

Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

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

Bulletin 2017 No 1

MONTHLY SUMMARY JANUARY 2017

1st March 2017



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Three briefly at Haughton Strother GP on 12th.

Influx continued with sightings at many sites.

Influx continued with groups up to 33 strong.

Four at Newbiggin and one at Longhirst.

320 in Budle Bay area.

284 at Fenham Flats on 3rd.

101 at Goswick on 24th.

Drake offshore at Goswick all month.

Two redheads on 17th at East Chevington and one at Monks' House Pool from 20th to 25th.

First sighting for county with one commuting between East Chevington and Druridge Bay CP from 20th.

Only sighting was one at Cheswick on 17th.

Two at Gosforth Park and a single at East Chevington.

One at Ouston Fell on 14th.

Single at Druridge Pools all month.

Wintering bird at Budle Bay again on 5th and 7th.

Two past Seaton Sluice on 13th.

High peak of five at North Shields Fish Quay on 1st.

Interesting ringing recovery on Holy Island on 15th. Ringed in Cambridgeshire last summer !

Roost now numbering 17 at Nuns Moor Park, Newcastle.

One present all month at Prestwick Carr plus singles at Ford Moss and Warenford.

Group of seven at East Chevington again remained all month.

Influx continued with many flocks up to 250 strong.

Third record for county. First-winter female briefly at Whittle Dene on 2nd.

A County first

The much appreciated

and approachable

Pacific Diver

Druridge Bay CP

23rd January

Colin Bradshaw



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.

March 9th John Callion will talk on '**Memories of Dotterel**' -a personal journey, telling the story of his ornithological development, leading to his 'discovery' of the species in the golden period of the 1970s and '80s.

FIELD TRIPS

Please contact Steve Anderson for details seaswan@btinternet.com

The following spring trips are not to be missed:

April 23rd	Langholm	Harriers and more	Steve Anderson
May 21st	Kielder	Raptors and more	Martin Davison Kielder CP at 0900h
May 28th	Geltsdale	Upland birds	meet the Warden at 0900h in the car park NY588584

CLASSIFIED LIST

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

QEII CP Lake held 48 on 15th (CDH), 33 were at the Tweed Estuary on 11th (MHu), 23-25 at Big Waters and East Chevington (DM), and 14 at Murton (MHu). Five to eight were also at Arcot, Cocklawburn, Holywell and Linton Ponds, the Blyth Estuary, Fenham Flats, Newcastle Exhibition and Leazes Parks, and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. A dead adult at Tweedmouth on 8th was considered a possible Otter 'kill' and had been ringed at Killingworth Lake (aged at least two years) on 26th October 2010; a movement of 89km (CH).

Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus*

Three adults landed briefly at Haughton Strother GP, before flying off W, on 12th (MR).

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Peak counts were 36 at Fenham-le-Moor on 24th (IRD), 36 at Horncliffe on 24th (JDL), 35 at Low Newton scrape on 8th (SVM/AJM), and 30 at Warkworth (IRD). Seven to nine were at Cresswell Pond, East Chevington and Horncliffe, and one to four at Goswick, Grindon Lough, Longhirst, West Chevington, West Ord, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Woodhorn Flashes.

Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*

A small influx was apparent. All those identified racially were of the 'Tundra' *rossicus* race; four were at Seaton Sluice on 5th (STH) with four at nearby Gloucester Farm, Blyth on 7th (MSH) and one to two there on several dates between 12th-19th (MSH/PRM); three were at Bell's Farm, Cresswell on 2nd (AA), three at Cresswell on 14th (MSH), two at Cheswick-Cocklawburn between 20th-30th (MJC/MHu/PRM *et al.*), and one at Cooper's Flash (near Ashington) on 2nd (MSH).

Two, of the 'Taiga' *fabalis* race, were near Blyth beach on 17th (AJR).

Un-raced birds involved six at Big Waters on 8th (SRB) and six at Elwick on 7th (IBDa/KDa/SVM).



Bean Geese at Cheswick

Above: by Mike Carr on 25th January

and left: by Tim Dean on 19th January



Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

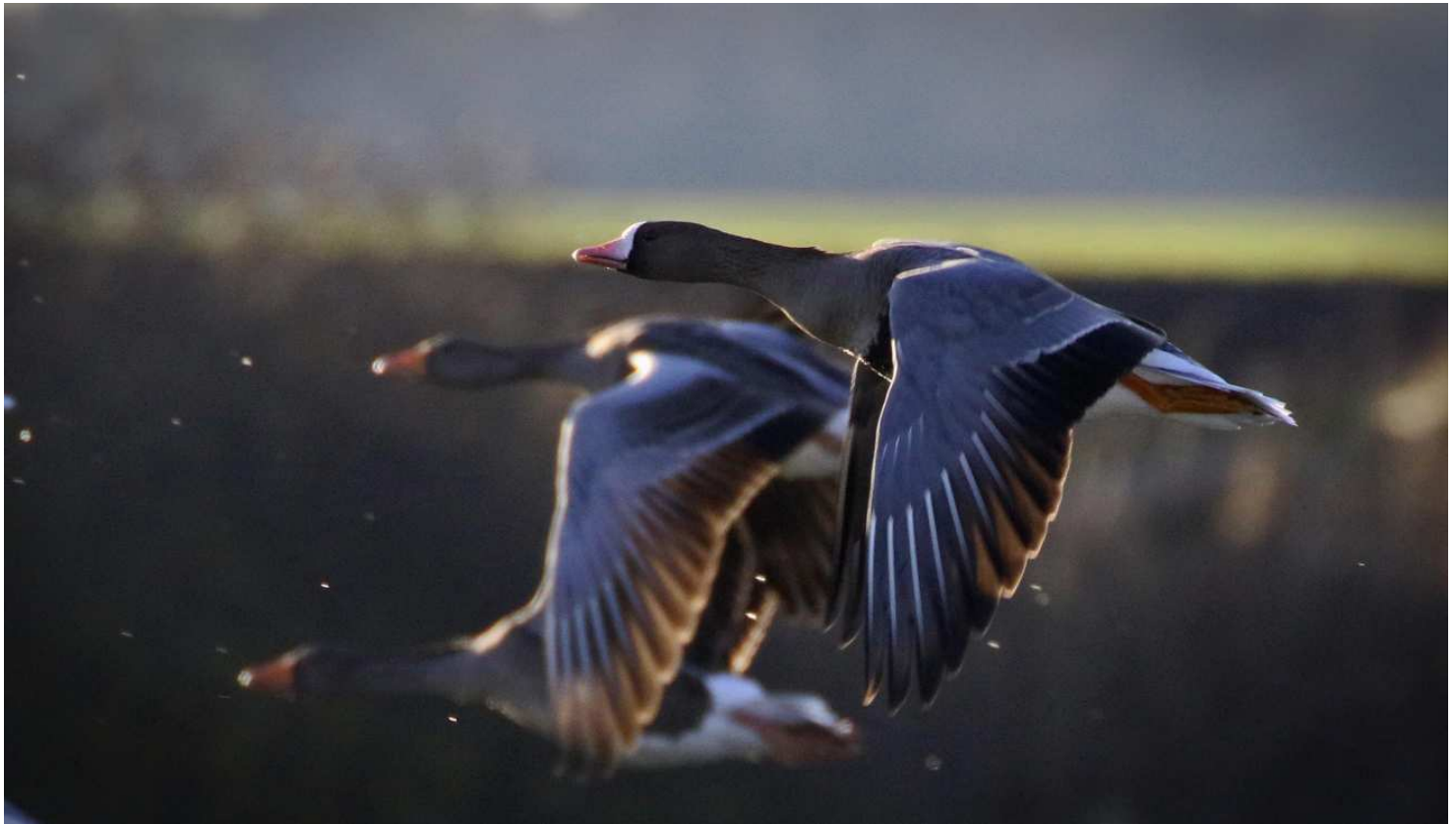
At Seaton Sluice, 250 flew N on 17th (SSWT), 130-150 flew N at Chapel House (Newcastle) on 20th and East Ord on 7th, a total of 155 moved W/NW at Derwent Reservoir on 18th (IFo), 154 flew W at Haughton Strother GP on 19th (MR) following 125 W there on 1st (MR); a total of 760 flew S at Morpeth on 4th (MJC), and 40-80 flew S at five coastal sites on four dates between 7th-17th. As many as 5,000 were noted flying between a roost and feeding grounds at East Ord (Berwick) each morning between 20th-27th (CH), 2,800 were at Doddington on 1st (TRD/JD), 1,600 at Cheswick on 3rd (MHu), 1,500 at Druridge (MN), 1,000 at West Chevington (TRD/JD), 600-800 at Cresswell Pond, Gloucester Lodge (Blyth), Snab Point (Cresswell) and Waren Mill, and 100-300 at Backworth, Budle Bay, Derwent Reservoir, East Chevington, High Hauxley, Seaton Sluice, Spittal and Woodhorn Flashes. Ten to 90 were at about ten further coastal/near-coastal sites. An atypical individual with bright orange legs was at Snab Point on 1st (MSH),

White-fronted Goose *Anser flavirostris*

An influx of mainly Eurasian *albifrons* race birds included peaks of 33 S over Druridge Pools on 29th (JFa/TFa), and 28 (including five first-winters) at Backworth on 29th. Eight to 22 were noted there between 4th-25th and included seven first-winters on 7th (MSH *et al.*). Other peak counts involved 22 at Gosforth Park NR on 1st (MJC), 21 at West Holywell on 3rd (LJM), 16 at Hemscott Hill on 7th (GB/DM/LAR), 15 at Cheswick on 27th (TRD/JD), 14 at Cocklawburn Pond on 30th (MHu), 12 (one first-winter) at High Hauxley on 2nd (MSH), ten at East Chevington on 14th (TF/JFa), nine at Cresswell on 9th (TF/JFa), eight at Derwent Reservoir on 1st (IFo), eight N at Seaton Sluice on 5th (SSWT), three at Gloucester Lodge (Blyth) (TF/JFa), and one at Longhirst (TRD/JD).

Birds of the Greenland *flavirostris* race included four (two adults) at Woodhorn Flashes on 2nd and 4th (MSH), and one at Longhirst on 6th (TRD/JD).

A flock of ten at East Chevington on 12th involved birds of both races (IRD). Un-raced birds involved 18 at West Holywell on 27th increasing to 33 on 31st (MNC), 16 at Big Waters on 8th (SRB), and one to two at Cheswick, Cresswell, Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Pools and Seaton Sluice.



Albifrons White-fronted Goose at Cheswick

Mike Carr
23rd January

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

The Harper's Heugh area (near Budle Bay) held 2,000 on 24th (DGB), 1,000 were at Elwick on 7th (IBDa/KDa), 450 at Derwent Reservoir on 4th (IFo), 320 at Castron on 14th (JD), 217-220 at Backworth (MSH) and West Holywell (MNC), 100-191 at Cheswick, East Chevington, West Holywell and Woodhorn Flashes, and 58-87 at/over Cocklawburn, Gosforth Park NR, Hoppen Kiln Flash, Prestwick Carr and Woodhorn Flashes. Groups of 20-49 were at Longhirst, Monks' House, Wark and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Variable numbers at Grindon Lough included as few as 38 (PRM) and a peak of 400 on 14th (SRB), 235 were at Druridge Pools on 24th (RMHa/PMHa), 220 at Fontburn Reservoir on 17th (JD), 181 at Bothal Pond on 21st (TD), 169 at the former Longhirst Flash (MSH), and 100-150 at Gosforth Park NR (MJC) and Widdrington Moor Lake (MSH). Groups of 22-76 were at Colt Crag Reservoir, Newcastle Leazes Park, QEII CP Lake and West Ord.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

300 were at Budle Bay on 15th (TRD/JD) and 320 on 22nd (CGK/GPK/PS), six at Grindon Lough on 8th (MRS), four at East Chevington (TF/JFa), and singles at Cheswick, Cocklawburn, Cresswell, QEII CP Lake and Gloucester Lodge (Blyth)-Seaton Sluice.

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Pale-bellied *hrota* race birds included 42 N at Stag Rocks on 20th (PRM) and five N at Seaton Sluice on 5th (SSWT), 1,000 at Beal Point on 1st (TD), 600 at Budle Bay on 15th (TRD/JD), 182 at Fenham Flats (IRD), 102 at Harper's Heugh (MSH) and one at Cheswick.

The sole report of dark-bellied *bernicla* race birds involved five on 20th (PRM).

Un-raced birds involved 300 at Fenham Flats on 5th (DGB), and one at East Chevington.

Nine flew N and three S at Seaton Sluice on 5th-6th (SSWT), 315 were at the Fenham Flats section of Lindisfarne NNR on 24th (IRD), 280 at Holy Island causeway on 20th (PRM), 120 at Budle Bay on 5th (PRM), and 19 at the Blyth Estuary on 25th (STH). Four to five were also at Elswick and Widdrington Moor Lake, and one to two at Branton GP, East Chevington, New Water Haugh, Rockcliffe, Swallow Pond and West Stobswood Pool.

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

30 flew N and 30 S at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT). About 1,200 were offshore at East Chevington on 18th and 20th (TRD/JD), 1,000 were at Druridge Pools on 24th (IFo), 420-437 at Derwent and Whittle Dene Reservoirs (IFo/MR), 202-270 at Bothal Pond (TD) and Hoppen Kiln Flash (MSH), and 105-180 at Budle Bay, Doddington, Grindon Lough and Widdrington Moor Lake. Counts of 30-65 came from Gosforth Park NR, Linton Ponds, the Tweed Estuary and West Stobswood Pool, while 14-25 were at Brenkley, Middle Ord Pond and QEII CP Lake.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Peak counts were 38 at Swallow Pond on 27th (GPK), 27 at the Blyth Estuary on 1st (DM/STH), ten to 15 at Arcot, Bothal, Holywell and Linton Ponds, Castron, East Chevington and Gosforth Park NR. Five to eight were also at Cresswell Pond, West Stobswood Pool and Widdrington Moor Lake, four at Bothal Pond, and one to two at Druridge Pools, Ladyburn and QEII CP Lakes, and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.



A pair of Gadwall
Howdon Wetland
Colin Bradshaw

Teal *Anas crecca*

A total of 11 flew N and 25 S at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT). Largest counts were 807 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 14th (SR), 355 at Druridge Pools on 14th (IRD), 211 at Bothal Pond on 14th (TF/JFa), 150-176 at Arcot Pond, Budle Bay, Colt Crag Reservoir and Grindon Lough, and 118-145 at the Blyth Estuary, Budle Bay, Derwent Reservoir, and West Stobswood Pool. Groups of 57-91 were also at Elwick, Linton Ponds and Prestwick Carr, and 22-40 at Brenkley, Cresswell and Middle Ord Ponds, Haughton Strother GP, West Ord and Widdrington Moor Lake.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

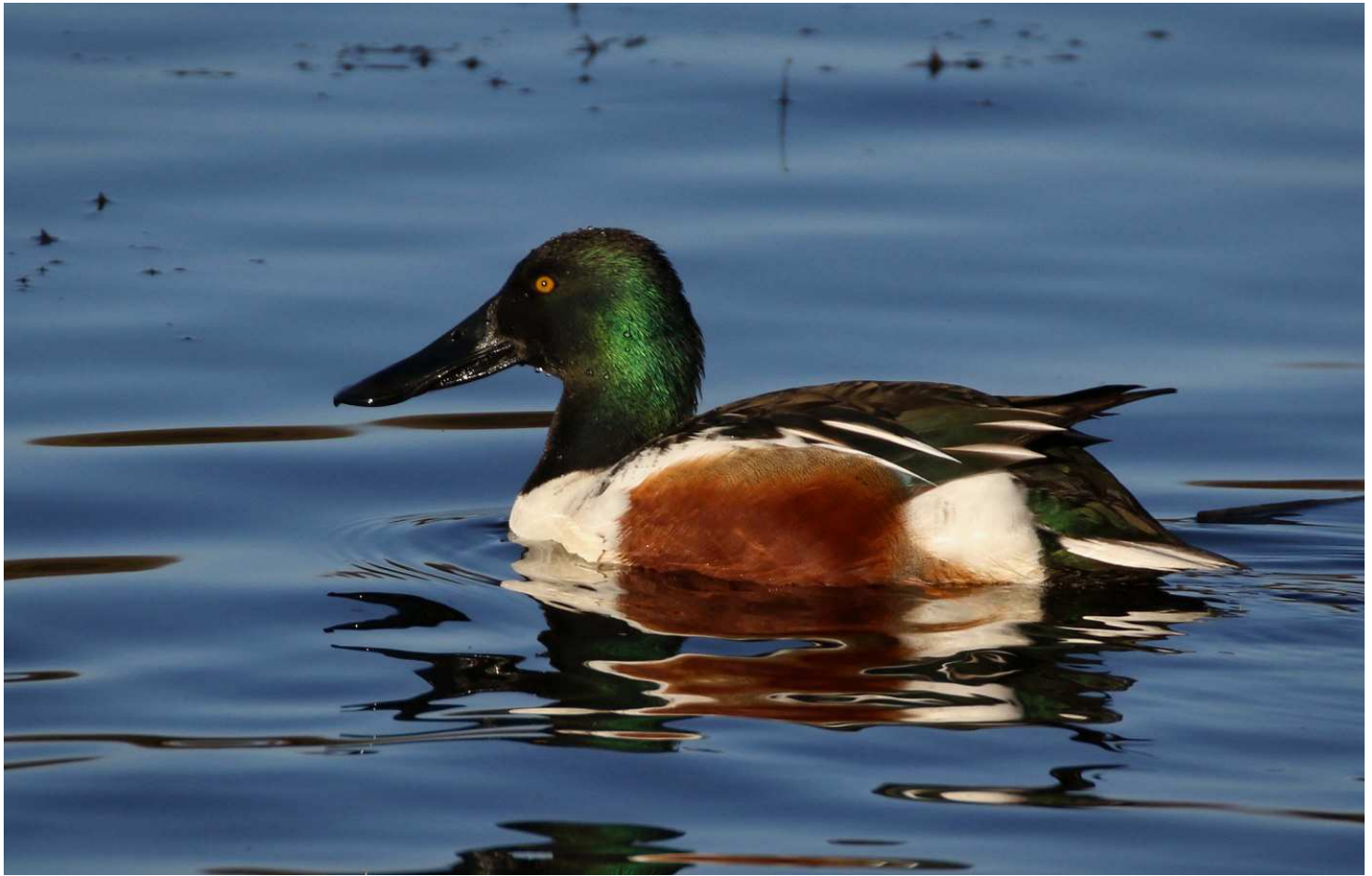
Six flew N at Seaton Sluice on 6th (SSWT). Whittle Dene Reservoirs held 189 on 14th (SR), 186 were at Derwent Reservoir on 18th (IFo), 86 at the Tweed Estuary on 11th (MHu), 57-77 at Bothal Pond (TD) and Castle Island (STH), and 24-48 at Chirton Dene Park, Cocklawburn, Holywell, Linton and Newsham Ponds, Grindon Lough, Newcastle Leazes Park, QEII CP and Widdrington Moor Lake.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

A gathering of 284 at Fenham Flats on 3rd included 129 drakes (MH/AA). Away from this core area only singles were noted; at Budle Bay, Druridge Pools, Swallow Pond and the Tweed Estuary on occasional dates.

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Largest counts were 30 at East Chevington on 21st (IRD), 28 at Budle Bay on 7th (IBDa/KDa), 12 at Druridge Pools on 24th (IFo), and ten at Killingworth Lake (LJM) and Low Newton scrape (TRD). Five to nine were at Arcot Pond (LJM), Bothal Pond (TD), Gosforth Park NR (MJC) and Monks' House Pool (TRD/JD), and three to four at Branton GP, Grindon Lough and Widdrington Moor Lake, while one was at Linton Ponds.



