

Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

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

Bulletin 2012 No 1

MONTHLY SUMMARY – JANUARY

6th March 2012



HIGHLIGHTS

Bewick's Swan
Tundra Bean Goose
Taiga Bean Goose
Eurasian White-fronted Goose
Green-winged Teal
Lesser Scaup
White Stork
Rough-legged Buzzard
Grey Phalarope
Great Skua
Iceland Gull
Glaucous Gull
Short-eared Owl
Great Grey Shrike
Hooded Crow
Black Redstart
Desert Wheatear

Two at East Chevington and Ellington
Further county record of 70 at Maiden's Hall Lake on 24th
Only one report, a single on the Tweed on 1st
New county record of 470 at Maiden's Hall Lake on 27th
Separate males at East Chevington and Holy Island
Juvenile female remained at Marden Quarry until 23rd
Single at Cresswell Pond on 22nd
Single over Ellington on 4th
Singles at Stag Rocks & Snab Pt
One N at Newbiggin on 5th
Influx including up to 5 at North Shields Fish Quay
Singles at Newburn, North Shields and Stakeford
Peak of twelve at Prestwick Carr
One at Prestwick Carr all month
Sightings at Boulmer, Budle Bay & Rock
Single at Newbiggin
First-winter Male at Newbiggin from last month seen until 3rd

CONTENTS

EGM on April 12th - subscriptions proposal
Appeal for Descriptions
Survey volunteers needed in Durham
NTBC clothing now available
NTBC Accounts for 2010-2011
Field trips 25th March to Kielder and 13th May to Harthope Valley
Indoor Meeting 8th March – Black-tailed Godwits
Gosforth NR building threat removed



Iceland Gull
North Shields Fish Quay
The most photographed bird of the month
A 4th-winter bird by Dan Turner
21st January

WEATHER

1st to 5th The month began mild, with some heavy showers in the north on 1st. A wet and very windy period ensued, as a series of deep depressions crossed the country. The 3rd was particularly windy as an active cold front moved across the country with gales or severe gales to many areas. After a brief respite on 4th, another deep low moved across the country on 5th giving another very windy day.

6th to 11th This was a milder period as high pressure to the south-west brought westerly winds to much of England, allowing daytime temperatures to reach double figures quite widely. There was, however, a lot of cloud with outbreaks of rain and drizzle, especially towards the west. Eastern parts had some sunnier interludes, especially on 6th and 7th.

12th to 22nd On 12th a cold front brought a spell of rain to many parts but also introduced a colder north-westerly flow everywhere. It then turned more settled, with frost and fog, but sunshine during the day. Where any fog persisted through the day, temperatures struggled. The 15th and 16th were both fine and sunny, but with overnight frost and fog patches. Milder but more unsettled weather pushed into the west on 17th, causing a significant contrast in daytime maxima. In northern parts it was cooler but brighter with sunshine but also some wintry showers across high ground, windy also on 19th. The 20th was cloudy and damp, but mild. On 21st, brighter but cooler conditions returned briefly, as a cold front moved southwards; winds were the main feature. The afternoon of 22nd did see the cloud break up in the east but towards the north and west further showers developed.

23rd to 26th A cold north-westerly air-stream moved across the country during 23rd giving a day of sunshine and showers across much of England. A cold night followed, with Benson falling to -4°C in the early hours of 24th, ahead of another frontal system which in the east gave a brief spell of snow across higher ground; a depth of 8 cm was recorded at Copley (County Durham). Mild in the west on 24th, with maxima of 12°C in many places, but colder in the east in the cloud and rain with only 2.9°C at Albermarle (Northumberland). The milder air reached all parts by 25th to give outbreaks of rain and drizzle in places. Winds also increased during the day ahead of a cold front. Colder on 26th, and showery, with snow on northern hills.

27th to 31st The end of the month saw an area of high pressure over Scandinavia and Russia introducing a cold easterly flow. The 27th saw some wintry showers affect the north. The 28th was mostly dry and bright, but cloudier in the west. During 29th and 30th a warm front brought some rain, sleet and snow to parts of south-west England before retreating westwards, as the easterly winds began to dominate, giving cold days and frosty nights

CLASSIFIED LIST

The following account consists of unchecked reports. The species/subspecies marked * require descriptions.

A complete list of all sightings that need notes is included in the NTBC website www.ntbc.org.uk under the County Records Committee section and in Birds in Northumbria 2009 page 224.

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

TARGET SPECIES

Please report all records in as much detail as possible. The Club is sensitive to the vulnerability of these species to disturbance and persecution and will be particularly cautious about what is actually published, above all about nesting and roosting sites. Please address any questions to Tim Dean or Dick Myatt.



A pair of Mute Swans at Killingworth Lake by Adriana Buskin

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Peak counts were 96 at Killingworth Lake on 13th (LJM), 71 at Capheaton on 29th (STE), 51 at QEII Lake on 15th (DM/STH/PJA), 41 at Big Waters on 30th (PCF) and 21-29 at East Chevington and the Tweed Estuary. Ten to 14 were also at Cheswick, Ladyburn Lake and Newcastle Leazes Park, five to nine at Alnmouth links, Cocklawburn and Linton Ponds, Marden Quarry, Prestwick Carr and Woodhorn Flashes, and one to four at 12 further sites.

Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus*

Two adults were at East Chevington regularly between 2nd-23rd (ASJ/TRD *et al.*), with perhaps the same two birds at Warkworth Lane on 15th and 26th (GB/ASJ/JPD).

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

The only sizeable concentration was 92 at Ellington-Warkworth Lane on 28th (MN), with 70-87 regularly there between 2nd-26th (IRD/ASJ *et al.*). Elsewhere, 15 were at Fenham Mill on 4th (TRD), 14 (ten adults) at Catcleugh Reservoir on 19th and 22nd (TRD/JD/PRM), 11 at Alnmouth links on 5th (JMA), and ten at Low Heugh on 22nd (MHu). Five to nine were also at Capheaton and East Chevington, and one to four at Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Druridge, Greenlee Lough, QEII Lake and West Ord.

Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*

The recently created Maiden's Hall Lake (West Chevington) held excellent numbers of *rossicus* (Tundra) race birds until at least 27th, with peaks of 70 on 24th (EC/JSB), 61-62 on 20th (MSH/PRM), 60 on 11th (TB) and 35 on 27th (PH). Other reports of *rossicus* birds included 17 at Budle Bay on 11th (JPD) and 13 at nearby Harper's Haugh on 13th (MSH), three at the *Beehive* Flash (Earsdon)-Monkseaton area on 7th, 17th and 19th (AC/MSH/CGK *et al.*), three near Monkseaton on 7th (MSH *et al.*), three at Bell's Farm, Cresswell on 8th (MSH), two at East Chevington on 11th (MSH), and one at Woodhorn Flashes between 1st-9th and on 29th (AA/GB/TB/MSH *et al.*).

A single bird of the *fabalis* (Taiga) race was at New Water Haugh on the River Tweed on 1st (MHu).

An unraced bird was at Cresswell Pond on 11th (TB).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Northerly movement was evident on several dates, with 210 at Gosforth Park NR (GB), 190 N at Tynemouth (DRW) and 140 at Holywell Dene (JPD) on 15th, 80 at Cocklawburn on 23rd (MHu), 79 at Blyth South Harbour on 10th (LJM), 54 at East Ord on 25th (MHu) and 40-50 at Prestwick Carr and Woodhorn Flashes on 5th and 14th (GB/JPD), while southbound flocks involved 176 at East Ord on 8th and 86 there on 27th (MHu), and 24 at Newbiggin on 5th (PRM). About 70 moved SW at Stag Rocks on 20th (ADM), 60 W at Berwick Harbour on 13th (MSH) and 40 W at Cramlington on 14th (DM).

The largest gatherings were 4,000+ in the Druridge Bay area on 2nd (JPD), about 3,000 at East Chevington on 15th and 22nd (GB/JRT), 3,000 at Maiden's Hall Lake (West Chevington) on 26th (JPD/MPF/ASJ), 2,500 at Cresswell on 8th and 16th (MSH/SW), and 2,000 at Bell's Farm on 1st and 6th (IRD/TRD). Much overlap between the above flocks was possible. Elsewhere, 2,000 were at Easington Grange (near Belford) on 20th (JMA), 500+ at Newhouses on 2nd (MSH), 240-250 at Harper's Haugh and Newham Bog (MSH), 100-105 at Doddington and Low Heugh, and 58-70 at Backworth, the *Beehive* Flash-Monkseaton area and Grindon Lough. One to 15 were at three further sites.

A bird with neck collar IVD was at Druridge Bay on 1st. The bird was ringed as an adult female in Iceland in July 2000 since when it has been reported about 50 times throughout Scotland and sometimes in eastern England. The first report in our area was in 2007 (BB).



Left: Greenland Whitefronts at East Chevington on 27th January and
right: European White-fronted Geese at Hepple near Caistron 15th January
both photographs by Tim Dean

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

Impressive numbers of Eurasian *albifrons* race birds continued to be reported. A large gathering at Maiden's Hall Lake (West Chevington) included peaks of 470 on 27th (PH) and 420 on 23rd (TRD/JD), with 200-400 regularly up to 28th. Elsewhere, peak counts were 188 at Newham Bog on 2nd (MSH) and 79 on 18th (MSH/JCD), 134 at New Water Haugh on the River Tweed on 1st (MHu), 18 N at the *Beehive* road on 15th (JPD), seven to eight at the *Beehive* Flash, Bothal Pond, Branton, Harper's Haugh (near Budle Bay), near Monkseaton and Pegswood Moor, and one to three at Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Grindon Lough, Holywell Pond and Woodhorn Flashes.

Records of Greenland *flavirostris* race birds included seven at Bothal Pond on 11th (TB), seven at Woodhorn Flashes on 29th (TB) and four there between 1st-9th (TRD/IF/PRM/MSH *et al.*), four at Bell's Farm, Cresswell on 16th (MSH), four over East Chevington on 23rd (TRD/JD), and singles at Bothal Pond, Grindon Lough, Maiden's Hall Lake and Newham Bog.

Unraced birds involved 210 at Low Newton on 11th (ASJ), 44 at Low Heugh on 8th (MHu), seven at Holywell Pond, and one to two at Big Waters and East Chevington.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Peak counts were 525 at Flotterton in Coquetdale on 25th (IRD), 400 at East Chevington on 2nd (TRD/JD), 300 at Cresswell Pond on 18th (AJR), 250+ at Newham Bog on 2nd (MSH), 227 at Harper's Haugh (Budle Bay) on 13th (MSH), 183 at Woodhorn Flashes on 5th (PRM), 130 at Low Newton on 20th (JMA), 110 at St Mary's on 14th (PBu/ABu), 50-75 at Castron, Low Haugh, near Monkseaton, Monkridge Hall and Ottercops, and 46 at Prestwick Carr and Yarrow Slake. Ten to 15 were also at/over Cocklawburn, Cramlington, East Ord and Newhouses, and two to eight at six further sites.

Canada Goose *Branta Canadensis*

Grindon Lough held peaks of 450 on 22nd (SJH) and 435 on 31st (PRM), and 167-370 regularly between 2nd-27th. Other peak counts were 150 at Bothal Pond on 11th and 130 there on 27th (TB), 89 at Killingworth Lake on 13th (LJM), 40 at Hartburn Reservoir on 7th (DM *et al.*), 29 at QEII Lake on 15th (DM *et al.*), 22 at Newcastle Leazes Park on 23rd (DM), 12-15 at Marden Quarry and West Ord, and seven at Woodhorn Flashes.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

492-500 were in the Budle Bay-Harper's Haugh area between 11th-13th (MSH/JPD/ASJ/MPF) and 300-329 on three dates between 2nd-22nd (CGK/PS/MSH *et al.*). Elsewhere, 21 were at Maiden's Hall Lake (West Chevington) on 13th (AT) and one to five between 6th and 11th, six to seven at Bell's Far, Cresswell Pond and Grindon Lough, and one to two at Big Waters and East Chevington.

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Pale-bellied *hrota* race birds involved 1,500 at Holy Island causeway on 8th (TRD), 500 in the Beal Sluice area of Lindisfarne NNR on 13th (MN), 200 at Fenham-le-Moor on 19th (TRD/JD), 107 at Harper's Haugh (near Budle Bay) on 13th (MSH), 100 at Holy Island rocket field on 8th (TRD), and one at Seahouses.

Seven dark-bellied *bernicla* race birds were at Holy Island on 8th (TRD).

800 unraced birds were at Beal on 11th (ASJ/MPF/JPD) and about 150 at Budle Bay on 18th (MT/NT).

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

12 were at Hauxley Reserve on 19th (HRS), ten at the Blyth Estuary on 7th (DM *et al.*), two to three at East Chevington and North Shields Fish Quay-the Tyne Estuary, and one at Cresswell Pond. Inland, six were at Elswick on 18th (DM), two at West Hartford on 10th and 22nd (LJM/STH) and one at Grindon Lough on 12th (SJH).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Cresswell Pond held a peak of 850 on 18th (AJR) and 800 were noted on the sea off there on 10th (EC/JSB), 400 were at Capheaton on 29th (STE), 304 at East Chevington 12th (PRM), 250 at Alnmouth wetlands on 12th (JMA), 200 at Derwent Reservoir, 194 at Gosforth Park NR on 15th (MHSN), 171 at Grindon Lough on 18th (SJH), 151 at Druridge Pools on 6th (SWA), and 109-125 at Big Waters, Hauxley Reserve, Warkworth Gut and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Counts of 50-93 came from Boulmer, Newham Bog and QEII Lake, and two to 15 at seven further sites including West Allotment Pond.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Peak counts were 21 at QEII Lake on 20th (PRM), 14 at East Chevington on 15th (GB), 14 at Swallow Pond on 31st (a site record; JPD), 13 at Gosforth Park (NHSN), 12 at Marden Quarry (AC), seven to nine at West Allotment Pond and Woodhorn Flashes, five to six at Big Waters, Holywell Pond and Ladyburn Lake, and four at Arcot Pond. One was at Capheaton Lake but more unusual was a duck on the River Tyne at Tynemouth on 15th (DRW).

Teal *Anas crecca*

A total of 402 was in the Rocket Field and Lough areas of Holy Island on 29th (SR), 285 were at Grindon Lough on 18th (SJH), 279 at Derwent Reservoir on 7th (IFo), 250 at Druridge-Chibburn on 18th (AJR), 194 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs (SR), and 130-140 at Cresswell Pond and Warkworth Gut. Groups of 50-76 were at Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Castle Island, East Chevington, Monks' House Pool, Newton Pool and along the River Tweed between the A1-West Ord, and 17-47 at Arcot Pond, the Blyth Estuary, Capheaton Lake, Elswick, Gosforth Park NR, Hauxley Reserve, Linton Ponds, West Hartford and Woodhorn Flashes.

Green-winged Teal *Anas carolinensis*

A drake was at East Chevington, on the south pool on 6th, 23rd and 25th (JSB/EC/TRD *et al.*) and the north pool on 7th (DWS). A drake was also at Holy Island Lough on 18th (AA/MH) and 22nd (SR/AH).

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Peak concentrations were 189 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 14th (SR), 168 at the Tweed Estuary on 12th (MHu), 162 at Derwent Reservoir on 3rd (IFo), 126 at Big Waters on 15th (GB) and 100 on a flooded field at Hebron on 19th (JMA). Counts of 52-80 came from Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Grindon Lough, Hauxley Reserve, Marden Quarry, Newcastle Leazes Park, Newham Bog, West Allotment Pond and on the River Tweed between the A1-Horncliffe, and 23-

45 from Airy Holm Reservoir, Castle Island, Cresswell, Linton, Middle Ord and West Allotment Ponds, Ladyburn Lake, QEII Lake, Wallsend Gut, Wallsend Park, and the Wansbeck Estuary. Four to 18 were at 14 further sites.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

The Fenham Flats area of Lindisfarne NNR held 130 on 13th (MN), 110 on 4th (TRD) and 40 on 19th TRD/JD). Away from this stronghold up to four (three drakes) visited Druridge Pools on three dates between 7th-18th (IRD/AJR/AT), and three (two drakes) at East Chevington frequently between 2nd-25th (TB/IRD/MT/NT *et al.*).

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

The only double figure counts were 14 at East Chevington on 8th (IFo) and 15th (RMHa/PMHa), and 11 at Holy Island (seven at the Lough and four at the Rocket Field) on 6th (IK). Other peak counts were up to seven at Gosforth Park NR during the month (NHSN), seven at Holy Island on 8th (TRD), five at Swallow Pond on 28th (PBu), and three at Ladyburn Lake, West Allotment Pond and Woodhorn Flashes. One to two also visited Big Waters, Druridge Pools, Killingworth Lake, Monks' House Pool, Newham Bog and West Hartford.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Peaks were 26 at Swallow Pond on 26th (JPD), 24 at Killingworth Lake on 19th (CGK/MSH), 21 at Ladyburn Lake on 7th (DM/GB/STH/LAR), eight at Broomlee Lough on 14th (MRS) and four at QEII Lake. One to two were also at Branton and Linton Ponds, East Chevington, Grindon Lough and Marden Quarry.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Killingworth Lake proved attractive, with a peak of 124 on 19th (CGK/MSH). Other peak counts were 81 at QEII Lake on 20th (PRM), 75 at Branton GP on 20th (PRM), 56 at Marden Quarry on 18th (AC), 20-29 at Capheaton Lake, Newcastle Leazes Park, Shasun Pharma (Dudley), Tynemouth Boating Lake and West Allotment Pond, and 12-18 at Broomlee Lough, Cocklawburn and Swallow Ponds, Grindon Lough, and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. One to nine were at nine further sites.

Scaup *Aythya marila*

Two were at Ladyburn Lake on 28th (CDB) and one on 3rd and 8th (TRD/SW). Singles were also at East Chevington on 14th (IRD) and Swallow Pond on 28th (PBu).

Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis*

The first-winter female was again at Marden Quarry regularly until 16th (AC *et al.*) and again on 23rd (MN).



The Marden Quarry
Lesser Scaup
by Colin |Bradshaw

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

No large concentrations were reported, with peaks of only 55 at Blyth Harbour on 21st (STH), 36 at Cheswick on 16th (MHu), 30-35 at Berwick North Shore, Newbiggin, North Shields Fish Quay and Seahouses, and 24 at Cullercoats Bay. Six to eight were also at the Druridge Bay and Tweed Estuary.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

Two flew N at East Chevington on 23rd (TRD/JD). Holy Island harbour attracted 41 on 8th and 54 on 23rd, with many displaying on the latter date (IK). The Stag Rocks-Budle Point area attracted 20 on 4th and 7th (ADM/TB *et al.*), and one to ten on several dates between 2nd-19th. Two were at Cheswick on 6th (MHu), one at Cocklawburn on 29th (BWG), and one at East Chevington north pool between 2nd-24th (JPD/TRD/ADM *et al.*).

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

One flew N at Newbiggin on 3rd (TRD). 300+ were at Cheswick Sands on 23rd (TBr) and 108 on 6th (MHu). Other large counts were lacking, with peaks of 55 at Holy Island on 12th (ADM), 35 at Stag Rocks on 20th (ADM), 30 in Druridge Bay on 8th (SW), and two to five at Cocklawburn and Newbiggin. More unusual was a drake on the north pool at East Chevington on 10th (AC) and 24th (IRD/ADMc).

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

Singles flew N at Newbiggin on 6th (GB) and Holy Island on 8th (TRD), and one was at Low Hauxley on 8th (SW).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Four flew N at Newbiggin on 6th (GB). Peak counts were 92 at the Tweed Estuary on 12th (MHu), 50, including many displaying, at East Chevington on 26th (MSK/NEWT), 40 at Capheaton Lake on 29th (STE), 20-27 at Bakethin Reservoir, Caistron, QEII Lake, ten to 16 at Branton GP, Castle Island, Grindon Lough, Killingworth Lake and West Ord. Groups of five to nine were also at Big Waters, the Blyth Estuary, Broomlee Lough, Elswick, Greenlee Lough, Holy Island, Ladyburn Lake, Newton Point, and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and three to four at Bothal Pond, Catcleugh Reservoir, Hauxley Reserve and Killingworth Lake and Seahouses. One to two were at a further 12 widespread localities.

Smew *Mergellus albellus*

A 'redhead' was at East Chevington regularly between 2nd-8th (TRD/JD/IFo/SW *et al.*). It, or another, was often reported at QEII Lake between 12th-29th (TB/IFo *et al.*).

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

16 at Budle Bay on 17th included five displaying drakes (MH/AA), 11 were at Cresswell Pond on 12th (PRM) and two to eight there between 2nd-28th, ten at Holy Island on 12th (ADM), eight at Ladyburn Lake and Spittal, five to seven at the Blyth Estuary, Stag Rocks-Budle Point, and the Tweed Estuary, and three at Berwick North Shore, East Chevington and Warkworth Gut. One to two were also at Amble Braid, Castle Island, Cheswick and Newbiggin.



Red-breasted Merganser drake
Amble
27th January
Peter Fletcher

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

A total of 39 was counted on the River Tweed between the A1-Horncliffe on 16th (TBr), 14 were at QEII Lake on 24th (TBr), ten at Marden Quarry on 2nd (CB), ten (three drakes) at Arcot Pond on 1st (DM), nine at Branton GP on 13th (TRD), seven to eight at Alnmouth wetlands, Close House and Greenlee Lough, and five to six at Killingworth Lake and West Ord. Three to four visited Coquetmouth, Doddington, Thrum Mill (Rothbury), the Tweed Estuary and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. One to two were also at Airy Holm Reservoir, Gosforth Park, Jesmond Dene, Sheepwash and Wark.

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

A drive of 9km along the road at Dryburn Moor on 31st counted 70 (EC/JSB), whilst 45 were at Scald Hill (The Cheviots) on 12th (IRD). The peak count on Plenmeller Common was 35 on 14th (MH). Five were in the Harthope Valley on 18th and singles at Beanley Moor, Steng Moss (Harwood Forest) and The Wou (Thirlwall Common), where the observer had not seen the species for several years.



A Red Grouse and a Greyhen by John Clark
31st January near Allendale town

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

The highest count was nine (eight males) at Smallsburn Moor on 31st, flushed by a female Sparrowhawk (JSB/EC). Counts of three, one male and two males respectively, came from Plenmeller Common on 14th/21st (MH/SJH). Two males were at Hollin Green Farm (Keenley) on 12th (SJH) and at Carrshield Moor and Knockshield on 31st, when two females were near Nettle Hill (JSB/EC). Two birds were also at Langleeford Hope on 18th (JD).

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

The largest numbers were noted in the Brier Dene Farm-Holywell areas with 25 at Brier Dene Farm on 25th (MNC), 17 at Holywell and 11 in Holywell Dene on 19th (CGK/MT/NT) and nine in the *Beehive* Flash area on 2nd (CGK). Elsewhere five were located unusually at Chevington Moor on 6th (TRD) and singles were at Bavington and Cronkley (Derwent Reservoir).

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

The largest gatherings were 20+ in stubble by the car park at Warkworth Gut on 12th (MH/AA), 18 at Gloucester Lodge Farm (Blyth) on 1st (PJA), 17 at Beal on 15th (SR/AH), 16 at Scaffold Farm (Wallsend) on 29th (JPD), 15 at Maiden's Hall Lake on 7th (DM *et al.*), Ellington on 15th (TB) and Druridge Pools on 18th (JMA), 14 at Chevington Moor on 8th (SW), 13 at Backworth on 2nd (CGK), 12 at Cresswell Pond and West Ord on 15th and near Blyth Cemetery on 1st/6th/17th, 11 at St Mary's on 7th and Newbiggin roundabout on 18th and ten at Pegswood on 30th. One to eight were seen at Bellasis Bridge, Bothal Barns, Boulmer, Cheswick, Cocklawburn, Damdykes Farm (Cramlington), Cresswell dunes, East Chevington, East Ord, Embleton, Holystone, West Chevington, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Woodhorn Flashes.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

At Greensidehill (Ingram) 12 were present on 22nd (JR), six were at Wylam on 17th where three were regularly seen in a garden (RMHa/PMHa). One to three were noted at Cresswell, Bothal Barns, Druridge, Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene), and a Walbottle garden and there was an unusual occurrence of one of flying over the road at Newcastle Business Park, Elswick.

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Light passage was noted with a peak of eight N and three S in one hour at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) on 12th (ADM), five flew past at Newbiggin on 5th (AT), three flew S at Cheswick Sands on 23rd, two flew N at Stag Rocks on 4th and Newbiggin on 6th/28th and singles flew N at Monks' House on 6th/20th, Newbiggin on 6th and Seahouses on 20th. The highest counts were 32 feeding off Saltpan Rocks (Cocklawburn) on 16th, 24 in Spittal Bay on 1st (MHu) and 13 off Cheswick Sands on 23rd (TBr). Counts of four came from The Blyth Estuary on 7th (DM/STH/GB/LAR) and Druridge Bay on 8th (SW). One to three were noted at Cheswick, Druridge Bay, East Chevington, Holy Island, Meadow Haven (Berwick), Newbiggin, Newton Point, North Shields Fish Quay, St Mary's, Snab Point and Stag Rocks.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

Singles were noted at Stag Rocks on 7th (TB/SLB/MSK/GMi) and 2nd (CGK/PS) and at Holy Island on 27th (SR).

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

Singles flew S at Snab Point on 6th (TRD) and East Chevington on 23rd before landing on the sea (TRD/JD) and N at Newbiggin on 13th (AT). Singles were noted offshore at Stag Rocks on 4th/14th/22nd (TRD/MT/NT/CGK/PS) and in Holy Island Harbour on 17th/18th (MH/AA).

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Singles flew N and S at Newbiggin on 5th (AT/PRM). Birds were noted returning to breeding colonies during the month with a peak of 26 at Nessend (Holy Island) on 27th (SR). Nine were at Tynemouth Priory cliffs on 15th (DRW), seven at Bamburgh GC cliffs on 17th (MH/AA), six at Cullercoats on 20th and five at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) on 8th. One to two were seen at Newbiggin and Union Bridge (Berwick).

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

Two were off Stag Rocks on 22nd (CGK/PS). Singles were noted at Spittal Bay and Newbiggin on 3rd, flying S at Newbiggin on 5th and at Holy Island on 27th.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

The peak counts were 79 at North Shields Fish Quay on 14th and 76 at Blyth South Harbour on 7th (DMT), 41 at QEII Lake on 21st (CDH) and 40 at Amble Harbour on 12th (JMA). Elsewhere 18 roosted at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 8th and 15 were nearby at Berwick North Shore on 13th (MHu). Smaller gatherings were eight at Newbiggin Breakwater on 28th, seven at Big Waters on 2nd, six at Greenlee Lough on 14th (MRS) and five at Millennium Bridge (Newcastle) on 4th (DM). One to three were noted at Alnmouth Wetlands, Arcot Pond, Berwick Lifeboat Station, Boulmer, Castle Island, Cresswell Pond, Elswick Wharf, Ladyburn Lake, Linton Ponds, Maiden's Hall Lake, Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth), flying over Prestwick Carr and Whittle Dene reservoirs.

Continental Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*

Four were at QEII Lake on 6th (GB), where three were present on 19th (IF) and a single was seen there on 26th (IRD). One was at Marden Quarry on 5th (PRM).

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

The peak roost counts were 46 at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 8th (MHu) and 26 at Blyth South Harbour on 21st (STH). Elsewhere 14 were at Newbiggin on 1st (DM/STH/PJA), 11 in Spittal Bay on 3rd (Mhu), eight at Tynemouth on 15th (DRW) and Cocklawburn on 30th (MHu). One to four were seen at Berwick Harbour and North Shore, East Chevington, Emmanuel Head (Holy Island), Newton Point and Stag Rocks. 'Many' were noted with breeding crests at Holy Island during the month (IK).

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Three were present all month at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN). A single was at East Chevington North Pool on 7th/15th (DRo/RMHa/PMHa).

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Four were by Holy Island causeway on 8th (TRD) with one to two being seen in the Lindisfarne NNR area on seven further dates up to 19th. A single was inland at Castron on 22nd (DRo).

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

The peak counts were 19 in the Tweed Estuary on 12th (MHu), 12 at North Blyth staithe on 14th (AT), seven at Holy Island on 26th (ADM), six in Berwick Harbour on 13th (MSH) and at Hartley West Farm, Holywell Dene on 21st (RJP). Five were at Warkworth Gut and four at Greenlee Lough and Old Hartley. One to three were at Akeld Steads Bridge, Bellasis Bridge, Berwick Bridge and Lifeboat Station, Bothal Barns, Boulmer, Cresswell Pond, Dunstanburgh Castle, East Chevington North Pool, Druridge Pools, Gosforth Park NR, Holywell Pond, Humford Mill, Jesmond Dene, Low Newton, Marden Quarry, Newcastle Great Park, Newton Pool, Prestwick Carr, QEII Lake, Roddam Bog, Sheepwash Bridge, Stannington, Sweethope Lough, Wansbeck Estuary, Wark, West Chevington, West Hartford, Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and three sites in the Howick area.

***White Stork** *Ciconia Ciconia*

On 22nd one wary and apparently un-ringed bird was at Cresswell Pond (CGK/PS/ASH *et al.*). On 23rd it or another flew SE over QEII Lake (ADMc).

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

The highest counts were nine in the Blyth Estuary on 24th (LJM), six at Ladyburn Lake on 1st/12th (DM/STH/GB/LAR), three were at Hauxley NR on 19th (HRS) and in Warkworth Gut on 1st (AJR). One to two were seen at Akeld Steads Bridge, Big Waters, Capheaton Lake, Castle Island, Cresswell Pond, Gosforth Park NR, Holywell Dene, Killingworth Lake, QEII Lake, Sheepwash Bridge, Tweed Estuary and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

One flew N at Bondicarr on 1st (MH). Three were at Whittle Dene Southern Reservoir on 18th/24th (SR) and one was at Coves Haven (Holy Island) on 2nd (SR).

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

One flew N at Tynemouth Pier on 14th (JPD). Three were in Holy Island Harbour on 8th (IK), where a single was noted on five further dates from 11th-27th.

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

The largest gatherings were ten seen between Stag Rocks and Budle Point on 4th (ADM) and nine in Holy Island Harbour on 8th (IK). Up to eight were noted at Holy Island on five further dates and up to six in the Stag Rocks-Budle area on six further dates. A single was at Seahouses on 12th.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Three birds were seen soaring together at Low Wakerley on 10th (IFo). Single birds were seen near Snods Edge on 1st, Low Wakerley on 5th (IFo), Whittonstall on 15th (JL), Birkenside on 16th (RMH), near Wylam on 19th (SWA) and near Kiln Pit Hill on 26th (IFo).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Single birds were noted over several sites during the month (AA/MH *et al.*).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Two birds were at Scotland Gate and at Stannington throughout the month (SLB/MSK/RWM/MIM)) and two were on Holy Island on 20th (ADM). Single birds were at 19 other sites during the month, including birds with prey such as Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus* and a Blackbird *Turdus merula*.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

13 birds were counted between Prestwick Carr and Blagdon on 26th (MH). Six birds were at Prestwick Carr on 23rd (SWA); four birds were at Druridge Bay CP on 7th (DM/STH/GB/LAR), Aln Banks on 11th (MT/NT), Birkenside on 16th (RMH) and at Maiden's Hall Lake on 22nd (CGK/PS *et al.*). One to three birds were noted at 50 sites.

Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus*

An adult flew N over Ellington early morning on 4th (TB) but could not be relocated.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

11 birds were between Prestwick Carr and Blagdon on 26th (MH). Three were at West Chevington on 28th (MN), and two birds were at Elsdon on 16th (JMA), Cresswell & West Lyham on 18th (JMA/MT/NT), Budle Bay on 20th (JMA) and at Maiden's Hall Lake on 23rd (RWM/MIM). Single birds were noted at 38 further sites during January.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Holy Island had a maximum of three birds throughout the month (ADM *et al.*); single birds were seen at Beal on 19th (TRD/JD), East Chevington on 28th (JD) and at two inland sites (SJH/DRO).

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Pairs were seen at two potential breeding sites (EC/JSB/AI) and another pair was seen hunting at Beal Sluice (Lindisfarne NNR) on 19th (TRD/JD). Single birds were noted at nine coastal sites and at four inland sites during the month.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Up to four were at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN) on several dates and two birds were at Warkworth Lane on 15th (TB). Single birds were at Arcot Pond, Backworth, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Holy Island, Seghill NR and Swallow Pond. A single at Jesmond Dene on 15th (BMO) is possibly the first record there. A bird was resident in a Holy Island garden frequently emerging from flower beds to chase other species off food (IK).

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

37 birds were at Marden Quarry on 5th (PRM), 26 birds were at Silverlink Park LNR (CGK) on 16th, 21 were at QEII CP on 20th (PRM), 17 were at Druridge Bay CP on 28th (CDB) and 12 were at Killingworth Lake 13th (LJM). One to ten birds were at 12 further sites during the month.

Coot *Fulica atra*

The highest counts were 164 birds at QEII CP on 20th (PRM), 115 birds at Killingworth Lake on 13th (LJM), 55 at Marden Quarry on 1st (DM/STH/PJA) and 53 at Druridge CP on 12th (IFo). Between one to 48 birds were at ten further sites.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

The WeBS count at Berwick North Shore produced the highest total with 218 on 13th (MHu). Apart from 86 at Hauxley NR on 19th (HRS) and 60 in Cullercoats Bay on 10th (MN), ten to 25 were noted at Beadnell, Coquet estuary, Craster, Dunstanburgh Castle, Low Newton and Newton Pool, with single-figure counts reported from elsewhere. A pair was seen displaying at Howick Burn mouth on 31st (JMA).

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Good numbers were again reported from the Blyth harbour area where 167+ were noted on 22nd (DMT); elsewhere 110 were at Berwick Little Beach (MHu) and 78+ at Newbiggin (PRM) both on 5th, 55 on the Blyth Estuary on 24th (LJM), 35 at Snab Point on 12th (TB), 33 at Cheswick Sands on 23rd (TBr), 25 at Lynemouth power station beach, 15-16 at Cocklawburn, East Chevington and Fenham-le-Moor and single figures at two further locations.

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Typically large numbers were noted at St Mary's with 1,500 on 4th the highest (ASJ), plus 700-800 were counted on two other occasions (AC/MSH). A 'high concentration' of 800 was noted north of Newton Pool on 4th (TRD), 369 were at Cocklawburn also on 4th (MHu), 250 at Cresswell Pond on 5th (JMA), 230 at Blyth (Gloucester Lodge farm area) on 6th (AT), with 100-192 at the Blyth Estuary, Derwent Reservoir, Newbiggin and Rising Sun CP. Smaller groups of 20-50 were seen at Beacon Lane (Cramlington), Druridge Pools, Holystone, Clifton Lane (Morpeth), Plenmeller and West Ord. A single bird was seen feeding on the Royal Grammar School sports field (Jesmond) at night on 31st (GB).

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Peak counts in the north included 100 at Goswick on 8th (TRD) and 15 at Beadnell on 11th (ASJ); a flock of 11 lifted off the beach at Lynemouth power station on 1st (DM/STH/PJA), eight to nine were reported from Berwick North Shore, Blyth Estuary, Cocklawburn and Newbiggin (MHu/GB/LJM) and one to two were at Bamburgh, Boulmer, Fenham-le-Moor, Hauxley beach and Snab Point.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Derwent Reservoir attracted the peak count of 900 on 10th (IFo) whilst elsewhere inland, Grindon Lough held 500-600 during 22nd-23rd (SJH). The high at East Chevington was 449 on 12th (PRM), 280 were at St Mary's on 2nd (ASJ), 250 at Cresswell Pond on 5th and West Hartford on 31st (JMA/MN) with 200 near Blyth links cemetery on 1st and at Druridge Pools on 18th (MN/JMA). Additional reports included 46-160 at Low Acton Farm (Allendale), Big Waters, Boulmer, Castle Dyke (Warkworth), Cocklawburn, Elswick, Brandon Farm (Ingram Valley), Low Newton and the Tweed Estuary, with smaller numbers elsewhere including ten passing overhead at the NUFC training ground (Little Benton) on 11th.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

High counts in the Lindisfarne NNR area included 1,100+ in Budle Bay on 22nd (CGK/PS), 500 at Beal Sluice on 19th (TRD/JD) and 300 at Goswick on 8th (TRD). Good counts in the south were 55 at Newbiggin on 2nd (ASJ), 40 at St Mary's on 4th (AC) and 38 in the high-tide roost at Snab Point on 8th (IFo).

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

The Berwick area held good numbers with 130 at Little Beach on 5th and 76 at North Shore on 13th (MHu). The peak at Newbiggin was 61 on 5th (PRM); 50 were at Boulmer on 12th (JMA), 25 in the Druridge Bay area, seven to ten at Embleton Bay, Goswick and Low Newton, with low single numbers elsewhere.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Most counts during the month came from Stag Rocks but a peak of only ca.70 was noted on 4th (ADM). Elsewhere, 22 were at Cocklawburn on 30th (MHu), 15 at Beadnell on 11th (ASJ), 12 on the Newbiggin breakwater on 7th (DM/STH/PJA), eight to nine at Berwick North Shore and Seahouses, and one to five at Cheswick, Cullercoats Bay, Holy Island, Low Newton and Snab Point.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Gatherings included 300 at Fenham-le-Moor on 4th (TRD), 136 on the Blyth Estuary on 24th (LJM), 100 in Budle Bay on 4th (TRD) and 80 at Berwick Little Beach on 5th, Coquet mouth on 12th and Goswick on 8th (MHu/JMA/TRD). Apart from 20-25 on three dates at Boulmer (RB/MB/JMA), low numbers were noted at Cresswell Pond, Newton Pool and Snab Point.

Jack Snipe *Limnocryptes minimus*

Singles were found at St Mary's on 4th (AC), at Newbiggin on 14th and 15th (GB/DM/STH/PJA), Cresswell on 28th (MN), Duke's Pond on 29th (JPD) and Swallow Pond on 31st (JPD).

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

At Warkworth Gut 23 were in a low tide roost on 4th (AA/MH) and 15 were at St Mary's, also on 4th (AC), nine were at East Chevington on 15th (TB), nine at Bothal Pond on 27th (IFo) and up to eight at West Hartford (LJM). One to three were noted at Arcot Pond, Cramlington, Cresswell, Gosforth Park NR, Newbiggin, Prestwick Carr, Ryal, Thirlwall Common, Thropton and Woodhorn Flashes.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Two were found in Harwood Forest on 7th (DM *et al.*) and two were at Arcot Hall GC on 13th (STH). One came in off the sea at Hadston Scars on 25th, one flushed from a flower border in Tynemouth on 31st and singles appeared at Cramlington, Holystone, Longhorsley Moor and West Hartford. The remains (a wing) of one were found in Holy Island harbour on 26th.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Two were present all month at Rocket Field pools, Holy Island (IK *et al.*) and three on 27th (SR). Singles visited Druridge Pools on 2nd and East Chevington, North Pool on 12th.



Bar-tailed Godwit stretches its legs
Newbiggin beach
by Simon Elliott

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

On 4th 250 were counted at Fenham-le-Moor and 200 in Budle Bay (TRD) and 300 from Holy Island causeway on 8th (TRD); 20 were noted at Beal Sluice on 19th and ten to 13 in the Blyth Estuary, Hauxley, Low Newton and Newbiggin. Three were seen at Berwick and Boulmer.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

The most were 92 at East Chevington on 12th (PRM), 91 at St Mary's on 9th (ASJ) and 90 at Coquetmouth on 12th (JMA). A few areas had 50-78: Cocklawburn, Cresswell/Druridge Pools, Newton Pool, Hauxley, Howick, the Tweed Estuary and Whitley Bay. Elsewhere 25-33 occurred at Berwick, Boulmer, Holy Island, Holywell Dene and Newbiggin.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Three were noted at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 14th and 19th (SR/JPD/ASJ) and one or two on other days mid-month. One was along a stretch of river near Hedgeley on 13th (TRD).

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

One was reported from Warkworth Gut on 4th, 12th and 15th (AA/MH *et al.*). One was in the Blyth Estuary on 24th (LJM).

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

One was seen in Budle Bay on 11th and 18th (JPD/ASJ/MT/NT).

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

The Tweed estuary WeBS count produced 163 on 12th (MHu) and 60 were in Cullercoats Bay on 10th (MN); 26-46 were noted at Berwick, Elswick Wharf, Hauxley and Newbiggin. Smaller numbers were noted at a further six places.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

The Berwick area held the most with 74 at Little Beach on 5th (MHu) and 48 on 13th (MHu); 22-41 were found at Hauxley beach, Newbiggin, North Shields Fish Quay and the Tweed Estuary with five or fewer at seven other typical locations.

A Turnstone at North Shields Quay
by Adriana Buskin



***Grey Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius*

The same team of four observers discovered two on 7th: one flying N at Stag Rocks with a Guillemot and another swimming close inshore at Snab Point (TB/SLB/MSK/GMi).

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*
One flew N past Beacon Point, Newbiggin on 5th (PRM).

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Passage was evident on 12th when nine were noted gradually moving N at Snab Pt, Cresswell (TRD) & eight N off Holy Island (ADM). Otherwise most sightings were concentrated at two sites with up to six off Stag Rocks, Bamburgh and five at North Shields Fish Quay. At Blyth South Harbour only a single individual was noted all month. Holy Island also saw two there on 27th (SR). Finally a sign that fish is not always required was a first-winter, unusually at QE II CP on 5th, which happily came to bread in the car park (MSH) !

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

The peak count involved 2,460 at the sea roost between Tynemouth and Cullercoats on 27th (DMT). Other large concentrations were noted at the Tweed Estuary on 12th with 610 present on a WeBS count, 500 at Derwent Reservoir on 7th and 383 at QE II CP, on 21st (CDH). At the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay, 312 was the peak count noted on 14th (DMT) with 258 also seen at Castle Island on 15th (DM). Groups of 120 – 160 were found at Ewart Park, Jesmond Dene and Leazes Park. Otherwise well reported with up to 100 at many sites.

A Black-headed Gull
Simon Elliott



Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

The only sighting reported was a first-winter at North Shields Fish Quay on 31st (AC).

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

The prime hot spot of Newbiggin accounted for the majority of sightings with the peak being eight adults , a second-winter and two first-winters on 20th (PRM). Otherwise only single adults were noted at Amble Harbour, Blyth, Brierdene, Holywell Pond, Tynemouth, Tyne Estuary and Woodhorn Flash.

Common Gull *Larus canus*

The sea roost between Tynemouth and Cullercoats saw the peak count with 1,500 there on 15th (DMT). 600 were noted at Ewart Park on 22nd (JR) with 160 at North Charlton Moor on 1st (JR) and 115 the peak count at the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay on 2nd (DMT). Up to 45 were noted at a wide variety of sites.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

Very few mid-winter reports as expected. Two were at Swallow Pond on 26th and 31st (ASJ/JPD) with singles at Humford Woods (Bedlington) on 3rd (TB) and the regular over-wintering adult at Southfield Green (Cramlington) and nearby Arcot Lane (DM).

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argenteus*

The peak count was ca. 550 at the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay on 14th (DMT). Blyth South Harbour saw a peak of 123 on 22nd (DMT). Up to 100 were noted at a wide variety of sites.



A Herring Gull with a dark eye
1st January at North Shields Fish Quay
photograph by Dan Turner

'Northern' Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argentatus*

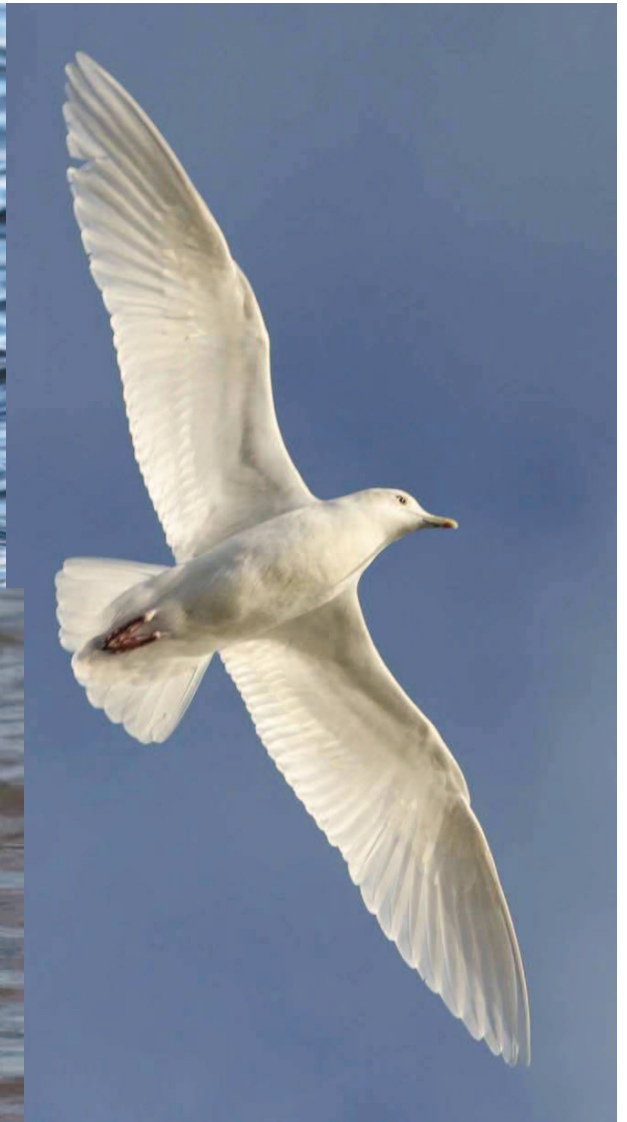
At least 21 adults were found of this Northern race at Seghill Tip on 13th (PRM).

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*

An adult was seen at Newburn on 26th (IK).

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoideus*

Part of the huge influx into Scotland started to permeate south, North Shields Fish Quay being the prime site with at least five birds present including a juvenile, first-winter, second-winter, fourth-winter and an adult. These birds also spread out to Tynemouth. Single adults were also noted at Amble Harbour, Blyth Harbour, Denton Park, Newburn, Stakeford Bridge and Swallow Pond with a single second-winter at Blyth on 31st and a juvenile at St Mary's Island on 1st.



Iceland Gulls at North Shields Fish Quay in January.
Top left a second-winter by Dan Turner and top right a fourth-winter by Adriana Buskin and swimming another fourth-winter by Colin Bradshaw and bottom a first-winter by Dan Turner.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

North Shields Fish Quay was again the main target with a first-winter and a second-winter reported there from 21st. An adult was noted at Stakeford Bridge on the Wansbeck on 14th (MSK) and a juvenile at Newburn on 20th (AT).



Second-winter Glaucous Gull at North Shields Fish Quay
21st January by Duncan Watson

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

The peak count noted was 104 at the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay on 8th which included 51 first-winters. The only other counts of note were 67 at Blyth South Harbour on 7th and 42 at Castle Island on 15th (DM). Up to 12 were noted at several other sites.

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

Evidence of a return were relatively high numbers in the north of the county with 35 at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 18th (MT/NT) and 22 off Holy Island on 12th (ADM). Numbers were lower elsewhere with up to seven at Amble, Berwick, Blyth, Cocklawburn, Cresswell, Monks' House, Newbiggin and Spittal Bay.

Razorbill *Alca Torda*

A high concentration of at least 90 was noted at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 22nd (ASJ) with the next highest count there only being eight on 22nd (CGK/PS). Otherwise one to three were found at Cocklawburn, Cresswell, Druridge Bay, East Chevington, Holy Island, Newton Pt and St Mary's Island.

Little Auk *Alle alle*

Two were noted N at East Chevington on 2nd (JD).

Rock Dove / Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*

The peak count was 103 on the roof of the EA Building at Newcastle Business Park on 5th (DM) with 82 at Blyth South Harbour on 15th (DMT), 72 at Blyth Quayside on 5th (PCF), 40 at North Shield Fish Quay on 14th and two at Beatty Avenue (South Gosforth) on 24th.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

On 26th 33 fed on stubble at Bellasis Bridge (MH), 22 at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 22nd (TB) and 10 at Holywell Dene on 19th (CGK). Seven were at various locations in Jesmond Dene on 8th with six there on 15th (MJCo) and at Cresswell Pond on 7th (DM/STH/GB/LAR), four at East Chevington on 12th and visiting a Walbottle garden on 15th. There were one to three at Marden Quarry, Prestwick Carr, South Gosforth, Wallsend Dene, West Hartford and Whittle Dene.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

The largest gatherings were 540+ at Prestwick Carr on 19th & 20th (PRM/PCF), 500 at White Adder Water (Berwick) on 24th (TBr), 475 at Whittle Dene on 19th (PRM), 300 at East Chevington on 12th (IFo) and Holy Island on 26th (ADM) with around 250 at Ford Moss on 22nd (JR), The Vale Stannington on 17th (JMA) and Brier Dene Farm on 13th (MNC). Counts of 100-200 came from Arcot Hall, Doddington, Holywell Dene, Longridge School, Low Newton and Norham with two to 50 from seven other locations including birds visiting gardens at South Gosforth and Whitley Bay.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

A large flock of 41 was by Stamfordham Village on 19th (EC) with Cramlington being the next favoured location having 17 in one tree at Horton Park on 4th and 14 in the observer's garden at Northburn on 31st, nine at Southfield Green on 22nd and five at Shasun Pharma on 27th (LJM/DM/PJA). One to four were at six further locations with copulation noted at Stannington on 5th.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

The resident pair were noted all month at Holy Island with two at the farm on 8th (SR/AH) and two hunting the dunes at Low Hauxley (SW) on the same date. Single birds were reported from Holy Island on three other occasions and also at A69 at Aydon, near the Gate Inn, Alnwick, Belford, Boulmer, Keepersfield, Longframlington, Longhorsley, Newcastle Airport, Pegswood Moor and Widdrington.

The **target species** for 2012 are all the owls. Please report all records.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Two were at Ovington all month (SAS) and at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 22nd (TB) with singles on two other dates and at Backworth on 4th, Hack Hall (Dinnington) on 7th, Holywell Grange on 14th and Corbridge on 31st.

The **target species** for 2012 are all the owls. Please report all records.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Three males and two females were at Humshaugh on 30th (SW), three at Sleafy Hall on 7th (RMH) and three males at Ellington on 28th (TB) with two or more at Scotland Gate (SLB/MSK), two at Stamfordham (EC) and at Northumberland Park North Shields (CGK/AC/MSH/AJ/MNC/AC) throughout the month. Two calling birds were at Wark (N Tyne) on 8th, Wanneys on 9th, Longhorsley on 13th and 31st, Ellington on 23rd and Melkridge on 30th. Single birds were reported from Dipton Wood, Ellington, Gosforth Park NR, Kiln Pit Hill, Harwood Forest, Humshaugh, Whorral Bank (Morpeth), Rothbury, Stagshaw Bank, Stamfordham, Sleafy Hall, West Hartford and Wideopen.

The **target species** for 2012 are all the owls. Please report all records.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

Singles were reported from Prestwick Carr on 3rd (per PCF), Pegswood Moor on 8th (TB), Ratcleugh Crag (Alnwick) on 22nd and East Bolton on 22nd (JR).

The **target species** for 2012 are all the owls. Please report all records.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

The comparison with January 2011 when there was only a single report is remarkable as January 2012 had over 100 reports from 29 locations involving 83 birds. The peak counts were 12+ at Prestwick Carr on 13th (MH), eight at Newbiggin Ash Lagoons on 13th (TB), seven at Holy Island on 27th (SR), six at West Chevington on 20th (PRM) and four at Plenmeller Common on 9th, Cresswell Pond on 11th, West Hartford on 15th, East Chevington and Killingworth / Holystone both on 16th and three at Warkworth Lane (Ellington) on 1st, Pegswood Moor on 13th. There were numerous reports from many of these sites with one to two also at eighteen further widespread localities.

The **target species** for 2012 are all the owls. Please report all records.



A Shortie at Prestwick Carr by Peter Fletcher on 25th January

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Three were at Horton Burn (Cramlington) on 8th (LJM) and Jesmond Dene on 8th and 29th (MJCo) with numerous sightings of one to two birds at both these sites during the month. One was at Gosforth Park NNR all month with singles also at Amble Braid, Branton GP, Caistron, Corbridge, Cresswell Pond, Mitford, and Morpeth.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

A bird yaffled regularly near the observer's house at Rothbury all month (TRD/JD) with singles at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on four dates during the month (TB), Swallowship Wood (Hexham) on 6th & 18th (AJH), Bakethin on 15th (MD/AM) and Harwood Village on 19th (ASJ/JPD).

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

The largest counts were five at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 14th (TB) and Gosforth Park NR on 16th (MSH) where four were recorded throughout the month (NHSN). Three were at Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 7th and 24th (CGK/MNC), Arcot Pond on 15th (LJM), Jesmond Dene on the same date (MJCo) and Holywell Dene on 26th (RJP). One to two visited a Holywell garden during the month and were at Humford Mill (Bedlington) on 18th with singles found at a further 20 widespread localities.

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*

The single bird remained at Prestwick Carr being seen regularly till 23rd when presumably the same bird was seen north of Big Waters and not subsequently (PCF/AJJ *et al.*). Another single was found at Four Laws (Sweethope) on 7th (NR).

The popular Great Grey Shrike at Prestwick Carr by Colin Bradshaw

**Magpie** *Pica pica*

Swallow Pond held the largest gatherings with 55 on 20th and 67 on 31st (JPD) with 19 at Scotswood on 15th (PCF), 15 at Marden Quarry on 1st (PJA) and 15 at Holywell Dene on 6th (RJP). One to eight were at Choppington, Valley Park (Cramlington), Cresswell, Humford Mill Bedlington, Jesmond Dene, Sheepwash Bridge, Whitley Bay and Manors (Newcastle) where the individual was noted as having a white head.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Well reported with six at Gosforth Park NR during the month (NHSN) and three there on 16th (MSH). Six were at Netherwitton on 29th (AB/LB), five at Ford Moss on 22nd (JR), four at Scotch Gill Woods on 7th (DM) and at Bolam Lake on 31st (ADM). Two were at Arcot Pond, Newmoor (Ashington), Valley Park (Cramlington), Jesmond Dene, Highford Bridge, Meldon, Morpeth, Plessey Mill and Woods, Prestwick Carr, Slaley Hall, Swallow Pond and Scotland Gate all month. Singles were recorded at a further eleven widely spread locations.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Evening roosts at Gosforth Park NR numbered 2,000 on 21st and 1,500 on 15th (GB). Smaller numbers elsewhere with around 150 at Roddam on 22nd (JR) and 120 at Boulmer on 25th (JMA) with 75 at Blagdon on 17th, 70 at Warkworth on 12th and Thrunton Farm on 22nd, 50 at Cresswell Village on 18th and 40 at North Charlton Moor on 1st. One to 24 were at a further nine locations with a bird at Netherton Park (Stannington) marked distinctly black and white.

A bird showing characteristics of the Nordic race *ssp. monedula* was at Killingworth Lake on 19th (CGK/MSH).

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

The largest counts were around 300 at Roddam and 200 at Thrunton Farm on 22nd (JR), 200 at Cresswell Village on 18th, 100 at Clifton and Longhirst both on 9th (JMA). Eight to 93 were at Alexandra Park (Cramlington), Reaveley Greens Farm (Ingram), and Redscar Bridge.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

The maximum count in the Tyne Estuary up to the Fish Quay was 64 on 27th (DMT) with 55 at evening roost in Gosforth Park NR on 15th (GB), 14 at Elswick Wharf on 10th (DM) and 13 at Espershields (Slaley) on 16th (RMH). Two to seven were at Bedlington, Ingram, Jesmond Dene, South Gosforth and Walbottle.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

A bird fed on road kill near Rock on 4th (TRD) with singles also recorded at Boulmer on 26th (TBr) and Budle Bay on 27th (AT/ADM).

Raven *Corvus corax*

On 12th five were at Holystone (DRo), three at Four Laws near Sweethope on 7th (MN), a pair at Bewick Moor on 2nd (MH) and two at Grindon Lough on 14th (MRS) with singles at Brizlee Wood, Harthope Valley, Harwood Forest and Preston Hill in the Cheviots.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

The peak count was nine at Ford Moss on 22nd (JR) with five at Cramlington on 6th (STH), three at Jesmond Dene on 15th (BMo) and two Marden Quarry on 2nd (PBU), Harwood Forest on 7th (DM/STH/LR/GB) and Weldon Bridge on 22nd (JR). Singles were conspicuous in Cramlington with five sightings there and at seven other locations.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Some large counts of 51 at Humford Mill (Bedlington) on 18th (JR), 34 at Holywell Dene E on 31st (MT/NT), 33 at Wansbeck Riverside Park / Sheepwash Bridge on 26th, 25 at Bothal Village on 26th and 19 at Weldon Bridge on 22nd (JR). Eighteen were at Gosforth Park NR, Holywell Dene and Ingram Village, 17 at Coeburn and 11 at Choppington on 26th with two to nine at South Gosforth, Walker, Walbottle and Whitley Bay.

Great Tit *Parus major*

The peak count of 42 again from Humford Mill on 18th (JR) with 35 at Holywell Dene on the 4th (JPD) 33 there on 18th and 20+ there on the 7th and 31st (ASJ/MT/NT). A flock of 30 was at Letah Wood (Hexham) on 20th (AJH) and 16 at Wansbeck Riverside Park/Sheepwash Bridge on 25th. One to 12 were found at 12 other widespread locations.

Great Tit at Prestwick Carr
by Peter Fletcher on 14th January

**Coal Tit** *Periparus ater*

Twenty five was the largest count at Wallington on 19th (ASJ), 22 at Bothal Village on 26th (JR), 15+ at Spindleston on 18th (MSH/JCD), 13 at Ford Moss on 22nd, Humford Mill (Bedlington) on 18th, nine at Weldon Bridge and seven at Ingram both on 22nd (JR). One to five were at eight other localities.

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

Four were at Prestwick Carr on 2nd & 26th (CB/MH) with one to two recorded on six other dates. Two were also reported from Beacon Lane (Cramlington) on 28th (GMi) with singles at Annitsford Pond, Arcot Hall, Howburn Woods (Morpeth), Slaley Hall, Weldon Bridge and Scotland Gate throughout the month.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

Just four reports of two together at Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth) on 6th (GB) and singles at Letah Wood (Hexham) on 1st (AJH), Wallington Hall on 19th (JPD) and Linnels Wood (Hexham) on 21st (MD/AM).

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

The largest counts were all coastal with 25 at Holy Island on 11th (ASJ), 20+ at St Mary's on 7th (CGK/AC/MSH/AJ), 15+ at Maiden's Hall Lake (West Chevington) on 15th (GB), 10 at Ellington on 25th (TB) and nine at Woodhorn South Flash on 15th (DM/STH/PJA). One to three were at Arcot Pond, Lindisfarne NNR, Low Newton, Newbiggin and over Wark (North Tyne) at 22.30-22.45h on 8th (PRM).

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

28 were at Allen Banks on 11th (MT/NT), 16 at Derwent Reservoir on 20th (IFo), 13 at Jesmond Dene on 15th (MJCo) and 12 at Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 26th. Ten to 11 were also reported from Shasun Pharma (Dudley), Prestwick Carr, Slaley Hall and Spindleston; nine were at Valley Park (Cramlington), Walker Riverside Park (Newcastle) and Wark (North Tyne), eight at Hexham, Netherton Park and Weldon Bridge and one to seven at a further 15 localities.



A Long-tailed Tit on New Year's Day 2012
Prestwick Carr by Peter Fletcher

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Four individuals were reported; a single at West Allotment Pond (North Shields) on 1st (MSH), Druridge Pools on 2nd and 28th (JPD/CDB), St Mary's Island / Wetland on 2nd and 17th (CGK/MSH) and Cramlington on 9th (PJA).

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Two were noted at Berwick on 27th (BWG) and singles at Howick and Tynemouth on 1st (JR/DRW), Heaton Park (Newcastle) on 15th (BMO) and gardens at Whitley Bay on 17th (MT/NT), Jesmond Dene all month (*per* GB) and Heddon-on-the-Wall on 26th (JSB).

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

The only report was a single 'trilling' as it flew over Marden Quarry (Whitley Bay) on 1st (PJA/DM).

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

No fewer than nine were heard calling at Wallington on 15th (ASJ) and nine were at Humford Mill (Bedlington) on 18th (JR). In other woodland habitats seven were reported from Allen Banks on 11th (MT/NT), six at Plessey Woods CP on 22nd (LJM) and four at Bothal, Jesmond Dene and Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth). One to three were at a further 19 widespread localities, including gardens at Ellington, Gosforth, Melkridge, Rothbury, Stamfordham and Walbottle.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Five were noted at Gosforth Park NR during the month (NHSN), three at Warkworth Lane on 1st and at Hareshaw Linn (Bellingham) on 5th. Two were at Jesmond Dene on 1st and Ford Moss on 22nd and singles at a further 17 localities, including a long overdue garden tick for the observers at Netherton Park (RWM/MIM).

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Remaining rather scarce, the highest count was eight at Humford Mill (Bedlington) on 18th (JR). Four were at Bothal Barns on 26th, three at Ingram on 22nd and at Wansbeck Riverside Park on 26th; one to two were also reported from a further five localities.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

3,000 were at Holy Island on 20th (JMA) and 2,000 at a dusk roost at Brunswick Green on 29th (GB). At Prestwick Carr 1,000 flew E in the early evening of 15th (PCF), whilst at Grindon Lough numbers declined from 660+ on 19th (PRM) to 200 by 28th (PFS/MMS). The only other large gatherings were 500 at Westerhope on 11th and 100-150 at Beadnell, Druridge Bay and Howick. Up to 90 were reported from a further eight localities.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Nine were found between Shillmoor-Fairhaugh (Upper Coquetdale) on 25th (IRD) and two at Thrum Mill (Rothbury) on 5th. Two were also reported from Allen Banks, Bywell Bridge, Corbridge, Highford Bridge (Morpeth), Holywell Dene, Jesmond Dene (Waterfall / Extension Wood / Benton Bank Bridge), Ouseburn and Weldon Bridge and singles at Ingram (singing), Slaley Hall, Wark Burn and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

23 were found in Ingram village on 22nd (JR), 21 in a Walbottle garden on 29th (KR/LR) and 18 at Humford Mill (Bedlington) on 18th (JR). 11-15 were also reported from Bolton (Alnwick), Bothal, Ford Moss, Hepburn, Walker and Weldon Bridge. Gardens attracted larger numbers than usual with up to nine in a Whitley Bay garden from 15th-29th, seven at Old Hartley throughout the month and at Netherton Park on 17th. Seven were also at Blyth, South Gosforth and Wansbeck Riverside Park and four in Jesmond Dene. A male was in full song at B&Q (Scotswood) by 10th.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

300 at Slaley on 28th was the largest gathering (AJH). 110-150 were also at Callerton, Fulbeck, Longhorsley, Otterburn Ranges and Thirlwall Common and 50-80 at Ottercops, Prestwick Carr and Thrington Woods. Smaller flocks of 20-45 were noted at Backworth, Harwood Forest, Hepple, Grindon Lough, Roddam and Shadfen and one to 18 at a further seven localities.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Three were feeding at Blyth harbour Caravan Park on 17th (EC). Three were in Jesmond Dene (Matthew Bank and Quarry / Extension Wood) and two at Gosforth Park NR on 15th, Ingram village on 22nd and Newbiggin on 14th. Birds were heard singing in Newcastle from 9th when one was at RGS with other singing birds at Leazes Park and Northumbria University on 12th (GB). Singles were also noted at Bamburgh, Beacon Lane (Cramlington), Branton GP, Brizlee Wood, Warkworth Gut and a Whitley Bay garden.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Rather scarce this month. The largest flocks were 100 at Plessey Hall Farm on 28th (GMi), 60 at Borough Woods (Morpeth) on 17th (AT) and 50+ at Grindon Lough on 2nd (PRM). 20-34 were also reported from Elishaw (Upper Redesdale), Longhorsley and Swallowship (Hexham), 15 at Prestwick Carr and 11 at Nelson Village (Cramlington). One to ten were noted at a further 13 inland localities.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Another rather scarce species this month. Five were at Low Acton Farm (Allendale) on 12th (SJH) and four at Prestwick Carr on 6th (PCF). Elsewhere one to two were reported from a further 13 localities, including singing birds at Close House (Wylam), Gosforth Park NR, Killingworth Lake and Slaley Hall from 1st.

Alert Mistle Thrushes at Prestwick Carr
1st January by Peter Fletcher

**Robin** *Erithacus rubecula*

Some encouraging counts were received, the largest of which was 16 at Humford Mill (Bedlington) on 18th and 12 at Wansbeck Riverside Park on 26th (JR). At Prestwick Carr, 11 were noted, including some birds taking food from the hands of photographers waiting for Short-eared Owls. Counts of six came from Bothal, Holywell Dene and Ingram and four to five from Choppington, Ford Moss, Jesmond Dene and Weldon Bridge. One to three were at four further localities.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

An immature bird was at Newbiggin from 26th-29th (ASJ *et al.*).

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

All but one of the records this month were from coastal areas. In Druridge Bay, four were noted at Druridge Pools on 18th (JMA), up to three at Cresswell Pond / links throughout the month (ASJ *et al.*) and a pair at East Chevington. Pairs were also at Buston Links on 12th, Cocklawburn all month, Coquet Estuary on 12th and Low Newton on 25th. Singles were reported from Bamburgh (Stag Rocks), Lynemouth Flash, Monks' House Pool and Warkworth Gut. The sole inland record was a single at Clennel Hill (Alwin Valley) on 31st (IRD).

Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti*

The first-winter male found at Beacon Point (Newbiggin) in December 2011 was last reported on 2nd (GB/CB/AA).

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

Two were observed at a Whitley Bay garden on 15th and 29th (MT/NT), Jesmond Dene on 22nd (MJCo) and a South Gosforth garden on 24th (MJCo).

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

70 were observed at Cullercoats Bay on 10th (MN), 46 at a Parkside (Cramlington) garden on 12th (SLJ), 40 at Battlesteads Hotel (Wark) on 15th (CB), 28 at Southfield Green (Cramlington) on 15th (DM), 26 at Whittle Dene on 15th (PCF), 23 at a Wylam garden on 17th (RMHa/PMHa). 20 at Trent House Beer Garden (Newcastle City Centre) on 26th (DM), 11 at Ingram Village on 22nd (JR) and three at a Whitley Bay garden on 19th (MT/NT).

Tree Sparrow *Passer Montanus*

A well observed flock was present in a stubble field next to Blyth Cemetery between 1st-26th with a peak of 62+ on 20th (PRM). 20 were at Fenham-le-Moor on 4th (TRD) and near Holywell Pond on 9th (CGK), 12 at Morpeth Common on 14th (IRD), 11 at a Walbottle garden on 8th (KR/LR), ten at Battlesteads Hotel (Wark) on 15th (CB) and Old Berwick on 18th (MT/NT), six at Sheepwash Bridge on 26th (JR) and five at Angerton Lake on 7th (DM/STH/GB/LAR). One-two were at a further seven widespread localities including Holy Island and a Wylam garden.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Three were found at Jesmond Dene on 22nd (MJCo) and at Whittle Dene on 19th (JPD). Singles were also at Cramlington (Horton Burn and Valley Park), Jesmond, Newcastle City Centre, North Shields Fish Quay, Richardson Dees Park (Wallsend), St. Mary's Island, Seghill Tip, Spittal (Newbiggin), a Tynemouth garden, Wallsend Gut, Wark and Wylam.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla Alba yarrellii*

35 were recorded at QEII CP on 14th (AT). Six were at Beacon Point beach (Newbiggin) on 1st (DM/STH/PJA). Five were at South Bay (St. Mary's) on 29th (MT/NT) and four between Cresswell and Druridge Pools on 18th (MJCo). One-two were at a further ten widespread localities.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

32 were in the St. Mary's area on 22nd (ASJ), 30+ at West Hartford on 29th (LJM), three at Beanley Moor on 2nd (MH) and Newbiggin on 14th (GB), two at Bewick Moor on 2nd (MH) and singles at Greensidehill (Ingram Valley), Low Newton and Quarry House Moor.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

A loose flock of 12 was noted on Hauxley beach on 27th (IFo) with five at nearby Bondicarr (Hauxley) on 1st (MH) and Berwick Little Beach on 13th (MHu), four at Spittal Cliffs (Berwick) on 11th (MHu), two at Newbiggin on 3rd-20th (TRD *et al.*), Low Newton on 4th (TRD), Holy Island on 8th (TRD) and Cullercoats Bay on 8th (MN). Singles were noted at East Chevington on 2nd (TRD/JD), Snab Point (Cresswell) on 6th (TRD), Blyth South Harbour on 7th (DM/STH/GB/LAR) and Tynemouth Boating Lake on 21st (PRM).

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

A minimum of 200 fed on spilt grain at Belford Granary on 13th (JSB/EC), 140 at Shoresdean on 8th (MHu), 60 at Wallington Hall on 19th (ASJ/JPD), 40-60 at Ridsdale on 29th (MD/AM), 35+ in a stubble field next to Blyth Cemetery on 20th (PRM) and two-20 at a further ten widespread localities.

A cock Chaffinch at Wallington
15th January by John Richards

**Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla*

20 were found at Bolam Lake on 31st (ADMc), 17 at Ridsdale on 29th (MD/AM), ten at Angerton Moor Cottages on 21st (ADMc), six at Humshaugh on 29th (TWi), two at Fullhope (Upper Coquetdale) on 2nd (JL), on feeders at Battlesteads Hotel (Wark) on 15th (CB), Holystone on 22nd (TRD/JD) and an Ovington garden on 29th (SAS). Singles were also at Gosforth, Harwood Village (Harwood Forest), Mount Pleasant, Pegswood, Rothbury, Slaley Hall, Wallington Hall. Wark and Wylam.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

65 were observed at Fenham-le-Moor on 22nd (ASJ), 33 visited a Walbottle garden on 29th (KR/LR), 30 at Boulmer on 1st (JR), 14 at a Whitley Bay garden on 29th (MT/NT). 12 at a Cramlington garden on 25th (PJA), seven at Humsford Mill (Bedlington) on 18th (JR) and one to five at a further four widespread localities.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

100 at Hemscotthill Dunes (Cresswell) on 18th (JMA), 40-60 at Village Hotel, Cobalt Business Park (North Shields) all month with a peak of 80+ on 24th (CGK), 8 visited garden feeders at East Ord on 4th (MHu), 45 at Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 11th (MNC), 30 at a Stannington garden on 17th (JMA) and Blyth South Harbour on 21st (STH), 22 at East Chevington on 12th (PRM), 20 at Wallsend Green on 8th (PBU) and Swallow Pond on 28th (PBU). One to 15 were at a further 17 widespread localities including gardens at Whitley Bay and Wylam.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

150+ were observed at Thrunton Woods on 18th (MT/NT), 70+ at Druridge Bay CP on 26th (JPD), 40+ at Harwood Forest on 14th (MSH), 35 at QEII CP on 25th (MT/NT), 30 at Gosforth Park NR all month (MHSN) and Humford Mill (Bedlington) on 18th (JR). 26 at Big Waters on 30th (PCF), 21+ at Nelson Park (Cramlington) on 16th (LJM), 20+ at Spindleston on 18th (MSH/JCD), 19 at feeders at Melkridge on 30th (SJH), 16 at Morpeth on 3rd (TB) and 12 at the Mound (Newbiggin) on 6th (GB). One to ten were at a further 14 widespread localities. Five were ringed at Slaley Hall on 29th (RMH).

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Coastal and lowland areas held the largest flocks with 140 at Cocklawburn on 6th (MHu) and Ord Sewage Works on 21st (MHu), 120 at Fenham-le-Moor on 22nd (ASJ), 100 at Hemscotthill Links (Cresswell) on 7th (ASJ), 100 at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 22nd (ASJ), C.90 at High Horton Farm (Blyth) on 18th (JR). 80 on Holy Island on 29th (SR), 70 at Boulmer on 1st (JR) and Bamburgh on 13th (EC/JSB), 25 at Swallow Pond on 28th (PBU), eight at Newbiggin on 20th (PRM) and one at West Hartford on 8th (STH).

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

Traditional winter flocks involved a peak of 130 at Bamburgh on 13th (EC/JSB), 120 at Hemscott Hill Links (Cresswell) on 26th (ASJ), 49 at East Chevington on 12th (PRM), 12 at Berwick Little Beach on 1st (MHu), five at Newbiggin Golf Course on 5th and four on Holy Island on 29th (SR).

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*

27 were found at Swallow Pond on 1st (JPD), 15+ at Harwood Forest on 14th (MSH), 14 at Ellington Pond on 15th (TB), 12 at QEII CP on 2nd (TB) and Holystone on 29th (DRo), eight at Caistron on 22nd (DRo), six singing at Scotland Gate on 9th (MSK), five visited a Wylam garden on 23rd (RMHa/PMHa) and one or two at Elishaw, Grindon Lough, Rothbury, Wark and Warkworth Lane.

Mealy Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*

15 were observed at QEII CP on 25th (MT/NT). Two were at Swallow Pond on 1st with one still there on 20th (JPD).

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Singing/displaying birds were noted at Harwood Forest all month with a peak of 100+ on 4th (MSH), 74 at Taret Forest on 27th (MD), 41 at Sidwood on 1st (SW), 35 at Holystone on 31st (DRo), 30 at Bakethin Reservoir (Kielder) on 15th (MD), 12 at Four Laws near Sweethope on 7th (MN), seven at Wark Burn on 7th (CB) and Capheaton on 29th (STE) and six at Catcleugh Reservoir on 19th (PRM). One to five were at a further 14 widespread localities.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

14 were feeding amongst heather in clear-fell at Harwood Forest on 29th (AB/LB), ten at Battlesteads Hotel (Wark) on 7th (CB) and Choppington on 26th (JR), eight at Scotland Gate all month (SLB/MSK) and Blagdon Kennels on 17th (JMA), six at Beacon Lane (Cramlington) on 1st (GMi), West Mickley on 14th (SWA), Arcot Pond on 15th (LJM), QEII CP on 24th (LJM) and an Old Hartley garden on 30th (RJP). Five were at a Heddon-on-the-Wall garden all month (JSB), Walker Riverside Park (Newcastle) on 1st (PBu/ABu) and The Mound (Newbiggin) on 7th (DM/STH/GB/LAR). One to four were at a further 27 widespread localities.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

30 were in a field opposite Amble Braid on 12th (JMA). A well observed flock in a stubble field next to Blyth Cemetery all month peaked at 20 on 22nd (ASJ *et al.*), 15 at Warkworth Gut between 1st-12th (AJR/MH/AA *et al.*) with 17 there on 7th (DRo). Elsewhere, on the coast, three were at Newbiggin on 13th (AT), two at Hemscott Hill Dunes (Cresswell) on 2nd (JPD) and Spittal (Berwick) on 24th-25th (MHu). Inland, seven were observed on the Otterburn Ranges on 2nd (JL), four on the old pit heap at Earsdon on 28th (CS) and one at Backworth on 28th-29th (CGK *et al.*).

A Snow Bunting
7th January by Brian Bullough

**Lapland Bunting** *Calcarius lapponicus*

Two were at St. Mary's Island on 6th (AC). Another was at Beal Road Ends (Holy Island Causeway) between 11th-19th (ASJ/TRD/JD).

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Large numbers were noted throughout month. Peak gatherings involved 220 at Fenham-le-Moor on 22nd (ASJ), 95+ in stubble field next to Blyth Cemetery on 20th (PRM), 60 at Swallowship Wood (Hexham) on 6th (AJH), near Ingoe on 20th (EC/JSB) and Callerton on 30th (MH), 36 at Scremerston on 23rd (MHu), 24 at Blyth Golf Course on 8th (SJL), 23 at Ford Moss on 22nd (JR) and one to 20 at a further 16 widespread localities.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Ten at St. Mary's Island on 4th (AC) increased to 22 by 22nd (ASJ). 13 were amongst the Yellowhammers in a stubble field at Callerton on 30th (MH). Six were at Ellington Pond on 15th (TB), five at Old Hartley on 31st (MNC) and four in a stubble field next to Blyth Cemetery on 20th (PRM). One to three were at a further nine typical localities.

ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN**Escapes****Muscovy Duck** *Cairina moschata*

Two were again on the River Tyne at Elswick Wharf from 5th to 18th (DM). They were also noted further up river at Scotswood on 15th (PCF). A single was also seen at Bolam Lake on 26th (PCF).

Speckled Teal *Anas flavirostris*

The individual seen last month at Marden Quarry was found again on 13th and 14th (AC/TRD).

Speckled Teal
Marden Quarry
by Tim Dean
14th January

**Reeve's Pheasant** *Syrnaticus reevesii*

A tail feather of a male bird was found in a bush at Spittal car park, Newbiggin on 28th (GB).

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

Singles were noted at Holywell Pond and Killingworth Lake.

The Canada Goose x Greylag Goose at Killingworth Lake
by Adriana Buskin

**Canada Goose x Barnacle Goose** *Branta canadensis* x *Branta leucopsis*

This unusual hybrid was present at Marden Quarry from 1st to 5th (DM/STH/PJA/PRM).

Glaucous Gull x Herring Gull *Larus hyperboreus* x *Larus argentatus*

A first-winter was photographed at North Shields Fish Quay on 1st (DMT).

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Berwick Wildlife Group, Hauxley Ringing Station, Natural History Society of Northumbria, Northern Experience Wildlife Tours.

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

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

This bulletin was compiled by Graeme Bowman (Mute Swan to Egyptian Goose, Ruddy Shelduck to Ruddy Duck), Lindsay McDougall (Red Grouse to Black-necked Grebe), G Trevor Blake (Honey Buzzard to Crane), Ian Forsyth (Oystercatcher to Skua), Tim Dean (Ivory Gull to Puffin, Escapes, Hybrids and Unknown Origin, List of Contributors, Highlights), Peter Fletcher (Feral Pigeon to Red-rumped Swallow), Mike Richardson (Cetti's Warbler to Pied Flycatcher), Eddie Crabtree (Dunnock to Corn Bunting), Dan Turner (WeBS Coastal Counts) and Steve Holliday (WeBS Inland Counts). Thanks again to Ann McKeown for typing the section Dunnock to Corn Bunting. Thanks to David Sanders of NNBC for providing data. Proof reading was by Mike Smith.

Edited by Steve Barrett NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.com

Postal bulletins distributed by Brian Bullough.

RECORD SUBMISSION

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 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 NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.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 cost of printing and stamps. Ask for an e-mailed bulletin from:

jo.bentley@waitrose.com

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS 2011

Annual subscription is £23. For membership enquiries please contact jo.bentley@waitrose.com

NTBC WEB SITE

The Club website is an excellent resource for all interested in birds in the north east. There are numerous interesting sections, including a photograph gallery, site information and trip reports together with extensive reference information for birding in our area. The site is at www.ntbc.org.uk

If you have any ideas or things you would like to see or hear about on the site please let Chris know on 0751 582 5024 or e-mail christopher.knox@o2.co.uk

NTBC SIGHTINGS PAGE

The club sightings web page gives listings of birds seen locally. Adding a sighting is simple. A short e-mail is all that is needed. If anyone would like to be added as a contributor please contact Alan Tilmouth at ntbcorg@gmail.com. The sightings page can be found at <http://ntbc sightings.posterous.com>

INDOOR MEETINGS

The next indoor meeting will be at Northern Rugby Club, McCracken Park, Great North Road, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 2DT on Thursday 8th March at 7pm. Please note the venue.

On 8th March we have **The Black-tailed Godwit** by Jenny Gill.

On 12th April by the ever popular **Members' Night**. Ian Kerr will update us on Holy Island and Gary Woodburn will talk on His Patch on the Northumberland coast

FIELD TRIPS

The next trip is to **Kielder** on 25th March.

On 13th May a trip is planned to The Harthope Valley.

Please contact Trevor Blake for more information: trevor.1958@live.co.uk

NTBC COMMITTEE NEWS

EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

An Extraordinary General Meeting of the Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club will be held on Thursday 12th April 2012 at 8.30pm at the Northern Rugby Club.

Agenda

Subscriptions

Proposal - That annual subscriptions to the Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club be raised to £30.00 for single membership, £32.00 for Family membership and £10.00 for junior membership (under 18 years of age), to take effect from September 2012 (membership year 2012/2013)

Proposer NTBC committee

Background

NTBC subs were last raised in 2004.

Since 2004 the costs of producing Birds in Northumberland has risen by 73%. Postage by 60%.

Expenditure on monthly meetings 24%

For some time, running costs have been balanced against inflation by the increased use of electronic communications. We have now reached a situation where there is little further potential saving.

If you are unable to attend the meeting on Thursday 12th April and would like to comment on the proposal please contact Jo Bentley by email ntbc@jobentley.plus.com or phone 01661 832167. Please leave a message on the answer-phone if no one is in. A summary of members' views will be presented at the meeting. Only members attending the meeting will be eligible to vote on the proposal.

ACCOUNTS

The 2010-2011 Accounts are attached to this bulletin.

NTBC Clothing

The Club now has polo shirts, sweatshirts and hoodies available. An unveiling will take place at the next indoor meeting. Samples and colours will be available for inspection - Polo shirts £13.50; Sweatshirts £18.00; Hoodies £18.00 plus postage. Wear your colours with pride.

GOSFORTH RESERVE SUCCESS

Newcastle City Council have announced that the threat of building alongside the NHSN reserve, an SSSI, has been lifted. Thanks to all members who took part in the protest at this mis-conceived scheme.

VOLUNTEER SURVEYORS REQUIRED

Volunteer bird surveyors are needed for two University Projects in Durham/Northumberland during Summer 2012. Mieke Zwart is a PhD Student at Newcastle University and is seeking volunteers to help out on two projects. The first is a breeding bird survey at a wind farm in Tow Law in County Durham.

The survey area is 20km² and is divided up into 12 sections, each roughly 2km². It is planned to survey each section 6 times between April-June with the 1st survey starting mid-April. The surveys will start at dawn, which means 6am around April to about 4am around June.

The survey data will be used to investigate if the bird distribution nearer the turbines is different from that further away and if there is a cumulative effect in this area as there are actually 3 wind farms in our study area but built at different times. Data will be provided to Durham City Council.

The second project is in collaboration with Wildlife Acoustics, an American company that makes remote recording equipment. It is hoped to gain insight on whether this equipment can complement nightjar surveys to help determine how many breeding nightjars are in a certain area as it is not easy to survey this species. This data will also be used in a PhD. All travel expenses will be covered by the organizers.

Anyone interested please contact Mieke Zwart by email at m.c.zwart@newcastle.ac.uk

DESCRIPTIONS WANTED FROM 2011

Given below is a full list of sightings in 2011 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.

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 2011'. Descriptions need to be forwarded by late May to allow the records committee meeting in July time to vet them. A complete list of all species needing notes is included in the NTBC website www.ntbc.org.uk under the County Records Committee section. This is also replicated in Birds in Northumbria 2010 on page 228. A copy of the Rarity Report Form can be downloaded from the website.

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. 2011 was not as prolific for rare migrants compared with 2010 but there are still many county rarities here that need documenting.

Hopefully these records will be written up in order for them to appear in 'Birds of Northumbria 2011' as the observers may only now be aware that I am still waiting for a description. 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 , Atlas work over and Spring still over the horizon!

Thanks
Tim Dean

INLAND WEBS COUNTS: NORTH HUMBERLAND

Version:

Interim

LIM PT

GB

RF

ISD MFP

MR CP

MD AC

SPP IDR

CH NA

DE

IE

CGK MR

Warkworth Lane

White Dene Res

Woodhorn Flashes

Angerton Lake

Arct Pond

Backworth Ponds

Big Waters

Boam Lake

Borthal Pond

Branton GP

Broomie Lough

Calston

Capheaton Lake

Castle Island

Calcleugh Reservoir

Colt Crag Res

Cresswell Pond

Druidge Pools

East Chevington

Gosforth Park

Greenlee Lough

Grindon Lough

Hallington Res

Haughey NR

Hedgely GP

Holywell Pond

Jess

Killer Water

Killingworth Lake

Leazes Park

Linton Pond

Longfirst Flash

Marden Quarry

Monks' House Pool

Newton Pool

OE CP

Rayburn Lake

Rothley Lake

Shield on the Wall

Swellow Pond

Sweethope Lough

Tynemouth Boating Lake

Warkworth Lane

White Dene Res

Woodhorn Flashes

Angerton Lake

Arct Pond

Backworth Ponds

Big Waters

Boam Lake

Borthal Pond

Branton GP

Broomie Lough

Calston

Capheaton Lake

Castle Island

Calcleugh Reservoir

Colt Crag Res

Cresswell Pond

Druidge Pools

East Chevington

Gosforth Park

Greenlee Lough

Grindon Lough

Hallington Res

Haughey NR

Hedgely GP

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Warkworth Lane

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Calston

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Castle Island

Calcleugh Reservoir

Colt Crag Res

Cresswell Pond

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Grindon Lough

Hallington Res

Haughey NR

Hedgely GP

Holywell Pond

Jess

Killer Water

Killingworth Lake

Leazes Park

Linton Pond

Longfirst Flash

Marden Quarry

Snow Goose	1	Ashington	20/03/11	?
Snow Goose	1	Farne Islands	23/03/11	FIW
Snow Goose	4	Hauxley	23/08/11 & 18/09/11	STE
Snow Goose	4	East Chevington	31/08/11 01/10/11	STE
Snow Goose	1st W	Budle Bay	26/10/11	?
Snow Goose	2 Ad	Budle Bay	28/10/11	?
Ross's Goose	2	Monk's House Pool	26/09/11 28/09/11	RA / PJA
Green-winged Teal	M	Cresswell Pond	19/03/11 02/04/11	CN et al
Black Scoter	M	Cocklawburn	21/04/11	?
Black Scoter	M	Bamburgh	12/06/11 16/06/11	?
Balearic Shearwater	1	St Mary's Island	21/07/11	?
Balearic Shearwater	1	Newbiggin	22/07/11	?
Balearic Shearwater	1	Beadnell Pt	24/07/11	?
Balearic Shearwater	1	Newbiggin	25/07/11	ADMc
Balearic Shearwater	1	Newton Pt	28/07/11	?
Balearic Shearwater	1	Holy Island	31/08/11	RA
Balearic Shearwater	1	Holy Island	31/08/11	RA
Balearic Shearwater	1	North Blyth	15/09/11	?
Macaronesian Shearwater	1	Tynemouth	08/10/11	SPP
Continental' Cormorant	1	Killingworth Lake	27/01/11	IF
Continental' Cormorant	7	Blyth South Harbour	10/02/11	PRM
Continental' Cormorant	2	Big Waters	06/04/11	TC (per IF) One till 7 th
Great White Egret	1	Blyth Estuary	30/05/11	?
Purple Heron	1	Beal	02/09/11	?
White Stork	1	Cresswell / Druridge	25/04/11	Gmi / IDR
White Stork	1	Long Nanny	11/05/11	?
White Stork	1	Cresswell Pond	11/05/11	?
Honey-buzzard	F	Shirlaw Pike	09/05/11	?
Honey-buzzard	M	Hexham	09/05/11	?
Honey-buzzard	1	Callerton	13/05/11	?
Honey-buzzard	1	Cresswell Hall Woods	31/08/11	TB
Honey-buzzard	Juv M	High Newton	06/10/11	GW
White-tailed Eagle	1	East Chevington	14/04/11	?Wing-tagged
White-tailed Eagle	1	Morpeth	14/04/11	DS / NFO
White-tailed Eagle	1	East Chevington	14/04/11	ASJ Not wing-tagged
White-tailed Eagle	1	Blagdon	15/04/11	DS
White-tailed Eagle	1	Bamburgh	16/04/11	?
White-tailed Eagle	1	Newbiggin	26/08/11	?
White-tailed Eagle	1	Blyth Estuary	30/08/11	per AT
Pallid / Montagu's Harrier	Juv	Holy Island	08/11/11	MJC
Montagu's Harrier	M	Thrunton	07/05/11	JWR
Goshawk	Juv	St Mary's Island	01/09/11	?coastal
Goshawk	1	Fenham Mill	26/10/11	PRM
Rough-legged Buzzard	1	Kielder	19/03/11	MPF/TB et al
Rough-legged Buzzard	Juv	Goswick	26/10/11	MSK
Hobby	1	Farnley	21/04/11	BNR
Hobby	M	Softley	01/05/11	BNR
Hobby	F	Hagg Bank, Wylam	05/05/11	BNR
Hobby	1	Swallow Pond	06/05/11	JPD
Hobby	F	Beldon Burn, Riddlehamhope	07/05/11	BNR
Hobby	F	Lambley Viaduct	29/05/11	BNR
Hobby	1	Wylam	30/05/11	JB
Hobby	1	Gosforth Park	30/05/11 23/07/11	per SRB
Hobby	F	Sinderhope	31/05/11	BNR
Hobby	1	Rising Sun CP	13/06/11	SPP
Hobby	1	Broad Oak Quarry	21/06/11 22/06/11	CS
Hobby	1	East Chevington	03/07/11	TB
Hobby	1	Blagdon	21/07/11	per PCF
Hobby	1	Clennel St, Upper Coquetdale	31/07/11	IRD

Hobby	1	West Hartford	02/08/11	?
Hobby	1	Druridge Pools	14/08/11	IDR
Hobby	1	Hauxley	17/08/11	BL
Hobby	1	Fenham le Moor	25/08/11	Nmo
Hobby	1	Druridge Pools	29/08/11	AA
Hobby	1	Ellington	29/08/11	TB
Hobby	1	Druridge Lnks	31/08/11	STE
Hobby	M	Blanchland	07/09/11	BNR
Hobby	F	Newbiggin Beldon Burn	07/09/11	BNR
Hobby	Juv	Druridge Pools	09/09/11	?
Hobby	1	Budle Bay	07/11/11	?
Corncrake	1	Brownsman , Farne Islands	25/09/11	FIW
Corncrake	1	Beadnell / Newton	July 11 22/08/11	per GW
Crane	3	Longframlington Moor	29/04/11	?
Crane	2	Druridge Bay CP	01/05/11	?
Crane	2	Holywell Pond	01/05/11	RD
Crane	1	Whittle Dene Res	14/05/11	DM/ALT/HD/ACo
Crane	1	Knowesgate	21/05/11	?
Crane	1	Wallsend	22/05/11	FS
Crane	1	Druridge	24/05/11	?
Crane	1	Green Rigg , nr Sweethope Loi	24/05/11	?
Crane	1	Belford – Chathill	13/06/11 15/06/11	?
Crane	Ad	Budle Bay	11/09/11 29/09/11	Ida / KDa
Crane	1	Murton	29/09/11	?
Crane	Ad	Lindisfarne to Alnmouth	03/09/11 ?	
Sandhill Crane	1	Newbiggin	29/09/11	EB
American Golden Plover	1	Newbiggin	11/10/11	SJM
Temminck's Stint	1	Beadnell	09/05/11 10/05/11	GW et al
Temminck's Stint	1	East Chevington	17/05/11	MSK
Temminck's Stint	1	Beadnell	20/05/11	GW et al
Pectoral Sandpiper	1	Lynemouth Flash	22/07/11	JSB / EC
Pectoral Sandpiper	Juv	Derwent Reservoir	04/09/11 07/09/11	Ifo / AA / PRM
Marsh Sandpiper	1	Cresswell Pond	04/08/11	per DR
Grey Phalarope	1	Druridge	08/01/11	IDR
Grey Phalarope	1	Hauxley	18/10/11	TW
Grey Phalarope	6	Newton Pt	23/10/11	CR
Grey Phalarope	1	Stag Rocks, Bamburgh	06/11/11	?
Grey Phalarope	1	Farne Islands	24/11/11	FIW
Grey Phalarope	1	North Blyth	03/12/11	?
Grey Phalarope	1	North Blyth	03/12/11	?
Long-tailed Skua	Juv	Newbiggin	31/08/11	TRC
Long-tailed Skua	Juv	St Mary's Island	02/09/11	?
Long-tailed Skua	1	Pelagic off Beadnell	10/09/11	MSK / NEWT
Long-tailed Skua	Juv	St Mary's Island	16/09/11	?
Long-tailed Skua	7 Juv	Farne Islands	21/09/11	FIW
Long-tailed Skua	2 Juv	Farne Islands	23/09/11	FIW
Long-tailed Skua	Juv	Farne Islands	29/09/11	FIW
Long-tailed Skua	Juv	Farne Islands	30/09/11	FIW
Long-tailed Skua	3	Tynemouth	08/10/11	SPP
Long-tailed Skua	Juv	Farne Islands	22/10/11	FIW
Long-tailed Skua	Juv	Seahouses	22/10/11	?
Long-tailed Skua	Juv	Emmanuel Head , Holy Island	22/10/11	?
Long-tailed Skua	Juv	St Mary's Island	23/10/11	?
Sabine's Gull	Ad	Newbiggin	08/08/11	Gmi
Sabine's Gull	Imm	Hauxley	11/08/11	?
Sabine's Gull	Juv	Newbiggin	18/09/11	?
Sabine's Gull	Juv	Newton Pt	09/10/11	?
Sabine's Gull	1	Annstead Pt	22/10/11	RA
Sabine's Gull	Juv	Farne Islands	23/10/11	FIW
Sabine's Gull	Juv	3m E of St Mary's	08/11/11	MSK

Yellow-legged Gull	Ad	Swallow Pond	25/03/11	JPD/SPP
Yellow-legged Gull	1	Plenmeller Common	05/06/11	BNR
Yellow-legged Gull	near Ad	Derwent Reservoir	01/08/11	DB
Great Grey Shrike	1	Cresswell Pond	11/04/11	?
Nordic Jackdaw	1	Wark	25/01/11	PRM
Nordic Jackdaw	2	Lyne Sands	24/02/11	AT
Nordic Jackdaw	1	Elsdon	26/02/11	PCF
Nordic Jackdaw	2	Dinnington	04/03/11	PCF
Nordic Jackdaw	1	Newsham	14/03/11	?
Nordic Jackdaw	1	Ashington	17/03/11	MSK
Nordic Jackdaw	1	Melton Park, Gosforth	03/10/11	GB
Nordic Jackdaw	1	Newbiggin	25/10/11	GB
Crested Tit	1	Holywell Pond	11/01/11	NR
Short-toed lark	1	Briar Dene	25/10/11	NPD Calling , flight only
Hume's Warbler	1	Holy Island	15/11/11	MJC
Dusky Warbler	1	Holy Island lough	12/11/11 & 15/11/11	MJC
Siberian Chiffchaff	1	Holy Island	26/10/11 28/10/11	MJC
Scandinavian Chiffchaff	8	Holy Island	26/10/11 30/10/11	MJC
Siberian Chiffchaff	1	Newbiggin	06/11/11 04/12/11	AT
Barred Warbler	1 st W	Newbiggin	19/08/11	PRM
Barred Warbler	1 st W	Crooked Lonnen, Holy Island	18/09/11 19/09/11	RC / IK
Bluethroat	1	Seahouses	28/10/11	?
Alpine Accentor	1	Bamburgh GC	08/09/11	DR
White Wagtail	1	Annstead , Seahouses	02/09/11 13/09/11	RA
White Wagtail	1	Holy Island	07/09/11	RA
White Wagtail	4	Derwent Reservoir	09/09/11 10/09/11	PRM / EAW
White Wagtail	M	Druridge Pools	09/09/11	EC
White Wagtail	1	Football Hole, Newton	10/09/11	CB / JGS
White Wagtail	1	Budle Bay	13/09/11	RA
Richard's Pipit	1	Inner Farne	14/10/11 15/10/11	FIW
Richard's Pipit	1	Brownsman , Farne Islands	16/10/11	FIW
Richard's Pipit	1	Snook, Holy Island	26/10/11	MJC
Richard's Pipit	1	Straight Lonnen,Holy Island	26/10/11	?
Richard's Pipit	1	Brownsman , Farne Islands	27/10/11	FIW
Olive-backed Pipit	1	Inner Farne	01/10/11	FIW
Red-throated Pipit	1	Low Hauxley	18/05/11	?
Scandinavian Rock Pipit	1	Holy Island	06/03/11	RA
Scandinavian Rock Pipit	3	Low Newton	09/03/11 20/03/11	GW
Water Pipit	1	Low Newton	12/11/11	GW
Arctic Redpoll	1	Big Waters	16/01/11	?
Arctic Redpoll	1	Swallow Pond	09/02/11 10/02/11	SPP/JPD
Arctic Redpoll	1	Longframlington Common	11/03/11	?
Common Rosefinch	F	nr Druridge Bay CP	20/06/11	?
Common Rosefinch	1	Brownsman , Farne Islands	23/08/11	FIW
Corn Bunting	1	West Ord	02/06/11 28/06/11	MHu

ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2011

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT	2011	2010	2009
INCOME			
Members subscriptions Includes 5 Honorary & 9 Life members	5,475.00	5,391.00	5,927.00
Sales			
Birds in Northumbria - current year	1,151.60	1,675.45	1,747.75
All publications - other years	68.95	-	-
Refund of Income tax (Gift Aid)	1,356.35	1,277.98	1,311.83
Bank Interest (Northern Rock)	8.64	14.29	117.06
Field trips	-	-	658.00
Grants and fund raising	280.50	-	552.00
Miscellaneous (50th etc)	5.00	-	1,192.00
	8,346.04	8,358.72	11,505.64
EXPENDITURE			
Opening stock for sale	2,471.00	-	-
Birds in Northumbria - current year	6,288.89	3,863.81	3,614.00
Less Closing Stock	3,375.50	-2,471.00	-
Total Cost of Sales	5,384.39	1,392.81	3,614.00
Membership	407.56	-	46.86
Indoor meetings	729.77	512.15	1,101.02
Monthly Bulletins	1,843.68	2,299.35	2,394.76
Birds in Northumbria (in year postage)	207.06	306.54	266.12
Officers expenditure	203.04	272.36	314.74
Field trips	-	-	922.16
Record cards/storage	984.74	752.00	333.89
Insurance	110.00	110.00	110.00
SSWT Costs	303.42	-	179.49
Website and IT	135.61	138.80	75.22
Miscellaneous	127.17	168.14	85.49
Atlas	133.25	-	399.34
50th	-	-	1,357.20
Grants	-	-	402.00
Total Expenses	10,569.69	5,952.15	11,602.29
Surplus / deficit for year	-2,223.65	2,406.57	-96.65
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 30 JUNE 2011			
ACCUMULATED FUND			
Balance as at 30 June 2010	6,449.80	4,043.23	4,139.88
Surplus/ (Deficit) from I & E Account	-2,223.65	2,406.57	-96.65
Total	4,226.15	6,449.80	4,043.23
Represented by Assets:			
Stock	3,375.50	2,471.00	-
Debtors	1,356.35	-	1,311.83
Lloyds TSB Treasurers Account	4,649.30	1,853.09	1,201.31
Northern Rock	-	5,725.71	5,711.42

Total	9,381.15	10,049.80	8,224.56
Less Liabilities			
Creditors	5,155.00	3,600.00	4,181.33
Total	5,155.00	3,600.00	4,181.33
	4,226.15	6,449.80	4,043.23

Note 1: Stock has been valued at lesser of cost or net realisable value.

Note 2: A revaluation of stock utilising advertised sale figures for net realisable value has increased the total stock valuation.

Note 3: The debtor relates to the gift aid not received in year.

Note 4: Seaton Sluice Watch Tower expenditure includes maintenance and rates.

NORTHUMBERLAND AND TYNESIDE BIRD CLUB
DEVELOPMENT FUND ACCOUNTS
FOR YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2011

<u>INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2009</u>
INCOME			
Sales	107.55	91.00	276.90
Atlas Data	2206	1,350.00	1,000.00
Donations (balance from 50th)		-	1,002.38
Bank Interest	16.06	17.50	249.84
Fund raising New Atlas	1577.25	-	-
	3906.86	1,458.50	2,529.12
LESS EXPENDITURE			
Grants	600	1,450.00	4,275.26
Atlas	206	581.35	-
	806	2,031.35	4,275.26
Surplus (Deficit) for Year	3098.86	-572.85	-1746.14
Balance sheet as at 30th June 2010			
Accumulated fund			
Balance as at 30 June 2010	16996.04	17,568.89	19,315.03
Surplus/deficit from I & E account	3098.86	-572.85	-1,746.14
	20094.9	16,996.04	17,568.89
Represented by:			
ASSETS			
Cash - Bank (Santander)	20094.9	16,996.04	17,531.62
Debtor	-	-	-
Cash/Cheque in Hand	-	-	37.27
	20094.9	16,996.04	17,568.89

Accounts prepared by Jo Bentley (Honorary Treasurer)

HONORARY AUDITORS REPORT

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 J.L. Grilley
Date 23/02/2012

Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

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

Bulletin 2012 No 2

MONTHLY SUMMARY – FEBRUARY

3rd April 2012



HIGHLIGHTS

Bewick's Swan
Tundra Bean Goose
Eurasian White-fronted Goose
Ross's Goose
Egyptian Goose
Green-winged Teal
Bittern
White Stork
Black-necked Grebe
Whimbrel
Spotted Redshank
Iceland Gull
Glaucous Gull
Black Guillemot
Short-eared Owl
Great Grey Shrike
Shorelark
Black Redstart

Two at Maiden's Hall Lake
Groups still present after winter influx
Large numbers still present with peak of 320 at Maiden's Hall Lake
Single at East Chevington
One at Holywell Pond
Separate males still at East Chevington and Holy Island
Two still at Gosforth Park and single at East Chevington
Two over Wark on 19th
Single off Holy Island
Early migrant at Warkworth Lane on 29th
Single still at Warkworth Gut
Influx still including up to 5 at North Shields Fish Quay
Single at Newburn
Close views of one at Stag Rocks from 12th to 24th
Peak of ten at Prestwick Carr
Singles at three localities
Single at Ross Back Sands on 8th
Single at Newbiggin

CONTENTS

Indoor meeting on 12th April members' night – Gary Woodburn and Ian Kerr
Field trip to Harthope Valley on 12th May
Maiden's Hall Wind Farm proposal
Christmas Quiz result
NHSN natural history courses
Birds of Durham published
Ring Ouzel survey



Close up to a Red-necked Grebe on 19th February at Amble by Chris Barlow

WEATHER

1st to 3rd: A very cold easterly airstream resulted in daytime temperatures rising no higher than 3 to 4 °C in most areas, with the west generally brightest. By the 3rd, lighter winds allowed the cold to intensify.

4th to 6th: During the weekend of 4th/5th, a band of rain, sleet and snow moved eastwards. Further east, many areas had their first significant snowfall of the winter, with 5 to 10 cm lying quite widely in central and eastern parts. The snow eventually cleared eastwards on 5th.

7th to 12th: Cold continental air dominated conditions in the east, with lying snow helping to maintain the low temperatures. Further west it was often cloudier and much milder, with fronts becoming slow-moving, bringing significant ice at times on the boundary between the mild and cold conditions. Most spells of rain and snowfall were light.

13th to 17th: Northern and western areas were often cloudy with occasional rain and drizzle, whilst the best of cloud breaks were to the south and east.

18th to 19th: Fronts moved down from the north, with northerly winds bringing wintry showers to northern parts. Elsewhere conditions were largely clear and cold, with a return of widespread overnight frosts. During 19th, a ridge of high pressure over the Atlantic with west or south-westerly winds brought in milder air.

20th to 29th: The final third of the month saw often mild or very mild conditions with generally westerly winds. Frontal systems mainly brought rain or showers to northern and, to some extent, western areas. The 20th, in particular, was wet across the north-west with over 40 mm in the north Pennines. Large amounts of cloud, with sea fog and widespread hill fog characterised this period. North-eastern areas generally fared best for brightness throughout. A significant number of places recorded their highest February temperature on record.

CLASSIFIED LIST

The following account consists of unchecked reports. The species/subspecies marked * require descriptions.

A complete list of all sightings that need notes is included in the NTBC website www.ntbc.org.uk under the County Records Committee section and in Birds in Northumbria 2009 page 224.

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

TARGET SPECIES

The target species for 2012 are all the owls. Please report all records in as much detail as possible. The Club is sensitive to the vulnerability of these species to disturbance and persecution, and will be particularly cautious about what is actually published, above all about nesting and roosting sites. Please address any questions or concerns to Tim Dean or Dick Myatt.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Killingworth Lake held a peak of 123 on 16th (PRM), 102 were at Capheaton on 15th (STE), 60 at QEII CP on 13th (CDH), 20-28 at Big Waters, Cheswick and the Tweed Estuary, and 14-19 at Bolam Lake and Longhirst Flash. One to seven were at 12 further waters. A dead individual found at Doddington on 15th had been ringed (red, DPC) at Haggerston Castle in 1993 as a second-year bird, making it 19 years old. Many reported sightings during its lifetime included when it was moulting on the River Tweed and also when visiting Lindisfarne NNR (JD).



Adult Bewick's Swan
Maiden's Hall
25th February
Peter Fletcher

Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus*

Two adults frequented East Chevington on 10th (ASJ) and 28th (JSB/EC), and Cresswell Pond on 12th (ADMc). An adult and a juvenile were at Maiden's Hall Lake, West Chevington regularly between 2nd-28th (JPD/MSH/ADMc *et al.*), and a single adult was at Bothal Pond on 16th and Ashington on 21st (TB).

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Three flew S at Choppington Woods on 7th (MSK). The flock centred on Warkworth Lane-Ellington numbered 87 on 1st (ASJ) and 76 on 24th (ASJ). Other large counts were 36 at West Mains, Norham on 26th (MHu) and 16 at East Chevington on 17th (STH/PJA). Five to nine were also at Ashington (Cooper's Corner), Bothal Pond, Buston Links, Capheaton, Catcleugh and Derwent Reservoirs, Doddington and West Ord, and one to three at Bellasis Bridge, Big Waters, Hartburn Reservoir, Killingworth Lake, Monks' House and Prestwick Carr. A colour-ringed adult (DP4) at Ellington on 28th January 2012 had been ringed in August 2007 in Iceland and was noted in Dumfries during winter 2009-10 (BB).

Whooper DP4 at Ellington
28th January by Brian Bullough

**Bean Goose** *Anser fabalis*

Reports of *rossicus* (Tundra) race birds included 25 at Maiden's Hall Lake, West Chevington on 24th (JPD) and singles there on 23rd and 25th (SRB/MSH), 23 at West Stobswood on 28th and eight on 29th (MSH), a minimum of 20 near QEII CP on 13th (CDH), three at Big Waters between 24th-26th (GB/ISD), two at Druridge Hamlet on 11th (IF) and one at Budle Bay on 24th (JPD).

Un-raced birds involved 35+ at Maiden's Hall Lake on 24th (ASJ/MPF/JPD), 15+ in the QEII CP area on 14th (ADMc), three at Budle Bay on 13th (MR), two at East Stobswood on 16th (ADMc), two at Bell's Farm on 12th (ADMc), and one at the *Beehive* Flash, Earsdon on 7th (MNC).



Bean Goose with White Fronts at West Stobswood
8th February by John Clark

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Northward movement involved 200 at Newton Links on 19th (CB), about 400 at East Ord (MSH), 250 at Earsdon (MSH) and 100 at Blyth on 20th (BB), 80 at Swallow Pond on 21st (JPD), 140 at East Ord on 27th (MHu), and 250 at Eshott on 29th (MSH), and a total of 235 at Cocklawburn on four dates between 14th-28th (MHu). 310 moved SW at Cheswick on 3rd (MHu), 62 NW at Swallow Pond on 15th (SPP), 50 E at Prestwick Carr on 29th (PCF) and 28 W at Melkridge on 27th (SJH). Some large concentrations were noted, with 4,500 near QEII CP on 13th (CDH), 4,500 at Doddington on 15th (JD), 3,000 at Maiden's Hall Lake, West Chevington on 24th (ASJ/MPF/JPD), 1,800 at Fenham Slake on 12th (IBDa/KDa), 1,500 at East Chevington on 6th (IRD), 1,000 moving W at Beal on 6th (IK), about 1,000 at Druridge Hamlet on 11th (IF), 800 at Cresswell Pond on 8th (TRD/JD), 400-500 at Newham Bog (400 were reported as being 'vigorously pursued by the Hunt!') (AJR) and Smeafield, and 150 at West Stobswood. Groups of 30-48 were at Caistron and Prestwick Carr.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

Records of Eurasian *albifrons* race birds involved 240 at Maiden's Hall Lake, West Chevington on 7th (MN) and 240 there on 25th (MSH), 87 at Harper's Haugh near Budle Bay on 19th (MSH) and 70-80 at Budle Bay on 7th (MR), 65 at Caistron on 28th (BB), 11 at Woodhorn Flashes on 13th (CDH) and three to ten there on 3rd and 25th (MSH/STH/SPP), ten at Hemscott Hill near Cresswell on 6th (AT), ten at West Stobswood on 28th (MSH), and one to three at Airy Holm and Derwent Reservoirs, Druridge Hamlet, Fenham Flats, QEII CP and Smeafield.

Records of Greenland *flavirostris* race birds involved seven near QEII CP on 13th (CDH), five at Woodhorn Flashes on 25th (MSH) and four there on 3rd and 13th (JPD/CDH), and one at Grindon Lough all month.

Un-raced birds included about 350 at Maiden's Hall Lake on 16th (ADMc) and 230-320 there on 23rd-24th (SRB/JPD/MPF/ASJ), 218 NW over Tynemouth on 21st (ASJ), 48 at Ashington on 21st and 30 on 24th (TB), 46 at Bothal Pond on 20th (ADMc), ten at East Chevington on 1st (IRD), and two to seven at Bank Top Farm, Cresswell Pond and Woodhorn Flashes.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

About 600 were at Caistron on 28th (BB), 400+ at Harper's Haugh near Budle Bay on 19th (MSH), 165 at Woodhorn Flashes on 3rd (STH), 158 at Big Waters on 10th (GB), 113-136 at the *Beehive* Flash and Derwent Reservoir, 80-84 at Bank Top Farm and Cocklawburn Pond, 40-50 at East Chevington and Prestwick Carr, and ten to 31 at Ashington, Hammersfield, Haughton Castle, Killingworth Lake, Monks' House Pool and Swallow Pond. One to eight were at six further sites.

*** Snow Goose** *Anser caerulescens*

One was at East Chevington on 21st and 25th (IRD).

*** Ross's Goose** *Anser rossii*

One was with Pink-feet at East Chevington on 25th (SPP).

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Grindon Lough held 425 on 16th (PRM), 402 on 8th (SJH) and 43-370 on several other dates. Peak counts elsewhere were 320 at Bothal Pond on 11th (TD), 105 at Derwent Reservoir on 25th (IFo), 88 at Killingworth Lake on 12th (LJM), 39 at QEII Lake on 13th (CDH), and 11-26 at Big Waters, Bolam Lake, Newcastle Leazes Park, Plenmeller Common, Swallow Pond and West Ord. One to seven were also at Castle Island, Dinnington, Foxton Bend, Ladyburn Lake, Linton Ponds, Spartylea, Swallow Pond and Woodhorn Flashes, and a leucistic bird was again at Caistron (JD).

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

A flock centred on Harper's Haugh-Budle Bay numbered 200 on 7th (MR), 600 on 12th (IBDa/KDa) and 194 on 19th (MSH), and 90 were at Fenham Flats on 12th (IBDa/KDa). One to two were also at Big Waters, Budle Bay, Derwent Reservoir, Grindon Lough, Killingworth Lake and Swallow Pond.

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Pale-bellied *hrota* race birds involved 2,000 at Fenham Flats on 12th (DM/STH/IFo/PJA), 331 at Holy Island on 22nd (PRM), 250 NE at Amble on 27th (JMA), 90 at Harper's Haugh near Budle Bay on 19th (PRM), 30 N at Snab Point on 8th (TRD/JD), and one to nine at Cocklawburn, Stag Rocks and St Mary's.

Dark-bellied *bernicla* race birds included 186 at Holy Island on 22nd (PRM) and 34 there on 13th (MR), and eight S at Stag Rocks on 22nd (PRM).

Nine un-raced birds flew N at Druridge Pools on 8th (STE).

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

A peak of 124 was at Budle Bay on 25th (AT), 28 were at East Sleekburn on 5th (JR), 26 at the Blyth Estuary on 7th (LJM), 13 at Hauxley Reserve on 11th (HRS), six at Elswick (DM), three to four at the *Beehive* Flash (Earsdon), Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Haughton Strother and West Hartford, and one to two at Castle Island, Holy Island and West Stobswood.

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

A minimum of 22 were at Ridley Stokoe on 24th (JSB/EC).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

The largest concentrations were 795 at Cresswell Pond on 9th (IRD), 600 at Budle Bay on 3rd (JPD), 600 at East Chevington on 13th (IRD), 300-350 at Alnmouth (JPD) and Newham Bog (AJR), 230-274 at Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Pools and Foxton Bend, and 105-154 at Big Waters, Grindon Lough and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Counts of 75-89 came from Bothal Pond, Gosforth Park NR and QEII Lake, and ten to 33 at Arcot, Coanwood and Middle Ord Ponds, Holy Island and Woodhorn Flashes.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

QEII Lake attracted 26 on 13th (AT), 23 were at East Chevington on 17th (PRM), 18 at Big Waters on 11th (GB), 15 at Swallow Pond on 24th (JPD), ten at Ladyburn Lake on 17th (PRM), nine at West Allotment Pond on 7th (CGK), seven at Arcot Pond on 19th and 25th (STH/LJM), four at Ladyburn Lake and two at Cresswell Pond, Haughton Strother and Monks' House Pool. More unusual were four at the Blyth Estuary on 7th (LJM).



A drake Gadwall at Druridge Pools by Peter Tapsell

Teal *Anas crecca*

Peak gatherings were 350 at Alnmouth on 3rd (JPD), 332 at Grindon Lough on 16th (PRM), 290 at Budle Bay on 22nd (PRM), 289 at Derwent Reservoir on 11th (IFo), 255-263 at Holy Island and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, 170 at Swallow Pond, 108 at Elswick and 53-77 at Arcot, Cresswell and Middle Ord Ponds, East Chevington, Tyne Green, Haughton Strother GP and West Hartford. Groups of 22-46 were at Backworth and Bothal Ponds, the Blyth Estuary, Bolam Lake and Warkworth Gut, and ten to 14 at Castle Island and Monks' House Pool.

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

Single drakes were at East Chevington south pool on 2nd (BMo) and 17th (STH/PJA) and Holy Island Lough on four dates between 5th-22nd (DGB/IK/PRM/SR/AH *et al.*).

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

148 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 6th (SR), 133 at Big Waters on 5th (GB), 127 at Ladyburn Lake on 17th (PRM) and 124 at Derwent Reservoir on 20th (IFo) were the only three-figure counts. Other peaks were 89 at Killingworth Lake on 12th (GB), 76 at Cocklawburn Pond on 3rd (MHu), 74 at the Tweed Estuary on 10th (MHu), 72 at Bolam Lake on 4th (CDB), 53-67 at Hauxley Reserve and Newcastle Leazes Park, and 30-48 at Airy Holm Reservoir, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Haughton Strother GP, QEII Lake and Wallsend. Ten to 29 were also at the Blyth Estuary, Bothal and Linton Ponds, Byker, Elswick, Furnace Bridge, Grindon Lough, Humford Mill, Jesmond Dene, Kielder Water, Monks' House Pool, Newcastle Civic Centre and Exhibition Park, and Wark.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Three drakes were at East Chevington on 8th (TRD/JD) and one on 3rd (TB), three birds visited Druridge Pools on 12th (JD) and two on 26th (IRD), and singles were at Big Waters on 24th-26th (GB) and Hauxley Reserve on 11th (HRS).

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Greatest counts were 15 at Holy Island Lough on 5th (SR/AH), 11 (nine drakes) at Monks' House Pool on 19th (GB/MSH), three at Swallow Pond on 9th (PBu/ABu), three at Woodhorn Flashes on 16th (AT), and two at Druridge Pools on 29th (MJCo), Gosforth Park NR on 5th (GB) and West Allotment Pond on 21st (CGK). A more unusual locality was Killingworth Lake, where six (two drakes) were present on 5th (GB) and one on 12th (GB/LJM; the latter observer's first record there since 1975!)

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Killingworth Lake proved popular, with peaks of 41 on 5th (GB), 40 on 6th (AC) and 30 on 25th. The only other locality to hold over ten was Swallow Pond, where peak counts were 27 on 28th (JPD/SPP) and 21 on 18th (SPP). Six to seven were at QEII Lake (CDH) and West Allotment Pond (MSH/CGK), three to four at Big Waters, Branton GP and Ladyburn Lake, and one to two at Bothal Pond, Grindon Lough and Woodhorn Flashes.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

As with Pochard, Killingworth Lake proved very attractive to this species. Peak counts there were 214 on 6th (AC) and 188 on 12th (GB), falling to 72 by 27th (MSH). Elsewhere, 41 were at Newcastle Leazes Park on 13th (DM), 32 at Marden Quarry on 4th (AC), 23-25 at QEII Lake, West Allotment Pond and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and ten to 18 at Big Waters, Bothal, Cocklawburn, Linton and Swallow Ponds, Druridge Pools, Ladyburn Lake and Newcastle Exhibition Park. Five to nine were also at Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother GP, Holy Island Lough, Jesmond Dene, and Tyne Green, and one to four at six further sites.

Scaup *Aythya marila*

Three (one drake) were at Ladyburn Lake on 10th (ASJ) and two (first-winter drake and duck) on 8th, three at nearby East Chevington on 12th (JD) and 17th (two drakes; STH/PJA), a pair there on 3rd (TB) and a first-winter drake on 9th (JPD). One was at Swallow Pond on 16th (PBu/ABu) and a drake was at Woodhorn Flashes on 25th-26th (AA/STH).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

Counts were low, with peaks of only 65 at Hadston Carrs on 17th (PRM), 41 (24 drakes) at Blyth South Harbour on 4th (DMT), 38 at Tynemouth on 4th (DRW), and 31-37 at Berwick North Shore and the Tyne Estuary-North Shields Fish Quay.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

Peak counts were 40 at Holy Island harbour on 6th when many were displaying (IK), 22 off Ross Back Sands on 7th (IRD), about 20 at Stag Rocks on 19th (BCFT/MJC) and one to 15 there on various other dates up to 29th.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

13 flew N at Newbiggin on 26th (STH). Peak counts were 80 at Stag Rocks on 19th (BCFT/MJC), 64 at Cheswick on 3rd (MHu), 34 at Cocklawburn on 3rd (MHu), 30 off Ross Back Sands on 13th (MR), and 13-14 off Hadston Carrs-Low Hauxley (IFo/PRM). Eight were in Beadnell Bay and two off Druridge and Warkworth. A drake was at East Chevington north pool on 3rd (TB), 17th (STH/PJA) and on 24th-25th (JPD/ASJ/SPP).

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

Two flew N at Buston Links on 2nd (ADMc/AT) and one N off Druridge on 12th (SLB/MSK).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

The Tweed Estuary held 109 on 10th (MHu), 65 were at Beadnell on 19th (CB), 42 at East Chevington on 21st (IRD), 40 on the River Tweed between A1-Horncliffe on 12th (TBr), 30-38 at Castron, Kielder, QEII Lake and West Ord, 23-28 at Killingworth Lake, the Wansbeck Estuary and Warkworth, and ten to 15 at Berwick North Shore, Big Waters, Branton GP, Castle Island, Grindon Lough, Howick, Kitty Brewster and West Ord. Five to seven were also at Bolam and Ladyburn Lakes, Harbottle, Seahouses harbour, Stag Rocks and Swallow Pond, and one to four at Bothal Pond, Budle Bay, Druridge Pools, Elswick, Foxton Bends, Holy Island Lough, Spartylea, Wark and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Display was noted at Big Waters on 26th (GB) and Killingworth Lake on 4th (CGK/AJ).

Smew *Mergellus albellus*

On 17th, East Chevington held three (two on the north pool and one on south pool; PRM), when one was also on Ladyburn Lake (PRM). Three 'redheads' were at Ladyburn Lake on 10th-11th (ASJ/ADMc/NFO) and one there on 8th (TRD/JD) and 17th (PRM). A 'redhead' was also at QEII Lake on 13th and 21st (IRD/CDH/AT) and 21st (TB), and a first-winter drake was at Kielder Water on 26th (MD). A more unusual record concerned a 'redhead' with six Goldeneyes on the sea off Warkworth on 5th (NFO).

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

11 were at Cocklawburn on 8th (MHu), six at Holy Island Harbour on 22nd (PRM), six at Ross Back Sands on 19th (BCFT/MJC), six at Stag Rocks on 19th (BCFT/MJC), four to five at Beadnell Bay, Cheswick, Cocklawburn, Cresswell Pond, Ladyburn Lake, Seahouses, Spittal Bay, the Tweed Estuary, and one to two at Blyth South Harbour, Budle Bay and East Chevington.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Peak counts were rather low, with ten (five pairs) at Haydon Bridge on 10th (JMA), ten at QEII Lake on 17th and 21st (TB/IRD), eight at Wylam on 7th (MH), seven at Airy Holm Reservoir on 25th (IFo), seven at Arcot Pond on 2nd and 19th (DM), and five at Tyne Green, Hexham (AJR). Three to four were at Allen Banks, Furnace Bridge, Humford Mill, Killingworth Lake, Stocksfield, Weldon Bridge, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Wylam, and one to two at Bardon Mill, Cresswell, Holywell and West Allotment Ponds, Derwent Reservoir, Houxty, Jesmond Dene, Ladyburn Lake, Morpeth, Newcastle Exhibition Park, Ray Estate, Riding Mill, Shillmoor and Wark.

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

The peak counts were 21 on Dryburn Moor on 8th (SJH), 20+ at Plenmeller on 16th (ASJ/MPF/JPD), 16 in the Knockshield Burn area on 7th/28th and at Paxhill on 29th (SJH). Eight were in the Keenly-Hollin Green area on 8th and two near Harwood Forest gibbet on 28th.

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

The species was very well reported this month. 18 males were in the Knock Shield/Sipton Burn area on 16th (PD), whilst on 7th nine (five females) were in this area (SJH). Counts of six males came from Plenmeller on 1st (AA/MH) and Swinhope Shield on 28th, whilst five were in the Hollin Green/Keenly area and four at Low Acton Farm on 18th, two at Blacklot on 16th and a single on Dryburn Moor on 8th (SJH).

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

The highest counts were 17 in two coveys at Longwitton on 7th and 16 at Holywell on 3rd (SPP) with six at Fell House Farm (Plenmeller Common) on 19th (SJH), five at Newham Bog on 15th (AJR) and four on Plenmeller Common on 19th (SJH). One to three were noted at Derwent Reservoir, Felton Lane, Keenly and near Tritlington.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

The largest gatherings were 15 in three coveys at Druridge Pools on 8th (STE), 13 in four coveys at Bradford Kaims on 11th (AJR) and 12 at Pegswood on 7th (TB). Eight were at Cresswell Pond on 3rd/6th (TB) and seven at Brenkley Drift (Blagdon) on 10th (GB) and Old Hartley on 14th (MNC). One to six were noted at Beaconhill (Cramlington), Bellasis Bridge, Big Waters, Blyth Cemetery, Bothal Pond, Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay), Chugdon Wood (Ellington), Cresswell, Doddington, East Chevington North Pool, Elford, Ellington, Foxton, Newton Links, Ross Back Sands, Scremerston, Seghill Tip, Warkworth Lane, Weetslade Colliery CP, West Ord and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

An alert Grey Partridge
Bellasis Bridge
Peter Fletcher
19th February

**Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus*

Four to six were regularly present at Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene) and two males were in an Old Hartley garden on 2nd (RJP). Two were at Foxton Bends with singles at Castle Island and in a Walbottle garden.

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Five flew N at Stag Rocks on 12th (DGB). Offshore counts of ten came from Buston Links on 2nd (AT/ADMc) and Cheswick on 3rd (MHu), whilst at least eight were noted from Ross-Guile Point on 19th (BCFT/MJC). Six were at Ross Back Sands on 7th (TRD/JD), Cocklawburn on 8th (MHu) and Stag Rocks on 19th (BCFT/MJC). One to three were noted at Alnmouth Beach, Druridge, Hadston Carrs, Snab Point and the Tweed Estuary.

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

Singles were noted at Stag Rocks on 3rd (JPD) and Ross Back Sands on 7th/13th (MR).

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

At Church Point (Newbiggin) 11 including a "blue" phase bird flew N in one hour on 11th (AT). At breeding sites 12 were on the cliffs at Old Hartley on 7th (SPP) and six apparently occupied nests were on Whitley Bay South Bay South Promenade cliffs on 20th (MSH).

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

The largest movement noted was 850/h N at Berwick Pier on 19th (MHu). From Ross-Guile Point on the Club Field on 19th 50 were noted flying N and 25 S, when 30 flew N at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) (IK). Lighter movements were 15 N at St Mary's on 19th, ten at Emmanuel Head on 18th, four at Blyth on 13th and Newbiggin on 19th. One was offshore at Holy Island on 22nd.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

The peak roost counts were 95 in Blyth South Harbour on 4th, 77 at North Shields Fish Quay on 2nd (DMT), 13 in Amble Harbour on 20th (LJM) and 12 at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 5th (MHU). Smaller gatherings were 11 at Berwick North Shore on 12th (MHu), eight at Big Waters on 6th (GB) and six at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) on 18th (IK). One to four were noted at Cresswell, Druridge, Elswick Wharf, Gosforth Park NR, Holywell Dene, Killingworth Lake, Millennium Bridge (Newcastle), flying over Ray Estate, Swallow Pond, Wark and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.



A Cormorant at North Shields Fish Quay
29th February
Adriana Buskin

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

The peak roost counts were 27 at Blyth South Harbour on 19th (DMT), 25+ at Stag Rocks on 24th (ASJ), 19 at Tynemouth on 4th (DRW), a feeding flock of 18 off the end of Tynemouth Pier on 2nd (AC) and 16 at Berwick North Shore on 12th (MHu). Elsewhere seven roosted at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 5th. One to three were seen at Hadston Carrs, Low Hauxley, North Shields Fish Quay and Spittal Bay. Unfortunately one dead bird was found in Seahouses Harbour on 19th.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Two were seen in flight together at dusk on 5th at Gosforth Park NR (GB), where one was noted on 11th/18th (BMo/CDB). Two were seen on the ice at East Chevington on 9th (JPD), where one flew from the reeds at East Chevington North Pool on 17th (STH/PJA and again on 25th (SPP).

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

The peak counts were 13 at Druridge Pools on 26th (JR), ten in the Aln Estuary on 24th (AJN), eight flying S at Ellington on 21st (TB) and six in the Tweed Estuary on 10th (MHu). Five were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Wylam and four at Holy Island. One to three were at Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, Grindon Lough, Harwood Forest, Holywell Dene, Leazes Park (Newcastle), Spartylea and Wark.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

The highest counts were six at Foxton Bend on 12th (DM/STH/IFo/PJA), four at Kittybrewster on 5th (JR) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 28th (MR) and three at Castle Island on 1st (ADMc), Killingworth Lake on 4th (CGK/AJ), Hexham on 8th (PRM), Tweed Estuary on 10th (MHu) and Morpeth Stepping Stones on 16th (ADMc). One to two were seen at, Big Waters, Bolam Lake (first known record for this site), Blyth South Harbour, Cocklawburn Pond, East Mill (Morpeth), Holy Island Lough, Ladyburn Lake, Morpeth Rugby Club Bridge, Swallow Pond, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Woodhorn Flashes.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Numbers at Whittle Dene Reservoirs rose to six by 28th (SR/MR/PRM). Four were at Derwent Reservoir on 29th (PRM), where a pair displayed on 25th (IFo). Three were off Buston Links on 2nd (AT/ADMc) and numbers rose to three at Killingworth Lake by 27th, where a pair displayed on 24th (GB/CGK *et al.*). A displaying pair was at Big Waters on 24th (GB) and a pair was at Airey Holm Reservoir on 25th (IFo). Singles were at East Chevington on 12th, QEII Lake on 13th, Tweed Estuary on 19th and Bothal Pond on 27th.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

Most records came from the Holy Island Harbour-Heugh area where two were present on 17th/25th (IK/IBDa/KDa) and singles were present on four further dates. Singles were also seen at Ross Back Sands (BCFT/GB/MJC) and Amble on 19th (CDB) and Stag Rocks on 29th (AA/MH).



A Red-Necked Grebe in the surf at Amble
Chris Barlow
19th February

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

The largest gatherings were 32 off Ross Back Sands on 7th (MR), where up to ten were seen on four further dates and 15 at Stag Rocks on 29th (AA/MH), up to six were seen here on seven further dates. The peak count at Holy island was four off The Heugh on 6th (MH/AA), where three were noted on 11th/12th. A single was at East Chevington North Pool from 3rd-21st (TB/EC/JSB/IRD *et al.*) and at Cheswick on 28th (MHu).

