR).

**Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*

A pair was at Scotland Gate throughout the month (SLB/MSK), and a single bird was also seen throughout the month at Longbenton (ADM). Other single birds were noted at 20 locations including a juvenile attacking a Jackdaw *Corvus monedula* in an Old Hartley garden on 29th (RJP).

**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*

Six birds were seen at Sweethope Lough on 5th (PRM) and at Middleton Hall (Harthope Valley) on 16th (RWM/MIM). Four birds were at Ryal and at Barhaugh Hall (Shawhead) on 14th (ASJ/BNR). Three birds were noted at Melkridge on 4th (SJH), Fell Cottages (Slaley) on 6th (RMH) and at Dotland Park on 23rd (JSB/EC). One to two birds were at over 60 sites during the month, including one with jesses at Addycombe (Rothbury) on 28th (JD).

**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*

A pair which has nested at Kielder hatched three young this month, the first time a pair has bred for over 200 years (TRD *et al*). Single birds were seen at Sweethope Lough on 5th (PRM), Minsteracres on 10th (BNR), the Long Nanny (Newton) on 15th (MSH) and at Greenlee Lough on 16th (MRS).

**Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*

Six birds were at Grindon Lough on 14th (PRM); three were in the Harthope Valley on 16th (LJM). Two were at Wylam on 7th (BNR), St Mary's Island on 11th (ASJ) and at Chesters House on 14th (ALT). Singles were observed from over 20 sites during June.

**Merlin** *Falco columbarius*

Only two records this month with singles near Bellingham on 12th (TRD) and in the south west of the county on 22nd (MSK).

**\*Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*

A pair was interacting near Sinderhope on 13th (BNR), and single birds were seen mobbing other raptors at Wylam on 7th & Beldon Burn (Newbiggin) on 9th (BNR).

**Peregrine** *Falco peregrinus*

Three birds which consisted of a pair and a juvenile were in the Sweethope Lough area on 20th (MSK). Single birds were seen at Crag Lough on 2nd(JMA), Kielder Forest on 13th (PRM), Berwick on 25th (PRM), Budle Bay & the Long Nanny (Newton) on 30th (PRM/MSK)

**Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus*

Single birds were heard at Cresswell Pond on 5th & 6th (ADM), East Chevington on 23rd (TB) and a bird was squealing at Weetslade Pools on 27th (GB).

**Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*

Highest counts this month was 11 at Arcot Pond on 16th (STH *et al*) and at Monk's House Pool on 30th (PRM), seven were at Druridge Pools on 30th (IDR). One to five were noted at 14 sites.

Breeding data for Moorhen in June;

Location	Max. No of Broods	Max. No of young	Observers
Arcot Pond	2	3	STH et al
Dinnington	1	1	PCF
Druridge Pools	1	2	IDR
Ellington Pond	1	2	IDR
Hadrian Pond (Wallsend)	1	4	LJM
Halton Castle (Corbridge)	1	1	MR
Jesmond Dene	1	2	MJCo
Rock	1	2	MLC
South Charlton	1	1	MLC
Spindlestone	1	1	MSH
Wallsend Swallow Pond	1	3	LJM

#### **Coot** *Fulica atra*

The highest counts were at Bothal Pond which peaked at 47 birds there on 28th (GB) and Capheaton Lake with 30 on 26th (PRM). 15 birds were seen at Linton Pond on 21st (CDH); one to six birds were seen at over 20 locations during the month.

Breeding data for June;

Location	Max. No of Broods	Max. No of young	Observers
Annitsford Pond	1	2	LJM
Arcot Pond	3	7	STH/LJM
Burradon Pond	3	13	LJM
Drift Inn Pools (Seaton Burn)	1	3	GB
Killingworth Lake	3	9	LJM
QEII CP	1	1	LJM
Shasun Dudley	1	4	LJM
Silverlink Park LNR	3	8	LJM
Wallsend Swallow Pond	6	12	LJM
Wansbeck Business Park	1	1	LJM
Woodhorn Flash	3	5	CB/CDH/STH

#### **Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*

Successful breeding reports were of two half grown young at Derwent Reservoir on 4th, two chicks at Haughton Strother on 14th and a juvenile at Castron on 14th (IFo/MR/TRD). Four to eight were in potential breeding areas at Broadoak Quarry, Muckle Moss, Wooler and Wylam/Hagg Bank and one to two in another eight suitable places. The roost at Cresswell Pond decreased from 53 on 2nd to 32 on 14th (MJCo *et al.*), 35 were at Black Law on 13th and 30 in Budle Bay on 21st.

#### **Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*

Unfortunately, at Haughton Strother the first nesting attempt (reported in April) failed but the pair were incubating a second clutch towards the end of the month (MR). Successful breeding does appear to have taken place in the Grindon Lough area, with up to three adults and three juveniles noted from 4th; display was also seen there on 14th (PRM). Two pairs were reported at Derwent Reservoir on 24th and a single visited Hauxley NR on 6th (PRM/PCF).

#### **Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*

A pair with four tiny chicks was at Weetslade Colliery CP on 27th (GB) and two juveniles were at Grindon Lough, also late in the month (PRM). According to the wardens, nine pairs were at Long Nanny on 23rd (*per* SRB). Elsewhere, two to six appeared at Blyth, Castron, Castle Island, Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Pools, Fenham-le-Moor and Newbiggin.

#### **Golden Plover** *Pluvialis apricaria*

Nine pairs were noted from the path to Killhope Law from Ropehaugh, Allenheads on 12th (JMA). Two displayed on Blanchland Moor on 2nd, two were calling at the summit of The Cheviot on 8th and one was at Riddlees Cairn, in likely breeding habitat, on 13th. At Holy Island, 33 were on the shore at Chare Ends on 30th (PRM).



**Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*

Reports of newly hatched and older young came from Blanchland Moor, Druridge Pools, Humblehaugh, Seaton Burn and Weetslade Colliery CP. Up to 17 were noted inland in another 19 breeding areas and in some cases distraction display was witnessed. Post breeding gatherings included 125 at Seaton Sluice on 30th, 72 at Eshott on 19th, 62 at Arcot Pond on 23rd and 40-50 at Cresswell Pond and East Chevington.

**Knot** *Calidris canutus*

The only reference relates to an individual receiving unusual attention from a male Ruff at Hauxley on 4th (RB/MB).

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba*

An impressive 90 was at Hadston Beach on 5th (EC/JSB); the only others were four at Long Nanny on 12th and one at Warkworth on 14th.

**Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*

One in summer plumage was feeding at the eastern end of Grindon Lough in the evening of 8th (PRM).

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*

Most reports concerned adults at Grindon Lough, including ten on 8th, eight on 12th and four on 20th; one was still present on 28th (PRM). Otherwise 20 were at Fenham-le-Moor on 20th and three to four at Cresswell Pond, East Chevington and Monks' House Pool.



A summer plumaged Dunlin at Cresswell Pond  
3rd June by Mike Hodgson

**Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*

A male in full summer plumage was displaying to a Redshank and a Knot at Hauxley on 4th (RB/MB); possibly the same individual visited Druridge Pools on 13th, Cresswell Pond on 20th and East Chevington on 29th. A late record concerns one at Druridge Pools on 6th May.

**Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*

A count of 15 on Blanchland Moor included 12 displaying on 2nd and one was 'chipping' at Derwent Reservoir, Winnowshill on 9th (ASJ/BNR). Singles were at Ewartly Shank, Hepple and Whitfield Monk/Keenleyside. Late records concern seven at Bellingham, Cross Law on 26th May and three at Bellingham, Sandysike Rigg on 22nd May.

**Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola*

A brood of four was discovered at Hexham, Holly Bush on 26th (MR). Roding at Slaley Forest featured, with up to 11 doing so noted from 2nd to 23rd (ASJ/BNR *et al.*). One was noted at Redheugh on 7th.

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

The only one was at north pool, East Chevington on 25th (TB).

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

On 25th two at East Chevington, north pool flew off N; on 27th two at Cresswell Pond also flew off N and three were in the south pool area of East Chevington on 29th before flying E (all ADMc).

**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*

Six were noted at Druridge Pools on 28th, five at Newbiggin, Church Point on 5th and five flew N at Holywell Pond on 20th (IDR/JF/AT/SPP). Two were at Beal Point on 10th and further singles appeared at Druridge on 23rd and 30th.

**Curlew** *Numenius arquata*

Pairs at Blanchland Moor had increased to 12 on 2nd (ASJ) and single pairs were noted at Bolam and Walwick. In addition eight were at Whitfield Monk and one to six were reported from another 20 potential breeding areas. At Newbiggin, Church Point 17 flew N in three hours on 22nd (TRC) and ten flew N at Woodhorn Flashes on 21st (CDH). Tetrad counts at Corsenside on 19th and at Rubbingstob Hill on 22nd produced 18 and 17 respectively and 50 were in Budle Bay on 21st.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*

In Coquetdale 19 pairs were located during the month (JR); presumably these include eight pairs in Upper Coquetdale on 3rd, when a nest with four eggs was found (ASJ). Also a pair with a chick was at Ingram on 8th (PAT). Eight were at Corbridge on 27th, six at Wooler on 21st, six at Cresswell Pond on 27th and four at Ingram on 16th (AJH/JR/ADM/RWM/MIM); one to three were noted at another 21 sites.

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*

Two were at Longhirst Flash on 28th (GB); singles appeared at Holywell Pond on 13th, Haughton Strother on 24th/27th, Arcot Pond on 28th and Longhirst Flash on 30th.

**Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus*

One in full breeding plumage was at south pool, East Chevington on 27th (AA).

**Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*

Three flew SE at Ellington Colliery at dusk on 14th (IDR); two were noted at Druridge Links on 21st and at Swallow Pond and Longhirst Flash on 28th, with one at the latter site on 30th. One remained at Castle Island from 2nd to 7th and other singles occasionally visited Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools and East Chevington.

**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*

One of the two from late May remained at Druridge Pools on 1st and another was there on 13th. The next was one at East Chevington on 20th with two there, on south pool, on 28th-29th (ADM/NFO *et al.*). One was seen at Longhirst Flash on 28th/30th.

**Redshank** *Tringa totanus*

Up to 13 adults were noted regularly at Grindon Lough and also two juveniles on 20th/22nd and three juveniles on 26th (PRM); 12 pairs were on Blanchland Moor on 2nd (ASJ). The few other reports relate to ten at Derwent Reservoir on 24th and one to five at Arcot Pond, Blyth and Weetslade Colliery CP.

**Pomarine Skua** *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Two pale phase adults flew N at Cresswell, Snab Point on 6th (ADMc).

**Arctic Skua** *Stercorarius parasiticus*

A light N passage was observed early and late in the month from typical points, involving singles unless stated: St Mary's and Snab Point on 4th, Newbiggin on 5th, two at Hauxley on 7th, two at Druridge on 9th; two at Druridge on 22nd, at St Mary's on 26th and East Chevington on 28th.

**Great Skua** *Stercorarius skua*

Slight N movements occurred: at Seaton Slice one on 5th and two on 6th; one at Newbiggin on 26th and one off Warkworth beach on 28th.

**Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla*

Only one passage observation was noted with 75 per hour N at Seaton Sluice on 5th (SSWT). The Tweed Estuary continued to be used as a gathering area with at least 285 there on 25th (PRM) with 42 also noted on 14th (MHu). The Newcastle breeding colonies on the River Tyne were well reported with the main area at the Tyne Bridge comprising of 290 nests with 27 nests at the Guildhall and 22 at the Quayside (DM). The only other large count comprised 208 at the Cullernose Point breeding colony on 20th (PCF). The winter gathering areas were largely deserted with only two noted on 6th & 28th at North Shields Fish Quay, a single

at Blyth South Harbour with two also at Curry's Point, Whitley Bay on 8th (DM/STH).



Kittiwakes at Howick cliffs  
5th June by Mike Hodgson

**Black-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

The Plenmeller Common breeding colony provided a high count of 3000 on 7th with hundreds of chicks present (SJH). There was a gathering of 202 at Grindon Lough on 30th (MR). Few other large counts noted with at least 50 adults still present at Hedgeley GP's with juveniles already away from the main nesting area (LJM). At Swallow Pond 22 adults and ten young were noted on 24th with 28 noted at Allenheads on 12th (JMA), 16 at Castle Island on 21st (DM) and 12 at Broomlee Lough also on 12th (PRM). The regularly watched sites of Blyth South Harbour and the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay only hosted two birds each all month. All other counts were in single figures from various localities.

**Little Gull** *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Passage observations were few with a single adult N at Newbiggin on 23rd (AT) and a second-summer S there on 22nd (TRC). The regular gathering of first-summer birds continued to build up at East Chevington with a peak of 26 reached on 24th (AA). Double figure counts were noted there on many days throughout the month but the only adults noted were two on 25th (TB). Some of these first-summer birds were undoubtedly responsible for sightings nearby with five S at Druridge on 13th and three to four at Cresswell Pond on 3rd and 27th (ADM). The only other sightings comprised single first-summer birds at Castle Island on 7th (RA) and at Swallow Pond on 19th (SPP).

**Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus*

Two adults in full breeding plumage were noted at Newbiggin on 30th (MSK) with single birds being present from 6th to 10th (ACo/GB/MSK). One of these birds was probably responsible for a sighting at Snab Point, Cresswell on 10th (MSK). Finally a first-summer was at Newbiggin on 26th (TRC) with a sub-adult at Hauxley on 17th (RMH).

**Common Gull** *Larus canus*

Few reported with the only double figure counts being 11 E at Brocolitia near Hadrian's Wall on 28th (PRM) and ten first-summer birds at Ordley on 6th (BNR). Otherwise only two first-summer birds at Budle Bay and singles at Blyth South Harbour, Tyne Estuary and Wark.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus graelsii*

Few counts received with 25 at East Chevington on 9th (TRD/JD) the peak with ten at Jesmond Dene on 7th (MJCo) and ten adults also at Blyth South Harbour on 21st (DMT). Otherwise two at Castle Island and Plenmeller and singles at North Blyth, Tyne Estuary and Walbottle.

**Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus argenteus*

The regularly watched area of the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay provided the peak count with 211 on 13th (DMT). An interesting breeding record of sixteen pairs on the A1167 road bridge at Berwick with fourteen young showed a local increase with eight nests also noted at North Blyth on 6th (TAC/MLC). The only other observations noted were 34 at Castle Island on 21st, a peak of 27 at Blyth South Harbour on 14th (DMT) and four at Jesmond Dene on 26th (MJCo).

**Iceland Gull** *Larus glaucoides*

A late first-summer was present at Blyth South Harbour from 2nd to 14th (RA/DMT) with sightings at Cullercoats on 1st (PAT) and at St Mary's Island on 4th and 5th (MSH/ASJ) also likely to have been the same individual. A possible second-summer at Bondi Carr on 22nd was unconfirmed as a hybrid Glaucous X Herring Gull could not be ruled out (MSH).

**Great Black-backed Gull** *Larus marinus*

The regularly watched sites provided the main counts with peaks of 39 at the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay on 14th and 28th with 17 being the peak at Blyth South Harbour (DMT). Otherwise the only sightings reported were singles at Broomlee Lough on 12th (PRM) and Castle Island on 21st (DM).

**Little Tern** *Sternula albifrons*

31 pairs were confirmed nesting at the Long Nanny by the National Trust wardens (*per* SRB). Few sightings otherwise with singles at East Chevington on 1st & 6th (RA/GB) and at Newbiggin on 23rd (AT).

**Sandwich Tern** *Sterna sandvicensis*

The only passage observation was of 110 S at dusk past Beacon Pt, Newbiggin on 18th (PRM). The peak count of loafing birds was of at least 60 at East Chevington on 23rd (MN). Other gatherings noted were 41 at Berwick on 25th (PRM), 34 at the Tyne Estuary on 21st (DMT) and 20 at Budle Bay on 30th (PRM). Otherwise up to ten at Cresswell, Druridge, Hauxley, Monk's House Pool, Tyne Estuary and Whitley Bay.

**Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo*

The only successful breeding sites noted were Swallow Pond and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. At Swallow Pond five pairs produced at least 12 young with two pairs at Whittle Dene hatching three chicks each but only three young surviving at the end of the month. The pair remained at Arcot Pond intent on mobbing the Grey Heron presumed responsible for the failed breeding attempt (LJM). One to five were also noted at Backworth, East Chevington, Hauxley, Leazes Park, Monk's House Pool, Newcastle Exhibition Park and Newcastle Great Park.

**Roseate Tern** *Sterna dougallii*

An excellent 'local patch' record involved one at Swallow Pond on 28th which arrived at 19:30h during a sea fret. It was heard calling before landing on a stump where it stayed until dusk, a first site record (SPP/MPF). A cruise to Coquet Island revealed at least ten at their nest boxes on 21st (DM/STH/RB/MB). The only other reports involved singles offshore at East Chevington on 1st (RA) and Hauxley on 17th (RMH).

**Arctic Tern** *Sterna paradisaea*

650 pairs were reported as nesting by the National Trust wardens at the Long Nanny on 23rd, a considerable decrease on recent years (*per* SRB). The peak count at East Chevington was of 45 on 11th (TRD/JD).



An Arctic Tern on the Farne Islands  
8th June by Peter Tapsell

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

The only passage noted was of 250 per hour at Seaton Sluice over a 2.5 hour period (SSWT/TRC).

**Guillemot** *Uria aalge*

The only passage count received was of 25 N at St Mary's Island in one hour on 3rd (MSH). Nine were around Coquet Island on 21st and five were noted at Spittal Bay on 5th (MHu). Singles were offshore at East Chevington on 9th and 11th (TRD/JD).

**Razorbill** *Alca torda*

The only passage count received was of five N at St Mary's Island in one hour on 3rd (MSH). Otherwise two to four offshore at Coquet island, Druridge and East Chevington.

**Puffin** *Fratercula arctica*

The only passage count received was of one N at St Mary's Island in an hour on 3rd (MSH). Several thousand were showing at Coquet Island on 5th and 22nd (ASJ/RB/MB). Otherwise the only other report comprised three at Spittal Bay on 5th (MHu).

**Rock Dove / Feral Pigeon** *Columba livia*

84 were at Blyth South Harbour on 21st and 78 at North Shields Fish Quay on 28th (DMT), 61 were in Cresswell and 48 at the Spillers Building on Newcastle's Quayside on 4th.

**Stock Dove** *Columba oenas*

Atlas visits to the Bellingham area recorded ten on 7th and nine on 19th (MJC). Seven were in Corbridge on 22nd (MR) and fours were in Bellingham, Carterway Heads, Meldon and West Hartford.

**Woodpigeon** *Columba palumbus*

The highest count came from Walbottle where 300 were in a field on 4th (LR/KR). 150 fed on a school field in Longbenton on 30th (CDH). 20 to 44 were counted on various surveys from Ancroft Moor, Cockle Park, Coupland, Humblehaugh (Nr Alnwick), Rock Midstead, South Charlton, Unthank Moor and Wooler.

**Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

15 were on farm buildings at Whittle Dene on 29th (PCF), five were counted at Bellingham, Cockle Park and Ulgham. On 14th two flew N at Druridge Links where they were noted as being 'uncommon'.

**Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus*

Most records were of single calling males. Concentrations included five calling at Slaley on 2nd (ASJ), three were at Simonside on 3rd and Harthope Valley on 16th. One to two were at many other locations.

**Barn Owl** *Tyto alba*

Two were at Cresswell Pond on 12th with singles seen there on other dates (TB *et al*), two were also seen at Cawfields and Felton Lane. A single was regularly seen at Holywell Dene throughout the month and a single observed at Tranwell woods on 7th and 10th were the observer's first sightings of this species at this location in over ten years of observations (PAT).

**Little Owl** *Athene noctua*

Breeding was confirmed at Ellington (Chugdon Wood) where one to two adults and three to five juveniles were seen during the month (TB). Two were at Broadlaw Farm on 16th (ADMc) and one was regularly seen at Backworth during the month and singles were also reported from Ancroft, Cawfields, Ellington (Warkworth Lane), near Greenhead and Ingoe.

**Tawny Owl** *Strix Aluco*

In a Stamfordham garden, a pair fledged two young by 7th (EC). Two were at Forestburn Gate on 3rd and Walbottle Hall on 7th. Single juveniles were noted at Dinnington, Prestwick Carr and Slaley Forest.



A young Tawny Owl in a Stamfordham garden  
6th June by Ed Crabtree



**Long-eared Owl** *Asio otus*

A single adult was at Wallsend Swallow Pond on 21st where two juveniles were seen on 28th (SPP) and an adult and at least one calling young were heard at Felton Lane on 30th (AT). A single was noted in the Druridge Pools area between 13th and 23rd and at Duddo Hill on 30th.

**Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus*

Three were noted a single site near Haltwhistle on 20th (MSK). Singles were at Burntridg Moor, Greenrigg Moor and Scotland Gate.

**Nightjar** *Caprimulgus europaeus*

In May, four territories were established in Slaley Forest by 29th (ACo *et al.*) and a single was noted at Holburn on 24th (*per* NNBC).

Slaley was once again the best site for this species with four churring males here on 2nd (ASJ). Two were in the Kyloe area on 22nd (CGK) and singles were at Dipton and Dilston. A single female was present in Holy Island Village on 17th (MJC/ADM).

**Swift** *Apus apus*

At Druridge Pools, 152 moved generally west in a single flock after heavy rain on 17th (IDR). On 7th, the A19 road was popular with about 150 over the Seghill flyover and 80 over the Moor Farm roundabout at Cramlington (PCF/JA). At Ashington (Castle Island), about 100 were present on 12th and, 60 fed at Whitley Bay on 1st and West Ord on 3rd and 40 were 'on territory' at Whitley Bay by 1st. At least two pairs, possibly four, had taken up residence in the village pub in Stamfordham by 29th.

**Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*

Young and adults were on the Ouseburn/Jesmond Dene between 11th and 24th (DHWB *et al.*), singles were at Big Waters, Haughton Strother, Holywell Dene, Low Angerton and Morpeth (High Ford).

**Green Woodpecker** *Picus viridis*

Singles were heard or seen at Corbridge, Harthope Valley, Letah Wood, Lickar Dene, Linnels, Mitford Castle and Nunykirk.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major*

Seven were counted on a timed tetrad visit to Hesleyside near Bellingham on 19th (MJC). At Grindon Farm (Tynedale), four adults were seen on feeders throughout the month joined by at least two young by 20th (JF) and Juveniles were also noted on peanuts at Rothbury throughout the month (TRD/JD). Juveniles were also noted at Corbridge, Cramlington, New Water Heugh, Plessey Woods, Softley (from nest), Spindleston, Wark and West Moor.

**Skylark** *Alauda arvensis*

Tetrads in the Bellingham area held high numbers during atlas visits with between 21 and 76 noted as the highest count at Sandysike Rigg on 22nd (MJC). Elsewhere in the uplands, the Cheviots at Ewe Hill on 25th (MLC) and the Otterburn Ranges on 3rd (ASJ) held about 50 each. On the coast 18 were at Cresswell on 4th and 15 were at St. Mary's Island (Whitley Bay) on 12th.

**Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia*

The colony at Hadston Links in Druridge Bay Country Park numbered at least 50 nests with about 250 individuals counted there on 23rd (SRB), 200 were counted at nearby Hauxley reserve on 22nd which were presumably from this colony. At Broadoak Quarry, 105 pairs were counted at two colonies on 24th (PRM). Also in Druridge bay 50 were noted 500m offshore from Druridge links on 22nd and 40 were counted in the bay on 23rd. Other nests sites were 26 nest holes at Wooler and 20 at Wark Bridge, birds were also noted as nesting in the Walls of Hulne Priory in Hulne Park, Alnwick on 6th.



Sand Martin in flight by Alan Tilmouth

**Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*

The highest count was a timed tetrad visit to Charlton near Bellingham with 61 there on 19th (MJC). 52, including fledged juveniles were at Walwick on 21st (PRM), other timed tetrad visits noted 42 at Humblehaugh near Alnwick, 24 at Cresswell and Forestburn Gate and on a WBBS at Wooler. In the Harthope Valley an adult fed young and then copulated with a house martin *Delichon urbica* on 19th (MSK).

**House Martin** *Delichon urbica*

20 were noted at Corbridge on 1st (MR), nest building at Burradon Pond on 9th (LJM) and on a timed visit to Stobswood on 10th (MJCo). At Belsay Hall there were about 21 apparently occupied nests by 24th and eight at Stannington.



Housemartins at Kirkharle  
29th June by Tim Dean

**Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis*

The highest concentration was ten in the Bellingham area on 7th (MJC), five migrants were on Holy Island on 17th (MJC/ADM). Birds were noted in typical breeding habitat and numerous locations including Simonside Hills, Thrunton Woods, Kielder and Cheviots areas, SW Northumberland and Matfen.

**Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis*

Counts of between 32 and 89 were made during timed visits to the Bellingham area during the month (MJC) and 47-48 were noted in two tetrads in the Cheviot Hills on 25th (MLC).

**Rock Pipit** *Anthus petrosus*

Only two records this month, a pair were on Whitley bay Promenade on 3rd (MSH) and a pair were on St. Cuthbert's Isle on Holy Island on 13th (IDR).

**Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava flavissima*

At Whittle Dene Reservoirs four pairs were noted and at least two juveniles by 16th (MR) and there were perhaps two pairs near Widdrington where adults were seen carrying food on 28th (GB). On 30th, three males were on Holy Island (DWS) and two's were noted at Haughton Strother and East Ord. A single juvenile was at St. Mary's (Whitley Bay) on 30th.

**Blue-headed Wagtail** *Motacilla flava flava*

A single male was collecting food by the River Tyne at Wark on 7th (PRM).

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*

14 pairs were counted in Upper Coquetdale during the month (JR). Five were in Hulne Park on 6th (RB/MB) and a pair with three newly fledged young were at Healey Cleugh on 10th (RMH). An adult and three young were at Norham on 21st. Two's or pairs were noted at Bellingham, Clennel, Eals Bridge, Forestburn Gate, Haydon Bridge, Holywell Dene, Jesmond Dene, Kirkharle, Newcastle (Exhibition park), Rothbury and Wark,

Wooler. Breeding was also confirmed at Harthope Valley, Jesmond Dene, Park Burn (Coanwood).



Grey Wagtail at Kirkharle on 29th June by Tim Dean

**Pied Wagtail** *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

21 pairs were noted in the Coquetdale area during the month (JR) and 14, five adults and nine juveniles were at Boulmer on 12th (MT/NT) and six, three adults and three juveniles were at Druridge Pools on 30th (IDR). Six were also counted during a timed visit to Wark Bridge. Juveniles were also noted at Hauxley, Sashun Dudley and South Charlton.

**White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba alba*

One was at Druridge Pools on 14th (IDR).

**Dipper** *Cinclus cinclus*

Four were noted at Wooler on 21st (JR). Successful breeding was recording with fledged young seen at Lewisburn (Kielder Forest) and Weldon Bridge on 3rd, Melkridge on 4th, Hulne Park (Alnwick) on 6th, Mitford Castle on 22nd and Rothbury on 26th.

**Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Between 12 and 47 were recorded during timed visits to the Bellingham area during the month (MJC). 31 were at Plessey Woods on 19th (LJM) and atlas workers counted 24 at Rock Midstead, 21 at Longwitton, 14 at Rock and 13 at South Charlton. Ten recently fledged juveniles were on a Rothbury patio on 6th, an adult had five mobile young at Druridge Links on 25th and two adults and four juveniles were caught and ringed there on 21st.

**Dunnock** *Prunella modularis*

In the Bellingham area, 12 were recorded on a timed visit on 19th (MJC), survey work unearthed six at Wooler on 21st and Cockle Park on 29th (JR). Two adults and a juvenile were caught and ringed at Druridge Links on 21st (IDR/JF).

**Robin** *Erithacus rubecula*

The highest counts were the result of Atlas work. Three Tetrads in the Bellingham area produced a total of 54 birds (MJC), 17 were counted in Plessey Woods CP on 19th (LJM) and 15 were singing in Dipton Woods on 20th (BNR). A woodland BBS produced a count of ten at Wooler on 21st (JR), and ten were also at Hagg Bank (Wylam) on 7th. Six to nine were also reported from Chesters House and Walled Garden, Rock, Rock Midstead and Wark Bridge (N. Tyne), and one to five from a further 20 localities.

**\* Nightingale** *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Proof that Breeding Bird Surveys need not be boring, came on 23rd, when MRS stumbled across this remarkable find at Howlett Hall, Bolam. Although typically elusive, it was seen and heard singing on a number of occasions until the month end (MRS *et al.*)

**Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Atlas work in the Bellingham area produced a total of 39 from four Tetrads, the highest count 17 (Hesleyside), followed by 11 (Charlton), six (Corsenside) and five (Sundaysight- MJC). Elsewhere three pairs were at Beacon Hill on 3rd (ASJ). Family parties were noted at a number of sites including six at Greenhaugh (Black Middens Bastle) on 7th (JR), five at Haughton Strother on 27th (MR), and four at Prestwick Car and Slaley Forest. Three to four were also reported from Bolam (Howlett Hall), Holystone and

Thrunton Woods and one to two from a further 12 localities, including nesting activity at Bolam, Hawsen Burn (Harthope Valley), Heddon Steads, Matfen, Middle Newham (Belsay) and Shipley Shiel Farm. There was also a late report of a coastal migrant at Newton church on 14th May.

#### **Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra*

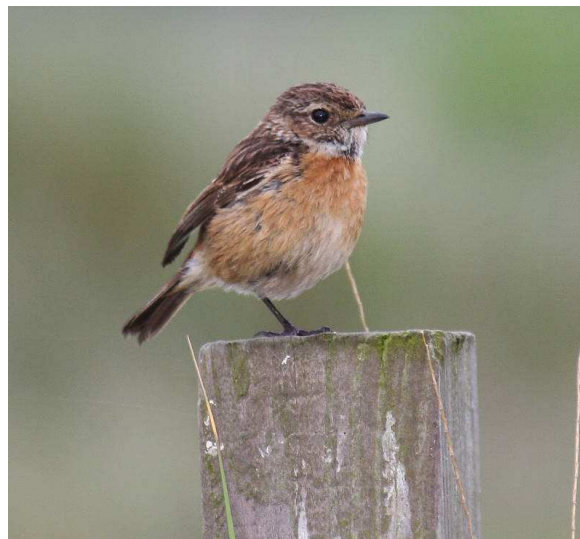
All records were from upland areas, the majority in the Coquet and Cheviot valleys. Seven were found in a 1km square at Rams haw Burn (Ingram) on 25th (MLC) and a further six ( four males plus a pair) near Linhope on 23rd (IFo). In Upper Coquetdale four were at Alwinton on 5th (RB/MB). Elsewhere one to two were reported from Alnham, Bellingham (Sundaysight), Cartington, Clennell, Langleeford Hope, Linhope (west of), Rowhope and Shilmoor.

#### **Stonechat** *Saxicola torquata*

Confirmed breeding was reported from eight inland and eight coastal sites as outlined in the chart below. 11 localities are in addition to those reported last month. A total of 31-32 confirmed breeding sites so far this year.

Site	Date	Adults	Young	Notes	Observer
Alnham	16th June	2	2		TRD/JD
Berwick Little Beach	5th June			Adults feeding fledged young.	MHu
Bellingham (Sundaysight)	22nd June	2	3		MJC
Buston Links	12th May	2		Carrying food	MLC
Coanwood Pond	2nd June	1	2		JSB/EC
Cresswell Pond	5th June	2	9	2 broods 4 & 5 4 adults here on 1st	ASJ/MT/NT
Druridge Links	27th June	2	3	New brood ( 2nd brood from this pair )	IDR
East Chevington	11th June	2	2	Male and 5 juveniles here on 30th (JSB/EC)	TRD/JD
Harthope Valley	16th June		3		LJM
Monks House Pool	17th June		3		PRM
Newcastle Great Park Pools	7th June		2	Same as last month?	TRD
North Blyth	10th May	1		Carrying food	MLC
Rothbury (Addycombe)	23rd June	2	2		TRD/JD
Slaley Forest	23rd June	1	1	S.E. corner	JSB/EC
Stiddlehill Common (Ridsdale)	1st June			Family party	NFO
St Mary's Island	30th June	2	4		ASJ

In addition seven were found at Bellingham (Hesleyside) on 19th (MJC), and one to two at Gowk Hill (near Rothbury), Haughton Strother, Muckle Moss, Newbiggin, Plenmeller and West Chevington.



Two views of the increasingly common Stonechat

L a male at Long Nanny by Mike Hodgson and R by Alan Tilmouth



**Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe*

The highest counts were six at Alwinton on 5th (RB/MB) and five, including two juveniles, at Hethpool (Coquet Valley) on 19th (IDR/JF). In the Bellingham area four's were at Charlton and Sundaysight on 19th and 20th respectively (MJC). Three at Rothbury (Addycombe) on 10th included a downy juvenile, while one to two was also reported from Alnham (carrying food), Annstead, Broomlee Lough, Shillmoor and Tows Bank, the latter also carrying food.

Late reports included three coastal migrants at Low Newton-by-the-Sea on 7th May and one at Newton Point on 17th May. Another single was reported from Long Nanny on 28th May (GW).

**Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus*

Two were reported from the Harthope Valley on 19th, where a male was in song and a female carrying food (MSK). A single was again in the Makendon-Chew Green area (Upper Coquetdale) on 14th (IRD).

Two late reports were received, a migrant at Football Hole (Newton) on 14th May (GW) and two in potential breeding habitat in the Harwood Shield area on 31st May (MJC)

**Blackbird** *Turdus merula*

Atlas work again produced the highest counts. 52 were counted in a two hour TTV at Cramlington (Southfield) on 8th (LJM), 45 in two hours at Killingworth / West Moor on 20th (LJM) 19 in the Bellingham area (Hesleyside) on 19th (MJC), 14 at Rock Midstead and Stobswood and 12 at South Charlton, Wark and Wooler. Elsewhere eight to ten were noted at Chesters House and Walled Garden, Chipchase, Duddo, Highthorn, Tritlington and Ulgham, and one to seven at a further 18 localities.

**Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris*

A single bird at Eshott on 11th was an unusual summer record (MSH).

**Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos*

Well reported again this month, with 11 counted in the Bellingham area (Hesleyside) on 17th (MJC) and at Wooler on 19th (JR). Nine were singing in the Harthope Valley between Carey Burn Bridge and Hawsen Burn on 16th (LJM) and eight singing birds were heard at Walwick on 21st (PRM). Four to five were reported from Chesters House and Walled Garden, Chipchase Castle, Cockle Park, Dipton Wood, Newbiggin (Hexhamshire), Plessey Woods, Rock, Shilford, Swallow Pond and Unthank and one to three from a further 18 localities.

A late report was received from Holy Island where 25+ were counted on 17th May, most presumed to be migrants (MJC/ADM).

**Redwing** *Turdus iliacus*

A late migrant / summering bird was at Holy Island on 1st (RA) and again 10th-13th (*per* TRD).

**Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus*

Post breeding gatherings included 11 at Allendale on 28th, 11 at Greenrigg Moor on 27th and ten at Burnridge Moor on 28th (RMH). Elsewhere, up to eight were noted at Prestwick Carr, seven at Brocolitia, and four at Hexham and Sandhoe. Single birds were reported from Hawsen Burn, Ulgham, a Walbottle garden, Wark and Wooler.

**Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella naevia*

Up to three reeling birds were heard at Arcot Pond on 11th and two recently fledged young were noted here on 4th and 8th (STH/LJM *et al.*) Two were heard at East Chevington throughout the month, a bird carrying food here by 22nd (ASJ/PCF/IF/MSH). Two were also at St Mary's on 27th and Wark Forest on 26th (ASJ/PRM). Single birds were noted at Big Waters, Bolam (collecting food from horse dung on the road) Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools and Links, Holy Island, Linton Pond, Newbiggin, Ogle-Whalton, Swallow Pond and Swarland.

**Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

12 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 16th included eight singing males and birds feeding young (MR). Six were reported from St Mary's (three pairs) on 1st (ASJ) and East Chevington (singing) on 19th (PRM) and three to four from Cresswell Pond, Humblehaugh (Alnwick), The Loddems (north of Haltwhistle), Middle Newham and Swallow Pond. Elsewhere one to two were noted at a further 11 localities including Corsenside (Bellingham) where this species is considered to be a rarity, and Wark Forest.

Four were reported from Holy Island on 17th May (MJC/ADM).

**\* Marsh Warbler** *Acrocephalus palustris*

A singing bird was seen at St Mary's on 7th-8th (ASJ *et al.*)



**Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Three singing birds were at East Chevington (North Pool) on 23rd (TB) and another at East Chevington (South Pool) on 11th (PRM). Three were seen at Holywell Pond on 20th (SPP). New sites were occupied at St Mary's, where a pair was present on 1st (ASJ) and at Swallow Pond where a singing bird was seen on 28th-29th (MPF/SPP). Single singing birds were also reported from Linton Pond and Weetslade Colliery CP.

**\* Great Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

A singing male, trapped and ringed at Gosforth Park, may have been present all month and into July (*per* ASJ)

**Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla*

Well reported, particularly from the North Tyne, where 11 at Bellingham (Hesleyside) on 19th (MJC) was the highest count received. Elsewhere in this area three to four were noted at Chesters House and Walled Garden, Chipchase, Haughton Strother, Lewisburn (Kielder) and Pit House, and singles at Pundershaw, Walwick and Wark. A family party of ca.5 was found at Cresswell Pond on 23rd (RWM/MIM); four were at Farnley on 1st and Shilford on 22nd and three at Wooler on 21st. One to two were reported from a further 28 localities.

Two migrants were at Holy Island on 17th May (MJC/ADM).

**Garden Warbler** *Sylvia borin*

Ten at Bellingham (Hesleyside) on 19th was the highest count received (MJC), followed by five at Trewitt on 23rd (TRD) and four at Farnley and Wooler on 1st and 21st respectively (RB/MB/JR). Two to three were reported from Bolam, Chesters House and Walled Garden, Cockle Park, Grindon, Haughton Strother, Newton church, Norham, Oakpool/Hollybush, Rock Midstead, Wark and Wylam and singles from a further 16 localities.

14 passage birds were noted on Holy Island on 17th May (MJC/ADM) and one to three at Newton church 15th-17th May (GW).

**Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca*

Two were noted at Ancroft Moor on 6th (JR), Cheswick on 10th (TRD) and Ellington on 22nd-23rd (TB), the latter carrying food, and singles also at Ancroft Mill, Arcot Pond, Corsenside (Bellingham), Fenham-le-Moor, Holy Island, Little Tosson (Coquetdale), Middle Newham and Prestwick Carr.

Belated records included three in four adjacent Tetrads in the Bellingham area on 7th May and a further two at Corsenside (Bellingham) on 22nd May (MJC); three coastal migrants at Holy Island on 17th May (MJC/ADM) and a single at Newton Church on 16th May (GW).

**Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis*

Another very good month for this species, reported from 40 localities. The highest concentrations was noted at St Mary's on 20th where 20+ included six pairs, some with fledged young (ASJ). 16+ (8+pairs) were at Broadoak Quarry near Whittonstall on 24th (PRM) and 16 along the Waggonways Cycle Track (Whitley Bay-Seaton Delaval) on 3rd (MT/NT). A total of 14 were recorded from three adjacent Tetrads in the Ancroft area on 6th (JR), 12 at Prestwick Carr on 13th (PCF) included a family party and 12 were also at Bolam on 27th (PRM). 11 at Halton Castle / Aydon Castle (Corbridge) on 22nd included seven singing males (MR). Six+ at Holburn Grange on 15th included at least four fledged young and four to five were reported from Breamish Valley (Knock Hill), Coupland, Fenham-le-Moor, Middle Newham and Welton and one to three from a further 25 localities.

Four passage migrants were at Holy Island on 17th May (MJC/ADM).

**Wood Warbler** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Three were singing at Cupola Bridge on 6th (AJH) and two were at Bellingham (Corsenside) on 22nd (MJC). Single birds were also found in breeding habitat at Allen Banks, Bellingham (Hesleyside), Hexham, Rothbury (Addycombe) and Sidwood.

Late reports were received for the Bellingham area, where there was one on 7th May, and the migrant on Holy Island reported last month was still present on 17th May (MJC).

A Wood Warbler on 1st June at Rothbury by  
Tim Dean



**Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*

Ten were found at Wooler on 21st (JR), and a total of eight from seven sites within Jesmond Dene on 21st (MJCo). Elsewhere four to five were reported from Belsay Hall, Rock, Shilford, Stobswood and Ulgham, and one to three from a further 33 widespread localities.

Ten coastal migrants were at Holy Island on 17th May (MLC), six on the River Aln at Alnwick on 4th May and at Rock Midstead on 12th May.

**Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Atlas work produced some very impressive counts for one observer in the Bellingham area as outlined below (MJC).

Elsewhere 16 (including a family party) were at Prestwick Carr on 13th (PCF), 13 at Wooler on 21st (JR) and 12 at Pike House (South of Rothbury) on 18th (MLC). Six to nine were reported from Druridge Links, Forestburn Gate, Hethpool, Lewisburn, Pit House, Ramshaw Burn, Softley, Stobswood and Sweethope Lough and one to five from a further 48 widespread localities.

Late reports included 14 coastal migrants at Holy Island (MJC/ADM) and nine at East Ditchburn on 17th May, eight at Watergate on 12th May and six at Thorneyhirst on 21st May.



A Willow Warbler at St. Mary's  
10th June by Mike Hodgson

**Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus*

11 were noted in family groups at Ordley on 28th, six at Shilford on 22nd and four in Slaley Forest on 21st (BNR) and one to two at a further seven localities. A migrant was at Holy Island on 17th May.

Spotted Flycatcher in a garden at Tranwell  
25th June  
by Peter Tapsell

**Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata*

Well observed throughout month. Three pairs were noted in the Beacon Hill area on 3rd (ASJ), two pairs

breeding at Lordenshaw on 3rd (ASJ) and Stamfordham on 20th (EC), three at Sundaysight on 20th-22nd (MJC), Cawfields between 1st-13th (SJH) and Hesleyside (Bellingham) on 19th (MJC). Breeding was confirmed near Boalm (PG), Fontburn Reservoir (ADM), Lambley (MRS), Slaley Hall Golf Course (PG) and Wallington Hall (MJC). Pairs were also at Alwinton, Ancroft, Black Middens Bastle (Greenhaugh), Corsenside (Bellingham), Kielder Forest, Linshiels Bridge, Rothbury, Shipley Shiel Farm and Simonburn. On Holy Island, single migrants were noted on 17th May (MJC/ADM) and 1st (RA). Singles were at a further 26 widespread localities including one ringed at Hauxley NR on 5th (RMH).

**Spotted Flycatcher is a target species for 2009. Please report all records.**

**Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Six migrants were observed on Holy Island on 17th May (MJC/ADM). Six were at Corsenden (Bellingham) on 22nd (MJC), four in the Bellingham area on 7th (MJC), two at Sundaysight (Bellingham) on 22nd (MJC) and singles at Nunnykirk on 2nd (ADM) and Forestburn Gate on 18th (TAC).

**Long-tailed Tit** *Aegithalos caudatus*

Breeding was confirmed at Black Middens Bastle (JR), Leazes Park (DM) and Oakpool (BNR). 16 were at Haughton Strother near Humshaugh on 27th (MR), ten at Corbridge on 23rd (MR), six at Barhaugh Hall on 14th (BNR) and Bellingham on 22nd May (MJC). One to four were at a further nine widespread localities,

**Blue Tit** *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Five pairs were breeding at Haughton Strother near Humshaugh (MR). Family parties were observed at Forestburn Gate (TAC), Leazes Park (DM), Rock Midstead (MLC), South Charlton (MLC) and West Ditchburn (MLC). 40 were noted during an Atlas visit at Charlton (Bellingham) on 19th (MJC), 25 in the Killingworth/West Moor area on 20th (LJM), 17 at Haughton Strother on 27th (MR), 16 at Hagg Bank on 7th, Softley on 14th and Whitley Chapel on 21st (BNR) and 11 at Pit House on 22nd (PC). One to nine were at a further 22 widespread localities.

**Great Tit** *Parus major*

Five pairs were breeding at Haughton Strother (MR). Breeding was confirmed at Druridge Links (nine juveniles ringed on 14th – IDR/JF), Forestburn Gate (TAC), Rising Sun Organic Farm (JMA), Rock Midstead (MLC), Town Moor (Newcastle – JMA), a Walbottle garden (two young fledged, two eggs infertile – KR/LR) and West Ditchburn (JR). Ten were found in the Thorneyhirst tetrad on 27th (PC) eight at Norham on 21st (JR) and Wark Bridge on 27th (PC), six at Chesters Walled Garden on 14th (ALT). One to five were at a further 11 widespread localities.

**Coal Tit** *Periparus ater*

Breeding was confirmed at East Cramlington NR (three family parties – LJM) and Shilford (three family groups – BNR) plus Longbenton (ADM), Lordenshaw (pair feeding young in a nest in a hole in fence post two feet from the ground – ASJ), Plessey Woods CP (LJM/PA), Rock (MC). 12 were at Whitley Chapel on 21st (BNR) and four at Pit House on 22nd and Wark Village on 29th (PC). One to two were at a further seven widespread localities.

**Willow Tit** *Poecile montanus*

Family parties were observed at Tranwell Lane opposite Morpeth Common Farm on 19th (four young – ADM), Prestwick Carr on 24th (three young – PCF) and Three Hills NR, Wideopen on 25th (three young – MPF). Three were also noted at Howlett Hall, Bolam on 28th (ADM), two at Castle Island on 21st (DM/STH), and singles at St. Mary's on 8th (north edge of wetland, an island mega tick – MSH/AC), Stobswood on 22nd (RA), near Bolam on 28th (DM/STH) and East Chevington NR on 28th (unusual at this coastal locality – perhaps post-breeding dispersal (GB) ).

**Marsh Tit** *Poecile palustris*

Confirmed breeding was recorded at Haughton Strother (MR) and Ordley (BNR). Pairs were at Derwent Gorge opposite Muggleswick on 2nd (AJN) and Beacon Hill on 3rd (ASJ) and singles at Linden Hall on 13th (NFO) and Rothbury on 26th (TRD).

**Marsh Tit is a target species for 2009. Please report all records.**

**Nuthatch** *Sitta europaea*

Breeding was confirmed at Fell Cottages, Slaley (three fledged young – RMH), Oakpool (BNR), Plessey Woods CP (three juveniles – LJM/PA), Rothbury (one juvenile- TRD) and Spindleston (two juveniles – MSH). 11 were noted at Hesleyside during an Atlas visit on 19th (MJC) and seven at Chesters Walled Garden on 14th (ALT). One to three were also at Beldon Burn, Bellingham, Belsay Hall, Cartlington, Coupland, Dukeshagg Wood, Esp Mill, Jesmond Dene, Twizell near Belford and Wark Bridge and Village.

**Treecreeper** *Certhia familiaris*

Successful breeding occurred at Haughton Strother(MR) and Plessey Woods CP (LJM/PA). Six were at Hesleyside, Bellingham on 19th (MJC), four at Oakpool on 25th (BNR), two at Hulne Park on 6th (RB/MB), Shilford on 22nd (BNR). Singles were also at Chesters Walled Garden, Dilston, Holystone, Howlett Hall (Bolam), Norham, Pit House, Rothbury, Thrunton Woods and Wark.

**Jay** *Garrulus glandarius*

Three were at Whitley Chapel on 21st (BNR), two at Haughton Strother on 18th (MR), Shilford on 22nd and Oakpool on 25th (BNR). Singles were also at Blagdon, Cupola Bridge, Dilston, Dinnington, Ford Bridge, Hagg Bank, Hulne Park, Langleeford Hope (Harthope Valley), Longhirst Flash, Mitford Cricket Club, Rothbury, Thorneyhirst, Tranwell, Thrunton Woods and Walwick.

**Magpie** *Pica pica*

12 visited a Walbottle garden on 14th (KR/LR), ten at Hagg Bank on 7th (BNR), seven (five juveniles) at Druridge Pools on 15th (IDR) and one to four at a further 11 widespread localities.

**Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula*

Breeding was confirmed at Chesters near Alnwick (MLC), Dinnington (PCF), Forestburn Gate (TAC), Rock (MLC), South Charlton (MLC), Walbottle (KR/LR) and West Ditchburn (MLC). 200+ came into an evening roost at Wark on 21st (PRM), 120 at Oakpool on 25th (BNR), 75 at Steel Rigg on 2nd (JMA), 58 in the Chipchase Castle area on 29th (PC), 55 at Dinnington on 30th (PCF), 46 during an Atlas visit to Tritlington on 11th (MJCo), 38 at Wooler on 21st (JR) and 33 at Stobswood on 10th (MJCo). One to 30 were at a further 23 widespread localities.

**Rook** *Corvus frugilegus*

61 were at Tritlington on 11th (MJCo), 50 at Rock on 0th (MLC), 27 at Norham on 21st (JR) and 24 at West Ditchburn on 10th (MLC). One to 15 were noted at a further ten widespread localities.

**Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone*

36 were observed at North Shields Fish Quay on 6th (DMT). Atlas visits produced 19 at Craigshield on 12th (PC), 18 at Esp Mill on 12th (PC), 16 at Crag Lough on 2nd (JMA), 15 at Wark Village on 29th (PC), 12 at Welton on 7th and Ulgham on 23rd (MJCo), 11 at Highthorn on 9th (MJCo), ten at Rubbingstob Hill on 22nd (PC) and Marden Farm Estate on 24th (MN). One to nine were at a further 26 widespread localities.

**Raven** *Corvus corax*

Four flew over Muckle Moss on 30th (MR), three in the Bellingham area on 7th (MJC) and Makemerich Farm near Capheaton on 10th (ADM), two at Catcleugh Reservoir on 7th (PRM), Carey Burn (Harthope Valley) on 8th (TRD/JD), Bellasis Bridge (Blagdon) on 12th (PCF), Addycombe Crag (Rothbury) on 14th (JD) and west of Linhope on 29th (IFo). Singles were in the Blakehope Burn area (Kielder Forest) on 13th (PRM) and Softley on 14th (BNR).

**Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*

Post breeding flocks developed with C.600 at Druridge Links on 27th (IDR), 300+ on Holy Island on 16th (MSK), 250 at Snitter on 21st (JMA), 200+ at Catcleugh on 22nd (MSK), 120 (juveniles) at St. Mary's on 1st (ASJ), 55 (juveniles) in a Whitley Bay garden on 1st (ASJ) and 42 in a Walbottle garden on 7th (KR/LR). One to 31 were at a further 14 widespread localities.

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*

Confirmed breeding was noted at Forestburn Gate, Humblehaugh near Alnwick, Rock Midstead and West Ditchburn (MLC). Post breeding gatherings involved 60 in the Burradon/Dudley area on 9th (LJM) and Holy Island Village on 13th (IDR), 42 feeding in hedges near Whittle Dene Farm on 19th (PCF), 40 in the Southfield area of Cramlington during an Atlas visit on 8th (LJM), 29 at Humblehaugh on 16th (MLC), 24 at Ulgham Grange Farm on 3rd (MJCo), 23 at Tritlington on 11th (MJCo), 22 at Ulgham on 23rd (MJCo) and Wark Bridge on 27th (PC), 20 at Wark Village on 29th (PC). Four-18 were at a further 16 widespread localities.

**Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*

35+ (20+ adults and 15 young) were found at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) during month (TB). Breeding was also confirmed at Haughton Strother (MR) and Middle Newham near Belsay (TAC/MLC). 12 were at Haughton Strother on 21st (MR), eight at Blakemoor Farm (Cresswell) on 2nd (MJCo), Ancroft North Farm on 6th (JR), Tritlington on 11th (MJCo), three pairs at Wark on 12th (PRM) and Blam on 27th (PRM). One to five were also observed at Ancroft, a Dinnington garden, Goswick, Halton Castle (Corbridge), Hemscott Hill (Cresswell), Howlett Hall (Bolam), a Netherton Park garden, an Old Hartley garden, a Prestwick Carr garden

and Unthank Moor.

**Tree Sparrow is a target species for 2009. Please report all records.**

**Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs*

In the Bellingham area, 78 were Corsenside on 19th, 70 at Sundaysight on 22nd and 61 at Hesleyside on 19th (MJC). 47 were at South Charlton on 13th (MLC), 35 at Rock Midstead on 23rd (MLC), 30 at Wooler on 21st (JR) and 25 at Walwick on 21st (PRM). One to 21 were at a further 33 widespread localities including three ringed at Druridge Links on 21st (IDR/JF).

**Greenfinch** *Carduelis chloris*

Ten visited a Walbottle garden on 28th (KR/LR). Nine were noted during an Atlas visit to Ulgham on 23rd (MJCo) and six visited a Dinnington garden on 30th (PCF). One to five were also at Ancroft (North Farm and Moor), Chesters Walled Garden, Chipchase Castle, Cockle Park, Duddo, Forest Burn Gate, Highthorn, Jesmond Dene, Stobswood, Tritlington, Ulgham Grange Farm, Unthank Moor, Wark Bridge and Village and Wooler.

**Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis*

11 visited garden feeders at Whitley Bay on 1st (ASJ), ten were at Ancroft Moor on 6th (JR), nine at Unthank Moor on 6th and Wooler on 21st (JR), seven at Ancroft on 6th (JR), six at Pit House on 22nd (PC) and Cresswell Pond on 23rd (RWM/MIM). One to five were at a further 24 widespread localities.

**Siskin** *Carduelis spinus*

20+ were present at Grindon Farm all month (JF), 1 were at Blakehope Burn area of Kielder Forest on 13th (PRM), nine at Hesleyside (Bellingham) on 19th (MJC), eight at Corsenside (Bellingham) on 19th (MJC) and Lewis Burn (Kielder Forest) on 3rd (PRM). One to five were also at Barhaugh Hall, Beldon Burn, Callaly, Cartington, Catcleugh Reservoir, Ewarty Shank, Gowk Hill, Grindon Lough, Langleeford Hope (Harthope Valley), Rothbury, Scrainwood, Simonside Woods, Softley, Sundaysight (Bellingham), Sweethope Lough, Thrunton Woods, Walwick, Wark Forest and Village and Whitley Chapel.

**Linnet** *Carduelis cannabina*

24 were noted at Chare Ends, Holy Island on 30th (PRM), 20 at Newbiggin on 23rd (SRB), nine pairs at St. Mary's on 1st (ASJ), 15 at Corsenside (Bellingham) on 22nd (MJC), West Hartford on 3rd (LJM) and Pike House on 18th (MLC), 14 at Newbiggin on 18th (PRM), 12 at Tritlington on 11th (MJC) and Budle Bay on 30th (PRM) and 11 at Blakemoor Farm (Cresswell) on 2nd (MJCo). One to ten were at a further 23 widespread localities.

**Twite** *Carduelis flavirostris*

One was flying low over road from moor calling at Whitfield Monk/Keenleyside on 13th (BNR).

**Lesser Redpoll** *Carduelis caberet*

Nine were at Sundaysight (Bellingham) on 22nd (MJC), four pairs at Lordenshaw on 3rd (ASJ), eight at Harthope Valley on 8th (TRD/JD), seven at Corsenside (Bellingham) on 19th (MJC), six at Grindon Lough on 4th (PRM) and one to four at Blakehope Burn (Kielder Forest), Caistron, Cawfields, Debdon, Eshott, Esp Mill, Ewarty Shank, Fell Cottages (Slaley), Greenlee Lough, Hareshaw Common, Harwood Shield, Hepple, Hesleyside, Holburn Grange, Holystone, Knock Hill (Breamish Valley), Linden Hall, Merlkridge, Rothbury, Scrainwood, Sweethope Lough, Thrunton Woods, Walwick, Wark Forest and Whitfield Monk.

**Crossbill** *Loxia curvirostra*

Ten were at Hesleyside (Bellingham) were noted during an Atlas visit on 19th (MJC), two at Rushy Knowe (Kielder) on 12th (TRD) and Fell Cottages (Slaley) on 18th (RMH). One was ringed at Newton Church on 27th (GW). Another was at Bolam Lake CP on 29th (TRD/JD).

**Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Breeding was confirmed at Allerdean Greens (MHu), Dinnington (PLF), Lickar Dene (ASJ) and Rothbury (TRD/JD). Six were noted at Hesleyside (Bellingham) on 19th (MJC). One to two were also at Ancroft Moor, Arcot Pond, Cheswick, Chipchase Castle, a Dinnington garden, Dukeshagg Wod, Lewis Burn (Kielder Forest), Oakpool, an Old Hartley garden, Seghill NR, Slaley Forest, Thrunton Woods, Tower Knowe (Kielder Forest), a Walbottle garden and Wylam.

**Yellowhammer** *Emberiza citrinella*

15 males were singing near Linden Hall on 1st (ASJ), 14 (13 singing males) around Wark Village on 29th (PC), 13 at Humblehaugh near Alnwick on 16th (MLC), 12 at Middle Newham near Belsay during a farm survey on 21st (TAC), 11 at Welton near Whittle Dene on 7th (MJCo), South Charlton on 13th (MLC) and



Norham on 21st (JR). Six to ten were noted at Ancroft Moor and North Farm, Chesters near Alnwick, Chipchase Castle, Peigh Hills Rock, RockMidstead, Ulgham Grange Farm and Unthank Moor. One to five were at a further 25 widespread localities.

#### **Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus*

21 were singing at East Chevington on 5th (ASJ), 18 at Cresswell Pond on 5th (ASJ) with 14 at adjacent Blakemoor Farm on 2nd (MJCo), 13 males singing at St. Mary's on 1st (ASJ), 11 at Arcot Pond on 8th (DM), nine (seven males) at Druridge Links on 29th (IDR), six at Highthorn on 9th (MJCo) and Sundaysight (Bellingham) on 20th (MJC). Confirmed breeding was noted at Haughton Strother (MR), St. Mary's area (ASJ) and Whittle Dene (MR). One to five were also noted at 26 widespread localities.

#### **Corn Bunting** *Emberiza calandra*

Last month's bird was still mimicking Yellowhammer song north of Linden Hall between 1st-20th (ASJ/ACo/NFO).

#### **Brown-headed Cowbird** *Icterus galbula*

The sighting at Belford on 2nd May was from 15:00 to 15:03 not 15:30 as stated. Hence the observer had no time to alert anybody else and indeed had managed to persuade the garden's owner to allow access if the bird re-appeared. However it never showed again even with several neighbours involved in the search. The inference in the birding press that this bird was suppressed is unfair to the observer who never sought to achieve this aim and was fully aware of the interest that would be generated by this astonishing visitor from the States !

### **ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN**

#### **Escapes**

##### **Indian Peafowl** *Pavo cristatus*

A pair bred at Chesters near Alnwick producing four chicks (TAC/MLC).

#### **Hybrids**

##### **Canada Goose x Greylag Goose** *Branta canadensis* x *Anser anser*

Single hybrids were seen at Hauxley on 25th (TRD/JD) and at Berwick on 12th (MHu).

##### **Glaucous Gull** *Larus hyperboreus* x *Larus argentatus*

A presumed hybrid first or second-summer was found at the Black Middens on the Tyne Estuary on 13th but only stayed briefly before flying South (DMT).

### **LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS**

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Bamburgh Ringing Station, Hauxley Ringing Station, North Northumberland Bird Club, Seaton Sluice Watch Tower.

Those observers marked with an asterisk after their name(s) have submitted records on-line using the club spreadsheet, copies are available by emailing Dick Myatt at [dick@dickmyatt.co.uk](mailto:dick@dickmyatt.co.uk).

### **Apologies for any accidental omissions**

### **BULLETIN COMPILATION AND PRODUCTION**

This bulletin was compiled by Lindsay McDougall (Swans to Geese, Game birds, Divers to Herons), Graeme Bowman (Ducks), Trevor Blake (Birds of Prey to Rails), Ian Forsyth (Waders to Skuas), Tim Dean (Gulls to Auks, Escapes, Hybrids and Unknown Origin, List of Contributors, Highlights), Iain Robson (Doves to Dunnock), Mike Richardson (Robin to Warblers), Dee McKeown (Flycatchers to Buntings), Julie Roper/Dan Turner (WeBS Coastal Counts) and Steve Holliday (WeBS Inland Counts). Thanks again to Ann McKeown for typing the section Flycatchers to Buntings.

Edited by Steve Barrett [Sscmagpie@aol.com](mailto:Sscmagpie@aol.com)

Distributed by Alan Watson [apusx@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:apusx@blueyonder.co.uk)

## RECORD SUBMISSION

**Cards:** Please send all record cards to Tim Dean, 2 Knocklaw Park, Rothbury NE65 7PW, to arrive on, or preferably before, the 8th of the month following that in which the records were collected. Please write cards legibly to ensure that your sightings are correctly recorded.

**E-mail:** Members are encouraged to e-mail their records on an Excel-style spreadsheet. Please e-mail Dick Myatt at [dick@dickmyatt.co.uk](mailto:dick@dickmyatt.co.uk) for a copy of the standard spreadsheet and other details.

**Location names and Grid references:** The use of standard location names and the inclusion of grid references greatly increases the value of records in subsequent analyses. A 1km square grid reference is the ideal e.g. NY8067 for Grindon Lough, but 2km square references (Tetrads) are also acceptable e.g. NY86D in this case. A list of localities and their tetrad grid references (Tetrad/Locality List) can be downloaded from the 'Resources & Downloads' section of the Club website at <http://www.ntbc.org.uk> – the use of these names, wherever possible, would be highly appreciated.

## AUTHORS

We are always on the look out for authors for the bulletin sections. This takes two or three evenings at the end of the month. It would be especially useful if a volunteer could be found/press-ganged to act as a standby author to cover for unavailability of writers. You will have noticed that the May and June bulletins were delayed due to holidays.

Please contact any committee member or email Steve Barrett at [Sscmagpie@aol.com](mailto:Sscmagpie@aol.com)

## PHOTOGRAPHS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Please keep submitting your articles, photographs, sketches and illustrations for the bulletin. Thanks again to those who have supplied the excellent photographs.

Please send to Steve Barrett at [Sscmagpie@aol.com](mailto:Sscmagpie@aol.com)

## ELECTRONIC BULLETIN

The NTBC bulletin can be received electronically or as hard copy. The electronic bulletin arrives earlier than the printed version, it is in colour and we save all that printing and stamps. Ask for an e-mailed bulletin from [jo.bentley@waitrose.com](mailto:jo.bentley@waitrose.com).

## MEMBERSHIP

For membership enquiries please contact [jo.bentley@waitrose.com](mailto:jo.bentley@waitrose.com).

## NTBC WEBSITE

The excellent club website is available at [www.ntbc.org.uk](http://www.ntbc.org.uk). Chris Knox is the link person to the club committee for the website and you can contact him at [christopher.knox@o2.co.uk](mailto:christopher.knox@o2.co.uk)

## FIELD TRIPS

The next field trips are;

Saltholme	20th September
Holy Island	18th October
Mersehead	22nd November

Contact is Trevor Blake;

Email: [trevor.1958@live.co.uk](mailto:trevor.1958@live.co.uk)

Tel: 01670 862 635

## INDOOR MEETINGS REMINDER – CHANGE OF VENUE

The club is moving the meeting venue for the 2009/2010 winter session to the Newcastle Falcons Rugby Club at Kingston Park Stadium, Brunton Road, Kenton Bank Foot, Newcastle upon Tyne NE13 8AF. Indoor meetings will be held, as usual, starting at 7pm on the second Thursday of every month between September and April. First meeting of the autumn is on 10th September.

Detailed travel directions to the new venue can be found on <http://www.newcastle-falcons.co.uk>

**CONSERVATION OFFICER****Role of the Northumberland & Tyneside Bird Club Conservation Officer**

Lindsay McDougall as NTBC Conservation Officer has been carrying out valuable work for several years on environmental issues in our area. His key role is to represent the Club in actioning issues concerning bird conservation which are brought to the Club's attention either by Club members or by organizations.

Examples of consultations that have taken place are:

A1 Road Widening Proposals  
 Blyth South Harbour Wind Turbine Replacement.  
 Castle Island Rowing Disturbance  
 Cramlington South West Sector Development (Arcot)  
 Newbiggin Sea Defenses Improvement  
 Newbiggin Water Catchment Zone.  
 North Brenkley Surface Mine  
 Pegswood Moor Country Park Development  
 Rising Sun Country Park Hides  
 Shotton Surface Mine  
 Tyne Bridge Kittiwake Colony  
 West Hartford Business Park

Whilst the above list seems to give prominence to the urban south east it is in this area where most of the issues have been brought to the Club's attention.

Members raising issues of concern should initially raise these with the Club Secretary Alan Watson [apusx@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:apusx@blueyonder.co.uk) and through them the Club Committee will decide whether to involve the Conservation Officer.

The Conservation Officer is also a member of the Newcastle/North Tyneside Joint Biodiversity Action Plan Steering Group.

**INLAND WeBS CO-ORDINATOR REQUIRED**

After 10 years in the role I am looking to give someone else a chance! The task involves managing a few emails & letters each month and producing the monthly table for each NTBC Bulletin. Three times a year a handful of Core Count Forms need chasing up and sending onto the BTO, whilst at the end of the year, the summary table requires completion for input to Birds in Northumbria. The monthly effort is around 2-3 hours and a rudimentary knowledge of Excel would be useful but not essential. The rewards include copies of the annual Newsletter and the Waterbirds Report plus a deep sense of satisfaction from knowing you are contributing to something really worthwhile. If you would like to take this chance please let me know.

Steve Holliday, tel 01670 731963 or email [steveholliday@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:steveholliday@hotmail.co.uk)

**JIM McELWEE**

A number of our long-standing members will be saddened to learn of the death of Jim McElwee on 16th June. He was 81 years old. To me he was a quiet-natured and polite man and in the 1970s Keith Dures and I used to bump into him at various local birding sites on Tyneside and chat, as usual, about all manner of things not just birds! A supporter of the bird club from its early days, his initials are scattered through the bulletins as a regular contributor and he really enjoyed 'just birdwatching'. A quick look through Birds in Northumbria shows Jim's name appearing in the very first annual report in 1970 and he is still shown there as a contributor in 2000. He is survived by his wife Nancy, daughter Denise and grandchildren Emily, William and Helen.

Mike S. Hodgson

COASTAL WEBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

JUNE	2009
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Site	Berwick Little Beach		Tweed Estuary		Spital - Cocklawburn		Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay)		Budle Pt - Seashouses		Howick - Boulmer		Coquet Estuary		Blyth Estuary		Tyne North Pier - Fish Quay		Wallsend, (north bank only)		Redheugh - Scotswood Bridge.		Scotswood - (north bank)		Newburn Bridge, (north bank)	
	RL	MHu	MHu	PRD	MHu	PRD	PRD	PRD	RP	JAR	EC	LJM	DMT	DMT	PF	PF	DMT	DMT	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF
COUNTER	15	12	10	7					28	18	15	22	13	14	14	14										
DATE																										
Little Grebe			2																							
Cormorant	5	5	9	19					2	1		6	4	5	2	2										
Shag	6		5						1																	
Grey Heron	23	14	1	4						2	1	1														
Mute Swan	544	477		2					4		57	4														
Greylag Goose	5	5																								
Canada Goose	35			35																						
Light-bellied Brent Goose	2			2																						
Shelduck	93			36						36	8	7				6										
Teal	6			4					2																	
Mallard	127	30	3	13					20		8	10														
Tufted Duck	6		2						4																	
Eider	708	3	4	80	501				60	49	9		2													
Common Scoter	52			52																						
Red-breasted Merganser	42			42																						
Goosander	30	16	10							4																
Moorhen	4		1						2		1															
Coot	6			2					4																	
Oystercatcher	139	3	8	37	23				13	36		11	7		1											
Ringed Plover	118			114								4														
Grey Plover	1			1																						
Lapwing	9			7					2																	
Dunlin	40			37					3																	
Bar-tailed Godwit	14			14																						
Curlew	120	7	3	75						34		1														
Redshank	5			4						1																
Turnstone	10			10																						
Black-headed Gull	773	154	4	88						9	325	116		27	38	12										
Common Gull	5			4									1													
Lesser Black-backed Gull	54	4		14								3	1		32											
Herring Gull	884	175	206	69						9	64	59	211	45	42	4										
Great Black-backed Gull	41	4	2							3	1	1	21	7	2											
Kittiwake	9	4										3	1	1												
Sandwich Tern	118	4	20	14	13				8	32		2	25													
Common Tern	21			11						2		5		1	1	1										
Arctic Tern	62			62																						
Little Tern	12			12																						
Kingfisher	0																									
ADDITIONAL SPECIES																										
Fulmar	7	3	3	1																						
TOTALS - WILDFOWL	1,751	8	551	165	660	0	99	92	84	28	6	5	16	37												
- WADERS	456	3	15	40	285	0	18	71	0	16	7	0	1	0												
- GULLS & TERNS	1,979	4	361	226	273	0	8	55	390	189	260	74	120	19												

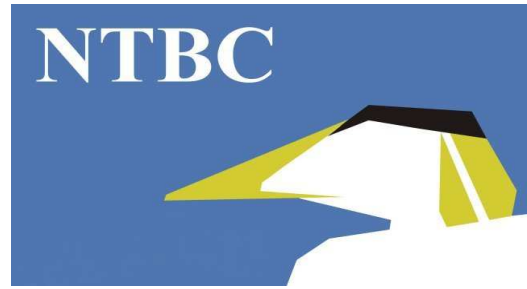




# Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

<http://www.ntbc.org.uk/>



## Bulletin 2009 No 7 MONTHLY SUMMARY – JULY

3rd September 2009

### HIGHLIGHTS

**Mute Swan** – 632 on the Tweed Estuary, highest total since 1994

**Ruddy Shelduck** – Two with Shelduck offshore from Cocklawburn

**Goosander** – 205 at the Tweed Estuary , record count.

**Cory's Shearwater** – Single off Newbiggin on 11th

**Red-necked Grebe** – Juvenile at East Chevington on 22nd

**Bittern** – Singles at East Chevington and Gosforth Park

**Osprey** – Pair at Kielder Reservoir raising three young.

**Pacific Golden Plover** – Summer adult at East Chevington on 11th

**Glaucous Gull** – Unusual mid summer record at Tyne Estuary on 23rd

**Roseate Tern** - Excellent breeding season on Coquet Island

### NEWS

First indoor meeting of the Autumn is on Thursday 10th September at Newcastle Falcons

The next field trip is to Holy Island on Sunday 18th October



An adult and a juvenile Spotted Flycatcher  
An increasingly scarce summer visitor in Knarsdale churchyard  
24th July by Eddie Crabtree

## WEATHER

Mean temperatures were close to the 1971–2000 normal across the UK. The month was similar to July 2008, but somewhat warmer than July 2007. Rainfall was significantly above normal in almost all areas, parts of north-east England recording over three times the normal amount.

1st to 4th: The month began with very warm weather but also some thunderstorms and high rainfall amounts. there were reports of flooding during the 1st in the Durham area with some places reporting 25 mm in an hour. 5th to 9th: Low pressure dominated with bands of rain and showers or thunderstorms on many days. Some were particularly heavy and there was prolonged rain on the 7th with thunder, By the 9th the thunderstorms became more confined to eastern areas, whilst elsewhere saw drier and brighter weather.

10th to 19th: There was a good deal of drier weather from the 10th to 12th with sunshine during the day and temperatures reaching the mid-20s, although there was a band of rain overnight on the 11th. For the rest of this period, there was a return to unsettled conditions with low pressure dominating and bands of rain sweeping through or showery conditions, with the showers often heavy and thundery. An area of low pressure brought more prolonged rain eastwards on the 16th and 17th.

20th to 31st: The driest and brightest days were the 20th, 25th, 26th and 31st with small ridges of high pressure across the country. Chilly overnight into the 25th with temperatures dipping to 3.5 °C at Redesdale (Northumberland). However, the rest of the period remained generally unsettled with low pressure dominating and fronts bringing spells of persistent rain on some days interspersed with sunny spells and widespread heavy thundery showers.

## CLASSIFIED LIST

The following account consists of unchecked reports. The species/subspecies marked \* require descriptions. A complete list of all sightings which need notes is included in the NTBC website [www.ntbc.org.uk](http://www.ntbc.org.uk) under the County Records Committee section and in Birds in Northumbria 2007 page 251.

The Inland and Coastal Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) tables are at the rear of the bulletin. These contain additional counts to those in the Classified List.

## TARGET SPECIES

The target species for 2009 are **Marsh Tit**, **Spotted Flycatcher** and **Tree Sparrow**.

Please report all records for these species.

### Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

The count of 632 in the Tweed Estuary on 10th was the highest total here for 8 years (MHu). Other large gatherings were 92 at Killingworth Lake on 18th, 89 at Castle Island on 8th and 57 at Amble Braid on 28th (LJM/PRM/TRC). Two to eight were noted from Arcot Pond, Bothal Pond, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, East Chevington North Pool, Haughton Strother (Humshaugh), Hauxley NR, Leazes Park (Newcastle) and Wylam. Further broods were noted at Backworth Pond (two), Holy Island Lough (seven reduced to three one of which was recovering from a mauling by a Fox or Otter), Linton Pond (second brood of five) and Newton Pool (four).

### Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

The peak count was 255 at East Chevington on 26th (TRC). Other gatherings were 74 at NWT Hauxley on 13th, 30 at Allerdean Grange on 5th, 28 at Newcastle Great Park Pools on 11th, 23 at Marden Quarry on 15th and 20 at Oxford pits on 14th (HRS/MHu/AHB/LJM/KWY/). At Prestwick Carr 14 fed in a flooded field on 25th (PCF). Four to nine were at Arcot Pond, Castle Island and Grindon Lough.

Further breeding records are detailed below:

Locality	No .of broods	No. of young	Observer/Comments
Sweethope Lough	3	11	PRM on 1st
Oxford Pits	1	3	MHu on 14th



A Greylag family at Druridge Pools  
5<sup>th</sup> July by Iain Robson

**Greater Canada Goose** *Branta canadensis*

The highest counts were 211 at Castle Island on 8th, 150 at Grindon Lough on 24th, 108 at Hauxley on 25th and 54 at Haughton Strother on 22nd (PRM/PCF/IF/MR). Other gatherings were 33 at Marden Quarry on 8th, 29 at Killingworth Lake on 29th, 25 including many goslings at Shankhead (Ridley Common) on 6th, 21 at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 12th and 20 at Linton Pond on 17th (KWY/PCF/SJH/DM/CDH). One to 11 were noted from Bank's Pond (Dinnington) and Stonehaugh.

Further breeding records are detailed below:

Location		No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/Comments
Rockhouse	Fell	9 adults	8	SJH on 7th
Plenmeller				
Rothley Lakes		1	6	TRD/JD on 24th

**Brent Goose** *Branta bernicla*

An unraced bird was on East Chevington North pool on 13th (TRC).

**Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna ferruginea*

An unusual record involved one which flew N with four Shelducks at Cocklawburn dunes on 20th (PRM).

**Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna*

Budle Bay held 78 on 20th (PRM), 30 arrived from N at Lindisfarne NNR on 12th (IK), 16 were at Boulmer on 18th, four at Cresswell Pond on 12th (DM et al.) and three at Hauxley Reserve on 13th (HRS). Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Castle Island	2	9 (5 & 4)	PRM. With four adults on 8th
Hauxley Reserve	2	6	HRS. On 13th
Kitty Brewster, Blyth	1	9	GB/STH. As May-June
East Chevington north pool	1	3	STH/IFo. On 5th

A juvenile at Doddington on 14th was thought to be locally bred (JD).

**Mandarin** *Aix galericulata*

Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Shittleheugh, Redesdale	1	11	JCD. With two adults on 15th
Stobbs Farm, Rochester	1	5 or 6	DPR. Half grown young with adult female, on 3rd

**Wigeon** *Anas penelope*

One flew S at Seaton Sluice on 16th (TRC). Five were at Grindon Lough on 4th and 21st and two to four on three other dates between 4th-22nd (SJH/PRM/MR), four were amongst Common Scoters in Druridge Bay on 4th (DM), twos at Arcot Pond on 3rd (STH), Castle Island on 15th (PRM) and Holywell Pond on 6th (MSH), and singles at Castle Island, Hauxley Reserve and Longhirst Flash on occasional dates.

**Gadwall** *Anas strepera*

Peak counts (most/all adults) were 18 at Hauxley Reserve on 13th (HRS), ten at Castle Island on 27th (TRD), six at Druridge Pools on 1st (PRM), three at Linton Pond on 17th (CDH), and one to two at Holywell Pond and Longhirst Flash. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes	Locality	No. of broods
Hauxley Reserve	3	25 (10, 8 & 7)	HRS. On 13th (brood of 10 first noted on 4th)	Hauxley Reserve	3
East Chevington south pool	3	12+ (6-7, 3 & 2)	IF/ADMc. On 2nd & 4th	East Chevington south pool	3
Bothal Pond	1	10	PRM. On 8th	Bothal Pond	1

**Teal** *Anas crecca*

Northerly movement involved 11 at Newbiggin on 18th (GB) and seven at St Mary's on 8th (MSH). Numbers at Grindon Lough reached a peak of 51 on 21st (PRM) with 20-49 between 4th-22nd (IFo/SJH/PRM/MR), ten were at Arcot Pond on 3rd (STH), six at Airy Holm Reservoir on 6th (TRD), five at Longhirst Flash on 15th (PRM), three at Hauxley Reserve on 13th (HRS), and singles at Dodd Reservoir and Druridge Pools.

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

A count of 101 at Big Waters on 12th included a brood of seven small young (GB), 60+ were at Eshott on 22nd (MSH), 56 at Grindon Lough on 21st (PRM), 54 at Linton Pond on 17th (CDH), 31-34 at Haughton Strother and Newcastle Leazes Park, 23-28 at Cresswell Pond, Hauxley Reserve and Tynemouth Park, and ten to 17 at Arcot Pond, Newcastle Civic Centre and Exhibition Park, Slaley Forest and Tindal House. One to nine were also at seven further sites. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Marden Quarry	4	34	LJM. On 15th
Killingworth Lake	4	20	LJM. On 18th
Castle Island	3	19 (11, 5 & 3)	PRM. On 8th
Bothal Pond	2-3	14-17	PRM. From 1st
West Ord	2	10 (7 & 3)	MHu. On 5th
Arcot Pond	1	11	DM. Large young on 12th
Holywell Pond	1	8	MSH. New brood on 2nd
Wallsend Hall	1	6	LJM. On 31st
Druridge Pools	1	4	PRM. On 1st
Wallsend Dene	1	4	LJM. On 31st
Hauxley Reserve	1	3	HRS. On 13th

**Garganey** *Anas querquedula*

One was at Grindon Lough on 4th (PRM).

**Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*

Eight were at Linton Pond on 12th (DM/STH/IFo/PA), three at Druridge Pools on 27th (TRD), and singles at Arcot and Bothal Ponds, and Longhirst Flash. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
East Chevington south pool	1	9	ADMc. From 5th
Swallow Pond	1	7	SPP. On 12th

Two juveniles at Druridge Pools on 21st were considered to have possibly been bred on site (TRD/JD).

**Pochard** *Aythya ferina*

Seven adults were at Swallow Pond on 8th (SPP), four drakes at Hedgeley GP on 1st (TRD), a pair at Capheaton Lake on 4th (GB/LAR), two drakes at Ladyburn Lake on 10th (IFo), two drakes at Linton Pond on 17th CDH), and singles at Big Waters, Druridge Pools and West Ord. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Swallow Pond	3	12 (6, 4 & 2)	SPP. On 8th
Arcot Pond	1	2	GB/DM/STH. Reduced brood first noted in June.

**Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*

One flew N at Newbiggin on 10th (TRC). Peak counts were 35+ at Castle Island on 15th (PRM), 24 adults at Swallow Pond on 14th (SPP), 21 at Marden Quarry on 21st (KWY), 17 at Hauxley Reserve on 13th (HRS), and 12 at Tynemouth Park on 9th (JMA). Five to nine were also at Haughton Strother, Linton Pond, Newcastle Exhibition and Leazes Parks, and West Ord, and one to four at Backworth and Bothal Ponds, Grindon Lough, Jesmond Dene and Longhirst Flash. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Hauxley Reserve	4	32 (9, 8, 6, 5 & 4)	HRS. From 4th-25th
Linton Pond	3	16 (7, 5 & 4)	TRD. On 27th
Woodhorn Flashes	2	15 (9 & 6)	GB. On 11th
Ladyburn Lake	2	13 (9 & 4)	IFo. On 10th
Swallow Pond	2	9 (7 & 2)	SPP. On 14th
Holywell Pond	1	8	MSH. On 6th (reduced to 4 by 20th)
Newcastle Great Park Pools	1	8	AHB. On 11th
Dukes Pond	1	6	SPP. On 19th
Hedgeley GP	1	5	TRD/JD. On 1st
East Chevington north pool	1	5	LJM. On 22nd
Newcastle Leazes Park	1	5	DM. On 16th
Newcastle Exhibition Park	1	4	DM. Tiny young on 16th

**Scaup** *Aythya marila*

Two drakes were at Hauxley Reserve on 5th (STH/IFo), two juveniles at Woodhorn Flashes on 18th (PRM/EAW) and a female at Druridge Pools on 28th (MSK).

**Eider** *Somateria mollissima*

117 off Stag Rocks on 3rd included seven juveniles (PCF), 68 were at Cheswick on 3rd (MHu), 37 at Budle Bay on 20th (PRM), 11 at the Wansbeck Estuary (PRM), seven (female and six juveniles) at Holy Island causeway on 2nd (JMA), and one to three at Cocklawburn dunes and the Tyne Estuary to North Shields Fish Quay.



**Common Scoter** *Melanitta nigra*

A total of at least 108 flew N and six S at Newbiggin on four dates between 10th-28th (GB/ASH/PRM *et al.*), 46 N and nine S at Seaton Sluice between 10th-18th (TRC), 22 N at St Mary's on 18th (MSH) and 17 N at Meadow Haven, Berwick on 6th (MHu). Numbers in Druridge Bay varied from a notable peak of 1,000 on 1st (ACo) to 300 on 4th (DM) and 58-85 from 22nd-25th (IDR/STH *et al.*). Peak counts elsewhere were 164 at Cheswick on 13th (MHu), 48 at Cocklawburn on 23rd (MHu), 25 offshore at Newbiggin on 15th (PRM), and eight to 12 at Seahouses and Snab Point.

**Velvet Scoter** *Melanitta fusca*

Two drakes flew N at Newbiggin on 10th (ASH/JGS *et al.*), and one was in Druridge Bay on 1st (ACo).

**Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula*

One was at East Chevington north pool on 18th-19th and 25th (STH/ADMc *et al.*).

**Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator*

30 were at the Pilgrim's Way area of Lindisfarne NNR on 12th (IK), 11 at Boulmer Haven on 18th (RWM/MIM), and one at Budle Bay on 11th (CGK).

**Goosander** *Mergus merganser*

An impressive 205 were counted at the Tweed Estuary on 10th (MHu), 36 were at Cheswick on 3rd (MHu), 32 at Dodd's Well, Berwick on 12th (MHu), and counts of 30 at Meadow Haven, Berwick on 6th (MHu) and Holy Island Heugh on 31st (IK). Elsewhere, 12 were at Holystone on 22nd (DRo), eight (family party) at Stag Rocks on 3rd (PCF), and singles at Castle Island, Cresswell Pond, Killingworth Lake and, more unusually, St Mary's. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Derwent Reservoir	1	9	IFo. Almost full sized young on 15th
Haughton Strother	1	7	MR. Well-grown young on 11th
Redesmouth	1	6	DPR. On 3rd

**Ruddy Duck** *Oxyura jamaicensis*

The only reports came from Swallow Pond, where two drakes were noted on 22nd and one on 15th (SRB).

