

Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

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Bulletin 2013 No 1

MONTHLY SUMMARY – JANUARY

6th March 2013



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CLASSIFIED LIST HIGHLIGHTS

Whooper Swan	Large gathering at Loanend near Horncliffe with 162 on 6th.
Tundra Bean Goose	Singles in Blyth / Holywell area and in Druridge Bay
Greenland White-fronted Goose	Only one or two noted at Woodhorn and Grindon Lough
Mandarin	Single on the River Tyne at Allerwash
Pintail	Peak of 106 at Elwick on 30th.
Goldeneye	High count of 194 on the WEBS count at the Tweed Estuary
Smew	The redhead remained at East Chevington all month.
Bittern	Wintering birds with two at Gosforth Park, two at East Chevington and two others
Cattle Egret	The second county record with one on Holy Island from 26th
Red-necked Grebe	Singles off Holy Island castle and at Stag Rocks, Bamburgh
Rough-legged Buzzard	Singles reported at Lucker and Harper's Heugh
Black-tailed Godwit	High winter counts of nine at Holy Island causeway and four at Hadston.
Greenshank	Wintering bird still at Budle Bay
Little Gull	Unusual winter sighting of an adult offshore at East Chevington on 24th.
Iceland Gull	One at North Shields Fish Quay on 27th.
Glaucous Gull	A first-winter at North Shields Fish Quay on 29th.
Little Auk	One off Stag Rocks on 5th.
Black Redstart	wintering bird at Low Newton
Mealy Redpoll	Single at East Chevington on 24th.
Hawfinch	Singles at Big Waters and Hexham
Lapland Bunting	An unusual record of a male singing at Swallow Pond on 23rd !

COMMITTEE NEWS

Seaton Sluice Watchtower

After many years the watchtower steps were in a very poor state of repair with the lower steps held up on bricks. As this was a safety hazard new steps were commissioned and Chirton Engineering made a fantastic offer to provide them free of charge saving the club a significant sum. The committee would like to thank Chirton Engineering and particularly Paul Stewart for this huge act of generosity.

Over the weekend of 23rd/24th February two work parties first removed the old steps and then took on the task of moving the new steps from 'the mainland' onto Rocky Island and into position. Despite freezing conditions and the occasional blizzard the work went reasonably well and the new steps are now in place. Thanks to Martin Davison, Andy McLevy, Maurice Hepple, Brian Bullough, Steve Barrett, Nick Adams, Paul Stewart for some sterling work. See later in this bulletin to see the new steps.

Backworth Pond/Beehive Flash/Lynemouth Flash

All three of these wetland sites are currently under threat of drainage from landowners/tenants. The committee are aware of the issues and are communicating with Northumberland Wildlife Trust and the relevant local authorities to try and safeguard the habitats. Work carried out at Backworth Pond has been reversed after a site meeting involving NWT and North Tyneside Council but further negotiations are continuing. The committee would like to thank club members including Chris Knox for bringing these issues to our attention.

INDOOR MEETINGS

The next indoor meeting is at 7pm at Northern Rugby Club on 14th March.

Birders' Question Time. The 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.

FIELD TRIPS

Trevor Blakes' next field trips are;

Kielder on 24th March – raptors are certain to feature in this popular visit

Harthope Valley 19th May – upland birds in one of our most scenic areas

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

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Killingworth Lake held 161 on 6th (JPD), 13 were at Druridge Bay CP on 17th (PRM), and five to nine at Bothal Pond, East Chevington, Hartburn Reservoir, Newcastle Leazes Park, Prestwick Carr and Spittal, One to four were at 16 further widespread sites. A darvic ringed individual at the Tweed Estuary on 9th had been ringed at Edinburgh on 2/8/12 (MHu).

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

150 flew N at Tynemouth on 5th (BMo), eight NW at West Chevington on 12th (MHP/TRC), and four N at Cresswell Pond on 16th (RD/IF). A flock of 162 at Loanend, Horncliffe on 6th consisted of 128 adults and 24 juveniles (MHu), 64 were at Cornhill on Tweed on 29th (JDL), 46 (four juveniles) at Fenham Mill on 28th (AA/MH), 35 near Warkworth on 27th (JPD/ASJ), and 25-29 at Alnmouth on several dates (DHa/MPu *et al.*). Six to ten were at Budle Bay, Cresswell and Linton Ponds, Doddington, East Chevington, and one to three at Capheaton and Killingworth Lakes, Prestwick Carr and West Ord.

An adult Whooper Swan
Killingworth Lake
19th January by Adriana Buskin



Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*

One of the *rossicus* race was found at Holywell Pond on 10th (SPP) and remained until 13th (CS/ASJ/RJP *et al.*) and probably the same bird was at Seaton Sluice-Glouster Farm, Blyth area between 21st-26th (MHP/STH *et al.*). It, or another of the *rossicus* race was in the Druridge Pools area on 16th-17th (MSH/PRM).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Passage to NW-N-NE involved 250-270 at East Ord and Longhorsley (MHu/NFO), and 50-150 at Arcot and Swallow Ponds and East Cramlington on 5th-6th (JPD/DM/LJM); and southbound birds included 1,300 at East Ord on 10th (MHu), 208-240 at East Chevington and Howick on 1st (TRD/JD/SS), and 73-138 at Cocklawburn, Howick Haven Ord Moor and Swallow Pond on several dates (JPD/MHu/SS).

The Druridge Bay area held good numbers (possibly some interchange between sites), with peaks of about 5,000 at Druridge Pools on 17th (PRM), 4,500 on the south side of East Chevington south pool on 17th (ASJ), and 3,000 at Cresswell on 2nd (MSH). In the north of the county about 4,000 were at Doddington on 2nd (TRD/JD), 1,400 at Ladythorne, Cheswick on 24th (MHu), 1,000 at Harper's Heugh (near Budle Bay) between 29th-31st (JPL/DHa/DGB *et al.*), and 400-680 at Cocklawburn, Elwick and Fenham-le-Moor (DGB/MHu/PRM). Elsewhere, 600-700 were at Holywell Pond on 10th (SP), 600 in the Earsdon-Holywell areas on 1st-2nd and 11th (MSH), 200 at St Mary's Island on 16th (SPP), 150-200 at Blyth-Seaton Sluice on 23rd-24th (JPD/ASJ/MSH), 100-150 at Alnwick and Smeafield, and ten to 30 at Bothal Pond and Capheaton.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

Eurasian *albifrons* race birds involved two in the Druridge Pools area on 2nd (TF/JFa) and 19th (NFO), and singles at Holywell Pond on 31st (SPP) and Woodhorn on several dates between 12th-24th (ASJ/PRM/NFO).

Greenland race *flavirostris* birds involved two at Cresswell Pond on 26th (MSH), one to two at Woodhorn on seven dates between 1st-29th (MSH/AT *et al.*) and one at Grindon Lough on 5th-6th (SJH).

One of the Greenland race Whitefronts
Woodhorn Flash
by Paul Massey
24th January

**Greylag Goose** *Anser anser*

1,000 at Harper's Heugh near Budle Bay on 29th-30th (DGB) was the largest single concentration. Other peak counts were 300 at Holywell Pond on 9th (JPD), 296 at Druridge Pools on 29th (MSH), 151-167 at Cheswick (MHu), Derwent Reservoir (IFo), East Chevington (PRM), Waren Mill (MSH) and Woodhorn Flashes (PRM), 100-135 at East Holywell and Lesbury, and 61-98 at Big Waters, Earsdon and Prestwick Carr. Counts of 28-44 came from Backworth Flash, Cresswell Pond, East Ord, Grindon Lough and West Hartford, and two to 16 at seven further sites.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Grindon Lough attracted a peak of 382 on 6th (SJH), 230 were at Bothal Pond on 13th (TD), 101 at Fontburn Reservoir on 18th (TRD/JD), 50-76 at Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Pools and East Chevington (IFo/MSH/PRM), 21-46 at Newcastle Leazes Park, QEII CP, the Tweed Estuary and West Ord, and 11-18 at Big Waters, Prestwick Carr and Woodhorn Flashes, and two to eight at Arcot Pond, Hartburn Reservoir and Hauxley Reserve. A flock was heard over Wark during darkness on 23rd (PRM).

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

200 were at Harper's Heugh near Budle Bay on 9th (SV/AJM) and between 29th-31st (DGB/JPL), and 90 in Budle Bay on 27th (CGK/MSH/MJC). One was at Tynemouth Boating Lake between 6th-30th (PJA/CDB/KWY).

A Barnacle Goose
Tynemouth Boating Lake
by Chris Barlow

**Brent Goose** *Branta bernicla*

Pale-bellied *hrota* race birds included 1,400 in the Elwick/Fenham-le-Moor area on 30th (PRM), about 340 at Budle Bay on 5th (CGK *et al.*), 23-30 at Beal Point (Lindisfarne NNR), Boulmer and Budle Bay (TRD/JD/MSH/SS), and three at Stag Rocks.

Dark-bellied *bernicla* race birds involved 75 at Holy Island on 27th (JPD), 60 at Budle Bay on 5th (CGK *et al.*), and two to five at Boulmer, Cheswick and Newbiggin.

Un-raced birds involved 75 near Holy Island castle on 28th (CDB), 40 at East Chevington on 26th (TB) and four at Boulmer.

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

A total of 874 were in the Fenham-le-Moor and Elwick areas of Lindisfarne NNR on 30th (PRM), and 150 were at Budle Bay on 13th (DM/STH). Elsewhere, 21 were at the Blyth Estuary on 13th (LJM), 11 at Howdon Wetland NR on 1st (CB/ME), six at Hauxley Reserve, and one to two at Castle Island, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Elswick, Hadston Carrs, Holy Island Rocket Fields and Newburn Haugh. One was well inland at Branton GP on 9th (MSH/JCD).

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

A pair, with Mallard, was found at Allerwash Hall on the River Tyne on 5th while the observer was kayaking (JL).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Two flew N at Cullernose Point on 20th (SS). 600 were on the sea in Druridge Bay on 4th (MSH), 600 were at Cresswell Pond on 23rd (JPD), 517 at Big Waters on 11th was a site record (AJJ *per* GB), 300 were at Druridge Pools on 3rd (AJR), 250 at East Chevington (PRM), 153-179 at Arcot Pond, Elwick (Lindisfarne), Grindon Lough and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, 90-118 at Amble, Bothal Pond, Derwent Reservoir and Hauxley Reserve, and 60 at Gosforth Park NR. Counts of 16-38 came from QEII CP Lake, West Stobswood Pool and Woodhorn Flashes.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Peak counts were 25 at Arcot Pond on 6th and 12th (STH/LJM), 21 at the Blyth Estuary on 26th (STH), 17 at Holywell Pond on 30th (MHP), ten to 12 at Big Waters, East Chevington and QEII CP Lake, and six at Linton Ponds. Three to four were also at Bothal and Cresswell Ponds, Capheaton Lake, Gosforth Park NR, Holy Island Lough (unusual there in winter; IK) and Woodhorn Flashes, and one at Newton Pool. Several were heard calling at Backworth during darkness on 5th (CGK *et al.*).

Teal *Anas crecca*

Peak concentrations were 404 at Big Waters on 30th (AJJ *per* GB), 380 at Holy Island Rocket Fields on 27th (SS), 295 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 18th (SR), 250 at Grindon Lough on 6th (SJH), 200 at Howdon Wetland NR on 1st (CB/ME), 174-180 at East Chevington and Elswick (River Tyne), and 100-117 at Arcot, Cresswell and Linton Ponds, Druridge Bay and St Mary's Island. Counts of 50-91 came from Amble, Big Waters (some displaying; GB), Bothal Pond, Newburn Haugh, Tyne Green (Hexham), West Hartford and West Ord, and 12-31 at Castle Island, Druridge Pools, Gosforth Park NR, Hauxley Reserve, Middle Ord and Swallow Ponds, Monks' House Pool and Woodhorn Flashes. Two at Killingworth Lake on 23rd were unusual for the locality (LJM).

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

The largest gatherings were 279 at Big Waters on 26th (GB), 237 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 18th (SR), 204 at the Tweed Estuary on 11th (MHu), 142 at Cocklawburn Pond on 29th (MHu), and 100-115 at Castle Island (DM/STH), Elwick (PRM), Fontburn Reservoir (TRD/JD) and Holy Island Lough (105 on 25th was unusually high count for the site and may have involved birds frozen off mainland ponds; IK). Counts of 55-70 came from Derwent Reservoir, Holywell, Linton (display noted; CDH) and West Allotment Ponds, Newcastle Leazes Park, QEII CP Lake and Tyne Green (Hexham), and 22-43 from Arcot, Bothal and Duke's Ponds, Gosforth Park NR, Grindon Lough, Hauxley Reserve, Longhirst Flash, Newcastle Exhibition Park and Woodhorn Flashes.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

At Lindisfarne NNR peak counts were 106 at Elwick on 30th (PRM) and 96 at Fenham Flats on 27th (GB/STH/ML/DM). In the south of the county up to eight (six drakes, two ducks) were at Druridge Pools between 23rd-26th (CDB/STE), two drakes at Big Waters on 29th and three drakes on 30th-31st (AJJ *per* GB), and singles (all drakes where stated) at Cresswell Pond, Holywell Pond, St Mary's Wetland and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.



Pintail fly in to Druridge Pools
by Chris Barlow

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Swallow Pond had 13 on 3rd and 11 on 1st (JPD), 11 were at Holy Island Lough on 30th (PRM) and up to ten regularly there during the month (IK), eight at East Chevington on 17th (PRM), six at Cresswell Pond on 17th (TRD), three at Killingworth Lake (LJM/BMo), and one to two at Budle Bay and Monks' House Pool.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Numbers were generally rather low, with peaks of 31 at Killingworth Lake on 15th (LJM), 17 at Swallow Pond on 31st (JPD), eight to nine at East Chevington (IRD) and QEII CP Lake (GB), and three to four at Grindon Lough, Holywell and Swallow Ponds. One to two were also at Bothal, Linton and West Allotment Ponds, and Derwent Reservoir.

A Drake Pochard
Killingworth Lake
Chris Barlow



Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Good numbers were at Killingworth Lake, with a notable 228 on 6th (JPD) and 154 on 12th (LJM). Other peak counts were 101 at Branton GP on 13th (SS), 86 at East Chevington on 13th (DM/STH), 65 at Swallow Pond on 1st (JPD), 51 at QEII CP Lake (CDH), and 20-41 at Arcot, Bothal and Linton Ponds, Grindon Lough, Tynemouth Park, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Woodhorn Flashes. Ten to 17 were also at Cheswick, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, and Newcastle Exhibition and Leazes Parks, and two to seven at eight further sites, including one at the Tweed Estuary on 11th (Mhu).

Scaup *Aythya marila*

Two were inland at Branton GP between 13th-15th (SS/IBDa/KDa). Singles were at East Chevington on 1st (GB *et al.*) and 5th (CGK *et al.*) and Holywell Pond on 7th (CS). A drake was on the 'R. Tyne' (locality not given) on 26th (JL).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

72 were at Holy Island on 30th (PRM), 50 at Fenham Flats on 30th (PRM), 49 at Blyth Harbour on 12th (STH), 30 at North Shields Fish Quay (MN), 18 at Warkworth weir (DM/STH), nine to 12 at Berwick North Shore and the Tweed Estuary, and two at St Mary's Island. Many displaying groups were at Holy Island Harbour/St Cuthbert's Island on 13th (IK).

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

A total of 69 on 11th consisted of 34 at Holy Island Heugh, 24 at Stag Rocks and 11 at Holy Island castle (AA/MH). Other peak counts were 20 in the North Shore-Sandon Bay area of Holy Island on 13th (SR/AH), eight at Fenham Flats (DGB), seven at Beadnell Bay (JPL/SMa), and three to four at Annstead, Berwick, Low Newton and the Tweed Estuary. Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, East Chevington and Seahouses all attracted two on various dates, and singles were at Amble, Cheswick, Newbiggin, Holy Island causeway and Newton Pool. More unusual was an immature drake at the Blyth Estuary on at least four dates between 1st-22nd (MHp/LJM). Display was noted at Holy Island on 13th (IK).



Long-tailed Duck at Cresswell Pond by Chris Barlow

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Numbers were unexceptional, with peaks of 100 at Stag Rocks on 6th (JPL), 42 at Cheswick on 24th (MHu), 19 at Beadnell Bay (JPL/SMa), and ten at Howick Haven (MRM). One to six were also at Druridge Bay, Low Newton, Spittal Bay and St Mary's Island. A drake was inland at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 28th (SR).

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

One flew N at Berwick pier on 6th (MHu) and three flew S at St Mary's Island on 13th (SPP). Singles were at Alnmouth Bay on 11th (MRM) and Beadnell Bay on 13th (SMa).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Four flew N at St Mary's Island on 26th (JPD). The Tweed Estuary attracted 194 on 11th (MHu), 75 were off Spittal on 3rd (JMA), 48 at East Chevington on 24th (PRM), 30 at Low Newton on 29th (TRD/JD), 29 at Swallow Pond on 8th (a notable count for the site; JPD), 25-28 at QEII CP Lake and West Ord, and ten to 18 at Annstead, Beadnell Bay, Branton GP, Grindon Lough Howick Haven, Killingworth Lake and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Five to nine were also at Berwick North Shore, Big Waters, the Blyth Estuary, Bothal and Cresswell Ponds, Castle Island and Dilston, and one to two at 14 further scattered sites.



A handsome drake Goldeneye at Killingworth Pond on 16th January by Adriana Buskin

Smew *Mergellus albellus*

A 'redhead' was noted at East Chevington (north and south pools) on seven dates between 1st-24th (CB/ME/PRM *et al.*).

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Ten were at Cocklawburn on 10th (MHu), eight at Spittal Bay on 23rd (MHu), five to six at the Blyth and Tweed Estuaries, East Chevington North Pool, Holy Island, Newbiggin and West Ord, and three to four at Cresswell Pond, Druridge Bay and Stag Rocks. One to two were also at Amble, Beadnell and Blyth Bays, Berwick North Shore, Boulmer, Budle Bay, Castle Island, Druridge Pools and Low Newton.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Largest flocks were 11 at Wylam on 28th (JSB), nine at Tyne Green (Hexham) on 18th (RMH), and five at the Aln and the Tweed Estuaries, Newcastle Exhibition Park, on the R. Tyne between Haydon Bridge-Hexham, and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Three to four were at Airy Holm Reservoir, Dilston, Killingworth and QEII CP Lakes, Wark and West Ord, and one to two at Branton GP, Capheaton Lake, the Coquet Estuary, Jesmond Dene, Morpeth, Newcastle Leazes Park and Thrum Mill (Rothbury).

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

Only three reports were received. Four birds were on Plenmeller Common on 26th with three present there on 24th (SJH). One was at Winter's Gibbet (Ottercops Moss) on 5th (DM/STH/GB/LAR).

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

The peak counts were 30 at Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene) on 24th (RJP) and 14 at Allenbanks on 20th (JL). Four were at Carterway Heads, where they are uncommon, on 28th (Ifo). Singles were noted by the A1 south of Belford, Espley Hall and Woodhorn.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

The peak counts were 26 at Alnmouth on 6th (IBDa/KDa) and 18 throughout the month at Chare Ends dunes (Holy Island), which was the largest flock seen on the island for many years (IK *et al.*). Counts of 12 came from Hemscott Hill Farm (Cresswell) on 5th (DM/STH/GB/LAR), West Ord on 6th (MHu), Glororum (Bamburgh) on 21st/26th (JHa) and Lucker on 23rd (JHa). Ten were at Newbiggin on 4th (GB) and East Chevington on 8th (MHp/TRC). Seven were at Druridge Pools on 23rd (MSH) and Beal Point on 24th (TRD/JD). Four to six were noted at Amble Braid, Beehive Flash (Earsdon), Cresswell, Druridge Links, Ellington, Hepscott Park, Lesbury, Warkworth Gut, West Hartford, Whitchester (Haltwhistle) and Woodhorn Flashes. Singles were at East Chevington and St Mary's Wetland.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Eight (three males) were in a Walbottle garden on 27th (KR/LR). Two were seen throughout the month at Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene). Two duelling males were at West Hartford on 12th and a single was at Hauxley on 5th.



A cock pheasant in a Woolsington garden by John Littleton

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

At Cocklawburn 15 flew S in 30 minutes on 17th (MHu). At St Mary's Island six flew S on 26th and four flew S on 23rd (JPD). Peak offshore counts were ten at Newbiggin on 25th (AT), nine at Howick Haven on 6th (SS), eight in Druridge Bay on 4th (MSH), five off Stag Rocks on 10th (JDL) and four at East Chevington on 24th (PRM). One to three were noted at Amble, Berwick Pier, Blyth (Bay, Estuary and South Beach), Beadnell Bay, Boulmer, Budle Bay, Cheswick, Cocklawburn, Holy Island, Snab Point (Cresswell), Spittal Bay (Berwick) and Warkworth Dunes.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

A single was off Stag Rocks on 11th (AA/MH) and a juvenile was in Hartley Bay on 13th (SPP).

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

One flew N at Holy Island on 27th (TRD/JD). Two were off Church Point (Newbiggin) on 3rd (AJR) and a single was off Stag Rocks on 5th/6th/11th/27th (PRM/TB/AA/MH/JPD).

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Three flew N at Stag Rocks on 5th (PJA). Return to breeding colonies was noted at several sites. 56 were at Nessend (Holy Island) on 8th (SR). Numbers at Howick increased from ca.30 on 5th (SS) to ca. 50 by 9th (STE). In the south east 22 were at High Point (Whitley Bay) on 13th (MN), 11 at Hartley cliffs on 24th (SPP) and eight at Cullercoats on 12th (ASJ). At other breeding sites one to five were present at Bamburgh Castle, Tynemouth cliffs and Union Bridge (Berwick). One to four were noted offshore at East Chevington, Holy Island, Newbiggin and Stag Rocks.

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

Three flew S at Cullernose Point on 20th (SS) and singles were noted off Holy Island on 8th/13th (SR/AT).

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

The peak counts were 59 at North Shields Fish Quay on 8th (JPD), 50 at Blyth South Harbour on 12th (STH), 17 at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 27th (MHu), 16 at Berwick North Shore on 9th (MHu), 12 at Amble Harbour on 5th (IRD), 11 at QEII Lake on 13th (CDH) and eight at Big Waters on 12th (GB). One to five were noted at Amble Weir, Dilston (Corbridge), Druridge Bay, Elswick Wharf, Hadston Carrs, Holywell Dene, Linton Ponds, Newburn Haugh, flying over the A697 near Ponteland, Prestwick Carr, St Mary's Island, Spittal, Tweed Estuary, Tyne Green (Hexham), West Allotment Pond and flying E along the River Blyth at West Hartford.

Reports of *sinensis* race birds involved singles at Branton GP on 9th (MSH/JCD) and at Linton Pond on 31st (PRM).

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Peak counts were 24 in Blyth South Harbour on 12th (STH), 20 in Spittal Bay (Berwick) on 17th (MHu), ten at Berwick North Shore on 9th (MHu) and six in Druridge Bay on 4th (TRD/JD). Five were offshore at East Chevington on 13th and Blyth South Beach on 16th (TRD/JD). One to two were noted at Holy Island, Newbiggin, Stag Rocks and the Tweed Estuary.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Two were again present throughout the month at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN). Two were at East Chevington on 1st (TRD/JD) where a single was seen on 5th (TB). Two were seen at Swallow Pond on 19th and again on 26th when they flew in high from W (JPD). A single was seen here on six further dates from 20th-31st (JPD/SPP/AJ). A single was at Linton Pond on 29th (AT).

One of the Gosforth NR bitterns in flight
23rd January by Chris Barlow

**Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*

The second for Northumberland, the first being on private land at Barrasford in 1986, attracted much attention. It was identified on 26th, having been present since 23rd according to local people in a Crooked Lonnen house garden (IK). It continued to be seen daily until 31st (many observers).

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Two were at Fenham Mill (Lindisfarne NNR) on 5th (TB) and two were seen in the Lindisfarne NNR on 5th with one at Holy Island Causeway and one in Budle Bay (DM/STH). Singles were noted in the Lindisfarne NNR area on seven further dates with records from Beal Sluice, Budle Bay, Fenham Flats and Holy Island Causeway. Elsewhere singles were in the Tweed Estuary on 15th and at Warkworth Gut on 20th.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

The peak counts were 19 in the Tweed Estuary on 11th (MHu), eight at Old Hartley on 12th (ASJ) and five at Hauxley on 5th (MB/RB), Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene) on 8th (RJP) and throughout the month at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN). Elsewhere one to two were noted at Amble Weir, Arcot Pond, Berwick North Shore, Boulmer, Cramlington (Northburn), Dilston (Corbridge), Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Highford Bridge (Morpeth), Holy Island, Leazes Park (Newcastle), Linton Pond, Monk's House Pool, Newbiggin, Newcastle Great North Park, Rising Sun CP, Seahouses Harbour, Tyne Green (Hexham), Wark and Woodhorn Flashes.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

The peak counts were seven at Kitty Brewster (Blyth Estuary) on 17th (MHP/TRC), six at Hedgeley GP on 9th (MSH/JCD), four at Tyne Green (Hexham) on 6th (AJH) and Bothal Pond on 17th (TRD) and three at Cresswell Pond on 1st, Hauxley on 5th, Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 6th/28th, Tweed Estuary on 11th and Berwick Old Bridge on 23rd. One to two were noted at Big Waters, Branton GP, Capheaton Lake, Castle Island, Derwent Reservoir, East Chevington, Killingworth Lake, Morpeth (High Stanners and Scotch Gill), QEII Lake, Wallsend Gut and Woodhorn Flashes.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

The only record was of one at Holy Island on 16th (SR).

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

The species continued to be scarce this winter with only singles being noted off Holy Island on 6th (CB) and Stag Rocks on 30th (BMo).

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

On 11th at least 18 were off Holy Island in The Heugh and Castle area with a further 12 off Stag Rocks (AA/MH). Nine to ten were seen off Holy Island on 13th/29th (IK/DGB), whilst at Stag Rocks up to six were seen on seven further dates. The bird found at Leazes Park (Newcastle) in December remained until 1st. A single was at East Chevington North Pool from 1st -5th (many observers).

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

A single bird was noted at Wooler on 14th and 16th (NNBC) and other singles were seen near Corbridge on 20th (RMH) and at Ovington on 31st (SAS).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

A ringtail was at one site on several dates throughout the month (PCF/GB *et al.*) and a male was at another site on the 7th (IFo).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

The only record involved a bird seen flying off near Harbottle on 28th (JMA).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Three were at Swallow Pond on 6th (JPD) and two birds were seen at Scotland Gate (SLB/MSK) and at Holywell Dene (RJP) throughout the Month. While single birds were seen regularly at Heddon on the Wall (JSB), Rothbury (TRD/JD) and at Stamfordham (EC) during January. Single birds were also noted at 22 further sites.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Four birds were seen at Bothal on 9th (AT) and three were noted at Derwent reservoir on 25th (IFo), Keepersfield (North Tyne) on 28th (PRM) and at Grindon Lough on 29th (SJH). Two birds were at Alnwick, Belsay, Capheaton, Pegswood & Plenneller Common. Single birds were noted at over 20 sites during the Month.



A Common Buzzard over Tranwell on 31st January by Peter Tapsell

Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus*

Single birds were reported at Lucker on 25th (PRM) and at Harper's Heugh (Budle Bay) on 29th (DHa *et al.*).

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Two males were at Woodhorn Flash on 24th (PRM), and a single bird was noted in an observer's garden near Stanington throughout the month (RWM/MIM). Single birds were observed at a further 20 sites.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Single birds were noted at 19 sites on or near the coast and a single bird was seen hunting Skylarks over farmland at Smeafield on 13th (STH/DM).

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Three birds were seen in the Fenham Flats area on 13th (STH/DM) and the 27th (JPD/ASJ). Up to two birds were on or near Holy Island on a handful of dates (IK/SR/AH *et al.*) and two birds were also noted on the River Blyth Estuary on 23rd (JPD/ASJ). 27 records of single birds came from 20 sites.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Swallow Pond peaked at five birds on 29th (SPP) with between one to three seen or heard on several dates (JPD *et al.*). Three birds were also at Gosforth Park NR on 3rd (GB) and Holy Island Lough on 16th (SR). Singles were seen or heard at Backworth Pond, Big Waters, Branton GP, Cresswell Pond, Earsdon and East Chevington.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

High counts this month included 39 at Swallow Pond on 19th (JPD), 16 at QEII CP on 13th (CDH) and at Big Waters on 20th (GB). 14 birds were at Druridge Bay CP on 17th (PRM), 12 were at Silverlink Park LNR on 25th (CGK) and 11 were at Castle Island on 13th (DM/STH). One to nine birds were at fifteen further sites.

Moorhen
Gosforth NR
Colin Bradshaw

**Coot** *Fulica atra*

The QEII CP again had the highest count this with 138 birds present on 13th (CDH) followed by 101 birds at Killingworth Lake on 12th (LJM). 75 birds were at East Chevington on 17th (PRM), 66 birds were at Arcot Pond on 27th (LJM), and at Woodhorn Flash 62 birds were counted on 24th (PRM). 30 were at Bothal Pond on 13th (TD) and at Big Waters on 26th 24 birds were seen (GB). One to thirteen birds were at 11 other sites.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

The WeBS count at Berwick North Shore produced 246 on 9th whilst elsewhere in that area there were 84 at Cocklawburn on 10th and 32 on the Tweed Estuary on 11th (MHu). Staying in the north, 50+ were at Boulmer on 6th (RB/MB) and 41 at Howick Haven on 6th (SS). Moving south, 30-37 were noted at Amble Links, Hauxley NR and St Mary's Island (JMA/CDB), and 17 were on fields at Gloucester Lodge (Blyth; MSH). Six were also noted at Newbiggin but inland sightings included eight at Dilston (Corbridge) on 25th (RB/MB) and one to three at Hedgeley GP, Hexham (displaying pair), West Ord and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Peak counts included 40 at Newbiggin (TRD/JD) and 38 on the Blyth Estuary (DM/STH/PJA), both on 1st, and ten at Berwick North Shore on 9th (MHu). Other coastal reports included two to six noted at Boulmer, Fenham-le-Moor, Long Nanny, Monks' House Pool, St Mary's Island and Snab Point (Cresswell).

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Some good sized flocks were reported, particularly in the south east where ca.500 were at St Mary's Island on 16th (TRD/JD), ca.400 at East Holywell on 27th (MNC), 327 on fields at Gloucester Lodge (Blyth) on 25th (MSH) and 200 flying N over Wallsend on 12th (JPD). Other gatherings included 320 at Derwent Reservoir on 13th (IFo), 300 at Holy Island Causeway on 24th (TRD/JD), 111 near Peepy Farm, near Stocksfield on 13th (SAS) and 100 on the Blyth Estuary on 1st/26th (DM/STH/PJA). Smaller groups involved 40-86 at Budle Bay, Coquet Point, Cullernose Point, Druridge Bay, East Chevington, Howick, Newbiggin (Sandy Bay), Plenmeller Common (41 flew off SW on 15th) and Prestwick Carr; and 20-26 at Cocklawburn and Newcastle Town Moor. Reports of single-figure groups came from several other localities including inland at Dilston (Corbridge) and Lanehead. Three birds were seen feeding on a snow-covered sports field during the night (20.10hrs) at the Royal Grammar School (Jesmond) on 15th (GB).

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

A peak of twenty at Newbiggin on 1st was a good count for the south (TRD/JD) and several further reports were made at this location. Reports from the north included 15 at Fenham-le-Moor on 24th (TRD/JD) and ten at Berwick North Shore on 9th (MHu). Four were noted on the 24th at both East Chevington beach (PRM) and heading N at St Mary's Island (SPP) and singles were seen at Beal Point (Lindisfarne NNR), the Blyth Estuary, Boulmer, Cheswick Black Rocks, Holy Island Harbour and Snab Point (Cresswell).

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Some big flocks in the south included 700 at Holywell Pond on 9th (JPD), 550-600 at Cresswell Pond between 2nd-3rd (JPD/AJR), 325 at St Mary's on 16th (ASJ) and 520 inland at Derwent Reservoir on 6th (IFo). Flocks of 100-150 were noted at Ashington (Cooper's Kennel Fields), East Chevington, Grindon Lough and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, whilst 50-80 were at near Amble, Aydon (near Corbridge), Big Waters, Morpeth (Whorral Bank), Peepy Farm (near Stocksfield), Swallow Pond and West Hartford. Smaller numbers were reported from a further 12 sites.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Estimates of ca.1,000 were made at Budle Bay on 13th (DM/STH) and from Holy Island causeway on 24th (TRD/JD), with a further 300 noted at Fenham-le-Moor also on 24th (TRD/JD). Amble Braid held 17 on 20th (NFO), three to six were reported from Cresswell Pond on 27th/31st (IRD/TRD) and singles were noted at East Chevington beach, Low Newton, Newbiggin and St Mary's Island.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Some excellent numbers were in the south with 160 on East Chevington beach on 24th (PRM), 150+ in south bay at St Mary's Island on 9th (SPP) and 115 at Blyth South Beach (Meggie's Burn mouth roost) on 24th (MHp). Further north, highs included 75 at Low Newton on 29th (TRD/JD), 60+ at Wellhaugh Point (Amble) on 4th (MSH) and 40 at both Berwick North Shore on 9th (MHu) and Druridge Bay on 5th (RB/MB). Some five to 16 were also seen at Newbiggin and Sandstell Point (Spittal, Berwick).

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Well reported from Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) throughout the month, with the highest total being 92 on 29th (DGB); just to the south, 28 were counted at Low Newton on 27th (ASJ). Other gatherings included 24 at Berwick North Shore on 9th (MHu) and 20 at St Mary's Island on 9th (SPP), whilst maximum counts elsewhere included eight at Cheswick Black Rocks and Snab Point (Cresswell), three at Howick Haven, Newbiggin and Seahouses and two at Craster and Holy Island.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

A similar pattern to last month with ca. 1,000 seen from Holy Island Causeway on 24th (TRD/JD) and smaller numbers elsewhere. Good-sized groups included 295 at Amble Braid on 20th (NFO), 250+ in south bay at St Mary's Island on 3rd (SPP), 200 at Fenham-le-Moor on 24th (TRD/JD), 153 at Newbiggin on 25th (AT), 150 at Cresswell Pond on 23rd (JPD/ASJ) and 70+ on East Chevington beach on 24th (PRM). A further 20 were noted on the Blyth Estuary on 1st (DM/STH/PJA) and at Boulmer on 6th (RB/MB) and two to nine were seen at Berwick North Shore, in fields at Gloucester Lodge (Blyth), Holywell Pond, Long Nanny and Low Newton.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Three were briefly on Swallow Pond before flying off E on 23rd (PRM).

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyrtus minimus*

A site in the Cramlington area held one on 1st and three on 5th (DM/PJA *et al.*) and three were in stubble near the *Beehive* at Earsdon on 24th (CS). One to two were noted at Backworth on several dates (CGK), one at Duke's Pond on 17th/20th/23rd and singles at Big Waters on 1st, West Monkseaton on 14th, Swallow Pond on 23rd and Newbiggin and Howdon Wetland on 25th.



A Jack Snipe
Howdon Wetlands
Colin Bradshaw

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

St Mary's Wetland had roosting peaks in hard weather of 55 on 12th, 70 on 16th, 76 on 24th and 88 on 26th (MSH/ASJ/SPP/JPD) and 40+ were at Gosforth Park NR and adjacent pool on 3rd (NHSN). The peak at Cresswell Pond reached 20 on 26th (IRD), 13 were at Holywell Pond on 16th, 11 at Howick on 20th and ten at Earsdon on 24th. Five to eight were noted on occasions at Arcot Pond, Blyth, Cramlington, Howdon Wetland and Swallow Pond and three or fewer at a further eight places.



A Common Snipe
Howdon Wetlands
Colin Bradshaw

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Six were at Swallow Pond on 19th/20th (JPD), three were at Gosforth Park NR on 21st (NHSN) and two each at Capheaton on 2nd (STE), Hexham on 18th (AJH) and Howick on 20th (SS); also the tide-line remains of two were found at Blyth, South Beach between 21st and 23rd (MHP). Singles were at another 25 locations, mainly in the south of the County.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

The majority occurred at Holy Island: nine from the causeway on 28th (CDB) and one in the Rocket Field Pools from 13th to the month's end (IK). Four were at Hadston Carrs on 5th (CDB).

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Around 2,000 were at Beal Point on 24th (TRD/JD) and about 100 at Fenham-le-Moor the same day. Apart from 29 in the Blyth Estuary on 26th (STH) and 11 at Cocklawburn on 10th there were single-figure counts at Berwick, Budle Bay, Cheswick, Cresswell Pond, Hadston Carrs, Holy Island, Newbiggin and St Mary's.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Substantial counts were of 410+ roosting in fields at high tide at Elwick on 30th (PRM) and around 400 were on Holy Island regularly throughout (IK). Boulmer Steel held about 200 on 9th (STE) and 100-152 were at Cresswell Pond, Holywell Dene, Howick, Howick Haven and St Mary's on occasions. Berwick, the Blyth Estuary area, Druridge Pools, Hauxley NR and Newbiggin had 57-90 at times and smaller numbers appeared at ten other places at or near the coast.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Two were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 20th (AA) with singles noted there on four other dates. One was at Hedgeley GP on 13th and one flew over Longhirst Flash, also on 13th.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

One was seen in Budle Bay on 5th/6th, 24th and 30th (PJA *et al.*).

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

The Tweed Estuary WeBS count revealed 336 on 11th (MHu) and the St Mary's Wetland roost contained a maximum of 260 on 16th (ASJ). The high-tide roost at Cresswell Pond held about 170 on 11th (EC/JSB), 150+ were at Howdon Wetland NR on 1st (CB/ME) and 117 were on the R Tyne at Elswick Wharf on 3rd (DM). Newbiggin had 54 on 5th and smaller numbers were found at Beal, Berwick, Bothal Pond, Castle Island, Druridge Pools and East Chevington.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

At least 120 were on the beach at East Chevington on 24th (PRM), 78 were logged at Berwick on 9th (MHu) with 55 in the Tweed Estuary on 6th (MHu). Low Newton attracted 30 on 29th, St Mary's 20 on 6th with 12 or fewer at Amble, the Blyth Estuary, Boulmer, Newbiggin, Snab Point, Stag Rocks and Tyneside Park.



A Turnstone poses in the winter sun for Tim Dean
Amble Harbour 17th January

Razorbill *Alca torda*

Four were in Druridge Bay on 4th (MSH) and on the following day three were seen off Snab Point (STH/DM). Singles were at Newbiggin on 9th and 25th (AT).

Little Auk *Alle alle*

On 5th one was on the sea at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) with a Guillemot (PJA).

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

At Cocklawburn on 17th four were noted (MHu), three were off Snab Point on 5th (DM *et al.*) and two offshore at East Chevington NWT on 17th (PRM). Singles were also seen at Snab Point on other dates throughout the month.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Passage was evident on 23rd when 100/hour moved S close inshore at Snab Point of which ca.20% were first-winters (STE). Elsewhere single adults were at Blyth Harbour, Cullernose Point and Low Newton with a first-winter bird on the beach at East Chevington.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

The largest concentrations were 365 at QE II CP Lake on 13th (CDH), 250 in Budle Bay on 3rd (JMA), 240 in the Tweed Estuary during a WeBS survey on 11th (MHu) and 210 at Castle Island on 13th (DM/STH/PJA). Lesser gatherings of 100-130 were at Holywell Pond, Jesmond Dene, Leazes Park, Silverlink Park LNR and Tyne Green (Hexham). Up to 100 were at Arcot Pond, Berwick North Shore, Big Waters, Bywell (Stocksfield), Exhibition Park, Hauxley NWT and Newbiggin plus 33 feeding on scraps in an observer's garden at Walbottle. A long-staying ringed bird which breeds in Norway was again recorded at Amble on 12th (PCF); this bird, J72J, was first recorded in April 2005 as a third-calendar year.

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

A rare winter sighting in the county was an adult offshore at East Chevington feeding with other gulls on 24th (PRM).

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Well reported including two to eight at Newbiggin throughout the month including adults and immatures (AT *et al.*) and up to three regularly seen at the nearby Woodhorn Flashes. Elsewhere three were at Blyth South Beach with singles at Brierdene, Howick, St. Mary's Island, Swallow Pond and in the gull roost at the Vickers factory on the River Tyne at Scotswood.

Common Gull *Larus canus*

The Derwent Reservoir roost contained an estimated 5,000 birds on 13th (JL) and at least 3,500 were in the Budle Bay roost on 5th (CGK/MSH); 1,000 fed in fields east of the A1 Morpeth Bypass on 3rd (IK) and 600 were 'loafing on the ice surface' at Airy Holm Reservoir, near Shotleyfield, on 17th (IFo). Other gatherings of 100-350 were reported from Cocklawburn, Grindon Lough, Middle Ord (Berwick) and Tyne Green (Hexham) with up to 70 at eight other inland and coastal localities.

A Common Gull at Amble
by Peter Fletcher on 12th January

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

Sightings of three over-wintering adults came from Blyth South Beach on 20th (MHP), Cramlington on 12th (DM) and one overflying Jesmond Dene on 27th (MJCo).

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argentatus*

The peak count was ca.1,000 in the roost at the Vickers factory, Scotswood on 12th (JL) with lesser flocks of 102 and 85 recorded at Berwick North Shore and the River Tweed Estuary respectively during WeBS surveys on 9th and 11th (MHu). Castle Island held 23 during a WeBS survey on 13th (DM/STH/PJA) and elsewhere one to 12 were at three inland sites; an all-white albino-leucistic immature was on the River Blyth Estuary on 14th (MHP).

A Herring Gull
Amble Braid
17th January
Tim Dean

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

Eight birds of this Northern race were on the beach at East Chevington NWT on 24th (PRM), five were in the gull roost at the Scotswood Vickers factory on the River Tyne on 12th (JL) and four were seen at Newburn Haugh on 23rd (PRM).

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucooides*

The only report was of an immature bird (either a first- or a second-winter) which flew upstream at the North Shields Fish Quay (NSFQ) on 27th (DRW).

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

A first-winter bird was at the NSFQ on 29th (ASJ).

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

The gull roost at the Vickers factory (Scotswood) held at least 150 on 12th (JL). Elsewhere, apart from 26 at Budle Bay on 13th (DM/STH), only single-figure counts were recorded comprising one to nine at Berwick North Shore, Big Waters, Dilston (Corbridge), Druridge Pools, Elswick Wharf (River Tyne), Grindon Lough, the River Tweed estuary, Tyne Green (Hexham) and Wark.

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

A rock bottom count of one in the observer's garden at Beatty Avenue, South Gosforth on 25th (MJCo).

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Wallsend Rising Sun C.P. remained popular with 50+ on 3rd and 30 on 1st and 27th (JPD/BMo). All other reports were single figures with six at Backworth, Duncie's House and Big Waters, four in Jesmond Dene, and one to three at nine widely spread locations.

Correction: The count of 178 at Station Road, Wallsend in December 2012 should have been 17.

A Woodpigeon in a frosty Woolsington garden
by John Littleton

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Large counts of 1'200 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 18th (SR), 1'000 at Fisher Lane (Cramlington) on 1st (LJM), 550 at Sandy Bay (Newbiggin) on 9th (AT), 500+ at Briar Dene Farm (Whitley Bay) on 1st (MSH) and 450+ at Wideopen on 24th (PRM). 13 to 320 were at Arcot Pond, Carterway Heads, Holywell Village, Jesmond Dene, Walbottle and West Ord. Birds visiting gardens numbered 3 to 16 at Alnwick, Dinnington, Stanington, South Gosforth and Walbottle including a juvenile at the latter location.

**Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

Twenty were at Fenham-le-Moor on 13th, eight in one tree at Horton Burn (Cramlington) on 1st (DM/STH/PJA) with 18 found over 1.5km there on 28th (LJM), seven at Longhirst on 5th (PCF), six at Trent House Beer Garden (Newcastle) on 2nd and two to three at Holy Island, Newbiggin and South Gosforth.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

A peak count of four on Holy Island (IK) with singles seen there regularly throughout the month and at Adderstone, West Cawledge (Alnwick), Ancroft, New Moor (Ashington), Beadnell, Meggie's Burn (Blyth), Branton GP, A1 at Brownieside, Druridge Lane, East Chevington, Fowberry, Lee Siding (near Rothbury), Linden Hall, Prestwick Carr and Yearle

A bird at Belford Moor was mantling prey by the roadside (TB) whilst a road casualty near RAF Boulmer had been ringed as a pullus on 12 June 2011 (DM/STH).

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

A single was present regularly at Rising Sun CP all month (JPD/SPP) and at Dinnington on 11th (PCF), Big Waters on 12th (GB) and calling at Shiremoor on 27th (CGK).

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Three males called at Wark (North Tyne) on 9th (PRM) and at Linden Hall (Longhorsley) on 17th (NFO) with two or more singing at Scotland Gate during the month and two at Belford Moor, Holywell Dene on 5th (TB / CGK) and Capheaton on 6th (STE). Singles were at Big Waters, Valley Park (Cramlington), Havannah NR, Howick, Prestwick Carr, Rothbury and Wark with one road casualty near Horsley on 18th.

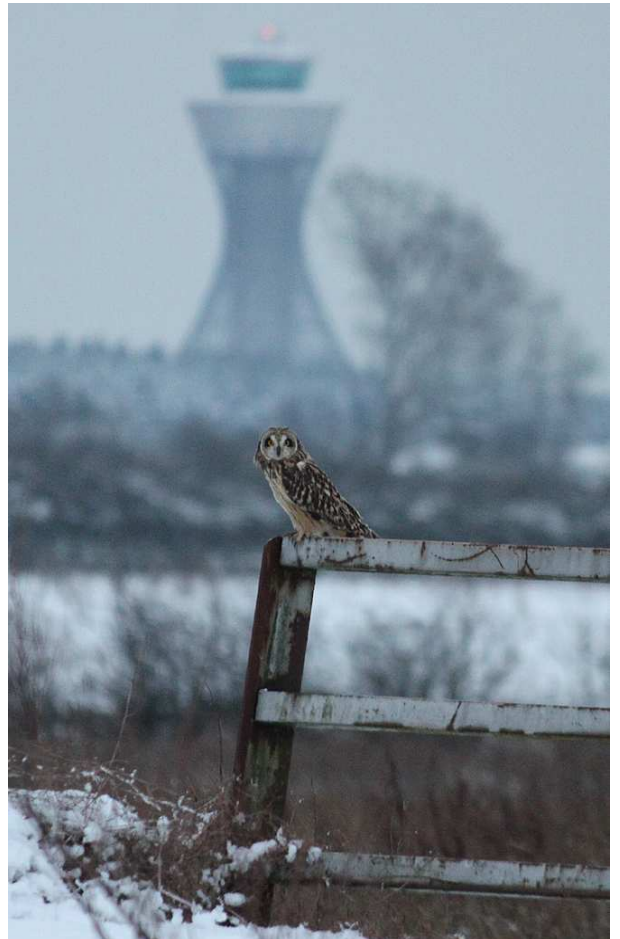
Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

A garden roost at Holy Island held up to three during the month with two there on 27th (IK/CB) and a single was at Prestwick Carr on 23rd (PCF). Six birds were trapped and ringed at Rising Sun CP (Wallsend) during the month.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Four were at Rising Sun CP on 25th/26th (ASJ/BMo/JPD) with three trapped and ringed there during the month and three to four at Holy Island (IK/CB/DGB). Two were at Prestwick Carr and East Chevington with singles at all the aforementioned sites on various dates and Bamburgh, Berwick, Cresswell / Druridge Bay area, Cocklawburn, Grindon Lough, Holywell Pond, Otterburn Ranges, Simonside Hills, West Hartford and Woodhorn.

A Short-eared Owl at Prestwick Carr
by Peter Fletcher
17th January



Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

All reports were of single birds regularly at Branton Gravel Pits, Big Waters, Horton Burn (Cramlington), Swallow Pond and at Howick Haven, Jesmond Dene, Ridley Stokoe, Thrum Mill (Rothbury) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Again all reports of singles from Gosforth Park NR, Ridley Stokoe and Stonehaugh on 5th, Cramlington on the same date and 26th and Rothbury on 24th and 26th.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Three or more were at Gosforth Park NR and adjacent pool during the month (NHSN) with three at South Gosforth on 5th (CGK/MJC/SH/AC), Tyne Green (Hexham) on 6th (AJH) and Jesmond Dene on 20th (MJCo). Two were regularly at Holywell Dene and Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 13th, Valley Park (Cramlington) on 14th, Dilston (Corbridge) on 24th and Big Waters on 26th with singles at 16 other widespread localities.

Magpie *Pica pica*

Some large roost gatherings with Swallow Pond again providing the peak count of 106 on 10th (JPD), 65 at Marden Quarry on (Whitley Bay) on 8th (MN), 47 in a redundant building near Vickers Pressings (Scotswood) on 26th with 40 there on 12th (JL) and 41 at Big Waters on 9th (AJJ per GB). One to eight were at five other locations.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

The largest count was of three at Linden Hall (Longhorsley) on 5th (NFO), two or more at Scotland Gate and Gosforth Park (SLB/MSK/MSH) with two at Swallow Pond on 5th (JPD) and Morpeth on 23rd (TB). Singles were regularly at Arcot Pond, Big Waters and Valley Park (Cramlington) and also at Hedgeley GP, Linton Ponds, Newminster Abbey / Scotch Gill (Morpeth), Northumberland Park (North Shields), Sheepwash, Stannington and Woodhorn.



A Jay in a Tranwell garden
by Peter Tapsell
25th January

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

A mixed flock of 300+ fed on a roundabout at West Moor near Gosforth Park on 28th (PCF).

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Gosforth Park NR attracted large roost counts with estimates of around 3,000 on 3rd & 5th (DM/STH/GB/LAR) and 700+ came to roost at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 31st (PRM). Sixty were at Beacon Hill (Cramlington) on 1st (DM) with one to nine at Cresswell, Eachwick, Jesmond Dene and in a Walbottle Garden.

A bird showing characteristics of the Nordic species *C.m.monedula* was at Amble on 12th (PCF).

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

200 at Elwick on 3rd was the largest count (JMA) with 80+ at Druridge links on 26th (MSH), 50+ at Gallows Hill (Harwood) on 5th (DM/STH/GB/LAR) and 50 at Amble Braid on 10th (JMA).

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

The Fish Quay (North Shields) area attracted 50 on 9th and 33 on 5th (MN/STE) with five at Druridge Pools on 26th, three at Jesmond Dene on 13th and two in the observer's garden at Walbottle on 27th being the only other reports.

Raven *Corvus corax*

Four were between Foulplay Knowle and Bluestone Edge at Otterburn Ranges on 6th (JL), three at Grindon Lough on 16th (SJH) and Raylees Common on 24th (IRD) with two at a confidential site in mid-Northumberland and at Capheaton, Cowden, Harthope Valley and a single at Plenmeller Common.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Three at Rising Sun CP on 23rd was the highest count (PRM) with two at Harwood Forest on 5th, East Ord on 6th, Monkseaton on 13th, Valley Park (Cramlington) on 14th, Wark (N Tyne) on 14th, Swallow Pond on 20th and Berwick on 24th. Singles were at a further 13 widespread locations.

Tit sp.

Low numbers, never more than two at a time of Great, Blue or Coal were noted in the observer's garden at Fulbeck (Morpeth) (TD).

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Feeders at Gosforth Park NR attracted up to 20 during the month (NHSN) with six at Bothal on 3rd (AT), Eachwick on 20th (CDB) and Dilston (Corbridge) on 22nd (RB/MB), five at Jesmond Dene on 27th, three in the observer's garden at South Gosforth on 26th (MJCo) and two at Hauxley and Linton Lane NWT.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Gosforth Park NR feeders attracted 20+ during the month (NHSN), nine at Jesmond Dene on 27th (MJCo), four at Eachwick, two at Hauxley and singles singing at Aydon and South Gosforth.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Four were found in Jesmond Dene on 27th (MJCo), one to three in an Old Hartley garden during the month (RJP) and three singing at Silverlink (North Shields) on 10th and Shiremoor on 29th (CGK). One to two were seen or sang at seven other widespread localities.



An inquisitive Coal Tit at Prestwick Carr
by Peter Fletcher on 5th January

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

Two or more regularly attended feeders at Big Waters during the month (GB *et al.*) with two also at Hadrian's Pond (Wallsend) on 1st (JPD), Prestwick Carr on 26th (PCF) and Rising Sun CP on 26th (BMo). Singles were reported from the above and Branton GP, Bassington NR (Cramlington), Craster, Dinnington, Eachwick, Linton Lane NWT, Lucker, Thrum Mill (Rothbury) and Slaley Hall.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

Linden Hall (Longhorsley) had two during the month (NFO) with singles occasionally at Scotland Gate (MSK/SLB), Woodhorn on 2nd (ASJ), Carlisle Park and Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth) on 5th and 12th (TRD/JD/STH) and Thrum Mill (Rothbury) on 26th (JD).

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Harsh weather attracted a gathering around 1,500 to stubble fields at Newton Links on 20th (CB/ME) with 450+ in fields at Ovington on the same date (SAS), 200+ at Howick on 19th (SS), 130 near Blyth Cemetery on 15th (MNC), 110 moving S at Cresswell Pond on 26th (IRD) and 100 at Cullernose Point on 20th (SS). Groups of 18 to 60 were noted at the Blyth Estuary, Druridge Pools, Holy Island, Newburn Haugh, Ord Industrial Estate and St Mary's Island with one to nine at ten other widespread localities.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

By far the largest count was an impressive 32 in a Walbottle garden on 6th; this is the highest number ever recorded here in over 26 years' residence (KR/LR). Up to 18 were noted at Swallow Pond (JPD) and 12 were at North Shields (Northumberland Park) on 13th. Eight to ten were noted at Big Waters, Cramlington (Bassington NR / Southfield Green and Valley Park), Hexham (Tyne Green), Jesmond Dene, Linton Pond, South Gosforth and a Wallsend garden. Six to seven were at Corbridge (Dilston), East Chevington, Gosforth Park NR, Holywell Dene, Newcastle (Leazes Park) and Prestwick Carr and one to five at a further 11 localities.



A Long-tailed Tit at garden fat balls
by Jonathan Farooqi

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

One at Holy Island (Sandon Bay) on 13th was the only report (SR/AH).

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Nine wintering individuals were reported. A male was in a Heddon-on-the-Wall garden throughout and a second male on 23rd (JSB). A female was present all month in a Gosforth garden and a male appeared on 5th (STE). Another long-staying female was in a Monkseaton garden from 10th-31st (AAM) and a male was reported from another Monkseaton garden on 7th (*per* LJM). A female visited at Howick garden on 6th (SS), a male was at Big Waters on 23rd (AJJ) and an un-sexed bird was in a Berwick garden also on 23rd (BWG).

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulous*

Some sizeable flocks remained, particularly in the south east of the region. The largest gatherings were 50 at Cramlington (Northburn Park) on 28th (JM), 49 at Forest Hall on 26th (JPD), 39 at Gosforth on 1st (CDB) and 30 at Shiremoor on 23rd (SMckie). 15-16 were noted at several other sites in the Cramlington area during the month; 15 were in the Hauxley-Red Row area on 5th and 9th and 14-15 at Woodhorn on 13th. Ten to 11 were reported at Brunswick Industrial Estate, North Seaton and Wallsend and one to six at Bates Minewater Treatment Works, Blyth, Branton GP, East Ord, Holy Island and Prestwick Carr.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Four were noted around the feeding station at Gosforth Park NR on 5th (PJA) and three at Bothal Sawmill on 12th (TB). Two were reported from Jesmond Dene, Morpeth (Scotch Gill Woods), a Stamfordham garden and Wark (North Tyne) and singles at a further eight localities.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Two + were noted at Gosforth Park on 3rd (MSH) and two at Castle Island (GB), Prestwick Carr (PCF) and Swallow Pond (JPD). Singles were widespread from a further 14 localities.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

11 at Prestwick Carr on 5th was an excellent count by recent standards (PCF). Two were at Cramlington (Southfield Green) on 1st and singles reported from Druridge Pools, Jesmond Dene and Netherton Park. Another singing strongly in Leazes Park (Newcastle) at 01.00hrs on 1st was probably the first 'year tick' for the observer.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

A roost count of 827 at Fawdon on 27th was well above the norm of around 50 birds (CDB). Flocks of 78-100 were reported from Alnwick, Big Waters, Grindon Lough and Seahouses and 20-30 at Angerton Lake and Cresswell. One to 15 were reported from a further eight localities.

Starlings flocking to roost over Fawdon
by Chris Barlow

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

A total of seven were noted on the River Tyne from Haydon Bridge-Hexham on 5th (JL). Up to three were reported from Jesmond Dene and three were displaying together at Rothbury on 6th. Twos and/or pairs were noted at Alnwick (Canongate), Bedlington (Furnace Bridge), Dipton Mill and Holywell Dene and singles at Corbridge (Aydon and Dilston), Cramlington (Horton Burn), Hedgeley GP, Hexham (Tyne Green), Morpeth (Highford Bridge), Pegswood, Ponteland, Rothbury (Thrum Mill) and Wark (North Tyne).

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

A total of 40-50 were counted along the roadside at Prestwick Carr on 6th (AJN) and 41 were feeding on apples in the garden at Slaley Hall on 25th (RMH). More apples (and fruitcake) attracted up to 12 to an Alnwick garden during the month and ten were at Hexham (Tyne Green) on 18th. Nine were at Eachwick on 20th and a roost at North Shields (Cobalt Business Park) also held nine on 25th. The species was common in a Morpeth (Fulbeck) garden all month, where the peak count was eight on 26th. One to six were reported from a further five localities, including two in full song at the Freeman Hospital (High Heaton) on 3rd and three to four singing, pre-dawn, at Chapel House on 4th.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

A spell of hard weather during the middle of the month produced some large gatherings. The highest counts were 400+ at Monkseaton on 24th (MSH), 300+ at Woodhorn on 23rd (MSH) and 300 at South Newsham (Blyth) on 24th (MHp); 260 were at West Ord on 27th and 200 at East Holywell on 25th. On Holy Island an influx, probably from the mainland brought 150 on 25th, declining from 120 on 27th to 65+ by the end of the month. Elsewhere 100-110 were reported from Blagdon (Bellasis Bridge), Cocklawburn and Forestburn Gate and 60-80 from Druridge Bay, Holywell Pond, Howick (Hips Heugh) and Prestwick Carr. Flocks of 26-54 were reported from a further 13 widespread localities.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

This species was well reported this month. A notable eight were at Cocklawburn on 24th (MHu) and five at West Hartford on 16th (PJA). Birds in full song were heard from 2nd, at Gosforth Park NR, Hexham (town centre), High Heaton, Netherton Park, Newcastle (Leazes Park) and Shiremoor. Two flew W, in off the sea at Blyth on 18th and one to two were reported from a further three coastal and seven inland localities.



Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Larger gatherings included 100-100+ at Howick on 19th (SS), Woodhorn Flashes on 24th (PRM) and East Holywell on 25th (MNC). Flocks of 60-70 were reported from Blyth Cemetery on 23rd, Hexham (Swallowship) on 16th and Slaley Hall on 13th and 30-40 from Cramlington, Druridge Bay, Newton Links, Swallow Pond, Tynemouth (Marden Farm) and West Hartford. Elsewhere 20-25 were noted at Bilton Mill, Doddington, Ellington, Lynemouth Flash, North Shields and Tynemouth Park and one to 16 at a further 24 widespread localities.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

A single flock of ten at Capheaton on 13th was the largest gathering (STE), followed by six at Ellington on 1st (TB). Five+ were on the Otterburn Ranges and four in Jesmond Dene on 6th and three at Druridge Pools, Linden Hall and Swallow Pond. Singing was heard from 4th at Bilton, Jesmond (RGS) and the Simonside Hills. One to two were reported from a further nine localities including a Walbottle garden, where one on 20th was the first record here since January 2011.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

A notable ten were singing along a 1.5 km stretch at Cramlington (Horton Burn) on 28th (LJM) and six were at Aydon (Corbridge) on 18th (RB/MB). Four were singing at Gosforth Park NR on 6th and four was the highest monthly count from a Walbottle garden on 13th. Three were reported from Eachwick and Jesmond Dene and one to two at Druridge Pools, Hauxley and South Gosforth.

A Robin accepts Peter Fletcher's meal-worm

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Another wintering bird was at Low Newton on 23rd (ASJ) and 27th (MRM).

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Inland birds were four at Branton GP on 19th (IBDa/KDa), three at West Hartford on 6th (STH), two at Prestwick Carr on 3rd and a male at Plenmeller Common on 24th-26th. As usual the vast majority of reports were from coastal areas. Up to three were noted at Cresswell Pond on seven dates and at East Chevington on 13th; elsewhere in Druridge Bay one to two were also reported at Hemscott Hill and Druridge Links. Two were at Coquet Point on 26th, the Long Nanny on 13th, Stag Rocks-Budle Point on 6th and Warkworth Gut on 6th, while singles were noted at Alnmouth, Blyth Harbour, Cheswick, Holy Island and Monks' House dunes.

Dunnoek *Prunella modularis*

Four were in an Old Hartley garden throughout the month (RJP). Two were at Hauxley and Cresswell both on 5th (CDB) whilst singles were at Fenham-le-Moor on 27th (PJA) and in a South Gosforth garden on 26th (MJCo).

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

100 at Cullercoats Bay on 8th was the month's highest total (MN). A flock totalling 46 birds was present throughout the month at Northburn (Cramlington) (LJM/PJA). One to 30 were also present at Battlesteads Hotel (Wark), Belle Vue Gardens (Alnwick), Chapel Lands (Alnwick), Cobalt Business Park and Eachwick throughout the month.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

35 at Holywell Pond on 15th (JPD) and 30 at East Fleetham on 4th (MSH) were the highest counts. 25 were at both Howick on 6th (SS) and Scaffoldhill Farm on 19th (JPD). One to 21 were recorded at a further 19 sites throughout the month.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Two were at Horton Burn (Cramlington) throughout the month (JM/LJM), Jesmond Dene (Newcastle) on 6th (MJCo) and Whitley Bay Town Centre on several dates (GCK). Single birds were noted at a further 17 sites throughout the month.

Correction The Yellow Wagtail at Tynemouth on 3rd the December 2012 bulletin was a Grey Wagtail.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Only three records were received for the month including two at Newbiggin on 5th (CDB) and two at Snab Point (Cresswell) on 1st (GB). Also a single was at Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 11th (GB).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

50 were at St Mary's Island on 15th and 16th (ASJ/JPD). 20 were at both Cresswell Pond on 16th (RD/IF) and Newbiggin on 20th (AT). 15 were at East Chevington on 17th (PRM) whilst one to ten were at 14 other sites throughout the month.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

20 were at Low Newton beach on 27th (JPD). Eight were feeding on flies around seaweed debris at Bondicarr Beach (Hauxley) on 8th (EC). One to six were at a further nine sites throughout the month including a colour-ringed individual at Sandstell Point (Spital) on 28th (BWG).



Three finches in a Woosington winter's garden
Top a Greenfinch and a male Bullfinch and below a Siskin
and a female Bullfinch

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

50 were at Whittle Dene on 18th (SR) and a flock of 28 were feeding in fields at Capheaton on 2nd (STE). 21 in an observer's garden in Walbottle on 20th was the highest number recorded in 26 years (KR/LR) and one to 20 were at Hauxley, Holywell Dene, Jesmond Dene (Newcastle) and Low Newton throughout the month.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

A tight flock of 180 feeding on rough ground at Ord Industrial Estate on 26th was the month's largest total ((MHu). 35 were at Melkridge Village on 25th (SJH) whilst one to 12 were at 18 further sites throughout the month.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

20 were at a Walbottle garden on 27th (KR/LR) whilst ten were at Cobalt Business Park on 25th (CGK) and six at both Backworth Pond on 16th (MNC) and Netherton Park (Stannington) on 21st (RWM/MIM). Also four were at Prestwick Carr on 1st (PCF).

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

110 at Cresswell Pond on 2nd (ASJ) and 100 at East Chevington on 10th (JMA) were the largest counts for the month. One to 38 were at 23 further sites throughout the month.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

100 were in roadside trees along Fisher Lane (Cramlington) on 1st (LJM). 60 were at Lemmington Hall (Edlingham) on 20th (PHa), 35 at Hexham on 14th (AJR) and 27 at Big Waters on 2nd (GB). One to 22 were seen at a further 38 sites throughout the month.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

A single flock held 500 birds at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 26th (AJH) and 100 were at Duncie's House on 7th (AT). 91 at Howdon Wetland NR on 25th beat the site's previous highest count of six (CB). 80 were at Beadnell on 27th (ASJ), 70 at Wellhaugh Point (Amble) on 5th (DS), 60 at Swallow Pond on 8th (JPD) and 50 at Doddington on 2nd (TRD/JD). One to 25 were seen at a further five sites throughout the month.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

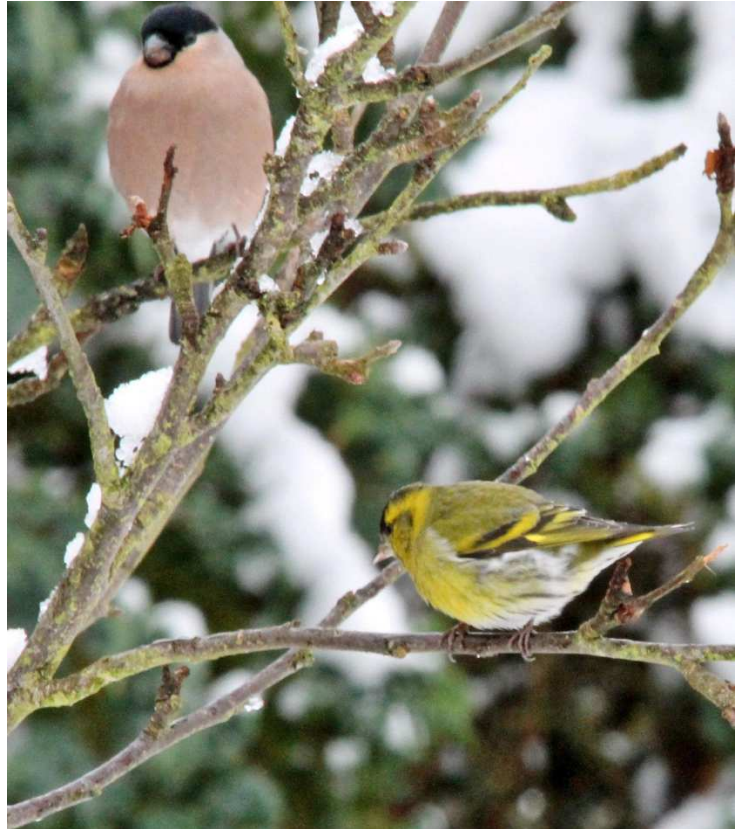
An impressive flock of 90 was at Beal Point on 24th (TRD/JD) with possibly part of the same flock seen throughout the month at the Beal end of Holy Island Causeway (AA/MH/CDB). 60 were at Druridge Links on 13th (NFO) and 50 were at both Hemscotthill Links on 2nd (ASJ) and Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 27th (PJA/JM).

Redpoll sp.

Singles were heard and seen flying over Big Waters, Gosforth and Wideopen throughout the month (GB).

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*

42 was the month's highest total at Prestwick Carr on 1st (PCF) whilst 40 were feeding in Silver Birches in Melkridge Village on 14th (SJH). 30 were at Summerhouse Lane Pond (Newbiggin) on 5th (DM/STH) and 20 were at Swallow Pond on 8th (JPD). One to eight were at a further 15 sites throughout the month.



Mealy Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*

A single was in alders along the south bank of the South Pool with Lesser Redpolls at East Chevington on 24th (PRM). Another single was at Swallow Pond on 3rd (JPD).

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

20 including seven males were noted near the dipping pond at Swallow Pond on 29th (SPP). Three flocks totalling 17 birds were at Howick on 1st (SS). 16 went over the South Pool at East Chevington on 3rd (MHP/TRC). One to eight were at a further eight sites throughout the month. The majority of these records came from either coastal or urbanised areas and absence from traditional sites was noted.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Eight were seen in a Fulbeck garden (Morpeth) throughout the month (TD), Peepay (Stocksfield) on 13th (SAS) and Valley Park (Cramlington) on 20th (DM). Groups of seven were seen at Bates Minewater Treatment Plant (Blyth) on 6th (MHP) and Gosforth Park (NHSN). One to six were at a further 32 sites throughout the month.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

A very unusual record for the site was one flushed off by an incoming aircraft at Big Waters on 8th (AJJ *per* GB). A single was also a Swallowship Wood (Hexham) on 16th (AJH).

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

A quiet month for this winter visitor with 20 at Bamburgh on 18th (JHa) and ten seen in flight from a stubble field across the A1 near Fenwick on 23rd (CDB). Also two were at Lucker on 15th (JHa) and a single at St Mary's on 5th (CGK/MJC/MSH/AC).

Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*

The only record of the month was a singing bird well inland at Duke's Pond (Wallsend) on 23rd (JPD).

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

The highest count for the month was of 34 at Ord Industrial Estate on 26th (MHu). 30 were at Whittle Dene on 18th (SR), 25 at Pegswood on 7th (AT), 17 at Fenham-le-Moor on 13th (DM/STH) and 15 along the Holystone/Killingworth Waggonway on 5th (BMo). One to 12 were at a further 15 sites including unusual records of five to six coming to seed in a suburban estate at Brunswick Green (Wideopen) on 19th (GB) and a single at Shiremoor Metro Station on 17th (CGK). These records were probably a result of the snowy conditions.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza Schoeniclus*

Ten were at Swallow Pond on 28th (MSH). Eight were along the Holystone/Killingworth Waggonway on 5th (BMo) and at the Ord Industrial Estate on 26th (MHu). One to seven were also at a further 15 sites throughout the month.

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

One at East Chevington on 13th (TRD/JD) and at Druridge Pools on 29th (MSH).

Muscovy Duck *Cairina moschata*

One from last month at Airy Holm Reservoir near Shotleyfield was present until 9th (IFo).

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Berwick Wildlife Group, Hauxley Ringing Station, Natural History Society of Northumbria, North Northumberland Bird Club.

Apologies for any accidental omissions

WEATHER

1st to 11th: Generally dry and bright on 1st. The 2nd saw rain for eastern areas in the morning, which cleared to leave scattered showers in the north-west. It was mainly dry but dull for many areas on 3rd, although the north-east saw some patchy rain, and mild. From 4th to 6th it remained dry and mild, but mostly overcast. A band of rain spread across the northern half of the country on 7th. On 10th, after more widespread mist and fog cleared, a band of rain spread from the south-west. There were some light showers for eastern coastal areas.

12th to 25th: A band of rain, with snow for some higher inland areas, spread from the west on 12th. On 13th a band of rain, again with snow over higher ground. Another band of at times heavy rain, sleet and snow spread from the west during the morning of 14th. Eastern coastal areas had snow showers on 15th, and temperatures were below average. After a frosty night the 16th was a quieter day, remaining cold. The 17th started wet in the south-west, the patchy rain turning readily to snow as it moved north and east. On 18th a band of sleet and snow spread from the west during the day. The snow moved to eastern areas on 19th. A band of snow moved up the eastern side of England in the afternoon. The 21st saw a widespread frost and a cold but bright day, with northern and north-eastern areas getting some snow. After another cold start on 22nd snow in the north-east gradually died out, by which time Redesdale (Northumberland) had a depth of 28 cm. The 24th was drier and brighter, but remained cold after a frosty start. On 25th an area of rain for coastal areas, but snow for many other areas, spread from the west during the afternoon.

26th to 31st: Milder weather returned on 26th, with south-westerly winds increasing and rain spreading from the west. Scattered showers on 27th were driven on by strong westerly winds. More rain spread from the west on 28th with strong westerly winds. The 29th was again breezy, but mild. Cooler on 30th as the winds turned north-westerly, with showers for northern areas. The 31st was brighter, but still breezy with scattered showers in the north.

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 Mail 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>

BOU NEW ORDER OF SPECIES

The BOU have recently issued a new order of species as of 14th January 2013. (Please see www.bou.org.uk and follow links via British List, The List, Species in Categories A,B and C and 'View the British List'.) The main change this time is a complete overhaul of Waders plus a repositioning of Gulls, Terns & Auks which are now re-ordered Auks, Terns & Gulls. (Please do not ask me why as I am not a Mitochondrial DNA specialist !)

NTBC have always attempted to keep in line with the BOU position so the next bulletin will be adhering to this new order. It was agreed by the County Records Committee at the last meeting to keep the annual report 'Birds in Northumbria 2012' under the old order issued on 15th December 2011 to keep it in line with all the bulletins and online submissions from last year.

DESCRIPTIONS WANTED FROM 2012

Given below is a full list of sightings in 2012 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 and RBA websites have 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 2012'. Descriptions need to be forwarded by late May at the latest 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 2011 on page 228. A copy of the Rarity report form can be downloaded from the website and is also printed in this month's bulletin.

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. 2012 was another busy year for migrants and 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 2012'. A recent email splurge asking for descriptions was successful and many of these sightings I am sure will be documented. 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 with Spring still over the horizon!

Thanks
Tim Dean



Seaton Sluice Watch Tower
Two Chairmen of the Club hard at work
Please note the rainbow (with a crock of gold at the base of the new steps?)

			Outstanding Descriptions	Photo
4 Taiga Bean Goose	1	Goswick	21/08/12	RA
4 Bean Goose	12	St Mary's	28/11/12	AC
8 Snow Goose	2	Wylam	03/05/12	CP
8 Snow Goose	2	Holy Island Lough	18/05/12	MJC
8 Snow Goose	1	Hauxley	23/05/12	?
8 Snow Goose	2	Beal Pt	23/09/12	Ida / Kda
8 Snow Goose	1 Blue	Linton	05/10/12	TB
9 Ross's Goose	2 Ad	Monk's House Pool	02/09/12	?
9 Ross's Goose	2 Ad	Cresswell Pond	10/09/12	Gary/Gwen
10 Todd's Canada Goose	6	Woodhorn / QEII Cp / Bothal Por	20/11/12	04/12/12 JGS / SJM et al
14 Egyptian Goose	1	Holywell Pond	06/03/12	09/03/12 JPD
39 Northern' Eider	M	Snab Pt, Cresswell	12/03/12	MSK
76 Cory's / Great Shearwater	1	Cresswell	06/09/12	MW
80 Balearic Shearwater	1	North Blyth	11/07/12	TL
80 Balearic Shearwater	1	Beadnell	26/07/12	GW
80 Balearic Shearwater	2	Emmanuel Head, Holy Island	21/09/12	?
85 Leach's Petrel	2	Newbiggin	24/09/12	AT/DD
85 Leach's Petrel	1	Beadnell	25/09/12	GW
97 Night-heron	Ad	Holy Island Snook	26/06/12	?
108 White Stork	2	Wark	19/02/12	?
108 White Stork	1	Holywell Pond	31/03/12	?
108 White Stork	1	Dudley	05/04/12	CP
108 White Stork	1	Big Waters	21/04/12	GB
108 White Stork	1	Wylam	23/04/12	Cpo
117 Honey-buzzard	1	Druridge Pools	21/08/12	IDR
120 White-tailed Eagle	1	Morpeth	21/10/12	MF
130 Rough-legged Buzzard	1	Ellington	04/01/12	TB
140 Hobby	1	Morpeth	25/04/12	TB
140 Hobby	1	Holy Island	12/05/12	ASJ/MPF/JPD
140 Hobby	1	Gosforth Park	07/06/12	09/06/12 PS/MJC
140 Hobby	1	Swallow Pond	20/06/12 & 01/07/12	SPP / JPD
140 Hobby	Ad	Whittle Dene Res	22/06/12	PRM
140 Hobby	Ad	Druridge Bay / Bothal Pond	25/06/12	03/07/12 ADMc / ASJ / PRM / TB et al
140 Hobby	1	Monk's House Pool	27/06/12	NEWT
140 Hobby	Sub Ad	Holy Island	12/08/12	31/08/12 SR / AH / IK
140 Hobby	1	Cresswell Pond	12/08/12	FG
140 Hobby	Juv	Elwick	31/08/12	GR
149 Corncrake	1	St Mary's	25/09/12	GC
155 Crane	1	St Mary's	25/03/12	SPP
155 Crane	3	Swarland	10/04/12	PE
155 Crane	1	Gosforth Park	02/05/12	Jbe
155 Crane	1	Killingworth	18/05/12	per SJM
155 Crane	1	Dinnington	27/05/12	per PCF
194 White-rumped Sandpiper	1	Elwick	21/09/12	PRM
196 Pectoral Sandpiper	Ad	Newton Flash	22/07/12	24/07/12 GW et al

RBA, No details logged

 Yahoo Group
 No contact details, Durham birders
 Birdline N/W
 Mobile phone number incorrect from RBA
 Escape
 known escapee

 Hoax !

						Outstanding Descriptions			
						15/09/12	16/09/12	BW	
196 Pectoral Sandpiper	1		Newton Flash			16/09/12	18/09/12	ASJ et al	Only one on 16 th
196 Pectoral Sandpiper	2 juv		Lynemouth Flash						
237 Grey Phalarope	1		Beadnell			01/01/12		GW	
237 Grey Phalarope	1		Bamburgh			07/01/12		TB/SLB/MSK/GMi	
237 Grey Phalarope	1		Snab Pt			07/01/12		TB/SLB/MSK/GMi	
237 Grey Phalarope	2		pelagic off Tynemouth			22/09/12		MSK / Bmo et al	
240 Long-tailed Skua	Juv		Seahouses			27/08/12		GR	
240 Long-tailed Skua	Juv		Farne Islands			27/08/12		FIW	
240 Long-tailed Skua	2 juv		St Mary's Island			19/09/12		SPP	
240 Long-tailed Skua	5 juv		Newbiggin			20/09/12		JGS / TRC AA et al	
240 Long-tailed Skua	1		Emmanuel Head, Holy Island			21/09/12		?	RBA, No details logged
240 Long-tailed Skua	juv		Beadnell			21/09/12		GW	
240 Long-tailed Skua	6 juv		Newbiggin			21/09/12		STH / JGS / RSF / TRC	
240 Long-tailed Skua	juv		Staple Sound, Farne Islands			22/09/12		FIW	
240 Long-tailed Skua	3 juv		Tynemouth			22/09/12		SPP	
240 Long-tailed Skua	juv		Emmanuel Head, Holy Island			22/09/12		SR	
240 Long-tailed Skua	3 juv		Farne Islands			23/09/12		FIW	
240 Long-tailed Skua	4 juv		Newbiggin			23/09/12		JGS / SJM	
240 Long-tailed Skua	7 Juv		Newbiggin			24/09/12		AT et al	
240 Long-tailed Skua	juv		Beadnell			24/09/12		GW	
240 Long-tailed Skua	3 juv		Holy Island			24/09/12		PRM	
240 Long-tailed Skua	juv		Beadnell			25/09/12		GW	
240 Long-tailed Skua	3 juv		Farne Islands			25/09/12		FIW	
240 Long-tailed Skua	Ad		St Mary's Island			25/09/12		ASJ	
243 Sabine's Gull	Juv		Newbiggin			29/10/12		AT	
243 Sabine's Gull	1		Potland Burn, Linton			13/10/12		IRD	
259 Yellow-legged Gull	1		Newbiggin			25/09/12		Ssh	Probable
268 Bridled Tern	1		North Tyne Valley			03/04/12		PRM	
335 Lesser Spotted Woodpeck€	1		Gosforth Park			11/05/12		per NHSN	No contact details
335 Lesser Spotted Woodpeck€	1		Long Nanny, Newton			09/12/12		GR	
373 Short-toed Lark	2		Lynemouth			12/05/12		IDR et al	
385 Red-rumped Swallow	1		Plessey Woods			19/05/12		PRM	
385 Red-rumped Swallow	1		Hexham			22/10/12	23/10/12	PRM	Inland
394 Yellow-browed Warbler	1		Wallsend			28/10/12		per JPD	Inland
394 Yellow-browed Warbler	1		Cambois			03/10/12	12/10/12	ST / AT / ASJ et al	
395 Hume's Warbler	1		Haggerston			01/04/12		Jim	
401 Siberian Chiffchaff	1		Backworth			14/04/12		MN	
401 Siberian Chiffchaff	1		Holy Island			07/10/12		MJC	
402 Scandinavian Chiffchaff	2		Holy Island			14/10/12		MJC	
402 Scandinavian Chiffchaff	2		Low Newton			14/10/12		GW	
402 Scandinavian Chiffchaff	1		Straight Lonnen, Holy Island			23/10/12		JD/TRD	
402 Scandinavian Chiffchaff	1		Holy Island			26/10/12		MJC	
403 Northern Willow Warbler	8		Holy Island			11/05/12		MJC	
403 Northern Willow Warbler	8		Holy Island			19/05/12		MJC	
406 Barred Warbler	1		Low Newton			14/08/12		GW	

					Outstanding Descriptions	
					19/08/12	22/08/12
406 Barred Warbler	1	Druridge Bay CP	AT et al		SS	
406 Barred Warbler	1	Howick	SS			
406 Barred Warbler	1	Newbiggin	EB			
406 Barred Warbler	1	Cambois	ST			
406 Barred Warbler	1	Straight Lonnen, Holy Island	PRM et al			
406 Barred Warbler	1	Cambois	ST			
415 Subalpine Warbler	1	Woodhorn	?			
426 Icterine Warbler	Ad	Half Moon Slack, Holy Island	PRM			
426 Icterine Warbler	1	Low Newton	GW			
432 Marsh Warbler	M	East Chevington	MN			
432 Marsh Warbler	M	Hadston / Hauxley	CDB et al			
432 Marsh Warbler	M	Big Waters	GB et al			
450 Black-bellied Dipper	1	Holywell Dene	AJR			
479 White-spotted Bluethroat	1	Woodhorn	JGS			
481 Red-flanked Bluetail	1	Ridley Park, Blyth	LH			
496 Red-breasted Flycatcher	1 st W	Tynemouth	? / Dlo			
496 Red-breasted Flycatcher	1 st W	St Marys	Dlo			
496 Red-breasted Flycatcher	1	Low Newton	GW			
496 Red-breasted Flycatcher	1 st W	Newbiggin	AT et al			
506 Grey-headed Wagtail	M	Holy Island rocket pools	ASJ/JPD/MPF			
509 White Wagtail	1	Lynemouth	JL			
510 Richard's Pipit	1	The Snook , Holy Island	? / JD et al			
510 Richard's Pipit	1	Newton	GW / JGS et al			
513 Olive-backed Pipit	1	Rumbling Kern, Howick	SS			
538 Common Rosefinch	1	Holy Island	PRM / ?			
566 Little Bunting	1	Druridge Pools	per IDR			

No contact details, Durham birders

Only heard
Possible

Birdnet

Probable

Probable, Birdguides

ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2012

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT	2012	2011	2010
INCOME			
Members subscriptions	5,515.00	5,475.00	5,391.00
<i>Includes 5 Honorary & 9 Life members</i>			
Birds in Northumbria - current year	1,656.20	1,151.60	1,675.45
Birds in Northumbria - other years	120.55	68.95	
Other (atlas)	677.88		
Refund of Income tax (Gift Aid)	1,190.11	1,356.35	1,277.98
Bank Interest (Northern Rock)		8.64	14.29
Atlas fund raising	460.00	280.50	
Misc	-	5.00	
	9,619.74	8,346.04	8,358.72
EXPENDITURE			
Opening stock for sale	3,375.50	2,471.00	-00
Birds in Northumbria - current year	4,290.36	6,288.89	3,863.81
Less Closing Stock	2,422.80	3,375.50	-2,471.00
Total Cost of Sales	5,243.06	5,384.39	1,392.81
Membership	29.93	407.56	
Indoor meetings	943.77	729.77	512.15
Monthly Bulletins	1,720.58	1,843.68	2,299.35
Birds in Northumbria (postage)	193.37	207.06	306.54
Birds of Holy Island			
Officers expenditure	280.29	203.04	272.36
Field trips			
Record cards/storage	387.43	984.74	752.00
Insurance	110.00	110.00	110.00
SSWT Rent and Rates	28.21	303.42	
Website and IT	62.88	135.61	138.80
Miscellaneous	423.98	127.17	168.14
Atlas	9.98	133.25	-00
Sweatshirts	135.00		-00
	9,568.48	10,569.69	5,952.15
Surplus / deficit for year	51.26	-2,223.65	2,406.57

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 30 JUNE 2012			
ACCUMULATED FUND			
Balance as at 30 June 2011	4,226.15	6,449.80	4,043.23
Surplus/ (Deficit) from I & E Account	51.26	-2,223.65	2,406.57
	4,277.41	4,226.15	6,449.80
Represented by Assets:			
Stock	2,422.80	3,375.50	2,471.00
Debtors	-	1,356.35	
Prepayments		-00	
Lloyds TSB Treasurers Account	6,614.61	4,649.30	1,853.09
Northern Rock	-	-00	5,725.71
Cash in Hand	-	-00	-00
Total	9,037.41	9,381.15	10,049.80
Less Liabilities			
Accruals	-	-00	-00
Creditors	4,760.00	5,155.00	3,600.00
Total	4,760.00	5,155.00	3,600.00
	4,277.41	4,226.15	6,449.80

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

NORTHUMBERLAND AND TYNESIDE BIRD CLUB
DEVELOPMENT FUND ACCOUNTS
FOR YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2012

<u>INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>
INCOME			
Sales - Winter Atlas	0	107.55	91.00
Atlas Data	1140	2206	1,350.00
Donations (balance from 50th)			-00
Bank Interest	20.96	16.06	17.50
Fund raising New Atlas	643.97	1577.25	1,458.50
	1804.93	3906.86	
<u>LESS EXPENDITURE</u>			
Winter Atlas postage			
Grants		600	1,450.00
Atlas		208	581.35
		808	2,031.35
<i>Surplus (Deficit) for Year</i>	1804.93	3098.86	-572.85
<u>Balance sheet as at 30th June 2012</u>			
<u>Accumulated fund</u>			
Balance as at 30 June 2012	20094.9	16996.04	17,568.89
Surplus/deficit from I & E account	1804.93	3098.86	-572.85
	21899.83	20094.9	16,996.04
Represented by:			
ASSETS			
Cash - Santander	21899.83	20094.9	16,996.04
Debtor		0	
Cash/Cheque in Hand		0	-00
	21899.83	20094.9	16,996.04

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. Corlley

Date 15. 2. 13.



Northumberland & Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

RARE or SCARCE BIRD REPORT FORM

A list of species requiring documentation by the County Records Committee is available in *Birds in Northumbria* or on the club's website at www.ntbc.org.uk

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

Is this record 100% certain?

YES/NO

Circumstances & Description :-

(Please include circumstances of finding the bird (brief), details of plumage, bare parts, any calls/song, behaviour or 'jizz'. Add extra pages if necessary)

An electronic copy of the completed form can be emailed to the County Recorder, Tim Dean at ***t.r.dean@btinternet.com*** or alternatively, a paper copy to 2 Knocklaw Park, Rothbury NE65 7PW

Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

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

Bulletin 2013 No 2

MONTHLY SUMMARY – FEBRUARY

4th April 2013



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Committee News

Indoor Meetings

Field Trips

Classified List

Weather

WeBS Inland

WeBS Coastal December 2012, January and February 2013

Hen Harrier Update

BB For Sale

CLASSIFIED LIST HIGHLIGHTS

Whooper Swan

Taiga Bean Goose

Greenland White-fronted Goose

Scaup

Goldeneye

Smew

Bittern

Cattle Egret

Black-tailed Godwit

Greenshank

Great Skua

Glaucous Gull

Ring-necked Parakeet

Black Redstart

Mealy Redpoll

Large gathering at Loanend near Horncliffe with 134 on 3rd.

Three joined a mixed goose flock at Budle Bay on 8th.

Four adults noted at Woodhorn and a single at Grindon Lough.

Only one or two at Druridge Bay CP.

High count of 230 on the WeBS count at the Tweed Estuary.

The redhead remained at East Chevington all month.

Singles at Gosforth Park, Cresswell Pond & Swallow Pond.

Bird on Holy Island stayed until 2nd when thought to have perished.

High winter count of eight on Holy Island.

Wintering bird still at Budle Bay.

Unusual wintering record with one S at Cocklawburn on 11th.

A juvenile at North Shields Fish Quay on 23rd.

Two at Jesmond on 22nd.

Wintering bird at Spittal on 9th.

Two at Warkworth Gut on 8th.

COMMITTEE NEWS

WEBSITE

Following the announcement from Posterous that their free hosting service, used by the club to support the sightings page, is to end on April 30 and the resignation of our website management team of the last 5 years (Mike Hodgson and Chris Knox) we have begun work on redeveloping the club web offering.

Work has begun on a new website combining much of the content of the existing site and a new sightings facility for club members. This is a big task and will take some time to come to full fruition. Club members can continue to access the existing website(s) as the club's domain name (ntbc.org.uk) will remain the same. We will keep everyone abreast of developments as they progress.

The committee would like to thank Mike & Chris for all of their hard work and efforts over the last five years in developing what remains one of the best club websites in the country with a rich content. We hope that we can with the continued support of club members build on what they have achieved in the future.

MARCH MEETING QUESTION TIME

The meeting turned out to be a lively affair with discussions ranging from Hen Harrier protection to the role of NTBC in encouraging interest in birding from young people. The panel consisted of Nick Adams (RSPB), Tom Cadwallender (representing BTO) and Tim Dean – County Recorder. The Northumberland Wildlife Trust had been invited but were unable to take part having a major event of their own in Newcastle. The evening was ably chaired by Martin Davison.

The pros and cons of keeping Hen Harrier records confidential throughout the year was thoroughly considered. Committee were asked to investigate ways of putting pressure on politicians to protect our birds of prey.

Nick Adams fielded questions about the prospects of the RSPB setting up a 'northern reserve' possibly in co-operation with the Wildlife trusts. This led to consideration of the criteria and significant expense involved in the establishment of new reserves and the need for them to attract a wide range of visitors.

By the time we got to a discussion about Arcot Pond the audience was well warmed up and contributions from the floor raised questions and some answers about ownership, maintenance and Arcot's status as a hotspot for breeding warblers. Reference was made to the valuable long-term records that have been built up by members in the area.

Tim Dean gave an update on progress on our new county atlas. NTBC is working on a possible agreement with BTO for a joint publication aimed for late 2014. So far 30 members have volunteered as species authors; more are welcome. Funding is being sought from the Heritage Lottery Fund and species are still available for members to sponsor (details from Steve

Lowe). There was also a discussion about ebook or hard copy and some interesting possibilities for a combination of both were raised.

Tom Cadwallender responded to questions about the NBN gateway (National Biodiversity Network). BTO has an agreement about older data and discussions are continuing at a local level.

The role of NTBC in encouraging interest from children and young people produced a varied response from the panel and the audience. The age range of people coming into birdwatching was noted including reference to the Natural History Society locally which is attracting significant audiences to its Friday meetings. The role of schools, parents and wildlife organisations was thoroughly aired and reference to the success of local projects such as Red Kites and the Kielder Osprey Watch celebrated.

After nearly an hour and a half the final discussion was pretty unanimous in expressing disappointment in the latest information about the CAP proposals and agreement and it was strongly felt that MPs and MEPs need to go back and look again.

The evening provided some interesting discussion and a range of opinion. It also served as a reminder that our membership has real in-depth knowledge, not just about birding but also about the background and development of some of our best birdwatching sites.

INDOOR MEETINGS

The next indoor meeting is at 7pm at Northern Rugby Club on 11th April

PAPUA NEW GUINEA - THE ULTIMATE BIRDING DESTINATION? By Neil Osborne

PNG is home to some of the world's most spectacular birds. Famous for its Birds of Paradise, it is also home to a dazzling array of kingfishers, bowerbirds and jewel-babblers to name but a few, all in a rugged wilderness. Neil is a well-known member of NTBC and this talk showcases some of the highlights of a 3-week trip in 2010.

FIELD TRIPS

Trevor Blakes' next field trips are:

Kielder in March was postponed due to the weather and will now be on Sunday 14th April– raptors are certain to feature in this popular visit

Harthope Valley 19th May – upland birds in one of our most scenic areas.

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.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Peak concentrations were 97 at Killingworth Lake on 10th (LJM), 67 at QEII CP Lake on 16th (DM), 48 at the Tweed Estuary on 8th (MHu), 46 at Fenham Mill (JPD), 30 at Alnmouth (PCF) and ten to 16 at Big Waters, Bothal and Swallow Ponds. Five to nine were also at Druridge Bay CP, Linton Ponds and Newcastle Leazes Park, and smaller numbers at several further sites, including one found dead under overhead lines at Cresswell Pond.

Whooper and Mute Swans at QEII CP
27th February by Tim Dean

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

A count of 134 at Loanend, Horncliffe consisted of 96 adults and 38 juveniles (MHu). Other peak counts were 49 at Fenham Mill on 9th (IK), 41 at Birling Carrs (Warkworth) on 8th (EC/JSB) and 35 at nearby Alnmouth on 16th (PCF), 40 (two juveniles) at Druridge Bay CP on 9th (CDB), 24 at West Ord (MHu), and 13-18 at Catcleugh Reservoir, Doddington, Longhirst and West Ord. Seven to nine were also at Grindon Lough and near Linton, and one to four at/over Big Waters, Druridge Pools, Killingworth and Rayburn Lakes, QEII CP, Red House Farm and Rothbury.



Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*

Three, of the *fabalis* (Taiga) race, landed briefly near a mixed flock of Barnacle and Brent Geese at Budle Bay on 8th but flew off N after 10-15 minutes (AA/MH).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

N to NW movement involved 300 at Stamfordham on 27th (EC), 250 at Blyth Harbour on 9th (LJM), and 150-170 at Cramlington and Kiln Pit Hill (IFo/LJM), while 230 flew S at East Ord (MHu) and 140 at Newbiggin on 2nd (GB). Numbers in the Cresswell Pond area ranged from 2,000-3,000 between 16th-27th (TB/MSH/ASJ) after an estimated 5,000 on 17th (CDB). A flock centred on Doddington numbered 4,000 on 2nd and 14th (SVM/AJM/DGB/RH). Other peak counts (some overlap likely) were 3,500 at West Chevington on 10th (TRD), 3,000 at Goswick on 7th (TRD), 3,000 at East Chevington on 27th (JPD), 3,000 at Elwick on 27th (ASJ), 2,000 at Druridge on 5th (MSH), 2,000 at Lowick on 10th (EHa), 1,000 at Longbridge End, Lindisfarne NNR (IK), and 250-600 at Blyth Links, Budle Bay, Holywell Dene, Horncliffe, Lucker and Woodhorn. Three to 16 were at four further sites, and one was in a flock of domesticated Mallard at Rothbury on 4th (TRD).



Wintering Geese. Left: Greenland Whitefronts at Grindon Lough by Jonathan Farooqi and, right: A Pink Foot at Holywell Pond by Chris Barlow

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

Eurasian *albifrons* race birds involved two, with Pink-feet, at West Chevington on 10th (TRD), and singles at Backworth on 9th (adult; MSH), Druridge Pools on 16th (TF/JFa), Holywell Pond all month (MHp/SPP/CS), and Woodhorn on 16th (JM). Records of Greenland *flavirostris* birds were four adults at Woodhorn between 10th-16th (TRD/MSH/JM *et al.*), two adults at Grindon Lough on 22nd (PRM) and one there, accompanying Canada Geese, regularly between 7th-21st (TF/JFa/SJH). Five un-raced birds flew S at Ellington on 9th and seven S there on 17th (TB), and one was at Big Waters on 10th (GB/AJJ *et al.*).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

800 were at Budle Bay (undated; JPL/DGB), 400 flew over Lucker on 25th (JHa), 184 at Backworth on 4th (MSH), 180 at West Ord (MHu), 110-144 at Backworth, Derwent Reservoir, Loanend (Horncliffe) and Woodhorn, 65-71 at Big Waters and Low Newton, and 12-39 at Cheswick, Cocklawburn, Druridge, Grindon Lough and Prestwick Carr. One to seven were at three further sites.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

The regular Grindon Lough flock peaked at 387 on 8th, with two to 348 on various other dates (SJH/PRM *et al.*). Other peak gatherings were 204 at Bothal Pond on 10th (MSH), 101 at West Stobswood Pool on 11th (MSH), 81 at Hauxley Reserve (CDB), 24-39 at Bywell Haughs, Newcastle Leazes Park, Prestwick Carr, QEII CP Lake and West Ord, and ten to 19 at Big Waters, Colt Crag Reservoir, Plenmeller Common and Swallow Pond. One to eight were also at Arcot Pond, Bolam Lake CP, Castle Island, Druridge Pools and Kingswood Burn.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Numbers at Budle Bay ranged from 144 on 8th (AA/MH) to 75 on 17th (MSH) to a peak of 240 (undated; JPL/DGB). Elsewhere, four were at Woodhorn on 14th (MSH), and one to two at Druridge, Tynemouth Boating Lake and West Stobswood Pool.

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Ten un-raced birds flew S at St Mary's on 2nd (JPD), and 800 were at Budle Bay (undated; JPL/DGB).

Pale-bellied *hrota* race birds included 500 at Holy Island causeway on 3rd (TRD), 500 at Goswick on 7th (TRD), 380 at Budle Bay on 17th (MSH), 300 at Beal Point, Lindisfarne NNR on 7th (TRD), 36 at Boulmer Haven on 22nd (AB/LB), and 11 at Alnmouth.

Dark-bellied *bernicla* race birds involved seven S at Seaton Sluice on 20th (SSWT), 100 at The Ouze (Holy Island) on 9th (IK), 75 at Holy Island Harbour on 27th (ASJ), and six to seven at Boulmer on 8th and 17th (JSB/EC/AJR).

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

16 flew N and two S at Seaton Sluice between 12th-23rd (SSWT), and two flew S at Cocklawburn on 11th (MHu). Budle Bay held 310 on 27th (ASJ), 22 were at Howdon on 9th (CB), three to four at Cresswell and Warkworth Lane Ponds, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Elswick, Hauxley Reserve, and one to two at Ashington, Blyth, Lynemouth Flash, West Hartford and West Stobswood Pool. Further inland, two were at Grindon Lough on 28th (AJR) and one at Branton GP on 6th (TRD).

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

A drake was at Wallsend Burn/Dene on 6th-7th and 21st (JPD/SPP).



A drake Mandarin displays his fine feathers at Wallsend Burn by Adriana Buskin

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Peak counts were 600 at Cresswell Pond on 21st (MSH), 516 at Big Waters on 12th (SPP), 300 at Druridge Pools on 14th (MSH), 140-170 at Bothal Pond, Hauxley Reserve and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and 78-88 at Arcot Pond and Grindon Lough. Counts of 13-33 came from Middle Ord and Swallow Ponds, and West Stobswood Pool.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Unusually, Arcot Pond held the largest numbers with a peak of 31 on 7th (LJM). Peak counts elsewhere were 14 at Big Waters on 22nd (GB), ten at East Chevington on 22nd (TRD), ten at Laverock Hall Farm (Blyth) on 12th (the observer's first there in 38 years; LJM), six to seven at Cresswell and Holywell Ponds, Druridge Bay CP and Gosforth Park NR, and three to four at Bothal and Swallow Ponds, and Druridge Pools. One to two were also at Branton GP, Castle Island, Duke's Pond, Grindon Lough and Howdon Wetland (the first record for the site; CB). A drake displayed to a 'paired up' female Mallard at Swallow Pond on 15th (SPP).

Teal *Anas crecca*

Peak counts were on the low side; about 200 at the 'rocket field' (Holy Island) all month (IK), 200 at Howdon on 3rd (CB/ME), 136 at Grindon Lough on 8th (SJH), 100-118 at Arcot Pond, Druridge Pools, Elswick and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and 54-84 at Colt Crag Reservoir, Middle Ord and Swallow Ponds, West Hartford. Counts of 12-48 came from Backworth, Big Waters (some display noted; GB), Bothal Pond, Castle Island, Derwent Reservoir, East Chevington, Newburn Haughs, St Mary's Wetland and Todburn (Slaley).

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Large counts were lacking, peaks being 139 at Big Waters on 3rd (GB), 136 at the Tweed Estuary on 8th (MHu), 126 at Cocklawburn Pond on 6th (MHu), 103 at Killingworth Lake on 10th (LJM), 56-89 at Castle Island, Derwent and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, Middle Ord Pond, Newcastle Leazes Park and QEII CP Lake. Groups of 20-48 were at Arcot, Bothal and Linton Ponds, Cheswick, Corbridge, Grindon Lough, Hexham, Shield on the Wall, Warkworth and Widdrington Moor Lake, and four to 18 at 16 further sites.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

220 were at Fenham Flats on 14th (JPL) and 40-46 on 3rd and 7th (TRD). Six (three drakes), along with a pair of Shoveler, were on the sea off Tynemouth Priory on 18th (SPP), three (two drakes) were at Druridge Pools on 10th (IRD/TRD) and one on 14th (MSH). A pair was at Arcot Pond on 15th (TRD/JD) and a drake at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 14th (PRM). Display was noted at Druridge Pools on 10th (IRD).

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Druridge Pools attracted nine to 12 on various dates and a peak of 15 on 10th (IRD), 13 were at Holy Island Lough on 10th (SR/AH), nine (six drakes) at Swallow Pond on 19th (JPD), five at East Chevington (TRD/JD), three at Killingworth Lake and Low Newton, and one to two at Gosforth Park NR and Monks' House Pool. A pair, with six Pintails, was on the sea off Tynemouth Priory on 18th (SPP).

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Greatest numbers were found at Killingworth Lake, where 41 were present on 10th (LJM), and Holywell Pond, with 24 on 19th (MHP). Other peaks were 20 at Swallow Pond on 15th (JPS), 19 (16 drakes) at Bothal Pond on 22nd (TRD), 15 at Grindon Lough on 28th (AJR), and five to nine at Arcot Pond, Bakethin Reservoir and East Chevington. One to two were also at Big Waters, Branton GP, Druridge Pools, Gosforth Park NR, QEII and Tynemouth Boating Lakes, Warkworth Lane Pond and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

One flew N at Seaton Sluice on 19th (SSWT). As with Pochard, the greatest numbers were found at Killingworth Lake which held a peak of 134 on 16th (GB). Peak counts elsewhere were 60 at QEII CP Lake on 10th (CDH), 59 at Arcot Pond on 24th (LJM), 54 at Grindon Lough and 20-37 at Bothal, Holywell and Swallow Ponds, Branton GP, Newcastle Leazes Park, Rayburn and Tynemouth Boating Lakes and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Counts of 12 -19 came from Big Waters, Bywell Haughs, East Chevington and Newcastle Exhibition Park, with one to seven at 12 further sites.

Scaup *Aythya marila*

A pair was at Ladyburn Lake on 8th (MRM), with the drake also recorded regularly until 27th (TB/TRD/JD/ASJ *et al.*).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

Generally small numbers only, with 59 at Blyth Harbour on 22nd (MHP), 36-37 at Berwick North Shore, North Shields Fish Quay and St Mary's Island (MHu/SPP/PRM), 20-22 at Cullercoats Bay, Hadston and Seahouses, and 11 at the Tweed Estuary.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

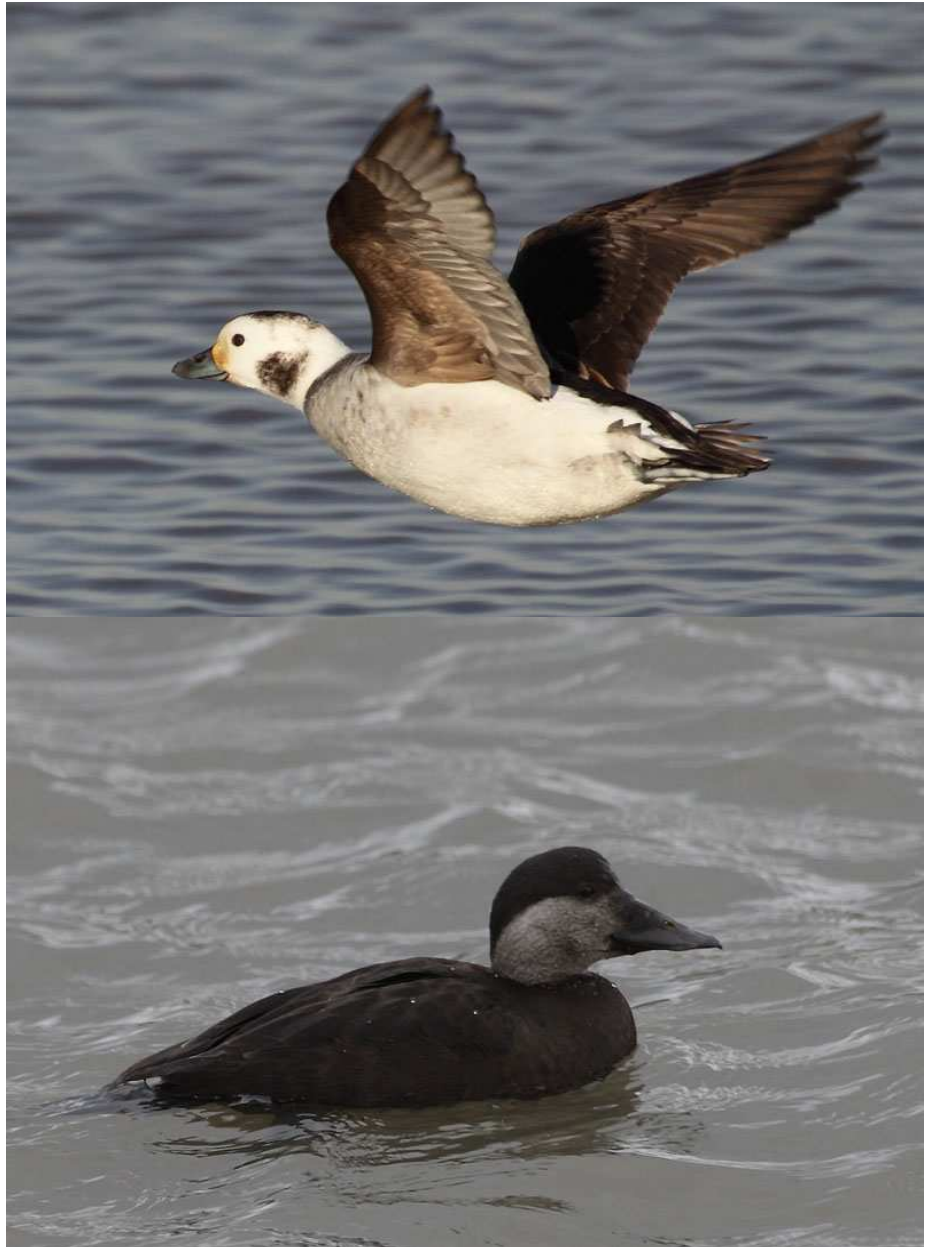
Two flew N at Newbiggin on 2nd (GB), four flew S at Seaton Sluice between 2nd-13th (SSWT) and one S at St Mary's on 6th (SPP). A total of 26 were displaying at Holy Island Harbour on 23rd (IK), five were at Low Newton on 8th (TRD), up to five were at Stag Rocks during the month (JPL/NNBC *et al.*), three to four at Beadnell Bay (JPL), Berwick Harbour-the Tweed Estuary (TRD/MHu) and off Emmanuel Head, Holy Island (TRD). Two were also at the Blyth Estuary-Harbour, Holy Island causeway and Seahouses, and one to two visited Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools and Low Newton scrape on various dates between 3rd-27th.

Long-tailed Duck
Druridge Pools
by Chris Barlow

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

The only sizeable flock was at Stag Rocks, where 180 were noted on 10th (JDL/DHa) and 91 on 17th (MSH). Elsewhere, 35 were feeding in Alnmouth Bay on 22nd (AB/LB), 20 were at Beadnell Bay (JPL) and one to eight off Cheswick, Cocklawburn, Druridge, Goswick, the Long Nanny Estuary, Low Newton, Seahouses and St Mary's. More unusual were two in Blyth Harbour on 9th and 13th (MHP/LJM) and one at North Shields Fish Quay on 9th (AJR).

A Common Scoter
Seahouses
by Chris Barlow

**Velvet Scoter** *Melanitta fusca*

Singles flew N and S at Seaton Sluice (SSWT) and St Mary's Island (JPD) on 2nd, and one was with Common Scoters and Long-tailed Ducks off Low Newton on 8th (TRD).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

The Tweed Estuary held 230 on 8th (WeBS count; MHu) and 81 were in Berwick Harbour on 7th when an additional 44 were at Yarrow Slake (TRD). Other peak counts were 47 at East Chevington north pool on 3rd (IK), 32 at Killingworth Lake on 16th (GB), and ten to 24 at Bakethin Reservoir, Big Waters, Bolam Lake, Branton GP, Grindon Lough, Low Newton, QEII CP Lake, the River Tweed between A1-Horncliffe, and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Five to eight were also at Arcot and Bothal Ponds, Castle Island, Derwent Reservoir, Hedgeley GP, Holy Island Lough and Seaton Bay, and one to four at 11 further sites. Display was noted at Bolam Lake on 4th (CW) and Killingworth Lake on 10th (GB).

Smew *Mergellus albellus*

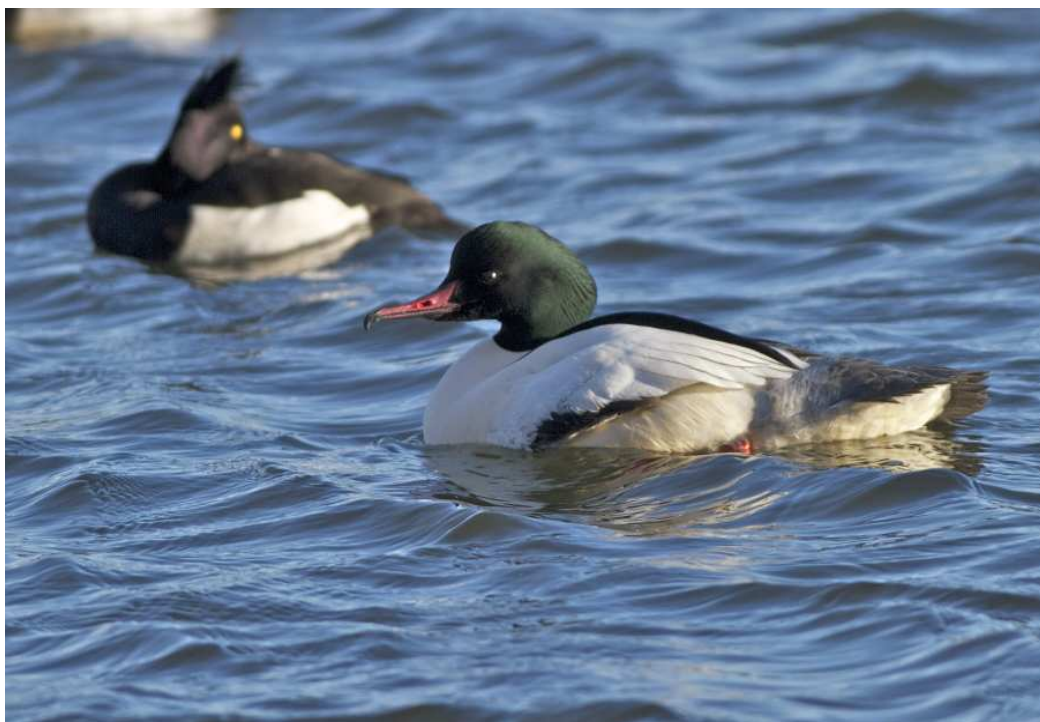
A 'redhead' was at East Chevington on 2nd-3rd, 16th and 22nd (TB/STH/IK *et al.*). Possibly the same individual was at nearby Druridge Pools 'Budge fields' on 27th (TRD/JD).

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

15 were at Budle Bay on 27th (ASJ), ten at the Tweed Estuary on 8th (JPL), six at the Blyth Estuary on 9th (LJM), and four to five at Cresswell Pond (TB/MRM), East Chevington (CDB) and Widdrington Moor Lake (MSH). One to two were also at Beadnell Bay, Berwick Little Beach, Druridge Pools, Holy Island, the Long Nanny Estuary, Seahouses, Spittal Bay and Warkworth weir.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Singles flew N at Seaton Sluice on 2nd and 12th (SSWT) and St Mary's on 2nd (JPD). Peak gatherings were 21 on the River Tweed between A1-Horncliffe on 16th (TBr), 12 at Branton GP on 6th (IBDa/KDa), five to six at Airy Holm (IFo), Whittle Dene (CB) and Wydon Burn Reservoirs (notable count for a tiny water body; AJR) and three to four at Colt Crag Reservoir, Hexham, Jesmond Dene and Melkridge. One to two were also at Arcot and Swallow Ponds, Bolam Lake, Branton GP, Bywell Haughs, Corbridge, Killingworth and QEII CP Lakes, Mootlaw Quarry, Newcastle Exhibition Park, Redesmouth, Thropton and Warkworth.



A drake Goosander at Killingworth Lake on 20th February by John Clark

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

There were some excellent counts during the month with the highest 149 seen during a drive in snow through Allendale Moor on 12th and 79 at Dryburn Moor (near Allendale) on 11th. Birds were observed displaying from 16th amongst groups of up to 23 birds on moors in the south of the county. There was only one report from the north of the area - seven in the Harthope Valley on 12th.

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

Gratifyingly high counts of this attractive species were made, all from the southern uplands. One observer counted 48 individuals in the area on 16th (STH). These included an impressive 19 Grey-hens on top of a wall along a minor road with three males in the field at the foot of the wall at Acton Common (Allendale) on 16th. In the same area 13 (three males) were present at Paxhill on 19th. Nine birds were at High Knock Shield on 12th and one to six cocks were seen at four places on nearby uplands on 12th and 13th. Birds were recorded on seven other days in the same area during the month.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

The only reports were from the Holywell Dene area where up to 16 were seen almost daily from 12th to the end of the month.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Birds were recorded at 14 well distributed lowland locations through the month. Groups were generally of up to six birds, however there were some bigger groups the largest of which was a notable 22 birds at Lucker during the month. Ten were at Belford on 9th and eight at Milkhope near Blagdon on 4th.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Nine birds were at Big Waters on 3rd and up to six visited a Walbottle garden during the month.

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

This species was seen throughout the month with the Seaton Sluice Watch Tower log recording 59 birds (34S and 25 N). Highest counts from 'sitting' birds were 21 at Stag Rocks on 27th and 12, all in winter plumage off Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) on flat seas on the same day. Eight were off Holy Island on 15th and seven off St. Mary's on 2nd and off Newton Point on 8th. There were 13 other sightings of up to three birds. Two were in the Tyne estuary on 25th.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

Two flew N off Hadston (Druridge Bay) on 9th and the only other record in the month was a single at Holy Island on 24th.

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

A single flew S at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower on 14th and another was at Embleton Bay on 17th.