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Three birds were up in the air together at Low Waskerley on 29th (IFo). Singles were seen at Cronkley on 8th (RMH), Alnwick on 22nd (JMA) and at Woosington Village on 23rd which is possibly only the second sighting there in 200 years (SRB).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Single ringtails were noted at four sites during the month (BB/SJH *et al.*).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Up to a maximum of four birds were at one site regularly during the month (ASJ/MPF/JPD *et al.*). Two birds were at two other sites (MH/AA *et al.*) and at three other sites (ADMc *et al.*).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

The regular pair was at Scotland Gate throughout the month (SLB/MSK) and other pairs were seen at Cramlington, Ellington and Jesmond Dene (LJM/TB/MJCo). Single birds were at 14 other sites during the month, including a female which caught a Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola* which was then rescued by a Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* at Foxton (Alnmouth) on 7th (MHM).



A Sparrowhawk
Eachwick
Chris Barlow
5th February

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Ten + birds were seen at Harwood Forest on 24th (JPD) and ten were also near Alnwick on 5th and on a private estate on 24th (MH). Seven birds were at Derwent Reservoir on 29th (PRM) and five were at Hulne Park (Alnwick) on 24th (JPD). Over 50 records of one to four birds were received.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Nine birds were noted between Bamburgh and Warkworth on 10th (ASJ); four were on a private estate on 26th (MH). Three were seen at Callerton during the month and at Prestwick Carr on 3rd (PCF) and Longhorsley Moor on 13th (AB/LB). Two were noted at Derwent Reservoir, Harwood Forest, Red Row and Warkworth. Single birds were noted at 11 sites including one which tried repeatedly to rob a white Stoat *Mustela erminea* of a mouse at Holy Island Castle on 4th (IK)

A Kestrel hovering at
Prestwick Carr.

John Clark
28th February

**Merlin** *Falco columbarius*

Up to two birds were on Holy Island throughout the month (SR/AH *et al.*). Also on the coast singles were at Cresswell on 15th (BMo), Ross Back Sands on 7th (MR) and at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 12th (DM/STH/IF/PJA). Single birds were at Chathill on 29th (JPL) and Bothal Pond on 11th (TD), and at two inland sites (RNa/SJH).

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

On Holy Island up to two birds were regularly seen (MH/AA *et al.*) and pairs were at two potential breeding sites (ASJ/MH). Single birds were noted at 17 other sites during the month.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Up to three were at Swallow Pond during the month (SPP/JPD) and up to two were seen at Holy Island Lough (IK/SR/AH). Single birds were seen or heard at Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, Gosforth Park NR, Whitley Bay and inland near Tutehill Moss (Harwood) on 7th (ADMc).

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

35 birds were at Druridge Bay CP on 17th (PRM), 28 at Killingworth Lake on 16th (PRM), 25 at Swallow Pond on 12th (JPD), 23 were at Marden Quarry on 12th (AC) and 21 at Woodhorn Flash on 3rd (STH) were the highest counts this month. One to 15 birds were at 14 further sites during the month.

Coot *Fulica atra*

The highest count was 133 birds at QEII CP on 13th (CDH) followed by 131 birds at Killingworth Lake on 5th (GB). 57 were at East Chevington on 17th (PRM), 41 at Druridge Bay CP on 29th (PRM) and one to 38 birds at a 13 further sites.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Ross Back Sands held peak numbers with 349 on 7th (IRD), with good counts elsewhere involving 304 at Cullercoats Bay on 24th (ASJ) and 179 at Berwick (North Shore) on 12th (MHu). Apart from 50 at Derwent Reservoir on 29th (PRM) other double-figure counts of 11-32 came from Haughton Strother GP, Melkridge area (including display), Spartylea (Coatenhill), Tweed Estuary, Warkworth Gut, West Ord and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. First returning birds of the year were noted at a number of sites, including Big Waters on 16th, Arcot Pond on 19th and five at West Hartford on 21st, with one to two also noted at a number of sites further inland including Catcleugh Reservoir, Grindon Lough, Haughton Castle, Hexham, Rothbury, Wark and Weldon Bridge.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

A mixed flock of Ringed Plover and Dunlin at Blyth south harbour numbered 350+ on 19th (DMT). Berwick Little Beach held numbers similar to last month with 102 on 1st and at Berwick North Shore there were 54 on 12th (MHu). Records from elsewhere were few, with 35 at Snab Point (on the beach) on 3rd (TB), a pair at West Stobswood Pool on 29th (MSH) and a single at Cresswell Pond on 8th (TRD/JD) the only reports.

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Large concentrations were in reduced numbers compared to last month, the peak being 500 at Blagdon-Brenkley (in flight) and 400 at Beaconhill (Cramlington), both on 26th and possibly involving the same birds (GB/DM). The Beaconhill (Cramlington) flock had increased from 97 on 5th. At the coast, ca.220 were resting at Seaton Point (Boulmer) on 17th (AB/LB) and 109 were at Cocklawburn on 8th (MHu). Inland groups included 150 at Low Acton Farm (Allendale) on 29th, 120 at both Plenmeller Common on 17th and at Hammershield (Allenheads) on 28th (SJH). Additional counts of 28-100 were made at Callerton-North Walbottle, Haggburn Gate (SW of Allendale), Hollin Green area (near Keenley), Kitty Brewster (Blyth), Paxhill (Allenheads) and St Mary's. Display flights were also noted at two sites in Allendale and at Plenmeller Common in the latter half of the month (SJH).

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

The highest counts were typically in the north, where Ross Back Sands-Wide Open held 60 on 7th (IRD) and 19 were noted at Berwick North Shore on 12th (MHu). Eight were at Cocklawburn on 8th (MHu), six at Warkworth Gut on 7th (MN) and two to five at Cheswick, Newbiggin, St Mary's Island and Stag Rocks, whilst a single bird flew over the frozen pool at Druridge Pools on 3rd.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

A large number of records were received this month, reflecting some obvious movements taking place. The highest count involved ca.800 on a rape field at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 24th (EC), with 520-582 on two dates at Derwent Reservoir (IFo/PRM) and 460+ on Holy Island on 22nd (PRM). Other good-sized flocks included 350+ at Causey Park bridge (Morpeth), 304 at Plenmeller Common and 280+ at East Chevington, all on 17th (PRM/SJH), 200-230 at Bellasis Bridge (Blagdon), Haughton Strother GP, Stamfordham Fen ('waiting for the frost to melt!'), West Hartford and Whemley (Longhorsely).

Smaller groups, including territorial and displaying birds, involved counts of 91-196 at coastal/near-coastal sites such as Ashington and St Mary's, and at the following inland locations: Allendale (Knockshield Burn, Low Acton Farm, Spartylea and Swinhope Shield), Bywell (Peppy Farm), Grindon Lough, Hollin Green (near Keenley), Plenmeller, Ridley Common (Shankhead). Smaller counts of 25-80 were noted at Acomb, Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, Hammershield (near Allenheads), Kitty Brewster (Blyth) and the Tweed Estuary, with additional reports from a further five sites.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Good numbers were again in the Lindisfarne NNR area, with 700-800 in Budle Bay on 12th (DM/STH/IFo/PJA) and 670 on Fenham Flats on 7th (IRD); some 32 were at Cocklawburn on 28th. In the south, 93 were at St Mary's Island on 7th (SPP), 40 at Seaton Sluice on 19th, 24 at Low Hauxley on 29th and a single at Newbiggin on 2nd.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

The Berwick area again held good numbers with 108 at North Shore on 12th and 76 at Little Beach on 1st (MHu). A few reports from elsewhere included 30 at Newbiggin on 3rd, 12 at Low Hauxley on 29th and eight at Cheswick on 3rd.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Numbers at Stag Rocks peaked at 50 on 12th when a female Merlin was watched giving chase to the flock but without success (DM/STH/IFo/PJA). A count of 25 in Blyth South Harbour on 19th was one of the best in recent years (DMT). Additional gatherings in the north included 16 at Seahouses, 15 at Cheswick and 11-12 at two Berwick sites (AJR/MHu) and three at Holy Island, whilst in the south, single-figure counts included eight at Cullercoats Bay, six at St Mary's Island, seven at Newbiggin, two at Amble harbour and one at Low Hauxley.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Some exceptional numbers noted in the south, perhaps as a result of the cold weather, included a site record of 820 on the Blyth estuary on 11th (AC) with a further count of 649 on 14th a personal high for the long-standing WeBS counter (LJM). Other good counts in the south included 305 at Warkworth Gut on 2nd (ADM), 120 at St Mary's Island on 14th (AC), 108 at Cresswell Pond on 12th (ADM) and 76 at Newbiggin on 1st (IRD). Further north, the Berwick area also had very good numbers with 440 at Little Beach on 1st and 376 at North Shore on 12th, and 196 were on the Tweed Estuary on 10th (MHu). Some 150 were at Boulmer on 6th and 100-120 were seen from the Holy Island causeway and nearby Fenham-le-Moor (JMA/DM *et al.*). Groups of 18 were also seen at Cocklawburn and the Coquet estuary, with 13 on the River Tyne at Elswick.

Other untypical reports included 12 some 5km from the Tweed Estuary mouth at Coroner's Meadow (Jack's Island) on 12th (TBr), two on 1st and four on 3rd at a frozen West Hartford (LJM), two at Prestwick Carr on 7th (*per* PCF) and a single at Haughton Strother GP on 27th (MR).

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Several singles were found in the early part of the month: at Callerton / North Walbottle on 2nd (MH), at St Mary's on 6th and 11th (AC), Cresswell Pond on 6th/8th/10th (AT *et al.*) and at Duke's Pond, Rising Sun CP on 8th and 10th (SPP).

A Jack Snipe at Cresswell Pond
8th February by Tim Dean

**Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*

A count of 20 at Callerton / North Walbottle on 2nd (MH) was comfortably the highest, next being nine at each of St Mary's on 3rd (JPD) and Swallow Pond on 29th (JPD). Three were at East Chevington on 17th and otherwise one or two appeared at Arcot Pond/Lane, Big Waters, Cramlington, Gosforth Park NR, Holy Island, Linton Ponds, Newcastle (Town Moor) and West Hartford. Display flighting was noted at Allendale and Plenmeller Common on 28th and near Spartylea on 29th (SJA).

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Three were at Longhorsley Moor on 13th (AB/LB) and at Ellington, Warkworth Lane on 18th (TB) with two at Big Waters, Bradford Kaims, Chugdon Wood and Tranwell Wood. Singles were found at another 12 widespread locations, including one caught by a Sparrowhawk but released by a Black-headed Gull at Alnmouth on 7th (MHM).

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

The two regulars at Holy Island Rocket Field were joined by a third on 5th and all remained at the end of the month (IK *et al.*).

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

The WeBS count at Berwick North Shore revealed 32 on 12th (MHu), 16 were at Cocklawburn on 8th, 12 at St Mary's on 14th and 12 at Hadston Carrs on 17th. Otherwise it was thinly distributed as usual, mostly along the coast with up to five at Kitty Brewster, Long Nanny, Low Hauxley, Newbiggin GC, Newcastle Business Park, Seahouses Harbour, Stag Rocks and the Tweed estuary.



Bar-tailed Godwits at St. Mary's Island
by Adriana Buskin on 29th February

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

On 29th singles were reported from St Mary's (PBU/ABu) and flying N at Ellington, Warkworth Lane (MJC) and these are amongst the earliest ever in the County.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

The largest coastal flocks were 400+ at Harper's Heugh / Budle Fields on 19th (MSH), 117+ at Holy Island Lough & Rocket Fields on 22nd (PRM) and 112 at St Mary's on 10th (ASJ) with 68 at Whitley Bay on 14th, 40 at Holywell Pond on 15th, 38 at Berwick on 12th and 26 at Boulmer on 17th. Movements to inland breeding areas were noted from around mid-month with the first three at Plenmeller Common on 15th and two at Derwent Reservoir on 16th. Late in the month it was well established in parts of Allendale, Hammershield, Melkridge, Plenmeller Common and Spartylea and 41 were at Prestwick Carr on 28th. Small numbers were noted at a further 12 typical widespread sites.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Whittle Dene Reservoirs enjoyed a monopoly with one or two noted throughout (SR *et al.*).

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

The individual at Warkworth Gut was noted on several days up to 12th.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

The winterer in Budle Bay was still present on 25th.

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Again the Tweed Estuary WeBS count produced the most, 358 on 10th (MHu). Otherwise 29 were at Kitty Brewster on 5th, 29 at Elswick Wharf on 23rd, 23 at Berwick North Shore on 12th and small numbers at Cresswell, Druridge Pools and Wallsend. The first well inland were four at Hammershield on 29th (SJH).

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

The Berwick area again held the most with 84 at North Shore on 12th (MHu) and 14 in the Tweed Estuary on 5th. Eight or fewer were seen at Amble, Newbiggin, North Shields Fish Quay and Stag Rocks.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Few records received this month with a peak of only six when birds were seen back at the Tyne Bridge in Newcastle on 29th (DM). Otherwise up to five found at Ross Back Sands on 7th and 19th (MR/BCFT/MJC) and two at the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay on various dates (DMT/BB). The only other sighting reported was more unusual with an adult at Haughton Strother GP near Chollerford on 27th (MR).

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

The two peak counts were at typical sites with at least 3,000 at Derwent Reservoir on 29th (PRM) and 2,125 at the sea roost between Tynemouth and Cullercoats on 17th (DMT). Another high concentration was 800 at Cocker Park on 26th (JR). Flocks of 370 to 380 were noted at Killingworth Lake, QE II CP and West Ord. Smaller groups of 100 to 170 were found at Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Blyth Harbour, Grindon Lough, Leazes Park, Tweed Estuary and Tyne Estuary. Otherwise up to 90 found at several other locations.

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

A first-winter seen on 2nd on the beach at Newbiggin (TB) may well have been the same individual seen later the same day off Amble flying N (ADM/AT). Always a scarce bird in winter.



Two February views of a Mediterranean Gull at Amble.
Left (ring YJU7) by John Clark on 10th and right by Chris Barlow on 19th

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

The numbers at Newbiggin stayed fairly static with the peak being nine on 7th (MN) with smaller numbers on other dates. Mostly adults involved with at least two first-winters and one second-winter. Otherwise single adults noted at St Mary's Island on 7th and 11th (SPP/AC), Swallow Pond on 17th (SPP), Amble on 20th and 25th (SPP/CDB), Budle Bay on 22nd (PRM) and Bamburgh on 24th (JPD).

Common Gull *Larus canus*

The peak count was an impressive 9,000 at the gull roost on Derwent Reservoir on 29th (PRM). Also notable were 1,500 at Cockle Park on 26th (JR) and 850 at the sea roost between Cullercoats and Tynemouth on 17th (DMT). 430 were noted at Haughton Strother GP on 22nd (MR) and at least 340 were roosting at Tower Knowe at Kielder Reservoir on 12th (PRM/EAW). Groups of 100 to 226 were noted at Big Waters, North Acomb Farm, Tyne Estuary and Whittle Dene Reservoir with up to 70 at several other locations.

A Common Gull
Druridge Bay 28th January
Chris Barlow

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

In the first two weeks only the odd wintering bird was noted with the adult at Cramlington still being seen all month and at nearby Arcot Pond on 2nd (DM). At Swallow Pond two adults on 11th had increased to three adults, a second-winter & a first-winter by 28th (JPD/SPP). A definite return though from 14th with sightings at Big Waters, Blyth Harbour, Budle Bay, Derwent Reservoir, Exhibition Park (Newcastle), Grindon Lough, Jesmond Dene, Newburn Haugh and Palmersville. All were single adults except for a single first-winter at Newburn Haugh. The low numbers were indicative of a tentative return.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argenteus*

The peak count was at the reliable site of the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay where 801 were noted on 2nd (DMT). Other counts involved 244 at Stag Rocks, Bamburgh on 25th (AT), 156 at the Tweed Estuary on 10th during a WeBS survey (MHu) and 129 at Blyth South Harbour on 4th (DMT). The only passage observations were on the 18th at Emmanuel Head on Holy Island with 100 during a steady movement N and 19th with 100 per hour N at Stag Rocks and Ross (BCFT/MJC). Elsewhere up to 23 at several sites.

'Northern' Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argentatus*

Only a single report of this northern race with nine adults at the North Shields Fish Quay on 16th (PRM).

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucooides*

The influx into the county in January remained with North Shields Fish Quay being the main focus. At least five birds involved there with three juveniles, one second-winter and a near adult all being seen on 1st (AC). A gradual reduction noted during the month with only one juvenile and the near adult remaining by the end. The same individuals were sometimes observed on the Black Middens at Tynemouth. The adult at Swallow Pond was regularly noted from 8th through to 28th (SPP/JPD). Otherwise only a single second-winter found at Killingworth Lake on 15th (GB).



Iceland Gulls at North Shields Fish Quay in February
Left a near adult by Tim Dean on 2nd and right a juvenile by Colin Bradshaw

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

Unlike Iceland Gull this species was still decidedly scarce with only a single first-winter being noted at Newburn on 14th (BB).

A first-winter Glaucous Gull
Newburn
by Brian Bullough
14th February

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

Numbers reported still low with only the regularly watched sites showing any concentrations with 74 at the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay on 26th with 66 at Blyth Harbour on 4th (DMT). 28 were found at Budle Bay on 12th (DM/STH/IFo/PJA). Otherwise only up to 14 noted at six sites.

Auk sp *Uria aalge* / *Alca Torda*

Around 30 were seen flying N during a Bird Club field trip to Ross Back Sands on 19th (BCFT/MJC).

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

Numbers still low with up to seven found at Cocklawburn, Newbiggin, Ross Back Sands, Spittal Bay, St Mary's, Snab Point (Cresswell) and Stag Rocks (Bamburgh).

Razorbill *Alca Torda*

The peak count was at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) with at least 40 present on 24th (ASJ). Otherwise mainly in the North with up to eight seen at Holy Island, Ross Back Sands and Stag Rocks. The only other sighting away from here was of three off Warkworth Gut on 12th (DM/STH/IFo/PJA).

Black Guillemot *Cephus grylle*

A first-winter was first located off Stag Rocks, Bamburgh on 12th (DGB/STH/DM/IFo/PJA) with frequent sightings there from 21st to 24th (JSB/EC/JPD/ASJ/MPF/PRM). It stayed close inshore near the lighthouse giving unusually close views. The small wintering population of a few birds normally stays close to the Farne Islands, hence the appreciative audience.

Rock Dove / Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*

Seahouses harbour held 60+ birds on 25th (DWS/BS) with the peak monthly counts being 48 at North Shields Fish Quay on 4th, 27 at Blyth South harbour on 19th (DMT) and two at Beatty Avenue (South Gosforth) on 23rd (MJCo).

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Some good numbers, the largest counts being 37 at Heron Lea Farm (Allenheads) on 16th (JPD), 34+ at Brenkley Drift (Blagdon) on 10th (GB), 30 at Angertonmoor Cottage on 17th (JSB/EC), 22 at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 25th with 17 there on 26th (TB), 20 at Swallow Pond on 17th (SPP), 19 at Haughton Strother GP on 27th (MR), 18 at Ovingham on 12th (PCF) and 16 at Callerton / N Walbottle on 5th (MH). Six to 15 were at Allendale, Allenheads, Backworth, Big Waters, Jesmond Dene and Swallow Pond with one to five at nine other widely spread localities.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

A large gathering was noted at Whittle Dene from 2nd peaking at around 1,500 on 24th (EC/MR/PCF), the next largest being 250 at Woodfoot (Slaley) on 5th and near Riding Mill on 15th (RMH/IFo), 220 at Union Bridge Berwick on 12th (TBr), 180 at West Hartford on 17th (STH) and 150 at Swallow Pond on 23rd (JPD). Six to 86 were at Allendale, Holywell Dene, Jesmond Dene, South Gosforth, Tritlington and Walbottle.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Only two reports of four at Dinnington on 23rd (PCF) and one to two in an Old Hartley garden during the month (RJP).

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Numerous reports but all single birds at 21 widely spread locations with regular sightings at Bamburgh and Newcastle Airport. An immature female was trapped and ringed at Prestwick Carr on 19th (AdeG per PCF) but five road casualties were reported, the A1 being the prime culprit (IRD/AJ).

Barn Owl is a **target species** for 2012. Please report all records.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Two birds found during January remained at North Walbottle all month (AJ) and a pair were observed all month from the observer's house in Ovington (SAS) with two calling after dark at Wark (N Tyne) on 11th (PRM). Singles were at Shildon Grange (Corbridge), Dinnington, East Shield Hill and Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on two dates with a road casualty found at Stagshaw on 11th.

Little Owl is a **target species** for 2012. Please report all records.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Two males and a female called at Wark (N Tyne) on 12th (PRM), two birds called all month at Scotland Gate (SLB/MSK), at Ellington on four dates (TB) and Melkridge on two dates (SJH) with a pair near the A1 at Felton on 29th (JPL). Singles were seen or heard at the above noted locations and at Alnwick, Coanwood, Dipton Wood, Felton Lane, Haughton Strother, Havannah NR, Heddon Steads, Holywell Dene, Linden Hall, South Charlton, Walbottle, Wallington and Northumberland Park (North Shields) all month. A road casualty was found on the A69 near Bardon Mill.

Tawny Owl is a **target species** for 2012. Please report all records.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otis*

Just three reports with two at a confidential site in the county and singles, possibly the same birds, at two locations nearby on 12th (AT/SLB/MSK).

Long-eared Owl is a **target species** for 2012. Please report all records..

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

The peak count at Prestwick Carr was ten on 3rd and 11th with multiple counts most days during the month and a bird trapped and ringed on 12th (PCF/BMo/AdeG). Seven were at West Hartford on 17th (STH), five at Black Lough (Edlingham) on 6th (IBDa/KDa), four at Brenkley Drift (Blagdon) on 10th (GB) and Callerton / North Walbottle on 11th (MH). Two were at Alnmouth, Arcot Pond, Backworth, Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Longhirst GC, Plenmeller Common, West Allerdene, West Chevington and Whittle Dene with singles at these and a further six locations. A road casualty was at Wallhope (Longframlington) on 25th.

Short-eared Owl is a **target species** for 2012. Please report all records.



Above A Short-eared at Prestwick Carr by Peter Fletcher on 1st February and, right, a Great Spotted Woodpecker at Gosforth NR on 18th February by Chris Barlow

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Three were on the Ouseburn on 19th (TW) with two noted in Jesmond Dene on 10th, 12th & 20th (MJCo/MJC) and at Thrum Mill (Rothbury) on 22nd (JD). Singles were at Branton GP and Horton Burn (Cramlington) all month, Haughton Strother GP, Mitford, Morpeth, Sleaf Burn, Wallington Hall and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

A single bird called near the observer's house at Rothbury regularly during the month (TRD/JD) with birds seen or heard at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on four dates (TB) and Bassington NR Cramlington on two (DM/STH/PJA/IFo).

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Drumming birds were prevalent with four reported from Kirkley Hall on 4th (IK), Jesmond Dene on 26th (MJCo), Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 26th (TB), Horsley Wood on the same date (IK) and Wallington Hall on 28th (PRM/EAW). Three were drumming at Holywell Dene on 24th with a pair coming regularly to feeders there and at Tynemouth (CS/RJP/CB). Two were also at Arcot Pond, Berwick, Gosforth Park NR, Harwood Forest, Leazes Park and Wallsend Park. Singles were seen or heard regularly at Armstrong Park, Cramlington, Heaton Park, Holy Island Village and Scotland Gate with reports from a further ten widespread localities.



Great Grey Shrike *Lamius excubitor*

Singles were at Otterburn Ranges on 12th (ASJ/RD), Tarsset Forest on 23rd (MD) and at Black Down on the Ray Estate on 26th (MH). The single bird at Prestwick Carr went unseen for three weeks but was re-found on 20th staying till the month end (PCF/JSB/EC).

Magpie *Pica pica*

The peak count was 68 at Swallow Pond on 19th (JPD), with 42 at Killingworth Lake on 12th (GB), 12 at Prestwick Carr on 5th (PCF), ten at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 2nd (DM), six at Attlee Park (Bedlington) on 27th (JR) and in a Walbottle garden on 19th (KR/LR). One to four were at five further locations.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Four were at Plessey Woods CP on 27th (JR) with three at Arcot Hall GC on 19th (DM) and near North Acomb Farm on 26th (SAS). Two were at Choppington Woods and Swallow Pond all month and also at Bywell, Cramlington, Jesmond Dene and Wylam with singles at five further widespread localities.



Two Jackdaws: left, a 'nordic' bird at Throckley on 13th February by Peter Fletcher and right, a bird at Amble on 28th January by Chris Barlow

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula* / **Rook** *Corvus frugilegus*

A mixed flock of 550 was at Brier Dene Farm, Whitley Bay on 17th (MNC).

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

The largest counts were 600 at Branton GP on 20th (IBDa/KDa), 500 at Haughton Strother GP on 12th (MR), 150 at Forestburn Gate on 24th (JR), 130 at Old Hartley on 19th (JPD), 120 at Town Moor (Newcastle) on 22nd (GB) and 100 at Woolsington on 26th with 90+ at Wark (N Tyne) on 11th (PRM) and 48 at Newburn on 14th (AT). One to 13 were at Beadnell, Hazlerigg, Jesmond Dene and Walbottle.

Birds showing characteristics of the Nordic race ssp *monedula* were at Throckley on 12th (PCF) and Killingworth on 25th (GB).

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

400 moved towards a roost at New York on 1st (CB), 100+ were at Old Hartley on 19th (JPD) with 14 around a rookery of ten nests at Simonburn on 25th (JR).

A Rook
28th January
Amble
Chris Barlow



Carriion Crow *Corvus corone*

A pre-roost gathering of 52 was at Newcastle Town Moor on 6th (GB), 47+ foraged at the Ray Estate on 3rd (MH), 46 in the Tweed Estuary on 29th (MHu) and 43 in the Tyne Estuary on 17th (DMT). 27 were at West Hartford on 17th, 16 at Elswick Wharf on 23rd and four at Jesmond Dene on 20th.



A Carrion Crow plays with its food at Cresswell on 18th February by Chris Barlow

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

A single was at Longhoughton Steel on 7th (JSB/EC) and at Budle Bay on 12th (DGB).

Raven *Corvus corax*

Six were in the Bilsmoor area on 13th (ADMc) and four foraged on the moor edge at Asholme Common on 1st (MH/AA) with three south of the gibbet at Harwood Forest on 19th (NFO/ADMc). Two were at Plenmeller Common on 8th, near Redesmouth on 13th, Holystone and the Ray Estate on 26th with singles at Allen Banks, Berwick, Branton, Kielder, Thrunton Woods and Plenmeller.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Five birds sang at Whittle Wood (Horsley) on 21st (RMH) with two singing at Grindon Lough on 29th (PRM) and two at Jesmond Dene on 20th (MJCo). A single was found in Percy Street (Newcastle) on 29th (DM) and one fed in a Walbottle garden all month (KR/LR) with others at Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Bay, Heaton Park and Wark.

**Blue Tit** *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Counts at Bedlington found 22 at Free Wood on 5th, 21 at Humford Mill on 27th, 20 at East Sleekburn on 5th, 17 at Plessey Woods CP on 27th, 14 at Furnace Bridge (R Blyth) and Kitty Brewster on 5th and 13 at Attlee Park (Bedlington) on 27th (JR). Ten at Wallington Hall on 4th included a pale 'ghost' bird also seen on 3rd (CDB/TRD/JD) with one to five at Cresswell Pond, Jesmond Dene, South Gosforth, and Walbottle.

The 'washed out' Blue Tit at Wallington 3rd February by Tim Dean

Great Tit *Parus major*

A peak count of 14 at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 11th (DM), ten at Humford Mill (Bedlington) on 27th (JR) with nine at Prestwick Carr on 4th (PCF), Free Wood (Bedlington) on 5th and eight at East Sleekburn on the same date. Six were at Jesmond Dene on 26th, Plessey Woods and Attlee Park (Bedlington) on 27th, five at Plessey Woods CP visitor centre and four at Furnace Bridge (R Blyth) and Kitty Brewster.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Six was the largest count at Free Wood and Humford Mill (Bedlington) on 5th and 27th (JR) with five in Jesmond Dene on 5th (MJCo), four at Plessey Woods and Attlee Park Bedlington on 27th and one to four in an Old Hartley garden during the month (RJP).

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

One to two were at Swallow Pond all month (SPP/JPD) and coming to feeders at Sleafy Hall where they were ringed as adult and 1st winter on the 6th (RMH). A pair were at Linnels Wood on 11th (MD/AM) and at Prestwick Carr on 25th (PCF) with singles at Gubeon near Morpeth on 3rd (AT), Whittle Woods on 28th (SAS) and occasionally at Scotland Gate throughout the month (SLB/MSK).

A Willow Tit in a Tranwell garden
Peter Tapsell

**Marsh Tit** *Poecile palustris*

A pair were at Burnfoot near Featherstone on 1st (MH/AA), two at Haughton Strother GP on the same date (MR) and at Mitford on 5th and 21st (IRD/ADMc) with singles at Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth) on 7th (AT) and singing at Linden Hall on three dates from 4th to 19th (NFO).

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Well reported as birds returned, the peak counts being 94 moving N/NW in two hours at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 25th (AT), 70+ on stubble at St Mary's Island on 3rd (JPD) with 55 there on 2nd (ASJ) and 40 on 5th (MSH). Stubble also attracted flocks of 48 at Haughton Strother GP on 27th (MR) and 42 at Callerton / North Walbottle on 2nd (MH) with 31 at Hammershields nr Allenheads on 29th (SJH) and 22 at Beaconhill (Cramlington) on 5th (STH). Ten to 19 were at Cocklawburn, Ellington, Hollin Green and Swallow Pond with one to nine, many noted singing, at 19 widely spread localities.

Shore Lark *Eremophila alpestris*

One was at Ross Back Sands on 8th (JMA).

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Two tribes totalling 33 were at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 25th (TB) and 30+ in Jesmond Dene on 12th (MJC). In Wallsend Dene, three feeding parties totalled 25 on 4th (PBu/ABu), whilst 20 (mostly paired) were in the Allen Banks – Judas Crag area on 25th (MJC). Elsewhere 16 were at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 15th and 11-14 at Gosforth Park NR, Holywell Dene, Netherton Park (Stannington), Prestwick Carr, Walbottle and Wark (N. Tyne). Counts of seven to nine were also received from Belford, Etal-Ford, Hexham, Killingworth Lake and Walker Park (Newcastle) and one to five from a further 16 localities, several of which were already paired.

A Long-tailed Tit at Marden Quarry
29th February by Adriana Buskin



Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

One at Druridge Pools on 3rd was the only record. This was a different bird from that noted in January, which was metal-ringed.



A Chiffchaff braves the ice
Druridge Pools on 6th February by Chris Barlow

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Six birds were reported from five gardens. Two were at Warkworth on 13th and one on 1st (JMA) and singles at Heddon-on-the-Wall on 9th and 29th (JSB), Monkseaton on 9th (AAM), South Gosforth on 7th and 25th (MJCo) and Tynemouth on 4th (DRW).

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

Eight flew W at Holystone (Newcastle) on 14th (CGK). At Blyth, eight were noted on 23rd (TB) and four on 25th (SLB/MSK); three were in hawthorns at Newmoor (Ashington) on 17th before flying off N (TB).

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Six were reported from Jesmond Dene on 5th (JPD); six singing males at Horsley Wood on 26th appeared to indicate a very healthy population in that area (IK). Many were singing at Kirkley Hall on 14th (IK), whilst elsewhere four were at Humford Mill (Bedlington) on 27th, three at Wallington Hall on 28th, two + at Featherstone on 1st and two at Free Wood (Bedlington), Holywell Dene, Northumberland Park (North Shields) and a Stamfordham garden. Singles were reported from Arcot Pond, Haughton Castle, Valley Park-Cramlington (only the third record here in 21 years) and Wark (North Tyne).

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Five were in Jesmond Dene on 12th (MJC) and Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 25th (TB). Four were seen together at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 1st and four were also at Warkworth Lane on 18th. Two were reported from Hexham Abbey, Holywell Dene, Leazes Park (Newcastle), Wark (North Tyne) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs and singles from a further nine localities.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

In the Bedlington area, eight were found in Attlee Park and seven at Humford Mill on 27th and five at Free Wood on 5th (JR). The only other report was of three in Jesmond Dene on 26th.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

A roost at Brunswick Green held 3,500 on 10th increasing to 5,000 by 26th (GB). At Prestwick Carr 1,000 flew E on 13th (PCF) and 640 were at Berwick GC on 23rd. In the Allendale-Allenheads area counts included 600 at Paxhill on 29th, 400 at Knockshield Burn and at Hammershield on 28th and 350 at Low Acton Farm on 29th; 300 were at

Plenmeller Common on 19th. Elsewhere 100-200 were reported from Blagdon, Cresswell Pond, Keenly, Ridley Common, Spartylea and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Pairs were well established in breeding areas. In Jesmond Dene, four included a pair nest-building at the Waterfall (with others at Benton Bank Bridge and Quarry-MJCo/DHWP). Three singing males were found between Allen Banks-Judas Craggs on 25th (MJC) and three were at Thrum Mill (Rothbury) on 29th (TRD/JD). Further pairs were reported from Budle Bay (Waren Burn), Free Wood (Bedlington), Furnace Bridge (R. Blyth), Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Elsewhere singles were noted at Berwick Hill Bridge, Bywell Bridge, Carey Burn, Elsdon, Holywell Dene, Plessey Woods, Ridley Stokoe, Scaup Burn (Kielder), Wark (North Tyne) and Weldon Bridge.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

25 at Swallow Pond on 28th was the highest count (JPD); the peak count from a Walbottle garden was 16 on 26th (KR/LR) and 16 were at East Sleekburn on 5th (JR). 12 were at Free Wood (Bedlington) on 5th, 11 in a garden at Marden Estate (Tynemouth) on 15th, nine at Humford Mill and eight at Plessey Woods CP on 27th and one to seven at a further four localities.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Flocks of 150 were reported from Shadfen on 3rd (TB) and Crindledykes on 8th (SJH), 93 were at Featherstone on 1st and 85 at Longhorsley on 17th. Elsewhere 50-70 were noted at Bywell, Harwood Forest, Morpeth, North Acomb Farm (Corbridge), Swallow Pond, Whittle Wood and Yearle and 20-37 at Allendale, High Horton and Wark (North Tyne).

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Seven were in song at Swallow Pond by 28th (JPD); five were at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 1st and Jesmond Dene on 26th (MR/MJCo) and four at Prestwick Carr on 4th. Further singing males included four at Northburn (Cramlington) on 29th and three at Thrunton Woods on 26th. One to three were reported from a further ten localities.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

On Holy Island light influx was noted from the mainland during a freeze early in the month (IK). Up to 40 were at Morpeth on 13th and 27th (TB) and 20 in Jesmond Dene on 22nd (GB). The species was generally very scarce, the only other reports received were of 12-18 at Bywell, Longhorsley and Shadfen and two to seven at a further four localities.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Four singing males were at Thrunton Woods on 26th (MJC). Four were also at Hammershield (Allenheads) on 28th (SJH) and Shadfen on 3rd and one to three at a further seven localities, including Longhorsley where a bird was seen carrying nest material.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

12 in Attlee Park (Bedlington) on 27th was the highest count (JR). Nine were singing at Holywell Dene on 15th (ASJ) and nine were at Humford Mill on 27th (JR). Six to seven were also reported from East Sleekburn and Free Wood (Bedlington) on 5th (JR) and Walker Riverside Park on 18th (PBu/ABu) and one to five at a further four localities.



An inquisitive Robin
Prestwick Carr
6th February
Peter Fletcher



The popular Black Redstart at Newbiggin
6th February
Chris Barlow

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

A first-winter male at Newbiggin from 2nd-5th (TRD/JD/CDB) disappeared briefly before being relocated on 19th (CDB).

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

On the coast, five were at Warkworth Gut on 2nd (AT/ADMc) and up to three at Cresswell Pond (ASJ) and at East Chevington (JSB/EC) during the month; two were reported from Buston Links, Cocklawburn, Druridge Pools, Monks' House Pool, Seaton Sluice and Stag Rocks and a single at Ross Back Sands. Inland birds were still very scarce with four (two pairs feeding together) on the Otterburn Ranges on 12th (ASJ), two at Green Side (Alwinton) on 11th, a pair at Widehope on 13th and a female at Alnwick Moor on 12th.

A cock Stonechat at
Druridge Bay 28th January
by Chris Barlow



Dunnoek *Prunella modularis*

Five were noted at a Walbottle garden on 26th (KR/IR), four at Dinnington on 9th (PLF), three at East Sleekburn on 5th (JR) and Attlee Park (Bedlington) on 27th (JR). One to two were also at Jesmond Dene and South Gosforth.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Large gatherings involved 100 at Cullercoats Bay on 3rd (MN), 52 at Cramlington High School on 2nd (DM), 50+ at Holy Island on 25th (DWS) and 22 at East Sleekburn on 5th (JR).

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Large groups included 250 at Mindrum all month (*per* NNBC), 155 at Low Angerton including 85 in a garden on 12th (ASJ/RD), 45 near Blyth Cemetery on 3rd (ASJ) declined to 21 on 11th (LJM), 22 at Loanend (Horncliffe) on 25th (AT), 15 visited Holywell Pond feeding station on 16th (SPP) and 13 at Whittle Farm on 13th (TW). One to ten were noted at a further nine widespread localities including gardens at Linden Hall (NFO), Netherton Park (Stannington – TWM/MIM), Walbottle (KR/LR) and Warkworth (JMA).

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Four were observed at Holywell Dene on 23rd (RJP), three at Jesmond Dene on 20th (MJCo), two at Thrum Mill (Rothbury) on 18th (JD) and Whittle Dene on 29th (PRM). Singles were at a further eight typical localities.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

A pre-roost gathering of 46 was observed feeding at QE II CP on 21st (TB) and 18 leaving a roost at Ellington on 15th (TB).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

50+ were at St. Mary's Island on 3rd (JPD), 17 at Backworth on 8th (CGK), 13 at West Hartford on 17th (STH/JPA), ten at Prestwick Carr on 4th (PCF) and seven at Ray Estate on 3rd (MH). One to four were at a further six widespread localities.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Three were at Berwick Little Beach on 1st (MHu), two at the Tweed Estuary on 5th (MHu) and one at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 12th (DM/STH/IFo/PJA).

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

150+ were on a traditional sheep/neeps field at Titlington near Powburn on 12th (MH), 100 at Belford on 19th (GB), 60 at Low Angerton on 12th (ASJ/RD), 50+ at feeders at Featherstone Park Station on 1st (MH/AA), 26 at East Ord on 18th (MHu), 24 at East Sleekburn on 5th (JR) and one to 13 at a further seven widespread localities.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

28 were in the park close to Hexham Abbey on 22nd (PBu/ABu), 25 at Ridsdale on 26th (MD/AM), 13+ at Elsdon on 17th (JSB/EC), five at Branton on 8th (IBDa/KDa), three to five on garden feeders at West Woodburn all month (MU *per* AA) and one-two at Druridge Bay CP, Harwood Forest, Holywell Pond, Rothbury and Yearle.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chlorisand*

62 were at Fenham-le-Moor on 11th (ASJ), 34 at a Walbottle garden on 5th (KR/LR), 12 at Bassington NR (Cramlington) on 4th (STH), ten at Beaconhill (Cramlington) on 5th (STH), seven at East Sleekburn on 5th (JR) and one to four at a further four widespread localities.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

150+ were found at Swallow Pond on 20th (SPP), 90+ coming into roost at the Village Hotel, Cobalt Business Park (North Shields) on 3rd (CGK), 72 on feeders at East Ord on 18th (MHu), 62 at Yearle on 24th (DGB/RHB), 50 at Beadnell all month (JPL), 32 at Knowesgate on 24th (MH) and 11 at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 4th (DM). One to ten were at a further seven widespread localities.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Well recorded this month. The largest gatherings involved 126 at Newburn on 12th (PCF), 70+ near North Acomb on 26th (SAS), 60 at Ashington on 3rd (TB), 50 at Alnwick pastures on 9th (JMA) and Whittle Wood (Horsley) on 21st (RMH), 40 at Horsley Wood on 26th (IK) and Harwood Village area on 26th (SRB), 30 at Green Batt (Alnwick) on 1st (JMA), 25-30 at Swallow Pond on 10th (SPP) and 27 at Humford Mill (Bedlington) on 27th (JR). One to 25 were at a further 22 widespread localities including gardens at Foxton (Alnmouth), Fulbeck (Morpeth), Netherton Park (Stannington), Old Hartley, Ovington, South Gosforth and Walbottle.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

200+ were recorded at Low Angerton on 12th (ASJ/RD), 150 at Branton on 8th (IBDa/KDa), 108+ near North Acomb Farm on 29th (SAS), 90 at Hemscott Links (Cresswell) on 3rd (ASJ), 80 at Big Waters on 10th (GB), 25+ at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 25th (DWS) and two at West Allotment on 29th (ASJ).

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

120 favoured Hemscotthill Links (Cresswell) on 3rd ((ASJ/JPD) declined to 45 by 15th (BMo). 100+ at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 3rd (ASJ/JPD) declined to 25+ by 25th (DWS). 33+ were also at Beal Point on 6th (AA/MH).

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis caberet*

25 were noted at Swallow Pond on 12th (JPD), 12 at Ellington Pond on 18th (TB), seven from an office window at Morpeth on 10th (TB), four at Widehope on 13th (JD) and one at a Fulbeck (Morpeth) garden on 10th and 13th (TD).

Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

150 were found in Harwood Forest on 1st indicating birds singing several song phases not recorded before in the county indicating a very different invasion population (STE). Throughout the month at Harwood, 60 were recorded between the Village and Tutehill Moss on 13th (BB), 40+ at Harwood Head on 29th (MSH) and 30 (including one juvenile) at Winter's Gibbet on 19th ((BB). Kielder Forest also proved to be a magnet with innumerable numbers throughout the forest on 22nd (STE). Within the forest 130+ (including 20 singing males) were found around Leaplish on 12th (PRM/EAW), 30-40 at Tasset on 17th (MD), 25 at Bakethin on 26th (MD), ten pairs at Tower Knowle on 7th (MD) and Akenshaw Burn on 19th (IRD). Elsewhere, 55+ were at Wallington Hall on 28th (PRM/EAW), three at Thrunton Woods on 11th (JD) increased to 40 there by 26th (MJC), eight at Capheaton on 15th (STE), six at Greyhound Law near Byrness on 14th (IRD), six at Ray Estate on 26th (MH) and one to five at Bolam Lake, Bywell, Fulbeck (Morpeth), Linden Hall, Swallow Pond, West Allotment Pond and Widehope.



A juvenile Crossbill at Harwood Forest
Brian Bullough on 22nd February

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

15-28 were recorded in the Ford/Etal area all month (*per* NNBC), ten in the park next to Hexham Abbey on 22nd (PBU/ABU), seven at Harwood Forest on 1st (STE), along the Horton Burn (Cramlington) on 4th (LJM) and Ellington on 25th (TB), six daily at Scotland Gate (SLB/MSK), five at Wylam on 12th (STE) and one to four at a further 29 widespread localities including garden feeding stations at Fulbeck (Morpeth), Netherton Park (Stannington), Old Hartley, Ovington, South Gosforth and Walbottle.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

20 at the stubble field next to Blyth Cemetery on 3rd (JPD) declined to 14 by the 11th (LJM). Eight were at Warkworth Gut on 3rd (AT/ADM), two at Spittal Beach (Berwick) between 5th-7th (BWG) and inland two flying N over A68 near Cowden on 28th (IFo).

Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*

One on the north shore, Holy Island on 19th was the only record (IK).

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Well recorded throughout the month with 200+ at Fenham-le-Moor on 11th (ASJ), 150 at Loanend (Horncliffe) on 25th (AT), 80+ at Adderstone on 19th (MSH), 70 in the stubble field next to Blyth Cemetery on 3rd (ASJ/MPF/JPD) and St. Mary's Island on 5th (AC), 55+ in the Callerton/North Walbottle area on 2nd (MH), 32 at Whittle Dene on 15th (SR), 20 at Brunswick near Wideopen on 5th ((GB), Cresswell Pond on 9th (IDR) and Big Waters on 10th (GB), 18 at Beacon Lane Paddocks (Cramlington) on 12th (DM) and Thornton on 26th (MHu). One to 15 were at a further eight widespread localities.

A Yellowhammer at Cresswell
6th February
Chris Barlow

**Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus*

62 were found in the St. Mary's Island area on 3rd (ASJ), 58 near Blyth Cemetery on 3rd (ASJ/MPF/JPD), 14+ amongst Yellowhammers in the Callerton/North Walbottle area on 2nd (MH), three at Brunswick near Wideopen on 5th (GB), Fenham-le-Moor on 12th (DM/STH/PJA/IFo) and Big Waters on 10th (GB). One to two were at a further nine widespread localities including an Alnwick garden.

ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN**Escapes****Muscovy Duck** *Cairina moschata*

A pair were again on the River Tyne at Elswick Wharf until at least 12th (DM/PCF). Also one remained at Bolam Lake on 4th (CDB).

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

One was again noted at Killingworth Lake on 12th (LJM).

The Bolam Muscovy duck
Chris Barlow
29th January

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Hauxley Ringing Station, Natural History Society of Northumbria, North Northumberland Bird Club, Northern Experience Wildlife Tours.

Apologies for any accidental omissions.

BULLETIN COMPILATION AND PRODUCTION

This bulletin was compiled by Lindsay McDougall (Mute Swan to Egyptian Goose, Red Grouse to Black-necked Grebe), Graeme Bowman (Ruddy Shelduck to Ruddy Duck), Trevor Blake (Honey Buzzard to Crane), Steve Holliday (Oystercatcher to Dunlin), Ian Forsyth (Snipe to Skua), Tim Dean (Ivory Gull to Puffin, Escapes, Hybrids and Unknown Origin, List of Contributors, Highlights), Peter Fletcher (Feral Pigeon to Red-rumped Swallow), Mike Richardson (Cetti's Warbler to Pied Flycatcher), Eddie Crabtree (Dunnock to Corn Bunting), Julie Roper/Dan Turner (WeBS Coastal Counts) and Steve Holliday (WeBS Inland Counts). Thanks again to Ann McKeown for typing the section Dunnock to Corn Bunting. Thanks to David Sanders of NNBC for providing data. Proof reading was by Mike Smith.

Edited by Steve Barrett NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.com

Postal distribution by Brian Bullough.

RECORD SUBMISSION

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 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 NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.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 cost of printing and stamps.

Ask for an e-mailed bulletin from: jo.bentley@waitrose.com

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS 2011

Annual subscription is a £23. For membership enquiries please contact jo.bentley@waitrose.com

NTBC WEB SITE

The Club website is an excellent resource for all interested in birds in the north east. There are numerous interesting sections, including a photograph gallery, site information and trip reports together with extensive reference information for birding in our area. The site is at www.ntbc.org.uk

If you have any ideas or things you would like to see or hear about on the site please let Chris know on 0751 582 5024 or e-mail christopher.knox@o2.co.uk

NTBC SIGHTINGS PAGE

The club sightings web page gives listings of birds seen locally. Adding a sighting is simple. A short e-mail is all that is needed. If anyone would like to be added as a contributor please contact Alan Tilmouth at ntbcorg@gmail.com. The sightings page can be found at <http://ntbcsightings.posterous.com>

INDOOR MEETINGS

The next indoor meeting will be at Northern Rugby Club, McCracken Park, Great North Road, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 2DT on Thursday 12th April at 7pm for the ever-popular **Members' Night**.

We will feature;

Gary Woodburn on Patch Birding at Beadnell and Newton and
Ian Kerr on Holy Island Migration

FIELD TRIPS

The next trip organised by Trevor Blake is to the Harthope Valley on Saturday May 12th. This wonderful valley in the Cheviots should provide many moorland species and upland summer visitors.

Please contact Trevor Blake for more information: trevor.1958@live.co.uk

NTBC COMMITTEE NEWS

BLUE SKY MAIDEN'S HALL WIND FARM APPLICATION

An application to develop a 13-turbine wind farm in the Maiden's Hall/West Chevington area has recently been submitted to Northumberland County Council. The plans are currently viewable on the NCC website. NCC have expressed concerns over the scheme because it presents something of a wall of turbines just east of the large lakes being created as part of the restoration of the Maiden's Hall/Steadsburn opencast. The ornithological survey work included in the Environmental Statement was completed prior to this winter, and so missed all the recent goose activity. After discussion, the NTBC committee have agreed to supply NCC with all club records concerning this area from 2011/2012 to provide an indication of the activity levels since the inception of the lakes. We would encourage members visiting the recently restored lakes at Stobswood and Maiden's Hall to submit records/counts of anything they find there and to view the on-line plans on the NCC website providing any comments there they feel appropriate.

CHRISTMAS QUIZ

The winner of Graeme Bowman's Christmas Quiz was Michael Frankis.

Answers were; Cormorant, Storm Petrel, Ruddy Duck, Willow Tit, Little Egret, Turtle Dove, Starling, Osprey, Marsh Harrier, Golden Eagle, Avocet, Lesser Scaup, Wryneck, Kingfisher, Dunnock, Greater Yellowlegs and Cattle Egret.

Solution - **Mediterranean Gull**

NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY OF NORTHUMBRIA
Natural History Education Courses - Summer Term 2012

Birds of the North East: Bird Song & Breeding Behaviour Tuesdays from 1st May

Expert ornithologist David Noble-Rollin leads this 10-week course teaching the songs, calls and breeding behaviour of birds living in the North East. Indoor classes use field guides, film, photos, diagrams and sound recordings. There will be 5 field visits to a variety of habitats including Farne Islands, Druridge Bay, Northumberland National Park and lowland woodlands and wetlands.

There is a choice of 2 courses beginning at 10.15am or 1pm. Cost: £83 (Concessions: £67)

Northumbrian Rivers

Wednesdays from 2nd May, 10.15am

The Wear, Tyne, Coquet, Aln and Till: from the boggy hilltops of the Cheviots and Pennines sharp, quick streams descend to wide meandering valleys and the sea. Northumbria's rivers each have their own unique character. Over 10 sessions Derek Teasdale will explore how the interplay of underlying geology and water has, over immense time, created the familiar landscapes of our river catchments. 5 indoor classes, one ½ day field trip and 2 full-day trips. Cost: £83 (Concessions: £67)

Wildlife Digital Photography

Wednesdays from 2nd May, 1pm

Learn how to take fantastic digital photographs of our amazing local wildlife. Photography is undergoing a revolution as important as any in its history. Modern equipment means that the limits on photography are the imagination and skill of the photographer. David Noble-Rollin leads this 10-week course aimed at those who have a digital camera but still tend to use it on the automatic settings and would like to take better photographs and improve their wildlife photography techniques. Includes 2 field sessions.

Cost: £89 (Concessions: £72)

Ecology of the North East Coast

Thursdays from 3rd May 10.15am

Veronica Howard leads this 6 week course exploring the ecology of the north east's coastal habitats. Rocky shores, dune systems, salt marsh, estuaries, mudflats and sea cliffs are all habitats where the land meets the sea and the plants and animals found there have adapted to this challenging environment. Includes a field trip to the Druridge Bay area.

Cost: £53 (Concessions: £43)

Dark Age Archaeology in the North East

Thursdays from 3rd May, 2pm

After the Roman occupation in Britain came to an end in the 5th century AD, the country fell into a period popularly called 'The Dark Ages' - but how can this be with 33 Anglo-Saxon churches built in Northumberland and Durham, the creation of the incomparable Lindisfarne Gospels, the relics of St. Cuthbert, royal palaces and so much more? Steve Speak leads this 10-week introduction to these fascinating Dark Age sites and objects. Includes site visits.

Cost: £83 (Concessions: £67)

Amphibians & Reptiles of the North East

Fridays from 27th April, 7pm

On this 10-session course you will learn about the amphibians and reptiles of the UK, with an emphasis on the north-east. Rachel Jackson and John Grundy will help you discover how to identify them and where they can be found and you will learn about their ecology and how to help conserve these special creatures. The course includes 5 outdoor sessions.

Cost: £83 (Concessions: £67)

Bats of the North East

Wednesdays from 25th April, 7pm

Find out about our local bat species; discover where they live and how they hunt at night and get to see some of these amazing mammals in action. On this 3-week course, bat expert Tina Wiffen will teach you about bat ecology, lifestyle and the legislation that protects them and we will discuss current research being undertaken locally into these poorly understood mammals. There will be 2 outdoor sessions watching bats and using a bat detector.

Cost: £38 (Concessions: £29)

UK National Ring Ouzel Survey 2012

This year the RSPB is coordinating the second National Breeding Ring Ouzel Survey, with the aim of creating new population estimates for the UK, and constituent countries. We are hoping to cover a minimum of 400 tetrads nationally; 17 of which are in Northumberland. The field methods will follow that used during the last national survey in 1999 and will use playback (MP3 players and mini-amp speakers are available to borrow).

Fieldwork will start in mid-April, with one visit between mid-April and mid-May and another from mid-May to the end of June. It should take approximately 4 to 5 hours to cover one tetrad. RSPB fieldworkers will be able to carry out some of the work, but we are seeking extra help. If you are interested in covering any of the following tetrads, which are still available, please contact andrew.stanbury@rspb.org.uk

NT8810 NT8826 NT9428 NT9816 NU0026 NU0622 NU0816 NY6078 NY8250 NY8448 NY9090 NY9482 NY9854

Andrew Stanbury Senior Research Assistant
 Conservation Science The Lodge Sandy Bedfordshire SG19 2DL
Tel. 01767 680551

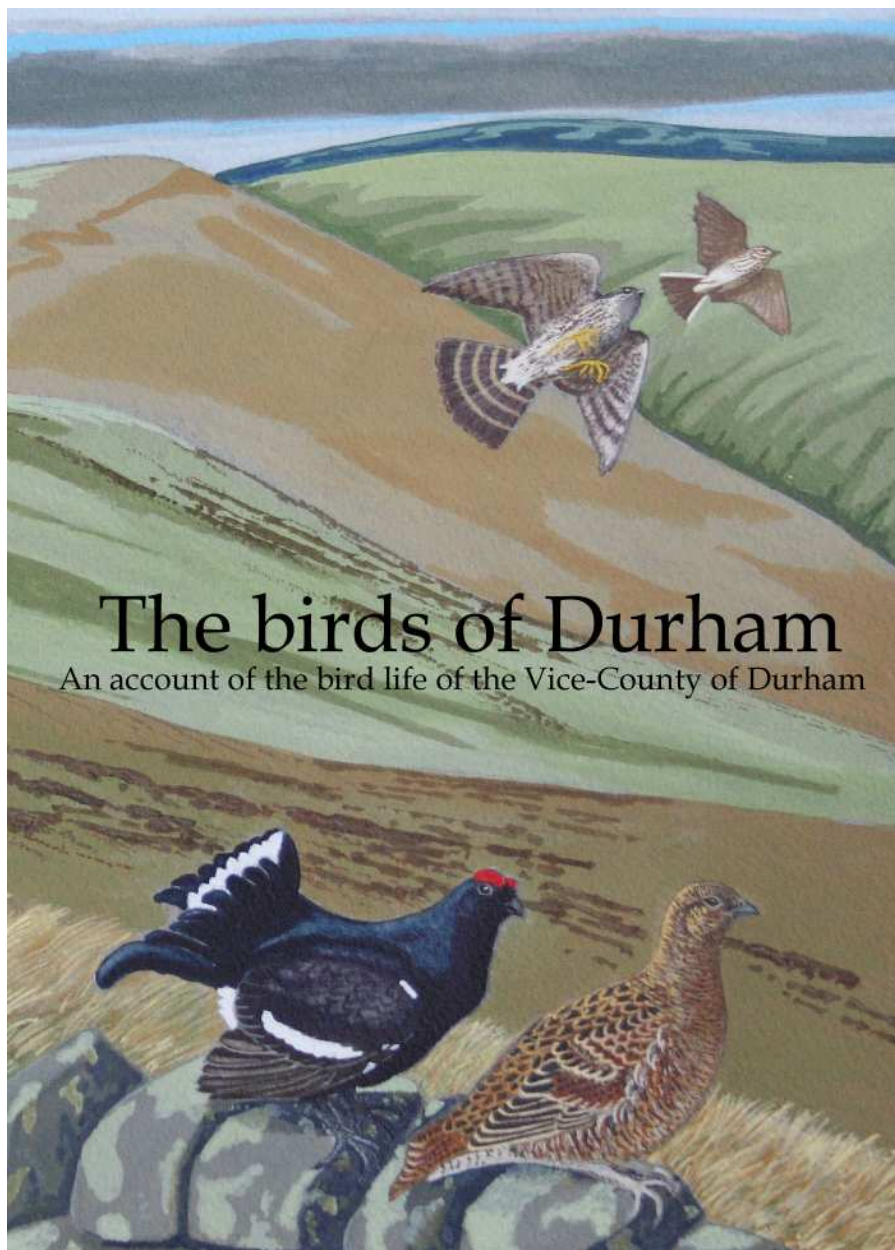
INLAND WeBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

Interim

Version:

Year: 2012
Month: February

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The birds of Durham

An account of the bird life of the Vice-County of Durham

The birds of Durham

An account of the bird life of the Vice-County of Durham



Durham Bird Club
Registered Charity No 515101

This ground-breaking publication is the definitive account of every species of bird that has been recorded in County Durham up until the end of 2011. It is the first full Avifauna to be published since 1951 and is packed with facts and figures about all 385 species recorded to date. With more than 600 pages of text and over 100 full colour photos it is an essential addition to the library of anyone with an interest in birds in North East England.

With a publication date scheduled for April 2012, and with a limited print run of 1200 copies, now is the time to order your copy of this eagerly awaited book. With a very reasonable price tag of just £30 (+ £5 postage and packing) it offers superb value for money, but there is a further saving and a reduced price (only £25 + £5 postage and packing) to members of the Durham Bird Club, Durham Upland Bird Study Group, Durham Wildlife Trust, Natural History Society of Northumbria and the Teesmouth Bird Club, all of whom contributed as partners to The Birds of Durham Heritage Project. It is envisaged that copies of the book will also be available to buy (post free) on a limited number of dates via Durham Bird Club, Durham Wildlife Trust, Natural History Society of Northumbria and Teesmouth Bird Club. (Please check with your organisation for full details of events)

To obtain your copy please fill in and return this form together with your cheque/postal order (strictly NO CASH please) made payable to DURHAM BIRD CLUB to:

Allan Rowell
18 Hill View Road
SUNDERLAND
SR2 9JY
Tel: 07515-901482

Please send me () copy/copies of "The Birds of Durham".

I enclose herewith cheque/P.O for £ made payable to The Durham Bird Club.

Name.....

Address.....

.....

.....

Telephone.....

Email address.....

I am a member of DBC/DUBSG/DWT/NHSN/TBC (please circle as appropriate)

Membership number (if applicable).....

Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

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

Bulletin 2012 No 3

MONTHLY SUMMARY – MARCH

6th May 2012



HIGHLIGHTS

Bewick's Swan

Tundra Bean Goose

Eurasian White-fronted Goose

Greenland White-fronted Goose

Ross's Goose

Egyptian Goose

Bittern

White Stork

Crane

Common Sandpiper

Iceland Gull

Black Guillemot

Great Grey Shrike

Two still at Maiden Hall Lake

Groups still present after winter influx until 13th

210 at Maiden Hall Lake on 1st

Single at Grindon Lough all month

Single at Budle Bay on 11th

One at Holywell Pond until 9th

One still at Gosforth Park

A ringed bird at Backworth Pond on 31st

One at Warkworth Lane on 28th

Early migrant on 6th at Wark

Remaining adult and first-winter still at Tynemouth and Swallow Pond

The first-winter seen again at Stag Rocks on 4th

An early Spring influx with at least six individuals seen

CONTENTS

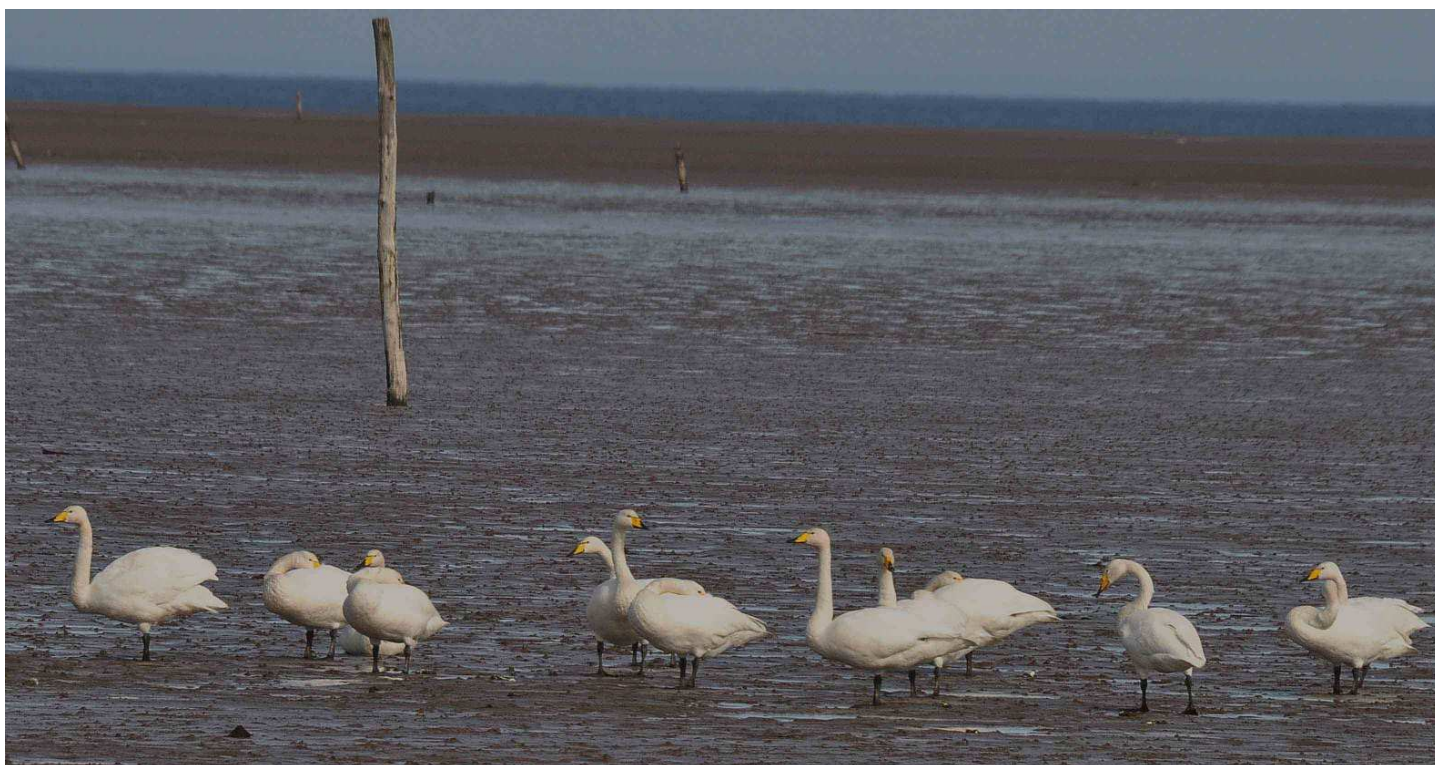
Rarity Sightings

Sparrowhawk drowns woodpecker

Field Trip to Harthope Valley on 12th May

Annual Butterfly Report

Members Survey



Whooper Swans
Beal Point
by Tim Dean
11th March

WEATHER

Most of the month was influenced by high pressure, although there were short unsettled spells around 3rd-6th and 17th-18th. Eastern England received some welcome rainfall on 4th, 5th and 17th, but apart from this much of the month was dry. As well as the dryness, the period 23rd-30th was remarkably sunny across virtually the whole of the UK. Daytime temperatures rose strongly, with many new records.

The provisional UK mean temperature was 2.5 °C above the 1971-2000 average, ranking 3rd warmest in a series since 1910 and the warmest March since 1957. More remarkable still was a maximum temperature anomaly of +3.6 °C, narrowly setting a new record for May. Most of the UK was much drier than average. Most of Wales, Northern Ireland, south-west England, parts of northern England and eastern Scotland had less than a third of their normal rainfall amount. However, March 2011. For the UK it was provisionally the driest March since 1953, and the 5th driest since 1910. Sunshine amounts were provisionally the sunniest in England in a series since 1929.

CLASSIFIED LIST

The following account consists of unchecked reports. The species/subspecies marked * require descriptions.

A complete list of all sightings that need notes is included in the NTBC website www.ntbc.org.uk under the County Records Committee section and in Birds in Northumbria 2009 page 224.

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

TARGET SPECIES

The target species for 2012 are all the owls. Please report all records in as much detail as possible. The Club is sensitive to the vulnerability of these species to disturbance and persecution, and will be particularly cautious about what is published, above all about nesting and roosting sites. Please address any questions or concerns to Tim Dean or Dick Myatt.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Killingworth Lake held 115 on 10th (LJM), 104 were at Capheaton on 21st (STE), 56 at QEII CP on 26th (KR/LR), and 20-34 at Big Waters, Bolam Lake, Cresswell and Warkworth Lane Ponds, Low Heugh, the Tweed Estuary and Wark on Tweed. Counts of ten to 14 came from Cocklawburn, Doddington, Druridge Pools, and one to eight at 14 further scattered localities.

Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus*

Maiden's Hall Lake held an adult and a juvenile regularly between 1st-16th (CB/JSB/TB/EC/MSH). Two adults were at East Chevington on 1st (JPD/ASJ), and Bellasis Bridge on 11th (PRM), and two adults flew S at Druridge Pools on 29th (PRM).



Whoopers at Castron on 8th March by Dennis Lovatt

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Northerly movement involved 72 at Druridge Pools on 1st (IRD), about 50 at Slaley Hall on 2nd (RMH), 24 at East Ord on 13th (MHu), 13 at Tweedmouth on 24th (BWG), and ten at Cresswell Pond on 26th (TB), while 50 flew E at Rothbury on 2nd (JD). A flock of 84 at Wark on Tweed on 11th included seven juveniles (CGK/MSH), 80 were at nearby West Mains, Norham on 7th (TBr) and 48 at Cornhill on Tweed on 19th (SVM/AJM). Other peak counts were 76 at Warkworth Lane on 1st (JPD/ASJ), 67 at Capheaton Lake on 22nd (PRM), 46 at Cresswell Pond on 27th (TB), 36 (34 adults) at the Beal Sluice area of Lindisfarne NNR on 11th (TRD/JD) when 32 (31 adults) were at the Fenham Mill area of the NNR (CGK/MSH), and 31 were at Low Newton on 28th (per NNBC). Counts of 23-27 came from Bothal Pond, Maiden's Hall Lake (West Chevington) and Sweethope, and 11-16 at Arcot and Cresswell Ponds, East Chevington, and Stag Rocks. One to nine were also found at Bakethin Reservoir, Bellasis Bridge, Big Waters (including red darvik ringed bird Y696), Budle Bay, Castron, Doddington, East Chevington, Kitty Brewster, QEII CP (metal ringed bird ZY4493; ringed there in January 2011), Rayburn Lake, West Ord and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

A ringed bird (T59) at Lindisfarne NNR on 11th was found to be a regular winterer at Martin Mere, Lancashire (TRD/JD).

'Tundra' Bean Goose *Anser fabalis rossicus*

At Maiden's Hall Lake (West Chevington), 12 were present on 1st (JPD/ASJ), 17 on 5th (JPD/ASJ), 15 on 10th (TRD/JD), seven on 13th (MSH), and 12 on 14th (AJR). Four were also at Warkworth Lane on 1st (JPD/ASJ).

Correction: In the February 2012 bulletin the report of 35 un-raced birds at Maiden's Hall Lake on 24th was erroneous, and 25 *rossicus* race birds were present on that date (JPD/MPF/ASJ).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Northerly movement involved 160 at Druridge Pools on 29th (PRM), 120 at Harwood Forest on 2nd (EC), and 45 at Ellington on 26th (TB).

Peak counts were 1,100 at Doddington on 11th (MSH/CGK), 1,000 at Maiden's Hall Lake (West Chevington) on 5th (JPD/ASJ), where 400 were still present on 29th (MSH), about 400 at Warkworth Lane on 1st (MJC), 300 at Budle Bay on 4th (TRD/JD), and 120-130 in the Bell's Pond-Cresswell area and Hauxley. Groups of 13-30 were at Backworth, Caistron, East Chevington and Holywell Pond, and smaller numbers at six further localities.

'Eurasian' White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons albifrons*

Maiden's Hall Lake (West Chevington) held 210 on 1st (JPD/ASJ), 95+ on 14th (AJR) but only three by 29th (MSH). The Harper's Haugh area near Budle Bay held 67 on 2nd (MSH), 81 on 9th (MSH), and 105 on 14th (JPD), nine were at Grindon Lough on 14th (PRM) and eight there on 25th (ASJ), five at Woodhorn Flashes on 3rd (together with five 'Greenland' race birds; GB), and one to two at Airy Holm Reservoir, Backworth, Holywell Pond and Old Hartley.

White-fronted Goose
Holywell Pond
12th March
Chris Knox

**'Greenland' White-fronted Goose** *Anser albifrons flavirostris*

Five were at Woodhorn Flashes on 1st (JPD) and 3rd (together with five 'Eurasian' race birds; GB), and one at Grindon Lough regularly between 1st-31st (SJH/PRM/MRS)

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

Records of un-raced birds concerned 150 at Maiden's Hall Lake (West Chevington) on 4th (CB), and four to 34 there on three further dates between 2nd-18th (CB/TB/ME et al.), ten at Budle Bay on 8th (JPL) and ten at Woodhorn Flashes on 7th (AT).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

The largest concentrations were 650 at Warkworth Lane on 1st (ASJ), 650 at Budle Bay on 8th (JPL) and 350-375 in the Harper's Haugh-Budle Bay area on 2nd-27th (MSH/RNa/DGB/JPL et al.), 450 at Airy Holm Reservoir on 1st (IFo), 212 at Derwent Reservoir on 30th (PRM), 172 at Woodhorn Flashes on 1st (JPD), 106-128 at Druridge Pools, High Hauxley and Holywell Pond, 50-92 at Backworth, Grindon Lough, Haydon Bridge, Old Hartley, Roddam Quarry Pond, Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and 21-47 at Hedgeley GP, Monkridge, Swallow Pond, West Chevington, Whitley Bay. One to 18 were also noted at about 14 further sites.



Greylags landing at Hauxley NR
13th March by Peter Fletcher

Ross's Goose *Anser rossii*

One was at Harper's Haugh near Budle Bay on 11th (MSH/CGK/RWM/MIM).

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

There were no three figure counts, peaks being 98 at Capheaton on 9th (STE), 92 at Grindon Lough on 8th (AJR), 75 at Derwent Reservoir on 30th (PRM), 47 at Hedgeley GP on 2nd (MSH), 20-28 at Newcastle Leazes Park, Plenmeller Common, Roddam Quarry Pond, Shankhead (Ridley Common), West Stobswood Lake, and 11-18 at Hartburn Reservoir, Linton and Swallow Ponds, QEII CP. One to eight were also at Arcot and Warkworth Lane Ponds, Bakethin Reservoir, Eals, Monks' House Pool, Spartylea, West Ord and Woodhorn Flashes.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

The Harper's Haugh-Budle Bay area held peaks of 30 on 9th (MSH) and 20-21 on 2nd and 11th (MSH/JPL), with one remaining until 29th (RNA/DGB/JPL). One to two were also at Castron, Cresswell Pond, Druridge, Grindon Lough and Woodhorn Flashes

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

60 were at Holy Island causeway on 1st and four on 6th (JMA), 40 at Fenham Flats on 4th (TRD/JD), and eight at Beal Sluice on 11th.

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

190 were counted at Fenham Flats on 11th (MSH/CGK), and seven were noted at Holy Island on 23rd (JMo).

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

74 un-raced birds were at Guile Point, Lindisfarne on 11th (IBDa/KDa).

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiacus*

One found at Holywell Pond on 6th (SPP) was still present on 7th-8th (PJA/JPD).

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Two flew N at Newbiggin on 3rd (GB). Budle Bay held 134 on 9th and 136 on 23rd (MSH), 31 were at Cresswell Pond on 29th (MSH), 21 at Castle Island on 29th (AT), and 16 at the Blyth Estuary on 18th (GB). Six to eight were at Boulmer, Elswick and Warkworth Lane, three to four at the *Beehive* Flash (Earsdon) and Holywell Pond, and one to two at Backworth Pond, Bebside, Branton GP, Grindon Lough, Holy Island, Monks' House Pool, West Hartford and Woodhorn Flashes.

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

Nine (four pairs and a drake) were in the Ridley Stokoe-Smalesmouth area of the River North Tyne on 25th (GB/DM), and one to four were noted there on five further dates between 4th-29th (AA/MSK/NEWT et al.). A drake was at Haughton Strother GP on 27th (MR).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

26 flew S at Holy Island on 22nd (JMo). Peak concentrations were 250 at Cresswell Pond on 14th (MN) with 182 remaining by 30th (SJH), 177 at Capheaton Lake on 22nd (PRM), 160-166 at Derwent Reservoir and Grindon Lough, 145 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 4th (SR), 90-100 at Bothal Pond, Gosforth Park NR and Hauxley NR, and 30-50 at Alnmouth wetlands, Branton GP, Budle Bay and Woodhorn Flashes. Counts of 16-20 also came from Druridge Pools, Holywell Pond, Shield on the Wall and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and smaller numbers at six further sites.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Arcot Pond attracted a peak of 18 on 9th (DM) and six to 11 regularly between 3rd-18th (STH/DM/LJM), 12 were at Cresswell Pond on 26th (MJC), 12 at QEII Lake on 10th (CDH), ten at Capheaton Lake and East Chevington, eight to nine at Big Waters, Druridge Pools and Ladyburn Lake, and five at Warkworth Lane Ponds. One to two also visited Gosforth Park NR, Holy Island, Newton Pool, West Hartford and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Green-winged Teal *Anas carolinensis*

A drake was at East Chevington on 1st (JPD).

Teal *Anas crecca*

Peak counts were 249 at Grindon Lough on 30th (SJH), 120 at Holy Island rocket field on 1st (JMA), 100+ at Budle Bay on 9th (MSH), 100 at Druridge Pools on 14th (MN), 91 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 6th (SR), and 20-44 at Arcot, Holywell and Warkworth Lane Ponds, the *Beehive* Flash (Earsdon), Druridge Pools, Elswick, Haughton Strother GP, and West Hartford. Ten to 19 were also at Backworth and Middle Ord Ponds, and Derwent Reservoir, and one to eight at six further sites.



Drake Teal
Holywell Pond
12th March
Chris Knox

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

A total of 204 were recorded at the Tweed Estuary on 9th (MHu), 61 were at Newcastle Leazes Park on 7th (DM), 56 at QEII Lake on 10th (CDH), 50-52 at Budle Bay, Grindon Lough and Middle Ord Pond, and 40 at Derwent Reservoir. Ten to 18 were also at Bakethin Reservoir, Druridge Pools, Newcastle Civic Centre and Exhibition Park, Monks' House Pool, Roddam Quarry Pond, Tynemouth Boating Lake. Breeding data were as follows (the first of the year):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Byker	1	2	DM. Tiny ducklings on 16th.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

A drake flew high to NW at Haughton Strother GP on 24th (MR). Four were at Druridge Pools on 9th-10th and 14th (PBU/ABU/MN/AT) and two to three on several dates between 1st-30th (JSB/EC/ IRD/JPD et al.), three visited Branton GP on 5th (IBDa/KBDa), and one at East Chevington on 16th (JSB/EC).

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Peaks were 23 at Cresswell Pond on 14th (TB), 14 at Druridge Pools on 17th (TRD/JD), eight at Monks' House Pool on 11th (TRD/JD), eight (five drakes) at Swallow Pond on 8th-9th (JPD/ SPP), four at East Chevington on 29th (TRD), three at Woodhorn Flashes on 3rd (GB), and one at Gosforth Park NR

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Killingworth Lake attracted 16 on 6th (AJN) and 18 on 10th (LJM), 12 were at Gosforth Park NR during the month (NHSN), 12 at Swallow Pond on 20th (JPD), seven at Bakethin Reservoir on 18th (PRM/EAW), seven at Big Waters on 22nd (TRD/JD), and four at West Allotment Pond. One to two were also at Arcot and Cresswell Ponds.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Peak counts were 81 at Killingworth Lake on 10th (LJM), 61 at Hedgeley GP on 2nd (MSH), 39 at Ladyburn Lake on 23rd (IFo), 36 at Newcastle Leazes Park on 7th (DM), 34 at Linton Ponds on 10th (CDH), and 20-26 at Capheaton Lake, Newcastle Exhibition Park, QEII Lake, Roddam Quarry, Swallow and West Allotment Ponds, and Woodhorn Flashes. Counts of 13-19 came from Big Waters, Bolam Lake, Druridge Pools, Grindon Lough, Hartburn Reservoir, Rayburn Lake and Tynemouth Boating Lake, and one to nine at 14 further sites.

Scaup *Aythya marila*

The north pool at East Chevington held a peak of seven (three drakes) on 26th (ADM), with one to five there on several dates between 18th-24th (IFo/JM et al.), four (two drakes) were at Ladyburn Lake on 18th (NFO) and a pair on 23rd (IFo), and singles at Bothal Pond on 2nd (IRD) and Woodhorn Flashes occasionally between 1st-30th (AA/GBASJ/AT).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

Counts were low, with peaks of 53 at Boulmer on 9th (PCF), 25 at Snab Point on 29th (PRM), 21 at Berwick North Shore on 8th (MHu), and ten to 16 at Berwick Meadow Haven and North Shore, Druridge Bay and Spittal Bay.

'Northern' Eider *Somateria mollissima borealis*

An adult drake showing characteristics of the northern race *borealis* drifted S at Snab Point on 12th (MSK/NEWT).



A splendid drake Eider
Amble Harbour by Chris Barlow

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

At Stag Rocks 21 were present on 2nd (MSH), 20 on 13th (AJN), and five to 11 on several dates between 4th-14th (AA/MH/JPD et al.), four were at Cheswick on 26th (MHu), and one at Holy Island on 12th and 20th (JMo).

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Peak counts were 23 at Cheswick on 5th increasing to 320 by 30th (MHu), 60 at Stag Rocks on 20th (AA/MH), 44 at Holy Island on 20th and 22nd (JMo), 30 at Amble Pier-Coquet Island on 26th (JL), and 12 at Beadnell Bay. One to seven were also at Alnmouth, Druridge Bay, Newbiggin and Newton Point. More unusual was a drake at East Chevington north pool on 1st (resting on grass; JPD), 7th (IRD) and 22nd-23rd (AA/MH/TB)

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

An immature drake with Common Scoters at Cheswick on 19th (MHu) was the sole record.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

A total of 164 was counted at the Tweed Estuary on 9th (MHu), 40 were at East Chevington north pool on 6th (EC/JSB), 40 at West Ord on 4th (MHu), 30 at Bakethin Reservoir on 24th (MN), 20-21 at Beadnell Bay and QEII Lake, 15-18 at Capheaton Lake, Castle Island, Grindon Lough and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and ten to 12 at Big Waters and a confidential site in North Northumberland. Counts of seven to eight came from Alnmouth, Castron, Killingworth and Ladyburn Lakes, and Seahouses, and threes from Newton Pool and Stag Rocks, and one to two from nine further sites.

Smew *Mergellus albellus*

A first-winter drake was at QEII Lake on 1st (JPD/ASJ) and 5th (AT). Single 'redheads' were at East Chevington on six dates between 2nd-23rd (TB/IFo/MSK et al.), and well inland at Bakethin Reservoir on 18th (PRM/EAW) and 27th (MSH).

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

17 were at Ross Back Sands on 11th (IBDa/KDa), 15 at Druridge Pools on 29th (PRM), 12 at East Chevington on 18th (CB/ME), nine at the Blyth Estuary on 18th (GB) and nine at Stag Rocks on 10th (RNa), and five to six at Cheswick, off Cresswell and Holy Island. Three to four were also at Beadnell Bay, Cresswell Pond, Hauxley Reserve and St Mary's, and one to two at Bamburgh, Castle Island, Ladyburn Lake, Newton Point and Tynemouth. Display was noted at the Blyth Estuary (five drakes and two ducks) on 18th (GB) and East Chevington (three drakes and one duck) on 10th (TRD/JD).

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Four flew N at Stag Rocks on 4th (TRD/JD). The only double figure count was of 13 at Greenlee Lough on 8th (MRS). Other peaks were seven at Hagg Bank on 10th (AJN), seven at Hexham on 7th (PBu/Abu), five to six at Airy Holm Reservoir, Corbridge, Killingworth Lake, Rothbury and West Ord, and three to four at Alnmouth, Arcot Pond, Bellingham, Derwent Reservoir, Thropton and Wark (North Tyne). One to two were at 13 further widespread localities.



A drake Goosander
River Tyne at Hexham
7th March
Adriana Buskin

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

The species was well reported this month with some large counts especially in the North Pennines. 40+ were on Swinhope Moor on 30th (PRM), 37 on Carrshield Moor on 3rd (SJH), 33+ on Quickcleugh Moss on 22nd (PRM), 29 at Paxhill on 10th (SJH), 20 at Langleeford (Harthope Valley) on 23rd (TRD/JD), 17 at Plenmeller Common on 10th (SJH), 15 at Acton Fell (Slaley) on 8th (JL) and 12 at Sipton Burn on 22nd (PRM). One to eight were seen at Alnwick Moor, Hepple Whitefield, Hollin Green Farm (Keenly) and Meadow Cottage (Allenheads). Birds were also noted as 'common' and 'plentiful' in the Hawsen Burn-Harthope Valley area (ASJ/RWM/MIM).

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

The species was again very well reported this month. 16 (15 lekking males) were at Carrshield Moor on 3rd (SJH), where a female was seen on 23rd (PRM) and a maximum of 15 males were at Swinhope Shield on 20th (ADM). Six males were noted in Allendale on 28th (MSK/NEWT) and five males were at Paxhill on 10th (SJH). On 14th five females were at Low Acton Farm (Allendale) and on 10th two females were in the Knockshield Burn area and two males at Hollin Green Farm (Keenley (SJH). Two males were also at Quickcleugh Moss on 22nd (PRM).

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Few were reported this month with the highest counts being five in the Harthope Valley on 24th (AT). Counts of four came from Shankhead (Ridley Common) on 11th (SJH), Alnwick Moor on 25th (RWM/MIM) and Druridge Pools on 29th (PRM). One to two were noted at Beanley Wood and Cambo.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

The largest gatherings were six (three pairs) at Swallow Pond on 2nd and five at Bell's Farm (Cresswell) on 1st (JPD). One to four were noted at Beal Sluice, Big Waters, Billy Law (Ord Moor), Bothal Pond, Doddington, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Great Whittington, Green Shiel (Holy Island), Hold House Farm (Ponteland), Holywell Dene, Lowick, Prestwick Carr, Seaton Sluice and Woodneuk Farm (Slaley).

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Ten were at Prestwick Carr on 4th (PCF). Up to two were at Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene) during the month and a male was in an Old Hartley garden on 17th (RJP). Two males were in a Walbottle garden on 11th, where single birds were present throughout the month (KR/LR).

A chocolate Pheasant just in time for Easter
Chris Barlow
Hauxley NR

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

One flew S at Newbiggin on 3rd (GB). The largest offshore counts were 30+ at Goswick Sands on 14th (MH/AA), 22 at East Chevington on 17th (MH), 17 off Druridge Pools on 29th (PRM), 12+ off Stag Rocks on 30th (MSK/NEWT) and ten, several in summer plumage, in Cresswell Bay on 26th (JL). Five were in Spittal Bay on 12th and four at Cheswick on 28th (MHu). One to three were noted at Blyth, Cocklawburn, Holy Island, Howick, Newbiggin, Newton Point and the Tweed Estuary.

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

Singles were noted at Blyth on 7th (TB) and Ross Back Sands on 11th (NFO).

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

Singles were at Stag Rocks on 13th/30th (RNA/MSK/NEWT) and in Alnmouth Bay on 26th (JL).

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Birds were noted at several breeding sites. On 13th 19 pairs were at Whitley Bay cliffs (JMA) and 17 were noted at Cullercoats cliffs on 18th, when eight were at Old Hartley cliffs (SPP). At Holy Island 20+ birds were present on cliff ledges on 12th (JMo) and a pair was at the nearby castle on 1st (JMA). On 15th eight pairs were at Dunstanburgh Castle and four pairs at Cullernose Point (JMA). Three were at Tynemouth cliffs on 2nd (PBu/Abu). 20+ were off Stag Rocks on 12th (MJC) where singles were noted on two further dates. Singles were also noted at St Mary's Island and Snab Point.

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

The largest movements noted were 200 N in 30 minutes at Newton Point on 30th (TRD) and 70 N at Holy Island on 15th, where 40 flew N in 10 minutes on 12th (JMo). 20 passed both N and S at Holy Island on 10th (MSK/NEWT), small numbers also passed here offshore on 9th (JMo). 12 followed a fishing boat from North Shields-Tynemouth on 2nd (PBu/Abu). Many thousands were noted on 28th from Seahouses-Annstead and in Beadnell Bay (DGB/JPL). One to five was seen at Blyth, Spittal Bay and Stag Rocks.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

No counts were received from the key roost site at Blyth and only two were noted at North Shields. The peak count was 19 at Derwent Reservoir on 22nd (IFo). Six were at Newbiggin on 26th (KR/LR) and five at QEII Lake on 3rd (GB) and Big Waters on 1st (SRB). One to four were noted at Bakethin Reservoir, Berwick, Boulmer, Dunstanburgh Castle, Elswick Wharf, Greenlee Lough, Grindon Lough and Newcastle Quayside.

Continental Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*

Two were at QEII Lake on 3rd (GB).

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

The peak roost count was 16 at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 29th (MHu, when at Dunstanburgh seven were present including at least three on nests (MJC). Five were at Cocklawburn on 1st (MHu) and Newton Point on 13th (TRD/JD). Two to three were at Stag Rocks on two further dates.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

A single was at Gosforth Park NR during the early part of the month (NHSN).

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

A single was at Fenham Slake on 11th (IBDa/KDa).

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

The peak counts were nine at Druridge Pools on 29th (AT), eight at the Gosforth Park heronry during the month (NHSN), six at Holywell Pond on 18th (CGK) and Longhirst Flash (three juveniles) on 22nd (TB) and five in the Tweed Estuary on 9th (MHu) and at Arcot Pond on 28th (LJM). Four were at Low Cocklaw (Berwick) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. One to three were at Acklington Park, Blyth, Cresswell Pond, Cullernose Point, Dunstanburgh Castle, Farnley, Grindon Lough, Hartburn Reservoir, Shielhill Pool (Wallington) and Wark.

A Grey Heron at Cresswell Pond
10th March by Adriana Buskin

**White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia*

One, with a narrow ring on its left leg was seen at Backworth Pond on 31st (CGK).

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Numbers at Swallow Pond rose to nine by 21st (JPD). Counts of eight came from Capheaton (four courting pairs) on 22nd/25th (PRM/STE), and Holywell Pond on 12th (SPP). Six were at Gosforth Park NR all month (NHSN) and five at Shield-on-the Wall on 8th (MRS), Woodhorn Flashes on 21st (AT) and Farnley on 22nd (RB/MB). Counts of four came from Hedgeley GP on 11th (CGK/MSH), Rayburn Lake on 25th (MSH) and Druridge Pools on 26th (MJC). Three were at Big Waters and Warkworth Lane. One to two were noted at Blagdon Lake, Cocklawburn Pond, Hartburn Lake, Holy Island Lough, Middleton (Hartburn), Mootlaw Quarry, Newton Pool, Roddam Quarry and the Tweed Estuary.



A Little grebe with a stickleback lunch
Holywell Pond on 12th March by Colin Bradshaw

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Numbers at Whittle Dene Reservoirs continued to increase with a maximum of 14 on 14th (MR *et al*). Four were at Killingworth Lake from 5th with a pair incubating by 26th (BMo/LJM). Four were also at Derwent Reservoir by 18th (JL) and at East Chevington on 29th (TRD). Three, including a displaying pair, were at Big Waters on 11th (GB). A pair was at Airey Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield) throughout the month (IFo), at Branton GP from 4th (IBDa/KDa *et al*), at Swallow Pond from 9th (JPD) and displaying at East Chevington on 30th (MSK/NEWT). Singles were seen at Bothal Pond, Gosforth Park NR, Hartburn Reservoir, Haughton Strother GP (first site record), Holywell Pond, QEII Lake, Rayburn Lake and offshore at Druridge Pools.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

Three were regularly seen during the month at Holy Island (IK) and on 14th three were at Goswick Sands (MH/AA) and two at Stag Rocks (ASJ/JPD). One was also at Stag Rocks on 6th/24th (MSH/AC/JM).

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

The largest gathering was 48 off Stag Rocks on 14th, including two in breeding plumage (ASJ/JPD/MH/AA). Up to eight were seen here on eight further dates. Seven were off Ross Back Sands on 11th (NFO). Three were off Goswick Sands also on 14th (MH/AA), two were off Cheswick on 1st/5th and off Cocklawburn on 7th (MHu).

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

Pairs were noted at one regular breeding site from 21st and from another from 22nd.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Two birds were seen together at West Throckley on 30th with one flying N and the other flew S (AA). Singles were seen at Wylam on 13th (EC/JSB), Harlow Hill on 23rd (CB), Colt Crag and Belassis Bridge on 25th (AM/ADM), Shilbottle on 26th (ADM *per* DA), Morpeth on 28th (ADM) and at Derwent Reservoir on 30th (PRM).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

The first record involved a single bird at Gosforth Park NR on 5th (NHSN). A single juvenile was seen at Holywell Pond on 27th (SPP/RD), and at last year's breeding site up to three birds were noted from 29th (ASL/PRM *et al*). An adult male was seen migrating steadily N at Hauxley on 31st (*per* MH).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

An adult male was seen at Druridge Pools on 27th (EC/JSB) six sightings of ring tails were noted at sites in East Northumberland (TB/ASJ *et al*) and three sightings were at sites in North Northumberland (JPD/BWG *et al*).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

In the Kielder area up to six birds was noted during the month (BCFT *et al*). Up to a maximum of three birds were at two sites regularly during the month (MH/CP *et al*). One to two birds were at four other sites (MSK/NEWT *et al*).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Three birds were at Bamburgh on 23rd (BRS), and the regular pair was at Scotland Gate throughout the month (SLB/MSK). Other pairs were seen at Harbottle, Longhirst, Prestwick Carr, and Whitley Bay and Wylam (LJM/MJC *et al*). Single birds were at 24 other sites during the month.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

22 birds were seen at the Sweethope/ Great Wanney area on 5th (ASJ/JPD) and up to 15+ were in the Kielder area throughout the month (PRM/EAW/BCFT). 12 birds were at Ingram on 14th (ASJ/JPD), Harthope Valley on 21st (JPD) and at Harwood Forest on 22nd (PRM). Ten were seen at Sleafy Forest on 18th (JL). 102 records of one to nine birds were received.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

12 birds were noted in the Sweethope/Great Wanney area on 5th (ASJ). Prestwick Carr had four birds on 5th and 20th (BMo/PCF). Pairs were noted at Grindon Lough, Harwood Forest, Linton Roundabout, Longhorsley Moor, Sleafy Hall and Swallow Pond. Single birds were noted at 29 other sites during March.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Single birds were seen at seven inland sites and on the coast at Beadnell on 8th (JPL), Cocklawburn on 13th (MHu), Bell's Farm (Cresswell) on 22nd (MSK/NEWT) and on Holy Island on 23rd (JMo).



A Peregrine passes Peter Fletcher at Prestwick Carr on 11th March

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Pairs were at two potential breeding sites (STE/ASJ/TRD/JD). Single birds were noted at 14 other sites during the month, including a bird over the observers garden at Chapel House (Newcastle) his first sighting there in 40 years (MH).

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Up to four were at Gosforth Park NR during the month (NHSN/MRS). Single birds were seen or heard at Backworth, Caistron, Cresswell Pond, Jesmond Dene, Prestwick Carr, and Swallow Pond and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

27 birds were at Swallow Pond on 12th (JPD), 17 were at Druridge pools on 29th (PRM) and 12 at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 20th (DM) were the highest counts this month. One to eight birds were at nine further sites during the month.



Two photographs by Colin Bradshaw.
Left a Moorhen at Cresswell Pond and right a Coot at Gosforth NR

Coot *Fulica atra*

The highest count were 55 birds at East Chevington on 1st (JPD), 48 at Gosforth Park on during the month, 42 were at QEII CP on 10th (CDH), 35 were at Woodhorn Flash on 3rd (GB), 34 at Capheaton on 22nd (PRM), 32 were at Swallow Pond on 6th (JPD) and 30 were at Big Waters on 18th (GB). Between one to 21 birds were at 13 further sites including four pairs on nests at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 26th (DM).

Crane *Grus grus*

Sightings included a bird flying N/NW over the field next to St Mary's Wetland on 25th (SPP), and it or another was found at Warkworth Lane (Ellington) on 28th (MJC *et al*) remaining into April.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*
A count of 570 at Guile Point, Lindisfarne NNR on 11th was by far the largest (IBDa/KDa) and 102 at Berwick (North Shore) on 8th was the only other count of more than 100 (MHu). Counts of 55-80 came from inland locations such as Branton GP and Derwent Reservoir plus coastal sites such as Cocklawburn, Craster-Dunstanburgh and Cullercoats Bay. Again inland, groups included 49 near Spartylea (Coatenhill), 41 at Coanwood Pond and 26 at Haughton Strother GP. Further coastal gatherings included 42 at Cresswell Pond, 40 at Hemscott Hill Links and 30 at Amble Links, plus 26 on the river at West Ord. Additional counts of ten to 20 were noted at Arcot Pond, Cronkley, Newbiggin, Newton by the Sea, Sharpeton, Tweed estuary, West Hartford, Whitley Bay and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Smaller numbers and many pairs were reported from a further 26 sites, which also included a leucistic bird at Wark (North Tyne) on 5th (PRM).

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Cresswell Pond provided most sightings with the first bird on 2nd (TB/IRD) which remained until the following day (AA). Three on 18th included a displaying pair (CB) and two remained the following day (MSH). There was then a further gap before two arrived on 26th (TB/MJC) which increased to seven (a pair and five separate birds) on the following day (MJC/TB). Elsewhere, a pair dropped into Holywell Pond for 25 minutes on 27th before flying off S/SW (SPP/RDack), providing only the second record for this site.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

A lonely single was noted at Haughton Strother GP on 25th (MR).

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Berwick (North Shore) held 23 on a WeBS count on 8th (MHu) and 11 were noted at Newbiggin on 18th (CDB). Elsewhere, five to seven were seen at Caistron (including displaying birds), Cheswick and on the Tyne at Elswick Wharf, a maximum of four at Derwent Reservoir, two at West Hartford on 27th/30th and a single at Maiden's Hall Lake (West Chevington) on 2nd.

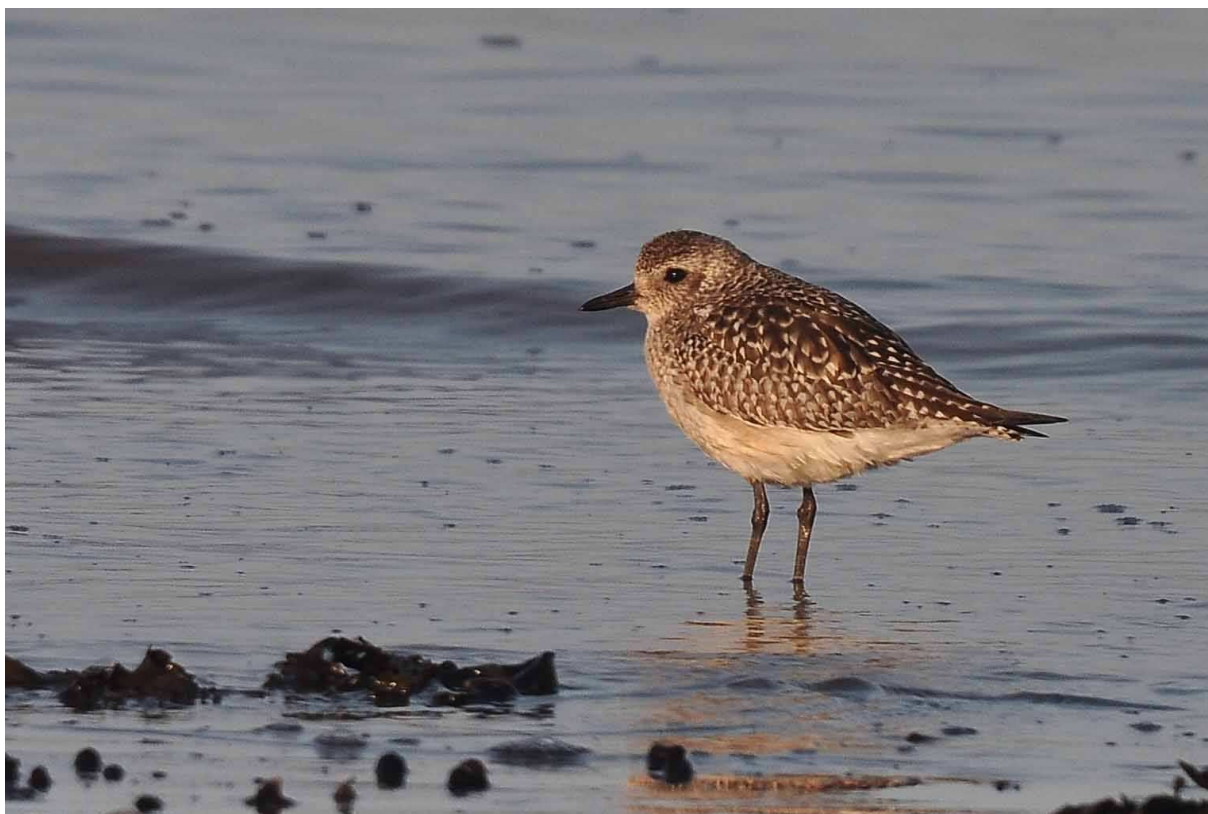
Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Very well reported again this month; with peaks of c.900 at Acton Fell (Blanchland) on 7th (RMH) and 693 between Nedderton-Stannington on 25th falling to 200 on 28th/30th (ASH/TB). The Plenmeller area held several large groups with ca.350 near Green Syke Farm on 10th, c.300 in the Fell House Farm area and ca.250 on Plenmeller Common, both on 14th, and 135 at Todhillwood Fell on 3rd (SJH). Also in the south west were 196 at Paxhill (near Allenheads) on 10th, 120

in Allendale on 25th, 82 at Low Acton Farm (Allendale) on 10th and 70 at Quickcleugh Moss (Allendale) on 22nd. Prestwick Carr held 178 on 31st and c.80 headed N at Sundaysight (Bellingham) on 31st. Smaller gatherings included 62 at Hollin Green Farm (near Keenley) on 10th, 50 on Holy Island on 22nd, 23 at Spy Crag/Lampert, 16 displaying males at Carrshield Moor on 12th (SJH) and 12 at Beacon Hill (Cramlington); whilst further displaying birds were noted at Coatenhill (near Spartylea), Meadow Cottage and Swinhope Moor (both Allendale) and Hollin Green Farm (near Keenley).

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Reducing numbers saw the only two digit count being 11 at Beacon Point (Newbiggin) on 3rd (GB), whilst elsewhere in the south, six were on the Blyth at Kitty Brewster on 24th and two at St Mary's Island on 1st. In the north, eight were at Cocklawburn on 7th, three at Berwick (North Shore) on 8th and two at Boulmer on 26th.



A Grey Plover on Boulmer beach
26th March
Tim Dean

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Extremely well reported this month and especially so from the inland moorlands, where many reports included birds on territory. Allendale produced the peak count of 200 birds (100 pairs) and 200 birds (groups of 80 and 100 plus territorial birds) in the Knockshield Burn area on 10th and 25th respectively (ASJ/SJH). Monthly maximums of groups including birds on territory included 130 at Derwent Reservoir, 120 at Shankhead (Ridley Common), 120 at Fell House Farm (Plenmeller Common) and Low Acton Farm (Allendale), 71-100 at Coatenhill (near Spartylea), Coldshield (Coanwood Common), Hollin Green Farm (near Keenley) and Todhillwood Fell (Plenmeller Common). Further north, 60-66 were reported from Whemley (Longhorsley) and Threestoneburn, and 30-51 were seen at Carrshield Moor, Cresswell Pond, Grindon Lough, Hammershield (near Allenheads), Paxhill (near Allenheads), Swinhope Shield (near Spartylea) and West Hartford.

Presumed migrants included 27 in a tight flock just off the road at Otterburn Ranges on 14th and seven flying NW at Linhope (Ingram valley) on 5th. One to ten pairs were noted at the following additional sites: Bewick Moor, Darras Hall-Dissington, Druridge Pools, Felton, Hauxley NR, Hepple (ten pairs), Holy Island, Ingram valley, Roddam and Warkworth Lane (Ellington).

Knot *Calidris canutus*

The highest counts came from the south this month, with ca.40 in winter plumage at Newbiggin on 18th (CDB) and 17 on the Blyth at Kitty Brewster on 24th (GB). Moving north, Boulmer held eight on 26th, six were at Cheswick on 13th, five at Low Newton on 13th and four at Cocklawburn on 7th. Single birds were also noted at Budle Bay and Fenham-le-Moor,

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

St Mary's Island held the majority with 80+ on 10th reducing to ca.40 on 18th (SPP). Good counts in the north included 64 at Cheswick on 19th, 62 at Berwick (North Shore) on 8th and 48 at Cocklawburn on 7th (MHu). Some ten to 24 were also seen at Boulmer, East Chevington, Low Newton-Dunstanburgh and Newbiggin.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Several counts at Stag Rocks saw a peak of 79 on 30th (MSK/NEWT), whilst to the north, 28 were noted at Berwick (North Shore) on 8th (MHu). Other good counts included 20 at Marden Rocks (Alnmouth), 17 at Cheswick beach, 15 at Cullercoats bay, with one to six at Boulmer, Holy Island, Low Newton, Newbiggin, Snab Point (Cresswell), St Mary's Island and Tynemouth.



A Purple Sandpiper
Boulmer
26th March
Tim Dean

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Numbers were much reduced following last month's influx. The only double figure counts came from the north where 62 were at Berwick (North Shore) on 8th (MHu), 36 on the Tweed estuary on 9th (MHu) and 20 at Fenham-le-Moor on 4th (TRD/JD). One to two were on the coast at Cresswell Pond, Low Newton and on the Tyne at Newcastle Business Park, but more interestingly, singles were also noted inland at Grindon Lough and Swinhope Moor (Allendale) (PRM).

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

One at Derwent Reservoir on 16th was still present on 31st (ADMc/AT/IFo). Another was on a small flash near Warkworth Lane pond on 29th (TRD).

Jack Snipe *Limnocyrtus minimus*

Singles were at Cresswell Pond on 2nd (IRD) and at West Hartford on 17th (STH).

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

At West Hartford 31 flushed on 11th (LJM) and 21 did so on 17th (STH) with 11 at Arcot Pond also on 17th (STH); eight were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 6th, seven at Druridge Pools on 27th and up to four at several other sites. Display flights and singing were prominent for much of the month, including three to five at Acton Fell, in three areas of Allendale and at Coanwood Lough, Coatenhill and Paxhill. One or two were similarly behaving at 14 widespread suitable habitats.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Two were at Longhorsley Moor on 3rd (AB/LB) and two at Ellington, Chugdon Wood on 18th (TB). Singles appeared at Berwick Cricket Club, Fontburn Reservoir, Gosforth Park NR, Harwood Forest, Newcastle, North Shields, Ridley Stokoe and Tynemouth. On 17th one flushed from a probable breeding site in the Cheviots.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

The usual two or three winterers were present throughout in the Rocket Field, Holy Island (IK/DGB *et al*); probably one of those visited Fenham Slake on 29th (JPL). One was at East Chevington on 18th (NFO).

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Fenham-le-Moor held 30 on 4th (TRD/JD) and the Blyth estuary 25/26 on 21st/24th (LJM/GB), high counts at the latter site. Otherwise 14 were at Berwick on 8th, 11 at Cocklawburn on 7th, up to ten regularly at St Mary's, seven at Low Newton on 30th, five at Boulmer on 26th and one at Tynemouth on 31st.



Bar-tailed Godwits
Boulmer
26th March by Tim Dean

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

One flew calling over Swallow Pond on 1st (SPP) and one was noted at Cresswell Pond on 30th (MSK/NEWT). Both are early by normal standards, the former exceptionally so following the two in late February.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

The profusion of records largely focused on territorial behaviour from mid month onwards on the breeding grounds, particularly in the west. About 100, including groups and others on territory were found in Allendale (Knockshield Burn) and Plenmeller Common whilst 58-66 occurred at Allendale (Low Acton Farm and Spartylea) and Hammersfield (all SJH). It was also well established at Carrshield Moor, Coanwood Common and Shankhead and a small group was near Keenley. Elsewhere inland, display was noted at Bewick Moor, the Ingram Valley and near Slaley and counts of 19-62 came from Castron, Derwent Reservoir, Grindon Lough, Houghton Strother GP and Prestwick Carr, with at least ten in the Harthope Valley and small numbers at another 11 sites.

At or near the coast 124 were in the Tweed estuary on 9th (MHu), 104 at Cocklawburn on 1st (MHu), 101 roosting at Kitty Brewster on 24th (GB) and 96 at the *Beehive* Flash on 30th with 25-54 at Backworth, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Hauxley, Newton Pool and Seaton Sluice.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

One on R. North Tyne at Wark on 6th (PRM) was extremely early!

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Again one or two were reported throughout at Whittle Dene Reservoirs (AA/MR/SR). Singles were found at Longhirst flash on 23rd (AT), Castle Island on 29th (AT) and Cresswell on 30th (MSK/NEWT).

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

The winterer in Budle Bay was still present on 27th; two were seen there on 13th (AJN), feeding one mile apart.

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

There was a gradual return to breeding areas. Around mid month display was witnessed at Coanwood Common, Shankhead and near Spartylea and three pairs were noted at Plenmeller Common (SJH). By the month end 14 were at Grindon Lough, 11 at Derwent Reservoir and one at Allenheads.

Along the coast the Tweed estuary again held the most, 234 on 9th (MHu) and counts increased at other sites: 192 at Kitty Brewster on 24th (GB), 131 roosting on Holy Island on 9th, 100 at St Mary's on 3rd (KWY), 100 in Cullercoats Bay on 9th (MN) and 80-98 at Budle Bay, Cresswell Pond, Elswick Wharf and Snab Point. Also 20-24 were noted at Berwick and Newbiggin.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

The peak counts were of 82 at Holy Island, South Shore on 20th (JMo), 63 at Berwick on 8th (MHu) and 60+ at St Mary's on 12th (MSH), with 24-34 at Boulmer, Tweed estuary and Tynemouth. Single figures were reported from Cresswell, Kitty Brewster, Low Newton and Stag Rocks.



A Turnstone at Amble Harbour by Chris Barlow

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

The colony at the Tyne Bridge in Newcastle gradually built up during the month with only seven there on 2nd but 223 by 28th (DM/SRB). Also on 28th were 36 on the Quayside buildings and 25 at the Guildhall (DM). Numbers elsewhere were very small with the only double figure count being ten at St Mary's including one first-winter on 22nd where singles seemed to be gradually moving S (TRD/JD). Two were seen prospecting cliffs at Sharper's Head near Berwick on 8th (MHu). Otherwise one to four seen at Bamburgh, Druridge, Holy Island, Low Newton and Newbiggin.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

The peak count this month was 1,000 seen on the S Tyne at Crow Hall on 11th following a plough (SJH). Other high concentrations were 720 at Grindon Lough on 8th at the evening roost (PRM) and 639 on a WEBS count at Berwick on 8th (MHu). Groups of 100 to 250 were noted at Boulmer, Budle Bay, Elswick Wharf, Felton, Haughton Strother GP, Leazes Park, Plenmeller Common and QE II CP. Otherwise smaller numbers at many localities.

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

The only sighting was a first-winter at Newton Pool on 30th (BWi/TRD).

First winter Little Gull at Newton Pool on 30th March by Tim Dean



Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

At Newbiggin numbers had diminished with an adult, one second-winter and four first-winters seen during the month there (AT/STH). Forays to ploughed fields between here and Woodhorn were noted (AT). Otherwise a pair of full summer plumaged adults were seen at East Chevington on 29th (JPD) with another summer adult at Haughton Strother GP on 13th (MR) and a first-winter at Holywell Pond on 12th (SPP).

Common Gull *Larus canus*

The largest flock was seen at Haughton Strother GP on 13th when 520 gathered there (MR). 200 were at Simonburn on 11th with 150 at Greenhaugh and 100 at Hot Farm on 17th (JR). Also 100 were noted at Grindon Lough on 12th (SJH), 68 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 26th (SR) and 31 at Otterburn on 25th (JR). Otherwise up to 10 at several localities.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

The popular locality of Budle Bay held 26 on 9th (MSH) with 56 there by 11th (TRD/JD) and 48 on 14th (JPD) all being adult birds. Swallow Pond was the other site with good numbers with a peak of 31 adults on 28th (JPD/SPP). A gradual rise in numbers had been noted during the month there. Otherwise up to eight at many localities as birds returned from wintering areas to the S.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argenteus*

Out on its own was a WeBS count of 686 at the Tweed Estuary on 9th (MHu). Counts of up to 70 were made at Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Exhibition Park, Holy Island, Jesmond Dene and Leazes Park.

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoideus*

The remains of the winter influx was still noticeable with the near adult still being seen in Tynemouth/ North Shields area up to 15th (DRW) with the remaining first-winter there up to 18th (DRW/MSH/JM). Also at nearby Swallow Pond possibly the same birds were being seen, with the near adult up to 20th and a first-winter there up to 23rd (SPP/JPD). Possibly the same adult was seen at Linton Pond on 22nd (TB).



Iceland Gull on ice at North Shields Fish Quay
Peter Fletcher

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

There were few reports with the main numbers being seen at Castle Island with 79 present on 29th (AT). 20 were noted at Derwent Reservoir on 31st with only one adult present (IFo). WeBS counts provided the only other sightings with 15 at the Tweed Estuary on 9th (MHu) and a single at Grindon Lough on 8th.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

The first spring sighting was at St Mary's on 22nd (ASJ) with further sightings at Beadnell, Boulmer, Cocklawburn, Cresswell, Druridge, Holy Island, Newton, Seahouses and Tynemouth. Numbers were typically small with a peak of eight at Berwick on 29th (MHu).

Auk sp *Uria aalge* / *Alca Torda*

At least 200 were noted off Stag Rocks, Bamburgh on 12th (MJC).

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

Only a few reports received but numbers were obviously starting to increase with 45 at Newbiggin on 3rd including 25 S (GB) and a peak of 40 at Stag Rocks, Bamburgh on 12th (MJC). The only other site noted was Cocklawburn with two on 13th (MHu).

Razorbill *Alca Torda*

At Dunstanburgh at least 25 were seen on 29th with at least seven on nests (MJC). At Stag Rocks, Bamburgh a peak of at least 20 were seen on 12th (MJC). Otherwise up to five noted at Cheswick, Cocklawburn, Druridge, Newbiggin, Newton Point and St Mary's.

Black Guillemot *Cephus grylle*

The first-winter bird seen at Stag Rocks, Bamburgh last month was again noted on 4th (DGB/AT/ADMc).

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

There was a slow return with one or two off Bamburgh from 2nd to 14th and singles off Druridge on 22nd and 29th (AT/PRM).

Rock Dove / Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*

One large count of 97 on the Environment Agency Roof at Newcastle Business Park on 14th, four at Redesmouth on 25th (DT) and a single at Beatty Avenue South Gosforth on 3rd (MJCo).

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Well reported again with a peak count of 50 on unharvested rape at Angerton on 2nd (EC), 13 at Carrshield Moor on 3rd (SJH), 12 at Cresswell Pond on 26th (MJC), eight at Paxhill near Allenheads on 10th, seven in Jesmond Dene on 18th (MJCo) and six at Northumberland Park, North Shields on 19th (MNC). Five were at Backworth on 27th, four at Low Acton Farm, Allendale on 10th and at Thrunton Woods on 25th with one to three at Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Bells Farm (Cresswell), Furnace Bridge (Blyth), Exhibition Park, Harwood Forest, Low Carritheth (Hesleyside), Rothbury, Sipton Burn, West Hartford and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Some large counts of 500 at Heckley House near Alnwick on 5th (JMA), 400 at Holywell Pond on 6th and 258 at Swallow Pond on 12th with 202 there on 1st (JPD). Seventy five were at Alnmouth on 8th, 70 at Paxhill ((near Allenheads) on 12th, 50 at Stannington on 3rd, 32 at Ridley Common Shankhill on 14th, 27 at Low Acton Farm (Allendale) on 14th (JMA / STH) Two to 20+ were at Linhope Ingram Valley, Jesmond Dene and South Gosforth.



Woodpigeon at Hauxley NR by Chris Barlow
31st March

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Pairs were at Holywell Dene all month (RJP), copulating at Netherton Park Stannington on 1st and a single at Heaton Park Wood, Jesmond Dene on 25th (MJCo).

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

The pair at Holy Island was noted regularly during the month (IK) with all other reports being singles at Ratcleugh (Alnwick), Belsay, Chatton, Cresswell Pond, Denwick, Kingston Park, Lilburn Grange, Little Mill, Redesmouth, Rennington and Rock.

Barn Owls are **target species** for 2012. Please report all records.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Two were at Big Waters on 11th (GB), Chugdon Wood Ellington on 29th (TB) and Swallow Pond on the same date with singles seen there throughout the month (JPD/SPP). Singles were also reported from Quickcleugh Moss (Allendale), Berwick Hill, Eachwick, Ellingham, Clifton Lane (Morpeth), Middle Stobswood and Ovington.

Little Owls are **target species** for 2012. Please report all records.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Birds were heard throughout the month at Bridge End with three there on 13th (SW), two or more at Scotland Gate (SLB/MSK), two at Longhorsley Village on 4th (AB/LB), Ellington on 19th & 24th (TB) and near Allendale on 27th (SAS). Singles were well reported from Arcot Hall GC, Atlee Park (Bedlington), Capheaton, Milkwell Corbridge (on three dates), Eachwick, Earsdon, Warkworth Lane (Ellington), Hexham, Holywell Dene, Prestwick Carr, Slaley Hall, Yearle (throughout the month), Walbottle, Warden, Wark (on five dates), Meadowfield (Whitley Bay) and Woolsington. A bird was found dead at Kitty Green but the cause was not apparent.

Tawny Owls are **target species** for 2012. Please report all records.

A Tawny Owl
Prestwick Carr
23rd March
Peter Fletcher

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

Only one record of one standing in the middle of the road before flying off at Longdyke near Shilbottle on 8th (TAC/MLC).

Long-eared Owls are **target species** for 2012. Please report all records.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

The peak counts at Prestwick Carr were ten on 1st and 3rd (MRS/PCF) with five including a displaying pair at a site in east Northumberland on 26th (TRD), four at Whemley, Longhorsley on 3rd (AB/LB), between Druridge Pools and Cresswell on 5th (JPD) and at Holy Island on 9th (JMo). Three were at Bamburgh and West Hartford on two dates, Longhorsley Moor and a site in south west Northumberland. One to two were seen at all the above location plus a further 21 widely spread localities.

Short-eared Owls are **target species** for 2012. Please report all records.

A Short-eared Owl eyes up Peter Fletcher at
Prestwick Carr on 24th March

**Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*

Two pairs of birds were found in Jesmond Dene between 7th and 18th (DHWB) with singles there on six dates and four locations from 9th to 25th (MJCo). All other reports were single birds at Branton GP on 3rd (IBDa/KDa), Scotch Gill Woods Morpeth on 6th (AT), Ponteland Park on 7th (CW), Highford on 12th, Abbey Mill (Morpeth) on 15th (ADM), Powburn on 24th (AT), Haughton Strother GP on 25th and 27th (MR), Pauperhaugh (Rothbury) on 27th (CP), Borough Woods (Morpeth) and Castron both on 28th (ADM/TRD/JD).

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Three were heard at Swallowship Wood, Hexham on 4th (AJH) with two at Stocksfield Community Woodland on 13th (EC) and Gosforth Park NR on 27th (NHSN). Single birds were at Chugdon Wood (Ellington), Gosforth Park NR and Rothbury all month plus six locations in the Kielder area and at Arcot Hall GC, Letah Wood (Hexham), Kilham, Longhorsley, Lynemouth, Newburn, Redesdale, Slaley Hall and Horsley Wood near Wylam.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Six including two drumming males were at Wallington Hall on 17th (PRM/EAW) with three there on 22nd & 26th (AT) and three pair were at Shildon near Blanchland on 10th (JMA). Four birds drummed at Holywell Dene during the month (CGK) with three at Rothbury on 2nd (TRD/JD), Slaley Hall on 3rd (RMH), Jesmond Dene on 13th (MJCo) and Bakethin on 18th and 24th (PRM/EAW/MN). One to two were at twenty further widespread locations.

A Great Spotted Woodpecker is carried off by a Sparrowhawk. See later for the explanation.

By Peter Tapsell on 20th March

**Great Grey Shrike** *Lanius excubitor*

The single bird remained at Prestwick Carr throughout the month with others at Aid Moss from 7th to 12th (ADM/MN), Wanney Craggs from 2nd to 11th (AT/MH), Tutehill Moss, Harwood Forest on 14th (TRD/JD), Spartylea on 24th (JM), Fourlaws Plantation, Ridsdale on 25th (IK), Slaley Forest on 14th/16th and singing there on 27th (JP/RMH).

Magpie *Pica pica*

The gathering at Swallow Pond continues with 97 the peak count on the 2nd (JPD) the only other double figure count being 22 on rugby pitches near Scotch Gill Woods, Morpeth on 6th (AT). One to nine were at Dipton Wood, Jesmond Dene, Slaley, South Gosforth and in a Walbottle garden.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Three were at Chugdon Wood, Ellington on 5th (ASJ/JPD), West Hartford on 21st (PJA) and Farnley, Corbridge on 22nd (RB/MB). A pair were seen on three dates at Swallow Pond and two over Choppington Wood regularly during the month (SLB/MSK) with two near the Thistle Hotel in Gosforth Park on 21st (GB). Singles were reported regularly from Jesmond Dene, West Hartford and Arcot Pond with one at Harwood Head, Harwood Forest on 5th.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

The peak counts were 200 at Ingram on 1st (JMA), 160 near R Tyne at Newburn on 6th (KR/LR), 120+ at Swallow Pond on 9th (JPD) and 100 at Hemscott Hill on 5th. Three to 50 were at Boulmer, Dinnington, Jesmond Dene and in a Walbottle garden.

Birds showing characteristics of the Nordic race ssp *monedula* were at West Allotment Pond on 6th (CGK), Hemscott Hill and Lynemouth both on 9th (AT).

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Recently ploughed fields near Bell's Farm, Cresswell attracted 400 on 4th with 80 still present on 18th (CB). There were 114 apparently occupied nests at Borewell, Scremerston and 56 at Castlehills Berwick on 29th (MHu) with 30 at Holywell Dene on 12th (KWY) and 11 at Ponteland on 20th (KR/LR). Pairs of birds were prospecting or nest building at Chare Ends (Holy Island), Deadwater Fell (Kielder), St Thomas's Churchyard and Leazes Park (Newcastle).

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Largest counts were of 47 on the beach at North Shields Fish Quay on 29th (CB), 41 attracted to a sheep carcass at Beanley Moor on 5th (MH), 25 at West Hartford on 28th and 20+ at Arcot Hall GC on 2nd (STH). Nine were at Elswick Wharf R. Tyne on 14th and five in Jesmond Dene on 18th.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

A single bird was at Ross Back Sands on 11th (IBDa/KDa) and at Holy Island on 18th and 23rd (CP/JMo).

Raven *Corvus corax*

Well reported with nine at Wholehope Knowe on 8th (IRD), five on The Cheviot on 10th (IBDa/KDa), four+ at Slaley Forest on 18th (JL), with three in the Great Wanney Crag area on 30th (ADM/MN), at Border Park RFC, Kielder on 31st (CB) and Upper Irthing, Lampert on 18th (MH). Pairs were noted at Capheaton, Winters Gibbet (Harwood Forest) and West Simonside with two at Beanley Wood, Carey Burn (Harthope Valley), Coe Craggs (Thrunton Woods) and Ros Castle. Singles were at twelve further upland localities.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

The species was noted as common during the Bird Club field trip to Kielder however the peak counts came from migrants on the coast with 21 at Holy Island on 22nd, 15 on 24th (JMo), ten at Budle Bay on 23rd (MJC) and six+ at St Mary's Island on 15th and 22nd (MSH/TRD/JD), Howick Haven on 22nd (MJC) and Bamburgh on 24th (BRS). Inland eight were singing at Cottonshopeburnfoot on 25th (JR) and six at Harwood Burn, Harwood Forest on 21st (MSH). Two to five were at a further six coastal localities with singles at six more inland locations.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Under reported this month with three at Jesmond Dene on 13th, two at Beatty Avenue South Gosforth on 3rd (MJCo) and a pair visiting a nest box in the observer's garden at Netherton Park, Stannington on the 26th (RWM/MIM) being the only records.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Only two reports of seven in Jesmond Dene on 13th and one in the observer's garden at South Gosforth on 3rd (MJCo).

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

One to three were in an Old Hartley garden during the month (RJP) with three at Jesmond Dene on 25th (MJCo) and two at Farnley, Corbridge on 22nd (RB/MB).

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

A peak count for the month of five at Prestwick Carr on 17th (PCF) with three at Swallow Pond on 2nd (JPD), two at Mootlaw Quarry, Ryall during the month (ALT) at Warkworth Lane, Ellington on 1st (MJC), and pairs at Beacon Hill, Longhorsley on 20th and 30th (EC), Gubeon near Morpeth on 23rd (AT) and Fontburn Reservoir on 27th (TRD/JD). Singles were at Hadrian's Pond, Warkworth Lane (Ellington), Lucker, Scotland Gate and Slaley Hall.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

Two were near Southard Edge, in the Scotch Gill area both on the 9th and at Hartburn Bridge and Wall on 30th (ADMc/AJH). Singles visited a Linden Hall garden on 3rd and 10th (IFo), were at High House Bank on 12th, Highford, Morpeth on 15th (ADMc), New Mills Wood, Berwick on 27th (TBr) and Beacon Hill, Longhorsley on 30th (EC/JSB).

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Good numbers as birds sang the largest counts being 55 at Sweethope on 5th (ASJ/JPD), 23 at Chare Ends, Holy Island on 15th (JMo), 20+ at Swallow Pond on 20th (JPD), 16 at Haughton Strother GP on 13th (MR), 15+ at Carey Burn, Harthope Valley on 30th and more than ten at Harbottle on 31st (MJC). One to seven were found at 15 further widespread localities with ten/h moving W at Cresswell Pond on 26th.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

The first report was a single at Low Hauxley on 23rd (IFo) with the peak counts being 30 at a nest colony at Fourstones on 25th (ASJ), seven at Bolam Lake on 31st (CDB) and six at Hepple on 29th (ASJ). Two were at Thropton on 26th, Druridge Pools on 29th and Cocklawburn on 30th with singles also at Bamburgh, Cresswell Village, Haughton Strother, Holywell and Wark (N Tyne).

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

The first birds all arrived on the 29th with singles at Druridge Pools NR (PRM), flying north off Cresswell and at Hepple (ASJ).

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Eight were at Ellington on 23rd (TB) and six at Prestwick Carr on 7th (PCF). Much more unusual was four crossing open moorland at 1,000ft at West Simonside on 2nd (IK). Elsewhere three were at Farnley, Howick Dene and a Rothbury garden and pairs were noted at a further 12 localities including nest building at Bakethin and East Ord from 19th.

Long-tailed Tit
Big Waters
6th March
John Littleton

**Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*

It promises to be yet another very good year for this species with birds reported from at least 78 localities during the month. Singles were noted at Warenden, Warden and Seahouses from 1st-5th, followed by an influx from 11th-18th when singles were reported from a further 19 widespread localities. The highest counts were 17 at Swallow Pond on 27th (JPD), 12 singing at Kilham on 25th (TRD/JD) and ten singing at Gosforth Park NR on 27th (IK) and nine at Wallsend Dene on 29th (PBU/ABU). Eight were singing in the Ingram area on 24th and seven at Holywell Dene on 22nd, whilst counts of six to six+ came from Carey Burn, Eshott, Horsley Wood, Linden Hall, Silverlink CP and Whittle Woods (Horsley).

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Singles, possibly over-wintering birds, were noted at Hexham Abbey on 7th (PBU/ABU), a Heddon-on-the-Wall garden from 12th-26th (JSB) and a Walbottle garden on 11th (KR/LR). Singing was heard at Tynemouth from 22nd, Swallow Pond on 28th and Warkworth Lane on 29th. A single was at Whiteadder Water (Berwick) on 27th and up to three were noted at Swallow Pond (JPD) and a single at Cramlington from 30th-31st.

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

Five at Blyth (Asda) on 15th declined to four from 16th-21st, one remaining to 22nd (TB *et al.*). Four were also at Heaton Road (Newcastle) on 16th (SPP).

A Blyth Asda Waxwing by Chris Barlow

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Five were singing at Bolam Lake on 31st (CDB) and two pairs were at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) on 25th (MSH). Counts of three came from Holywell Dene, Jesmond Dene, Kielder and Wallington Hall and two at Bakethin, Farnley (Corbridge) and Simonburn. Single birds were reported from a further 12 localities.

**Treecreeper** *Certhia familiaris*

The best count was seven+ at Linden Hall on 14th (JPD). Five were noted at Gosforth Park NR during the month (NHSN) and at Letah Wood (Hexham) on 16th (AJH) and four were in the same tree at Bolam Lake on 31st (CDB). One to three were reported from a further 14 localities including a very approachable individual on the Straight Lonnen (Holy Island) on 21st (JMo). Nest building was noted in Holywell Dene by 30th.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

20 were singing at Furnace Bridge (R. Blyth) on 20th (LJM). Four were reported from Farnley (Corbridge) and Jesmond Dene. Nest building was noted at Carey Burn by 17th (MJC).

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

500 at Prestwick Carr on 3rd was the largest gathering (PCF), followed by 300 at Ridley Common and at Spartylea and 250 at Allendale and Plenmeller Common from 10th-12th (SJH). On the coast flocks of 200 were reported from Hemscott Hill Links on 5th and Whitley Bay Links on 31st (JMA/KWY). 100-120 were at Allenheads, Coanwood Common and Keenley from 10th-11th and 90 at Carrshield Moor on 3rd (SJH). 30-60 were noted at Dunstanburgh Castle, Newton Pool and Swinhope Shield (Spartylea) and four to ten at a further four localities. A nesting cavity was being visited in Hexham town centre by 14th.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Two pairs were at Allendale on 13th (SAS), Carey Burn (Harthope Valley) on 17th (MJC) and also in Jesmond Dene (Quarry and Waterfall MJCo). Three were at Thrum Mill (Rothbury) on 3rd and pairs at Clennel, Farnley (Corbridge), Holywell Dene, Linhope, Low Alwinton, Plessey, Rothbury, Smalesmouth, Whittle Burn (Horsley) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs; singles were noted at a further nine localities. Nesting was well under way by mid-month.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

The first arrivals were a pair at Sipton Burn on 20th (ADMc) and a pair at Hawsen Burn (Harthope Valley) on 21st (ASJ/JPD). Three (two males and a female) were at Sipton Burn and a first summer male at Swallow Pond on 30th and a pair at Makendon (Upper Coquetdale) and one at Alnham Moor on 31st.