A handsome drake Shoveler on New Year's Day

Mike Carr

Gosforth Park NR

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Numbers at Bothal Pond built up from nine on 1st (IRD) to a peak of 27 on 31st (IRD), five to nine were at Holywell (MSH) and Swallow (GPK) Ponds, Killingworth Lake (LJM) and Widdrington Moor Lake (JBU), and three at Ladyburn Lake. More unusual were singles at Cocklawburn Pond on 30th (MHu) and Holy Island Lough on 29th (the observer's first record there since 2013; IK).

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Peak counts involved 99 at Killingworth Lake on 15th (LJM), 62 at Ladyburn Lake on 19th (PRM), 37 at Bothal Pond on 4th (TF/JFa), 20-31 at Castle Island, East Chevington, Holywell and Swallow Ponds, Newcastle Leazes Park and QEII CP Lake, and 11-18 at Arcot and Cocklawburn Ponds, Grindon Lough and Haughton Strother GP.

Scaup *Aythya marila*

At East Chevington north pool, ten were noted on 21st (TF/JFa) and one to five regularly between 2nd-24th (TRD/IRD *et al.*). Five were at Holy Island on 1st (SR/AH/TD), four at Widdrington Moor Lake on 4th (TRD/JD), four at Cresswell Pond on 9th (IRD) and three on 27th (EC/JSB/CW), two at Bothal Pond on 11th (IRD), and two well inland at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 2nd (SR) with one remaining until 4th (PRM). Singles were also at Holywell Pond on several dates between 3rd-25th (MSH/SPP *et al.*), and at 'Northumberlandia' (Cramlington) on 30th (LJM).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

26 flew N and 18 S at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT). Peak counts were 90 at Stag Rocks on 20th (PRM), 65 at Holy Island causeway on 20th (PRM), 51 at Blyth Harbour on 7th (STH), 22-36 at Berwick pier and Meadow Haven, and ten to 11 at Budle Bay, Cullercoats, North Shields Fish Quay and the Tweed Estuary.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

Two flew N at Seaton Sluice between 2nd-4th (SSWT) and one flew N at Hadston Carrs on 2nd (TF/JFa). A count of 101 at Goswick on 24th included many displaying drakes (MH/AA); 70 at nearby Cheswick Sands on 29th (CH) may have involved the same birds as above; 66 were at Stag Rocks on 20th (PRM), 15 at Holy Island harbour on 29th (IK), and eight at Football Hole (PRM). Singles were at Bothal Pond between 4th-7th (TF/JFa/DM *et al.*), Castle Island on 27th (PG), Grindon Lough on 18th (PRM), Horncliffe between 11th-14th (JDL), and more typically at Seahouses.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

A total of 123 flew N and 25 S at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT). The Cheswick Sands-Goswick Sands area held a peak of 515 on 17th (CH), 90 were off East Chevington on 19th (PRM), 85 at Stag Rocks on 24th (IRD), 40 at Embleton Bay (SW), 22 off Seaton Sluice, and 11-15 at Cullercoats, Low Newton and Whitley Bay. One to seven were off Druridge, Football Hole and Rockcliffe.

Black Scoter *Melanitta americana*

A drake was at Goswick-Cheswick Sands between 5th-29th (TRD/JD/CH/PRM *et al.*).

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

Three moved N and three S at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT), three flew N at St Mary's on 8th (AC), and two N at Tynemouth on 2nd (DRW). A flock of seven was at Stag Rocks on 15th (TRD/JD) with three to four there between 5th-7th (JBu/PRM), two were off Low Newton on 24th (TRD), two at Whitley Bay on 8th (IJ), and one at Goswick on 5th (JD).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

A total of 16 flew N and three S at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT) and six moved N at Seahouses on 5th (MSH). Peak counts involved 90 at East Chevington on 18th (TRD/JD), 48 on the River Tweed between Tillmouth-West Newbiggin on 20th (MJC), 46 at the Tweed Estuary on 11th (MHu), 20-34 at Killingworth Lake (LJM), Tweed Dock and West Ord (MHu), and ten to 17 at Bolam and QEII CP Lakes, Castron, Castle Island, Grindon Lough, Newton, Swallow Pond and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Five to eight were at the Blyth Estuary, Bothal and Holywell Ponds, Horncliffe, Tyne Green and Widdrington Moor Lake, and three to four at Gosforth Park NR, Ladyburn Lake and Meadow Haven (Berwick).

Smew *Mergellus albellus*

Two 'redheads' were at East Chevington on 17th (EC/JSB/DRH), while a single 'redhead' was at Monks' House Pool between 20th-25th (SRB/PRM *et al.*).

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

55 were at Goswick on 25th (MJC), 14 at Cheswick Sands on 29th (CH), 12 at East Chevington on 19th (PRM), seven at the Blyth Estuary (LJM) and Ladyburn Lake (PCF), and three to four at Meadow Haven, Spittal Bay, Stag Rocks, Tweed Dock, the Tweed Estuary. One to two were also at Budle Bay, Druridge Pools, Holy Island, Ladyburn Lake, Longhoughton and Seahouses, while one was on the River Wansbeck at Sheepwash on 7th (GB/DM/LAR).

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

One flew N at Tynemouth on 14th (DRW), 42 were on the River Tweed between Tillmouth-West Newbiggin on 20th (MJC), 21 at Killingworth Lake on 3rd (LJM), 20 at Branton GP on 20th (IBDa/KDa), 18 at Horncliffe (JDL), and five to nine at New Water Haugh, QEII CP Lake, the Tweed Estuary, West Ord, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Wylam. Three to four were at Airy Holm Reservoir, Bywell, Holywell Pond and Rothbury-Thropton, and one to two at Bellingham, Bolam Lake, Derwent Reservoir, Hesleyside, Jesmond Dene, Linkham Lane Pond, Sheepwash and Wark.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

14 were at Bradford on 5th (MSH) whilst one to five birds were at various other localities including two regularly feeding on spilled niger seed below feeders in a Rothbury garden (TRD/JD).

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

The peak count was 24 at Hedgehope on 29th (IRD), closely followed by 20 seen on Swinhope Moor (Allendale) on 19th (TRD/JD). A minimum of 16 were at Ouston Fell on 14th (PRM), whilst 15 were counted during a five km walk along the Border Ridge in the Cheviots on 8th (MJC). 15 were also at High Knock Shield Farm (Allendale) on 19th, whilst five were also present at Meadow Cottage (Allenheads) on that date (TRD/JD). Four were recorded at both Bewick Moor and Thrunton.

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

In the Allendale area four males and three females were present at High Knock Shield Farm on 19th (TRD/JD) and five were slightly further south in trees alongside the road at Peasmeadows (Spartylea) on 23rd (CT). One to four were at two further localities.

A Black Grouse

High Knock Shield (Allendale)

Tim Dean

19th January



Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

The highest count this month was 18 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 30th (SR). A group of 12 were in an autumn-sown field immediately adjacent to Blyth Links Cemetery on 13th (SJL) and ten were on the shoreline of Cresswell Pond on 1st (DRH) – the same number being recorded, so presumably the same birds, at Hemscott Hill (Cresswell) on 7th (DM). A count of eight came from Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin) on 9th (RS), seven were in stubble fields at Chare Ends (Holy Island) all month (IK) and seven were also at Shildon (Corbridge) on 24th (MR). One to six were at Ashington, Beal, Boghouses (Hartford), Cheswick, Druridge Bay, Middle Ord (Berwick), Monks' House Pool, Ord Moor (Berwick), Prestwick Carr, and West Ord (Berwick).

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Seven were at Prestwick Carr on 24th (PCF), four were at Spartylea on 21st, three were at Whitelea Chase (Cramlington) and two were seen at Linton Ponds.

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

The total for the month at Seaton Sluice was 112 – 75 N and 37 S – which was average for the time of year (SSWT). At least 47 were seen from East Chevington NWT on 19th (PRM) and 32 were at Goswick on 25th (MJC) after 29 were counted there a day earlier (MH/AA). Around 30 were at Cheswick Sands on 22nd (TBr) and 20 flew S past Hauxley in one hour on 29th (HRS). One to 17 were recorded at many other locations throughout the coastline.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

Singles were reported from Cheswick Sands, Cocklawburn Beach and Snab Point (Cresswell).

Pacific Diver *Gavia pacifica*

This welcome new addition to the county list first appeared at the Blyth Estuary on 18th (via Twitter, *per* AC) where its correct ID was not yet known - but suspected – then relocated to the North Pool at East Chevington on 20th (TRD/PRM/AC) whereupon it was duly confirmed to be a first-winter bird, before finally moving to Druridge Bay CP on the following day (IRD/JD/RMHa/PMHa/DM) where it conveniently remained to be admired by all-comers until the end of the month.



The Druridge CP Pacific Diver has a meal
by Mike Carr on 22nd January

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

Passage birds included two singles S past Seaton Sluice Watch Tower on 13th and 14th (SSWT). Two were at Holy Island on 8th, Cheswick Sands on 17th and Goswick on 24th. Singles were widely reported from the whole of the coastal strip.

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Very light passage was recorded at Seaton Sluice with a peak of 25 in three and a half hours on 4th (SSWT). The start of the breeding season was evidenced by a count of 33 on cliffs at Cullernose Point on 19th (IRD) and *ca.*30, mainly in pairs, at Coves Bay (Holy Island) on 15th (IK). One to six were at several other typical localities.

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

The monthly passage total of 350 (340 N and ten S) in 36 hours at Seaton Sluice was by far the largest number recorded at that location in the month of January. The vast majority were adults (SSWT). One to four were sighted elsewhere along the coast.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

The largest count was 51 in Blyth Harbour on 7th (STH), followed by 38 at North Shields Fish Quay on 12th (PRM). Other double-digit counts were 27 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 30th (SR), 18 at QE11 CP Lake on 15th (CDH), 11 at the Meadow Haven (Berwick) roost and ten at Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay), Browns Bay (Whitley Bay) and Newcastle Quayside. One to nine were at many other locations.

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Seaton Sluice Watch Tower recorded a monthly total of 13 N and seven S (SSWT). Numbers at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) fluctuated during the month with a peak of 98 present on 20th (PRM). Seven were at Cullernose Point (Craster) on 19th (IRD), the Meadow Haven (Berwick) roost held five on 24th (MHu) and one to three were reported from several other localities.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

After three in December, only two individuals could be certain to be present at Gosforth Park all month (MJC/MH/AA) and a single remained at East Chevington until at least 21st (JBu/IK/ASH/MSH).

A Bittern

Gosforth Park NR

Graeme Bowman

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*

Fields next to the Horton Burn at Boghouses (Cramlington) remained a popular location with four present on 10th (LJM). Four were also seen from Holy Island Causeway on 20th (PRM) and one to three birds were at many other locations including fairly well inland sites such as Whittle Dene Reservoirs and one near the golf course at Rothbury.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

19 were present during a WeBS count in the River Tweed Estuary on 11th (MHu) and the peak at Druridge Pools was eight on 21st (IRD). West Hartford held six on 25th (LJM) and one to three birds were at many other typical localities including Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield), where this species is considered unusual in winter.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

20 was an unusually high count for Caistron on 14th (JD) and a peak of 15 were at East Chevington on 18th (TRD/JD). One to four birds were at many other usual localities.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Three were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 9th and one to two were at Bothal Pond, Druridge Pools, East Chevington NWT, Killingworth Lake and Warkworth.

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

The northern end of the county proved most popular with numbers gradually increasing throughout the month to a peak of 12 in Holy Island Harbour on 29th (IK), and peaks of six at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 21st (SW) and four at Goswick on 25th (MJC). Elsewhere, singles were at East Chevington and Snab Point (Cresswell).

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigrocollis*

The only record was one picked out amongst a Common Scoter flock at Cheswick Sands on 17th (CH).

Red Kite *Milvus Milvus*

Two birds were at Low Waskerley on 12th and 29th and two different birds were at Derwent Reservoir on 20th and 21st (IFo).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Up to two different birds were seen in the Druridge Bay area throughout up till the 8th including a 2nd calendar year male on 5th (MH *et al.*) and other single birds were seen at six other sites.

A juvenile Hen Harrier

Druridge Pools

4th January

Tim Dean

**Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis*

Two sightings this month both involving females at two different sites on 19th (MH) and 22nd (Phi/SSC).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Two birds were hunting together at Budle Bay on 7th (PJA) and two birds were at Haughton Strother GPs on 16th (MR). Single birds were noted at Beadnell, Bedlington, Boghouses, Budle Bay, Corbridge, Cullercoats, Haughton Strother GPs, Holywell Pond, Longhorsley, Spartylea, Spindlestone and at Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Six birds were in the air together at Derwent Reservoir on 21st (IFo); five were at Haughton Strother GPs on 12th (MR) and five were displaying and calling at Ritton (Nunykirk) on 25th (AB/LB). Four birds were observed at Prestwick Carr on 2nd (PCF) and at Widdrington Moor Lake on 8th (MSH). One to three birds were at 28 sites.

Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus*

A bird was watched hunting over moor land and clear fell on Ouston Fell on 14th (PRM).

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Three birds were at East Chevington NWT on 19th (PRM) and two birds were at Swallow Pond (Wallsend) (GPK *et al.*) and Branton GPs on 5th (IBDa/KDa). Single birds were either seen or heard at Big Waters NWT, Branton GPs, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington NWT, Gosforth Park NR, Holywell Pond, St Mary's Wetland, Valley Park (Cramlington), West Hartford and at Woodhorn Flashes.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

The highest counts came from Druridge Bay CP, 24 birds on 19th (PRM) and 21 birds on 29th (MH) followed by 19 on 22nd (LJM). 18 birds were at Chirton Dene Park (North Shields) on 22nd (MSH) and 17 were at Swallow Pond (Wallsend) on 24th (LJM) and 11 were seen at QEII CP on 15th (CDH). One – ten birds were at six sites.

A Moorhen

Colin Bradshaw

Howdon Wetland



Coot *Fulica atra*

The highest count came from East Chevington with 81+ birds present on 19th (PRM); other high counts came from QEII CP with 32 birds on 15th (CDH), 27 at Linton Ponds on 15th (CDH) and 26 birds at Bothal Pond on 21st (TD). 16 birds were at Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 4th & 16th (DM). Two – seven birds were at 5 sites.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

105+ birds were seen at Budle Bay on 5th which declined to ca. 45 on 20th (PRM), while at the other end of the county 90 were noted on 7th at Cullercoats (MN). 81 birds were counted during a WeBS at North Shore (Berwick) on 16th (TBr) and another WeBS on the adjacent Tweed Estuary reported 64 birds on 11th (MHu). Blyth Estuary held 62 on 1st (DM) which declined to 44 by 25th (STH) and 31 birds were recorded along the R Tweed between Tillmouth-West Newbiggin on 20th (MJC). Along the southern section of the coast, 21 birds were seen at Brierdene on 12th (PRM), 15 were at Seaton Sluice on 1st (DM) and 15 were at Rockcliffe on 8th (IJ). Although all other counts were of singles, some notable inland records were received: 5 birds at Derwent Reservoir on 30th was described as an exceptional winter record and the single bird seen at Castron on 14th (JD) was noted as an early returning bird.

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

The biggest counts by far were in and around Budle Bay with a respectable ca. 500 birds on 5th (TRD/JD, MSH) growing to ca. 3,500 by 24th (DGB). During the interim, ca. 3,000 were seen in the air on 15th (TRD/JD) and 1,200+ were estimated on 20th (PRM). 1,500 birds were recorded in fields to the south of Blyth on 17th (TRD) and on 1st, Derwent Reservoir held 800 which decreased to 300 by 12th (IFo). Gloucester Lodge (Blyth) had a count of 300+ on 10th which increased to 500+ on 12th (MSH). On the same day, nearby Blyth Links ca. 410 birds were reported (PRM). Other 3-digit counts came from Cullercoats (275 on 15th, IJ), Cullernose Point (268 on 19th, IRD), Widdrington Lane had 250+ on 26th (MSH), St Mary's (250 on 17th, TRD), Prestwick Carr (100-140 on 31st, RMHa/PMHa), while Cocklawburn reported 108 on 30th (MHu) and 100+ were seen at Fenham-le-Moor on 5th (MSH). Other reports came from Bothal Pond (Coney Garth), Cocklawburn, Cullercoats Bay, Grindon Lough, Healey, Kirknewton, Newton Tor, Middle Stobswood, Prestwick Carr, Prudhoe, Hyons Wood, Rockcliffe and Seaton Sluice.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Holy Island Causeway held 25+ birds on 20th (PRM). A count of 19 was made in the Blyth Estuary on 25th (STH) with 12 counted at Mt Pleasant in the upper Blyth Estuary on 1st (DM) and seven seen at Berwick Little Beach during a WeBS on 16th (TBr). Reports of six or fewer birds came from Bamburgh, Stag Rocks, Fenham-le-Moor, Lindisfarne NNR, Beal Point, Newton, Newton Point, R Tweed Estuary and Seaton Sluice Watch Tower.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Budle Bay saw an increase from 900+ birds estimated on 20th (PRM) to 2,100 on 22nd (CGK/GPK). A count of 1,200 on 1st at Derwent Reservoir had grown to a peak of 1,350 on 18th (IFo) and over 500 birds were at Widdrington Moor lake on 19th, an increase on the 400+ estimated on 8th (MSH). Haughton Strother CP reported 465 on 19th (MR), 406 were at Grindon Lough on 24th (PRM) and 300 were reported from Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 9th and 17th (MR, SR). 250 birds were at Dinnington on 8th (PCF) while at Castron a count of 230 was made on 14th (JD). Estimates of 200+ were made at both Fenham-le-Moor on 5th and Middle Stobswood on 24th (MSH) while counts of 180 and 189 were made at Grindon Lough on 8th (PRM, MRS). Blyth Links held ca. 180 on 12th (PRM) which decreased to 110 on 12th (ASJ). The Tweed estuary had 152 on 11th (MHu) and St Mary's recorded 140 on the same day (ASJ). Cocklawburn had 136 on 12th which declined to 114 on 30th (MHu) and East Chevington NWT had 122 on 19th (PRM). There were 108 birds counted at Bothal Pond (Coney Garth) on 21st (TD). Counts of fewer than 100 birds came from Arcot Pond, Big Waters NWT, Blyth, Gloucester Lodge, Bothal Pond (Coney Garth), Budle Bay, East Chevington, Healey and Holywell Pond.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

A count of 52 was made during a high-tide roost at Chevington Burn mouth on 9th (MH) while the Blyth Estuary held 47 birds at Sleekburn on 1st (DM) and 48 on 5th (STH). Numbers at East Chevington NWT ranged from 26-30 between 10th-12th (TRD/JD, PRM, respectively). Tynemouth reported 24 on 7th (CGK), while just up the coast at St Mary's, a count of 22 was made on 28th (ASJ). There were 21 birds at Goswick Sands on 5th (PRM) and nine at Cocklawburn on 12th. Other counts came from Rockcliffe and Fenham-le-Moor.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

The largest count was of 220+ birds from Budle Bay on 20th (PRM). There were 176 in cereal fields adjacent to the shore at Boulmer on 10th (AB/LB) and 110 at Cocklawburn on 3rd (MHu). A count of 92 was made at St Mary's on 20th (ASJ), 91 birds were at Harper's Heugh (Budle Bay) on 5th (MSH), 85 in the Blyth Estuary on 25th (STH) and 80 on the same day at Low Newton scrape (SRB). Marden Farm, Tynemouth had 75 birds on 25th (MN) and 70+ were at Budle Bay on 5th (PRM). Counts of fewer than 35 came from Cheswick, Cresswell, Snab Point, Goswick, Holy Island, Monks' House Pool, Newcastle Business Park, North Shields Fish Quay, Rockcliffe, Seaton Sluice, Tweed Estuary, Whitley Bay and Woodhorn Flashes.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Reports came from either Lindisfarne NR or Druridge Pools. At the former, birds were present throughout the month on the Rocket Field pools with a peak count of 13 on 15th (SR/AH, IK). Nearby Fenham Flats reported at least a single bird with Bar-tailed Godwits on 7th (JBu). Sightings came in from Druridge Pools throughout the month with the highest count of six reported on 20th (IK).