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Birds returned to nest cliffs in the middle of the month with the first noted in the south with 28 at High Point (Whitley Bay) on 9th and six nearby at Cullercoats on the same day. On Holy Island the first pairs were on nest sites on 24th with birds displaying at The Castle.

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

Birds were recorded passing along the coast in low numbers throughout the month. The numbers were generally low but over 100 went N at Cullercoats on 25th and small parties also moved N off Holy Island on 24th. Earlier in the month 14 flew N in two hours at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower/St. Mary's on 6th.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

The largest group seen in the month was of 66 at Blyth Harbour on 18th. 49 were on North Shields Fish Quay jetty on 21st. Other counts of over ten were of 17 at Amble Harbour on 20th, 15 at Big Waters on 22nd, and 12 at Derwent Reservoir on 14th. Six which flew S at West Hartford on 16th was a site record.



Reports of *sinensis* race birds involved one at Big Waters on 10th, two at Linden Hall on 23rd and one at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 14th. An individual at North Shields Fish Quay on 23rd was with several other very 'white-headed' birds which were Atlantic Cormorants and not *sinensis*.

A Cormorant at North Shields on 23rd February by Peter Fletcher

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

The peak number reported was over 30 at Stag Rocks on 27th. Holy Island had ten on 3rd. Elsewhere the maximum recorded was seven at Berwick Little Beach on 7th. Observers at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower reported that very few were noted in the month with a maximum of three birds N on 12th.

A bird was seen on 7th on the patio of the house next to Cresswell village hall. Strangely it walked away towards the house when seen.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Bitterns were recorded at three sites during the month. One was at Swallow Ponds between 3rd-14th giving excellent views near one of the hides. Another was at Gosforth NR on 23rd and a third sighting was at Cresswell Pond on 16th.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

The Crooked Lonnen (Holy Island) bird reported at the end of January was seen on 1st and 2nd. On both days it was reported to be feeding well and appeared healthy, however by the afternoon of 2nd it was along a main drain 200 yards from the Lonnen when it looked weak with wings trailing. It didn't move when a farmer approached within 20 feet on a quad bike. White fox-chewed feathers which were found the following week at the spot don't bode well for this rare visitor. The feathers are now being analysed (IK).

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Another egret was in the Holy Island area during February. This Little Egret was in the Holy Island Causeway/Fenham Flats area from 3rd of the month with the last record from Budle Bay on 27th.(SR/AH/JPD *et al.*).

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Numbers were low during the month. The only double figure count was of 18 birds on the Tweed Estuary on 8th during a WeBS count. Elsewhere one to three birds were at nine places with four at Big Waters on 10th and also at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 14th.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Recorded at 15 places during the month typically up to two birds but five were at Castle Island on 10th, four were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 18th and three were at Cresswell Pond on 10th and also on the River Tweed estuary on 8th.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

There was only one report from the coast, a single at East Chevington North Pool on 16th. Birds were reported from mid-month at inland breeding sites. The earliest report was a single in breeding plumage at Killingworth Lake on 16th with a pair there on 18th. At Whittle Dene Reservoirs, a single bird was seen on 18th increasing to eight by 26th.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

Reported by one observer as very scarce this winter. There were only three records, all from the north of the area - single birds at Budle Bay on 9th and at Holy Island on 10th and 24th .

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

Reports were all from the north of the county. Holy Island had the biggest counts with 11+ seen in the Heugh area of the island on 2nd. Two was the maximum count here later in the month, on 24th. Elsewhere Bamburgh Stag Rocks had regular sightings with one or two seen on four dates between 3rd and 24th. A single on the Tweed Estuary was the only other record.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

At Shiremoor on 2nd a single bird flew low E mid-morning mobbed by Corvids, Gulls and Starlings (CGK); other singles were seen at Heddon on the Wall on 14th (SR) and E of Riding Mill on 20th (SJH).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

A juvenile was at one site on several dates throughout the month (ASH/PCF) and another ringtail was at a site in the N of the County on 28th (IK).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Again only one record this month of a single bird near Middleton on 23rd (CMur/VWa).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

A pair was displaying at St Nicholas' Hospital (Gosforth) on 8th (AJN), and two birds were in Jesmond Dene on 10th (MJCo). A single bird was seen throughout the month in Holywell Dene (RJP). Other single birds were noted at nine further sites including birds with Dunnock *Prunella modularis*, Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus* and a Blackbird *Turdus merula* as prey.

Close up of a regular visitor to Tranwell.
A Sparrowhawk in Peter Tapsell's garden

**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*

Seven birds were seen at Derwent Reservoir on 14th (PRM), six were at Heddon on the Wall on 17th (AA) and five were at Blagdon on 16th (ASH). At Swallowship Wood (Hexham) on 8th and at Melkridge on 17th four birds were seen (AJH/SJH), three birds were at Coanwood and Staward Gorge on 17th (PCF/ASH) and at Slaley Forest on 28th (RMH). One to two birds were seen at 24 sites including a bird at Staward Gorge with a purple wing tag on the left wing and a green tag on the right wing (ASH).

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Up to five birds were seen on Holy Island throughout the month (IK). Two birds were seen at Shield on the Wall (MRS) and Howdon (CB) on 9th and at Grindon Lough on 21st (PRM). Single birds were observed at 17 sites including a bird eating Earthworms in Ponteland Park on 1st (CW).

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Most of the sightings involving single birds came from the Lindisfarne NNR area (SVM *et al.*) throughout the month, and a juvenile was seen at West Chevington on 24th (NFO). Single birds were noted at a couple of inland sites (SJH/PRM/PCF).

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

The Lindisfarne NNR area had up to five birds throughout the month (SR/AH/IK *et al.*). Also on or near the coast single birds were at Stag Rocks on 10th and 24th (JDL/NNBC), Swallow Pond on 14th (SPP), Monks' House Pool on 17th (MSH), Seaton Sluice Watch Tower on 22nd (SSWT) and at Howdon on 23rd (CB). Single birds were also noted at Big Waters on 10th (GB) and at three other inland sites.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Swallow Pond had three birds on 3rd and 10th (JPD) and three were also noted at Prestwick Carr on 18th (PCF). Singles were seen or heard at Backworth Pond on 14th (CGK), Branton GPs on 5th (IBDa/KDa), Howdon on 17th (CB) and at Jesmond Dene on 22nd (MJCo).

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Swallow Pond had the highest counts with 24 birds on 3rd, 7th and 15th (JPD). Other high counts included 22 at Killingworth Lake on 10th (LJM), 19 were at QEII CP on 16th (DM) and 17 were at Big Waters on 3rd (GB). One to nine birds were at eight further sites.

A young Moorhen by Chris Barlow
A peanut thief at Big Waters

Coot *Fulica atra*

High counts this month included 85 birds at QEII CP on 10th (CDH), 64 at Arcot Pond on 23rd (DM), 59 at Killingworth Lake on 10th (LJM), 40 at Bothal Pond on 10th (TD) and 28 at Big Waters on 24th (GB). One to sixteen birds were at eight other sites.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

The WeBS count at Berwick North Shore produced 178 on 6th and 59 were at nearby Cocklawburn on the same date (MHu). A high-tide roost at St Mary's involved 85+ on 6th, whilst good numbers were arriving inland with a peak of 40 at Branton GP on 19th (TRD/JD). Additional double-digit counts included 34 on the Tweed Estuary on 8th (MHu), 27 at Hauxley NR on 9th (CDB) and 15 display flighting over the river at Melkridge village on 17th (SJH). A bird at Kielder Dam on 16th was the first of the year at this site (MD) and six to eight were at Acton Moor, West Hartford and Whittle Dene Reservoirs during 19th-26th. Returning pairs and singles were also noted at Arcot Pond (presumed to be the pair from *Shasun Pharma* at nearby Dudley), Big Waters, Chollerford, Corbridge, Hexham and Killingworth Lake.

**Golden Plover** *Pluvialis apricaria*

The Derwent Reservoir area held the majority of birds with 280 on 2nd and 500+ with others hidden in undulating ground on 9th (IFo). Further inland, ca.170 were at Paxhill (near Allenheads) on 19th (SJH) and 75 were at Birkenside Farm (Carterways Heads) on 27th (RMH). A group of 50 at Acton Moor (Allendale) included three displaying birds on 19th (ASJ). The flock at Newcastle Town Moor increased in numbers from January to 150 on 6th (GB) and roving flocks of 45-55 were present mid-month at Boulmer and Prestwick Carr (NFO/PCF/TRD/JD). Further coastal groups included 20 at both Cresswell Pond on 27th and Newton Point on 8th, and 12 roosting on rocks at St Mary's Island on 6th (PRM). The Royal Grammar School (Jesmond) continued to attract night-time feeding birds with six there on 5th (GB). Three to six were also seen at High Knock Shield Farm and Low Acton Farm (both in Allendale) and at Clifton (Morpeth), and singles were at Big Waters (flying S) on 17th and Plenmeller Common (Fell House Farm) on 19th. Small groups were also present on Holy Island on 28th and some individuals showed black bellies but not quite into full breeding dress (IK).

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Peaks of 11 occurred at both Newbiggin on 2nd (GB) and Hauxley NR on 9th CDB), whilst the high in the north was ten at Budle Bay on 3rd (TRD). Interestingly, a total of nine were feeding in fields to the west of Hauxley NR on 7th (AJD). Smaller groups of two to five were also logged at Berwick Little Beach, Fenham-le-Moor and Low Newton.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Some large pre-breeding flocks were again reported, the largest being 604+ at Derwent Reservoir on 14th (PRM), 400 at Holywell Pond on 7th (SRB), 350+ at Druridge Pools NR on 14th (MSH), 300 moving SW at Longhorsley on 23rd (AB/LB) and ca.200 at Grindon Lough on 17th (RMH). Groups numbering 100-120 were also seen inland at Acton Moor, Carrshield, Melkridge and Swinhope Shield (near Spartylea) (ASJ/SJH). Smaller flocks of 35-75 were also noted at Birkenside Farm (Carterways Heads), Bywell Haughs, Coatenhill Pond (near Spartylea), Fell House Farm (Plenmeller Common), Low Acton Farm (Allendale) and Park Gill (Acton Common) and near the coast at the Blyth Battery, Cramlington, East Chevington, Hauxley NR and Howdon, with display noted in several locations. Reports came from a further ten sites and display flights were recorded on Holy Island from the 28th.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Chevington Burn mouth held the monthly high of 23 on 9th (CDB), whilst 16 were noted at Long Nanny on 12th (TRD) and ten+ roosted on St Mary's Island on 6th (PRM). Two to five were also at Berwick Little Beach, Berwick North Shore, Cocklawburn and Fenham-le-Moor.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Large numbers remained near the coast with ca.600 in coastal fields at Goswick on 7th (TRD), 300 at Hauxley NR on 9th (CDB), 200 at Cresswell Pond on 12th (TB) and 110 at both Druridge Pools and Boulmer on 10th and 22nd respectively (TRD/AB/LB). Groups of 22-55 were also noted at Berwick North Shore, Blyth Battery, Cocklawburn, Holywell Pond, Howdon, Newburn Haughs, St Mary's and the Tweed Estuary. Smaller numbers were noted elsewhere and one at West Hartford on 17th was regarded as 'the first returning bird' (PJA).

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

The Rocket Field on Holy Island monopolised reports this month, with two present all month increasing to eight on 8th, three on 17th, four on 27th and three on 28th (IK/JPD/SR/AH). A further two were at Fenham-le-Moor on 6th (JDL).

Correction to January Bulletin The records of nine from Holy Island causeway on 28th and four at Hadston Carrs on 5th January should have referred to Bar-tailed Godwit (CDB).

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

A peak of ca.300 was noted from Holy Island causeway on 7th and ca.100 were also at both Budle Bay and Fenham-le-Moor on the same date (TRD). A count of 33 on the Blyth Estuary on 3rd was exceptionally good for this site (MHP) and in the Berwick area, 30 were at Little Beach on 7th and 12 at North Shore on 6th (MHu). Two to eight were also seen at Cocklawburn, Druridge Pools, Hauxley NR and Low Newton.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

The high tide roost at St Mary's Island attracted 55+ on 6th (PRM), 52 were in Druridge Bay at Hadston on 9th (CDB), 40 at Low Newton on 8th (TRD) and ten to 20 at Berwick Little Beach, Cocklawburn, Fenham-le-Moor, Holy Island, Snab Point (Cresswell) and Tynemouth Boating Lake; single figure reports came from Berwick North Shore, Budle Bay, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, North Shields Fish Quay, Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) and the Tweed Estuary.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Counts of ca.300 were made at Newbiggin (north bay) on 1st (EC/JSB) and 300+ at Budle Bay on 17th (MSH), whilst 200 were noted at Fenham-le-Moor on 7th (TRD). Elsewhere, Amble Braid hosted 23 on 9th (NFO), 20+ were at Cresswell Pond on 21st (MSH) and two to six were seen on Lynemouth Flash on four dates, with a single noted at nearby Snab Point on one occasion (MSH/TB/TRD).

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

High numbers in the north included 124 at Berwick North Shore on 6th (MHu), 52 at Sandstell Point (Spittal) on 12th (MHu) and 30 at Low Newton on 8th (TRD). Groups of 20-25 were found at Berwick Little Beach, East Chevington and roosting at St Mary's Island, and one to three were at four further sites including one on Lynemouth Flash on 22nd (TRD).

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

By far the largest flock was 260+ roosting on St Mary's Island on 6th (PRM), whilst elsewhere, ca.100 were noted at Fenham-le-Moor on 3rd/7th and at the Long Nanny on 12th (TRD). Some 90+ were on rocks below the Spanish Battery at Tynemouth on 21st (SPP) and 40-55 were seen at Blyth (south beach – unusual here), Cresswell Pond and Low Newton. Smaller groups included 19 on the R. Tyne at Newcastle Business Park, 14 at Hauxley NR, ten at Snab Point and one to three at a further three locations.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

The highest count was of 80 at Stag Rocks on 10th (JDL). Low Newton held 20 on 8th, St Mary's 19 on 18th, Cheswick Black Rocks 14 on 6th and nine or fewer at Amble, Berwick, Cresswell, Holy Island, North Shields, St Mary's, Seaton Sluice Watch Tower and Tynemouth.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Singles were noted at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on seven dates between 10th and 26th. Other singles appeared near Blagdon Hall Estate on 4th, at Hedgeley on 6th and at Ryal on 17th.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

One was in Budle Bay on 2nd (SPP/RD/DD).

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

The River Tweed Estuary WeBS count revealed 364 on 8th (MHu), the maximum at Howdon was 170 on 23rd (CB) and the St Mary's Wetland high tide roost contained 130+ on 6th (PRM). The only other reports were of 38 on R Tyne between Elswick Wharf and Newcastle Business Park on 12th, 27 at Ellington on 24th and 19 at Berwick, North Shore on 6th.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Singles were present at Howdon on 2nd-3rd and from 16th - 21st (CB) and one was again in stubble near the *Beehive* at Earsdon, on 6th (CS).

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Singles were reported from eight locations: Bothal Pond on 1st, Holy Island on 3rd, Black Hough on 4th, Longframlington on 6th, Howdon on 9th and 28th, Tipalt Burn on 9th, Swallow Pond on 10th, Lesbury on 11th and Rothbury on 26th.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Around 25 flushed at Holywell Pond on 28th (MHP), 24+ at St Mary's wetland on 6th (PRM) and 20 at Druridge Pools on 10th (IRD). Howdon had 11 on 18th and seven or fewer were noted at Backworth, Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools and Gosforth Park NR.

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

An uncommon winter record concerned one flying S at Cocklawburn on 11th (Mhu).

Razorbill *Alca torda*

During a two-hour morning seawatch at St Mary's Island on 6th, a single flew S (PRM) and elsewhere, the only reports were eight at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 17th (MSH) and two in Holy Island Harbour on 24th (IK).

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

A significant movement was noted at Seaton Sluice on 10th when 1,380 moved S in one hour during the late afternoon (SSWT), possibly birds returning from a temporary pre-breeding visit to the Farne Islands; virtually all these birds were in summer plumage. 45+ were at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 17th (MSH) with smaller counts of nine at St Mary's Island on 6th, five at Church Point (Newbiggin) on 2nd (GB) and singles at Berwick and Newton Point (TRD).

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

A two-hour seawatch at St Mary's Island on 6th (PRM) recorded 74 moving S and 35 lingering offshore but, in 30 hours watching at Seaton Sluice throughout the month, only 31 were noted, with a majority flying S (SSWT). At the Tyne Bridge nest site, nine were first recorded on 28th and a returning single bird at the Newcastle Quayside on 20th was the observer's earliest record here (DM). Elsewhere one to two were at Berwick Pier, Blyth South Harbour, Cresswell, Newbiggin (Church Point) and North Shields Fish Quay (GB/TRD/JD/SPP/MHu/LJM).

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Two peak counts at traditional evening roost sites (PRM) were 14,100+ at Derwent Reservoir on 14th and 4,200+ at Colt Crag Reservoir on 15th. Other significant gatherings were 429 at QEII CP (CDH), 300 at Druridge Pools (CDB), 230 in Jesmond Dene (MJCo) with 100-160 at Castle Island, Leazes Park, Melkridge (River South Tyne), Newcastle Quayside and the River Tweed Estuary. Smaller groups of up to 100 were at Arcot Pond, Berwick North Shore, Druridge Bay, Exhibition Park, Slaley and West Hartford.

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

A scarce winter visitor with only one sighting, a first-winter bird flying N at St Mary's Island on 2nd (JPD).

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

The number at the favoured Newbiggin South Bay was eight on 2nd (STH) with two there on 24th (ASH), these being the only records from that locality during the month. There were sixteen other records of one to two birds (a number of these records probably involving the same, mobile, individual birds), mainly adults but also two second-years, from Amble Harbour (LJM), Blyth (South Beach) (MHP), Cullercoats Bay (MN), Holy Island (Rocket Field) (JPD/IK), St Mary's Island (JPD/SPP), Seaton Sluice (SSWT), Tynemouth (SPP) and Whitley Bay Links (CGK).

Common Gull *Larus canus*

The peak count was a massive 43,200+ in the evening gull roost at Derwent Reservoir on 14th (PRM) with a smaller gathering, nonetheless impressive, of 13,800+ in the Colt Crag Reservoir roost on 15th (PRM). Elsewhere, concentrations of 200 were recorded on 20th at Grindon Lough, where up to 50 were also present on many other days (SJH), 200 at Slaley (RMH) on 27th and 150 at Howdon (CB) on 23rd-28th, with 30-52 at Melkridge (River South Tyne), Otterburn and the River Tweed Estuary. One to six were at four other localities.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

During the first half of the month, single birds at Arcot Pond, Blagdon and West Hartford (SRB/PJA/DM), on different days, were likely to have been over-wintering birds reported in recent months from the nearby Cramlington area. From mid-month, increased sightings reflected the return passage, with singles at Big Waters, Byker, Colt Crag Reservoir, Grindon Lough (GB/JPD/SJH/PRM/SPP) and two at Killingworth Lake, the River Tyne (Elswick), Swallow Pond and West Hartford (GB/JPD/CGK/LJM/SPP); all these birds were adults except for a first-winter at Colt Crag Reservoir.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argentatus*

At Seaton Sluice the only movement of note was 85 (75% adult) S in one hour on 15th (SSWT). Peak gatherings elsewhere were 310+ in the Colt Crag Reservoir gull roost on 15th (PRM) with WeBS surveys (MHu) recording 145 in the River Tweed Estuary on 8th and 88 at Berwick North Shore on 6th. A WeBS count at Castle Island on 10th included 31 (PJA/STH/DM) and 23 were in the Derwent Reservoir roost on 14th (PRM). Other sightings were one-16 at Leazes Park, 12 at West Hartford and a single in Jesmond Dene.

'Northern' Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argentatus*

Birds of this northern race included seven in the Colt Crag Reservoir gull roost on 15th (PRM) and, on the same day, four adults were at Newburn Haughs (PRM).

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoides*

A scarce bird this year with only a second-winter bird noted at North Shields Fish Quay on 21st (SPP) which was seen again on 24th at the nearby Black Middens Rocks (JPD).

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

Another scarce winter visitor this year, with only one first-winter bird which frequented the North Shields Fish Quay from 22nd until at least 26th and was seen by many observers (JSB/EC/JPD/MSH/SPP *et al.*).

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

The reported numbers were very low with a maximum of 12 in the Derwent Reservoir gull roost on 14th (PRM), nine in the River Tweed Estuary on 8th (MHu) and eight in the Colt Crag roost on 15th (PRM). Elsewhere, one to six were at Berwick North Shore, Big Waters, Castle Island, East Chevington, Grindon Lough and the River Tyne at Elswick Wharf (CDB/GB/SJH/DM *et al.*).

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

Just two counts, both from Southfield Green (Cramlington) with 13 on 10th rising to 16 on 16th (DM).

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

In the south east of the county a flock of 41 fed at Swallow Pond on 6th with 30 there on 16th (PRM/JPD), 35 at Howdon on 18th (CB) and nine in Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 5th (MNC). Inland a flock in the Sinderhope / Sparty Lea area numbered eight on 16th rising to 12 the next day (SJH/ASH). Six were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 26th (SR), four in the observer's garden at Walbottle on 3rd (KR/LR), at West Hartford on 28th (PJA/LJM) and one to three at Allendale, Brunswick Green (coming to nuts), Gosforth Park NR, Jesmond Dene, Royal Grammar School (Newcastle), Plenmeller Common and Prestwick Carr.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Flocks of 500+ at Juniper on 18th and near Beehive Flash (Earsdon) on 22nd (AJH/PCF), 200 at Gosforth Park NR on 16th (GB), 50 at Druridge Pools NR on 9th (CDB) with five to 37 at Carterway Heads, Town Moor (Newcastle), Jesmond Dene, South Gosforth and Walbottle.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Just one report of a single at Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 26th (MNC).

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Four were at Holy Island all month, one losing prey to a Kestrel near the Priory on 8th (IK), two noted there on 3rd (SR/AH) and at Cresswell Pond on 8th (TB). Singles were at both the aforementioned locations on various dates and at New Moor (Ashington), Beadnell, Doddington, East Chevington, East Stobswood, Ellington, Embleton Mill, Eschott, Hadrian's Wall, Linton, Longhorsley Moor, Morpeth, Newton Red House, Simonburn, Stamfordham and Togston.



A Barn Owl hunts around Cresswell Pond by Jonathan Farooqi

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

One was near the reserve at Big Waters on 17th (GB) and at East Stobswood on 22nd (JSB/EC).

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Calls from at least two birds at Ponteland Park and two males at Rothbury all month (CDB/TRD/JD) with singles at Ford Moss on 8th (EHa), Bradford near Belsay on 13th (IRD), Yearle on 11th (SVM/AJM) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 26th (SR).

Long-eared Owl *Asio Otus*

Three left roost at dusk and hunted at Wallsend Rising Sun CP on 6th (PRM) with two roosting at Holy Island on 5th (IK) and a single at the Crooked Lonnen on 2nd (SPP/RD/DD).

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

A peak of six at Holy Island (IK) with many sightings of fewer birds, four at Prestwick Carr on 27th (PCF), three all month at Wallsend Rising Sun CP all month (SPP/JPD/PRM), two at Cresswell Pond from 3rd to 8th (TB/AJD) and West Hartford on 17th (PJA). Singles were also at Backworth, Berwick, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, East Stobswood and Killingworth.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

The only multiple count was of two at Branton GP during the month (IBDa/KDa/SVM) with singles at Northumberland Park (North Shields) till 14th (MNC), Big Waters on 10th & 22nd (GB) and Weldon Bridge on 15th (MJC).

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Two males called at Bakethin Reservoir on 16th and a single at Sidwood on the same date (MD/AM), at Rothbury all month (TRD/JD) and at Stocksfield on 19th (ASJ).

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Peaks of three at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 2nd, Arcot Hall GC on 10th (DM) and Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 26th (MNC) with two visiting garden feeders at Rothbury and Old Hartley all month (TRD/JD/RJP) and at Big Waters on 3rd, Countess Park (Redesmouth) and Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 9th, Colt Crag Reservoir on 15th, Chesters on 21st and Eachwick on 23rd (GB/PRM/TB/CDB). Singles were at Jesmond Dene all month and ten other widespread localities.

Magpie *Pica pica*

The largest count was 87 at Swallow Pond on 3rd (JPD) with 40 at Red House Farm on 25th (CS), 38 at Big Waters on 18th (GB), 20 at Westwood Grange (Cramlington) on 25th (LJM), 11 at Newburn on 25th (SAS) and two to four at Jesmond Dene, Fulbeck (Morpeth) and North Shields with nest building noted at the latter two locations.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Five were at Wallington on 14th (MJC) and two at Hartford Bridge (Bedlington) on 3rd (LJM) all other reports being of singles at Ashington, Valley Park (Cramlington), Harwood, Jesmond Dene, Kielder, Prestwick Carr, Linden Hall (Longhorsley), Countess Park (Redesmouth) and Wooler.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Large flocks of 600 at Gosforth Park NR on 16th (GB), 300+ at Hartford Bridge (Bedlington) on 24th (LJM), 230 over Big Waters on 18th (GB) and 200 at Woolsington on 15th (SRB). Six to 80 were at Bolam Lake, Throckley, Jesmond Dene and Walbottle.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

150 were at Kiln Pit Hill on 26th and 20+ repaired nests at Holywell Dene on 28th (MJC).

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

A pre-dusk gathering on the Town Moor (Newcastle) numbered 84 on 6th and 57 on 25th with 18 at Big Waters on 18th (GB) and six at Jesmond Dene on 3rd (MJCo).

Raven *Corvus corax*

Four were at Ridley Common on 2nd (SJH) and Walltown on 9th (BMo) with three at Raylees on 18th (IRD), Wark Forest on 21st (PRM), two at West Ord on 10th, Rothbury on 11th, Doddington on 17th and Crag Lough on 21st with a single noted flying over the Tyne at Newburn Haugh towards Blaydon Landfill site on 15th (PRM).

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

A minimum of 20 were found in woods NW of Swallow Pond on the 7th (DLo) with two at Berwick Castle on 2nd (BWG), in the observer's garden at Walbottle on 17th (KR/LR) and at Wark Forest on 21st (PRM). Singles were at Chesters, Valley Park (Cramlington), Jesmond Dene, Leazes Park (Newcastle), Prestwick Carr, Countess Park (Redesmouth) and Walltown.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Eleven at Eachwick on 23rd (CDB) was the highest count with ten+ at Wallington on 14th (MJC) including many singing birds, five at Jesmond Dene on 17th and three in the observer's garden at Beatty Avenue (South Gosforth) on 14th (MJCo).

Great Tit *Parus major*

Territorial singing was noted with 10+ at Wallington on 14th (MJC), ten at Jesmond Dene on 17th (MJCo), eight at Prestwick Carr on 24th (PCF), seven at Eachwick on 23rd (CDB) with two at South Gosforth, Druridge Bay and a single singing at County Hall, Morpeth.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Four was the peak count for the month in an Old Hartley garden (RJP) and at Jesmond Dene on 17th (MJCo), Eachwick on 17th (CDB) with singles at Chesters, Derwent Reservoir, Holy Island and South Gosforth.

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

The feeding station at Big Waters attracted two birds regularly during the month (SPP/CDB/GB) with two also at Prestwick Carr on 16th (PCF) and Lucker on 20th (JHa). Singles were at Branton GP, Northumberlandia (Cramlington), Eachwick, Eschott, Linden Hall (Longhorsley) on three dates, Thrum Mill and Old Railway Line (Rothbury) and Slaley Hall.



Three of our common Tits
Top: a Great Tit at Howdon
by Colin Bradshaw

Middle: a melanistic Coal
Tit in a Tranwell garden by
Peter Tapsell and bottom:

a pair of squabbling Blue
Tits at Bolam by Chris
Barlow



Left: a Marsh Tit on 17th and right: a Willow Tit on 16th February
Two 'cousins' photographed by Neil Osborne at Linden Hall

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

Three were in the garden at Linden Hall on 9th and 16th (NFO) with courtship noted. Two were at Weldon Bridge on 15th (MJC) and Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth) on 22nd (EC/JSB) with singles coming to garden feeders at Battlesteads Hotel (Wark), Newton Red House and Linden Hall (Longhorsley) regularly and also at Countess Park (Redesmouth) on 9th.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Display and singing was noted with 11 at Swallow Pond on 15th (JPD), ten at Ellington on 17th (TB), eight at Holy Island on 28th (IK), seven at Whiteadder Water - Cantys Brig (Berwick) on 16th (TBr), Big Waters on 17th (GB), six at Whittle Dene on 18th (CDB) and one to three at 15 other widespread localities.



A Long-tailed Tit at Howdon by Colin Bradshaw

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

The highest counts were 16 at Lowick on 10th (EHa) and 12 in a Walbottle garden on 3rd (KR/LR). Counts of 11 came from Big Waters and Ellington and eight to ten were reported from Cramlington (Northburn), Eachwick, Jesmond Dene, Newcastle Business Park and Redesmouth (Countess Park). Six to seven were noted at Druridge Bay CP, Melkridge, Newcastle City Centre, South Gosforth and Stanington and two to five at a further seven localities.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Only one bird was reported this month, at North Shields (Northumberland Park) on 15th (MNC).

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Five males were reported, mostly from gardens, with one to two at Heddon-on-the-Wall from 1st-6th (JSB) and singles at Alnwick on 23rd, Hexham on 1st and Tynemouth on 7th. A female visited a garden at Monkseaton throughout the month.

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulous*

45 at Kitty Brewster on 14th was the largest flock reported (JPD). At Cramlington (Northburn) 26 were noted on 13th (LJM) and groups of 20 were at Killingworth Lake on 26th and Lesbury on 9th and 15-20 at Newcastle (Coast Road) on 2nd. Smaller gatherings included ca.15 at Blyth on 10th, 12 at Druridge Bay CP on 16th and nine at Swallow Pond on 15th and West Hartford on 17th. One to seven were noted at a further eight localities.



Two Waxwings grace QEII CP on 17th February by Peter Tapsell

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

There were notable counts of seven from Bolam Lake on 20th (CDB) and six in Jesmond Dene on 17th (MJCo). Five + were singing at Wallington Hall by 14th and five were found between Mitford-Newminster (Morpeth) on 2nd. Three were at Chesters (Chollerford) on 21st and two in Holywell Dene. Singles were reported from a further eight localities.

Two bark climbers both at Gosforth NR

Right: a Nuthatch heads down by Colin Bradshaw and

below: a Treecreeper heads up by John Littleton



Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Six+ in a wood at Rising Sun CP (Wallsend) on 7th was notable (DLo). Two were reported from Bolam Lake CP, Morpeth (County Hall), Prestwick Carr, QEII CP, Wallington Hall and Stamfordham, the latter feeding on garden decking. Singles were noted at Eachwick, Holywell Dene, Jesmond Dene, Rothbury and Spindlestone.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

There were only two reports; three at Druridge Pools on 9th and two in Jesmond Dene on 17th.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

A flock of 1,424 at Fawdon on 5th was counted from a photograph (CDB); an interesting strategy. Perhaps making estimates beforehand would reveal how many of us are underestimating flock sizes (probably everybody!). Other noteworthy flocks included 750 at Cresswell Pond on 12th, 500 at Kingston Park on 8th, 400 at West Minsteracres on 27th and flocks of 200 at Derwent Reservoir, Longhorsley and Prestwick Carr. 120-150 were reported from Big Waters and Coanwood Pond whilst in the Allendale-Spartylea four flocks were noted of between 24 and 80.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Six were counted in Upper Coquetdale (Linbriggs-Barrowburn) on 3rd (JMA). At least three were reported from Jesmond Dene on six dates during the month and two in Holywell Dene were considered to be from two different pairs. Elsewhere were two at Alnwick (Hulne Park), Redesmouth (Countess Park), Tipalt Burn and Weldon Bridge and singles at Sinderhope and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Only four counts were received, of which 13 in a Walbottle garden on 3rd was the largest (KR/LR), closely followed by 11 at Eachwick on 23rd (CDB). Three in a South Gosforth garden and one in Jesmond Dene were the other reports.

A Blackbird
Prestwick Carr
17th February
Peter Fletcher

**Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris*

Counts of 300-300+ were received from Cowden on 15th, Grindon on 19th and Seldom Seen on 19th (IFo/ASJ/JPD). 200-270 were at Earsdon, Longhorsley and Swallow Pond and 50-80 at Blagdon, Bywell and Prestwick Carr. Smaller flocks were widespread with 20-45 noted at Coanwood Pond, Eachwick, Ellington, Eshott, Ridley Common and Whitfield. One to 15 were reported from a further eight localities.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

There was an encouraging number of records this month, including seven foraging and feeding on snails at Holy Island (Harbour pier) on 23rd (IK) and seven in song at Swallow Pond on 27th (JPD). Five singing males were within 1km of each other at Whiteadder Water (Berwick) on 16th and three were singing in the Allendale area on 16th and at Melkridge on 17th. Three presumably singing birds were in Jesmond Dene on 17th and two at Longhorsley on 23rd. Singles were reported from Fulbeck (Morpeth), Howden, Rothbury and Stamfordham.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

130 at Earsdon on 22nd was the largest gathering (MNC) followed by 100+ at Cramlington (Nelson Village) on 10th-11th (LJM/DM/PJA). Elsewhere flocks of 30-50 were reported from Arcot Hall GC on 23rd, Big Waters on 3rd, Chesters (Chollerford) on 21st, Prestwick Carr and Weldon Bridge on 15th. One to 25 were noted at a further ten localities.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

35 at Thorngrifton on 19th was by far the largest gathering (ASJ/JPD). In the Allendale area 12 were at High Knock Shield on 12th (EC/JSB) and seven at Acton Moor on 19th (ASJ), while a singing male was heard at Low Acton Farm on 16th-19th. Four to five were reported from Castle Island, Chesters (Chollerford), Jesmond Dene and Kingswood Burn, three at Hepscott and Rising Sun CP and one to two from a further eight localities.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Counts of four were received from Big Waters on 6th, Druridge Bay CP on 9th, Eachwick on 23rd (CDB) and Jesmond Dene on 3rd (MJCo). Three were in gardens at Netherton Park and Walbottle and one at South Gosforth.

A Robin at Howdon by Colin Bradshaw

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Single birds were noted at Low Newton on 2nd (SPP) and Spittal (Berwick) on 9th (BWG).

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Four were noted at Warkworth Gut on 9th (NFO) and Druridge Bay CP on 19th (JSB/EC) and three at Low Newton on 8th (JSB/EC). One to two were reported regularly from Cresswell and Cresswell Pond and two were at East Chevington on 9th. Pairs were noted at Druridge Pool links, Prestwick Carr and West Hartford and singles at Blyth Harbour, Blyth (South Beach) and Cocklawburn.

Dunnoek *Prunella modularis*

Four were in an Old Hartley garden throughout the month (RJP) whilst three were at Big Waters on 6th (CDB) and singles at Jesmond Dene (Newcastle) on 17th (MJCo) and South Gosforth on 14th (MJCo).

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

180 were on Holy Island on 19th (SR). 44 were in a Northburn garden (Cramlington) on 13th (LJM), 25 were at Battlesteads Hotel (Wark) on 10th (CB), 15 at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 9th (DM) and six at Eachwick on 23rd (CDB).

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

30 were at Holywell Pond on 14th (SPP) and Birling Carrs on 8th (JSB/EC) whilst 17 in a Walbottle Garden on 3rd were the highest total since recording began in 1987 (KR/LR).

One to 12 were seen throughout the month at Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, Dinnington, Doddington, Linden Hall (Longhorsley), Lowick, Lucker, Red House Farm (West Monkseaton), Tynemouth, Wooler and Yearle.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Two at Newcastle City Centre on 27th was the month's highest total (PRM). Singles were seen throughout the month at Bakethin Reservoir, Countess Park (Redesmouth), Cramlington, Cullercoats Bay, Doddington, Ellington, Hexham, High Point (Whitley Bay), Jesmond Dene (Newcastle), Lower Ouseburn (Byker), Newcastle Quayside, Northumberland Park (North Shields), Ponteland Park, South Gosforth and Whittle Dene.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

A flock of 12 were feeding in a ploughed field at Prestwick Carr on 6th (CW). Five were at Chevington Burn mouth on 9th (CDB) and a single was at Newcastle Town Moor on 6th (GB).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Only two records for the month, both of singles at Acton Moor (Allendale) on 19th (ASJ) and Grindon on 19th (ASJ).

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

12 at Hadston (Druridge Bay) on 9th was the month's highest total (CDB). Eight were at Little Beach (Berwick) on 7th (TRD) and seven at The Ouze (Holy Island) on 27th were back in breeding areas after being absent since last December (IK). One to five were also seen throughout the month at Blyth Harbour, High Point (Whitley Bay), Low Newton, North Shields Fish Quay and St Mary's Island.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

60 were in a Ridsdale garden on 17th (MD/AM). 25 were at Slaley Hall on 3rd (RMH) and 20 including some singing birds at Wallington on 14th (MJC). One to nine were also at Jesmond Dene (Newcastle), Northumberland Park (North Shields), an Old Hartley garden and a Walbottle Garden throughout the month.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

13 were at Longhoughton on 1st (JPL) and 12 were in a Ridsdale garden on 17th (MD/AM). One to six birds were at a further 14 sites throughout the month.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

The month's highest count was 28 in a Walbottle garden on 10th (KR/LR). 11 were at Village Hotel (Cobalt Business Park) on 21st (CGK) and one to five were at Big Waters, Eachwick, a Fulbeck garden (Morpeth), Jesmond Dene (Newcastle), Nelson Village (Cramlington) and South Gosforth.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

60 gathered to roost at dusk in trees outside the Great North Museum (Newcastle) on 1st (GB). 41 were at Big Waters on 18th (GB) whilst one to 40 were seen at Cramlington High School, Derwent Reservoir, Eachwick, East Chevington, Hemscotthill Links, Jesmond Dene (Newcastle), Nelson Village (Cramlington), Newburn Haughs, Rising Sun CP (Wallsend), South Gosforth, a Walbottle Garden and Village Hotel (Cobalt Business Park) throughout the month.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

63 were on feeders at Battlesteads Hotel (Wark) on 10th (CB), 40 were at County Hall (Morpeth) on 18th (MJC) and 30 in a Fulbeck garden (Morpeth) throughout the month (TD). One to 25 were at a further 24 sites throughout the month including a single bird perched on a gutter above William Hill's during a snow shower at Bigg Market (Newcastle) on 13th (DM). This was a site lifer for the observer.

Three Finches at Howdon Wetlands
photographed by Colin Bradshaw
from top a Brambling,
a Goldfinch
a Bullfinch

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

171 at South Acomb Farm on 7th were by far the month's highest count (SAS). 65 were Swallow Pond on 16th (JPD), 16 at Sandstell Point (Spittal) on 12th (MHu) and two at East Chevington on 9th (CDB).

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

30 were at both Cresswell Pond on 3rd (TB) and Hemscotthill Links on 16th (TF/JFa).

Redpoll sp.

A single flew over Newbiggin 'mound' calling on 2nd (GB).

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*

30 were at Warkworth Gut on 8th (MRM), a flock of 28 were feeding in Silver Birches at Melkridge on 9th (SJH) and 27 were at Prestwick Carr on 21s (PCF). One to 25 were also seen throughout the month at Colt Crag Reservoir, Druridge Pools, Ellington, a Fulbeck garden (Morpeth), Rothbury and Swallow Pond.

Mealy Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*

Four were on the pit heap at Swallow Pond on 19th (SPP) and at least two were amongst a flock of 30+ Lesser Redpoll at Warkworth Gut on 8th (MRM).

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

17 at Swallow Pond on 3rd were the highest total for the month (JPD/SPP). 15 including four males were at Druridge Bay CP on 9th (CDB) and ten were at Hexham on 18th (AJH). One to eight were seen at Colt Crag Reservoir, Dam Dykes Plantation (Cramlington), Derwent Reservoir, QE11 CP, Rising Sun CP (Wallsend), Slaley Hall, Valley Park (Cramlington), West Hartford and Wideopen.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Eight were at Red House Farm (West Monkseaton) on 26th (CS) whilst one to four were seen at a further 18 sites throughout the month.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

28 were at Cresswell Pond on 10th (IRD), 15 at Fenham Mill on 27th (ASJ) and ten at Brunswick Village (Wideopen) on 24th (GB). One to eight were seen at Beacon Lane (Cramlington), Big Waters, Corbridge, Eachwick, Ellington, Foxton Bends and Prestwick Carr throughout the month.



Reed Bunting *Emberiza Schoeniclus*

Five were at Big Waters on 6th (CDB) whilst one to four were seen at a further 11 sites throughout the month including a displaying pair at Arcot Pond on 17th (LJM) and a pair in full song at Backworth on 17th (CGK).



A Reed Bunting on 5th February by John Clark

ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN

Hybrids

Herring Gull x Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus argentatus x fuscus*

An adult at Big Waters on 17th was thought to be the same individual seen here in Spring 2012 (GB). It looks superficially like a Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus michahellis*) but with an atypical wing tip pattern. This hybrid is the most likely explanation for this situation.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

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Berwick Wildlife Group, North Northumberland Bird Club, Seaton Sluice Watch Tower..

Apologies for any accidental omissions

WEATHER

The first half of the month was generally unsettled, with variable temperatures and periods of rain, and snow at times in some areas. After a short sunnier spell in mid-month, the weather turned colder and cloudier as high pressure became established.

It was rather drier than normal for most areas. The month was near average for sunshine, with 98% of the normal sunshine hours, but rather duller towards the east and south, and bright in the north-west.

1st to 13th: Rain cleared from the south-east on the morning of 1st. A ridge of high pressure built on 2nd to give a fine day. The 3rd was generally dry apart from patchy rain in the south-east. Rain spread from the west into the Midlands and North on 5th, with strong winds. It was colder on 6th in a strong northerly wind, with some showers for eastern areas turning to snow at times inland. Dry on 7th. Eastern coastal areas had patchy rain on 8th. On 10th another band of rain and snow spread from the west, and a strengthening south-east wind made it feel very cold. There were further pulses of snow in the early hours of 11th. Generally dry and overcast on 12th. A band of rain, sleet and snow spread eastwards to all areas during 13th.

14th to 19th: A brighter day on 14th. High pressure built from the south, giving more settled conditions from 15th onwards, with night frosts and morning fog for some areas but generally sunny days.

20th to 28th: Colder air arrived from the east on 20th, overnight temperatures falling and from now on it was generally overcast. The 21st again remained cold. A band of snow showers affected the north-east on 23rd. The 24th was generally overcast, with scattered showers in the north-east again. Overcast, dry and cold on 25th and 26th. There was some sunshine for many on 27th and 28th and it remained dry.

BULLETIN COMPILATION AND PRODUCTION

This bulletin was compiled by Graeme Bowman (Mute Swan to Ruddy Duck), Steve Barrett (Red Grouse to Black-necked Grebe), Trevor Blake (Honey Buzzard to Crane), Steve Holliday (Oystercatcher to Dunlin) Ian Forsyth (Snipe to Skua), Ed-die Crabtree (Auks to Gulls), 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 (Duncock 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 Mail 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://ntbcsightings.posterous.com>

NORTH TYNEDALE HARRIERS

The last few years have been desperately bad for hen harriers in England: in 2010 there were seven successful hen harrier nests, from which 23 young fledged. These paltry numbers declined progressively in subsequent years, so that in 2012 England had only a single successful nest (and no – it wasn't in Bowland). With *Circus cyaneus* on the brink of extinction in England, every breeding attempt, every egg and every fledgling this year will be precious. During the earliest stages of this year's breeding cycle (up to the beginning of egg-laying) I and a few highly experienced workers will be instigating a very low-key, softly-softly approach to monitoring and the determination of nest localities. Accordingly, I am respectfully requesting that each of you refrains from visiting the key North Tynedale site until the birds are established and the 24/7 nest-watch regime gets underway.

If you have questions or want to know what's happening on site just get in touch with me and I'll be happy to help. We have already had two harrier sightings in North Tynedale, an adult male in each case. Given that we are still in the midst of winter and that the vast majority of birds are still on their wintering sites, the fact that at least one adult male has been showing interest in the key breeding site is extremely encouraging.

We can always do with a few more dayshift nest monitoring volunteers. A shift would usually be 0800-1200h, 1200-1600h or 1600-2000h. Volunteers must be registered with the RSPB (and in doing so earn the right to claim travel expenses), have their own transport and have basic ID skills (we monitor all prey items coming in to the nest).

Here's to success! All the best Dr Stephen Temperley

RSPB Species Protection Coordinator, Forestry Commission, Kielder NE Office, Eals Burn, Bellingham, Northumberland, NE48 2HP **Mob: 07703 045395 email: stephen.temperley@rspb.org.uk**



He's behind you
A Short-eared Owl outflanks a birder at Druridge
by Chris Barlow

BRITISH BIRDS FOR SALE

The following BBs are for sale to best offer(s). All are in good condition;

1964 to 1977 complete excluding 1972 index

1978 complete except October

In addition 25 months of 1962, 1963, 1978 and 1987

For further details contact Steve Barrett

mobile = 07779577485 or

ntbcbulletin2012@gmail.com

COASTAL WeBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

January 2013

Site	Berwick North Shore (Including Little Beach)		Berwick Little Beach		Tweed Estuary		Tweed At By-Pass to Horncliffe		Hospital - Cockaburn		Lindisfarne NMR (Including Budle Bay)		Budle Pt. - Seahouses		Seahouses - Beadnell		Beadnell - Howick		Howick - Boulmer		Alyn Estuary		Ripon South		Cocknet Estuary		Chevington - Crosswell		Crosswell - Newbiggin		Newbiggin - Cambois		Blyth Estuary		KVB Sluice		St Mary's Island		Whitley Bay - Tynemouth		Tyne North Pier - Fish Quay		East Howdon, (north bank only)		Redeugh- Scotswood Bridge, (north bank)		Scotswood - Newburn Bridge, (north bank)						
	MHU	MHU	MHU	MHU	MHU	MHU	MHU	MHU	AC	BP	MLC	K/R	JAR	TAC	RP	RC	MGA	PC	LJM	KVB	SP	MK	DMT	P/F	P/F	DMT	P/F	DMT	P/F	DMT	P/F	DMT	P/F	DMT	P/F	DMT	P/F	DMT	P/F	DMT	P/F	DMT	P/F										
Counter	9	9	9	11	13	10	13	12	12	12	12	13-15	28	12	13	13	12	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13								
Date																																																					
Red-footed Diver				3	2		1																																														
Little Grebe																																																					
Great Crested Grebe																																																					
Slavonian Grebe																																																					
Cormorant	108	16		5	9	3	34		2	4	1	4																																									
Shag	203	10		1	5	5	45	5		4				2	25																																						
Grey Heron	67	1		19	11	1	7	1		2	7	9		2																																							
Mute Swan	139			62	3		38																																														
Bewick's Swan	1						1																																														
Whooper Swan	84						44																																														
Pink-footed Goose	342						340																																														
Grevilag Goose	3																																																				
Canada Goose	38						24																																														
Dark-bellied Brent Goose	10																																																				
Light-bellied Brent Goose	1,009																																																				
Shelduck	1,231																																																				
Midgeon	1,157																																																				
Gadwall	6																																																				
Teal	985					27	286	106																																													
Marlard	949					52	68	95																																													
Pintail	323																																																				
Shoveler	2																																																				
Tufted Duck	11			1		1	7																																														
Eider	814	12		9		17	464																																														
Long-tailed Duck	82			2			67	6																																													
Common Scoter	342					2	303	12	9	8																																											
Goldeneye	287	9		184	24		26	2	2	19	1	2																																									
Red-breasted Merganser	71	1		5		10	41	1																																													
Goosander	33			6		27																																															
Moorhen	28					3																																															
Coot	6			1			2																																														
Oystercatcher	2,165	246		32	3	115	625	120	49	172	175	89	127																																								
Ringed Plover	169	10		10			49																																														
Golden Plover	1,349					26	599																																														
Grey Plover	210	10					138																																														
Lapwing	986			34	13		112																																														
Knot	2,039						2033	950																																													
Sanderling	530	40					95																																														
Purple Sandpiper	231	24																																																			
Dunlin	1,918	2					1066																																														
Snipe	76																																																				
Woodcock	1																																																				
Bar-tailed Godwit	1,559	9					11																																														
Curlew	1,728	67		26	1	62	766	28	1	18	6	355	192																																								
Redshank	2,244	17		7	336	5	6																																														
Greenbank	2																																																				
Unstone	983	78		11	42		108																																														
Black-headed Gull	3,911	43		30	240	50	26	228	43																																												
Common Gull	914	27		30	38	8	68	320	41																																												
Lesser Black-backed Gull	1																																																				
Herring Gull	1,743	102		66	85	9	17	359	45																																												

COASTAL WEBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

February 2013

MHu M. Hutcheson
TB T. BrewisAC A. Craggs
RP R. Poyer
JAR J. A. Roper
AB A. BruntTAC T. A. Cadwallender
TW T. Watson
MGA M. G. Anderson
LJM L. J. McDougallSP S. Parnaby
MK M. Kerby
DMT D. M. Turner
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 NMR (including Budle Bay)	Budle Pt - Seahouses	Howick - Boulmer	Boulmer - Alnmouth	Aln Estuary	Alnmouth South	Coquet Estuary	Amble - Chevington	Cresswell - Newbiggin	Blyth Estuary	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)	
Counter	MHu	MHu	MHu	TB	MHu	AC	RP	JAR	AB	TAC	RP	RP	TW	MGA	LJM	SP	MK	DMT	DMT	PF	PF	
Date	6	6	8	16	6	9-10	10	14	11	22	10	14	15	10	17	9	16	10	24	25	10	10
Red-throated Diver	23		3	2			3		1		8	11	1		2	1	6	1				
Little Grebe	16																					
Slavonian Grebe	32					31	1															
Cormorant	224	9	8	7	3	57		1	4	1			2		24	30		54	10	12	2	
Shag	54	2			2	34	2								4	1						
Grey Heron	36	1	18	6	4			1		2			2		1		1					
Mute Swan	218		48	6	2	114				33					6				3		6	
Whooper Swan	76					46				30												
Pink-footed Goose	892					892	500															
Greylag Goose	14			1	12	1																
Canada Goose	22		1	12						9												
Barnacle Goose	121					121																
Dark-bellied Brent Goose	114					114																
Light-bellied Brent Goose	218					173	70		45													
Shelduck	1,665					1582	250	12	7	8		8			33				9	6		
Widgeon	920			1		510	350	42		185		180	1					1				
Teal	834			13		190	170			117		60			109	42		116	139	48		
Mallard	1,087		136	55	126	497	80	51		77		24			44	11		2		33	31	
Pintail	276					276																
Tufted Duck	8					6																
Scaup	1					1																
Eider	1,345	37	11		5	1015		24	65	53			11			36	27	26	35			
Long-tailed Duck	32		4		1	21	4						1			1						
Common Scoter	297				4	151		104		35			1			2						
Goldeneye	316	1	223	24	33			4	5	4		8			14							
Red-breasted Merganser	33	2	10		2	8			2		1		1	1	6							
Goosander	22		1	21																		
Moorhen	25			4		2					12		2				5					
Coot	8		2			1					3											
Oystercatcher	2,338	178	65	34	24	59	1035	90	31	142	114	188	5	22	83	65	82	67	168	41	2	
Ringed Plover	175	2				13			24					13	38	37	34	5	9			
Golden Plover	1,819					1358	350	110								90	261					
Grey Plover	747					624		39	64						7	13						
Lapwing	721		8			34		68		33						180	210				46	
Knot	806					775		3							4							
Sanderling	429	124				35		55	29						26	60		80	18			
Purple Sandpiper	72	4			14	2		21	6	3	4				2	8		2	1	5		
Dunlin	3,430					2638		53	34						39	5	392	35	5	169	1	
Shipe	21																21					
Black-tailed Godwit	2					2																
Bar-tailed Godwit	2,147	12	8		11	2046		36	15						4	1	22					
Curlew	3,138	33	2	52	1	38	1807	97	320	128	302				13	5	4	103	203	124		
Redshank	1,727	19	6	364	4	6	563	170	1	77	45	2			44	42	25	117	155	119	5	
Turnstone	529	6			20	87		13	136	43		2	6	29	26	16	81	45	13		6	
Black-headed Gull	2,758	20	6	160	6	14	14	445		326					220	181		262	166	486	376	
Common Gull	347	8	3	30	16	48	179		16						10	7		2	12	5	12	
Herring Gull	811	88	12	145	4	12	69		75		56				20		79		61	101	5	
Great Black-backed Gull	175	6	3	9		10	34	30		1					2		7		10	66	23	
Killwake	5				2			5									1		2		2	
Glaucous Gull	1																					
Mediterranean Gull	1																	1				
ADDITIONAL SPECIES																						
Fulmar	4		4																			
Little Egret	1					1					1											
Water Rail	1																					
TOTALS - WILDFOWL	8,929	52	0	465	152	157	5,880	138	176	152	489	12	294	17	2	280	127	27	90	142	190	87
- WADERS	18,101	378	207	464	29	162	11,019	647	66	1,045	499	525	11	278	216	632	710	1,149	485	258	83	86
- GULLS & TERNS	4,098	122	24	344	26	86	296	30	0	541	0	383	0	0	252	0	275	1	335	348	496	105

INLAND WEBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

Version: Intranet

Year: 2013
Month: FEBRUARY

Site	MFLy Holm Reservoir										Arctot Pond										Blackworth Ponds										Bogham Lake										Bothal Pond										Broome Lough										Causton										Castle Island										Carrington Reservoir										Carrington Ponds										Carrington Ponds										Carrington Ponds										Carrington Ponds										Carrington Ponds										Carrington Ponds										Carrington Ponds										Carrington Ponds										Carrington Ponds										Carrington Ponds										Carrington Ponds										Carrington Ponds										Carrington Ponds										Carrington Ponds										Carrington Ponds										Carrington Ponds										Carrington Ponds										Carrington Ponds										Carrington Ponds										Carrington Ponds										Carrington Ponds										Carrington Ponds										Carrington Ponds										Carrington Ponds										Carrington Ponds										Carrington Ponds										Carrington Ponds										Carrington Ponds										Carrington Ponds										Carrington 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Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

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

Bulletin 2013 No 3

MONTHLY SUMMARY – MARCH

3rd May 2013



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CLASSIFIED LIST HIGHLIGHTS

Bewick's Swan

Tundra Bean Goose

Greenland White-fronted Goose

Goldeneye

Smew

Bittern

Red Kite

Marsh Harrier

Osprey

Avocet

Greenshank

Black Guillemot

Puffin

Little Gull

Iceland Gull

Glaucous Gull

Hooded Crow

Black Redstart

Crossbill

Only bird of year was between Warkworth and Alnmouth on 23rd and 24th.

Several records with peak of 11 at Holywell Pond briefly on 14th.

Four at Woodhorn, two at Maiden's Hall and one at Grindon Lough.

High count of 267 on the WeBS count at the Tweed Estuary.

The redhead remained at East Chevington all month.

Wintering birds remained with one at Gosforth Park and Cresswell Pond.

Unusual number of sightings in north of county.

Early record of one over West Hartford on 27th.

Early birds with one at Hallington on 16th and one at East Ord on 27th.

Early sighting of one at breeding site on 21st.

Wintering bird still at Budle Bay.

Single off Stag Rocks, Bamburgh from 15th.

Worrying wreck of corpses along coast.

Several coastal sightings of storm-driven birds.

Single at North Shields Fish Quay.

Several records.

One near Budle Bay on 17th.

Early migrant on Holy island on 29th.

Dearth of sightings with most being near coastal wetlands.

COMMITTEE NEWS

April 2013 New Website Manager

Paul Buskin has volunteered to take responsibility for managing the club website. Paul has a wealth of technical experience with web development. Paul will concentrate on reviewing the site structure and design and will ensure we have appropriate back-ups and that software updates are performed as needed.

April 2013 New Members' Event

A brisk breeze met three members of the committee (Tom Cadwallender, Steve Lowe and Alan Tilmouth) at St. Mary's Island for the second 'New Members' Event'. We were pleased to meet Phil, Hector, Janet and Keith who have all recently joined the club. The shelter of the lower walls provided ample space for some friendly discussion on a range of subjects about the club, local birding sites, optics and how to sex Shelducks!

April 2013 Promoting Tourism

NTBC were contacted by the [Northumberland Coast & Lowland Leader Programme](#) to deliver a short talk on Northumberland's coastal birds to a group of Latvian and Greek guests visiting the region. County recorder Tim Dean met the group in Seahouses and accompanied them on a trip over to The Farnes after delivering a talk on our coastal birds.

INDOOR MEETINGS

Indoor meetings have now ended and start again on September 12th. At the April meeting Neil Osborne took us to the warmth and sunshine of Papua New Guinea. Neil's visit took him across the country on 'awful roads' and 'interesting' aircraft to see some of the most exotic birds imaginable – colourful and often endemic to the area (around 400 present in New Guinea). Birding had its difficulties, not least the lack of an effective field guide, but skilled local guides compensated.

Just a sample of the birds - starting in New Britain Neil showed us Blue-eyed Cockatoo, Black-capped Paradise Kingfisher and the only hornbill – Blyth's Hornbill; from Port Moresby – a brilliantly camouflaged Papuan Frogmouth and Rajah Shelduck. Birds of Paradise and Kingfishers abounded – Raggiana Bird of Paradise and Rufous-bellied Kookaburra in Variata National Park; Kiunga showed a stunning Flame Bowerbird and Blue Jewel- babbler.

Thanks to Neil for his talk – a real blast of sunshine and some incredible birds to add to any birders wish-list!

FIELD TRIPS

Trevor Blake's next trip is to the Harthope Valley on 19th May. Expect to see Ring Ouzel and Tree Pipits at this wonderful location. 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 2011 page 228.

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.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Two adults and three juveniles flew N at Seaton Sluice on 13th (SSWT). Peak concentrations were 110 at Killingworth Lake on 25th (LJM), 76 at Capheaton on 17th (STE), 74 at QEII CP Lake on 10th (CDH), 40 near Alnmouth (JWA), 25-27 at Cornhill and Fenham Mill, and ten to 19 at Berwick, Big Waters and Swallow Pond.

A Mute Swan gets airborne
Druridge Pools
by Chris Barlow on 30th March



Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus*

One, with Mute and Whooper Swans, was near Alnmouth on 23rd-24th (RC/RSF/MRM).

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Several flocks were noted on the move: 28 flew NW Rothbury on 9th (TRD/JD), 28 W high over Kielder Burn on 31st (ASH), 22 N at Marden Quarry on 17th (AC), 17 N at Bamburgh on 20th (MJC), 16 NW at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 23rd (IK), 14 N (then settled on sea) at Stag Rocks on 17th (TRD/JD), five to six N at Cresswell Pond, and three E at East Chevington. A group of 31 was at Budle Bay on 17th (per NNBC), 30 at Fenham Mill on 17th and 16-20 there Fenham Mill on 3rd and 22nd (TRD/JD/MSH), 23 were at Capheaton on 27th (STE), 16 at Wark on Tweed on 29th (JMA), 15 at Pegswood Community Park on 6th (AT), and one to six at Big Waters, Buston Links (Alnmouth), Cornhill, Cresswell Pond, Druridge, Gosforth Park NR, Hartburn Reservoir, Killingworth Lake, Newham, QEII CP Lake and West Ord.

Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*

One, of the *rossicus* (Tundra) race, was at Gloucester Lodge, Blyth on 10th (a different individual from that noted on 24th January) and was joined by a second bird on 11th (thought to be the same bird from 24th January; MSH). Both were noted at Blyth-Seaton Sluice on 12th (JSB/EC/TRD/JD). On 14th, 11, also of this race, flew in to Holywell Pond with 250 Pink-footed Geese and stayed for 20 minutes before flying off high to N (SSP).

A Tundra Bean Goose at Seaton Sluice
12th March
Tim Dean



Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Northbound flocks involved 310 at Seaton Sluice on 28th (SSWT), 200 at Budle Bay on 3rd (TRD/JD), 100 at Cambois on 3rd (STH/IFo), 100 at the Tyne Estuary on 5th (JM), and 55-60 at Prestwick Carr and Snab Point, and 180 flew NW at Swallow Pond on 3rd (JPD). At Maiden's Hall Lake (West Chevington) 1,500+ on 6th increased to 3,000+ by 28th (MSH), about 2,000 were at Doddington on 25th (DGB/RHB), 2,000 at West Stobswood Pool on 17th (MSH) and 26th (EC/JSB), 1,500+ at Earsdon (near Tritlington) on 10th (MSH), 300-400 at Budle Bay (Harper's Heugh), High Hauxley, Holywell Pond and Raylees, and 150-267 at Gloucester Farm (Blyth), Holywell Dene, Seaton Sluice and Woodhorn. Two to 14 were at Cocklawburn and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

A single bird of the Eurasian *albifrons* race was at Budle Bay on 3rd (TRD/JD).

Records of Greenland *flavirostris* race birds involved four adults at Woodhorn on 28th and 31st (MSH), two (possibly from Woodhorn group?) at Maiden's Hall Lake (West Chevington) on 6th (MSH), and singles at Grindon Lough on 2nd (AB/LB) and 29th (MSH), Holywell Pond on 6th (SPP) and Backworth-East Holywell on three dates between 14th-28th (JPD/SPP).

Un-raced birds involved four at Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene) on 27th (RJP), four at Ellington on 29th (TB), two at Harper's Heugh, Budle Bay on 3rd (IBDa/KDa) and one at Gloucester Farm, Blyth on 17th (JM).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

300 were at Harper's Heugh (Budle Bay) during the month (JPL/DHa/RNa), 159 at Airy Holm Reservoir on 12th (IFo), 104 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 29th (SR), 100 at Kiln Pit Hill on 28th (IK), and 70-95 at East Chevington, East Holywell and Slaley. Counts of ten to 33 came from near Alnmouth, Grindon Lough, Harehaugh and Maiden's Hall Lake (West Chevington). Four to eight were at Cocklawburn and West Hartford.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Peak counts were 150 at Grindon Lough on 29th (MSH), 113 at Derwent Reservoir on 9th (IFo), 74 at Bothal Pond on 3rd (TD), 24-30 at Bywell Haughs, Harehaugh, Linton Ponds, Newcastle Leazes Park, and Pegswood Community Park, and 12 at QEII CP Lake. Two to eight were also at Arcot, Backworth, Cresswell and Swallow Ponds, East Chevington and West Ord.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

40 were at Harper's Haugh-Budle Bay (no date; JPL/DHa) and four were noted there on 17th and 22nd (TRD/JD/MSH). Singles were at Capheaton, Maiden's Hall Lake (West Chevington) and Tynemouth Boating Lake.

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Pale-bellied *hrota* race birds involved about 200 at Fenham Flats on 3rd (TRD/JD), 150 at Harper's Haugh (Budle Bay) on 17th (TRD/JD) and 100 remaining on 28th (MSH), 75 were at Holy Island causeway on 21st (JMA), and 11 at Boulmer. About 80 dark-bellied *bernicla* race birds were at Holy Island all month (IK).

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Six flew N and 14 S at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT). Budle Bay held 165 on 12th (MSH) and 140 on 27th (PRM), 18 were at Kitty Brewster on 30th (FS), 16 at Boulmer on 7th (JMA), ten at Hebron on 21st (JMA), and three to five at Cresswell Pond, Elswick, Howdon, Redheugh and West Stobswood Pool. One to two were at/over Big Waters, Blyth, East Chevington, Grindon Lough, Hexham, Holy Island, Longhirst Flash, South Charlton, West Hartford and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

Three pairs were noted at Smalesmouth on 2nd (JR) and Tasset Burn mouth on 3rd (RSF), four ducks were at Ridley Stokoe on 1st (JSB), and a single pair at Smalesmouth on 28th (JMA). Away from the River North Tyne, a drake was at Wallsend Burn on five dates between 1st-29th (JPD/AJN).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Largest gatherings were 359 at Big Waters on 2nd (per GB), about 250 at Amble on 1st (SWA), 200 at Bothal Pond on 4th (TF/JFa), 160 at Capheaton on 27th (STE), 100-134 at Gosforth Park NR and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, 72-90 at Budle Bay, Cresswell Pond, Derwent Reservoir and Grindon Lough, and 31-40 at Swallow Pond and West Stobswood Pool. Ten to 17 were at Arcot Pond and QEII CP Lake.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Peak counts were 23 at East Chevington on 8th (AT), 22 at Big Waters on 7th (per GB), 22 at Bothal Pond on 24th (TF/JFa), 18 at Cresswell Pond (STH/IFo/TLC), 18 at West Hartford (a site record, on 16th; GMi), and 16-17 at Holywell Pond (SPP) and Pegswood Community Park (AT). Four to six were at Arcot and Linton Ponds, Druridge Pools, Gosforth Park NR and St Mary's Wetland, and one to two at Branton GP, Laverock Hall Farm Pond (Blyth), Maiden's Hall Lake (West Chevington) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

A Drake Gadwall takes to the air at Hauxley
by Chris Barlow
30th March

**Teal** *Anas crecca*

Peak counts were 320 at Budle Bay on 27th (PRM), 198 at Howdon on 15th (CB), 192 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 2nd (SR), 130 at Holy Island 'rocket fields' on 31st (IK), 107 at Big Waters (per GB), 72-95 at Elswick, Grindon Lough and West Hartford, and 34-50 at Arcot and Bothal Ponds, Longhirst Flash, Middle Ord Pond and St Mary's Wetland. Groups of 12-28 were at Backworth Pond, Gosforth Park NR, Maiden's Hall Lake (West Chevington), Tyne Green CP and West Ord.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Big Waters attracted 159 on 12th (per GB), 138 were at the Tweed Estuary on 12th (MHu), 74 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 2nd (SR), 66 at Derwent Reservoir on 21st (IFo), 56 at Newcastle Leazes Park (DM), 25-39 at Bothal Pond, Longhirst Flash, Newcastle Exhibition Park and QEII CP Lake, and 13-17 at Arcot and Linton Ponds.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Ten were at Fenham Flats on 13th (JDL) and 50 on 14th (JPL). Elsewhere, three were at East Chevington north pool on 16th (TB), two at Big Waters (GB) and Low Newton (NFO), and one at Whittle Dene Reservoirs between 3rd-29th (SR).

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

A count of 15 at Druridge Pools on 21st consisted of 12 drakes and three ducks (TRD), while 14 drakes and one duck were noted there on 26th (EC/JSB), 14 (ten drakes) were at East Chevington north pool on 12th (EC/JSB), five at Swallow Pond on 31st (CGK), four at Cresswell Pond (PCF), and one to two at Arcot and Bothal Ponds, Big Waters, Killingworth Lake and West Hartford.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Largest counts were 25 at Swallow Pond on 3rd (JPD), 23 at Bothal Pond on 2nd (TF/JFa), 17 at Big Waters on 7th (per GB), 13 at Broomlee Lough on 2nd (AB/LB), 13 at Killingworth Lake on 25th (LJM), and 11 at Bakethin (TRD/JD). Six were at Lewisburn, three to four at East Chevington, Gosforth Park NR, Linton and Swallow Ponds and QEII CP Lake, and one to two at Arcot and West Allotment Ponds, Branton GP and Longhirst Flash.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Killingworth Lake again proved popular, with a peak of 128 noted on 25th (LJM). Peak counts elsewhere were 43 at Arcot Pond on 31st (DM), 37 at Grindon Lough on 2nd (AB/LB), 30 at Swallow Pond on 17th (JPD), 20-27 at Big Waters, Bywell Haughs, QEII CP and Tynemouth Boating Lakes, and 13-18 at Bothal, Cresswell and West Allotment Ponds, Jesmond Dene, Newcastle Exhibition and Leazes Parks, Pegswood Community Park, and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Two to eight were at seven further sites.

Scaup *Aythya marila*

Singles were at Ladyburn Lake on 8th (AT) and Holy Island causeway on 22nd (MSK/NEWT).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

Generally small numbers noted, with peaks of 72 at Berwick North Shore on 9th (MHu), 51 at Blyth South Harbour on 8th (MHp), 42 at Tynemouth on 3rd (DRW), 40 at North Shields Fish Quay (MNC), and 22 at Tweedmouth Dock. Four to six were at Sharper's Head (Berwick) and Holywell Dene (estuary).

A Drake Eider splendid in the Seahouses sunshine
13th March by Dennis Lovatt

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

One flew N at Seaton Sluice on 13th (SSWT), 35 were at Stag Rocks on 3rd (TRD/JD) and eight to 23 on several other dates. Five were at Seahouses during the month (DHa/DGB/DLo *et al.*), four at the Tweed Estuary on 31st (MHu), two at Cresswell Pond regularly all month (TB/IRD *et al.*) and one at Kitty Brewster on 30th (FS).



Two photographs of Long-tailed Duck

Left: in Seahouses Harbour by Dennis Lovatt on 13th March and right: by Fiona Stafford at Kitty Brewster on 30th March

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

At Seaton Sluice, a 'below average' 18 flew N and 15 S during the month (SSWT). About 300 were at Stag Rocks on 3rd (TRD/JD) and 16-210 on various other dates (DGB/BRS *et al.*), 20-22 were at Beadnell Bay (JPL) and Cocklawburn (PRM), and 12 at Alnmouth (TRD). One to two were at Blyth South Harbour, Druridge Bay, Fenham Flats, Seaton Sluice, Spittal Bay and the Tweed Estuary.

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

The sole report was of a drake which flew S at Stag Rocks on 15th (EC/JSB).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

The Tweed Estuary attracted 267 on 12th (MHu), 68 were at Tweedmouth Dock on 16th (MHu), 43 were at East Chevington on 3rd (STH/IFo), 24-27 at Grindon Lough, Killingworth Lake, QEII CP Lake, and the River Tweed between A1-Horncliffe. Counts of ten to 18 came from Bakethin and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, Branton GP, Castle Island, East Chevington, Newton Pool and Spittal Bay, five to seven at Berwick North Shore, Bothal Pond and Seahouses harbour, and three to four at Arcot Pond, Broomlee Lough, Longhoughton, Shield on the Wall and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Smew *Mergellus albellus*

A 'redhead' was at Druridge Pools on four dates between 6th-28th (IRD/TRD/JD/AT) and East Chevington on three dates between 1st-30th (TF/JFa/DM *et al.*).

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

16 were at the Tweed Estuary on 12th (MHu), eight at Cresswell Pond on 30th (TB), six at East Chevington on 29th (PCF), three to five at Alnmouth Bay, Berwick North Shore and Newbiggin, and one to two at Berwick, Budle Bay, Castle Island, Druridge Pools, Fenham Flats, Seaton Sluice (bottom of Holywell Dene) and Stag Rocks.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Two flew N and one S at Seaton Sluice on 4th (SSWT). Five were at Harehaugh on 2nd (JR), Mootlaw Quarry on 3rd and 10th (ALT), and the Tweed Estuary on 12th (MHu), and three at Airy Holm Reservoir, Barrowburn (Upper Coquetdale), Holywell Pond, Thrum Mill (Rothbury) and Wark. One to two were also at Alnwick, Bakethin Reservoir, Big Waters, Broomlee Lough, Catcleugh and Derwent Reservoirs, Hexham, Kielder Burn, Kilham, Linbriggs Farm (Upper Coquetdale) and Pegswood Community Park.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Single birds were reported at Whittle Dene Reservoirs (MPF/JPD/SR) and at Lemington (Newcastle) both on 2nd (SR), Derwent Reservoir on 3rd (IFo) and at North Acomb on 13th (RMH). Further north, singles were observed between Shipley and Eglington on 22nd (JW), West Hartford on 24th (ASH) and on the Otterburn Ranges on 29th (TRD/JD).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

There were three records of this very scarce breeder, a single at Newton Pool on 2nd (RNa) followed by females at West Hartford being mobbed by gulls on 27th (PJA) and then another female at West Chevington moving SW on 28th (MSH).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

An unsexed bird was at one site on 1st and 2nd (PCF) and a male was seen at a site in the north of the County on 8th (JHa).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Two to three birds were noted in the Border area on 2nd (JPD) and a pair was noted at another site on 2nd with a single bird seen there on 8th (STH/CB *et al.*).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

A pair was seen throughout the month in Scotland Gate (SLB/MSK) and a male was seen in the observer's garden throughout the month and it caught and ate a Siskin *Carduelis spinus* on 31st (TD). A pair were seen displaying at Big Waters on 17th (GB). Single birds were noted at 12 further sites including a female eating a Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus* at Backworth Pond on 3rd (CS).

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Eight birds were at Deadwater Fell on 2nd (JPD), six birds were at the Belford Bypass on the A1 on 5th (JMA) and five were in the Alwin Valley (Upper Coquetdale) on 16th (JR). Four birds were at Prestwick Carr on 2nd (ASH) and on the A1 near Horncliffe on 10th (TBr), three birds were noted at Pegswood on 5th (AT), in the Breamish Valley (Harthope) on 14th (DLo) and at Swallow Pond on 29th (JPD). One or two birds were seen at 27 sites during the month.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

The first record of this very scarce breeder in the County was a bird catching a Rainbow Trout at Hallington Reservoir on 16th. It moved off N after 30 minutes (*per* RSF). On the 27th a bird flew off N at East Ord being harassed by gulls (MHu).

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Only seven records this month with a pair at Cocklawburn Dunes on 27th (PRM) and singles at Harwood Forest on 2nd (STH), Chollerford on 13th (PRM), Lowick on 27th (PRM), Cramlington on 29th (DM) and at Cresswell Pond (DM/STH/PJA) and Howdon (CB) on 30th.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Holy Island had up to four birds present throughout the month including two birds which joined forces to unsuccessfully chase Dunlin *Calidris alpina* in the harbour on 30th (IK). Single birds were seen at Lucker from the 1st – 16th (JHa), Beal on 5th (SR/AH), Prestwick Carr on 24th (ASH) Springhill (Tweedmouth) on 26th (MHu) and at Bamburgh on 31st (CNur/VWa).

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Up to three birds were present on Holy Island throughout the Month (IK). Single birds were noted at Cresswell, Ellington, Fenham-le-Moor, Newcastle, North Shields, Stag Rocks, West Chevington and at West Hartford. A single bird was at a nest site on 28th (PCF).

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Swallow Pond had three birds present throughout the month (JPD/SPP), Gosforth Park NR had up to two birds throughout the month (NHSN/GB), and two birds were calling at Prestwick Carr on 30th (PCF). Singles were seen or heard at Big Waters on 2nd (GB), Jesmond Dene on 3rd (DHWB) and at East Chevington (DM/STH/PJA/ADM), Pegswood Community Park (AT) and West Hartford (JM) all on the 30th.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Swallow Pond had the highest counts with 40 birds on 26th (JPD) possibly a site record. Cresswell Pond had 18 birds on 30th (DM) and 17 were at Backworth Pond on 31st (CGK). One to eight birds were at Arcot Pond, East Cramlington NR, Jesmond Dene, Leazes Park (Newcastle), Pegswood Community Park and at Tyne Green CP (Hexham).

Coot *Fulica atra*

The QEII CP had 56 birds present on 10th (CDH), 40 were at Arcot Pond on 31st (DM) and 38 at North Pool (E Chevington) on (DM/STH/PJA). 36 birds were at Killingworth Lake on 25th including one occupied nest (LJM) and 28 were at Big waters on 12th (per GB). Up to 24 were at Bothal Pond throughout the month.(TD) and 18 were seen at Cresswell Pond on 30th (DM/STH/PJA). One to eleven birds were at eight other sites.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

An early returning bird appeared at Cresswell Pond for one day only on 21st (TRD) and two were noted here on 30th (TB/TD).

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Coastal areas held the highest numbers; 330 roosted on St Cuthbert's Island (Holy Island) on 15th falling to 66 on 29th (IK) and Berwick North Shore held 226 on 9th (MHu). Elsewhere, 72 were at Cresswell Pond on 19th (PCF), Pegswood Community Park saw a peak of 61 on 8th falling to 32 on 24th (AT), 51 were at Maiden's Hall Lake (West Chevington) on 19th (MSH) and 31-42 were seen at Bardon Mill, Branton GP, Pegswood Moor, the River Tweed (near Horncliffe) and West Ord. Reports of ten to 22 came from the Acomb, Blyth estuary, Bywell Haughs, Tweed Estuary, West Hartford and Whittle Dene Reservoirs and single-figure counts were made at a further 17 locations, often in pairs, including a displaying pair at Killingworth Lake.

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Fields adjacent to Blyth Links held 250 on 11th (TB), 200 were at High Muckley on 21st (SWA) and 120 were noted at Rowley Burn on 16th (AJH). Counts of 70-75 came from Cresswell Pond, Corbridge and Heddon-on-the-Wall in the final week (TB/AJH/ALT), 50 were at Warkworth Lane on 31st (TB) and numbers peaked at 40 on Prestwick Carr on 21st (PCF). Some 30 were in the West Monkseaton car-boot field [buying or selling?] on 11th (CS), 20 were at both Morpeth (Whorral Bank) and Pegswood during mid-month and 14 flew W over Big Waters on 31st (GB).

Inland, three birds sang amongst the snow on Hexhamshire Common on 31st (MJC). Back in the south east, the Royal Grammar School, Jesmond continued to attract night-time feeding birds with a peak of seven there on 26th (GB).

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Budle Bay held the majority of birds with counts of 20 on 3rd (TRD/JD) and 50 on 15th (EC/JSB). Boulmer attracted 19 on 30th (NFO), ten were at Newbiggin on 28th (AT), two were at Berwick Little Beach on 31st (MHu) and one which circled Holywell Pond before flying off E on 20th was a good local site record (MHp).

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Pre-breeding flocks began to disperse during the month; remaining flocks included 130 at Cresswell Pond on 3rd (STH/IFo) and 239 here on 30th (DM/STH/PJA), 100 at Warden on 12th (RMH), 65 at Shiremoor on 24th (CGK) and 50 at both Bothal Pond and Corbridge late in the month. Smaller gatherings of 17-35 were also noted at the Blyth Estuary, Grindon Lough, Howdon, Pegswood Community Park, Plenmeller Common (displaying birds) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs (flying S).

Some 62 tide-line corpses were found along 1.7km of Blyth South Beach during 19th-29th (MHp). Interestingly and probably related to the tide-line corpses, at about 16 miles off Holy Island, ten birds were seen flying low past a fishing boat heading towards the mainland on 16th and a hard-weather movement from Denmark was suggested (per IK). A single bird was also noticed flying in high from the NE at Seaton Sluice on 18th (SSWT).

Some 30 were counted in the *Northumberlandia* (Cramlington) area on 2nd and this included five displaying pairs (DM). Smaller numbers were reported from several further sites, including displaying or paired birds at Big Waters, Billylaw (Old Moor) and snow covered Hexhamshire Common (300m a.s.l.).

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Very few reports this month, with 11 at Cocklawburn on 10th the peak (MHu). Eight roosted on Ferguson's factory roof in Blyth Harbour on 29th (STH), four were feeding on the north bank of the Tyne at Elswick on 5th (GB), two were on the Tweed Estuary on 19th (MHu) and a single was at Cresswell Pond on 30th (DM *et al.*).

Curlew *Numerius arquata*

The largest groups involved ca.250 at Alnmouth on 6th (TRD), 200+ at Harper's Heugh (near Budle Bay) on 22nd (MSH) and 145 at Boulmer on 30th (NFO), otherwise more modest counts of 50-64 came from Blyth Links, Cocklawburn, East Chevington and Slaley. Gatherings of 23-46 were also noted at Cheswick Beach, Ellington (Chugdon Wood area), Elswick (R Tyne), Howdon, Morpeth (Whorral Bank), Prestwick Carr, Raylees, Rowley Burn and Whitely Bay (near the Cemetery). Further sightings came from at least 15 additional sites, including singing males in the snow at Hexhamshire Common on 31st (MJC) and a displaying pair at West Hartford on 29th (LJM).

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Three were present at the Rocket Field on Holy Island throughout the month, with one attaining full breeding dress by 30th (IK). Single birds were also noted at Low Newton scrape on 2nd (RNa), Fenham-le-Moor on 13th (JDL) and Cresswell Pond on 31st (TB).

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

The monthly peak at Holy Island numbered 690 in the high tide roost on St Cuthbert's Island on 29th (IK). The Blyth estuary (Kitty Brewster) held 22 on 30th (FS), 11 were on Boulmer beach on 23rd (JR) and ten were in Budle Bay on 3rd (TRD/JD). One to four were also noted at Berwick Little Beach, Cresswell Pond and on the Tweed Estuary.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Newbiggin held the most with 55 on 28th (AT); 35 were on Boulmer beach on 23rd (JR) and the peak at Tynemouth was 32 on 3rd (DRW). The Tweed Estuary WeBS revealed 22 on 12th, 14 were at Cocklawburn on 22nd and five or less appeared at Cresswell Pond, North Shields, St Mary's and Stag Rocks.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Cresswell Pond hosted 13 on 17th and 15 on 31st (TB *et al.*); one at Lynemouth Flash was the sole other report.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

The maximum at Low Newton was 150 (RNA/JPL/DGB), no date given; 109 were noted there on 17th (NFO). Boulmer beach held around 60 on 23rd (JR) and 36 were at Newbiggin on 28th. Three areas of Berwick had up to 12, ten were at Blyth beach on 29th and one visited Lynemouth Flash on 6th.

Sanderling
St. Mary's Island
by Alan Jack

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*

Cresswell Pond was the most favoured location with 80 on 17th increasing to 90 on 21st (STH/IFo/TLC/IRD); 61 were at Tynemouth on 3rd (DRW), 43 on flood-water at Druridge on 25th, 40 at Holywell Pond on 21st and 36 on R Tyne at Elswick on 5th. Two to five were noted at Cocklawburn, Lynemouth Flash, Prestwick Carr and the Tweed Estuary. Sadly, the remains of five were along a 1.7 mile stretch of Blyth South Beach during 20th-26th (MHP).

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

The Stag Rocks stronghold had 60 on 3rd (TRD/JD), rising to 80 on 10th (JDL) then falling to 40 on 17th and 27th. Elsewhere, peaks included 36 at St Mary's on 11th (AC), 33 at Newbiggin on 28th (AT), 22 at Cheswick Black Rocks on 22nd and 18 at Seahouses on 16th. Up to ten were noted at Seaton Sluice and Tynemouth and one was in Blyth Harbour on 26th and 29th.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

One or two were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs during 10th-26th (SR *et al.*) and singles at Hedgeley on 5th and 12th/13th (SMa/IBDa/KDa).

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

The Budle Bay winterer was recorded on 3rd and 27th (TRD/JD/PRM).

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

The Tweed Estuary WeBS produced 282 on 12th (MHu) and the maximum at Howdon was 185 on 9th (CB). On the R Tyne 68 were between Elswick Wharf and Newcastle Business Park on 5th (DM) and 70+ between Redheugh Bridge and Newburn on 16th (JL). The most at Cresswell Pond was 56 on 27th (PCF) and Berwick, Boulmer and Kitty Brewster had 16-19 at times. Small numbers appeared at Backworth Pond, Big Waters and Bothal Pond; the only report from any distance inland was of two at Derwent Reservoir on 27th.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Five records of singletons were received: at West Monkseaton on 1st and 8th, at Monks' House Pool on 26th (JDL), St Mary's Wetland on 27th (SPP) and Howdon on 31st (CB).

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

A light influx of eight or nine was evident on Holy Island during 10th-12th (IK) and five were logged at Longhorsley Moor on 15th (AB/LB); three were present throughout in the Gosforth Park NR area (NHSN). Two were at each of Slaley Hall on 25th (RMH) and at Swallow pond on 29th (JPD) and singles turned up at a further 18 locations, mainly in the SE of the County. The remains of four were found along a 1.7 mile stretch of Blyth South Beach during 23rd-26th (MHP) and the wings of another were on the high-tide line at Hadston on 22nd (JR).

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Eight were displaying at Rowley Burn on 16th (AJH). On 3rd 17 flushed from a flash pool near Bothal Pond (TF/JFa) and 16 were at Big Waters on 30th (AJJ per GB). Eight were at Backworth Pond on 3rd, six at Howdon on 23rd and four at Prestwick Carr on 31st. One to three appeared at Cresswell Pond, Dipton Mill, Gosforth Park NR area, Otterburn Ranges, West Monkseaton and Woodhorn Flashes.

A Snipe at Howdon Wetland
by Colin Bradshaw

**Auk** *sp*

At Seaton Sluice, 52 hours of sea-watching recorded only 54 birds, the majority moving N (SSWT). The onset of strong, cold and very persistent easterly winds from mid-month onwards produced a 'wreck' of Auks with many tide line corpses recorded (see below), presumably the birds dying as a result of inability to find sufficient food in rough seas.

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

Only a single record of live birds comprising two N at Seaton Sluice on 24th (SSWT). A total of 144 tide line corpses was recorded between Holy Island-Blyth from 12th-31st with the largest counts of 72 at Blyth South Beach (MHP), ca.40 at Holy Island (IK) and 30 at Boulmer (JMA) with one to four at other sites.

Black Guillemot *Cephus grylle*

An adult bird, changing from winter into summer plumage, was close inshore at Bamburgh Stag Rocks on 15th (JSB/EC).

Razorbill *Alca torda*

A maximum of ten were at Bamburgh, Stag Rocks on 12th (BRS) with three to six there on other dates and elsewhere, singles were at Berwick (Sharper's Head) (MHu) and Newbiggin (AT). Tide-line corpses were 14 at Holy Island on 31st (IK), five at Blyth South Beach (MHP) and two at Boulmer Beach (JR).

Little Auk *Alle alle*

A single tide-line corpse was noted at Boulmer on 7th (JMA).

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

A maximum count of 20+ came from Bamburgh Stag Rocks on 12th (BRS) and elsewhere one to two were at Berwick (Sharper's Head), Blyth Harbour and Cresswell, Snab Point. Corpses were found at a number of localities including 23 in a 1.7 mile stretch of beach at Blyth (MHP) and three at Hadston (JR) and Warkworth (IRD) beaches.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

The first record of this early migrant was one at Low Newton on 24th (Chris Redfern).

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Significant movement occurred at Seaton Sluice on 18th when 600 moved N in 1.5 hours and 130 moved S in 1 hour (SSWT); otherwise only small numbers were recorded here during the month. Movement N was also noted at Newbiggin on 1st when 61 passed (AT). The Tyne Bridge colony built up during the month with five on 7th (DM) increasing to 70 on 20th (JMA) plus seven on nearby Quayside buildings on 15th (DM). The Howdon Lead Works held 14 on 9th (CB). One to five were at eight other coastal sites from the Tweed Estuary-North Shields Fish Quay with a single bird inland at Big Waters on 31st. Corpses, resulting from the adverse weather conditions from mid-month onwards, included two found at Holy Island and singles on Boulmer Beach and Woodhorn Flashes.



A Kittiwake at Blyth by Chris Barlow on 23rd March

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Peak counts this month were 342 at the QEII CP on 10th (CDH), 278 at Elswick Wharf on the River Tyne on 5th (DM), 184 at Berwick North Shore on 9th (MHu) and 160 in Jesmond Dene on 19th (MJCo). Elsewhere, lower counts of 50-141 came from Exhibition Park, Grindon Lough, Leazes Park Lake and West Hartford (DM/PRM). One to 14 were at five other sites including two colour-ringed birds, one at Amble, J72J – ringed in Norway in April 2005 (SWA) and another at Killingworth,

VA11 (PCF). Three tide-line corpses were found on Boulmer Beach on 23rd (JR).

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

A single bird was noted feeding over the sea at the tide line near Cresswell on 19th (JR). However, commencing on 22nd an unusual March influx of storm-driven birds was recorded, with the majority occurring between North Shields and Blyth Harbour. A single was at Hadston Beach (JR) and two at Prior's Haven (North Shields) on 22nd (JSB/EC) with further birds recorded at Blyth Harbour/South Beach, commencing with one on 23rd, this increasing daily to a maximum of ten on 28th (MHP/JM/STH/TB/CB/AC). Elsewhere, up to four were at St Mary's Island from 24th-27th (CB/AC/SPP) with one or two at Bamburgh, Newbiggin and Warkworth (Birling Carrs). The last record was of two moving S at Seaton Sluice on 30th. Apart from a 1st-winter bird at Blyth South Beach, all these records were of adult birds in winter plumage and excellent views were afforded to many observers as they fed over the sea at the tide line.



A Little Gull at North Shields on 22nd March by John Clark

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

At Newbiggin, birds were present throughout the month with a maximum of 15 on 21st, of which 11 were adults (AT) and on five other dates, one to eight were reported there (STH/PJA/ASH *et al.*). Swallow Pond held three adults on 19th (JPD/SPP), one carrying a white colour ring (number not read) and elsewhere, single birds were noted at eight widespread sites namely, Amble, Berwick, Big Waters, Blyth Harbour, Holy Island, QEII CP, St Mary's Island and Tynemouth. The Amble bird carried a red colour ring, YJU7 (SWA), ringed in Serbia in May 2007 when it was aged more than two calendar years; this bird has wintered regularly in the Amble area since 2007.

A summer-plumaged Mediterranean Gull
at the species' favourite site of Newbiggin
26th March by Peter Tapsell



Common Gull *Larus canus*

The largest flock was seen at Kirkley Hall on 3rd where 400 fed in the estate fields (IK), ca.200 were at Scots' Gap on 16th (JR), and 150 at Howdon on 1st (CB). Also 50 were at Redesmouth on 2nd (JR), 30 at Gosforth Park NR throughout the month (NHSN) and 23 at Prestwick Carr on 2nd (PCF). Up to ten were recorded at six other localities.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

On 13th-14th, 19 moved N at Seaton Sluice (SSWT) as birds returned from their wintering areas and numbers built up throughout the month to give maximum counts of 32+ on the River Tyne (Redheugh Bridge-Newburn but mainly at the Scotswood breeding site) on 16th (JL), 19 at Gosforth Bridlepath area on 28th (MJC), 12 at Budle Bay on 17th (TRD/JD) and Swallow Pond on 21st (JPD) with ten at Jesmond Dene (MJCo) and West Hartford (LJM) during the last week of the month. Otherwise one to four at ca.20 widespread localities, mainly on the south east coastal plain, including suburban sites, but also well inland at Grindon Lough and Shotleyfield.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argenteus*

Two gatherings of around 220 were recorded at Ord Moor and during a WeBS count on the Tweed Estuary on 8th and 12th respectively (MHu) with a similarly sized flock at Holy Island on 5th (SR/AH); at Berwick North Shore, a WeBS count on 9th recorded 124 (MHu). A flock of 40 was at North Shields on 26th (PJA) and three to 16 were at Jesmond Dene, Leazes Park and West Hartford (MJCo/DM); an albino was at Newburn on 16th (JL).

The sap is rising at the coast.
Herring Gulls celebrating spring
by John Clark



Iceland Gull *Larus glaucooides*

A scarce bird this winter, the only record being a 3rd calendar year bird at the North Shields Fish Quay from 3rd-6th, seen by many observers (CGK/GPK/DRW/GB *et al.*).

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

Another scarce visitor this winter with records of single first-winter birds, almost certainly involving the same individual, at the North Shields Fish Quay from 3rd-6th (GB/DRW *et al.*) and 12th-13th (TRD/JD/SPP). An immature bird seen briefly at Cresswell Pond on 8th (ADMc) which flew off S, may have been another sighting of the same bird.



The North Shields Fish Quay Glaucous Gull;
Left by John Clark on 5th March and right by Tim Dean on 12th March

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Only two reports this month, one feeding with other gulls in an observer's Walbottle garden on 10th (KR/LR) and a corpse on the tide line at Hadston Beach on 22nd (JR).

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

On 31st a large gathering of ca.150 was in the vicinity of Hawsen Burn (Harthope Valley) when deep snow lay on the ground (NFO) and 60+ were on Hexhamshire Common (MJC). Ten were in the Harthope Valley on 4th (TRD/JD), eight at Shirlaw Pike (Longframlington) on 5th and six at Rowley Burn on 16th.

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

Counts of six males came from Sinderhope on 13th (AA) and Swinhope Shield on 29th (STH), where four were present on 4th. One male was at Rowley Burn on 16th.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Very few were reported with the peak count being four at Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene) on 11th (RJP). One to two were at Breamish Valley, Plenmeller Common, Whittle Dene Reservoirs, Wooperton and on a Stamfordham front lawn!

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

The peak counts were ten at West Monkseaton in the car boot sale field (CS) and six at Linton on 1st (TB) and Swallow Pond on 15th (JPD), five at Goswick Golf Course on 16th (DM) and on 10th four at Big Waters (GB) and Lowick (EHa). One to three were noted at Beal Point, Billy Law (Ord Moor), Cresswell Pond, Ellington, Hemscott Hill Farm (Cresswell), Loanend (Horncliffe), Maiden's Hall Lake, Middle Ord Pond, *Northumberlandia* (Cramlington) and Stannington.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

On 2nd 45 were at Holystone Grange (JR). A Netherton Park garden (Stannington) attracted five (one male) on 8th (RWM/MIM). Four were in a Walbottle garden on 17th and one to two were at Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene) throughout the month.

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

At Seaton Sluice 52 hours of sea-watching counted 24 N and 32 S. These were below average numbers for the time of year. (SSWT) At Newbiggin three flew N and one S on 1st (AT). Peak offshore counts were 14 at Holy Island on 5th (SR/AH) and seven off Stag Rocks on 3rd (IBDa/KDa). One to three were noted at Alnmouth, Blyth Harbour, Holy Island, Newbiggin, Seaton Sluice, Snab Point, the Tweed Estuary and on 29th/30th a summer-plumaged bird was at Whittle Dene Reservoirs (SR).

A red-throated diver at Alnmouth
by Mike McMahon on 30th March



Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

A single was seen successfully fishing off Seaton Sluice on 20th (SSWT/DLo) and one was offshore at Cocklawburn Dunes on 27th (PRM).

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

The only record was of a single off Stag Rocks on 27th (PRM).

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

During the month "many" were noted nesting on ledges from Howick-Berwick (JPL/SVM). At Stag Rocks ten were present on 17th (TRD/JD). One to four were noted at Bamburgh Castle, Berwick North Shore and Snab Point. Single corpses were found on the high-tide line between Seaton Sluice-Blyth on 22nd and Boulmer on 23rd (JR).

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

The largest passage movement occurred on 10th with 720/hour in Spittal Bay (Berwick) (MHu). At Seaton Sluice only 111, mainly N, were noted in 52 hours of sea-watching (SSWT). At Craster ca.100 flew N on 13th, (DLo), whilst on 17th 50 flew N at Stag Rocks (TRD/JD). At Newbiggin 41 flew N on 1st (AT). Many small parties were seen flying N between Howick-Berwick during the month (JPL/DGB). A high-tide line corpse was found at Long Nanny on 23rd (JR).

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

The peak counts were 65 at North Shields Fish Quay on 4th (JPD), 52 at Blyth South Harbour on 29th (STH), 15 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 21st (SR) and ten at Big Waters on 10th (GB). One to six were noted at Berwick North Shore, Holywell Dene, Linden Hall, QEII, River Tyne near Newcastle Business Park and flying S during a snow storm at Shiremoor. The only report of a *sinensis* race bird was one at Linden Hall on 10th (NFO).

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

During the month at Seaton Sluice only five flew N and one S in a two-hour period (SSWT). Two flew N at Newbiggin on 1st (AT). Peak counts were 140+ at Stag Rocks on 12th (BRS) and seven in Blyth South Harbour on 29th (STH). One to four were noted at Alnmouth, Berwick North Shore, North Shields and the Tweed Estuary.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

At least one remained throughout the month at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN). A single was seen at Newton Pool on 3rd/17th (CR/BRG/GW). One was at Cresswell Pond on 30th (DGB).

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Singles were noted in Budle Bay on 4th/22nd (DGB/MSH) and at Fenham Flats on 26th (JDL).

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

The peak counts were 14 in the Tweed Estuary on 12th (MHu) and nine (at least six nests) at Howden on 29th (CB). Five were back on nests at Gosforth Park NR during the month (NHSN). Singles were noted at Bywell Haughs, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Holywell Dene, Wark and flying over Heaton Park Bowling Green.



Above, Grey Heron at St. Mary's and below a pair of Great Crested Grebes at Killingworth Lake, both by Alan Jack

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

The peak counts were four at Cresswell Pond on 17th (STH/IFo/TLC), Swallow Pond on 29th (JPD) and throughout the month at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN). Two were noted at Arcot Pond, Farnley Haughs (Corbridge), Tweed Estuary and Woodhorn Flashes. Singles were at Branton GP, Derwent Reservoir, East Chevington, Linton Pond, Nelly's Moss Lakes (Craggside) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

The peak count was nine at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 26th (SR). Three, including a displaying pair, were at Killingworth Lake on 2nd (BMo) and three including a displaying pair were at Derwent Reservoir on 8th (IFo). Two were at East Chevington on 2nd and on 17th a pair was Bothal Pond and another pair displayed at Big Waters. Singles were at Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield), Cresswell Pond, Nilston Rigg Lake (Langley) and Sandon Bay (Holy Island).



Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

Only a single was noted off Stag Rocks on 4th (RNA).

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

The peak count was eight at Stag Rocks on 3rd (TRD/JD). Up to four were seen here on five further dates. Six were off St Cuthbert's Island (Holy Island) on 10th (IK), the peak count for this locality during the month. Two were in Budle Bay on 31st (Cmur/VWa).

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

Sixty were at Blyth Harbour on 27th and two at Beatty Avenue, South Gosforth on 21st.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

The peak count for the month was 11 at Howdon on 30th (CB), eight at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 21st (SR), six at Jesmond Dene on 4th (MJCo) and at Warkworth Lane (Ellington) on 31st (TB). Five were at Bell's Farm (Cresswell) on 21st, three in the observer's garden at Walbottle on 17th and at Woodhorn Flashes on the same date with one to two at Arcot Lane, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Kielder and Pegswood Community Park.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Large gatherings of 500 at Burradon on 26th (PJA), 300+ at Prestwick Carr on 21st and Charlton Mires on 28th (PCF/MSH), 200+ at West Hartford on 4th (PJA) and 140 at Ord Moor (Billylaw) on 17th (MHu). Two to 60 were at Jesmond Dene, Town Moor (Newcastle) and South Gosforth.

A Woodpigeon at Howdon Wetland
by Colin Bradshaw

**Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

A single was in the observer's garden at Beatty Avenue, South Gosforth on 21st (MJCo).

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Two pairs and a single were present at Holy Island all month (IK) with regular sightings at Bamburgh, Cresswell Pond from 27th, Lesbury on 12th and 28th, Wallhouses on 11th and 13th and Yearle on 23rd and 30th. Singles were also reported from Craster, Druridge, East Ord, East Stobswood, Holywell Dene, Shiremoor and Warkworth.

A Barn Owl quarters Cresswell
by Peter Fletcher on 28th March

**Little Owl** *Athene noctua*

Two were at East Stobswood on 3rd (TB) with a single there on 1st, at Middle Stobswood on 12th and 26th and West Stobswood on 17th. Singles were also at Acomb on 17th Holywell Grange on 28th and Big Waters on 31st.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

More than two called at Scotland Gate during the month (SLB/MSK) with a pair noted nesting at Gosforth Park (NHSN) and two at Longframlington Common on 5th (IRD), Ellington on 6th (TB), Rothbury on 15th (JD) and Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 18th (MNC). Singles were at Cramlington, Harbottle, Heddon on the Wall, Holywell Dene, Morpeth, Rothbury and Spindleston.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

A single at Big Waters on 4th was found dead the next day (IRD/AF per GB) and tide-line remains were found at Blyth South Beach on 26th (MHp) with, thankfully, a living individual at roost at Holy Island on 31st (IK).

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Three to four were present at Holy Island all month (IK) with three seen at Guile Point on 10th (IBDa/KDa) and three at West Hartford on 5th the highest count of the winter there (JM). Two were at Prestwick Carr on 1st and 2nd (PCF/BMo), at Swallow Pond from 3rd to 19th (JPD) and Shiremoor on 21st (CGK) with singles also at Backworth Pond, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Fenham-le-Moor and Shield on the Wall.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Present at Jesmond Dene all month, two were noted on 13th and 31st (DHWB) with singles at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 2nd and 12th (SR) and at Big Waters on 17th (GB).

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Two were at Gosforth Park NR all month (NHSN) with all other reports singles at Edlingham and Rothbury all month (TRD/JD), Ridley Stokoe, Bakethin and Kielder on 1st and 2nd, Belsay Hall on 2nd, Swallow Pond on 3rd, Swallowship Wood (Hexham) on 3rd and 29th, Ellington on 16th and 17th and Arcot Pond on 30th.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Highest counts of four or more at Staward Station on 17th (MJC/ASH/TW), four at Gosforth Park NR all month (NHSN) and three at Prestwick Carr on 2nd (PCF), Linden Hall (Longhorsley) on the same date (NFO), Kirkley Hall on 3rd (IK) and Valley Park (Cramlington) on 29th (DM). One to two were at 14 other widespread localities.

A Great Spotted Woodpecker
at Rothbury by Tim Dean

**Magpie** *Pica pica*

The gathering at Swallow Pond continues with 82 on 12th and 77 on 3rd (JPD) also at Big Waters with 58 on 10th and 44 on 4th (GB). 25 were at Red House Farm on 1st and 14 at Howdon on 14th (CB) with 11 at Jesmond Dene on 4th (MJCo) and three to ten at Hadston, Hauxley, Kitty Brewster, Slaley, Walbottle and Wideopen.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

A peak of four at Gosforth Park during the month (NHSN), three at Swallow Pond on 4th (JPD), Kilham on 31st (TRD) and two+ at Scotland Gate (SLB/MSK). Two were at Windmill Lane (Cramlington) and Ellington with singles at Arcot Hall GC, Hexham, Jesmond Dene, Rothbury and in the observer's garden at Beatty Avenue, South Gosforth.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Largest counts of 75 at Lesbury on 14th and 50 at Hexham GC on 8th (JMA) with six in the observer's garden at Walbottle on 31st (KR/LR) and two at Paddy Freeman's Playing Field on 4th (MJCo).

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

A large count of 130 at Derwent Reservoir on 8th (IFo), 50 at Tughall and 25 at Budle Bay on 14th with 25 at Tarsset on 28th. Rookeries with 40 apparently occupied nests at Warden on 23rd and eight at the Sun Hotel (Warkworth) on 14th (JMA).



Two corvids in March. Left: a Carrion Crow by Alan Jack and right: a Rook by Chris Barlow

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Counts of 40 at Town Moor (Newcastle) on 7th (GB) and Low Lights Car Park (North Shields) on 20th (SPP) with 21 at Prestwick Carr on 2nd, 14 at Druridge Pools on 6th, five at Jesmond Dene on 19th and three in the observer's garden at Walbottle on 10th.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

One was at Harper's Heugh (Budle Bay) on 17th (JD/RSF).

Raven *Corvus corax*

Four together at Allerhope Burn (Kidlandlee) on 5th (MHP) was the peak count with displaying pairs at East Kielder on 2nd (JPD) and Plenmeller Common on 8th (EC/JSB), two at Winter's Gibbet (Harwood Forest) on 2nd (STH), Langleeford (Harthope Valley) on 4th (TRD/JD) with singles seen at Plenmeller on 13th and East Kielder on 1st.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Two attended feeders regularly in the observer's garden at Walbottle (KR/LR) with two at Alnwick on 5th (per NNBC) and singles at Arcot Pond, Southfield Green, Valley Park, Dam Dykes, Windmill Lane (all Cramlington), Leazes Park (Newcastle), Pegswood and Prestwick Carr.



Our smallest species. A Goldcrest at Prestwick Carr on 22nd March by Peter Fletcher

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

More than 15 attended feeders at Gosforth Park (NHSN), six at Prestwick Carr on 5th, four at Jesmond Dene on 19th and two in the observer's garden at South Gosforth on 13th with two grey morph birds in the Gosforth Bridlepath area on 28th (MJC).

Great Tit *Parus major*

Counts of 20+ Gosforth Park (NHSN), eight at Prestwick Carr on 2nd (PCF), five at Jesmond Dene on 19th and two in the observer's garden at South Gosforth on 21st (MJCo).

A Great Tit at Howdon Wetland
by Colin Bradshaw

**Coal Tit** *Periparus ater*

Four was the peak count in an Old Hartley Garden during the month (RJP) with four at Jesmond Dene on 19th and two in the observer's garden at South Gosforth on 21st (MJCo).

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

A pair came to seed at Prestwick Carr all month with a singing bird on 30th (GB/PCF/BMo/JSB/EC) and presumably the same pair coming to garden feeders at Dinnington on 16th. Two were at Big Waters on 17th and Ellington on 31st with singles at all the above locations on many dates and at Valley Park (Cramlington), Holywell Dene, Linden Hall (Longhorsley), Lucker, Thrum Mill (Rothbury) and Scotland Gate.

A popular Willow Tit from Prestwick Carr
Photographed by Peter Fletcher
7th March

**Marsh Tit** *Poecile palustris*

Two were at Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth) on 3rd (GB), Weldon Bridge on 15th (MJC) and Linden Hall (Longhorsley) on 17th with singles at the latter location on many dates and at Whiteadder Water (Berwick), Scotland Gate and Battlesteads Hotel (Wark).

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

A large count of 40 at Greystead Farm (near Lanehead) on 29th (TRD), ten pairs at East Chevington on 30th (DM/STH/PJA), eight singing at Beacon Hill (Cramlington) on 24th, seven at Prestwick Carr on 16th, five at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 15th and one to four at six widely spread locations including a male singing on Hexhamshire Common in the snow 400m above sea level on 31st (MJC).

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Most of the larger 'tribes' had dispersed by mid-month, the largest gatherings being 12 at Ellington on 10th (TB) and a maximum of seven in an Old Hartley garden during the month (RJP). Six were at Alexandra Park (Cramlington) on 9th and six in a Walbottle garden included a pair gathering nest material by 24th. One to five were reported from a further ten localities.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

A singing bird at Linden Hall (Longhorsley) on 17th (NFO) may have been an over-wintering individual. One was at Killingworth Village on 27th (BMO), while reports of singles at Gosforth and Gosforth Park NR on 28th may have referred to the same bird (MJC/NHSN). Potential new arrivals were at East Chevington on 30th (PJA/DM/STH) and Arcot Pond and Big Waters on 31st (STH/per GB).

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

A female visited feeders in a Monkseaton garden throughout the month (AAM), as did a male at Heddon-on-the-Wall (JSB). An Alnwick garden attracted a male on at least four dates during the month (JMA) and a Gosforth garden held a female on 6th and a male on 14th (STE).

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulous*

Well reported across the south-east of the county, with the largest gatherings in the Ashington and Cramlington areas. The highest count was 65 at Ashington on 25th (TB); 20-43 were reported from here on a further eight dates from 10th-28th, mainly in the Wansbeck Business Park area. At Cramlington, 30 at Northburn on 1st increased to 40 by 17th and 30 were at North Shields on 1st. Elsewhere, 20-25 were noted at Jesmond, Preston, Seaton Delaval, Wallsend and West Monkseaton, 14 at Holywell Grange and West Hartford, six at Ellington and one at Tynemouth.



One of our most handsome visitors.
A Waxwing at Ashington on 21st March by Tim Dean

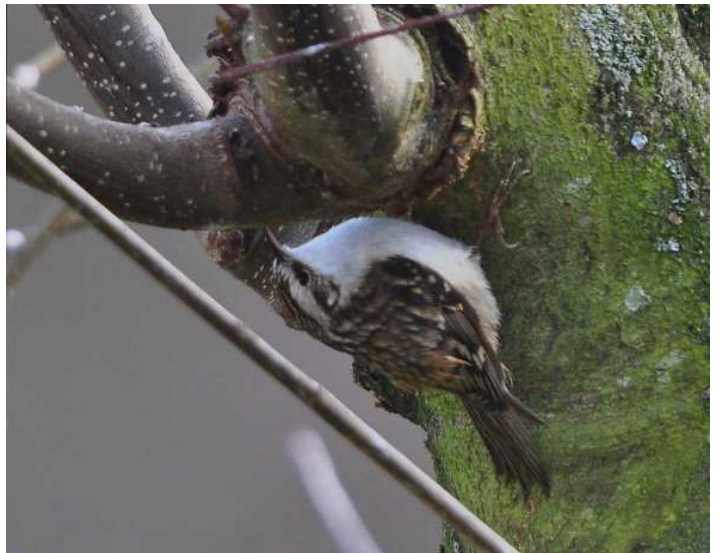
Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Three were noted at Belsay Hall, Gosforth Park NR and Humford Mill (Bedlington) and singles were in three areas of Jesmond Dene (Quarry, Shoe Tree and Heaton Park Wood). One to two were also reported from Arcot Pond, Hartford Bridge (Bedlington), Holywell Dene, Morpeth, Rothbury, Slaley Hall, Smalesmouth (Ridley Stokoe) and Valley Park (Cramlington). Display was noted at the last site by 24th.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Two were at Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth) on 3rd and singles at Holywell Dene, Prestwick Carr and Windmill Lane (Cramlington). A single in a Heddon-on-the-Wall garden throughout the month spent most of its time on the ground feeding among the soil (JSB)!

A Treecreeper in typical pose
in a Rothbury Garden
by Tim Dean

**Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Two were at Jesmond Dene on 24th and one at Kitty Brewster on 30th.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

By far the largest gathering was a roost in a Kingston Park garden which increased from 3,000 on 5th to 4,500 by 26th (SRB). Another roosting flock of 400 was at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 20th (EC) and roosts of 'many' were reported from Seahouses and Yearle. Some 300-350 were noted at Plenmeller Common on 29th, Plessey Woods on 4th and Prestwick Carr on 20th and 250 at Bells Farm (Cresswell) on 17th. Smaller numbers noted elsewhere included 100-150 at Big Waters, Derwent Reservoir and Swallow Pond and 40 at Linbriggs Farm (Upper Coquetdale).

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Six were found along a 1.5km stretch of the South Tyne at Featherstone on 8th (JSB/EC). Two pairs were noted in Holywell Dene during the month (RJP) and pairs were nest building at Benton Bank Bridge, Thrum Mill and West Holywell village. Two were on the Stocksfield Burn on 13th and singles at two sites in Jesmond Dene (Extension Wood and Fisherman's Lodge). Single were also reported from Deadwater Burn, Hartford Bridge (Bedlington), Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) and Warren Mill.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Light and steady passage was noted on most days at Holy Island; a more substantial exodus occurred on 16th when ca.200 moved off NE at sunset (IK). Six inches of snow cover at Slaley Hall concentrated 31 on apples put out in a garden on 25th (RMH); likewise up to 13 were attracted to a Walbottle garden during the month (KR/LR). Swallow Pond held 29 on 11th (JPD) and one to two were noted at Jesmond Dene, Kitty Brewster and South Gosforth. A total of four beached corpses were found along a 1.7 mile stretch of South Beach (Blyth) between 19th-29th (MHp).

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Swallow Pond attracted 100-220 from 12th-27th with a peak on the latter date (JPD) and at least 210 were at Grindon Lough on 7th (PRM). Elsewhere numbers were much lower with 96 at West Hartford on 4th and 80 at Backworth on 3rd; 50-60 were noted at Elsdon, Felton, Ford Moss and Pegswood and 20-44 at Corbridge, Gosforth Park NR, Linbriggs (Upper Coquetdale), Lowick, Newton Red House (Mitford), Plessey Woods and Prestwick Carr. Two to 12 were also reported from a further six localities, including a total of seven beached corpses found along a 1.7 mile stretch of South Beach (Blyth) between 24th-27th (MHp).

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Many birds were in song, including ten in village gardens at Holy Island on 17th (IK). Three to four singing males were noted at Eals Bridge (South Tyne), Hartford Bridge (Bedlington), Howden, Jesmond Dene and Wark (North Tyne) and one to two at Featherstone Bridge (South Tyne), Fulbeck (Morpeth) and Stannington.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Gosforth Park NR held at least 30 throughout the month and a peak of 100+ on 16th (NHSN). A sizeable flock of 85 was at Backworth on 3rd (CGK/GPK), 50 were at Plessey Woods on 4th and 40 at Arcot Pond on 31st; 35-36 were reported from Big Waters, Chugdon Wood (Ellington), Horncliffe and Jesmond Dene and 17 at Dinnington. One to ten were noted at a further four localities, including a total of two beached corpses found along a 1.7 mile stretch of South Beach (Blyth) between 26th-27th (MHp).

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Eight were noted at Gosforth Park NR during the month (NHSN) and a total of five from four areas in Jesmond Dene on 19th (MJCo). Four were noted at Linden Hall (Longhorsley) on 10th and two at Blindburn Farm (Upper Coquetdale) on 2nd and Newbiggin on 21st.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

One to three were reported from Jesmond Dene and gardens at South Gosforth and Walbottle.

A Robin
Howdon Wetland
by Colin Bradshaw

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*

A breeding plumage male was at Holy Island (Ouze) on 29th-30th (IK).

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Rather worryingly, given the nature of the weather in March, only four birds were found. A pair was feeding among the fishing sheds on Holy Island (Ouze) on 29th (IK), a female was at Warkworth Gut on 3rd (STH/IFo) and a male was at Warkworth Gut on 10th (NFO).



A Dunnock surveys Howdon Wetland. By Colin Bradshaw

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

Five along Gosforth Bridlepath on 28th was the month's highest count (MJC). One to four were also seen at Holywell Dene, Jesmond Dene (Newcastle), Northburn (Cramlington), South Gosforth and a Walbottle garden.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

The only records of the month were 25 at Battlesteads Hotel (Wark) on 27th (CB) and a pair nest building at Monkseaton on 27th (MSH).



A House Sparrow at the seaside. A Seahouses photograph by Chris Barlow

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

35 were noted at Holywell Pond on 6th (SPP) whilst 28 were at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 17th (TB). Ten to 14 were seen at Battlesteads Hotel (Wark), Cresswell Pond, Red House Farm Pond, Spindlestone and a Walbottle garden on various dates. One to eight were seen at a further 18 sites throughout the month including one at Arcot Lane which was the first at the site for 13 years.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Three at Jesmond Dene (Newcastle) on 24th was the highest total for the month (MJCo). One to two were at a further 18 sites during the month.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

15 were at Lynemouth Flash on 4th (AT), five were at Prestwick Carr on 29th (PCF) and four at Big Waters on 17th (GB).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

A flock of 40 passage birds was in a field at Big Waters on 28th (AJJ per GB). 12 were noted at East Chevington on 30th (DM/STH/PJA) and one to ten were at Arcot Pond, Dinnington, Fourstones, Harwood Forest, Gosforth, Hexamshire Common, Newbiggin, Newcastle Town Moor, Pegswood Community Park, Prestwick Carr, Staward Station, Straight Lonnen (Holy Island), West Hartford and Whitelea (Cramlington) throughout the month.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Ten were back on breeding areas at Sandon Bay (Holy Island) after being absent since late 2012 on 9th (IK). Boulmer Beach held seven on 23rd (JR) whilst one to two were at Blyth Harbour, Cocklawburn Dunes, Craster, Lynemouth Flash, Seahouses and Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) throughout the month.