**Red Grouse** *lagopus lagopus*

The highest counts were 14 at Todhillwood Fell (Plenmeller Common) on 8th and nine on a TTV at Slaley Forest on 20th (SAJH/RMH). One to four were noted from Auchope Cairn, Harwood Shield, Little Ward Law, Swinhope Moor and Windy Gyle.



Red Grouse on moors east of Allenheads  
10th July by Tim Dean

**Black Grouse** *Tetrao tetrix*

Only two reports were received. On 20th a female was in Slaley Forest and a male was at Swinhope Shield (RMH/MSK).

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

The highest count was seven at Brown House on 30th (JMA). Two to three were seen at Alnham, Bellingham, Ravensheugh (Stonehaugh) and Ridley Common (Shankhead).

**Grey Partridge** *Perdix perdix*

The highest counts were 11 including eight juveniles at Dovecote Farm (Stannington) on 25th and nine (seven juveniles) near Gubeon Farm on 21st (RWM/MIM/ADM). At Lucker ten were present in two coveys during the month (JHa). Breeding was also confirmed at Hauxley where an adult accompanied five very small chicks on 21st and at Vandyke (River Aln) on 10th (EC/JSB/MLC). Pairs were noted at Howick, Netherton Park (Stannington) and Wooden and singles at Doddington, Longhirst Flash, North Brunton, Paxhill (Allenheads), Ravensheugh (Stonehaugh) and Tiptoe Farm (Etal).



Grey Partidges on moors east of Allenheads

7th July by Tim Dean

**Quail** *Coturnix coturnix*

Singles were noted at 11 locations during the month. One was seen and heard at Cocklawburn on 3rd and one was heard at Windmill Hill (Goswick) on 8th (MHu). One was calling from a wheat field at Startup (Ogle) on 9th (MRS). At Doddington one was calling from 12th-15th (TRD/JD *et al*). At East Chevington South Pool one was heard on 15th/16th (TRC/IF/IDR). Also on 15th singles were calling at Dunstan Steads (Embleton) and at the new pool south of Woodhorn roadside flash (MLC/TAC/PRM). One was calling at Fowberry on 23rd (IDR), whilst one mile north of Bellasis Bridge one was calling on 26th/28th (PCF/ADM). On 27th one was singing at the edge of a wheat field at Moor Road, Prudhoe (SRB) and one was at Tindal House on 28th (JAR).

**Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus*

Three juveniles were at Howick on 5th (JAR). Two to three adults were noted at Chesters House and Walled Garden, Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene) and Tindal House.

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

At Newbiggin two flew S on 15th and one flew S on 10th (PRM/TRC). Two were close inshore at Seaton Sluice on 18th (TRC).

**Great Northern Diver** *Gavia immer*

Singles were noted offshore at Cheswick on 3rd and in summer plumage off Druridge Links on 15th (MHu/IDR).

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Four were at Newton Pool on 28th and three including the previously reported juvenile at Banks Pond (Dinnington) on 14th ((RWM/MIM/PCF). A pair was re-nesting after flooding at Woolsington Ponds on 9th (SRB). Pairs were also at Oxford pits on 14th, Longhirst Flash on 18th and Rothley Lakes on 24th (MHu/PRM/TRD/JD). Singles were noted from Airey Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield), two separate ponds at Allenheads, Blyth Golf Course, East Chevington and Linden Hall.

Little Grebe breeding data is as follows:

Location	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/Comments
Holywell Pond	3	5	SRB on 22nd
Colt Crag Reservoir	2	3	PCF on 24th
Woodhorn Flashes	2	3	GB on 11th
Whittle Dene Reservoirs	1	4	PCF on 26th
Cocklawburn Pond	1	3	MHu on 13th
Earth Balance Bomarsund	1	2	GB on 23rd
Gosforth Park	1	2+	SRB on 15th
Arcot Pond	1	1	STH on 3rd
Bothal Pond	1	1	TRD on 27th
Coatenhill	1	1	TRD on 7th
Cragside Rothbury	1	1	TRD on 22nd
Linton Pond	1	1	CDH on 15th
Newton Pool	1	1	IF <i>et al</i> on 29th

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*

Numbers at Derwent Reservoir peaked at seven on 5th and five at Killingworth Lake on 18th (TRD/LJM). A pair was at Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield) on 13th (TRD). Singles were at Capheaton Lough on 4th and in full breeding plumage in Sandon Bay (Holy Island) on 31st (TRD/IK).

Breeding data are as follows.

Location	No. of broods	No of young	Observer/Comments
Killingworth Lake	1	2	LJM on 18th
Derwent Reservoir	1	1	TRD on 6th

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

A juvenile visited East Chevington North Pool on 22nd (ADMc).

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

At the now regular breeding site a pair was seen regularly with three young from 8th. A pair was also present at a former breeding site.

**Fulmar** *Fulmarus glacialis*

At St Mary's Island 30 flew N on 8th in one hour and on 10th 11 flew N in 30 minutes (MSH). Singles flew N at Hauxley on 9th/11th (TRD/JD/HRS).



Fulmar at Tynemouth  
by Colin Bradshaw

**\*Cory's Shearwater**

One flew N at Church Point Newbiggin at 18:34 on 11th (ASH).

**Manx Shearwater**

Significant movement was seen at Church Point Newbiggin on 10th when at least 151 flew N (ASH/TRC/JGS/RD/DD). Here on 11th 51 flew N, whilst on 9th 19 flew N (ASH/GB), 14 flew S on 28th and two flew S on 15th (MSK/PRM). At Hauxley 20 flew N on 11th and one N on 9th (HRS/TRD/JD). Tynemouth saw 15 fly N in 1 hour 10 minutes on 8th (KWY) and six passed Seahouses on 25th (DGB). At St Mary's Island four flew N in one hour on 7th, three flew N and one S in one hour on 8th and one N in 30 minutes on 10th (MSH). Three flew N at Spittal Bay (Berwick) Pier on 7th and two N at Berwick on 17th (MHu). Three passed Annstead on 19th (IBDa/KDa).

**Storm Petrel** *Hydrobates pelagicus*

A ringing session at Bondicarr Beach, (Hauxley) trapped one on the evening of 25th/26th with two to three other birds present (HRS).

**Gannet** *Morus bassanus*

Large-scale movements occurred at Berwick Pier where 1,200/hour flew N in a strong wind on 17th and nearby in Spittal Bay on 7th where 550/hour flew N (MHu). At Church Point, Newbiggin 160 flew N in one hour on 9th (ASH). At Tynemouth 157 flew N and seven S in 1 hour 10 minutes on 8th. Sea watching at St Mary's Island produced the following data (MSH):

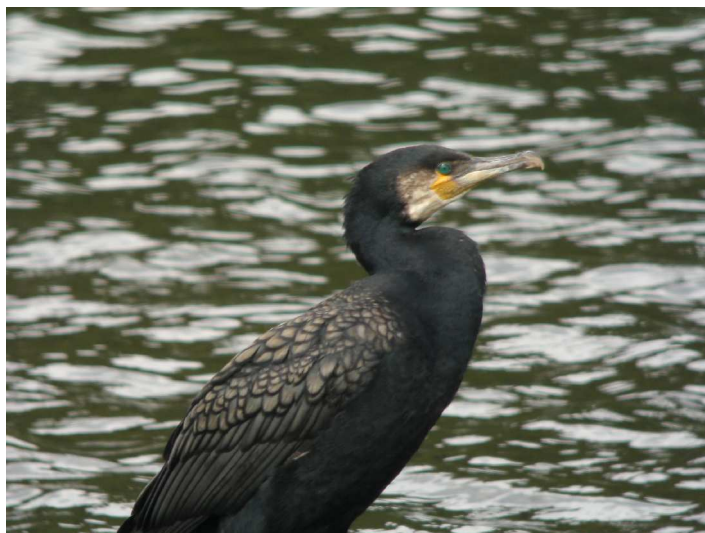
Date	Count/Comments
July 8th	100 N and 4 S 08:10-09:10
July 10th	30N 09:15-09:45
July 7th	27N and 3S 15:50-16:20

At Hauxley 80 flew N on 9th and 40 flew N on 11th (TRD/JD/HRS)

**Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

One flew N at Whitley Bay on 9th (JMA). The peak roost counts during the month were 54 in Blyth South Harbour and 28 at North Shields Fish Quay on 9th (DMT/JMA). At least 36 were at St Mary's Island on 10th (PRM). Inland 13 were at Castle Island on 25th and 12 at Derwent Reservoir on 13th (STH *et al*/IFo). One to three were noted from Arcot Pond, Cresswell Pond and Howden Staithes.

Two birds of the *sinensis* race were at Howden Staithes on 3rd and a single at Castle Island on 15th (PRM). Singles were also at Blyth South Harbour on 3rd, St Mary's Island on 10th and Cresswell Pond on 12th (MSH/AC/STH /IFo/PA).



*Sinensis* Cormorant at Castle Island  
15th July by Paul Massey

**Shag** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

The only record was of three fledged young at Dunstan Steads, Embleton on 15th (MLC/TAC).

**Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris*

A single first seen in Gosforth Park NR on 8th was noted several times before the month end (ACo/per SRB). Another was at East Chevington North Pool on 15th (ADMc)

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*

Two adults were in Budle Bay on 26th (CGK). At East Chevington a single was noted from 9th was present here until 13th, when killed by a Marsh Harrier (NFO/MSK/ADMc et al). A single at Arcot Pond on 18th remained until 19th (LJM/GB/STH et al) Singles were also noted in Budle Bay on 20th, at Caistron on 21st, North Seaton on 28th, Alnmouth and Bilton Mill (River Aln) on 29th and Cresswell Pond on 31st (PRM/LMo/MSK/TRC/MLC/MSH).

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*

At least 13 were at Holywell Pond on 20th (MSH). Nine were at East Chevington on 12th (ADM). .Counts of seven came from the Tweed Estuary on 20th and Holy Island on 31st (PRM/JMA). Six were at Hauxley on 19th and five at Druridge Pools on 1st (GRS.PRM). Counts of four came from Arcot Pond, Castle Island and Cresswell Pond. One to three were noted at Bothal Pond, Holywell Dene, Howden Staithes, Kirkhaugh, Linton Pond, Low Crasterhope, Longhirst Flash, Stannington, Sweethope Lough, West Woodburn, Williamston and Wylam.

**Red Kite** *Milvus milvus*

Two birds were over a wood at North Dunslaw (Horsley) on 12th (MR). Single birds were seen at Shilford on 3rd (BNR), Howick on 4th (IDR/HJH/PHa), Blakely Hill on 5th (SRB), Blanchland / Derwent Reservoir area on 6th (TRD) and at Wylam/ Hagg Bank on 12th (BNR).

**Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*

Apart from the pair that has successfully bred, single birds were seen at Cresswell Pond on 5th (STH/IFo), a juvenile was at Budle Bay on 26th (CGK) and a single bird was seen at Arcot Pond on 30th (LJM).

**Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis*

Only two records this month, involving a bird soaring over a wood at Akeld Steads on 3rd (TRD/JD) and another bird at Holystone on 15th (DRo).

**Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*

A pair was at Scotland Gate throughout the month (SLB/MSK), and two juveniles together may have been bred locally were at Bamburgh on 25th (BRS). A pair was also seen at Cramlington on 16th (DM). Single birds were noted from another 20 sites during the month, including a juvenile harassed by Terns at Tynemouth and being forced onto the rocks on 19th (KWY).

**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*

In the Dilston/ Swallowship area five birds were seen on 15th, four birds were at Unthank on 9th and Westwood (Hexham) on 11th (BNR). Four birds were also seen at Eshott (MSH) & Featherstone (SJH) on 14th, Belsay Castle on 19th (GL), Haughton Strother on 22nd (MR) and at Chesters House on 26th (ALT). One to three birds were at over 40 sites during the month.

**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*

At the Kielder nest site an adult and two young were on the nesting platform on 24th (TRD/JD), the only other record involved a single bird flying upstream at Melkridge on 5th (SJH).

**Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*

Near Bardon Mill three birds were mobbing Common Buzzards *Buteo buteo* on 10th (SJH); three birds were also at Prestwick Carr on 9th & 28th (PCF). Two birds were at Sweethope Lough (PRM), Prudhoe (BNR), Greenlee Lough (MRS), Foxton (IDR), Howick (JAR), and Whitfield Hall (BNR) and at Chesters House (ALT). Single birds were at another 20 sites during the month.

**Merlin** *Falco columbarius*

A pair was seen near Chatton on several dates (JHa). Single birds were observed at Plenmeller on 7th & 14th (SJH), Annstead on 31st (JP et al). A single bird was chasing Meadow Pipits *Anthus pratensis* on Holy Island also on 31st (IK).

**\*Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*

A single bird was seen at Hillheads Farm (Killingworth) on 2nd (MIM), with others at Ordley, Snope Burn and Oakpool (BNR).



**Peregrine** *Falco peregrinus*

From the 26th a pair and three juveniles were over the River Tweed Estuary/ Border Bridge for several days (BWG). Two adults and a juvenile were at Budle Bay on 26th (CGK); two were at Sipton Burn on 20th (MSK). Single birds were at the Needles Eye (Berwick), Berwick GC, Branton, New Water Heugh, Stannington, St Mary's Island & Whittle Wood.

**Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus*

Single adults were seen at Cresswell Pond on several dates during the month (JSB/STH *et al*).

**Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*

Highest counts this month was 11 at Arcot Pond on 12th (DM). Eight birds were at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 16th (DM), six birds were at Hauxley NR on 13th (HRS) and six were also at Marden quarry (Whitley Bay) on 15th (LJM). Five birds were at Shield on the Wall on 12th (MRS), Northumberland Park (N Shields) on 23rd and Blyth GC on 24th (LJM). At Druridge Pools on 1st & Bothal Pond on 8th four birds were seen (PRM). One to three birds were at a further ten sites.

**Coot** *Fulica atra*

Bothal Pond peaked at 59 birds there on 12th (DM/STH *et al*); Linton Pond peaked at 33 birds on 17th (TRD/MSH *et al*). Holywell Pond had 26 adults on 20th (MSH), 16 birds were at Arcot Pond on 12th (DM/STH. ) 13 birds were at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 16th (DM), Capheaton Lough had 10 birds on 4th (GB). One to eight birds were seen at a further six locations during the month.

**Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*

At the coast numbers soon increased with maxima of 91 at Hauxley NR on 13th (HRS), 80 at Goswick Sands on 31st (MHu), 62 at North Blyth on 26th (TRC), 60+ at Howick on 22nd (JAR), 55+ in Budle Bay on 20th (PRM), 48 at Cresswell Pond on 11th (IRD) and 29 at St Mary's on 22nd. Inland the most was 54 at Derwent Reservoir on 13th (IFo) and two-14 were noted at another 17 inland locations and at two on the coast. It was heard migrating SW over Shiremoor at 0130h on 27th (CGK).

**Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*

Breeding was suspected at Grindon Lough where it was reported up to 16th, including seven on 11th and four adults and a juvenile on 4th (PRM/SJH). At Haughton Strother up to five were noted regularly but a juvenile first seen there on 6th was not reared at the site (MR). One was at Doddington on 14th, where it was said to have 'probably bred' (JD). Two were at Derwent Reservoir on 6th with singles on 7th and 13th and a juvenile was at *Beehive* Flash, Earsdon on 10th.

**Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*

Cheswick Black Rocks held 22 on 29th, 15 were at Cheswick Shiel on 31st (MHu) and 15 at St Mary's on 24th. Eight were at Blyth South Harbour on 26th and two to five were noted occasionally at Derwent Reservoir, East Chevington, Grindon Lough, Seaton Sluice, Tynemouth and the Wansbeck estuary.

**\*Pacific Golden Plover** *Pluvialis fulva*

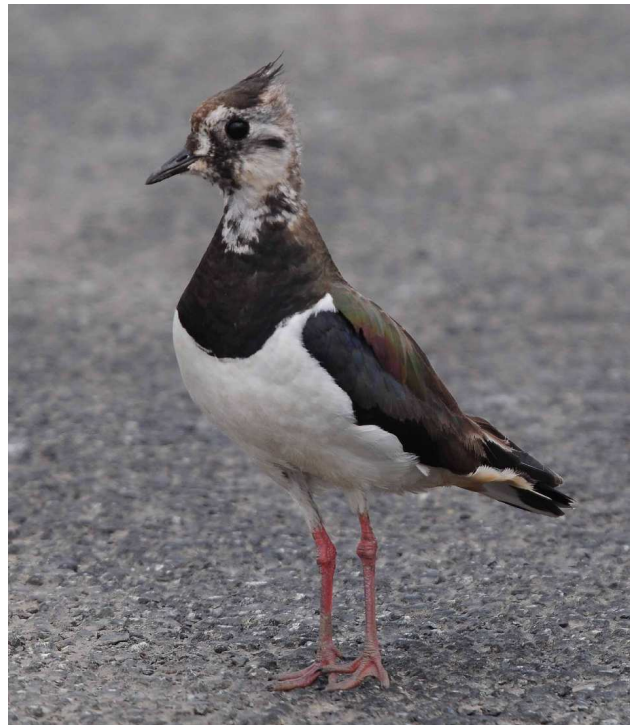
An adult in full summer plumage was found at north pool, East Chevington on 11th. The original finders do not seem to have reported it for *Bulletin* purposes (IF can supply notes). After it went missing from north pool it was relocated at south pool some 35 minutes later (ADMc).

**Golden Plover** *Pluvialis apricaria*

Early passage occurred near Blagdon when 11 landed in a field on 2nd, three were at Druridge Pools on 4th and 50 were on Town Moor, Newcastle on 5th (GB/IDR/JF/GL). Later, 215 were at Newbiggin on 15th and 300+ at St Mary's on 22nd (PRM/SRB). Lowish numbers were noted at Amble Braid, Cambois Holy Island and Whitley Bay and the only one reported still in a breeding area was near Allendale on 10th.

**Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*

Post-breeding flocks included 350 at Derwent Reservoir on 4th and 13th (IFo), that in the Cresswell Pond area increased from 300 on 19th to 400+ on 31st (MSH), 220+ were at Castle Island on 15th (PRM) and 120-165 occasionally at Arcot Pond, Bothal Pond, Grindon Lough, Ridley Common and West Ord. Smaller numbers appeared at another 13 locations.



Lapwings – Left, a juvenile ringed at Druridge by Iain Robson and right an adult at Plenmeller on 10th July by Tim Dean

**Knot** *Calidris canutus*

Visual passage involved nine S in two hours at Newbiggin on 26th (TRC) and two S at Druridge Links on 22nd (IDR). Budle Bay held 25, most in summer plumage on 29th (JPL/RNa) and up to 23 were at East Chevington, north pool, from 13th to 15th MSK/ADMc *et al.*), including a colour ringed/flagged individual on 13th (TRC); also 21 were at Hauxley NR on 17th (JA), 11 at Newbiggin on 15th and 11 at Amble Braid on 28th. One or two were noted occasionally at Alnmouth, the Blyth estuary, Cresswell Pond and the Wansbeck estuary.

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba*

The first to return were 12 at Blyth on 18th then 28 at Cheswick and four at Low Hauxley on 20th (STH/MHu/IFo). By the end of the month 36 were at Blyth and 28 at St Mary's on 30th and 20 at East Chevington on 31st (DM/MT/NT/RB/MB), with 11 at Long Nanny on 29th.

**Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*

One was at Cresswell Pond on 30th (MSK).

**Purple Sandpiper** *Calidris maritima*

Three were on the Farne Islands on 25th (DGB).

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*

Inland, nine were at Grindon Lough on 5th with up to seven there occasionally to 21st (SJH *et al.*); singles appeared at Derwent Reservoir on 7th, Prestwick Carr on 29th and Holywell Pond on 30th. At the coast, 230 at Goswick Sands on 31st (MHu) was the largest total by some measure: ahead of 36 at Berwick on 27th, 29 at North Blyth on 26th, 29 at Amble Braid on 28th, 25 at St Mary's on 22nd and 23 at East Chevington on 15th (MHu/TRC/MT/NT). Up to 19 were noted at some seven other places along the coast.

**Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*

There were four records of singles in Druridge Bay: at East Chevington on 12th (GB/MSH/AC), in the Blyth estuary on 18th (STH) and at Cresswell Pond on 28th (MSH).

**Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*

Ten were logged on a visit to Shankhead, Ridley Common on 6th, where some display was noted and nine were at Plenmeller Common, Todhillwood Fell on 8th (both SJH). Singles were recorded in potential breeding areas at Auchope Cairn and Windy Gyle (JR) on 4th. Seven were at Druridge Pools on 19th; eight were over Prestwick Carr early on 29th and six at Backworth on 30th. One to three appeared at Bothal, Carterway Heads, Coatenhill, Derwent Reservoir, Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother and Kielder (Deadwater).

**Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola*

Most records came from Slaley Forest, mostly specified as roding: two on 2nd, four or five on 3rd, one on 4th and two on 9th (AA/TB/EC/RMH). One was roding in Wark Forest on 4th (DRW).

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

The only movement reported was of 13 N over Cresswell Pond on 5th (IFo/STH). No doubt they were on their way to East Chevington, a site which attracted the species from 2nd to 16th; mainly up to five but also 26 on 3rd and 15 on 6th (JSB/EC/ADM). Six were at Cresswell Pond on 28th, five at Cheswick Black Rocks on 29th, two at Monks' House Pool on 15th and two at Hauxley on 31st; singles visited the Blyth estuary, Boulmer and Hedgeley GP.

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

Lindisfarne NNR, Pilgrims' Way held 80 on 12th (IK), mostly new arrivals. Two flew N at St Mary's on 8th, two-three were occasionally noted in the Blyth estuary and singles at East Chevington on 9th and at St Mary's on 30th.

**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*

It was widely reported throughout the month, including two S at East Chevington on 3rd and one S there on 12th, two W at Gosforth Park on 19th and one S at Annstead Links on 22nd. A total of 30 was at Holy Island on 31st (IK), eight at Fenham Slake on 12th (DGB), eight in the Blyth estuary on 25th (DRW), up to six regularly at East Chevington, six at Cresswell Pond on 16th, six at Budle Bay on 25th, five at Druridge Pools on 4th and four at Cocklawburn on 15th. One or two were noted at a further 15 places.



Left a whimbrel with redshanks on 28th July by Mike Hodgson and right a flying bird by Tim Dean on 16th July, both at Cresswell Pond

**Curlew** *Numenius arquata*

Counts at Budle Bay steadily increased: 100 on 5th, 180 on 10th and 270 on 24th (CGK). Foxton held 132 on 25th (MSH), Hauxley NR had a peak of 119 on 8th (ASH) and those in the Blyth estuary peaked at 95 on 19th (STH). Also 58 were at Alnmouth on 28th and 19-44 at times at Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Holystone, Holywell Dene, Newbiggin (24 S on 10th), Ridley Common and St Mary's. Single figures appeared at ten other locations.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*

Breeding was confirmed at Ingram Gidders by 11th (MLC/TAC). Nine were in Budle Bay on 25th (CGK), eight at Haughton Strother on 6th (MR), eight at Foxton on 25th (MSH), at Castle Island five on 8th and six on 15th (PRM), six at Holystone on 1st (DRo) and five at Derwent Reservoir on 15th (IFo). Four were at Otterburn on 15th and at Beal on 25th with two-three at Alnmouth, Cresswell Pond, Doddington, Druridge Pools, Grindon Lough, Hauxley NR, Howdon Staith, Howick, Melkridge, the Tweed estuary and the Wansbeck estuary. Singles were noted at another 14 places.



Common Sandpiper at Druridge Pools  
19th July by Iain Robson

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*

It was noted regularly at Haughton Strother, including three on 15th/19th and four on 22nd/29th (MR). Three were also at Bothal Pond and Druridge Pools on 25th (RA/MSK) and at Budle Bay on 26th (CGK); two were at Castle Island on 6th/25th, at Eshott on 18th and Longhirst Flash on 7th/18th. Singles appeared at Alnmouth, Arcot Pond, near Belassis Bridge, Branton GP, Chatton, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Holywell Pond, Lindisfarne, Linton Pond and Woodhorn Flashes.

**Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*

After heavy rain on 19th six appeared in the Budge field at Druridge Pools (IDR/JF); five were at Cresswell Pond on 3rd (JSB/EC) and at East Chevington on 13th (MSK). Four were at Cresswell Pond on 4th/5th/7th/19th; one of those on 4th/5th was colour ringed as a juvenile at Tarty, Ythan estuary, NE Scotland on 4th August 2008. Four were also at East Chevington on 12th and threes appeared at Amble Braid on 8th, Bothal Pond and Budle Bay on 25th. One or two could be found at these locations on many other days and also occasionally at Alnmouth, Backworth Flash, Castle Island, Lindisfarne and Longhirst Flash.

**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*

Two were present at Longhirst Flash on 5th/10th (MSH/TB), with one noted there on 1st/8th/9th and two were at East Chevington on 8th (NFO) and Bothal Pond on 28th (TB). Singles visited Castle Island on 8th/12th and Druridge Pools on 14th.

**Redshank** *Tringa totanus*

An adult and three fledged juveniles were at East Chevington on 15th (TRC) and a brood of one was noted at Hauxley NR on 13th (HRS). The regular high tide roost at North Blyth staithes contained 549 in the early morning of 26th (TRC); 151 were noted in the estuary on 18th (STH). In Budle Bay 15% of 115 were aged as juveniles on 25th (CGK) and 110 were at Alnmouth on 28th (TRC). Cresswell Pond held a maximum of 39 on 11th and the most inland were 18 at Howdon Staith on 3rd and 15 at Derwent Reservoir on 4th. Single figure counts were made at Castle Island, Grindon Lough, Plenmeller Common, Ridley Common, St Mary's, Wallsend Dene and Whitley Bay.

**Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*

First to return to the mainland were singles S at Newbiggin and in the Blyth estuary on 18th followed by one S at Druridge Links and six at St Mary's on 22nd (GB/IDR/MT/NT). North Blyth staithes held 32 on 26th (TRC) and 20 were at Newbiggin on 29th.

**Pomarine Skua** *Stercorarius pomarinus*

At Newbiggin two third summers flew past on 9th (ASH) and an adult went S on 10th (ASH/TRC).

**Arctic Skua** *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Passage at Newbiggin comprised seven N on 9th, two N and one S on 10th and three N on 11th (ASH/TRC); two flew N at Hauxley on 11th (HRS). Singles flew N at Seaton Sluice on 2nd, 10th and 16th and other singles were seen at Annstead on 19th and 31st and at Cocklawburn, St Mary's, Snab Point and Tynemouth.



**Great Skua** *Stercorarius skua*

All were seen flying N in a five day period: at Newbiggin one on 9th, five on 10th and two on 11th (ASH/TRC), one at St Mary's on 7th and two on 8th and a single at Hauxley on 9th.

**Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla*

The only passage movement noted was 450 per hour N on 7th at Spittal Bay (MHu). At Dunstan Steads c150 nests were counted on 15th (MLC/TAC). The Tweed Estuary continued to attract roosting birds with 182 on 10th (MHu). North Shields Fish Quay saw a peak count of ten on 11th and Blyth South Harbour four on 26th (DMT). At least 25 were noted on the Tyne at Howdon Staith on 3rd (PRM). Otherwise one to three noted at Hauxley, St Mary's Island and the Wansbeck Estuary.

**Black-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Juveniles were much in evidence at the breeding colonies with many amongst 500 birds on Rock House Fell, Plenmeller and 160 at Grindon Lough on 13th (SJH). At Hauxley 75% of the 384 birds present were juveniles from nearby Coquet Island. The regularly watched localities of the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay saw a peak of 98 on 23rd and Blyth South Harbour nine on 12th (DMT). Castle Island held 70 on 12th with 45 at Alexandra Park, Cramlington on 21st (DM) and 36 at Long Sands, Tynemouth on 5th (DMT). Otherwise one to six at Arcot Pond, Jesmond Dene and Leazes Park. The leucistic bird present last month was seen again at Castle Island on 6th (RA).



Juvenile Black-headed Gull

10th July by Alan Tillmouth

**Little Gull** *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

East Chevington was again the main gathering point with a maximum of three adults and sixteen first-summers on 4th and 5th (ADMc/MSH). Numbers dwindled thereafter with ten present by 10th, five by 13th and the last sighting of a single on 18th and 25th. An adult, first-summer and second-summer were present at the Wansbeck Estuary on 8th (PRM). Otherwise a single adult lingered off Druridge Links being seen on 15th and 19th (IDR/JF). A single first-summer was unusually feeding on a ploughed field at Cambois with Black-headed Gulls on 18th (GB) with another first-summer on rocks at St Mary's Island on 10th (MSH) and one at Cresswell pond on 5th (IRD/STH/IFo).



First summer Little Gull

10th July

St Mary's

by Mike Hodgson



**Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus*

Numbers increased at Newbiggin with a total of nine adults, five second-summers and seven first-summers seen during the month (ADMc/IF/TRC/PRM/MSK/JD). Single adults were found at Boulmer on 26th (RB/MB), East Chevington on 5th (ADMc), Holywell Pond on 16th (SPP) and Black Middens in the Tyne Estuary on 5th (DMT). An adult was seen feeding a juvenile at Hauxley on 24th and 25th (JA/IF) almost certainly having nested successfully on Coquet Island. If this is confirmed it will be the first successful breeding in the county. A second-summer was found at East Chevington on 15th (ADMc). Finally a first-summer was seen at Cresswell Pond on 1st (MSH) and one of indeterminate age at Amble on 22nd (DCh)



Mediterranean Gull with Black-headed Gull  
Newbiggin beach on 20th July  
by Tim Cleeves

**Common Gull** *Larus canus*

The only large count in the month was of 140 at a roost at West Ord on 26th (MHu). Adults started to return to Budle Bay with ten on 10th (CGK). Otherwise few reported with one to six at several sites.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus graelsii*

Concentrations in Newcastle were noticeable with 34 including eight juveniles at Scotswood and 23 including six juveniles at the Business Park on 28th (PCF). Nesting was also successful at Blyth South Harbour with two pairs producing two chicks each and a further two pairs fledging one chick (DMT). 11 were at Derwent Reservoir on 4th (IFo). Otherwise one to six at several sites.

**Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus argenteus*

The peak count was at the Tyne Estuary up to the North Shields Fish Quay with 293 on 5th (DMT). 90 were at Wylam on 12th and 46 at Blyth South Harbour on 4th (DMT). Eight nests were counted at Blyth South Harbour with five being successful (DMT). Sixteen were at Castle Island on 12th (DM) with one or two at several sites. A sign of predation was noted in Newcastle City Centre with one carrying a pigeon pullus in its bill on 23rd (MRS).

**Glaucous Gull** *Larus hyperboreus*

An unusual summer sighting was a 3rd or 4th summer bird at the Black Middens in the Tyne Estuary on 23rd (DMT).

**Great Black-backed Gull** *Larus marinus*

The regularly watched sites provided the peak counts with 66 at Blyth South Harbour on 12th and 43 at the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay on 25th. The only other counts submitted were 22 immatures at Cheswick on 3rd (MHu), nine at Castle Island and eight at East Chevington both counts on 12th (DM).

**Little Tern** *Sternula albifrons*

Few reports with only one to three found at Cresswell, Druridge, East Chevington, Hauxley, Newbiggin and Newton.

**Sandwich Tern** *Sterna sandvicensis*

Well reported with some large counts notably 220 in Budle Bay on 26th (CGK). The far North of the county also saw good numbers with 142 in a roost at Saltpan Rocks, Cocklawburn on 20th and 110 at Cheswick Shiel on 31st (MHu). Counts of 21 to 65 were noted at Blyth Estuary, Budle Bay, East Chevington, Hauxley, St Mary's Island, Tweed Estuary and Tynemouth. Up to ten were noted at several sites.



Juvenile Sandwich Tern at St Mary's  
12th July  
by Mike Hodgson

**Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo* / **Arctic Tern** *Sterna paradisaea*

A mixed colony at Lindisfarne of ca.70 pairs had a high success rate (IK).

**Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo*

Well reported with again some high counts. 71 at East Chevington on 13th was by far the highest (TRC). Swallow Pond saw successful nesting with 21 adults and eight juveniles present on 8th (SPP). 12 to 25 were at Alnmouth, Cresswell Pond, Tynemouth, Wansbeck Estuary and Whittle Dene. Finally one to seven were seen at Arcot Pond, Blyth Estuary, Bothal Pond, Castle Island, Cramlington, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Hauxley, Holywell Pond, Howdon Staith, Leazes Park (Newcastle), Prestwick Carr and St Mary's Island. Gosforth Park NR saw a complete nest failure reportedly due to heron predation.

**Roseate Tern** *Sterna dougallii*

An excellent breeding season on Coquet Island with 90 pairs fledging 119 chicks all of which were ringed. The previous best season was in 2005 when 105 chicks fledged (TAC). Some of the adults started moving S from mid month with Newbiggin seeing good numbers with at least 20 in 3.5 hours on 17th (ADMc) and seven S on 26th (TRC). One to five were noted at Budle Bay, Cresswell, Druridge, East Chevington, Hauxley, Newton, Seaton Sluice, Tyne Estuary and Wansbeck Estuary. Single juveniles accompanied adults at Budle Bay, East Chevington, and Newton.

**Arctic Tern** *Sterna paradisaea*

Northerly movement was noted at Seaton Sluice with 35 in two hours on 17th (TRC). The Newton colony was markedly down in numbers on recent years with ca.700 pairs fledging 175 juveniles. One to ten were noted at Cocklawburn, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington and Hauxley.

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

Northerly movement was witnessed at St Mary's Island with 113 in one hour on 8th, 25 in 30 minutes on 10th and 15 in 30 minutes on 7th. Southerly movement was only seen on 8th with 11 in one hour (MSH).

**Guillemot** *Uria aalge*

Movement was noticeable on 7th with 360 per hour N on 7th at Spittal Bay with 30 there on 13th (MHu). Seven moved N at St Mary's Island on 7th (MSH) and two S at Druridge Bay on 4th (DM).

**Razorbill** *Alca torda*

20 were nesting at Dunstan Steads, Embleton on 15th (MLC/TAC).

**Puffin** *Fratercula arctica*

Movement N at St Mary's Island was slight with three on 8th, two on 10th and four on 18th (MSH). 50 were offshore from Hauxley on 9th and 20 at East Chevington on 16th (TRD/JD). Nesting was successful at Needles Eye, Berwick with two pairs feeding young (MHu) and up to five elsewhere in Berwick.

**Rock Dove / Feral Pigeon** *Columba livia*

91 were counted in Blyth South Harbour on 12th. On 11th 90 were at North Shields Fish Quay and 31 on the cliffs below Tynemouth Castle (DMT).

**Stock Dove** *Columba oenas*

Seven were in a single flock at Staward on 7th (BNR), seven were also at Cresswell Pond on 31st (MSH). Four were at Woodhorn on 4th, Beal on 22nd and Whitfield Hall on 27th. Two or three were at Eshott, Greenhead, Grindon Lough, Jesmond Dene, North Shields, Thistleton and Walbottle.

**Woodpigeon** *Columba palumbus*

In a timed tetrad visit to the Blyth area, 120 were counted on 22nd (LJM), 43 were at Whitfield Hall on 26th and 41 at Wylam on 12th where they fed on grain fields (BNR). 22 were counted in two tetrads in the Bellingham area and at Tindal House. Breeding was noted at Bamburgh where two young were in a nest on 21st (BRS).

**Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

Twenty were counted in three tetrads in the Bellingham area on 5th (ADM). One fed along the tideline at Newbiggin beach on 15th.

**Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus*

A singing male was at Blanchland on 5th (MJC), juveniles were noted near Stannington on 16th, Halidon Hill (Berwick-upon-Tweed) on 25th and Prestwick Carr on 28th. Singles were also noted at East Chevington and Cresswell Pond.

**Barn Owl** *Tyto alba*

Successful breeding was noted to the west of Broomhill Farm where five large chicks were in a nest box on 6th (DD per ADMc). On Holy Island 4 young had fledged by late month (IK) and two recently fledged chicks were noted on 31st at Kirkheaton. Two were also noted at Cresswell Pond and West Chevington Opencast Site. At Hauxley NR a male was seen catching a rat *Rattus norvegicus* (ASH).

**Little Owl** *Athene noctua*

Breeding was confirmed at Doddington where two adults and a juvenile were present on 5th (TRD/JD). A pair where noted at Whitton on 22nd-23rd (DCh) and singles were reported from Kirkheaton on 5th, Druridge Lane on 9th and Backworth on 30th. One was found as road casualty at Druridge Lane on 16th (IDR).

**Tawny Owl** *Strix Aluco*

A family group of three were at the Sele Grounds in Hexham on 23rd (BNR) and breeding was confirmed at Humshaugh where two adults and a single juvenile were present on 11th (TWi). Two were calling at Aydon Castle (Corbridge) on 6th and Wark (North Tyne) on 22nd with singles there on other dates.

**Long-eared Owl** *Asio otus*

The two juveniles reported last month from Swallow Pond in Wallsend were reported to be 'showing well' on 8th (SPP) and a single was noted here on 2nd (CB).

Long-eared Owl at Swallow Pond  
2nd July  
Colin Bradshaw



**Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus*

Singles were reported from Plenmeller on numerous dates with a single juvenile seen on 24th, sadly, one was noted as a road casualty in the same location on 25th (SJH/EC/JSB). One was seen giving a marsh harrier a 'hard time' at East Chevington on 6th with another single reported here on 25th, a single was also at Bieldy Pike near Rothbury on 21st.

**Nightjar** *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Up to three were heard or seen in Slaley Forest between 2nd and 9th (AA/TB *et al*) and a single was seen flying over the road at Dipton Wood on 31st (BNR).

**Swift** *Apus apus*

Between 200 and 300 were counted over Whitley Bay on 29th (MT/NT) and at least 200 were at Longhirst Flash on 26th (TB). 54 were flying over Berwick upon Tweed town centre on 27th, 52 at Prestwick Carr on 4th and at least 50 over Wallsend on 6th. Between 20 and 30 were noted at Bellasis Bridge, Dilston, Druridge Pools, Hexham and Wark (North Tyne).

**Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*

Young and adults were on the Ouseburn/Jesmond Dene between 1st and 22nd (DHWB *et al*), two were at Haughton Strother on 22nd and two (one adult female and a juvenile) were trapped at Whittle Wood on 27th with another juvenile trapped there on 6th (DWN). Singles were noted at Belassis Bridge on 16th and 28th, in the Morpeth area and numerous other places.

**Green Woodpecker** *Picus viridis*

A family group of three including at least one juvenile was at Dilston on 15th (BNR) and an adult and juvenile were at Corbridge on 13th (TRD). Two were at Letah Wood (Hexham) on 4th and Slaley on 14th. A dead juvenile was a road casualty at Holystone on 3rd.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major*

At Grindon Farm (Tynedale), four, two juveniles and two adults were on feeders throughout the month (JF) and a family party of two adults and two juveniles was at Unthank on 9th (BNR). On 16th one adult male and 3 juveniles were trapped at Whittle Wood (DWN). Juveniles were also noted at Alnwick, Healy, Holywell Dene and Rothbury. Two adults were at feeders in Walbottle garden throughout the month and a single juvenile, presumably a wandering bird, was caught and ringed at Bamburgh on 25th.

**Skylark** *Alauda arvensis*

38 were counted on a timed tetrad visit to Ewe Hill, near Prendwick on 1st (MLC) and 28 in three tetrads in the Bellingham area on 25th (ADM). Between seven and 17 were counted in various tetrads in NT81 (The Cheviot Hills) on 4th and 28th (JR).

**Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia*

230 were counted at East Chevington on 25th (RA) and 200 were at Haughton Strother on 1st, however part of the sandbank here collapsed after monsoon conditions on 17th with inevitable losses (MR). About 70 were at Druridge Farm on 3rd and 40 at nearby Druridge Pools on 19th and 20th. About 40 were also hawking over the River Rede at Otterburn on 15th. A new colony of 35 was found at Denwick Bridge in a new bank created by last autumn's floods (MLC).

**Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*

The highest count was about 200 in three tetrads in the Bellingham area on 26th (ADM), 100 were at Howick on 14th (JAR) and Spindlestone on 26th (CGK). Fledged young were noted on the River Aln near Alnwick on 10th and a brood of four fledged from a garden shed at Ordley on 10th.

**House Martin** *Delichon urbica*

About 20 were counted in Knarsdale Churchyard where at least four nests had been built on the church on 24th (EC/JSB) and 20 were counted at Barrowburn in Upper Coquetdale on 30th (JMA). Young fledged from a nest in Stannington.

**Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis*

A pair were at Thistleton on 1st (TRD) and a pair took food to a nest at Dipton Woods on 5th (MR). Singles were noted at Sweethope Lough and Fourlaws on 4th (GB).



**Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis*

95 were counted in two tetrads in the Bellingham area on 26th and 50 were counted in the Ewe Hill (near Prendwick) tetrad on 1st (MLC). Between four and 30 were counted in numerous tetrads in the Cheviot Hills on 4th (JR). 26th were at Unthank on 9th and on the coast 15 were at Druridge Pools on 4th.

**Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava flavissima*

Adults were noted feeding juveniles at Whittle Dene on 26th (four adults, six juveniles) (PCF), Chatton on 9th and Monk's House Pool on 23rd (two adults, two juvenile). Fledged young were also noted at Haughton Strother (with two adults), Lindisfarne NNR (Beal Point/Longbridge Ends) (two juveniles), Newton Pool (two juveniles) and single juveniles were noted at Belsay, Berwick Golf Course and Cresswell Pond. Two were at Wark (North Tyne).

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*

53 individual records were received this month! A pair fledged three young at Haughton Strother by 22nd (MR), fledged young were also noted at Hartside Hill (two on 11th), Otterburn (three on 15th), Warden (two on 7th), Haltwhistle (two on 23rd), Holywell Dene (two on 29th), Eshott (one on 1st), Whittle Wood (one trapped on 7th) and one at Brierdene, Whitley Bay on 29th. Newcastle attracted singles to three locations in the city centre during the month.

**Pied Wagtail** *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

The highest count of 55 came from three tetrads in the Bellingham area on 26th (ADM). Up to 34 were counted at Prestwick Carr (30% juveniles) on 18th (PCF) and at least 28 were at Grindon Lough on 21st. 19 came into a roost at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 19th (TB) 10 juveniles were at Backworth on 30th.

**Dipper** *Cinclus cinclus*

Successful breeding was noted at Rothbury (four young on 13th) (JD), Carey Burn (two young on 12th) (MJC), Warden (1 young on 7th), Hexham (1 young on 29th), Ingram Gidders (1 young on 11th) and Whittle Wood (1 young trapped on 6th).

**Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

13 were counted at Dilston on 15th, 11 at Towsbank on 6th and Softley on 10th (BNR).

**Dunnock** *Prunella modularis*

On 24th, a pair fed a second brood in a Monkseaton garden (MSH), three were at Chesters Walled Garden.

**Robin** *Erithacus rubecula*

Seven were at Chesters House and Walled Garden on 12th (ALT) and at Bamburgh a pair had fledged a second brood of four by 25th (BRS). Three to four were noted at Little Ward Law, Tiptoe Farm (Etal), Tindal House and Usway Forest and one to two at a further four localities.

**Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Breeding activity included a male and three juveniles at Haughton Strother on 11th (MR), an adult with three juveniles at Shankhead (Ridley Common) on 6th (SJH) and two at Halton Shields included a female carrying food on 19th (ALT). Elsewhere one to two were noted at Coanwood, Fallowfield, Healy and Wark (North Tyne).

**Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra*

Four were noted at Ward Law Plantation and at Windy Gyle on 4th (JR) and a single at Usway Burn in Upper Coquetdale on 25th (TRD/JD).



**Stonechat** *Saxicola torquata*

Confirmed breeding was reported from ten inland and five coastal sites as outlined in the chart below. 11 localities are in addition to those previously reported; bringing the total to at least 42 confirmed breeding sites this year (19 coastal / 23 inland).

Site	Date	Adults	Young	Notes	Observer
Buston Links	21st July		2		IDR
Cresswell Pond	25th July		1	Two males here on 31st (MSH)	STH
Druridge Links	4th July	2	3	2nd brood of three	IDR/JF
East Ditchburn	2nd July			Breeding confirmed	MLC
Edges Green	10th July	1	1		SJH
Embleton, Dunston Steads	15th July		2		MLC/TAC
Fallowfield	3rd July	1	2		TWi
Halton Shields	19th July	2	3		ALT
Healy	28th July	2	4+		TWi
Ingram Gidders	11th July		4		MLC/TAC
Prestwick Carr	15th July		2		PCF
Ravensheugh (near Stonehaugh)	10th July		2		SW
Redesdale (Dargueshope)	23rd July	6		Fledged young noted	JCD
Unthank	9th July	1	1		BRN
Warkworth Dunes	21st July	2	3		IDR

In addition 11 were found in the Bellingham area on 26th (ADM), five at Cheswick Dunes on 31st (MHu), a pair at Foulwicks and singles at Plenmeller Common and Usway Burn.

**Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Six were found in the Bellingham area on 26th (ADM) and five at Usway Burn (Upper Coquetdale) on 25th (TRD/JD). Four (2 pairs) were at Dargueshope (Redesdale) on 23rd, where fledged young were also seen (JCD). Further reports of juveniles were received from Addycombe (Rothbury), Cocklawburn, East Ditchburn, Edges Green, Holy Island (Nessend Quarry), Howick, Ingram Gidders and Upper Coquetdale. Three were at Cheswick Dunes on 31st and singles at Acton, Cockhill Farm (near Gubeon) and Ravensheugh (Stonehaugh).

**Blackbird** *Turdus merula*

A total of 38 were reported from three tetrads in the Bellingham area on 5th (ADM). 11 were at Wylam and nine at Chesters House and Walled Garden on 12th, the latter including an incubating female (BNR/ALT), and at Kenton two pairs were feeding third brood fledglings all month (MRS).



A male Blackbird sunbathing at Wallington Hall on 25th July by Steve Barrett

**Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos*

Three to four were reported from Hexham (Westwood/High Wood), Haughton Strother and Oakpool/Hollybush (BNR/MR) and one to two from a further eight sites including singles at three localities in Jesmond Dene.

**Redwing** *Turdus iliacus*

The summering bird reported in June was seen again on several occasions this month, near the harbour at Holy Island. There was no suggestion of breeding (IK).

**Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus*

Post breeding gatherings were a feature of the month. Four groups totalling 31 birds flew E. at Prestwick Carr on 29th (PCF), 26 were at Stannington on 26th (RWM/MIM), 15 at Howick on 20th (JAR) and eight at Blakely Hill (near A69) on 5th (SRB). In addition three were reported from Bellasis Bridge on 12th.

**Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella naevia*

Reeling birds were reported from 14 localities, including up to four at Prestwick Carr on 11th (PCF), two at East Chevington on 16th (IF/IDR) and two in set-aside at St Mary's Island on 24th (MT/NT). Elsewhere singles were heard at Arcot Pond, Buston Links, Cambois, Cocklawburn, Deadwater (Kielder), Morpeth (County Hall), Stannington, St Mary's Wetland, Stonehaugh, Woodhorn Flashes and Woolsington ponds.

**Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Eight at Prestwick Carr on 11th included a family party (PCF) and four (two pairs) were at Garretshiels (Redesdale) on 15th (JCD). Elsewhere one to three was reported from Arcot Pond, Backworth, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Embleton (on nest and carrying food), Shittleheugh (Redesdale) and Tiptoe Farm (Etal). At East Chevington a ringing session on 4th produced hardly any, suggesting an early clearout from that site (IF).



A ringed Sedge Warbler singing at East Chevington  
9th July by Peter Tapsell

**Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Single birds were reported from Big Waters on 26th, Cresswell Pond on 25th, Holywell Pond on 4th, Longhirst Flash on 15th and Swallow Pond on 12th (GB/STH/PRM/ SPP).

**Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla*

Three were at Staward on 4th (BNR) and Jesmond Dene on 5th (MJCo). Two+ were reported from Bamburgh on 25th, two at Beacon Hill on 25th and Wylam on 12th and singles from a further ten localities. In the Cramlington study area a further two territories were identified, bringing the total to 36 (15 in 2003).

**Garden Warbler** *Sylvia borin*

Four were reported from Shiellow Woods on 24th and Softley on 10th (MJC/BNR) and three at Haughton Strother on 1st, the latter two adults with a fledged juvenile (MR). Two were at Tiptoe Farm (near Etal) on 28th and singles in a further seven potential breeding areas. In the Cramlington study area another territory was located bringing the total to four (nine in 2003).

**Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca*

Single birds were reported from Arcot Pond, Cramlington (Beaconhill), East Benridge Cottages, Holystone and Spindlestone, the latter feeding young.

**Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis*

16 at Prestwick Carr on 11th included two family parties (PCF). Elsewhere one to two were reported from Arcot Pond, Bellasis Bridge, Berwick, Castle Island, Embleton, Holystone, Howden Staith, Longhirst Flash, Morpeth, Prudhoe, St Mary's Island, Tindal House, Tiptoe Farm (Etal), West Cawledge and Wooden.

**Wood Warbler** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

The only report was of a single giving alarm calls at Staward on 4th (BNR).

**Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*

Highest count by far was ten at Howick on 20th (JAR). Three were reported from Dilston/Swallowship on 15th, two+ at Eshott on 14th and two at Castle Island, Chesters House and Walled Garden, Heaton Park and Linton Pond. Single birds were recorded at a further 13 localities, including four sites in Jesmond Dene. In the Cramlington study area a further two territories were identified bringing the total to 51 (28 in 2009).

**Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Atlas work produced some very impressive counts for one observer in the Bellingham area in May and June as outlined below (MJC).

Site	May	Count	June	Count
Shitlington Common	7th	69	19th	98
Hesleyside	7th	38	19th	40
Charlton	7th	34	19th	28
Sundaysight	22nd	71	20th	27
Corenside	22nd	35		
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>247 (5 tetrads)</b>		<b>193 (4 tetrads)</b>

12 at Prestwick Carr on 11th included a family party (PCF). Eight were at Whitfield Hall on 25th and four to five at Chesters, Oakpool/Hollybush, Newbrough, Softley and Tows Bank/W Ashholme Common. Elsewhere one to three were reported from a further 17 mostly inland localities.

**Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus*

A better month with 13 reported from Slaley Forest on 20th (RMH), 12 at Whitfield Hall/Park Head on 26th (BNR) and seven to eight at Little Ward Law, Softley and Usway Forest. Five were at Howick and Yarnspeth Law and singles reported from a further four localities.

**Cramlington warbler survey; results to end of June 2009** (STH/LJM/DM)

Species	Territories in 2009	Territories in 2003
Grasshopper Warbler	13	11
Sedge Warbler	30	18
Blackcap	36	15
Garden Warbler	4	9
Lesser Whitethroat	4	8
Whitethroat	50	42
Chiffchaff	51	28
Willow Warbler	50	50
Goldcrest	3	-

**Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata*

Successful breeding (involving feeding young in nest or nearly fledged young) was recorded at the Tree House at Alnwick Gardens (RWM/MIM), Brownrigg Cottage (Redesdale – JCD), Chesters near Chollerford (SW), Denwick (JMA), Falstone (TRD/JD), Greenhead (SW), Harbottle (JMA), Haughton Strother (MR), Hawkswell (Stamfordham – EC), Healy (TWi), Knarsdale Churchyard (EC/JSB), Linden Hall (NFO), Little Harle (Kirkwhelpington – DPR), Lucker (JHa), Melkridge (SJH), Milford (DGB), Newbrough (PRM), Otterburn Ranges (IK), Stamfordham (EC) and Whitton (Rothbury – DCh). Two pairs were at Oakpool on 24th (BNR). Pairs were also found at Letah Wood (Hexham) on 4th (AJH), Ramshaw Field area near Henshaw on 5th (SJH), Tranwell Woods on 5th (PAT), Tows Bank on 6th (BNR), Ingram Gidders on 11th (MLC/TAC), Otterburn on 15th (JCD) and Bakethin Reservoir on 31st (PCF). Singles also occurred near Abshiel and at Barhaugh Burn, Bellasis Farm (Blagdon), Blanchland, Dipton Mill, Holystone, Ridley Common, Tindal House, Wark and Whalton Village.

**Spotted Flycatcher** is a target species for 2009. Please report all records.



The well reported Spotted Flycatcher nest at Alnwick Garden  
18th July by Dick Myatt

**Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula hypoleuca*

A male visited a garden at Willow Green, Otterburn on 5th (DPR). Another male was at Barhaugh Burn on 10th (JSB).

**Long-tailed Tit** *Aegithalos caudatus*

22 (including juveniles) were at Chesters on 12th (SW), 20 at Alexandra Park (Cramlington) on 16th (DM), 12 at Ellington on 5th (TB) and Oakpool on 24th (BNR), C.10 in the Bellingham area on 5th (ADM), eight at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 16th (DM) and four at Berwick on 20th (PRM). One to three were at a further five widespread localities.

**Blue Tit** *Cyanistes caeruleus*

18 were found in three tetrads in the Bellingham area on 5th (ADM), 15 at Haughton Strother on 15th (MR), 12 at Tows Bank on 6th (BNR), seven at Tiptoe Farm near Etal on 28th (JR), six at Chesters Walled Garden on 12th (ALT), five at Tindal House on 28th (JR) and three in a Walbottle garden on 26th (KR/LR).

**Great Tit** *Parus major*

A pair fledged young from a nest in a cupboard in the greenhouse at Chesters Walled Garden on 4th (ALT). A family party (three juveniles) visited a Walbottle garden on 26th (KR/LR). Ten were noted at Tows Bank on 6th (BNR), four at Tiptoe Farm on 28th (JR) and one at Jesmond Dene on 19th (MJCo).

**Coal Tit** *Periparus ater*

Breeding was confirmed at Netherton Park (Stannington) (RWM/MIM) and Walbottle (KR/LR). 31 were noted during an Atlas visit to Slaley Forest on 13th (RMH). 18 (in two groups) were at Dilston on 15th (BNR), 17 during Atlas visits in the Bellingham area on 5th (ADM), six at Little Wardlaw on 4th (JR) and four at Yarnspeth Law on 25th (JR). One to three were at a further eight widespread localities.

**Willow Tit** *Poecile montanus*

Two were at Prestwick Carr on 20th (PCF). Singles were noted at Airy Holm Reservoir near Shotleyfield on 6th (TRD) and Woodneuk Farm (Slaley) on 10th (RMH).

**Marsh Tit** *Poecile palustris*

Three were noted south-west of Felton on 4th (NFO), two at Beacon Hill on 25th (STH *et al*), Mitford Castle on 27th (ADM), Abbey Mill-Mitford Road on 27th (ADM) and Linden Hall on 30th (NFO). Singles at Letah Wood on 4th (AJH) and Haughton Strother on 15th (MR).

**Marsh Tit** is a target species for 2009. Please report all records.

**Nuthatch** *Sitta europaea*

Local breeding was noted at Corbridge (MR) and Rothbury (TRD/JD). Ten were observed at Chesters Walled Garden on 12th (ALT). Two were at Haughton Strother on 1st (MR), Fallowfield on 3rd (TWi), Newbrough on 25th (PRM) and Corbridge on 30th (TWi). Singles were present at Barhaugh, Beacon Hill, Bearsbridge, Darras Hall, Falstone, Foxton, Holly Hill, Jesmond Dene, Knowe Head, Linnels, Prestwick Carr, Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth), Staward Gorge, Thistleton, Wark and Whitley Chapel.

**Treecreeper** *Certhia familiaris*

Breeding was confirmed at Haughton Strother (MR) and Healy (TWi). Three were at Towsbank on 6th (BNR), two at Westwood (Hexham) on 11th (BNR), Chesters Walled Garden on 12th (ALT), Dilston on 15th (BNR), Barhaugh Burn and Knarsdale on 24th (JSB/EC). Singles were also at Beacon Hill, Bearsbridge, Jesmond Dene, Newbrough, Northumberland Park (North Shields), Oakpool, Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth) and Tiptoe Farm near Etal.

**Jay** *Garrulus glandarius*

Confirmed breeding was noted at Duke's Wood (Hexham) (TWi) and Warden (TWi). Nine were found at Borough Woods (Morpeth) on 27th (ADM), four at Hollybush (Dipton Woods) on 5th (MR) and Scotland Gate on 28th (SLB/MSK), three at Shiellow Woods on 15th (MJC) and Oakpool on 24th (BNR). Two were at Tows Bank on 6th (BNR), Plessey Woods CP on 9th (PRM/EAW), Westwood (Hexham) on 11th (BNR), Bothal Woods on 11th (GB), Longframlington on 23rd (TRD/JD), Gubeon Wood on 24th (ADM) and Bakethin Reservoir on 31st (PCF). Singles were also at Abbey (Morpeth), Halton Shields, Havannah NR, near Hebron, Holystone, Longhirst Flash and Whorral Bank. One was ringed at Whittle Wood on 6th (DWN).

**Magpie** *Pica pica*

12+ were present at Grindon Farm on 29th (JF), seven at Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 16th (DM) and three at Bygate Hall on 30th (JMA).

**Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula*

150+ were at Preston Village (North Shields) on 14th (DMT), 124 at Havannah NR on 24th (LJM), 105 at Wylam on 12th (BNR) and in the Bellingham area on 26th (ADM) and 52 in a Dinnington field on 7th (PCF). Two to 23 were at a further four widespread localities.

**Rook** *Corvus frugilegus*

500 were at Tindal House on 28th (JR), ca.345 in the Bellingham area on 26th (ADM), 180 at Bellasis Bridge on 12th (PCF), 100 at West Woodburn on 11th (JMA), 40 at Duridge Pools on 4th (IDR/JF) and 20 at Alnham on 30th (JMA).

**Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone*

61 were found in three tetrads in the Bellingham area on 26th (9ADM), 38 at North Shields Fish Quay on 5th (DMT), six at Collingwood Monument on 9th (JMA) and one to five at a further five widespread localities.

**Raven** *Corvus corax*

24 (flocks on 18 and six) flew over Copper Snout, Usway Burn (Upper Coquetdale) on 25th (TRD/JD). Four (family group) were tumbling over the moors at Snope Burn on 10th (BNR). Three (including one juvenile) were at Addycombe (Rothbury) on 3rd (TRD/JD) and Mounces Viewpoint (Kielder Forest) on 24th (ADM). Two were at Holystone on 12th (DRo) and the Bellingham area on 26th (ADM) and a single south of East Ord on 4th (MHu).

**Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*

1,000+ came into roost at East Chevington on 12th (ADM), 210 at St. Mary's Island on 15th (LJM), ca.200 at Seaton Sluice on 4th (RWM/MIM), 100 at Hauxley NR on 13th (HRS), 95 at Whitfield Hall on 26th (BNR), 80 at Cawfields on 29th (JMA) and 75 on the Snook, Holy Island on 2nd (JMA). 43 visited a Dinnington garden on 1st (PCF).



**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*

A good breeding season was recorded in the Kenton area of Newcastle (MRS). Post breeding gatherings involved 107 in the Bellingham area on 5th (ADM), 100+ in a cereal field at Holywell Pond on 22nd (SRB), 42 at Ramshaw Field near Henshaw on 5th (SJH) and 34 at Slaley Forest on 10th (RMH). Three to seven were also at Netherton Park, Ridley Common and Tiptoe Farm (Etal).

**Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*

Successful breeding occurred at Branton (IBDa/KDa), Dinnington (PCF), Duke's Wood (Hexham – Twi), Make Me Rich (Blagdon – MRS), Netherton Park (Stannington – RWM/MIM), Thistleton (TRD) and Wooden (MLC). 28 were at Haughton Strother on 11th (MR), 24 at Wooden on 21st (MLC), seven in a tight flock flying SW over East Chevington on 13th (MSH), six at Hyons Wood on 3rd (BNR) and Holywell Grange on 4th (SPP) and one-two at Doddington, Eslington Park, Heddon Birks and Steads, Hemelspeth near Felton, Lucker, Seahouses and Wark.

**Tree Sparrow** is a target species for 2009. Please report all records.

**Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs*

50 were found in the Bellingham area on 26th (ADM), 20+ came to feeders at Grindon Farm all month (JF) and three to ten at a further ten widespread localities.

**Greenfinch** *Carduelis chloris*

Ten were noted at Prestwick Car on 4th (PCF) and a Walbottle garden on 12th (KR/LR). Five were at Chesters Walled Garden on 12th (ALT) and Tiptoe Farm on 28th (JR). Four were at Tindal House on 28th (JR).

**Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis*

Breeding was confirmed at Alnwick (MLC), Fallowfield (TWi) and Walbottle (KR/LR). Six were at Newbrough on 25th (PRM) and Tindal House on 28th (JR), four at Wansbeck Estuary on 8th (PRM). One to three were at a further nine widespread localities.

**Siskin** *Carduelis spinus*

Confirmed breeding was recorded at Allenheads (TRD) and Duke's Wood (Hexham – Twi). 20+ came to feeders at Grindon Farm all month (JF). 13 were at Blanchland on 14th (RMH). Six were at Fell Cottages (Slaley) on 12th (RMH), Bellingham on 26th (ADM), five at Healy on 28th (TWi), four at Melkridge on 7th (SJH), Sweethope Lough on 14th (GB), Dilston on 15th (BNR) and Wark on 28th (PRM). One to three were also at Allendale Common, Allensford, Allenshields, Crooked Oak, Greenley Cleugh, Linnels, Lucker, Ninebanks, Oakpool, Prestwick Carr, a Rothbury garden, Softley, Spartylea, Tows Bank, Usway Burn (Upper Coquetdale), Westwood (Hexham) and Wolfcleugh.

**Linnet** *Carduelis cannabina*

48 were at Cheswick Dunes on 31st (MHu), 10 at Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay) on 20th (MT/NT), 15 at Healy on 28th (TWi), ten+ at Berwick on 20th (PRM), nine at Ridley Common on 6th (SJH) and Holystone on 28th (DRo), eight at Beehive Flash (Earsdon) on 10th (PRM) and six at Fallowfield on 3rd (TWi). One to five were at a further six widespread localities.

**Lesser Redpoll** *Carduelis cabaret*

A family party was noted at Brownrigg Cottage, Redesdale on 23rd (JCD). Eight-three at Grindon Lough on 11th (PRM) and Sheillow Woods on 24th (MJC), seven at Ramshaw Field near Henshaw on 5th (SJH), six at Saughy Hill on 25th (JR), five at Wark Forest on 15th (SJH) and Whitfield Hall on 25th (BNR), four at Ridley Common on 6th (SJH), Edges Green area on 10th (SJH) and Thorngraston Common on 24th (EC/JSB), three at Plenmeller Common on 8th (SJH), Unthank on 9th (BNR), Haughton Strother on 22nd (MR), Usway Burn (Upper Coquetdale) on 25th (TRD/JD) and Tindal House on 28th (JR). One to two were also at Allendale Common, Baybridge (Blanchland), Coanwood, Crooked Oak, Derwent Reservoir, Dirt Pot, Eshott, Falstone, Foulaws, Langley, Melkridge, Rothley Lakes, Sinderhope, Softley, Sweethope Lough and Towsbank.

**Crossbill** *Loxia curvirostra*

Well recorded throughout month. Ca.50 were noted at Kyloe Woods on 20th (NNBC), 36 at Holystone on 19th (DRo), 30 at Wark forest on 15th (STH), Shiellow Woods on 16th (MJC), Mouncies Watchpoint (Kielder Forest – ADMc) and Scotland Gate on 28th (SLB/MSK), 23 at Longhirst Flash on 18th (PRM/EAW), 15 at Slaley Forest on 13th (RMH), nine at Healy on 28th (TWi), seven at Stonehaugh on 10th (SW), four at Linden Hall on 11th (NFO), Halton Red House on 19th (ALT) and Wansbeck Estuary on 25th (RA). One to three also occurred at Castle Island, Dipton Wood near North Steads, Staward Gorge, Stonehaugh,

Thrunton Woods and Woodhorn Flashes.



A male Crossbill on a pavement at Holywell village  
18th July by Mike Hodgson  
t

**Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Breeding was confirmed at Corbridge (TWi), Holywell Dene (RJP), Rothbury (TRD/JD), Tranwell Woods (PAT) and Whitfield Hall (two family parties – BNR), Chesters Walled Garden on 12th (ALT) and Oakwood on 24th (BNR). One to three were at a further 22 widespread localities including a garden at Dinnington. Three (including a juvenile) were ringed at Whittle Wood on 6th (DWN).



A juvenile bullfinch in a garden at Tranwell  
The bird was one of nine young  
27th July by Peter Tapsell

**Yellowhammer** *Emberiza citronella*

The species was noted as generally more common in the Stannington area than for many years (RWM/MIM). Confirmed breeding occurred at Newsham (Blyth – LJM) and West Cawledge (MLC). 15+ males were recorded in mixed farmland along a section of Northumberland Coast Trail between Belford to Fenwick on 24th (MLC), nine during an Atlas visit at Tindal House on 28th (JR), four at Tiptoe Farm near Etal on 28th (JR) and Healy on 28th (TWi). One to three were at a further ten widespread localities.

**Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Breeding was confirmed at Buston Links (IDR) and Warkworth Dunes (IDR). Eight were singing at Cresswell Pond on 12th (DM/ST/IFo/PA), Garretshiels (Redesdale – JCD). Six were at Druridge Pools on 1st (PRM) and Backworth Pond on 22nd (LJM), five at Berwick on 20th (PRM), four at Auchope Caim on 4th (JR) and Holystone on 24th (DRo). One to three were also at Embleton, Monk's House Pool, Plessey Woods CP, Ridley Common, Rock House Fell (Plenmeller), Saughy Hill, Slaley Forest, St. Mary's Wetland and Windy Gyle.



A splendid singing Reed Bunting at Cresswell Pond  
1st July by Mike Hodgson

**ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN****Escapes****Raptor sp**

A very large raptor flew S/E over Fontburn Reservoir on 19th July a presumed escape as it trailed jesses.

**Hybrids****Canada Goose x Greylag Goose** *Branta canadensis* x *Anser anser*

A single hybrid was seen at Hauxley on 13th (HRS).

**LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS**

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Those observers marked with an asterisk after their name(s) have submitted records on-line using the club spreadsheet, copies are available by emailing Dick Myatt at [dick@dickmyatt.co.uk](mailto:dick@dickmyatt.co.uk).

**Apologies for any accidental omissions****BULLETIN COMPILATION AND PRODUCTION**

This bulletin was compiled by Lindsay McDougall (Swans to Geese, Game birds, Divers to Herons), Graeme Bowman (Ducks), Trevor Blake (Birds of Prey to Rails), Ian Forsyth (Waders to Skuas), Tim Dean (Gulls to Auks, Escapes, Hybrids and Unknown Origin, List of Contributors, Highlights), Iain Robson (Doves to Dunnock), Mike Richardson (Robin to Warblers), Dee McKeown (Flycatchers to Buntings), Julie Roper/Dan

Turner (WeBS Coastal Counts) and Steve Holliday (WeBS Inland Counts). Thanks again to Ann McKeown for typing the section Flycatchers to Buntings.

Edited by Steve Barrett [Sscmagpie@aol.com](mailto:Sscmagpie@aol.com)

Distributed by Alan Watson [apusx@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:apusx@blueyonder.co.uk)

## RECORD SUBMISSION

**Cards:** Please send all record cards to Tim Dean, 2 Knocklaw Park, Rothbury NE65 7PW, to arrive on, or preferably before, the 8th of the month following that in which the records were collected. Please write cards legibly to ensure that your sightings are correctly recorded.

**E-mail:** Members are encouraged to e-mail their records on an Excel-style spreadsheet. Please e-mail Dick Myatt at [dick@dickmyatt.co.uk](mailto:dick@dickmyatt.co.uk) for a copy of the standard spreadsheet and other details.

**Location names and Grid references:** The use of standard location names and the inclusion of grid references greatly increases the value of records in subsequent analyses. A 1km square grid reference is the ideal e.g. NY8067 for Grindon Lough, but 2km square references (Tetrads) are also acceptable e.g. NY86D in this case. A list of localities and their tetrad grid references (Tetrad/Locality List) can be downloaded from the 'Resources & Downloads' section of the Club website at <http://www.ntbc.org.uk> – the use of these names, wherever possible, would be highly appreciated.

## PHOTOGRAPHS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Please keep submitting your articles, photographs, sketches and illustrations for the bulletin. Thanks again to those who have supplied the excellent photographs.

Please send to Steve Barrett at [Sscmagpie@aol.com](mailto:Sscmagpie@aol.com)

## ELECTRONIC BULLETIN

The NTBC bulletin can be received electronically or as hard copy. The electronic bulletin arrives earlier than the printed version, it is in colour and we save all that printing and stamps. Ask for an e-mailed bulletin from [jo.bentley@waitrose.com](mailto:jo.bentley@waitrose.com).

## MEMBERSHIP

For membership enquiries please contact [jo.bentley@waitrose.com](mailto:jo.bentley@waitrose.com).

## NTBC WEBSITE

The excellent club website is available at [www.ntbc.org.uk](http://www.ntbc.org.uk). Chris Knox is the link person to the club committee for the website and you can contact him at [christopher.knox@o2.co.uk](mailto:christopher.knox@o2.co.uk)

## FIELD TRIPS

The next field trip is to Holy Island on Sunday 18th October

Contact is Trevor Blake;

Email: [trevor.1958@live.co.uk](mailto:trevor.1958@live.co.uk)

Tel: 01670 862 635

## INDOOR MEETINGS REMINDER – CHANGE OF VENUE

The club is moving its meeting venue for the 2009/2010 winter session to the Newcastle Falcons Rugby Club at Kingston Park Stadium, Brunton Road, Kenton Bank Foot, Newcastle upon Tyne NE13 8AF. Indoor meetings will be held, as usual, starting at 7pm on the second Thursday of every month between September and April.

Detailed travel directions to the new venue can be found on <http://www.newcastle-falcons.co.uk>

The next two meetings are;

**Thurs 10th September** The Goose Detective by Phil Prosser

**Thurs 8th October** AGM and  
White-tailed Eagles in Poland by Terry Pickford



**GREENLAND WHITE-FRONTED GEESE AT GRINDON LOUGH**

I have been asked by Dr Tony Fox, the expert on GWF, for information on the Grindon flock (the only wintering flock in England!). Has anyone got any records of juvenile Whitefronts present in the small flock for last winter? If so could they please let me know.

Thanks, Roger Norman, 0191 285 8314, [r.norman@clara.net](mailto:r.norman@clara.net)

**WANTED**

Good quality telescope (and stand). Must be in excellent condition and preferably lightweight. Will consider most price ranges.

Contact John Littleton on 07717 241 691



A female Blackbird at Tynemouth  
by Colin Bradshaw



## COASTAL WeBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

219

JULY 2009		MHu	M. Hutcheson	MLC	M. L. Cadwallender/J. Bentley	RC	R.Chilton							
		PRD	P. R. Davey	JAR	J. Roper	DMT	D. M. Turner							
		RP	R.Poyer	TAC	T. A. Cadwallender	PF	P.Fletcher							
Site	TOTAL	Tweed Estuary	Spittal - Cocklawburn	Lindisfarne NWR (including Budle Bay)	(Budle Bay)	Budle Pt - Seahouses	Seahouses - Beadnell	Howick - Boulmer	Aln Estuary	Newbiggin - Cambois	Tyne North Pier - Fish Quay	Wallsend, (north bank only)	Redheugh - Scotswood Bridge, (north bank)	Scotswood - Newburn Bridge, (north bank)
Counter		MHu	MHu	PRD	PRD	RP	MLC	JAR	TAC	RC	DMT	DMT	PF	PF
Date		10	9	12		26	28	16	12	14	11	19	12	12
Little Grebe	1		1											
Cormorant	107	3	2	20		4	15	4	2	8	15	32	2	
Shag	6					6								
Grey Heron	48	12		6			3	5	16			6		
Mute Swan	636	632		2					2					
Canada Goose	2	1							1					
Light-bellied Brent Goose	1			1										
Shelduck	60			26				30	4					
Teal	2			2										
Mallard	109	20		18		12			7				16	36
Shoveler	6					6								
Tufted Duck	1		1											
Eider	1,115	21	38	783		60	103	29	29	51	1			
Common Scoter	48		48											
Red-breasted Merganser	13			13										
Goosander	213	205							8					
Moorhen	5		1			2			2					
Coot	5			2		3								
Oystercatcher	477	14	46	167		25	108	75	23	3	14		1	1
Ringed Plover	13			5			6	1		1				
Golden Plover	167			25				142						
Grey Plover	1								1					
Lapwing	165	36		6		20		12	46			1	38	6
Knot	74			72				2						
Sanderling	6						6							
Dunlin	140			107			16	17						
Snipe	1							1						
Bar-tailed Godwit	222			219		3								
Whimbrel	19			17				1	1					
Curlew	1,936	63	6	1481			176	128	75		3	1	3	
Redshank	281	26	1	52			8	35	62		4	44	49	
Greenshank	1								1					
Common Sandpiper	10	1		1		2			6					
Turnstone	16			7		4	4	1						
Black-headed Gull	1,011	354	37	90			174	14	55	nc	1	118	86	82
Common Gull	47	14		32						nc	1			
Lesser Black-backed Gull	81	14		14			6	1					43	3
Herring Gull	891	340	40	155			104	6		nc	178	8	59	1
Great Black-backed Gull	93	26	2				12	13			31		7	2
Kittiwake	654	182	6				450	2			10	4		
Sandwich Tern	59	16	20			3	5	8	6		1			
Roseate Tern	2							2						
Common Tern	26					8			11		4	3		
Arctic Tern	17					6		11						
Kingfisher	0													
ADDITIONAL SPECIES														
Fulmar	6	4	2											
TOTALS - WILDFOWL	2,378	894	91	873	0	93	121	68	71	59	16	38	18	36
- WADERS	3,529	140	53	2,159	0	54	324	415	215	4	21	46	91	7
- GULLS & TERNS	2,881	946	105	291	0	17	751	57	72	0	226	133	195	88

## INLAND WeBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

Version:

Interim

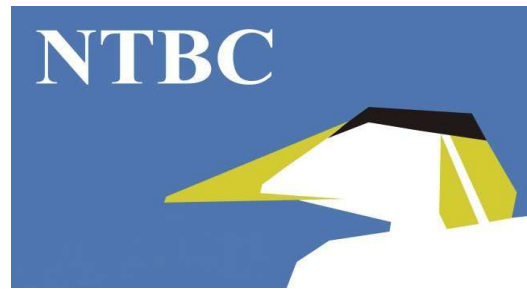
Month: JULY

[illegible]

# Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

<http://www.ntbc.org.uk/>



## Bulletin 2009 No 8 MONTHLY SUMMARY – AUGUST

3rd October 2009

### HIGHLIGHTS

Balearic Shearwater -	Singles at Newbiggin and the Farne Islands
Bittern -	One at Cresswell Pond showed briefly on 10th.
Quail -	several late singing birds in a good year
Gadwall -	109 at East Chevington on 29th is the first three figure count recorded in the county.
Red Kite -	One at Rennington on 11th , considerably further North than usual
Dotterel -	A Juvenile/ First-winter on top of Windy Gyle on 25th.
Semi-palmated Sandpiper -	Adult at Cresswell Pond from 17th to 25th , third county record
Pectoral Sandpiper -	One at Hauxley on 1st & 4th, only sighting this year
Icterine Warbler –	One at Fenham le Moor on 9th.
Ortolan Bunting -	Single on Inner Farne on 24th

### NEWS

Annual subscriptions are now due.  
Bulletin Photograph competition  
Field trips to Holy Island and Mersehead are scheduled  
Appeal for editors for BIN  
County Records committee member required



A Sanderling at St Mary's  
25th August by Tim Dean

## WEATHER

A generally unsettled month, with cloudy conditions to the west and north while the east and south enjoyed some fine warm days. Rainfall was near to or below the 1971 to 2000 average, but there were significant variations.

1st to 6th: Generally unsettled for the first few days of the month, some heavy rain on the 1st.

7th to 10th: Quieter and drier weather during this period as a ridge of high pressure extended from the Azores, although a few weakening weather fronts did affect the north-west. After a rather cold night on 7th where the minimum temperature fell to 5 °C in parts of the north, it became warmer again.

11th to 17th: There was still a good deal of dry and bright weather in the south but became more unsettled across northern and western parts.

18th to 23rd: The north-west / south-east split continued through this period with the driest and brightest weather in south-east England and more unsettled conditions persisting in the north and west. No large daily rainfall totals were recorded, but heavy showers on the 21st gave hourly totals of around 10 mm in parts of the north.

24th to 31st: Rather more unsettled generally through this period with some rain at times in all parts.

## CLASSIFIED LIST

The following account consists of unchecked reports. The species/subspecies marked \* require descriptions. A complete list of all sightings which need notes is included in the NTBC website [www.ntbc.org.uk](http://www.ntbc.org.uk) under the County Records Committee section and in Birds in Northumbria 2007 page 251.

The Inland and Coastal Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) tables are at the rear of the bulletin. These contain additional counts to those in the Classified List.

## TARGET SPECIES

The target species for 2009 are **Marsh Tit**, **Spotted Flycatcher** and **Tree Sparrow**.

Please report all records for these species.

### Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

The peak count of 252 in the Tweed Estuary on 21st was significantly down on last month (MHu). Other large gatherings were 97 at Killingworth Lake on 15th, (a site record), 70 at Amble Braid on 1st/ 2nd and 30 at Ladyburn Lake on 6th (LJM/PCF/MSH/JMA). Smaller groups were 19 at Castle Island and 16 at Hauxley NR on 16th (DM/STH/PA). Two to eight were noted from Arcot Pond, Capheaton Lough, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington South Pool, Fenham-le-Moor, Holy Island Lough (where one of the remaining cygnets recovered after back wounds caused by fox or otter), Leazes Park (Newcastle), Newcastle Great Park pools, Newburn and Reaveley Farm (Ingram). Further broods were noted at Druridge pools (four young), Farnley (four young), Oxford pits (seven young) and Yeavering (seven young).

### Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Singles were noted with the Canada Goose flock at Derwent Reservoir on 11th and a possibly feral bird at Yarrow Slake (Tweed Estuary) on 28th (PRM/MHu)

### Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Light, possibly local, movement was noted in the south east with 20 flying S over Dinnington on 4th, 19 flying SE at Damdykes Farm (Cramlington) on 8th, 18 flying SW over Arcot Hall GC on 6th and 13 N at Druridge Pools on 18th (PCF/DM/STH/IDR). The peak counts were 404 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 24th, 338 at Derwent Reservoir on 11th and 220 at Yarrow Slake (Tweed Estuary) on 30th (MR/PRM/MHu). Elsewhere 85 were at East Chevington North Pool on 6th, 60 at Lowick on 25th, 52 at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 29th, 50 at Arcot Pond on 31st, 25 at Hauxley NR on 6th and 18 at Backworth on 5th (JMA/EHa/MR/STH/SPP).

### Greater Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Eight flew over Coquet Cairn (Harwood) on 1st and two flew SE over Southfield Green (Cramlington) on 5th (JMA/DM). The highest counts were 552 at Grindon Lough on 7th, 331 at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 6th, 260 at Hauxley NR on 28th, 240 at Bothal Pond on 27th and 89 on Derwent Reservoir on 11th (EC/JSB/MR/JA/SRB/PRM). Smaller gatherings were 51 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 19th, 45 at Killingworth Lake on 15th, 37 near Cresswell Pond on 16th and 28 on Leazes Park Lake (Newcastle) on 22nd (MR/LJM/STH/DM/PA). Two to 15 were noted from Big Waters, Branton, Castle Island, Ladyburn Lake and Yarrow Slake (Tweed Estuary).

### Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

A single, of possible dubious origin, was with the Canada Goose flock at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 12th/26th (MR).

**Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna*

Fenham Flats held 118 on 14th (PRM) and 194 on 19th (ASJ), and 41 were in Budle Bay on 7th (PRM). Six were at Amble on 25th (PRM), six (one juvenile) at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 24th (MR), five juveniles at Cresswell Pond on 19th (DM/STH/PA) and two there on 29th (GB), and single juveniles at Castle Island and Hauxley Reserve.

**Wigeon** *Anas penelope*

Six flew N at Spittal Bay on 20th (MHu). Grindon Lough held 17 on 9th (PRM) and a peak of 44 on 22nd (MRS), three at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 19th (MR) increased to eight by 24th (MR), seven were at Derwent Reservoir on 10th (IFo), five at Yarrow Slake on 30th (MHu), and threes at Hauxley Reserve on 22nd (HRS) and the Tweed Estuary on 30th (MHu).

**Gadwall** *Anas strepera*

Very high numbers were at East Chevington later in the month, with peaks of 77 on 23rd, 109 on 29th (ADMc) and 95 on 31st (JRT). This is the first three figure count yet recorded in the county.

Other large concentrations were 61 at Cresswell Pond on 21st (STH/MHp/PA), 46 at Hauxley Reserve on 21st (HRS), 35 at Longhirst Flash on 30th (JRT), 30 at Fenham-le-Moor on 4th (MSK/NEWT), 13 (including ten well-grown young) at Bothal Pond on 5th (GB), and four at Druridge Pools on 4th (TRD), Singles were also at Big Waters and Marden Quarry on single dates.

**Teal** *Anas crecca*

Coastal movement involved ten N at Boulmer on 7th (PRM), eight N at Druridge Links on 13th (IDR), 26 S at Spittal Bay on 20th (MHu), seven S at Boulmer on 25th (PRM) and four S at Cocklawburn on 19th (MHu). East Chevington attracted 426 (309 on north pool and 117 on south pool) on 24th (IFo), 186 were at Grindon Lough on 5th (PRM), 132 at Monk's House Pool on 31st (MSH), 70 at Cresswell Pond on 22nd (MN), 49 at Arcot Pond on 30th (LJM), 34 at Holywell Pond on 19th (SPP), 30 at Middle Ord Pond on 28th (MHu), 20-26 at the *Beehive* Flash (Earsdon) and Hauxley Reserve, and 13-15 at Castle Island and Derwent Reservoir. Counts of five to nine came from Big Waters and the Tweed Estuary, and one to four from the *Drift Inn* pools (Seaton Burn) and Shilford.

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

Peak counts were 193 at Grindon Lough on 5th (PRM), 145 at Castle Island on 16th (DM/STH/PA), 142 at Haughton Strother on 16th (MR), 142 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 19th (MR), 130 at Cresswell Pond on 24th (TRD/JD), 92 at Arcot Pond on 13th (LJM), 88 at Derwent Reservoir on 28th (IFo), 85 at East Chevington on 12th (IFo), 84 at Fenham Flats on 14th (PRM), 52-56 at Newcastle Leazes Park and Middle Ord Pond, 44-48 at the *Beehive* Flash (Earsdon) and Marden Quarry, and 30-36 at Farnley Haughs, Monk's House Pool and Shield Hall (Slaley). Counts of 15-28 also came from Newburn, Richardson Dees Park (Wallsend), Wallington Hall and West Ord, and two at Chesters.

Breeding data were as follows (may include broods from previous months):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Newcastle Leazes Park	2	5	DM. New brood of 5 on 5th and new brood of 3 on 22nd
Belsay Hall	1	5	KR/LR. On 6th
Newburn	1	5	PRM. On 11th
Horton Burn, Cramlington	1	4	LJM. On 15th
Killingworth Lake	1	3	LJM. On 15th
Richardson Dees Park, Wallsend	1	2	CDH. On 31st (additional to broods from May)
Wansbeck Business Park, Ashington	1	2	LJM. New brood on 5th

**Pintail** *Anas acuta*

One was at East Chevington on 24th (IFo).