A Black-tailed Godwit
Howdon Wetlands
Colin Bradshaw

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Approximately 40 birds were seen at Budle Bay on 5th (PRM) and 12 were counted at Berwick Little Beach on 16th (TBr). On 6th ten birds were counted on the adjacent Tweed Estuary (MHu) with ten at Fenham-le-Moor on 5th (TRD/JD) and the same number at Budle Bay on 20th (PRM). Counts of fewer than ten came from Blyth Estuary, Cocklawburn, Goswick, Hauxley beach, Lindisfarne NNR, Sleekburn, Upper Blyth Estuary.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

The highest count received was ca. 55 at Stag Rocks on 5th (PRM). Also in the north, 37 were at Berwick Little Beach on 12th (BWG). Sites attracting other significant groups were in the south east, at Snab Point (Cresswell), 33 on 10th (IFo), St Mary's Island, 28 on 20th (ASJ), Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) 25 on 2nd (IJ) and Brierdene (Whitley Bay), 170 on 12th (PRM). One to ten were at Berwick Pier, Blyth South Harbour and South Beach, Cullercoats, Kitty Brewster (upper River Blyth Estuary), Longhoughton, Newton, North Shields Fish Quay, River Blyth Estuary, River Tweed Estuary and Seaton Sluice.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

The vast majority of birds this month were located in the favoured Budle Bay area with a maximum of 320 seen on 22nd (CGK/GPK). One to nine were at Budge Fields (Druridge Pools), Cocklawburn, Longhoughton, River Blyth Estuary and Seaton Sluice.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

A wintering bird was reported from Druridge Pools from 2nd-29th

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

A large group of 150 were present regularly in Sandham Bay (Holy Island) during the month (IK). The flock in Druridge Bay remained from December, with 110 counted at East Chevington on 10th (TRD/JD). Elsewhere, the highest count from Berwick Little Beach was 54 on 12th (BWG). Longsands Beach (Tynemouth) attracted 53 on 14th which was noted as a very high count for that locality. Also in that area, 60 were at St Mary's Island on 7th and 26 at Whitley Bay on 8th (DM/IJ). Further north, 38 were at Cocklawburn, 32 at Hauxley Beach and 16 at Goswick from 5th-12th. Three were at Blyth South Beach on 1st.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

31 flew S at Seaton Sluice on 6th. The Blyth Estuary was again the prime site with 400 reported on 14th (AC) and 212 on the upper estuary at Kitty Brewster on 1st (DM). At Lindisfarne ca.200 were counted at Fenham-Le-Moor on 5th and ca.30 at Budle Bay on 20th (TRD/JD/PRM). 150-200 were on the Spanish Battery Rocks (Tynemouth) on 5th (SPP) and Berwick Little Beach held 140 on 24th (MHu). Cresswell Pond attracted 16-98 on 24th and 28th (IFo/PCF) and 50 were at Low Newton Scrape on 24th (TRD). One-26 were seen at Beal Point (Lindisfarne), Cocklawburn, Druridge Pools, Hauxley Beach, Stag Rocks and Swallow Pond.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

A slight decline in numbers was recorded at Stag Rocks from December as the maximum noted was 78 on 2th (IRD). The next largest group was 15 in Sandham Bay (Holy Island), noted as a good count for the Island. Maxima of 11 were recorded at St Mary's Island on 14th (SPP) and Tynemouth on 8th (DRW). One to ten were seen at Amble, Berwick Pier, Boulmer, Cocklawburn, Cullercoats, Hauxley Beach, Longhoughton, North Blyth, Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) and Seaton Sluice during the month.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Birds were settled in regular winter quarters with two reported regularly from Whittle Dene Reservoirs throughout the month (SR/AA *et al.*). Singles were at Rothbury - Thropton on 2nd (TRD/JD), Haughton Strother GP on 8th (MR) Hedgeley GP on 29th and Branton GP on 30th (both IBDA/KDa).

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

The wintering bird at Budle bay was reported on 5th and 7th (PRM/GPK/PJa *et al.*).

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Budle Bay held a minimum of 290 on 20th (PRM) and a WeBS count at the River Tweed Estuary revealed 148 on 11th (MHu). Cresswell Pond attracted 120 on 9th (IRD), 100 were counted at Cullercoats on 23rd (MN) and 96 were at Berwick Little Beach on 12th (BWG). A maximum count of 52 came from Newcastle Business Park- Redheugh Bridge (River Tyne) on 31st (DM). Much smaller numbers elsewhere included ca. 20 at Holy Island causeway and 11 at Druridge Bay CP on 19th. Bothal Pond continued to hold high numbers with a maximum of 17 seen on 21st (TD). One to nine were at Cheswick, Holywell Pond Flash, North Shields Fish Quay, Seaton Sluice and Whitley Bay. A bird was still present at Derwent Reservoir to 30th being noted by the observer as very unusual in winter.

Jack Snipe *Limnocryptes minimus*

Newburn Riverside proved much to the liking of this skulking species with five recorded on 19th (IFo). Two were at Haughton Strother GP, West Hartford and Goswick (MR/STH/PRM) and a single at Whittle Dene (PS/CGK/GPK). One disturbed from marshy ground well inland in the College Valley on 22nd indicated how many more could be lurking undisturbed in the county (Phi/SSc).

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Migrants were still arriving in the county with two 'in-off' at Seaton Sluice on 6th (SSWT). Two were also at Belford Moor on 28th (PJA). Singles were reported from Arcot Pond, Blakehopeburnhaugh (Kielder Forest), East Chevington, Longhorsley, Netherwitton, Prestwick Carr, Swallow Pond and Tranwell Woods between 2nd-29th.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Newburn Riverside maintained the high numbers from December with 74 counted on 19th (IFo). The maximum at Arcot Pond was 31 on 23rd (STH) and 23 were at Haughton Strother GP on 12th (MR). Other counts were 18 at West Hartford on 4th (STH), 12 at Branton GP on 9th (JD) and 11 at Bothal Pond on 24th (IFo). One to nine were at Berwick Moor, Big Waters, Boghouses (Cramlington), Cresswell Pond, Doddington, Druridge Pools,, East Chevington, Linton Ponds, two locations in Longhorsley, Monks' House Pool, Prestwick Carr, Ray Estate and one in off the sea at Seaton Sluice.

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

One flew N at Seaton Sluice on 4th (SSWT).

Auk *sp*

Several large movements noted up to 18th at Seaton Sluice, with a maximum 150 N in one hour on 1st and 150 S in two hours on 18th, the vast majority being Guillemots (SSWT).

Razorbill *Alca torda*

A notable gathering at Bamburgh Stag Rocks where 140 were present on 20th (PRM) with 24 there on 22nd (CGK/GPK). At least nine were at Goswick on 24th (MH/AA), four at East Chevington on 19th (PRM) with one to three elsewhere at Browns Bay, Druridge Bay and Whitley Bay (IJ/DM/GB/LAR).

Little Auk *Alle alle*

Two passed N at Seaton Sluice on 13th (SSWT).

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

At least ten were at Bamburgh Stag Rocks on 20th (PRM), six in Blyth Bay on 19th (STH) and four at East Chevington, also on 19th (PRM). One to two were at ten other localities along the coast from Berwick to Rockcliffe.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

A typically poorly recorded species at Seaton Sluice with a monthly total of nine N and nine S, seen on only four days (SSWT).

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Three-figure counts were 223 at the QE II CP Lake (CDH), 132 in the River Tweed Estuary (MHu) and 127 in Exhibition Park (DM) with smaller gatherings of 80-90 at Arcot Pond and Bothal Pond (TD/DM) and 36 in Leazes Park (DM). Two colour-ringed birds were Norwegian J1TL in Druridge Bay CP and Danish VA11 on Killingworth Lake (PCF).



Above: a Black-headed Gull at Howick on 10th January by Mike Carr

and below: A juvenile Lesser Black-backed Gull North Shields Fish Quay
By Tim Dean on 17th January



Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Up to ten fed on bread throughout the month at Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin) (RS) with a count from a WeBS survey at Newbiggin of five on 18th (CH). One to two were elsewhere at Cullercoats Bay, Rockcliffe, Seaton Sluice Watch Tower, St Mary's Island, Swallow Pond, Tynemouth and Woodhorn Flash (DM/GB/LAR/SPP/IJ/GPK/MN/DRW). The majority of all these sightings were of adult birds.

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Haughton Strother GP hosted 150 on 19th (MR) but elsewhere numbers were much smaller with ten to 30 at Arcot Pond, QE II CP Lake, the River Tweed Estuary and single-figure counts at three other localities.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

Two were present in the Corbridge area on 10th-11th (RB/MB) and the wintering adult was again at Cramlington throughout the month (DM/LJM). Singles were recorded also from Chollerford (MR), North Shields Fish Quay (AC/TRD/TF/JFa/SPP) and Swallow Pond (GPK/SPP).

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argenteus*

Two large gatherings comprised 550, ca.40% immatures, at Newburn, Tyne Riverside on 19th (IFo) and 375 in the River Tweed Estuary on 11th (MHu). Elsewhere, 31 were at Linton Ponds (CDH), 22 at the QE II CP Lake (CDH), 15 at Arcot Pond (DM) and one to two at Corbridge, Exhibition Park and Rockcliffe.

Two adults of the Northern race, *L. a. argentatus*, were at the North Shields Fish Quay on 12th (PRM) and a single adult fed in Quarry Cottage garden (Newbiggin) on 15th (RS).



An adult Herring Gull at North Shields Fish Quay by Jack Bucknall

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucooides*

At Seaton Sluice on 5th, an adult and an immature flew N and an immature S (SSWT). On 4th, an immature was at North Shields Fish Quay remaining all month and joined by a second immature on 11th and subsequent dates (AC *et al.*) and an immature was at Tynemouth on 7th-8th (DRW). The Blyth Estuary held an immature on 1st (DM/STH) with probably the same individual seen again there on 7th (AC/STH). Single adults were occasionally seen at Swallow Pond from 22nd-30th (SPP/GPK) and on 25th-26th immatures were at Castle Island (PG) and Newton Haven (SRB).

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

An unusually large influx, almost entirely immatures, the largest for many years, with a monthly total of eight N and two S passing Seaton Sluice with a maximum of four N on 13th (SSWT). A maximum of five were at the North Shields Fish Quay (ASJ *et al.*) where the species could be seen almost daily throughout the month in varying numbers. Other localities where immatures were recorded on a number of dates included the Blyth Estuary, Cresswell, Cheswick/Goswick, Haughton Strother GP, Holy Island, Rising Sun CP, St Mary's Island, the River Tweed Estuary, Warkworth and Whitley Bay. The only record of an adult bird was one seen inland on the River Tyne at Wylam on 5th (PT).



Two 'white wing' gulls from North Shields Fish Quay in January.
Above: an Iceland by Alan Jack and below: a Glaucous by Jack Bucknall



Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

On 13th, 450 flew N in seven hours at Seaton Sluice (SSWT) and 100 were counted at Rockcliffe on 7th (IJ). Elsewhere, one to 13 were noted at Cramlington, Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother GP, Linton Ponds, QE II CP Lake, the River Tweed Estuary and the River Tyne (Newcastle City and Business Park to Elswick Wharf).

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

A high count of 76 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 31st (MR), 29 at Lower Ouseburn (Byker) on 25th (DM), ten at Southfield Green (Cramlington) on 29th and eight at Seaton Sluice on 1st.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

On 12th 21 were at Haughton Strother GP, ten at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 4th (MR), seven at Big Waters on 7th and Dinnington on 8th, five at Gosforth Park NR on 1st, four at Whitley Bay Crematorium on 25th and one to two at four other locations.



A Stock Dove by Colin Bradshaw at Howdon Wetland

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Some large counts with 1150 overhead in 30mins at Haughton Strother GP on 26th (MR), 600 at Holywell Pond on 3rd and 400 there on 9th (STH), 450 at Derwent Reservoir on 20th (IFO), 300 at East Cramlington LNR on 25th and 100 at Plessey Hall (Cramlington) on 20th (STH). One to 40 were at six widely spread localities.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

The observer's garden at Corbridge held 15 on 3rd (MR), six at Rockcliffe on 2nd, four all month at Whitley Bay Community Garden (IJ), and two at Spartylea on 14th & 30th (CT).

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

At least four were at Holy Island during the month with one unusually roosting in the reedbed at the lough. One found dead at this location on 15th by (SR/AH) had been ringed last summer in Cambridgeshire, a movement of 401km for a supposedly sedentary species. It had probably died by being blasted against the side of the hide in violent gale and represents by far the longest movement to Northumberland so far recorded (IK).

Two were in a tree at Bedlington on 7th (JBu) with singles at Cramlington, Gunnerton, Hepple, Humshaugh, Matfen, Prestwick Carr and Twice Brewed with two A1 road casualties at Felton and Shilbottle.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Two were at Derwent Reservoir on 2nd and Shiremoor on 29th (IFo/CGK) with singles at Blyth on four dates and Dinnington on 8th.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Three called at Brenkley on 7th (DM/GB/LAR) and three at Spartylea on 24th and 31st with two there on four other dates during the month (CT). Two were at Prestwick Carr on 7th, Humshaugh on three dates from 22nd and Rothbury all month. A male called at Arcot Hall GC on 4th and one was found dead on the road at Brunton Bank on 25th.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

On 4th two flew out of roost late pm at a confidential site in the SE (STH) and a male sang from scrubland at East Chevington NWT on 19th (PRM).

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Up to five were at Holy Island during the month (IK), three at Prestwick Carr on 2nd and in high flight over dunes at Goswick on 24th (PCF/MH/AA), two quartered a hay field at Newton on 21st (TD) with singles at all the above locations plus East and West Chevington.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Well reported with all sightings of single birds inland at Gosforth Park, Haughton Castle, Hexham, Jesmond Dene, Prestwick Carr, Rothbury, Whittle Dene and on the coast at Blyth, Boulmer, Cambois, Castle Island, Cullercoats, Druridge Bay CP, East Chevington and St Mary's Island.



A Kingfisher enjoys sun on the 1st January at Gosforth Park NR by Mike Carr

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

One called at Rothbury on 4th (MJC) and at Bakethin (Kielder) on 14th (CGK/GPK/PS), Ridley Stokoe on 18th (PRM) and Prestwick Carr on 22nd (MJC).

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Four were at Plessey Woods CP on 29th (LJM), three at Widdrington on 10th, Tilmouth-West Newbiggin (R.Tweed) on 20th Bilsmoorfoot (nr Hepple) on the same date and Valley Park (Cramlington) on 28th. One to two were at 16 other widespread localities.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Three birds were at Prestwick Carr on 7th (DM/GB/LAR) and on 19th (PRM); two birds were also seen at Grindon Lough and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 4th (PRM), Cheswick on 5th (PRM) and Haughton Strother GPs on 12th (MR). Single birds were at Arcot Pond, Cramlington, Grindon Lough, Moor Farm (Cramlington), Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, Prestwick Carr, Quarry Cottage, Seaton Sluice and Spartylea.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Only single birds were noted at Carrshield on 19th (JD), Cresswell on 20th (TRD) and Holy Island on 1st (SR/AH), 15th (IK) and 20th (PRM). The bird on 15th was a juvenile female which was being mobbed by a Barn Owl *Tyto alba*.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Two birds were at Budle Bay on 22nd (CGK/GPK/PS) and a single bird on 5th (SVM/ TRD/JD). Single birds were also at Backworth, Bamburgh, Chain Bridge (River Tweed), Coquet Island, Cresswell Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Dinnington, Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother GP's, Holy Island, Horncliffe, King Edward VII Bridge (Newcastle Quayside) and at Widdrington Moor Lake.

Ring necked Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

A high count of 17 in a roost at Nuns Moor Park (Newcastle) on 26th (JBU) with three at Fenham on 14th (CGK/GPK).

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*

Singles at Ford Moss from 3rd to 9th (NNBC), Warenford – Lucker on the 3rd (MH/AA) and the wintering bird remained at Prestwick Carr all month (PCF *et al.*).

The Prestwick Carr Great Grey Shrike.

24th January by Mike Carr

**Magpie** *Pica pica*

On 1st seven were at Prestwick Carr (PCF), six all month at Whitley Bay Community Garden (IJ) with one refurbishing last year's nest in the observer's garden at Monkseaton on 12th (MSH).

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Four at Gosforth Park NR on 1st (MJC) was the high count with one to two at 14 other widespread localities.

December correction 100 at Hexham on 2nd should be two.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

A mixed flock of corvids at Gosforth Park NR contained at least 500 in a pre-roost gathering (PJA), 200 at Prestwick Carr on 9th (PCF), 100 at Beaconhill (Cramlington) on 15th with 42 there on 2nd (DM) and 38 at Spartylea on 13th (CT). Two flushed by fireworks flew across the Tyne Newcastle Quayside at midnight: present all month at Whitley Bay Community Garden (PJA/IJ).

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Over 100 at Derwent Reservoir on 15th (IFo) and 14 at Cramlington High School on 2nd (DM).

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

A roost in trees at West Hartford on 5th numbered 70 (STH), 20 at Kitty Brewster (Blyth) on 1st and Aydon Castle (Corbridge) on 13th (DM/MR), Nine on a 17km walk Barrowburn-Windy Gyle (Cheviots) on 8th and one to eight at four other locations.

A Carrion Crow

North

Shields Fish Quay

10th January

by Alan Jack



Raven *Corvus corax*

Seven on a 17km walk Barrowburn-Windy Gyle (Cheviots) on 8th (MJC), three at Ouston Fell on 19th (TRD/JD), two at Belford Moor on 14th (CGKGPK/PS) and a pair calling at Whitehall Hillfort (College Valley) on 22nd with singles at Ford Moss, Rothbury-Thropton and Spartylea.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

More than ten were at Hyons Wood (Prudhoe) on 7th with two at Grindon Lough on 4th and Ridley Stokoe on 18th (PRM). All other sightings were singles at 12 other widespread localities.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Around 25 were at Spartylea on 7th with nine there on 12th (CT), 21 at Spindlestone on 18th with 18 trapped & ringed inc three re-traps (BRS). Four were at Whitley Bay Community Garden all month and at Rockliffe on 2nd (IJ).

Great Tit *Parus major*

At Spindlestone 15 were trapped and ringed on 18th with five re-traps (BRS). Ten were at Prestwick Carr on 24th and Longhorsley on 27th (PCF/AB/LB), eight at Spartylea on 7th with five there on 12th (CT) and two at Whitley Bay Community Garden all month (IJ).

A great Tit at Howdon wetlands by Colin Bradshaw

**Coal Tit** *Periparus ater*

12 at Spartylea on 9th was the high count with ten there on 7th (CT), four at Spindlestone on 18th with three trapped and ringed including one re-trap (BRS). Two present at Whitley Bay Community Garden all month and one at Wark (N.Tyne) on 16th.

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

Very well reported with seven the peak at Prestwick Carr on 19th (PRM) and four there regularly during the month. Three were at Branton GP on 30th (IBDa/KDa) two at Hyons Wood (Prudhoe) on 7th, Dinnington and Derwent Reservoir on 17th and Linden Hall (Longhorsley) on three dates. Singles were at many of the above plus nine different locations.