A Dipper in Holywell Dene by Adriana Buskin on 30th March

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

An impressive 41 were logged during a 3km walk at Northburn (Cramlington) on 25th (LJM), 30 singing males were heard at Marden Estate (Tynemouth) on 10th (ASJ) and 21 were found at Swallow Pond on 9th (JPD). A maximum of 11 visited a Walbottle garden during the month and six road casualties were found at Tynemouth on 15th. Elsewhere the only other reports were five in Jesmond Dene and singles at South Gosforth and Holy Island.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Flocks of 350 were noted at Capheaton on 21st (STE) and Cowden (A68) on 28th (IFo); 210 moved E at Hepple Whitefield on 24th (TRD/JD) and 200 were feeding near Greenlee Lough on 8th (MRS). Other notable flocks were 160 at Allendale on 14th and 130+ at Hepple on 29th, whilst 50-80 were also reported from Deadwater, Haughton Strother (Humshaugh), Linden Hall, Prestwick Carr, Rochester (Wylam), Ryal, Shadfen, Whitcheater (Haltwhistle) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Smaller gatherings of 20-45 were noted at Allenheads, Cottonshope, Grindon Lough, Morpeth, Ridley Stokoe, Shillmoor, Swallow Pond and Thrunton Woods and one to 15 at a further nine localities.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

12+ at Linhope (Ingram Valley) on 5th included two singing males (MJC). Six were reported from Jesmond Dene on 13th (MJCo); five were singing at Swallow Pond on 5th and four singing at Prestwick Carr on 4th. One to two were noted at a further five localities including a nest with two eggs in a Woosington garden on 30th (SRB).

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

52 at Swallowship Wood (Hexham) on 4th was the largest gathering (AJH); 25 were at Shadfen on 7th and 15 at Rudchester (near Heddon) on 11th. Nine to ten were noted at Darras Hall, Morpeth (Clifton Lane) and Ridley Stokoe and one to six at a further six localities.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Ten+ at Linhope (Ingram Valley) on 5th included four singing males (MJC). Four singing males were also in the Harthope Valley on 24th (AT) and four birds in Jesmond Dene on 13th (MJCo). In the Allendale area twos were noted at Low Acton Farm and Sipton Burn, whilst elsewhere one to two were reported from Cottonshope (Otterburn Ranges), Cramlington, Darras Hall, East Kielder Farm, Harwood Forest, Holywell Dene (nest building), Newbiggin, Ponteland, a Stamfordham garden (singing and nest building from 22nd) and Woodhorn Flashes.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

The only reports were six in Jesmond Dene on 18th (MJCo), four at Simonburn on 11th, and singles at South Gosforth and Nessend (Holy Island).

A Robin at Hauxley NR on 1st March by Chris Barlow

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*

One was again at Newbiggin (Promenade) on 6th (ADMc).

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

Up to three (two males and a female) were noted at Cresswell Pond throughout. Elsewhere in Druridge Bay pairs were reported from Druridge Pools and Hauxley NR, and a male was at East Chevington. Further coastal birds were a pair at Cocklawburn on 1st and 13th (MHu) and singing males at Newton Pool on 13th (TRD/JD) and Budle Point on 23rd (MJC). There were encouraging signs of a return to inland areas with birds reported from nine localities; pairs were noted at Berwick Moor on 5th (MH), Tutehill Moss (Harwood) on 14th, Winter's Gibbet (Harwood) on 15th (TRD/JD) and West Simonsides on 3rd (IK) and singles at Beanley Moor on 5th, Carey Burn on 17th and 21st, Great Wanney on 11th, Ottercops on 6th and West Hartford on 12th.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

The first was at Old Hartley on 17th (ASJ). In inland breeding areas one to two were reported from Harthope, Haughton Strother GP, Hepple Whitefield, Riddlees, Rothbury, Rowhope and Sipton Burn from 21st-30th. Coastal migrants were at Maidens Hall Lake on 22nd, Newbiggin on 24th and Cocklawburn on 30th.

A Dunnock at Prestwick Carr by Peter Fletcher

**Dunnock** *Prunella modularis*

Seen daily in a Walbottle garden with a maximum of four on 4th (LR/LR). Three were at Jesmond Dene on 25th (MJCo).

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

12 were in a bush at Walkerville (Newcastle) on 24th (CDH).

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

18 were at Cresswell Pond on 29th (ASJ), 17 at Haughton Strother GP on 27th (MR), 12 at feeders at Battlesteads Hotel (Wark) on 4th (CB), ten at Holywell Pond on 7th (PJA), eight at Warkworth Lane on 29th (TRD), seven in gardens at Walbottle on 4th (KR/LR) and Netherton Park (Stannington) on 21st (RWM/MIM), two-six at a Linden Hall garden all month (NFO), five at Thornton Farm near Norham on 11th (CGK/MSH) and Bothal Pond on 29th (TRD) and four at Angerton Lake on 22nd (PRM). One to three were also observed at Bamburgh, a Dinnington garden, Holy Island Village, Maidens Hall Lake, an Old Hartley garden, Prestwick Carr, Ross Farm, Slaley Hall, Warkworth Lane Ponds, Whittle Dene and garden feeders at Whorlton Hall, (Westerhope, Newcastle).

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Three pairs were found along the Carey Burn (Harthope Valley) on 30th (MJC), two pairs at Holywell Dene all month (RJP/MSH) with a pair nesting there (CGK *et al*), four together at Cockshaw Burn (Hexham) on 5th (AJR) and Whittle Dene on 6th (SR), three at Morpeth on 8th (TB), Plessey Woods on 18th (PBU/ABU), Furnace Bridge, Blyth on 20th (LJM) and Jesmond Dene on 25th (MJCo). One or two were at a further 35 widespread localities including many upland sites plus Cullercoats Bay, Holy Island, Newcastle City Centre and Woodhorn Flash.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

47 were observed on ploughed fields at Newbiggin on 7th (AT), 15 at Grindon Lough on 31st (SJH), 14 at Swallow Pond on 21st (SPP), 11 at Haughton Strother GP on 13th (MR), nine travelling north at Holy Island on 21st (JMo), eight at Woodhorn Flashes on 24th (GB), six at Budle Point on 23rd (MJC) and Whittle Dene on 28th (MR), four at Grindon Lough on 30th (STH) and Carey Burn (Harthope Valley) on 30th (MJC). One or two were at a further five widespread localities.

White Wagtail *M.a. alba*

Three to four were feeding in a freshly ploughed field at Swallow Pond on 20th on Cresswell Pond on 14th (IRD), Derwent Reservoir on 30th (PRM) and Cheswick on 30th (MHu).

Tree Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

One in full song from a tree top at Prestwick Carr on 25th was the first arrival (MRS).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Two were on Holy Island on 12th (JMo) with 48 moving N there on 21st (JMo), ca.30 at Coe Craggs (Thrunton Woods) on 25th (MJC), Cresswell Pond on 27th (MJC) and Harbottle on 31st (MJC), eight at Newbiggin Golf Course on 24th (GB), six at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) on 17th (ALT), East Kielder Farm (Kielder) on 25th (BCFT) and Grindon Lough on 31st (SJH). Five went N over Southfield Green (Cramlington) on 24th (DM). One to three were at a further ten widespread localities.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus petrosus*

An influx of birds on the south shore, Holy Island involved 11 on 12th (MJo). Six+ including two singing/displaying were at Seahouses on 12th (MJC), five up the coast at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 12th (MJC). Three were at Low Newton on 13th (TRD/JD), two at St. Mary's Island on 1st (MSH) and inland, one flew over calling at Woodhorn Flashes on 3rd (GB). Another single was noted at Cullercoats Bay on 9th (MN). Scandinavian rare birds, *A.p. littoralis*, involved three at Snab Point, Cresswell on 6th (ADMc), two at Newbiggin on 9th (AT), singles at Beal Sluice (TRD/JD) and St. Mary's Island on 11th (CS). By 12th eight+ were attracted to St. Mary's Island declining to three by 16th as they headed N and high (MSH).

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

250+ (only five females) were around Leaplish feeding station (Kielder Forest) on 16th (MSK/NEWT), seven were singing at Cottonshopeburnfoot (Redesdale) on 25th (JR) and six at Jesmond Dene on 15th (MJCo).

Cock Chaffinch at Holywell feeding station on 30th March by Adriana Buskin

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Ca.20 were observed moving NW with Chaffinch at Harwood on 15th (ADMc) and 20 were at Bolam Lake CP on 31st (ADMc), 17 were at Ridsdale on 29th (MD/AM), ten at Angertonmoor Cottages on 31st (ADMc), two-three at Holywell Pond feeding station between 6th-12th (SPP/KWY) with one still present there on 19th (SPP), two visited an Ovington garden on 29th (SAS) and singles were in gardens at Cramlington on 10th (JM), Rothbury on 10th (TRD/JD) and Mount Pleasant on 15th (SWN).



Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

55 were noted in the Rothbury-Blaeberry Hill area on 10th (NFO), 22 at a Walbottle garden on 4th (KR/LR), nine at Barns Park (Cramlington) on 18th (DM) and one-six at a further four widespread localities. A leucistic bird with almost white primaries was watched at Rothbury on 21st (TRD/JD).

The Rothbury leucistic Greenfinch
Rothbury 21st March
by Tim Dean

**Goldfinch** *Carduelis Carduelis*

100+ came into roost at Cobalt Business Park (North Shields) on 8th (CGK). 34 were at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 1st (DM), ten visited a Walbottle garden on 11th (KR/LR), eight at Blyth on 22nd (PRM) and one to five at a further five widespread localities.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Observed as very common at Kielder Forest on 25th with many singing/displaying birds at Tower Knowle, Elf Kirk, Bakethin, East Kielder Farm, Deadwater and Kielderhead Viaduct (BCFT). Many were also paired up and singing/displaying at Bull Crag and Bakethin on 27th (MSH). Elsewhere, 100 were at Alwin Valley (Upper Coquetdale) on 2nd (JR), 55 at Feeders at Battlesteads Hotel (Wark) on 4th (CB), 50 at Capheaton on 9th (STE), 20 at Harwood Head (Harwood Forest) on 21st (MSH) and Border Park RFC (Kielder) on 31st (CB), 15+ at Gosforth Park NR all month (NHSN) and one to ten at a further 15 widespread localities including gardens at Chapel House (Newcastle), Cramlington, Netherton Park (Stannington) and Walbottle. Coastal passage involved six flying N at Bamburgh on 23rd (BRS), two at Kitty Brewster (Blyth) on 24th (GB) and one N at Straight Lonnen (Holy Island) on 21st (JMo).

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Wintering coastal flocks involved 120+ on set-aside at Elwick on 2nd (MSH), 100 at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 4th (TRD/JD) declined to 55 by 15th (ASJ) as birds drifted back to breeding areas. 50 were at Chare Ends (Holy Island) on 15th (JMo) and 24 at Druridge Pools NR on 29th (PRM). Six pairs were at Backworth on 30th (ASJ). Two to eight were at a further six widespread localities.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

The last on the coast involved 60 at Hemscotthill Dunes, Cresswell on 6th declining to 35 by 13th (ADM_c) and 25 at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 14th (ASJ). A pair were observed on breeding habitat at Quickcleugh Moss (Allendale) on 22nd (PRM).

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*

A few were back in upland breeding habitat at Foulwals Plantation (Ridsdale) on 4th. By 25th more were displaying over young conifer areas here (IK). Noted as common at Kielder Forest on 25th with birds singing/displaying at Tower Knowle, Elf Kirk, Bakethin, East Kielder Farm and Kielderhead Viaduct (BCFT), 40 were at Swallowship Wood (Hexham) on 2nd (AJH), 20 at Allendale on 25th (ASJ) and the Great Wanney Crag area on 30th (ADM_c) and Rowley Burn on 28th (AJH), five+ at Winter's Gibbet (Harwood) on 22nd (PRM), two pairs displaying at Sipton Burn (Allendale) on 23rd (EC/JSB) and single pairs at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 18th (DM) and Beacon Hill on 30th (EL/JSB). On the coast, four were at Druridge Pools on 29th (AT) and one at Foxton (Alnmouth) on 22nd (MHM). One or two were at Grindon Lough, Linden Hall, Swinhope Moor and Wark.

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Kielder Forest proved popular with 46+ around Bakethin Reservoir on 5th (PRM/EAW), 20+ at East Kielder Farm area on 11th (MJC), ten at Border Park RFC on 31st (CB) and one to seven at Bull Crag, Deadwater, Kielderhead Viaduct and Tower Knowle. Harwood Forest attracted 30+ at Harwood Head between 5th-21st (MSH) and seven at Winter's Gibbet on 22nd (PRM). Breeding was confirmed at Harwood Head on 2nd with a female feeding a juvenile (EC). Elsewhere, 20+ were at Cragside on 10th (MJC), 15+ at Slaley Forest on 18th (JL), 12+ at Thrunton Woods on 5th (MJC) with 10+ at nearby Coe Crag on 25th (MJC). One to eight at a further eight widespread localities. Coastal and lowland passage was indicated by five flying north at Harper's Heugh near Budle Bay on 9th (MSH), two north over Arcot Pond on 28th (STH) and singles at Ross Farm on 1st (NFO), West Hartford on 21st (PJA) and Bamburgh on 23rd (BRS).

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Seven were at Harper's Heugh on 14th (JPD), five at Bolam Lake CP on 31st (CDB), up to four at Holywell Dene all month (RJP), four at Big Waters on 7th (STE), Swallow Pond on 8th (JPD) and Furnace Bridge on 20th (LJM), three at Sipton Burn (Allendale) on 22nd (PRM) and one or two at a further 14 widespread localities including gardens at Cramlington, Netherton Park (Stannington) Old Hartley, Rothbury, Scotland Gate, South Gosforth and Walbottle.

A cock Bullfinch and Greenfinch share a feeder
by John Richards

**Snow Bunting** *Plectrophenax nivalis*

The last involved six at Holy Island on 11th (SR/AH) declining to three on 20th (JMo) and one by 25th (SR/AH). Two were near Beacon Point (Newbiggin) on 6th (ADMc) and Goswick Sands on 14th (AA/MH). Inland, one flew N at Carey Burn (Harthope Valley) on 30th (MJC).

Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*

Five were still present at Holy Island on 18th (CP) with two there on 17th-19th (IK/SR/AH) and a male in full breeding plumage up to 21st (IK). On the adjacent mainland three were at Beal Sluice on 11th (TRD/JD).

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citronella*

75+ were feeding on spilt grain at Welton Hall Farm near Whittle Dene on 19th (EC), 70 at nearby Whittle Dene on 10th declining to 18 by 26th as birds dispersed to breeding areas (SR), 40 at Hepscott on 17th (CW), 25 at Fourstones on 9th (AJH) and one to four at a further ten widespread localities.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Nine were found around Prestwick Carr on 17th (PCF), eight at Cocklawburn on 26th (MHu), seven at Druridge Pools NR on 29th (PRM), six at Sweethope Lough on 5th (ASJ) and West Hartford on 11th (LJM), five at St. Mary's Wetland on 4th (ASJ) and Silverlink on 20th (ASJ) and four at Arcot Pond between 11th-25th (LJM/DM). One to three were at a further six widespread localities including gardens at Dinnington and Sleafy Hall.

ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN**Escapes****Muscovy Duck** *Carina moschata*

The individual seen last month at Elswick Wharf was again present until at least 23rd (DM). One noted at Mootlaw Quarry, Ryal on 25th (ALT).

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

One was found at Holywell Pond on 28th (MSH)

Birds of Unknown Origin**Rose-ringed Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri*

The roving bird in the Ponteland area was regularly noted with sightings at the Northumbria Police HQ on 14th (GMi) and at Bell Villas on 16th before moving to Dinnington on 18th and Prestwick on 19th (PCF).

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Bamburgh Ringing Station, Berwick Wildlife Group, Natural History Society of Northumbria, North Northumberland Bird Club, Northern Experience Wildlife Tours, NTBC Field Trip (BCFT).

Apologies for any accidental omissions

BULLETIN COMPILATION AND PRODUCTION

This bulletin was compiled by Graeme Bowman (Mute Swan to Ruddy Duck), Lindsay McDougall (Red Grouse to Black-necked Grebe), Trevor Blake (Honey Buzzard to Crane), Steve Holliday (Oystercatcher to Dunlin), Ian Forsyth (Snipe to Skua), Tim Dean (Ivory Gull to Puffin, Escapes, Hybrids and Unknown Origin, List of Contributors, Highlights), Peter Fletcher (Feral Pigeon to Red-rumped Swallow), Mike Richardson (Cetti's Warbler to Pied Flycatcher), Dee McKeown (Dunnock to Corn Bunting), Dan Turner (WeBS Coastal Counts) and Steve Holliday (WeBS Inland Counts). Thanks again to Ann McKeown for typing the section Dunnock to Corn Bunting. Thanks to David Sanders of NNBC for providing data.

Edited by Steve Barrett NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.com

Postal distribution by Brian Bullough.

RECORD SUBMISSION

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 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 NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.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 cost of printing and stamps.

Ask for an e-mailed bulletin from: jo.bentley@waitrose.com

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS 2011

Annual subscription is a £23. For membership enquiries please contact jo.bentley@waitrose.com

NTBC WEB SITE

The Club website is an excellent resource for all interested in birds in the north east. There are numerous interesting sections, including a photograph gallery, site information and trip reports together with extensive reference information for birding in our area. The site is at www.ntbc.org.uk

If you have any ideas or things you would like to see or hear about on the site please let Chris know on 0751 582 5024 or e-mail christopher.knox@o2.co.uk

NTBC SIGHTINGS PAGE

The club sightings web page gives listings of birds seen locally. Adding a sighting is simple. A short e-mail is all that is needed. If anyone would like to be added as a contributor please contact Alan Tilmouth at ntbcorg@gmail.com.

The sightings page can be found at <http://ntbcsightings.posterous.com>

RARE BREEDING BIRDS

We're now right in the thick of the breeding season and with many more people contributing to the NTBC Sightings page we thought it worthwhile providing some 'guidance' on rare breeding birds in the county.

Sadly, not everyone appreciates birds in the way our club members do, a small number of highly resourceful egg collectors continue to remain active and the persecution of some raptor species in many areas by various 'interest' groups continues.

With all of this in mind we have added a page entitled 'Rare Breeding Birds' which you can find just underneath the title at the main site. Please read the page as it highlights all of the Schedule 1 species that you should be aware of, particularly those that breed in Northumberland. Please ensure that if you post a sighting of one of these species you **do not post specific locations** during the breeding season.

We are aware that there are a small number of previously publicised sites for some species (such as Ospreys at Kielder) that are in the public domain and sightings at these specific sites will be allowed. However any reports from other potential breeding locations of these species should not be published with specific location details.

If you wish to post a sighting of commoner species on the schedule 1 list (e.g. Barn Owl or Kingfisher) during the breeding season please use only phrases such as 'one in the north of the county' or 'two at a site on the River Tyne' and avoid highlighting breeding behaviour that may draw attention to a breeding attempt.

NTBC reserve the right to remove or amend contributors reports to remove any information considered a risk to a Schedule 1 species in the county. We will attempt to contact the contributor to discuss/explain but can't always guarantee that this will happen prior to the removal of such sightings.

INDOOR MEETINGS

The next indoor meeting will be at Northern Rugby Club, McCracken Park, Great North Road, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 2DT on Thursday 13th September.

FIELD TRIPS

The next trip organised by Trevor Blake is to the Harthope Valley on Saturday May 12th. This wonderful valley in the Cheviots should provide many moorland species and upland summer visitors.

Please contact Trevor Blake for more information: trevor.1958@live.co.uk

COMMITTEE NEWS

A survey of members was carried out in January. The summary of results is attached for your information.

Please contact any committee member with your comments.

SPARROWHAWK TAKES GREAT-SPOTTED WOODPECKER

A male Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* caught a female Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major* in our garden at Tranwell near Morpeth and appeared to drown it in our garden pond. Has any of you seen this behaviour before ?

For some time now a male Sparrowhawk has regarded our garden feeders as his buffet table. His MO is to sit openly in a nearby tree (see picture) and wait for the small birds to come to the feeders. Sometimes he will sit for some time before swooping down and trying to grab something. He is not particularly successful with quite a low hit rate - I've placed the feeders next to a beech hedge as a refuge for the intended prey. However over the last few weeks he has caught four male bullfinches and several blue and great tits - although thankfully neither of the two Willow Tits we have in daily.

On 20th march at about 9.30am I saw him sitting on his favourite branch as a female Great Spotted Woodpecker (a regular) came in to feed on peanuts. I wondered to my wife if the hawk would go for the woodpecker and scarcely had I spoken when the hawk swooped. The woodpecker panicked and flew straight into the window we were looking out of with a tremendous crash and fell to the ground. The hawk grabbed the woodpecker almost before it landed and flew over to our nearby garden pond where it landed in the water with the woodpecker underneath it. I dashed out with my camera as the hawk "mantled" over the woodpecker (see attached picture) and remained in this posture in the water for a minute or two. There was no sign of a struggle beneath the hawk so the woodpecker may have already been dead but the hawk certainly appeared to be drowning its prey. It then flew off with the woodpecker dangling and dripping beneath it (see picture of the hawk flying off with the woodpecker).

Peter Tapsell

The male Sparrowhawk

Right, on the alert and below drowning the
Great-spotted Woodpecker



ANNUAL BUTTERFLY REPORT

The Annual Butterfly Report for Northeast England for 2011 is now available to download from the branch website:

www.northeast-butterflies.org.uk

INLAND WeBS COUNTS: NORTH HUMBERLAND

Interim

Version:

Year: 2012
Month: March

[illegible]

Northumberland & Tyneside Bird Club Members Survey 2011

Membership

1. Length of Membership?	1 year	4 (8.7%)	1-5year	5 (10.9%)	5-10years	0 10years+	36 (80.4%)
2. Age Group	Under 18		0 18-30		0 30-65	65+	10 (19.6%)
3. Other Organisation memberships	NWT None 2 (4.4%)	32 (71.1%)	NNHS	14 (31.1%)	RSPB	Other	30 (66.7%)

Indoor Meetings

1. How often do you attend meetings	Every	11 (24.4%)	Some	20 (44.4%)	Never	14 (31.2%)	
3. Indoor Talk Topics Most enjoyed	Foreign Trips Non-birding	23 (51.1%) 9 (20%)	Conservation Rare Birds	26 (57.8%) 23 (51.1%)	Local Birding	28 (62.2%)	

Website/Sightings Page

1 Website	Daily	1 (2.2%)	Weekly	12 (26.7%)	Monthly	14 (31.1%)	Rarely 18 (40%)
2. Sightings Page	Daily	6 (13.3%)	Weekly	10 (22.2%)	Monthly	8 (17.7%)	Rarely 21 (46.7%)

Birds in Northumbria

1. Which sections most valued	Annual Summary Back Papers	8 (12.1%) 7 (10.6%)	Species Accounts First & Last Dates	17 (25.7%) 4 (6%)	Photos Full Report	9 (13.6%) 21 (31.8%)	
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2. Do you keep copy	Yes	44	No	2			
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Field Trips

1. How many attended annually	None	38 (79.2%)	one-two	9 (18.8%)	All	1 (5%)	
2. Which type most likely to attend	Local	24 (50%)	UK	11 (22.9%)	Europe	10 (20.8%)	Non-Europe 3 (6.3%)

Bulletin

How do you receive	Email	32 (69.5%)	Print	14 (30.5%)			
Which sections value most	Monthly Summary	25	Species Acc	22	Images	14	Other Info 13
Do you contribute sightings	Every Month	19 (43.2%)	Occasionally	15 (34.1%)	Never	10 (22.7%)	
Bulletin description	Main Source	17 (31.5%)	Handy reference	26 (48.1%)	Interesting but not useful	9 (16.7%)	Use or read infrequently 2 (3.7%)

New Members

offers of help
17 with a further 3 possible

joining committee	Yes	4	No	37			
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NB Please note not everyone answered all questions and some questions allowed for more than one answer to indicate interest.

Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

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

Bulletin 2012 No 4

MONTHLY SUMMARY – APRIL

3rd June 2012



HIGHLIGHTS

Bewick's Swan
Bean Goose
Garganey
Great Northern Diver
Little Egret
White Stork
Black Guillemot
Short-eared Owl
Wryneck
Siberian Stonechat

Two still at East Chevington until 13th
One late bird at Ellington on 6th.
One or two at Holy Island and Druridge Pools
Summer plumaged bird past St Mary's on 29th.
Only record all month was at Druridge Pools
One on St Mary's wetland on 29th feeding on a dead Tufted Duck !
One seen again at Stag Rocks on 8th
Many records still after winter influx
One or two on Holy Island from 27th to 30th.
A male at Holy Island on 28th. The first spring record for county.

CONTENTS

EGM Meeting Result
Postal Bulletin – distributor needed.
Standby bulletin writer wanted.



An alert Grey Heron at Big Waters
by Simon Elliott
8th April

WEATHER

With low pressure over or near the UK for most of the month, the weather was generally unsettled with numerous showery days. There was some snow in northern areas early in the month and longer spells of rain especially in the last week.

It was the coldest April since 1989. Unusually, April was colder than March. Most of England was much wetter than normal, making it provisionally the wettest April on record across the UK.

1st to 2nd: The month began with relatively settled conditions as a result of a ridge of high pressure. T

3rd to 5th: On 3rd showers broke out ahead of a southward moving cold front, some with thunder in places. During the night into 4th rain, sleet and snow moved through northern England. Drifts of snow closed some higher routes in the Pennines. Temperatures were well below average.

6th to 9th: The 6th saw cloud and mostly light rain moving southwards replacing early sunshine in the south. Temperatures recovered to around average, and 7th and 8th were cloudy and mild with outbreaks of rain and drizzle.

10th to 14th: There were showers in many areas.

15th to 16th: By 15th the wind became northerly, with dry cold conditions at night and showers of hail in eastern areas by day. Overnight into 16th there was a widespread frost, with temperatures as low as -4 °C in a few places. The day was mostly fine with plenty of sunshine under a brief ridge of high pressure.

17th to 22nd: This period saw showers or longer periods of rain. The 17th was a wet day with heavy rain spreading eastwards in the morning, followed by showers some with hail and thunder. The 18th was a wet day too as low pressure tracked across southern England bringing rain and showers. By the morning of 19th the low had reached eastern England, with bands of showers or more prolonged rain. On 20th, with low pressure over the North Sea, north-eastern coasts were cloudy with rain and heavy thundery showers developed elsewhere.

23rd to 30th: The 23rd saw an area of low pressure approach from the south-west. This brought prolonged rain to southern areas, while the north was brighter but with further thunderstorms. The 24th saw a brief ridge of high pressure. Overnight and into 25th another low moved from the south-west, bringing strong winds and very heavy rain. The 26th saw widespread heavy and sometimes thundery showers. By 27th a weather front brought more heavy rain to many central and southern areas, although the north was drier and brighter. The 28th was similar with outbreaks of heavy rain or showers in many areas. A low moved away south-westwards on 30th.

CLASSIFIED LIST

The following account consists of unchecked reports. The species/subspecies marked * require descriptions.

A complete list of all sightings that need notes is included in the NTBC website www.ntbc.org.uk under the County Records Committee section and in Birds in Northumbria 2009 page 224.

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

TARGET SPECIES

The target species for 2012 are all the owls. Please report all records in as much detail as possible. The Club is sensitive to the vulnerability of these species to disturbance and persecution, and will be particularly cautious about what is actually published, above all about nesting and roosting sites. Please address any questions or concerns to Tim Dean or Dick Myatt.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Killingworth Lake held 115 on 8th (LJM), 112 were on the River Tweed at New Water Haugh on 15th (MHu), 102, including four on nests, were at Capheaton Lake on 11th (STE), 62 at Wark on Tweed on 24th (TBr), and 53 at the Tweed Estuary on 5th (MHu). Other peak counts were 25 at Warkworth Lane and ten, including two on nests, at Big Waters, while five to nine were at Arcot and Cresswell Ponds, Grindon Lough and Newcastle Leazes Park. One to four were at a further 14 widespread localities.

A Mute Swan at Druridge Pools
by Chris Barlow



Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus*

Two were in the East Chevington south pool area on 11th and 13th (TB) and singles on 14th, 17th and 20th (ADMc).

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

56 flew NW at Swallow Pond on 6th (JPD), 39 moved N at Warkworth Lane on 6th (TB), and nine flew N after resting on the sea at St Mary's on 6th (MSH). Peak concentrations were 52 at Brandon (Ingram Valley) on 7th (IBDa/KDa), 45 at Beal on 5th (JMA), 44 at Grindon Lough on 10th (MRS), and ten at Cresswell Pond on 4th (TB). One to seven were noted at Bakethin and Catcleugh Reservoirs, Capheaton, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Maiden's Hall Lake (West Chevington), Wark, Warkworth Lane and West Ord up to 20th. The only reports after this date were of three at Whiteadder Point, Berwick on 29th (TBr) and one at Killingworth Lake until 29th (BMo).

Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*

An unraced bird was at Warkworth Lane on 6th (TB).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Northerly movement involved 76 at Cocklawburn on 18th (MHu), 11 at Ellington on 14th (TB), and five at Warkworth Lane on 6th (TB). Holywell Pond held 15 on 3rd (LJM), eight on 18th (SPP) and one on 27th (PBU/ABU), nine were at Newton Pool on 17th (TRD/JD), and two to three at Druridge Pools, Grindon Lough and Hauxley Reserve between 10th-30th.

A Pink Foot at Druridge Pools
28th April
Chris Barlow

**'Eurasian' White-fronted Goose** *Anser albifrons albifrons*

Ten were at Maiden's Hall Lake on 1st and eight on 15th (NFO), and singles were reported from Holywell Pond on 1st and 5th (GMI/SPP) and Woodhorn Flashes on 9th (STH).

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

Two unraced birds flew over Druridge Pools with three Pink-footed Geese on 16th (TRD/JD).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Largest groups were 140 at Monks' House Pool on 8th (DGB), 80 at Harper's Haugh near Budle Bay on 5th (MSH), 32 at Woodhorn Flashes on 14th (CDH), 29 at Grindon Lough on 10th (MRS), and 12-17 at Hauxley Reserve, New Water Haugh (River Tweed) and Prestwick Carr. One to nine were also at Arcot and Linton Ponds, Capheaton, Castle Island, Cocklawburn, Greenside Hill, Kimmer Lough, Silverlink CP and Yarrow Slake. Breeding data (the first of the year) were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/comments
Tumbleton Lake, Craggside	1	6	TRD/JD. On 23rd
Haughton Strother GP	1	5	MR. On 25th

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Peak counts were 31 at Castle Island on 29th (DM), 29 at Bothal Pond on 8th (TD), 27 at Halton-Lea-Gate on 22nd (SW), 18-22 at Grindon Lough, Hauxley Reserve and Linton Ponds, and 14 at Newcastle Leazes Park. Five to eight were also at Bell's Pond, Big Waters, Druridge Pools, West Ord and Yarrow Slake, and one to four at Alnmouth, Arcot Pond, Greenlee Lough (on nest), Kielder (on nest), Linbriggs, Wark Forest (nests at two sites) and West Hartford. A more unusual locality (in spring) was Holy Island where four were present on 8th-9th and three on 24th (IK/ADM/SR). Breeding data (the first of the year) were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/comments
Woolsington Ponds	1	5	SRB. On 27th

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Two were at Hauxley Reserve on 16th (AT) and four between 28th-30th (CDB/TRD/JD), while singles were at Grindon Lough on 10th (MRS) and Linton Ponds on 19th (AT). A colour-ringed individual (orange BLY), together with an un-ringed bird, was at Derwent Reservoir on 25th February 2012. It was ringed as an adult female at Caerlaverock, Dumfries and Galloway on 13/2/04 and was noted as being 'regular' there until the last sighting on 17/3/11 (IFo).

Barnacle Geese at Druridge
Pools
28th April by Chris Barlow

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Two unraced birds were at Fenham Slake on 29th (SVM/AJM).

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

One was at St Mary's on 29th (MSH *et al.*).



Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Five flew N at St Mary's on 29th (MSH). Peaks were 28 at Castle Island on 28th (GB), 16 at Cresswell Pond on 7th and 16th (MN/TB), 12 at West Hartford on 14th (PJA), and ten at Warkworth Lane on 6th (TB). Six to seven were at Elswick, Hauxley Reserve, and three to four Backworth, Kimmer Lough, Warkworth Lane and Woodhorn Flashes. One to two were also at Bothal, Cresswell and Linton Ponds, Derwent Reservoir, Haughton Strother GP, Monks' House Pool, New Water Haugh, Prestwick Carr and Yarrow Slake

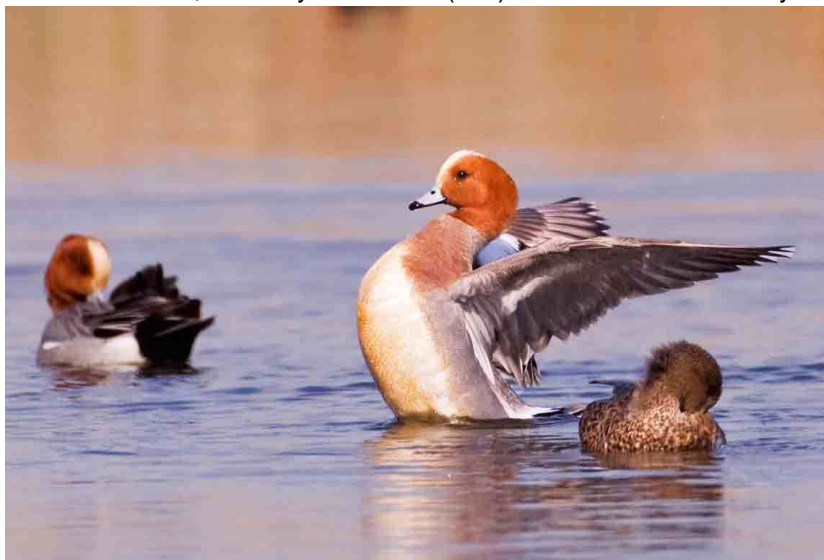
Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

At Ridley Stokoe, five (three drakes) were present on 5th (JPD/ASJ) and eight (five drakes) on 14th (AA), and two pairs were at nearby Smalesmouth on the latter date (JR). Single pairs were at Bakethin Reservoir on 6th (TRD/JD) and Whitelee Farm, Redesdale on 14th (JR), a drake was at Boat Farm, North Tyne on 15th (SW) and a duck at Rothbury on 10th (JD).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Five flew N at Newbiggin on 15th (GB). Grindon Lough held 70 on 10th (MRS) falling to 14 by 23rd (PRM). Other peak counts were 40 at Cresswell Pond on 7th (MN) dropping to six by 30th (TRD/JD), 28 at Derwent Reservoir on 7th (IFo), and five to eight at Big Waters, Capheaton and Colt Crag Reservoir. Four were at Hauxley Reserve and one to two at Arcot, Cresswell, Linton and Middle Ord Ponds, and Prestwick Carr.

Wigeon at Cresswell Pond
by Colin Bradshaw

**Gadwall** *Anas strepera*

42 at Castle Island on 6th was a high count for that site (STH), 18 were at Woodhorn Flashes on 17th (AT), tens at Bothal Pond on 18th (TD) and East Chevington (TRD), and eight to nine Druridge Pools and Hauxley Reserve, and five to six at Capheaton, Cresswell Pond and West Hartford. Three to four also visited Backworth and Linton Ponds, Big Waters, Holy Island, Monks' House Pool and Prestwick Carr.

A drake Gadwall at Druridge Pools
by Tim Dean on 16th April

**Teal** *Anas crecca*

Peak counts were 52 at Grindon Lough on 10th (MRS) with 40 remaining on 23rd (PRM), 44 at Druridge Pools on 29th (DM/STH), 34 at West Hartford on 4th (STH), 32 at Longhirst Flash on 8th dropping to three pairs by 18th (TD), and ten to 20 at Arcot, Bothal and Middle Ord Ponds, the *Beehive* Flash, Castle Island, and Monks' House Pool. Five to nine were also at Big Waters, Capheaton, Colt Crag Reservoir, Linton Ponds, and West Ord, with three to four at three further sites.

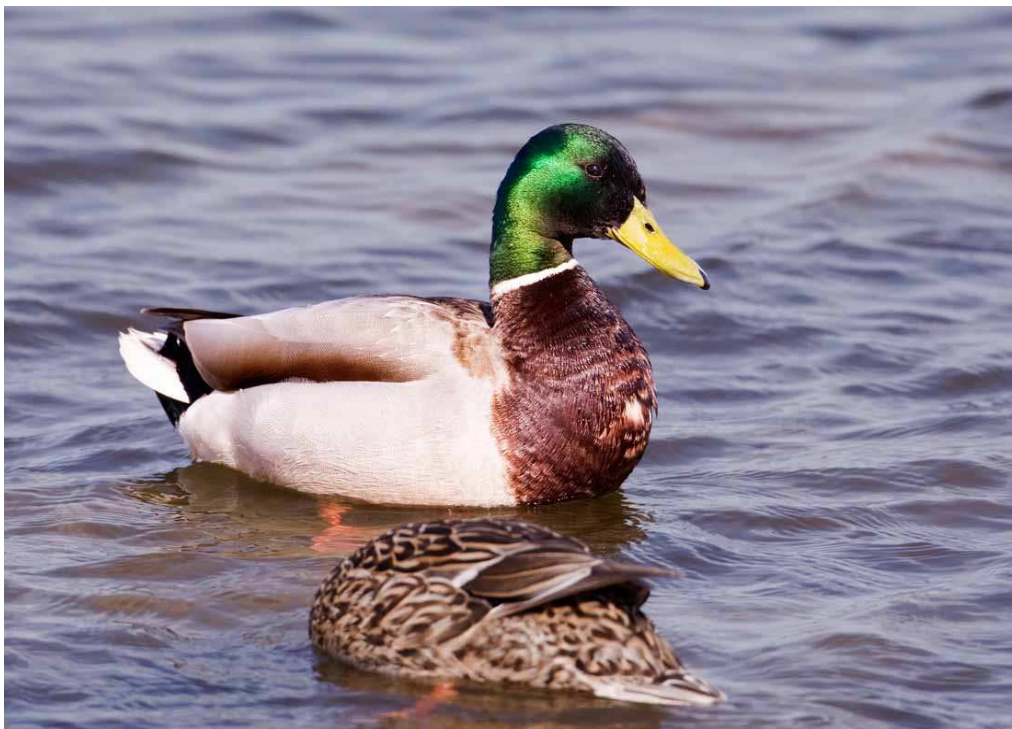
A pair of Teal
Big Waters
Adrian Buskin on 9th April



Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Highest counts were 55 at Newcastle Leazes Park on 23rd (DM), 35 at the Tweed Estuary on 5th (MHu), 22 at Jesmond Dene, and 12-14 at Arcot and Bothal Ponds, and Newcastle Civic Centre and Exhibition Park. Two visited *Morrisons* car park in Killingworth on 6th (PBU/Abu). Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/comments
Morpeth (River Wansbeck)	1	11	TD. 2-3 day old ducklings on 12th
Newcastle Civic Centre	2	19 (16 & 3)	SRB. Newly hatched on 17th.
Slaley Hall	1	9	RMH. On 22nd
Gosforth Park NR	1	7	NHSN. On 22nd



A pair of Mallard
Druridge Pools by Colin Bradshaw

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Seven (four drakes) were at Druridge Pools on 4th (TF/JFa) and a pair was noted there regularly between 1st-16th (STH/PJA/TRD/JD *et al.*). Three (two drakes) were at Bell's Pond (Cresswell) on 27th (TRD/JD/AT), and single drakes at Cresswell Links on 27th (TB) and East Chevington north pool on 13th and 18th (TB/JPD).

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

Two were at Holy Island on 5th (IBDa/KDa) but it was not until 24th when the next report was received, with a drake at the Rocket Field, Holy Island on 24th (SR) and again on 29th (ADM/MJC). A pair was at Druridge Pools on 27th (TB/TRD/JD) and a drake there on 28th (CDB/AT/STH).

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Most records came from the Druridge Bay area, where peak counts were 12 at East Chevington on 5th (STH), ten at Druridge Pools on 29th (STH/DM), six at Warkworth Lane Ponds on 20th (AT), and six at Cresswell Pond on 30th (TRD/JD). Away from this core area, six were at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN), and one to two at Holywell and Swallow Ponds, and Prestwick Carr. More unusual was a drake at Bakethin Reservoir on 6th (TRD/JD).



A drake Shoveler in flight
John Clark
Druridge Pools
20th April

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Swallow Pond held six (four drakes) on 5th and eight (six drakes) on 16th (JPD), six (five drakes) were at Holywell Pond on 18th (SPP), five at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN), three to four at Arcot and Hadrian's Ponds, and one at Big Waters.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Killingworth Lake again proved popular attracting 69 on 8th (LJM). Other peak counts elsewhere were 45 at Castle Island on 17th (AT), 35 at Newcastle Leazes Park on 2nd (DM), 34 at Linton Ponds on 14th (CDH), 21-24 at Haughton Strother GP, Swallow Pond and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and ten to 17 at Bothal and West Allotment Ponds, Capheaton, Gosforth Park NR, Greenlee and Holy Island Loughs, Newcastle Exhibition Park, Shield on the Wall, Slaley Hall, St Mary's Wetland and Woodhorn Flashes. Six to nine were also at Belsay Hall, Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, Dinnington, Grindon Lough, Hallington Reservoir, Monks' House Pool and West Hartford, and one to four at eight further localities.

Scaup *Aythya marila*

Six flew N at Snab Point on 26th (ADM), and at Newbiggin three (two drakes) flew N on 26th (AT) and three (one drake) on 30th (ADM). A pair was on Druridge Pools on 30th (JL).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

152 were at Cheswick on 11th (MHu), 68 at Cocklawburn on 2nd (MHu), 64 at the Tweed Estuary on 3rd (MHu), 50 at St Mary's on 1st (SPP), 20-35 at Berwick North Shore, Blyth South Harbour and Spittal Bay, and 17 at the Tyne Estuary.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

The only report was ten at Holy Island on 5th (AT).

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Most large counts came from the north, with 280 at Cocklawburn on 2nd (MHu), 86 at Cheswick on 11th (MHu), 40 at Holy Island on 22nd (SR/AH), and 30 off Hauxley on 30th (TRD/JD). Seven were at Stag Rocks and one to two at Berwick North Shore, Newton Point and Warkworth.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Largest gatherings were 45 at East Chevington north pool on 11th (TB) falling to 11 by 21st (AT) and one by 24th (TRD/JD), 42 at the Tweed Estuary on 5th (MHu), 42 at New Water Haugh (River Tweed) on 6th (MHu), 26 (no adult drakes) at Bolam Lake on 1st (CDB), and ten to 15 at Bakethin, Colt Crag and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, Branton GP, and a confidential site in the north. Five to seven were also at Capheaton, Killingworth Lake and Swallow Pond, and one to two at nine further sites, with the latest report of one at Holy Island on 29th (ADM). Display was noted at Colt Crag Reservoirs on 22nd (JL) and at Swallow Pond on 12th (CGK).

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

About 80 were at Holy Island on 29th (ADM), 17 were in Budle Bay on 8th (DGB), ten at the Tweed Estuary on 3rd (MHu), six to eight at the Blyth Estuary (ASH) and Stag Rocks (RNa), four to five at Alnmouth and Castle Island, and one at East Chevington.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

19 were at Berwick on 15th (per NNBC), 15 at West Ord on 29th (MHu), 13 at Whiteadder Point, Berwick on 29th (TBr), and eight at Haughton Strother GP on 22nd (MR). Three to four were found at Derwent Reservoir, Morpeth, Thrum Mill (Rothbury) and Wark, and one to two at Bakethin Reservoir, Carshope, Castle Island, Farnley, Greenlee Lough, Jesmond Dene, Killingworth Lake, Rede Bridge, Ridley Stokoe, and on the River Alwin.

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

The only report this month was of two at Langleeford (Harthope Valley) on 4th (TRD/JD).

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

The highest count was of 12 males, ten of which were flushed by a Short-eared Owl, at Knockburn Farm (Allendale) on 22nd (TRD/JD). Five males and two females were present also in Allendale on 28th (SLB/MSK). Four, three displaying males, were at two sites in the Harwood Shield/Heaheryburn area on 14th, where two displaying males were seen on 7th (MJC). Counts of three (one male) came from Haltonlea Fell on 18th (SW) and Blanchland Moor (two males) on 24th (ALT).

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Few were reported this month with the highest count being five at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) on 15th (ALT) in the Harthope Valley on 24th (AT). Four were at Tritlington on 12th (TB). One to two were noted at Hartburn, Holywell Dene, Killingworth (north of Wagonways) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

The largest gathering was six at Ellington on 7th (TB). One to four were noted at Arcot Lane and Pond, Backworth Pond, Beehive Flash, Belford, Bell's Farm (Cresswell), Big Waters, Castle Hills (Berwick), Conundrum, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools East Chevington, Elwick, Holy Island, Linton Lane, Lucker, St Mary's Island, Scaffold Hill Farm (Wallsend), Stamfordham, Swallow Pond, Warkworth, Warkworth Gut and West Hartford.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Six were at Belsay Hall on 16th and three in a Walbottle garden on 15th (KR/LR). One to two were at Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene) and St Mary's.

A cock Pheasant at Cresswell
Colin Bradshaw

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

Light N passage was noted with two at Newbiggin on 27th (AT) and Alnmouth dunes on 30th (MHu) and one at St Mary's Island on 20th (MSH). On Holy Island 21 were counted between Snipe Point and Emmanuel Head on 17th (SR). One to three were noted at Bamburgh, Boulmer, Cheswick, Cocklawburn, Newbiggin, Stag Rocks and Warkworth.

Black throated Diver

One, partially in summer plumage, was offshore at Old Hartley on 15th (SPP).

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

Two flew N at Snab Point on 26th (ADMc) and one in summer plumage flew N at St Mary's Island on 29th.

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

At St Mary's Island 40+/h flew N on 29th (MSH) Birds were noted at several breeding sites. On 17th 35 were at Nessend Cliffs (Holy Island) (SR), 22 were on nesting ledges at High Point Cliffs (Whitley Bay) on 2nd (MN) and at least eight were at Bamburgh Castle by 28th (BS/DWS/DM). Ten were at Berwick North Shore and three at Cocklawburn on 4th (MHu).

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

One flew N at Snab Point on 26th (ADMC).

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

The largest movements noted were 130/h N at Berwick Pier on 26th (MHu) and 100/h N at St Mary's Island on 29th (MSH). On 12th 80 flew N at Craster and 47 at Dunstanburgh Castle (JMA). Two were off Newton Point on 17th.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

The peak roost counts were 54 at Blyth South Harbour on 7th and 16 at North Shields Fish Quay on 15th (DMT). At New Water Haugh (River Tweed) 20 fished in a line across the river on 29th (MHu). Inland 11 were at Derwent Reservoir on 1st/20th (IFo/RMH). The peak count at Bothal Pond was eight on 17th (TB). Seven were at Berwick North Shore on 4th (MHu) and six at Big Waters on 16th (GB). One to four were noted at Cresswell Pond, Elswick Wharf, Wark and West Allotment Pond.

Continental Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*

One was at Bothal Pond on 17th (TF/JFa).

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Four flew N at Newbiggin on 4th (AT). The peak roost count at Blyth South Harbour, where four colour-ringed birds were noted during the month, was 32 on 22nd (DMT). One to three were noted at North Shields Fish Quay and Spittal Bay.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

A single was at Druridge Pools from 21st-27th (CDB/AT et al).



Cormorants
Bothal Pond
by Jonathan Farooqi

Little Egret
Druridge Pools
Chris Barlow
21st April

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*

The peak counts were 14 at Horton Grange on 14th (PCF) and 11 at Bothal Pond on 17th (TB). Four were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 25th (PCF). One to two were seen at Arcot Pond, Cresswell Pond, Hauxley NR, Holywell Dene, Linton Ponds, St Mary's and feeding in a garden pond at Netherton Park (Stannington). Breeding was confirmed with five nests at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN), five nests (one failed) at Hauxley (HRS) and one nest at Crooked Lonnen, Holy Island (IK/ADM).

***White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia*

One was seen distantly in flight to the N of Big Waters (GB/LAR).

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Peak counts were seven throughout the month at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN) and six at Holywell Pond on 3rd (LJM). Four were at Craggside on 5th (JD), Warkworth Lane on 9th (TB) and Capheaton on 11th (STE). Counts of three came from Holy Island Lough on 5th (AT), Shield-on-the Wall on 10th (MRS) and Woodhorn Flashes on 11th (TRD/JD). Pairs were noted at Arcot Pond, Backworth, *Bank's* Pond (Dinnington), Bothal Pond, Cocklawburn Pond, Colt Crag Reservoir, Conundrum, *Drift Inn* Pools (Seaton Burn) Druridge Pools, Grindon Lough, Laverock Hall Farm Pond (Blyth), Linton Pond and Mootlaw Quarry. Singles were noted at West Hartford and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

The peak count at Whittle Dene Reservoirs was nine on 6th (SR)). Four were at Derwent Reservoir on 1st/ 22nd (IFo) and East Chevington on 16th (TRD/JD). Displaying pairs were seen at Hallington Reservoir on 22nd (JL) and Cresswell Pond on 30th (TRD/JD). Pairs were also noted throughout the month at Airy Holm Reservoir (IFo) and at Branton GP on 23rd (TRD/JD). Singles were at Holywell Pond on 3rd, Haughton Strother GP on 8th/9th, Big Waters on 14th, Colt Crag Reservoir on 22nd and Bothal Pond on 24th.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

Single birds in summer plumage were seen at Holy Island in the harbour on 6th and off St Cuthbert's Island on 29th (ADM).

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

Singles were off Cocklawburn on 11th and in summer plumage off Newbiggin on 21st (AT).

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

Up to four were noted at one regular breeding site and up to three at another.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Only three sightings this month with singles at Hexhamshire Common on 1st (MJC/ASH) and Low Waskerley on 1st and 7th (IFo).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Up to three birds were at East Chevington during the month and at other sights close by to the breeding site (TRD/JD *et al*). Other sightings came from Backworth and Warkworth Lane (SPP/RB/MB/DLo)

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

An adult male flew W at one site on 16th (per PCF), and ringtails were at two coastal localities on 17th and 23rd (SR/IF).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Singles were at four sites including a bird flying W over Otterburn Mill on 6th (TRD/JD).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Up to three birds were noted at Gosforth Park NR and Swallow Pond (NHSN/JPD), a pair was at Backworth on several dates (CGK) and at Bywell on 12th (MN). Single birds were at 17 other sites during the month.

Two garden photographs of Sparrowhawks

Left by Roger Norman and right by Dick Gilhespy



Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

12 birds were at Kielder on 4th (ASJ) and 12 were moving N at Doddington on 18th (JD)). Six birds were seen in the Harthope Valley on 16th (MSK) and five were at Swallowship Wood (Hexham) on 1st (AJH).

AS Buzzard on the lookout
Bank's Pond
by Peter Fletcher
1st April

**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetuss*

A bird was noted at Plessey South Farm (Cramlington) on 2nd, followed by a pair which were back at Kielder from the 5th (JPD *et al*) and by the 10th both pairs had returned (MD). Another pair was noted elsewhere in the County (ASJ/AT). Other single birds were noted at Ryal on 8th (ALT), Harthope Valley on 16th (MSK), Branton GPs on 27th (IBDa/KDa), Druridge Bay and Prestwick Carr on 30th (JL/PCF).

An Osprey flies over Prestwick Carr
30th April
by Peter Fletcher

**Kestrel** *Falco tinninculus*

Three birds were at Prestwick Carr on 12th (PCF) and at Slaley Hall on 13th (RMH), and a pair was note in the Harthope Valley on several dates (MJC/MSK/NEWT). Single birds were recoded from 20 further sites.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Single birds were seen on Holy Island on several dates (PRM *et al*) and at two inland sites on 15th and 25th (ASJ/MR).

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

A single bird was chased by a female Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* at the pond at County Hall (Morpeth) on 25th (TB).

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Pairs were at two potential inland breeding sites (MSK/NEWT/JD). Single birds were seen at further 11 coastal and inland sites (ALT *et al*).

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Up to four were again seen or heard at Gosforth Park NR during the month (NHSN) and singles were also seen or heard at Backworth and Swallow Pond on several dates (CGK/JPD) Other single birds were at Big Waters, East Chevington, Hauxley & Prestwick Carr.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

15 birds were at Swallow Pond on 15th (JPD), 12 were at Woodhorn Flash on 14th (CDH), six birds were at Arcot Pond, Leazes Park (Newcastle) (DM) and at Linton Pond (CDH). Four were at Middle Ord pond (Berwick) on 1st (MHu) and three were seen at Druridge Pools on 29th (DM/STH). Two were at Jesmond Dene on 15th (MJCo) and Hauxley NWT on 17th (HRS) and a single was at Castle Island on 29th (DM/STH).

Coot *Fulica atra*

The highest count was 16 birds at Bothal Pond on 8th (TD), 11 were at Linton Pond on 14th (CDH), 10 were at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on several dates (DM) and at Big Waters on 29th (DM). Nine birds were noted at Haughton Strother GPs on 30th (MR) and six birds were at Arcot Pond (DM) and at the Drift Inn Pools (Seaton Burn) (GB). Four were at Exhibition Park (Newcastle) and Woollington Ponds, while three were at Silverlink Park LNR and three birds were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs. A single bird was on Paddy Freeman's Lake (Jesmond Dene) on the 29th. This was the observer's first sighting on the patch since one was on the Ouseburn at Fisherman's Lodge in January 1999 (MJCo).



A young coot at Rising Sun pond on 21st April by Adriana Buskin

Crane *Grus grus*

Three adults were feeding in a ploughed field at Whittle Dene Reservoirs at 18:30 then flew N on 7th (EC). The single bird from last month remained at Warkworth Lane until the 12th with it or another seen circling over Ellington on 8th (TB).

A Crane over Cresswell Pond in April
Colin Bradshaw



Below a pair of Oystercatchers on the Tyne at Wark. One was leucistic, the other of normal colour.

Photograph by James Bowyer on 14th April

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

A roost of 155 at Cullercoats on 2nd was by far the highest gathering (ASJ), whilst 58 at Berwick North Shore on 27th was the highest flock noted in the north (MHu). Near coastal/inland water-bodies held peaks of 35 at Cresswell Pond on 7th (MN), 21 at Haughton Strother GP (MR), 19 at Derwent Reservoir on 7th (IFo), 14 at Hauxley NR on 17th (HRS) and 13 at Arcot Pond on 4th (STH). Seven to eight birds were also seen at Capheaton, Prestwick Carr, West Hartford and Whittle Dene Reservoirs; two territorial pairs were at Colt Crag reservoir on 22nd and one to four (mainly pairs) were reported from Bothal Pond, Castle Island, Corbridge (Farnley), Greenlee Lough, Grindon Lough, Linton Ponds, Prestwick Carr, Shillmoor (Upper Coquetdale), Tarsset Mouth, Windhaugh and Woolsington Ponds.





The popular Avocets at Cresswell Pond
29th April by Chris Barlow

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Following last month's reports to the 27th March, this month saw the first report of ten birds noted on 5th (TB) and two from the 6th-7th at Cresswell Pond (TB/IRD/MN). Two were again noted thereafter from 14th, with mating noted on 18th, increasing to four birds on 27th until the month's end. Elsewhere, a single appeared at *Beehive Flash* (Earsden) on 23rd (MSH) and remained until 30th; on the 25th four birds appeared at Holywell Pond before relocating and joining the single bird at *Beehive Flash* (Earsden) during early evening that same day – all five were 1st summer birds (CGK/MSH *et al*). A further report involved two seen at East Chevington on 22nd (IF).

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

First of the month were singles at Branton on 9th (ASJ) and Druridge Pools on 11th (AT). Two at Derwent Reservoir on 12th (IFo) increased to five on 15th (ASJ). Two were noted at Bothal Pond on several dates from 17th-29th (TF/JFa *et al*), at Longhirst Flash on 18th (TD) and near Chollerford on 25th/30th following a single here on 18th (MR). Single birds were also seen at Cresswell Pond during 17th-18th and Castle Island on 28th.



Two Little Ringed Plovers at Bothal Pond by Jonathan Farooqi

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

The estuaries held the highest counts, with ten at both the Blyth on 8th (ASH) and Coquet (Amble) on 30th (JL). Four were noted at both Cheswick on 11th (MHu) and Derwent Reservoir on 7th (IFo); two were at West Hartford on 6th (STH) and on the Tyne at Elswick Wharf on 12th (DM) and a single was at East Stobswood on 2nd (TRD).

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

A strong passage of 'Northern' birds took place through Prestwick Carr; following 180 on 5th (STH) numbers quickly increased to 900 on 10th (EC/JSB) before falling back to 500+ on 14th/21st (PCF) and 73 on 30th (GB). High counts elsewhere included 300 at Longhorsley on 15th (AB/LB), 200 at Rowley Burn on 25th (AJH), 130 at Nedderton on 4th (TB), 98 at Ray Burn on 12th (AT) and 40+ at Hadrian's Wall on 22nd (JL). Seven were at Knockburn Farm (Allendale) on 22nd (TRD/JD) and a single flew N off the fell at Halton-Lea-Gate on 18th (SW).

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Ten, including some in summer plumage, were at Holy Island on 29th (SVM/AJM) and two were noted at both the Blyth estuary on 8th (ASH) and Low Newton on 17th (TRD/JD).

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

A count of 15 at Big Waters on 22nd was the only double-figure report (GB). Up to nine were at Hauxley NR with three hatched young seen on 28th (HRS/CDB). Two to six, including likely breeding birds, were also noted at Bothal Pond, Ord Moor (Billylaw), Wark Forest and Whemley Burn Farm (Longhorsley).

A Lapwing lunching
Hauxley NR
28th April
Chris Barlow

Knot *Calidris canutus*

None reported this month.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Some excellent counts at St Mary's Island where a minimum of 100 were present all month; peak counts involved 245 on 22nd (SPP) and 150+ on 24th (MSH). Ten at Snab Point on 17th included some in summer plumage (TB).

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Blyth South Harbour held its highest numbers for many years with roost counts of 82 on 7th and 66 on 22nd (DMT). In the north, some 60 were seen at Stag Rocks on 8th (DGB) and 18 at both Berwick North Shore on 4th and Cheswick on 11th falling to seven on 30th (MHu). A peak of 14 was reported on three dates at Newbiggin during 9th-15th (ASH/JPD/STH), whilst further south, peaks of ten occurred at St Mary's Island on 8th (flying S) and Tynemouth on 22nd (SPP/DRW), with fewer numbers at both sites on several further dates. Elsewhere, seven were at Berwick Little Beach on 19th and three at Low Newton on 17th.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

The Golden Plover flock attracted small numbers to Prestwick Carr late in the month, with one on 26th increasing to 11 on 28th and ten on 30th (PCF/GB). Eight were on the Coquet estuary (Amble) on 30th (JL) and a single was on Cresswell Pond on 29th (DM/STH).

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

One was occasionally at Derwent Reservoir and also two there on 14th (BMo).

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

The most were 12 at West Hartford on 8th (LJM) and nine over the A1 at Stannington roundabout on 10th (RWM/MIM). Two to five appeared at times at Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Bothal Pond, East Chevington, Halton-Lea-Gate and Holy Island and singles in Allendale, at Druridge Pools and Gosforth Park NR.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Individuals roding was witnessed at Slaley (Pithouse Fell) and Blanchland Moor on 24th (ALT). Two were at Holy Island on 30th (MJC) and singles at Swallow Pond on 9th and Allenheads on 22nd.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

There was a notable influx of 77 into Prestwick Carr on 26th (PCF) and the numbers rose to a remarkable 117 by 27th (PCF/MSH) before declining to 19 on 30th. Also on 26th 30 were at *Beehive* Flash, Earsdon (MSH); this flock was presumably most of the 32 seen at Holywell Pond on 27th (JPD) and later the 30 flying N offshore at Newbiggin (AT). Also on 27th 49 were at Hauxley NR (ADMc) and 12 were at Bell's Farm in flooded fields on 28th (JPD/STH). Either side of the influx, apart from seven briefly at Cresswell Pond on 23rd, there were the usual two on Holy Island and occasionally one or two at Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, East Chevington and Prestwick Carr and also one at Grindon Lough on 23rd.

Black-tailed Godwits at Prestwick Carr on 27th April by Peter Fletcher



Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

The few reports were headed by 14 at Low Newton on 17th (TRD/JD), six at Hauxley on 4th (TF/JFa) and six at Boulmer on 8th (RB/MB). Singles appeared at Backworth Flash and St Mary's but perhaps the most interesting record concerns one at Prestwick Carr during 23rd to 30th (PCF).

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

The majority passed through during the last five days, including 25 N at Ellington on 26th (TB), five at Cresswell Links on 27th (TB), five at Dunstanburgh on 28th (AJH), three or four at Alnmouth Dunes, *Beehive* Flash, Bell's Farm, High Newton, Prestwick Carr, Seahouses GC and Tynemouth Haven and one or two at six other places. Earlier singles were noted at Holy Island on 8th, Tynemouth Haven on 15th, Morpeth on 18th and at Tynemouth on 20th.



A Whimbrel at Widdrington on 28th April by Chris Barlow

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Prestwick Carr held 40 on 4th (PCF) reducing to five by 21st, 38 were at Cresswell Pond on 5th (PCF), 34 at Backworth on 15th (CGK), 32 in the Tweed estuary on 5th (MHu) and 30 at Ellington on 6th (TB). Otherwise ten were at Hauxley on 17th and two to four at Arcot Pond, Grindon Lough, Hepscott, Lynemouth Flash and West Hartford.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

The first one of the month was at Haughton Strother GP on 4th (MR) followed on 11th by two at Bothal Pond (TF/JFa) and one along the R Breamish (IBDa/KDa). Singles appeared from 14th in 11 further typical places and two pairs were located in Upper Coquetdale on 23rd (JR).

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

One or two remained at Whittle Dene Reservoirs to 11th (AA/JSB) and also at Arcot Pond to 16th (GMi/STH); two were reported at Prestwick Carr on 22nd (per PCF) and at Foxton Bends on 29th (SS/JWR). Singletons were found at Cocklawburn pond on 2nd, Longhirst Flash on 13th, Cresswell Pond on 17th and Ellington on 30th.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

A very tired individual was at Cocklawburn pond on 11th (MHu). Further singles appeared in Budle Bay on 21st (MSH) and at Prestwick Carr on 27th and 30th (PCF/GB).

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Singles were found at Branton GP on 16th (IBDa/KDa) and at West Hartford on 22nd (PJA).

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Along the coast the Tweed estuary again held the most with 268 on 5th (MHu), 164 roosted at Cullercoats on 2nd (ASJ) and 86 were at Cresswell Pond on 9th (JPD). The highest counts inland were of 59 at Hallington Reservoir on 22nd (JL), 45 at Prestwick Carr on 27th and 30 at Elswick Wharf on 12th. Small numbers were reported from six potential breeding areas.



A Redshank
Druridge Pools
Tim Dean
2nd April



A summer plumaged Turnstone at St. Mary's
by Peter Tapsell on 30th April

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

At St Mary's many of 95 were in full breeding plumage on 22nd (SPP). Most of the others were in the north: up to 30 in the Berwick/Tweed estuary area on 19th. Ten were around the Coquet estuary on 30th, six at Cheswick on 11th and one or two at Cresswell Pond and Low Newton.

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

One flew N off Snab Point on 26th (ADMc). At St Mary's Wetland a very wet and bedraggled individual fed on a recently dead drake Tufted Duck on 29th (AG/MSH *et al.*).

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Northerly movement was noted on 4th (MSH) with 42 at St. Mary's Island and on 26th (MHu) at Berwick Pier where 220/hour passed. The largest gatherings were in excess of 100 at Tynemouth Cliffs on 2nd (MSH/SPP), 62 in the gull roost on the Tweed Estuary on 24th, 27 on Berwick North Shore on 4th (MHu) and 26 in the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay on 22nd (DMT). The only other sightings reported were six and four respectively in the Tweed Estuary and Cocklawburn during the first week of the month (MHu). None were seen at Blyth South Harbour during the month.

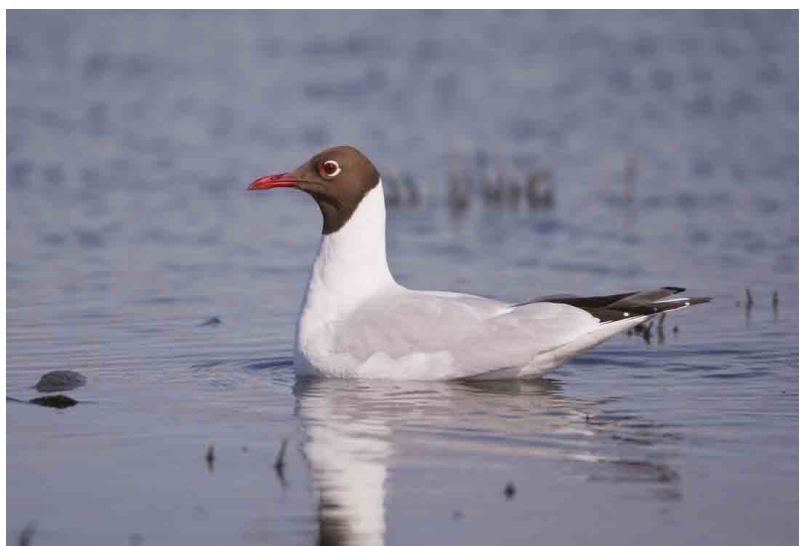
Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

The peak count was in excess of 500 at Branton Gravel Pits on 13th (JPD) and elsewhere 300 were at Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield) on 12th (MJC), 167 at Linton Ponds on 14th (CDH), 100 at Deanmoor and 75 at Reavley Farm on 12th and 4th respectively (JMA) and 90 at Grindon Lough on 10th (MRS). One to 12 were recorded at ten other sites.

A dapper Black-headed Gull at Cresswell Pond by
Colin Bradshaw

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

A first-summer bird frequented Holywell Pond on 6th-7th (ASJ/CS) and a similarly aged individual, possibly the same bird, was reported from East Chevington from 9th-18th (ASJ/TRD/JD/JPD) and at Cresswell Pond on 29th (DM/STH).



Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

On 15th six first-summer birds still lingered at Newbiggin (STH), at Branton Gravel Pits an adult and a first-summer bird were noted on 9th and 13th (ASJ/JPD) and an adult and second summer were at East Chevington on 11th (TRD/JD). Single immature birds were also seen on dates throughout the month at Cresswell Pond, Holywell Pond, St. Mary's and Swallow Pond.

Common Gull *Larus canus*

N movement was evident at Church Point, Newbiggin on 13th (JPD) where 200 passed in 30 minutes and at Old Hartley where in excess of 300 flew by in two hours (SPP). Two significant gatherings were 500 at Haughton Strother on 8th (MR) and 250 at Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield) on 7th (IFo); elsewhere ten first-summer birds were at Prestwick Carr on 28th (GB) with one to seven at five other localities.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

A flock of 120 followed the plough at Middleton on 4th (TRD/JD), 75 were at Reavley Farm on 5th (JMA), 20 at Budle Bay and Swallow Pond on 21st and 2nd (JPD/MSH) respectively, 16-18 in Jesmond Dene on 1st and 8th (MJCo/DM) and 16 on the Tweed Estuary on 5th (MHu). One to 12 were recorded from another 14 widespread localities throughout the month.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argenteus*

Five large concentrations were reported comprising 376 in the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay on 7th (DMT), 350 at Kimmer Lough on 12th (MJC), 287 on the sea off Tynemouth/Cullercoats on 1st (DMT), 268 in the Tweed Estuary on 5th (MHu) and 120 at Prestwick Carr on 28th (GB). Smaller flocks of 20-75 were at Big Waters, Blyth South Harbour, Haughton Strother GP, Leazes Park, Linton Ponds and Reavley Farm and up to 15 were at four other sites.

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoideus*

An adult bird was on a ploughed field at Shadfen on 14th (AT) and single immatures were reported from Budle Bay on 8th (DGB), the Tyne Estuary on 1st and 30th (SPP/DMT) and Linton Ponds (CDH).

Greater Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Immature birds comprised the majority of gatherings of 59 in Blyth South Harbour on 24th (DMT) and 49 in the Tyne Estuary up to North Shields Fish Quay on 1st (DMT). Elsewhere were 17 in the Tweed Estuary on 5th (MHU), three at Hauxley NWT and a single at Castle Island.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Well reported this month with almost 40 sightings recorded. At Newbiggin 50 birds flew N on 9th (ASJ). The peak count was ca.100 at St. Cuthbert's Island, Holy Island on 15th (SR/AH) with 40 at Stag Rocks, Bamburgh on 5th (BRS). From mid-month gatherings of ten-35 were noted at 14 coastal sites between Tynemouth and Cocklawburn but with Holy Island the favoured locality. Sightings of one to nine birds came from many sites throughout the month with the well-watched East Chevington and Cresswell Pond producing the majority of records.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

The first record of the year was a single bird at Stag Rocks, Bamburgh on 8th (DGB) followed by three at Newbiggin on 9th and 13th (JPD/ASJ) and a single at East Chevington on 11th (TRD/JD). One to two were recorded at five other sites from mid-month and a count of eight came from East Chevington on 28th (JPD). At inland breeding sites the first birds were recorded at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 22nd (ALT), at Swallow Pond on 23rd (JPD) and at Gosforth Park NR on 27th (NHSN).

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

An exceptionally early first record this year was of a single on the Tweed Estuary on 3rd (MHu) which presumably had been encouraged to move northwards by the remarkably warm weather in March. Other early records were two at Cocklawburn on 13th (MHu), two at Newton Point on 17th (TRD/JD) and one at Cresswell Pond on the same day (TB). Eight were at Berwick Pier on 28th (MHu) and three at Cambois on 24th with singles at East Chevington towards the month end.

Auk sp

Coastal movement was observed at St Mary's Island where 176 flew N in 15 minutes on 29th (MSH).

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

At Berwick Pier 86/h flew N on 26th. Three other records received were of five and eight in the Berwick area on 24th and 27th (MHu/SVM) and three at Newton Point on 17th (TRD/JD).

Razorbill *Alca torda*

Thirty birds at Dunstanburgh Castle on 12th (JMA), six at Cocklawburn on 11th (MHu) and 20 at Berwick, Needles Eye on 27th (SVM) were the only reports.

Black Guillemot *Cephus grylle*

The long staying bird at Stag Rocks, Bamburgh was again seen on 8th (RB/MB).

Rock Dove / Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*

A flock of 200+ fed in a bean field at Swallow Pond on 6th (JPD) with maximum counts of 76 at Blyth South Harbour and 36 at North Shields Fish Quay both on 7th (DMT).

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Peak counts of 24 at Houghton Strother GP on 22nd (MR), 12 at Whittle Dene on 9th (SR), ten at Marden Quarry on 22nd (KWY), nine at Cresswell Pond on 29th (DM) and five at Gosforth Park NR on 5th included a displaying pair (MJC). Four was the peak count in a Walbottle garden and at Jesmond Dene with three at Conondrum, Cramlington and two at twelve further locations.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

The bean field at Swallow Pond attracted 400 on 5th building to 1000+ on 6th (JPD) with 24 on the Town Moor on 30th (GB) and nine at Jesmond Dene on 8th (MJCo).

A Woodpigeon in the drizzle at Cresswell
28th April by Chris Barlow

**Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

Just two reports of one to three in a Holywell garden throughout the month (RJP) and two at Beatty Avenue South Gosforth (MJCo).

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

The first bird was at Whittle Dene on 21st (ASJ) followed by one at Crag End on 27th (JD).

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

All reports were single birds at Throckley on 2nd (per PCF), A1 at Felton on 4th and 11th (AH), Seahouses on 5th (per NNBC), Dilston Corbridge on 6th (per RMH), Denwick on 7th (MSH), West Chevington on 18th (PRF), Park End (North Tyne) on 19th (PRM) and Prestwick Carr on 27th (TW).

Barn Owl is a **target species** for 2012. Please report all records.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Two was the only multiple count at Chugdon Wood Ellington on 28th (TB) with singles at Shiremoor all month (CGK), Backworth on several dates (CGK/SPP/PRF), Shildon Corbridge on 5th (DWN), Clifton Lane Morpeth on 11th (TB), East Shield Hill Morpeth on 13th (ADM), Belsay Hall on 22nd (CW), Ovington on 23rd and 25th (SAS) and Big Waters on 29th (GB).

Little Owl is a **target species** for 2012. Please report all records.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

A pair bred and two chicks were ringed at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN) with other pairs at Scotland Gate all month (SLB/MSK), Humshaugh Village on 22nd and two birds at Prestwick Carr on 11th (PCF) and Longhorsley on 15th (AB/LB). Singles were at Berwick, Capheaton, Fourstones, Hexham, Holywell Dene, Jesmond Dene, Rothbury, Shiremoor and Walbottle Hall.

TawnyOwl is a **target species** for 2012. Please report all records.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otis*

Two birds were at a site in South Northumberland all month (CGK/MSH/AJ) and one was at Red Row on 11th (TB).

Long-eared Owl is a **target species** for 2012. Please report all records.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Four birds were at Backworth till 25th (CGK et al), Prestwick Carr on 11th (PCF) and Holy Island from 24th to 27th (SR/MJC/IBDa/KDa), three at Arcot Pond on 7th (STH) and West Hartford on 14th, 15th and 22nd (STH/LJM/PJA) with lower numbers at all the aforementioned sites throughout the month. Two were reported from Backworth, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Longhorsley, Nedderton, Newcastle Great Park, Redesmouth, Sweethope, Tughall and the Wanneys. Singles were at a further 22 widespread localities.

Short-eareds at Prestwick Carr
21st April by Chris Barlow



Short-eared Owl is a **target species** for 2012. Please report all records.

Swift *Apus apus*

The first birds were seen on the 26th heading N with two near Big Waters (IF) and a single over Cramlington (PJA). The peak counts were ten at Bothal Pond on 30th (TB), eight at Castle Island on 28th (AT) and at East Chevington on 30th (JL) with seven+ at Holywell Pond on the same date (JPD). Five were at Wark (N Tyne) on 29th (PRM), four at West Ord (MHu) and Arcot Pond on 30th (STH) with one to three at ten further widespread locations from 27th.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Singles were at Gosforth Park NR all month (NHSN), Hedgeley on 8th (TRD/JD) nearby Powburn on 9th (ASJ), Jesmond Dene on 8th and 15th (MJCo), Haughton Strother GP on 18th and 27th (MR), near Meldon R Wansbeck on 19th (MJC), near Highford on 20th (ADM), Tyne Green Hexham on 27th (AJH) and Wark (North Tyne) on 30th (PRM).

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

A single was found at the Snook Holy Island on 27th (ADM) with likely a second individual at Chare Ends on 29th (ADM) which was again seen on 30th (IBDa/KDa/MJC).

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Two were at Gosforth Park NR all month (NHSN) and Stocksfield Community Woodland on 6th (JSB). Singles were reported from Arcot Pond and Rothbury all month and at Bakethin Reservoir, Corbridge, East Woodburn, Ellington, Healey, Hexham, Linnels, Ridley Stokoe, Sleafy Hall, Throckley and Wark.



A bedraggled Green Woodpecker in a Tranwell garden
by Peter Tapsell
26th April

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Gosforth Park NR had two resident pairs all month (NHSN) with a peak of ten including eight drumming on the 5th (MJC). Four were at Morpeth on 9th (JFa), three at Jesmond Dene on 9th (MJCo), Farnley Corbridge on 15th and Arcot Pond on 22nd (LJM) with two at these locations and at Big Waters, Valley Park Cramlington and Tranwell Woods during the month. Singles attended garden feeders regularly at Dinnington, Scotland Gate, Beatty Avenue South Gosforth and Walbottle with birds also reported from Beal, Ellington, Wallington, Wark and West Hartford.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*

A male was found singing in trees at 9.30h on 3rd but not subsequently (PRM), this being the first record since 2006.

Great Grey Shrike *Lamius excubitor*

The single bird was seen almost daily at Prestwick Carr till 22nd (PCF *et al*) with others at Ovington from 7th till 16th (SAS/SM) and at Woodhorn on 28th (GB).

Magpie *Pica pica*

Just two reports of 51 at Swallow Pond on 2nd (JPD) and two at Jesmond Dene on 29th (MJCo).

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Three were at West Hartford on 5th (STH) and Morpeth Common on 20th (ADMc). Two were seen over Choppington Woods, Scotland Gate throughout the month and also at Beacon Hill, Capheaton, Rothbury, Swallow Pond, Tranwell Woods and Wingates with singles at a further ten widespread locations.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Sixty were at Belsay Hall on 16th (KR/LR) and three flew over Matthew Bank, Jesmond Dene on 29th (MJCo).

A bird showing characteristics of the Nordic race *ssp monedula* fed with other Jackdaws in a horse field nr Big Waters on 29th (GB).

An alert Jackdaw at Cresswell
by Colin Bradshaw

**Rook** *Corvus frugilegus*

Nest counting replaced bird counting with 68 apparently occupied nests at Carraw on 15th (TWi), 44 at Bellingham on the same date (SW), 35 at Ancroft on 5th (JMA), 28 at Redeswood on 15th and 21 at Longhoughton on 12th. Rookeries with three to 12 nests were at Cramlington Hall and St Nicholas Churchyard (Cramlington), Humshaugh, St Thomas's Churchyard Newcastle, Seaton Burn and Walbottle.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

A peak count of 58 at North Shields Fish Quay on 6th with 52 there on 14th and 30 on 24th (CB/DMT/JMA), Swallow Pond was the other hot spot having 27 on 2nd rising to 36 on 18th (JPD). Six were also at Jesmond Dene on 8th and two in a Walbottle garden on 15th.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

A single bird stayed around the sheep feeders at Hemscott Hill Cresswell from 28th to 30th (AT *et al*).

Raven *Corvus corax*

A pair with four large fledglings were found in the south west of the county on 22nd (ASH/MJC) with other pairs noted at Bakethin on 4th (ASJ), Monks Car Park Kielder and Dancing Green Hill on 5th (JPD/MSH), Capheaton on 11th (STE), St Cuthberts Cave area on 12th (MJC) and Harthope Valley on 17th (MSK/NEWT). Single birds were at three other upland localities.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Straight Lonnen, Holy Island had around five on 19th with two remaining till 29th (ADM/MJC). Two were at Jesmond Dene on 8th and 29th (MJCo), Castlehills Berwick on 18th (BWG), St Mary's Island on 20th (MSH) with singles at Bamburgh, Dam Dykes Cramlington, Gosforth Park, Valley Park Cramlington and in a Walbottle garden.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Four were in Jesmond Dene on 15th (MJCo) with a pair nesting at Nedderton Park Stannington on 13th (RWM/MIM) and young using garden feeders at Walker on 30th (PBu/ABu).

Great Tit *Parus major*

Big Waters feeding Station attracted 12 on 29th (DM) with four in Jesmond Dene on 8th (MJCo).

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Three was the peak count visiting an Old Hartley garden during the month (RJP) with two at different locations in Jesmond Dene on 15th (MJCo).

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

Well reported compared to other Tits with three at Prestwick Carr on 21st (PCF), two at Ellington Lane Warkworth on 6th (TB) and Longhorsley on 15th and 24th (AB/LB). Singles were at Lucker and Mootlaw Quarry, Ryal all month, Nedderton Park Stannington, Warkworth Lane Wood, Lough House and Rothbury however the regular bird at Scotland Gate was absent.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

Two pairs were at Blackpool Farm on 18th (JPD) and around the Mitford area on 20th (ADMc) with two at Twizell on the River Till regarded as scarce at this locality (TBr). Singles were at Beacon Hill on 5th, Nunnykirk on 18th and Whittle Dene on 13th.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

We must have grown accustomed to their singing as there were no reports for Skylark this month.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

There were two large counts around 180 at Branton GP on 23rd (TRD/JD) and West Ord on 29th (MHu), 135 at Whittle Dene on 14th (SR) with 100 there on 15th & 19th and at East Chevington on 21st (AT). Sixty hawked over the R Tweed and adjacent fields at Wark on 24th with 45 at Bothal Pond on 16th, 40 at Hedgeley Gravel Pits on 14th and Big Waters on 21st. Ten to 35 were at many of the above locations and Bakethin Reservoir, Bolam Lake and Holywell Pond with one to nine at 21 further widespread localities but noted as absent from R Aln at Foxton on 29th where many would normally be expected from the breeding colony there (SS/JWR).

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

The River Tweed at West Ord was again favoured with around 300 there on 29th (MHu), 100+ at Holywell Pond on 25th (CGK/MSH) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 24th (JSB/EC), 80 at East Chevington on 30th (TRD/JD), 70+ at Big Waters on 29th (DM) with 50+ at Holywell Pond on 18th (SPP) and Monks House Pool on 30th (MSH). Five to 40 were at many of the above locations plus Berwick, Bothal Pond, Castle Island, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Felton, Holy Island, Swallow Pond and Wark with one to four at 27 further widespread localities.

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

The first birds were recorded on 6th with singles at Whittle Dene (SR) and Hartley (KWY), counts up until 22nd only being of one or two birds at ten different locations. The first multiple counts didn't occur until 25th with 20 at Whittle Dene (PCF) and ten at Holywell Pond (CGK). Ten were also at Druridge Pools on 28th (CDB) and seven at Bothal Pond on 30th (TB) with the largest count being 22 at West Ord on 29th (Mhu).

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Two pairs were at Gosforth Park GC on 22nd (DM). Pairs were reported from a further 15 widespread inland localities, including birds lining a nest at Carey Burn on 15th.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Holy Island held a peak of 22 on 30th, rising from 14 on the previous day (MJC); earlier in the month there were 13 on the island on 19th and eight on 22nd (ADM). Inland up to 14 were noted at Swallow Pond and 12+ were in song at Craggside by 6th and 11 singing at Gosforth Park NR on 5th (JPD/MJC). Eight were singing at Arcot Pond on 9th and seven at Farnley (Corbridge) on 15th; seven were also at Belsay Hall on the following day. Counts of five to six came from Big Waters, Dilston, Hadrian Cycle Way, Plessey Woods, Silverlink CP, Valley Park (Cramlington) and Tynemouth and one to three from a further 17 localities.

A bird showing characteristics of **Siberian Chiffchaff** *P.c.trisitis* was reported from Backworth on 14th (MN).

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Well reported in some areas. The first arrivals were two at Swallow Pond on 5th, rising to 38 by 24th (PBU/ABU/JPD). At Arcot Pond 22 were singing by 30th (LJM), 20 were at Prestwick Carr on 21st (PCF), 13 at Big Waters on 29th (DM) and 11 at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN). Coastal falls produced peaks at Holy Island of eight on 19th and 30 on 30th (ADM/MJC); on the latter date eight+ were also at Bamburgh and seven at Tynemouth. Seven were inland at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) on 9th and Dinnington on 21st and one to five at a further 34, mainly inland localities.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Well reported including some obvious coastal passage from 19th-30th. The peak count was 15 at Prior's Park on 30th (CB). On Holy Island there were four on 19th, nine on 22nd and three to six from 27th-30th (MJC/ADM). In inland breeding areas nine were in Holywell Dene on 11th and 23rd (JPD), a total of seven in Jesmond Dene on 29th (MJCo), five+ at Silverlink CP (North shields) on 16th (CGK) and five in Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth) and at Swallow Pond. Four were noted at Alnmouth GC pond on 29th and at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 22nd and one to three at a further 37 widespread localities.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

The first was singing at Warden on 11th (ASJ), followed by singles singing at Sidwood on 23rd and Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 30th.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

The first were at Arcot Pond on 17th (LJM), Beaconhill (Cramlington) on 21st and St Mary's Island on 27th. On 30th, three+ were at St Mary's Island (JPD/MPF), two at Holy Island and a single bathing in a garden pond at Prior's Park (Tynemouth).

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

As with most other summer migrants arrival was delayed due to the prevailing north/north-east winds and associated cold temperatures. The first were two at Swallow Pond from 22nd-30th (JPD). From 27th-30th further singles were reported at Alnmouth GC, Backworth, Holywell Pond, Priors Park and Tynemouth. Three were at Holywell Dene on 29th (BMo).

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

The first was at West Hartford on 21st (GMI) followed by one at Prestwick Carr on 22nd, with two here by 25th (MSH/TRD/JD). From 24th-30th further singles were reported from Arcot Pond, Bamburgh, Beaconhill (Cramlington), Carey Burn, Longhorsley Moor and Warkworth GC. Two were at Arcot Pond by 30th.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

The first arrival was a single at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 11th (PRM). From 29th-30th further individuals were noted at Alnmouth GC, Cocklawburn, Cresswell Pond and Holy Island lough.

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Four+ were at Gosforth Park NR from 20th (NHSN) and a single at Wallington Hall on 22nd (PBu/ABu).

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Seven, including five singing males were at Gosforth Park on 5th (MJC), four at Scotch Gill (Morpeth) on 4th (TB) and threes at Jesmond Dene, Plessey Woods and Wark (North Tyne). Counts of two came from Belsay Hall, Boat Farm (North Tyne), Gosforth Park GC, Holywell Dene, Morpeth, Redeswood, Stocksfield Community Woodland, Tranwell Woods and Wallington Hall. Singles were reported from a further 14 potential breeding areas. A bird was adding mud to a nest hole in Jesmond Dene on 11th (DHWB).

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Three were noted in Jesmond Dene, where a pair was nesting at Coleman's Field (MJC/MJCo/DHNB). Twos were reported from Capheaton, Gosforth Park NR and Hartford Woods and singles from Dilston, Thrum Mill, West Hartford and Whittingham.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Six singing males were at Hawsen Burn on 15th (MJC) and five birds in the Wallsend Dene-Burn area on 28th (PBu/ABu). The only other reports were of two at Belsay Hall on 16th and at Jesmond Dene on 15th.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

The only report was of six in Jesmond Dene on 8th (MJCo).

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

In Jesmond Dene two pairs were noted (DHWB); a pair at Waterfall were feeding young by 29th (MJCo) and another pair was between Armstrong Bridge and Ouseburn Park. Elsewhere pairs were at Holywell Dene, Holywell Village (with nest material), Rede Bridge (feeding young), Thrum Mill and Whittle Wood (Horsley). Singles were noted at a further eight localities.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

There was a notable influx on Holy Island from 27th-30th with counts of ten on 27th (MJC), nine on 29th (ADM/SR/AH) and six on 28th and 30th; earlier in the month two were at the excavations on 4th. Elsewhere one to two migrants were at Tynemouth on 27th, 28th and 30th. In upland breeding areas one to two were reported from Carey Burn, Hawsen Burn and Makendon. More unusual was a male which flew over the A189 at Burradon-Killingworth on 15th (GMI).

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Seven to nine migrants were on Holy Island on 27th and 29th (MJC). Six were counted in Jesmond Dene on 15th (MJCo). Breeding data included a recently fledged juvenile being fed by both parents at Wark (North Tyne) on 21st and a female building five nests in as many weeks in a Kenton garden, probably due to Magpie predation; a 'half white' aberrant-plumage female had returned to the same area after being absent over the winter (MRS).

Fieldfare *urdus pilaris*

By far the largest flock was 700+ in the Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) area on 4th (MR). Other large gatherings were 350+ near Whalton on 23rd (ADM), 300 near Whitley Chapel on 1st (MJC/ASH) and 200+ at Otterburn on 5th (MSK/NEWT). 100-150 were reported from Cowden, Greenlee Lough, Halton Red House, Nunykirk and Prestwick Carr and 50-80 from Glanton Station, Midgeholme and Wallhouses. Up to 40 were noted at further 21 mainly inland localities.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

23 arrived at Holy Island during a fall of other migrants on 27th, declining to eight by 30th (MJC). Two were at High Green (Redesdale) on 14th and at Jesmond Dene on 15th and a single in a Netherton Park garden on 9th where the species has been an infrequent visitor this year. A nest with four eggs was predated at Woolsington, probably by Magpies.

A Song Thrush
Riverside Park Walker
by Adriana Buskin
15th April

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

200 were near Kiln Pit Hill on 1st (AFo), 100+ at Otterburn on 5th (MSK/NEWT) and 45 at Howford Banks on 9th (AJR); 12 were at East Ord on 8th. Late individuals were at Whittle Wood (Horsley) on 15th and three at Arcot Pond on 17th. The final record was a passage bird at Holy Island on 29th (MJC/ADM).

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

One to three were reported from Arcot Hall GC, Arcot Pond, Civic Centre (Newcastle), Exhibition Park, Jesmond Dene, Prestwick Carr and Tynemouth.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Most reports were from Holy Island where there was a notable fall on 19th and again from 27th-30th; the peak day counts were 53 on 27th, 51 on 29th, 30 on 30th, 25 on 19th and 18 on 22nd (MJC/ADM). Six were also trapped and ringed at Bamburgh on 30th and five were reported from Jesmond Dene on 29th. Earlier passage birds were on Holy Island with singles on 8th and 12th.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochrurus*

A female / first summer male was at Tynemouth Pier from 1st-2nd (MSH/CGK/CB/DRW/JPD/SPP). Later in the month a male was on the Crooked Lonnen (Holy Island) on 22nd (IBDa/KDa) and another female / immature at Tynemouth Coastguard Cottages on 27th (DRW).

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Early arrivals were a singing male at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 8th (TB) and two males at Benridge Moor on 13th (ADMc). Four were noted in the Wingates area on 18th (ASJ) and at Smalldene (Longframlington) on 20th (AB/LB). Three were singing at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 25th and a pair visited a nest site at Prestwick Carr on 20th. One to two passage birds were on Holy Island from 27th-29th and single birds in potential breeding areas at a further ten localities.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

A male at Warkworth GC on 30th was the only record (JL).

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

Three (a pair and a male) were at Warkworth Gut on 14th (NFO). Pairs were reported from Amble dunes, Cocklawburn, East Chevington and Hawsen Burn and single males from Alnmouth dunes, Cresswell Pond / dunes, Druridge Pools, Garleigh Moor (Rothbury), Holy Island, Monks' House Pool, Newton Pool and Stag Rocks.

A stunning male **Siberian Stonechat** *S.t.maura/stegnegeri* was seen and photographed at Chare Ends (Holy Island) on 28th (IBDa/KDa/TRD/JD). This will be the first spring record for the county, if accepted.



Two views of the Holy Island Siberian Stonechat on 28th April by Tim Dean



Wheatear *Oenanthe Oenanthe*

On 30th, 38 were at Chare Ends (Holy Island), 17 at Alnmouth dunes, 16 at Monks' House Pool and 12 between Amble-Cresswell (MJC/JL/MSH). Holy Island held 16 on 27th and nine on 29th, while earlier in the month one to three were reported from a further 13 coastal localities. Inland four were in the Harthope Valley on 9th, three at Backworth on 27th, up to three at Swallow Pond during the month and one to two at a further six localities. Single birds showing characteristics of the **Greenland race** *O.o.leucorhoa* were reported from Bells dunes on 18th, Cresswell Pond on 22nd and 29th, Holy Island on 27th and Cocklawburn on 30th (JPD/NFO/TF/JFa/MJC/MHu)

A front view of a male Wheatear
Chris Barlow on 28th April

**Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula hypoleuca*

The only reports were of singles on Holy Island on 27th (Vicar's garden) and 29th (Crooked Lonnen-MJC/ADM).

Duncock *Prunella modularis*

Singles were noted at Jesmond Dene on 8th and South Gosforth on 12th (MJCo).

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Two pairs were nesting at a Rothbury garden for the first time this month (TRD/JD). A juvenile was using garden feeders at Walker (Newcastle) on 30th (PBU/ABU).

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Noted as more plentiful than House Sparrows in a garden at Netherton Park (Stannington) on 15th (RWM/MIM), 25 were at Big Waters feeding station on 16th and 29th (SPP/DM). 20 at Haughton Strother GP on 9th where nest building was observed (MR), ten at Hepscott on 5th (CW) and Blakemoor Farm, Cresswell on 29th (DM/STH), up to six daily at a Walbottle garden including one carrying nesting material (KR/LR), six at Warkworth Lane on 2nd (TRD) and four at Backworth on 8th (CGK). One to two were at a further six widespread localities.

A Tree Sparrow at Cresswell
21st April
Chris Barlow

**Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flavissima*

Singles at Bell's Farm, Cresswell and Whittle Dene on 16th were the first arrivals (TRD/JD/MR) followed by one at Newton Flash (Low Newton) on 17th (TRD/JD). Two were at Whittle Dene by 27th (SR) and in a cereal field at Whiteadder Point, Berwick on 29th (TBr). Singles were also noted at Budle Bay on 21st (MSH), Haughton Strother GP on 22nd (MR), West Ord on 24th (BWG) and 30th (MHu), Holy Island on 29th (ADM), Monks House Pool on 30th (MSH), West Hartford on 30th (JM) and Wark on 30th (PRM).

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Two pairs were found at Thrum Mill, Rothbury all month (JD), three at Scotch Gill (Morpeth) on 4th (TB), two at Holywell Dene throughout month (RJP) and Jesmond Dene on 9th (MJC) and singles at Alnwick, River Breamish, Hartford Bridge, Harthope Valley, Hepple, Marden Quarry, Newcastle City Centre (Bigg Market and Newgate Street), Ridley Stokoe and Whittingham. One visited a nest with food on River Till at Twizel on 28th (TBr).

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

16 were at Prestwick Carr on 15th (PCF), ten at Cresswell Pond on 11th (TB). Three moving through Holy Island on 8th (IK) increased to seven there on 27th (MJC) and eight on 29th (MJC) and eight on 29th (MJC). Seven were at Howick on 28th (SS), two pairs were at Exhibition Park (Newcastle) between 4th-12th (DM), four at St. Mary's Island on 27th (PBU/ABU) and three at Jesmond Dene on 29th (MJCo).

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

An influx occurred throughout month. On Holy Island three were recorded there on 15th and 22nd with five present there on 17th (SR/AH) and two on 27th (MJC). Cresswell Pond also proved popular with two on 5th and 28th-30th (JD/CDB/JL) and singles on 8th (IRD) and 11th (TB). Elsewhere, two were at East Chevington on 1st (NFO), Bell's Farm Dunes (Cresswell) on 9th (JPD), Druridge Pools on 11th (AT), Hadston Carrs on 22nd (TF/JFa), Prestwick Carr on 23rd (PCF),

Backworth on 27th (JPD) and St. Mary's Island on 27th (PBU/ABU). Singles were at Maiden's Hall Lake on 1st and 22nd (NFO), Bothal Pond on 5th (TB), St. Mary's Island on 6th (MSH), Low Newton on 17th (TRD/JD), Gosforth Park NR on 22nd (NHSN), Backworth on 27th (CGK), Berwick Little Beach on 27th (MHu), Howick on 28th (SS), Warkworth Gut on 28th (NFO) and East Chevington on 30th (JL).

March bulletin additional record. Two White Wagtails were at Woodhorn Flashes on 24th March (GB).

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

One singing at Wingates on 18th was the first arrival (JPD). Two were at Matfen on 22nd (ALT), two passed through Holy Island on 29th (MJC). One was singing at Shila Hill on 23rd (MJC).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

60+ were observed at Haughton Strother GP on 4th (MR), an influx of 40 flying in off the sea at Emmanuel Head, Holy Island on 8th (IK), ca.30 at Hawsen Burn (Harthope Valley) on 15th (MJC), 15 flying NW over Big Waters on 22nd (GB), 13 at Prestwick Carr on 7th (PCF), 25 N/h at St. Mary's Island on 1st (CGK) and 20 NW/h at Gosforth Garden Village on 9th (MJC).

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Four were at Berwick Pier on 27th (MHu), three at Tynemouth Cliffs on 2nd (MSH) and a pair at High Point, Whitley Bay on 2nd (MN).

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

A summer plumage individual was observed at Hartley on 6th (KWY).

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

13 were at Prestwick Carr on 7th (PCF) and six at Jesmond Dene on 15th (MJCo).

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Ten were at Wark Forest on 2nd and 20 (some singing) at Tasset on 11th (MD). Singles were also noted at Holywell Pond on 1st (GMi), East Woodburn on 5th (IFo), a Rothbury garden on 17th and 20th (JD), Holy Island on 27th (MJC) and 29th (SR/AH/ADM) and Foxton Bend (Alnmouth) on 29th before flying off West (SS/JWR).

Greenfinch *Carduelis Chloris*

Seen daily throughout month in a garden with a peak of 13 on 22nd (KR/LR) and three at Jesmond Dene on 8th (MJCo).

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

50 were at Boulmer on 23rd (IBDa/KDa), nine at a Walbottle garden on 22nd (KR/LR), eight at Tynemouth on 28th (PRM) and one to two in gardens at Old Hartley, South Gosforth and Wark.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

50+ singing males were observed at Harwood Forest on 8th (CB), 40+ at Craggside on 6th (MJC), ten at Branton GP on 14th (IBDa/KDa) and six at Wark on 21st (PRM). Two-four visited a Fulbeck (Morpeth) garden all month with birds collecting nesting material on 14th (TD). Spring passage was indicated by six north at Bamburgh on 5th and one there on 21st (BRS), four north at Arcot Pond on 8th (STH). Four were at Capheaton on 11th (STG) and one to two at Horncliffe, Old Hartley and Warenton.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

28 were found at Lynemouth Flash on 21st (AT), 16 at Conundrum on 17th (BWG), 15 on Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 9th (ADM), ten at Prestwick Carr on 23rd (PCF), eight at Cocklawburn Pond on 23rd (MHu) and St. Mary's Island on 27th (PBU/ABU), five at Wark on 23rd (PRM), four at Tynemouth on 28th (PRM) and two at Newcastle Quayside on 13th (DM). A leucistic bird was observed at Hadrian's Wall on 22nd (JL).

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

Four were still on the coast at Cocklawburn on 23rd (MHu).

Redpoll s.p.

Two flew N at Backworth on 25th (CGK).

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*

20 (especially around village) were at Harwood Forest on 8th (CB), 13 flew north over Bamburgh on 21st (BRS), six+ at Craggside on 6th (MJC), four singing males at Langleeford (Harthope Valley) on 15th (MJC) with a further one at Hawsen Burn (Harthope Valley) on 15th (MJC). Two were song fighting at Linden Hall on 14th (NFO). Two migrants were on the Snook (Holy Island) on 30th (MJC) and one at Newton Pool on 17th (TRD/JD).

Meally Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*

Two were amongst Lesser Redpoll, *L.cabaret* at Wark Forest between 2nd-18th (MD).

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

150 were at Harwood Forest on 8th with very few around the village but numerous around clear-fell at Fallowlees (CB), ten to 60 in the Border Forest all month with many juveniles noted indicating a good breeding station (MD). 40+ were at Leaplish (Kielder) on 15th (PRM), 30+ at Kielder on 5th (MSK/NEWT), 25+ including juveniles on 6th (MJC), eight at Capheaton on 11th (STE), a family party (three juveniles) near Bywell on 15th (SAS), four at Wark on 21st (PRM) and three at Haughton Strother GP on 25th (MR).

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Six were at Scotland Gate all month (SLB/MSK), three pairs at Arcot Pond between 21st-30th (DM/LJM), up to five at Fulbeck (Morpeth) garden all month (TD), two pairs at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 7th (DM), Lucker all month (JHa) and a Walbottle garden on 8th (LR/KR). One to three were at a further eight widespread localities including gardens at Netherton Park (Stannington), Old Hartley, Rothbury and South Gosforth.

A female bullfinch in a Tranwell garden
Peter Tapsell
15th April

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

A female visited a private garden in the Morpeth area on 28th (ADMc).

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

One was observed at Dancing Green Hill on 5th (MSH).

Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*

Four were still present at Holy Island on 1st (IK/SR/AH).

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

60 were around the farm at Whittle Dene on 5th declined to ten by 9th as birds dispersed (SR). 20 at Big Waters on 10th (BMo) declined to one singing bird there on 29th (GB). Five were singing at Holywell Pond on 8th (ASJ) and one at West Hartford on 14th (PJA).



A little bit of bread and no cheese sings a Yellowhammer
by Simon Elliott at Havannah NR on 8th April

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

13 singing males were recorded at Gosforth Park NR on 5th (MJC), 12 at West Hartford on 8th (LJM), eight at Cocklawburn Pond on 11th (MHu), five at St. Mary's Island on 27th (PBU/ABu), three at Arcot Pond between 21st-27th (DM), two at Felton on 13th (RWM/MIM) and singles at Big Waters, Silverlink CP (North Shields) and Valley Park (Cramlington).



A female Reed Bunting at Big Waters
By Adriana Buskin on 9th April

ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN**Escapes****Black Swan** *Cygnus atratus*

One was on East Chevington South Pool on 11th (TB).

Muscovy Duck *Cairina moschata*

A pair were noted again at Elswick Wharf on 5th with the male seen through to 20th (DM). One also flew in at dusk to East Chevington North Pool on 11th (TB).

Helmeted Guinea Fowl *Numida meleagris*

A feather found at Killingworth Lake was identified as being of this species (PCF).



The Guinea Fowl feather from Killingworth by Peter Fletcher

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis*

The escapee found in previous years in the Upper Coquet Valley was again seen at Makendon on 7th (TRD/JD)

Canary *Serinus sp*

One was enjoying the freedom of Walkerville in Newcastle on 21st (CDH).

Hybrids**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus* x ?

A hybrid male was in a flock of House sparrows at Dinnington on 5th (PCF).

The hybrid Sparrow from Dinnington
by Peter Fletcher on 5th April

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Bamburgh Ringing Station, Berwick Wildlife Group, Hauxley Ringing Station, Natural History Society of Northumbria, North Northumberland Bird Club, Northern Experience Wildlife Tours.

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

This bulletin was compiled by Graeme Bowman (Mute Swan to Ruddy Duck), Lindsay McDougall (Red Grouse to Black-necked Grebe), Trevor Blake (Honey Buzzard to Crane), Steve Holliday (Oystercatcher to Dunlin), Ian Forsyth (Snipe to Skua), Eddie Crabtree (Ivory Gull to Puffin), Tim Dean (Escapes, Hybrids and Unknown Origin, List of Contributors, Highlights), Peter Fletcher (Feral Pigeon to Red-rumped Swallow), Mike Richardson (Cetti's Warbler to Pied Flycatcher), Dee McKeown (Duncock to Corn Bunting), Dan Turner (WeBS Coastal Counts) and Steve Holliday (WeBS Inland Counts). Thanks again to Ann McKeown for typing the section Duncock to Corn Bunting. Thanks to David Sanders of NNBC for providing data.

Edited by Steve Barrett NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.com

Postal distribution by Paul Stewart

STANDBY WRITER

Does anyone fancy a job with nothing to do for no pay? We need a bulletin standby writer to cover for holidays and the like. This means that there is normally no work but, say, twice a year a bulletin section needs to be written.

Please contact Steve Barrett NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.com

POSTAL BULLETIN

We are looking for a volunteer to arrange distribution of postal bulletins. Our printer is in North Shields. Is there a member who receives the hard copy bulletin who would be willing to spend an evening once a month packaging it?

Please contact any committee member.

RECORD SUBMISSION

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 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 NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.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 cost of printing and stamps.

Ask for an e-mailed bulletin from: jo.bentley@waitrose.com

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS 2011/2012

Annual subscription is £23. For membership enquiries please contact jo.bentley@waitrose.com

NTBC WEB SITE

The Club website is an excellent resource for all interested in birds in the north east. There are numerous interesting sections, including a photograph gallery, site information and trip reports together with extensive reference information for birding in our area. The site is at www.ntbc.org.uk

If you have any ideas or things you would like to see or hear about on the site please let Chris know on 0751 582 5024 or e-mail christopher.knox@o2.co.uk

NTBC SIGHTINGS PAGE

The club sightings web page gives listings of birds seen locally. Adding a sighting is simple. A short e-mail is all that is needed. If anyone would like to be added as a contributor please contact Alan Tilmouth at ntbcorg@gmail.com.

The sightings page can be found at <http://ntbcsightings.posterous.com>

COMMITTEE NEWS

Result of EGM on Thursday 12th April 2012

The proposal to increase subscriptions from October 2012 was unanimously agreed. Comments from three members who contacted committee before the meeting were summarised by the Chair and the proposal was discussed with contributions from a good number of the members present.

As from October 2012 (membership year 2012/2013) Subscriptions will be

Individual - £30.00

Family - £32.00

Junior - £10.00.

We will issue a new membership form with the bulletin in July/August as there are changes to the requirements for information linked to Gift Aid subscriptions. Standing orders will also need to be updated.

MYSTERY SPECIES

Chris Barlow found this mammal-avian hybrid at Cresswell Pond in April.



COASTAL WEBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

APRIL	2012
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Site	Berwick North Shore (including Little Beach)		Berwick Little Beach		Tweed Estuary		Tweed: A1 By-Pass to Horncastle		Spirit - Cocklawburn		Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay)		Seashouses - Beadnell		Beadnell - Howick		Boulmer - Alnmouth		Aln Estuary		Coquet Estuary		Amble - Chevington		Cresswell - Newbiggin		Newbiggin - Cambois		Blyth Estuary		St Mary's Island		Whitley Bay - Tynewmouth		Tyne North Pier - Fish Quay		Walsend, (north bank only)		Redhugh - Scotswood Bridge, (north bank)		Scotswood - Newburn Bridge, (north bank)																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																												
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Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

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

Bulletin 2012 No 5

MONTHLY SUMMARY – MAY

5th July 2012



CONTENTS

Highlights

Committee News

Indoor Meetings

Field Trips

Classified List

Weather

WeBS Coastal

WeBS Inland

CLASSIFIED LIST HIGHLIGHTS

Taiga Bean Goose	An unseasonal bird was on Holy Island from 19th to 23rd.
Manx Shearwater	Large passage of 190 past Newbiggin on 15th.
Spoonbill	Single bird at East Chevington and Cresswell from 26th to 31st.
Honey-buzzard	Male over Doddington Bridge on 22nd.
Red Kite	An untagged bird over West Hartford on 27th was a first site record.
Hobby	Singles on Holy Island and at Haughton Strother GP.
Crane	One on 2nd over Prestwick Carr and Gosforth Park and one on 27th at Dinnington.
Kentish Plover	A superb male showed well on Holy Island causeway from 15th to 19th.
Temminck's Stint	Two stayed at Holy Island's rocket pools from 27th to 29th.
White-rumped Sandpiper	First Spring record for county at Holy Island Causeway from 16th to 21st.
Long-tailed Skua	An adult N at Newbiggin on 15th.
Arctic Tern	A record-breaking inland flock of 22 at Big Waters on 2nd.
Turtle Dove	One flew in front of observer's car at Whittle Dene on 26th.
Red-backed Shrike	Notable Spring passage this year.
Hooded Crow	The wintering bird stayed in East Chevington/Cresswell area until 9th.
Red-rumped Swallow	Two at Lynemouth sewage farm on 12th and one at Plessey Woods on 19th.
Willow Warbler	Passage of Northern race <i>acredula</i> birds mid-month.
Icterine Warbler	Singles on Holy Island on 8th and 31st.
Marsh Warbler	Single at East Chevington.
Bluethroat	Notable passage this Spring.
Grey-headed Wagtail	Male on Holy Island on 27th and 28th.
Ortolan Bunting	Male on Holy Island on 20th.

COMMITTEE NEWS

New Club Members/Beginners Initiative

During May a meeting between some of the committee and club members who had made suggestions and/or offers to help in relation to new club members was held at NWT office in St. Nicholas Park.

The meeting was an opportunity to discuss many of the suggestions and comments made during the Autumn 2011 Member Survey and how these might inform how we go forward.

Several excellent proposals were discussed; some will be implemented with little effort whilst others require further work and organization.

One proposal that is to be implemented immediately is to move the notices from the back of the bulletin to the front in order to give them greater prominence (if we have our co-ordination right the bulletin you are reading should be organised that way).

Editor's note – I remembered as the presses started to roll.

Website

In order to continue the development of the club's website and after discussion with Chris Knox and Mike Hodgson who manage the NTBC site, the club has invested in a new 17-inch up-to-date laptop and will be purchasing some upgraded website software.

Sand Martins and Their Fleas!

Club members may like to know that their Atlas data doesn't just go to the Atlas. We have received a request from a student preparing a PhD on the distribution of two sub-species of flea that live on Sand Martins and over-winter in Sand Martin nests. We are providing Atlas data that will allow the nests to be visited and fleas extracted during the winter months in order to help plot the distribution of the two sub-species. Don't hold your breath for an ID paper for the 'Identification Matters' section of the website though!



The Holy Island causeway Kentish Plover
by Tim Dean on 17th May

INDOOR MEETINGS

The next indoor meeting will be at Northern Rugby Club, McCracken Park, Great North Road, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 2DT on Thursday 13th September at 7pm.

FIELD TRIPS

Fancy a few nightjars, not the alcoholic type but the feathered variety? Then this is the trip for you, it doesn't matter if you're an expert or a beginner; please come and join me on the next fieldtrip to the Slaley area to look for Nightjars. Birds that we should see or hear are Woodcocks and Tawny Owls amongst other species.

So if you can't sleep at nights or just love midgies then why not come on the next field trip? We are meeting in the car park at 21:00h on the south side of the River Tyne at Corbridge on Friday 20th July, and don't forget to bring your insect repellent.

Please contact Trevor Blake for more information: trevor.1958@live.co.uk



A Tawny Owl in a Tranwell garden
by Peter Tapsell

CLASSIFIED LIST

The following account consists of unchecked reports. The species/subspecies marked * require descriptions.

A complete list of all sightings that need notes is included in the NTBC website www.ntbc.org.uk under the County Records Committee section and in Birds in Northumbria 2009 page 224.

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

TARGET SPECIES

The target species for 2012 are all the owls. Please report all records in as much detail as possible. The Club is sensitive to the vulnerability of these species to disturbance and persecution, and will be particularly cautious about what is actually published, above all about nesting and roosting sites. Please address any questions or concerns to Tim Dean or Dick Myatt.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Peak concentrations were 140 at Killingworth Lake on 11th (LJM), 104 at the Tweed Estuary on 21st (MHu), 93 at Capheaton Lake on 5th (DM) and 40 at West Ord. Six to ten were at Ellington, Grindon Lough, Holy Island, Newcastle Leazes Park and Prestwick Carr, and smaller numbers at several other sites. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/comments
Gosforth Park NR	1	9	NHSN
Holy Island Lough	1	8	IK. On 25th
Belsay Hall Pond	1	7	SRB. On 27th
Swallow Pond	1	7	JPD. On 20th
East Chevington	1	5	PRM. On 30th
Rothley Lakes	1	4	JCD. On 19th
Hauxley Reserve	1	3	JPD. On 25th
Burradon Pond	1	2	LJM. On 30th

Birds were noted on nests at Big Waters, Bothal and Linton Ponds, and Castle Island (two pairs).

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Two were at Rayburn Lake on 6th (TRD/JD), and singles at Budle Bay, Hauxley Reserve, Killingworth Lake, Sharperton, Warkworth Lane Ponds, Whinney Hill (River Blyth) and Whiteadder Point (Berwick) on occasional dates up to 28th.

Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*

An individual of the *fabalis* (Taiga) race was at Holy Island 'rocket pool' between 19th-22nd (RA/CDB/MJC/TF/JFa).



A Bean Goose on Holy Island
19th May by Chris Barlow

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Eight flew N at Warkworth Lane on 6th (TB), two were at Hauxley Reserve on 7th and 28th (CDB/TB) and singles at Bell's and Holywell Ponds, the Blyth Estuary, Holy Island and Tynemouth on sporadic dates up to 30th.

A Pink-footed Goose on a collision course
Hauxley on 7th May
by Chris Barlow

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

A Eurasian *albifrons* race bird was at Woodhorn Flashes until 27th (GB/STH/PJA).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Woodhorn Flashes held a peak of 31 on 12th (GB), ten were at Cresswell Pond on 27th (DM *et al.*), ten at Maiden's Hall Lake (West Chevington) on 19th (MSH), six to seven at Bell's Pond and East Chevington, and one to four at Cocklawburn and Linton Ponds, Cramlington, the Long Nanny Estuary, Prestwick Carr and West Ord. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/comments
Hauxley Reserve	3	12 (5,4,3)	CDB. On 7th (brood of 4 first noted on 4th; PCF)
Cresswell Pond	2	9 (6,3)	TD. On 23rd (brood of six first noted on 11th; MSH)
Plenmeller Common	1	4	DM/ALT/HD. On 5th
Silverlink Park LNR	1	3	MSH. On 6th

*** Snow Goose** *Anser caerulescens*

Two flew N at Holy Island Lough at 13.35h on 18th (MJC).

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Peak counts were 54 at Killingworth Lake on 30th (LJM), 38 at Bothal Pond on 31st (TB), 32 at Grindon Lough on 30th (PRM), 27 at Linton Ponds and 12 at Newcastle Leazes Park and Prestwick Carr. One to two were also at Arcot and Cocklawburn Ponds, Holy Island. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/comments
Hauxley Reserve	2-3	7-14	CDB/IF. Brood of 7 on 7th and broods of 5 and 2 on 11th
Midgeholme	2	7 (5,2)	SW. On 20th
Newcastle Leazes Park	2	6 (4,2)	DM. Brood of 4 on 8th and new brood of 2 on 28th
Holywell Pond	1	6	JPD. On 3rd
Swallow Pond	1	6	JPD. On 3rd
Woolsington Ponds	1	6	SRB. On 22nd, parents missing but young survived until end of month without them
East Chevington	1	5	STH/PJA. On 16th
Shasun Pharma, Dudley	1	4	LJM. On 31st
Rothley Lakes	1	3	JCD. On 19th
West Stobswood Pool	1	1	MSH. On 19th

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

One was at Grindon Lough on 3rd (PRM) and one flew S at Holy Island on 20th (ADM).

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Three dark-bellied *bernicla* race birds were at Lindisfarne NNR on 17th (TRD/JD) and one was at Hauxley Reserve on 7th (CDB). Un-raced birds involved four at Fenham Flats (Lindisfarne NNR) on 19th (SPP) and one at Hauxley Reserve on 6th (RB/MB).

A Brent Goose at Hauxley
7th May by Chris Barlow



Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Budle Bay held 109 on 24th (PRM), 35 were at the Blyth Estuary on 19th (GB), 26 at Holy Island on 17th (PRM), and 11 at Hauxley Reserve. Five to six were also at Elswick, Foxton Bend and Prestwick Carr, two to three at Branton GP, Cambois, Lynemouth, Newbiggin, New Water Haugh (River Tweed), the Tweed Estuary, West Hartford and Widdrington, and one at Linton Ponds. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/comments
Whitefield	1	10	TWi. On 27th
Haughton Strother GP	1	9	MR. On 13th
East Stobswood	1	6	TRD/JD. On 29th
West Stobswood Pool	1	5	MSH. On 26th
Grindon Lough	1	4	PRM. On 30th
Bothal Pond	1	3	TB. On 31st

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

A pair was at Redheugh on 12th (JR).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

13 (eight drakes) at Grindon Lough on 3rd dropped to five drakes by 30th (PRM), and one to two were at Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Haughton Strother GP, Maiden's Hall Lake (West Chevington) and Prestwick Carr on odd dates up to 29th.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Largest counts were ten at Woodhorn Flashes on 6th (GB), five at Cresswell Pond on 20th (CDH), five at Prestwick Carr on 3rd (GB) and three to four at East Chevington and Holy Island Rocket Field. One to two were also found at Arcot, Bothal and West Allotment Ponds, Big Waters, Bolam Lake, Castron, the Drift Inn pools (Seaton Burn), Druridge Pools, Hedgeley GP, Holy Island Lough, Maiden's Hall Lake (West Chevington) and Widdrington. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/comments
Bothal Pond	1	7	SW. On 25th

Teal *Anas crecca*

Grindon Lough held 23 (12 drakes) on 3rd and five (four drakes) on 30th (PRM), five were at Big Waters on 3rd (GB), five at Druridge Pools on 6th (GB), three at Holy Island on 16th (TRD/JD) and one at Branton GP.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Peak counts were 41 at Newcastle Leazes Park on 21st (DM), 38 at the Tweed Estuary on 21st (MHu), 13 at Wooler Haugh, and five to nine at Arcot Pond and Prestwick Carr. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/comments
Swallow Pond	4	30 (11,7,6,6)	JPD. 2 broods on 8th, and others on 20th and 25th
Gosforth Park NR	3+	20+	NHSN
Newcastle Exhibition Park	2	12 (7,5)	GB. On 8th. Down to 3 young by 22nd
Grindon Lough	2	8 (4,4)	PRM. On 30th
Haughton Strother GP	2	--	MR
Hepscott	1	13	PCF. On 4th
Ladyburn Lake	1	10	JMA. On 3rd
East Chevington	1	9	PRM. On 30th
Monks' House Pool	1	9	PRM. On 24th
Arcot Pond	1	8	LJM. On 29th
Killingworth Lake	1	8	LJM. New brood of 8 on 30th
Prestwick Carr	1	7	PCF. On 23rd
West Allotment Pond	1	6	MSH. On 6th
St Mary's Island	1	5	MSH. On 24th
Middle Ord Pond, Berwick	1	4	MHu. On 17th

Pintail *Anas acuta*

The only report was of a pair at Grindon Lough on 30th (PRM).

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

Druridge Pools attracted three drakes on 8th (MSH), two drakes on 29th (TRD/JD), a pair on 14th (TB) and a single drake on 20th (TF/JFa) and 23rd (TD). Two drakes were at Cresswell Pond on 9th (ASH) and 12th (JPD/ASJ) and Longhirst Flash on 3rd (TB), and single drakes were at Bothal Pond on 20th (SW), Cresswell Pond on 15th and 19th (IRD), Gosforth Park NR on three dates between 6th-19th (NHSN), Holy Island on 16th (TRD/JD/AH/ASJ) and West Hartford on 9th (PJA),

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Peaks were six (three pairs) at Druridge Pools on 8th (MSH), and single pairs at Cresswell Pond, East Chevington and Grindon Lough. Single drakes were also at Holy Island and Woodhorn Flashes. More unusual was a pair that flew N over the Blyth Estuary on 18th (STH/MHp/MSH).

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

The largest assemblies were 12 at Swallow Pond on 7th (STH/PJA), ten at Killingworth Lake on 2nd (GB), eight (three pairs and two drakes) at East Chevington on 14th (TB), and eight (five drakes) at Hadrian's Pond on 8th (JPD). One to two were also at Burradon, Cresswell, Warkworth Lane and West Allotment Ponds, Holy Island Lough and Monks' House Pool.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Peak counts were 79 at Killingworth Lake on 2nd (MSH), 43 at Linton Ponds on 20th (CDH), 36 at Newcastle Leazes Park on 1st (DM), 36 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 17th (SR), and 25-26 at Hauxley Reserve and Swallow Pond. Ten to 19 were also at Arcot Pond, Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother GP and Newcastle Exhibition Park, and eight to nine at Holy Island and Maiden's Hall Lake (West Chevington). A drake at Monks' House Pool on 12th deliberately broke up a fight between two Moorhens by charging between them (RWM/MIM).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

The few counts received included 54 at Cocklawburn on 9th (MHu), 20 at Berwick North Shore on 15th (MHu), and 17 at the Tweed Estuary on 21st (MHu). Seven to nine were also at Blyth Harbour, Budle Bay and Seaton Sluice. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/comments
Budle Bay	1	6	CGK. On 26th

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

A duck was at Football Hole (Newton) on 21st (TRD/JD).

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

13 flew S at St Mary's on 25th (SPP), 135 were off Cocklawburn on 17th (MHu), about 60 at Budle Point-Stag Rocks on 6th (MJC/ADM) and two to six at Cheswick and Snab Point. More unusual was a drake on East Chevington north pool on 8th and 20th (ADMc).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Four were at New Water Haugh (River Tweed) on 17th (MHu), three at Hedgeley GP on 5th (DM/ALT/HD), three at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 5th (MR), two at East Chevington on 9th (TRD/JD), and singles at Cocklawburn, East Chevington and Gosforth Park NR on occasional dates until 16th. The last were singles at New Water Haugh (River Tweed) and the Tweed Estuary on 21st (MHu).

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

14 were at Holy Island on 17th (PRM), four at East Chevington north pool on 5th (DM/ALT/HD) and singles there on 14th and 16th, and two at Budle Bay.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Two flew N at Holy Island on 19th (CDB), one moved N at Newton Point on 21st (TRD/JD), and singles flew over The Cheviot and Haltonlea Fell. A large pre-migration gathering at New Water Haugh (River Tweed) involved 112 on 1st, declining to 74 by 17th and five by 24th (MHu). Eight were at Riding Mill on 5th (DM/ALT/HD), four ducks between Allen Banks-Plankey Mill on 9th (MSH), and four at the Harthope Valley on 19th (PJA). One to two were also at Bygate, Castron, Holy Island, Killingworth Lake, Low Carritheth (Hesleyside), Thrum Mill (Rothbury), Twizel, Wallington and Wark.

A Drake Goosander
Killingworth Lake
by Adriana Buskin on 31st May



Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

The highest count was of six in the Hawsen Burn on 5th (DM/ALT/HD). Three to four adults were seen at Blanchland Moor, Langleeford (Harthope Valley) and Rowley Burn. Two unaccompanied juveniles were on Simonside on 20th (AB/LB).

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

More reports were received than from the previous species. Five (three males) were near High Eshells on 3rd, when three (two males) were near Allendale and a pair was displaying on Eshells Moor (SAP). Five (three males) were near Dalton on 29th and four males were at Sipton Shield on 23rd (SAP). Three males were lekking at Swinhope Shield on 20th (ASH). One to two males were at Haltonlea Fell, Meadow Cottage (Allendale Common), Rowley Burn and Shieldbridge (West Allendale).

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

The peak count in the Harthope Valley was six on 5th (STH/MHp). One to two were noted at Cockle Park Farm, Errington, Fairmoor (Morpeth), Hartburn, Mitford Steads, Netherwitton and running down the high street in Wooler!

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Pairs were noted at Arcot Pond, Bell's Dunes (Cresswell), Blackburn (Slaley), Bothal Pond, Cresswell Pond, Damdykes Farm (Cramlington), Duke's Pond (Wallsend), East Chevington NR, Flodden Field, Newbiggin and Newbiggin GC, Prestwick Whins, Rowley Burn, Spindleston, West Hartford, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Woodhorn Church. A single was at Monks' House Pool.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Singles were calling at Whiteadder Point (Berwick) on 27th (TBr) and at a confidential site in the north of the county.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Four were at Cockle Park Farm (Ulgham) on 5th (JR) and in a Walbottle observer's garden on 6th (KR/LR). One to two were at Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene) and Wooler Haugh.

A dark Pheasant at Hauxley NR
by Chris Bartlow
7th May

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Light N passage was noted with three at Cullercoats on 16th (CGK) and singles at St Mary's Island on 10th (MSH) and Newbiggin on 15th (STH). Offshore one to two were seen at Budle Point, Cheswick, Cocklawburn and Spittal Bay.

**Black throated Diver** *Gavia arctica*

One flew N at Cullercoats on 16th (CGK).

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Very few were reported with one to five off Cullernose Point, East Chevington, Newton Point and Snab Point and in the Tweed Estuary.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

Noticeable N movement occurred on 15th with 190 at Newbiggin in 2 hours (STH) and 72 in 1 hour 30 minutes at St Mary's Island (JPD). Seven flew N at Cullercoats on 16th (CGK).

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

At St Mary's Island 65 flew N in 1 hour on 10th (MSH) and 20 flew N at Stag Rocks on 5th (DM/ALT/HD). One to five were noted at Cullernose Point, East Chevington, Newton Point and Snab Point.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Four flew E at Capheaton Lake on 28th (TB). The peak roost counts were 37 at Blyth South Harbour on 8th (STH) and nine at Needle's Eye on 23rd (MHu). Elsewhere in the Berwick area 14 were at the North Shore on 15th and 12 in the Tweed Estuary on 21st (MHu). A single was at Whittle Reservoir on 5th.

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

The peak roost count at Blyth South Harbour was 23 on 8th (STH). In the Berwick area nine were at the North Shore on 15th, six at Needle's Eye on 23rd and two in Spittal Bay on 8th (MHu). Eight were at Low Newton on 21st (TRD/JD).

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

One was at East Chevington Pools on 17th (ADMc).

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Two circled Holy Island Lough in misty conditions on 22nd (MJC). One was at Druridge Pools on 14th (TB).

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

The peak counts were nine at Prestwick Carr on 1st and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 12th (SR). One to three were noted at Arcot Pond, Boulmer Haven, Chollerford, Holy Island, Holywell Dene, Linton Ponds, Tweed Estuary, Wark, Wooler Haugh, flying over gardens at Walbottle and Walkerville and feeding at a garden pond at Fulbeck (Morpeth). The five nests at Gosforth Park NR contained young (NHSN) and the Holy Island nest fledged two (IK).

Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

One first seen at East Chevington North Pool on 26th remained there until 29th. It was seen again by many observers at Cresswell Pond on 30th/31st, which it had visited on the evening of 26th.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Peak counts were ten at Holywell Pond on 6th, eight at Swallow Pond on 8th (JPD), six throughout the month at Gosforth Park NR, where two pairs had young by the end of the month (NHSN), four at Capheaton Lake on 14th (TRD/JD) and Linton Ponds on 20th, where a juvenile was also noted. Two were at Bothal Pond, East Chevington and Hadrian's Pond (Wallsend) and singles at Cresswell Pond and Woodhorn Flashes.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

The peak count at Whittle Dene Reservoirs was 11 on 12th. A nest with eggs was present here on 29th (SR/MR)). Five (three small young) were at Killingworth Lake on 1st (LJM). Four were at Derwent Reservoir all month (IFo) and at East Chevington on 16th/30th (JPD/PRM). Pairs were at Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield) all month (IFo), displaying at Holywell Pond on 6th (JPD/BMo) and at Hedgeley GP on 5th (GB), Warkworth Lane on 6th (TB), Swallow Pond on 7th (STH/PJA) and Bothal Pond from 20th (SW *et al.*). Singles were at Cresswell Pond on 2nd/5th, Angerton Lake on 15th and Big Waters on 26th.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

A single in full breeding plumage was in Holy Island Harbour on 4th (IK).

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

A single in full breeding plumage was at Grindon Lough on 13th/15th (STH/PJA/PRM) and at Haughton Strother GP on 17th (MR).

Grindon Lough Slavonian Grebe
Digi-scoped by Paul Massey
15th May

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

Up to four were noted at one regular breeding site and up to three at another.

**Honey-buzzard**

Adult male, flew S along River Till at Doddington Bridge before picking up a thermal, kettling to 1000ft plus, then headed off to W (MJC).

The Doddington Bridge Honey-buzzard
by Mike Carr
22nd May

**Red Kite** *Milvus milvus*

Two birds were up in the air together near Wylam on 25th (TB) and singles were seen at Derwent Reservoir on 9th (JPD/ASJ), Hagg Bank (Wylam) on 14th (TB), West Hartford on 27th (PJA) and over the A69 at Heddon-on-the-Wall on 29th (*per* AJ).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Up to five birds were at East Chevington area during the month (ASJ *et al.*) and two females were at Druridge Pools on 14th (TB). Single birds were also seen at Holy Island (ADM *et al.*) & Holywell Pond (CS/CB/SPP) on several dates, Prestwick Carr on 8th (*per* PCF), Ryal on 20th (ALT), the Beehive Flash (Earsdon) and West Hartford on 27th (AC/PJA).

A female Marsh Harrier quarters
Holywell Pond
by Colin Bradshaw

**Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*

Ringtails were seen at two sites in the West (EC/SAS), at sites in the South West (ADMc/PCF) and in the North of the County (Mhu).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Singles were noted from the Kielder and Harwood areas (IFo/TB) and from two further sites (CDB/STH/MHp).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Three birds were at Sweethope Lough on 28th (TB) and two were seen at Bamburgh on 12th (BRS) and at Southfield Green (Cramlington) on 13th (DM). Single birds were recorded from a further 15 sites during the month including a male as a road casualty at Wallsend on 29th (CDH).

A Sparrowhawk in Tynemouth
by Colin Bradshaw

**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*

Eight birds were seen in the Harthope Valley on 5th (DM/AT/HD), six were seen at Haughton Strother on 6th (MR) and at Sweethope Lough on 28th (PRM). One to three birds were noted at over 30 sites during the month.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetuss*

Two birds were at one site in the County on 5th (TRD/JD) and singles were noted from another site in the South West and on Holy Island on a couple of dates. Other birds were noted at West Ord on 6th (MHu), over Morpeth on 12th (ADMc), Cresswell on 14th (TB), East Ord on 19th (MHu) and at Castle Island on 27th (GB).

An Osprey flies over East Chevington
11th May
Peter Tapsell



Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

A pair was nesting in Gosforth Park during the month (AJN) and two were at Chatton Moor on 9th (MJC). Single birds were recorded from 12 further sites.



A Kestrel eyes up a meal in Tynemouth
by Colin Bradshaw

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

The only records were two birds on Holy Island; a female near the Lough and a male over the village on 4th (IK).