A Rock Pipit at Seahouses
by Chris Barlow on 29th March

**Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs*

12 throughout the month at Gosforth Park was surprisingly the month's highest count (NHSN). Eight were in a Walbottle garden on 10th (KR/LR) and seven were at Jesmond Dene (Newcastle) on 4th (MJCo).

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

40 at Aydon on 12th was by far the highest total for the month (RM/MB). One to nine were seen at Bilton Mill, Branton, Castle Terrace (Berwick), Featherstone, Gosforth Park, Heddon-On-The-Wall, Howdon, Longhoughton, Rothbury, Slaley Hall and Yearle throughout the month.

A male Brambling
Howdon Wetland
by Colin Bradshaw

**Greenfinch** *Carduelis chloris*

23 were seen daily in a Walbottle garden on 17th (KR/LR). 15 were at Slaley on 24th (RMH), nine at Jesmond Dene (Newcastle) on 19th (MJCo) and singles at Holywell Dene throughout the month (RJP) and South Gosforth on 13th (MJCo).

A male Greenfinch
Howdon Wetland
by Colin Bradshaw

**Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis*

40 roosted at Cobalt Business Park on 7th (CGK) whilst 40 were at Seaton Sluice on 8th (DLo). 28 were in Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 18th (MNC) and 22 were seen daily in a Walbottle garden on 17th (KR/LR). One to seven were also seen at Holywell Dene, Jesmond Dene (Newcastle), Prestwick Carr, South Gosforth and Southfield Green (Cramlington) throughout the month.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

63 were on feeders at Battlesteads Hotel (Wark) on 29th (CB) whilst 25 visited feeders in a Wallsend garden on 1st (JPD). One to 20 were at a further 24 sites throughout the month.



Two handsome finches, left: a Redpoll and right: a Siskin
at a feeder in a Rothbury garden by Tim Dean

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

40 coasted south in small parties at Bamburgh on 28th (BRS). 30 were at Aydon on 29th (RB/MB) and 25 at Whorral Bank (Morpeth) on 25th (TB). One to six were also seen throughout the month at Cocklawburn, East Chevington and Northumberlandia (Cramlington).

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

The only record was of 52 at Hemscotthill Links on 9th (JL). Several of these birds were colour-ringed and details have been submitted.

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*

60 were feeding in Alders at Whemley (Longhorsley) on 11th (AB/LB). One to ten were at a further nine sites throughout the month.

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

12 were seen frequently around the south east edge of the nature reserve at Choppington Woods throughout the month (SLB/MSK). One to six were seen at a further nine sites throughout the month.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

The month's highest count was of six including three male and three female birds at Scotland Gate throughout the month (SLB/MSK). One to four were seen at a further 13 sites throughout the month.



A pair of Bullfinches in a Woolsington Garden
by John Littleton

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

All records for the month were of singles at Blyth Harbour, Holy Island and fly-overs at St.Mary's Island and Wetland throughout the month. An inland record involved a single watched for 25 minutes at Newcastle Town Moor on 7th (GB). A bird was also present at this site in October 2012.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

An encouraging total of 70 birds were at Whittle Dene on 14th (SR). 40 were at Spindlestone on 16th (BMo), 35 at Cresswell Pond on 31st (TB) and 21 at Corbridge on 23rd (AJH). One to ten were at a further five sites throughout the month.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza Schoeniclus*

12 were back in breeding areas at Chare Ends (Holy Island) after being absent since the turn of the year on 17th (IK). One to seven were at a further ten sites throughout the month including a striking partial albino type at Woodhorn Flashes on 30th (GB/LAR). The bird was noted as having white wing tips, tail and head with buff-brown on the mantle.



A female Reed Bunting
at Eachwick a first sighting in the location
30th March by Chris Barlow

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

One was found at Airy Holm Reservoir near Shotleyfield on 9th (IFo).

Hybrids**Canada Goose x Swan Goose** *Branta canadensis x Anser cygnoides*

A hybrid thought to match this pairing was seen at Leazes Park on 25th (DM).

Birds of Unknown Origin**Parakeet sp** *Psittacula sp*

Three flying over calling at Newcastle Town Moor on 27th were thought to be probably Ring-necked Parakeets (GB).

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Bamburgh Ringing Station, Berwick Wildlife Group, Natural History Society of Northumbria, North Northumberland Bird Club, Northern Experience Wildlife Tours, Seaton Sluice Watch Tower..

Apologies for any accidental omissions

WEATHER

1st to 6th: It was generally dry on 1st. With high pressure dominating, it was dry with sunny spells from 2nd until 5th; frosty at night, but increasingly mild by day.

7th to 14th: It became more unsettled on 7th, with rain spreading from the south. Rain in southern areas, heavy at times, spread eastwards on 8th. On 9th a band of rain, sleet and snow affected central and eastern areas, with an easterly wind. The 10th was much colder than of late, with a strong east wind and snow showers for eastern areas. It remained cold on 11th with strong north-east winds and snow showers. Still cold, with scattered coastal snow showers on 12th. 13th was another cold day with frequent snow showers. The 14th began with temperatures dipping.

15th to 21st: It was milder but wetter on 15th with rain for many areas. A band of rain cleared from eastern areas on the afternoon of 16th. The 17th started with a band of rain, sleet and snow for central and southern areas spreading from the west, clearing in the afternoon. The 18th was mostly cloudy, with patchy rain in the north. Any showers on 19th were confined to the coasts, inland areas remaining generally dry with sunny spells though cool. It was generally overcast on 20th with light rain for central and eastern areas, and again cool. A bright start for most on 21st, but rain spread northwards accompanied by strengthening south-easterly winds.

22nd to 31st: The 22nd felt bitterly cold, with strong south-east winds and a band of rain and snow spreading from the west giving significant depths on higher ground. Snow continued in northern areas on 23rd and it remained bitterly cold, with day-time temperatures struggling to rise above 0° C. The snow was restricted to eastern areas on 24th and became lighter and patchier. Winds eased slightly but it remained cold. There were light and scattered snow showers on 25th in the north and north-east, with other areas brighter but remaining cold. Snow showers continued for northern and north-eastern areas on 26th and 27th in a strong easterly wind. Showers were much fewer on 28th and 29th; it remained cold with an easterly breeze but more areas saw the sun. A few more snow showers for eastern coastal areas on 30th, but remaining areas dry with sunny spells. The 31st was another dry, bright but cold day.

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 (Avocet to Godwit) Ian Forsyth (Turnstone 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 (Dun-nock 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 Mail 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

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. Please continue to submit any new content for the website to the main club email address at ntbcorg@gmail.com

NTBC SIGHTINGS PAGE

The club sightings web page gives listings of birds seen locally. Adding a sighting is simple. NTBC members who would like to contribute and post sightings to the club sightings page, which can be done via email, should send a request to ntbcorg@gmail.com specifying the email address they would like to use to submit posts from.

SEABIRD WRECK

Following surveys by NEBBS Group members, and other parties, in recent weeks the following auk corpses have been recorded in Northeast England during the period 23rd March to 29th April 2013:

Puffin 1,362

Guillemot 394

Razorbill 217

Little Auk 3

This very large seabird wreck has come about since strong easterly winds and heavy seas developed over a period of days in late March. Puffins have been particularly badly hit - we have photographed over 200 for correct ageing by Prof M P Harris and to augment his studies on wing moult. We have frozen around 50 fresh puffin corpses for possible future investigations. Some of these auks carried leg rings – a number of Puffins were ringed on the Farne Islands.

These birds were recorded in our NE England recording area i.e. along the North Sea shores of counties Northumberland, Tyne & Wear, Durham and Cleveland. The corpses recorded in the most recent weeks have almost all originated from the episode at end of March (i.e. are mostly 'old' corpses).

Please continue to keep me updated concerning your beach surveys.

Dan Turner,
NEBBS Group Coordinator

BINDING GALLOWAY & MEEK

Many Club members will possess a copy of the county avifauna published in three parts during 1978-83 and the Supplement which was published covering 1978-84. Last year I came across a very good and reasonably priced book-binder in Leeds who has since bound four copies for myself and other local contacts. I shall be dropping off further material at the book-binders on the 19th July and would be prepared to arrange binding of further copies of Galloway & Meek for any member at an all-in cost of £35; this includes drop off in Leeds and return post to my house. As an aside, if any Club member has a spare copy of the Supplement I should be very pleased to hear from you.

In addition, I have also started 'trading' in local and county bird report (all counties) and if any member would like to dispose of/sell any reports or seek out that missing report please don't hesitate to get in touch for a copy of my catalogue and details.

Cheers

Steve Holliday

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A Shag in Blyth Harbour
29th March by Peter Fletcher

COASTAL WeBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

MARCH 2013

[illegible]

Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

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

Bulletin 2013 No 4

MONTHLY SUMMARY – APRIL

15th June 2013



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Great White Egret

Spotted Crake

Crane

Avocet

Pectoral Sandpiper

Iceland Gull

Glaucous Gull

Hooded Crow

Black Redstart

Blue-headed Wagtail

Ashy-headed Wagtail

White Wagtail

Four still present at Woodhorn and a single still at Grindon Lough.

The redhead remained at East Chevington until 6th.

Peak count was 18 in seven hours on 27th at Seaton Sluice.

One wintering bird remained at Gosforth Park.

One at Prestwick Carr on 27th.

Migrant at Druridge Pools showing well at times on 23rd and 24th.

Six flew N over Backworth on 21st and three over Fenwick on 17th.

Up to six birds present at breeding site.

Early migrants at Hoppen Kiln Flash and Backworth / Holywell.

First-winter at Scotswood on 14th.

One N from Seaton Sluice watch tower on 8th.

Singles on Holy Island and Low Newton.

Singles at Old Hartley and Whitley Bay cemetery.

Singles at Bothal Pond and St Mary's.

One at South Newsham flash, Blyth on 28th.

Large passage this Spring with groups of 30+.



A Willow Warbler returns

Photographed at Hexham on 20th April by Adriana Buskin

COMMITTEE NEWS

Howard Embleton obituary

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 2010 page 229.

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



A Mute Swan at Killingworth Pond starts a nest
by Adriana Buskin on 7th April

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Killingworth Lake held 108 on 14th (LJM), 101 were at Capheaton Lake on 13th (STE), 50 at QEII CP on 28th (DMT), 24-27 at Big Waters, Buston Links and the Tweed Estuary, and nine at Gosforth Park NR. One to four were at 14 other sites (some on nests), including one drifting S on the sea off Seaton Sluice on 13th (SSWT). Two dead birds were found under overhead lines near Cresswell Pond on 11th (STH).

Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus*

An adult was with Whooper Swans at Alnmouth on 3rd (PRF) and 5th (JSB).

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Eight flew N at Rothbury on 1st (TRD/JD). Nine were at Hartburn Reservoir on 2nd (GB/LAR), seven (adults) near Alnmouth on 5th (JSB), four at Catcleugh Reservoir on 20th (MD), and one to two at Capheaton, QEII CP, Ridley Cairn (Otterburn Training Area) and the Tweed Estuary.

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

330 flew N at Ord Moor (Billylaw) on 7th (MHu). About 1,000 were at Doddington on 20th (JD), 600 at West Stobswood Pool on 4th (MSH), 500 near Hauxley Reserve on 19th (EC/JSB), 200 at Cresswell on 7th (TRD/JD), and 70 at Woodhorn. One to six were at four further sites.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

Four adults of the Greenland *flavirostris* race were at Woodhorn Flashes on 7th (STH) and one of the same race was at Grindon Lough on 3rd (SJH).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Peak counts were 120 at East Holywell on 7th (MNC), 109 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 5th (SR), 51-53 at Backworth and Slaley, and 13-17 at Capheaton, Grindon Lough and Woodhorn Flashes. Two to seven were at Bakethin Reservoir, Cocklawburn, East Ord, Haughton Strother GP and the Tweed Estuary. Nests with eggs were found at Haughton Strother GP on 1st and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 8th (MR).

Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens*

On 20th, four white-phase birds were at Bell's Pond, Cresswell (PCF), Druridge Pools-East Chevington (TRD/JD/JL) and flying N at Ross Back Sands (TBr).

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

58 were at Capheaton on 2nd (MSH), 38 at Grindon Lough on 3rd (SJH), 25 at Newcastle Leazes Park on 29th (DM), and 18-20 at Bywell Haughs and Linton Ponds. One to eight were also at Arcot Pond, the *Beehive* Flash (Earsdon), Cheswick, Holy Island, Scaup Burn (Kielder; with nest) and Wallington.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Singles were at Capheaton on 2nd (MSH) and Hauxley Reserve on three dates between 15th-23rd (JPD/TRD/JD/ASJ).

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

About 30 dark-bellied *bernicla* race birds remained at Holy Island until around 20th (IK).

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was 15 N and ten S, including seven N on 13th (SSWT). Largest counts were 11 at Holy Island on 19th (PRM), four pairs displaying at Hauxley Reserve on 10th (STE), five to six at Howdon Wetland, Lynemouth wind farm, Scotswood and West Stobswood Pool, and three to four at Elswick and West Hartford. One to two were also at Backworth, the *Beehive* Flash (Earsdon), Big Waters, Breamish Valley, Castle Island, Cheswick, Cocklawburn, Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother GP, Hazlerigg, Hoppen Kiln, South Newsham, Todburn (Slaley) and Warkworth.

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

Single pairs were at Redmire on 6th (JR) and Ridley Stokoe on 13th (AJH), and a drake was at Ridley Stokoe-Smalesmouth on 1st and 18th (TRD/JD/JR). In the south-east, a drake was at Wallsend Burn (damaged breast feathers) on 1st and a different drake (pristine) at Swallow Pond on 15th (JPD).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Five flew N at Seaton Sluice between 1st-6th (PRM). Peak counts were 250+ at Derwent Reservoir on 6th (JL), 166 at Big Waters on 2nd (AJJ per GB), 166 at Cresswell Pond on 12th (CDH), 150 at Bothal Pond on 1st (IRD) dropping to 63 by 12th (SJH), 99-109 at Capheaton and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and 33-66 at Gosforth Park NR, Grindon Lough, Derwent Reservoir, Hazlerigg and West Stobswood Pool. Few were left by the end of the month.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

One flew N at Seaton Sluice on 8th (SSWT). The largest concentrations were 35 at Hauxley Reserve on 23rd (TRD/JD), 19 at Pegswood Community Park on 2nd (AT), 18 at Holywell Pond on 9th (MHP), 15 at East Chevington on 5th (TRD), 13 at the Mount Pleasant Farm area of the Blyth Estuary on 14th (a high count for the site; LJM), ten at Big Waters, six to seven at Cresswell Pond and Druridge Pools, and four at the *Beehive* Flash (Earsdon), Castron and, more unusually, at the Wansbeck Estuary on 6th (GB). One to two were also at Arcot Pond, Capheaton, the *Drift Inn* pools (Seaton Burn), Gosforth Park NR, Howdon Wetland, Low Newton Scrape, QEII CP, West Hartford, West Stobswood Pool and Whittle Dene Wood.

Teal *Anas crecca*

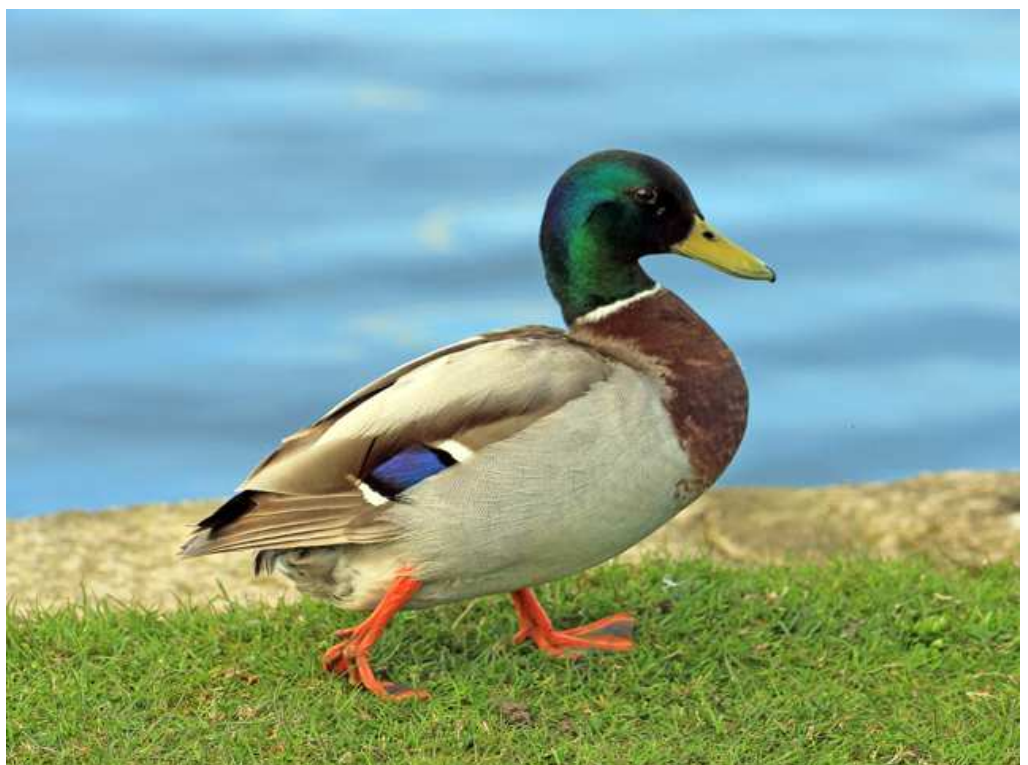
142 were at Grindon Lough on 3rd (SJH) and 80 there on 25th (PRM), 127 at Hoppen Kiln on 19th (PRM), 120 at Howdon Wetland (no date; CB), 100 at Holy Island 'rocket field' on 12th dropping to 20 by 26th and two by 30th (IK), 36-53 at Elswick, Hoppen Kiln, West Hartford and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and ten to 24 at Arcot, Backworth, Cresswell and Middle Ord Ponds, the *Beehive* Flash (Earsdon), Big Waters (some display), Capheaton, Gosforth Park NR, Haughton Strother GP and Prestwick Carr. One to eight were at eight further sites.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Newcastle Leazes Park held a peak of 45 on 2nd (DM), 42 were at the Tweed Estuary on 12th (MHu), 31 at Grindon Lough on 3rd (SJH), and 15 at Byker. The first broods of the year were noted:

A female was on a nest at Jesmond Dene on 28th (MJCo).

A drake Mallard
Killingworth Pond
7th April by Adriana Buskin



Mallard nest records;

Locality	No. broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Byker	2	12 (6,6)	DM. Tiny ducklings on 16th
Gosforth Park NR	1	14	NHSN. On 24th
Newcastle Civic Centre	1	11	DM. Tiny ducklings on 8th
Swallow Pond	1	10	JPD. On 20th
Newcastle Leazes Park	1	4	DM. Tiny ducklings on 29th

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Single pairs were noted at East Chevington on 2nd (PCF), and Cresswell Pond (TF/JFa) and Druridge Pools on 7th (TRD/JD).

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

A drake at Druridge Pools on 15th (ASJ) was followed by single drakes at East Chevington on 18th (TBr/MHp/TRC), again at Druridge Pools between 19th-21st (TF/JFa/NFO/JR *et al.*) and Cresswell Pond on 20th (TRD/JD/JL).

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

A pair flew S at Seaton Sluice on 17th (SSWT). Druridge Pools attracted a peak of 18 (14 drakes) on 5th (TRD), dropping to 12 by 7th and two by 23rd (TRD/JD). Six were at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN), six at Cresswell Pond on 13th (JL), six at Monks' House Pool on 23rd (MHu), and three to four at East Chevington, Low Newton Scrape and Swallow Pond. One to two were at Big Waters, Cocklawburn and West Allotment Ponds, Holy Island, Newbiggin, Prestwick Carr, and West Stobswood Pool.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Peak counts were 13 at Killingworth Lake on 14th (LJM), 13 (11 drakes) at Swallow Pond on 15th (JPD), 12 at Big Waters on 5th (GB), six to eight at Bothal, Hadrian's and West Allotment Ponds (JPD/TRD/CGK) and Gosforth Park NR (NHSN), and four to five at Duke's Pond and Linton Ponds (IRD/JPD). Singles were also at Arcot Pond, Derwent Reservoir, East Chevington, Hauxley Reserve and Longhirst Flash.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

A pair flew S at Seaton Sluice on 17th (SSWT). Killingworth Lake proved popular, holding 96 on 14th (LJM). Peak counts elsewhere were 34 at Hartburn Reservoir on 2nd (GB/LAR), 31 at Grindon Lough on 17th (SJH), 30 at Swallow Pond on 14th (JPD), 24-28 at Big Waters, Capheaton, Newcastle Exhibition and Leazes Parks, and 11-19 at Haughton Strother GP, Jesmond Dene, Linton and West Allotments Ponds, and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. One to eight were at nine localities.



A pair of Tufted Duck
Marden Quarry
by Adriana Buskin
13th April

Scaup *Aythya marila*

A drake was with Goldeneyes at West Ord on 13th (MHu) and a drake was at Bothal Pond on 23rd (TF/JFa).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

At Seaton Sluice, a total of 104 flew N and 69 S during the month (SSWT). Flock sizes were small, peaks being 50 at Amble Harbour on 30th (JL), 46 at Berwick Pier on 7th (MHu), 32 at Berwick North Shore on 11th (MHu), 15-18 at Blyth South Harbour, Seaton Sluice and the Tweed Estuary, and eight at the Tyne Estuary-North Shields Fish Quay.



A drake Eider in Seahouses harbour
Jonathon Farooqi on 2nd April

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

A drake flew N at Seaton Sluice on 5th (SSWT), 20 were at Stag Rocks on 8th (BMo) falling to one by 30th (TRD/JD), six (in pairs) were at Holy Island on 13th (IK) and two on 21st (SR/AH), four at the Tweed Estuary on 12th (MHu), and one to two at the Farne Islands, Seahouses and the Tweed Estuary. Two were at Cresswell Pond on 1st and 21st-22nd (IRD/TF/JFa *et al.*) with one on seven further dates between 5th-27th, and singles were at Druridge Pools on 2nd (GB) and the Blyth Estuary on 14th (LJM).

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was 145 N and 24 S, including 78 N on 27th (SSWT). Peak flock sizes were 60 at Holy Island on 27th (IK), 42 at Cocklawburn on 30th (MHu), 40 at Stag Rocks on 1st (TRD/JD), 26 at Berwick Pier and ten to 12 at Cheswick Black Rocks and Spittal Bay. One to six were also off Low Newton, Seaton Sluice and Snab Point. A drake swam upstream at Kitty Brewster bridge on the Blyth Estuary on 14th (LJM), a drake was at Amble Harbour on 20th and 30th (JL), and a duck presented an odd sight well inland at Bakethin Reservoir on 18th (TRD/JD).

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

The sole report was of two drakes N at Seaton Sluice on 2nd (SSWT).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Seven flew S at Coquet Island on 14th (JPD) and one flew S at Seaton Sluice on 17th (SSWT). Peak counts were 66 at the Tweed Estuary on 2nd (MHu), 51 at East Chevington on 5th (TRD), 16-17 at Killingworth Lake and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and ten to 15 at Bolam Lake, Branton GP, Caistron, Capheaton Lake, Grindon Lough and West Ord. Counts of six to nine came from Bakethin Reservoir, Broomlee Lough and Low Newton, and one to four at Big Waters, Branton GP, Budle Bay, Cresswell and Swallow Ponds, Derwent Reservoir, Gosforth Park NR, Newton Pool, Widdrington Moor and Wylam.

Smew *Mergellus albellus*

A 'redhead' was at Druridge Pools on 5th (SRB/TRD) and East Chevington on 6th (NFO).

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

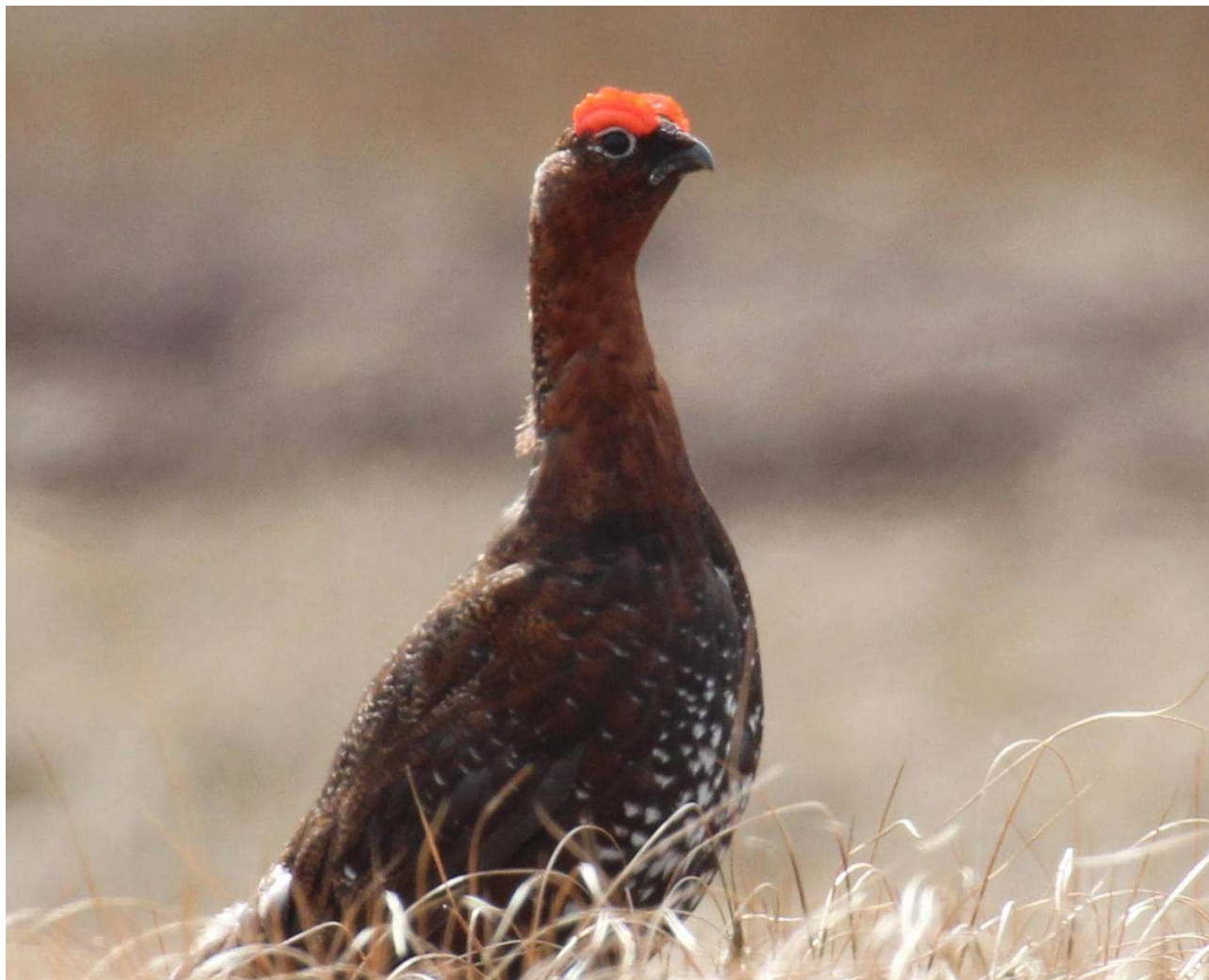
Four flew N and two S at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT). Peak gatherings were 30 at Budle Bay on 26th (AB/LB), 18 at East Chevington on 13th (MSK/NEWT), eight at Cresswell Pond on 14th (IRD), eight at Holy Island on 19th (PRM), and three to five at Castle Island, Cheswick Black Rocks and the Tweed Estuary. One to two were also at Boulmer, Druridge Pools, Hauxley Reserve and Stag Rocks. One was at Widdrington Moor Lake on 13th (JL).

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

At Seaton Sluice two flew N on 27th and one S on 8th (SSWT). A total of 33 (18 drakes) were on the River Tyne at Wylam on 4th (SAS), six were at West Ord on 25th (MHu), five at Wark on 23rd (PRM), and three to four at Airy Holm Reservoir, Broomlee Lough, Castron, Lewisburn, Nether Warden (River North Tyne) and Wark. One to two were at Alwin Valley, Bakethin and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, Barrow Burn, Big Waters, Carshope, Cocklawburn Pond, Hartford Bridge, Rothbury and Thrum Mill. A drake was begging for food with domestic ducks at Rothbury on 5th (JD).

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

Few were reported this month with a maximum count of six at Hepple Whitefield on 11th. Five were in the Harthope Valley on 12th and two at Gowk Hill (Rothbury) on 20th (TRD/JD).



A Red Grouse on Hexhamshire moors
by Peter Tapsell on 29th April

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

The peak count was seven males at Swinhope Shield on 14th (ASH/AN). Five (two males) were in South Tynedale and four (two males) were in Allendale on 19th (MSK/NEWT). Three (two males) were at Meadow Cottage (Allenheads) and two females were at Rowley Burn on 28th.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

The peak count was 13 between Brandon-Ingram (Breamish Valley) on 30th (MRS). Eight were at Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay) on 30th (MNC) and five were nearby at Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene) on 16th (RJP). Four were at Heighley Gate (Morpeth) on 2nd (NFO). One to two were at Acomb, Cronkley (Derwent Reservoir), Ellingham, Holystone Common, Matfen, St John Lee (Acomb) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

The peak counts were six at Swallow Pond on 10th (JPD) and Old Hartley on 25th (MNC) with four at Newbiggin on 17th (AT). One to three were noted at Arcot Lane, Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay), Cresswell and Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Fenham-le-Moor, Prestwick Carr, Rowley Burn and Seaton Point (Boulmer).

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

One male and five females frequented a Walbottle garden throughout the month (KR/LR). Singles were at Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene) and Leazes Park (Newcastle). A female was seen sauntering across the Great North Road near Northern Rugby Club (Gosforth) on 29th!

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

At Seaton Sluice 57 hours of sea-watching counted 41 N and 30 S. These were again below average numbers for the time of year (SSWT). Singles flew N at Hauxley on 21st and St Mary's Island on 30th. Six were in Alnmouth Bay on 30th (JL) and four off Ross Back Sands on 20th (TBr). Offshore one to three were noted at Berwick Pier, Blyth Harbour, Cocklawburn, Druridge Bay, East Chevington, Holy Island, St Mary's Island, Seaton Sluice, Snab Point, Stag Rocks and the Tweed Estuary.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

A single flew N at Seaton Sluice on 8th (SSWT).

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

The only movement of note was at Seaton Sluice where 25/hour flew N on 27th (SSWT). Only small numbers had returned to breeding sites with peak counts of 30 on the Farne Islands on 19th (TRD) and 26 in Coves Bay (Holy Island) on 27th (IK). Eight pairs were on Whitley Bay cliffs on 2nd (JMA) and six pairs at Bamburgh Castle on 1st (DM). One to three were noted at Berwick North Shore, Seaton Sluice and Stag Rocks.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

Eighteen flew N in seven hours at Seaton Sluice on 27th (SSWT).

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

At the Farne Islands 150 flew N on 19th (TRD), whilst at Seaton Sluice 75 flew N in one hour at Seaton Sluice on 27th (SSWT). At Stag Rocks 25 flew S on 8th (BMo). 500 followed fishing boats at Seaton Sluice. One to three were at Boulmer and East Chevington.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

At Seaton Sluice eight flew N and six S in three hours on 17th (SSWT). The peak counts were 43 at Blyth South Harbour on 5th (STH), 32 at the new roost at New Water Haugh (Tweed Estuary) on 28th (MHu) and 21 at North Shields Fish Quay on 10th (DMT). Inland 11 were at Big Waters on 1st (GB) and Derwent Reservoir on 22nd (IFo) and nine at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 1st (SR). Eight were at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 21st and four at Capheaton Lake on 13th. One to two were noted at Arcot Pond, Holywell Dene, Jesmond Dene, Newcastle Business Park, Tweed Estuary and Wark.

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

At Seaton Sluice 14 flew N from 19th-21st (SSWT). At least 200 were present on the Farne Islands on 19th (TRD). Five, including White LDT ringed as a chick on the Isle of May on 4th June 2003 and recorded at this site every year since, were at Blyth South Harbour on 5th (STH). Four were at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 21st (MHu). One to three were noted at Boulmer, Seahouses, Stag Rocks, Tweed Estuary and the Tyne Estuary.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

An elusive bird remained at Gosforth Park NR being seen on several dates including 15th/21st (NHSN).

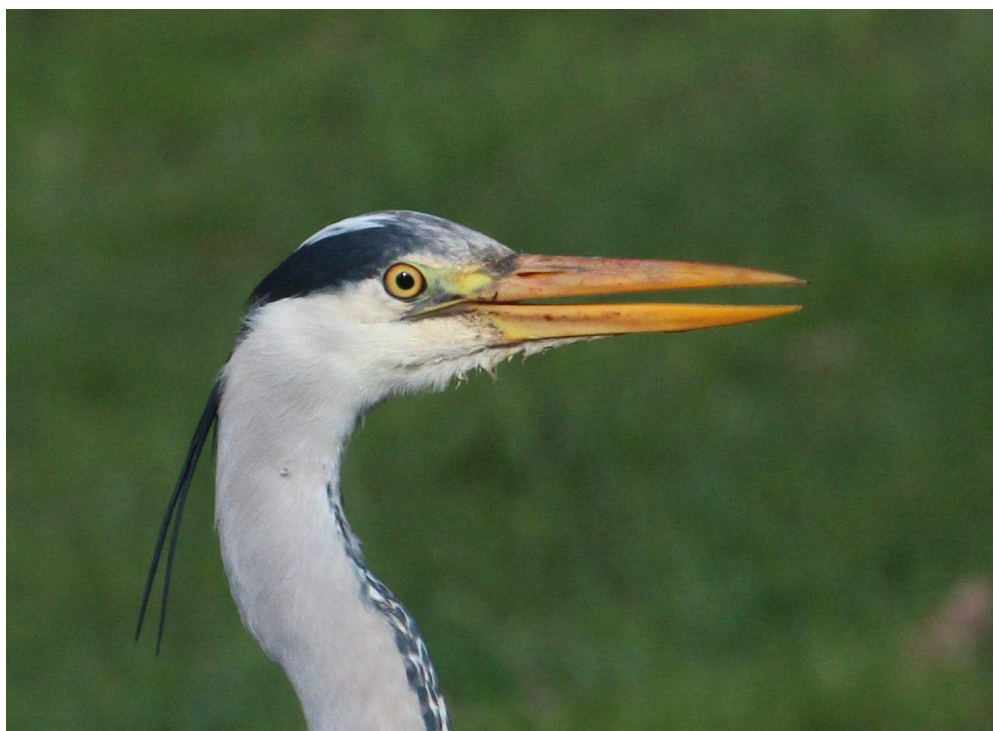
Great White Egret *Ardea alba*

One visited Prestwick Carr on 27th (TRD/JD *et al.*).

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

The peak counts were nine (six nests) at Howdon Wetland NR on 5th (CB) and six at Gosforth Park NR throughout the month (NHSN) and in the Tweed Estuary on 12th (MHu). Four were at Big Waters on 20th and three at Longhirst Flash on 12th. One to two were noted at Arcot Pond, Holy Island, Holywell Dene, Warkworth Weir, Whitehouse (Slaley) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

A Grey Heron on alert
a Tranwell Woods garden
by Paul Tapsell
18th April



Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

The peak counts were nine at Swallow Pond on 7th (JPD), six at Gosforth Park NR all month (NHSN) and at Linton Ponds on 12th (CDH) and four at Shield-on-the Wall (MRS) and Capheaton Lake (STE) on 13th. Three were at Arcot Pond on 6th and Big Waters on 7th. Two were noted at Bothal Pond, Holy Island Lough and Laverock Hall Farm Pond (Blyth). Singles were at Bamburgh, Caistron, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Nelly's Moss Lakes (Craggside) and Rothley Lakes.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

The peak count was six at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 5th/8th (SR/MR). Three were at East Chevington on 5th/23rd (TRD/JD), Derwent Reservoir on 13th (IFo) and Bothal Pond on 30th (TRD/JD). Two were at Big Waters on 1st (GB). A pair was incubating eggs at Killingworth Lake on 14th but abandoned the nest and was re-nesting by 27th (LJM/BMo). Singles were at Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield), Cresswell Pond, Horncliffe and Swallow Pond.

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

The peak count was 16 in full breeding plumage on the sea off The Heugh and St Cuthbert's Island (Holy Island) on 13th (IK). Two were with Common Scoter at Seaton Sluice on 26th (DLo). Singles were in Budle Bay on 9th, at Ross Back Sands on 20th and inland at Swallow Pond on 24th.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

Two pairs frequented a confidential site in South Northumberland from 20th. Single pairs were noted at two other sites, one in the south and one in the south west from 7th.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

There were five sightings this month with singles at Low Waskerley on 5th (IFo), over Newcastle Dental School on 7th (SLB/MSK), Wark (N Tyne) on 14th (PRM), near Blanchland on 24th (JMA) and at Morpeth on 27th (JFa).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Up to three birds were at East Chevington during the month (PCF/TF/JFa *et al.*) and single birds were noted at Druridge Pools on 5th and 21st (TRD/TF/JFa) and at South Newsham Flash (Blyth) on 24th (MHp).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Females were noted at one site on 5th and 17th (PCF) and at another site on 17th (ID/KD); a male was noted flying N on 18th at a confidential site (*per* RWM) and a male was noted in the north of the County on 19th and 20th (SR/IK).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Four birds were at one site on 20th (ASJ) with a male seen there on the 7th (IK), two birds were seen in the Kielder area on 20th (MSK/NEWT) and a single bird was noted there on 3rd (DLo).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

A pair was at Scotland Gate throughout the Month (SLB/MSK). Three birds were seen at Swallow Pond on 7th and 13th (JPD) and two birds were at Shiremoor on 1st (CGK), Monkseaton (Whitley Bay) on 3rd (MSH), Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 24th (GB) and at Eachwick on 28th (CDB). Single birds were noted at Bedlington, Cramlington, Harthope Valley, Hauxley NWT, Hexham, and Holywell Dene and at South Gosforth.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Eight birds were seen along the Kielder Forest Drive on 20th (MSK/NEWT) and six birds were up in the air together at Kielder on 3rd (DLo). Four birds were at Prestwick Carr on 12th (PCF) and at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 27th (SR) and three birds were at Longhorsley on 4th (PCF). One to two birds were at 18 sites during the month.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetuss*

A single bird was back at the Kielder nest site on 1st (ASH) and two birds were seen on 13th at Kielder Water (AJH). Single birds were seen at Kielder on 18th (TRD/JD), Bakethin Reservoir on 20th (MSK/NEWT), at a confidential site on 13th (MRS) and at Holy Island on 19th & 25th (PRM/SJH).

Kestrel *Falco tinninculus*

A pair was at Low Carritheth (Hesleyside) on 1st (JR), and two birds were at Linshiels on 4th (JMA). Single birds were recorded from a further 17 sites including a bird mobbing a Red Kite near Blanchland on 24th (JMA).

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Only one record this month of a male seen at Clifton (Morpeth) on 11th (IRD).

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Two birds were present on Holy Island until 14th with a single seen there on 21st (IK *et al.*) and other singles were at East Chevington on 3rd (STE), Swallow Pond on 11th (JPD), Shiremoor on 12th (CGK), Holywell Pond on 21st (MHp) and Druridge Pools on 23rd (MSK/NEWT). Single birds were also seen at two other sites.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Up to four were again seen or heard at Druridge Pools on 25th (JPD) and two pairs were at Gosforth Park NR throughout the month. Three birds were calling at Prestwick Carr on 2nd (PCF) and two were at a site in the SE of the County on 6th (DM). Single birds were at Backworth, Big Waters, Brunswick Green (Wideopen), Cresswell Pond, Hauxley, Jesmond Dene, Pegswood Community Park, Swallow Pond and West Hartford.

Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana*

A single bird was seen at a site in the south-east of the County on 23rd and 24th (TRD/JD)

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

24 birds were at Swallow Pond on 1st (JPD), six were at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 22nd (DM), two were at Jesmond Dene on 7th (MJCo), Arcot Pond and Wallington on 29th (DM/CDB) and singles at Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 11th (DM) and Belsay Hall on 20th (KR/LR)

Coot *Fulica atra*

Arcot Pond had the highest counts which peaked at 32 on 6th (DM/STH), Big Waters had 16 birds on 5th (GB) and 10 were at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 22nd (DM). Four pairs were at Middle Ord Pond (Berwick) on 13th (MHu); two were at Monks' House Pool on 1st (DM), Belsay Hall on 20th (KR/LR), Laverock Hall Farm pond on 23rd, which were feeding young in the nest (LJM), and at Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 23rd (DM).

Crane *Grus grus*

At least two birds were heard calling as they flew N over Wark (N Tyne) at 23.15h on 13th (PRM), three birds were at Fenwick (Stamfordham) on 17th (per NHSN). Then on 21st six birds flew N then E near Backworth Flash (JPD/TDa) and the following day six birds were drifting N over the A1 at Adderstone (per BWG).

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

A single bird appeared at Cresswell Pond on 1st (IRD) and two arrived at Hauxley NR at 0800h on 3rd (STE), whilst a further two were seen from the Tern Hide at the latter site on 27th (RB/MB). More sightings took place at Cresswell Pond from the 13th onwards (JL *et al.*) as numbers grew from two to a peak of six on 24th (TRD/JD) reducing to four on 27th/30th. A pair was seen at a confidential site in the south east on 23rd, with a single there on 27th. Elsewhere, two were watched at West Hartford during the afternoon of the 20th (GM *et al.*) and two were at Warkworth Gut on 28th (RB/MB).



Spring is in the air -Avocets in breeding mode
Cresswell Pond
20th April
by Peter Tapsell

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Dwindling coastal numbers included a peak of 76 at Berwick North Shore on 11th (MHu) and 26 at Cresswell Pond on 14th (STH), whilst inland, 52 were noted at Derwent Reservoir on 6th (JL) reducing to 22 on 22nd (IFo) and 18 were counted at both Houghton Strother GP (SR) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 10th (MR). Two pairs were seen at West Stobswood Pool on several dates (GB/MSH), four birds were at West Hartford on 20th (GB) and single pairs were also noted at several wide-ranging locations including Airy Holm Reservoir, Arcot Pond, Backworth, Grindon Lough, Howdon Wetland NR, Humshaugh, Shillmoor Farm (Upper Coquetdale), Silverlink CP (North Shields), Tarset Bridge and Wark (many obs.). A single bird flew over the Tesco building at Kingston Park, Newcastle on 18th (PCF).

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

A slight build-up in numbers from March saw a high of 260 on 3rd (TRD/JD) and 400 at St Mary's on 7th (ASJ), and 150+ inland at Prestwick Carr on 22nd (PCF). Approximately 110 were noted at Rowley Burn on 28th (AJH) and ca.100 flew W over Stanley Plantation (Portgate) on 20th (ALT). A group of 80 was seen at Pegswood Community Park on 2nd (AT), 60 moved N at Lucker on 19th (TRD) and 43 were seen at Swallow Pond on 21st (JPD). Four summer-plumaged birds were at Plenmeller Common on 13th (CB) and a single bird flew over Linden Hall (Longhorsley) on 27th (NFO).

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Reports from the north included 58 at Holy Island on 20th (SJH) and ten in Budle Bay on 1st (TRD/JD). One to three were also seen at Boulmer, East Chevington, Hauxley and Seahouses Harbour, and one was watched feeding in a small pool in a coastal field north of Druridge Pools on 2nd (GB).

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Breeding reports predominated this month, with 25 pairs counted on Blanchland Moor on 14th and 12 pairs at Druridge Pools on 15th (ASJ). Ten were watched and display noted at Ord Moor (Billylaw) on 7th (MHu), nine were at Big Waters on 20th (GB) and up to six on four dates at Grindon Lough (SJH/PRM). Tide-line corpses continued to be found and included three at both Druridge Bay on 2nd (GB) and Low Newton on 4th (TF).

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Reports included up to three birds from two confidential sites (south-west and central Northumberland) from the 7th and throughout the month. Elsewhere, two were at Derwent Reservoir and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 30th (IFo/SR) and single birds were noted at Backworth on 21st (MSH), Branton GP on 28th (TRD/JD), Caistron on 9th (TRD/JD), Cresswell Pond on 14th (BDK *et al.*), South Newsham Flash (Blyth) on 26th/28th with two here on 18th (MHP) and a 'major surprise' was one flying around Exhibition Park (Newcastle) before continuing N on 25th (GB).

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Holy Island attracted good numbers with 166 here on 20th (SJH), whilst further south numbers on the coal road flashes at Druridge peaked at 35 on 15th (ASJ) and 21+ were in the same area on 20th (JL). A good passage was also noted at inland Prestwick Carr where ten on 20th increased to 13 the following day (PCF). Inland water-bodies/flashes attracted small numbers throughout the month and included 8+ at Widdrington Moor Lake on 13th, seven at Grindon Lough on 17th and five at South Newsham Flash (Blyth) on 18th (JL/SJH/MHP *et al.*) whilst two to four were also seen on the coast at Berwick North Shore, Cheswick Black Rocks, Elswick Wharf (Tyne) and St Mary's. Four were at Caistron on 9th and a potential breeding pair was at West Stobswood Pool later in the month.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

A light spring passage saw the first two pass N at Tynemouth on 13th (CB) followed by a single at East Chevington on 15th (ASJ). Highs of seven were at East Chevington on 20th and flying N at Druridge Bay CP on 30th (JL); five landed at Houghton Strother GP on 30th (MR), four were in fields between Amble-Alnmouth on 20th (JL), near East Chevington on 30th (JL) and at Holy Island on 24th (SJH). Additional reports of one to two were also noted in the period at Cheswick Black Rocks, East Chevington, Druridge Pools, Houghton Strother GP, Hauxley, Holy Island, Hoppen Kiln Flash, Linden Hall (Longhorsley), Low Newton and Prestwick Carr.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Monthly peaks occurred on the 2nd and included 82 at East Chevington (PCF), 35 at Whitehouse (Slaley) (RMH) and 30 at Prestwick Carr (PCF). Smaller counts included 27 in fields between Amble-Alnmouth on 20th (JL) and 24 at Berwick North Shore on 11th (MHu) plus 11-17 at Backworth, Big Waters, Holywell Dene, Howdon Wetland NR and the Tweed Estuary, with single-figure reports from a further six sites.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Spring passage produced a peak of 11 at Druridge Pools and 8+ at Linton Pond, both on 30th (JL); whilst *islandica* birds included five at Grindon Lough on 21st (PRM) and four on St Mary's Wetland on 21st (MSH/JPD). Three moved N over Druridge Pools, East Chevington and Hauxley NR on the 23rd (TRD/JD *et al.*). The Rocket Field on Holy Island continued to hold one to two throughout the month (IK *et al.*) and further singles appeared at South Newsham Flash (Blyth) on 19th and both Bothal Pond and Cresswell Pond on 30th.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Few reports included five in Budle Bay on 1st (TRD/JD) and singles at Cresswell Pond on 1st/20th and Hauxley on 23rd.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

The highest counts were both on 12th: 36 at Newbiggin (PCF) and 28 in the Tweed Estuary (MHu). At Howdon Wetland NR 22 were present on 1st (CB), eclipsing the previous site high of six. 20 roosted at Hauxley NR on 23rd (TRD/JD) and 12 were at Berwick North Shore on 11th. Two were found at Cheswick, Farne Islands, St Mary's and Seahouses.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Thirty were in Budle Bay on 1st (TRD/JD) and ten roosted at Hauxley NR on 3rd (STE). Nine were at Cresswell Pond on 14th and one at Lynemouth Flash on 3rd.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

One flew S over Bothal Pond on 8th (TF/JFa).

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

The peak count at St Mary's was 173 on 25th (ASJ) with 80-100 noted there on 19th, 20th and 30th (AJN/MSH/DLo). Cheswick Black Rocks held 82 on 19th (MHu), Cocklawburn had 56 on 22nd, 43 were counted on a 3km walk in Druridge Bay on 8th, 38 were at Newbiggin, Beacon Point on 6th and 30 at Low Newton on 1st. Small numbers appeared at East Chevington and Hauxley.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Forty were at St Mary's on 28th (CDB), up to 32 at Druridge Coal Road pools during 20th-27th (JL *et al.*) and 30 in Budle Bay on 1st (TRD/JD). At Grindon Lough up to eight were present during 15th-26th and six were at Horncliffe on 14th. Two were at each of Cheswick and near Bradford Kaims on 16th and 25th respectively.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Numbers were relatively low with top totals of 15 at Seahouses on 19th (TRD), 14 at Berwick on 11th and 12 at St Mary's on 8th. Nine or fewer were noted at Cheswick, Farne Islands, Monks' House, Newbiggin and Seaton Sluice.

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

There was a remarkable spring double of adults, involving the earliest-ever County record. The first was at Hoppen Kiln Flash on 19th/20th (TRD *et al.*). The second was found at Backworth on 20th (JPD/CGK *et al.*) and it commuted between there and nearby Holywell Pond until 23rd.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

The first returns appeared on 13th: singletons at Haughton Strother GP, on R North Tyne at Warden and at Whittle Dene Reservoirs (MR/SR/JL). Ten were at Horncliffe on 14th (TBr) and by 16th 12 were in Upper Coquetdale, seven at Sharperton and seven at Hepple (all ASJ). From 15th one to four were noted at Allen Banks, Bakethin Reservoir, Big Waters, Bothal Pond, Bridge End, Derwent Reservoir, Eals Bridge, Featherstone Castle, Rothbury, Seaton Sluice and West Hartford, with also nine in Brearnish Valley on 30th (MRS).



A Common Sandpiper by Peter Tapsell
Druridge Pools on 28th April

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

All records involved singles between 2nd and 23rd at seven locations: Whittle Dene Reservoirs, Haughton Strother GP, Big Waters, Swallow Pond, Holy Island, Capheaton and Arcot Pond

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

The Budle Bay winterer was present on 1st (TRD/JD) and the first passage migrant appeared at Hoppen Kiln Flash on 30th (TRD/JD).

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

The Tweed Estuary WeBS revealed 310 on 12th (MHu); 75 were at St Mary's on 18th (MNC), 68 at Howdon Wetland NR on 1st (CB) and 50+ at Alnmouth Saltmarsh on 30th (JL). Several places held 11-34: Backworth, Berwick, Cheswick Black Rocks, Cresswell Pond, Elswick Wharf, Grindon Lough, Holywell Pond and Hoppen Kiln Flash. Ten or fewer were noted at eight other sites. Display was witnessed at Grindon Lough on 13th and a pair copulated at East Chevington on 30th.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*

One showed in front of the hide at Howdon Wetland NR on 6th (CB).



The only Jack Snipe of the month at Howdon Wetlands
Photograph by Colin Bradshaw on 6th April

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

At least 15 were at Swallow Pond on 7th (JPD) and seven at Backworth were regarded as returning migrants 'held up' by NE winds, also on 7th (CGK). Seven were recorded in various areas of Kielder Forest during 2nd-11th (MD). Four were at Longframlington Common on 10th (IRD), three at Longhorsley Moor on 4th (AB/LB) and three at Whiteadder Water on 9th (TBr). Two were at Low Carrith and Bassington NR early in the month and singles appeared at 15 other widespread locations. Roding was witnessed around a Rothbury garden on 25th and at Sleafy Hall on 28th.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Eight were at Earsdon Beehive North Pond on 7th (MNC), up to seven were at Gosforth Park NR and adjacent pool and the maximum at Howdon Wetland NR was six on 14th. At times, four were at Backworth, East Chevington and Rowley Burn and three at Big Waters; one or two occurred at a further 17 widespread places. Drumming was reported from Shield on the Wall on 13th and towards the month end from the Breamish Valley and Prestwick Carr.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Three dark phase birds flew N off Seaton Sluice Watch Tower on 27th.

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

One flew N off Seaton Sluice Watch Tower on 27th.

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

On the Farne Islands, 50 were noted on 19th (TRD), the usual high numbers occurring there during the breeding season having not yet arrived. Only six birds were recorded passing Seaton Sluice during the period 8th-27th (SSWT). All other records were of tide-line corpses, in various stages of decomposition, arising from the 'wreck' which occurred in March, namely 41 in Druridge Bay (GB/IRD), 24 at Low Newton (TF) and four at Hauxley (TRD/JD).

Black Guillemot *Cephus grylle*

The often elusive bird at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh), now in full summer plumage, was again recorded close inshore on 3rd and 5th (JSB/PRF).

Auk sp

A passage of 100 Razorbill/Guillemots moved N in one hour at Seaton Sluice (SSWT) on (date not specified), otherwise few records from this site during the month.

Razorbill *Alca torda*

Few records, consisting of three on the Farne Islands on 19th (TRD), two at Stag Rocks, Bamburgh on 30th (TRD/JD) and a single in winter plumage on the River Tweed Estuary on 7th (MHu).

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

A count of ca.1,500 was made at the Farne Islands on 19th (TRD), the majority on the sea and few yet on the cliffs. Up to five were noted elsewhere at Stag Rocks, Bamburgh and Seaton Sluice. Five corpses were recorded on the tide-line at Low Newton (TF).



Guillemots on the Farne Islands
by Tim Dean on 19th April

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

The first sighting of the year was a single bird at the Lindisfarne breeding site on 26th (IK) and on the following day four together flew rapidly N at Seaton Sluice (SSWT).

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Sightings were reported from 1st when five flew N at Seaton Sluice (SSWT) and two were at Seahouses (TRD/JD). From the 12th onwards records increased considerably, with 30 N at Seaton Sluice in 30 minutes on 15th and elsewhere, one to seven were reported from at least a dozen sites from the Tweed-Tyne Estuaries with double-figure counts of ca.20 at Stag Rocks on 28th (ADM) and 16 at Holy Island on 19th (PRM).

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

At Seaton Sluice, the only records were 13 moving S on 17th and three N on 17th (SSWT). Elsewhere, birds were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs from 15th, with 12 on 18th (SR) and one to three seen there on other dates. East Chevington held at least 12 on 23rd (MSK) with one to seven there from 18th onwards. Up to four were reported from Bamburgh, Berwick (Meadow Haven), Big Waters, Gosforth Park NR, Holy Island and West Ord. Two unusual records of single, gale-blown birds, came from Bakethin Reservoir on 15th and Kielder Dam on 16th (MD).

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

The first record was of three birds moving N at Snab Point on 13th (JL). The highest count was 14 at the River Tweed Estuary on 18th and Berwick Meadow Haven held eight on 21st (MHu). One to four were sighted elsewhere at four sites in Druridge Bay, at Stag Rocks and in the Berwick area, including four sheltering from a strong westerly gale at Cocklawburn Pond on 16th (MHu).

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Several large hourly counts of birds moving N came from Seaton Sluice, including peaks of 800 and 500 on three dates from 2nd-27th (SSWT). At the Newcastle Quayside breeding sites, 317 were recorded on 19th, with at least 26 bathing there in the river (DMT), although one observer noted from his record of 72 there on 17th-18th, that numbers were 'well down for the time of year' (DM). The Farne Islands colonies held c.300 on 1st and 19th (TRD/JD) and small groups totalling 120 in an hour moved N at Boulmer on 2nd (TRD/JD). A maximum count of 37 came from the Tyne Estuary on 20th (DMT) with 16 at the Howdon Wetland NR on 26th (CB); one to ten were recorded from eight other sites from River Tweed-St Mary's. Three corpses were found at the Wansbeck Estuary (GB) and an immature bird, recorded inland on a ploughed field at Holywell Pond, was possibly a sick bird (MHP).



A Kittiwake on the Farne Islands on 19th May
by Tim Dean

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

A peak count of 300 came from Dilston (near Corbridge) on 6th (JMA) and smaller gatherings of 100-250 were recorded at Amble Braid, Denwick, Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother GP, Riding Mill and Stocksfield (JMA/SJH/MR/MRS). Elsewhere, 30-60 were at Elswick Wharf (River Tyne), Jesmond Dene, Leazes Park, Rothbury and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. At Gosforth Park NR, seven pairs were prospecting to nest on the new tern platform (NHSN).

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

There was a single record of two moving N at Bamburgh, Stag Rocks on 28th (ADM).

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Only one 1st-winter bird lingered at Newbiggin on 7th with two 1st-winters at the nearby Woodhorn Flashes on the same day (STH). An adult was at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 10th and singles elsewhere were at Cresswell Pond on 14th, Hauxley NWT on 20th and at Monks' House Pool on two dates, an adult on 3rd and a 2nd-calendar year on 25th.

Common Gull *Larus canus*

At Seaton Sluice, 200 moved N in an hour on 11th (SSWT) and seasonal concentrations of migrant birds, *en route* to their summering quarters, included a peak count of 1200 at Haughton Strother GP on 10th (MR) with records of 400 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs also on 10th, 200 at Hartburn Reservoir on 13th (JR) and 150 at Halton Red House on 1st (JR). Three other sites, Prestwick Carr, QEII CP and the River Tyne Estuary held up to 40 birds.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

Birds moved N throughout the month at Seaton Sluice with a total of 61 recorded there (SSWT). Peak counts of up to 37 were at Elswick Wharf (River Tyne) on 17th (DM/STH/PJA), 32 at Swallow Pond on 13th (JPD) and 26 at Jesmond Dene (Paddy Freeman's Lake) on 14th (MJCo). Elsewhere, one to nine were seen at a number of mainly inland localities notably Grindon Lough and West Hartford but also on the River Tweed Estuary and at the Howdon Wetland NR. A former breeding site for this species, and also Herring Gulls, on a factory roof in Westerhope has now gone as the roof has been netted (SRB).

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argenteus*

A WeBS count on the River Tweed Estuary on 12th found 340 (MHu) and the maximum count this month on the River Tyne Estuary, up to the NS Fish Quay, was 171 (DMT). Elsewhere, 86 were recorded in Blyth South Harbour on 21st (DMT) and 52 were at Berwick, North Shore on 11th (MHu). 22, all immatures, were at Airy Holm reservoir, 20 at Arcot Pond, 18 at West Hartford and 11 in Jesmond Dene. Two to five were seen at Grindon Lough and Leazes Park.

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucooides*

A late record for this winter visitor was of a 1st-winter bird on the River Tyne at Scotswood, seen flying from the south bank of the river onto the Vickers Factory roof, on 14th (R. Cox).

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

An immature flew N at Seaton Sluice on 8th (SSWT).

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

The maximum count this month on the River Tyne Estuary, up to the NS Fish Quay, was 47 on 24th and Blyth South Harbour held 33 on 21st, both counts including a majority of 1st-summer birds (DMT). A WeBS count on the River Tweed Estuary on 12th recorded 11 birds (MHu). One to two were at Elswick Wharf (River Tyne) throughout the month (DM).

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

Maximum monthly counts of 39 at North Shields Fish Quay on 21st (DMT), 25 at Tynemouth on 25th, 16 at Blyth South Harbour on 21st, 14 at Southfield Green (Cramlington) on 1st and one at Beatty Avenue (South Gosforth) on 21st.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Well reported with ten the maximum count at Howdon Wetland on 19th (CB), eight at Northumberland Park North Shields on the same date (MNC), six at Druridge Pools, Backworth and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, five at Jesmond Dene and one to four at eleven other widespread localities including gardens at Walbottle and Woosington.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Largest gatherings of around 300 in a Walbottle field on 8th (KR/LR) and at Whiteadder Water (Berwick) on 26th (TBr), 150 at Coldcote Moor (Ponteland) on 1st and at Shiremoor on 2nd (JMA), 135 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 24th (PRM) with one to 63 at four other locations.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Four at Dinnington on 21st was the peak count (PCF) with two in an Old Hartley garden during the month (RJP), at Eachwick on 14th (CDB) and one at Matthew Bank (Jesmond Dene) on 28th.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

All reports of single birds at Ottercops on 1st, Craster on 4th, Shiremoor on 20th, Ellington on 23rd and Whiteadder Water (Berwick) on 24th. Dead birds were found in stacked creels at Holy Island, at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) (which had been present since the beginning of the year) and at Shirlaw Pike (Longframlington).

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Single birds on territory at Shiremoor during the month (CGK), at Great Whittington on 4th, Swallow Pond on 12th and 13th, Prestwick Carr on 24th, Tughall on 25th, Beacon Lane (Cramlington) on 28th with one roadside casualty at Norham on 7th.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Four called at Juniper on 19th (MSK/NEWT), a pair nested at Gosforth Park (NHSN) and two were at Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 1st and Walbottle on 22nd (KR/LR). Singles were at Alnwick, Bamburgh, Brocolitia, Haughton Strother, Longframlington Common, Prestwick Carr and Slaley Forest.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

All sightings from Holy Island with one still in regular winter roost on 13th and a migrant on Crooked Lonnen with two more migrants on Straight Lonnen on 21st (IK) and a single on 20th (SR).

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

At least three remained at Holy Island till 13th (IK) with two at Shield on the Wall Dam on 12th (PRM) and at West Hartford on the same date (LJM). Singles were also at Allendale, Backworth, Berwick, Brocolitia, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Kielder Forest, Newbiggin, St Mary's wetland and Woodhorn.

Swift *Apus apus*

Unlike the hirundines, arrival was pretty much normal, the first on the 25th with three at Marden Quarry, Whitley Bay (ASJ) and at Colmill (PAT) with singles at Big Waters (AJJ per GB), Kingston Park (PCF), Holy Island (SJH) and Humford Mill, Bedlington (JR). The peak count was five at Bothal Pond on 29th (JR) with three there on 27th, four at Gosforth Park and adjacent pool on 26th (NHSN), also three at Prestwick Carr (JSB/EC) and two at Arcot Pond and Berwick on 26th.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

All reports of singles with one regularly at Prestwick Carr in the first week (PCF), at Gosforth Park N.R. and adjacent pool (NHSN) and Jesmond Dene on 7th & 28th (MJCo). Other sightings were at Haughton Strother on 16th, Ridley Stokoe on 18th, Wallington on 20th and Whiteadder Water (Berwick) on 28th.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Two at Gosforth Park NR and adjacent pool (NHSN) was the only multiple count with one calling on three dates during the month, at Arcot Pond on 2nd and 6th (LJM/PJA/STH) and regularly at Craggside (TRD/JD) all month. Singles were also seen or heard at Sidwood on 1st, Swallowship Wood (Hexham) on 12th, Stonehaugh on 13th, Bakethin on 15th and Belsay Hall on 20th.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Good counts of seven at Wallington on 20th (CDB), five at Gosforth Park N.R. (NHSN), four at Jesmond Dene on 3rd (MJCo) and three at Valley Park Cramlington on 1st, Tranwell Woods on 9th and West Hartford on 11th. Two were at Battle Hill, Holywell Dene, Northumberland Park (North Shields), Redesmouth and Swallow Pond with singles at a further nine widespread locations.

Magpie *Pica pica*

A peak count of 62 at Swallow Pond on 1st (JPD) with 14 at Howdon Wetland on 17th (CB), 12 at Newbiggin on 3rd (AT), 13 at Prestwick Carr on 6th and one to six at Jesmond Dene, a Walbottle garden and Kielder Village, the individual there being the observer's second sighting in 30 years (MD).

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Four were at Linden Hall (Longhorsley) on 6th (NFO), three at Jesmond Dene on 21st (MJCo), two+ seen daily at Scotland Gate during the month with two also at Big Waters, Capheaton, Castle Island (R.Wansbeck), Bassington NR (Cramlington), Holystone Common, Sugley Dene (Lemington), Linton Ponds, Slaley Hall and Swallow Pond. Singles were at five other locations.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Highest counts of 60 at Percy's Cross (Otterburn) on 1st (JMA) and roosting in a tree at Hartford Bridge on 7th (DM) with 50 at Kirkharle on 1st, Holystone on 4th and Amble Braid on 8th (JMA). One to 30 were at Barrowburn, Eachwick, Jesmond Dene, Wallington and Walbottle.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Peak count of 50 at Kirkharle on 1st (JMA) with five the highest count in a Walbottle garden and singles at Seaton Sluice and Wallington. Rookery counts found 27 AONs at Alnham on 4th, 18 at Linshiels on the same date (JMA), 17 at Walbottle on 9th and 12 at Broom House and Heckley House (Alnwick) on 8th.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Gatherings at North Shields Fish Quay numbered 35 on 2nd and 29 on 23rd (JMA/DMT) with 21 at Prestwick Carr on 1st (PCF) and South Newsham Flash (Blyth) on 20th (MHp). Eight were at Jesmond Dene on 7th, seven out N to sea at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower on 1st and 2nd and two daily in a Walbottle garden.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

One was at Crooked Lonnen (Holy Island) on 14th (SR/AH/ADM) and at Low Newton on 26th (TRD/JD).

A Hooded Crow on the beach
Low Newton 26th April by Tim Dean

Raven *Corvus corax*

Six were found along the Kielder Forest drive on 20th (MSK/NEWT), two at Elf Kirk (Kielder) on 2nd (MSH), and at Coquet Island on 15th (BDK) with singles at Harwood Forest on 2nd and Craggside (Rothbury) on 6th.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Holy Island had 13 on 21st and nine on 14th (ADM) with two daily in a Walbottle garden (KR/LR) and at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 14th, Prestwick Carr on 22nd, Jesmond Dene on 28th and Ponteland on 29th. Singles were at eight further widespread localities.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

A peak count of six at Wallington on 20th (CDB), five at Jesmond Dene on 7th (MJCo), four at Humford Mill (Bedlington) on 25th (JR) and two in the observer's garden at Beatty Avenue (South Gosforth) on 18th.

Great Tit *Parus major*

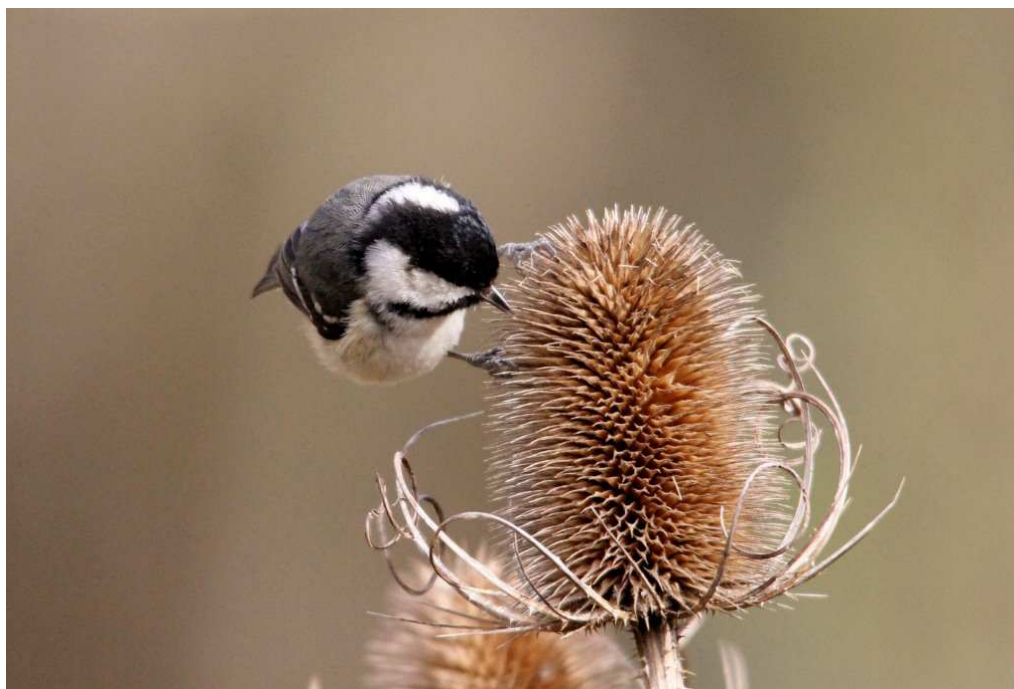
Seven were at Jesmond Dene on 14th (MJCo), five at Humford Mill (Bedlington) on 25th (JR), four at Wallington on 20th (CDB) and two in the observer's garden at Beatty Avenue (South Gosforth) on 18th.



Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Four were at Jesmond Dene on 3rd (MJCo), three at Wallington on 20th (CDB), two at Stonehaugh on 13th (PRM), Humford Mill (Bedlington) on 25th (JR) and one to three in the observers' gardens at Holywell Dene, South Gosforth and Walbottle

A Coal Tit enjoys a teasel at Gosforth NR by John Littleton

**Willow Tit** *Poecile montanus*

Pairs were at Village Hotel (North Shields) (CGK), Linton Lane NWT (AT) and Bassington NR (Cramlington) (GMi) all on 3rd and at Longhorsley on 18th (AB/LB), Hadrian's Pond on 20th (JPD), Prestwick Carr on 30th and in the observer's garden at Dinnington on the same date (PCF). Singles were at eight other widespread localities.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

Present at Linden Hall (Longhorsley) throughout the month peaking at three on 21st (NFO), a pair at Felton Lane and visiting a nest at Whiteadder Water (Berwick) on 4th (MSH/BWG) with singles at Hartburn, Longhorsley, Rothbury and Rothley Lakes.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Singing birds numbered six at St Mary's on 2nd (ASJ), four at Grindon Lough on 15th with three there on 3rd (SJH), two at East Chevington on 5th (SRB) and singles at Longhorsley Moor on 4th and West Minsteracres on 23rd.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Possibly the latest return of this species with the first sighting being 35 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 12th (SR), the last time in recent years that arrival was delayed into this month being 2nd April in 1991. Numbers grew quickly at this location with 50 on 13th and peaking at 180 on 18th. The highest count was 250 at East Chevington on 17th (NFO) with other large counts of 40 to 50 at Bakethin on 15th, Wark (N Tyne) on 14th, QEII CP on 26th and Big Waters on 24th. Counts of one to 24 came from 23 other widespread localities.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Returning in lower numbers at the same time as Sand Martin, the first was seen a day earlier battling a northerly wind over the Town Moor (Newcastle) on 11th (DM). Singles were at Bothal Pond and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 12th (JR/SR) with sightings widespread for the next week (29 locations) but in single figures with the exception of Whittle Dene where the highest count of 77 occurred on 18th (SR), Bakethin where 50 battled the gale on 15th (MD) and 35+ at Swallow Pond on 17th (JPD) indicating the need to find food over water. Later in the month 60 moved north at Haughton Strother on 27th (MR), 45 were at Holywell Dene on 25th, 25 at Gosforth Park NR and adjacent pool and Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 28th with one to 20 at seven other mainly coastal locations.

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

The first were four NW over Holy Island (IK), three at Branton Gravel Pits (JPD) and one at Wark (N Tyne) (PRM), all on 14th. Numbers were low till the month end with a peak of 15+ over the R. Blyth at Plessey Woods CP on 16th (LJM/PJA) and eight over trees at Humford Mill (Bedlington) on 25th (JR). One to three were at 22 other widespread localities.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Three pairs were in Plessey Woods CP and two pairs in Leazes Park (Newcastle-DM). One to four were reported from Arcot Hall GC, Cramlington (three localities), Exhibition Park (Newcastle), Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) where nest building was noted, Holywell Dene, Jesmond Dene, Redheugh Bridge, South Gosforth, Stonehaugh and Walbottle.



A Long-tailed Tit in a Wooslington garden by John Littleton

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

The first of the year was a singing male at Allen Banks on 30th (EC/JSB).

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

A major 'fall' occurred on Holy Island at the end of the month with 46 noted on 28th (ADM). Ten were at Wallsend Burn on 18th. In breeding areas, up to nine were found in Jesmond Dene by 28th (MJCo) and eight at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) on 15th, Cramlington (Village Green) on 20th and Cramlington (Windmill Lane) on 27th. Seven were at Craggside on 13th and six at Bamburgh on 25th, Humford Mill (Bedlington) on 25th and Silverlink CP (North Shields) on 16th. Up to five were noted at Gosforth Park NR during the month and one to three at a further 30 mainly inland localities. Several observers commented on late arrivals, including at Cramlington where the first singing bird was 22 days later than last year (DM).

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

The first arrival was at Hepple Whitefield (Coquetdale) on 11th (JD) followed by singles in the Harthope Valley and at West Hartford on 12th and Craggside on 13th. On Holy Island a 'fall' deposited ca.25 on 27th (IK). In breeding areas, 20 were at Holystone on 20th (ASJ) and on 30th 25 were singing in the Breamish Valley (MRS), 29 were at Swallow Pond (JPD) and 18 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs (SR). Elsewhere nine to ten were reported from Beacon Hill (Longhorsley), Cramlington (Windmill Lane) and Prestwick Carr and one to seven at a further 27 mainly inland localities.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Seven at Swallow Pond on 24th had increased to 14 by the end of the month (JPD). Seven were also noted at Holywell Dene on 25th (ASJ) and at Tynemouth on 27th (CB) and five obvious passage birds were found at Newton Pool on 26th (TRD/JD). Four different birds (two males / two females) visited a Heddon-on-the-Wall garden during the month including the 'resident' male present since November 2012; all were considered to be overwintering birds (JSB). Four were also noted at Woodhorn Flashes on 26th, Woodhorn on 27th, Jesmond Dene on 28th and Newcastle City Centre on 30th. Counts of three came from Gosforth Park NR, Howdon Wetland NR and Humford Mill (Bedlington) and one to two from a further 23 widespread localities.



Left: A female Blackcap at Gosforth NR by John Littleton and right: a male at Howdon Wetlands by Colin Bradshaw

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

The only record of the month was a single at Berwick on 21st (BWG).

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

The first arrival was at Arcot Pond on 24th (ASJ). Three were at Holywell by 29th (ASJ) and two at Wallsend Dene on 30th (JPD). Singles were noted at Cramlington (Northburn, Village Green and Windmill Hill), Howdon Wetland NR, Lynemouth and Tynemouth on dates from 26th-28th.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

The first arrivals were two at Woodhorn on 19th (AT). Well reported from 21st with a peak of five at Prestwick Carr by the month end (PCF). Up to four were noted at Swallow Pond from 21st (JPD) and four males were near Ovington on 30th (SAS). Three were at Holywell on 23rd (ASJ) and two at Bamburgh on 25th, Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay) on 29th, Tynemouth on 30th, Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 27th and Woodhorn Flashes on 26th. Single were reported from a further ten localities.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

The first arrival was at Woodhorn on 19th (AT) followed by singles at Holy Island, Prestwick Carr and St Mary's on 20th. Numbers at Prestwick Carr increased to four by the month end (PCF) and three were at Warkworth Gut on 27th (NFO). Two were reported from Druridge Pools on 22nd and Cresswell Pond on 27th and singles at Bamburgh, East Chevington, Gosforth Park NR, East Chevington, Fenham-le-Moor and Newbiggin between 27th-30th and well inland at Stonehaugh on 23rd.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

The first arrival was on 17th at Gosforth Park NR, where up to three were noted by the end of the month (NHSN). One at Holy Island on 20th was followed by three singing at the Lough by 26th (SR/IK). Druridge Pools and East Chevington had singles by 22nd and 23rd respectively and further singles were noted at Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Bradford Kaims, Cocklawburn, Cresswell Pond, Elwick and Newton Pool from 26th-30th.

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

First seen on 19th at Gosforth Park NR where at least four were noted by the end of the month (NHSN).

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulous*

There were still a few sizeable flocks around during the first ten days of the month. At Byker, 44 on 9th had declined to eight by 13th (MP). Blyth Sports Centre attracted 40 on 5th and 20 were still at Blyth (Plessey Road) on 9th (MHP). Up to 35 were at Lynemouth on 4th-5th (SRB *et al.*). At East Ord numbers fluctuated between three and 16 from 4th-11th with a peak on 9th and one to six were at a further four localities from 7th-14th.

Contrasting views
of Waxwings.

Top: feasting on
cottoncreeper at
Lynemouth by
John Littleton and
below: having a
bathe at Byker by
Mike Potts on 13th
April



Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Noted as absent from some areas, although up to five were in Jesmond Dene during the month (MJCo) and three at Holywell Dene on 28th (JPD). Three were also at Gosforth Park NR during the month and two on feeders at nearby Peter Barratt's Garden Centre on 1st. Two were also reported from Plessey Woods CP and Wallington Hall with singles noted at Arcot Hall GC, Cramlington, East Ord, Humford Mill (Bedlington), Melkridge, Rothbury, Swallow Pond and Wark (North Tyne).

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Four were at Capheaton on 13th (STE) and three at Wallington on 20th (CDB). Elsewhere were two at Wark (North Tyne) and singles at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley), Cramlington, Felton Lane, Harthope Valley, Holywell Dene, Seaton Sluice, Spindleston and Thrum Mill.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

12 at Prestwick Carr on 6th was the highest count (PCF). Elsewhere were counts of seven in Holywell Dene on 16th, five at Wallington Hall, four at Jesmond Dene and two at Humford Mill (Bedlington).

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Two sizeable flocks early in the month were of ca.300 at Longhorsley on 2nd (AB/LB) and 200 at Derwent Reservoir on 4th (IFo). At Cramlington (Northburn), 30 were at garden feeders on 7th and 20 were reported from West Minsteracres on 23rd.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

The on-going survey in Coquetdale produced a total of 14 pairs (14 nests) during the month (JR). Two pairs were noted in Jesmond Dene (Jesmond Vale and Waterfall (MJCo) one of which appeared to lose an earlier nest (DHWB). A pair was feeding young at Hartford Bridge (Bedlington) by 16th and another pair was nesting at Ponteland. Pairs were also noted at Haughton Strother (North Tyne) and Thrum Mill (Rothbury) and singles at Holywell Dene, Humford Mill (Bedlington), Langleeford, Melkridge, Rothbury (The Lee) and Wedder's Leap.



A Dipper mid-stream at Coldgate
by Colin Bradshaw

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

The first was a male at Sipton Burn on 9th (EC/JSB). A few arrived at the coast from 12th with two at Newbiggin on 12th (MHp/TRC) and two at St Mary's on 13th (ASJ). On the latter date one to two were in Upper Coquetdale at Buckham's Bridge and Makendon and a male at Swallow Pond. A male was at Holy Island on 21st and a female here on 27th-28th while another female was at Bygate (Upper Coquetdale) on 27th.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

An unusually large gathering at Swallow Pond increased from 41 on 1st to 152 by 10th (JPD). There was a similar influx at New Mills (Berwick) with 60+ on 7th (TBr). Elsewhere ca.30 were at Newbiggin on 12th and 25 at Cramlington (Horton Burn) on 19th; 15 were reported from Wallsend Burn on 1st and ten at Exhibition Park on 2nd. Higher numbers in observers' gardens included ten at Netherton Park on 13th and a peak of ten at Walbottle on 28th. Two to five at four other localities included a pair feeding young in a Kenton garden by the end of the month.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

A large and rather late gathering of ca.220 was at West Minsteracres on 23rd (RMH). There was a noticeable influx mid-month, beginning on 10th when 150+ were at Swallow Pond (JPD); 137 flew high N at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 13th when 80 were also at Bellingham and 80 at Kirkwhelpington. On 15th, 200 were at Big Waters and 100 there on the following day. One to 37 were reported from a further 14 localities to 27th when ten were at Fontburn Reservoir.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Eight were at Swallow Pond on 13th (JPD) and seven (in a tight group) at Deadwater (Kielder) on 2nd (MSH). A total of five were reported from four localities in Jesmond Dene on 3rd and three were at Howdon Wetland NR on 6th and Newbiggin on 7th. A pair was nesting in a Netherton Park garden from early in the month; two were at Valley Park (Cramlington) and Wallington and a single at Holywell Dene.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

A mid-month influx brought 150 to Swallowship Wood (Hexham) on 12th (AJH) and 100 to Big Waters on 15th (AJJ). At Beacon Hill (Cramlington) 80+ were noted on 2nd, 55 were at Netherton Park and 50+ at Swallow Pond on 13th. Elsewhere 20-40 were reported from Arcot Pond, Cramlington, Gosforth Park NR, Hepple Whitefield, Prestwick Carr and Thrum Mill (Rothbury) and one to 13 at a further ten localities. The final record was a single at Cresswell Pond on 30th.

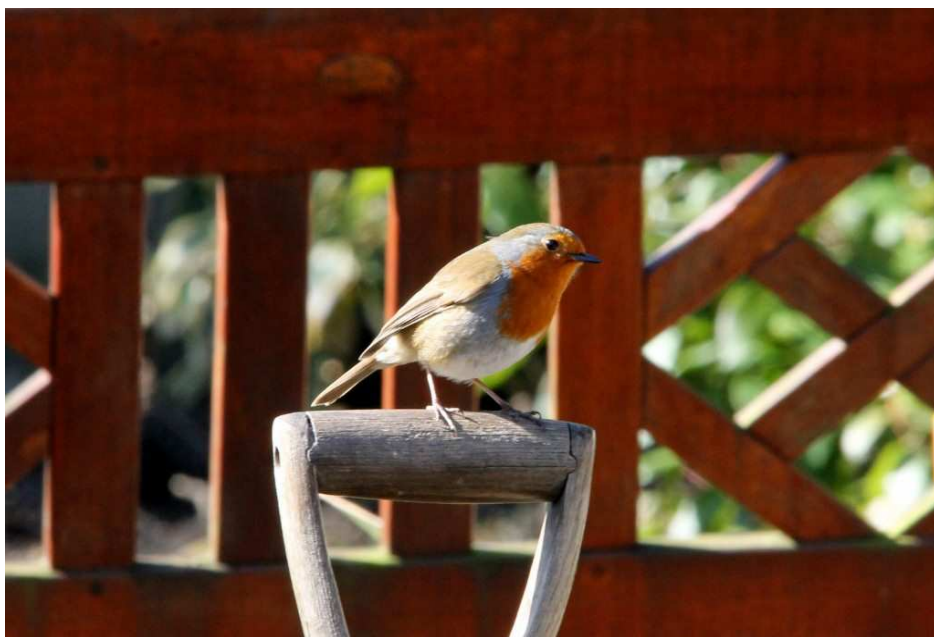
Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

At Jesmond Dene birds were reported from three localities, including a nest at Picnic Field (MJCo). A pair was feeding young at Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 19th (MNC) and two were singing at New Mills (Berwick) on 4th. One was at Humford Mill (Bedlington) on 25th and a tide-line corpse was picked up near Chevington Burn on 2nd.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

15 at Swallow Pond on 10th was the highest count of the month (JPD) followed by nine on Holy Island on 14th. Five were at Humford Mill (Bedlington) and Jesmond Dene and one to three at South Gosforth, Walbottle and Wallington Hall.

A Robin poses in a Woolsington garden
by John Littleton

**Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula hypoleuca*

An early arrival was a female at East Bolton on 17th (ID/KD). Another female was at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 27th (MR) and males were found at Eals Bridge (South Tyne) and Morralee Wood on 30th (EC/JSB).

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Singles were at Old Harley on 13th (ASJ) and Whitley Bay Cemetery on 13th-14th (JB/DMcG/TF/JFa).

A Black Redstart at Whitley Bay Cemetery
by Jonathon Farooqi on 14th April

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Males were at Holy Island on 19th (Straight Lonnen) and 21st (Straight Lonnen and Snook). Three were at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) on 30th (ASJ) and two at Allen Banks, Fontburn Reservoir, Haughton Strother (Humshaugh), Prestwick Carr and Thrunton by the end of the month. Singles were also noted at Big Waters, Craster, Exhibition Park (Newcastle), Featherstone Castle, Kirkley Hall, Linden Hall, Longframlington, Lordenshaw, Slaley, Warkworth Lane and West Kyloe from 20th.

**Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra*

On 26th a pair was at Whiteadder Point (Berwick) (TBr) and a male at Woodhorn Flashes. A male was at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 27th with it or another on 30th, when a singing male was also at Widehope (Edlingham).

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Almost all reports this month were from coastal areas. At Warkworth Gut a pair plus a female were noted on 7th and three males on 27th (NFO), while at Warkworth Dunes a male and two females were observed on 21st (STE). Pairs were reported from Amble Links, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington and Low Newton and a single male from Newbiggin. The only inland record was a male at Widehope (Edlingham) on 30th.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

An influx occurred during the final week with 11 at Holy Island on 21st increasing to 15 by 24th (ADM/SJH). Woodhorn Flashes held 12-13 on 26th and 29th (AT), 14 at Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay) on the morning of 30th had all departed by the afternoon (MNC) and ten were at High Letham (Berwick) on 30th. Six to eight were also reported from Cheswick on 25th, Hemscott Hill Links on 30th, Newbiggin on 17th and Whiteadder Point (Berwick) on 26th. Counts of four to five came from Backworth, Cottonshope Farm (Otterburn Ranges), Farnham Moor, Prestwick Carr, South Newsham (Blyth), Stobswood Opencast, Swallow Pond and Windyhaugh (Upper Coquetdale). One to three were noted at a further 26 widespread localities.



A Wheatear at St. Mary's on 28th April by Jonathon Farooqi

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

18 were seen in a one km square at New Mills Wood (Whiteadder Water, Berwick) on 10th (TBr). Seven were at both Cramlington Village Green on 29th (LJM) and Newbiggin on 17th (AT). One to four were seen at Eachwick, Holywell Dene, Jesmond Dene (Newcastle), South Gosforth and a Walbottle garden throughout the month.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

A flock of 50 was at Low Cocklaw (Berwick) on 10th (TBr). 25 were at Battlesteads Hotel (Wark) on 29th (CB), 14 at Eachwick on 14th (CDB) and a single at Jesmond Dene (Newcastle) on 28th was noted as being an uncommon species at the site these days (MJCo).

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

32 were at Hauxley on 19th (ASJ), 18 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 1st and 27th (MR) and one to 16 at a further 17 locations throughout the month. Four pairs at Swallow Pond on 17th using at least two nest boxes and tree holes were the first breeding birds for many years at this site.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

The first returning birds of the spring were two males at Cresswell Pond on 15th (BDK) and three at Whittle Dene also on 15th (SR). The three at Whittle Dene were joined by a further 20 by 24th (SR) which was the month's highest count. Ten were at Bothal Pond on 30th (TF/JFa), seven at both Cresswell Pond on 20th (TRD/JD) and South Newsham Flash (Blyth) on 20th (Mhp) and six at Whiteadder Point (Berwick) on 26th (TBr). One to five were at Alnmouth, Backworth, Beehive Flash (Earsdon), Big Waters, Boulmer, Bradford Kaims, Coal Road Pools (Druridge), Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Exhibition Park (Newcastle), Gosforth Park, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Low Newton, Prestwick Carr, St. Mary's Island, West Hartford, West Ord and Woodhorn Flashes throughout the month. A male, probably of the 'channel' variety ('flava' x 'flavissima') was photographed in field north of Druridge Pools on 27th (GB/LR/PJA).

One of the popular
Yellow Wagtails at
Cresswell by Colin
Bradshaw



Blue-headed Wagtail *M.f. flava*

Two were part of a pre-roost gathering of 25 mostly Yellow Wagtails on the spit at Cresswell Pond on 29th (CS). Singles were also at Bothal Pond on 21st (TF/JFa), St. Mary's on 27th and 28th (GEd/JBu/CDB) and Whitley Bay beach on 27th (DMT).

The St. Mary's Blue-headed Wagtail

by Jonathon Farooqi

28th April



Ashy-headed Wagtail *M.f. cinereocapilla*

A bird showing characteristics of this subspecies or a hybrid was present at South Newsham Flash (Blyth) on 28th (MHp).

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Four at Nether Warden (North Tyne) on 13th was the highest number recorded during the month (JL). One to three were present at a further 32 sites throughout the month.

A Grey Wagtail

Allen Banks

by Eddie Douglas

19th April



Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

26 were on Holy Island on 24th (SJH), 20 at Bakethin Reservoir on 2nd (MSH), a single flock of 19 at Whiteadder Point (Berwick) on 26th (TBr), 19 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 10th (MR) and 13 at Whittle Dene on 24th (SR). One to nine were seen at a further eight locations throughout the month. A group of 48 Pied/White Wagtails were feeding together on a small muddy flash in the horse field at Prestwick Carr on 27th (TRD/JD) whilst a mixed group of 17 came close inshore off Seaton Sluice Watch Tower on 26th (SSWT).

A Pied Wagtail at Matfen by Eddie Douglas on 13th April



A White Wagtail at Newton on 2nd April by Jonathon Farooqi

**White Wagtail** *M. a. alba*

An impressive month for this species started with a single at Low Newton beach on 2nd (TF/JFa). 30 were at South Newsham flash (Blyth) on 24th (MHp), 17 at St. Mary's on 28th (ASJ), 14 at Whittle Dene on 30th (SR) and ten at Holy Island on 20th (SR). One to six were also seen at Alnmouth, Alnmouth Saltmarsh, Backworth, Beehive Flash (Earsdon), Big Waters, Bothal Pond, Bradford Kaims, Coal Road Pools (Druridge), Cocklawburn, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Gosforth Park, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Haul Road Flash, Lynemouth Flash, Monk's House Pool, Prestwick Carr, Swallow Pond, West Hartford, West Ord, West Stobswood Pool and Whitley Bay beach throughout the month.

One to six were also seen at Alnmouth, Alnmouth Saltmarsh, Backworth, Beehive Flash (Earsdon), Big Waters, Bothal Pond, Bradford Kaims, Coal Road Pools (Druridge), Cocklawburn, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Gosforth Park, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Haul Road Flash, Lynemouth Flash, Monk's House Pool, Prestwick Carr, Swallow Pond, West Hartford, West Ord, West Stobswood Pool and Whitley Bay beach throughout the month.

Pipit sp.

40 were at Prestwick Carr on 22nd (PCF).

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

The first returning birds of the spring were both on the 24th at Arcot Pond (ASJ) and Beacon Hill (TRD/JD). Other singles were at Linden Hall (Longhorsley) on 26th and 30th which was only the second record at this site in nearly ten years (NFO), Matfen on 27th (ALT), Newton Pool on 26th (JD) and Slaley Forest on 30th (STH)

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

50 were at Hepple Whitefield on 11th (TRD/JD), 48 were flushed from stubble at Bellasis Bridge on 7th (PCF), 40 at both Caistron on 9th (TRD/JD) and Low Cocklaw on 21st (TBr) and 36 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 18th (MR). One to 30 were seen at a further 15 sites throughout the month.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Five were at Boulmer on 2nd (TRD/JD), three at Low Newton on 1st (TRD/JD) and singles at Seahouses on 1st (TRD/JD) and St. Mary's Island on 28th (CDB).



A Scandinavian Rock Pipit
Newton
2nd April by Jonathon Farooqi

Scandinavian Rock Pipit *A.p. littoralis*

Two were at Boulmer on 2nd (TRD/JD) and on the beach at Low Newton on 2nd (TF/JFa). Singles were seen at Coal Road Pools (Druridge) (TRD/JD) and St. Mary's Island (MSH) on various dates throughout the month.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

A single flock was feeding in a seeded field at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 30th (MR). 45 were at Stonehaugh on 13th (PRM) and 23 at Plashetts on 6th (PCF). One to nine were seen at Jesmond Dene (Newcastle), South Gosforth and Wallington throughout the month.



A cock Chaffinch
Woolsington
by John Littleton

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

The last of the winter visitors were seen in small numbers throughout the month with one to four at Eachwick, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Hauxley, Heddon-On-The-Wall, Holy Island, Howdon Wetland NR, North Road (Berwick), Rothbury, Slaley Hall, Tynemouth and Wallington.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

Only four records for the month with the highest being 11 in a Walbottle Garden on 28th (KR/LR). Five were at Jesmond Dene (Newcastle) on 3rd (MJCo), three at Holywell Dene throughout the month (RJP) and two at South Gosforth on 18th (MJCo).

A Brambling and a Greenfinch
share a feeder in Rothbury
by Tim Dean

**Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis*

A pre-roost flock of 30 was at Backworth on 21st (CGK). Two to 17 were seen at a further eight sites throughout the month.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

An impressive 63 were at feeders at Battlesteads Hotel (Wark) on 29th (CB). 52 were trapped in a garden at Sleafy Hall after being attracted by Sunflower hearts on 28th (RMH); this was part of 126 birds trapped at this site during April. A tight flock of 22 came in off the sea at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower on 16th (SSWT). One to 15 were seen at a further 32 sites throughout the month.

A male Siskin in a Rothbury
garden
by Tim Dean
15th April

**Linnet** *Carduelis cannabina*

A flock of 20 was at Hepscott on 30th (CW) and 12 at Scremerston Station on 30th (MHu). One to five were also seen at Calder's Lead Works (Elswick), Cheswick Dunes and Howdon Wetland NR during the month.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

The month's only records were of 30 at Hemscotthill Links on 7th (TRD/JD) and a single bird still in winter plumage between Druridge Pools and East Chevington on 20th (JL).

Redpoll sp.

21 including at least two Common Redpoll with white rumps were at Corbridge on 29th (MR). Also a single flew over Fawdon on 26th (GB).

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*

15 were trapped in a garden at Sleafy Hall after being attracted by Sunflower hearts on 28th (RMH); this was part of 31 birds trapped at this site during April. 15 were also at Heddon-on-the-Wall on 22nd (JSB). One to ten were recorded at a further 18 sites throughout the month.

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

16 flew west at Prestwick Carr on 22nd (PCF). 12 were seen frequently around the south-east edge of Choppington Woods NR in first week of month (SLB/MSK). One to ten were seen throughout the month at Capheaton, Craggside, Cramlington, Linden Hall (Longhorsley), Lordenshaw, Swallow Pond, Valley Park (Cramlington) and Wideopen.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

The highest total for the month was four at Windmill Lane (Cramlington) on 16th (LJM). One to three were seen at a further 11 sites throughout the month.



A pair of Bullfinch in a Woollington garden
by John Littleton

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

35 at Whittle Dene was the highest total for the month on 1st (SR). One to nine were also at a further nine locations throughout the month.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza Schoeniclus*

11 singing males were noted over a two km square at Prestwick Carr on 12th (PCF). One to 11 were noted at a further 13 locations throughout the month.

A male Reed Bunting
Howdon Wetlands
by Colin Bradshaw

**Escapes****Muscovy Duck** - *Cairina moschata*

One was found at Swallow Pond from 17th to 30th (JPD) & last month's bird at Airy Holm Reservoir was still present on 8th (IFo).

Hybrids**Canada Goose x Swan Goose** *Branta canadensis x Anser cygnoides*

A hybrid thought to match this pairing was still present at Leazes Park until the 22nd (DM).

Birds of Unknown Origin**Parakeet sp** *Psittacula sp*

A probable Ring-necked Parakeet flew over calling loudly at Jesmond on 25th (GB).

Ring-necked Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

The long-staying individual was at Bell Villas in Ponteland on 26th (PCF)

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Bamburgh Ringing Station, Berwick Wildlife Group, 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 (Avocet to Godwit) Ian Forsyth (Turnstone 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 (Dun-nock 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 Mail 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

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. Please continue to submit any new content for the website to the main club email address at ntbcorg@gmail.com

NTBC SIGHTINGS PAGE

You now have access to post by email by sending posts to rpts517641@ntbc.org.uk. Format posts as before.

HOWARD EMBLETON OBE

Howard Embleton, a member of the Bird Club for many years has, sadly, died. He is pictured here on a birding trip with Brian Galloway.

Howard originally came from Newcastle; then his parents moved to Hexham when he was a young lad. He started in forestry at Rothbury as a teenager and planted trees on Simonside. He trained as a forester at a Forestry Commission forestry school. He had a number of posts as a forester where he worked in North Yorkshire and then in Northumberland at Redesdale, Wark, Thrunton and Harwood. He was Head Forester in charge of Harwood Forest.

I first met Howard when he was a forester in Redesdale living in a house near Catcleugh Reservoir in the 1970s. I remember receiving good site information concerning breeding Merlins when I was working on the Merlin population in Kielder Forest. Steve Perry kept me in touch when Howard moved to Lochgilphead in Argyll. He was

very successful in his career and was promoted to Forest District Manager in West Argyll at a time when very few foresters worked their way through the ranks to become a District Manager (this was normally the domain of university graduates). He was awarded an OBE in 1998 for his work in Argyll before retiring to Rothbury. Then Howard was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2007 and told he would have 2 years to live but managed five years before passing away last year at 75. Howard was a lovely man and one of nature's gentlemen. I will miss him.

Brian Little

I only met Howard annually when I delivered 'Birds in Northumbria' to his door in Rothbury. Invariably I was ushered in and presented with a cup of tea before Howard eagerly caught up with birding events in Northumberland. As Brian has intimated above he was a gentle man in the best possible sense and I shall miss our chats.

Tim Dean



APRIL 2013

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Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

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Bulletin 2013 No 5

MONTHLY SUMMARY – MAY

5th July 2013



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WeBS Coast

CLASSIFIED LIST HIGHLIGHTS

Green-winged Teal

Male at Castle Island on 6th.

Manx Shearwater

Large passage on 24th.

Great White Egret

Singles at Hauxley, Holywell Pond and Druridge Pools.

Purple Heron

A much admired adult at East Chevington on 4th and 5th. Another at Arcot Pond on 17th.

Spoonbill

One or two at Druridge and Hauxley.

Black Kite

One at West Hartford from 14th to 16th.

Avocet

Up to 11 birds present at breeding site.

Temminck's Stint

Two at Druridge on 6th and a single at Cresswell on 27th.

Pectoral Sandpiper

Another adult at Hoppen Kiln Flash on 10th and 11th.

Wood Sandpiper

Ten at Hoppen Kiln Flash on 10th represents a record spring flock for county.

Long-tailed Skua

Several reports of adults.

Black Tern

Four offshore at Hadston Carrs on 25th.

Cuckoo

Around 50 reports, a welcome sign nowadays.

Red-backed Shrike

Impressive passage this Spring.

Lesser Grey Shrike

A fine adult on 19th and 20th on Holy Island.

Icterine Warbler

Single on Holy Island on 19th.

Great Reed Warbler

Singing male at East Chevington.

Collared Flycatcher

Stunning male at Newton. First county record.

Ashy-headed Wagtail

One still at South Newsham flash, Blyth on 1st.

Grey-headed Wagtail

Male on Holy Island on 25th.

Common Rosefinch

Males at Slaley and Holy Island.

Rustic Bunting

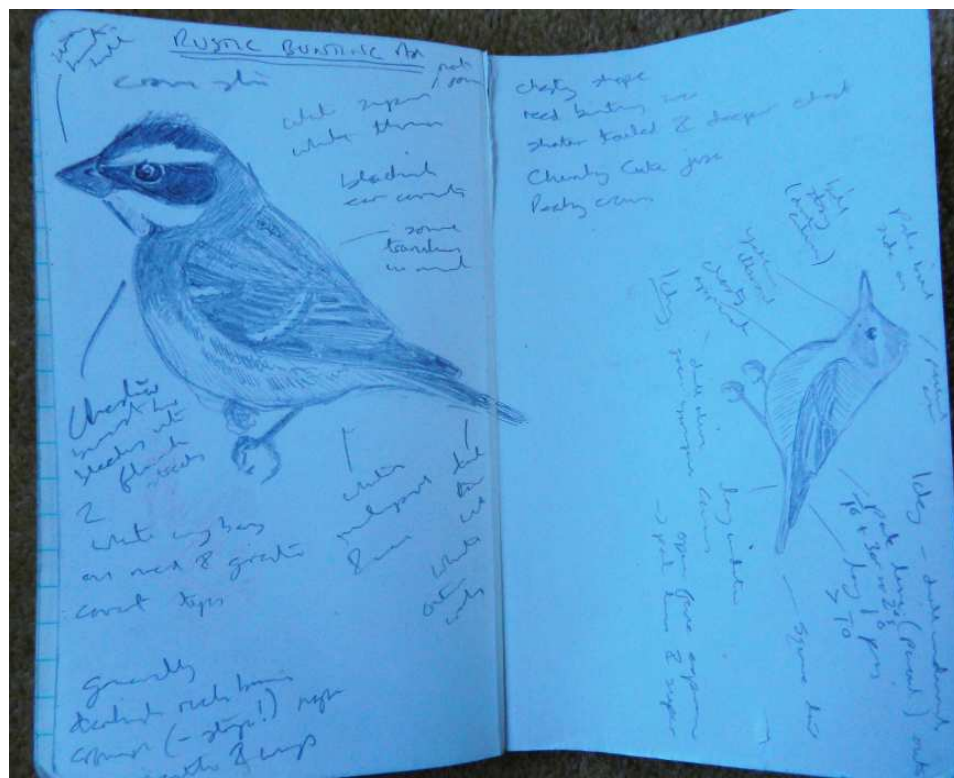
Male on Holy Island on 19th.

COMMITTEE NEWS

NTBC Data Manager – vacancy

Mike Carr's field notes from a great day
on Holy Island on 19th May

A Rustic Bunting and Icterine Warbler
grace facing pages



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 2011 page 228.

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

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Peak concentrations were 122 on the River Tweed at New Water Haugh on 26th (MHu), 110 at Killingworth Lake on 17th (LJM), 48 at the Tweed Estuary on 10th (MHu), and 12-16 at Big Waters and Castle Island. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
East Chevington	2	11 (6,5)	JPD. On 28th
Yeavinger	1	9	TRD/JD. On 12th
Holy Island Lough	1	7	IK. pair took young away from Lough probably due to Otter presence
Arcot Pond	1	6	LJM. On 16th, down to 2 by 26th
Big Waters	1	5	GB. On 25th
Swallow Pond	1	5	JPD. On 31st
Branton GP	1	2	LJM. On 21st

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

One was at Branton GP on 21st (LJM).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

18 were at Cocklawburn on 2nd (MHu), ten at Alnwick on 2nd (JMA), ten at Plenmeller Common on 25th (DM et al.), and two to eight at/over Arcot and Holywell Ponds, Cramlington, Halton-Lea-Gate (RSPB reserve Geltsdale), Killingworth Lake and Silverlink CP. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Hedgeley GP	7	33	LJM. On 21st
Caistron	5	36	TRD/JD. On 20th
Branton GP	3	19	LJM. On 21st
Woodhorn Flashes	1	6	LJM/PJA. On 14th
Cocklawburn	1	5	MHu. On 31st
Dukes Pond	1	1	JPD. On 14th



A Canada Goose looks after the year's brood
Marden Quarry
15th May by Adriana Buskin

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Newcastle Leazes Park held 25 on 13th (DM), 12 were at Holywell Pond on 6th (DM), six pairs at Bothal Pond on 25th (TD), and two to seven birds at/over Arcot Pond, the *Beehive* Flash (Earsdon), Big Waters, Cramlington and Grindon Lough. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Branton GP	4	20	LJM. On 21st
Hedgeley GP	3	20	LJM. On 21st
Halton-Lea-Gate (RSPB Geltsdale)	2	10	SW. On 28th
Bank's Pond, Dinnington	1	8	PCF. On 6th
Scaup Farm, Kielder	1	7	MD. 2 to 3 day old young on 8th
Backworth Pond	1	5	MNC. On 28th
Bakethin Reservoir	1	5	MD. About 7 day old young on 21st
Druridge Pools	1	5	PCF. On 24th
Ellington Pond	1	5	TB. On 9th
Castle Island	1	4	STH. On 6th
Catcleugh Reservoir	1	3	MD. On 30th

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

About 20 flew NE at Leaplish (Kielder) on 14th while the observer was carrying out a Woodcock survey (MD). Two flew N over Ellington on 8th (TB), and singles were at Marden Quarry on 6th (AC), Capheaton Lake on 15th (TRD/JD) and Holy Island on 26th (SR/AH).

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

15 pale-bellied *hrota* race birds were still at Fenham Flats on 6th (TRD).

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Budle Bay held 42 on 26th (CGK), 11 were at Bradford Kaims on 29th (GB/LAR), and four to six at Branton GP, Elswick, Foxton Bend and Hoppen Kiln Pools. One to two were also at/over Big Waters, Bothal, Cocklawburn and Holywell Ponds, Middleton, Monks' House Pool, Prestwick Carr, the Tweed Estuary and West Hartford. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Hoppen Kiln Pools	1	6	CGK. On 26th
Cresswell Pond	1	2	STH/IFo. On 31st

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

A pair was at Low Carritheth (Hesleyside) on the River Tyne at 11th (JR). Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Hesleyside, Bellingham	1	3	AJR. On 30th

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

150 were still at Bothal Pond on 1st (IRD); a significant count for this late date. Six drakes were at two different pools at Plenmeller Common on 12th (AA), three (two drakes) were at Hauxley Reserve on 27th (STH), and one to two were at Branton GP, Capheaton Lake, Castle Island, Cresswell Pond, Grindon Lough and St Mary's on several dates between 4th-25th.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Largest counts were 30 at Druridge Pools on 31st (TRD/JD), 25 at Cresswell Pond on 1st (IRD), 20 at Castle Island on 28th (STH), 12-13 at Bothal Pond (TD) and East Chevington (TRD), ten at Bell's Pond, Cresswell on 6th (GB), and five at Big Waters. One to two were at Arcot and Holywell Ponds, Castron and Longhirst Flash. More unusual were single pairs at the Blyth Estuary on 27th (MHP) and on the River Rede at Otterburn on 21st (IRD).

Teal *Anas crecca*

Five (three drakes) were at Big Waters on 1st (GB), two at Backworth, Budle Bay, Coatenhall Reservoir (Allendale), Hauxley Reserve and Longhirst Flash on single dates until 26th, and one at West Hartford on 1st.

A drake Green-winged Teal
6th May at Castle Island
by Chris Barlow



Green-winged Teal *Anas carolinensis*

A drake was at Castle Island on 6th (STH).

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Peak counts were 47 at Newcastle Leazes Park on 1st (DM), 32 at the Tweed Estuary on 10th (MHu), 30 at Mootlaw Quarry on 18th (ALT), and ten to 22 at Arcot, Bothal and Holywell Ponds, Big Waters, Byker and Prestwick Carr. A pair were found dead on the side of the A1 road, near Alnwick, on 9th (BS/DWS). Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Swallow Pond	3	24 (11,7,6)	JPD. On 25th
Branton GP	3	20	LJM. On 21st
Castle Island	2	13 (8,5)	STH. On 28th
Jesmond Dene	2	12 (8,4)	MJCo. Brood of 4 on 5th and brood of 8 on 17th.
Newcastle Leazes Park	2	4 (2,2)	DM. On 1st
Hoppen Kiln Pools	1	10	CGK. On 26th.
Holywell Dene	1	9	RJP. On 14th. The first young for many years at this site
Monks' House Pool	1	8	DM. On 25th
Prestwick Carr	1	8	PCF. On 29th
Big Waters	1	7	GB. On 27th
Coatenhall Reservoir, Allendale	1	7	DM. On 25th
Arcot Pond	1	5	LJM. On 16th
Sipton Burn, Allendale	1	5	DM. On 25th
Killingworth Lake	1	2	LJM. On 22nd

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

Two drakes were at Druridge Pools on 11th (NFO), following one on 4th (NFO). Single drakes were also at Holy Island Lough (AH) and Warkworth Lane Ponds on 5th (TB), Castle Island (TB) and Holywell Pond on 6th (DM), and, more unusually, Holy Island causeway on 31st (AC).



Two drake Garganey at Druridge Pools
Tim Dean
11th May

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Two flew N at Seaton Sluice on 24th (SSWT). Druridge Pools held eight drakes on 1st (TRD/JD), five drakes on 14th (LJM/PJA), and single pairs on 15th and 19th (TD/TRD). Two pairs were at Killingworth Lake on 1st (BMo), four (three drakes) at Bell's Pond (Cresswell) on 6th (GB), four (three drakes) at Swallow Pond on 11th (JPD), and single pairs at Cresswell Pond, East Chevington and Monks' House Pool on occasional dates.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Swallow Pond held 12 on 5th (JPD), six were at Holywell Pond on 25th (DM/ALT/HD), five at Arcot Pond on 26th (STH *et al.*) and two to three there on several further dates (DM/LJM *et al.*), four (three drakes) at Big Waters on 1st (GB), a pair at Burradon Pond (LJM), and a drake at Bothal Pond. A drake, with Tufted Ducks, at Newcastle Exhibition Park on 10th was highly unusual for the site (GB).

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Three flew N at Newbiggin on 17th (IFo) and two N at Seaton Sluice on 24th (SSWT). Peak counts were 39 at Holywell Pond on 7th (MHp), 33 at Branton GP on 21st (LJM), 31 at Swallow Pond on 14th (JPD), 20-27 at Hedgeley GP, Holywell Pond, Ladyburn Lake and Newcastle Exhibition and Leazes Parks, and ten to 18 at Arcot and Bothal Ponds, Marden Quarry and Wansbeck Business Park (Ashington). One to five were at Big Waters, Coatenhall Reservoir and Cocklawburn Pond.

Scaup *Aythya marila*

A drake and two ducks were inland at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 15th (SR). A drake, first noted in April 2013, was at Bothal Pond until 10th (TB/IRD *et al.*), and a drake was at Arcot Pond on 1st (PJA).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

54 were at Cocklawburn on 2nd (MHu), 36 at the Blyth Estuary on 16th (LJM), and one to eight at Berwick North Shore, Budle Bay, Seaton Sluice and the Tweed Estuary. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods/ crèches	No. of young	Observer/notes
Budle Bay	1	2	CGK. On 26th.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

One flew N at Seaton Sluice (SSWT) and St Mary's on 24th (JPD). Two were at Cresswell Pond on 1st and 4th (TRD/JD/NFO) and two at Stag Rocks on 6th (TRD).

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

A total of 91 flew N at Newbiggin on 17th (IFo), following 50 N and eight S there on 6th (STH), while 28 flew N at St Mary's (JPD/MPF) and 14 N and 20 S at Seaton Sluice on 24th (SSWT), and ten N at Beadnell on 25th (DM *et al.*). In the north of the county, 200 were at Holy Island on 5th and 12th (SR), 200 at Stag Rocks on 6th (TRD), 120 at Cocklawburn on 16th (BWG), 74 at Cheswick (MHu), 38-40 off Druridge (JPD/MPF) and Spittal Bay (MHu), and five at Seahouses. A drake was at Derwent Reservoir on 2nd (IFo).

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

One was with Common Scoters off Seaton Sluice on 20th (SSWT).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

12 were still at East Chevington north pool on 5th (TB), four at Berwick on 3rd (MHu), three at Grindon Lough on 25th (DM/ALT/HD), and two at Fenham Flats on 6th (TRD), Swallow Pond on 8th (JPD) and the regular breeding site on 5th (with a female seen near the latter site on 20th). Singles were at Bothal Pond, Derwent Reservoir, East Chevington and Holy Island until 17th.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

25, mostly in pairs (some displaying) were at the St Cuthbert's Island area of Holy Island on 25th (IK), ten were at East Chevington on 4th (display noted; JPD), nine at Fenham Flats on 6th (TRD), and five at the Blyth Estuary on 5th (MHP). Four were at Cresswell Pond on 1st (TRD/JD), and one to three there occasionally until 21st (STH/IFo), three at Spittal Bay on 7th (MHu), and one to two at Budle Bay, Castle Island, Druridge Pools and East Chevington until 26th.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

A flock of 17 flew N over Holy Island Snook on 21st (JPD), 25 drakes were at the Rivers Tweed/Whiteadder confluence on 22nd (BWG), nine were at Holy Island on 25th (ADM), seven (six drakes) at Kielder Burn on 20th (MD), and four at Airy Holm Reservoir (IFo) and near Haltwhistle (DLo). One to two were also at Castle Island, Corbridge, Derwent Reservoir, Devil's Water (Dilston), Linbriggs, Rothbury, Thrum Mill, West Woodburn and Wooler Haugh. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Corbridge	1	4	DM/ALT/HD. Small ducklings on 25th

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

At least ten were in the Harthope Valley on 1st (ASJ). On 25th six were on Allendale Common, five at Sipton Burn and two at Hawsen Burn and Pithouse Fell (DM/ALT/HD).

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

Only two records were received. On 12th a displaying pair was at Plennmeller (AA) and on 25th a male was at Shieldbridge (Allendale) (DM/ALT/HD).

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

The peak count of only three was at Hartside on 20th (SW). One to two were noted at Dipton House, Earle (Wooler), Edlingham, Glanton, Harthope Valley, Hedgeley GP, Helm, Lucker, Rothley Crag, Widdrington and Widehope.

A Red-legged Partridge in the Harthope Valley
by Chris Barlow on 16th May

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

The peak count was six in the Spindlestone-Lucker on 26th (CGK/GPK). One to two, mainly in pairs, were seen at Backworth, Beal Point, Big Waters, Blyth Cemetery, Coatenhall Reservoir (Allendale), Cresswell Links, Druridge Lane, East Chevington, Ellington, Fenham-le-Moor, Hauxley, Hemscott Hill, High Chibburn, Palm Strothers (Slaley), West Hartford and Widdrington.



Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Four (one male) were in a Walbottle garden on 12th (KR/LR). A male was in the unusual location of Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 1st.

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

On 24th five flew N at St Mary's Island and Seaton Sluice Watch Tower (JPD/SSWT) and singles flew N at Spittal Bay on 23rd and N at Beadnell on 25th. Eight were on the sea in Druridge Bay on 28th (JPD). Offshore one to three were noted at Cheswick, Cocklawburn, East Chevington, Newbiggin and Newton Point.

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

Five flew N at St Mary's Island on 24th (JPD/AC), when one flew N at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) (IK). One flew N at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower on 30th (SSWT).

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

N movements noted were 200 in one hour at Seaton Sluice on 24th (SSWT), 45/hour at Spittal Bay on 23rd (MHu) and 12 in 1 hour 30 minutes at Newbiggin on 17th (IFo). At Whitley Bay cliffs 12 pairs were noted at nests on 1st (JMA). Elsewhere one to two were noted at Stag Rocks and Berwick North Shore.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

On 24th 397 flew N in one hour at St Mary's Island (JPD/AC), 180 flew N at Seaton Sluice (SSWT) and 60/hour flew N at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island). Six flew N at Newbiggin on 29th and a single flew N at St Mary's Island on 17th.

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

On 24th 1,600 flew N in one hour at Seaton Sluice and 1,500 flew N in the same period of time at Holy Island (MJC). 1,200/h flew N at Spittal Bay on 23rd and 1,000/h flew N at Berwick Pier on 15th (MHu). Smaller N movements were 40 at Newbiggin on 29th and 25 at Beadnell on 25th. 50 were off Stag Rocks and 25 at Low Newton on 16th, and 12 at Newton Point on 8th. One to two were seen off Druridge Pools and East Chevington.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

The peak counts were 30 at Blyth South Harbour on 23rd (STH/PJA), 11 at Derwent Reservoir on 12th (MHu) and ten at Big Waters on 1st (GB) and Berwick North Shore on 12th (MHu). Six to nine were noted in the Berwick area at Meadow Haven, North Shore and in the Tweed Estuary. One to three were noted at Arcot Pond, Beadnell, Branton GP, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington North Pool, Holywell Dene and Newcastle Business Park (River Tyne).

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

On 25th 40+ were off Stag Rocks (DM/ALT/HD). One to five were noted at Blyth South Harbour, Meadow Haven (Berwick), and the Tweed Estuary.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

One was at Elwick Flash on 31st (AC).



The Great White Egret at Hauxley NR on 9th May by Alan Jack

Great White Egret *Ardea alba*

An adult was at Hauxley NR from 5th-9th (JPD/TB *et al.*). One flew onto Holywell Pond on the evening on 16th (BMo) and a single was at Druridge Pools on 17th (IRD/TB).