A Willow Tit

Tim Dean

Prestwick Carr

8th January

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

More than three at Hyons Wood (Prudhoe) on 7th with singles at Linden Hall (Longhorsley) on three dates (NFO), Bolam Lake on 8th, New Mills Wood (Berwick) on 10th, Newton Red House on 14th, Thrum Mill (Rothbury) on 23rd and Hartburn on 25th.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Stubble at Brier Dene farm (Whitley Bay) held 65 on 29th (MNC), 50-60 at Beacon Hill (Cramlington) on 2nd (DM), 40 at Cawledge Burn (Alnwick) on the same date (MH), 21 at Doddington on 1st (TRD/JD), 15 at Cramlington on 3rd (STH) with ten at Shildon (Corbridge) on 18th and Haughton Strother GP on 26th (MR). One to three were at five other locations.

Shore Lark *Eremophila alpestris*

The seven wintering birds remained at East Chevington all month.

Mike Henry studies of the
East Chevington Shore Larks

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

A total of 23 at Gosforth Park NR on 1st comprised two flocks (MJC), while 22 were noted between Tillmouth-West Newbiggin (R Tweed) on 20th. Elsewhere 12-13 were reported from Lower Ouseburn, Prestwick Carr, Quarry Cottage (Woodhorn) and Spartylea and seven to nine at East Chevington, Spindlestone and West Hartford. Five were regular visitors to peanuts at Rothbury, while two to four were noted at a further ten localities.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Singles were reported from Amble on 6th, St Mary's Wetland on 7th, Tynemouth on 8th and Goswick on 25th.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

A female was in a Tynemouth garden on 7th (DRW) and another in a garden at Walker on four dates from 12th-28th (SPP). A male was also at Northburn (Cramlington) on 25th (STH).

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

The largest gatherings by far were next to the Coast Road (Newcastle) on 15th-16th; on 15th there were two mobile flocks totalling 250 birds (100 and 150), while on the following day 130 were on Benfield Road (SRB/JBu). A flock of 28 was at Lemington on 27th (SR), 23 were in Dobbies Car Park (Ponteland) on 17th (MR) and 20 at Choppington on 26th (IK). Elsewhere 17 were in Corbridge on 30th (RB/MB), 12 at Wark (North Tyne) on 21st (PRM), 11 at Horton Burn (Cramlington) on 15th (LJM), seven at Throckley on 28th, six at Druridge Bay CP on 26th and five at Stobhill Manor (Morpeth) on 29th, with one to four at Bedlington, Colt Crag Reservoir, Hexham, Kenton Lane, Newbrough, Prestwick Carr, Rothbury, Ulgham and Tynemouth.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Four were together at Belsay (PG) and four were singing at Furnace Bridge (Bedlington) on 29th (LGM). Also on 29th, three were singing at Plessey Woods and two were at Wark (North Tyne). Two were also noted at Gosforth Park NR, Longhorsley, Spartylea and Spindlestone with singles at a further nine localities.



Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Singles were reported from Caistron, Colt Crag Reservoir, Corbridge (Aydon), Gosforth Park NR, Holywell Dene, Humshaugh, Hyons Wood (Prudhoe), Prestwick Carr, Ridley Stokoe, Stamfordham and Wallington.



A Tree Creeper grounded
Wallington NT on 24th January by Janet Dean

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

A total of 13 were noted during a 17km walk in the Cheviots (Barrowburn-Fairhaugh-Windy Gyle) on 8th (MJC). Elsewhere the only reports were one to two at Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) and Spartylea.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

The regular roost at Holy Island Lough held 8,000 on 2nd (IK). 1,000 flew E over Prestwick Carr at dusk on 1st (PCF) and 700+ were at Budle Bay on 5th (PRM). Flocks of 500 were reported from Cresswell Pond on 24th and Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 19th and 450 were at Derwent Reservoir on 30th. Elsewhere 90-100 were noted at Corbridge (Aydon), East Chevington and Grindon Lough, with 30-50 at Longhorsley and Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) and six to nine at Spartylea.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Four singing males were noted in the Cheviots (Barrowburn-Fairhaugh-Windy Gyle) on 8th (MJC) and four were between Rothbury-Thropton on 2nd (TRD/JD). Counts of two came from Jesmond Dene, Plessey Woods (display) and Spartylea, while singles were at Blanchland, Corbridge (Milkwell), Fontburn, Ridley Stokoe and Wark (North Tyne).

Black-throated Thrush *Turdus atrogularis*

A first-winter female was found at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 2nd (MR). Accompanied by a large flock of Redwings, it flew into a hawthorn hedge, where showing well, it was watched for about ten minutes. It dropped to the ground and under the hedge where it was lost to view and assumed to have flown off with the Redwing flock towards nearby Dodley.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Groups of 15+ were noted in several fields at Humshaugh at the end of the month (SW) and 26 were at nearby Haughton Strother on 1st (MR). A total of 28 were noted over 1km at Horton Burn (Cramlington) on 15th (LJM) and 25 at Prestwick Carr on 3rd (PCF). Birds were also noted as 'conspicuous' in the Corbridge area this winter. There were counts of 13-16 from Causey Park Farm, Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs and up to ten from a further five localities.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

260+ were at Belford Moor on 22nd (CGK/GPK/PS) and 180 at Longhorsley on 12th (AB/LB). Counts of 100-150 were reported from Bewick Moor, Doddington, Humshaugh, Prestwick Carr, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Widdrington; 80 were at Derwent Reservoir, 50-65 at Holywell and 35 at Grindon Lough. Up to 20 were noted at a further three localities.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Singing birds were noted from Cramlington, Leazes Park (two), Quarry Cottage (Woodhorn) and Ridley Stokoe from 17th and two were singing on Holy Island by 29th. One to two were also at Spartylea from 13th to the end of the month.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Some sizeable flocks remained in the area, including 150 at Haughton Mains on 29th (SW), 120+ at Swallow Pond from 16th-19th, 120 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 2nd, and 95 at East Holywell on 22nd. Flocks of 40-60 were reported from Corbridge, Cramlington, Kiln Pit Hill, Longhorsley and Warden, 30 at Ridley Stokoe and one to ten from a further seven localities.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

22 were noted at Swallow Pond on 28th (SPP) and five at East Cramlington LNR on 25th. Elsewhere many birds were in full song, including four singing at Alnwick, three at Felton, two at Leazes Park, Whitley Bay and Whittle Dene Reservoirs and singles at Colt Crag Reservoir, County Hall (Morpeth), Exhibition Park, Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) and Stamfordham. Three birds were reported from Prestwick Carr, two at Boghouses (Cramlington) and Hyons Wood (Prudhoe) and singles at Ridley Stokoe and Wark (North Tyne).

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

A total of 14 were counted over 3km at Corbridge (Halton-Milkwell) on 13th (MR), eight were at Prestwick Carr on 1st and seven at Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) on 2nd. Four were at Whitley Bay Community Garden throughout the month and two to four at Spartylea. One was singing under a street light at the Great North Museum at 0.45h on 1st.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

A female/first-winter was at Cullercoats from 1st-20th (ASJ *et al.*) and another bird was at North Quayside on 7th (STH).



Two photographs of the popular

Cullercoats Black Redstart

Top: by Alan Jack on 5th January

and right: by Tim Dean on 8th January

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

In coastal areas six were at Holy Island on 15th (IK) and five at Cocklawburn on 30th (MHu); one to two were also reported from Bamburgh, Berwick Little Beach, Cheswick, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Embleton Bay, Goswick, Monks' House (Bamburgh), Newton Pool, Old Hartley, St Mary's Island and Tynemouth. Inland records continue to increase, with pairs at Eglington Common and Lordenshaw and two at Prestwick Carr and singles at Colt Crag Reservoir, Healey and West Hartford.

Duncock *Prunella modularis*

Eight were at Prestwick Carr on 8th and four at Spartylea on 19th. Two to three were at four other sites.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

62 were along 1.5km of the Horton Burn on 15th (LJM). 50-60 were at Cullercoats Bay, with 50 at Holywell all month and 50 at Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) on 2nd (ASJ/IJ). 24 at Southfield Green (Cramlington) on 29th (DM/STH). One to 19 were at six further locations.

Tree Sparrow *Passer Montanus*

70+ were noted at Elwick on 5th (MSH). 40 were in a Corbridge garden on 7th with 40 feeding in a game crop on 18th at Shildon (Corbridge) (MR). 30+ were at Holywell Pond on 10th and 25th (ASJ/MSH). 20 were seen near the Tin Church (Low Newton) on 24th and 20 also at East Ord (Berwick) on 26th (TRD/CH). Ten+ at Big Waters on 7th. One to seven at five further sites.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Pairs were seen at Blyth town centre, the Tweed Estuary and Whittle Dene during the month. Single birds noted at 20 widespread sites.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrelli*

30 feeding on the beach at Chevington Burn Mouth on 18th was the largest gathering of the month with lesser numbers present there throughout (TRD/JD). 17 fed on upland stubble at North Charlton on 19th (MH). 12 at St. Mary's on several dates (ASJ). One-two at three further sites.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

22 were at East Cramlington on 25th with 21 at East Chevington on 5th and 12 there on 7th (STH/MH). Also on the latter date, 15 were at Northumberlandia (Cramlington). 12 at Prestwick Carr on 11th and seven at St. Mary's the following day (PCF/ASJ). One to two at four other sites including upland areas of Bewick Moor and Derwent Reservoir.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

14 were at Berwick Little Beach on 12th and 12 at nearby Berwick Pier on 29th (BWG/MHu). A maximum of eight were noted at both Cullercoats and St. Mary's on several dates, and four at Tynemouth on 10th (ASJ/IJ). Six were at Low Newton on 24th (TRD). One to five were at six further coastal locations during the month.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Holywell Dene continued to hold good numbers of birds with around 100 present on several dates (ASJ). 130+ were feeding here, (70 in one bush) on 3rd (SPP). 50 on 1st and 50 flew N from here at dusk on 3rd (STH/DM). Northumberlandia also attracted birds to feeders with 20 in the area on 5th (STH). 20 were at Ray Mill (Klirkwhelpington) on 31st (MH/AA). One to thirteen were at 12 further sites during the month, including birds at garden feeders at Cramlington, Stamfordham and Spartylea.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

100 were on stubble with other finches at Ray Fell on 31st (MH/AA). 30+ were at Elwick on 5th (MSH). 20 were at Longhorsley on 27th (AB/LB). 11-18 on several dates at Spartylea during the month (CT). Four were in a Whitley Bay garden all month (IJ).

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Between five and nine were noted throughout the month in Gosforth Park. Eight were at Prestwick Carr on 22nd and Arcot Lane on 24th (MJC/STH). Seven were at Haughton Strother on 23rd (MR). One to six were noted at fifteen further sites.

Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*

A large flock of 98 birds was the maximum counted at a roost this month at East Ord (Berwick)(CH). One to six were seen at four other sites.



A greenfinch at Howdon Wetland by Colin Bradshaw

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Good numbers were seen this month with 200 at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 21st the largest flock (SW). 170-180 were still here on 26th (ASJ). 180 remained at Briar Dene Farm (Whitley Bay) during the month (MNC/ASJ). 60+ were noted at Elwick on 5th and at Old Hartley on 11th (MSH/ASJ). Gatherings of 50 were found at Berwick Little Beach on 13th and at Ray Mill (Kirkwhelpington) on 31st (TBr/MH). 40 were at Whittle Dene, Hemscott Hill and Embleton Bay during the month (MR/ASJ/SW), with 30 at Hemscott Hill on 7th (DM *et al.*).

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

The feeding flock continued to be attracted to seed provision at Chevington Burn Mouth each day throughout the month with varying numbers counted of between ten to 84 birds, one singing on 21st (DM/GB/PRM/ASJ/TRD *et al.*). 31 were in flight over East Chevington North Pool on 21st and 25 at Hemscott Hill Links the same day (ASJ). A mobile flock of 30 was at Chare Ends (Holy Island) on 18th (IK). 20 on 5th were at an unspecified site on the island, may have involved this flock. 30 were also noted at Fenham Le Moor on 7th (JDL). Six were found at Cocklawburn (Berwick) on 12th (MHu). A single was at Goswick on 5th (PRM).



Twite from Chevington Burn Mouth.

Above: a close up on 23rd January by Mike Carr and below: a flock of 68 (I think – Ed.) by Eddie Douglas on 24th January



Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis caberret*

40+ were at Grindon Lough on 24th (PRM). 30 were seen at Holystone on 22nd (JD). One to six were at four further sites.

Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

A large flock of 50 was in trees at Holystone on 22nd (JD). 45+ were noted at Grindon on 24th (PRM). A 17km walk in the Cheviots on 8th produced 27 birds (MJC). Also in the Cheviots, 20-30 were watched feeding in the College Valley on 22nd (Phi/SSc). 15 at Thrunton Woods on 16th included singing/displaying males. Five seen here on 10th (JD/IRD). 12 were at nearby Callaly on 29th (SR). One to two at five further sites, including singing males.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Last month's flock remained at East Chevington, with 112 counted on 19th, 52-65 on 21st (PRM/DM/ASJ). Feeders at Spartylea attracted birds all month with a maximum count of 30 made on 7th (CT). One to 20 were seen at fifteen additional sites during the month, including on 6th, 20 in Newcastle's Bigg Market (DM).

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

65 found at Bakethin on 14th was the month's largest flock (PS/CGK/GPK). 62 were counted at Haughton Strother on 12th (MR). 55+ at Hyon's Wood on 7th (PRM). 40 were at County Hall (Morpeth) on 18th and at Druridge Bay Country Park on 28th, with 30 there on 24th. 30 were seen all month at Swallow Pond and at Plessey Hall Wood (Cramlington) on 20th (GPK/STH). One to 25 were noted at 15 other sites in January.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

A single male seen on 19th and 20th at Chevington burn mouth was the sole sighting of the month (PRM/TRD).

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

45-55 were noted at Longhorsley on 27th (LB/AB). 40+ at Shildon (Corbridge) on 18th (MR). 20 at a Felton farm on 26th and 15 at Lilburn on 21st (Nfo/SW). One to 12 were found at eight further sites during the month.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Eight at Haughton Strother on 23rd was the largest group seen this month (MR). Elsewhere, six were at Longhorsley, five at Prestwick Carr and at Blyth Harbour and four at St. Mary's and Shildon (Corbridge) during the month. One to three were at six other sites.

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

The individual from last month was again seen this time at Elwick on 7th (IBDa / Kda).

Hybrids**Tufted Duck x Pochard** *Aythya fuligula x Aythya ferina*

A drake was again seen with one at Tynemouth on 22nd (DRW)

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

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Bamburgh Ringing Station, Berwick Wildlife Group, Hauxley Ringing Station, North Northumberland Bird Club, Seaton Sluice Watch Tower.

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

This bulletin was compiled by Graeme Bowman (Mute Swan to Ruddy Duck), Steve Laing (Red Grouse to Black-necked Grebe), Trevor Blake (Honey-buzzard to Crane), Tom Brewis (Avocet to Godwit), Clive Hampton (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 Jack (Duncock to Corn Bunting), Kathy Evans (WeBS Coastal Counts) and Steve Holliday (WeBS Inland Counts).

Data Manager is Tom Brewis

Thanks to David Sanders of NNBC for providing data.

Proof reading was by Mike Smith.

Mail distribution by Paul Stewart.

Edited by Steve Barrett NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.com

RECORD SUBMISSION

Please email records for the month to ntbc.records@googlemail.com

Please email for a copy of the standard spreadsheet and other details.

Location names and grid references: Please use of standard location names and include grid references as this 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.

BIRDS IN NORTHUMBRIA 2016

Photographs

Photos are always welcome for consideration. All members are free to submit images (taken within the county during 2016) to the editor. Please send to Andy Mould at highroller10@btinternet.com as maximum quality, jpeg attachments to one or more emails, by **31st May 2017**.

Late Records

Although our Annual Report is not finalised until late in the year, writing the Classified List begins in **February** and many section authors have completed their accounts by April. Consequently, late submission of records (as well as Bird Track-only submissions) causes significant work for compilers, who have to insert hundreds of additional records in parts of the manuscript already written. Tables, maximum counts, and earliest and latest occurrences often have to be amended in addition to whole accounts that sometimes have to be re-written.

An additional problem is that many species' localities have already been summarised into monthly or quarterly site lists by bulletin compilers and so a significant percentage of late records can't be used as authors have no way of knowing whether the 'new' localities have been included in the original summaries or not.

For the above reasons, could I please request that all outstanding records for 2016 are submitted ASAP and all future records are submitted to the club by **31st January** each year at the latest.

Many thanks Andy Mould



Another photograph of one of the most popular birds of the year:
the Pacific Diver at Druridge CP by Tim Dean on 24th January

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

Annual membership costs £10 for a junior, £30 for an individual, and £32 for a family. For membership enquiries please contact ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

If you internet bank you can pay online: please include your name in the ref. It is helpful if you email me to let me know when you've made the transfer ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

If you decide to set up a standing order please date the first payment at least a fortnight from your posting date to allow time to process with the bank. You can also set up your standing order directly with your bank if you wish; just let me know.

Finally, if you know anyone who might like to join NTBC please pass on the club information - new members are always welcome.

Jo Bentley - Hon Treasurer

NTBC WEB SITE

The club website is an excellent online resource for anyone interested in birds. There are:

Photo Galleries – Here you can view hundreds of photos of birds from Northumberland, Newcastle and North Tyneside. Members are encouraged to contribute their own photos. Simply send them to galleries@ntbc.org.uk

Sightings – Here you can view reports of birds recently reported in the County. Anyone who would like to contribute and post sightings to this page, please email sightings@ntbc.org.uk Please note this section is moderated, so there may be a short delay before your record appears.

There are also County Checklists, Records Committee updates, Information on important Surveys, useful articles and reports on Bird ID and Overseas Birding Trips....and much more...

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

New content such as Birding Trip Reports etc.. is always welcome and very much appreciated.

To find out more please visit www.ntbc.org.uk

WeBS TABLES IN THE MONTHLY BULLETINS

Monthly WeBS tables have been included as part of the Monthly Bulletins since 2000 and PDF versions have been included on the NTBC website since 2013. Since 2000 however, the number of sites covered by the Inland and Coastal WeBS has increased, resulting in the text and numbers on the paper copy being reduced in size such that it is quite difficult to read (especially on the Inland table). This isn't a problem on the website PDF version where the text can be magnified, as preferred. Given the current situation our proposal is to not include versions of the monthly tables within the Bulletin but to continue to add them to the NTBC website. Monthly activity involved in preparing the tables for their subsequent use on the website and in the Birds in Northumbria will not change. If anyone has any objections to this proposal could you please email your comments through to Steve Holliday steveholliday@hotmail.co.uk and/or Kathy Evans kathyevans121@gmail.com as soon as possible please.

Thank you.

TRAWLING FOR EAGLES

"Trawling for Eagles" is about the two years I spent working on a converted trawler in the West of Scotland. It starts with me as an active NTBC member, with limited life experience and no knowledge of boats, and ends with me as a qualified skipper, before trying my luck in the 'real world' down south.

A lot of friends have read it, and some of the longer-serving Club members might relate to the story from the '80s.

I've attached a sample, including four chapters, covering my rather unorthodox interview, my first cruise with fare-paying punters, and one of the last cruises, when we encountered some horrendous conditions in a quest to break a bird species record.

A link to the book on Amazon can be found here (it's been available as an e-book for a while, as well as in paperback since last month):

https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/1519050860/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1484235387&sr=8-1&keywords=trawling+for+eagles

Please take a look if you have some spare time. Any feedback, good or not so good, would be much appreciated.