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Two sightings of single birds came from Holy Island on 12th (JPD/ASJ) and at Haughton Strother on 17th (MR).

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Pairs were at two potential inland breeding sites in Central Northumberland and the north of the County. Single birds were at four inland sites and at Berwick, East Ord, and Holy Island and at Pegswood.

A Peregrine
Holy Island Causeway
19th May
Chris Barlow

**Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus*

Up to two pairs were noted throughout the month at Gosforth Park (BMo *et al.*) and up to two birds were at East Chevington (JPD/TRD). Singles were seen or heard at Backworth on several dates (CGK), Swallow Pond on 9th (JPD), Prestwick Carr on 13th (*per* PCF), and the River Blyth Estuary on 20th (STH/PJA) and at Cresswell Pond on 30th (MSH).

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Seven birds were at Killingworth Lake on 11th (LJM) and at Monks' House Pool on 12th (RWM/MIM); six were at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 14th (DM). Pairs were noted at Arcot Pond, Dinnington, Holy Island, Jesmond Dene and single birds at Wallsend and Wooler Haugh.

Coot *Fulica atra*

22 birds at Killingworth Lake (LJM) on 11th was the highest count, followed by 14 at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 8th & 21st (DM). Eight were at Haughton Strother GPs on 11th (MR), seven were at Linton Pond on 20th (CDH) and Havannah NR on 26th (STH/PJA) and 3 pairs were nesting at Silverlink LNR on 21st (CGK). One-five were at 13 other sites.

Crane *Grus grus*

A single bird was observed over Prestwick Carr and Gosforth Park on 2nd (PCF/*per* NHSN), another bird was reported on 27th soaring over Dinnington at 16:00h before heading off E (*per* PCF).



A Common Crane over Prestwick Carr
2nd May
Peter Fletcher

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Diminishing numbers on the coast saw mainly non-breeding gatherings of 42 at Berwick North Shore on 15th (MHu), 31 on the Blyth estuary on 17th (STH), 29 at Cresswell Pond on 16th (TB), 22 at Hauxley on 7th (CDB) and 11 at Newbiggin on 12th (GB). Inland counts included ten at Haughton Strother GP on 28th (MR) and eight at Wooler Haugh on 6th (JR). Reported breeding birds involved four pairs in the Hauxley area on 11th (IF), three pairs in the Harthope valley including one sitting bird which received close attention from a lamb (JMA), two pairs at Featherstone Castle, Haughton Strother GP and Widdrington, and single breeding pairs at Blindburn (Upper Coquetdale), Chollerford, Redesmouth, Shillmoor (Upper Coquetdale) and Tarsset Bridge. Three to six were also noted at Alwinton, Big Waters, Grindon Lough and Prestwick Carr and one to two at Arcot Pond, Cramlington (Barn's Park), Killingworth Lake and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Peaks of five were noted at Cresswell Pond on 1st and 17th (MSK/NEWT/TB), with four still present on 20th but only one seen during 23rd-31st (many obs.); a colour-ringed bird was seen on 19th but flew off before full details could be taken. During the month, copulation was noted on 8th (AJR) and a sitting bird was watched on the spit during 11th-15th (MSH *et al.*) but was ultimately unsuccessful. During the period, birds from presumably the group of five were seen at East Chevington, where three were noted on 11th and two on 18th (RMHa/PMHa). The single bird which was present at Beehive Flash (Earsdon) at the end of April remained to the 1st (SPP/IF).

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Breeding birds were noted at a number of confidential sites as follows: South Northumberland (six birds/three pairs), Central (two pairs), South-east (single birds at two sites). Elsewhere, three were at Caistron on 4th (TRD/JD) and three flew N over Cresswell Pond on 15th (TRD); two were at Bothal Pond during 1st-18th (TB *et al.*), two were near Chollerford throughout the month and Cresswell Pond on 1st/6th, and singles were noted flying over the Blyth estuary on 17th/18th, and on single occasions at Cresswell Pond, Lynemouth Flash and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Vast numbers were reported from Holy Island causeway during the middle of the month, with peak counts of 1,200+ on 15th (CGK/MSH) and 2,500 on 16th (AJS/JPD), falling away to 800 on 17th (TRD/JD) and 44 on 28th (JPD/ASJ/MPF). Other high counts involved 296 at Budle Bay on 20th (TM) and 286 on the Blyth Estuary on 18th reducing to 181 on 20th (STH/PJA). Elsewhere, double-figure counts of ten to 16 came from Berwick Little Beach, Holy Island Harbour and Low Newton, whilst one to four were seen at Boulmer, East Chevington, East Stobswood Lake, Elswick Wharf (River Tyne), Newbiggin, West Stobswood Pool and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*

A male was found from Holy Island causeway on 15th (RA) and remained in the area, albeit affected by the tides, until 17th, with record 'cards' eliciting comments such as 'what a cracker' and 'gorgeous creature'!

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

The flock of northern birds at Prestwick Carr remained into May, with numbers falling rapidly from 90 on 1st (PCF), to 20 on 3rd/5th, to five on 10th and one on 15th (GB/AJN/PRM/TRD). Elsewhere, 25 at Rowley Burn on 1st was the only report (AJH).

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Holy Island causeway provided all the records this month, with counts of 28 on 16th (JPD), 44 on 17th and 31 on 24th (PRM).

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Breeding birds dominated reports this month, with 25 pairs at Blanchland Moor on 9th (ASJ), seven pairs in two fields at Midgeholme on 20th (SW) and five pairs at Holywell on 3rd (ASJ). Adults with two to four young were noted at Backworth, Big Waters, Cambois, Haughton Strother GP and Hauxley, whilst displaying birds were at Prestwick Carr and Spylaw (Simonside) and a pair was at Dissington-Darras Hall.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Other attractions in the Holy Island causeway area enabled a peak count of 16 on 17th (CDB). Elsewhere, two were on the Blyth estuary on 20th (STH/PJA) and a summer-plumaged bird was at Cresswell Pond during 19th-20th (MSH/CDH).

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Holy Island causeway produced a peak of 70+ on 17th (PRM) followed by 20 on 19th (CB). St Mary's saw 42 pass N on 20th (ASJ) and 30 were at Stag Rocks on 5th (DM/ALT/HD). Counts elsewhere included 15 at East Chevington, 12 at Low Newton, ten on the Blyth estuary and four at Berwick Little Beach.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Singles were noted at Holy Island on 11th (RA) and on the beach with Dunlin at Beacon Point (Newbiggin) on 27th (GB).

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

Two were present at the Holy Island Rocket Field pools during 27th-28th (IK *et al.*).

White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis*

An adult was found at Holy Island causeway during a search for the Kentish Plover on 16th (ASJ/JPD/MPF/TRD/JD) being noted again on 17th (CDB/TRD/JD/PRM/ADM/AT) and 19th (SPP).

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

One was seen from Holy Island causeway during 15th-17th (CGK/MSH/ASJ/JPD/MPF/CDB), with two noted here on 18th (MJC). Single birds were also seen at West Stobswood Pool on 16th (MSH) and on the Blyth estuary on 17th (AC).

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

A count of 50 at Stag Rocks on 12th was by far the highest (MSK/NEWT) and 13 remained here on 20th (TM). Elsewhere, 18 roosted on St Mary's Island on 3rd (SPP), 13 was the peak count at Tynemouth on 5th (DRW), five were at Low Newton on 13th (NFO) whilst a single graced Berwick Little Beach on 13th (MHu).

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Mid-month produced some large counts from Holy Island causeway with counts involving 1,000+ on 15th (CGK/MSH), 1,500 on 16th (ASJ/JPD) and 900+ on 17th (PRM). The Blyth estuary held much smaller numbers with a peak of 35 on 18th (STH). The small flock at Prestwick Carr at the end of April lingered into May, with counts of 15 on 1st and five on 3rd (TRD/JD), and 15 moving N at East Chevington on 11th was the only other double-figure report (IF). Eight were at Berwick Little Beach on 13th and one to five were seen at Cresswell Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Haughton Strother NR, Low Newton, Newbiggin, West Stobswood Pool and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Two to three at Grindon Lough included some display being noted on 21st (PRM).

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Two in the Holy Island Rocket Field pools on 27th and 28th (IK/SR/AH/JPD) 'remained for several days' and one was at Hauxley NR on 28th (TB).

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Display or song was noted in two areas of Allendale, at Blanchland Moor, near Coanwood, Druridge Pools, Prestwick Carr and Ridsdale. Four were at Prestwick Carr on 26th (PCF) and one at West Hartford on 1st.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Four were at Longhorsley Moor on 27th (IF) and individual roding was witnessed at Blanchland Moor on 5th (DM/ALT/HD) and at Slaley Hall on 20th (RMH). One was feeding in broad daylight at Derwent Reservoir NR on 22nd (IFo).

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

At Backworth Flash ten first-summers were present on 3rd (MSH), one of which had been colour ringed on Tayside in autumn 2011. There were five in the Blyth Estuary on 17th, rising to eight on 19th/20th (STH/GB), four at Foxton Bends on 3rd, three at Prestwick Carr on 1st, three at Druridge Pools on 5th and singles at Hauxley on 7th, Lynemouth Flash on 14th and Long Nanny on 16th.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

The largest count was of 60+ from Holy Island causeway on 17th (PRM) and the most in the Blyth Estuary was seven on 17th (STH). Five were at Low Newton on 11th (TRD/JD) and one at Foxton Bends on 3rd. Inland, the individual from late April remained at Prestwick Carr on 1st and one was present at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 8th/9th (SR/MR).

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Northerly passage was evident, particularly up to around mid-month: 37 at Stag Rocks on 12th (MSK/NEWT), 19 at Low Newton on 11th (TRD/JD) and 24 there next day (SPP), 16 at Holy Island causeway on 11th (MJC) and 12 there on 16th (CDB), nine at Hauxley on 6th, eight at East Chevington on 11th, seven at East Ord on 8th, five at Amble on 12th and four at St Mary's on 10th. Smaller numbers N were noted at Boulmer Haven, Ellington, Tweedmouth and Tynemouth. On the ground around 35 were at East Chevington on 1st (ADM), 14 at Newbiggin GC on 11th (STH) and 11 at Bell's Farm (Cresswell) also on 11th (MSH); Prestwick Carr had a peak of 11 on 6th, three of which were, unusually, still present on 23rd and one lingered until 29th (PCF *et al.*). Up to six visited Cresswell Pond and one or two were found at Beal Sluice, Berwick, Long Nanny, Lynemouth Flash, Slaley Hall and Warkworth Gut.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

In the Blyth Estuary 32 were present on 8th down to 15 on 17th (STH), 29 flew into roost at the power station site at Cambois on 26th (STH/PJA) and 22 were at Long Nanny on 16th (STH/PJA). The most at Prestwick Carr were 13 on 5th and at the Tweed Estuary eight on 21st. Four flew over Big Waters on 2nd. Relatively few reports were received from breeding areas although there was a flock of 14 in the Upper Breamish Valley at Greensidehill on 6th (RWM/MIM); three were at Chatton Moor on 9th, single pairs at Arcot Pond and Quickenincote and one or two at Grindon Lough, Longhorsley Moor and Sweethope Lough. A leucistic individual was at Cresswell Pond on 5th (STH/MHp).

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

At least six pairs were located in Upper Coquetdale (IRD/ASJ/JR), nine birds were at Wooler Haugh on 6th (JR), four near Rothbury on 8th and four at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 12th. Two pairs were along the R Allen on 16th and three were present at Derwent Reservoir and Druridge Bay. Altogether one or two were noted at a further 16 potential breeding areas and one or two migrants appeared at Backworth Pond, the Blyth Estuary, Bothal Pond, Cresswell Pond, Hauxley, Holy Island, Newbiggin, Tynemouth Haven and Woodhorn Flashes.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

The individual, adult in summer plumage, from late April at Prestwick Carr remained there on 1st (PCF/MSH/TRD/JD).

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

It was very scarce: singles at Druridge Pools on 5th (MSH), Prestwick Carr on 6th (*per* PCF) and at Hauxley NR on 25th (JPD).

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

There was a light passage, with just one of the singletons concerned lingering beyond the date it was found: at Prestwick Carr on 3rd (TRD), Bell's Ponds (Cresswell) on 5th (DM/ALT/HD), Bothal Pond on 6th (TB/TF/JFa *et al.*), on a roadside flash near High Newton on 13th (NFO) and in the Holy Island Rocket Field Pools on 27th/28th (IK/SR/AH *et al.*)

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Display was noted at Grindon Lough on 21st and 30th (PRM) where on the last date seven were present. Records from other potential breeding areas were sparse: a pair at Midgeholme on 20th (SW) and a single at Spartylea on 5th (DM *et al.*). Otherwise two were at Haughton Strother GP on 2nd and one at Berwick on 15th.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Eight were at Low Newton on 11th (TRD/JD), seven at Newbiggin on 27th and six at Stag Rocks on 5th (DM/ALT/HD). The only others reported were three at Berwick on 13th and one at Holy Island causeway on 17th.



A Turnstone at Holy Island
19th May by Chris Barlow

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Three were harrying Sandwich Terns off Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 14th (MHu), one flew N at St Mary's on 15th (JPD) and two were 'loafing about' at Holy Island on 16th (JPD).

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*

An adult flew N at Newbiggin on 15th (STH/DFa).

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

One flew N at Tynemouth on 19th (DRW).

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

The maximum counts were ca.300 at Cullernose Point on 19th (TRD/JD) and 170 on ledges at Walker Riverside CP on 7th (SPP). On various dates mid-month ten-40 were at Berwick North Shore, Low Newton and the River Tweed Estuary (TRD/JD/MHu) with a single at Snab Point (Cresswell) on 15th.

Black-headed Gull

Chroicocephalus ridibundus

The well-established breeding colony on Plenmeller Common was very active on 1st, containing probably hundreds of pairs although no attempt was made to accurately estimate or count the numbers present (EC/JSB). Elsewhere very few were reported with 13 on the River Tweed Estuary on 21st (MHu), seven at Wooler Haugh on 6th (JR) and two at Grindon Lough on 30th (PRM). A pair was nesting on a platform at Gosforth Park NR during the month (NHSN).

Black-headed Gull in Leazes Park
Newcastle by Adriana Buskin
27th May



Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

It was another poor spring for sightings of this species with the majority of records coming from Chevington North Pool from 25th-28th when up to three first-summer birds and a single adult were present (TB *et al.*). Elsewhere a first-summer was at Tynemouth on 5th (DRW) and an adult on Holy Island Causeway on 17th (PRM).

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

The only records were of three first-summer birds at Newbiggin-by-the-Sea on 7th (STH/PJA) and 15th (ADMc) with a single first-summer there on 18th (ADMc).

Common Gull *Larus canus*

At Big Waters 30 flew E on 2nd (GB). At least 50, generally 2nd-summer birds, were regularly on flash water at Prestwick Village around the 14th (PCF) and a similar number of 1st-summers were on the nearby Carr on 25th (PRM). Ten-15 1st-summers were at Backworth throughout the month (CGK).

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

Budle Bay held 28 on 24th (PRM) and the only other double-figure count was 11 around Jesmond Dene on 27th (MJCo). On various dates throughout the month one-five were at Exhibition Park, Leazes Park, the River Tweed estuary and Wallsend (Davy Bank) where one nest was noted (CDH/MHu/DM).

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argenteus*

The peak numbers from WeBS counts were 305 on the River Tweed Estuary on 21st and 62 at Berwick North Shore on 15th (MHu). At least 25 birds with 15 apparently occupied nests were at Wallsend (Davy Bank) on 6th (CDH). Up to 21 were noted at Leazes Park during the month (DM) with one-seven at Castle Island (where one bird appeared to be at a nest), Exhibition Park, Grindon Lough and Jesmond Dene (DM/PRM/MJCo/STH/PJA).

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucooides*

A lingering 1st-summer bird was noted flying S at St Mary's Island on 8th (AC).

Greater Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

The North Pool at East Chevington held 17 on 5th (DM/ALT/HD) and 12 were recorded during the WeBS count on the River Tweed Estuary on 21st (MHu). One-three were at Cockle Park Farm (near Morpeth), Cresswell Pond, Elswick Wharf (River Tyne) and Warkworth Weir (DM/JR).

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

The first record of the year was of five birds at the breeding site on Lindisfarne on 2nd where six-seven pairs were nesting by the end of the month (IK). Elsewhere birds were not seen until 11th when ten were noted at the Long Nanny (ADMc) rising to 22 on 16th (STH/PJA). One-five birds were recorded by many observers on a number of dates from 11th-28th, primarily at Lindisfarne/Holy Island, but with sightings also from Cullercoats and at Low Newton from where birds were recorded flying N on 12th.



A Little Tern passes Holy Island Causeway
19th May by Chris Barlow

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

The peak count was 40 at Tynemouth Haven on 7th (CB) and throughout the month lesser counts of 11-36 came from five other coastal localities, namely Berwick (Meadow Haven), East Chevington, Holy Island, St Mary's Island and Tynemouth (MSH/MHu/ASJ/CGK/AJR). One-ten were recorded at ten other sites from the River Tweed Estuary-Tynemouth Haven.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

At the Gosforth Park NR 18 pairs were nesting on platforms by the month end (NHSN) but apart from a single pair nesting at Whittle Dene Reservoirs (MR) and another pair at Cramlington (Dudley, Shasun Pharma) (*per* LJM) no other confirmed breeding records were received although 11 birds were around the nesting raft at Swallow Pond on 16th (JPD/SPP). A maximum of 11 were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 17th (SR) with maxima of ten at Big Waters on 20th (GB), East Chevington on 23rd (TD), Swallow Pond on 7th (STH/PJA) and Tynemouth Haven on 7th (CB). Elsewhere one-four were at Alnmouth, Arcot Pond, Berwick (Meadow Haven), Bothal Pond, Grindon Lough, Hauxley, Holywell Pond, Killingworth Lake, Prestwick Carr, River Tweed Estuary and Seaton Sluice.



A Common Tern at Whittle Dene with ring SV95
15th May by Tim Dean

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

One record only of a single bird moving N at Cullercoats on 16th (CGK).

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

On 16th ca.1,000 birds were at the Long Nanny breeding colony (STH/PJA *per* NT wardens). An unusual sighting, perhaps involving a record count for an inland site in the county, was of 22 feeding over Big Waters lake during the evening of 2nd (GB) presumably as a result of the cold and adverse conditions prevailing during the first week of the month; all had departed by early the following morning. Only two other records came in, of two at Cresswell Pond on 8th and a single at East Chevington on 29th.

Auk sp

On 10th 70 flew N in one hour at St Mary's Island (MSH).

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

One to six were recorded at Berwick (Spittal Bay), Cocklawburn, Cullernose Point, Druridge Bay and Stag Rocks on a number of dates throughout the month (TRD/JD/MHu/DM).

Razorbill *Alca torda*

A paucity of records this month comprising only 15 birds at Cullernose Point on 21st (TRD/JD) and three at Berwick, Spittal Bay on 8th (MHu).

Puffin *Fratercula artica*

One record received of 21 birds passing N at St Mary's Island on 25th with, concurrently, a handful resting offshore (SPP).

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Four were noted regularly at Backworth during the month (CGK) with two adults and two juveniles in the observer's garden at Walbottle on 6th (KR/LR). Three were at Arcot Pond on 1st (LJM) with two at Darras Hall, Beatty Avenue (South Gosforth), Lynemouth Flash, Hauxley, Heddon on the Wall, Hemscott Hill, Holy Island, Shieldbridge, Thrunton Woods and visiting a nest site at New Water Haugh (River Tweed). Singles were at five other widespread localities.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

The peak counts were 150 at Acklington on 28th with 100 at Howick on 13th (JMA). BBS/WBBS surveyors found 31 at Belford Moor on 9th, 25 at Wooler Haugh on 6th and 15 at Cockle Park Farm on 5th (MJC/JR) with 14 at Jesmond Dene on 27th (MJCo) and two to six in three recorders' gardens.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Low numbers with four at Cockle Park Farm on 5th (JR), one to three visiting a Holywell garden during the month (RJP) and one to two at Jesmond Dene, Kingston Park Metro Station and Wooler Haugh.

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

A single bird flew in front of the observer's car between Nesbitt Hill and Whittle Dene at 08.30 on 26th (JR).

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Very well reported, the highest counts being three at Fallowlees (Harwood Forest) on 8th (MSK/NEWT) and East Chevington on 19th and 26th (CDB/JPD). Two were at Alwinton, Bewick Moor, Catcleugh, Longhorsley Moor, Beacon Hill Longhorsley, Harthope Valley, Midgeholme, Rothbury, Simonside Hills, Steel Rigg, Sweethope, Tows Bank and West Hartford. Singles were seen or heard at many of the aforementioned and a further 31 widespread localities.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Breeding was confirmed at Harwood Village where a pair had three young on 28th (JCD) and two were in the Beehive Flash (Earsdon) area regularly during the last week of the month. All other reports were singles at A1068 between Bedlington and Choppington, Chollerford, East Chevington, High Hauxley, Holywell Dene, Low and High Newton, North Stobswood, Warkworth and a bird with jesses was around the observer's garden at Tynemouth on 4th (CB).

Barn Owl is a the **target species** for 2012. Please report all records



The Tynemouth garden Barn Owl on 4th May by Colin Bradshaw

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

A pair were at Swallow Pond on 9th (JPD) and two birds remained at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) (TB) with singles seen there, at a nest in Ovington and at Backworth regularly during the month. Single birds were also at Big Waters, two locations near Catton, Clifton, Cramlington, Longhorsley Moor, Middle Stobswood, and Widdrington.

Little Owl is a **target species** for 2012. Please report all records.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Pairs with two fledglings were at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN) and at Stamfordham from 4th (EC). Two or more sang at Scotland Gate throughout the month (SLB/MSK), at Prestwick Carr on 5th (DM/ALT/HD) and at Walbottle Hall on 30th (KR/LR). Singles were at Allen Banks, west of Alnwick, Bingfield, Bothal, Ellington, Errington, Glanton, Keepersshield near Chollerford, Kyle Woods, Longhorsley, Carlisle Park (Morpeth), Netherton Park (Stannington), Sweethope Lough, Walbottle and Whittle Dene with one road casualty on the A69 near Ridley Hall.

Tawny Owl is a **target species** for 2012. Please report all records.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otis*

Three adults were at Swallow Pond on 5th with two juveniles heard there on 23rd (JPD/SPP) and there were regular reports from a site in South East Northumberland. Singles were at Druridge Pools on 9th (AC), QE2 Lake on 11th (ADMc) and a bird was hit by a car but recovered and flew off at Fell End (Haltwhistle) on 12th (SW).

Long-eared Owl is a **target species** for 2012. Please report all records.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Four were at Holy Island between 8th and 12th (AJR/ASJ/JPD) with three (flushed by a Peregrine) at Langleeford (Harthope Valley) on 2nd (TRD/JD) and Prestwick Carr on 3rd (PCF). Two were at Backworth, Breamish Valley, Longhorsley Moor and Sweethope, all before 8th, with singles at the above and a further 14 widespread localities, the last birds being at Grindon Lough and St Mary's Island on 30th and East Chevington on 31st.

Short-eared Owl is a **target species** for 2012. Please report all records.

Swift *Apus apus*

Some large gatherings, the peak being 180 feeding over the River Wansbeck at Castle Island on 20th (STH/PJA) whilst 120 were counted heading 'N at head height' over Holy Island on 11th (MJC) and 100 fed at Woolsington on 20th (SRB). Around 90 were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 17th (SR), 80+ over Killingworth Lake on 8th (BMo), 70 with 500 *hirundines* at West Ord on 13th (MHu), 60 at East Chevington on 16th (STH/PJA) and 50 at Bothal Pond on 20th (SW) with ten to 36 also at Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, Newbiggin, Prestwick Carr, St Mary's, Thrunton Woods and Wark (North Tyne). One to nine were at a further 24 widespread localities.



A Swift not quite over the Moon
At Prestwick Carr by Peter Fletcher on 29th May

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Just two reports, of singles at Low Angerton on 3rd (IRD) and in the Morpeth area on 14th (ADMc).

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

The only multiple report was of two at Gosforth Park NR during the month (NHSN) with birds present all month at Rothbury (TRD/JD) and at Arcot Pond until 15th (STH). Singles were also reported from Barns and Valley Parks (Cramlington), Capheaton Lake, Comb (near Falstone), Cupola Bridge, Dipton Wood, Harthope Valley, Letah Wood Hexham, Leazes Park, Riding Mill, Rising Sun CP, Rothley Lakes, Slaley, Throckley, Thrum Mill, Twizell (near Berwick), Woolsington and Wylam.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

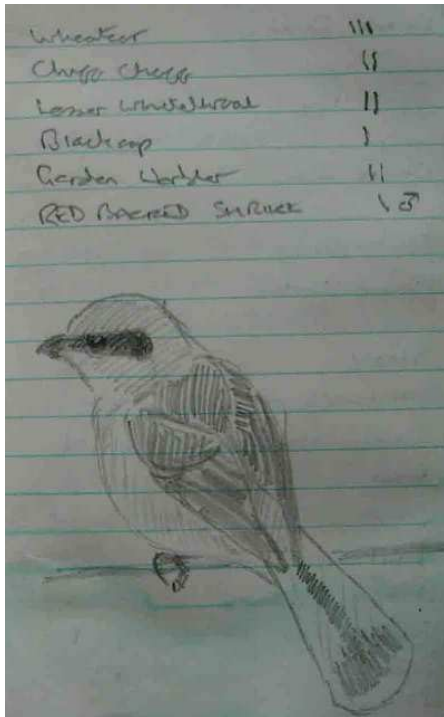
Breeding was confirmed at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) with an adult and three juveniles on 12th and two adults with three juveniles on 28th (TB). Two pairs were at Gosforth Park NR during the month and one to three at Holywell Dene where the first juvenile was being fed in an Old Hartley garden on 31st (RJP). Three were found in Jesmond Dene on 27th (MJCo) with two at Allen Banks, Leazes Park, Bluebell Woods (Morpeth), in a Walbottle garden and Wallington Hall. Singles were at 18 widespread locations

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*

A possible was reported at Gosforth Park NR on 11th (*per* NHSN).

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

Males were found at several locations with one moving between High and Low Hauxley on 12th being seen by many. One was found at Newbiggin Moor on 18th remaining until 19th (AT/ADM/GB/LAR) and one - possibly two - on Holy Island on 19th which remained till 27th (RA/SR/AH *et al.*). A female was at Newton Links House on 20th (TM).



Red-backed Shrikes in May. Above: a male at Low Hauxley on 11th by Jonathon Farooqi and left: from Mike Carr's note book from Straight Lonnen (Holy Island) on 22nd

Magpie *Pica pica*

A single report of seven in Jesmond Dene on 14th (MJCo).

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Peak counts of four from Capheaton and Netherwitton both on 5th (DM/ALT/HD/JR), three at Plankey Mill on 9th (MSH) with two at Scotland Gate throughout the month, Dipton Wood, Harwood Forest, Thrum Mill (Rothbury) and Spindleston. Singles were at 13 further widespread localities.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

An evening gathering of 180 at Big Waters on 2nd (GB) was the largest with survey counts of 45 at Wooler Haugh on 6th and 26 at Cockle Park Farm on 5th (JR). One to two birds were at Jesmond Dene and South Gosforth.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Another dusk gathering of 350 over woods at QEII CP on 19th (CB) and survey counts of 26 at Wooler Haugh on 6th and 15 at Cockle Park Farm on 5th (JR). Three to six were at Simonside House, Nedderton and Chapel Lands (Alnwick) where they had learned to unhook feeders for easier access on the ground.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

The largest count of 34 from Swallow Pond on 4th where one attacked a fox (JPD), with six at Jesmond Dene, five at Wooler Haugh and two at Cockle Park Farm.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

Two were at Hemscott Hill on 1st (ADM/GB) with one there on 4th and at nearby Cresswell Pond on 5th visiting East Chevington on 9th (STH/MHp/TRD/JD).

Raven *Corvus corax*

Five soared high and distant at Haughton Strother GP on 28th (MR), four at Lough Shore on 20th (IFo), two on Cheviot on 5th (GB/KMP) and at Shillmoor on 24th (JMA) with singles at Acton Burn, Usway Burn, Langleeford and Lamberton Holdings.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

A BBS survey recorded 34 at Kyloe Woods on 31st suggesting a good recovery from the last two seasons (TBr). Elsewhere many were at Dipton Wood on 5th and 9th (DM/CB) and Allen Banks on 13th (STH/JPA), five at Slaley Forest and one to two at Barns Park, Valley Park, and Crow Hall Lane (Cramlington), Havannah NR, Haughton Strother GP, Jesmond Dene, Plessey Woods and Stamfordham.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Survey work recorded 16 at Wooler Haugh on 6th, ten at Cockle Park Farm on 5th, nine at Humford Mill, five at Free Wood (both Bedlington) on 1st (JR). Six breeding pairs were at Haughton Strother GP on 6th (MR) but torrential rain at Kirkley Hall on 10th-11th led to the loss of two broods totalling 20 young (IK). A pair at Nedderton Park (Stannington) had nine young on 16th (RWM/MIM) whilst a pair at Dinnington were visiting a nest box 80 times per hour on 25th with four at Jesmond Dene on 20th and two at South Gosforth on 3rd.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Four breeding pairs were at Haughton Strother on 6th whilst the torrential rain at Kirkley Hall on 10th-11th put paid to two broods near fledging with a loss of 11 young. Six were at Humford Mill Bedlington, five at Jesmond Dene and one to three at four further localities.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

A Kyloe Woods BBS recorded 18 on 31st (TBr) and a pair fledged two young in the observer's garden at Cramlington on 20th (LJM) with one to three in gardens at Old Hartley and Walbottle during the month. A family party of 3+ was at Sweethope on 27th with one to two at Jesmond Dene and South Gosforth.

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

A pair fed 3+ chicks in the nest at Prestwick Carr on 26th which had fledged by 28th (PCF) and two were north of Benridge Moor on 7th with one visiting a nest hole there on 20th (ADMc). A single sang at Abshiels on 7th (TF/JFa).

A Willow Tit at the nest at Prestwick Carr
26th May by Peter Fletcher

**Marsh Tit** *Poecile palustris*

Two at Benridge Hagg on 5th with one at Linton on the same date and near Beacon Hill on 20th (ADMc/TB).

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

BBS surveying recorded 35 at Belford Moor and 32 at Chatton Moor on 9th (MJC), with 15 singing males at Sweethope on 23rd, nine at St Mary's on 10th and five at Holywell on the same date (ASJ). Two to four were at Cockle Park Farm, Dissington - Darras Hall, Longhorsley Moor and Simonside.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Eighty were around a nest colony at Fourstones on 3rd (ASJ) with 50+ at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 1st & 5th (MR/DM/ALT/HD) and 50 at Big Waters on 8th (GB). Forty+ moved N along the coast at St Mary's Island on 12th (PRM) with 20+ there on 21st (MSH), 20 at Holywell Pond on 6th (CB), 19 in the Hauxley area on 11th (IF) and around 15 at Holy Island Lough on 7th (MJC).

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Large gatherings of 200+ at East Chevington on 16th (JPD), 150+ at Killingworth Lake and West Stobswood Pool on 19th (GB/MSH), 120+ moving N at St Mary's Island on 12th (PRM) and 100+ at Swallow Pond on 3rd and Holywell Pond on 4th (JPD/ASJ). Movements recorded were 420/h N on the morning of 9th at Cheswick, ca.30/h N at Seahouses on 2nd, 40/h W over the Snook (Holy Island) on 6th with northerly movement noted on 12th at Bamburgh and Newton Point. Ten to 70 were at many of the above locations plus Big Waters, Low Newton Flash, Lynemouth, Plessey Woods, West Chevington and West Hartford with one to six at eleven further localities.



A Swallow eats hard-boiled egg-shell at Seahouses
by Chris Barlow on 27th May

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

A peak count of 70 at Lynemouth on 13th (MN), with 42 at Holywell Pond on 4th (ASJ), 40+ at Swallow Pond on 3rd (JPD) and at Plessey Woods CP, West Stobswood Pool and Maiden's Hall Lake all on 19th (PRM/MSH). West Hartford had 20+ on 20th with 15 at Holywell Pond daily during the month and one to 15 at nine further widespread localities.

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica*

The first multiple sighting for the county was of two over Lynemouth Sewage Farm on morning of 12th although the finder (IDR?) did not submit a record (TRD/JD/JPD/IF). Another sighting was at Plessey Woods CP on 19th for five minutes at 15.30 before it headed off N with Swallow and Martins (PRM).

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

The largest 'tribe' was 15 at Branton GP on 6th (RWM/MIM). Four pairs were at Rising Sun CP (Wallsend) on 5th and a flock of six at Jesmond Dene on 14th (MJC).

Family parties were reported from Exhibition Park, Gosforth (5 birds) and Valley Park (Cramlington) and one to four birds from a further ten localities.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

The first of the year were two at Allen Banks on 6th (ADM), increasing to four singing males on 9th-12th (MSH/IRD). Four singing birds were also at West Dipton Burn on 26th (AJH) and two at Sidwood (Tarset Burn) on 29th (IF). Singles were at Low Carrieth (Hesleyside) and Holy Island on 12th.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

On Holy Island, 12 were noted on 6th and 11th, ten on 13th, seven to eight from 20th-25th and five on 30th. A total of 43 were heard over a seven mile stretch between Beacon Hill-Garleigh (Longhorsley) on 20th (ASJ). Ten to 13 were reported from Chatton Moor, Kyloe Woods and Wooler Haugh and five to six from Attlee Park (Bedlington), Dipton Wood, Free Wood (Bedlington) and Prior's Park (Tynemouth). One to four were reported from a further 27 localities.



Two similar *Phylloscopus* photographed by Chris Knox
left: a Chiffchaff and right: a Willow Warbler, both at Spindleston

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Coastal passage was particularly evident on 11th when 51 were at Holy Island, 15 at Prior's Park (Tynemouth) and four at St Mary's Island (MJC/CB/MSH). 12-14 were at Holy Island on 7th, 12th and 19th, eight + at St Mary's Island on 1st and four to eight at Bamburgh, Budle Point, Holy Island and Tynemouth on a further six dates during the month. In inland breeding areas 49 were heard singing over seven miles from Beacon Hill-Garleigh (Longhorsley) on 20th (ASJ), 33 were at Swallow Pond on 4th (JPD), 28 were singing at Wingates on 20th (ASJ), 22 at Chatton Moor on 9th (MJC) and 20 at Prestwick Carr on 10th (PRM). 11-13 were also noted at Holywell, Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) and Wooler Haugh and one to six at a further 21 localities.

Birds showing characteristics of the **Northern race** *P.t. acredula* were eight at Holy Island on 11th and two on 19th (MJC) and singles at Tynemouth on 10th (CB) and 17th (CGK).

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Some passage was noted at Holy Island during the first week with a peak of ten on 6th reducing to five on the following day (MJC); five were again present here from 11th-13th and a single on 19th. The highest counts were 14 at Holywell Dene on 8th (ASJ) and 14 singing at Plessey Woods CP on 19th (PRM). Eight singing birds were heard at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 22nd (DM), seven were at Wooler Haugh on 6th and six between Dissington-Medburn on 24th and at Westwood Grange (Cramlington) on 22nd. Four to five were reported from Arcot Pond, Bamburgh, Chatton Moor, Dipton Wood, Jesmond Dene, Linhope, Rising Sun CP, Silverlink Park LNR (North Shields) and Tynemouth and one to three from a further 22 mainly inland localities.



A male Blackcap in Tynemouth by Colin Bradshaw

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

On Holy Island there were four to six on 11th-12th rising to seven on 19th (MJC/ASJ). In inland breeding areas six birds were on territory at Linden Hall by the end of the month (NFO) and six were at Wingates on 20th (ASJ). At Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) five on 13th included a bird collecting nest material; the other four were singing males. Four were also singing at Oakpool (Allendale) on 28th and at Smalesmouth Farm (Kielder) on 22nd. Three were at Chatton Moor on 9th and Wooler Haugh on 6th and one to two at a further 28 widespread localities.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

There was some notable passage at Holy Island during the month with two to two+ on 7th-8th, two on 13th, and a peak of five on 19th (CDB); singles were noted on a further five dates. Three were at St Mary's Island on 1st (MSH), two were at Beal Sluice on 17th, Rising Sun CP (Wallsend) on 5th and Spindleston on 27th and singles at Arcot Pond, Beaconhill (Cramlington), East Chevington, East Thurston, Hauxley NR, Holywell Pond, Lynemouth, Newbiggin, Newton Point, West Hartford and West Ord.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Peak counts at favoured localities during the month were 17 at Holywell on 16th (ASJ), 14 at Swallow Pond on 8th (JPD), 14 at Prestwick Carr on 26th (PCF), 12 at St Mary's Island on 15th (JPD) and 12 at West Hartford on 9th (PJA). At Cramlington eight were singing in the Whitelea-Beacon Lane area on 24th (DM) and seven over 1km at Westwood Grange on 22nd (LJM). Six were in Upper Coquetdale on 23rd and five from Dissington-Medburn on 24th. On the coast passage migrants were noted at Holy Island on many dates with peaks of seven to eight from 11th-13th and four to five from 18th-19th (MJC/ADM); six were also at Prior's Park (Tynemouth) on 11th and four + at Bamburgh on 20th. Four were noted at Cambois on 19th and 26th, three at Belsay, Hauxley, Warkworth Lane and Whittle Dene Reservoirs and one to two at a further 15 localities.



A Whitethroat at Prestwick Carr
on 7th May by Peter Fletcher

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Six were singing at Arcot Pond and adjacent fields on 6th (STH) and three near Ovington on 1st (SAS). Two were noted at Chatton Moor on 9th, Dam Dykes Farm (Cramlington) on 12th, Prestwick Carr on 5th and West Hartford on 9th-10th. Singles were also reported from Beehive Flash (Earsdon), East Chevington, Gosforth Park NR, Hartley caravan site, Holywell Pond, Longhirst, Newbiggin ash lagoons, Shiremoor, Stamfordham and Tynemouth Priory.

Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*

Singles were found at Holy Island Straight Lough on 8th (AJR) and Holy Island Snook on 31st (PRM).

Acrocephalus sp.

An unidentified *Acrocephalus* warbler was singing at Big Waters from 23.45-24.00h on 14th. It was not a Sedge Warbler and probably not a Reed Warbler (IF).

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Late arrival was noted at several sites with a moderate influx apparent from 4th-7th. Whittle Dene Reservoirs held 18 by 12th (SR) with ten singing males noted here on 9th (MR). Ten were singing from fields in the Tranwell area on 28th (ASJ) and ten at Prestwick Carr on 25th included nine singing males (PRM). Seven were singing at Backworth on 15th (CGK) and Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) on 19th (ALT) and five to six + were reported from East Chevington and St Mary's Island. Up to six were also at Holy Island Lough during the month and five at Bamburgh on 20th. Two to four were reported from Arcot Pond, Beal Sluice, Budle Point-Stag Rocks, Caistron, Gosforth Park NR, Grindon Lough, Hauxley, Lamberton Holdings and Laverock Hall Farm (Blyth) and singles from a further eight localities.

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*

One was seen and heard at East Chevington on 30th (MN).

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Singing males were reported from 12 localities during the month. The two principal sites were Gosforth Park NR with up to 8+ noted during the month (NHSN) and East Chevington, where the first bird was heard on 5th and the highest count was five on 30th (IF). Elsewhere two were reported from Backworth (displaying from 20th), Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, Killingworth Lake and St Mary's Island (nest building on 21st) and singles from Hauxley, Holy Island Lough, Newton Pool and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Five were at Scotch Gill (Morpeth) on 14th (TB), four+ at Plankey Mill (Allen Banks) on 9th (MSH), four at Wallington Hall on 5th (PRM/EAW) and three at Low Carrith on 12th and at Plessey Woods CP on 19th. A pair with an immature was at Hartburn, while pairs were feeding young in the nest at Armstrong Park and Jesmond Dene. One to two were also reported from Arcot Pond, Comb (Falstone), Cupola Bridge, Free Wood (Bedlington), Greenhaugh, Holywell Dene, Morpeth, Rothbury, Sidwood (Tasset Burn) and Spindleston.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Three were at Chatton Moor on 9th and at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 26th. A pair fed young in the nest at Jesmond Dene (DHWB) and on 1st a bird visited a nest site at Beacon Lane (Cramlington). Singles were noted at a further seven localities.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

25 in Kyloe Woods on 31st was the highest count (TBr) followed by 13 at Wooler Haugh on 6th (JR). In the Bedlington area six were noted at Free Wood, five at Humford Mill and four at Attlee Park, all on 1st (JR). Five were in Holywell Dene on 29th, four in Jesmond Dene on 20th and three at Cackle Park on 5th, while a single in a Walbottle garden on 13th was the observer's only sighting here for the month.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

A flock of 60+ at St Mary's Island on 24th included many fledged juveniles (MSH) although all 28 birds at Prior's Park (Tynemouth) on 7th were adults (CB). Many family parties were reported at Southfield Green (Cramlington) from 13th (DM), 12 juveniles were among a flock of 18 in a Walbottle garden on 13th and about ten at Newbiggin comprised several family parties. One to three were also noted at Cackle Park, Jesmond Dene and South Gosforth.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Nest sites with fledged or large young were reported at Allen Banks, near Dalton (Hexhamshire), Jesmond Dene (Waterfall), Low Carrith, Middleton (Harthope Valley) and Thrum Mill. Further evidence of breeding came from Holywell Dene, Rowhope (Upper Coquetdale) and Usway Burn. Four birds were at Wooler Haugh on 6th and singles at Bywell Bridge, Carey Burn and Cattle Grid (both Harthope Valley), Chollerford, Cupola Bridge, Dilston Mill, Humford Mill, Juniper and Ponteland.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

The impressive spring passage continued at Holy Island with six on 4th (IK), three on 11th (MJC) and two on 12th (ASJ/JPD). Another passage bird was at Newbiggin on 12th. In the Harthope Valley six to seven were noted (including five males / two females) at Hawsen Burn on 5th (STH/MHp), 17th (MSK/NEWT) and 19th, the latter including a female carrying food to a nest (PJA); in the same area singles were noted at Carey Burn, Langleeford and New Burn on 5th and 12th. Elsewhere in upland areas a male was at Makendon (Upper Coquetdale) on 6th and a female near Errington Hill Head (east of Chollerford) on 1st. More unusual were single males at Backworth on 1st-2nd (CGK) and Beaconhill (Cramlington) on 23rd (STH).

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

By far the largest count was an impressive 39 singing males at Marden Estate (Tynemouth) on 24th (ASJ). Elsewhere 16 were reported from Wooler Haugh on 6th, 14 from Cockle Park Farm on 5th and in the Bedlington area nine to 12 were noted at each of Attlee Park, Free Wood and Humford Mill on 1st (JR). Two to five were also at Jesmond Dene, South Gosforth and Walbottle.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Some sizeable flocks were still present during the first week of the month; 400 were found at Letah Wood (Hexham) on 4th (RMH) followed by 350 at nearby Whitley Chapel on 5th (MJC) and 100+ at Middleton Hall (Harthope Valley) also on 5th (STH/MHp). Elsewhere 40 were at Sweethope Lough on 1st, 25 at Holy Island on 4th, 16 at Causey Park on 1st, two at Holy Island on 6th and singles at Backworth on 1st and Scaffold Hill Farm (Wallsend) on 8th. An adult was watched collecting and carrying food into woodland in the Coanwood area on 27th (PS)!!

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

The only reports were six singing males on the Monkseaton-Holywell Waggonway on 3rd (ASJ), five in Jesmond Dene on 27th (MJCo), four at Cockle Park on 5th and Wooler Haugh on 6th and a single at Holywell Dene on 25th. On Holy Island there was one on 6th and three on 11th (MJC).



Above left: Song Thrush disposing of a snail on Holy Island by Chris Barlow on 19th May and right: an alert Mistle Thrush at Prestwick Carr by Peter Fletcher on 12th May

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

20+ were near Whitley Chapel on 5th (MJC) and the final bird was at Holy Island (Snook) on 13th (ADM).

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

A total of 12+ were noted in the lower reaches of the Harthope Valley on 19th (PJA). Four were in Jesmond Dene on 27th and three at Cockle Park on 5th and Harwood Forest on 20th. One to two were also reported from Attlee Park (Bedlington), Gosforth, Newbiggin (including fledged juveniles), Prestwick Carr and Wooler Haugh.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

The first of the year were three at Allen Banks on 9th (ASJ). There was a notable influx of at least 24 at Holy Island on 30th, declining to only five by the following day (PRM); up to four were noted here on 11th, seven on 19th and singles on 13th, 20th and 25th (MJC/ADM). Pairs were back in breeding areas in a Stamfordham garden by 20th and at Eshott on 27th and one to two were also reported from Beacon Hill (Longhorsley), Belsay Hall, Bywell Bridge, Cowden, Halton-Lea-Gate, Haughton Strother, Holystone, Mitford, Newbiggin (migrant on 12th), Rothbury, Spylaw (Simonsides), St Mary's Island, Sweethope, Thorngrafton and West Dipton Burn.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Light passage at Holy Island produced 13 on 6th, three on 7th and two on 11th (MJC/ADM). The highest counts of the month were 25 at Kyle Woods on 31st (TBr) and 15 at Wooler Haugh on 6th (JR). In the Bedlington area nine were at Humford Mill, seven at Attlee Park and six at Free Wood, all on 1st (JR). Four to five were noted at Bamburgh, Cockle Park Farm, Jesmond Dene and a Walbottle garden and a pair bred successfully in a Netherton Park garden; two were also at Harwood Forest on 20th.

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*

Perhaps three different males were reported during the month, a reasonable spring influx by recent standards. The first was at Football Hole (Low Newton) from 11th-12th (AT/SPP), heard singing on the latter date. On Holy Island a singing male was found at the Lough on 20th (ADM), the same observer finding another at the Snook on 27th which was considered likely to be a different bird, based on study of photographs of the former.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochrurus*

One at Seahouses on 20th was the only record (RA).

Redstart *Phoenicurus hoenicurus*

Coastal passage was noted at Holy Island from 8th-13th with a peak of 16 on 11th (MJC) and again from 19th-20th when six declined to two. Elsewhere on the coast one to two were reported from Bamburgh, East Chevington, Fenham-le-Moor, St Mary's Island and Tynemouth from 10th-19th. Inland breeding areas were well represented with 18 males found in the Allendale area during the month (SAS), 12+ singing males in the Belsay area on 8th (MJC) and seven males in the Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) area on 23rd (ASJ). Five were at Wingates on 20th and five males at Alwinton on 23rd, four singing males were found at Letah Wood (Hexham) on 7th and two breeding pairs were noted at Cowden, Fallowlees and Haughton Strother (Humshaugh). Up to three singing males were at Allenbanks, Coanwood and Thrunton Wood and one to two birds in a further 18 potential breeding areas.

Above: a Redstart at Prestwick Carr on 30th May by Peter Fletcher and below: a Whinchat in the Upper Coquet by Tim Dean on 6th May

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Well reported from upland breeding areas with 23 (16 singing males / seven females) found on 3km of hillside in Upper Coquetdale on 23rd (ASJ). Eight + were noted in the Hawsen Burn area (Harthope Valley) on 19th (PJA), five singing males were at Linhope Burn (Upper Breamish) on 12th (IFo), four singing males at Halton-Lea-Gate on 30th (SW) and a pair at Langleeford (Harthope Valley) on 12th. One to two were also noted at Catton, Clennel, Fulhope, Kidland and Spartylea. Coastal passage was noted at Holy Island with one to three from 11th-13th; singles were also reported from Tynemouth Haven on 11th, Cresswell Pond and St Mary's Island on 12th and Fenham-le-Moor on 17th. Inland passage produced singles at West Hartford on 11th, Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 12th and Haughton Strother on 17th.

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

In coastal areas up to three pairs were at East Chevington throughout the month and a pair accompanied three juveniles here on 29th (TD/TRD/JD). A family party of five was at Budle Bay on 26th (CGK) and a male and two fledged young were at Hauxley (Coastguards) on 11th (IF). One to three were also noted at Bamburgh, Cresswell Pond, Embleton Burn, Druridge Pools, Newton Pool and Warkworth Gut. Inland three pairs were at Bewick Moor on 25th (MJC), a pair and two juveniles at Halton-Lea-Gate, two at Hawsen Burn (Harthope Valley) on 19th and Westburnhope (Hexhamshire) on 30th and a male at Winnows Hill (Slaley) on 20th. Some observers again expressed concerns at the low inland population.

A Stonechat at East Chevington
on 9th May by Tim Dean



Wheatear *Oenanthe Oenanthe*

Several distinct influxes occurred on Holy Island during the month, beginning with 21 on 6th, 27 on 7th and nine on 8th; 14-20 were present from 11th-13th; one on 17th increased to 32 by 18th with 24 still present on 20th before a sharp decline, leaving only one to two from 24th-27th. The final record was a single on 31st (MJC/ADM *et al.*). Elsewhere on the coast 14 were at Football Hole (Newton), 12 at Snab Point and ten at Newbiggin on 12th (JPD/GB), ten at Cresswell Pond on 14th (TB) and five to six at Boulmer, East Chevington, Fenham-le-Moor, Hauxley, Howick, Newbiggin GC and Tynemouth between 8th-19th and one to four at Beal, Blyth Harbour, the Long Nanny, St Mary's Island, Warkworth Gut and Woodhorn Flashes.

In inland breeding areas the highest count was of 18 males in Upper Coquetdale on 23rd (ASJ). Seven were noted at Sinderhope on 12th (SAS) and six at Cook's House (Hexhamshire) on 9th (RMH) and at Crag Lough on 26th (BMo). Two pairs were at Kidland on 5th and one to three at a further 17 inland localities.

Birds specifically identified as showing characteristics of the **Greenland race** *O.o.leucorhoa* were noted on many dates at Holy Island, including ten near the Priory on 5th (IK), ten + on the Straight Lonnen on 7th (MJC) and finally two near the Lough on 25th (IK). Eight were at Berwick Little Beach on 14th and singles at Cheswick on 9th and Spittal Cliffs (Berwick) on 17th (Mhu).

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Light coastal passage at Holy Island produced a peak of seven on 11th (MJC) with two to three here on 12th-13th and one to two from 19th-20th. Other passage birds were at Silverlink CP (North Shields) on 1st and Prior's Park (Tynemouth) on 7th. In woodland breeding areas the peak count from Allen Banks was nine singing males on 9th (JPD). Three pairs were using nest boxes at Letah Wood (Hexham-RMH), up to five males were at Nunnykirk (AJS), two males and a female at Juniper and pairs at Dipton Wood and Wallington. Singles were also reported from an Allendale garden, a Corbridge garden, Cupola Bridge, Lintley (South Tyne), Slaley Hall and Todburn (Slaley).

Duncock *Prunella modularis*

Family parties were noted in gardens at Northburn (Cramlington) and Walbottle on 13th (LJM/KR/LR). Seven were found in Cockle Park Farm on 5th (JR) and two to three at Humford Mill (Bedlington), Jesmond Dene, Old Hartley, South Gosforth and Wooler Haugh.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Breeding was successful at a Rothbury garden, the first breeding since the observers moved there in 2004 (JD). 39 were found at Cockle Park Farm during a BBS survey on 5th (JR). Nine were at Wooler Haugh on 6th (JR), four at a Walbottle garden on 13th (KR/LR) and two at Jesmond Dene on 27th (MJCo).

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Breeding was observed at Cresswell Pond (one entering nest hole – CDH), Linden Hall (NFO), Longhorsley (AB/LB) and a Walbottle garden (three juveniles – KR/LR). 12 were at Haughton Strother GP on 28th (MR), ten at Hauxley on 7th (CDB) and Waren Mill Caravan Park near Bamburgh on 26th (CGK), seven at Cresswell Pond on 20th (CDH), six at a Walbottle garden on 20th (KR/LR), three at Whittle Dene between 9th-12th (MR/SR) and West Hartford on 15th (TRD). One to two were also noted at Beal, Grindon Lough, Plessey Woods CP, Prestwick Carr, a Stamfordham garden and Wark.



A Tree Sparrow at the Big Waters colony
by Adriana Buskin on 7th May

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

Observed at favoured Whittle Dene all month with a peak of ten there on 8th (SR) and a female collecting nesting material near hide on 13th (STH/PJA). Elsewhere, two pairs were at New Water Haugh on 29th (TBr), three at Haughton Strother GP on 27th (MR), two at Aydon (Corbridge) on 12th (PJA), White Adder Point (Berwick) on 27th (TBr) and Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) on 27th (ALT). Singles were also found at Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Grindon Lough, Holy Island Rocket Field Pools, Howlett Hall (Bolam), Low Newton Flash, St. Mary's Island, Wark and West Ord.

Blue-headed Wagtail *m.f. flava*

One was observed at Holy Island Rocket Field Pools on 28th (ASJ/JPD/MPF).

Grey-headed Wagtail *m.f.thunbergi*

One was discovered at Holy Island Rocket Field Pools on 28th (ASJ/JPD/MPF). Other observers thought it possibly an intergrade (TRD/JD).

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Confirmed breeding occurred at Allenbanks (SW), Coldgate Mill (AB/LB) and Harthope Valley-Carey Burn, Cattle Grid (STH/MHp), Middleton - (GB/KMP/LAR). Seven were at Allen Banks on 9th (JPD/ASJ). Two pairs were at Atlee Park (Bedlington) on 1st (JR) and pairs at Langleeford (Harthope Valley) on 2nd (TRD/JD), Wooler Haugh on 6th (JR), Dye House (Juniper) on 7th (RMH), Quickenincote on 12th (JR), Thrum Mill (Rothbury) on 13th (TRD/JD), Nunnykirk on 14th (TRD/JD), Plessey Woods CP on 18th (PCF), Morpeth on 18th (TB), Cupola Bridge on 22nd (TRD/JD) and Twizel near Berwick on 30th (TRD/JD). Singles were also present at Alwinton, Dalton, Greenhaugh, Hawsen Burn (Harthope Valley), Jesmond Dene, Low Carritheth (Hesleyside), Newcastle City Centre, Riding Mill, Shillmoor, Wark and Upper Coquetdale.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

Breeding was observed at Haughton Strother GP (two broods – MR), Holy Island (MJC), Howlett Hall (Bolam – MJC), Whittle Dene (two broods – MR) and Windy Haugh (Upper Coquetdale) (JR). Ten were at Whittle Dene on 8th (SR). Two pairs were at Shillmoor (Upper Coquetdale) on 5th (JR) and four at Hauxley beach on 7th (CDB).

A Pied Wagtail takes a first step
Hauxley NR by Chris Barlow

**White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba alba*

Four were at Whittle Dene on 8th (SR) with singles also there on 5th (MR), 9th-12th (MR) and 17th (SR). Holy Island held two on 13th (ADM) and four on 19th (SR/AH). Singles visited Cresswell Pond on 2nd (TB), 5th (STH/MHp) and 6th (GB).

Elsewhere, singles were at Haughton Strother GP on 2nd (MR), Killingworth Lake on 5th (BMo), Lyne Burn (Lynemouth) on 6th (GB), Hauxley Beach on 7th (CDB) and Newton Pool on 25th (AJH) and 18th (MJL).

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Spring passage on Holy Island was very evident with singles on 6th (MJC/ADM), ten there on the 11th (MJL), two on 12th (ASJ), one on 13th (ADM) and on 18th (MJL) and three on 19th (MJL). A migrant also flew north at Lynemouth on 12th (GB). Singles were also at Haughton Strother GP, Holystone, Sweethope Lough and Thrunton Woods. At breeding grounds five were at Old Park Wood (Hartburn) on 6th (JD/TRD), Wingates on 23rd (ASJ) and Simonside Hills on 23rd (ASJ). Three were at Swallowship Wood (Hexham) on 1st (AJH), Dipton Wood on 5th (DM/ALT/HD) and 9th (CDB), Steel Hall on 14th (RMH) and Alwinton on 23rd (ASJ). Two were at Langleeford Farm and Hope (Harthope Valley) on 2nd (TRD/JD) and on 12th (BCFT), at Catcleugh on 8th (CW), Slaley Forest on 9th (ASJ) and 12th (RMH), Comb near Falstone on 20th (JR), Low Carritheth (Hesleyside) on 20th (JR), Addycombe Woods (Rothbury) on 24th (JD) and Alwinton on 25th (TD).



Our two pipits - top: a Tree Pipit by Chris Barlow at Dipton on 9th
and below: a Meadow Pipit at East Chevington by Tim Dean on
16th May

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Breeding was observed at Shillmoor (Upper Coquetdale) on 19th (JR), West Hartford and Cambois railway line on 26th (STH/PJA). 28 were found at Belford Moor during a BBS visit on 9th (MJC) and 16 at Longhorsley Moor on 7th (AB/LB).

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Three were at Dunstanburgh Castle on 21st (TMi), two at Tynemouth on 17th (CGK) and singles at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 5th (DM/ALT/HD), Low Newton between 11th-21st (TRD/JD) and Lindisfarne Castle on 24th (TMi).

**Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs*

28 were found at Wooler Haugh on 6th during a WBBS (JR), 14 at Cockle Park Farm during a BBS visit on 5th (JR), seven at Jesmond Dene on 14th (MJCo), six at Free Wood (Bedlington) on 1st (JR) and four at Attlee Park (Bedlington) on 1st (JR).

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

A late migrant was noted singing at the Vicar's garden, Holy Island Village on 11th (MJC).

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

13 visited a Walbottle garden on 6th (KR/LR). One to five were at a further five widespread localities.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Ca.60 were still flocking on stubble fields at Kirkharle near Capheaton on 15th (RMH), 20 at Backworth on 20th (CGK), ten at Cockle Park Farm on 5th (JR), eight at New Water Haugh on 16th (MHu), seven at a Walbottle garden on 27th (KR/LR) and six at Free Wood (Bedlington) on 1st (JR), Chollerford on 6th (PRM). One to five were at a further nine widespread localities.



A Goldfinch with nest lining at Druridge Pools
11th May by Chris Barlow

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

15+ were at Grindon Lough on 28th (PRM), five migrants flew north at Bamburgh on 7th (BRS), five at Chatton Moor on 9th (MJC), four at an Alnwick garden on 18th (JMA) and a plantation at Alwinton on 25th (TD) and one to three at a further nine widespread localities including gardens at Cramlington and East Ord.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

85 were noted during a BBS visit at Belford Moor on 9th (MJC), 45 at Wark on 3rd (PRM), 22 at Prestwick Carr on 1st (PCF), 20 at Letah Wood (Hexham) on 7th (AJH), 18 at Derwent Reservoir on 9th (IFo), 13 during a BBS Survey at Cockle Park Farm on 5th (JR) and one to ten at a further nine widespread localities.

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*

28 were observed at Belford Moor during a BBS visit on 9th (MJC), eight at Chatton Moor on 9th (MJC) and Sweethope Lough on 28th (PRM), six at Tilhill (Dipton Wood) on 5th (DM/ALT/HD), three at Harthope Valley on 5th (GB) and one to two at Castron, Holystone, Longhorsley Moor and Thrunton Woods. A pair were gathering nest material at Branton GP on 19th (PJA). Coastal passage was indicated by two on Holy Island on 18th (MJC) and one at Tynemouth on 7th (DRW).

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

40 were found at Dipton Wood on 7th (AJR), 25 at Slaley Forest on 25th (RMH), 23 north of Rothbury on 13th (NFO), 20 at Thrunton Woods on 13th (JCD) and Ford Moss (family parties) on 16th (BWG), 12 near Bywell on 6th (SAS) and Sweethope Lough on 28th (PRM). One-eight were at a further nine typical localities. Movement involved ten W at East Chevington on 30th (IF), eight over Fulbeck (Morpeth) on 26th (TD), three E at Bamburgh on 12th (BRS) and two at Gosforth Park on 6th (NHSN).

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Five were at Swallowship Wood (Hexham) on 14th (AJH), four at Swallow Pond on 4th (MSH) and Valley Park (Cramlington) on 12th (DM), three at a Rothbury garden all month (TRD/JD) and Kyloe Woods on 18th (MHu). One to two were at a further 13 widespread localities including gardens at Fulbeck (Morpeth), Old Hartley, Scotland Gate and Walbottle.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

A very late male passed through Holy Island on 11th (AH).

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

A flock of 13 was at Backworth on 1st (CGK), 12 singing males at Sharperton on 20th (ASJ), ten at Beacon Hill-Longhorsley area on 20th (ASJ), nine at Holywell on 3rd (ASJ), seven at Whitlea-Beacon Lane area (Cramlington) on 24th (DM) and four at Branton GP on 6th (RWM/MIM). Two to three were also at Big Waters, Cockle Park Farm, Longhorsley Moor and Whittle Dene.

Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana*

A male was watched for 15 minutes by Holy Island Lough on 20th (DRW/MGK).

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

A pair were breeding at Midgeholme on 30th (SW). 15 singing males were at Wingates on 20th (ASJ), 12 at St. Mary's Wetland area on 3rd (ASJ), nine at Holy Island on 30th (PRM), at least three pairs at Gosforth Park NR all month (NHSN), seven at Arcot Pond on 20th (DM), five at Whittle Dene on 29th (MR) and two pairs at Longhorsley Moor on 7th (AB/LB). One to three were at a further nine widespread localities.

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

Two were found at Hauxley on 4th (PCF) with another sighting of a single at East Chevington on 6th (TB).

Muscovy Duck *Cairina moschata*

The pair remained at Elswick Wharf until at least 25th (DM).

Birds of Unknown Origin**Ring-necked Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri*

The long-staying individual at Prestwick was again seen in the village from 14th to 18th (PCF).



The Prestwick Parakeet
by Peter Fletcher on 4th May

WEATHER

A cool and unsettled first three weeks, with winds mostly from the north or east. Then, a very warm and settled last 10 days, with some high temperatures for the time of year.

1st to 11th: An unsettled start to the month with persistent and heavy rain at times. The 3rd was particularly cool across many eastern areas, with maxima around 8°C, and it was as cool again on 5th and 6th. The unsettled period continued with small low-pressure systems running north-eastwards giving occasionally heavy rain. Temperatures rose to around normal.

12th to 14th: A brief ridge of high pressure gave a more settled spell on 12th. There were strong westerly winds on 13th and 14th across northern parts in particular.

15th to 16th: It was cool on 15th in a showery north-westerly air-stream. Some of these showers fell as wet snow across parts of the north-east, and some were thundery. There was a slight air frost in places early on 16th.

17th to 20th: Unsettled and cool as a complex area of low pressure moved across England bringing east or north-easterly winds and spells of rain or showers. This was replaced by a weak ridge of high pressure on 20th, heralding a change of weather type for the rest of the month.

21st to 30th: This period saw much warmer, more settled weather. Humid air also brought some mist in from the sea at times to south-western and eastern areas, with some fog being slow to clear.

31st: The warm spell faded with cloud and rain moving from the west. A rather humid air mass still allowed temperatures to reach 20°C in places across the south, but it turned cool.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

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Bamburgh Ringing Station, Berwick Wildlife Group, Natural History Society of Northumbria, Northern Experience Wildlife Tours, NTBC Field Trip.

Apologies for any accidental omissions.

BULLETIN COMPILATION AND PRODUCTION

This bulletin was compiled by Graeme Bowman (Mute Swan to Ruddy Duck), Lindsay McDougall (Red Grouse to Black-necked Grebe), Trevor Blake (Honey Buzzard to Crane), Steve Holliday (Oystercatcher to Dunlin) Ian Forsyth (Snipe to Skua), Eddie Crabtree (Ivory Gull to Puffin), Tim Dean (Escapes, Hybrids and Unknown Origin, List of Contributors, Highlights), Peter Fletcher (Feral Pigeon to Red-rumped Swallow), Mike Richardson (Cetti's Warbler to Pied Flycatcher), Dee McKeown (Dunnock to Corn Bunting), Dan Turner (WeBS Coastal Counts) and Steve Holliday (WeBS Inland Counts). Thanks again to Ann McKeown for typing the section Dunnock to Corn Bunting. Thanks to David Sanders of NNBC for providing data. Proof reading was by Mike Smith.

Edited by Steve Barrett NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.com

Postal distribution Paul Stewart.

RECORD SUBMISSION

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 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 NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.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 cost of printing and stamps. Ask for an e-mailed bulletin from:

jo.bentley@waitrose.com

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

For membership enquiries please contact jo.bentley@waitrose.com

NTBC WEB SITE

The Club website is an excellent resource for all interested in birds in the north east. There are numerous interesting sections, including a photograph gallery, site information and trip reports together with extensive reference information for birding in our area. The site is at www.ntbc.org.uk

If you have any ideas or things you would like to see or hear about on the site please let Chris know on 0751 582 5024 or e-mail christopher.knox@o2.co.uk

NTBC SIGHTINGS PAGE

The club sightings web page gives listings of birds seen locally. Adding a sighting is simple. A short e-mail is all that is needed. If anyone would like to be added as a contributor please contact Alan Tilmouth at ntbcorg@gmail.com. The sightings page can be found at <http://ntbcsightings.posterous.com>

COASTAL WeBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

144

MAY 2012		MHu	M. Hutcheson	AC	A. Craggs	JAR	J. Roper	NA	N. Adams											
		TB	T. Brewis	RP	R. Poyer	TAC	T. A. Cadwallender	DMT	D. M. Turner											
				MLC	M. L. Cadwallender	MGA	M. G. Anderson	PF	P. Fletcher											
Site	TOTAL	Berwick North Shore (including Little Beach)	Berwick Little Beach	Tweed Estuary	Tweed: A1 By-Pass to Horncliffe	Spital - Cocklawburn	Lindisfarne NWR (including Budle Bay)	(Budle Bay)	Budle Pt - Seahouses	Seahouses - Beadnell	Howick - Boulmer	Aln Estuary	Alnmouth South	Coquet Estuary	Cresswell - Newbiggin	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	MHu	TB	MHu	AC	AC	RP	MLC	JAR	TAC	RP	RP	MGA	NA	DMT	DMT	PF	PF
Date		15	15	21	20	17	20	20	21	17	22	19	23	20	19	20	19	31	20	20
Red-throated Diver	7					2	5													
Cormorant	85	14		12	1		26				3	4		3		6	15	1		
Shag	41	9				5	12		13	1									1	
Grey Heron	39			3	3	2	14	2		3	2	5		2	1			3		1
Mute Swan	254			104	84		12	2				6		45						3
Whooper Swan	2				1		1													
Greylag Goose	2			2																
Canada Goose	8			2																
Dark-bellied Brent Goose	1						1					5								
Light-bellied Brent Goose	3						3													
Shelduck	222			2			151	79	1		18	14		18				5	13	
Wigeon	2						2													
Gadwall	1						1													
Teal	8						8													
Mallard	193	2		38	42	5	39	22		1		28		6		3	3	4	16	6
Tufted Duck	14				2	2	8					2								
Eider	893	20	8	17		118	388	15	46	141	27	8	26	52	12	21	17			
Common Scoter	479					135	300						44							
Goldeneye	1			1																
Red-breasted Merganser	4						4													
Goosander	6				4							2								
Moorhen	7				1							3				3				
Coot	4						1					3								
Oystercatcher	387	42	4	8	10	17	140	60	2	72	3	5	1	5	6	62	11		2	1
Ringed Plover	1,857	14	14			2	1541	18		243	12	45								
Grey Plover	178						177				1									
Lapwing	11						8					3								
Sanderling	20	4	4							16										
Purple Sandpiper	33	1								31					1					
Dunlin	493	6	6				463			11	2	11								
Bar-tailed Godwit	13						11			2										
Whimbrel	17	2	2				5					10								
Curlew	166			8	2		108			5	38	2		2				1		
Redshank	11	1			1		6				1	2								
Common Sandpiper	2				1							1								
Turnstone	93	2					17			66					1	4	3			
Black-headed Gull	449			13	2		360	40		13		44				1		1	14	1
Common Gull	46						46													
Lesser Black-backed Gull	166			4		1	105			2								5	47	2
Herring Gull	3,204	62	3	305	4	54	2229	25		102	59	3				38	158	6	173	11
Great Black-backed Gull	83	4	1	12		6	10	9		7	1					6	23		14	
Kittiwake	574	11		40						509						1	13			
Sandwich Tern	121	6		6		14	43		4	1	14		4	3	16	6	4			
Roseate Tern	2														2					
Common Tern	27						20								1		4	2		
Arctic Tern	29						28								1					
Little Tern	10						8			2										
Kingfisher	0																			
ADDITIONAL SPECIES																				
Bean Goose	1						1													
Muscovy Duck	1																		1	
TOTALS - WILDFOWL	2,276	45	8	181	138	269	977	120	60	146	50	80	70	126	13	33	35	13	30	10
- WADERS	3,281	72	30	16	14	19	2,476	78	2	446	57	79	1	7	8	66	14	1	2	1
- GULLS & TERNS	4,711	83	4	380	6	75	2,849	74	4	636	74	47	4	3	20	52	202	14	248	14

Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

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

Bulletin 2012 No 6

MONTHLY SUMMARY – JUNE

31st July 2012



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Weather

Grey Goose Census 2010-2012

WeBS Coastal

WeBS Inland

The most photographed bird of the
year - the Hadston Marsh Warbler

Photographed in song

by Tim Dean June 14th



CLASSIFIED LIST HIGHLIGHTS

Storm-petrel	One on a pelagic south of the Farne Islands on 10th.
Sooty Shearwater	An unseasonal single off Hauxley on 4th
Hobby	Several coastal migrants this month
Corncrake	Single calling at Bellasis Bridge
Avocet	Pair still present at Cresswell Pond
Curlew Sandpiper	Singles on Holy Island and Monk's House Pool
Little Gull	The regular build up gathered pace late in the month at Cresswell Pond
Red-backed Shrike	Male on Holy Island and female at East Chevington
Marsh Warbler	Ringed male singing from 5th to 14th in Hadston/Hauxley area
Rustic Bunting	A glorious male in full plumage on Inner Farne on 1st

COMMITTEE NEWS

AGM and Committee Nominations

The Annual General Meeting of Northumberland & Tyneside Bird Club will take place on Thursday 11th October 2012 at Northern Rugby Club, McCracken Park, Great North Road, Gosforth.

Nominations for election to the committee should be made in writing to the club secretary Alan Tilmouth (by post: 12 Stowe Gardens, Pegswood, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 6TH or by email: ntbcorg@gmail.com)

Nominations should be proposed and seconded by club members and submitted no later than 21 days prior to the AGM (20th September 2012).

Paul Stewart has resigned from the NTBC Committee due to other personal and work commitments. The committee wish to thank Paul for his sterling work on Indoor Meetings over the last year and wish him well in the future

NTBC Annual Subscription

The revised subscription form is attached. All members should complete the membership details on the form so that we can have a full update this year. I want to make sure we're up to date and on the right side of the tax man and would really appreciate your help.

If you pay **cash or by cheque** please do as usual and the updated form should be sent to the treasurer.

Standing orders – all standing orders need updating **before payment is due please**. This will save a lot of extra work chasing up small amounts to complete membership payments. There are two options

Update your SO at your bank branch or online, or

Complete the form and return it signed to the treasurer

Gift aid regulations are being tightened by HMRC – the middle part of the form will cover this so if you gift aid your subscription please complete, sign, and send to the treasurer.

I

Please drop me an email or leave a message on my mobile (07713554242) to let me know when you've updated your Standing order.

Many thanks, Jo Bentley (Honorary Treasurer) ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

ATLAS - Species Account Authors Wanted

All data for the forthcoming combined County Atlas has been verified and a number of other strands of the project are currently beginning including a review of the mapping options, early printer investigations and cost options.

The committee have discussed and agreed that Tim Dean our county recorder will act as Editor for the new publication. We would hope that by the beginning of 2013 we will be in a position to begin to develop the individual species accounts and wish to begin to draw together a list of those individuals within the club who would like to be involved in authoring these accounts.

we are seeking club members who are interested in authoring about 180 species accounts. We plan a briefing meeting involving all authors at some point in the future but we need to understand the level of interest in authoring species accounts in order to identify any gaps/over subscription.

Please contact Tim Dean via email t.r.dean@btinternet.com to express an interest.

INDOOR MEETINGS

The next indoor meeting will be at Northern Rugby Club, McCracken Park, Great North Road, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 2DT on Thursday 13th September at 7pm.

Visible Migration of Birds by Keith Clarkson - east coast reserves manager for the RSPB.

FIELD TRIPS

The next of Trevor Blake's popular trips are to :-

Sunday 9th September to Teesside and

Sunday 7th October to Holy Island

Please contact Trevor direct for more information: trevor.1958@live.co.uk

CLASSIFIED LIST

The following account consists of unchecked reports. The species/subspecies marked * require descriptions.

A complete list of all sightings that need notes is included in the NTBC website www.ntbc.org.uk under the County Records Committee section and in Birds in Northumbria 2009 page 224.

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

TARGET SPECIES

The target species for 2012 are all the owls. Please report all records in as much detail as possible. The Club is sensitive to the vulnerability of these species to disturbance and persecution, and will be particularly cautious about what is actually published, above all about nesting and roosting sites. Please address any questions or concerns to Tim Dean or Dick Myatt.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Breeding data were as follows (additional to broods reported in May):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Duke's Pond, Wallsend	1	7	CDH. On 4th
Bothal Pond	1	5	TD. On 17th
West Allotment Pond	1	5	CDH. On 4th
Druridge Bay CP	1	4	PRM. On 7th
Newton Pool	1	4	SRB. On 1st
Willington Gut, Wallsend	1	4	CDH. On 23rd. Reduced to 2 by end of month
Linton Ponds	1	2	CDH. On 23rd
Woodhorn Flashes	1	2	CDH. On 23rd
Broomlee Lough	1	1	MRS. On 24th
Castle Island	1	1	STH et al. On 24th
Whittle Dene Reservoirs	1	1	MR. On 17th

A brood of eight at Holy Island Lough in May was reduced to six by 30th June (IK).

Peak concentrations were 144 at Killingworth Lake on 16th (LJM), 128 at the Tweed Estuary on 22nd (MHu), 59 at Budle Bay on 22nd (a site record for the observer; CGK), 34-36 at Berwick North Shore and New Water Haugh (Berwick), and ten to 14 at Big Waters, the Blyth Estuary, East Chevington, Grindon Lough and Haughton Strother GP. One to six were at several further sites.

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Two were at Caistron on 4th (STH) and two at Hauxley Reserve on 6th (AJR), while one was at Derwent Reservoir on 29th (PRM).

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

A Eurasian *albifrons* race bird remained at Woodhorn Flashes on 2nd and 23rd (GB/CDH/STH).

A Greylag at Killingworth Lake
by Adriana Buskin in 7th June

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

28 flew N at Cheswick on 5th (MHu), 20 W at Ellington on 20th (TB), 15 SE, with seven Barnacle Geese, at East Chevington on 7th (PRM), nine NW at Holy Island on 18th (MSH), and six S at East Ord on 9th (MHu). Derwent Reservoir held a notable 793 (including 20 goslings) on 29th (PRM), 138 were at Hauxley Reserve on 7th (JPD), and 15-28 at Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, East Chevington and Redmire. One to eight were at several further sites. Breeding data were as follows (additional to May unless otherwise stated):



Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Caistron	--	58	STH. On 4th
Roddam Quarry Pond	--	30	JMA. On 18th.
Woodhorn Flashes	3+	18+	GB/CDH/STH. On 2nd and 23rd.
Hauxley Reserve	3	5	DM. On 24th. As May?
East Chevington	2	12	PRM. On 7th.
Low Newton Flash	1	6	SRB. On 1st
Castle Island	1	3	DM/STH/PJA. On 24th
Whittle Dene Reservoirs	1	3	MR. On 17th

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Northerly movement involved 70 at Woolsington Ponds on 3rd (SRB), 70 at Blyth Harbour on 5th (STH), 39 at Shiremoor on 5th (CGK), 16 at Berwick on 19th (MHu), and one to six at East Ord and Tynemouth on three dates, while 22 flew E at West Chirton on 4th (CDH) and 20 NW at East Ord on 14th (MHu). Hauxley Reserve held 160 on 6th (AJR), 99 were at Killingworth Lake on 16th (LJM), 97 at Castle Island on 28th (PRM), 88 at Derwent Reservoir on 29th (PRM), 39-45 at Cresswell and Warkworth Lane Ponds on 5th-6th, and ten to 25 at Greenlee and Grindon Loughs, Holy Island, Linton Ponds and Newcastle Leazes Park. Two to six were also at Arcot Pond, Druridge Pools and the Tweed Estuary. Breeding data were as follows (additional to May unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Hauxley Reserve	--	19	PCF. On 2nd. Includes broods from May?
Cresswell Pond	1	7	STH/TLC. On 10th.
Caistron	1	4	STH. On 4th

A brood of six at Woolsington Ponds, first reported in May (when both parents were killed), was down to five young by 3rd June and all were missing by 7th (SRB).

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Seven, with 15 Greylags, flew SE at East Chevington on 7th (PRM), two were at Hauxley Reserve on 6th (AJR), and singles at the Tweed Estuary on 20th and 22nd (TRD/MHu) and the Blyth Estuary on 28th (PRM).

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Two pale-bellied *hrota* race birds flew N at St Mary's on 4th (SPP) and one was at Hadston Carrs on 30th (NFO).

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

23 were at the Blyth Estuary on 17th (LJM), 21 at Castle Island on 2nd (GB), five to eight at Elswick, Howdon Wetland NR, Maiden's Hall Lake, Newbiggin and Newham Bog, and three to four at Cocklawburn and Woodhorn Flashes. One to two were also at Berwick Little Beach, Cheswick, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, New Water Haugh (River Tweed) and Yarrow Slake. Breeding data were as follows (additional to May unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Castle Island	2-3	8-14	STH/PRM et al. On 24th and 28th
Low Newton shore	1	10	SRB. On 1st. Presumed same brood down to 6 by 4th (TD/SW)
East Chevington	1	8	JPD/PCF. On 4th
Cresswell Pond	1	7	JPD. On 7th. Down to 5 by 14th (MSH).
West Stobswood Pool	1	6	MSH. On 1st.

An adult with three young (from a brood of nine first reported in May) was at Houghton Strother GP on 27th (MR).

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

A drake was at Ridley Stokoe on 10th (JR) but more unusually a duck was at Druridge Pools on 30th (SR/AH).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Six (five drakes) were at Grindon Lough on 7th and three (two drakes) on 13th (PRM). One at Hauxley Reserve on 6th (TRD/JD) increased to three on 27th (IFo) and a drake was at East Chevington on 7th (PRM).

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Cresswell Pond attracted a peak of 30+ on 7th (MSH), 18 were at Druridge Pools on 7th (PRM), 15 at Castle Island on 2nd (GB), 15 at East Chevington on 7th (PRM), and six at Hauxley Reserve and Woodhorn Flashes. One to two were also at Big Waters, Cresswell and Linton Ponds, and Low Newton Flash but more unusual were two on the Blyth Estuary at Kitty Brewster on 17th (LJM). Breeding data were as follows (all additional to May):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Hauxley Reserve	2	17 (12 & 5)	PCF/MSH. On 14th and 17th
Big Waters	1	12	per GB. On 26th. First ever breeding record for this site
Shasun Pharma, Dudley	1	12	LJM. On 19th
Druridge Pools	1	7	TRD/JD. On 27th
East Chevington	1	6	TRD/JD. On 27th
Castle Island	1	6	STH/PJA/DM. On 24th
Cresswell Pond	1	5	PCF. On 30th



A pair of Gadwall
Hauxley NR
23rd June
by Tim Dean

Teal *Anas crecca*

11 were at East Chevington on 7th (PRM), three at Castle Island on 24th (DM/STH/PJA), and twos at Grindon Lough, Low Newton Flash and Newham Bog on four dates.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Peak counts (excluding young) were 43 at Druridge Pools on 7th (PRM), 35 at Newcastle Leazes Park on 18th (DM), 35 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 17th (MR), 25-29 at Castle Island, Derwent Reservoir, Linton Ponds, and 12-18 at Grindon Lough, Newcastle Exhibition Park and the Tweed Estuary. Breeding data were as follows (additional to May unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Swallow Pond	5+	36 (11,8,7,6,4)	JPD/CDH/LJM. Between 4th-26th
Howdon Wetland NR	4	30+	CB.
Killingworth Lake	3	20 (9,6,5)	LJM. On 16th. All new broods
Newcastle Civic Centre	3	15 (10,3,2)	SRB. On 6th, including one week old brood (10). Other broods 4-6 weeks old
Druridge Pools	3	13 (6,4,3)	PRM. On 7th
Hauxley Reserve	2	15 (10,5)	JPD. On 4th & 7th
Linton Ponds	2	11 (9,2)	CDH. On 23rd
Ladyburn Lake	2	17 (9,8)	PRM. On 7th. Includes brood from May?
Low Newton Flash	2	16 (10,6)	SRB. On 1st
Farne Islands	2	13 (7,6)	PRM. On 3rd
Castle Island	2	12 (7,5)	STH/PJA/DM. On 24th
Duke's Pond	2	9 (7,2)	JPD/LJM. On 20th and 26th

Single broods were also at Big Waters (5 young), Bothal Pond (10), Caistron (8), Blyth Estuary (2), Jesmond Dene (8), Newcastle Leazes Park (6), Shillmoor (2), Wark (8), West Hartford (12), West Ord (6), Willington Gut (7) and Wooler Haugh (5). A brood of five was rescued from a storm drain in Ashington on 21st (JMA).

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Druridge Pools held three (two drakes) on 7th (PRM) and three drakes on 14th (TRD), two drakes were at Warkworth Lane on 5th (TB), a pair at East Chevington on 7th (PRM), two birds at Swallow Pond on 19th-20th and 25th (JPD), and a drake at Woodhorn Flashes on 2nd (GB/STH). Breeding was noted at one locality:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Druridge Pools	1	6	TRD/JD. On 27th

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Killingworth Lake held 12 drakes on 16th (LJM) and 13 (ten drakes) on 20th (GB), three to four were at Arcot, Hadrian, Swallow and West Allotment Ponds, and one to two at Bothal and Duke's Ponds, Druridge Pools and Monks' House Pool. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Holywell Pond	3	14 (7,4,3)	SPP. Brood of 7 on 12th and broods of 4 & 3 on 25th.
Swallow Pond	2	16 (11,5)	JPD/SPP. Brood of 4 on 4th and 11 on 29th
Duke's Pond	1	3	JPD/SPP/LJM. On 20th. Down to 2 by 26th
Killingworth Lake	1	3	LJM. On 26th

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Peak counts were 39 at Castle Island on 2nd (GB), 31 at East Chevington on 7th (PRM), 28-29 at Linton and Swallow Ponds (JPD/CDH), 21-23 at Broomlee Lough and Newcastle Leazes Park, and ten to 18 Druridge Pools and Roddam Quarry Pond. Six to nine were also at Bothal Pond, Howdon Wetland NR, Ladyburn Lake, Newcastle Exhibition Park and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and one to four at Arcot, Cresswell and Middle Ord Ponds, Big Waters, Jesmond Dene, and Woodhorn Flashes. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Druridge Pools	1	5	TRD/JD. On 27th.

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

The largest reported groups (excluding juveniles) were 46 at Seahouses on 3rd (PRM), 54 at Meadow Haven, Berwick on 17th (MHu), 36-42 at Cocklawburn and the Tweed Estuary, and 11-22 at Berwick North Shore, the Blyth Estuary, Newbiggin, North Blyth and Tynemouth. Breeding data were as follows (additional to May unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods/crèches	No. of young	Observer/notes
Beadnell-Newton-Dunstanburgh	3	15 (9,5,1)	TD. On 4th
Budle Bay	2	15	IK. On 9th. Includes brood from May?
Seahouses	1	23	PRM. On 3rd
Low Newton shore	1	10	SRB. On 1st
Holy Island (Snipe Point)	1	3	IK. On 1st

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

A total of 94 flew N in one hour at North Blyth on 28th (PRM) and one flew N at Snab Point on 27th. Peak concentrations were 120 off Cocklawburn on 29th (MHu), 92 at Hadston Carrs on 27th (IFo), 40 off nearby East Chevington on 21st (TRD), and 20 off Hauxley on 4th (JPD). One to three were off Cheswick and Druridge Links.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Three flew N at Hadston Carrs on 10th (ADMc). The Blyth Estuary held four drakes (three adult and one immature) on 2nd-3rd (GB/LJM), and three on 8th and 28th (GB/PRM). A drake was at Budle Bay on 9th (MSH/AC).

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Four flew N at Cresswell on 10th (TB). Three were at Holy Island on 10th (ADM), and one to two at Budle Bay, East Chevington and St Mary's.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Four flew N at Chevington-Hadston on 10th (ADMc/STH/TLC). All large gatherings were in the north of the county, with peaks of 117 at the Tweed Estuary on 22nd (MHu), 80 at Holy Island (Guile Point) on 10th (RA), 38 at Holy Island (St Cuthbert's Island area) on 17th (ADM), 20 at Meadow Haven, Berwick on 17th (MHu), and six to ten at Berwick Little Beach and New Water Haugh (River Tweed). Four were at Berwick North Shore and one to two at Castle Island, Corbridge, Cresswell Pond, Killingworth Lake, Thrum Mill (Rothbury), Wark and Wooler Haugh. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods/crèches	No. of young	Observer/notes
Ingram (River Breamish)	1	5	JMA. On 19th

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

Breeding was confirmed at West Simonsides where two broods, one of at least 12, were seen on 24th (IK) and near Boddle Moss where a pair with seven fledged young was present on 19th (IFo). Singles were seen at Hulne Park and Slaley Forest.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Three were at Carey Burn (Harthope Valley) on 4th (MSH) and two near Ryal on 24th (EC). Singles were seen at Druridge Lane and on two dates at Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Breeding was confirmed in the Blagdon area where on 29th at Horton Grange a pair with eight young crossed the road, two of which were subsequently killed (PCF) and a pair with five small young were seen on the Berwick Hills road (EC). Two pairs were at West Ord on 20th (MHu) and three were at two sites in the Ellington area at Chugdon Wood on 1st and Warkworth Lane on 5th (TB). Two, mainly in pairs, were seen at Bellasis Bridge, Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, Doddington, Duddo, Eachwick, Hawkwell (Stamfordham), High Seat (Whittle Dene), Holywell Dene, Howlett Hall (Bolam), Warkworth Gut and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Singles were noted at Cresswell, Doddington, Linden Hall and in the Dissington-Darras Hall area.

A Grey Partridge at Eachwick
by Chris Barlow

**Quail** *Coturnix coturnix*

Singles were heard singing at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) on 10th (ALT) and East Chevington on 17th (PRM).

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

The peak counts were six at Hulne Park on 10th (MHM) and Cockle Park Farm (Ulgham) on 12th (JR). Two were in a Walbottle garden and a single at Wooler Haugh.

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

A single flew N at St Mary's Island on 3rd (MSH).

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Counts at breeding colonies recorded 53 on breeding ledges at Coves Bay (Holy Island) on 2nd (IK) and 36 nests at Needle's Eye on 11th (MHU). One to four were seen at Bamburgh Castle, Berwick Little Beach, Farne Islands, Snab Point, Tweed Estuary, Tynemouth and flying over Howdon Wetlands.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

The largest N movements were 13 at St Mary's Island in two hours on 13th (SPP) and five at Newbiggin on 4th (JPD) and Scarr Rocks (Cresswell) on 10th (TB). Two to four were noted from Emmanuel Head (Holy Island), St Mary's Island, Snab Point and a NEWT pelagic trip off Dunstanburgh.

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

One was seen flying N off Hauxley on 4th (JPD).

Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

On a NEWT pelagic on 10th, one was seen just S of Staple Island, but was only reported to the organiser when the bird had flown out of his sight! (NEWT).

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

The largest movements were 600/h S at Berwick Pier on 15th (MHu) and 200/h both N and S at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) on 4th (IK). 12 flew N at Hadston Carrs on 27th (IFO). At North Blyth six flew N and one S in one hour on 28th (PRM). Counts of 25 came from the Farne Islands on 1st and Newton Point on 24th and 20 from Stag Rocks on 20th (TRD). Three to five were seen at Berwick Little Beach, Cresswell and Snab Point.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

The peak Blyth Harbour roost count was 21 on 5th (STH). Elsewhere 12 were at East Chevington on 7th (PRM), 11 at Berwick North Shore on 21st (MHu), ten at Derwent Reservoir on 24th (IFo) and nine at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 3rd (MHu). One to four were seen at Blyth Estuary, Castle Island, Linton Ponds and West Allotment Pond.

Continental Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*

Three and two juveniles were in the Blyth Estuary on 28th and two first summers at Druridge Pools on 7th (PRM).

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

On 1st 25 were at the Farne Islands (TRD), whilst in the Berwick area 45 were at Needle's Eye, where three nests were observed, on 11th, and 20 were at Meadow Haven on 3rd and North Shore on 21st (MHu). Ten were at Stag Rocks on 20th and Newton Point on 24th (TRD). Seven first summer birds were at Blyth South Harbour on 5th (STH), where a juvenile was seen begging food from an adult on 23rd.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Three were in Budle Bay on 20th (TRD). Two were at Hauxley NR on five dates from 4th-27th, with a single noted here on 5th/6th (Many observers). Two were at Cresswell Pond on 8th (ADMc) and in the Tweed Estuary on 22nd (MHu). A single was at East Chevington North Pool on 7th (ADMc).

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

The peak counts were ten at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 17th (MR), eight in the Tweed Estuary on 22nd (MHu) and Druridge Pools on 30th (PCF) and at least six at Howdon Wetlands on 2nd, where four occupied nests were noted. (LJM *et al*). Four were at East Chevington on 7th and in the Blyth Estuary on 28th (PRM). One to three was noted at Belsay Hall, Berwick North Shore, Cocklawburn Pond, Cresswell Pond, Holywell Dene, Jesmond Dene, Linton Ponds, Wark and Wooler Haugh.

A Grey Heron by Adriana Buskin
Duke's Pond Rising Sun
24th June

**Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia*

A fourth calendar bird, which had visited Druridge Pools in May 2011, was at Hauxley NR from 18th-21st (MSH *et al*).

The Hauxley Spoonbill
21st June
Tim Dean

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

The highest counts of adults were five at Druridge Pools on 7th (PRM), four at Caistron on 4th (STH), Hauxley on 14th (TRD), Linton Ponds on 23rd (CDH) and Bothal Pond on 28th (PRM). One to two were seen at Arcot Pond, Ashington Hospital Pond, Craggside, East Chevington, Grindon Lough, Ladyburn Lake and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Location	No. of Broods	No. of Young	Observer/Comments
Hadrian Pond	2	5	CDH/JPD by 13th
Woodhorn Flashes	2	3	GB/CDH by 23rd
Duke's Pond Wallsend	1	3	JPD on 19th
Swallow Pond	1	3	JPD on 13th
Bothal Pond	1	3	PRM on 28th
Annitsford Pond	1	1	LJM on 19th

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

The peak count at Whittle Dene Reservoirs was ten including a nesting pair on 17th (MR *et al*). Four were at East Chevington North Pool on 25th/27th (TB/IFo) and three at Derwent Reservoir on 1st/29th (IFo/PRM). A pair was present throughout the month at Bothal Pond (TB *et al*). A breeding pair at Big Waters lost their nest after heavy rain on 28th (GB). A pair was seen displaying at Broomlee Lough on 24th (MRS). Singles were seen at Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield), Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools and Holywell Pond.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

At one site where up to four adults were present one pair were seen with two very small young by the end of the month.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Single birds were near Shotleyfield on 1st (IFo), Heddon-on-the-Wall on 15th (AA), Tritlington on 18th (JMA), Morpeth on 19th (JFa) and at three other confidential sites in SW Northumberland on 2nd, 19th and 24th (MR/AA).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Up to three birds were at East Chevington area during the month (ADMc *et al*) and a pair was seen at another site on 5th and 10th (TB/ASJ). Away from the Druridge Bay area singles were also noted at Longbridge End (Beal) on 3rd (SR/AH), Arcot Pond on 5th (STH/GMi) and at the Long Nanny on 27th (MSK/NEWT).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Only one record this month of a bird in the south of the county on 13th (ASJ).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Two were seen in the Southfield Green area of Cramlington on 7th (DM). A single bird was noted throughout the month at Scotland Gate (MSK/SLB) and single birds were noted from 13 other sites.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Eight birds were in the Sweethope area on 2nd (ASJ) and at Plashetts on 4th (JPD); four birds were in the Harthope Valley and at Kyle Woods on 4th (MSH) and at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 13th (PRM). One to three were at 20 other locations

A Buzzard
Blagdon
by Colin Bradshaw



Osprey *Pandion haliaetuss*

Only two records involving single birds moving N in the Boulmer-Howick area on 10th (SS) and another S at Monkseaton on 17th (AAM)

Kestrel *Falco tinninculus*

Breeding was confirmed at Allerdean (Berwick) five half-grown young were in a nest box and five young fledged from a nest box at Slaley Hall over two days (RMH). At Callerton a pair nested in a hole in an Ash tree and reared 4 young, three young were reared from a nest in a Lime tree at Throckley and breeding was also confirmed at Wylam in a Carrion Crow (*Corvus corone*) nest (AJ). Two birds were in the Carey Burn (Harthope) on 4th (MSH), Grindon Lough on 7th (PRM), Ingram on 19th and Alnham Moor on 21st (JMA). Single birds were recorded from 19 further sites.

Kestrel young at a nest box
Slaley Hall
22nd June
Michael Holmes



Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Only two records this month were a pair near Rothbury on 26th (TRD/JD) and a single bird at another site on 4th (AJR).

*** Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*

On 1st a single bird was seen in silhouette at Bedlington (JR), other single birds were noted at Gosforth Park NR on 9th (MJC), an adult Swallow Pond on 20th (SPP), and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 22nd (PRM). In the Chugdon Wood – East Chevington area a sub-adult/adult was noted from 24th- 28th (ASJ *et al*). Other single birds were noted at Monks' House Pool on 27th (NEWT) and an adult at Bothal Pond on 28th (PRM).

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Two birds an adult and a juvenile were at one site on 21st (EC) and singles were seen at South Middleton on 2nd (JMA), Doddington and Newton Links on 11th (JD/AC), in the Berwick/East Ord area on 14th and 15th (BWG/MHu), Holy Island on 17th (ADM), Old Bewick on 19th (JMA) and a juvenile scattering Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) at Cresswell Pond on 27th (TRD/JD).

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Singles were seen or heard at West Hartford on 7th (PJA), East Chevington on 10th (ADM), Hadrian's Pond on 13th (JPD), Hauxley on 14th (TRD) and at Swallow Pond on 19th (JPD).

Corncrake *Crex crex*

One was heard calling at a confidential site on 24th and 27th; apparently it could have been present for some time.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Ten birds consisting of five pairs were at Druridge Pools on 7th (PRM), six were at Ponteland on 7th (KR/LR), Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 18th (DM) and at Newsham Pond (Blyth) on 23rd (LJM). Four birds were at the Holiday Inn (Seaton Burn) on 2nd (PCF) and one to two birds were noted at nine further sites.

Coot *Fulica atra*

Bothal Pond had the highest count with 38 birds on 28th (PRM), 19 birds were at Woodhorn Flash on 23rd (CDH) and 16 were at Druridge Pools on 7th (PRM). 13 were seen at Linton Pond on 23rd (CDH) and at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 25th (DM) and 12 were at Dudley on 6th (PJA). One to ten birds were at 12 other sites.

*** Crane** *Grus grus*

A single bird was seen at Newham Lough on 10th (RA).

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Peak gatherings were typically to be found on the coast and included 75 at Hauxley NR on 4th (JPD), 46 at Berwick North Shore on 21st (MHu), 37 at Newbiggin on 2nd (GB), 36 at Budle Bay on 23rd (CGK), 30 at Cresswell Pond on 4th (JPD) and 22 at North Blyth on 28th (PRM). Counts of five to 11 also occurred at the Blyth estuary, Derwent Reservoir, Morpeth (Fulbeck) and Wooler Haugh, whilst smaller numbers were at around 20 further sites, including inland at Slaley Forest. Breeding was confirmed at the following locations: Castle Island (three juveniles), Glidders (River Breamish – fledged young), Hauxley (two broods, with two and one young), Upper Coquetdale (washed out nests/eggs at three sites – Blindburn, Bygate and Windyhaugh, plus a nest & eggs later found empty at Shillmoor (JR)) and West Stobswood Pool (one young).

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

One to two were seen at Cresswell Pond up to the 10th and from the 24th (many obs.), whilst, similar to last month, a colour-ringed bird was seen but flew off before full details could be taken, on 2nd (MSH). Elsewhere, two nests were located (eggs later lost) and up to seven were present at a confidential site during the first half of the month.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

At a confidential site in Central Northumberland a breeding pair lost its eggs over several days of watching from distance, although a Fox was noted on occasions. A pair in the south-west hatched a brood of four which later reduced to two mid-month. Four adults were noted at Derwent Reservoir on 24th (IFo) and one was at Cresswell Pond on 25th (TB).

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Some good counts early in the month included 140 at Warkworth Gut on 2nd (NFO), 35 at Low Newton on 1st (SRB) and ten at Newbiggin on 2nd (GB). Twos were noted at the Breamish Valley, Inner Farne and North Blyth.

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Two at Backworth on 30th were described as 'first of the autumn' and constituted the only report (CGK).

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

A summer-plumaged adult was at Beacon Point, Newbiggin on 2nd (STH).

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

The post-breeding flock at Cresswell Pond increased very rapidly from 54 on 22nd (IFo) to 420 on 24th (ASJ). Grindon Lough held a peak of 26 on 13th (PRM), 12 at Big Waters on 3rd included four young in a nearby field (GB) and ten were on Castle Island on 24th (DM et al). Other breeding reports included eight pairs in Allendale (South Wooley Farm) on 24th (JMA), three pairs at Newbiggin on 2nd (GB), two pairs with chicks at Billylaw (Ord Moor) on 17th (MHu) and adults with young at Cresswell Pond (three downy young) on 30th (RWM/MIM) and Hauxley NR (one chick) on 6th (TRD/JD). Two were at Prestwick Carr on 28th (PRM) and agitated display was noted at Hulne Park (Alnwick) on 10th (MHM).

Knot *Calidris canutus*

60 were counted at Guile Point, Holy Island on 10th (RA) and a single 'grey' plumaged bird, with a limp, was noted at Hauxley on 5th (CDB).

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

A count of 17 at Beacon Point, Newbiggin on 2nd was by far the highest (GB); seven were at East Chevington on 17th (NFO), six at Holy Island on 20th (CR) and one to two at Hauxley and Low Newton.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Two were seen from the Causeway at Holy Island on 3rd (SR/AH) and one at Monks' House Pool on 20th was in partial summer plumage (TRD).

The Monk's House Curlew Sandpiper
20th June by Tim Dean

**Purple Sandpiper** *Calidris maritima*

A flock of 15 flew N at Sheldrake Hole, Holy Island on 4th (IK) and 13 remained at Scarr Rocks, Cresswell on 10th (TB).

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

A dramatic reduction in numbers from last month's four figure counts saw a high of five counted at Hauxley on 5th (CDB) and three at Low Newton on 4th (TD). Three at Beacon Point, Newbiggin on 2nd included a bird singing (GB/STH) and three adults were displaying at Grindon Lough on 7th (PRM). One to two were also at Cresswell Pond on 14th/24th and Haughton Strother GP on 2nd.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

A fine adult 'ginger' male was at Cresswell Pond on 24th (DM/STH/PJA/ASJ).

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Most records relate to calling or displaying birds: three in the Breamish Valley on 18th (MRS), two at Lambley on 26th (MRS) and singles at Broomlee Lough, on three dates at Druridge Pools, Grindon Lough, Prestwick Carr and Riddlees Cairn.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

In Slaley Forest at least six were roding on 13th (JPD/ASJ) and four on both 14th and 30th (PRM). One was roding and another calling at Ridsdale on 12th (PC) and one was noted at Catcleugh on 22nd (CW).

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

The majority were at Hauxley NR with five on 4th, six on 6th, seven on 9th, two on 13th and four on 20th to 24th (JPD/TRD/JD/IRD/MSH et al). Two were found at each of Newham Lough on 10th, Holy Island causeway on 17th and Cresswell Pond on 30th.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

In the north 80 were at Lindisfarne NNR, Guile Point on 10th (RA) and 60 non breeders gathered at St Cuthbert's Island on 5th (IK). Further south four were in the R Blyth estuary on 28th (PRM).

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Three were at Cresswell Pond on 26th (MSK/NEWT). Singles were noted at Boulmer on 6th, East Chevington on 7th, Holy Island on 10th, Low Newton on 24th (heard overhead), Cresswell Pond on 26th and N at Ellington on 27th

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

At Lindisfarne NNR, Guile Point 300 were present on 10th (RA) and the number at Budle Bay rose from 25 on 22nd to 110 on 24th (CGK). Hauxley NR held 51 in a HT roost on 27th (IFo) and 50 were in the R Blyth estuary on 28th (PRM); 22 were in the R Tweed estuary on 22nd. Remarkably, 15 were displaying at Slaley on 13th (ASJ); a pair with three juveniles was noted at Druridge Pools on 20th (PCF) and four pairs at Low Hope on 12th (AJR). Small numbers were found at Arcot Pond, Berwick, R Blyth estuary, Bolam, Hauxley NR, Grindon Lough, Prestwick Carr and Vindolanda.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

12 were at Wooler Haugh on 5th (JR) and nine in the Breamish Valley on 18th; at the latter two pairs had recently hatched broods on 9th (MSH/AC) and a pair had two young in Upper Coquetdale on 10th (JR). Five were at Colt Crag Reservoir on 18th, five at Big Waters on 24th (GB), four at Doddington on 17th (TRD/JD), four at Harthope Burn on 18th (JMA) and four at Derwent Reservoir on 25th (IFo). One or two were noted at a further 14 widespread localities.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Just two singletons: at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 27th (SR) and Castle Island on 28th (PRM).

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

It was again very scarce: singles at Hauxley NR on 4th (JPD), Cresswell Pond on 27th (ASJ), the R Blyth estuary on 28th (PRM) and Castle Island also on 28th (PRM).

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

At Grindon Lough six were displaying on 7th and a juvenile was present on 13th (PRM); at least one juvenile was noted at Cresswell Pond on 30th (RWM/MIM) and two pairs were alarm calling at Low Hope on 12th (AJR). The largest gathering was of 15 at Hauxley NR on 24th (DM et al) and other signs of return passage included four at Howdon Wetland NR on 25th and two at Cheswick on 25th.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

The Newbiggin area held 16 on 2nd and 21 on 8th (GB). The only others reported were three at Low Newton on 4th and one at Cresswell, Scarr Rocks on 10th.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Several singles appeared: at Snab Point on 2nd, 8th (ADMc) and 22nd (IFo), at St Mary's on 3rd (MSH), Hauxley on 4th (JPD) and East Chevington on 7th (PRM).

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

Two flew N at Hauxley on 4th (JPD). A most extraordinary inland record concerns one which flew NE over open moorland of Kielder Forest on 23rd (IFo), at closest approx 120m from the observer.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

The colony at Needles Eye, Berwick comprised 960 nests on 11th compared with 1310 last year (MHu). The River Tyne breeding colonies generally showed a slight increase this year with the following nest counts on 28th (DM); Tyne Bridge 372, Quayside Buildings 77, Guildhall 15 and Baltic Arts Centre 65.

Elsewhere 180 birds were recorded on a WeBS count on the River Tweed estuary on 23rd (MHu), ca.100 on the Farne Islands on 1st and 10 on Berwick, Little Beach on 20th (both TRD). One to five were seen at Cresswell (Snab Point), Druridge Bay CP (Ladyburn Lake), East Chevington and the River Blyth estuary.

A Kittiwake peers through the railings
Tyne Bridge on 19th June by Steve Barrett

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

At Swallow Pond four pairs had eight chicks on the raft on 7th (SPP) but at Big Waters a pair nesting on the island were flooded out after heavy rain on 28th (GB). At Cockle Park Farm 80 were recorded during a BBS survey on 12th (JR), 34 fed on a newly sown field at Slaley on 15th (RMH), 12 were found on a WeBS count at Berwick, North Shore on 21st (MHu) and ten were on the Tyne at Elswick Wharf on 20th (DM).

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Well reported as numbers built up throughout the month to a maximum of 12 at Cresswell Pond from 22nd-30th (TB et al) including a single adult and first summers. East Chevington NWT held a maximum of five birds, recorded mainly during the second half of the month, including two adults with first-summers on 17th (ADMc/IRD/TB et al). The only other sites where one to three were recorded were Hauxley and Newton, Long Nanny.

Little Gulls at Cresswell
30th June
by Jonathan Farooqi



Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Cresswell Pond held three on 30th including an adult with two immatures (TF/JFa) and three first-summers lingered at Newbiggin on 4th (JPD). Records of single first-summers, possibly the same bird, came from Woodhorn Flash on 2nd and 10th (STH/TLC).

A lone Mediterranean Gull with Black-headed
Cresswell Pond
30th June
Jonathan Farooqi

**Common Gull** *Larus canus*

The only counts received were 27, all immatures, roosting at Budle Point on 24th (CGK) and a single adult at Haughton Strother GP on 24th (MR).

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

Breeding records were of three young raised in one of two nests on a silo at Shasun Pharma factory, Dudley (PJA/LJM), four apparently occupied nests at Davey Bank, Wallsend (CDH) and three nests at Blyth Riverside Industrial Estate (LJM). Elsewhere double-figure gatherings were of 15 at East Chevington NWT on 27th (IFo) and 13 at Big Waters on 9th (GB). One to eight were recorded at Arcot Pond, Cockle Park Farm, Exhibition Park, Grindon Lough, Jesmond Dene, Leazes Park, the River Tweed estuary, Valley Park (Cramlington) and a Walbottle garden.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argenteus*

Successful nesting was observed at Blyth Riverside Industrial Park where three of six nests on factory roofs had produced four young by 23rd (LJM).

The peak counts were 516 and 47 found during WeBS surveys at the River Tweed estuary and Berwick North Shore respectively on 21st/22nd (both MHu). Lesser gatherings were 28 at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 25th (DM), 15 flying N at Haughton Strother GP on 11th (MR) and one-seven at Castle Island, Cockle Park Farm, Leazes Park and Wooler Haugh.

Greater Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

The only records were 11 on the River Tweed estuary on 22nd (MHu) and a single on Grindon Lough on 13th (PRM).

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

On Lindisfarne the entire breeding colony of 14 pairs were all washed out by a high tide and a north east swell on 4th despite the clutches being moved progressively up the beach during the preceding week (IK). It was also reported (*per* IK) that the Long Nanny colony of 41 nests was also totally destroyed by the same tide.

The only other record was of three birds at the Long Nanny on 24th (TRD).

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

On 24th 73 were in the Budle Bay roost (CGK) and ca. 50 were recorded on the Farne Islands on 1st (TRD). Elsewhere up to ten were noted at various coastal localities between the River Blyth estuary and Berwick mainly during the second half of the month.



Above left a Sandwich Tern flies past Adriana Buskin at Amble Harbour on 30th June and right a Common Tern lands at Hauxley NR by Chris Barlow

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Two pairs were on eggs on the raft at Whittle Dene Reservoirs by mid-month (PRM/MR); elsewhere a nesting pair fed young at the Shasun Pharma factory, Dudley on 19th (PJA/LJM) and a pair at Swallow Pond had two young on 20th (SPP). The exceptionally wet weather and associated high water levels at Big Waters flooded the island and drowned five young. The peak counts were 20 at Gosforth Park NR on 10th (CGK/PS), 14 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 13th (PRM), 12 at East Chevington NWT on 27th (TRD/JD) and 11 at Swallow Pond on 20th (SPP). One to two were also noted at Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools and Hauxley NWT.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

A single record of two birds flying N close inshore at St Mary's Island on 13th (SPP).

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

On the Farne Islands ca.500 were counted on 1st with a similar number seen at the Long Nanny breeding colony on 24th (both TRD). Up to ten were recorded at the East Chevington NWT from 16th-27th including two first summer birds (TRD/NFO). An unusual sighting was of three flying N at Sweethope Lough on 2nd (PC).

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

At the Needles Eye colony, Berwick, 72 nests were recorded with 280 adults present there on 11th (MHu).

An approximate count on the Farne Islands revealed ca.2000 on the 1st. Ca.300 were spread out over the sea at Stag Rocks, Bamburgh on 20th, with 50 on the sea at Cresswell on 21st and 40 at Newton Point on 24th (all TRD). At Cocklawburn on 20th 13 birds were noted (MHu) and two to five were seen at Berwick North Shore, East Chevington and Cresswell Snab Point.

Guillemots, including a 'bridled' bird
Staple Island 1st June by Tim Dean

**Razorbill** *Alca torda*

The auk colony at Needles Eye, Berwick contained 38 nests with 80 adults in attendance on 11th (MHu). Ca.15 were seen on the Farne Islands on 1st and elsewhere six were at Newton Point on 24th with three at Stag Rocks, Bamburgh on 20th (all TRD). The only other record was of three at Cocklawburn on 20th (MHu).

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

Four flew N at St Mary's Island on 3rd (MSH). Four nest holes and six birds were recorded at Needles Eye, Berwick on 11th (MHu) and on the Farne Islands ca.400 was an approximate count on 1st (TRD). On the sea at Bamburgh, Stag Rocks there were ca.25 on 20th with 20 at Hauxley on 14th (both TRD).

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

The highest count was 44 at Dukesfield Mill, Slaley on 15th (RMH) with the peak count at Howdon Wetland NR where birds were present all month being 12 on 25th (CB). Six were spread throughout Jesmond Dene on 3rd (MJCo) with five in the observers garden at Walbottle on 10th (KR/LR) and one to two at Druridge Pools NR, Chugdon Wood Ellington, Holywell Dene, Grindon Lough and Cragside Rothbury.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Survey work found 21 at Cockle Park Farm on 12th and 17 at Wooler Haugh on 5th (JR) with 17 at Kidlandlee on 20th and 13 at Hulne Park Alnwick on 10th (MHM). Seven were in Jesmond Dene on 10th, a pair with two juveniles in a Dinnington garden on 15th and a pair with one juvenile in a Walbottle garden on 2nd.

A Woodpigeon enjoys a bird table meal
Woolsington 1st June by Steve Barrett

**Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

Seven were at Stannington on 27th (PCF) with one to three in an Old Hartley garden during the month and at Cockle Park Farm, Dinnington and Eachwick.

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

As last month well reported the highest count four at Chevington Pools on 18th where one to three birds were present all month (ADM_c *et al*). Three were at Slaley on 13th (ASJ/JPD) with two at Longframlington Common on 2nd (JD) and Low Hope on 12th (AJR). Singles were at Abshields, Bothal Village, Castron NR, Derwent Reservoir, Routin Lynn (Ford), Hauxley NR, Haughton Strother GP, Midgeholme, Netherwitton, Newton Links, St Mary's Island, Wark Forest, West Chevington and Wooler Haugh.

Owl sp A single, possibly Long-eared Owl was at East Chevington on 1st (CBD).

Owls are **target species** for 2012. Please report all records.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Two were at Waren Mill Caravan Park near Bamburgh on several dates during the month (CGK/GPK), at A1068 between Lesbury and Warkworth on 18th (MSK/NEWT) and at West Chevington on 24th (STE) with successful breeding confirmed at Stagshaw, Corbridge. Singles were reported at Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Hadston Carrs and East Chevington on several dates and at Holy Island, A68 at Waterfalls, Warkworth and Wooperton.

Barn Owls are **target species** for 2012. Please report all records.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

An adult and two juveniles were at Clifton, Morpeth on 28th (TB) with resident pairs were at New York and Murton near Shiremoor (per CGK/CS) and two near Stobswood in the early part of the month (ADM). Singles were at Swallow Pond / Rising Sun Farm on several dates, Backworth, Big Waters, Doddington, Chugdon Wood Ellington, Eshott and Wylam.

Little Owls are **target species** for 2012. Please report all records.

A Little Owl
Dinnington
6th June by Tim Dean



Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Two or more sang occasionally at Scotland Gate throughout the month and two plus youngsters called at Wallington on 27th (TWi) with two birds also at Slaley Forest on 13th & 30th (JPD/PRM), near Bellasis Bridge on 24th (DM/STH/PJA) and Warkworth on 4th (SW). Singles were at Big Waters, Boulmer, Haughton Strother GP, Thrum Mill Rothbury, and Wylam with a first for an Old Hartley garden on 26th. One road casualty on the A1 at Felton.

Tawny Owls are **target species** for 2012. Please report all records.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

A family party of one to two adults with three juveniles was well observed at Druridge Pools from the 27th (TB et al) with single bids having been seen hunting there on several dates earlier in the month and at East Chevington on 1st. The only other report was a juvenile calling at Slaley Forest on 30th (PRM).

Long-eared Owls are **target species** for 2012. Please report all records.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

A pair of birds were noted from a confidential site (IFo) with two at Swallow Pond on 20th (JPD/MPF) and Holy Island on 10th (ADM). Singles were at Chevington Pools regularly, Derwent Reservoir and St Mary's Island.

Short-eared Owls are **target species** for 2012. Please report all records.

Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

At Slaley Forest four birds were present on 13th (JPD/ASJ/MPF) with two males there on 30th one wing clapping above the observers head! (PRM). The only other report was a churring bird at Fourlaws Plantation Ridsdale on 12th (PC et al).

Swift *Apus apus*

Large gatherings of 280+ at Corbridge on 2nd (PRM), 250 at Howdon Wetland NR on 27th (CB), 150 at Castle Island on 2nd (GB) with 100+ at Swallow Pond on 1st and Wark on 26th (JPD/CB). 25-60 were at Bellingham, Berwick Station, Big Waters, Cullercoats, East Chevington, Spindleston and West Ord with two to five at Holywell Dene, Howdon Wetland NR and Wooler Haugh.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

An adult with two young was at the Ouseburn on 27th (DHWB) with two at Whittle Dene on 17th & 18th (MR/SR). Singles were at Chollerford, Gosforth, Haughton Strother GP, near Morpeth, Reeth Pond Newburn and Thrum Mill Rothbury.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

A reports of singles at Thrum Mill Rothbury on 2nd (JD), Reeth Pond Newburn on 5th (PCF), Weetslade Colliery CP on 10th (AJ), Wark (N Tyne) on 11th (PRM), Oldpark Wood Netherwitton on 13th (TRD/JD) and Walwick also on 13th (PRM).

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Ellington was a hot spot for this species with five at Warkworth Lane on 5th and four at Chugdon Wood on 4th & 17th (TB). Counts of four in the observers garden at Eachwick on 10th (CDB), a family party at Spindleston on 23rd (CGK) and at Lambley on 26th (MRS) with two pairs at Battlesteads Hotel Wark on 27th (CB). Two to three were at Jesmond Dene, Mitford Church, Thrunton Woods, Rothbury and Tynemouth with singles at Valley Park Cramlington, Scotland Gate and Walbottle all month and at a further eight widespread localities.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

A male found at the Snook Holy Island on 17th was elusive (ADM/SR/AH) and a female was found at East Chevington on 24th (ASJ).

The finder of the well watched bird at Low Hauxley in May was (MJS) on 11th.

Magpie *Pica pica*

The gathering at Swallow Pond numbered 32 on 13th and 40 on 25th (JPD) with four noted dive bombing birds on feeders in an Old Hartley garden (RJP) and four in Jesmond Dene on 24th (MJCo).

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Two were seen over Choppington Woods Scotland Gate all month with two also at Dinnington on 3rd (GB), Oldpark Wood Netherwiton on 13th (TRD/JD), Jesmond Dene on 25th (MJCo) and Horton Grange on 27th (PCF). Singles were at Arcot Pond, Valley Park and West Hartford Cramlington, Chollerford, Havannah NR, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and at Spindlestone regularly during the month.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

A dusk roost at Swallow Pond on 20th & 25th numbered 100+ with many juveniles noted (JPD). Counts of 56 at Cockle Park Farm on 12th (JR), 55 at Howdon Wetland NR on 4th (CB), 23 at Wooler Haugh on 5th and 11 in the observers garden at Walbottle on 10th (KR/LR). Up to six destroyed feeders in an Old Hartley garden during the month, four were on Paddy Freeman's Playing field Jesmond Dene and three, all with various pale areas of plumage were at Big Waters.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

The largest counts were 207 at Kidlandlee on 20th (MHM), 200 at South Middleton on 2nd, 100 at Alnwick Moor on 2nd, 50 at Brandon on 19th (JMA), 35 at Cockle Park Farm on 12th (JR), 20 at Allendale on 24th and nine at Wooler Haugh on 5th.

Carrión Crow *Corvus corone*

Only one double figure count of 52 on the River Tweed Estuary on 17th (MHu) with one to nine at Berwick, Cockle Park Farm, Jesmond Dene, Kidlandlee and Wooler Haugh.

Raven *Corvus corax*

A probable family party of five or more were in the Breamish Valley on 9th (MSH/AC) with two at Thrunton Woods on 4th (IFo).

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

A high count of 16 at Kidlandlee on 20th (MHM) with a female and four chicks at Longframlington Common on 2nd (JD), five singing at Belsay Hall on 4th and three at Vindolanda on 5th (DM). Two were at Jesmond Dene on 10th & 18th with singles at Valley Park Cramlington all month, Derwent Reservoir, River Blyth Estuary and Wooler Haugh.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Nest boxes at Kirkley Hall contained ten broods fledging 71 young (IK) but numbers elsewhere were low with three at Cockle Park Farm, two at Jesmond Dene, two juveniles in the observers garden at Walbottle and one at Eachwick.



Juvenile Blue Tits
Wark
by Colin Bradshaw

Great Tit *Parus major*

A similar story to Blue tit with six broods fledging 35 young at Kirkley Hall (IK) but only two at Wooler Haugh, Eachwick, Cockle Park Farm and Walbottle with a single at Jesmond Dene.



Juvenile Great Tits at Wark

Left, a yellow and right, a grey phase by Colin Bradshaw

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Seven were at Kidlandlee on 20th (MHM), three the peak count in an Old Hartley garden (RJP) and singles at Eachwick, Jesmond Dene and Wooler Haugh.

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

An adult fed five juveniles at Prestwick Carr on 10th (PCF) with two there on 12th & 27th (EC/JSB/NFO), at Abshields junction on 5th (ADMc) and a single at Reeth Pond Newburn on 5th.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

First sighting of the year at Thrum Mill Rothbury was two birds (JD) with singles at Ellington, west of Felton and Wark (N Tyne).

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

20 sang in the Stamfordham / Matfen area on 10th (ASJ), two family parties numbering 11 were at Spindlestone on 23rd (CGK), seven were at Hulne Park Alnwick on 10th (MHM) with five at St Mary's on 11th, three at Cockle Park Farm on 12th, between Dissington – Darras Hall on 19th and two at Battlesteads Hotel Wark on 26th.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

A WBBS count at Wooler Haugh found 57 at a colony with 129 nest holes (JR). More than 30 were at Corbridge on 2nd (PRM), 20 at Howdiemont Sands Boulmer on 6th (AJR), four nesting pairs at Spittal Berwick on 20th (MHu) and seven at Kidlandlee on also on 20th (MHM).

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

More than 70 were at Corbridge on 2nd (PRM), 21 at Cockle Park Farm on 12th and 9 at Wooler Haugh on 5th (JR). There were 5 AON at Belsay Hall on 18th (KR/LR), two at Vindolanda on 5th (DM) and one to four birds at Eachwick, Holywell Dene, Leazes Park. On the coast a poor breeding year was noted at Holy Island with light coastal passage of 20 per hour North off Emmanuel Head on 4th (IK) and two pair fed young at Longstone Lighthouse on the Farne Islands on 3rd (PRM).

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

A large count of 190+ at Corbridge on 2nd (PRM), 100 at Castle Island on the same date (GB), around 65 at West Ord on 3rd (MHu), 40 at Exhibition Park Newcastle on 1st (DM) and up to 20 at Hartley West Farm Holywell Dene during the month. Seven pairs were nesting at Belsay Hall on 4th, three pairs at Vindolanda on 5th and there were 5+AON at Netherton Park Stannington during the month. One to 15 birds were at five further locations.



House Martins gather mud at Widdrington
by Peter Fletcher on 6th June

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

A large 'tribe' of 43 was at Waren Mill Caravan Park on 24th (CGK) and four family parties totalling 25+ birds were on the Holywell-Whitley Bay Waggonway on 1st (ASJ). Further family parties included 18 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), 12 at Linhope (Breamish Valley), 11 at Bothal Pond and five to six at Big Waters, and Rothbury.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

The only report was a singing male at Holystone North Wood on 4th (NFO).

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

The species was again widely reported from 29 localities. On Holy Island two on 3rd increased to at least seven on 10th; most birds had moved off the island by 17th when three remained. The largest counts were 16 singing males in the Stamfordham-Matfen area on 10th (ASJ) and ten at Wooler Haugh on 5th (JR). Six were singing at Belsay Hall on 4th and at Swallow Pond on 25th and three to five were noted at the Blyth Estuary, Jesmond Dene and Wark Forest. One to two were reported from a further 21 localities.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Coastal passage was still evident with six at Holy Island after heavy rain on 10th (IK). The largest counts were 20 singing at Swallow Pond on 13th (JPD) and 19 at Wooler Haugh on 5th (JR). Four to seven were reported from Druridge Pools, Howdon Wetland NR and Hulne Park (Alnwick), three at Prestwick Carr and one to two at a further 12 localities.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Nine were noted at Wooler Haugh on 5th (JR), five at Hauxley NR on 27th and four at the Blyth Estuary on 28th. Counts of three came from Belsay Hall, Jesmond Dene, Kyle Woods, Tynemouth, Walwick and Wallsend Dene with one to two at a further 16 localities, including Newcastle City Centre where a bird was singing on 20th.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Four at Wooler Haugh on 5th and two at Cockle Park Farm on 12th were the only multiple counts. Elsewhere singles (mainly singing) were noted at Airy Holm Reservoir, Arcot Pond, Belsay Hall, Derwent Reservoir, Hepple Whitefield, Holystone, Jesmond Dene, Middle Ord (Berwick), Scremerston, Wark (North Tyne) and Whittle Dene Reservoir.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

A late passage bird was on Inner Farne on 1st. A ten mile journey between Red Row and Felton produced five singing males on 10th (ASJ), while two were at Spindleston on 23rd and Whalton on 30th. Elsewhere singles were noted at Alnwick Moor, Budle Bay, East Chevington and West Hartford.

A Lesser Whitethroat on Inner Farne
1st June by Tim Dean

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Four family groups totalling 19 birds were at Holywell on 25th (ASJ). Eight were at Druridge Pools on 7th (PRM) and eight singing between Branton-Ingram (Breamish Valley) on 18th (MRS). Up to six were noted at Howdon Wetland NR during the month and five were in the Blyth Estuary on 28th. One to four were reported from a further 12 localities, including family parties at St Mary's Island and Tynemouth and a singing male behind Newcastle Central Station on 13th and 20th.

A Whitethroat at Prestwick Carr
by Peter Fletcher on 14th June

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Two birds were reeling at Prestwick Carr on 28th (PRM) and singles at Arcot Pond, Backworth, Big Waters, Hadston Links, Holywell and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Acrocephalus sp.

An unidentified *Acrocephalus* warbler at Big Waters on 7th was initially thought to be a Marsh Warbler. It was heard singing on a number of occasions during the rest of the month. The song often starting off like a Reed Warbler ('jag-jag-jag-ker-ker-ker'), but then getting excited and much more varied, with mimicry thrown in. Over several visits it was heard to imitate Blackbird, Linnet, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Swallow, House Martin, Blackcap, Jackdaw, Chiffchaff call, phrases like Song Thrush song, and brilliantly realistic Common Tern and Oystercatcher calls. At other times though it sang like a Reed Warbler. Concluded that we couldn't be sure it was a Reed Warbler with an exceptional vocabulary or a Marsh Warbler with (at times) unusually limited vocabulary! (per GB).



Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Nine at Holy Island on 10th had reduced to five by 17th (ADM). At East Chevington, 11 on 7th included seven singing males (PRM), nine were singing at Arcot Pond on 9th (STH/PJA) and eight at Cresswell Pond on 27th (ASJ). Threes, all singing, were at Caistron, Druridge Pools and Prestwick Carr and one to two at Hadston (carrying food on 12th), Falstone, Hauxley NR, Valley Park (Cramlington) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.



Sedge Warblers at Chevington, left, a newly fledged bird by John Littleton and right a parent with food by Simon Elliott.

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*

A singing bird was at Hadston Carrs from 5th-12th, before relocating to nearby Hauxley NR on 14th. During its stay it was heard to imitated, Blackbird alarm call, Blue Tit, Chaffinch, Common Tern, House Sparrow, Linnet, Oystercatcher, Sandwich Tern, Starling, Swallow and Willow Warbler (CDB/TRD/JD *et al*). Two different birds were in the Hadston area (seen and heard 300yds north of T junction / heard 300yds west of T-junction) on 9th (MJS). Another was seen and heard at Big Waters on 11th (SPP).



Two photographs of the Hadston Marsh Warbler.
Left by Tim Dean on 14th June and right by Chris Barlow

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Four were singing at Cresswell Pond on 24th (ASJ), three birds were at Holywell Pond on 5th and two to three at Big Waters on 3rd (GB). A breeding pair was at Backworth during the month (CGK) and a pair was carrying food for young at Swallow Pond on 20th, this latter report the first confirmed breeding record for the site (JPD/MPF). Two singing birds were at St Mary's Wetland on 1st and a pair here on 2nd and 13th. Twos were also singing at Bates mine-water treatment works (Blyth) on 3rd, Caistron on 4th and Hauxley NR on 24th. Singles were also heard singing at Druridge Bay CP, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Holy Island Lough throughout the month and Howdon Wetland NR.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Two pairs were found in the Spindlestone area during the month (CGK) and three were at Craggside on 12th (IRD). Two were on a roof top in Lambley Village on 26th. Breeding was confirmed at Wooler Haugh (two juveniles) on 5th and Thrum Mill (one fledgling) on 2nd. Singles were also reported from Arcot Hall GC, Belsay Hall, Big Waters, where the species is rare, Eachwick, Jesmond Dene, Valley Park (Cramlington) and Walwick.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Breeding was confirmed at High House road (Morpeth-Mitford), where five juveniles were attended by two adults on 17th (TD) and in the Big Waters area where a family party of three to four were noted on 9th (GB). The only other report was of a single at Jesmond Dene on 3rd.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

By far the highest count was 16 at Wooler Haugh on 5th (JR). Seven were reported from Kidlandlee on 20th, five at Cockle Park Farm on 12th and four in Jesmond Dene on 3rd. Three were at Hulne Park (Alnwick) on 10th and a single at Newburn on 1st. An active nest was found on top of a Swallow's nest in a hide entrance at Caistron on 4th (STH).

The double-decker Wren's nest at Caistron by Steve Holliday.

**Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*

130+ at Prestwick Carr on 28th was the highest count (PRM) and 100 were at Beacon Point (Newbiggin) on 2nd (STH). A flock of 70 at Howdon Wetland NR on 3rd had declined to nil within two weeks and 55+ were at Corbridge on 2nd. One to 13 were reported from a further four localities.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Four birds were found from Branton-Ingram (Breamish Valley) on 18th (MRS) and three at Wooler Haugh on 5th. At Jesmond Dene (Waterfall) a pair was feeding a brood of two young on 3rd (DHWB). Single were also reported from Holywell Dene, Ponteland, Thrum Mill (Rothbury) and Wark (North Tyne).

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

The only report was of a juvenile at Makendon (Upper Coquetdale) on 17th (JR).

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

24 were found at Wooler Haugh on 5th (JR) and 11 were 'worming' in the hotel grounds at Sleafy Hall on 24th (RMH). Four to eight were also reported from Cockle Park Farm, Eachwick and Jesmond Dene. After five attempts at building a magpie-proof nest in a Kenton garden last month, the bird managed to fledge her brood by the end of the month. Another pair fledged three young from a Cramlington garden.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Torrential rain brought a very late bird down at Chare Ends (Holy Island) on 9th (IK).

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Only four reports this month; seven at Wooler Haugh on 5th (JR), five in Jesmond Dene on 10th, four at Cockle Park Farm on 12th and a single at Kidlandlee on 20th.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

One to three were noted at Jesmond Dene, Kidlandlee, Newcastle Civic Centre, Walwick and Wooler Haugh.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Two pairs were at Linden Hall during the month, two+ in the Breamish Valley on 9th and two in Kielder Forest on 23rd. Pairs, probably breeding were noted at Stamfordham and Wallridge and a bird was collecting food at Howick Hall on 25th. Elsewhere single were reported from Belsay Castle, Eshott, Hadston, Harthope Valley, Howdon Wetland NR, Milbourne Hall near Ponteland, Old Quickening Cote, Rothbury, Rowhope and Wark (North Tyne).