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Very few were reported with peak counts of three at Arcot Pond, on 4th/16th (DM/LJM), a juvenile being present here on 26th (STH/PJA), Holywell Pond on 6th (DM) and in the Tweed Estuary on 10th (MHu). Singles were noted at Allen Banks, Farnley Haughs (Corbridge), Holywell Dene, Newcastle Business Park and flying E over Southfield Green (Cramlington).

A Grey Heron
5th May
Chris Barlow
Hauxley NR

**Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea*

One was well watched at East Chevington South Pool on 4th/5th (IRD *et al.*). It or another was seen at Arcot Pond on 17th (ASJ).



Left the Black Stork fleetingly seen over Corby's Crag

Photograph by Peter Tapsell on 1st May

Black Stork *Ciconia Nigra*

A bird flew over Corby's Crag late morning on 1st May (Bird Guides). It was harassed by a Buzzard as it flew N.

Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

Two were present at Druridge Pools on 30th (IK/ASH), whilst a single in full breeding plumage was at Hauxley NR on 27th/28th (TB/JPD).

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

The peak counts were ten at Swallow Pond on 7th (JPD), five at Big Waters on 1st (GB), and four at Holywell Pond on 6th (DM), Bothal Pond on 25th (TD) and Arcot Pond on 28th (LJM). Three were at Hedgeley GP on 21st (LJM). Two were noted at East Chevington and Longhirst Flash and singles at Castron, Capheaton, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Farnley (Corbridge), Heighley Gate Garden Centre Pond, Middleton and Newton Pool.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

The peak counts were five at East Chevington North Pool on 4th/27th (TB) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 29th (SR). Three were at Derwent Reservoir until 8th (IFo). A pair was present at Bothal Pond throughout the month (TF/JFa). Pairs were also noted at Colt Crag Reservoir on 2nd (RMH), Killingworth Lake, (nesting) on 17th, Airey Holm Reservoir on 23rd and displaying at Big Waters on 30th. Singles were noted at Branton GP, Holywell Pond and Swallow Pond.

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

One in partial summer plumage was in Spittal Bay on 7th (MHu). One was noted on 21st in the unusual location of Nelly's Moss Lake (Cragside) (TRD/JD). Two were with Common Scoter at Seaton Sluice on 26th (DLo). Singles were in Budle Bay on 9th, at Ross Back Sands on 20th and inland at Swallow Pond on 24th.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

Two pairs frequented one confidential site, whilst one pair was at another.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

A bird was found at West Hartford on 14th (GMi/STH) and was seen on 15th (LJM/PJA *et al.*) and again early morning on 16th (JPD) before flying off NW. It or another was seen at Hauxley NR on 27th (ML *per* JPD).



The West Hartford Black Kite photographed by Paul Massey on 16th May

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Two birds were near Blanchland on 27th (AJN) and single birds were at Derwent Reservoir on 2nd (IFo) and 6th (JPD), Linnels Bridge on 4th (PRF), Low Waskerley on 5th and 26th (IFo), Slaley Forest on 6th (JPD) and Longframlington Common on 23rd (IRD).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

East Chevington had three birds, a male and two females, on 5th (TB) and up to two seen throughout the month. (IRD/TRD/JD *et al.*). Two birds also flew NW near Kielder on 4th (MD). A female was noted at Hauxley NWT on 5th (IFo/STH).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

A ring-tail was noted flying NW in the south west of the County on 2nd (DLo) and another was in the north on 16th (SR).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Three birds were seen at Swallow Pond on 5th (JPD), and a single bird was seen at Rothbury throughout the Month (TRD). Other single birds were seen at Cramlington, Holywell Dene, Letah Wood (Hexham), South Tyne Trail (near Haltwhistle) and a bird which was found dead entangled in a wire fence at Widdrington on 6th (GB). and two birds were at Shiremoor on 1st (CGK), Monkseaton (Whitley Bay) on 3rd (MSH), Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 24th.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Five birds were up in the air together at West Hartford on 7th (LJM); three were on the South Tyne Trail (near Haltwhistle) on 2nd (DLo). Two birds were at Arcot Pond on 6th (STH) and at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 31st (SR). Single were at 15 sites during the Month.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetuss*

Holy Island had single birds there on 12th (AH/ADM) 26th (IK) and 28th (SR), another single bird was sitting in a tree by the river at Wylam on 30th (MIM).

Kestrel *Falco tinninculus*

A pair was noted at Hesleyside on 19th (JR) and two were also seen at Big Waters on 25th (GB). Single birds were at eight other sites including a bird at Lower Ouseburn (Byker) on 21st which caught a rat (DM).

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Two sightings this month with a single which flew over the road near Rothbury on 9th (TRD) and another which flew along the Harthope Valley on 19th (BCFT).

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Only two records involving a single bird at a confidential site on 2nd and 25th.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Three birds were heard squealing at Gosforth Park NR on 25th DM/STH/AT/HD). Singles were at Swallow Pond on 3rd and 11th (JPD), Big Waters on 10th (GB), Backworth on 19th (CGK) Castron on 20th (JD) and at Prestwick Carr on 28th (PCF).

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Six birds were at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 1st (DM), and three were at East Cramlington Pond NWT on 28th (LJM), two were noted at Wallington Hall on 2nd (KR/LR) and Arcot Pond on 4th (DM). Single birds were at Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 14th (DM) and Jesmond Dene on 25th (MJCo).

Coot *Fulica atra*

16 birds were at Bothal Pond on 12th (TD), 14 were at Arcot Pond on 4th (DM) and 13 at Big Waters on 1st (GB). One to ten birds were at ten sites during the month.

Common Crane *Grus grus*

A bird was noted on three or four occasions near Longhorsley during the month (*per* TB).

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Records from Cresswell Pond dominated reports with a peak of 11 birds on 11th (NFO). Copulation was noted on the 8th (DLo) followed by two sitting birds on 11th, three on nests on 15th and four on nests from 17th/21st (IRD/TRD/JD *et al.*) albeit one was almost flooded on the latter date. A huge sea and a very strong NE wind completely flooded out all the sitting birds on the 24th (*per* ADMc).

Birds were also seen occasionally at nearby sites; reports included two at Warkworth Lane on 5th and on a roadside flash near Linton Pond on 24th-25th, and singles flying around Ellington Pond before flying off towards Warkworth Lane on 12th and another flying N at Hemscott Hill on 22nd (TB). Warkworth Flash also hosted one bird on 28th (JPD).

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Non-breeding summering birds totalled 140 in the high-tide roost at St Cuthbert's Island (Holy Island) on 26th (IK) and to the north some 114 were at Berwick North Shore on 12th (MHu). Peaks in the south included 53 at Tynemouth on 11th (DRW) and 52 at Hauxley on 8th (ASJ). Budle Bay held 23 on 26th (CGK).

Ten to 12 were noted at Branton GP, St Mary's Island and Wooler Haugh (RWM/MIM/JMA/JR) and proof of breeding occurred at the Alwin Valley (adult sat on nest on 25th), College Valley (one chick on 26th), Hauxley NWT (three chicks on 27th), Linbriggs (Upper Coquetdale) (adult on nest on 20th) and Redesmouth Bridge (three eggs on 4th and two young on 26th) (MJC/STH/JR *et al.*). One to four were also noted at approx. ten other locations.

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

20 lingered at Prestwick Carr until the 1st (PCF) whilst an inland group of 35 at Blanchland Moor included some displaying birds on 3rd (ASJ). Other migrants included nine at Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay) on 4th (MNC), two at East Chevington on 11th (NFO) and a late one at Spital (Newbiggin) in coastal fog on 19th (GB). Ten were near Meadow Cottage (Allendale) on 25th (DM/ALT/HD); three birds included one in display at Dardon Lough-Grasslees on 8th (CW) and singles were noted at Pithouse Fell on 25th (DM/ALT/HD) and at Troughend Common on 4th (AB/LB). A late 'Northern' *altifrons* bird was seen at Backworth on 6th (CGK).

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Five summer-plumaged birds were seen from Holy Island causeway on 6th (TRD/JD).

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Breeding reports included 23 pairs at Blanchland Moor on 3rd, ten pairs at Druridge Pools on 20th (ASJ), six pairs at Meadow Cottage, Allendale on 25th (DM), three pairs at Holywell Pond on 6th (DM) and one to two pairs at Blanchland Moor, Coatenhall Reservoir, Seaton Delaval Flash and Sipton Burn (DM/ALT/HD). The first chicks were noted at Big Waters (three small young) on 12th (GB) and additional reports of young came from Hoppen Kiln Flash (two broods), Hauxley NWT (two chicks) and Scaffold Hill Farm (three chicks), whilst on Holy Island the first small young of the year were seen when three broods were noted on 25th, some three weeks later than normal (IK/CGK/STH/JPD *et al.*). Birds showing signs of breeding e.g. display, were also noted at Darras Hall, Holywell Pond and Linhope (Upper Breamish) and single-figure reports also came from Dudlees (Otterburn Ranges), South Tyne Trail (near Hexham), West Hartford and Wooler Haugh.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Reports of one to two came from three confidential sites (south, central and north Northumberland) during the month. Elsewhere, five were noted at Castron on 20th (TRD/JD) and three at Prestwick Carr on 3rd (JPD). Single birds appeared at South Newsham Flash (Blyth) on 4th (MHP) and West Hartford on 10th (LJM), whilst another at Hoppen Kiln Flash on 27th was the observer's first sighting in this 10km square NU13 in over 34 years of regular birding in the area (CGK/GPK).

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

May is a typically good month for this species involving both passage and breeding birds. High coastal counts included ca.300 at Holy Island causeway on 6th (TRD) and ca.200 in the same area on 26th (IK) falling to 125 on 29th (GB). Some 48 passed N at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) on 24th (MJC). Counts at the Blyth Estuary included 163 on 16th (LJM), 193 on 26th (AC) and 236 on 27th (MHP). Coastal reports elsewhere in the north included 35 at Boulmer on 4th (NFO) and 12 on the Tweed Estuary on 14th/31st (MHu). Flooded fields, roadside pools and ponds also attracted birds and single-figure records came from Cresswell Pond (maximum five birds), Druridge Pools coal road flash (one), Hoppen Kiln Flash (seven), Prestwick Carr (six), South Newsham Flash (three) and West Hartford (six). Breeding was noted at North Blyth (two young

on 24th) (PCF) and possible breeding was noted at Caistron and Hoppen Kiln Flash (display) (TRD/CGK).

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Well reported, especially in the first half of the month; the maximum count involved 23 moving NE at dusk at Cresswell Pond on 4th (PJA). East Chevington held 11 on both 11th-12th (NFO) plus fewer numbers on several other dates and Holy Island attracted birds throughout the month with a high of six on 19th (MJC/ADM). One to three were also seen at Alnmouth, Beacon Hill (Longhorsely), Berwick North Shore, Blyth, Boulmer, Cocklawburn, Cresswell, Druridge Pools, Ellington, Hauxley, Hoppen Kiln Flash, Low Hauxley, Newbiggin, Prestwick Carr, Seaton Sluice, St Mary's Island and Warkworth Lane. Inland reports included one calling as it moved N at Stamfordham on 6th (EC) and another calling over Shillmoor Farm (Upper Coquetdale) on 11th (JR).

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Saltmarsh at The Snook (Holy Island) held ca.130 summering birds on 27th (IK), 18 were on the Tweed Estuary on 10th (MHu) and 14 were in fields at the river Blyth on 31st (GB). Some 15 pairs were counted on Blanchland Moor on 3rd (ASJ). One to six were elsewhere and displaying birds were at Longhorsely Moor on 31st and Troughend Common on 4th (AB/LB).

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

The wetland habitat at Druridge Pools proved attractive; a peak of 24 was noted on 21st (TRD/JD) with two to eight seen on three further dates (GB/STH/IFo). Six birds were at East Chevington on 28th (JPD) with two here on 25th (DM/ALT/HD), two were also seen at Bothal Pond on 16th/20th and Warkworth Lane on 5th (TB), whilst singles appeared at Arcot Pond on 4th (DM), Holy Island Rocket Field Pools on 12th/24th/25th involving two different birds (ADM/MJC/IK), Hoppen Kiln Flash on 13th (JD) and West Hartford on 5th (LJM/STH).

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

The high tide roost at Black Law (Ross, Lindisfarne NNR) totalled ca.250 non-breeders in winter plumage on 26th (IK) and 100 birds in non-breeding plumage were on Holy Island flats on 29th (GB). Hauxley NWT attracted two on 5th (STH/IFo/TB) and singles were at Hauxley on 8th (DLo) and East Chevington on 12th (NFO).

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

A notable passage occurred at Holy Island when 110 flew N past Emmanuel Head during 1300-1405 on 24th (MJC). On the mainland 18 were in the Tweed Estuary on 10th (MHu), 12 at Newbiggin on 19th and two to eight at Boulmer, Cheswick, Cresswell Pond, Hauxley and Low Newton. One was present at Tynemouth Boating Lake from 13th to at least 16th.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Eight were at Hauxley NR on 5th (TB) and one there on 27th; singles were found at Cresswell Pond on 11th and in the Blyth Estuary on 27th.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

A female was at Druridge Pools on 11th (STH/PJA/NFO) and male and female there on 20th (TD), the male sporting an orange ruff.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

At Seaton Sluice Watch Tower 30 flew N on 30th. Earlier, 34 were at Cocklawburn on 7th (MHu), 30 at St Mary's on 1st (JMA), 28 at Cheswick on 2nd (MHu), 23 at Blyth South Beach on 13th (LJM) and 15 at Holy Island on 29th (GB). Small numbers occurred at Cresswell Pond, Low Newton, Newbiggin, Stag Rocks and the Tweed Estuary.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Easily the highest count was of ca. 250 from Holy Island causeway on 6th (TRD). Along the coast numbers were low, generally eight or fewer at six locations with a maximum of 15 at East Chevington on 15th. Inland 12 were noted at Grindon Lough on 12th (ASJ), including some display; four were at West Hartford on 11th and three at Hoppen Kiln Flash on 10th.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Typically, numbers dwindled with 15 at Stag Rocks on 6th and 14 at Holy Island on 5th the most. Five or fewer were noted at Berwick, Cheswick, Hauxley, Low Newton, Seaton Sluice and Tynemouth up to 8th and two at Berwick on 12th were the latest reported.

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

The third individual of spring was found at Hoppen Kiln Flash on 10th/11th (TRD/JD).

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

It was widely reported throughout with maxima of 17 along the Coquet from Sharperton to Hepple on 25th (ASJ) and five pairs on stretches of the South Tyne near Haltwhistle on 2nd (DLo); eight were present in the early morning at Tynemouth on 16th (DRW) before flying high N. Four to six were noted in the Breamish Valley, at Caistron, Derwent Reservoir, Rothbury and Wooler Haugh and one or two at a further 26 places.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

A light passage involved two in the R Blyth estuary on 5th (MHp), two at Hoppen Kiln Flash on 11th (TRD/JD) and singles at Backworth and West Hartford on 3rd, Tweedmouth on 4th, Blyth on 6th, the Blyth Estuary and West Hartford on 8th and at Caistron on 20th,

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

The 'astonishing sight' of ten feeding together greeted the observer at Hoppen Kiln Flash on 10th (TRD), believed to be a record spring flock for the County; four remained next day. Four were at Druridge Pools on 17th (TB/IRD) and two at West Hartford on 8th (LJM). Singles appeared at West Hartford on 2nd and 10th, at St Mary's on 8th, Druridge Pools on 9th and 11th, Hoppen Kiln Flash on 16th, Caistron on 20th and Elwick Flash on 26th.



A Wood Sandpiper at Caistron on 12th May
by Peter Tapsell

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

A high-tide roost at Tweedmouth (Blakewell) held 32 on 4th (MHu). Otherwise only one or two were reported from Blanchland Moor, Branton GP, Castle Island, Grindon Lough, Middleton and the R Tweed estuary.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Roding was noted at Matfen on 19th (ALT) and at Slaley on 25th (DM *et al.*); one flushed at Longhorsley on 26th (AB/LB).

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

On Blanchland Moor 15 were displaying on 3rd (ASJ) and four pairs did so at Longframlington Common on 8th (IRD). Drumming was also noted from singles on 25th at Allendale, Druridge Pools, Prestwick Carr and Slaley. The only others reported were singletons at Druridge Pools on 1st and on the lower slope of Hedgehope on 5th.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Two sub adults flew N at St Mary's during 1030-1730 on 24th (JPD/MPF/AS).

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

At St Mary's 15 flew N on 24th during 1030-1730 (JPD/MPF/AS). A total of seven flew N off Seaton Sluice Watch Tower with a maximum of four on 24th. Two flew N at Newbiggin in 1.5 hours on 17th (IFo) and one moved N there on 30th (IK).

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*

Two adults flew N off St Mary's during 1030-1730h on 24th (JPD/MPF/AS) and at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower the same day.

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

On 24th 15 moved N at St Mary's (JPD/MPF/AS/AC), 13 did so off Seaton Sluice Watch Tower and one at Holy Island. One flew N over Holy Island on 29th and singles were noted at Newbiggin on 6th and Cocklawburn on 18th.

Auk *sp*

Very strong north-easterly winds on 24th initiated a huge coastal movement of sea birds, including large numbers of auks, almost entirely razorbills and guillemots. On Holy Island, 1,000/h moved N and 100/h S in the early afternoon (MJC) and 'several thousands' moved N at Seaton Sluice throughout the day (SSWT). During the previous week on 17th, mixed flocks of razorbills and guillemots, numbering 640 in 1.5 hours, moved N at Newbiggin (IFo).

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

Very few were reported during the huge auk movement on 24th when only eight were recorded moving N at St Mary's Island in seven hours' sea-watching (JPD) and only one was noted at Seaton Sluice (SSWT). Thirteen also flew N on 29th-30th at Seaton Sluice (SSWT). Three were at Bamburgh, Stag Rocks on 16th with a single bird at Newbiggin on 29th (TRD).

Razorbill *Alca torda*

A lone bird was noted on 29th at Newbiggin (TRD).

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

At Berwick Pier on 15th, 860/h moved N on 15th (MHu). Twenty were at Newbiggin on 29th, ten at Newton Point on 8th (TRD) with one to seven at four sites elsewhere.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

Eight were at Budle Bay on 27th (CGK) and elsewhere, one to two were recorded at six sites, from St Mary's Island-Holy Island, from 5th onwards.

Black Tern *Chilidonias niger*

During the impressive movement which occurred on 24th, during strong north-easterly winds, four were watched for 20 minutes, dip-feeding close inshore over the sea at Hadston Carrs, before moving off N (JSB/EC).

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Away from the breeding colonies a maximum gathering of ca.100 was recorded at Berwick Meadow Haven on 22nd (MHu) and 52 were on St Cuthbert's Island (Holy Island) on 29th (ADM); lesser counts of 15-34 were recorded at Berwick Meadow Haven on 14th (MHu), East Chevington on 7th (TRD), off Seaton Burn on 6th (DM) and on the Tweed Estuary on 22nd (MHu). One to ten were at eight other sites from Berwick-Newbiggin throughout the month.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Present throughout the month at East Chevington with a maximum 20 recorded on 1st (TRD) and one to six at other coastal sites, namely Bamburgh (Stag Rocks), Cresswell Pond, Hauxley and Low Newton. At inland sites five to seven were at Big Waters on various dates (GB), four at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 5th (ALT) and one to two at Arcot Pond, Backworth, Bothal Pond, Holywell Pond and Prestwick Carr.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

A single bird, the first of the year, was in Amble Harbour on 16th (JPD/MPF) and another single flew S at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) on 24th (MJC).

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

Poorly reported this month with a maximum of four at St Mary's Island on 1st (JMA) and one to two at East Chevington from 1st-4th (TB/TRD/JD), at Newbiggin on 29th and Hauxley on 31st (TRD/JD).

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

At Newbiggin on 17th, 73 moved N in 1.5 hours (IFo) but on 24th, during the heavy passage of sea birds, 'many hundreds' per hour moved N at Hadston (JSB/EC) with 100/h passing N at Emmanuel Head, Holy Island (MJC). The gull roost in the River Tweed Estuary contained a maximum of 120 on 31st (MHu) with 30 at Bamburgh Stag Rocks on 16th and 20 at Low Newton on the same day (TRD/JD). On 16th, 24 were noted collecting nest material of mud and sea-weed from the exposed mud flats on the River Tyne near Elswick Wharf (DM). One to three were at Backworth, Boulmer and Hauxley and an unusual record was of an unfortunate individual found as prey in a Peregrine nest in the Border Forest (Kielder) on 20th (MD).

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

At Branton GP on 21st at least 50 pairs were recorded nesting (LJM). In Budle Bay, 65 1st-summer birds were observed on 26th (CGK), 22 were at Holywell Pond on 6th (DM) and eight were recorded in a WeBS count at the River Tweed Estuary on 10th (MHu). One and six were seen at Jesmond Dene and West Hartford respectively.

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Four birds moved N at Seaton Sluice during the last week of the month (SSWT). On 17th, three were at East Chevington, with a maximum of seven there on 27th (TB) and from 20th-31st one to six, the majority immatures, were recorded from Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools East Chevington and St Mary's Island (JPD/TRD/MPF/STH/IFo *et al.*). Elsewhere, an adult and an immature were on the River Tweed Estuary on 22-23rd (MHu).

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

The only record was of a 1st-summer bird which lingered at Newbiggin on 6th (STH).

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Forty birds moved N in an hour at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) during the heavy passage movement on 24th (MJC) and on the 22nd, 84 'storm bound' immature birds were in the River Tweed Estuary (MHu). Two immatures were each recorded at Big Waters and Cocklawburn.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

At a breeding site on Bassington Drive (Cramlington), 19 were present on 7th (LJM). In Jesmond Dene, 30 were on Paddy Freeman's Lake on 14th (MJCo) and double-figure counts elsewhere, on various dates, were 21-31 at Bradford Kaims, Budle Bay, the River Tyne (Elswick Wharf to Newcastle Business Park), Swallow Pond and West Hartford (JPD/TRD/STH/CGK/DM). One to six were at Arcot Pond, Cramlington (Valley Park), Exhibition Park, Leazes Park, the River Tweed Estuary, and a Walbottle garden.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argentatus*

At the breeding site in Bassington Drive (Cramlington), 18 were present on 7th (LJM). WeBS counts (MHu) on the River Tweed Estuary on 10th recorded 472 and 38 were at Berwick North Shore on 12th. One to ten were at Cramlington (Valley Park), Exhibition Park, Jesmond Dene, Leazes Park and West Hartford.



Black-backed Gulls
Hauxley NR
by Mike Potts on May 5th

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Budle Bay held 35 on 26th (CGK) and WeBS counts on the Tweed Estuary and at Berwick North Shore recorded 15 and three respectively on 10th and 12th (MHu). Elsewhere one to two were recorded at Budle Bay, the River Tyne (Elswick Wharf) and West Hartford.

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

14 were at Southfield Green (Cramlington) on 4th (DM) and present at Jesmond Dene during the month.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Two groups of three and five at Ellington on 22nd with four there on 11th (TB), four at differing locations in Jesmond Dene on 25th (MJCo), three at Cresswell Pond on 1st and Rothbury on 12th (TRD/JD) and one to two at nine other widespread localities.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

A large count of 100 at Shiremoor on 1st (JMA), ten at Jesmond Dene on 5th (MJCo) with pairs at South Gosforth and nesting at Shiremoor Metro Station in a site used last year by Collared Dove (CGK).

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

A peak of six at Dinnington on 23rd, five at Prestwick Village on 28th (PCF) with two visiting gardens at Walkerville and Old Hartley.

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Very well reported with the peak count four at Simonside on 25th (ASJ), three at Langleeford (Harthope Valley) on 19th (BMo) and at Ingram on 20th (SW) with two at Derwent Reservoir, Longframlington Common and in the College Valley. Singles were seen or heard at 19 other upland locations and ten lowland / coastal sites.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

The only multiple counts came from Holy Island with a pair having three eggs, however another two were found dead under power lines bringing the death count for the year at this locality to four (IK). Singles were at Low Newton on 8th & 9th (TF/JFa/NFO), East Chevington on 15th and 25th (TRD/NFO), Cresswell Pond on 20th (IRD/TB), Guyzance on 21st and Ellington on the same date (TB). Potential breeding was also noted in the south east of the county (*per* GB).

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

An adult and five first-summer birds were found at Druridge Pools on 31st (TBr), two at East Stobswood on 22nd (TB) and singles holding territory at Shiremoor and at Beacon Hill (Cramlington), Cocklaw Farm and High Chibburn.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Two pairs were found at Prestwick Carr and single pairs at Gosforth Park NR and near Matfen, all on 25th (DM/ALT/HD), with two birds calling at Walbottle Hall on 5th (KR/LR) and in the observer's garden at Fulbeck (Morpeth) on 26th (TD). Singles were at Rothbury, all month at Ellington on three dates and Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) on 7th.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

The only multiple sighting was two at the Snook (Holy Island) on 25th (ADM) with single birds at the same locality on six other dates during the month, the only other reports being singles at Low Newton on 8th (JPD) and Dunstanburgh Castle on 14th (AA).

Swift *Apus apus*

Peak counts of around 50 feeding birds over water at Whittle Dene on 12th (ASJ) and East Chevington on 11th (NFO), 45 at Swallow Pond on 28th (JPD), 40 at West Ord on 19th and 35 at Arcot Pond on 16th (LJM). Ten to 20 were at Backworth, Big Waters, Seaton Sluice Watch Tower and Tynemouth Beach with one to eight at 19 further widespread locations.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Just three sightings from Thrum Mill (Rothbury) on 1st (JD) and at the Waterfall on 5th and Two Bridges (both Jesmond Dene) on 17th (MJCo).

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Heard regularly at Arcot Pond and Rothbury during the month at Gosforth Park on 1st, Nunnykirk and Ellington on 4th, Kielder Village on 5th, Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) on 7th, Sleafy Hall and Wylam on 20th, Sleafy Forest on 25th, College Valley on 26th and Farnley (Corbridge) on 28th.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Two pairs fed young in nests at Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 19th (MNC) with four at Holystone on 25th (ASJ), three on the South Tyne Trail near Haltwhistle on 2nd (DLo) and one to two in an Old Hartley Garden during the month (RJP). Singles were at Valley Park (Cramlington) regularly during the month and at 16 other widespread localities.



A Great Spotted Woodpecker
Simonsides
by Alan Jack

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

An influx on the 19th with three on Holy Island (MNC/ADM/ TF/JFa) rising to five on the 20th (AC) and singles remaining till the month end. Singles were also found at Seaton Sluice on 19th, East Chevington on 28th and Cambois on 31st.



One of the month's coastal Red-backed Shrikes
Seaton Sluice on 19th May by Adriana Buskin

Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor*

An adult male was found by David King near the main car park on Holy Island on 19th being twitched by many others thereafter and was still present on 20th.



The popular Lesser Grey Shrike on a misty Holy Island
By Jonathon Farooqi on 19th May

Magpie *Pica pica*

A high count of 27 at Swallow Pond on 31st (JPD) with a peak of five in a Walbottle garden on 26th (KR/LR), at Heaton Park Wood on 5th, four at Jesmond Dene on 25th (MJCo) and one to three in an Old Hartley garden during the month (RJP).

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Three was the highest count at West Hartford on 16th (CGK/PS/ADMc) with two at Swallow Pond on 3rd, Wylam on 6th, Bolam on 9th, Gosforth Park NR on 22nd and Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 26th. Singles were at nine further widespread locations.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

The evening roost at Big Waters numbered 150 on 9th and 25th (GB) with 27 found on a WBBS at Wooler Haugh on 7th, nine the highest count for the month in a Walbottle garden and one to three at Holywell Dene, Jesmond Dene and South Gosforth. A nest with young was found on an open ledge under the old railway bridge at Cambois on 28th (STH).

A bird showing characteristics of the Nordic species *C.m.monedula* was at Newcastle Town Moor on 9th (GB).

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

At Holywell Dene 58 pairs were counted on 3rd (JPD) with 43 amongst 75 nests at Wooler Haugh and 19 amongst 53 nests at Wooler on 7th (JR). Other rookery counts were 21 AON at Linbriggs on 20th and eight AON at Wallington Hall on 2nd.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Recently seeded fields attracted 44 at Beacon Hill (Cramlington) on 4th and 22 on 6th (DM/STH). Two to three were at Jesmond Dene and in gardens at Old Hartley and Walbottle.



A Carrion Crow glistens in the sunlight
by Adriana Buskin at Walker Riverside Park on 12th May

Raven *Corvus corax*

A flock of 12 was at Carey Burn (Harthope Valley) on 25th (MJC) with four-six there on 5th, 6th & 19th (NFO/GB) and four at Blanchland Moor on 6th (ASJ). One to two were at Alwinton, Blakehopeburnhaugh, Carter Bar, Kielder Forest, Linhope, Sing Moor and Usway Burn.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Many called at Dipton Wood on 25th with three at Jesmond Dene on 5th, two at Wooler Haugh on 7th and singles at Middle Farm Plantation (Seghill) and Beacon Hill (Longhorsley).

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

A WBBS count of 11 at Wooler Haugh on 7th (JR) with one to three at Jesmond Dene and South Gosforth. Two pairs in nests in the observer's garden at Fulbeck (Morpeth) were incubating eight and six eggs.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Two were at Jesmond Dene and South Gosforth (MJCo) with a pair at Netherton Park (Stannington) occupying a nest box used continuously for the last ten years (RWM/MIM).

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

One to three visited an Old Hartley garden during the month (RJP), two at Jesmond Dene on 5th, Wooler Haugh on 7th, South Gosforth on 10th and a single at Wallington Hall on 2nd.

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

Potential breeding pairs were at Big Waters on 18th, Nunnykirk on 4th and Prestwick Carr on 5th (GB/JD/PCF). Singles were at Big Waters regularly and at Dinnington on 8th and Slaley Hall on 6th.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

At Linden Hall (Longhorsley) three were present in the garden throughout the month (NFO), two at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) on 25th (ASJ) and Whiteadder Water (Berwick) on 28th (TBr) with singles at Nunnykirk on 2nd and Letah Wood (Hexham).

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

A peak count of 35 singing birds at Otterburn Ranges on 28th, 10 near Widdrington on 29th (ASJ), eight at Spindlestone – Lucker on 27th (CGK/GPK), and two to five at Darras Hall, Longhorsley Moor, Seghill and Troughend Common.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

38 were counted at a river bank colony at Wylam on 20th (SAS), 35 at Whiteadder Point (Berwick) on 24th (TBr), 30 at Wooler Haugh on 7th (JR), 25+ at Lynemouth on 14th (LJM/PJA) and 20 at Big Waters on 9th (GB). Six pairs prospected nests at Huds Head (Berwick) on 7th with six at Holy Island Lough and two at Branton GP.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Feeding flocks of around 150 at Swallow Pond on 11th (JPD), 120 at Derwent Reservoir on 12th (IFo), 100 at Killingworth Lake on 17th (LJM), 80 at Whiteadder Point (Berwick) on 24th (TBr) and 70 at Holy Island and West Ord. Ten to 50 were at Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Callerton, Haltwhistle, Town Moor / Exhibition Park (Newcastle) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs with one to seven at six further locations.



A Swallow in Holy Island village
by Adriana Buskin on 27th May

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

A large flock of 180 over the Tweed at West Ord on 22nd with 45 there on 19th (MHu), 40 at Arcot Pond on 21st (DM), 29 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 29th (SR), 25 at Whiteadder Point (Berwick) on 24th (TBr) and 20 at Town Moor / Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 8th (DHWB). Two to 15 were at Amble, Brunswick Green, Rock, Southfield Green (Cramlington), Holywell Dene, Holy Island, Stannington and Warkworth.

A Long-tailed Tit
Backworth
by Chris Knox

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Six at Ellington on 15th was the largest gathering (TB). Elsewhere two were at Jesmond Dene on 19th; two at St Ann's (Newcastle Quayside) on 3rd and two were courtship feeding at Longhorsley on 26th. The only other report was a single in an Old Hartley garden on 6th.



Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Single passage birds were noted at Holy Island on 19th (Snook) and 24th (singing in Village). Up to six were reported from the favoured Allen Banks area throughout the month (JPD *et al.*) and singles were also in breeding areas at Derwent Gorge on 16th and Holystone on 25th. Another single was found in woodland near Waren Mill on 25th.



A Wood Warbler on Holy Island by Peter Tapsell
20th May

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

A light 'fall' produced 18 at Holy Island on 19th, declining to only four on 20th (MJC/ADM); one to three were noted here on a further five dates during the month. Nine were found during a WBBS at Wooler Haugh on 7th (JR); six were in Jesmond Dene on 14th (MJCo) and four at Farnley Haughs (Corbridge) on 28th. One to three were reported from a further six localities.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Light coastal movement produced 19 at Holy Island on 19th, declining to eight on the following day (MJC/ADM). The highest counts of the month were of 24 in the Harthope Valley on 1st (ASJ/JPD) and at Swallow Pond on 3rd (JPD), 23 at Wooler Haugh on 7th (JR) and 20 at Wingates on 25th (ASJ). Counts of 12-18 were received from Beacon Hill (Longhorsley), Branton GP, College Valley, Prestwick Carr and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Nine to ten were noted at Catcleugh Reservoir and the South Tyne Trail (Haltwhistle) and one to four from a further ten localities.

Two birds showing characteristics of the **Northern race** *P.t.acredula* were at Holy Island on 19th-20th (MJC/ADM).



A Willow Warbler singing at Holywell photographed by Alan Jack

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

The highest counts were ten in Holywell Dene on 6th (DM) and nine during a WBBS at Wooler Haugh on 7th (JR). Six to seven were reported from Jesmond Dene, Northumberland Park (North Shields) and Tynemouth and four to five at Allen Banks, Arcot Hall GC, Farnley (Corbridge) and Silverlink CP (North Shields). One to three were noted at a further 17 localities. Evidence of late arrival was highlighted by a report from Linden Hall on 4th, some 20 days later than the average first arrival date of the previous nine years (NFO).

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Three to five were noted on Holy Island from 16th-24th with a peak on 19th (MJC/ADM). In breeding areas, four were noted at Kilham on 12th (TRD/JD) and counts of three came from College Valley, Dipton, Ingram (Breamish Valley), Sweethope Lough and Wingates. Elsewhere two were reported from Bradford (near Lucker), Catton, Linton Ponds, Rothbury, St Mary's Island and Wooler Haugh and singles from a further 16 widespread localities.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

The mid-month 'fall' at Holy Island produced ten+ on 19th (TFa/JFa), with eight here on 21st (JPD) and six on 24th (MJC). In breeding areas four singing males were heard at Cramlington (Village Green) on 7th (LJM) and three at Arcot Pond on 2nd, Bellasis Bridge on 30th, Holywell on 7th and Swallow Pond on 26th. One to two were at Backworth from 3rd, two at Low Newton on 8th and a pair at Cambois from 28th-31st. Singles were also reported from Buckton Moor (near Kyloe Wood), Castle Island, Hauxley NR and Howdon.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Very well reported from some of the favoured breeding areas during the month with 15 at Holywell Pond on 2nd (ASJ); 14 singing males were at Cramlington (Village Green) on 7th (LJM), 12 birds at Prestwick Carr on 4th (PCF) and 12 at Wingates on 25th (ASJ). Six to eight were reported from Backworth, College Valley, Darras Hall, Holywell, St Mary's Island and Whittle Dene Reservoirs and one to five from a further 29 widespread localities.

A wet Whitethroat at Tynemouth
by Colin Bradshaw

**Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella naevia*

Four were noted at Prestwick Carr on 4th (PCF). Three territories were being held at West Hartford during the month and three singing males were at Arcot Pond on 2nd and Cramlington (Village Green) on 7th (LJM). Up to two were noted at Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools and Linton Ponds and singles at Beacon Lane (Cramlington), Cocklawburn, East Chevington, Fenham-le-Moor, Newbiggin GC, Newton Pool, St Mary's Island and Warkworth Gut.

A Grasshopper Warbler
Castle Island

6th May

by Chris Barlow



Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*

Singles were at Holy Island (Snook and Vicar's garden) on 19th (TF/JFa/MJC/ADM).

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Another well reported species this month, with counts of 12 singing males from Cresswell Pond on 8th (ASJ), East Chevington on 4th (ASJ) and Gosforth Park NR on 25th (DM); 11 were singing at Branton GP on 21st, ten were found at Prestwick Carr on 25th and nine were singing at Backworth on 6th. Two to six noted at Holy Island on five dates may have involved some recent arrivals. Elsewhere, five singing males were at Arcot Pond on 4th and five territories were identified at West Hartford and four at Cocklawburn. One to three were reported from a further 11 localities.

Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

One seen briefly at East Chevington on 20th was heard singing on the following day (SWA/TRD/JD/JPD).

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

There was an excellent count of 20 at East Chevington on 17th (ASJ) with further counts from here of up to six on several other dates during the month. One to two were reported from St Mary's Island from 1st-5th and singles were noted at Bates Minewater Treatment Works (River Blyth) on 31st, Big Waters on 10th, Cresswell Pond from 25th-31st, Druridge Pools on 31st, Killingworth Lake on 4th and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 31st.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Widely reported from suitable woodland breeding habitat. Four to five were noted at Allenbanks, Beacon Hill (Longhorsley), Hesleyside (North Tyne) and Wallington Hall and two at Beehive Flash (Earsdon), Jesmond Dene and Riding Mill. Singles were also reported from Berwick, Cragside, Cramlington (Valley Park), Dipton Wood, Holywell Dene, Nunnykirk, Oakpool, Rothbury, Slaley Hall and Warkworth Lane.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Four were reported from Beacon Hill (Longhorsley), two at Big Waters and East Hartford Wood (displaying) and singles at Beacon Hill (Cramlington), Dipton Wood, Felton Lane, Fulbeck (Morpeth), Harthope Valley, Jesmond Dene, Nunnykirk and Wallington Hall.

Wren *troglodytes troglodytes*

Numbers appear to be showing signs of recovery after recent declines following the harsh winters of 2009-10 and 2010-11. Although only four reports were submitted, there were two very encouraging counts of 20+ in the College Valley on 26th (MJC) and 15 at Humford Woods (Bedlington) on 19th (LJM). Five were noted at Holywell Dene and three in Jesmond Dene.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

100 at Whitley Bay Links on 1st was the highest count (JMA). Near Big Waters a flock of 50 feeding in a horse field on 27th included ten fledged juveniles (GB) and 30 were noted at Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 2nd (GB). The only other reports were of 21 in Jesmond Dene on 14th and 19 in a Walbottle garden on 19th, the latter including 12 juveniles.



Colourful Starlings on 1st May at Holywell
by Alan Jack

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Very well reported this month. Breeding activity was noted in the Breamish Valley where two pairs were feeding young on 21st (LJM); two pairs were also feeding young at Usway Burn (Upper Coquetdale) again on 21st (SW) and young were being fed in the nest at Linhope Spout (Upper Breamish Valley) on 20th (SW). On 22nd, an adult fed two recently fledged young at Bygate Hall (River Coquet) and a pair was carrying food at Hartford Bridge (Bedlington). Elsewhere two pairs were noted at Carey Burn (Harthope Valley), three birds at Wooler Haugh, three from Baybridge-Carrick (Blanchland). One to two were reported from a further ten, mainly upland localities.



A Dipper contemplates a plunge at Harthope
by Chris Barlow on 16th May

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

A passage bird was at Holy Island on 5th (ADM). There were numerous reports from breeding areas in the Harthope Valley, where up to two males and a female were noted at Hawsen Burn (IRD), a female at New Burn (NFO) and a singing male at Carey Burn (MJC). A female was seen at Simonside on 25th (ASJ).

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

12 were found during a WBBS at Wooler Haugh on 7th (JR). Six were reported from Wallington Hall, four Jesmond Dene and three in a South Gosforth garden.

A Young Blackbird on 13th May at
Morpeth by Jonathon Farooqi

**Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris*

A late individual was near Big Waters on 6th (GB).

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

At Hesleyside (North Tyne) three pairs were noted on 11th and a nest with five eggs was predated at some time after 19th (JR). Five singing males were at Backworth on 19th (CGK) and five birds at Wooler Haugh on 7th (JR). Four were singing at Cramlington (Village Green) on 7th and four were reported from Holystone, Jesmond Dene and Northumberland Park (North Shields). Two to three were in full song at Leazes Park (Newcastle) and Cramlington (Valley Park) on 20th and singles at Wallington Hall and Holy Island, the latter a migrant on 19th.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Singles were at Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 13th (MNC) and Holy Island on 26th (ADM).

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

15 in the Harthope Valley on 1st included at least six singing males (JPD/ASJ); 12 were at Holystone on 4th (ASJ) and six (three pairs) in Jesmond Dene on 14th and at Sipton Burn (Allendale) on 25th. At Hesleyside (North Tyne) two pairs were noted on 11th and a pair had fledged three young here by the end of the month (JR). Three were at Wooler Haugh on 7th and two at Prestwick Carr on 2nd.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Two along the South Tyne Trail (near Haltwhistle) on 2nd were the first arrivals of the year (DLo). No more were seen until one at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) on 16th followed by a light influx from 17th-20th when one to two were noted at Hartside, Holy Island, Langleeford, Linhope and Tynemouth. Further arrivals were noted on 21st when two were at Branton GP, Breamish Valley and Stamfordham. The main influx occurred towards the end of the month with five on Holy Island on 24th (MJC), five singing at Linden Hall on 26th (NFO) and six at Holy Island on 30th (TF/JFa); one to two were noted at Allen Banks, Alnham, Catton, Dipton Wood, Hauxley NR, Holystone, Lucker, Nunnykirk, Otterburn and Simonside Hills during the same period.



A Spotted Flycatcher on Holy Island by Jonathon Farooqi on 30th May

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

20+ were noted in the College Valley on 26th (MJC) and 13 singing males were holding territory at Cramlington (Village Green) on 7th (LJM). Counts were few and far between from elsewhere in the county with reports from only five further localities; seven at Wooler Haugh, five in Jesmond Dene, four at Walbottle and Wallington Hall and two on Holy Island.



The male Collared Flycatcher
Low Newton
8th May
Jonathon Farooqi

Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis*

A stunning first summer male found at Low Newton on 8th remained until the following day. If accepted this will be the first county record (GW).

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Five passage birds were noted at Holy Island on 19th (MJC/ADM) and singles here on 12th and 29th-30th. In breeding areas the peak count from Allenbanks was four on 6th and 12th (JPD/ASJ); up to three were noted at the Linnels, two at Nunnykirk and singles at Holystone, Oakpool, South Tyne Trail (Haltwhistle) and, more unusually, at East Ord on 15th.

A Pied Flycatcher on Holy Island
May 19th
Jonathon Farooqi

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*

At Holy Island (Snook) a male was found on 19th (TRD/JD) and a female on 20th (AC). One of these or another was reported from the island on 21st (JPD).

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

One to two passage birds were noted on the coast at Cresswell Pond, Holy Island, Newbiggin and Tynemouth from 15th to the end of the month. Birds were well reported from breeding areas with a notable ten singing males around Kielder Village on 5th (MD), five on the Simonside Hills on 25th, four singing at Derwent Reservoir on 7th and at Longframlington on 31st and four at Holystone on 25th. Counts of three were received from Beacon Hill (Longhorsley), Broomfield Fell (Longwitton) and Nunnykirk and one to two at Dipton Wood, East Shaftoe Hall, Harthope Valley, Hesleyside, Linden Hall, Prestwick Carr, Rothbury, South Tyne Trail (Haltwhistle) and Wallington Hall.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

In Upper Coquetdale 50 singing males were located along three 3km transects from Alwinton-Barrowburn (including the Usway Burn) from 20th-22nd (SW). Elsewhere in Upper Coquetdale a further three pairs were noted in the Alwin Valley on 25th (JR) and four singing males at Rowhope on 8th (IFo). Birds were also well reported from the Harthope Valley with at least five pairs noted at Hawsen Burn (BMo) and a pair at Langleeford on 19th. Up to four were seen in the Breamish Valley (three in the Bulby's Wood area and one at Reaveley Hill). Two were at Alnham on 25th, one to two at St Mary's Island from 17th-22nd and singles at East Chevington on 4th, Holy Island on 30th, Holywell Pond on 6th, Sing Moor on 26th and Wark Forest on 2nd.

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Seven (two pairs, a male and two juveniles) were at Buston Links (Alnmouth) on 26th (NFO) and four (including one juvenile) at Warkworth Gut on 19th (NFO). Pairs were noted at Boulmer, East Chevington and Hawsen Burn (Harthope Valley) and single males at Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Hauxley and Newton Pool.

A Stonechat in full voice
by Neil Osborne
4th May

**Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe*

There was a notable 'fall' during the first week of the month. Unprecedented numbers arrived at Big Waters on 4th, when 26 (including some Greenland race) were noted; 14-15 were here on 6th and seven from 12th-14th (GB). Holy Island held 24 on 5th and 14 on 12th (ADM), while 11 were reported from Holystone on 4th (ASJ) and ten at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) on 2nd, most of the latter passage birds (EC). Ten were in Upper Coquetdale on 28th and eight at Backworth and Cresswell Pond from 1st-6th. Four to five were reported from College Valley, Prestwick Carr, South Newsham and Warkworth Lane and one to three from a further 17 widespread localities. Birds showing characteristics of the **Greenland race** *O.olleucorhoa* (in addition to Big Waters above) were singles at

Cambois on 25th (AC), Cocklawburn on 7th and 10th (MHu), Great Whittington on 2nd (EC) and Holy Island on 24th (MJC).

Dunnoch *Prunella modularis*

11 singing males were heard at Cramlington Village Green on 7th (LJM). Six were in an Old Hartley garden throughout the month including some juvenile birds towards the end of the month (RJP). One to four were seen throughout the month at Jesmond Dene (Newcastle), South Gosforth and in a Walbottle garden.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Not many records for the month but the highest were ten at St. Mary's Island on 1st (JMA). Singles were at Jesmond Dene (Newcastle) on 5th (MJCo) and a pair was at West Hartford on 3rd which was the first record at the site in eight years (PJA).

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Three pairs were nesting at Waren Mill Caravan Park on 27th (CGK) whilst ten were at Hauxley NR on 25th (DM/ALT/HD). One to four were at a further 14 sites throughout the month.

A Tree Sparrow at Cresswell
Pond by Tim Dean on 9th
May



Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

The highest total for the month was of 22 at Cresswell Pond on 6th (BMo). Other notable counts were 13 at Whittle Dene on 22nd (SR) and seven at Prestwick Carr on 3rd (JPD) and Whiteadder Point (Berwick) on 24th (TBr). One to six were at a further 20 sites throughout the month.

A Yellow Wagtail
Whittle Dene
by Eddie Douglas
13th May



Blue-headed Wagtail *M.f. flava*

Two males were in a field near the north pool at East Chevington on 5th (TB). Singles were seen at Cresswell Pond on 4th (NFO) and Druridge Pools on 6th (GB) whilst a "Channel" type bird was seen at Holy Island on 5th (ADM).

Ashy-headed Wagtail *M.f. cinereocapilla*

A bird showing characteristics of this race or Spanish Wagtail was at South Newsham Flash (Blyth) on 1st (MHP/AC).

Grey-headed Wagtail *M.f. thunbergi*

A male was seen only for a few minutes at 7:35 am in Half-Moon Slack on The Snook (Holy Island) before flying off west on 25th (ADM).

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Five adults and two juveniles were at Breamish Valley on 21st (LJM), five were at Allenbanks on 6th (JPD) and five at Blanchland on 27th (AJN). One to four were also seen at a further 21 sites throughout the month.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

18 were seen at Hoppen Kiln (Bradford Kaims) on 26th (CGK) whilst 13 were at South Newsham Flash (Blyth) on 6th (MHP). One to eight were seen throughout the month at Alwin Valley (Upper Coquetdale), along the South Tyne Trail and at Wooler Haugh.

White Wagtail *M. a. alba*

Nine were at both Cresswell Pond (STH/IFo) and Holy Island on 5th (SR/ADM). One to seven were seen at a further nine sites throughout the month.



A female White Wagtail at Hadston
by Chris Barlow on 6th May

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Six were displaying at Holystone on 25th (ASJ). One to four were seen throughout the month at Blanchland Moor, Broomfield Fell (Longwitton), Catcleugh, Cocklake (Slaley), Comb, East Chevington, Harthope Valley, Holy Island, Kilham, Langleeford (Harthope), Linhope (Upper Breamish valley), Low Kellas, Low Newton, Nunnykirk, Rothbury, Simonside, Slaley Forest, Sweethope Lough, Tilhill Plantation (Dipton) and Wingates.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

12 were noted at Longhorsley Moor on 31st (AB/LB) whilst ten passage birds flew north over Gosforth Garden Village on 5th (MJC). Singles were at Hold House Farm (Ponteland) on 4th (CW) and along the South Tyne Trail on 2nd (DLo).

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

A pair was at Tynemouth on 19th (CGK) and at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 25th (DM/ALT/HD).

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

38 was the month's highest count at Wooler Haugh on 7th (JR). 13 were found over 1km at Prestwick Carr on 4th (PCF). One to four were at Aydon, Holywell Dene and Jesmond Dene (Newcastle) throughout the month.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

Eight were in a Walbottle Garden on 26th (KR/LR) whilst one to three were seen throughout the month at Holywell Dene, Jesmond Dene (Newcastle), Netherton Park (Stannington) and South Gosforth.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

36 flew WNW over Fenwick Tip (Backworth) on 6th (CGK). 36 were also recorded at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) on 18th (ALT). One to nine were recorded at Holywell Dene, Jesmond Dene (Newcastle), South Gosforth, a Walbottle garden and Wooler Haugh throughout the month.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

A massive total of 621 was recorded at Humshaugh throughout the month with 600 being ringed and 280 seen at once in a small garden (TWi). 12 were at Slaley Hall on 6th (RMH) and one to four were noted at a further 12 sites throughout the month.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

An unusually late flock of 60 was at Hoppen Kiln (Bradford Kaims) on 27th (CGK/GPK). 30 were at Aydon on the 1st (RB/MB), six at Prestwick Carr on 6th (PCF) and a pair at Stonelaw (Cramlington) on 4th (DM).



A Linnet on Holy Island on 26th May by Adriana Buskin

Redpoll sp.

A single flew calling over Big Waters on 3rd (GB).

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*

An impressive 103 were at Humshaugh throughout the month of which 95 were ringed (TWi). 100 were seen flying continuously north on migration at tree-top height at Slaley Hall on 10th (RMH). One to 12 were seen at a further 26 sites throughout the month.

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

30 were at Slaley Hall on 6th (RMH). 19 were at Raylees (Otterburn) on 3rd (IRD) whilst 18 were Healey Whins on 1st (RMH). One to four were seen at a further seven sites throughout the month.

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*

There were two records for the month of this rarity. The first was an immature male in the Vicar's garden (Holy Island) on 19th (ASJ). The second was an inland record of a male coming to peanuts in a private garden near Slaley on 28th (per TRD/JD).

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Two pairs were in an observer's garden in Fulbeck (Morpeth) on 8th (TD). One to four were at a further 16 sites throughout the month including a pair in the car park shrubbery at Newcastle's Metro Radio Arena on 16th (GB).

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

21 were noted by an observer whilst cycling between Ponteland and Ingoe on 24th (ASJ). 16 singing males were noted around the Bellasis Bridge area on 23rd (ASJ) whilst one to seven were at a further nine sites throughout the month.



A Yellowhammer at Holywell
6th May by Alan Jack

Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica*

An adult male was at the Snook (Holy Island) on 19th (MJC/ADM).

Reed Bunting *Emberiza Schoeniclus*

24 singing males were noted at East Chevington on 4th (ASJ).) One to 12 were seen at a further nine sites throughout the month.

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

One was still present at Duke's Pond (near Swallow Pond) up to 26th (JPD). Two others were noted at Druridge Bay CP on 17th (IFo).

Birds of Unknown Origin**Parakeet sp** *Psittacula sp*

A probable Ring-necked Parakeet flew SW calling loudly at Exhibition park on 2nd (GB). This may be the bird seen last month at Jesmond.

Ring-necked Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

Interestingly one was observed at Arcot Hall GC on 4th where it showed very well in an oak tree next to the practice green (DM). There are certainly more records at new sites in recent years.

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Berwick Wildlife Group, NTBC Field Trip (BCFT), 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 (Avocet to Godwit) Ian Forsyth (Turnstone 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 (Dun-nock 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 Mail 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

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. Please submit any new content for the website to the main club email address at

ntbcorg@gmail.com

NTBC SIGHTINGS PAGE

Clarification of the access to the Sightings web-site.

Members need to submit a request to be added to the website, specifying the email address they wish to post from before they can submit sightings to ntbcorg@gmail.com

Please format posts as before.

VACANCY FOR DATA MANAGER

After many years excellent service Dick Myatt has advised the committee that he will be looking to stand down from his role as Data Manager at the end of September. This is a key role handling and maintaining our records database and requires someone with knowledge of databases and crucially the time available to manage this key resource. Dick estimates that this work takes 13-15 hours per month, mainly over a four-day period. We have detailed below the key tasks the Data Manager's role delivers and a list of current software used. The committee are keen to hear from any interested parties as soon as possible in order that a managed and smooth handover can take place. Please contact Alan Tilmouth either by telephone 01670 512013 or email ntbcorg@gmail.com if you would like to be discuss or apply for this role.

Key Tasks

Collect Electronic records submitted via dedicated Gmail account.

Collate and edit records in order to update Club Database.

Produce preliminary consolidated report for County recorder in time for Monthly Meetings (Sep-Apr only).

Produce final consolidated report and list of contributors for Bulletin Authors in time for them to write Bulletin.

Backup database etc.

Produce list of late records for BiN editor, annually.

Manage Card Record Archive held at a Document Storage facility.

Current Software

Gmail via Internet Explorer

MS Excel (including VBA macros)

MS Access

MS Windows Vista (for file management etc.)

Roxio Creator Basic (for backing up to DVD)

MS Robocopy (for backing up to disk)

ImgBurn (for backing up to DVD)



Another page from Mike Carr's field notes on 19th May from Holy Island showing the Red-backed and Lesser Grey Shrikes

COASTAL WEBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

MAY 2013

MHu M. Hutcheson
TB T. BrewisAC A. Craggs
MLC M. L. Cadwallender
JAR J. A. Roper
TAC T. A. CadwallenderLJM L. J. McDougall
NA N. Adams
DMT D. M. Turner
PF P. Fletcher

Site	Berwick North Shore (including Little Beach)		Berwick Little Beach		Tweed Estuary		Tweed: At By-Pass to Horncastle		Spittal - Cocklawburn		Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay)		Seahouses - Beadnell (Budle Bay)		JAR	TAC	LJM	NA	DMT	East Howdon, (north bank)	Redheugh - Scotswood Bridge, (north bank)	Scotswood - Newburn Bridge, (north bank)
Counter	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	TB	TH	TH	TH	MHu	AC	AC	AC	MLC	JAR	14	14	8	12	27	30	12	12
Date	12	12	10	5	8	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	27	14	14	14	8	12	27	30	12	12
Red-throated Diver	3				2	1			2													
Slavonian Grebe	1				1				1													
Cormorant	73	10	6	4	4	23			3	1			3	1			8		5	5	2	2
Shag	11		2		1	6			2				4	2								
Grey Heron	18		3	3	1	5			4													
Mute Swan	110		48	22	4	7	4								19	2	1	2	4	1		
Whooper Swan	2				2																	
Greylag Goose	14					14																
Canada Goose	32														13							
Light-bellied Brent Goose	11								11													
Shelduck	261		2		2	197	96							17	16	24			1	2		
Teal	5					5																
Mallard	147	3	32	31	10	29	14	5	7	22											4	4
Tufted Duck	6		2																			
Eider	706	8	5		52	418	71	115	41	3	29	25	10									
Long-tailed Duck	2																					
Common Scoter	108				48	60										1						
Red-breasted Merganser	23	1			3	18									2							
Goosander	34			32											1	3	1					
Moorhen	5																					
Coot	3					1																
Oystercatcher	568	114	4	9	13	304	75	22	43	4	37	10	8									
Ringed Plover	486	2	4		2	363	22	46	42	8	19											
Golden Plover	308					308																
Grey Plover	2								1	1												
Lapwing	30					14									16							
Knot	12					12																
Sanderling	88		4		34	50																
Purple Sandpiper	2	2																				
Dunlin	1,090		2			1019		5	40	4	17	1									2	
Black-tailed Godwit	2					1																
Bar-tailed Godwit	49					49																
Whimbrel	2	1	1			1																
Curlew	259	1	18			227	8		11	1	1											
Redshank	28		2		2	21	17														1	
Greenshank	1																					
Common Sandpiper	8		2	4																		
Turnstone	86		18			17		16	18	1	15	1										
Black-headed Gull	149	1	8			27		13	5	45	35	3							8	4		
Common Gull	11			1	2	7																
Lesser Black-backed Gull	86		6			15																
Herring Gull	1,783	38	10	472	10	114	405		66	29	21	103	15	273	71	123			1	5	37	
Great Black-backed Gull	121	3	1	16		5	21	7				2	4	22		35			4	20		6
Kittiwake	268		14						226													
Sandwich Tern	119	6	2	6		22	52		13	10									6	4		
Common Tern	9																					
Arctic Tern	10					8			1										1			
Little Tern	2								2													
Kingfisher	0																					
TOTALS - WILDFOWL	1,575	22	0	98	96	142	787	125	129	68	78	67	27	36	10	9						6
- WADERS	3,021	120	90	54	13	49	2,386	122	90	155	33	81	28	9	0	3						0
- GULLS & TERNS	2,558	48	13	522	11	144	543	0	328	44	66	161	33	305	105	199						49

Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

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

Bulletin 2013 No 6

MONTHLY SUMMARY – JUNE

22nd August 2013



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CLASSIFIED LIST HIGHLIGHTS

Mandarin	Male at Jesmond Dene on 15th.
Velvet Scoter	Four N at Seaton Sluice on 28th.
Quail	Only three singles noted.
Great Northern Diver	Three sightings early in month.
Sooty Shearwater	Unusual Spring sighting of a single N at Hartley Bay on 6th.
Bittern	Single at Gosforth Park from 20th.
Red Kite	Single outside normal range at Linden Hall on 15th.
Osprey	Single off Holy Island from 2nd to 9th.
Hobby	One at Gosforth Park on 9th, becoming a regular site.
Red-necked Phalarope	Surprise sighting of one on a pelagic trip E of Lynemouth on 21st.
Spotted Redshank	One in summer plumage at East Chevington on 12th.
Long-tailed Skua	One adult N at Seaton Sluice on 5th.
Red-backed Shrike	Another two males noted in first few days at East Chevington and St Mary's.
Hooded Crow	Singles at St Mary's on 4th and Breamish Valley on 15th.
Marsh Warbler	Male singing at St Mary's on 8th.

COMMITTEE NEWS

NTBC AGM

The Annual General Meeting of Northumberland & Tyneside Bird Club will take place on 11th October 2013. 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

INDOOR MEETINGS

NTBC indoor meetings start again in September. As usual meetings will be held at Northern Rugby Club, McCracken Park, Great North Road, Newcastle, NE3 2DT starting at 7.00pm and generally finish between 9.00pm-9.30pm.

The first meeting is on Thursday 12th September.

Bird Atlas 2007-2011 "Revealing the maps"

Dawn Balmer of the BTO will give an illustrated talk on the changes in bird populations revealed by the Atlas.

VACANCY FOR DATA MANAGER

After many years of excellent service Dick Myatt has advised the committee that he will be looking to stand down from his role as Data Manager at the end of September. This is a key role, handling and maintaining our records database and requires someone with knowledge of databases and, crucially, the time available to manage this key resource. Dick estimates that this work takes 13-15 hours per month, mainly over a four-day period. We have detailed the key tasks the Data Manager's role delivers and a list of current software used in the April bulletin. The committee are keen to hear from any interested parties as soon as possible in order that a managed and smooth handover can take place.

Please contact Alan Tilmouth either by telephone 01670 512013 or email ntbcorg@gmail.com if you would like to discuss or apply for this role.

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 2011 page 228.

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

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

The Tweed Estuary held a peak of 340 on 28th (MHu), 144 were at Killingworth Lake on 26th (LJM), 62 at New Water Haugh (River Tweed) on 2nd (MHu), 37 at Amble Braid on 5th (JPD), 28 at Castle Island (DM) and nine to 11 at the Blyth Estuary, Budle Bay and Greenlee Lough. Breeding data were as follows (additional to May unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Dukes Pond	1	6	JPD. On 7th
Gosforth Park NR	1	6	NHSN.
Hartburn Reservoir	1	6	IRD. On 8th
Hauxley Reserve	1	6	JPD. On 5th
Swallow Pond	1	6	SPP. On 6th
West Allotment Pond	1	5	CGK. On 24th
Castle Island	1	3	DM. On 23rd. Probably bred on site.
Budle Bay	1	2	CGK. On 16th
Big Waters	1	1	GB. Also a brood of 4 (originally 5 in May)

A brood of seven noted at Holy Island Lough in May was reduced to three by the end of June, Otter predation suspected (IK).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

A flock of 43 flew N at East Chevington on 2nd (IF). Peak counts were 237 at Hauxley Reserve on 27th (IF), 130 at Castron on 5th (AJR), 50 at Branton GP on 19th (AJR), and 18 over Warkworth Lane (AJR). Two to ten were also at Cresswell Pond, East Chevington and Newcastle Leazes Park. Breeding data were as follows (additional to May unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Branton GP	2	10	LJM/AJR. Brood of 5 on 11th and 2 broods of 5 noted on 19th.
Woodhorn Flashes	2	22 (13, 9)	CDH. On 23rd. Brood of 13 small goslings plus 9 well-grown young.
Linton Ponds	2	8 (5, 3)	CDH. On 23rd
Cocklawburn Pond	1	5	MHu. On 21st

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Northerly movement involved 51 (in two flocks) at East Chevington on 2nd (IF), 42 at Shiremoor on 16th (CGK), 37 at West Allotment Pond on 14th (CGK) and 32 at Seaton Sluice between 2nd-6th (SSWT). Peak gatherings were 147 at Hauxley Reserve on 27th (IF), 130 at Castron on 5th (AJR), 130 at Castle Island on 26th (PG), 46 at and Killingworth Lake (LJM), 28-35 at Bothal Pond, Newcastle Leazes Park and New Water Haugh (River Tweed), and ten to 19 at Budle Bay, Cresswell Pond, Grindon Lough, Prestwick Carr and the Tweed Estuary. Two to nine were also at Arcot and Backworth Ponds, Broomlee Lough, Cramlington, and West Ord. Breeding data were as follows (additional to May unless otherwise stated):

Canada Geese with young
by Tim Dean



Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Linton Ponds	2	12 (6, 6)	CDH. On 23rd
Backworth Pond	1	5	CGK. Presumed same as May
Hedgeley GP	1	3	LJM. On 2nd. Additional to May broods
Shasun Pharma, Dudley	1	5	LJM. On 3rd
Ladyburn Lake	1	2	LJM. On 4th.
Newcastle Leazes Park	1	1	DM. On 3rd.

A brood of eight first noted at Bank's Pond, Dinnington in May was reduced to five by 4th June (PCF).

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

A late spring record concerned two pale-bellied *hrota* race birds N at Seaton Sluice on 5th (SSWT).

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Budle Bay held 135 on 15th (CGK), 36 at the Blyth Estuary on 5th (LJM), eight at Howdon Wetland NR on 2nd (CB), four at Elswick on 26th (DM), and one to three at Berwick North Shore, Cheswick Black Rocks, Cocklawburn, West Stobswood Pool and Widdrington Moor Lake. Breeding data were as follows (additional to previous months unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Castle Island	3	20 (7,7,6)	DM. On 23rd.
Branton GP	2	21 (14,7)	JD/TRD. On 5th. Brood of 14 still present on 12th
Blyth Estuary	2	13 (10,3)	ASH. On 1st
Howdon Wetland NR	--	16	CB. On 9th
Caistron	1	14	TRD. On 21st
Cresswell Pond	2	14 (10, 4)	TRD/PCF. Brood of 10 on 17th, and 2 broods of 4 on 22nd
Bradford Flash	1	8	CGK. On 15th.
Grindon Lough	1	8	JPD/PRM. From 15th-28th
Hauxley Reserve	1	5	PCF. On 22nd
Budle Bay	1	4	CGK. On 15th
Monks' House Pool	1	3	MSH. On 17th

A brood of six (first noted in May) at Hoppen Kiln on 14th (TRD/JD) was later reduced to four young (CGK/MSH).

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

One was at Paddy Freeman's Lake, Jesmond Dene on 15th (MJCo).

A Shelduck family
12th June
by Tim Dean

**Wigeon** *Anas penelope*

Grindon Lough held a peak of 30 on 10th (IFo), with two to 15 (up to 11 drakes) on several dates between 13th-27th (PRM). Six were at Cresswell Pond on 16th (MSH), four at Hauxley Reserve on 27th (IF), and one to two at Branton GP, Caistron, East Chevington and New Water Haugh (River Tweed).

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Peak counts were 36 at Cresswell Pond on 16th (MSH), 24 at Druridge Pools on 5th (JPD), 19 at Hauxley Reserve on 27th (IF), ten to 14 at Castle Island, Linton and Warkworth Lane Ponds, and Ladyburn Lake, eight at Bothal Pond, and four at Arcot Pond, Caistron and Gosforth Park NR. One to two were also at Big Waters, Branton GP, East Chevington and Swallow Pond. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Hauxley Reserve	1	6	IF. On 27th.

Teal *Anas crecca*

A total of 15 flew N at Seaton Sluice between 6th-30th (SSWT). Largest counts were 18 at Warkworth Lane Ponds on 13th (AJR), 15 (14 drakes) at East Chevington on 19th (BK), up to 13 (11 drakes) at Grindon Lough on 13th and 21st (PRM), 12 at Castle Island on 23rd (DM), eight at Druridge Pools, and four at Hauxley Reserve. Two were at Cocklawburn Pond and Howdon Wetland on single dates. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Plenmeller Common	1+	3	AA. Two adult females with young on 23rd.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Big Waters attracted a peak of 108 (plus ten young) on 26th (GB), 48 adults were at Newcastle Leazes Park on 24th (DM), 47 adults at Killingworth Lake on 26th (LJM), 32-43 at Gosforth Park NR (includes this year's young; NHSN), Hauxley Reserve (IF) and Linton Ponds (CDH), and the Tweed Estuary (MHu), 15-26 at Arcot, Bothal and Duke's Ponds, East Chevington, Elwick Flash, Lower Ouseburn and Wark.

Mallard breeding data were as follows (additional to previous months unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Linton Ponds	4	15 (6,4,3,2)	CDH. On 23rd.
Swallow Pond	3	25 (12,7,6)	JPD. New broods of 12 and 7 on 2nd, and new brood of 6 on 24th.
Grindon Lough	3	19 (9,7,3)	PRM. On 13th and 19th.
Branton GP	3	17	LJM. New broods
Killingworth Lake	3	15	LJM.
Bothal Pond	2	17 (11,6)	TD. On 7th.
Castle Island	2	13 (7,6)	DM. On 23rd. Additional to May?
Arcot Pond	2	10	LJM. New broods.
Newcastle Civic Centre	2	3 (2,1)	JMA. On 29th.
Cresswell Pond	1	11	DM. On 23rd.
Big Waters	1	10	GB. On 26th. Down to 8 by 28th
Jesmond Dene	1	10	MJCo. On 9th.
Duke's Pond	1	9	JPD. On 20th.
Monks' House Pool	1	9	MSH. On 17th.
Cupola Bridge	1	7	STH. On 9th.
Dinnington	1	6	PCF. On 11th.
Bolton	1	4	JMA. On 27th.
Derwent Reservoir	1	3	IFo. On 4th.
Hauxley Reserve	1	3	IF. On 27th.
Lower Ouseburn	1	3	DM. On 18th.
Newcastle Exhibition Park	1	2	GB. On 24th.
Newcastle Leazes Park	1	2	DM. On 3rd (as May?). One young lost to a Lesser Black-backed Gull.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Two unseasonable drakes were at Cresswell Pond on 24th (AA) and one on 23rd and 27th (TB/IRD/DM), while a drake was also at East Chevington on 19th (BK).

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

A drake flew N at Seaton Sluice on 5th (SSWT). Up to five (four drakes) were at Swallow Pond on 7th and 9th (JPD), four at East Chevington on 23rd (DM), and one to two at Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, Elwick Flash and Gosforth Park NR. A pair displayed at a site in the north of the county on 16th (CGK).

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Peak counts were 13 at Killingworth Lake on 26th (LJM), nine at Swallow Pond on 7th (JPD), six at Hadrian's Pond on 9th (JPD), and four at Arcot Pond (LJM) and Bothal Pond (TRD). One to two were also noted at Big Waters, Cresswell and West Allotment Ponds, and Gosforth Park NR.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Two flew N at Seaton Sluice on 21st (SSWT). About 100 were at Castron on 5th (AJR), 56 at Cresswell Pond on 23rd (DM), 31 at Killingworth Lake on 26th (LJM), 24 at Branton GP (AJR), and ten to 16 at Bothal and Warkworth Lane Ponds, Grindon Lough, Newcastle Exhibition and Leazes Parks, and Widdrington Moor Lake. Two to eight were also at Arcot Pond, Castle Island, Hauxley Reserve, Howdon Wetland and Monks' House Pool, and a drake was at the Blyth Estuary on 10th (LJM). Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Newcastle Leazes Park	1	4	DM. On 24th

Scaup *Aythya marila*

One was at Cresswell Pond on 23rd and 27th (IRD/DM) and two were noted there on 29th (JL).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

A total of 24 flew N and 14 S at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT), 32 were off Berwick North Shore on 23rd (MHu), 27 at the Blyth Estuary on 5th (LJM), and 15 at Blyth Harbour (STH). Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods/crèches	No. of young	Observer/notes
Amble Braid	--	70	JPD. Young together with 27 adult females on 5th.
Budle Bay	2	18	CGK. On 16th.
Lindisfarne NNR	1+	--	IK. First young noted on 16th, at Holy Island causeway etc.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

A well above average monthly total of 1,189 was recorded at Seaton Sluice and consisted of 1,105 N and 84 S (SSWT). Few were noted offshore, with peaks of 46 at Cheswick Black Rocks on 27th (MHu), 39 between Tynemouth-Lynemouth on 21st (MSK/NEWT), 24 at Cocklawburn on 21st (MHu), and 11 to 12 at Dunstanburgh and Snab Point.

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

A party of four flew N at Seaton Sluice on 28th (SSWT).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

A first-summer drake was at Grindon Lough on 10th (IFo) and two first-summer drakes were noted there on 13th (PRM).



A duck Goldeneye with young at an undisclosed site in the county by Tim Dean

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

15 were at Holy Island on 2nd (SR), five were at Fenham Flats on 15th (CGK), a pair were in Budle Bay on 15th (CGK), and two at Howick Haven on 25th (IRD).

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

A group of four flew N at Seaton Sluice on 24th (SSWT), 126 gathered on the River Tweed at New Water Haugh on 30th (MHu), about 100 were at Lindisfarne NNR in the month, mainly in the Holy Island Harbour and Black Law areas (IK), 52 at the Tweed Estuary on 24th (MHu), and 19-27 at Berwick North Shore and Spittal Bay (MHu). One to two were also at Airy Holm and Derwent Reservoirs, Killingworth Lake, Low Angerton and near Tilmouth. Breeding data were as follows:

A Goosander at Allen Banks
26th June
by Denis Lovatt



Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Blyth Estuary	1	9	ASH. Adult female with full-sized young on 31st.
Allen Banks	1	6	DLo. On 26th

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

Seven were on Simonside on 8th (ASJ) and three were on Longframlington Common on 19th (IRD).

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

Four males were at Sinderhope on 23rd (AA).

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

The peak count was eight at Abshiels (Beacon Hill) on 19th (TB). Three were at Beanley on 3rd and one to two at Spindleston and Widdrington.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

A pair with four young crossed the road at Druridge Pools on 29th (PCF). Three were at Ellington on 11th and one to two at Catraw (Stannington), Linden Hall, Newton Links, Prestwick Carr, Stamfordham, West Hartford and Widdrington.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Singles were calling at North Walbottle on 8th (SR), Ingoe on 9th (ASJ) and Blayney Row (Newburn) on 12th (SR).

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Six were at Prestwick Carr on 8th (PCF) and four (two males) were in a Walbottle garden on 2nd (KR/LR).

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

During the month 24 flew N and ten flew S at Seaton Sluice, which was well above the June average (SSWT). Two flew S at Newton Point on 29th (TBr). Singles were seen at Cheswick Black Rocks, in Druridge Bay and off Holy Island.

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

Two flew S, high over Coquet Island, on 2nd (MSH). A single in summer plumage flew S at Coquet Point (Hauxley) on 11th (MSK/NEWT) and one in summer plumage was seen at Snab Point on 6th (BDK).

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

No noticeable movement was recorded at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT). There were 16 apparently occupied nests at Needle's Eye (Berwick) on 3rd and two were in the Tweed Estuary on 24th (MHu). Singles were noted at East Chevington and Snab Point.

Fulmars at Seaton Sluice on 2nd June by Mike Potts

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

One flew N in Hartley Bay on 6th (SPP).

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

During the month at Seaton Sluice 538 flew N and 26 S with 435 noted in 4 hours on 24th/25th, above the average for June (SSWT). Also on 25th 65+ moved N at St Mary's Island, where 30 fed offshore with Kittiwakes (SPP) and 30 flew N at Newbiggin in 30 minutes (JSB/EC). At Druridge Bay 11 flew N on 19th in 1 hour (NFO) and six flew N at St Mary's Island on 24th (MSH). On a pelagic trip from Tynemouth to Lynemouth 13 were noted on 21st (MSK/NEWT). Six were off Snab Point on 17th and five off Hauxley on 22nd.

On 7th 400/h moved S on fishing trips at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) ((IK) and 250 flew N in one hour at Seaton Sluice on 28th (SSWT). Ten were in Spittal Bay on 30th and one to two were seen at Boulmer, Long Nanny and Snab Point.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

On 28th 29 flew N and 11 S in 3 hours at Seaton Sluice (SSWT). The peak counts were 29 at Blyth South Harbour on 3rd (STH), 15 at New Water Haugh (River Tweed) on 2nd (MHu), ten at Castle Island on 23rd (DM), nine at Derwent Reservoir on 1st (IFo), eight at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 2nd and seven at East Chevington North Pool on 4th/23rd. Two to four were seen at Berwick North Shore, Cresswell Pond and Gosforth Park NR. A juvenile *sinensis* race bird was at Hauxley NR on 27th (MSH).

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Nine flew N at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT). Seven were at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 2nd, six with two apparently occupied nests nearby at Needle's Eye on 3rd and two in the Tweed Estuary on 23rd (MHu).

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

One was first seen at Gosforth Park NR on 20th appearing regularly after that date (NHSN).



Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

The peak counts were nine at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 17th (SR), eight in the Tweed Estuary on 24th (MHu) and seven at Hauxley NR on 27th (IF). One to four were noted at Arcot Pond, Berwick North Shore, Budle Bay, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Gosforth Park NR, Leazes Park (Newcastle), Linton Ponds and West Hartford. Singles were noted at Allen Banks, Farnley Haughs (Corbridge), Holywell Dene, Newcastle Business Park and E over Southfield Green (Cramlington).

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Two pairs were at Gosforth Park NR throughout the month, Caistron on 5th (AJR) and Arcot Pond on 29th (STH). Three were at Big Waters on 23rd (GB). Two were at Hedgeley GP on 3rd and Bothal Pond on 17th with singles at Cresswell Pond, Holy Island Lough and Woodhorn Flashes.

Little Grebe breeding details are as follows:

Location	No. of broods	No. of Young	Observer/Comments
Linton Pond	3	5	CDH on 23rd
Hadrian's Pond	1	2	JPD on 26th
Wallington Hall	1	1	TRD/JD on 21st
Arcot Pond	1	1	LJM on 30th

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

The peak counts were six at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 17th (SR), five (two juveniles) at Killingworth Lake on 7th (LJM) and East Chevington North Pool on 14th, where two pairs were frequently noted (TB *et al*). Two pairs were also at Bothal Pond where one pair was nesting by 8th (TB *et al*). Three were at Branton GP on 5th, where one was incubating by 11th (JD/LJM) Pairs were at Caistron on 5th (AJR), Cresswell Pond on 11th (TB) and Airey Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield) on 13th (IFo). Singles were at Swallow Pond on 11th and Big Waters on 26th.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

Up to three were noted at a site in the south of the county.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Three birds were noted at Carterway Heads on 1st (IFo), single birds were seen flying N at High Brunton on 4th (JWP) and at Linden Hall (Longhorsley) on 15th (NFO)

Harrier sp

A ring-tail, possibly a Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus* on size and jizz, was drifting SE in the south of the County on 29th (JL).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

In Druridge bay a male and a female were noted throughout the month (TRD/JD *et al.*). Away from the breeding site a pair was seen at Warkworth Lane (Ellington) on 13th (AJR) and other singles at Holywell Pond on 11th (SPP) and at Gosforth Park NR on 17th (NHSN).



A Marsh Harrier at East Chevington
by Tim Dean
17th June

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

A male was seen kettling with two Buzzards *Buteo buteo* in the south west of the County on 2nd (ASH).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Only three records this month involving pairs at Scotland Gate (SLB/MSK) and Shiremoor (CGK) regularly throughout the month and a single bird at Southfield Green (Cramlington) on 16th and 30th (DM).

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Five birds were in the Budle Bay – Spindlestone area on 15th (CGK) and three birds were in the Breamish Valley on 3rd (MSH/AC). Two birds were seen at Scotland Gate throughout the month and at Blagdon and Prestwick Carr on 2nd and 29th and at Nedderton (Bedlington) on 2nd (ASH), Hedgeley GPs on 3rd (MSH/AC), near the A1 at Morpeth on 9th (ADM) and at Belford on 15th (CGK). Singles were at nine other sites.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetuss*

One flew over the Vicar's Garden (Holy Island) on 2nd (DRW) and it or another was seen on the Pilgrims' Way (Lindisfarne) between the 7th - 9th (IK).

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Four birds were seen between Stanington and north of Morpeth on 14th (NFO). Breeding in the Otterburn Training Area was confirmed with two broods of five ringed from two nest sites and another brood already fledged from another site (IK/BG). Two birds were at Grindon Lough on 27th (PRM) and singles were at 13 other sites including a male chasing a Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* off its patch at Ovingham (SAS).

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

On the 9th a bird roosted at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN), this is the third year in a row a Hobby has frequented the reserve periodically.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

At a confidential site a pair was seen with at least two fledged juveniles on 17th, singles were in the Upper Coquetdale area on 18th (EC) and at Swallow Pond on 29th (JPD).

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Two pairs were holding territory at Gosforth Park NR and adjacent pool throughout the month (NHSN/GB). Up to two birds were calling at Prestwick Carr on 15th and 30th (PCF) and another bird was heard calling at Swallow Pond on 1st (SPP). A bird was at a site in the south east of the County on 2nd and 23rd (DM).

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

At Hauxley NWT six birds were present on 27th (IF), four birds at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 24th (DM) and three were at Arcot Pond on 18th (DM). One to two were at Castle Island on 23rd (DM), Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 5th (DM) and at Jesmond Dene on 27th (MJCo).

Coot *Fulica atra*

75 birds at Killingworth Lake on 26th included 46 adults and 29 young (LJM), Cresswell Pond peaked at 44 birds on 23rd (IRD) and 33 birds were at Woodhorn Flashes on 23rd (CDH). 25 birds at Hadrian's Pond included broods of 2, 3 & 4 young, Linton Pond had 17 birds on 23rd (CDH). 16 was the maximum count at Bothal Pond during the month (TD), other maximum counts included 20 at Arcot Pond on 23rd and 12 at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 17th (DM). One to six birds were at eight further sites.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

One to three were present at Cresswell Pond on several occasions from the 17th to the end of the month, with one noted sitting on a nest on the first date (TRD/IRD/TB *et al.*). Four were at East Chevington also on the 17th, of which two flew N (TRD). A single appeared at Hauxley NR on 7th (PCF) and two were noted here on 30th (STH/IFo). Finally, one took to flying up the street, just above rooftop level, at Ellington, on 6th (TB).

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

The non-breeding flock on Holy Island numbered ca.200 all month (IK), whilst the peak at Cresswell Pond was 62 on 16th (MSH). Other double-digit counts included 36 first-summer in Budle Bay on 15th (CGK), 22 at Berwick North Shore on 23rd (MHu), 20+ at Branton GP on 10th (MSH) and ten at both Hauxley NR and the Tweed Estuary late in the month. A pair with two young at West Hartford on 8th had probably bred on the nearby industrial estate (LJM); similarly, another pair with two young was seen at Mill Hill Farm near Big Waters on 9th (AJJ/ISD per GB). Two broods were noted along the river at Breamish Valley on 3rd (MSH/AC) and a pair with two very young chicks was at Ovington on 23rd (SAS).

Groups of seven were noted at Prestwick Carr and Widdrington Moor Lake, and one to four were reported from Arcot Pond, Bothal Pond, Castle Island, Cobalt Business Park (North Shields) - probably breeding on undeveloped land, Cramlington (Southfield Green), Elswick Wharf (Tyne), Grindon Lough, Todburn (Slaley), Wark, West Allotment Pond and West Stobswood Pool.

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

A minimum of four pairs were on Round Hill (NY8054) on 17th (AJR) and two were calling on territory at Hedgehope on 3rd (IRD).

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Stobswood Pools attracted the largest post-breeding flock, with 105 counted on 24th (NFO). Some 50 at Whalton on 29th (ASJ), 18 flew W over Swallow Pond on 24th (JPD) and 15 at Grindon Lough on 21st (PRM) were the only other double-figure counts. Three to eight were noted at Bothal Pond, Castle Island, Hauxley NR, Milbourne (South East Farm) and Prestwick Carr.

Young were noted at Backworth (four young), Big Waters (three) and Hoppen Kiln Flash (four pairs including a new brood of four) and a 'reasonably good' breeding year was noted on Holy Island which included the rescue of two young which got their feet tangled in sheep wool (IK). Three pairs were at Low Barton on 1st with single pairs recorded at Blagdon, Blanchland and Bolton on the same date (JMA). A pair was noted on territory at Arcot Lane on 2nd and a dead immature bird was watched being buried by sexton beetles at Linhope Spout on 3rd (IRD).

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Reports came from four confidential sites during the month, including one with four young. Two were at Caistrion on 21st (TRD) and singles were noted at East Chevington on 11th/30th (TB/STH/IFo), Ingram (Breamish Valley) on 19th (MRS) and Lynemouth Flash on 30th (AA).

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

The Blyth Estuary continued to hold passage birds early on with 77 noted at Kitty Brewster on 5th (JPD) and 12-14 were noted at Amble Braid during 5th-11th (JPD/MSH). Breeding reports included four nesting pairs at Black Law (Ross) (IK) and two pairs (three mid-sized young and two small chicks) at Widdrington Moor Lake on 29th (GB). West Hartford held a peak of five on 16th (LJM) and one to four were seen at Backworth, Caistrion, Cheswick Black Rocks, Elswick Wharf and West Stobswood Pool.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Two reports, conceivably the same birds (?), involved five at Cheswick Black Rocks and five heading S at Ellington, both on 21st (MHu/TB).

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Passage at Seaton Sluice totalled 97 N between 24th-30th (SSWT) and estuary counts included 26 on the Tweed on 24th (MHu) and 21 on the Blyth on 15th (STH). Some 25 at Widdrington on 29th included groups of 16 and seven plus an agitated pair suspected of having young nearby (GB). Seven pairs were noted at both Round Hill (NY8054) and Whapweasel Burn during the month (AJR) and four pairs were in full display at Herdlaw (Otterburn TA) on 21st (IK/BG). One to four were noted at Berwick North Shore, Big Waters, Elswick Wharf, Grindon Lough and Pundershaw (Wark Forest).

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Druridge Pools proved attractive, holding six on 1st, five on 2nd and one on 6th (TF/JFa/AA/IFo *et al.*). Two were at East Chevington on 4th (TB) and singles appeared at Cresswell Pond on 1st (PCF) and 29th (JL).

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

The summering flock on Holy Island peaked at 266 on 9th (ADM/IK/MSH). Seven passed N at Seaton Sluice from 27th (SSWT) and one to three were noted at Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Hauxley and Long Nanny.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

At least 27 were in the Holy Island area on 27th (MSH), just one of which was in breeding plumage and next day 20 in non-breeding plumage were at St Cuthbert's Island (IK). Three visited East Chevington on 17th.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Singles were at West Hartford on 7th/8th (LJM/ASH) and at Cocklawburn pond on 27th (MHu).

***Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii*

The following records were inadvertently omitted from the May 2013 section. Two were at pools by the old coal road near Druridge Pools on 6th (GB *et al.*) and another was at the north end of Cresswell Pond on 27th (STH *et al.*).

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Four were at Coquet Island on 2nd, two at Boulmer on 8th and singles at East Chevington on 17th and at Cheswick Black Rocks on 21st.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

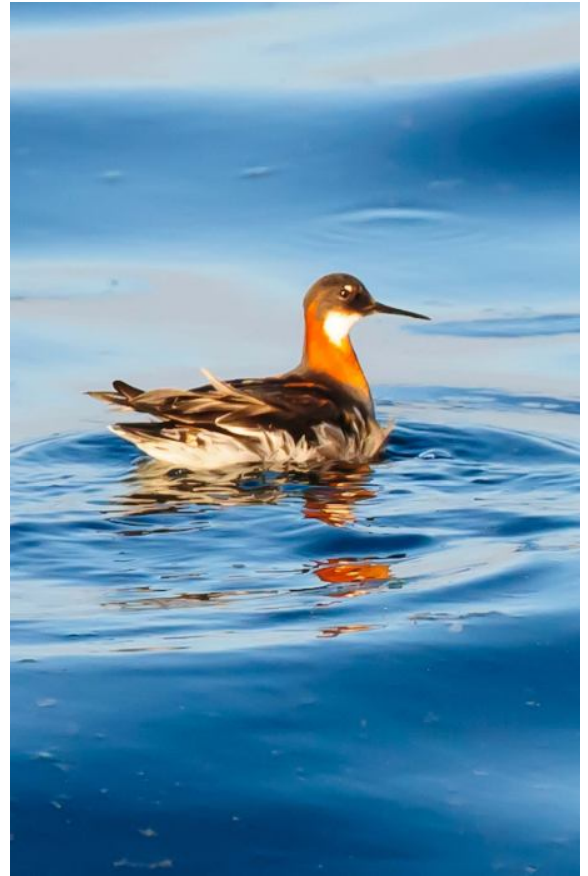
Ten in breeding plumage were on Holy Island on 30th (IK); nine adults at Grindon Lough on 28th (PRM) were potentially local breeders. Three appeared at East Chevington on 17th and singles did so at Cheswick on 21st and Hauxley NR on 27th.

***Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus*

One was at sea two nautical miles off Lynemouth on 21st (MSK/NEWT).



An unexpected discovery. Two views of the Red-necked Phalarope found at sea during a NEWT pelagic on 21st June by Martin Kitching

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*

Six pairs were in the Harthope valley on 11th (LJM). A pair with a recently hatched brood of three was noted in the Breamish Valley on 10th (MSH). Three were at Redesmouth on 7th and at Castron on 21st and singles were at Bakethin, Branton GP, Hauxley and Rothbury up to 24th; perhaps an early migrant was at Cresswell Pond on 27th.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

One was at Castle Island on 23rd (DM).

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

One in breeding plumage was at East Chevington, North Pool on 12th (AC).

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

One was at Druridge Pools on 29th (PCF).

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

There was a regular presence at Grindon Lough with a peak of ten on 21st (PRM), eight were at Round Hill on 17th (AJR) and a pair at Castron on 5th. A high-tide roost at Hauxley NR contained at least 30 on 27th (MSH).

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

At Priest Close Wood (Prudhoe) a total of 13 roding events was recorded on 3rd (MRS) during the BTO survey. One flew across the A1 near Seaton Burn on 4th at 21:30 and singles were noted in Sleafy Forest on 21st and at Yarrow Point on 25th.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Four were drumming/calling at Longframlington Common on 16th (IRD), two were at Prestwick Carr on 12th, and singles displayed at Grindon Lough on 13th and 21st and one was at Hepple Whitefield on 24th.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Eight (four N, four S) was described as an average monthly total for June at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower. Five were off East Chevington on 25th (TRD/JD), three together N plus two in the Bay; also two flew N at St Mary's on 25th (SPP) and one did so there on 24th.

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*

An adult flew N past Seaton Sluice Watch Tower on 5th (MHP).

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

At Seaton Sluice Watch Tower a total of three singles moved N between 2nd and 24th.

Auk *sp*

The maximum monthly counts at Seaton Sluice were 300 moving N in one hour on 6th and 220 S in one hour on 18th (SSWT).

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

At Seaton Sluice, 480 moved N in three hours during the 24th-25th, the period of maximum movement (SSWT) and 60 passed St Mary's Island in two hours on 6th (SPP). Ten were recorded at Dunstanburgh on 7th (SJH) and elsewhere, two to three were at Berwick (Needle's Eye) and Cresswell (Snab Point).

Razorbill *Alca torda*

At Berwick (Needle's Eye), 32 birds were present with 20 AON (apparently occupied nests) on 3rd (MHu) and on the Dunstanburgh Castle Cliffs, ten pairs were counted on 6th (JMA). Two birds were at Cresswell (Snab Point) on 6th.

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

The colony at Berwick (Needle's Eye) held 68 AON on 3rd when 154 birds were present and elsewhere in the Berwick area. 18 were at Spittal Bay on 30th and 17 at Cocklawburn on 21st (all MHu). On the sea off Dunstanburgh Cliffs on 6th, 80 were gathered (JMA) and one-three were noted at Cresswell (Snab Point) and East Chevington.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

The Long Nanny colony comprised 16 pairs on 16th with chicks reported to have successfully hatched late in the month (LN wardens *per* STH) and the Lindisfarne NNR colony held 11 pairs which also successfully hatched chicks (IK) - excellent news following last year's disastrous breeding season for this species. Away from the breeding colonies, four were at Boulmer on 1st (NFO) and at Budle Bay on 16th (CGK) with two at East Chevington on 30th (STH/IFo).

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

The only significant movement at Seaton Sluice was 120 moving S in one hour on 21st (SSWT). The largest concentrations comprised three groups totalling 191, at Holy Island on 2nd (ADM), 30 recorded during a WeBS count at Berwick North Shore on 23rd (MHu) and 30 at East Chevington on 27th (MSH), where smaller numbers were present throughout the month. A group of 26 at St Mary's Island on 24th included a colour-ringed bird marked as a chick at Sands of Forvie, Aberdeenshire in summer 2008 (MSH). The River Tweed Estuary held 18 on 24th (MHu) and single-figure counts came from Boulmer and the Long Nanny. A more unusual record on 10th was one circling over West Allotment Pond (Silverlink Park LNR), before moving off W (CGK).

Common/Arctic Tern *Sterna hirundo/paradisaea*

A mixed breeding colony of the two species at the Lindisfarne NNR held ca. 100 pairs during the month (IK).

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Small numbers, totalling 17 moving N and 18 S, were noted at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT). A colony of 55 AON was recorded on 27th at North Shields Royal Quays Marina (IF) and the largest inland breeding colony was 15 pairs at Gosforth Park NR and the adjacent pool, where chicks were seen from 24th; other breeding records were three pairs at Big Waters (GB) and Swallow Pond (SPP) and a pair at Cramlington (Dudley, Shasun Pharma) (LJM). Counts elsewhere were 15 birds at East Chevington (TRD/JD/MSH), ten at Whittle Dene Reservoirs (SR), nine at Big Waters (GB) and one-two at Arcot Pond, Backworth Pond, Leazes Park, Prestwick Carr, over Whitley Bay High Street and West Allotment Pond.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

Three were recorded around Coquet Island during a boat trip on 13th (MSK/NEWT) and two, a probable pair, were at St Mary's Island on 24th (MSH).

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

The Long Nanny colony consisted of approximately 1,500 pairs (LN wardens *per* STH) and around 800 birds were counted there on 11th (TRD/JD). A maximum of five were regularly recorded from East Chevington and five were at Hauxley NWT on 27th.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

The maximum monthly counts from Seaton Sluice were 200 moving S in one hour on 28th and 125 N in one hour on 24th (SSWT). The Berwick (Needle's Eye) colony held 880 AON on 3rd, where 130 birds were also on the sea (MHu) and the Newcastle City colonies included 238 AON on the north side of the Tyne Bridge, 64 at the Quayside and 12 at the Guildhall (all DM). On the River Tweed estuary, 122 roosted on 26th and a WeBS count there recorded 24 (MHu). Elsewhere, 17 were on the Howdon Wetland NR on 1st (CB) with one to six seen at Boulmer, Cresswell (Snab Point) and Hauxley.



A Kittiwake at Newcastle Quayside by Adriana Buskin on 28th June

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Gosforth Park NR and the adjacent pool held a monthly maximum of 14 with seven pairs nesting there on the new tern platform and successfully hatching chicks (NHSN). At Swallow Pond a total of 18 chicks were counted from pairs nesting on the raft and the island (JPD/SPP). Gatherings of 207 were at Hauxley NWT on 27th (IF), 60 at Castle Island on 23rd (DM), 40, all first-summers, at Hoppen Kiln Flash (near Lucker) on 14th (CGK) and 25 on the River Tweed Estuary on 24th (MHu). Groups of 14 and 10 respectively were at Slaley (RMH) and Elswick Wharf (River Tyne)(DM); ten fledglings were at Branton GP on 12th, noted as a 'limited success' for the gull colony there (TRD/JD). One to three were at five other localities, including two very young fledglings at East Chevington which may have been raised there (TRD/JD).

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Very well reported by many observers, with 33 records, the majority from the well watched sites of Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools and East Chevington. The maximum counts at these favoured localities, almost all 1st and 2nd-summer birds, were 15 at Druridge Pools on 6th (TB), 11 at East Chevington on 5th (JPD) and six at Cresswell Pond on 27th (IF); birds were present in varying numbers throughout the month at each of these sites. Elsewhere, single immatures were noted at Coquet Island, Inner Farne and the Long Nanny.



A Little Gull at Druridge Pools
on 1st June
by Jonathan Farooqi

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Two adults were at the favoured Newbiggin locality on 5th (TB) and two different 1st-summer birds were seen at Seaton Sluice on 12th and 13th (SSWT) with possibly one of these birds frequenting Whitley Bay beach on 11th (CGK). Elsewhere, an adult was recorded moving S at East Chevington on 13th.

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Only two records, both of immature birds, three at Cheswick Black Rocks on 27th and a single at Grindon Lough on the same day.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

A gathering of ca. 120 was at Slaley on 8th (RMH) and double-figure counts were 39 at Elswick Wharf (River Tyne) on 13th (DM), 33 at Swallow Pond on 26th (JPD), 23 on a WeBS survey on the River Tweed Estuary on 24th (MHu), 13 at West Hartford on 5th (STH) and 12 in Jesmond Dene on 2nd (MJCo). Four AON, one with a young chick, were seen at the Blyth Riverside Business Park on 25th (LJM) and elsewhere, one-four birds were at Castle Island, Dinnington, Hadrian's Pond, Leazes Park, Seaton Sluice, Walbottle and Wark. At Newcastle Central Station, a nest sited on the ground in a car park bay contained a single young with an adult nearby (STH).

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argenteus*

Breeding colonies held 25 AON at Berwick (Needle's Eye) (MHu) with 15 AON, including 13 young, at Blyth Riverside Business Park (LJM). The only significant gatherings recorded were 334 and 92 found during WeBS surveys on the River Tweed estuary and at Berwick North Shore respectively during the last week of the month (MHu). At Castle Island, 13 were present on 23rd (DM) and elsewhere, one-five were recorded, at Jesmond Dene, Leazes Park, Newcastle Quayside, Walbottle and West Hartford,

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Two-five were at Berwick North Shore, Castle Island, Elswick Wharf (River Tyne) and the River Tweed Estuary (MHu/DM).

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

The largest count was of six, some of whom were occupying Barn Owl boxes at Miller's Bridge (Berwick) on 3rd (TBr), four at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 7th, Jesmond Dene on 9th, Grindon Lough on 21st and Big Waters on 23rd. Two were in gardens at Rothbury and Walbottle, near Darras Hall and at Callaly.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Nine were found in Jesmond Dene on 15th (MJCo), three including a juvenile in a garden at Walbottle on 2nd (KR/LR) and a pair nest building in Wisteria on a house wall in Woosington on 15th (SRB).

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Just three at Prestwick Carr on 11th (PCF) and two in a Walbottle garden on 9th (KR/LR).

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

A belated **May** record of one heard on 23rd near the observer's home in Rothbury (JD) and on the same day as one reported flying through Cresswell.

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Four were at Lordenshaw on 8th (ASJ) with three at Wark Forest on 3rd (IFo), Priest Close Wood (Prudhoe) on 13th (MRS) and Longframlington Common on 19th (IRD). Two were at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) on 5th, Harthope Valley on 11th, Billsmoor and Slaley Forest both on 21st with singles at some of the aforementioned and nineteen further widespread localities.

The records for **April** were accidentally omitted and should read;

The first returning bird was found at Newton Pool on 26th (TRD) with other singles at Rowley Burn on 28th (ASH), Hepplewoodside on 30th (IFo) and a possible pair at Eals on the same date (EC/JSB).

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Pairs with three young were found at Alnwick on the 12th and Amble on 27th (JMA) with three large young ringed at Holy Island on 22nd (IK) and singles near nest sites at three further locations. All other reports were singles at Miller's Bridge (Berwick), Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Ellington, High Hauxley, Hipsburn, Linden Hall (Longhorsley), Newcastle Airport, and Stobswood Pools.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

A pair was noted regularly at Shiremoor during the month (CGK) with two at Derwent Reservoir on two dates (IFo), singles at Backworth and Ovington on several dates (ASJ/SAS) and near Big Waters on 4th and 26th (GB).

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

A count of seven at Holywell Dene included juveniles (JPD/MPF) at Gosforth Park NR a pair had two juveniles and a juvenile roosted regularly with an adult at Prestwick Carr between 10th & 15th (PCF) and a juvenile at Detchant on 15th (CGK). Pairs were at Slaley Forest on 21st, Wark Forest on 25th with two calling at Walbottle Hall on 30th and singles at Chugdon Wood, Ellington, Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) and regularly in a Rothbury garden.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

Singles were at Arcot Pond on 1st (STH), Swallow Pond on 6th & 29th (JPD), Widdrington on 8th (NFO) and roosting in a Eucalyptus tree at Castle Terrace (Berwick) on 16th (BWG).

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Just two reports from Holy Island of singles on 9th & 23rd (ADM/SR/AH).

Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Two were heard at Sleafy Forest on 20th and a single on 21st (AJH/ASH) with another male churring at Pundershaw (Wark Forest) on 25th (PRM).

Swift *Apus apus*

Swallow Pond attracted the largest gatherings with ca.400 on 10th and ca.300 on 27th with counts over 100 on three other dates (SPP/ASJ/JPD). Other counts over 100 were 123 at Hauxley NR on 27th (IF), 120 at Woodhorn Flashes on 1st and 100 at Lynemouth Village on 29th (ASJ) with 25 to 75 at Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, St Mary's Island, Wark and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. One to five were at five other widely spread localities.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Proving to be scarce this year with singles at Jesmond Dene on 2nd, 7th and 23rd (MJCo), Low Angerton on 4th (IRD) and Thrum Mill (Rothbury) on 17th (JD).

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

An ant hill in a Rothbury garden attracted one all month (TRD/JD) with other sightings of singles all in the first half of the month at Arcot Pond and Tarsset Burn (Sidwood) on 1st, Foustones on 2nd, Letah Wood (Hexham) on 2nd and 5th, Edlingham on 6th, Dipton Mill on 8th, Healey Cleugh on 9th and Rothley Lakes on 16th.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Six were found along the Waren Burn between Lucker and Spindlestone on 15th (CGK), two pairs at Barn's Park (Cramlington) on 29th (DM) and family party of four at Warkworth Lane (Ellington) (TB) with one to three at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley), Valley Park, Southfield Green & Beacon Lane (Cramlington), Gosforth Park, Jesmond Dene, Leazes Park, Morpeth, Scotland Gate and Walbottle. Three pairs were noted as having raised young in the Jesmond Dene area (DHWB), a pair carried food to a nest at Arcot Pond on 3rd and fed young at Harthope Valley (LJM) with an adult and at least one juvenile at Anick on 22nd (PRM).



Great Spotted Woodpeckers at a nest hole
Tranwell Woods
by Peter Tapsell

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

A male was at St Mary's Island on 1st and 2nd (JPD/SPP/CGK *et al.*) and another male found at East Chevington by Dave Elliot also on 2nd (IF/AA).

Magpie *Pica pica*

The Swallow Pond gathering was 38 on 2nd (JPD) with eight the peak count in a Walbottle garden, and a family party of two adults and three juveniles in a Fulbeck (Morpeth) garden during the month and four in Jesmond Dene on 9th.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

More than two were at Scotland Gate during the month (SLB/MSK) with two at Swallow Pond on 2nd (JPD) and Spindlestone on 15th (CGK). Singles were at eleven further widespread localities.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

A gathering of 150 at Rowley Burn on 5th (AJH), 55 at Howdon Wetland NR on 9th (CB) with ten the highest count in a Walbottle garden during the month. Adults with juveniles in tow were noted in the observer's garden at Fulbeck (TD) and at a nest on the roof of Walbottle First School (KR/LR) with four at Paddy Freeman's Playing Field on 2nd.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Rowley Burn had a flock of 200 on 5th (AJH) with 75 at Tritlington on 1st, 50 at Cawledge also on 1st and at Roddam on 27th (JMA).

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

The largest count was 46 at North Shields Fish Quay on 2nd (CB) with four the highest count in a Walbottle garden during the month (KR/LR), two in Jesmond Dene on 27th and a pair fledged two young from a tree nest at Southfield Green (Cramlington).

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

One was at St Mary's Island on 4th (AC/JPD) and at Breamish Valley on 15th (ASJ).

Raven *Corvus corax*

The only report of a pair displaying at Billsmoor on 21st (JSB/EC).

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Many were reported singing at Morralee Wood (Allen Banks) on 9th (STH) with just two at Jesmond Dene on 27th and one or more regularly at Scotland Gate during the month.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

A pair fledged five young of six from a nest in a Walbottle garden (KR/LR) and a pair was noted feeding young in platform pillars at Cullercoats Metro Station (CGK) with four at Jesmond Dene on 23rd and two pairs at Barn's Park (Cramlington) on 29th.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Gardens attracted family parties with a pair and four juveniles at Fulbeck (Morpeth) on 30th (TD), a pair and three young on feeders at Newton Red House on 28th (PG), three including one juvenile in a Walbottle garden on 30th (KR/LR) and a pair feeding young in a nest box at Stanington on 3rd (RWM/MIM). Two were at Jesmond Dene on 9th.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Six was the peak count in a Fulbeck (Morpeth) garden with four juveniles in the last week, a family party was at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 2nd and two at Jesmond Dene on 23rd.

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

An adult with two newly fledged young was at Slaley Hall on 24th (RMH) and a male sang at Prestwick Carr on 21st with a single at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) on 5th.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

Just two reports of singles at Juniper (Dye House) on 5th (RMH) and Linden Hall (Longhorsley) on 7th (NFO).

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Fifteen sang at Bellasis Bridge on 3rd, ten at Ingoe on 9th, (ASJ), ten+ at Greenleighton on 12th (AJR), eight at Simonside included two juveniles and six at Prestwick Carr on 8th with pairs noted at the Snook (Holy Island), Low Barton and a single at Gosforth Park.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Counts near nest colonies numbered 120 at Fourstones on 17th (ASJ), around 80 at Eals Bridge (R. South Tyne) on 6th (TBr) and 40 at Lynemouth on 12th with 23 at Elwick Flash on 15th and 20 at Big Waters on 28th.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Probably so common nobody counted them as there were just two reports of ten (five nesting pairs) at Foxhunters Industrial Estate (Whitley Bay) on 1st (ASJ) and three at Paddy Freeman's Playing Field (Jesmond Dene) on 15th.



Swallows roosting at St. Mary's on 30th June by Alan Jack

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

A peak count of 25+ at Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 11th (GB), 24+ at Town Moor on 20th (DM), 15 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 25th (SR) and eight (four pairs) at Wark (N. Tyne) on 19th (PRM). Needle's Eye (Berwick) had 9AON on 3rd (MHu) and the observer's garden at Stannington had 4AON on 30th noted as another poor year (RWM/MIM).



A House Martin at Allenheads on 14th June by John Clark

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

A family party of 12 was at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 15th and another family party at nearby Dam Dykes plantation on 23rd (DM). The only other report was of three at Jesmond Dene on 2nd.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Two singing birds were at Allen Banks on 9th and at Allenheads NT on 20th (AJH/JL). One was also noted at Sidwood (Tarsset Burn) on 1st (IF).

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Six in Jesmond Dene on 15th was the highest count reported (MJCo). Four were noted at Valley Park (Cramlington) and three at Anick (Hexham), Dissington-Darras Hall and Shawdon Hall. One to two were at a further ten localities, including coastal birds at Tynemouth on 2nd and Holy Island on 9th.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Counts of 24 singing males came from Swallow Pond on 2nd and the Wingates area on 8th (JPD/ASJ). Elsewhere 16 singing birds were heard in the Harthope Valley on 11th, 12 at Ladyburn Lake on 4th and ten at Dissington-Darras Hall on 8th when nine birds were also at Prestwick Carr. Six were counted at Pundershaw (Wark Forest) and up to four at Grindon Lough. Three late migrants were on Holy Island on 2nd and singles here on 9th and 16th.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Counts of singing males included ten from Dissington-Darras Hall on 8th (CW), nine at Swallow Pond on 2nd and six+ near Tilmouth on 7th. Four to six were reported from Gosforth Park NR, Hulne Park (Alnwick), Jesmond Dene and Linden Hall (Longhorsley) and a female was feeding three newly fledged young in a Stamfordham garden by 19th (EC). One to three were noted at a further 11 localities.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Five were singing at Castron on 21st (TRD) and two were reported from Derwent Reservoir, Dissington Bridge and Linden Hall (Longhorsley). Singles were noted at a further ten localities, including Hadrian's Pond (Wallsend) where the species is now considered to be rare.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Two were heard alarm calling near Chainbridge Honey Farm (Berwick) on 16th (TBr) and two were singing at Swallow Pond on 26th (JPD). Singles in song were also heard at Arcot Pond, East Chevington, Howden Wetland NR and Warkworth Lane (Ellington). Late passage birds were at Holy Island on 2nd and 7th.



A Whitethroat at Woodhorn by Alan Jack on 1st June

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

A bike ride from Backworth-Holywell on 10th produced a total of 33 singing males (ASJ) and 22 were heard singing in the Wingates area on 8th (ASJ). Elsewhere nine to ten were reported from Dissington-Darras Hall, Prestwick Carr and Swallow Pond and six at Silverlink CP (North Shields) and Tynemouth. Three recently fledged young were at Arcot Pond on 21st and a family group was noted at Linden Hall (Longhorsley) on 24th. A pair nest-building at Holy Island on 7th is only the second confirmed breeding record for the island, after the first in 2011 (IK). One to two were also noted at a further six localities.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Two 'reeling' birds were heard at Grindon Lough on 13th (PRM) and Prestwick Carr on 8th (PCF). Singles were also reported from Bamburgh, Beanley, Berwick, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, East Hartford, Gosforth Park NR, Holy Island, Kielder Forest, Morpeth (County Hall), St Mary's, Warkworth Lane (Ellington) and West Hartford.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Ten at Cresswell Pond was by far the highest count of the month (ASJ). Up to four were noted on Holy Island and three+ at Gosforth Park NR. Singles were also reported from Beal and Grindon Lough.

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*

One was heard singing intermittently at St Mary's Wetland on 8th (SPP).

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Six at Newcastle Great Park Pools on 2nd included five singing males (LAR) and five at Cresswell Pond on 23rd included a ringed individual (DM). Four+ were heard at Gosforth Park NR during the month and four were heard at Ladyburn Lake on 4th. There were two at St Mary's on 3rd and singles were reported from Arcot Pond, Big Waters, East Chevington, Holy Island Lough, Howden Wetland NR, Swallow Pond and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

One to three were reported from Allen Banks, Blanchland, Jesmond Dene, Wark and Widdrington, the latter the first BBS record here in over five years. Breeding was confirmed in Jesmond Dene.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Family parties were reported from Chugdon Wood (Ellington), Hawsen Burn, Jesmond Dene, Prestwick Carr and Scotch Gill (Morpeth). Singles were also noted at Cramlington, Hulne Park, Redesmouth and Rothley Lakes.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

14 were counted over 2km at Prestwick Carr on 8th (PCF) and five were noted at Jesmond Dene on 23rd. A pair with six young was seen at Gosforth Park NR during the month.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Post-breeding flocks comprised 250 at East Chevington on 15th (ASJ), 200+ at Prestwick Carr on 2nd and 150 at St Mary's on 3rd; many young were noted. Twelve were at Jesmond Dene on 15th and a family party of seven was in a Walbottle garden on 9th.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Five+ in the Breamish Valley on 3rd included one to two fledged young (MSH/AC). Young were also being fed at Allen Banks, Hartford Bridge (Bedlington) and Jesmond Dene and juveniles were found at Plessey Woods CP and perhaps more unusually on the outflow channel at East Chevington. Two adults were at Thrum Mill (Rothbury) on 24th and singles at Dissington-Darras Hall and Hawsen Burn.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

A pair with three fledged young was at Hawsen Burn (Harthope Valley) on 17th (KAS per RWM).

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

A high population on Marden Estate (Tynemouth) was maintained with a count of 36 singing males on 6th (ASJ). Many second-brood young were noted on Holy Island in what has been a good breeding season (IK). Six were noted at Dinnington and in a Walbottle garden and four at Jesmond Dene.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

It has been a good season on Holy Island where several recently fledged second broods were noted (IK). Singles were reported from five areas in Jesmond Dene on 15th (MJCo); three were at Prestwick Carr on 3rd and at Tranwell on 29th.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Up to six in Jesmond Dene included two juveniles in a nest on 15th (MJCo). Three were at Grindon Lough on 27th.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Very well reported this month. A total of seven singing males were noted at Linden Hall (Longhorsley) from 1st-2nd (NFO). Breeding was confirmed at Breamish Valley, where a pair was feeding four well-grown young on 19th (MRS), Rothbury (three fledglings on 8th), Nunykirk and Spindlestone, the latter the first BBS record for three years. In addition an active pair was resident in a Stamfordham garden throughout the month. Three were at Meldon Park on 3rd and two at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley), Bradford, Kirkheaton and Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) and singles at a further six potential inland breeding localities. On the coast three were at Prior's Park (Tynemouth) on 1st and at Holy Island on 2nd. Late singles were again at Holy Island on 7th, 9th and 10th.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Two breeding pairs in a Fulbeck (Morpeth) garden raised a total of at least five young (TD) and a pair with young was noted at Gosforth Park NR. Four were in Jesmond Dene on 2nd.



A young Robin in a Tranwell garden by Peter Tapsell

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

The only report was of two males at Letah Wood (Hexham) on 2nd (AJH).

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Confirmed breeding was noted at Blanchland (feeding young), Dalton (Hexham) where there were two adults and four young on 22nd (AJH), Hallington (carrying food) and Prestwick Carr (male feeding a juvenile). Singing males included seven from Longhorsley-Forestburngate (ASJ) on 8th, five at Letah Wood (Hexham) on 2nd, three at Black Heddon and singles at Dissington Bridge, near Hallington Reservoir, Milbourn and Rothbury. Three birds were noted at Healey Cleugh on 9th and singles in a further seven potential breeding areas.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Some high populations were reported from upland breeding areas, most notably 20 (16 males, four females) in the Breamish Valley at Ingram on 15th (ASJ) and 20 adults in Upper Coquetdale from Alwinton-Chew Green on 18th (JSB/EC). Eight were noted north-east of Linhope on 26th and one at Kielder Forest on 27th. A migrant was on the coast at Holy Island on 2nd.



A male Whinchat in the Ingram valley by Alan Jack on 14th June

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Pairs with fledged young and juveniles were reported from Bamburgh Dunes, Cocklawburn, Cresswell, Druridge Pools / links, Hauxley, Newton Links and Warkworth Gut. In addition a pair was noted at Cresswell Pond on 14th and a male at Boulmer on 1st. There were no inland reports.

A female Stonechat
Hauxley
1st June
by Alan Jack



Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

In Upper Coquetdale 20 adults and seven juveniles were noted from Alwinton-Chew Green on 18th (JSB/EC). A pair was feeding at least two recently fledged young at Mootlaw (Ryal) on 17th and singles were noted at Hepple Whitefield, Little Swinburne and Raylees. A late migrant was on the coast at Holy Island on 2nd.

Dunnoek *Prunella modularis*

An adult feeding two juveniles was in a Walbottle garden on 9th (KR/LR). A single was also noted at Jesmond Dene (Newcastle) on 9th (MJCo).

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

30 were present all month in a Tynemouth garden (ASJ) whilst 26 six including 20 juveniles were at Ovington throughout the month (SAS). One to nine were at Jesmond Dene (Newcastle), Netherton Park (Stannington) and a Walbottle garden throughout the month.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

The highest total for the month was 35 at Black Heddon on 20th (ASJ) whilst one to nineteen were at a further 19 sites throughout the month.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

18 were at Whittle Dene on 10th (SR). Four pairs were collecting food for nests in nearby arable fields at Devil's Water on 14th (EC) and one to five were at a further 11 sites throughout the month.

One of the Devil's Water Yellow
Wagtails with a feast for its young
by John Clark
14th June

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*

Six including at least two families of young birds were at Allen Banks on 26th (DLo) whilst one to four were at a further 11 sites throughout the month.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

30 were at Whittle Dene on 25th (SR), for including three juveniles at West Hartford on 23rd (LJM) and four broods at West Allotment Pond on 24th (CGK).

A Pied Wagtail after a bathe
Holy Island
9th June
by Adriana Buskin

**Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis*

Six were at Healey on 8th (AJH) and four at Simonside on 8th (ASJ) whilst one to two were at Beacon Hill, Breamish Valley, Callaly, Druridge Pools, Forestburn Gate, Hindhope Linn (Kielder), Prestwick Carr, Pundershaw (Wark Forest), Slaley Forest and Tranwell throughout the month.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Surprisingly there were no records for June.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

27 singing males were at Black Heddon on 20th (ASJ), nine at Jesmond Dene (Newcastle) on 15th (MJCo) and three in a Walbottle garden including a juvenile being fed by adult on 23rd (KR/LR).

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

Eight including a juvenile were in a Walbottle garden on 2nd KR/LR, four at Cramlington on 28th (DM) and three at Jesmond Dene (Newcastle) 2nd (MJCo).