Many thanks
Steve Younger

Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

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

Bulletin 2017 No 2

MONTHLY SUMMARY FEBRUARY 2017

31st March 2017



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Bittern

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Glaucous Gull

Ring-necked Parakeet

Great Grey Shrike

Shorelark

Siberian Chiffchaff

Waxwing

Up to four seen at Cheswick

Influx continued with groups up to 47 strong

Up to six at Cresswell, Linton, Longhirst and Newbiggin

1,100 in Budle Bay area

Drake present at Grindon Lough all month

340 at Fenham Flats on 9th

High counts of 35 at Killingworth Lake and 31 at Bothal Pond

Up to 11 at East Chevington

Last month's highlight bird stayed all month at East Chevington or Druridge Bay CP

An unseasonal bird was seen off Stag Rocks, Bamburgh on 13th

Only sighting was one at East Chevington on 15th

Two at Gosforth Park and single at East Chevington plus one inland at Branton GP

High winter count of 32 at Druridge Pools on 15th

Single again at Druridge Pools all month

One wintering at Fenham le Moor all month. Only fourth ever for county

Wintering bird at Budle Bay again all month

High peak of four at North Shields Fish Quay on 6th

Roost now numbering 26 at Fenham, Newcastle

One present again all month at Prestwick Carr

Group of seven at East Chevington again remained all month

At least one in North Shields / Tynemouth area

Influx continued with flock of 100 at Pegswood

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.

Antarctica

Thursday 13th April: Tim Daley - 'Antarctica realm of kings, bipolar terns, and parochial pipits'. In the summer of 2016 Tim joined a wildlife cruise to Antarctica with scenic, birding, and geographical highlights.

Revealing details about the stars of the show.

FIELD TRIPS

23rd April 2017

Langholm

Moorland Specials

Contact Steve Anderson seaswan@btinternet.com

7th May 2017

Kielder

A walk in the woods with Martin Davison, meet at Kielder Cas

Contact Martin Davison martindavison3@gmail.com

21st May 2017

Geltsdale

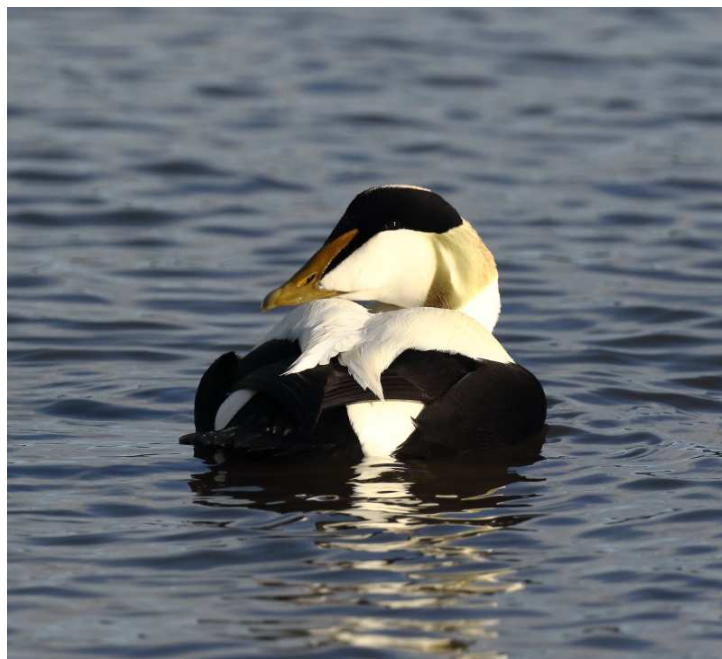
Meet the warden at 9 am in the car park at NY588584

24th June 2017

Nightjars

Contact Steve Anderson seaswan@btinternet.com

The NTBC bird, a drake Eider, at Seahouses Harbour
by Alan Jack on 4th February



CLASSIFIED LIST**Mute Swan** *Cygnus olor*

Two moved S off Whitley Bay on 19th (IJ). Killingworth Lake held 43 on 1st (LJM), while 36 were at QEII CP Lake (CDH) and the Tweed Estuary (MHu), 32 at West Ord (MHu) and 22 at Howdon (CB). Eight to ten were also at Big Waters, Linton Ponds and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus*

A first-winter bird was near Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 3rd (JSB/EC).

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Moderate numbers involved 35 at Fenham-le-Moor (JDL) and 22 at Low Newton on 3rd (PG), and ten at Warkworth on 19th (PG). Three to four were also at Castron and East Chevington, and one to two at Greenlee Lough and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Two flew high to NW at Derwent Reservoir on 27th (IFo).

'grey goose' (sp.) *Anser* (sp.)

A flock of 170 flew high to W at Greenlee Lough on 15th (MRS).

Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*

At Cheswick, birds of the 'Tundra' *rossicus* race included four on 1st and 8th (MHu) and two on several dates between 15th-21st (JBU/MSH *et al.*), while one was with Pink-footed Geese near Cresswell Pond on 16th (CB/JGS).

A probable Bean Goose (sounding most like a *rossicus* race bird) was heard calling as it flew over Gosforth just before midnight on 19th (MJC/ADM).



Two Bean Geese
Cheswick Pond by Stewart Sexton

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Northerly movement included about 400 at Spittal Point on 21st (RS), 250 at Berwick on 27th (MJC), and 97-160 at East Ord and Holywell and Swallow Ponds between 15th-21st, while 160-175 flew W at Grindon Lough and Slaley on 15th. About 3,000 were at Doddington on 28th (JD), about 2,500 at Elford on 6th (DF), 2,000 at Cresswell Pond and Ellington (TB), 1,300-1,500 at Cheswick (DF) and Goswick-Haggerston (MHu), and 600-900 at Bradford Kaims, East Chevington and Elwick. Counts of 200-491 came from Druridge Pools, Earsdon, Harper's Heugh (near Budle Bay), Longhirst Flash and West Stobswood, while 20-80 were at/over Big Waters, Mootlaw Quarry, Ross and West Holywell.

White-fronted Goose *Anser flavirostris*

Good numbers of Eurasian *albifrons* race birds remained and included peaks of 47 (one to two first-winters) at Cheswick Sands on 28th (CH), 43 (41 adults) at Holywell Pond on 4th and 17 adults there on 18th (SPP), 33 at Gosforth Park NR on 3rd (GPK), 32 at Grindon Lough between 3rd-16th (PJA/PRM), eight to ten at Cresswell (TF/JFa), Linton Ponds (MSH), Longhirst Flash (TYF/JFa), and Woodhorn Flashes (CB/JGS), and five to six at Elwick (PRM) and Ross (PRM). One to three were also at Druridge Pools, Low Newton and Swallow Pond.

Birds of the Greenland *flavirostris* race included six with Pink-footed Geese at Cresswell on 16th (CB/JGS) and one there on 21st (TF/JFa), four (two adults) at Woodhorn Flashes on 16th (CB/JGS), and four at Linton Ponds on 17th (TF/JFa) and 27th (MSH). The latter group (two adults) were also noted at nearby Longhirst Flash on 27th (MSH).

Un-raced birds included 29 at West Holywell on 4th (MNC), and a group (unknown number) heard flying S over South Gosforth on 5th (CGK).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Singles flew N at Whitley Bay on 16th (IJ) and Seaton Sluice on 21st (PJA). Peak gatherings involved 385 at Budle Bay on 6th (PRM), 240 at Ross on 9th (PRM), 230 at Cheswick (MHu) and West Holywell (MNC), 100-165 at Caistron, Healey and Longhirst Flash, and 66-97 at Haughton Strother GP and Linton Ponds. Counts of 33-44 came from Maiden's Hall Lake, Prestwick Carr and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and 17 were at Lynemouth Flash. A neck-collared individual at Low Newton scrape on 3rd had been marked in Norway on 10th July 2013 and was noted in Spain on 3rd December 2016 (DF).

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Numbers at Grindon Lough peaked at 358 on 3rd (PRM), 138 were at Bothal Pond on 3rd (TD), 133 at Derwent Reservoir on 10th (IFo), 108 at Hauxley Reserve (HRS), and 94-100 at Big Waters and Killingworth Lake. Groups of 20-38 were also at Greenlee Lough, Linton Ponds, Newcastle Leazes Park, QEII CP Lake and West Ord. A leucistic individual was at Grindon Lough on 28th (TRD).

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

1,100 came in to roost at Budle Bay on 20th (CGK), 1,070 fed on fields at Ross Farm and roosted at Budle Bay all month (DF), and groups of 150-250 were at Harper's Heugh (near Budle Bay) on 15th and 28th (MSH). Singles were at Cheswick and QEII CP Lake.

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Pale-bellied *hrota* race birds involved about 1,600 feeding on fields at Ross Farm and roosting at Budle Bay all month (DF), exactly 500 at Fenham Flats on 21st (STH), and 350-400 at Harper's Heugh (near Budle Bay) on 15th and 28th (MSH).

Dark-bellied *bernicla* race birds included 120 at Ross on 9th (PRM), 66 at Fenham Flats on 21st (STH), and seven at Harper's Heugh on 15th (MSH) when one was at Bradford Kaims (MSH).

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

At Lindisfarne NNR, 417 were at Fenham Flats and 194 at Elwick on 9th (PRM), and 145 at Budle Bay on 20th (CGK). Elsewhere, 38 were at Howdon on 26th (CB), 20 at Druridge Pools on 15th (TD), ten at Cresswell Pond on 25th (IRD), five at Hauxley Reserve, and one to two at Bothal and Swallow Ponds, Byker, Castle Island, Elswick-Scotswood, Lynemouth Flash and Widdrington Moor Lake. Further inland, three were at Grindon Lough on 15th (PRM/MRS), and one to two at Branton GP and Haughton Strother GP.

January bulletin the species heading was missing for Shelduck. The paragraph began "Nine flew N".



Shelduck at Howdon by Colin Bradshaw

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

Four (three drakes) were at Smalesmouth (River North Tyne) on 17th (TRD/JD), and a drake was at Tyne Green, Hexham on 7th (MR) and 25th (JBu).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Two flew N at Seaton Sluice on 2nd (SSWT). Peak concentrations were 800 at Cresswell Pond on 13th (MSH), 670 at Bradford Kaims on 23rd (DF), 650 at Budle Bay on 20th (CGK), 641 at Big Waters on 10th (SPP), 520 at Derwent Reservoir (IFo), 365-397 at Grindon Lough and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, 210-235 at Bothal Pond and Widdrington Moor, and 105-136 at Caistron, Hauxley Reserve and Linton Ponds. Groups of 65-80 were at Fenham Flats and West Stobswood Pool, with 28-44 at Elwick, New Water Haugh and QEII CP Lake.

American Wigeon *Anas americana*

A drake was again at Grindon Lough, on 3rd (AA/JSB/EC), 24th (MSH) and 28th (TRD). On 24th it was paired with a female Wigeon and attempted copulation at least once (MSH).

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Peak counts were 58 at Swallow Pond on 23rd (GPK), 33 at Caistron on 12th (JD), and 20 at Bothal Pond on 28th (TF/JFa). Counts of ten to 17 came from Marden Quarry and Hauxley Reserve, while six to eight were at Holywell and Linton Ponds, Howdon, and West Stobswood Pool. Two were at Big Waters, East Chevington and Killingworth Lake.

Teal *Anas crecca*

Peak counts were 531 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 7th (MR), 420 at Grindon Lough on 3rd (PRM), 310 at Budle Bay on 20th (CGK), 200-250 at Cresswell Pond, Grindon Lough and Howdon Wetland, and 102-182 at Arcot and Bothal Ponds, Derwent Reservoir and West Stobswood Pool. Counts of 54-66 came from Backworth and Linton Ponds, Craggy Bog and Scotswood, with 20-43 at Callerton, Castle Island, Hauxley Reserve, Hoppen Kiln Flash, St Mary's Wetland and Whiteadder Point (Berwick), and ten to 18 at Holywell and Middle Ord Ponds, Lynemouth Flash and Monks' House Pool. More unusual was a drake at Northumberland Park, North Shields all month (MNC/DRW).

Two ducks from Howdon wetland by Colin Bradshaw.

Top a Gadwall female

and below a drake Teal

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

Moderate numbers included peaks of 129 at Derwent Reservoir on 11th (IFo), 124 at the Tweed Estuary on 9th (MHu), 89 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 14th (SR), 51-72 at Haughton Strother GP and QEII CP Lake. Counts of 30-41 came from Airy Holm Reservoir, Bothal Pond, Hauxley Reserve, Killingworth Lake, Lynemouth Flash, Newcastle Leazes Park and Whiteadder Point (Berwick), while ten to 18 were at Backworth, Cocklawburn and Linton Ponds, and Howick.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

A drake flew N at Whitley Bay on 18th (IJ). The Fenham Flats area of Lindisfarne NNR held 340 on 9th (PRM) and 265 on 6th (DF). One to two were also at Big Waters, Druridge Pools, Elwick, Grindon Lough, St Mary's and the Tweed Estuary.

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Largest counts concerned 17 at Druridge Pools on 15th (IFo), 16 at Budle Bay on 20th (CGK), 14 at Killingworth Lake on 5th (MSH), and 13 at Monks' House Pool (SS). Three to four were at Bothal and Holywell Ponds, and Grindon Lough, and two at Arcot, Cresswell and Linton Ponds, and West Stobswood Pool.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Killingworth Lake attracted a peak of 35 (27 drakes) on 12th (JBu), 31 (27 drakes) were at Bothal Pond on 27th (MSH), ten (eight drakes) at East Chevington on 15th (IFo), ten at Holywell Pond on 28th (LJM), and six at Ladyburn Lake (TB). Singles were also at Bakethin Reservoir, Grindon Lough and Tynemouth boating lake.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

As regularly with this species, Killingworth Lake held the greatest numbers, with a peak of 91 on 12th (DM). Peak counts elsewhere involved 44 at Ladyburn Lake on 12th (SS), 22-29 at Haughton Strother GP, Howick Hall, Linton and Swallow Ponds, and ten to 19 at Arcot, Bothal and Holywell Ponds, Newcastle Leazes Park and QEII CP Lake.



An *Aythya* hybrid, presumably a tufted/pochard.
by Mike Carr from Killingworth Lake on 5th February

Scaup *Aythya marila*

East Chevington attracted a peak of 11 on 16th (CB/JGS), with three to ten, mainly on the north pool, regularly between 1st-24th (AA/SRB *et al.*). Six were on nearby Ladyburn Lake on 12th (TB/SS), three at Linton Ponds on 22nd and 27th (TF/JFa/MSH), and one to two at Holy Island Lough on 16th (JBu), Holywell Pond between 4th-28th (MSH/SPP/KWY), Horncliffe between 5th-27th (CH/JDL), and *Northumberlandia*, Cramlington on 4th (JBu).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

Small numbers involved 40 at Fenham Flats and 27 at Elwick on 9th (PRM), 12-14 at Berwick North Shore (TBr) and North Shields Fish Quay (DM), and seven to nine at the Tweed Estuary and Whitley Bay.

An Eider duck
Seahouses harbour
Alan Jack
4th February



Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

50 were off Goswick on 16th (JBu), 47 at Stag Rocks on 15th (MSH), 20 at Ross Back Sands on 16th (JBu), and 20 at Cheswick Black Rocks on 19th (IBDa/KDa). One was on the River Wansbeck at Castle Island on 27th (PG).

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Seven flew N at Whitley Bay on 18th (IJ). A tight flock of 650 was off Cheswick Sands on 24th (CH) and 86 at nearby Cocklawburn on 14th (MHu), about 100 were at Holy Island north shore on 12th (ADM), and 12-20 off East Chevington and Stag Rocks.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Two flew N at Seaton Sluice on 2nd (SSWT). Peaks were 83 at East Chevington on 1st (IFo), 72 at the Tweed Estuary on 9th (MHu), 30-32 at Killingworth Lake (JBu) and West Ord (MHu), 22-25 at Castle Island, Horncliffe and Whiteadder Point (Berwick), and 13-16 at West Newbiggin (River Tweed) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Six to nine were at Big Waters, Bothal Pond, Boulmer, Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother GP, Hauxley Reserve and QEII CP Lake. Three to four were also at Bakethin and Derwent Reservoirs, Elswick, Greenlee Lough, Holy Island and Ladyburn Lake.



One of the most striking diving ducks.

A drake Goldeneye

Killingworth Lake

by Alan Jack on 7th February

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Ten were at East Chevington north pool on 22nd (SRB), nine at the Tweed Estuary on 9th (MHu), nine displaying at Budle Bay on 27th (DF), six to eight at Ladyburn and QEII CP Lakes (SRB/SS), and three to five at Alnmouth, Cheswick, Holy Island, Longhoughton Low Steads and Stag Rocks. One to two were also at Cocklawburn Pond, Druridge Pools, Elwick and Hauxley.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

29 were on the River Tweed at West Newbiggin on 2nd (MJC), 19 at Powburn on 4th (MJC), 17 at Branton GP on 1st (TRD/JD), ten to 15 at Whiteadder Point (Berwick)(TBr) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs (MR), six to nine at Greenlee Lough, Heddon-on-the-Wall, Killingworth Lake and Tyne Green, four at Morpeth and QEII CP Lake, and one to two at Airy Holm Reservoir, Bywell, Corbridge, Gosforth Park, Grindon Lough, Jesmond Dene, Tyne Green and the Tweed Estuary. Copulation was noted at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 4th (PCF).



A Goosander at Morpeth by Tim Dean on 7th February

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Eight were at Carrshield Moor on 3rd (JSB/EC) and Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay) on 21st (MNC). One to two birds were at several other locations.

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

Plenmeller Common held a minimum of 21 on 2nd (PRM) and, on other dates, singles were at Alnwick Moor and Spartylea.

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

Eight males together in a rushy meadow at Coanwood Common on 14th were presumed to be part of a lek (MH/AA). Three males were at Meadow Cottage (nr Allenheads) on 3rd and a male with two females were at Swinhope Shield (Allendale) on 25th. One to two were also at Plenmeller Common, Smallburns Moor (Carrshield) and Spartylea.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Ten were in extensive stubble at North Walbottle on 10th (MH), four were at Chugden Wood (Ellington) and two pairs were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs. One to three were at nine other locations.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Three males were at Spartylea all month (CT).

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

The monthly total from Seaton Sluice was 22 - three N and 19 S (SSWT). A visit to Ross Back Sands on 16th found 16 offshore there (JBu) and a minimum of 12 were off Cheswick on 15th (MSH). One to six were recorded from several other locations.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

Singles were at Cheswick and Harkness Rock (Bamburgh). In Druridge Bay on 14th an unfortunate individual was attacked by a Great Black-backed Gull, held underwater until it drowned then promptly eaten (JP).

Pacific Diver *Gavia pacifica*

The county first from last month remained at East Chevington from 1st to at least 24th, whilst also being seen flying around Ladyburn Lake (Druridge Bay CP) on 24th before returning to East Chevington (IFo/IRD/TB/GB).

The Pacific Diver in flight

Ladyburn Lake
Chris Barlow



Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

Three were off Cheswick Beach on 5th (SS), reducing to two on 15th, then only one seen on 19th (IBDa/KDa). A single was at Goswick on 16th (JBu).

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

40 were at Cullernose Point (Craster) on 19th (TRD/JD) and 21 were on the sea at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 15th (MSH). 14 were frequenting the cliffs below Newbiggin caravan site on 22nd (CH) and one to three were reported from elsewhere.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

One flying S past Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 24th was an unusual sighting for the time of year (DF).

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

Passage included 40, mostly N, past Stag Rocks in ten minutes on 24th (TRD/JD) and a peak of 31 (nine N, 22 S) past Seaton Sluice in three hours on 2nd (SSWT). One to three were sighted elsewhere along the coast.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Once again North Shields Fish Quay held the highest numbers, peaking at 110 on 18th (DRW). Whittle Dene Reservoirs also proved a popular location with 30 birds on 7th (MR). A WeBS count at Berwick North Shore produced 20 on 15th (TBr) and 16 were at the Meadow Haven (Berwick) roost on 16th (MHu). Greenlee Lough held 15 on 15th and one to 11 were reported from many other typical locations although one at Woolsington Ponds on 24th was noted as unusual (SRB). Four of the continental "sinensis" race (two adults and two immatures) were at QE11 Country Park on 3rd (MSH) and a strikingly plumaged "sinensis" was at North Shields Fish Quay on 1st (SRB).