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

11 were at Wooler Haugh on 5th (JR) and one to three at a further four localities.

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Three breeding pairs were at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) and two broods (seven young) were noted here during the month (MR). Eight (seven males / one female) were found in the Black Heddon-Wallridge area on 10th (ASJ) and four males were at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) on 13th. Three, including a female carrying food were at Holystone on 4th and young were being fed at Howlett Hall (Bolam) on 19th and Walwick on 13th. Elsewhere one to two were noted at Bickerton, Great Whittington, Grasslees Burn, Haughton Castle (Humshaugh), Matfen, Netherwitton, Rothbury and Wallington Hall.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

In Upper Coquetdale, 13 (including two juveniles) were found at Kidlandlee on 20th (MHM), two pairs (one with a brood of five) in the Alwin Valley on 30th (JR), a pair with a brood of five at Makendon on 23rd (JR) and two in the Alwinton area on 2nd. In the Breamish Valley the maximum count was seven adults at Linhope Burn on 29th (IFo) and two pairs and a singing male were at Knock Hill on 11th (PC). In the south-west a nest with three naked chicks on 20th had failed by 23rd after 48 hours of rain (SW). Another male was singing at Halton Lea Gate on 6th.

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

At East Chevington the maximum count was two pairs and two juveniles on 21st-24th (TRD/ASJ), although three juveniles had been recorded here earlier in the month. Elsewhere on the coast a pair and two juveniles were noted at Cresswell Pond on various dates, a pair were feeding young in the nest at Druridge Pools on 24th, a pair were at Embleton and two males on separate territories at High Newton on 4th and two juveniles at The Snook (Holy Island) on 18th. Inland breeding pairs were Kielder Forest on 28th and near Redesmouth on 18th and a male in the Breamish Valley on 9th.

Wheatear *Oenanthe Oenanthe*

Pairs were noted with broods in Upper Coquetdale at Bygate Farm (four young) on 10th and Usway Burn (five young) on 17th (JR). Two newly fledged broods were in the West Simonsides on 24th (IK) and two juveniles at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) on 26th (ALT). Two freshly fledged young on Holy Island on 30th suggested local breeding (IK). Also in a breeding area three were at Kidlandlee on 20th (MHM). One was at Beacon Point (Newbiggin) on 2nd and two at Holy Island on 3rd. A single was also noted near Chollerford on 5th.

A large female at Snipe Point (Holy Island) on 1st was probably of the **Greenland race** *O.o.leucorrhoa* (IK).

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

The only report received was a single at Wallington Hall on 1st (CW).

Duncock *Prunella modularis*

Seven were noted during a BBS survey at Cockle Park Farm on 12th (JR), six singing along a 1 km stretch of the Horton Burn (Cramlington) on 1st (LJM), up to four visited an Old Hartley garden all month (RJP), three at Jesmond Dene on 3rd (MJCo) and a Walbottle garden on 10th (KR/LA) and two at Wooler Haugh on 5th (JR).

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

19 were at Cockle Park Farm during a BBS on 12th (JR), 12 at Eachwick on 10th (CDB) and nine at Wooler Haugh on 5th (JR). Nine (including five juveniles) were at a Walbottle garden on 10th (KR/LR).

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Breeding was confirmed at Cresswell Pond on 24th where 20 including fledged juveniles were present (ASJ), at least four nest sites in old mill walls in Great Whittington on 5th (ALT), three pairs were carrying food at Battlesteads Hotel (Wark) on 27th (CB) and pairs feeding juveniles at Budle Bay (CGK), Eachwick (CDB), at Hedley on the Hill garden (per RWM), Linden Hall (NFO) and a Walbottle garden (KR/LR). 20+ were in the Stamfordham/Matfen area on 10th (ASJ), 15 at Hauxley on 15th (ASJ), ten+ at Holywell Grange on 25th (SPP) four at Haughton Castle on 1st (TWi) and one to three at Beacon Lane (Cramlington), Big Waters, a Dinnington garden, Doddington, Duddo, Shasun Pharma (Dudley), Haughton Strother GP, Thornton, West Ord and Whittle Dene.

Tree Sparrows at Eachwick by Chris Barlow

**Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava flavisora*

14 were at favoured Whittle Dene on 26th (SR). At least three pairs were on territory in a field just above the Battlesteads Hotel (Wark) on 27th (CB). A female with three newly fledged young were found at Allerdean (Berwick) on 18th (RMH). Three including two juveniles were at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) on 26th (ALT). Two were at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 18th (MR) and singles at Cresswell Pond on 2nd (MSK/NEWT) and Colwell on 12th (TWi).

A Yellow Wagtail at Whittle Dene Res.
5th June by Peter Fletcher

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*

Breeding was confirmed at Blindburn (Upper Coquetdale) on 17th (JR). Four were at Kidlandlee on 20th (MHM), pairs at Wooler Haugh on 5th (JR), Usway Burn, Rowhope, Shillmoor and Alwin Valley (all Upper Coquetdale) on 17th and 30th (JR). Singles were also noted at Bigg Market and St. Nicholas Cathedral (both Newcastle City Centre), Holywell Dene, Jesmond Dene, Lower Ouseburn (Byker), Thrum Mill (Rothbury), Vindolanda and Wallington Hall.

At Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 18th 13 juveniles were found plus a nest in a shovel which moves about 800 metres daily and the adults follow (MR). Pairs with fledged young were also noted at Belsay Castle on 4th (DM) and Shillmoor (Upper Coquetdale) on 30th (JR). A pair was at Vindolanda on 5th (DM) and one at Cockle Park Farm on 12th.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Two were at Sweethope Lough on 4th (JPD) and Oldpark Wood (Netherwitton) on 13th (TRD/JD). One was noted carrying food at Matfen on 5th (ALT). Other singles were at Holystone on 4th (NFO), Thrunton Woods on 10th (JD) and Slaley Forest on 13th (JPD).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

60 were observed at Hulne Park on 10th (MHM) and 13 at Kidlandlee on 20th (MHM).

A Meadow Pipit at Druridge Links by John Littleton

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Two were at Blyth Harbour on 5th (STH) and singles at Inner Farne (Farne Islands) on 1st (TRD) and Berwick Little Beach on 20th (TRD).

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Breeding was confirmed at Shillmoor (Upper Coquetdale) (JR) and Walbottle (KR/LR). 40 were noted during a WBBS survey at Wooler Haugh on 5th (JR), 18 at Kidlandlee on 20th (MHM), ten at Cockle Park Farm on 12th (JR) and seven at Jesmond Dene and Wooler Haugh.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

12, including four juveniles, visited a Walbottle garden on 2nd (KR/LR), six were at Eachwick on 10th (CDB), four at Cockle Park Farm on 12th (JR) and one-two at Jesmond Dene and Wooler Haugh.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

36 were at Doddington on 11th (JD), 16 at Blyth estuary on 28th (PRM), 13 at a Walbottle garden on 18th (KR/LR), five at Tynemouth on 5th (PRM), Hadston Carrs (Druridge Bay) on 7th (PRM), Eachwick on 10th (CDB), Cockle Park Farm on 12th (JR) and Walwick on 13th (PRM). One to four were at a further eight widespread localities including gardens at Brunswick Green (Wideopen) and Old Hartley.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Two flew north at Silverlink CP, North Shields on 20th (CGK) and one visited a Monkseaton (Whitley Bay) garden during heavy rain on 21st – very unusual for the time of year (MSH). 14 were at Haughton Strother GP on 7th (MR), ten+ at Kyloe Woods on 4th (MSH), six coming to feeders at Battlesteads Hotel (Wark) on 20th (KB), five+ at Linden Hall on 30th (NFO), four at Vindolanda on 5th (DM) and one to three at Belsay Hall, Derwent Reservoir, Walwick, Wark and Whittle Dene.

Three of our most colourful Finches.

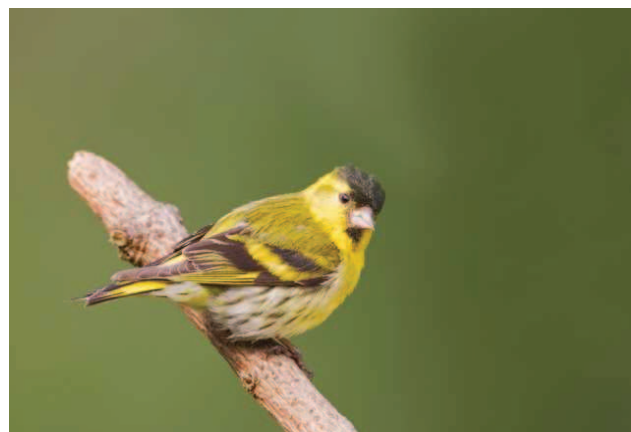
Top a Goldfinch and a Siskin, both by Colin Bradshaw from Wark and bottom a cock Linnet at Newton on 24th June by Tim Dean

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

13 were at Druridge Pools on 7th (PRM), 11 at Cockle Park Farm on 12th (JR), six at Wooler Haugh on 5th (JR) and Derwent Reservoir on 29th (PRM), five at Hulne Park on 10th (MHM) and Prestwick Carr on 28th (PRM). Four were at Howdon Wetland NR all month (CB) and one to two at a further five widespread localities.

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis caberret*

15+ were at Holystone on 4th (NFO) 12+ at Sweethope Lough on 4th (JPD), six at Swallow Pond on 20th (JPD), two at Grindon Lough on 7th (PRM) and Batallshiel Haugh (Upper Coquetdale) on 17th (JR). Singles were also at Walwick on 13th (PRM) and Battlesteads Hotel (Wark) on 27th (CB). A breeding plumage male was found dead in a raptor food cache at West Simonsides on 24th (IK).



Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

30 (family groups in flock) were at Thrunton Woods on 30th (TRD/JD). 30 flew north-west at Scotland Gate on 25th (MSK), 18 south over Beacon Lane (Cramlington) on 5th (DM), 17 at Airy Holm Reservoir near Shotleyfield on 1st (IFo), ten at Sweethope Lough on 4th (JPD) and Whittle Dene on 17th (MR), seven at Grindon Green on 18th (AJR), six at Matfen on 5th (ALT) and one-five at Arcot Pond, Colt Crag, Cramlington, Holystone, Swallow Pond and a Wallsend garden.

A juvenile Bullfinch at Gosforth NR
by Simon Elliott

**Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Breeding was noted at Gosforth on 24th (STE) and Old Hartley (RJP). Four were at Craggside on 12th (JD), three at a Walbottle garden on 17th (KR/LR), two daily at Scotland Gate (SLB/MSK), a pair at Northburn (Cramlington) on 3rd (LJM), Wallsend Dene on 5th (CDH) and Howdon Wetland NR on 10th (CGK/PS). Singles were also at Cockle Park Farm, Jesmond Dene, Rothbury, Valley Park (Cramlington) and Walwick.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Breeding was confirmed in fields above Battlesteads Hotel (Wark) on 27th (CB). 23 males were singing in Stamfordham/Matfen area on 10th (ASJ), nine at Holywell on 25th (ASJ), five at Cockle Park Farm on 12th (JR) and one-three at Big Waters, the Blyth Estuary, Dissington-Darras Hall, Eachwick, Linton Ponds, Walwick and Whittle Dene.

A vocal Yellowhammer at Bellasis
6th June by Peter Fletcher

*** Rustic Bunting** *Emberiza rustica*

A breeding plumage male was present on Inner Farne (Farne Islands) 31st May-1st June (FIW/CDB/TRD/JPD/MPF).

The Rustic Bunting on Inner Farne
Tim Dean
1st June

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

12 singing males were at Swallow Pond on 19th (JPD), 11 males at St. Mary's Wetland on 25th (ASJ), six at Druridge Pools on 7th (PRM), five at Upper Coquetdale on 27th (IFo), four at East Chevington on 7th (PRM) and Prestwick Carr on 28th (PRM) and one-three at a further six typical localities. A pair were feeding young at 350m above sea level at Blackburn Head on 12th (AJR).

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

After two last month an intriguing five turned up at Cresswell Pond on 12th (TB *et al*) dropping to four by 20th and only a single through to 27th. It would be interesting to speculate as to their origin but probably would not involve them having flown over the Himalayas.

One of the Bar-headed Geese at Cresswell
by Colin Bradshaw

**Muscovy Duck** *Cairina moschata*

The pair remained at Elswick Wharf until at least 25th (DM). The flirtly female was again seen displaying to a Mallard

Weaver *Ploceus sp*

A weaver photographed in a Newbiggin garden on 17th showed features of Weyns, Golden-backed or Yellow-backed Weaver so presumably was a captive hybrid (*per* TB).

Hybrids

Herring Gull x Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus argentatus* x *Larus fuscus*

An adult hybrid showing similarity to a Yellow-legged Gull but with an anomalous wing pattern was present at Big Waters from 3rd to 7th (GB).

WEATHER

With low pressure over or close to the UK for the whole month, it was exceptionally wet with showers or longer periods of rain on most days. There was an almost complete absence of fine, settled spells.

The mean temperature was 0.2 deg C below the 1971-2000 average, making it the coolest June since 1991. It was very wet across almost all areas including Northumberland. Provisionally it was the second wettest June on record. The number of days with rain was the third highest for June in the last 50 years. Sunshine amounts were well below normal and provisionally it was the second dullest June on record.

1st to 4th: After a dry, warm start to the month, slow-moving fronts produced rain or drizzle.

5th to 9th: After a chilly start to 5th in the north and east rain moved north-eastwards. There was a very wet and windy spell from 7th to 9th. More than 20 mm of rainfall was recorded on 7th.

10th to 13th: A shallow but active depression ran across southern areas on 10th and 11th with over 15 mm rainfall recorded widely each day. Further north it was more showery.

14th to 17th: Another wet and windy period with rain spreading north-eastwards on 14th, clearing the north during 16th. Strong winds began to ease on 17th.

18th to 20th: A warmer spell, with temperatures widely reaching 20 °C.

21st to 24th: Unsettled, as a low pressure area moved north-eastwards. Heavy rain on 21st was followed by bands of showers circulating around the low, becoming thundery across the south and with winds gusting above 40 mph.

25th to 28th: Warm, humid air moving northwards brought rather cloudy, muggy conditions. Hill and coastal fog became a feature over western areas as sporadic rain spread to all parts with some heavy showery bursts on 27th. Thunderstorms developed in the south-west early on 28th, and a series of thunderstorms later across parts of northern England brought torrential downpours, frequent lightning and large hail. Rainfall totals of 20 to 30 mm in an hour were reported widely.

29th to 30th: A fresher feel, but unsettled conditions continued with showers tending to form bands and some turning heavy and thundery. Eastern and south-eastern parts were driest.

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Berwick Wildlife Group, Northern Experience Wildlife Tours.

Apologies for any accidental omissions

BULLETIN COMPILATION AND PRODUCTION

This bulletin was compiled by Graeme Bowman (Mute Swan to Ruddy Duck), Lindsay McDougall (Red Grouse to Black-necked Grebe), Trevor Blake (Honey Buzzard to Crane), Steve Holliday (Oystercatcher to Dunlin) Ian Forsyth (Snipe to Skua), Eddie Crabtree (Ivory Gull to Puffin), Tim Dean (Escapes, Hybrids and Unknown Origin, List of Contributors, Highlights), Peter Fletcher (Feral Pigeon to Red-rumped Swallow), Mike Richardson (Cetti's Warbler to Pied Flycatcher), Dee McKeown (Duncock to Corn Bunting), Dan Turner (WeBS Coastal Counts) and Steve Holliday (WeBS Inland Counts). Thanks again to Ann McKeown for typing the section Duncock to Corn Bunting. Thanks to David Sanders of NNBC for providing data.

Edited by Steve Barrett NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.com

Postal distribution Paul Stewart.

RECORD SUBMISSION

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 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 NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.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 cost of printing and stamps. Ask for an e-mailed bulletin from:

ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

For membership enquiries please contact ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

NTBC WEB SITE

The Club website is an excellent resource for all interested in birds in the north east. There are numerous interesting sections, including a photograph gallery, site information and trip reports together with extensive reference information for birding in our area. The site is at www.ntbc.org.uk

If you have any ideas or things you would like to see or hear about on the site please let Chris know on 0751 582 5024 or e-mail christopher.knox@o2.co.uk

NTBC SIGHTINGS PAGE

The club sightings web page gives listings of birds seen locally. Adding a sighting is simple. A short e-mail is all that is needed. If anyone would like to be added as a contributor please contact Alan Tilmouth at ntbcorg@gmail.com. The sightings page can be found at <http://ntbcsightings.posterous.com>

ICELANDIC BREEDING GREY GOOSE CENSUS

Northumberland 2010-2012

This long-running annual monitoring scheme run by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust counts wintering Icelandic Greylag *Anser anser* and Pink-footed Geese *A. brachyrhynchus*. It is based primarily on roost counts, with priority count dates in 2010 of 9/10th October, 6/7th November and 4/5th December, and in 2011-12 of 1/2nd October, 5/6th November, 3/4th December and 25/26th February. To meet current arrival dates, Pink-footed Geese are counted in October and November and Greylag Geese, due to their later arrival dates, in November and December. Sites holding both species are counted in all three months. Surveys were mostly undertaken at either dawn or dusk, although some daytime counts were also carried out.

An additional spring census was carried out of as many sites as possible in February 2012. This census will help to determine the distribution of Pink-footed and Greylag Geese during early spring when they are preparing to leave for their breeding grounds.

Most traditional roost sites were counted during both 2010 and 2011/12, although, for a number of reasons, the Tweed Estuary, Hedgeley Gravel Pits, Branton Gravel Pits, Hallington Reservoir, Colt Crag Reservoir and Derwent Reservoir were not counted. For instance, heavy snowfall in many areas of the county during November and December 2010 caused a number of surveys, particularly in the more remote areas of the county, to be abandoned.

Other geese and swan species were also recorded where present and these have been detailed in tables 2 and 3 below alongside Pink-footed and Greylag Goose.

Table 1. Icelandic-breeding Goose Census: Survey coverage in 2010 and 2011/12

	Number of surveys in							
	October 2010	November 2010	December 2010	October 2011	November 2011	December 2011	January 2012	February 2012
Big Waters	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0
Branton Gravel Pits	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Caistron Quarry	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Colt Crag Reservoir	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cresswell Pond	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
Derwent Reservoir	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
East Chevington	1	1	1	0	2	0	1	0
Grindon Lough	0	2	0	1	3	1	2	0
Hallington Reservoirs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hedgeley Gravel Pits	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holburn Moss NNR	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holburn & Greymare Flashes	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1
Holywell Pond	1	1	1	1	2	1	0	1
Lindisfarne NNR	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1
Long Nanny	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Maiden's Hall Lake	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Newton Pool	1	3	2	0	0	0	0	0
Prestwick Carr	1	1	1	0	3	2	1	2
Tweed Estuary	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Whittle Dene Reservoirs	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0

Table 2. Icelandic-breeding Goose Census: Results of the 2010 Surveys

	Big Waters	Caistron Quarry	East Chevington	Grindon Lough	Holburn Moss NNR	Holywell Pond	Lindisfarne NNR	Long Nanny	Newton Pool	Prestwick Carr	Monthly Total
Count Date											
October	-	-	9th	-	?	10th	?	12th	10th	10th	
November	7th	6th	7th	6 & 7	?	6th	?	-	7,15,26	6th	
December	5th	-	5th	-	-	7th	-	20th	16, 20	4th	

Pink-footed Goose											
October	-	-	2680	-	800	0	2630	30	0	0	6140
November	0	0	1500	0	250	150	660	-	0	0	2560
December	0	-	45	-	-	300	-	0	0	0	345
Greylag Goose											
October	-	-	0	-	0	73	0	0	0	0	73
November	0	98	74	8	0	0	60	-	100	98	438
December	0	-	68	-	-	25	-	0	220	0	313
Greenland White-fronted Goose											
October	-	-	0	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
November	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	1
December	0	-	0	-	-	0	-	0	0	0	0
Canada Goose											
October	-	-	0	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
November	0	32	0	442	0	0	0	-	0	0	474
December	0	-	0	-	-	0	-	0	0	0	0
Pale-bellied Brent Goose											
October	-	-	0	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
November	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	0
December	0	-	0	-	-	0	-	64	63	0	127
Mute Swan											
October	-	-	0	-	0	4	0	0	0	0	4
November	0	18	0	4	0	4	0	-	0	0	26
December	0	-	0	-	-	0	-	0	0	0	0
Whooper Swan											
October	-	-	0	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
November	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	-	0	0	10
December	0	-	0	-	-	0	-	0	0	0	0

Table 3. Icelandic-breeding Goose Census: Results of the 2011-12 Surveys

	Big Waters	Cresswell Pond	East Chevington	Grindon Lough	Holburn & Greymare Flashes	Holywell Pond	Lindisfarne NNR	Maiden's Hall Lake	Prestwick Carr	Whittle Dene Reservoirs	Monthly Total
Count Date											
October	-	-	-	13th	?	2nd	?	-	-	20th	
November	30th	25th	5, 25	7, 24, 30	?	6 & 10	?	-	3, 6, 30	22nd	
December	1st	-	-	3rd	?	4th	?	-	3 & 4	8th	
January	-	12th	4, 12	2, 19	-	-	-	-	13th	19th	
February	-	-	26th	-	?	25th	?	26th	25 & 26	-	
Pink-footed Goose											
October	-	-	-	2	175	0	2400	-	-	0	2577
November	0	0	3800	0	250	72	5250	-	0	0	9372
December	0	-	-	0	150	0	1675	-	0	1	1826
January	-	47	803	0	-	-	-	-	0	0	850
February	-	-	0	-	0	0	1100	2000	0	-	3100
Greylag Goose											
October	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	-	-	0	0
November	97	0	400	47	0	0	0	-	2	20	566
December	0	-	-	0	0	11	0	-	14	190	215
January	-	79	310	0	-	-	-	-	0	0	389
February	-	-	0	-	33	0	0	20	40	-	93
Greenland White-fronted Goose											
October	-	-	-	1	0	0	0	-	-	0	1
November	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	-	0	0	2
December	0	-	-	2	0	0	0	-	0	0	2
January	-	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	0	0	0
February	-	-	0	-	0	0	0	0	0	-	0

European White-fronted Goose											
October	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	-	-	0	0
November	0	3	31	25	0	0	0	-	0	0	59
December	0	-	-	25	0	0	0	-	2	1	28
January	-	1	0	0	-	-	-	-	0	0	1
February	-	-	0	-	0	0	0	60	0	-	60
Barnacle Goose											
October	-	-	-	7	0	0	0	-	-	0	7
November	2	0	800	3	0	0	0	-	0	0	805
December	0	-	-	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	1
January	-	0	150	1	-	-	-	-	0	0	151
February	-	-	0	-	0	0	0	30	0	-	30
Canada Goose											
October	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	-	-	0	0
November	0	0	0	486	0	0	0	-	0	0	486
December	0	-	-	360	0	0	0	-	2	0	362
January	-	0	0	304	-	-	-	-	0	0	304
February	-	-	0	-	0	0	0	0	4	-	4
Tundra Bean Goose											
October	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	-	-	0	0
November	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	15	0	15
December	0	-	-	0	0	0	0	-	14	0	14
January	-	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	0	0	0
February	-	-	0	-	0	0	0	20	0	-	20
Mute Swan											
October	-	-	-	0	0	4	0	-	-	0	4
November	15	0	8	5	0	4	0	-	0	0	32
December	10	-	-	2	0	0	0	-	0	0	12
January	-	0	29	0	-	-	-	-	0	0	29
February	-	-	0	-	0	2	0	0	0	-	2
Whooper Swan											
October	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	-	-	0	0
November	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	15
December	13	-	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	13
January	-	1	9	0	-	-	-	-	0	0	10
February	-	-	0	-	0	0	0	0	0	-	0
Bewick's Swan											
October	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	-	-	0	0
November	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	0
December	0	-	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	0
January	-	0	2	0	-	-	-	-	0	0	2
February	-	-	0	-	0	0	0	0	0	-	0

Acknowledgements

This summary was assembled from the survey work undertaken by the following: S.L. Barratt, A. Craggs, I.S. Davidson, P. Fletcher, M. Kitching, P.R.Massey, K. Redgrave and P. Tapsell. Without the continued efforts of all the above individuals, year upon year, there would be nothing to report. Apologies for any accidental omissions.

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COASTAL WEBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

JUNE 2012

Site	TOTAL																														
	Berwick North Shore (including Little Beach)		Berwick Little Beach		Tweed Estuary		Tweed: A1 By-Pass to Horncliffe		Spital - Cocklawburn		Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay)		(Budle Bay)		Buddle Pt - Seashouses		Aln Estuary		Almouath South		Coquet Estuary		Blyth Estuary		St Mary's Island Quay		Wallsend, (north bank only)		Redheugh - Scotswood Bridge, (north bank)		Scotswood - Newburn Bridge, (north bank)
Counter	MHu	MHu	MHu	TB	MHu	AC	AC	RP	TAC	RP	RP	LJM	NA	DMT	DMT	PF	PF														
Date	21	21	22	27	20	24	24	23	25	24	25	23	24	27	30	24	24														
Red-throated Diver	1					1			3																						
Comorant	115	11	4	1	4	51						31	3	4	3																
Shag	78	20			18	16		17			5	2																			
Grey Heron	33	3	1	8	4	1	8	2	4	4				1																	
Mute Swan	284	34	8	128	3	56	52		7		46	8	2																		
Canada Goose	11								10			1																			
Barnacle Goose	1		1																												
Light-bellied Brent Goose	1					1																									
Shelduck	215				4	166	124		6		24	12	1				2														
Wigeon	3					3																									
Teal	20					20																									
Mallard	76	4	2	18	7	2	6		10			6	4		3		16														
Tufted Duck	2												2																		
Eider	498	22	14		53	257	18	12	4	26	36	32	33	9																	
Common Scoter	206				22	150				34																					
Red-breasted Merganser	24					24	4																								
Goosander	158	4	117	25	7	5																									
Moorhen	7			1					2			3	1																		
Oystercatcher	218	46	25	4	6	105	31	7	16	3	3	11	6	7			2														
Ringed Plover	12					11							1																		
Grey Plover	23					23	14																								
Lapwing	20					9			2		9																				
Dunlin	32					32																									
Bar-tailed Godwit	11					11																									
Curlew	622	2	22			524	32	2	39		5	24		4																	
Redshank	18					7			4				1			6															
Greenshank	2					2																									
Turnstone	9					8								1																	
Black-headed Gull	314	12	2	3	3	186	71		53			22	13	1	5	13	3														
Common Gull	18					15			1					2																	
Lesser Black-backed Gull	68	1	6	2	2	8						7			2	37	3														
Herring Gull	1,537	47	10	516	5	164	21		1			96	132	196	46	167	13														
Great Black-backed Gull	129	1	11			11	8					9	3	38		37	19														
Kittiwake	220	6	180			12						1	2	13	6																
Sandwich Tern	127	6	3		30	36		6			6	4	20	19																	
Roseate Tern	1												1																		
Common Tern	24					17		2		3				1	1																
Arctic Tern	86					76		4		6																					
Little Tern	12					12																									
Kingfisher	0																														
ADDITIONAL SPECIES																															
Little Egret	4		2			1	1		1																						
Muscovy Duck	1															1															
TOTALS - WILDFOWL	1,733	98	11	290	38	764	200	29	46	60	115	95	46	13	7	0	18														
- WADERS	967	48	25	26	2	6	732	77	9	61	3	17	35	8	12	0	6														
- GULLS & TERNS	2,536	73	15	716	7	199	527	100	12	55	0	15	139	171	268	62	254														

Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

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

Bulletin 2012 No 7

MONTHLY SUMMARY – JULY

4th September 2012



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Best Birding Sites in NE England

The popular Pectoral Sandpiper
Cresswell
by Chris Barlow
13th July



CLASSIFIED LIST HIGHLIGHTS

Long-tailed Duck	Early single at East Chevington on 27th then Cresswell Pond.
Velvet Scoter	Small passage mid-month.
Goosander	Huge moulting flock of 246 off Cocklawburn on 30th.
Sooty Shearwater	Small passage mid-month.
Bittern	Summering bird still at Gosforth Park.
Spoonbill	Two at Cresswell Pond on 24th.
Pectoral Sandpiper	Popular bird at Cresswell Pond from 13th to 17th. Also one at Newton Flash.
Red-necked Phalarope	Superb summer-plumaged female at Backworth Flash. First in county since 2006.
Little Gull	Peak flock of 26 at Cresswell Pond on 2nd.
Mediterranean Gull	Numbers increasing at Newbiggin with 28 on 28th.
Red-backed Shrike	Fine male at East Chevington from 6th to 8th.

COMMITTEE NEWS

Subscriptions are now due. Don't forget if you don't pay up you won't get the 2011 BIN.

Committee members are still needed.

AGM is on 11th October. For details see later this bulletin.

NTBC 2013 calendars will soon be on sale to raise funds for the Atlas. The calendar features the best photographs from the last couple of years. Also an auction of art will be held at the October meeting. The framed paintings are splendid buys and have featured in NTBC publications, including BIN. They have been donated by the artists who are all club members. Again, all profits will go to the Atlas. So now there is no need to worry about what to buy mum for Christmas.

You will have noted that the excellent NTBC web-site is up and running at full speed again. Mike and Chris have burnt the midnight oil to eliminate the bugs and the committee thank them wholeheartedly.

Tape luring is a controversial topic and a policy has been agreed. See after the Classified section.

INDOOR MEETINGS

The next indoor meeting will be at Northern Rugby Club, McCracken Park, Great North Road, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 2DT on Thursday 13th September at 7pm.

Visible Migration of Birds by Keith Clarkson - East Coast Reserves Manager for the RSPB.

FIELD TRIPS

The next of Trevor Blake's popular trips is on Sunday 7th October to Holy Island.

The Saltholme trip on Sunday 9th September was cancelled. Sorry for the inconvenience.

Please contact Trevor direct for more information: trevor.1958@live.co.uk

CLASSIFIED LIST

The following account consists of unchecked reports. The species/subspecies marked * require descriptions.

A complete list of all sightings that need notes is included in the NTBC website www.ntbc.org.uk under the County Records Committee section and in Birds in Northumbria 2009 page 224.

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

TARGET SPECIES

The target species for 2012 are all the owls. Please report all records in as much detail as possible. The Club is sensitive to the vulnerability of these species to disturbance and persecution, and will be particularly cautious about what is actually published, above all about nesting and roosting sites. Please address questions or concerns to Tim Dean or Dick Myatt.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Peak counts were 168 at Killingworth Lake on 13th (LJM), 93 at QEII CP Lake on 28th (LJM), 84 at the Tweed Estuary on 20th (MHu), and 46-63 at Bolam Lake (CDB), Budle Bay (DGB) and Meadow Haven (Berwick; MHu). Six to 15 were at Berwick North Shore, Bothal and Cresswell Ponds, Gosforth Park NR, Grindon Lough and Newcastle Leazes Park. Breeding data were as follows (broods not reported in previous months):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Ladyburn Lake	2	13 (7,6)	LJM. On 10th
Wansbeck Business Park, Ashington	1	5	LJM. On 28th
Woodhorn Flashes	1	4	STH/IFo. On 1st
Big Waters	1	2	GB. On 22nd
Castle Island	1	2	STH <i>et al.</i> On 20th

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

One was at Backworth on 29th (CGK).

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

A Eurasian *albifrons* race bird remained with Greylag Geese at Woodhorn Flashes on 14th (GB/IFo).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Hauxley Reserve held 195, including a brood of three, on 5th (PRM), 139 were at Backworth late in the month (CGK), 53 at East Chevington on 22nd (DM *et al.*), 38 at Cresswell Pond and 33, including 13 young, at Woodhorn Flashes. One to six were at seven further sites, including one at the Blyth Estuary.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Two flew S at Cocklawburn on 25th (MHu). Largest counts were 225 at Grindon Lough on 31st (AJR), 170 at Hauxley Reserve on 5th (AJR), 106 at Castle Island on 15th (STH/PJA), 89 at Killingworth Lake (LJM) and 26-38 at Bolam Lake, Cresswell Pond and Newcastle Leazes Park. Two to four were also at Arcot Pond, Castle Island and Greenlee Lough. Breeding data were as follows (additional to previous months):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Big Waters	1	6	GB. On 3rd

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

One to five were at Ashington, Backworth Pond, Castle Island, Grindon Lough, Howdon Wetland NR and Warkworth Gut. Most reports were of breeding birds (additional to previous months):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Boulmer	--	17	PCF. Plus 2 pairs. On 20th
Amble Braid	2	15 (11, 4)	STH/PJA. On 15th
Castle Island	2	12 (7,5)	STH/PJA. On 15th
Hauxley Reserve	2	11 (6,5)	IF. On 21st
Cresswell Pond	1	8	AJR. On 29th
West Stobswood Pool	1	8	MSH. On 19th

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

Single females were at Druridge Pools on 1st (SR/AH) and Gosforth Park NR on 30th (NHSN).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Three flew N at Low Newton on 25th (PRM). Grindon Lough held 16 (including four juveniles) on 26th (PRM), and up to 11 on several other dates. Ten were at Broomlee Lough on 21st (MRS), four to six at Arcot and Cresswell Ponds, and Hauxley Reserve, and singles at Coanwood Pond (agitated female), Druridge Pools and Gosforth Park NR. Breeding data were as follows (additional to previous months):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Grindon Lough	1	6	PRM. On 16th. Reduced to 4 young by 26th

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Peak counts were 11 at Hauxley Reserve on 5th (PRM), ten at Cresswell Pond on 25th (TRD/JD), ten at Linton Ponds on 15th (CDH), and five at Bothal Pond (four young), Castle Island and East Chevington. One was also at Druridge Pools. Breeding data were as follows (broods not reported in previous months):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Ladyburn Lake	2	14 (10,4)	LJM. On 10th
Castle Island	1	9	STH/PJA. Down to 8 young by 20th

The brood of 12 reported at Big Waters in June was reduced to five by 15th (GB). The report of a brood of 12 at Shasun Pharma, Dudley in June was erroneous and should be deleted.

Teal *Anas crecca*

A flock of 26 that flew S at Druridge Bay CP on 5th (PRM) was notable for the time of year, and two flew N at Newbiggin on 12th (PRM). Grindon Lough attracted a peak of 36 (including 12 young) on 31st (AJR), and two to 26 on several further dates (PRM). Three were at Gosforth Park NR and one to two at Arcot and Linton Ponds, Howdon Wetland NR, QEII CP Lake, St Mary's and Warkworth Gut. Breeding data were as follows (broods not reported in previous months):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Grindon Lough	2	12 (6,6)	AJR. Half-grown young on 31st

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

70 (including young) were at Gosforth Park NR during the month (NHSN), 67 at Low Newton on 25th (PRM), 66 at Derwent Reservoir on 25th (IFo), 42-55 at Big Waters, East Chevington and Newcastle Leazes Park, and 27-38 at Castle Island, Cresswell and Linton Ponds, Grindon Lough, Hauxley Reserve and the Tweed Estuary. Ten to 17 were also at Airy Holm Reservoir, Arcot Pond and Newcastle Civic Centre. Breeding data were as follows (additional to previous months unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Howdon Wetland NR	6	30	CB. May include earlier broods. Low fledging rate
Ladyburn Lake	4	25 (8,6,6,5)	LJM. On 10th. May include previously reported broods
Holywell Pond	2	16 (8,8)	LJM. On 4th
Newcastle Exhibition Park	2	13 (10,3)	GB. Brood of ten on 19th down to 5 young by 25th. Brood of 3 on 13th
Newcastle Leazes Park	2	9 (5,4)	DM. On 1st-2nd
Byker	2	7 (5,2)	GB. On 31st
Castle Island	1	8	STH <i>et al.</i> On 20th
Newsham Pond, Blyth	1	8	PJA. Large young on 28th
Warkworth Gut	1	6	DM <i>et al.</i> On 22nd
QEII CP Lake	1	5	LJM. On 28th
Blyth Estuary	1	4	LJM. On 14th
Oxford Pits	1	4	MHu. On 6th
Derwent Reservoir	1	3	IFo. Large young on 25th
Killingworth Lake	1	3	LJM. New brood on 13th

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Few reports; Eight were at Low Newton on 25th (PRM), six at Cresswell Pond on 26th (IFo), and two at Backworth and Swallow Ponds (MSH/CGK).

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

15 adults (12 drakes) were at Holywell Pond on 4th (LJM), 13 adults, plus three young from June, at Killingworth Lake on 21st (GB), six at Arcot Pond (GMi) and Bothal Pond on 23rd (TF/JFa), three at Gosforth Park NR, and one to two at Broomlee and Grindon Loughs, Holy Island Loughs, and Low Newton.

Pochard breeding data were as follows (additional to previous months unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Holywell Pond	3	13 (5,4,4)	LJM. On 4th. May include broods from June

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Largest gatherings were 64 at Killingworth Lake on 21st (GB), 63 at Broomlee Lough on 21st (MRS), 53 at East Chevington on 22nd (DM *et al.*), 43 at Ladyburn Lake (IFo), 20-28 at Grindon Lough, Holywell Pond and Prestwick Carr, and 11-17 at Castle Island, Holy Island Lough, Newcastle Leazes Park and Woodhorn Flashes. One to nine were at eight further sites. Breeding data were as follows (additional to previous months unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Howdon Wetland NR	2	16 (11,5)	CB. From 8th. Brood of 11 later reduced to 2
Wansbeck Business Park, Ashington	2	8 (6,2)	LJM. On 28th
East Chevington North Pool	1	8	DM <i>et al.</i> On 22nd
Gosforth Park (not NR)	1	8	GB. On 29th
Ladyburn Lake	1	7	LJM. On 10th
Coanwood Pond	1	6	AJR. On 3rd
Big Waters	1	5	GB. On 17th. Reduced to 3 by 22nd
Woodhorn Flashes	1-2	12-17	CDH/LJM. Brood of 12 on 15th and brood of 5 on 28th
Cresswell Pond	1	2	DM <i>et al.</i> On 22nd
West Stobswood Pool	1	2	GB/IFo. On 14th



A family of Tufted Duck at Druridge Pools
Tim Dean on 13th July

Scaup *Aythya marila*

Single ducks were at East Chevington on 26th (CB) and Cresswell Pond on 27th (TB).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

About 500, mainly moulting drakes, were in the Black Law-Ross area of Lindisfarne NNR all month (IK). Elsewhere, 40 were at Beadnell on 25th (PRM), 32-37 at Berwick North Shore and Cocklawburn (MHu), 12-17 at Newbiggin, Spittal Bay and the Tyne Estuary-North Shields Fish Quay, and seven to eight at Blyth South Harbour and the Tweed Estuary.



A duck Eider
Coquet Island
Adriana Buskin
21st July

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

An unseasonable bird was at East Chevington North Pool between 22-26th (ADMc *et al.*). It, or another was at Cresswell Pond on 31st (TB/ADMc).

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Northerly movement involved a total of 149 at Newbiggin on four dates between 5th-19th, including 67 on 14th and 38 on 5th (PRM/AT), 60 at Hauxley on 8th (STE), 36 at Spittal Bay on 23rd (MHu), 31 at the Long Nanny Estuary on 14th (PRM), and 22 at Cresswell, while 16 flew S at St Mary's on 6th (MSH). There were few flocks, 130 at Cocklawburn on 30th (MHu) being the largest, while 32 were in Druridge Bay on 20th (PCF), 30 about 3km off St Mary's on 6th (MSH), 14 at Newbiggin and one to six off Cresswell and Warkworth. A flock of seven drakes and two ducks at Airy Holm Reservoir (near Shotleyfield) on 10th was a notable inland record (IFo).

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

All records were of birds moving north, with six at Berwick pier (MHu) and one at Newbiggin (AT) on 19th, and singles at Holy Island on 20th (IK), and Cresswell (STE) and the Long Nanny Estuary (PRM) on 25th.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

One flew N at Newbiggin on 12th (PRM). Three were at the Tweed Estuary on 20th (MHu), two ducks were regularly at Holy Island Lough (IK) and one was at Arcot Pond on 25th and 27th (DM/GMi). Three large juveniles were at a confidential site in the north of the county on 26th (TRD/JD).

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Two flew N at Hauxley on 21st (STE). Five were at Budle Bay on 25th (DGB) and three from 21st-23rd (DGB/CGK), two at Newbiggin on 5th (PRM), and singles off Cresswell, Howick and Newbiggin. One was on the north pool at East Chevington on 26th (TB).

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

The moulting flock at Cocklawburn numbered an impressive 246 on 30th (MHu), 136 were at the Tweed Estuary on 20th (MHu), ten to 18 at Meadow Haven and North Shore (both Berwick), and New Water Haugh (River Tweed). Six to eight were at Budle Bay and Spittal Bay, four to five at St Mary's, Wark and Warkworth, and one to two at Boulmer, Cornhill on Tweed, Fenham Flats, Harthope Valley, Killingworth Lake and Low Newton. Five at the Blyth Estuary on 14th included a duck with two medium-sized young (LJM).

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

The only record was of a pair with two chicks at Gowkhill (Rothbury) on 27th (TRD).

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Three were at Acomb on 1st (AJH) and near Holywell Dene) on 31st. Two were at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) on 19th (ALT).

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Four (two pairs) were in Budle Bay on 20th (CGK) and three at West Ord on 8th and Loandean (Horncliffe) on 15th (MHu). One to two were at Backworth, Big Waters, Cocklawburn, Cresswell Links and Pond, Druridge Pools, Hold House (Ponteland), Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal), Ord Moor, Prestwick Carr and West Hartford.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Singles were heard singing at Bellasis Bridge on 2nd/3rd (TB/PCF) and West Stobswood on 24th (PJA).

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Adults were seen accompanying single juveniles in a Walbottle garden (KR/LR) on 1st and at West Chevington on 10th (LJM). An all-black male was at Bolton (Alnwick) on 12th (JMA).

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Light passage was noted with a peak of six N at Newbiggin on 28th (STE). Three in summer plumage flew N in 30 minutes at St Mary's Island on 9th (MSH). Two flew N at Hauxley on 8th and 25th, Boulmer on 11th, Druridge Bay and Newbiggin on 14th and a single flew N at Newbiggin on 12th. Two flew S at Spittal Bay on 23rd and a single at Newbiggin on 14th. Offshore three in summer plumage were in Druridge Bay on 15th (TF/JFa) and a further three were off Newbiggin on 25th (TRD/JD). One to two were off Scar Rocks (Cresswell) and East Chevington.

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

One was off Cheswick on 16th (MHu).

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Four pairs were at Whitley Bay cliffs on 16th, but no young were apparent (JMA). One to four were seen at Cresswell, Newbiggin, Newton Point, Snab Point and Tweed Estuary.

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

Light N movement was noted with four in two hours at St Mary's Island on 19th (AC), two at Newbiggin on 12th (AT) and singles at St Mary's Island and Druridge Bay on 20th (PCF/AT).

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

The largest N movements were at Newbiggin with 33 on 19th (AT), 30 in two hours on 12th (PRM) and 15 on 25th, when eight flew N at Snab Point (TRD/JD). One to five flew N at Amble, Annstead, Beadnell, Berwick Pier, Boulmer, Druridge Bay, Long Nanny, Low Newton, Newbiggin, Newton Point and at sea two miles east of Blyth. Three flew S at Newbiggin in one hour on 5th.

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

The largest movements were in the Berwick area with 1,200/hour S at the pier on 19th and 600/hour S at Sharper's Head on 5th (MHu). Elsewhere 58 flew N and four S at Newbiggin in 1 hour on 5th and 42 flew N in 30 minutes at Low Newton on 25th (PRM). 30 minute counts at Druridge Bay on 20th and St Mary's Island on 9th produced 23 and 22 respectively (PCF/MSH). At Boulmer 20 flew N on 11th (TRD). Large offshore feeding gatherings occurred on 15th when 250+ were off Boulmer (STE) and 200 off Castle Point (Holy Island) (IK). On 13th feeding groups of 120 were off Cresswell and 100 off East Chevington (TRD/JD). Two to 15 were noted off *Cresswell Ices*, Hauxley, Newbiggin, Newton Point, Snab Point and Stag Rocks.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

The peak Blyth Harbour roost count was 90 on 8th with 57 on the pier and 33 on the offshore wind turbines (DMT). At North Shields Fish Quay the peak count was 35 on 24th (DMT). Other large gatherings were 34 at East Chevington North Pool on 22nd (DM/STH/PJA), 26 at Newbiggin on 14th (AT), 25 at Amble on 27th (PCF), 22 at Berwick North Shore on 22nd (MHu) and Castle Island on 29th (AT), 19 at Derwent Reservoir on 11th (IFo) and 14 at Howdon Wetland NR on 25th (CB). Nine were at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 1st and one to six at Beadnell, Hauxley and Gosforth Park NR.

Continental Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*

A first-summer bird was at Beadnell on 25th (PRM).

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

The peak counts were 30 at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 1st, 27 at Berwick Shore on 22nd (MHu), 20 at Stag Rocks on 19th (TRD/JD) and 15 at Blyth South Harbour on 16th, although none was present on 26th (STH). Two to four were at Newton Point and Spittal Bay.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

One was seen in Gosforth Park NR on 1st/22nd (NHSN).

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Two flew N at Low Newton on 25th (PRM). Three were present in Warkworth Gut from 26th-31st, where two were seen on 11th and a single on 22nd (many observers). Two were at Amble on 14th (TB) and Hauxley on 21st (CDB/STE/IF). Two were also at Bothal Pond from 26th-31st (TB *et al.*).

Singles were at Cresswell Pond on 1st, Beal Point on 19th, Gosforth Park NR on 20th and Castle Island on 27th.



A little Egret lands at Hauxley NR
21st July by Chris Barlow

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

The peak counts were 14 in the Tweed Estuary on 20th (MHu), 10 in Holywell Dene on 25th (RJP) and nine at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 3rd (SR). Six roosted on the cliff face at Berwick Little Beach on 5th (MHu) and at least five were present in Gosforth Park NR throughout the month (NHSN). Five were at Prestwick Carr on 24th and four at Beadnell on 25th and Linton Ponds on 15th. One to three were seen at Alnmouth, Arcot Pond, Bellasis Bridge, Berwick North Shore, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington North Pool, Elswick Wharf, Grindon Lough, Hauxley NR, Jesmond Dene, Leazes Park (Newcastle), Low Newton, Newbiggin and Warkworth Gut.

Spoonbill *Platalea leucoropia*

On 24th two were seen at Cresswell Pond and later flying N over East Chevington North Pool (TB/DE/ADMc).

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

The highest counts of adults and large young were eight throughout the month at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN) and Holywell Pond on 4th (LJM) and seven at Linton Pond on 15th (CDH). Five adults were at Bothal Pond on 5th (IFo) and Grindon Lough on 16th/26th (PRM) and four at Ladyburn Lake on 5th (PRM), Woodhorn Flashes on 14th (GB/IFo) and East Chevington on 26th (IFo). Three, including a large juvenile, probably not bred on site, were at Arcot Pond on 28th (STH). One to two were seen at Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield), Broomlee Lough, Castle Island, Cragside, Cresswell Pond, Low Newton, Shield-on-the Wall and Woosington Ponds.

Location	No. of Broods	No. of Young	Observer/Comments
Holywell Pond	4	8	LJM on 4th
Gosforth Park NR	2	2/3	GB by 29th
Bothal Pond	1	3	IFo on 27th
Linton Pond	1	2	CDH on 15th
Ladyburn Lake	1	1	PRM on 5th

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps Grisegena*

The peak count at Whittle Dene Reservoirs was ten on 5th (SR). Single pairs each fledged two young at Bothal Pond and East Chevington North Pool (TB *et al.*) and a pair was nesting at Killingworth Lake from 14th (BMo *et al.*). Pairs were also at Airey Holm Reservoir until at least 25th (IFo), Big Waters on 3rd /19th (GB), Branton GP on 26th (TRD/JD). Singles were noted at Arcot Pond and Cresswell Pond, the latter a juvenile.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

At one site up to three adults were present and two fully fledged juveniles were seen on 31st.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Single birds were seen at Whitley Chapel on 7th (ASH/MJC), Heddon-on-the-Wall on 15th (AJ) and at Low Wakerley on 20th (IFo).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Up to three birds were seen in the Druridge Bay area throughout the month (TRD/JD *et al.*). Away from the coastal area a female was noted at Prestwick Carr from 3rd – 7th (PCF/TRD/JD).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Three birds were seen in Holywell Dene on 25th (RJP), two were in Jesmond Dene on 30th (MJCo). A single bird was noted throughout the month at Scotland Gate (MSK/SLB) and single birds were noted from nine other sites including a female which caught a juvenile Jackdaw *Corvus monedula* in the observer's garden in Cramlington (LJM).

A Sparrowhawk in a Tynemouth Garden
by Colin Bradshaw

**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*

Three birds, possibly a family party, were at Darras Hall on 4th (CW). Two were noted at Acomb Fell on 1st (JL), Etal Village and West Learmouth on 12th, Etal Manor on 13th (JMA), in the Harthope Valley on 15th (MJC) and at Arcot Pond on 28th (STH). Single birds were noted at seven other sites.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetuss*

On 1st one was fishing from poles along Pilgrim's Way (Lindisfarne NNR) and later it did a circuit over the village at rooftop level. It was also noted in the same feeding area on 22nd (IK).

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Four birds were at Ingoe on 8th (ASJ), three were at Yearle on 26th (RB) and two birds were noted at Beadnell, Gosforth Park, Grindon Lough and Netherton Park (Stannington) Single birds were recoded from nine sites during the month.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

In a Study Area two out of three pairs successfully reared broods of four and three young despite atrocious weather this season (MJC). Only one other record this month involving a single bird at Cresswell Pond on 28th (PCF).

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

On 1st an adult was at Swallow Pond on 20th (JPD). This was followed by single birds at Druridge Pools on 2nd (ASJ) and at Bothal Pond on 3rd (TRD/JD).

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Up to three birds, an adult and two immature birds, were at one site on 1st and 22nd (PCF/ALT) and two birds, an adult and a juvenile, were near Redesmouth on 9th (IFo). Single birds were at Newcastle Quayside above nesting Kittiwakes *Rissa tridactyla* on 1st (JMA), Slaley Forest on 20th interacting with a Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* (STH/PJA) and a juvenile was at Derwent Reservoir on 27th (IFo).

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Two pairs were at Gosforth Park NR throughout the month (NHSN) and two were calling at Druridge Pools on 14th (STE). Singles were seen or heard at Backworth, Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, Prestwick Carr and the River Blyth Estuary.

Corncrake *Crex crex*

One was heard calling at a confidential site on 2nd and 3rd (PCF/ASJ) and a calling bird was discovered at Big Waters on 17th (GB).

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

13 birds were at Arcot Pond on 31st (LJM), 11 were at Gosforth Park NR on 29th (GB), seven birds were noted at West Hartford on 17th (GMI) and at Dinnington on 26th (PCF). One to five birds were at ten further sites.

Coot *Fulica atra*

61 birds at Killingworth Lake on 21st (PRM) was the highest count. 36 birds were at Woodhorn Flash on 14th (LJM), 30 were at Bothal Pond on 14th (TD) and 22 were at QEII CP on 28th (LJM). One to 18 birds were at ten other sites.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Numbers on the coast similar to last month, with peaks of 76 at Hauxley NR on 13th (IRD), 65 in Budle Bay on 20th (CGK), 42 at Berwick North Shore on 22nd (MHu) and 15-24 at Cresswell Pond, Derwent Reservoir and the Tweed Estuary, though 12 at Backworth Pond/Flash on 2nd was probably a bit more unusual (MSH). The Cramlington area saw up to seven birds in the month and a pair, with two large young, was on a flat factory roof on Bassington Lane on 26th (LJM/DM). Counts of three to four were noted at Big Waters, Prestwick Carr, a Shiremoor playing field and Wark (two pairs on the North Tyne); one to two were at or over Bellasis Bridge, Darras Hall-Ponteland, Elswick Wharf (Tyne), Grindon Lough and West Stobswood Pool.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

The two birds in late June at Cresswell Pond stayed into July and remained to breed (TB *et al.*). Two eggs were visible on 2nd (SRB); hatched young were noted from the 27th and four chicks were clearly visible from 29th to the month's end (MSH *et al.*). Two additional adults were present on 8th (CB) and an extra adult bird was noted on 20th/31st (TB). A pair also bred at a separate confidential site, with the first chick being seen on 22nd and a second from 24th.

Avocets with chicks
Cresswell
27th July
John Littleton

**Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*

The failed breeding pair at a confidential site in Central Northumberland during June tried again and was more successful this month with four newly hatched young noted on 22nd and three larger downy young present on 29th. An adult and three fully fledged juveniles were on the dam wall at Derwent Reservoir on 24th (EC), whilst singles were also at Castle Island on 5th (AT) and Warkworth Gut (juvenile) on 22nd (DM/STH/IFo/PJA).

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Counts this month included 17 at Beadnell on 25th (PRM), ten at Cresswell (Scarr Rocks) on 24th (TB), four at Cocklawburn and up to three at West Stobswood Pool. A pair with four young was seen on three occasions at Chevington Burn mouth during 16th-24th (ADMc).

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Following last month's dearth of reports birds returned in abundance with 60 on 14th increasing to a peak of 800 on 20th, including many northern birds still in breeding plumage, seen from the Straight Lonnen, Holy Island (IK). At St Mary's, some 340-350 were counted on 12th/21st (ASJ/AC) and 120 were on rocks at Newton Point on 24th (TRD/JD). Elsewhere, 31 were at Newbiggin on 5th (PRM), 28 at Cresswell Pond on 26th (TB) and one to three at Beadnell, Prestwick Carr, Warkworth Gut and West Stobswood Pool.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Some 30 newly returned birds, still in breeding plumage, were at St Cuthbert's Island (Holy Island) on 21st (IK).

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Good numbers at Cresswell Pond remained throughout the month with 300 on 1st and 500 on 29th (IRD/STH/IFo). Flocks of 150-199 were noted at Backworth (CGK), Bothal Pond (TF/JFa), Derwent Reservoir (IFo) and Prestwick Carr (PCF) in the latter half of the month, and 95-132 were counted at Castle Island, Grindon Lough and New Water Haugh (Tweed). Smaller gatherings of 19-80 were at Elswick Wharf (Tyne), Hauxley NR, Howdon Wetland NR, Newburn Haugh (Tyne), Swinhope Burn (Allendale) and West Stobswood Pool. At Cresswell Pond, a pair with four seven-to-ten-day-old chicks and another half-grown chick from a different brood, were noted on 5th (IFo/MSH) and distraction behaviour was recorded at Darras Hall-Ponteland on 4th (CW).

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Returning adults included 20 at St Cuthbert's Island (Holy Island) on 21st (IK).

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Sixty were counted at East Chevington Burn mouth on 28th (NFO), up to 11 were noted at St Mary's Island during mid-month (MSH/ASJ) and two to four were at Berwick North Shore, Blyth South Harbour, Cocklawburn and Long Nanny.

*** Pectoral Sandpiper** *Calidris melanotos*

A well-watched adult was found at Cresswell Pond on 13th and remained until 17th (DE *et al.*) and another bird was found at Low Newton Flash on 24th (TRD/JD).



The Cresswell Pectoral Sandpiper
by Chris Barlow on 13th July

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

A bird in partial summer plumage was seen at Low Newton Flash on 24th (TRD/JD).

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Cresswell Pond saw some low single numbers in the early part of the month, until larger counts appeared late on, with peaks of 120 on 25th and 180 on 27th (TB); such flocks are often associated with high-tide times. Other peaks occurred during the final week, with 71 on the Coquet Estuary on 29th (AT), 45 at Low Newton on 25th (PRM), 31 on the Blyth Estuary on 31st (LJM), 30 at Berwick North Shore on 22nd (MHu), 21 at Amble Braid on 23rd (MSH) and 13 at Hauxley NR on 26th (IFo). Elsewhere, one to nine were reported from Boulmer, East Chevington, Newburn Haugh (Tyne) and Warkworth Gut.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

One was noted at Cresswell Pond on several dates from 15th to 29th (STH/PJA *et al.*).

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

After one at Cresswell Pond on 5th up to three were noted there and at Broomlee Lough, East Chevington, Grindon Lough, Low Newton and Warkworth Gut then six at Druridge Pools on 16th, six at Prestwick Carr on 31st and 21 at Grindon Lough on 31st (AJR).

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Slaley Forest again produced the majority with at least four roding on 3rd (JL), two on 13th and three on 20th (TB). Singles were recorded at Acomb Fell on 1st, Hexhamshire Common on 7th and Ryal on 19th.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

The largest gathering was of 12 at Low Newton on 25th (TF/JFa). Cresswell Pond was favoured for most of the month with regularly up to five and also seven on 8th and 30th (TF/JFa) and nine on 28th/29th (MSH). Prestwick Carr held eight on 23rd/24th (PCF), seven were at Hauxley NR on 5th (PRM), five at Warkworth Gut on 29th, four in the Coquet Estuary on 29th and four at Lynemouth Flash on 31st. Singles were at Amble Braid on 23rd and at Castle Island on 27th.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

At Holy Island around 90 non-breeders were joined by 15 returning from breeding grounds on 14th and on 20th about 200 arrived there from high to NE (IK). Cresswell Pond occasionally had one or two and five on 12th, three were in Budle Bay on 22nd, two at Hadston Carrs on 1st and Low Newton on 4th and one at Amble Braid on 23rd and Hauxley NR on 26th.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Coastal movements, mainly S, were noted almost throughout along the length of the coast including seven at Hauxley on 29th (STE), six at Berwick on 5th (MHu), five at Newbiggin on 28th (STE) and four at Cocklawburn on 6th (MHu). Also six were in Budle Bay on 21st (CGK), six at Holy Island on 29th (SR/AH) and five at St Mary's on 14th (MSH). One to three were noted at Alnmouth, Beadnell, Blagdon, Boulmer, Blyth Estuary, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, East Ord, Howick, Lynemouth Flash, Newbiggin and Snab Point. Inland one was at West Stobswood Pool on 19th and at least one flew E over Cramlington at 00:06h on 20th.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

There was a large gathering of 400 from Holy Island Causeway on 19th (TRD/JD) and the HT roost at Hauxley NR contained 192 on 13th (EC/JSB). The Blyth Estuary held 114 on 31st (LJM) and the peak at Holywell Dene reached 113 on 13th (RJP). The Berwick area had 52-64 on 20th/22nd (MHu), 30 were at Cresswell Pond on 2nd, 25 at Howdon Wetland NR on 23rd, 21 at Prestwick Carr on 14th and 16 or fewer appeared at another seven typical locations.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

In Upper Coquetdale 15 pairs were noted on 5th (ASJ). About five were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 19th (SR), four at Castle Island on 5th (AT) and three occasionally at North Shields Fish Quay, the Coquet Estuary and Hauxley NR. One or two appeared at Ashington, Backworth, Beadnell, Berwick, Big Waters, Bywell Bridge, Derwent Reservoir, East Chevington, Harthope Valley, Holy Island, Newbiggin, Warkworth Gut and West Stobswood Pool.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Four were at Castle Island on 22nd (DM/PJA/IFo/PJA) and again on 31st (ADMc). Two were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 19th (SR) and singles showed at Backworth on 1st/4th/22nd, at Beadnell on 25th, Hedgeley GP on 25th, Holywell Pond on 15th, Low Newton on 30th, Warkworth Gut on 27th and Whitley Bay on 4th.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Three, including two juveniles, were at Bothal Pond on 12th (TB), two at Backworth Pond on 22nd (AC) and two at Low Newton on 27th (MJC). Singles appeared at times at Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Prestwick Carr, Hauxley NR and Warkworth Gut.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Two were at Backworth Pond on 7th (AC) and one was at Warkworth Gut on 27th to 30th (RB/MB *et al.*).

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

The number in the Coquet Estuary increased from 120 on 20th to 167 by 29th (AT), 142 were at Amble Braid on 23rd (MSH) and 113 in the Blyth Estuary on 31st (AT); 55-60 were noted at Alnmouth, Budle Bay and Holy Island. Elswick Wharf had a peak of 27 on 25th, 12 were at Berwick on 22nd, 11 at Warkworth Gut on 22nd. Small numbers occurred at Backworth, Derwent Reservoir, Grindon Lough, Hauxley NR, Prestwick Carr and the Tweed Estuary.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

A HT roost at Hauxley NR held 22 on 26th (IFo) and 14 were at Church Point (Newbiggin) on 5th (TB). Five or fewer were noted at Beadnell, Cresswell Pond, Low Newton and St Mary's.

*** Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus*

A female in breeding plumage was present at Backworth Pond on 1st and 2nd (AC/CDB/GMi *et al.*).

The Backworth Red-necked Phalarope
Jonathon Farooqi
1st July

**Pomarine Skua** *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Two adults flew S at Beadnell on 25th (PRM) and an adult moved N at St Mary's on 20th (AC).

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Three were noted at each of East Chevington on 13th (TRD/JD), at Hauxley on 25th (STE) and around Coquet Island on 28th (NFO); two were seen at Boulmer on 11th and two at Stag Rocks on 19th. Singles appeared off Beadnell, Cocklawburn, Cresswell, Druridge Bay, Newbiggin and St Mary's.

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

One flew N at St Mary's on 6th (MSH) and one past Amble Harbour on 24th (BMo) was the only other.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

At Church Point (Newbiggin) 278 moved N in one hour during mid-morning (PRM) and 20 moved N at Boulmer on 11th (TRD). A WeBS count in the Tweed Estuary on 20th revealed 240 present and 238 were in the gull roost there on 8th (MHu); counts of 100 came from Cresswell and East Chevington on 13th (TRD/JD). Elsewhere numbers were lower with 19 at Blyth Harbour on 7th (STH) and a similar number on the Tyne Estuary, up to the North Shields Fish Quay (NSFQ), on 26th (DMT) with ten at Druridge on 13th (TRD). One to eight were at seven other coastal localities on various dates throughout the month.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Several large concentrations were noted with 488 recorded during a WeBS count in the Tweed Estuary on 20th (MHu) and in excess of 400 were in a pre-roost gathering at Widdrington Moor Lake on 28th (MSH). At Prestwick Carr 350, including a number of juveniles, were present on 14th (PCF), 141 were at Elswick Wharf on the River Tyne on 25th (DM), 104 at Berwick North Shore on 22nd (MHu) and 100 at Castle Island on 22nd (DM *et al.*). Smaller concentrations of 20-72 were recorded from Backworth, Blyth South Harbour, Hauxley NWT, Jesmond Dene and the Tyne Estuary up to the NSFQ. One to 15 were at five other sites including a pair nesting at Gosforth Park NR which fledged one chick.



A Black-headed Gull eyeballs Simon Elliott
East Chevington

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

One and four 1st-summer birds flew N at Newbiggin on 5th (PRM) and 19th (AT) respectively and a single moved N at Beadnell on 25th (PRM). The species was very well reported from Cresswell Pond throughout the month by many observers, with numbers there building up during the first half of the month to a maximum of ca.36 on 14th (ADM), the majority being 1st-summer birds with a maximum of only two adults being seen together. Thereafter the numbers declined to one-two by the month end. Elsewhere only one record of two birds came from Druridge Pools on 1st (STH/IFo).

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

The peak counts at Newbiggin were 29 on 17th (ADMc) and 28 on 28th (STH); 23 there on 5th included nine adults with the rest either 1st or 2nd-summer birds. Cresswell Pond is an increasingly favoured location with up to six on 30th (AT) and two adults recorded there at the month end. Elsewhere one-two were at Bothal Pond, East Chevington, Holy Island (Rocket Field), Howdon Wetland NR, the Wansbeck Estuary, Whitley Bay (Briar Dene) and Woodhorn Flash.

A Mediterranean with Black-headed Gulls
Jonathon Farooqi
Cresswell 26th July

**Common Gull** *Larus canus*

A pre-roost gathering at Widdrington Moor Lake on 28th included at least 800 (MSH) but elsewhere numbers were far lower with 26 at the Tweed Estuary on 20th and 18 at Berwick North Shore on 22nd (both MHu). One to five were recorded at Backworth Pond, Berwick Little Beach, Big Waters, Blyth South Harbour, Castle Island, the Tyne Estuary up to NSFQ and West Ord.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

Maximum counts were 34 feeding on a cut field at Bellasis Bridge on 15th (LJM), 29 at the River Tyne Elswick Wharf on 25th (DM), 21 on the River Tweed Estuary found during a WeBS count on 20th (MHu) and 13, all adults, in Blyth South Harbour on 8th (DMT). One-ten were at ten other locations, both coastal and well inland at Grindon and Broomlee Loughs (MRS), including nine fledged young on a factory site at Bassington Lane, Cramlington and three juveniles at a small breeding colony at Blyth Riverside Business Park (both LJM).

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argenteus*

On 17th 200 and 120 moved E over Deanmoor and Stannington respectively (JMA). A WeBS count in the Tweed Estuary on 20th recorded 736 (MHu) and a pre-roost gathering at Widdrington Moor Lake on 28th held in excess of 300 birds (MSH). Elsewhere concentrations were 233 at Widdrington on 24th (AT), 227 in the Tyne Estuary up to the NSFQ on 24th (DMT) and 88 in Blyth South Harbour (DMT). Up to 72 were at six other localities including 26 and 17 fledged young at colonies at Blyth Riverside Business Park and Bassington Lane, Cramlington (both LJM).

Greater Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

The main count was 167 on the River Coquet Estuary on 20th (AT). Smaller groups were 90 at Castle Island on 27th (AT), 55 on the River Tyne Estuary up to the NSFQ on 24th (DMT), 43 in Blyth South Harbour on 8th, including 16 1st-summer (DMT) and 37 in a Budle Point roost on 21st (CGK). Other reports included one to seven at four other localities (DM/MHu).

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

Very poorly reported following the tidal destruction last month of the two breeding colonies at Lindisfarne and Long Nanny. A single bird flew N at Newbiggin on 5th (PRM) and apart from a gathering of 30 birds remaining at the Lindisfarne colony on 14th (IK) the only other records were one to three adults at Alnmouth, Boulmer and the Long Nanny (JD/PRM/NFO).

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Well reported although the numbers were below those recorded last year. A roost of 105 occurred on the River Aln Estuary on 11th (TRD) and lower counts were 64 at Cocklawburn on 30th, 60 at Berwick (Meadow Haven) on 5th (both MHu) and 40 at Holy Island on 29th (SR/AH). Ten-40 were at 13 widely dispersed coastal sites between Berwick and St Mary's Island and two-eight were reported from three other localities. An interesting record of an adult colour-ringed bird came from Cresswell Pond on 10th (MSH), the bird having been originally ringed as a *pullus* on Coquet Island in June 2003 and marked in August 2010 on the Ythan Estuary, NE Scotland.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

At Gosforth Park NR 18 pairs nested on the platform where chicks began to fledge from 11th onwards (NHSN) and other successful breeding was also confirmed at Whittle Dene Reservoirs where 25 birds were recorded on 25th including four juveniles (SR). The River Aln Estuary held 25 on 11th (TRD), there were at least 15 in Blyth Harbour on 26th (STH) and ten at East Chevington, Hauxley NWT and Holywell Pond (TRD/JD/CS). Otherwise very well reported with up to eight at Arcot Pond, Backworth, Big Waters, Bamburgh Stag Rocks, Boulmer, Cresswell Pond/Snab Point, Druridge, Exhibition Park, Killingworth Lake, Newton Point, Prestwick Carr, River Tyne Newburn Haugh, Warkworth and Woolsington Ponds.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

On Coquet Island 'dozens' were reported on 23rd (NNBC), 20 were seen there on 3rd (ASJ), ten adults fished close inshore at Hauxley on 29th (STE) and an adult was at Hauxley NWT on 5th (PRM). Further sightings were made as the birds dispersed from the Coquet Island colony after mid-month, with up to three adults and three juvenile at Blyth Harbour on 26th (STH) and 29th (LJM). Up to four adults were noted on Holy Island on various dates and on the 25th two adults were at the Long Nanny (PRM) with two at Alnmouth on 27th (NFO) and singles at East Chevington on 17th and Alnmouth on 21st.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

Only four records received of 15 and five at East Chevington during the first week of the month (both TRD/JD), four at Cocklawburn on 30th (MHu) and two at Hauxley on 7th (TRD/JD).

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

Maximum counts of 36 and 26 came from Berwick, Spittal Bay and Cocklawburn on 23rd and 30th respectively (both MHu) with 15 at Newton Point on 24th (TRD/JD). One to five were noted on the sea at Boulmer, Cresswell, East Chevington, Newbiggin and St Mary's Island.

Razorbill *Alca torda*

Four birds flew N at St Mary's Island on 6th (MSH) and three were seen at Newbiggin on 25th (TRD/JD).

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

Three flew S at St Mary's Island in the late afternoon of the 6th (MSH). At Newton Point on 24th 20 were present, ten were at the River Aln Estuary on 11th and elsewhere five were at Boulmer on 11th and three at Cresswell on 2nd (all TRD/JD).

Rock Dove / Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*

The peak monthly counts were 55 at Blyth South Harbour on 29th and 25 at North Shields Fish Quay on 1st (DMT) with 22 at Southfield Green (Cramlington) on 22nd (DM).

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Birds were present at Howdon N.R. all month numbering 14 on 6th and a peak of 15 on 25th (CB) with 10 at Cresswell Pond on the same date (TB). Five were at Jesmond Dene on 2nd (MJCo) and Big Waters on 8th (GB) with three in the observer's garden in Walbottle on 1st and one to two at Arcot Pond, Druridge Pools, Exhibition Park Newcastle, an Old Hartley garden and Lynemouth.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

There was one report of six at Jesmond Dene on 22nd (MJCo).



Left: a young Woodpigeon in a Woolsington garden
2nd July by Steve Barrett and right:
a Collared Dove enjoys the rare sight of this summer's sun in Dinnington
23rd July by Peter Fletcher

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Four were in the observer's garden at Dinnington on 19th (PCF).

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

The largest count was three juveniles at Druridge Pools on 16th (TB) with two at East Chevington on 1st and 2nd (ADM/ASJ) and singles remaining till 22nd with a juvenile and adult at Hummel Knowe (Wark Forest) on 31st (IRD). Singles were at Prestwick Carr on 3rd, Budge Fields (Druridge) and Humford (Bedlington) on 4th, Holy Island on 15th, St Mary's Island on 16th, West Chevington on 22nd and Once Brewed (Military Road) on 27th.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

A pair with at least two young were at Holywell Dene on 16th with two at Druridge Pools on 13th and 21st (CDB), Ratcleugh (Alnwick) on 20th (AH) and Cresswell Dunes on 26th (TF/JFa). Singles were at Backworth, Cresswell, East Chevington and Warren Mill (Bamburgh) all month and at Boulmer, Chatton, Craster, Druridge Pools, Wark (N Tyne), Warkworth and Widdrington Moor Lake.

Barn Owl is a target species for 2012. Please report all records.

A Barn Owl out in daylight
Holywell Pond
by Paul Buskin
19th July

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Two adults and two juveniles were at Boulmer on 16th with two at Rennington on 20th (AH), Kiln Pit Hill on 24th (JMA) and two juveniles at Clifton (Morpeth) on 26th (TB). Singles were at Blagdon, Big Waters, Cramlington, Elyhaugh near Felton, Glanton and Derwent Reservoir. Three territories located in the Backworth-Shiremoor-New York area included a site with three fledged young.

Little Owl is a target species for 2012. Please report all records.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

More than two were at Scotland Gate during the month (SLB/MSK) with two males calling at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 10th (TB). Singles were at Spindleston and Walbottle all month, Wark on 5th and 15th, Slaley Forest on 13th and Gubeon Morpeth on 28th.

Tawny Owl is a target species for 2012. Please report all records.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otis*

The family group at Druridge Pools showed well in the first week of the month with all five in the air on 8th (TB). Elsewhere singles were at Marden Estate (Tynemouth) on 3rd, Slaley Forest on 13th and near Great Wanney Crag on 20th.

Long-eared Owl is a target species for 2012. Please report all records.

One of the Long-eared Owls at Druridge
13th July by Chris Barlow

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

A single remained near the Snook (Holy Island) all month (IK/SR/AH) and at Needles Eye (Berwick) on 2nd (MHu), Low Newton on 4th (MSK/NEWT) and Goswick on 21st (IK).

Short-eared Owl is a target species for 2012. Please report all records.

Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

All reports bar one were from Slaley Forest with four on 3rd (JL) and two on 13th and 20th (MJC/ASH/TW/AJ/MN) with a single near Great Wanney Crag on 20th (AJ/TW).



Swift *Apus apus*

Large gatherings of 300 at Ellington on 23rd (TB), 200 at Prestwick Carr on 29th (PCF), 150 at Cullercoats on 2nd (ASJ) and 100 at Hepscott Hill (Cresswell) on 22nd (DM/STH/PJA/IFo) with 20-65 at Ord Moor Billylaw, Hazlerigg, Newcastle Town Moor, Ponteland Park, Shiremoor, Stobswood, Wark, Whitley Bay and two to 12 at seven other locations. Passage S was noted at Druridge Pools on 1st (MSH) with ca.50/h at Berwick on 30th (MJC).

A Swift over Druridge Pools
13th July
Chris Barlow

**Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*

Two were at Fisherman's Lodge (Jesmond Dene) on 18th (MJCo) with a single male at Gosforth Park N.R. all month and in a Ponteland garden on 1st. Singles were also at Byker, Chevington North Pool, Low Angerton, Mitford, Ponteland Park, Thrum Mill (Rothbury) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Three, including two juveniles, were at Letah Wood (Hexham) on 29th (AJH) with reports of singles from Gosforth Park N.R. all month (NHSN), Harthope Valley on 2nd (R&GB), Cramlington on 14th and 15th (PJA/LJM), Rothbury on 25th (JD) and Swallowship Wood (Hexham) on the same date (AJH).

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

A family party of two adults with three juveniles were at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 7th (TB) with three present at Gosforth Park N.R. all month (NHSN) and at Arcot Pond on 31st (LJM). Singles were at Valley Park (Cramlington), Scotland Gate all month and at Grindon Lough, Holywell Dene, Wark and Walbottle.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

An adult male was observed by many at East Chevington from 6th to 8th although the finder is not recorded (EC/JSB *et al.*).

Magpie *Pica pica*

A 3km walk in the Brockwell / Westwood Grange area of Cramlington on 8th found 18 (LJM) with seven at Druridge Pools on 20th (PCF), six the maximum in an Old Hartley garden during the month (RJP) and at Jesmond Dene on 12th (MJCo) with four in a Walbottle garden on 1st (KR/LR).

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

A family of two adults with two juveniles visited feeders in a Rothbury garden for a week around the 12th (TRD/JD) with two seen at Scotland Gate occasionally during the month (SLB/MSK) and at Tranwell Woods on 17th (PCF). Singles were at Valley Park (Cramlington) all month and at Barns Park, Bellasis Bridge, East Chevington, Eshott, Morpeth and Rothbury.

A Jay at a garden feeder
Rothbury
19th July
Tim Dean

**Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula*

Evening roosts at Wark (North Tyne) contained over 310 birds (PRM) and 200 at Big Waters on 3rd (GB). More than 200 were at Ingoe on 8th (ASJ), 91 at Throckley on 22nd (PCF), 50 at Alnwick on 6th (JMA) and 16 at Howdon Wetland N.R. on 5th (CB). The highest count in an Old Hartley garden during the month was 11 and eight in a Walbottle garden with six over Matthew Bank (Jesmond Dene) on 30th.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Large counts of 250 at Cornhill on 12th and South Charlton on 23rd (JMA) with 150 at Ingoe on 8th (ASJ).

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

The peak count for the month in the Tyne Estuary was 40 on 7th (DMT) with three in Jesmond Dene on 12th (MJCo).

Raven *Corvus corax*

A probable family group of five was at Kilham on 27th (TRD/JD), four at Grindon Lough on 7th (PRM) and at Gibbs Hill on 22nd (JB) with two at Simonside on 21st and singles at Carey Burn, Harthope Valley on 15th and Craggside (Rothbury) on 20th.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

A peak count of four found at various locations in Jesmond Dene on 2nd (MJCo) with singles singing at Valley Park (Cramlington) from 7th to 21st (DM) and at Big Waters on 8th (GB).

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Twelve including eight juveniles were in the feeding station at Big Waters on 19th (PCF) with a single found in Jesmond Dene on 22nd (MJCo).

A Blue Tit
Big Waters feeding station
22nd July by Adriana Buskin

**Great Tit** *Parus major*

A family party with six juveniles was at Valley Park, Cramlington on 7th (DM) and two were in Jesmond Dene on 15th (MJCo).

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

One to three visited an Old Hartley garden during the month (RJP), two in Jesmond Dene on 15th and one in a Walbottle garden on 8th.

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

A probable family party of six was at Prestwick Carr on 30th (BMo) with singles at Bolam Lake on 5th, Big Waters on 8th and Arcot Pond on 29th.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

Singles at Thrum Mill (Rothbury) from 8th to 14th and in the observer's garden at Rothbury from 19th to 26th (TRD/JD) with the only other report one at Linden Hall on 16th (NFO).

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Singing birds numbered 20 in the Stamfordham / Ingoe area on 5th (ASJ) and six were in the Ponteland / Darras Hall area on 4th (CW).

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

200 fed high over Cresswell Pond on 12th (ASJ), around 25 including juveniles at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) on 8th (ALT) with over 20 at Lynemouth Flash on 5th, Newbiggin on 21st (PCF) and a single at Gosforth Park NR on 29th (GB).

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

A peak count of 40 at Budle Bay on 21st (CGK) with 25 fledged young at Cresswell Pond on 12th (ASJ), 12 at Hold House (Ponteland) on 3rd (CW), six at Paddy Freeman's playing field (Jesmond Dene) on 22nd and one to five at Crow Hall Farm (Holywell Dene) during the month.

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

Forty were near Great Whittington on 25th (JMA), five to 35 at Holywell Dene during the month (RJP), 28 at Stamfordham on 8th (ASJ), 11 over Banks Pond (Dinnington) on 1st and three at Heaton Park Bowling Green on 2nd. The cliffs at Dodds Wall (Berwick) held six AON on 22nd (MHu).

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

A 'tribe' of 25 was noted at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 7th (TB) and a family party was at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 14th (DM). The only other reports were of five at Newburn Haugh on 26th, three in an Old Hartley garden on 10th and two at Coleman's Field (Jesmond Dene) on 12th.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Five were singing from Dissington-Medburn on 3rd (CW) and at Bolam Lake on 8th (CDB) and three in Jesmond Dene on 2nd. One to two were reported from a further seven localities.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

The only reports were of one to two at Bellasis Bridge and Bolam Lake.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Six were singing in the Stamfordham-Ingcoe area on 7th (ASJ) and four were in the Darras Hall (Ponteland) area on 4th (CW). Three were noted singing at Bellasis Bridge on 5th and one to two were reported from a further eight inland and four coastal localities.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Three were at Linden Hall on 4th (NFO) and singles singing at Linden Hall on 7th, Hauxley NR on 5th and Whiteadder Bridge (Berwick) on 27th.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

A family party of five (at least three juveniles) was at East Chevington on 20th (EC/JSB). Singles were singing at West Hartford on 1st and calling at Cullernose on 15th.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Remained conspicuous in inland breeding areas until mid-month. Eight were singing in the Stamfordham-Ingoe area and seven singing at the Wansbeck Estuary on 5th (ASJ/AJR). Seven were in the Darras Hall (Ponteland) area on 4th (CW). Seven at Brockwell-Westwood Grange (Cramlington) on 8th included two newly fledged juveniles (LJM) and six at Howden Wetland NR on 16th included four fledged juveniles (CB). Elsewhere four were at Bellasis Bridge on 5th and one to two at Dissington-Medburn, Druridge Bay CP, Low Newton, Ponteland and Wark (North Tyne), the latter carrying food.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Up to four were singing at Prestwick Carr from 3rd-10th (PCF *et al.*) and three at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) on 8th (ASJ). Two were 'reeling' at West Hartford on 24th-25th and singles were also reported from Arcot Pond, East Chevington, East Hartford and Stamfordham.

***Acrocephalus* sp.**

The unidentified *Acrocephalus* warbler reported at Big Waters in June, was again heard singing on 3rd and 17th (GB).

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Bamburgh Ringing Station reported a very poor month with four+ adults on 13th and three adults on 27th; no juveniles were seen or trapped. The highest counts elsewhere were seven at Stamfordham and four at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) on 8th (ASJ). Three singing males were noted at Bellasis Bridge and Hauxley NR on 5th (PRM) with one to two also reported from Beadnell, Coat Hill Farm (Darras Hall), Druridge Bay, Druridge Bay CP, Great Whittington, Low Newton and Warkworth Gut.



A Sedge Warbler with food
at East Chevington by Simon Elliott

*** Marsh Warbler** *Acrocephalus palustris*

The bird reported at Hauxley NR in June was still present, and singing on 10th (MSH).

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

At Gosforth Park NR up to eight + were noted during the month and there were many breeding pairs (NHSN). Four at Ladyburn Lake on 10th included two singing and a bird carrying food to a nest (LJM). Up to three were heard at Backworth and two at Cresswell Pond during the month and two were at Swallow Pond on 1st. Singles were also reported from Howdon Wetland NR (carrying food) on 6th and singing at Wansbeck Business Park (Ashington) on 28th.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

The only reports were four at Bolam Lake on 8th (CDB) and singles at Bellingham and Wark (North Tyne).

A nuthatch at a garden feeder at Woolsington - John Littleton

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

The only reports were three at Stamfordham on 30th (EC) and singles at Prestwick and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

There were six at Bolam Lake on 8th (CDB) and four in Jesmond Dene on 2nd (MJCo). A family party was noted at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 17th and one was in a Walbottle garden throughout. Indications are the recovery is slow; one in a Holywell Dene garden on 7th was considered a rarity compared with a couple of years ago when two to three were noted regularly (RJP).

A Wren in Woolsington by John Littleton

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Post-breeding flocks included 350+ at Newbiggin on 5th (PRM), 200+ at Prestwick Carr on 15th (PCF), 150 (almost all juveniles) at Cresswell on 8th (CB) and 100 at Alnwick on 17th (JMA). Elsewhere 20-25 were noted at Rothbury, a Walbottle garden, Whitley Bay links and Whitley Chapel. The latter, a flock of 25 containing only two juveniles was indicative of a poor breeding season (MJC).



Two young Starlings at Newbiggin by Peter Fletcher on 7th July

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Breeding was confirmed at Thrum Mill (Rothbury) where two young were found on 2nd (JD). Up to three were noted at the Waterfall and a single at Jesmond Vale (both Jesmond Dene) during the month and singles at Dirt Pot (East Allen) on 12th and Bywell Bridge on 14th and 18th.

A Blackbird attends to pot-bound chicks
Dobbie's Ponteland by Ken Russell

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Four in a Walbottle garden on 1st included a juvenile. A female with two chicks was nesting in a plant pot at Dobbie's Garden Centre (Ponteland) on 13th and three birds were in Jesmond Dene on 2nd (KR/LR/MJCo).

**Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos*

Five were singing along a 3km walk in the Brockwell-Westwood Grange (Cramlington) area on 8th (LJM) and four were in Jesmond Dene on 2nd (MJCo). Two regularly visited a Netherton Park garden and singles were at Bolam Lake on 8th and Derwent Reservoir on 6th.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

24 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs (SR) and 12 at Swallowship (Hexham) on 25th (AJH) were the highest counts. Six were noted at Beaconhill (Cramlington) on 4th and four at Arcot Pond and West Hartford on 24th (STH). The only other report was a single at Heaton Park Bowling Green on 2nd.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Breeding was confirmed at Linden Hall, where two to three pairs were present and fledging was noted by mid-month (NFO). Four in a Stamfordham garden included fledged young late in the month (EC) and two adults were feeding two juveniles at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) on 29th (ALT); a pair also fledged young successfully at Eshott (MSH). Singles were reported from Addycombe (Rothbury), Allendale (probably feeding young), Rothbury and Wark (North Tyne).



A Juvenile Robin shows a hint of red
Bolam
8th July
Chris Barlow

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Three at Bolam Lake CP on 8th included a male feeding a fledgling (CDB). Three passage birds were at Big Waters on 8th (GB), a male and juvenile at Hallington Reservoir on 1st and a juvenile in a Rothbury garden on 8th.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

An adult feeding two recently fledged young at Carey Burn (Harthope Valley) on 15th was the only report (MJC).



A cock Stonechat at Druridge by Peter Fletcher on 5th July

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

Seven at Warkworth Gut on 24th comprised two recently fledged juveniles, a female and four males, one of which was almost completely melanistic (PJA). Birds variously reported from East Chevington included four juveniles on 8th and up to two males (TB *et al.*). Singles were also noted inland at Carey Burn (Harthope Valley) on 15th and Felicia Moss (Kielder Forest) on 31st.

Wheatear *Oenanthe Oenanthe*

Seven at Usway Burn (Upper Coquetdale) on 12th included four immatures (IRD). Three juveniles were at Newbiggin on 21st and at Cocklawburn on 25th. Elsewhere single birds were reported from Addycombe (Rothbury), Cresswell Pond, Ellington, Eshott and Newcastle Town Moor, the latter a passage bird.

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

13 were found in the Brockwell/Westwood Grange area of Cramlington on 8th (LJM). Three, including a juvenile, visited a Walbottle garden on 1st (KR/LR).



A Dunnock at Tynemouth by Colin Bradshaw

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

200 were observed at Chare Ends (Holy Island) on 29th (SR/AH). 30 dust-bathing on farm lane at Beaconhill (Cramlington) on 19th increased to 80 in an adjacent wheat field there on 29th (STH). 21, including juveniles, visited a Netherton Park (Stannington) garden on 31st (RWM/MIM), 20 at Whittingham on 17th (JMA) and 16 at a Walbottle garden on 29th (KR/LR).

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

15 at Battlesteads Hotel (Wark) on 14th (CB), six at Cresswell Pond on 22nd (DM/STH/PJA/IFo), three to five at Backworth all month (CGK) and one to three at Capheaton, Darras Hall (Ponteland), Fulbeck (Morpeth), Old Hartley and Walbottle.

Yellow Hammer *Motacilla flava*

Ten, including two juveniles, were at Whittle Dene on 19th (SR). Observed daily at Cresswell Pond between 14th-31st with a peak of ten on 31st including eight juveniles (NFO). Elsewhere, three were at Battlesteads Hotel (Wark) on 14th (CB), two juveniles at Warkworth Gut on 22nd (DM/STH/PJA/IFo) and an adult and juvenile there on 28th (NFO) and two flying S at Low Newton on 27th (MJC) with singles also there on 25th (TF/JFa) and 28th (NFO).

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Four were at Whittle Dene on 3rd (SR), Ashington on 19th (TB) and Warkworth Gut (including three juveniles) on 26th (IFo). Two were at Thrum Mill (Rothbury) on 4th (JD), Wark on 8th (PRM), Newgate Street (Newcastle City Centre) on 20th (DM) and Jesmond Dene on 22nd (MJCo). Singles were at a further eight widespread localities.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

40 including juveniles were at Warkworth Gut on 22 (IFo/DM/STH/PJA). 20+ were at Cresswell Pond on 18th (MSH), a pre-roost flock of 18 at Ellington on 23rd (TB), 12 at Grindon Lough on 31st (AJR) and six at Hauxley on 21st (PCF).

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Five were singing at Harthope Valley on 4th (TRD/JD). One was noted carrying food at Swinhope Burn (Allendale) on 17th (AJR).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

One at Howdon Wetland on 8th was the only record (CB).



A meadow Pipit at Low Newton on 30th July by Jonathon Farooqi

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Two were at Newbiggin on 5th (PRM) and singles at Newton Point on 25th (PRM), Beadnell on 25th (PRM) and Blyth South Harbour on 29th (LJM).

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Four at Jesmond Dene on 2nd (MJCo) and three visited a Walbottle garden on 1st (KR/LR).

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

One at Heaton Park (Newcastle) on 30th was the only record (MJCo).

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

40+ were noted at Arcot Pond on 31st (LJM), 17 at Newburn Haugh on 26th (PRM), eight at Beacon Lane (Cramlington) on 15th (DM), seven at a Walbottle garden on 1st (KR/LR) and Leazes Park on 1st (DM) and five at Bellasis Bridge on 5th (PRM). One to three were at a further five widespread localities.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

15+ (family parties) at Fern Hill Farm (Acomb Fell) on 1st (JL), four-six (including juveniles) at a Fulbeck (Morpeth) garden all month (TD) and juveniles noted at Spindleston on 21st (CGK) all indicated local breeding. Post breeding dispersal involved 25+ at Low Newton Tin Church on 25th (PRM), ten+ at Linden Hall all month (NFO), four at Eshott on 16th (MSH) and one-three at Battlesteads Hotel (Wark), Big Waters, Grindon Lough, Newburn Haugh, Walbottle and Wark.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

The Berwick area held the largest post-breeding flocks with 70 at Needles Eye on 2nd and 16 at Letham Shank on 27th (MHu). Elsewhere, seven were at Newbiggin on 5th (PRM), six at Howdon Wetland all month (CB) and Hold House (Ponteland) on 3rd (CW), five at Low Newton on 25th (PRM), four at Darras Hall (Ponteland) on 4th (CW) and Bellasis Bridge on 5th (PRM) and two at a Netherton Park (Stannington) garden on 22nd (RWM/MIM).

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

Five were seen well in an upland meadow at Coanwood Lake on 3rd (AJR).

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*

Five were at Grindon Lough on 7th with four still present on 26th (PRM). Two were at Battlesteads Hotel (Wark) on 14th (CB) and singles at Linden Hall between 7th-15th and Cresswell Pond on 28th (NFO).

Mealy Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*

One was feeding on dandelions at a Tynemouth garden for 20 minutes on 22nd May (CB).

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostris*

15+ (family parties with juveniles) were at Fern Hill Farm BBS square (Acomb Fell) on 1st (JL). Seven (two adults and five juveniles) were noted at Swallow Pond on 1st (JPD). Post-breeding dispersal was evident all month with 28 flying south-west at Shiremoor on 1st (CGK), 20 over a Fulbeck (Morpeth) garden on 7th (TD), one to 16 on five dates between 1st-28th at Linden Hall (NFO), nine at Whittle Dene on 13th (SR), seven north at Budle Bay on 22nd (CGK), four at Bolam Lake CP on 8th (CDB) and Capheaton on 22nd (STE). One to two were also at Big Waters, Brunswick Green (Wideopen), Craggside, Ellingham, Eshott, Greenlee Lough and Valley Park (Cramlington).

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Successful breeding was observed at Old Hartley (RJP), Priest Close Wood (Prudhoe) (per EC) and Walbottle (KR/LR). Four visited a Walbottle garden on 8th (KR/LR) and one to two at Alexandra Park (Cramlington), Bellasis Bridge, Bolam Lake CP, Capheaton, Dinnington Village, Gosforth, Jesmond Dene, Prestwick Carr and Valley Park (Cramlington).



A cock Bullfinch at a garden feeder
by Ken Russell

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

39 were singing in the Stamfordham/Ingoe area on 5th (ASJ), 22 singing in the Bellasis Bridge/Tranwell area on 3rd (ASJ), eight at Todridge on 24th (AJR), seven at Battlesteads Hotel (Wark) on 14th (CWB), four at Hold House (Ponteland) on 3rd (CW) and one to three at a further eight typical localities.



Above: a Yellowhammer at Battlesteads and below:
a cock Reed Bunting at East Chevington both by Colin Bradshaw

**Reed Bunting** *Emberiza Schoeniclus*

Eight were at Gosforth Park NR all month (NHSN), seven males holding territory at Sleekburn Fen (Bedlington) on 23rd (AJR), three breeding pairs at Coanwood Pond on 3rd (AJR), five singing males at Prestwick Carr on 8th (PCF), three at Hauxley and Bellasis Bridge on 5th (PRM) and Arcot Pond on 8th (DM). One to two were also at Darras Hall (Ponteland), Howdon Wetland (carrying food), Grindon Lough, Long Nanny, Low Newton and Warkworth Gut.

ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN

Escapes

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*

One of last month's birds turned up at Hauxley on 1st (STH/IFo).

Muscovy Duck *Cairina moschata*

The pair remained again at Elswick Wharf until at least 25th (DM).

Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethopicus*

Two were seen over Druridge Pools heading S. Apparently these are likely to be feral birds from France where a breeding population is increasing (ADM/ASJ).

Hybrids

Herring Gull x Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus argentatus* x *Larus fuscus*

An adult hybrid showing similarity to a Yellow-legged Gull but with an anomalous wing pattern was again present at Big Waters on 22nd (GB).

WEATHER

The weather was again characterized by low pressure bringing rather cool, cloudy conditions with some high rainfall totals in the first half of the month. There was a much warmer, settled week from the 21st, but the unsettled theme resumed for the last few days.

The mean temperature was 1.0 °C below the 1981-2010 average. It was a wet month, with many areas having more than twice their average rainfall. All areas were duller than normal.

1st to 20th: Low pressure controlled the weather throughout this period with bands of rain giving way to sunny spells and heavy, thundery showers which were slow-moving at times. Some exceptional rainfall totals were recorded during this period, particularly on 6th and 7th from a mixture of rain and thundery showers.

21st to 28th: By 21st high pressure extending from the Azores reached the UK, bringing a respite from the unsettled conditions. There was overnight cloud, mist and fog at times but this cleared to allow some hot and humid conditions to develop in the days preceding the 27th. Temperatures rose steadily through this period with maxima over 25 °C widely across England each day from 23rd to 26th. A cold front began to edge southwards over northern England from 25th bringing an end to the fine, dry spell with all parts feeling much fresher by 28th.

29th to 31st: The month ended with low pressure once more. Some cool days and nights with daytime maxima around 20 °C and night time minima widely below 8 °C. Sunshine and showers were widespread with thunder and hail reported. Late on 30th and into 31st rain spread north-eastwards.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

P.J.Allott, J.M.Almond, C.D.Barlow, S.L.Barratt, S.R.Barrett, D.G. & R.H Bell, J.Bentley, R.J. & M.Bentley, T.Blake, J.S.Booth, G.Bowman, C.Bradshaw, T.Brewis (TBr), M.J.Carr, M.J.Cook (MJCo), E.Crabtree, A.Curry, T.Daley, T.R. & J.Dean, J.P.Dobinson, I.R.Douglas, S.T.Elliott, T. & J.Farooqi (TF/JFa), I.Fisher, P.C.Fletcher, I.Forsyth (IFo), A.Hall, C.D.Hampton, A.S.Hart, A.J.Hewitt, M.S.Hodgson, S.T.Holliday, M.Hutcheson (MHu), A.S.Jack, A.Janes, I.Kerr, M.S.Kitching, C.G.Knox, J.Littlewood, J.Malloy, P.R.Massey, L.J.Mcdougall, D.McKeown (DM), A.D.Mclevy (ADM), G.Milward (GMi), B.Moorhead (BMo), R.W. & M.I.Myatt, M.Natrass, N.F.Osborne, R.J.Pannell, A.J.Richards, S.Rippon, K. & L.Russell, C.Scrimgeour, M.R.Smith, A.Tilmouth, A.L.Todd, D.M.Turner, T.Watson, C.Wright.

Bamburgh Ringing Station, Natural History Society of Northumbria, Northern Experience Wildlife Tours, North Northumberland Bird Club.

Apologies for any accidental omissions

BULLETIN COMPILATION AND PRODUCTION

This bulletin was compiled by Graeme Bowman (Mute Swan to Ruddy Duck), Lindsay McDougall (Red Grouse to Black-necked Grebe), Trevor Blake (Honey Buzzard to Crane), Steve Holliday (Oystercatcher to Dunlin) Ian Forsyth (Snipe to Skua), Eddie Crabtree (Ivory Gull to Puffin), Tim Dean (Escapes, Hybrids and Unknown Origin, List of Contributors, Highlights), Peter Fletcher (Feral Pigeon to Red-rumped Swallow), Mike Richardson (Cetti's Warbler to Pied Flycatcher), Dee McKeown (Dunnock to Corn Bunting), Dan Turner (WeBS Coastal Counts) and Steve Holliday (WeBS Inland Counts). Thanks again to Ann McKeown for typing the section Dunnock to Corn Bunting. Thanks to David Sanders of NNBC for providing data. Proof reading was by Mike Smith.

Edited by Steve Barrett NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.com

Postal distribution Paul Stewart.

RECORD SUBMISSION

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 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 NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.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 cost of printing and stamps. Ask for an e-mailed bulletin from:

ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Many thanks to members who have already returned membership forms and updated their standing order. If you're sending S.O. mandates to me please can you make sure that they are with me by 14th September so that I can get them to the bank well before 1st October as they will not backdate them.

Don't forget if you don't pay up you won't get your 2011 BIN.

Jo Bentley

For membership enquiries please contact ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

AGM and COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS

The Annual General Meeting of Northumberland & Tyneside Bird Club will take place on 11th October 2011. Nominations for election to the Committee should be made in writing to the Club Secretary Alan Tilmouth, 12 Stowe Gardens, Pegswood, Morpeth, NE61 6TH, Email: ntbcorg@gmail.com

Nominations should be proposed and seconded by club members and submitted no later than 21 days prior to the AGM (20th September).

Alan Tilmouth
Honorary Secretary

NTBC WEB SITE

The Club website is an excellent resource for all interested in birds in the north east. There are numerous interesting sections, including a photograph gallery, site information and trip reports together with extensive reference information for birding in our area. The site is at www.ntbc.org.uk

If you have any ideas or things you would like to see or hear about on the site please let Chris know on 0751 582 5024 or e-mail christopher.knox@o2.co.uk

NTBC SIGHTINGS PAGE

The club sightings web page gives listings of birds seen locally. Adding a sighting is simple. A short e-mail is all that is needed. If anyone would like to be added as a contributor please contact Alan Tilmouth at ntbcorg@gmail.com The sightings page can be found at <http://ntbcsightings.posterous.com>

COUNTY RECORDS COMMITTEE

Mike Carr will complete his four-year spell on the committee in December 2012. 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 should be forwarded when applying. This year there will be a cut off date for applications of 15th November.

Tim Dean
2,Knocklaw Park
Rothbury
NE65 7PW
email : t.r.dean@btinternet.com

POLICY ON PLAYBACK TO ATTRACT BIRDS

Playback should **never** be used in relation to any species that are contained within Schedule 1 of The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (see attachment and club website for full list). In England, Scotland & Wales it is a criminal offence to recklessly disturb at or near the nest a species listed under Schedule 1.

NTBC strongly discourage the use of playback **for any species** at any time but particularly during the breeding season. Repeated playback or excessive volume to encourage a bird to respond so it can be seen can divert birds from normal activities and result in the desertion of territories or may leave eggs/young exposed. Exceptionally,

playback may form part of a legitimate species survey sanctioned by a reputable scientific organization such as the BTO.

For a small number of rare and scarce migrants it may be useful to use playback to assist in the identification process. NTBC considers it reasonable for the finder(s) to briefly use playback whilst assessing the identification. It is considered unacceptable however to use playback to locate or re-locate a species that has previously been found, identified and news of its whereabouts communicated to others. Playback must always be avoided for any bird that appears sick or tired.

Members are expected to use common-sense if considering the use of playback in their birding activities and adhere to the content and spirit of this policy. The welfare of the bird must be paramount at all times but any effects on other birders and the general public should also be considered.

ROSEATE TERN CALLS

This recording was made at 6am on 29th July 2012 on the beach at Hauxley. I'd gone out specifically to record feeding Sandwich Terns but was rewarded by this small noisy flock of Roseates diving close in shore.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wnhGbmoGS-I>

Simon Elliott

PHOTOGRAPHY

NTBC have received a request for help with photography and fieldcraft techniques for photographing waders from a local photographer who is to be assessed by the Royal Photographic Society (LRPS) in April 2013 for ARPS, the theme being 'Birds and their environment'. If any club members feel able to offer a little time and experience in helping this photographer during the winter months please contact Alan Tilmouth at ntbcorg@gmail.com who will provide contact details for the photographer.

BEST BIRDWATCHING SITES IN NORTH-EAST ENGLAND

Buckingham Press have just launched this new site guide to the best Birdwatching Sites in North-East England written by Brian Unwin and completed by Ian Kerr after Brian lost his fight with cancer. The guide covers sites in all three North-East recording areas Cleveland, Durham and Northumberland.

We are pleased that Buckingham Press have offered Northumberland & Tyneside Bird Club members a £2 discount on the normal full sale price of £17.95 for all telephone orders. This discounted price includes postage & packing. Should you wish to take advantage of this please order by telephone at 01733 561 739 remembering to tell them you are an NTBC member.

BIRD TALK

Tim Birkhead, author of Bird Sense will give a talk at The Centre for Life in Newcastle. <http://www.amazon.co.uk/Bird-Sense-What-its-Like/dp/1408820137>

Tim Birkhead: Bird Sense on : 21st November 2012 at 6pm-7pm.

The Centre for Life, Times Square, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4EP

Price: £2 on the door.

Booking: Book here <http://www.life.org.uk/whats-on/events/bird-sense>

COASTAL WeBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

JULY 2012

Author	Journal	Year	Volume	Issue	Pages	DOI
M. Hutcheson	AC	2001	10	1	1-10	10.1002/1099-0488(200101)10:1<1::AID-AC10>3.0.CO;2-1
T. Brewis	RP	2001	10	1	1-10	10.1002/1099-0488(200101)10:1<1::AID-RP10>3.0.CO;2-1
M. L. Cadwallender	MLC	2001	10	1	1-10	10.1002/1099-0488(200101)10:1<1::AID-MLC10>3.0.CO;2-1
T. A. Cadwallender	TAC	2001	10	1	1-10	10.1002/1099-0488(200101)10:1<1::AID-TAC10>3.0.CO;2-1
A. Craggs	AC	2001	10	1	1-10	10.1002/1099-0488(200101)10:1<1::AID-AC10>3.0.CO;2-1
R. Poyer	RP	2001	10	1	1-10	10.1002/1099-0488(200101)10:1<1::AID-RP10>3.0.CO;2-1
M. L. Cadwallender	MLC	2001	10	1	1-10	10.1002/1099-0488(200101)10:1<1::AID-MLC10>3.0.CO;2-1
T. A. Cadwallender	TAC	2001	10	1	1-10	10.1002/1099-0488(200101)10:1<1::AID-TAC10>3.0.CO;2-1
L. J. McDougall	LJM	2001	10	1	1-10	10.1002/1099-0488(200101)10:1<1::AID-LJM10>3.0.CO;2-1
N. Adams	NA	2001	10	1	1-10	10.1002/1099-0488(200101)10:1<1::AID-NA10>3.0.CO;2-1
D. M. Turner	DMT	2001	10	1	1-10	10.1002/1099-0488(200101)10:1<1::AID-DMT10>3.0.CO;2-1
P. Fletcher	PF	2001	10	1	1-10	10.1002/1099-0488(200101)10:1<1::AID-PF10>3.0.CO;2-1

[illegible]

INLAND WEBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

Year: 2012

Month: JULY

Version: Interim

Site	TOTAL																				Woodhorn Flashes					
	Alry Holm Reservoir	Arcof Pond	Backworth Ponds	Big Waters	Bothal Pond	Branton GP	Broomlee Lough	Castron	Castle Island	Cateleugh Reservoir	Druridge Pools	East Chevington	Greenlee Lough	Grindon Lough	Hauxley NR	Hedgeley GP	Killingworth Lake	Leazes Park	Linton Pond	Longhirst Flash		Momks' House Pool	Shield on the Wall	Swallow Pond	Sweethope Lough	West Allotment Pond
Counter	IFo	LJM	CGK	GB	TD	JR	MRS	PT	STH	PRM	IDR	DE	MRS	MRS	IF	JR	LJM	DM	CH	TD	RP	MRS	SPP	PRM	CGK	JGS
Date	20	14	25	22	14	22	21	22	22	NC		22	21	21	21	22	13	23	15	14	22	21	21	NC	25	
Ice Cover (%)																										
Little Grebe																										
Great Crested Grebe																										
Cormorant																										
Grey Heron																										
Little Egret																										
Mute Swan																										
Greylag Goose																										
Canada Goose																										
Shelduck																										
Wigeon																										
Gadwall																										
Teal																										
Mallard																										
Shoveler																										
Pochard																										
Tufted Duck																										
Goosander																										
Water Rail																										
Moorhen																										
Coot																										
Oystercatcher																										
Lapwing																										
Dunlin																										
Shipe																										
Curllew																										
Redshank																										
Green Sandpiper																										
Common Sandpiper																										
Black-headed Gull																										
Common Gull																										
Lesser Black-backed Gull																										
Pres. Herring x Lbb Gull																										
Herring Gull																										
Great Black-backed Gull																										
Sandwich Tern																										
Common Tern																										
Kingfisher																										
ADDITIONAL SPECIES																										
Domestic Duck																										
TOTAL - WILDFOWL																										
TOTAL - WADERS																										
TOTAL - GULLS & TERNS																										

SCHEDULE ONE SPECIES

Schedule 1 birds are specially protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 and the Wildlife (NI) order of 1985. This means that it is an offence to intentionally disturb these birds whilst they are building a nest, or in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young; or to disturb dependent young even if not in the nest.

Avocet	Goldeneye	Purple Sandpiper
Barn Owl	Golden Oriole	Quail
Bee-eater	Goshawk	Red-backed Shrike
Bearded Tit	Great Northern Diver	Red Kite
Bewick's Swan	Green Sandpiper	Red-necked Phalarope
Bittern	Greylag Goose*	Redwing
Black Redstart	Gyr Falcon	Roseate Tern
Black-necked Grebe	Greenshank	Ruff
Black-tailed Godwit	Harriers (all species)	Savi's Warbler
Black Tern	Hobby	Scarlet Rosefinch
Black-winged Stilt	Honey Buzzard	Scaup
Bluethroat	Hoopoe	Serin
Brambling	Kentish Plover	Shorelark
Capercaillie	Kingfisher	Slavonian Grebe
Cetti's Warbler	Lapland Bunting	Snow Bunting
Chough	Leach's Petrel	Snowy Owl
Cirl Bunting	Little Bittern	Spoonbill
Common Scoter	Little Gull	Spotted Crake
Corncrake	Little Ringed Plover	Stone-curlew
Crested Tit	Little Tern	Short-toed Treecreeper
Crossbills (all species)	Long-tailed Duck	Temminck's Stint
Dartford Warbler	Marsh Warbler	Velvet Scoter
Divers (all species)	Mediterranean Gull	Whimbrel
Dotterel	Merlin	White-tailed Eagle
Fieldfare	Osprey	Whooper Swan
Firecrest	Peregrine	Woodlark
Garganey	Pintail	Wood Sandpiper
Golden Eagle	Purple Heron	Wryneck

* Outer Hebrides, Caithness, Sutherland and Wester Ross only

Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

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

Bulletin 2012 No 8

MONTHLY SUMMARY – AUGUST

6th October 2012

NTBC



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WeBS Inland



A Greenshank at Hauxley
Colin Bradshaw

CLASSIFIED LIST HIGHLIGHTS

Gadwall	Almost a record count for county of 138 at Cresswell Pond on 29th.
Long-tailed Duck	Popular bird at Cresswell Pond all month in wing moult.
Little Egret	Peak of seven at Warkworth Gut on 26th.
Spoonbill	Long-stayer at Cresswell and one-day stays at East Chevington and Holy Island.
Hobby	Several records at coastal sites.
Avocet	Successful breeding at Cresswell Pond and another site.
Stilt Sandpiper	An adult at Newton Flash from 5th to 9th was the first county record.
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	One briefly at Amble Braid on 18th.
Dotterel	One flew over Holy Island on 16th.
Greenish Warbler	Singles at Tynemouth, St Mary's and Inner Farne, all between 26th and 28th.
Barred Warbler	Singles at several localities.
Black Redstart	Single at Boulmer on 16th.
Blue-headed Wagtail	One at Cresswell Pond on 18th.

COMMITTEE NEWS

Dee McKeown is retiring after writing sections for the bulletin for 20 years. Everyone at NTBC wishes to thank Dee for the hard work he has put in. We also wish to thank Ann McKeown for her help and wish her a speedy recovery from her illness.

INDOOR MEETINGS

The next indoor meeting will be at Northern Rugby Club, McCracken Park, Great North Road, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 2DT on Thursday 11th October at 7pm.

11th October - Annual General Meeting and **Skydancer Project** 2012 Update, Blánaid Denman from RSPB the Skydancer Project Engagement Officer will provide a short update on recent developments with the Skydancer Project.

Auction of Bird Art and start of **2013 Calendar sale**, both in aid of Northumberland Bird Atlas.

The result of the Bulletin photographic competition 2011-2012 will be announced at the November meeting.

Due to the unavailability of our venue for the required Thursday in both **January & February** we have had to change the Indoor Meetings and re-arrange speakers as follows. January will now be **Wednesday 9th January 2013** at Northern - speaker Mike Watson, India Wildlife Spectacular. February will now be **Monday 4th February 2013** at Northern and we have a change of speaker to **Birds & People: Pushing the Boundaries by Birding Frontiers and Biotope**, featuring Martin Garner of Birding Frontiers with ground-breaking stories of bird ID, the places and the people, and Tormod Amundsen of Biotope, mixing architecture and birding; Arctic Norway - the making of a nature destination.

FIELD TRIPS

The next of Trevor Blake's popular trips is :-

Sunday 7th October to **Holy Island**.

Please contact Trevor direct for more information: trevor.1958@live.co.uk

Trevor is also looking into the logistics of a Club trip to **Mull** in May 2013 and is considering the possibility of running trips to destinations in **Ireland**.

A winter trip to **Killybegs and Donegal**, perhaps late January/early February. Killybegs is one of the best locations to see good numbers of 'white-winged gulls' and has a good track record for the rarer forms such as Kumlien's and Thayer's as well as several records of American Herring Gull. The trip would be Friday -Monday flying from Newcastle to Belfast (estimated return price £80) and driving to Killybegs from Belfast (car hire ca.£15 per person based on 4) with B&B accommodation (price ca.45euros per night).

A September trip to **Tacumshin, Co Wexford**, one of the best locations for rare American waders in Southern Ireland as well as many other rare species. All costs for this are still tbc but would involve a flight from Newcastle to Cork and travelling by hire car/bus from Cork.

At this stage we are looking for expressions of interest to gauge whether either of these trips is of any interest to club members and if so how many in order to look at possible accommodation. Please let Trevor know by 25th October if you might be interested. Thanks.

August was a good month for waders, so here are two more photographs.



A Common Sandpiper at Hauxley by Tom Brewis



The sadly short-staying Buff-breasted Sandpiper at Warkworth Gut
Digi-scoped by Neil Osborne on 18th August

CLASSIFIED LIST

The following account consists of unchecked reports. The species/subspecies marked * require descriptions.

A complete list of all sightings that need notes is included in the NTBC website www.ntbc.org.uk under the County Records Committee section and in Birds in Northumbria 2009 page 224.

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

TARGET SPECIES

The target species for 2012 are all the owls. Please report all records in as much detail as possible. The Club is sensitive to the vulnerability of these species to disturbance and persecution, and will be particularly cautious about what is actually published, above all about nesting and roosting sites. Please address any questions or concerns to Tim Dean or Dick Myatt.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Killingworth Lake attracted a peak of 181 on 10th (LJM), 164 were at the Tweed Estuary on 17th (MHu), 61 at Amble Harbour on 2nd (PRM) and 55 at nearby Warkworth Gut (JPD). Counts of 12-17 came from Berwick North Shore and Budle Bay, and six to eight at Alnmouth, Cresswell and Linton Ponds, Gosforth Park NR, Grindon Lough and Newcastle Leazes Park. Breeding data were as follows (additional to previous months unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Bates Minewater Treatment Plant, Blyth	1	2	LJM. On 13th.
Monks' House Pool	1	1	DM. On 16th

The brood of eight young first noted at Holy Island in May was reduced to four by August (IK).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Singles were at East Chevington on 19th (ASJ) and Cresswell Pond on 20th and 26th-27th (PJA/CDB/TB).

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

An un-raced individual was at Hauxley Reserve on 22nd (CDB).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Peak concentrations were 630 at New Water Haugh (River Tweed) on 12th (MHu), 221 at East Chevington on 31st (ASJ), 200 at Cresswell Pond on 20th (CDB), 160 at Low Newton scrape on 7th (PRM), and 30-48 at Backworth Pond, Hauxley Reserve, Prestwick Carr and Widdrington Moor Lake. One to two were also at Alnmouth, Arcot Pond, Castle Island and Grindon Lough.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

12 flew S at Cocklawburn on 20th (MHu). Peak counts involved 406 at Haughton Strother GP on 22nd (MR), 365 at Grindon Lough on 8th (PRM), 290 at Castle Island on 19th (DM/STH/PJA), 200 at Cresswell Pond on 21st MN), 147 at West Stobswood Pool on 9th (MSH), 65 at Rothley Lakes (MNC), and 26-38 at Arcot Pond, Newcastle Leazes Park, West Hartford and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Six to nine were also at Alnmouth, Hauxley Reserve, New Water Haugh and the Tweed Estuary.

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

The first returning pale-bellied *hrota* race birds at Lindisfarne NNR were 20 on 25th (IK).

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Eight were at Cresswell Pond on 29th (STH), four at Castle Island on 4th (GB), and two at Lynemouth Flash. Breeding data were as follows (additional to previous months unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Alnmouth	2	7 (5,2)	PRM. On 8th. Also 6 adults
Howdon Wetland NR	1	5	CB. Fledged young on 1st
Amble Harbour	1	5	PRM. On 2nd. Presumed same as July
Hauxley Reserve	1	4	CDB. Fledged young on 10th. Presumed same as July

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Northerly movement involved seven at Cocklawburn on 26th (MHu), and on 30th 24 passed St Mary's (morning; MSH) and seven at Newbiggin (evening; GB). Grindon Lough held 25 on 8th and 77 on 16th (PRM), 44 were at Derwent Reservoir on 28th (IFo), five to eight at Arcot and Cresswell Ponds, and one to three at Airy Holm Reservoir, Backworth and Holywell Ponds, Druridge Pools, Hauxley Reserve, and Newbiggin.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Cresswell Pond held 24-75 on several dates between 8th-28th (CDB/AJR/PRM *et al.*) and peaked at a notable 138 on 29th (STH). Numbers were much lower elsewhere, with 15 (including four half-grown young) at Castle Island on 4th (GB), seven at Linton Ponds on 21st (CDH), six (including five large young) at Big Waters, three to four at Druridge Pools and West Hartford, and one to two at Arcot Pond, Caistron, East Chevington and Hauxley Reserve

Teal *Anas crecca*

Northerly passage involved 128 at Cullernose Point on 30th (TF/JFa), 25 at Newbiggin on 25th and 15 on 12th (AT), while 25 moved S at St Mary's on 30th (MSH). A 'raft' of 128 was off Spittal Bay on 30th (MHu), 110 were in Budle Bay on 25th (CGK), 96 at Grindon Lough on 16th (PRM), 70 at Arcot Pond on 29th (STH), 51 at Cresswell Pond on 10th (PRM), and 30-33 at Druridge Pools and Hauxley Reserve. Counts of five to 12 came from Big Waters, Cheswick, Cocklawburn, Howdon Wetland NR, Linton Ponds, Low Newton scrape, and one to four at five further sites.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Peak counts were 128 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 18th (SR), 116 at Haughton Strother GP on 18th (MR), 115 at Budle Bay on 24th (CGK), about 100 at Cresswell Pond on 30th (CDB), 88-94 at Castle Island (DM/STH/PJA) and Killingworth Lake (GB), 50-69 at Gosforth Park NR, Linton Ponds, Newcastle Leazes Park, Newton Pool/Scrape and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, 22-48 at Airy Holm Reservoir, Alnmouth, Arcot Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Grindon Lough, Lynemouth Flash, and the Tweed Estuary, and 12-17 at Byker, Newcastle Civic Centre and Exhibition Park, West Hartford and West Ord. Breeding data were as follows (additional to previous months unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Killingworth Lake	2	12 (10,2)	LJM. On 10th
Mitford	1	8	PJA. On small pool on 11th
Warkworth Gut	1	8	PRM. On 8th
Byker	1	7	DM. Tiny young on Ouseburn on 22nd
Amble Harbour	1	3	PRM. On 2nd
Newcastle Leazes Park	1	2	DM. Small young on 28th

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Five flew N at Cullernose Point on 30th (TF/JFa). One at Cresswell Pond on 19th (TF/JFa) increased to two between 26th-28th (PJA/TRD/AJR).

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

A juvenile was at Howdon Wetland NR on 1st (CB), a drake in eclipse plumage at Low Newton scrape on 6th (TRD/JD), and one was at Cresswell Pond on five dates between 17th-31st (TF/JFa/MSH/ADMc).

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Cresswell Pond held one to 21 regularly between 10th-29th (CDB/IFo *et al.*) and a peak of 28 on 10th (PRM). Elsewhere, four were at Grindon Lough on 16th (PRM), and one to two at Backworth Pond, Castle Island, East Chevington, Holy Island Lough, Low Newton scrape and West Hartford.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

The largest counts were 11 at Big Waters on 8th (GB), eight at Bothal Pond on 20th (TF/JFa), six (two adults and four juveniles – not bred on site) at Haughton Strother GP on 13th (MR), six at Killingworth Lake on 1st (GB), four to five at Arcot, Bothal and Cresswell Ponds, three at Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and singles at Druridge Pools and Holy Island Lough.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Eight flew N at Newbiggin (GB) and four N at St Mary's (MSH) on 30th. Peak counts were 47 at Killingworth Lake on 10th (LJM), 46 at Druridge Pools on 10th (PRM), 34 at East Chevington on 10th (PRM), 30-32 at Bothal and Cresswell Ponds, Grindon Lough, and 17 at Haughton Strother GP. One to six were also at Arcot and Linton Ponds, Howdon Wetland NR (four fledged young), Newcastle Leazes Park and West Ord. Breeding data were as follows (additional to previous months unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Summerhouse Lane Pond, Newbiggin	3	17 (12,3,2)	GB. On 4th. Young all about third adult size
Bothal Pond	2	10 (6,4)	IRD. On 11th
Howdon Wetland NR	1	9	CB. New brood on 1st
Holy Island Lough	1	5	IK. On 12th. The first breeding there for five years.
Woodhorn Flashes	1	3	GB. On 4th. As July?
Oxford Pits	1	2	MHu. On 4th

Scaup *Aythya marila*

Cresswell Pond attracted and immature bird on 8th (PRM), and two birds were present on 26th (AJR).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

Few were noted, with 38 at Snab Point on 19th (DM/STH/PJA), 33 at Amble Harbour on 2nd (PRM), 30 at Berwick North Shore on 18th (MHu), and five to nine at Blyth Harbour, off Hauxley Reserve and the Tweed Estuary. Breeding data were as follows (additional to previous months):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Alnmouth	1	2	PRM. Female with two young on 8th

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

One, in full wing moult, was at Cresswell Pond between 2nd-29th (TRD/JD/ADMc *et al.*).

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Light movement was noted at Newbiggin, with a total of 45 N and 14 S on three dates between 12th-31st (GB/ASH/AT), 34 flew N off Druridge on 25th (JR), and four to nine N at Cambois and North Blyth. A flock of 68 was off Cheswick on 6th (MHu), 65 were off Tynemouth Pier on 11th (DRW), and 15-16 off Cocklawburn and Cresswell.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

One flew S at Cullernose Point on 30th (TF/JFa). Six (juveniles) were at Howick on 9th (JMA), three at the Blyth Estuary on 5th (ASH) and Holy Island on 26th (MJC), and singles at Budle Bay and the Tyne Estuary.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

120 were at Cocklawburn on 20th (MHu), 110 at the Tweed Estuary on 17th (MHu), 90 (moulting females and juveniles) at Holy Island on 13th (IK), 62 at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 1st (MHu), 22 at West Ord, Boulmer and Thrum Mill (Rothbury). Three to four were also at Amble Harbour, Castle Island and Kitty Brewster, and one to two at Alnmouth, Budle Bay, Druridge, Killingworth Lake and Tynemouth.

A Goosander
Tynemouth Lake
Duncan Watson
11th August

**Red Grouse** *Lagopus lagopus*

The only records were from the Simonside area where 30+ were present on 23rd and five on 2nd (MJC).

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Four were at Crowhall Farm (Holywell Dene) on 4th (RJP).

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Five were at Old Hartley on 31st (MNC), four at Budle Bay on 11th (CGK) and one at Big Waters on 5th.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Singles were heard singing near West Stobswood Pool on 6th (PJA) and at Holburn on 23rd (BWG).

Pheasant *Phasianus coluicis*

Three (male, female and juvenile) frequented a Walbottle garden throughout the month (KR/LR).

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

At Newbiggin three flew N on 31st (ASH) and one on 30th (GB). Nine were noted at Druridge on 25th (JR) and four at Beadnell on 26th (CB/JGS). Two were at Cocklawburn on 20th and one at Cresswell on 2nd.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

One was noted off St Mary's Island on 24th (ASJ).

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

On 31st 23 passed Newbiggin and on 5th nine passed Cambois (ASH). Two flew over Ellington on 24th (TB) and one flew N at Beadnell on 26th (CB/JGS).

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

Light N movement was again noted with eight at Beadnell on 26th (CB/JGS), three at Cullernose Point on 30th (TF/JFa), two at Newbiggin on 25th with singles there on 11th/26th/31st. Two flew S at Berwick Pier on 13th (MHu).

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

Only light N movement was noted with a peak of 15 at Beadnell on 26th (CB/JGS). At Newbiggin seven were noted on 31st (ASH) and four on 30th (GB). One was seen at Cambois on 8th.

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

The only large movement was 1,200/hour N at Spittal Bay on 30th (MHu). At Bamburgh 80 flew S and 25 N in 3 hours on 16th (DM).

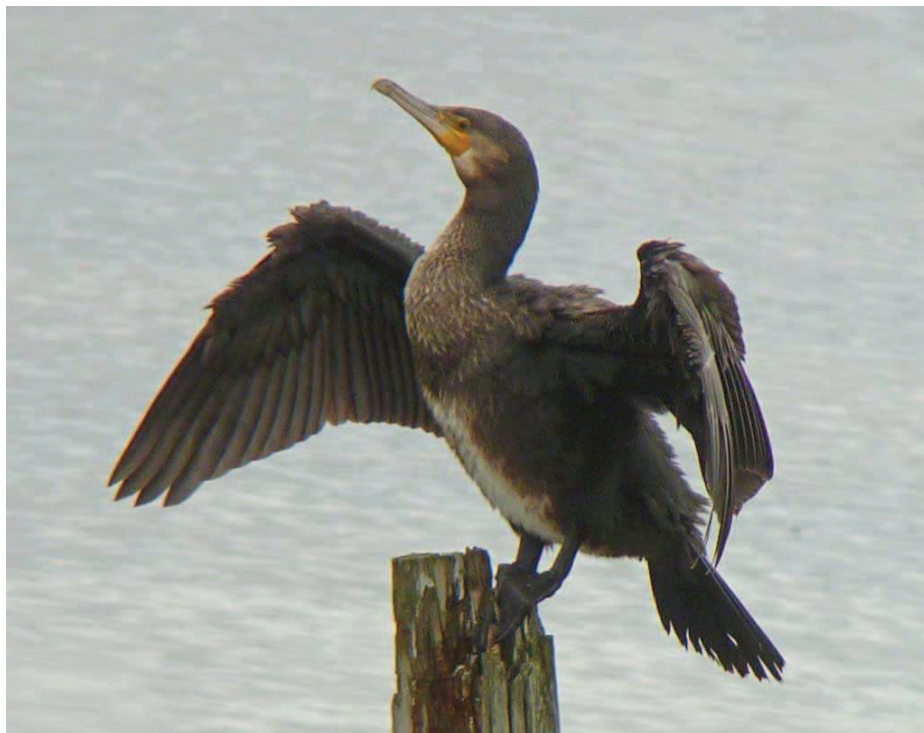
Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

The peak Blyth Harbour roost count was 144 on 26th (STH/PJA). Elsewhere peak counts were 76 at Amble on 29th (PCF), 36 at Berwick North Shore on 18th (MHu), 32 at Castle Island on 4th/15th (AT), 30 at East Chevington on 10th (PRM) and 12 at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 12th and in the Tweed Estuary on 17th (MHu). Nine were at Howden Wetland on 1st, eight at Hauxley on 26th and one to six at Alnmouth, the Blyth Estuary, Derwent Reservoir, Linton Ponds, Newbiggin, Warkworth Gut and Willington Gut.

Continental Cormorant*Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*

Two, an adult and a juvenile, were in Budle Bay on 12th (CGK). An adult was in Amble Harbour on 2nd, when a first-summer was at Foxton bends (Alnmouth (PRM)). A first-summer was also at Druridge Pools on 10th (PRM) and one was at Cresswell Pond on 19th (TF/JFa).

Continental Cormorant
Jonathan Farooqi
12th August
Cresswell Pond

**Shag** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

The peak counts were 34 at Berwick North Shore on 18th, 32 at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 12th (MHu) and 17 at Blyth Harbour on 29th (STH/PJA). One was in the Tweed Estuary on 17th.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

One was seen on several dates, especially later in the month, at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN).

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Birds were seen at Warkworth Gut on ten dates from 2nd with a peak of seven on 26th (PRM/PJA *et al.*). Three were at Hauxley NR on 22nd (CDB/MSK/NEWT), where a single was noted on 2nd/15th and three (one juvenile) were in Budle Bay from 24th-27th (CGK), where two were noted from 10th-14th and a single on 3rd. Two were at Bothal Pond from 1st-3rd (TB). Singles were also noted at Alnmouth on 2nd, Wansbeck Estuary on 12th and one with a broken leg was at Whittle Dene reservoirs on 20th.

The Hauxley NR Little Egrets
Chris Barlow
22nd August

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*

The peak counts were 17 in the Tweed Estuary on 25th (BWG), 15 at Howden Wetland on 12th/19th (CB/CGK/AJ *et al.*), 12 at Alnmouth on 8th (PRM), nine at Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene) on 6th (RJP) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 9th (MR) and seven in Budle Bay on 24th (CGK). One to five were noted at Arcot Pond, the Blyth Estuary, Castle Island, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Gosforth Park NR, Hauxley, Linton Ponds, Low Newton, Rothley Lakes, Wark and Warkworth Gut.

Spoonbill *Platalea leucoropia*

On 13th one was briefly at Rocket Field (Holy Island) before flying S (IK). An adult was at Cresswell Pond from 15th-26th, with probably the same bird visiting East Chevington on 16th/22nd (many observers).



An adult Spoonbill at Cresswell Pond on 19th August by Jonathan Farooqi

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

The highest counts of adults and large young were 16 at Holywell Pond on 24th (STH), 14 at Bothal Pond on 11th (IRD), 13 at Arcot Pond on 26th (DM) and 11 at Big Waters on 29th (GB). Seven were present throughout the month at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN) and at Linton Pond on 21st (CDH). Six were at Hauxley on 26th (CDB), five at East Chevington on 3rd/10th (IFo/PRM), Castle Island on 19th (STH/DM/PJA) and Cresswell Pond on 20th (CDB). Four were at Grindon Lough on 8th (PRM). One to three were noted at Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield), Craggside, Middle Ord Pond (Berwick) and Newton Pool.

Additional breeding records were

Location	No. of Broods	No. of Young	Observer/Comments
Linton Pond	1	2	CDH on 21st
Arcot Pond	1	1	STH on 12th

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps Grisegena*

The peak count at Whittle Dene Reservoirs, where one juvenile was noted on 9th, was seven on 22nd (SR/MR). Four (two juveniles) remained at Bothal Pond until at least 21st (TB). The pair at Killingworth Lake was carrying two young on their backs on 3rd (BMo). Three, including a large juvenile, were at Cresswell Pond on 3rd/5th, with one adult remaining until 19th ((IFo/STH/PJA/DM). Four were at Derwent Reservoir on 5th with three present all month (IFo). Two were at Druridge on 25th and single juveniles off The Heugh (Holy Island) on 1st and at East Chevington on 2nd /3rd. Singles were also at Widdrington Moor Lake on 4th, Arcot Pond on 16th and Big Waters on 29th.



Juvenile and adult Great-crested Grebes

by Alan Janes

Killingworth Lake

**Slavonian Grebe** *Podiceps auritus*

One, in summer plumage, was seen at Church Point (Newbiggin) on 11th (ADMc).