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

13 were in a Walbottle garden on 16th (KR/LR) whilst one to two were noted at Grindon Lough, Holy Island, Jesmond Dene (Newcastle) and Wark throughout the month.

A handsome Goldfinch at Howdon
Wetlands
by Colin Bradshaw

**Siskin** *Carduelis spinus*

Five were in a Fulbeck garden (Morpeth) thorough the month (TD) and one to two were also seen throughout the month at Gosforth Park (GB), Scotland Gate (SLB/MSK) and Wark (PRM).

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

21 were at Warkworth Gut on 23rd (NFO), a family party at Cresswell Pond on 23rd (DM) and a single at Newcastle Quayside on 18th (DM).

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*

12 were in the Breamish Valley on 10th (MSH) whilst one to ten were seen at a further ten locations throughout the month.

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

12 were noted at Craggside (Rothbury) on 13th (TRD/JD) and 11 at Healey on 8th (AJH). One to eight were seen at a further eight sites throughout the month.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Six were at Holywell on 10th (ASJ) whilst one to five were seen at a further 16 sites throughout the month.

A cock Bullfinch
Howdon Wetlands
by Colin Bradshaw

**Yellowhammer** *Emberiza citrinella*

22 singing males were at Black Heddon on 20th (ASJ), 19 singing males at Bellasis Bridge on 19th (ASJ) and 15 singing males were at Saltwick Hill on 26th (ASJ). One to six were seen at a further six sites throughout the month.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza Schoeniclus*

12 were at Cocklawburn on 27th (MHu), seven at Gosforth Park throughout the month (NHSN), four at Arcot Pond on 17th (DM)



A pair of Reed Buntings in the Ingram Valley
14th June by Alan Jack

ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN**Escapes****Lesser White-fronted Goose** *Anser erythropus*

A single at Cresswell Pond on 27th & 30th would have been very popular had it been deep mid-winter ! (IRD)

Muscovy Duck *Cairina moschata*

One was still present at Duke's Pond (near Swallow Pond) through to 29th (JPD).

'Khaki Campbells' *Anas platyrhynchos*

Two at Leazes Park on 24th (DM)

Birds of Unknown Origin**Ring-necked Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri*

Single at Earsdon on 19th at dusk (CGK)

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

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Berwick Wildlife Group, Long Nanny Wardens, 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 (Avocet to Godwit) Ian Forsyth (Turnstone to Skua), Eddie Crabtree (Puffin to Great Black-backed Gull), 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 (Duncock 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

Mail 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

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. Please submit any new content for the website to the main club email address at ntbcorg@gmail.com

NTBC SIGHTINGS PAGE

The Sightings Page contains current sightings by members. Access is from the NTBC website.

Members need to submit a request to be added to the website, specifying the email address they wish to post from before they can submit sightings to ntbcorg@gmail.com



A Barnacle Goose
Marden Quarry
6th June
by Adriana Buskin

COASTAL WEBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

JUNE 2013

AC A. Craggs
MLC M. L. Cadwallender / W. Dickson
TAC T. A. Cadwallender

LJM L. J. McDougall
NA N. Adams
DMT D. M. Turner
PF P. Fletcher

MHu M. Hutcheson
TB T. Brevin

Site	TOTAL		Berwick North Shore (including Little Beach)		Berwick Little Beach		Tweed Estuary		Tweed: A1 By-Pass to Horncastle		Spirit - Cocklawburn		Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay)		(Budle Bay)		Seahouses - Beadnell		Aln Estuary		Blyth Estuary		St Mary's Island		Tyne North Pier - Fish Quay		East Howdon, (north bank only)		Redhugh - Scotswood Bridge, (north bank)		Scotswood - Newburn Bridge, (north bank)	
	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	MHu	TB	MHu	AC	AC	MLC	TAC	LJM	NA	DMT	DMT	DMT	DMT	DMT	DMT	DMT	DMT	DMT	DMT	DMT	DMT	DMT	DMT	DMT	DMT	DMT		
Counter	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	
Date	57	4	2	2	8	15	21	5	17																							
Comorant	6	2																														
Shag	30	2			8	6	1	6																								
Grey Heron	289				228	23		8	7																							
Mute Swan	16				1		6																									
Greylag Goose	14				9																											
Canada Goose	1																															
Light-bellied Brent Goose	328	3	2																													
Shelduck	7																															
Teal	209	2			34	107			16																							
Mallard	6					4			1																							
Tufted Duck	697	32			5			45	418	4	120	32	6	36	3																	
Eider	24							24																								
Common Scoter	2								2																							
Red-breasted Merganser	140	27	3	52	26	19	15																									
Gosander	9																															
Moorhen	2					1																										
Coot	310	22	12	10	9	25	147	15	73	10	5	1	6																			
Oystercatcher	34						2	24																								
Ringed Plover	14								14																							
Grey Plover	30	1	1					7			20																					
Lapwing	33								33																							
Knot	3							1	2																							
Sanderling	26							1	25																							
Dunlin	2																															
Shipe	403								403	12																						
Bar-tailed Godwit	5							5																								
Whimbrel	592	3	1	26			3	524	88	2	18	13																				
Curlw	26							12			8	2	4																			
Redshank	18								11																							
Turnstone	1,056	3	2	25	2	5	591	210	7	73	129	136																				
Black-headed Gull	50																															
Common Gull	102	1	1	23			1	20		6		3																				
Lesser Black-backed Gull	1,445	92	52	334	1	57	135																									
Herring Gull	115	3		5			1	9	7	40	1																					
Great Black-backed Gull	335	2		24						300																						
Kittiwake	88	30	4	18			12	23		4		1																				
Sandwich Tern	5									2		1																				
Common Tern	8								7																							
Arctic Tern	0																															
Kingfisher																																
ADDITIONAL SPECIES																																
Fulmar	9			2						5																						
TOTALS - WILDFOWL	1,837	72	5	338	176	103	764	224	122	119	35	61	6	5	23	13																
- WADERS	1,496	26	14	36	9	37	1,202	115	83	58	20	9	6	0	6	4																
- GULLS & TERNS	3,204	131	59	429	3	76	835	217	457	96	216	322	269	147	177	46																

Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

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

Bulletin 2013 No 7

MONTHLY SUMMARY – JULY

9th September 2013



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WeBS Inland
Red Kite 2013 Breeding Report
Shearwater Event
Constitution

CLASSIFIED LIST HIGHLIGHTS

Common Scoter	Record breaking numbers past Seaton Sluice this month
Velvet Scoter	Noticeable small passage mid month
Goosander	Maximum count of 332 in Spittal Bay on 18th.
Quail	Only one single noted in a poor year for this species
Black-throated Diver	Single at Cheswick on 2nd
Sooty Shearwater	Single off Cullercoats on 22nd.
Manx Shearwater	Large passage off Seaton Sluice
Little Egret	Marked increase in records this month
Spoonbill	One at Budle bay on 30th.
Red-necked Grebe	Adult off Newbiggin on 22nd
Red Kite	Coastal record N at Hauxley on 15th.
Hobby	One at Big Waters on 30th.
Water Rail	Excellent breeding success at Big Waters
Crane	One roosting at Rayburn lake early in month
Curlew Sandpiper	Up to three at East Chevington
Temminck's Stint	Singles at Derwent Reservoir and East Chevington
Spotted Sandpiper	Marvellous 'spotted' adult at Foxton from 27th to 30th.
Bridled Tern	A real treat as one was found on Inner Farne on 1st, also visited Druridge Bay
Mediterranean Gull	Peak count of 49 at Newbiggin on 24th.

COMMITTEE NEWS

NTBC AGM

The Annual General Meeting of Northumberland & Tyneside Bird Club will take place on 10th October 2013. 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

CONSTITUTION

In line with advice from the Charity Commission regarding good governance the committee has conducted a periodic review of the Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club's Constitution.

A revised constitution will be presented for adoption at the 2013 AGM. A copy of the revised constitution is attached to this bulletin. The main change to the proposed new constitution is an additional club aim as follows:

To promote for the benefit of the public the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment [by promoting biological diversity].

As the birds within our recording area continue to be under pressure from a range of threats, the committee believes that this additional aim will help the club focus its efforts in working with other conservation organisations.

We have also modernised the wording in several areas of the constitution, making some minor changes that will allow both the current and future committees greater flexibility to manage the business of running the club.

COUNTY RECORDS COMMITTEE

Ian Fisher will complete his four year spell on the committee in December 2013. 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 bird life 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

INDOOR MEETINGS

NTBC indoor meetings start again in September. As usual meetings will be held at Northern Rugby Club, McCracken Park, Great North Road, Newcastle, NE3 2DT starting at 7.00pm and generally finish between 9.00pm-9.30pm.

The first meeting is on Thursday 12th September.

Bird Atlas 2007-2011 "Revealing the maps"

Dawn Balmer of the BTO will give an illustrated talk on the changes in bird populations revealed by the Atlas.

FIELD TRIPS

The next of Trevor Blake's popular field trips are;

Sunday 15th September to Saltholme and Teesside,

Sunday 13th October to Holy Island

For further information please contact Trevor direct

trevor.1958@live.co.uk

BULLETIN WRITERS

We are always grateful for help writing sections of the bulletin on a long term or stand-by basis. We will soon need a writer for Dunnock to Corn Bunting as Phil Allott will not be available. Please contact any committee member or email

Steve Barrett NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.com



One of the highlights of the year, the Bridled Tern on the Farne Islands. By Colin Bradshaw on 1st July

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 2011 page 228.

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

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

The Tweed Estuary held 306 on 19th (MHu), 148 were at Killingworth Lake on 17th (MHu), 65 at Ladyburn Lake on 6th (DM), and 50 (including broods of four and two young) at Castle Island on 18th (PRM). Counts of 12-14 came from the Blyth Estuary, Budle Bay and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Breeding data were as follows (additional to previous months unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Burradon Pond	1	5	LJM. On 26th
Gosforth Park	1	5	GB. On small pond in NW corner (not the NR), on 23rd
Whittle Dene Reservoirs	1	5	SR. On 9th
Ladyburn Lake	1	1	DM. On 6th

A pair successfully reared two young in Budle Bay (CGK), and a pair at Newcastle Exhibition Park had a nest with four eggs (DHWB).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Good numbers at Derwent Reservoir, with peaks of 423 (370 adults plus a crèche of 53 young) on 3rd (PRM), 550+ on 4th (IFo) and 575+ on 11th (PRM) and 857 on 12th (JPD). Peak counts elsewhere were 54 at Big Waters on 20th (GB), 37 at Cresswell Pond on 21st (DM), 26 at Arcot Pond (LJM), and 12-15 at Backworth and Linton Ponds. One to six were at/over Alnmouth, Bolam Lake CP, Bothal, Cocklawburn and Cresswell Ponds, East Chevington, Foxton Bend, Grindon Lough and Simonside.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Peak counts were 118 at Castle Island on 18th (STH), 89 at Killingworth Lake on 17th (LJM), 60 at Hartburn Reservoir on 25th (TB), 45 at Widdrington Moor Lake (LJM), 35 at Newcastle Leazes Park (DM), and 22-30 at Grindon Lough (PRM) and Linton Ponds (CDH). Five to seven were also at Backworth, New Water Haugh (R. Tweed), the Tweed Estuary, and Yarrow Slake, and one to two at Bell's Pond, East Chevington and Foxton Bend.

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Two flew N and four S at Seaton Sluice on 23rd (SSWT). Numbers at Budle Bay fell from 123 on 13th (CGK) to 74 by 25th (PRM) and 31 by 28th (CGK), as a result of moult migration, 22 were at Castle Island on 21st (DM/GB/JH), and two at the Long Nanny Estuary. Breeding data were as follows (additional to previous months unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Cresswell Pond	2	19 (11,8)	PRM. Plus four adults, on 23rd
Amble	2	9 (8,1)	PRM. On 5th
Blyth Estuary	2	8 (2,6)	LJM. On 22nd. Includes broods from June?
Howdon Wetland	1	11	CB. Pair with 11 fledged young on 29th (from June)
Grindon Lough	1	8	PRM. Pair with young from 6th-16th (as June). One juvenile on 22nd
Foxton Bend	1	6	PRM. Pair with young on 28th
Alnmouth	1	4	PRM. Pair with young on 30th

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

One was at Druridge Pools on 15th, 21st and 26th (TRD/JD/CDB et al.). Five large juveniles were at Bakethin Reservoir on 7th (JPD), and an adult female with two ducklings was noted at Blakehopeburnhaugh on 16th (JD).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Grindon Lough held peaks of 18 on 18th and 23rd, with one to 17 on several dates between 9th-19th (PRM). Ten were at Druridge Pools on 26th (CDB), fours at Cresswell Pond, Derwent Reservoir and East Chevington, and one to two at Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Canty's Brig (Lower Whiteadder Water), Fenham Flats, Hauxley Reserve and Monks' House Pool.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Linton Ponds held 11 on 21st (CDH), seven were at Arcot Pond between 3rd-14th (STH), and one to two at Big Waters and East Chevington. Breeding data were as follows (additional to previous months):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Ladyburn Lake	3	15	LJM. On 9th
Bell's Pond, Cresswell	2	20 (11,9)	GB/DM/JH. On 21st
Druridge Pools	1	10	TRD/JD. On 21st
Bothal Pond	1	8	TRD/PRM. On 15th. Down to five young by 18th.
Big Waters	1	7	GB. On 20th. Down to 6 young by 30th
East Chevington south pool	1	4	PRM. On 23rd

Teal *Anas crecca*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was 58 N and 12 S, including 43 N between 20th-24th (SSWT), and 54 flew N at Newbiggin in 90 minutes on 21st (TRC). Peak site counts were 42 at Hauxley Reserve on 3rd (IFo), 37 at Grindon Lough on 22nd (PRM), 22 at East Chevington on 23rd (PRM), and seven to ten at Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools and Meadow Haven (Berwick). One to five were also at Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Castle Island, Derwent Reservoir and Monks' House Pool.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Largest concentrations were 158 at Derwent Reservoir on 22nd (IFo), 155 (including a brood of six young) at Big Waters on 17th (GB), 87 at Ladyburn Lake on 6th (DM), 54-63 at Holywell Pond, Newcastle Leazes Park and Newton Pool, 35-47 at Arcot, Bothal, Duke's and Linton Ponds, Bakethin Reservoir and the Tweed Estuary, and 21-29 at Budle Bay, Castle Island, Cresswell Pond, Fenham Flats and Wark (N. Tyne).

Mallard breeding data were as follows (additional to previous months unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Killingworth Lake	5	30 (11,7,5,4,3)	LJM. On 24th. Includes broods in June?
Ladyburn Lake	4	21 (8,5,4,4)	DM. On 6th
Big Waters	3	11 (6,3,2)	GB. On 24th. Includes brood from June
Castle Island	2	20 (11,9)	DM/GB/JH. On 21st
Arcot Pond	2+	19+ (10,9)	STH/LJM. On 6th and 12th
Duke's Pond	2	18 (10,8)	JPD/LJM. On 4th and 18th
Grindon Lough	2+	15+ (8,7)	PRM. On 6th and 11th. As June?
Byker	2	4 (2,2)	DM. Tiny young on 18th
Bothal Pond	1	10	TD. On 14th
Lynemouth	1	9	DM/GB/JH. On 21st
Newcastle Exhibition Park	1	8	GB. New brood on 24th
Cresswell Pond	1	7	DM/GB/JH. On 21st
Derwent Reservoir	1	6	JPD. On 12th
Monks' House Pool	1	6	LJM/PJA. As June?
Swallow Pond	1	6	JPD. New brood on 18th
Shasun Pharma, Dudley	1	5	JA. On 30th
Stannington	1	5	ASH. On 16th
Bell's Pond, Cresswell	1	4	DM/GB/JH. On 21st
Hartford Bridge	1	4	LJM. On 11th
Bellasis Bridge	1	2	PCF. On 9th
Bakethin Reservoir	1	1	JPD. On 7th

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Two were at Cresswell Pond on 20th and 27th (ASH) and one on three dates between 21st-26th ((TB/JPD), and one was at nearby Bell's Pond on 21st (GB/JH/DM).

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Two flew N at Newbiggin on 21st (GB/JH/DM). Five were at East Chevington on 28th (TRD/JD), three at Cresswell Pond on 29th (IFo), and singles at Castle Island and Killingworth Lake.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

An unusual sea-watching record concerned ten flying S at Seaton Sluice on 22nd (SSWT). Eight were at Cresswell Pond on 15th and 17th (TRD/IFo) and one to four on several dates between 3rd-14th (IJ/IRD), four at Bothal Pond on 3rd and 14th (TD/TF/JFa), and one to two at Arcot and Linton Ponds, and Big Waters.

Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Killingworth Lake	1	2	LJM. On 24th.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

A total of 14 flew N at Seaton Sluice between 10th-28th (SSWT), and two flew N at Newbiggin on 21st (TRC). Cresswell Pond attracted a peak of 104 on 7th (CGK/AJ), 44, including a brood of eight, at Bothal Pond on 25th (TF/JFa), 42 at Castle Island on 3rd (PG), and 25-34 at Killingworth Lake (LJM) and Swallow Pond (JPD). Ten to 19 were also at Druridge Pools, Hauxley Reserve, Newcastle Leazes Park and QEII CP, and one to five at Arcot Pond (including a presumed breeding female slipping into reeds), Big Waters, East Chevington, Newcastle Exhibition Park and West Ord.

Tufted Duck breeding data were as follows (additional to previous months unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Linton Ponds	4	29 (8,7,7,7)	CDH. On 21st

Swallow Pond	4	24 (8,7,6,3)	JPD. First brood (7 young) on 4th, others between 11th-26th
Howdon Wetland	2	14 (11,3)	CB. On 6th, 11 chicks at 10am, reduced to 6 by 5pm. Brood of 3 on 21st.
Wansbeck Business Park, Ashington	2	12 (7,5)	LJM. On 16th
Bothal Pond	1	9	TD. On 14th
Druridge Pools	1	9	TRD. On 15th
Cresswell Pond	1	8	MSH. Fresh young on 12th
Gosforth Park (not the NR)	1	7	GB. At small pond in NW corner on 23rd
Holywell Pond	1	6	JPD. On 25th
Newcastle Exhibition Park	1	6	GB/PG. Fresh young on 8th.
St Mary's Wetland	1	5	IJ. On 21st.
Shasun Pharma, Dudley	1	1	JA. On 30th

Scaup *Aythya marila*

One flew N at St Mary's on 23rd (JPD/MPF). A female was with Common Scoters at Tynemouth on 21st (JPD/MPF/DRW), a female was at Druridge Pools on 26th (CDB) and a male at Cresswell Pond on 27th (NFO).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

Largest counts were 79 at Stag Rocks on 25th (PRM), 64 at Cocklawburn on 2nd (MHu), 55 at Holy Island on 31st (PRM), 47 at Newbiggin (STH), and 13 at Berwick North Shore. Four to five were off Monks' House and at the Tweed Estuary.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

A notable feature of the month was a significant passage of this species. Seaton Sluice recorded 6,337 N and 382 S (the largest July movement on record for the site) and included 846 N and 189 S on 3rd, 1,081 N between 10th-14th and 4,120 N between 19th-26th (SSWT). On 21st, a total of 520 N and 27 S passed Tynemouth (DRW), 433 flew N at Newbiggin (TRC) and 200 N at Snab Point (TB), while 462 moved N at St Mary's on 23rd (JPD/MPF), 120 N at Cocklawburn on 2nd (MHu), and 110 N at St Mary's on 10th (MSH). Large numbers were found in Druridge Bay, with peaks of 2,000 on 14th (TRC) and 26th (MSH), while 1,250 were in Blyth Bay on 24th-25th (SSWT), 520 off Budle Point on 27th (CGK), 420 at nearby Stag Rocks on 25th (PRM), 320 at Cheswick on 29th (MHu), 184-230 at Cocklawburn (MHu) and Ross Back Sands (IRD), and 50 off Holy Island and Tynemouth. A female, with Tufted Ducks, on the River Wansbeck at Castle Island on 23rd (STH/IFo) was an unusual record.

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

A total of 14 flew N at Seaton Sluice between 12th-24th (SSWT), three flew N at Berwick pier on 10th (MHu) and one N at Tynemouth on 21st (JPD/MPF). Two were amongst Common Scoters in Druridge Bay on 14th (TRC) and one on 23rd (PRM), and one was off Cocklawburn on 18th (MHu).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Two were at Castle Island on 21st (GB/DM/JH et al.) and 23rd (STH/IFo), and one was at Cresswell Pond between 21st-25th (TB/PRM/TF/JFa et al.).

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Seven flew N at Seaton Sluice on 28th (SSWT), one N at Newbiggin on 21st (TRC) and one S at Cresswell on 21st (TRD/JD). Holy Island held 13 on 22nd (IRD), three were at Cullernose Point on 19th (IRD), and one to two at Cresswell Pond, East Chevington (north pool and offshore), Fenham Flats and Tynemouth. A female accompanied nine small young at Budle Bay on 27th, having been brought across from the Farne Islands (CGK).



The Budle Bay Red-breasted Merganser family. Photograph by Chris Knox on 27th July

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Four flew N and one S at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT). Good numbers in the north of the county included peaks of 332 at Spittal Bay on 18th (MHu), 328 at Berwick North Shore on 17th (MHu), 254 at the Tweed Estuary on 19th (MHu), 224 at Cocklawburn on 2nd (MHu), 164 at Cargies Cove, Spittal on 24th (MHu) and 138 at Meadow Haven, Berwick on 24th (MHu). Other large counts were 59 at Boulmer on 21st (NFO), 40 at West Ord on 20th (TBr), 19 (juveniles) at the Blyth

Estuary on 25th (STH), 11-14 at Corbridge, the Coquet Estuary, and Thrum Mill (Rothbury), and five to seven at Alnmouth, Bywell, Ladies Skerr (Berwick) and Holy Island, and one to four at Foxton Bend, Killingworth Lake and Tynemouth. .

Goosander breeding data were as follows (additional to previous months unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Blyth Estuary	2	17 (10,7)	LJM. Family groups on 22nd. May include brood reported in June.
West Ord	1	10	MHu. On 22nd.
Derwent Reservoir	1	5	IFo. Full sized young on 20th
Amble Braid	1	4	LJM/PJA. Medium sized young on 2nd.

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

Eight, including at least one small flying young, were at Simonside on 23rd (PG) and three were at Acton Fell (Blanchland Moor) on 6th (DM/STH/LJM).

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

One to two were noted at Eglingham, Pigdon and Warton.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

A pair was seen with a brood of ten at Boulmer on 2nd (JPD). An adult was seen with seven juveniles at Low Angerton on 19th (IRD). One to two were seen at Big Waters, Chugdon Wood (Ellington), and Foxton Bends (River Aln).

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

One was singing at 23:45 at Bellasis Bridge on 23rd (PRM).

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

A female accompanied six juveniles at Arcot Pond on 26th (DM). A male was at Linton Ponds on 21st.

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

During the month 20 flew N and ten flew S at Seaton Sluice, which was above the July average (SSWT). Five flew N at Tynemouth on 21st (DRW/JPD), four flew S at Berwick Pier on 10th (MHu) and two flew N at St Mary's Island on 23rd (JPD). Singles were seen flying N at St Mary's Island on 10th and Newbiggin (two different times) on 21st. Seven were seen at East Chevington on 7th with five present on 21st (TRD/JD). Two were offshore at Warkworth Gut on 7th, Cheswick on 18th and in Druridge Bay on 21st. Singles were noted in Druridge Bay and at East Chevington on two further dates.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

An immature was off Cheswick Black Rocks on 2nd (MHu).

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

An adult flew N at Snab Point on 23rd (PRM) and an immature was off Cocklawburn on 11th (MHu).

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Very few were reported during the month. Two were in the Tweed Estuary on 19th and one flew N at Newbiggin on 21st (TRC). A 'blue' phase bird was seen off Bamburgh Castle on 1st (TRD).

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

One flew N at Cullercoats on 22nd (CGK).

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

Very noticeable passage occurred during the month especially at Seaton Sluice where 1,539 flew N and 598 flew S. Peaks were noted here of 692 N and 264 S from 8th-13th and 714 N from 19th-24th (SSWT). Other large counts were 110 at Tynemouth Pier in 4 hours on 21st (JPD), 88 at St Mary's Island on 8th (MSH) and at Newbiggin all in two hour counts 84 N on 19th, 82 N on 21st and 63 N on 22nd, where a further 42 flew N in one hour on 21st (TRC). Counts of 26 N on 23rd in four hours and 22 N in one hour on 22nd came from St Mary's Island (JPD/MSH). At Tynemouth 54 flew N and eight S in three hours on 21st (DRW), 43 flew N at Newbiggin 13th (ASH), whilst on 22nd 35 flew N at Cullercoats (CGK). Three to 24 were seen flying N at Cresswell, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Farne Islands, Newbiggin, St Mary's Island, and Snab Point on 13 dates up to 25th. Up to 50 were offshore at Newbiggin on 21st (DM/GB/JH) and 46 were offshore at St Mary's Island on 22nd (MSH).

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

At Seaton Sluice 525 flew N in one hour on 22nd with further counts of 250+/hour on 10th/11th/20th/21st and 23rd (SSWT). At Holy Island 166 flew S on 22nd (IRD). 60+ fed offshore at Stag Rocks on 25th (PRM). At Druridge Bay CP 30+ were offshore on 6th (DM). One to ten were noted from Inner Farne, East Chevington, Long Nanny and Snab Point.



A gannet flies past the Farne Islands
6th July by Jonathan Farooqi

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

The peak counts were 27 at Blyth South Harbour on 26th (STH), 25 at East Chevington on 23rd (PRM), 15 at Castle Island on 18th (PRM) and North Shields Fish Quay on 30th (JMA) and 13 at Derwent Reservoir on 13th (IFo0 and on Newbiggin Breakwater on 18th (STH). In the Berwick area seven were in the Tweed Estuary on 19th and six at Meadow Haven on 3rd and North Shore on 17th (MHu). A single was at Druridge Pools on 26th.

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

In the Berwick area nine roosted at Meadow Haven on 3rd and five were at North Shore on 17th (MHu).

Shags at the nest
Farne Islands
6th July
Jonathan Farooqi



Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

This species was well reported this month with a maximum of four (two adults with plumes) at East Chevington North pool on 16th (EC/JSB). Up to two were seen here on eight further dates from 17th-29th. Three were at Hauxley NR on 16th (MSK/NEWT). Two were at Foxton Bends (River Aln) on 28th/29th with a single there on 26th/27th (Many observers). Two were at Holywell Pond on 29th (CS) and New Water Haugh (R Tweed) on 30th (MHu). Singles were noted at Arcot Pond, Budle Bay, Bywell Bridge, Castle Island, St. Mary's, West Ord, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Yarrow Slake (Tweed Estuary).

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

The peak counts were 18 in the Tweed Estuary on 19th (MHu), 11 at Druridge Pools on 20th (PCF) and in Holywell Dene on 22nd (RJP), ten at Castle Island on 18th (PRM) and nine at Howden Wetland on 18th (CB) and Bothal Pond on 29th (IFo). Six were at East Chevington on 23rd/26th. One to four were noted at Airey Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield), Alnmouth, Arcot Pond, Beal Sluice, Derwent Reservoir, Elswick Wharf, Foxton Bends (River Aln), Grindon Lough, Holy Island causeway, Ladyburn Lake, Leazes Park (Newcastle), Linton Ponds, St Mary's Island, Wark and West Hartford.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Five, including a large juvenile not hatched on site, were at Big Waters on 24th (GB) when this number was at Holywell Pond (KWY). Four were at Bothal Pond on 14th (TD). Two were at Alnmouth on 5th and Foxton Bends (River Aln) on 30th (PRM). One was at Druridge Pools on 15th and a juvenile was at Cresswell Pond on 21st.

Breeding details are as follows:

Location	No. of broods	No. of Young	Observer/Comments
Arcot Pond	4	6	LJM on 19th
Swallow Pond	2	6	JPD on 14th
Linton Ponds	2	4	CDH on 21st (new broods)
Ladyburn Lake	2	3	LJM on 9th
East Chevington	1	1	TRD on 15th
Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal)	1	1	ALT on 20th

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

The peak counts of adults were 12 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 22nd (SR), seven at Derwent Reservoir on 28th, six at Bothal Pond on 29th and four at East Chevington on 17th (IFo). The pair at Big Waters abandoned their nest and left site by mid-month. However the pair at Killingworth Lake was incubating five eggs by 12th (GMi/BMo). Breeding details are as follows:

Location	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/Comments
Bothal Pond	2	7	IFo by 29th
East Chevington	2	2	TRD/JD on 21st
Derwent Reservoir	1	4	IFo on 28th

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

One was offshore at Newbiggin on the evening of 22nd before flying off N (TRC).

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

Up to two were noted at a site in the south of the county.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

On 15th one gradually flew N inland at Hauxley NR (TRD). Other singles were noted at Simonside on 23rd (PG) and Carterway Heads on 27th (IFo).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Most records this month came from the area close to the breeding site with up five birds noted including a male, female and three juveniles. The only record away from the Druridge area was a juvenile being mobbed by Lapwings *Vanellus vanellus* at Acomb Moor on 20th (ALT).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

A second year male was hunting over the dunes at Cresswell Pond on the 18th before flying NW (TRB).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

On the 8th a single was noted at Slaley Forest (JPD).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

The regular pair were at Scotland Gate (SLB/MSK) during the month. Three were at Derwent Reservoir on 12th (JPD), and two were at Swallow Pond on 14th (JPD) and at Elswick (Newcastle) on 16th (GB). Singles were noted at 13 further sites.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Five birds were at Harwood Forest on 7th (JPD) was the only multiple sighting. One or two birds were noted at 15 sites including a road casualty at Stannington Vale on 16th (ASH).

Osprey *Pandion haliaetuss*

On the 7th four adults were noted at Kielder Water (JPD) and a pair were also seen from Mounce's Viewpoint (Kielder) on 17th (RB/MB).

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Three birds were seen at Grindon Lough on 9th and 18th (PRM), two birds were seen at Newton Links on 4th and Kiln Pit Hill on 6th (JMA). Singles were noted at 15b other sites during the month.

Merlin *Falco culumbarius*

Only one record of a male hunting in the south west of the County on 5th (AA)

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

On the 30th a bird flew over Big Waters scattering Sand Martins *Riparia riparia* (GB).

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

A family party of five birds was at Budle Bay on 14th with the three juveniles seen on 27th (CGK), and four birds were seen at Ross Back Sands on 9th and two seen on there on 22nd (IRD). Two birds were soaring at a confidential site on 13th (ALT) and singles were at Tynemouth on 21st (DRW), Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 25th (PRM), East Chevington and Foxton Bends (Alnmouth) on 27th (JPD/TRD/JD)

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

At Big Waters during the month 14+ birds were noted including three broods of four, three and three and four adults (GB). Three birds (adult and two juv) were at Arcot Pond on 26th (STH), two were squealing at Warkworth Lane on 13th (TB). Singles were either heard or seen at Arcot Pond, East Chevington, Swallow Pond .and a bird eating a frog/toad at Big waters on 20th (GB).

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Peak counts included 28 birds at Bothal Pond on 18th (PRM) and at Arcot Pond on 21st (DM), 19 were at Big Waters on 31st (GB), 11 at Druridge Bay CP on 9th (LJM). One to nine birds were at 12 sites.

Coot *Fulica atra*

The highest counts this month included 71 birds at Woodhorn Flash on 14th which was the highest count (STH), followed by 58 at Cresswell Pond on 26th (STH), 51 at Bothal Pond on 18th (PRM), 35 at Swallow Pond on 14th (JPD), 34 at Arcot Pond on 21st (DM), 24 at Big Waters on 28th (GB) and 21 at Linton Pond on 21st (CDH). One to fourteen were at six other sites.

Crane *Grus grus*

A single bird was observed at Rayburn Lake on the evening of 4th (NF0).

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Apart from one to two during the first half of the month, increasing numbers of post-breeding birds gathered at Cresswell Pond from the 14th onwards when seven (two juveniles) were noted (TRC), to 12 on the 15th (TRD) and peaked at 16 (six juveniles) on 26th (STH *et al*). Elsewhere, four (three juveniles) were at Castle Island on 16th (PJA/LJM) and four were again here on 30th (PG). One other bird flew N over the Metro at Tynemouth on 6th (MNC).

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Passage at Seaton Sluice involved 210 heading S between 23rd-29th (SSWT). The largest groups were in the north and included 72 at Budle Bay on 27th (CGK), 70 at Ross Back Sands on 22nd (IRD) and 50+ roosting on St Cuthbert's Island, Holy Island on 31st (PRM). Counts at Derwent Reservoir numbered 37 on 11th (PRM) and 41 the following day (JPD). Apart from 19 on Berwick North Shore on 17th (MHu) there were single figure reports from a further 14 locations.

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Returning birds to St Mary's Island totalled 120 on 21st (IJ) and further post-breeding birds included 32 at Boulmer on 21st (NFO) and 12 at Backworth on 28th (CGK). Additional coastal reports included one to five at Amble, Cocklawburn, Fenham-le-Moor and Snab Point, whilst two were at Haining Head (Wark Forest) on 1st.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

A lone bird was noted at Fenham-le-Moor on 25th (PRM).

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Post-breeding flock sizes grew during the month, with 210 on 17th (IFo) increasing to 400 at East Chevington on 25th the largest (JPD). Bothal Pond attracted 210 on 18th (PRM), 146 were at Yarrow Slake (Tweed) on 30th (MHu) and 130 were at Grindon Lough on 18th (PRM). Flocks of 53-94 were noted at Earsdon, Elswick (Tyne) and Holywell Pond, whilst 15-43 were seen at Bell's Pond (Cresswell), Big Waters, Castle Island, Derwent Reservoir, Howdon Wetland, Monks' House Pool, New Water Haugh (Tweed) and Swallow Pond, with single figure reports from a further six sites.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

One to three young were noted at three confidential sites during the month, including a maximum of eight birds at one of these locations. Coastal pools attracted post-breeding birds, with Cresswell Pond holding one to two juveniles from the 20th and East Chevington attracting up to two adults and one juvenile from the 23rd (many obs). Singles were seen at Hauxley on 12th and 25th (RB/MB/TF/JFa).



A juvenile Little Ringed Plover at Hauxley on 27th July by Neil Osborne

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Snab Point held the majority with 60 on 24th (TB) whilst to the south, a factory roof in Blyth harbour held 45 at roost on 26th (STH). Ten to 12 were noted at Cheswick, East Chevington and Holy Island (MHu/PRM) and one to five were reported from Branton GP, Castle Island, Cocklawburn, Cresswell Pond, Derwent Reservoir, East Chevington, Elswick Wharf (Tyne), Inner Farne and Newbiggin.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

A total of 117 (107 S and 10 N) were logged flying past Seaton Sluice during the month, mainly between 23rd-29th (SSWT). Another high count involved 74 moving S at Bamburgh on 27th (MSK). Additional flocks included 21 S at Druridge Pools on 25th (JPD), 13 heading E over Cresswell Pond on 12th (EC/JSB) and eight in Budle Bay on 28th (CGK). One to four was recorded at a further 16+ locations throughout the month, though mainly in the last ten day period.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Passage at Seaton Sluice involved 55 N and 9 S during the month (SSWT). Post-breeding flocks were much more prominent this month, with most large groups in the north. Totals included 310 at Long Nanny on 12th (TRD), 280 at Budle Bay on 14th (CGK), 170+ at Fenham-le-Moor on 25th (PRM), 160 at Boulmer on 21st (NFO) and 103-138 at the Blyth estuary, Hauxley NWT, Holywell Pond and Yarrow Slake (Tweed) (LJM/IFo/CS/MHu). Some 70 were counted at Snab Point on 22nd (TB), ten to 27 were noted at Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Grindon Lough and Howdon Wetland NR, whilst single figure counts were noted at around ten additional sites.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Cresswell Pond attracted a large group during the period 2nd-10th which peaked at 70 on 9th (TB et al), whilst Hauxley NR briefly held two groups of 31 and 25 before they moved off south on 3rd (RMH/BG/BL). Another 24 were at Hauxley NR on 7th (MSKJ/NEWT), 19 were at Warkworth Gut on 25th and 11 were on the Coquet estuary on 26th-27th (GB/MSH/AC) perhaps relating to the same group of birds. Six to seven were present at Castle Island between 15th-21st (TRD/TF/JFa/PRM/CGK), four were at Druridge Pools on 10th (MSK/NEWT) and one to three were noted during the month at Amble, Big Waters, Blyth estuary, Budle Bay, Earsdon (*Beehive Flash*), East Chevington, Grindon Lough, Inner Farne (two on 4th), Holywell Pond, Monks' House Pool and Whittle Dene Reservoirs

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Lindisfarne NNR held the majority of birds, with 120+ seen from the Holy Island Causeway and 70+ at Fenham-le-Moor, both on 25th, and 50+ in the Harbour/St Cuthbert's Island (Holy Island) on 31st (PRM). Passage at Seaton Sluice totalled 16 N between 11th-28th (SSWT), whilst elsewhere one to three was seen at the Blyth estuary, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Hauxley NR and Newbiggin.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

At Seaton Sluice Watch Tower a total of 22 flew S during 20th to 29th. The roost at Tynemouth Pier peaked at 31 on 21st (JPD), 18 roosted on the breakwater at Newbiggin on 29th (IFo) and 12 were at Hauxley on 25th. Three to nine were found from 9th to 28th at Boulmer, Cresswell, East Chevington, Ross Back Sands and Stag Rocks; earlier two were noted at Inner Farne on 1st.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Passage was most evident on 25th with an 'unprecedented' 760 S in two hours at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower, around 200 at Hauxley (MSK/NEWT), 98 at East Chevington (NFO) and smaller numbers at Fenham-le-Moor, Blyth estuary, St Mary's and Stag Rocks. Also at Seaton Sluice another 150 passed S during 20th to 29th. On 27th 71 were at Amble Braid/Warkworth Gut, 60 were at Inner Farne on 1st, 40 at Stag Rocks on 30th and 29 in the R. Coquet estuary on 26th. Small numbers appeared at another seven coastal locations and one was at Holywell Pond on 25th.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

One was at Cresswell Pond on 24th (MSH); one was at East Chevington on 29th with two there on 30th (NFO *et al.*).

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Two at East Chevington on 23rd (PRM) were probably the two at Hauxley NR on 24th (RMH/BG/BL/ASH) before moving back to Chevington on 25th, where three were present on 26th, two on 27th and one remained to 28th.

***Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii*

An adult was found in the NE corner of Derwent Reservoir on 3rd (PRM) and remarkably it was still present on 11th when the same observer returned. An adult was at East Chevington on 20th (EC/JSB).

The Derwent Reservoir Temminck's Stint
by Paul Massey on 3rd July

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

At Seaton Sluice Watch Tower 48 flew S during 25th to 28th and eight did so at Newbiggin on 23rd. The largest beach flock was at East Chevington: rising from 37 on 23rd to 136 on 27th (NFO); 50 were near Snab Point on 24th, 44 at Ross Back Sands on 22nd and 23 at Hauxley on 28th. Small numbers were noted at six further coastal spots.

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*

The main passage occurred during the last week: 310 in the Warkworth Gut/Amble Braid area on 25th to 27th (JPD *et al.*), 300 at Hauxley NR on 24th (RMH/BG/BL/ASH), 200 in the R. Coquet estuary on 26th (GB) and 170+ roosting on St Cuthbert's Island on 31st (PRM). Other peak counts included 89 at East Chevington on 23rd, 64 in the R. Blyth estuary on 25th and 45 at Cresswell Pond on 20th. The only juveniles well inland were noted at Grindon Lough, two during 6th to 12th and one on 18th; up to five adults were also noted there. Small numbers occurred at four other places.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Up to 19 were found at R Aln, Foxton Bends during 28th to 30th (TB *et al.*) and a remarkable 17 at Derwent Reservoir on 12th (JPD). Elsewhere seven were at Castle Island on 18th, six at Bakethin Reservoir on 7th, six at West Ord on 20th and five at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 29th; up to four were noted at another 23 widespread localities.

***Spotted Sandpiper** *Actitis macularius*

An adult in breeding plumage was at River Aln, Foxton Bends from 27th to 30th (ACo/MS *et al.*), although it was apparently not reported to NTBC on 29th. This is believed to be the third County record.



The Spotted Sandpiper at Foxton on the Aln on 27th July by Tim Dean

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Five were at each of East Chevington on 25th (JPD) and Backworth on 28th (CGK). It was present from 2nd at Whittle Dene Reservoirs with a peak of four on 29th (SR). Castle Island had two on 21st, Hauxley two on 28th and Foxton Bends two on 30th. Several places had singletons at times: Arcot Pond, Bell's Pond, Bothal Pond, Branton GP and Holywell Pond.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

One flew south past the hide at Fenham-le-Moor on 25th (PRM).

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Passage was well under way in the last week or so with four at Foxton Bends on 29th (MSH) and regularly three there in the last few days; also three at Castle Island on 23rd (IFo/STH), at Holy Island causeway on 25th (PRM) and at East Chevington on 29th (TB/PG/NFO). These places often held two and two also appeared at Hauxley NR on 24th, Budle Bay on 27th, Derwent Reservoir on 28th and at Cresswell Pond on 30th. The earliest were singles at Druridge Pools on 6th, East Chevington on 7th and Longhirst Flash on 14th.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

East Chevington had one from 25th to 27th then four on 28th (TRD/JD/ASH). Two were at Arcot Pond on 26th and 29th/30th (STH/GB/LJM) and two were at Holywell Pond on 29th (CS) with one at Hauxley NR on 28th/29th.



A Wood Sandpiper at Hauxley by Chris Barlow

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

A total of 172 flew S at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower. High tide roosts contained 400+ at St Cuthbert's Island on 31st (PRM) and 119 at Hauxley NR on 14th (IFo) with WeBS totals of 124 at Berwick, North Shore on 17th and 103 in the Tweed estuary on 19th (MHu). Budle Bay held 87 on 27th and 12-50 were at R Blyth estuary, Cocklawburn, R Coquet estuary, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Elswick, Foxton Bends and St Mary's. Small numbers, including juveniles, appeared inland at Derwent Reservoir and Grindon Lough from 3rd.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

One was roding at Slaley Forest on 6th (DM/STH/LJM) and one was at Blakehopeburnhaugh on 17th (TRD/JD).

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

At Druridge Pools 14 were disturbed by a Marsh Harrier on 30th (IRD). Five were noted on several dates at Backworth, five at Derwent Reservoir on 11th, up to four at Grindon Lough and one or two at Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Blakehope Nick, Doddington, Foxton Bends and Hauxley NR.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

All occurred in a four days spell. At Seaton Sluice Watch Tower four flew N on 20th, five did so on 21st and one on 22nd. Three passed St Mary's on 23rd (JPD/MPF) and singles went N at Snab Point on 21st and at Cullercoats on 22nd.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower was above average with 34 N and 31 S; the biggest day being 21st with 11 N. Seven passed Snab Point on 21st (TF/JFa), six were off Warkworth Gut on 7th (NFO) and six off Tynemouth on 21st (DRW) with 4+ at Cresswell/Druridge Bay on 5th and 25th and three at St Mary's on 25th. There were many reports of one or two from almost the length of the coastline.

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

At Seaton Sluice Watch Tower a total of 13 moved N and one S, with a maximum of five N on 21st. Six flew N off Tynemouth Pier on 21st (JPD) when also three went N off Newbiggin. Singles were noted during 4th to 23rd at Inner Farne, Ross Back Sands, St Mary's and Snab Point.

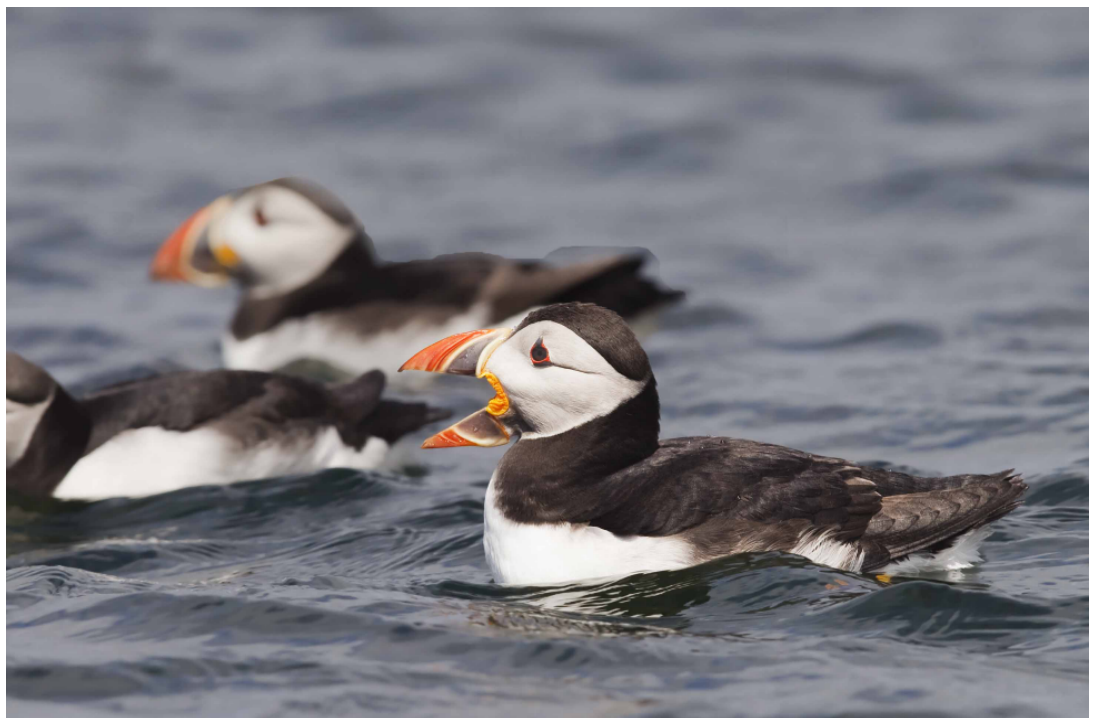
Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

At St Mary's Island, 130 flew S in four hours on 23rd (JPD/MPF) and the maximum count at Seaton Sluice was 110 N in one hour on 11th (SSWT). On Inner Farne ca.400 were recorded on 1st (TRD) and at Stag Rocks, Bamburgh, ca.120 were on the sea on 30th (TRD/JD). Elsewhere, one to six were on the sea at four locations from St Mary's Island to East Chevington.



Two photographs of
Puffins on the Farne
Islands.

Top by Jonathan Farooqi
and bottom by Colin
Bradshaw



Auk sp

The only significant movement noted at Seaton Sluice comprised 100 guillemots/razorbills which moved N in one hour on 10th; also on this date, the first juvenile was noted on the sea (SSWT).

Razorbill *Alca torda*

The only counts were ten at Stag Rocks, Bamburgh on 30th, three on Inner Farne on 1st and two at Druridge Bay on 21st (all TRD/JD),

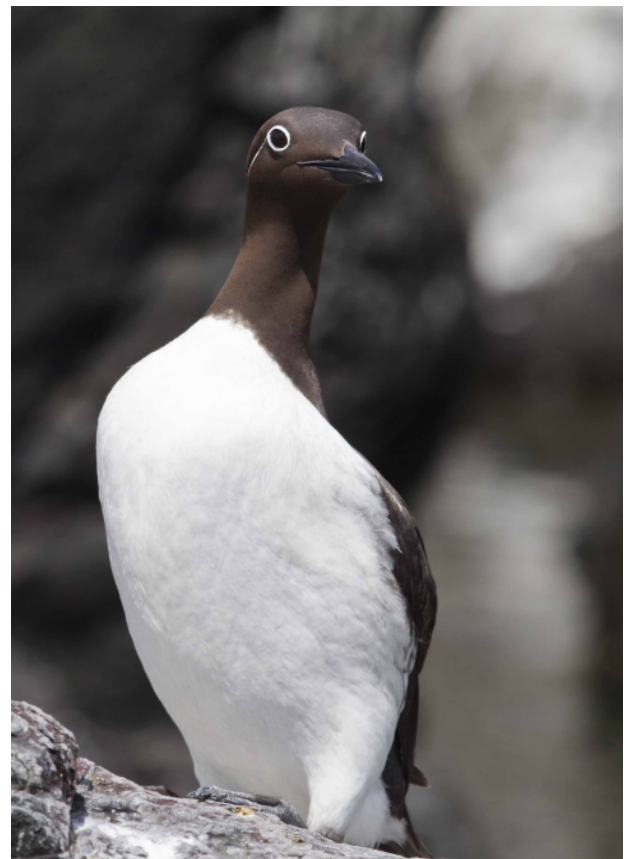
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A Razorbill
Farne Islands
Colin Bradshaw

**Guillemot** *Uria aalge*

On Inner Farne, ca.200 were recorded on 1st (TRD), 52 were at Spittal Bay, Berwick on 4th (MHu) and 20 at Stag Rocks, Bamburgh on 30th (TRD/JD). Other records were one to five at Cresswell, East Chevington and Newbiggin (TRD/JD/DM *et al*).

A Bridled Guillemot
Farne Islands
Colin Bradshaw



Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus*

First seen by one of the Farne Islands wardens, a magnificent adult arrived on Inner Farne during the afternoon of 1st and was seen there daily up to the 4th, during which time it settled into a routine of roosting on the island and fishing out to sea, returning to the island every few hours. This was the fourth county record and the 24th for the UK of this scarce vagrant from sub-tropical and tropical seas and it was the first 'twitchable' Bridled Tern in the country for over twenty years. Accordingly, it was seen on the island by hundreds of observers. On 5th it appeared at Cresswell Pond giving many observers a further opportunity to see the bird but thereafter, from 6th-8th, sightings became less frequent as the very mobile bird commuted between Cresswell and East Chevington (with a brief excursion to Saltholme, Cleveland on the afternoon of 6th). On 9th the bird was seen feeding off Coquet Island but on 10th, a Bridled Tern, almost certainly the same individual, moved S at Flamborough, Yorkshire, from which it appeared unlikely that it would be seen again in the county. However, on 13th the bird re-appeared on Inner Farne and was seen there daily until 24th, but intermittently, with long periods spent away from the island, presumably as it fished at sea and possibly roosted at an unidentified location away from Inner Farne. The last sighting was in the late evening of 24th on the rocks by the Inner Farne jetty.



One of the most popular arrivals for years, the Bridled Tern on the Farne Islands
Top in flight by Colin Bradshaw and below by Tim Dean
on 1st July



Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

A maximum count of 37 came from the colony at the Long Nanny on 12th (TRD) but breeding success this year has been badly affected by Kestrel predation with at least 15 young taken. Sightings elsewhere were limited to four at Budle Bay (CGK) on 14th and four moving N at Seaton Sluice on 26th (SSWT) with singles, seen mainly towards month end, at Cresswell Pond, moving S at Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Hauxley, and Low Newton.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

At Seaton Sluice, the largest count by far was 230 moving S in one hour on 26th (SSWT) and the first juvenile was noted there on 20th. Elsewhere, it was well reported with counts of 195 on the River Blyth Estuary on 25th (STH) and 165 in a roost at Goswick Sands on 26th (MHu); on various dates throughout the month 100-150 were at Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Newbiggin and the River Tweed Estuary (IRD/TRD/JD/MHu/MSH/STH) with double figure counts up to 95 at these and four other localities in the Berwick area (MHu) and at the River Wansbeck Estuary (STH). One-five were at eleven other coastal sites, including a colour-ringed bird at St Mary's Island on 25th which was marked at the Ythan Estuary, Aberdeenshire, in August 2011 (MSH).

N.B. On 30th June, two colour-ringed birds at East Chevington had also been ringed at the Ythan Estuary in September, 2010 (STH/IFo).



Above an Arctic Tern on the Farne Islands by Colin Bradshaw and below Common Terns at Druridge Pools by Chris Barlow



Common/Arctic Tern *Sterna hirundo/paradisaea*

On 26th, 110 moved S in one hour at Seaton Sluice (SSWT).

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Extremely well-reported with over 50 records submitted. At Seaton Sluice 60 moved S in one hour on 25th, with the first juvenile noted there on 23rd (SSWT). At North Shields, Royal Quays Marina, good numbers were present throughout the month with a maximum of 133, including 63 juveniles, on 21st (LJM) and 35-66 were at Cresswell Pond, East Chevington and Tynemouth (TRDJD/MSH/DRW/KWY). Elsewhere, double-figure counts of 10-25 came from Blyth Harbour, Inner Farne, Long Nanny and the River Blyth Estuary with one-five at many other coastal sites and inland at Arcot Pond, Backworth, Bothal Pond, Bolam Lake, Dinnington, River Tyne (Elswick and Newcastle Business Park), Weetslade Colliery and Ellington (Warkworth Lane).

Successful breeding was confirmed at Big Waters, where seven young were fledged, Cramlington (Dudley, Shasun Pharma) with two young, with probable breeding at Whittle Dene Reservoirs with a maximum of 14 birds on 29th, although no young were recorded there.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

At Seaton Sluice, the total recorded movements were seven N and six S with the first and only juvenile seen on 29th (SSWT). Small gatherings were noted at a few localities, including six, with two juveniles, on the Newbiggin breakwater on 30th (TRC), five adults at Hauxley NWT on 4th (ASH) and five fishing off-shore at Warkworth Gut on 27th (NFO). Elsewhere, one-three were at Cresswell Pond, Druridge Bay, East Chevington, Inner Farne, Newbiggin and Tynemouth.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

A three-hour watch at Tynemouth on 21st recorded 350 moving N and, at Seaton Sluice, during the same movement 308 moved N in two hours (SSWT). At the mainland colony on the Long Nanny, the wardens reported 1500 nests this year and around 2000 birds were counted there on 12th (TRD); ca.300 were seen on Inner Farne on 1st (TRD). Smaller counts elsewhere included 11 immatures and several adults at East Chevington on 10th (MSH) with up to ten there on other dates throughout the month and one to six, including immatures, at Berwick (North Shore), Budle Bay, Cresswell Pond, Newbiggin and the River Tweed Estuary.



A Portlandica Arctic Tern on the Farne Islands
by Colin Bradshaw

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

No large-scale movements were recorded at Seaton Sluice, the maximum being 75 N in one hour on 6th (SSWT). Peak gatherings were up to 260 in the gull roost at the River Tweed Estuary on a number of dates throughout the month (MHu) and 250 on the rocks at Church Point, Newbiggin on 6th (STH). One to ten were seen elsewhere, at Berwick (North Shore), Boulmer, Cresswell, East Chevington, Howdon Wetland NR, Long Nanny and St Mary's Island.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

During two WeBS counts on 19th and 17th respectively, 824 and 722 were noted in roosts on the River Tweed Estuary and at Berwick (North Shore) (MHu). Smaller gatherings elsewhere were 130+ at Grindon Lough on 18th (PRM), 130 at Yarrow Slake on the River Tweed Estuary on 5th (MHu), 116 at Castle Island on 21st (DM/GB/JH), 90 at Budle Point on 13th (CGK) and 77 at Exhibition Park, Newcastle on 16th (DM). Other double figure counts of 11-57 were at Arcot Pond, Berwick (Ladies Skerr), Ladyburn Lake, Swallow Pond and West Ord. One to eight were at three other localities.

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Well-reported again although numbers declined from last month. At Seaton Sluice, 14 moved N between 19th-27th, all these being adults in summer plumage (SSWT); other movements were three adults S at Newbiggin on 19th (TRC), three adults N at Tynemouth on 21st (JPD/DRW) and singles N and S at Cresswell (Snab Point), Druridge Pools and St Mary's Island. Cresswell Pond was the favoured locality where gatherings of one-seven were recorded almost daily, the peak count occurring on 5th when one adult and at least six immatures were present (TRC/PRM). Elsewhere, singles were at East Chevington, and Hauxley NWT.



Top A Little gull at
Druridge Pools by
Chris Barlow and
below a juvenile
Mediterranean Gull
at Newbiggin by
Neil Osborne

**Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus*

The watch tower observers at Seaton Sluice recorded only four birds, two N and two S, between 10th-23rd, including adults and immatures. However, a notable gathering occurred at the favoured Newbiggin South Bay on 24th when 48, including one juvenile, were present (STH). The numbers there fluctuated widely between single-figure counts of six-eight early in the month, rising to the peak of 48 on 24th, before declining to 31 on 30th (TRC) of which 19 were adults; a number of immature birds were usually present in these gatherings. Away from Newbiggin, one to three were noted at Arcot Pond, Cresswell Pond, Cullercoats, East Chevington, Ellington, St Mary's Island, Tynemouth and Whitley Bay, some of which are likely to have been counted in the gatherings at Newbiggin.

Common Gull *Larus canus*

The only significant count was 90 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 26th (SR) and elsewhere, two to ten were seen at Arcot Pond, Budle Point, Castle Island, Cramlington, Druridge Pools, East Chevington and at four sites in the Berwick area.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

The evening gull roost at Budle Point held 73 on 13th (CGK) and other sizeable gatherings were 43 at Swallow Pond on 4th (JPD), 42 at Goswick Sands on 26th (MHu) and 30 in Budle Bay on 25th (PRM). One to nine were Arcot Pond, Bellasis Bridge, Berwick (North Shore), Blyth Riverside Park (two broods with three young (LJM), Castle Island, Grindon Lough, Jesmond Dene, Leazes Park, the River Tweed Estuary and a Walbottle garden.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argenteus*

By far the largest gatherings were recorded (all MHu) from the north of the county, namely 552 on a WeBS count at Berwick (North Shore) on 17th, ca.500 in a roost at Goswick Sands on 26th, 350 in the River Tweed Estuary on 19th and 110 in a roost at West Ord on 14th. Elsewhere, on 4th, 150 were at Cullernose Point and 140 at Boulmer (JMA), 80 were in the Budle Point gull roost on 13th (CGK), 60 at the North Shields Fish Quay and 50 at Tynemouth Park on 1st (JMA). At Blyth Riverside Business Park, 18 broods held 30 young on 8th (LJM) and one to nine birds were at five other localities (DM/STH/MJCo/KR/LR).

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

The evening gull roost at Budle Point held 160 on 13th (CGK) but elsewhere the numbers recorded were small with 22 on 17th, 18 on 26th and 13 on 19th at Berwick (North Shore), Goswick Sands and the River Tweed Estuary respectively (MHu). A single bird was at Castle Island on 21st (DM).

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

A peak of eight at Howdon Wetland NR on 23rd (CB), five at Jesmond Dene on 7th (MJCo) with three at St Mary's Island on 21st and Foxton Bends (R.Aln) on 25th. One to two were at Arcot Pond, Castle Island, Cresswell Pond, Elswick, Grindon Lough, Slaley Hall, West Hartford, Widdrington and N at Seaton Sluice on 28th which was noted as unusual (SSWT).

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Twenty came in to drink in front of the Oddie Hide at Druridge Pools on 26th (CDB), 12 the peak at Jesmond Dene on 14th (MJCo), four including a juvenile in a Walbottle garden on 14th and two at St Mary's Island on 21st.



A Wood Pigeon at Druridge Pools
by Chris Barlow

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

The observers garden at Stannington held six on 10th (RWM/MIM), a pair with two young in the nest in an Alnwick garden on 25th (JMA) and two at Matthew Bank (Jesmond Dene) on 14th.

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Just three reports of singles at East Chevington on 4th and 5th (TBr/TF/JFa) and possibly the same bird sneaking through the dunes at Cresswell Pond on 5th whilst everyone was watching the Bridled Tern (PCF/AJJ).

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

A bird hunted regularly at Linden Hall (Longhorsley) during the month (NFO) with other singles at Cresswell Pond on 16th & 23 (MSK/NEWT/PRM) and Lesbury on 1st (MRM).

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Singles at Beaconhill (Cramlington) on 3rd (STH), Eachwick on 15th (CDB), Bells Farm Pond (Cresswell) on 21st (DM/GB/JH) and Derwent Reservoir on 30th (IFo).



An alert Little Owl
Eachwick
Chris Barlow

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Two were at Earsdon Village on several dates during the month (CGK et al), at Slaley Forest on 8th (JPD) and over the observers garden at Walbottle on 21st (KR/LR). Singles were at Rothbury all month, Ellington, Prestwick Carr, Wark (N Tyne) on two dates plus Branxton, Bellasis Bridge and Simonburn.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

At East Chevington a juvenile perched on hay bales at dusk on 23rd (PRM).

Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Four reports from Slaley Forest with numbers between three and five on four dates in the first half of the month. Whitburn Ringing Group were present on 5th and 11th when three birds (two males, one female 'with egg') were trapped and ringed (AT et al).



Nightjars

Slaley Forest

5th and 11th July

Photographs by Whitburn Ringing Group and Alan Janes

Swift *Apus apus*

Large counts of 250+ at Backworth on 28th (CGK), Holywell Dene on 26th (KWY), 160 at Beehive Flash (Earsdon) on 9th (CGK), 100 at Swallow Pond on 18th (JPD), 80 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 20th (SR) with 17 to 50 at Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Cullercoats, Hartburn Reservoir, Holywell Dene, Nedderton, Newton Red House, Stannington, Wark and Whitley Bay. One to 12 were at nine further locations.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Two were on the R. Wansbeck at Low Angerton on 3rd (IRD) with all other reports singles at Ellington and Lesbury on 7th, Lower Whiteadder Water (Berwick) on 9th & 23rd, Corbridge on 12th, Stannington on 16th, Hexham on 23rd, Rothbury on 25th and Wark (near Coldstream) on 30th.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

An adult and juvenile called regularly at Rothbury during the month with the juvenile seen on the lawn on 19th (JD) and one at Sleafy Hall on 7th (RMH).

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

On 31st five were in Northumberland Park (North Shields) (MNC), four including many juveniles was the peak count in an Old Hartley garden (RJP), an adult and juvenile in a Walbottle garden on 7th (KR/LR) and two juveniles at Valley Park and two at Dam Dykes Farm (Cramlington) on 21st (DM). Singles were at six further widely spread localities.



A Great-Spotted Woodpecker at a feeder in Holywell Dene
13th July by Adriana Buskin

Magpie *Pica pica*

The gathering at Swallow Pond numbered 32 on 11th (JPD), eight was the peak count for the month in a Walbottle garden on 14th (KR/LR), five at Jesmond Dene on 14th (MJCo), three an unusually high count for an upland locality at Barrowburn on 18th (TRD/JD) with two at St Mary's Island and East Chevington (IJ).

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Five including three juveniles were at Swallow Pond on 14th (JPD), five at Stannington on 16th (ASH) with two at Scotland Gate and Jesmond Dene on several dates where an adult fed a juvenile on 27th (DHWB). Singles were at 13 other locations.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

A pre roost gathering at Church Farm (Earsdon) was 400 strong, 250 were at Brunswick Industrial Estate on 20th and nearby Big Waters on 25th (PCF/GB), 160 at Yarrow Haugh (R. Tweed) on 5th and four to 53 at Howdon Wetland, Jesmond Dene and in a Walbottle garden.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

All reports from (JMA) of 200 at Kiln Pit Hill on 27th, 75 at Cullernose point on 4th, 70 at Deanmoor on 4th and 50 at Haydon Bridge on 27th.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

At North Shields Fish Quay 15 were present on 1st (JMA), eight at Castle Island on 21st (DM/GB/JH) and five in Jesmond Dene on 7th (MJCo).

Raven *Corvus corax*

Three were at Longframlington Common on 16th (IRD) with singles at Holystone on 3rd and Barrowburn (Upper Coquetdale) on 18th (TRD/JD).

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Just a single report of one at Arcot Hall Golf Course on 27th (DM).

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Again a single report of three in Jesmond Dene on 18th (MJCo).

Great Tit *Parus major*

Twelve were found at Prestwick Carr on 7th (PCF) with two in Jesmond Dene on 18th (MJCo).

A great Tit in Holywell Dene
by Adriana Buskin

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

The peak count in an Old Hartley garden was three (RJP) with two including a juvenile in a Walbottle garden on 7th (KR/LR) and two in Jesmond Dene on 18th (MJCo).

**Willow Tit** *Poecile montanus*

At Prestwick Carr two fed together on 27th (PCF) with singles at Big Waters all month, Stakeford Bridge and Castle Island on 16th (PJA/LJM), Sleafy Hall on 26th (RMH) and Arcot Hall GC on 28th (DM).

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

Two moved between riverside and garden at Rothbury regularly during the month (JD) with singles at Linden Hall Longhorsley all month (NFO) and Ellington on 7th (TB).

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Eleven were at Lower Whiteadder Water (Berwick) on 9th (TBr) and nine males sang at Weetslade CP on 6th (LJM).

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

A late evening pre roost gathering of 150 at Big Waters on 30th (GB), 80 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 2nd (SR), 30 at Druridge Pools NR on 26th (CDB), 26 at Blakemoor Farm (Cresswell) on 21st (DM/GB/JH) with a single the peak count for the month at Howdon Wetland NR on 29th (CB).

A Swallow in flight at
Druridge Pools
by Chris Barlow

**Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*

The largest counts of 120 from Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 22nd (SR) and Backworth on 29th (CGK), 33 at Sleafy Hall on 26th, 25 at Wark (N Tyne) on 15th and three to 11 at Druridge Pools, Holywell Dene, Howdon Wetland, Jesmond Dene and Walbottle with a single report at Inner Farne from 1st to 4th (CGK *et al*). There were still three AON at Druridge Pools on 6th (DM) and four AON at Belsay Hall on 14th (KR/LR).

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

A peak count of 120 at Lower Whiteadder Water, Berwick on 9th with 48 AON at nearby Canty's Brig (TBr). 60 were at Backworth on 28th (CGK), 30+ at Arcot Pond on 1st (DM), 25 in Old Hartley Village on 9th (RJP) and two to six at Druridge Pools, Holywell Dene and Slaley Hall with 10 AON at Belsay Hall on 14th.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Eight to ten were reported from Valley Park (Cramlington) during the month (DM) and three at Thrum Mill (Rothbury).

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Four at Plessey Woods CP on 14th was the highest count (DM). One to two were also reported from Alnmouth, Baybridge (Blanchland), Belsay Hall, Dam Dykes (Cramlington), Derwent Reservoir, Fulbeck (Morpeth), Howick, Jesmond Dene and Wooler.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Up to 13 were noted at Prestwick Carr (PCF). Six were at Derwent Reservoir on 11th, two at Grindon Lough on 9th, two juveniles at Netherton Park on 19th and on at Baybridge (Blanchland) on 6th.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Six singing males were noted at Swallow Pond on 14th (JPD). Four were reported from Jesmond Dene on 7th, four (three males) at Derwent Reservoir on 11th and three singing males at Druridge Bay CP on 6th. One to two were also noted at Aydon (Corbridge), Baybridge (Blanchland), Belsay Hall, Castle Island, Cramlington and Grindon Lough.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Singing males were reported from Derwent Reservoir, Linden Hall, Middle Ord (Berwick), Thrunton Woods and Valley Park (Cramlington).

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Two singing males were at Swallow Pond on 4th (JPD) and two agitated males at Linton Lane on 21st (CDH). Single singing males were also reported from East Chevington and Rising Sun CP.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Family parties were reported from Billylaw (Ord Moor), Castle Island, Cocklawburn and Valley Park (Cramlington). At Prestwick Carr there was a peak count of 11 on 13th (PCF) and seven singing males were reported from Beacon Lane (Cramlington) on 7th. Four were heard singing at Swallow Pond on 4th and three singing at Fenham-le-Moor on 25th. One to two were noted at a further six localities.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

One to two were reported 'reeling' from Arcot Pond, Beacon Lane (Cramlington), Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Fenham-le-Moor, Grindon Lough, Kyloe, Prestwick Carr and West Hartford.



A Grasshopper Warbler at Cresswell Ponds by Colin Bradshaw

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Family parties were noted at Arcot Pond, Horncliffe and Valley Park (Cramlington). A count of 22 was made over a 3km stretch of the Lower Whiteadder Water (Berwick) on 9th (TBr). Five were noted singing at Druridge Bay CP on 6th and one to two were at Beal, East Chevington and Fenham-le-Moor.



A Sedge Warbler at Cresswell Ponds by Colin Bradshaw

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

At Whittle Dene Reservoirs, one singing on 2nd increased to four on 20th, a remarkable count for this site (SR). Three were singing at Ladyburn Lake on 6th and two to three were singing at Big Waters on 31st. Three at East Chevington on 23rd included one singing male and singles were also reported from Arcot Pond on 23rd and Holy Island on 7th.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

One to two were reported from Arcot Hall GC, Chugdon Wood (Ellington), Ellington, Eshott, Jesmond Dene, Seaton Delaval Hall, Valley Park (Cramlington) and Warkworth Lane.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

One at Slaley Hall was the only report.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

A family party was reported from Valley Park (Cramlington), three in Jesmond Dene and a single at Holywell Dene.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

186 were on the church roof at Newbiggin on 7th (STH); 22 in a Walbottle garden on 28th included many juveniles and 11 were at Low Newton on 4th.



A juvenile starling at Seahouses
6th July by Jonathan Farooqi

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Breeding was confirmed at Thrum Mill (Rothbury), where an adult and three juveniles were seen on 2nd (JD). Another juvenile was at Rothbury on 31st and an adult and juvenile on the Ouse Burn between Ouseburn Park and Jesmond Dene; single adults were noted at three other Jesmond Dene sites during the month. Two were at Bywell Bridge on 21st and singles at Aydon (Corbridge), Holystone and Stannington.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Six in a Walbottle garden included two juveniles (KR/LR). Four were in Jesmond Dene on 14th and an adult was feeding a juvenile at Netherton Park on 10th.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

One to two were reported from Howden Wetland NR, Jesmond Dene and a Walbottle garden, the later only the second record of the year.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Two large flocks were reported from the Slaley area. On 8th, 47 were noted in Slaley Forest (JPD) and c.20 were reported from Slaley Hall on 29th (RMH). Elsewhere seven were at Swallow Pond on 18th and one to two at Derwent Reservoir, Jesmond Dene, Prestwick Carr (carrying food to a nest) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Three were at Blakehopeburnhaugh (Redesdale) on 17th and at Doddington on 22nd, the latter including two juveniles. A pair was in a Stamfordham garden throughout the month but breeding was not proven. One to two were also noted at Countess Park (Redesmouth), Kirkharle, Lesbury, Linden Hall, Rothbury and Thrunton Woods.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Three in Jesmond Dene was the only report.

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Juveniles were reported from Kirkharle and Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) and single adults at Holystone and Slaley.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

All reports were from Upper Coquetdale with four at Rowhope (IFo), two at Shillmoor and a single at Makendon.

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

A pair were feeding three fledged young at Cresswell Pond on 2nd (MSH) and another pair fed three young near Amble on 29th (MSH/AC). A pair and two juveniles were noted at Cheswick Dunes on 2nd while immature / juvenile birds were also reported from Berwick (Spittal beach), East Chevington and Warkworth Gut. Adults were noted at East Chevington and Low Newton.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Five were noted in Upper Coquetdale on 18th (TRD/JD) and a pair with three fledged young was at Cheswick Dunes on 26th (MHu). One to two were reported from Boulmer, Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) and Simonside.

Dunnoek *Prunella modularis*

Three including a juvenile were in an Old Hartley garden throughout the month (RJP) as was a single in a Walbottle garden (KR/LR).

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

A post-breeding flock of 150 were above the Battlesteads Hotel (Wark) on 12th (CB). 16 were in a Walbottle garden on 14th (KR/LR) and a pair were feeding a recently hatched second brood at Monkseaton from 23rd (MSH).

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

20 including many juveniles were in the Waren Mill area on 13th (CGK). Also one to 12 were seen throughout the month at Foxton GC (Alnmouth), Bothal Pond, Cresswell Pond, Dinnington, Druridge Bay CP, Heighley Gate (Morpeth), Horncliffe, Linden Hall (Longhorsley), Northumberlandia (Cramlington), St. Mary's Church (Blyth), a Walbottle garden, Wark, Warkworth, and Whittledene.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

An impressive 23 were at Whittle Dene on 29th (SR). Seven, an adult and six juveniles were at Hauxley NWT on 24TH (RMH/BG/BL/ASH) whilst six, one male, two female and three juveniles were at Battlesteads Hotel (Wark) on 12th (CB). Six juveniles were noted at Hempcott Hill Farm (Cresswell) on 21st (DM/GB/JH) and five including a pair feeding a fledgling were at Lower Whiteadder Water (Berwick) on 9th (TBr). One to three mostly juveniles, were also at Alnmouth, Amble, Beal, Bothal Pond, Boulmer, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Fenham-le-moor, Grindon Lough, Ingoe, Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal), Spittal Point (Berwick) and Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) throughout the month.



A Yellow Wagtail
Druridge Pools
by Chris Barlow

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Seven was the months highest total at Lower Whiteadder Water (Berwick) on 9th (TBr). One to four were also seen throughout the month at Blyth Estuary, Byker, Bywell Bridge, Ellington, Hexham, Grindon Lough, Jesmond Dene (Newcastle), Kirkharle, Lesbury, Newcastle City Centre, Northumberland Park (North Shields), Plessey Woods CP, Rothbury GC, Thrum Mill (Rothbury) and Wark.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

45 were at Derwent Reservoir on 12th (JPD), 32 were feeding in horse fields at Church Farm (Earsdon) on 28th (CGK), 27 at Whittle Dene on 9th (SR) and 24 mainly juveniles were at West Hartford on 11th (LJM). One to 12 were seen at a further eight sights throughout the month.

White Wagtail *M. a. alba*

Two were at Cresswell Pond on 11th (TB) and a single was collecting food and thought to be nesting with a Pied Wagtail at Big Waters on 5th (GB).

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Two were at Holystone on 3rd (TRD/JD) and a single was at Thrunton Woods on 30th (JD).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

The only record was of 40 at Blanchland on 31st (AJH).

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

One was on Inner Farne (Farne Islands) on 2nd (IJ).

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Five were at both Holywell Dene throughout the month (RJP) and at Jesmond Dene (Newcastle) on 18th (MJCo). Also an adult fed two juveniles in a Walbottle garden on 7th (KR/LR).

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

The highest total for the month was 11 in a Walbottle garden on 28th (KR/LR) whilst one to three were seen throughout the month at Cresswell Pond, Holywell Dene and Jesmond Dene (Newcastle).



A Greenfinch
Howdon Wetlands
Colin Bradshaw

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

20 were at Arcot Pond on 10th (STH) and one to 15 were at a further 12 sites throughout the month.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

25 were at Blanchland on 31st (AJH) also one to four were at a further seven sites on various dates throughout the month.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

100 were at Backworth on 29th (CGK), 56 at Scremerston Station on 18th (MHu) and 35 at both East Chevington on 23rd (PRM) and Weetslade Colliery CP on 6th (LJM). One to 15 were also seen at a further eight sites throughout the month.

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*

Six were at Derwent Reservoir on 11th (PRM) whilst one to four were at Holystone, Grindon Lough and Wark throughout the month.

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

50 were at Slaley Hall on 5th (RMH) and 20 came in from the north and landed in Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 8th which was a city centre lifer for the observer (DM). Also six were at Craggside (Rothbury) on 23rd (TRD/JD) and a single at Wark on 22nd (PRM).

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Five were in a Fulbeck garden (Morpeth) throughout the month (TD) whilst one to four were at a further ten sites throughout the month.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

12 were at Corbridge on 12th (BMo) whilst one to six were seen at a further ten sites throughout the month.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza Schoeniclus*

13 were at East Chevington on 23rd (PRM) whilst one to nine were seen at a further seven sites throughout the month.

Corn Bunting *Emberiza Calandra*

Encouraging news as a non-singing adult was seen at the entrance to Hauxley NR near the Sea Hide on 22nd (MHS).

ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN

Escapes

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*

Four adults were found at Derwent Reservoir on 20th (IFo) presumably those that have been noted in the Druridge Bay area.

Muscovy Duck - *Cairina moschata*

One was still present at Duke's Pond (near Swallow Pond) through to 18th (JPD). Another was present at Druridge Bay CP on 6th (DM). Singles were also noted at Wansbeck Business Park in Ashington on 16th (PJA) & at Airy Holm Reservoir at Shotleyfield on 20th (IFo).

Helmeted Guinea Fowl – *Numida meleagris*

Two were noted foraging on the S side of the River Wansbeck near Castle Island on 21st (DM / GB / JH).

Unknown Origin

Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus*

A sub-adult bird was at Hauxley Reserve on 12th (RB/MB), 21st (CGK/PS) and 23rd (CDB).



The Hauxley Lesser White-fronted Goose by Chris Barlow

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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 (Avocet to Godwit) Ian Forsyth (Turnstone to Skua), Eddie Crabtree (Puffin to Great Black-backed Gull), 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 (Duncock to Corn Bunting), Dan Turner (WeBS Coastal Counts) and Steve Holliday (WeBS Inland Counts). Thanks to David Sanders of NNBC for providing data.

Edited by Steve Barrett NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.com

Mail 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

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. Please submit any new content for the website to the main club email address at ntbcorg@gmail.com

NTBC SIGHTINGS PAGE

The Sightings Page contains current sightings by members. Access is from the NTBC website.

Members need to submit a request to be added to the website, specifying the email address they wish to post from before they can submit sightings to ntbcorg@gmail.com

NORTH EAST RED KITE BREEDING REPORT 2013

2013 results at a glance (2012 figures in brackets)

27 known active territories (26)
 20 nests built or refurbished (19)
 17 known incubating pairs (18)
 9 nests successful (13) fledging 18 young (22)
 7 nest failures (5).
 1 outcome unknown

Kites were widespread early in the season and monitoring work identified 27 potential breeding territories being held by pairs or displaying males. However, the nesting season which followed proved disappointing with a high failure rate and only limited evidence of breeding (two pairs) outside the core area in the Derwent Valley. The very cold conditions of March and April may have had some impact on the fitness of birds at the start of the season.

Friends of Red Kites (FoRK) are concerned that the population is not expanding as it should. This is the third consecutive season where there has been no apparent increase in breeding pairs. Comparisons with other regional release programmes, made at the same time-scale following the release of kites, show that the North East has a significantly lower breeding population. If the national trend had been followed we could have expect a population by now of upwards of 50 breeding pairs. This problem is to be discussed with the RSPB and others.

Twenty nests were found and 17 pairs went on to produce eggs. Two of the other nests were built by unmated males and the third by a young pair which did not go on to lay eggs. The final results showed that, worryingly, nearly half the nests failed despite, in sharp contrast to 2012, the weather then being favourable right through from the hatching until the fledging period.

The nine remaining closely-monitored pairs went on to fledge at least 18 young compared with 13 pairs fledging 22 young in 2012. The fledging total was the absolute minimum as the outcome at two further localities was not known. In one area of mature woodland where an early nest appeared to have been abandoned during incubation, alarm-calling adults late in the season may have indicated the presence of young. Two of the successful pairs fledged broods of three young; five pairs had two young and the remaining two fledged single chicks.

Once again all but two of the nests found were in the Derwent Valley. The exceptions were one in the Causey Gill, and one at a site near Wylam, close to the Northumberland boundary, which was used for the first time in four years and which produced at least one chick.

Birds were also prominent during the season around the Derwent Reservoir, Blanchland, Edmundbyers, Muggleswick and the Derwent Gorges but once again, despite extensive searching, no nests were found.

2013 was the fourth year in which responsibility for monitoring was undertaken by the Friends of Red Kites (FoRK), the organisation made up of former volunteers with the Northern Kite project which released 94 birds from the booming Chilterns population over a three-year period. Ringing, wing-tagging, the completion of BTO Nest Record Cards and liaison with the Rare Birds Breeding Panel was also undertaken.

In the Derwent Valley, several sites used regularly in recent years were unoccupied indicating that previous 'tenants' may have perished but several new sites were found, one of them in a garden just 25 yards from the back of a bungalow.

During June and July 12 chicks at six nests were ringed by Keith Bowey, Ken Sanderson and Ian Kerr, aided by our regular climbers. Ten of them were wing-tagged with the normal Northern project tags of pink on the left wing and the 2013 year tag of yellow with black lettering on the right wing. Two of the ringed young were too small to tag. Others nests had young which were too large to handle safely and one was not found until the young had fledged.

An analysis of the seven failed nests showed that one was predated when it contained two young. Nest lining had been ripped out and was hanging over the edge. Another nest, predated at either the egg or small chick stage, showed similar damage and was just 30 yards from a successful Carrion Crow nest, perhaps a clue to the culprits. The cause of failing at the other seven was not established.

Next year will mark the tenth anniversary of the start of the Northern Kites reintroduction project. FoRK is planning to increase the size of its monitoring teams in an effort to ensure that all potential areas are fully covered.

The aim will be to recruit volunteers from the Durham and the Northumberland and Tyneside birds clubs, RSPB and other groups to 'adopt' potential areas and survey them for displaying birds in February and March and for evidence of breeding in April and May.

This will aim to build on a one-day survey carried out during March 2013 when, despite appalling conditions with freezing winds, icy roads and heavy snow in upland areas, more than 30 volunteers turned out to search for kites.

IAN KERR & KEN SANDERSON (FoRK)

SHEARWATER SHOW

The Natural History Society has teamed up with the Hancock Museum and Newcastle University to put on a shearwater show on 26th September, 7-9pm. It is free and open to the public but pre-booking is required. I thought that this would appeal to bird club members.

There is also a sea-watching event from St Mary's that is also open to all. Details on the NHSN website <http://www.nhsn.ncl.ac.uk/activities-ttea.php>

Shearwater is a performance of stories and music that is both a poetic and a scientific evocation of seabirds. It highlights the wonder of seabirds and threats to their populations; combining folktale, natural history and personal life-stories to create a single piece embroidered with Hebridean, Icelandic and Siberian music. It is collaboration between Tim Dalling and Malcolm Green, with an introduction from seabird researcher Dr Richard Bevan.

"a curious blend of photo-documentary, autobiography, romantic quest and Nordic saga with nary a dull moment, delivered with great verve and wit by these two poetic champions. What comes across so vividly is their passion for and wonderment at the British wilds and at seabirds from the majestic Manx Shearwater to the fattest, puffiest puffin. Their presence is brilliantly evoked through the senses – you can almost feel wings beating in your face, smell the salt spray and hear the sea crashing against the rocks." The Bristol Review.

This will be a homecoming and the final show of a tour which will visit Orkney, Mull, Skye, Rum, Islay and Arran, so there will be extra, up-to-date news of bird-life and adventures from these islands to share.

Free but booking is essential, to book call 0191 222 5121 or email info@greatnorthmuseum.org.uk

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COASTAL WEBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

JULY 2013

MHU M. Hutcheson
TB T. Brewis

AC A. Craggs and team
MLC M. L. Cadwallender
TAC T. A. Cadwallender

LJM L. J. McDougall
NA N. Adams
DMT D. M. Turner
PF P. Fletcher

Site	TOTAL																			
	Counter	MHu	(Including Little Beach)	Berwick Little Beach	Tweed Estuary	Tweed: A1 By-Pass to Horncastle	Spittal - Cocklawburn	Lindisfarne NNR (Including Budle Bay)	(Budle Bay)	Seahouses - Beadnell	Aln Estuary	Blyth Estuary	St Mary's Island	Quay	Redheugh - Scotswood Bridge. (north bank)	Scotswood - Newburn Bridge. (north bank)				
	Date	17	17	17	19	20	18	21	21	23	19	23	21	28	21	21				
	Red-throated Diver						2			1			1							
	Cormorant	128	6		7		14	51		10		21	1	15	3					
	Shag	16	5				2	9												
	Grey Heron	44	1		18	6	1	5	1	1	7		3		1	1				
	Mute Swan	332	3		306	11		6	4		4	2								
	Greylag Goose	14					5						9							
	Canada Goose	21			9					12										
	Light-bellied Brent Goose	2						2												
	Shelduck	154						124	82		6	10			14					
	Wigeon	2				2														
	Mallard	205	6		44	26		29	6	4	35	1	10		14	36				
	Tufted Duck	6				1		4					1							
	Eider	830	13		5		74	602	11	70	12	17	25	12						
	Common Scoter	115					112						3							
	Velvet Scoter	1					1													
	Red-breasted Merganser	65						65	1											
	Goosander	997	328	264	254	40	332	24			2	17								
	Moorhen	12					1				8		3							
	Coot	2						2												
	Oystercatcher	835	19		8	5	72	587	61	45	43	13	18	23	1	1				
	Ringed Plover	39					12	18					8			1				
	Golden Plover	124							3			4	117							
	Grey Plover	7						7												
	Lapwing	94			10			12			42		7		15	8				
	Knot	2						2												
	Sanderling	47								32			15							
	Dunlin	320	3	3	4			258			45	9	1							
	Black-tailed Godwit	3									3									
	Bar-tailed Godwit	700						700												
	Whimbrel	4						4												
	Curlew	922	5		92	1	4	660		11	93	32	11	7	5	1				
	Redshank	1,167	124		103		14	545	40	26	93	153	44	11	53	1				
	Common Sandpiper	10				6					4									
	Turnstone	104						19		60		1	10	14						
	Black-headed Gull	4,604	722	350	824	77	72	1376		327	150	429	161	42	352	72				
	Common Gull	94	2		2	5	2	80				2		1						
	Lesser Black-backed Gull	120	2		2	7		9		28		9			59	4				
	Herring Gull	2,410	552	140	350	37	36	879		123	9	130	85	140	66	3				
	Great Black-backed Gull	137	22		13		1	4		20		5	15	42	9	6				
	Kittiwake	566	10		220		2	2		290	2		31	9						
	Mediterranean Gull	1																		
	Sandwich Tern	565	68		94		98	201		15	14	69	5	1						
	Roseate Tern	2												2						
	Common Tern	98	2					30		6	18	25		14	2	1				
	Arctic Tern	135	3		3			70		56			3							
	Little Tern	27								27										
	Kingfisher	0																		
	ADDITIONAL SPECIES																			
	Little Egret	3				1		2			1									
	Greylag Goose (domestic)	1																		
	TOTALS - WILDFOWL	2,950	362	264	643	86	544	923	105	86	86	68	56	27	32	37				
	- WADERS	4,378	151	3	217	12	102	2,815	101	174	323	212	231	55	74	12				

Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

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

Bulletin 2013 No 8

MONTHLY SUMMARY – AUGUST

7th October 2013



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Ruddy Shelduck	One past Seaton Sluice on 4th
Quail	Only two singles noted this month
Sooty Shearwater	Passage finally underway late month
Manx Shearwater	Large feeding flock of 600 off Bamburgh
Balearic Shearwater	Notable passage
Little Egret	Count of 11 at Berwick - a county record
Red-necked Grebe	Several from sea watches late month
Honey-buzzard	Singles at Big Waters and Holy Island
Golden Eagle	First sighting for six years in county
Spotted Crane	Single juvenile at East Chevington all month
Ruff	High count of 95 at East Chevington on 31st
Pectoral Sandpiper	Singles at Newton and Holy Island
Long-tailed Skua	Adult past St Mary's on 1st
Bridled Tern	Last month's highlight returned to Farne Islands from 15th to 19th
White-winged Black Tern	Juvenile at East Chevington and Bothal Pond
Bonaparte's Gull	Adult in summer plumage at Cresswell Pond for 10 minutes on 14th
Turtle Dove	One briefly at Rising Sun CP on 7th
Wryneck	Single at Tynemouth on 26th
Booted Warbler	Highlight of month with one at Hadston Carrs on 24th
Greenish Warbler	Single at Tynemouth 25th-26th

COMMITTEE NEWS

AGM including revised Constitution at the Indoor Meeting on 10th October

2013-2014 Subscriptions are due. Please pay any Committee member or send in the attached Membership Form. Please don't forget to Gift Aid.

FIELD TRIPS

Trevor Blake's next trip is to Holy Island on Sunday 13th October.

For details of the visit to this migrant hot spot please contact Trevor direct on 01670 862635 or trevor.1958@live.co.uk

INDOOR MEETINGS

NTBC indoor meetings are held at Northern Rugby Club, McCracken Park, Great North Road, Newcastle, NE3 2DT starting at 7.00pm and generally finish between 9.00pm-9.30pm.

Thursday October 10th

AGM plus 'Everybody loves Long-eared Owls' – Martin Davison

The talk is about a 35-year study in the border forest at Kielder looking at the way the owls have used the forest in that time. As the whole area is an upland spruce forest, it will be interesting to compare breeding success over the years and to see how the owls are fairing along with the Goshawks.

A young Water Rail
Big Waters
by Graeme Bowman



BULLETIN WRITERS

We are always grateful for help writing sections of the bulletin on a long-term or stand-by basis. We will soon need a writer for Dunnock to Corn Bunting as Phil Allott will not be available. Please contact any committee member or email

Steve Barrett NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.com

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 2011 page 228.

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

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

The Tweed Estuary held 314 on 22nd (MHu), 216 were at New Water Haugh on the River Tweed on 31st (MHu), 94 at Killingworth Lake on 16th (LJM), 42 at Castle Island (/DMSTH/IFo), and 31 at Warkworth (DM). Six to 12 were at Blyth, Bywell (pair with four juveniles), Greenlee Lough and Newcastle Leazes Park, and one to four at seven further sites. At Holy Island the last of seven cygnets disappeared on 7th, presumably predated (IK). A nest at Newcastle Leazes Park that had contained four eggs on 31st July was empty by 14th August (DHWB).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Peak counts were 285 at Widdrington Moor Lake on 14th (MSH), 176 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 28th (PCF), 150 at Airy Holm Reservoir on 21st (IFo), 145 at Backworth Pond on 18th (MNC), 86 at Bothal Pond (DM/STH/IFo), 20-38 at Budle Bay, East Chevington and Hauxley Reserve, and 12-18 at Grindon Lough, New Water Haugh, Prestwick Carr and the Tweed Estuary. One to five were also at Foxton Bend and Holywell Pond.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

High counts were 500 at Felton Lane on 21st (TB), 340 at Bothal Pond on 17th (TD), 292 at Grindon Lough on 7th (PRM), 79 at Widdrington Moor Lake (MSH), 57 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs (SR), 41-48 at Newcastle Leazes Park (DM) and Swallow Pond (JPD), 20-30 at Backworth and Ellington, and ten to 18 at Hauxley Reserve and New Water Haugh. One to five were also at Foxton Bends and Linton Ponds.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

One flew W, with 20 Canada Geese, at Holywell Pond on 31st (JPD).

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

One flew S at Seaton Sluice on 4th (per SSWT).

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

At Seaton Sluice, nine flew N and three S between 5th-21st (SSWT). Budle Bay held 57 on 25th (CGK), 13 (11 fledged young) were at Howdon Wetland NR on 4th (CB), five to seven at the Coquet Estuary (pair with three juveniles; JMA), Druridge Lane (TB) and Foxton Bends (IJ), three to four at Castle Island, Druridge Pools and New Water Haugh, and one to two at Grindon Lough and Yarrow Slake.

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

At Seaton Sluice a total of 83 flew N from 23rd (SSWT), 25 flew N at Newbiggin (DM/STH/IFo) and eight N at St Mary's (MSH/AC) on 25th. Light passage from NE was noted at Holy Island on 23rd (IK), and 500 had built up at Fenham Flats by 29th (TRD/JD). Numbers at Grindon Lough rose from 29 on 1st (SJH) to 130 by 11th (PRM) dropping slightly to 110 by 25th (MRS). Ten to 21 were also at Budle Bay, Derwent Reservoir, East Chevington and Monks' House Pool between 18th-27th, and one to six at Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, Hauxley Reserve, Longhirst Flash and the Tweed Estuary.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Peak counts were 33 at Linton Ponds on 25th (CDH), ten at Druridge Pools on 26th (CDB), seven (family party) at Big Waters (GB) and four to five at Arcot Pond, East Chevington, Gosforth Park NR, Hauxley Reserve and Howdon Wetland. One to two were also at Bothal and Cresswell Ponds.

Teal *Anas crecca*

A record August total was recorded at Seaton Sluice, with a monthly total of 1,287 N and 327 S, including 1,139 N and 308 S between 15th-25th (SSWT). A total of 150 flew N at Hadston Carrs (JPD) and 97 N at St Mary's on 25th (MSH/AC). Peak site counts were 373 at Grindon Lough on 24th (SW) up from 46 on 1st (SJH), 350 at East Chevington on 15th (TRD), 140 at Budle Bay on 23rd (CGK), and 57-95 at Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Cresswell Pond and Derwent Reservoir, and 20-43 at Bothal Pond, Bradford Kaims, Castle Island, Gosforth Park NR, Holy Island Lough, Howdon Wetland and Monks' House Pool. Ten to 18 were also at the Beehive Flash (Earsdon) and Linton Ponds, and one to five at six further sites.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

The greatest concentrations were 147 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 29th (SR), 129 at Derwent Reservoir on 18th (IFo), 109 at Druridge Pools on 12th (JPD), 95-96 at Grindon Lough and Killingworth Lake, 50-60 at Big Waters, Bothal Pond, Newcastle Leazes Park and West Ord, and 30-48 at Alnmouth, Duke's and Holywell Ponds, Gosforth Park

NR, Hauxley Reserve, Monks' House Pool, Newcastle Exhibition Park and the Tweed Estuary. Counts of 14-28 came from Arcot Pond, Airy Holm Reservoir, the *Beehive* Flash (Earsdon), Byker and Prestwick Carr.

Mallard breeding data were as follows (additional to previous months unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Holywell Dene (estuary)	1	9	RJP. Almost fully grown young on 20th; the first successful fledging there for some years
Grindon Lough	1	9	PRM. On 8th
Duke's Pond	1	8	JPD. New brood on 1st
Swallow Pond	1	7	JPD. Fresh brood on 30th
Wark	1	6	PRM. On 11th
Newcastle Leazes Park	1	2	DM. Tiny young on 16th
East Cramlington	1	1	LJM. On 6th

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Four, with six Wigeon, flew in to Big Waters on 22nd and were also present on 23rd (GB). Cresswell Pond held two on 4th (JPD), three on 16th (TRC) and one to two on several further dates (TRD/MSH), two were at Low Newton scrape on 16th (IBDa/KDa), and one at Arcot Pond on 25th-26th (GB/DM).

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

One found at Arcot Pond on 13th (GMI) remained there into September (DM/LJM *et al.*). One was also at Cresswell Pond on 18th (TF/JFa).



A Shoveler at Holywell Pond
by Adriana Buskin on 17th August

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

East Chevington attracted a peak of 12 on 6th (IFo), with four on 4th and 25th-26th (GB/TRD/JD). Five were at Cresswell Pond on 18th (TRC), five at Monks' House Pool on 24th (BRS), four at Arcot Pond on 25th (DM/LJM), and one to two at Druridge Pools, Grindon Lough and Hauxley Reserve

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Ten were at Holywell Pond on 6th (SPP), nine at Bothal Pond on 17th (TD), five at Arcot Pond on 11th (GB/JH/LJM), three to four at Bothal and Linton Ponds, Big Waters, Hauxley Reserve and Killingworth Lake, and one to two at Airy Holm Reservoir, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington and Gosforth Park NR. Breeding data were as follows (additional to previous months unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Holywell Pond	1	4	SPP. On 6th

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

One flew N at Seaton Sluice on 12th (SSWT). Largest counts were 58 at Killingworth Lake on 16th (LJM), 57 at Bothal Pond on 6th (TF/JFa), 46 at Hauxley Reserve on 29th (IFo), 29-38 at Cresswell and Swallow Ponds, and Druridge Pools (TRC/JPD), and 12-18 at Airy Holm Reservoir, Holywell and Linton Ponds, and Newcastle Leazes Park. Two to six were also at Castle Island, Cocklawburn and Newcastle Exhibition Park. Breeding data were as follows (additional to previous months unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Holywell Pond	2	14 (9,5)	JPD. On 1st
Cragside	1	9	JD. On 1st
Arcot Pond	1	3	DM. Half-grown young on 1st
Linton Pond	1	2	CDH. Two well grown young on 25th (not previously reported)
Marden Quarry	1	1	KWY. On 16th

Seven large young were also at Howdon Wetland (CB).

Scaup *Aythya marila*

Single drakes visited Cresswell Pond on 12th (JPD) and 14th (TRC), Hauxley Reserve on 17th (TB) and Druridge Pools on 26th (CDB). An un-sexed bird was at Monks' House Pool on 6th (RNa).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

A concentration off Guile Point (Holy Island) numbered 950 on 27th (DGB/RHB), 90 were at Stag Rocks on 24th (BRS), 57 off Seaton Sluice on 27th (SSWT), 56 at St Mary's on 8th (SPP), 18 at Berwick North Shore (MHu), and one to three at Foxton, Tynemouth and Warkworth. A total of 18 juveniles were at the Coquet Estuary on 1st (JMA). A female accompanied two ducklings at Berwick Little Beach on 6th (MHu).

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Following record counts in July, Seaton Sluice again recorded above average numbers, with a monthly total of 1,268 N and 57 S (SSWT). Elsewhere, peak passage counts were 64 N at Berwick pier on 15th (MHu), 57 N at St Mary's on 7th (JPD), and 70 S at Holy Island on 23rd (IK). About 300 were off East Chevington on 3rd (NFO), 230 at Cocklawburn on 6th (MHu), 220 at Cheswick on 27th (MHu), and nine at Craster. A notable inland record concerned a flock of 16 drakes and six ducks found near the Leaplish visitor centre, Kielder Water on 4th. First noted at 1125h the flock flew off but returned in the early afternoon and were still present at 1700h (TW).

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

Three flew N at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Three were at a confidential site on 20th (JD) and a female/immature was at Derwent Reservoir on 24th (IFo).

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

33 were at Boulmer on 3rd (AJH) and three were off Druridge on 23rd (TRD/JD). At Budle Bay, the brood of nine first noted in July, was reduced to eight young by 4th (ASH) and later down to seven (CGK). Perhaps the same brood (seven young), was at Fenham-le-Moor on 29th (TRD/JD).

Three Goosander at Budle Bay by Chris Knox

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

A total of three flew N at Seaton Sluice between 23rd-29th (SSWT). Good numbers were again recorded in the north, with peak counts (perhaps including some overlap) of 290 at Spittal cliffs on 20th (MHu), 168 at Cocklawburn on 12th (MHu), 153 at the Tweed Estuary on 22nd (MHu), about 100 at Lindisfarne NNR (the harbour/Black Law area) during the month (IK), 90 at Stag Rocks on 17th (IBDa/KDa), 84 at New Water Haugh, River Tweed (MHu), and 60-62 at Boulmer (NFO) and West Ord (MHu). A count of 36 at Derwent Reservoir on 16th was notably high for the locality (IFo), 34 were at Berwick North Shore (MHu),



20(19 juveniles) at the Blyth Estuary on 18th (LJM), and 11 at Warkworth (MSH). Six to eight were also at Budle Bay, Foxton Bend, Seahouses and West Woodburn, and one to two at Alnmouth, Castle Island, Grindon Lough, Killingworth Lake, QEII Lake and Warkworth Gut.

Goosander breeding data were as follows (additional to previous months unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Blakehopeburnhaugh	1	8	TRD/JD. Old juveniles on 11th

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

There were two reports. 20+ including two females with over seven young were on Blanchland Moor on 10th (JL) and a family party of 11 were feeding in heather in the Harthope valley on 4th.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

A single report of four birds at Alnham on 25th (TRD/JD).

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

There were a gratifying ten reports during the month, often of family parties. 16 were at Needles Eye (Berwick) On 7th (MHu). 13 were in a covey at West Hartford on 15th (LJM) and a family party of ten including 8 juveniles were at Brunton Bridge (Gosforth) also on 15th (PCF). A covey of nine was on Newbiggin GC on 9th and five were at Ryal on 21st and at Big Waters on 22nd. One or two were at four other places.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

There were two records of this secretive species during the month. One was singing west of the hide at Holywell Pond on 1st (JPD) and another was on Holy Island on 2nd (JDL).

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

17 were at Holystone Grange on 18th (JR) and 11, including ten juveniles were at Ryal (Mootlaw) on 21st (PCF).

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

The monthly total for Seaton Sluice was 13, 8 N and 5 S (SSWT). Elsewhere Druridge Bay had five adults on 10th and four on 29th with three N past St. Mary's on 31st. Three were off Cheswick on 30th (MHu). Two were seen off Newbiggin on 26th.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

There were two sightings, both singles, one near the shore at Druridge Bay on 10th (TD) and another at Cheswick on 30th (MHu).

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

An immature was at Cheswick Black Rocks on 27th (BWG).

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Few birds remained at nesting cliffs with the highest counts of eight birds at Craster on 28th (TRD/JD) and four adults and two juvenile birds at Rockcliffe Cliffs (Whitley Bay) on 6th (IJ). There were few reports of passage although 45 passed Newbiggin Point in late afternoon on 13th (ASH).

Two birds flew around the north pool at East Chevington on 27th (PJA) and a blue-phase bird which was well inland passed E over Prestwick Carr on 23rd (PCF).

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

All records bar one were in the last week of the month. The exception was four N at Newbiggin Point on 13th (ASH). The first records of the month at Seaton Sluice were three N on 22nd with a month's total of six regarded as 'very poor' (SSWT). Five flew S past Emmanuel Point (Holy Island) in one hour on 23rd (IK), five passed Stag Rocks on 29th (JFa/TF) and three there on 20th (IBDa/KDa). Two fed off Stag Rocks on 31st (JPD). Elsewhere one or two birds were seen at three places on 22nd and 23rd.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

SSWT reported numbers during the month as 'average' with 433 passing during the month (220 N and 213 S). Late in the month numbers observed in the north of the county were significant when there were large numbers feeding off the Farne Islands. Peak counts were 600 feeding in the evening of 22nd off Budle Point (CGK) and over 500 feeding on 31st off Bamburgh (TD/JPD). 250-300 were seen off Holy island between 20th-24th attracted by abundant sand eels (IK *et al.*). Peak daily counts included 103 S at Seaton Sluice on 5th between 15.35 and 19.30h (TRC), 65 passing Tynemouth in one hour on 10th (SPP) and 55 N between 16.35h and 18.05h on 13th at Newbiggin (ASH).

Balearic Shearwater *Puffinus mauritanicus*

There was a notable passage of the species during the month. Two passed Stag Rocks on 29th (TF/JFa) and singles were seen, all heading N, at several sea watch points. One passed St. Mary's on 12th (ASJ) another on 25th (AC/MSH), one passed Seaton Sluice on 27th and 28th (SSWT *et al.*) and another passed Newbiggin on 22nd (ASH/JR).

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

There were no reports of greater than ten birds passing during the first three weeks of the month. A significant passage was seen at the end of the month with 800 N in two hours on 25th and 240 N in one hour on 22nd at Seaton Sluice (SSWT). Off Holy Island 290 passed S on 26th and 275 S on 23rd (IK).

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

A number of roosts were reported in the month, the largest of which was 134 at Blyth Harbour on 27th (STH/PJA). On 21st 25 were on the North Pool at East Chevington and another 75 flew S (TB). 17 to 28 were recorded as seen at East Chevington at other times. Castle Island had 90 on 25th and 35 on 11th (STH/DM/IFo) and 33 were on Berwick North Shore on 23rd (MHu). Groups of one to 15 were seen at 12 other inland and marine sites.

There were few reports of movements but 78 went N at Seaton Sluice in three hours on 22nd (SSWT).

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

There were three reports, all from the north of the area. Eleven were at a roost at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 4th (MHu) and five were at Stag Rocks on 29th (TRD/JD).

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Two were seen throughout the month at Gosforth NR (NHSN) and a single appeared at East Chevington north pool on 28th (MSH).

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

There were numbers of reports of this increasing species. A record count of 11 was made on the River Tweed at Berwick New Water Haugh on 18th (BWG) and five were in the same area on several dates during the month (MHu). Nine, including a juvenile, were in Budle Bay on 21st and six were there on 22nd (CGK). Eight were at Warkworth Gut on 2nd (JPD). Further south two to four were seen at Amble Braid, Fenham le Moor, Hauxley NR, Lindisfarne NR and in the Warkworth area. In addition singles were observed at other places on 14 occasions.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

A record number was counted for the River Tweed on 31st when 31 birds were at Yarrow Slake (BWG) and 15 were there on 22nd. Groups of ten or more were seen on various dates further south including 17 at Castle Island on 22nd and 14 were there on 11th. 11 were at East Chevington on 13th and a count of ten was made at Howdon Wetlands on 10th.

There were 20 reports of one to nine birds at other places during the month. A strange record was of a bird which caught and swallowed a mole at Big Waters on 11th (GB).

Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

Spoonbills were seen at three places during the month. Hauxley NR had three birds, an adult and two juveniles, on 17th (CBD/TB) and singles were seen at Budle Bay from 1st-5th (RNa/JPL/GRo) and at West Ord on 4th (MHu).

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

There were some high counts at waters in the south east of the county. An impressive 28-29 were at Holywell Pond on 13th (22 adults and 6/7 chicks) (SPP). Up to 17 were at Big Waters with the maximum on 21st (AJJ *per* GB). 13 were at Bothal Pond on 11th (TD). Up to 11 were at Arcot Pond (STH) on 18th, ten were at Linton Pond on 25th (CDH) and nine were at Holywell Pond on 2nd and 31st (IJ/JPD). Up to six were also reported at about ten other widely distributed locations.

Breeding data reported were;

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Holywell Pond	2	3 and 1 juv	New broods (JPD)
Bothal Pond	2	6 juv	TD
Gosforth NR		3 juv	NHSN
Holy Island Lough		3 juv	SR/AH
Whittle Dene Res.		1 large juv	IK
Arcot Pond		5	IJ

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Birds were reported from 12 locations during the month. The high numbers were from fresh water breeding sites. At Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 9th 11 birds were present (SR) and at Bothal Pond ten (two pairs with three juveniles each) were present all month (TD/JFa/TF *et al.*). Two adults with four large young were on Killingworth Lake on 16th (CDB/GB). An adult with a juvenile was reported throughout the month at East Chevington. On the sea five, two adults with three juveniles, were close to the shore on 10th (TD). Three flew E over Ellington on 8th (TB). Elsewhere one to two were reported from seven other places inland and at the coast.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

A single, perhaps the same bird, was seen by numbers of observers flying N at Hadston Carrs, St. Mary's and SSWT early morning on 25th.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

The only reports for the month were from two sites in the south of the county with up to six birds of which two were juveniles at one site and seven including juveniles at another.

Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

On the 23rd a bird flew South low over Big Waters (AJJ/ISD/BrR *per* GB) and another bird was noted on Holy Island on 26th (IBDa/KDa).

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Two birds were at Low Wakerley on 14th and a single was noted there on 2nd (IFo). Other singles were near Otterburn on 3rd (MD/AM), Blanchland on 10th (AJH), Carterway Heads on 14th (and at Derwent Reservoir on 30th (IFo).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Three juveniles were at East Chevington on 18th (TB) and two juveniles were at Hauxley NWT on 6th (IFo) and Cresswell Pond on 19th (TRD/JD). A female and a juvenile were seen at Linton Ponds on 17th (TF/JFa). Away from the Druridge Bay area singles were at Big Waters on 13th (AJJ *per* GB), Woodhorn Flash on 25th (CDH), Fenham Flats on 25th (IBDa/KDa) and at West Hartford on 26th (STH).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

On the 19th a female flew over the A69 near Greenhead and another female was noted near Corbridge on 24th (PRM).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Two were at Gosforth Park NR during the month (NHSN). Four birds were seen at Swallow Pond on 14th and 18th (JPD). Three birds were in Ponteland Park on 15th (PRM); two were at West Hartford (STH) and Tynemouth (CDB) on 26th. Single birds were noted at 20 sites including one which was running along the road at Fenham-le-Moor on 21st (TRD/JD).

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Six birds were in the air together at Big Waters on 14th (GB); four were at Sweethope Lough on 7th (PRM) and Derwent Reservoir on 16th (IFo). Three birds were noted at Budle Bay, Dissington, Grindon Lough, Holburn Moss, Simonside and Whitley Bay. . One to two birds were noted at 20 sites during the month.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

A 2nd- or 3rd-summer bird was watched soaring for 5 minutes at Sweethope Lough before diving down and being lost to view on 7th (PRM).

Osprey *Pandion haliaetuss*

Derwent Reservoir had a juvenile on 7th and an adult on 14th (Ifo); other singles were seen at Hedgeley Bridge on 19th (IBDa/KDa), Holy Island on 24th and 25th (AH/IK), near Wallington on and at St Mary's Island on 30th (AC/ASJ).

Kestrel *Falco tinninculus*

Six birds were hunting in the Harthope Valley on 4th (MRS) and five birds involving a female and four juveniles were at Ovingham on 1st (SAS). Three birds were at Sweethope Lough on 7th, and two were at Wark (N Tyne) on 4th, Holburn Moss on 10th, Prestwick Carr on 12th and West Woodburn on 15th. Singles were reported from Druridge Pools, Holy Island, River Aln (Foxton) and in the Upper Coquetdale.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Only one inland record of a male at a site on 4th (MRS) and the only other records involved birds at Budle Bay on 11th (CGK), Cresswell Pond on 18th (CGK) and at Bamburgh GC on 25th (CGK).

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

On the 2nd an adult was seen at East Chevington (JPD/MPF/AS); other single birds were seen at Hedgeley Bridge on 23rd (IBDa/KDa), Warenford on 25th (JHa) and at Whitley Bay cemetery on 31st (JPD/MPF/AS).

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Budle Bay had three birds on 9th and 21st (CGK) and singles noted there on 11th (DGB) and 29th (DHa). Single birds were seen at six inland sites and at East Ord on 8th (MHu), Widdrington on 18th (ASJ), Cresswell Pond on 20th (JR) and at Bothal Pond on 23rd (TF/JFa).

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

At Big Waters up to six birds were noted during the month (GB). 4+ birds involving two pairs and a chick were seen at Gosforth Park NR during the month (NHSN). Three birds were at Swallow Pond on 24th (JPD) and Arcot Pond on 25th (LJM *et al.*). Single birds were at Branton GP on 14th (IBDa/KDa), Warkworth Lane on 20th (TB), East Chevington on 23rd and 24th (IK/ASH *et al.*) and Crag Lough on 26th (IJ).



A juvenile Water Rail at Big Waters by Graeme Bowman on 7th August

Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana*

A single bird was seen from the 1st on the North Pool (East Chevington), showing well at times throughout the month. On 23rd it was being chased by a Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus* giving a good size comparison (TRD/JD).

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

29 birds at Arcot Pond on 13th and 25th were the highest counts (LJM/DM/STH/IFo) followed by 26 at Big Waters on several dates (GB). 11 were at Bothal Pond on 25th (DM/STH/IFo), nine were at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 16th (DM). One to two were at nine other sites.

Coot *Fulica atra*

Killingworth Lake had the highest counts this month with 92 birds on 16th (LJM) followed by 83 birds at Woodhorn Flash on 25th (CDH). 52 were at Bothal Pond on 17th (TD), 35 were at Arcot Pond on 18th (STH), 29 were at Holywell Pond on 2nd (IJ) and 28 were at Big waters on 19th (GB). One to sixteen were at four other sites.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Almost all reports came from Cresswell Pond where the post-breeding flock remained from July into August. The peak of 15 birds occurred on 4th (IRD/GB/TBJPD) before dwindling to 12 on 7th (TF/JFa), to five on 9th-10th (PCF/TB/TRD/JD) and a single reported during 19th-25th (MSH/RB/MB *et al.*). Four were also noted at Castle Island on 2nd (JPD).

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

A good passage was noted at Seaton Sluice where 1,031 moved S and 32 N during the month (SSWT). Post-breeding gatherings included 216 at Berwick North Shore on 23rd (MHu), 130 on 10th/21st in Budle Bay (CGK), with roosting birds involving 67 at Black Middens on 25th (JPD), 62 at Hauxley NWT on 29th (IFo) and 41 at Cullercoats on 14th (ASJ). Eighteen were counted on the Tweed Estuary on 22nd and 14 at Whitley Bay (Rockcliffe Tennis Club cliffs) on 23rd, whilst single-figure reports came from a further ten localities.

A late record for July involved four young being successfully reared in a potato field, after care was taken to avoid the nest during farming operations, on Holy Island (IK).



Oystercatchers in line at Holy Island by Adriana Buskin on 26th August

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Some 127 moved S at Seaton Sluice between 21st-23rd (SSWT). Peak post-breeding flocks involved 300 on 5th increasing to 1,000 on 23rd at Holy Island (IK) and 1,000 at Boulmer on 25th (RB/MB), whilst St Mary's attracted 250 on 1st increasing to ca.650 on 6th and 400+ on 18th (ASJ/SPP). Newbiggin held 125 on 26th (GB) and 20-44 were seen at Cullernose Point, Earsdon (Church Farm), East Chevington and Prestwick Carr, with one to two on two dates at Grindon Lough.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Apart from a count of 125 roosting on the north shore at Budle Bay on 21st (CGK), only singles were reported from the following sites: Amble Braid on 31st, East Chevington on 4th/23rd/25th, Hadston Carrs on 25th, Longbridge End (Lindisfarne NNR) on 6th and moving N at Seaton Sluice on 25th.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Very well reported this month with increasing flock sizes noted. The peak involved 613 counted at Bothal Pond on 27th (TF/JFa), with 584 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 27th (SR), 500 at East Chevington on 2nd (IJ/JPD), 367 at Charlton Mires (north of Alnwick) on 6th (AH), 320 at Derwent Reservoir on 27th (IFo), 290+ at Grindon Lough on 11th (PRM), 200+ at Monks' House Pool on 24th (BRS) and 108-150 at Backworth, Castle Island, Cocklawburn, Slaley, St Mary's, Swallow Pond and Yarrow Slake (Tweed). Smaller groups of 25-66 were also present at Big Waters, Cawledge (Alnwick), Cresswell Pond, Ellington (Chugdon Wood), Foxton Bends (Aln), Hadston, Holywell Pond, Howdon Wetland NR and the Tweed Estuary.

A Lapwing glistens in the sun at Cresswell Pond by Alan Jack

**Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*

Three at Holywell Pond included two juveniles on 4th (JPD). A juvenile was at Druridge Pools on 4th (GB) with two juveniles seen here on 7th (TF/JFa). Further juveniles were noted at Cresswell Pond on 16th (TRC) and at a confidential site on three dates to the 28th.



A Little Ringed Plover at Druridge Pools
Jonathan Farooqi on 7th August

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Post-breeding gatherings included counts of 120 at Budle Bay on 24th (CGK) and Warkworth Gut on 18th (TB). The roost on a factory roof in Blyth harbour held 87 on 27th (STH/PJA). Back in the north, 52 were counted at Berwick North Shore on 23rd, 38 at Cocklawburn on 30th and 20 at Berwick Little Beach on 21st (MHu/TRD/JD). At least 50 were at St Mary's on 18th (SPP), ten+ were noted at Amble Braid on 6th (MSH), nine was the monthly peak at Grindon Lough on 20th (PRM) and Cresswell Pond held seven on 21st (TB). One to four were at other coastal spots but at inland Big Waters three passed over heading S on 18th and one flew W on 24th (GB).