**Garganey** *Anas querquedula*

A compact group of four was at Longhirst Flash on 15th (TRD), two were noted there on 21st (GE/IF/STH *et al.*) and one on 30th (JRT). Singles were at Bothal Pond on 24th (IFo) and 28th (TRD/JD) and Castle Island on 10th (RA).



Garganey at Bothel Pond  
28th by Tim Dean

**Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*

Swallow Pond held 14 on 30th (SPP), ten (an apparent family party but not bred on site) at Holy Island Lough on 24th (IK), four at East Chevington on 4th (TRD), three at the *Beehive* Flash (Earsdon) on 29th (MSH), three at Monk's House Pool on 14th (PRM), and one to two at Arcot, Cresswell and Holywell Ponds, Hauxley Reserve and Monk's House Pool.

**Pochard** *Aythya ferina*

Only low numbers recorded, with peaks of four at Arcot Pond on 6th (STH) and one to three there (including two large juveniles) on 8th and 16th (GB/DM), three at Capheaton Lake on 8th (PRM), two drakes at Ladyburn Lake on 24th (IFo), and a pair at Swallow Pond on 11th (TRD). Singles were at Big Waters, Bothal Pond and Whittle Dene reservoirs on occasional dates (GB/TRD/MR).

**Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*

The largest gatherings were 51 at Capheaton Lake on 8th (PRM), 46 at Marden Quarry on 23rd (KWY), 44 at Hauxley Reserve on 12th (IFo), 27 at Swallow Pond (including juveniles) on 16th (SPP), 25 at Grindon Lough on 23rd (SW), ten at Newcastle Leazes Park on 22nd (DM), five to seven at Castle Island and Haughton Strother, and singles at Arcot Pond and Jesmond Dene.

Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Capheaton Lake	2	14 (8 & 6)	DM. Tiny young on 1st
Woodhorn Flashes	2	14 (9 & 5)	LJM. On 5th
Wansbeck Business Park, Ashington	2	11 (7 & 4)	LJM. On 5th
Shasun Dudley	1	9	SB/LJM. On 1st
Shield Hall, Slaley	1	7	RMH. Female with 7 almost full-grown young on 24th.
East Chevington	1	7	TRD. On 4th
Newcastle Great Park Pools	1	7	AHB. On 1st. Same brood as June
Holywell Pond	1	5	LJM. Five well-grown young on 12th
Ladyburn Lake	1	5	IFo. On 12th. Young 7-10 days old
Newcastle Leazes Park	1	2	DM. New brood on 5th

**Eider** *Somateria mollissima*

Peak counts were 158 at Hadston Carrs on 21st (MT/NT), 126 at Seahouses on 7th (PRM), 103 off Hauxley on 2nd (HRS), 92 at Cheswick Black Rocks on 31st (MHu), 86 at Warkworth on 13th (GE), 52 at Cocklawburn on 12th (MHu), 52 off Druridge Links on 10th (IDR), 20-26 at Boulmer, Craster and Howick, and six to ten at Holy Island and St Mary's.

**Common Scoter** *Melanitta nigra*

Northerly movement involved 45 at St Mary's on 2nd (MT/NT), 31 at Seaton Sluice on 23rd (LMO), and 12 at Cresswell on 25th (TRD). Numbers in Druridge Bay varied from about 200 off Cresswell beach on 9th (LMO), 180 off Druridge Links on 5th and 140 there on 9th and 13th (IDR/JF). Elsewhere, 46 at Cocklawburn on 12th rose to 66 by 31st (MHu), and 12 were at Seaton Sluice on 16th (DM/STH/PA).

**Velvet Scoter** *Melanitta fusca*

Singles drakes flew N off Druridge Links on 10th (IDR) and Hauxley on 12th (TRD). A drake was off Druridge Links on 5th (IDR).

**Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula*

One was at Hauxley Reserve on 4th and 16th (HRS).

**Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator*

A total of 29 were at Fenham Flats on 19th (ASJ). Singles were at the Blyth Estuary on 16th (DM/STH/PA) and off Druridge Links on 5th (IDR).

**Goosander** *Mergus merganser*

One flew S at East Chevington on 23rd (ADMc). The Tweed Estuary again held large numbers, with a peak of 172 on 12th, and 154 were at nearby Cheswick on 7th (MHu). A moulting flock of 30 was at Lindisfarne all month (IK), 15 were at Cocklawburn on 31st (MHu), 12 at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 2nd (MHu), nine (female plus eight well-grown juveniles) at Derwent Reservoir on 11th (PRM), six (juveniles) at the College Valley on 27th (JMA), six (thought to be probably a brood) at Shillmoor on 30th (JR), four juveniles at Allen Banks on 15th (ACo), three at Castle Island on 23rd (GB). One to two were also at Boulmer, Budle Bay and Seahouses.

**Ruddy Duck** *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Four drakes were at Swallow Pond on 17th (ACo) and one there on 11th (TRD). Singles were at Bothal Pond on 25th-26th (MSH/JRT) and Holywell Pond on 25th (MSH).

**Black Grouse** *Tetrao tetrix*

The sole report was of a male at Sipton Shield (Allendale) on 15th (ACo)

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

The highest count was 21 at Broom Wood Farm near Alnwick on 16th (JR). Four were in Thrunton Woods on 13th and two at Hepple on 7th (MT/NT/PRM).

**Grey Partridge** *Perdix perdix*

Family parties were noted during the month at Ashington (six young), Cresswell Pond and *Drift Inn* fields, Cresswell (seven young), Howick (eight young) and Todlaw Pike (BDK/ADMc *et al.* JAR/JR). Counts of seven came from Dinnington on 7th, where they fed on spilt horse food and West Ord on 30th (PCF/MHu). Two to four were noted from Cresswell Dunes, Prestwick Carr and Woodhorn Flashes.

**Quail** *Coturnix coturnix*

Two were heard 1.5km north of Bellasis Bridge on 18th with a single calling there on 3rd/12th/22nd /25th (JCB/EC *et al.*). Singles were heard at Duddo on 2nd, Oxford pits on 5th and Acomb on 8th/11th (TRD/JD/MHu/SW/TWi/).

**Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus*

The only reports were of singles at Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene), where scarce this year and Chesters House and Walled Garden (RJP/ALT).



Pheasant at Hauxley NR by Chris Knox

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

Two flew N at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) on 26th as did one at Boulmer one flew N on 7th (IK/PRM). Three were off Cocklawburn on 19th (MHu). Singles were at Druridge Links on 9th, Annstead Point on 26th and Hauxley shore on 28th (IDR/JF/JPL/JA).).

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

The highest count was 24 including juveniles at Holywell Pond on 29th (SPP). Castron held 14 on 17th whilst 11 including juveniles were at Swallow Pond on 30th and ten including the breeding pair detailed below were at Big Waters on 24th (DCh/SPP/GB). Six were at Ladyburn Lake and five at Cresswell Pond on 12th (IFo/TRD/JD). Four were at Shield-on-the-Wall on 22nd (MRS). One to three were noted from Arcot Pond, Bakethin Reservoir, Castle Island, *Drift Inn* pools (Seaton Burn)Grindon Lough, Holy Island Lough, Linden Hall, Longhirst Flash, and Yeavering.

Additional breeding data were as follows:

Location	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/Comments
Newcastle Great Park pools	3	7	AHB by 22nd
Swallow Pond	3	7	SPP on 3rd
Bank's Pond Dinnington	1	4	PCF on 2nd no young noted on 8th
Bothal Pond	1	3	GB on 23rd
Farnley Corbridge	1	2	BNR on 14th
Hauxley NR	1	2	HRS on 15th
Big Waters	1	1	GB on 24th
Capheaton Lough	1	1	TRD on 13th
Whittle Dene Reservoirs	1	1	MRS on 24th

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*

Numbers at Whittle Dene Reservoirs peaked at 13 on 24th (MR), whilst nine comprising two family parties were at Killingworth Lake on 7th (LJM). Four were at Derwent Reservoir on 14 th (IFo) A single was on Ladyburn Lake on 24 th and single juveniles offshore at Druridge Links on 25 th and East Chevington on 28 th (lfo/IDR/TRD/JD).

Additional breeding data is as follows.

Location	No. of broods	No of young	Observer/Comments
Killingworth Lake	1	3	LJM on 7th

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

At the now regular breeding site a pair was seen with two young up to the 11th with two young only remaining on 16th and one by 18th. At a former breeding site a pair was noted feeding either one or two young on the adult's back on 1st. Elsewhere a juvenile was at Holywell Pond on 19th (SPP)..

**Fulmar** *Fulmarus glacialis*

At Whitley Bay South Promenade at least seven well-grown chicks were noted on nesting ledges on 11th and at Howick a large chick was still on the cliffs on 9th (MSH/JAR). One to three were noted from Cresswell, Cullernose Point, Hauxley, Newton Point and Snab Point (Cresswell).

**Sooty Shearwater** *Puffinus griseus*

The only record was of one seen from the *Northern Experience* pelagic trip from Tynemouth on 7th (MSK/NEWT/RA).

**Manx Shearwater** *Puffinus puffinus*

At Boulmer 17 flew N in 1 hour on 7th and 16 flew N at Hauxley on 16th (PRM/HRS). Three flew S off Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) on 12th, three N at Snab Point (Cresswell) on 29th with one S there on 4th and at Druridge Links on 10th and Howick on 4th. At least 100 were noted from the *Northern Experience* pelagic trip from Tynemouth on 7th (NEWT/MSK). At Druridge Links 87 were offshore on 10th and seven were noted at St Mary's Island on 9th (IDR/SPP).

**Gannet** *Morus bassanus*

By far the largest movement reported was 854 N at Boulmer in 1 hour on 7th (PRM). Elsewhere five flew N at Snab Point (Cresswell) on 4th (TRD). At Spittal Bay (Berwick) 65+ were feeding close inshore at high tide on 20th, whilst 50+ were offshore at Druridge Links on 10th (MHu/IDR). One to four were noted from Cresswell, East Chevington, Hauxley, Newton Point and Newbiggin, where a juvenile was noted sitting on the rocks at Beacon Point.

**Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

At Spittal Bay (Berwick) 18 flying S on 26th may have been a migrant flock (MHu). The peak roost counts during the month were 161 in Blyth South Harbour on 27th and 14 at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 30th (STH/MHu). The maximum count at Derwent Reservoir was 21 on 14th, 19 were at East Chevington North Pool and 16 were at Castle Island on 16th, 12 offshore at Hauxley on 9th and ten at Bakethin Reservoir on 1st (IFo/STH/DM/PA/HRS). One to six were noted from Catcleugh Reservoir, Craster, Cresswell Pond, Hagg Bank (Wylam), Hauxley NR and Newburn.

A single of the *sinensis* race was at Hauxley NR on 4th (HRS).



Cormorant at Druridge Pools  
by Steve Barrett 25th

**Shag** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Most reports came from the Berwick area where 42 roosted at Meadow Haven on 20th, ten were in Spittal Bay on 18th and three were in the Tweed Estuary on 21st (MHu). Two were at Newton on 10th and one at Hauxley on 16th (TRD/JD).

**Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris*

A single thought to be a juvenile as its plumage appeared completely un-abraded, was seen in flight twice in the early morning of 10th at Cresswell Pond (MSH).

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*

Two were at Hipsburn in the Aln Estuary on 24th (JMA). Singles were noted on 2nd at West Ord feeding on the edge of the Tweed and in the Wansbeck Estuary (MHu/RA). A single was also noted at Cresswell Pond on 6th and from 9th-12 h (RHe/BDK *et al*) and also at East Chevington on 6th and Alnmouth on 13th (MSK/NEWT/RA).

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*

The peak count was 19 in the Tweed Estuary on 21st, when at Hauxley NR 11 were present (MHu/HRS). Counts of seven came from Castle Island on 16th and Holy Island on 30th (STH/DM/PA). Six were at Arcot Pond on 16th, Hauxley NR on 16th and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 24th (STH/DM/PA/MR). Five were at Druridge Pools on 3rd and Cresswell Pond on 4th (IDR/MSH) and four at Boulmer on 7th and Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 17th (PRM/MR). One to two were noted at Derwent Reservoir, Farnley (Corbridge), Hethpool (College Valley), Holywell Dene, Monk's House Pool, Shildon (Blanchland) and Whitehill (College Valley).

**Red Kite** *Milvus milvus*

Only four records this month. The first flew S at Whittle Wood on 3rd (DWN), other singles were seen at Rennington on 11th (JMA) and a juvenile was at Wylam/Hagg Bank on 12th, with a different bird there on 23rd (BNR).

**Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*

Apart from the birds that bred successfully in Druridge Bay, other birds were noted at Bothal Pond, Cresswell Pond, Ellington, Hauxley NR and Shortridge Hall.

**Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis*

Two birds were at Holystone on 17th (DRo), while single birds were noted at Rothbury on 5th (JD), Harwood Forest on 6th (MNC), Redheugh Farm on 7th (JR), March Burn/Healey Mill area on 17th and at Hexham Westwood on 21st (BNR).

**Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*

An adult was with two juveniles who were calling for food was at Holystone on 12th (DRo). Two birds were in an Old Hartley garden throughout the month (RJP). Two birds were in Jesmond Dene on 2nd (MCo), Budle Bay on 4th (MSK/NEWT) and at Southfield Green (Cramlington) on 30th (DM).

**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*

The highest count this month was six birds at Ordley on 7th (SB/EC); five birds were at Prestwick Carr on 2nd (PCF). Whilst four birds were seen at Acombfell, Blagdon, Bull Crag (Kielder), Bygate, Old Hawkhill & Sweethope Lough. One to three birds were noted at various localities including one bathing in a garden bird bath at Red House Farm on 21st, this bird took a Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* earlier on the same week (*per* PCF).

**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*

On the 25th a single bird was on a post eating a fish outside the hide at Fenham Le Moor, it flew N and was joined by a second bird (DS). Single birds were at Catcleugh Reservoir on 9th (SLB/MSK), Fontburn Reservoir on 31st (SW), Hethpool (College Valley) on 7th (JL), Kielder on 1st (DM/STH/PA), Midgehope on 27th (SW), Snab Point (Cresswell) on 29th (GB *et al*), Sweethope Lough on 1st (JR), Whittle Wood on 3rd (DWN) and at Wingates on 21st (DRW).

**Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*

Four birds were at Prestwick Carr on 9th (PCF), three were seen at Bellingham on 7th (PRM), Howick on 4th (JAR), and at March Burn on 17th (BNR). Pairs were at Chesters Houses, Shilford, & at Staward.

**Merlin** *Falco columbarius*

A pair was at Chatton throughout the month (JHa). A juvenile was at East Chevington on several dates, and it or another juvenile was also seen at Cresswell Pond throughout the month (PHe/MSH/ADMc). A male was also noted at Cresswell Pond on 11th (LMo/IW); other singles were at Addycombe (Rothbury), Cheswick, Newton and at Whittle Dene Reservoirs.



**\* Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*

Single birds were seen near Letah Wood on 11th & Staward on 15th (BNR), whilst on 16th at Chew Green (Upper Coquetdale) an adult chased and caught a Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis* (JR). An adult flew over the A68 near Riding Mill towards the River Tyne on 20th (DPR).

**Peregrine** *Falco peregrinus*

Two birds were at Harwood Forest on 6th (MNC), near Matten on 9th (PCF), Budle Bay on 19th, Ros Castle on 24th and in the Cheviots on 25th (EHa). Singles were observed at Bamburgh, Bothal Pond, Budle Bay, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Green Leighton quarry, Holy Island, Sweethope & at Williamston (S Tyne). A bird was seen eating a freshly killed Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus* at Lesbury on 27th (JAR).

**Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus*

The majority of the sightings came from Cresswell Pond, with the maximum of three juveniles on 12th (ADMc) and an adult and two juveniles on 30th (ADMc). Single birds were also seen there on several dates. The only sighting away from Cresswell Pond was a bird at Big Waters on 24th (GB).

**Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*

Castle Island on 16th 16 birds were present (DM/STH/PA), 11 birds were at Arcot Pond on 8th (DM) and at Hauxley NR on 21st (HRS). 10 were at Bothal Pond on 5th and Belsay Hall on 6th (LJM/KR/LR). Eight birds were seen at Monk's House Pool (PRM). Six birds were at Dinnington, Farnley Haughs (Corbridge) and at Leazes Park. Up to five birds were seen at a further 10 sites.

**Coot** *Fulica atra*

The highest counts this month were 31 at Capheaton and 22 at Arcot Pond on 1st (DM/STH/PA), 14 birds were seen at Leazes Park on 5th & 22nd (DM), 10 were at Big Waters on 24th (GB), nine at Castle Island on 16th (DM). Two birds were at Wansbeck Business Park (Ashington) on 5th and at Monk's House Pool on 7th.

**Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*

Another breeding record relates to two adults with two fully grown young at Pegswood Community Park on 5th (LJM). At Druridge Links 22 flew S on 17th and 25 moved NE on 18th (IDR). Respective coastal peaks reached 142 at Tynemouth on 26th, up from 72 on 13th (KWY), also 72 at St Mary's on 13th (ASJ) and 67 at Hauxley NR on 16th (HRS). Elsewhere, 31 were in the Blyth estuary on 22nd and 30 noted from the Holy Island causeway on 27th. Eight lingered inland at Derwent Reservoir on 11th and nine migrants passed Haughton Strother on 26th.

**Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*

At Haughton Strother eight, including seven juveniles, were present on 1st and four on 3rd (MR). Singles were at Cresswell Pond on 16th (ASJ/BDK) and at West Hartford on 28th-30th (JM/STH *et al*).

**Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*

The number at Berwick, Little Beach rose from 30 on 2nd to 142 on 24th (MHu), the peak in the Blyth estuary was 134 on 30th (DRW) and a maximum of 56 was at St Mary's, on 13th (ASJ). Also 48 were at Cheswick Black Rocks on 31st, 45+ in the Wansbeck estuary on 29th, 25 at Cocklawburn on 12th and up to six at Boulmer, Cresswell, Haughton Strother and Hauxley. One was at Grindon Lough on 5th.



Ringed Plover at Newbiggin  
by Alan Tillmouth on 13th

**Dotterel** *Charadrius morinellus*

A juvenile/first winter was present at Windy Gyle, Coquet Valley on 25th (EHa).

**Golden Plover** *Pluvialis apricaria*

The flock at St Mary's gradually increased to around 500 by 27th (SPP/MT/NT *et al*) and 100-150 appeared at Annstead Point, Howick and Lowick. At West Hartford 15 flew S on 30th.

**Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*

At Black Law, Lindisfarne 40 in breeding plumage were present on 9th (IK) and 39 were noted at Fenham-le-Moor on 19th (ASJ). One or two appeared from 5th at Annstead, Blyth estuary, Castle Island, Druridge Links and Hauxley.

**Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*

The flock at Cresswell Pond peaked at 550 on 12th (IFo), the most at Bothal Pond was 500 on 21st (GE/IF) and 500 were also at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 24th (MR). Several sites held 210-408 at times: Castle Island, Derwent Reservoir, Holystone, Monks' House Pool, St Mary's and Yarrow Slake with 100-154 at Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother, Newburn, Seaton Sluice and West Ord.

**Knot** *Calidris canutus*

Movements included 76 S at Snab Point on 13th, 60+ at Cresswell Pond on 23rd (CB) later flew S and 12 went S off Druridge links on 17th (IDR). Fenham Slake held 150 on 25th (JPL) and 58 were on Cresswell beach on 30th (ADM). Otherwise up to 22 were in the Cresswell area on several dates, 12 at Stag Rocks on 4th with a scattering of one to seven occasionally at Amble, Blyth, Boulmer, Castle Island, Cheswick Black Rocks, Hauxley, Howick and Seaton Sluice.

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba*

S movements included 92 at Snab Point on 13th (ASJ) and 30 at Emmanuel Head, Holy Island on 28th (IK). Also, 138 were counted from the Holy Island causeway on 12th, 90 were at Fenham-le-Moor on 19th, the most at Cresswell shore was 80 on 21st/25th and a peak of 75 occurred at St Mary's on 25th (BDK/ASJ/GE/IF/TRD). At Berwick 20 were present on 24th and up to eight appeared at some nine other coastal localities.

Two very interesting reports of colour ringed individuals were received. The first, at Druridge Links on 16th (IDR/JF), was ringed at Sandergoi, SW Iceland on 12th May this year. The other, at Cresswell on 24th (CB), which also had a flag on its left leg, had been banded as a three-day old chick at Zackenberg, NE Greenland on 3rd July and was potentially en route to Namibia. For just a simple act of noting and reporting a colour ring the reporter of the latter was also sent a photo of the bird when it was ringed and a paper on what is currently known about Sanderling using the African-Eurasian flyway.

Sanderling in Greenland in July and seven weeks later at Newbiggin by Colin Bradshaw



**\*Semipalmated Sandpiper** *Calidris pusilla*

An adult was in the Cresswell Pond/shore area on 17th-25th (BDK/AC/MSH *et al*). At first considered to be a Little Stint, it was not until 19th that the correct identification was clinched.

**Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*

One was at Hauxley NR on 10th (JA), two were reported at Cresswell Pond on 18th (ASJ) and a single at Cresswell Pond on 29th (ASJ).

**\*Pectoral Sandpiper** *Calidris melanotos*

An adult, possibly the same one, was at Hauxley NR on 1st (RB/MB) and 4th (JSB/EC/LMo/HRS/IW).

**Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*

After singles on 5th at Monks' House Pool (RA) and at Seahouses Harbour (RNa), the first of many at Cresswell Pond was an adult on 8th-14th (AJ *et al*). Next at Cresswell were two on 21st, three from next day and four on 25th, involving an absolute minimum of five individuals during this period (TRD/JD/MN/SRB/PRM *et al*). Two more visited Cresswell Pond on 29th-30th then one at Monks' House Pool on 30th-31st (STH *et al*).

**Purple Sandpiper** *Calidris maritima*

The only reports were from the north: two at Cheswick Black Rocks on 20th (BWG) and a total of seven in the Berwick area on 24th (MHu).

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*

Apart from 267 at Holy Island causeway on 12th (BDK) and 200+ on 19th at Fenham-le-Moor (ASJ), passage migrants at other favoured locations tended to peak during the last week or so. These included 217 at Cresswell Pond on 28th, 214 at Little Beach, Berwick on 24th and 156 in the Blyth estuary on 30th (ADMc/MHu/DRW). Around 70 were regularly present in the Rocket Field, Holy Island, 40+ were at Amble Braid on 2nd, 38 at Boulmer on 12th, a peak of 26 at Hauxley NR on 16th and 25 in the Wansbeck estuary on 29th. Otherwise 12-20 appeared occasionally at Druridge Links, St Mary's and the Tweed estuary; up to six were noted at Big Waters, Bothal Pond, Castle Island, Derwent Reservoir, Earsdon, Holywell Pond, Monks' House Pool, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and West Hartford.



Two views of Dunlin  
Left at St. Mary's on 25th by Tim Dean and  
Right at Newbiggin on 13th by Alan Tillmouth

**Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*

There were regularly up to three juveniles at Cresswell Pond during 13th-29th. Bothal Pond was another favourite location, including three juveniles on 18th/29th and four at a small pool nearby on 30th (MN). Three were at Castle Island on 13th/16th and two in Budle Bay on 4th and at Lynemouth on 29th. Singles were noted at Hauxley, Holburn Moss, Holy Island, Longhirst Flash and Monks' House Pool.

**Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*

On 10th 22 were seen at Holburn Moss (BWG) and the peak count at Bothal Pond reached 22 on 25th. Other larger totals were 16 at Monks' House Pool on 19th and nine at Haughton Strother on 22nd, with three



to five at Arcot Pond, Castle Island, Cresswell Pond, Hauxley and Seaton Burn. One or two were also noted at Big Waters, East Chevington, Grindon Lough, Longhirst Flash and near Woodhorn Flashes.

**Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola*

Three reports of singles: in the middle of the road, dazzled by headlights for several minutes near Widdrington level crossing on 14th (PRF); at Slaley Forest on 16th (PHe); at dusk at Felton on 27th (JMA).

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

Cresswell Pond duly attracted large numbers, particularly late in the month. After 17 on 12th there were 43 on 23rd, 52 on 28th, a peak on 72, mostly juveniles, on 29th and still 61-62 at the month end (ADM/GB *et al*). There were ten on 2nd and 15 on 5th in Budle Bay, ten at Cocklawburn on 12th and ten at Monks' House Pool on 25th. Six frequented Beehive Flash and Hauxley NR mid month and six were at Holy Island on 26th; one-four were seen at Amble Braid, Bothal Pond, Castle Island, East Chevington, Hauxley NR and Holywell Pond.

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

Most of 500 at Black Law, Lindisfarne NNR on 9th (IK) were still in breeding plumage, 150 were at Ross Point on 20th (EHa) and 21 at St Mary's on 1st were all adults except one. Otherwise there was a scattering of one to seven along the coast at well-watched locations.

**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*

Southerly movements recorded include 22 some six miles off Tynemouth on 7th (MSK), 13 at St Mary's on 9th (SPP), three at St Mary's on 2nd, two at East Ord on 6th and two at East Chevington on 16th. Singles also flew S at Cramlington on 3rd and 6th, at Berwick on 18th, Cresswell Pond on 21st and St Mary's on 25th; one flew W at Newbiggin GC on 28th. At least six were in the East Chevington pools area on 2nd, six were on Cresswell beach on 21st and five were at Cocklawburn on 19th (ADM/MT/NT/MHu). One was inland at Castron on 28th (DRo) and one to three were noted up to 28th at a further 15 coastal localities.

**Curlew** *Numenius arquata*

Coastal numbers continued to build up, notably 200+ at Fenham-le-Moor on 5th (MSH), peaks of 134 in the Blyth estuary on 16th (DM/STH/PA), 97 at Hauxley NR on 4th (HRS) and 85 in the Tweed estuary on 21st (MHu). Also 64 were at Holystone on 11th (DRo), 50+ at Amble on 22nd (DWS) and peaks of 49 at St Mary's on 3rd (ASJ), 39 at Holywell Dene on 3rd (RJP) and 30+ at Cresswell Pond on 4th. Inland, seven were at Grindon Lough on 5th, two in the Slaley area on 13th and one at Softley on 18th.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*

It maintained a noticeable presence throughout the month, although typically numbers dwindled in the last week. Four were noted at each of East Chevington on 5th (JRT), Hauxley NR on 11th (JSB/EC) and Castle Island on 21st (STH/MHp/PA) with threes at East Chevington on 1st, Howick on 2nd, Cresswell Pond on 8th, Hauxley NR on 14th, Castle Island on 16th and at Haughton Strother on 17th. One or two were seen at many of those locations and some 11 others, including the last singles on 30th at Budle Bay and Tynemouth pier.



Common Sandpiper at Hauxley  
16th by Tim Dean

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*

It was present throughout the month at Haughton Strother with six on 9th, four on 3rd/9th and three on 22nd/29th (MR). Four were at Castle Island on 5th (RA) and threes were noted at Beehive Flash on 4th, Longhirst Flash on 7th, Branton GP on 17th and Bothal Pond on 19th. Two came in off the sea at Cresswell beach on 4th (JSB/EC) and two were noted occasionally at Arcot Pond, Grindon Lough, Holy Island and Holywell Dene. One or two were often noted at the locations already mentioned and singles also visited Belsay, Caistron, Hauxley NR, High Angerton and Low Angerton.

**Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus*

Single juveniles were seen at Budle Bay on 4th-7th (MSK *et al*) and at Bothal Pond on 17th-22nd (BDK *et al*). An adult was at Cresswell Pond on 19th (DM *et al*), one was heard there on 23rd (CB) and one was at Alnmouth on 25th (KWY).

**Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*

Passage was sustained and widespread, particularly in coastal areas, throughout the month. Peak counts were ten at Foxton on 19th (ASJ), eight at Cresswell Pond on 26th (MSK), six on a pool north of the main road near Bothal Pond on 20th (ADMc) and six at Lindisfarne on 27th (IK). Five were in Budle Bay on 4th and at both Caistron and Cresswell Pond on 28th. Longhirst Flash attracted four on 21st as did Bothal Pond on 24th-25th. Boulmer, Castle Island, Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Hauxley NR also held three at times and one or two were noted at another 12 places.



Two views of Greenshank  
Left at Cresswell Pond on 10th by Mike Hodgson  
and right at Budle Bay by Chris Knox

**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*

At Cresswell Pond one was present on 22nd-31st with two on 24th-25th (MN/KWY/TRD *et al*) and two were at Longhirst Flash on 4th (TB). Singles were at Holywell Pond on 1st/3rd, Longhirst Flash on 2nd, Monks' House Pool on 5th and Bothal Pond on 8th/21st/25th.

**Redshank** *Tringa tetanus*

Amble Braid held around 300 on 2nd (RA), about 200 were in the Blyth estuary at Kitty Brewster on 29th (GB) and 150+ in Budle Bay on 5th (MSH). A WeBS count in the Tweed estuary revealed 89 on 21st and the peak at Hauxley NR was 73 on 21st; 35-50 were recorded at Castle Island, Cresswell Pond, St Mary's and Tynemouth.





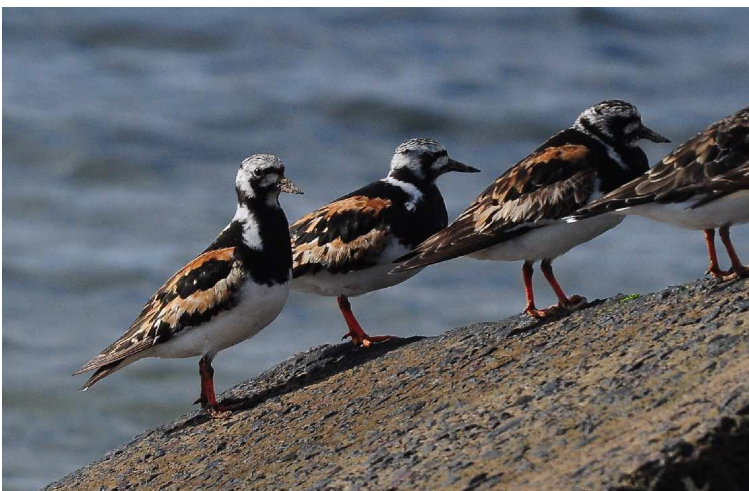
A Redshank living up to it's name at St. Mary's on 25th by Tim Dean

**Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*

Regular counts at Hauxley NR produced a maximum of 60 on 16th (DM/STH/PA), 45 were at Berwick on 24th (MHu), 41 at Seahouses on 2nd (MR) and 29 at St Mary's on 27th (MT/NT). Smaller numbers were seen at the Blyth estuary, Cresswell, Seaton Sluice and Tynemouth.

**Summer plumaged Turnstones**

Right at St. Mary's on 7th by Mike Hodgson and below a group of adults on Hauxley shore on 12th by Tim Dean



**Arctic Skua** *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Passage was exceptionally light with maxima of four on both 13th and 17th at Druridge Links (IDR), three at Snab Point on 2nd and off Cresswell beach on 21st (LMO/MT/NT). Two were noted flying over the pools at East Chevington on 16th/17th and two flew S at Newbiggin Beacons on 24th. Singles were recorded irregularly at Bamburgh, Berwick, Boulmer, Cresswell, Holy Island and Seaton Sluice.

**Great Skua** *Stercorarius skua*

Just two singles were reported: at Druridge Links on 10th and Stag Rocks on 11th (IDR/RNa).

**Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla*

The Tweed Estuary continued to attract good numbers with 224 found on a WEBS count on 21st (MHu). The Cullernose Point breeding colony seemed to have had a productive year with 180 juveniles counted on 6th with 40 already on the sea (JMA). Breeding ledges on the Tyne Bridge were deserted by 29th. Large counts were received from Annstead Point with at least 100 on 26th (JPL) and 58 on the piers at Blyth Harbour (STH). Otherwise reports were few with five at Newton on 10th and one at St Mary's on 25th (TRD). An interesting sighting was of a juvenile briefly inland at Swallow Pond on 3rd (SPP).

**Black-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

The highest concentration came from Druridge where c1500 gathered on 16th. Other large counts included 634 on the Tweed Estuary on 21st (MHu), 750 at Lowick and 600 by the Holy Island causeway both on 27th (JMA). Also 506 were at Arcot Pond on 16th (LJM), 350 at Castle Island on 16th (DM), 250 at Howick on 19th (JAR) and 100 at Goswick on 31st (JMA). Up to 24 were at Leazes Park (Newcastle) and Jesmond Dene.

**Little Gull** *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Only two reports this month with two adults and a juvenile in a gull roost at Druridge links on 6th (IDR/JF) and an adult offshore from Cresswell Ices on 4th (TRD).

**Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus*

Newbiggin continued to be the focus with five adults, three second-winters and two juveniles on 10th being the peak count there (MSK/NEWT). Two second-winters at Woodhorn Flash on 28th and 29th (EC/JSB/STH) were likely to have come from Newbiggin. Otherwise single adults were found at Cresswell Pond on 13th and 27th (ADM), Boulmer on 7th (PRM) and Alnmouth on 13th (RA). An inland adult was more unusual with one at Holywell Pond on 8th (SPP). A single juvenile was at Cresswell Pond on 28th (ADM).

An interesting record was of a bird ringed 5350343 as a pullus on Heligoland on 14th June 2008 and observed at Newbiggin on 30th July with the following record of recoveries (BB).

Date	Finding place	Co-ordinates	Country	County	Finder	Comments
07 07 08	Grünendeich, Strand	55 35 N 09 36 E	Germany	colony	Andreas Zours	Fledged
11 07 08	Grünendeich, Strand	53 35 N 09 36 E	Germany	colony	Andreas Zours	
30 07 09	Newbiggin by Sea	55 11 N -1 30 W	UK	Northumberland	Brian Bullough	



The Heligoland ringed Mediterranean Gull at Newbiggin on 30th July by Brian Bullough

**Common Gull** *Larus canus*

A substantial roost at Druridge built up from ca.600 on 5th, 1000 on 6th to 2,500 on 16th (IDR/JF). Further high concentrations included 750 at Lowick on 27th (JMA), 600 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 19th (MR), 430 at a riverbank roost at West Ord on 12th (MHu) and 400 at Haughton Strother on 26th (MR). Otherwise only two smaller groups were reported of 220 at Bywell on 23rd (BNR) and 200 at Bingfield (PCF).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus graelsii*

Larger groups included 47 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 19th (MR) and 31 at Arcot Pond on 16th (LJM). Ten to 16 were reported at Castle Island, Derwent Reservoir, Druridge, and West Hartford with one to two at Arcot lane and Jesmond Dene.

**Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus argenteus*

The main concentration reported was of 1088 on the Tweed Estuary during a WEBS count on 21st (MHu). 300 were at Budle Bay on 6th (JMA) with 233 at Arcot Pond on 16th (LJM). The only other groups reported were 56 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 19th (MR) and 22 at Castle Island on 16th (DM/STH/PA).

**Great Black-backed Gull** *Larus marinus*

Only three reports received with at least 60 at St Mary's on 2nd (mostly third year birds or adults) with 42 there on 25th (MT/NT). Elsewhere 17 were counted on the Tweed Estuary on 21st during the WEBS count (MHu).

**Little Tern** *Sternula albifrons*

The Lindisfarne colony fared badly again with the ten pairs present failing to raise any young due to fox predation (IK). Elsewhere the only reports were of two adults at the Chibburn Mouth on 3rd (TB) with a single North at Emmanuel Head, Holy Island on 12th (BDK) and a lone juvenile at East Chevington on 1st (NFO).

**Black Tern** *Chilidonias niger*

An adult and a juvenile lingered at East Chevington from 28th to 30th (JSB/EC/ADM/JA/PHe). Surprisingly also singles at four other localities with an adult on rocks at Coquet Island on 6th and 10th (IF/CB), an adult off Emmanuel Head, Holy Island on 12th (BDK) and single juveniles at St Mary's island on 16th (ASJ) and on the beach at Cresswell on 20th (MSH/TRC).

**Sandwich Tern** *Sterna sandvicensis*

A loafing group of 55 at Budle Bay stayed from 7th to 9th (PRM/TRD). Other high counts included 50 at the Blyth Estuary on 30th (DRW) and 32 at the Tweed Estuary on 21st (MHu). 20 were offshore at Hauxley on 29th (TRD). Otherwise up to ten found at Amble, Boulmer, Cresswell, East Chevington, Hauxley and Newton. Interestingly one was found well up river at Kitty Brewster on the River Blyth (GB).



Sandwich Terns at Newbiggin on 3rd  
Tim Cleeves

**Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo*

The only large group found was at least 40 at St Mary's Island on 2nd (MSH). Up to five were noted at Amble, Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Cresswell, East Chevington, Hauxley, Holywell Pond, Newcastle Business Park, Newton and Tweed Estuary. Single juveniles were still being fed at Arcot Pond, Big Waters. Swallow Pond and Hauxley though only the two latter sites were thought to have hatched young.



**Roseate Tern** *Sterna dougallii*

Always popular and well reported with large groups noticeable after the successful breeding season on Coquet Island. At least 50 were still being seen around Coquet Island on 10th (CB). Numbers at Beacon Pt, Newbiggin rose from 12 on 19th to 29 on 24th and an impressive 40 (including ten juveniles) on 25th (DRW/ASJ/ADM). The popular gathering area at St Mary's peaked at 27 on 29th (ASJ) with nearby Seaton Sluice also witnessing groups with ten to 12 from 14th to 16th (MT/NT/DM/STH/PA). Up to seven were noted in the Cresswell area during the month with up to four at East Chevington (GB/ADM/ASJ/TRD). One to three were also reported from Amble Harbour, Druridge, Newton Pt and Tynemouth.



Roseate Terns at Coquet on 8th  
by Colin Bradshaw

**Arctic Tern** *Sterna paradisaea*

Groups of 15 to 40 were still feeding at Boulmer, Cresswell, Druridge and St Mary's. Otherwise one to five were noted at Berwick, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington and Newton. Interestingly one was found inland at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 19th (MR).

**Guillemot** *Uria aalge*

46 were noted in Spittal Bay, Berwick on 18th (MHu). Otherwise up to seven were noted at Cresswell, Druridge, Hauxley and Meadow Haven (Berwick).

**Stock Dove** *Columba oenas*

Ten at Cresswell Pond on 16th (DMc/STH/PA) was the peak count in the month. Eight were at Northumberland Park, North Shields (MNC) on 17th. Three to four were at Exhibition Park and Jesmond Dene. A pair fledged one young from a garden Owl nest box at Stamfordham on 25th (EC). One to two were at 16 widespread localities in the south or south west of the county.

**Woodpigeon** *Columba palumbus*

Chesters Walled Garden held six on 9th (ALT), the highest count submitted in the month. Two adults and a juvenile were noted in a Walbottle Garden on 2nd (KR/LR) and a pair were incubating eggs at Woosington on 31st (SRB).

**Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

Four at Hauxley on 2nd (HRS) was the peak count received for the month. Two were also in a Walbottle Garden on the same date. Singles were noted at Chesters Walled Garden and Matthew Bank, Jesmond Dene.

**Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus*

A single record of one flying over Summerhouse Lane Pond on 11th (TRD).

**Barn Owl** *Tyto alba*

Breeding was confirmed at Holy Island where the regular pair doubled their brood from last year by fledging four young (IK). Singles were noted from Big Waters, East Chevington, Howick, Prestwick and Widdrington. A road casualty was noted on the A1 at Cawledge Bridge, Alnwick.

**Little Owl** *Athene noctua*

Individuals were noted at Adderstone, Berwick Hill and on 15th, 21st and 22nd in the Dinnington/Big Waters area (PCF)

**Tawny Owl** *Strix Aluco*

Pairs were noted calling at Big Waters on 15th (GB), Bolam Lake CP on 22nd (STH), Walbottle Hall on 3rd (KR/LR), Wark (North Tyne) on 24th (PRM) and West Wantage on 12th (TWi). Individuals were noted at Bellasis Bridge, Haltwhistle, Howick, Longhorsley, Rothbury and St Mary's Hospital, Morpeth.

**Long-eared Owl** *Asio otus*

An adult and three juveniles were observed at a site near Widdrington (STH) on 7th. One was noted hunting along a railway embankment at Needles Eye, Berwick on 3rd (MHu).

**Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus*

One on Melkridge Common on 31st (PRM) was the only report in the month.

**Nightjar** *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Two at Holburn Moss on 10th (BWG) was the only report in the month.

**Swift** *Apus apus*

Well reported this month with a peak count of 250 at Berwick on 1st (DEJ/PJ) when 120 fed at Marden Estate Tynemouth (ASJ). 30-50 were noted early in the month at Humshaugh, Shilford, Marden Quarry and Whitley Bay Ice Rink a general departure at the latter two sites noted by 7th. 15-20 were noted passing south over Holy Island between 23rd-29th. 5-15 were at Bothal Pond, Brunton Lane, Capheaton, East Chevington and Swallow Pond. One to four were reported from a further 27 widespread localities to the end of the month.

**Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*

Two were noted at Haughton Strother near Humshaugh on 22nd and Lowford, Morpeth on 31st (MR/ADM). Singles were reported from Big Waters, Catcleugh Reservoir, Cresswell Pond, Hepple, Hexham, Jesmond dene, Lowford Morpeth, Newburn, Newcastle Great Park Pools and River Blyth estuary.

**Green Woodpecker** *Picus viridis*

Family groups of three were reported from Farnley on 14th and Whitley Chapel on 13th (BNR). Two at Farnley Haughs on 13th (MR) and at Dipton Mill on 23rd (BNR). Singles were seen or heard at Bakethin Reservoir, Healey Whins, Holystone, Kirkhill Est. Morpeth, Longhirst Flash, Ordley (two dates), Tranwell Woods and Woosington Hall.



Green Woodpecker in a Tranwell garden  
30th by Peter Tapsell



**Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major*

Three were at Wallington Hall on 11th (DMc), Whitley Chapel on 13th (BNR) and at two separate locations around Prestwick Carr on 22nd (PCF). Six different birds, five juveniles and an adult female, were trapped during the month at Whittle Wood during CES ringing sessions (DWN). Two were noted at Howick, Rothbury and a Walbottle Garden. Singles were reported from 20 widespread locations.

**Skylark** *Alauda arvensis*

A single record received of five on Newcastle Town Moor on 27th (GB).

**Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia*

100 were reported from Bothal Pond on 21st (JSB/EC et al.) was the largest gathering in the month. 45 were at the colony behind Hauxley NWT on 9th (HRS) and 42 fed over Druridge Links on 18th (IDR). Elsewhere three to 12 were reported from Arcot Pond, Farnley, Hagg Bank, Holystone, Newcastle Town Moor and Warden.

**Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*

Embleton Bay held 200 on 9th (MH) and 180 were in a single feeding flock at Warden on 19th (BNR). 140 were at Holystone on 23rd and 110 gathered on wires at Houtley on 14th, this had reduced to 70 by 23rd perhaps indicating a move out of the area (BNR). 50-80 were noted from Arcot Lane, Bywell Peepy, Druridge Links, Dipton Mill, Matten, Prestwick Carr, Slaley, Wallridge and West Hartford. Many reports indicated a high percentage of juveniles. Some pairs continued to feed unfledged young at Kenton Bank Foot on 27th (3 broods), Kielder on 28th and Holy Island on 30th. One to 46 were at a further 35 widespread localities during the month.



## Juvenile Swallows

Top at Hauxley on 7th by Tim Dean and

Bottom at Budle Bay by Chris Knox

**House Martin** *Delichon urbica*

The ledges of the Military Museum, Exhibition Park held 150 on 26th (DHWB). 50+ were in Old Hartley throughout the month, 48 were noted at 24 nests on a 'Water Board' building at Simonside on 10th (ASJ). Counts of 30-32 came from Cresswell Village, Dinnington, Haughton Strother and Newcastle Airport. 15-25 noted at Chesters Walled Garden, Bywell Cottagebank, Farnley, Fell Cottages Slaley, Hagg Bank, Hexham, Kielder and Warden. One to 24 were reported from a further six localities.

**Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis*

Three at Holystone on 2nd (DRo) was the only report of this species during the month.

**Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis*

180 at Holystone on 28th was the largest count for the month (DRo). 21 were noted on Holy Island on 12th (BDK), where a pair were feeding a late brood on 28th (IK). 10 were reported from Town Moor on 27th (GB). One to two moved south over Southfield Green, Cramlington on 26th/29th (DMc).

An individual seen and photographed at Newbiggin Golf Course on 14th was considered by the observer to show some characteristics of the race *whistleri* (AT).



Meadow Pipit at Budle Bay by Chris Knox

**Rock Pipit** *Anthus petrosus*

Four at Cullernose Point on 6th were the only report of the month (JMA).

**Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava flavissima*

Five were present at Barrasford on 8th (SW), Cresswell on 23rd (CB) and Whittle Dene on 24th (MR). Three were noted flying south at east Chevington on 22nd (IF) and at Haughton Strother on 12th (MR) and Newbiggin Golf Course on 24th (ADM). One to two were at 12 other mainly coastal locations, Cresswell Pond being notable with reports of one to two were received for seven separate dates between 11th-27th.

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*

Two family parties totalling seven individuals were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 24th (MR). Five were at Haughton Strother on 22nd (MR). Elsewhere one to two were reported from Bothal Pond, Castle Island, Chesters Walled Garden, Chesterwood, Cresswell Beach, Exhibition Park, Fell Cottages Slaley, Hauxley, Holywell Dene, Newburn, Staward, Tynemouth, Warden, Wark and near Woodhorn Flashes.

**Pied Wagtail** *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

Tapee Fen on the River Tweed, Berwick held a roost numbering up to 50 on 30th (PJ). 44 roosted at Newcastle Airport on 20th (IF) and 40 gathered pre-roost at Colpitts Slaley on 26th (RMH). 35 were at St Mary's Island on 14th and 27 at Prestwick Carr on 31st. Elsewhere one to 12 were at nine widespread localities.



Pied Wagtail at Newbiggin  
13th by Alan Tillmouth

**Dipper** *Cinclus cinclus*

Single birds were noted at several points in Jesmond Dene on 2nd, 9th, 16th and 30th. An adult and a juvenile were present by the waterfall there on 23rd (DHWB/MCo). Away from Jesmond Dene one was at Tanner's Yard behind Hexham Abbey on 5th (DPR).

**Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

18 were at Hesleyside on 1st (JR). 14 at Ordley on 9th and Dilston on 22nd (BNR). 12 were at Shilford 1st and Westwood Hexham on 21st (BNR). One to ten were at Chesters Walled Garden, Druridge Links, Jesmond Dene, Healey Mill, Staward N, and a Walbottle garden.

**Dunnoek** *Prunella modularis*

Four were in a Walbottle garden on 2nd (KR/LR). Two were at Chesters Walled Garden on 9th (ALT). Singles were noted from Jesmond Dene and caught and ringed at Druridge Links.

**Robin** *Erithacus rubecula*

15 were at Chesters House and Walled Garden on 30th (ALT), eight at Hauxley RS on 2nd and 9th (a total of six ringed here), six in Jesmond Dene on 30th (MCo) and a single was caught and ringed at Druridge Links on 14th (JF/IDR).

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*

A male frequented the boat sheds at Holy Island harbour on 2nd (IK).

**Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

The three juveniles reported at Haughton Strother GP last month were still present on 1st (MR); another juvenile in a Tranwell Woods garden on 3rd was only the second record here in ten years (PAT). Elsewhere an immature male was at Chesterwood on 22nd (ALT), a male at Shildon (Blanchland) on 26th (JMA) and a female at Druridge Bay CP (PHe).

**Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra*

At St Mary's Island there were five juveniles on 27th, increasing to seven by 30th, three still present the following day (MT/NT/SPP). A family party of seven were at Alwinton on 2nd (AJR), and five at West Hartford on 30th (STH). Elsewhere three were found at Newcastle Town Moor on 27th (GB), two at Angertonmoor Cottage on 14th, Cresswell Pond on 22nd, and singles at East Chevington, Ellington and Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh).

**Stonechat** *Saxicola torquata*

Confirmed breeding was reported from eight sites as outlined in the chart below. Three localities ( \* ) are in addition to those previously reported; bringing the total to at least 45 confirmed breeding sites this year (21 coastal / 24 inland).

Site	Date	Adults	Young	Notes	Observer
*Boulmer	25th August	2	2		PRM
Druridge Links	13th August		3		IDR
Healy Whins	2nd August	1	1		RMH
Howick	15th August	2	3		JAR
*Lynemouth	17th August	2	4		BDK
*Shillmoor (Upper Coquetdale)	2nd August			At least two family parties.	AJR
St Mary's Island	27th August		1		MT/NT
West Hartford	30th August	1	1	Probable second brood	LJM

In addition pairs were noted at Cullernose Point on 6th (JMA) and Holy Island on 30th (STH) and singles at Cresswell Pond, Ellington and Newcastle Town Moor, the latter a passage bird and local rarity (GB).

**Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe*

There were signs of obvious coastal passage during the final few days, with 13 at Holy Island and eight at Cresswell Pond on 30th (STH/PHe/MSH). Up to seven were noted at St Mary's Island on 29th and three at Hauxley NWT on 27th and Ellington on 29th. Four on Newcastle Town Moor on 27th suggested some overland passage at this time (GB). In breeding areas many juveniles were in evidence, 16 counted at Chew Green (Upper Coquetdale) and nine at Fulhope on 2nd and seven at Riddlees Cairn on 30th (JR). Elsewhere one to two birds were reported from Annstead, Blyth Harbour, Cocklawburn, Crindledykes Quarry, Cullernose Point, Howick, Linton Pond, Monk's House Pool, Mowden Hall, Plashetts, Prestwick Carr, Rothbury

(Addycombe) and Warkworth Gut.



Juvenile Wheatear at Budle Bay by Chris Knox

**Blackbird** *Turdus merula*

Counts of 17 came from Chesters House and Walled Garden on 30th, where birds were feeding on a good Juniper berry crop (ALT), and at Marley Cote Walls (Slaley) on 29th (RMH). Six in the Juniper / Dye House area on 28th included three very recently fledged young (BNR) and on Holy Island two pairs were feeding newly fledged young on 29th. Some pairs here have had three broods this year (IK).

**Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris*

Five early migrants came in off the sea at Hauxley NR on 28th (JA).

**Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos*

A pair fledged four young in a Stamfordham garden on 2nd, the birds still present at the end of the month (EC). Elsewhere an adult and juvenile were at Howick on 4th (JAR), a juvenile in a Walbottle garden on 9th (KR/LR), and one to two also at Chesters House and Walled Garden, Hauxley RS, Jesmond Dene, and Marley Cote Walls (Slaley).

**Redwing** *Turdus iliacus*

The summering bird on Holy Island remained in gardens near the harbour all month (IK).

**Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus*

Post breeding gatherings were again a feature of the month. 34 were reported from Dod Wood (nr Font Burn) on 31st (SW), 30+ at East Sleekburn and ten at Shilford on 1st (MSH/BNR), seven were at Wylam on 23rd, six at Bellasis Bridge and Prestwick Carr and four at Chesters House and Walled Garden.

**Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella naevia*

Reeling birds were reported from East Chevington on 1st (NFO) Ellington on 6th (TB), Prestwick Carr on 1st (PCF) and West Hotbank on 18th (AJR). All were single birds.

**Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

164 were ringed at East Chevington during the month, 79 on 3rd, 39 on 9th and 46 on 22nd (IF). Elsewhere eight were at Arcot Pond on 8th and at Druridge Pools on 3rd (DM/IDR), a family party was found at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 17th (DM), four were at Cresswell Pond on 30th and Oxford Pits on 5th, three at Howick and singles at Big Waters (carrying food), Hauxley RS and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

**Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

46 were ringed at East Chevington during the month, 19 on 3rd, 16 on 9th and 11 on 22nd (IF) and a singing bird was heard at this site on 4th (TRD). Elsewhere two were reported from Cresswell Pond on 18th (MSH) and a single at Druridge Pools on 3rd (IDR).

**Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla*

Three were at Druridge Links on 13th (IDR) and one to two at Arcot Lane, Bamburgh, Bothal Pond, Bywell, Chesters House and Walled Garden, Haughton Strother GP, Hauxley RS, Marden Quarry, Styford, Woolsington and Wylam.

**Garden Warbler** *Sylvia borin*

Two were still feeding on Juniper berries at Chesters House and Walled Garden on 30th (ALT). Passage birds were noted at Exhibition Park on 25th (a first for this site-GB), St Mary's Island on 29th (CB/MT/NT) and Tynemouth on 30th. Elsewhere, single inland birds were reported from Haughton Strother GP, Ordley, Prestwick Carr and Softley.

**Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca*

Single birds were reported from Bywell Cottagebank on 27th, Cresswell Pond on 23rd, Druridge Bay CP, Holy Island on 10th, near Horton Grange on 3rd and Lynemouth on 17th.

**Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis*

Family parties were reported from Dam Dykes (Cramlington) on 8th (DM), Farnley Haughs (Corbridge) on 13th (MR) and Newcastle Great Park (PHe). Four were also at Druridge Bay during the month and at Lynemouth on 17th (PHe/BDK). Three juveniles were recorded at St Mary's Island on 29th and three birds were found on Waggonways Cycle Track (Whitley Bay-Seaton Delaval) on 8th. Elsewhere two were at Marden Quarry and singles at Arcot Pond, Druridge Links, East Chevington, Exhibition Park (migrant), Holywell Pond, Howick and Tynemouth.

**Willow/Chiff** *Phylloscopus* (sp.)

Four unidentified birds were with a mixed species tit flock at Woosington Ponds on 30th (SRB).

**Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*

11 at Shilford on 1st included a family party of three (BNR). At Hauxley RS, ten birds were reported on 16th and four were ringed during the month (HRS). On 22nd nine were calling in the Dilston/Swallowship area and six were with a mixed species tit flock at Haughton Strother GP (BNR/MR). Elsewhere there were four at Eshott on 30th, three at Druridge Links on 13th, three at Hexham on 21st and one to two at a further 16 mostly inland localities.

**Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus*

There was some evidence of light coastal passage towards the end of the month. Ten were at both St Mary's Island and Priors Park (Tynemouth) on 29th (CB), while inland nine singing birds were at Arcot Pond on 8th (DM) and nine were found over 2km at Prestwick Carr on 22nd (PCF). Five to six were reported from Druridge Links, Haughton Strother GP and Hauxley RS, four at Marden Quarry and three passage birds at Exhibition Park. Elsewhere reports of one to two were submitted for a further eight coastal and ten inland localities including in the west at Catcleugh Reservoir, north to Holy Island and gardens in Kenton and Whitley Bay.

**Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus*

It was noted as common in the Bakethin Reservoir / Raptor Watch Point area on 1st (DM/STH/PA). 15 were also reported from Fontburn Reservoir on 18th and nine in Slaley Forest on 13th (DCh)/BNR). Elsewhere three were at Chesters House and Walled Garden and Jesmond Dene.

**Firecrest** *Regulus ignicapilla*

A single bird was found at Lucker on 14th (JHa)

**Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata*

Six pairs (each with three to four young) were present in a large garden at Little Harle (Kirkwhelpington) on 6th (DPR) and three pairs feeding young at Meldon Park on 2nd (MRS). Breeding was also confirmed at Bonnyrigg Hall (MRS), Haughton Strother (MR), Juniper (BNR), Linden Hall (NFO), Stamfordham (two families – EC) and Wallington Hall (DM). Passage was also evident with birds moving through both inland and coastal sites. Three were at Whittle Dene on 9th (PCF), Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 25th-26th (GB), Swallow Pond on 30th (SPP), two at St. Mary's Wetland on 29th (MT/NT) and singles at Marden Quarry (Whitley Bay) on 29th (KWY), Priors Park Allotments (Tynemouth) on 29th (CB) and Cresswell Pond on 30th (MSH). One to two were also observed at Bickerton Farm near Castron, Burnmouth Bridge, Chesters Walled Garden, Dipton Mill, Fell Cottages (Slaley) Holystone, Letah Wood (Hexham), Lough House near Heighley Gate, Rothbury, Styford, Thrunton Woods, a Tranwell Woods garden and Wedder Leap Car Park.

Spotted Flycatcher is a target species for 2009. Please report all records for the species.

**Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula hypoleuca*

One was ringed at Hauxley RS on 23rd (HRS).

**Long-tailed Tit** *Aegithalos caudatus*

Largest post-breeding "tribes" involved 20 at East Ord on 2nd (BWG), 16 at Haughton Strother on 26th (MR), 15 at Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 11th (GB), 14 at Ordley on 9th (BNR), 12 at Dilston on 22nd (BNR), ten at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 18th (DM) and Woosington Ponds on 30th (SRB). Three to six were also at Dam Dykes (Cramlington), Farnley and Jesmond Dene.



**Blue Tit** *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Nine pairs used nest boxes at Kirkley Hall and produced 81 young (IK). A pair hatched 11 young in a box on Holy Island but all died close to fledging. No apparent cause but one of the adults may have perished (IK). 18 were at Haughton Strother on 3rd (MR) and 12 at Chesters Walled Garden on 9th (ALT).



Juvenile Blue Tit at Wallington by Colin Bradshaw

**Great Tit** *Parus major*

5 pairs fledged 37 young at Kirkley Hall. A sixth brood of two was found dead (IK). Seven were at Chesters Walled Garden on 30th (ALT).

**Coal Tit** *Periparus ater*

A family party was at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 23rd (DM). 18 were at Dilston on 22nd (BNR), 17 at Shilford on 1st (BNR), ten+ at Haughton Strother on 22nd (MR), seven at Chesters Walled Garden on 9th (ALT), up to four in an Old Hartley garden all month (RJP), four at Jesmond Dene on 9th (Mco) and three+ at Hauxley on 9th (HRS). Two visited a Walbottle garden on 2nd (KR/LR) and a Marden Estate (Tynemouth) garden on 15th (ASJ).

**Willow Tit** *Poecile montanus*

Two were present at Preswick Carr on 1st and 22nd (PCF), Fell Cottages (Slaley) on 12th (RMH) and Farnley on 14th (BNR). One at Haughton Strother on 1st was a first record for this site (9MR). Singles were also at Castle Island, Linton Pond and Sleekburn (Blyth Estuary) (GB). A juvenile ringed at Bamburgh on 5th indicated local breeding (BRS).

**Marsh Tit** *Poecile palustris*

Two were at Weldon Bridge on 8th (MJC) and singles at Linden Hall all month (NFO), Haughton Strother on 3rd (MR), Dye House (Hexham) on 14th (RMH) and Allen Banks on 29th (DRW). Marsh Tit is a target species for 2009. Please report all records for the species.

**Nuthatch** *Sitta europaea*

Nine were at Chesters Walled Garden on 9th (ALT), eight at Wallington Hall on 13th (DM), five at Jesmond Dene on 30th (MCo), three at Westwood (Hexham) on 21st (BNR) and Dilston on 22nd (BNR). One to two were also at Blanchland Abbey, Bywell, Dipton Mill, East Ord House (scarce here), Low Carritheth (Hesleyside), a Rothbury garden, Slaley Forest, a Walbottle garden and Wark.

Nuthatch in a Tranwell Garden  
18th by Peter Tapsell



**Treecreeper** *Certhia familiaris*

Five were at Shilford on 1st (BNR), four at Haughton Strother on 26th (MR), three at Chesters Walled Garden on 9th (ALT), two at Dipton Mill on 11th (BNR) and March Burn on 17th (BNR). Singles were also at Arcot Pond, Bywell, Cartington, Fontburn Reservoir, Prestwick Carr, Softley and Westwood (Hexham). One was ringed at Hauxley on 23rd (HRS).

**Jay** *Garrulus glandarius*

Nine were observed at Holystone on 25th (DRo). Three were at Gubeon Wood on 1st (ADMc), two at Woolsington Hall all month (PHe), Capheaton on 1st (DM/STH/PA), Howick on 4th (JAR), Prestwick Carr on 6th (PCF), Weldon Bridge on 6th (MLC), Ordley on 9th (BNR), Staward Gorge on 15th (BNR) and Halton Red House on 27th (ALT). Singles were also at Chesters Walled Garden, Crowhall Lane (Cramlington), Dilston, Ellington, Ford Moss, Longhirst Flash, March Burn, Rothbury, South Gosforth, Thrinton Woods, Valley Park (Cramlington) and Wallington Hall.

**Magpie** *Pica pica*

Six were at Hauxley RS on 2nd (HRS) and four at Jesmond Dene on 9th (MCo).

**Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula*

500+ flew over Holywell Pond on 29th (SPP), 150 W over Longhirst Flash on 25th (PCF), C70 at Netherton Burnfoot on 16th (JR) and Dilston on 22nd (BNR), 50 a Newburn on 4th (KR/LR), 48 at Chesters Walled Garden on 9th (ALT), 20 over Jesmond Dene on 9th (MCo) and ten at Druridge Pools on 18th (IDR).

**Rook** *Corvus frugilegus*

250 were at Netherton Burnfoot on 16th (JR), 200 at Stonecroft Mine, Newbrough on 5th (JMA) and three visited Chesters Walled Garden on 30th (ALT).

**Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone*

50 were observed at Beal Saltmarsh on 27th (IK), 15 at March Burn on 17th (BNR), eight at Hauxley NR on 6th (JMA), seven at St. Mary's Island on 18th (MT/NT), six at Druridge Pools on 3rd (IDR), three at Jesmond Dene on 2nd (MCo) and one at Chesters Walled Garden on 30th (ALT).

**Raven** *Corvus corax*

Two pairs were present at Windy Gyle on 10th (SRB), three mobbing a Buzzard at Addycombe (Rothbury) on 17th (JD), three at Sweethope Lough on 23rd (PRM), two at Shill Moor (Upper Coquetdale) on 2nd (AJR), Ford Moss on 17th (EHa), Riddlees Cairn and Leighton Hill on 30th (JR). Singles were also observed at Bull Crag (Kielder), Fontburn Reservoir, Holystone, north of Rothbury, Slaley Forest, Staward Gorge, Wark and Whitton.

**Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*

2,000 were noted at dusk at East Chevington on 6th (JMA), 1,000 coming into roost at Cresswell Pond on 1st (MSH) and Lowick on 27th (JMA) and 250 at St. Mary's Island on 18th (MT/NT).

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*

A very successful breeding season was recorded at Kenton (Newcastle) with young birds being fed in observer's garden on 8th (MRS). Post-breeding flocks included 160 on stubble at Highfields (Berwick on 3rd (MHu), 150+ at Earsdon Garden Centre on 28th (MN), 150 at St. Mary's Island on 16th (KYW) declined to 54 on 27th (MT/NT), 60+ at Hauxley on 9th (HRS), 50 at Humbleton on 27th (JMA), 45+ at Boulmer on 25th (PRM) and seven to 40 at a further seven widespread localities.

**Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*

70+ were present at Haughton Strother between 3rd-22nd (MR), C.20 at Blakemoor Farm (Cresswell Pond) on 28th (ADMc), 13 at Boulmer on 25th (PRM), 11 at Cresswell Pond on 12th (ADMc) and one to five at Blagdon, Bothal Pond, a Dinnington garden, East Chevington, Greencarts, Hauxley, Newton Red House near Morpeth, near Saltwick and Wark.

Tree Sparrow is a target species for 2009. Please report all records for the species.

**Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs*

21 were at Low Carritheth (Hesleyside) and 17 at Snabdaugh Farm on 1st (JR), 11 at Hauxley on 2nd (HRS), six at Chesters Walled Garden on 9th (ALT) and four at Jesmond Dene on 9th (MCo).

**Greenfinch** *Carduelis chloris*

16 visited a Walbottle garden on 2nd (KR/LR), 15 at Prestwick Carr on 9th (PCF), 13 at Juniper on 28th (BNR), nine at garden feeders at Dinnington on 24th (PCF) and eight at Hauxley on 2nd (HRS).

**Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis*

Post-breeding "charms" involved 220 in fields by Feather's Caravan Site (St. Mary's/Brierdene) on 11th (MNC), 110 at Cocklawburn on 31st (MHu), 100 at Cresswell Pond all month (PHe), 85 at Backworth Pond on 20th (MNC), 55 at St. Mary's Island on 25th (MT/NT), 40 at Hauxley NR on 24th (IFo) and one to 29 at a further 13 widespread localities.

**Siskin** *Carduelis spinus*

Eight were at Fontburn Reservoir on 18th (DCh), six at Wark on 12th (PRM), two at Bull Crag (Kielder) on 4th (PRM) and Catcleugh Reservoir on 23rd (PRM).

**Linnet** *Carduelis cannabina*

Post-breeding flocks involved 160 at Chare Ends, Holy Island on 29th (IK), 100 at Monks House Pool, Bamburgh on 19th (ASJ), 40 at St. Mary's/Brierdene on 11th (MNC), 34 at Cheswick on 7th (MHu), 32 at Prestwick Carr on 31st (PCF) and two to 15 at Beacon Lane (Cramlington), Boulmer, Colpitts (Slaley), Cullernose Point, Druridge Links, Holy Island Dunes, March Burn, St. Mary's Island and Whittle Dene.

**Lesser Redpoll** *Carduelis caberet*

20 were at Fontburn Reservoir on 18th (DCh). Four were flushed from the roadside at Prestwick Carr on 9th (PCF), three at Fell Cottages (Slaley) on 1st (RMH), two-three at Bakethin Raptor Watchpoint (Kielder) on 1st (DM/STH/PA) and singles at Healey Whins on 2nd (RMH), Derwent Reservoir on 11th (PRM), Softley on 18th (BNR) and Big Waters on 19th (GB).

**Crossbill** *Loxia curvirostra*

Large concentrations involved 300 at Holystone on 2nd (DRo), 106+ at Bull Crag (Kielder Forest) on 4th (PRM), 75 at Edlingham Woods on 13th (MNC), 15 at Thrunton Woods on 1st (TRD/JD), five at Bakethin Raptor Watchpoint (Kielder) on 1st (DM/STH/PA) and two at Softley on 18th (BNR).



A Male Crossbill at Harwood forest on 2nd by Alan Tillmouth



Male and juvenile Bullfinches at Wallington by Colin Bradshaw

**Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Family parties were observed at Bellasis Bridge (PCF), Corbridge (MR), Ellington (BDK), East Chevington NR (LJM), Farnley BNR), Marden Quarry (Whitley Bay – KWY), Ordley (BNR), Pegswood Community Park (LJM) and Prestwick Carr (PCF). Seven were at Dilston on 22nd (BNR), five at Bakethin Raptor Watchpoint (Kielder Forest) on 1st (DM/STH/PA), four at Hexham Westwood on 21st (BNR) and Bywell on 23rd (BNR) and one to three at a further 14 widespread localities.

**Yellowhammer** *Emberiza citrinella*

15 were singing in the Bellasis Bridge area on 6th (ASJ), 13 singing at Ogle on 8th (ASJ), five between Whitley Bay-Seaton Deleval on 8th (MT/NT), four at Holywell Pond on 2nd (ASJ), three at Wark on 5th (PRM) and one at the Straight Lonnen, Holy Island on 10th (RA).

**Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus*

13 were ringed at East Chevington between 3rd-9th (IF). Two were at Farnley on 14th (BNR).

**Corn Bunting** *Emberiza calandra*

One was singing from wires at Bywell (Longhorsley) on 30th (TB).

**ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN****Escapes****White-cheeked Pintail** *Anas bahamensis*

This attractive South American duck stayed at Hauxley from 4th to 17th (HRS/BDK/JA/LMo/IW).

**Hybrids****Canada Goose x Greylag Goose** *Branta canadensis x Anser anser*

A single hybrid was seen at East Chevington on 29th (TRD).

**LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS**

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Those observers marked with an asterisk after their name(s) have submitted records on-line using the club spreadsheet, copies are available by emailing Dick Myatt at [dick@dickmyatt.co.uk](mailto:dick@dickmyatt.co.uk).

**Apologies for any accidental omissions****BULLETIN COMPILATION AND PRODUCTION**

This bulletin was compiled by Lindsay McDougall (Swans to Geese, Game birds, Divers to Herons), Graeme Bowman (Ducks), Trevor Blake (Birds of Prey to Rails), Ian Forsyth (Waders to Skuas), Tim Dean (Gulls to Auks, Escapes, Hybrids and Unknown Origin, List of Contributors, Highlights), Alan Tillmouth (Doves to Dunnock), Mike Richardson (Robin to Warblers), Dee McKeown (Flycatchers to Buntings), Julie Roper/Dan Turner (WeBS Coastal Counts) and Steve Holliday (WeBS Inland Counts). Thanks again to Ann McKeown for typing the section Flycatchers to Buntings.

Edited by Steve Barrett [Sscmagpie@aol.com](mailto:Sscmagpie@aol.com)

Distributed by Alan Watson [apusx@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:apusx@blueyonder.co.uk)

**RECORD SUBMISSION**

**Cards:** Please send all record cards to Tim Dean, 2 Knocklaw Park, Rothbury NE65 7PW, to arrive on, or preferably before, the 8th of the month following that in which the records were collected. Please write cards legibly to ensure that your sightings are correctly recorded.

**E-mail:** Members are encouraged to e-mail their records on an Excel-style spreadsheet. Please e-mail Dick Myatt at [dick@dickmyatt.co.uk](mailto:dick@dickmyatt.co.uk) for a copy of the standard spreadsheet and other details.

**Location names and Grid references:** The use of standard location names and the inclusion of grid references greatly increases the value of records in subsequent analyses. A 1km square grid reference is the ideal e.g. NY8067 for Grindon Lough, but 2km square references (Tetrads) are also acceptable e.g. NY86D in



this case. A list of localities and their tetrad grid references (Tetrad/Locality List) can be downloaded from the 'Resources & Downloads' section of the Club website at <http://www.ntbc.org.uk> – the use of these names, wherever possible, would be highly appreciated.

### **PHOTOGRAPHS AND ILLUSTRATIONS**

Please keep submitting your articles, photographs, sketches and illustrations for the bulletin. Thanks again to those who have supplied the excellent photographs.

Please send to Steve Barrett at [Sscmagpie@aol.com](mailto:Sscmagpie@aol.com)

### **PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION**

A prize will be given for the best photograph in the bulletin for 2009/2010. This will cover bulletins from August 2009 to July 2010.

### **ELECTRONIC BULLETIN**

The NTBC bulletin can be received electronically or as hard copy. The electronic bulletin arrives earlier than the printed version, it is in colour and we save all that printing and stamps. Ask for an e-mailed bulletin from [jo.bentley@waitrose.com](mailto:jo.bentley@waitrose.com).

### **MEMBERSHIP**

Annual subscriptions are now due. Why not pay your £23 (a bargain) by standing order and while you are at it fill in a gift aid request. For membership enquiries please contact [jo.bentley@waitrose.com](mailto:jo.bentley@waitrose.com). Details can be found on the NTBC website.

### **NTBC WEBSITE**

The excellent club website is available at [www.ntbc.org.uk](http://www.ntbc.org.uk). Chris Knox is the link person to the club committee for the website and you can contact him at [christopher.knox@o2.co.uk](mailto:christopher.knox@o2.co.uk)

### **FIELD TRIPS**

The next field trip is to Holy Island on 18th October. On 22nd November the club will visit Mersehead on the Solway.

Contact is Trevor Blake;

Email: [trevor.1958@live.co.uk](mailto:trevor.1958@live.co.uk)

Tel: 01670 862 635

### **INDOOR MEETINGS REMINDER – CHANGE OF VENUE**

The club is moving its meeting venue for the 2009/2010 winter session to the Newcastle Falcons Rugby Club at Kingston Park Stadium, Brunton Road, Kenton Bank Foot, Newcastle upon Tyne NE13 8AF. Indoor meetings will be start at 7pm on the second Thursday of every month between September and April.

Detailed travel directions to the new venue can be found on <http://www.newcastle-falcons.co.uk>

### **BIRDS IN NORTHUMBRIA – Appeal for Editors**

Steve Holliday and Ian Fisher are retiring from the editorship of BIN after completion of the 2008 edition. They have edited BIN since 2005 and the club committee and members are grateful for the hard work they have put in maintaining the excellent standard of the production.

The committee would like to hear from any member(s) who would be willing to take over the editor role starting with the 2009 edition. This is a big task and an important one.

### **COUNTY RECORDS COMMITTEE**

Mike Hodgson will complete his four year spell on the committee in December 2009. Hence there will be a vacancy on the CRC to be filled. Please could anyone wishing to apply to join the committee let the County Recorder Tim Dean know, either by email or letter. Applicants need to have a comprehensive knowledge of Northumberland's birdlife and will be required to attend four meetings a year to verify sightings in the county. It is envisaged that applicants will need to access online documents and have email access. A brief resume of birding credentials and experience would be useful when applying.

Tim Dean  
2, Knocklaw Park  
Rothbury  
NE65 7PW

email : [t.r.dean@btinternet.com](mailto:t.r.dean@btinternet.com)



### **BLOGGING – The Twenty First Century Field Notebook?**

Wikipedia states that a Blog is a type of website usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, description of events or other material such as graphics or video.

It is hard to imagine that there are any birders that don't maintain some form of regular record of the birds they have seen. Most have a notebook to record sightings in the field and many use this as the basis for record keeping at home.

Having casually glanced in one or two birder's notebooks over the years it is clear that there is a huge amount of information stored and often some great field sketches that never see the light of day. With the advent of Google's Blogger that can all change and the birder's notebook can leap into the twenty first century. Perhaps because of its size or its remoteness Northumberland already has a host of excellent Bird & Nature bloggers producing fantastic content every week. There is a rapidly growing community of bird & nature bloggers across the country (and the rest of the world) providing a huge range of blogs from the simple entries and notes of species seen to detailed posts on identification.

Sometimes when a good birding day is over there is a wish for more, blogging can provide an extension of your birding day by not only sharing your birding but getting to know what others have seen. The coverage is not comprehensive and certainly will never match the detail and accuracy of a bird club bulletin but it does offer opportunities to share information quickly and cheaply.

How often have you taken a great picture and wanted some feedback, again blogging and the posting of images can offer just that through the capability to receive comments about individual posts.

I hope that many more club members will consider taking up blogging as a natural extension and output of their birding. Should anyone require any technical help getting started or wish to explore the opportunity further please feel free to get in touch.

Alan Tilmouth (email [birdneast@btinternet.com](mailto:birdneast@btinternet.com))

### **VICARAGE GARDEN, HOLY ISLAND**

Many birders who have checked – or rather tried to check – this wonderful garden over the summer will have been very frustrated by the screen of high hogweed and other tall plants which have effectively blocked the view from the usual spots along the field wall.

After the problem was brought to my attention by a couple of regular visiting birders in late August I took up the matter with the vicar, Brother Damian, who as a Franciscan is naturally very keen on birds and other wildlife!

He immediately and very happily gave me permission to deal with the problem and a couple of hours hard work with my loppers and shears put the matter right. There is now a clear view from the wall into the garden and across to the trees and ground cover on the far side so beloved by migrants.

I told Damian that every visiting bird watcher this autumn would bless him for his co-operation. Being a man with a great sense of humour he suggested gently that giving out blessings was perhaps his line of work!

Everything should be fine for October and November with clear views guaranteed if another Red-flanked Bluetail and Pallas's Warbler should grace the garden as they did early last November. Personally, I need a Siberian Rubythroat.

IAN KERR

## COASTAL WeBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

LJM L. J. McDougall

250

MHu M. Hutcheson

JAR J. Roper

SP S.Parnaby

PRD P. R. Davey

TAC T. A. Cadwallender

DMT D. M. Turner

RP R.Poyer

EC E.Cooke

PF P.Fletcher

AUGUST 2009

Site	TOTAL	Tweed Estuary	Spittal - Cocklawburn	Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay)	Budle Bay	Budle Pt - Seahouses	Howick - Boulmer	Aln Estuary	Coquet Estuary	Blyth Estuary	St Mary's Island	Tyne North Pier - Fish Quay	Wallsend, (north bank only)	Redheugh - Scotswood Bridge, (north bank)	Scotswood - Newburn Bridge, (north bank)
Counter		MHu	MHu	PRD	PRD	RP	JAR	TAC	EC	LJM	SP	DMT	DMT	PF	PF
Date		21	19	23		24	25	27	23	24	27	22	23	23	23
Red-throated Diver	3		3												
Little Grebe	2		1	1											
Cormorant	167	14	16	8			3	7	5	38	25	11	37	2	1
Shag	51	3	35	5		6					2				
Grey Heron	41	19	2	5		1	2	3	2	1	2		3		1
Mute Swan	334	252		14				8	51	3	2			4	
Greylag Goose	56	52				4									
Canada Goose	1	1						nc							
Shelduck	153			151				1	1						
Wigeon	5							5							
Teal	294	5	4	222			55	8							
Mallard	160	22		53		20		8			3			15	39
Eider	374	4	98	142		80	15		35						
Common Scoter	38		38												
Red-breasted Merganser	10			9			1								
Goosander	65	25	40												
Moorhen	12			1		4		1			6				
Coot	3					3									
Oystercatcher	992	24	86	584		25	180		10	21	40	22			
Ringed Plover	285	28	10	56		24	85			59	20	3			
Golden Plover	540			17			123				400				
Grey Plover	226			225			1								
Lapwing	838	4		23		320		29	250		200			9	3
Knot	81		2	65		7		7							
Purple Sandpiper	2		2												
Dunlin	982	18		794		7	49		67	47					
Ruff	2					2									
Snipe	5			2		3									
Black-tailed Godwit	7		1	1		5									
Bar-tailed Godwit	989			981		2	6								
Whimbrel	8		5	2			1								
Curlew	543	85	17	260		4	86	32	17	34		1		6	1
Redshank	1,187	89		283		12	141	159	275	113		7	23	84	1
Greenshank	2							2							
Common Sandpiper	3					1	1	1							
Turnstone	87		2	16		16	46			6		1			
Black-headed Gull	2,598	634	164			nc	42	182	180	446		243	455	203	49
Common Gull	85	30						25	27	1				2	
Lesser Black-backed Gull	90	6				nc			20	9			2	50	3
Herring Gull	2,165	1088	354				13	15	73	105		372	34	105	6
Great Black-backed Gull	240	17	2			nc	6		43	115		44		6	7
Kittiwake	224	224													
Sandwich Tern	224	32	105	4		9	15			6	50	3			
Roseate Tern	6										6				
Common Tern	55	2				3				4	30	16			
Arctic Tern	1										1				
Kingfisher	0														
<b>ADDITIONAL SPECIES</b>															
Fulmar	2		2												
Little Egret	2							2							
TOTALS - WILDFOWL	1,769	397	237	611	0	118	76	41	94	42	40	11	40	21	41
- WADERS	6,779	248	125	3,309	0	428	719	230	619	280	660	34	23	99	5
- GULLS & TERNS	5,688	2,033	625	4	0	12	76	222	343	686	87	678	491	366	65



# Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

<http://www.ntbc.org.uk/>

**Bulletin 2009 No 9**

**MONTHLY SUMMARY – SEPTEMBER**

1st November 2009



## HIGHLIGHTS

Great Shearwater - One off Dunstanburgh Castle on 15th.

Cory's Shearwater – Singles on 5th & 14th at Farne Islands, Newbiggin and St Mary's.

Balearic Shearwater – At least six noted from 12th to 16th.

Bittern - One at Gosforth Park from 19th.

White Stork - An un-ringed bird at Fourstones was also seen at Whittle Dene Reservoirs

Glossy Ibis - Single in Druridge area from 25th. First in county since 1989

Red-crested Pochard - Eclipse male from 5th to 13th.

Honey-buzzard - Singles over Gosforth and Haughton Strother GP on 12th & 14th.

Osprey – One was widely appreciated off Holy Island causeway from 14th to 26th.

Long-tailed Skua – Singles off Druridge and Newbiggin

Sabine's Gull – One on pelagic trip on 5th with at least four seen off Newbiggin on 14th.

Little Auk – Early movement with several at Newbiggin and St Mary's.

Bluethroat - Single on Farne Islands on 14th.

Lanceolated Warbler - One on Longstone, Farne Islands on 29th.

Icterine Warbler - Single on Farne islands on 4th.

Barred Warbler - Single on Farne Islands on 4th and two on Holy Island on 15th.

Red-breasted Flycatcher - Single on Holy Island on 15th.

Common Rosefinch - One on Farne Islands from 14th to 19th.

Black-headed Bunting - One on Brownsman, Farne Islands on 14th.

Annual Subscriptions are now due, the form is attached to this bulletin

Next Indoor Meeting

Adrian Pitches on Ethiopia 12th November

Next Field Trip Mersehead 22nd November

2008 Seabird Report

The popular Glossy Ibis at Druridge Pools

by Paul Massey

29th September



## WEATHER

Another warm month and after an unsettled first week, it was largely fine and dry. Rainfall was well below the 1971-2000 average in almost all parts. England provisionally it was the driest September since 1997 and ranks 11th in the series. Mean temperatures were generally above average, particularly in counties along the east coast. Sunshine totals were mostly close to average.

1st to 6th: Plenty of scattered showers on the 1st, some heavy and thundery across eastern England, with a few places recording around 10 mm in an hour. The 3rd and 4th were windy, showery days, especially across the north. The 5th and 6th saw further cloud and rain in northern areas.

7th to 18th: This period was mostly dry as high pressure became established. Some rain fell in the north and west on 8th. The 9th to 11th were dry and mostly sunny after some early fog. The 12th and 13th were also fine and dry, with daytime temperatures over 20 °C widely. Cloud thickened to bring a little rain to the north on 14th, but the emphasis was on dry, settled conditions. Pressure rose on 17th and 18th, and all areas were fine with some sunshine and highest temperatures around 20 °C.

19th to 30th: The high declined and a weakening front moved into the north-west during 19th, although amounts of rain were mostly small. Rather cloudy with some light rain across northern areas on 21st but southern areas had another fine day. The south was cloudy with some light rain on 22nd and 23rd, the north seeing the best of the sunshine. Continuing generally dry and fine with some sunshine during the last few days.

## CLASSIFIED LIST

The following account consists of unchecked reports. The species/subspecies marked \* require descriptions.

A complete list of all sightings which need notes is included in the NTBC website [www.ntbc.org.uk](http://www.ntbc.org.uk) under the County Records Committee section and in Birds in Northumbria 2007 page 251.

The Inland and Coastal Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) tables are at the rear of the bulletin. These contain additional counts to those in the Classified List.

## TARGET SPECIES

The target species for 2009 are **Marsh Tit**, **Spotted Flycatcher** and **Tree Sparrow**.

Please report all records for these species.

### Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

78 at QEII Country Park was the highest count of the month on 20th (CDH). 36 had been on the Tweed on 18th during a WeBS count (MHu), with 21 at nearby Cornhill on 25th. Elsewhere one to 14 were present at Alnmouth, Arcot Pond, Castle Island, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, East Learmouth, Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother GP, Hauxley NR, Holy Island, Leazes Park, Shield on the Wall Dam and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Five flew N past Church Point, Newbiggin on 15th (TAC).

### Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

One at Yarrow Slake on the River Tweed was the only record until the 13th when a widespread influx began with 120 west over Tynemouth (ASJ). Some south passage was noted 14th-17th with 200-210 past Newbiggin (ASJ/IK) and seven to 71 over Budle Bay, Ellington, Druridge Pools and Midgeholme. A much larger influx took place from 23rd when 130 moved south at Berwick. This was perhaps the vanguard for 1600 in fields north of Budle Bay on 24th with arrivals noted from the north throughout the afternoon (ASJ/AT). 900+ were around Druridge Pools by 30th (TRC). Overflying birds some 'at great height' were observed flying south at Cresswell with 200 in smaller skeins on 26th & 27th. Away from the coast 15 flew west at West Hotbank, Greenlea on 30th.

### White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

20 reported from Brier Dene Farm, Whitley Bay on 24th with ten remaining on 26th (MNC) were very early with most previous records coming between November – January.

### Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

220 was the peak count on 20th at East Chevington NWT (DM/STH/PJA). 85 were at Arcot pond on the same date (LJM). In the north of the county 72 were at Yarrow Slake on the River Tweed on 1st (MHu). Elsewhere eight to 56 were at Castle Island, Cresswell Pond, Haughton Strother GP and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

### Greater Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

540 at Linton Pond on 24th (PT/IW) was the peak count during the month. 302 were at East Chevington NWT North Pool on 20th (DDM/STH/PJA). Elsewhere 156 were at Haughton Strother GP on 6th (MR) and one to 75 were reported from Alnmouth, Arcot Pond, East Learmouth, Holywell Pond, Howick, Leazes Park, Swallow Pond, Wellfield, QEII Country Park and Yarrow Slake on the River Tweed.

### Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Absent until 21st when a single bird was roosting with Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* at Blyth South Harbour. 128 were noted in fields north of Budle Bay on 24th (ASJ) and 92 rested at East Chevington on 27th (IK). 200 flew S at Berwick on 29th before a significant arrival on 30th when 2500+ were counted in Budle Bay (MSH), 1600+ passed SW over Druridge Pools (RD) and 860 SW over St Mary's Island (MNC/ASJ/JRT). Many of these will have accounted for further sightings



inland on 30th of 550 passing W over West Hotbank, Greenlee (AJR); 450 W over Humshaugh and 410 moving in the same direction over Wark. Coastal mist perhaps cause some temporary disorientation with 250 in from SE at Bamburgh and 50-98 moving North at Druridge and Seahouses.

**Pale-bellied hrota Brent Goose** *Branta bernicla hrota*

One was noted at Amble Braid on 2nd and five moved N at St Mary's Island on 4th. 400 at Lindisfarne NNR by 8th (MSK/NEWT) increased to 2000 between 16th – 19th (IK/JPL *et al*) and to 2500 by 24th (ASJ). The total had reached 3200 by 29th (JPL). Elsewhere one to 38 were noted at Seaton Sluice, Snab Point, Spittal Bay, Hauxley, Newbiggin & Seahouses.

**Dark-bellied bernicla Brent Goose** *Branta bernicla bernicla*

One flew in from E on 4th at St Mary's Island before resting on the sea (DRW). Another single flew N at Church Point, Newbiggin on 13th (GB). 38 noted flying N past Annstead Point, Seahouses on 30th in two groups (nine, 29) was both the largest count and final record of the month (MLC).

**Duck (sp.)**

A flock of 110 unidentified ducks flew N, at about 1,000 feet, at Newbiggin on 30th (ASH/TRC).

**Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna*

A notable flock of 58 flew N at Cullercoats on 1st (ASJ). The Fenham Flats area of Lindisfarne NNR held 725 and 210 were in Budle Bay on 24th (ASJ). Three were at Alnmouth on 8th (PRM), and one to two juveniles at Cresswell Pond between 3rd – 29th (GB/PRM *et al.*).

**Wigeon** *Anas penelope*

Northerly movement involved 759 N at Seaton Sluice between 13th – 16th, including 491 on 14th (SSWT), at least 478 N at Newbiggin between 13th -16th, including 203 on 14th (GB/TRC/MSK), 21 N at Druridge Links on 14th (IDR), and 12 N at Berwick on 4th (MHu). One to eight were at Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Kitty Brewster, St Mary's Wetland and Yarrow Slake between 1st – 12th but, apart from 63 at Grindon Lough and 27 at Hepple on 8th (PRM), larger numbers were not noted until mid-month when 100 were at Hauxley Reserve (HRS) 2,000 were at Fenham Flats (JPL) and 151 at East Chevington on 16th (JPL), 104 at Grindon Lough and 70 at Shield on the Wall on 19th (MRS), 40 at Budle Bay on 28th (CGK), and 24 at Cresswell Pond on 29th (PRM). One to ten were also at Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Druridge Pools and Whittle Dene Reservoirs from 17th – 29th .

**Gadwall** *Anas strepera*

East Chevington held peaks of 146 on 6th (ASJ) and 43 on 22nd (JRT), 28 were at Longhirst Flash on 22nd (JRT), 25 at Linton Pond on 20th (CDH), 19 at Hauxley Reserve on 15th (HRS), ten at Druridge Pools on 30th (TRD/JD), six at Castle Island on 26th (GB), and five at Woodhorn Flashes on 2nd and 5th (GB/TRD).

**Teal** *Anas crecca*

Coastal passage involved a total of 410 N at Newbiggin between 11th -16th, including 184 on 14th (GB/TRC/MSK/AT), 369 N at Seaton Sluice between 14th-16th including 281 on 14th (SSWT), 140 N at St Mary's on 4th and 89 N on 11th (MT/NT/DRW), 96 N and 16 S at Hauxley NR between 12th-15th (HRS), 66 N at Spittal Bay on 4th and 34 N on 16th (MHu), and 25-30 N at Druridge and Snab Point on 3rd-4th (GB/TRD/JD). The largest concentration was 1,100 at Budle Bay on 28th (CGK). Numbers at East Chevington built up from 190 on 1st (TRD) to 238 on 22nd (JRT) and 450 on 30th (TRD/JD), 385 were at Monk's House Pool on 6th (MSH), 157 at Arcot Pond on 27th (DM), 156 at Derwent Reservoir on 29th (IFo), 150 at the Rocket Field, Holy Island in the latter half (IK), 149 at Grindon Lough on 8th (PRM), 134 at Castle Island on 27th (GB), 116 at Middle Ord Pond on 6th (MHu), 40-49 at Cresswell Pond and Hauxley Reserve (HRS/PRM), 31 at the *Beehive* Flash (Earsdon), ten to 16 at Druridge Links, Haughton Strother and West Hartford, and three to eight at Alnmouth, Linton Pond, Meadow Haven and West Ord.

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

Peak gatherings were 161 at Cresswell Pond on 29th (PRM), 96 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 21st (MR), 89 at Hauxley Reserve on 5th (HRS), 69 at Big Waters on 17th (GB), 59 at Newcastle Leazes Park on 21st (DM), 53 at Arcot Pond on (DM), 40 at Linton Pond on 20th (CDH), 37-38 at the *Beehive* Flash (Earsdon), Cresswell Pond and Marden Quarry, 26 at Cornhill, eight to 16 at Druridge and Monk's House Pools, Newcastle Civic Centre, QEII Lake and St Mary's Wetland.

**Pintail** *Anas acuta*

A notable 24 flew N at Spittal Bay, Berwick on 4th (MHu), one N at Newbiggin on 14th was followed by five N on 16th (TRC), and at Seaton Sluice four N on 14th were followed by one N on 16th (SSWT). The Fenham Flats section of Lindisfarne NNR held 48 on 24th (ASJ), four at East Chevington on 1st (TRD) increased to 17 by 15th (ACo) but dropped to eight on 16th (JRT) and four on 28th (IFo). A group of six newly arrived birds at Holy Island Lough on 20th-21st were described as 'very thirsty' on the former date (IK). Four were at Grindon Lough on 8th (PRM), and singles were at Derwent Reservoir on 29th (IFo), Holywell Pond on 22nd (ASJ), Haughton Strother on 1st and 6th (MR), with Common Scoters off Newbiggin on 30th (TRC), and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 21st (MR).

**Garganey** *Anas querquedula*

A female was at Druridge Pools on 16th (MSK/NEWT) and single juveniles at Haughton Strother on 18th (MR) and Swallow Pond on 23rd (SPP).

**Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*

Swallow Pond proved favourite, with 14 on 20th increasing to a peak of 21 on 29th (SPP). Other peaks elsewhere were 16 at East Chevington on 22nd (JRT), seven at Monk's House Pool on 6th (MSH), five at Grindon Lough on 19th (MRS), three at Hauxley Reserve on 12th (HRS) and three at Linton Pond on 20th (CDH). One to two were also at Arcot, Bothal and Cresswell Ponds, the *Beehive* Flash (Earsdon), West Hartford

**\*Red-crested Pochard** *Netta rufina*

A drake in eclipse plumage was at Gosforth Park NR between 5th-13th (PHH/per SRB).

**Pochard** *Aythya ferina*

Low numbers generally. Peak counts were 11 at Swallow Pond on 29th (SPP), eight at Ladyburn Lake on 28th (IFo), three at Newcastle Great Park Pools on 19th (AHB), and one to two at Big Waters, Bothal and Linton Ponds, Haughton Strother, Killingworth Lake and Woodhorn Flashes.

**Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*

One flew N at Newbiggin on 16th (AT). Largest concentrations were 57 at Hedgeley GP on 19th (TRD), 48 at Newcastle Great Park Pools on 26th (AHB), 40 at Castle Island on 26th (GB), 36 at East Chevington on 22nd (JRT), 25 at Linton Pond on 20th (CDH), 23 at Cresswell Pond on 13th (IRD), and 12-15 at Haughton Strother, Hauxley Reserve, Newcastle Leazes Park and Swallow Pond. Six to nine were also at Grindon Lough and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and one to four at Cocklawburn Pond, Druridge Pools, Jesmond Dene, Pegswood Community Lake, QEII Lake and Yarrow Slake.

**Scaup** *Aythya marila*

A total of 38 flew N at Newbiggin on 16th (TRC) and two flew N there on 14th (AJR/MSK), while one flew N at Seaton Sluice on 14th (SSWT). Three were at Hauxley Reserve on 14th (AJR), twos at Bothal Pond on 18th-19th (TRD), Cresswell Pond on 14th and 27th-28th (IRD/IFo/AJR), East Chevington on 13th (IRD) and offshore at Newbiggin on 30th (ASH/TRC). Singles were at Cresswell Pond on 21st-23rd (TRC/JRT), off Druridge Links on 5th (IDR) and Pegswood Community Park on 23rd (AT).

**Eider** *Somateria mollissima*

A total of 638 was counted at Holy Island Heugh on 24th (ASJ), 236 were at Cheswick Black Rocks on 12th (MHu), 85 off Hauxley Reserve on 12th (HRS), 25 at Howick on 8th (JAR), 11 at St Mary's on 12th (MT/NT), and one to five at Alnmouth and Seaton Sluice.

**Common Scoter** *Melanitta nigra*

A minimum of 378 flew N at Newbiggin between 7th-16th (TRC et al.), 342 flew N at Seaton Sluice between 14th-16th including 250 on 14th (SSWT), 300 N at Hauxley on 14th (AJR), 40 N at Snab Point on 3rd (GB), 38 N at St Mary's on 14th (CGK et al.), 11-23 N at three further coastal points between 4th-11th, and five to six N at two other sites. A total of 60 flew S at Newbiggin on 30th (ASH et al.). A flock of 75 off Druridge on 15th (IDR) increased to 230 by 30th (TRD/JD) when 188 gathered off Church Point, Newbiggin, and 160 were at Cheswick Black Rocks on 16th (MHu).

**Velvet Scoter** *Melanitta fusca*

The majority of reports concerned northbound birds, with a total of at least 11 at Newbiggin between 11th-15th (AA/GB/TRC/ASH et al.), eight at Seaton Sluice between 13th -15th (SSWT), twos at Spittal Bay on 4th and 14th (MHu) and Hauxley on 14th (AJR/HRS), and one at Seaton Sluice on 13th (LMO). A drake was with six Common Scoters at Cambois outfall on 13th (PCF).

**Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula*

Three flew N at Seaton Sluice on 14th (SSWT).

**Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator*

Coastal passage involved at least three N and four S at Newbiggin between 13th -15th (GB/TRC/MSK et al.), and one N at Hauxley on 15th (HRS). Seven were at Holy Island harbour on 13th (ADM/MJC) and three on 27th (ADM), four off Druridge-East Chevington on 12th-13th (IRD/TRD/JD) and two there on 10th (PHH). Two were at Alnmouth on 18th (TRD).

**Goosander** *Mergus merganser*

One flew N at Druridge on 30th (TRD/JD). Peak counts were 34 at Cheswick Black Rocks on 2nd (MHu), 14 at Shillmoor on 6th (JR), 12 at the Tweed Estuary on 18th (MHu), ten at Windyhaugh on 2nd (TRD/JD), eight at Boulmer on 18th (TRD), six at Barrowburn on 6th (JR), and three to four at Cresswell, Druridge Links and Ingram. One to two were also at Amble Harbour, Budle Bay, Castle Island, Grindon Lough, Holy Island and Newbiggin.

**Ruddy Duck** *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Singles were at Holywell Pond (MSH) and Killingworth Lake (GB) on 1st, and Bothal Pond on 11th (TRD).

**Red Grouse** *lagopus lagopus*

12 were at Simonside on 1st, two on 20th and three present on 25th. Away from Simonside the only other record for the month was two noted at Langleeford on 17th (TRD/JD) perhaps reflecting observer bias toward coastal sites during September.

**Black Grouse** *Tetrao tetrix*

Eight were at Spartylea on 7th (PFS) and four were at Langleeford Hope on 17th (TRD/JD).

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

A single record of 32 at West Hartley Farm, Holywell Dene on 26th were probable recent releases (RJP).

**Grey Partridge** *Perdix perdix*

20 at Foxton on 18th was the peak count during the month (TRD). 14 were at Howick on 6th (JRD) and 10 were near Beal on 27th (ADM). Eight were reported from dune scrub in Druridge Bay on 9th and from Hauxley NR on 10th. One to seven were noted at Big Waters NWT, Boulmer, Cresswell Pond, High Hauxley, Hartley West Farm, Prestwick Carr, Thornington, Waterside House near River Aln and Woodhorn.

**Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus*

51 were at Rodham on 6th (JR), when 20 were in the Hauxley area (HRS). 18 were in fields west of Bellasis Bridge on 13th. Four were at Arcot Pond on 5th, two were in a Walbottle Garden on 20th and a single bird at Chesters Walled Garden on 27th.

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

Two in Druridge Bay on 4th increased to 11 on 10th, 16 on 12th and 26 at the north end of the bay by 18th (EC/JSB). 10 in Alnmouth Bay on 11th had increased to 21 on 18th (RPo). Passage was well reported during the month with eight past Emmanuel Head, Holy Island on 13th (ADM/MJC) and over the dunes at Druridge Pools on 30th (TRC) the largest movements. 20N and 12S were recorded at Seaton Sluice between 13th – 17th (SSWT). One to seven were reported from 2nd onward at Cheswick Black Rocks, Church Point Newbiggin, Cocklawburn, Hauxley, Howick, Spittal Bay Berwick, Stag Rocks Bamburgh and St Mary's.

**Black-throated Diver** *Gavia arctica*

Three were at Meadow Haven, Berwick on 6th (MHu) and two flew north together at Newbiggin on 11th (AT).

**Great Northern Diver** *Gavia ummer*

One flying south on 14th and two south on 29th past St Mary's Island, one of which was estimated to be flying at 1000ft were the only records (ASJ).

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

21 at Holywell Pond on 22nd was the peak count for the month (ASJ). 14 including six juvenile were at Great Park Pools on 19th (AHB). Three at Hauxley on 5th had risen to 11 by 20th (HRS). Elsewhere five to six were at Bakethin Reservoir, Big Waters NWT, Bothal Pond, Foxton R Aln & Holy island Lough. One to four were reported from Blyth GC Pond, Craggside Rothbury, Cresswell Pond, Drift Inn Pools Seaton Burn, Hedgley GP, Linton Pond & QEII CP.

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*

16 at Whittle Dene Reservoir on 3rd, the peak count for the month had declined to 11 by 21st (MR). Seven on Killingworth Lake on 1st included five juveniles (GB). Singles were noted at Big Waters NWT, Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Pools, Fontburn Reservoir and East Chevington. Individuals were noted either on the sea or moving past headlands at Alnmouth Bay, Cheswick, Church Point Newbiggin, Sandon Bay & Emanuel Head Holy Island and Stag Rocks Bamburgh between 8th – 20th.

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

All records involved birds moving offshore; the first a single from Church Point Newbiggin on 6th (AT) followed by three on 14th, one on 15th (TRD/TRC) and two on 16th (TRC). Away from Newbiggin one was noted at Seaton Sluice on 14th, another seen from Druridge Links on 15th (IDR) and finally at St Mary's Island on 16th (SPP).

**Slavonian Grebe** *podiceps auritus*

Three were at Budle Point on 27th (DEG).

**Fulmar** *Fulmarus glacialis*

Some movement in suitable weather conditions was noted on 14th-15th with 51N and 32N at Hauxley on those dates (HRS) and 25N and 8N at Newbiggin (TRD). Elsewhere two to five were reported from Druridge Links, Snab Point Cresswell, St Mary's Island and a pelagic from Tynemouth on 5th.

Fulmar photographed during  
a pelagic trip on 5th September  
by Tim Dean



**\* Cory's Shearwater** *Caolnectris diomedea*

One moved N past Newbiggin on 5th and was seen again at The Farne Islands (DS/JM *et al*). Another passed St Mary's Island early afternoon on 14th (DRW)

**Sooty Shearwater** *Puffinus griseus*

Early in the month a single past Newbiggin on 5th (GB) when six were noted from the NTBC/NEWT Pelagic between Tynemouth and Druridge. No more were reported till 11th when three past Newbiggin. Numbers began to increase from 13th when two N at St Mary's Island and 10N past Newbiggin. On 14th 20N past Newbiggin (TRC), four N at St Mary's Island and three N at Hauxley. Three past Newbiggin on 15th and two were noted off Druridge Links. 27 on 16th N at Newbiggin (AT) was the peak count for month. 10N were noted at Seaton Sluice from 13th-17th. 20 from another NTBC/NEWT Pelagic trip between Tynemouth & Cresswell on 19th was the only other report received (AT/MSK).

Sooty Shearwater off Tynemouth  
19th September by Alan Tilmouth



**Manx Shearwater** *Puffinus puffinus*

Few were reported in the first half of the month, 100 noted from the NTBC/NEWT Pelagic the highest count on 5th (NEWT/BSP) when 50 were noted past Newbiggin (GB). Two N, again at Newbiggin on 7th & 11th were the only other early records. 86N at Newbiggin and 47N at St Mary's Island on 13th heralded the start of a short but productive period. On 14th 337N past Newbiggin in eight hours 20 minutes (TRC) and 250N past Hauxley (AJR) with smaller numbers noted passing Druridge Links (98N) & St Mary's Island (168N). 43N at Newbiggin on 15th and 130N on 16th (TRC). In the same period 872N at Seaton Sluice included 647N on 14th in 7 hours (SSWT). After this period the only two records were of two from NTBC/NEWT Pelagic on 19th and two N at Spittal Bay Berwick on 21st.

**\* Balearic Shearwater** *Puffinus mauretanicus*

A single N at Seaton Sluice on 12th (SPP) may also have been the individual noted at Newbiggin (SJM<sub>c</sub>). On 13th three N at Newbiggin in a one and half hour morning spell (GB/JGS/SJM<sub>c</sub> *et al*) and two moved N at Seaton Sluice (RD). Two moved N at St Mary's Island late afternoon on 15th (DRW) and two at Seaton Sluice on 16th (RD/MHP). Further singles were noted at Newbiggin either side of these on 14th & 16th (TRD/AA).

**\* Leach's Storm-Petrel** *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

A single petrel noted at St Mary's Island on 4th was believed to be of this species (AA).

**Gannet** *Morus bassanus*

NE winds on 13th/14th resulted in 1600N and 1000S/hour at Emmanuel Head Holy Island (ADM/MJC) and 1680N/hour and 800S/hour at Spittal Bay Berwick (MHu). Movements noted from Seaton Sluice were 500N/hour on 14th, 667N/hour on 15th and 500N/hour on 16th (SSWT). Elsewhere on 14th 500N noted at Newbiggin, 347+ at Druridge Links and 264N at Hauxley with 308N here on 15th. Some 300 fed close inshore on Herring at Spittal Bay on 16th and 150 were at Berwick on 29th some feeding very close to harbour wall. One to 35 were reported from Boulmer, Cresswell, Newton Point, Snab Point, St Mary's Island and the NTBC/NEWT Pelagic on 5th.



Two views of Gannets

Left at sea off Tynemouth by Alan Tilmouth and  
Right, a juvenile by Berwick Pier by Tim Dean

**Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

35 moved N past Howick on 11th (JAR). 26 roosted at Sandstell Point Spittal on 13th (MHu). 15 were at East Chevington NWT on 20th (DMc) and roosting at Bakethin on 21st (MR). 12 were at Castle Island on 20th and 10 at Hauxley on 15th. Seven were at Whittle Dene on 3rd and in Druridge Bay on 14th. Two individuals considered to be *sinensis* race were reported from Alnmouth on 8th and another from Cresswell Pond on 29th (PRM).



A *Sinensis* race Cormorant at Cresswell on 29th September by Paul Massey

**Shag** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

15 moved N at Seaton Sluice on 12th (SPP) and 10 were at Berwick on 29th (TRD/JD). Five at Hauxley on 15th (HRS) and four off Druridge Links on 14th (IDR) were the only other records.

**Bittern** *Botaurus stellarus*

An individual was noted on several dates from 19th at Gosforth Park NR (*per* SRB).

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*

An additional record from August involved two at Budle Bay on 8th (CGK). Singles were noted at Alnmouth (PRM) & Budle Bay (MSK/NEWT) on 8th. The latter perhaps also the individual reported in Budle Bay on 11th & 15th. Two were in Budle Bay on 19th, a single on 24th with three reported on 28th (CGK). The only other report was a single south of Holy Island Causeway on 24th.



**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*

32 were on the River Tweed on 18th during a WeBS count was the peak count for the month (Mhu) and 16 were reported roosting in fields on Holy Island on 16th (DWS). Nine were at Hauxley on 6th with up to six remaining till 27th (HRS). Five were at Arcot Pond, Berwick Little Beach, Druridge Pools, Haughton Strother GP and Whittle Dene Reservoir. One to four were at a further seven widespread localities.

A Grey Heron wades past the Glossy Ibis at Druridge Pools. The Ibis was a once in a generation sighting for the locals, both birds and humans  
Photograph on 29th by Paul Massey

**\* White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia*

An unringed individual was present at Fourstones from 21st-26th (PG), presumably the same individual was at Humshaugh on 29th (Twi).

**\* Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus*

An individual found at Druridge Pools on 25th was relocated on 26th at Longhirst Flash before moving south to Bothal Pond. It moved off quickly for a short time before reappearing from the south, briefly landing again at Bothal then Longhirst Flash, before relocating to Cresswell Pond. It remained in the Cresswell/Bell's Pond area until 27th and then moved back to its original location at Druridge Pools where it remained until the end of the month and beyond (RH/JR/AH/AT/SPP/DMc *et al*). This individual is the fifth record for the county the last being a single bird briefly at Bothal Pond in 1989.

Glossy Ibis in flight by Tim Dean  
Cresswell Pond 26th September

**\* Honey Buzzard** *Pernis apivorus*

One in conifers at Haughton Strother (nr Humshaugh) on 14th was at the same site as a bird there last year (MR).

**Red Kite** *Milvus milvus*

Only two records this month. One flew over the A1 at Alnwick on 2nd (JHa) and another was seen at Gosforth Park NR on 4th (per SRB)

**Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*

A late record for August, where a juvenile at Budle Bay on 9th (CGK). Singles were seen at Prestwick Carr (per PCF) and Cresswell Pond on 1st (IFo/STH); other singles were seen at the later site on 7th (TRD/MSH) & 14th (JPL *et al*). A juvenile was at East Chevington on 4th (MSK/NEWT) and on 25th a single bird was in the air with six Buzzards *Buteo buteo* and a Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* (ACo), while on the 10th a juvenile was at Druridge Pools (IDR).

**Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*

Males were seen hunting near Grindon Lough on 8th (PRM) and at Embleton on 30th (MSK/NEWT). Female/ringtails were seen at Ellington Lane on 26th (SLB/MSK) and at Hartley on 29th (JSB/EC).

**Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis*

The only record this month was a single bird at Thrunton Woods on 12th (IBDa/KDa).

**Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*

Three birds were at Gosforth Park NR on 24th (per SRB). Two birds were seen throughout the month at Holywell Dene & Scotland Gate (RJP/SLB/MSK); other pairs were at Dinnington on 4th (PCF) and Bothal Pond on 26th (JR). Singles were

at a further 18 sites during the month including a female at Cresswell Pond with a freshly caught Dunlin *Calidris alpina* on 27th (SPP).

#### **Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*

The highest counts this month included 12 birds soaring at Williamston Common on 1st (JSB/EC), eight were in the Brenkley/ Prestwick area on 20th (GB/PHH). Six birds were seen at Stamfordham on 9th (JSB/EC), Prestwick Carr on 12th & 22nd (PCF/JSB/EC), East Chevington on 25th (ACo) and at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 30th (JRT). Five birds were at Haughton Strother on 6th (MR) and at Woolington on 12th (PHH). One to four were at a further 22 sites during September.

#### **Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*

Singles were seen at Simonburn on 2nd (TWi), Cocklawburn on 7th (MHu), Fenham Slake from the 16th – 21st (NNBC) and at Norham on 20th (BWG). On the Lindisfarne NNR a bird was present from the 14th – 26th, during its stay it caught a variety of fish including Salmon *Salmo salar*, Sea Trout *Salmo trutta*, Mullet *Chelon labrosus* and a Flatfish *sp* (IK *et al*).

#### **Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*

Six birds were hunting around Prestwick Carr on 11th (MRS); three birds were present on Holy Island all month (ADM/MJC). Two birds were seen at Cresswell Pond, Dudley, Kilham, West Hartford and Woodhorn Flashes during the month.

#### **Merlin** *Falco columbarius*

One to two birds were at the River Tweed, Berwick Tapee Fen area on 9th and 11th, on both occasions they were seen to attack a Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba* flock at sunrise (PJ). Two birds were also seen at Chatton on 11th (JHa), Holy Island on 19th (DRW) and Budle Bay on 28th (CGK). Single birds were seen at Bells Pond, Cheswick, Cocklawburn, Druridge, Hauxley, Holy Island, Makedon, Monk's House Pool, Simonside, Warkworth Lane & Widdrington. At Big Waters on 17th a bird chased a large bat, possibly a Noctule Bat *Nyctalis noctua* (GB).

#### **Peregrine** *Falco peregrinus*

At Budle Bay on 15th a female was seen feeding a juvenile sitting on a rock, while the male flew around (NNBC). Two birds were at Holy Island on 16th (CP), the A189 roundabout at Linton on 20th (AT) and at Fenham Mill on 25th one of a pair knocked down a Pigeon *sp*, the other bird flew off with the prey (JSB/EC). Single birds were at a further 14 sites.

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

One to two birds were seen at Cresswell Pond on 1st and 29th (TRD/LMo/IWa/PRM); single birds were seen or heard at Backworth (SPP), Big Waters (GB) and Swallow Pond (SPP).

#### **Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*

The highest counts were 16 at Big Waters on 20th (GB), 14 at Leazes Park on 21st (DM), 12 were at Castle Island on 20th and Druridge Pools and St Mary's Wetland on 21st (PRM/MSH). 11 were at Hauxley on 15th (HRS). One to nine were at a further four sites.

#### **Coot** *Fulica atra*

92 was the highest count this month at Killingworth Lake on 1st (GB), while 74 were at Branton GP's on 6th (IBDa/KDa). 25 were at East Chevington on 20th (STH/DM/PA), 15 were at Woodhorn Flash & QEII CP on 5th and 20th respectively (GB/CDH), 14 at Big Waters on 20th (GB) and 12 were at Leazes Park on 21st (DM). One to ten was noted at another five sites during the month

#### **Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*

An evening roost at Howick contained 250 on 21st (JAR) and 128 were at St Mary's on 30th (ASJ). Peaks at Cresswell Pond and Hauxley NR were respectively 73 on 19th and 60 on 2nd and 15th (IRD/HRS).

#### **Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*

One remained at West Hartford on 1st/2nd (IFo/STH/LJM).

#### **Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*

In the Blyth estuary 200 were counted on 5th (DRW); other peak totals were 75 at Berwick, Little Beach on 13th (MHu), 52 including 30 juveniles at St Mary's on 27th (ASJ), 35 at Cheswick Black Rocks on 16th and 25 at Newbiggin on 7th. Snab Point held 22 on 20th, Hauxley shore 12 on 6th and up to five were at Alnmouth and Cresswell Pond. Two at Haughton Strother GP on 1st were the only ones inland.

#### **Golden Plover** *Pluvialis apricaria*

At Druridge Bay dunes 150 flew in off the sea then N on 13th (IDR/JF), 18 flew SW at Cresswell Pond on 28th and 13 E at Swallow Pond on 29th. The largest gatherings were 2000 at Holy Island on 15th (MSK/NEWT) and a peak of 950 at St Mary's on 2nd (JMA). Groups of 30-200 were noted at East Chevington, Longhoughton Steel, Newcastle (Town Moor) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs and seven were at Grindon Lough on 19th.

**Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*

There were only three reports: 30 at Fenham Flats on 24th and singles at Hauxley on 15th and at Boulmer on 28th.

**Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*

Flocks at St Mary's and Cresswell Pond respectively peaked at 720 on 30th and 560 on 2nd (ASJ) and 500+ were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 3rd (MR). Flocks of 98-290 were noted at Alnmouth, Bothal Pond, Earsdon, Elswick, Haughton Strother GP, Hauxley, Howick, Ponteland and Yarrow Slake with smaller numbers at Arcot Pond, Monks' House Pool, Throckley Pond, Seaton Sluice and West Hartford.

**Knot** *Calidris canutus*

About 60 were at Hadston on 22nd (JSB/EC) and 55 juveniles were at Cresswell Pond on 3rd (GB). Holy Island harbour held 28 on 10th, 12 were at Berwick on 19th and up to nine appeared at Blyth, Boulmer, Hauxley and St Mary's.

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba*

At St Mary's 82 on 16th (ASJ) included 'one ringed as a juvenile this year in Greenland'. Elsewhere, 50 were in Druridge on 12th (TRD/JD), 20 at Cresswell shore on 26th and five or less at Boulmer, Cheswick Black Rocks, Cresswell Pond and Newbiggin.

A Sanderling at Newbiggin on 7th September by  
Alan Tilmouth

**Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*

Three were at Monks' House Pool on 12th (NNBC) and three were in Budle Bay on 24th (JPL). Singles appeared at Cresswell Pond on 1st/7th/10th/12th and at Holy Island on 27th.

**Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*

Three juveniles were at Cresswell Pond on 1st<sub>L</sub> (IFo/STH *et al*) with one remaining next day and on 4th; an adult was there on 7th (TB) and one of unspecified age on 10th. Two were at Berwick on 19th (MHu) and one flew N at St Mary's on 4th (DRW). Other singles were at Amble Braid, Budle Bay and the Wansbeck estuary on 2nd/5th (RA), Monks' House Pool on 6th, Druridge Pools on 7th/12th, East Chevington on 10th, Blyth and Boulmer on 20th (DCh/PT/DRW).

Curlew Sandpiper at Druridge Pools  
on 7th September  
by Peter Tapsell

**Purple Sandpiper** *Calidris maritima*

Three flew N at Newbiggin over a long period on 14th (TRC), four were at St Mary's on 14th and singles were at Seaton Sluice on 12th and at Stag Rocks on 15th and 24th.

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*

Fenham Flats held 2000+ on 24th (ASJ), 220 were at Boulmer on 28th (TRD), 175+ at Cresswell Pond on 1st (IFo/STH) and 160 in the Blyth estuary on 5th (DRW). Other higher counts include 64 at Berwick on 19th, 40 at Holy Island on 27th and 27 at Alnmouth on 18th. Between ten and 25 appeared at Castle Island, Druridge Bay, Hauxley NR, West Hartford and Yarrow Slake with smaller numbers at another six places.



**Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*

At West Hartford two landed on the main pool briefly on 4th (PJA). All others were singles: at Cresswell Pond on 1st/3rd/4th/7th, at East Chevington on 1st, Haughton Strother GP on 9th, Holy Island on 15th and Budle Bay on 19th. Late records for August are singles at Budle Bay on 9th and Monks' House on 22nd.

**Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*

Like last month, the peak count was 22, this time at Haughton Strother GP on 18th (MR). Backworth had 12 on 12th as did Cresswell Pond on 17th; six to nine were noted occasionally at Druridge Pools, Greenlee, Holy Island and West Hartford. Up to three were seen at Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Bothal Pond, Druridge Bay (one over the sea on 4th), Hauxley NR, Linton Pond, Seaton Burn, Woodhorn Flashes and Yarrow Slake.

**Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola*

The only record is of one at Gosforth Park NR on 26th (*per* SRB).

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

It remained in strength at Cresswell Pond early in the month with 32 on 1st and still 15+ on 4th (IFo/STH *et al*). Ten were at Boulmer on 20th (DCh), three in Budle Bay on 21st/23rd, one at Stag Rocks on 8th and a juvenile at Hauxley NR on 28th.

A juvenile Black-tailed Godwit at Cresswell Pond on 4th by Mike Hodgson

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

At Holy Island 152+ were present on 10th (PRM) and 45 in Budle Bay on 28th (CGK). Seven flew S at Newbiggin on 5th (GB), seven went N at Seaton Sluice on 12th (SPP) and the maximum of regular sightings in the Cresswell Pond area was

14 on 3rd; ten were at Boulmer on 18th. Also six roosted at Howick on 21st and five were noted at Berwick, Cheswick Black Rocks and Hauxley NR; one to three appeared at Alnmouth, Castle Island and Newbiggin.

**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*

Three flew S at St Mary's on 2nd (JMA/MSH) and one S at Newbiggin on 14th (TRC). On 10th two were at Holy Island and one at Cresswell Pond, singles visited St Mary's on 11th and 14th and the last of the month were two in the Blyth estuary and one at Holy Island on 20th.

**Curlew** *Numenius arquata*

The peak at St Mary's reached 127, on 11th (MT/NT), and probably some of these were part of 78 at nearby Briar Dene Farm, Whitley Bay on 18th (MNC) and possibly of 75 at Earsdon on 4th. The most at Hauxley NR was 71 on 15th (HRS), 34 were at Cresswell Pond on 13th and 23+ at Alnmouth on 8th. The only other reported was a single at Elswick Wharf on 8th.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*

Typically, it was much scarcer: along the coast, after three at Howick on 6th (JAR) singles were noted at Druridge Pools on 10th, the Amble estuary on 12th and at Cresswell Pond on 29th; inland, two were at Haughton Strother GP on 14th (MR).



Common Sandpiper with a Redshank  
at Hauxley NR  
by Jim Alexander



**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*

Haughton Strother GP was again the most favoured location with three throughout the month (MR). At least two were present at Whittle Dene Reservoirs, probably throughout (MR) and two were at Backworth Pond on 10th (SPP). Singles were found at West Hartford on 7th and at Holy Island on 13th.

**Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus*

Singles were at Foxton on 1st, Alnmouth on 8th and Budle Bay on 15th (TAC/PRM/NNBC); one was at Cresswell Pond on 19th-24th (RB/MB/IRD *et al*).

A late record concerns two in Budle Bay on 8th August (CGK).



Two views of a Spotted Redshank at Cresswell Pond by John Clark on 22nd September

**Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*

It was present throughout at Cresswell Pond, with no doubt a regular turnover, generally up to four but six on 4th (MSK/NEWT); also six at Foxton on 1st (TAC). Up to three were regularly in Budle Bay, particularly in the latter half of the month, and maxima of three at Hauxley NR on 15th and at Alnmouth on 16th. One or two were noted occasionally to the month end at Bothal Pond, Branton GP, Cocklawburn pond, Druridge Pools, Holy Island, St Mary's, Swallow Pond, Woodhorn Flashes and Yarrow Slake.

Three views of a photogenic Greenshank in September at Druridge Pools. top right by Iain Robson and below by Peter Tapsell (R) and Tim Dean





**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*

One from late August remained at Cresswell Pond until 4th, with two reported on the last date (TRD/JD).

**Redshank** *Tringa totanus*

A count at Holy Island produced 430+ on 10th (PRM) and 345 were noted in Budle Bay on 28th (CGK); in the Blyth estuary at Kitty Brewster numbers remained similar early in the month with 211 on 5th (GB). The peak of the regular high tide roost at Hauxley NR was 159 on 9th (HRS), 129 were in the Tweed estuary on 18th (MHu) and 50+ were noted at both Alnmouth and Elswick Wharf on 8th. Five other places held up to 35 and one well inland at Derwent Reservoir on 29th was late for that location.

**Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*

Little Beach at Berwick held 144 on 19th (MHu) and the peak at Hauxley NR was 64 on 15th (HRS); 30 were at St Mary's on 2nd and 25 at Howick on 21st. Two or three were noted at Cresswell Pond, Newbiggin and the Wansbeck estuary.

**Pomarine Skua** *Stercorarius pomarinus*

A total of 11 flew N at Seaton Sluice, including three on 13th and seven adults in a single flock on 30th (SSWT). N movement was also witnessed at Newbiggin: two adults on 13th and two adults and a juvenile on 14th (GB/SJM/TRC). Singles went N in Druridge Bay on 14th and 15th (IDR) and one there on 4th occasionally settled on the sea (TRD/JD); a 'sub-adult' went N at St Mary's on 13th (CGK/AC/AJ). One was on the water in Budle Bay on 24th (ASJ) and one was seen on a pelagic trip from Tynemouth on 19th (AT/NEWT/BCP). On the last date ten were reported from St Mary's but without further details (ASJ).

**Arctic Skua** *Stercorarius parasiticus*

The bulk of movement occurred from 12th to 16th with a total of at least 45, mainly N, at Newbiggin (TRC/MSK *et al*); during this period 23 at Seaton Sluice was described as a low total (SSWT). Also eight flew N at St Mary's on 15th, seven, mainly S, off Holy Island on 13th and six N off Druridge Bay dunes on 14th. Elsewhere in the same period up to three were recorded at Berwick, Cocklawburn, Hauxley and Stag Rocks. Five were off Newbiggin on 2nd and four at Berwick on 4th. Apart from others at the aforementioned locations one to two were seen at Alnmouth Bay, Cheswick, Cresswell and on two pelagic trips out of Tynemouth.

**Long-tailed Skua** *Stercorarius longicaudus*

An adult flew N at Newbiggin on 12th (SJM) and a juvenile moved N at Seaton Sluice on 14th (BB/MHp).

**Great Skua** *Stercorarius skua*

N passage during 13th-16th totalled 25 at Newbiggin (TRC *et al*) and 21 at Seaton Sluice (SSWT). In the same period four on 14th and eight on 15th went N at St Mary's, seven were noted off Holy Island on 13th, four on 14th and six on 15th N at Hauxley and four moved N at Druridge Bay dunes on 14th. Also two were noted at Stag Rocks on 13th. Clearly, there is a good deal of duplication involved. Outside the main movements five were at St Mary's on 19th and one or two were seen occasionally at Hauxley, Druridge Bay, Newbiggin, St Mary's and on two pelagic trips out of Tynemouth.

**\* Sabine's Gull** *Xema sabini*

A single adult was noted feeding amongst Kittiwakes eight miles off Newbiggin during the NTBC pelagic trip on 5th (TRD/RA/NEWT/BCP). All other sightings during the month were on 14th at Newbiggin when two to three adults and one juvenile were noted passing in a four hour spell (MSK) with an adult and a juvenile present at 18:30h (AT). Further details are still needed to establish how many individuals were involved with currently single adults specifically noted moving S at 07:35h & 15:00h (TRC/DD).

**Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla*

The peak movement was on the 15th when 2,500 were noted moving N at St Mary's Island and also feeding offshore (ASJ). The ideal northerlies from 14th to 16th saw good numbers N off Seaton Sluice with 1,000 on 15th in 90 minutes (SSWT). Also at Druridge 298 passed N on 14th with 371 on 15th (IDR) with Hauxley recording ca.50 N on 15th in two hours (HRS). Early on 16th at least 500 were still feeding offshore on 16th at Seaton Sluice (SSWT). At Berwick 120 per hour N were moving on 16th (MHu). Undoubtedly birds were moving N all the way along the coast at this time. Numbers outside this period were low with the main count being 36 at Spittal Bay on 21st (MHu).

**Black-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

The peak count recorded was 1,800 at Budle Bay on 28th (CGK). A WEBS count on 18th on the Tweed estuary saw 512 counted (MHu). 250 were noted at Howick on 6th (JAR) with 143 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 21st (MR). 120 were on the Hauxley shore on 6th (HRS) and 112 were at Castle Island on 20th (DM). The peak count at Arcot Pond was on 5th when 97 were present. Otherwise only smaller gatherings of ca.50 flying over Chesters S/E on 26th (ALT) plus 27 at Jesmond Dene on 27th (MJCo) and 11 at Leazes Park, Newcastle (DM).

**Little Gull** *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

After last months low total of 4 birds seen, this month only two individuals were noted with single adults at Newbiggin on 14th (AT) and on the NTBC pelagic on 19th (AT/NEWT/BCP).

**Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus*

Only five individuals were reported at Newbiggin this month with three adults, a second-winter and a juvenile moulting to first-winter all present there on 2nd (TRD). A first-winter on 7th (TRD) and one on 14th (AT) were the only other Newbiggin reports though undoubtedly under-recorded this month. Elsewhere numbers as usual were reduced with the only multiple report being two adults on Holy Island on 13th (CP) with single birds being seen on the island on 6th and 27th (DCh/ADM/MJC). This latter bird was ringed (2A10), a yellow ring on left leg and typically tame with MJC's chip lunch under siege! Single adults were noted at Holywell Pond on 10th and Swallow Pond on 29th (SPP). Finally the returning adult was again noted in the Whitley Bay area with single sightings on 14th at Briardene (PCF) and on the mini golf area on 26th (KWY).



A first calendar year Mediterranean Gull at Newbiggin  
17th September by Alan Tilmouth

The ringed bird reported from Newbiggin in the August bulletin was actually ringed near the river Elbe west of Hamburg, not on Heligoland.

**Common Gull** *Larus canus*

The largest concentration was at Chatton where ca.2,000 gathered (JR). At least 800 were noted at Haughton Strother GP near Humshaugh on 23rd with 660 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 21st (MR). Other high counts involved 450 at Old Bewick on 6th (JR), 400 at Ryal on 15th (PCF) and 400 at Shipley on 3rd (JMA). Finally smaller groups of c250 were found at Moneylaws, 190 at Pegswood on 23rd (AT) and 29 on Hauxley shore on 6th (HRS). Interestingly at the well-watched area of Jesmond Dene the first wintering bird was back on 6th (MJCo).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus graelsii*

There were still surprisingly high numbers being reported with by far the highest count being 195 (included 23 immatures) at Old Bewick on 6th (JR). 34 were on the Tyne at Elswick Wharf on 8th (DM) with 30 noted W at Haughton Strother GP on 28th and 25 at Budle Bay the same day (CGK). A group of 14 at Chatton included 11 immature birds on 6th (JR) with 11 at East Chevington also including one juvenile on 28th (IFo). One to six were noted at Arcot Pond, Castle Island, Derwent Reservoir, Hauxley, Jesmond Dene, Leazes Park, West Hartford and on the NTBC pelagic trip (one immature).

**Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus argenteus*

The prime concentration noted was of 676 at the Tweed Estuary during a WEBS count on 18th (MHu). Otherwise counts were small with at least 50 on the Hauxley shore on 6th (HRS) with 21 at Castle Island on 20th (DM). One to four were noted at Arcot Pond, Jesmond Dene and Leazes Park.

**Iceland Gull** *Larus glaucoides*

A second-winter at Blyth harbour on 22nd could well have been the returning bird from last winter (RA).

**Great Black-backed Gull** *Larus marinus*

Passage at Hauxley was marked with 134 N on 14th in 45 minutes and 146 N on 15th in two hours (HRS). Otherwise few reports with at least 78 on fields at Druridge on 29th (PRM), 20 on a WEBS count at the Tweed Estuary on 18th (MHu) and 17 at Old Bewick on 6th (JR) and 25 at Castle Island on 20th (DM).

A Great-backed Gull off Tynemouth  
19th September by Alan Tilmouth

**Black Tern** *Chilidonias niger*

The juvenile from last month remained at East Chevington until 6th (IFO/STH/TRD/ASJ) and was joined by another juvenile on 2nd (Aco). A brief sighting on 4th at Cresswell Pond (MSH) could well have been one of these birds. Finally one was noted S offshore from Newbiggin on 4th (AA).

**Sandwich Tern** *Sterna sandvicensis*

Large numbers were still being reported with many high counts. 140 were roosting at Cocklawburn on Saltpan Rocks on 7th (48 there on 16th) plus ca.130 at Ladies Skerr, Berwick on 13th (MHu). At Stag Rocks, Bamburgh 102 were on rocks there on 6th (MSH). Further south 70 were noted in the Blyth Estuary on 5th (DRW) and at least 60 at Hauxley on 6th (HRS). The northerlies from 14th to 16th saw numbers moving at Druridge with 18 on 14th and 23 on 15th (IDR). Seaton Sluice noted 19 still on rocks there on 15th with a late bird S on 30th (SSWT). 15 were at Howick on 8th (JAR) with up to eight at Cresswell, Hauxley and Newbiggin in the first two weeks.

**Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo*

The peak count was an impressive 210 on rocks on 6th off Cresswell village with many juveniles apparent (ASJ). A late report of the nesting colony at Royal Quays Marina was received with 20 adults and six juveniles on 3rd August (RWM/MIM). At least 20 were offshore at Hauxley on 6th (HRS). Otherwise in the month one to ten reported at Big Waters, Cresswell, Druridge, East Chevington, Newbiggin, Spittal Bay, St Mary's and Tynemouth.

**Roseate Tern** *Sterna dougallii*

The highest count by far was 21 at St Mary's Island on rocks on 1st (ASJ). This reduced quickly with three adults and two juveniles on 4th and a single juvenile on 15th (DRW). The Newbiggin roost still had five present on 7th (TRD) with one still there on 11th (AT). A few were noted off Seaton Sluice with two N and one S on 4th, a single N on 13th and an adult and two juveniles on rocks there on 14th (SSWT). A single at Blyth Harbour on 2nd (RA) was the only other report this month. Of note though was a late report of a chick still being ringed on 10th August on Coquet Island (TAC). This was the latest ever ringed by the observer.

**Arctic Tern** *Sterna paradisaea*

A large group of 45 was still present on rocks off Cresswell Village on 6th (ASJ) with 16 still roosting at Saltpan Rocks, Cocklawburn on 7th (MHu). Hauxley noted at least 20 offshore on 6th and 5 passed S on 9th (HRS). The only other report was two at Newbiggin on 14th (TRD).

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

Substantial numbers were noted N during the northerlies with 75 per hour on 14th, 125 per hour on 15th and 150 per hour on 16th at Seaton Sluice (SSWT). This movement was also noted at Hauxley with 39 N on 14th in 45 minutes and ca.60 per hour on 15th (HRS).

**Guillemot** *Uria aalge*

Numbers were noticeable moving N during the northerlies from 14th to 16th with at least 50 N at Newbiggin on 14th (TRD) with 17 at Druridge on 14th and 12 on 15th (IDR). Also on 27th 22 moved S and 10 N at Hauxley (HRS). Otherwise one to ten reported at Bamburgh, Cresswell, Druridge, Holy Island, Howick, Newbiggin and on the NTBC pelagic trip. There was still a report of a juvenile accompanying an adult at Howick on 3rd (JAR).

**Razorbill** *Alca torda*

The peak count was of at least ten off Emmanuel Head, Holy Island on 13th (ADM/MJC). Otherwise one to three were at Druridge, Newbiggin and on the NTBC pelagic trip.

**Little Auk** *Alle alle*

The prime sea watching conditions from 13th to 16th saw an early influx with three N at St Mary's on 13th (CGK/AJ/AC) with a single adult still in breeding plumage N on 14th at Newbiggin (AT/MSK) and two N at Newbiggin on 16th (AT).

**Puffin** *Fratercula arctica*

The NTBC pelagic trip from Tynemouth on 5th recorded five with four N at Newbiggin on the same date (GB). Otherwise one to six reported during the northerlies from 14th to 16th at Newbiggin and Seaton Sluice (TRC/SSWT).

**Rock Dove / Feral Pigeon** *Columba livia*

Only one record this month of 52 in Ashington on 2nd (PCF).

**Stock Dove** *Columba oenas*

At Prestwick Carr, 11 were present on 19th (PCF), 11 were also at Holywell Ponds on 27th (JRT). Twos were at Cresswell Pond on three dates, Arcot Pond and Chesters Walled Garden.

**Woodpigeon** *Columba palumbus*

500 were in four different flocks at Hartley West Farm, Holywell on 25th (RJP) and 40-50 were seen in the Hauxley area on two dates. In Woolsington, a pair fledged three young in a garden, one of which drowned in a pond.

**Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

34 were counted flying around (presumably not in) the manor Walks Shopping Centre in Cramlington on 29th (TB) and 26 were in Heddon-on-the-Wall on 6th (PCF). 12 were seen on Holy Island on 27th and at Hauxley on 6th where, on 27th, a single bird was noted feeding on the beach.

**Barn Owl** *Tyto alba*

Singles were seen at Warkworth on 4th (MSK/NEWT) and Druridge Links on 16th (IDR). One was found as a road casualty near Humshaugh on 14th (MR).

**Little Owl** *Athene noctua*

One to two were present at Chugdon Woods, Ellington (TB) and a single at Adderstone (JHa) throughout the month and one was noted on four dates at Shiremoor. Singles were also seen at Doddington, East Coldcotes and Stannington.

**Tawny Owl** *Strix Aluco*

Two were heard at Throckley Pond on 2nd, Wallington on 5th and Wark (North Tyne) on 7th (PRM/TWi), two were also at Hipsburn on 26th (TAC). Singles, mostly heard calling, were recorded at Bowsden, Gosforth, Halton Red House, Hauxley Ringing Station, Hazlerigg, Lickar Dene, Park End (North Tyne), Walbottle Hall and Warkworth. A roadside casualty was noted at on the A1 at Fenwick Granary (DWS).

**Long-eared Owl** *Asio otus*

An adult roosted on Holy Island on 21st (IK).

**Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus*

Prestwick Carr attracted up to four (on 10th) during the month (PCF/PHH). One was at East Chevington on 19th (RB/MB) and Hauxley nature Reserve on 20th (HRS).

**Swift** *Apus apus*

All records received came from 1st to 11th. Three flew S at Ellington on 1st (TB) and Hauxley on 6th (HRS), with two S there on 5th. Several singles were noted, mainly flying S, with the last one being seen at Shiremoor on 11th (CGK).

**Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*

Two were at Holywell Dene on 9th (MNC). Singles were reported at numerous locations including Big Waters and Haughton Strother Gravel Pits on three dates, Branton Gravel Pits, Howick (on the coast), Lemmington, Linton Pond and West Ord.

**Green Woodpecker** *Picus viridis*

One was calling at Ingram on 6th (JR). Singles were also at Newcastle Business Park on 20th, Ponteland Golf Course on 24th (PCF) and Wark (North Tyne) on 29th (EAW).

**Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major*

Three were noted in Leazes Park (Newcastle-upon-Tyne) on 16th (LJM) and two visited feeders in Rothbury throughout the month (TRD/JD). All other records were of singles, mostly in typical habitat. One flew along the cliff top path in Spittal on 4th which may have been a migrant (MHu). Singles were noted at Hauxley Ringing Station between 12th and 20th with one ringed there on 19th.

Juvenile Great Spotted Woodpecker  
at Wallington  
by Colin Bradshaw

**Skylark** *Alauda arvensis*

28 moved N at Druridge Pools on 17th (MSK/NEWT), 20 moved S at Hauxley on 19th with ten S there on 12th (HRS) and 15 flew E at Haughton Strother on 13th. A 'strong SE passage' was noted at Bamburgh on 30th (BRS). The largest gathering was 130 at Duddo on 30th (ASJ), 90 were on Holy Island on 18th, 45 at St Mary's Island (Whitley Bay) on 30th, 36 at Black Heddon on 25th and 32 at Haughton Strother GP on 23rd.

**Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia*

By a substantial margin, the highest count came from East Chevington where 200+ were feeding on 6th (ASJ). 20+ were noted at Hauxley on 6th, 10 at Cresswell Pond on 3rd and nine at Haughton Strother GP where two young were still being fed at the nest hole on 9th.

**Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*

Southerly passage was noted at Hauxley with 680 on 6th, 150 on 2nd, 100 on 5th, 50 on 20th and 20 on 15th with 15-30 in village during the month (HRS). 50 flew S at Hazlerigg on 7th and 'Steady' S passage was noted at St Mary's (Whitley Bay) on 3rd (MSH). The largest gathering was at Ingram with 250 (mostly young birds) there on 6th (JR), about 200 fed before dusk at West Hartford on 7th, also on 7th, 100 fed and mobbed owls at Prestwick Carr, 100 were also on the roof

of the valve tower at Kielder Dam on 11th. 40-60 were at Alnwick, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Haughton Strother, Howick, Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Town Moor), Rodham Bog, Slaley, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Whitley Bay (St Mary's Island). Flocks of between 13 and 35, mostly young birds, were noted around the Cheviot fringe on 6th and 25th. The final brood of three were still being fed in a nest at Wellfield Allotments on 21st but had gone by 22nd and a pair were still feeding young at a nest in Wark (N. Tyne) on 30th. On Holy Island it has been the best year so far in study area. 56 pairs bred. 35 monitored nests fledged 136 young, six pairs being double brooded (IK).

#### **House Martin** *Delichon urbica*

Southerly movement was noted at Hauxley with 200 counted on 5th (HRS) and 35 moved through Cullercoats and 18 through Haughton Strother on 1st. The largest gatherings were 150 at Bamburgh Castle Wood on 6th (BRS), 140 at Yearle on 7th, 100 at Hauxley on 6th and on the roof of the valve tower at Kielder Water on 11th. 40-60 were at Ashington (Castle Island), Haughton Strother, Ingram Valley and Kielder (Gowanburn Farm). All birds had left the Stannington (Netherton park) colony by 27th but young were still in a nest at Holywell Pond on 30th.

#### **Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis*

At Hauxley, about 100 per hour flew S on 6th and over 60 were counted on the beach on the same day, 30-40 flew S at Hauxley on 5th and 20th and 20 on 12th (HRS). 60+ flew W at Greenlee on 30th where there was continuous westerly movement throughout the day. One to five flew S over Cramlington on various dates. Large gatherings included 120 at Prestwick Carr on 19th (PCF), 100+ on Holy Island on 13th and 27th, 47 on the Town Moor (Newcastle upon Tyne), 34 at Pegswood Community Park and 31 at Kilham.

#### **Rock Pipit** *Anthus petrosus*

One to five were on Hauxley Shore on numerous dates (HRS), 2 were at Whitley Bay (St. Mary's Island) on 2nd (MT/NT) and singles were at Holy Island on 10th and 27th.

#### **Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava flavissima*

Two flew S at Whitley Bay (St. Mary's Island) on 3rd (MSH) and singles S at Hauxley on 6th and 12th. Five, including two males, were at Haughton Strother on 1st with two there on 9th (MR), two were at Boulmer on 20th and singles were at Backworth, Hauxley and Whittle Dene Reservoirs between 12th and 21st.

#### **Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*

Three flew S at Hauxley on 12th and 19th and two S there on 20th (HRS). Three were at Jesmond Dene on 6th (MJCo) and Whitley Bay (St. Mary's Island) on 25th (ASJ). Two were noted at Bamburgh, Bywell, Cramlington, Cresswell Pond, Howick, Makendon, Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Exhibition Park), North Shields (Northumberland Park), Mitford, Whitley Bay (Marden Quarry) and Wylam.

#### **Pied Wagtail** *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

Data from the usual roost at Tapee Fen, Berwick upon Tweed was as follows (PJ):

Date	Count	Remarks
02/09/09	80	Sunset; some dance though rain beginning
03/09/09	8	Sunset; birds dance, go down then up & away
05/09/09	50	Sunset
06/09/09	50	Sunset; rain, Wagtails dancing; Kestrel passing
09/09/09	90	Sunrise; attacked by 2 Merlins working in tandem
11/09/09	84	Sunrise; attacked by a Merlin, outcome not seen
12/09/09	36	Sunrise
13/09/09	48	Sunrise; Kestrel passing N>S
15/09/09	50	Sunrise; bat seen coming towards roof/roost?
16/09/09	60	Sunrise; Merlin up from SW corner of fen
17/09/09	120	Sunrise
18/09/09	143	Sunrise
19/09/09	7	Sunrise; total cloud cover, v. low tide today
20/09/09	187	Sunrise
22/09/09	97	Sunrise; Swallow rises with Wagtails; Merlin N>S
23/09/09	206	Sunrise; much cloud and mist on sea
24/09/09	280	Sunrise; most Wagtails rise and gone in 7 minutes
25/09/09	600	Sunrise; strong wind from W. Wagtails blown about
26/09/09	711	Sunrise; clear and windy
27/09/09	544	Sunrise; many flies in air
28/09/09	428	Sunrise; windy. reeds swaying
28/09/09		Sunset; many seen in prolonged dance over fen
29/09/09	412	Sunrise; calm and with much low cloud
29/09/09		Sunset; much dancing despite light rain.
30/09/09	349	Sunrise; calm, drizzle. all depart >W or >SW



Elsewhere, 27 were feeding at Prestwick Carr on 12th (PCF) and 21 were in Tynemouth Park on 13th. 20+ were on Holy Island on 13th and 27th.

**White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba alba*

Three were on the Rocket Field on Holy Island on 20th with one there on 19th (IK). One was at Low Newton-by-the-Sea on 2nd (RNa) and on Hauxley Beach on 19th (HRS).

**Dipper** *Cinclus cinclus*

Two were at Haughton Strother on 13th (MR), Bywell Bridge on 20th (PCF) and Wylam on 27th (EAW/PRM). Singles were at Rothbury and Mitford.

**Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Ten were at Haughton Strother on 13th (MR), seven at Chesters Walled Garden and five in Holy Island Village on 20th.

**Dunnock** *Prunella modularis*

Ten were in Holy Island Village on 20th (MJC/ADM) and nine were in the Hauxley area on 6th. Ringers caught four at Hauxley on 12th and two at Druridge Links on 13th and Hauxley on 14th and 19th.



Juvenile Dunnock in a Fawdon (Newcastle) garden  
by Les Robson

**Robin** *Erithacus rubecula*

Conspicuous in the Hauxley area during the month, where there was a peak of 24 on 6th decreasing to seven by 14th. There was a further influx on 15th when ca.20 were located, declining to only two by 27th. A total of nine were ringed here (HRS). In the North Tyne valley 16 were reported from Haughton Strother GP on 13th (MR) and 14 at Chesters House and Walled Garden on 27th (ALT). Numbers on Holy Island increased from six to seven on 13th to ten on 27th (ADM/MJC). Elsewhere three to seven were reported from Bamburgh RS, Druridge Bay, Jesmond Dene, Kilham, St Mary's Island and Tilmouth Bridge.

**\* Bluethroat** *Svecica svecica*

One on Staple Island (Farne Islands) on 14th was the first record of the autumn, following a decent spring total of five individuals (FIW).

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Two birds were reported, a female at Berwick Little Beach on 24th (MHu) and a juvenile at Newcastle Quayside (near the mouth of the Ouseburn), on 29th (IK).

**Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Inland singles were at Eals Bridge and Wark on 1st (EC/JSB/MNC). A coastal migrant was on Holy Island from 19th-24th (IK *et al.*)

**Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra*

Birds continued to frequent St Mary's Island, with a peak count of 13 on 2nd (MT/NT). Elsewhere on the coast seven were at Druridge Bay on 9th ((MT/NT) and a single at East Chevington on 10th. Inland six were fly-catching at Prestwick Carr on 9th (PCF), one bird still present here on 20th. The three birds reported at Newcastle Town Moor in August remained until 7th (GB); two were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 21st (MR) and one at Swallow Pond on 1st. Singles were still in breeding areas at Makendon and Shillmoor (Upper Coquetdale) on 2nd and at Kilham on 25th.

**Stonechat** *Saxicola torquata*

Birds reported from new or previously unreported breeding areas are listed in the chart below; bringing the total to at least 52 breeding sites this year (22 coastal / 30 inland).

Site	Date	Adults	Young	Notes	Observer
Bamburgh Wood	20th September	3	1		ADM/MJC
Bygate(Upper Coquetdale)	6th September		2		JR
Debdon	6th September		1		TRD/JD
Kilham	25th September	1	4		JR
Plenmeller Common	1st September			Family party of 4	JSB/EC
Simonside	1st September		4		JR
Simonburn	2nd September	1	3		TWi

The largest concentration this month came from Cocklawburn with ten on 23rd (MHu). Up to five were at Bamburgh Castle Wood and St Mary's Island and four at Cheswick, Druridge Pools, Holy Island and Prestwick Carr. One to three was reported from a further eight coastal and six inland localities.

#### **Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Well reported from coastal areas during the month. 18 at St Mary's Island on 2nd was the highest count submitted, declining to ten by 4th (MT/NT). Seven were at Newcastle Town Moor on 2nd (GB) and five at Berwick Little Beach also on 2nd, three present here on 21st (MHu). In Druridge Bay passage was on-going with birds reported throughout the month. Up to five were at Hemscotthill Links on 15th (EC/JSB), four at Bell's Farm on 30th and Druridge Pools on 25th (EC/JSB/PCF) three at Cresswell Dunes on 2nd (TRD) and one to two on various other dates. Elsewhere on the coast four were at Annstead on 14th (per NNBC), three at Berwick Little Beach on 21st (BWG) and Cocklawburn on 23rd (MHu) and one to two at a further ten localities. Inland four were at Kirkheaton on 23rd (PCF) and one to two at Alnwick Moor, Backworth, Chew Green (Upper Coquetdale), Gosforth Park, Ingoe Moor, Simonside and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.



A first winter Wheatear at Monk's House pool on 6th September by Mike Hodgson

#### **Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus*

One at Ladykirk on 18th was the only report (CP).

#### **Blackbird** *Turdus merula*

Variously reported from Hauxley RS during the month where peak counts were 15+ on 20th, and 14 on 12th (HRS). Elsewhere 13+ were at Chesters House and Walled Garden on 27th (ALT) and four at Kilham on 25th.

#### **Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris*

25 were reported from Ladykirk on 18th (CP) and one bird arrived high from the east at Hauxley on 12th (HRS).

#### **Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos*

15+ at Chesters House and Walled Garden on 27th was a good local count, apparently attracted to a bumper Yew berry crop (ALT). Two to four at Hauxley RS increased to 12 on 19th (HRS). Elsewhere two to six were reported from Alnham, Jesmond Dene and Kilham.

#### **Redwing** *Turdus iliacus*

Four were at Holy Island on 30th, and one here on 27th (SVM/AJM/ADM). Three were noted at Ellington on 13th (TB), two at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) and Slaley on 27th and singles at East Ord on 22nd and Wark (North Tyne) on 29th.

#### **Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus*

The largest flocks were 29 at Thockrington on 1st (MNC) and 25 feeding on a stubble field at Howick on 12th (JAR). On Newcastle Town Moor eight on 2nd increased to 18 by 9th (GB). Elsewhere during the month 12 were at Gosforth, ten at Blyth, eight at Exhibition Park, seven at Hepple, six at North Shields, up to five at Hauxley and two at Chesters House and Walled Garden.

#### **\* Lanceolated Warbler** *Locustella lanceolata*

One on Longstone (Farne Islands) on 29th will be only the third county record, if accepted (FIW). The first was at Priors

Park in November 1984 and the last also on the Farne Islands in September 1995.

**Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella naevia*

Two individuals were found, one at Prestwick Carr on 9th (PCF) and another at West Hartford on 12th (PJA).

**Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Eight+ were still at Cresswell Pond on 2nd (MSH) and singles at Cocklawburn, St Mary's Island and Woodhorn Flashes.

**Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Singles were at Cresswell Pond on 17th and 29th (MSK/PRM) and at Druridge Bay Dunes on 13th (IDR/JF).

**Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla*

Two were at Hauxley RS on 5th and 9th, with single here on 12th and 19th (HRS). Two were also at Holywell Dene on 9th (MNC), and singles at Arcot Pond, Bamburgh, Exhibition Park, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Holy Island (Vicar's garden), Holy Island (North dunes), Kilham, and Rothbury (Craggside).

**Garden Warbler** *Sylvia borin*

Singles were reported from Swallow Pond on 11th (SPP) and Hauxley on 20th (HRS)

**\*Barrred Warbler** *Sylvia nisoria*

A bird was on Staple Island on the Franes on 14th (DS). Two on Holy Island on 15th were reported on Birdguides.

**Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca*

One at Swallow Pond on 1st was the only record (SPP).

**Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis*

Six birds were noted during the first week. Two juveniles were at Arcot Pond on 7th (PJA) and two at Cresswell Pond on 2nd (MSH). Singles were also reported from Cocklawburn on 7th and St Mary's Island on 2nd.

**Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus*

A lack of favourable winds resulted in only one record this month, a single at Holy Island on 20th (ADM/MJC/CP).

**Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*

Well reported from the Hauxley area, with birds present throughout the month. Peak counts here included 14 on 5th, 19 on 6th, 13 on 9th and ten from 14th-20th. A total of 11 were ringed here during the month (HRS). Six were at Arcot Pond on 2nd (LJM), four at Black Heddon on 25th (ASJ) and three to three+ at Bamburgh Castle Wood on 6th (BRS) and Holy Island from 13th-20th (ADM/MJC). Elsewhere two's were reported from Berwick, Cramlington (Valley Park), Exhibition Park, Linton Pond, Newcastle Business Park and St Mary's Island with singles at a further 18 inland and five coastal localities.

Chiffchaff at Woodhorn Church  
27th September by Alan Tilmouth



**Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Coastal migrants were reported from a number of localities including 15+ in Bamburgh Castle Wood on 6th (BRS), ten at Hauxley on 5th declining to three by 15th (HRS), ten at St Mary's Island on 12th, six moving through a Marden Estate (Tynemouth) garden on 4th (ASJ) and four in Holy Island village on 20th. At the latter locality an additional two birds were reported as unidentified Willow/Chiffs (ADM/MJC). Inland seven were found over 2km at Prestwick Carr on 5th (PCF), three at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 1st and three in Holywell Dene on 9th. Elsewhere one to two were also reported from Cocklawburn, Cresswell Pond, Exhibition Park, a Kenton garden, Rothbury, Stannington and Woodhorn Cemetery.

**Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus*

12 were reported from Wark (North Tyne) on 1st (MNC), five at Chesters House and Walled Garden on 27th (ALT), four at Tilmouth and one to two at Hauxley and Jesmond Dene.



**Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata*

A family party was noted at Eals on 1st (JSB/EC). three late birds inland were observed at Haughton Strother on 6th (MR), Cragside on 15th (JD/TRD), Mitford Castle on 24th (AT) and Fell Cottages, Slaley on 24th (RMH). Inland movement was very evident all month with two to four at Exhibition Park/Newcastle Town Moor between 1st-7th (GB), three at Backworth on 29th August (CGK), two at Arcot Pond on 2nd (LJM) and singles at Swallow Pond on 1st (SPP), at a Tranwell Woods garden between 3rd-7th (PT), Holywell Pond on 5th (MSH) and Prestwick Carr between 5th-9th (PCF/LMo). On the coast, three were at Woodhorn Church on 5th (GB), two at Castle Wood. Bamburgh on 6th (BRS) and singles at Cresswell Pond on 2nd (MSH) and Holy Island on 15th (CP). One was ringed at Druridge Bay Links on 11th (JF).

Spotted Flycatcher is a **target species** for 2009. Please report all records for the species.

A Spotted Flycatcher ringed at Druridge Links  
7th September by Janet Fairclough

**\*Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula parva*

One graced the Vicar's garden, Holy Island on 15th (CP). A pile of feathers belonging to a dead 1st winter bird was observed at Hauxley NR on 15th (HRS).

**Long-tailed Tit** *Aegithalos caudatus*

30 were noted at Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 30th (MNC), 27 at Howick on 7th (JAR), 20 at Prestwick Carr on 28th (LMo), 18 at Kilham on 25th (JR), 15 at Hauxley RS on 6th (HRS), 12 at Wark on 1st (MNC) and ten at Bank's Pond (Dinnington) on 5th (PCF). One to nine were at a further seven widespread localities.



Long-tailed Tit at Backworth  
by Chris Knox

**Blue Tit** *Cyanistes caeruleus*

22 were observed at Haughton Strother GP on 18th (MR), nine at Hauxley RS on 6th (HRS), eight at Chesters Walled Garden on 27th (ALT), seven at Kilham on 25th (JR) and six at Tillmouth on 25th (JR).

**Great Tit** *Parus major*

11 were at Hauxley on 6th (HRS), eight at Chesters Walled Garden on 27th (ALT), five at Kilham on 25th (JR), four at Jesmond Dene on 27th (MJCo) and three at Tillmouth on 25th (JR).

**Coal Tit** *Periparus ater*

13 were noted at Hauxley on 6th (HRS), nine at Chesters Walled Garden on 27th (ALT), six at Southfield Lea, Cramlington on 6th (DM) and Jesmond Dene on 27th (MJCo) and three+ at Bamburgh on 30th (BRS). One to three visited gardens at Marden Estate (Tynemouth – ASJ), Old Hartley (RJP) and Walbottle (KR/LR).

**Willow Tit** *Poecile montanus*

Two were at Beacon Lane (Cramlington) on 5th (DM) and Prestwick Carr between 5th-16th (PCF/MRS). Singles were also at Hauxley RS on 6th (HRS), Hepple Whitefield on 7th (JD), Fell Cottages, Slaley on 9th and 20th-23rd (RMH),

Swallow Pond on 10th-11th (ASJ/SPP), Arcot Pond on 18th (PJA), Bedlington on 23rd (ASH) and Kilham on 25th (JR).

**Marsh Tit** *Poecile palustris*

Three were at Haughton Strother on 6th and 12th (MR). Singles were at Chesters on 4th (SW) and Pigdon on 9th (ASJ).

Marsh Tit is a **target species** for 2009. Please report all records for the species.

**Nuthatch** *Sitta europaea*

Nine were at Chesters Walled Garden on 26th (ALT), three at Wark on 1st (MNC) and Wylam on 27th (PRM/CAW), two at Northumberland Park (North Shields – MNC), Mitford Castle on 24th (AT) and Jesmond Dene on 27th (MJCo). Singles were also at Attlee Park (Bedlington), Cragside, Hepple Whitefield, Humford (Bedlington), a Rothbury garden, Wark and a Walbottle garden.

**Treecreeper** *Certhia familiaris*

Three were at Chesters Walled Garden on 27th (ALT), two at Mitford Castle on 24th (AT) and singles at Hauxley on 6th (HRS), Cragside on 15th (TRD/JD) and Matfen on 15th (PCF). One was re-trapped at Hauxley on 20th (HRS).

**Jay** *Garrulus glandarius*

Five were observed at Morpeth on 27th (TB), four at Wylam on 27th (PRM/EAW), three at Bank's Pond (Dinnington) on 10th (PCF) and Prestwick Carr on 11th (JSB/EC), two at Wark on 1st (MNC), Duddo Hill on 15th (MHu), Ellington on 22nd (TB), Fell Cottages (Slaley) on 23rd (RMH), Tillmouth on 25th (JR) and Humford (Bedlington) on 27th (ASH). Singles were also at Bothal Pond, Cragside, Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Pools, Fell Cottages (Slaley), Hethpool (College Valley), Howick, Langleeford (Harthope Valley), Powburn and West Hartford.

**Magpie** *Pica pica*

19 were at Big Waters on 17th (GB), 15+ at Hauxley on 6th (HRS), 12 at Whitley Bay Cemetery on 7th (MT/NT), nine at Druridge Bay Dunes on 8th (IDR) and six at Jesmond Dene on 6th (MJCo).



Magpies making a meal of a rabbit  
Druridge Links  
8th September by Iain Robson

**Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula*

140 were at Seaton Burn on 17th (GB). 47 were at Alnham on 6th (JR), 43 at Dam Dykes Farm, Cramlington on 5th (DM), 34 at Kilham on 25th (JR), ten at Chesters Walled Garden on 26th (ALT) and nine at Jesmond Dene on 20th MJCo).

**Rook** *Corvus frugilegus*

50 were at South Charlton on 7th (JMA), 27 at Kilham on 25th (JR) and one at Chesters Walled Garden on 26th (ALT).

**Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone*

16 were at Hauxley on 6th (HRS), nine at Kilham on 25th (JR), eight at Jesmond Dene on 6th (MJCo) and one at Chesters Walled Garden on 27th (ALT).

**Raven** *Corvus corax*

Three flew S at Grindon Lough on 19th (MRS) and Rothbury near Cragside on 18th (per NNBC).



**Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*

540 were at Cocklawburn on 7th (MHu), 300 at St. Mary's Island on 10th (MT/NT), 185 at Bell's Farm, Cresswell on 8th (PCF) 70 at Dinnington on 13th (PCF) and four-50 at a further four widespread localities.

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*

230 (flocks on 120 and 110) were at St. Mary's Island on 10th (ASJ), 150 at Holywell Village on 5th (MSH), 105 at Whittle Dene on 6th (PCF). 50 at Brenkley on 5th (9GB), South Charlton on 7th (JMA) and Holy Island on 26th (DWS), 45 at Marden Estate (Tynemouth) all month (ASJ), 40 at Hauxley Village on 20th (HRS), 35 at Berwick Hill on 13th (PCF), 34 at Dinnington on 5th (PCF), 31 at a Walbottle garden on 27th (KR/LR) and 29 at Kilham on 25th (JR). Ten to 25 were also at Blagdon, Howick and Stag Rocks (Bamburgh).

**Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*

Post breeding flocks involved 70 at East Holywell on 20th (MNC), 40 at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) all month (TB), Haughton Strother on 1st (MR) and Backworth (mainly juveniles) on 10th (SPP), 25 at Doddington on 19th (TRD), 24 at Letham Shank, Berwick on 7th (MHu), 17 near Tranwell on 30th (ASJ), 12 at Cresswell Pond on 2nd (MSH), nine at Prestwick Carr on 25th (PCF), four in gardens at Hauxley on 20th (HRS), two on feeders at Netherton Park (Stannington) on 4th (RWM/MIM) and singles at Wark on 9th (PRM) and Holy Island Village on 18th (MJC).

Tree Sparrow is a **target species** for 2009. Please report all records for the species.

**Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs*

150+ were in stubble fields at Haughton Strother GP on 23rd (MR), 24 at Alnham on 6th (JR), 23 at Kilham on 25th (JR), 16+ at Chesters Walled Garden on 27th (ALT), six S at Hauxley on 20th (HRS) and three at Jesmond Dene on 27th (MJC).

**Greenfinch** *Carduelis chloris*

30 were noted at Chare Ends, Holy Island on 18th (MJC), 19 at Kilham on 25th (JR), 12 at Prestwick Carr on 5th (PCF), seven at a Whitley Bay garden on 4th (MT/NT), five S at Hauxley on 20th (HRS) and singles at Chesters Walled Garden and Jesmond Dene.

**Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis*

Largest post breeding "charms" involved 130 at Cocklawburn on 2nd (MHu), 110 at St. Mary's Island on 1st (ASJ), 100 at Steel Rigg on 19th (MRS), 93 at Prestwick Carr on 16th (PCF) 65 at Kirkheaton on 15th (PCF), 50 at Arcot Pond on 27th (DM), 45 in the Hauxley area on 5th (HRS), Gloucester Lodge dunes (Blyth) on 6th (LJM) and 25 at Wark on 1st (MNC). Two-25 were at a further nine widespread localities including Dinnington and Whitley Bay.

**Siskin** *Carduelis spinus*

38 were recorded at Haughton Strother GP on 27th (MR), 35 at Eals Bridge on 1st (EC/JSB), 30 at Thrunton Woods on 12th (IBDa/KDa), five at Simonside on 25th (TRD) and singles at Wark on 5th and 30th (PRM). On the coast, three flew S over Hauxley on 27th (HRS).

**Linnet** *Carduelis cannabina*

Large post breeding flocks included 430 at Cheswick on 23rd (MHu), 150 at St. Mary's Island on 1st (ASJ) and Haughton Strother GP on 13th (MR), 120 at Monk's House on 24th (ASJ), 90+ at Whittle Dene on 21st (MR), 80 at Howick on 5th (JAR), 60+ at Newsham, Blyth on 17th (LJM) and Stag Rocks, Bamburgh on 27th (ADM/MJC), 50+ at Gloucester Lodge dunes on 6th (LJM) and Fourstones on 26th (RMH). Two to 40 were at a further eight largely coastal areas.

**Twite** *Carduelis flavirostris*

First returning birds involved two at Holy Island on 30th (SVM/AJM).

**Lesser Redpoll** *Carduelis cabaret*

Ca.70 were at Fell Cottages (Slaley) on 20th where 26 were ringed and one controlled during month (RMH). 30 were at Langleeford (Harthope Valley) on 17th (TRD/D), ten at Addycombe (Rothbury) on 14th (JD) and Craggside on 15th (TRD/JD), eight at Prestwick Carr on 26th (PCF), seven at Haughton Strother GP on 23rd (MR) and one to two at Cresswell Pond, East Chevington and Hepple Whitefield.

**Redpoll sp.** – One flew S over Hauxley RS on 12th and two were there on 20th (HRS).

**Crossbill** *Loxia curvirostra*

80 were at Craggside on 24th (DCh). 40 were at Bakethin (Kielder) on 21st. In Kielder Forest on 22nd there were many flocks of ten-30 with a pair displaying and males singing (MD). 30 were at Debdon on 6th (TRD/JD) and one-three at Fell Cottages (Slaley), Simonside and Thrunton Woods.

**\* Common Rosefinch** *Carpodacus erythrurus*

A showy immature/female was discovered on Longstone (Farne Islands) on 14th before relocating on nearby Brownsman

between 15th-20th (DS/JC *et al*).

**Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

A late family was noted at Stamfordham on 17th (EC). Nine were at Prestwick Carr on 9th (PC) and five at Bellasis Bridge (Blagdon) on 20th (PCF). One-three were also noted at Bedlington, Druridge Bay dunes, Lickar Dene, Linton Pond, Newcastle Business Park, a Rothbury garden, Tillmouth, Thrunton Woods, Valley Park (Cramlington) and a Walbottle garden.

**Lapland Bunting** *Calcarius lapponicus*

The first of the autumn involved a single on Holy Island on 19th (SVM/AJM).

**Snow Bunting** *Plectrophenax nivalis*

A male at Druridge Pools dunes on 22nd was the first autumn arrival (EC).

**Yellowhammer** *Emberiza citronella*

19 were at Scrainwood on 6th (JR), 13 at Alnham on 6th (JR), 12 at Haughton Strother GP on 23rd (MR) and one-three at Beacon Lane (Cramlington), Big Waters, Hauxley and Howick.

**Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus*

15 were on Holy Island on 13th (ADM/MJC), five at Arcot Pond on 5th (DM) and Hauxley on 6th (HRS), three at Kilham on 25th (JR), two at Howick on 6th (JAR) and Druridge Pools on 29th (PRM) and one at Wark on 30th (PRM). Three flew S at Hauxley on 20th (HRS).

**\* Black-headed Bunting** *Emberiza melanocephala*

A 1st year bird showed well on Brownsman, Farne Islands on 14th (DS/JC/JM *et al*). It is the Island's fourth record and the first since 2004.

Reed Bunting at Newbiggin  
by Alan Tilmouth



**ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN**

**Escapes**

**Harris's Hawk** *Parabuteo unicinctus*

An escaped falconer's bird was seen twice at Holywell Dene on 1st and 15th (KWY).

**Hybrids**

**Canada Goose x Greylag Goose** *Branta canadensis x Anser anser*

A single hybrid was seen at East Chevington on 20th (PA).

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Bamburgh Ringing Station, Berwick Wildlife Group, Bird Club Pelagic, Hauxley Ringing Station, North Northumberland Bird Club, Northumberland Experience Wildlife Tours, Seaton Sluice Watch Tower.

Those observers marked with an asterisk after their name(s) have submitted records online using the club spreadsheet ,

copies are available by email'ing Dick Myatt at [dick@dickmyatt.co.uk](mailto:dick@dickmyatt.co.uk).

### Apologies for any accidental omissions

### BULLETIN COMPILATION AND PRODUCTION

This bulletin was compiled by Alan Tilmouth (Swans to Geese, Game birds, Divers to Herons), Graeme Bowman (Ducks), Trevor Blake (Birds of Prey to Rails), Ian Forsyth (Waders to Skuas), Tim Dean (Gulls to Auks, Escapes, Hybrids and Unknown Origin, List of Contributors, Highlights), Alan Tilmouth (Doves to Dunnock), Mike Richardson (Robin to Warblers), Dee McKeown (Flycatchers to Buntings), Julie Roper/Dan Turner (WeBS Coastal Counts) and Steve Holliday (WeBS Inland Counts). Thanks again to Ann McKeown for typing the section Flycatchers to Buntings.

Edited by Steve Barrett [Sscmagpie@aol.com](mailto:Sscmagpie@aol.com)

Distributed by Alan Watson [apusx@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:apusx@blueyonder.co.uk)

### RECORD SUBMISSION

**Cards:** Please send all record cards to Tim Dean, 2 Knocklaw Park, Rothbury NE65 7PW, to arrive on, or preferably before, the 8th of the month following that in which the records were collected. Please write cards legibly to ensure that your sightings are correctly recorded.

**E-mail:** Members are encouraged to e-mail their records on an Excel-style spreadsheet. Please e-mail Dick Myatt at [dick@dickmyatt.co.uk](mailto:dick@dickmyatt.co.uk) for a copy of the standard spreadsheet and other details.

**Location names and Grid references:** The use of standard location names and the inclusion of grid references greatly increases the value of records in subsequent analyses. A 1km square grid reference is the ideal e.g. NY8067 for Grindon Lough, but 2km square references (Tetrads) are also acceptable e.g. NY86D in 247 this case. A list of localities and their tetrad grid references (Tetrad/Locality List) can be downloaded from the 'Resources & Downloads' section of the Club website at <http://www.ntbc.org.uk> – the use of these names, wherever possible, would be highly appreciated.

### PHOTOGRAPHS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Please keep submitting your articles, photographs, sketches and illustrations for the bulletin. Thanks again to those who have supplied the excellent photographs. Please send to Steve Barrett at [Sscmagpie@aol.com](mailto:Sscmagpie@aol.com)

### ELECTRONIC BULLETIN

The NTBC bulletin can be received electronically or as hard copy. The electronic bulletin arrives earlier than the printed version, it is in colour and we save all that printing and stamps. Ask for an e-mailed bulletin from [jo.bentley@waitrose.com](mailto:jo.bentley@waitrose.com).

### INDOOR MEETINGS

The next Indoor Meeting is at Newcastle Falcons Rugby Club

Thursday 12th November at 7pm

Adrian Pitches will talk on **Ethiopia – Endemic birds and mammals**

### MEMBERSHIP

Annual subscriptions are now due. Why not pay your £23 (a bargain) by standing order and while you are at it fill in a gift aid request. For membership enquiries please contact [jo.bentley@waitrose.com](mailto:jo.bentley@waitrose.com). The form is attached to the bulletin.

### NTBC WEBSITE

The excellent club website is available at [www.ntbc.org.uk](http://www.ntbc.org.uk). Chris Knox is the link person to the club committee for the website and you can contact him at [christopher.knox@o2.co.uk](mailto:christopher.knox@o2.co.uk)

### FIELD TRIPS

The next field trip is to Mersehead 22nd November on the Solway for geese and raptors.

Contact is Trevor Blake;

Email: [trevor.1958@live.co.uk](mailto:trevor.1958@live.co.uk)

Tel : 01670 862 635

### NTBC/BTO ATLAS MEETING Thursday 26 November 2009 from 7.15pm

The Northumberland & Tyneside Bird Club will be welcoming all Atlas volunteers to the new venue at the Newcastle Falcons Rugby Club. Refreshments will be provided so it would be helpful if you could let us know if you intend to be there so that we can have some idea of numbers for the catering.