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

A juvenile was at Holywell Pond from 16th-24th (SPP/STH *et al.*). An adult in winter plumage was at Bothal Pond on 20th/21st (TF/JFa/AT). One at Woodhorn Flashes on 30th was believed to have been present for several days (GB/MN). Another was feeding close inshore at high tide in Spittal Bay on 30th (MHu). One was observed at another site on 19th.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Only one record this month of a single bird observed at Walbottle on 31st (SR).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Three juveniles flew W at Hauxley NR in a five-minute period on 16th (CDB). Up to four different birds were seen in the Druridge Bay area throughout the month (PRM *et al.*). Away from the Druridge Bay area singles were noted at Blagdon (PCF), Bothal Pond (MSK/NEWT), Budle Bay (CGK), Holy Island (SR/AH/IK), Holywell Pond (STH/SPP), St Mary's Island (AC), Tynemouth (SPP/MK), Warkworth Gut (JPD/ASJ) and West Hartford (STH/PJA).

A Marsh Harrier quarters Druridge Pools
28th August
Chris Barlow

**Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*

An adult male flew N at an inland site on 8th (IFo).

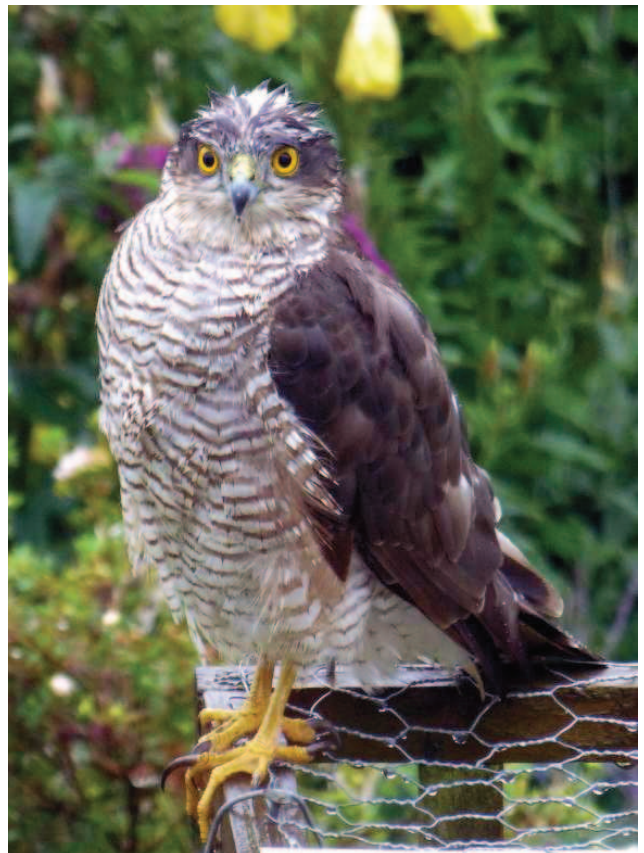
Goshawk *Accipiter gerntilis*

One unsexed bird was seen at a site on 20th (IRD)

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Five birds consisting of a pair with three young were at Preston Cemetery (N Shields) on 12th (MNC). Up to two birds were seen in Holywell Dene on several dates (RJP). Two were Arcot Pond on 11th (STH) and at Lambley also on 11th (MN), Earsdon on 22nd (MSH) and at Big Waters on 29th (GB). Single birds were noted at 17 further sites.

A bedraggled Sparrowhawk
25th August by Russell Pannell

**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*

At Corby Crag (Edlingham) eight birds were seen on 21st (MJC), seven were at Stamfordham on 26th (EC) while six birds were seen at Alnmouth on 8th (PRM) and at Lambley on 11th (MN). Five birds were noted at Harwood Forest on 11th (PJAS) and at West Hartford on 26th (GMi). One to four birds were at a further eight sites.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetuss*

Single birds were at Derwent Reservoir on 5th (IFo), Angerton Lake (Hartburn) on 8th (JR), Holy Island on 12th, 16th and 27th (SR/AH/DB/IK) and at West Ord on 16th (MHu).

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Four birds were in the Upper Irthing at Lampert on 23rd (AJR) and at Holy Island on 26th (MJC) and two were at Old Hartley on 20th (MNC). Single birds were recorded at Seaton Burn on 1st, Grindon Lough on 8th, Cresswell Pond on 10th, Plessey Woods CP on 27th.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Two were on Holy Island on 14th (CGK). Single birds were at two inland sites on 23rd (MJC/AJR), while on or near the coast, single birds were at Cresswell Pond (NFO/ADM *et al.*) and Holy Island (MK *et al.*) on several dates and another single bird was at Holywell Pond on 22nd (SPP).

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

A sub-adult was seen on Holy Island between the 12th and 14th (SR/AH/IK) and another was flying over the dunes and the pools at Druridge on 25th (JR).

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Up to two birds were on Holy Island on several dates (AT/ADM *et al.*) and single birds were also noted on or near the coast at Budle Bay on 10th (CGK), Tynemouth on 11th (DRW), Cresswell on 16th (MNC), St Mary's on 21st and 24th (ASJ), Lyneburn Flash on 23rd (MSH) and at Hauxley on 31st (ASJ). Single birds were also noted at four inland sites during the Month

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Up to six birds including three juveniles were at Gosforth Park NR throughout the month (NHSN/CDB); two were at East Chevington on 10th (PRM). Singles were seen or heard at Alnmouth, Arcot Pond, Backworth, Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, Wallsend Swallow Pond and at Warkworth Lane (Ellington).



A charming juvenile Water Rail at Gosforth NR on 14th August by Chris Barlow

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

22 birds were at Backworth on 16th (CGK), 20 were at Big Waters on 29th (GB) and 18 were at Linton Pond on 21st (CDH) and at Arcot Pond on 26th (DM). One to seven birds were at ten further sites.



Attentive Moorhen parents,
top by Adriana Buskin
below by Chris Barlow

**Coot** *Fulica atra*

Cresswell Pond had the highest count with 91 birds present on 29th (STH); other high counts were of 40 birds at Woodhorn Flash on 21st (CDH), 34 at Arcot Pond on 14th (DM), and 24 at Gosforth Park NR throughout the month (NHSN). One to 21 birds were at five other sites.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

A pair was still tending two juveniles (from three hatched) at Lynemouth Flash on 10th (PRM/MSH). However, increasing post-breeding numbers were also being noted with 142 at Cresswell Pond on 8th (PRM), 120 at Budle Bay on 25th (CGK), 115 at the Blyth estuary on 8th (ASH), 80 at Hauxley NR on 26th (CDB), 74 at Tynemouth on 11th (DRW), 71 at North Blyth Staithes on 2nd (AT), 62 at Newbiggin Beacon Point on 25th (STH/PJA), 50-56 at Cheswick and Cullercoats Bay, 33 at Warkworth Gut, 17 at Derwent Reservoir and two to ten at Alnmouth, Berwick North Shore, Cramlington, Low Newton, Prestwick Carr, the Tweed Estuary and the River Tyne.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

The four chicks at Cresswell Pond from July survived until at least 3rd August. One young was predated soon after this date, with three young noted from 7th until 12th before being taken away from the main pool by the adults (ADM/MSH *et al.*). An additional adult was present in the Cresswell Pond area on 2nd, 8th, 15th, 18th, and 20th-28th (many obs.). The two juveniles noted in late July at a second confidential site were also present until 12th before going missing on this date. A single adult was present with the young up until this date.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

The four young which hatched at a confidential site in Central Northumberland during July were reduced to two on 19th. An adult and a juvenile were also noted near Chollerford on 5th. A juvenile was present at Lynemouth Flash during 5th-8th (ADM *et al.*).

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Autumn passage birds built up on the Blyth Estuary from 107 on 12th to 200 on 24th (AC), whilst at nearby Blyth Harbour some 83 were roosting on Ferguson's factory roof at high tide on 8th (STH/PJA). Apart from 110 in Budle Bay on 26th (CGK), the only other double-figure count involved 11 at Alnmouth on 2nd (PRM). One to eight were reported from Castron, Cresswell Pond, Haughton Strother GP, Hauxley NR, Prestwick Carr, St Mary's Island, West Stobswood Pool and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

A bird flew over the Snook area of Holy Island on 16th (DB)

The Holy Island Dotterel
Dave Bywater
16th August

**Golden Plover** *Pluvialis apricaria*

The largest post-breeding gathering involved 700-800 throughout the month in the St Mary's area (TRD/JD/MNC/ASJ), whilst 300 were at Derwent Reservoir on 1st (RMH). Numbers increased slowly throughout the month at Cresswell Pond and peaked at 40 on 21st (TB) and 30 were at Newcastle Town Moor on 31st (GB). A single was at Warkworth Gut on 8th (PRM).

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

A high-tide roost numbered 163 in Budle Bay on 27th (CGK), whilst elsewhere two were noted at Alnmouth on 8th and singles were at Hauxley and Newbiggin.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Exceptionally well reported this month, with inland peaks of 1,200 at Millshield near Derwent Reservoir on 1st and 1,000 at Flothers (Slaley) on 7th (RMH). Some 500 were near Corbridge on 24th (RB/MB), 455+ were at Bothal Pond on 30th (TF/JFa), up to 450 were at Cresswell Pond all month (many obs), 450 were at Alnmouth on 8th (PRM), 350 at East Chevington on 18th (ASJ), 276 at Cocklawburn, 265 at both Castle Island and St Mary's, and 100-192 at Allendale, Amble Harbour, Airy Holm Reservoir, Catton Masts, Druridge Bay CP, Elswick Wharf (Tyne), Haughton Strother GP, Hauxley, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Yarrow Slake (Tweed). Elsewhere, flocks of 50-80 were noted at Arcot Pond, Bellasis Bridge, Ellington, Grindon Lough and Holywell Dene, with smaller groups seen at a further six sites.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

An increasing number of reports this month, which included peaks of 25 at the Budle Bay high tide roost on 27th (CGK), 18 at Newbiggin (Beacon Point) on 25th (STH/PJA) and 15 at Amble Braid on 16th (ASJ), Cresswell Pond on 16th (MN) and St Mary's Island on 11th (SPP). Up to eight were reported on many dates throughout the month at Cresswell Pond, whilst elsewhere one to four (including adults in summer plumage) were at Berwick North Shore, Boulmer, Cheswick, Hauxley NR and Tynemouth.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

A group of ca.50 were feeding on the shore at Hauxley on 30th (CDB) and 47 were counted at St Mary's on 24th (ASJ). A total of 33 were noted at Druridge on 25th (JR), 26 were at Newbiggin (Beacon Point) on 25th (STH/PJA) and 15 were at Holy Island (Sandon Bay) on 26th (MJC). Reports of single-figure counts also came from Berwick Little Beach, Cheswick and Seaton Sluice.

Sanderling
St. Mary's
by Colin Bradshaw

**Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*

A well-reported bird was present at Cresswell Pond during 15th-16th and 18th (MSH/TRD/CDB *et al.*) and another bird was found here on 27th (PJA).

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Two adults were at Lindisfarne NNR on 3rd (AT/ADMc) and a single was at Boulmer beach on 5th (SR/AH). An adult bird was noted at Cresswell Pond during 18th-19th (NFO/IRD *et al.*) and a juvenile was seen here during 21st-22nd (TB/TF/JFa/CDB). Lynemouth Flash attracted a single juvenile from 22nd to the month's end and was joined by another on 30th for one day only (TB/TF/JFa).

Stilt Sandpiper *Calidris himantopus*

An adult bird was reported at Low Newton scrape during 5th-7th (GW *per* TRD/JD *et al.*), although various online blogs show that the bird remained until the 9th. If accepted by the CRC, this bird represents a first for the county.



The well viewed Newton Stilt Sandpiper by John Littleton on 8th August

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Two early returning birds were on St Mary's Island on 5th (SPP) and singles were at the Tyne estuary on 20th (AC) and Cullercoats Bay on 21st (MN).

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Despite a plethora of reports this month, numbers were relatively low as birds began to move out of or through the area. The highest count was 80+ at Amble Harbour on 2nd (PRM), followed by 62 at Lynemouth Flash on 16th (ASJ/JPD) where there were many other counts of 20-40 throughout the month. Elsewhere, peaks included 40 at both the Blyth Estuary on 4th (GB) and Cresswell Pond on 16th (MN), 23-27 at Budle Bay and Hauxley NR, 14 at Warkworth Gut and single-figure counts were noted at Berwick Little Beach, Cheswick, Holywell Pond, Low Newton scrape, St Mary's Island and the Tweed Estuary. Inland singles flying over Big Waters on 8th (GB) and at Houghton Strother GP on 25th/29th were noteworthy (MR).



Two fine Dunlins

top: at Hauxley by Chris Barlow and below:
by Colin Bradshaw at St. Mary's

***Buff-breasted Sandpiper** *Tryngites subruficollis*

One was present, and 'digi-scoped', at Warkworth Gut in the early afternoon of 18th (NFO).

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

The first week or so was fairly quiet with up to three occasionally in the Budle Bay area, at Cresswell Pond, Hauxley, Holy Island, Low Newton, Lynemouth Flash and the R Tweed estuary. The main passage commenced around mid-month: 13 at Holy Island on 12th then 18 on 13th (SR/AH/IK) and 27 at Ellington, Warkworth Lane also on 13th (ASJ); 15 were at Low Newton on 15th (JPD/ASJ). Numbers at Cresswell Pond rose from six on 15th to 26-30 on 18th and to 40 on 26th (MJC/TB/ASJ *et al.*) before declining to six by the month end. Additionally, the peak at Bothal Pond reached 13 on 30th (TF/JFa), nine were at Lynemouth Flash on 26th, eight in the R Blyth Estuary on 22nd, seven near Budle Bay on 24th and five at Castle Island on 15th.



A Ruff at Lynemouth Flash
by Jonathan Farooqi

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Early in the month the highest count was of 33 at Cresswell Pond on 7th (IFo) with later peaks there of 40 on 16th (MN) and 28 on 25th (AT). At other locations numbers generally increased in the last third, notably at Whittle Dene Reservoirs from 22 on 20th to 43 on 29th (SR); 32-38 were at Druridge Pools during 28th to 31st (AT/JR/CDB), 23 at Holy Island on 26th (MJC), 20 at Haughton Strother GP on 29th (MR) and 16 at Hauxley on 22nd (CDB). Additionally, ten were at Lynemouth Flash on 12th, eight on a flash pool near Budle Bay also on 12th, six at West Hartford on 15th, five at Prestwick Carr on 22nd and up to three at Caistron, Low Newton and Warkworth Gut.



A Snipe reflects at Hauxley NR on 15th August by Chris Barlow

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Variable numbers were present at Cresswell Pond almost throughout, including peaks of six on 2nd, eight on 18th and 12 on 27th/28th (TB/PJA *et al.*). Elsewhere six were at Warkworth Gut on 16th, five near Budle Bay on 10th, four in Amble Harbour on 2nd and one at Berwick Little Beach on 13th. Inland, two visited Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 9th (MR).

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

At Druridge 17 flew S on 25th (JR). Otherwise low numbers were reported: at Cresswell Pond one on 21st, three on 29th and two on 31st; two at St Mary's on 1st, two near Budle Bay 24th to 27th and one in the Blyth Estuary on 19th.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Passage S at the coast included 23 at Tynemouth on 4th (CB), 12 at Holy Island on 5th (MK), nine at Newbiggin on 25th (AT), four at Cresswell on 15th and two at Newbiggin on 29th. Singles S at Tynemouth were recorded on four other days and one at Hauxley on 4th. Inland, one flew S at Cramlington on 14th (DM). Nine were in the Tweed Estuary on 30th (MHu), four at Hauxley NR on 2nd, four at Holy Island on 12th with up to three in the Blyth Estuary, the Cresswell area, at Low Newton, St Mary's, Warkworth Gut and West Stobswood Pool.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

At Tynemouth 31 flew S on 10th (CB) and 22 moved N at Druridge Pools on the same day (PRM). Large congregations included 117 at Old Hartley on 9th rising to 167 on 31st (MNC), 117 in the R Blyth estuary on 12th (ASH), 94 in the Tweed Estuary on 17th (MHu), 84 at Alnmouth on 8th (PRM) and peaks in the Cresswell area of 50 on 4th (MN), 40 at Hauxley on 22nd and 30+ at Amble Harbour on 2nd. Small numbers were found at another nine locations, including inland at Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Derwent Reservoir, Elswick Wharf, Grindon Lough and Plessey Woods CP.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Hauxley NR was favoured for most of the month with four on 2nd, eight on 15th, 12 on 16th and a peak of 14 on 18th (CDB/MN *et al.*). Some other locations also held good numbers: up to 11 in the Blyth Estuary on 13th/14th (LJM/AC), nine at Alnmouth on 8th (PRM) and seven at Foxton Bends on 16th (JPD). Three or four appeared occasionally at Amble, Budle Bay, Castle Island, Newbiggin and Tynemouth and one or two at another eight widespread places.



A Common Sandpiper at Hauxley NR on 20th August by Peter Fletcher and below:
a Green Sandpiper by Chris Barlow

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*

Whittle Dene Reservoirs had good numbers with five to seven on 4th/8th (SR), a notable ten on 9th (MR) and still four on 22nd. Four were at each of Low Newton on 5th (SR/AH), Holy Island on 12th (IKSR/AH) and near Budle Bay on 17th and 24th to 27th (AC/MJC/IF/CGK) with three at Houghton Strother GP on 5th and at Gosforth Park NR (date(s) unspecified).

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

A flash pool near Budle Bay attracted six on 17th (AC/MJC/IF) with four juveniles still present there on 24th (CGK). Cresswell Pond had two juveniles on 7th/8th and one on 9th/12th/16th and 18th, two (one adult) on 19th and singles on 20th/22nd and 25th (ADM/CB *et al.*). A juvenile found Lynemouth Flash to its liking from 21st to 24th (MSH *et al.*).

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

A flash pool near Budle Bay was being used during the HT periods over 10th-14th, peaking at a remarkable 34 on 12th (CGK); 20 were there on 17th (AC *et al.*) and 23 on 25th (CGK). Nine were at Foxton on 16th (JPD/PRM), seven at Alnmouth on 8th (PRM) and a peak of seven at Hauxley on 16th (ASJ *et al.*). Hauxley regularly drew in up to four from 7th to 29th; four were at Low Newton on 5th, four at Big Waters on 8th and four at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 22nd. Three were in the Blyth Estuary on 7th. One or two were noted at Cresswell Pond, two at Amble Braid on 2nd, two at West Stobswood Pool on 4th and singles at a further 11 places.



Two 'Shanks', Green top and a Red below feeding at Hauxley
by Peter Fletcher on 18th August

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Two were on a flash pool near Budle Bay on 17th (AC/MJC/IF) and two visited Bothal Pond on 20th (TF/JFa). One circled Cresswell Pond at 19:30 on 8th (PRM) before heading off SE and another was at Cresswell Pond on 18th to 20th (ADMC *et al.*).



A Wood Sandpiper
Newton Flash
6th August
John Littleton

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

The Amble Harbour area held at least 370 on 2nd (PRM). There were also some high numbers in the Blyth Estuary: 107 on 4th (GB), 246 on 6th (AC), 357 on 8th (ASH) and 106 on 19th (DM/STH/PJA); also 122 in Budle Bay on 11th (CGK) and 134 in the Tweed Estuary on 17th (MHu). Alnmouth, Cullercoats, Elswick Wharf and Hauxley had 20-62 at times with small numbers at Cresswell Pond, Low Newton and Lynemouth Flash. Only two were found inland: at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 11th and Grindon Lough on 16th.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

The peak in the Berwick area was of 54 at North Shore on 18th (MHu) and the HT roost at North Blyth Staithes contained 44 on 2nd (AT) and 48 on 5th (ASH). Numbers at Tynemouth peaked at 27 on 11th (DRW) and 24 were at Snab point on 10th (PRM). St Mary's had 16 on 28th, Hauxley ten on 26th and one was at Cresswell Pond on 15th.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

A total of 22 passed Newbiggin between 10th-31st with a day maximum of six on 30th (AT/ASH); nine flew S at St Mary's in one hour on 29th (MSH). Four were off Cullernose Point on 30th; three noted from Cambois also on 30th and two were at sea three miles off Blyth on 18th. Singles were recorded sporadically at six other coastal localities.

A dark phase Arctic Skua
22nd August
Druridge Bay
by Chris Barlow

**Great Skua** *Stercorarius skua*

The majority of a rather thin passage occurred late in the month: eight N at Beadnell on 26th (CB/JGS), three N and one S at Newbiggin on 30th (GB), two N at St Mary's on 30th and one S at Tynemouth on 26th. Earlier two were in Druridge Bay on 19th and singles were off Newbiggin on 10th, 12th and 18th.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

The peak concentration of 320 was on the Tweed Estuary during the WeBS count on 17th (MHu) and other significant gatherings, all in the Berwick area, were 246 at Berwick Pier on 9th, 140 on the Tweed Estuary on 5th and 46 at North Shore on 18th (all MHu). The only other record was of an adult and a juvenile at Cullernose Point on 9th (JMA), the only birds which remained at the colony.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Evening roosts at Budle Point held at least 600 birds on 26th (MHu) and 400 on 10th (CGK). Other large flocks were 510 on the Tweed Estuary during a WeBS count on 17th (MHu) and 232 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 18th (SR); also at the latter site 160 were noted on 4th (SR) and 178 were at the River Tyne (Elswick Wharf) on 2nd (DM). Flocks of ca.100 were recorded at the Coquet Estuary on 9th (JMA), Hauxley on 30th (CDB), St Mary's Island on 3rd and 28th (JMA/PCF) and Whitley Bay Links on 3rd (JMA). Two of the birds recorded at St Mary's Island on 28th had been ringed as 3rd calendar-year birds in Denmark in April 2011 and in Norway in April 2012 (PCF).

Elsewhere at least 60 were at Gosforth Garden Village feeding on a flying ant swarm on 4th (MJC), 60 at Castle Island on 19th (DM/STH/PJA), 54 at Arcot Pond on 19th (DM), 43 in Jesmond Dene on 26th (MJC), 40 in Exhibition Park on 29th (DM), 28 at Berwick North Shore on 18th (MHu) and 17 in Leazes Park on 1st (DM).

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Only five reports were received, each comprising single immature birds during the second half of the month, at Beadnell (CB/JGS), Berwick Pier (MHu), Blyth (three miles offshore, CB), Cullercoats (MK) and Newbiggin (ASJ).

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

The Newbiggin gathering built up to a maximum of 31 on 29th (STH) including one juvenile and four colour-ringed birds one of which originated in Hungary, with 18 there on 19th (ASH) and 12 the previous day (STH). Elsewhere one-four birds were recorded regularly throughout the month at Cresswell Pond (TB *et al.*) with two at Holywell Pond on 22nd (SPP) and single birds, either adults or immatures, at various locations namely Budle Bay/Point (CGK), Boulmer (JPD/ASJ), the Blyth Estuary (AC/ASH), Cresswell Snab Point (MSK), Holy Island Rocket Pool (SR/AH) and Tynemouth (SPP).

Common Gull *Larus canus*

A very large roost of 2,300 was recorded at Budle Point on the evening of 26th (CGK) and 1,350, of which 95% were adults, were at Derwent Reservoir at mid-morning on 30th (IFo), an unusually high number outside the roosting time. Other significant groups included at least 400 in pre-roost gatherings at Widdrington Moor Lake on 4th and 9th (MSH), 336 and 300 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 18th and 8th respectively (SR), 210 at an evening roost at Budle Point on 10th (CGK), 200 at Ryal (Mootlaw Quarry) on 26th (ALT), 120 at West Ord on 12th and the same number at the Tweed Estuary on 17th (MHu). A flock of 87 were inland at Knowesgate on 12th (JR) and two other reports were of six at Hauxley and four in Jesmond Dene.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

The evening roost at Budle Point built up to 215 on 26th from 94 on 10th (CGK) and other double-figure counts were 17-30 at the River Tyne (Elswick Wharf) on 2nd and 24th (DM), 16 in Jesmond Dene on 20th (MJCo), 12 at the Widdrington Moor Lake pre-roost on 4th (MSH) and 12 at Bellasis Bridge on 31st (MJC). Elsewhere one-four were noted at Berwick North Shore, Castle Island, Cramlington, Exhibition Park, Grindon Lough, Hauxley, Leazes Park, the Tweed Estuary, Ryal (Mootlaw Quarry) and Tynemouth.



A Lesser Black-backed Gull at Killingworth Lake by Adriana Buskin

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argenteus*

The large gull roost at Budle Point held 410 on 26th and 260 on 10th (CGK) and a gathering of 315 was at the Tweed Estuary during a WeBS count on 17th (MHu). On the Coquet estuary 100 were recorded on 9th (JMA) and elsewhere groups of 26-57 gathered at Berwick North Shore (MHu), Castle Island (DM), River Tyne Elswick Wharf (DM), St Mary's Island and Tynemouth Boating Lake (JMA). Seven-15 were at Exhibition Park, Hauxley, Jesmond Dene and Leazes Park.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

At Amble Braid 188 were present on 2nd (AT) and the Budle Point roost held 145 on 26th, an increase from the 71 noted there on 10th (CGK). The Tyne Estuary held 48 on 17th (CGK) and a WeBS count on 18th included 12 on the Tweed Estuary and seven at Berwick North Shore (MHu). One-four were at the River Tyne Elswick Wharf and at Castle Island (DM).

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

Following the tidal destruction of the Lindisfarne breeding colony in June, three pairs were reported to have re-laid and successfully fledged young during the month (IK). The only other reports were of a juvenile at Alnmouth beach on 2nd (PRM) and an adult feeding with other tern species at Berwick Meadow Haven on 15th (BWG).

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

A very poor year in the county for this species, the first records for the year being a single bird (age unknown) at St. Cuthbert's Isle (Holy Island) on 16th (DB) and a juvenile flying N at Newbiggin on 25th (AT).

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

The majority of significant records came from roosts in the north of the county with the peak gatherings 112 at Cheswick on 28th, 104 at Cocklawburn on two dates, 6th and 20th, 64 at Berwick Coastwatch (all MHu), 55 at Budle Bay on 15th (CGK), 52 at Berwick Meadow Haven on 5th and 46 in the Tweed Estuary on 5th (MHu). During a WeBS count on 17th/18th, 44 were at Berwick North Shore and 42 in the Tweed Estuary (MHu).

Lower counts from sites further south were 30 at Alnmouth beach on 6th and 20 at St Mary's Island on 28th (TRD/JD). Two to six were at Amble Harbour, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Bay CP, East Chevington, Lynemouth Flash and Newbiggin Church Point.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Very well reported this month with 27 records. The peak count was 139 on the rocks at Tynemouth on 16th (CB), a locality where significant numbers were seen throughout the month (MK). The Tyne Estuary held 45, including 13 juveniles, on 17th (CGK) and 40 were in a roost at Berwick Coastwatch on 13th (MHu) with 38 at nearby Berwick Meadow Haven on 18th (BWG) and 25 at Alnmouth beach on 6th (TRD/JD). At inland breeding sites a maximum of 22 were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on the 2nd (SR) from where there was only one successful breeding record of two juveniles fledged on 9th (MR). At Gosforth Park NR there was a maximum of 13, including juveniles all fledged by mid-month (NHSN) and at Swallow Pond a pair was with a juvenile on 30th (SPP).

Elsewhere one to eight were at Alnmouth, Amble Harbour, Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Bay CP, East Chevington, Killingworth Lake and the Tweed Estuary.



Two views of our local terns.

Top: a Common Tern by John Clark and below: a Roseate on the Tyne by Colin Bradshaw

**Roseate Tern** *Sterna dougallii*

Post-breeding records, which included fledged juveniles, came in from the first week of the month. The peak count was 12, including five juveniles, on the Newbiggin breakwater on 5th (ADMc) and 11, including four juveniles, were on the Black Midden/Spanish Battery rocks on 26th (SPP). On Holy Island nine, including two juveniles were recorded at Guile Point on 5th (MK) and at St. Cuthbert's Isle (Holy Island) there were three, including a juvenile, on 16th (DB); elsewhere, one-six were at Alnmouth, Berwick Coastwatch, Blyth Harbour, Budle Point and the Tyne Estuary, the latest record coming on the 26th.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

A large number, at least 500, came into the evening roost at Budle Point on 24th (CGK) and other significant counts were made in the Berwick area and nearby localities where roosts contained 120 at Berwick Coastwatch on 13th, 62 at Berwick North Shore on 18th, 34 at Berwick Meadow Haven on 5th and 22 at Cocklawburn on 20th (all MHu). Elsewhere, apart from 20 at Boulmer on 9th (JMA), one-seven were at the coastal sites of Alnmouth beach, Cheswick, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Newbiggin Church Point, the Tweed Estuary and Tynemouth. Two unusual inland records came from Haughton Strother GP at Humshaugh where a juvenile was recorded on 18th, this bird staying only briefly before flying off W, and a different juvenile bird on 29th which fished successfully for at least one hour.

Auk *sp*

At St Mary's Island on 30th 26 flew N during a half-hour period in late afternoon (MSH).

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

On Holy Island adults with young were prominent offshore throughout the month (IK). Small groups recorded elsewhere included 36 at Druridge on 25th (JR), 21 at Cocklawburn on 20th (MHu), 16 at Berwick North Shore on 18th (MHu), 15 with young at Druridge Bay CP on 19th (TRD/JD) 13 in the Tyne Estuary on 17th (CGK) and 11 at Berwick Meadow Haven on 1st (MHu). One-eight were offshore at Cresswell, East Chevington, Hauxley, North Blyth and St Mary's Island.

Razorbill *Alca torda*

On Holy Island adults with young were prominent offshore throughout the month (IK). At least 100 were at sea some three miles off Blyth on 18th (CB) and it was noted that ca.30% of all juvenile auks seen in the area were this species. Three juveniles were seen off Tynemouth Pier on 12th (CB) but the only other records were two at Cocklawburn and at Druridge.

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

Perhaps surprisingly, no records were received this month.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

A regular gathering at Howdon Wetland NR peaked at 22 on 23rd (CB) with 14 at Cresswell Pond on 8th (PRM), 8 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 8th (SR) and 7 throughout Jesmond Dene on 12th (MJCo). One to three were at Arcot Pond, Newcastle Business Park, Rothbury, West Hartford and in a Walbottle garden.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

The only report was of nine in Jesmond Dene on 19th (MJCo).

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Seven were at Seaton Burn on 25th (PCF), six at Stanington on 31st where they have been scarce recently (RWM/MIM), three at Benton and in an Old Hartley Garden and one at Walkergate, Newcastle (RJP/CDH).



A Collared Dove
Low Cocklaw
by Tom Brewis

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

There were numerous sightings of juveniles from three locations with a high count of two at Cresswell Pond on 18th (ASJ) and at Druridge Pools on 30th (CDB) with singles at Holy Island on 19th and 26th.



A Cuckoo feeds at Druridge Dunes
30th August by Chris Barlow

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Two multiple counts of three east of Redesmouth on 2nd (IFo) and two at Hauxley Moor Farm on 9th (JMA). A single bird at Cresswell Pond was noted on eight occasions from 5th to 26th (MSK/NEWT *et al.*) with other birds at Shiremoor on 6th, Longhoughton on 8th, Holy Island on 16th & 26th, Dunstanburgh Castle on 20th, Yarrow Haugh, the Tweed Estuary on 24th and Waren Mill on 26th. A poor breeding year was noted at Holy Island with two boxes containing single young of which only one fledged (IK).



A vole regrets being out in daylight
A Barn Owl hunts at Cresswell by John Littleton

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

An adult and juvenile were at Backworth on 16th with two at Waren Mill on 26th and one regularly at Shiremoor during the month (CGK). Singles were also at Derwent Reservoir on 2nd, Cramlington on 8th, Dinnington on 25th, Rising Sun CP on 27th and one found dead at Stannington on 28th.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Three juveniles were calling around the Reeth Pond (Newburn) on 2nd (PCF), more than two sang at Scotland Gate during the month (SLB/MSK) and two were at Waren Mill on 26th (CGK). Singles were at Allerdean, Alnwick, Ellington, Harehope Hall, Ponteland Park, Prestwick Carr, Rising Sun CP, Walbottle Hall, Wark and, unusually for this species, Holy Island on 16th (MJC).

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Two birds were noted regularly at Holy Island during the month but no indication of breeding was seen (IK). Elsewhere one was at Longframlington on 1st (JMA), a single flew S at Low Newton on 6th (JFa) and one was at Berwick Golf Course on 23rd (BWG).

Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Ringling sessions at Sleaford Forest by a BTO A-permit holder with permission of Natural England and the Forestry Commission caught three males on 3rd and captured one male and one juvenile on 8th with a further three males churring on that date (*per* PRM).

Swift *Apus apus*

Light passage all day at Holy Island on 17th consisted of 50-60 migrants likely held up by rain with a party of 40 N noted at dusk and 40 S on 18th (IK/MJC/AC/IF). Passage S of two -16 birds was noted at many other coastal locations during the month with notable late counts of 47 at St Mary's Island and 15 at Berwick on 29th (MSH/MHu), seven at Druridge Bay on 28th (CDB), at Cocklawburn on 26th and six at Bamburgh on 27th (CGK). Around 50 fed at Prestwick Carr on 2nd with six remaining there on 26th (PCF), 30 at Gosforth Garden Village on 4th and Morpeth on 8th (MJC/IDR), 20 at Whitley Bay on 18th (ASJ) and one to ten birds at numerous widespread localities till the 31st when two were seen at Cresswell Pond and one at Newbiggin Point.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

A pair fed young at an Ouseburn nest site between 1st and 26th with two young seen there till 31st (DHWB) and two birds elsewhere in Jesmond Dene on 26th (MJCo), at Big Waters on 8th (GB) and Wallington on 30th (TRD/JD). Male and female birds were reported singly at Gosforth Park NR and a juvenile caught and ringed at Whittle Wood (Horsley) with singles at Caistron, Castle Island, Haughton Strother GP, Holywell Dene, Ponteland Park, Mitford and Rothbury.



A Kingfisher
Gosforth Park NR
14th August
by Chris Barlow

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

An adult with two juveniles was present all month at Rothbury often in the recorder's garden (TRD/JD). Singles were at Gosforth Park NR all month, Cramlington on 1st, 6th and 19th, East Cramlington and Seaton Delaval on 12th, Edlingham on 21st, Ellington on 22nd and 23rd, Morpeth Common on 24th and Lynemouth Flash on 30th.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Three were at Gosforth Park NR all month (NHSN), two at Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 31st (GB) with singles at Arcot Pond, Valley Park (Cramlington) and Scotland Gate throughout the month (DM/SLB/MSK). Singles were also at Annitsford, Dam Dykes (Cramlington), Harwood Forest and Wark with juveniles noted at Arcot Pond and Walbottle.

Magpie *Pica pica*

The highest count was six at Druridge Pools on 28th (CDB) with four at Jesmond Dene on 12th (MJCo) and two at Hauxley on 18th.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Four at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 17th and 24th could have been the result of breeding here for the first time (DM) with three at Rivergreen Mill (Mitford) on 20th (MNC) and two at Ellington on 3rd (TB), Valley Park (Cramlington) on 25th (DM) and occasionally at Scotland Gate throughout the month (SLB/MSK). Singles were at Arcot Pond, Jesmond Dene, Longframlington Common, Longhirst, Rothbury and one dead on the road at Blagdon.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

A large gathering of 400 at Budle Bay on 11th (CGK) with 50 at Knarsdale on 5th (JMA), ten at Howdon Wetland NR on 1st (CB), six the peak count in a Walbottle garden during the month (KR/LR) and four in Jesmond Dene on 12th (MJCo).

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

100 at Cresswell Village on 9th and Greenhead on 29th (JMA) were the only reports.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

A peak count of 21 at Mount Pleasant (the Blyth Estuary) on 19th (DM), with four at Jesmond Dene on 12th (MJCo) and Hauxley on 18th (CDB).

Raven *Corvus corax*

Two birds were in the Simonside Hills on 2nd (MNC) with a pair over Kielder Village on 4th (NFO).

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

More than three were at Bamburgh on 25th (BRS), three in the observer's garden at Tynemouth on 25th (CB) and singles at Valley Park (Cramlington) from 18th -26th, Cresswell Pond on 19th, Tynemouth on 26th and in the observer's garden at Monkseaton on 3rd which was noted as an unusual autumn sighting (MSH).

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Good counts of 26 at Haughton Strother GP on 25th (MR), 16 at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 16th (DM), eight the peak in a Walbottle garden on 26th (KR/LR) and seven at Prestwick Carr on the same date with singles at Hauxley and Jesmond Dene.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Four was the highest count in the observer's garden at Walbottle on 26th with two at Jesmond Dene on 12th (MJCo).

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Garden counts of one to three at Old Hartley during the month (RJP) and three at Walbottle on 26th (KR/LR).

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

Two adults with two juveniles were on the Cresswell Pond to Warkworth Lane bridlepath on 20th (ADM), four juveniles at Prestwick Carr on 3rd and 26th (PCF) all other reports being singles at Alnmouth on 2nd, Big Waters on 8th, Arcot Pond on 12th, Ponteland on 21st, Cramlington on 26th and Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield) on 28th.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

Singles at Thrum Mill (Rothbury) on 3rd and old railway line (Rothbury) on 26th (JD), Linden Hall on 13th (NFO), Posternwood (Morpeth) on 13th and High House Bank (Morpeth) on 24th (ADM).

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

A single report of seven at Budle Bay on 12th (CGK).

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Over 350 flew S at Druridge on 31st (ASJ) with 150 S in one hour at that location on 20th (CB). 22 were at Hauxley on 18th, 15 at Big Waters on 29th with one to four at Cocklawburn, Low Newton, Town Moor (Newcastle) and Wark.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Heavy passage noted throughout the day at Druridge on 31st with 5,000+ S in four hours (ASJ/EC/JSB), 750 S there in one hour on 20th (CB), 600+ roosting in a wheat field at Budle Bay on 24th (CGK), 500+ roosting in reedbeds at Gosforth Park NR on 18th (NHSN), 200 at Big Waters on 29th (GB) and 160 S at Newbiggin Point on 31st (ASH). 124 were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 22nd, 109 at Ovington on 23rd, 100 at Prestwick Carr on 7th, 75 at West Hartford on 26th and 68 at Holy Island on the same date with four to 50 at Cramlington, Druridge Pools, Jesmond Dene, Low Newton, Town Moor (Newcastle), Old Hartley and Plessey Woods. An albino bird was noted flying S at Cresswell Pond on 18th (JM). Late breeding was noted at Wellfield Allotments where a 3rd brood was present (RJP), two adults still had four young in the nest at the Oddie Hide (Druridge Pools) on 28th (CDB) and a pair fledged four young from the refuge on Holy Island causeway despite the regular disturbance from stranded idiots! (IK).



A Swallow at a sunny Prestwick Carr
by Peter Fletcher on 7th August

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

On 31st 600+ flew S at Druridge with 70+ S at St Mary's Island on 29th (MSH) and 66 E in one hour at Haughton Strother GP on the same date (MR). 53 were at East Ord on 29th, 50 at West Hartford on 2nd, 45 at Rothbury on 31st, 43 at Town Moor (Newcastle) on 21st and 40+ at Plessey Woods CP on 27th with two to 40 at Cramlington, Druridge Pools, Holywell Dene, Jesmond Dene, Low Newton and Whitley Bay.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Large 'tribes' were 29 near Bywell on 19th (SAS), 26 at The Sele (Hexham) on 27th (DM), 23 at Whittle Wood on 24th (SAS), 20 at Prestwick Carr on 3rd (PCF) and 18 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 29th (MR). Eight to ten were reported from Bywell, Castle Island, Civic Centre (Newcastle), Holywell Dene and Howden Wetland NR with one to six at a further seven localities.

*** Greenish Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

Two individuals were located, the first in bushes at Tynemouth Pier on 26th (MK) and another at St Mary's Island on 28th (TF/JFa/MN).

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

A passage bird was in a Berwick garden on 15th (BWG).

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Up to ten were noted with tit flocks at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) late in the month (MR). Eight were at Alnmouth on 8th (PRM) and six+ at Bamburgh on 25th (BRS). Elsewhere, three to four were found at Budle Point, Cresswell, Holy Island and Meldon Hall and one to two at a further seven localities.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Family parties totalling 15 were at Prestwick Carr on 3rd (PCF). On Holy Island passage birds included four to six from 14th-17th (CGK/MJC/AC/IF) and 11 on 26th (MJC). Seven were at Alnmouth on 8th, six at Cresswell Pond on 10th (PRM) and five at Budle Point on 26th-27th and Hauxley NR on 26th. One to four were reported from a further 12 localities.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Six were trapped and ringed at Bamburgh on 25th (BRS) and three+ were at Budle Point on 26th-27th (CGK). One to two were also noted at Alnmouth, Berwick, Druridge Pools, Hauxley HR, Holy Island, Jesmond Dene, Rothbury and Scotland Gate.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Two to three were at Budle Point on 26th-27th (CGK) and singles at St Mary's Island on 12th, Holy Island from 16th-17th and Bamburgh on 25th.

*** Barred Warbler** *Sylvia nisoria*

Three individuals were reported. The first was at Hadston Carrs / Links on 19th (DE/DM/STH/PJA *et al.*), another was found at Budle Point on 26th (CGK) and a very elusive bird was on the Straight Lonnen (Holy Island) on 26th-27th (MJC/IK/DB)

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Only one was reported; at Spittal (Newbiggin) on 4th (GB).

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

During a 'fall' of migrants at least seven were at Budle Point on 26th (CGK). Earlier in the month, six were noted here on 13th and five were at Newbiggin on 15th (AT). Family parties of four were reported from Arcot Pond and Tynemouth on 12th (LJM/CB) and three were at Hadston Links on 19th. One to two were reported from a further six coastal localities.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Singles were at West Hartford on 2nd (STH) and Prior's Park (Tynemouth) on 16th (DRW).

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Ten at Holy Island on 16th was the highest count (MJC), followed by six at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 9th (MR). Four+ were at Bamburgh on 25th and three at East Chevington on 10th. Signs of breeding activity were at Cresswell Pond, a pair feeding young in the nest on 3rd (MSH) and a bird carrying food to a probable nest site at Woodhorn Flashes on 21st (CDH). One to two were reported from a further eight localities.

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Still fairly conspicuous, with family parties of six at St Mary's Island on 14th (AC) and five+ at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN). Singles were also noted at Bates Minewater treatment works (the Blyth Estuary) on 4th, Cresswell Pond on 3rd, Holy Island on 26th and St Mary's Island to 28th.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Four were at Low Carritheth (Hesleyside) and three at Simonburn on 12th (JR) and three at Longhirst Hall on 21st (TB). One to two were also reported from Arcot Pond, Eshott, Furnace Bridge (Bedlington), Jesmond Dene, Meldon Hall, the Sele (Hexham Town Centre), Valley Park (Cramlington) and Wark (North Tyne).

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Singles were reported from Big Waters, Exhibition Park (Newcastle), Meldon Hall and Wark (North Tyne).

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Two at Jesmond Dene on 12th was the only report (MJCo).

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

The largest gatherings were ca.500 at Flothers (Slaley) on 7th (RMH) and 400+ on Holy Island on 16th (MJC). Flocks of 200-250 were noted at Budle Bay, Cresswell Village and St Mary's Island, 100 at Boulmer and 50 at Whitley Bay links. Three to 16 were reported from a further four localities.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Two young were noted in Jesmond Dene during the month (DHWB) and an adult and one juvenile at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh). Elsewhere, at Corbridge, a juvenile was seen on 18th and an adult on 13th and singles at Furnace Bridge (Bedlington) and Thrum Mill (Rothbury).

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

A juvenile was near the summit of Deadwater Fell (Kielder) on 4th (NFO).

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Eight in a Dinnington garden on 17th (PCF) and a single in Jesmond Dene on 26th were the only reports.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

A very early individual was noted at Holy Island on 12th (AH).

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Two nests of four young were found at Alnwick on 1st (JMA) and a single was at Jesmond Dene on 12th.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

A flock of 14 at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 8th was unusual for this site (MR) and a flock / flocks of 12 and 14 were at Newcastle Town Moor on 3rd and 8th (GB). Five were at Gunnerton on 31st, three at Wallsend on 11th and one at Kitty Brewster on 19th.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Breeding activity was well reported with family parties of five to six at Cowden on 2nd (IFo) and five at Redheugh on 12th (JR) and a family party at Kielder Village on 4th (NFO). Three at Halton Red House (Corbridge) on 26th included at least two juveniles and two juveniles were in a Stamfordham garden on 9th. In addition a pair were observed carrying food at Chirdon on 9th. Counts of four were received from Lambley on 11th (MN) and Linden Hall on 19th (NFO) and three from Comb (Falstone) and Thorneyburn on 12th. One to two were noted at a further five localities.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Six at Prestwick Carr on 26th was the only multiple count (PCF). The first autumn song was noted at Chapel House on 21st (IK) and a single was in Jesmond Dene on 26th.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

A first-summer male was at Boulmer on 16th (ASJ/JPD).

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

An adult male and two juveniles were at Prestwick Carr on 30th (PCF) and two at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 18th. A passage bird was at Big Waters on 5th and singles at Derwent Reservoir on 6th and Holy Island and Ryal on 19th.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Two were noted at Cocklawburn on 24th, Harwood Forest (one juvenile) on 11th, Holy Island on 14th and 26th Ryal (juveniles) on 24th and Sinderhope (one juvenile) on 2nd. Another juvenile was at Howden Wetland NR on 16th.

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

There was an encouraging number of breeding records, although all were from coastal areas. Reports from Cresswell Pond included a family group of five on 18th, five juveniles on 18th, an adult and two immatures on 19th and a pair with two recently fledged young on 29th. A family party of four was at Budle Point during the month and three newly fledged young were at Holy Island Lough on 12th. At Warkworth Gut a pair was noted on 8th and two juveniles on 12th. A pair was at East Chevington on 2nd, when a juvenile was also at Druridge Pools.

Wheatear *Oenanthe Oenanthe*

Light passage at Holy Island produced three on 14th (CGK) and three on 26th (IK). Elsewhere, at Cheswick, two were noted on 6th and a single on 31st (MHu). On Newcastle Town Moor, a fresh juvenile passage bird was found on 3rd and probably the same on 6th, followed by a different bird on 9th (GB). Singles were also at Cresswell Pond on 2nd and 29th, Amble Braid on 2nd, Addycombe (Rothbury) on 9th and St Mary's Island on 24th.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

On Holy Island, two were noted on 16th and 26th (MJC/IK/DB) and singles on 14th, 17th and 26th. Single passage birds were also reported from Whitley Bay Cemetery on 13th, Chapel House on 14th (killed hitting a window), Tynemouth on 16th and St Mary's Island on 16th and 20th.

A pied Flycatcher on passage
St. Mary's
17th August
by Peter Fletcher



Dunnoek *Prunella modularis*

Surprisingly there were no records for August of this common species.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

89 were observed at Ovington and 64 at Peepy Farm on 11th (SAS). 14 at Whittle Dene on 16th (PRM) had increased to 50 by 29th (SR). 24 were in observer's garden's at Walbottle on 26th (KR/LR) and at Netherton Park (Stannington) on 30th (RWM/MIM). 14 were at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 18th (DM).

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

74 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 8th increased to 118 by 22nd (MR). 15 attended garden feeders throughout Waren Mill Caravan Park all month (CGK). 15 were also at Cresswell Pond on 15th (CDB) and one to five, at Hauxley, Low Newton, Prestwick Carr, a Walbottle garden, Warkworth Gut, Whittle Dene and Widdrington.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

30 were mobbing a Sparrowhawk at Whittle Dene on 20th (SR). 24 at Cresswell Pond on 19th (TB) was the maximum count at the site but apart from 20 going to roost in reeds on 16th (IRD), one to ten were seen throughout the month including seven juveniles. One to two were seen at Alnmouth, Cresswell, East Chevington, Hadston Links, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Kitty Brewster (Blyth), Low Newton, Lynemouth, Newbiggin, Wark and Whittle Dene.

Blue-headed Wagtail *m.f. flava*

A single was at Cresswell Pond on 18th (IRD)/(TB).

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Six were at Whittle Dene on 9th (MR). Four went over Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 30th (MR) while three were at Thrum Mill (Rothbury) on 29th (JD). Two were seen at Cockshaw Burn (Hexham) on 27th (DM), Jesmond Dene (Newcastle) on 19th (MJCo), Tyne Green CP (Hexham) on 13th (PRM) and Wark on 21st (PRM) whilst singles were noted at Bassington NR (Cramlington), Corbridge, Cresswell Pond, Exhibition Park (Newcastle), Newgate Street (Newcastle City Centre), Thrum Mill (Rothbury), Wark and Whittle Dene throughout the month.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

A single loose flock of 50 at Haughton Strother GP on 25th (MR) was the peak count whilst 40 were recorded at both Longhirst Hall on 21st (TB) and Lynemouth Flash on 30th (ASJ). 38 were at Berwick GC on 19th (MHu), 35 at Low Newton on 2nd (PRM), 22 at both Backworth on 16th (CGK) and Cresswell Pond on 26th (ASJ), a flock of 19 moving slowly south at Alnmouth Village GC on 10th (RWM/MIM), 17 at East Holywell on 14th (MNC), 14 at Prestwick Carr on 17th (PCF) and one to eight at Hauxley, Newbiggin and Town Moor (Newcastle).

White Wagtail *M. a. alba*

Two were at Low Newton Beach on 6th (JD) and singles at Cresswell Pond on 30th (JFa) and Holy Island on 19th (SR/AH).

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Autumn movement was indicated by singles at Thropton (Rothbury) on 18th (MJC), Straight Lonnen (Holy Island) between 25th and 26th (IK), Beacon Point (Newbiggin) on 29th (AA) and heading S over Bellasis Bridge 31st (MJC).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

400-500 gathered in the Cresswell/Druridge area and flew south on 31st (ASJ). 60 were on Holy Island on 16th (MJC), 50 flew S over the Marden Estate (Tynemouth) on 30th (ASJ), 40 arrived at West Stobswood Pool from the west calling in one loose group on 4th (MSH), 23 at Simonside on 23rd (MJC) and 10 were on Town Moor (Newcastle) on 31st with a nesting pair there on 3rd (GB).

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Two were at Blyth Harbour on 8th (STH/PJA).

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

80 were noted at Haughton Strother GP on 29th (MR). 17 were at Redheugh on 12th (JR) and two at Jesmond Dene (Newcastle) on 26th (MJCo).

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

12 were between Town Moor and Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 21st (DM). Six visited a Walbottle garden on 5th (KR/LR) and singles were at Hauxley on 18th (CDB) and Holywell Dene on 3rd (RJP).

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

320 were at East Holywell on 27th (MNC) and 300, including many juveniles, were flushed from thistles by a Sparrowhawk at Swallow Pond also on 27th (SPP). 120 were noted at Backworth on 5th (CGK), a single charm of 65 at East Chevington on 26th (AJR), 60 at St. Mary's Island on 28th (PCF), 52 at Cocklawburn on 31st (MHu), a post-breeding flock of around 50 was on Holy Island on 12th (IK), 50 at Lampert Farm (Irthing Valley) on 9th J.M.A., 46 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 8th (MR) and 30 at West Hartford on 26th (STH/PJA). One to 15 were seen at a further 13 locations throughout the county.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

40 were at Comb near Falstone on 12th (JR) and 30 at Redheugh on 12th (JR). A further one to four were at Bellingham, Eshott, Prestwick Carr and Waren Mill Caravan Park.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

200 were on wires at Bothal on 25th (JR), 40 at Budle Bay on 12th (CGK) and 35 at Warkworth Gut on 2nd (PRM). One to ten were seen at a further 11 coastal locations.

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*

Two were at East Chevington on 4th (PCF).

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Six at Whittle Dene on 8th (SR) was the month's highest count with one to five at a further nine locations including one flying west over Monkseaton (Whitley Bay) on 9th (MSH).

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Six were at Holywell Dene on 12th (RJP) and a family party of six at Waren Mill caravan park on 12th (CGK). One to five were at Ellington, Grindon Lough, Holywell Dene, Prestwick Carr, Ponteland, Prestwick Carr, a Walbottle garden and Valley Park (Cramlington).

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Four were at Alnmouth on 8th (PRM) with one to two singing birds at Airey Holm Reservoir on 6th (IFo), Amble Harbour on 2nd (PRM) and Warkworth Gut 8th (PRM).

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Two at Howdon Wetlands NR on 1st (CB) and singles at Warkworth Gut on 2nd (PRM) and Arcot Pond on 26th (DM) were the only records.

ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN**Escapes****Muscovy Duck** *Cairina moschata*

The pair were seen again at Elswick Wharf on 2nd (DM).

WEATHER

The weather was mainly influenced by low pressure bringing cloudy conditions with showers or longer spells of rain on many days, especially to the north and west.

1st to 6th: An area of low pressure was located to the west of the UK, bringing rather cool, showery conditions; some of the showers were heavy and thundery.

7th to 11th: As the low pressure moved away across the North Sea, high pressure built in to become centred over the UK on 9th and 10th. However, there were still some showers on 7th and 8th. Low cloud, mist and fog formed on the night of 8th, clearing during the morning of 9th. It remained fine on 10th, with temperatures again widely above 25 °C, and on 11th.

12th to 17th: Thunderstorms broke out in some northern and western areas on 12th. Then it turned more generally unsettled, with low pressure systems bringing bands of rain, heavy showers and some thunderstorms. The 15th was wet across many western, central and northern areas, with over 15 mm in places.

18th to 19th: Over the weekend of 18th and 19th, there was cloud and showers.

20th to 25th: Low pressure to the west brought some rain and heavy showers at times to the north and west. Periods of rain spread eastwards on 24th followed by showers on 25th, becoming heavy and prolonged.

26th to 31st: The north and west had unsettled conditions. Some more prolonged rain spread eastwards on 29th, giving large totals in the west and north, and the night of 30th / 31st was clear and -0.7 °C was recorded at Red esdale Camp (Northumberland).

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Bamburgh Ringing Station, Berwick Wildlife Group, Natural History Society of Northumbria, Northern Experience Wildlife Tours.

Apologies for any accidental omissions

BULLETIN COMPILATION AND PRODUCTION

This bulletin was compiled by Graeme Bowman (Mute Swan to Ruddy Duck), Lindsay McDougall (Red Grouse to Black-necked Grebe), Trevor Blake (Honey Buzzard to Crane), Steve Holliday (Oystercatcher to Dunlin) Ian Forsyth (Snipe to Skua), Eddie Crabtree (Ivory Gull to Puffin), Tim Dean (Escapes, Hybrids and Unknown Origin, List of Contributors, Highlights), Peter Fletcher (Feral Pigeon to Red-rumped Swallow), Mike Richardson (Cetti's Warbler to Pied Flycatcher), Phil Allott (Dunnock to Corn Bunting), Dan Turner (WeBS Coastal Counts) and Steve Holliday (WeBS Inland Counts). Thanks to David Sanders of NNBC for providing data. Proof reading was by Mike Smith.

Edited by Steve Barrett NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.com

Postal distribution Paul Stewart.

RECORD SUBMISSION

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 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 NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.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 cost of printing and stamps. Ask for an e-mailed bulletin from:

ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

For membership enquiries please contact ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

NTBC WEB SITE

The Club website is an excellent resource for all interested in birds in the north east. There are numerous interesting sections, including a photograph gallery, site information and trip reports together with extensive reference information for birding in our area. The site is at www.ntbc.org.uk

If you have any ideas or things you would like to see or hear about on the site please let Chris know on 0751 582 5024 or e-mail christopher.knox@o2.co.uk

NTBC SIGHTINGS PAGE

The club sightings web page gives listings of birds seen locally. Adding a sighting is simple. A short e-mail is all that is needed. If anyone would like to be added as a contributor please contact Alan Tilmouth at ntbcorg@gmail.com. The sightings page can be found at <http://ntbc sightings.posterous.com>

COASTAL WeBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

AUGUST		2012																	
MHu	M. Hutcheson	ACra	A. Craggs	TAC	T.A. Cadwallender	DMT	D. M. Turner												
TB	T. Brewis	RP	R. Pover	MGA	M. G. Anderson	PF	P. Fletcher												
Bewick North Shore (including Little Beach)	Bewick Little Beach	Tweed Estuary	Horncliffe (including Bude Bay)	Lindfarne NNR (including Bude Bay)	Seahouses - Beadnell	Boulmer - Almouth	Aln Estuary	Almouth South	Coquet Estuary	Cresswell - Newblighin	Blith Estuary	St Mary's Island	Tynemouth North Pier - N Shields Fish Quay	DMT bank only	Redough - Scotswood Bridge.	Scotswood - Newburn Bridge, (north bank)			
MHu	MHu	MHu	TB	MHu	ACra	RP	ACra	RP	MLC	AB	TAC	RP	RP	MGA	LJM	SP	DMT	PF	
18	18	17	19	20	19	19	19	21	13	20	20	19	19	19	14	14	19	18	18
TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Little Grebe	36	12	1	36	104				28	6	5	3	17		40	22	23	1	
Shag	167	34	1	72	19			13		3					4	1			
Grey Heron	60	8	9	3	10			3		5	5	9			15	2	8	1	
Mute Swan	321	12	164	26	1			11	2		2		43						4
Grevilag Goose	153																		
Canada Goose	32	7		12							13								
Light-bellied Brent Goose	1				1														
Shelduck	73				56					5	6								
Wigeon	101				101														
Teal	477			9	339	6			5	120						4			
Mallard	394		33	36	210	7					65				5		25	20	
Tufted Duck	1				15														
Scaup	15																		
Eider	1,120	30	2	5	63	640		32	79	121	4	16	39	20	24	40	7		
Common Scoter	247			18	220					8						11			
Red-breasted Merganser	32				24						3		3						
Goosander	272	12	3	110	19	120													
Moorhen	9										4				2	3			
Oystercatcher	1,382	2	8	62	900	135	42	93	10	2	36	13	111	10	72	21			
Ringed Plover	328				197	50		75	8	1		13	2	1	23	8			
Golden Plover	1,609				659	70										950			
Grey Plover	286				259			2	25										
Lapwing	976	14	60	56	151			1		8		134				200	231	5	
Knot	142				100			7				7	5			15			
Sanderling	107							1							27	79			
Purple Sandpiper	2														2	2			
Dunlin	301				207			3	16	45						30			
Ruff	4																		
Snipe	9				5								2						
Black-tailed Godwit	5												5						
Bar-tailed Godwit	402				388			5	7						1	1			
Whimbrel	43				40							2							
Curlew	1,790	94		9	1,273			3	26		224		27	9	66	50	4	1	4
Redshank	1,335	134		2	561	195	5	62	46	103		176	20	60	80	6	27	53	
Greenshank	14				7						7								
Common Sandpiper	10			2															
Turnstone	313				3	49													
Black-headed Gull	3,628	28	510	35	135	1357	100	26	45	47	1	15				100			
Common Gull	1,100	120	230	5	742			51			518				160	281	231	52	209
Lesser Black-backed Gull	121	3	2	2				6			3								
Ferring Gull	3,205	26	1	315	20	62	1630				28				21		1		66
Great Black-backed Gull	260	7	12	2	63	40		97							213	73	352	6	173
kittiwake	367	46	320					32			2				47	10	36	21	28
Mediteranean Gull	1															1			
Sandwich Tern	259	44	30	42	104	22	1	5	10		5	2			5	17	3		
Roseate Tern	8				3											2	3		
Common Tern	102	12				60									1	5	24		
Ardic Tern	99	62	14	6	22			2	6						1				
Kingfisher	2		1																
ADDITIONAL SPECIES																			
Little Egret	5										1								
Water Rail												4			1				
TOTALS - WILDFOWL	3,829	124	5	493	98	334	1,786	27	46	114	263	107	19	119	20	100	85	35	31
- WADERS	9,068	2	2	250	62	132	4,800	450	91	330	189	477	58	365	196	138	1,605	39	28
- GULLS & TERNS	9,150	228	45	1,327	287	330	4,097	140	7	202	0	549	5	2	0	447	391	650	58

INLAND WeBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

Version:

Interim

Year: 2012

Month: AUGUST

[illegible]

Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

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

Bulletin 2012 No 9

MONTHLY SUMMARY – SEPTEMBER

6th November 2012



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Highlights
Committee News
Indoor Meetings
Field Trips
Classified List
Weather
WeBS Coastal
WeBS Inland
Icelandic Goose Census

CLASSIFIED LIST HIGHLIGHTS

Balearic Shearwater	Singles at Holy Island and St Mary's
Leach's Petrel	One off Emmanuel Head , Holy Island on 26th.
Black-necked Grebe	Singles at Holywell Pond, Big Waters and East Chevington
Osprey	Popular bird along Pilgrim's Way near the Holy Island causeway all month
Red-footed Falcon	A real surprise adult male at Fenwick on 21st
Baird's Sandpiper	A brief sighting of one at Cresswell Pond on 16th
Pectoral Sandpiper	One at Lynemouth Flash on 16th and 17th.
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	A juvenile on Cheswick beach on 22nd
Long-billed Dowitcher	A juvenile at Holy Island on 28th relocated to Cresswell Pond on 30th.
Long-tailed Skua	A large count of 14 seen at St Mary's on 21st.
Sabine's Gull	Singles at St Mary's on 13th and 25th.
Arctic Warbler	One located by the Lindisfarne hotel on Holy Island from 26th to 29th.
Redstart	73 found in atrocious conditions on 25th on Holy Island
Red-breasted Flycatcher	Several records
Richard's Pipit	Singles on Holy Island and at St Mary's
Hawfinch	An unusual migrant with one on Holy Island on 26th.

COMMITTEE NEWS

Annual General Meeting

At the recent AGM all of the current trustees (club committee) stood for re-election. In addition a nomination of Martin Davison was received prior to the meeting and seconded at the meeting.

At the first committee meeting following the AGM the committee elected officers and allocated responsibilities to individual committee members as follows:

Chairman	Martin Davison
Secretary	Alan Tilmouth
Treasurer	Jo Bentley
County recorder	Tim Dean
Bulletin Editor	Steve Barrett
Field Trips & Club Sales	Trevor Blake
Indoor Meetings	Tom Cadwallender
Atlas Fund-raising	Steve Lowe
Data Management	Dick Myatt

ATLAS FUND RAISING

Three talented and philanthropic club members; Mike Henry, John Steele and Stewart Sexton, donated 13 original pieces of artwork between them, to raise funds for the `Atlas` project. All the paintings had featured in NTBC publications over the years with one going back as far as being the cover for *Birds in Northumbria* 1993. From an idea from Steve Barrett we had a very `grand auction` after the Bird Club Annual General Meeting in October. There were some extremely generous club members in the audience that night as we raised £780. So after framing costs were covered we made a profit of £585 which will go into the development fund to help publish the `Atlas`. I think everyone there that evening went home happy, but none more so than the proud owners of some very fine and exclusive bird paintings.

Many thanks to all who participated, especially the artists, the successful bidders, auctioneer Tom Cadwallender and not forgetting the non-successful bidders.

And if you failed to purchase your painting don't forget that the 2013 Club Calendar is available for £5 a copy at Indoor Meetings. This makes an ideal Christmas present. If you buy five we will deliver it free to you if you live in our area. Here again all funds raised will aid publication of the Atlas. So just pick up the phone and ask if you can't get to a meeting.

INDOOR MEETINGS

The next indoor meeting will be at Northern Rugby Club, McCracken Park, Great North Road, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 2DT on **Thursday 8th November at 7pm.**

Birds, Birds, Birds by Ron McCabe. Ron was Scottish Nature Photographer of the Year 2010 so we are guaranteed some superb images.

On **13th December** we have;

Inspired by Birds professional musician and birder Tom McKinney has been fascinated by birds used in music since his mid teens. From the composition of an orchestral symphony to counting flocks of calling Meadow Pipits, the talk will reflect on just how profoundly bird sound can affect and inspire us.

The first meeting of 2013 is on **Wednesday 9th January (please note the date)**

India Wildlife Spectacular - A return visit from Mike Watson to talk to us. Mike is a former NTBC member who left a thriving Tyneside birding scene in 1985. After years in the wilderness of the banking industry in the south he wisely decided to pursue his passion for birds full time, quitting his job, selling his house and going off travelling, eventually ending up working for Birdquest. Mike has been travelling to India for 20 years now and it remains one of his favourite destination.



A Bar-tailed Godwit at Druridge Bay
Peter Fletcher
22nd September

CLASSIFIED LIST

The following account consists of unchecked reports. The species/subspecies marked * require descriptions.

A complete list of all sightings that need notes is included in the NTBC website www.ntbc.org.uk under the County Records Committee section and in Birds in Northumbria 2009 page 224.

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

TARGET SPECIES

The target species for 2012 are all the owls. Please report all records in as much detail as possible. The Club is sensitive to the vulnerability of these species to disturbance and persecution, and will be particularly cautious about what is actually published, above all about nesting and roosting sites. Please address any questions or concerns to Tim Dean or Dick Myatt.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Peak counts involved 134 at Killingworth Lake on 29th (BMo), 79 at QEII Lake on 15th and 19th (CDH/DM), 76 at the Tweed Estuary on 14th (MHu), 50 at Big Waters (GB), 20-27 at Amble Braid and the Wansbeck Estuary, and ten to 16 at Budle Bay, Cresswell Pond and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Four to seven were also at Holy Island Lough (including four surviving cygnets), Linton Ponds, Newcastle Leazes Park and West Hartford, and more unusually, two in Blyth Harbour.

A Mute Swan sails into the sunset
Bolam Lake
19th September
Chris Barlow



Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Three adults paused at Cresswell Pond on 20th before flying off S (MSH/IK/ADMc).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

One was at Cresswell Pond from 1st-5th and eight arrived at East Chevington on 5th (IFo). 23 at Budle Bay on 8th were the observer's earliest record there by six days in 32 years of regular observation and were followed by 175 S on 9th (CGK), when 60 were near Bell's Pond (DM *et al.*) and 31 flew S at Hauxley on 9th (TB). On 10th, 145 moved S at Budle Bay (CGK) and 42-52 S at Holy Island and Prestwick Carr (PCF/JL), 46-60 flew over Great Whittington and Wallsend on 12th, and 400 at Beal (JPD), 135 near Budle Bay (JPD) and 130 S at Cocklawburn on 13th (MHu).

Larger numbers arrived on 15th, with about 900 at Beal (IK), 600 at East Chevington (TD) and 500 over Cresswell Pond (NFO). Maiden's Hall Lake (West Chevington) held 1,500 on 16th (ASJ), 500 were at Cresswell Pond on 17th (ASJ), 1,700 roosted at Budle Bay on 22nd (CGK) when 1,000 were at Cheswick Sands (JPD), and about 1,000 were at Lindisfarne NNR on 27th (JD).

Southward passage was noted at various, mainly coastal, localities between 15th-28th, with peaks of 400 at Tynemouth (JPD) and 356 at Newbiggin (IFo) on 27th, and 350 at Snab Point (JL) and 100 during a pelagic trip (NEWT) on 22nd, and 55-90 at Boulmer, Dunstan, Lynemouth, Newbiggin and Tynemouth on various dates. Several groups ranging from 23 to 150 flew N/NW at four coastal sites, 52 flew E at Shiremoor and 40 W at Cramlington.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

An un-raced bird was at East Chevington on 2nd (IRD).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

60 flew S at Low Newton on 9th (DM *et al.*) when 60 flew N at West Hartford (PJA). Numbers were much smaller than those of Pink-footed Goose, with peaks of 350 at Yarrow Slake (Tweed Estuary) on 1st (BWG), 300 at Widdrington Moor on 18th (PJA), 200 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 18th (SR), 151 at Bothal Pond on 3rd (TF/JFa), 128-134 at Big Waters and Cresswell Pond, and 45-90 at Budle Bay, Monks' House Pool, Newton scrape and West Hartford.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Largest concentrations involved 500 at Widdrington Moor on 18th (PJA), 304 at Haughton Strother GP on 19th (MR), 302 at Bothal Pond on 3rd (TF/JFa), 42-55 at QEII Lake and the Tweed Estuary, ten to 26 at Cresswell Pond, Newcastle Leazes Park, Prestwick Carr and New Water Haugh (River Tweed), and five to six at Amble Braid and Big Waters.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Early reports involved six at Monks' House Pool on 2nd (JPD), five SW at Budle Bay on 10th (CGK) and six there on 16th (MJC), 25 S at Snab Point on 22nd (JL), and seven at Budle Bay and Newbiggin on 23rd. Larger numbers began arriving on 27th, when at least 230 flew N at Tynemouth (MK), 200 NW at St Mary's (JPD), 89 S at Newbiggin 9IFo) and 200 were at Lindisfarne NNR (JD). At least 3,000 were at the latter site on 28th (IK) but on 29th 6,000 were found at Goswick Sands (NFO), 800 were at Holy Island (TF/JFa) and 150 at Budle Bay (NFO). On 30th, 110 flew N at Cresswell Pond (ASJ), 105 N and 25 S at Hauxley Reserve (HRS), and one was at Prestwick Carr.

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Records of un-raced birds involved 80 N at St Mary's on 24th and 73 N there on 21st (AJ/CGK/AC/MSH), 50 N at sea during a pelagic trip (BMo) and 42 N at Tynemouth (SPP) on 22nd, and 15 S at Cambois on 27th (TB), and 700 were at the Fenham Flats area of Lindisfarne NNR on 13th (ASJ).

Pale-bellied *hrota* race birds included 75 N at St Mary's (AC/MSH *et al.*), 50 N at Newbiggin (STH/JGS/RSF/TRC) and 21 N at Budle Point (CGK) on 21st, 130 N at Newbiggin (GB), 75 at Snab Point (JL) and 17 N at Hauxley (HRS) on 22nd, ten N at Newbiggin on 23rd (GB), and 90 N at St Mary's on 24th (MSH *et al.*), while 259 were at the Fenham Flats area of Lindisfarne NNR (DM/GB/PJA/JH) on 9th increasing to 750 by 13th (JPD/ASJ).

Ten dark-bellied *bernicla* race birds flew N at Hauxley on 22nd (HRS) and one N at Newbiggin on 26th (ASH).

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

650 were at the Fenham Flats section of Lindisfarne NNR on 13th (JPD/ASJ), and 30 in Budle Bay on 9th increased to 180 by 22nd (CGK). Seven juveniles were at Ashington on 1st (JR).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

At Newbiggin, a total of 328 flew N on three dates between 21st-27th, including 233 on 22nd (GB/IFo/STH *et al.*), 115 flew N at Snab Point on 23rd (JR), 75 N at Hauxley on 22nd (HRS), a total of 54 N at St Mary's between 21st-23rd (JPD), and 50 N at Tynemouth on 27th (JPD). The Fenham Flats area of Lindisfarne NNR held 1,000 on 13th (JPD/ASJ), 100 were at East Chevington on 9th (MK), 100 at Hauxley Reserve on 22nd (HRS), 75 at Big Waters on 30th (GB), 70 at Cresswell Pond on 13th (JPD), 65 at Budle Bay, and 40 at Gosforth Park NR. Ten to 27 were also at Arcot Pond, Derwent Reservoir, East Chevington and Prestwick Carr.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Two flew N at Newbiggin on 22nd (GB). Cresswell Pond held peaks of 125 on 17th (JPD), 100 on 9th (MK) and 90 on 2nd (STH). Other peak counts were 43 at Linton Pond on 19th (CDH), 30 at Hauxley Reserve on 15th (HRS), 17 at St Mary's Wetland on 27th (ASJ), and ten to 13 at Big Waters, Druridge Pools and Gosforth Park NR. Five to eight were at Arcot Pond, Marden Quarry and Woodhorn Flashes, and two to four at Backworth and Bothal Ponds, Longhirst Flash, Newton Pool and Prestwick Carr.

Teal *Anas crecca*

Peak northerly movement involved 244 at Newbiggin on 22nd and 100 on 23rd (GB), 175 in one hour at Tynemouth on 1st (DRW) when 70 passed Snab Point in ten minutes (STH/PJA), 57 at Hauxley on 22nd (HRS), and 46 at Newbiggin (STH *et al.*) and 26 at St Mary's (JPD) on 21st. Peak concentrations were 685 in Budle Bay on 22nd – up from 260 on 8th (CGK), 300 at Cresswell Pond on 17th (JPD), 78 at Arcot Pond on 2nd (STH) increasing to 222 by 16th (LJM), 200 at East Chevington on 9th (MK), and 130-131 at Druridge Pools and Holy Island. Groups of 31-65 were also at Backworth and Bothal Ponds, Cullercoats, Hauxley Reserve, Newton flash, and 12-17 at Gosforth Park NR, Linton Ponds and Warkworth Gut.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

The only report of coastal passage involved three N at Newbiggin on 23rd (GB). The largest gatherings were 154 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 1st (SR), about 150 at East Chevington on 9th (MK), 146 at Cresswell Pond on 17th (JPD), 132 at Budle Bay on 10th (CGK), 63-89 at Backworth and Linton Ponds, Derwent Reservoir, Newcastle Leazes Park and the Tweed Estuary, and 17-30 at Bothal, Cocklawburn and Duke's Ponds, Byker, Gosforth Park NR, Newcastle Exhibition Park, Newton Pool, Prestwick Carr, QEII CP and West Ord. Late breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Holywell Pond	1	9	MSH. About 7 day-old young on 19th
Newcastle Leazes Park	1	8	DM. Tiny young on 17th
Cocklawburn Pond	1	3	MHu. 10 day-old young on 17th

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Coastal movement concerned five N at St Mary's on 21st (AC/MSH/CGK/AJ) and four N at Newbiggin on 22nd (GB), while inland 11 flew SW high over Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 10th (MR). One at East Chevington on 1st (STH/PJA) increased to 14 by 9th (MK), five were at Cresswell Pond on 2nd (TB) and one to three there on several dates between 1st-16th (ADM/NFO *et al.*), four at Lindisfarne NNR on 9th-10th and 13th (JL/SR/AH/JPD *et al.*), three at Prestwick Carr on 30th (GB/PCF), and one to two at Big Waters and Hauxley Reserve.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

One, possibly a drake in 'eclipse' plumage, was regularly at Cresswell Pond between 2nd-11th (ADM/NFO *et al.*).

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Gosforth Park NR (and adjacent pool) held up to 17 during the month (MHSN), 14 were at Newton Flash on 2nd (JPD), eight at Monks' House Pool on 9th (GB/DM/PJA/JH), six at Cresswell Pond on 2nd (STH), three at Linton and Swallow Ponds, and one to two at Arcot and Backworth Ponds, Big Waters, Druridge Pools and Hauxley Reserve.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

One flew S at St Mary's on 25th (CGK *et al.*). Big Waters attracted a peak of 26 on 15th and one to ten on several other dates between 2nd-12th (GB). Numbers were low elsewhere, with five at Linton Ponds on 23rd (DM *et al.*), three to four at Arcot, Bothal and Swallow Ponds, East Chevington and one to two at Cresswell Pond, Haughton Strother GP and Hauxley Reserve.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Three flew S at St Mary's on 25th (CGK *et al.*). The largest concentrations were 154 at Killingworth Lake on 23rd (LJM) and 75 at QEII Lake on 19th (CDH). Other peak counts were 38 at Bothal Pond on 2nd (TF/JFa), 30 at Haughton Strother GP on 8th (MR), 21 at Linton Ponds and 12 at Swallow Pond. Five to nine were also at Arcot Pond, Newcastle Leazes Park and Prestwick Carr, and one to three at Cocklawburn Pond, Jesmond Dene, Monks' House Pool, Newcastle Exhibition Park and West Ord.

Scaup *Aythya marila*

The sole report was of a first-winter female at QEII Lake on 19th (CDH).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

The only records were of 18 at Blyth Harbour and six to nine at Berwick North Shore and the Tweed Estuary.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

A female was at Cresswell Pond frequently between 1st-30th (ADM/TB/IRD *et al.*).

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

At Newbiggin, a total of 189 flew N and 37 S between 21st-23rd, including 84 N on 22nd and 93 N on 23rd (GB/STH *et al.*), 85 flew N at Snab Point on 1st (STH/PJA) and 60 N on 22nd (JL), and 29 N at Hauxley on 22nd (HRS). Smaller numbers were noted at Hauxley, Snab Point and St Mary's on several dates. A group of 34 was off Cocklawburn on 13th (MHu), 20-26 were off Hauxley Reserve, Stag Rocks and St Mary's, 12-15 at Cheswick and Druridge Bay, and eight at Spittal Bay. An unusual inland record involved a drake at Derwent Reservoir on 9th (IFo).

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

Northerly movement involved three at St Mary's (JPD) and two at Newbiggin (STH *et al.*) and Tynemouth (MK) on 21st, six at Snab Point (JL) and two at Newbiggin (GB) on 22nd, five at St Mary's on 25th (CGK), and two at Newbiggin on 27th (IFo). Southbound birds concerned one at Newbiggin on 19th (JPD), one at Tynemouth on 21st (MK), four at St Mary's on 23rd (JPD), and one at Newbiggin on 25th (GB). Five were at St Mary's on 21st (ASJ), two off Hadston Carrs on 22nd (TF/JFa), and one at Holy Island on 22nd (SR).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Singles were at East Chevington on 1st (STH/PJA), the Blyth Estuary on 9th (GB/DM/PJA/JH) and at a confidential site in the north of the county on 25th (JD).

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Two flew N and one S at Hauxley (HRS) and one N at Newbiggin (GB) on 22nd, and singles flew N at St Mary's on 21st (AJ *et al.*) and Newbiggin on 23rd (GB). Seven were in Budle Bay on 10th (CGK), two at Holy Island on 9th (ADM) and one at the Blyth Estuary on 29th (ASH).

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

A very notable count of 220 at Branton GP on 26th involved 150 on the west lake and 70 on the east lake, and was thought to concern storm-disrupted birds from the River Tweed (JD). Other peak counts were 78 at the Tweed Estuary on 14th (MHu), 38 at New Water Haugh on 9th (MHu), 24 at West Ord on 2nd (MHu), 22 at Spittal on 10th (JL), and 12 at Budle Bay. Five to eight were also at Berwick North Shore and the Blyth and Coquet Estuaries, three at Newcastle Exhibition Park, and singles at Derwent Reservoir, Jesmond Dene and Killingworth Lake.



A Goosander at Low Newton on 24th September by Jonathan Farooqi

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

All records were from the North Pennines with six males, including a group of five at Blackcleugh Burn (Plenmeller Common) on 11th, where a male and a female were present on 4th, two adult males and a juvenile male at Dryburn Moor on 23rd (AJR) and two males at Coanwood on 7th (EC/JSB).

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

At least 60, possibly newly released birds, were at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) on 15th (ALT) and 11 newly released birds were by the roadside at Carey Burn (Harthope Valley) on 9th (STH), when seven (five juveniles) were at Christon Bank (GB/DM/PJA). One to two were at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) and sitting in the middle of the A1 near Newham turn-off.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

The peak count in Budle Bay was 15 on 22nd (CGK), 11 were near East Linden on 15th (NFO), when 10 were at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) and seven were at Ellington on 23rd (TB). Six were at Cresswell Pond on 2nd (TB) and five at Old Hartley on 15th/27th (MNC) and West Hartford on 29th (PJA). One to four were at Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay), Havannah NR, Prestwick Carr and St Mary's.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

At Bellasis Bridge 35, including three all white birds, were counted on 23rd (PCF). A female accompanied by seven juveniles was at High Newton-by-the-Sea on 9th (DM/GB/PJA *et al.*). Four (two males) were in a Walbottle garden on 30th and a single was noted in Holywell Dene on three dates.



A handsome cock Pheasant at Prestwick Carr
by Peter Fletcher on 15th September

Diver species *Gavia sp.*

On 23rd nine flew S and seven flew N in one hour 20 minutes, including a bird calling in flight (GB).

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

At Newbiggin 25 flew S and nine flew N in 6 hours 35 minutes of sea-watching on 22nd, including a party of five containing an adult in breeding plumage which was actively calling in flight (GB). Other movements were 29 S in 7 hours 15 minutes at St Mary's Island on 21st (JPD), ten N at St Mary's Island on 23rd (JPD), eight N and seven S at Newbiggin in 6 hours 40 minutes on 21st (STH/JGS/RSF/TRC), eight flew S at St Mary's Island on 19th (SPP), six S at one N at Hauxley on 8th (HRS), four S at Hauxley on 22nd two N at Newbiggin on 27th, singles N at Snab Point on 1st and St Mary's Island on 12th and one S at St Mary's Island on 18th. The peak count in Druridge Bay was 12 on 15th (TRD) with 10+ noted there on 22nd (JL) when at least six were at Hadston Carrs (TF/JFa). Eight were offshore at Druridge Pools on 17th (JPD) and five were at East Chevington on 18th (TRD). One to three were offshore at Boulmer, Farne Islands, Newbiggin, St Mary's Island and Snab Point.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

One flew S at Hauxley on 22nd (HRS).

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

Two flew N at Newbiggin on 2nd (ADM).

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Only light passage was noted with a peak of 12 N at St Mary's Island in 1 hour 30 minutes on 12th (AJ). On 21st 10 flew N in 6 hours 40 minutes (STH/JGS/RSF/TRC), and three flew N at Snab Point on 23rd. Three were at Inner Farne on 17th and a "blue phase" bird flew S at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) on 26th (TRD).

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

N movement was again light with a peak of six in 6 hours 40 minutes at Newbiggin on 21st (STH/JGS/RSF/TRC). At St Mary's Island five were seen on 24th (MSH *et al.*), three on 21st (AC) and two on 23rd/25th (JPD/ASJ). Two were also at Hadston Carrs on 22nd (TF/JFa) and Hauxley on 24th (HRS). Singles were at Tynemouth on 1st and Newbiggin on 25th.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

Only light N movement was again noted with peak counts of 19 at St Mary's Island on 24th in 3 hours 15 minutes (AC/MSH *et al.*), 11 at Newbiggin in 6 hours 40 minutes on 21st (STH/JGS/RSF/TRC), ten at Hauxley on 22nd (HRS), nine in 3 hours and eight in seven hours at St Mary's Island on 21st (AC/JPD) and four at Hadston Carrs (TF/JFa) and Newbiggin on 22nd when one flew S (GB). One to three flew N at Hauxley, Holy Island, Newbiggin, St Mary's Island and Snab Point on seven dates, mainly from 19th-24th and two flew S at Hauxley on 24th.

***Balearic Shearwater** *Puffinus mauritanicus*

Three passed Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) on 22nd (SR) and two flew N at St Mary's Island on 21st (AJ/AC/MSH/CGK).

***Leach's Petrel** *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

One gave excellent views at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) on 26th, before moving S (TRD).

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

The largest movements were 700-880/h at Hauxley on 22nd (HRS), 600/h S at Spittal Bay (Berwick) on 6th (MHu), 350/h N at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) on 16th (IK) and a constant stream N at Holy Island on 9th (ADM). Smaller movements were noted with 50 S in 30 minutes at Holy Island on 22nd and 20 at Low Newton on 9th. The largest offshore gatherings were 900 in Druridge Bay on 18th (TRD), 500 off Hauxley on 15th (HRS), 400+ sheltering in Budle Bay on 24th (CGK), 350+ in a feeding frenzy off Bondicarr (Hauxley) on 18th (EC/JSB) and 300+ from 8th-10th feeding in the Skate Road-Budle Point area (CGK). Counts of 100-200 came from Holy Island, Newton Point and Stag Rocks on four dates and 20 to 60 were noted at Cheswick, Druridge Bay, Holy Island, Inner Farne, Newton Point and Snab Point. Up to 12 were seen at Boulmer, Howick and Spittal Bay. Singles were seen flying along the ash lagoon bank at Newbiggin on 25th and being found with an injured wing in the Harthope Valley on 16th.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

The peak Blyth Harbour roost count was 187 on 5th (STH). Elsewhere peak counts were 44 at Berwick North Shore on 11th, 26 in the Tweed Estuary on 14th (MHu) and 20 on Newbiggin breakwater on 8th (STH). At East Chevington 14 were present on 11th/19th (STH/PJA/IFo) and this number were also at Amble Braid on 9th (DM/GB/PJA). Seven to nine were at Big Waters, Gosforth Park NR and adjacent pool and at Kittybrewster (Blyth Estuary). One to three were at Elswick Wharf, Cresswell Pond and QEII Lake.

Continental Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*

Colour-ringed Red3VT, ringed at Mageorne (Denmark) as a chick on 1st May 2012, has been confirmed as a *sinensis* bird (STH/PJA).

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

At Newbiggin 142 flew S in 2 hours on 27th (IFo). Peak counts were 86 at Berwick North Shore on 11th (MHu) and 28 in Blyth South Harbour on 22nd (STH/PJA). On 7th 20 were on Inner Farne (TRD). Six juveniles were fishing offshore at St Mary's Island on 8th (SPP). One to five were noted at Holy Island, Howick, Spittal Bay (Berwick) and Tweed Estuary.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

At least one was present throughout the month at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN).

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

At Warkworth Gut four were present from 8th-15th with two remaining on 19th (RWM/MIM/RB/MB/NFO/TRD). Singles were noted in Budle Bay on 2nd/8th-10th/22nd, Longridge End and Low Moor Point (Lindisfarne NNR) on 15th and Holy Island and Kittybrewster (Blyth Estuary) on 22nd.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

The peak counts were six at Hauxley NR on 7th, Boulmer on 8th (PCF) and Cresswell Pond on 9th (DM/GB/PJA *et al.*) and at least five throughout the month at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN). Four were at West Hartford on 11th (PJA/LJM) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 20th (MR). One to three were noted at Flothers (Slaley), Holywell Dene, Old Hartley, Leazes Park (Newcastle), Newton Flash, QEII Lake, Tweed Estuary and Valley Park (Cramlington).

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

The peak counts were 20 at Holywell Pond on 4th (PJA/LJM), where a group of 18 surrounded the passing Great Skua, after it had attacked and killed a Coot 18th (SPP), 16 at Bothal Pond on 16th (TD), and 15 at East Chevington on 1st (STH/PJA), 14+ at Big Waters on 2nd (GB), 13 at Linton Pond on 23rd (DM/STH/PJA) and 12 at Arcot Pond on 2nd (LJM). Eight were at Hauxley NR on 5th (IFo), seven at Gosforth Park NR throughout the month (NHSN) and Druridge Pools on 2nd (IRD), six were at Airey Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield) from 15th-30th (IFo) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 20th (MR). One to three were noted at Blyth GC Pond, Branton GP, Cresswell Pond, Killingworth Lake, Marden Quarry, Monk's House Pool and West Hartford.

Additional breeding records were:-

Location	No. of Broods	No. of Young	Observer/Comments
East Chevington	2	4	STH/PJA on 1st
Holy Island Lough	1	2	IK on 14th
Arcot Pond	1	1	LJM on 2nd
Druridge Pools	1	1	STH/PJA on 1st

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps Grisegena*

One flew S at Newbiggin on 23rd (GB). The peak count at Whittle Dene Reservoirs was 12 on 18th (SR). The pair at Killingworth Lake were still feeding two young on 18th/23rd (BMo/LJM). Three were at Cresswell Pond on 26th (IFo). Two were at Big Waters on five dates from 2nd with one on 23rd and two again on 30th (GB). Two remained at Derwent Reservoir until 17th with one still present on 21st (IFo). Two were also at Branton GP on 30th (JD). Singles were noted at Bothal Pond, Cheswick, Cocklawburn, Coves Haven (Holy Island) and Widdrington Moor Lake.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

One was on the sea at Hadston Carrs on 22nd (TF/JFa).

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

One flew N at Snab Point on 22nd (JL).

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

A juvenile was at Holywell Pond on 3rd (BMo) and also at Big Waters from 12th-21st (GB/SPP). One was at East Chevington North Pool on 19th/20th (STH/IFo/IK).

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Only one record again this month of a single bird noted near Shotleyfield on 27th (IFo).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Two juveniles circled over St Mary's then flew S on 11th (ASJ), and two were at Holywell Pond on 19th (MSH). Single birds were seen at Bothal Pond (JL), Budle Bay (JPD), Chugdon Wood (Ellington) (TB), Cresswell Pond (JL/TF/JFa/ASJ). Druridge Pools (STH/PJA/TRD/JD), Hartley (BMo), Hauxley (AA) and at Widdrington Moor Lake (PJA).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Two sightings of adult males were at two inland sites on 17th and 30th (IFo/ALT).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Three birds were sitting together along a fence line near the Mound at Newbiggin on 23rd (GB). Two birds were seen at Budle Bay on 9th (CGK), East Chevington on 19th (STH/IFo) and at Bamburgh on 26th (BRS). Single birds were noted at 11 further sites during the Month.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

On 7th nine birds were seen at Williamston Common (Slaggyford) (EC/JSB), six were near Humshaugh on 8th (MR). One to four birds were at a further 26 sites.

An Osprey over Druridge Pools
by John Clark on 4th September

**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetuss*

A single bird was present all month up to 29th at Lindisfarne NNR (IK *et al.*). Other singles were at Druridge Pools on 4th (EC/JSB), Slaley Forest then at Derwent Reservoir on 5th (JWP/RC/IFo), High Brunton on 6th (JWP), Holywell Pond on 11th (CS), Red Row on 19th (STH/IFo) and at St Mary's Island on 25th (CGK/AC/MSH *et al.*). Angerton Lake (Hartburn) on 8th (JR), Holy Island on 12th & 27th (SR/AH/IK) and at West Ord on 16th (MHu).

Kestrel *Falco tinninculus*

Up to seven birds were on Holy Island on 23rd (MJC/ADM), five were at Holywell Pond on 23rd (CS) and three birds were at Ellington on 7th (TB), Holywell Pond on 8th (BMo) and at Holy Island on 9th (ADM). One to two birds were at 18 other sites.

Red-footed Falcon *Falco vesperinus*

A good find was of an adult male at Fenwick on 21st (MJC).

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Single birds were at Cresswell Pond on several dates (JPD/IRD/ASJ), in Druridge Bay at Hadston Carrs on 22nd (ASJ), Fenham Flats on 13th (JPD), Holy Island on several dates including a juvenile on the Snook which was observed flying with a Peregrine *Falco peregrinus* over the central area of the Snook before they both landed in the same small Scots Pine with no interaction between them on 9th (ADM). Other singles were seen at Holywell Pond on 23rd (CS), near Morpeth on 4th (NFO), Newbiggin on 22nd (GB), St Mary's Island on 23rd (JPD) and at an inland site on 7th (EC/JSB).

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

An adult flew S at Slaley Hall pursued by many Hirundines on 5th (RMH).

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Two birds were on in Budle Bay on a handful of dates with prey such as Redshank *Tringa totanus* and Teal *Anas crecca* (CGK). Up to two birds were on Holy Island on several dates (ADM *et al.*) and two were at Fenham Flats on 13th (JPD/ASJ). Single birds were also seen on or near the coast at Boulmer, Cresswell Pond, Holywell Pond, Lyneburn Flash, St Mary's Island and Seaton Sluice. Inland single birds were noted at Humshaugh, Prestwick Carr, Slaggyford, Wall Village and Whittle Dene Reservoirs

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

At Gosforth Park NR and Swallow Pond up to two birds were present throughout the month (NHSN/JPD/SPP). Singles were seen or heard at Big Waters on several dates including a juvenile which was almost fledged on 15th (GB), Cresswell Pond on 9th (ADMc) and at Shiremoor Pond on 16th (CGK).



A Water Rail at Cresswell Pond
2nd September by John Littleton

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Arcot Pond had the highest numbers with a peak count of 31 on 23rd (LJM/STH), 23 were at Big Waters on 12th (GB) and 16 were at Swallow Pond on 17th (JPD), 15 were at Linton Ponds on 19th (CDH), 14 were at Cresswell Pond on 17th (STH) at Hadrian's Pond 12 birds were present on 7th (JPD). One to ten birds were at nine further sites.

Coot *Fulica atra*

Cresswell Pond had the highest counts with a peak count of 137 birds present on 13th (JPD *et al.*), other peak counts were of 90 birds at Killingworth Lake on 12th (LJM), 59 at Woodhorn Flash on 23rd (GB/STH), 51 at Arcot Pond on 23rd (LJM/STH), and up to 48 were at Gosforth Park NR throughout the month (NHSN). 34 birds were at Linton Pond on 23rd (DM/CDH) and one to 21 birds were at seven other sites.

A Coot in the sunshine
Marden Quarry
Adrian Buskin
15th September

**Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*

The high-tide roost on St Cuthbert's Island (Holy Island) with 450 on 26th held by far the largest group (JPD/ASJ). Good counts elsewhere included 146 at Tynemouth on 27th (DRW), 100 at St Mary's Island on 4th (JMA), 91 at Snab Point on 30th (JL), 84 at Hauxley NR on 30th (HRS), 54 at Beacon Point, Newbiggin on 8th (STH) and 24 at Berwick North Shore on 11th (MHu). Two remained inland at Derwent Reservoir on 6th (IFo).

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

The adult and three young which departed Cresswell Pond on 12th August returned to the site on 2nd, where they remained until 9th and reappeared again on 21st (ADM/TB *et al.*).

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Two were at Cresswell Pond on 2nd (TB).

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

The high-tide roost on Ferguson's factory roost (Blyth Harbour) held 82 on 5th (STH) and numbers at Newbiggin peaked at 41 on 23rd (GB). Some 22 were noted from Holy Island causeway on 9th (DM). The high at Hauxley NR was 17 on 22nd (HRS) and 15 were counted at Berwick North Shore on 11th (MHu). Elsewhere, seven to eight were noted at Backworth Flash and Tynemouth and one to four were seen at Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, Low Newton Flash, Lynemouth Flash, Tynemouth Boating Lake and the Wansbeck Estuary.

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Post-breeding flocks were very noticeable in the south east where a peak of 1,200 was at St Mary's Island on 8th (AC/ASJ), 800 were at both Tynemouth on 9th (DRW) and Cresswell Pond on 12th (ASJ). In the north, Holy Island saw 1,000+ over the village on 16th ADM). Several reports came from Newcastle Town Moor where counts increased throughout the month as follows: 90 on 5th, 135 on 10th, 200 on 18th, 350 on 21st and 400 on 26th (GB/SRB). Inland counts involved 52-77 at Eglington Moor, Halton Red House, Prestwick Carr and Whittle Dene Reservoirs (IRD/ALT/MR/PCF); on the coast at Boulmer 60 were noted on 28th (TRD/JD). A group of 12 was noted at East Linden, three at Annstead and singles were also seen at Inner Farne and Holywell Pond.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

On the coast six were at Seaton Sluice on 11th (BMo) and singles at Hauxley NR, St Mary's Island and Lindisfarne NNR. Interesting reports just off the coast included five at Backworth Flash on 27th and three present on 28th (AJ/AC/CGK), two on a roadside flash at Druridge on 20th (ADM/C) and one inland at Prestwick Carr on 27th (per PCF).

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Cresswell Pond held the largest gathering this month, where 600 on 17th (JPD/ASJ) increased to 1,000 on 30th (TRD/JD/ASJ). Counts of 400-478 were recorded at Bothal Pond, Derwent Reservoir and Monks' House Pool (TF/JFa/IFo/ASJ) and 160-200 were at Elswick (on mud on north bank of the Tyne), Haughton Strother GP, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Yarrow Slake (Tweed). Apart from 120 at Flothers (Slaley), smaller groups of 40-55 were noted at Low Newton scrape, Prestwick Carr, St Mary's Island, the Tweed Estuary and West Hartford.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Autumn birds returned in force this month, with 850 on St Cuthbert's Island (Holy Island) on 26th and 144 at St Mary's on 8th (ASJ). On this latter date, ten were at Warkworth Gut (NFO) and one to three were seen at Boulmer, Hauxley NR, Seahouses and Snab Point.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Hadston Carrs attracted the highest group with 80+ on 1st (DWS/BS) and 95 on 5th (IFo), whilst 12-32 were reported in the Hauxley area on six occasions. St Mary's recorded 49 on 8th (ASJ), 26 were in Budle Bay and 15 by Holy Island causeway on 9th (DM/GB *et al.*) and a further 12 were seen at Newbiggin on 16th (STH).



A Sanderling at Hauxley
Peter Fletcher on 1st September

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Singles were reported at Cresswell Pond on 8th, 10th, 11th and 30th (NFO/STH/MSH *et al.*), whilst juveniles were noted at Elwick Flash on 13th (JPD/ASJ) and Backworth Flash on 27th-28th (AC/CGK).

Baird's Sandpiper *Calidris bairdii*

A juvenile was noted at Cresswell Pond on 16th (ASJ).

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

Lynemouth Flash attracted two juveniles on 16th, whilst one remained until the following day (ASJ/TB).

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Peak numbers occurred in the north, with 11 on a large flash pool at Elwick on 13th (JPD/ASJ) and seven here on the 15th falling to three on 17th, two on 23rd and one on 29th (TF/JFa/TRD/JD), with a further seven at Holy Island causeway on 10th (JL) and one to three at Fenham Flats during 9th-15th (JPD/ASJ/DM *et al.*). Cresswell Pond also attracted four briefly on the 19th (STH/IFo) plus a single on the 10th (STH), whilst nearby Lynemouth Flash had one to two present from 1st-15th (ADM/TB/AA *et al.*) and two were on roadside flashes at Druridge on 30th (ADM). Further singles were also at Low Newton scrape and Holy Island (north shore) on 22nd (AJ/SR) and flying past St Mary's Island on 25th (JPD).

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Eight were on Tynemouth Pier on 1st (SPP) and two were on Inner Farne on 17th (TRD).

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

The large flash at Elwick attracted 100-200 during 13th-17th (TRD/JPD/ASJ). Lynemouth Flash held 60-62 during 11th-15th (MSH/JPD/ASJ) and smaller numbers either side of this period. A count from Holy Island causeway totalled 48 on 9th (DM *et al.*) and the roost on a factory roof top in Blyth harbour numbered 39 on 5th (STH). Another flash pool near Budle Bay saw 38 birds present on 9th (CGK) and small numbers early in the month gradually built up to a peak of 34 at Cresswell Pond on

30th (STH *et al.*). A coastal count at Boulmer saw 20 here on 19th (TRD) and flooded fields at Backworth Flash pulled in birds late on with 17 on 27th and 12 on 28th (AJ/AC/CGK). 12 were on the Wansbeck estuary on 9th (DM *et al.*) and two to seven were at Hauxley NR, Low Newton Flash and Yarrow Slake (Tweed). Inland singles also appeared at Prestwick Carr on 28th, West Hartford on 18th and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 8th.



A Dunlin at Druridge Bay and below a Snipe at Cresswell Pond, both by John Littleton on 22nd September

***Buff-breasted Sandpiper** *Tryngites subruficollis*

A juvenile was at Cheswick Burn/beach on 22nd (JPD/ASJ). It is believed that others may have been present in the County but not yet reported to NTBC.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

A reasonable passage was evident, particularly in the first half. At Elwick Flash 12 were noted on 13th (JPD/ASJ) and the peak of a regular presence at Cresswell Pond was ten on 2nd/4th (IRD/STH/ADM). Four were at each of Ashington on 1st, Bothal Pond regularly from 2nd to 9th and Prestwick Carr on 27th with three in Budle Bay on 16th and at St Mary's on 28th. One or two appeared occasionally at Backworth, Druridge, Goswick, Low Newton and Lynemouth Flash. The only one any distance away from the coast was at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 20th.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyrtus minimus*

At least one was present on Newbiggin GC on 25th to 27th (GB/RSF/IFo). Singles were found at St Mary's on 25th (AC/AJ/CGK *et al.*) and at Holy Island on 26th (MJC).

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Castle Island held 48 on 10th (AC) with 35 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 1st (SR), at least 30 at Cresswell Pond on 8th (NFO) and 25-30 at Bothal Pond during 5th to 19th (TB/TD/IFo/STH). West Hartford had 25 on 29th (STH); Cresswell Pond regularly had 14-22, 22 were on Holy Island on 16th and the peak at Hauxley NR was 16 on 5th/7th. Druridge Pools and Prestwick Carr held peaks on ten and 12 respectively and four to seven were noted at Arcot Pond, Little Whittington and Warkworth Gut; three or fewer were at a further ten places.



* **Long-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus scolopaceus*

A juvenile was in the high-tide Redshank roost on Holy Island for two hours on 28th (IK) and left with the latter to feed during the falling tide. What may have been the same juvenile was found at Cresswell Pond on 30th (ADMc *et al.*) and this individual visited Hauxley NR the same day (HRS).

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

A migrant at the Mound (Newbiggin) on 25th (GB) is the only record.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

The majority were in Druridge Bay with peaks of 18 at Cresswell Pond on 4th (ADMc), 15 at East Chevington on 19th (IFo/STH), 12 at Bell's Pond/Cresswell Pond on 19th (JPD/ASJ) and seven near Druridge Pools on 18th. Elsewhere, Low Newton had seven on 22nd and three or fewer appeared at Budle Bay, the Blyth Estuary, Holy Island, Prestwick Carr, River Tweed Estuary and near Whitley Bay.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

At Tynemouth 40 flew N on 1st (DRW). At Holy Island 350-400 were roosting on 26th (JPD/ASJ/TRD) with 150 noted at St Cuthbert's Island there next day (JD). In the second half of the month it was regularly noted at Druridge coal road flashes with a peak of 36 on 30th (ADMc), the maximum count at Hauxley NR was of 21 on 30th and 20 were at Fenham-le-Moor on 23rd. Berwick, Budle Bay and Cresswell Pond held ten to 12 at times and smaller numbers were seen at another nine coastal locations.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Five were at Ellington, Warkworth Lane on 6th (TB). Singles appeared at St Mary's on 8th (ASJ), S at Amble Braid on 9th (DM/GB/PJA *et al.*), Holy Island on 9th (JL) and a late one at Cresswell Pond on 19th (JPD).

Top a Bart-tailed Godwit
Holy Island
29th September
by Chris Barlow



Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Around 350 were feeding in stubble at Boulmer on 15th (NFO) and a peak of 167 occurred at Old Hartley on 1st (MNC). Other higher counts were of 74 in the Blyth Estuary on 12th, 57 at Cresswell Pond on 17th, 46 in the Tweed Estuary on 14th and 40+ at Hauxley on 24th; 16-34 were at Berwick, Cambois, Cheswick, Newbiggin and Prestwick Carr. Further inland five flew over Big Waters on 15th, one or two were at Elswick Wharf and one flew E at Airy Holm Reservoir on 3rd.

A Curlew at Druridge Bay
by John Littleton
22nd September



Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Typically, it was most apparent in the first half of the month: two at Cresswell Pond on 2nd/4th (IRD/NFO), two at Hauxley NR on 5th/15th (IFo/HRS) with singles there occasionally and at Blyth Harbour, Budle Bay, Cullercoats, Gosforth Park, Seaton Sluice, Waren Mill and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Later singletons were at Seaton Sluice on 25th and at Branton GP on 26th (JD).

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Whittle Dene Reservoirs again held a majority with regular reports up to 20th; peaks included three on 8th, six on 12th, five on 18th and three on 20th (SR/MR). Two were at Haughton Strother GP on 15th/29th (MR) and two at West Hartford on 19th (STH) plus singles at the latter on two other dates. One was at Gosforth Park NR on 1st (GB).

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

At least three were roosting at high tide on Holy Island on 28th and singles were 'noted on many other dates in month' (IK). Two were in the Blyth Estuary on 2nd (AC), two at Holywell Pond on 14th (CS) and an adult at a flash pool near Budle Bay on 8th (CGK).

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Five were in the River Blyth Estuary on 2nd (AC), four on a flash pool near Budle bay on 8th (CGK) and three at Holy Island on 2nd/10th (JPD/JL) with two noted there on 9th; two were at East Chevington on 1st and in Budle Bay on 15th/22nd. Singles were found on other dates at some of those locations and also at Cramlington, Cresswell Pond, Hauxley NR, the Tweed Estuary, West Hartford and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

One was noted at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 1st and 4th (SR).

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Up to 400 were regularly in the high-tide roost at Rocket Field pools(Holy Island) (IK), 180 in the Tweed Estuary on 14th (MHu), 154 in Budle Bay on 9th (CGK), 120+ at Elwick on 13th (JPD/ASJ) and 97 in the Blyth Estuary on 12th (AJ). The most at Elswick Wharf was 65 on 18th; 30 were at Snab Point on 19th, 20 at Newbiggin on 8th and 26 at Berwick on 11th. Small numbers occurred at another nine places.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

The peak counts were of 60 at Snab Point on 19th (TB), 56 at Newbiggin breakwater on 8th (STH) and 42 at Berwick, North Shore on 11th (MHu). Additionally 20 were in the high-tide roost at Hauxley NR on 26th (IFo) and ten or fewer were reported from the Blyth Estuary, other parts of the Berwick area and Inner Farne.

*** Grey Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius*

Two were observed during a pelagic trip on 22nd (BMo).

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Just two records of singles: on a pelagic trip on 22nd (BMo) and S at Holy Island on 26th (TRD).

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

N passage was most evident during 20th to 23rd, notably 20 at Newbiggin on 21st (STH/JGS/RSF/TRC), nine at Snab Point on 23rd (JL), seven at St Mary's on 21st (AC) and seven there on 23rd (JPD), with six on 22nd at Druridge Bay and five at Newbiggin. A total of five was noted at Newbiggin on 20th/23rd and three at Budle Point on 22nd. Outside the main period eight went N at Holy Island on 10th (JL), including a flock of six, three moved S at St Mary's on 12th and singles appeared off Berwick, Seaton Sluice and Holy Island.

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*

Passage, mostly N, was evident between 19th and 24th with sea watchers at Newbiggin and St Mary's enjoying a near monopoly. At St Mary's at least 14 (no adults) were reported on 21st (JPD/ASJ *et al.*), two on 19th (SPP) and four on 24th (AC). At Newbiggin six juveniles moved N on 21st (STH/JGS/RSF/TRC) after at least one on 20th (AA). Also three flew N at Tynemouth on 22nd (SPP), one S at Hadston Carrs on 22nd (JFa) and one was off Holy Island also on 22nd (SR). The only sightings outside this period involve two at St Mary's on 12th (AJ/AC) and one at Holy Island on 26th (TRD).



The Great Skua which frequented the
Druridge area.
by John Littleton on 22nd September

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

At Newbiggin 30+ moved N in two hours on 20th (AA), including flocks of nine and 14. On 21st at least 22 went N at St Mary's (AC/MSH/CGK/JPD/ASJ) and 14 did so at Newbiggin (STH *et al.*). At Holy Island 14 were noted on 22nd (SR) then 33 N at St Mary's on 24th (AC/MSH *et al.*). Also around this period seven flew N at Tynemouth on 21st, six at Newbiggin on 25th, five at Snab Point on 21st and up to four at several other places. Other sightings include two on Inner Farne on 17th and one off Hauxley on 8th. From 9th to the month end a 'rogue' individual regularly harassed wildfowl and waders at Cresswell Pond; it appears to have visited Holywell Pond on 18th when it attacked and killed a Coot (SPP).

*** Sabine's Gull** *Xema sabini*

Two lucky observers each sighted a single bird; an adult fed offshore with a flock of Kittiwakes at St Mary's Island on 13th (AC) and a juvenile was at the same location on 25th (ASJ).

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

At Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) on 26th 200 moved S (TRD). Berwick Pier held roosts of 860 on 9th and 740 on 7th (MHu) and significant gatherings elsewhere were 250 offshore seen during a sea watch at Newbiggin on 21st (STH/JGS/SF/TRC), 240 on the sea at Dunstanburgh on 22nd (AJ) and 214 on Blyth Harbour East Pier on 22nd (STH). WeBS counts included 56 on 11th and 36 on 14th, at Berwick North Shore and the River Tweed Estuary respectively (MHu).

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

The largest concentrations came from the north of the county with 1,200 roosting on the sea at Berwick Meadow Haven on 7th (MHu), 1,100 in the Budle Point evening roost on 9th which had declined to 620 on 22nd (CGK) and 492 found during a WeBS count in the River Tweed Estuary on 14th (MHu).

Prestwick Carr held at least 350 on 27th (PCF), 100 were at Whitley Bay Links on 4th (JMA) with 84 at Exhibition Park on 5th (DM) and 68 at the QEII CP Lake on 19th (CDH). Lower counts of 14-67 came from Berwick North Shore (MHu), Jesmond Dene (MJCo), Leazes Park (DM) and Slaley (RMH).

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

A single adult bird, possibly the same individual, was at St Mary's Island, moving S on 25th (AC) and feeding offshore at Newbiggin on the same date (GB). Elsewhere single immatures were on flooded fields at Backworth on 27th (AJ/AC), at Hauxley on 15th, 22nd and 24th (HRS), on Newbiggin beach on 8th (AA) and at St Mary's on 25th (ASJ).

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Well reported this month with a maximum count of 42 at the favoured location of the south bay at Newbiggin on 2nd (ADM) with 32 there on 8th (STH). Lower counts of four-seven also came from Newbiggin (STH/SRB) and up to five at Cresswell, Snab Point (JL) on various dates throughout the month. One to three were noted at Budle Bay, Cresswell Pond, Holy Island, Holywell Pond, Prestwick Carr, St Mary's Island, Tynemouth, West Hartford, Whitley Bay (Brierdene), Widdrington Moor Lake and Woodhorn Flashes.

Common Gull *Larus canus*

The evening roost at Budle Point increased to a maximum of 2,700 on 9th (2,300 in August) of which ca. 2% were noted as juveniles/first winters; the count there on 22nd showed a decline to 1,350 (CGK). Other significant gatherings were 600 at Haughton Strother GP on 15th (MR), 300 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 5th (PCF) and 20th (MR) and 204 on the River Tweed Estuary on 14th (MHu).

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

On 3rd 40 moved W at the Haughton Strother GP (MR) and 25/hour moved S at Hauxley on 15th (HRS).

The evening roost at Budle Point declined from over 200 last month to 133 on 9th and 42 on 22nd (CGK) reflecting the autumn movement out of the county. On the River Tyne at Elswick Wharf, 22 were present on 6th (DM) and elsewhere one-five frequented Exhibition Park, Jesmond Dene, Leazes Park, the QEII CP Lake, the River Tweed Estuary, West Hartford and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argenteus*

The Budle Point roost increased in numbers from around 400 last month to at least 940 on 9th, 1,050 on 22nd (CGK) and in excess of 800 were counted in Budle Bay on 8th (MSH). On the River Tweed Estuary 660 were present during a WeBS count on 14th with 76 at Berwick North Shore on 11th (both MHu). Whittle Dene Reservoirs held 17th on 20th (MR) and three were in the Jesmond Dene area on 16th (MJCo).

***Yellow-legged Gull** *Larus michahellis*

A single was seen in Budle Bay on 15th (TF/JFa).

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

The peak count was 92 at Amble Braid on 9th (DM/GB/PJA/JH) and the large evening gull roost at Budle Point contained 62 on 9th falling to 26 on 22nd (CGK). WeBS counts included 12 on the River Tweed estuary on 14th and eight at Berwick North Shore on 11th (MHu). The only other reports were one-three on the River Tyne at Elswick Wharf and a single at West Hartford (DM).

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

Four reports of single juveniles were received (probably involving only two birds), comprising one in the gull/tern roost at Budle Point on 8th and 9th (CGK) and another individual at Boulmer on 15th (NFO) and 16th (RB/MB).

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

A roost on St Cuthbert's Island at Lindisfarne produced the monthly peak count of 69 on 9th (ADM) with 62 in the gull/tern roost at Budle Point on 22nd, an increase from the 36 seen there on 9th (CGK) and 42 were at a roost at Cocklawburn on 5th (MHu). Berwick North Shore and the River Tweed Estuary held 28 and 24 on 11th and 14th respectively (MHu). One-eight were recorded at various localities throughout the month, namely Budle Bay, Cresswell (Snab Point), Druridge, Farne Islands, Holy Island (Emmanuel Head), Newbiggin, Seaton Sluice and Tynemouth.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

The Budle Point roost included 200 on 9th (CGK) but apart from that large gathering few were recorded with only six-eight adults and juveniles on two dates, 9th and 19th, at Boulmer (NFO/TRD) and elsewhere one-three at Dunstanburgh Castle, the River Tweed Estuary and Tynemouth.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

Eleven, including four juveniles, roosted at Budle Point on 9th and the following evening a similar number, but with only one juvenile, was recorded there (CGK). Three adults with a juvenile were around the Tynemouth Pier and Battery on 1st (DRW) and singles were noted at Boulmer (NFO) and St Mary's Island (AC) at mid-month.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

The very significant gull/tern roost at Budle Point held 180 on the evening of 9th (CGK) but elsewhere only a few were reported including 14 at Cocklawburn on the 5th, 12 at Berwick North Shore on 11th, eight on the River Tweed Estuary on 14th (all MHu), three at Boulmer (NFO) and a single at Seaton Sluice (PJA).

Auk sp

At St Mary's Island 570 moved S in just over one hour during mid-afternoon of 18th (AJ).

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

Many reports this month from localities along the entire coastline. The peak counts comprised in excess of 300 on the sea at Cresswell (Snab Point) on 16th (JL) with more than 200 in family parties off Tynemouth Pier on 15th (SPP) ca.200 offshore at Hauxley on 22nd and 100 there on 15th (HRS). Elsewhere, on various dates, 10-34 were at five localities in the Berwick area (MHu) with one-five at Blyth Harbour, Druridge, Dunstanburgh Castle, East Chevington, Holy Island, Howick, Inner Farne, the River Tweed Estuary and Tweedmouth Dock.

Razorbill *Alca torda*

On 15th in excess of 20 were on the sea off Tynemouth pier (SPP). One-three were noted at Cresswell (Snab Point), Holy Island (Emmanuel Head), Howick and Inner Farne (TRD/JD/JL).

Puffin *Fratercula artica*

There was only a single record of one bird off Inner Farne on 17th (TRD).

Rock Dove / Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*

Large counts of 138 on the Environment Agency Roof at Newcastle Business Park on 18th and 48 at Seahouses Harbour on 9th (DM/GB/PJA/JH).

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Well reported in small numbers with five in Jesmond Dene on 9th and at Big Waters on 16th (MJCo/GB), four juveniles at Backworth Pond on 4th (MSH) with two at Linton Lane, West Hartford, Holy Island and singles at five further localities.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Fifty were at Kiln Pit Hill on 17th (JMA) and ten in Jesmond Dene on 23rd (MJCo).

A Woodpigeon makes the most of the
summer weather
by John Littleton at Woolsington

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

At least 20 were between the car park and village at Holy Island on 30th (PJA), 10 feeding in the observer's garden in Cramlington on 14th (LJM) and two at Holywell Dene and Jesmond Dene.

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

A juvenile was in the Cresswell / Druridge area on 1st (ADM/STH/JPA/JR) and another at Holy Island on 9th with presumably the same bird on 11th (SR/AH/ADM/SR).

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Two were at Cresswell Pond on 2nd (TB) with singles at Glanton on 3rd, Kirknewton on 5th, near Cowden on 13th, Linden Hall (Longhorsley) on 18th, Holywell Pond on 21st and Holy Island on 25th/26th. There were two road casualties, at Red Row on 1st and the A1 at Blagdon on 6th.

August revision the sighting east of Redesmouth should of one bird not three on 2nd.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

East Holywell had two on 12th (MNC) and Derwent Reservoir two on 18th (IFo) with a single at Swallow Pond all month until 23rd (JPD/SPP), Bell's Farm (Cresswell) on 1st (JR) and Great Whittington on 28th (ALT).

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

A pair were heard at Holywell Dene on 23rd (BMo) and at Waren Mill Caravan Park on the same date (CGK). Singles were at Haughton Strother GP on 11th, Big Waters on 16th (GB) and Eachwick on 27th (CDB) with a road casualty on the A1 at Shotton on 1st (BS/DWS).

Long-eared Owl *Asio Otus*

A single roosted at Prestwick Carr on 19th (PCF) and Crooked Lonnen (Holy Island) on 29th (CDB *et al.*) with a single at Straight Lonnen on 2nd and a first for a Wallsend garden on 9th (JPD).



A Long-eared Owl roosts on Holy Island
29th September
by Chris Barlow

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

A peak of three at St Mary's Island on 12th and 27th (ASJ/JPD) with three reported at Prestwick Carr on 6th (*per* PCF), two at West Hartford on 14th (JM) and singles at Holy Island all month and Holywell Pond on 16th.

Swift *Apus apus*

Four were at Tynemouth on 10th (DRW), two at Cresswell Pond on 1st (STH/JPA) and a single at High Newton on 2nd (JPD) with a final well observed late bird over St Mary's on 25th (CGK/AC *et al.*).

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Two were at Haughton Strother GP on 8th (MR) and at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 18th (SR) with singles at Budle Bay, Jesmond Dene and Gosforth Park NR all month and at Highford and Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth) on 9th, Wallington Hall on 10th, Big Waters on 12th, Rothbury on 17th and Branton GP on 26th.

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

Two were at Holy Island on 26th (ASJ/MJC) with one remaining in the Chare Ends area until 29th.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Morpeth area was popular where two were at Kirkhill Estate on 5th (ADMc) and singles at Morpeth Common on 3rd, Nunykirk on 5th, Scotch Gill Woods on 9th with one calling regularly at Rothbury until 16th (TRD/JD), Slaley Hall on 17th and Shiellow Woods on 21st.

Three Woodpeckers

Top: a Wryneck on Holy Island on 29th September by Chris Barlow, left: a Green Woodpecker in a Rothbury garden by Tim Dean and right: a Great Spotted Woodpecker at Holywell Pond by Adriana Buskin

**Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major*

A peak of five at Gosforth Park NR and adjacent pool during the month with three at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 1st (TB), Swallow Pond on 1st (JPD) and Hauxley NWT on 9th and 22nd (TB/HRS). Two were at Brunswick Green (Wideopen) on 16th, Shiellow Woods on 21st and Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 29th with singles all month at Valley Park (Cramlington), Jesmond Dene and on various dates at ten other widespread localities.

Red backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

A female was at Snab Point (Cresswell) at 5pm on 30th and may have been present since the mid-week fall (JL).

Magpie *Pica pica*

Peak counts of 45 at Swallow Pond on 16th and 34 on 1st (JPD) with 27 at Holywell Dene on 22nd (RJP), 20 at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 6th (DM), 15 at Big Waters on 16th (GB), ten at Jesmond Dene on 9th (MJCo) and six the peak count for the month in a Walbottle garden on 2nd (KR/LR).

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Gosforth Park NR and adjacent pool had a peak of five during the month (NHSN) with four at Haughton Strother on 11th (MR), three at Linden Hall (Longhorsley) on 12th (NFO) and Arcot Pond on 16th and 23rd (LJM). Two were at Shiellow Woods on 21st and Swallow Pond on 17th with singles at eight further widespread localities.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

The peak count was 200 at Swallow Pond on 17th (JPD), an evening roost in the car park trees at Big Waters numbered 150 on 12th (GB), 100 were at Roddam on 6th (JMA), 47 at Prestwick Carr on 20th (PCF) with nine the peak monthly count in a Walbottle garden and three at Jesmond Dene and the Snook Holy Island.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

There was a large gathering of 500 in a ploughed field at Slaley on 17th, 100 at Bolton and Roddam on 6th (JMA) and 100+ at Swallow Pond on 17th (JPD).

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

A group feeding on saltmarsh at New Water Haugh (River Tweed) on 9th numbered 28 (MHu) with 25 at Hauxley on 22nd, 17 there on 30th (HRS) and five at Jesmond Dene on 16th (MJCo).

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

One flew across the Straight Lonnen at Holy Island on 23rd (SR/AH).

Raven *Corvus corax*

One moved N at Foulraves (Ridsdale) on 5th (IFo).

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Fall conditions resulted in many large counts, Holy Island having 152 on 25th rising to a massive 181 (65 Snook, 60 Village, 39 Straight Lonnen, 17 Chare End) on 26th (MJC/ADM) with counts in excess of ten most days from 21st. Elsewhere 27 were at St Mary's Island on 25th (AJ), 33 at Hauxley on 22nd (HRS), 25 at Craster on 27th (MJC), 13+ at Bamburgh and 10+ at Woodhorn on 25th and Tynemouth on 27th. Inland six were at Wingates on 18th, four at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 8th with singles there all month, three at Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 5th and one to four at six other coastal locations.



A Goldcrest at Holy Island
Chris Barlow on 29th September

Tit sp.

The first large mixed flock of the year was at Jesmond Dene on 6th (MJCo).

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

The peak monthly count in a Walbottle garden was six on 16th (KR/LR) with three at Jesmond Dene on 2nd (MJCo) and two including a very pale bird at Milkhope (Blagdon) on 28th (CDB).

Great Tit *Parus major*

Fourteen was the largest count during the month at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN), five in the observer's garden at Walbottle on 16th (KR/LR), four at Jesmond Dene on 23rd and two at Milkhope (Blagdon) on 28th.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

More than 20 were at Hauxley on 15th with 16 there on 22nd (HRS), ten+ at Tynemouth on the same date (MK) and up to five in an Old Hartley garden during the month (RJP) with five at Milkhope (Blagdon) on 28th (CDB).

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

A peak of three was at Prestwick Carr on 19th (PCF) with three at Newbiggin Moor on 8th (ADMc), Craster on 27th (MJC) and singles at Bassington NR (Cramlington) on 1st, Swallow Pond on 1st and 17th, Arcot Pond on three dates from 9th to 20th, Big Waters on 21st and Great Whittington on 22nd.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

Two were at Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth) on 23rd (TD) and Linden Hall (Longhorsley) on 30th (NFO) with singles there on two further dates, at Wingates from 3rd to 5th (IRD) and Thrum Mill (Rothbury) on 14th (JD).

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

A fall of 60+ dropping into Chare End (Holy Island) at 14.30 on 26th (MJC) with 40 at St Mary's on 27th and 33 remaining there on 29th (SRB/ASJ), 24 inland at Haughton Strother on the same date, 12 at Craster on 27th. Visible migration was noted at Sleafy Hall with ten moving south on 19th and five S at Newbiggin on 23rd. Three to seven were at Bellasis Bridge, Hauxley NR, Town Moor Newcastle and Prestwick Carr.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

In the first half of the month movement south was recorded at Cresswell Pond with 250 on 1st (ASJ), 100 on 13th and 150+ on 17th (JPD) with counts of 40+ nearby at Lynemouth Flash on 13th and 20 at Hauxley on 15th. Inland eight flew SE at Haughton Strother on 19th and 3 at Whittle Dene on 20th (MR) with two at Big Waters on 8th, Derwent Reservoir on 20th, Branton GP on 26th and Prestwick Carr on 27th. Late singles were at Big Waters and Holy Island on 16th, Woodhorn on 25th and Church Point (Newbiggin) on 27th.



A Swallow at Prestwick Carr
2nd September
Peter Fletcher

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Southerly movement recorded at the coast, the largest counts being 400 at Cresswell on 19th (ASJ), 200 at Holywell Pond on 3rd (CS), Hauxley on 8th (HRS), Holy Island on 26th (ASJ), Newbiggin on 27th (SRB) and Tynemouth on 28th (MK). Inland 170 flew SE at Haughton Strother on 17th and 120 on 15th (MR), 100+ fed at Saltwick Hill (Morpeth) on 10th and were at Low Newton by the Sea on 9th, Newcastle Town Moor on 13th, Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 20th and Prestwick Carr on 21st. Ten to 75 were recorded at these and eighteen other widespread locations. A leucistic cream coloured individual was noted amongst 50+ at Elwick on 13th (ASJ/JPD) and a pair still fed young at the nest in Budle Bay on 23rd (CGK) the last birds recorded being six at Flothers (Sleafy) and one at Prestwick Carr on 30th (RMH/GB). Breeding at Holy Island was 25-30% down on last year with 41 pairs fledging 150 young about three weeks later than usual and including a white juvenile for the second year running (IK).

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

Peak counts of 200+ S at Low Newton by the Sea on 9th (DM/GB/PJA/JH) and Cresswell Pond on 19th (ASJ) with 150 at Shoreston Hall on 13th (JPD), 100 at Hauxley on 8th (HRS), 85 at Tynemouth on 2nd (DRW) and 70 at Sleafy Hall on 7th (RMH). Ten to 30 were recorded from these and ten other localities with late breeding noted at Southfield Green on 1st, Netherton Park (Stannington) on 2nd and Fenwick on 21st. Fifteen birds remained at Newcastle Town Moor on 28th and ten at Holy Island until 25th with one to three at four other locations in the last week the final sighting being three at Prestwick Carr on 30th (GB).

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Some large tribes were noted in coastal areas, including 22 at Budle Bay on 9th and 27 at nearby Waren Mill Caravan Park on 10th (CGK) and 27 at Hauxley RS on 15th (HRS). Elsewhere, 21 were at Swallow Pond on 1st (JPD), 12 at Craster on 27th and at Sleafy Hall on 1st and ten at QEII CP on 15th. Nine were at Winter's Gibbet (Harwood Forest) and at Big Waters and two to seven at a further seven localities.

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

NOTE: The finder of the Greenish Warbler at St Mary's Island on 28th August was Jack Bucknall (JBu).

Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis*

One found in the sycamores at the Lindisfarne Hotel (Holy Island) on 26th remained to 29th (ASJ).

The Holy Island Arctic Warbler
by Chris Barlow on 29th September

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

A notable fall occurred during the final week of the month. At St Mary's Island, two on 22nd (AC), increased to four by 25th (AC/CGK/AJ *et al.*) with two still present on 26th and one remaining to 30th. One was at Hauxley RS from 22nd-25th (HRS). One at Holy Island on 23rd (MJC/ADM) increased to two from 25th-26th (MJC) and one was present here on 29th (CDB). Elsewhere singles were noted at Newbiggin on 25th (GB), Tynemouth on 26th (MK) and Bamburgh on 27th (BRS).

**Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*

A noticeable fall occurred during the final week with peak counts of 44 at Hauxley RS on 30th (HRS), 31 at Holy Island on 26th (MJC), 16 at Craster on 27th (MJC), 12 at St Mary's on 25th (ASJ), eight at Cambois on 23rd (DM), seven to seven + at Bamburgh on 23rd and 26th (CGK/BRS) and six + at Tynemouth on 22nd. Lower numbers (eight to 14) were noted at Hauxley on five other dates and Holy Island (two to 17) on six further dates. One to five were reported from a further 25 widespread localities.

A Chiffchaff at St. Mary's
by John Littleton
27th September

**Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Almost all records were of coastal migrants. Holy Island held a peak of 12 on 26th (CDB) with further counts from here of two on 9th, 16th and 29th. Hauxley RS had seven on 1st and one to two on 15th and 22nd (HRS) and five were at St Mary's on 25th. One to two were also noted at Bamburgh on 5th, 23rd and 27th, Budle Point on 22nd, Craster on 27th and Tynemouth on 26th-27th. Inland three were noted at Gosforth Park NR (no date supplied-NHSN) and two were at Airy Holm Reservoir on 21st.



A pair of Blackcap in a Woolsington garden
John Littleton

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

At Holy Island, 26 arrived during a fall of common (and not so common) migrants on 25th, 13 remaining on the following day (MJC/ADM). Seven were at Cambois on 23rd (DM) and three to six at Bamburgh, Tynemouth and Woodhorn Church on 26th-27th. The peak count at Hauxley NR came earlier in the month, with 13 on 2nd (HRS). One to three were noted at a further five coastal and six inland localities.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

A fall at Holy Island deposited ten to 11 from 25th-26th (MJC), only one remaining by 27th; an earlier bird was present here on 9th. St Mary's Island had one to two on 25th-26th, increasing to five on 27th (AC). Three were trapped and ringed at Bamburgh from 26th-27th, two were at Tynemouth Haven on 27th and singles at Hauxley RS, Newbiggin and Woodhorn between 25th-27th.

Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria*

Two birds were found during the month. The first was in an observer's garden at Howick on 22nd (SS), his second record here, following one in October 2010!! Another was at Tynemouth from 25th-27th (BMo/SPP/MK/DRW).



The Tynemouth Barred Warbler
27th September by Duncan Watson

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Several arrived together with a wide variety of other migrants during the final week of the month. On Holy Island, three on 23rd (MJC/ADM) had declined to two from 25th-26th (ASJ/JPD), with a single here from 27th-30th. One to two were at St Mary's Island from 25th-27th and singles at Cambois on 23rd and Tynemouth on 27th.



Lesser Whitethroat at St. Mary's
John Littleton on 27th September

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Two were at Budle Point on 10th (CGK). A long awaited garden tick arrived after 24 years, at Slaley Hall on 5th (RMH). Further singles were noted at Arcot Pond and Hauxley RS on 8th, Swallow Pond on 16th, Linton Ponds on 19th, St Mary's and Woodhorn Church on 26th and Holy Island from 26th-27th.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

One was at West Hartford on 22nd (PJA).

Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*

A first-winter was found in the Churchyard (Holy Island) on 25th (MJC).