A Cormorant

North Shields Fish Quay

Colin Bradshaw

**Shag** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Seaton Sluice Watch Tower recorded 32 S in two hours on 9th, the only indication of movement noted during the month (SSWT). 12 were at the Meadow Haven (Berwick) roost on 19th (MHu) and five were at Stag Rocks on 24th. One to two were at Cheswick, Longhoughton, North Shields Fish Quay and Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay).

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Two were seen at Gosforth Park Nature Reserve on 1st and 9th (GPK), one was at East Chevington on 3rd and a single was at Branton GP from 17th-24th (MJC/NNBC).

A Bittern flies over Branton GPs

Mike Carr

19th February



Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Seven were roosting near the A189 at the River Blyth at 7.30 am on 22nd (AA) with counts of three and four regularly in that Horton (Blyth) area throughout (TB). One to two were at many other widely spread localities, often at sites fairly well inland including Great Whittington, Prestwick Carr and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

The peak counts were 18 at Howdon on 19th (CB), 13 at Druridge Pools on 25th (IRD) and 12 nesting at Howick Hall (*per* AWG). One to five were at many other locations.



A Heron at Berwick by Mike Carr on 17th February

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Well reported this month from many widespread sites. Maximum numbers were eight at Tyne Green (Hexham) on 21st (AJH) and Hauxley NWT on 26th (HRS). Two males were observed fighting over a female at Howick on 27th (JAR).

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps Cristatus*

Birds started to arrive at their breeding sites in earnest from the start of the month with six at Whittle Dene Reservoirs by 27th (SR), four at Bothal Pond (Coney Garth) by that date (MSH) and three at Killingworth Lake on 12th (JBu/DM). A pair were in breeding plumage at Derwent Reservoir by 5th (IFo) and singles were at Airy Holm Reservoir, Big Waters NWT, Haughton Strother GP and Widdrington Moor Lake.

Great Crested Grebes courting
Killingworth Lake
15th February
by Alan Jack

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

One was at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 3rd (JDL).

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

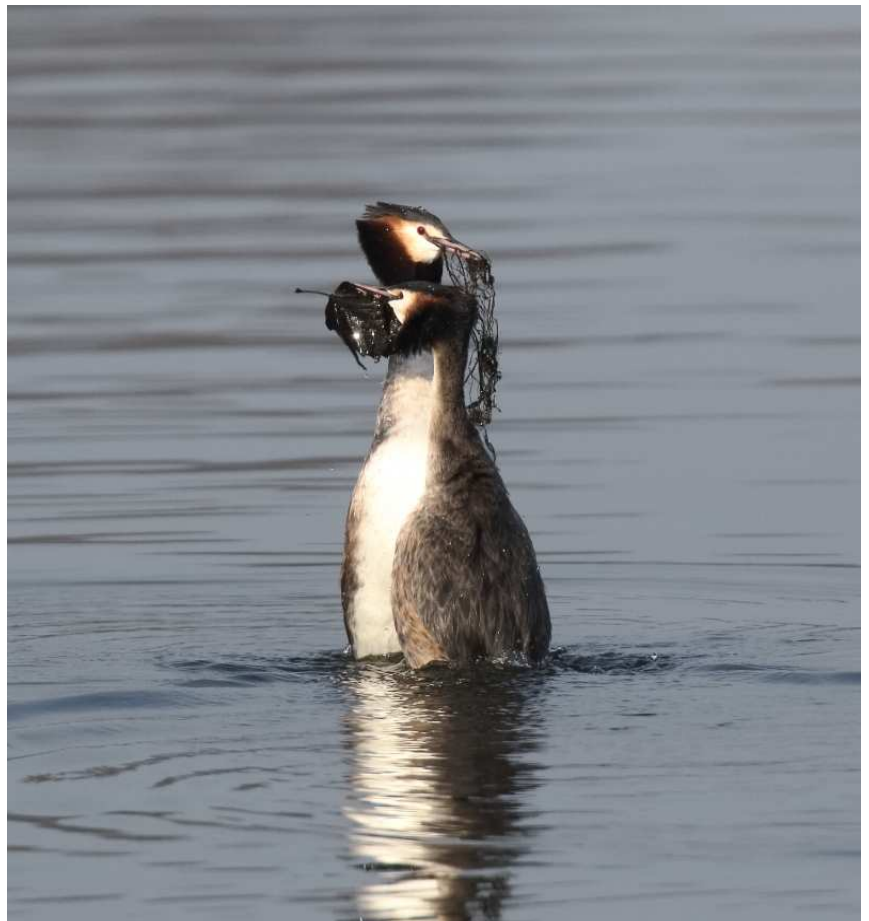
Numbers somewhat diminished from last month but three were still present at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 15th (MSH), reducing to two by 17th (DF). Cheswick also had two on 15th and singles were at Blyth South Harbour, East Chevington, Fenham-le-Moor, Harkness Rock (Bamburgh) and Swallow Pond – the latter being only the fourth record for this site (GPK/SPP).

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigrocollis*

Only one record of a single at East Chevington on 15th (IFo).

Red Kite *Milvus Milvus*

Two birds were in adjacent trees at Snods Edge on 21st (IFo) and two were just inside south east Northumberland at Ebchester on 24th (MH). Singles were seen Derwent Reservoir on 3rd and 22nd (IFo) at Snods Edge on 16th and Carterway Heads on 22nd (IFo).



Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Three sightings this month with a female over a moor in the N of the County (MNC), and adult males were seen at a site in the SW of the County on 16th (MH) and at another confidential site (*per* MH).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Three birds, all adults and large, were in the air simultaneously at one site on 28th (MH/AA) and a female crossed a clear fell area in another site on 19th (MH). A single bird was noted at a further site during the month (NNBC).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

A pair were seen at Spital Point (Newbiggin) throughout the month (RS) and at Howdon (CB). Two birds were also at Low Cocklaw (Berwick) harrying a Buzzard *Buteo buteo* on 13th (TBr), Whitley Bay GC on 18th (KWY), Ellington (TB) and Derwent Reservoir (IFo) on 21st. Single birds were noted at 11 sites including a bird attacking a pre-roost gathering of Ring-necked Parakeets *Psittacula krameri* at Fenham (Newcastle) on 5th (PJA).

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Eight birds were at Grindon Lough on 3rd (PRM) and eight were at Pauperhaugh (Rothbury) on 21st (MJC). Seven birds at Lambley Viaduct on 14th and at Chatton Moor on 28th (MH/AA) and six birds were in the Carey Burn (Harthope Valley) on 4th (MJC). Five birds were at West Newbiggin (River Tweed) on 2nd (MJC), Derwent Reservoir on 6th (IFo) and at Milkwell (Corbridge) on 28th (RB/MB). Four birds were observed at Whiteadder Point (Berwick) on 13th (TBr), Craggside on 24th (MJC) and at Haughton Strother GP's on 26th (MR). One to three birds were at 24 sites.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

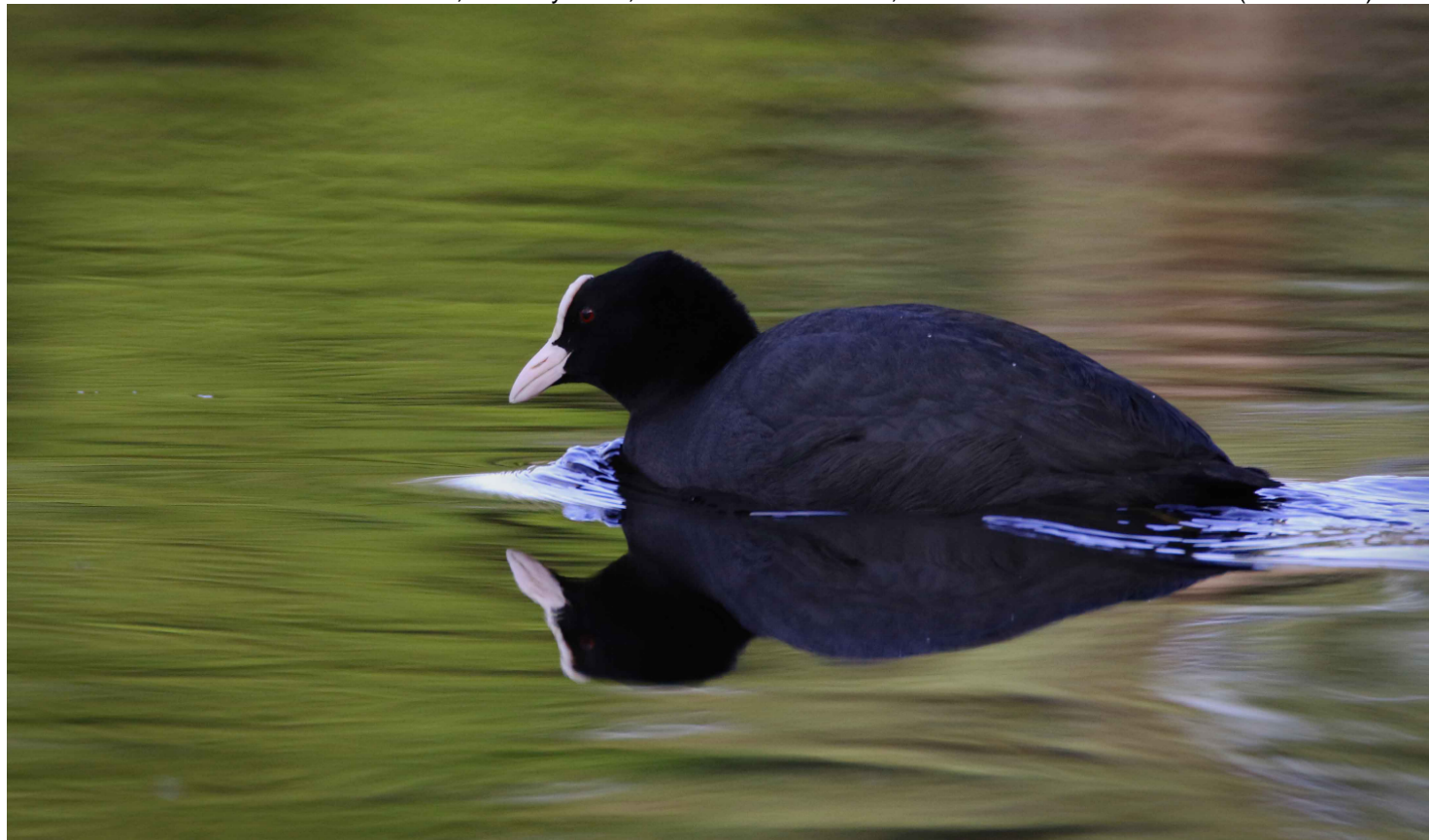
Three calling birds were at Gosforth Park NR on 5th (MJC) and two were heard but not seen at Whiteadder Point (Berwick) on 13th (TBr). Single birds were either seen or heard at Big Waters NWT, Branton GPs, East Chevington NWT, Holywell Pond and at Swallow Pond (Wallsend).

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

The highest counts came from Druridge Bay CP with 25 birds on 12th (TB) followed by 17 at Whiteadder Point (Berwick) on 13th (TBr). One – ten birds were at Arcot Pond, Castle Island, Druridge Bay CP, Hauxley NWT, Howick Hall Mill Pond, Jesmond Dene (Newcastle), Killingworth Lake, Leazes Park (Newcastle), Linton Pond, QEII CP Lake and Reeth Pond (Newburn).

Coot *Fulica atra*

96 birds at Swallow Pond (Wallsend) on 17th (SPP) and 45 birds at Killingworth Lake on 12th (DM) were the high counts this month followed by 28 at Bothal Pond on 3rd (TD), 24 at Linton Pond on 12th (CDH) and 19 at QEII CP Lake on 12th (CDH). One to twelve birds were at Arcot Pond, Hauxley NWT, Howick Hall Mill Pond, Howdon and at Leazes Park (Newcastle).



A Coot at Craggside on 24th February by Mike Carr

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

The largest reported count for the month was at Budle Bay, where a count of 115 was made on 20th (CGK). Not far behind were 84 birds at Derwent Reservoir on 24th (IFo) which was the highest February count at this site. St Mary's held 80 birds on 18th (KWY), 67 were at Berwick North Shore on 17th (TBr) and 60 at Cullercoats on 20th (MN). Other reports of above 20 birds came from Tweed Estuary (45 on 9th, MHu), 42 at Berwick, West Ord on 5th (MHu), 40 at Hauxley NWT on 26th (HRS), 22 at Derwent Reservoir on 9th (IFo). Counts of 20 or fewer birds came from Airy Holm Reservoir, nr. Shotleyfield, Big Waters NWT, Black Middens Rocks in the Tyne Estuary, Bothal Pond (Coney Garth), Hexham, Tyne Green, Killingworth Lake, Wark (North Tyne), West Chevington, Maiden's Hall Lake and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Oystercatchers

Ladyburn Lake

Chris Barlow

**Golden Plover** *Pluvialis apricaria*

Large numbers continued to be recorded at Budle Bay with an estimated 3,200 birds on 4th (DF), a number which had grown from a count of ca. 2,700 the day before (DF). Later in the month, on 20th, estimates at Budle Bay had declined to 2,100 (CGK). Prestwick Carr on 22nd held an estimated 1,000 (SRB), while 500+ were recorded at Widdrington Moor Lake on 3rd (MSH) and 500 were seen in the fields near Widdrington on 16th (CB,JGS). Derwent Reservoir reported a count of 320 on 22nd (IFo), the same number was at Stannington on 11th (SJL) and counts of 300 came from St Mary's (3rd, TRD/JD and on 4th, CB), Gloucester Lodge, Blyth (3rd, TRD/JD) and Grindon Lough (24th, MSH). Counts of between 100-300 came from Bradford Kaims, Hoppen Kiln Flash, Grindon Lough and Prestwick Carr, while smaller counts were from Berwick, North Shore, Boulmer, Cullercoats Bay, Fenham-le-Moor, Plenmeller Common and Ryal Mootlaw Quarry.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Only three records of this species were received: two birds at Boulmer on 4th (JD), two at Berwick North Shore on 15th (TBr) and a single at Fenham-le-Moor on 24th (TRD/JD).



A Grey Plover passes Hauxley. By Chris Barlow

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

The largest count was an estimate of over 2,300 birds from Budle Bay on 3rd (DF). Large inland counts came from Fourstones on 14th (1,500, AJH), Derwent Reservoir on 2nd and 21st (1,300 and 1,000, respectively, IFo) and Grindon Lough on 15th/16th (700-800, MRS, PRM, respectively). Further inland counts came from Houghton Strother GP, where 562 were counted on 16th, Stannington (412 on 11th, SJL) and 410+ at Grindon Lough on 14th (PRM). An estimate of 400+ was made at Widdrington Moor Lake on 3rd (MSH), 273 were counted as part of a WeBS on 9th in the Berwick Estuary (MHu), 260+ were estimated at Grindon Lough on 3rd (PRM), 260 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 14th (SR), 250 at Prestwick Carr on 4th (PCF) and 200+ at Bradford Kaims on 28th (MSH). Counts of 100-200 came from Big Waters NWT, Bothal Pond (Coney Garth), Murton, Craggy Bog, QEII CP Lake and Widdrington Moor. Counts of less than 100 came from Berwick (Whiteadder Point), Blyth, Horton, Bothal Pond (Coney Garth), Catton, Cramlington, Ford Moss, Grindon Lough, Hauxley NWT, Howdon, Longhorsley, Newbiggin, Plenmeller Common, Spartylea and West Hartford.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Numbers of records and counts were small this February. Budle Bay on 20th held 37 birds (CGK), while all of the remaining five records were of counts in single figures. These were eight at Cocklawburn on 21st (MHu), three at East Chevington on 20th, two at Seaton Sluice on 3rd, an early returning pair at Derwent Reservoir on 16th, staying until 27th at least (IFo) and an undisclosed number at Chevington Burn mouth throughout the month.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

By far the largest count was 410 at Budle Bay on 20th (CGK). About 200 birds were estimated at Goswick Farm as part of a farmland AONB study on 27th (TBr), while 138 were counted at Seaton Point, Boulmer on 14th (NFO). Inland, exceptional numbers were witnessed at Derwent Reservoir with the first ever record for February on 14th and succeeding counts culminating in 138 on 28th (IFo). Hauxley had 104 on 26th (HRS) and there were 102 birds at Cocklawburn on 8th (MHu). Counts of less than 100 came from Big Waters NWT, Bothal Pond (Coney Garth), Branton GP, Catton, Cullercoats Bay, Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Bay, Budge Pools, Druridge Bay, Hadston Carrs, Ebchester (Broad Oak Quarry), Elwick, Grindon Lough, Houghton Strother GP, Howdon, Prestwick Carr, Seaton Sluice Watch Tower, Spartylea, Tweed Estuary, Tynemouth, Marden Farm and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.



A Curlew
Howdon wetland

Colin Bradshaw

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Numbers continue to remain buoyant with the largest count of 32 at Druridge Bay, Budge Pools on 15th (IFo). 28 birds were counted at the same location between 15th-21st (TD, TF/JFa), a number which declined to 20 on 24th (GB). Howdon held 25 on 5th (CB) and 16 were at Holy Is on 19th (SR/AH). All other reports came from the above sites.



A Black-tailed Godwit at Holy Island
by Alan Jack on 4th February

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Typically, counts were relatively large at Lindisfarne NNR but small elsewhere, with Budle Bay holding 125 birds on 20th (CGK). A count of 11 was made at Berwick North Shore during a WeBS on 15th (TBr). Only two more records were submitted, both of singles: one in the Tweed Estuary on 9th and the other at Budle Bay on 24th.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Much lower numbers were reported this month, the highest count being a 'personal best' for the observer of 47 at Budle Bay on 20th (CGK). Cresswell Pond attracted 30 on 15th (TB) and ten were at Stag Rocks on 24th (TRD/JD). Two to six were at Cullernose Point, North Shields Fish Quay and the River Tweed Estuary.

January correction- 170 at Brierdene should be 17.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

No counts were received from Budle Bay which had held over 300 in January. The only reports were 13 at Seaton Sluice on 13th (SSWT), five at Fenham-le Moor on 24th (TRD/JD) and one at Druridge Pools on 15th and 24th (GB/IFo).

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

A wintering bird at Druridge Pools was noted on four dates during the month (IFo/IRD/TF/JFa).

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

The wintering flock at Druridge Bay remained with a maximum of 71 at East Chevington on 6th (STH). In the north, the highest number was 35 seen on a WeBS count at Berwick North Shore on 15th (TBr), 17 were at Cocklawburn on 8th (MHu) and 16 were at Berwick Little Beach on 28th (MHu). Seaton Sluice had 20 on 3rd (TRD/JD) and ten were at North Shields Fish Quay on 1st (SRB).

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Ponds in the Druridge Bay area were favoured with 263 at Cresswell Pond on 10th (IRD) and 165 at Druridge Pools on 25th (IRD). The Blyth Estuary continued to hold high numbers with a maximum count of 253 made on 5th (LJM). Elsewhere 120 were at St Mary's Island on 3rd (TRD/JD) and 74 at Berwick Little Beach on 28th (MHu). 29-30 were seen at Berwick North Shore, Fenham-le Moor and Hauxley NWT. One - two were at Castle Island and Derwent Reservoir.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

The regular haunt of Stag Rocks had a minimum of 75 on 23rd (DF). Football Hole (Newton) attracted 21 on 27th (JAR) and 19 were at Cocklawburn on 28th (CH). Other reports were of 13 at Cullercoats on 27th (MN) seven at St Mary's Island (SPP), six at Seaton Sluice on 2nd (SSWT) and two at Berwick North Shore on 15th (TBr).