The meeting is open to all participants of the Bird Atlas and anyone who thinks that they may like to take part in the future. There will be a chance to see literature relating to the atlas, book more tetrads, ask questions of the organisers and, most importantly, meet other surveyors in a sociable atmosphere. If you still have any breeding records to submit, or forms to send off, please could you do that as soon as possible to allow data for the breeding season to be brought up to date.

Finally, thank you very much for all the hard work that has already been done; we have had some tremendous support.

Muriel & Tom Cadwallender on behalf of the Northumberland Bird Atlas committee.  
Email [tomandmurielcadwallender@hotmail.com](mailto:tomandmurielcadwallender@hotmail.com) tel 01665 830884

## Bird Atlas 2007-11

### Summary of vacant tetrads October 2009

	We have around 1430 tetrads in the county . 754 have been completed in winter and about 700 in the breeding season, and we are halfway through. There are still at least 46 tetrads have not yet been allocated in the winter season. Quite a lot are on the moors or in forests. Up to four adjacent tetrads could be covered on one visit, so we are looking for volunteers to take these on, or to organise a team.
NT91 C D E H I J	6 tetrads nth west from Low Bleakhope to Scotsman Knowe
NT92 B C D G H M N Z	8 tetrads north Cheviots up to Kirknewton
NT93 D G H U Z	5 tetrads nr Milfield
NU02 E R Y	3 tetrads singles, Clavering, Heburn Wood, Chatton Moor
NU03 Q V W	3 tetrads, Belford Mains
NY66 G H I L M N P R S U X Y	13 tetrads 3 bordering Cumbria Breeding season only
NY77 A C D E I J N P U	9 tetrads Wark forest
NY78 R & W	2 tetrads Whitchester Moor
NY84 E H I L S T U Y Z	10 tetrads Allenheads
NY98 F H I J L M N P Q R S T U V W X Z	17 tetrads breeding season only

## Neotropical Bird Club

I know that in the current credit crunch the Neotropics aren't necessarily on everyone's radar. However as more of us travel to Central America, the Caribbean and South America on holiday, can I take this opportunity to plug the Neotropical Bird Club if you are not already a member. The club was established to promote birding and conservation in the Neotropics and further information on the club is available at [www.neotropicalbirdclub.org](http://www.neotropicalbirdclub.org)

Ordinary membership is a very reasonable £21 p.a, and family membership is £27. For that you get a copy of Cotinga which publishes papers on the study of Neotropical birds, and two issues of the widely acclaimed Neotropical Birding which is full of superb articles on id., places to go birding, conservation and stunning photography. This magazine just gets better and better and if you are remotely interested in birding in the region you will love it. Unless the club can recruit more members it will not be able to continue to publish two issues of Neotropical Birding a year

Neil Osborne.

## Bird Magazines

Northumberland Wildlife Trust has recently received a kind donation of a huge number of birding magazines, mainly Bird Watching and RSPB Birds mag. The stack is about three foot high! Although we would love to keep these and make them available to visitors, we do not have the space.

We would therefore like to offer these to anyone who would find them of value and is able to collect them from our HQ in Gosforth. A donation would be very welcome.

If anyone is interested could they please contact me to arrange collection.

Steve Lowe

Northumberland Wildlife Trust Garden House

St. Nicholas Park Gosforth Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 3XT

Tel 0191 2846884 Web: [www.nwt.org.uk](http://www.nwt.org.uk)

# Summary of seabird breeding recorded on Tyneside, SE Northumberland and Dunstanburgh in Summer 2008

## PART A – Tyneside, coastal Tyne and Wear and SE Northumberland

### Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*)

The counts recorded in Table 1 were carried out on 9 - 10 July 2008 and include all the current River Tyne breeding locations known. The counts were performed when chick growth was well underway in order to easily observe the young birds that were present. There were 6 free-flying juveniles visible on 10 July at Tyne Bridge North tower. Refer to Table 2 for the June counts of Apparently Occupied Nests (i.e. a well-built nest capable of containing eggs with at least one adult present) along the river.

**Table 1:** Numbers of Kittiwake young fledged from nests on the River Tyne - July 2008.

River Tyne locality	Brood sizes	Min. number of successful nests fledging young	Minimum number of young fledged	Average number of young fledged per successful nest	Total number of older birds present (mid July 2008)
1. Tynemouth cliffs	53 x 1, 8 x 2, 15 x ?	61	69	1.13	93
2. North Shields Ferry Landing area	5 x 1, 1 x 2, 1 x ?	6	7	1.17	12
3. McNulty (Tyne Dock)	26 x 1, 2 x 2	28	30	1.07	30
4. International Coatings	44 x 1, 14 x 2, 13 x ?	58	72	1.24	107
5. Baltic Flour Mill	12 x 1, 2 x 2	14	16	1.14	15
6. Gateshead 'Kittiwake Tower'	32 x 1, 2 x 2, 5 x ?	34	36	1.06	62
7. Newcastle Quayside buildings (buildings below bridge).	10 x 1, 2 x 2	12	14	1.17	12
8. Tyne Bridge: North Tower, Newcastle	126 x 1, 28 x 2, 1 x ?, 6 free flying	154	188	1.18	137
9. Tyne Bridge: South Tower, Gateshead	19 x 1, 2 x 2	21	23	1.10	22
10. Newcastle Quay: Guildhall	9 x 1	9	9	1.0	15
<b>Totals and overall young per successful nest</b>	<b>336 x 1, 61 x 2, 35 x ? 6 free flying</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>464</b>	<b>1.15</b>	<b>505</b>

Locations 1, 2, 7, 8 and 10 are on the north side of the river Tyne, with 3, 4, 5, 6 and 9 on the south side. The most westerly sites (i.e. the furthest inland) have been 8 and 9 in recent years, although nesting has been successful since 2007 on the Newcastle Guildhall (just west of the Tyne Bridge). All nesting sites mentioned apart from Tynemouth cliffs are on man-made structures.

The number of Apparently Occupied Nests (AON) was 10.5% lower than in June 2007 (Table 3) and the minimum number of successful nests (i.e. raising at least one well grown young) was 31 % lower compared to July 2007 (Table 4). All river Tyne colonies (apart from the Baltic) recorded a decrease in number of successful nests when compared to 2007 (Table 4). The minimum number of chicks in July 2008 was 313 lower than during the same period in July 2007. The 2008 breeding success was a minimum of 0.57 young per AON compared to 0.86 in 2007. The average number of young fledged per successful nest was 1.15 in 2008 (Table 1) compared to 1.3 in 2007. A minimum of 397 nests fledged young in summer 2008 i.e. 49 % of the 812 AON counted in early June (Table 2). The number of older (i.e. not chicks or young of the same calendar year) Kittiwakes present during early June was just 19 higher (at 1083) than the June 2007 figure (Table 3), while during the counts in July 2008 the number of older birds was 27 lower than the equivalent July 2007 number of 532 individuals.

22 AON were observed on the long ledge on the north face of the Baltic in early June (17 in June 2007) with 16 chicks counted in July (12 in 2007). No more netting was observed this summer on the Newcastle Quayside buildings or the Tyne Bridge. There were twelve successful nests (a minimum of 14 in 2007) on buildings directly under the north side of the Tyne Bridge, but none (one in 2007) on the Akenside Building just west of the bridge. At the McNulty colony there was one successful nest on the face of the building within the yard (from 3 AON), while on the face on the outside of the yard there were 27 successful nests. The Guildhall colony on Newcastle quayside increased from 12 AON in 2007 (producing ten large chicks in July) to 15 in 2008 producing nine large chicks in July.

On 5 June at International Coatings small chicks were visible at four nests when seven small chicks were seen on the Kittiwake Tower northwest face. On 6 June 19 nests were seen with small chicks at the Tyne Bridge North (Newcastle), one nest was seen with a small chick at the Tyne Bridge South (Gateshead) and there was one small chick on the Baltic.



There was one dead chick at the Tyne Bridge north tower on 10 July, two on the south tower and one at McNulty. At the McNulty yard two chicks were blown from their nest during strong winds in late June, one was lost, presumably to a rat, while the second was rescued by staff. However this chick died after three days. On 10 July there were several discarded pipefish around the base of the Tyne Bridge north tower.

Numbers of AON at Marsden cliffs colony, South Tyneside, stood at 2,474 in 2007 to 2,459 in 2008 (Marsden data from J.C.Coulson).

**Table 2:** Kittiwake Apparently Occupied Nests (AON) on the River Tyne on 5 and 6 June 2008.

Location	AON (early 2008)	Min. number of successful nests (mid July/ 2008)	Min. no. of young fledged/AON	Minimum no. of successful nests as percentage of AON
1. Tynemouth cliffs	120	61	0.58	51 %
2. N Shields Ferry Landing	12	6	0.58	50 %
3. McNulty, Tyne Dock	42	28	0.71	67 %
4. International Coatings	149	58	0.48	39 %
5. Baltic Flour Mill	22	14	0.73	64 %
6. Kittiwake Tower (Gateshead)	120	34	0.30	28 %
7. Newcastle Quayside buildings	21	12	0.67	57 %
8. Tyne Bridge – Newcastle side	274	154	0.69	56 %
9. Tyne Bridge – Gateshead side	37	21	0.62	57 %
10. Newcastle Quay: Guildhall	15	9	0.60	60 %
<b>Totals, overall success and %</b>	<b>812</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>49 %</b>

**Table 3:** Kittiwake Apparently Occupied Nests (AON) on the River Tyne - June 2007 and 2008.

Location	AON - early June 2007	AON - early June 2008	AON % change (in numbers) from 2007 to 2008	OBP – early June 2007	OBP – early June 2008
1. Tynemouth cliffs	152	120	- 21 %	184	224
2. N Shields Ferry Landing	11	12	+ 9 %	15	16
3. McNulty, Tyne Dock	41	42	+ 2 %	54	51
4. International Coatings	205	149	- 27 %	241	195
5. Baltic Flour Mill	17	22	+ 29 %	21	34
6. Kittiwake Tower (Gateshead)	143	120	-16 %	159	150
7. Newcastle Quayside buildings	21	21	No change	26	26
8. Tyne Bridge – Newcastle side	264	274	+ 4 %	304	315
9. Tyne Bridge – Gateshead side	41	37	- 10 %	47	52
10. Newcastle Quay: Guildhall	12	15	+ 25 %	13	20
<b>Totals and overall % change</b>	<b>907</b>	<b>812</b>	<b>-10.5 %</b>	<b>1064</b>	<b>1083</b>

**Key** OBP: Older birds present (i.e. not chicks or young of the same calendar year).

**Table 4:** Kittiwake Successful Nests (SN, raising chicks to fledging) on the River Tyne - July 2007 and 2008.

Location	Min. no. SN mid July 2007	Min. no. SN mid July 2008	SN % change (in numbers) from 2007 to 2008
1. Tynemouth cliffs	86	61	- 29 %
2. N Shields Ferry Landing	9	6	- 33 %
3. McNulty, Tyne Dock	33	28	- 15 %
4. International Coatings	88	58	- 34 %
5. Baltic Flour Mill	10	14	+ 40 %
6. Kittiwake Tower (Gateshead)	101	34	- 66 %
7. Newcastle Quayside buildings	15	12	- 20 %
8. Tyne Bridge – Newcastle side	198	154	- 22 %
9. Tyne Bridge – Gateshead side	30	21	- 30 %
10. Newcastle Quay: Guildhall	9	9	No change
<b>Totals and overall % change</b>	<b>579</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>- 31 %</b>

In tables 1, 2, 3 and 4 the percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

**Herring Gull** (*Larus argentatus*)

This is a brief summary of observations made during the period from 11 to 15 July 2008 (and a comparison with the 2006 and 2007 data) in the usual North Tyneside study area, which has been surveyed since 1994, comprising: Tynemouth, Cullercoats (including Marden), North Shields (including: Preston, New York, Chirton, West Chirton, Percy Main, Tyne Commission Quay, Albert Edward Dock, Royal Quays) and East Howdon.

**Table 5:** Number of successful Herring Gull nests (i.e. those nests recorded with chicks) and minimum number of chicks raised to fledging in North Tyneside study area (split by location) during summers 2006 and 2007.

Location	10 – 12 July 2006		11 – 17 July 2007	
	Succ. Nests	Min. chicks	Succ. Nests	Min. chicks
Tynemouth	40	83	42	64
North Shields	64	104	59	111
Cullercoats	7	12	9	15
East Howdon	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>190</b>

**Table 6:** Herring Gull brood sizes during 11 to 15 July 2008 in North Tyneside study area (split by location).

Location	Brood sizes, 11 – 15 July 2008	Successful nests raising chicks	Minimum number of nestlings	Adults present
Tynemouth	16 x 1, 24 x 2, 7 x 3	47	85	47
North Shields	27 x 1, 34 x 2, 10 x 3, 3 x ?	71	125	75
Cullercoats	5 x 1, 1 x 1-2, 3 x 2, 2 x 3	11	18 – 19	12
East Howdon	0	0	0	--
<b>Total</b>	<b>48 x 1, 1 x 1-2, 61 x 2, 19 x 3, 3 x ?</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>228 - 229</b>	<b>134</b>

**Table 7:** Minimum number of Herring Gull chicks per successful nest 2006 – 2008, North Tyneside study area.

Breeding summer in year	2006	2007	2008
Average number of chicks per successful nest	1.79	1.73	1.77

The minimum number of successful Herring Gull nests (i.e. those nests fledging young) recorded in the period 2006 – 2008 was between 110 and 129 which raised a minimum annual total of from 190 to 228 chicks in this period. The overall minimum number of chicks raised per successful nest was 1.77 in 2008 (Table 7). During the July 2008 surveys most young were well grown while a small number of nestlings had already left the nest (for example five free-flying juveniles, not included in table 6, were seen in North Shields on 14 July). On 14 and 15 July single adults were observed sitting tight at four nests with no chicks visible, perhaps the eggs had failed to hatch or any young present were still very small.

A number of local residents at one Tynemouth street, who had complained about the noise, aggression and dirt from the birds, each had some metal spikes placed where the gulls had been nesting in previous years on certain properties behind chimney stacks. The spikes had no major effect and the birds continued to nest on some of these properties. A North Shields lady complained of the 'nightmare' of having them nesting in her street. Another North Shields resident lady had attempted to rescue a fledgling from the street only to be dive-bombed by the adults. A property owner in Wallsend Road, North Shields, was very happy to see the chicks on her chimney stack through my binoculars and said she wants them back in the future.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** (*Larus fuscus*)

In Cullercoats on 13th July there were two adults on a chimney stack on the opposite side of the road to a chick, on another chimney stack, which may have been theirs (i.e. possible breeding). There were also three adults flying in another part of Cullercoats on the same day. No nests were observed in Tynemouth, but in a North Shields street on 14th July there was one adult present with two or three chicks at a chimney stack nest site. On 26th July at this site there were two adults present with one large fledgling walking on the street and pavements beneath and a resident had placed some food for it. This juvenile was still present on 27th and 28th, but was not seen on 29th.

**Fulmar** (*Fulmarus glacialis*)

Breeding data for the summer 2007 and 2008 seasons are recorded here for the Tyne and Wear (to the north of the river Tyne) and the SE Northumberland coast. An Apparently Occupied Site (AOS) is defined as: a location where a bird appears to be sitting tightly on a reasonably horizontal area judged large enough to hold an egg.

**Table 8:** Breeding Fulmar data, summer 2007. AOS: Apparently Occupied (nesting) Sites

Breeding Fulmar data	June 6 & 7, 2007		Aug 9 – 11, 2007	
Location	Older birds	AOS	Older birds	Chicks
Tynemouth cliffs	57	23 – 24	1	7
Whitley Bay, Browns Bay cliffs	5	1	0	0
Whitley Bay, High Point cliffs	25	10	0	4
Old Hartley cliffs	66	32	0	0
Collywell Bay, Seaton Sluice	3	2	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>68 - 69</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>

Therefore total productivity for summer 2007: for 11 chicks from 68 AOS was 0.16 chicks per AOS.

**Table 9:** Breeding Fulmar data, summer 2008. AOS: Apparently Occupied (nesting) Sites

Breeding Fulmar data	June 5, 2008		Aug 6, 2008	
Location	Older birds	AOS	Older birds	Chicks
Tynemouth cliffs	60	36	3	13
Whitley Bay, Browns Bay cliffs	4	2	0	0
Whitley Bay, High Point cliffs	29	16	3	6
Old Hartley cliffs	57	20	0	1
Collywell Bay, Seaton Sluice	8	3	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>20</b>

Therefore total productivity for summer 2008: for 20 chicks from 77 AOS was 0.26 chicks per AOS.

## **PART B – Dunstanburgh Castle cliffs, coastal mid Northumberland.**

### **Kittiwake breeding data – Dunstanburgh Castle cliffs**

Here are brief data on the Kittiwake colony at Dunstanburgh, Northumberland for the summers of 2005 to 2008.

**Table 10:** Dunstanburgh Kittiwakes, June 2005 – 2008 (Apparently Occupied Nests)

Kittiwake	8 June 2005	7 June 2006	8 June 2007	9 June 2008
AON	379	334	359	341
Adult birds present	885	652	583	472

On 12 July 2008 there were 131 Kittiwake chicks counted on the cliffs (i.e. 127 x 1 and 2 x 2) with 234 adults present and no free-flying fledglings seen. There were also 26 sites with close sitting adults where chicks were not seen. This gives a minimum productivity of 0.38 chicks per AON for 2008.

### **Fulmar breeding data – Dunstanburgh Castle cliffs**

Here are brief data on the Fulmar colony at Dunstanburgh, Northumberland for the summers of 2005 to 2008.

**Table 11:** Dunstanburgh Fulmars, June 2004 to 2007 (Apparently Occupied Sites)

Fulmar	8 June 2005	7 June 2006	8 June 2007	9 June 2008
AOS	10	11	14 – 15	7
Adult birds present	20	25	26	14

On 12 July 2008 nine (adult) Fulmars were seen here. On 6 August 2008 there was one Fulmar chick seen on the cliffs and no adult birds present, giving a minimum productivity for 2008 of 0.14 chicks per AOS.

On 9 June 2008 (early in the breeding season) there were 47 Razorbills on Dunstanburgh cliffs, no Guillemots, but three Shags attended three nests. On 12 July 17 adult Razorbills (and one chick was seen with an adult on the cliffs) and seven adult Shags were present. There were three successful Shag nests on 12 July, each with two nestlings and an adult in attendance. There were six adult Shags and four juveniles present on 6 August.

## **Acknowledgements**

Thanks are extended to Dr John C Coulson for checking and commenting on the draft of this report, to George Deroche (security) and Andrew Davidson (Environmental Co-ordinator) of McNulty Offshore, Tyne Dock for allowing access.

For my annual Tyneside breeding gull / seabird reports for 1994 - 2007 refer to NTBC monthly summaries: July 94 to Nov 07.

*D.M.Turner, 9 Haswell Gardens, North Shields, Tyne and Wear NE30 2DP. Email: [Dan.M.Turner@btopenworld.com](mailto:Dan.M.Turner@btopenworld.com) (2008 Report version 3 was prepared on 09 October 2009).*



## INLAND WeBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

Version:

Year: 2009
Month: SEPTEMBER

Site	Angerton Lake										Arcot Pond										Backworth Ponds										Big Waters										Bolam Lake										Bothal Pond										Broomlee Lough										Calston										Capheaton Lake										Castle Island										Catclough Reservoir										Colt Crag Res										Cresswell Pond										Dundage Pools										East Chevington										Ellington Pond										Gosforth Park										Gremlie Lough										Hallington Res										Haughton Strother GP										Haxley NR										Holywell Pond										Jesmond Dene										Kielder Water										Killingworth Lake										Ladburn Lake										Leazes Park										Linton Pond										Longhirst Flash										Marden Quarry										Newbigh Ash Lagoons										QE II CP										Rayburn Lake										Rothley Lake										Shield on the Wall										Swallow Pond										Sweethope Lough										Warkworth Lane										West Allotment Pond										White Dene Res										Woodhorn Flashes																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																										
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## Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

<http://www.ntbc.org.uk/>

**Bulletin 2009 No 10**

**MONTHLY SUMMARY – OCTOBER**

10th December 2009



### HIGHLIGHTS

Snow Goose – Singles at Holywell Pond and Budle Bay area  
 Egyptian Goose - One at Whittle Dene Reservoir on 7th.  
 Green-winged Teal - Male at Holywell Pond on 29th.  
 Balearic Shearwater - Several early in month  
 Leach's Petrel – One off St Mary's on 9th.  
 Bittern - Singles at Cresswell Pond & East Chevington  
 White Stork - The long-staying bird again seen at Corbridge & Thornbrough  
 Glossy Ibis - Last month's bird stayed until 23rd at Druridge Pools  
 Pectoral Sandpiper – Singles at Holywell Pond / St Mary's and Earsdon  
 Buff-breasted Sandpiper – One at Cresswell Pond on 7th & 8th.  
 Sabine's Gull - Three individuals off Newbiggin in month plus a popular juvenile off North Shields Fish Quay  
 Olive-backed Pipit - One at Newbiggin on 7th.  
 Barred Warbler - Singles at Craster and Holy Island  
 Pallas's Warbler - Singles at Holy Island and Beal  
 Radde's Warbler – Singles at Druridge Pools & Holy Island  
 Red-breasted Flycatcher - Singles on Holy Island & Farne Islands  
 Red-backed Shrike - Singles on Holy Island & Farne Islands



The popular Sabine's Gull.at North Shields  
by Tim Dean on 26th

### EVENTS

The next **Indoor Meeting** is at Newcastle Falcons Thursday 14th January at 7pm – Conservation, Birds and the Northumberland Wildlife Trust by Steve Lowe.

The next **Field Trip** is to Ross Back Sands on 24th January.

## WEATHER

Mean temperatures were generally above the 1971-2000 normal for October, typically by between 1.0 and 1.5 °C. This was largely due to a very mild last 10 days. Rainfall was below average across most of the UK.

A maximum temperature of 21.2 °C was recorded at Coningsby (Lincolnshire) on the 6th. A minimum temperature of -4.0 °C was recorded at Tyndrum (Stirlingshire) on the 17th. In the 24 hours ending at 0900 on the 22nd, 90.3 mm of rainfall was recorded at Durris (Aberdeenshire). On the 3rd, a gust of 73 m.p.h. was recorded at High Bradfield (South Yorkshire) with one of 70 m.p.h. at Tain Range (Highland).

The month saw variable weather, with periods of fine, sunny conditions but also rain at times.

**1st to 7th:** The month started with a north-westerly flow bringing rather cloudy conditions with some bright or sunny spells and a few showers. Winds turned westerly on 2nd and 3rd with gusts of 60 to 70 m.p.h. over northern hills, and spells of rain in the north. Rain spread across the south on 5th, and then northwards on 6th, but it remained warm with daytime temperatures reaching 20 °C quite widely.

**8th to 14th:** Rain cleared southwards early on 8th with high pressure building. Dry at first on 9th, but cloud and rain spread from the south and west later. This cleared on 10th to leave dry, sunny weather. Rather cloudy and mild on 11th. Most places were dry and bright on 12th and 13th, with some rain in the north and east on 14th, but otherwise dry.

**15th to 21st:** Rather cloudy with some patchy rain on 15th. A weak band of rain spread southwards on 16th, followed by a chilly night with ground frost in many areas. Dry on 17th, and again in southern areas on 18th, but cloud and rain spread to the north later. On 19th cloud and rain spread northwards with a southerly wind bringing dry weather to all parts and daytime maxima up to 15 °C.

**22nd to 31st:** Many places were dry and bright on the 22nd and 23rd, but with showers across western areas, spreading eastwards later, and further rain in the west. Cloud with rain and strong winds across most parts on 24th, then brighter later. A breezy day on 25th, with gusts over the Pennines reaching 60 m.p.h. There was heavy rain across northern hills. Generally cloudy on 26th and 27th with rain at times, but some brighter spells too. Northern and western areas became drier on 28th. However, temperatures were again well above normal. Dry in most places on 29th and 30th with a very mild southerly flow, before some rain spread eastwards later. This cleared eastern areas during the morning of 31st to leave another fine, mild day.

## CLASSIFIED LIST

The following account consists of unchecked reports. The species/subspecies marked \* require descriptions.

A complete list of all sightings which need notes is included in the NTBC website [www.ntbc.org.uk](http://www.ntbc.org.uk) under the County Records Committee section and in Birds in Northumbria 2007 page 251.

The Inland and Coastal Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) tables are at the rear of the bulletin. These contain additional counts to those in the Classified List.

## TARGET SPECIES

The target species for 2009 are **Marsh Tit**, **Spotted Flycatcher** and **Tree Sparrow**.

The target species for 2010 are **Shoveler**, **Whinchat** and **Bullfinch**.

Please report all records for these species.

### Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

The peak count was 98 at QEII Lake on 11th (CDH). Elsewhere the maximum counts were 38 in the Tweed Estuary on 8th and at Beal Sands on 29th (MHu/JMA). Numbers at Hauxley NR peaked at 26 on 23rd whilst 22 were in the Coquet Estuary on 5th (JA/JMA). The only other double figures counts were 14 at Fenham le Moor on 20th and ten at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 1st/10th (PRM/DM).. One to nine were noted from a further 20 locations.

### Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Only small numbers were noted during the month. At East Chevington North Pool 13 flew N on 10th, whilst at the South Pool here six flew SW on 25th (ADM/AT). At St Mary's Island seven (five juveniles) flew S on 18th, seven flew inland at North Shields on 25th, six flew N at Cocklawburn on 5th, five flew S at Hauxley on 17th and two flew N at Druridge Links on 16th (ASJ/MHu/HRS/IDR). Numbers at East Chevington increased to 22 by 21st with eight being noted on 4th (ASJ/NFO et al). At Druridge Pools 20 (nine juveniles) were present, whilst 19 were at Cresswell Pond on 9th (JSB/EC/TB). At Beadnell 14 were present on 29th, 13 were at Holy Island on 13th and 11 at Bothal Pond on 26th (per JPL/DGB/ADM). One to seven were noted from Castron, Haughton Strother, Hauxley, Nelly's Moss Lakes (Craggside) and QEII Lake.



Whoopers at Castron on 11th  
by Peter Tapsell

**Goose species** *Anser* sp.

At Newbiggin Church Point 199 flying S on the horizon on 4th were thought probably to be Pink-footed Goose (TRC).

**\*Bean Goose** *Anser fabalis*

Four birds of the *fabalis* race were noted at East Chevington on 19th (BDK).

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

Noticeable movement occurred during the month with a maximum of 1,570 N in three skeins at Druridge Links on 16th, 750 also flew NW here on 10th (IDR/TAC/NA). At East Chevington on 5th 1,000+ were circling to S with 460+ off these dropping in to the North Pool and at least 1,000 flew N at Holy Island on 11th (IFo/ADM)..At Linton Pond 970+ flew in from N on 11th (CDH)...At Hauxley 700 flew S on 29th, with 260 S and 60 S on 17th (HRS). At St Mary's Island 390 flew S on 1st, 370 passed over Woodhorn in three skeins on 17th, 330 flew in off the sea at Cocklawburn on 7th, 320 flew S at Seaton Sluice on 31st and 300 flew N at Druridge Bay on 2nd /8th, S at Whitley Bay on 17th and Stag Rocks on 29th. S movements of up to 250 occurred at Berwick, Cocklawburn, Hauxley, Newbiggin, North Shields Fish Quay, Prestwick Carr, St Mary's Island, Seaton Sluice, Ross and Wark on seven dates from 1st-29th. N movements of up to 220 were noted at Bothal Pond, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Links, East Ord, Hauxley, Lucker and Ross from 5th -31st. Movements of up to 65 were noted at Hauxley and Swallow Pond on three dates from 17th-28th. The largest gathering was 3,000 in Budle Bay on 4th reducing to 1,500 on 5th (MJC/MSH). Counts of at least 1,000 came from Fenham-le-Moor on 4th, Druridge Pools on 8th, East Chevington on 16th and Lowick on 25th (ASJ/MT/NT/SVM/AJM). At Fenham Mill 540+ were present on 21st (PRM). Counts of 40 to 420 came from Budle Bay, Druridge Pool, Grindon Lough, Lindisfarne NNR, Stag Rocks and Steads Burn (Widdrington). A single accompanied the Greylag Goose flock at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 9th.

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

A single Greenland race *flavirostris* flew onto Holywell pond with Greg Geese on 31st (GB/LAR/BD/MPF et al).

**Greylag Goose** *Anser anser*

At Hauxley 80 flew S on 4th and 54 flew S at Cocklawburn on 28th (HRS/MHu). The largest gatherings were 316 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 9th, 240+ at Linton Pond on 11th and 200 at Hauxley NR on 29th (PRM/PHH/HRS). 116 were in the Tweed Estuary on 8th and 54 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 30th (MHu/MR). Peak counts at Monk's House Pool and Grindon Lough were 41 on 12th and 35 on 7th respectively (MSH/JMA). One to three were noted from Southfield green (Cramlington) and Newcastle Great Park Pools.

**\* Snow Goose** *Anser caerulescens*

A white morph adult flew S over Holywell Pond on 17th, accompanying c150 Pink-footed Geese (SPP). A white morph adult was found at Budle Bay on 18th and was seen there again on 19th (TB/BCFT/ADM/MJC/PH). It or another was seen nearby at Monk's House Pool on 29th/30th (ADM/MSH/CP et al).

Adult white morph Snow Goose  
at Monk's House Pool  
30th by Mike Hodgson

**Greater Canada Goose** *Branta canadensis*

Linton Pond saw a very large gathering of 656 on 11th (CDH). Peak counts at Grindon Lough and Haughton Strother GP were 416 on 31st and 154 on 30th respectively (SW/MR). On 20th 29 were at Killingworth Lake, 24 were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 7th, 18 at Leazes Park Lake (Newcastle) on 28th and eight at QEII Lake on 20th.

**Barnacle Goose** *Branta leucopsis*

At Ross 200+ flew N with Pinkfeet on 29th and 80 flew W at Humshaugh on 1st (SW/TWi). N movements of 85 and 25 came from Newbiggin on 8th/4th and 65 and 40 from Stag Rocks on 5th (ASH/GB/BRS/TRD/JD). At St Mary's Island 65-70 flew S on 1st (SPP). Further S movements were 21 at Hauxley on 5th, six at Ross on 29th and a single at Newbiggin on 18th. Further N movement comprised ten at Cresswell Pond on 1st, and three at Newbiggin on 5th. Large numbers were noted early in the month in the north of the county with peaks of 1,600 on Holy Island on 4th and 1,000 in Budle Bay on 1st (IK/JPL). At Beal Point (Lindisfarne NNR) 500 were still present on 23rd (TRD/JD). At Druridge Pools 300+ grazed in fields on 1st whilst 197 were at Grindon Lough on 3rd (MSH/PRM). East Chevington hosted 120 on 4th (NFO). The peak count at Hauxley NR was 29 on 9th (JA). One to 14 were noted from Cresswell Pond, Haughton Strother GP, Monk's House Pool, Tweed Estuary and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

**Pale-bellied hrota Brent Goose** *Branta bernicla hrota*

At Lindisfarne NNR 2,900 were present on 9th (IK). A single flew N at Tynemouth on 16th (DRW/MK).

**Dark-bellied bernicla Brent Goose** *Branta bernicla bernicla*

Twelve were on East Chevington North Pool on 31st; seven were in the Tweed Estuary on 14th, four on Holy Island on 27th and three on the causeway there on 21st (ADM/MHu/PRM).

Seven un-raced birds flew N at Newbiggin on 1st, two N there on 9th/10th with a further single on 12th (ADM/PRM/GB/JR). Three flew N at Hauxley on 11th (HRS).

**\* Egyptian Goose** *Alopochen aegyptiacus*

A single was with the Greylag/Canada Goose flock at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 7th (MR).

**Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna*

One flew N at Newbiggin on 31st (GB). Budle Bay held 15 on 2nd (RWM/MIM) and 90 on 5th (TRD/JD), 39 were at Fenham Mill on 21st (PRM), 14 at Holy Island causeway on 21st (PRM) and one at Cresswell Pond on 25th (STH).

**Mandarin** *Aix galericulata*

A duck was at Haughton Strother GP on 5th (MR).

**Wigeon** *Anas penelope*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was 344 N and 163 S, including 177 N between 10th-14th and 150 S on 30th-31st (SSWT), 300 flew N at Hauxley on 10th (HRS), and at Newbiggin a total of 19 flew N and two S between 8th-12th (ASH/PRM). Peak concentrations were 250 at Grindon Lough on 7th increasing to 500 by 16th (JMA), 450 at Budle Bay on 11th (CGK), 320 at Cresswell Pond on 22nd (IFo), 200 at Shield on the Wall on 12th (MRS), 123 at Hauxley Reserve on 17th (HRS), 103 at Derwent Reservoir on 26th (IFo), and 49-60 at Amble Braid and Fenham Flats. Counts of 12-27 came from Druridge Pools, Holywell Pond, QEII and Rothley Lakes, Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and one to eight from Berwick, Linton, Middle Ord and Wallsend Swallow Ponds, St Mary's Wetland and the Tyne Estuary.

**Gadwall** *Anas strepera*

A single flock of 27 birds flew N and then back S at Seaton Sluice on 17th, the largest number ever recorded there, and six moved N on 22nd (SSWT). Peak wetland gatherings were 36 at East Chevington on 18th (JRT), 35 at Linton Pond on 11th (CDH), 16 at Holywell Pond on 22nd (SPP), ten at QEII Lake on 6th (LJM), nine at Druridge Pools on 11th (IDR), eight (four pairs) at St Mary's Wetland on 26th (MT/NT), seven at Hauxley Reserve on 10th (HRS), seven at Warkworth Lane Ponds on 28th (GB/LAR), six at QEII Lake on 11th (CDH), and five at Big Waters on 11th (GB). Three to four were also at Grindon and Holy Island Loughs and Woodhorn Flashes, twos at Bothal Pond and Castle Island.

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

A drake was found at Holywell Pond on 29th (SPP).

**Teal** *Anas crecca*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was 312 N and 13 S including 187 N on 22nd and 93 N on 30th (SSWT), 80 flew N at Hauxley Reserve on 10th (HRS), 46 N at Newbiggin on 2nd (TRC), and 30 N at St Mary's on 10th (MT/NT). Good numbers at Grindon Lough included peaks of 653 on 13th (PRM) and 685 on 31st (SW). Other peak concentrations were 380 at Holy Island 'rocket field' on 23rd (IK), 358 at East Chevington on 11th (JRT), 300 at Holy Island Lough on 14th (MR), 300 at Monk's House Pool on 2nd (RWM/MIM), 214 at Derwent Reservoir on 6th (IFo), 192 at Arcot Pond on 16th (STH), 149 at Holywell Pond on 7th (SPP), and 110 at Druridge Links on 10th (IDR). Counts of 35-52 came from Castle Island, Druridge Pools, Hauxley Reserve, Linton Pond and North Seaton, 11-28 at Longhirst Flash, Middle Ord Pond, Plenmeller Common and St Mary's Wetland, and five at Warkworth.

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

A total of 71 flew N and 13 S at Seaton Sluice between 12th-31st (SSWT). The largest gatherings were 150 at Hetton Limeworks on 29th (JMA), 117 at Derwent Reservoir on 30th (IFo), 106 at Grindon Lough on 13th (PRM), 81 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 7th (MR), 69 at Ladyburn Lake on 28th (GB), 66 at Middle Ord Pond on 6th (MHu), 63 at the Tweed Estuary on 8th (MHu), 62 at Haughton Strother GP on 3rd (MR), 50+ at Holywell Pond on 29th (MSH), and 30-37 at Newcastle Great Park Pools and Leazes Park. Counts of 20-26 came from Druridge Pools, Greenlee Lough, Newcastle Civic Centre, Northumberland Park (North Shields) and St Mary's Wetland, 11-19 from Broomlee Lough, Budle Bay, Castle Island, Cocklawburn Pond, Lambley viaduct, North Seaton, QEII Lake and Wark, and one to eight from Arcot Pond, Catcleugh and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, Kielder Water, and Plenmeller Common.

**Pintail** *Anas acuta*

Seven flew N at Seaton Sluice on 31st (SSWT). East Chevington north pool held peaks of 15 on 10th (ADM) and nine between 28th-31st (GB/IFo/ADM), with two to nine noted regularly between 5th-27th (PCF/MSH/JRT et al.). Elsewhere, two were at Haughton Strother on 15th and 24th (MR), and singles at Bothal Pond on 4th (TF), Cresswell Pond on 10th (GB), and Fenham Flats on 20th (PRM).

**Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*

Four flew S at Seaton Sluice on 31st (SSWT). Peak counts were 22 at East Chevington north pool on 28th (GB/LAR), 19



at Monk's House Pool on 30th (MSH), 17 at Grindon Lough on 13th (PRM), 17 at Swallow Pond on 13th (SPP), 13 at Linton Ponds on 17th (ACo), eight at Holy Island Lough on 14th (MR), four at Druridge Pools on 27th (TRD/JD), three at Bothal Pond on 28th (GB), and one to two at Branton GP, Haughton Strother GP, Hauxley Reserve and St Mary's Wetland.

**Shoveler is a target species for 2010. Please report all records.**

**Pochard** *Aythya ferina*

22 were seen to arrive at Hauxley Reserve on 15th (HRS) and 22 were at Swallow Pond on 18th (SPP), 13 were at Linton Pond on 11th (CDH), nine at Holywell Pond on 31st (GB/LAR), five at Bothal Pond on 28th (GB/LAR), and four at Ladyburn Lake on 28th (GB/LAR), and singles at Castle Island, Cocklawburn Pond, Haughton Strother GP and Newcastle Great Park Pools.

**Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*

A group of 15 flew S over Tynemouth pier on 31st (CB). Peak counts were 77 at Ladyburn Lake in 22nd (IFo), 48 at QEII Lake on 11th (CDH), 28 at Linton Pond on 11th (CDH), 26 at Castle Island-North Seaton on 11th-26th (DM/JR), 18 at Marden Quarry on 9th (MNC), 17 at Hauxley Reserve on 10th (HRS), 16 at Newcastle Great Park Pools on 10th (AHB), and 11-14 at Grindon Lough, Holywell Pond, Newcastle Exhibition Park and Slaley Hall. Counts of five to nine came from Haughton Strother GP, Shield on the Wall and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and one to four at Broomlee Lough, Catcleugh Reservoir, Cocklawburn Pond and Jesmond Dene.

**Scaup** *Aythya marila*

Singles flew N at Newbiggin on 16th (ADMc) and Tynemouth on 16th (DRW/MK), and one flew S at Newbiggin on 9th (PRM). Two were at Druridge Pools regularly between 11th-22nd (IRD/IDR/ADMc et al.) and four on 19th (MSH), three were at Cresswell Pond on 9th-10th (GB/IFo) and two there on 3rd and 11th (ADMc), two at East Chevington north pool on 10th (ADMc) and one there on 11th and 28th (IRD/GB/LAR), and singles off Druridge Links on 10th (IDR), QEII Lake on 11th (CDH), and Stag Rocks on 11th and 15th (RNa/AT). A juvenile was at Big Waters between 11th-28th (GB).

**Eider** *Somateria mollissima*

A total of 181 flew N and 16 S at Seaton Sluice during the month, including 156 N between 16th-22nd (SSWT), and 11 flew N at Newbiggin on 16th (MT/NT). Peak counts were 180 off Cheswick on 28th (MHu), 82 at Seaton Sluice on 15th (MSH), 77 off Newbiggin Church Point on 29th (IFo), 56 at Fenham Flats on 20th (PRM), 53 at Hauxley on 15th (HRS), about 50 at Stag Rocks on 2nd (RWM/MIM), 40 at Seahouses harbour on 2nd (ADM), 30 at Lynemouth on 10th (IFo), 17 at Blyth South Harbour on 17th (DMT), and four to five at St Mary's and the Tyne Estuary-North Shields Fish Quay.

**Long-tailed Duck** *Clangula hyemalis*

At Newbiggin, five flew N on 12th, two N on 16th and one S on 2nd (ADMc), three flew N and one S at Tynemouth on 16th (DRW/MK), and one S at Holy Island on 2nd (IK). The largest count was of 14 at Ross Links on 29th (SW), East Chevington north pool attracted four on 17th (ACo), three on 18th (JRT), two on 22nd (ADMc) and one on 23rd and 28th (GB/NFO/LAR). Two were at Stag Rocks on 18th (TB/BCFT) and one on 24th (RNa), and one was at Holy Island on 26th (DCh). More unusual was one at North Shields Fish Quay on 26th (IF).

**Common Scoter** *Melanitta nigra*

The monthly total of 550 N and 95 S at Seaton Sluice included 336 N between 30th-31st (SSWT), 135 flew N at Druridge Bay on 10th (JR), 38 N and 47 S at Newbiggin between 4th-12th (GB/TRC/PRM/JR), a total of 36 N at Hauxley on 5th and 17th (HRS), ten N at Stag Rocks on 22nd (PH), and five N at Holy Island on 20th (PH). The largest congregations were 183 at Hadston Carrs on 14th (JA), 100 off Newbiggin Church Point on 2nd (TRC), 86 at Cheswick on 28th (MHu), 80 at Cocklawburn on 5th (MHu), 55 off Druridge Links on 10th (IDR), 11 at Seaton Sluice.

**Velvet Scoter** *Melanitta fusca*

A total of 13 flew N at Newbiggin on four dates between 4th-29th, including five N on 29th (GB/IFo/ADMc), seven flew N at Seaton Sluice between 7th-26th (SSWT), and four flew S at Hauxley on 5th (HRS). A notable 26 were with Common Scoters at Hadston Carrs on 14th (JA). Six were at Holy Island on 26th (AA/MH), two with Common Scoters at Seaton Sluice on 5th (ADM), and singles at Druridge on 8th (TRD/JD), Seaton Sluice on 4th (LMO) and Stag Rocks on 10th (DGB).

**Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula*

Coastal passage was light, with 20 N at Hauxley on 10th (HRS), 12 N at Seaton Sluice on 13th (SSWT), and one to two at Hauxley and Newbiggin on three dates between 9th-21st (GB/IFo/PRM). Two were at Bothal Pond on 6th (TF), three at Newbiggin and one at Holy Island on 9th (ADM/PRM), five at Swallow Pond on 13th (SPP) and one to three at Berwick, Budle Bay, Druridge Pools, Grindon Lough, Linton Pond, Newton Pool and QEII Lake between 11th-14th (CDH/CGK/IDR/MRS et al.). Larger numbers occurred in the latter half of the month, with 16 at East Chevington north pool on 29th (IFo), 12 at North Seaton on 30th (JR), seven at Ladyburn Lake on 28th (GB), six at Holywell Pond on 31st (MSH), five at Grindon Lough on 17th (PRM), five at Druridge Pools on 19th (MSH), five at Meadow Haven on 27th (MHu), and threes at Cheswick and Newton Pool. One to two were also at Broomlee and Holy Island Loughs, Castle Island, Howick, Newcastle Great Park Pools, Newton Pool, Rothley Lakes and the Tyne Estuary.



**Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator*

Northerly movement involved four at Newbiggin on 5th (GB) and two at St Mary's on 9th (MSH). Peak counts were 14 at Ross Links on 29th (SW), ten at Cambois on 18th (JA), eight at Ladyburn Lake on 22nd (IFo), eight at Cresswell Pond on 20th (SPP) and up seven there regularly between 11th-29th 27th (GB/SRB/IFo et al.), six at Hauxley Reserve on 30th (JA), five at Holy Island on 9th (ADM), and three at Budle Bay on 29th (ADM). One to two were also at Cocklawburn, Druridge Links, East Chevington, Kitty Brewster (Blyth) and St Mary's.

**Goosander** *Mergus merganser*

A flock of 26 flew W, in off the sea, at East Ord on 8th (MHu), two flew N and 15 flew S at Newbiggin on 12th (ADMc/AA/MH), three flew N at Druridge Links on 16th (IDR), and singles N at Newbiggin on 2nd and 16th (ADMc) and St Mary's on 25th (SPP). The Tweed Estuary held 24 on 8th (MHu), nine were counted between Close House-Wylam on 12th (MH/AA), seven were at Rothbury on 16th (TRD), four at Newcastle Exhibition Park on 12th (GB), four at Shillmoor on 30th (IRD), and threes at Druridge Links on 16th (IDR), Greenlee Lough on 7th (JMA) and Holystone on 3rd (DRo). Singles were also at Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Pools, Hauxley Reserve, Hetton limeworks, Holy Island, Holywell Pond, Marden Quarry, Morpeth, Rothbury and Warkworth.

**Ruddy Duck** *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Three were at Swallow Pond on 27th (CDH), two at Big Waters on 30th (ACo) and one at Grindon Lough on 3rd (PRM).

**Red Grouse** *Lagopus lagopus*

Harwood Shield hosted 37 on 15th, 15 were on Simonside on 7th and seven on Plenmeller Common on 19th (BNR/TRD/JD/PCF). Two to four were noted at Langlee, Langleeford and in the Slaye Forest/Ladycross area.

**Black Grouse** *Tetrao tetrix*

The sole report was of a male at Coanwood on 29th (BaR)

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

Only two records were received this month. A flock of ca 30 was present on Benridge Moor on 26th and a single was at Hepple on 27th (ADMc/PRM).

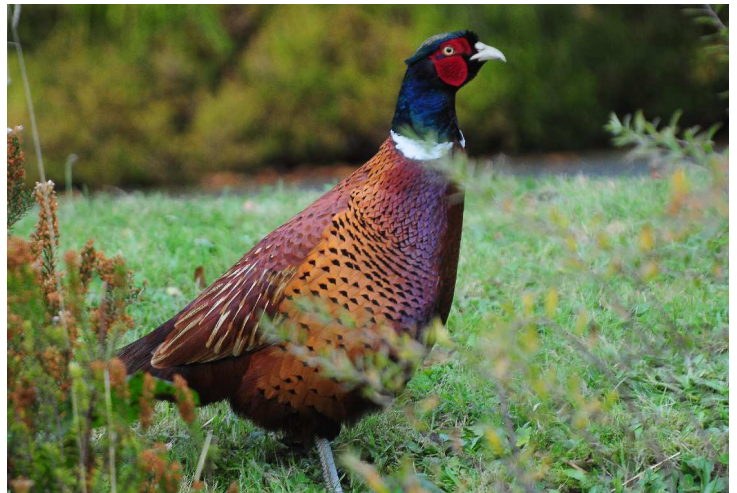
**Grey Partridge** *Perdix perdix*

The largest counts were 21 at Hauxley NR on 16th, 18 in a single covey at Ellington on 8th, 17 near South Highmoor (Linden Hall) on 17th, 16 at Blyth Cemetery on 22nd, 14 at High Chibburn Farm (Widdrington) on 10th and Swallow Pond on 13th, 13 at Howick on 3rd and 12 at Druridge Pools on 5th and Whitfield Hall on 19th. Eight to ten were noted from Backworth and Newton and one to five from Cresswell Pond, Holywell Dene, Holy Island Horncliffe, Newbiggin GC, Prestwick Carr and Snab Point (Cresswell).

**Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus*

The highest counts came from the SW with 30 at Whitfield Hall on 19th, 15 in the Parson Shields/Williamston area on 7th and 11 at Slaye Fell Cottages on 4th (KR/LR/BNR/RMH). One to eight were recorded at Chesters House and Walled garden, Druridge Pools, Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene), High Fotherly, Preston Cemetery (North Shields) and a Walbottle garden.

A handsome cock Pheasant  
at Rothbury by Tim Dean 20th

**Diver species** *Gavia sp.*

At Hauxley on 5th 24 flew S of which four were thought to be Great Northern Diver. A further single unidentified diver flew S here on 4th (HRS).

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

Passage was significant during the month. At Seaton Sluice 104 flew N and 30 S during 40 hours of watching with peak movement of 36 N and 17 S on 16th/17th (SSWT). At Newbiggin on 16th 20 flew N in two periods of watching and four flew S, on 12th, 16 flew mostly N and on 2nd ten flew S and four flew N (ADMc). Lighter movement at Newbiggin of up to six N and four S was noted on 4th/10th/17th. At St Mary's Island counts of 11 passing came on 1st/2nd with 6 S and five N on the latter day (SPP/MSH). At Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) seven flew N on 26th, six N on 2nd and 3 S and 1 N on

20th (AA/MH/IK/PH). Lighter movement entailed 2N and one S at St Mary's Island on 10th/9th respectively and at Hauxley 2 S on 17th and singles N and S on 11th. The largest gatherings 58+ off Druridge Links on 10th, 56 off Ross Links on 29th, 21 off Chevington Burn mouth on 11th and 18 in Spittal Bay on 14 th (IDR/SW/AA/MH/MHu) Ten were off Stag Rocks on 18th and counts of seven came from Holy Island on 25 th and Alnmouth Bay on 29 th (ADM/MJC/NNBC/RPo). One to four were noted from Cheswick, Cocklawburn, Cresswell and Cresswell Pond, East Chevington North Pool, Newbiggin Church Point, St Mary's Island, Seaton Sluice and Tynemouth. An unusual record was of three seen on Killingworth Lake from a passing car on 10th (PC).

#### **Black-throated Diver** *Gavia arctica*

Three flew N at St Mary's Island on 14 h, one flew N at Hauxley on 5th, whilst at Seaton Sluice one flew N on 16th, one flew N on to sea on 30th whilst on 19th two on the sea took off, one flying N and one flying S (ASJ/HRS/SSWT). Offshore two were at Ross Links on 14th, whilst singles were at Holy Island on 6th and Stag Rocks on 9th/18th (SW/IBDa/KDa/DGB/MJC/ADM).

#### **Great Northern Diver** *Gavia immer*

Singles flew N at Emmanuel Head, Holy Island on 2nd and at Hauxley on 10th, one flew S at St Mary's Island on 2nd one flew in from the direction of the Farne Islands and landed on the sea off Emmanuel Head, Holy Island on 26th and the first of the autumn flew S at Seaton Sluice on 30th (IK/HRS/MSH/AA/MH/SSWT). Two were offshore at Snipe Point, Holy Island on 14th and one offshore at Ross Links on 29th (MR/SW). On 18th at Stag Rocks a juvenile was close inshore and two-three distant birds were believed to be of this species (ADM/MJC/TB/BCFT).

#### **Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

The peak counts were 14 at Castle Island on 11th, 12 at Newcastle Great Park Pools on 17th, 11 at Hauxley on 9th and ten at Alnmouth on 30th (STH/DM/IFo/AHB/NNBC). At least eight were present on Holywell Pond on 17th/31st and seven at Druridge Pools on 19 th (MSH ).Counts of five came from North Seaton and four from Bothal Pond, Cresswell Pond and Woodhorn Flashes. Three were present at Big Waters, Ladyburn Lake and Linton Pond. One to two were noted at Arcot Pond, Banks Pond (Dinnington), Blyth Estuary, Broomlee Lough, Catcleugh Reservoir, Derwent Reservoir, Duke's and Swallow Ponds (Wallsend), East Chevington North Pool, Grindon Lough, Killingworth Lake and QEII Lake.

Additional breeding data is as follows:

Location	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/Comments
Cocklawburn Pond	1	1	MHu 14 day old young on 7th

#### **Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*

Coastal passage was noted with singles S at St Mary's Island on 1st and Newbiggin on 4th and one N at Tynemouth on 19th (SPP/TRC/DRW/MK). The highest count was five at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 7th (MR). Three were in Alnmouth Bay on 28th and two in Spittal Bay on 14th and at East Chevington on 27th (RPo/MHu/TRD/JD). Singles were noted at Big Waters, Derwent Reservoir, Killingworth Lake, QEII Lake and Sandon Bay (Holy Island).

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

One flew N at Newbiggin on 17th (GB). Four were off Ross Links on 29th (SW). Singles were noted off Stag Rocks on 10th/22nd/30th, Druridge Links on 16th, and Hauxley and Holy Island on 17th.

#### **Slavonian Grebe** *Podiceps auritus*.

A large gathering of 24 was off Ross Links on 29th (SW). Six were off Chare Ends, Holy Island on 28th with three off The Heugh on 18th and one to two present on 23rd /25th (DRW/TB/BCFT *et al*). Three were in the Budle Bay/Stag Rocks area on 18th (ADM/MJC).

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

The only records came from Seaton Sluice where singles flew N on 10th/17th (SSWT).

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

Light passage continued with six N at Newbiggin on 1st/16th and at Emmanuel Head, Holy Island on 9th being the highest counts (ADM/MJC). Five flew N at Seaton Sluice on 16th (SSWT). Four flew N at St Mary's Island on 1st, two at Tynemouth on 16th and singles at Hauxley on 5th, Newbiggin on 12th and Emmanuel Head, Holy Island on 20th (MPF/MSH/DRW/MK/HRS/ADM/PH).

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

At St Mary's Island on 1st 538 flew N in 3 hours 30 minutes, whilst nearby at Seaton Sluice 218 flew N in 1 hour 30 minutes and at Newbiggin 202 were counted N in two periods of watching (MPF/MSH/AC/ADM). On 9th 44 flew N at Newbiggin in 3 hours, whilst nine flew N and one S at St Mary's Island in 1 hour (PRM/MSH). At Newbiggin on 4th 37 flew N in 1 hour and on 5th 34 flew N at Hauxley in 2 hours 35 minutes and eight flew N at Newbiggin (TRC/HRS/ASH/GB). On 1st/2nd 17 flew and 14 flew N respectively at Newbiggin (ADM). Up to six were noted passing Annstead, Cresswell,

Hauxley, Newbiggin, Seaton Sluice, Stag Rocks and Tynemouth until 17th.

**\* Balearic Shearwater** *Puffinus mauritanicus*

On 1st four flew N at St Mary's Island from 16:10-16:41, whilst at Seaton Sluice three flew N from 16:45-18:30 (MPF/MSH/SSWT).

**Storm Petrel** *Hydrobates pelagicus*

One was watched briefly at Stag Rocks on 5th (JD).

**\*Leach's Petrel** *Oceandroma leucorhoa*

One flew S at St Mary's Island at 15:55 on 9th (AC). The bird reported off St Mary's on 4th September should have been reported as seen off Newbiggin (AA).

**Gannet** *Morus bassanus*

The largest movements were 1,000N in 1 hour at Seaton Sluice on 11th, 677N in 30 minutes at Low Hauxley on 9th with passage continuing at this rate for at least another 20 minutes and 750N in 1 hour at Seaton Sluice on 12th (SSWT/IFo). At St Mary's Island 515 flew N in 1 hour on 2nd and 315 flew N in 1 hour on 9th (MSH). Other larger movements were 200N at Stag Rocks on 5th, 250S in 1 hour at Seaton Sluice on 20th, with 150 N there in 1 hour on 10th, 191 N in 10 minutes at Annstead on 16th and 150N in 2 hours 35 minutes at Hauxley on 5th (TRD/JD/SSWT/HRS). Smaller movements involved 50N at Beadnell on 5th, 40N and 35S at Seaton Sluice on 30th/31st and one to two N at Craster and Newton. "Many" were feeding offshore at Emmanuel Head < Holy Island on 3rd despite the strong NW gale, 100 were feeding offshore at Stag Rocks on 2nd and 65 were feeding offshore at Fenham-le-Moor on 20th (IK/RWM/MIM/TRD). Two to ten were noted from Cresswell, St Mary's Island and the Tweed Estuary where they hunted Herring.

**Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

At Newbiggin a flock of 23 flew S on 29th (IFo). The peak roost counts during the month were 132 in Blyth South Harbour on 17th, 79 at North Shields Fish Quay on 29th, 44 at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 14th and 41 at Sandstiel Point (Spittal) on 13th (DMT/MHu). The WeBS count in the Tweed Estuary on 8th realised 38, whilst the maximum count at Derwent Reservoir was 22 on 12th (MHu/IFo). Other double figures counts were 24 in the Newburn area on 28th, 20 at Castle Island on 11th and ten at Big Waters on 11th (MH/STH/DM *et al*/GB). One to six were noted from Amble Braid and Weir, Catcleugh Reservoir, Newcastle City Centre and Millennium Bridge North Seaton, Prestwick Carr, QEII Lake, Seahouses harbour, Tower Knowe (Kielder), Wark, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Woodhorn Flashes. White ringed 'HJY' at North Shields Fish Quay was ringed as a chick at Inverbervie (south of Aberdeen) on 25th July 2009 and was later seen at Aberdeen Harbour on 24th/25th October (DMT).

\* Singles of the *sinensis* race were photographed at Stag Rocks on 10th, St Mary's Island on 13th and Holywell Pond on 18th (MSH)

**Shag** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

At Stag Rocks 40 were present on 5th (TRD/JD). The Meadow Haven (Berwick) roost held 26 on 14th (MHu) whilst the peak count at Blyth South Harbour was seven on 17th. A red-ringed immature 'TUA' from the Firth of Forth Islands was seen here on 25th (MHu/DMT). At Seaton Sluice the highest count was three N on 13th (SSWT).

**Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris*

At Cresswell Pond on 9th one flew towards Warkworth Lane being mobbed by corvids (TB). It or another was seen at East Chevington North Pool on 31st (ADMc).

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*

All records came from the north of the county with three at Budle Bay on 4th, two on 18th and one on 5th (ASJ/ADM/MJC/TB/BCFT/TRD/JD). A single was feeding near the causeway at Beal on 11th (IK).

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*

The peak count was 45 in the Tweed Estuary on 8th (MHu) Elsewhere nine were on the Sleek Burn on 31st eight at Hauxley on 10th/15th and Old Hartley on 14th six in Budle Bay on 4th and five in fields west of St Mary's Wetland on 25th (GB/HRS/MNC/ADM/MT/NT). Counts of four came from Arcot Pond on 16th, Newcastle Business Park on 19th and in Holywell Dene throughout the month (STH/GB/RJP). One to three were noted at Amble Braid, Annstead, Broomlee Lough, Boulmer, Castle Island, Chollerford, Cresswell Pond Exhibition Park (Newcastle), Greenlee Lough, Harbottle Peels, Holy Island, Kielder Water, Monk's House Pool, Newcastle Great Park Pools, a Netherton Park garden, North Seaton, North Shields Fish Quay, QEII Lake, Sandy Bay (Newbiggin), Simonburn, Wark and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

**\* White Stork** *Ciconia Ciconia*

One flew S over the A69 at Thornborough on 25th (ALT)

**\* Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus*

The long staying first-winter bird remained at Druridge Pools until 21st briefly visiting Bell's Pond Cresswell on 2nd (TB/PHH *et al*).



Two photographs of the popular Glossy visitor.

Above by Tim Dean on 8th and right by Peter Tapsell on 12th. Both were at Druridge Pools

**Red Kite** *Milvus milvus*

On the 1st two birds were seen at Prudhoe Hospital (MH) and on the 14th two were at Red Row (JMA).

**Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*

Singles were observed at Druridge Pools on 1st (MSH), East Chevington on 7th (AA/MH), and at Holy Island on 11th (CGK/MSH/TW). A juvenile was being harried by a Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* on Holy Island on 16th (PHH).

**Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*

A ringtail was hunting at Byrness on 3rd and another was seen at Fenham Le Moor on 10th (ACo).

**Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis*

The only sightings this month were of a juvenile female over Beldon Burn (Harwood Shield) on 15th (BNR) and a single bird at Twizell (near Ogle) on 28th (JHa).

**Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*

Two first year males were trapped and ringed at Bamburgh during the month (BRS); two other males were also ringed at Hauxley on 10th & 15th (HRS). Pairs were seen at Callerton on 5th (AJo), Parson Shields on 7th (BNR), and Hauxley on 20th (HRS) and at Holy Island on 23rd (ADM). Single birds were noted at a further 19 sites including a male which caught and ate a Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris* in a Whitley Bay garden (MT/NT).

**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*

Eight birds were noted in the Bywell/Styford area on 1st (MH), seven were seen at Parson Shields/ Williamston N area on 7th (BNR), and six birds were at Low Prudhoe on 1st (MH). Five birds were noted at Budle Bay on 4th (ADM), Molesden on 18th (MNC) and Bywell Cottage Bank on 25th (BNR). At Derwent Reservoir four birds were in the air together on 30th (IFo). One to three was seen at 40 sites during the month.

**Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*

The highest count was five birds at Cresswell Pond on 8th (ASJ); three were at St Mary's island on 9th (AST) and at Holy Island on 16th & 30th (ADM/MJC). Two to three birds were seen at Callerton throughout the month, pairs were noted at Catcleugh Reservoir, Newbiggin, Pegswood, West Minsteracres and Woodhorn. Singles were at a further 25 sites.

**Merlin** *Falco columbarius*

Two birds were on the Snook at Holy Island on 22nd (MJC); single birds were noted on Holy Island on a further five dates (IB/BCFT *et al*). Other singles were seen at Boulmer, Cocklawburn, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Newbiggin, Ross Point, St Mary's Island and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

**\* Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*

Singles were noted at Parson Shields/ Williamston N area on 7th (BNR) and at Holy Island on 11th (IBDa/KDa).

**Peregrine** *Falco peregrinus*

During October a juvenile male and a juvenile female were regularly seen hunting together on Holy Island (IK/BCFT/NNBC). Other pairs were near Matfen on 27th (PCF) and Budle Bay on 29th (SW). Singles were noted at 13 more sites during the month.

**Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus*

At Holy Island Lough two birds were seen and another was heard on 14th (MR), up to two birds were also seen or heard there on several dates. Two were at Backworth Pond on 31st (CGK), Cresswell Pond on 29th (IFo) and at Holywell Pond on 22nd & 31st (SPP/MSH). Single birds were seen or heard at Big waters, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Marden Quarry and Swallow Pond. More unusual was a bird flushed from the rocks at Snab Point (Cresswell) on 10th (GB/LAR/IFo).

**Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*

The highest counts were 21 at Druridge Pools on 11th (IDR), 16 at Silverlink Park LNR on 14th (PCF), and 13 at Dukes Pond (Wallsend) on 27th (CDH). 12 birds were noted at Killingworth Lake on 25th and at Bothal Pond on 28th (GB), 11 were at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 8th & 12th (DM). One to ten were noted at 18 sites.

**Coot** *Fulica atra*

21 birds at QEII CP on 11th was the highest count followed by 19 at Big Waters also on 11th (GB). Druridge Bay CP had 12 birds on 22nd (IFo), Leazes Park (Newcastle) had 11 birds on several dates (DM), 10 were at Haughton Strother GP's on 3rd (MR). Two were at Castle Island on 11th (DM) and a single bird was at Holy Island Lough on 27th (PRM).

**Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*

At St Mary's 124 were present on 1st (TRC) and the monthly maximum at Hauxley NR was 80 on 4th (HRS). Berwick GC held 46 on 11th, 23 were at Sandy Bay on 12th, five near Seaton Sluice on 4th and one at Castle Island on 11th.

**Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*

A warehouse roof at Blyth South Harbour was used as a roost with a maximum of 71 on 4th (DMT), the peak at St Mary's was 61 on 1st (ASJ) and 30 were at Little Beach, Berwick on 9th (MHu); 23 were on the shore at Cresswell on 11th.

**Golden Plover** *Pluvialis apricaria*

Holy Island had some large numbers, including 2000 on 2nd/4th (RWM/MIM) and 3000 on 28th (per NNBC). The regular St Mary's flock peaked at 2000 on 22nd (SRB) and 1500 were at North Seaton on 12th (JR). It was present at Grindon Lough throughout with a peak of 500 on 17th (PFS/MMS *et al*), 400 circled high over Hauxley on 22nd before the majority moved N, 350 were at Beacon Point, Newbiggin on 29th and 300 were disturbed by a light aircraft at Newton on 5th. Boulmer, East Chevington, Newcastle (Town Moor), Swallow Pond and Whittle Dene Reservoirs all held 150-290 at times and small numbers were noted at Causey Park Bridge, Derwent Reservoir, Harwood Shield and Plenmeller Common.

**Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*

There were seven reports of singles fairly evenly spread throughout the month: on three days at Hauxley NR and on one date at each of Blyth, Cresswell Pond, Lindisfarne and Newbiggin.

**Lapwing** *Vanellus Vanellus*

A WeBS count in the Tweed estuary produced 1380 on 8th (MHu), 1000+ were in Budle Bay on 5th (MSH), 650 were at St Mary's on 1st (ASJ), 580 at Derwent Reservoir on 6th (IFo) and 550+ at Castron on 30th (DRo). Elsewhere 102-370 were noted at Bothal Pond, Castle Island, Cocklawburn, the Coquet estuary, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Haughton Strother GP, Seaton Sluice and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Small numbers were found at Big Waters, Broomlee Lough, Cresswell Pond, Holystone, Newton on the Moor and Slaley.

**Knot** *Calidris canutus*

Fenham-le-Moor attracted some 800 on 4th (ASJ). More than usual were in the Cresswell area during the month, including 140 roosting at Cresswell Pond on 20th (SPP). At Seaton Sluice 30 flew N on 5th (ADM).

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba*

The peak counts were 99 at St Mary's on 10th (ASJ) and 97 at Newbiggin on 5th (TRC), then 49 at Coves Bay, Holy Island on 23rd (IB). The beach at East Chevington held 24 on 28th and three to seven were noted at Beadnell, Cresswell and Newton. At Hauxley 50 flew S on 30th and 28 moved N at Druridge Links on 18th.

**Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*

Two were in Budle Bay on 22nd (RNa).



**\* Pectoral Sandpiper** *Calidris melanotos*

A juvenile visited Holywell Pond on 17th (BD/MSH *et al*) and another juvenile was at Earsdon, Beehive Flash on 28th-31st (RP/MNC *et al*).

Pectoral Sandpiper at Beehive Flash on 29th by Mike Hodgson



**Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*

A juvenile was in the Rocket Field pools on Holy Island on 18th, with two there on 21st (MJC/IB). A juvenile was feeding in the Blyth estuary on 4th (GB).

**Purple Sandpiper** *Calidris maritima*

Stag Rocks held small numbers throughout, although the peak of 26 on 29th (ADM) was relatively low; 14 were at Coquet Island on 31st (IDR/JF). Three were at Berwick on 16th, two at Dunstanburgh on 5th and one at Newbiggin on 31st. At Tynemouth there was just one on 19th instead of the expected 15+ at this time of year (CB).

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*

Berwick, Little Beach held 196 on 9th and 84 on 16th (MHu). Elsewhere 40 were at Lindisfarne on 23rd, 26 at Cresswell Pond on 11th, 24 in the Tweed estuary on 18th, a peak of 22 at Grindon Lough on 12th and 17 at Druridge Links beach on 10th. One to six appeared occasionally at Bothal Pond, Broomlee Lough, East Chevington, Haughton Strother GP, Hauxley NR and St Mary's.

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper** *Tryngites subruficollis*

One at Cresswell Pond on 7th-8th (AA/MH *et al*) also visited Druridge Pools briefly on the evening of 7th (IDR).



Buff-breasted Sandpiper at Cresswell Pond on 7th by  
Mike Hodgson

**Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*

Three were in the Rocket Field on Holy Island on 20th (IB). Earlier singles were at the Harbour Pools on Holy Island on 4th and at Cresswell Pond on 6th-8th.

**Jack Snipe** *Lymnocyrtus minimus*

The first of autumn was one at Haughton Strother GP on 3rd (MR) then two S at Cresswell Pond on 8th (ASJ) and two at Holywell Pond on 10th (SPP), one of the latter seen in flight with two Snipe. Three were at Newcastle Great Park Pools on 17th (AHB). Further singles were found from mid month: at St Mary's on 15th, Druridge Pools on 16th, Holywell Pond on 17th-18th, Newbiggin GC on 27th and Holy Island on 28th.

**Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*

It was noted regularly at Hauxley NR including 22 on 16th, 27 on 21st and 25 on 30th (JA/HRS). Haughton Strother GP had 14 on 5th (MR) and 11 were on North Pool at East Chevington on 22nd (IFo). At least eight were at Monks' House Pool on 2nd and one-seven were found at Arcot Pond, Berwick, Big Waters, Cramlington, Druridge Pools, Grindon Lough, Holy Island, Holystone, Howick, Lynemouth, Newcastle Great Park Pools and Seaton Burn.

**Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola*

After one in Whitley Bay cemetery on 13th, one came in off the sea at Seaton Sluice on 14th and another was at Holy Island the same day. Between 15th and 24th three or four more were found on Holy Island and singles appeared again in Whitley Bay cemetery, at Hauxley on three dates, at Newbiggin on two days and at Rothbury, Shiremoor and Wingates. A

further influx occurred from 27th when at least six were at Newbiggin (GB/TRC) and three at Cresswell; four were at Holy Island on 28th, increasing to five on 30th. Also on 30th no less than 22 were in the woodland adjacent to Golden Sands at Cresswell (JSB) and two were at Hauxley NR. Further singles flew in off the sea at Seaton Sluice on 30th and 31st.

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

Four in the Rocket Field on 2nd was the peak count for the month on Holy Island (IK). Budle Bay had one on 4th and two on 5th and one was at Monks' House Pool on 2nd/5th.

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

The number at Holy Island increased to 760+ on 27th (PRM) and the most reported from Budle Bay was 38 on 11th (CGK). Berwick drew in 11 on 12th; up to ten were regularly in the Hauxley area, four at Newton on 26th and singles at East Chevington and St Mary's.

**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*

Singles were at Hauxley NR on 4th (HRS) and at Earsdon, Beehive Flash on 11th (MNC); one flew S at Hauxley on 15th (HRS).

**Curlew** *Numenius arquata*

On 9th a total of 130 were noted in the Boulmer/Howick/Seahouses area on 9th (JMA), 120 were at Caistrone on 30th (DRo) and the most in the Hauxley area was 80 on 4th (HRS). Several places held 28-52: Amble Braid, Beehive Flash, Holystone, Sandy Bay and near Seaton Sluice. Small numbers appeared at Castle Island, Causey Park Bridge, Holywell Dene and Wallsend.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*

One was at Caistrone on 4th (JRT) and two at Druridge Pools on 7th (IDR).

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*

Four were together at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 7th (MR). Haughton Strother GP was once again the most favoured location with up to three regularly (MR); two were noted at Caistrone on three dates (JRT/PT/DRo). One was at Druridge Pools on 11th and one at Branton GP on an unspecified date.

**Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus*

One at West Hartford on 1st (LJM) was flushed away by dog walkers.

**Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*

It was present almost throughout at Druridge Pools, including three on 4th/8th/31st and two on several other days (ASJ *et al*). Three were at Lindisfarne on 11th (IK), two at Cresswell Pond on 6th and in Budle Bay on 11th/14th; singles were occasionally at Alnmouth, Bothal Pond, Caistrone and Woodhorn Flashes.

**Redshank** *Tringa totanus*

A WeBS count in the Tweed estuary revealed 332 on 8th (MHu), 137 roosted at HT at Hauxley NR in the early morning of 9th (IFo) and 100 were in view from the Holy Island causeway on 1st (JMA). The Hauxley area also held 90-100 on 4th and 15th, 92 were at St Mary's on 1st, 88 in the Blyth estuary at Mount Pleasant on 31st, 69 at Newcastle Business Park on 19th and 68 at Sandy Bay on 12th. A further three places had smaller numbers including two at Bothal Pond on 29th.

**Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*

Stag Rocks held 70 on 4th (ASJ), the most at Berwick was 68 on 9th (MHu), 42 were at Hauxley NR on 15th and 36 at St Mary's on 28th. In addition 15 moved N off Church Point, Newbiggin on 5th, 12 were at Coquet Island on 31st, the maximum at North Shields Fish Quay was 11 on 10th, ten were noted in Budle Bay on 5th and five at Newton on 26th.

**Pomarine Skua** *Stercorarius pomarinus*

On 1st there was significant N passage witnessed at two watch points: at St Mary's at least 35 from 1600-1830 hrs (AC *et al*) and 18 at Seaton Sluice from 1645-1830 hrs (SSWT). Also on 1st four together flew S at St Mary's (SPP). On 5th six flew N off Hauxley in addition to three skuas sp. (HRS), two went N at Newbiggin (ASH) and one at St Mary's (TRC). There were three other records: one S at St Mary's on 4th (SPP), two N at Newbiggin on 9th (PRM) and one S at Stag Rocks on 22nd (PH).

**Arctic Skua** *Stercorarius parasiticus*

On 5th 14 flew N off Hauxley (HRS) in just under two hours, three N at Newbiggin (ASH) and two S at Seaton Sluice (ADM) and one N at St Mary's. On 9th 15 went N at Newbiggin (PRM) in a total of three hours and two did so at St Mary's (MSH) in one hour. During 1st-17th a total of 11 were recorded at Seaton Sluice (SSWT). Also two were off Druridge Links on 16th (IDR) and one at Newbiggin on 4th.



**Great Skua** *Stercorarius skua*

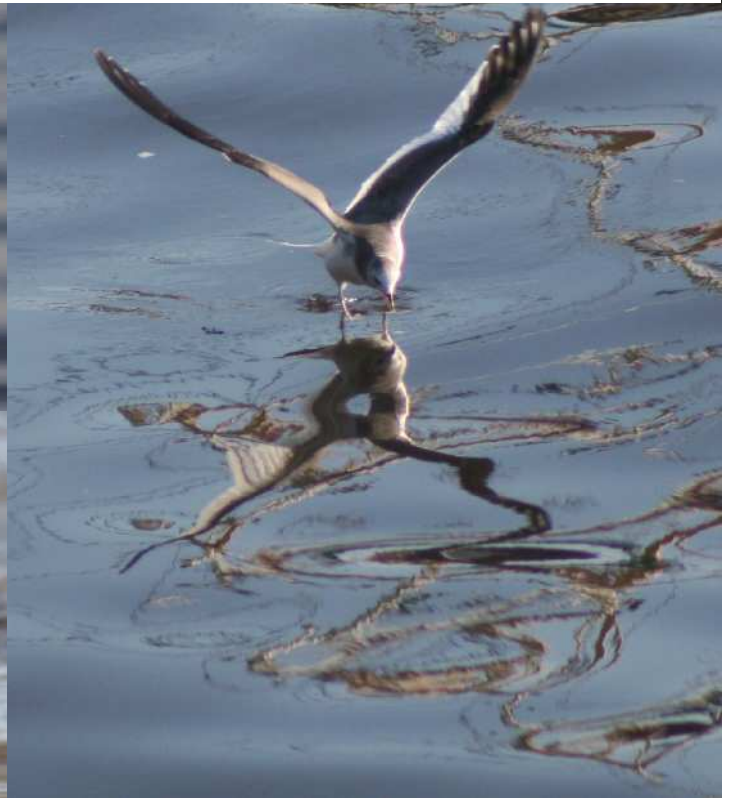
Most coastal passage was observed at Newbiggin with at least 14 N on 9th (PRM/AT), two N on 4th (GB/TRC) and two S on 12th (AA/MSH). Also on 9th different singles moved N at Hauxley and St Mary's. Three were seen at Seaton Sluice between 10th/17th and singles were noted at St Mary's on 2nd, Stag Rocks on 4th and Hauxley on 5th.

A freshly dead ringed one was found by a gamekeeper at Debdon Moor, near Rothbury on 29th. The specimen was given to John Steele and subsequently photographed (JD) and, at 698g, was seriously underweight. It was ringed as a chick at Fair Isle on 21st July 2009 and becomes only the fourth inland record for the County (per JD/TRD). The nearest distance to the sea is 20km as the crow flies. (JD/JS).

The inland Great Skua on 30th  
photograph by Janet Dean

**Sabine's Gull** *Xema sabini*

One of the real highlights of the year was the opportunity to watch a Sabine's Gull at close range with your feet actually on 'terra firma' and without the need of a telescope! This juvenile was found on the 25th at North Shields Fish Quay by one of our real gull devotees (DMT) and stayed into early November. It was totally oblivious of the assembled birders as it glided around the quay. It also moved into Tynemouth Haven from time to time and across to South Shields. This rather eclipsed events at Newbiggin where three individual juveniles in the month was a substantial total. The first was seen on 1st (ADMc) with another S on 9th as part of a large movement of gulls (PRM) and finally one N on 12th (JR).



Three photographs of the North Shields Sabine's Gull.

Top left by Colin Bradshaw, bottom left on the beach by Mike Hodgson and right feeding at the Fish Quay by Steve Barrett

**Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla*

The peak movement was on the 26th when 375 moved N at Newbiggin in one hour (JR). Also on the 26th ca. 90 found off Emmanuel Point, Holy Island associating with two large cetaceans probably Minke Whales (MH/AA). No other movements were noted with sightings confined to the two main gathering areas with a maximum of c52 at Blyth South Harbour on 4th and seven at North Shields Fish Quay on 10th (DMT). A ringed bird at Blyth South Harbour was found to have been hatched on Coquet Island in 2003.

**Black-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

The main counts were again as a result of regular observations at certain sites with 1000 on the sea roost between Tynemouth and Cullercoats on 7th, 188 in the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay on 18th and 119 in Blyth South Harbour on 4th (DMT) though 500 were counted in Budle Bay on 9th (JMA). Groups of between 100-150 were noted at Castle Island, Howick, Jesmond Dene and Leazes Park (Newcastle). The only other groups noted were 74 at Arcot Pond on 11th (DM) and 46 at North Seaton on 30th (JR). A partial albino was in Howick Haven on 24th (PRM).

**Little Gull** *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Again no major movement was noted in a particularly poor year for this species. The only sightings were all lone birds with the first an adult at St Mary's on 6th (ASJ), then a first-winter N at Newbiggin on 9th (AT), one S at Seaton Sluice on 13th (SSWT), one at Monk's House Pool on 14th (Aco) and finally an immature at the Tweed Estuary in the gull roost on 31st (MHu).

**Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus*

There were at least ten individuals recorded at Newbiggin throughout the month with five adults, two second-winters and three first-winters being seen. Elsewhere they were widespread but the only other multiple sightings were two adults at Amble on 1st (TRC) and an adult and first-winter at North Shields Fish Quay on 5th (DMT). Most other observations involved single adults with coastal individuals at Amble, Boulmer, Sandy Bay, Seaton Sluice, St Mary's and Tynemouth. A second-winter was found in the horse field at Backworth on 22nd (SPP). Inland sightings are always sparse with single adults at Bothal Pond on 6th (TF) and Haughton Strother GP on 26th which had a green ring on left leg (MR). A ringed bird 'PAU2' seen at North Shields Fish Quay on 25th was ringed as an adult at Wrocklaw. Poland in May 2006 and has been seen at various localities in N/E England over the last few years.

**Common Gull** *Larus canus*

The main counts this month involved 450 at the sea roost between Tynemouth and Cullercoats on 18th (DMT) and 420 at Whittle Dene reservoirs on 7th (MR). 118 were at Bywell on 25th (BNR). Otherwise numbers noted were small with up to 16 at Arcot Pond, Blyth South Harbour, Castle Island, Tyne Estuary and Walbottle.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus graelsii*

The reduction in numbers was noticeable this month with birds departing for warmer climes. The peak count was 11 at East Chevington on 7th which included one first-winter (MSH). Six adults were at Amble Braid on 16th (MSH) and four at Budle Bay on 5th (TRD/JD). Well recorded this month with one to three at Amble Braid, Arcot Pond, Budle Bay, Blyth South Harbour, Castle Island, Cramlington, Derwent Reservoir, Grindon Lough, Holywell Pond, Jesmond Dene, Kielder Water, Monk's House, Newcastle Business Park and Newcastle Town Moor.

**Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus argenteus*

The main counts were again as a result of concerted effort at three regularly watched sites. Peak counts recorded were 702 at the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay on 27th, 138 at Blyth South Harbour on 17th and 46 at the sea roost between Tynemouth and Cullercoats on 18th (DMT). Other high counts noted were 450 at the Coquet Estuary on 5th, 400 at Budle Bay on 9th and 250 at Monk's House Pool also on 9th (JMA). 134 were found on a WEBS count at Castle Island on 11th (DM). The only other observations were 17 at North Seaton on 30th (JR) and three at Leazes Park on 12th (DM). A ringed bird '0778' was noted at St Mary's on 10th (STH).

**Iceland Gull** *Larus glaucoideus*

Last month's second-winter at Blyth South Harbour was again seen on 17th (DMT).

**Great Black-backed Gull** *Larus marinus*

The peak counts this month involved 314 (mainly adults) at Amble Braid on 16th (MSH) with 250 at East Chevington on 9th (Ifo). The regularly watched localities peaked at 220 at Blyth South Harbour on 25th and 198 at the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay on 4th (DMT). A WEBS count at Castle Island saw 147 noted on 11th (DM/STH/IFO/PA) with 140 at Druridge Bay CP on 9th (Ifo). 24 were at North Seaton on 30th (JR) with 25 at Seahouses harbour on 9th (JMA) and up to three at Grindon Lough and Newcastle Quayside.

**Sandwich Tern** *Sterna sandvicensis*

Typically late in departing, a few were seen in a number of sites with four being the maximum at Stag Rocks on 4th (ASJ). An adult was still feeding a juvenile here on 5th (TRD/JD). One or two were found at Budle Bay, Druridge Bay, Hauxley, Monk's House Pool and Seaton Sluice with birds at Hauxley still being seen offshore on 30th.

**Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo*

Only two singles reported with birds at Newbiggin on 2nd (TRC) and at Emmanuel Head, Holy Island on 10th (IK).

**Arctic Tern** *Sterna paradisaea*

A few seen early in the month with nine at Newbiggin on 2nd and two S on 4th (TRC) plus two at Hauxley on 5th (HRS). A late first-winter was seen at Snab Point, Cresswell at the high tide roost before flying out to sea (IFO).

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

Some large movements recorded mid month with 100 N and 125 S at Seaton Sluice in one hour on 12th, 350 N there on 16th and 100 N on 17th. The only other movement noted at this site was 12 S on 30th (SSWT). The mid month movement was also witnessed at St Mary's with 200 N in one hour on 9th plus seven N at Annstead Point on 16th (MSH).

**Guillemot** *Uria aalge*

A big movement was noticeable on 9th with 750 N in one hour at Low Hauxley. There were birds seen regularly off Stag Rocks, Bamburgh with at least 12 on 4th, three on 5th and at least 50 on 18th (ADM/TRD/JD). The only other sightings reported were two S off St Mary's on 11th and four in Spittal Bay on 14th (MHu).

**Razorbill** *Alca torda*

The peak count was off Low Hauxley on 9th with 50 N (IFo). The only other sightings reported were eight N off Annstead Point on 16th and five at Stag Rocks on 18th (ADM).

**Little Auk** *Alle alle*

Only two singles reported with birds at Stag Rocks on 9th (per NNBC) and at Budle Bay on 18th (CP).

**Puffin** *Fratercula arctica*

A lone sighting with one N off Newbiggin on 9th (PRM).

**Rock Dove / Feral Pigeon** *Columba livia*

The highest count this month came from Coquet Island RSPB with about 220 there on 31st (IDR/JF). 158 were at North Shields Fish Quay on 11th and 124 at Blyth South Harbour on 17th (DMT).

**Stock Dove** *Columba oenas*

A very large gathering of over 60 was at Haughton Strother on 30th (MR). Smaller groups included 12 at Rising Sun Farm in Wallsend on 27th, eight at Ellington (Chugdon Wood) on 4th and seven at nearby Cresswell Pond on 5th.

**Woodpigeon** *Columba palumbus*

About 150 gathered at Brier Dene Farm in Whitley Bay on 18th (MT/NT), about 90 were at Red Row on 11th and 50 at West Minsteracres on 4th. Ten juveniles were on a Walbottle rooftop on 25th and a single bird was still sitting on a nest in Craster on 5th (JMA).

**Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

About 25 were counted on Holy Island on 25th (ADM), 18 were at Whittle Dene on 4th, 12 at Shiremoor on 20th and eight at High Hauxley on 4th. A single flew N at Druridge Links on 28th where they are very uncommon.

**Barn Owl** *Tyto alba*

Two were hunting at dusk at Prestwick Carr on 18th (GB). Singles were recorded on Holy Island on three different dates, other records came from East Chevington, Heavenfield (near Chollerford), nr Ponteland, Rothbury, Seaton Delaval and Stannington. An adult male was found as a freshly dead corpse on the A1 at Bog Mill on the Alnwick Bypass on 7th (IDR).

**Little Owl** *Athene noctua*

Two were present at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) (TB) and a single at Backworth (CGK) throughout the month. Two were at Prestwick Carr on 18th (PCF) and singles were also noted at Adderstone, Druridge Links, High Hauxley and Holywell Grange.

**Tawny Owl** *Strix Aluco*

Two were noted at Walbottle Hall on 4th (LR/KR), Howick on 12th (JAR), Chollerford on 13th, Ordley on 14th and Slaley on 28th. A single was recorded at Wark (North Tyne) on numerous dates and as a road casualty on the A69 at Haydon Bridge on 4th (IRD).

**Long-eared Owl** *Asio otus*

One arrived from the E with four short-eared owls *Asio flammeus* on Holy Island on 18th (MD/AM), it or another was on the Island at Skylark Cottage on 22nd and the Snook on 23rd (IB/SVM/AJM).

**Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus*

Four arrived from the E on Holy Island on 18th (MD/AM) and four were also at Prestwick Carr on same date (GB). One to three were recorded on Holy Island on numerous other dates between 9th and 30th and at Prestwick Carr between 8th and 31st. Elsewhere two were at East Chevington on 27th and singles at Blagdon, Cresswell, Newton Point (Newton-by-the-Sea) and Seaton Sluice.

**Nightjar** *Caprimulgus europaeus*

One was found on the Straight Lonnen on Holy Island at daybreak on 17th (MD).



**Swift** *Apus apus*

A very late record involved one at the Chare Ends on Holy Island on 21st (PRM *et al*).

**Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*

Two were present at Haughton Strother on 15th with a single there throughout the month (MR). Singles were reported from Jesmond and Holywell Denes on numerous dates. Inland, singles were reported from Eltringham, Felton, Morpeth, Newcastle Great Park and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Coastal records included Bamburgh (Stag Rocks), Blyth (South Harbour), Howick (fishing in rock pools) Lynemouth and Seaton Sluice.

**Green Woodpecker** *Picus viridis*

Two were at Wark (presumably N Tyne) on 8th (MNC), singles were at Holystone throughout the month and at Thrunton Woods between 15th and 19th.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major*

One to three were recorded at Hauxley between 4th and 30th with three on 10th and 17th (HRS). Three were also in Northumberland Park, North Shields on 23rd (MNC). Two were regulars in a Rothbury garden and two were at Parson Shields on 20th. Interesting coastal records, which may have involved migrant birds came from Newbiggin on 8th and 10th, Cresswell (Snab Point) and East Chevington on 11th, Whitley Bay (St Mary's Island) on 13th, Druridge Links and Bamburgh on 23rd and Ross on 31st.

**Skylark** *Alauda arvensis*

Peak passage counts included ca. 200 N at Hauxley on 19th with 47 S there on 28th and 40 S on 23rd, 30 S on 11th, 17th and 22nd (HRS/IFo). 45 flew S at East Chevington on 5th and 31 flew over Druridge Links on 11th with lighter passage recorded on many other dates at numerous locations. Large gatherings were recorded at Duddo with 125 here on 5th, 50 at Whitley Bay (St Mary's) on 2nd and Longhoughton on 18th (ASJ). 20-40 were reported from Bamburgh, Haughton Strother, Holy Island, Prestwick Carr, Ross Back Sands (on saltmarsh) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

**Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*

The peak count on Holy Island was 50-60 on 10th with singles present there as late as 23rd and adults feeding fledged 5 fledged juveniles there on 10th. (ADM/IK *et al*). 14 juveniles were at Benridge Moor on 9th (ADMc), 12 at Holystone on 3rd, nine at Sleafy on 1st and seven at Prestwick Carr on 4th.

**House Martin** *Delichon urbica*

40 were still around Holy Island Village on 10th (IK) and ten resident birds were still at Longhoughton on 5th (SRB). Two were at Cresswell on 2nd, singles were at Cramlington on 18th (well after resident birds had departed by 26th September) and Bothal Pond. Two at Newbiggin-by-the-Sea on 31st were the latest records of the month (GB).

**\*Olive-backed Pipit** *Anthus hogsoni*

One was at Beacon Point, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea on 7th (ASJ).

**Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis*

Two, and possibly a third, were at Snook House on Holy Island on 23rd before flying off high to E (ADM).

**Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis*

In the Hauxley area, about 50 were on the beach on 10th, 28 at Bondicarr on 17th and about 20 in the area on 21st (HRS). 15 were counted at the Snook on Holy Island on 4th, 12 were at Howick and Newbiggin Golf Course on 7th, nine were at Sleafy on 31st and seven to eight were at Druridge Links from 11th-16th.

**Rock Pipit** *Anthus petrosus*

15 were counted at Newton-by-the-Sea on 18th (ASJ) and ten were at Little Beach at Berwick-upon-Tweed on 6th (MHu). Nine were on Coquet Island RSPB on 31st and between two and nine were at Hauxley beach between 10th and 30th peaking at nine on 11th. Two to five were at Annstead, Bamburgh, Beadnell, Boulmer, Cresswell and Whitley Bay.

Rock Pipit at Stag Rocks on 12th by Mike Hodgson

**Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava flavissima*

A late record involved a single bird flying S over Catcleugh Reservoir on 11th (PRM).

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*

Four flew S at Hauxley on 15th with one to two S there on other dates (HRS) and two flew S at Druridge Links on 10th and NW at Cresswell Pond on 25th. Four were at Ashington (Castle Island) on 11th (DM *et al*), three were at Chesters Walled Garden on 25th, two were at



Shiremoor throughout the month. Two were also recorded at Bedlington, Boulmer, Cresswell, Howick, Jesmond, South Gosforth and Whitley Bay. Several records involved single birds in Newcastle City Centre.

**Pied Wagtail** *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

Data from the usual roost at Tapee Fen, Berwick-upon-tweed was as shown right (PJ):

Elsewhere 27 were at Tower Knowe (Kielder Reservoir) on 4th, 23 were at Wark (North Tyne) on 22nd (PRM) and 13 were at Waren Mill

Date	Count	Remarks
01/10/09	77	Sunrise; NW wind and sky clearing
02/10/09	317	Sunrise; hawk sp took one, ate in sycamore E of fen
02/10/09		Sunset; many dancing, no count made
03/10/09	151	Sunrise; wildly windy, wags blown about
03/10/09		Sunset; windy, dancing wagtails blown W > houses
04/10/09	333	Sunrise; falcon up from roost S corner trees
05/10/09	473	Sunrise; cold and calm, all wags > W & SW
05/10/09		Sunset; hawk sp present at roost hour then > S
06/10/09	236	Sunrise; blanket cloud then drizzle
06/10/09		Sunset; sky clearing, groups dancing
07/10/09	473	Sunrise; calm, cold and clear
08/10/09	330	Sunrise; cold. clear, windy
09/10/09	228	Sunrise; Sparrowhawk attack, outcome unknown
10/10/09	20	Sunrise; much low cloud still after night rain
11/10/09	221	Sunrise; calm and mostly clear
12/10/09	8	Sunrise; cold and fierce wind from N. Low cloud.
13/10/09	20	Sunrise; calm, cloudy with mist
14/10/09	96	Sunrise; hawk sp, mist and cloud, rain in night
15/10/09		Sunrise; watch kept, but thick mist
16/10/09	4	Sunrise; cold with strong wind from N
17/10/09	7	Sunrise; cold and mostly clear. N wind variable
18/10/09	13	Sunrise; ground frost
19/10/09	11	Sunrise; rain in night. W wind
20/10/09	104	Sunrise; strong wind from SW
22/10/09	1	Sunrise; cold and misty
23/10/09	11	Sunrise; heavy cloud and wind from S
24/10/09	30	Sunset; dancing over fen after wild wet day
25/10/09	32	Sunrise; fierce W wind
26/10/09	23	Sunrise; workers/lights on railtrack all night
27/10/09	20	Sunrise; calm and cloudy
28/10/09	50	Sunset; dancing, circling over fen
28/10/09	23	Sunrise; calm and cool
29/10/09	25	Sunset; early to roost - 16:28
29/10/09		Sunrise: mist too thick to see birds
30/10/09	44	Sunrise; misty with much cloud

**Waxwing** *Bombus garrulus*

One was at Hauxley on 30th (HRS).

**Dipper** *Cinclus cinclus*

Three were at Holystone on 28th (DRo), one to two were in Jesmond Dene throughout the month and singles were at Chollerford, Elsdon, Haughton Strother and Holywell Dene.

**Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

At Hauxley, 23 were present on 17th with five caught and ringed, 14 were counted there on 10th (five ringed) and 12 on 15th (2 ringed) (HRS). Elsewhere, 21 were counted over 2km at Prestwick Carr on 10th (PCF), 16 were at Druridge Links on 16th with 13 there on 23rd and five caught and ringed on 10th (IDR *et al*). Ten were at Haughton Strother on 15th and the maximum count on Holy Island was nine on 11th, nine were also at Bedlington on 13th.

**Dunnock** *Prunella modularis*

Data from Hauxley Ringing Station was as follows:

Date	Number Recorded	Number Ringed
4th	3	3
10th	10	6
15th	9	1
17th	20	4
21st	7	1
23rd	9	3
24th	11	1
29th	2	1
30th	4	1

At Chapel House Estate nine were in one bush on 6th, which the observer recorded as being unusual, suspecting a cat may have caused the gathering (MH). Ten were at Bamburgh on 5th, nine at Sandy Bay (Newbiggin-by-the-Sea) on 12th, eight on Holy Island on 16th and Druridge Links on the 23rd were the observer remarked that there had been an influx.

**Robin** *Erithacus rubecula*

Almost continuous coastal passage was reported throughout the month, the main recipients being the obvious sites at Hauxley and Holy Island. At Hauxley birds appeared to be arriving and departing on a daily basis with peak counts of 50+ on 22nd and 37+ on 10th, 12-25 were noted on seven other dates, but only one on 17th (HRS). A similar pattern emerged on Holy Island where passage was again on-going with up to 50 present on many dates (IK). One observer reported 27 on 23rd declining to nine by 25th (ADM) while on 27th numbers had increased again to 28+ (PRM). Elsewhere on the coast an influx brought 44 to Druridge Links on 23rd (IDR), 22 were at Sandy Bay on 12th (JR), 15+ at Bamburgh on 10th (BRS), and 14 at Boulmer and Howick on 24th (PRM). Inland birds had become more vocal and easier to detect resulting in counts of 24 at Prestwick Carr on 10th (PCF), 20 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 15th (MR) and 14 at Chesters House and Walled Garden on 18th (ALT), some of these birds no doubt of continental origin. Two to eight were reported from a further four coastal and six inland localities.

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*

The first was at East Chevington on 10th (PHH). From 21st-25th a further five were reported, singles at East Chevington on 25th (ADM/AT/TB), Hauxley on 21st (HRS), Holy Island on 22nd (PH), St Mary's Wetland on 22nd (AC) and Whitley Bay Cemetery on 23rd (JSB). Another was at Coquet Island on 31st (IDR/JF).

**Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

At least one was on Holy Island from 19th-22nd and two on 23rd (IB/ADM *et al*). Singles were also found at Blyth Cemetery on 22nd (MSH), Druridge Links on 10th (IDR/TAC/NA), and Newham on 26th (RNa).

**Stonechat** *Saxicola torquata*

The vast majority of records this month came from coastal areas, no doubt a reflection of observer preference and therefore of little significance. Up to ten were reported from Holy Island throughout the month (ADM/MJC) and ten were also at St Mary's on 5th (ASJ). Eight were at Bamburgh on 5th (BRS) and Druridge Bay dunes on 16th (MT/NT) and seven at Gloucester Lodge dunes on 17th (STH) and nearby Meggies Burn on 22nd (MSH). Four to six were reported from Boulmer, Howick, Lynemouth and Ross Back Sands, and three's from Backworth Pond, Callerton, Hauxley, Newbiggin, Prestwick Carr and Ross Point. Elsewhere one to two were noted at a further twelve coastal sites and six inland sites, including as far west as Steel Rigg.

**Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Very few were reported this month. By far the highest count was ten birds of the *Greenland race* *O.o.leucorhoa* at Holy Island on 4th (IK). Elsewhere three were at St Mary's on 1st (SPP), two at Dunstanburgh on 5th and singles at Black Middens, Hauxley, Howick, Newbiggin, Sleek Burn, and Steel Rigg from 4th-10th. Another was at Holy Island on 11th and

a late bird well inland at Simonside on 26th (JW).

**Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus*

Three were at Bamburgh on 10th (BRS), when two also arrived with an influx of Redwings at Holy Island (IK). Again on 10th two lucky observers found a bird moving W. with other thrushes through their garden at Netherton Park (Stannington). Not surprisingly this was a "garden tick" for them (RWM/MIM). Further singles were reported from Holy Island (Snook) on 12th (MJC) and Holy Island (Straight Lonnen) on 27th (PRM).

**Blackbird** *Turdus merula*

Holy Island witnessed a considerable influx on 27th, the observer submitting an underestimated count of 3,836+ in off the sea all day, especially the period from dawn to 11.00 hours (PRM). 727 were counted on the island on 30th, and 133 on 22nd (MJC). Many other observers submitted lesser counts prior to and in-between these dates, suggesting passage was ongoing as birds quickly moved inland. Hauxley also supported large numbers, including ca.300 on 15th, 200 on 21st-22nd and 150 on 30th. A total of 121 birds were ringed here during the month (HRS). Elsewhere "hundreds" were at Whitley Bay Cemetery on 30th (including 65 in one field hedgerow (MNC), and 50 here on 21st (ASJ). 100 were at Newbiggin and 60+ at Woodhorn on 27th (TRC), 30+ at Bamburgh on 23rd, where a total of 54 were ringed during the month, and 30 moved W. through a garden at Netherton Park (Stannington) on 10th. 20-30 were also reported from Coquet Island on 31st, Druridge Links on 23rd, and East Sleekburn on 30th. 14 were together on a garden lawn in Tynemouth on 30th (CB) and two to 12 at a further nine localities.



A cock Blackbird at Prior's Park Tynemouth  
30th by Colin Bradshaw

**Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris*

Birds were reported from 10th. A considerable influx occurred at Holy Island on 27th when an underestimated 3,809 arrived in off the sea during the day (PRM). Elsewhere numbers were less impressive, although 400 W. at Bakethin Reservoir on 10th (MD), ca.300 at Newbiggin on 27th (TRC), 150 at Once Brewed on 16th (JMA) and 118+ at Swallow Pond on 28th (SPP) were all noteworthy. 94 were again on Holy Island on 30th (MJC), 40-50 at Broad Strother on 21st, 47 S. at Chesters House and Walled Garden on 31st, and 46 at Houghton Strother G.P. (Humshaugh) on 19th. 22 flew W. at Big Waters on 28th and up to ten were noted at Hauxley and Tynemouth. One to seven were reported from a further nine localities.

**Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos*

250 arrived with Redwings at Holy Island on 10th (IK) followed by lesser numbers to the end of the month, including 17-20 from 18th-22nd and 70 on 30th (ADM/MJC). At Hauxley 25 arrived on 15th and 15 on 11th, three to 13 reported on numerous other dates throughout the month (HRS). Further coastal immigration brought ten+ to Bamburgh on 23rd (BRS) and ten to Coquet Island on 31st (IDR/JF). Inland movement was indicated by counts of 30 on the county boundary at Ebchester on 9th (MD), 15 at Chesters House and Walled Garden on 18th (ALT) and ten at Bakethin Reservoir on 13th (MD). Four to six were reported from Druridge Links, Jesmond Dene, Northumberland Park (North Shields) and Prestwick Carr and one to two from a further six localities.

**Redwing** *Turdus iliacus*

There were two distinct periods of obvious immigration during the month, from 10th-15th and 27th-30th. On Holy Island 1,000 per hour flew S.W. on 10th (05.00hrs-09.30hrs. - IK), and 4,005+ arrived in off the sea together with large numbers of Fieldfares and Blackbirds on 27th (07.00hrs-11.00hrs - PRM). 820 were again on the Island on 30th (MJC). A total of 800 flew W. at Midgeholme on 10th (SW), 400 were on Holy Island on 14th (RA), c.300 at Hauxley on 15th (HRS), 200+ W. over Bakethin Reservoir on 13th (MD), 150 W. at Rothbury on 10th (JD) and 104 W. at Prestwick Carr on 10th (PCF). Passage was more or less continuous on a much smaller scale throughout the month, with counts of 40-80+ received for Druridge Links, Houghton Strother G.P. (Humshaugh), Hauxley, Hazlerigg, Hexham, St Mary's and Wideopen. 20-37 were noted at Bamburgh, Blyth Cemetery, Coanwood, Newbiggin, Newcastle Town Moor, Slaley, Swallow Pond, Tynemouth and Woodhorn and one to 13 at a further 15 localities.

**Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus*

12 were at Longhirst Flash on 17th (ACo), ten at Walwick on 14th (EAW), seven at Dinnington on 8th and Prestwick Carr on 17th (PCF) and six at Kyloe on 15th (PCF). Elsewhere two to three were reported from Chesters House and Walled Garden, Healey Whins, Holy Island, Holywell Dene and Jesmond Dene and singles at Berwick, Hauxley and Wark (North Tyne).



**Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla*

Not particularly numerous this month when many more might have been expected during coastal falls. Highest counts were eight at Hauxley RS on 22nd (HRS), six newly arrived birds in Druridge Links on 23rd (IDR), and at Holy Island, five+ on 10th (CGK/PS et al.) and four on 22nd (MJC). Bamburgh RS reported only five trapped and ringed during the entire month. Elsewhere two were at Hauxley on 15th (HRS) and Woodhorn village on 18th (AT) and singles at Cambios on 30th, Newbiggin on 10th and 21st, Whitley Bay cemetery on 23rd and 28th and Woodhorn on 27th.

**Garden Warbler** *Sylvia borin*

Singles were at Craster on 14th (TRD/JD) and Hauxley N.R on 21st (HRS).

**\* Barred Warbler** *Sylvia nisoria*

Single birds were reported from the Farne Islands on 14th (Bird Guides) and Holy Island (Straight Lonnen) on 15th (RA). Another, possibly a different bird was again on Holy Island from 22nd-26th (IK/ADM et al.)

**Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca*

At least two were on Holy Island from 11th-23rd (CP/DCh/KDa/ADM/IK et al.). One was at Hauxley on 15th and another or same from 23rd-30th (HRS). A bird at St Mary's on 17th showed characteristics of one of the *Central Asian* races, possibly *ssp. halimodendri* (IF/AC).



Left, a Lesser Whitethroat on 17th by Colin Bradshaw and right, a Pallas's Warbler at Beal Ends on 23rd by Tim Dean

**Pallas's Warbler** *Phylloscopus proregulus*

One was on Holy Island (Snook) from 22nd-23rd, and another nearby at Beal Road Ends car park on 23rd (CP/SVM/AJM/ADM et al.)

**Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Two were noted early in the month, followed by a notable arrival from 10th and another influx from 21st-24th, a total of 20-22 birds. Four to five were reported from Holy Island on 10th with two+ here the following day (CGK/PS/IK et al.). Probably two different birds were again reported from Holy Island (Snook and village) on 22nd (PH/IB/MJC). One at St Mary's Wetland on 10th increased to three on 11th (AC/ASJ et al.), and another was found here on 24th (ASJ/AC). At Hauxley there was one on 4th, a different bird on 10th-11th and two on 15th. The influx later in the month brought two on 21st, one remaining to 22nd (HRS). Elsewhere singles were found recently dead at Newbiggin on 7th (MSH), Berwick on 11th (MHu), Whitley Bay Cemetery from 11th-15th (AC/ASJ), Bamburgh on 12th and another on 23rd (BRS), Craster on 14th (TRD/JD) and Druridge Links on 23rd (IDR).

**\* Radde's Warbler** *Phylloscopus schwarzi*

A single bird was caught and ringed at Druridge Links/Pools on 10th (IDR/TAC/NA/TB) when another was also on Holy Island (DGB/CP). A bird at Holy Island on 22nd (MJC/DGB/CP) may have been the same, or part of the substantial fall of migrants around this time.

**Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*

Present on Holy Island from 4th, numbers increasing from six or seven on 10th to 25 on 11th and decreasing to three the following day (IK/MJC et al.). There were six at Druridge Links on 15th, five still here on 23rd (IDR) and five at Hauxley on 4th (HRS). Elsewhere there were three at Prestwick Carr on 4th (PCF) and two's at Arcot Pond, Bamburgh, Bondicarr, Cambois, Exhibition Park, Newbiggin, St Mary's and Tynemouth. In addition single birds were noted at a further five coastal and 12 inland sites.

Birds showing characteristics of the *Eastern race P.c.abietinus* included two at Holy Island (Snook) on 22nd, and Holy Island (Straight Lonnen) on 23rd (MJC), two at Tynemouth on 23rd-24th (CGK/MSH/CB) and one at Hauxley on 22nd, it



or another ringed on 23rd and re-trapped on 29th (HRS).

Birds showing characteristics of the *Siberian race P.c.tristis* included three at Holy Island on 22nd (MJC) and a single or singles from 16th-23rd (MH/PH/ADM/CP *et al.*). Another was reported from St Mary's Wetland on 15th (PHH).

**Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Early in the month three were reported from Brierdene (Whitley Bay) on 5th (MNC), two from Howick on 3rd (JAR) and a single at Holy Island on 4th (MJC). The only other report was a single at Holy Island from 10th-16th (IK/ADM/MR/MJC).

**Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus*

It has certainly not been a good year for this species. Coastal passage was far quieter than might be expected in October, with several observers commenting on low numbers. 14 at Holy Island on 22nd was by far the highest coastal count submitted (MJC), numbers here declining to seven the following day (ADM). At Hauxley small numbers were noted from 10th with a peak of ten on 23rd (HRS). Two at Druridge Links on 10th were the first here this year for one regular observer, increasing to six by 23rd (IDR). Elsewhere on the coast six were at Cambois on 24th (STH), four at Newbiggin on 27th where the comment was "tiny numbers this autumn" (TRC), three+ also at Tynemouth on 24th ("scarce this month on coast" – CGK) and two at Bamburgh on 12th, where only two were trapped for ringing during the entire month (BRS). Inland 24 were counted in Slaley Forest on 22nd (BNR), eight at Bedlington (Attlee Park) on 13th (JR), seven at Chesters House and Walled Garden on 25th (ALT) and six at Humford Mill on 13th (JR). One to three was reported from a further five coastal and three inland localities.

**Firecrest** *Regulus ignicapillus*

At least 24 birds were recorded during the month. A light fall occurred on 10th and a much larger influx from 21st-26th, with several localities reporting multiple sightings. A male was found on Holy Island (Snook) from 10th-11th (CGK/PS *et al.*), another bird was at Tynemouth on 10th (BirdGuides) and one at St Mary's Wetland from 11th-12th (AC/LMo/ASJAA/MH). The largest fall on record occurred later in the month, beginning on 21st. At Low Newton-by-the-Sea up to six were reported from 21st-25th with a peak on 22nd (BirdGuides), Hauxley reported three from 21st-23rd and another on 24th, several birds were ringed here, and it was considered a total of seven different birds were involved (HRS). Holy Island supported at least three birds from 21st-26th, with singles at the Lough, Straight Lonnen and a female in the Links (IB/MJC/PH *et al.*). Two were found at Howick Dene from 23rd-25th (TF) and singles at Craster on 22nd (Bird Guides), Druridge Links from 23rd-25th (IDR/TB) and Newbiggin Mound on 21st (AT).

**\* Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula parva*

One was found in the Captain's garden, Holy Island on 14th (MR).

**Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula hypoleuca*

One was in the Vicar's garden, Holy Island on 10th (TF/CGK *et al.*).

**Long-tailed Tit** *Aegithalos caudatus*

20 were at Holywell Dene on 7th (MNC) and Hauxley on 22nd (HRS), 17 at Haughton Strother GP near Humshaugh on 15th (MR), 16 at Howick Dene on 23rd (PH), 15 at Prestwick Carr on 8th (PCF), 12 at Humford Mill (Bedlington) on 13th (JR), Druridge Bay CP on 28th (GB), Hepburn Wood on 29th (JMA) and Chesters Walled Garden on 31st (ALT). Ten were at Healey Whins on 4th (RMH), Creswell Pond on 9th (PCF) and Humshaugh on 16th (SW). Two to eight were at a further 15 widespread localities. 14 were ringed at Hauxley between 15th-29th (HRS).

**Blue Tit** *Cyanistes caeruleus*

17 were noted at Humford Mill (Bedlington) on 13th (JR), 16+ at Bamburgh on 5th (BRS), 15 at Haughton Strother GP on 15th (MR), 13 at Hauxley on 22nd (HRS), 11 at Chesters Walled Garden on 4th (ALT) and four to seven at Attlee Park (Bedlington), Druridge Links and Holywell Dene. Three ringed at Hauxley on 15th (HRS).

**Great Tit** *Parus major*

13 were at Hauxley on 17th (HRS), 11 at Humford Mill on 13th (JR), Haughton Strother GP on 15th (MR) and Chesters Walled Garden on 18th (ALT) and three to six at Druridge Links, Holywell Dene and Jesmond Dene.

**Coal Tit** *Periparus ater*

15 were noted in the Parson Shields/Williamston area on 7th (BNR), 14 at Chesters Walled Garden on 31st (ALT), ten+ at Bondicarr on 7th (MSH), seven at Haughton Strother GP on 5th (MR) and Humford Mill (Bedlington) on 13th (JR), six at Druridge Links on 16th (IDR) and one to three at a further nine widespread localities including gardens at Old Hartley and Walbottle.

**Willow Tit** *Poecile montanus*

Four were observed near the goat field at Prestwick Carr on 16th (LMo/IWa), one-two at Linden Hall on 23rd (NFO), two at Ellington on 31st (TB) and singles at Fell Cottages, Slaley on 4th and 9th (AMH), Backworth on 10th (SPP) and Craster on 14th (TRD/JD).

**Marsh Tit** *Poecile palustris*

Two were at Haughton Strother GP on 5th (MR) and Postern Wood (Morpeth) on 28th (ADMc). Singles were found at Linden Hall on 17th and 24th (NFO) and Chesters Walled Garden on 25th (ALT).

**Marsh Tit is a target species for 2009. Please report all records.**

**Nuthatch** *Sitta europaea*

Seven were at Chesters Walled Garden on 4th (ALT), four were at Wark on 8th (MNC), three were at Rothley Lakes on 31st (PCF), two visited a Walbottle garden all month (LR/KR), Humford Mill on 13th (JR) and Molesdon on 18th (MNC). Singles were also noted at Arcot Pond, Gragside, Heaton Park (Newcastle), Jesmond Dene, Parson Shields and a Rothbury garden.

**Treecreeper** *Cedrorhina familiaris*

Six were observed at Chesters Walled Garden on 25th (ALT). Singles were at Healey Whins, Ladycross (Slaley Forest) and Rothbury.

**Red-backed Shrike** *Lanius colluris*

A juvenile took up residence at the Straight Lonnen, Holy Island between 1st-3rd (CP/IK).

**Jay** *Garulus glandarius*

At least 16 were noted along the Hadrian Way between Newburn/Bywell on 1st (MH). Four were near Bothal Pond on 4th (ADMc) and Lambley Viaduct on 12th (JMA), three at Mitford Castle on 5th (ADMc), Wark on 8th (MNC), Fell Cottages (Slaley) on 9th (RMH) and Arcot Pond on 16th (STH). Coastal records involved singles at Bondicarr (Hauxley) on 7th (MSH), East Chevington on 7th (MSH) and Bamburgh on 12th (BRS). One was observed caching food at Banks Pond, Dinnington on 25th (PCF). Elsewhere, one-two were at Abbey Mill, Attlee Park (Bedlington), Belford, Bellasis Bridge, Benridge Moor, Big Waters, Borough Woods, (Morpeth), Chesters Walled Garden, Craggside, Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Bay CP, Gosforth Park, Hepburn Wood, Highfield (Mitford), Holywell Dene and Pond, Howick, Jesmond Dene, Linden Hall, Linton Pond, Low Angerton, Mitford Hall, Molesden, Paddy Freemans (Newcastle), Pegswood, Postern Wood (Morpeth), Prestwick Carr, Rothley Lakes, Stannington Hospital, Swallow Pond, Valley Park (Cramlington), Walwick, West Cawledge, West Falloden, Whittle Dene, Woodhorn Village and a Woosington garden.

**Magpie** *Pica pica*

18 were at East Sleekburn on 30th (JR), 12 at Cramlington on 16th (PCF), 11 at Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 13th (MNC), ten at Jesmond Dene on 13th (MJCo). Nine visited a Walbottle garden on 4th (KR/LR) and one to eight were at a further four widespread localities.

**Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula*

294 were moving north in small groups at Parson Shields/Williamston area on 7th (BNR), 200+ at Featherstone on 30th (EAW), 120 at Cawfields on 12th (JMA), 80 at Holywell Dene on 18th (MT/NT), 55 at Prestwick Carr on 14th (PCF), 50 at Hotbank Craggs on 7th (JMA) and two to 25 were at a further six widespread localities.

**Rook** *Corvus frugilegus*

200 were at Featherstone Castle on 16th (JMA), 102 at Bywell Cottage Bank on 25th (BNR), 100 were at Housesteads on 11th (KR/LR), 60 at Alnwick Bypass on 13th and Beal on 14th (JMA). Four to 50 were at a further five widespread localities.

**Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone*

97 were noted in the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay on 10th (DMT), 16 at Hauxley on 17th (HRS), four at Chesters Walled Garden on 4th (ALT) and two at a Walbottle garden on 11th (KR/LR).

**Raven** *Corvus corax*

Three were at Holystone on 9th (DRo) and Harwood on 15th (BNR), two at St. Cuthbert's Cave on 14th (PT) and singles at Tows Bank on 7th (BNR), Barhaugh Hall on 7th (BNR) and East Ord on 16th (MHu).

**Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*

9,300 were at the Holy Island Lough roost on 25th (IK) with 5,200+ leaving there on 27th (PRM), 2,000 at East Ord on 29th (MHu), 1,800+ at Howick on 22nd (JAR), 1,200 at Low Teppermoor on 20th (TWi) and Druridge Links on 23rd (IDR), 1,000 at Hauxley on 15th (HRS), Cresswell Pond on 22nd (IFo) and Buckton on 29th (JMA), 800 at St. Mary's Island on 11th (ASJ). Six to 380 were at a further 15 widespread localities.

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*

31 visited a Walbottle garden on 18th (KR/LR), 27 at Harwood Shield on 15th (BNR), seven at Fell Cottages (Slaley Forest) on 31st (RMH) and three at a Whitley Bay garden on 22nd (MT/NT).

**Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*

35-40 were at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) all month (TB), 35 in the Hauxley area on 17th (HRS), 25 at Molesden on 18th (MNC), 18 at Duddo on 5th (ASJ), Blakemoor Farm (Cresswell) on 7th (AA/MH) and Haughton Strother GP on 24th (MR), 12 next to Warkworth Golf Course on 6th (JSB/EC), ten at East Chevington Dunes on 18th (IK). One to five were at a further eight widespread localities including Holy Island (an uncommon visitor here – IK/MR/RA/IB) and gardens at Dinnington, Netherton Park (Stannington), Snab Point (Cresswell) and Walbottle. Four were ringed at Hauxley between 23rd-30th (HRS).

**Tree Sparrow is a target species for 2009. Please report all records.**

Tree Sparrows at a feeder in a Walbottle garden  
photograph by Ken Russell

**Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs*

100+ were at Haughton Strother GP on 24th (MR), 42 at Bolam on 15th (PCF), 19 at Prestwick Carr on 17th (PCF), 17 at Chesters Walled Garden on 31st (ALT), 16 at Hauxley on 10th (HRS) and four to nine were at a further four widespread localities.

**Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla*

One at St. Mary's Island on 6th was the first autumn arrival (MSH). On the 10th 40 arrived with Redwings on Holy Island (IK), six at Hauxley (HRS), two-three at the Mound (Newbiggin) (GB) and two at Midgeholme (SW). Passage was then recorded daily on Holy Island until 23rd when 50 flew W over the Snook (MJC). Elsewhere on the coast, ten were at Hauxley on 17th (HRS), four at Druridge Links on 15th (IDR), three at Whitley Bay Cemetery on 18th (ASJ) and Woodhorn Church on 22nd (IFo) and one-two at Bamburgh, Beal, Blyth Cemetery, Newbiggin Mound and St. Mary's Island. Inland, four were at Holystone on 24th (DRo), two at Chesters Walled Garden on 25th (ALT) and singles at Bakethin Reservoir on 13th (MD), Haughton Strother GP on 15th (MR) and Rothbury on 22nd (TRD). One was ringed at Hauxley on 21st (HRS).

**Greenfinch** *Carduelis chloris*

100 were in the Hauxley area between 21st-23rd (HRS), 55+ on Holy Island on 20th (PRM), 30+ at Blyth Cemetery on 15th (MSH), 22 visited a Walbottle garden on 18th (KR/LR), 14 at Bywell Cottage Bank on 25th (BNR). One-nine were at a further four widespread localities. 104 were ringed at Bamburgh all month (BRS) and seven at Hauxley between 17th-30th (HRS).

**Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis*

The largest "charms" involved 200+ next to Warkworth Golf Course on 6th (JSB/EC), 60 at Hauxley on 22nd (HRS), 50 at Druridge Bay Dunes on 16th (MT/NT), 40+ at Blyth Cemetery on 15th (MSH), 30 at Straight Lonnen, Holy Island between 18th-30th (MJC), 23 at Haughton Strother GP on 24th (MR) and East Sleekburn on 20th (JR) and one-20 at a further 14 widespread localities including gardens at Stanington, Walbottle and Whitley Bay. 20 were ringed at Hauxley between 22nd-30th (HRS).

**Siskin** *Carduelis spinus*

Inland, 130 were at Tarsset Burn and 10 at Bakethin Reservoir, Kielder on 13th (MD), 60+ at Haughton Strother GP on 8th (MR), 40-50 at Swallow Pond on 28th (SPP), 25 at Hepburn Wood on 29th (JMA) and one to 15 at a further ten widespread localities. Coastal passage was evident from 10th, with peaks of 100 moving through the Hauxley area on 17th (HRS), 14 at the Mound, Newbiggin on 10th (GB), ten+ at Druridge Links on 28th (IDR), six at Bamburgh on 23rd (BRS) and five at Cambois on 24th (STH).

**Linnet** *Carduelis cannabina*

Coastal flocks included 500+ at Warkworth Golf Course on 6th (SB/EC), 400 in a stubble field at Monk's House Pool on 31st (AT), 180 at Chare Ends, Holy Island on 30th (MJC), 155 at St. Mary's Island on 10th (ASJ), 120 at Waren Mill Caravan Park on 11th (CGK) and 120 at Creswell Pond on 22nd (IFo). Four to 55 were at a further ten widespread localities.

**Twite** *Carduelis flavirostris*

72 were found on Coquet Island on 31st (IDR/JF), 40 at Ross Point on 29th (SW), 26 flying along the Cheswick shoreline on 28th (MHu), 19 at Beal on 18th (CP), 12 at Snab Point, Cresswell on 27th (GB/LAR), four at Hemscotill Links, Cresswell on 25th (AT) and one came in off the sea at Holy Island on 14th (RA). By 21st 17 were at Chare Ends, Holy Island (PRM) with two on the Snook on 27th (PRM).

**Redpoll Sp.**

Four+ were at Druridge Pools on 28th (MSH), two landed N at Newbiggin on 10th and singles there on 17th and 28th (GB), two S at Newcastle Town Moor on 13th (GB) and singles at the Snook, Holy Island on 22nd (MJC), Druridge Bay CP on 28th, Hazlerigg on 28th and Holywell Pond on 31st (GB).

**Lesser Redpoll** *Carduelis cabaret*

300 were at Addycombe (Rothbury) on 22nd (JD). Five at Craggside on 4th increased to 130 by 14th (TRD/JD). 40 flew W with Redwings at Midgeholme on 10th (SW) and 40+ at Bakethin Reservoir on 13th (MD). 27 were noted at Fell Cottages, Slaley on 9th (RMH), 24 at Prestwick Carr on 10th (PCF) and 20 at Holystone on 5th (DRo). One-eight were at a further 16 widespread localities. Coastal passage was evident throughout the month at Hauxley with peaks of 30 on 10th and 20 on 30th (HRS). Six flew over Druridge Links on 14th and 10+ there on 28th (IDR). One to five were also observed at Bamburgh, Budle Bay, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools and the Snook, Holy Island.

**Crossbill** *Loxia curvirostra*

90 were at Bakethin Reservoir, Kielder on 13th (MD), 80 at Holystone on 5th (DRo), 50 at Debdon near Rothbury on 13th (TRD/JD), 30 at Craggside between 4th-21st (TRD/JD) and Tarsset Burn (Kielder) on 13th (MD), 16+ at Sweethope Lough on 6th (PRM). One-six were also at Fell Plantation (Slaley), Grindon Lough, Harwood Shield, Rothbury, Simonside and Thrunton Woods. Coastal movement involved four S over Marden Estate, Whitley Bay on 24th (ASJ) and one at Hauxley on 17th (HRS).

**Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

13 were at Prestwick Carr on 10th (PCF), ten at Fell Plantation (Slaley) on 22nd (BNR), eight at Linton Pond between 8th-11th (MSH/CDH) and Hauxley on 30th (HRS), six at Holystone on 31st (DRo), five at Walwick on 16th (SW), four at a Walbottle garden on 4th (KR/LR), near Mitford Steads on 5th (ADM), Linton Pond on 28th (GB) and Backworth on 31st (CGK). One-three were noted at a further 19 widespread localities. Four were ringed and one re-trapped at Hauxley between 22nd-30th (HRS). One was ringed at Bamburgh on 22nd (BRS).

**Bullfinch is a target species for 2010. Please report all records.**

**Hawfinch** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

One was discovered at Haughton Strother GP on 24th (MR).

**Lapland Bunting** Two came in off the sea at Church Point at Church Point, Newbiggin on 4th (GB/TRC), two were at St. Mary's Island on 9th with one still present there on 24th (ASJ/AC), one was on Hauxley beach on 10th (HRS), Beal on 11th (CP), two (JR), three at Chare Ends, Holy Island on 18th (MD) and one at Holy Island Lough on 20th (PH). Another was at Newbiggin Golf Course on 21st (AT).

**Snow Bunting** *Plectrophenax nivalis*

On Holy Island, 12 were at Straight Lonnen on 28th (DRW), two at the Excavations on 22nd (MJC) and singles at Chare Ends on 11th (ADM) and Snipe Point on 20th (PH). Ten were noted at Long Nanny on 29th (per JPL). One at Hauxley beach on 21st increased to seven by 30th (HRS). Four were at St. Mary's Island on 9th (ASJ) and Boulmer Steel on 15th (JAR), three at Seaton Sluice on 11th (LMo), Howdumont Sands (Boulmer) on 31st (RJP) and Coquet Island on 31st (IDR/JF). One to two were also at Brierdene Burnmouth (Whitley Bay), Church Point (Newbiggin), Old Stell Craggs (Simonside Hills-TRD/JD) and Snab Point (Cresswell).

**Yellowhammer** *Emberiza citronella*

20 were in gorse bushes at Craster on 14th (TRD/JD), nine+ at Causey Park Bridge on 6th (PRM), six at Holy Island on 21st (PRM), four at Beacon Lane (Cramlington) on 11th (DM), Howick Cove on 23rd (PH) and East Sleekburn on 30th (JR), three at Howick on 1st (JAR) and Cornerfield (Slaley) on 12th (RMH) and one at Sweethope Lough on 6th (PRM).

**Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Present on Holy Island all month with a peak of 16 on 18th (ADM), 14 were at St. Mary's Island on 12th (ASJ), 12 next to Warkworth Golf Course on 6th (JSB/EC), four at Hauxley on 17th (HRS) and Snab Point, Cresswell on 27th (GB) and one to three at Arcot Pond, Blyth Cemetery, Catcleugh Reservoir, Druridge Links, Grindon Lough, Holystone, Lynemouth, Meggie's Burn (Blyth) and Simonside.

**ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN****Birds of unknown origin****Rose-ringed Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri*

One was seen around the churchyard in Ponteland on 28th (MR). This continues to be the favourite locality for this species in the county.

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Bamburgh Ringing Station, Berwick Wildlife Group, Bird Club Field Trip, Hauxley Ringing Station, North Northumberland Bird Club, Seaton Sluice Watch Tower.

## **BULLETIN COMPILATION AND PRODUCTION**

This bulletin was compiled by Lindsay McDougall (Swans to Geese, Game birds, Divers to Herons), Graeme Bowman (Ducks), Trevor Blake (Birds of Prey to Rails), Ian Forsyth (Waders to Skuas), Tim Dean (Gulls to Auks, Escapes, Hybrids and Unknown Origin, List of Contributors, Highlights), Iain Robson (Doves to Dunnock), Mike Richardson (Robin to Warblers), Dee McKeown (Flycatchers to Buntings), Julie Roper/Dan Turner (WeBS Coastal Counts) and Steve Holliday (WeBS Inland Counts). Thanks again to Ann McKeown for typing the section Flycatchers to Buntings.

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## **RECORD SUBMISSION**

**Cards:** Please send all record cards to Tim Dean, 2 Knocklaw Park, Rothbury NE65 7PW, to arrive on, or preferably before, the 8th of the month following that in which the records were collected. Please write cards legibly to ensure that your sightings are correctly recorded.

**E-mail:** Members are encouraged to e-mail their records on an Excel-style spreadsheet. Please e-mail Dick Myatt at [dick@dickmyatt.co.uk](mailto:dick@dickmyatt.co.uk) for a copy of the standard spreadsheet and other details.

**Location names and Grid references:** The use of standard location names and the inclusion of grid references greatly increases the value of records in subsequent analyses. A 1km square grid reference is the ideal e.g. NY8067 for Grindon Lough, but 2km square references (Tetrads) are also acceptable e.g. NY86D in 247 this case. A list of localities and their tetrad grid references (Tetrad/Locality List) can be downloaded from the 'Resources & Downloads' section of the Club website at <http://www.ntbc.org.uk> – the use of these names, wherever possible, would be highly appreciated.

## **PHOTOGRAPHS AND ILLUSTRATIONS**

Please keep submitting your articles, photographs, sketches and illustrations for the bulletin. Thanks again to those who have supplied the excellent photographs. Please send to Steve Barrett at [Sscmagpie@aol.com](mailto:Sscmagpie@aol.com)

## **ELECTRONIC BULLETIN**

The NTBC bulletin can be received electronically or as hard copy. The electronic bulletin arrives earlier than the printed version, it is in colour and we save the printing and stamps.

Ask for an e-mailed bulletin from [jo.bentley@waitrose.com](mailto:jo.bentley@waitrose.com).

## **INDOOR MEETINGS**

The next Indoor Meeting is at Newcastle Falcons Rugby Club

Thursday 14th January at 7pm – Conservation, Birds and the Northumberland Wildlife Trust by Steve Lowe

## **MEMBERSHIP**

Annual subscriptions are now due. Why not pay by standing order and while you are at it fill in a gift aid request? For membership enquiries please contact [jo.bentley@waitrose.com](mailto:jo.bentley@waitrose.com).

## **NTBC WEB SITE – YOUR RESOURCE**

It's a little over a year since the latest incarnation of the bird club web site 'went live'. The main aim of the site is to provide members with information about the club, what's on, what's happening, and general birding information that may be relevant or interesting to them. It seems to have worked out as the site has received over 8,000 visits to date!

As well as details of Indoor Meetings and forthcoming Field Trips there is a Notice Board with lots of interesting information. You can read the Club's Constitution (how many members have done that?) and download a range of documents for subscriptions, rare bird report forms, aids for bird-recording, a plethora of bird trip reports and more.

Perhaps to be expected, some of the most popular pages on the site have been the Photo Galleries where images taken of birds occurring in the club's recording area are displayed. Many of our local, very talented photographers have kindly provided material over the year. We are always looking for new photos and they do not all have to be high quality feather-perfect portraits. We are keen to publish images which may be instructive to club members in terms of identification, behaviour, etc. Don't forget we have some talented artists in the club so check out the Art Gallery. We are currently awaiting a number of 'Birding Sites' articles which have been promised.



The latest section to be added has been Identification Matters where we hope to publish articles, etc. by club members on a range of identification topics. If Central Asian Lesser Whitethroat and 'Siberian' Chiffchaffs sound a bit heavy, don't worry, Black-tailed Godwits and Cormorants are in the pipeline!

If you haven't yet visited the web site, give it a try at [www.ntbc.org.uk](http://www.ntbc.org.uk) and if you have any ideas or things you would like to see or hear about on there then let Chris know on 0751 582 5024 or email [christopher.knox@o2.co.uk](mailto:christopher.knox@o2.co.uk).

The committee is aware that a number of members may not have easy access (or even want access) to the web site and the information provided there is also published in the monthly bulletins. Printed copies of any downloads can also be provided on request.

**Chris Knox & Mike Hodgson**

## FIELD TRIPS

The next field trip is to Ross Back Sands on 24th January.

Please contact Trevor Blake;

Email: [trevor.1958@live.co.uk](mailto:trevor.1958@live.co.uk)

Tel : 01670 862 635

## BIRGUIDES OFFER

Birdguides Ltd have offered NTBC a group purchase discount on pre-christmas orders. For every product ordered and placed as part of an amalgamated 'NTBC' order they will offer a discount of 1%. For example if ten products are ordered the total order value will be reduced 10% etc.

The only requirement is for the orders to be placed in bulk. Alan Tilmouth from the NTBC committee who also works with Birdguides has agreed to act as a central collation point for orders. Birdguides catalogues can be downloaded from [www.birdguides.com](http://www.birdguides.com) and will be available at the next indoor meeting.

Anyone wishing to order any product should email Alan Tilmouth at [birdneast@btinternet.com](mailto:birdneast@btinternet.com) with the product details and members name, address & contact tel no. This offer does not apply to the Information Services provided by Birdguides. Orders must be received by Wed 17th December."

## CETTI'S WARBLER – The Next Addition To The County List?

The first occurrence of Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti* in the UK was less than 50 years ago at Titchfield Haven in Hampshire in 1961. It took a further nine years before breeding was confirmed in 1972 in Kent but by 1984 300 pairs were breeding in Britain. The population suffered losses as a result of severe winters but subsequently recovered and by 2005 1331 singing males were located. Cetti's Warbler is yet to be recorded in Northumberland but events this Autumn suggest that we may not have too much longer to wait as a wave of individuals have been recorded across the country in many areas north of their current breeding range.

Singing birds have penetrated north on the west coast as far as Leighton Moss RSPB in Lancashire with another noted at Marton Mere a few miles south. On the east coast the movement has been much more evident with several records in Lincolnshire, Yorkshire and most notably in the North East during the first few days of November at Bowesfield Marsh, Cleveland, Hurworth Burn Reservoir, Durham, Coatham Marsh NR and Fulwell Sunderland. The latter bird was photographed after an apparent window collision and the images have been circulated to Durham CRC for verification.

Cetti's Warbler favour dense vegetation, near but often not in water, phragmites reeds, riverside scrub and willow. The population in the UK is largely resident and therefore can be encountered throughout the year. Possible obvious sites in the county for Cetti's to be found would be Gosforth Park or Big Waters NWT. It may however be just as likely to occur along one of the river systems such as the Blyth or stretches of the Ouseburn. With many club members now actively engaged in BTO Winter Atlas work anyone unfamiliar with the distinctive explosive song, which is often the only clue to the presence of one of Britain's most secretive birds, may find it useful to use the Xeno Canto bird sound resource site that has a range of Cetti's Warbler song and alarm calls and can be accessed at [http://www.xeno-canto.org/europe/index\\_static.html](http://www.xeno-canto.org/europe/index_static.html). Opportunities to add a new species to the county list don't come around too often and this one is perhaps the most likely candidate in the immediate future.

Alan Tilmouth 11th November 2009

# SUMMARY OF SEABIRD BREEDING RECORDED ON TYNESIDE, SE NORTHUMBERLAND AND DUNSTANBURGH IN SUMMER 2009

PART A – Tyneside, coastal Tyne and Wear and SE Northumberland

## Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*)

The counts recorded in Table 1 were carried out on 9 - 11 July 2009 and include all the current River Tyne breeding locations known. The counts were performed when chick growth was well underway in order to easily observe the young birds that were present. There were eight free-flying juveniles visible during these July surveys. Refer to Table 2 for the June counts of Apparently Occupied Nests (i.e. a well-built nest capable of containing eggs with at least one adult present) along the river.

**Table 1:** Numbers of Kittiwake young fledged from nests on the River Tyne - July 2009.

River Tyne locality	Brood sizes	Min. number of successful nests fledging young	Minimum number of young fledged	Average number of young fledged per successful nest	Total number of older birds present (mid July 2009)
1. Tynemouth cliffs	60 x 1, 33 x 2, 17 x ?	93	126	1.35	194
2. North Shields Ferry Landing area	3 x 1, 7 x 2, 1 x 3, 1 x ?	11	20	1.82	14
3. McNulty (Tyne Dock)	18 x 1, 18 x 2, 1 x 3, 1 x ?, 1 free flying	37	58	1.54	67
4. International Coatings	49 x 1, 45 x 2, 1 x 3, 7 x ?, 1 free flying	95	143	1.49	214
5. Baltic Flour Mill	17 x 1, 8 x 2, 2 free flying	25	35	1.32	51
6. Gateshead 'Kittiwake Tower'	48 x 1, 34 x 2, 6 x ?	82	116	1.41	152
7. Newcastle Quayside buildings (buildings below bridge).	10 x 1, 14 x 2, 1 x ?	24	38	1.58	47
8. Tyne Bridge: North Tower, Newcastle	112 x 1, 90 x 2, 16 x ?, 4 free flying	202	296	1.45	307
9. Tyne Bridge: South Tower, Gateshead	19 x 1, 18 x 2, 1 x ?	37	55	1.49	75
10. Newcastle Quay: Guildhall	6 x 1, 12 x 2, 2 x ?	18	30	1.67	53
<b>Totals and overall young per successful nest</b>	<b>342 x 1, 279 x 2, 3 x 3, 52 x ? 8 free flying</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>917</b>	<b>1.46</b>	<b>1174</b>

Locations 1, 2, 7, 8 and 10 are on the north side of the river Tyne, with 3, 4, 5, 6 and 9 on the south side. The most westerly sites (i.e. the furthest inland) have been 8 and 9 in recent years, although nesting has been successful since 2007 on the Newcastle Guildhall (just west of the Tyne Bridge). All nesting sites mentioned apart from Tynemouth cliffs are on man-made structures.

The number of Apparently Occupied Nests (AON) was 14 lower (1.7 %) in early June 2009 compared to 2008 (Table 3), but the minimum number of successful nests was 227 higher (57 %) in July 2009 compared to July 2008 (Table 4). The minimum number of chicks in July 2009 was 453 higher than during the same period in July 2008. The 2009 breeding success was a minimum of 1.15 chicks per AON which is double the success of 0.57 in 2008. The average number of young fledged per successful nest was 1.46 in 2009 (Table 1) and 1.15 in 2008. A minimum of 624 successful nests fledged young in summer 2009 i.e. 78 % of the 798 AON counted in early June (Table 2). All river Tyne colonies showed an increase in successful nests when compared to 2008 (Table 4). The number of older (i.e. not chicks or young of the same calendar year) Kittiwakes present during early June was 39 higher than the June 2008 figure (Table 3) of 1083 birds, while during the counts in July 2009 the number of older birds was 669 (132 percent) higher than the equivalent July 2008 number of 505 individuals.

27 AON were observed on the long ledge high on the north face of the Baltic in early June (22 in June 2008) with 35 chicks counted in July (16 in 2008). At the Baltic the ledges had been made unsuitable over a few years with netting (i.e. between the 1997 and 1998 breeding seasons a large part of the building exterior and all the main nesting ledges were

covered with fine mesh netting, through which the Kittiwakes could not penetrate). A few breeders lingered into summer 2000 until the site was completely 'sanitised' against any possible nesting attempts. In recent years, as the netting has been removed and some of the ledges become accessible again, a few breeding pairs have returned to the Baltic (starting with 2 AON in 2004 and rising since then - on the long ledge below the lettering high on the north face).

No more netting was observed this summer on the Newcastle Quayside buildings or the Tyne Bridge. There were 21 successful nests (a minimum of 12 in 2008) on buildings directly under the north side of the Tyne Bridge and three (none in 2008) on the Akenside Building just west of the bridge. At the McNulty colony there were no AON or successful nests on the face of the building within the yard, while on the outside face there were 37 successful nests. The Guildhall colony on Newcastle quayside increased from 15 AON in 2008 (producing nine large chicks in July) to 26 in 2009 producing 30 large chicks in July. Three long wooden Kittiwake ledges had been removed from International Coatings between the 2008 and 2009 breeding seasons, they had already partially collapsed. The 21 AON at Newcastle Quayside buildings was obviously a slight undercount (Table 2) compared to the number of 24 successful nests observed there in July.

On 5th June at the Tyne Bridge (north) one small chick was visible at each of two nests. Between the June and July surveys at the Kittiwake Tower one of the ledges on the northwest face had slipped onto a lower ledge and five dead adult birds were seen beneath the fallen ledge. The ledge that was beneath the one that had slipped had held seven AON on 4th June, but none of these nests were therefore successful in producing large chicks. I think this was a one-off problem with the Kittiwake Tower (slipping ledge), in the main it appears to be robust and successful. I shall contact the Gateshead Council to say perhaps they ought to check the structure. Pipefish were not noted as a feature during the 2009 breeding surveys.

Numbers of AON at Marsden cliffs colony, South Tyneside, increased from 2,459 in 2008 to 2,563 in 2009, i.e. a rise of 4% (Marsden data from J.C.Coulson).

**Table 2:** Kittiwake Apparently Occupied Nests (AON) on the River Tyne on 4th to 8th June 2009.

Location	AON (early June 2009)	Min. number of successful nests (mid July 2009)	Min. no. of young fledged / AON	Minimum no. of successful nests as percentage of AON
1. Tynemouth cliffs	134	93	0.94	69 %
2. N Shields Ferry Landing	13	11	1.54	85 %
3. McNulty, Tyne Dock	41	37	1.41	90 %
4. International Coatings	116	95	1.23	82 %
5. Baltic Flour Mill	27	25	1.30	93 %
6. Kittiwake Tower (Gateshead)	110	82	1.05	75 %
7. Newcastle Quayside buildings	21	24	1.81	114 %
8. Tyne Bridge – Newcastle side	268	202	1.10	75 %
9. Tyne Bridge – Gateshead side	42	37	1.31	88 %
10. Newcastle Quay: Guildhall	26	18	1.15	69 %
<b>Totals, overall success and %</b>	<b>798</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>1.15</b>	<b>78 %</b>

In tables 1, 2, 3 and 4 the percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

**Table 3:** Kittiwake Apparently Occupied Nests (AON) on the River Tyne - June 2008 and 2009.

Location	AON - early June 2008	AON - early June 2009	AON % change (in numbers) from 2008 to 2009	OBP - early June 2008	OBP - early June 2009
1. Tynemouth cliffs	120	134	+ 12 %	224	212
2. N Shields Ferry Landing	12	13	+ 8 %	16	18
3. McNulty, Tyne Dock	42	41	- 2 %	51	63
4. International Coatings	149	116	- 22 %	195	151
5. Baltic Flour Mill	22	27	+ 23 %	34	41
6. Kittiwake Tower (Gateshead)	120	110	- 8 %	150	162
7. Newcastle Quayside buildings	21	21	0 %	26	29
8. Tyne Bridge – Newcastle side	274	268	- 2 %	315	351
9. Tyne Bridge – Gateshead side	37	42	+ 14 %	52	58
10. Newcastle Quay: Guildhall	15	26	+ 73 %	20	37
<b>Totals and overall % change</b>	<b>812</b>	<b>798</b>	<b>- 1.7 %</b>	<b>1083</b>	<b>1122</b>

**Key** OBP: Older birds present (i.e. not chicks or young of the same calendar year).

**Table 4:** Kittiwake Successful Nests (SN, raising chicks to fledging) on the River Tyne - July 2008 and 2009.

Location	Min. no. SN, mid July 2008	Min. no. SN, mid July 2009	SN % change (in numbers) from 2008 to 2009
1. Tynemouth cliffs	61	93	+ 53 %
2. N Shields Ferry Landing	6	11	+ 83 %
3. McNulty, Tyne Dock	28	37	+ 32 %
4. International Coatings	58	95	+ 64 %
5. Baltic Flour Mill	14	25	+ 79 %
6. Kittiwake Tower (Gateshead)	34	82	+ 141 %
7. Newcastle Quayside buildings	12	24	+ 100 %
8. Tyne Bridge – Newcastle side	154	202	+ 31 %
9. Tyne Bridge – Gateshead side	21	37	+ 76 %
10. Newcastle Quay: Guildhall	9	18	+ 100 %
<b>Totals and overall % change</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>+ 57 %</b>

**Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*)**

This is a brief summary of observations made during the period from 13th to 19th July 2009 (and a comparison with the 2007 and 2008 data) in the usual North Tyneside study area, which has been surveyed since 1994, comprising: Tynemouth, Cullercoats (including Marden), North Shields (including: Preston, New York, Chirton, West Chirton, Percy Main, Tyne Commission Quay, Albert Edward Dock, Royal Quays) and East Howdon.

**Table 5:** Number of successful Herring Gull nests (i.e. those nests recorded with chicks) and minimum number of chicks raised to fledging in North Tyneside study area (split by location) during summers 2007 and 2008.

Location	11 – 17 July 2007		11 - 15 July 2008	
	Succ. Nests	Min. chicks	Succ. Nests	Min. chicks
Tynemouth	42	64	47	85
North Shields	59	111	71	125
Cullercoats	9	15	11	18 – 19
East Howdon	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>228 - 229</b>

**Table 6:** Herring Gull brood sizes during 13 – 19 July 2009 in North Tyneside study area (split by location).

Location	Brood sizes, 13 – 19 July 2009	Successful nests raising chicks	Minimum number nestlings of	Adults present
Tynemouth	16 x 1, 19 x 2, 9 x 3	44	81	46
North Shields	46 x 1, 42 x 2, 15 x 3	103	175	102
Cullercoats	5 x 1, 4 x 2, 3 x 3	12	22	10
East Howdon	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>67 x 1, 65 x 2, 27 x 3</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>158</b>

**Table 7:** Minimum number of Herring Gull chicks per successful nest 2007 – 2009, North Tyneside study area.

Breeding summer in year	2007	2008	2009
Average number of chicks per successful nest	1.73	1.77	1.75

The minimum number of successful Herring Gull nests (i.e. those nests fledging young) recorded in the period 2007 – 2009 grew from 110 to 159 which meant the number of chicks raised increased from a minimum of 190 to 278. The overall minimum number of chicks raised per successful nest was 1.75 in 2009 (Table 7). During the July 2009 surveys most nestlings were well grown while a small number of young had already left the nest. On 13th July a single adult was observed sitting at a nest with no chicks visible (and no messy droppings around the nest), perhaps the eggs had failed to hatch or any young present were still very small. Complaints and incidents this summer, as I carried out the surveys, expressed by residents were minimal.

Comment from John Coulson: 'It is interesting that the numbers of Herring Gulls in North Shields is so many less than in South Shields. In their early days at North Shields, one of their council's pest officers shot them out and so the increase you are finding started later than across the river'.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*)**

In Cullercoats on 13th July there were single adults at two chimney stack nests, but no chicks were observed. No nests were observed in Tynemouth, but three adults were observed flying in one street area on 13th July. In North Shields on 14th July, at a site where there had been successful nesting in 2008, one adult was present with two chicks. At a second successful North Shields roof top nest there were three chicks and an adult on 14th July when the chicks were half grown and the adult dive-bombed me.

**Fulmar** (*Fulmarus glacialis*)

Breeding data for the summer 2008 and 2009 seasons are recorded here for the Tyne and Wear (to the north of the river Tyne) and the SE Northumberland coast. An Apparently Occupied Site (AOS) is defined as: a location where a bird appears to be sitting tightly on a reasonably horizontal area judged large enough to hold an egg.

**Table 8:** Breeding Fulmar data, summer 2008. AOS: Apparently Occupied (nesting) Sites

Breeding Fulmar data		June 5, 2008		Aug 6, 2008	
Location		Older birds	AOS	Older birds	Chicks
Tynemouth cliffs		60	36	3	13
Whitley Bay, Browns Bay cliffs		4	2	0	0
Whitley Bay, High Point cliffs		29	16	3	6
Old Hartley cliffs to Crag Point		57	20	0	1
Collywell Bay, Seaton Sluice		8	3	1	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>158</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>20</b>

Therefore total productivity for summer 2008: for 20 chicks from 77 AOS was 0.26 chicks per AOS.

**Table 9:** Breeding Fulmar data, summer 2009. AOS: Apparently Occupied (nesting) Sites

Breeding Fulmar data		June 4 and 6, 2009		Aug 6 and 7, 2009	
Location		Older birds	AOS	Older birds	Chicks
Tynemouth cliffs		65	32	7	16
Whitley Bay, Browns Bay cliffs		2	2	0	1
Whitley Bay, High Point cliffs		29	17	3	8
Old Hartley cliffs to Crag Point		32	13	0	0
Collywell Bay, Seaton Sluice		6	3	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>134</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>25</b>

Therefore total productivity for summer 2009: for 25 chicks from 67 AOS was 0.37 chicks per AOS.

#### PART B – Dunstanburgh Castle cliffs, coastal mid Northumberland. Kittiwake breeding data – Dunstanburgh Castle cliffs

Here are brief data on the Kittiwake colony at Dunstanburgh, Northumberland for the summers of 2006 to 2009.

**Table 10:** Dunstanburgh Kittiwakes, June 2006 – 2009 (Apparently Occupied Nests)

Kittiwake	7 June 2006	8 June 2007	9 June 2008	7 June 2009
AON	334	359	341	316
Adult birds present	652	583	472	537

On 12th July 2009 there were a minimum of 180 Kittiwake chicks indicated on the cliffs (i.e. 130 x 1 and 25 x 2) with 399 adults present and no free-flying young seen. This gives a productivity of 0.57 chicks per AON for 2009.

#### Fulmar breeding data – Dunstanburgh Castle cliffs

Here are brief data on the Fulmar colony at Dunstanburgh, Northumberland for the summers of 2006 to 2009.

**Table 11:** Dunstanburgh Fulmars, June 2006 to 2009 (Apparently Occupied Sites)

Fulmar	7 June 2006	8 June 2007	9 June 2008	7 June 2009
AOS	11	14 – 15	7	16
Adult birds present	25	26	14	48

On 12th July 2009 15 (adult) Fulmars were seen on the cliffs at seven sites. On 8 August 2009 there was one Fulmar chick seen on the cliffs and four adult birds present, giving a minimum productivity for 2009 of 0.06 chicks per AOS.

On 7th June 2009 (early in the breeding season) there were 60 adult Razorbills on Dunstanburgh cliffs, thirteen on the sea nearby and two single chicks visible on the cliffs. There were also two Guillemots on the sea nearby and five adult Shags attended four nests, three of which had nestlings present (1 x 1-2 chicks and 2 x 2 visible). On 12th July thirteen (adult) Razorbills were on the cliffs and 15 on the sea, one Guillemot was on the sea 50 metres from the cliffs and two adult Shags were present at cliff nest sites (one with three juveniles). There were two adult Shags present on 8th August and no Guillemots or Razorbills nearby.

#### Acknowledgements

Thanks are extended to Dr John C Coulson for checking and commenting on the draft of this report, to Lee Wastell (security) and Andrew Davidson (Environmental Co-ordinator) of McNulty Offshore for allowing access.

For my annual Tyneside breeding gull / seabird reports for 1994 - 2008 refer to NTBC monthly summaries: July 94 to late 09.

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(2009 Report version 2 was prepared on 09 October 2009).







## Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

<http://www.ntbc.org.uk/>

Bulletin 2009 No 11

**MONTHLY SUMMARY – NOVEMBER**

31st December 2009



### HIGHLIGHTS

Snow Goose - Single white morph in Budle Bay on 5th & 7th.  
 Egyptian Goose - One at Haughton Strother GP  
 Green-winged Teal – One at East Chevington and Holywell Pond only up to 4th.  
 Bittern - One at East Chevington was only seen on 22nd.  
 White Stork - The long staying bird again seen at Corbridge on 8th.  
 Sabine's Gull - The popular juvenile stayed until 9th at North Shields.  
 Black Guillemot – Singles at Bamburgh and Cullercoats  
 Red-rumped Swallow - One lingered on Holy island on 13th.  
 Water Pipit - Singles at Newton, Rothbury and St Mary's  
 Bearded Tit - A fine male stayed at Holy Island lough from 4th to 15th.



A splendid Blackcock at Barhaugh Burn  
 Photograph by John Clark on 11th

### NOTES

**BIN 2008** is now being distributed to members.

The **Club Accounts** are attached to this bulletin

The next **indoor meeting** at the Falcons is on Thursday 14th January at 7pm – Steve Lowe will talk on Conservation, Birds and the Northumberland Wildlife Trust

The next **Field trip** is to Ross Back Sands on 24th January.

The target species for 2010 are **Shoveler, Whinchat and Bullfinch**. Please report all records for these species.

Club **annual subscriptions** are due. Please contact Jo Bentley.

## WEATHER

The weather was unsettled throughout, with showers or longer periods of rain and some strong winds at times. However, it was very mild, with mean temperatures everywhere at least 1.0 °C above the 1971-2000 normal. Provisionally, it was the warmest November over England since 1994 and the third warmest in a series from 1914. There were very few days with air frost. Rainfall was well above average everywhere, especially so in Cumbria. It was the wettest November generally in a series from 1914, but only slightly wetter than November 1929. Sunshine totals ranged from above normal over East Anglia and other eastern areas to a little below normal further north and west.

**1st to 7th:** On the 1st heavy rain and strong winds spread across all parts. It was very mild with temperatures reaching 17 °C in the south. Rain cleared to a scattering of showers on 2nd with quieter conditions. Further rain spread from the west overnight and on 3rd, becoming heavy later with squally winds. The 4th was brighter with blustery showers, but it was cloudier with periods of rain on 5th. Rain spread from the west on 6th, then showery.

**8th to 14th:** On 8th scattered showers continued at first, before becoming drier. The 9th was dry with some mist or fog patches at first and it was rather cold where these persisted. The 10th was a generally cloudy day with rain spreading from the west. Largely dry at first on 11th, then rain reached the south-west later with strengthening winds.

**15th to 22nd:** The 15th was a quieter day with sunny spells and scattered locally heavy showers. Rain spread across all parts on 16th, then bright and windy with showers. Mainly dry at first on 17th, then rain later. The 18th was the start of a very wet and windy period in the north. The 19th saw heavy, persistent rain over the Lake District and severe flooding. Seathwaite (Cumbria) recorded 379 mm in the 48 hours from 0900 on 18th. Rain cleared on 20th to sunny spells and scattered showers. Further heavy rain spread across all parts on 21st. Rain cleared early on 22nd with sunny spells and scattered showers, then heavy showers later with gusts to around 60 m.p.h. in the west.

**23rd to 30th:** The 23rd saw strong to gale-force south-westerly winds and periods of heavy rain or showers. Further heavy rain on 24th particularly in Cumbria. The 25th was brighter with some showers, occasionally persistent and heavy in the west and north. Very windy, with gusts to near 60 m.p.h. in the north. The 26th and 27th were bright with blustery showers. The 28th saw further heavy rain spread across southern and central areas. On 29th further localised flooding was reported. Conditions turned colder on 30th as it became brighter with a northerly breeze.

## CLASSIFIED LIST

The following account consists of unchecked reports. The species/subspecies marked \* require descriptions.

A complete list of all sightings which need notes is included in the NTBC website [www.ntbc.org.uk](http://www.ntbc.org.uk) under the County Records Committee section and in Birds in Northumbria 2008 page 255.

The Inland and Coastal Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) tables are at the rear of the bulletin. These contain additional counts to those in the Classified List.

## TARGET SPECIES

The target species for 2009 are **Marsh Tit**, **Spotted Flycatcher** and **Tree Sparrow**.

The target species for 2010 are **Shoveler**, **Whinchat** and **Bullfinch**

Please report all records for these species.

### Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

The peak count was 95 at Caistron on 22nd (TRD). Elsewhere the maximum counts were 63 at QEII Lake on 21st, 51 at Fenham Flats on 25th, 32 in the Tweed Estuary on 23rd and 23 at Hauxley NR on 2nd (CDH/PRM/MHu/JA). Ladyburn Lake hosted 20 on 20th, whilst 15 were at Newcastle Great Park Pools on 21st (JMA/AHB). One to nine were noted from Cocklawburn Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Pools, Duddo, Leazes Park (Newcastle), Linton Pond, St Mary's Wetland, Tynemouth Boating Lake and Warkworth.

### Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

As with October only small numbers were noted during the month. At Ellington Colliery 34 flew S on 6th, whilst at nearby East Chevington North Pool 14 flew S and seven N on 8th, ten flew S at Lindisfarne NNR on 9th and on 4th six flew S at the Farne Islands and Stag Rocks and three flew S at Druridge Links (IDR/ADM/MHu/AA/M/CG). The largest gathering was 41 in fields to the west of Druridge Pools on 26th (LMO/PTa). On Cresswell Ponds two herds totalling 24 flew off W on 8th, whilst 22 were on Druridge Pools on 23rd, 19 at Catcleugh Reservoir on 12th and 17 at Bell's Farm (Cresswell) on 7th (MK/IDR/PRM/ADM). The maximum count at Hauxley NR was 18 on 3rd whilst 17 were at Fenham-le-Moor on 27th, 12 at Branton Ponds from 8th-11th and at Chibburn Preceptory (Widdrington) on 27th and 11 were on the Rocket Field Pools (Holy Island) on 9th. (IFo/TRD/IBDa/KDa/PRM). One to nine were noted from Berrington, Blackblakehope, Caistron, Cocklawburn Pond, Craggside (Rothbury), Denwick, Grindon Lough, Longhirst Flash, Low Newton and Tweed Estuary.

### Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Movement continued into November with large S movements at Cocklawburn of 1,360 in eight skeins on 4th and 1,320 in seven skeins on 6th and nearby at Holy 1,000S in five skeins on 3rd and 760 S on 13th (MHu/IK/ADM). Smaller movements were 750 S in four skeins at Hauxley beach on 9th, 600S at East Chevington on 3rd, 520 W at Cocklawburn on 19th, 500 S at Fenham-le-Moor and 400S at Detchant on 4th, 400 S at Holy Island on 6th, 300-400S at St Mary's Island on 4th 310 S at Holy Island and Blyth on 8th, 300 S at Berwick and 250 S at Hauxley on 8th, 220 S at Cheswick on 23rd, 200 S at Whitley Bay on 8th 180 S at Preston Tower on 10th, 129 SW at Stag Rocks on 3rd, 110 S at Bell's



Farm (Cresswell on 3rd, 100S at Cramlington on 8th and 100 W at Hauxley on 7th. A further five movements of up to 85 birds were noted from Bamburgh, Duddo,, Elford , Newton Links and Whitley Bay. The largest gatherings were 2,000 at Doddington on 30th, 400 at Cresswell on 20th, 326 grazing on stubble at Cheswick on 6th, 298 at Holywell Pond on 10th, 193 at Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay) on 5th, 130 at East Chevington on 13th, 125 at Druridge Hamlet on 29th, and 114 in Budle Bay on 3rd. Two to 18 were noted from Caistron and Grindon Lough.

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

Numbers of Greenland race *flavirostris* birds at Grindon Lough rose from seven on 7th to 11 by 16th (PRS/JSB/EC/MMS/SJH *et al.*).

**Greylag Goose** *Anser anser*

At Hauxley 120 80 flew S at dusk on 7th and 47 flew S over Whitley Bay on 10th (HRS/MT/NT). The highest counts were 452 at Powburn on 25th, 291 at Hauxley NR on 7th, 250 at Bingfield on 30th, 234 in Budle Bay on 3rd, 200 at Derwent Reservoir on 27th, 170 roosting on Craggside lakes (Rothbury) on 4th and in the Tweed Estuary on 23rd. 143 at Holywell Pond on 4th, 138 at Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay) on 7th , 130 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 14th and 110 at Caistron on 22nd (PRM/HRS/ALT/IFo/PRM/RMH/JD/SPP/MHu/MNC/MR/TRD). Smaller gatherings were 56 at Low Newton on 19th and 27 at Grindon Lough on 15th. One to seven were noted from Holy Island causeway, Horton Grange Muckle Moss, Prestwick Carr and St Mary's Wetland.

**\*Snow Goose** *Anser caerulescens*

The white morph adult in Budle Bay was seen again on 5th/7th (SVM *et al*/NNBC).

**Greater Canada Goose** *Branta canadensis*

At the Tweed Estuary 35 flew in off the sea on 15th (MHu). The largest gatherings were 482 at Grindon Lough on 15th, 164 at Bothal Pond on 20th, 142 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 8th, 87 at Hauxley on 7th and 64 at Derwent Reservoir on 27th (PRM/MSH/MRHS/RMH). Smaller counts were 50 at Caistron and 47 at Killingworth Lake on 22nd and 42 in the Tweed Estuary on 23rd (TRD/MSH/MHu). Two to 17 were noted from Holywell Pond, Ladyburn Lake, Leazes Park (Newcastle), QEII Lake and Stakeford Bridge.

**Barnacle Goose** *Branta leucopsis*

Numbers in Budle Bay peaked at 400 on 9th with 270 still present on 16th (IK/TRD *et al.*). Elsewhere two were at Derwent Reservoir on 27th and one was at Tynemouth Boating Lake from 6th to the end of the month.

**Pale-bellied hrota Brent Goose** *Branta bernicla hrota*

Four flew N at Seaton Sluice on 30th and two flew N at Stag Rocks on 10th (SSWT/JD) At Lindisfarne NNR the peak count was 5,750 on 25 th (PRM *et al.*) 2,900 were present on 9th (IK). A single flew N at Tynemouth on 16th (DRW/MK).

Dark Breasted Brent Goose on 15th at Boulmer  
by Mike Hodgson

**Dark-bellied bernicla Brent Goose** *Branta bernicla bernicla*

Ten to 11 were on a recent flood at Bell's Farm (Cresswell) on 2nd -3rd (MSK/MSH). Four to five were in the Rocket Field pools at Holy Island from 3rd -22nd (PRM/AJR). Four were in Budle Bay on 3rd, two at Boulmer on 15th and a juvenile at Hauxley NR on 27th (PRM/SH/JA).



**\* Egyptian Goose** *Alopochen aegyptiacus*

A single was at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 4th/8th/14th (MR).

**Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna*

16 flew N at Seaton Sluice on 30th (SSWT) and five N at St Mary's on 30th (MSH). A total of 712 at Budle Bay on 4th was the observer's largest count there in 28 years (CGK) and 320 were counted there on 15th (MSH). About 600 were at Fenham Flats on 22nd (AJR) and 559 on 25th (PRM).

**Mandarin** *Aix galericulata*

Four were at Dally Castle on 7th (SW) when two were also at Smalesmouth, North Tyne (GB).



**Wigeon** *Anas penelope*

Light northerly coastal passage involved 82 N at Seaton Sluice (SSWT) and 45 at St Mary's on 30th (DRW/MK), and eight at Stag Rocks on 10th (MT/MT). Lindisfarne NNR held about 10,000 on 8th (IK) and 3,900 were counted at the Fenham Flats section on 25th (PRM). The peak count at Budle Bay was 863 on 3rd (PRM). Other peaks were 286 at Grindon Lough on 16th (SJH), 200 at East Chevington on 20th (JMA), 200 at Newham Bog on 23rd (MSH), 177 at Cresswell Pond on 29th (IRD), 136 at Druridge Pools on 23rd (IDR), 80-93 at Derwent and Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Hipsburn (JMA/IFo/MR), and 59-60 at Amble Braid, Hauxley NR and QEII Lake (JMA/PRM/HRS). Counts of 28-30 came from Bothal and Linton Ponds, Caistron and Gosforth Park NR, and ten to 16 from Alnwick, Kimmer Lough, Middle Ord and Swallow Ponds, and West Ord. One to five were at six further localities, including two at Laverock Hall Farm, Blyth on 28th - the first record for the site (LJM).

**Gadwall** *Anas strepera*

Peak counts were 34 at Caistron on 22nd (TRD), 20 at St Mary's (on the sea and then the wetland) on 13th (SPP), 16 at East Chevington on 3rd (IFo), 11 at Bothal Pond on 12th (IFo), eight at QEII Lake on 21st (PRM), six at Big Waters on 1st (GB), five at Holywell Pond on 17th (LJM), five at Newton Pool on 19th (JMA), four at Linton Pond on 21st (CDH/PRM), and three at West Allotment Pond on 2nd (MSH). One to two were also at Arcot Pond, Monk's House Pool and Woodhorn Flashes.

**Teal** *Anas crecca*

Largest numbers were centred on the Lindisfarne NNR, with peaks of 928 at Budle Bay on 4th (CGK), and 665 at the 'rocket field', Holy Island on 1st (IK). Elsewhere, other peak counts were 432 at Druridge Pools on 23rd (IDR), 350 at Grindon Lough on 9th (SJH), 260 at Derwent Reservoir on 10th (IFo), 174 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 9th (MR), 150 at Newham Bog on 9th (MHu), 95-99 at Cresswell and Linton Ponds (CDH/IDR), and 52-78 at Castle Island, Middle Ord Pond and St Mary's Wetland. Counts of 28-40 came from Arcot Pond, Carter Moor, Hauxley NR, Monk's House and Newton Pools, and ten to 18 at Berrington Pond, Gosforth Park NR, Haughton Strother GP and Hipsburn. One to three were at five further sites.

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

Largest concentrations were about 150 at Grindon Lough on 10th (SJH), 109 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 16th (MR), 92 at the Tweed Estuary on 23rd (MHu), 85 at Hexham on 9th (JMA), 80 at Linton Pond on 21st (PRM), 80 at Middle Ord Pond on 29th (MHu), 62 at Derwent Reservoir on 10th (IFo), 62 at Marden Quarry on 3rd (KWY), 61 at Haughton Strother GP on 25th (MR), and 50-58 at Druridge Pools (IDR), Hauxley NR (HRS), Langley Dam (PRM) and Newcastle Leazes Park (DM). Counts of 30-40 came from Castle Island, Cresswell and Middle Ord Ponds, QEII Lake and St Mary's Wetland, 20-27 from Alnmouth, Monk's House and Newcastle Great Park Pools, Newcastle Civic Centre, Wark and West Allotment Pond, and 13-14 at Cocklawburn Pond and Tynemouth Park. One to eight were at five further sites.

**Pintail** *Anas acuta*

Three were at East Chevington on 3rd (IFo), two at St Mary's Wetland on 22nd (MT/NT) and singles at Fenham Flats on 25th (PRM), Haughton Strother GP on 25th (MR) and Hauxley NR on 7th (HRS).

**Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*

Monk's House Pool attracted the largest gathering, with peaks of 21 on 16th (TRD) and 17 on 14th (SVM et al.). Other peak counts were 16 at Gosforth Park NR on 10th (MSH), 13 at Druridge Pools on 23rd (IDR), ten at West Allotment Pond on 2nd (MSH), five at Linton Pond on 21st (PRM), four at Longhirst Flash on 20th (MSH), and two at St Mary's Wetland on 21st-22nd (PRM). Singles were also at Cocklawburn Pond and Woodhorn Flashes.

**Shoveler is a target species for 2010. Please report all records**

**Pochard** *Aythya ferina*

One flew N at Seaton Sluice on 29th (SSWT). Swallow Pond attracted 17 on 3rd (SPP), 14 were at Holywell Pond on 19th (MSH), 13 at Bothal Pond on 3rd (IFo), five at Linton Pond on 21st (PRM), twos at Shasun Dudley on 3rd (LJM), QEII Lake on 14th (GB) and Woodhorn Flashes on 14th (GB), and one at Newcastle Great Park Pools on 21st (AHB).

**Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*

Three flew N at Seaton Sluice on 29th (SSWT). Peak gatherings were 68 at Killingworth Lake on 25th (LJM), 62 at Ladyburn Lake on 9th (IFo), 43 at Linton Pond on 21st (CDH), 35 at Caistron on 22nd (TRD), 32 at QEII Lake on 21st (CDH), 21 at Tynemouth Park on 6th (JMA), 20 at Holywell Pond on 2nd (MSH), and 17-18 at Langley Dam (PRM) and Newcastle Exhibition and Leazes Parks (GB/DM). Counts of 12-13 came from Castle Island and Hauxley NR, three to four from Catcleugh Reservoir, Cocklawburn Pond and St Mary's Wetland, and singles at Coanwood Pond, Kielder Water and Newcastle Great Park Pools.

**Scaup** *Aythya marila*

Singles flew N at Seaton Sluice (SSWT) and St Mary's (MSH/DRW/MK) on 30th. Singles were at Cheswick on 23rd (MHu) and inland at Haughton Strother GP on 25th and 30th (MR).

**Eider** *Somateria mollissima*

On 30th, 92 flew N at Seaton Sluice (SSWT) and 40 N at St Mary's (DRW/MK/MSH), and nine flew N at St Mary's on 29th (MSH). The largest congregations were 524 at Holy Island on 11th (PRM), 132 at Cheswick on 23rd (MHu), 120 at Newbiggin on 18th (STH), 86 at Cocklawburn on 13th (MHu), 86 at Stag Rocks on 3rd (PRM), 85 off Seaton Sluice on 13th (SPP), 42 at Coquet Sound on 7th (HRS), 28-35 at Blyth South Harbour, Meadow Haven and the Tweed Estuary, and 11-15 at Seahouses Harbour and the Tyne Estuary-North Shields Fish Quay.



Two views of a drake Eider at Stag Rocks by Chris Knox

**Long-tailed Duck** *Clangula hyemalis*

Five flew N at Seaton Sluice on 29th-30th (SSWT). About 30 were in the St Cuthbert's Island area of Holy Island on 15th (MJC/ADM), 16 were at Stag Rocks on 10th (EC/JSB) and four to 14 in the Stag Rocks-Budle Point area between 4th-27th. More unusual was one on East Chevington north pool on 8th and 12th (ADMc) and 21st (ACo).

**Common Scoter** *Melanitta nigra*

Strong coastal movement was evident on 29th-30th, when a total of 796 flew N at Seaton Sluice (SSWT), and at least 256 moved N and 45 S at St Mary's on 30th (DRW/MK/MSH). In addition, 40 flew N at Hauxley on 7th (HRS), 19 N at Stag Rocks on 10th (MT/NT), and five S at St Mary's on 21st (PRM). A flock of 740 was off Cheswick on 13th (MHu), 260 were at Cocklawburn on 4th (MHu), 210 at Newbiggin on 18th (STH), 160 off Hadston on 30th (TW), 130 at Seaton Sluice on 15th (MN), 20 at Stag Rocks on 27th (TRD), and four at Holy Island.

**Velvet Scoter** *Melanitta fusca*

Two flew N at Seaton Sluice on 29th-30th (SSWT), and at St Mary's singles flew N on 18th (MT/NT) and S on 30th (DRW/MK). Three were at Cocklawburn on 25th (PRM), two at Stag Rocks on 10th (EC/JSB/TRD/JD) and one there on 4th (per NNBC), and one was at Newbiggin on 23rd (MH).

**Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula*

A total of 13 flew N and one S at Seaton Sluice on 29th-30th (SSWT), and three flew N at St Mary's on 30th (DRW/MK). Peak counts were 44 at the Tweed Estuary on 23rd (MHu), 32 at Castron on 22nd (TRD), 30 at Cheswick on 4th (MHu), 25 at Beadnell (JPL), 22 at East Chevington on 12th (IFo), 18 at West Ord on 7th (MHu), 13 at Castle Island on 22nd (DM/STH), nine at QEII Lake on 21st (CDH), nine at Holy Island on 22nd (ADM), and five to six at Derwent and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, Hauxley NR and Kimmer Lough. Three to four were at Alnwick, Big Waters, Budle Bay, Holywell Pond and Killingworth Lake, and one to two at Allenheads, Bothal, Cocklawburn and Cresswell Ponds, Catcleugh Reservoir, Druridge Pools, Grindon Lough, Monk's House and Newton Pools, Seahouses, Slaley Hall, Stag Rocks and Warkworth.

**Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator*

Seven flew N at Seaton Sluice on 29th-30th (SSWT), two N at Stag Rocks on 10th (MT/NT) and one N at St Mary's on 30th (DRW/MK). Nine were at Holy Island on 3rd (PRM), eight at Ladyburn Lake on 3rd (IFo), six at Cocklawburn on 25th (PRM), four at Meadow Haven on 29th (MHu), and one to two at East Chevington, Hauxley NR and Ladyburn Lake.

**Goosander** *Mergus merganser*

Six flew S at Cresswell Pond on 15th (ADMc) and one N at Seaton Sluice on 29th (SSWT). Peak gatherings were 49 at Branton GP on 5th (IBDa/KDa), 15 at Grindon Lough on 15th (PRM), 13 between Close House-Wylam on 6th (MH), ten at Foxton Bend on 7th (ACo), seven at Killingworth Lake on 29th (CGK), five at West Ord on 7th (MHu), and three to four at Derwent Reservoir, Hedgeley GP, Newcastle Exhibition and Leazes Parks, and Thrum Mill. One to two were at Allen Banks, Castron, Catcleugh Reservoir, Etal, Holy Island, Jesmond Dene, Kimmer Lough, Marden Quarry, Monk's House, Snope Burn, Stakeford and Warkworth.

**Ruddy Duck** *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Two were at Holywell Pond on 2nd-3rd (MSH/KWY) and one on 17th (LJM), and one was at Big Waters on 1st (GB). All were females or juveniles.

A Ruddy Duck at Holywell Pond on 19th

Photograph by Mike Hodgson

**Red Grouse** *Lagopus lagopus*

In the Whitfield Moor/Snope Common/Eals Fell area a total of 57 were found on 15th with a further 48 on Whitfield Moor that day (BNR). In the Cheviots during Atlas survey work on 13th 51 were noted in the Broadstrother tetrad, 27 on Great Moor and 19 on Cold burn Hill (MJC). On 28th 15 were present on Ayle Common and at; least ten were at Allenheads on 27th (BNR/RWM/MIM). Two to five were seen at College Valley, Harthope Valley, Rock House Fell (Plenmeller), St Cuthbert's Cave and Sipton Burn.

**Black Grouse** *Tetrao tetrix*

A party of 17 (seven males) were found feeding on haws at Barhaugh Burn on 13th (EC/JSB). At Yellow Rigg (Stublick) on 26th six (two males) were feeding in roadside hawthorn bushes (BNR). Three (two males) were at Coanwood on 4th, two males were on Ayle Common and a male fed in a roadside hawthorn at Stublick Chimney on 28th (SW/BNR).

Three views of the party of Black Grouse at Barhaugh Burn on 13th

Photographs by John Clark

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

The highest count was 35 at Castron on 18th, whilst at Derwent Reservoir a covey of 18 on 13th was a high count for the location (JMA/IFo). At Widdrington a 2hour TTV on 6th located 14 (MJCo). Nine were near Lucker on 29th, eight at Shipley Hill and Carterway Heads on 10th/30th respectively (MT/NT/IFo). Six were at Newham on 23rd, four at Garbutt Hill on 13th and singles at Bamburgh and Great Tosson.

**Grey Partridge** *Perdix perdix*

The highest counts were 17 near Mayfair House, Prestwick Carr on 9th, 12 at Howick on 1st (LMo/JAR). Ten were at Linden Hall on 7th, nine at Cresswell on 28th, eight at Fenham-le-Moor on 25th, Alnwick and Hemscott Hill Links (Cresswell) on 27th and seven at Woodhorn Flashes on 14th and Bamburgh on 25th. One to six were noted at Bowsden, Cheswick Dunes, Duddo, Hadwins Close (Alnwick), Holywell Pond, Lanehead, Norham, Pegswood, Sipton Burn and Todburn.



**Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus*

Some high counts came from the north of the county with 53 at Duddo on 7th, 45 at Mindrum (Pawston) on 15th, 39 at Ford Moss on 7th, 31 at Routin Lynn (Ford) 25 at Kimmerston and 17 at Bowsden all on 7th (JR). Elsewhere 35 (only one female) fed in a small area at Derwent Reservoir on 23rd, 25 in the Hauxley area on 7th, 16 at Longshaws Mill (Netherwitton) on 14th, 13 at Felkington on 29th, 12 at Low Chibburn (Widdrington) on 4th and ten at Arcot Lane (Cramlington) on 8th IFo/HRS/JR/IDR/DM0. One to eight were noted from Allenheads, Blackburn (Slaley), Chester's House and Walled Garden, Eshott, Grievestead, Netherton Park (Stannington), Norham, Slaley Fell Cottages, Widdrington and a Walbottle garden.

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

Passage was obvious late in the month at Seaton Sluice when 23 flew N and four S on 29th/30th (SSWT). Two flew N at Hauxley on 8th and at Stag Rocks on 10th and one S at St Mary's Island on 21st (HRS/MT/NT/PRM). The species was most noticeable at Holy Island with peaks of 11 on 15th and ten following a fish shoal off St Cuthbert's Island on 1st (ADM/IK). Up to eight were noted offshore on seven further dates (ADM/PRM/IK *et al.*). Eight were also off Cocklawburn on 25th and seven off The Wynding (Bamburgh) on 2nd and in Spittal Bay on 25th (MHu/MH/AA). The peak count at Stag Rocks was six on 7th/8th (IBDa/KDa/SVM *et al.*). At Cheswick six were offshore on 13th and five were in Druridge Bay on 23rd (MHu/MH/AA). Counts of four came from Chevington Burn Mouth on 13th and Long Nanny on 23rd (MH/AA). One to three were noted from Blyth South Harbour, Howick, Meadow Haven (Berwick) and Newton Point.

**Black-throated Diver** *Gavia arctica*

Three were close inshore at Budle Point on 4th, whilst two were off St Cuthbert's Island (Holy Island) on 1st and off Stag Rocks on 7th (CGK/IK/SVM *et al.*)

**Great Northern Diver** *Gavia immer*

At St Mary's Island at least five flew N and one S in 2 hours 35 minutes on 30th and five also flew N at Seaton Sluice(MSH/DRW/MK/SSWT). Singles flew N at Nessend (Holy Island) on 2nd, S at Stag Rocks on 4th and N at Hauxley on 8th (IK/BRS/HRS). The peak offshore count was six at Stag Rocks on 30th with singles noted there on four further dates (MH/AA *et al.*). Two were off the Heugh (Holy Island) on 22nd and a singles off Chevington Burn mouth on 23rd and Tynemouth on 27th (AJR/MH/MK).

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

The peak counts were seven at Hauxley NR on 6th, and six at Holywell Pond on 2nd, Newcastle Great Park Pools on 7th and Castron on 22nd (MSH/AHB/TRD). Five were at Ladyburn Lake on 3rd and Cresswell Pond on 7th and four at Cocklawburn Pond on 6th (IFo/STH/DM/MHu). Three were present at Bothal Pond, Castle Island, Druridge Pools, QEII Lake and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. One to two were noted at Big Waters, Coanwood Pond, Craggside Lakes, Linton Pond, Newton Pool, Warkworth and Woodhorn Flashes.

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*

Three were on the sea at Stag rocks on 20th and only two were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 9th (EC/JSB/MR). Singles were seen at Big Waters, Derwent Reservoir, East Chevington, Holywell Pond, QEII Lake, Sandon Bay (Holy Island) and Tweed Estuary).

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

The species continues to be scarce with a maximum off Castle Point (Holy Island) on 11th (PRM/IK). Singles were noted in the Harbour, The Heugh or in the Sound on four further dates (IBDa/KDa/ADM/MJC). One to two were off The Farne Islands all month (DS/JM). On 4th singles were also off Budle Point and Stag Rocks (NNBC/CGK).

**Slavonian Grebe** *Podiceps auritus*.

Most records came from Stag Rocks where the maximum count was seven on 30th with up to three on nine further dates (AA/MH). Three were of St Cuthbert's Island (Holy Island) on 15th and two off Budle Point on 4th and off Castle Point (Holy Island) on 15th (MJC/CGK/TRD/JD). A single was off Bamburgh beach on 4 h (BRS).).

**Fulmar** *Fulmarus glacialis*

One flew N at St Mary's Island on 29th (DS/JM/MSH). Four were noted from the mainland around the cliffs on Inner Farne on 27th (TRD).

**Sooty Shearwater** *Puffinus griseus*

At the Farne Islands two late birds flew N on 29th and one flew N on 28th (DS/JM)

**Manx Shearwater** *Puffinus puffinus*

Two flew N at Seaton Sluice on 29th (SSWT).

**Storm Petrel** *Hydrobates pelagicus*

One lingered off the Farne Islands on 29th (JM/DS).

**\*Leach's Petrel** *Oceandroma leucorhoa*

One flew N at the point on Brownsman (Farne Islands) on 30th (DS/JM).

**Gannet** *Morus bassanus*

At Seaton Sluice 60 flew N on 29th and ten flew N on 30th (SSWT). At Hauxley 26 flew N on 8th, at Holy Island 20 flew mostly N on 22nd and at St Mary's Island six flew on 29th (HRS/ADM/MSH). At Holy Island 55+ were present on 11th and 30 were off St Cuthbert's Island there on 1st (PRM/IK). One to ten were noted offshore from Cheswick, Cocklawburn, Meadow Haven (Berwick) and Stag Rocks.

**Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

The peak roost counts during the month were 104 in Blyth South Harbour on 22nd, 80 at North Shields Fish Quay on 9th/27th and 36 in Amble Harbour 13th. ((DMT/MK/MSH). Elsewhere 29 were in the Tweed Estuary on 23rd, 27 at Derwent Reservoir on 2nd, 14 at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 8th and ten at Warkworth on 13th (MHu/IFO/MSH). One to eight were noted from Amble Weir, Arcot Pond Castle Island, Catcleugh Reservoir, Cocklawburn, Cresswell Pond, Gosforth Park NR, Hauxley NR, Hipsburn, Killingworth Lake, Linton Pond, Morpeth, Stakeford Bridge, Wark and Warkworth..

\* Nine birds of the *sinensis* race were specifically identified at Blyth South Harbour on 23rd, five at Warkworth and two at Amble Harbour on 13th (MSH).

**Shag** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

At Seaton Sluice nine flew S and six N on 29th/30th (SSWT). At Stag Rocks there was a gathering of 215+ on 3rd whilst at Holt Island 195+ were offshore on 11th (PRM). The Meadow Haven (Berwick) roost held 18 on 9th (MHu) whilst the peak count at Blyth South Harbour was 11 (two juveniles) on 22nd. A red-ringed immature, caught on 20th June 2009, 'TUA' from Craigleith Firth of Forth Islands was seen here on 22nd (DMT). Ten were at Newton on 17th and six at Cocklawburn on 25th (TRD/PRM). One to three were at Monk's House and Seahouses.

**Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris*

At East Chevington on 22nd one was seen flying W from the North pool over the South Pool until lost from view (PRM).

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*

All records came from the north of the county with two at Budle Bay on 4th and singles here on 5th/30th (ACo/CGK *et al*). Two were also at The Granary Fenham Flats on 9th (AA/MH). A single was at Stag Rocks on 10th (TRD/JD).

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*

The peak counts were 12 in the Tweed Estuary on 23rd, nine at Holy Island on 11th and seven at Hauxley on 7th 8th (MHu/PRM/HRS). Elsewhere three were at Arcot Pond and St Mary's Island on 8th, and Ridley Stokoe on 28th. (DM/MT/NT/STH/PA). One to two were noted at Aln Wetlands, Castle Island, Cresswell Pond, Holywell Dene, Leazes Park (Newcastle), Monk's House Pool, Newcastle Great Park Pools, Newton Pool, North Seaton, North Shields Fish Quay, Slaley Fell Cottages, Thrum Mill, Wark, and Warkworth.

**\*White Stork** *Ciconia Ciconia*

One was feeding in a field near the bridge at Corbridge mid-afternoon on 8th (*per* RWM).

**Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*

There was only one sighting this month which was an immature female at N Sunderland on 14th (ACo).

**Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*

A ring-tail was in the North of the County on 25th (ACo).

**Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis*

On the 2nd a single bird was mobbed by a Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* at Holystone (DRo). Further singles were seen at Thirwell Castle on 7th (MH), Longframlington Gate on 23rd (TRD/JD), Kielder on 28th (CGK/MSH) and a juvenile at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 30th (MR).



Two views of a Goshawk at Kielder by Chris Knox



**Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*

Two birds were at Scotland Gate throughout the month (SLB/MSK), and two were hunting together at Holywell Pond on 3rd (KWY). On Holy Island two birds were seen on 10th & 11th (MJC/PRM) and two were at East Chevington on 22nd (PRM). Over 35 records of single birds came from a further 29 sites during November.

**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*

Six to seven birds were in the Newcastle Airport/ Prestwick Carr area on 20th & 26th (LMo/MH); five were at Catcleugh on 12th (PRM), and at Broadstruther and the Carey Burn on 13th (MJC). Over 60 records were submitted of one to three birds.

**Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*

Four birds were at Prestwick Carr on several dates (MH/PCF) and at Stannington on 23rd (MH). Two birds were noted at a further 12 sites.

**Merlin** *Falco columbarius*

On Holy Island three birds were present on 8th (IBDa/KDa), with two birds seen on 9th (AA/MH/MSH). Single birds were at a further 15 sites including a bird hunting in a Dinnington garden on 14th (PCF).

**Peregrine** *Falco peregrinus*

Up to four or five birds were on Holy Island on 15th (ADM), two birds were sitting on a rock in Budle bay on 4th (ACo). Singles were observed at Amble, Callerton, North Shields Fish Quay, Prestwick Carr, West Chevington & West Ord.

**Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus*

At least six birds were heard at Holy Island Lough on 11th (IK/PRM), with three birds seen or heard there on several dates during the month. One to two birds were at Backworth, Big waters, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Holywell Pond, Marden Quarry, Newton Pool, Swallow Pond & Wooler Common Pond.



Two contrasting photographs of Water Rails

Left an unusual place for this secretive species - the window ledge of a Newcastle office on 11th photographed on a camera phone by Eddie Crabtree and right in the reeds at Cresswell Pond by Tim Dean on 13th by Tim Dean

**Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*

12 birds were at the Silverlink Park LNR on 2nd and at Druridge Bay CP on 20th (MSH/JMA), Leazes Park (Newcastle) peaked at 10 birds on 12th (DM). Eight birds were at Castle Island on 22nd (DM) & St Mary's Wetland on 21st & 22nd (MT/NT/PRM). One to five were at a further six sites.

**Coot** *Fulica atra*

A late brood of two young were at Marden Quarry on 12th (MN). Killingworth Lake had a peak count of 123 birds on 25th (LJM/MSH), 75 were at East Chevington on 17th (JSB/EC). 31 birds were at QEII CP on 21st CDH) and at Marden quarry 22 birds were seen on 21st (MN). Big Waters had 14 birds on 15th (GB). 12 birds were at Leazes Park on 3rd and at Linton Lane on 21st (PRM).

**Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*

At least 415 were at Holy Island on 11th (PRM), by some way the largest total reported. The high tide roost at Berwick GC held 52 on 15th rising to 110 on 29th (MHu) and 52 were at Hauxley NR on 7th (HRS). Other records relate to 18 at Stag Rocks on 10th and three at Beadnell on 19th.

**Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*

The number roosting on the favoured shed roofs at Blyth South Harbour reached 120+ on 28th (LJM). High tide roosts were 62 at Berwick GC on 29th (MHu) and 27 in Newbiggin Bay on 13th; also 42 were at Berwick, Little Beach on 8th, 32 at North Blyth on 22nd and 24 at Long Nanny on 17th. Between eight and 20 were found at Cullercoats, Fenham-le-Moor, Hauxley beach, St Mary's and Tynemouth with low single figure counts at Monks' House and Stag Rocks.

**Golden Plover** *Pluvialis apricaria*

St Mary's continued to attract some large numbers with 3000+ on 4th (SPP), regularly 3500 (MSH) and 3600+ on 21st, including a leucistic individual, and 22nd (PRM). In the Budle Bay area the peaks were 2000 on 15th (MSH) and 1500 on 27th (TRD); 1000 on 11th (SJH *et al.*) was the highest of several day counts at Grindon Lough and 1000 were over Newcastle, Town Moor on 17th. Up to 900 were in the Seahouses area during the month, Cresswell Pond drew up to 710 in the last ten days and 600 wheeled over the Tyne near Newcastle Business Park on 18th. Annstead Farm, Carriteth Moor, Holy Island, Monks' House and Newbiggin all held 250-400 at times and small numbers appeared at Ayle Common, Border Ridge (The Cheviots), Chibburn, Cocklawburn, East Chevington, High Newton, Plenmeller Common and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

**Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*

Fenham Flats held 130+ on 25th (PRM). Otherwise there were seven at Berwick on 22nd, a maximum of four at Hauxley NR on 30th, two at Newbiggin on 14th and one N at St Mary's on 30th.

**Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*

Budle Bay produced the most, with 1200-1250+ on 3rd/4th (PRM/CGK), about 1000 were at Annstead during the month (JPL) and 990 on the WeBS count in the Tweed estuary on 23rd (MHu). Derwent Reservoir held a monthly maximum of 600, on 4th (IFo), 420 were at Caistron on 22nd, the flock at Cresswell Pond reached 350 on 12th and 200-350 at times visited Amble Braid, East Chevington, Grindon Lough, Haydon Bridge, Monks' House Pool and St Mary's. Elsewhere, 19-160 were found at Blagdon, Chibburn, Cocklawburn, Eshott, Hauxley, Prestwick Carr, Seahouses, Shiremoor, Stannington and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.



Two views of a Lapwing at St. Mary's wetland. Left by Colin Bradshaw and right by Mike Hodgson

**Knot** *Calidris canutus*

The number at Fenham-le-Moor increased to 1100+ by 25th (PRM). In the Cresswell area 58 were at the Pond on 29th (IRD) and 42 were in the high tide roost at Snab Point on 12th (IFo); 50 were at Newbiggin on 14th (GB) and seven at Hauxley on 12th.

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba*

Little Beach at Berwick held 86 on 8th (MHu) and the regular flock at St Mary's peaked at 72 on 22nd (PRM/MT/NT *et al.*). Several places had 32-60 at times: Chevington Burn/Druridge Links, Holy Island, Long Nanny, Low Newton and the Tweed estuary. Also 15 were at North Shields Fish Quay on 28th with up to five at Hauxley and three at Stag Rocks.

**Purple Sandpiper** *Calidris maritima*

Numbers at Stag rocks soon increased to 80+ by 5th, to 115 on 10th and there were still 114 on 27th (*per* NNBC/MT/NT/TRD *et al.*). Amble-Hadston, Berwick, Cheswick Black Rocks, Low Newton and Seahouses held 12-23 at times and single figures were recorded at Cullercoats, Hauxley, Howick, Newbiggin, North Blyth and St Mary's.



**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*

In the North East 1300+ were at Fenham Flats on 25th (PRM) and 350 in Budle Bay on 6th (CGK). Berwick held 64 on 8th, the most at St Mary's was 47 on 18th and five to 18 were noted at Blyth South Harbour, Cresswell Pond and Low Newton.

**Jack Snipe** *Lymnocyrtus minimus*

Three were found in a stubble field at Chare Ends, Holy Island on 7th (ACo) and one was seen on 'three dates throughout month' at Backworth (CGK).

**Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*

Two flew in off the sea at Cheswick on 6th (MHu). The most at East Chevington was 15 on 11th (ACo) and at Hauxley NR 15 on 12th (IFo). Backworth held 12 on 21st and Eshott 11 on 27th with five-nine at Arcot Pond, Haughton Strother GP, Holy Island, Kimmer Lough area, Newcastle Great Park Pools, St Mary's and West Hartford. Up to four were noted at Big Waters, Blackblakehope, Budle Bay, Cramlington, Druridge Pools, Holystone, Monks' House Pool and Rock House Fell (Plenmeller), the latter record concerning three calling at dusk (SJH).



Snipe at Cresswell Pond on 13th by Tim Dean

**Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola*

The influx that began in late October continued during the first week and it was much in evidence: Eight were on the Farne Islands on 1st, with one or two daily there until 6th (DS/FIW), five in Holy Island dunes on 3rd (IK), three at Brier Dene Farm, Whitley Bay on 5th (MNC) and two at Halton Shields on 7th. Also in the first week singles were found at Big Waters, Hauxley, Holy Island, Mitford Castle, Seahouses, Seaton Delaval and Tynemouth. Later singles occurred at Big Waters, Ford Moss, Holy Island, Holystone, Longhorsley, Norham, Preston Tower and Redesdale.

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

The Rocket Field at Holy Island was the only location from which it was reported: one on 3rd, two from 4th and four from 8th to the month end (PRM/NNBC/IK).

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

Fenham Slake held 1000+ on unspecified dates during the month (JPL), 20 were in Budle Bay on 27th (TRD) and regularly up to nine roosted at Hauxley NR with 17 there on 17th (EC/JSB). Seven were at Low Newton on 17th and one to four at Beadnell, Boulmer, Cheswick, Monks' House and Newbiggin.

**Curlew** *Numenius arquata*

On 7th 200 were at Long Nanny (IBDa/KDa), 180 were in Budle Bay on 3rd (PRM), 90 at Cresswell Pond on 27th (IRD) and 81 at Holy Island on 11th (PRM). Several places had 33-75: the AIn estuary, Caistron, Hauxley, Marden Farm, St Mary's and Whitley Bay and small numbers occurred at Newburn and Holystone.



Curlews in the sunshine at St. Mary's  
by Colin Bradshaw on 11th

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*

Three together flushed from the Blyth at Carter Moor on 15th (AHB) and flew upstream. Singles were at Branton Ponds on 3rd, at Haughton Strother GP on 4th, 14th and 25th and at Caistron on 22nd.

**Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*

Budle Bay was the main location with three on 10th (EC/JSB) after two on 3rd (PRM); singles were noted there on at least four dates. Other singles were at Druridge Pools on 3rd and in the Tweed estuary on 23rd.

**Redshank** *Tringa totanus*

In Budle Bay 420+ were present on 3rd (PRM), 225 were in the Tweed estuary on 23rd (MHu), 165 at the Cullercoats Bay roost on 20th (MK), peaks 128-140 at Hauxley NR on 2nd and 17th (JA/EC/JSB) and 140+ in total at high tide roosts at Cresswell Pond/Snab Point on 12th (IFo). Tynemouth held 72 on 7th, up to 49 were regularly in the St Mary's/Whitley Bay area, 14 flew S at Druridge Links on 4th and 14 were at Low Newton on 19th. The furthest inland was one at Bothal Pond on 12th.

**Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*

Totals were relatively low, although it was fairly widespread as usual along the coastline; maxima of 44 at St Mary's on 15th, 42 at Stag Rocks on 4th and 40 at Low Newton on 17th. Between 14-25 were found at Cheswick, Cullercoats, Newbiggin, North Blyth and North Shields Fish Quay and low single figures were logged at Beadnell, Blyth South Harbour, Hauxley, Monks' House and Seahouses.

**Pomarine Skua** *Stercorarius pomarinus*

One at Stag Rocks on 5th (ADMc).

**Arctic Skua** *Stercorarius parasiticus*

One flew N at Seaton Sluice on 29th (SSWT).

**Great Skua** *Stercorarius skua*

The only movement detected occurred late in the month: seven N and two S at Seaton Sluice and two N at St Mary's on 29th (SSWT/MSH); one N at Cullercoats on 30th (CB).



\* **Sabine's Gull** *Xema sabini*

The popular juvenile at North Shields Fish Quay remained until the 9th often giving exceptionally close views ( DMT *et al.*).



The Sabine's Gull at Tynemouth  
by Colin Bradshaw

**Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla*

The only movement noted was on the 29th when at least 1,250 moved N at Seaton Sluice mainly in small groups of ca. 30 with very few noted the next day (SSWT). Also on the 29th 58 passed N in just 15 minutes at St Mary's (MSH). Otherwise very few recorded with sightings restricted to the main two wintering sites. Even here numbers were small with only three noted at Blyth South Harbour and two at North Shields Fish Quay during the month.

**Black-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

The main count was at the sea roost between Tynemouth and Cullercoats where 4,700 gathered on 23rd (DMT). At the other regularly covered areas 316 were present on 28th in the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay and 80 at Blyth South Harbour on 15th (DMT). 250 were noted at Cullercoats on 27th (JMA) with 174 at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 23rd (DM) plus 168 at Paddy Freeman's playing field at Jesmond Dene on 18th (MJCo). Counts of 100 birds were also made at Druridge Bay CP on 20th and at Tynemouth Park on 6th (JMA). Up to 30 were noted at several other localities. An interesting example of birds returning to exactly the same wintering site involved an adult seen at St Mary's on 30th (MSH). This bird was ringed as an adult in Rostock in Germany in June 2006 and had previously been seen at St. Mary's in January 2007 and December 2008.



A Black-headed Gull in winter plumage at North Shields Fish Quay by Chris Knox



**Little Gull** *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

The only sightings involved five adults and a first-winter passing N off Seaton Sluice on 29th (SSWT).

**Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus*

Newbiggin again proved to be the most favoured locality with the peak count involving four adults, two second-winters and two first-winters on 23rd (MH). Up to four were seen on other dates here. Elsewhere two were noted in Amble Harbour on 1st (NNBC) and an adult and a first-winter were at Briar Dene car park in Whitley Bay on 20th (IF). Single adults were noted in the Tyne Estuary from 10th to 22nd (DMT), at Monk's House Pool on 3rd (PRM) and at Haughton Strother GP on 8th (MR). Finally a second-winter was present on Swallow Pond on 22nd.

**Common Gull** *Larus canus*

Well recorded this month with the peak count being again at the sea roost between Tynemouth and Cullercoats with a maximum of 1,000 on 8th (DMT). The other regularly watched localities saw few present with peaks of 39 at the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay on 28th and only three at Blyth South Harbour on 15th (DMT). Other large flocks this month involved at least 560 at the roost on Kielder Water on 7th & 8th (PRM/EAW/GB) and 270 at Haughton Strother GP also on 8th (MR). Flocks of up to 120 were noted at many inland localities.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus graelsii*

As usual by November only one or two were present in the county at any one site. Two adults were at Swallow Pond on 5th (SPP) with an adult at Budle Bay up to 6th (CGK) and another adult at Big Waters on 15th (GB). Likely wintering individuals were noted at Southfield Green, Cramlington on 4th & 6th (DM) and at Blyth South Harbour on 22nd (PRM).

**Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus argenteus*

The regularly watched localities again provided the main counts with the peak count of 752 at the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay on 7th and 143 at Blyth South Harbour on 15th (DMT). 200 were noted at East Chevington on 16th and at the Black Middens on the Tyne on 27th (JMA) with 144 at Castle Island on 22nd (DM/STH) and 100 at Cullercoats on 27th (JMA). 51 were at North Sunderland on 23rd (MSH) with up to four at several other locations.

A first winter Herring Gull calling  
North Shields Fish Quay  
by Chris Knox

**Iceland Gull** *Larus glaucoideus*

The second-winter at Blyth harbour was again seen on 22nd but appeared to have a damaged right wing though still able to fly (PRM/DMT).

**Glaucous Gull** *Larus hyperboreus*

An immature was on the rocks at Sharpness Point, Tynemouth on 26th (MK).

**Great Black-backed Gull** *Larus marinus*

The regularly watched localities saw peak counts of 363 at Blyth South Harbour on 22nd and 124 at Blyth South Harbour also on 22nd (DMT). 150 were at East Chevington on 16th (JMA) with 70 at Castle Island on 22nd (DM/STH) and 42 on the Tweed Estuary on 1st (MHu). Otherwise the only sightings noted were 11 at Derwent Reservoir on 17th and a single at Big Waters on 1st (GB).

**Arctic Tern** *Sterna paradisaea*

A late juvenile was seen heading W at North Shields Fish Quay on 2nd (CGK/TW). These late staying birds have been a feature of recent years.

Correction. The bird noted last month at Cresswell was actually seen on 29th October thereby being another example of these summer visitors hanging on later now.

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

In the ideal Northerly conditions on the 29th and 30th very few were noted amongst the other seabirds at Seaton Sluice. Only seven were seen heading N on 29th with 45 on 30th (SSWT).

**Guillemot** *Uria aalge*

Few were noted but up to seven were at the main locality of Stag Rocks, Bamburgh during the month. Otherwise only one or two were noted at Cocklawburn, Monk's House and Spittal Bay. Worryingly, heavily oiled birds were found at Bamburgh and Monk's House on 4th & 9th (MSH/BRS).

The Guillemot right was photographed by Chris Knox at Stag Rocks

**Razorbill** *Alca torda*

The only sighting involved two at Stag Rocks, Bamburgh on 4th (BRS).

**Black Guillemot** *Cephus grylle*

A regular individual was regularly reported on the Bird News services off Stag Rocks, Bamburgh having first been reported on 30th October with sightings through to 20th. However the only reports received were on the 4th & 7th (IBDa/KDa/NNBC). At the Farne Islands up to five were noted through the month at their only wintering locality in the county. Finally an excellent sighting for the area involved a first-winter heading N at Cullercoats on 30th (CB).

**Little Auk** *Alle alle*

A poor autumn for this enigmatic species with the only reports in this normally popular month being three N at Seaton Sluice on 29th (SSWT) and one N at the Farne Islands also on 29th (JM/DS) with two the following day at St Mary's Island (DRW/MK). The lack of Northerlies to bring them close inshore undoubtedly being responsible for the lack of sightings otherwise in the month.

**Rock Dove / Feral Pigeon** *Columba livia*

About 200 where in Wallsend town centre on 21st (CDH). 153 was the maximum count at North Shields Fish Quay on 7th and 57 was the highest count at Blyth South Harbour (DMT), 45 were at Stakeford Bridge.

**Stock Dove** *Columba oenas*

33 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 16th was the highest count (MR), other notable counts were 15 at Big Waters 8th (GB) and five at Budle Bay on 3rd. One to three were at Allendale, Arcot Pond, Cresswell Pond, Holywell Pond, Jesmond Dene, Shotton Edge, Walbottle Hall and Wooley.

**Woodpigeon** *Columba palumbus*

An impressive 850 were at Blagdon on 28th (ASH) and 430 left a woodland roost at Prestwick Carr on 15th (PCF). Other notable counts were 230 at Arcot Pond, 79 and 76 at Duddo, 68 at Norham and 40 at Slaley.

**Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

Atlas workers counted 17 at Adderstone Grange on 23rd and 16 at Belford on 15th (MSH). Numbers at Netherton Park, Stannington built up to a maximum of 14 on 29th. Eleven were at Alnwick, ten and Belford and eight at Duddo.

**Barn Owl** *Tyto alba*

Well reported this month from across the County. On the Otterburn Ranges, five were found in nest boxes during a clean and repair operation on 15th (IK/BG). Two were at Prestwick Carr on 4th and singles were reported regularly from the Druridge Bay area. In north Northumberland singles were reported 'throughout the area', in the south, singles were at Hexham, Ordley, Wall Fell and Whittle Dene.

**Little Owl** *Athene noctua*

Only three records this month, presumably a single individual was at Druridge Lane on 4th and 15th (ACo/MSK) and at Haughton Strother on 30th (MR).

**Tawny Owl** *Strix Aluco*

Most records were of calling birds with at least three throughout the month at Scotland Gate (SLB/MSK), A male and a female called at Haughton on 13th (TWi) and two called at Walbottle Hall on 20th. Singles were at Dinnington, Elsdon, Hepple, Humshaugh, Kielder, Morpeth and Prestwick Carr.

**Long-eared Owl** *Asio otus*

Two were at East Chevington on 2nd with a single there on 15th (MSK/NEWT), a single was also at Hepple on 3rd (PRM).

**Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus*

Six were apparently flushed from a dune roost by walkers on Holy Island on 8th (IK/IBDa/KDa) with smaller numbers here throughout the month. Six were also at Prestwick Carr 9th, this was the highest count from here with smaller counts made between 4th and 23rd (PCF/MH *et al.*). East Chevington attracted four on 8th, two on 15th and singles on other dates (ADMc *et al.*). Singles were also reported from Brocolitia and Grindon Lough.

**Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*

Two were present at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 16th (MR), singles were reported regularly from Byker (on the Ouseburn), Creswell Pond and Jesmond Dene. A coastal bird was at Budle Bay on 21st.

**Green Woodpecker** *Picus viridis*

All records were of single birds and came from Alnwick (Hulne Park), Detchant, Falstone, Langleeford, Rochester, Slaley and Whitley Chapel.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major*

The highest count of the month came from Craggside with five seen there on 5th (JMA), three were at Rowfoot on 4th (SW) and Horncliffe on 6th (MJC). Twos were seen throughout the month in a Walbottle Garden and at Rothbury. Two at Stannington were the first for some time and two were also seen at Holywell Dene, Slaley and Blackblakehope. 35 records were received of single birds.

**Skylark** *Alauda arvensis*

Passage was noted at Hauxley on 7th with 15 S (HRS), five flew S Cramlington on 7th and four S at Arcot Pond on 8th. The greatest concentration was on Holy Island with 44 being counted there on 6th (CGK/PS), 25 were at East Wallhouses on 5th, 12 at Bowsden on 7th, eight at Big Waters on 8th and seven at Bullock's Hall Opencast Coal Site at Chevington on 13th. Five were noted in the Cheviot Hills at Branton where they are rare in winter.

**\* Red-Rumped Swallow** *Cecropis daurica*

A juvenile was found in Holy Island Village on 13th on wires outside Vicarage at 12.20pm, it was watched and photographed until dusk around the Vicarage, Churchyard and village (ADM).

**Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis*

30 were attracted to Bullock's Hall Opencast Coal Site at Chevington on 13th (MH/AA). On 9th 24 were counted at West Hartford (LJM), 18 were with Pied Wagtails at Prestwick Carr on 20th and 12 were at Muckle Moss on 13th. Five to ten were reported from Fenham Flats, Grindon Lough, Low Newton-by-the-Sea, Seaton Burn, Whitecleugh (Kielder Forest) and Whitley Bay. At Coldburn Hill in the Cheviots, this was one of only two species recorded in a one hour timed tetrad visit on 13th (MJC).



Two views at St. Mary's by Colin Bradshaw.  
Left a Rock Pipit and right a Meadow Pipit

**Rock Pipit** *Anthus petrosus*

This species was very well reported this month. The highest count was made on walk around Holy Island on 15th with 46 counted between St Cuthbert's Island and Snipe Point (ADM), other counts on Holy Island during the month included 26 on 22nd and 18 on 15th as well as an individual on the Straight Lonnen, well away from usual habitat on 1st. Elsewhere 15 where at Whitley Bay beach on 8th (MSH) with eight at nearby St Mary's Island on 21st, Beacon Point at Newbiggin-by-the-Sea attracted six on 18th and four was the highest count at Bamburgh (Stag Rocks) on 3rd.



\* **Water Pipit** *Anthus spinoletta*

At Low Newton-by-the-Sea, one was found at the high tide mark on 2nd (MH/AA). Another individual was found on Whitley Bay beach on 5th (MT/NT/MSH) and was later seen at nearby St. Mary's Island and was still present into December. On the 19th one was seen briefly on the River Coquet at Rothbury (JD).



The Water Pipit at St. Mary's/Whitley Bay,  
photographed left by Mike Hodgson  
and right by Colin Bradshaw

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*

Six were counted on the River Aln at Alnwick on 27th (MJC). Other notable counts were three at St Mary's Island in Whitley Bay on 7th (MT/NT), three on the River Coquet near Rothbury on 20th and two at Cullercoats on 6th. There were many records of single birds again this month including regular sightings in Newcastle's Bigg Market and one to two at Higham Place in Newcastle where song was heard on three or four occasions.



Grey Wagtails at St. Mary's  
Photographs by Colin Bradshaw

**Pied Wagtail** *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

36 were at Prestwick Carr on 20th (MH/AA), 35 at Grindon Lough on 10th (SJH), 14 at Lynemouth and eight at both Kielder Dam and Earsdon (North Tyneside).

Data from the Pied Wagtail roost at Tapee Fen, Berwick upon Tweed is shown in the table (PJ):

Date	Count	Remarks
05/11/09	100	Sunset; birds dancing and circling at 16:30
06/11/09	8	Sunrise; ground frost in night and sea mist now
11/11/09	14	Sunrise; cold with rain showers
13/11/09	13	Sunrise; no wind, horizon sharp.
18/11/09	0	Sunrise; strong W wind and some rain
22/11/09	12	Sunrise; 20+/- unidentified small birds up also.
23/11/09	8	Sunrise; W wind, cold. Perhaps brought in by same weather system as Goldeneye?
25/11/09	72	Sunrise; clear, cold. handful of finches also.
26/11/09	78	Sunrise; strong NE wind. 1 Goldeneye NE>SW
27/11/09	60	Sunrise; W wind. 4 Curlew E>W to south of fen.
29/11/09	0	Sunrise; fierce wind from NE. heavy showers.
30/11/09	0	Sunrise; chill. Fierce wind still from NE showers



Pied Wagtails in the sun at St. Mary's  
Two photographs by Colin Bradshaw

#### **Dipper** *Cinclus cinclus*

Up to three were noted as being 'very active' in Jesmond Dene throughout the month (DHWB), three were also on the River Coquet near Rothbury on 20th (MJC). Twos were noted at Butterburn, Chollerford, Harthope Valley, on the River Tyne where it is crossed by the A69 near Hexham and Thirlwall Castle where one was in full song.

#### **Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Atlas workers yielded some high counts including 31 and 28 in two different tetrads in the Tarsset Valley on 28th (MJC), 23 were counted in the Cheviot Hills at Broadstruther and 21 at Emblehope (Kielder) and 12 at nearby Blackburnhead. Non TTV counts included an impressive 24 at Prestwick Carr and 12 at Haughton Strother and Holy Island.

#### **Dunnock** *Prunella modularis*

About 20 were at Hauxley on 7th (HRS). Six were at Duddo on 7th and five were on Holy Island on 15th.

A Dunnock at Rothbury on 23rd  
photograph by Tim Dean



#### **Robin** *Erithacus rubecula*

Singing birds continued to establish winter territories, resulting in several double figure counts, including 20 at Craggside on 5th (JMA), 18 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 4th (MR), 12 at Slaley on 13th (RMH)



and ten at Tarsset Valley (Kielder) on 28th (MJC). On the coast Holy Island held up to 11 to mid month, declining to four by 22nd (ADM/PRM) and 12 were at Hauxley on 7th (HRS). Eight to nine were found at Bowsden, Broadstruther (Cheviots), Duddo and Widdrington, six to seven at Druridge Links, Grievestead, Holywell Dene and Norham and one to five at a further nine localities.

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Two first winters were at the Farne Islands on 4th, one present since 1st (FIW). A male was in Cullercoats Bay on 4th (MN) and a first winter at Tynemouth Priory coastguard station on 28th (AJN).

**Stonechat** *Saxicola torquata*

Very well reported yet again, and almost guaranteed in some coastal areas. Highest counts were nine at Cocklawburn on 13th (MHu), six at Plenmeller Common on 13th (JSB/EC) five at Holy Island on 8th (ADM) five at Newton by the Sea on 17th (TRD) and five in the Greenhead area on 7th (MH/AA). Three to four were also reported from Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay), Chevington Burn area, Cresswell Pond, Howick, Prestwick Carr, Stag Rocks, St Mary's and Whitley Bay beach and one to two from a further eight coastal and 18 inland localities.

**Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe*

A late bird at Low Newton-by-the Sea on 4th was the only record (*per.* NNBC)

**Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus*

A first winter was found feeding on hawthorns well inland at Falstone on 7th (GB/LAR)

**Blackbird** *Turdus merula*

The remnants of last months considerable influx at Holy Island were apparent during the first few days with 260+ reported on 3rd (PRM) declining to 80+ by 6th (ADM), 30-35 remaining to 15th (PRM/MJC). Elsewhere on the coast a maximum of 17 were at Hauxley on 7th (HRS). Some sizeable flocks were noted inland with 21 at Duddo and 18 at Bowsden on 7th (JR), 15 at Slaley on 13th (RMH) and Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 30th (MR), 13 at Norham on 29th (JR) and 12 at Widdrington on 6th (MJCo). Two to nine were reported from a further ten inland localities.

A cock Blackbird in the sun at St. Mary's  
by Colin Bradshaw



**Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris*

All sizeable flocks reported this month were from inland localities, the largest of which was 570 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 17th (MR). 'Good numbers' were reported in N Northumberland during the month (JPL). Several counts of ca. 250 were received, namely Derwent Reservoir on 2nd (IFo), Grindon Lough on 11th (SJH), Slaley (Comb hills) on 6th and Slaley (Blackburn) on 13th (RMH). Elsewhere 180-225 were reported from Eals, Errington (Bingfield), Langley Dam, Prestwick Carr, Snope Burn, Todburn and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, 150 were at Slaley (Blue Gables), 120 at Ford, 70 at Duddo and New Haggerston, 63 at Great Moor (Cheviots), 50 at Hexham and Chesters House and Walled Garden and 45+ at Wark (North Tyne). The largest coastal count was 45+ at Holy Island on 3rd (PRM). Elsewhere 18-40 were reported from Dipton Mill Road (Hexham), Grieve-stead, Howick, Kilham, Lilburn Grange, Muckle Moss, Newcastle Town Moor, Thorngraston and Tows Bank and one to ten from a further coastal and five inland localities.

**Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos*

Numbers on Holy Island declined rapidly after the October influx, to 15+ by 6th (ADM). Inland seven were at Bowsden and four at Duddo on 7th (JR) and four at Hauxley on 7th (HRS). Elsewhere reports were decidedly sparse, one to three reported from a further two coastal and four inland localities, including a bird in a Walbottle garden, only the third sighting of the year here (KR/LR).

**Redwing** *Turdus iliacus*

Reports included 'good numbers' in N Northumberland this month (JPL). 150 flew W at Derwent Reservoir on 2nd (IFo), 130 were in the Thorngraston area on 16th (SJH) and 100 at Chesters House and Walled Garden on 8th and nearby at Haughton Strother GP on 14th (ALT/MR). 67+ were on the coast at Holy Island on 3rd, where 40 'new' birds arrived on 21st (PRM/IK). Elsewhere 40-63 were noted at Snope Burn, Slaley and Wark (N Tyne), 20-36 at Dipton Mill Road (Hexham), Killham and New Haggerston and one to 13 at a further ten mainly inland localities.

**Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus*

Eight at Blyth GC on 28th was the highest count (LJM). Five were reported from the Whitfield Hall area on 22nd (BNR), four at Duddo on 7th, Langley Dam on 28th and Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 3rd. Elsewhere one to three were noted at a further eleven mainly inland localities.

**Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla*

A male at Holy Island (Snook) on 8th and Holy Island (village) on 11th may have been the same bird (ADM/PRM). A female was found at Newcastle Business Park on 18th (MK).

**Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*

Three were reported from Holy Island on 3rd (PRM) two still present to 13th, one remaining to 15th (ADM/MJC). Another was at Holywell Pond on 8th (MSH).

A bird showing characteristics of the Eastern race *P.c.abietinus* was at Holy Island on 6th (ADM)

**Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus*

49 were counted during a TTV in the Tarsset Valley (Kielder) on 28th was by far the highest number reported this year (MJC). 19 at Bowsden on 7th was another encouraging total (JR) as was 17 at Broadstruther (Cheviots) on 13th (MJC) perhaps indicating a decent breeding season and consequent recovery after a very poor year so far. Elsewhere numbers remained low by comparison with nine at Wark Forest South on 15th, eight at Netherwitton on 14th and five at Chester House and Walled Garden, one bird at the latter site in full song. One to four were reported from a further 15 inland localities.

**\* Bearded Tit** *Panurus biarmicus*

A well observed male took up residence at Holy Island Lough between 14th-15th (per NNBC/IK *et al.*).

**Long-tailed Tit** *Aegithalos caudatus*

Largest groups involved 20 at Kirkley Hall on 30th (IK), 17 at Holywell Dene on 20th (MT/NT), 16 at Leaplish (Kielder Water) on 8th (PRM/EAW), 15 during an Atlas visit to Widdrington on 6th (MJCo), 15 at Prestwick Carr on 14th (PCF), 13 at Holystone on 4th (DRo) and Beacon Hill on 14th (JR), 12 at Warkworth on 13th (MSH) and Felkington on 29th (JR). Six to ten were also observed at Bamburgh, Blackburn (Slaley), Castron, Craggside, Curley Kews (Morpeth), Fell Cottages (Slaley), Grindon Lough, Hauxley, Linton Pond, Marden Quarry, New Haggerston, Netherton Park (Stannington), Snope Burn and Whitecleugh (Kielder Forest). One to five were at a further nine widespread localities.

**Blue Tit** *Cyanistes caeruleus*

28 were recorded at Allen Banks on 27th (MT/NT), 20 at Chesters Walled Garden on 8th (ALT) and Holywell Dene on 12th (MT/NT), 15 at Hauxley on 8th (HRS), 14 at Beacon Hill on 14th (JR), 12 at Whitfield Hall on 22nd (BNR). Five to eight were also observed at Blackburn (Slaley), Bowsden, Duddo, Felkington and Widdrington. Two to four were at a further five widespread localities.

**Great Tit** *Parus major*

22 were at Allen Banks on 27th (MT/NT), 22 at Holywell Dene on 12th (MT/NT), ten at Hauxley on 8th (HRS), nine at Beacon Hill on 14th (JR), five at Chesters Walled Garden on 22nd (ALT) and four at Blackburn (Slaley) on 13th (RMH). One to three were at a further eight widespread localities.

**Coal Tit** *Preriparus ater*

65 were recorded in two tetrads in the Tarsset Valley (Kielder) during the count on 28th (MJC), 30 were found at Allen Banks on 27th (MT/NT), 17 at Wark Forest on 15th (SJH), 13 at Whitfield Hall on 22nd (BNR), 12 at Blackburn (Slaley) on 13th (RMH) and Broad Strother (Cheviot Hills) on 13th (MJC). Four-ten were also at Beacon Hill, Bell Crag Flow area, Blackburn Head (Kielder Forest), Chesters Walled Garden, Eshott, Felkington, Hauxley and Whitecleugh (Kielder Forest). One-three were at a further ten widespread localities including gardens at Netherton Park and Walbottle.

**Willow Tit** *Poecile montanus*

Up to two were present at Linden Hall during month (NFO). Pairs were also noted at Prestwick Carr on 7th (PCF), a Netherton Park (Stannington ) garden between 13th-30th (RWM/MIM), Netherton on 14th and Longshaws Mill (Netherwitton) on 14th (JR). Singles were at Scotland Gate all month (SLB/MSK) and Fell Cottages (Slaley) on 2nd (RMH).

**Marsh Tit** *Poecile palustris*

Three were at Borough Woods (Morpeth) on 2nd (ADMc) and Letah Wood (Hexham) on 7th (AJH). Two visited gardens at Linden Hall and Rothbury all month (NFO/TRD/JD). Other pairs were noted at Curley Kews (Morpeth) on 9th (ADMc), an Ordley garden on 11th (BNR), Rothbury on 13th (TRD), Brinkburn on 20th (MJC) and Beacon Hill on 25th (ACo). Singles were also at Duddo, Haughton Strother GP, Highfield-Mitford road, Netherwitton, Swarland Woods and Wark.

**Marsh Tit is a target species for 2009. Please report all records.**

**Nuthatch** *Sitta europaea*

Five were at Allen Banks on 27th (MT/NT). Four were present at Chesters Walled Garden on 8th (ALT), three at Whitfield Hall on 22nd (BNR), two at Craggside on 5th (JMA), Wallington Hall on 13th (AJN) and Beacon Hill on 14th (JR). Singles were also at Alnwick, Bothal Woods, Catcleugh Reservoir, near Falstone (Kielder Forest), Preston Tower, Rothbury, a Walbottle garden, Walbottle Hall and Wark.

**Treecreeper** *Certhia familiaris*

Three were recorded at Chesters Walled Garden on 8th (ALT), two at Holywell Dene on 12th (MT/NT) and a Hexham garden on 28th (AJR). Singles were also at Allenheads, Beacon Hill, Bowsden, Catcleugh Reservoir, Chumsike Lodge, Felkington, Jesmond Dene, Lanehead, Longshaw Mill (Netherwitton), Preston Tower, Rothbury, Rowfoot, Slaley, Thorneyburn Station and Wallington Hall.

**Jay** *Garrulus glandarius*

Seven were at Blackburn (Slaley) on 13th (RMH), six at Rowfoot on 4th (SW), four at Craggside on 5th (JMA), three at Prestwick Carr on 6th (ADM), Bothal Woods on 7th (JMA) and Hole House on 17th (AJR). One to two were also recorded at Arcot Pond, Beacon Hill, Berry Burn (Berrington), Bowsden, Carrith Moor, Chumsike Lodge, The Comb ((Kielder), Dally Castle, Gosforth Park NR, Harwood Forest, Hepscott, Howick, Jesmond Dene, Longshaws Mill (Netherwitton), Mindrum, Morpeth Abbey, Ponteland, Postern Burn (Morpeth), Preston Tower, near Smalesmouth, Thrunton Woods, Wark Forest and Whitfield Hall.

**Magpie** *Pica pica*

A pre-roost gathering of 25 was noted at Seghill on 14th (LJM), 14 visited a Walbottle garden on 7th (KR/LR). Eight were at Whitley Bay Cemetery on 26th (MT/NT) and Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay) on 12th (MT/NT). One to three were also present at Jesmond Dene, St. Mary's Island, West Chevington and Widdrington.

**Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula*

272 were noted at Whitfield Hall on 22nd (BNR), C.250 at Slaley on 6th (RMH), 165 at Derwent Reservoir on 27th (RMH), 117 at Seghill on 14th (LJM), 115 at Bowsden on 7th (JR), 100 at Amble Weir on 2nd (JMA), 77 at Adderstone Grange area on 23rd (MSH), 75 at Hexham on 9th (JMA) and 56 in the Belford area on 15th (MSK). One to 47 were at a further 13 widespread localities.

One showing characteristics of "Nordic Jackdaw" was observed at Melton Park, Gosforth on 20th (GB).

**Rook** *Corvus frugilegus*

250 were at Shaftoe on 28th (JMA), 230 at Bowsden on 7th (JR), 200 at Slaley on 6th (RMH), 120 at Derwent Reservoir on 27th (RMH), 100 at Amble Weir on 2nd (JMA), 56 at Blackburn (Slaley) on 13th (RMH) and four to 50 at a further eight widespread localities.

**Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone*

125 were at Knotts Flats, North Shields on 6th with 100 still there on 27th (JMA), 40 at Craggside on 28th (JMA), 35 were feeding on acorns at Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 2nd (MNC), 33 at Widdrington on 6th (MJCo), 31 at Eshott on 22nd (MJCo), 28 feeding on washed up kelp at St. Mary's Island on 5th (MT/NT), 20 at Blackburn (Slaley) on 13th (RMH), 14 at Belford Station area on 15th (MSH) and Beacon Hill (Cramlington) on 22nd (DM). One to eight were also at a further eight widespread localities.

**Raven** *Corvus corax*

13 at Otterburn Ranges on 15th was the biggest party the observers have seen on the training area (IK/BG). Four were at Catcleugh Reservoir on 12th (PRM) and Hethpool, College Valley on 30th (TRD/JD). Pairs were recorded at Coanwood on 4th (SW), Yearle on 8th (RHB) and Blackburnhead (Kielder Forest) during an Atlas visit on 28th (DM/STH/PA). One headed N over Melkridge Village on 11th (SJH) and another was noted at Harthope Valley on 21st (RHB). One was found at Emblehope Moor (Kielder Forest) during an Atlas visit on 28th (TRD).

**Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*

The important Holy Island Lough roost held 35,500 on 1st declining to 17,000 on 3rd, 15,000 on 7th and 160 by 21st (IK). 18,100+ were noted at the evening roost in North Pool reed beds, East Chevington on 22nd (PRM). 2,000 were going into roost at Wingates on 15th (TRD/JD) and Tyne Green, Hexham on 30th (RMH). Ca.1,000 were at Wentworth Car Park, Hexham on 10th (RMH). 140-500 were recorded at Bowsden, Combhills (Slaley), Dinnington, Monk's House Pool, Prestwick Carr, St. Mary's Island and Widdrington. One to 100 were at a further ten widespread localities.



**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*

70+ were present at Cullercoats Bay all month (MN), 50 were at Hauxley Village on 8th (HRS), 42 at Norham on 29th (JR), 24 in a Walbottle garden on 7th (KR/LR) and Eshott on 22nd (MJCo), 18 at Woodneuk Farm (Slaley) on 6th (RMH). Six to ten were also at Bowsden, Felkington, Grieve-stead, West Chevington and Widdrington.

A Cock House Sparrow  
by Colin Bradshaw

**Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*

15 were present at Hauxley RS/NR between 7th-27th (HRS/JA). Eight were on feeders at Warkworth on 21st (JMA). Four visited a Walbottle garden all month (KR/LR) and Haughton Strother GP on 4th (MR). One to three were also observed at Blakemoor Farm (Cresswell), Cresswell Pond, a Dinnington garden, Doddington, Duddo, Longbyer near Greenhead and Norham.

**Tree Sparrow is a target species for 2009. Please report all records.**

**Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs*

107 were noted at Widdrington during an Atlas visit on 6th (MJCo), 102+ were at Belford Station area on 15th (MSH), 53 at Adderstone Grange area on 23rd (MSH), 40 at Thrunton Farm on 10th (MT/NT), 31 at Blyth G.C. on 28th (LJM), 30 at Chesters Walled Garden on 8th (ALT) and 25 at Snope Burn on 15th (BNR). One to 20 were at a further 15 widespread localities.

**Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla*

Three migrants were observed at Chare Ends, Holy Island on 6th (CGK/PS). 12 at Catington Hill on 22nd was the peak site count (JD). Nine visited a Rothbury garden on 24th while during the rest of the month one or two were present (TRD/JD). Eight were at Fallowfield on 21st (TWi), seven feeding in the car park at Chesters Walled Garden on 8th (ALT), six fed on beech mast at Grindon Hill Farm on 13th (EC/JSB) and four at Snope Burn on 15th (BNR). One to two were also noted at Coanwood, Coldside, Combhills (Slaley), Fell Cottages (Slaley), Haughton Strother GP, a Linden Hall garden, Thornton MOD Range and Whittle Dene.

**Greenfinch** *Carduelis chloris*

36 visited a Walbottle garden on 7th (KR/LR). 30+ were at Bamburgh on 4th (BRS), 26 at Hauxley RS on 7th (HRS) and one to five at a further seven widespread localities.

**Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis*

Druridge Links held 70+ on 4th (IDR), 30+ at Holy Island Lough on 9th (MSH) and New Haggerston on 27th (MHu), 22 at Cheswick Dunes on 6th (MHu), 18 at Corbridge on 16th (MR), 14 at Norham on 29th (JR). One to ten were at a further 18 widespread localities including gardens at Walbottle and Whitley Bay.



Two photographs by Colin Bradshaw of Goldfinches, one of our most attractive resident birds

**Siskin** *Carduelis spinus*

Coastal records involved seven north at Bamburgh on 4th (MSH) and 15 at Hauxley RS on 7th (HRS). Inland gatherings involved 200 at Haughton Strother GP on 30th (MR), 150 at Fourstones on 29th (AJH), 85 at Holystone on 16th (9DRo), 75 at Blakehopeburnhaugh (Redesdale) on 28th (GB/LAR), 53 near Falstone (Kielder Forest) on 7th (GB/LAR), 38 at Langhead on 7th (SW), 13 at Derwent Reservoir on 27th (RMH) and 12 at Caistron on 22nd (TRD). One to seven were at a further 11 widespread localities.

**Linnet** *Carduelis cannabina*

At least 400 were at Seahouses on 20th (JSB/EC). 250+ were at nearby Monks House Pool on 4th (MSH). 200 were found at Eshott during an Atlas visit on 22nd (MJCo). 135+ were in the Belford Station area on 15th (MSH), 120 at Borewell (Scremerston) on 16th (MHu), 65 at Duddo on 7th (JR) and 60+ at Howick on 8th (JAR) and Powburn on 25th (PRM). One to 47 were at a further ten widespread localities.

**Twite** *Carduelis flavirostris*

Inland, three were discovered at Blackbodies during an Atlas visit on 28th (TRD). Traditional coastal flocks built up during month. 250 were noted on the mainland side of Lindisfarne NNR (85 between Fenham Burn/Teal Hole Point, 15 between Blacklaw/Granary Point and 150 at Beal Saltmarsh) on 9th (MH/AA). The Druridge Bay flock peaked at 150 at Hemscott Hill Links on 27th (JSB/EC). 100+ were at Long Nanny on 2nd (per NNBC), 16 flew South at St. Mary's Wetland on 3rd (MT/NT), six were at Warkworth Dunes on 25th (JMA) and one was feeding outside the Oddie hide at Druridge Pools on 2nd (MSK/NEWT).

**Redpoll Sp.**

Six were at Druridge Pools on 3rd (MSH), one flew SW over the Straight Lonnen, Holy Island on 2nd (IK), one was near Falstone on 7th (GB) and another at QEII CP on 14th (GB).

**Lesser Redpoll** *Carduelis cabaret*

50 were at Grindon Lough on 10th (SJH), 23 at Longshaws Mill (Netherwitton) on 14th (JR), 21 at Holywell Dene on 11th (MNC) and 11 at Hauxley RS on 8th (HRS). Five-ten were also noted at Belsay Hall, Bowsden, Derwent Reservoir, QEII CP, Rowfoot, Slaley Hall and Woodneuk Farm (Slaley). One to four were at a further 13 widespread inland localities. One was ringed at Hauxley RS on 7th (HRS).

**Crossbill** *Loxia curvirostra*

The Atlas counts in Kielder Forest on 28th revealed this species to be the most widespread and numerous in the area. Counts included 132 in the Tarsset Valley tetrad (MJ), 50 at Blackblakehope (TRD), 49 in another Tarsset Valley tetrad (MJC), 34 at Whitecleugh (DM/STH/PA), 26 at Redesdale (GB/LAR), 20 at another Bedesdale tetrad (GB/LAR), four at Blackburnhead (DM/STH/PA) and two at Balkehopeburnhaugh (TRD). Elsewhere, 50 were at Holystone on 22nd (DRo), 30 at Thrunton Woods on 13th (TRD/JD), 25 at Plenmeller Common on 13th (EC/JSB), 21 at Wark Forest on 14th (SJH), 20 near Falstone (Kielder) on 7th (GB), 18 at Simonside Hills on 28th (NFO) and 17 at Rowfoot on 4th (SW). One to eight were at a further nine typical conifer forest localities.

**Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

26 (including a flock of 14) were noted at Simonsides during an Atlas visit on 28th (NFO). Kielder Forest proved popular with the species with 19 (including a flock of 15) at Blackburnhead, 19 (including a flock of 14) at Redesdale and 13 at Blackblakehope during the Atlas visit on 28th (DM/STH/PA/GB/LAR/TRD). Nine were at Bowsden on 7th (JR), eight at Coanwood on 4th (SW), six at New Haggerston on 27th (MHu) and Sipton Burn on 28th (PRM). One to five were reported from another 48 widespread localities including gardens at Cramlington and Walbottle. One was ringed and another re-trapped at Hauxley RS on 7th (HRS).

**Bullfinch is a target species for 2010. Please report all records.**

**Lapland Bunting** *Calcarius lapponicus*

Three were in stubble with Skylarks at Ness End, Holy Island on 3rd (IK). Another was associating with Skylarks in stubble at Chare Ends, Holy Island on 2nd (IK).

**Snow Bunting** *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Ten arrived from the east at Ness End, Holy Island on 2nd (IK) with 30 present there at the Quarry on 3rd (IK). 15 were at Long Nanny on 2nd (per NNBC), ten Flew N at Stag Rocks, Bamburgh on 5th (ADMc) and S at Whitley Bay beach on 7th (MSH), seven were at Hauxley beach on 9th (MSH). One to three were also noted at Budle Jetty, Cheswick, Holy Island (various localities) Howdiemont Bay (Longhoughton), Low Newton-by-the-Sea, Ross Back Sands and St. Mary's Island. Inland, two were observed at Snope Burn on 15th (BNR), Whitfield Moor on 1st (BNR), a single on open farmland at Adderstone Grange on 23rd (MSH) and two at Ayle Common on 28th (BNR).

**Yellowhammer** *Emberiza citrinella*

Ca.50 were at Branton on 22nd (TRD/JD), 22 at Haughton Strother GP on 8th (MR), 20 at Howick on 20th (JAR), 14 at Prestwick Carr on 9th (LMO) and Norham on 29th (JR), 13 at Duddo on 7th (JR) and one to eight at Bowsden, Eshott, Felkington, Grievestead, Langley Dam, Powburn, Slaley, Thrunton Farm, Wark and West Chevington.



**Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus*

50+ were in a Hawthorn hedge at Low Horton Farm, Blyth on 28th (LJM). 11 were at Backworth on 21st (CGK) and Norham on 29th (JR), ten on Holy Island on 6th (ADM) and Cheswick Dunes on 6th (MHu), five at Kimmer Lough on 26th (MLC), four at Hauxley on 7th (HRS) and St. Mary's Island on 22nd (PRM). One to three were also noted at Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Bowsden, Cresswell Pond, Duddo, Felkington, Grievestead, Holystone, Langley Dam, Monks House Pool, Powburn, Prestwick Carr.

**ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN****Hybrids****Canada Goose x Greylag Goose** *Branta canadensis x Anser anser*

A single hybrid was seen at Hauxley on 7th (HRS).

**CONTRIBUTORS**

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**BULLETIN COMPILATION AND PRODUCTION**

This bulletin was compiled by Lindsay McDougall (Swans to Geese, Game birds, Divers to Herons), Graeme Bowman (Ducks), Trevor Blake (Birds of Prey to Rails), Ian Forsyth (Waders to Skuas), Tim Dean (Gulls to Auks, Escapes, Hybrids and Unknown Origin, List of Contributors, Highlights), Iain Robson (Doves to Dunnock), Mike Richardson (Robin to Warblers), Dee McKeown (Flycatchers to Buntings), Julie Roper/Dan Turner (WeBS Coastal Counts) and Steve Holliday (WeBS Inland Counts). Thanks again to Ann McKeown for typing the section Flycatchers to Buntings.

Edited by Steve Barrett [Sscmagpie@aol.com](mailto:Sscmagpie@aol.com)

Distributed by Alan Watson [apusx@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:apusx@blueyonder.co.uk)

**RECORD SUBMISSION**

**Cards:** Please send all record cards to Tim Dean, 2 Knocklaw Park, Rothbury NE65 7PW, to arrive on, or preferably before, the 8th of the month following that in which the records were collected. Please write cards legibly to ensure that your sightings are correctly recorded.

**E-mail:** Members are encouraged to e-mail their records on an Excel-style spreadsheet. Please e-mail Dick Myatt at [dick@dickmyatt.co.uk](mailto:dick@dickmyatt.co.uk) for a copy of the standard spreadsheet and other details.

**Location names and Grid references:** The use of standard location names and the inclusion of grid references greatly increases the value of records in subsequent analyses. A 1km square grid reference is the ideal e.g. NY8067 for Grindon Lough, but 2km square references (Tetrads) are also acceptable e.g. NY86D in 247 this case. A list of localities and their tetrad grid references (Tetrad/Locality List) can be downloaded from the 'Resources & Downloads' section of the Club website at <http://www.ntbc.org.uk> – the use of these names, wherever possible, would be highly appreciated.

**PHOTOGRAPHS AND ILLUSTRATIONS**

Please keep submitting your articles, photographs, sketches and illustrations for the bulletin. Thanks again to those who have supplied the excellent photographs. Please send to Steve Barrett at [Sscmagpie@aol.com](mailto:Sscmagpie@aol.com)

**ELECTRONIC BULLETIN**

The NTBC bulletin can be received electronically or as hard copy. The electronic bulletin arrives earlier than the printed version, it is in colour and we save all that printing and stamps. Ask for an e-mailed bulletin from [jo.bentley@waitrose.com](mailto:jo.bentley@waitrose.com).

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**NTBC WEB SITE** – [www.ntbc.org.uk](http://www.ntbc.org.uk) and if you have any ideas or things you would like to see or hear about on the club website then let Chris Knox know on 0751 582 5024 or email [christopher.knox@o2.co.uk](mailto:christopher.knox@o2.co.uk).

### **INDOOR MEETINGS**

Indoor Meetings are at Newcastle Falcons Rugby Club, Kingston Park, Newcastle

The next meeting is on Thursday 14th January at 7pm. Steve Lowe will talk on **Conservation, Birds and the Northumberland Wildlife Trust**.

On Thursday 11th February Colin Bradshaw will talk on **From Raga to Rubythroat**. This will be based on on Colin's recent trip to Northern India and he promises to tell us a safe way to see Tigers.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

The next field trip is to Ross Back Sands on 24th January.

Please contact Trevor Blake;

Email: [trevor.1958@live.co.uk](mailto:trevor.1958@live.co.uk)

### **BIRDS IN NORTHUMBRIA 2008**

BIN 2008 is now being distributed to members of the club. This is another impressive production from the Holliday-Fisher team and their many helpers. The Club are grateful for all the years of effort Ian and Steve have put in to make BIN a highlight of our birding year.

### **EMBLEHOPE BLITZ 28th NOVEMBER 2009 - how to atlas in the middle of Kielder Forest**

It's 06:00 am, cold and dark as I look out of my Whitley Bay bedroom window – Fog!! that's the last thing I expected. Would this finish off several weeks planning for a 'raid' by 14 brave souls into NY79 centred on Emblehope Moor, one of the remotest squares to successfully atlas in Northumberland? Last winter we had to abandon our plans twice because of heavy snow, severe frost and badly churned up forestry roads. I needn't have worried, as the day came alive the high ground in the west of the county was largely blessed with sunshine, blue skies and not a breathe of wind although it was pretty nippy! Those taking part got occasional glimpses to the east where the mist lingered all day in some areas. We couldn't have planned it better with perfect weather that will rarely, if ever, be repeated in Kielder during the winter months!

Our mission was to try and carry out single two-hour timed visits to as many tetrads as we could during the short daylight hours. With special access for several vehicles into forestry roads (courtesy of Martin Davison – many thanks) and everyone in teams of two we managed to visit 15 tetrads from various points in the square.

The data generated is extremely interesting and useful in the atlas context at both local and national level and fills a big potential gap in winter coverage. Many species vacate this upland area during the winter months and we did not expect a huge list. A total of 1,219 birds of 44 species were counted with top position, in terms of numbers, going to Crossbill with 443 birds including some seen display-flighting and singing presumably in preparation for mid-winter breeding! It appears to be a good winter for Crossbill in Kielder but perhaps not so in nearby Redesdale.

In second place, and with no surprise, came Coal Tit with 182 quickly followed by Wren in third position with 161. Goldcrests have been remarkably scarce in some areas this year, perhaps as a result of the prolonged hard weather last winter, and the count amounted to just 91.

Raptor numbers were low, as we expected they would be, with just five Common Buzzards, four Kestrels, three Sparrowhawks and, for one team, an awesome Goshawk soaring directly overhead! Probably rarest of all the species found were three Twite, always difficult to locate on high ground in the county at any time of the year. The supporting cast was still very good and included, for example, totals of 76 Bullfinches and 17 Great Spotted Woodpeckers. The best thing though was everyone enjoyed the outing!

Thanks are due to those intrepid atlas counters who took part : Phil Allott, Graeme Bowman, Trevor Bridges, Mike Carr, Alan Curry, Tim Dean, Roger Forster, Mike Hodgson, Steve Holliday, Alan Janes, Chris Knox, Dee McKeown, Andy McLevy, Les Robson

MIKE S. HODGSON

**NORTHUMBERLAND AND TYNESIDE BIRD  
CLUB  
ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2009**

<b>INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>
<b>INCOME</b>		
Members subscriptions	5,927.00	5183
<i>Includes 5 Honorary &amp; 9 Life members</i>		
Birds in Northumbria 2007	1,747.75	942.5
Birds in Northumbria - other years		404
Other (atlas)		220
Birds of Holy Island		20
Refund of Income tax (Gift Aid)	1311.83	1194.08
Bank Interest	117.06	204.55
Field trips	658	1344.65
Grants from DF	552.00	
50th	1,192.00	375
	<b>11,505.64</b>	<b>9887.78</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Membership	46.86	41.19
Indoor meetings	1,101.02	701.15
Monthly Bulletins	2,394.76	2418.85
Birds in Northumbria 2007	3,614.00	3047
Birds in Northumbria 2007 (postage)	266.12	311.76
Birds of Holy Island		95
Officers expenditure	314.74	896
Field trips	922.16	1343.95
Record cards/storage	333.89	658
Insurance	110.00	110
SSWT Rent and Rates	179.49	16.54
Website and IT	75.22	462.89
Miscellaneous	85.49	185
Atlas	399.34	80
50th	1,357.20	146.87
Grants	402.00	
	<b>11,602.29</b>	<b>10514.2</b>
Surplus / deficit for year	- <b>96.65</b>	<b>626.42</b>
<b>BALANCE SHEET AS AT 30 JUNE 2009</b>		
<b>ACCUMULATED FUND</b>		
Balance as at 30 July 2008	4,139.88	4766.3
Surplus/ (Deficit) from I & E Account	- 96.65	626.42
	<b>4,043.23</b>	<b>4139.88</b>
<b>Represented by:</b>		
<b>Assets</b>		
Lloyds TSB Treasurers Account	1,201.31	2323.72
Northern Rock	5,711.42	5594.36
Debtors	1,311.83	-
Cash in Hand	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,224.56</b>	<b>7918.08</b>
<b>Less Liabilities</b>		
Accruals	-	458.13
Creditors	4,181.33	3320.07
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,181.33</b>	<b>3778.2</b>
	<b>4043.23</b>	<b>4139.88</b>

**NORTHUMBERLAND AND TYNESIDE BIRD CLUB**  
**DEVELOPMENT FUND ACCOUNTS**  
**FOR YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2009**

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>
<b>INCOME</b>		
Sales - Winter Atlas	276.90	377
Atlas Data	1,000.00	900
Donations (balance from 50th)	1,002.38	15
Bank Interest	249.84	1015.53
	<b>2,529.12</b>	<b>2307.53</b>
<b>LESS EXPENDITURE</b>		
Winter Atlas postage	-	38.43
Grants	4,275.26	4090.9
	4,275.26	4129.33
<i>Surplus (Deficit) for Year</i>	<b>- 1,746.14</b>	<b>- 1,821.80</b>
<b>Balance sheet as at 30th June 2009</b>		
<b>Accumulated fund</b>		
Balance as at 30 June 2008	19,315.03	21136.83
Surplus/deficit from I & E account	- 1,746.14	- 1,821.80
	<b>17,568.89</b>	<b>19315.03</b>
<b>Represented by:</b>		
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Cash - Alliance & Leicester	17,531.62	19087.76
Debtor	-	220.00
Cash/Cheque in Hand	37.27	7.27
	<b>17,568.89</b>	<b>19315.03</b>
Accounts prepared by Jo Bentley (Honorary Treasurer)		
<b>HONORARY AUDITORS REPORT</b> I hereby certify that the above Income and expenditure accounts and Balance Sheets are a true representation of the financial affairs of the Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club, as evidenced by the books, vouchers and other information supplied to me.  Signed <u>V.L. Bradley</u> Date <u>13.12.09</u>		

COASTAL WeBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

November 2009

Site	COUNTY OF DUNDEE																						TOTAL														
	Tweed Estuary		Spital - Cocklawburn		Lindisfarne NMR (including Budle Bay)		Seashouses - Beadnell		Beadnell - Howick		Boulmer - Alnmouth		Aln Estuary		Coquet Estuary		Amble - Chevington		Chevington - Cresswell		Cresswell - Newbiggin			Blyth Estuary		Blyth Estuary - Seaton Sluice		St Mary's Island		Whitley Bay - Tynemouth		Tyne North Pier - Fish Quay		Wallsend, (north bank only)		Redheugh - Scotswood Bridge, (north bank)	
Counter	MHu	MHu	PRD	PRD	RP	MLC	KR	JAR	AB	TAC	EC	TW	MSK	MGA	LJM	KVB	SP	MK	DMT	DMT	PF	PF															
Red-throated Diver	23	17	22	22	25	17	23	26	14	21	22	30	22	21	28	27	14	21	7	22	21	29															
Little Grebe		9	3		2	2										1	1																				
Great Crested Grebe					1					2	1				2																						
Cormorant	393	14	55			5	21	1	3	18	30	2			79	6	25	2	75	23	3	2															
Shag	25	6			8		4			1					6																						
Grey Heron	31	12	2				2			5	2				1		6					1															
Mute Swan	135	32	3	76	3		5			4	8				4		2					1															
Whooper Swan	17	1	16																																		
Pink-footed Goose	3	3																																			
Greylag Goose	170	170																																			
Canada Goose	44	42								2																											
Dark-bellied Brent Goose	25																																				
Light-bellied Brent Goose	3,250																																				
Shelduck	1,248			310																																	
Wigeon	6,873			550				8		273	90	2																									
Gadwall	20																																				
Teal	927			175	12		4			320							20																				
Mallard	485	92	20	216	85	6	24	3	22	24	5				12	52	4			30	56																
Pintail	195														6	4				24	39																
Shoveler	11				10												1																				
Pochard	3										3																										
Tufted Duck	6	3	3																																		
Eider	874	2	68	254		49	72	57	12	32	4	89	95	15	84	36			5																		
Common Scoter	766		560					25				160		20			1																				
Goldeneye	82	44	7				22	6		2					1																						
Red-breasted Merganser	38	2	3	29				2				1					1																				
Goosander	2										2																										
Moorhen	22						6			6																											
Oystercatcher	1,857	12	116	463	60	72	210	215	93	88		14	76	28	44	58	33	200	89	46																	
Ringed Plover	300		3	2	61	53	17					5		4	120		10	4	21																		
Golden Plover	4,952		62	1,440	40			55	350						6		3,000	39																			
Grey Plover	257		181		1	7	3		62					1	2																						
Lapwing	4,760	990	94	1,392	775	60	124	115	305	114	600				38		500	77		202	134	15															
Knot	384		375	110		8		1																													
Sanderling	477	56	159		17		47				5	90	3	6		9	59	26																			
Purple Sandpiper	178				85	51		2	2		1	11				4	4	8	6																		
Dunlin	2,614	4	2108		7	28		102	137		22	41		12			150	3																			
Snipe	4		2				1				1																										
Bar-tailed Godwit	466		5	428	20	5	5	3	2	14		2		2																							
Curlew	2,647	8	88	2102	45	3	15	82	18	5	113	45	3	2	4	65	50	17	1		2	24															
Redshank	2,327	225	7	656	75	24	28	59	90	149	115	23	151	2	26	117	46	200	231	37	3	130	8														
Greenshank	2	1					1																														
Turnstone	658	4	17	49		8	146	14	48	102	8	110	3	4	3	10	60	45	27																		
Black-headed Gull	4,016	610	184	360	nc	175	723	36		248		220			301		nc	267	378	108	406																
Common Gull	1,237	30	216	740			224								8		10	nc	8	1																	
Lesser Black-backed Gull	17						14					3																									
Herring Gull	1,409	107	52	5	nc	9	263	12		44		12			92		nc	752	24	35	2																
Great Black-backed Gull	364	14	4	2	nc	31	73	3		13					136		nc	81	6	1																	
Kittiwake	11											7			2				2																		
Kingfisher	1					1																															
TOTALS - WILDFOWL	15,672	425	690	12,323	88	79	145	57	57	661	230	260	15	20	195	43	123	2	80	23	57	99															
- WADERS	21,883	1,300	396	9,357	1,125	343	675	442	526	1,214	342	719	489	39	110	401	102	4,233	536	141	205	266	47														
- GULLS & TERNS	7,054	761	456	1,107	0	0	215	1,297	51	305	0	252	0	0	539	0	0	0	1,110	408	145	408															





## Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

<http://www.ntbc.org.uk/>

**Bulletin 2009 No 12**

**MONTHLY SUMMARY – DECEMBER**

4th February 2010



### HIGHLIGHTS

Bean Goose – Single at Widdrington & East Chevington  
 Eurasian White-fronted Geese – Six at East Chevington from 5th to 9th.  
 Great Northern Diver – High count of six off Stag Rocks on 1st.  
 Black-throated Diver – A single off Budle Pt on 26th  
 Bittern - Single from 27th at East Chevington  
 White Stork – Single over Walker, Newcastle on 22nd.  
 Pomarine Skua - One on beach at Hauxley and Druridge from 9th to 13th.  
 Iceland Gull - The second-winter still present at Blyth Harbour  
 Skylark - Large flocks due to cold weather including 2,000 near Budle Bay  
 Water Pipit - The regular wintering bird at St Mary's plus one at Alnmouth  
 Waxwing – The only sighting involved five at Hipsburn  
 Tree Sparrow - A welcome large flock of 93 near Mitford  
 Lapland Bunting - Six regularly seen near High Newton and three at Beal

### NOTE

The next Indoor Meeting is 11th February at 7pm - By Colin Bradshaw - "FROM RAGA TO RUBYTHROAT"  
 Field Trip - the next field trip is to Ross Back Sands on Sunday 14th February.  
 Winter Atlas half way point newsletter attached  
 Club subscriptions are now overdue. This will be the last bulletin for non payers.



A Reed Bunting making the best of the snow at Backworth  
 by Chris Knox

## WEATHER

Sunshine totals were generally well above normal, the main exception being eastern Scotland. Provisionally, it was the second-sunniest December in a series from 1929 and similar to December 2008.

Most of the month was changeable, the first 10 days being mild but it then became colder with snowfalls after mid-month. Overall, it was a cold month with mean temperatures typically between 1.5 and 2.0 °C below the 1971-2000 normal. Provisionally, it was the coldest December since 1996. Rainfall was generally close to normal, but it was wetter than normal in many eastern areas. Sunshine totals were generally well above normal, especially in Lincolnshire, the Midlands and parts of north-west England. Provisionally it was the second sunniest December in a series from 1929, and similar to December 2008.

**1st to 8th:** An unsettled start with a succession of weather fronts moving eastwards. Bands of rain crossed the country, although there were some drier, brighter interludes. Temperatures were generally near or above average, although there were some frosty nights with patchy fog.

**9th to 14th:** Pressure rose to give a spell of mainly dry weather with some sunshine. It was mild at first but it gradually became colder with overnight frost in places from 10th.

**15th to 19th:** An area of low pressure moved southwards on 15th with another moving down the North Sea on 16th. Associated weather fronts moved southwards bringing periods of rain. It also became colder as winds turned into the north. On 18th and 19th an area of low pressure became slow moving over the near Continent.

**20th to 25th:** A cold spell with some hard overnight frosts. Temperatures struggled to rise above freezing in many parts during the daytime. It was also unsettled with further outbreaks of rain, sleet or snow. The rain turned to sleet and snow as it moved northwards across the rest of England, giving falls of several cm in places. The sleet and snow died out during 24th.

**26th to 31st:** The cold spell continued with further overnight frosts. Rain spread across most parts on 26th. Many parts had showers on 27th, but these died out later to allow a widespread hard frost, with patchy fog that was slow to clear. Rain spread into the south on 29th becoming heavy and persistent. The rain moved northwards into the Midlands and then northern England, turning to sleet and snow. Depths of 10 to 15 cm were reported quite widely over northern England by 30th along with strong easterly winds. The rain, sleet and snow died out in most parts overnight, although further sleet and snow showers continued to affect the north-east. Wintry showers continued in the north-east on 31st.

## CLASSIFIED LIST

The following account consists of unchecked reports. The species/subspecies marked \* require descriptions.

A complete list of all sightings which need notes is included in the NTBC website [www.ntbc.org.uk](http://www.ntbc.org.uk) under the County Records Committee section and in Birds in Northumbria 2008 page 255.

The Inland and Coastal Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) tables are at the rear of the bulletin. These contain additional counts to those in the Classified List.

## TARGET SPECIES

The target species for 2009 were **Marsh Tit**, **Spotted Flycatcher** and **Tree Sparrow**.

The target species for 2010 are **Shoveler**, **Whinchat** and **Bullfinch**

Please report all records for these species.

### Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

The peak gatherings, which were found on waters that had some sections ice-free, were 91 on Killingworth Lake on 27th, 69 at QEII Lake on 19th and 21 in the Tweed Estuary on 18th (GB/AIB/CDH/MHu). 21 were still present in the QEII Lake–Linton area on 27th and 18 were at Ross village on 13th (STH/PJA/MSH). Counts of 12 came from Haggerston Castle on 1st and Prestwick Carr on 9th (MHu/PCF). One to ten were noted from Backworth, Blyth Estuary, Cocklawburn Pond, East Chevington, Greenlee Lough, Grindon Lough, Hauxley, High Newton, Howick, Leazes Park (Newcastle), Linton Pond, Long Nanny, Monk's House Pool, Newcastle Business Park, St Mary's Wetland, Shield-on-the-Wall, Tynemouth Boating Lake, Wark and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

### Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Ten flew S over St Mary's Wetland on 22nd, six flew S over Yarrow Slake (Tweed Estuary) on 11th and one flew over Rothbury on 6th (MT/NT/MHu/JD). Numbers continued low with peak counts of 30 at Ramshope on 9th and 28 in the QEII Lake-Linton area on 27th (JCD/STH/PJA). Nelly's Moss Lake (Craggside) hosted 17 on 3rd, whilst 16 were NW of QEII Lake on 6th and near Widdrington on 2nd with five and seven juveniles present respectively (TRD/ADMc/ACo). 14 (two juveniles) were on the flood at High Newton on 8th, 13 were near East Chevington South Pool on 6th and 11 at Ross village on 13th (PRM/ADMc/MSH). One to eight were noted from Beadnell, Castron, Haughton Strother and Warkworth Gut.

### Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*

One regular *fabalis* race bird was in fields near Widdrington on 27th (STH/PJA).

### Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Small movements during the month with a peak of 400 S at Cheswick on 26th, 73 flew W at Prestwick Carr on 5th, 50 flew E at Rothbury on 31st, 47 flew NW at Killingworth on 5th and 38 S at Howick on 23rd ((MHu/PCF/JD/LJM/TAC). A large concentration was in the Cresswell Pond area with a peak count of 5164 on 22nd (JSB/EC *et al*). Gatherings away

from this site were 600 at Holywell Pond on 4th, 220 in fields N of Budle Bay on 28th and 134 at East Chevington on 9th (SPP/MSH/MJCo). 60 were at Widdrington on 27th, 40 at High Newton on 28th and 15 at Derwent Reservoir on 2nd (STH/PJA/TRD/IFo). One to two were noted at Brandon Grindon Lough and Prestwick Carr.