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Single juveniles were trapped and ringed at Bamburgh on 5th and 8th (BRS). Single birds were at Cresswell Pond and Holy Island on 9th, Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 20th and St Mary's on 25th.

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Four passage birds were at Holy Island on 25th (MJC), one remaining to 26th. Two were still at Gosforth Park NR during the month (NHSN) and singles at Big Waters and St Mary's Island on 8th, Cresswell Pond on 20th, Newbiggin on 26th-27th, Tynemouth on 18th and 27th and at St Mary's Island from 25th-26th.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Five were in Jesmond Dene on 23rd (MJCo) and one to two at Blagdon (Milkhope Centre), Cramlington (Valley Park), Doddington, Holywell Dene, Rothbury, Slaley Hall, Walbottle and Wallington Hall. Perhaps more unusual was a bird at Tynemouth, the observer's first record here in ten years (MK).

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

One to two were reported from Bamburgh GC, Big Waters, Hauxley RS, Holywell Dene, Jesmond Dene and Rothbury.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Three were ringed at Hauxley RS on 2nd and singles were reported from Blagdon (Milkhope Centre) and Jesmond Dene.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

500+ at Monks' House Pool on 26th was the highest count (MSH), followed by 460 at Berwick GC on 7th (MHu) and 400 at Whitley Bay Links on 4th (JMA). The roost at Holy Island Lough held 300+ by 9th and 250-300 were also at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) and Newcastle Town Moor. The only other reports received were ca.120 at Flothers (Slaley) on 30th, 12 in a Walbottle garden on 23rd and three at Jesmond Dene on 16th.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Four were in Jesmond Dene (three at North Lodge / one at Benton Bank Bridge) on 2nd (MJCo) and three at Thrum Mill (Rothbury) on 26th (JD). One to two were also reported from Holywell Dene, Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth) and Wallington Hall.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

Holy Island held three on 25th and two on 26th (MJC). Singles were at Craster on 27th, Hadston Carrs on 26th, flying W at Hipsburn on 16th, St Mary's Island on 25th and 26th and Tynemouth on 25th.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

A modest coastal fall on 25th deposited 75 on Holy Island (MJC/ADM), 20+ at Tynemouth (MK), 17 at Hauxley RS and three at St Mary's Island. Inland 16 were at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 11th, seven in a Netherton Park garden and four at Jesmond Dene on 16th.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Three were at the Snook (Holy Island) on 25th and two here on 26th (ADM/MJC) and a single at Tynemouth on 27th (MK).

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

A huge arrival occurred on 25th, when 4,532 were noted on Holy Island (including 4,190 arriving between 08.30-09.30-MJC/ADM), 100-150 at Hauxley RS, 80 at Woodhorn (GB), 60 at St Mary's (ASJ), 40+ at Tynemouth (MK) and six at Seaton Sluice. On the following day (26th) 500+ were either still on or 'new' to Holy Island (ASJ), 40+ at Newbiggin (IFo), 30+ at Woodhorn Church, 29 at Bamburgh and 20 at Whitley Bay Cemetery.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

The first of the autumn was seen in a roadside hedge on the A1 near Alnwick on 15th (BWS/DWS). Another was at Holy Island on 23rd; the 25th brought a light fall, with 38 at Holy Island (MJC/ADM), 20+ at Tynemouth (MK), two at St Mary's Island and one at Hauxley RS.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Well reported, with some sizeable flocks this month. 29 were at Bygate (Upper Coquetdale) on 8th (JR) and 22 at Benridge Hagg on 7th (ADM) and at Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 18th (GB). Flocks of 16 were noted at Arcot Pond on 16th, Newcastle Business Park (Elswick) on 16th and Plenmeller Common on 11th, 14 at Flothers (Slaley) on 30th and 12 at Slaley Hall on 17th. Seven to eight were at Linden Hall on 16th and 30th and singles at Hauxley RS on 8th and Jesmond Dene on 23rd.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

At Holy Island numbers increased from 16 on 25th (MJC/ADM) to 30+ on 26th (ASJ) with only six on the following day (JD) and ten on 28th (IK); two to three were noted here at the end of the month. Elsewhere four to six were at St Mary's Island on 25th-26th (JPD/AC/ AJ). One to two further migrants were also reported from Seahouses, Seaton Sluice, Tynemouth and Woodhorn between 25th-27th and a passage bird was at Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 13th. An adult and juvenile were still well inland at Featherstone on 1st and two at Holywell Dene on 8th. Singles were at Doddington on 22nd, Linden Hall on 8th and Swallow Pond / Rising Sun CP on five dates from 7th-19th.

A Spotted Flycatcher uses the Holy Island vicar's garden spade
by Tim Dean on 22nd September



Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

A large fall occurred towards the end of the month. By far the largest concentration was at Holy Island, where 200 on 25th declined to 101 by the following day (MJC/ADM). 38 were counted between Proctor Steads-Low Newton (eight miles) on 22nd (AJ) when 34 were also at Hauxley RS, 32 were at Craster on 27th (MJC), 30+ at Tynemouth and 20+ at St Mary's on 25th and 20+ at Bamburgh on 26th. Inland, numbers also increased during the same period, with 15 at Prestwick Carr on 22nd, 13 at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 29th and eight at Jesmond Dene on 23rd. One to four were reported from three further localities, including a newly fledged juvenile in the Harthope Valley (STH).

A young Robin in a Woolsington garden
25th September by John Littleton

**Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Holy Island held 73 on 25th and 62 on 26th (MJC/ADM) with lesser numbers thereafter to 29th. Also on 25th, St Mary's Island had 25+ (JPD), five were at Blyth Cemetery, four at Tynemouth, three at Seaton Sluice and two at Newbiggin. Seven were at Newbiggin and four at Cresswell Pond on 26th, and on 27th, seven were at Craster, four at Tynemouth and at least three at Bamburgh and Seahouses. One to two were reported from a further eight localities.

A Redstart on Holy Island
29th September by Jonathon Farooqi

**Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra*

Two passage birds were on Newcastle Town Moor on 4th (GB), two at Prestwick Carr on 12th (PCF) and one to two at Holy Island on 26th-27th (CDB/JD). A juvenile was at Swallow Pond on 11th and singles were also reported from Arcot Pond on 8th, Druridge on 17th, Newbiggin on 22nd and North Shields and Tynemouth on 25th.

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

A group of five were at Dunstanburgh on 22nd (AJ) and three at Cresswell on 17th, Cresswell Pond on 9th and Warkworth Gut on 29th. Two were at Druridge on 19th, Newbiggin GC on 27th and Stag Rocks on 9th and singles at Halton Red House, Holy Island, West Hartford and St Mary's Island.

Wheatear *Oenanthe Oenanthe*

Holy Island held a peak of ca.15 on 27th (JD) with a single still there on 29th. Ten were at Tynemouth on 25th (MK) and seven at Lynemouth on 17th (JPD). Five to six were also noted at Hadston on 14th and Seaton Sluice and St Mary's Island on 25th. Three juveniles were still well inland at Chew Green (Upper Coquetdale) on 8th and three on the coast between Berwick-Holy Island and at Old Hartley. One to two were reported from a further nine inland and 11 coastal localities to 29th.



A Wheatear at Druridge Bay on 19th September by John Littleton

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*

One at Holy Island on 23rd increased to at least two to three and possibly four by 25th. All were first-winters and all were at the Snook (MJC/ADM). Other first-winters were at Newbiggin on 26th (IFo) and Priors Park (Tynemouth) on 27th (DLo).

A Red-breasted Flycatcher on Holy Island
27th September by Chris Barlow



Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

The well watched sites at Holy Island and St Mary's were again the main recipients of a coastal fall during the final week of the month. The peak count at St Mary's was seven on 25th (ASJ); four to five were also at Holy Island from 25th-26th (CGK/AC/AJ *et al.*) One to two were also reported from Hauxley RS, Holy Island, St Mary's and Tynemouth between 22nd-29th.

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

One to three were in a Old Hartley Garden throughout the month (RJP), and one was in an observer's garden at Walbottle on 2nd (KR/LR).

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

200 at Elwick Flash on 13th (ASJ/JPD) was the highest count followed by 100 at Whittle Dene on 10th (MR). 54 were at Widdrington on 8th (PCF) and 50 at Whittonstall on 16th (JMA). 25 were seen in an observer's garden at Netherton Park (Stannington) on 12th (RWM/MIM) and at Milfield on 3rd (JMA). Three were seen at the Milkhope Centre (Blagdon) on 28th (CDB).

A Woolsington House Sparrow by
John Littleton



Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

60 were at Cresswell Home Farm (Lynemouth) on 16th (JL), 50 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 15th (MR) and 45 at East Holywell on 19th (MNC) whilst 40 were at both Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 8th (TB) and Maiden's Hall Lake on 14th (ASJ).

32 were at Holywell Grange on 18th (SPP) and 20 at Big Waters on 2nd (GB). One to 12 were seen throughout the month at Backworth, Cresswell, Cresswell Pond, Doddington, Hauxley, Holywell Dene, Holywell Pond, Linden Hall (Longhorsley), Walbottle and Whittle Dene. Migration was suggested when four flew N at Bamburgh on 23rd (CGK) and one flew S at Tynemouth on 28th (MK).

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

Ten at Whittle Dene on 4th (SR) was the month's highest total with one to eight seen throughout the month at Budle Bay, Cresswell Pond, Doddington, Goswick, Hauxley Ringing Station, High Newton, Holy Island, Low Newton, Lynemouth Flash, Prestwick Carr and St.Mary's.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Seven at Whittle Dene on 4th (SR) and 3 at Hadston Carrs (Druridge Bay) were the highest counts with one to two at Big Waters, Budle Bay, Cresswell Pond, Hauxley Ringing Station, Hexham, Holywell Dene, Holy Island, Jesmond Dene (Newcastle), Killingworth Lake, Lynemouth Flash, Newcastle (City Centre, Exhibition Park), Northumberland Park (North Shields), Thrum Mill (Rothbury), Tynemouth, Waren Mill and Waren Mill Caravan Park.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Peak counts were 50 at Prestwick Carr on 28th (PCF), 42 at Lynemouth Flash on 16th (ASJ), 38 at St.Mary's on 20th (ASJ) and a pre-roost gathering of 36 at Briar Dene (Whitley Bay) on 19th (AC). 32 were at Berwick GC on 9th (MHu) and 28 at Bamburgh GC on 23rd (CGK). 20 to 25 were noted at Beachcomber House (Goswick), Goswick GC, Newsham Flash (Blyth) and Whittle Dene. One to 16 were at Big Waters, Cresswell, Earsdon, Flothers (Slaley), Hauxley Ringing Station, Holy Island, Newbiggin, Newcastle (Exhibition Park and Town Moor), Prestwick Carr and Slaley.

White Wagtail *M. a. alba*

Two were at Lynemouth Flash on 16th (JL) and a single was at Blyth Links Cemetery on 23rd (PJA/CS).

*** Richard's Pipit** *Anthus richardi*

One was on the Snook (Holy Island) on 27th (JD) whilst another called as it flew over the wetland at St.Mary's Island also on the 27th (AC).

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

32 arrived at Holy Island Village between 08:30 and 09:30 on 25th (MJC). Two were at the Straight Lonnen (Holy Island) on 26th (MJC) and singles at Lynemouth Flash on 15th (MSH), St.Mary's Island on 27th (AC) and Tynemouth on 25th (MK).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

500 were at Druridge on 1st (ASJ) and 350 were at Cresswell Pond also on 1st (ASJ). 100 went south between 07:30 and 08:00 at Tynemouth on 28th (MK) and 80 were at the Snook (Holy Island) on 16th (MJC/ADM). 40 to 60 were observed at Bamburgh GC, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Hauxley Ringing Station, Newbiggin, Prestwick Carr and St. Mary's. Also one to 22 were seen at Backworth, Big Waters, Budle Bay, Newcastle (Town Moor), Rising Sun Farm (Wallsend), Slaley and Wingates throughout the month.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

The highest count was ten at Bondicarr (Hadston Beach, Druridge Bay) on 21st (EC). One to five were also at Blyth Harbour, Church Point (Newbiggin), Hadston Carrs, Hauxley, Little Beach (Berwick), Low Newton, Rocky Island (Seaton Sluice), Seahouses Harbour and Tynemouth.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

The month's highest totals were 120 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 8th (MR) and 100 at Pit Mill on 17th (JMA). 35 were at Holy Island on 25th (MJC/ADM) with 25 arriving at the village between 07:30 and 08:00. 32 were at Fenham-Le-Moor on 13th (ASJ), 30 at Tynemouth on 25th (MK) and 30 arrived from the north at Hauxley Ringing Station on 22nd (HRS). One to 20 were also noted at Bygate (Upper Coquetdale), Jesmond Dene (Newcastle), Milkhope Centre (Blagdon), Northumberland Park (North Shields) and St.Mary's Island.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

The first autumn arrivals were an impressive 493 at Holy Island between 08:30h and 09:30h on 25th (MJC/ADM). Between one and ten were seen at Corbridge, Slaley Hall, St.Mary's Island, Tynemouth and Woodhorn Churchyard.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

60 were at Cresswell on 13th (ASJ) with 40 at the Drift Inn (Cresswell) on 27th (JPD). 28 were in an observer's garden at Walbottle on 23rd (KR/LR) and 15 were in a garden on the Marden Estate (Tynemouth) on 27th (ASJ). Of the 11 in a Northburn garden (Cramlington), one was later taken by a Sparrowhawk on the 19th (PJA). Four in an Old Hartley garden on 22nd was the best in a one month in over a year (RJP) and the single seen at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 29th (MR) was the first record of the year at the site! Two were also seen in an observer's garden in Netherton Park (Stannington) on 19th (RWM/MIM) one of which was a juvenile begging for food at a feeder.

A Goldfinch feeds at St Mary's by John Littleton

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Post-breeding flocks contained 200 birds at Holy Island on 26th (JPD) and Swallow Pond on 16th (JPD). 120 were at Berwick GC on 7th (MHu) and Football Hole (Newton) on 23rd (TRD/JD) whilst 100 were at Hauxley Ringing Station on 30th (HRS) and St.Mary's on 30th (ASJ). 95 were at Old Hartley on 22nd (MNC), 90 at Budle Bay on 9th (CGK), 85 at Hauxley NWT on 26th (IFo), 84 at Prestwick Carr on 22nd (PCF), 76 at West Ord on 9th (MHu) and 60 at Rising Sun Farm (Wallsend) on 12th (AJ). One to 50 were at Big Waters, Church Point (Newbiggin), Cocklawburn Beach, Craster, East Chevington, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Holy Island, Holywell Dene, Newbiggin GC, Newcastle (Exhibition Park), Tynemouth and an observer's garden in Walbottle.



Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

60 were at Slaley Hall on 28th (RMH), 50 S between 07:30 and 08:00 at Tynemouth on 28th (MK), 45 at Prestwick Carr on 10th (PCF) and 40 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 29th (MR). Between 1 and 35 were observed at Backworth, Big Waters, Brunswick Village, Cambois, Craster, Dinnington, East Cramlington Pond NWT, Gosforth Park, Hadston Carrs, Harthope Valley, Hauxley NR, Holy Island, Holywell Dene, Linden Hall (Longhorsley), Newbiggin, Prestwick Carr, Rising Sun Farm (Wallsend), Shiremoor, Southfield Green (Cramlington), St. Mary's Island, Tynemouth, Valley Park (Cramlington) and West Hartford.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Returning winter birds were back with 400 at Monks' House on 13th (ASJ), 400 at Shoreston on 13th (JPD) 300 at Lynemouth Flash on 19th (ASJ), 200 at Cresswell on 17th (ASJ), 72 at Craster on 27th (MJC), 70 at High Newton on 2nd (JPD) and 60 at Ellington on 9th (TB). One to 50 were also at Carrshield, Earsdon, Elwick Flash, Holy Island, Little Beach (Berwick), Rising Sun Farm (Wallsend) and Tynemouth.

Redpoll sp.

20 Redpoll sp. were at Prestwick Carr on 30th (GB) with one to eight seen at a further four locations including Big Waters, Brunswick Village, Newbiggin and Newcastle (Exhibition Park).

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*

A feeding flock of 35 was at Unthank on 25th (IFo), 32 at Prestwick Carr on 22nd (PCF) and 20 S between 07:30 and 08:00 at Tynemouth on 12th (MK). One to 15 were at Backworth, Bygate (Upper Coquetdale), Doddington, Hauxley Ringing Station, Holy Island, Linton Lane, Swallow Pond, Thorngraston Common and West Hartford.

A Lesser Redpoll at Prestwick Carr
Peter Fletcher on 22nd September

Mealy Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*

Singles were at Holy Island on 23rd and 27th (JFa/MJC).

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Seven flew west calling over Big Waters (GB) and a single flew over Linden Hall (Longhorsley) on the 8th (NFO).

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

One to four were recorded throughout the month at Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield), Bellasis Bridge, Budle Bay, Cambois, Gosforth Park, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Holywell Dene, Linton Ponds, Prestwick Carr, Shiremoor, Valley Park (Cramlington) and in an observer's garden at Walbottle.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

A migrant was at Straight Lonnen (Holy Island) on 26th (ASJ/JPD).

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

The first autumn arrivals involved a single at Hadston Carrs on 22nd (JAL) and another flew SW over Straight Lonnen (Holy Island) on 26th (MJC) whilst another single female was seen feeding at Tynemouth Pier on 27th (ASJ/JPD/DLo).

The first autumn snow bunting at
Hadston Carrs
22nd September by John Littleton

Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*

One calling over Newbiggin GC on 26th (IFo) was the first autumn arrival.



Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

12 at Craster on 27th (MJC) and single at Warkworth Gut on 23rd (DM) were the only record for the month.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza Schoeniclus*

Between 19 and 17 were seen at The Snook and Chare End (Holy Island) on 26th (MJC/ADM). 13 were at St.Mary's on 20th (ASJ), eight were at Rising Sun Farm (Wallsend) on 12th (AJ) and a single was at Newton Pool on 9th (DM/GB/PJA).

ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN**Escapes****Ross's Goose** *Anser rossii*

Two were found at Monks' House Pool on 2nd (JPD). As they were in company with a few feral Barnacle Geese it seems reasonable to assume that they were escapes, especially so due to the early autumn date. Presumably the same birds were relocated in Budle Bay on 10th and 16th (CGK / MJC).

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis*

One was found on 3rd at Ellington (TB).

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

One of these regular hybrids was found at Bothal Pond on 3rd (TF / JFa).

House Sparrow x Tree Sparrow *Passer domesticus x Passer montanus*

One was identified at Holywell Grange by the Catflap Cattery on 18th in company with 32 Tree Sparrows and 15 House Sparrows (SPP).

Birds of Unknown Origin**Rose-ringed Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri*

Unusually two records away from Ponteland with one at Earsdon cemetery on 2nd (CGK) and another at Hauxley on 15th and 22nd (HRS).

WEATHER

1st to 4th: It was largely fine with some warm sunshine on 1st, but then a band of cloud and patchy rain moved south across the country on 2nd with cloudy and misty conditions in the south, though it brightened up further north. After a misty start on 3rd, it became mainly fine and sunny once again, but another band of cloud and patchy rain spread south on 4th.

5th to 8th: High pressure dominated in the south throughout this period, with clear, chilly nights, as well as some mist and fog patches, then dry and fine days. However, the north was often cloudy, and so milder by night, with the odd spot of drizzle.

9th to 20th: It was generally more unsettled through this period, with rain or showers, particularly over the north-west, with the south-east holding on to the best of the drier, brighter conditions. Some days were warm.

21st to 26th: A band of rain moved south across the country on 21st, with a few heavy bursts, but the 22nd was largely dry and fine. A vigorous area of low pressure moved northwards across the UK on 23rd to 24th localised flooding occurred over northern parts of England.

27th to 30th: Sunny spells and showers were seen on 27th, then a fragmenting band of cloud and rain moved south across the country on 28th. It was mainly fine again on 29th, after a chilly start. Another band of rain moved in from the north on 30th, heavy in places and accompanied by strong winds

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Bamburgh Ringing Station, Berwick Wildlife Group, Hauxley Ringing Station, Natural History Society of Northumbria.

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

This bulletin was compiled by Graeme Bowman (Mute Swan to Ruddy Duck), Lindsay McDougall (Red Grouse to Black-necked Grebe), Trevor Blake (Honey Buzzard to Crane), Steve Holliday (Oystercatcher to Dunlin) Ian Forsyth (Snipe to Skua), Eddie Crabtree (Ivory Gull to Puffin), Tim Dean (Escapes, Hybrids and Unknown Origin, List of Contributors, Highlights), Peter Fletcher (Feral Pigeon to Red-rumped Swallow), Mike Richardson (Cetti's Warbler to Pied Flycatcher), Phil Allott (Dunnock to Corn Bunting), Dan Turner (WeBS Coastal Counts) and Steve Holliday (WeBS Inland Counts). Thanks to David Sanders of NNBC for providing data. Proof reading was by Mike Smith.

Edited by Steve Barrett NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.com

Postal distribution Paul Stewart.

RECORD SUBMISSION

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 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 NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.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 cost of printing and stamps. Ask for an e-mailed bulletin from:

ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

For membership enquiries please contact ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

NTBC WEB SITE

The Club website is an excellent resource for all interested in birds in the north east. There are numerous interesting sections, including a photograph gallery, site information and trip reports together with extensive reference information for birding in our area. The site is at www.ntbc.org.uk

If you have any ideas or things you would like to see or hear about on the site please let Chris know on 0751 582 5024 or e-mail christopher.knox@o2.co.uk

NTBC SIGHTINGS PAGE

The club sightings web page gives listings of birds seen locally. Adding a sighting is simple. A short e-mail is all that is needed. If anyone would like to be added as a contributor please contact Alan Tilmouth at ntbcorg@gmail.com. The sightings page can be found at <http://ntbcsightings.posterous.com>

ICELANDIC BREEDING GOOSE CENSUS

We are now in full swing with this year's annual Icelandic-breeding Goose Census (ICG) autumn/winter roost counts in Northumberland. The first ICG priority count date for 2012 was over the weekend of 13/14 October, with the other two count dates being 10/11 November and 8/9 December. Peak Pink-footed Geese counts are undertaken on the October and November dates and peak Greylag Goose counts on the November and December dates. There will be no spring count in 2012-13.

Volunteer counter participation in the past two years has been low, with many important sites only being counted on an *ad-hoc* basis. Sites where we would appreciate the recruitment of regular and reliable counters are: Big Waters, Branton Gravel Pits, Castron Quarry, Colt Crag Reservoir, Derwent Reservoir, Hallington Reservoir, Hedgeley Gravel Pits, Holywell Pond, Kimmer Lough, Norham Bridge, Tweed Estuary and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Counts of roosting geese are ideally undertaken at dawn before the birds leave their roosts. However, dusk roost counts are also appreciated along with daytime counts of feeding geese - most geese feed within a few km of their roost so it is often possible to get accurate counts this way with a bit of effort.

If anyone would be able to spare a few hours over the next few months to regularly count any of the above sites then I would be keen to hear from you. In addition, if anybody knows of any other sites, in addition to those above, that regularly hold roosting Pink-footed or Greylag Geese then I like to hear from you.

Paul Massey

pr_massey@yahoo.co.uk

COASTAL WEBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

SEPTEMBER 2012

Site	Berwick North Shore (including Little Beach)		Berwick Little Beach		Tweed Estuary		Tweed: A1 By-Pass to Horncastle		Spittal - Cocklawburn		Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay)		Budle Bay		Budle Pt - Seahouses		Seahouses - Beadnell		Aln Estuary		Alnmouth South		Coquet Estuary		Amble - Chevington		Cresswell - Cresswell		Cresswell - Newbiggin		Newbiggin - Cambois		Blyth Estuary		Blyth Estuary - Seaton Sluice		St Mary's Island		Whitley Bay - Tyneworth		Tyne North Pier - Fish Quay		East Howdon, (north bank only)		Redhugh - Scotswood Bridge, (north bank)		Scotswood - Newburn Bridge, (north bank)																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																										
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INLAND WeBS COUNTS: NORTH HUMBERLAND

Version

Interim

Year: 2012
Month: September

[illegible]

Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

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

Bulletin 2012 No 10

MONTHLY SUMMARY – OCTOBER

5th December 2012



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Highlights
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Indoor Meetings
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Classified List
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CLASSIFIED LIST HIGHLIGHTS

Taiga Bean Goose	One over Haughton Strother GP on 24th.
Snow Goose	Two white-phase birds S off Low Newton on 2nd and a blue phase at Linton on 5th.
Bittern	Singles at Gosforth Park, Cresswell Pond and Big Waters.
Pectoral Sandpiper	One on a flash N of Druridge Pools on 4th.
Long-billed Dowitcher	Still present at Cresswell Pond on 1st only.
Sabine's Gull	An adult off Snab Point on 26th and a juvenile off Newbiggin on 29th.
Little Auk	Large movement from 26th.
Black Guillemot	Single adults off Boulmer and Newbiggin.
Firecrest	Single at Lucker on 27th.
Dusky Warbler	Singles at St Mary's and Holy Island.
Yellow-browed Warbler	Singles at many localities from mid-month.
Pallas's Warbler	First of autumn at St Mary's on 24th.
Barred Warbler	Singles at Holy Island and Tynemouth.
Blyth's Reed Warbler	One at St Mary's on 12th and 13th. Ninth record for the county.
Pied Wheatear	First-winter male on Holy Island on 14th. Fifth record for county.
Red-breasted Flycatcher	Singles at Newbiggin and St Mary's.
Hawfinch	Single seen flying over Corbridge and on Holy Island.

COMMITTEE NEWS

2013 Calendars

The 2013 Club Calendar is available for £5 a copy at Indoor Meetings. This makes an ideal Christmas present. If you buy five we will deliver it free to you if you live in our area. All funds raised will aid publication of the Bird of Northumbria Atlas. So just pick up the phone and ask if you can't get to a meeting. Or email ntbcbulletin2012@gmail.com

County Records Committee

The County Records Committee has to replace two members this year, Mike Carr leaves the committee through rotation and David Steel due to other work commitments. We would like to thank both Mike and David for all their hard work and dedication over their respective terms on the committee. Applications for the two positions were discussed at the most recent committee meeting and we are pleased to announce that Colin Bradshaw and Gary Woodburn will be joining the CRC in 2013.

Seaton Sluice Watchtower

As some members may have noticed the steps at SSWT have become damaged. Replacement steps are currently in construction with Chirton engineering and will be installed in the coming weeks. The committee is grateful to Paul Stewart for providing engineering advice and expertise on this matter.

Members Subscriptions

Currently some 50 members have not yet renewed their subscriptions for 2013. We appreciate it is a busy time of year but we hope that these members can find a few minutes to renew ahead of the end of the year

INDOOR MEETINGS

The next indoor meeting will be at Northern Rugby Club, McCracken Park, Great North Road, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 2DT on Thursday **13th December**. We have **Inspired by Birds**. Professional musician and birder Tom McKinney has been fascinated by birds used in music since his mid-teens. From the composition of an orchestral symphony to counting flocks of calling Meadow Pipits, the talk will reflect on just how profoundly bird sound can affect and inspire us.

The first meeting of 2013 is on **Wednesday 9th January (please note the date)** at Northern Rugby Club when we have **India Wildlife Spectacular** - A return visit from Mike Watson to talk to NTBC. Mike is a former NTBC member who left a thriving Tyneside birding scene in 1985. After years in the wilderness of the banking industry in the south he wisely decided to pursue his passion for birds full time, quitting his job, selling his house and going off travelling, eventually ending up working for Birdquest. Mike has been travelling to India for 20 years now and it remains one of his favourite destinations.



Two splendid views of Slavonian Grebes in October
above by Chris Barlow and below by Colin Bradshaw



CLASSIFIED LIST

The following account consists of unchecked reports. The species/subspecies marked * require descriptions.

A complete list of all sightings that need notes is included in the NTBC website www.ntbc.org.uk under the County Records Committee section and in Birds in Northumbria 2009 page 224.

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

TARGET SPECIES

The target species for 2012 are all the owls. Please report all records in as much detail as possible. The Club is sensitive to the vulnerability of these species to disturbance and persecution, and will be particularly cautious about what is actually published, above all about nesting and roosting sites. Please address any questions or concerns to Tim Dean or Dick Myatt.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Killingworth Lake held a peak of 167 on 29th (STH), 61 were at Holy Island causeway on 25th (SJH), 61 at QEII Lake on 14th (CDH), 54 at the Tweed Estuary on 11th (MHu), and 14-24 at Cresswell Pond and Ladyburn Lake. Two to nine were also at Amble Braid, Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Broomlee Lough, Budle Bay, Castle Island, Cramlington, Elswick, Hartburn Reservoir, Jesmond Dene, Monks' House Pool, Newcastle Leazes Park, Newham Bog, Prestwick Carr, Roddam Bog and Shield on the Wall.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

A group of 44 flew S, with 200 Pink-footed Geese, at the *Beehive* Flash (Earsdon) on 25th (SPP), 18 flew in off the sea at Berwick on 21st (BWG), 15 S at Old Hartley on 10th (MNC), seven S at Warkworth Gut on 9th (ADMc), seven S at Hauxley Reserve on 21st (HRS), seven S at Snab Point on 20th (JR) and, at Holy Island, three adults flew NE into a gale and disappeared on the horizon on 27th (IK). A small flock was heard calling as they moved S at Waren Mill at 23.00h on 6th (CGK).

The first of the month were six adults at Ladyburn Lake on 5th (IFo) and one at Prestwick Carr on 6th (GB/PCF). Largest gatherings were 32 (seven juveniles) at West Ord on 20th (TBr), 31 at Holy Island on 8th (SJH), 26 at Widdrington Moor on 26th (NFO), 25 (five juveniles) at Potland Burn near Linton on 27th-28th (IRD/ADMc), 20-22 at East Chevington and Horncliffe and 13 at Branton GP and Cresswell Pond. One to five were also noted at Budle Bay, Cragside, Cocklawburn, Druridge, Greenlee Lough, Haughton Strother GP, Holywell Pond and Lucker.

Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*

One, probably of the Taiga *fabalis* race, flew over Haughton Strother GP from W on 24th (MR).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Northward movement involved a total of 410 at Ord Moor from 26th-28th (MHu), 300 at West Hartford on 8th (JM), 210 at Horncliffe on 26th (MHu) and 80 at Bamburgh on 20th (BRS). A total of 1,090 flew S at Hauxley on five dates between 3rd-27th (HRS/JPD), and other southerly movement included 600 at Holywell Pond on 25th (SPP), 350 at Cramlington on 8th (STH) and 50-86 at Cocklawburn, East Ord, Marden Quarry and North Shields between 3rd-10th, while 400 flew SW at East Chevington on 3rd (JPD). Westerly passage involved 58-80 at West and East Chevington on 8th and 41 at St Mary's on 4th and 40 moved E at Haughton Strother GP on 3rd. A flock was heard flying SW at Hartburn on 12th (MJC).

A large flock centred on the Linton-New Moor-QEII CP area numbered 2,000 on 24th (TB), about 3,000 on 26th (EC) and 1,500 on 30th (MSH). At Budle Bay 2,800 roosted on 5th (CGK), 800 were at Lindisfarne NNR on 10th (TRD/JD), 600 at Cheswick on 8th (PRM), 400 at Goswick on 10th (TRD/JD), 300 at East Chevington on 29th (TRD/JD), 177-200 at Druridge, Hauxley and Linton and 31-52 at Druridge Bay CP and Prestwick Carr.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

A single bird of the Greenland *albifrons* race was at Grindon Lough on 9th (SR) and 15th (SJH).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

44 flew S at East Ord on 24th (MHu) and 18 N at West Ord on 26th (MHu). Peak counts were 500 at Beal on 9th (JMA), 500 at Holy Island mudflats on 9th (JMA), 277 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 9th (MR), 269 at Hauxley Reserve, 250 at Budle Bay (JMA), 107 at Big Waters (GB), 60-64 at Backworth, Holywell Pond and Prestwick Carr, and 12-21 at Earsdon and Grindon Lough. One to five were also at/over the Blyth Estuary, Cramlington, and Killingworth and QEII Lakes.

Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens*

Two white-morph birds flew S with about 30 Pink-footed Geese at low Newton on 2nd (TBr) and a single blue-phase individual was with Pink-footed and Canada Geese at Linton on 5th (TB).

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Grindon Lough held 571 on 14th (MRS) and 223 on 15th (SJH). Other peak counts were 290 at QEII Lake on 14th (CDH), 92 at Killingworth Lake on 29th (STH), 60 at Hauxley Reserve on 20th (HRS), 28 at the Tweed Estuary (MHu), 22 N over Newcastle Exhibition Park (GB), 18-19 at Newcastle Leazes Park, Prestwick Carr and West Ord, and eight at Arcot Pond.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

A widespread movement, in all directions was evident on 6th-7th, with 100 W at Druridge Bay CP (CDB) and 50 W at Hauxley Reserve (HRS), 70 E at Tynemouth (MK), 50 N at Hauxley Reserve (HRS) and Seaton Sluice (SSWT), and 26 NW at St Mary's (SPP), while 65 arrived from the E at Budle Point (CGK) and 47 flew over Snab Point (JL). Ten S at Seaton Sluice on 12th (SSWT) were followed by 20 W at Cambois on 14th (DM *et al.*).



A flock of Barnacle Geese over Budle Bay by Chris Knox

A flock of 2,500 was in the Beal Point area of Lindisfarne NNR on 3rd (TRD/JD) and 700-800 there on 7th moved off to SW (IK); 1,000 at Budle Bay on 2nd increased to 1,300 by 6th (CGK/PS) but fell to 300 by 22nd (MR) 1,200 were at Elwick on 23rd-24th (JPL/DGB/GRo), 700 at Fenham Slake on 14th (IBDa/KDa). Few were noted away from the immediate coastal strip, with 40 at New Moor (Ashington) on 16th (TB) and 17 over Prestwick Carr on 7th (PCF). One to six were at six localities between 8th-28th. A leucistic individual was at Beal Point on 3rd (TRD/JD).

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Passage of pale-bellied included 33 N at Newbiggin on 26th-27th (GB/PJA/ASH), 21 N at Snab Point on 26th (EC), 19 N at Hauxley on 27th (HRS) and seven S there on 7th (HRS), and seven N at St Mary's on 27th (JPD/MPF). The flock of *hrota* race birds at Lindisfarne NNR numbered about 2,000 on 10th-11th (SJH) and reached 2,600 by the end of the month (IK), and one was at the Tweed Estuary.

Reports of dark-bellied *bernicla* race birds involved ten N at Newbiggin on 26th (GB), six at the Blyth Estuary on 18th (LJM) and 21st (ASH), and two N at Tynemouth on 29th (SPP).

Un-raced birds involved a total of 94 N at Seaton Sluice during the month (57 hours), including 44 on 26th and 37 on 12th (SSWT), 20 at Annstead on 26th (JPL *et al.*) and one at Collywell Bay.

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

All records came from Budle Bay, building up from 100 on 4th (JMA) to 280 by 6th (CGK), 347 by 15th (MSH), 442 by 22nd (MR) and a peak of 451 on 20th (MSH).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was 3,094 N (in 57 hours), including 1,846 N on 12th (SSWT); 254 flew N at Newbiggin on 26th (GB), 123 N at Cullernose Point on 27th (TF/JFa), and 20-91 N at Cullercoats, Snab Point, St Mary's and Tynemouth between 26th-28th. Southward movement involved 25-40 at Hauxley on 13th and 21st (HRS).

About 3,000 were at the Fenham Flats area of Lindisfarne NNR on 14th (IBDa/KDa) rising to by 5,000 30th (IK). Other peak gatherings were 230 at Cresswell Pond on 17th (PRM), 210 at Budle Bay on 6th (CGK), 196 at Grindon Lough on 15th (SJH), 152 at Big Waters (GB), 130 at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN), 91-97 at Arcot Pond and Hauxley Reserve, and 21-35 at Bothal Pond, Haughton Strother GP and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Two to 17 were at nine further sites.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Seven flew S at Tynemouth on 28th (DRW). Peak counts were 60 at Cresswell Pond on 1st (TRD/JD), 47 at Linton Ponds on 14th (CDH), 42 at Arcot Pond on 21st and 29th (a site record: STH/LJM), 30 at Big Waters on 7th (GB), about 20 at Hauxley reserve on 6th (HRS), 14 at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN), ten at Maiden's Hall Lake, West Chevington (MSH), and six at St Mary's Wetland and, more unusually, on the sea off Tynemouth on 21st (SPP). One to three were also at Bothal and Cocklawburn Ponds.

Teal *Anas crecca*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was 544 N (in 57 hours), including 233 N on 12th (SSWT), 102 moved N at Newbiggin on 26th (GB), and 97 N at Tynemouth on 28th (DRW). At Holy Island 1,100 were mainly concentrated at a pool in a stubble field at Chare Ends that was baited with barley by shooters (IK), 510 were at Budle Bay on 6th (CGK), 281 at Cresswell Pond on 17th (PRM), 188 at Grindon Lough on 15th (SJH), 103 at Arcot Pond (DM), 59-89 at Warkworth Gut and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and 24-43 at Derwent Reservoir, Longhirst Flash and Prestwick Carr. Two to 19 were at eight further sites.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was 140 N (in 57 hours; SSWT), 62 flew N at Newbiggin on 26th-29th (GB/PJA/STH), 26 N at St Mary's between 27th-30th (JPD), and 20 N at Snab Point on 27th (JR). The largest concentrations were 179 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 1st (SR), 120 at the Tweed Estuary on 11th (MHu), 102 at Killingworth Lake on 19th (LJM), 80 at Holywell Pond on 30th (SPP), 50-77 at Airy Holm and Derwent Reservoirs, Cocklawburn Pond, Haughton Strother GP, Marden Quarry and Newcastle Leazes Park, and 16-48 at Arcot, Bothal, Linton and Swallow Ponds, Elswick, Grindon Lough, Hartburn Reservoir, Hauxley Reserve, Jesmond Dene, Kielder, Roddam Bog and Tynemouth Park.



A drake Mallard takes to the air at Druridge Bay CP on 21st October by Chris Barlow

Pintail *Anas acuta*

One flew N at Seaton Sluice on 26th (SSWT). Three were at Prestwick Carr on 1st (PCF), three at East Chevington on 9th and 29th (TRD/JD/AT) and two there on 28th (IRD/NFO), and singles at Big Waters, Cresswell Pond and Haughton Strother GP on single dates.

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Peak counts were 28 at Monks' House Pool on 25th (JPL) and 22 there on 29th (IRD), 16 at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN), ten at East Chevington on 18th (IFo), eight at Grindon Lough on 14th (MRS), seven at Longhirst Flash and four to five at Cresswell and Linton Ponds, and Holy Island.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Scarce coastal passage records involved two, with Common Scoters, N at Tynemouth on 29th (SPP), and singles N at Seaton Sluice (also with Common Scoters) on 12th (SSWT) and Newbiggin on 29th (STH). The only double-figure counts were of 18 at Killingworth Lake on 29th (STH) and ten at Swallow Pond on 22nd (SPP). Seven were at Haughton Strother GP on 28th (MR), five at Derwent Reservoir on 15th (typically scarce there; IFo), four at Hauxley Reserve, and one to two at Arcot, Bothal, Cocklawburn and Cresswell Ponds, Bakethin Reservoir, Big Waters, Castle Island, Gosforth Park NR and QEII Lake.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Two moved N at Seaton Sluice on 29th (SSWT). Killingworth Lake was by far the most attractive site, holding 148 on 19th (LJM), while 62 were at Castle Island on 14th (DM), 54 at QEII Lake on 16th (LJM), 44 at Cresswell Pond on 17th (PRM), and ten to 19 at Arcot, Bothal, Linton and West Allotment Ponds, Haughton Strother GP, and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Six to nine were also at Grindon Lough, Jesmond Dene, and Newcastle Exhibition and Leazes Parks, and one to three at five further sites, including two at the Tweed Estuary on 11th (MHu).

Scaup *Aythya marila*

A total of nine flew N at Seaton Sluice between 26th-29th (SSWT), and two flew N off East Chevington on 30th (AT). Cresswell Pond held four (juveniles) on 17th (PRM), three on 16th (AA/MH), and one to two on several dates between 15th-30th (TRD/JD/MN *et al.*). Singles were at Holy Island and Ross Back Sands, and a short way inland at Bothal Pond on 20th (TF/JFa) and Holywell Pond on 3rd (SPP).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was 298 N and 57 S (in 57 hours; SSWT), 80 flew N at Tynemouth on 27th-28th (DRW), and 73 N and three S at Newbiggin between 26th-28th (GB/PJA/ASH). Few were noted elsewhere, with 34 at Holy Island, and seven to 12 at Meadow Haven, North Shore (both Berwick) and the Tweed Estuary.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

Light northerly passage involved a total of 11 at St Mary's between 26th-30th (MSH/AC/MK/JPD), seven at Newbiggin between 26th-29th (GB/STH/NFO), six at Seaton Sluice from 25th (SSWT), five at Tynemouth on 27th-28th (DRW), two at Cullercoats (CGK/AJ) and Hauxley on 27th (HRS) and two at Ross Back Sands on 22nd (MR). Holy Island harbour attracted 22 on 22nd (MR) and eight on 28th (IK), two were at East Chevington on 28th (MSK/NEWT) and singles at Newton Point, Snab Point and Stag Rocks. More unusual were singles at Cresswell Pond between 4th-29th (TB/ADM/MN *et al.*) and the Beehive Flash, Earsdon (juvenile) on 19th, 21st and 25th (CGK/AJ/MSH *et al.*).



A Long-tailed Duck
Beehive Flash
by Chris Knox

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Strong passage was evident, particularly towards the end of the month. Seaton Sluice recorded a monthly total of 4,027 N and 328 S (in 57 hours), including peaks of 1,299 N on 26th and 1,226 on 29th (SSWT). Also on 26th 855 flew N and eight S at Newbiggin (GB/ASH/ADM), 570 N at St Mary's (AC) and 260 N at Holy Island (IK); on 27th 700 passed (N?) Annstead (JPL/RNa *et al.*), 400 N at St Mary's (ASJ/JPD/MPF), 103 N at Cullercoats (CGK/AJ) and 46-61 N at Newbiggin and St Mary's; on 29th 566 flew N at Tynemouth (SPP), 439 N at Newbiggin (STH/AT), 250 N off East Chevington (ADM) and 105 at Snab Point (ADM) while on 30th 282 flew N at St Mary's (JPD/MPF).

On 25th, 125 were at St Mary's (PRM), 100 at Stag Rocks on 29th (IBDa/KDa), 80 at Goswick and Newbiggin Bay, and 12-30 off Boulmer, East Chevington and Holy Island. More unusual were four well inland at Branton GP from 12th until at least 14th (IBDa/KDa) and one at Cresswell Pond on 14th-15th (ADM/TRD/JD) and between 27th-29th (TB/IRD/TD *et al.*).

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

The Seaton Sluice monthly total was 22 N (in 39 hours), mainly from 25th (SSWT). Four flew N at the Farne Islands on 9th (TM), one N at Berwick on 12th (MHu) and two N at Ross Back Sands on 22nd (MR). Other northerly movement was concentrated between 26th-30th, with two at Annstead and one at Newbiggin on 26th (GB/ADM/JPL *et al.*); seven at Cullernose Point (TF/JFa), seven+ St Mary's (JPD/MPF/MK *et al.*), six at Annstead (JPL/RNa), six at Snab Point (ADM) and three at Cullercoats (CGK/AJ) with one to two at Newbiggin and Tynemouth (NFO/DRW); five at Newbiggin (ADM) and one at Tynemouth on 28th (DRW); three at Newbiggin (STH), Snab Point (ADM) and Tynemouth (SPP) on 29th and two at St Mary's (JPD/MPF) and one at East Chevington (AT) on 30th. Three were at Stag Rocks on 29th (IBDa/KDa).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

At Seaton Sluice a total of 195 flew N, mainly from 25th (in 39 hours; SSWT), 82+ flew N at Newbiggin on 26th (ADM/GB), 16-17+ N at Cullernose Point (TF/JFa) and St Mary's (MK/JPD *et al.*) and ten N at Cullercoats (CGK/AJ) on 27th with 11 N at Tynemouth on 28th (DRW). Three flew N over Front Street (Tynemouth) on 28th (CB).

A group of 18 were at New Water Haugh (R. Tweed) on 26th (MHu), 11 off East Chevington on 29th (ADM), ten at Cresswell Pond on 30th (ADM), eight at Holy Island from 24th (SJH) and six at Newbiggin. Three to five were at Bothal Pond, Branton GP, Derwent Reservoir, Grindon Lough, Hauxley Reserve and West Ord, and one to two at Cheswick Black Rocks, Gosforth Park NR, Holy Island, Lynemouth Flash, QEII Lake, and Roddam and Swallow Ponds from 10th onwards.



Goldeneye at Killingworth Lake
by Adriana Buskin on 13th October

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*/**Goosander** *Mergus merganser*

A group of 18 were distantly off the Heugh (Holy Island) on 28th (ADM).

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was 18 N (in 39 hours), mainly from 25th (SSWT). 14 moved N at Newbiggin on 26th (GB), and five N at Tynemouth on 28th (DRW). Holy Island causeway held a peak of 42 on 25th (SJH), nine were at Budle Bay on 22nd (MR), nine at Annstead on 26th (JPL) and three at Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, St Mary's and Stag Rocks. One to two were also at the Blyth Estuary, Craster, Hauxley and Newbiggin.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

At St Mary's three flew N on 27th (ASJ), three N on 28th (SPP) and two N on 30th (JPD), while one moved N at Newbiggin on 26th (GB). Newcastle Exhibition Park held a peak of 14 on 18th and 30th-31st (GB/DHWP), 12 were at Holy Island on 12th (ADM), six to seven at Jesmond Dene (MJCo) and West Ord (MHu), and three to four at Arcot Pond, Killingworth Lake and Rothbury. One to two were also at Airy Holm Reservoir, Berwick Little Beach, Budle Bay, Gosforth Park NR, Holywell Pond, Usway Burn and Wark.

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

Seven were on Plenmeller Moor on 19th (SJH) and four on Alnwick Moor on 10th (TRD/JD).

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

A male was on Plenmeller Moor on 19th (SJH) and a female fed in the same hawthorn bush at Staward Manor (Langley) on 20th, where a pair was seen on 1st January 2010 (RWM/MIM).

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Counts of 45-62 presumably newly released birds were seen in Holywell Dene on three dates up to 25th (RJP/MNC/KWY). Seven were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 9th.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

The peak count was 20 in the dunes at the northern end of the Straight Lonnen (Holy Island) on 20th. This was the largest group seen on the island for many years (IK). Eight were at Hack Hall (Dinnington) on 11th (PCF) and Cresswell Home Farm (Lynemouth) on 28th (JL). Seven were at Budle Bay, south of Cresswell village, Ellington and Old Hartley and six at Craster and Maiden's Hall Lake (West Chevington). One to five were noted at Beal Point, Boulmer, Cresswell Pond, Darras Hall, Eachwick, Holywell Pond, Needle's Eye (Berwick), Newbiggin, Prestwick Carr, Snab Point, Swinhoe, Waren Mill Caravan Park, Widdrington Moor and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

At Ford Moss 34, were counted on 13th (JL) and 17 were at Roddam Bog on 13th (JR). Seven were at Eachwick on 8th and five including three juveniles at Arcot Lane on 29th. Four were present throughout the month at Hartley West Farm and three were nearby in an Old Hartley garden on 25th.

Diver species *Gavia sp.*

On 26th four, including two 'large' divers flew S at Newbiggin (GB), whilst one flew S and a 'large' diver, either Great Northern or White-billed, flew N there on 27th (GB/PJA/DD/PCF).

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Significant passage was noted during the month especially at Seaton Sluice where 94 flew N and 72 S in 57 hours of sea-watching. At St Mary's Island 31 passed in 3 hours 55 minutes on 30th, 17 flew N in 4 hours 45 minutes on 27th and four flew N in 45 minutes on 24th (JPD). Ten flew N at Hauxley on 7th, with a single N there on 13th (HRS). At Newbiggin eight flew N and four S on 26th (ADM/GB) and five flew N on 28th (GB). Five flew N in 2 hours at Cullercoats on 27th (CGK/AJ), four flew N and one S at Snab Point in 30 minutes on 22nd (MSH). Offshore peak counts were 62 between Newbiggin and Hauxley on 18th (AA/MH), 23 off the Druridge coal road on 20th (ADM), 22 off East Chevington on 9th (AT) and ten off Newton Point on 28th (IBDa/KDa). Four to eight were noted at Budle Point, Cocklawburn, Holy Island Harbour, Newbiggin, Ross Back Sands, Snab Point and Spittal Bay. Smaller counts of one to three were noted at Annstead, Berwick (Little Beach, North Shore and Meadow Haven), Cheswick, Cresswell Pond, Goswick, Hauxley and Stag Rocks.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

Two flew N at St Mary's Island on 27th (AJ/MSK *et al.*) and singles flew N at Hauxley on 7th (HRS), Goswick on 10th (TRD/JD), Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) on 26th and Tynemouth on 28th (DRW) and 29th (SPP). Offshore nine were at Newton Point on 28th (IBDa/KDa) and singles at Holy Island on 9th/10th (SJH), Snab Point on 28th (JL) and Stag Rocks on 29th (IBDa/KDa).

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

Six flew N during the month at Seaton Sluice in 44 hours of sea-watching from 16th onwards (SSWT). On 28th three flew N and three flew S at Newbiggin. Two flew N together at St Mary's Island on 14th (MSH). Two flew N at Newbiggin and Snab Point on 29th (STH/ADM), whilst two flew S at Snab Point on 30th (ADM). Singles flew N at Newbiggin on 26th/27th, S at St Mary's Island on 26th, St Mary's Island on 28th and past at Annstead on 26th.

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

The only bird recorded was a single flying N at Seaton Sluice on 25th (SSWT).

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

Only small numbers were noted with a peak of five off Cullernose Point on 27th (TF/JFa). Two flew N at Newbiggin on 7th (ASH), and Seaton Sluice on 14th (SSWT). Singles were noted at Seaton Sluice on 26th and Stag Rocks on 29th.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

As with the previous species only small numbers were noted with a peak count of four off Cullernose Point on 27th (TF/JFa). At Newbiggin three flew N on 27th (GB/PJA), two on 7th (AS), and one on 26th. Three also flew N at St Mary's Island on 27th (AC). Singles flew N at Boulmer on 11th, Ross Back Sands on 22nd, Snab Point on 26th, Seaton Sluice on 27th/29th and Tynemouth on 28th. One flew S at Seaton Sluice on 16th.

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

At Seaton Sluice 1,000 flew N in 3 hours on 25th, 500 N in 1 hour on 6th, 450 N in 2 hours on 26th and 100 N in 1 hour on 17th (SSWT). Elsewhere counts were much lower with peaks of 51 N at Beadnell on 29th (IRD), 25 N in 2 hours at Cullercoats on 27th (CGK/AJ) and 17 N at Snab Point in 2 hours on 27th (JR). One to 15 were noted at East Chevington, Hauxley, Howick, Newbiggin and Stag Rocks.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

At Hauxley 30 flew N on 7th (HRS). The peak counts were 101 at Blyth Harbour on 4th (STH), 68 at North Shields Fish Quay on 29th (SPP), 21 in the Tweed Estuary on 11th (MHu) and Howdon on 28th (CB), 17 at Derwent Reservoir on 28th (IFo), 15 at Big Waters on 7th (GB) and 11 at Berwick North Shore on 9th (MHu). One to seven were noted at Arcot Pond, Castle Island, Elswick Wharf, Gosforth Park NR, Holywell Dene, Linton Ponds, Prestwick Carr, QEII Lake, Rothley Lakes, Wark and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

'Continental' Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*

The Danish ringed Red3VT, reported in September bulletin was at Blyth South Harbour on 22nd September (STH/PJA).

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Peak counts were 41 in Blyth South Harbour on 4th (STH) and 16 at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 21st (MHu). 12 were feeding offshore at Tynemouth on 29th (SPP). One to five were seen at Berwick North Shore, Goswick, Howick, Newbiggin, Newton Point, Snab Point, Stag Rocks, Tweed Estuary and in the Tyne Estuary.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Two were present throughout the month at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN). Singles were at Cresswell Pond on 2nd (ADM/EC), 20th (IRD/ASJ/TF/JFa) 21st (ADM) and 30th (EC). Singles were also seen at Big Waters on 21st/27th (GB/BMo).

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Two were present at Lindisfarne NNR throughout the month, including sightings from Beal, Beal Point and Budle Bay (IK/MSH/SJH/SR). Singles were noted in the Lindisfarne area on eight further dates. Elsewhere singles were at Warkworth Gut on 6th/9th/15th and Cresswell Pond on 10th/26th.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

The peak counts were 14 in the Tweed Estuary on 11th (MHu), eight at Holy Island on 6th (PRM) and seven at Hauxley on 23rd (HRS). Four were at Guide Post on 20th (JR) and Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene) on 21st (RJP). One to three were noted at Arcot Pond, Beehive Flash (Earsdon), Bellasis Bridge, Berwick North Shore, Castle Island, East Ord, Elswick Wharf, Forestburn Gate, Leazes Park (Newcastle) and Prestwick Carr.

A Little Grebe
Hauxley NR
19th October
Chris Barlow

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

The peak counts were 16 at Hauxley NR on 11th (HRS), 12 at East Chevington on 3rd (JPD), nine at Cresswell Pond on 3rd (JPD) and Arcot Pond on 6th (STH), seven at Branton GP on 14th (IBDa/KDa), six at Airey Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield) on 2nd (IFo), five at Swallow Pond on 2nd (JPD), Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 10th (SR) and Longhirst Flash on 13th (TD). One to four were noted at Angerton Lake, Bakethin Reservoir, Beehive Flash (Earsdon), Big Waters, Broomlee Lough, Castle Island, Cocklawburn Pond, Druridge Pools, Gosforth Park NR, Killingworth Lake, Ladyburn Lake, Linton Ponds, Lynemouth Flash, Newton Pool, Roddam Bog and St Mary's Island Wetland.

A Great Crested Grebe
Killingworth Lake
13th October
Adriana Buskin

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*

Singles flew N at Seaton Sluice on 12th (SSWT), Tynemouth on 28th (DRW) and St Mary's Island on 30th (JPD). The peak count at Whittle Dene Reservoirs was nine on 1st (SR). Five, including the family party of four, remained at Killingworth Lake on 6th (BMo). Two were at Airey Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield) on 3rd (IFo), Cresswell Pond on 5th/14th/17th (IFo/GB/PRM), East Chevington on 5th/18th (IFo) and Big Waters on 7th (GB). Singles were noted at Broomlee Lough, Derwent Reservoir, Ladyburn Lake and QEII Lake.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

One flew N at Seaton Sluice on 29th (SSWT). One was at Beadnell on 12th (per NNBC).

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

Four were off Ross Back Sands on 22nd (MR). Two were in Holy Island Harbour on 28th (SJH), with a single being noted there on 9th/22nd and a single nearby off The Heugh on 21st. Singles were also noted at Hauxley NR on 15th, Ladyburn Lake on 21st, Cresswell Pond on 29th and off Snab Point on 30th.



A reflecting Slavonian Grebe at Druridge Bay CP on 21st October by Chris Barlow

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Two birds were seen over the A69 bypass at Beaufront Red House and at Anick Farm on 31st (MR). Single birds were observed at Low Waskerley on 1st and 6th (IFo), Poppy Farm on 4th (SAS), on the Holystone – Killingworth Waggonway on 13th (BMo) & over Acomb East Wood on 17th (RSF).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

At Cresswell Pond on the 1st a female/ juvenile was seen (TRD/JD/TB), while on the 7th a female flew SW at Prestwick Carr (Bmo).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

A ringtail was being mobbed by a Raven *Corvus corax* at a confidential site on 19th (SJH), and a ringtail was seen at a coastal site on several dates with another bird noted coming in off the sea on 26th (SJH *et al.*). An adult male was noted at two sites on the 25th and 26th (*per* PCF/IFo).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Two sightings involving a female at Thrunton Woods on 5th (TRD/JD), and another unsexed bird at Kirknewton Churchyard on 7th (BWG).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Two birds were seen throughout the month at Holywell Dene and at Scotland Gate (RJP/SLB/MSK). Other pairs were noted at Holy Island on several dates (CGK/PS *et al.*) and at Prestwick Carr on 18th (PCF). Single birds were noted at 20 further sites during the month.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Five birds were seen at Sleafy Hall on 7th (RMH), four were at Prestwick Carr on 6th (PCF) and three were at Ingram in the Breamish Valley on 13th (JR). One to two birds were noted at a further 20 sites, including on Holy Island a bird which flew N along the Straight Lonnen on 7th (BCFT) and another which flew from Beal Point to the Snook on 10th (TRD/JD).

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Up to six birds were on Holy Island throughout the month (BCFT/ADM *et al.*). Three birds were at St Mary's Island on 16th (MSH) while two were seen at Holywell Dene throughout the month (RJP) and at Tynemouth Castle on 17th (KWY) and at Hazelrigg on 21st (GB). Single birds were at seven further sites (JMA/CDB/MR).

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

On Holy Island up to five birds were seen on several dates (JPD/ASJ *et al.*), two birds were on the Farne Islands on 30th (*per* NNBC) Singles were seen at Cresswell, East Chevington, Ellington, Newton Point, Seaton Sluice and at one inland site.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

A good month for sightings this month with 48 records received. Two birds, an adult female and a juvenile, were at Cresswell Pond on 1st (TB/JD) and Holy Island on a couple of dates (SJH). Single birds were seen at 27 sites during the month.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

At Gosforth Park NR, Prestwick Carr and Swallow Pond up to three birds were present throughout the month (NHSN/PCF/SPP). Singles were seen or heard at Branton GPs on 1st (IBDa/KDa), West Hartford on 8th (STH), Arcot Pond on 9th (STH), Holywell Pond on 10th (SPP), St Mary's Island on 12th (AC), Hauxley on 22nd (HRS), Cresswell Pond on 28th (IRD) and a bird in a back yard in Tynemouth on 29th (MNC).

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Arcot Pond had the highest numbers with a peak count of 37 on 20th (STHLJM/DM), 32 were at Big Waters on 7th (GB) and 16 were at Killingworth Lake on 29th (STH), 15 were at Gosforth Park NR throughout the month (NHSN) and 12 were at Hauxley NR on 11th (HRS). One to ten birds were at seven further sites.

A Moorhen at Marden Quarry
Adriana Buskin
28th October

**Coot** *Fulica atra*

Killingworth Lake had the highest count with 106 birds on 19th (LJM), Arcot Pond on 29th had 87 birds (DM), 54 were at East Chevington on 3rd (JPD) and up to 48 were at Gosforth Park NR throughout the month (NHSN). 32 birds were at QEII CP on 14th (CDH), 21 were at Big Waters (GB) and Linton Pond (CDH) on 14th. Two to 15 birds were at Bothal Pond, Holy Island, Leazes Park (Newcastle) and at Craggside (Rothbury).

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

The high-tide roost on St Cuthbert's Island (Holy Island) once again produced the monthly peak with 500+ on 9th (PRM) and 260 on 26th (MJC). Just to the north some 157 were counted at Berwick North Shore on 9th (MHu) and to the south 117 were in Budle Bay on 7th (CGK). Hauxley NR attracted 49 on 11th and 85 on 13th (HRS), whilst 15 were on the Bondicarr shore on 27th (JR). Elsewhere, singles appeared at Prestwick Carr on 4th (PCF) and more unusually at Newcastle Town Moor on 30th-31st (GB).

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

A peak count of ca.150 took place from Holy Island causeway on 25th (SJH), whilst counts of roosting birds on a factory roof in Blyth Harbour numbered 96 on 4th and 136 on 15th (STH/PJA). Some other good counts included 65 at the Berwick Little Beach high-tide roost on 16th and 62 at Berwick North Shore on 9th (MHu), 48 roosting on the village bay beach at Newbiggin on 7th (STH/PJA), 40+ at St Mary's Island on 20th (SPP), 24 in a field at Bondicarr on 27th (JR) and 22 at Tynemouth on 21st (SPP). Elsewhere, three were at East Chevington on 29th and two at Backworth Flash on 4th (TRD/JD/CGK).

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Several counts evidenced that 2,000+ were present on Holy Island until 20th with a peak of 2,200 on 8th (SJH *et al.*), although 1,000 on 24th and 700 on 25th suggested a falling away in numbers (SJH). Large numbers were present at St Mary's Island where 1,000+ were noted on 7th (SPP) and 2,000 on 22nd (ASJ). A total of 640 were counted at Monks' House Pool on 29th (IRD) and the large flock at Newcastle Town Moor which was present in September remained and reached a new peak of 500 on 1st (GB) but fell away to 150 on 10th (DHWB). Inland, some 465 was a good count of birds in a field of *brassica* at Carterway Heads on 10th (IFo). Back on the coast, ca.450 were at Boulmer on 14th (NFO) and 350 were at Low Newton scrape on 18th (TRD). Further counts of 200-250 were noted at Backworth, Cocklawburn, Cresswell Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Howick, Longhoughton Steel, Prestwick Carr and Seahouses while 80-102 were seen at Blanchland Moor, Elswick (Tyne), Linden Hall (Longhorsley), Newbiggin and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and 54 were on the Blyth Estuary. Bothal Pond and Ellington each produced 25 whilst four were seen feeding on the sports field (at 8pm) at the Royal Grammar School, Jesmond (GB).

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

All double-figure counts emanated from the north, with 67 at Budle Bay on 7th the highest (CGK); several counts on Holy Island ranged from 29-52 throughout the month (SJH) and 11 were at Berwick North Shore on 9th (MHu). Typically, one to four were also noted at Berwick Little Beach, the Blyth Estuary, Newbiggin, St Mary's Island and the Tweed Estuary.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Some 1,070 at Derwent Reservoir on 3rd was easily the highest count of the month (IFo) and numbers reached 650+ at Cresswell Pond on 18th (ASJ). Other good sized groups included 400 at Budle Bay on 7th (CGK), 325 on mudflats at Elswick (Tyne) on 9th (GB), 280 at Haughton Strother GP on 19th (MR), 245 at Grindon Lough on 15th (SJH) and 200 at St Mary's Island on 8th (KWY). Additional flocks of 120-160 were noted at Backworth, Corbridge, Prestwick Carr and Woodneuk Farm (Slaley); with 52-64 at the Cocklawburn, Ord Moor and the Tweed estuary, and 27 moved S in three hours over Spital, Newbiggin on 20th (GB). Four were present on Newcastle Town Moor on 31st.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Numbers of roosting birds on St Cuthbert's Island, Holy Island reduced this month with 260+ on 9th the maximum (PRM). Ten were noted at both Berwick North Shore on 9th (MHu) and Druridge Bay on 7th (CDB), and three to five were seen at Cresswell Pond and Hauxley very early on in the month. One to two were seen on three dates at Stag Rocks, Bamburgh and a single was on Lynemouth flash on 8th (MSH).

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Some excellent counts on Holy Island included 200 on 10th (SJH), 280 on the north shore on 15th (JPD) and 263 between Snipe Point-Emmanuel Head on 26th (MJC). At least 180 were present in the south bay at St Mary's Island on 20th (SPP) and 70 were in Budle Bay on 7th (CGK). Other coastal sites produced peaks of 38 at East Chevington on 30th (AT), 30 at Low Newton on 18th (TRD) and 15 near Cresswell Ices on 26th (TRD/JD). One to six were also noted at Berwick North Shore, Goswick and Hauxley.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Singles were noted at Low Newton scrape on 2nd (TBr), Cresswell Pond on 2nd-3rd (CGK/PS/ASJ/JPD) and Blyth (South Newsham road flash) on 6th (STH) though the latter was also reported but not submitted for the 5th.

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

One was seen at the Druridge coal road flash on 4th (ADMc).

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Increasing numbers were noted, the highest being 41 at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 21st (AA), followed by 14 feeding along the base of Tynemouth Pier on 21st (SPP). Blyth Harbour also attracted birds with 13 roosting on East Pier at high tide on 15th (STH/PJA). Nine were roosting on St Mary's Island on 27th (SPP) and one to four were also at Beadnell, Boulmer, Cheswick Black Rocks, Cullercoats Bay, Hauxley beach and Newbiggin, whilst one at Cresswell Pond on 21st was most unusual (TB).

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

The north held the majority with 280 in Budle Bay on 7th (CGK) and 150 from Holy Island causeway on 10th (TRD/JD). Further south, 100+ were on Hauxley beach on 14th (TD), 40 were on Cresswell Pond on 1st (TRD/JD) and 30-32 were noted roosting on a factory roof in Blyth Harbour on two dates (STH/PJA). The Tweed Estuary attracted 12 on 11th (MHu), six passed N at Newbiggin on 26th (GB) and inland sightings involved two at Backworth on 13th (GB) and singles at Hoppen Kiln Pool (Bradford Kaims) on 2nd (CGK/PS) and Bothal Pond on 28th (TD).

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

There were six at Cresswell Pond on 1st with three next day and one on 4th (TB *et al.*) and two visited nearby Snab Point on 3rd. On 2nd four were at Bradford Kaims and three at Amble Braid (CGK/PS) with two at the latter on 3rd. Prestwick Carr held two on several days from 2nd to 17th, also three on 11th and one remaining on 28th (PCF/GB/IFo *et al.*). Singles were at Backworth 3rd to 20th, Hauxley on 1st, East Chevington and Lynemouth on 3rd and St Mary's on 5th.

Jack Snipe *Limnocryptes minimus*

Most attention was focused on an obliging individual near the hide at Cresswell Pond during 9th to at least 29th (EC *et al.*). Elsewhere singles were found at Plenmeller Common on 4th (PH), Holywell Grange on 10th (SPP), Newbiggin GC on 12th (IFo) and at St Mary's on 16th (ASJ).

A skulking Jack Snipe at Cresswell Pond
11th October by Alan Hart



Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

At Cresswell Pond a count of 61 on 18th (ASJ) was an isolated peak against a background of up to 28 there; the most elsewhere were 18 at West Hartford on 8th (STH), 16 at Prestwick Carr on 9th (PCF) and 16 at Holy Island on 12th (ADM). Up to 11 visited Big Waters and ten were at Warkworth Gut on 5th; five or fewer were noted at a further ten localities.

***Long-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus scolopaceus*

At Cresswell Pond the juvenile found the previous day was present on 1st until at least 18:50h (NFO *et al.*).

The Long-billed Dowitcher with a
Redshank
Cresswell Pond
1st October
John Littleton

**Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola*

Most records came in the last few days, notably seven in off the sea in seven hours at Seaton Sluice on 26th (SSWT) and five or more at Holy Island during 22nd to 28th (ADM/IK/SR/AH). Three were at Hauxley NR on 27th and one or two during this period appeared at Bedlington, Berwick, Boulmer, Cullernose Point, Hartley, High Heaton, Lynemouth, Newbiggin, Rothbury, St Mary's and Tynemouth. An earlier light arrival brought one or two to Holy Island, Newbiggin and St Mary's on 12th to 14th.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

One at Prestwick Carr on 2nd/3rd was still present on 6th (PCF/GB *et al.*). One was in Budle Bay on 25th (JPL).

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

The roost at St Cuthbert's Island contained 320+ on 9th (PRM) and 250 on 15th (JPD); 55 were in Budle Bay on 7th (CGK). The Hauxley area regularly had up to 20 in the first half, 20 were at Beal Point on 3rd, 11 at Berwick on 9th, 11 at Cheswick Black Rocks on 10th and ten at Cresswell Pond on 1st. Small numbers appeared at six other places, including one inland at Prestwick Carr on 3rd (GB/PCF).

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

A late one was reported from Beadnell on 19th (per NNBC).

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Budle Bay held 210 on 5th (CGK), Newton Links dunes 120 on 8th (TM), 97 were on the Lynemouth Bay shoreline on 7th (JL) and 86 at Cocklawburn on 18th (MHu); 52-68 were noted at the Tweed Estuary, the Blyth Estuary, at Cresswell Pond and two other areas of Druridge Bay. There were 42 at Berwick on 8th, the peak at Hauxley was 38 on 6th and a regular flock of up to 28 was at Prestwick Carr. Small numbers were seen at Big Waters, Ellington, Elswick Wharf, Holywell Dene, Howdon and Longhirst Flash.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Two late singles were found: at Branton GP on 1st (IBDa/KDa) and at Warkworth Gut on 18th (AA/MH).

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

At Whittle Dene Reservoirs three were present on 9th, two on 10th, one on 25th and two on 30th (MR/SR). One was noted at Haughton Strother GP on 10th then two on 21st/24th (MR).

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

One flew W, calling, over Newbiggin GC on 12th (IFo).

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Most appeared in Budle Bay with two on 3rd/5th, three on 6th and one on 20th (TRD/JD/CGK/TM/MSH). Singles were at Bradford Kaims on 2nd (CGK/PS) and in the Tweed Estuary on 11th (MHu).

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

The WeBS count in the Tweed Estuary produced 296 on 11th (MHu) and around 200 were at Budle Bay/Holy Island causeway on 4th (JMA); 100 were noted at Holy Island on 9th (JMA). Berwick, Cresswell Pond, Elswick Wharf and Hauxley had 22-56 at times and small numbers occurred at Backworth, Castle Island, Howdon and Prestwick Carr.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

More than 200 fed on a narrow strip of shore at Hauxley near high tide on 14th (TD), easily the peak count at that location. Berwick held 63 on 9th (MHu) and 50 were noted at Holy Island between Snipe Point and Emmanuel Head on 26th (MJC). Low double-figure counts came from Cheswick, Craster, Howick and the Tweed Estuary and smaller numbers were found at Budle Bay, Cresswell, East Chevington, Low Newton, Newbiggin and Stag Rocks.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Two, including a dark phase adult, flew N at Newbiggin on 26th (TRD/JD). Singles flew N at Newbiggin on 7th (ASH) and at Seaton Sluice on 14th (SSWT) and one was off Annstead on 26th (JPL *et al.*).

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Just three reports of singles: at Stag Rocks on 7th (TB), Bamburgh on 9th (TM) and Seaton Sluice on 17th (SSWT).

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was 23 N in 57 hours (SSWT), the vast majority of which appeared on two days: ten on 14th and 11 on 26th. Elsewhere three went N at Newbiggin on 26th (GB) and two were at Hauxley on 14th, Snab Point on 14th, 22nd and 26th, Cullernose Point on 27th and St Mary's on 27th. Singles appeared on two days at East Chevington and at Cresswell Pond, Farne Islands, Holy Island and Tynemouth.

***Sabine's Gull** *Xema sabini*

An adult fed offshore at Snab Point on 26th (EC) and an immature flew S at Newbiggin on 29th (AT).

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

On 6th 100 moved N in one hour at Seaton Sluice (SSWT). The onset of a period of north-easterly winds initiated further significant movements on 27th including 180/h N at Hauxley (HRS), 130 N in 3 hours at Newbiggin, Church Point (GB/PJA), 35/h N at Snab Point (JR) and on 26th six flew N at Cresswell (TRD/JD). Elsewhere numbers were low, comprising eight at Berwick North Shore (MHu), six at Blyth Harbour (STH) and a single at Bamburgh (TRD/JD) on dates 4th-10th.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

The Budle Point roost contained 1,800 on the evening of 6th (CGK) and on 15th in excess of 1,000 fed at the tide-line on the north shore at Holy Island (JPD). Smaller concentrations were 250 on the tide-line at Hauxley on 14th and 27th (HRS), 136 in Jesmond Dene on 28th (MJCo), 132 at the QE II CP Lake on 14th (CDH) and 114 found during a WeBS count on the Tweed Estuary on 11th (MHu). Other counts of 40-100 came from Berwick North Shore, Big Waters, Leazes Park and Stannington with smaller counts from Arcot Pond, Castle Island, Druridge Bay CP, Exhibition Park and Walbottle.

A Little Gull
Prestwick Carr
Peter Fletcher
6th October

**Little Gull** *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

At Seaton Sluice three first-winter birds moved N on 14th (SSWT). Significant gatherings observed later in the month were 60 feeding offshore at St Mary's Island on 26th (AC) and a similar number, including many adults, feeding offshore with Kittiwakes on the same day at Seaton Sluice (SSWT). Elsewhere one to four were at Tynemouth from 27th-29th (DRW/SPP) and a more unusual inland record was a second-winter bird hawking over flooded fields at Prestwick Carr from 6th-19th (ADMc *et al.*).

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

The regular gathering in Newbiggin South Bay peaked at 27 on 7th (STH/PJA/ADMc) before declining slowly in numbers as the month progressed to a count of five on 30th (TB/MN/STH). Throughout the month up to four were seen at Snab Point (JL) and three were at Seaton Sluice on 6th (SSWT). Single adult and immature birds were reported from Holy Island from 11th-15th (JPD/SJH/SR) and single birds were also at Bamburgh Stag Rocks, Budle Bay, Hauxley, Shiremoor, St Mary's Island and Tynemouth on a number of dates throughout the month.



A Mediterranean Gull at a favoured location – Newbiggin
by John Littleton on 1st October

Common Gull *Larus canus*

A huge count of 8,000 came from the evening roost at Budle Point on 6th (CGK), possibly the highest ever coastal count for the county. Other large concentrations were 1,200 at the Haughton Strother GP on 3rd (MR), 300 in the Breamish Valley at Branton on 13th and 55 at Stannington on 28th (both JR). Four other locations held up to 16 birds.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

The low numbers reported reflect the autumn exodus from the county. The Budle Point gull roost held 12 on the 6th (CGK) but elsewhere, apart from six at the River Tyne Elswick Wharf on 3rd (DM), all other records were of one-two at the Blyth Estuary, Castle Island, Cramlington, Hauxley, Newcastle Town Moor and the Tweed estuary.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argentatus*

The peak count came from the QEII CP Lake on 24th where 900 were present (ASJ) and other significant flocks were 500 at Budle Bay on 4th (JMA), 450 on the Potland Burn (Linton) on 13th (IRD), 254 on the Tweed Estuary found during a WeBS survey on 11th (MHu) and 250 at Wandylaw on 9th (JMA). Groups of 24-80 were at Berwick North Shore, Budle Point and Castle Island with one to eight at Budle Bay and Leazes Park.

***Yellow-legged Gull** *Larus michahellis*

One bird was recorded in the large Herring Gull gathering at the Potland Burn (Linton) on 13th (IRD).

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

A first-winter bird was on the Holy Island Rocket Field Pools on 11th (SJH).

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

The peak count was ca.1,000 at the QEII Park Lake on 24th (ASJ). Two other groups containing 25 birds were at Budle Point in the roost on 6th (CGK) and Castle Island on 14th during a WeBS survey (DM/STH/PJA/IF). One-five were at three other localities. A colour-ringed bird seen in Budle Bay on 15th (MSH) had been ringed as a *pullus* at Dunbeath, Highland in June 2002 but had not been reported elsewhere during the intervening ten years.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Only two records were received comprising a single bird at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 13th (NNBC) and one feeding off Newbiggin Point on 26th (ASH).

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* / **Arctic Tern** *Sterna paradisaea*

One was noted over the sea at the Excavations (Holy Island) on 14th (SR).

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Five were recorded at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 3rd (TRD/JD), three first-winters were at St Mary's Island on 25th (AC) and two first-winters at Stag Rocks on 12th (EC). Single birds, all first-winters, were at five other widespread coastal localities between Budle Point and the River Tyne estuary on various dates with the latest being recorded on 29th at Newbiggin (STH).

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

The last record of the month was of a juvenile flying N at Tynemouth on 28th (DRW). Six were at Stag Rocks on 2nd (MJC) and three moved S there on 11th (TM). Single birds were at Tynemouth and Budle Point on 6th and 7th respectively.

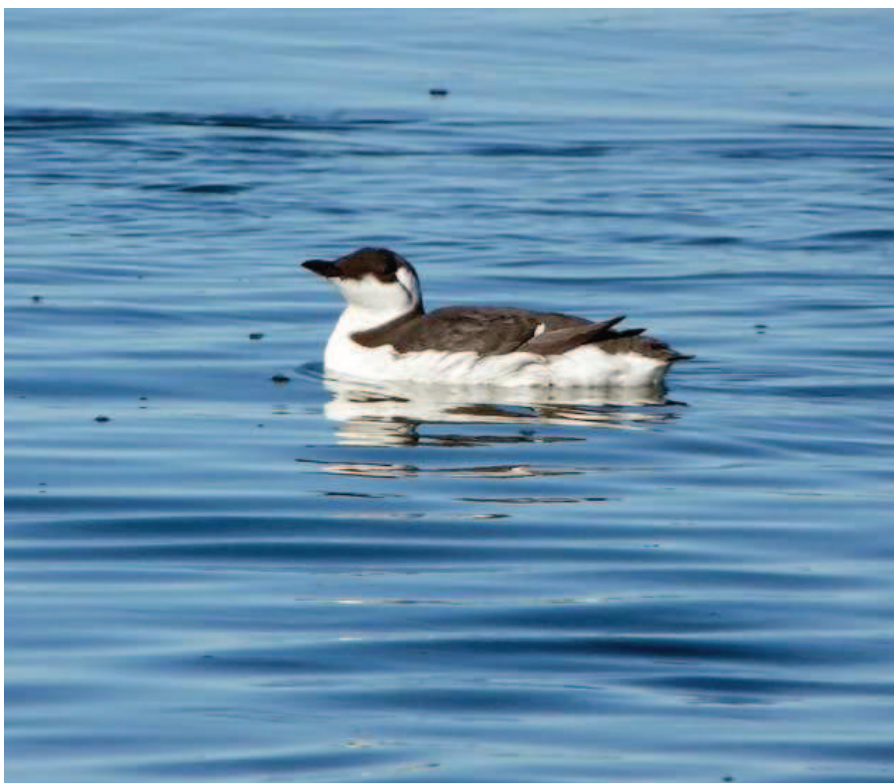
Auk *sp*

At the Seaton Sluice Watch Tower three periods of sea-watching produced records of 200 S in four hours on 12th, 50 N in one hour on 17th and 270 N in seven hours on 25th.

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

At Snab Point 27 were on the sea at midday on 27th (JR). One-ten were at fourteen widespread coastal localities ranging from Berwick to Newbiggin on various dates throughout the month. Four tide-line corpses were reported from Holy Island on 7th and 9th (PRM).

A Guillemot in Budle Bay
by Chris Knox

**Razorbill** *Alca torda*

Only five records, comprising three birds at Stag Rocks on 10th (TRD/JD), two at Holy Island on 26th (SJH) and single birds at Hauxley, Low Newton and Newbiggin (all TRD/JD).

Black Guillemot *Cephus grylle*

A summer-plumaged bird flew N at Boulmer on 15th (RB/MB) and another flew N at Newbiggin on 28th (AT).

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

No records this month.

Little Auk *Alle alle*

A period of fresh to strong northerly winds from 26th-29th produced many reports of birds moving N along the coast as they fought their way out of the North Sea.

The first records on 26th were of two and three moving N at Snab Point (Cresswell) and Newbiggin (TB/TRD/JD). The numbers increased on 27th when 54 moved N in eight hours at Seaton Sluice (SSWT), 44 N in five hours at Newbiggin (PJA/GB/NFO) and 21 N in three hours at Cullernose Point (TF/JFa). Up to 25 were also noted from other sea-watching localities namely Hauxley, St Mary's Island, Seahouses, and Tynemouth.

A similar intensity of movement N continued on the following day, 28th, with in excess of 50 recorded at St Mary's Island (ASJ), 44 in two hours at Tynemouth (DRW), 21 at Newton Point (IBDa/KDa), 11 at Seaton Sluice (SSWT) and smaller numbers at Newbiggin.

The movement peaked on 29th with 542 N in little more than one hour in the early morning at Newbiggin (AT) falling to 67 in one hour during late morning (ASH/STH) and 202 in two hours late morning at Snab Point (TF/JFa) but, perhaps surprisingly, only 73 in nine hours at Seaton Sluice (SSWT). Elsewhere up to 18 were noted at Beadnell, East Chevington and Tynemouth. By 30th, with the onset of light westerly winds, the movement had substantially finished although at St Mary's Island 23 disorientated birds were seen moving both N and S during late morning (JPD/MPF); also one to two were still being seen at a few other coastal localities.

Rock Dove / Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*

Numbers increased by four from last month with 142 on the Environment Agency Roof at Newcastle Business Park on 10th (DM) and 55 on a health club roof at Kingston Park 25th (PCF).

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

A flock of 156 sat on a roof to be counted after being flushed by a Sparrowhawk at Howdon on 28th (CB), 11 at Benton Square on the same date (LJM), three at Big Waters on 14th with two at Exhibition Park on 5th & 10th, in the observer's garden at Walbottle on 7th, at Spital (Newbiggin) on 20th and a single at Heaton Park Bowling Green on 28th (MJCo).

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Large gatherings of 2,500 at Ellington on 31st (TB), 600 at Hauxley on 27th (HRS), 440 at Black Callerton on 14th (PCF) with 400+ at Beehive Flash (Earsdon) on 19th (MSH) and at Swallow Pond on 29th (JPD). Around 350 were west of Darras Hall on 24th, 200 at West Hartford on 11th and three to 50 at Eachwick, Jesmond Dene and Walbottle.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

An impressive 105 were found around the village at Holy Island on 15th (JPD/ASJ), 14 at Fourstones on 6th (RMH), 11 at Northburn (Cramlington) on 3rd (CDB) with one to six at Black Callerton, Blagdon, High Hauxley, Holywell Dene, Walbottle and Whittle Dene.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Four were on Holy Island throughout the month (IK) with one to two noted on numerous dates and two were at Brada Quarry near Bamburgh on 6th (CDB). Singles were at Cresswell Pond, Ellington, Embleton, Fair Moor (Morpeth), Slaley, St Mary's, Stamfordham and Tynemouth where a possible breeding pair was reported. There were two road casualties on B6318 near Brocolitia on 14th and the A69 at Heddon on the same date.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

All reports were of singles at Rising Sun Farm on 1st (SPP), Earsdon near Tritlington on 11th (ADM), East Stobswood on 23rd (EC) and Ovington on 22nd and 25th (SAS).

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Pairs sang at Scotland Gate and Stamfordham throughout the month (SLB/MSK/EC), at Holywell Dene on 4th (BMo) and Ellington on 8th (TB). Singles were at Chollerford, Corbridge, Eachwick, Ellington, Elsdon, Flotterton, Holy Island, Ovington, Ponteland, Wark, West Monkseaton, Marden Quarry (Whitley Bay) and at Dissington Hall flying over a spot where another had been found dead on the road earlier in the month.

Owl (Asio sp)

One came in off the sea at Seaton Sluice on 12th (SSWT).

Long-eared Owl *Asio Otus*

A single presumed new arrival was flushed from the East Shore (Holy Island) on 14th (ADM) with one at Straight Lonnen on 15th (ASJ) and daily there from 23rd to 26th (IK *et al.*). Singles were also at St Mary's on 24th (ASJ *et al.*) and Holywell Pond on 25th (SPP).



A Long-eared Owl on Holy Island
23rd October by Tim Dean

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Reported in good numbers at Holy Island throughout the month with two to six on ten dates peaking at nine on 30th (IK). Four were at Holywell Pond on 4th (BMo) with three there on 21st and at nearby St Mary's on 22nd (DRW/ASJ) and two at West Hartford on 8th (STH). Singles were at the above locations and Cresswell Pond, Lynemouth, Newbiggin, Plennmeller Common, Prestwick Carr and Swallow Pond.



One of the Holy Island Short-eareds hunting
by Tim Dean on 23rd October

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Unusually two frequented a flooded channel near the bridleway at Prestwick Carr from 7th to 13th (BMo/PCF) and two were at Hartburn on 9th (MJC). Singles were present throughout the month at Gosforth Park NR and adjacent pool, Ouseburn at Jesmond Dene, Horton Burn (Cramlington), Northumberland Park (North Shields), Thrum Mill (Rothbury), Whittle Dene Reservoirs and at seven further inland localities and six coastal locations.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Singles were present at Gosforth Park NR and Rothbury all month (NHSN/TRD/JD), at Kielder Village on 4th and Addycombe (Rothbury) on 19th.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

A peak count of three at Cambois on 14th (DM/STH/PJA/IFo), two at Hauxley all month (HRS) and at Milkwell (Corbridge) on 7th (RB/MB). Singles were regularly at Valley Park (Cramlington), Holy Island Village and Scotland Gate and at 16 other widespread localities. One of the many sightings reported on Holy Island was a possible northern race bird *ssp major* on 23rd (TRD).

Magpie *Pica pica*

The largest count was 26 at Swallow Pond on 29th (JPD), seven at Druridge Bay CP on 6th, at Fourstones on the same date and in the observer's garden at Walbottle on 28th with five at Heaton Park and a single in Jesmond Dene.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Very well reported as birds prepared for winter with a peak count of eight in the College Valley at Hethpool on 28th (EHa), five the peak count at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN), four at Hexham on 5th, Wylam on 16th and Haughton Strother on 21st (ALT/EC/MR) with three at Prestwick Carr on 6th, Ford Moss and Akeld on 13th. Two were at Arcot Pond and Valley Park (Cramlington), Gosforth, Morpeth, Scotland Gate and Thrunton Wood with singles at a further 22 widely spread localities..

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

An evening roost gathering at Prestwick Carr on 7th numbered over 100, 30 were at Paddy Freeman's Playing Field (Jesmond Dene) on 22nd (MJCo), 18 fed on Acorns at Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 30th (MNC), 15 at Rothley Craggs on 28th (JR), 12 in a Walbottle Garden on 21st (KR/LR) and two at Eachwick on 6th (CDB).

A bird showing characteristics of the Nordic species *C.m.monedula* was at Seaton Sluice on 10th (PCF).

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

250 flew to roost over Alnwick on 4th and 100 were at Harnham on 22nd (JMA) with the only other report 21 at Rothley Craggs on 28th (JR).

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

The peak count was 49 around the Town Moor (Newcastle) on 15th (GB) with 45 at Hauxley NR on 21st (HRS), 30 feeding on Acorns at Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 30th (MNC), 28 on the roof of Learning Village at Cramlington on 19th (PJA) with 23 at Bellasis Bridge on 28th (JR) and 22 at Beacon Hill (Cramlington) on 13th (DM). Two to 16 were at eight widespread locations.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

One was at Holy Island on 22nd (CMur/VWa) and seen flying to mainland on 28th (IK).

Raven *Corvus corax*

Three were at Usway Burn (Upper Coquetdale) on 15th (IRD) and feeding on road kill at Plenmeller Common on 30th (PH), two at Thrunton Woods on 14th (TRD/JD) and at Melkridge Village on 15th (SJH). Singles were at Haughton Strother on 3rd, East Ditchburn on 23rd and at Craster on 25th.



A Goldcrest eyeballs Colin Bradshaw at Tynemouth

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Fall conditions produced large numbers on the coast, the largest gathering being Holy Island on 12th & 14th where counts of around 111 and 122 were recorded (MJC/ADM). Elsewhere the peak counts were between 22nd & 24th with maxima of 60 at Tynemouth, 50+ at St Mary's Island, 41 at Hauxley, 30+ at Bamburgh, 25 at Whitley Bay Cemetery and 12 at Newbiggin. Counts of five to 11 came from four other coastal locations but the peak inland count was three at Valley Park (Cramlington), Eachwick, Leazes Park (Newcastle) and Melkridge Village with one to two at ten other locations. At Hauxley, 13 birds were ringed between 14th and 25th (HRS). On Holy Island on 22nd two birds landed on fishing boats two miles from the shore, rested in the wheelhouse till nearer land and then were released to make it to cover (IK).

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*

One was found at Lucker on 27th (JHa).

Tit sp.

Blue, Great and Coal Tits recorded in the observer's garden at Holy Island on 24th was notable for the island (IK).

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Good numbers at Hauxley all month with a peak of 20 on 21st and 16 birds ringed between 6th & 14th (HRS). Four was the highest count for the month in a Walbottle garden on 14th (KR/LR) with two at Eachwick on 6th and Jesmond Dene on 14th.

Great Tit *Parus major*

On 14th seven were in the observer's garden at Walbottle (KR/LR), four at the Milkhope Centre (Blagdon) on 6th and three at Eachwick on the same date (CDB) with two at Jesmond Dene on 22nd and at Holy Island on 23rd.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Hauxley recorded good numbers rising from one on 6th to peak at 17 on 20th & 25th with 25 birds ringed over that period. Ten fed on sunflower feeders at Warren Mill Caravan Park near Bamburgh on 6th (CGK), seven were at Milkhope Centre (Blagdon) on the same date (CDB). Six was the peak monthly count in a Old Hartley garden and at Berwick Parish Churchyard on 14th and Bamburgh on 24th. One to four were at Holy Island, Jesmond Dene, Newbiggin GC, Walbottle and Whitley Bay Cemetery.

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

Four was the peak count at Prestwick Carr on 7th (BMo). Two were present at Brierdene (Whitley Bay) all month (AC) with singles at Big Waters on a number of dates. Singles were also at Linden Hall (Longhorsley), Morpeth and Valley Park (Cramlington). The last place was the observer's first sighting there since the 1990s (DM).

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

All reports came from the area west of Morpeth with two at Linden Hall (Longhorsley) on 7th, 13th and 27th and singles there on four other dates (NFO). Two were at Weldon Bridge on 23rd and Hartburn on 30th (MJC) with singles at Mitford Castle and Highford Bridge (Mitford Road) both on 8th (ADMc).

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

More than 220 were observed leaving a roost at the Lough (Holy Island) on 9th (PRM) with 110 recorded low over at 40-50/h on the morning of the 10th (SJH). Peak counts elsewhere were 60 at Budle Point on 7th (CGK), 40+ at St Mary's Island on 14th (MSH), 30 at Craster on 21st (MJC) and one to 24 at Bamburgh, Cheswick, Ellington, Goswick, Hauxley, Newbiggin and Woodhorn. Inland 15 was the largest count at Ingoe on 7th (ASJ), ten in the Dam Dykes/Arcot Pond area of Cramlington on 29th (DM), six at West Hartford (PJA) with one to four at Big Waters, Brunswick Green, Cramlington, Darras Hall (W) and Town Moor (Newcastle).

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

The last two reports of the year were 32 moving S in ½ hour at Hauxley NR on 3rd (ASJ/JPD) with a single W over Brunswick Industrial Estate on 6th (STH/PJA).

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

The peak count was 13 S at Haughton Strother on 3rd (MR) with ten at Cresswell Pond on the same date (ASJ), seven at Alnwick on 4th (JMA) and six at Bamburgh on 2nd, Darras Hall W on 5th, Linden Hall (Longhorsley) on 14th, Hauxley on 25th and Newton on 28th. One to five were at ten coastal locations and 12 inland with the last record being two S at Snab Point on 30th (LJM).

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

Eight were at Prestwick Carr on 6th (GB) and six at Ellington on 12th with three still there on 17th, this being the latest record (TB). Three were at Town Moor (Newcastle) on 1st, two at Cresswell Pond on 3rd with pairs still feeding young at Alnwick Leisure Centre on 9th (JMA) and Meadowdale Crescent (Bedlington) on 12th (ASH) and singles at Haughton Strother and Bamburgh both on 3rd.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

At Hauxley, 12-14 were noted on various dates from 6th-23rd and 28 were present on 27th (HRS). On Holy Island, where this species is still a rare find, a roving flock was present from mid-month; numbers peaked at 26 on 13th (PRM) with 15-20 noted regularly in the Straight Lonnen and village gardens thereafter (IK). A notable 25+ were at Morpeth (Carlisle Park) on 11th (JFa) and 20+ at Prestwick Carr on 10th (PCF) and Bamburgh from 20th-24th (BRS). Elsewhere flocks of 11-19 were reported from Arcot Pond, Edlingham, Ellington, Hartburn, Holywell Dene, Humshaugh and Spital (Newbiggin) and one to ten from a further 18 localities.

Pallas's Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus*

A single bird was found at St Mary's on 24th (ASJ).

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

On Holy Island there were at least three, perhaps as many as six during the month. At least one was present on 14th (Lindisfarne Hotel and Vicar's garden-SR/MJC/ADM); one was at the south end of the Straight Lonnen from 15th-20th and perhaps the same bird at the north end from 22nd-25th and two to three were in the Churchyard-Vicarage area from 22nd-24th (IK). Elsewhere singles were at St Mary's Island on 1st and 3rd (AC/ASJ) and 12th-13th (AC/MSH), Newbiggin (Ash lagoon bank) on 12th (IFo), Tynemouth (Prior's Park) on 13th (DRW), Newbiggin (The Mound) on 17th (PRM), Tynemouth (Collingwood Monument) and Hauxley RS on 20th and more unusually, well inland at Hexham (Wentworth Car Park) on 22nd (PRM) and another on Wallsend High Street on 28th (per JPD).

*** Hume's Warbler** *Phylloscopus humei*

A single was at Cambois on 3rd (ASJ).

*** Dusky Warbler** *Phylloscopus fuscatus*

Singles were found at St Mary's Island on 23rd (MSH/AC) and Holy Island (Straight Lonnen) from 25th-26th (IK).

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

The highest count was 12 at Bamburgh on 2nd (MJC). Holy Island held birds from 7th, with peaks of six on 12th, five on 23rd and four on 28th (PRM/ADM). On the latter date, three together in the village comprised green, brown and grey individuals, all were judged to be variations of *collybita*. One to six were at Hauxley on eight dates from 5th-25th, with a peak on 13th (HRS). Five were at Backworth on 1st (CGK) and one to two at a further three coastal and 13 inland localities.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Three were in an Eachwick garden on 5th (CDB), two at Druridge Pools and Prestwick Carr on 7th and singles at Holy Island (Snook) and Newbiggin on 12th and Holy Island Village on 15th.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

On Holy Island, one to three were noted between 9th-13th, with a peak on 12th (ADM); three were present on 23rd (TRD/JD/ADM) and singles on 25th-26th. Two+ were noted occasionally throughout the month at Scotland Gate (SLB/MSK); two were at Hauxley RS on 6th, two males at Cambois on 7th and two at Tynemouth on 20th. Singles were also found at Bamburgh, Berwick, Dinnington, Druridge Pools, Ellington, Howick and Ponteland Park.

A male Blackcap
Dinnington
by Peter Fletcher
8th October

*** Barred Warbler** *Sylvia nisoria*

A first winter was at Tynemouth on 7th (DRW). On Holy Island (Straight Lonnen) a bird was present on 13th and 15th (PRM/ASJ) and another from 23rd-27th (SR/AH/ADM *et al.*); on 25th a second bird was found in dunes half a mile away (IK).

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Singles were at St Mary's Island on 2nd, 4th and 12th, Hauxley RS on 14th and Tynemouth on 15th. Two were noted at Holy Island on 15th (JPD) and singles at St Mary's on 22nd and Holy Island on 23rd.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

One was at Holy Island (Snook) on 12th (PRM).

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

One was at Gosforth Park NR on 7th (BMo).

Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum*

One at St Mary's Island from 12th-13th, if accepted, will be the ninth county record (AC).

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

One was at Cresswell Pond on 20th (IRD).

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulous*

Birds arriving late in the month were the vanguard to a considerable influx during November. The first arrivals were a single at Ellington (TB) and two at Middleton on 27th (CMur/VWa), these latter birds remaining to 28th, when 14 were at Berwick (MSK) and another at Tynemouth. On 29th, up to nine were at Ashington (ASJ), four at Morpeth and one at Newcastle (Ouseburn). Two were at Morpeth and one at Alnmouth on 31st.

A Waxwing at Ashington
by Jonathan Farooqi
31st October

**Nuthatch** *Sitta europaea*

A total of four were found in Jesmond Dene on 28th (MJCo). Two were reported from Blagdon, Haughton Strother (Humshaugh), Walbottle and Whitchester (Haltwhistle) and singles from Alnwick, Eachwick, Holywell Dene, Rothbury, Wallsend and West Hartford.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

The only reports were two at Edlingham and singles at Corbridge, Ridley Stokoe, Wark (North Tyne), Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Woodhorn Church. At Hauxley RS a bird was ringed on 11th and an un-ringed bird was present on 27th.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Light coastal movements produced five at Holy Island on 7th, seven on 14th, 12-13 from 21st-23rd and eight to nine from 26th-28th (ADM). Six to ten were noted at Hauxley on five dates from 6th-23rd. Inland, an encouraging 11 were found at Prestwick Carr on 20th (PCF), whilst elsewhere numbers remained low, with one to three at Druridge Pools, Eachwick, Jesmond Dene and a Walbottle garden. Regular walks in Holywell Dene highlighted a decline, with no more than one seen in October, when prior to 2010 expected daily counts would have been in double figures (RJP).

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

The important roost at Holy Island Lough held an impressive 20,000 at the end of the month (IK). Elsewhere in the north of the county 2,200 were at Cheswick on 18th (MHu) and 2,000 at Goswick on 10th (TRD/JD). Counts of 1,000 came from Cresswell Pond on 18th and over Prestwick Carr on 30th and 500 flew in off the sea at Tynemouth on 28th (DRW). An evening roost of ca.250 was at Great Whittington on 14th and 100 roosted at Hauxley NR on 28th. The only other sizeable gathering was 100 at Coanwood on 1st. Counts of 11-50 were received from Newcastle (Bigg Market), Newbiggin, St Mary's Island, Walbottle and Wingates.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Two pairs were in Holywell Dene (RJP) and one to three in Jesmond Dene during the month. Three were at Usway Burn (Upper Coquetdale) on 15th and two at Hart Burn on 30th, Hartburn-Meldon on 24th and Weldon Bridge on 23rd. Singles were also reported from Ponteland Park and Thrum Mill (Rothbury).

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

Five to six were found on Holy Island (this count NOT including Chare Ends) on 12th (ADM), one remaining the following day. Two were at Cambois on 15th (STH/PJA) and Tynemouth on 24th (DRW/MK) and singles at Tynemouth on 20th, Hauxley and Tynemouth on 22nd, St Mary's daily (or the same) from 22nd-25th, Cullercoats on 23rd, Bamburgh on 24th and Craster and well inland at Plenmeller Common on 25th.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

There were two sizeable influxes at Holy Island during the month. The first, on 12th, involved 2,900 (including 2,400 in off the sea at The Snook), most of which headed straight inland (ADM); on the same day 2,000+ were reported over the village (PRM). The second arrival occurred on 22nd, when 2,000 were on the island and 50+ at nearby Ross Back Sands (MR) and 100 at Prior's Park (Tynemouth-CB); ca.360 were still on Holy Island on 23rd. During the same periods, Hauxley had peak counts of 106 on 13th and 95 on 22nd. In addition, 60 were at Newbiggin on 12th and 20-40 at Bamburgh, Brierdene (Whitley Bay), Craster, Tynemouth, St Mary's Island and Whitley Bay Cemetery from 22nd-25th. Four to 16 were reported from a further nine localities.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

The large mid-month arrival of thrushes at Holy Island on 12th included ca.950 (900 of which arrived in-off the sea at The Snook (ADM). The second wave of incoming migrants deposited 660 on the island on 23rd (ADM), with a further 2,000 passing over SW (IK). This latter arrival was more pronounced and widespread, beginning on 22nd when ca.250 were at St Mary's, 200+ arriving at Ross Back Sands, 100+ at Swallow Pond and 80+ at Eshott. On 23rd, 300+ were at St Mary's, 230 at Wark (North Tyne), 200 at Old Hartley, 100 at Melkridge and 40-60 at Corbridge, Cullercoats, Hauxley and Newbiggin. Elsewhere during the month 150+ were at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 28th, flocks of 50 at Prestwick Carr on 17th, Sleafy Hall on 25th and Tynemouth on 24th and one to 38 at a further ten localities.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

About 300 arrived off the sea with other Continental thrushes at The Snook (Holy Island) on 12th (ADM); a further 160+ on the island on the same day where probably additional birds (PRM); only 14 remained by 14th. At Hauxley RS the peak count was 56 on 13th (HRS). An earlier count of 20+ came from Holy Island (St Coomb's Farm) on 2nd (CGK/PS), whilst elsewhere 30+ were at St Mary's Island (MSH/AC) and nine at Newbiggin on 23rd and 50 at Red House Farm on 25th (CS). One to four were reported from four further localities.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

A huge October influx of Continental thrushes at Holy Island comprised mainly Blackbirds (see above) and Redwings. They arrived in two waves; 359+ Redwings on 11th (PRM) heralded the main arrival on 12th, when 2,400 came in off the sea at The Snook before heading straight inland (ADM), whilst elsewhere 3,620+ were counted across the island on the same day (PRM); numbers had declined to 170+ by 13th and to 98 on 14th (PRM/MJC/ADM). The second influx produced a total of 4,000-4,500 on 22nd, of which more than 3,000 passed SW over the Heugh to the mainland (IK); ca.1,225 were still present the following day (ADM). At St Mary's 800-1,000+ new arrivals were noted daily from 22nd-24th (ASJ). Elsewhere, on 22nd, 500+ arrived at Ross Back Sands (MR), 350+ were at Swallow Pond (SPP) and 120 per hour were heard over Wark (North Tyne) from 23.30hrs onwards. On 23rd, 200 were at Hauxley and Weldon Bridge and 150 at Old Hartley. 110-150 were reported from Hartburn-Meldon (12th), Humshaugh (21st) and Newbiggin (12th), 95 at Wingates (12th) and up to 80 at numerous other widespread localities.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

There were few reports this month. Seven at Newcastle (Town Moor) on 30th was the highest count, increasing from three on 5th (GB). Four were noted at Ashington on 5th and Hauxley RS on 20th and one to two at Cheswick Dunes, Eachwick, Jesmond Dene and Ponteland Park.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Two on Holy Island on 2nd was the only record (CGK/PS).

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

A substantial influx occurred at Holy Island on 22nd when ca.300 arrived; an interesting anecdotal comment expressed the fate of one bird (perhaps many), which succumbed to a marauding Herring Gull, while trying to land on a fishing boat two miles out (IK). Numbers on the island had declined to 40 by 23rd (ADM). Hauxley held 30-37 from 22nd-23rd (HRS), St Mary's Island had 20-50 daily from 22nd-25th, with a peak on 24th (ASJ) and including 20 in off the sea on

22nd (AC) and 16 were at Newbiggin (Sandy Bay) on 23rd. On 24th, 25+ were at Bamburgh and 20 at Tynemouth. An earlier influx deposited ca.70 at Hauxley on 13th (HRS) and 18-27+ at Holy Island from 12th-14th. Inland, 22 were counted at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 10th, 21 at Prestwick Carr on 20th and two to four at Blagdon, Jesmond Dene and a Walbottle garden.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Singles were reported from Holy Island (Snook) on 12th (PRM), Tynemouth on 28th-29th (CB/DRW/SPP) and Beadnell on 29th (IRD).

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

St Mary's held singles on 12th and 23rd and 15 on 24th (ASJ). The peak counts on Holy Island were six on 12th (PRM) and five on 14th (SR) and one was at Hauxley NR on 14th. Inland, a juvenile visited an Eachwick garden on 2nd.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Singles were at Prestwick Carr on 6th (GB/PCF) and at Hauxley on 13th-14th (HRS/TD).

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

Two family parties totalling eight birds (pair + three juvs. / pair+ one juv) were found at Thrunton Woods on 7th (NFO). Other inland sightings were a pair at Prestwick Carr on 6th (GB) and one on 10th, two at West Hartford on 14th and Usway Burn (Upper Coquetdale) on 15th and singles at Alnwick Moor on 10th and Gowk Hill (Craggside) on 18th. On the coast up to three were at Hauxley during the month and three at Low Newton (pair + juv.) on 18th and Warkworth Gut on 21st. Pairs were identified at Bamburgh Castle dunes, the Long Nanny, Lynemouth Bay and Seaton Sluice and two at Beadnell, Budle Bay and Newbiggin GC. Singles were reported from Berwick (Spittal Cliffs), Cocklawburn, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Holy Island, Newbiggin, Ross Point and St Mary's Island.

Wheatear *Oenanthe Oenanthe*

Single birds were reported from Prestwick Carr on 13th, Boulmer on 14th, Whitley Bay on 21st and Druridge Pools on 23rd.

*** Pied Wheatear** *Oenanthe pleschanka*

A first-winter male found at Holy Island (Snipe Point) on 14th will, if accepted, be the fifth county record (SR).

*** Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula parva*

A further three individuals were found this month. The first was at St Mary's Wetland on 1st (DLo); others were at Newbiggin (Ash Lagoon Bank) on 12th (IFo) and St Mary's Island on 13th (AC/TF/JFa).

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

One was at St Mary's Island on 22nd (MSH/AC).

Dunnoek *Prunella modularis*

One to 20 were at Hauxley throughout the month and one bird was ringed there on the 14th (HRS). 13 were at Holy Island on 26th (MJC) and two of five birds together at Woodhorn Church on 13th were seen flying off high to the W (GB). Three were in an observer's garden in Walbottle on 28th (KR/LR) and two were in an Old Hartley garden throughout the month (RJP).

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Surprisingly low counts for the month with 89 at Ovington and 64 at Peppy Farm both on 11th (SAS). 36 were at Whittle Dene on 14th (PCF) and in an observer's garden at Netherton Park (Stannington) on 20th (RWM/MIM). The only other record was 25 at Easington Grange on 4th (JMA).

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

One to 90 were in the Hauxley-Bondicarr area throughout the month where six birds were ringed on 6th (HRS). 25 were at Maiden's Hall Lake (West Chevington) on 8th (TRD/JD), 24 at Wallridge on 6th (ASJ) and 23 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 3rd (MR). Migration was visible along the coast with nine W at Tynemouth on 13th (DRW), 7 N at Bamburgh on 15th (BRS), 17 flying S at St. Mary's on 15th (AC) and eight S at Spital (Newbiggin) on 20th (GB). One to 12 were also seen across the month at Craster, Cresswell Pond, Dinnington, Ellington, Holywell Dene, Holywell Grange, Linden Hall (Longhorsley), Marden Estate garden (Tynemouth), Netherton Park (Stannington), QE11 CP Lake, Red House Farm Pond, Rothbury (the first record for eight years in an observer's garden), Slaley Hall, a Walbottle garden, Whittle Dene, Woodhorn, Woodhorn Church, Woodhorn Flashes and Yearle.



Tree Sparrows prospecting at Woosington by John Littleton

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

A late single was at St. Mary's Island on 2nd (JPD).

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

The highest count was eight at Whittle Dene on 30th (SR). One to four were also seen at Backworth, Bamburgh, Budle Bay, Cambois, Cullercoats Bay, Eachwick, Exhibition Park (Newcastle), Holy Island, Horton Burn (Cramlington), Jesmond Dene (Newcastle), Killingworth Lake, Meldon (Hartburn), Morpeth, Newcastle City Centre, North Blyth, Northburn (Cramlington), Northumberland Park (North Shields), one in off the sea at Ross Back Sands, Southfield Green (Cramlington), Thrunton Woods, Tynemouth, Tynemouth Haven, Wark, Weldon Bridge and Whitley Bay Cemetery.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

25 were at Prestwick Carr on 13th (GB) and 20 on the tide-line at Lynemouth Bay on the 21st (JL). One to 12 were noted at Eachwick, Exhibition Park (Newcastle), Hauxley (Bondicarr), Newcastle Town Moor, St. Mary's Island and Whitelea (Cramlington).



A dapper Pied Wagtail at Dinnington
by Peter Fletcher
26th October

White Wagtail *M. a. alba*

One was on the tide-line at Lynemouth Bay on the 21st (JL).

Pipit sp.

Either a Tree or Olive-backed Pipit was heard only, coming in off the sea with thrushes at Ross Back Sands on 22nd (MR).

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

A late migrant was at The Snook (Holy Island) on 12th (PRM).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

95 were on Holy Island (45 at The Snook and 50 at The Straight Lonnen) on 14th (MJC/ADM). 44 flew S and two N between 08:35-11:35 at Spital (Newbiggin) on 20th (GB), 40 at St. Mary's Island on 16th (MSH) and 30 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 10th (MR). One to 20 were at Bamburgh, Ellington, Hauxley (Bondicarr), Newcastle (Town Moor) and Northburn (Cramlington).

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

35 was a good number at Holy Island on 21st (ADM). 20 were at Hauxley Beach on 7th (HRS) whilst one to ten were seen at Beadnell, Cullercoats Bay, Goswick, Hauxley, Howick, Newbiggin and Snab Point (Cresswell).



A Rock Pipit
Hauxley NR

by Peter Fletcher on 13th October

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

65 were at Wallridge on 6th (ASJ). 46 was the total at Spital (Newbiggin) on the 20th flying S between 08:35-11:45 (GB). One to 14 were at Eachwick, Hauxley (where three birds were ringed), Holywell Dene and Jesmond Dene (Newcastle).

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

200 were present across Holy Island on 22nd (IK). 40 were feeding in a roadside field at Seldom Seen Farm (Grindon) on 15th (SJH). One to ten were also at Bamburgh, Cambois, Corbridge, Gosforth Park NR, Hauxley, Horton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Linden Hall (Longhorsley), Morpeth, Nafferton Farm, Newbiggin GC, Prior's Park (Tynemouth), Ridley Park (Blyth), Ross Back Sands, Rothbury, Slaley Hall, St. Mary's, Southfield Green (Cramlington) and Tynemouth.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

100 were observed at East Chevington on 29th (JPD), St. Mary's held 42 on 21st (ASJ) whilst one to 20 were at Eachwick, Exhibition Park (Newcastle), Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Holywell Dene, Milkhope Centre (Blagdon), Prestwick Carr, a Walbottle garden and West Hartford.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

300 were at Hauxley on 3rd (ASJ), 200 at East Chevington on 29th (ASJ/JPD), 150 at St. Mary's Island on 2nd (JPD), 100 at Druridge Pools on 5th (PCF), 80 at Swallow Pond on 2nd (JPD) and 70 in the dunes at Cresswell on 22nd (MSH). One to 42 were also noted at Berwick Cricket Club, Blyth Estuary, Cambois railway line, Cocklawburn, Cresswell Pond, Exhibition Park (Newcastle), Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Holy Island, Holywell Dene, Horton Burn (Cramlington), Leazes Park (Newcastle), Sandy Bay (Newbiggin), Spital (Newbiggin), a Walbottle garden and Wark.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

A flock of 150 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 19th was the month's highest total (MR). Also one to 25 were at Cambois, Derwent Reservoir, Gosforth Park NR, Hauxley NR (where one was ringed), Holy Island, Linden Hall (Longhorsley), Spital (Newbiggin), St. Mary's Island, Swallow Pond, Thrunton Woods, Valley Park (Cramlington) and Wark.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

In the September bulletin, the record of 400 linnets at Monks' House and 400 at Shoreston Hall on the 13th refers to the same flock.

200 were at Hauxley on 6th (HRS), 150 at Fenham-le-Moor on 20th (MSH), 125 at Black Heddon on 6th (ASJ) and 100 at Milkwell (Corbridge) on 6th (RB/MB). One to 30 were also at the Blyth Estuary, Craster, Cullercoats Bay, Holy Island, Holystone-Killingworth Waggonway, Holywell Pond, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Little Beach (Berwick), Newbiggin, and Spital (Newbiggin).

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

The first winter arrivals involved 14 at Holy Island (ASJ/JPD) on 15th, 14 near the hide at Fenham-le-Moor on 27th (STH) and 20 at Long Nanny on 29th (IRD).

Redpoll sp.

12 flew S between 08:35 and 11:45 at Spital (Newbiggin) on 20th (GB). One to four were at Big Waters, Budle Point, Exhibition Park (Newcastle), Holy Island, Marden Quarry (Whitley Bay) and St. Mary's.

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*

120 were at East Chevington on 3rd (JPD) whilst 86 was the peak count for the month at Prestwick Carr on 10th (PCF). One to 40 were also at Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield), Arcot Pond, Backworth, Bamburgh, Brunswick Green (Wideopen), Cambois, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Hauxley, Holy Island, Newton Pool, Southfield Green (Cramlington), St. Mary's Island, Valley Park (Cramlington), Wallridge and Woodhorn Flashes.



A Common Redpoll at Prestwick Carr
by Peter Fletcher
26th October

Mealy Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*

Singles were at Holy Island Village on 14th (MJC/ADM) and found amongst a Lesser Redpoll flock at Prestwick Carr on 27th (PCF).

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

16 flew N over Wark Village on 28th (PRM). One to six were also seen at Addycombe (Rothbury), Cambois, East Chevington, Hauxley RS, Holy Island, Linden Hall (Longhorsley), Prestwick Carr, Slaley Hall, St. Mary's, Swallow Pond, Thrunton Woods, and Whittle Dene.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Seven at Prestwick Carr on 20th (PCF) and Ovington on 26th (SAS) were the largest gatherings seen. One to four were also noted at Angerton, Arcot Lane, Arcot Pond, Backworth, Beacon Lane (Cramlington), Big Waters, Cambois, Gosforth Park NR, Hauxley RS, Redhouse Moor (Lowick), St. Mary's Island, Thrum Mill (Rothbury), Valley Park (Cramlington) and a Walbottle garden.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

A migrant was perched in a hawthorn with a berry in its beak before flying back to the village at the Straight Lonnen (Holy Island) on 12th (RWM). Also a single flew over Corbridge on 13th (MR).

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Nine (four M, four F and a 1st winter) were just north of the burn at East Chevington on 29th (TRD/JD). One to four were at Budle Point, Church Point (Newbiggin, three in off the sea), Cullernose Point, Holy Island, Newbiggin Moor, Ross Back Sands and Seaton Sluice Watch Tower. The most unusual record of the month was a single that flew over Newcastle Town Moor on 30th before landing and feeding in long grass and then flew off again further into the moor (GB). Strangely enough this isn't the first Newcastle record.

Lapland Bunting *Calciarius lapponicus*

Five to seven were around the Nessend Quarry area of Holy Island between 14th and 20th (IK/ SR). Also one to three were between the Straight Lonnen and the North Dunes (Holy Island) throughout the month (MJC/ADM). Singles were also at St. Mary's on 24th (ASJ/MPF/JPD) and Newbiggin GC on 30th (STH).

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

40 at Craster on 21st was the maximum count for the month (MJC). 18 were at Beacon Lane (Cramlington) on 29th (DM). One to five were at Big Waters, Holy Island, Holywell Dene and Woodhorn Flashes.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza Schoeniclus*

30 were at St. Mary's on 22nd (ASJ), 20 were in a hedgerow at West Hartford on 9th (PJA) and 18 were at The Snook (Holy Island) on 14th (MJC/ADM). One to ten were seen at Arcot Pond, Beacon Lane (Cramlington), Big Waters, Cambois, Cocklawburn Pond, Cresswell Pond, Hauxley, Holywell Dene, Newbiggin GC, Sandy Bay (Newbiggin), Spital (Newbiggin) and Woodhorn Flashes. A highly unusual record probably involved a passage migrant at Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 5th where it was the first sighting of this species (GB).

ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN**Escapes****Muscovy Duck** *Cairina moschata*

One was noted at Richardson Dees Park Lake on 19th (JPD).

Hybrids**Greylag Goose x White-fronted Goose** *Anser anser x Anser albifrons*

An interesting hybrid combination with one identified in the Greylag flock at High Hauxley on 20th (PCF).

Birds of Unknown Origin**Rose-ringed Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri*

Several records, unusually in the south east. A pair were seen at Richardson Dees Park Lake in Wallsend on 18th, 19th & 27th (JPD). These were found to be feeding on Hornbeam. Another was seen flying over a Northburn garden in Cramlington on 25th (PJA).

WEATHER

October was a contrast of low pressure systems bringing fronts and periods of heavy rain interspersed with high pressure systems associated with mild, cloudy and rather damp conditions. Nights were often chilly with localised patches of frost and fog. Towards the end of the month a blast of Arctic air reduced temperatures and provided the first significant snow accumulations of the year, mainly across high ground in parts of north-east England.

1st to 6th:Low pressure brought fronts and periods of rain or showers, interspersed with transient quieter spells. Rain was heavy at times, notably on 4th to 6th. It was chilly at times overnight with local frost and fog at times.

7th to 10th:High pressure became established.

11th to 18th:Low pressure moved in from the Atlantic and an active front produced some torrential rain. On 16th to 18th periods of rain alternated with showers and some strong winds.

19th to 24th:A quieter spell of weather under a ridge of high pressure. Although it was cold by night at first, milder conditions spread from the south-east through the period.

25th to 31st:Much colder Arctic air gave a sharp contrast to recent weather as it sank southwards. Heavy showers affected eastern coasts on 26th to 27th, falling as sleet, snow and hail, with accumulations of a few centimetres across north-east England. There was a period of fresh to strong northerly winds from 26th-29th as low pressure sat to the north of the UK which produced many reports of birds moving N along the coast as they fought their way out of the North Sea.

By 30th, with the onset of light westerly winds, the movement had substantially finished. Later on 31st an active cold front moved east across the UK, bringing persistent rain with some heavy squally bursts.

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Bamburgh Ringing Station, Berwick Wildlife Group, Hauxley Ringing Station, Natural History Society of Northumbria, North Northumberland Bird Club, Northern Experience Wildlife Tours, Seaton Sluice Watch Tower.

Apologies for any accidental omissions

BULLETIN COMPILATION AND PRODUCTION

This bulletin was compiled by Graeme Bowman (Mute Swan to Ruddy Duck), Lindsay McDougall (Red Grouse to Black-necked Grebe), Trevor Blake (Honey Buzzard to Crane), Steve Holliday (Oystercatcher to Dunlin) Ian Forsyth (Snipe to Skua), Eddie Crabtree (Ivory Gull to Puffin), Tim Dean (Escapes, Hybrids and Unknown Origin, List of Contributors, Highlights), Peter Fletcher (Feral Pigeon to Red-rumped Swallow), Mike Richardson (Cetti's Warbler to Pied Flycatcher), Phil Allott (Dunnock to Corn Bunting), Dan Turner (WeBS Coastal Counts) and Steve Holliday (WeBS Inland Counts). Thanks to David Sanders of NNBC for providing data. Proof reading was by Mike Smith.

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Postal distribution Paul Stewart.

RECORD SUBMISSION

Please e-mail Dick Myatt at 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 NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.com

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

For membership enquiries please contact ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

NTBC WEB SITE

The Club website is an excellent resource for all interested in birds in the north east. There are numerous interesting sections, including a photograph gallery, site information and trip reports together with extensive reference information for birding in our area. The site is at www.ntbc.org.uk

If you have any ideas or things you would like to see or hear about on the site please let Chris know on 0751 582 5024 or e-mail christopher.knox@o2.co.uk

NTBC SIGHTINGS PAGE

The club sightings web page gives listings of birds seen locally. Adding a sighting is simple. A short e-mail is all that is needed. If anyone would like to be added as a contributor please contact Alan Tilmouth at ntbcorg@gmail.com. The sightings page can be found at <http://ntbc sightings.posterous.com>

COASTAL WeBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

October	2012
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Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

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Bulletin 2012 No 11

MONTHLY SUMMARY – NOVEMBER

2nd January 2013



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A Sanderling at Hadston Carr
by Chris Barlow on 17th November



CLASSIFIED LIST HIGHLIGHTS

Bean Goose

Greenland White-fronted Goose

Todd's Canada Goose

Garganey

Bittern

Purple Sandpiper

Ruff

Jack Snipe

Long-billed Dowitcher

Greenshank

Pomarine Skua

Glaucous Gull

Hooded Crow

Bearded Tit

Waxwing

Lapland Bunting

A flock of 12 flew N offshore at St Mary's on 28th.

Only singles noted at Druridge and Grindon Lough.

A fascinating family group of six at QE II CP and Bothal Pond.

A very late female at Ellington on 11th.

Two at both Gosforth Park and East Chevington.

Impressive peak of 154 at Stag Rocks, Bamburgh on 14th.

Single at Prestwick Carr on 2nd and 3rd.

Popular bird at Cresswell Pond by hide and one at Backworth.

Another record this year with one showing well at Long Nanny from 4th to 18th.

One on Holy Island on 11th.

One on beach at Long Nanny on 9th.

A juvenile frequented St Mary's and Seaton Sluice from 19th to 28th.

One in Budle Bay on 17th.

Four at Cresswell Pond and one at East Chevington.

Influx with a peak of at least 350 at Silverlink CP on 15th.

One by Holy Island Lough on 10th.

COMMITTEE NEWS

Appeal for wardens for 2013 for the Hen Harrier project please contact Elisabeth.charman@rspb.org.uk

Simon Elliott's photograph of a Sedge Warbler at East Chevington from June 2012 won the annual bulletin photograph competition. For details of photograph formats see the end of the bulletin.

ForRK Red Kite survey. Ian Kerr asks for help to survey this splendid species on March 23rd 2013. For details see his article.

If you haven't paid your NTBC 2012-2013 subscription, time is running out.

INDOOR MEETINGS

The next indoor meeting will be at Northern Rugby Club, McCracken Park, Great North Road, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 2DT on **Wednesday 9th January 2013 (please note the date)** at Northern Rugby Club.

India Wildlife Spectacular - A return visit from Mike Watson to talk to NTBC. Mike is a former NTBC member who left a thriving Tyneside birding scene in 1985. After years in the wilderness of the banking industry in the south he wisely decided to pursue his passion for birds full time, quitting his job, selling his house and going off travelling, eventually ending up working for Birdquest. Mike has been travelling to India for 20 years now and it remains one of his favourite destination.

CLASSIFIED LIST

The following account consists of unchecked reports. The species/subspecies marked * require descriptions.

A complete list of all sightings that need notes is included in the NTBC website www.ntbc.org.uk under the County Records Committee section and in Birds in Northumbria 2009 page 224.

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

TARGET SPECIES

The target species for 2012 are all the owls. Please report all records in as much detail as possible. The Club is sensitive to the vulnerability of these species to disturbance and persecution, and will be particularly cautious about what is actually published, above all about nesting and roosting sites. Please address any questions or concerns to Tim Dean or Dick Myatt.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Killingworth Lake attracted a peak of 170 on 28th (LJM), 134 were at Capheaton Lake on 3rd (STE), 67 at QEII CP on 18th (CDH), 28 at New Water Haugh (MHu), and 12-19 at Bolam Lake, Budle Bay, Cresswell Pond, the Tweed Estuary and West Ord. Two to seven were at eight further sites.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

A group of 88 at Loanend (Horncliffe) on 4th contained 24 juveniles (Mhu). 37 were at New Moor (Ashington) on 5th (TB), 33 at nearby Linton on 7th (TB), 32 (six juveniles) flew in off the sea at Cresswell Pond on 28th (PCF), 26 were at Rayburn Lake (IRD), and ten to 17 at Druridge, the Long Nanny Estuary, Newton Pool and Ottercops Moss. One to six were also at/over Arcot Pond, Bolam Lake, Budle Bay, Druridge Bay CP, East Chevington, East Ord, Ellington, Haughton Strother GP, Hauxley Reserve, High Newton, Longhirst Flash, QEII CP and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.



Whoopers fly by the Long Nanny
9th November by John Clark

Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*

A flock of 12 unraced birds flew N at St Mary's on 28th (AC).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

At East Ord, a total of 894 flew N and 82 S between 5th-24th (MHu), 500 S/SW and 85 N at Newbiggin on 3rd (GB), 200 S at Cresswell Pond on 1st (MSH), 140 S at Alwinton on 24th (NFO), 120 S/W at East Chevington on 1st (TRD/JD), 110 S at Blyth Harbour on 3rd (STH), 106 N at West Ord on 11th, 60-78 S at Howdon Wetland NR and Seaton Sluice, and 28- 47 N/NW at Cramlington and Seaton Sluice.

Peak counts were 2,000+ at Druridge on 29th (MSH), 1,500 at nearby Bell's Pond on 15th (ASJ) when 1,000 were at Cresswell Pond (JPD), 620 at Cheswick on 14th (MHu), 300 at Doddington on 10th (JD), 174 at Backworth and 55 over Rothbury.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

Records of Eurasian *albifrons* race birds involved four (two juveniles) at Bell's Farm, Cresswell on 18th (CB/ME) and singles at Cresswell Pond on 3rd (PCF) and Woodhorn Flashes on 7th (MSH).

Single Greenland *flavirostris* race birds were at Druridge on 14th (MSH), and Grindon Lough on 11th (JWP) and 29th (SJH).

Correction: In the October 2012 bulletin Greenland race was given as '*albifrons*' but should have read '*flavirostris*'

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

A group of 67 flew E at Plenmeller Common on 2nd (SJH). Peak counts were 300+ at Hauxley Reserve on 15th (JPD), 238 at Cheswick on 20th (MHu), 94 at Prestwick Carr on 27th (PCF), 50 at Woodhorn Flashes (MSH), 24-34 at Plenmeller Common and the Tweed Estuary, and 11-13 at Grindon Lough, Linton Ponds and West Ord. One to five were also at/over Arcot, Cocklawburn and Cresswell Ponds, East Chevington and Wallsend.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

250 at Woodhorn Flashes on 14th (MSH) was the largest single gathering. Other peaks were 244 at Grindon Lough on 29th (SJH), 153 at Killingworth Lake on 24th (BMo), 150 at Bothal Pond on 24th (PJA), 72 at Hauxley Reserve on 16th (HRS), 52 at QEII CP (CDH), 27-29 at Bolam Lake and Newcastle Leazes Park, and ten at Arcot Pond. One to eight were also at Cramlington ('Northumberlandia'), Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. An albino was at Bothal Pond on 24th (PJA).

Reports of *interior* race birds ('Todd's Canada Goose') involved six at QEII CP on 23rd (CS) and 24th (TB), and four at Bothal Pond on 24th (PJA).

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

52 flew NW at Cheswick on 1st (MHu). One to two visited Druridge, Linton and Widdrington Moor on single dates.

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Pale-bellied *hrota* race birds involved four N at Seaton Sluice on 27th, 16 N at Seaton Sluice (SSWT) and St Mary's on 28th (SPP), while 1,400 were at Holy Island on 11th (AJR).

Reports of dark-bellied *bernicla* race birds concerned 220 at Holy Island on 11th (AJR).

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

On 27th, 14 flew N at St Mary's (MSH/AC) and 12 N at Seaton Sluice (SSWT). Totals of 327-335 were at Fenham Flats on 8th (JPD/ASJ) and 285 at Budle Bay on 17th (MSH).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

At Seaton Sluice, 124 flew N and 31 S on three dates between 5th-27th (SSWT). 1,000 were at Fenham Flats on 8th (JPD/ASJ), 800 at Budle Bay on 17th (MSH), 350-400 at Big Waters on 30th (SPP), 300 at Cresswell Pond on 1st and 15th (JPD/MSH), 300 offshore in Druridge Bay on 23rd (MH/AA), 178 at Arcot Pond (LJM), 163 at Grindon Lough (SJH), 100-147 at Bothal Pond, Derwent Reservoir and Newham Bog, and 44-88 at Gosforth Park NR, Hauxley NR, Linton and Swallow Ponds, West Stobswood Pool and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. One to six were at five further sites.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Peak counts were 46 at Caistron on 21st (TRD), 35 at Arcot Pond on 18th and 28th (LJM), 26 at Big Waters on 4th (GB), ten at East Chevington (TRD/JD), four to six at Castle Island, Cresswell and Linton Ponds, and Woodhorn Flashes, and two at Bothal Pond.

Teal *Anas crecca*

Northerly movement involved 94 at Seaton Sluice on 20th and 195 on 28th (SSWT), and 52 at St Mary's on 28th (MSH). Budle Bay held 700 on 17th (MSH), 300 were at Holy Island Lough on 10th (IK), 201 at Arcot Pond on 11th (LJM), 201 at Grindon Lough on 2nd and 29th (SJH), 143-150 at Cresswell Pond and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, 100-122 at the Coquet Estuary, East Chevington and Howdon Wetland Centre, 51-90 at Arcot and Swallow Ponds, and Elswick. Counts of 20-37 came from Bolam Lake, Bothal and Linton Ponds, Gosforth Park NR, and Earsdon (*Beehive* and Fenwick's Close Flashes), and 12-13 at Castle Island, Middle Ord Pond and the Tweed Estuary.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

A total of 50 flew N at Seaton Sluice on 28th-29th (SSWT). Peak counts were 220 at Big Waters on 30th (SPP), 200 at East Chevington on 1st (JMA), 172 at Cocklawburn Pond on 1st (MHu), 141 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 24th (SR), 108 at Killingworth Lake on 14th (LJM), 105-106 at Big Waters and Derwent Reservoir, 73-87 at Haughton Strother GP, Holywell Pond, QEII CP and the Tweed Estuary, and 52-63 at Castle Island, Grindon Lough and Newcastle Leazes Park. Counts of 20-40 also came from Airy Holm Reservoir, Alnwick, Arcot and Bothal Ponds, Bolam Lake, Byker, Farnley Haughs, Marden Quarry, Morpeth and Tynemouth boating lake, with smaller numbers at several further sites.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Two drakes were at West Stobswood Pool on 10th (MSH), and East Chevington on 18th (CB/ME) and 23rd (JPD). One was at the latter site on 5th (TRD/JD).