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Passage at Seaton Sluice included 15 N and 63 S between 2nd-24th (SSWT) whilst at nearby St Mary's, a further 55 flew S on the 1st (JPD). At Fenham Flats (Lindisfarne NNR) ten on 7th increased to 20 on 8th (JDL), 16 were at both Cresswell Pond and St Mary's (moving S) on 7th (TF/JFa/JPD), 12 moved S at St Mary's on 4th (SPP/ASJ) and 11 passed S at Newbiggin on 7th (TRC). Nine were in Budle Bay on 10th with a further five here on 21st and seven flew S over Alnmouth on 26th. The latest report of the month was of six heading S at St Mary's on 31st (JPD) and one to five were seen or heard at a further 17 locations. Inland reports included singles flying over Hazelrigg on 8th (GB), S over Derwent Reservoir on 24th (IFo) and over Prestwick Carr on 31st (PCF).

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

In the north, the peak at Budle Bay numbered 355 on 21st (CGK), 206 were on the Tweed estuary on 22nd (MHu) and 110 were on Yarrow Slake (Tweed) on 20th (MHu). Birds were present on farmland at Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene) throughout the month and reached 133 on 5th (RJP). Additional flocks included 85 at Foxton Bends (Aln) on 11th (GB/JH), 34 at Hauxley NWT on 29th (IFo), 25 at Berwick North Shore on 23rd (MHu) and 14 at Howdon Wetland NR on 16th (CB). Single-figure reports included a maximum of seven at both Derwent Reservoir and Grindon Lough, with fewer numbers at three other sites.



A Curlew preens at Holywell Pond
by Alan Jack

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

A large number of reports this month included a high of 61 at East Chevington on 31st (TF/JFa) with 28 here the previous day (NFO). Castle Island held 27 on 18th (ASJ), 19 were at Cresswell Pond on 18th (TRC), 17 at Bothal Pond on 20th (TF/JFa), 14 at Charlton Mires (5 miles north of Alnwick) on 13th (AH) and 12 on the Blyth Estuary (Kitty Brewster) on 4th (JPD); many of these sites held smaller numbers on several dates throughout the month.

Elsewhere, five were in flooded fields at Gloucester Lodge (Blyth) on 6th (LJM/PJA), four were seen at Amble Braid-Warkworth Gut between 7th-11th (TF/JFa/GB/JH/NFO) and Budle Bay on 10th and 21st-26th (CGK), three were at Amble Braid, Grindon Lough, Hauxley NWT and flying over Big Waters on 31st (JH per GB). Seaton Sluice recorded two birds moving S between 5th-21st (SSWT) and one to two were noted at the following additional sites: Alnmouth, Arcot Pond, Backworth Flash, Berwick North Shore, Budle Bay, Fenham-le-Moor, Monks' House Pool, St Mary's Island, Tweed Estuary and West Hartford.



Two Black-tailed Godwit at St. Mary's by Alan Jack

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Holy Island held 51 birds in the channel near the school on 25th (ADM), ten were at Warkworth Gut on 18th (TB), seven were on Berwick North Shore on 23rd (MHu) and one to three were present at Berwick Little Beach, Blyth Estuary (Kitty Brewster), Boulmer, East Chevington, Fenham-le-Moor and Hauxley.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

The peak at Tynemouth was 35 on 10th (DRW) and 20 were at Hauxley on 15th (TRD). One to seven were at some 12 locations along the length of the coast from Berwick and Cocklawburn in the north to Whitley Bay and St Mary's in the south.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

A total of 108 flew S at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower, including 70 in one hour on 5th. A few places held 30-40 at times: Amble Braid, R Coquet Estuary, Stag Rocks and Warkworth Gut; 10-15 appeared at Holy Island, R Tweed Estuary and St Mary's. One to six were reported from other six coastal sites.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

East Chevington, North Pool held small numbers from 1st then 19 on 24th, 75 on 30th (NFO) and 95 on 31st (TRD/JD *et al.*), the highest count for many a year. It was noted at Grindon Lough from 20th with a peak of 44 on 24th (SW *et al.*), 23 were N of Alnwick at Charlton Mires on 25th (AH) and 12 at Bothal Pond on 25th (TF/JFa). One to five were seen at Backworth Pond, Big Waters, Budle Bay, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Holywell Pond, Hoppen Kiln Flash and St Mary's.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

On 31st six were seen from Holy Island causeway (TD) and five at Amble Braid (TF/JFa). Two were at St Mary's on 24th (JPD/ASJ), two at Low Newton scrape on 27th (IBDa/KDa) and singles at R. Tweed Estuary on 4th, Amble Braid on 22nd and at East Chevington on 24th.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Good numbers occurred at St Mary's with 46 on 8th and 80 on 20th (SPP) rising to 187 on 30th (ASJ). Elsewhere the most were 46 near Snab Point on 6th (IFo), 16 at Backworth Flash on 5th, 16 at Berwick on 23rd and 15 at Newbiggin on 26th. One found at West Hartford on 22nd (GMi *et al.*) remained until 25th, an unusually long stay for a species scarce inland.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

A total of 305 flew S at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower, including 90 in one hour on 5th and 160 during 27th/28th. The largest concentrations were of 488 at Amble Braid on 6th (MSH), 400 in Budle Bay on 24th (CGK), 300 at Fenham-le-Moor on 29th (TRD/JD), 250 in R Coquet estuary on 11th (GB/JH) and 200 at Warkworth Gut on 4th (JPD) with 108 at Berwick on 23rd. Ten to 30 were found at Backworth Flash, Blyth Harbour, Boulmer, Cocklawburn, Coquet Island, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Hauxley and R Tweed Estuary. Small numbers appeared at a further six places, including up to seven at Grindon Lough.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

The first returning, and only ones reported, were two at Tynemouth on 3rd (DRW).

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

A light passage was evident during 23rd to 26th: one at East Chevington on 23rd/24th (JPD *et al.*), singles on 24th at Cresswell Pond (ASJ) and at Monks' House Pool (BRS), one at West Hartford on 25th (LJM *et al.*) and two at Grindon Lough on 26th (SW).

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

One was at Low Newton on 15th (MRM) with possibly the same there on 18th (TF/JFa), although it was not reported to NTBC in between. One was at Holy Island on 18th (SR/AH).

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Six flew S at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower between 11th and 24th. About ten were at Foxton Bends on 2nd (IJ), a pair with four young at Longhirst Flash on 17th and six at Budle Bay on 23rd with two to five at Big Waters, Castle Island, Cresswell Pond, Derwent Reservoir, East Chevington, Hauxley NR, Longbridge End, Monks' House Pool, West Ord and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Singles were found at many of these and at a further eight places.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

A count of 14 at Branton GP on 22nd (IBDa/KDa) was the highest by a wide margin. Four were noted at Holywell Pond on 12th (ASJ) and four on 14th (SR) at Whittle Dene Reservoirs was the peak there after three on 6th. Three were at Charlton Mires on 6th and at Dinnington on 21st; two were at each of Backworth, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Foxton Bends, Grindon Lough, Hauxley NR and Longhirst Flash. Singles were found at many of those and at a further ten locations.



A Green Sandpiper at Hauxley NR

Tim Dean
15th August

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

One or two were at Cresswell Pond from 17th to 31st with also four on 25th (TRD/JPD/IFo/STH/DM *et al.*); one was at East Chevington from 21st to 29th with two on 23rd (TRD/TF/JFa/MRM *et al.*). Two were found at Budle Bay on 25th (CGK) and singles occurred at Earsdon on 12th, Ellington on 20th, Fenham Flats on 20th, Budle Bay on 23rd, Hauxley on 23rd/24th and inland at Derwent Reservoir on 29th (IFo).



A Spotted Redshank digiscoped at Hauxley NR
by Neil Osborn on 24th August

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

It was noted throughout at Cresswell Pond, occasionally five or six and a peak of seven on 18th (CGK/PS); seven were at Earsdon, Beehive Flash on 15th (ASJ) and six at Backworth on 8th (CGK). Bothal Pond held up to five all month (TF/JFa *et al.*), five were at Budle Bay on 23rd (CGK) and Derwent Reservoir had a peak of five on 24th (IFo). Charlton Mires, East Chevington, Fenham Flats and West Hartford had four at times and Holy Island, Holywell Pond, Grindon Lough, Killingworth Lake, R Tweed Estuary and Whittle Dene Reservoirs up to three. One or two visited another 14 sites. Singles flew S off Tynemouth Pier on 23rd and at Seaton Sluice on 24th.



Two Greenshank at Cresswell Pond.
Top by John Littleton on 31st August
and bottom by Tim Dean

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Two were at Backworth Flash on 5th (AJ) with one in the Pond/Flash area on 4th and 6th/7th. Singles appeared at Holywell Pond on 2nd, Druridge Pools on 3rd, Cresswell Pond on 4th, Grindon Lough on 6th/7th, Hauxley NR on 17th, at Budle Bay on 23rd and East Chevington on 24th.

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

A total of 168 flew S at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower and 69 N. The highest counts were of about 300 at Amble Braid on 8th (ASH *et al.*), 280 in Budle Bay on 21st (CGK) and 162 in R Tweed Estuary. Alnmouth and Berwick had up to 28 and Elswick Wharf 22; small numbers were at six other typical locations.

Jack Snipe *Limnocyptes minimus*

Two were reported from Fenham Flats on 20th (JDL), an exceptionally early date for this species.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

One in Thrunton Wood on 31st (JD) was the only report.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Grindon Lough held the most with a peak of 43 on 7th (PRM); Backworth Pond drew a maximum of 23 on 11th (JPD) and 21 were at Monks' House Pool on 7th (DGB). Branton GP, Cresswell Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Fenham Flats, Hauxley NR, Holywell Pond and Hoppen Kiln Flash attracted eight to ten at times and smaller numbers were found at a further eight places.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

A sub-adult N at St Mary's on 7th (JPD) was the only record.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower was well below average with eight N and 33 S; no more than five on any one day were recorded elsewhere along the coast. One landed on Cresswell Pond on 31st (AJ), harried some terns and then sat on mud in front of the hide for 15 minutes.

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower was well below average with only three individuals. Three were off Newton Point on 27th (IBDa/KDa) and singles flew N at St Mary's on 25th and at Newbiggin on 26th.

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

Records comprised only two birds at Berwick Pier on 15th (MHu) and a single moving N on 30th at Whitley Bay (IJ).

Guillemot *Uria aalge* / **Razorbill** *Alca torda*

Small numbers, adults and juveniles, were noted daily on the sea at Seaton Sluice throughout the month (SSWT).

Razorbill *Alca torda*

An adult and juvenile were at Druridge Bay on 10th (TRD/JD).

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

Adults and juveniles, totalling 86, were offshore at Cocklawburn on 12th (MHu) but few were recorded elsewhere with only two-eight at Bamburgh (Stag Rocks), Cheswick, Druridge and Newbiggin (CDB/RB/MB/TRD/JD/MHu). Two moved N at Seaton Sluice on 25th (SSWT).

Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus*

This extremely rare visitor, which had given many observers an opportunity to add it to their county and UK lists in July, returned to Inner Farne on 15th following the last sighting in the county at the same site on 24th July. This favoured locality was again visited briefly on 15th, 16th and 19th but the bird was not recorded again, either in the county or elsewhere in the UK, by the month end. No NTBC observers submitted records of sightings this month.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

Six birds were seen moving S at Seaton Sluice between 5th and 12th (SSWT), these being the only recorded sightings.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

A single juvenile appeared at East Chevington on 25th and was seen by a number of observers (JPD/MPF/TRD/JD/TF/JFa/MRM/JM) and three juveniles were at Bamburgh, Stag Rocks on 31st (JPD/MPF).

White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*

A juvenile was found at East Chevington North Pool in mid-afternoon on 10th (NFO) and was seen thereafter by a number of observers (TB/JPD/TRD/PCF/MRM). It was still present there on 11th until at least 9am (STH/IFo) and in the late afternoon of that day an immature, presumably the same bird, was recorded at Bothal Pond for a short period (JPD/TD).



The East Chevington White-winged Black Tern
by Jonathan Farooqi
10th August

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Considerable movements S were witnessed at Seaton Sluice with a maximum of 300 in an hour on 7th and 150-220 in an hour on three other dates up to 12th (SSWT). Large concentrations were seen in the Berwick area with maxima of 184 at Cocklawburn (Saltpan Rocks) on 27th, 112 at Meadow Haven on 5th and 82 in the River Tweed Estuary (MHu). Elsewhere, counts of 10-20 were at Bamburgh (Stag Rocks), Berwick (North Shore), Budle Bay and East Chevington (TRD/JD/MHu/IJ) and two-eight were at nine other localities between Whitley Bay and Berwick Little Beach.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

On 1st and 7th, 75-80 flew S in one hour at Seaton Sluice, these being the only significant movements recorded there (SSWT). Concentrations of up to 61 were at East Chevington during the first half of the month (IJ *et al.*) with 25 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 6th (SR). At Gosforth Park NR and the adjacent pool, a maximum of 10 were recorded and all, including fledged chicks, departed during the month. Ten were at Alnmouth and Berwick Little Beach (TRD/JD) with one-eight, including juveniles, at Arcot Pond, Bamburgh, Big Waters, Boulmer, Cresswell Pond, Druridge, Hauxley, Holywell Pond and Killingworth Lake.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

At Seaton Sluice, two birds moved N and three S from 5th-11th, a poor record here for August (SSWT). The maximum recorded gatherings were up to 24, including eight juveniles, on dates between 21st-26th, at Budle Point (CGK) and 15 were on rocks at Bamburgh Stag Rocks on 29th (TF/JFa). Newbiggin breakwater held up to nine birds, with a maximum of four juveniles, on 1st-2nd (ASH/IK/STH/PJA *et al.*) and elsewhere, one-four were at Alnmouth, Berwick (Meadow Haven), Boulmer, Holy Island and Tynemouth.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

A movement S of 150 in one hour occurred at Seaton Sluice on 5th (SSWT). The Budle Point evening roost held 150 on 22nd (CGK) and counts of 32-68 came from three roosts in the Berwick area from 5th-27th (MHu) with one-nine recorded at Bamburgh (Stag Rocks), East Chevington and the River Tweed Estuary.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

The observers in the watch tower at Seaton Sluice counted 125 moving S in one hour on 25th, the only significant movement, and the first juvenile of the year was recorded there on 8th (SSWT). A WeBS count on the River Tweed Estuary recorded 238 on 22nd (MHu) and elsewhere, 46 were on the East Pier at Blyth Harbour on 27th (STH/PJA) with 18 at the Howdon Wetland NR on 2nd (CB).

***Bonaparte's Gull** *Chroicocephalus philadelphia*

One very lucky observer recorded a summer-plumaged adult at Cresswell Pond on 14th (TRC) which stayed for only ten minutes, no doubt to the frustration of many twitchers and listers.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

The largest concentrations came from the north of the county with 600 in the Budle Bay evening roost on 22nd (CGK) and, from WeBS counts, 410 were on the River Tweed Estuary on 22nd and 314 at Berwick North Shore on 23rd (MHu). Further south, a maximum count of 350 came from the Howdon Wetland NR on 10th (CB), 270 from Bothal Pond on 11th (TD), 200, feeding probably on flying ants, high over Big Waters on 1st (GB) and flocks of 100 at Red Row and Morpeth (JMA). Elsewhere double-figure counts were 60 in Jesmond Dene (MJCo), 58 at West Hartford, 55 in Exhibition Park, 45 on Castle Island, 38 at Leazes Park (all DM), 30 at the Coquet Weir, Amble (JMA) and 17 at Foxton Bends on the River Aln (IJ). One-nine were recorded at five other localities throughout the month.

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

A monthly total of thirteen was noted moving N at Seaton Sluice, comprising nine in a single flock on 25th and four on 28th (SSWT). East Chevington North Pool held four on 5th (TF/JFa) with singles there on other dates and at Budle Point two were seen on 24th (CGK). Elsewhere singles were at Bamburgh, Cresswell Pond, Newbiggin and the River Tweed Estuary.

A Little Gull at East Chevington
15th August
Jonathan Farooqi



Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Newbiggin South Bay again provided the majority of multiple sightings with 15 on 3rd and 13th (TB), 12 on 23rd (STH) and up to nine on other dates during the month (ASH *et al.*). Nine were at Chugdon Wood on 17th (TB) with one-two, either adults or immatures, at Backworth, Berwick Little Beach, Bothal Pond, Cresswell Pond, Holy Island, St Mary's Island, Seaton Sluice, Swallow Pond, Widdrington and Woodhorn Flashes. A Polish colour-ringed 3rd-winter bird, red ring no. PLL1, was recorded at Tynemouth on 20th (DRW/KWY).

Common Gull *Larus canus*

The evening gull roost at Budle Point held 1,100 on 22nd (CGK) and lesser gatherings elsewhere included ca.300 at Rowley Burn on 9th (AJH), 150 at Close House (Wylam) on 10th (MSH), 100 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 28th (PCF), 60 at Big Waters on 7th (GB) 38 at West Ord on 4th (MHu) and 35 at Sharperton on 30th (JR). One to eight were at four other localities.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

The Budle Bay roost held 120 on 22nd (CGK) and at Sharperton, 33 were recorded on 30th (JR) with 20 feeding on a ploughed field at Big Waters on 10th (GB). One-nine occurred at Arcot Pond, Berwick North Shore, Castle Island, Cramlington, East Chevington, Exhibition Park, Foxton Bends, Gosforth Park NR, Grindon Lough, Jesmond Dene, Leazes Park, the River Tweed Estuary, Walbottle (feeding in an observer's garden), West Ord and Whitley Bay.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argentatus*

Several large concentrations were recorded, notably 420, 500 and 1,200 in the Budle Bay gull roost on three dates, 9th, 22nd and 26th respectively (CGK), 615 from a WeBS count in the River Tweed Estuary on 22nd, 348 at Berwick North Shore on 23rd, ca.300 in a roost at West Ord on 4th (MHu) and 200 at Foxton Bends (Alnmouth) on 2nd (IJ). At Big Waters, 35 followed the plough on 10th (GB) and 12 were seen at Bothal Pond on 11th, a high count for that site (TD). One to nine were at Arcot Pond, Castle Island, Exhibition Park, Holywell Pond, Leazes Park, Sharperton, Walbottle (feeding in an observer's garden) and Whitley Bay.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

The Budle Bay evening roost again contained the largest number with 170 on 22nd (CGK) and, further south, 87 were on East Chevington North Pool on 4th (JPD). Apart from 26 in the River Tweed Estuary on 22nd (MHu) only single figure counts were recorded, namely, seven at Berwick, North Shore, five at the Coquet Weir, Amble and singles at Castle Island and Grindon Lough.

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

The roof of the Environment Agency Building at Newcastle Business Park hosted 73 on 20th with 20 at Warkworth Castle on 26th (DM) and also present at Jesmond Dene and Whitley Bay.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Large counts at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) of 48 on 17th and 32 on 10th with 30 at Cresswell Pond on 21st (TB). Eight were at Howdon Wetland NR on 22nd (CB), seven at Jesmond Dene on 17th (MJCo) and one to three at eight other widespread localities.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

The highest count was 13 at Jesmond Dene on 4th (MJCo), four at Arcot Pond on 14th (IJ) and in the observer's garden at Walbottle on 25th (KR/LR). One to three were at six other coastal localities.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

A gathering of 15 on lines over a recently harvested field at Prestwick Carr on 29th, three in the observer's garden at Dinnington on 21st (PCF), two in gardens at Holywell Dene and Walbottle (RJP/KR/LR) at Great Whittington on 21st and Tynemouth on 26th.

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

A single bird was heard 'purring' in the wood next to the visitor centre at Swallow Pond on 7th before being flushed by Carrion Crows (SPP).

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Two to three sighted at three locations on Holy Island on 24th (IK), two there on 25th (SR), at Tynemouth on 26th (CDB) and two juveniles at Holburn Moss on 10th (MJC) with a single juvenile at Bellcrag Flow (Wark Forest) on 6th (SJH) and one at Arcot Pond on 25th (LJM).

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

A brood of three young fledged successfully at Holy Island (IK), two carried food from dunes near Warkworth on 7th (CB) and one carried food to nest at Cresswell Pond on 8th (BMo) with singles at five other widespread localities including one with 4 young in the nest at Slaley on 6th (RMH).

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Present throughout the month at Ovington with two seen on 3rd (SAS) with singles at Derwent Reservoir on 15th, Big Waters on 22nd (GB) and roosting on a house alarm box at Dinnington on 24th (per PCF).

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

A high count of four at Branton on 7th (IBDa/KDa), three at Bellcrag Flow (Wark Forest) on 6th (SJH), two over the observer's garden at Walbottle on 18th (KR/LR) and at least two at Eshott on 21st (MSH). Singles were seen or heard at seven other locations.

Swift *Apus apus*

Large feeding flocks were noted with 300 at Backworth on 6th (ASJ), 200+ there on 13th (SPP), 200 at *Beehive* Flash (Earsdon) on 6th (ASJ), 100+ at Big Waters on 1st (GB) with 100 at West Hartford and Lynemouth on 6th. Movement of 87 south was noted at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower on 2nd with 20 to 90 at Alnwick, Cullercoats, Holywell, Stanington, Swallow Pond, Wark and Whitley Bay and one to 11 at 12 other locations up to 31st.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

All reports of singles at Budle Bay on 10th & 21st (CGK), Big Waters on three dates from 26th to 31st (JH/AJJ per GB), Rothbury on 22nd and 24th (TRD/JD) and at Arcot Pond, Jesmond Dene, Mitford, Ponteland and West Woodburn.

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

A single was found by Martin Kirby on a wall at the pier base at Tynemouth on 26th (DRW/CDB).

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Two adults fledged juveniles at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN) and one was present all month at Rothbury (TRD/JD) with one at Edlingham on 19th (MJC) and at Bassington Ind. Est (Cramlington) on 25th and 29th (PJA/PCF).

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

An Old Hartley garden had visits from one to three including juveniles during the month (RJP) with three at Arcot Hall G.C. on 14th (DM), two at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN), Big Waters on 19th (GB), Arcot Pond on 14th (IJ), Jesmond Dene on 17th (MJCo) and singles at seven other widespread localities.

Magpie *Pica pica*

A peak of 39 at Swallow Pond on 20th (JPD), five at Jesmond Dene on 27th, four in the observer's garden at Walbottle on 25th, two at East Chevington on 26th and singles at four other locations.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

More than six were at Kyloe Woods on 31st (JPD), five at Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth) on 14th (MJC), four at Swallow Pond on 14th (JPD), two called most days at Rothbury (TRD/JD) and at Valley Park (Cramlington) regularly with two on 27th (DM). Singles were reported from five other locations.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Pre-roost gatherings of 600 at Church Farm (Earsdon) on 8th, Budle Bay on 10th (CGK) and 275 at Big Waters on 8th (GB). 59 was the maximum count for the month at Howdon Wetland with one to seven at four other locations including one at Lynemouth Flash on 20th showing characteristics of the Nordic race *C.m.monedula* (LJM/PJA).

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Large gatherings of 200 at Bellshill Farm (Belford) on 1st, 150 at Powburn on 3rd, 100 at Swinhoe Farm on 28th (JMA) and 38 at Alnmouth G.C. on 26th (DM) with four at Cresswell Pond on the same date.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Four were at Jesmond Dene on 27th (MJCo), two in the observer's garden at Walbottle on 18th (KR/LR) and at Tynemouth on 26th (CDB) with other sightings at Holywell Pond, St Mary's Island and Whitley Bay.

Raven *Corvus corax*

A high count of four at Ewarty Shank on 25th (TRD/JD), two at Harthope Valley on 4th, Kilham and Powburn on 8th, Holburn Moss on 10th, Byrness on 11th and West Woodburn on 15th with singles at Usway Burn and Shiellow Woods.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

One multiple count of seven at Sweethope Lough on 7th with one at Grindon Lough on the same date (PRM) and one at Big Waters on 9th (GB).

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

The peak monthly count was six in a Walbottle garden on 4th (KR/LR) with four at Tynemouth on 26th (CDB), two in Jesmond Dene on 8th and at Prior's Park (Tynemouth) on 25th & 26th. At Kirkley Hall eight pairs used nest boxes fledging 52 young from broods of four to ten (IK).

Great Tit *Parus major*

Six was the peak monthly count in a Walbottle garden on 4th (KR/LR) with three in Jesmond Dene on 27th (MJCo) and two at Tynemouth on 26th (CDB). Kirkley Hall nest boxes had eight pairs fledging 32 young from broods of one to seven (IK).

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Jesmond Dene held a total of four (MJCo) and one to two visited an Old Hartley garden being noted as lower numbers than recent years (RJP).

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

Two were at Prestwick Carr on three dates (MRS/PCF) and at Big Waters during the month (GB) with singles at Arcot Pond, Backworth, Beacon Lane (Cramlington) and Slaley.

A Willow Tit at Backworth by Chris Knox

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

Regularly at the strongholds for this species at Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth) and Linden Hall (Longhorsley) with two the largest count at both locations (MJC/NFO) and a single occasionally visiting the observer's garden and along the river at Rothbury (TRD/JD).

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

No reports returned for this species this month.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Feeding flocks of 200 at Druridge Pools on 6th (ASJ) and Bothal Pond on 17th (TD) with around 100 at East Chevington on 19th (NFO), 70 at Big Waters on 21st (GB) with 50 there on 5th and 19th. One to eight were at five other locations.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

A large roost was noted gathering at Holywell Pond on 27th (CS) with an estimate of 3,000+ made on the 30th and similar number on 31st (MSH/CS). Other large gatherings with many juveniles noted amongst 220 at Black Heddon on 28th (ASJ), 200+ at Backworth on 8th (CGK), 150+ at Swallow Pond on 13th (JPD), 100 at Seaton Sluice on 6th and Prestwick Carr on 29th. One to 50 were at 18 other widely spread localities with juveniles noted fledging in the Oddie Hide at Druridge Pools, the refuge on Holy Island causeway and concrete bunkers at Longbridge End (Lindisfarne NNR). Movement S was noted at Budle Point on 11th, Blyth Cemetery on 26th and 220/h the maximum count at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower on 21st.

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

At Bamburgh 50+ coasted S on 24th (BRS), 40 circled over the observer's garden at Walbottle on 18th (KR/LR), 30 at Seaton Sluice on 5th, 26 at Great Tosson on 16th (ASJ), 25 the peak over an Old Hartley garden during the month and 20+ at Arcot Pond on 18th (DM). A pair still fed three young in the nest at Beaconhill (Cramlington) on 13th and two broods fledged from nests at Holy Island.



Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Counts of eight came from Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth) on 14th (MJC) and Valley Park (Cramlington) on 2nd (DM). Six juveniles were at Holywell Pond on 6th and two to four birds at a further four localities.

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

A single was seen and heard calling and singing at Prior's Park (Tynemouth) on 25th-26th (DRW/MK).

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

A single bird arrived during a light coastal 'fall' at Tynemouth on 24th (MK), remaining to 26th.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Six + at Bamburgh on 24th was the largest count (BRS) followed by up to five (including juveniles) at Gosforth Park NR during the month (NHSN). One to three were reported from a further 11 localities.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

A 'fall' of migrants from 23rd-26th produced 12+ at Bamburgh, 12 at Holy Island, eight at Budle Point, up to seven at Tynemouth and four+ at St Mary's Island (BRS/ADM/CGK/DRW/MSH). Inland, seven were at Arcot Lane on 14th and at Sweethope Lough on 7th, five at Prestwick Carr on 25th and one to three at Arcot Pond, Grindon Lough and Redesdale.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Three (male and two juveniles) were at Big Waters on 10th (GB), two at Budle Point on 24th and singles at St Mary's Island on 23rd and Bamburgh on 24th.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

A light 'fall' resulted in eight on Holy Island on 24th, reducing to three the following day (IK/SR). Single passage birds were also at Tynemouth on 4th and 16th, St Mary's on 24th and Waren Mill on 26th. The only inland bird was at Fontburn Reservoir on 14th.



A migrant Garden Warbler on Holy Island
26th August by Adriana Buskin

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Two were at Warkworth Lane on 20th and singles at Budle Point on 26th, Craster on 28th, Druridge Bay CP on 7th, Hadston Carrs on 25th, Holywell Pond on 2nd and Thrunton Woods on 27th.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

At St Mary's Island two family parties totalling seven+ were noted on 23rd (MSH), while seven here on 20th were all identified as juveniles (ASJ). Seven juveniles were also at Tynemouth on 11th (CB) and Newbiggin on 29th (IFo). A light 'fall' on 24th produced seven at Budle Point (CGK) and three at Bamburgh. Singles were also reported from Allendale, Arcot Pond, Castle Island, Holy Island, Prior's Park (Tynemouth) and Slaley Hall.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

A passage bird was at Budle Point on 24th. Inland, singles were reported from Arcot Pond, Prestwick Carr and West Hartford on 3rd-4th.

Booted Warbler *Iduna caligata*

A single was reported from Hadston Carrs on 24th (IJ).

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Breeding was confirmed at Needle's Eye (Berwick), Ovington and St Mary's. Two to three+ were at Arcot Pond and Gosforth Park NR and singles at Bamburgh on 24th, Big Waters on 22nd, Budle Point from 24th-26th, Cocklawburn on 30th, East Chevington on 2nd and St Mary's Island on 25th.

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

The breeding population at Gosforth Park NR was estimated at 20-40 pairs this year. After a good breeding season it seemed likely at least 50 birds were on site at the start of the month (NHSN). Elsewhere a family party of five was noted at St Mary's Wetland on 20th (ASJ), two were singing at Big Waters on 5th and 8th and singles were reported from Big Waters on 22nd, Cresswell Pond on 13th, East Chevington on 22nd and 28th and Holywell Pond on 6th.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Reports of one to two came from Arcot Hall GC, Chugdon Wood (Ellington), Close House (Wylam), Jesmond Dene, Low Carrith, Plessey Woods and West Ord.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

One to two were noted at Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Jesmond Dene and Rothbury.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

A recently fledged brood was at the Hen Hole (Cheviots) on 3rd. One to three were reported from three further localities.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Numbers at Grindon Lough peaked at 2,000 by 25th (MRS). 700+ were at Backworth on 9th (JPD) and 100 at Monks' House Pool on 1st. Elsewhere 70 were reported from Slaley on 11th-14th and 40 was the highest count from a Walbottle garden on 4th.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

An adult and juvenile were noted on the Usway Burn (Upper Coquetdale) on 3rd (JD). Two were found at Shillmoor Farm and Tipalt Burn and singles at Bywell Bridge, Hexham, Highford Bridge (Mitford), Scotch Gill Woods, Thrum Mill, Wark and Whitelee Moor.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

20+ roosted in hawthorns at Waren Mill on 9th (CGK) and five juveniles visited a Netherton Park garden on 25th. One to two were reported from Jesmond Dene and Tynemouth.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

15+ roosted with Blackbirds in a hawthorn copse at Waren Mill on 9th.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

25 at Slaley on 11th was the largest gathering (RMH), followed by 18 at Holywell Grange on 19th and 11 at Big Waters on 22nd.



Mistle Thrush bathes at Backworth by Chris Knox



Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Evidence of breeding included three separate families (total of eight birds) at Blakehopeburnhaugh on 11th (TRD/JD), up to four (including two juveniles) at Linden Hall throughout and a family party of three at Budle Bay on 9th. Four were at Fontburn Reservoir on 20th and single at Prestwick Carr, Slaley Hall, Steel Rigg and Wark (North Tyne). Passage birds included four at Big Waters on 22nd, two at Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 21st and singles at Newbiggin on 25th, Prior's Park (Tynemouth) on 23rd and St Mary's on 24th-25th.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Four in Jesmond Dene on 27th, a juvenile in a Walbottle garden on 4th and a single at Tynemouth on 26th.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

A light coastal 'fall' after overnight rain on 24th produced about ten on Holy Island (IK), three at St Mary's Island, two at Newbiggin GC and singles at Bamburgh, Budle Point and Tynemouth. One to two remained the following day.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

The only record was of a single well inland at Old Quickening Cote (Upper Coquetdale) on 18th (JR).

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Two juveniles were at Halton-Lea-Gate on 5th, a male and juvenile at Fontburn Reservoir on 14th and two males at Rothbury on 22nd. Singles were noted at Arcot Pond on 16th, Big Waters on 2nd, Derwent Reservoir on 10th and 30th and Ridsdale on 9th.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

A total of 39 in Upper Coquetdale on 16th included several pairs with fledged young (ASJ). A light coastal 'fall' produced up to eight on Holy Island on 24th-25th (IK/SR), three at Budle Bay from 24th-26th (CGK) and two at St Mary's Island on 23rd-24th with singles noted at Cheswick, Monks' House Pool and Tynemouth during the same period. Four passage birds were inland at West Hartford on 26th (JM) and a single on Newcastle Town Moor on 20th.

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Evidence of breeding included family parties at Bamburgh, Budle Point and Druridge Pools (JHa/CGK/ASJ) and one to two juveniles at East Chevington, St Mary's Island and Warkworth Gut. Counts of up to four came from Cheswick Dunes and Cocklawburn on 30th (MHu) and three at Cresswell Pond on 14th. A male was at Spittal cliffs (Berwick) on 20th.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Four family parties totalling nine birds were reported from Usway Burn (Upper Coquetdale) on 3rd (JD). Passage birds included nine at Old Hartley (MP) and five at Craster (TRD/JD) on 28th and three at Newcastle Town Moor on 22nd. One to two were noted at a further 15 mainly coastal localities.



A Wheatear at St. Mary's by Alan Jack

Duncock *Prunella modularis*

Three were at both Holywell Dene (RJP) and a Walbottle garden (KR/LR) throughout the month. Also two were at Hauxley on 26th (CDB) and Jesmond Dene (Newcastle) on 4th (MJCo).

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

A high count of 84 at Ovington on 18th (SAS). A flock of 60 was at Prestwick Carr on 3rd (PCF) whilst 50 were at Edlingham on 3rd (JMA), Marley Cote Walls on 24th (RMH) and Whittle Dene on 6th (SR). One to 20 were also seen at Big Waters, Holburn Grange, Holywell Dene, Sleafy Hall, St.Mary's Island and a Walbottle garden throughout the month.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

The highest count of the month was of 12 at Warren Mill Caravan Park on 26th (CGK). One to eight were also seen at a further seven sights throughout the month.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

An impressive 25 were feeding along the tide-line at the burn mouth, East Chevington on 12th (NFO). 16 were at Whittle Dene on 9th (SR) and 12 at Cresswell Pond on 13th (MSH). One to six were also at a further 19 sites throughout the month.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Three at both Plessey Woods CP on 18th (DM) and Wark on 11th (PRM) were the highest counts with one to two at a further 25 sites throughout the month.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

33 were at Whittle Dene on 6th (SR), 32 at Backworth on 8th (CGK), 21 feeding at the sea front car park at Whitley Bay on 29th (ASJ) and 20 at Cresswell Pond on 13th (MSH). 14 were on Newcastle Town Moor on 2nd (GB) whilst 12 flew SW to evening roost at West Hartford on 27th (STH/PJA). Also one to nine were at Alnmouth Golf Club, Foxton Hall, Hauxley, Prestwick Carr and Rockcliffe Tennis Club cliffs (Whitley Bay) throughout the month.

Two Wagtails.

top right: a Grey at Corbridge by Alan Jack and bottom:

a Yellow Wagtail at Druridge Pools by Jonathan Farooqi



White Wagtail *M. a. alba*

A single bird was at Holy Island on 27th (DGB).

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Singles were seen throughout the month at Holy Island (ADM/SR), Linden Hall (Longhorsley) (NFO) and St. Mary's Island (MSH).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

50 were at Grindon Lough on 11th (PRM) whilst three were at Wark on 22nd (PRM) and a single at Rockcliffe Tennis Club cliffs (Whitley Bay) on 21st (IJ).



A Meadow Pipit on Holy Island on 25th August by Adriana Buskin

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Six at Berwick Pier on 19th was the total for the month (MHu). One to two were also at Craster on 28th (TRD/JD) and Rockcliffe Tennis Club cliffs (Whitley Bay) on 23rd (IJ).

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

30 were at Beacon Lane (Cramlington) on 14th (DM) and 11 at Prestwick Carr on 1st (PCF) whilst three to six were at Arcot Pond, Holywell Dene and Jesmond Dene (Newcastle) throughout the month.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

12 were at Prestwick Carr on 20th (PCF) whilst one to ten were at Arcot Pond, Beacon Lane (Cramlington), Holywell Dene, Prior's Park (Tynemouth), Tynemouth and a Walbottle garden throughout the month.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

A charm of 350 was at Budle Bay on 23rd (CGK), 130 at Cocklawburn on 20th (MHu), 110 at East Chevington on 29th (IFo) and 100 at Backworth Pond on 14th (JPD). One to 65 were at a further 20 sites throughout the month.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Only three records with three present all month on niger seed feeders in a Rothbury garden (TRD/JD) and singles at Sweethope Lough on 7th (PRM) and Wark on 4th (PRM).

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

140 were at Budle Bay on 24th (CGK), 50 at Ellington on 17th (TB), 45 at Prestwick Carr on 25th (PCF) and 35 at Lynemouth flash on 20th (LJM/PJA). One to six were seen at a further six sites throughout the month. A late record from 13th July concerned a pair with six young in a very overcrowded nest at Holy Island harbour pier.

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*

30 were at Bygate Farm (Upper Coquetdale) on 4th (JR), 30 at Windyhaugh (Upper Coquetdale) on 18th (JR) and 18 at Sweethope Lough on 7th (PRM). One to four were at a further six sites throughout the month.

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

20 were at Kylloe Woods on 31st (JPD/MPF) and 16 were at Cragside (Rothbury) on 9th (MJC) whilst one eight were seen throughout the month at Bellcrag Flow (Wark Forest), Blakehopeburnhaugh, Dam Dykes Farm (Cramlington), Darden, Eshott, Howick, Linden Hall (Longhorsley), Monkseaton, Morpeth, Scotch Gill Woods and Thrunton Woods.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Eight were at Prestwick Carr on 15th (PCF) whilst one to five were at a further 14 sites throughout the month.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Ten including a singing bird were in the Black Heddon area on 20th (ASJ) whilst one to two were noted at Airey Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield), Arcot Pond, Beacon Lane (Cramlington), Big Waters, Havannah NR and Holywell Pond throughout the month.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza Schoeniclus*

Seven were at Gosforth Park throughout the month (NHSN) whilst one to two were at Arcot Pond, Beacon Lane (Cramlington), Holywell Pond and Howdon Wetland throughout the month.

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

The four adults found last month at Derwent Reservoir were again seen there on 2nd (IFo). After leaving here they decided on a tour of the county turning up at Holywell Pond on 6th (SPP/MSH/PJA/LJM) then Widdrington Moor Lake on 14th (MSH) and finally East Chevington on 26th (PJA).

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

Two of these frequent hybrids were noted at Widdrington Moor Lake on 14th (MSH).

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

One with features of this parentage was seen at Backworth Pond on 13th and Holywell Pond on 19th (SPP).

Lesser White-fronted Goose x White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus* / *A. albifrons*

The sub-adult Lesser White-fronted Goose seen in recent months is now thought to be a hybrid probably with Eurasian White-fronted. It is too large to be a pure Lesser White-front. It was seen again this month at Hauxley on 3rd and 11th (CDB/GB).

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Bamburgh Ringing Station, Berwick Wildlife Group, Natural History Society of Northumbria, 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), Steve Barrett (Red Grouse to Black-necked Grebe), Trevor Blake (Honey Buzzard to Crane), Steve Holliday (Avocet to Godwit) Ian Forsyth (Turnstone to Skua), Eddie Crabtree (Puffin to Great Black-backed Gull), 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.

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Mail 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

2013-2014 subscriptions are now due. A membership form is attached to this bulletin. Don't forget to use Gift Aid. It costs you nothing.

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. Please submit any new content for the website to the main club email address at

ntbcorg@gmail.com

NTBC SIGHTINGS PAGE

The Sightings Page contains current sightings by members. Access is from the NTBC website.

Members need to submit a request to be added to the website, specifying the email address they wish to post from before they can submit sightings to ntbcorg@gmail.com



A Pied Wagtail at Corbridge by Alan Jack,

COASTAL WeBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

MHu M. Hutcheson

TB T. Brewis

ACra A. Craggs

RP

MLC M. L. Cadwallender

MGA M. G. Anderson

RC R. Chilton

LJM

SP/NA S. Pamaby & N. Adams

DMT D. M. Turner

PF P. Fletcher

L. J. McDougall

S. Pamaby & N. Adams

D. M. Turner

P. Fletcher

AUGUST 2013

Site	TOTAL	Berwick North Shore (including Little Beach)	Berwick Little Beach	Tweed Estuary	Tweed: A1 By-Pass to Horncliffe	Spittal - Cocklawburn	Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay)	(Budle Bay)	Budle Pt - Seahouses	Seahouses - Beadnell	Alnmouth South	Cresswell - Newbiggin	Newbiggin - Cambois	Blyth Estuary	St Mary's Island	Tyne North Pier - Fish Quay	Redhaugh - Scotswood Bridge, (north bank)	Scotswood - Newburn Bridge, (north bank)
Counter		MHu	MHu	MHu	TB	MHu	ACra	ACra	RP	MLC	RP	MGA	RC	LJM	SP/NA	DMT	PF	PF
Date		23	23	22	25	20	25	25	29	8	25	25	28	18	11 / 25	31	25	25
Red-throated Diver	3														3			
Little Grebe	1					1												
Great Crested Grebe	1										1							
Cormorant	193	33		12	6	18	23			8			3	40	32	15	1	2
Shag	24	2				2			14	1	3				2			
Grey Heron	46	3	1	15	9	2	10						1		3		3	
Mute Swan	340			314	5		9	4						10	1			1
Greylag Goose	46				1		45	45										
Canada Goose	45				45													
Shelduck	107						105	62						2				
Wigeon	395			1	4		382	21						7	1			
Gadwall	2														2			
Teal	810			8			792					3			7			
Mallard	402			48	60		195	32						1	5		57	36
Pintail	2						2											
Tufted Duck	12				5		5								2			
Eider	647	18	4			90	166		80	131	24	2	39	16	79	2		
Common Scoter	238					174	60				4							
Red-breasted Merganser	22						22											
Goosander	613	34	12	153	76	290	30			10				20				
Moorhen	6				3	2									1			
Coot	2						2											
Oystercatcher	1,345	216	102	18		52	348	94	29	283	13	201	25	44	83	33		
Ringed Plover	367	52	52	8		14	78			69	24	23		58	41			
Golden Plover	819						16			1		2			800			
Grey Plover	6						6											
Lapwing	613			56	20	126	57			165		32			55		93	9
Knot	48						2			42		1		3				
Sanderling	97	16	12				6					33			42			
Dunlin	814	108	108	25			626			4		7		14	30			
Ruff	1						1											
Snipe	7						2								5			
Black-tailed Godwit	9	1	1				7								1			
Bar-tailed Godwit	97	7	5				71			4		12		3				
Whimbrel	27	2					16			3					6			
Curlew	1,084	25	5	206		6	588	106	4	83		23	2	91	51		5	
Redshank	1,409	28	6	162		11	562	216	6	128		51	11	220	151	1	78	
Greenshank	12	1		3	1		3			2					2			
Common Sandpiper	1				1													
Turnstone	303	7	4				33			202	1	10		6	42	2		
Black-headed Gull	2,966	314	55	410	628	254	628	355		58				52	114	53	306	149
Common Gull	381	8	8	12	201	4	155	88						1				
Lesser Black-backed Gull	85	2		7	15		5			9				3	1	1	42	
Herring Gull	3,486	348	180	615	107	612	1250	160		41				59	87	278	86	3
Great Black-backed Gull	252	7	1	26	3	4	32			26				25	5	97	16	11
Kittiwake	290			238						46				2	4			
Mediterranean Gull	2														2			
Sandwich Tern	340	14	4	64		206	32			14				4		6		
Common Tern	15													10		5		
Arctic Tern	277	32	14	6		88	146			5								
Kingfisher	0																	
ADDITIONAL SPECIES																		
Little Egret	12			5	5		2											
TOTALS - WILDFOWL	3,957	90	17	551	214	579	1,848	164	94	150	32	5	43	96	138	17	61	39
- WADERS	7,059	463	295	478	22	209	2,422	416	39	986	38	395	38	439	1,309	36	176	9
- GULLS & TERNS	8,094	725	262	1,378	954	1,168	2,248	603	0	199	0	0	0	156	213	440	450	163

INLAND WeBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

Version:

Interim

Year: 2013
Month: August

Month: August

[illegible]

Summary of Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla* breeding data recorded on the River Tyne, northeast England, during 2010 – 2013

Daniel M. Turner (North Shields)

These data include all the River Tyne breeding locations and they result from surveys carried out by the author.

These tables provide summaries only.

Key: **AON** Apparently Occupied Nests (well-built nests capable of containing eggs, with at least one adult present)

2010 summary data: Kittiwake nests (AON) and breeding productivity on the River Tyne.

Location	AON (June 4-8, 2010)	Chicks (July 8-10, 2010)	Min. no. of young fledged / AON
1. Tynemouth cliffs (natural site)	189	240	1.27
2. N Shields Ferry Landing	13	20	1.54
3. McNulty, Tyne Dock	49	65	1.33
4. International Coatings	144	211	1.47
5. Baltic Flour Mill	48	57	1.19
6. Kittiwake Tower (Gateshead)	105	76	0.72
7. Newcastle Quayside buildings	53	53	1.00
8. Tyne Bridge – Newcastle side	302	362	1.20
9. Tyne Bridge – Gateshead side	65	86	1.32
10. Newcastle Quay: Guildhall	26	32	1.23
Totals and overall success	994	1202	1.21
Totals (excluding Tynemouth)	805	962	1.20

2011 summary data: Kittiwake nests (AON) and breeding productivity on the River Tyne.

Location	AON (June 8-13, 2011)	Chicks (July 4-11, 2011)	Min. no. of young fledged / AON
1. Tynemouth cliffs (natural site)	208	267	1.28
2. N Shields Ferry Landing	8	10	1.25
3. McNulty, Tyne Dock	51	68	1.33
4. International Coatings	130	141	1.08
5. Baltic Flour Mill	53	62	1.17
6. Kittiwake Tower (Gateshead)	92	76	0.83
7. Newcastle Quayside buildings	46	60	1.30
8. Tyne Bridge – Newcastle side	317	408	1.29
9. Tyne Bridge – Gateshead side	77	102	1.32
10. Newcastle Quay: Guildhall	27	28	1.04
Totals and overall success	1009	1222	1.21
Totals (excluding Tynemouth)	801	955	1.19

2012 summary data: Kittiwake nests (AON) and breeding productivity on the River Tyne.

Location	AON (June 3-13, 2012)	Chicks (July 7-9, 2012)	Min. no. of young fledged / AON
1. Tynemouth cliffs (natural site)	197	186	0.94
2. N Shields Ferry Landing	7	12	1.71
3. McNulty, Tyne Dock	55	69	1.25
4. International Coatings	128	115	0.90
5. Baltic Flour Mill	52	61	1.17
6. Kittiwake Tower (Gateshead)	91	96	1.05
7. Newcastle Quayside buildings	67	52	0.78
8. Tyne Bridge – Newcastle side	300	336	1.12
9. Tyne Bridge – Gateshead side	77	93	1.21
10. Newcastle Quay: Guildhall	13	11	0.85
Totals and overall success	987	1031	1.04
Totals (excluding Tynemouth)	790	845	1.07

2013 summary data: Kittiwake nests (AON) and breeding productivity on the River Tyne.

Location	AON (June 3-8, 2013)	Chicks (July 11-25, 2013)	Min. no. of young fledged / AON
1. Tynemouth cliffs (natural site)	147	117	0.80
2. N Shields Ferry Landing	7	7	1.00
3. McNulty, Tyne Dock	41	29	0.71
4. International Coatings	114	113	0.99
5. Baltic Flour Mill	54	36	0.67
6. Kittiwake Tower (Gateshead)	---	0	---
7. Newcastle Quayside buildings	55	37	0.67
8. Tyne Bridge – Newcastle side	310	233	0.75
9. Tyne Bridge – Gateshead side	78	64	0.82
10. Newcastle Quay: Guildhall	20	21	1.05
Totals and overall success	826	657	0.80
Totals (excluding Tynemouth)	679	540	0.80

Notes.

1. Kittiwake Tower (Gateshead) was deserted due to crow disturbance (early June 2013).
2. River Tyne breeding was delayed by up to 2 weeks in 2013, possibly due to poor weather in late March.

Contact Email: dan.m.turner@btinternet.com

Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

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

Bulletin 2013 No 9

MONTHLY SUMMARY – SEPTEMBER

5th November 2013



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CLASSIFIED LIST HIGHLIGHTS

Goosander	Another high count of 294 on the Tweed at New Water Haugh
Balearic Shearwater	Further notable passage this month
Storm Petrel	One past St Mary's on 10th
Little Egret	Still at least ten in the Berwick area up to 20th
Red-necked Grebe	A popular juvenile at the Tweed estuary up to 22nd
Honey-buzzard	One noted over Fawdon, Newcastle on 28 th
Hobby	One emaciated juvenile found dead at Big Waters on 20th
Spotted Crake	Still at East Chevington on 13th after a six-week stay
American Golden Plover	A moulting adult at St Mary's from 19th to 22nd
Ruff	Another high count of 89 at East Chevington on 1st
White-rumped Sandpiper	An adult at East Chevington from 1st to 9th
Pectoral Sandpiper	Several individuals this month
Long-tailed Skua	Notable passage this month
Common Tern	High roost count at Budle Pt of 280 on 21st
Arctic Tern	High roost count at Budle Pt of at least 170 on 21st
Wryneck	Single on Holy Island on 8th
Swallow	A large roost of 6,000 at Holywell Pond
Yellow-browed Warbler	Large Influx. Record day count of 52 in county on 26th
Barred Warbler	One ringed on Holy Island on 27th
Blyth's Reed Warbler	One at Half Moon Slack, Holy Island on 28th
Thrush Nightingale	An excellent find on Holy Island on 7th
Bluethroat	A popular bird at St Mary's from 25th to 28th
Red-breasted Flycatcher	Another popular bird on Holy island on 25th and 26th
Richard's Pipit	An excellent inland record of one over Wark calling on 8th
Two-barred Crossbill	A juvenile at Grindon Lough on 14th. Part of a national influx
Little Bunting	One at the Snook on Holy Island from 25th to 29th

COMMITTEE NEWS

Bulletin Writers

There was an excellent response to the request for bulletin writers. Thanks to all who offered to help.

AGM

The new NTBC Constitution was agreed at the AGM in October.

COMMITTEE

Steve Anderson has joined the committee.

Dick Myatt and Alan Tilmouth have left the committee and are thanked for the great work they have put in over the years into the running of NTBC.

INDOOR MEETINGS

NTBC indoor meetings are held at Northern Rugby Club, McCracken Park, Great North Road, Newcastle, NE3 2DT starting at 7.00pm and generally finish between 9.00pm-9.30pm.

The next meeting is on Thursday 14th November and should be a fascinating insight into a major reserve on our doorstep.

RSPB Geltsdale Nature Reserve: Whinchats, Hen Harriers & Upland Management – An illustrated talk by RSPB Reserve Site Manager, Steve Westerberg.

One of this autumn's
Yellow-browed Warblers

St Mary's

26th September

Jack Bucknall



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 2011 page 228.

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

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

One flew N at St Mary's on 18th (JPD). Peak gatherings were 114 at New Water Haugh on the River Tweed on 3rd (MHu), 112 at the Tweed Estuary on 20th (MHu), 92 at QEII CP Lake on 22nd (CDH), and 22-40 at Bolam and Killingworth Lakes, Castle Island and West Ord. Ten to 11 were at Newcastle Leazes Park and Greenlee Lough, and one to seven at 12 further sites.

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

The first of the autumn were eight at East Chevington on 9th (IRD) and five to six there on 11th-12th (IFo/MSH), followed by 14 at Snab Point (TF/JFa) and two S at Stag Rocks on 14th (DHH). Stronger southerly movement involved 47 at Ridsdale on 16th (MD), 210 at St Mary's on 17th (ASJ), 200-205 at Holy Island (IK) and St Mary's (SPP) and 93-110 at Big Waters (GB) and Druridge Pools (STH/PJA) on 18th, 19 at Spittal on 20th (MHu), 250 at Lucker on 21st (MSH), and 100 at Byker on 30th (SPP), while 70 flew SW at Monkseaton on 19th (MSH), 20-32 W at Elswick and Prestwick Carr on 21st-22nd (PCF), 400 N at Holy Island on 20th (ADM), and 90 N at Derwent Reservoir on 27th (IFo). Numbers at Budle Bay rose from 1,800-2,000 on 18th-19th (DGB/TRD/JD) to 3,100 by 21st (CGK), 97 at East Chevington on 17th (MSH) rose to 1,500 by 22nd (JPD/MPF), and 50-68 were at Branton GP (IBDa/KDa), Fenham Flats (TRD/JD) and Grindon Lough (AJ) on 18th, and ten were at Doddington and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

50 flew S at Bamburgh on 28th (BRS) and 40 NW at St Mary's on 23rd (MSH/AC). Peak counts were 539 at East Chevington on 17th (MSH), 300 at Brandon Ponds on 5th (JMA), 220 at Airy Holm Reservoir on 4th (IFo), 112-135 at Bothal Pond (TF/JFa) and Colwell (AJR), 52-65 at Arcot, Backworth, Cocklawburn, Holywell and Linton Ponds, and 32-34 at Big Waters and the Tweed Estuary. Two to four were also at Newcastle Leazes Park and QEII CP Lake.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

49 flew S at Mootlaw Quarry on 1st (ALT). QEII CP held 469 on 22nd (CDH), 375 were at Linton Ponds on 18th (STH/PJA), 82 at Holywell Pond on 18th (MSH), 59-60 at Backworth Pond (MNC) and Marden Quarry (KWY), and 32-48 at Bothal Pond, Newcastle Leazes Park, the Tweed Estuary and West Ord. Two to 11 were also at Berwick, Grindon Lough and Newcastle Exhibition Park.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

On 26th, 110-130 flew S at St Mary's (SRB/JPD/MPF), five S at Druridge Pools (MJC) and one was at East Chevington (IFo), while three flew N at Newbiggin (ADM); on 27th, a total of 74 in several small groups were noted at East Chevington (ADM); and eight flew S at Bamburgh on 28th (BRS).

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Northerly movement of pale-bellied *hrota* race birds involved a total of 102 N at Seaton Sluice, including 54 on 6th (SSWT) when 47 flew N at St Mary's (JPD/MSH) and 19-24 N at Embleton Bay (JEd), Hadston and Snab Point (JSB/EC), and seven flew N at Newbiggin on 13th (TRD/JD). At Lindisfarne NNR, 30 were noted on 18th (TRD/JD) and 2,600 were present by the end of the month (IK).

Records of un-raced birds concerned 170 at Fenham Flats on 5th (JDL) followed by 350 on 11th (JDL) and 1,128 on 22nd (IBDa/KDa), 500 at Chare Ends (Holy island) on 29th (CGK/PS), and seven at Newbiggin on 13th (ASH).

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Budle Bay held 270 on 21st (CGK), and two were at the Blyth and Tweed Estuaries on three dates (DM/MHu *et al.*).

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

The only report was of two at Bakethin Reservoir on 4th (MD).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was an average 789 N and seven S (SSWT), 248 flew N at St Mary's between 6th-20th (JPD) and 200 moved N at Newton Point on 25th (TRD/JD). An estimated 10,000 were at Lindisfarne NNR by the end of the month (IK), 110 at Grindon Lough on 2nd increased to a peak of 680 by 29th (PRM), 140 were at Big Waters on 27th (AJJ *per* GB), 35-78 at Arcot Pond, Derwent Reservoir and East Chevington, and 11-15 at Greenlee Lough and Monks' House Pool. One to nine were at nine further sites, including Mootlaw Quarry (the first record for the site; ALT).

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Two flew S at Seaton Sluice on 6th (SSWT). Peak counts were 60 at Big Waters on 29th (GB), 25 at Arcot Pond on 16th (SPP), 18 at Linton Ponds on 22nd (CDH), and five to eight at East Chevington (TRD) and Marden Quarry (KWY). One to two were also at Bothal and Cresswell Ponds, Castle Island, Grindon Lough, Newton Pool and St Mary's Wetland. Active display was noted at Big Waters on 9th and 11th (GB).

Teal *Anas crecca*

An above average (for September) 1,491 flew N and 34 S at Seaton Sluice (SSWT), while a total of 275 flew N at St Mary's between 6th-20th (JPD), and 263 were noted during a pelagic trip from North Shields on 21st (PRM). Budle Bay held 700 on 21st (CGK), 438 were at Monks' House Pool on 21st (MSH), 300 at East Chevington on 12th (MSH), 217-272 at Arcot Pond (GB), Derwent Reservoir (IFo) and Grindon Lough (SJH), and 120 at Holy Island 'rocket field'. Counts of 30-45 came from Backworth and Holywell Ponds, Earsdon, Howdon and St Mary's Wetlands, Hallington, Longhirst Flash and Tynemouth, and ten to 21 from Bothal and Middle Ord Ponds, Castle Island, Newton Pool and the Tweed Estuary.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Six flew N at St Mary's on 14th (JPD) and four N at Newbiggin on 13th (JR). Largest concentrations were 206 at East Chevington on 4th (JPD), 170 at Grindon Lough on 29th (PRM), 138 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 12th (SR), 109-110 at Derwent Reservoir (IFo) and Holywell Pond (MSH), and 50-88 at Big Waters, Bothal and Brandon Ponds, Earsdon, Longhirst Flash, Marden Quarry, Newcastle Leazes Park, St Mary's, on the river Tweed between A1-Horncliffe, and the Tweed Estuary. Counts of 30-49 came from Airy Holm Reservoir, Byker, Cocklawburn, Duke's and Middle Ord Ponds, Kielder village, Leaplish, Monks' House Pool, Newcastle Exhibition Park and Wark, and 15-24 at Arcot and Linton Ponds, Castle Island, Newcastle Civic Centre, Newton Pool, Prestwick Carr and QEII CP Lake, and Tynemouth. A total of 100 young birds were released by a gamekeeper at Mootlaw Quarry on 28th (ALT). A new brood of one was noted at Swallow Pond on 12th (JPD).

Pintail *Anas acuta*

A total of 23 flew N at Seaton Sluice during the month, including 18 N on 6th and five N on 18th (SSWT), five flew N at St Mary's (JPD) and two N at Newbiggin (ASH) on 6th, three flew N at Newbiggin on 25th (ADM_c), and two S at Tynemouth on 7th (SPP). Peak site counts were 16 at Grindon Lough on 8th (SJH), 15 at Cresswell Pond on 24th (ADM_c), 15 at East Chevington on 29th (NFO), and three at St Mary's Wetland (ASJ). One to two were at Big Waters, Holy Island, and Monks' House and Newton Pools.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

Two were at Bothal Pond on 9th (TF/JFa), and singles were at Arcot Pond on 5th and 8th (LJM), East Chevington north pool on 2nd and 17th (ADM_c), and Hauxley Reserve on 4th (JPD/MPF/AS).

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Five flew N at Seaton Sluice between 6th-23rd (SSWT). Peak counts were on the low side, with 18 at Monks' House Pool on 14th (MSH), ten at East Chevington on 4th (JPD), nine at Arcot Pond on 16th (SPP), four at Big Waters (GB) and Bothal Pond (TD/TF/JFa), and two at Grindon Lough (PRM).

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Two flew N at Seaton Sluice on 6th (SSWT). Counts were on the low side, with a peak of only five at Big Waters on 10th (AJJ *per* GB), two at Bothal (TD) and Cresswell (IFo) Ponds, Derwent Reservoir (IFo) and Greenlee Lough (MRS). Singles were at Castle Island, Grindon Lough and Ladyburn Lake.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

A total of seven flew N at St Mary's between 6th-14th (JPD). Peak counts were 87 at East Chevington on 22nd (JPD), 61 at Tynemouth Boating Lake on 29th (KWY), 66 at Castle Island on 22nd (DM), 58 at Ladyburn Lake (IFo), 40-45 at Brandon and Cresswell Ponds and Killingworth Lake, and 22-28 at Bothal Pond, Greenlee Lough, Newcastle Exhibition and Leazes Parks, and QEII CP Lake. Ten to 15 were at Airy Holm, Derwent and Hallington Reservoirs, and two to six at four further sites, while one was at Yarrow Slake (Tweed Estuary).

Scaup *Aythya marila*

Singles flew N at Seaton Sluice and St Mary's on 6th, when one also flew S at the latter site (JPD/SSWT), and one flew S at Tynemouth on 7th (SPP). Five (two drakes) were at East Chevington on 17th (NFO) and a drake was on the River Tweed at New Water Haugh on 17th (MHu).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

120 were at Cheswick on 12th (MHu), 50 at Hartley on 5th (SPP), six to eight at Berwick North Shore and the Tweed Estuary, and one to two at St Mary's and Whitley Bay.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was an above-average 604 N and 26 S, including 511 N between 6th-12th but few thereafter (SSWT), and a total of 168 flew N at St Mary's between 6th-20th (JPD). About 300 were off Cresswell on 24th (TRD), 230 at Cheswick on 12th (MHu), 140 at Cocklawburn on 3rd (MHu), 45 were noted during a pelagic trip from North Shields on 21st (PRM), and 15 were at Stag Rocks (GRo). One to seven were also at Goswick, Holy Island, Snab Point and Whitley Bay.

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

Northerly movement involved four at St Mary's (JPD) on 10th and singles there on 6th (MSH) and 25th (AAM/AJ), three at Seaton Sluice between 6th-14th (SSWT), and one at Newbiggin on 13th (JR). Five were at Stag Rocks on 27th (GRo), two at Newbiggin on 10th (ASH), and one at Bamburgh on 28th (JHa).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Singles were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 26th (SR) and a confidential site in the north of the county on 3rd (JD).

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

One flew S at St Mary's on 26th (JPD/MPF), 14 were at Bamburgh on 28th (JHa), ten at Holy Island on 26th (TRD/JD) and two there on 15th (ADM), and six at East Chevington on 24th (TRD).

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Nine flew N at Holy Island on 9th (MJC/ADM), and three N at Seaton Sluice between 6th-23rd (SSWT). New Water Haugh on the River Tweed attracted 126 on 3rd (MHu) rising to 294 by 17th (BWG); 126 were counted along the R. Tweed between A1-Horndcliffe on 22nd (TBr), 99 were at Branton GP on 22nd (IBDa/KDa), 59-64 at Berwick Little Beach and the Tweed Estuary (TRD/JD/MHu), and 36-46 at Berwick North Shore and West Ord (MHu). Nine to ten were at the Blyth Estuary, Castle Island and Doddington, and three to five at Budle Bay, Derwent Reservoir and Holy Island. One to two were also at Beal, Foxton Bends, Stag Rocks and St Mary's.

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

The only records came from the Rothbury area with five at Addycombe on 20th and one at Gowk Hill (east of Craggside) on 26th (TRD/JD).

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

On 15th 34 were present at Flotterton (Coquetdale) and on 8th 17 were at Callaly (JR). 12 were near the *Beehive* Flash (Earsdon) on 7th (JPD). Eight were at Overthwarts (Edlingham) on 9th and seven at Beal Road Ends on 29th.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Three coveys totalling 29 were at Beal on 8th (MJC) and 13 were at Embleton on 3rd (JEd). Counts of 11 came from Whittingham on 8th (JR) and Beal Road Ends on 22nd (MJC/ADM). Ten were at Doddington on 14th (JD) and nine juveniles at Big Waters on 6th (AJJ). Five were at High Newton and four at Dinnington.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

At Bellasis Bridge 32 were present on 28th (PCF) and 23 were at East Bolton on 8th (JR). Four were in a Walbottle garden and at Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene).

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

During the month 25 flew N and 41 flew S at Seaton Sluice, which was well below the September average (SSWT). The peak movements at St Mary's Island were 19 N and six S on 20th in 2 hours 45 minutes and nine N and one S in two hours on 18th. A further six flew N and two S on 14th with six being noted on 7th and four on 10th (JPD). At Newbiggin 18 flew past on 26th in two periods of sea-watching totalling 2 hours 40 minutes (ASH). Two flew N at Snab Point on 6th and one was noted flying S from a pelagic trip off Amble on 8th. Offshore the peak counts were 21 in Druridge Bay on 12th (DHH), 20 off East Chevington on 24th (TRD/JD), 19 in Alnmouth Bay on 23rd (RPo), nine off Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) on 27th (JDL) and eight off Cresswell on 24th (TRD). One to five were noted from Alnmouth, Cheswick, Goswick, Newton Point, Snab Point, Spittal Bay, Stag Rocks, Warkworth and from a pelagic trip from North Shields.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

At St Mary's Island two flew S on 7th (JPD/ CGK *et al.*) and on 26th (PRM) and singles flew N here on 14th and S on 18th (JPD). Two were off Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) on 27th, where one was present on 3rd (JDL).

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

At Seaton Sluice two flew S from 11th-13th (SSWT) and nearby two flew S at St Mary's Island on 26th (JPD/SPP). One was noted at Newton Point on 11th (IBDa/KDa).

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Noticeable N passage occurred on 6th with 200/h at Newbiggin (ASH), 100 in 1 hour at Seaton Sluice (SSWT), 45 at St Mary's Island in 1 hour (MSH) with a 'blue phase' being noted here (JPD) and 43 in 1 hour at Snab Point (JR). At Newbiggin Point a further 27 flew N in 1 hour on 13th (JR). On 14th eight flew N and two S at St Mary's Island and two flew N at Stag Rocks (DHH). Two juveniles were still in nests on Whitley Bay cliffs on 1st (IJ) and one to two were noted on three further dates at Newbiggin, Newton Point, Snab Point and Stag Rocks. A 'blue phase' bird flew N at Seaton Sluice on 1st (SSWT).

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

At Seaton Sluice 29 flew N and one S from 6th-14th, well below the September average (SSWT). At St Mary's Island on 6th at least 28 flew N from 07:15- 16:00h (JPD/AC/MPF). Eight also flew N here on 10th (JPD). At Newbiggin 18 flew N from 6th-14th (ASH/JR/GB) with a further two N on 26th (ASH). Five were noted flying N on a pelagic trip from Amble on 8th and on 6th three flew N at Tynemouth, two flew N at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) and one flew N at Embleton Bay. Seven were seen at Newton Point on 14th (IBDa/KDa). Five were seen at Tynemouth on 10th. One to two were noted on two further dates at Newton Point and Snab Point.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

At Seaton Sluice 403 flew N and two S during the month, well below the September average. On 6th 167 flew N and on 7th 177 flew N in 1 hour (SSWT). Also on 6th 230/hour flew N at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) (IK), a minimum of 139 flew N at St Mary's Island (AC/JPD/MSH), 54 flew N at Embleton Bay (JEd), three at Snab Point and one flew N at Newbiggin. 100 flew N in 1 hour at Tynemouth on 7th (CB). Smaller reported N movements were eight on a pelagic trip from Amble on 8th, five at Newbiggin on 13th with three there on 10th/26th and two at Spittal (Berwick). Five flew S at St Mary's Island on 10th. At Snipe Point (Holy Island) 300 were feeding close inshore on 13th (IK) and nearby 120 were off Emmanuel Head on 10th (SR). At Stag Rocks 60 were present on 13th (DHH) and 54 on 1st (IBDa/KDa). 19 were off Newton Point on 11th (IBDa/KDa). Six were at Goswick on 22nd and three were noted on a pelagic trip from North Shields on 21st.

***Balearic Shearwater** *Puffinus mauretanicus*

Singles were seen flying N at Stag Rocks on 1st (IBDa/KDa), St Mary's Island on 6th (AC/JPD/MPF/AS) and Newbiggin on 13th (ASH).

Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

Singles were seen flying N on a pelagic trip from Amble on 8th (DM *et al.*) and at St Mary's Island on 10th (AC).

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

On 6th 2,500 flew N at Seaton Sluice (SSWT), 150 flew N at St Mary's Island in 1 hour (MSH) and 73 flew N in 1 hour at Snab Point (JR). At Stag Rocks on 14th 874 flew N and 195 S (DHH) and at Seaton Sluice hourly counts produced 400 N on 19th and 250 N on 13th (SSWT). Also on 13th 122 flew N in 1 hour at Newbiggin (JR). Peak S movements at Holy Island were 1,100/hour on 19th and 600/hour on 28th (IK) and here on 15th ca.60 were seen moving both N and S (ADM). 500 were in a large feeding frenzy off Stag Rocks on 18th (TRD/JD), 200 were noted between Stag Rocks-Budle Point on 20th (ADM), 150 were offshore at The Snook (Holy Island) on 20th (ADM) and 60+ were feeding offshore at North Blyth on 1st (LJM). One to 30 were noted offshore at Alnmouth, Berwick Little Beach, East Chevington, Low Newton, Newbiggin, Newton Point, Snab Point, Spittal Bay and Whitley Bay.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

At Seaton Sluice 31 flew N in one hour on 14th (SSWT). The peak counts were 154 at Blyth South Harbour on 3rd (STH), 58 at Amble Harbour on 8th (DM *et al.*), 49 on the Tweed from the A1 road bridge to Horncliffe on 22nd (TBr), 35 at Castle Island on 22nd (DM/STH/IFo), 29 at Derwent Reservoir on 16th (IFo), 26 at North Shields Fish Quay on 2nd (JMA) and 19 in the Tweed Estuary on 16th (PRM). In the Berwick area 14 were at Meadow Haven on 16th and North Shore on 18th (MHu). Ten were at East Chevington North Pool on 8th (DM/STH/GB/IFo) and seven were at Fontburn Reservoir on 24th. One to five were noted at Bothal Pond, Elswick Wharf, Kitty Brewster (Blyth), St Mary's Island and Whitley Bay.

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

In the Berwick area 18 roosted at Meadow Haven on 16th, 12 were at North Shore on 18th and Cheswick on 24th, six in Spittal Bay on 13th (MHu) and five at Little Beach on 18th, when a juvenile was at Stag Rocks (TRD/JD).

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

One was at East Chevington North Pool on 7th (SRB).

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Ten were in the Whiteadder Water/New Mills area of the Tweed Estuary on 20th (TBr), nine were nearby at New Water Haugh on 14th (BWG) with one to eight being noted in the estuary on six further dates (MHu *et al.*). Four were at Beal on 22nd (MJC/ADM) and three at Alnmouth on 1st (ASJ), Longbridge End (Lindisfarne NNR) on 20th (IK) and in Budle Bay from 21st-23rd (CGK). Singles were noted at Coquet Estuary, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Fenham Flats and Warkworth Gut.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

The peak counts were 34 in the Tweed Estuary on 5th (MHu), 21 at Howdon Wetland NR on 5th (CB), 11 at Castle Island on 22nd (DM/STH/IFo), seven at Elswick Wharf on 24th (DM) and six at Old Hartley on 22nd (DM/STH/IFo). One to four were noted at Arcot Pond, Berwick North Shore, Chollerford, Goswick, Holy Island, Holywell Dene, Longhirst Flash, Leazes Park (Newcastle), Newton Pool, St Mary's Island and Wark.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Large post-breeding counts were 23 at East Chevington North Pool on 21st (ADMc), 19 at Big Waters on 5th/9th (GB), 14 at Hedgeley GP on 5th, 13 at Bothal Pond on 7th (TD) and ten at Bakethin Reservoir on 26th (MD), Castle Island on 22nd (DM/STH/IFo) and Ladyburn Lake on 3rd (IFo). Eight were at Hauxley NR on 11th (IFo), seven at Airey Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield) on 12th (IFo) and six at Arcot Pond on 22nd (DM), Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 26th (SR) and Cresswell Pond on 29th (ADMc). One to four were noted at Alnmouth (Lion Bridge), Cresswell Pond, Beal, Branton GP, Cocklawburn Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Grindon Lough, Holy Island Lough, Holywell Pond, Killingworth Lake, Linton Ponds, Newton Pool, QEII Lake, St Mary's Wetland, Warkworth and unusually Exhibition Park (Newcastle).

Further breeding details are as follows:

Location	No. of broods	No. of Young	Observer/Comments
Bakethin Reservoir	1	1	JMA on 17th
Hedgeley GP	1	2	JMA on 5th
Nelly's Moss Lake Craggside	1	1	TRD/JD on 17th

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

One flew S at Stag Rocks on 14th (DHH). Ten adults were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 12th (SR) and seven including immatures at Bothal Pond on 2nd (TF/JFa) and Killingworth Lake on 10th (LJM). Five were at Derwent Reservoir on 2nd with four remaining here throughout the month (IFo). Three, including a juvenile, were at East Chevington North Pool on 7th (SRB). Singles were noted at Airey Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield), Amble Braid, Branton GP and Cresswell Pond.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

One flew N at Seaton Sluice on 26th (SSWT). Two immatures were in the Tweed Estuary on 26th with one being noted there on 16th/18th/20th/22nd (MHu/TRD/JD).



A Red-necked Grebe on the Tweed estuary
Tim Dean on 18th September

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

Two were in the Common Scoter flock offshore at Cresswell on 24th (TRD) and one was off the east shore at Holy Island on 15th (ADM).

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

Two juveniles were noted at a site in the south of the county.

Honey-buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

A bird flying SE at Fawdon Metro Station (Newcastle) on 28th was thought to be of this species (MRS).

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Two birds were at Low Waskerley on 28th and singles were noted there on several dates (IFo). An untagged juvenile was seen at Holywell Grange and it landed on a pylon at Seghill before drifting W on 3rd (SPP): other singles were at Slaley on 4th (RMH) and Derwent Reservoir on 29th (IFo).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Two birds, a female and a juvenile, were at Cresswell on 1st (ASJ) and two birds were at Hemscott Hill (Cresswell) on 7th (SRB). Singles were noted at Druridge on 1st (ASJ), Prestwick Carr on 3rd (per PCF), St Mary's Island on 7th and Tynemouth (AC *et al.*), East Chevington on 8th (ASJ), Druridge Pools on 9th (AA) and at Cresswell on 13th (TRD/JD).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

A single bird was observed at Warenford on 12th (JHa).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Two birds were at Big Waters on 5th (GB). Single birds were noted at 16 sites during the month.

A Sparrowhawk
Cresswell Pond
29th September
Alan Hart

**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*

At Edlingham on 9th five birds were up in the air together (MJC). Four birds were seen at Slaley Hall on 8th (RMH), Derwent Reservoir on 10th (IFo), Darras Hall (Ponteland) on 12th (CW) and at Arcot Pond on 28th (STH). One to two birds were noted at 11 sites during the month.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetuss*

An adult female and a juvenile were at Kielder Dam on 4th (MD) and singles were at Hallington on 2nd (AJR) and at Derwent Reservoir on 12th and 15th (IFo).

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Up to five birds were on Holy Island on several dates (MJC/ADM), three birds were seen at Swallow Pond on 3rd (JPD) and Bellasis Bridge on 21st (PCF). Two birds were at Ingram Mill on 5th (JMA) and single birds were noted at Elsdon on 1st (JR), Snab Point (Cresswell) on 6th (JR), River Tweed Estuary and West Hartford on 22nd (PRM/DM *et al.*).

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

One inland record of a single bird at a site on 21st and 29th (ALT). The rest of the sightings came from coastal sites including birds at Seaton Sluice on 9th (SSWT), Fenham-Le-Moor on 11th (JDL), Monks' House Pool on 17th (JDL), Bamburgh on 28th (BRS) and Holy Island on 28th and 29th (MJC/CGK/PS).

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

A very emaciated freshly dead juvenile was found at Big Waters on 20th (AJJ *per* GB).

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Up to two birds were on Holy Island during the month (IK) and two birds were at an inland site on 1st (ALT) and at Budle Bay on 21st (CGK). Singles were reported from 14 sites.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Big Waters had three birds, 2 adults and a large dusky juvenile, on 9th (GB), and two birds were at Swallow Pond on 12th (JPD) & East Chevington on 27th (ADM). Single birds were at Arcot Pond, East Chevington, Holywell Pond and Swallow Pond.

Spotted Crane *Porzana porzana*

The bird from last month was seen at the North Pool (East Chevington) until the 8th (TD/IJ *et al.*)

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

35 birds at Arcot Pond on 5th (LJM) and 31 at Big Waters on 5th (GB) & 30 at Bothal Pond on 19th (IRD) were the highest counts this month followed by 29 at Backworth on 28th (CGK). One to thirteen were at birds were at 11 other sites.

Coot *Fulica atra*

The highest counts this month came from QEII CP with 143 on 22nd (CDH) and 120 at Killingworth Lake on 10th (LJM). 65 birds were at Woodhorn Flash on 22nd (CDH), 27 at Big Waters on 29th (GB), 25 at Bothal Pond on 7th (TD) and 22 were at Arcot Pond on 1st & 25th (DM). One to thirteen were at four other sites.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

The high-tide roost at Guile Point (Lindisfarne NNR) held the largest group by far, with 500 counted on 20th (IK), whilst at nearby Budle Bay some 140 were noted on 22nd (CGK). In the south 68 were at St Mary's on 12th (ASJ) and 49 at Hauxley NR on 4th (JPD). Counts of 20 to 22 came from Berwick North Shore and the Tweed Estuary mid-month (MHu) whilst single-figure reports came from the Blyth Estuary, Cramlington and Whitley Bay, with a further single remaining inland at Derwent Reservoir on 28th (IFo).



The popular American Golden Plover at St. Mary's
Jonathan Farooqi
20th September

American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica*

A moulting adult was found at St Mary's on 20th (James Spencer), occasionally moving to outlying rocks off nearby Hartley (SPP *et al.*), and was reported until the 22nd at least (AC *et al.*).

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

The large autumn flock at St Mary's increased from 800 on 5th (AC) to 1,500+ on 16th (ASJ) and peaked at 3,000 on 27th (AC). The high-tide roost at St Cuthbert's Island (Holy Island) totalled 1,500 on 28th (IK). Much smaller flocks included 225 at East Chevington on 12th (ASJ), 65 at Newcastle Town Moor on 30th (GB), 56 at Grindon Lough on 25th (PRM), 50 at Whittle Dene Reservoir on 26th (SR) and 42 moving S over Derwent Reservoir on 29th (IFo). Apart from 28 at Billylaw (Ord Moor) on 1st (MHu) single-figure reports came from Bothal Pond, Boulmer, Castle Island, Cottonshope Head (Otterburn Ranges), Cramlington and Low Newton.



Part of the St. Mary's Golden Plover flock at St. Mary's
Alan Jack on 13th September

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Only single-figure reports this month, with a high of six at St Mary's Island on 24th (AC). Four flew N past St Mary's Island on 6th (JPD) and three were noted heading N past nearby Seaton Sluice on the same date (SSWT). One to three were also noted at Boulmer, East Chevington, Hauxley beach, Holy Island and Newbiggin (flying N) but without doubt the most remarkable record was of a juvenile present at Derwent Reservoir between 24th-27th (IFo).

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Well reported, especially from East Chevington where there were 700 on 1st (ASJ) and 795 on 9th (IRD). High counts elsewhere included 675 at Bothal Pond on 9th (TF/JFa), 486 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 21st (SR), 420 at Derwent Reservoir on 23rd (IFo), 340 at Grindon Lough on 25th (PRM), 268 at Cocklawburn on 20th (MHu), 225 at St Mary's on 2nd (ASJ), 202 on the Tyne between Elswick Wharf-Newcastle Business Park on 24th (DM) and 200+ at Warenford on 22nd (PRM). The Tweed Estuary also held 158 on 20th (MHu) and ca.150 were at Hartley West Farm (near Holywell Dene) on 27th (RJP), whilst 70-85 were also noted at Castle Island, St Mary's, Scaffold Hill Farm (near Swallow Pond) and Swallow Pond.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Up to two remained at one confidential site, with the last bird seen here on 14th. A juvenile was on East Chevington north pool on 21st (ADMc).

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Coastal groups included 100+ at St Mary's Island on 5th (SPP), 92 at Berwick north shore on 18th (MHu), 76 at Cocklawburn on 12th (MHu), 39 on a small pool near the caravan park at Amble on 7th (JR) 30 at Berwick Little Beach on 18th (TRD/JD) and 28 at Cresswell on 28th (JR). A peak of 12 was counted at Cheswick on 12th (MHu) whilst inland, 11 on 3rd was the highest of several counts at Grindon Lough during the first part of the month (SJH) and five on 5th was the peak of several counts at Derwent Reservoir during the month (IFo). Low single figures were noted at five further sites.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

A count of 21 on Fenham Flats (Lindisfarne NNR) on 5th was noteworthy (JDL), whereas singles were the order of the day at Beal, Cresswell Pond, Druridge, East Chevington, Grindon Lough (flew W calling on 4th), Overthwarts – flying S (near Edlingham) with the latest sighting being one at St Mary's Island on 21st (PRM).

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Estuary counts included 106 at Yarrow Slake on the Tweed on 5th (MHu) and 82 on the Blyth on 8th (LJM). Some 77 were at Hauxley NR on 4th (JPD/MPF) and 38 were on a small pool near Amble on 7th (JR), otherwise, single-figure reports came from Big Waters, Castle Island, Derwent Reservoir (last on 7th), Grindon Lough, near Holywell Dene, Prestwick Carr, St Mary's Island and on the Tyne near Newcastle Business Park.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

High numbers continued from last month with East Chevington commencing with the monthly high of 83 on 1st (ASJ), with 20 here the next day (TRD/JD), 15+ on 7th (TF/JFa), 14 on 17th (NFO), five on 22nd (TF/JFa) and a single on 24th (TRD). Castle Island also briefly attracted a large flock with 57 on 13th (PG), whilst the nearby Blyth estuary held 27 on 11th (STH) and 26 on 21st (GB) with counts in the teens being made here on several other dates during the month.

The Coquet estuary also held 21 on 4th (JPD), ten on 9th (ASH), 22 on 22nd (JPD) and 24 on 24th (RPo). Ten were noted at both Cresswell Pond and Fenham-le-Moor during mid-month and one to five were logged at Big Waters, Coroner's Meadow (Tweed), Druridge Pools, Fenham Flats, Grindon Lough, Howdon Wetland NR (first record here), Longhirst Flash, Seaton Sluice (two N), Spittal Bay (Berwick), Tweed Estuary, Tynemouth Boating Lake (very unusual here), West Ord and Yarrow Slake (Tweed).

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Holy Island typically held the majority with ca.200 noted on 26th (TRD/JD), whilst 20-22 were seen in Budle Bay during mid-month (CGK/TRD/JD). The only other double-digit reports involved 11+ at Newbiggin Beacons on 25th and ten circled East Chevington north pool before heading off S on 24th (ADMc). Seven were at St Mary's Island on 24th (IJ) and six were recorded at Hauxley NR on 11th (IFo) and on the Tweed Estuary on 22nd (PRM). One to five were also reported from Berwick north shore, Blyth Estuary, Cheswick, Cresswell Pond, Goswick, Hauxley beach and Tynemouth. The most unusual report involved one feeding on the 'scrape' for several hours at Big Waters on 4th (AJJ/JCD *per* GB).

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

The WeBS count of 62 at Berwick North Shore on 18th (MHu) was the highest, then a peak of 52 at St Mary's on 21st (PRM) and 27 feeding along the high tide line in Newbiggin Bay on 25th (IFo). Ten were in the Blyth Estuary at Kitty Brewster on 22nd, six at Whitley Bay on 1st, six in the Tweed Estuary on 20th and one to three at Cresswell, Low Newton and Stag rocks.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Stag Rocks held the most with 110 on 22nd (CGK); 20 were at Boulmer on 29th. Two to four were noted at Berwick, the Blyth Estuary and Low Newton.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Present at East Chevington throughout with a peak of 89 on 1st (ASJ), down to 64 on 4th (JPD), 35 on 9th (IRD) and 17 on 22nd. The most at Cresswell Pond was nine on 15th, seven were at Long Nanny on 4th and up to seven were at Grindon Lough during 2nd to 9th; three were at Newton Point on 25th. Singles appeared for one day each at Arcot Pond, Budle Bay, Blyth Estuary, Charlton Mires Flash, Derwent Reservoir, Newbiggin, St Mary's, Seaton Sluice and the Tweed Estuary with a further one at Grindon Lough on 29th.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Six were found at Amble Braid on 1st (ASJ) with two there on 4th, three were at St Mary's on 5th (AC/SPP) and five on 6th (JPD). Three were at East Chevington on 7th (STH) and two on 8th and 13th and singles irregularly from 5th to 29th. Two were at Boulmer on 14th and at least two in the Berwick area on 18th; singles occurred at Cresswell Pond on 4th, R Blyth estuary on 11th and 22nd, Warkworth Gut on 14th, Monks' House Pool on 19th and Whittle Dene on 27th.

A Curlew Sandpiper
St. Mary's
5th September
Jack Bucknall

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba*

An estimated 300 were at St Mary's on 5th (SPP) with 120 there on 7th (JPD) and 210 on 19th (ASJ). Berwick North Shore had 80 on 18th (MHu) and the most at Hauxley was 25 on 11th. Eight were at Cocklawburn on 12th and five or fewer were at a further five typical locations.

NB. The entry for 16 at Backworth Flash on **5th August** should have been St Mary's.

A summer plumage
Dunlin

St. Mary's

by Alan Jack

13th September



Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Amble Braid held at least 350 on 4th (JPD/MPF/AS), whilst in the Blyth Estuary 256 were present on 1st (AC) down to 190 on 22nd (IFo/DM/STH). The WeBS at Berwick North Shore produced 170 on 18th (MHu) and 122 were feeding along the high tide line in Newbiggin Bay on 25th (IFo). St Mary's held 90 on 12th, Holy Island 50 on 26th and the peak at East Chevington was 37 on 26th. Fenham-le-Moor, the Tweed Estuary and Wansbeck Estuary had 20-22 at times and one to 11 occurred at a further 11 places at or near the coast. The only reports well inland concern up to seven at Grindon Lough on a few dates and up to five at Derwent Reservoir on several days.

NB. The entry relating to Backworth Flash in **August** should be deleted. An incorrect location was submitted, it should have been St Mary's.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

One was near Seaton Sluice Watch Tower on 1st then singles at Stag Rocks on 18th and 21st with three there on 29th.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Six were found at Fenham Flats on 5th (JDL). At East Chevington three were present on 7th/8th and two during 9th to 13th (STH *et al.*); two were also at Warkworth Gut on 13th (TRD/JD). Singles were at Backworth on 7th (AC/CGK/TW), at Cresswell Pond on 11th (IFo) and Goswick on 22nd (PRM).

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

An adult was at East Chevington North Pool from 2nd to 9th (ADM/JT *et al.*).

***Pectoral Sandpiper** *Calidris melanotos*

Two juveniles arrived on 4th: one at Grindon Lough remaining to 8th (PRM) and one at East Chevington staying to 5th (JPD/MPF/AS *et al.*). A juvenile visited Bothal Pond on 9th (TF/JFa) and another was at Cresswell Pond on 22nd (ADM *et al.*).



Pectoral Sandpiper
Cresswell Pond
Jonathan Farooqi
22nd September

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

A total of four flew S past Seaton Sluice Watch Tower between 1st and 23rd. At Derwent Reservoir three were present to 6th with two remaining to 9th (IFo). Singles were at Ingram Bridge on 5th, Snab Point on 13th, the Tweed Estuary on 22nd and, lastly, in Newbiggin Bay on 25th (IFo).

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Three were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 22nd (AA). Singles were found at Branton GP on 3rd, Derwent Reservoir on 5th, Longhirst Flash on 7th, Bothal Pond on 11th and at St Mary's on 21st.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

There were five reports of singles: at Cresswell Pond on 2nd and 4th (JPD), at East Chevington on 3rd (IFo *et al.*), at Budle Bay on 14th (DHH), Grindon Lough on 14th (PRM) and in the Tweed Estuary on 17th (MHu).

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Nine were at Cresswell Pond on 4th (JPD) after three on 2nd and 4th, seven at Beal Road Ends on 1st (SR/AH) and five at Beal on 8th(MJC); inland four were at Derwent Reservoir on 6th/7th (IFo) and two to three there until 27th. Three were at Yarrow Slake on 3rd and 17th, at Longbridge End on 20th and at Fenham Flats on 26th and two at Bothal Pond on 7th, Budle Bay on 21st and at Yarrow Haugh on 21st. Singles appeared at times at another 13 widespread locations.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Singles visited Bothal Pond on 7th (TD) and Monks' House Pool on 25th (DGB).

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

The Tweed Estuary held 224 on 20th (MHu), 145 were in Budle Bay on 21st (CGK), 120 at St Mary's on 12th (ASJ) and 108 at Berwick North Shore on 18th (MHu); 74 were along R Tyne between Elswick Wharf and Newcastle Business Park on 24th and the high-tide roost at Hauxley NR contained 33 on 11th. Nine were at Castle Island on 22nd, two at Whitley Bay on 1st and two over Big Waters on 19th. Late records well inland were of four at Grindon Lough on 2nd with one there on 4th and one at Derwent Reservoir on 5th.

Jack Snipe *Limnocryptes minimus*

A small influx was apparent in the second half: on Holy Island singles at Chare Ends on 19th and 27th (IK) and The Snook on 28th (MJC), one at Newbiggin Moor on 20th (ADMc), one at Backworth on 28th (CGK) and one at St Mary's on 29th (AC).

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

There were no reports this month.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Again Grindon Lough held the most with a peak of 38 on 4th (PRM); 21 were at Cresswell Pond on 26th (IRD) and 20 at Mootlaw Quarry on 21st (ALT), with 12-15 at Backworth, Big Waters and Hauxley NR. The peak at East Chevington was ten on 5th, ten were at Bothal Pond on 11th, ten at Alnmouth on 23rd and ten at Doddington on 28th. Four to seven appeared at Charlton Mires, Derwent Reservoir, Monks' House Pool and Prestwick Carr and one to two were found at a further eight places.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

At Seaton Sluice Watch Tower two adults flew N on 6th and a juvenile did so on 23rd. Singles were off Holy Island on 5th (JDL) and 7th (IK), adult at Tynemouth on 10th (SPP), adult S off Berwick Pier on 16th (MHu), adult at St Mary's on 18th (SPP) and one at Bamburgh on 25th (JHa).

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower of 118 (52 N, 66 S) was well below average. St Mary's figured prominently, including 58 S during 09:45 to 16:20 on 10th (JPD), 11 S on 6th and 18 on 14th; also on 10th 30 were noted past Tynemouth (SPP). Nine were in Embleton Bay 'all day' on 6th, eight at Newton Point on 14th, six at Newbiggin on 26th and three to five from another eight sites. One or two were seen occasionally from a further nine watch points.

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*

Five, an adult and four juveniles, were at Tynemouth on 10th (SPP), the adult and two juveniles lingering in King Edward's Bay for ten minutes. Two flew N and one S, all juveniles, at St Mary's on 6th (JPD/AC). At Seaton Sluice one adult and one juvenile flew N on 7th (MHp/BB) and a juvenile moved N there on 1st (SSWT). A juvenile flew N at Snab Point on 7th (JR).

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

At St Mary's at least 19 flew N from 07:15 to 14:00 (AC/JPD) when seven moved N at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower, the most on a single day at those places. Five went past Tynemouth on 10th and four to five were seen on pelagic trips on 8th and 21st. Otherwise things were quiet with just one to three irregularly at Embleton Bay, Newton and Stag Rocks.

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

On pelagic trips from Amble and North Shields respectively, 15 were noted on 8th (*per* CGK) and three on 21st (PRM); the only record from Seaton Sluice was a single on 1st (SSWT).

Razorbill *Alca torda*/ **Guillemot** *Uria aalge*

The total recorded passing N at Seaton Sluice was 65, a low monthly record (SSWT).

Razorbill *Alca torda*

Two records only comprising three seen on an Amble pelagic trip on 8th and one at Newbiggin on 13th (TRD/JD).

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

At least 50 were seen on an Amble pelagic trip on 8th and one to three on various dates at Berwick (Spittal Bay), Cresswell/Cresswell Snab Point and Newbiggin (TRD/JD/MHu).

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

Three were recorded at Bamburgh Stag Rocks on 17th (JDL).

Black Tern *Chilidonias niger*

Four flew N at Tynemouth on 7th (SPP). Three-four juveniles roosted at Budle Point on 21st/22nd (CGK) and single juveniles were at nearby Bamburgh Stag Rocks on various dates from 8th-21st (IBDa/KDa/TRD/JD/BRS). Elsewhere, singles were at East Chevington on 7th (SRB/TF/JFa/ADM), on an Amble pelagic trip on 8th (AC) and Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) on 10th (SR).



A Black Tern at Budle Point
by Chris Knox
21st September

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Totals of 63 moving N and 54 S were recorded at Seaton Sluice from 13th-18th but few were seen there beyond that date (SSWT). Gatherings of 68 occurred in the River Tweed Estuary on 1st (MHu), ca.60 at Holy Island on 15th (ADM), ca.40 at Cocklawburn on 3rd (MHu) 30-35 at East Chevington on 1st-2nd (TRD/JD/ASJ), 24 at Berwick Pier on 18th (MHu), 20 at Hauxley beach on 1st, some carrying food to Coquet Island (TRD/JD), and 12 at Berwick Spittal Bay on 2nd (MHu). One-six were recorded elsewhere, on various dates up to 29th, from many localities along the coast between St Mary's Island in the south and the River Tweed Estuary.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

At Seaton Sluice 11 moved N and 5 S between 7th-14th (SSWT). The Budle Point roost contained an impressive 280 in the evening of 21st (CGK) and gatherings of 40-60 were recorded at nearby Bamburgh Stag Rocks from 18th-21st (TRD/JD/BRS). Two-six were seen on various dates at Alnmouth, East Chevington, St Mary's and from a pelagic trip from North Shields (GB/TRD/JD/ASJ/PRM/DM *et al.*).

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

All records came from Bamburgh Stag Rocks and nearby Budle Point where birds lingered late in the season presumably due to the benign weather conditions. On 1st, two were present there (IBDa/KDa) but from 18th-23rd a maximum of 15 were recorded, including up to four juveniles (CGK), as they rested on the rocks or commuted between the two sites (AA/TRD/JD/ADM /BRS/RPo). Surprisingly, no sightings came from the usually favoured localities of St Mary's and Tynemouth.

Roseate Terns
Budle Point
21st September
Chris Knox

**Arctic Tern** *Sterna paradisaea*

Ten were recorded moving N at Seaton Sluice from 6th-12th (SSWT). The very notable gull/tern roost at Budle Point held 170+ on 21st (CGK) and elsewhere, 38 were at Berwick Spittal Bay on 2nd (MHu) with 15+ at Bamburgh Stag Rocks on 21st (BRS). Singles were noted on three dates in the Berwick area (MHu).

***Sabine's Gull** *Xema sabini*

An adult/ 2nd-summer bird, flew N at Tynemouth Pier on 7th (SPP) and single juveniles were recorded on a pelagic trip out of Amble on 8th (AC) and moving N at St Mary's Island on 14th (JPD/TD/BR).

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Poorly reported with only two small gatherings noted, comprising 37 on Blyth Harbour Pier on 3rd (STH) and ca.30 feeding near Berwick Pier on 16th (MHu). One-five were present at Cresswell Snab Point, Low Newton and Newbiggin on various dates (TRD/JD). No large-scale movements were apparent at Seaton Sluice (SSWT).

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Concentrations of 550 were on a newly ploughed field at Shiremoor on 14th (CGK) and at West Ord on 22nd (TBr) with, elsewhere, a monthly maximum count of 474 at Howdon Wetland NR on 8th (CB) and 400 at the Budle Point roost on 22nd (CGK). Smaller gatherings of 80-330 came from Berwick North Shore, Big Waters, Castle Island, Leazes Park, Linton Ponds, QEII CP Lake, St Mary's Island, the River Tweed Estuary, Tynemouth and West Hartford (JMA/GB/DM/MHu/CDH/IJ). A mix of adults and immatures at Bothal Pond on 7th and 22nd numbered up to 70 (TD) and 31 were seen at Jesmond Dene on 15th (MJCo) with six to 23 at four other localities.

A Bonaparte's Gull from last month
Maurice Hepple's photograph of a short-staying
visitor at Cresswell on 14th August

**Little Gull** *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

A monthly total of 101 came from Seaton Sluice comprising 18 moving N and 83 S, the latter including a feeding party of 80 1st-winter birds on 14th (SSWT). Elsewhere, 44 flew N off Newbiggin Point on 13th (ADM), 15 fed offshore at Newbiggin on 14th (GB) and six, including two juveniles, were off Newbiggin Point on 13th (ASH), these four records probably comprising birds from a single mobile large group. Singles were seen elsewhere at East Chevington on 4th (JPD/MPF/AS), Hauxley NWT on 7th (PCF) and on a pelagic trip from North Shields on 21st (PRM).

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

The two Woodhorn Flash ponds held a total of 21 on 1st (ASJ) and the maximum number recorded at the favoured Newbiggin South Bay was 17 on 17th (STH); at the latter locality, seven on 13th comprised four adults, one 2nd-winter and two 1st-winters (TRD/JD). Elsewhere, one-two were noted at Berwick North Shore, Big Waters, Blyth Harbour, Budle Bay, Cresswell Pond/Snab Point, QEII CP, St Mary's Island and Whitley Bay GC.



Mediterranean Gulls at Newbiggin by Alan Jack

Common Gull *Larus canus*

By far the largest gathering was 5,600 in the evening roost at Budle Point on 22nd (CGK) and elsewhere, a significant flock of 1,500 followed tractors on farmland at Ingoe on 12th (ASJ) and 900 were noted at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 21st (SR). Other three-figure counts of up to 400 came from Doddington, East Bolton and West Ord (TBr/JD/MHu/JR).

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

A maximum of 158+ was counted in the Budle Bay roost on 22nd, an increase on last month's maximum of 120 (CGK) and during the first week, counts of 74 and 37 came from Yetlington and East Bolton respectively (JR). At Elswick Wharf on the River Tyne, 21 were present on 24th (DM) and one to four frequented Castle Island, Cramlington, East Chevington, Exhibition Park, Grindon Lough and West Hartford.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argenteus*

The Budle Bay concentration, seen following the plough and resting in the bay, was recorded at 2,000+ on 21st although only 120 occupied the gull roost there on 22nd (CGK). A WeBS count on the River Tweed Estuary on 20th recorded 696, with 280 roosting at West Ord on 1st, 240 roosting at Ord Moor on 22nd and 86 at Berwick, North Shore on 18th (all MHu). On 1st at Big Waters, a steady movement W, totalling 50 adults/immatures, occurred during the morning (GB) and a similar number were at Linton Ponds on 22nd (CDH). Four to 17 were noted elsewhere at Castle Island, Jesmond Dene, Leazes Park, St Mary's Island, West Hartford and Whitley Bay.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

The largest gatherings were 176 at East Chevington North Pool on 4th (JPD) and in the gull roost at Budle Point with 70 on the evening of 22nd (CGK). WeBS counts on 20th and 18th on the River Tweed Estuary and Berwick, North Shore included 14 and nine respectively (MHu). Three were at Castle Island on 22nd (DM/STH/IF) and two at Grindon Lough on 8th-9th (SJH).

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

The maximum count for the month was 36 at Howdon Wetland NR on 1st (CB) with four at Holywell Pond NR on 18th (MSH), three at Bellasis Bridge, Jesmond Dene, West Hartford, two at Cresswell Pond, New Water Haugh (River Tweed), Walbottle and one at Bolam and Cramlington.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Around 200 were in one field at Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene) on 15th (RJP), 150 at East Bolton on 8th (JR) with one to ten at Jesmond Dene, Newton Pool, St Mary's Island, Whitley Bay and Woodhorn.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Gardens at Dinnington had four on 23rd (PCF) and at Walbottle two on 15th (KR/LR).

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

A juvenile was at Druridge on 8th (ASJ), one at West Allotment on 9th (AC) and one at Cresswell Pond on 12th (ADMc).

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

A single report of one on the fence near the hide at Cresswell Pond on 24th (TRD).

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Two were present all month at Shiremoor (CGK) with singles at Derwent Reservoir on 2nd (IFo), Holywell Grange on 3rd (SPP) and Big Waters on 4th (GB).

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Two called at Bedlington (west) on 2nd (ASH), Wark (North Tyne) on 22nd (PRM), Waren Mill (near Bamburgh) on 23rd (CGK), Newton Red House on 25th (PG) and Walbottle on 29th (KR/LR). Singles were at Bamburgh, Big Waters, Bedlington, Jesmond Dene, Mitford Hall, Prestwick Carr, Stagshaw and Wark.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

A juvenile hunted at Straight Lonnen (Holy Island) on 19th (IK) with one south past Tynemouth on 26th (SPP) and one at Crow Hall Farm (Holywell Dene) on 30th (MNC).

Swift *Apus apus*

A single bird circling over Church Point (Newbiggin) on 10th (STH) was the only report.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

The only multiple count was of two on the Edlingham Burn at Overthwarts on 11th with singles there on 9th & 12th (MJC) with one seen regularly at Thrum Mill (Rothbury) between 20th & 27th (JD) and at Jesmond Dene on 13th & 30th (MJCo). Singles were also at Berwick, Branton GP, Budle Bay, Cresswell Pond, Lower Ouseburn, Newton Pool, Seaton Sluice, Tynemouth, Wark and Warkworth.

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

One was at North Dunes (Holy Island) on 8th (MJC).

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

At Overthwarts on Edlingham Burn one was present on 3rd and 9th (MJC) with one at Bakethin on 26th (MD).

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Up to two were in a Holywell garden during the month (RJP) with two at Exhibition Park (Newcastle Town Moor) on 5th (GB), Wallington Hall on 14th (PRM) and Holy Island on 25th (MJC/ADM). Singles were at Valley Park (Cramlington) on three dates, Bamburgh, Jesmond Dene, Netherton Park (Stannington), Newbiggin and Walbottle.

Magpie *Pica pica*

The largest count was of 41 at Swallow Pond on 2nd (JPD), 19 at Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene) on 15th (RJP), four at Jesmond Dene on 29th (MJCo) with three at St Mary's Island on 24th (IJ) and regularly in the observer's garden at Walbottle during the month (KR/LR).

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Three were at Overthwarts (near Edlingham) on 12th (MJC) and at Big Waters on 19th (AJJ *per* GB) with two at Prestwick Carr on 1st, Grindon Lough on 7th, Linden Hall (Longhorsley) on 8th, Hepple on 24th, West Hartford on 26th and East Sleekburn on 29th. Singles were at Valley Park (Cramlington) all month and six other locations.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Large gatherings on 450+ at Garden Village (Gosforth) on 21st (MJC), 200 at Big Waters on 11th (GB) and 181 at Swallow Pond on 18th (JPD) with 11 the highest count for the month in a Walbottle garden and nine at Jesmond Dene on 15th.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

One hundred were at Shipley on 5th (JMA), 28 at Amble on 14th and four at Holy Island on 29th (SR/AH).

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

A flock of 167 at Garden Village (Gosforth) on 21st was noted as having 5% with white wing linings (MJC). Six were at Jesmond Dene on 22nd and two in the observer's garden at Walbottle during the month.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

One was at Newbiggin Moor between north shore and beacons on 30th (ADMc).

Raven *Corvus corax*

Just two reports of four at Blaxter Quarry (Otterburn) on 10th (IRD) and three at Ingram on 21st (AJ).

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

A peak count of 13 at Bakethin on 4th (MD), more than six were at Bamburgh on 14th and 21st (BRS), a total of five at three locations on Holy Island on 25th (MJC), three at Wark (N Tyne) on 30th (PRM) and one to two regularly at Holy Island and nine other widely spread localities.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

The highest count for the month in a Walbottle garden was five (KR/LR), four in Jesmond Dene on 15th (MJCo) and present at Newton Pool on 1st (IJ).

Great Tit *Parus major*

Three were in the observer's garden at Walbottle on 8th (KR/LR) and in Jesmond Dene on 15th (MJCo).

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

More than ten visited a garden at Fulbeck (Morpeth) during the month (TD), up to three in an Old Hartley garden (RJP), at Prestwick Carr on 14th, Wark on 30th with two at Bamburgh, Jesmond Dene and Walbottle.

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

A peak of four at Prestwick Carr on 21st with two or more present regularly during the month (PCF/JSB/EC), three at Linden Hall (Longhorsley) on 8th (NFO), two at Big Waters, Lucker, Newton and singles at Branton GP, Brierdene (Whitley Bay), High Newton, Newbiggin Ash Lagoons, Linton Ponds, Slaley Hall and Sleek Burn.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

Two was the only multiple count at Linden Hall on 28th (NFO) with singles there on 14th and in the observer's garden at Rothbury during the month and Thrum Mill on 27th (TRD/JD).

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Movement south was noted with 210 over the Snook (Holy Island) early a.m. on 28th and 163 on 29th (MJC), 120 at St Mary's on 29th and 65 on 17th (ASJ), 60 present in a single field at Backworth on 28th (CGK), 45 SW in two hours at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) on 21st (ALT) and 44 at Cocklawburn on 20th (MHu). 24 were at Ingoe Moor on 22nd, 22 at Prestwick Carr on 28th, 17 at Winter's Gibbet (Harwood), 15 at Grindon Lough on 27th and 11 at Cottonshope (Otterburn Ranges) on 15th. Two to seven were at many of the above locations and Boulmer, Cramlington and Overthwarts.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Six were at Cocklawburn pond on 3rd (MHu), four at Grindon Lough on 5th (SJH), two south at Cresswell Pond and Druridge Pools on 21st (GB) with a single found five miles offshore on a pelagic on the same date (NEWT) and the last at Big Waters on 25th (GB).

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

A large roosting flock at Holywell Pond on 3rd was estimated at 6,000+ (MSH/CS/CGK) dropping to 2,000+ on 5th but re-building to 3,000+ on 7th as passage continued. The roost at Big Waters was 600 on 3rd and 500 on 4th (GB) with 300+ feeding or drinking at Longhirst Flash on 22nd (TD) and 220 on wires at Black Heddon on 5th (ASJ). Counts over 100 came from Druridge Pools, Great Whittington, Otterburn, Prestwick Carr and Wark with 14-80 from eighteen widespread localities and one to ten from a further seven. A poor breeding season was reported from Holy Island where 40 pairs fledged ca.115 young, one pair hatching six! (IK). Late young were noted at Powburn Café, three on 5th (JMA) and Cottonshope Head (Otterburn Ranges), four on 15th (JR) with the last sighting being three on the 29th at Holy Island. (STH).



Swallows at St. Mary's on 13th September by Alan Jack

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

A flock of 200+ drank at Longhirst Flash on 22nd (TD), 75 were at Blaxter Quarry (Otterburn) on 10th (IRD), 70 on wires at Great Whittington on 21st (ALT), 50+ at Swallow Pond on 12th (JPD), 32 at East Ord on 15th (MHu), 30+ at Southfield Green (Cramlington) on 1st (DM) and 30 at Big Waters on 11th (GB). One to 25 were at thirteen other widespread localities with late broods still at Yearle on 22nd, Beadnell and Alnwick Leisure Centre on 27th (SVMAJM/PL/JMA).

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

The largest tribe was 16 at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 16th (DM). Counts of ten came from Dinnington and Hauxley NR, nine were at Prestwick Carr, seven at Valley Park (Cramlington) and six at Lower Ouseburn and Prior's Park. Three to four were also reported from Jesmond Dene, an Old Hartley garden and Slaley Hall.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

One on Holy Island on 22nd (MJC/ADM) was followed by two at St Mary's Island on 24th (JPD). There was a substantial influx on 25th when up to 17 were noted on Holy Island (IK/MJC/ADM/SR), numbers at St Mary's Island increased to eight + (JPD/MPF/A.Swan) and five were on the Farne Islands, five at Newbiggin and three to four at Druridge Pools. Elsewhere on 25th singles were reported from Brierdene (Whitley Bay), Cambois, Hauxley NR, High Newton, Prior's Park (Tynemouth), Seaton Sluice and Whitley Bay Cemetery; a day total of at least 45 birds. Two apparently 'new' arrivals were at St Mary's Island on 26th (GB) when four were also at Druridge Pools (MJC) and another at Tynemouth Haven. Birds continued to be reported to the month end, with Holy Island the prime location. Numbers here fluctuated somewhat, perhaps suggesting on-going passage, counts including five on 26th, nine on 28th and 12 on 29th (STH *et al.*), when another was at Beal Road End car park. Elsewhere three to four remained at St Mary's into October, the Brierdene bird was still present to 29th and 'new' birds were reported from Bamburgh and Cambois on 28th and Newbiggin on 29th. Singles were again at Prior's Park (Tynemouth) and Tynemouth on 30th.



Two Yellow-browed Warblers on 25th September at St. Mary's

Top on a wet railing by Alan Janes and right one found dead by Chris Knox

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Up to four were noted at Wallington Hall (JMA/PRM) and three in Jesmond Dene (MJCo). One to two were also reported from Arcot Hall, Craggside, Edlingham, Kielder, Morpeth (Carlisle Park), Rothbury, Slaley Hall and Wark (North Tyne).

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

One to two were reported from Edlingham, Rothbury, Stamfordham, River Tweed Estuary and Wallington Hall.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Good local counts included 11 at Prestwick Carr (PCF) and ten at Bakethin (MD). Seven were on Holy Island on 29th (MJC/ADM) and one to three at a further four localities.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

The highest of six counts from Grindon Lough from 4th-9th was 362 on 7th (SJH *et al.*). There were also 200 at West Stonefolds on 7th (JMA), 100+ at Prestwick Carr on 5th, 90 at Catton on 20th, 75 at Carrshield, Cullercoats and Newcastle (Town Moor) and 50 at Housesteads. Three to 30 were noted at a further four localities.



A Starling at Seahouses by Steve Barrett on 12th September

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Up to four were noted at Rothbury (TRD/JD) and two at Balkehopeburnhaugh. Singles were reported from Edlingham, Elsdon, Holywell Dene, Jesmond Dene (Benton Bank Bridge and Waterfall) and Spindleston.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Six at St Mary's Island on 24th and three at Jesmond Dene on 22nd. There were also some small arrivals on Holy Island from 26th onwards.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

The first autumn arrival was a single bird at Holy Island (Snook) on 25th (ADM).

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

30 arrived at Holy Island on 25th, followed by 36 on 29th (MJC/ADM). Inland three flew E at Ridsdale on 23rd and 17 were feeding on Rowan berries at Bakethin on 26th (MD).

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

The first autumn arrivals were 11 at St Mary's and four at Seaton Sluice on 24th (ASJ). On Holy Island, 61 arrived on 25th (MJC/ADM), there were four here on 28th and 21 on 29th. Five were at Bamburgh on 25th.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

About 35 in the west of the county at Greenhaugh on 12th was the largest gathering (RMH). 20+ were at Elsdon on 23rd (PG) and 12 at Henshaw Common (Bardon Mill) on 18th (AJ). Elsewhere ten were noted at Newcastle (Town Moor) on 5th, six at Newbiggin on 29th and one to three at a further three localities.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Three were at Longframlington Common on 5th (JD) and two at Big Waters on 4th and 13th. At Exhibition Park (Newcastle) there was one on 3rd and 5th and two on 9th and further singles were at Swallow Pond from 2nd-4th and at Yearle on 8th. On the coast two were noted at Prior's Park on 7th and singles at Berwick Pier on 18th and Holy Island on 20th and 25th. A very late individual was well inland at Wark (North Tyne) on 30th.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

The peak count from Holy Island was 26 on 25th (MJC) with five to nine noted on a further four dates. Prestwick Carr recorded 11 on 28th (PCF) and one to four were noted at three further localities.

Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia*

A first-winter was found at Chare Ends (Holy Island) on 7th (TF/JFa/IBDa/KDa).

A record photograph of the Holy Island Thrush Nightingale
7th September by Jonathan Farooqi

**Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica*

A female / juvenile was at St Mary's Island from 25th-28th (SPP/PRM *et al.*).



The much visited Bluethroat at St. Mary's
photographed by Jack Bucknall
25th September

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*

A first-winter graced the Straight Lonnen (Holy Island) on 25th-26th (MJC/ADM *et al.*)

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Two were at Tynemouth on 7th (CB). Another was at Tynemouth on 26th and from 25th-29th one to two were noted on Holy Island.

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Two were on Holy Island on 25th (MJC/ADM) and a single from 28th-29th. Inland, further singles were noted at Newcastle (Town Moor) on 5th and Big Waters on 6th.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Inland, there were three at Prestwick Carr on 14th (PCF) and two at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) on 21st (ALT). St Mary's Island had one on 20th and three from 24th-26th (ASJ/JPD) and two still present on 28th. On Holy Island singles were noted on 8th and 29th.

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Highest counts were five at East Chevington on 7th and at Seaton Sluice on 24th (STH/ASJ). Four were reported from Druridge Pools on 18th and three at Cocklawburn on 24th. One to two were also noted at Bamburgh, Boulmer, Cresswell Pond, Hauxley NR, Holy Island, Holywell, Low Newton, Newbiggin, Prestwick Carr, St Mary's and Warkworth Gut.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Small numbers were noted along the coast from 3rd when ten+ were at Dunstanburgh Castle (JEd). Seven were at Newton Point on 4th and six at Seaton Sluice on 7th. Elsewhere on the coast one to three were reported from a further 12 localities. Inland one to two were noted at Backworth, Cottonshope (Otterburn Ranges), Grindon Lough, High Carrick, Howdon Wetland NR and Newcastle (Town Moor)

Dunnoek *Prunella modularis*

18 were trapped and ringed throughout the month at Bamburgh (BRS). Also one to four were seen throughout the month at an Old Hartley garden, St. Mary's Island and a Walbottle garden.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

180 were noted across Holy Island on 20th (ADM). 50 were at Heighley Gate garden centre (Morpeth) on 9th (LJM), 40 throughout the month in a Tynemouth garden (ASJ) and 25 at Horton Grange (Blagdon) on 28th (PCF).

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

120 was the highest total for the month at Black Heddon on 12th (ASJ). 16 were at Cresswell on 26th (ASJ) whilst one to ten were at a further ten sites through the month.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

Five came in to roost at East Chevington on 17th (NFO) whilst one to four were seen at a further 11 sites throughout the month.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Four were at Whittle Dene on 12th (SR) whilst one to three were at a further 21 sites through the month.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

An impressive 80 were at Low Newton on 29th (JPL/RNa). 40 were at Newbiggin on 3rd (IFo), 28 at Grindon Lough on 7th (SJH), 25 at Prestwick Carr on 21st (PCF), 18 at Earsdon on 16th (MNC) and one to ten at a further seven sites throughout the month.

White Wagtail *M. a. alba*

Three were at Seahouses on 8th (DHa) and a single was at Holy Island Village on 29th (JPD).

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi*

An interesting record concerned a single bird flying low west over a Wark garden at 13:50 hours on 8th. It was seen and heard to call three times. (PRM).