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

Up to nine Greenland race *flavirostris* birds remained at Grindon Lough until at least 19th (MRS/PRM/BNR).

A family party of six European race *albifrons* birds were at East Chevington from 6th -31st (ADMc/MSH).

**Greylag Goose** *Anser anser*

The highest counts were 470, including a large leucistic bird, at Brandon on 28th, 400 at Widdrington on 27th, 255 at High Newton on 6th, 250 at Derwent Reservoir on 2nd and 203 at Holywell Pond on 4th (RWM/MIM/STH/PJA/PRM/IFo/SPP). Elsewhere 145 were in Yarrow Slake (Tweed Estuary) on 2nd, 105+ at Prestwick Carr on 14th, 100+ in Budle Bay on 28th, 95 at Branton on 15th and 77 at Grindon Lough on 6th (MHu/MRS/TRD/MSH/PRM). Smaller gatherings were 33 at Hauxley on 13th, 32 at East Chevington on 9th and 22 at High Chibburn (Widdrington) on 10th. Whittle Dene Reservoirs hosted two on 5th.

Greylags overhead at Newton on 28th  
by Tim Dean



**Greater Canada Goose** *Branta canadensis*

Grindon Lough again held the largest gathering with a peak of 490+ on 6th (PRM/BNR). Other sizeable flocks were 60 at Killingworth Lake on 27th, 55 at Hauxley on 1st and 20 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 5th (GB/AIB/TRD/PRM). Counts of nine to 15 came from Leazes Park (Newcastle), Marden Quarry, QEII Lake and Tweed Estuary. One to six were noted from Castle Island, East Chevington, Greenlee Lough, Stakeford Bridge and West Ord.

**Barnacle Goose** *Branta leucopsis*

Budle Bay remained the key county site with 240 on 6th and 188 still present on 28th (ASH/MSH). Singles were at Hauxley and St Mary's Wetland on 1st (TRD/MNC/SPP) and the bird first seen at Tynemouth Boating Lake on 6th November remained throughout the month (MSH/KWY/CDH).

**Pale-bellied hrota Brent Goose** *Branta bernicla hrota*

Six flew N at Newbiggin Church Point on 14th (TRC). The official Lindisfarne NNR count realised 3,500 on 4th (IK). During the month 600 were seen in two groups at the causeway there on 3rd, 272 were noted on a TTV at Ross Point/Fenham Flats on 1st and 125+ were at Fenham-le-Moor on 28th (JMA/MSH).

**Dark-bellied bernicla Brent Goose** *Branta bernicla bernicla*

The peak count at Lindisfarne NNR was 70 on the shore off School Lane, Holy Island on 16th with 30 birds noted throughout the month at the Ouse, Holy Island and 25 at Fenham-le-Moor on 28th (TRD/IK/MSH). Two were feeding in a field at Blyth on 4th and one was at the Long Nanny on 8th (TRC/PRM).

**Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna*

Lindisfarne NNR held 550 on 1st (MHu) and 250 were noted from Holy Island causeway on 3rd (JMA). Seven were at the Blyth Estuary on 22nd and 29th (GB/STH/IFo), three at Newcastle Business Park on 24th (DM), and one was at Bothal Pond on 1st (IFo).



**Mandarin** *Aix galericulata*

Four were at Ratter, Redesdale on 14th (JCD).

**Wigeon** *Anas penelope*

12 flew N at Newbiggin on 14th (TRC). Peak counts were 470 at Grindon Lough on 6th (PRM), 342 at East Chevington on 9th (MJCo), 208 at Druridge Pools on 24th (IDR/JF), 195 at Cresswell Pond on 31st (IRD), 192 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 28th (MR), 120 at Gosforth Park NR on 12th (IK), 118 at Hauxley NR on 13th (HRS), 115 at Swallow Pond on 5th (SPP), 110 at the Long Nanny Estuary on 28th (TRD), and about 100 at Beadnell Bay on 19th (GW). Lesser counts involved 86 at East Chevington on 1st (IFo), 74 at QEII Lake on 19th (CDH), 41 at Bothal Pond, 21 at Haughton Strother, and one to three at Cocklawburn Pond and St Mary's.



A pair of Wigeon on the ice  
on 31st at QEII Country Park  
by Alan Tilmouth

**Gadwall** *Anas strepera*

QEII Lake held 21 on 19th (CDH) and 29th (GB), 16 were at St Mary's Wetland on 6th, 14 on 8th and four to 14 on several dates between 1st-29th, and 12 offshore on 26th (MT/NT *et al.*). Following one on 22nd, nine at the Blyth Estuary on 29th (GB/STH/IFo) was an unusually large count for the site and probably the result of freezing conditions. Three were at West Allotment Pond on 18th (MSH), three at Backworth on five dates (CGK), twos at Big Waters, Caistron and Castle Island, and singles at Haughton Strother (first record for the site, on 5th; MR), Holywell Pond and High Chibburn.

**Teal** *Anas crecca*

About 600 were at the 'rocket field', Holy Island until 16th when freezing conditions reduced the number to about 250 (IK), and 420 were at Grindon Lough on 6th (PRM). Unusually high numbers at the Blyth Estuary began with 231 on 22nd (GB) increasing to 345 on 29th (STH/IFo) before dropping to 254 by 31st (STH). Other peak counts were 175 at Cresswell Pond on 18th (IRD), 159 at Druridge Pools on 24th (IDR/JF), 141 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 21st (MR), 92 at St Mary's Wetland on 25th (MSH), 88 at Newcastle Business Park on 24th (DM), 84 at Linton Pond on 19th (CDH), 50-52 at Bowsden, Branton GP and Middle Ord Pond, 32-44 at Backworth, Monk's House Pool and Prestwick Carr, and 16-28 at Castle Island, Cocklawburn Pond, East Chevington, Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother, Lesbury, Plenmeller Common and Tyne Green (Hexham). Two to nine were at Cheswick, Hauxley NR, High Chibburn, the Long Nanny Estuary and West Ord.



**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

250 appeared at Derwent Reservoir on 28th during hard weather (IFo), 190 were at Grindon Lough on 6th (PRM), 163 at the Tweed Estuary on 18th (MHu), 124 were flushed during shooting at Prestwick Carr on 12th (PCF), 123 were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 21st (MR), 82 at Druridge Pools on 24th (IDR/JF), 76-79 at Newcastle Leazes Park and Tyne Green, Hexham (DM/BNR), and 51-63 at Branton GP, Cocklawburn and West Allotment Ponds, Killingworth Lake, Marden Quarry and St Mary's Wetland. Counts of 31-41 came from Castle Island, Haughton Strother, Hauxley NR and Linton Pond, and ten to 24 at Backworth and Colpitts Ponds, the Blyth Estuary, High Chibburn, Morralee, Northumberland Park (North Shields), QEII Lake and Slaley Hall. One to eight were at eight further sites.

**Pintail** *Anas acuta*

Three flew in from N, landed on sea for ten minutes, then continued S at Hauxley on 1st (IFo). 100+ were at Fenham Flats on 15th (AA/MH), and singles at Druridge Pools on 26th (IRD) and St Mary's Wetland on 1st and regularly between 23rd-27th (MNC/SPP/MT/NT *et al.*).

**Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*

A count of 22 at Holy Island Lough on 19th was considered unusually high for the time of year at this site (IK), 18 at Linton Pond on 19th (CDH) had declined to 12 by 29th (GB/AIB/LAR), eight were at Monk's House Pool on 4th (PRM), seven at East Chevington on 9th (MJCo), seven at Killingworth Lake (unusual at this site) on 24th (PCF), seven at Marden Quarry on 21st (MN), four to five at St Mary's Wetland on 29th and 31st (MSH/MT/NT), five at Swallow Pond on 14th (TRD), and four at East Chevington on 1st (IFo). One was offshore at St Mary's on 26th (MT/NT).

**Shoveler is a target species for 2010. Please report all records**

**Pochard** *Aythya ferina*

Peak counts were 36 at Swallow Pond on 7th (SPP) falling to five by 14th (TRD), and 22 at Holywell Pond on 12th (GB). Five were at Bothal Pond on 1st (IFo), five at Druridge Pools on 31st (the highest count at this site in 2009; IDR), five at West Allotment Pond on 18th (MSH), four at Derwent Reservoir on 28th (very scarce there; IFo), East Chevington on 9th (MJCo), Linton Pond on 19th (CDH), Marden Quarry on 31st (MNC), and three at Grindon Lough. One to two were also at Big Waters, Branton GP, Castle Island, and Killingworth, Ladyburn, QEII and Tynemouth Boating Lakes.

**Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*

A count of 83 at Longhoughton Quarry on 18th was the largest reported concentration (TRD). Other peak counts were 73 at Killingworth Lake on 27th (GB/AIB), 66 at Druridge Pools on 26th (IRD), 56 at QEII Lake on 19th (CDH), 54 at Linton Pond on 19th (CDH), 50 at Marden Quarry on 31st (MNC), 31-35 at Newcastle Leazes Park and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, 20-25 at High Chibburn and Tynemouth Park, and 11-12 at East Chevington, Linden Hall and West Allotment Pond. One to six were also at Castle Island, Cocklawburn Pond, Grindon Lough, Hauxley Reserve, Northumberland Park (North Shields) and St Mary's Wetland. Some moved on to rivers during the hard weather; 24 on the Tweed at West Ord on 30th was the largest flock yet noted on the river by the observer (MHu) and 20 on the Tyne at Newcastle Business Park on 24th were unusual (GB).

**Scaup** *Aythya marila*

Five were off Hauxley Reserve between 10th-13th (MSH/ADM/LMo/PTa *et al.*) and were noted as one adult male, one adult female, two juvenile females and one first-winter male (TRD/JD). Two were at Druridge Pools on 31st (IDR) and one on 24th (IDR/JF), and one was with Goldeneyes off Newton Point on 28th (TRD). One was well inland at Haughton Strother (near Humshaugh) on 5th, 9th and 16th (MR).

**Eider** *Somateria mollissima*

Northerly movement involved 68 at Annstead on 4th (PRM) and 40 at Newbiggin on 14th (TRC). 350 were in the Ross Point-Fenham Flats area on 1st (MSH), 70 at Seahouses on 4th (PRM), 48 at Blyth South Harbour on 5th (DMT), Cheswick on 2nd (MHu), 45 at North Blyth on 27th (STH/PA), 37 off Monk's House, 22-26 at Annstead and the Tweed Estuary, and ten to 18 off East Chevington, Inner Farne Sound, the Long Nanny Estuary, Meadow Haven and the Tyne Estuary to North Shields Fish Quay. Up to nine were at St Mary's. One was again in Holywell Dene, about 1.5 km upstream from Seaton Sluice harbour, on 10th (RJP).

**Long-tailed Duck** *Clangula hyemalis*

Singles flew N at Hauxley on 13th (TRD/JD) and Holy Island on 16th (TRD). The Budle Point-Stag Rocks area held peaks of 43 on 20th (per NNBC) and 40 on 28th (MSH), and 33 were off nearby Ross Back Sands on 1st (MSH). Other peak counts were also in the north, with 18 at Cheswick Sands on 9th (AA/MH), seven at Ross Point-Fenham Flats on 1st (MSH), and six at Holy Island harbour on 4th (IK). Singles were at Druridge Pools on 18th and 31st (IRD), East

Chevington north pool on 1st (TRD/IFo) and 6th (ADMc), and off Hauxley beach on 1st (IFo). A group of 12 drakes and two ducks were displaying at Stag Rocks on 1st (MH/AA).

**Common Scoter** *Melanitta nigra*

Light northerly movement concerned 40 off Druridge Pools on 1st (LMo/PTa), 13 at Newbiggin on 14th (TRC) and four at St Mary's on 17th (MT/NT). Large numbers were noted in the north of the county, with 2,000 at Stag Rocks on 28th (RA), 1,100 at Cheswick on 7th (MHu) and about 1,000\* there on 9th (AA/MH), about 1,000 off Ross Back Sands on 26th (MSH), 1,000 at Budle Point on 20th (*per* NNBC), 800+ at Stag Rocks on 28th (MSH) and 560 at Cocklawburn on 17th (MHu). Some interchange between the above sites was considered likely. In addition, 50 were at Alnmouth on 8th (TRD/JD), and two to seven at Beadnell, Druridge, Fenham Flats and Hauxley. A female/juvenile was at the main pool at Druridge Pools on 31st (IDR).

\* disturbed when two 500 pound bombs were detonated at Goswick!

**Velvet Scoter** *Melanitta fusca*

Five flew N at Hauxley on 13th (HRS) and two were at Fenham Flats on 15th (AA/MH).

**Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula*

The Tweed Estuary held 142 on 18th (MHu), 60 (including 12 adult males) were on the sea off East Chevington on 22nd (EC/JSB), 38 at Yarrow Slake on 11th (MHu), 36 at Caistron on 6th (TRD), 32 at East Chevington north pool on 1st (IFo), 27 at Beadnell Bay on 29th (GW), 20 at Newton Point on 28th (TRD), 15-19 at Capheaton Lake, Druridge Pools, North Blyth and West Ord, and ten to 14 at the Blyth Estuary, Branton GP, Castle Island, Grindon Lough, Howick, Ladyburn Lake, Meadow Haven and QEII Lake. Five to seven were also at Big Waters, and Derwent and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, three to four at Fenham Flats, Hauxley Reserve, High Chibburn, Holywell Pond, Killingworth Lake, Newcastle Business Park, Slaley Hall and Wark, and one to two at Annstead, Arcot, Colpitts and Cresswell Ponds, Craggside, Greenlee and Holy Island Loughs, Monk's House Pool and Tyne Green.



A drake Goldeneye at QEII Country Park on 31st  
by Alan Tilmouth

**Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator*

Peak counts were 20+ at Cheswick Sands on 9th (AA/MH), 17 (ten drakes) at Ladyburn Lake on 1st (ACo), ten off East Chevington on 26th (JR), eight at Fenham Flats on 28th (MSH), five at Ross Back Sands on 1st (MSH), five off Druridge Links on 27th (IDR), and three to four off Hauxley and at the Tweed Estuary. One to two were also at Beadnell Bay, Blyth South Harbour, Newton Point, Spittal Bay and Stag Rocks. Two were at Castle Island on 20th (DM/STH/PA) and one was at Druridge Pools on 31st (IDR).

**Goosander** *Mergus merganser*

The largest gatherings involved 16 at Hedgeley GP on 7th (TRD), ten at Branton GP on 7th (TRD), nine at Marden Quarry on 10th (MK), eight at Newcastle Leazes Park on 18th (DM), eight at the Tweed Estuary on 18th (MHu), seven at Haughton Strother on 6th (MR), six at Thropton on 9th (TRD), and three to four at Morralee (near Bardon Mill), Rothbury, St Mary's and Tyne Green. One to two were also at Beggar's Rigg (Rothbury), the Blyth Estuary, Derwent Reservoir, Evistones, Greenlee Lough, Jesmond Dene, Morpeth, Newcastle Exhibition Park, Ramshope, Redesmouth, Warkworth, West Ord and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

**Red Grouse** *Lagopus lagopus*

In the Whitfield Moor/Whitfield Law area 87 were noted on 8th (BNR). Other high counts were 50 at Westburnhope on 25th, 30+ at Allenheads on 26th, 27 at Linhope Spout on 27th and 21 at Willyshaw, Whitfield Moor on 4th (AJH/RWM/MIM/PC/BNR). Other reports in double figures were 13 at Newton Tors (Cheviots) on 4th and ten at St David's Cairn (Kidland Forest) on 9th (MJC/PC). Counts of seven came from Bewick Moor on 8th and Hoddon Shank (Ewartly Shank) on 9th (MH/PC). One to five were noted from Lord's Rigg (Whitfield Moor), Stublick Moor and two locations in Redesdale.

**Black Grouse** *Tetrao tetrix*

On 13th five males were in a hawthorn bush at Stublick Moor and four males were at Knockshield Burn (PRM), whilst on 8th three females fed on hawthorn at Staward Manor and two birds were in Upper Redesdale away from the MOD Range (EC/JCD).

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

The highest count was 67 at Lord's Rigg (Whitfield Moor) on 15th (BNR). Counts of 15 came from Hartley West Farm Holywell Dene on 5th and the nearby Crow Hall Farm on 24th (RJP/MSH). TTVs produced eight at East Chevington on 9th and Kirknewton on 4th (MJCo/IDR/JF). One to five were noted from the A1 at Corbridge, Heighley Gate and the Parmently/Whitfield Hall area.

**Grey Partridge** *Perdix perdix*

The highest counts were 39 in three coveys at Howick on 23rd, 23 in fields east of Murton (Shiremoor) on 25th and 15 at Shoreston on 26th (TAC/MT/NT). Counts of 14 came from Sandy Bay (Newbiggin) on 20th, Cresswell Pond on 22nd, Beaconhill (Cramlington) and Scremerston Station on 26th and Prestwick Carr on 29th (DM/STH/PJA/EC/JSB/MHu/LMo). On 28th 11 were at Low Chibburn (Widdrington) and ten were at Bell's Farm Cresswell on 4th (MJCo/MSH). Eight to nine were noted at Backworth, Cullernose Point, Druridge Pools and East Chevington. One to five were reported at Catcleugh, Great Whittington, High Newton, Old Hartley and Stublick Moor.

**Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus*

Some high counts came from the south west of the county with 50 in the Whitfield Hall/Parmently area on 11th, 48 males at Allen Banks on 12th and 30 at Lord's Rigg, Whitfield Moor on 15th (BNR/AJH). Elsewhere 24 were at East Chevington on 27th, 18 at The Brocks on 8th, 13 at Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene) on 9th and nine at Berrington Law on 5th (STH/PJA/MJCo/RJP/JR). One to eight were noted from Bowsden, Chesters House and Walled Garden, Howden, Linhope Spout, Newcastle Business Park, Netherton Park, Red Row and a Walbottle garden.

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

Light movement was noted with four N at Newbiggin in 2 hours on 14th, three N at Alnmouth on 31st and singles N at St Mary's Island on 4th and North Blyth on 31st and S at Howick on 7th (TRC/TAC/MLC/MT/NT/STH/JAR). The highest counts were six off Stag Rocks on 28th, five in the Ross Point /Fenham Flats (SE corner) on 1st, Holy Island harbour on 4th and Cheswick on 7th and Newton on 29th (MSH/IK/MHu/TRD). Counts of four came from Seahouses on 4th, High Newton on 8th, Ross Back Sands on 3rd and Beadnell Bay on 29th (PRM/MSH/GW). One to three were noted at Alnmouth, Annstead, Budle Point, Druridge Links, Hauxley, Inner Farne Sound, Long Nanny, Meadow Haven (Berwick), Monk's House, Newton Point and Spittal Bay,

**Black-throated Diver** *Gavia arctica*

Only two singles were reported off Stag Rocks on 9th and off Budle Point on 26th (ACo/MSH).

**Great Northern Diver** *Gavia immer*

At St Mary's Island one flew S at St Mary's Island on 4th (MT/NT). Six (two adults) were off Stag Rocks on 1st, three in the Cheswick/Goswick area on 9th and two off Cheswick Sands on 9th (MH/AA/MHu). Singles were noted at Ross Back Sands and off Druridge Pools on 1st, Whittle Dene Reservoirs (first winter bird) from 3rd-7th, St Cuthbert's Island (Holy Island) on 4th and Budle Point on 26th (MSH/LMo/PTA/TRD/MR *et al*).



Great Northern Diver at Whittle Dene Reservoirs  
by Paul Massey on 5th December

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

The peak count was five at Hedgeley GP on 7th (TRD). Counts of four came from Castle Island on 20th/22nd, and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 21st (DM/STH/PJA/MR/GB). Three were noted at Blyth Estuary, Cocklawburn Pond, Druridge Pools, Ladyburn Lake and QEII Lake. One to two were seen at Annstead, Bothal Pond, East Chevington, High Chibburn (Widdrington), Hauxley, Moralee (Bardon Mill), Tyne Green (Hexham), Rothbury and Stakeford Bridge.

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*

This species was scarce this month with a maximum of two on East Chevington North Pool on 1st (TRD/IFo). Singles were noted in Sandon Bay (Holy Island on 5th, Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 7th and offshore at Ross Back Sands on 16th (IK/MR/MSH).

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

The species continues to be very scarce with only singles noted off Cheswick Sands on 9th and off Holy Island near the castle on 16th (AA/MH/TRD).

**Slavonian Grebe** *Podiceps auritus*.

As in November all records came from the north of the county with a peak count of seven off Ross Back Sands on 1st and off Budle Point on 20th (MSH/NNBC). Five were found on a TTV to Ross Point and the SE corner of Fenham Flats on 1st and two were off Stag Rocks on 26th (MSH). Singles were noted on TTVs at Ross Back Sands on 13th and Budle Point on 26 h and off School, Lane, Holy Island on 13th (MSH/TRD).

**Fulmar** *Fulmarus glacialis*

A gathering of 60 was well offshore at Nessend, Holy Island on 9th, 37 were in Inner Farne Sound on 26th and 15 off Stag Rocks on 28th (IK/MSH). Five were off Monk's House on 4th and two in Spittal Bay on 15th (PRM/MHu). Birds commenced returning to breeding sites with six on Castle Mount, Bamburgh on 28th and two at Union Bridge, Berwick on 15th and Bamburgh Golf Course Crags on 13th (MSH/MHu). An unusual sighting was one flying E over fields north of the A69 at Haydon Bridge on 20th (SLB/MSK).

**Gannet** *Morus bassanus*

Five were off Seahouses on 6th, two were diving amongst the Common Scoter flock off Cheswick on 7th and a single was off Monk's House on 4th (PRM/MHu/PRM).

**Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Five flew S at St Mary's Island on 4th (RWM/MIM). The peak roost counts during the month were 122 at North Shields Fish Quay on 6th and 118 at Blyth South Harbour on 5th (DMT). The Meadow Haven, Berwick roost held 27 on 13th (MHu). Inland 13 were on QEII Lake on 19th, eight at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 21st and Elswick Wharf on 24th and six at Tyne Green, Hexham on 20th (CDH/MR/DM/BNR). Six were at Seahouses on 8th. Singles were noted from Bedlington, Castle Island,, East Chevington, Hauxley, Humford Mill Leazes Park (Newcastle), Long Nanny, Rattenraw (Redesdale) and Wark.

\* Two birds of the *sinensis* race were identified at Seahouses on 4th/8th and one at Annstead Pools on 4th (PRM).



**Shag** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Atlas TTVs produced some high counts with 124 at Ross Point/Fenham Flats (SE corner) on 1st, 86 at Ross Back Sands on 13th, 41 at Budle Point on 26th and 32 in a further tetrad at Ross Back Sands on 1st (MSH). The Meadow Haven (Berwick) roost held 42 on 13th (MHu) whilst 30+ were in the Tweed Estuary on 6th and off Stag Rocks on 28th (MSH). Offshore at Monk's House 28+ were present on 4th, with 22 off Holy Island on 18th and 16 in Inner Farne Sound on 26th (PRM/TRD/MSH). The peak count at Blyth South Harbour was 15 (eight immatures) on 5th, but nine adults were noted on 12th. These birds included colour ringed adult Red "HTH" ringed as a nestling on the Isle of May on 17 June 2003 and found nesting these in summer 2009, however the eggs failed, colour ringed juvenile. Blue "ZAT" was ringed as a chick on the Isle of May on June 22nd 2009 and seen near Portknockle Banff on 5th September and adult White "LDT2" ringed as a nestling on the Isle of May in June 2003 and seen at Blyth every winter since then (DMT/STH). At Druridge Links eight to nine were offshore on 27th/31st (IDR). Six were at Cocklawburn on 7th and five at Berwick on 4th and in Spittal Bay on 15th (MHU). Singles were noted from Cresswell, Howick, Newton and Tyne Estuary.

**Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris*

At East Chevington on 27th a single flew on to the frozen South Pool (STH/PJA).

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*

Two were still on Holy Island causeway on 9th (AA/MH/RA). Singles were noted at Ross Low, Budle Bay on 1st, in Budle Bay on 6th and at the Long Nanny on 8th (AA/MH/ASH/PRM).

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*

The peak counts were 27 at the Yarrow Slake (Tweed Estuary) roost on 2nd, 19 during the Tweed Estuary WeBS count on 18th and 13 at North Blyth staithes on 27th (MHu/STH/PJA). Elsewhere six were in the St Mary's Wetland-Old Hartley area on 8th, five at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 21st and four at Prestwick Carr on 4th (MT/NT/MR/PCF). One to three were recorded at Annstead, Arcot Pond, Bedlington, Hauxley, High Chibburn (Widdrington), High Newton, Holywell Dene, Horton Burn (Cramlington), Howick, the Juniper area, Kilham, Moralee (Bardon Mill), QEII Lake, Red Row and Tyne Green (Hexham).



A Grey Heron makes a meal of a luckless field vole  
St. Mary's wetland on 22nd December  
by Peter Tapsell

**\*White Stork** *Ciconia Ciconia*

One was seen flying low over Walker (Newcastle) on 22nd being mobbed by gulls before flying W up the Tyne (ASJ).

**Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*

On the 15th a male was hunting at Fenham Flats (MH), other males were seen in the SW of the County on 16th (PRM), in the N of the County on 18th (MH) and near Newham Bog briefly on 28th (MSH). A ring tail was noted at Monk's House also on 28th (TAC).

**Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis*

Only one record this month of this secretive species involving three birds all soaring together at Cragside (Rothbury) on 27th (TRD/JD).



**Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*

The regular pair was at Scotland Gate throughout the month (SLB/MSK). Two birds were also at Pigdon on 6th (TW), Howick Dene on 15th (TRD), and Prestwick Carr on 19th & at Bardon Mill on 21st (PCM). Single birds were noted at a further 25 sites during the month.

**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*

Seven birds were at Haughton Strother (near Humshaugh) on 9th (MR); six were at Bardon Mill on 21st (PRM). Four birds were at West Chevington on 26th (JR), one to three were at over 40 sites.

**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*

At the Kielder nest site an adult and two young were on the nesting platform on 24th (TRD/JD), the only other record involved a single bird flying upstream at Melkridge on 5th (SJH).

**Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*

At Prestwick Carr, five birds were hunting and squabbling on 18th & 31st (JSB/EC/PCF). Five birds were noted along a five mile stretch of the A69 on 28th (MH); four were regularly seen hunting on Holy Island during the month (IK). Four were also noted at Grindon Lough on 16th (PRM) and at Redesmouth on 27th (ADM/MJC). One to three were at a further 25 locations.

**Merlin** *Falco columbarius*

Single birds were seen at Corbridge on 8th (NFO), St Mary's Island & Old Hartley on 26th (MSH/MNC) and at Elwick on 27th (SLB/MSK). Single birds were also seen on Holy Island on several dates (AA/MH/MSK/NEWT).

**Peregrine** *Falco peregrinus*

A juvenile female & male were noted on several dates at Holy Island during the month (IK). Up to two birds were also seen at St Mary's Island on 22nd (MSH/PT) and two were at Newbrough on 30th (SLB/MSK). Single birds were at another eight sites including one with falconers jesses at the QEII CP on 19th (CDH).

**Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus*

Holy Island Lough had four birds on 19th and three were at Gosforth Park on 12th (IK). Two birds were seen at Big Waters on 13th and Prestwick Carr on 28th (GB/PCF). Single birds were seen or heard at a further eight sites.

**Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*

Silverlink Park LNR peaked at 14 birds on 18th (MSH), Druridge Pools had 13 birds there on 31st (IDR), 11 were at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 29th (DM) and Newton Flash on 28th (TRD). Hauxley NWT had 10 birds on 13th (HRS) and one to nine was at over 12 sites.

**Coot** *Fulica atra*

Two sites this month had over 100 birds this month, with 146 at Killingworth Lake on 27th & 115 at QEII CP on 29th (GB/AIB). Marden Quarry had 49 on 24th (KWY), Branton GPs had 47 on 7th (TRD) and 44 were at Bothal Pond on 29th (GB). 11 birds were at Druridge Pools on 31st, this was the highest count there during 2009 (IDR).

**Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*

A WeBS count at Cocklawburn revealed 86 on 17th, 75 were at Cullercoats on 9th, 64 at Stag Rocks on 13th and 63 at Hauxley NR also on 13th (MHu/MK/MSH/HRS). The high tide roost at Berwick GC held 42 on 30th, 41 were at Annstead on 4th and up to 38 were at St Mary's early in the month.

**Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*

The shed roof at Blyth South Harbour attracted 58 on 5th (DMT), Berwick, Little Beach had a peak of 48 on 11th and 34 roosted at high tide at Berwick GC on 30th (MHu). Both the Tyne estuary at Tynemouth and Blyth estuary had 33, on 5th and 31st respectively, and eight to 12 appeared at Cullercoats, Low Newton, St Mary's and Seahouses.

**Golden Plover** *Pluvialis apricaria*

Budle Bay held 2600 on 6th (ASH), the peak at St Mary's was 2000+ on 2nd (MSH) with regularly 1000-1200 there later; 1700 were in a dense pack on the R Tyne at Elswick on 7th (GB) and 1200 at Annstead on 18th (JMA). Cresswell Pond, Druridge, High Newton and Long Nanny all drew 400-700 at times; 200 were in the Blyth estuary on 29th, 100 at East Chevington on 9th and four to 70 at Ashtrees, Black Hill, Cullercoats, Jesmond, Old Hartley and Prestwick Carr. Also two were in The Cheviots at Newton Tors on 4th at 520m above sea level (MJC).

**Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*

Nine flew N at Newbiggin on 14th (TRD). Ross Point/Fenham Flats had 37 on 1st (MSH), 15 were at Howick on 31st and 13 at Seahouses on 4th. Between five and nine were noted at Berwick, the Blyth estuary and Hauxley with up to three at Alnmouth, Annstead, Boulmer, Low Newton and St Mary's.

**Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*

Budle Bay continued to hold the most with 1500+ in nearby fields on 6th (MSH), about 700 were at Yarrow Slake on 2nd (MHu) and 579 at Cresswell Pond on 11th (IRD). Several places had 200-400: Blyth, Druridge Pools, Elswick, Prestwick Carr, St Mary's, Seahouses and Whittle Dene Reservoirs with 134-180 at East Chevington, Grindon Lough and Newton. Small numbers were found at a further 17 localities.

**Knot** *Calidris canutus*

Apart from 500 at Ross Point/Fenham Flats on 1st (MSH), only ten or less appeared at Alnmouth, Cresswell Pond, Hauxley, Low Newton and St Mary's.

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba*

Hauxley beach held 106 on 1st (IFo) and the regular flock at St Mary's peaked at 97 on 23rd, with usually up to 65 there (MT/NT/SPP). Counts at other regular haunts include 80+ at Low Newton on 31st (GW), 63 at Ross Point on 1st, and 62 at Berwick on 21st. One to 15 were at Alnmouth, Boulmer, Cheswick, East Chevington, High Chibburn and North Shields Fish Quay. One at the latter location on 25th (DMT) had been colour ringed on 15th May 2007 at North Ronaldsay and subsequently reported at Midvager, Vager Faeroes on 11th August 2008.

**Purple Sandpiper** *Calidris maritima*

Seahouses held a good count of 137 on 4th (PRM), the peak at Stag Rocks reached 90 on 28th (MSH), 72 were at Annstead on 4th (PRM) and a peak of 50+ at Low Newton on 31st (GW). Cheswick Black Rocks had 20 on 9th; the most at St Mary's was ten on 1st and two to nine visited Berwick, Cullercoats and Hauxley.

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*

At Newbiggin ca. 30 flew N on 14th (TRC). At Ross Point/Fenham Flats 550 were present on 1st (MSH), the peak at Little Beach, Berwick was 160 on 11th, 120 were at Boulmer on 15th (TRD) and 115 in the Blyth estuary on 29th (IFo/STH). Between 27-65 were reported at Berwick GC, Cresswell Pond, Hauxley, Newton, St Mary's and Tynemouth.

**Jack Snipe** *Lymnocyptes minimus*

A total of seven records of singles were reported between 8th and 26th inclusive; in chronological order at Whitfield Moor, Fenham Flats, Blyth, Beal/Goswick, Seaton Burn, Newton and East Chevington.

**Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*

Hauxley NR held exactly 30 on 1st (IFo), 25 were at St Mary's on 22nd (MT/NT) and 23 at Backworth on 28th (CGK). Five-13 were noted at Arcot pond, Big Waters, Blyth, Castle Island, Cramlington, East Chevington, Haughton Strother GP, Holystone, Low Chibburn, Newham, Prestwick Carr, Redesmouth, Rothbury, West Hartford and Yarrow Slake. One-three appeared at another 12 places, some in unusual locations as a result of the hard weather around Christmas.

**Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola*

One flew in off the sea at Craster on 6th (SLB/MSK). On 31st four were at each of Hauxley NR (PT/LM/IW) and Newton church (GW) and two were at Edlingham on 9th (TRD). Otherwise singles were found at a further 25 widespread places.

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

The only report concerns one in the R. Aln estuary at Alnmouth on 31st (TAC/MLC).

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

Ross Point/Fenham Flats held 220 on 1st (MSH). Elsewhere, ten were in the Blyth estuary on 29th, nine on Hauxley beach on 1st, eight at Berwick on 4th and 21st and seven or less at Annstead, Boulmer, Cheswick, Cocklawburn, Holy Island, Low Newton and Seahouses.

**Curlew** *Numenius arquata*

Several large flocks were noted: 334 at Long Nanny on 29th (GW), 300+ in fields near Budle Bay on 6th (MSH), 221 in one field at Elwick on 28th (MSH), 200 at Goswick Sands on 15th (AA/MH), 114 at St Mary's on 15th (MNC) and 100+ at Hauxley NR on 1st and 13th (IFo/HRS). Also 24-60 occurred at Blyth, Branton GP, Cocklawburn, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Marden Farm, Marshall Meadows and Ross Point. Small numbers were at another six places.

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*

Two were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 4th (EC/JSB) with singles there on 21st and 28th. Singles were also at Haughton Strother GP on 5th, 9th and 16th, at Hedgeley on 7th and Thropton on 9th.

**Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*

Singles were in Budle Bay on 6th (ASH) and 28th (CGK).

**Redshank** *Tringa totanus*

The Tweed estuary at Yarrow Slake held 260 on 2nd (MHu) and the Tweed estuary WeBS count produced 184 on 18th; 187 were on Tyne at Elswick on 7th (GB), 150 at Cullercoats on 9th (MK) and the peak at St Mary's was 141 on 13th

(MT/NT) and 117 were at Hauxley NR on 11th (JA). The remaining counts include 90 at Cresswell Pond on 1st, 30 at Ross Point on 1st and 30 at Long Nanny on 19th. Two to 12 appeared at seven other places.

**Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*

Up to 36 were generally present at St Mary's, with a peak of 71 on 17th (MT/NT); 62 were at Seahouses and 46 at Annstead both on 4th (PRM). Berwick hosted 25 on 4th, 16 were at Hauxley on 13th and low single figures were noted at Alnmouth, Cheswick, Druridge Links and Low Newton.

**Pomarine Skua** *Stercorarius pomarinus*

A probable 3rd year was on the beach at Hauxley on 9th-10th (IF/MNC/LMo/PTa) and what was almost certainly the same individual was found exhausted on the beach in Druridge Bay on 13th (*per* JCD) and photographed.



A splendid series of photographs of a Pomarine Skua

by Tim Mason on Hauxley shore

**Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla*

Numbers remained small even at the two main wintering sites with only one found at North Shields Fish Quay on 5th and 13th plus two at Blyth South Harbour on 12th (DMT). The only other sighting was one on the sea with Black-headed Gulls at St Mary's Island on 31st (MK).

**Black-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

The peak count was again recorded at the sea roost between Tynemouth and Cullercoats with 650 noted on 13th (DMT). The other regularly recorded localities saw peaks of 257 at the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay on 5th and 154 at Blyth South Harbour also on 5th (DMT). Other concentrations involved at least 530 at Monk's House on 4th (PRM) and 436 on mudflats at Elswick Wharf on 24th (DM). Groups of 100 to 300 were also noted at Castle Island, Jesmond Dene, Leazes Park, QE II CP lake and Widdrington. Small numbers were also found at a number of other localities. A white colour-ringed bird 'E1KC' which was originally ringed in The Netherlands in June 2006 was again noted at North Shields Fish Quay for its third winter (DMT). Also a Lithuanian ringed bird was reported at St Mary's Island on 23rd (MSH).

**Little Gull** *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

The only sightings involved one adult and four first-winters which were seen on a pelagic trip off North Shields on 12th (RA). Winter sightings are always few and far between.

**Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus*

Numbers at Newbiggin were almost identical to November with the peak being five adults, two second-winters and two first-winters on 14th (TRC). The white ringed bird '3L47' was again seen here for its fifth winter having been ringed as a nestling in Holland in June 2005. The regular adult at Briar Dene car park was seen from 2nd to 5th (ASJ/MSH/MT/NT) with a single first-winter at North Blyth on 31st (STH) and a second-winter at St Mary's Island on 31st (MK).

**Common Gull** *Larus canus*

An unusually large concentration was noted at the Long Nanny Estuary at Newton with at least 1,300 present on 8th (PRM). Smaller flocks of 100 to 300 were seen at Blyth South Beach, Castle Island, Druridge Pools, Evistones, Haughton Strother GP and Widdrington. The regularly watched localities saw small numbers this month with only 205 at the sea roost between Tynemouth and Cullercoats on 13th, a peak of 51 at the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay on 19th and only a single at Blyth South Harbour on 5th & 26th (DMT). Smaller groups of up to 75 were seen at a number of localities.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus graelsii*

Typically only singles reported this month with the regular over wintering adult at Southfield Green, Cramlington throughout (DM) and another adult at Blyth South Harbour on 5th (DMT).

**Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus argenteus*

The regularly watched localities again provided the main counts with a peak of 500 at the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay on 19th and 314 at Blyth South Harbour on 5th (DMT). The only other large flock reported was around 400 at Holywell Pond on 12th (GB). Otherwise small groups reported of up to 68 at several localities.

**Iceland Gull** *Larus glaucooides*

The second-winter with the damaged right wing at Blyth South Harbour was again seen on 12th (STH/DMT).

**Great Black-backed Gull** *Larus marinus*

The regularly watched localities saw peak counts of 154 at Blyth South Harbour on 26th and 154 at the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay on 6th (DMT). Timed Tetrad visits for the BTO Winter Atlas saw counts of 54 at East Chevington on 9th (MJCo) and 38 at Ross Back Sands on 13th (MSH). One to five were noted at several inland and coastal localities.

Correction The November section should have read 'The regularly watched localities saw peak counts of 363 at Blyth South Harbour on 22nd and 124 at the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay on 21st (DMT).'

**Guillemot** *Uria aalge*

The only movement noted was of two S at St Mary's Island on 8th (MT/NT). At least 21 were seen off Monk's House on 4th, by far the highest count for the month. Otherwise one to four were found at Budle Point, Meadow Haven (Berwick), Spittal Bay and St Mary's Island.

**Razorbill** *Alca torda*

The only sighting involved a single on the sea off Newton Point on 28th (TRD).

**Puffin** *Fratercula arctica*

A single seen from the pelagic trip off North Shields on 11th was the only report this month (RA). Always tends to be further out to sea in the winter than the other common auks.

**Rock Dove / Feral Pigeon** *Columba livia*

North Shields Fish Quay attracted 148 on 5th (DMT) and 120 were at North Blyth on 27th (STH/PJA). 100 were at Stakeford bridge on 20th and 58 at High Chibburn (Widdrington) on 28th.

**Stock Dove** *Columba oenas*

Whittle Dene Reservoirs again attracted high numbers with up to 86 there on 7th (MR). Elsewhere, ten were at Letah Wood, seven at Druridge Pools, six at Whitfield Moor and four at Seahouses (Monk's House).

**Woodpigeon** *Columba palumbus*

The Backworth/Killingworth area attracted large gatherings – 1000 were on ploughing at Backworth on 24th and at Killingworth Lake on 27th (PCF/GB/AIB), 650 were counted between Killingworth and Backworth on 5th with 550 nearby on 10th. In the north of the County, 500 were near Budle Bay 26th and 350 at Howick on 21st. Other notable counts included 300 at Marsden Farm and Cramlington, 200 at Walbottle and 100 at Bamburgh.



**Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

A large roost of 42 birds was found at East Ord Farm (Berwick-upon-Tweed) on 5th (MHu). 18 were at Bowsden on 5th and a Stannington garden attracted up to ten regularly throughout the month and seven were at nearby Stannington Village on 17th.

**Barn Owl** *Tyto alba*

A pair were regularly noted on Holy Island during the month (IK) and two were noted at Prestwick Carr on 12th and East Chevington on 14th. All other records were of single birds from typical locations.

**Little Owl** *Athene noctua*

Two were noted at Druridge Lane (Widdrington) on 23rd with a single there on 27th (MSK/SLB). Singles were also noted at Framlington Gate, Houghtly and Ingoe.

**Tawny Owl** *Strix Aluco*

Three, two males and a female, were at Rothbury throughout the month (TRD/JD), a pair called throughout the month in a Stamfordham garden (EC) and two were heard regularly in Scotland Gate, they were also heard throughout the month at Howick. Twos were also heard calling at Letah Wood, Ordley, Walbottle Hall and Wark (North Tyne).

**Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus*

Prestwick Carr was the place to see this species in December with up to four present on 5th (PCF/STH) and two to three on other dates. On 4th one was at Cocklawburn and West Hartford on 5th, East Chevington on 20th and Havannah NR on 21st.

**Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*

All records were of individual birds, with one being seen regularly at Whittle Dene Reservoirs, urban records were received from Lemington Gut and nearby Elswick, Cramlington and Jesmond Dene. A single coastal record came from St Mary's at Whitley Bay.

**Green Woodpecker** *Picus viridis*

Two called throughout the month at Holystone (DRo), singles were at Big Waters on 13th and Redesmouth on 27th.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major*

A visit to three tetrads south and east of Redesmouth produced a tally of seven on 27th (ADM/MJC). Garden feeding stations attracted birds throughout the month including three regularly at Grindon Farm (Tyne dale) (JF) and twos at Holywell, Rothbury, Stannington and Walbottle. Twos were also noted at Evistones, Howick, Lanton, Low Gate, North Shields and Prestwick Carr.



A Great Spotted Woodpecker in a Tranwell Garden by Peter Tapsell



**Skylark** *Alauda arvensis*

The end of the month brought a big influx of this species into the County, illustrated by large flocks of coastal birds including an incredible 2000 in two fields at Harper's Heugh (near Budle Bay) on 26th with at least 1000 still there on 28th (MSH). Old Hartley attracted 500-600 between 20th and 28th (MNC et al), 300 at Howick on 21st was considered an under estimate as the field was full! 300 were also near St Mary's Wetland in Whitley Bay on 26th with 250 at nearby Brier Dene farm on 28th. Counts made from 21st to 31st of 100 –250 came from Big Waters, High Newton-by-the-Sea, Seahouses (Monk's House), Boulmer and Tughall.

**Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis*

At the end of the month 40 were attracted to the Aln Estuary at Alnmouth on 31st (TAC/MLC), also on the coast 32 were at Cresswell Pond on 22nd (MSH). At Prestwick Carr, 27 on 19th was the highest count of the month with smaller counts made here on other days. 23 were at Redesmouth on 27th and in the extreme west of the county, 22 were on waterlogged meadows on the border with Cumbria at Poltross Burn, near Gilsland, 22 were also at Backworth on 20th and 20 were counted on Holy Island on 20th as part of a hard weather influx.



Two photographs of Meadow Pipits  
Left at QEII Country Park by Alan Tilmouth and  
Right at Long Nanny by Tim Dean

**Rock Pipit** *Anthus petrosus*

In November, a minimum of 64 were counted on Holy Island between St Cuthbert's Island travelling anti-clockwise round the island to Snipe Point on 15th (MJC).

The highest count in December was 13 at St Mary's Island on 8th (MT/NT) with smaller counts made in the area on several other dates. Elsewhere 14 were at Annstead on 4th, seven at Alnmouth on 8th and six and Low Newton-by-the-Sea on 28th.

**Water Pipit** *Anthus spinoletta*

At Whitley Bay the regular wintering bird was noted throughout the month around the beach and at St. Mary's Island (MT/NT et al). One was noted feeding on the shoreline at Alnmouth on 8th (TRD/JD).

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*

Four, the highest count of the month were in St. Mary's area of Whitley Bay on 8th (MT/NT), twos were noted at Budle Bay, Howick Dene and in Newcastle City Centre. A single bird in the centre of Alnwick on 1st was noted as unusual (JMA).

**Pied Wagtail** *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

A impressive 55 roosted throughout the month at the Silverlink Shopping Centre near North Shields (ASJ) and about 40 were seen flying over Newcastle Airport to roost at dusk on 13th (IDR/JF), 12 were at nearby Prestwick Carr on 1st. Numbers were severely depleted at the regular Tapee Fen roost in Berwick-upon-Tweed with the highest count being nine on 10th (PJ). Up to five were attracted to St. Mary's Island and four were noted during an atlas visit to College Farm near Greenhead on 4th.

**Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Atlas workers yielded some high counts including 31 and 28 in two different tetrads in the Tasset Valley on 28th (MJC), 23 were counted in the Cheviot Hills at Broadstruther and 21 at Emblehope (Kielder) and 12 at nearby Blackburnhead. Non TTV counts included an impressive 24 at Prestwick Carr and 12 at Haughton Strother and Holy Island.

**Waxwing** *Bombycilla garrulus*

The only record of the month was of five flying over a Hipsburn garden on 22nd (TAC).

**Dipper** *Cinclus cinclus*

Three were all singing at Rothbury on 26th (JD) and the regular Jesmond Dene pair were singing and chasing each other throughout the month (DHWB), two were also in Upper Coquetdale and Hulne park (Alnwick).

**Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Atlas workers recorded 14 in two tetrads near Redesmouth on 27th (ADM/MJC) and ten were at Bedlington on 20th (JR). Five were noted at Berrington Law and four at Chesters Walled garden, Jesmond Dene, Red Row and The Brocks.

**Dunnock** *Prunella modularis*

Seven in a Walbottle garden (KR/LR) and at Bedlington (JR) was the highest count of the month. Six were at Berrington Law and The Brocks and four were reported from Allenheads and Netherton Park (Stannington).

**Robin** *Erithacus rubecula*

Atlas work again produced some of the highest counts with 17 found over three tetrads in the Redesmouth area on 27th (ADM/MJC) and 16 at Stannington on 17th (DM/LGM). 16 were also at Bedlington on 20th (JR), nine at Tyne Green (Hexham) on 20th (BNR) and eight at Berrington Law on 5th and Howick and two further Redesmouth tetrads on 29th. Elsewhere five to six were reported from Big Waters, Bowsden, Holywell Dene, Jesmond Dene and Wallington Hall and one to four at a further nine localities.



A Robin in festive season snow at Tranwell  
Photograph by Peter Tapsell

**Stonechat** *Saxicola torquata*

The highest counts submitted were a total of nine between Cheswick and S of Beal Sluice on 9th (MH) and seven at East Chevington on 9th and 27th (MJCo/STH/PJA). Fives were reported from Druridge Links (IDR/JF), Newton on 28th (TRD) and Ross Point / Fenham Flats area on 1st (MSH). Four were at Bewick Moor, Cocklawburn, Cresswell Pond, Hemscott Hill Links, Ross Back Sands and St Mary's, three at Annstead and one to two at a further 15 coastal and nine inland localities.

**Blackbird** *Turdus merula*

Highest counts were 37 over three adjacent tetrads S and E of Redesmouth on 27th (ADM/MJC), 30+ at Crow Hall Farm (Holywell Dene) on 21st (MSH), 28 at Prestwick Carr on 19th and Stannington on 17th (PCF/DM/LJM), 23 at Bedlington on 20th (JR), 21 in a Walbottle garden on 27th (KR/LR) and 20 feeding on the remaining hawthorns in the Straight

Lonnen (Holy Island) on 4th (IK). Elsewhere 19 were at Bowsden on 5th and west of Redesmouth on 29th, 17 at Berrington Law on 5th, 13 at The Brocks on 8th and Red Row on 4th and 12 at Aydon (Corbridge) on 4th. Two to ten were reported from a further 11 localities.

**Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris*

Still well reported this month, some of the largest flocks reported from the Prestwick Carr area where there was still a plentiful berry crop. Numbers here increased from 270 on 12th (PCF) to a minimum of 600 by 18th (JSB/EC), 500 remaining on 22nd (PCF). Elsewhere 500 were at Allerdean Mill (Berwick) on 16th (JH), 433 at Flotterton (Coquetdale) on 9th (DRo), 200 at Aydon (Corbridge) on 4th (RB/MB), 150+ at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 5th (MSH) and 126 in the Whitfield Hall area on 15th (BNR). Smaller flocks reported included 52-82 at Ancroft, The Brocks, East Ord, Langley Moss, Redesmouth and Stotsfold, 40-48 at Arcot Lane, Crow Hall Farm (Holywell Dene), Evistones, Haggerston Castle, Harper's Heugh (Budle Bay), Lanton and Whitwham and one to 37 from a further 22 localities.

**Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos*

12 at East Chevington on 26th was a good local count, possibly birds displaced by the bad weather inland (JR). Six at Cresswell Pond on 22nd and Druridge Pools on 28th may also have been the result of some hard weather movements (MSH/IDR/JF). Elsewhere one to three were reported from a further ten localities.

**Redwing** *Turdus iliacus*

The only sizeable flocks were 85 at Lanton on 4th (IDR/JF), 60 at Hexham on 20th (AJR), 50 at Prestwick Carr on 15th (EC/JSB) and 30 at Heaton Park on 13th (DHWB). Ten to 25 were also reported from Aydon (Corbridge), Big Waters, Leazes Park, Murton village, Northumberland Park (North Shields) and Redesmouth and one to nine from a further 16 localities.

**Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus*

Ten at Howick on 31st was the highest count (JAR). Five's were noted at Hethpool (College Valley) on 4th, Newburn on 20th and Prestwick Carr on 5th (PCF). Three to four were reported from Chesters House and Walled Garden, Langley Moss and Morralee (Bardon Mill) and one to two from a further 18 localities, several of which were forced into gardens by the heavy snow cover. Of these, one bird took a liking to bananas in Gosforth, several were noted squabbling with Fieldfares and one in a Holywell Dene garden was the first sighting in 12 years.

**Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla*

No less than 13 were reported from nine-ten localities. Pairs were noted at Amble on 31st (EC/JSB), Berwick on 27th (BWG), Castle Island on 22nd (GB) and two females were in a Holy Island garden on 3rd (IK). Elsewhere singles males were in gardens at Corbridge, Felton, Heddon-on-the-Wall and Morpeth and females were found at Amble Braid and Howick Dene.



A female Blackcap at Howick Dene  
by Tim Mason



**Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*

Only three were reported, all singles at Beal Sluice, Prestwick Carr and Marden Quarry (MH/PCF/MK)

**Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus*

The highest count of the month was ca. 19 from two adjacent tetrads S of Redesmouth on 27th (ADM/MJC). A single party of ten was at Simonside Woods on 6th (TRD/JD) and ten were also at Slaley Hall Hotel on 5th (RMH). One to four were reported from a further 11 inland localities.

**Long-tailed Tit** *Aegithalos caudatus*

Well recorded throughout month. Largest flocks involved 27 at Gosforth Park NR on 11th (AJ), 24 at Budle Bay on 9th (ACo), 20 at Countess Park Wood (Redesmouth) on 27th (ADM/MJC), 18 at Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 17th (MNC), 16 at North Cawledge near Alnwick on 1st (MJC), 14 at Bedlington on 20th (JR), 13 at Newcastle Business Park (Elswick) on 24th (GB) and 11 at Prestwick Carr on 5th (STH). One to ten were at a further 23 widespread localities.

**Blue Tit** *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Atlas visits produced 37+ at Low Gate on 19th (PRM), 33 west of Redesmouth on 29th (ADM) and 31 south and east of Redesmouth on 27th (ADM/MJC). 30 were recorded at the feeding station at Wallington Hall on 12th (MT/NT), 21 at Holywell Dene feeding station between 8th-29th (MT/NT), 19 during an Atlas visit at Stannington on 17th (DM/LJM) and Bedlington on 20th (JR). 14 were at Chesters Walled Garden on 6th (ALT). One to nine were at a further 12 widespread localities including Newcastle's Bigg Market.

**Great Tit** *Parus major*

12 were noted at Stannington Vale/Village area during an Atlas visit on 17th (DM/LJM) and in three tetrads to the south and east of Redesmouth on 27th (ADM/MJC). 11 were at Chesters Walled Garden on 6th (ALT) and in two tetrads to the west of Redesmouth on 29th (ADM). Four were observed at Jesmond Dene on 6th (MJCo) and a Walbottle garden on 20th (KR/LR). One to three were also present at Bedlington, Berrington Law, Bowsden, East Chevington NR, Red Row, The Brocks and a Whitley Bay garden.

**Coal Tit** *Periparus ater*

30 were observed at Wallington Hall feeding station on 12th (MT/NT), 18 at Chesters Walled Garden on 6th (ALT), 17 south of Redesmouth in two tetrads on 27th (ADM/MJC), 15+ present daily at Scotland Gate (SLB/MSK), eight at Low Gate on 19th (PRM) and Bedlington on 20th (JR), seven at Hodden Law on 9th (PC) and Holywell Dene on 29th (MT/NT), six at Berrington Law on 5th (JR) and Valley Park (Cramlington) on 6th (DM). One to five were at a further 13 widespread localities including gardens at Marden Estate (Tynemouth), Old Hartley, Walbottle and Whitley Bay.

**Willow Tit** *Poecile montanus*

One to three were noted at Linden Hall on several dates during the month 27th (NFO). Two were at Scotland Gate all month (SLB/MSK), at feeders at Netherton Park (Stannington) all month (RWM/MIM), and Backworth on 20th (PCF). Singles were at Meldon Station House on 3rd (TW), Prestwick Carr on 5th, 14th, and 25th (PLF/TRD), near Whittonstall on 6th (AJ), Humford Mill (Bedlington) on 8th (LJM). Bedlington on 20th (JR) and Tranwell Woods between 28th-31st (PT).

**Marsh Tit** *Poecile palustris*

Three were at Haughton Strother GP on 5th (MR), two at Meldon Station House on 3rd (TW), Letah Wood (Hexham) on 5th (ASH), Postern Wood (Morpeth) on 7th (ADM), Borough Woods (Morpeth) on 8th (ADM) and Wallington Hall feeding station on 12th (MT/NT). Singles were noted at Linden Hall on 5th and 12th (NFO), Mitford on 6th (TW), Newton Underwood Farm near Mitford on 6th (TW), Wark on 7th (PRM), Castle Island on 20th (IF), Ordley on 25th (RMH), Rothbury on 26th (JD), Countess Park Wood (Redesdale) on 27th (MJC) and Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth) on 31st (TW).

**Marsh Tit was a target species for 2009.**

**Nuthatch** *Sitta europaea*

Nine were noted at Countess Park Woods (Redesdale) during an Atlas visit on 27th (ADM/MJC), seven at Wallington Hall on 12th (MT/NT) and Chesters Walled Garden on 13th (ALT), five at Morralee near Bardon Mill on 6th and Borough Woods (Morpeth) on 21st (JRD). One to two were also recorded at Bedlington, near Edlingham, Gosforth Park NR, Greenhead, Haltwhistle, Holystone, Howick Dene, Humford Mill (Bedlington), Jesmond Dene, Northumberland Park (North Shields), a Rothbury garden, Thorneyburn, Wark and a Walbottle garden.

**Treecreeper** *Certhia familiaris*

Nine were found in two tetrads south of Bedlington on 27th (ADM/MJC), two at Big Waters on 6th (GB), Chesters Walled Garden on 6th (ALT). Morralee near Bardon Mill on 21st (PRM) and west of Redesmouth on 29th (ADM). Singles were also noted at Garret Shiels (Redesdale), Heaton Park Wood (Newcastle), Holystone, Humford Mill (Bedlington) Jesmond Dene, Linhope, Stannington Vale, Stublick Moor and Wark.

**Jay** *Garrulus glandarius*

Three to five were present at Linden Hall on 12th (NFO), three near Molesden on 8th (TW), Gosforth Park NR on 11th

(AJ), Wallington Hall feeding station on 12th (MT/NT) and Countess Park Wood (Redesdale) on 27th (ADM/MJC). Two were near Whalton on 3rd (TW), near Mitford on 5th (TW), Morralee near Bardon Mill on 6th (PRM), Humford Mill (Bedlington) on 8th (LJM), Eshott on 9th (MSH), Scotland Gate garden (very unusual garden visitor) on 17th (MSK), Bedlington on 20th (JR) and Howick on 25th (JAR). Singles were also at Bothal, Collingwood (Morpeth), Havannah NR, Howick, Howick Dene, Lanton, Letah Wood (Hexham), Middleton near Hartburn, near Molesden, Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth), Simonburn, Stublick Moor, Swallow Pond, Valley Park (Cramlington), near Whalton and Whittle Dene.

**Magpie** *Pica pica*

40+ were roosting at Marden Quarry all month (MN). 17 were at Woodhorn on 26th (JR), ten at Earsdon Churchyard on 23rd (MT/NT), eight at Jesmond Dene on 13th (MJCo), six at Murton Village on 25th (MT/NT) and one to five at a further eight widespread localities.

**Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula*

500 were at Allen Banks on 12th (AJH), 170 with Rooks at Scremerston Station on 7th (MHu), 124 in the Stannington Vale/Village area on 17th (DM/LJM), 120+ at Marshall Meadows on 6th (MSH), 100 at a stubble field at Hampeth on 18th (JMA), 70+ at Garbutt Hill on 10th (MSH), 60+ at Stublick Moor on 13th (PRM) and 54 at Hexham/Tyne Green on 20th (BNR). Two to 43 were at a further 11 widespread localities.

One belonging to the Nordic race, *C.m. monedula* was at Killingworth Lake on 27th (GB).

**Rook** were at Scremerston Station on 7th (MHu), 400 feeding in a field at Throckley Fell on 20th (PCF), 200 in three tetrads, south and east of Redesmouth on 27th (ADM/MJC), 160 at Lanton on 4th (IDR/JF), 150 at Deanmoor near Alnwick on 11th (JMA), 100 in a stubble field at Hampeth on 18th (JMA), 83+ at Low Gate on 19th (PRM), 60 at Beal on 3rd (JMA) and five to 50 at a further seven widespread localities.

**Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone*

141 were noted west of Redesmouth during Atlas visits to two tetrads on 29th (ADM). C.120 were found in three tetrads to the south and east of Redesmouth on 27th (ADM/MJC), 31+ at Stublick Moor on 13th (PRM), 24 in the Stannington Vale/Village area on 17th (DM/LJM). 17 at Brocks on 8th (MJCo) and High Chibburn (Widdrington) on 10th (MJCo), 14 at Druridge Pools on 27th (IDR). One to ten were at a further eight widespread localities including one which regularly attacks its own reflection in windows and car door mirrors at Red House Farm Estate, Monkseaton.

**Raven** *Corvus corax*

Four were at Kidland Forest on 24th (ID) and on the coast at Howick on 29th (JR). Pairs were at Upper Redesdale on 1st (JCD), Berwick-Hepburn Moors on 8th (MH) and High Newton-by-the-Sea on 29th (EC/JSB). Singles were also noted at Craggside on 25th (JD) and Allenheads on 26th (RWM/MIM).

**Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*

200 were noted at High Chibburn, Widdrington between 10th-28th (MJCo/IDR/JF), 111 St. Mary's Island on 4th decreasing to 65 by 8th (MT/NT). 56 visited a Whitley Bay garden on 15th (MT/NT) and 46+ were at Low Gate on 19th (PRM).

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*

50 were at Welton Hall Farm near Whittle Dene on 4th (EC/JSB), 49 at Low Hall Farm, Matfen on 1st (EC), 46 in the Stannington Vale/Village area on 17th (DM/LJM), 41 at Bowsden on 5th (JR), 39 at Great Whittington on 3rd (EC), 20 at Red Row on 4th (MJCo) and Netherton Park (Stannington) on 7th (RWM/MIM). Two to 14 were at a further seven widespread localities.

**Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*

93+ were noted at Red House Farm (Mitford-Dyke Neuk Road) on 8th (ADMc), 38 at Newham on 28th (TAC), 25 at Allerdean Mill (Berwick) on 15th (per RWM), 20 at Big Waters on 26th (GB) and Saltwick near Morpeth on 29th (TAC/MLC), 15 at Hauxley NR on 4th (JA), nine in a Corbridge garden on 29th (MR), eight at Cresswell Pond on 5th (ADMc), Howick on 8th (JAR) and Netherton Park (Stannington) on 17th (RWM/MIM), seven at Meldon Station House near Whalton on 3rd (TW) and Prestwick Carr on 7th (PCF), six in a Dinnington garden on 6th (PCF). One to five were also at Berrington Law, Druridge Hamlet, Flotterton, a Hexham garden, High Newton-by-the-Sea, a Hipsburn garden, Holywell Dene, Linden Lane near Linden Hall, Molesdon, a Pegswood garden, a Stannington garden, Wark and Whalton.

**Tree Sparrow was a target species for 2009.**

**Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs*

269+ were feeding in stubble at Langley Moss on 12th (PRM), 150+ at Ross Village on 13th (MSH), 130 at Haggerston Castle on 1st (MHu), 83 around Shitlington Hall on 29th (ADM), 60+ at Grindon Farm on 23rd (JF), 50 at the feeding station at Wallington Hall on 12th (MT/NT), 40 in the Stannington Vale/Village area on 17th (DM/LJM), 35 at Stotsfold on 13th (RMH) and one to 30 at a further 15 widespread localities.



**Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla*

32 visited a Rothbury garden on 29th (TRD/JD) and 20 a Corbridge garden on 29th (MR), both gatherings greatly increased there by the cold weather. 19+ were spooked by an unknown raptor at Thirlwell Castle Dene on 4th (MH). Eight were at Haggerston Castle on 1st (MHu) and five at Rivergreen Mill (Mitford) on 27th (IRD). One to two were also recorded at Big Waters, Blindburn (Upper Coquetdale), Buteland near Redesdale, Castle Island, near Donkleywood (North Tyne Valley), Elwick, Grindon Farm, Harwood Village, Hipsburn, Langley Moss, near Redesmouth, a South Gosforth garden, Stamfordham, a Tranwell Woods garden and Tyne Green (Hexham).



Bramblings in a Rothbury garden on 29th December by Tim Dean

**Greenfinch** *Carduelis chloris*

Ca.120 were at Haggerston Castle on 1st (MHu), 35 in a Walbottle garden on 13th (KR/LR), 30 amongst a mixed Finch flock on stubble at Errington on 6th (ALT). 19+ at Langley Moss on 12th (PRM), 15 in the Stannington Vale/Village area on 17th (DM/LJM), 12 at Scotland Gate on 8th (MSK) and one to five at a further four widespread localities.

**Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis*

85 were at East Chevington on 1st (PT/LM/IW), 52 at Haggerston Castle on 1st (MHu), 45 at Druridge Links on 28th (IDR/JF), 36-38 at an East Ord (Berwick) garden between 14th-23rd (MHu), 34 at Hauxley NRT on 31st (PT/LM/IW), 30 at Druridge Bay on 2nd (JMA), 26 in the Stannington Vale/Village area on 17th (DM/LJM) and one to 25 at a further 30 widespread localities including gardens at Chapel House Estate (Newcastle), Marden Estate (Tynemouth), Walbottle and Whitley Bay.

**Siskin** *Carduelis spinus*

200+ were observed at Houghton Strother GP on 16th (MR), 120 at Kedgeley GP on 7th (TRD), 100 at Rothbury on 26th (JD), 80 in Alder's at Tyne Green (Hexham) on 20th (AJR), 70+ at Scotland Gate on 13th (MSK), 60+ at Greystead (North Tyne Valley) on 28th (TW), 45 at Allerdean Mill (Berwick) on 16th (per RWM), Ca.40 were at Countess Park Wood

(Redesmouth) on 27th (ADM/MJC), 30 at Swallow Pond on 17th (SPP) and Mand Scar Park, Hexham on 19th (ALT), 24 at Newton Underwood Farm near Mitford on 6th (TW) and 22 at Blucher Village on 18th (MH). One to 20 were at a further 14 widespread localities.

**Linnet** *Carduelis cannabina*

250 were amongst a mixed finch flock in a stubble field at Errington on 6th (ALT), 200 at Ingram on 28th (RWM/MIM), 180 at Yarrow Heugh (Tweed Estuary) on 2nd (MHu), 170+ at Elwick on 28th (MSH), 120 at Berwick Little Beach on 4th (TRD) and Chare Ends (Holy Island) on 4th (IK), 80+ at Eshott on 11th (MSH), 70 at Big Waters on 26th (GB/AIB), 60 at Whittle Dene on 7th (MR), 56 at Flotterton on 9th (DRo) and 55+ at Monk's House on 4th (PRM).

**Twite** *Carduelis flavirostris*

The Hemscott Hill Links, Cresswell flock peaked at 120 on 11th (JSB/EC). 120 were at Beal Saltmarsh on 7th (MH/AA). 82 were on the saltings at Long Nanny on 8th (PRM). 50 were at Tealhole Point, Fenham Flats on 15th (AA/MH). Two were found in snowy conditions, inland at Aydon (Corbridge) on 21st (RB/MB).

**Mealy Redpoll** *Carduelis flammea*

Four to six were observed at Rising Sun CP on 17th (SPP).

**Lesser Redpoll** *Carduelis cabaret*

55 were at Berrington Law on 5th (JR), 27 at Corbridge on 8th (MR), eight at Hauxley NR on 1st (TRD), seven at Evistones on 8th (JCD), four with Siskins at Swallow Pond on 5th (SPP) and one to two at Beggar's Rigg (Rothbury), Big Waters, Branton GP, Brenkley, Castle Island, Cramlington, Hexham, Linden Hall, a Rothbury garden and Whitwham.

**Crossbill** *Loxia curvirostra*

40 were found at Holystone on 6th (DRo). Five were at Simonside Woods on 6th (TRD) and four at Catcleugh on 9th (JCD).

**Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Ten were at Haggerston Castle on 1st (MHu) and Lord's Rigg (Whitfield Moor) on 15th (BNR), seven between Warden-Warden Grange on 19th (ALT) and Hauxley NR on 31st (PT/LM/IW), six at Scotland Gate all month (SLB/MSK), Langley Moss on 12th (PRM), Yearle on 15th (SVM/AJM), and Allenheads on 26th (RWM/MIM), five at Girdle Fell (Redesdale) on 1st (JCD), Holystone on 8th (DRo), Stannington Vale/Village area on 17th (DM/LJM), Marden Quarry (Whitley Bay on 24th (KWY) and Howick on 29th (JR). Four were at Wallington Hall on 4th (JSB), Beggar's Rigg (Rothbury) on 7th (MJC), Howick Dene on 15th (TRD), Beacon Lane (Cramlington) on 20th (DM), Aydon (Corbridge) on 25th (RB/MB) and New Hartley Village on 26th (MT/NT). One to three were at a further 31 widespread localities.

**Bullfinch is a target species for 2010. Please report all records.**

**Lapland Bunting** *Calcarius lapponicus*

Three were in a stubble field at Beal on 113th (ADM/SS/RH). Birds were present at High Newton-by-the-Sea between 22nd-31st with a peak of six between 27th-29th (GW *et al*).

**Snow Bunting** *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Inland, one was at Langley Moss on 12th (PRM). On the coast, one was flying along Bamburgh beach on 24th (MW).

**Yellowhammer** *Emberiza citronella*

47+ were in stubble at Langley Moss on 12th (P:RM), 35 at Berrington Law on 5th (JR) and Backworth on 20th (CGK), 30 at Howick on 12th (JAR) and Big Waters on 26th (GB/AIB), 29 at Bowsden on 5th (JR), 26 at High Newton-by-the-Sea on 19th (GW) and 22 at Haughton Strother GP on 27th (MR). One to eight were also at East Chevington, Hauxley NR, High Chibburn (Widdrington), Low Trehwitt and Old Hartley.

**Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus*

110 were observed at Backworth Pond on 21st (MNC). 52 were at Old Hartley on 20th (ASJ), 40 at Big Waters on 26th (GB/AIB), 14 at Low Trehwitt on 10th (DRo), ten west of Linden Lane near Linden Hall on 31st (NFO), four at St. Mary's Island on 4th-8th (RWM/MIM/MT/NT) and Berrington Law on 5th (JR). One to three were at a further nine widespread localities including gardens at Dinnington and Rothbury.



A Reed Bunting in the snow at Backworth by Chris Knox

## ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN

### Hybrids

#### Canada Goose x Greylag Goose *Branta canadensis* x *Anser anser*

Three of these regularly occurring hybrids were noted at Yarrow Slake on the Tweed Estuary on 2nd (MHu).

### Escapes

#### Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiacus exotica*

A single was on the Wansbeck at Stakeford Bridge on 20th accompanied by a possible leucistic bird. According to locals it had been present for at least three days (STH/DM/PJA). These were probably escapes.

## BULLETIN COMPILATION AND PRODUCTION

This bulletin was compiled by Lindsay McDougall (Swans to Geese, Game birds, Divers to Herons), Graeme Bowman (Ducks), Trevor Blake (Birds of Prey to Rails), Ian Forsyth (Waders to Skuas), Tim Dean (Gulls to Auks, Escapes, Hybrids and Unknown Origin, List of Contributors, Highlights), Iain Robson (Doves to Dunnock), Mike Richardson (Robin to Warblers), Dee McKeown (Flycatchers to Buntings), Julie Roper/Dan Turner (WeBS Coastal Counts) and Steve Holliday (WeBS Inland Counts). Thanks again to Ann McKeown for typing the section Flycatchers to Buntings.

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Distributed by Alan Watson [apusx@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:apusx@blueyonder.co.uk)

## RECORD SUBMISSION

**Cards:** Please send all record cards to Tim Dean, 2 Knocklaw Park, Rothbury NE65 7PW, to arrive on, or preferably before, the 8th of the month following that in which the records were collected. Please write cards legibly to ensure that your sightings are correctly recorded.

**E-mail:** Members are encouraged to e-mail their records on an Excel-style spreadsheet. Please e-mail Dick Myatt at [dick@dickmyatt.co.uk](mailto:dick@dickmyatt.co.uk) for a copy of the standard spreadsheet and other details.

**Location names and Grid references:** The use of standard location names and the inclusion of grid references greatly increases the value of records in subsequent analyses. A 1km square grid reference is the ideal e.g. NY8067 for Grindon Lough, but 2km square references (Tetrads) are also acceptable e.g. NY86D in 247 this case. A list of localities and their tetrad grid references (Tetrad/Locality List) can be downloaded from the 'Resources & Downloads' section of the Club website at <http://www.ntbc.org.uk> – the use of these names, wherever possible, would be highly appreciated.

## PHOTOGRAPHS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Please keep submitting your articles, photographs, sketches and illustrations for the bulletin. Thanks again to those who have supplied the excellent photographs. Please send to Steve Barrett at [Sscmagpie@aol.com](mailto:Sscmagpie@aol.com)

## ELECTRONIC BULLETIN

The NTBC bulletin can be received electronically or as hard copy. The electronic bulletin arrives earlier than the printed version, it is in colour and we save all that printing and stamps. Ask for an e-mailed bulletin from [jo.bentley@waitrose.com](mailto:jo.bentley@waitrose.com).

## INDOOR MEETINGS

Indoor Meetings are at 7pm at Newcastle Falcons Rugby Club. The next meetings are:

Thursday 11th February at 7pm. By Colin Bradshaw on "FROM RAGA TO RUBYTHROAT". Colin is well known to many club members and we have been treated to several of his amusing yet informative talks over the years. This talk will be no exception and is based on a recent trip to Northern India and he promises to tell us a safe way to see Tigers.

On Thursday March 11th Keith Bowey will give members an update on the highly successful project to return Red Kites back to the North east.

## FIELD TRIPS

The next field trip is to Ross Back Sands on Sunday 14th February. This is a mid-winter trip to see divers, grebes, seaduck and, maybe much more. The trip was postponed from January due to illness.

A trip is also to take place to Kielder forest on Sunday March 21st. Hopefully Goshawks and other raptors will feature prominently.

Trevor's trips are proving very popular and are ideal for all the family.

Please contact Trevor Blake;  
Email: [trevor.1958@live.co.uk](mailto:trevor.1958@live.co.uk)

## MEMBERSHIP

Annual subscriptions are now over-due. Why not pay by standing order and while you are at it fill in a gift aid request. This bulletin will be the last for non payers.

For membership enquiries please contact [jo.bentley@waitrose.com](mailto:jo.bentley@waitrose.com).

**NTBC WEB SITE** – [www.ntbc.org.uk](http://www.ntbc.org.uk) and if you have any ideas or things you would like to see or hear about on the site then let Chris Knox know on 0751 582 5024 or email [christopher.knox@o2.co.uk](mailto:christopher.knox@o2.co.uk).

## BIRD AID - AN UPDATE ON PROGRESS

A team of volunteers collected a substantial quantity of wheat from a farm in Co Durham for the Bird Aid project to help birds survive the cold winter. The first allocation was to a team of volunteers for St Mary's Wetland. ITV filmed the grain collection and showed a news story on an evening bulletin. Many thanks to Alan Tilmouth, Tim Sexton, Cain Scrimmour, Graeme Stevens and other club members for this important exercise.

## NTBC/BTO LOCAL WINTER ATLAS NEWSLETTER November 2009

The half-way point of Atlas data collection has now been reached. We have already amassed a large amount of material and can draw some comparisons with the earlier findings in our county breeding and wintering atlases. Many local fieldworkers have taken part in collecting observations for all three atlas projects, in so doing, creating their own 10km and tetrad local patches. Time and again observers have expressed the satisfaction of covering inland rather than coastal areas in the winter months and of discovering "new" sites for the breeding season.

The work of the validators is now underway. Many hours are being spent looking at the hundreds of returns that have been sent in. The validators are not normally querying correct bird identification but checking that breeding status has been noted in the relevant season and that the grid reference is correct. Somewhat frustrating are those returns that do not identify a specific tetrad or fail to note the numbers of species present. Whilst the BTO has not always insisted on some figures, even stating that some are optional, this data is necessary for our proposed local atlas where numbers will permit comparison with our earlier county data.

In connection with information that will probably be needed for the LOCAL atlas fieldworkers should note that :

**Do not put a tick in the Extra column after the two hour visit. Instead submit your "extra" records as Roving Records and include the numbers of each species seen**

**Roving Records add to data from Timed Tetrad Visits and should not be regarded as replacing the tetrad visit**

**Moorland tetrads where there is difficult access can have one two-hour visit rather than two separate one hour visits, but should you be considering this it must be cleared prior to undertaking the fieldwork with the county BTO Representative – Tom Cadwallender**

**If you need to change your original data as a result of a validator querying it you should alter or re-edit your electronic return to the BTO, not simply email or phone the validator. The validators cannot alter or change your data.**

Nevertheless there are far more positives from our data collection to date than minor negatives, and a huge thank you to all fieldworkers is in order. A query from a validator is not criticism of your observations but a desire to ascertain or clarify a point.

The task however is only partially completed and as much if not more effort is still needed. Many tetrads that have named fieldworkers are still to do and a large number of tetrads are yet to be allocated to a volunteer. The extra effort is needed as many of the above are in the more remote and distant parts of the county. Even some of the more popular tetrads need to be re-visited to produce Roving Records for commoner species that were missed on the initial TTV survey. Roving Records should not be regarded as replacing a one or two hour visit to a tetrad, but rather as providing supplementary data to fill in any gaps left in the tetrad. **Any observer who has committed themselves to a number of tetrads or even a whole 10k square who now finds that time will not allow them to cover them all should notify Tom or Muriel who can re-allocate the square(s) or add them to the list of tetrads still requiring an observer.**

## Early Population and distribution Comparisons

After two years winter fieldwork some interesting comparisons can be made with the previous county Atlas. Even though only ten years have passed the distribution of some species has changed out of all recognition.

**White-fronted Goose** - Now almost non-existent as a winter visitor with only two 10km squares registering this species as opposed to 13 ten years ago.

**Ruddy Duck** - Only noted in NZ26 but ten years ago was present in winter in 15 10km squares. Although the control measures are obviously having an effect there was a tendency for the species to winter elsewhere anyway.

**Buzzard** - The early expansion was first noticeable in the previous wintering Atlas but only in the S/W & N/W. Now they have spread to all corners of the county except for some of the wilder areas of the Cheviots. Many observers have

commented that they see twice as many Buzzards than Kestrels.

**Red-legged Partridge** - Only missing from eight coastal 10km squares in this Atlas but previously only encountered in a quarter of the county. Birds from releases are able to spread now throughout the county.

**Coot** - A definite decline which has been well written up in BIN 2004. Only 26 10km squares have Coot on their list so far whereas 41 registered this species ten years ago.

**Green Sandpiper** - Twice as widespread as a Winter Visitor, now noted in 13 10km squares so far as opposed to only seven before.

**Barn Owl** - The recovery continues with records now from 43 10km squares as opposed to only 29 before in 1999. To come back from such a low ebb twenty years ago when only 18 pairs were left in the county is truly a success story.

**Stonechat** - Another remarkable transformation with only two 10km squares (NZ16 & NZ26) yet to encounter one. Its ability to turn up on a survey visit with no other species around makes one realize how versatile it can be.

**Raven** - Now to be found in any upland area with even a spread into parts of the North, found in 34 10km squares so far.

**Snow Bunting** - A marked decline in range with only half the 10km squares noted in 1999 ( 17 as opposed to 38). More visits to wild upland areas will undoubtedly turn up more.

Finally many species of conservation concern will only be helped if their true distribution can be definitively mapped and their habitat requirements understood. Grey Partridge, Little Owl, Green Woodpecker, Marsh & Willow Tits, Tree Sparrow and Corn Bunting are all species at low density in the county with many questions unanswered as to why they struggle to expand their populations. Hopefully the ongoing fieldwork will help to explain the situation better and measures can be taken so that in our dotage we shall not be expostulating along the lines of "in my day I can remember when...".

JCD; TD; M & TC; DMNov 2009

#### BIRD CLUB COMMITTEE

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**INTERNATIONAL WHOOPER AND BEWICK 'S SWAN CENSUS**

The five-yearly international census of Whooper and Bewick's swans, organised by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust took over the weekend of the 16/17th January 2010. Whilst the main usual wintering areas in the county were covered, birds may also turn up anywhere, either on minor waters, flooded areas or feeding in fields. If you came across feeding birds, it would be very helpful if you could note the crop in the field. From past surveys, this is often oilseed-rape. As the organiser for this census, I would be very grateful if everyone could send a record of any whoopers seen, (or Bewick's if very lucky), anywhere in the county any time during January and let me have the details. I can be contacted on 0191 285 8314 or at 1, Prestwick Gardens, Kenton, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 3DN or by email on [r.norman@clara.net](mailto:r.norman@clara.net).

Many thanks  
Roger Norman.

**FREE OFFER****Free to good home (or any home come to that!)**

Back-copies of Ibis (journal of the British Ornithologists' Union)

Ibis Vol 131 (1) 1989 – Vol 137 (1) 1995.

If you are interested please telephone Anne or Martin on 01207 563874 or e-mail [annemiddleton@talktalk.net](mailto:annemiddleton@talktalk.net)

COASTAL WEBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

December	2009	MHu	M. Hutcheson	MLC	M. L. Cadwallender / J. Bentley	EC	E. Cooke
		RP	R. Poyer	KR	K. Redgrave / C. Cuthbert	LJM	T. Watson
		AB	A. Brunt	TAC	T. A. Cadwallender	MK	L. J. McDougall
							D. M. Turner

Site	Tweed Estuary		Spital - Cocklawburn		Buddle Pt - Seahouses		Seahouses - Beadnell		Beadnell - Howick		Boulmer - Alnmouth		Aln Estuary		Coquet Estuary		Amble - Chevington		Blyth Estuary		Whitley Bay - Tynemouth		Tyne North Pier - Fish Quay		Wallsend, (north bank only)		Redeugh - Scotswood Bridge		Scotswood - (north bank)		Newburn Bridge, (north bank)	
	TOTAL	MHu	MHu	RP	MLC	KR	AB	TAC	EC	TW	LJM	MK	DMT	DMT	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF		
Counter		18	17	20	28	21	23	18	20	20	10	31	26	31	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	
Date																																
Red-throated Diver	24		2	9			13																									
Little Grebe	13	2						6	3		2																					
Slavonian Grebe	7			7																												
Comorant	280	16	3		28	5	1	3	31	3	106	2	52	23	4	3																
Shag	47			33			4				6																					
Grey Heron	43	19					2	3	3		2	1		10	1																	
Mute Swan	51	21					4	4	5		9		4	2	2																	
Pink-footed Goose	1	1																														
Greylag Goose	147	122				25																										
Canada Goose	15	14						1																								
Shelduck	15						2				3																					
WJWigeon	633			21		30		278	300	4																						
Teal	872		1	28		11		419			51			87	137	138																
Mallard	502	163	48	12	18	33	8	79	2		60	1																				
Shoveler	6			6																												
Tufted Duck	13	1												12																		
Eider	558	26	60	39	34	41	125	1	45	55	107	4	18	3																		
Long-tailed Duck	43			43																												
Common Scoter	1,536		520	1000			16				3																					
Goldeneye	184	142			8	14	2		5																							
Red-breasted Merganser	20		4		1	2	2	6	4		5																					
Goosander	12	8																														
Moorhen	11		1	4				3	2		1																					
Coot	3			3																												
Oystercatcher	930	14	86	35	199	117	61		19	115	105	140	39																			
Ringed Plover	210				17	21	13			38	101	10	10																			
Golden Plover	474					432						3	38																			
Grey Plover	36				7	6	22			1																						
Lapwing	922	2	14	27	7	12	2	102	300		37	22																				
Knot	18						16			2																						
Sanderling	176					83	42		5	46																						
Purple Sandpiper	179			81	60	6						9	3																			
Dunlin	319				15	25	114		120	23		18	1	1	2																	
Jack Snipe	1										1																					
Snipe	15	2		3	7	2		1																								
Woodcock	1					1																										
Bar-tailed Godwit	96		4	2	54	14	18			4																						
Curlew	403	28	57	2	12	11	8	133	20	11	44	10	1																			
Redshank	1,140	184	13	6	21	60	19	93	16	113	115	232	32	163	59	14																
Turnstone	293	4	2	16	61	18	11		3	33	8	125	12																			
Black-headed Gull	2,640	110	54	nc	98	137		223	350	80	197	431	167	305	382	106																
Common Gull	606		64	nc	1	72		85	15	11	1	39	271	18	29																	
Herring Gull	1,248	133	16	nc	73	59		98	250	25	123	15	410	18	24	4																
Great Black-backed Gull	463	16	7	nc	2	44		24	100	7	205	10	34	1	10	3																
Kittiwake	3										2	1																				
Mediterranean Gull	1																															
Kingfisher	3					2						1																				
ADDITIONAL SPECIES																																
Water Rail	1																															
TOTALS - WILDFOWL	5,036	534	640	1,205	89	171	175	803	402	62	355	8	70	145	188	189																
- WADERS	5,213	234	176	172	460	808	326	329	483	406	411	569	136	164	157	382																