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

A very late record involved a female at Ellington on 11th (TB).

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

The largest counts were 14 at Swallow Pond on 13th (SPP) and 25th (MSH), 11 at Holy Island Lough on 10th (IK), eight at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN), and four at East Chevington on 18th (DM/STH). One to two were also at Beadnell Flash, Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, Grindon Lough and Killingworth Lake.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Killingworth Lake attracted nine on 10th (GB) and 17 on 28th (LJM), eight were at QEII CP Lake on 18th (CDH), four at Swallow Pond on 4th (JPD), three at East Chevington on 16th (TB), and one to two at Airy Holm and Derwent Reservoirs, Cresswell Pond and Grindon Lough.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Peak concentrations were 115 at Killingworth Lake on 10th (GB) rising to 168 by 28th (LJM), 87 at Ladyburn Lake on 29th (IFo), 56 at QEII CP Lake on 18th (CDH), 38 at East Chevington (DM/STH), 20-30 at Bolam Lake, Bothal and Linton Ponds, Grindon Lough and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and 11-15 at Airy Holm Reservoir, Farnley Haughs and Hauxley Reservoir. Two to eight were also at Arcot and Cocklawburn Ponds, Castle Island, Jesmond Dene, Lynemouth Flash and Newcastle Leazes Park.

Scaup *Aythya marila*

One flew N at Seaton Sluice on 27th (SSWT). Two were at Cresswell Pond on 1st (TRD/JD/MSH) and one on several dates between 4th-18th (CB/ME/IRD *et al.*). A first-winter female was well inland at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 12th (MR).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

The monthly total from Seaton Sluice was 99 N (SSWT). A total of 210 was counted at Fenham Flats (Lindisfarne NNR) on 25th (JL), 31 were at Blyth Harbour on 3rd (STH), 26 at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 25th (JL), ten to 14 at Berwick North Shore and Spittal Bay, and four at the Tweed Estuary. One ventured up the River Tyne to Northumberland Dock (Howdon) on 11th (CB/CGK/MSH).

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

A total of 28 flew N at Seaton Sluice between 25th-29th (SSWT), and 12 N and three S at St Mary's on 26th-27th (MSH/AC). The peak count at Holy Island Harbour was 30 on 11th (IK), 17 were at Stag Rocks on 18th (CGK/PS), eight at Goswick on 18th (CGK/PS), six to seven at Fenham Flats and Ross Back Sands, and one to two at Holy Island and Snab Point. A drake was at Cresswell Pond occasionally through the month and was joined by a duck on several dates between 16th-23rd (TB/MSH/TRD/JD *et al.*), two were at East Chevington on 1st and one on the north pool sporadically until 23rd (TF/JFa/AA/MH *et al.*).

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

A strong movement occurred between 26th-29th when 2,074 flew N and 187 S at Seaton Sluice (SSWT), 748 moved N at St Mary's on 27th-28th (MSH/AC), and ten N at Boulmer. A group of 75 was off Goswick on 18th (CGK/PS), 22 at Cheswick on 8th (MHu), 11-15 at Holy Island and the Stag Rocks area, and one to two at Newbiggin and Tweedmouth. One was on Cresswell Pond on 1st (MSH) and a duck was well inland at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 27th (SR).

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

A total of 12 flew N at Seaton Sluice between 26th-28th (SSWT), three moved N at St Mary's on 27th (MSH/AC) and two N at Old Hartley on 15th (MSH/TRC/AC).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

At Seaton Sluice 40 flew N on 6th and 158 N between 25th-29th and 40 (SSWT), and 24 N at St Mary's on 28th (SPP). Peak gatherings were 48 at East Chevington North Pool on 16th (TB), 34 at Bolam Lake on 13th (CDB), 25 on the River Tweed between A1-Horndcliffe on 24th (TBr), and ten to 18 at Caistron, Castle Island, Grindon Lough, Killingworth Lake, New Water Haugh (R. Tweed), QEII CP Lake and the Tweed Estuary. Five to six were also at Derwent and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, Ladyburn Lake, Tweedmouth and West Ord, three at Budle Bay, Cresswell Pond and Newbiggin, and one to two at Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Gosforth Park NR and Widdrington Moor Lake.

Smew *Mergellus albellus*

An unusual sea-watching record concerned a 'redhead' that flew S with six Goldeneyes at St Mary's on 28th (SPP).

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Nine flew N at Seaton Sluice between 25th-29th (SSWT). Six were at Cresswell Pond on 28th (PCF) and four on 22nd (PCF), six were off East Chevington on 15th (TRD/JD), five at Holy Island on 4th (ADM), four at Budle Bay (TRD/JD) and one to two at Alnmouth Bay, Budle Bay, Castle Island, Druridge Pools, Hauxley (offshore), Holy Island, Stag Rocks, St Mary's and the Tweed Estuary.



Red-breasted Mergansers at East Chevington
by Jonathon Farooqi

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Three flew N at Seaton Sluice on 29th (SSWT). Peak counts were 40 at the Tweed Estuary on 16th (MHu), 20 on the River Tweed between A1-Horncliffe on 24th (TBr), 15 at Branton GP on 23rd (MJC), seven at Newcastle Exhibition Park (GB), five at Airy Holm Reservoir (IFo), and three at Bolam Lake and Warkworth. One to two were also at Cresswell and West Allotment Ponds, Derwent and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, Killingworth Lake, Morpeth, Newcastle Leazes Park, Thrum Mill, Tweedmouth, Tyne Riverside CP, Wark and West Hartford.

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

Ten were on Simonside on 1st (MJC) and at Plenmeller Moor seven were present on 4th with four on 8th (SJH).

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

The only records came from the Holywell area where 42 were seen at Hartley West Farm on 4th and 29 on 18th (RJP) and four were feeding near Holywell Pond on 14th (SPP).

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Counts of 12 were recorded at Woodhorn Flashes on 3rd (GB) and Backworth on 5th (CGK). Seven were noted in the Swallow Pond-Scaffold Hill Farm area on 1st /11th (CDH/JPD), at Newbiggin on 3rd (GB) and Ellington on 24th (TB). Six were at Long Nanny on 8th (JPD) and on Alnwick Moor on 7th (TRD/JD). One to five were noted at Allerdean, Blyth Links, Chevington Moor, Cresswell Pond, Football Hole (Newton), Maiden's Hall Lake (West Chevington) and Prestwick Carr.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Up to six were present throughout the month at Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene) (RJP). Three (two females) were in a Walbottle garden on 4th (KR/LR) and two males were at Woodhorn on 18th (CDH).

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Passage continued at Seaton Sluice with 37 S and 31 N in 35 hours of sea-watching (SSWT). At St Mary's Island six flew N and two S in 1 hour on 28th (MSH). The highest count in the Stag Rocks-Budle Bay area was 13 on 17th (MSH) with up to five present on four further dates. Nine were off Snab Point on 13th (JL), eight were off Chibburn Mouth (Druridge Bay) on 18th (DM/STH/ADM), at least seven off Old Hartley on 15th (MSH/TRC/AC) and six were feeding off St Mary's Island on 18th (SPP). Five were at Cheswick on 8th (MHu) and Goswick on 18th (CGK/PS). One to four were noted off Druridge Pools NR, East Chevington, High Newton, Holy Island and Seaton Sluice.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

One flew N at Seaton Sluice on 27th (SSWT). A juvenile was watched for 20 minutes at St Mary's Island on 10th before drifting into deeper water on the falling tide (SPP) and one, still largely in summer plumage, was at Stag Rocks on 3rd (BRS).

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

At Seaton Sluice four flew N on 27th and singles flew S on 20th/29th (SSWT). One flew N at St Mary's Island on 27th (MSH/AC). Four were off Druridge Pools on 24th (JRed). Possibly two birds were off Stag Rocks on 12th (MH/AA/NFO). Two were off Goswick on 18th (CGK/PS). Singles were off Holy Island on 4th and Seahouses on 14th.

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

At Seaton Sluice 25 flew N in 1 hour on 26th and 11 flew N in 2 hours on 25th (SSWT).

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

At Seaton Sluice singles flew N on 26th/27th (SSWT).

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

At Seaton Sluice 180 flew N in 2 hours on 5th, whilst 60 flew N in 12 hours of sea-watching on 27th/ 28th and 43 flew N in 1 hour on 19th (SSWT). Elsewhere singles flew S at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) on 11th and Ross Back Sands on 25th. On 14th two were off Seahouses and one off Stag Rocks, whilst a dead adult was found at Newbiggin GC on 3rd.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

The peak counts were 79 at Blyth Harbour on 3rd (STH), 17 at Big Waters on 1st (SPP), 16 at Howden Wetland NR on 9th (CB) and Berwick North Shore on 15th (MHu), 14 at QEII Lake on 21st (PJA), 12 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 17th (SR) and ten in the Tweed Estuary on 16th (MHu). One to six were noted at Amble Weir, Castle Island, Coquet Estuary, East Chevington, Elswick Wharf, Gosforth Park NR, Swallow Pond, Wark and West Allotment Pond.

Reports of *sinensis* race birds involved two at Swallow Pond on 25th (MSH/AC), where one was seen on 24th (CGK) and singles at Amble Harbour on 3rd (NFO) and QEII Lake on 12th/23rd (MSH/AC).

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Peak counts were 24 at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 4th (MHu), 20 in Blyth South Harbour on 3rd (STH) and 11 at Berwick North Shore on 15th (MHu). Eight were off Stag Rocks on 14th (TRD/JD). One to six were noted in Druridge Bay and at Old Hartley and Seahouses.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Two were again present throughout the month at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN) and at East Chevington North Pool on 15th (TRD/JD). On 30th singles were noted at Big Waters (SPP) and at Swallow Pond, this being a first site record (JPD).

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Two were present at Lindisfarne NNR on 11th/25th (SR/JL). Singles were noted in the Lindisfarne NNR area on six further dates. Elsewhere singles were in the Aln Estuary on 8th (MRM) and at the unusual location of the A69 feeding by the Hexham roundabout on 18th (MR).

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

The peak counts were 18 in the Tweed Estuary on 16th (MHu), 12 at Howden Wetland NR on 11th (CB) and six at Hauxley on 4th/18th (HRS). Five were at Holy Island on 16th (ADM). One to three were at Arcot Pond, Bolam Lake, Castle Island, Cresswell Pond, Elswick Wharf, Jesmond Dene, Leazes Park (Newcastle) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs..

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

The peak counts were 11 at Hauxley NR on 16th (HRS), six at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 17th (SR) and Castle Island on 18th (DM/STH), five in the Tweed Estuary on 16th (MHu) and four at Caistrion on 21st (TRD). One to three were noted at Big Waters, Bolam Lake, Cresswell Pond, Duke's Pond (Rising Sun CP), Gosforth Park NR, Howden Wetland NR, Killingworth Lake, Seaton Sluice Estuary, Swallow Pond, Tweedmouth and Tynemouth Boating Lake.



Little Grebes at Hauxley
by Peter Fletcher
9th November

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

The peak count was only two at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 10th (DRW). Singles were noted at Big Waters and Cresswell Pond on 1st, Holy Island on 4th/18th and on the sea off St Mary's Island on 15th.

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

At least six were in the Ross Back Sands-Skate Road area on 25th (JL) and six were in the Stag Rocks-Budle Bay area on 17th (BRS), where four were present on 12th and three on 18th. Three were in Holy Island Harbour on 11th (IK). A single was on East Chevington North Pool from 1st until at least 16th (many observers).

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Two birds were noted soaring high then N near Shotleyfield on 29th (IFo), and single birds were seen at Hexham on 6th (SJH), Horsley (Wylam) on 13th (AJH) and at Low Waskerley on 24th and 25th (IFo).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Two males were at a site on 23rd (MH). A ring-tail was seen in the north of the County by several observers on several dates and a male was seen at another location on 18th (IRD).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Two sightings involving a juvenile female at a site in the north of the County on 4th (MH) and another single bird at Craggside (Rothbury) on 25th (JD).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Three birds were seen at Gosforth Park NR throughout the Month (NHSN) and two were at Scotland Gate throughout the month (SLB/MSK). Three birds were also seen at Swallow Pond on 1st (JPD) and other pairs were noted at Bamburgh, East Chevington, High Heaton (Newcastle), Holy Island and Howden Wetland NR. Single birds were noted at 15 further sites.



A Sparrowhawk on alert at Dinnington
7th November by Peter Fletcher

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

At Callaly Mill five birds were present on 29th (MJC); four were seen near Christon Bank on 30th (MJC) and three were seen at Swallow Pond on 10th (JPD). One to two birds were noted at seven other sites.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Up to eight birds were on and adjacent to Rae Estate on 10th (MH) and between six and eight birds were present on Holy Island during the month (IK/ADM). Five were at Swallow Pond on 10th (JPD) and three were seen at Bradford Kaims on 12th (MH/AA). Two birds were at Boulmer on 8th (JMA) and single birds were at 12 further sites.

A Kestrel hovers
Rising Sun
by Chris Knox

**Merlin** *Falco columbarius*

Two birds were seen on Holy Island on 18th (SR), and single birds were at Cresswell Pond (PCF *et al.*), Fenham Mill (MH/AA), the Long Nanny (Newton) NFO/TF/JFa), Spindleston (BRS) and Swallow Pond (JPD). Singles were also at two inland sites during the month.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Two birds were at an inland site on 23rd (IFo), and single birds were also at three other inland sites (TRD/JD/SJH). On or near the coast single birds were seen at Lindisfarne throughout the month and at Backworth (SPP), Budle Bay (AA/MH), Cresswell Pond (TRD/JD), East Chevington (TRD/JD), Hipsburn (MRM), Ross Back Sands (JL), Seaton Sluice (SSWT) and at Tynemouth (DRW).

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Gosforth Park NR, Prestwick Carr and Swallow Pond all peaked with three birds (NHSN/PCF/NFO/JPD). Singles were seen or heard at Backworth (CGK), Cresswell Pond (NFO) and East Chevington (NFO).

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Arcot Pond had the highest numbers with a peak count of 34 on 5th (LJM/DM), 30 were at Backworth on 5th (CGK). 18 were at Bolam Lake on 13th (CDB) and 15 were at Big Waters on 11th (GB) while 14 birds were seen at Howden Wetland NR on 9th (CB) and 13 were at Swallow Pond on 4th (JPD) and 12 were at Cresswell Pond on 23rd (TRD/JD) and 11 at Duke's Pond on 16th (JPD). One to ten birds were at five further sites.

Coot *Fulica atra*

107 birds at Arcot Pond on 28th (LJM) and 104 at Killingworth Lake were the highest counts this month followed by 98 at East Chevington on 23rd (JPD) and 55 at Woodhorn Flash on 3rd (GB). Six to 24 birds were at Bothal Pond, Big Waters, Leazes Park (Newcastle) and at Swallow Pond.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Only two reports, the WeBS count at Berwick North Shore produced 182 on 15th and five were noted on the Tweed Estuary the following day (MHu).

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

The flock of roosting birds on a factory roof in Blyth Harbour topped 75 on 3rd (STH) and another roosting flock involved 54 at Berwick GC on 25th (MHu). Further gatherings included 25-50 at St Mary's Island on 18th (SPP), 20 at Long Nanny burn mouth on 14th (TRD/JD), 19 at Lynemouth Bay on 13th (JL) and seven at Berwick North Shore on 15th (MHu).

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Two separate counts in the Fenham-Holy Island area involved 4,000+ on 8th and 16th (ASJ/JPD/ADM). In the south east, some 1,500 at St Mary's on 2nd (ASJ) may have involved the 'same' 2,000 birds reported at East Holywell (Whitley Bay) on 29th (MNC) and perhaps involved some interchange with the 480 noted at Backworth on 5th (CGK). Elsewhere, 466 on fields adjoining the Blyth estuary on 29th was notable for this location (LJM) and 250-328 were seen at Carterway Heads, Elswick (R Tyne), Newbiggin and Warkworth Gut. Smaller flocks of 110-150 were reported from Derwent Reservoir, Great Wanney, Prestwick Carr and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, 50 were at Plenmeller Common, 44 at Cocklawburn, 20 at Cresswell Pond and a single on Stag Rocks (Bamburgh).

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Fenham Mill produced the peak of 65 on 8th (ASJ) whilst 48+ were noted at Holy Island on 11th (AJR). The WeBS count at Berwick North Shore revealed 14 on 15th (MHu) and one to two were seen at Cheswick, Cocklawburn and Warkworth Gut.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

A peak count of 450 occurred at both Fenham Mill on 8th (ASJ) and Derwent Reservoir on 28th (IFo). Close counts of other flocks numbered 397 at St Mary's on 2nd (ASJ), 339 at Widdrington Moor Lake on 14th (MSH), 322 at Cocklawburn on 8th (MHu) and 261 at Haughton Strother GP on 21st (MR). Flocks of 200 were reported from Boulmer on 8th (JMA) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 14th (SR); 100-146 were seen at the Coquet Estuary, Elswick (R Tyne), Grindon Lough and Newbiggin and 52-60 were at Gubeon Plantations (near Morpeth), the Tweed Estuary and West Ord, with single figure reports at Arcot Pond and Big Waters.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Numbers of roosting birds on St Cuthbert's Island (Holy Island) increased this month to 480 on 11th (AJR). The only other report was of a single at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 14th (TRD/JD).

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Berwick North Shore attracted 58 on 15th (MHu). Elsewhere, 28 were at Beadnell on 10th (IRD), ca.20 at Sandon Bay (Holy Island) on 16th (ADM) and at Chibburn mouth (Druridge Bay) on 18th (DM/STH/ADM), 14 at Cheswick on 1st (BWG) and three were at the Long Nanny on 14th (TRD/JD).

Sanderling in flight at Hadston
17th November
by Chris Barlow



Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Several counts of good numbers came from Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) during mid-month, with the highest being 154 on 14th and a further three at Seahouses the same day (TRD/JD). Just up the coast, some 68 were noted on the WeBS count at Berwick North Shore on 15th (MHu) and nine were at Cheswick on 1st (BWG). In the south, Tynemouth attracted the most birds with 14 on 3rd/18th (DRW), whilst ten were at St Mary's Island during high tide on 10th (SPP) and two were seen at Snab Point (Cresswell) and Newbiggin.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

A total of 45 were roosting on a factory roof in Blyth Harbour on 3rd (STH). Otherwise reports were few and included 11 at Berwick GC on 25th and nine at Berwick North Shore on 15th (MHu), plus singles at Cresswell Pond on 1st (TRD/JD) and Howdon Wetland NR on 11th (CB).

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

One was at Prestwick Carr on 2nd/3rd (PCF).

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyrtus minimus*

The much admired individual at Cresswell Pond remained until at least 23rd. The only other was present at Backworth on a 'handful of dates', including 12th (MSH/CGK *et al.*).

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

At Howdon Wetland NR 21 showed on 11th (CB/CGK/MSH); 15+ were feeding at St Mary's Wetland on 18th with 14 there on 24th (SPP) and 15 were at Cresswell Pond on 4th (IRD). Eight were in a flooded meadow at Fenham Mill on 12th, seven at Haughton Strother GP on 14th and six at Prestwick Carr on 1st; five were at Holy Island on 11th and five at Swallow Pond on 30th. One or two were noted at Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Ellington, North Shields, Plenmeller Common, Slaley and Woodhorn Flashes.

***Long-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus scolopaceus*

A juvenile, calling and photographed, was found at Long Nanny saltmarsh on 4th (CB/JGS) and remained in the area until 17th. After the discovery it was specifically reported on 8th, 10th, 14th and, of course, on 17th (JPD/IRD/TRD/JD/NFO).



The popular Long-Billed Dowitcher
Long Nanny by Colin Bradshaw

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

One came in off the sea at Seaton Slice on 25th (SSWT). Three were at Holy Island on 6th (SR) and singles were noted occasionally there and at Long Nanny, Rothbury and Swallow Pond. Two were reported at Gosforth Park NR during the month without specific dates.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Just one, on a pool at the seaward end of Crooked Lonnen (Holy Island), on 11th (SR).

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Around 650 were noted at Holy Island on 11th (AJR). Apart from 17 at Berwick North Shore on 15th (MHu), other totals were of six or fewer: at Cheswick, Cocklawburn, Seahouses and St Mary's.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Some 250 were at Long Nanny on 8th (JPD); other higher counts were of 200+ at St Mary's towards dusk on 18th (SPP), 158 at Cresswell Pond on 17th (PCF), 150 at Boulmer on 8th and 100 at Amble on 1st (both JMA). Cocklawburn, Druridge Lane and Prestwick Carr had 38-58 and 25 or fewer appeared at Berwick, Elswick Wharf, Hauxley, Holywell Dene, R Tweed Estuary and Woodhorn.



A Curlew flies in at dusk
Howdon Wetland NR
by Colin Bradshaw

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Two were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 14th and 24th (SR) and singles at Big Waters on 5th and at Haughton Strother on 10th.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

The only one was in the Rocket Field (Holy Island) on 11th (AJR).

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

By a considerable margin, the WeBS count of 362 on 16th (MHu) was the highest. Parts of Berwick, Howdon Wetland NR and R Tyne (Elswick Wharf and Northumberland Dock) held 42-55 at times and small numbers occurred at Arcot Pond, Backworth, Bothal Pond, Castle Island, Ellington, Lynemouth Flash, North Shields, QE11 CP and Swallow Pond.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

The WeBS count at Berwick North Shore revealed 93 on 15th (MHu) and around 50 were at Stag Rocks on 16th (ADM); 19-24 were noted at Cheswick Black Rocks, the Tweed Estuary and Whitley Bay with small numbers at Newbiggin and Seahouses.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

An adult was feeding on a dead gull on the beach at Long Nanny on 9th (EC).

The Long Nanny Pomarine
by John Clark
9th November

**Great Skua** *Stercorarius skua*

There was activity on two days late in the month: at Seaton Sluice three N on 26th, seven N and two S on 27th (SSWT) and four N at St Mary's on 27th (MSH/AC).

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

On 27th at least 150 flew N at St Mary's Island in two hours (MSH/AC) and at Seaton Sluice 80 were recorded moving N in seven hours (SSWT); on the previous day light movement N had again been recorded at the latter location with 55 passing in three hours (SSWT). Elsewhere two were at Stag Rocks on 14th (TRD/JD) and on 12th one was off Budle Bay often feeding close to two breaching porpoises (AA/MH).

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

During WeBS surveys 296 were on the Tweed Estuary on 16th and 122 at Berwick North Shore on 15th (MHu); 250 were at Boulmer on 8th (JMA), 205 frequented Jesmond Dene on 27th (MJCo), 45-143 at Leazes Park on various dates throughout the month (DM) and 100 on the Coquet Estuary on 5th (JMA). Gatherings of 18-63 were also recorded at Alnwick Pastures, Arcot Pond, Bolam Lake, Castle Island, Exhibition Park, Haydon Bridge, Tynemouth boating lake and West Hartford. In an observer's garden at Walbottle 11 were feeding on scraps on 25th (KR/LR).

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Only two records, comprising an adult on the sea at Seaton Sluice on 4th (SSWT) and a first-winter bird feeding at Cresswell, Snab Point on 13th (JL).

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

The peak count at Newbiggin was 11 on 18th comprising seven adult and four immature birds (CDB), and two adults were at St Mary's Island on 10th (SPP). Elsewhere only singles were noted, on 3rd where a 2nd-winter roosted with waders on a factory roof at Blyth Harbour (STH), an adult at Cresswell, Snab Point on 13th (JL) and adults and a 2nd-winter at Seaton Sluice on three dates (SSWT).



Top – a Mediterranean Gull and below a Common Gull, both photographed at Newbiggin by Chris Barlow on 18th November

Common Gull *Larus canus*

The largest counts were ca.700 at Fourstones on 16th (AJH) and 114 adults at Grindon Lough on 15th with lesser gatherings there of 18-56 on three other dates (SJH). Also 64 were at Bolam Lake on 13th (CDB) and 32 on the Tweed Estuary on 16th (MHu). One-four were at Arcot Pond, Castle Island, Jesmond Dene, Newbiggin, in a Walbottle garden and at West Hartford.

Correction: in the October Bulletin a count of 8,000 Common Gulls in the Budle Bay roost was described as 'possibly the highest-ever coastal count for the county'. It has been pointed out (CGK) that in past years the Budle Bay autumn gull roost has frequently held in excess of 10,000 Common Gulls and the record count for the Lindisfarne NNR occurred in December 1975 when probably as many as 37,000 were present in a mixed flock of 53,000 Common and Black-headed Gulls.



Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

Few birds remained in the county but three adults were still near Ridsdale on 23rd (IFo) and single adults were at Big Waters on 1st, Swallow Pond from 1st-11th, Haughton Strother GP on 5th, Arcot Pond on 19th with a sub-adult at Derwent Reservoir on 22nd. An adult seen at Cramlington on 18th and 20th was described as 'probably the regular wintering bird' (LJM).

Two adults of the *intermedius* type were at Swallow Pond on 4th (JPD).

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argenteus*

WeBS surveys included 154 in the Tweed Estuary on 16th (MHu) and 42 at Castle Island on 18th (DM/STH). Elsewhere were 13 at West Hartford on 19th and two-eight at Leazes Park throughout the month (DM). Three were in Jesmond Dene on 18th (MJCo) and three fed on scraps in a Walbottle garden on 25th (KR/LR).

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

Four records of juvenile birds were received, most probably involving a single individual, on 19th and 28th at Seaton Sluice (SSWT) and on 24th at St Mary's Island (AC/SPP).

Greater Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

At St Mary's Island 25 moved N in an hour on the morning of 28th (MSH). The peak gathering was 250 found during a WeBS survey at Castle Island on 18th (DM) and other WeBS surveys of the Tweed Estuary on 16th and Berwick North Shore on 15th recorded 23 and eight respectively (MHu). East Chevington North Pool held 26 on 18th (DM) and the new Widdrington Moor Lake attracted 13 on 14th (MSH). Two to six adults were at Grindon Lough between 8th and 16th (SJH).

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Single birds were in Alnmouth Bay on 11th (MRM) and at Stag Rocks on 18th (CGK/PS). A very late and unusual record was of an adult still in summer plumage flying N at Skate Road (Ross Back Sands) on 25th (JL).

Auk *sp*

At Seaton Sluice on 27th 120, including a good number of Razorbills, moved N in seven hours (SSWT); little movement had been observed before and after this date.

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

On the morning of 27th 20 flew N in two hours at St Mary's Island (MSH/AC) but generally numbers were low with only one-seven being seen, all during the first half of the month, at Bamburgh Stag Rocks, Berwick (Meadow Haven and Spital Bay), Cheswick, Cresswell Snab Point, Holy Island and Newbiggin.

Razorbill *Alca torda*

The only records were of two on the sea at East Chevington on 15th (TRD/JD) and a single bird off Chibburn Mouth (Druridge Bay) on 18th (DM/STH/ADMc).

Little Auk *Alle alle*

A few birds remained on the coast following the influx at the end of October with four moving N at Seaton Sluice on 6th and two on the sea at that location on 4th (SSWT); a single bird was on the sea off Budle Point on 12th (NFO) and one flew N at St Mary's Island on 28th (SPP).

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

During the first half of the month one-three were at Cresswell Snab Point, Druridge Bay, Seahouses and Seaton Sluice with the latest record comprising a single bird at Bamburgh Stag Rocks on 17th (BRS).

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

A large gathering during the month at Howdon Wetland NR had 72 on 9th with 55 remaining on 26th (CB) and 31 to 38 noted at nearby Swallow Pond on 16th and 17th (SPP/JPD). 36 were at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 11th and 28 there on 10th (TB), six at Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 4th and 8th, five at Newbiggin on 3rd and one to four at Arcot Lane, Bolam Lake, Hauxley NR, Jesmond Dene, Walbottle and West Chevington.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Numerous large gatherings with 1,000+ at Haughton Strother, Humshaugh on 21st (MR), 850 at Fallodon near Christon Bank on 30th (MJC), 600 at Swallow Pond on 24th (JPD/SPP), 500 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 12th (MR), 400 at Hauxley on 3rd (HRS), 200 at Prudhoe on 26th and Maiden's Hall on 1st (JMA). One to nine were at Jesmond Dene and South Gosforth.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Peak counts of 14 at Ovington on 12th and 12 at Harlow Hill on 18th (PCF) with six at Stannington on 9th and Woodhorn on 21st (PJA).

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

The resident pair and a 2012 youngster were at Holy Island during the month (IK) with two at East Chevington on 22nd (SLB/MSK). All other sightings were singles at Alnwick, Beal, Boulmer, Bridge of Aln, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools NR, East Chevington, Chugdon Wood (Ellington), Harlow Hill, Haughton Strother GP, Longframlington Common, Linden Hall Longframlington, Rudchester and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Two were together in the same tree at Big Waters on 11th (GB) and at Swallow Pond on 14th (JPD) with singles there on numerous dates during the month and at Prestwick Carr on 15th and Holywell Dene on 30th.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Two or more were at Scotland Gate during the month (SLB/MSK), at Haughton Strother GP on 26th (MR) and Armstrong Park (Heaton) on 30th where a single bird roosted on 4th and 5th (TW). Singles were also at Gosforth Park NR and Northumberland Park (North Shields) all month, at Dinnington on 10th, East Ord on 21st and Chollerford on 28th.

A roosting Tawny Owl
Photographed in Heaton Park
5th November
by Alan Janes

**Long-eared Owl** *Asio Otus*

A single bird remained roosting in a pine on the Straight Lonnen at Holy Island (IK) being sighted by four observers on 11th (SR/AH/ADM/AJR) with a possible second bird on the same date.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Eight to nine birds were at Holy Island in the first half of the month (IK/ADM/AJR) with 6+ at a confidential site in North Northumberland on 15th (CHJJ). Elsewhere two were noted regularly at Swallow Pond (JPD,SPP,CGK) and at Cresswell Pond on 29th (MSK/NEWT) with singles there and at East Chevington on numerous dates and at Cheswick Dunes, Druridge Pools, East Cramlington NR, Longframlington Common, Newton, Shield on the Wall, Warkworth Gut and West Hartford.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

The only multiple sighting was of two at Jesmond Dene on 20th (LJM) but singles were much in evidence at Holywell Dene and Weldon Bridge on three dates, Cresswell Pond and Northumberland Park (North Shields) on two dates and at Alnmouth, Castron, Druridge Pools NR, Haughton Strother GP, Prestwick Carr, Rising Sun CP and Seaton Sluice.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Singles were at Gosforth Park NR all month (NHSN), heard at Swallowship Wood, Hexham on 2nd and 4th (AJH) and Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 18th (TB).

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Pairs were at garden feeders in Tynemouth all month (CB) and in an Old Hartley Garden from 22nd (RJP) with two also at Big Waters, Callaly Mill, St Nicholas Hospital (Gosforth), Holy Island, Northumberland Park (North Shields), Prestwick Carr, Richardson Dees, Cragside (Rothbury), Spindlestone, Swallow Pond and Wallsend Park. Singles were at a further 12 widely spread localities.

Magpie *Pica pica*

The largest gathering again at Swallow Pond with 88 there on 11th and 66 on 1st (JPD), 28 at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 3rd (TB), 12 at Hauxley NWT on 29th (IFo) and six to ten at Jesmond Dene, Newburn, South Gosforth and Walbottle.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Again well reported, the largest counts being six at Gosforth Park NR and adjacent pools (NHSN), five at Swallowship Wood (Hexham) on 4th (AJH), four at Slaley Hall on 5th (RMH) and three at Swallow Pond on 1st and Ordley on 17th. Two were at Arcot, Doddington, Eschott, Holywell Pond, North Shields, Cragside (Rothbury), Scotland Gate and Wallsend Rising Sun CP with singles at nine further locations.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Large roosts of 500+ at Gosforth Park NR on 23rd (NHSN) and Rising Sun CP on 27th (SPP), 160 feeding in stubble at Scaffold Hill Farm on 2nd (JPD), 120 at Prestwick Carr on 1st (PCF) and 100 at Cullercoats, Walbottle and Woodlands Park (Wideopen). Ten to 15 were at Boulmer, Jesmond Dene and in a Walbottle garden.

A bird showing characteristics of the Nordic species *C.m.monedula* was at Melton Park on 30th (GB).

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

The only report was of two in the observer's garden at Walbottle on 25th (KR/LR).

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

A pre-roost gathering of 200 on pylons at West Hartford on 16th (PJA), 39 at Swallow Pond on 15th (JPD) and 33 at Howdon Wetland NR on 22nd where six to eight would normally be expected (CB). Two to four were at Bolam Lake, Jesmond Dene and Walbottle.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

One was at Budle Bay on 17th (AC).

Raven *Corvus corax*

Four at Raylees Common on 8th (IRD) was the largest count with three in the Henshaw area near Bardon Mill on 12th (SJH) and east of Redesmouth on 23rd (IFo). Two were over Melkridge Village, Plennmeller Common and Rothbury on 4th, foraging at Ray Fell on 10th and north of Alwinton on 24th. Singles were at Chirdon Burn, the Snook (Holy Island), Grindon Lough and Swallowship Wood (Hexham).

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

A return to normal with the peak count of four or more at Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 8th (MSH), Hauxley on 11th (HRS) and Gosforth Park NR on 28th and 29th (NHSN). Three were at East Ord on 13th (BWG) and Valley Park (Cramlington) on 18th (DM), two at Newbiggin on 3rd and Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 9th with singles at Arcot Hall, Byker, Howdon Wetland NR, Jesmond Dene, North Seaton and Prestwick Carr.

A Blue Tit at Big Waters

by Adriana Buskin

**Blue Tit** *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Ringling provided the highest counts with 17 trapped and ringed at Spindlestone on 24th (BRS) and 12 (10 ringed) at Hauxley on 11th (HRS). Five was the peak count in a Walbottle garden on 25th (KR/LR) with three at Jesmond Dene and Beatty Avenue (South Gosforth) (MJCo).

Great Tit *Parus major*

Nine were trapped and ringed at Spindlestone on 24th (BRS), seven the peak count for the month in a Walbottle garden on 4th (KR/LR) and at West Hartford on 13th (PJA), five at Jesmond Dene and two at Beatty Avenue (South Gosforth) (MJCo).

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

More than 15 were at Spindlestone on 17th where 14 were trapped and ringed on 24th (BRS), 12 at Hauxley RS on 3rd with seven ringed (HRS). Birds visited garden feeders with six in a Old Hartley garden being the highest count recorded there (RJP), three the peak count in a Walbottle garden and two at Jesmond Dene and South Gosforth.

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

As last month, four was the peak count at Prestwick Carr on 10th (BMo), two in the feeding station at Big Waters on 11th (GB) with singles at Scotland Gate on 17th, 18th and 24th (SLB/MSK) and Arcot Pond on 17th (STH).

A Willow Tit on feeders

Big Waters

by Adriana Buskin



Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

The largest count was five in Blue Bell Wood (Morpeth) on 27th (MJC), two at Linden Hall (Longhorsley) on 3rd, 18th and 24th (MJC/NFO) and Weldon Bridge on 14th. Single birds remained at Thrum Mill (Rothbury) on 6th (JD), provided a first garden record at Scotland Gate visiting regularly during the month (SLB/MSK) and fed on sunflower seeds in the feeding station at Big Waters on 24th (AJN).

Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*

Four were reported in the reeds near the hide at Cresswell Pond on 2nd which was confirmed by photograph (per EC) and one was heard from the reeds at East Chevington North Pool on 10th (JFa).

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

24 fed in a stubble field at Football Hole (Newton) on 3rd and four were at Long Nanny Saltmarsh on 4th (CB/JGS) with a single at Big Waters on 1st (GB).

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

A good number of late birds with two S at Low Hauxley on 1st (AJD) and N over the frozen beach there on 4th (STB). Singles were at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 11th, Corbridge on 12th, Cresswell Village on 13th and 17th, Swallow Pond on 14th and finally S at Links House (Newton) on 18th.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Three tribes totalling 30+ birds were reported from Jesmond Dene on 20th (LJM), 20+ were at Spindlestone on 24th (BRS) and ten to 20 at Holy Island from 1st-4th, presumably remaining from October (IK/ADM). Parties of 13-15 were noted at Byker (Lower Ouseburn), Cramlington (Northburn), Ellington (Chugdon Wood), Gosforth Park NR, Haughton Strother (Humshaugh), Holywell Dene and Weldon Bridge; eight to 11 were also reported from Arcot Hall GC, Backworth, Bothal Pond, Chapel House, Newcastle (Leazes Park), North Shields (Northumberland Park) and Prestwick Carr and three to seven from a further seven localities.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Three were found at Tynemouth on 18th (DRW) and singles at Woodhorn and Newbiggin on 3rd, Howdon Wetland NR and Marden Quarry on 11th, Backworth on 12th and Tynemouth on 26th.

In October birds showing characteristics of the **Scandinavian race** *P.c.abietinus* were at Holy Island on 7th (Village), 14th (Village and Straight Lonnen) and 26th (Village-MJC/ADM).

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Two + were seen occasionally throughout the month at Scotland Gate (SLB/MSK). In a Gosforth garden a male was seen on 24th and a female on 30th (STE). A single was ringed at Hauxley RS on 3rd (HRS), single males were at Holy Island on 4th (IK) and in a Wallsend garden on 5th, a female visited a Monkseaton garden on 15th (MSH), another male was at High Brunton on 27th (JWP) and a male at Heddon-on-the-Wall on 29th (JSB).



Two photographs of one of our most attractive visitors
left by Jonathan Farooqi at Morpeth and right by Tim Dean at Cramlington

Waxwing *Bombus garrulous*

Another significant 'eruption' occurred during the month with birds well reported, particularly from the south-east conurbations. The undoubted 'hotspot' was the Silverlink CP / West Allotment area where birds were present, and roosting in large numbers from 11th-15th. The first count here of any note was 210 on 11th (AC) rising to 341 (counted from a still video image) on 12th (ASJ) and still further to 350+ on 15th (CGK). Elsewhere, 160 were reported from Heaton on 9th (AC), in the High Heaton (Government offices) area numbers rose from 26 on 8th to 75 on 9th, with 55 still present to 12th (KWY), 100+ were at Wallsend on 10th (JPD), 75 at Cramlington (Beaconhill) on 17th (STH), 60+ at Stanington on 8th, up to 60 at Alnwick on various dates and 44 at Morpeth on 10th. Flocks of 20-25 were noted at East Chevington, Holy Island, Howdon Wetland NR, Tynemouth and West Hartford; ten to 18 were at Big Waters, Cramlington (Southfield Green), Ellington, Fenham Mill, Fenham-le-Moor, Gosforth Park NR, Haughton Strother (Humshaugh), Marden Quarry, Newcastle (Leazes Park), Rothbury, Scotland Gate and Wallington Hall and one to nine at numerous other widespread localities.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Two were reported from Bolam Lake, Cragside, Holywell Dene, Jesmond Dene, North Shields (Northumberland Park), a Walbottle garden and Wallington and singles from Alnwick, Arcot Hall GC, Cramlington (Valley Park), Cramlington Village, East Ord, Eshott, a South Gosforth garden and Spindleston.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Six were at Falldon (near Christon Bank) on 30th (MJC) and five at Gosforth Park NR on 21st (PJA). Five at Hauxley RS on 11th included a retrap from August 2011 (HRS); two were at Jesmond Dene and Swallowship (Hexham) on 4th and singles at Bamburgh, Netherton Park, Prestwick Carr and Rothbury.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Only three reports were received; six at Holy Island on 16th, four there on 4th (ADM) and a single at Jesmond Dene on 27th.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

The important roost at Holy Island Lough supported 20,000 at the start of the month, reducing to 7,000 by 9th and still further to only a few hundred by the end of the month (IK). The East Chevington roost numbered 5-6,000 on 8th (JPD); another reed bed roost at Gosforth Park NR held 3,000+ on 3rd (NHSN) and 750 roosted at Cresswell Pond on 17th (PCF). Counts of 1,000 came from Prestwick Carr on 1st and 10th (PCF/BMo) and 630 from Cocklawburn and 100 at Grindon Lough on 8th. Smaller flocks of 20-50 were noted at Alnwick, Boulmer, Newcastle (Exhibition Park), a Walbottle garden, West Chevington and Whitley Bay links.



Starlings coming in to a sunset roost
photographed at East Chevington
by Jonathan Farooqi

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Three were in Jesmond Dene on 13th (MJCo) and at Fourstones on 16th (AJH) and up to three in Holywell Dene on various dates from 14th-28th (RJP/SPP). Two were found at Rothbury (Thrum Mill) on 5th and Weldon Bridge on 8th and 13th and a single at Ponteland Park on 3rd. Perhaps of more interest was a bird on the swollen Cottingburn Beck at Fulbeck (Morpeth) on 25th, thus providing the observer with an unexpected garden tick (TD)!

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Some sizeable gatherings, perhaps indicating birds of continental origin were reported. Swallow Pond held 56 on 1st (JPD), 35 were at North Shields (Northumberland Park) on 27th (MNC) and 26-30 at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) from 21st-26th (MR). Over 20 were noted at Scotland Gate on 4th and 16 at Hauxley on 3rd. A Walbottle garden held a peak of 13 on 25th. Two tired migrants arrived at Holy Island on 26th and 12 were also at Berwick on 1st and in a Tynemouth garden on 10th. Elsewhere ten were at Slaley Hall on 30th and seven at Jesmond Dene on 18th.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

The largest gathering was 350 at Callaly Mill on 29th (MJC); flocks of 200 were noted at Ponteland (Hold House Farm) on 22nd (CW) and Prestwick Carr on 4th (IK). Elsewhere numbers were of a more modest nature, with 60+ reported from Eshott on 29th and 50 at Weldon Bridge on 5th; 12-23 were at Big Waters, Choppington Woods, Grindon Lough and West Ord. One to eight were reported from a further eight localities including Holy Island Village, where four tired birds appeared to be recent arrivals.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Five at Craggside on 18th was considered to be an unusual winter count for this site (JD). Four were at Hauxley and three at Newbiggin on 3rd; three were found in Jesmond Dene on 27th and two at High Newton on 4th. The only other report was a single at Berwick (Middle Ord) on 25th.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

With a rapidly diminishing berry crop most of last month's substantial influx appeared to move through the county fairly quickly. The only sizeable flocks were 150 at Prestwick Carr on 4th (IK), declining to 50 by 17th (PCF) and 120 at Swallowship (Hexham) on 11th (AJH). Flocks of 30 were noted at Alnwick Pastures on 3rd, Callaly Mill on 29th and Weldon Bridge on 14th with 27 at Slaley Hall on 30th. One to ten were reported from a further eight localities.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

The only reports were of six at West Allotment on 11th (ASJ), five in Jesmond Dene on 13th (MJCo), four at Prestwick Carr on 3rd and two at Howdon Wetland NR and Newcastle (Exhibition Park).

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

At Holy Island there were nine on 4th and six on 16th (ADM). Three were at Bolam Lake on 13th and Jesmond Dene on 27th, up to two in a Walbottle garden and one in a South Gosforth garden.

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

In Druridge Bay a total of seven (three males) were noted between Chevington Burn and Cresswell on 23rd (MH/AA); two to four were reported from Cresswell Pond and beach on a further five dates from 1st-16th, two at Druridge links on 3rd, one at Hadston Carrs on 14th and a female at East Chevington on 15th. Elsewhere on the coast three were at Newton (Football Hole) on 3rd, two to three at High Newton on 4th and 17th, a pair at Cocklawburn throughout the month and singles at Bamburgh and Embleton Bay. The only inland records were of pairs at Beanley Moor (Huntersheugh Craggs) on 4th and Simonside on 1st.

Duncock *Prunella modularis*

One to four were seen throughout the month at Beaconhill (Cramlington), Jesmond Dene (Newcastle), a Northburn Garden (Cramlington), Ouseburn (Newcastle), QE11 CP, South Gosforth (observer's garden), Walbottle and Woodhorn Mews.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Surprisingly low totals for the month with 22 at Southfield Green (Cramlington) on 24th (DM) and a single at a Walbottle garden on 18th (KR/LR).

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

45 were at Woodhorn on 18th (CDH), 40 at Fenwick's Close Farm (Earsdon) on 5th (CGK) and 25 at Scaffold Hill Farm on 1st (JPD). One to 20 were also recorded at a further 18 localities throughout the month.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Three was the month's highest count at Weldon Bridge on 13th (MJC) whilst one to two were at a further 15 typical localities.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

16 were on Cresswell Beach on 5th (MSH) whilst ten were at both Ellington on 11th (TB) and Hauxley Beach on 4th (HRS). Singles were at Big Waters on 11th (GB), Newcastle Town Moor on 16th (GB) and Jesmond Dene (Newcastle) on 27th (MJCo).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

60 were feeding in a stubble field at Christon Bank (Fallodon) on 30th (MJC) whilst 50 were at Ray Fell (Ray Estate) on 10th (MH). One to 17 were seen throughout the month at Berwick Moor, Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Links, Newcastle Town Moor and Prestwick Carr.



A Rock Pipit at Low Newton by Jonathan Farooqi

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Nine were seen at Holy Island throughout the month with many of last month's birds moved on (ADM) whilst eight were at both Hauxley Beach on 4th (HRS) and St. Mary's on 2nd (ASJ) and six at Whitley Bay Beach on 30th (MSH).

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

85 were in a stubble field at Swallow Pond on 16th (JPD) and 50 were also feeding in a stubble field at Callaly Mill on 29th (MJC). Two to 20 were noted at a further seven localities throughout the month.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Five (three males and two females) were at Northumberland WT Garden (Gosforth) on 23rd (AJN). One to Four were also at Big Waters, Capheaton, Featherstone, Gosforth Park, Hauxley NR, Leazes Park (Newcastle), Linden Hall (Longhorsley), Netherton Park (Stannington), Rothbury, Scotland Gate, South Gosforth, Spindlestone, Swallow Pond, Tynemouth (Marden Estate garden) and Wallington Hall.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

120 were in cattle fields south of Chevington Burn (Druridge Bay) on 23rd (MH/AA). 50 at Hemscotthill Links on 1st (TRD/JD) and St. Nicholas's Hospital (Gosforth) on 18th (AJN) were unusually high totals for these sites. Three to 30 were also seen at Bamburgh, Cramlington, Cresswell Pond, Jesmond Dene, a South Gosforth garden, Swallow Pond and a Walbottle garden.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

100 were at Hemscotthill Links on 1st (TRD/JD), 75 at Sugar Sands (Longhoughton) on 8th (JMA) and 70 in the dunes at Cresswell on 29th (MSH). One to 30 were at a further 14 localities throughout the month.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

A flock of 50 were in the west car park at Bolam Lake on 13th (CDB), 31 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 14th (MR) and 30 at Gosforth Park on 12th (NHSN). One to 14 were at a further 14 localities, many of which involved late migrants coming in off the sea.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

A flock of 200 were in the Bowman Field (Swallow Pond) on 22nd (SPP) and ten flew S at Spittal (Newbiggin) on 3rd (GB).

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

An impressive 170 were at Cheswick Dunes on 5th, which had all gone by the 8th (MHu). A peak of 99 were at Long Nanny saltmarsh on 4th (CB/JGS), 45 were at Fenham-Le-Moor on 12th (AA/MH), six at St. Mary's Island on 18th (SPP) and three were at Hemscotthill Links on 1st (TRD/JD).



Twite feeding at Low Newton by Jonathan Farooqi

Redpoll sp.

A single flew inland at Newbiggin on 17th (GB).

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*

The month's highest count was 45 at Harwood Burn (Harwood Forest) on 10th (MSH), 30 were feeding on nettles at Prestwick Carr on 4th (IK) whilst one to 15 were at a further 11 localities throughout the month.

A Prestwick Carr Redpoll
24th November by Peter
Fletcher

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Nine was the highest count at Swallow Pond all month on 3rd (CGK/AJ/MJC). One to five were at a further six localities throughout the month.



Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Seven (five males, two females) at Swallow Pond on 13th (JPD) and five at Bardon Mill (Henshaw) 12th (SJH) were the highest totals for the month. One to four were also noted at 20 other sites throughout the month.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

12 were at Long Nanny saltmarsh on 4th (CB/JGS), 11 at Beacon Point (Newbiggin) on 1st (MSK) and one to six at a further ten localities throughout the month. The most interesting of these records was of five well inland at Simonside on 1st (MJC).

Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*

The only record of the month was a single at the Lough (Holy Island) on 10th (IK).

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

The month's only records were of a flock of 12 at Airey Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield) on 24th (IFo) and eight at Backworth on 5th (CGK).

Reed Bunting *Emberiza Schoeniclus*

The month's highest total was 16 in stubble set-aside at Football Hole (Newton) on 3rd (CB/JGS), a flock of 14 was attracted to barley stubble at Chare Ends (Holy Island) on 22nd (IK) One to 12 were at a further 11 localities throughout the month.

ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN**Birds of Unknown Origin****Rose-ringed Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri*

Again records were in the south-east with one in a Wallsend garden on 3rd and two at Richardson Dees Park also in Wallsend on 30th (JPD). At the regular site of Ponteland, one was noted calling on 15th near the Diamond Inn (*per* PCF).

WEATHER

1st to 5th:Low-pressure systems around the British Isles brought an unsettled, wet and windy start to the month. Showers and longer spells of rain affected most areas, most notably on 4th. There were some cold nights; a widespread frost developed on the night of 4th/5th.

6th to 11th:High pressure in the North Atlantic extended towards the British Isles, bringing a change to more settled weather. The period brought sunny spells and showers, with the showery activity focussed towards the north and west of the country. The settled weather meant that temperatures fell below freezing in places on most nights, and there was also some fog.

12th to 18th:A warm front moved E across England on 12th, introducing cloudy but milder air which persisted for the next few days. Under the cloud, nights stayed relatively mild, with minima generally several degrees above freezing. Mist and fog affected many places, and there were some outbreaks of drizzle and light rain, chiefly in the west. The cloud eventually cleared on 17th and 18th.

19th to 27th:A very wet period for England, as a succession of low-pressure systems developed in the Atlantic and moved across the UK. Persistent, heavy rain affected many places and caused widespread flooding and landslips. Winds were strong at times, notably on 21st/22nd and 24th/25th, when gales affected some areas.

28th to 30th:The month ended much more settled but significantly colder. Northerly winds brought showers to some eastern counties, and also to the far west, but most areas were generally dry. There was sunshine by day, but widespread overnight frosts developed under clear skies, temperatures around -3 °C being typical for many places, with concerns that ice patches could form in recently flooded areas as water continued to seep from fields and verges. The 30th was cloudier in western parts, and an occluded front brought rain, sleet and snow to northern counties in the evening.

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Bamburgh Ringing Station, Berwick Wildlife Group, Hauxley Ringing Station, Natural History Society of Northumbria, Northern Experience Wildlife Tours, Seaton Sluice Watch Tower.

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

This bulletin was compiled by Graeme Bowman (Mute Swan to Ruddy Duck), Lindsay McDougall (Red Grouse to Black-necked Grebe), Trevor Blake (Honey Buzzard to Crane), Steve Holliday (Oystercatcher to Dunlin) Ian Forsyth (Snipe to Skua), Eddie Crabtree (Ivory Gull to Puffin), Tim Dean (Escapes, Hybrids and Unknown Origin, List of Contributors, Highlights), Peter Fletcher (Feral Pigeon to Red-rumped Swallow), Mike Richardson (Cetti's Warbler to Pied Flycatcher), Phil Allott (Dunnock to Corn Bunting), Dan Turner (WeBS Coastal Counts) and Steve Holliday (WeBS Inland Counts).

Thanks to David Sanders of NNBC for providing data.

Proof reading was by Mike Smith.

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RECORD SUBMISSION

Please e-mail Dick Myatt at 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 NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.com

It is preferable if you re-size your photos before sending and a suggested size is 640 x 480 pixels. Please ensure you include the following information with your submissions : name, species, date taken, locality.

Photographs will not be used elsewhere without the photographer's permission.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions for 2012-2013 are now overdue.

For membership enquiries please contact ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

NTBC WEB SITE

The Club website is an excellent resource for all interested in birds in the north-east. There are numerous interesting sections, including a photograph gallery, site information and trip reports together with extensive reference information for birding in our area. The site is at www.ntbc.org.uk

If you have any ideas or things you would like to see or hear about on the site please let Chris Knox know on 0751 582 5024 or e-mail christopher.knox@o2.co.uk

NTBC SIGHTINGS PAGE

The club sightings web page gives listings of birds seen locally. Adding a sighting is simple. A short e-mail is all that is needed. If anyone would like to be added as a contributor please contact Alan Tilmouth at ntbcorg@gmail.com

The sightings page can be found at <http://ntbcsightings.posterous.com>

PRE-SEASON SURVEY OF RED KITES

During late March our Red Kite population will be involved in spectacular aerial displays while some early pairs will be busy defending territories and nest-building.

Friends of Red Kites (FoRK) is organising a regional survey on the morning of Saturday, March 23rd 2013 with three main objectives:-

- To determine the total population in the region.
- To map the distribution of Red Kites across the North East and:-
- To try and establish the number of potential breeding territories.

The Red Kite monitoring team, which records, rings and wing-tags the kites and liaises with the BTO, the Rare Birds Breeding Panel and other bodies, is a small but very enthusiastic group and obviously cannot hope to cover the entire region without help.

We already have detailed information about most, if not all, the breeding sites in the core area but need help in examining other districts within the recording area of the Northumberland & Tyneside Bird Club.

For the past two years no breeding attempts have been recorded in Northumberland which is of great concern. If the re-introduction scheme is eventually to be judged successful the species has to break out of the core area. A few years ago breeding did take place in Hexhamshire but we know that birds there were persecuted. Red Kites are regularly noted along the Tyne Valley, particularly in the Wylam, Horsley, Whittle Dene and Corbridge areas, and westwards into Hexhamshire. Others are very regularly around the Derwent Reservoir and neighbouring areas of County Durham.

We have deliberately chosen to carry out the survey during the morning – between 9am and 12.30 – because experience has shown that kites are most active over potential breeding sites during that period. Later in the day they tend to drift away to forage.

Anyone who offer assistance with this one-off survey (and have the chance of finding some really spectacular birds) can e-mail me at ianisland@blueyonder.co.uk or call me on 0191 2676974 for further details.

FoRK has limited funds available but to help with this survey can offer 25p per mile for volunteers taking part. Now that's something you don't get from the BTO etc!

IAN KERR

WANTED: NHS Ornithological report, 1969 for Northumberland and Durham and The Farne Islands

Do you by any chance have a (spare) copy of the above which you would be willing to part with? I now have a run of county bird reports back to 1943 and would like to get them bound up sometime soon but still require the one for 1969. If so, I'm very happy to discuss price and would be delighted to hear from you.

Steve Holliday 01670 731963.

COASTAL WEBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBER LAND

November 2012

Site	TOTAL		Berwick North Shore (including Little Beach)		Berwick Little Beach		Tweed Estuary		Tweed: A1 By-Pass to Hornccliffe		Spirit - Cocklawburn		Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay)		Budle Pt - Seahouses		Seahouses - Beadnell		Beadnell - Howick		Boulmer - Alnmouth		Aln Estuary		Alnmouth South		Coquet Estuary		Chevington - Cresswell		Cresswell - Newbiggin		Newbiggin - Cambois		Blyth Estuary		Blyth Estuary - Season Sluice		St Mary's Island		Whitley Bay - Tynemouth		Tyne North Pier - Fish Quay		East Howdon, (north bank only)		Redheugh - Scotswood Bridge, (north bank)		Scotswood - Newburn Bridge, (north bank)																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																				
	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	TB	MHu	AC	RP	MLC	KR	AB	TAC	RP	RP	MSK	MGA	RC	LJM	KVB	SP	DMT	DMT	PF	PF	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu

Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

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

Bulletin 2012 No 12

MONTHLY SUMMARY – DECEMBER

7th February 2013



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CLASSIFIED LIST HIGHLIGHTS

Whooper Swan	Large gathering at Loanend near Horncliffe with 134 on 2nd.
Greenland White-fronted Goose	Only one or two noted at Woodhorn & Grindon Lough.
Todd's Canada Goose	The family group remained at Bothal Pond until at least 11th.
Goldeneye	High count of 163 on the WeBS count at the Tweed Estuary.
Smew	A drake at Fenham le Moor on 12th and a redhead at East Chevington on 30th.
Great Northern Diver	Popular bird inland at Bothal Pond until 11th.
Bittern	A welcome increase in wintering with 3 at Gosforth Park & 3 other singles.
Black-tailed Godwit	Unusual wintering record at St Mary's Island on 8th.
Grey Phalarope	Surprise brief sighting inland at Bothal Pond on 4th.
Little Gull	Unusual winter sighting of a first-winter at North Shields Fish Quay on 30th.
Iceland Gull	A Second-winter at North Shields Fish Quay on 27th.
Glaucous Gull	A juvenile was seen at St Mary's on 6th & again at North Shields from 27th.
'Nordic' Jackdaw	Singles at Killingworth Lake & Newbiggin.
Hooded Crow	One at Ross Links on 12th.
Bearded Tit	At least three remained at East Chevington from last month.
Waxwing	Continuing influx in the county.
Black Redstart	Wintering bird at St Mary's from 1st to 8th.

COMMITTEE NEWS

BIN 2011

Mike Richardson and his team have now issued BIN 2011. Another splendid production. Many members picked up their copy at the recent indoor meeting. Postal copies will follow.

County Atlas

Discussions have begun with the BTO with a view to NTBC benefiting from their expertise in the design and publishing of similar publications. We hope to reach an agreement soon that will ensure that this key club project will be delivered cost effectively and to a high standard that does justice to the huge amount of fieldwork and effort put into the project's early stages.

The committee would also like to thank members for a great response to the call for volunteer authors for the Atlas Project. Editor and County recorder Tim Dean will be in touch when we are ready to begin the authoring stages of the Atlas production.

Development Fund

An application was received from Abbeyfields First School, Morpeth for funding of £350 to purchase binoculars and feeders to equip their new outdoor 'Forest School'. This innovative project aims to encourage and inspire children of first school age through positive outdoor experiences and engagement with nature and the committee were delighted to be able to support the project. NTBC involvement will be publicised in the local press in the coming weeks.

NTBC Sightings Pages

A review of the Sightings Pages use in 2012 revealed that they received close to 82,000 visits during the year generating 122,000 page views. Many of these visits will have been from birders who aren't NTBC members and posts from club members about their birding in the recording area represent a huge opportunity to encourage non-members to get involved with birding and with NTBC. As it is only club members that can post their reports or images to the Sightings Pages we would like to encourage more members to post, even occasional posts help to ensure a steady stream of content advertising the club and what can be seen in our recording area. The club are happy to have image-only posts from members who may not wish to 'write-up' their birding; adding images is as simple as attaching them to an email. If you wish to get registered to

not wish to 'write-up' their birding; adding images is as simple as attaching them to an email. If you wish to get registered to post to the sightings page please email Alan Tilmouth at ntbcorg@gmail.com

Local Site Designation

NTBC records are beginning to provide vital data to Northumberland Wildlife Trust when it comes to the designation of local wildlife sites. Recognising the importance and contribution the records we have to local conservation the club is now providing data at a specific site level to Northumberland Wildlife Trust without charge to contribute towards the evaluation and designation of local sites in the recording area.

Northern Experience Wildlife Tours Charity Donation Scheme

Martin and Sarah at local Wildlife Tour company Northern Experience Wildlife Tours have selected NTBC as one of several charities to benefit from a Donation Scheme they have set up in their some items (Safari Days and Prestige Tours) in their on-line shop. Even more generously they are offering to match any donations made via the shop. Why not take a look at their store and see if anything catches your eye? <http://www.northernexperiencewildlifetours.co.uk/shop/>

INDOOR MEETINGS

The next indoor meeting will be back to the usual time next month – 7pm at Northern Rugby Club on 14th March.

BIRDERS' QUESTION TIME

Following the successful and popular inaugural session of last programme, and requests for an extended event, a full evening of Birders' Question Time has been arranged. The Birders' Question Time panel will include Mike Pratt, CEO of Northumberland Wildlife Trust, Nick Adams, Regional Conservation Manager for RSPB and Tom Cadwallender, Regional Representative for BTO and will be chaired by NTBC Chairman Martin Davison. Other panellists are to be included and will be listed when confirmed.

So please get you questions formulated and ready for the night.



A popular visitor, a Waxwing photographed by Tim Dean at Cresswell Pond

CLASSIFIED LIST

The following account consists of unchecked reports. The species/subspecies marked * require descriptions.

A complete list of all sightings that need notes is included in the NTBC website www.ntbc.org.uk under the County Records Committee section and in Birds in Northumbria 2009 page 224.

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

TARGET SPECIES

The target species for 2012 are all the owls. Please report all records in as much detail as possible. The Club is sensitive to the vulnerability of these species to disturbance and persecution, and will be particularly cautious about what is actually published, above all about nesting and roosting sites. Please address any questions or concerns to Tim Dean or Dick Myatt.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Peak counts were 173 at Killingworth Lake on 12th (LJM), 123 at Capheaton Lake on 9th (STE), 65 at QEII CP Lake (CDH), 63 at the Tweed Estuary on 13th (MHu), 31-48 at Alnmouth and New Water Haugh, and 13 at Cresswell Pond and Fenham Mill. Two to five were at nine further sites.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

In the northern half of the county, 134 (78 adults, 56 juveniles) were at Loanend, Horncliffe on 2nd and 128 on 30th (MHu), 39 were at Fenham Mill on 30th (CGK *et al.*), 24 (two juveniles) at Alnmouth on 17th (JL), six to nine at New Water Haugh and the Tweed Estuary, and two at Seahouses. Few were noted further south, with five to eight in the Linton-Linton Ponds area, six at Whittle Dene Reservoirs and four at Cresswell Pond.

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Two skeins, totalling 1,300 flew S at Spittal (Berwick) on 11th (MHu), about 250 flew SW at the Blyth Estuary on 18th (LJM), 85 N at Swallow Pond on 18th, plus 66 W there on 7th and 41 S on 1st (JPD), 60 S at St Mary's on 4th (IF), and 54 N at Berwick on 29th (MHu). The largest concentrations were 2,000 at East Chevington on 16th (ASJ), 1,200 near Cresswell Pond on 12th (SJH), 1,000 near QEII CP on 13th (MSH), 800 near Holywell Dene on 18th (MSH), 600 at Doddington (RHB), and 110-150 at Cheswick and Outchester. Eight were at Woodhorn.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

Records of Eurasian *albifrons* race birds involved one at Woodhorn on 9th (MSH) and three on 16th (ASJ). Greenland *flavirostris* race birds involved two adults at Woodhorn on 9th (MSH) and one there on 16th (TRD), and one at Grindon Lough on three dates between 5th-16th (SJH/PRM).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

A flock of 16 flew S at Tweedmouth on 19th (MHu). Peak gatherings were 1,000 at Budle Bay on 2nd (DGB), 276 near Elwick on 19th (MSH), 190 at Cheswick on 4th (MHu), 100-131 at Holywell Dene and Woodhorn, and 51-92 at Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, Hauxley Reserve and Prestwick Carr. Counts of 37-44 came from Cocklawburn, Holywell Pond and Widdrington Moor Lake, and ten to 18 from Horncliffe, Outchester and the Tweed Estuary.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Peak counts were 302 at Grindon Lough on 16th (PRM), 173 at Bothal Pond on 16th (TD), 121 at Killingworth Lake on 12th (LJM), 120 at Derwent Reservoir on 26th (STH/IFo), 60 at Widdrington Moor Lake (MSH), 20-35 at Newcastle Leazes Park, QEII CP Lake and the Tweed Estuary, and 12-14 at Arcot Pond and Big Waters. One to six were also at Castle Island, Hauxley Reserve and Woodhorn Flashes.

Reports of *interior* race birds ('Todd's Canada Goose') involved one to six at Bothal Pond on 4th (TB/TRD/JD) and four on 11th (TB).

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

200 were at Harper's Haugh near Budle Bay on 1st and 15th (DGB), and about 190 on 16th (AA). Two were at Widdrington Moor Lake on 1st (MSH) and one at Tynemouth Boating Lake on 8th and 15th (KWY).

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Pale-bellied *hrota* race birds involved 15 N at Seaton Sluice on 5th and five N on 11th (SSWT), three at Newbiggin on 24th (GB), three at Boulmer on 30th (CGK *et al.*) and one there on 12th (MRM).

A total of 42 dark-bellied *bernicla* race birds were at The Ouze (Holy Island) on 7th (IK).

Un-raced birds involved 2,500 at Fenham Flats (undated; JPL/IBDa/KDa) and 1,000 on 12th (ASJ).

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

The Fenham Flats section of Lindisfame NNR held 500 on 12th (JPD/ASJ) and 700 on 16th (JPL/IBDa/KDa). Further south, seven were at Howdon Wetland on 31st (CB) and one at Holywell Pond on 28th (GB).

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

The sole report was of eight at Ridley Stokoe on 8th (PRM).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Light northerly movement involved 42 at Seaton Sluice on 5th (SSWT) and 12 at Berwick on 2nd (MHu). 'Thousands' were at Fenham Flats (undated; JPL/JDL). Cresswell Pond attracted peaks of 300 on 4th (MSH), 1,200-1,500 on 9th (JPD/ASJ)

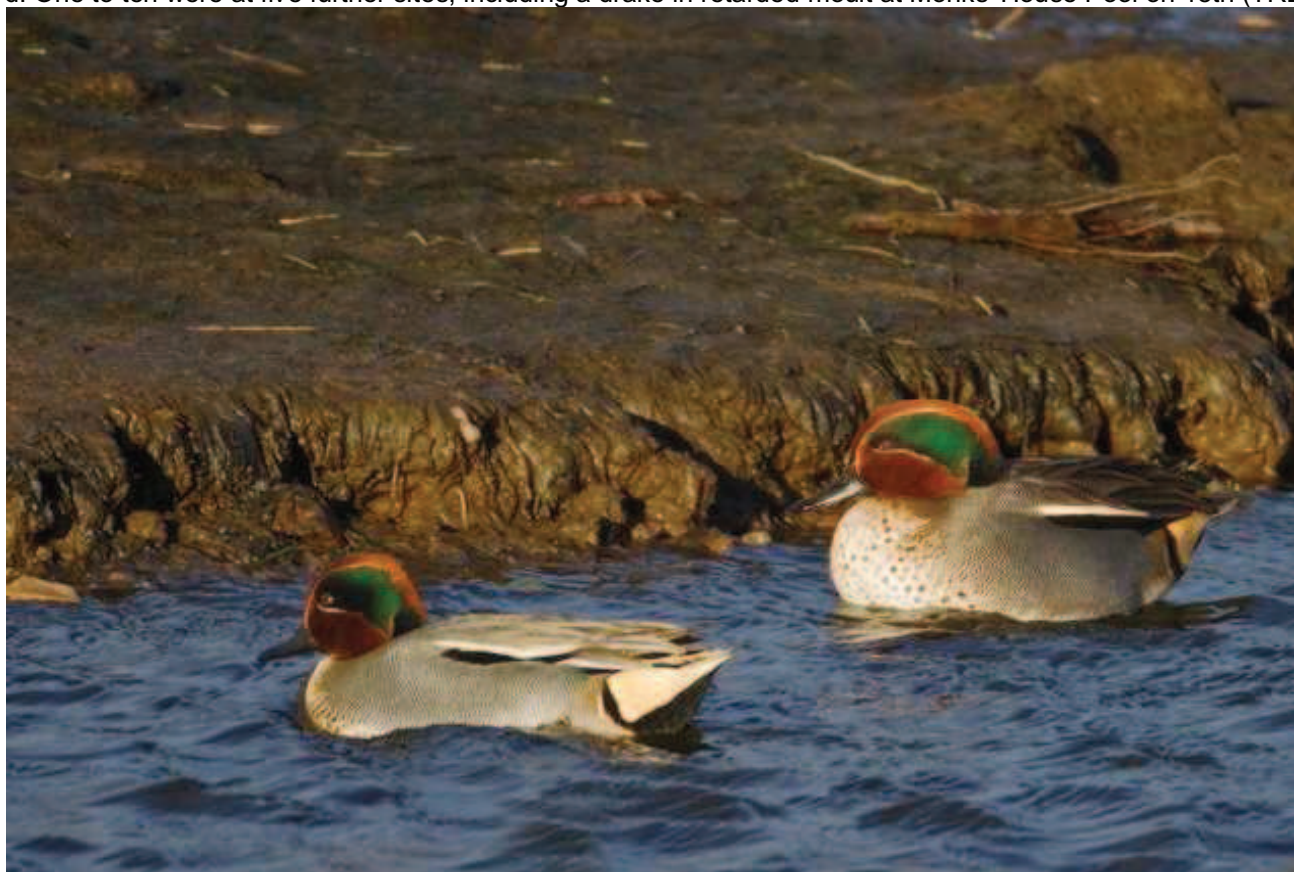
and 292 on 12th (SJH). Other peak counts were 424 at Big Waters on 9th (AJJ *per* GB), 174 at Arcot Pond on 24th (DM), 166 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 26th (SR), 110-136 at the *Beehive* Flash (Earsdon) and Capheaton, 50-97 at Bothal and Swallow Ponds, Grindon Lough, Hauxley Reserve, Longhirst Flash and QEII CP Lake. Two to 26 were at five further sites.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

The only reports came from the south-eastern quarter of the county. Two flew N at Seaton Sluice on 5th (SSWT), 22 were at Arcot Pond on 16th (LJM), 16 at QEII CP Lake on 15th (CDH), 13 at Castle Island on 16th (DM *et al.*), six at Gosforth Park NR/adjacent pool (MHSN) and Swallow Pond (LJM), five at Holywell Pond (MSH) and Woodhorn Flashes (GB), and three at Big Waters. One to two also visited Bothal Pond, Longhirst Flash and St Mary's Wetland. More unusual were five at the Blyth Estuary on 18th (LJM).

Teal *Anas crecca*

About 600 were at Holy Island throughout the month, including about 350 at the 'Rocket Field' and about 250 at the Lough (IK). Peak counts elsewhere were 376 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 31st (SR), 309 at Cresswell Pond on 12th (SJH), 272 at Howdon on 1st (CB), 115-139 at Derwent Reservoir and Grindon Lough, 50-99 at Alnmouth, Arcot, Bothal, Middle Ord and Swallow Ponds, Big Waters, Castle Island, Havannah NR, Tyne Green (Hexham), and 20-47 at the *Beehive* Flash (Earsdon), Hauxley Reserve, Kirkwhelpington Common, Linton Ponds, Longhirst Flash, St Mary's Wetland and West Hartford. One to ten were at five further sites, including a drake in retarded moult at Monks' House Pool on 18th (TRD).



Two drake Teal at Howdon Wetland
by Colin Bradshaw

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Highest counts were 264 at Big Waters on 14th (AJJ *per* GB), 224 at Cocklawburn Pond on 4th (MHu), 179 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 4th (SR), 150 at Fontburn Reservoir on 28th (a high count for this site; TRD/JD), 111-139 at Killingworth Lake (GB) and the Tweed Estuary (MHu), 56-89 at Cresswell and Middle Ord Ponds, Longhirst Flash, Newcastle Leazes Park, QEII CP Lake, St Mary's Wetland, and 20-42 at Arcot, Bothal and Linton Ponds, Castle Island, Gosforth Park NR, Grindon Lough, Hauxley Reserve, Sweethope Lough, and Widdrington Moor Lake. Four to 19 were at seven further sites.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Numbers at Fenham Flats ranged from 30 up to 70 during the month (JPL/JDL *et al.*). Away from this core area, two were at Hauxley Reserve on 13th (HRS), and singles at Arcot, Cresswell and Linton Ponds, East Chevington, and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Swallow Pond attracted a peak of 13 on 27th (CGK), with nine to 12 on several other dates in the month (JPD/CDH/LJM), six were at Cresswell Pond on 12th (SJH), three at Killingworth Lake on 30th (GB), and singles at East Chevington and Longhirst Flash.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Double figure counts involved peaks of 25 at Killingworth Lake on 1st (GB) and 11 at Swallow Pond on 16th (JPD). Four were at Arcot Pond on 28th (STH), four at QEII CP Lake on 9th (STH/IFo/TLC), and two at Branton GP and East Chevington. More unusual was a drake at Tweedmouth Dock on 15th (MHu).

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Peak counts were 175 at East Chevington on 4th (MSH), 173 at Killingworth Lake on 1st (GB), 71 at QEII CP Lake on 15th (CDH), and 24 at both Bothal Pond (TD) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs (SR). Counts of 13-19 came from Arcot, Cresswell and Swallow Ponds, Castle Island and Newcastle Leazes Park. One to six were at eight further sites, including two at Tweedmouth Dock on 15th (MHu).

Scaup *Aythya marila*

One at East Chevington on 26th (TRD/JD) increased to two on 30th (MJC/AC/MSH/CGK). Two were well inland at Branton GP on 29th (IBDa/KDa/TRD/JD).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

264-284 were at Fenham Flats, Lindisfarne NNR on 12th (JPD/ASJ), 32 at Blyth Harbour on 7th (STH), 17 at Berwick North Shore (MHu), seven to ten at Tweedmouth Dock and Tynemouth, and three at the Tweed Estuary.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

One flew S at Newbiggin on 24th (GB). Three to 12 were at Stag Rocks during the month and peaked at 16-20 on 12th (JPD/ASJ). Two, an adult drake and a female or immature, were frequently reported from Cresswell Pond between 1st-29th (IRD/TF/JFa/MSH *et al.*), and singles were at East Chevington on three dates between 9th-30th (IRD/JPD/TRD *et al.*) and Seahouses Harbour on 31st (*per* NNBC).

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

42 at Cheswick on 18th increased to 132 by 24th (MHu), 30 were at Stag Rocks on 12th (BRS), 19 at Beadnell Bay (JPL), and two to four at Alnmouth and St Mary's. Singles were at Cresswell Pond on 1st and 4th (TF/JFa/MSH) and in Blyth Harbour on 7th and 27th (STH).

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

The only report was of one at Stag Rocks on 25th (*per* NNBC).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

14 flew N at Seaton Sluice on 5th (SSWT). The Tweed Estuary attracted 163 on 13th (MHu), 62 were at Tweedmouth Dock on 23rd (BWG/MHu), 47 at East Chevington on 4th (MSH), 21 at Castle Island (DM *et al.*), 11 to 17 at Boulmer, Branton GP, Grindon Lough, Killingworth and QEII CP Lakes, West Ord and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Five to nine were also at Big Waters, Bothal and Cresswell Ponds, Howick Haven and Kitty Brewster, and two to four at Alnmouth, Amble, Berwick North Shore, Broomlee Lough, Derwent Reservoir, Hauxley Reserve, Monks' House and Newton Pools, and Seahouses GC. Display was noted at Howick Haven on 9th (MRM) and Killingworth Lake on 1st (GB).

Smew *Mergellus albellus*

A drake was at Fenham-le-Moor on 12th (JDL) and a 'redhead' at East Chevington on 30th (MJC/AC/MSH/CGK).

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Two flew N at St Mary's on 5th (MSH). Seven to 13 frequented Cresswell Pond between 8th-29th and peaked at 14 on 9th (STH/IFo/TLC) and 12th (SJH), nine were at Spittal Bay on 3rd (MHu), nine at the Tweed Estuary on 18th (BWG), seven at Cheswick (MHu), four to five at the Blyth Estuary, Castle Island, East Chevington, and three at Kitty Brewster and West Ord. One to two were at Alnmouth, Beadnell Bay, Boulmer, Hauxley Reserve, Newbiggin and Seahouses. More unusual was a first-winter drake on the River Wansbeck at Sheepwash on 10th (MSK).

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

The Tweed Estuary held 18 on 13th (MHu), 11 were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 9th (SR), 11 at Greenlee Lough on 16th (MRS), nine to ten at Newcastle Exhibition Park (DHWB) and Tyne Green, Hexham (AJR), and three to five at Airy Holm and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, Alnmouth wetlands, Branton GP, Craggside, Foxton Bends, Killingworth and QEII CP Lakes, Thrum Mill and West Allotment Pond. One to two were also at the Aln Estuary, Arcot Pond, Marden Quarry and Ridley Stokoe.

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

At Fellhouse Fell (Plenmeller Common) 27 including six territorial males were present on 17th (MH), whilst on 11th seven were present at Plenmeller Common (SJH).

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

The only record came from Hazlerigg (Belford) where four were present on 30th (CGK/AC/MSH/MJC).

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

The highest counts were 15 at Newbiggin on 24th (GB), 14 at Chare Ends (Holy Island) on 8th, which was the largest group in the area during the year (IK), 12 at Druridge Pools NR on 9th (TD) and eight at Middle Ord (Berwick) on 23rd (MHu). Seven were at Duke's Pond (Rising Sun CP) on 7th (JPD), Ellington on 8th (TB) and Boulmer on 16th (NFO). Six were at Branton on 12th (IBDa/KDa) and five in fields adjacent to Gosforth Park NR on 30th (NHSN). Three to four were noted at Backworth, Big Waters, Chugdon Wood (Ellington), Elwick and Fenham-le-Moor.

A digiscoped Grey Partridge
Boulmer
by Neil Osborne

**Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus*

Three were seen regularly in Holywell Dene and Hartley West Farm during the month (RJP). Three (two females) were in a Walbottle garden on 2nd (KR/LR) and two males were on Arcot Lane on 24th.

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Six were offshore at Newbiggin on 24th (GB) and two were at Stag Rocks on 16th (AJR) and 18th (TRD), and at Spittal Bay (Newbiggin) on 24th (GB). Singles were noted at Alnmouth, Berwick Old Bridge, Blyth South Harbour, East Chevington, Fenham-le-Moor, Ross Back Sands and in the Tweed Estuary.

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

One flew N at Seaton Sluice on 5th (SSWT). Two were off Stag Rocks on 16th (MRM/AJR). A juvenile was at Bothal Pond from 1st-11th (TF/JFa/many observers). Other singles were near Warkworth Weir on 2nd (AH) and off Boulmer on 16th (NFO).

The popular
Great Northern Diver
Bothal Pond
by Tim Dean



Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

One flew N at Snab Point on 12th (STE). Two were calling from Hartley cliffs on 8th (STE).

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

Light N movement was noted at Seaton Sluice with 29 in 2 hours on 10th, 21 in 3 hours on 5th and seven in four hours on 7th (SSWT), when two flew N at St Mary's Island (MSH).

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

The peak counts were 76 at Tynemouth on 26th (PRM), 64 at North Shields Fish Quay on 29th (MSH) and 41 at Blyth South Harbour on 7th (STH). Counts of 12 came from Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 2nd (MHu) and QEII Lake on 15th (CDH), whilst ten were at Big Waters on 9th (GB), nine in the Tweed Estuary on 13th (MHu) and at Derwent Reservoir on 26th (STH/IFo) and eight at Berwick North Shore on 12th (MHu). One to two were noted at Bellingham, Castle Island, Horton Burn (Cramlington), Holywell Dene, Wark, West Allotment Pond and flying over West Hartford.

Reports of *sinensis* race birds involved singles at Widdrington Moor Lake on 1st (MSH) and Swallow Pond on 26th/27th (AC/CGK).

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Two flew N at St Mary's Island on 7th (MSH). Peak counts were 18 at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 2nd (MHu), 14 in Blyth South Harbour on 27th, six in Spittal Bay on 3rd (MHu) and five off Stag Rocks on 18th (TRD). One to four were noted at Alnmouth, East Chevington, North Shields Fish Quay, St Mary's Island and Seahouses.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Three were again present throughout the month at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN), where three individual birds were noted on 2nd (BMo). Singles were seen at Big Waters on 4th (AJJ), East Chevington North Pool on 9th (STH/IFo/TLC) and 16th (STH/IFo/DM/PJA), when a single was also noted at Cresswell Pond (CDB).

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Singles were noted at Budle Bay on 16th (AJR) and 18th (TRD), Fenham Slake on 18th (IBDa/KDa/JPL), Warkworth Gut on 27th (MRM) and Fenham-le-Moor on 28th (CMur/VWa).

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

The peak counts were 21 in the Tweed Estuary on 13th (MHu) and 14 at Howdon Wetland NR on 3rd (CB). Elsewhere one to two were noted at Arcot Pond, Berwick North Shore, Cramlington (Beacon Lane and Valley Park), Cresswell Pond, Holywell Dene, Leazes Park (Newcastle), QEII Lake and Wark.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

At least ten were on the River Aln at Alnmouth on 17th (JL). Six were in the Tweed Estuary on 13th (MHu) and three at Cresswell Pond on 4th (MSH) and Tweedmouth Dock on 26th (MHu). One to two were noted at Beggar's Rigg (Rothbury), Bothal Pond, Castle Island, East Chevington, Foxton Bends, Killingworth Lake, QEII Lake and Shasun Pharma (Dudley), where it represented a first site record.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

A single was off Ross Back Sands on 26th (IBDa/KDa).

Slavonian Grebe
Podiceps auritus

Seven were off Stag Rocks on 18th (TRD), where up to five were noted on three further dates. Six were off Holy Island on 31st (IK) and four off Ross Back Sands on 13th/26th (IBDa/KDa/NNBC). Singles were at Fenham-le-Moor on 25th, East Chevington on 26th/30th and at the unusual location of Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 30th, being the first sighting here for the observer in 22 years of visits (DM). It is believed to have been present here for several days.

The Leazes Park Slavonian Grebe

by Colin Bradshaw



Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Only two records this Month involving single birds at Low Waskerley on 4th (IFo) and near Bardon Mill on 15th (SJH).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

A ringtail was seen in the north of the County throughout December and another ringtail was at another site on several dates (RSPB/MH).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

A 1st-year bird tried to catch Woodpigeons *Columba palumbus* at a site in the north on 26th (MH/BH)

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Two were at Scotland Gate throughout the month (SLB/MSK) and single birds were at Holywell Dene (RJP) & Rothbury TRD/JD) throughout the month. Single birds were also noted at 13 further sites.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

At Bolton (near Alnwick) six birds were noted along 3 miles of roadside on 26th (MH/BH). Three birds were at Hulne Park on 13th (JMA) and at Big Waters on 25th (AJN). One - two birds were noted at a 15 other locations during the month.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Nine birds were on the Otterburn Ranges on 2nd (IK/BG); seven were noted between Blyth and East Chevington on 26th (PCF). Three birds were seen at the Long Nanny on 10th (MH/AA) and at Ray Estate on 30th (MH), two were at Cresswell Pond, Grindon Lough, between Holystone & Killingworth, Holywell Pond and at Warren Mill. Single birds were observed at 12 sites.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

A single bird was seen to take a Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus* at East Chevington on 16th (ASJ); other single birds were at Fenham-le-Moor on 25th (CMur/VWa) and at Holy Island on 30th (CGK/AC/MSH/MJC).

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

An adult was seen perched on the roadside near Holystone on 28th (HAKn).

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Two birds were seen at Budle Bay on 16th (AA) and on 30th (CGK/AC/MSH/MJC). One – two birds were on or near Holy Island on a handful of dates (MSH/IK *et al.*). Single birds were seen on or near the coast at Elwick on 16th (JPL), *Beehive* Flash (Earsdon) on 18th (MNC), Brierdene (Whitley Bay) on 24th (MSH). Inland records included birds at Big Waters on 9th (GB) and at Newcastle Airport on 30th (IF).

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Two birds were at Swallow Pond on 7th (JPD), One or more birds were at Gosforth Park NR throughout the month (NHSN). Singles were seen or heard at Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Hauxley NWT, Howdon, Jesmond Dene, River Blyth Estuary and at West Hartford.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Druridge Bay CP had the highest numbers with a peak count of 23 on 4th (IF), 21 were at Big Waters on 9th (GB). 19 were at Cresswell Pond on 14th (PCF) and at Swallow Pond on 7th (JPD) and 18 were at Killingworth Lake on 12th (LJM). One – ten birds were at eight further sites.

Coot *Fulica atra*

QEII CP had the highest count this month with 241 birds present on 15th (CDH) followed by 138 birds at Killingworth Lake on 12th (LJM). 54 birds were at Woodhorn Flashes on 24th (GB) and 52 were at East Chevington on 23rd (JPD), 34 birds were at Bothal Pond on 16th (TD) and at Arcot Pond on 24th (DM). One to sixteen birds were at Big Waters, Castle Island, Leazes Park (Newcastle), Monks' House Pool and at Tweedmouth Dock.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

In the north, the WeBS count at Berwick North Shore produced 227 on 12th (MHu) and 180 were counted in Budle Bay on the same date (ASJ/JPD), whilst 110 at St Mary's on the 8th was the peak further south (ASJ). Elsewhere, 60-82 were seen at Berwick GC, Cullercoats Bay and Newbiggin (MHu/MN/MSH), 44-45 were at Hauxley NWT and Stag Rocks (HRS/JPD/ASJ) and two were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 4th (SR).

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

The flock of roosting birds on a factory roof in Blyth harbour totalled 103 on 27th (STH/MHp) and another roosting flock involved 40 at Newbiggin beach on 24th (GB). Further coastal stretches attracted 33 at Cresswell beach on 19th (STE), 30 at East Chevington on 29th (TD), 26 at Berwick North Shore on 12th (MHu) and seven at Cullercoats Bay on 29th (MN).

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

A flock of 750+ was feeding on root crops at Newton (Links House) on 10th (MH/AA). In the south, 210+ were noted at Cresswell Pond on 4th (MSH), 120 were at St Mary's Island on 16th (TRD), whilst inland some 70 were seen at Airy Holm Reservoir (near Shotleyfield) on 10th (IFo). A group of 105 remained in the Coquet Estuary area all month (JMA) and 26-60 were seen at Backworth, Cocklawburn, Ellington, Longhirst and Pegswood. Four birds were seen feeding on a sports field during the night at the Royal Grammar School, Jesmond on 12th (GB).



A Golden Plover in flight at St. Mary's
by Jonathan Farooqi

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

A count of 40 at Budle Bay on 12th was the highest (ASJ), although counts of 18 at Newbiggin on 24th (GB) and 15 on the Blyth Estuary on 18th (LJM) were good totals for the south of the county. One to five were also noted at Alnmouth, Berwick North Shore and Boulmer (Seaton Point).

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Three counts of 500-600 were made at Cresswell Pond during the month (ASJ/IRD/TD) and 420 were at nearby Snab Point on 16th (ASJ). Other good flocks included 400 at Derwent Reservoir on 24th (IFo), 250 at both St Mary's (ASJ) and Widdrington Moor Lake (MSH), 150 at Prestwick Carr (PCF) and 136 at the Tweed Estuary (MHu). Groups of 60-86 were at Cocklawburn, Grindon Lough and Hebron, and 30 moved E over Big Waters on 2nd (GB).

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Few reports this month, the only double figure count being ten at Cresswell on 29th (TD), with one to five also recorded at Boulmer (Seaton Point), Cresswell Pond and Newbiggin.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

A count of 169 at St Mary's on 23rd (ASJ) was the highest and 120 at Whitley Bay beach on 28th (KWY) may have included part of the same group. Other coastal gatherings included 40 at East Chevington shore on 29th (TD), 32+ at Low Newton on 10th (MN/AA), 25 at Blyth South Beach on 16th (TRD), 24 at Berwick North Shore on 12th (MHu), 18 at Newbiggin on 15th (STH) and two at Alnmouth on 3rd (TRD).

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Well reported from Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) throughout the month, with the highest total being 150 albeit with no actual date submitted (JDL/JBen *et al.*). A total of 30 at Newbiggin on 24th involved 11 roosting on the breakwater and at 19 at Beacon Point (GB). Counts from the north included 26 at Berwick North Shore on 12th (MHu), 21+ at Low Newton on 10th (MH/AA) and 18 at Cheswick Black Rocks on 11th (MHu). 15 were at the high tide roost in Cullercoats Bay on 29th (MN) and one to seven were noted at Blyth Harbour, Blyth South Beach, Boulmer (Seaton Point), Seahouses and St Mary's.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

A report of 1,000+ at Fenham-le-Moor on 12th was the highest by far (ASJ). A total of 136 were roosting on a factory roof in Blyth Harbour on 27th (STH/MHp) and 123 roosted at Beacon Point (Newbiggin) on 24th (GB). St Mary's attracted 120 on 8th (ASJ), 104 were at Berwick North Shore on 12th (MHu) and at Cresswell Pond a series of reports saw numbers increase from 17 on 9th, to 27 on 14th, to 67 on 23rd and a peak of 101 roosting in front of the hide on 26th (TRD/JD/PCF *et al.*). On the Tyne, 51 were counted at Scotswood on 16th (PCF), whilst elsewhere, 15 were noted at Cullercoats Bay on 29th (MN) and three fed in root crops with Golden Plovers at Newton (Links House) on 10th (MH/AA).

A Dunlin
Hadston Carr
16th December
Chris Barlow



Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Three were at Howdon during 15th to 23rd (CB *et al.*). Singles were seen at St Mary's Wetland on 6th (AC), Shankhouse Bridge (Cramlington) on 16th (DM), West Hartford on 23rd (AA) and again on a 'handful of dates' at Backworth (CGK *et al.*).

A Jack Snipe at Howdon
Wetlands by Colin
Bradshaw



Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

The highest count was of some 30 at St Mary's Wetland on 6th (AC) and the peak at Howdon was 12 on 15th (CB). Three to seven were noted at Cresswell Pond, Gosforth Park, Newbiggin GC and Swallow Pond and one or two at Big Waters, Corbridge, Monks' House Pool and Woodhorn Flashes.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Three were at Raylees Common on 20th (IRD) and two at Alnwick Moor on 4th (IBDa/KDa). Singles were found at several places: Arcot Hall GC, Backworth, Chatton, Druridge Bay CP, East Chevington, Gosforth Park, High Seat, Howdon, Howick Hall, North Shields and Swallow Pond.

A Woodcock flies by
Druridge Bay CP
Jonathan Farrooqi



Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

The only one flew N offshore at St Mary's on 8th (AC) in company with three Bar-tailed Godwits.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Some 180-210 were in the Budle Bay/Ross Links area on 12th (JPD/ASJ). A count of 23 on 18th (LJM) was described as high for R Blyth Estuary and eight or fewer were seen at Alnmouth, Beadnell, Berwick, Cheswick, Hauxley NR, Low Newton, Newbiggin and St Mary's.



Curlew at Howdon Wetland
Colin Bradshaw

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

The Newton area held around 400 at the Links on 5th (DGB/RHB) and 216+ at Long Nanny on 10th (MH/AA); 156 were feeding in fields at high tide at Hadston on 1st (MH). St Mary's held 127 on 8th and 130 on 29th (ASJ/CGK/AJ), 23-58 were at Berwick, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Hauxley NR, Holywell Dene, Prestwick Carr and the Tweed Estuary.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Whittle Dene Reservoirs had a monopoly: one on 2nd (JPD) and two on 24th (SR).

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

Two were at Fenham-le-Moor on 12th (JDL) and one at Elwick Pool on 16th (IBDa/KDa/JPL).

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

The only one was in Budle Bay on 30th (CGK/AC/MSH/MJC).

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

The WeBS count of 290 in R Tweed Estuary on 13th (MHu) was the highest. The high-tide roost at Cullercoats contained 190 on 29th (MN), a regular presence at Howdon peaked at 182 on 15th (CB), 125 were at St Mary's on 27th (ASJ) and 100+ at Cresswell on 29th (TD) with 98 roosting on the breakwater at Newbiggin on 24th (GB). Smaller numbers occurred in the Berwick area, at Bothal Pond and Castle Island.



A Turnstone at Hadston
Carr
16th December
Chris Barlow

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

The Links (Whitley Bay) held 42 on 20th (ASJ), 31 were at Tynemouth on 26th (PRM), 30 at Berwick on 12th and 20 in the R Tweed Estuary on 13th (both MHu); 12-14 were found at Blyth, Cheswick, Cocklawburn and Cullercoats. Small numbers

appeared at Alnmouth, East Chevington, Howdon and St Mary's.

Grey Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius*

At Bothal Pond one flew in from W on 4th (JD/TRD), settled on the surface for a few seconds and then flew off SE.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

An unusual record for late December was a flock of 28 adults over the river and harbour at Blyth before moving N (STH/MHp). Other recorded movements were 11 and 12 N at Seaton Sluice on 5th and 12th respectively (SSWT) and a single adult S at Newbiggin on 24th (GB).

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

A flock of 620 fed over a flooded field at Middle Ord (Berwick) on 23rd and 460 were recorded at nearby West Ord on the same day (MHu). Elsewhere gatherings during the month were 250-350 at Jesmond Dene, Prestwick Carr, QEII CP Lake and the River Tweed estuary (MJCo/PCF/CDH/MHu). Leazes Park in Newcastle held good numbers during the month peaking at 154 on 30th with 61 at Exhibition Park on the same day (DM). 100 were at Boulmer on 6th (JMA) and a WeBS survey on 16th recorded 85 at Castle Island on 16th (PJA/IFo/STH/DM). Smaller flocks of eight-38 were at three other sites including 24 feeding in an observer's garden at Walbottle on 30th (KR/LR).

A Black Headed Gull at
Killingworth Lake
Adriana Buskin



Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

An uncommon winter sighting in the county was a first-winter bird which fed briefly at the North Shields Fish Quay on 30th (AIB/GB/TF/JFa).

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

The favoured Newbiggin location provided a maximum count of eight on 30th (STH) with three recorded there on 15th and 19th (STE/STH). Other records, all of single adult or 2nd-winter birds, came from Amble Harbour, Cresswell Pond, St Mary's Island, Tynemouth Boating Lake and Whitley Bay.

Common Gull *Larus canus*

The largest concentrations were 280 at West Ord on 23rd (MHu), 150 inland at Grindon Lough on 10th (SJH) and 130 at Cocklawburn on 4th (MHu). Elsewhere 38-72 were at Big Waters, Cheswick, Longhirst and the River Tweed Estuary (GB/TD/MHu) whilst two-four frequented Arcot Pond, Castle Island, Jesmond Dene and Leazes Park.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

The over-wintering adult bird was seen again at Northumberland Business Park, Cramlington on 7th (DM) and elsewhere records were of single adults, possibly the same individual, at Shiremoor on 10th (CGK) and Swallow Pond on 18th (JPD).

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argenteus*

The only sizeable flocks were 115 recorded on the River Tweed Estuary during a WeBS survey on 13th (MHu) and 29 at Castle Island, also found during a WeBS survey, on 16th (PJA/IFo/STH/DM). Three-ten were at Berwick North Shore, Jesmond Dene and Leazes Park with two in an observer's garden at South Gosforth.

Three adults of the Northern race *ssp argentatus* were at North Shields Fish Quay on 29th (AJ/CGK).

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoideus*

A 1st-winter was at Swallow Pond on 24th (*per* JPD) and a 2nd-winter was reported at the North Shields Fish Quay on 27th (AC).

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

A juvenile which flew S along the links at St Mary's Island on 6th (MSH) was possibly the bird seen in this area during late November. A juvenile was at North Shields Fish Quay on 27th (AC) and two days later a 1st-winter appeared at this site and was a popular visitor seen by many observers during its brief stay (STH).

Greater Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

The largest gathering was 26 at Castle Island on 16th, found during a WeBS survey (PJA/IFo/STH/DM) and 12 were on the River Tweed Estuary on 13th (MHu). Two to three were also at Berwick North Shore and inland at Grindon Lough.

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

A single bird was seen on the sea at Tynemouth on 26th (PRM).

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

A count of 91 on the roof of a block of flats in South Jesmond on 17th (PCF), two counts in Cramlington both of 16 at Southfield Green on 1st and going to roost at the Sporting Club on 16th (DM) with two in the observer's garden in South Gosforth on 18th (MJCo).

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

A large gathering of 178 at Station Road (Wallsend) on 11th (LJM), with peak monthly counts of 69 at Howdon on 3rd (CB) and 37 at Swallow Pond on 9th (JPD). 14 were at Holywell Dene on 5th, 13 at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 8th, with two to eight at Big Waters, Jesmond Dene, Northumberland Park (North Shields) and Walbottle.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Four-figure counts of 2,500+ near Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene) on 18th (MSH) and 1,000+ north of Corbridge on 30th (RB/MB) with 500 at Fenham-le-Moor on 12th (ASJ) and Crow Hall Lane (Cramlington) on 17th (LJM). Gatherings in a Walbottle field peaked at 450 on 24th (KR/LR) with 120 to 360 at Loanend (Horncliffe), New Water Haugh (R.Tweed), Prestwick Carr and two to 36 at Jesmond Dene, South Gosforth and on the Ray Estate.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Six were at Cramlington on 25th (PCF), three at Chapel House on 13th (MH) with two at Matthew Bank (Jesmond Dene) on 12th and in the observer's garden at Walbottle on 16th.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

On Holy Island three were noted regularly throughout the month (IK) with all other reports being of singles at Annitsford on 6th, Cramlington and Wark on 9th, Kirkharle and Branton on 10th, Alnwick, Felton & Stannington on 12th and Brunton on 26th with un-dated reports also from Beadnell, Chatton, Doddington and Yearle.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Singles at Big Waters on 2nd (GB), Otterburn ranges on the same date, where the bird was first recorded at the farmstead site in 2010 (IK/BG), and at Battle Bridge (Edlingham) on 14th (AH).

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Multiple birds sang at Scotland Gate (SLB/MSK) during the month with singles regularly at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN/CGK/AC/MSH/MJC), Sheepwash on 9th (MSK/NEWT), Eglington on 14th (IBDa/KDa), Walbottle Hall on 25th (KR/LR) and Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 31st (MNC).

Long-eared Owl *Asio Otus*

No reports on this final month of the survey.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Numbers declined during the month at Holy Island with just 3 to 4 remaining by 31st (IK) and three were at Swallow Pond on 2nd with one to two remaining till 18th (JPD). Two were at Goswick GC on 9th with single birds seen regularly at Tughall Dunes and West Hartford plus over the sea at Alnmouth on 3rd, Backwork Pond on 6th, Shirlaw Pike on 13th, Lordenshaw & East Chevington on 16th, Druridge Pools on 19th and at Prestwick Carr on 26th.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Two were at Spindlestone Woods on 2nd and 3rd (per NNBC) with singles at Horton Burn (Cramlington) from 11th to 16th (PJA/LJM/DM), Swallow Pond on 13th and 18th, on the coast at Stag Rocks on 12th (JPD) and also at Big Waters, Branton GP, Black Plantation (Gosforth), Havannah NR, Jesmond Dene, Killingworth Lake, Morpeth, Swallow Pond and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Just two reports of singles at Havannah NR on 15th (GB) and visiting a garden in Bellingham on 21st (per PCF).

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

More than three were at Gosforth Park NR during the month (NHSN) with three visiting feeders in a Dinnington garden on 2nd (PCF), at Plessey Woods CP on 15th (PRM) and Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 16th and 31st (MNC). Up to two visited garden feeders regularly in an Old Hartley Garden (RJP) and at Tynemouth (CB) with two also at Swallow Pond on 1st (JPD), Rothbury on 25th (TRD/JD) and Big Waters on 26th (GB). Singles were at Scotland Gate occasionally, at Netherton Park (Stannington) on two dates and at 11 other widely spread localities.

Magpie *Pica pica*

Numbers at Swallow Pond rose from 59 on 1st to 104 on 18th (JPD) with roosts of 30 at Redhouse Farm on 3rd (CS), 28 at Big Waters on 9th (GB) and 26 at Howdon Wetland NR on 16th (MSH/CB) where they mobbed a Sparrowhawk. One to 16 were at Callerton, Cramlington, Jesmond Dene, Riding Mill and South Gosforth.



A Magpie at Howdon Wetland
by Colin Bradshaw

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Plessey Woods CP held five on 15th (PRM), four were found by the R. Wansbeck between Morpeth and Bothal on 2nd (IRD) and at Hulne Park on 13th (JMA) with three at Linden Hall, Longhorsley on 9th (NFO). Two were regularly at Scotland Gate, Swallow Pond and also at Arcot Hall GC, Gosforth Park NR, Morpeth and South Gosforth being noted as the observer's first there in 30 years (AJD). Singles were at seven further locations.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

High counts of 110 at Walbottle Hall on 27th (KR/LR), 60 at Alnwick on 13th (JMA), 52 at Alexandra Park (Cramlington) on 23rd (DM) and 21 at Paddy Freeman's Playing Field on the same date (MJCo) with five the peak in the observer's garden at Walbottle on 16th.

Birds showing characteristics of the Nordic species *C.m.monedula* were at Newbiggin on 24th and Killingworth Lake on 30th, presumably being the same individual seen here over the last few winters (GB).

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

A large flock of 750+ fed on stubble fields at Kirkwhelpington Common on 30th (MH) with 100 at Alnwick Moor on 13th and 75 at Riding Mill on 11th (JMA).

Carriion Crow *Corvus corone*

The largest count was 23 at Howdon on 26th (CB) with one to four at Jesmond Dene, St Mary's Island, South Gosforth and Walbottle.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

One was at Ross Links on 12th (ASJ/JPD).

Raven *Corvus corax*

A pair inspected a regular nesting site at Otterburn Ranges on 2nd (IK/BG), two were at Branton on 12th (IBDa/KDa) and one near Ridsdale on 15th (IFo).

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Ten were at Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 3rd (MNC), five+ at Plessey Woods CP on 15th (PRM), three at Jesmond Dene on 16th (MJCo) and singles at Dam Dykes & Valley Park (Cramlington), Havannah NR, Howdon, Jesmond, Leazes Park, Netherton Park (Stannington) and Wark (North Tyne).

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

At Spindlestone 13 were trapped and ringed on 12th (MSH/JCD), eight at Swallow Pond on 8th (JPD), six in a Cramlington garden on the same date (PJA), five the peak monthly count in a Walbottle garden on 20th (KR/LR) and at Eachwick on 25th (CDB), with four trapped and ringed at Eshott on 1st and four in the observer's garden at South Gosforth on 5th.



An inquisitive Blue Tit at Eachwick on 5th December by Chris Barlow

Great Tit *Parus major*

Six were at Jesmond Dene on 30th (MJCo), five trapped and ringed at Eshott on 1st and four at Spindlestone on 12th (MSH/JCD). Gardens at Walbottle had four on 20th and two at Beatty Avenue (South Gosforth) on 27th.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Ringling numbers of 13 at Eshott on 1st and five at Spindlestone on 12th (MSH/JCD) with six the peak count in an Old Hartley garden during the month, three at Eachwick on 25th and two at South Gosforth on 18th and Jesmond Dene on 30th.



A Willow Tit in a Tranwell garden on 5th December by Peter Tapsell

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

Two were at Linden Hall (Longhorsley) on 25th (Nfo), a pair at Hadrian Pond (Rising Sun CP) on 27th (CGK) with singles regularly at Scotland Gate, Big Waters and at Arcot Pond on 16th, Arcot GC on 24th and Eachwick on 25th.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

On 9th & 16th two were at Linden Hall (Longhorsley) with singles on five other dates (NFO) and seen occasionally at Scotland Gate (SLB/MSK), at Thrum Mill (Rothbury) on 5th & 20th (TRD/JD), R Wansbeck and Wark on 2nd (IRD/PRM), Letah Wood (Hexham) on 9th (AJH). Birds were attracted to garden feeders at Fulbeck (Morpeth) on 26th (TD) and Rothbury on 27th (TRD/JD).

Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*

Presumably the same birds as last month remained at East Chevington with three seen on 2nd (CDB), and one to two on 15th and 16th.

One of the Bearded Tits which visited East Chevington.
Photographed by Chris Barlow on 2nd December

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

The only report was five at Woodhorn Flashes on 24th (GB).

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

The largest counts were of 26 in a Walbottle garden on 26th, this the highest number recorded here in 26 years (KR/LR) and 25 at Linton Ponds on 2nd (TB). Flocks of 20+ were noted at Holywell Dene on 6th (MSH) and Plessey Woods CP on 15th (PRM); at North Shields, 20 were at Northumberland Park and 15 at Preston Cemetery on 31st (MNC). Up to 14 were found at Yearle during the month, 13 in Jesmond Dene on 4th, 12 at Hulne Park on 13th and 11 at Cramlington on 26th. Elsewhere eight to ten+ were reported from Arcot Hall GC, Hazlerigg, Newcastle (Leazes Park), South Gosforth and Wark (North Tyne) and two to seven from a further 12 localities, including Holy Island, where there were two on 8th.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

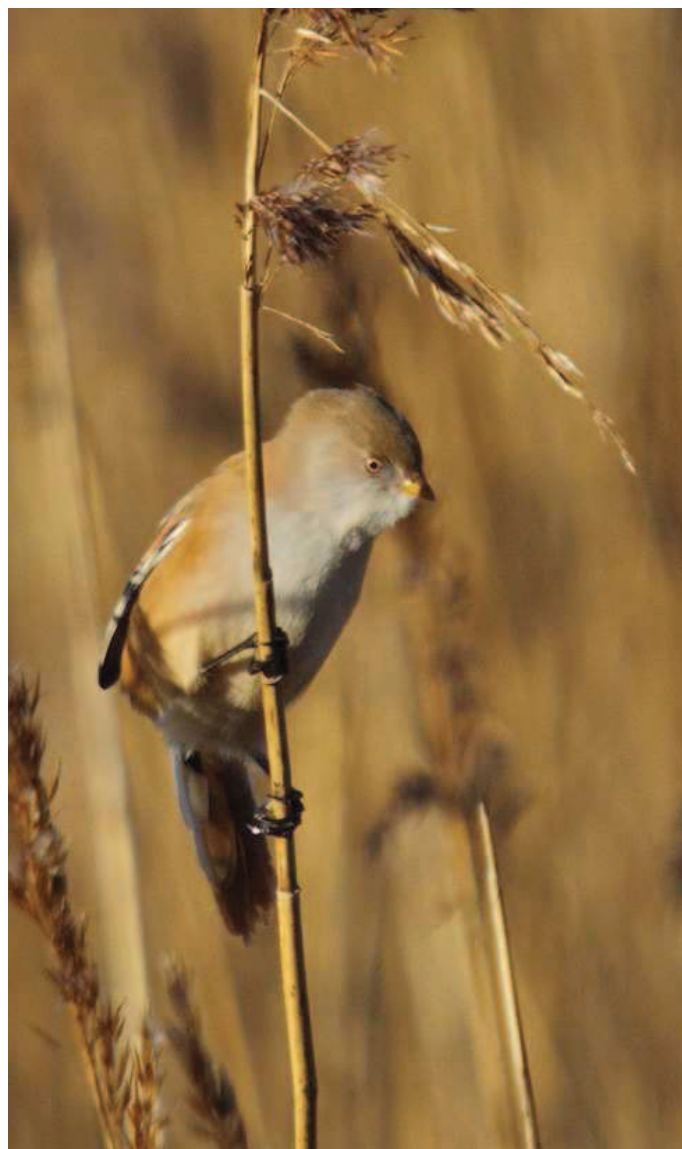
A single bird was present at Morpeth (County Hall) from 7th-12th (MJC) and another at Sandyford on 24th (DHWB). Two were found at Newcastle (Gosforth Home Farm) on 31st (MJC).

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Five wintering birds were noted. In a Gosforth garden a female was present throughout the month and a male from 5th-9th (STE); a female was at Earsdon (Fenwick's Close Farm) on 2nd (CGK) and males at Lesbury on 23rd (MRM) and Tynemouth on 26th (CB).

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

Numbers were much reduced after the November influx, probably due to the county's poor berry crop which may have forced birds to move on. The larger flocks were again reported from the south-east conurbations and in particular the Gosforth-Killingworth area. The actual numbers involved is complicated by the mobile nature of the species with many reports likely to refer to the same birds. Nevertheless, 64 were counted in the Melton Park-Gosforth Park area on 31st, while 45-50 at Heathery Lane-Longbenton on the same day must be assumed to be part of the same flock (MJC). A gathering of 50 was at Killingworth (Morrisons car park) on 12th-13th (IF), 44 were at Wideopen on 19th (GB) and two flocks of 40 were noted



Two Waxwings at North Shields by Colin Bradshaw

in Gosforth on 19th, the latter at least were again probably the same birds (AJD). At North Shields a flock of 37 on 8th had reduced to 18 on 9th with 15 still present to 20th (CB/ME). Further flocks of 33 were reported from Gosforth on 8th (NHSN) and 17 over Government offices at Longbenton on 7th (KWY). The peak count from the Cramlington area was nine on 3rd (PJA).

Very few were noted away from the south-east, larger flocks including 19 at Druridge Bay CP on 1st (TF/JFa), 12 at Alnwick on 31st (JMA), ten at Stamfordham on 9th (EC), ten at Chevington Moor on 12th (STE) and eight at Bamburgh on 6th and Middleton on 8th. One to five were reported from Branton GP, Cresswell Pond, Hexham, Newcastle Centre (Hancock Museum) and Shielhope.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

A total of four were found in Jesmond Dene on 16th (MJCo) and up to three in Holywell Dene (MSH). Three were noted along the R. Wansbeck from Morpeth-Bothal on 2nd (IRD) and two daily at a garden feeder in Ponteland (MPR). Singles were also reported from Arcot Hall GC, Middleton (Belford), South Gosforth, Spindleston and Wark (North Tyne).

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

The highest day count was three at Gosforth Park NR on 1st (AJN). Singles were noted at Bellingham, Corbridge, Holywell Pond, Jesmond Dene, Kielder, Plessey Woods, Ponteland, Prestwick Carr, Stamfordham, Walbottle and Wark (North Tyne).

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Singles were reported from Corbridge, East Chevington and Jesmond Dene.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Very few flocks were reported. The largest was 250+ at Blyth on 29th (DM) followed by 200 at Thirlwall (Greenhead) on 17th (MH). A roost at Alnwick (Morrisons) numbered 150 on 6th and 200 on 13th (JMA) and 100 were at Boulmer on 6th. The only other reports were 20 at Netherton Park and five to six at Jesmond Dene and St Mary's Island.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Pairs were noted in Jesmond Dene at Benton Bank Bridge on 4th, Waterfall on 16th and Jesmond Vale on 30th (MJCo) and at Rothbury (Beggar's Rigg) on 10th (TRD). Reports of singles also came from Cramlington (Horton Burn), Corbridge, Holywell Dene, Jesmond Dene (North Lodge), Kielder Castle area, Morpeth (Fulbeck) and Rothbury (Thrum Mill).

A bird showing characteristics possibly of the Continental race **Black-bellied Dipper** *C.c. cinclus* was reported from Holywell Dene on 5th (AJR).

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Swallow Pond held the largest numbers with 29 on 1st rising to 66 by 8th (JPD). A 1km walk at Cramlington (Horton Burn) produced 24 on 13th (LJM) and up to 14 were noted in an observer's garden at Walbottle during the month (KR/LR). Counts of ten came from an Alnwick garden, Holywell Dene and Kenton and four to five at Great Whittington and Jesmond Dene. One to three were noted at a further four localities including singing males at Chapel House and Shiremoor on 13th and 26th respectively.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

At Black Callerton a flock of ca.200 on 30th was the largest gathering (CDB); about 80 were at Plenmeller Village on 17th (MH), 50 at Eachwick on 25th (CDB) and 40 at Netherton Park on 9th (RWM/MIM). Lesser flocks of 22-26 were reported from Ellington (Chugdon Wood), Holywell Dene and Thornton and 20+ arriving from E on 12th may have been late immigrants. Some 13-16 were noted at Gosforth Park NR, Newcastle (Gosforth Home Farm) and Kitty Brewster and one to ten at a further 11 localities. Signs of meagre pickings in the wider countryside was suggested by odd birds enticed into gardens at Netherton Park and Kenton, the latter a garden 'first' for the observer.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Up to eight were noted at Gosforth Park NR during the month (NHSN) and three were present at Howdon for most of the month (CB). Two were reported from Jesmond Dene on 4th and Newbiggin on 24th and singles at Corbridge, East Chevington, Great Whittington, Havannah NR, Kenton, Kitty Brewster, Rising Sun CP, Tweedmouth and Weetslade Colliery CP.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

The largest gathering by far was ca.200 at Linton Lane NWT on 16th (TD). 'Good numbers' were reported at Jesmond Cemetery on 8th (DHWB), 40 were at Netherton Park on 9th and 35 at Hexham (Swallowship) on 1st; 20-22 were noted at Corbridge, Hexham (Letah Wood) and Nedderton and 12-18 at Ellington (Chugdon Wood), Murton and North Shields (Northumberland Park). One to seven were noted at a further seven localities.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

A loose flock of 18 was noted at Hexham on 4th (AJR). Up to six were at Corbridge on various dates (RB/MB) and five at Hulne Park (Alnwick) on 13th and Jesmond Dene on 4th. Four were at Newcastle (Exhibition Park) on 12th and one to two at a further seven localities, including singing birds at Newcastle (Civic Centre) on 11th and Shiremoor on 17th.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

A small 'flock' of eight was seen in a single shrub at Holywell Dene on 8th (RJP) and up to four visited a Walbottle garden throughout the month. One to three were reported from a further five localities.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

One frequented St Mary's Island from 1st-7th and probably the same was at Old Hartley from 7th-8th (AC *et al.*).

The St. Mary's Black Redstart
Chris Barlow
2nd December

**Stonechat** *Saxicola torquata*

In Druridge Bay up to three were reported from Cresswell Pond and three at East Chevington (ASJ/PCF). Elsewhere on the coast two were at Blyth Links on 29th and singles at Budle Point on 18th, Cocklawburn on 24th, Low Newton on 10th, Newton on 4th and Seahouses on 11th. Inland a pair was at Lordenshaw on 16th, two at Longframlington Common on 13th and two on the Otterburn Ranges on 2nd. One to two were at West Hartford on three dates and a male on Plennmeller Common on 17th.

Dunnoek *Prunella modularis*

A maximum of 20 were at Hauxley throughout the month where one bird was ringed (HRS). One to five were also seen at Brockwell Shopping Centre (Cramlington), Jesmond Dene (Newcastle), Netherton Park (Stannington), an Old Hartley garden, South Gosforth and a Walbottle Garden.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

The highest count in December was 30 at Northburn (Cramlington) present all month (PJA). 18 were at Netherton Park (Stannington) on 13th (RWM/MIM) and five in a Walbottle Garden on 23rd (KR/LR).

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

50 were at both Fenwick's Close Farm (Earsdon) on 12th (CGK) and East Bolton on 13th (JMA). 35 were at Fenham-le-Moor on 12th (ASJ) and one to 20 were at Alnmouth, Blawearie (Berwick Moor), Dinnington, Fenham Mill, Linden Hall (Longhorsley), Netherton Park (Stannington), an Old Hartley garden, Smallburn (Ponteland), a Walbottle garden, Wark and a Warkworth garden.

Tree Sparrows at a garden feeder
Walbottle 11th December
Ken Russell

**Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava*

An extremely late record was a single at Tynemouth on 3rd (PCF).

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

One to two were recorded throughout the month at Bothal Pond, Horton Burn (Cramlington), Howdon, Howdon Wetland NR, Howick Haven, Jesmond Dene (Newcastle), Kielder Forest, Killingworth Lake, Kittybrewster (Blyth), Linden Hall (Longhorsley), Newcastle City Centre, Plessey Woods CP, Prince Road, River Aln, South Gosforth, Spital (Newbiggin), St.Mary's Island, Thrum Mill (Rothbury) and a Wallsend garden.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

The only records for December were 35 at Ellington on 2nd (TB) and three at St.Mary's Island on 2nd (CDB).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

15 were at Longframlington Common on 13th (IRD). One to four were at Beanley Moor, Big Waters, Newbiggin and St.Mary's.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

A maximum of 12 were at St. Mary's Island on 8th (MSH). One to four were seen at Berwick Pier, Blyth Harbour, South Beach (Blyth), Spittal Cliffs (Berwick) and Tynemouth.



A Rock Pipit at St. Mary's
Jonathan Farooqi

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

60 were at Swallow Pond on 16th (JPD), 50 feeding in stubble fields at Bolton on 26th (MH/BH) and 30 at Spindleston on 12th (MSHJCD). Two to 20 were recorded at Horton Burn (Cramlington), Howdon, Jesmond Dene (Newcastle), Northumberland Park (North Shields) and South Gosforth.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

30 was the month's highest total at Corbridge on 30th (RB/MB). One to 11 were recorded at Branton GP, Cramlington, Howdon, Netherton Park (Stannington), South Gosforth, Stamfordham and at West Hartford where a female on the 2nd was the first record for the site (PJA).

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

140 at East Chevington on 16th was by far the month's highest count (ASJ). 30 were at Holywell Pond on 18th (MSH) and 28 in a Walbottle garden on 23rd (KR/LR). One to seven were at Cramlington (where one was killed when it hit a window), Havannah NR, Jesmond Dene (Newcastle), South Gosforth and Spital (Newbiggin).

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

200 were at East Chevington on 9th (JPD), 120 at Cresswell Pond on 16th (ASJ) and 64 at Howdon on 26th (CB). Two to 45 were present at a further ten locations throughout the month.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

The maximum count for December was 110 at Wark on 16th (PRM) and 80 were at Branton GP on 19th (IBDa/Kda). One to 30 were noted at a further 12 locations throughout the month.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

300 were at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) throughout the month (JBen/JPL), 200 at Fenham-le-Moor on 12th (ASJ/JPD) and 65 at Castlehills (Berwick). One to 50 were at a further four locations throughout the month.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

54 were seen at Cheswick Dunes on 4th (MHu), 50 at Hemscotthill Links on 2nd (ASJ), 50 at Fenham-le-Moor on 16th (AA), 21 at Main Guard (Berwick Walls) on 12th (BWG) and 6 at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 12th (ASJ).

Redpoll sp.

Singles were at Big Waters on 16th (GB), Corbridge on 11th (RM/MB) and Havannah NR on 15th and 29th (GB).



Three of our finches

Top: a Goldfinch, middle: a Brambling both in a Tranwell garden by Peter Tapsell and bottom: a Chaffinch by Adriana Buskin



Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*

12 at Gosforth Park throughout the month was the highest count for December (NHSN). One to seven were at Dam Dykes Farm (Cramlington), Howdon, Rothbury, Swallow Pond, Wark and West Hartford.

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

25 were at Swallowship Wood (Hexham) on 31st (AJH) and 20 at Kielder Forest on 8th (PRM). Two to nine were also seen at Addycombe (Rothbury), Capheaton, Derwent Reservoir, Horton Burn (Cramlington) and Valley Park (Cramlington) during the month.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Six to 12 were seen at Alnwick Moor, a Fulbeck garden (Morpeth), Holywell Waggonway, Prestwick Carr, Scotland Gate and Swallow Pond. One to five were noted at a further 26 locations throughout the month.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Four flew S calling over Cresswell Pond on 16th (ASJ) and singles were at Holy Island Lough on 31st (IK) and Warkworth Dunes on 27th (MRM).

A Snow Bunting Warkworth
27th December
Michael McMahon

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

100 were in a stubble field at Fenham-le-Moor on 12th (ASJ/JPD) and 35 were feeding on an experimental field at Stelling Hall on 27th (PCF). Five were at both Havannah NR on 15th (GB) and Beacon Lane (Cramlington) on 24th (DM).

Reed Bunting *Emberiza Schoeniclus*

20 were at East Chevington on 16th (ASJ) and 16 at Swallow Pond on 16th (JPD) whilst one to 13 were recorded at a further 12 locations throughout the month.

ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN**Escapes****Muscovy Duck** *Cairina moschata*

One was present all month at Airy Holm Reservoir near Shotleyfield (IFo).

Birds of Unknown Origin**Rose-ringed Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri*

No records submitted from the south-east as in recent months but the regular bird was noted visiting garden feeders in Ponteland on 31st (per PCF).

Weather

A succession of low pressure systems through the month gave rain which for many areas was often persistent and heavy, and fell on already saturated ground. Temperatures were significantly below average in the first half of the month, but above average in the second half. There were however some fine, sunny days in the first half of the month.

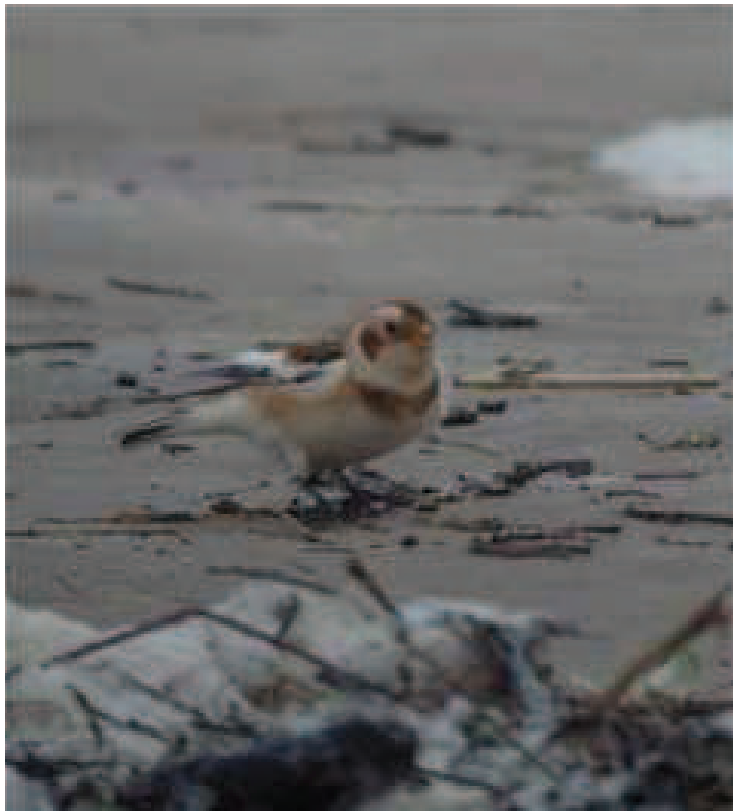
1st to 9th: The month began rather unsettled and showery, with occasional bands of rain. There was some sleet and snow at times, mainly over hills, but occasionally to lower levels too. On 3rd a band of rain moved across the country, turning to sleet and snow as it met colder air to the north and east, particularly over higher ground. Temperatures struggled to reach seasonal normal values, and there were a number of frosts. There was no particularly notable heavy rainfall.

10th to 13th: There were then a few days of quiet anticyclonic weather, allowing the first really severe frosts of the season. 10th was bright and sunny for most, with the exception of light wintry showers in the east. Overnight fog was often slow to clear during the day and caused some travel problems. A few wintry showers continued to affect eastern coastal areas. By 13th cloud and milder conditions reached the far south-west.

14th to 15th: An extensive low-pressure area brought fronts across the UK, giving heavy rain across all districts, and bringing temperatures back to near the seasonal average. The rain on 14th was also accompanied by strong winds.

16th to 24th: England remained largely under the influence of a large area of low pressure in the north Atlantic. This brought a mainly westerly or south-westerly flow with very mild but exceptionally wet conditions. A sequence of active depressions brought heavy rainfall and flooding to many areas of the UK, especially where ground was already saturated. The 17th was showery. The 18th was largely dry, but turned cloudy and windy in the west by late afternoon. There was a particularly wet spell on 19th and 20th, with rain falling on already saturated ground, resulting in widespread flooding, although generally not as severe or widespread as that experienced in late November. The wet theme continued, with further localised flooding and disruption during 22nd to 24th.

25th to 31st: The unsettled theme continued, with bands of heavy rain interspersed with showers. Temperatures were largely close to or above average, with overnight frosts still very limited. Winds were strong, with gales at times, mainly for hills and



coasts. A few of the showers were wintry. Many areas had showers on the morning of 25th. Scattered showers and spells of more persistent rain dominated the rest of the month. The evening of New Year's Eve was fine for most places, as the rain cleared away south-eastwards.

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Bamburgh Ringing Station, Berwick Wildlife Group, Hauxley Ringing Station, Natural History Society of Northumbria, North Northumberland Bird Club, Northern Experience Wildlife Tours, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Seaton Sluice Watch Tower.

Apologies for any accidental omissions

BULLETIN COMPILATION AND PRODUCTION

This bulletin was compiled by Graeme Bowman (Mute Swan to Ruddy Duck), Lindsay McDougall (Red Grouse to Black-necked Grebe), Trevor Blake (Honey Buzzard to Crane), Steve Holliday (Oystercatcher to Dunlin) Ian Forsyth (Snipe to Skua), Eddie Crabtree (Ivory Gull to Puffin), Tim Dean (Escapes, Hybrids and Unknown Origin, List of Contributors, Highlights), Peter Fletcher (Feral Pigeon to Red-rumped Swallow), Mike Richardson (Cetti's Warbler to Pied Flycatcher), Phil Allott (Dunnock to Corn Bunting), Dan Turner (WeBS Coastal Counts) and Steve Holliday (WeBS Inland Counts).

Thanks to David Sanders of NNBC for providing data.

Proof reading was by Mike Smith.

Edited by Steve Barrett NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.com Postal distribution by Paul Stewart.

RECORD SUBMISSION

Please e-mail Dick Myatt at 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 NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.com

It is preferable if you re-size your photos before sending and a suggested size is 640 x 480 pixels. Please ensure you include the following information with your submissions: name, species, date taken, locality.

Photographs will not be used elsewhere without the photographer's permission.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions for 2012-2013 are now overdue.

For membership enquiries please contact ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

NTBC WEB SITE

The Club website is an excellent resource for all interested in birds in the north-east. There are numerous interesting sections, including a photograph gallery, site information and trip reports together with extensive reference information for birding in our area. The site is at www.ntbc.org.uk

If you have any ideas or things you would like to see or hear about on the site please let Chris Knox know on 0751 582 5024 or e-mail christopher.knox@o2.co.uk

NTBC SIGHTINGS PAGE

The club sightings web page gives listings of birds seen locally. Adding a sighting is simple. A short e-mail is all that is needed. If anyone would like to be added as a contributor please contact Alan Tilmouth at ntbcorg@gmail.com

The sightings page can be found at <http://ntbc sightings.posterous.com>

BIRDS IN NORTHUMBRIA 2012 **a request for photographs / authors**

Photographs:

Photographs are always welcome for consideration. All members are free to submit images (taken within the county during 2012) to the editor.

Please send as jpeg image attachments to one or more emails, or copy to a disc and send to the address below.

Authors:

If anyone fancies writing up a few species for Birds in Northumbria 2012 please contact the editor at the address / email below.

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SEATON SLUICE WATCHTOWER

The existing steps at SSWT have decayed to a state beyond repair and as a result require replacement. Paul Stewart and Chirton Engineering have generously fabricated new steps that are ready for installation. The steps are heavy and the route to the watchtower involves moving them across the narrow footbridge over the old harbour entrance and over a wall to get them into place. We estimate that at least eight to ten individuals will be needed to complete this task and are seeking volunteers from within the club to help.

We plan on installing the steps on 24th February, meeting at 09:30 at The King's Arms public house at Seaton Sluice. It is important that we know in advance that we have the appropriate number of volunteers so we request that if you can help you contact Alan Tilmouth either by email on ntbcorg@gmail.com or telephone 01670 512013 to confirm if you plan on attending. This would be greatly appreciated.

GARDEN BIRD DISTRIBUTION

As part of a research team at the University of Cambridge, we are running an online survey to better understand how people influence the distribution of birds across gardens in the UK. We would greatly appreciate if members of the Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club could participate in our survey.

Survey questions should take no longer than 10-15 minutes and ask about the activities of birds in participants' gardens. No personal information other than postal code and age range will be collected.

www.surveymonkey.com/s/corvid_**perceptions http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/corvid_perceptions<

Alison Greggor alg61@cam.ac.uk



A Willow Tit at Eachwick by Chris Barlow

Year: 2012

Month: DECEMBER

Version:

Interim

Site	Allyholm Reservoir		Angerton Lake		Arctot Pond		Clackworth Ponds		Big Waters		Golan Lake		Bothal Pond		Branton GP		Broomlee Lough		Castleton		Capheaton Lake		Castle Island		Carricleugh Reservoir		Coit Craig Res		Cresswell Pond		Crosshill Pools		East Chevington		Gosforth Park		Greenlee Lough		Grindon Lough		Haughton Strother GP		Haxley NR		Hedgely GP		Holywell Pond		Kielder Water		Killingworth Lake		Ladburn Lake		Leazes Park		Linton Pond		Longfirst Flash		Marden Quarry		Monks' House Pool		Newton Pool		OE II CP		Rayburn Lake		Rothley Lake		Shield on the Wall		Swallow Pond		Ynemouth Boating Lake		Markworth Lane		West Allotment Pond		White Dene Res		Woodhorn Flashes																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																	
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