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

There were three records for the month, all of singles, at Bakethin on 4th (MD), Holy Island on 25th (MJC) and Newton Pool on 1st (IJ).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

216 flew south in small groups throughout the month at Tynemouth (ASJ). 110 Were at The Snook (Holy Island) on 28th (MJC), 90 in fields at St. Mary's on 25th (ASJ) and 50 at Grindon Lough on 14th (PRM). Groups of between one and 40 were seen heading S throughout the month at a further 20 sites.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

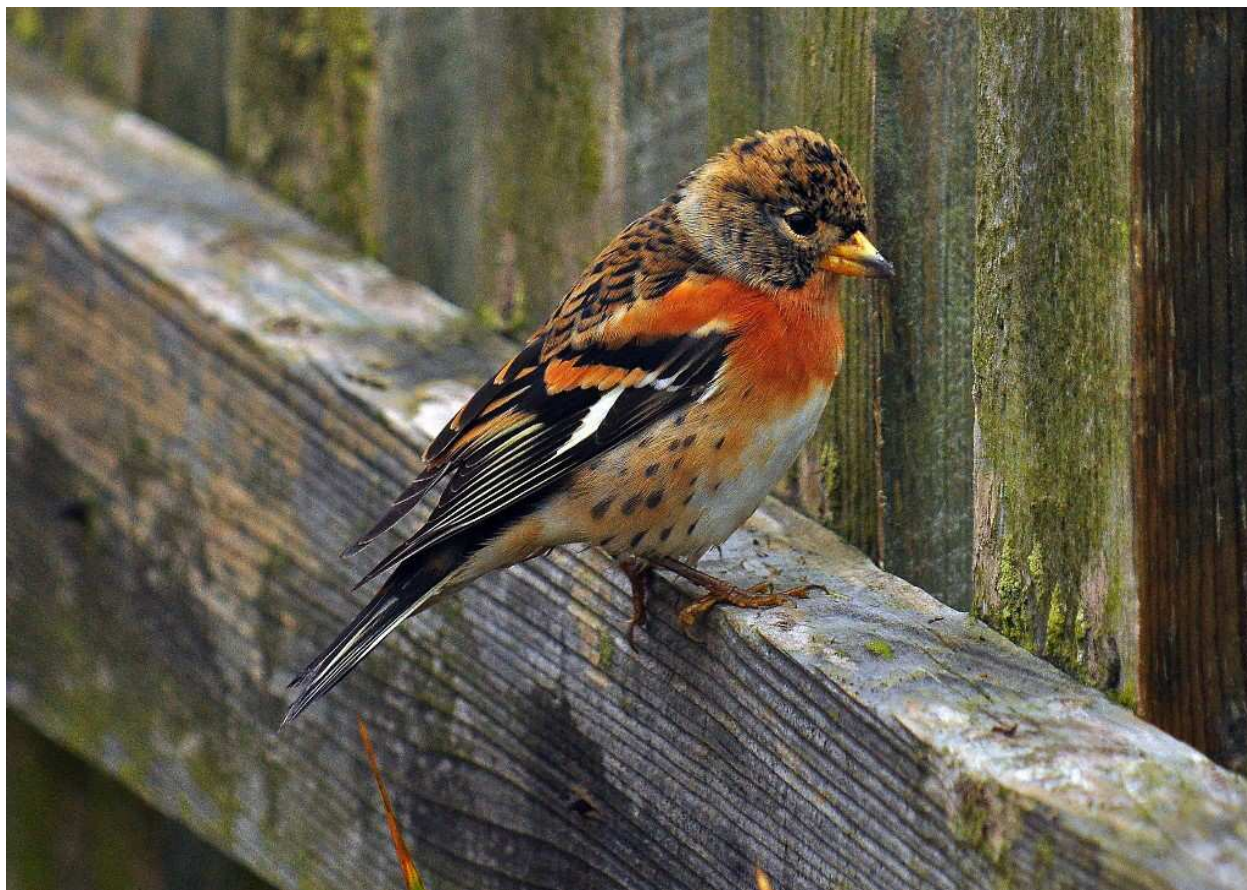
Six were at Tynemouth on 25th (KWY) and one to five at a further five sites throughout the month.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

15 were at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) on 21st (ALT), seven in a Walbottle garden on 1st (KR/LR) and five throughout the month in an Old Hartley garden.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

The largest group of returning birds were 19 on Holy Island on 29th (MJC/ADM). Three were at St. Mary's on 25th (ASJ) and singles at Broomhill on 30th (MD) and Hauxley on 28th (RB/MB).



One of the first Brambling arrivals of the autumn
by Jack Bucknall
St. Mary's
25th September

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

60 were at Lynemouth on 26th (ASJ), 53 at Cresswell on 26th (ASJ) and 30 at St. Mary's on 25th (ASJ). One to 20 were seen at a further four sites throughout the month.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

A charm of 150 were at Big Waters on 13th (AJJ per GB), 120 were at both Cresswell Pond on 3rd (IFo) and Swallow Pond on 2nd (JPD). 100 were at Arcot Pond on 16th (SPP) and St. Mary's Island on 27th (MSH) whilst one to 60 were at a further 11 sites throughout the month.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

50 were at Bakethin on 26th (MD) and ten were at Prestwick Carr on 28th (PCF) whilst one to nine were at a further nine sites throughout the month.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Flocks totalling 450 birds were present throughout the month in fields at Chare Ends (Holy Island). 300 were at St. Mary's on 24th (ASJ), 150 in stubble fields on Crow Hall Lane (Cramlington) on 10th (PJA/LJM) and 120 at Lynemouth on 26th (ASJ) whilst one to 70 were seen at a further ten site throughout the month.

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*

20 flew east at Prestwick Carr on 27th (PCF) whilst one to 11 were seen at a further six sites throughout the month.

Two-barred Crossbill *Loxia leucoptera*

A single juvenile was perched on a stone wall along Stanegate (the road along the southern edge of Grindon Lough), at 07.15h, giving a 'nasal trumpet call' for 15+ seconds before then flying off W giving a 'chip-chip-chip' call on the 14th. It was later looked for in Muckle Moss area but not relocated (PRM).

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Ten were at Bakethin on 26th (MD), three at Holy Island on 25th (SR) and singles at Sleafy Hall (RMH), St. Mary's Island (MSH) and Wark (PRM) throughout the month.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

A high count of 20 were at Bakethin on 20th (MD), 11 at Black Heddon on 5th (ASJ) and ten at Prestwick Carr on 1st (PCF). One to six were noted at a further 16 sites throughout the month.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

The first returning birds were singles at Holy Island North Shore on 13th (IK) and a female on the beach at Warkworth Gut on 14th (NFO). Four were at Newbiggin Beacons on 26th (ADM/AT) and singles were at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower on 23rd (SSWT) and Whitley Bay on 25th (ASJ).



A Snow Bunting at Budle Point
by Chris Knox

Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*

The first returning birds of the autumn were two that arrived from the east at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) on 18th (IK). Two were also at Snipe Point (Holy Island) on 27th (SR) and one at Goswick on 22nd (PRM).

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

The month's highest count was three at Holywell Dene on 16th (RJP) and at Holy Island on 29th (SR/AH) whilst two were at Black Heddon on 12th (ASJ) and a single bird at Wark on 8th (PRM).

Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*

A single bird was at The Snook (Holy Island) on 25th (ADM) and interestingly another, possibly the same, bird was at Chare Ends (Holy Island) on the 29th (SR/AH).

Reed Bunting *Emberiza Schoeniclus*

19 were at St. Mary's on 27th (ASJ), 16 at The Snook (Holy Island) on 14th (MJC) and between one and seven at a further four sites throughout the month

ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN**Escapes****Black Swan** *Cygnus atratus*

One was found at Big Waters on 17th and remained the following day (AJJ / GB).

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*

The four adults seen last month remained at East Chevington until at least 17th (IRD / MSH / JPD) before heading back to Derwent Reservoir again where they were located on 23rd (IFo). Their tour of the county will presumably resume next month.

Hybrids**Saker Falcon x Gyr Falcon** *Falco cherrug x Falco rusticolus*

A large falcon thought to be this falconer's cross was seen repeatedly stooping at birds on the N Pool at East Chevington on 21st (ADMc). It eventually managed to take a Black-tailed Godwit and departed to the west.

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

A group of five were heard at Heaton Park (Newcastle) on 20th and seen well there on 24th (TW). They relocated to Gosforth Garden Village on 26th where they were seen flying S (MJC). This is the largest group seen in the county, possibly a sign of birds spreading from the stronghold around Hartlepool. Also recorded this month were one at Prince Road, Wallsend on 4th and two at Richardson Dees Park, Wallsend on 22nd (JPD). If sightings continue in the Newcastle area the species may need to be re-assessed as genuinely feral birds reaching the county as opposed to the previously thought escapees.

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Bamburgh Ringing Station, Berwick Wildlife Group, North Northumberland Bird Club, 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 (Avocet to Godwit) Ian Forsyth (Turnstone to Skua), Eddie Crabtree (Puffin to Great Black-backed Gull), 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 (Duncock to Corn Bunting), Dan Turner (WeBS Coastal Counts) and Steve Holliday (WeBS Inland Counts).

Thanks to David Sanders of NNBC for providing data.

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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

2013-2014 subscriptions are now overdue. A membership form is attached to this bulletin. Don't forget to use Gift Aid. It costs you nothing.

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. Please submit any new content for the website to the main club email address at ntbcorg@gmail.com

NTBC SIGHTINGS PAGE

The Sightings Page contains current sightings by members. Access is from the NTBC website.

Members need to submit a request to be added to the website, specifying the email address they wish to post from before they can submit sightings to ntbcorg@gmail.com

RED KITE BREEDING SURVEY 2014

2014 marks the tenth anniversary of the start of the re-introduction programme of this spectacular species, absent as a breeder from the north east for some 170 years.

A total of 94 birds from the booming Chilterns population were released over a four-year period in the Derwent Valley with the aim of re-establishing Red Kites as a breeding species across Durham and Northumberland.

Since then I'm sure many members will have enjoyed their presence in the region even though comparatively few seem to get north of the Tyne Valley.

As members will probably realise, after a good start things have not gone as well as hoped. The species has really struggled compared with Britain's other re-introduction projects which have all been very successful.

The project has led to only four breeding records so far in Northumberland and even in the core area in the Derwent Valley and immediately adjacent areas the number of nesting pairs has flat-lined for the past three years. During the first two seasons we believe that kites suffered from the severe winters and were in poor condition for breeding while last spring's very cold conditions cannot have helped.

But there is a more sinister aspect. I am sure that everyone will know that several kites have been found illegally poisoned in Hexhamshire and in County Durham and we suspect that others have also died through persecution. It's really appalling that in the 21st Century we still have people using banned poisons, mainly carbofuran, to wipe out raptors.

Despite these setbacks, the Friends of Red Kites, the voluntary group now responsible for monitoring the population, is planning a major breeding survey in 2014 when we are hoping for better things.

Many club members turned out last March to check localities in the county even though it turned out to be one of the worst days of late winter with freezing temperatures, biting easterly winds and snow cutting off some areas which we planned to check.

We are now appealing for volunteers to take part during 2014. The idea is to allocate particular areas, probably clumps of tetrads where kites have occurred, for coverage. Volunteers will be asked to cover them once a month through from the display period in February/March to end of breeding in June/July in close co-operation with FoRK's ringing team.

Volunteers will choose their own days to operate to take account of weather conditions and their own availability. We realise that it will be a major commitment for everyone concerned but it will enable folk to get to know new or less-frequented birding areas and provide, of course, the opportunity to record many other species. The County Recorder will, I'm sure, bless you!

FoRK will provide copies of maps for areas to be covered and will also, if people feel it is necessary, organise a short training/discussion sessions for those taking part. Anyone who can help with the survey or wants to discuss it can contact me by e-mail at ianisland@blueyonder.co.uk or on 0191-2676974 or at any club meeting

IAN KERR

PS

2014 will mark the 10th Anniversary of the release of the first Red Kite chick in Gateshead's Lower Derwent Valley and the 5th Anniversary of the formation of the Friends of Red Kites.

We have plans to celebrate. One of which is a Photographic competition, which is open to Members, non-Members and Young Persons. Details are on our website at: <http://www.friendsofredkites.org.uk/page14.htm>

NORTHERN EXPERIENCE PELAGIC

Members may be interested in a four-hour sailing around the Farnes and up to Holy Island that Northern Experience are running on Saturday December 7th.

Departing Seahouses Harbour at 10:00h, target species will be **Harbour Porpoise, Grey Seal, Black Guillemot, Long-tailed Duck, Common Scoter, Slavonian Grebe, Red-throated** and **Great Northern Diver** etc.

Cost £35/person.

01670 827465

or martin@newtltd.co.uk to book.

Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

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

Bulletin 2013 No 10

MONTHLY SUMMARY – OCTOBER

3rd December 2013



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Stonechat eyeballs Colin Bradshaw
at Howick



CLASSIFIED LIST HIGHLIGHTS

Balearic Shearwater	Continued sightings during the ideal conditions mid-month
Storm Petrel	Singles at St Mary's Seaton Sluice and Newbiggin
Leach's Petrel	Unusually three sightings this month at Cullercoats, St Mary's and Seaton Sluice
Glossy Ibis	Single over Cresswell Pond on 8th
Rough-legged Buzzard	Single over Fenham Flats on 8th
Long-tailed Skua	Continued passage of juveniles this month
Great Skua	Record-breaking day count of 354 N at Seaton Sluice on 11th
Black Guillemot	Single flew past Newbiggin on 11th
Sabine's Gull	Single juveniles off Seaton Sluice & Holy Island on 11th
Bonaparte's Gull	An adult was found at Bamburgh on 30th and 31st
Barn Owl	Only three sightings all month
Hoopoe	One at Budle Bay on 3rd and 4th
Great Grey Shrike	Singles at Holy Island and Prestwick Carr
Firecrest	One or two at St Mary's and Bamburgh
Pallas's Warbler	Several reports
Yellow-browed Warbler	Continued influx
Eastern Subalpine Warbler	One at Druridge from 4th to 6th, the second county record of this race
Red-breasted Flycatcher	Single at Craster on 1st
Siberian Stonechat	One at Howick from 20th to 23rd
Richard's Pipit	One at the Long Nanny
Hawfinch	A migrant at Whitley Bay on 13th
Parrot Crossbill	Two at Hauxley on 19th

COMMITTEE NEWS

Atlas update follows Classified List-

Duncan Watson will take over from Ian Fisher on the County Records committee in 2014.

Record submissions to NTBC and Bird Track– please see note after Classified List

INDOOR MEETINGS

NTBC indoor meetings are held at Northern Rugby Club, McCracken Park, Great North Road, Newcastle, NE3 2DT starting at 7.00pm and generally finish between 9.00pm-9.30pm. The next meeting is on Thursday 12th December.

Hadrian's Wildlife – Hadrian's Wall is a famous world heritage site but what do we know about the wildlife along this historic corridor? John Miles, well-known author of "Hadrian's Birds", will give a grand, illustrated tour of the wildlife to be found on the land between Carlisle and Wallsend.

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 2011 page 228.

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.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

A total of nine flew N and three S at Seaton Sluice between 19th-21st (SSWT). Largest gatherings were 136 at the Tweed Estuary on 9th (MHu), 96 at New Water Haugh (R. Tweed) on 13th (MHu), 71 at QEII CP Lake on 20th (MHu), 50 at Killingworth Lake (numbers have decreased there since bulk feeding has been discouraged; LJM). Counts of 11-19 came from Big Waters, Budle Bay, Newcastle Leazes Park and West Stobswood Pool, while two to nine were at eight further sites. One at Bakethin Reservoir on 10th was only the tenth record for the locality (MD).

Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus*

Five were at Fenham Flats on 24th (JDL).

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

There were a number of widespread reports, beginning with two at Newton Pool on 8th (TM), 16 at Budle Bay on 9th (MSH), 16 WSW at Rowfoot (PH), 13 at Big Waters (AJJ per GB) and Kielder Water (MD), and one at Derwent Reservoir (IFo) on 10th, and 25 (adults) at Greenlee Lough (MRS) and ten S at Seaton Delaval (JR) on 11th. The largest count was of 31 at Branton GP on 13th and 25 there on 25th (IBDa/KDa), while 20 were at Fenham Flats on 24th (JDL), and ten to 14 at Amble Braid, Bell's and Cresswell Ponds, Monks' House Pool, and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Five to nine were also at Bolam Lake, Bothal Pond, East Chevington, Gosforth Park NR, Grindon Lough and Widdrington Moor Lake, and one to four at Budle Bay, Cheswick, Craggside and Elwick. Movement between 24th-30th involved 15 SW at Scotland Gate (MSK), 13 S at Seaton Sluice (SSWT), three to six S/SW-SE at Boulmer Steel, Briardene, Holy Island and Newbiggin, and five NW near Felton.



Three Whoopers fly past St. Mary's
by Eddie Douglas on 24th

Grey goose (sp.) *anser* (sp.)

50 flew NE at Heddon-on-the-Wall on 11th (MRS).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

A total of 1,352 flew S at Seaton Sluice on 16th-17th, including 1,002 on the latter date (SSWT), 1,200 moved W at Cheswick on 21st (MHu), 1,100 S at Holy Island on 24th (IK), 729 S at Hauxley between 4th-23rd (HRS), a total of 730 W/NW at East Ord on 16th and 20th (MHu), 340 N at Cocklawburn on 16th (MHu), and 286-300 S at Bamburgh and Druridge on 5th and 28th (GB/AJ). Groups of 119-200 flew S over Craster, Meadow Haven and St Mary's, and 11-70 (including some N) over seven further coastal sites, and a skein was heard over Wark at 2115h on 5th (PRM).

Peak concentrations were 2,500 at Holy Island on 24th (SJH), 2,100 roosting at Budle Bay between 3rd-6th (CGK), about 1,200 at Cresswell on 15th (TRD), 1,000 at East Chevington on 5th (RB/MB), 1,000 at Doddington on 12th-13th (DGB/RHB/JD), 300-500 at Druridge Links, Elwick, Hauxley Reserve and Holywell Pond, and 130 at Widdrington Station.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

Two adults of the *flavirostris* race were at Grindon Lough on 24th (PRM).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Peak counts were 450 at Holywell on 31st (MNC), 380 at Castron on 13th (TRD), 310 at Hauxley Reserve on 22nd (HRS), 104-126 at Big Waters (GB) and Cheswick (MHu), and 52-81 at Budle Bay, Grindon Lough, Monks' House Pool and Prestwick Carr and Spital (Newbiggin). One to five were at Arcot Pond, Bradford Kaims and Holy Island. An interesting report concerned four, thought to be of the eastern *rubirostris* race, at Grindon Lough on 29th (SJH).

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

17 flew E at Wark on 21st (PRM). Hauxley Reserve held a peak of 300 on 12th and 22nd, and 150-200 on several other dates between 5th-23rd (HRS), 246 were at Grindon Lough on 31st (SJH), 152 at Bothal Pond on 7th (TF/JFa), 54 at both Holywell (MNC) and QEII CP Lake (CDH), and ten to 19 at Newcastle Leazes Park and Prestwick Carr. One to three were also at Bywell Haughs, East Chevington and West Hartford.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Coastal passage involved 92 N at St Mary's (AC/MSH) and 53 N at Snab Point (TRC) on 10th, and 60 N and 11 S at Seaton Sluice on 9th-10th (SSWT), while 158 flew S in two flocks at the Tweed Estuary on 9th (MHu). Numbers at Budle Bay varied from 11 on 4th (CGK) to 253 on 9th (MSH), 800 on 29th (SMA) and one on 30th (MSH), 42 were at Elwick on 26th (ASJ), 400 at Fenham Flats on 13th (IBDa/KDa), 40 over Lucker on 14th (JHa), and ten to 17 at Cresswell, East Chevington and Woodhorn Flashes. One to three were at/over Branton GP, Grindon Lough, Hauxley Reserve and Holywell Pond.

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

About 3,000 pale-bellied *hrota* race birds were at Lindisfarne NNR during the month (IK), 20 flew N at St Mary's on 11th (MSH/AC/JBu), and three were resting in the car park area there on 10th and 12th (MSH/ASJ).

Records of dark-bellied *bernicla* race birds concerned 90-100 regularly feeding on a *zostera* bed at Lindisfarne NNR (IK), seven S at Berwick Little Beach on 17th (MHu), and one to two at Newbiggin and St Mary's. A total of 32 N at Seaton Sluice between 1st-19th were mostly of the *bernicla* race (SSWT)

Un-raced birds included 2,300 at Lindisfarne NNR on 24th (SJH), 22 N at Newbiggin (TRC/IFo) and four N at Snab Point (IFo) on 11th.

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Two flew N at Newbiggin on 11th (TRC). Numbers at Budle Bay varied from 342 on 3rd (CGK) to 557 on 6th (TM), 443 on 17th (MSH), 395 on 26th (ASJ) and 286 on 30th (MSH). Fenham Flats held 271 on 26th (ASJ), and two were at the Blyth and Tweed Estuaries.

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was an above-average 1,453 N and 31 S (SSWT), 435 flew N at Newbiggin between 11th-15th (TRC/GB/STH/JR *et al.*), 239 N at St Mary's between 10th-14th (MSH/AC/JBu), 198 N at Hauxley Reserve on 15th (HRS), and 11-32 N at Cullercoats and Snab Point.

The Fenham Flats area of Lindisfarne NNR held 6,000 on 5th (CGK) and 5,000 on 8th (TRD/JD) and 26th (ASJ), 620 were at Grindon Lough on 5th (PRM), 475 at Big Waters on 19th (AJJ per GB), 100-150 at Cresswell Pond, Derwent Reservoir and Gosforth Park NR, and 54-89 at Bothal Pond, Hauxley Reserve, Hoppen Kiln and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Counts of 30-41 came from Arcot Pond and Cragside, and three to 12 were at six further sites.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Big Waters attracted a peak of 102 on 19th (a site record; AJJ per GB), 51 were at Hauxley Reserve on 13th (HRS), 27 at East Chevington on 30th (STH), and ten at Arcot (LJM) and Linton Ponds (CDH). Three to five were at Branton GP, Cresswell Pond, Marden Quarry, QEII CP Lake, St Mary's and West Stobswood Pool, and one to two at Grindon Lough, Shield on the Wall and Woodhorn Flashes. More unusual were a pair at Union Bridge on the River Tweed on 7th (TBr).

Teal *Anas crecca*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was 125 N and 81 S (SSWT), 86 flew N at St Mary's between 10th-12th (MSH/AC/JBu), 37 N at Newbiggin on 11th-12th (GB/TRC/STH *et al.*), and 36 S at Cocklawburn on 19th (MHu). A count of 689 at Monks' House Pool on 5th coincided with a high tide roost (TM). Other peak concentrations were 550 at Budle Bay on 5th (CGK), 489 at Grindon Lough on 9th (SJH), 355 at Derwent Reservoir on 13th (IFo), 330 at Widdrington Moor Lake on 27th (AT), 200-250 at Cresswell Pond (MSH) and Holy Island 'rocket field' (IK), and 100-198 at Arcot Pond (STH), Hauxley Reserve (HRS) and Howdon Wetland NR (CB). Counts of 55-96 came from Bothal and Holywell Ponds, Hallington Reservoir, Holy Island Lough, Longhirst Flash and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, while 24-48 were at Big Waters, Elswick, Hoppen Kiln, and Linton and Middle Ord Ponds.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

A total of 43 flew N and four S at Seaton Sluice between 10th-25th (SSWT), 18 N at St Mary's on 11th-12th (MSH/AC/JBu), and 12 N at Newbiggin between 11th-13th (GB/TRC/STH *et al.*). Grindon Lough attracted a peak of 285 on 5th (PRM), 205 were at Derwent Reservoir on 9th (IFo), 151 at Big Waters on 12th (AJJ per GB), 102-138 at Cocklawburn Pond (MHu), St Mary's Wetland (ASJ), the Tweed Estuary (MHu) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs (SR), and 60-86 at Bothal Pond, Jesmond Dene (including Paddy Freeman's Park), Killingworth Lake, Longhirst Flash, Newcastle Leazes Park and QEII CP Lake. Counts of 20-46 came from Byker, Elswick, Greenlee Lough, Hauxley Reserve, Linton Ponds, Newcastle Civic Centre and Widdrington Moor Lake, and 11-15 from Holy Island Lough, Old Hartley and Prestwick Carr.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

At St Mary's, 11 flew N on 2nd and six N on 12th (ASJ/SPP), two moved N at Seaton Sluice between 10th-12th (SSWT) and one N at Hauxley on 15th (HRS). Counts at East Chevington varied from 14 on 2nd to 28 on 6th, 21 on 16th, 12 on 22nd and six by 31st (ADM *et al.*), presumably as a result of on-going passage. Grindon Lough held a peak of 12 (four drakes) between 18th-20th (PRM), eight were at Holy Island Lough on 10th (IK), and three to four at Cresswell Pond (TRD/MSH) and St Mary's Wetland (PJA/AC/SPP *et al.*), and one to two at Big Waters, Budle Bay, Caistron, Derwent and Hallington Reservoirs, Druridge Pools, Gosforth Park NR.

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Surprisingly, the largest count of the month involved a sea-watching record: 23 N at Seaton Sluice (SSWT) and then Newbiggin (TRC/IFo) on 11th. Gosforth Park NR held a peak of 16 on 24th (NHSN), 13 were at Holy Island Lough on 13th (ADM), 12 at Hauxley Reserve on 1st (IFo), 12 at Monks' House Pool on 30th (TRD/JD/MSH), seven at Linton Ponds (CDH), and four to five at Big Waters (AJJ per GB) and East Chevington (TRD/JD). One to two were also at Arcot Pond,

Grindon Lough, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Woodhorn Flashes. More unusual was one at Derwent Reservoir on 19th (only the second record for the observer in ten years; IFo).

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

One flew N at Newbiggin on 12th (GB). Numbers were again very low, with peaks of five at Ladyburn Lake on 11th (IFo) and QEII CP Lake on 20th (CDH), three at Airy Holm Reservoir on 3rd (IFo) and three at Hauxley Reserve on 7th (TRD/JD). One to two were also at Big Waters, Branton GP, Cocklawburn Pond, and Greenlee and Grindon Loughs.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

A total of 18 flew N at Seaton Sluice between 11th-14th (SSWT), and 11 flew N and one S at Newbiggin on 11th-12th (GB/TRC). East Chevington attracted 60 on 20th (IRD), 54 were at Killingworth Lake on 19th (LJM), 50 at Greenlee Lough on 11th (MRS), 38 at QEII CP Lake (CDH), 22 at Bywell Haughs (PRM), and ten to 18 at Airy Holm and Derwent Reservoirs, Bothal and Linton Ponds, and Newcastle Exhibition Park. One to nine were also at eleven further sites.

Scaup *Aythya marila*

Four flew N at St Mary's (MSH) and Newbiggin (ADM_c) on 14th, and two N at Seaton Sluice between 8th-11th (SSWT). Five were at Spittal Bay on 31st (MHu), and one to two at Cresswell Pond (JD/ADM_c), Druridge Pools (JD), East Chevington north pool (IJ/ADM_c/NFO *et al.*), Hauxley Reserve (TRD/JD/IFo *et al.*) and Stag Rocks (RB/MB) between 1st-31st.

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

A total of 70 flew N and 14 S at Seaton Sluice between 11th-28th (SSWT), and eight moved N at St Mary's on 11th-12th (MSH/AC/JBu). 500+ were at Stag Rocks on 4th (CGK), 259 were in the Stag Rocks-Budle Bay area on 6th (ADM), 124 at Cheswick on 29th (MHu), 36 at Berwick pier (MHu), 15-16 at Berwick North Shore, Howick and the Tweed Estuary, and four at Tynemouth.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

A total of 15 moved N at Seaton Sluice between 10th-23rd (SSWT), six N at Newbiggin on 11th-12th (GB/TRC/IFo), five N at St Mary's on 10th-11th (MSH/AC/JBu), and one to two N at Cullercoats (CGK), Snab Point (JL) and Tynemouth (DRW) between 10th-12th. Seven were at Stag Rocks on 17th (IBDa/KDa) and two to four on 30th-31st (TRD/JD/TF/JFa), and singles at Cresswell Pond between 20th-25th, Boulmer-Seaton Point on 31st and Holy Island causeway on 21st.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

A higher than average October total at Seaton Sluice consisted of 2,587 N and 296 S (SSWT), 615 flew N and 25 S at Newbiggin between 11th-15th (GB/TRC/STH/JR *et al.*), 465 N at St Mary's between 10th-14th (MSH/AC/JBu/TRC), 417 N at Tynemouth on 12th (SPP), and 205-221 N at Cullercoats (CB/CGK) and Snab Point (TF/JFa/JL) between 10th-12th. Stag Rocks held 250+ on 17th (BRS), 164 were at Cheswick on 16th (MHu), 80-92 at Cocklawburn (MHu) and Druridge (JD), and 60 at Seaton Sluice (PJA). More unusual were three on Cresswell Pond on 17th (AJR) and one at Druridge Pools on 13th and 15th (IRD/TRD).

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was 73 N and four S, including 19 N and three S on 11th (SSWT), 52 flew N at Newbiggin between 10th-18th (TRC/GB/ADM_c/STH *et al.*) and 17 N at St Mary's between 11th-14th (MSH/AC/JBu *et al.*). Nine to ten flew N at Hauxley (NFO), Holy Island (IK/PRM) and Tynemouth (SPP/DRW), and two to four N at Berwick pier, Cullercoats and Snab Point between 10th-12th. Nine were at Holy Island (eight at Snipe Point and one at Emmanuel Head) on 10th (SR), five at St Mary's on 9th (ASJ), and one at Stag Rocks.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was an unremarkable 26 N (SSWT), 19 moved N at Newbiggin between 11th-13th (GB/TRC/AT *et al.*), ten N at St Mary's on 11th-12th (MSH/AC/JBu/TRC), and six N and five S at Cullercoats on 12th (CB/CGK). Nine were at East Chevington on 23rd (TRD/JD), seven to eight at Bolam Lake (TRD/JD), Bakethin (MD) and Derwent (IFo) Reservoirs, and West Ord (MHu) from 19th, and three to five at Grindon Lough, Hauxley Reserve and Stag Rocks. One to two were also at Cocklawburn and Swallow Ponds, Druridge Pools, New Water Haugh, Spittal Bay and West Stobswood Pool. More unusual was one at Newcastle Exhibition Park during early morning fog on 16th (GB).

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

At Seaton Sluice, 14 flew N and seven S during the month (SSWT), and ten moved N at Newbiggin (GB/TRC/AT) and seven N at St Mary's (MSH/AC/JBu) between 11th-13th. Ten were at Holy Island on 1st (TRD), ten at Budle Bay on 17th (MSH), seven at Stag Rocks on 17th (BRS), three to four at Cresswell Pond, Hauxley Reserve and the Wansbeck Estuary, and one at Cocklawburn Pond.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

A notable flock of 29 flew S at East Chevington on 17th (ADM_c), and four flew N and two S at Seaton Sluice between 10th-15th (SSWT) when one to two flew N at Newbiggin (JR) and Snab Point (TRC). Four moved S at Newbiggin (over the town) on 19th (TRC). Peak counts were 33 at the Tweed Estuary on 9th (MHu), 26 at West Ord on 13th (MHu), 16 at Rothbury on 11th (JD), and 12 at the Blyth Estuary (LJM). Three to five were at Berwick North Shore, Derwent Reservoir, Doddington, Jesmond Dene, Newcastle Exhibition Park and Thrum Mill. One to two were also at Big Waters, Budle Bay, East Chevington, Hauxley Reserve, Mozie Law (Border Ridge), Rothbury, Snab Point and Widdrington Moor Lake.

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

Only two records were received both being counts of 12 at Byerhope Bank (Allendale) on 2nd (JMA) and on Alnwick Moor on 31st (TRD/JD).

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

Two males were in roadside fields at Derwent Reservoir on 23rd with one present from 18th-25th (IFo). A female was at Byerhope Bank on 2nd (JMA).

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

A large gathering of 114 was at Scrainwood Farm (Upper Coquetdale) on 6th (JR). 24 were at Longwitton on 28th (IRD) and 15 in the Harthope Valley on 3rd (JMA).

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

The peak count was 29 at Big Waters on 24th (ISD per GB). 12 were at Hauxley NR on 5th (HRS) and counts of ten came from High Chibburn (Druridge) on 1st (IFo), West Chevington on 13th (JD) and Spittal (Newbiggin) on 19th (GB). Eight were at Elwick on 5th (CGK) and seven at Billylaw (Ord Moor) on 27th (MHu). Six were in Budle Bay on 4th and at Druridge Pools on 20th and Howick on 21st. One to two were noted at Doddington, Hadston Links, High Carrick (Elsdon) and Waren Mill Caravan Park.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

At Scrainwood Farm 201 were present on 6th (JR). 29 were at Greenside Hill (Upper Breamish Valley) on 13th (JR) and counts of 23 came from The Raw (Hepple) on 19th (JR) and Hauxley on 26th (HRS). Six, a high count for the site, were at Grindon Lough on 11th (MRS) and five were in a garden at Walbottle on 13th (KR/LR). Two were at Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene) on 19th and a male found at the base of Tynemouth Pier on 12th was still present in the observer's Tynemouth garden on 20th (CB).

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

During the month 160 flew N and 61 flew S at Seaton Sluice with a peak of 46 N and four S on 11th (SSWT). At Newbiggin 39 flew N on 11th (TRC), 36 flew N on 12th (GB/JGS/LAR *et al.*) with five on 17th and three on 13th. At St Mary's Island 22 were noted on 9th (ASJ), 19 N and one S on 11th (MSH/AC/JBu), with eight N in one hour on 14th, four N and three S on 12th and two N on 10th. At Snab Point 15+ were seen on 11th (JL) with eight noted on 5th (MSK), five on 15th and two N on 10th. 15 flew N at Hauxley on 12th with a single N there on 19th and one S on 20th (HRS). At Cullercoats 11 flew N on 12th (CGK) and six on 11th (CB). Elsewhere four flew N at Beadnell on 13th and one at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) on 11th. Eight were offshore at Newbiggin on 15th (JR) and five at Cheswick Black Rocks on 24th (MHu). One to four were noted at Berwick (Meadow Haven and Spittal Bay), Budle Point, Druridge, Emmanuel Head (Holy Island), Hauxley, Stag Rocks and the Tweed Estuary).

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

This species was well reported this month with four N at Seaton Sluice from 12th–31st (SSWT), three N at Newbiggin on 11th (TRC) when two flew N at St Mary's Island (JBu/AC) and Cullercoats (CB) and two flew N at Newbiggin on 12th (STH/JGS/DD). At Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) singles flew S on 1st (PH) and N on 12th (IK) when singles flew N at St Mary's Island (ASJ) and King Edward's Bay (Tynemouth) (SPP) and at Beadnell on 13th (JR).

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

At Seaton Sluice 11 flew N from 11th–29th (SSWT), whilst at Newbiggin eight flew N on 11th (ADMc/TRC) with three N there on 12th (STH/JGS/DD). Two flew N at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) on 12th (PRM) and singles flew N at Snab Point on 11th (JL) and on 12th at Tynemouth (SPP), St Mary's Island (MSH), Snab Point (TF/JFa) and at Hauxley (NFO).

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

On 11th 13 'blue' phase birds flew N at Newbiggin (TRC) and three at Cullercoats (CB). One 'blue' phase bird flew N at Seaton Sluice on 14th (SSWT).

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

Significant N passage was noted especially around the middle of the month. At Seaton Sluice 171 were noted on 11th and 63 on 10th and a single on 14th (SSWT). Elsewhere on 11th 68 were seen at Newbiggin (TRC), a minimum of 38 at St Mary's Island (JBu/AC/MSH), 20+ at Snab Point (JL), two N at Cullercoats and one at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island). On 10th 23 passed Cullercoats in one hour (CB) and seven were seen at St Mary's Island (MSH/AC/JBu). Two passed Hauxley on 12th and Newbiggin on 15th and singles were noted at Snab Point and Emmanuel Head on 10th, Cullercoats on 12th and Beadnell on 13th.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

At Seaton Sluice 76 flew N on 11th, seven on 10th and one on 14th (SSWT). Also on 11th 55 flew N at St Mary's Island (TRC/MSH/AC/JBu), 25 flew N at Snab Point (JL), two at Berwick Pier and one at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island). On 10th eight flew N at Cullercoats (CB), and one at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island), whilst on 12th three flew N at St Mary's Island, two at Cullercoats and Newbiggin and one at Emmanuel Head.

***Balearic Shearwater** *Puffinus mauretanicus*

On 11th two flew N at Newbiggin (ADMc) and Seaton Sluice (BB per SSWT) and at St Mary's Island (MSH/AJ).

Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

Singles flew N at St Mary's Island on 9th (ASJ/JM), 10th (AC) and on 11th (NPD) and at Newbiggin on 11th (TRC/DD) and Seaton Sluice (per SSWT).

***Leach's Petrel** *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

Singles were seen flying N at Cullercoats on 12th (CB) and on 14th at St Mary's Island (MSH) and Seaton Sluice (per SSWT).

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

At Berwick Pier 1,800/hour flew N in a northerly gale on 11th, whilst on 1st 1,000/hour flew S at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) (TRD). At Hauxley 180/hour flew N on 13th (HRS), 48 flew N on 20th (IRD) and 20 were noted on 15th (TRD). One to ten were noted on six further dates at Hauxley, Howick, Snab Point, Spittal Bay, Spittal Bay, Stag Rocks and unusually on Ladyburn Lake, where a juvenile was repeatedly preening itself on 1st.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

At Newbiggin 33 flew S in 2 hours on 12th (STH/JGS/DD) and one flew S over Prestwick Carr on 30th (PCF). Peak counts were 47 at Blyth Harbour on 19th (STH), 36 at Derwent Reservoir on 5th (IFo), 19 at New Water Haugh (River Tweed) on 13th, 17 in the Tweed Estuary on 9th (MHu) and 13 in the evening roost during the month at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN). Nine were at Big Waters on 6th (AJJ per GB), eight at Berwick North Shore on 10th (MHu) and seven at Hauxley NR on 13th (HRS). One to four were seen at Arcot Pond, East Chevington, Elswick Wharf, Newburn Haugh, Newcastle Quayside area, Prudhoe Riverside CP, St Mary's Island, Wark and Wylam.

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

At Seaton Sluice 13 flew N and one S from 11th-28th (SSWT). At Stag Rocks 150+ were present on 17th (BRS) with 40 to 50 there on 8th/30th (TRD/JD). Two were at Berwick North Shore on 10h (MHu).

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Two were regularly seen at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN). Singles were seen at East Chevington on 1st (MSK/NEWT) and 23rd (JD/TRD) and Cresswell Pond on 27th (IRD). An unusual sighting was of one flying S over Seghill, just above roof-top height, at 02:00a.m on 4th (IF).

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

One flew S at Seaton Sluice on 27th (SSWT). The peak count in the Lindisfarne NNR area was five at Fenham-le-Moor (IK et al.). Up to four were in the Holy Island-Budle Bay area on 16 further dates (Many Observers). Elsewhere numbers at Whiteadder Water, New Mills (Berwick) peaked at five on 22nd with smaller numbers present throughout the month (TBr). One to two were noted at Arcot Pond, East Chevington North Pool, Gosforth Park NR, Tweed Estuary and West Hartford.

A record of five in WeBS at West Allotment Pond on the **20th August** (CGK) "should have referred to Mute Swan not Little Egret".

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

At Seaton Sluice six flew S on 4th and four flew N in the period 4th-20th (SSWT). The peak counts were 34 in the Tweed Estuary on 9th (MHu), 23 at Howdon Wetland NR on 5th (CB), 10 at Gosforth Park NR throughout the month (NHSN) and North Blyth on 31st (MSH) and nine at Boulmer on 5th (RB/MB) and Hauxley on 13th (HRS). Five were regularly seen in Holywell Dene (RJP). One to three were seen at Acton Cleugh, Arcot Pond, Berwick North Shore, Chollerford, Elswick Wharf, Howick, Humford Mill, Leazes Park (Newcastle), Linton Ponds, Northumberland Park (North Shields), Prudhoe Tyne Riverside CP, QEII Lake, St Mary's Island and Wark.



A Grey Heron has a bathe
Howdon Wetland by Colin Bradshaw

***Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus*

One was seen flying W over Cresswell Pond before being lost to view just before 13:00h on 8th (JSB/JC).



The Cresswell Pond Glossy Ibis photographed by John Clark on 8th October

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

The peak counts were 12 at Big Waters on 6th (AJJ *per* GB), 10 at Hauxley NR on 13th (HRS), nine at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 27th (SR) and six at East Chevington on 23rd (TRD/JD) and Bakethin Reservoir on 25th (MD). Four were at Gosforth Park NR throughout the month (NHSN) and at Derwent Reservoir on 10th and Airey Holm Reservoir on 19th (IFo). One to three were noted at Bothal Pond, Craggside, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Linton Ponds, Holy Island Lough and Marden Quarry.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

At Seaton Sluice two flew S and one N in the period 11th-27th (SSWT). Singles flew N at Newbiggin and St Mary's Island on 11th. The peak count of only four was at Derwent Reservoir on 2nd (IFo). Three were at Branton GP on 13th (IBDa/KDa), Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 18th (SR) and QEII Lake on 20th (CDH). Two (one juvenile) were off Tripping Chare (Holy Island) on 13th (SR) and at Big Waters on 18th/19th (AJJ *per* GB). Singles were noted at Airey Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield), Bothal Pond, Blyth Estuary, East Chevington, Ladyburn Lake, Newbiggin, St Cuthbert's Island (Holy island), Stag Rocks and offshore in Druridge Bay and King Edward's Bay (Tynemouth).

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

Two flew N at Seaton Sluice on 11th (SSWT). Two were in the Tweed Estuary on 9th and at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 14th (MHu). Singles were noted at Stag Rocks on 6th (RB/MB), St Mary's Island on 9th/10th (ASJ) and off Newbiggin (ASH) and Tripping Chare (Holy Island) on 13th (SR).

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

Two were off St Cuthbert's Island (Holy Island) on 25th (IK). Singles were at Fenham Flats on 5th (CGK), offshore at Seaton Sluice on 8th (SSWT) and on East Chevington North Pool from 16th-31st (ADM *et al.*).

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Two birds drifted NE at Low Waskerley on 8th (IFo), single birds were noted at Sleaford Hall on 20th (RMH) and Derwent Reservoir on 22nd (IFo).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

A ring-tail flew in off the sea at St Mary's Island and flew high W on 5th (Jbu/BD/BrR). Other sightings were at Holy Island and involved a male found by a visiting RSPB group (IK) and a male at a confidential site on 30th and 31st (TRD/JD).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

A bird was being mobbed at Prestwick Carr whilst perched up on 26th (*per* PCF)

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Two to three birds were at Hauxley Ringing Station during the month (HRS), and two were also seen at Budle Bay (CGK), Gosforth Park NR (NHSN), Holywell Dene (RJP) and Scotland Gate (SLB/MSK) throughout the month. Three birds were seen on Holy Island on 1st (ADM) and two birds were there on 2nd (MJC) and at Newbiggin Golf Course on 15th (MJC). Single birds were noted at 12 sites including a juvenile which spent two days devouring a Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus* which was killed by a cat at Tynemouth (CB).



A Sparrowhawk commandeers a bird-bath in a Tynemouth garden
by Colin Bradshaw

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Five birds were at Widdrington Moor Lake on 27th (AT), four birds were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 6th (SR) and at Widdrington Moor Lake on 24th (MSH). Two birds were at Scotland Gate throughout the month (SLB/MSK) and two were also noted at Bellshiel, Breamish Valley (Ingram), Grindon Lough, Harwood Gate (Harwood), Ridlees Cairn, Spindlestone and Wooler. Records of single birds came from 14 sites.

Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus*

A single bird was reported from Fenham Flats on 8th (DGB)

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Up to five birds were on Holy Island throughout the month (MJC/ADM/PRM) and up to five were also noted at Widdrington Moor Lake (MSH/AT). Three birds were seen at Big waters on 20th (GB) and Prestwick Carr on 21st and 24th (PCF/MRS). Two birds were seen at Elwick (ASJ) and Grindon Lough (PRM) and single birds were seen at Boulmer, Catcleugh Reservoir, East Woodburn and Rough Castle (Thrunton).

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Three birds involving an adult male and two juv. females were noted on Holy Island during the month (IK/TF/JFa). Singles were noted at or near the coast at East Chevington on 17th (AJR), Lucker and St Mary's Island on 26th (JHa/SPP), Fenham-le-Moor on 29th and 30th (SR/TD/JRD) and at Beal on 29th (SR).

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Holy Island had a maximum of three birds during the month (IK *et al.*) and two birds were noted at Budle Day throughout the month (CGK/IF/JPD). Single birds were noted at 19 sites including an immature which caught a Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* at Cresswell Pond on 7th (TRD/JD) but dropped it.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Five birds were at Gosforth Park NR during the month (NHSN), while Cresswell Pond had a maximum of three birds on 31st (ADM *et al.*). Two birds were noted at East Chevington North Pool on 6th and 17th (ADMc), St Mary's Wetland on 24th (AC) and Swallow Pond on 31st (SPP). Single birds were seen or heard at Arcot Pond, Backworth, and Big Water & Prestwick Carr during the month.

Corncrake *Crex crex*

A bird showed for a few minutes in the cut in the reeds in front of the top hide at the North Pool (East Chevington) on 1st (JSB/JC).

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Arcot Pond peaked at 35 birds on 13th (LJM/DM), while 13 were at QEII CP on 20th (CDH) and 11 were at Bothal Pond on 13th (TD). One to seven birds were seen at eight other sites.

Coot *Fulica atra*

Once again the highest counts this month came from QEII CP which had 189 birds on 20th (CDH) and 108 at Killingworth Lake on 19th (LJM). 66 birds were at Woodhorn Flash on 26th (AT), 62 at Big Waters on 25th (ISD *per* GB). 14 birds were at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 15th (DM) and four were at Bothal Pond on 13th (TD), two were at Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 7th (DM) and Hauxley NR on 13th (HRS). Single birds were at St Mary's Wetland and North Pool (E Chevington) (IJ).

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

The high-tide roost at St Cuthbert's Island (Holy Island) attracted the highest gathering with ca.600 noted on 1st (IK) and ca.500 on 13th (TRD/JD). Up the coast at Berwick North Shore some 266 were present on 10th (MHu) whilst, to the south, 180 were counted at the high-tide roost in Budle Bay on 3rd (CGK). Regular counts at Hauxley NR included a peak of 56 on 14th (HRS); 20 were at roost on North Blyth Staithes on 31st (MSH), 12 were on the Tweed Estuary on 9th (MHu) and a single bird was noted on three dates at Derwent Reservoir with the last sighting on 23rd considered as being 'exceptionally late' (IFo).

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Large numbers were present at St Mary's during the first half of the month at least, when the peak of 3,000 was noted on 6th (AC). Large numbers were also noted at Holy Island throughout the month and a high of ca.2,500 was recorded on 24th (SJH). Another strong gathering was 1,200 at Boulmer on 28th (TRD/JD). The Druridge Bay area also held good numbers; 860 were counted at Druridge hamlet on 13th (IRD), 760 flew S at Hauxley NR on 17th (HRS) and 500 were at East Chevington on 20th (IRD). Grindon Lough attracted varying numbers throughout the month and 760 (+/-40) on the 6th was the highest (AJR). Flocks of 180-300 were also noted at Adderstone, Barmoor, the Blyth Estuary and Newbiggin (Beacon Point) and 25-80 were also seen at Bell's Farm pond (Cresswell), Brunswick, Cocklawburn, Linden Hall, Loughoughton (Low Steads), Tynemouth Priory area and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Inland, four were noted at Dudlees on the Otterburn Ranges on 19th (JR).



Two Golden Plover photographs from St. Mary's in late October
Left: a group in flight by Eddie Douglas and right: two birds for the price of one by Alan Jack

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

The high-tide roost in Budle Bay held 84 on 3rd (CGK), whilst a series of counts from Holy Island Causeway peaked at 55 on 26th (SJH). Elsewhere, five were at Howick on 20th (TF/JFa), four at Boulmer on 5th (RB/MB) and one to three at Berwick North Shore, Newbiggin (Beacon Point) and Tynemouth (two N on 12th).

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Some increasing flock sizes were noted this month, along with passage birds which included 400 heading S at Hauxley NR on 17th (HRS) plus 25 S on 20th and 70 W on 27th at Big Waters (GB). Grindon Lough held the largest group peaking at ca.1,000 on 31st (SJH), followed by 700 at East Chevington on 5th (ASJ), 600 at Cresswell Pond on 30th (ASJ) and 550 at both Derwent Reservoir on 20th (IFo) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 6th (SR). Additional good sized flocks involved 144-380 at Arcot Pond, Budle Bay, Bywell Haughs, Cocklawburn, Holy Island causeway, Old Hartley, St Mary's, Tweed Estuary and Widdrington Moor Lake; 23-39 were noted at High Hauxley, Howdon Wetland NR and West Hartford, with lower numbers at four further sites.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Holy Island Causeway provided the majority of large counts this month with ca.250 on 26th the highest (SJH). Roosting birds on a factory roof in Blyth harbour numbered 94 on 27th (LJM). In the north, 48 were at Cocklawburn on 24th and 42 at Berwick North Shore on 10th (MHu). Low water at East Chevington north pool attracted 36 on 1st (IFo), 31 were at St Mary's Island on 31st (MSH), 18 at Cheswick Black Rocks on 29th (MHu), whilst inland were four at Hallington Reservoir on 3rd (AJR) and one at Grindon Lough on 29th (SJH).

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

A single bird was at St Mary's Island on 5th (MSH).

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

The peak from Holy Island Causeway was ca.250 on 19th (SJH) and to the north were 93 on the Tweed Estuary on 9th (MHu). Some 80+ were seen from Harper's Heugh (near Budle Bay) on 9th (MSH), 70 on 12th was the maximum at Hauxley NR (HRS), 32 were at Berwick North Shore on 10th (MHu), 21 flew W up the River Tyne at Elswick on 15th (GB) and a single was noted at St Mary's Island.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Small numbers remained in the Blyth estuary, with six on 6th (GB) and five on 20th (LJM). Arcot Pond attracted four on 13th (LJM), three were at Monks' House Pool on 5th (TM) and East Chevington on 7th (AA/MH) and one to two were noted at Budle Bay (until 6th), Fenham-le-Moor, Holy Island Lough, Low Newton, Tweed Estuary and Warkworth Gut.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Reports from Holy Island included ca.400 on 1st (TRD) and 1,000+ on 26th (ASJ), whilst the only other double-digit counts involved 14 at Berwick North Shore on 10th (MHu), 12 in Newbiggin north bay on 1st (ADM) and 11 at Hauxley NR/beach on 23rd (HRS). Three to five were noted at the Blyth Estuary, Budle Bay, Cheswick Black Rocks, Cresswell Pond and Snab Point (Cresswell), whilst one to two were also seen at East Chevington, St Mary's Island and the Tweed Estuary.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Counts at Stag Rocks increased from 35+ on 3rd to 60 on 31st (CGK/AJ/IF); 57 were at Berwick, North Shore on 10th and 32 in the Tweed Estuary on 9th (MHu). Twelve were St Mary's on 26th, 11 at Hauxley NR on 14th, ten at Cocklawburn on 24th and six at Cheswick on 29th. One or two were noted at four other locations including singles at Cresswell Pond on 7th and Howdon Wetland NR on 13th.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

The majority of reports came from Stag Rocks with 34 on 8th, 51 on 9th and still around that number on 30th (TRD/JD/MSH *et al.*). Six or fewer occurred at Boulmer, Cocklawburn and Hauxley NR.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

At East Chevington South Pool 19 arrived on 7th (TRD/JD) where water was just about low enough to produce mud in the middle for them to pitch down on. Six were at Cresswell Pond on 1st (IFo) and one was noted there on 13th. East Chevington North Pool held four on 1st, six on 5th (RB/MB), four on 6th and two on 17th. Singles appeared at Hallington Reservoir on 3rd, in Budle Bay on 5th, Holy Island causeway on 24th and at St Mary's on 28th.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Two, adult and juvenile, were present at East Chevington on 1st (MSK/NEWT) with reports suggesting that the juvenile lingered until 7th. Two, again adult and juvenile, were found in Budle Bay on 5th (CGK) and two, ages unspecified, were at Holy Island, Sandham Bay on 6th(ERM).

Correction to September: One at Whittle Dene on 27th was incorrect; it should have been one at Holy Island on 27th.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Around 200 were viewed from Holy Island causeway on 19th (SJH) and the peak at St Mary's was 120 on 5th (KWY). Blyth beach held 54 on 12th, 27 were at Newbiggin Beacon Point on 28th and 26 at East Chevington on 17th. Up to 12 were in the Cheswick and Cocklawburn areas and small numbers were seen at two other coastal spots.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

The majority occurred in the north: 800 at Fenham-le-Moor on 30th (TRD/JD), 500+ in Budle Bay on 31st (CGK/AJ) and 300 from Holy Island causeway on 18th/19th (SJH); 100 were at Beal Point on 8th and 80 at Berwick North Shore on 10th. Further south, 162 roosted on the staithes at North Blyth on 31st (MSH), East Chevington, Newbiggin and Stag Rocks drew 20-30 with smaller numbers at another six coastal locations. Inland, seven were at Hallington Reservoir on 3rd and at Grindon Lough two to three were present on several days from 12th and also four on 31st.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

At Seaton Sluice 22 flew N during 10th to 14th, including 15 on 14th. Stag Rocks held 58 on 30th (MSH) and 70+ on 31st (JPD); 14 roosted at high tide on East Pier (Blyth Harbour) on 19th, eight were at St Mary's on 12th, eight at Newbiggin on 26th, seven at Tynemouth on 28th and three at Seahouses on 3rd.



A purple Sandpiper, unusually photographed on the beach at Stag Rocks
by Jonathan Farooqi on 31st October.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

A few juveniles were found in the early part of the month: two at Druridge Pools on 1st (MSK/NEWT) then two at Cresswell Pond on 5th (ADMC), with singles noted at the latter on 7th and 11th. One was at East Chevington on 5th/6th (RB/MB/ASJ) *et al.*.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Three were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 6th (SR), also two there on 20th (AA) and two at Longhirst Flash on 22nd (ADMc). One was noted at Doddington on 20th and 29th (JD).

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Inland, two juveniles were at Derwent Reservoir during 2nd to 8th (IFo), very late for the location but a favourably low water level was undoubtedly the reason. Two were at Alnmouth on 17th (per NNBC) and in Budle Bay one was present from 3rd to 6th then two adults on 28th (ASJ) and one on 30th. Singletons were present at Fenham Flats on 8th and at Holy Island causeway on 19th.

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

The Tweed Estuary held 306 on 9th (MHu), 160 were in Budle Bay on 5th (CGK), 94 roosted on the staithes at North Blyth on 31st, the monthly maximum at Howdon Wetland NR was 93 on 13th, 81 were along R Tyne between Elswick Wharf and Newcastle Business Park on 4th and 52 were at Berwick North Shore on 10th (MHu). Lower numbers were at seven other coastal areas. A few miles inland, four were on a flash near Boghouses on 31st, three at Arcot Pond on 29th and one at Bothal Pond on 13th.

A Redshank at St. Mary's
by Alan Jack
21st October

**Jack Snipe** *Lymnocyrtus minimus*

Two flushed after reed clearance at Gosforth Park NR and adjacent pool on 26th (NHSN); one was at St Mary's on the same day. Earlier singles were discovered at East Chevington on 6th, Holy Island Lough on 11th, at Chesterhill on 13th and 20th, Newbiggin on 15th, Holy Island on 16th and 19th and Hauxley on 16th. Later, singles were found at Bothal Pond on 30th and at Cresswell Pond on 31st.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Four individuals were seen flying in off the sea: at St Mary's on 13th, at Tynemouth on 14th and 16th and at Seaton Sluice on 21st. At least two were at Hauxley RS during 14th to 17th, at Holy Island during 13th to 19th and at St Mary's on 12th. Singles were found in the period 12th to 30th at Bamburgh, Cramlington, Harwood Forest, Newbiggin, Rothbury, Swallow Pond, Tynemouth, Whitley Bay Cemetery and Woodhorn Church.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

The number at Cresswell Pond increased from 12 on 7th to at least 41 on 25th (JSB/EC *et al.*), 37 were at Branton GP on 19th (IBDa/KDa) and 26 at Grindon Lough on 13th (PRM). Other higher counts were of 17 at West Hartford on 27th, 14 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 6th, 14 at St Mary's on 17th, 12 at Hauxley NR on 20th and 12 at Big Waters on 28th. Small numbers were noted at a further ten suitable localities.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Almost all visible passage occurred during 10th to 14th. At Seaton Sluice nine flew N and four S on 10th/11th (SSWT) then seven, including a group of six adults, flew N at Tynemouth on 12th (SPP) when four were off St Mary's (ASJ), two noted N at Newbiggin (GB/STH) and two N at Hauxley (HRS). On 11th two flew N at St Mary's, Newbiggin and Snab Point. Others noted on 12th were singles N at Cullercoats and Snab Point, one moved N at Beadnell on 13th and one was off Holy Island on 14th. The exceptions outside this period were one flying WSW inland at Embleton Bay on 30th and an adult drifting on the sea Boulmer-Seaton Point on 31st.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Seaton Sluice observers described the total of 47 (39 N, 8 S) as above average for October with a maximum of 18 N on 11th (SSWT), a date when ten flew N at Newbiggin (TRC) and up to four were seen N at St Mary's, Cullercoats and Snab Point and one at Holy Island. Next day, 12th, eight moved N off Tynemouth, four N at Snab Point with two to three N at Newbiggin and one N at Cullercoats. Earlier one or two were seen off Budle Point, Cullercoats, St Mary's and Stag Rocks and later just singles were noted off Hauxley, Newbiggin and St Mary's during 13th to 15th and finally one N at Hauxley on 20th.

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*

Light passage was evident during 2nd to 12th. After one at Budle Point on 2nd (IBDa/KDa), two to three were off Newbiggin on 3rd (IK/ASH *et al.*). On 11th both Seaton Sluice (BB *et al.*) and Newbiggin (TRC) had two juveniles N and also one went N at St Mary's; on 12th single juveniles moved N at Tynemouth (SPP) and at St Mary's (ASJ).

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

Observers who were able to visit the coast on 11th witnessed a phenomenal N passage, lasting all day: 345 at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower, 279 at Newbiggin (TRC/IFo *et al.*), at least 130 at St Mary's (MSH/AC/JBu *et al.*) with 52 at Snab Point (JL). There were also 33 at Emmanuel Point, Holy Island, 28 at Cullercoats and 11 at Berwick Pier, all in periods of up to 1.5 hours. Some other counts outside of the big day were impressive by normal standards: 44 N in one hour at St Mary's on 9th (ASJ), 37 N in about seven hours at Newbiggin on 12th (GB/JGS/LAR *et al.*) and also on 12th 29 N at Cullercoats in three hours, 23 N at Tynemouth in two hours, 15 N at Hauxley in one hour and small numbers at Tynemouth, St Mary's and Snab Point. A total of another 70 went N at Seaton Sluice during the month. Other counts included 14 at Holy Island on 10th, ten at Newbiggin on 13th and one to five at another seven places.

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

Passage movements of 34 N and 28 S were observed at Seaton Sluice on 1st but thereafter at this locality records were few, with a single moving S on 25th being the latest record (SSWT).

Black Guillemot *Cephus grylle*

A first-winter bird flew N at Newbiggin Point on 11th (ADM/TC).

Razorbill *Alca torda*

The only record was of five moving S at Emmanuel Head, Holy Island on 1st (TRD).

Little Auk *Alle alle*

At Hauxley, 12 flew N on 12th (HRS).

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

Five moved S at Emmanuel Head, Holy Island on 1st (TRD), three N at Berwick Pier on 14th (MHu) with singles recorded elsewhere at Bamburgh, Cresswell and Hauxley on various dates up to 23rd (all TRD).

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

From 1st-14th the observers at Seaton Sluice recorded 6 N and 22 S (SSWT). The evening roost at Budle Point held ten on 4th (CGK) and elsewhere six were at St Mary's on 2nd (ASJ), four at Newbiggin on 15th, the latest record of the month (JR) with one-three at Newbiggin and Bamburgh Stag Rocks (GB/TRD/JD/ASH/AT).

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

The Budle Point roost held 35 on 4th (CGK) and at nearby Stag Rocks, 14 were recorded on 8th (TRD/JD) with nine juveniles there the following day (MSH). A single juvenile flew S over fields to the west of St Mary's on 2nd (ASJ/SPP) and the last sighting of the month came from Stag Rocks where a single was noted on 30th (PH).

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

Four, including a juvenile, were in the Budle Point roost on 4th (CGK), the only record.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

At Seaton Sluice, one moved N on 15th and one S on 20th, the latter being the latest sighting of the month (SSWT). Twenty roosted at Budle Point on 4th (CGK) but thereafter numbers declined rapidly with four N at Cullercoats on 12th (CB), two juveniles at Bamburgh Stag Rocks on 9th (MSH) and singles at Cresswell, Newbiggin and St Mary's Island on dates between 2nd-11th.

***Sabine's Gull** *Xema sabini*

A juvenile seen at Seaton Sluice on 11th (BB *et al.* per SSWT) was possibly the same bird seen moving N at Holy Island in the early afternoon of the same day (PRM).

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

On 11th, 1,200 per hour moved S on 11th (MHu) but elsewhere, the only double-figure count came from Bamburgh Stag Rocks where 20 were counted on 8th (TRD/JD). One-six were recorded at six other coastal localities, Berwick (North Shore), Boulmer, Cresswell, Hauxley, Holy Island (Emmanuel Head) and St Mary's.



The Stag Rocks Bonaparte's Gull
by Tim Dean on 30th October

***Bonaparte's Gull** *Chroicocephalus philadelphia*

A rare visitor to the county; an adult was found on 29th at Bamburgh Stag Rocks (Derek Forshaw) and was rediscovered the following day at nearby Budle Point (IBDa/KDa). The bird was seen by other observers as it moved between Stag Rocks and Budle Point on 30th-31st (TRD/JD/JPD/PH).

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

By far the largest gathering of 4,000 was in the roost at Budle Point on 4th, of which ca.10% were first-winters (CGK), with three-figure flocks elsewhere, comprising 544 from a WeBS survey at Berwick North Shore on 10th (MHu), 500 on the River Tyne at Elswick Wharf on 15th (GB), 200 at Newton (near Corbridge) on 2nd (JMA), 193 at Leazes Park Lake on 29th (DM) and 159 at the QEII CP Lake on 20th (CDH). Lesser concentrations of up to 100 were also at Arcot Pond, Bothal Pond, Exhibition Park, Grindon Lough, Jesmond Dene, Paddy Freeman's Park and the River Tweed Estuary. Six returned to feed in an observer's garden at Walbottle after a summer's absence.

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

A Northeast Cetacean Project (NECP) transect between Tynemouth and Coquet Island encountered 117 on 24th (MSK) but elsewhere only singles, mainly immatures, were seen at five localities, namely Bamburgh, Newbiggin, St Mary's, Seaton Sluice and Tynemouth Pier (TRC/ASJ/JPL/SPP/SSWT).

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Well reported with sightings from many localities along the entire coastal stretch. At Seaton Sluice an 'unprecedented' monthly total of 11 was recorded from the watch-tower between 10-29th (SSWT). Newbiggin maintained its reputation as the favoured haunt for this species with at least 40 on 18th (ADMc) and up to 17 (SRB) on several other dates, comprising a mix of adult and immatures. One-four were recorded at Berwick, Blyth Beach, Budle Bay, Cresswell, East Chevington, Hauxley NWT, Holy Island, Holywell Pond, Longhoughton, the River Wansbeck Estuary, Swallow Pond, St Mary's and Tynemouth.

Common Gull *Larus canus*

At Cambo, 500 were recorded moving SW on 19th (JR). The Budle Bay evening roost contained in excess of 7,000, including ca.2% first-winter birds, on 4th (CGK) and lesser gatherings elsewhere comprised at least 500 at Budle Bay on 20th (MSH), 378 on the River Tweed at West Ord on 7th (MHu), in excess of 300 at Wark on 21st (PRM), up to 190 at Grindon Lough on 29th-31st (SJH), 153 at Stanton Mill on 13th (JR), 36 at Longhorsley on 13th (JR), 30 at Greenlee Lough on 11th (MRS) and 25 at Longframlington on 15th (JMA). Three other locations held up to eight birds.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

Apart from the Budle Bay roost which held 40 on the evening of 4th (CGK), few birds were noted as the species departed the county for warmer climes. Five at Elswick Wharf on the River Tyne on 4th (DM), three at Budle Bay on 8th (TRD/JD), two at Big Waters on 13th (GB) and singles at six other sites, were the only other sightings.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argenteus*

At Seaton Sluice the observers recorded a movement S of 1,800 in two hours on 27th (SSWT). Two large gatherings comprised 660 from a WeBS survey on the River Tweed Estuary on 9th (MHu) and in excess of 400 were counted in the Budle Bay roost on 4th (CGK). Elswick Wharf on the River Tyne on 4th (DM) and Berwick North Shore on 10th (MHu) held 96 and 74 respectively. Elsewhere, one to five were at Arcot Pond, Leazes Park and St Mary's.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

The usual October influx of this species was again apparent with 257 reported from the River Blyth Estuary on 27th (LJM), 64 at Hauxley NWT on 2nd (ASH), 60 at the Budle Point roost on 4th (CGK) and 46 from a WeBS survey on the River Tweed Estuary on 9th (MHu). Gatherings of up to 12 were at Berwick, Elswick Wharf on the River Tyne, Grindon Lough, Newcastle Business Park on the Tyne and QEII CP Lake.

Rock Dove / Feral pigeon *Columba livia*

On 24th 57 roosted on the EA Building roof at Newcastle Business Park, 11 were at Southfield Green (Cramlington) on 20th (DM) and present at Jesmond Dene on 6th.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

A maximum count for the month of 136 at Howdon Wetland NR on 31st with counts of 93 & 92 on 5th & 12th (CB). A flock of 35 were at Big Waters on 31st with one to four at five other locations including a nest at Hauxley on 12th containing one young which was ringed as pullus on 23rd (HRS).

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

A large gathering of 600+ during the month at Gosforth Park and adjacent pool (NHSN), approx 40 at Brierdene (Whitley Bay) on 13th (IJ) with one to nine at four other locations including two juveniles still in the nest at Lynemouth on 12th (GB).

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Twenty were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 27th with five at Dinnington on 2nd (PCF).

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Two hunted in close proximity at Fenham-le-Moor on 5th (CGK/GPK) with singles at Lilburn on 11th and The Snook (Holy Island) on 12th (IBDa/KDa/ADM).

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

No reports this month

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

During the month two called at Bedlington (JR) and at Waren Mill from 3rd to 12th starting each night between 19.20 & 19.45 (GPK). Singles were at Bamburgh, Gosforth Park, Morpeth Common, Northumberland Park (North Shields), Wark (North Tyne) and a Walbottle garden.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

One came in off the sea at Seaton Sluice watch tower on 15th (SSWT).

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Between 7th and 15th three came in off the sea at Seaton Sluice watch tower (SSWT) with other 'in offs' at St Mary's Island on 9th (AC) and Church Point (Newbiggin) on 11th (TRC/IFo) with singles at both locations on dates following. Singles were also at Bamburgh GC, Cresswell, Hauxley, Holy Island and Prestwick Carr.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

An encouraging number of reports, all singles, at Jesmond Dene regularly, Thrum Mill (Rothbury) twice and at Alnmouth, Humford Mill (Bedlington), Whiteadder Water (Berwick), Branton GP, Briar Dene, Ouseburn (Byker), Caistron, Chollerford, Cresswell Pond, Holywell Dene, Linton Ponds, Plessey Woods, Ponteland and on rocks at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

One was at Budle Bay on 3rd until at least 4th (CGK).

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

One was at Craggside (Rothbury) on 3rd and in a Rothbury garden on 10th (TRD/JD) with a single at Gosforth Park NR on 30th (GB).

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Very well reported, no doubt boosted by migrants, seven to eight arriving with thrushes at Holy Island on 11th and still present on 13th, some described feeding warbler-like on aphids before dispersing, the last being seen flying SW on 27th (IK/SR/TF/JFa). Birds were noted most days at Hauxley NR with three on 13th, 18th & 22nd (HRS) and three also at Holywell Dene. One to two were at eighteen other widespread localities.

Juvenile birds of **ssp major (Northern)** were noted regularly on Holy Island with eight on 13th decreasing to three on 25th one of which was missing an eye and also apparently BTO ringed (MLC/ADM) with one also at Budle Bay on 6th (ADM).

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*

A juvenile was at Holy Island from 13th to 15th (TB/MLC/ADM *et al.*) and an adult at Prestwick Carr from 19th to 20th (RN/GB *et al.*) although reported on Birdguides till 22nd.



Two photographs of newly arrived Great Grey Shrikes. Left: on Holy Island on 13th by Mike Carr and right: at Prestwick Carr on 20th October by Peter Fletcher

Magpie *Pica pica*

High counts of 23 coming in to roost at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 27th (DM), 15 at Sandy Bay (Newbiggin) on 4th (JR), eight at Prestwick Carr on 20th (PCF) and Hauxley NR on 3rd (HRS) with five in the observer's garden in Walbottle on 20th (KR/LR). Two to four were at Jesmond Dene and various locations in Whitley Bay.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Six was the peak at Gosforth Park NR during the month (NHSN), five at Swallowship Wood (Hexham) on 20th (AJH) and four collecting acorns all month at Bedlington (JR) with three at Humford Mill (Bedlington), Derwent Reservoir, Prestwick Carr, Thrunton Woods and Craggside (Rothbury). One to two were at 15 other widespread localities.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

The roost at Gosforth Park NR numbered 1,000+ (NHSN) with a pre-roost gathering of 600+ at Budle Bay on 5th (CGK), 280 at Tyne Green (Hexham) on 25th (AJR), 100 at Alnwick on 15th (JMA) and Goose's Nest NWT (Kirkwhelpington) on 19th with 40 at Harwood Forest on the same date (JR). One to eight were at four other locations.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

A pre-roost gathering of 150 at Budle Bay on 5th (CGK), around 70 at Goose's Nest NWT (Kirkwhelpington) on 19th and 60 at Harwood Gate (Harwood Forest) also on 19th (JR).

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Howdon Wetland NR held 35 on 28th (CB), ten were at Jesmond Dene on 13th (MJCo), and on 19th nine at East Woodburn with eight at Harwood Gate (Harwood Forest) (JR). One to four were at various locations at Whitley Bay and in a Walbottle garden.

Raven *Corvus corax*

Four were at Kirknewton on 12th (JHa) and two at Lucker on 11th, Mozie Law (Border Ridge) on 15th and Beefstand Hill on the same date (JHa/IRD) with singles at High Brunton on 24th and Fontburn Reservoir on 27th (JWP/JL).

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Very well reported as fall conditions brought an influx of migrants, the largest count being 60 at Hauxley on 12th with 13 to 30 recorded each day from then till 19th of which five were ringed (HRS). Likewise 49 were found at Holy Island on 14th with counts between 16 and 32 on each day between 11th and 16th (MLC/ADM/MJC *et al.*). Around 18 were at St Mary's Island on 8th and 15 on 15th (ASJ/TRC) with ten at Tynemouth on 12th, 6 to 8 at Bamburgh from 13th to 17th and five at Gosforth Park NR and Woodhorn Church. One to four were at nine further coastal locations and eight inland.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus*

Two were at St Mary's Island from 2nd to 5th a single remaining till 12th (PJA/JM *et al.*) with two at Bamburgh on 4th one of which stayed till 15th (BRS) and one at Hauxley RS on 22nd and 23rd (HRS).

A Firecrest at St. Mary's Island
by Jack Bucknall on 3rd October

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

On 9th 19 were at Humford Mill (Bedlington) and 13 at Furnace Bridge (R Blyth) with 11 at Longwitton on 19th (JR). Eight were at Hauxley RS on 20th with six ringed during the month. One to four were at Jesmond Dene and around Whitley Bay.

Great Tit *Parus major*

The peak count was 13 at Humford Mill (Bedlington) on 9th with nine at Furnace Bridge on the same date (JR) and one to three at seven other widespread localities.

**Coal Tit** *Periparus ater*

Twelve at Humford Mill (Bedlington) and 11 at Furnace Bridge (R Blyth) on 9th (JR), eight at Craster on 22nd (DAsT) and six at Hauxley RS on 3rd and 12th (HRS). One to four were at seven other locations.

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

Present daily during the month at Prestwick Carr with four found on 13th, 22nd and 29th (PCF/JPD). Two were at Holywell Dene and Lucker during the month (RJP/JHa) and at The Heughs (Craster) on 4th (PH) and Derwent Reservoir on 16th (IFo). Single birds were also reported from Big Waters, Branton GP, Linden Hall and Slaley Hall.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

Two at Linden Hall (Longhorsley) on 26th with a single there on the 13th and at Thrum Mill Rothbury on 4th and 28th (NFO/JD) were the only reports.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Movement south was noted with 140 over the Village and Straight Lonnen (Holy Island) on 14th and 72 over the Snook on 13th (MJC), 65 at Druridge on 5th, 55 at St Mary's on 3rd, 50 at Old Mousen on 26th (ASJ), 40 S at Howick on 21st (CB), 37 at Hauxley, 25 at Druridge Links and R Wansbeck Estuary all on 5th (HRS/IF/GB) with 22 S at Spital (Newbiggin) on 6th. One to 20 were at ten other widespread localities.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Ten remained at Sparty Lea (Allendale) on 2nd (JMA) with two over Hauxley on 12th and 15th (HRS).

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

More than 30 at Waren Mill Caravan Park (Bamburgh) on 3rd declined to 2 by 8th (CGK/GPK), 13 were at Holy Island on 3rd and Prestwick Carr on 5th (MJC/PCF), ten S over Wansbeck Estuary on 5th and nine at Big Waters on 2nd (GB). One to six were also at thirteen other locations with two S over St Mary's wetland on 30th (LJM).

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

Fourteen flew S over Spital (Newbiggin) on 6th (GB), ten were at Byerhope (Allendale) on 2nd (JMA), five at Druridge and four at Bellingham on 5th (ASJ/PRM), three at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 8th (TRD/JD) with single stragglers W at Cresswell Pond on 26th (SRB) and Alnwick on 27th (AH).

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

The largest gathering was 29 at Bedlington (Furnace Bridge) on 9th (JR). A flock of 17 was at Spindleston on 6th (CGK/GPK), 12 were at Hauxley NR on 13th and at Prestwick Carr on 26th and ten at Corbridge on 24th. Eight to nine were noted at Bedlington (Humford Mill), Longwitton and Seaton Sluice, six at Blyth, Otterburn Mill, Slaley Hall and Woodhorn Church and one to four at a further six localities.



A Long-tailed Tit at Bamburgh on 28th October by Alan Janes

Pallas's Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus*

One was at Whitley Bay Cemetery on 12th (NPD) and another at Marden Quarry (Whitley Bay) from 22nd-23rd (AC).

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

As with last month, this species was again well reported. Numbers on Holy Island increased from three on 1st-2nd (ADM/MJC) to six by 3rd (MJC); three were here on 10th-11th (IK), at least one on 13th-14th, three on 16th and one until 20th. Six were found from Bamburgh-Budle Point on 4th (CGK/MSH/BRS) and five to six at Craster (Arnold Memorial Reserve) on 1st (MJC), two remaining here on 4th.

The St Mary's Island area held one to two on 1st-2nd, three from 3rd-5th, two on 6th and one from 7th-9th with another here on 13th (AC/TF/JFa *et al.*). Hauxley NR had one to three from 3rd-6th, one to two from 12th-13th, another from 15th-19th, two on 20th and one on 26th (HRS). One was at Marden Quarry (Whitley Bay) on 1st, two were here on 5th and another from 23rd-27th (AJ *et al.*).

Elsewhere, two were in Craster Village on 7th and singles at Brierdene, Cresswell, Delaval Arms, Holywell Dene, Newbiggin, Seahouses and a Whitley Bay garden between 3rd-6th, Blyth, Cresswell, Newbiggin and Whitley Bay Cemetery between 12th-14th and at Tynemouth Priory on 20th and Longhoughton Steel on 25th. More unusual was an inland bird at Big Waters, a first for the site, on 8th (AJJ *per* GB).



A Yellow-browed Warbler at Hauxley Ringing Station by Alan Hart on 6th October

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

There was a light influx during the first few days of the month and a more notable 'fall' from 11th. On Holy Island at least ten were present on 11th, 16 on 13th, a peak count of 26 on 14th (MJC), 15 on 16th, 11 on 19th and eight on 20th. At Hauxley NR birds were noted almost daily from 12th-26th, with peak counts of 25+ on 16th and 30 on 19th (HRS); also at this time four to five were noted at Newbiggin on 15th and 19th.

An earlier influx produced 12 at Craster on 1st, a peak of ten at Hauxley NR on 4th, six + from Bamburgh-Budle Point on 4th, six at Bamburgh on 3rd and four to six at Holy Island from 1st-6th. Elsewhere during the month up to four were noted at East Cramlington Pond and St Mary's Island and one to three at a further 17 coastal and 13 inland localities.

Birds showing characteristics of the **Northern race** *P.c.abietinus* included up to five at Holy Island on 14th-15th, 19th-20th and 25th (ADM/MJC/MLC) and one at Brierdene (Whitley Bay) on 5th (KWY).

Birds showing characteristics of the **Siberian race** *P.c.tristis* included three on Holy Island from 14th-15th (MJC), two at Whitley Bay Cemetery on 20th (AC), and singles on Holy Island on 13th, 16th and 19th-20th, Howick Dene on 23rd (PRM), Marden Quarry from 22nd-26th and St Mary's Island from 24th-25th (AC).

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Typically scarce in October with reports of single birds at Bamburgh on 3rd, Budle Point and Tynemouth on 4th and Holy Island (Vicar's garden) from 11th-15th. Further singles were noted at Holy Island on 19th and 25th (MJC).

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Very well reported from coastal areas. On Holy Island one to three were noted from 1st-3rd and thereafter up to ten daily from 11th-16th, reaching a peak of 13 on 19th (MJC *et al.*). Hauxley NR was also favoured during the same periods with eight to 14 from 3rd-5th and five to 15 from 12th-18th and five on 23rd (HRS). Five to six frequented the St Mary's Island area from 15th-17th (TRC) with lower numbers on several other dates. Additional counts of four to five came from Bamburgh, Craster, Newbiggin and Tynemouth with one to two noted at a further nine coastal localities. Inland singles were at Furnace Bridge (Bedlington) and Humford Mill on 9th, High Brunton (Chollerford) on 18th and Rothbury on 15th-16th.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Singles were reported from Holy Island (Snook) on 1st and Hauxley NR on 3rd. Three were at Hauxley NR on 4th and singles here on 19th and at Tynemouth on 20th.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Singles were reported from Holy Island on 3rd, 11th, 14th, 16th and 19th. Other singles were at Budle Point and Druridge Links on 4th, Hauxley NR on 12th, 18th and 22nd and Newbiggin on 13th and 19th.

Birds showing characteristics of **Eastern race** birds were noted at Budle Point (in addition to the above) on 4th (CGK) and Holy Island (Chare Ends) on 6th (ERM).

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Singles were noted at Holy Island (Chare Ends) on 2nd and Druridge Links / Pools on 4th-5th.

Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans*

An adult male / first summer of the **Eastern race** *S.c.albistriata*, was at Druridge Links on 4th-5th (MSK/JD/IF).

The Druridge Links Subalpine Warbler
by Jonathan Farooqi
5th October

**Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

A late individual was trapped and ringed at Hauxley NR on 2nd.

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

A late individual was at Hauxley NR on 3rd.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Three were in Jesmond Dene on 20th (MJCo) and one to two at Holywell Dene, Humford Mill, Rothbury, Spindlestone and Wark (North Tyne).

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Up to three were at Hauxley RS almost daily from 4th-19th with a peak on 12th (HRS). Two were at Craster on 1st and at Spindlestone on 6th.

A bird showing some characteristics of the **Northern race** *C.f.familiaris* was at Holy Island (Captain's garden) on 16th (SR).

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

There was a good count of 14 at Prestwick Carr on 26th (PCF) and six were noted at Humford Mill (Bedlington) on 9th (JR). Coastal arrivals included ten in the Hauxley area on 4th and seven here on 19th (HRS), up to six on Holy Island from 11th-20th and one to three at Bamburgh, Whitley Bay (various) and St Mary's Island. Two to three were also noted at Jesmond Dene and in the Upper Breamish Valley.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Numbers were relatively modest for the time of year with 500+ at Cresswell Pond the largest gathering (IFo). Elsewhere, 400 were at Elsdon on 19th (JR), 350 flew W at Prestwick Carr on 20th (PCF) and up to 290 were noted at Grindon Lough (SJH). Flocks of 200 were at Kenton Bar and Monkridge Farm and 40-80 at Brierdene (Whitley Bay), Cambo, Hauxley NR and Longframlington.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

One to two were reported from Chollerford, Corbridge, Dirt Pot, Harthope Burn, Holywell Dene, Ingram, Jesmond Dene, Plessey Woods, Thrum Mill, Wark (North Tyne) and Wooler.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

A light 'fall' occurred with Holy Island receiving the lion's share. Counts from here included two on 1st, rising to six on 2nd and five on 3rd (ADM/MJC). Later in the month singles were noted here from 11th-14th, two on 15th-16th and another on 19th. Elsewhere single birds were reported from Bamburgh GC, Craster, Hauxley NR and Tynemouth on 4th, Newbiggin on 5th, Big Waters on 8th, Whitley Bay Cemetery on 12th, Tynemouth on 17th, another at Whitley Bay Cemetery on 21st and at Newton Links on 24th.



A Ring Ouzel visits a lucky birder's garden by Alan Jack on 17th October

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Counts from Holy Island included 51 on 13th, 62 on 15th, a peak of 194 on 19th (MJC) and 50 on 20th (IK). Similar counts were received from the Hauxley area during the same period with peak counts of 50 on 15th and 100 on 19th (HRS). A count of 27 from Valley Park (Cramlington) also on 19th, included 14 probable migrants flying in from E. Elsewhere, mainly during this mid-month period, 20-25 were reported from Bamburgh, Newbiggin and St Mary's Island and 12-19 from Brierdene (Whitley Bay) on several dates, Longwitton, Newbiggin and Whitley Bay Cemetery. Two to ten were noted at a further seven localities.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Two arrived at Holy Island on 1st (ADM) followed by a modest influx from mid-month and in particular on 19th when 300 were at Bellshiel and at Monkridge Hill, 187 on Holy Island and 50 on the Otterburn Training Area (JR/MJC). Later in the month 215 were at Bakethin Reservoir on 24th (MD), 140+ at Grindon Lough on 24th and moving NW at Dancing Green Hill on 30th and 100+ moved W at Budle Bay on 30th; 60-75 were noted at Gosforth Park and Harwood Forest on 26th-27th and 30-45 at Corbridge, Rudchester (Heddon) and Wark (North Tyne). One to 22 were reported from a further 14 localities.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Holy Island witnessed an early influx with 135+ on 1st rising to 363 on 3rd (ADM/MJC); later in the month 23-30+ were reported here from 11th-19th. Hauxley showed a similar pattern, although numbers here were more modest, with peak counts of 34 on 4th and 12 on 15th (HRS). The only other significant counts involved 25+ at Budle Point on 3rd (CGK), 11 at Newbiggin on 4th and six to eight at Bakethin Reservoir on 10th, East Woodburn on 19th, Howdon Wetland NR on 19th, Newbiggin on 13th and St Mary's Island on 17th. One to three were noted at a further five localities.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

The first sizeable counts were 200 at Corby Craggs and 150+ at Holy Island on 1st (JMA/ADM). Numbers on Holy Island increased significantly by mid-month when there was a substantial 'fall' producing peak counts of 1,000 on 11th (IK) and 683 on 14th (MJC); 135-176 were noted here almost daily to 19th. Hauxley NR showed a similar influx with peak counts of 250 on 12th and 100-150 on 14th-15th (HRS). On the latter date 300+ were also at St Mary's Island (TRC). Large numbers were moving quickly inland as 500 were found at Bakethin Reservoir on 10th (MD) and at Slaley Hall on 18th (RMH), 160+ were at Wark (North Tyne) on 13th (PRM), 145 at Derwent Reservoir on 16th (IFo) and 100 at Swallowship Wood (Hexham) on 20th (AJH). Up to 60 were reported from a further 23 widespread localities.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

One to three, probable immigrants (some flying W) were noted at Hauxley NR daily from 12th-16th and on 26th (HRS) and singles were on Holy Island on 2nd, 11th, 13th and 25th (MJC) and at Whitley Bay Cemetery on 19th (IJ). Inland the largest gathering was 17 at Alnham on 6th (JR). Six were found at Hornccliffe Mains on 24th and four at Ingram on 13th. One to three were reported from a further eight inland localities.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

On Holy Island ten on 1st increased to 28 by 3rd (ADM/MJC); up to 70 were noted in the Hauxley area from 3rd-5th with a peak on 4th (HRS). A second modest 'fall' occurred mid-month with 19 at Holy Island on 11th increasing to 27-36 from 13th-20th (ADM); likewise the Hauxley area again witnessed a similar arrival with 40 on 12th and 22-25 from 13th-19th (HRS). Both localities held smaller numbers to 25th. Elsewhere, nine were at Humford Mill (Bedlington) and at Prestwick Carr, six to seven at Bamburgh, Brierdene, Furnace Bridge, Jesmond Dene and Snab Point and two to five at a further six localities.

A Robin at Budle Bay
by Alan Jack on 26th October

**Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula parva*

A first-winter was found at Craster (Arnold Memorial Reserve) on 1st (MJC).

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

One was at Holy Island on 1st (ADM) and singles at Hauxley NR on 5th, 12th, 18th and 19th (HRS).

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Holy Island had a male on 2nd (PRM), another male on 19th (MJC) and a female from 20th-22nd (IK). Elsewhere singles were noted at Tynemouth Haven on 12th (CB), Hauxley NR on 14th (HRS) and St Mary's Island on 25th (AC/JBu).

A Black Redstart at St. Mary's
25th October by Jack Bucknall

**Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Up to seven were noted on Holy Island from 1st-3rd (ADM/MJC). Two were at Elwick on 3rd (IBDa/KDa), when singles were also at Hauxley NR and St Mary's Island. Further singles were noted at Budle Point on 4th, Druridge Pools on 5th, Holy Island on 6th and Elwick on 13th.

Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola maurus*

A first-winter found by a visiting birder at Howick on 20th (D Atkins) remained in the area until 22nd (TRD/JD/IF).

The much photographed Siberian Stonechat

Howick

top: by Colin Bradshaw and below: by John Littleton

**Stonechat** *Saxicola rubicola*

The highest count was five at Seaton Sluice on 2nd (ASJ). Up to four were noted at Bamburgh / Stag Rocks, East Chevington, Hadston Links, and Warkworth Lane on various dates and three were noted at Blyth Links, Druridge Pools, Old Hartley and St Mary's Island. One to two were also reported from Amble, Budle Point, Boulmer, Cheswick, Cocklawburn, Craster, Cresswell Pond, Hauxley, Holy Island, Howick, Low Newton, Monks' House Pool and Newbiggin. There were only two inland reports, singles at Backworth on 24th (CGK) and Greensidehill (Upper Breamish) on 13th (JR).



Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Small numbers were noted along the coast from 2nd-9th with a peak count of six at Dunstanburgh on 6th (TM). Two to three were at Bamburgh, Boulmer, Hadston links and Snab Point and singles at a further six localities. Later individuals were noted at Holy Island on 13th (SR) and Newbiggin on 19th (GB).

Duncock *Prunella modularis*

20 were counted at Low Hauxley in the ringing station area on 20th (HRS) and eight were at Tynemouth Priory on the same day (DMc/STH). Two to three were in gardens at Old Hartley (RJP) and Walbottle (KR/LR), Whitley Bay Cemetery and Brierdene on 13th.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Kearsley near Ingoe held ca.50 on 10th (RMH) and 45 were in a garden on Marsden Estate (Tynemouth) throughout (ASJ). 40 were at Snab Point on 5th (GB), 25 at Hauxley on 20th (HRS) and 20+ in Wark on 3rd (PRM). 12 was the peak count in a well watched Walbottle garden on 13th (KR/LR) and three were at St. Mary's, also on 13th.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

80-100 were noted in the Hauxley area on 3rd, with smaller numbers counted on a further six dates and 80 again on 23rd (HRS). 36-37 were noted at St. Mary's 17th-21st (TRC/ASJ). 33 flying south in 2 hours at Spital, Newbiggin on 6th was a good indication of coastal passage (GB). Other coastal passage records included 16 at Tynemouth on 5th (DRW) and St. Mary's on 9th (ASJ) and a single party of six past Seaton Sluice Watchtower on 24th (SSWT). 25 were in Budle Bay on 6th (CGK) and 16 at The Heughs (Craster) on 4th (PH).

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

Two were at Hadston Links on 2nd (MSH). One at Cullernose Point on 7th (*per* NNBC) and the final record of the month was a female on Berwick Little Beach on 17th (MHu).

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Seven at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 18th was the month's highest count (SR). Five were spread around Tynemouth on 3rd (CB). Four were still in riparian habitat at Plessey Woods on 5th (Dlo) and Jesmond Dene on 6th (MJCo) and at Hauxley on 15th (HRS). A further 36 records were received of one to three, the majority from coastal or near-coastal locations.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

99 in horse paddocks south of Bothal Pond on 22nd was by far the largest count of the month (TF/JFa). 44 were at Whiteadder Point (Berwick) on 7th (TBr) and 40 at Hadston Links on 2nd (MSH). 24 were on the castle green at Bamburgh on 4th (CGK). Two to seven were reported at a further five locations.

White Wagtail *M. a. alba*

Two were at Seahouses on 5th (TM).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

The first six days of the month were characterised by small groups at the coast and light southerly passage. 65 at St. Mary's on 1st (ASJ), 69 around Holy Island on 3rd (MJC) and 100 at Druridge on 5th (ASJ) with 12-40 noted at Spital, Newbiggin, Wansbeck Estuary, Hauxley and Hadston Links. 24 fed on the shoreline at Cheswick on 21st (MHu).

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Four counts reaching double figures in the second half of the month suggested passage, a flock of 12 feeding in the quarry on Holy Island on 15th (MJC), 18 on Berwick Little Beach on 17th (MHu), 15 at St. Mary's on 24th (JPD) and 50-60 counted between Sandon Bay and Coombs Haven Bay on Holy Island on 25th (ADM). A further 12 reports of one to eight came from five coastal locations.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

A small arrival of 40 was noted at Hauxley on 19th (HRS) and 22 were there on 26th. Away from the coast 27 were in the Breamish Valley on 27th and 22 at Longwitton on 19th (JR), while 16 were at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 26th (DMc). A further seven records of one to nine were received from six locations.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Well reported in small numbers from coastal localities this month (51 reports) as wintering birds arrived, though the only significant concentrations were 23 on Holy Island on 1st (ADM) increasing to 85 on 2nd (PRM), 88 on 3rd (MJC) and ca.100 noted as an arrival on 11th (IK). 37 appeared at Hauxley on 12th (HRS) with smaller numbers there on eight dates. Away from Holy Island three at Whitley Bay Cemetery on 12th was the largest total recorded at another coastal site (TRC). One was at Bakethin Reservoir on 25th (MD) and by 26th, 30-40 were east of Bolam village (RWW/MIM).

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

Numbers at St. Mary's increased from 45 to 50 between 8th and 16th (ASJ/MSH). Numbers at Bamburgh decreased from 40 on 15th to 25 on 20th (BRS). 25 flew south and a further 25 were present at Hauxley on 19th (HRS) when 23 were at Spital (Newbiggin) (GB). Four arrived in off the sea at Seaton Sluice on 21st (SSWT).



A Greenfinch at Hauxley NR by Tim Dean on 23rd October

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

At Druridge Pools 100 on 5th had increased to 450 by 26th (PCF). 50-100 were noted at Dirt Pot (2nd), St. Mary's (8th), Cocklawburn (11th), Prestwick Carr (5th) and Newbiggin Moor (1st). A further 22 reports were received of one to 48 across 15 locations.



An immature Goldfinch on Holy Island on 1st October by Tim Dean

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

11 at Prestwick Carr on 13th had increased to 25 on 19th (PCF). Elsewhere nine were at Wark on 6th (PRM) and five at Hauxley on 17th. One to four were reported from a further seven locations.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

The largest flocks involved 200 at Chare Ends, Holy Island on 1st (ADM), 300 at St. Mary's, also on 1st (ASJ); 220 at Old Hartley on 3rd were presumably the same flock roaming (MNC) but a count of 400+ in Budle Bay on 3rd was the largest gathering during the month (CGK).

A further 130 were at Stag Rocks, Bamburgh on 3rd (CGK). 70-120 were noted from Cheswick Dunes (24th), Derwent Reservoir (16th) and Shoreswood (24th).

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

160 at Scremerston on 11th was the only notable flock in the recording area during the month (MHu). Four were at Longhoughton Steel 23rd-25th (DAst) and two on Holy Island on 13th (SR).

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*

Some light coastal passage was noted from 11th on Holy Island with 40-50 present on 14th (IK). 14 were at Derwent reservoir on 5th (IFo) and 11 at Prestwick Carr on 16th (PCF). One to five were at a further seven locations.

Mealy Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*

Light coastal passage brought 12 to Holy Island on 13th though this increased to 34 on 14th (MJC). This reduced to 16 on 15th and only seven were noted by 16th (MJC/MLC/ADM). Five were on Holy Island on 25th, nine at St. Mary's on 15th and 11 at Hauxley on 26th (MJC/NPD/HRS). A further 14 reports were received of one to four, all but a single at Prestwick Carr from well watched coastal locations.



A Mealy Redpoll on Holy Island by Jonathan Farooqi on 13th October

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostris*

16 flew W at Slaley Hall on 1st (RMH), 15 were at Swallowship Wood (Hexham) on 20th (AJH) and 14 at Raylees (Otterburn) on 22nd (IRD). Six were at Bakethin Reservoir on 25th (MD). One to three were at Cambois, Cragside and Holy Island during the month.

Parrot Crossbill *Loxia pytyopsittacus*

Two arrived and flew over the ringing station calling on 19th (HRS). If accepted this will be the first record since 1991.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

15-20 were at Bakethin Reservoir on 10th (MD). Six were at Craster on 1st (MJC). Four were at Gosforth Park NR during the month (NHSN). Three were at Castlehills (Berwick) on 22nd (BWG). A further nine reports were received.



A male Bullfinch at Prestwick Carr by Peter Fletcher on 5th October

'Northern' Bullfinch *Pyrrhula p pyrrhula*

A female probably of this race was feeding on nettle seeds on Holy Island 19th-20th (IK). Another was at Hauxley on 4th and a male at Hauxley on 16th (HRS).

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

One was at Whitley Bay Cemetery on 12th (NPD).

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Four were at Budle Point 2nd-3rd (IBDa/KDa/CGK). Two were at Hud's Head (Spittal) on 6th (BWG). 11 were at Islestone (Bamburgh) on 11th (TM) and singles in two locations on Holy Island that day. Holy Island then held two on 13th, one flew west on 15th and three flew south there on 16th. Three were at Blyth South Harbour on 19th and singles at Warkworth Gut (19th) and Howick (23rd). Three were in Druridge Bay on 26th, one remaining on 27th. 16 were at Stag Rocks on 29th (JPD) and 13 at Monk's House on 30th (TRD/JD). Away from the coast one was on Brownhart Law on 31st (IRD).



A Snow Bunting at Howick by Mike Carr

Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*

Four were in weedy fields between Chare Ends and Straight Lonnen during the month (IK). On 5th one flew south calling at Druridge Links (MJC/IF) and perhaps the same individual over the Wansbeck Estuary (GB) during a visible migration watch.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

One at Spital (Newbiggin) on 6th may have been moving through on passage (GB). Two on the Crooked Lonnen (Holy Island) were also noted as 'island rarities' (MJC).

Peak counts were 45 in fields at Holywell on 31st (MNC), 36 at Doddington on 12th (JD), 25 at Big Waters (31st) and Fenham-le-Moor (26th) and 20 at Elwick (26th).



A Yellowhammer, an unusual visitor to Holy Island, by Mike Carr on 15th October

Reed Bunting *Emberiza Schoeniclus*

Five moved S at Hauxley on 5th (HRS). At Budle Point 15 on 3rd increased to 50+ on 4th and then declined to 11 by 6th indicating a movement through the area (CGK). 11-15 were at Cocklawburn, Holywell, Holy Island and St. Mary's.

ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN**Escapes****Lesser White-fronted Goose** *Anser erythropus*

An adult was found at Hauxley with Greylag Geese on 9th and was last reported on 29th (IFo/ SRB/EC/JSB/HRS).



The presumed 'escape' Lesser White-fronted Goose at Hauxley NR
by John Littleton on 26th October

Hybrids**Tufted Duck x Pochard** *Aythya fuligula x Aythya ferina*

A female at Tynemouth boating lake was thought to be of this parentage (DRW).

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

A group of five were again seen in the Newcastle area with the group at Denton Burn on 31st (RY). It is thought likely that these are birds moving up from the feral colony at Hartlepool.

Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria*

One at Hauxley was seen from 4th to 22nd and had also been seen there in September (HRS).

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

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Bamburgh Ringing Station, Berwick Wildlife Group, Natural History Society of Northumbria, North Northumberland Bird Club, Northeast Cetacean Project (NECP), 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 (Avocet to Godwit) Ian Forsyth (Turnstone to Skua), Eddie Crabtree (Puffin to Great Black-backed Gull), 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), Alan Tilmouth (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

Mail 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.

Could club members please ensure they to submit records direct to NTBC rather than just Birdtrack, There may be an assumption by some members this happens automatically. We do not want to miss records.

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

2013-2014 subscriptions are now overdue. Don't forget to use Gift Aid. It costs you nothing and boosts Club funds.

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. Please submit any new content for the website to the main club email address at ntbcorg@gmail.com

NTBC SIGHTINGS PAGE

The Sightings Page contains current sightings by members. Access is from the NTBC website.

Members need to submit a request to be added to the website, specifying the email address they wish to post from before they can submit sightings to ntbcorg@gmail.com

NTBC ATLAS 2007-11

Progress report

Most members will be aware that the NTBC is in the process of producing the new County Atlas.

The objective is to provide a complete record for the distribution and abundance of breeding and wintering birds in Northumberland. It is to be compiled from data collected by the many volunteer surveyors following carefully planned tetrad visits, roving records and from other sources, stretching from 2007 to 2011.

An Atlas Sub-Committee, chaired by Tim Dean was established to manage the entire development and production process and beyond. The task comprises 3 main functions:

Atlas Data Preparation: Ranging from the design and development of maps, the collection and validation of species accounts submitted by the various authors, and the composition of a comprehensive range of additional sections and background information which are to be featured in the Atlas itself. These activities are scheduled for completion by April 2014.

Funding and Contract Agreement: Costing proposals have been accepted by the NTBC from Consilience Media Limited (the preferred bidder after receipt of quotations from several printers) for the production of the Atlas. This offer includes costs for the development of an interactive web-based application. Members should be aware that the NTBC has been advised that the inclusion of such 'value-added benefits', over and above the printing of an Atlas, will greatly enhance the prospect of a successful bid for sponsorship.

As a result of the proposed outputs and costings provided by Consilience, an expression of interest has been made to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a capital grant.

According to the terms of HLF capital grant scheme, about 28% of the total cost of the project will have to be found from NTBC resources. Some of this can be accounted for by voluntary work undertaken by club volunteers in Atlas preparation and promotions (the equivalent of 80 person days), and the remainder will be expected to come from club funds.

If a positive response is received from the HLF, the actual awarding of the grant will take a further 10 weeks. Therefore, it is hoped that this will happen in February 2014. A formal contractual agreement with Consilience will follow.

If all goes well with the bidding process and the establishment of the terms and conditions of the contract, the distribution of the Atlas is on target for completion by December 2014. (If not, alternative sources of funding will have to be considered and production re-scheduled.)

The pricing strategy for Atlas Sales for the NTBC membership, for other organisations, and in general will be established once the actual levels of funding are known and secured.

Atlas Production and roll-out of the `value-added` programme: This includes detailed document design and content presentation, proof reading, printing and distribution of the Atlas.

The introduction of `value-added services`, needed to satisfy the HLF grant conditions, will take this part of the project into 2015. This will include the development of web-based applications. Also required will be the undertaking of a programme of work for marketing and promoting the Atlas, as well as the function of the NTBC itself. The purpose of all of this is to increase understanding and to encourage greater interest and participation in ornithology in the County.

Further progress reports on the NTBC Atlas will be provided in future editions of the Bulletin.

John Littleton 21/11/13

BEACHED BIRD SURVEYS NEWS

The Northeast England Beached Bird Surveys (NEBBS) Group November 2013

Taxidermy specimens purchased with Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club grant (March 2011)

During the period 1 May 2012 to 10 Nov 2013 the four complete taxidermy specimens have been displayed as follows

Ringed Plover 14 dates NSFQ (9), BA (1), Tynemouth (2), Whitley Bay (1), Cullercoats (1)

Dunlin 10 dates NSFQ (7), BA (1), Whitley Bay (1), Cullercoats (1)

Black-headed Gull 7 dates NSFQ (4), BA (1), Tynemouth (1), Cullercoats (1)

Kestrel 7 dates NSFQ (4), BA (1), Cullercoats (2)

Venues: NSFQ = North Shields Fish Quay, Seaview Fisheries, Union Quay; Fish Quay Market on Lifeboat Day BA British Airways offices, Craggside Court, Newcastle Business Park, Tynemouth Photographic Society; Village Christmas Fayre (Metro Station), Whitley Bay Rotary Club (golf course club rooms) Cullercoats Fishermen's Mission Methodist church. Others Gateshead - Baltic Arts Centre

Total occasions of *all* bird displays at Seaview Fisheries in this period: 2012 (17), 2013 (12)

While the birds are on display Dan Turner is available to discuss them with the public along with the 'Save the North Sea' Fulmar project. Other birds and skulls are also normally displayed.

The long-term hope is to also educate within local schools using these and other specimens belonging to the NEBBS Group.

Other NEBBS Group News

(a) From late March to end April 2013 we experienced a large seabird wreck on the east coasts of England and Scotland. This affected auks in particular and Puffins in the main (see the two references listed below). Our north-east England surveyors recorded the following numbers of auk corpses: Puffin (1,553), Guillemot (467), Razorbill (276) and Little Auk (4).

Duff, J.P., Harris, M.P. & Turner, D.M. (2013) Mass mortality of Puffins linked to starvation.

Veterinary Record 173:224.

Harris, M.P. & Elkins, N. (2013) An unprecedented wreck of Puffins in eastern Scotland in March and April 2013. *Scottish Birds* 33:157-159.

Some of our NEBBS wreck data have been included during 2013 conferences in the USA:

Knoxville (Tennessee - July), Bremen (Maine - Aug) and Portsmouth (New Hampshire - Oct)

(b) On 10-11 June Dr Jan Andries van Franeker and Dan Turner analysed 22 Fulmar corpses at the Dove Marine Laboratory (Newcastle University). Some of the proceedings were filmed for the BBC *Inside Out* series programme which aired in two regions on 9 September 2013.

(c) 14 beached Kittiwakes have been collected since June 2010 by surveyors: C Beneke, L K Charlton, P Collins, S T Holliday, E Stubbings, D M Turner and Druridge Bay Country Park staff. They are intended for future research and are to feature, along with other gulls and specimens (skulls, breast bones, wings and feathers), in a new independent film, directed by Iain Mitchell, *Kittiwakes*. Our NEBBS group is to receive a film credit and donation.

Daniel M Turner (NEBBS Group coordinator)

COASTAL WeBS

Wetland Bird Survey Local Organiser

Do you have roughly three hours a month to spare, basic knowledge of Microsoft Word and Excel, internet and email access? Then perhaps you can assist NTBC and BTO and become Coastal WeBS Local Organiser for the NTBC recording area. You will act as a point of contact with volunteer surveyors and gather their data into monthly and annual reports – via paper and online forms through the BTO website. The Wetland Bird Survey scheme is national and organised by the BTO, RSPB, WWT and JNCC. Training can be provided.

Please contact Dan Turner

dan.m.turner@btinternet.com

telephone 0191 257 6680

Version:

Version:

276

Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

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

Bulletin 2013 No 11

MONTHLY SUMMARY – NOVEMBER

31st December 2013



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CLASSIFIED LIST HIGHLIGHTS

Tundra Bean Goose	15 flew past St Mary's on 29th
Gadwall	A site record at Big Waters with 129 there on 17th
Red-breasted Merganser	Five inland together at Fontburn Reservoir on 11th
Bittern	Sightings at East Chevington and Gosforth Park
Grey Phalarope	Single flew into Northumberland air space from South Shields on 6th!
Long-tailed Skua	Two late Juveniles noted at St Mary's on 2nd and 21st
Little Auk	Small passage mid month
Bonaparte's Gull	The adult seen last month turned up again on 16th at Stag Rocks, Bamburgh
Glaucous Gull	Singles at East Chevington and St Mary's
Lesser Grey Shrike	One at Newton from 13th to 26th proved very popular
Bearded Tit	The lone male at East Chevington was again seen on 7th and 9th
Yellow-browed Warbler	One calling inland at Wideopen on 1st
Waxwing	Single at Wark on 26th
Tree Sparrow	150 at Earsdon on 6th, a high count
Snow Bunting	Notable influx during the month.



The popular Lesser Grey Shrike at Newton Links
by Tim Dean on 22nd November

COMMITTEE NEWS

2013-2014 NTBC subscriptions are now overdue. To pay our dues please contact ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

INDOOR MEETINGS

NTBC indoor meetings are held at Northern Rugby Club, McCracken Park, Great North Road, Newcastle, NE3 2DT starting at 7.00pm and generally finish between 9.00pm-9.30pm. The next meeting is on Thursday 9th January 2014;

Wildlife in Motion

The fantastic **Wildlife in Motion** films made by award-winning local wildlife film maker and NTBC club member – Cain Scrimgeour. You may have seen some of Cain's work on the recent Robson Green series about Northumberland.

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 2011 page 228.

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

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Nine flew E at Prestwick Carr on 3rd (PCF) and eight S at Seaton Sluice on 6th-7th (SSWT). Peak counts were 108 at QEII CP Lake on 17th (CDH), 61 at Killingworth Lake on 20th (LJM), 40-42 at Hartburn Reservoir (MNC) and the Tweed Estuary (MHu), and 14-18 at Arcot Pond, Newcastle Leazes Park and Roddam. Five to nine were also at Bellasis Bridge, Broomlee, Greenlee, Grindon and Sweethope Loughs, East Chevington and Rothley Lakes, with one to two at seven further sites.

Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus*

Seven flew S at Beadnell on 7th (JPL).

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

A total of four flew N and 15 S at Seaton Sluice between 8th-18th (SSWT), 12 (two juveniles) flew SE at Swallow Pond on 5th (SPP), eight S at Chibburn mouth (Druridge) on 10th (TB), and three to six flew over Boulmer, Holywell Dene and Longhirst Flash on 15th and 23rd. A flock at Cornhill on Tweed reached a peak of 162 on 25th (JDL), 20 (three juveniles) were at East Chevington on 6th (JPD), 11-16 at Amble (JMA), Cresswell Pond (TRC), Fenham Flats (IBDa/KDa) and Warkworth Lane (TB/ASJ). One to six were also at Bamburgh, Bothal, Cresswell and Swallow Ponds, Branton GP, Catcleugh Reservoir, Greenlee, Grindon and Sweethope Loughs, Low Newton, New Moor (Ashington), and New Water Haugh (R. Tweed).

Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*

A flock of 15 'Tundra' *rossicus* race birds flew in off the sea at St Mary's on 29th (JPD/MPF/AS).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

A total of 821 flew S at Seaton Sluice during the month, including 326 S on 2nd and 250 S on 13th (SSWT), 634 flew W in off the sea at Spittal on 12th (MHu), 280 S at East Ord on 9th (MHu), 104 flew N at East Chevington on 10th (DM/STH/PJA), and 25-95 flew W/SW/S over the Blyth Estuary, Cramlington, Cresswell Pond, Denwick, East Sleekburn, Prestwick Carr and Tynemouth on various dates between 3rd-22nd.

3,000 were at Cresswell Pond on 6th (JPD) and 9th (TB/ASJ), 2,500 flew S at nearby Ellington on 21st (TB), and 1,000 were at Warkworth Lane on 2nd (TB). Away from this area, other peak counts were 1,000 at Holywell Pond on 12th (SPP) and 600-800 there on 19th (SPP), 650 at Doddington on 25th (SVM), 650 at East Ord on 13th (MHu), up to 300 regularly at Holywell Dene (RJP), and 120-145 at Druridge, East Chevington and Elwick. Counts of 14-30 came from Fenham Flats and Grindon Lough.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

Greenland *flavirostris* race birds involved two at Woodhorn Flashes on 3rd-4th (JPD), 8th (JSB/EC) and 29th (adults; MSH), two at East Chevington on 8th (JSB/EC), and two adults at Grindon Lough on several dates between 10th-27th (JSB/EC/PRM/MRS).

Three un-raced birds were at Woodhorn Flashes on 16th (AA).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

250 flew S at the *Beehive* Flash (Earsdon) on 1st (MNC) and 90 flew N at Druridge on 8th (DM/LJM). Typically smaller numbers were noted compared with Pink-footed Goose. Peak concentrations were 720 at Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay) on 5th (MNC), 320 at nearby Holywell on 12th (MNC), 230 at Big Waters on 27th (AJJ *per* GB), 225 at Yarrow Slake on 9th (BWG), 189-193 at Derwent Reservoir and Holywell Pond, 130-146 at Maiden's Hall Lake (West Chevington), Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Woodhorn Flashes, and 50-90 at Grindon Lough, Low Newton and the Tweed Estuary. Groups of 16-34 were also at the *Beehive* Flash (Earsdon), Bradford Kaims, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington and Grindon Lough.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Variable numbers were noted at Grindon Lough and included peaks of 432 on 3rd (PRM) and 415 on 10th (MRS), 148 were at Killingworth Lake on 20th (LJM), 120 at Bothal Pond on 10th (TD), 73 at the *Beehive* Flash (Earsdon)(MNC), 32-43 at Big Waters, Holywell Pond QEII CP Lake and Woodhorn Flashes, and 21-25 at Bywell Haughs, Hartburn Reservoir and Newcastle Leazes Park. Five to 12 were also at Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Prestwick Carr and Maiden's Hall Lake (West Chevington), and one at the Tweed Estuary.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

35 flew N at Ellington on 16th (TB) and 11 N at Seaton Sluice on 17th (SSWT). Budle Bay held 255 on 17th (ASJ), and 106 were at nearby Harper's Haugh on 23rd (MSH). Three were with Greylag Geese *Anser anser* at Holywell Pond on 12th (SPP).

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Pale-bellied *hrota* race birds included 3,500-3,600 at Lindisfarne NNR all month (IK), five at Harper's Haugh (MSH), and two N at St Mary's, one S at Tynemouth, and one at Tynemouth Haven.

Dark-bellied *bernicla* race birds involved about 100 regularly at Holy Island (IK), and 18 N at Seaton Sluice during the month were mostly of this race (SSWT).

Records of un-raced birds involved 1,120 at the Fenham Flats section of Lindisfarne NNR on 10th (IBDa/KDa) and 670 there on 17th (JDL), and one N at Druridge Bay.

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

A monthly total of 49 N at Seaton Sluice included 20 N on 14th and 20 N on 22nd (SSWT). Budle Bay held 109 on 17th (MSH) and five were at Elswick on 25th (DM).

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

Two flew high downstream at Ridley Stokoe on 28th (MD).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was 669 N and 41 S and included 232 N on 18th (SSWT), and 83 flew N at St Mary's on 21st and six S on 29th (JPD/MSH). Grindon Lough attracted a peak of 680 on 3rd (PRM), 580 were at Cresswell Pond on 21st (IRD), 300 at Alnmouth on 9th (JMA), 200-267 at Big Waters, Bradford Kaims, Derwent Reservoir and Newton Links, 121-162 at Budle Bay, Colt Crag and Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Hauxley Reserve, and 90-91 at Bothal Pond and East Chevington. Counts of ten to 40 also came from Arcot and Middle Ord Ponds, Hartburn Reservoir, Roddam, Rothley Lakes and the Tweed Estuary. A pair copulated at Big Waters on 10th (GB).



A drake Wigeon at Hauxley NR on 1st November by Tim Dean

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Good numbers at Big Waters culminated in a site record count of 129 on 17th (AJJ *per* GB), 25 were at East Chevington on 12th (TRD/JD), 21 at QEII CP Lake on 17th (CDH), 21 at Arcot Pond on 24th (LJM), 14 at St Mary's Wetland on 23rd (IJ/MK), three to four at Bothal Pond, Roddam Bog Pond, Widdrington Moor Lake and Woodhorn Flashes, and one to two at Branton GP, Hauxley Reserve, Holy Island and Longhirst Flash. A less typical locality was Chirton Dene Park (North Shields), where one was present on 30th (KWY).

Teal *Anas crecca*

A record November monthly total at Seaton Sluice was 679 N and 68 S, including 349 N on 11th and 258 N and 63 S on 18th (SSWT), and 60 flew N at St Mary's on 21st (JPD). Peak gatherings were 375 at Colt Crag Reservoir on 8th (PRM), 340 at Grindon Lough on 3rd (PRM), 295 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 26th (SR), 230-270 at Derwent Reservoir (IFo), Holy Island 'rocket field' (IK) and Low Newton (IJ/MK), and 53-97 at Arcot, Bothal and Linton Ponds, Big Waters, East Chevington, Elswick, Longhirst Flash and Warkworth Gut. Counts of 20-48 came from Airy Holm Reservoir, Backworth, Bradford Kaims, Castle Island, Ellington, Middle Ord Pond, St Mary's Wetland, Warkworth Lane and West Ord, and 12 at Coanwood Pond and Cresswell.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

At Seaton Sluice, 70 flew N and 13 S during the month (SSWT) and seven flew N at St Mary's on 21st (JPD). Largest counts were 155-165 at Holywell Pond on 12th (SPP), 154 at Derwent Reservoir on 15th (IFo), 135 at the Tweed Estuary on 8th (MHu), 128 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 26th (SR), 102 at Big Waters (AJJ *per* GB), 86-98 at Colt Crag Reservoir (PRM), Roddam Bog Pond (JR) and West Ord (TBr), and 51-75 at Alnmouth, Bothal and Cocklawburn Ponds, Castle Island, Marden Quarry, Newcastle Leazes Park, QEII CP Lake and Woodhorn Flashes. Counts of 20-49 came from Bywell Haughs, Cresswell and Linton Ponds, Felton, Grindon Lough, Guyzance, Jesmond Dene, Longhirst Flash, Low Newton, Rothley Lakes, St Mary's, Walltown Quarry and Widdrington Moor Lake, and 15-16 at Hartburn Reservoir, Middle Ord Pond, Newcastle Civic Centre and Wark.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Two flew N at Seaton Sluice between 18th-21st (SSWT), and one N flew N at St Mary's on 21st (JPD). Fenham Flats attracted 20 on 22nd (TRD), seven were at East Chevington on 6th (IRD) and one to four there between 1st-21st, (NFO/ADM *et al.*), and singles were at Big Waters, Cresswell Pond and Holy Island Lough.

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Nine were at Swallow Pond on 3rd (SPP), four at Killingworth Lake on 19th (MSH), two to three at Arcot Pond (DM/STH), East Chevington (TRD/JD), Hauxley Reserve (TRD/JD), Holy Island Lough (JDL), and singles at Cresswell Pond and Monks' House Pool.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Five flew N at Seaton Sluice between 14th-22nd (SSWT). Eight were at Bothal Pond on 17th (TRD), six at Killingworth Lake on 20th (LJM), five at Linton Ponds on 17th (CDH), four at Ladyburn Lake (IFo), and one to two at Big Waters, East Chevington, Greenlee Lough and QEII CP Lake.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Seven flew N at Seaton Sluice during the month, including six on 11th (SSWT). Peak counts were 102 at Killingworth Lake on 20th (LJM), 92 at Greenlee Lough on 10th (MRS), 52 at Ladyburn Lake on 21st (IFo), 52 at Longhoughton Quarry Pond (TRD/JD), 36 at Tynemouth Boating Lake (DRW), 20-28 at Big Waters, Castle Island, East Chevington, Marden Quarry and QEII CP Lake, and ten to 14 at Bothal, Cresswell and Linton Ponds, Coanwood Pond, Grindon Lough, Hartburn Reservoir and Rothley Lakes. One to nine were at nine further sites.

Scaup *Aythya marila*

Six N at Seaton Sluice in the month included four N on 11th (SSWT), two flew N at St Mary's on 21st (JPD) and one N on 9th (SPP), and one N at Snab Point on 21st (JR). Cresswell Pond held six on 13th (DM/STH/PJA), four on 7th (TRC/IJ/TRC) and 12th (TRD/JD), and one to three various dates between 1st-26th. Four were at St Mary's Island (South Bay) and St Mary's Wetland on 12th-13th (JPD/SPP/MSH), three at Holywell Pond on 26th (SPP), two at Hauxley Reserve regularly between 16th-28th (PCF/IFo *et al.*) and one at St Mary's Wetland on 6th-7th and 9th-10th (JPD/SPP/JBu *et al.*), and one with Common Scoters at Stag Rocks on 26th (TRD).



A Scaup at Hauxley NR
16th November
by Peter Fletcher

A Scaup with a Mallard
St. Mary's Wetland
12th November
Jack Bucknall



Eider *Somateria mollissima*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was a notable 1,056 N and 57 S, including 852 N on 21st-22nd (540 N on 22nd alone was a day site record; SSWT). A total of 529 flew N at St Mary's on 21st-22nd (JBu/JPD/MSH). Largest gatherings were 158 at King Edward's Bay, Tynemouth on 21st (SPP), 92 at Cheswick on 4th (MHu), 60 at Blyth South Harbour on 12th (MSH), 39 at Berwick North Shore (MHu), and 15-21 at Meadow Haven, Newton Links and St Mary's. Two to nine were also at Druridge Bay, Newbiggin, the Tweed Estuary, and Whitley Bay.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

A total of 52 N and four S at Seaton Sluice was a record November total (SSWT). At St Mary's, at least 13 moved N and three S during the month (JPD/MSH/JBu *et al.*), six flew N at Newbiggin on 22nd (ADMc), three N at Cresswell (ADMc) and Tynemouth on 21st (SPP) and two N at the latter site on 25th (SPP). At Holy Island, 40-45 were present by the end of the month, when many were displaying (IK), a peak of 20 were at Stag Rocks on 22nd (TRD), five at Beadnell Bay on 23rd (IBDa/KDa), three at Hauxley Reserve (TRD/IFo/ASH), Ladyburn Lake (MSH/TRD) and Newbiggin (STH), and one to two at Boulmer, Cresswell Pond, Cresswell Broad Sands and St Mary's.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

The monthly Seaton Sluice total was a healthy 1,969 N and 251 S (SSWT), 560 flew N at St Mary's between 21st-23rd (JBu/JPD/MSH/IJ *et al.*), and 100 N at Snab Point on 21st (JR). Largest concentrations were 500 at Stag Rocks on 17th (ASJ), 480 at Cheswick on 15th (MHu), 324 at Spittal on 12th (MHu), 300 at Holy Island on 12th (SR), 180 at Cocklawburn (MHu), 110 at Druridge (TRD) and 53 at St Mary's. Groups of ten to 22 were at Berwick, Hauxley, Holy Island, Newbiggin and Seaton Sluice.

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was 29 N and seven S (SSWT), four flew N at Newbiggin on 22nd (ADMc), on 21st, two flew N at St Mary's (JPD) and one N at Cresswell (ADMc), and one flew N at East Chevington on 13th (TF/JFa). Six were at Stag Rocks on 17th (ASJ) and one to three regularly between 7th-26th (GB/TRD/NNBC *et al.*), three were at Boulmer on 23rd (RB/MB), and singles off Beadnell Bay, East Chevington, Hauxley Reserve and Islestone (Bamburgh).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

A total of 180 flew N and 65 S at Seaton Sluice during the month, including 69 N and 31 S on 18th (SSWT), and 27 flew N at Tynemouth on 21st (SPP) when 20 N at St Mary's (JPD). Peak gatherings were 70 at East Chevington north pool on 11th (TRC), 42 at New Water Haugh on 24th (MHu), 24-30 at Bakethin Reservoir (MD) and the Tweed Estuary (MHu), and 12-16 at Big Waters, Castle Island, Colt Crag Reservoir, Holy Island and along the River Tweed between A1-Horncliffe. Five to nine were at Boulmer, Derwent and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, Druridge, Grindon Lough, Hauxley, Killingworth Lake, QEII CP Lake, and Roddam Quarry Pond, and three at Cresswell Pond and Ladyburn Lake.

A pair of Red-breasted
Mergansers in the surf of
Druridge Bay

by John Littleton

7th November



Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Nine flew N and eight S at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT), and one N at St Mary's on 21st (JPD). Peak counts were 18 off East Chevington on 10th (TF/JFa), 16 at Stag Rocks on 18th (AA/MH), six to eight at Budle Bay (JPL) and Holy Island (ADM), and three to four at Cresswell Pond, off Druridge and Meadow Haven (Berwick). A pair was at Castle Island

on 29th (PG) and a drake on 10th (DM/STH/PJA), and singles at Hauxley and the Tweed Estuary. A notable inland record concerned a tight group of five (adult drake, immature drake and three females) at Fontburn Reservoir on 11th (TRD/JD).

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

A total of 22 N and 18 S at Seaton Sluice was a record November total (SSWT), nine flew S at Cresswell dunes on 9th (ADMc) when eight moved S at St Mary's (SPP), three flew S then N at St Mary's on 13th (SPP), and singles N at Newbiggin and St Mary's on 21st-22nd. Peak counts were 110 on the River Tweed between A1-Horncliffe on 10th (TBr), 35 at the Tweed Estuary on 8th (MHu), 23 at Holy Island on 10th (MJC/ADM), 23 at Whiteadder Water on 6th (TBr), and 12-16 at Foxton (IRD) and Killingworth Lake (LJM). Three to five were also at Barrowburn, Big Waters, Bywell, Roddam, Rothbury (three areas), Tyne Riverside CP and Wark, with one to two at ten further sites.

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

On 23rd 16 were at Hedgehope (IRD), whilst on 12th on Bewick Moor 12 were present, of which a group of ten were thought possibly to be a successful brood (MH). Two were on Quarry House Moor on 2nd (JR) and a single was on high ground above Thrunton Wood on 6th.

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

A flock of 13 (11 males) was at Williamston Common on 15th (JSB/EC). Four males including one feeding on hawthorn berries were at Derwent Reservoir on 30th, where three males were present on 28th (IFo).



A Blackcock flies past John Clark
Barheugh Burn
15th November

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

On 12th 38 were noted near Holywell Pond (SPP), 24 were at Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay) on 17th (MNC), 16 at Cardington on 8th (MJC), 15 at Quarry House Moor on 2nd (JR), 11 in Holywell Dene on 19th (SPP) and ten at Hillhead Farm (Edlingham) on 23rd (JR). Three to seven were noted at Alnwick Moor, *Beehive* Flash (Earsdon), Coanwood Common and West Moor.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

The peak counts were 18 at Ellington on 15th (TB), 15 all month at Lucker (JHa), 12 at Swallow Pond on 7th (JPD) and 11 at West Moor on 9th (NFO). Counts of ten were noted at Beaconhill (Cramlington), Beal, North Trewick (Belsay) and Prestwick Carr. Five to nine were seen at Hazlerigg, High Newton, Newton Links, Prestwick Carr, Warkworth Dunes and West Hartford.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

On 12th 45 were present in fields in Holywell (MNC), 19 were at East Horton on 10th (JR) and 15, mainly all-black released birds, were feeding on the tide line at The Snook (Holy Island). Nine were at New Bewick Bridge on 23rd (JR) and five to six were seen at Beaconhill (Cramlington), *Beehive* Flash (Earsdon) and Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene).

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

The species was very well reported this month with 51 records being received. At Seaton Sluice there was a record November site count of 269 N and 259 S (SSWT). Elsewhere at least nineteen flew N and two flew S at St Mary's Island on 21st and 13 flew S on 29th (JPD/AS), ten flew N at Hauxley on 28th (TRD) and also at St Mary's Island eight flew N on 23rd (IJ/MK), eight N and three S on 22nd (JBU/MSH), five S and four N on 24th (MSH) and six flew by on 30th (JBU), when five flew N and two S at Newbiggin (ASH). The peak offshore count was 73 in Druridge Bay on 9th with 45 off Druridge Pools and 28 off Cresswell Pond (NFO). 53 were also noted off Chevington Burn Mouth on 6th (JPD/AS) and up to 35 were in the area on seven further dates. Offshore elsewhere eight were at Newbiggin on 30th (ASH), six were at Spittal on 16th (TBr) and four off Stag Rocks on 17th/19th (STH/JDL). One to three were noted at Beadnell Bay, Berwick North Shore, Hauxley, Holy Island, Low Newton, Newbiggin, Newton Links, St Mary's Island and Saltpan Rocks (Cocklawburn).

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

During the month six flew N and one S from 22nd-30th at Seaton Sluice, well above the monthly average (SSWT). At St Mary's Island two flew N on 30th (IJ/MK), on 21st one flew N and one flew S (JPD/MPF/AS) and one flew N on 24th (SPP). One also flew N at King Edward's Bay (Tynemouth) on 23rd (SPP). One flew N at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) on 30th (IK).

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

At Seaton Sluice 14 flew N and one S, well above the average for the month (SSWT), whilst at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) nine flew S in two groups in one hour on 30th (IK). At St Mary's Island six flew N in 3 hours 30 minutes on 22nd (JBU/MSH) and one flew N on 21st (MSH). One flew N at Holy Island Castle on 26th (TRD) and two were in Beadnell Bay on 17th (ASJ/JPD). Singles were in Druridge Bay on 6th, off Stag Rocks on 7th/17th/26th, Hauxley on 10th, Newton on 17th, Berwick Pier on 24th and Holy Island Harbour on 25th.

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

The only record received was of seven flying N at Seaton Sluice from 19th-30th (SSWT).

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

One flew N at Newbiggin on the late date of 30th (ASH).

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

At Seaton Sluice 1,525 were noted during the month, mainly flying N, with peak of 573 N in 15 hours on 21st/22nd (SSWT). On 30th 100 flew N far offshore in one hour at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island), whilst a further 12 flew N and S close inshore (IK). At St Mary's Island 14 flew N in one hour on 24th and nine flew N and five S on 21st (MSH), when 18 flew N at Berwick in two periods of sea-watching (MHu). Singles flew N at Stag Rocks on 16th and S at Newton on 28th. Offshore flocks were 50 at Newton Links on 23rd (IJ/MK), 30 off Newton Point and 20 off Newbiggin on 24th (TRD), ten off Stag Rocks on 22nd and one off Chevington Burn on 7th.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

At Seaton Sluice 19 flew S and nine N in 2 hours 30 minutes on 17th (SSWT). Peak counts were 103 at Blyth Harbour on 1st (STH), 32 at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 3rd (MHu), 16 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 19th (SR), 15 at Warkworth Gut on 6th (IRD), Berwick North Shore on 7th (MHu) and Castle Island on 10th (DM/STH/PJA), 14 in the Tweed Estuary on 8th (MHu), 13 at Colt Crag Reservoir on 8th (PRM) and ten at Derwent Reservoir on 18th (IFo). One to five were seen at Bellasis Bridge, East Chevington, Elswick Wharf-Newcastle Business Park, Grindon Lough, Holywell Dene, Killham, Newton Links, QEII Lake, St Mary's Island, Swallow Pond, Sweethope Lough, Tyneside Riverside CP (Prudhoe), Wark and Widdrington Lake.

***Continental Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*

Two were at Swallow Pond on 18th and one on 5th (SPP).

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

At Seaton Sluice 11 flew N and 8 S during the month (SSWT). In the Berwick area 32 roosted at Meadow Haven on 3rd and 14 were at Berwick North Shore on 7th (MHu). At Stag Rocks 10 were present on 26th (TRD). One to four were at Blyth South Harbour, Emmanuel Head (Holy Island), Newbiggin, Newton Links and Spittal Bay (Berwick).

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Two were regularly seen and possibly a third observed at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN). Two were seen at East Chevington on 19th (ADMc) with a single there on 9th/16th/17th (ADMc/GB/TB).

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

A count of five was made at Whiteadder Water (Berwick) on 8th (TBr). The peak count in the Lindisfarne NNR area was five at Harper's Heugh (Budle Bay) on 1st (RNA). One to two were noted in the Lindisfarne NNR area on six further dates. One was in the Tweed Estuary on 8th (MHu).

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

The peak counts were 29 in the Tweed Estuary on 8th (MHu) and six on Holy Island on 14th (ADM). Four were at Boulmer on 23rd (RB/MB). One to three were seen at Arcot Pond, Berwick North Shore, Castle Island, Holywell Dene, Leazes Park (Newcastle), Tyne Green CP (Hexham), St Mary's Wetland, Stocksfield, Wark, West Chevington and by the A1 at Gosforth Park.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

At least six were at Cresswell Pond on 1st (MSH). Six were also on Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 10th (SR). Four were at Hauxley NR on 16th (PCF) and Swallow Pond on 22nd (JPD) with three at East Chevington on 6th (JPD), Castle Island on 10th (DM/STH/PJA) and Big Waters on 18th (GB). One to two were noted at Bothal Pond, Colt Crag Reservoirs, Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Pools, Hauxley, Holywell Dene, Roddam Bog, St Mary's Wetland and the Tweed Estuary.



A Little Grebe at Hauxley NR on 23rd November by Peter Fletcher

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

The peak count was six at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 10th (SR). Two, one in summer plumage, were at QEII Lake on 4th (LJM). Singles were seen at Big Waters, Chibburn Mouth, East Chevington North Pool, Killingworth Lake, Widdrington Moor Lake and on the sea at Cresswell.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

One flew N at King Edward's Bay at Tynemouth on 21st (SPP). The peak count at Stag Rocks was four on 17th (ASJ) with three noted there on 5th (JDL) and one on 18th. One was off the east shore of Holy Island on 3rd.

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

The peak count at Stag Rocks was five on 17th (STH) with four there on 18th (AA/MH). Singles were also noted there on 16th/22nd/26th. Two were offshore S of Bamburgh on 16th (GB). Singles were also at East Chevington on 1st and in Druridge Bay on 7th/12th.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

A juvenile was at Cresswell Pond from 9th-26th (TRD/ASJ/MHS/IFO *et al.*). One was off Stag Rocks on 18th (AA/MH).



The Cresswell Pond Black-necked grebe on 10th November by Jonathan Farooqi

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Three birds were noted circling then flew N near Shotleyfield on 15th (IFo), and single birds were seen at Heddon-on-the-Wall on 13th (AA), near Carterway Heads on 17th (IFo) and near Wittonstall on 23rd (IFo).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Two ringtails were at a site on 21st and 22nd (SJH), another ring-tail was seen at another site on 29th (JSB/EC) and a male was seen at another location on 28th (AH).



Two photographs of Hen Harriers in Northumberland in November

Editor's note: how sad that we must keep locations for this charismatic raptor secret in this day and age.

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Only a single sighting of this elusive species involved a bird at Fowberry on 7th (JHa).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Single birds only were noted this month with birds at Cresswell Pond on 1st (MSH), Rothbury & Wooler on 2nd (JR), Northumberland Park (North Shields) and Holywell Dene on 3rd (MNC/RJP), Newcastle Business Park on 4th (DM), Colt Crag Reservoir and Bedlington on 8th (PRM/JR), Guyzance on 9th (JR), Castle Island and Red Row on 10th (DM/STH/PJA), Seaton Delaval on 18th (JR), Cobalt Business Park (North Shields) on 19th (PCF), Alnwick Moor on 23rd (JR) and Cramlington on 28th (DM).



A Sparrowhawk eyes up a suburban bird table
Walbottle
by Ken Russell

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Eight birds were in a flooded field at the New Bridge (Berwick) on 23rd (JR), six were at Cartington on 8th (MJC), four at Prestwick Carr on 1st (PCF) and three were at Widdrington Moor Lake on 1st (MSH). Two were at Colt Crag Reservoir on 8th (PRM), West Chevington on 9th (JR), Wark (North Tyne) on 17th (PRM) and Alnwick Moor on 23rd (JR). Single birds were noted at an 18 other sites.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Four to six birds were present on Holy Island on 14th with four also on 23rd and three on 3rd (ADM). Two birds were at Grindon Lough on 27th (PRM); single birds were seen at 13 further sites.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Single birds were at Beehive Flash (Earsdon) on 1st MNC), Holy Island on 3rd and 18th (SR/AH/AA/MH), Harlow Hill on 6th (MD), St Mary's Island on 12th and 30th (JPD/MPF/JBu), Haggerston on 15th (TBr), Stag Rocks on 17th (JPD/MPF), Lucker between 21st – 28th (JHa), Fenham-le-Moor on 22nd (TRD), the Long Nanny on 23rd (IBDa/KDa) and at Boulmer on 26th (IRD).



A Merlin at Fenham le Moor by Tim Dean on 22nd November

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Three birds drifted high over The Snook (Holy Island) and two were also seen at Fenham Flats on 17th (ADM/JDL). Single birds were also seen at Prestwick Carr on 5th (JSB/EC), St Mary's Island on 6th (JPD), Fontburn Reservoir on 11th (TRD/JD), Shotton Open Cast on 12th (MD), Grindon Lough on 13th, 19th and 21st (AJH/SJH/PRM), Big Waters on 15th (AJJ *per* GB), Budle Bay on 16th and 28th (NNBC/AJ), Holy Island and in the Upper Breamish Valley on 23rd (ADM/JR).

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Swallow Pond had three birds present on 22nd (JPD) and two on 27th (SPP), up to two were at North Pool (East Chevington) on several dates (ADM *et al.*) and two were at Backworth on 24th (CGK). Single birds were either seen or heard at Arcot Pond, Cresswell Pond, Gosforth Park, Hauxley NWT, Holy Island Lough, St Mary's Wetland and Weetslade Colliery CP.



A Water Rail in the open at Hauxley NR on 23rd November by Peter Fletcher

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

The highest numbers were 21 at Swallow Pond (JPD), up to 20 at Backworth Pond (JPD/CGK/MNC) and 13 at QEII CP (CDH). One to nine birds were at 16 further sites.

Coot *Fulica atra*

The QEII CP had a peak count of 253 birds on 17th (CDH) 105 were at Killingworth Lake on 20th (IFo), 57 were at Branton GP on 8th (IBDa/KDa) and 27 at North Pool (East Chevington) on 10th (DM/STH/PJA). One to seventeen were at five other sites during the month.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

The WeBS count at Berwick North Shore totalled 182 on 7th (MHu) whilst to the south, 76 were counted at Stag Rocks, Bamburgh on 17th (ASJ) and 40 were noted at Low Newton on 23rd (IJ/MK). In addition to 12 on the Tweed estuary on 8th, two to three were reported from Newton Links and St Mary's Island.

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Holy Island held the majority of birds with 1,000 on 3rd increasing to 3,000 on 14th (ADM). Another group of 1,000 was noted in fields at Seaton Sluice on 9th (ASJ) and at Cocklawburn 620 on 4th increased to 740 on 12th (MHu). St Mary's Island typically held good numbers and 600+ were present on 30th (MSH). Counts of ca.300 came from High Mickley [date n/k] (SWA), Newton Links on 23rd (IJ/MK) and over Scotswood-Benwell on 29th (MH). Smaller groups of 100-250 were also noted at Cresswell Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Grindon Lough and Newbiggin (Beacon Point), whilst 40-80 were also at Bothal Pond, Boulmer, East Chevington and Woodhorn Flashes. Two were feeding in fields at Big Waters on 10th (reported as being 'scarce' here) and one to two were noted feeding on the Royal Grammar School (Jesmond) sports field at night (GB).

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Berwick Little Beach held a tight flock of 32 on 21st (Mhu), 29 were at Seaton Point (Boulmer) on 26th (IRD), 20 at Fenham Mill (Lindisfarne NNR) on 22nd (TRD) and 18 at Berwick North Shore on 7th (MHu). Elsewhere, counts of one to six were the order of the day with reports made from Boulmer, Cocklawburn, Hauxley, Lindisfarne NNR (Beal Point), Long Nanny (in fields), Newbiggin (Beacon Point), St Mary's Island (one N), Seahouses and Seaton Sluice watch tower (three N).

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

A large flock of ca.1,000 at Grindon Lough on 1st gradually reduced to 390+ on 14th and 271 on 27th (PRM). Other good-sized flocks included 600+ at Cresswell Pond on 26th and 540+ at Derwent Reservoir on 17th (IFo), whilst 500 were seen moving S over East Holywell (Whitley Bay) on 16th (MNC) and 107 came in off the sea at Seaton Sluice on 18th (SSWT). Some 300 were noted at Bellasis Bridge on 17th (PCF) and 120-240 were reported from Cocklawburn, Coquet Estuary, East Chevington, Low Newton and St Mary's Island. Smaller groups of 32-94 were also at Big Waters, Bothal Pond, Newton Links, Moorhouse (Lowick) and Woodhorn north flash.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Roosting birds on a factory roof in Blyth South Harbour totalled 89 on 12th (MSH) and at nearby St Mary's Island some 60+ were noted on 7th (SPP). Between these two sites, up to 47 N and 32 S were regularly noted from Seaton Sluice and presumably related to the same birds (SSWT). In the north, 52 were counted on the WeBS at Berwick North Shore on 7th (MHu) and 28 were at the Long Nanny on 28th (TRD). East Chevington attracted 11 on 17th (TRD), ten were at Boulmer on 23rd (RB/MB) and five were at Newbiggin on 24th (TRD).

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Newton Links attracted 80+ on 5th (MSH) and ca.200 on 23rd (IJ/MK), and Cresswell Pond held 94 on 4th (TRC). A count of 50 came from Foxton on 9th (JMA), 40 were at Amble (Moorhouse Farm) on 4th (JMA) and 36 were at Druridge Pools on 24th (IRD). Ten to 22 were also noted at Berwick North Shore, East Chevington, Holy Island causeway, Howick-Seahouses and Low Hauxley, and single-figure reports came from a further seven locations.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Warkworth Gut proved attractive with four birds on 3rd (NFO) and 12 on 8th (AA/MH). Single birds were also recorded at Fenham Flats on 10th (IBDa/KDa) and flying N at Seaton Sluice on 30th (SSWT).

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

The monthly high was 20 at Boulmer on 19th (JSB/EC), followed by 16 on the Blyth Estuary on 22nd (LJM), 15 at Berwick North Shore on 7th (MHu) and ten on two dates at Hauxley (IFo/TRD). Seven were at Newbiggin (Beacon Point) on 23rd and one to five were also at Berwick Little Beach, Budle Bay, Cocklawburn, Fenham Mill, Holy Island and the Tweed Estuary.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

The top counts were of 72 at Berwick North Shore on 7th (MHu), 36 in the Tweed Estuary on 8th (MHu) and 30 at St Mary's on 30th (IJ). Ten were at Holy Island on 26th and two to five at Fenham Mill, Hauxley, Newbiggin and Stag Rocks.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

The few reports concerned six at Boulmer on 23rd (RB/MB), four at Seaton Sluice on 16th and singles at Cresswell Pond on 17th and at St Mary's on 30th.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

One was at Cresswell Pond on 6th (JPD).

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Around 200 at Sandon Bay (Holy Island) on 3rd (ADM) is described as the highest count here for many years and numbers were much reduced there by 14th; 128 were at Fenham Flats on 10th (IBDa/KDa). At least 80 were at Whitley Bay on 2nd (MSH), the peak count in Druridge Bay was of around 80 at Hadston Carrs on 12th (EC/JSB), 75 were at Boulmer on 26th (IRD) and 43 at Low Newton on 16th. The Berwick area, Newbiggin and St Mary's attracted 32-38 at times.



Sanderling hard at work at St. Mary's
28th November
by John Clark

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

At Seaton Sluice Watch Tower 194 flew N on 18th. The largest congregation was of around 200 at Fenham Mill on 22nd (TRD); 40 were at Beacon Point (Newbiggin) on 23rd and up to 34 in the Berwick/R Tweed area early in the month. The most at Cresswell Pond was 25 on 26th, 20 were at Long Nanny on 28th and two to 12 appeared occasionally at another seven places along the coast. Inland, two were at Grindon Lough on 1st and 3rd.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Stag Rocks held 114 from 5th to at least 10th (JDL/DGB) with 80 still there on 17th (ASJ). Low Newton had 33 on 16th, ten to 15 were at Berwick, Cheswick, Hauxley, Tynemouth and St Mary's and smaller numbers at another four places on the coast.

***Grey Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius*

On 6th one viewed to the south from Tynemouth flew across towards Northumberland before U-turning towards Durham (JBu/DMcG).

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Two were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 10th (SR).

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

One was noted in Budle Bay on 16th (NNBC).

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

The River Tweed Estuary WeBS revealed 258 on 8th (MHu) and the peak roost at St Mary's was 220 on 15th (ASJ); 149 were at Berwick North Shore on 7th (MHu). Cresswell Pond had 32 on 13th, 30 were at Low Newton on 23rd, 25 at Elswick Wharf/Newcastle Business Park on 4th and 14 at West Ord on 17th. Small numbers were noted at another five locations, including one at Bothal Pond on 10th and one over Big Waters on 30th.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyrtus minimus*

Two were at Long Nanny on 3rd (JPD) and two at St Mary's Wetland on 9th (MSH/IJ) with one at the latter on 12th. Singletons were found at East Chevington, North Pool on 10th (TB/TF/JFa), at Raylees (Otterburn) on 11th (IRD) and at West Hartford on 24th (LJM).

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Several singles were seen flying in off the sea: at Low Newton on 3rd, Chevington Burn on 7th, at St Mary's and Whitley Bay on 9th, Seaton Sluice and Snab Point on 11th and at Whitley Bay on 22nd. Two were at St Mary's Wetland on 9th and 20th (IJ/SPP), two at Prestwick Carr on 29th (PCF) and two at Mitford on 30th (IRD). Singles were found at a further 17 widespread locations both at the coast and inland.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

On 12th 20-25 were flying around Holywell Pond at dusk (SPP). The peak at Cresswell Pond was 15+ on 1st and ten to 13 were found at Backworth, Bothal Pond, Prestwick Carr, St Mary's Wetland and West Hartford. Five or fewer appeared at Arcot Pond, Broomlee Lough, Holy Island, Quarry House Moor and Shiremoor.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

A pale phase moved N slowly at East Chevington on 24th (TRD).

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

At Seaton Sluice five went N on 21st and one S on 2nd (SSWT); two were noted N at Snab Point also on 21st. One was on the beach at Boulmer on 23rd.

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*

One juvenile flew south past Brierdene beach on 2nd (SPP) and was then chased out to sea by a Herring Gull. A juvenile flew N at St Mary's on 21st (JPD).

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

A total of 16 N and two S moved past Seaton Sluice Watch Tower, including nine N on 22nd. Six flew past St Mary's in some five hours on 21st (JPD) when two flew N at Snab Point and one was off Berwick Pier. One flew N at Newton Point on 22nd and one attacked roosting gulls at Tynemouth on 25th.

Auk *sp.*

A steady movement was noted on 22nd, comprising 275 N in 8h at Seaton Sluice (SSWT) and 13 N in 1.5 h at St Mary's Island (MSH). On 24th, 200 moved N in 6h at Seaton Sluice but otherwise maximum counts throughout the month were 'very low' (SSWT).

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

The only records were of two moving N at St Mary's Island on 21st (JPD/MPF) and a single bird N on 15th at Seaton Sluice (SSWT).

Razorbill *Alca torda*

The movement of auks recorded on 22nd included 50 N, specifically identified, at Seaton Sluice (SSWT) from where there were few other records.

Little Auk *Alle alle*

It was a poor month for sightings of this sought-after species. Small numbers were noted in the auk movement of 21st-22nd with records of seven N at Seaton Sluice (SSWT), six N at St Mary's Island (JPD/MPF/AS) and singles N at Tynemouth (SPP). The last record was a single N at St Mary's Island on 24th (MSH).

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

Noted specifically in the auk movement of 22nd were 25 N at Seaton Sluice (SSWT). Elsewhere one to five were recorded at Berwick Pier, Cresswell, Druridge Bay, Holy Island and St Mary's Island (TRC/TRD/JD/MHu/IJ/MK).

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Single birds remained at Berwick on 3rd (MHu), Stag Rocks on 7th (TBr), moving N at Seaton Sluice on 12th (SSWT) and again at Stag Rocks on 12th (RNa).

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Significant movements were apparent in the late afternoons of 21st and 22nd with 350 N and 260 N respectively (SSWT) and at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) on 30th a light movement of 20/h N was recorded (IK). In the Berwick area, 41 were recorded at two sites on 21st (MHu).

***Bonaparte's Gull** *Chroicocephalus philadelphia*

The adult bird first seen at Bamburgh last month was again recorded on 16th at Stag Rocks (TF/JFa/NNBC).

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Three-figure gatherings were 326 at QE II CP Lake (CDH), 300 at Budle Bay on 7th (JMA), 200 at Alnmouth Shore on 9th (JMA), ca.200 at St Mary's Island (IJ), 162 at Leazes Park on 14th (DM), 143 from a WeBS survey at Berwick North Shore on 7th (MHu) and 118 at Paddy Freeman's Park on 19th (DM). Smaller concentrations of 20-100 were at Arcot Pond, Bothal Pond, Castle Island, Foxton, Monks' House Pool, New Berwick Bridge, the River Tweed Estuary and St Mary's Island.

Two birds at St Mary's Island on 7th were Latvian and Lithuanian ringed, the latter returning for its fourth consecutive winter (MSH). A Finnish-ringed bird was present at the QE II CP on 14th, this bird also having been seen there in the past two winters and a Norwegian-ringed bird was also at the QE II CP on 14th (MSH).

A second Norwegian bird, ringed J8Y6 as 3cy in 2012 was at Killingworth Lake on 15th, this bird also having been seen at Killingworth Lake in November 2012 and in Norway in April 2013 (PCF).

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

The monthly total recorded at Seaton Sluice was 24 N and five S (SSWT) and a first-winter flew N at Tynemouth on 21st (SPP). Single adult birds were at Stag Rocks on 1st (JSB/EC/JPL), East Chevington on 12th (AA/TRD/JD/MH) and St Mary's Island on 22nd (JBu).

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Eleven, six N and five S, passed the watch point at Seaton Sluice during the month comprising at least four birds, two adults and two immatures (SSWT). Newbiggin South Bay held 15 on 4th when there were also eight on the nearby playing-fields (ADMc) and records on two other dates from Newbiggin were of seven (six adults) and four immature birds (TRD/ADMc). One to two adults/immatures were recorded elsewhere throughout the month at Bamburgh, Cresswell Snab Point, East Chevington, Low Newton, Marden Estate (Tynemouth), QE II CP, St Mary's Island and Whitley Bay.



A Mediterranean Gull flies past Newbiggin
by Jack Bucknall
2nd November

Common Gull *Larus canus*

At Seaton Sluice 300 moved S in two hours on 4th (SSWT). A large gathering on the beach at the Long Nanny on 5th held in excess of 500 (MSH), 300 were at Airey Holm Reservoir (near. Shotleyfield) on 18th (IFo), 200 at Grindon Lough on 10th (MRS) and 134 at Lowick on 10th (JR). Elsewhere, 30-80 were found at Ingram Bridge, Howtel, Middlemoor (near Alnwick), New Berwick Bridge and Old Yeavinger (SJH/JR). A WeBS survey recorded 14 in the Tweed Estuary on 8th (MHu) and one to 16 were at Arcot Pond, Castle Island, Leazes Park, St Mary's Island and Widdrington Lake (DM/IJ).

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

Few birds remained in the county with a single, possibly over-wintering, adult in the Arcot/Cramlington area on a number of dates up to 13th (DM/LJM), an adult at Grindon Lough on 10th-14th (PRM) and one at Budle Bay on 17th (MSH).

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argentatus*

A WeBS count at the Tweed Estuary on 8th recorded 314 (MHu), in excess of 300 were on the beach at the Long Nanny burn mouth on 5th (MSH) and 70 were at Middlemoor (near Alnwick) on 2nd (JR). Elsewhere, six to 35 occurred at Arcot Pond, Berwick North Shore, Castle Island, East Chevington, Leazes Park, Newcastle Great Park, St Mary's Island, West Thirston and Widdrington Lake (GB/TRC/MHu/IJ/MK/DM/JR).

Seven birds, *ssp argentatus* (Northern), were identified on the Black Middens (Tynemouth) on 23rd (SPP) and a single of this race was at East Chevington on 1st (TRD/JD).

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoideus*

Three sightings of second-winter birds came from Seaton Sluice – moving N on 21st-22nd and S on 30th—‘presumed to be the same bird’. A first-winter was recorded flying over Welbeck School (Walker) on 16th (SPP).

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

An adult was at East Chevington North Pool on 10th (TB) and, on the same day, a second-winter was there briefly before flying off W (TF/JFa). A first-winter bird was at the North Shields Fish Quay on 28th (JPD/MPF/AS) and a ‘juvenile’, possibly the same bird, was seen to fly over St Mary’s Island before continuing N on 30th (JBU/DMcG).

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

The largest gatherings were 456 on the East Chevington North Pool islands on 11th (TRC), 302 in the River Blyth Estuary on 10th (LJM), 207, mainly adults, in Blyth South Harbour on 12th (MSH) and 105 on Castle Island on 10th (DM/STH/PJA). Double-figure concentrations at other localities were 17-57 at Budle Bay, Druridge Bay, QE II CP, the River Tweed Estuary, and Warkworth Gut (IRD/CDH/MHu/MSH/DM/LJM). One to six were at four other coastal sites and inland at Big Waters, Grindon Lough and the River Tyne at Elswick Wharf.

Rock Dove / Feral pigeon *Columba livia*

A peak count of 68 on the Environment Agency roof at Newcastle Business Park on 4th (DM) and 52 on the roof of In Lyne at Lynemouth on 23rd (PCF).

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

A flock of 70-80 fed in a field east of Holywell Pond on 12th (SPP) and 14 were at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 30th (TB).

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Only one report of ten W at Grindon Lough on 10th (PRM),



A Wood Pigeon leaves its mark on a Bathroom window
by Steve Barrett in Woolsington

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Seed at a garden feeding station in Cramlington attracted 28 to a nearby tree on 28th (STH), ten were at Church Farm (Earsdon) on 4th (MNC) and six at Prestwick Carr on 8th.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

At Holy Island three to four were present around the farm and village on 8th (IK). All other sightings were singles at Longhorsley Moor on 4th, Warenford on 7th, Annstead (Seahouses) on 11th and Ellington on 18th (TB) with a roadside casualty reported by two observers on the A1 at South Charlton on 15th/16th.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Singles were at Newcastle Great Park on 5th, Big Waters on 10th, Glororum (near Bamburgh) on 12th, Ogle on 25th and Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene) on 30th.

A late breeding report from **July** where two pairs each laid three eggs and fledged two young (SWA).



A Little Owl on the alert at West Stobswood
19th November
by John Clark

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

In the Melkridge area three birds called early evening on 21st and two on 12th (SJH), two called at Corbridge (N) on 27th (RB/MB) with singles regularly at Bamburgh and Wark (N Tyne) during the month, Holywell Dene on 12th & 19th and Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 16th.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

One report of a single at West Allotment Pond (Silverlink Park, North Shields) on 23rd (CGK).

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

On 21st birds arriving in off the sea were noted with two at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower (SSWT) and at St Mary's Island (JPD) likely to be the same birds and a single at Hauxley (NWT) (IFo). A single in off was also noted at St Mary's Island on 7th (JPD/SPP).

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

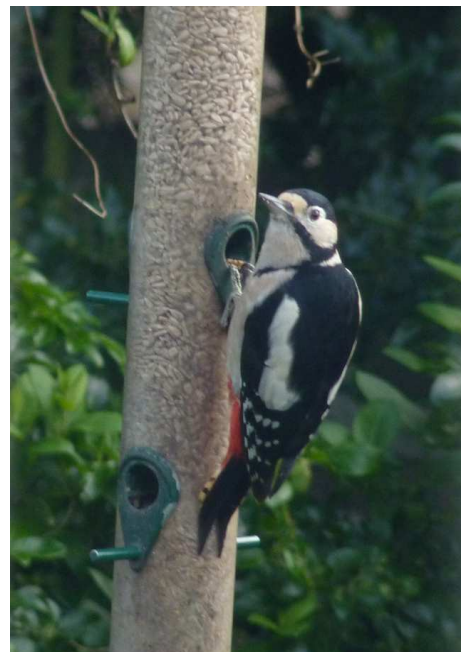
At Branton GP two were present during the month (IBDa/KDa) with one at Grindon Lough on 8th being the observer's first ever record in 12 years (PRM) and singles also at Wark (N Tyne) on 18th, Holywell Dene on 20th and Tyne Riverside CP on 30th.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Single birds were heard at Craggside (Rothbury) on 21st (TRD) and seen at Swallowship Wood (Hexham) on 22nd (AJH).

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Three were at Harwood Head (Harwood Forest) on 5th (MSH) with two at East Sleekburn on 4th (JR), Cresswell on 17th and in dunes at Blyth South Beach on 21st (TB) possibly indicating passage. One to two were in an Old Hartley garden during the month (RJP) with singles at a further eleven inland localities and three on the coast.



A Great Spotted Woodpecker in a Walbottle garden
by Ken Russell

Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor*

A single, originally thought to be a Great Grey, was found at Links House (Low Newton) on 16th and re-identified by Gary Woodburn being well watched by many until the 24th.



One of the most unexpected Autumn birds, the Lesser Grey Shrike at Newton Links

By Jonathan Farooqi on 16th November

Magpie *Pica pica*

The largest count was 45 at Swallow Pond on 7th (JPD) with six at East Thirston on 23rd (JR) and two at Cresswell on 7th (IJ/TRC).

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Five were at Swallowship Wood (Hexham) on 22nd (AJH) and at Arcot Pond on 28th (SPP), four at East Sleekburn on 4th and Kilham on 10th, with three at Ford Moss on the same date (JR) and Swallow Pond on 11th and 20th (SPP/AJ). Two were at Prestwick Carr and Grindon Lough with singles at seven other widespread locations.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

On 25th a flock of 600 fed in fields at Beaconhill (Cramlington) before flying SW to roost (STH) with flocks of 230 at Whitelea (Cramlington) on 7th (DM), 200+ at QEII CP on 14th (MSH), 50 at Boulmer on 9th, Kiln Pit Hill on 19th (JMA) and ten at Kilham on 10th (JR).

Three birds indicating characteristics of Nordic race ssp *monedula* were at Killingworth Lake on 15th (PCF).

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Around 300 were at Chatton on 10th with 71 at Kilham on the same date (JR). Two immature birds were digging for grubs in the observer's garden at Fulbeck (Morpeth) also on 10th (TD).

Carriion Crow *Corvus corone*

A pre-roost gathering of 60 in fields at Beaconhill (Cramlington) on 25th, 56 at Whitelea (Cramlington) on 7th (DM), seven at Kilham on 10th (JR) and also present at six coastal localities (IJ/TRC/MK)

Raven *Corvus corax*

A vocal group of six flew low at Coanwood Lough on 26th with four to five at Coanwood Common on 21st and 22nd (SJH), four at Plenmeller Common on 15th (EC/JSB) and Ridsdale on 24th (MD), three in the Melkridge area on 12th, two at Otterburn Camp on 14th (JR) and a one calling frequently at Berwick Castle on 19th (BWG).

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

On 8th nine were at Colt Crag Reservoir and eight at Sweethope Lough (PRM), 6+ at Spindlestone on 11th (BRS) with four at Furnace Bridge (R. Blyth) on 6th and Newton Red House on 16th. Two to four were in an Old Hartley garden mainly in the second half of the month with three at Leazes Park on 1st and one to two at eight further widespread localities.

Tit *sp*

A mixed flock of 50 mainly Blue and Long-tailed with 4 Coal and a few Great Tit were in Holywell Dene on 21st (MNC).

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Eight were at Prestwick Carr on 2nd (PCF), four at Kilham on 10th (JR) and present in Brierdene (Whitley Bay) on 30th (IJ). A late breeding record for **June** involved fourteen pairs using nest boxes at Dipton (SWA).

Great Tit *Parus major*

Present in Brierdene (Whitley Bay) on 30th (IJ).

Three pairs used nest boxes at Dipton (SWA) in **June**.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Five were at Southfield Green (Cramlington) on 17th (DM), four at Whittle Dene Reservoirs also on 17th with garden feeders at Old Hartley attracting one to four during the month and two at Dinnington on 17th (RJP/PCF). Singles were at Colt Crag Reservoir on 8th and Low Newton on 23rd.

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

At Prestwick Carr two to three were present all month with two visiting garden feeders at Dinnington on 8th (PCF) similarly, one to two were at Holywell Dene with probably the same pair visiting an Old Hartley garden regularly (RJP). Two were at Felton on 17th and at Lucker during the month (NFO/JHa). Singles were also at Big Waters, Branton GP, Warkworth Lane (Ellington), Airy Holm Reservoir (near Shotleyfield) and Brierdene (Whitley Bay).

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

Three were at Linden Hall (Longhorsley) on 16th (NFO), two at Hartburn on 3rd and Bluebell Woods (Morpeth) on 7th (IRD/MJC) with singles at Dipton Mill on 2nd, Thrum Mill (Rothbury) on 23rd and Mitford on 30th.

Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*

A male was in front of the south hide at East Chevington North Pool from 5th to 16th (ADM*c et al.*)

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Largest counts of 21 at High Newton on 17th (MJC), 15 at East Sleekburn on 4th (JR) and six off Beacon Lane (Cramlington) on 10th (DM) with one to three at Middlemoor (near Alnwick), over Southfield Green (Cramlington), Druridge Pools and East Chevington.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Late records involved three flying purposefully south over Druridge Bay dunes at 10.15am on 12th (AA/MH) with singles at St Coomb's Farm (Holy Island) on 6th and SW over Chapel House (Newcastle) on 12th (IK).

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

A 'tribe' of 25 at Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 19th was the largest gathering (MNC), followed by 15 at Prestwick Carr on 9th (PCF) and at Cramlington on 24th (DM); 12 were at Ellington on 9th and at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 23rd (TB). Eight to ten were reported from Berwick, Bywell Bridge, Leazes Park and Marden Quarry (Whitley Bay) and one to six at a further five localities.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

An unusual inland record came from Wideopen on 1st (GB).

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Holy Island held one on 14th, five on 17th and 23rd and two on 24th (ADM/IK). Singles were also at Bamburgh on 17th and 23rd (BRS) and Newton on 22nd (TRD).

A bird showing characteristics of the **Northern race** *P.c.abietinus* was on Holy Island on 17th (ADM).

A bird showing characteristics of the **Siberian race** *P.c.tristis* was on Holy Island on 17th (ADM).

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Singles were noted at Marden Quarry (Whitley Bay) on 1st, Mitford on 3rd, Furnace Bridge (Bedlington) on 6th, West Mickley on 15th and Bamburgh and Holy Island on 17th.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

One to two were reported from Arcot Hall GC, Bywell Bridge, Holywell Dene, Mitford, Rothbury, Spindleston and Wark (North Tyne).

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulous*

There were only two reports, both from the North Tyne Valley. One flew towards Chipchase Castle on 25th (MR) and another (or possibly the same) was at Wark on 26th (PRM).

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Four were noted at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 16th (TB) and one to two at Holywell Dene, Kilham, Sweethope Lough and Wark (North Tyne).

Wren *Troglodytes troglodyte*

At Holy Island the peak count was 13 on 17th, falling to nine by 23rd (ADM). Five were at Ford Moss on 10th and High Newton on 17th (JR/MJC) and two at Kilham on 10th.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

A disappointing 2,500 were noted in the regular roost at Holy Island Lough on 7th (IK), well below previous years. Elsewhere 650 were at Derwent Reservoir on 20th (IFo) and over 400 at Grindon Lough on 14th (PRM). Smaller counts included 300 at Coanwood Lough, 200 at Prestwick Carr and 100 at Seaton Burn and a total of 73 came in off the sea at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower during the month. Ten to 60 were noted at a further four localities.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

One to two were noted at Corbridge, Furnace Bridge (Bedlington), Holywell Dene, Ingram Bridge, Ponteland, Thrum Mill and Weldon Bridge.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

A sizeable influx on 11th produced about 1,000 at Holy Island (IK) and 30+ at Bamburgh (BRS) and a total of 32 were noted arriving over the sea at Seaton Sluice from 3rd-11th. Later in the month a light arrival deposited ca.60 on Holy Island on 22nd. Some notable inland counts included 20 at Whiteadder Water (Berwick) on 8th, 18 at Ford Moss on 10th and 11-15 at East Thirston and Felton Bridge on 23rd. Two to eight were reported from a further six localities.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Some sizeable inland flocks were reported towards the end of the month, the largest of which were 1,000 at Sinderhope on 31st (SWA), 600 at Prestwick Carr on 30th (PCF), 332+ at Grindon Lough on 27th and 200-250 at Derwent Reservoir, Gunnerton Fell and Plenmeller Common between 21st-27th; elsewhere 150+ were at Wark (North Tyne) on 17th. Coastal arrivals included, at Holy Island 149 on 3rd and 124 on 14th and a total of 117 in off the sea at Seaton Sluice during the first two weeks of the month. Flocks of 80-110 were reported from Kilham, Milbourn and Ord Moor (Berwick) and 45-65 from Barrowburn, Big Waters, Coanwood, Corby Craggs, Raylees, Swallow Pond and Thorngraston Common. Smaller gatherings of 15-30 were noted at Corbridge, Ellington, Ford Moss, Linden Hall, Old Yeavering, South Middleton and Tweedmouth with one to 12 at a further eight localities.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

The only reports were four (one in full song) at Prestwick Carr on 10th (PCF), two in off the sea at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower on 11th and one in song at Gosforth on 23rd.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Further coastal arrivals included 64 at Holy Island on 3rd (ADM) and 81 in off the sea at Seaton Sluice on 11th (SSWT). Inland flocks were generally rather small and included 53 at Beacon Lane (Cramlington) and 34 at Prestwick Carr on 10th, 22 at Dinnington on 4th and at Backworth on 24th and 20 at Kilham on 10th. One to six were noted at a further seven localities.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

The largest gatherings were seven at East Sleekburn on 4th and six at East Thirston on 23rd (JR). Five came in off the sea at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower on 11th and three were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 7th. One to two were reported from a further seven localities.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Counts from Holy Island were nine on 10th, 23 on 17th and 16 on 23rd (ADM/MJC). Inland, eight were reported from Ford Moss and from Kilham on 10th (JR) and one to three were noted at Brierdene (Whitley Bay), Furnace Bridge (Bedlington) and St Mary's Wetland.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Results from nest boxes at Dipton Woods were as follows (SWA);
Ten pairs laid 58 eggs, fledging 52 young.

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Peak counts from coastal localities were as follows;

Five at Warkworth Gut on 8th (MH/AA), four at Seaton Sluice on 9th (ASJ), three at Druridge CP, Druridge Pools/Links, East Chevington, St Mary's Island and Stag Rocks, two at Bamburgh, Cheswick, Cocklawburn, Cresswell Pond, Holy Island, Howick Burn, Long Nanny and Low Newton and singles at Old Hartley and High Newton. The only inland reports were a pair at Prestwick Carr on 29th (PCF), a male at Berwick Moor on 10th (MH/AA) and a female at Thorngraston Common on 15th (JSB/EC).

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

Only two reports for the month, two were in a garden at Old Hartley throughout and one was around the East Chevington Burn on 7th.



A Dunnock gives Peter Fletcher the eye
Prestwick Carr on 25th November

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

50 were in Cullercoats throughout the month (ASJ). 44 were noted at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 7th (PCF). 40 were in a garden on Marden Estate (Tynemouth) throughout and in a hedge at Southfield Green, Cramlington on 17th. 20 were at Low Newton on 23rd.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

150 were noted at *Beehive Flash* on 6th and 75 were at Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay) on 26th (MNC). 70+ were at Smeafield on 23rd (MSH) and 50 were at Halidon Hill (Berwick) on 9th (BWG). 20-42 were reported from Hauxley NR, Kimmerston and Seahouses. 10-15 were noted at Backworth, Cresswell Pond and Newton Links.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Two were at St. Mary's on 12th (JPD) all other reports during the month were of singles coming from 11 locations; five were typically coastal Blyth Estuary, Castle Island, Monkseaton, St. Mary's Wetland, Seaton Sluice. Away from the coast Newcastle city centre produced sightings on 1st, 15th and 26th, other urban locations included Morpeth and Valley Park (Cramlington). Inland reports came from Big Waters (24th) and Felton Bridge (23rd) with one at Thrum Mill (Rothbury) on 23rd and 25th.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

12 at Chibburn Mouth (Druridge Bay) on 6th (IRD) and 11 at Ellington on 23rd (TB) were the largest groups recorded in the month. One to seven were at Chugdon Wood, Ellington, Chevington Burn mouth, Low Newton/Newton links, St. Mary's and Whitley Bay links.

White Wagtail *M. a. alba*

A late adult was reported on beach east of Cresswell Pond on 9th (MHS).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

10 at St. Mary's on 15th was the peak count (ASJ). Elsewhere one to five were at Alnwick Moor, Arcot Pond, Big Waters, High Newton, Newcastle Great Park and Southfield Green, Cramlington.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Numbers remained healthy around Holy Island with 26 counted on 3rd and 23rd, the majority on both dates between Sandon Bay and Coombs Haven Bay (ADM). Elsewhere 15 were at St. Mary's on 15th (ASJ). Six were at Boulmer on 5th and Tynemouth Pier on 8th. One to four were at another four coastal locations.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

200 were in a turnip field at Alnwick Moor on 23rd (JR). 120 fed in a field near Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 17th (PCF). 30+ were at Smeafield on 23rd. 12-18 were noted from Doddington Bridge, Ewart Park, Kilham, Middlemoor (near Alnwick) and Prestwick Carr.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Ca. 30 in Holy Island village on 11th (IK) was the only flock that reached double figures in the month. Six were at Cartington on 8th (MJC) and five at Ewart Park on 2nd (JR). Three were at Rothbury from 6th and singles at Bolam Lake and Wark.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

30+ were at St. Mary's on 15th (MSH/AC) and at Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene) on 30th (MSH). 15+ were at Bamburgh on 23rd (BRS).

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Druridge Links held the most significant flock; numbers reported ranged from 200+ on 1st (MSH), 150+ at Hemscott Hill on 6th (JPD) and ca.400 on 12th (EC/JSB). 50 were at St. Mary's on 15th (ASJ). 27 came in off the sea at Seaton Sluice on 8th (SSWT) and 28 visited feeders at East Ord on 30th (MHu).

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

22 were at Newburn Business Park on 17th (PCF) and 30 flew over Alnwick on 22nd (JMA) but the largest flock in the month was 55+ on 30th at Tyne Riverside Country Park (Prudhoe) (PRM). One to nine were reported from three other sites.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

150 were at Chare Ends on Holy Island on 14th (ADM). 100 behind Stag Rocks on 5th and 16th (DGB/NNBC). 70 were noted at St. Mary's Wetland on 16th (KWY), 65 in Druridge Bay on 9th and 60 feeding in set-aside at the *Beehive* Flash on 6th. 15 came in off the sea at Seaton Sluice on 10th (SSWT).

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

60-70 at the Long Nanny on 3rd (JPD) had increased to 77 by 17th (TRD). 40 were at Holy Island on 17th (SR/AH). 20 flew over the north pool at East Chevington on 12th (TRD/JD). One was at Warkworth Gut on 3rd.

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*

25+ at Branton Gravel Pits on 8th was the only notable flock (IBDa/KDa). Singles were noted at Sweethope Lough on 8th, Beacon Hill (Cramlington) on 10th and Hauxley NR on 26th.

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostris*

Few and far between this month, seven at Sweethope Lough on 8th the largest count (PRM). Six flew over a garden in Fulbeck (Morpeth) on 3rd and six were at Thrunton Woods on 6th. Singles were noted flying W at St. Mary's on 6th and singing at Blakehopeburnhaugh on 13th.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

10 were at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 3rd (DMc) and Sweethope Lough on 8th (PRM). Six were at New Mills, Whiteadder Water (Berwick) on 6th and five at Colt Crag on 8th. One to four were noted at eight other sites.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

55 on Comb Fell on 9th was the largest flock (*per* NNBC) amongst 33 reports received this month. 40 were at Stag Rocks on 8th (FSO *et al.*) and presumably the same group in Budle Bay on 13th (JGlo). 35 were at Ross Back Sands on 9th and 32 flew south at Whitley Bay on 9th. on 17th 25 flew S at The Snook (Holy Island) and two were found dead on the tide-line there. Ten to 23 were reported from Berwick Little Beach, Druridge Bay, Blyth South Harbour and Warkworth Gut. Away from the coast four were at Quarry House Moor on 2nd (JR) and one flew S calling at Sweethope Lough on 8th (PRM).



Two Snow Buntings at Druridge Bay
7th November
by John Littleton

Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*

Only two reports this month. Three flew E over the Straight Lonnen on 10th (MJC/ADM) and one was at the Long Nanny on 7th (MJC).

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

A gathering of ca.60 was at Kimmerston on 10th (JR). 29 were at High Newton on 17th (MJC) and 25 at Ellington on 16th (TB). 20 were noted from the *Beehive* Flash on 6th and Felton on 17th.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza Schoeniclus*

At the *Beehive* Flash 80 were present on 6th (MNC), 44 were at High Newton on 17th (MJC). 17 were at Sweethope Lough on 8th and one to nine at five other sites during the month.

ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN**Escapes****Quail** *Coturnix coturnix*

One was observed for twenty minutes on 8th moving along a footpath along the River Wansbeck near the Estuary. It flew twice when originally flushed and was seen to have a couple of white primary feathers on each wing. Due to the tameness and white wing feathers, it was thought likely to have been an escape. Apparently a nearby shop stocks Quail !

Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo*

The known escape at Walker in Newcastle was heard on 5th and 14th in Burnham Avenue and seen well sitting on a gate post on 17th in St Anthony's Rd where it was being avidly mobbed by 28 Carrion Crows (SPP).

Hybrids**'Aythya sp' x Pochard** *Aythya sp x Aythya ferina*

A female at Tynemouth boating lake which was seen last month remained until the 2nd (DRW). The parentage is still being debated with either Scaup x Pochard or Tufted Duck x Pochard being likely possibilities.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

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Bamburgh Ringing Station, Berwick Wildlife Group, Natural History Society of Northumbria, North Northumberland Bird Club, 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 (Avocet to Godwit) Ian Forsyth (Turnstone to Skua), Eddie Crabtree (Puffin to Great Black-backed Gull), 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), Alan Tilmouth (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

Mail 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.

Could club members ensure they to submit records direct to NTBC rather than just Birdtrack. There may be an assumption by some members this happens automatically. We do not want to miss records.

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

Membership costs £30 per year. 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. Please submit any new content for the website to the main club email address at ntbcorg@gmail.com

NTBC SIGHTINGS PAGE

The Sightings Page contains current sightings by members. Access is from the NTBC website.

Members need to submit a request to be added to the website, specifying the email address they wish to post from before they can submit sightings to ntbcorg@gmail.com

FOR SALE

Canon EOS 50D body boxed, with 75-300 f4-5.6 lens - £400

Canon 2x converter m1 - £100

Contact

Ray Craig { Hexham } 01434 681738 evenings only



A Mediterranean Gull with Black-heads at Low Newton
by Jonathan Farooqi on 3rd November

COASTAL WEBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

November 2013

MHu M. Hutcheson TB M. Hutchison T. Brewis AC A. Craigs RP R. Poyer MLC M. L. Cadwallender KR K. Redgrave JAR J. Roper AB A. Brunt TAC T. A. Cadwallender MSK M. S. Kitching / S. L. Barratt SP S. Parnaby MGA M. G. Anderson LJM L. J. McDougall KVB K. Brooks DMT D. M. Turner PF P. Fletcher

Site	Berwick North Shore (including Little Beach)		Berwick Little Beach		Tweed Estuary		Tweed: At By-Pass to Hornciffe		Spital - Cocklawburn		Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay)		Budle Pt - Seashouses		Seashouses - Beadnell		Beadnell - Howick		Howick - Boulmer		Boulmer - Alnmouth		Aln Estuary		Alnmouth South		Couquet Estuary		Chevington - Cresswell		Cresswell - Newbiggin		Blith Estuary		Blith Estuary - Seaton		St Mary's Island		Whitley Bay - Tynemouth		Tyne North Pier - Fish Quay		East Howdon, (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 2013 No 12

MONTHLY SUMMARY – DECEMBER

3rd February 2014



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One of the Seahouses Ivory Gulls

7th September

Photographed by a lucky Jack Bucknall



CLASSIFIED LIST HIGHLIGHTS

Bean Goose

Greenland White-fronted Goose

American Wigeon

Sooty Shearwater

Manx Shearwater

Black-throated Diver

Bittern

Little Egret

Black-necked Grebe

Ruff

Grey Phalarope

Ivory Gull

Glaucous Gull

Waxwing

Brambling -

Twite

Snow Bunting

Lapland Bunting

Two at Broomlee Lough on 15th.

Three at Woodhorn and two at Grindon Lough

Male at Fenham Flats

Unusually late record of one off Cresswell on 7th.

Winter record of one on 23rd at Cresswell.

Influx along coast

Singles at Warkworth Lane and Chevington with three at Gosforth Park

Still seven along River Tweed near Berwick on 20th

Single at Cresswell Pond on 2nd

Single at Newburn on 21st

Several records late in month in north of county

Two at Seahouses on 7th were first seen in county since 1979 !

One at North Shields Fish Quay from 1st to 4th.

Groups of eight in Rothbury & Felton

Large flock of 260 at Grindon Hill on 22nd.

Five inland near Corbridge on Christmas Day

Flock of 55 on Holy Island on Christmas Day

Single on Holy Island on 13th

COMMITTEE NEWS

2013-2014 subscriptions are now well overdue. This is the last NTBC publication for non-payers.

There is a vacancy on the NTBC committee. Please contact any committee member.

FIELD TRIPS

Holy Island – 29th March 2014

Meet mainland end of causeway 09:30. As this is a tidal island members will need to be on before 11:10h and off after 17:15h.

Please email Steve Anderson seaswan@btinternet.com

INDOOR MEETINGS

NTBC indoor meetings are held at Northern Rugby Club, McCracken Park, Great North Road, Newcastle, NE3 2DT starting at 7.00pm and generally finish between 9.00pm-9.30pm. The next meeting is on Thursday 13th February

SPEYSIDE WILDLIFE

Top 'Speyside Wildlife' guide Chrissie Nicholson will describe her adventures and experiences of the wonderful wildlife of Speyside. This is a 'not to be missed' chance to share some amazing wildlife experiences from this fantastic place.

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 2011 page 228.

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

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Killingworth Lake held 65 on 16th (DM), 16 were at Arcot Pond on 6th (DM), and five to nine were at Gosforth Park NR, Greenlee Lough, Howdon Wetland, Newcastle Leazes Park, Prestwick Carr and Warkworth. One to four were also at seven further sites, including two on the River Tyne at Redheugh bridge.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

12 were noted over Bamburgh on 14th (JHa), and one flew N at Stag Rocks on 28th (JBU). About 80 were feeding in an oil seed rape field at Beal on 4th (JMA), 48 were at Warkworth Lane on 29th (TB), 19 at Warkworth on 28th (JBU), 14 at Loanend, Horncliffe on 29th (MHu), and ten were on the sea off East Chevington on 16th-17th (TW/TRD). One to three were also at Craggside, Low Newton, Shield on the Wall, West Ord and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

A pair of Whoopers at Craggside
Janet Dean
14th December



Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*

Two un-raced birds were at Broomlee Lough on 15th (MRS).

Pink-footed Goose/Greylag Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*/*Anser anser*

A mixed flock of 460 Greylag and Pink-footed Geese flew over the *Beehive* Flash (Earsdon) on 9th (MNC).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

39 flew N at Seaton Sluice between 5th-7th (SSWT), 32 N at St Mary's on 6th (JPD), and 30 N at East Ord on 14th (MHu). About 4,000 were in the Cresswell area on 13th (ASJ) and about 3,000 were noted in Druridge Bay on 4th (AJR). Other peak counts were 1,000 at Tughall on 8th (NFO), 1,000 at Doddington on 19th (DGB), 500 at Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene; RJP), 500 at Beadnell (IBDa/KDa/JPL), and 400 at the *Beehive* Flash, Earsdon (MNC). Two to 22 were also at Bakethin, Budle Bay, Derwent Reservoir and Grindon Lough.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

One seen briefly at Cresswell Pond on 6th was thought to be of the Eurasian *albifrons* race (JSB/EC). Three adult Greenland *flavirostris* race birds were at Woodhorn Flashes on 28th (GB/JBU), and a bird probably of this race was at Hartley West Farm, Holywell Dene on 24th (RJP). Three un-raced birds were at Woodhorn Flashes on 15th (AA).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Peak concentrations were 484 at Derwent Reservoir on 29th (IFo), 250 at the *Beehive* Flash, Earsdon on 2nd (MNC), 220 at East Chevington on 4th (AJR), and 151 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 22nd (SR). Groups of 30-52 were also at Grindon Lough, Holywell Dene and Prestwick Carr, and 14-18 at the *Drift Inn* pools (Seaton Burn) and New Water Haugh. One to five were at four further sites, including a freshly dead bird at Big Waters.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Grindon Lough attracted a peak of 401 on 6th (PRM) and 133-325 on various other dates (SJH/PRM). Elsewhere, peak counts were 160 at Bothal Pond on 28th (TF/JFa), 112 at Derwent Reservoir on 16th (IFo), and 84 at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN). Groups of 20- 44 were at Big Waters, Killingworth and QEII CP Lakes, Newcastle Leazes Park, West Ord and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and three to 12 at Hauxley and New Water Haugh.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

150 were at Budle Bay on 8th (TRD/JD).

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

About 3,600 pale-bellied *hrota* race birds were at Lindisfarne NNR all month (IK), two flew S at Seaton Sluice on 30th (SSWT), and one was at Tynemouth on 8th (DRW). About 100 dark-bellied *bernicla* race birds were at Holy Island all month (IK). Un-raced birds included 1,160 at Lindisfarne NNR on 18th (JDL) and 450 at Budle Bay on 11th (AJR).

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Six flew N and two S at Seaton Sluice between 2nd-18th (SSWT), The Fenham Flats area of Lindisfarne NNR held 1,190 on 18th (JDL), 21 were at Budle Bay on 8th (DM *et al.*), and one to three at Castle Island, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington and Howdon Wetland.

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Peak gatherings were 1,800 at Fenham Flats on 3rd (JDL), 860 at Cresswell Pond on 22nd (NFO), 273 at Derwent Reservoir on 12th (IFo), 258 at Big Waters on 15th (GB), 176-220 at Bothal Pond, Grindon Lough and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and 80-143 at Colt Crag and Derwent Reservoirs, Gosforth Park NR and Hauxley Reserve. Counts of 12-29 came from Arcot Pond, the *Drift Inn* pools (Seaton Burn), New Water Haugh and the Tweed Estuary.

American Wigeon *Anas americana*

A drake was at Fenham Flats on 28th (JBU/CB).

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Five flew S at Whitley Bay Links on 15th (IJ). Big Waters attracted 87 on 15th (GB), 20 were at East Chevington on 10th (TRD/JD), 18 at Castle Island on 15th (DM/STH/PJA), 13 at Arcot Pond on 9th (LJM), and ten at QEII CP Lake (CDH). Five to six visited Druridge Pools, Gosforth Park NR, St Mary's Wetland and Woodhorn Flashes, and two at Hauxley Reserve and at Linton Ponds. More unusually, nine were at the Blyth Estuary on 29th (LJM).

Teal *Anas crecca*

Largest gatherings were 355 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 1st (SR), 340 at Grindon Lough on 18th (PRM), 295 at Big Waters on 15th (GB), 268 at Derwent Reservoir on 18th (PRM), 220-230 at Holy Island 'rocket field' (IK) and Newlands Bog (MHu), and 100-169 at Arcot Pond, the Blyth Estuary, Big Waters, Elswick (River Tyne) and Howdon Wetland. Counts of 50-99 came from Bothal Pond, Cresswell Pond and Colt Crag Reservoir, 25-38 at Castle Island, Longhirst Flash and West Hartford, and 11-19 at Airy Holm Reservoir, Backworth, Lynemouth Flash, St Mary's and West Ord.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Peak counts involved 182 at Derwent Reservoir on 10th (IFo), 158 at the Tweed Estuary on 12th (MHu), 141 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 1st (SR), 124-130 at Big Waters (GB), Budle Bay (DM) and Grindon Lough (PRM), 57-91 at Bothal Pond, Castle Island, Colt Crag Reservoir, Killingworth Lake, Marden Quarry, Newcastle Leazes Park, Widdrington Moor Lake and on the River Tweed between A1-Hornccliffe. Counts of 20-47 came from Airy Holm Reservoir, Jesmond Dene, Longhirst Flash, Newcastle Civic Centre, QEII CP Lake and Wark, and 11-19 at Sweethope Lough and Whitley Bay Links.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

One flew N at Seaton Sluice on 9th (SSWT), and one flew S at St Mary's on 27th (JBU). At Fenham Flats, 30 were noted on 3rd (JDL) and 20 on 18th (TRD).

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Small numbers involved peaks of nine at Druridge Pools on 31st (IRD), eight at Gosforth Park NR during the month (NHSN), seven at Warkworth Lane on 7th (AJR), five to six at Holy Island 'rocket field' (IK), Linton Ponds (CDH) and Swallow Pond (JPD), threes at Arcot Pond (STH) and Big Waters (GB), and one at Killingworth Lake (AIB).

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Killingworth Lake held a peak of 12 on 16th (DM), nine were at Bakethin Reservoir on 15th (MD/AM), three to four at Bothal Pond (IRD) and Ladyburn Lake (GB/NFO *et al.*), and one to two at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN), Greenlee Lough (MRS), Linton Ponds (CDH) and QEII CP Lake (CDH).

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Killingworth Lake again held good numbers, with a peak of 183 on 30th (AIB). Peak counts elsewhere were 69 at QEII CP Lake on 16th (CDH), 42 at Greenlee Lough on 15th (MRS), and ten to 18 at Bothal and Linton Ponds, Big Waters, Castle Island and Hauxley Reserve. Nine were also at Grindon Lough and Newcastle Leazes Park, and one to four at ten further sites, including one at the Tweed Estuary on 12th (MHu).

Scaup *Aythya marila*

A pair was at Cresswell Pond on 12th and 14th (ADM_c) and a drake there on 2nd (TB) and 11th (ADM_c), a pair visited East Chevington north pool on 13th (ADM_c) and a juvenile was there on 10th (TRD/JD), and a female was at Druridge Pools on 4th (AJR). A little further inland, a female at Big Waters was present from 15th and into January 2014 (GB). A first-winter drake was well inland at Sweethope Lough on 2nd (PRM).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

A total of 21 flew N and 30 S at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT). Groups of 65 were at Beadnell on 4th (IRD), about 50 at Stag Rocks on 30th (ADM), 43 at Amble harbour on 8th (DM *et al.*), 20-26 at North Shields Fish Quay and Seahouses harbour, and 12-18 at Berwick North Shore, Blyth harbour and Meadow Haven. One to three were also at Cullercoats, the Tweed Estuary and Whitley Bay.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

At Seaton Sluice, six flew N and two S between 2nd-12th (SSWT). A total of 61 were counted between Guile Point-Ross Links on 26th (NFO), about 20 were at Stag Rocks on 8th (NFO), four at Fenham Flats on 15th (IBDa/KDa), and three at Ladyburn Lake on 1st, 21st and 28th (TB/TF/JFa/NFO). Two were at Cresswell Pond on 15th (ADMc), two regularly at Druridge Pools between 4th-29th (AJR/RMHa/PMHa et al.), two at New Water Haugh (the Tweed Estuary) on 12th and 15th (MHu), two at Newbiggin on 17th (PG), and singles at Beadnell, Boulmer, Hauxley Reserve and Holy Island.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was an above average 233 N and 95 S (SSWT). Numbers at Stag Rocks increased from 180 on 3rd to a peak of 950 on 26th (JDL/IBDa/KDa/DGB), Numbers at Cocklawburn varied from 80-330 during the month, with a peak of 540 on 16th (MHu/TBr), and 180 were at Cheswick on 31st (MHu). Counts of 11-14 came from Cresswell, Cullercoats and Newbiggin, and four to nine were at Boulmer, Holy Island and St Mary's. More unusual was a female on Druridge Pools on 22nd-23rd (IRD/JL).



A Common Scoter at Druridge Pools
by Peter Fletcher
28th December

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

Eight flew N and one S at Seaton Sluice between 2nd-12th (SSWT). At Stag Rocks, five were noted on 22nd (AA), four on 8th (TRD/JD), three on 18th (JDL), and one on 28th (JBU). Singles were at Boulmer on 15th (RB/MB) and Longhoughton Low Steads on 20th (TRD).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

The Tweed Estuary held 54 on 12th (MHu), 38 were at East Chevington on 10th (TRD/JD), 25 at Bakethin Reservoir on 15th (JBU/MD/AM), 24 on the River Tweed between A1 and Horncliffe on 17th (TBr), 21 at Bolam Lake on 31st (TF/JFa), and 11-17 at Big Waters, Castle Island, Colt Crag Reservoir, Grindon Lough, Killingworth and QEII Lakes, and West Ord. Counts of seven came from Branton GP and Holy Island, three to four from Broomlee and Sweethope Loughs, Ladyburn Lake and Shield on the Wall, and one to two at 13 further sites.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Ten were at Holy Island on 30th (ADM), seven at Ladyburn Lake on 10th (TRD/JD), six at Beadnell during the month (JPL/DGB), and four to five at the Blyth and Tweed Estuaries (MHu/ASJ/LJM), Castle Island (PG), Cheswick (MHu) and Druridge Pools (JL). Two to three were at Budle Bay, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Bay, East Chevington, Hauxley, Longhoughton Low Steads Seahouses and Stag Rocks. A drake was at Widdrington Moor Lake on 7th and 29th (GB).

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Five flew S at Seaton Sluice on 7th (SSWT). A total of 24 were counted on the River Tweed between A1-Horncliffe on 17th (TBr), 15 were at Killingworth Lake on 16th (DM), nine at the Tweed Estuary on 12th (MHu), six at Airy Holm Reservoir on 9th (IFo), and six at Warkworth on 7th (JMA). Three to four visited Branton GP, Castle Island, QEII CP Lake and Wark, and one to two at Arcot and West Allotment Ponds, Colt Crag Reservoir, Harthope Valley and Rothbury.

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

Counts of eight came from Plenmeller Common on 3rd (SJH), Windy Gyle (Upper Coquetdale) on 16th (IRD) and Addycombe (Rothbury) on 19th (TRD). Five were on the Simonside Hills on 28th (JL). One to three were noted at Gowk Hill (Rothbury), Otterburn Ranges and Otterburn Training Area.

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

Six males were at Kirkhaugh (South Tynedale) on 11th (AA). Two males were in roadside fields at Derwent Reservoir on 1st/21st (IFo) and one male was at Coanwood Common on 19th (SJH).

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Five were at Thrunton Woods on 6th (AT) and four at Widdrington on 29th (GB).

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

The peak counts were 25 at Lucker all month (JHa), 20 in two coveys at Borewell (Scremerston) on 10th (MHu), 15 at North Seaton on 20th (TB) and 14 at Pegswood on 3rd (IRD). Eight were at Whitedam Head (Berwick) on 3rd and seven at Shankhouse Bridge (Cramlington) on 15th. Three to four were at Boulmer and Widdrington.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Five females and a male were in a Walbottle garden on 29th (KR/LR). One to two were noted at Arcot Lane, Hartley West Farm (Holywell Dene), Northumberland Park (North Shields) and a Netherton Park garden.

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

At Seaton Sluice during the month 162 flew N and 150 S with a maximum count of 67 N and 15 S on 9th (SSWT). 18 flew N at Druridge Bay and then landed on the sea on 12th (TBr). At Annstead 13 flew S on 9th (JDL), 11 flew N at Newbiggin on 10th (JSB/EC) and singles flew S at Holy Island on 14th and Stag Rocks on 30th. Large offshore concentrations were noted in the Berwick area with 68 off Cocklawburn on 24th with 40 still present on 31st, 26 at Spittal Bay on 20th and 24 at Meadow Haven on 19th (MHu). The peak offshore count at Stag Rocks was 15 on 28th (JDL). One to three were noted at Berwick North Shore, Cresswell, Guile Point (Lindisfarne NNR), Howick and Monks' House.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

During the month five flew N and four S from 1st-23rd at Seaton Sluice, exceptional numbers for the month. Two were also on the sea here on 9th (SSWT). One flew N at St Mary's Island on 30th (JBu/DMcG). Singles were noted at Rushcliffe (Whitley Bay) on 8th (IJ), Stag Rocks on 14th (RB/MB), Hole Mouth (Holy Island) on 26th (NFO), Cocklawburn on 26th (TBr), East Chevington North Pool on 28th (before flying out to sea) (TF/JFa) and Stag Rocks on 28th (JBu).



A Black-throated Diver over East Chevington on 23rd December by Jonathan Farooqi

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

At Seaton Sluice three flew N and three flew S in the period from 1st-21st (SSWT) whilst at St Mary's Island on 6th three flew S and two flew N (JPD/MPF/AS). Three were at Ross Back Sands on 26th (NFO) and singles were noted at St Mary's Island on 8th, Cheswick on 18th, Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 19th, River Aln at Alnmouth on 29th and Stag Rocks on five dates from 8th-30th.

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Few records were received this month. At Seaton Sluice three flew N and one S during the period from 2nd-21st (SSWT). Two were noted at Bamburgh Castle on 18th/31st (TRD/JHa) and a 'blue' phase flew N at St Mary's Island on 30th (JBU/DMcG).

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

An unusually late record on 23rd was of one flying N at Snab Point on 23rd (JL).

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

At Seaton Sluice 100 flew N and 28 S during the month representing above average numbers for the period (SSWT). At Snab Point 50+ birds were noted on 23rd moving both N and S (JL) and one flew N here on 29th. Ten flew past St Mary's Island in three hours on 30th (JBU/DMcG). In the Berwick area 450 were off Cocklawburn on 24th, 320 were feeding in Spittal Bay on 20th, 60 were at Meadow Haven on 22nd and 40 at Cocklawburn on 31st (MHu) and 40 at Berwick Little Beach on 30th (TBr). Ten were noted of East Chevington on 17th (TRD). Singles were noted at Islestone Rocks (Bamburgh) and feeding at the mouth of the Tweed Estuary.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

At Seaton Sluice 21 flew S and 16 N on 9th (SSWT). Peak counts were 63 at North Shields Fish Quay on 1st (ASJ), 46 at Blyth Harbour on 26th (STH), 42 at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 22nd and 16 at Sandstell Point (Berwick) on 6th (MHu). Counts of 15 came from Berwick North Shore on 13th (MHu) and QEII Lake on 16th (CDH), whilst 14 were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 1st (SR) and 13 in the Tweed Estuary on 12th (MHu) and Derwent Reservoir on 18th (PRM). Colt Crag Reservoir hosted 11 on 6th (PRM), at least ten roosted at Gosforth Park NT during the month (NHSN) and ten were at Castle Island on 15th (DM/STH/PJA). Nine were in Amble Harbour on 3rd, eight at Big Waters on 15th and three at Elswick Wharf on 3rd. One to two were noted at Amble, Broomlee Lough, Cullercoats, Hauxley, Holywell Dene, Killingworth Lake, Prestwick Carr and Whitley Bay.

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

At Seaton Sluice 16 flew S and seven N from 7th-9th (SSWT). 80+ were off Ross Back Sands on 1st (JL). Counts of 40 came from Stag Rocks on 8th (TRD/JD) and Berwick Little Beach on 30th (TBr). At Meadow Haven (Berwick) 36 roosted on 22nd and nearby nine were in Spittal Bay on 20th and six at North Shore on 13th (MHu). One to three were noted at Blyth South Harbour, Boulmer, Low Steads (Longhoughton), Monks' House, Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) and Tweed Estuary.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Late in the month three were seen at the same time at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN). Singles were seen at Warkworth Lane on 7th (AJR) and East Chevington North Pool on 28th (TF/JFa).



A Bittern in flight at East Chevington
28th December by Jonathan Farooqi

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Seven flew up the River Tweed at Paxton on 20th (JDL) and up to two were seen at various locations in the Tweed Estuary on five further dates. Singles were also noted at Lesbury on 9th, Amble on 21st and Fenham-le-Moor on 22nd.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

The peak counts were 19 in the Tweed Estuary on 12th (MHu), six at Boulmer on 29th (AB/LB) and five at Howden Wetland NR on 1st (IJ/CB). One to three were seen at Arcot Pond, Castle Island, Gosforth Park NR, Holywell Dene, Northumberland Park (North Shields) and Whitelea (Cramlington).

An alert Grey Heron
Big Waters
by Adriana Buskin
8th December

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Four were at QEII Lake on 16th (CDH), in the Horncliffe area of the River Tweed on 17th (TBr) and at Hauxley NR on 29th (GB). Three were at Swallow Pond on 4th (JPD), East Chevington on 10th (TRD/JD) and Castle Island on 15th (DM/STH/PJA). One to two were noted at Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield), Bothal Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Gosforth Park NR, Marden Quarry and Seaton Sluice Estuary.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Two were on the sea at Warkworth Gut on 30th (NFO). Singles were noted at Berwick Pier on 1st (MHu) and on the sea at Blyth South Harbour on 29th (LJM).

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

Singles were at East Chevington North Pool on 12th/13th/22nd (TBr/ADMc/IRD/NFO), Stag Rocks on 18th/23rd/24th (TRD/DGB/JL) and Ross Back Sands on 26th (NFO).

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

Two flew N together at Seaton Sluice on 21st before landing on the sea (SSWT). At Ross Back Sands on 26th 21 were seen between Guile Point-Ross Links (NFO) and at least ten were in this vicinity on 1st (JL). The peak count at Stag Rocks was only three on 30th (ADM) with one to two seen on four further dates. At Holy Island two to three were occasionally seen off St Cuthbert's Island (IK).

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

The juvenile was still present at Cresswell Pond on 2nd (TB).

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Only two records this month both involving different birds at Derwent Reservoir on 11th and 21st (IFo).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Two ringtails were at one site on 11th (JPD/MPF/AS) and another ring-tail was seen at a site in the North of the County on 3rd (JDL). Males were seen at two sites one in the North on 19th (AK) and another in the central area on 29th (DRo).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

A female which was seen at Derwent Reservoir on 18th (IFo) was the only record.

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Two birds were present throughout the month at Gosforth Park NR (NHSN) and two were seen at Prestwick Carr on 21st (PCF). Single birds were noted at 11 other sites this month (RJP *et al*).

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Eight birds were up in the air together at Cupola Bridge on 29th (STH), five were at Prestwick Carr on 14th (ASJ), and three birds were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 10th (SR) and at Grindon Lough on 18th (PRM). Pairs were at Coanwood Common on 3rd (SJH) and at Barrowburn on 11th (JMA) and single birds were noted at 11 sites.



Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Prestwick Carr peaked with six birds on 14th (ASJ/PCF). Three birds were on Holy Island on 30th (ADM) and two were at Widdrington Moor Lake on 7th (GB). Single birds were seen at Arcot Pond, Castle Island, Grindon Lough, Shield on the Wall Dam and West Hartford.



A Kestrel inspects Peter Fletcher's patch
Prestwick Carr on 29th December

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Single un-sexed birds were at Fenham-le-Moor on 3rd (JDL), Seaton Sluice Watch Tower on and Lucker on 4th (SSWT/JHa) and at Annstead Dunes (Seahouses) on 8th (CGK/AJ). A female flew over the harbour wall at Seahouses harbour on 18th (TRD).

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

At Seahouses GC on 7th an immature killed a Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus* and while it plucked it an adult mobbed it (GB) and an immature and male were seen at Cresswell Pond also on the 7th (IRD). Two birds were at Black Law (Ross) on 15th (IBDa/KDa). Singles were seen at 17 sites including one bird mobbing Short-eared Owls *Asio flammeus* at West Stobswood on 17th (JSB/EC).

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Up to four birds were seen at Gosforth Park NR during the month (NHSN). Two birds were at Cresswell Pond on 15th (ADMc) and at Newcastle Great Park on 31st (GB). Single birds were at Big Waters, Branton GPs, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Hauxley NR, Linton Pond and Prestwick Carr.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

33 birds were present at Backworth Pond on 17th (MNC) and 28 at Druridge Bay CP on 21st (NFO) were the highest counts other double number counts included 14 at Big Waters on 1st (GB), and 11 at Backworth Pond on 4th (JPD), Killingworth Lake and QEII CP on 16th (DM/CDH). One to five birds were at seven other sites during the month.

Coot *Fulica atra*

The QEII CP peaked with a minimum of 270 birds on 6th (JSB/EC/CDH), and Killingworth Lake peaked with 133 birds on 11th (LJM/ASJ/DM). 38 were at Marden Quarry on 29th (KWY), 34 at Big Waters on 8th (GB) and 13 at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 2nd (DM). One to three were at Arcot Pond, Bothal Pond and St Mary's.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

The WeBS count at Berwick North Shore totalled 196 on 13th and 58 were at nearby Cocklawburn on 31st (MHu). Counts at St Mary's Island numbered 49 on 1st (ASJ) and 90 on 28th (KWY); 42 were on the Blyth estuary on 26th (STH), 26 on the Tweed estuary on 12th (MHu) and ten at Whitley Bay (Rockcliffe) on 8th (IJ).

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

The top count was 480 at Derwent Reservoir on 4th (IFo), closely followed by 400 at Low Newton on 8th (TD). Groups of 100 were noted heading S over Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 1st and at Cresswell on 28th (TB) whilst inland, 80 were at Sweethope Lough on 2nd and 75 at Grindon Lough on 1st (PRM). Some 50-70 were seen at Newcastle Town Moor, Pegswood and West Stobswood, 20-44 were at Cocklawburn, Colt Crag Reservoir and East Chevington and three were at Stag Rocks on 18th.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

The Berwick North Shore WeBS count held 21 on 13th (MHu), six were in Newbiggin bay on 17th (ADMc) otherwise, one to four were seen at Boulmer, Cresswell (two moving N at Broad Sands on 8th), Cresswell Pond, Fenham-le-Moor, Hauxley NWT and Seahouses beach.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Two large flocks included 1,000 at Boulmer on 15th (RB/MB) and a monthly maximum of 700 at Derwent Reservoir on 29th (IFo). Cresswell Pond held 207 on 22nd (IRD) and 100-150 were noted at Prestwick Carr, St Mary's Island, West Stobswood and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Elsewhere, 52-70 were counted at Cocklawburn, Grindon Lough, Havannah NR and the River Tweed (New Water Haugh) and 20-32 were at Bothal Pond, Colt Crag Reservoir, Chugdon Wood (Ellington) and West Hartford.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Berwick Little Beach held 45 on 4th (TBr) and 34 were at nearby Cocklawburn on 10th (MHu). A total of 33 was noted at both Cresswell village on 4th (AJR) and Fenham-le-Moor on 18th (TRD). Other good counts included 27 at Beadnell on 4th (IRD) and 15 on Seahouses beach on 8th (TRD/JD).

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Wintering flocks included 94 at Druridge Pools on 31st (IRD), 80 at Ellington (Chugdon Wood) on 28th (TB), 50 on the Blyth estuary on 26th (STH), 42 at Cocklawburn on 31st (MHu), 26-36 at Annstead (Seahouses) and West Ord (Berwick) and ten to 18 in fields near Amble Braid, on Berwick North Shore and the Tweed estuary. One to five were also seen at Elswick Wharf, Howdon Wetland NR, Prestwick Carr and Whitley Bay (Rockcliffe).

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

The Blyth estuary held a small group of wintering birds which peaked at seven on the 29th (LJM/STH) whilst elsewhere, two were at Amble (River Coquet) on 21st (AA) and singles were present at Cresswell Pond on 7th (IRD), Druridge Pools on 10th (TRD/JD) and Fenham Flats on 15th (IBDa/KDa).

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Peak counts included 40 at Boulmer on 20th (TRD) and 30 at Berwick (Dodd's Well) on 11th (BWG). The WeBS count at Berwick North Shore numbered 18 on 13th (MHu) and ten were counted at Fenham-le-Moor on 18th (TRD). Eight were noted at both Newbiggin bay on 17th (ADMc) and Hauxley NWT on 29th (GB) and two to three were seen at the Blyth estuary, Budle Bay, Cresswell (Broad Sands) and Stag Rocks.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

The highest counts were of 58 at St Mary's on 28th (KWY) and 32 at Berwick, North Shore on 13th (MHu), with 20 at Boulmer on 15th and ten at Cocklawburn on 10th. Eight or less were at Hauxley NR, Howdon Wetland NR, Stag Rocks, R Tweed estuary and Whitley Bay.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Just two reports: six at Boulmer on 15th (RB/MB) and four at Stag Rocks on 8th (TRD).

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

One was feeding at low tide on the River Tyne at Newburn on 21st (JL).

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Fenham flats held 138 on 15th (IBDa/KDa), 100+ were in Beadnell Bay during the month, the peak at St Mary's was 78 on 1st (ASJ), 52 were at Cheswick on 19th and 50 at Boulmer on 15th. The Berwick area, Cocklawburn and Druridge Bay had 20-36 at times with two to ten at Blyth Beach, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington and Whitley Bay.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Most were in the north: 200 in Budle Bay on 8th (TRD/JD), 150 at Boulmer on 20th (TRD), 130 at Berwick, North Shore on 13th (MHu) and about 100 at Fenham-le-Moor. Elsewhere 45 were in R Tyne estuary on 1st, 30 at St Mary's on 28th, five at Cocklawburn on 10th and, unusually, one at Derwent Reservoir on 18th (PRM).

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

The peak at Stag Rocks was 60 on 18th (TRD). Seahouses Harbour had 25 on 18th, Berwick 20 on 13th, 17 were at St Mary's on 1st, 13 at Tynemouth on 8th and 11 at Whitley Bay on 8th with two to eight at a further seven places.

***Grey Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius*

Two were off shore at Stag Rocks on 26th (DGB *et al*) and one was at Snipe Point, Holy Island also on 26th (SR).

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

One was noted at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 1st and 10th (SR) and 13th (AA). One was along the R Breamish on 15th (IBDa/KDa) and one at Rothbury/Thropton on 26th (TRD/JD).

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

One was at Fenham-le-Moor on 3rd (JDL).

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

One was in Budle Bay on 22nd (AA).

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

The peak at St Mary's was 221 on 1st (ASJ); 170 were in R Tweed estuary on 12th (MHu), 120 at Howdon Wetland NR on 1st (IJ/CB) and 85 at Newbiggin on 13th (AT). Berwick, North Shore had 47 on 13th, 25 were at West Ord on 28th with small numbers at another seven locations, including two at Bothal Pond on 15th.

Jack Snipe *Limnocryptes minimus*

Two were at Havannah NR on 21st (GB) and one flushed south of Snab Point on 7th (AJR).

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Three were at Branton on 1st (IBDa/KDa) and at and near Gosforth Park NR on 27th (NHSN) and two at Arcot Hall GC on 26th (DM). One was at Arcot Pond on 4th, Seahouses GC on 7th, Newton Red House on 15th and Prestwick Carr on 17th.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Gosforth Park NR and adjacent pool held 40+ during the month (NHSN), Howdon Wetland NR ten to 12 on 1st, nine at Little Waters NR on 19th and eight at Cresswell Pond on 29th. One or two appeared at Bothal Pond, Cramlington, East Chevington, Havannah NR, Newcastle Great Park and Rothbury.

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

Two flew N at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower on 5th (SSWT).

Auk *Sp*

The only significant movement recorded at Seaton Sluice was 315 N on 30-31st. All were 'probably Guillemots' (SSWT)

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

In the Berwick area on 19th and 20th, ca.10 and ca .30 were at Meadow Haven and Spittal Bay respectively (MHu).

Razorbill *Alca torda*

The maximum daily count for the month at Seaton Sluice was five moving N on 21st, with few other records from there (SSWT); a single was at Stag Rocks, Bamburgh on 18th (TRD).

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

At Seaton Sluice, in the auk movement noted on 31st, 71 flew N, but few were recorded prior to that date (SSWT). In a very strong westerly gale at Berwick, Meadow Haven on 19th, 200 were noted and elsewhere, c.120-130 were at Cocklawburn on 24th and 31st and ca.100 at Spittal Bay on 20th (all MHu). One to nine were seen at four other sites between Holy Island and Blyth, South Harbour on dates from 29th-31st.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

The record attributed to MHu at Berwick on 3rd November should be JDL.

Below one of the Seahouses Ivory Gulls
by Jonathan Farooqi
7th December

Ivory Gull *Pagophila eburnea*

A single first-winter bird was found on Seahouses Golf Course around midday on 7th (GW) and amazingly, as a small crowd excitedly watched what was the first record of this extremely rare visitor to the county since 1979, a second first-winter joined it to provide a unique sighting (GB/JPL/IBDa/KDa/SMa/SVM). Although the two birds eventually flew off they were later relocated on coastal rocks at nearby Beadnell (GW) but, to the great disappointment of numerous county and UK birders, they failed to show again on subsequent days.



Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

The sea bird movement on 30th-31st included 256 N and 104 S at Seaton Sluice, with few records prior to this (SSWT). Apart from a gathering of ca.100 at Cocklawburn on 24th (MHu), the only sightings, of one to eight, were recorded from six other coastal sites, Berwick (Meadow Haven), Blyth, Cheswick, North Shields Fish Quay, St Mary's Island and Whitley Bay (JBu/MHu/CGK/AJ/ASJ/IJ/DMcG).

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

At least 3,500 were in the winter gull roost at Derwent Reservoir on the evening of 18th (PRM) and smaller three-figure counts were 425 at the QEII CP Lake on 16th (CDH), 300 at The Links at Whitley Bay on 15th (IJ) and 236 at Killingworth Lake on 16th (DM). Other records of gatherings of 100-160 came from Arcot Pond, Leazes Park Lake, Paddy Freeman's Park, the River Tweed Estuary and St Mary's Island (MJCo/DM/MHu/IJ) with smaller flocks of up to 100 at Bothal Pond, Castle Island, Colt Crag Reservoir, Cullercoats, Druridge Bay CP, Exhibition Park, Newcastle Civic Centre Ponds, Tynemouth Park, Walbottle and Whitley Bay (JMA/TD/IJ/DM/PRM/LR/KR).

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

The only record was of two birds, an adult and an immature, moving S on 30th at Seaton Sluice (SSWT).

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Four birds, adults and immatures, was the monthly total passing the Seaton Sluice watch point (SSWT). The maximum count of wintering birds at Newbiggin South Bay was 12 on 17th (ADMc) with lesser numbers of up to six, seen there, and at nearby Woodhorn Flashes, on various other dates (STH/AT). One or two were recorded at Big Waters during the month. These included a colour-ringed female bird *red PNN6* which nested in Poland as a three year old in May 2013 (AJJ/KB) and was also seen at Newbiggin on 28th October 2013 (STH). One or two were also at Colt Crag Reservoir (one in the evening gull roost), East Chevington, Howick, Killingworth Lake, St Mary's Island and Whitley Bay.



The Polish Mediterranean Gull at Big Waters on 1st December
by Keith Bradley

Common Gull *Larus canus*

The Derwent Reservoir gull roost held a very significant 21,000 on 18th (PRM) and at Colt Crag Reservoir in excess of 300 were in the gull roost on 6th (PRM). The River Tweed Estuary held 124, counted during a WeBS survey on 12th (MHu), a gathering of ca.100 was at Sweethope Lough on 2nd (PRM) and 62 were at Grindon Lough on 2nd (SJH); elsewhere, counts of one to 25 came from nine widespread localities (MJCo/MB/RB/DM/MHu).

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

Three first winter birds were in the Colt Crag Reservoir roost on 6th (PRM) and elsewhere single birds, probably comprising six or seven adult individuals, were at Berwick (North Shore), Bothal Pond, Castle Island, the Cramlington area, Druridge Bay CP, Jesmond Dene and Seaton Sluice.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argenteus*

Two WeBS surveys on 12th-13th included 192 in the River Tweed Estuary and 28 at Berwick, North Shore (MHu) and 106 were at Castle Island on 15th (DM/STH). Smaller gatherings elsewhere of 17-58 were present at Bothal Pond, Derwent Reservoir gull roost, Leazes Park and West Hartford (TD/DM/PRM) with one-nine at seven other localities.

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoides*

An uncommon bird this winter, possibly as a result of the continuing very mild weather, with only three records this month, one (un-aged) moving S at St Mary's Island on 6th (JPD/MPF/AS), a first-winter on flood water at Newton Links on 8th (CGK/MSH) and one (also un-aged) in Blyth Harbour on 26th (STH).

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

As for the previous species, uncommon this winter, with one individual, a first-winter in the Tyne Estuary (CGK/MSH/AJ) and later at the North Shields Fish Quay (IJ) on 1st and, probably the same bird, a first-winter at the Fish Quay on 4th (JPD).

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

The largest gatherings were 158, found on a WeBS survey on 15th, at Castle Island (DM/STH/PJA), 34 from a WeBS survey in the River Tweed Estuary on 12th (MHu), at least 30 in the gull roost at Derwent Reservoir on 18th (PRM) and ten at Whitley Bay, Rockcliffe on 8th (IJ). One to five were recorded at a further nine localities.

Rock Dove / Feral pigeon *Columba livia*

Large gatherings of 400 on the new road bridge Berwick on 12th (JMA), 300 at Snods Edge on 17th (IFo), 150 over Alnwick on 5th and 122 on the roof of Jury's Inn Newcastle (PCF) on 3rd. Three to 55 were at Blyth South Harbour, Southfield Green (Cramlington), Paddy Freeman's Park (Newcastle) and Whitley Bay.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Well reported the peak being 90 in shooters field Big Waters on 8th with 30 there on 1st (GB), 80 at Snods Edge on 17th (IFo), 12 at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 26th (TB) with one to eight at nine further widespread locations including gardens at Wylam and Walbottle.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Counts of 300+ at Grindon Lough on 2nd and Whiteadder Water Berwick on 18th (PRM/TBr), 250+ at Prestwick Carr on 29th (PCF), 120 flying south at Berwick Station on 9th (MHu) and fifty at Palmersville on 6th (JMA). Two to 17 were at Howdon Wetland NR, Jesmond Dene and Walbottle.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

An invasion occurred at Kenton starting on 9th when six joined the resident pair numbers rising to nine on 21st and peaking at 17 on 22nd (MRS). Fourteen were at Church Farm (Earsdon) on 24th (MNC), two in the observer's garden at Walbottle on 1st and at one at Matthew Bank (Jesmond Dene) on the same date.

Rose ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

The group of five at Heaton Road reported in September and October were again seen on 7th possibly moving between there and Heaton Park with four noted on 14th and two on 29th (TW).

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Three to four were resident at Holy Island during the month (IK), two at Cresswell Pond on 28th (TB) with singles at East Moor Farm (Ellington) on 3rd, Wingates on 17th and Whitedam Head (near Berwick) on 19th.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Just three reports of singles at Holywell Dene on 2nd (RJP), West Stobswood on 3rd (JSB/EC) and Glororum (near Bamburgh) on 10th (JHa).

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Most reports were of calling birds the peak being three in the Melkridge Village area on 2nd and at Ellington on 25th (SJH/TB). Singles were at Harbottle, Holywell Dene, Rothbury, Walbottle and Wark (North Tyne) on two dates.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Three at West Stobswood on 17th (JSB/EC) was a good count in a winter where this species has been scarce with only a single noted at Holy Island during the month and one at Prestwick Carr on 21st (IK/GB).

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Sightings of single birds on rocks at the coast came from Seahouses on 8th, Howick on 19th and Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 28th (NFO/DRW/JBu). Inland reports also all singles from Richardson Dees Park (Wallsend) on 10th (JPD), Bolam Lake on 12th (AA), Horton Burn (Cramlington) on 15th (DM/PJA), Bakethin Reservoir on 15th (MD/AM), Rothbury on 24th (JD) and Jesmond Dene on 31st (MJCo).

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

One was seen and heard at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 26th (TB).

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

At Holywell Dene two were present on 11th and one to two visited an Old Hartley Garden during the month (RJP) with two at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 14th & 25th, Arcot Hall GC on 15th (DM) and Ellington on 26th (TB). Singles were seen regularly at Jesmond Dene, Northumberland Park (North Shields), Rothbury, Sweethope Lough and also at Amble, Barns Park, Beacon Lane (Cramlington), Killingworth Lake, Wark (North Tyne) and West Ord (Berwick).

Magpie *Pica pica*

One to seven visited an Old Hartley garden with a peak count in Holywell Dene of 23 on 19th (RJP). A group of seven were at Castle Farm Road Bridge (Jesmond Dene) on 29th (MJCo). Six was the highest count in a Walbottle garden on 15th (KR/LR) and also at Howdon Wetland NR on 1st.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

More than four were at Gosforth Park NR during the month (NHSN), three at Thrunton Woods on 6th (AT), Bolam Lake CP on 10th (LJM) and Mitford on 28th (GB) with two at Arcot Hall GC and Valley Park (Cramlington), Linden Hall (Longhorsley), Prestwick Carr and singles at four further locations.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

The roost at Gosforth Park NR held over 1000 during the month (NHSN), 500 were at Airy Holm Reservoir (near Shotleyfield) on 18th (IFo), 250 over Amble on 5th and in a Walbottle field on 10th (JMA/JR/LR) with 167 at Whitelea/Beacon Hill (Cramlington) on 29th and 143 at Town Moor (Newcastle) on 4th (DM).

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Large gatherings of 300 at Beal on 12th (JMA) and 200 at Airy Holm Reservoir (near Shotleyfield) on 18th (IFo) with 85 at Horncliffe on 17th (TBr).

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

The Gosforth Park NR corvid roost held over 70 during the month (NHSN). 24 were at Whitelea/Beacon Hill (Cramlington) on 29th (DM), 18 in the car park at North Shields Fish Quay on 1st (STH), 13 at Newcastle Business Park on 12th (DM), 12 at Tyne Riverside CP (Newburn) on 11th (KR/LR) and one to six at six other widespread localities.

Raven *Corvus corax*

Extensive observation at Coanwood Common during the month recorded a peak of 23 low overhead in small groups between 15.00 – 15.50h on 3rd with lesser numbers of two to 12 in similar fashion on seven further dates till 19th (SJH). Three were at Sweethope Lough on 2nd (PRM) and Kielder Village on 15th (MD/AM), two at Bakethin, Carrshield Moor and Catcleugh Reservoir with singles at Colt Crag Reservoir and Plenmellor Common.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

A count of seven at Colt Crag Reservoir on 6th (PRM), four at Mitford on 28th (GB), three at Sweethope Lough on 2nd and Darras Hall on 17th with two at Aydon (Corbridge), Valley Park (Cramlington) on two dates, Prestwick Carr and Seaton Sluice. Singles were at six other widespread localities.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

A peak count of 12 at Prestwick Carr on 1st (PCF), five at Thrunton Woods on 6th and in the observers garden at Walbottle on 8th (KR/LR) with single at Howdon Wetland NR and Jesmond Dene.

Great Tit *Parus major*

At Prestwick Carr 14 were found on 28th (PCF), five the highest count in the observers garden at Walbottle on 22nd (KR/LR), four at Jesmond Dene on 29th (MJCo) with one to two at Aydon and Howdon Wetland NR.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Feeders at Wallington attracted 40 (+/-5) on 15th (AJR) with 12 there on 13th (ASJ), 12 to 15 at Plashetts (Kielder) on 31st (MD/AM) and five at Holywell Dene on 19th (RJP). One to three were at Aydon, Colt Crag Reservoir, Jesmond Dene and gardens at Old Hartley and Walbottle.

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

Four was the highest count at Prestwick Carr on 11th (JPD) with one to three present all month. Two visited an Old Hartley garden on two dates during the month (RJP) and were at Lucker (JHa), a Longhorsley garden (AB/LB) and Big Waters where ringed individuals identified at least three birds visiting the feeders (GB). Singles were at Linden Hall (Longhorsley) on several dates and Wingates on 17th.

Willow tits on an Eachwick feeder
by Chris Barlow

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

Were present at Linden Hall (Longhorsley) all month with two on 15th & 26th (NFO) and two at Mitford on 28th (GB). Singles were seen regularly at Thrum Mill (Rothbury), Whiteadder Water (Berwick) on 1st and Wallington on 15th.



Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

More than 50 were in a stubble field at St Mary's Island on 11th (JPD) with the only other report being three at Whorral Bank (Morpeth) on 4th (AT).

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

20 were at Holywell Dene on 16th and 15 at Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 29th (MNC). Prestwick Carr held 11 on 1st (PCF); nine were at Longhorsley on 26th and eight at Colt Crag Reservoir on 6th. Five to seven were noted at Cramlington, Old Hartley and Walbottle and one to four at Jesmond Dene, Rothbury and Marden Quarry.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Singles were noted at Holy Island (Chare Ends) on 15th (IK) and Howick on 19th (DRW).

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

A female was in a Whitley Bay garden on 26th (JBu).

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Six were at Wallington on 13th (ASJ) and five at Bolam Lake on 10th (LJM). Singles were noted at three localities in Jesmond Dene on 10th (MJCo) and one to were at Blagdon, Holywell Dene and a Walbottle garden.

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

Eight were noted at Felton on 11th (TRD/JD) and at Rothbury on 22nd (KBHo *et al.*) and one to two in a Stobswood garden on 11th and 17th (MHS).



A Waxwing at Felton
11th December by Tim Dean

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Three at Colt Crag Reservoir on 6th was the largest count (PRM). Elsewhere singles were noted at Big Waters, Bolam Lake, Druridge Bay CP, Felton Lane and Holywell Dene.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

One to three were reported from Holywell Dene, Jesmond Dene and a Walbottle garden.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

'Several thousand' were noted at East Chevington on 3rd (JMA), ca.1000 gathered to roost at Longhorsley on 26th (AB/LB) and 900 were near Carterway Heads on 4th (IFo). At Coanwood Common, groups noted feeding and passing W included counts of 600 with Fieldfares on 9th, 300 on 10th and 115 on 21st (SJH); 600 were also at Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield) on 18th (IFo). On 2nd, 100 were at Grindon Lough and 80 flew W at Sweethope Lough, while 17 was the highest count of the month from a Walbottle garden on 29th. Three were at Jesmond Dene and St Mary's Island.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Two were at Holywell Dene on 8th and singles at Aydon (Corbridge), Fulbeck (Morpeth), Jesmond Dene and Thrum Mill (Rothbury). Perhaps more unusual was a single at Seaton Sluice estuary on 24th (RJP).

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

It was well reported with some sizeable gatherings, including 40 at Berwick (Whiteadder Water) on 11th (TBr) and at Backworth on 16th (CGK). A Walbottle garden attracted a peak of 12 on 29th (KR/LR) and at least ten were noted in a Stannington garden on 9th (RWM/MIM). Ten were also at Thrunton Woods on 6th (AT) and six in an Alnwick garden on 2nd (JMA). Two to three were also reported from Howden Wetland NR and Jesmond Dene.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Large numbers were reported from Prestwick Carr throughout the month with a peak of c.2000 on 14th (ASJ); further counts from here including 500+ on 4th (PCF), 1000+ on 11th (JPD *et al.*) and 700+ on 26th (IK). Further large gathering were 480 at Grindon Hill on 22nd, 400 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 10th and 300 at Kirkley Hall on 13th and at West Hotbank on 15th. Coanwood Common also held birds throughout the month with counts of 104-283, peaking on 21st. At nearby Crindledykes a flock of 200 was noted on 15th and 80-100 were reported from Aydon (Corbridge), Coroner's Meadow (River Tweed) and Longhorsley. Elsewhere flocks of 40-58 were noted at Berwick (West Ord and Whiteadder Water), Derwent Reservoir, Slaley Forest and Wark (North Tyne) with one to 30 at a further six localities.

A Fieldfare at Prestwick Carr
Peter Fletcher
18th December

**Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos*

During the final week of the month one to two were reported from Boulmer, Jesmond Dene, Mitford and Seaton Burn.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

The largest gathering was 100 at Aydon (Corbridge) on 8th (RB/MB), followed by flocks of 60 at Arcot Pond on 9th (DM), Beaconhill (Cramlington) on 14th (STH) and West Ord (Berwick) on 15th (MHu). Elsewhere, 30-41 were noted at Backworth, Derwent Reservoir, Longbenton, Prestwick Carr and Wark (North Tyne) and 20-25 at Fulbeck (Morpeth) and Longhorsley with one to 19 at a further nine localities.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Up to eight at Gosforth Park NR during the month was the largest gathering (NHSN). Threes were at Aydon (Corbridge) on 11th and at Jesmond Dene on 10th, two at the Freeman Hospital (Newcastle) on 14th and singles at Derwent Reservoir, Mitford, Seaton Burn and Woodhorn.



A Mistle Thrush at Eachwick by Chris Barlow

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

One to three were reported from Howden Wetland NR, Jesmond Dene and a Walbottle garden.

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Three were at Long Nanny on 4th (IRD) and up to two at Annstead, Boulmer, Cheswick, Cocklawburn, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Ross Back Sands and Warkworth Gut. Elsewhere singles were also noted at Druridge Pools, Monks' House Pools, Stag Rocks and St Mary's Island. The only inland record was a male on the Simonside Hills on 28th (JL).

Dunnoek *Prunella modularis*

Again only two reports this month, both of three in gardens at Old Hartley and Walbottle.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

100+ were at Cullercoats on 8th (IJ) and 50+ were Low Cocklaw, Berwick on 28th (TBr). 30 were around the beer garden at the Trent House public house in Newcastle on 17th. 19 in a garden at Walbottle on 1st and 14 at Valley Park, Cramlington on Christmas Day.



A Tree Sparrow
Whitley Bay
Jack Bucknall

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

95 at the Beehive Flash, Earsdon on 9th was by far the largest flock (MNC). 45 were in a wildlife strip at Whorral Bank, Morpeth on 4th (AT). 35 were at Chugdon Wood, Ellington on 14th (TB) and 20 were at Cambois on 28th (GB). Elsewhere one to 15 were at ten other widespread sites.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Six were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 1st (SR). All the other 15 records received were of single birds. In mild conditions many of these were away from the coast in areas such as Jesmond Dene (1st), Newcastle City Centre (2nd), Craggside (7th), Grindon Hill (22nd) and Linden Hall (30th).

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Four was the peak count recorded in the month at The Links, Whitley Bay on 15th (IJ) and Killingworth Lake on 16th (DMc). Three were at Cullercoats (8th), Castle Island (15th) and Havannah NR (21st). One or two were at five other sites.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Only two reports for the month, a single at West Hartford on 15th (DMc/PJA) and five at Newbiggin on 28th (GB).

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Holy Island again recorded the highest numbers this month with 17 noted on 30th (ADM). Elsewhere 8 were around St. Mary's on 1st (ASJ), Seahouses harbour held four on 30th. One-two were at Boulmer, Fenham-le-Moor, Stag Rocks and Whitley Bay.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

50 were around Harwood village on 13th (ASJ). 11 were noted at Prestwick Carr on 31st. One to five were Holywell Dene, Howden Wetland NR and Jesmond Dene.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Two good-sized flocks noted during the month with 250-300 noted in a roadside wood at Grindon Hill on 22nd (SJH) and 120+ at the favoured wintering location of Bolam Lake on 31st (TF/JFa). 20 were at Callaly on 29th and records of two came from Wallington Hall (15th) and Rothbury (16th).



A Brambling on a Rothbury garden feeder by Janet Dean on 29th December

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

17 in a Walbottle garden was the peak count in December (KR/LR). 10 were in a Whitley Bay garden on 31st (JBU). Eight were at Prestwick Carr on Christmas Day and two at Jesmond Dene on 1st.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

100+ fed along the roadside in Druridge Bay on 1st (PCF). 40 were at West Stobswood on 29th (GB). 35 were at Shiremoor on 6th (JMa) 20-26 were at Cramlington, East Ord, Newburn Business Park and Walbottle.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

40 were at workshops at Blagdon Hall Estate on 9th (LJM) and at Valley Park, Cramlington on 22nd (DMc). 30 were on the Havannah NR on New Year's Eve (GB). One to six were at eight other sites.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

A large flock of c.400 were regularly in weedy fields between Chare Ends and the Straight Lonnen on Holy Island (IK). 200+ were in stubble at St. Mary's on 11th (JPD/MPF/AS). 130 were at Bamburgh on 11th and 100-120 at Boulmer, Snod's Edge and Widdrington Moor Lake during the month. 20-84 were at Beadnell, Cambois, Cocklawburn and St. Mary's.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

74 were at the station at Scremerston on 16th (MHu). The only other reports were of 12 at Cresswell Links on 28th (TB) and a more unusual inland report of five at Aydon, Corbridge on Christmas Day (RB/MB).

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*

40 were in a mixed flock with Linnets *Carduelis cannabina* at Bamburgh on 11th (AJR). Boxing Day flocks included eight at Longhorsley and Prestwick Carr and six at Branton Gravel Pits. One to five were noted at Bakethin, Cramlington, Aydon, Newbiggin, Prestwick Carr, Rothbury and Sweethope Lough.

A Redpoll on a feeder in a Rothbury garden
Christmas Day 2013
by Janet Dean



Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostris*

Still scarce with only five reports during the month. Nine were at Sweethope Lough on 2nd and six remained there on 6th when a single was at Colt Crag (PRM). Another single was at Grindon Lough on 18th (PRM) and the final report of the year was of six males at Plassets, Kielder on 31st (MD/AM).

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Well-reported this month with 35 individual records received. 17 at Sweethope Lough was the peak count on 2nd (PRM). 12 were noted at Gosforth Park NR during the month and at Havannah NR on 31st, 11 of the latter site were males (GB). Elsewhere seven were at Valley Park, Cramlington on 6th and five at Linden Hall on 14th. Holywell Dene and Chugden Wood both recorded groups of four.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

55 were noted on Holy Island on Christmas Day (EHa) and a flock of 21 were regularly seen during the month between the Straight Lonnen and The Lough (IK). 15 were at Guile Point on 15th and five at Ross Back Sands on Boxing Day. Away from the north the only report was 19 that flew north past Seaton Sluice Watchtower in a single flock on 5th (SSWT).

Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*

The only report received was of an individual at Chare Ends, Holy Island in stubble on 13th (IK).

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

35 was the largest flock during the month at Ellington on 21st (TB). 20+ fed in shooting cover at Elwick on 1st (JL). Counts of 15 came from Beaconhill, Cramlington on 22nd and Mitford Steads on 28th. 10 were at Big Waters, Cambois and Cheswick.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza Schoeniclus*

Christmas Day at Big Waters produced the highest total of the month with 28 (GB). 16 were inland at Sweethope Lough on 2nd (PRM). Both the Beehive Flash and Cambois held 10 on 9th and 28th respectively. One to six were reported from 12 other widespread sites.

ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN**Escapes****Lesser White-fronted Goose** *Anser erythropus*

The adult first seen on 9th October was found again, this time at East Chevington on 10th (TRD/JD). Although it's small size and eye ring were noted it does appear to have less of a white blaze than usual for the species as not featuring above the eye. Hence this may not be a totally pure bird.

Hybrids**'Aythya sp' x Pochard** *Aythya sp x Aythya ferina*

A female at Tynemouth boating lake which was seen last month remained until at least the 8th (DRW). The parentage is still being debated with either Scaup x Pochard or Tufted Duck x Pochard being likely possibilities.

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Berwick Wildlife Group, Natural History Society of Northumbria, North Northumberland Bird Club, 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 (Avocet to Godwit) Ian Forsyth (Turnstone to Skua), Eddie Crabtree (Puffin to Great Black-backed Gull), 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), Alan Tilmouth (Dunnock to Corn Bunting), Dan Turner (WeBS Coastal Counts) and Steve Holliday (WeBS Inland Counts). Thanks to David Sanders of NNBC for providing data.

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Mail 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.

Could club members ensure they to submit records direct to NTBC rather than just Birdtrack. There may be an assumption by some members this happens automatically. We do not want to miss records.

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.

BULLETIN PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

There will be a competition for the best photograph featured in the bulletin during 2014. A prize will be given to the winner. So get snapping.

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Membership costs £30 per year. 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. Please submit any new content for the website to the main club email address at ntbcorg@gmail.com

NTBC SIGHTINGS PAGE

The Sightings Page contains current sightings by members. Access is from the NTBC website.

Members need to submit a request to be added to the website, specifying the email address they wish to post from before they can submit sightings to ntbcorg@gmail.com

BIRDS IN NORTHUMBRIA 2013

A request for photographs and authors

Photographs

Photographs are always welcome for consideration. All members are free to submit images (taken within the county during 2013) 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 2013 please contact the editor at the address / email below.

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BINOCULARS FOR SALE

I have a pair of LEICA 10 x 42. ULTRAVID BINOCULARS,
They are hardly used, and are still boxed.
I'm asking £.700 for them.

I can be contacted on 0191 268 1265.

Brian Bowman

COASTAL WEBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

December 2013

Site	Berwick North Shore (including Little Beach)		Berwick Little Beach		Tweed Estuary		Tweed: A1 By-Pass to Hornciffe		Spirital - Cocklawburn		Lindisfarne NNR (including Budle Bay)		Budle Pt - Seahouses		Seahouses - Beadnell		Howick - Boulmer		Boulmer - Alnmouth		Aln Estuary		Alnmouth South		Coquet Estuary		Ambles - Chevington		Cresswell - Newbligin		Newbligin - Cambois		Blyth Estuary		Blyth Estuary - Seaton		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	TB	MHu	AC	AC	RP	MLC	JAR	AB	TAC	RP	RP	RP	TW	MSK	MGA	RC	LJM	KVB	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP