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

An unusual mid-winter record of a first-winter bird at Fenham-le Moor noted on 9th and 24th (PRM/TRD/JD). It was commented that it was noted since December 2016 but this is the first time details have been received of this bird.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

The regular wintering site of Whittle Dene Reservoirs held a maximum of four during the month (MR/SR/PJA). Singles seen other regular sites were at Blagdon, Haughton Strother GP and Rothbury –Thropton (JD/MR/PCF).

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

The wintering bird at Budle Bay was present throughout the month.

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

A WeBS count on the River Tweed Estuary recorded 153 on 9th (MHu). Cresswell Pond held a maximum of 97 on 25th (IRD) and on the River Tyne, 83 were at Scotswood on 27th and 25 at nearby Elswick on 21st (MH/GB). Cullercoats Bay had 80 on 27th (MN) and 77 were at Hauxley NWT on 26th (HRS). At Berwick, 44 were counted at Little Beach on 28th and 40 at North Shore on 15th (MHu/TBr) and 35 were at Cocklawburn on 8th. The unusually high numbers wintering at Bothal Pond remained with a peak winter count of 22 on 14th (TD). Other records were five on the Black Middens (River Tyne Estuary) and a single remained at Derwent Reservoir until 14th. This the first wintering record in the 52 year history at this site (IFo).

Jack Snipe *Limnocyrtus minimus*

Newburn Riverside was again a regular site with a maximum of four noted on 17th (IFo). Singles were seen at Haughton Strother GP, Holywell Pond, Monks' House Pool and Quarry House Moor.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Two were seen at Longhorsley Moor on 17th (AB/LB) and singles were at Beanley Wood, Branton GP, Holburn Woods (Belford), Holy Island ('in-off' during a strong easterly wind) and Howick.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Some high counts were made this month with 72 at Backworth on 4th (CGK). The wintering flock remained at Newburn Riverside with 61 on 17th (IFo) and 59 were at Callerton subsidence area on 13th (MH). Other significant groups were 32 at Haughton Strother on 20th (MR), a maximum of 22 at Arcot Pond on 26th (STH) and 20 at Druridge Pools on 15th (IFo). One to six were seen at Bothal Pond, Branton GP, Cresswell Pond, Elwick, Goswick, Grindon Lough, Longhorsley Moor and West Ord (Berwick).

Auk *sp*

The largest movement was 150 N in one hour on 7th (SSWT).

Razorbill *Alca torda*

Counts of ten came from Cheswick and eight at Bamburgh Stag Rocks on 15th (MSH) with five at Cullernose Point and four at Longhoughton Low Steads on 19th (TRD/JD) and singles elsewhere on two other dates.

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

At least 30 were at Stag Rocks on 15th (MSH) and 20 at Tynemouth on 5th (DRW) with one to two at four other localities. On 28th, using a scope from the mainland, an observer saw many thousands back on the breeding ledges on the Farne Islands with many more birds on the sea and flying in from SE (MSH).

A Guillemot

North Shields Fish Quay

by Alan Jack

**Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla*

The first record of birds returning to the Newcastle City breeding colonies was 23 on the Tyne Bridge on 23rd (DM). Only a single was recorded moving S at Seaton Sluice on 21st (SSWT).

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Three-figure counts of 260-460 came from three Berwick/Tweed Estuary localities on various dates (MHu) and smaller groups of 20-100 were noted at Amble, Arcot Pond, Bothal Pond, Byker, Castle Island, Jesmond Dene, Leazes Park and QEII CP Lake (DM/CDH/MJCo/TD); two Norway-ringed birds - white J72J and white J17T - were at Amble and Druridge Bay CP (PCF).

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

The first record of the year was a single at Football Hole (Newton) on 5th (*per* NNBC).

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

A maximum count of 18 was recorded at Newbiggin on 14th (STH) with 17 there on 21st comprising ten adults and seven immatures (CH); counts at Spital Point, Newbiggin, where birds were fed regularly on bread, ranged from 15 of various ages on 1st, reducing to seven at the month end (RS). Elsewhere, single adults were seen at Cullercoats Bay, St. Mary's Island, Seaton Sluice and Swallow Pond.

Common Gull *Larus canus*

At Budle Point, 700 were counted on 20th (CGK) and 140 were at Grindon Lough on 15th (MRS). Small gatherings of up to 40 were at Arcot Pond, Byker, Castle Island, Cramlington, Howdon and Killingworth.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

Nine were at Grindon Lough on 15th (MRS), five at Swallow Pond on 27th (GPK), two at Budle Bay CGK) on 21st and singles, mainly from mid-month, at Cramlington, Derwent Reservoir, Ellington, Killingworth Lake, Linton Ponds, Newburn, Newcastle Quayside and North Shields Fish Quay.

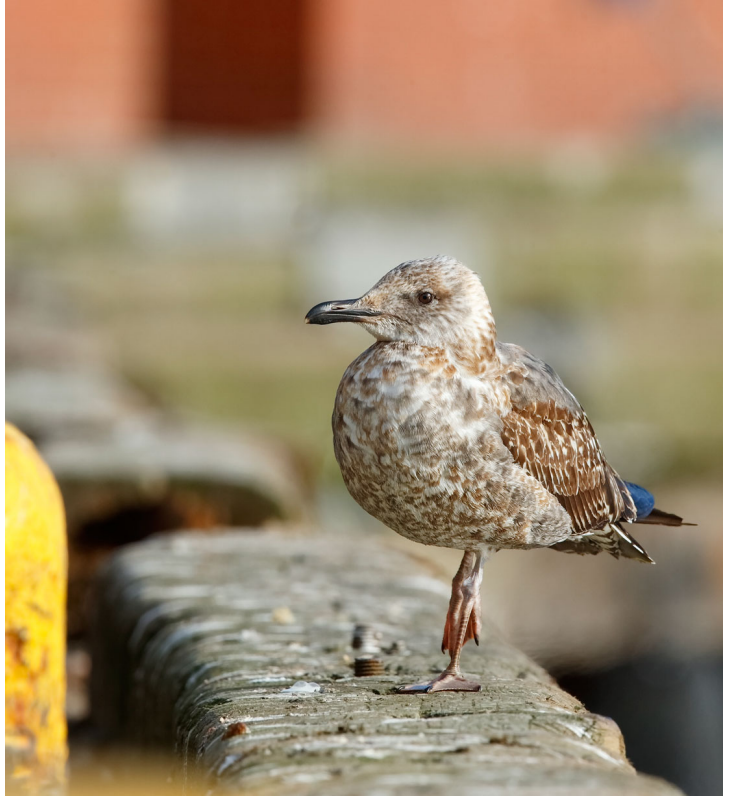
A Lesser Black-backed Gull immature
North Shields Fish Quay
Colin Bradshaw

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argenteus*

Linton Ponds held 450+ on 17th (TF/JFa), 247 came from a River Tweed Estuary WeBS on 9th (MHu), 110 moved W in a loose flock at Haughton Strother GP on 22nd (MR) and 72 were recorded at QE II CP Lake on 12th 9CDH). Groups of 30-50 frequented Blyth and Bradford Kaims with up to ten at three further localities.

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucooides*

One or two immatures were seen by many observers at North Shields Fish Quay from 1st-18th (CB/SRB/TRD/JD/DRW/MN/MSH) and an immature was on the QE II CP Lake on 26th (CDB). The only adult was one making brief appearances at Swallow Pond on various dates up to 20th (SPP/GPK).



An Iceland Gull

North Shields Fish
Quay

by Tim Dean



Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

Three to four immature birds frequented the NS Fish Quay from 1st-6th with a single recorded thereafter to the 18th (CB/TRD/JD/DRW/MN/SPP) and one took bread from a Tynemouth garden on 3rd (CB).



A Glaucous Gull patrols North Shields Fish Quay. Colin Bradshaw

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

The maximum gatherings were 52 at NSFQ on 12th (DM), 13 at Grindon Lough on 15th (PRM) and lesser numbers there of six to nine to mid-month (PRM/MRS). Ten were in the River Tweed Estuary on 9th (MHu), seven at Haughton Strother GP on 2nd (MR) with one to five at four localities elsewhere. An interesting but unfortunate event was a sighting of one in Druridge Bay on 14th which attacked and drowned a Black-throated Diver before proceeding to eat it (JP).

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

A high count of 118 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 7th (MR), 100 around Blyth Town Centre on 27th, 60 at Morpeth on 8th (RS) and present at Jesmond Dene.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

90 on set-aside at Haughton Strother GP on 13th (MR), 14 at Dovecot Farm Stannington on 11th (SJL), six at Big Waters and Ellington on 19th and five at Spartylea and Jesmond Dene. One to four were at eight other widespread locations.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Large counts of 2,000 at Cresswell Pond on 14th, 1,000+ at Haughton Strother GP on 12th (MR), 600+ at Bradford Kairns (nr Lucker) on 15th, 500+ at Holywell Pond on 5th (MSH), 400 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 4th and 300 at Howick on 8th (JAR). One to 80 at four other locations.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Just one report of two seen at Spartylea all month (CT).

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Two sat on consecutive fence posts at Littlehoughton on 9th (SS) and a pair were at garden nest site in Bellingham on 24th (*per* PCF). Singles were at Fenrother, Heavenfield, Howick, Spartylea and Whittle Dene with a road casualty at A69 near Whittle Farm.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Two at Derwent Reservoir on 22nd (IFo) with singles there on two other dates and at Branton on 4th and near Big Waters on 19th.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

A pair called in garden at Stamfordham and at Howick throughout the month (EC/JAR) with two also calling at Spartylea on 1st (CT). Singles were at Bedlington, Beacon Hill (Longhorsley), Gosforth, Ellington and Howick with road casualty near Ridley Hall on 16th.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Three in the air together near the causeway at Holy Island on 16th (JBU), two at Prestwick Carr all month (PCF), Low Newton on 27th and Longhirst on 28th (JAR/TF/JFa) and singles at Longhorsley Moor on 17th and Cresswell Pond on 25th.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Pairs at Gosforth Park NR on 5th (MJC) and Jesmond Dene on 20th (DHWB) with singles at Bothal Pond, Branton GP, Howick Hall, Prestwick Carr, Rothbury, St Mary's Wetland, Warkworth Gut and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Two at Healey on 5th (RB/MB) with singles at Bakethin on 1st (TRD/JD), Dukeshouse (Hexham) on 24th and Gosforth Park NR on 28th (GPK).

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Peak counts of three at West Newbiggin (R. Tweed) on 2nd, Gosforth Park NR on 5th (MJC), Howick on 17th (JAR) and Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 19th (TB). Two were at Alnwick Golf course, Healey, Jesmond Dene, Spartylea and Spindlestone with singles at seven other locations.



A Great Spotted
Woodpecker

Stewart Sexton

Spindlestone.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Big Waters NWT had two birds together on 19th (GB) and two birds were also Berwick on 27th (MJC) and at Derwent Reservoir on 28th (IFo). Single birds were at over 25 sites during the month.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

On the 4th at Ellingham an unsexed bird was seen (JPL) and a male was at Ord Moor (Berwick) on 5th (MHu). Females were noted at Fenham-le-Moor on 9th (PRM), Cullernose Point on 19th (TRD/JD) and near Dyke Neuk (Morpeth) on 28th (JR).

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Three birds, two adults and an immature, were at Budle Bay on 20th (CGK) and two birds were seen there on 15th (NNBC). Pairs were back on suitable territories on 19th and 28th (MH/AA). Single birds were at Cresswell Pond, Cullercoats, Goswick Farm, Grindon Lough, Newcastle Quayside, Prestwick Carr and at St Mary's Island.

Ring necked Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

A large flock of 26 came in to roost at Fenham Hall Drive allotments at 15.50 on 5th but were attacked by three Magpies and a Sparrowhawk flying off west (PJA). 22 were at the same Moorside Allotments location on 12th (TF/JFa) with more than two over the Royal Grammar School on 3rd and a single over on 13th (GB).

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*

The overwintering individual was at Prestwick Carr all month (PCF/STH).

Magpie *Pica pica*

On 23rd 18 were at Howdon (CB), 14 at Tyne Green Hexham on 28th (AJH), 12 at North Seaton Colliery on the same date (RS) and five at Jesmond Dene on 5th with nest building noted from six widespread localities.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Six at Gosforth Park NR on 5th the high count (JBU), three at Borough Woods (Morpeth) on 4th and Ovington on 8th (IRD) with one to two at ten other locations.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

110 fed on horse pasture at Newbiggin on 2nd (RS), up to 60 at Spartylea all month (CT), 50+ at Beacon Hill (Cramlington) on 26th (DM), 35 at Linden Hall (Longhorsley) on 21st (NFO) and 20 at Jesmond Dene on 26th (MJCo).

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Rookery repairs underway at Powburn by 30+ birds (MJC) and 15 at Spartylea on 1st.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Peak count of 53 at North Shields Fish Quay on 12th with 28 there on 1st (DM/SRB). Ten at Beacon Hill (Cramlington) on 26th, eight at Southfield Green (Cramlington) on 19th, seven at Jesmond Dene on 26th and two at Spartylea on 24th.

Raven *Corvus corax*

Two were at Bellshiel Law and Dudlees Farm (Horsley) on 5th (JR) Rothbury on 12th (TRD), Kielder Forest Drive on 17th (TRD/JD) and mobbed by Goshawk at Chatton Moor on 28th (MH/AA). Singles were at Otterburn Ranges, Plenneller Common and West Newton (Reedsford).

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

High count of four at Ponteland Park on 19th, two at Newcastle Civic Centre on 11th (PJA) and Budle Point on 20th (CGK) with singles at 11 other widespread localities.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

At Spindlestone on 6th 22 were trapped and ringed with six re-trapped (BRS), 10 to 19 seen all month at Spartylea (CT), eight at Spital Point on 17th (RS) and four in the observer's garden South Gosforth and in Jesmond Dene (MJCo). Two coming to feeders all month at Quarry Cottage (Spital Point) had distinctive markings (RS).

Great Tit *Parus major*

12 at Letah Wood (Hexham) on 25th (AJH), seven were trapped and ringed with two re-trapped on 6th at Spindlestone (BRS), six at Jesmond Dene on 15th and two in garden at South Gosforth (MJCo).

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

On 6th four were trapped and ringed with two re-trapped (BRS), eight all month at Spartylea (CT), four at Howdon on 6th (CB), with one to three at Jesmond Dene, South Gosforth, Walwick and Wark.

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

Three was the peak at Prestwick Carr on 5th (PCF) and Parish Haugh (Morpeth) on 16th (DF). Two visited garden feeders at Dinnington on 2nd and seen retrieving food cache at Longhorsley on 16th (AB/LB) with singles at six other locations.



A Marsh Tit at a Wallington feeder
28th February
Tim Dean

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

Two at Borough Woods (Morpeth) on 4th (TF/JFa) with singles there and at Linden Hall (Longhorsley), Newton Red House, Rothbury and Wallington.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

A high count of 60 on set aside at Haughton Strother GP on 13th (MR), 39 at Goswick Farm on 27th (TBr), 23 at Elwick on 9th (PRM), 12+ at Cheswick on 15th (MSH), 12 at Lowick on 24th (*per* NNBC) and ten at Hepple Heugh on 19th (MH). 15 reports of one to nine singing birds at widespread locations and minor movement N of one to three birds at five locations.



The sound and sight of spring over Berwick

A Skylark on 28th February by Mike Carr

Shore Lark *Eremophila alpestris*

Only two reports of five on 2nd and seven on 6th (IBDa/KDa/STH) but social media indicates the seven wintering birds remained at East Chevington all month.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

The largest gatherings were 22 at Tyne Green (Hexham) and 21 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), both on 13th (AJH/MR). Eight to 14 were seen throughout the month at Spartylea, 12 were noted at Howick Hall on 10th and ten at Longhorsley on 16th. Elsewhere, six to eight were reported from Branton GP, Hepburn Woods, Newburn, Ord Moor (Berwick) and Spindlestone with two to five at a further 12 localities.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

A single was feeding in the reed bed at Gosforth Park NR on 5th (MJC). In the Tynemouth-North Shields area at least two birds were noted, one of which, reported from 18th-23rd, showed characteristics of the **Siberian race** *P.c.tristis*; it was heard calling on the earlier date (DRW/MSH). Presumably the same bird was seen earlier in the month when it stunned itself on a window in North Shields on 9th (CB).

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

The sole record was a female in a garden at Walker throughout the month (SPP).

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

A large flock of *ca.*100 was at Pegswood on 7th (TRD/JD). In the Newcastle area the largest gathering was 75 at Benfield on 12th, while 15 were at Byker on 8th, eight at Walker on 16th and seven at Gosforth Garden Village on 18th. Flocks of 25-26 at Morpeth on 3rd and 12th were presumably the same birds and 20 were noted at Corbridge on 10th. Elsewhere eight were reported from Hexham on 11th, five were at Lynemouth on 20th and a single by the A69 at Beaufront (Hexham) on 14th.



A Waxwing a Eddie Douglas's garden

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Up to eight were noted at Gosforth Park NR during the month. Five were at Holywell Dene on 28th and at Jesmond Dene on 26th, while four were noted at Arcot Hall GC on 4th. Feeders attracted three at Lambley Viaduct on 14th and three were also at Howick Hall. One to two were reported from Alnwick GC, Chugdon Wood (Ellington), East Ord (Berwick), Healey, Leazes Park, North Shields (Preston Cemetery), Rothbury, Spartylea and Wallington.



A Nuthatch at Spindlestone by Stewart Sexton

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Eight were at Gosforth Park NR on 8th and four at Carey Burn (Harthope Valley) on 4th. Three were reported from Howick Hall and one to two at Chugdon Wood (Ellington), East Ord (Berwick), Hepburn Woods, Holywell Dene, Longhorsley, North Seaton Colliery, North Shields (Northumberland Park), Wallington and Waren Mill.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Nine were counted at Berwick Moor on 19th and five were at Holy Island on 12th. singles also reported from Howdon, Jesmond Dene, Newbiggin and Spartylea.



A Wren at Wallington on 28th February by Tim Dean

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

An estimated 10,000 were noted coming in to roost at Brunswick Village on 17th, with a similar number here on 19th and 23rd (GB). Another large murmuration of 2,500 was seen over Belford on 26th and 1,500 were at Cresswell on 13th, with 700 at the nearby Budge Pools on 15th. A further 700 were at Derwent Reservoir on 16th and three flocks of 200-300 were in the Meldon area on 8th. Up to 18 were reported from Spartylea, four at Tynemouth and two at Jesmond Dene.



A Starling in full voice at Seahouses by Chris Barlow

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Eight (including three singing males) were at Carey Burn on 4th (MJC) and three were at Blanchland on 3rd. Pairs or two were reported from Bywell Bridge, Featherstone, Holywell Dene, Ponteland Park, Ridley Hall (S. Tyne) and Spartylea with singles also at Corbridge, Derwent Reservoir, Fontburn Reservoir, Howick, Redesmouth and Walbottle Dene.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Up to 16 were at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) during the month and five at Spartylea. One to two were reported from a further five localities, including a bird in full song at East Ord (Berwick) on 5th.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

The largest gathering was 340 at Featherstone Castle on 14th (MH/AA). Elsewhere, 180 were noted at Murton on 28th, 150 at Healey on 8th, 100+ at Eshott on 13th and 100 at Prestwick Carr on 4th. Flocks of 60-95 were reported from Cottonshope Head (Otterburn Ranges), Ross and West Holywell, with 35-50 at Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield), Bothal Pond, Linden Hall, Spartylea and Swallow Pond; one to 28 were at a further six localities.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Seven were at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 28th, three of which were singing. Singing males were widespread with four at Jesmond Dene and at Whittle Dene Reservoirs, three at Holywell Dene and Spartylea, two at Blucher and Fulbeck (Morpeth) and singles at Corbridge, Howdon, Longhorsley, Newbiggin, Ross and Woolsington.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

200 at Meldon Stables on 8th was the largest gathering (SJL), followed by 130+ at Swallow Pond on 2nd and 120 at Rothbury on 12th. A flock of 80 was at Bywell on 18th, while 25-50 were reported from Chugdon Wood (Ellington), Eshott, Linden Hall and Low Cocklaw (Berwick). Up to 20 were reported from a further ten localities.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

A total of six were seen in Jesmond Dene on 26th and five were at Blanchland and Whiteadder Water (Berwick) on 3rd and 13th respectively. There were four at Elwick on 9th and two at Castle Island, Healey, Leazes Park and Whitley Bay. Singles were also reported from East Ord (Berwick), Longhorsley, Newburn and Ross.

A Mistle Thrush on 5th February by Eddie Douglas

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

There were 11 at Prestwick Carr on 4th (PCF) and eight were singing at Longhorsley Moor on 17th; one to four were noted at a further four localities.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

The male, last seen in November 2016, was again at St Nicholas's Cathedral (Newcastle) on 3rd (DM).

**Stonechat** *Saxicola rubicola*

Two pairs and a single male were on Holy Island on 12th (ADM). Elsewhere, two were at Bamburgh, Bewick Moor, Cheswick, Cresswell Pond, Hauxley NR, Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal), Prestwick Carr and Quarry House Moor, with singles at Blyth South Harbour, Cullernose Point, Druridge Pools, Howick, Lynemouth Flash and St Mary's Island.

Dunnoek *Prunella modularis*

Up to 16 were counted in Holywell Dene on 20th(ASJ). Five were at Spital Point during the month(RS). Pairs were at five other sites.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

50 at Cullercoats Bay on 17th (and on several other dates) was the month's largest count (MN/ASJ). Elsewhere, around 40 were at Spital Point throughout the month (RS). 30 attended feeders at Battlesteads on 5th (CB). 33 were at Southfield Green (Cramlington) on 26th, with 28 at a roost here on 5th (DM).

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

42 were at Big Waters on 26th (GB), 30 at Branton on 12th and at Holywell on several dates (IBDa/KDa/ASJ). 28 were seen at a roost at Waren Mill on 20th (CGK). One to 15 were noted at 12 further sites.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Three were in Jesmond Dene on 5th (MJCo). Pairs noted at Holywell Dene and Spital Point throughout the month and single birds at 19 further sites, including two sites in Newcastle city centre.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrelli*

30 were feeding near St. Mary's Hospital (Stannington) on 11th (SJL). 12 were noted at Howick on and 11 at St. Mary's Island on several dates (JAR/PCF/ASJ). Two inland at Derwent Reservoir on 18th were quite unusual in winter(lfo).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

50 at Tyne Riverside Park on 17th was a large count for February (IFo). 35+ were at Elwick on 9th (PRM). A northerly movement of 22 birds occurred on 19th at Bewick Moor. Three birds were back on breeding territory at Ford Moss by 26th (MJC). 12 were at Big Waters on 19th and five to six were at St. Mary's on 10th (ASJ). Two were at Grindon on 3rd and two at Fenham Le Moor on 9th (PRM).

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

15 were found on Holy Island on 12th over around half the island's shoreline(ADM). Nine were at Berwick on 17th and at St Mary's the following day (MJC/ASJ). Four were at Cullercoats Bay on 17th and at Tynemouth Haven on 18th (MN/ASJ). One to two were at three further sites.



A Rock Pipit eyes Mike Carr at Berwick on 17th February

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Feeders at *Northumberlandia* (Cramlington) attracted birds with 40 seen on 1st and 20+ on 4th (TB/JBu). 30 remained from last month in Holywell Dene on 9th (MNC). Five to 12 frequented Spartylea all month (CT). Birds were present at garden feeders at Beaconhill (Cramlington) throughout the month, with a maximum of 12 on 6th (STH). Ten were noted at feeders at Wallington on 28th and four at Stamfordham all month (TRD/JD). One to four were at three further sites during the month.



A Brambling at Wallington on 28th February by Tim Dean

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

80 were at Park Farm (Whalton) on 8th was the largest recorded gathering this month (SJL). 50 +were at Howick on 4th (SS). 31 at Meldon on 8th (SJL). 25-28 were seen at Longhorsely on 6th, Budle Bay on 20th and Haughton Strother on 22nd (AB/LB/CGK/MR).



A cock Chaffinch at Wallington on 28th February by Tim Dean

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Sixteen in a flock was a good count at Bewick Moor on 9th, with eight at Ford Moss on 26th (MJC). Six were at Letah Wood on 2nd and Prestwick Carr on 5th. One to five were at fourteen further widespread sites.



A male Bullfinch, 24th February at Branton GPs by Mike Carr

Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*

A large roost was noted at East Ord (Berwick) on 18th of 105 birds (CH). 18 were at Linden Hall on 17th (NFO). One to seven were seen at five other locations.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

A large flock of 180 were seen at Tranwell Woods on 5th (SJL). Around 120 were counted at Goswick Farm on 27th (TBr). 40+ were at Elwick on 9th (PRM). One to 30 were noted at a further ten sites during the month.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

The wintering flock at East Chevington Burn mouth peaked at around 100 on 15th (TB/ASJ). 55 were at Beal on 21st and 50 at Fenham le Moor on 9th, 23 being observed there on 7th (JDL/IBDa/KDa/AA). Six birds were at Cocklawburn on 8th (MHU).



A Twite from the Chevington Burn mouth flock by Chris Barlow

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis caberet*

15 were noted at Hepburn Woods on 26th (MJC). A maximum of nine was counted on 13th as birds came in to garden feeders all month at Rothbury (TRD/JD). One to two were at three other sites.

Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

20 were at Hepburn Woods on 26th (MJC). One to eight were at nine further sites included singing males.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

64 visiting feeders at East Ord was impressive on 16th (MHU). Two to 30 were noted at a further seven locations.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

60 were at Haughton Strother on 26th (MR). 50+ were seen at Big Waters on 10th and Hepburn Woods on 26th (SPP/MJC). Two to 30 were seen at ten other sites during February.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

The month produced only two sightings with two at St Mary's on 19th (SPP) and a single at Berwick on 17th (MJC).

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

The largest flock this winter was found at West Kyoie on 16th of 200+ birds (JBU). 90 were at Callerton on two dates (MH). 80 at Longhorsley on 6th (AB/LB). 26 at a Felton farm on 27th (NFO). One to 20 were seen this month at a further five sites including Airy Holm Reservoir. Three singing males were noted at Cramlington and Holywell in the final week (STH/ASJ).

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

30 fed in stubble at Callerton on 10th (MH). 15 were at Low Newton on 27th. Ten were at Big Waters feeders on 26th (GB). Two to six were at six other sites.

ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN

Escapes

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*

The individual from last month was again seen this time at Ross on 9th (PRM), Budle Bay on 20th (CGK) and Harper's Heugh on 28th (MSH).

Muscovy Duck *Cairina moschata*

One was noted at Tyne Green, Hexham on 5th (PJA).

Hybrids

Gyrfalcon x Saker *Falco Rusticolus x Falco Cherrug*

The escape at large since September 2016 at least was seen again at North Shields Fish Quay on 3rd (TRD/JD). The parentage is of some debate as these captive birds are widely cross-bred in falconry.



The Gyr/Saker escape at North Shields Fish Quay on 3rd February by Tim Dean

Tufted Duck x Pochard *Aythya fuligula x Aythya ferina*

A drake was again seen with one at Gosforth Park on 5th (MJC).

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

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Alnwick Wildlife Group, Bamburgh Ringing Station, Berwick Wildlife Group, Hauxley Ringing Station, 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), Steve Laing (Red Grouse to Black-necked Grebe), Trevor Blake (Honey-buzzard to Crane), Tom Brewis (Avocet to Godwit), Clive Hampton (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 Jack (Dunnock to Corn Bunting), Kathy Evans (WeBS Coastal Counts) and Steve Holliday (WeBS Inland Counts).

Data Manager is Tom Brewis
 Thanks to David Sanders of NNBC for providing data.
 Proof reading was by Mike Smith.
 Mail distribution by Paul Stewart.
 Edited by Steve Barrett NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.com

RECORD SUBMISSION

Please email records for the month to ntbc.records@googlemail.com
 Please email for a copy of the standard spreadsheet and other details.

Location names and grid references: Please use of standard location names and include grid references as this 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

Annual membership costs £10 for a junior, £30 for an individual, and £32 for a family.
 For membership enquiries please contact ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

If you internet bank you can pay online: please include your name in the ref. It is helpful if you email me to let me know when you've made the transfer ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

If you decide to set up a standing order please date the first payment at least a fortnight from your posting date to allow time to process with the bank. You can also set up your standing order directly with your bank if you wish; just let me know.

Finally, if you know anyone who might like to join NTBC please pass on the club information - new members are always welcome.

Jo Bentley - Hon Treasurer

NTBC WEB SITE

The club website is an excellent online resource for anyone interested in birds. There are:

Photo Galleries – Here you can view hundreds of photos of birds from Northumberland, Newcastle and North Tyneside. Members are encouraged to contribute their own photos. Simply send them to galleries@ntbc.org.uk

Sightings – Here you can view reports of birds recently reported in the County. Anyone who would like to contribute and post sightings to this page, please email sightings@ntbc.org.uk Please note this section is moderated, so there may be a short delay before your record appears.

There are also County Checklists, Records Committee updates, Information on important Surveys, useful articles and reports on Bird ID and Overseas Birding Trips....and much more...

Please submit any other new content for the website to the main club email address at ntbcorg@gmail.com
 New content such as Birding Trip Reports etc. is always welcome and very much appreciated.
 To find out more please visit www.ntbc.org.uk

COUNTY RARITIES 2016

The NTBC website www.ntbc.org.uk has now been updated to reflect the current position on County Rarities seen in recent years. By clicking on the 'Members Resources' tab & then 'Recording' the links to PDF copies are displayed in the top right hand corner. These were updated as a result of the County Records Committee meeting on 11th February 2017. These 'Work in Progress' spreadsheets show all the county rarities that have been reported in the last five years. All these species shown need documentation in order for the sighting to be included in the Annual Report 'Birds in Northumbria'. If any record shows as 'Awaiting Description' then the County Recorder would very much welcome a report. Forms can be downloaded via the link 'Submission Form for Rare & Scarce Species' which is also on the Recording page.

Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) - 2017

The BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey is the main scheme for monitoring the changing fortunes of the UK's common breeding birds, generating population trends used to set conservation priorities.

Methodology

After an initial reconnaissance visit in March or early April, to set up the transect route, two morning bird recording visits are required: **Early** - April/May: **Late** - late May/ June, at least four weeks apart. All birds seen and heard should be recorded, as well as habitat details. There is also an optional mammal section to this. The object is to visit the site at the same time, or as close as possible, each year, to enable comparisons to be made.

Last year, in the Northumberland and Tyneside area, 77 1km squares were surveyed and due to this success rate, BTO has 'rewarded' us with ten extra squares to add to our list. The squares are chosen randomly and cover all available habitats, reflecting the percentage of land use in the area and, so far out of 107 assigned to us, 88 have been allocated. A few of the remaining ones are presently 'uncoverable' due to terrain, access or cattle problems, so these are not shown in the list below, and one or two have become vacant due to the 'retirement' of previous surveyors.

The list of vacant 1km squares has approximate locations, with the grid reference of the bottom left-hand corner (SW).

BBS Vacant Squares 2017	
Grid Ref. SW Corner of 1km square	Approximate Location
NT7108	Deerlee Knowe
NT7400	Redesdale Forest
NT9040	Heaton Moor, nr Crookham
NU0242	Haggerston
NU1108	Edlingham
NU2127	West of Long Nanny
NY7994	West of Blackburnhead, Kielder Forest
NY9294	Dunshield, NW of Elsdon
NZ0096	Harwood Forest
NZ0383	Old Deanham, nr Wallington
NZ0790	Broomfield Fell, Netherwitton

For further information please contact Muriel Cadwallender, BBS Regional Organiser, email - tomandmurielcadwallender@hotmail.com and visit www.bto.org/bbs

FAREWELL ERIC, WE'LL ALL MISS YOU

On my bookshelf, within reach of my desk, is a 24-page closely typed A4 report entitled *The Birds of Prestwick Carr*, published in the old Tyneside Bird Report for 1969, forerunner of our very now familiar *Birds in Northumbria*.

Although his name doesn't appear anywhere on the report, it was written by Eric Meek who died suddenly on February 16th, aged 69, in a devastating blow to his family and all the friends who knew him in Northumberland and later in Orkney.

That early report was his prize winning entry in an essay competition for young people organised by the Natural History Society for Northumbria (NHSN). It detailed the known natural history of the Carr from the Roman period and was one of the first of many papers which flowed from Eric's pen and later typewriter and computer keyboard. He provided a whole series of carefully researched and well argued papers for various publications, including *British Birds*, demonstrating his incredibly wide knowledge and close attention to detail of birds and wildlife in general.

Eric, a long-time club member, probably remembered by many for this trademark shock of red hair and matching beard, died in Aberdeen Royal Infirmary five days after suffering a stroke. Sadly, Eric collapsed only hours after he and wife, Aileen, met up with old friends John and Marian Ginnever to discuss their next overseas birding trip. John will also be remembered by older members from his heavy involvement in the earlier days of the club. Eric was brought up in Ponteland and seems to have been a birder from his very early years of going on his bike to Prestwick Carr. He qualified as a geography teacher and taught at Heaton in Newcastle. He then lived in Dinnington or, as he put it, in easy reach of the Carr. He was heavily involved with the club and its work and also in ringing. He was a leading member of the Northumbria Ringing Group, spending his weekends and holidays in spring and summer working in particular on Merlins and other raptors and on Goosanders. During autumn all his spare time was spent at Hauxley Ringing Station catching migrants.

In 1972 he took a year's leave to work as assistant warden at Fair Isle Bird Observatory. He then returned to teaching as head of department in Newcastle. During this period he and Bryan Galloway wrote *Northumberland's Birds*, published in three parts by the NHSN. It completely updated the county's ornithological record under the eagle eye of its editor, Grace Hickling. But the irresistible lure of the Northern Isles remained. It resulted in him applying for and getting the post of RSPB officer for Orkney in 1981. He, his first wife, Chris, also a teacher, and children, Terry, then seven and Sally, five, moved to Stenness.

Home was a converted chapel which they rename Symril, Norse for his favourite species, the Merlin, and a nod to Orkney's rich Viking heritage. Eric himself with that hair and beard bore more than a passing resemblance to Erik the Red. In his new post he was responsible for the RSPB's reserves. It was a time of rapid expansion, particularly on Orkney's extensive moorlands. It wasn't always popular with the farming community and at one stage an effigy of Eric was burned as a protest. However, he rode out the controversy and won over most of those he met. In his busy role he still managed to find time for the real work of surveys, ringing and other studies and added Orkney's thriving Hen Harrier population to his workload. I have very happy memories of visiting harrier sites with Eric, inevitably accompanied by one of his succession of beloved black Labradors, left tied up at a safe distance. Then, of course, he was a generous host and great company around the table or at the local pub with talk ranging from birds (inevitably) to folk music, history and rugby.

In 2000, the family's world was turned upside down when Chris was diagnosed with leukaemia. She battled for nine months but sadly passed away in January 2001. Five years later Eric married Aileen who worked for the RSPB as the Orkney office secretary and field teacher, promoting wildlife to children. Eric retired in 2012 and recently he and Aileen had moved to Aberdeenshire although he still returned to Orkney to continue his field work on Merlins and harriers. Although his first love for birds remained, Eric became fascinated by botany and regularly led field trips on the Scottish mainland and further afield. His last official function in Newcastle was a lecture on the botany of Orkney to members of the NHSN in autumn 2015. He and Aileen then came to visit Hazel and I on Holy Island where we were joined by Bryan and Margaret Galloway for the inevitable walk out birding followed by a great evening in the Crown & Anchor.

Many tributes have been paid. Martin Auld, regional director of RSPB Scotland, said; "His encyclopaedic knowledge of Orkney and, in particular, its birds was highly valued by everyone. He always sought to promote the case for conservation and his wise and calm advice on conservation issues made them accessible and inspiring to others."

Close friend David Kirkland said that Eric, Terry and Sally coped bravely with Chris's premature death. "Some years later when Eric married Aileen their new happiness was a pleasure to perceive and a joy to share. How could we know it would be so brief?"

Eric's funeral, attended by 400 people, took place at Stenness on February 24 where John gave a touching eulogy. Aileen said that Eric would not just be greatly missed by his family but by many people whose lives he touched with his great love and enthusiasm for the natural world, particularly its birds and flora.

Eric was buried alongside Chris in the local cemetery overlooked by those moors he had loved so much and within sight and sound of the sea. A memorial service is to be held in Aberdeenshire at a date and venue to be announced.

IAN KERR



Eric with a Barn Owl at Hartburn in 1980

COASTAL WeBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND	RP	R. Pover	MLC	M. L. Cadwallender/ MGA	M. G. Anderson	SP	S. Pamaby
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Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

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

Bulletin 2017 No 3

MONTHLY SUMMARY MARCH 2017

10th May 2017



CONTENTS

WeBS Inland –

An appeal by the NTBC Records manager – please see page 90.

CLASSIFIED LIST HIGHLIGHTS

Tundra Bean Goose	Up to three in Hoppen Kiln / Bradford Kaims area up to 12th.
Barnacle Goose	Still 615 in Budle Bay area.
American Wigeon	Drake present at Grindon Lough up to 8th.
Ring-necked Duck	Immaculate Drake at Hauxley and East Chevington from 18th.
Ferruginous Duck	Drake first seen at Gosforth Park on 15th was also seen at other sites.
Pochard	High count of 28 at Bothal Pond.
Scaup	Up to 19 at East Chevington.
Pacific Diver	The highlight bird stayed until 16th at East Chevington or Druridge Bay CP.
Sooty Shearwater	Unusual single past Seaton Sluice on 23rd.
Great White Egret	Single at Druridge Pools from 26th.
Red-necked Grebe	Up to three off Bamburgh and Cheswick until 11th. Now a scarce winter visitor.
Little Stint	The wintering bird at Fenham le Moor was again seen on 23rd.
Great Grey Shrike	One present again all month at Prestwick Carr.
Shorelark	Group of seven at East Chevington again remained all month.
Black-throated Thrush	Superb find of a male at Prestwick Carr on 20th.
Water Pipit	New county record total of five seen together at Druridge Pools on 25th and 26th.
Corn Bunting	One at Newton on 5th was a pleasant surprise as now a real rarity in county.

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 first autumn meeting will be on Thursday September 14th .



The popular drake Ferruginous Duck by Jack Bucknall
SilverInk ponds on 30th March

FIELD TRIPS**21st May 2017 Geltsdale**

Meet the warden at 9 am in the car park at NY588584.

24th June 2017 NightjarsContact Steve Anderson seaswan@btinternet.com**CLASSIFIED LIST****Mute Swan** *Cygnus olor*

Peak counts were 92 at Wark on Tweed on 4th (JR), 73 at QEII CP Lake on 12th (CDH), 58 at Tweedmouth Dock on 13th (MHu), 52 at Killingworth Lake (LJM), and 34 feeding in a kale field at West Ord (MHu). Counts of ten to 17 came from Capheaton, Cornhill on Tweed, East Chevington, Howdon, Longhirst Flash and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and five to seven at Linton Ponds and Newcastle Leazes Park.

A Mute Swan
Howdon Wetland
Colin Bradshaw

**Whooper Swan** *Cygnus cygnus*

Well-reported. Record numbers (for March) were at Seaton Sluice, with a total of 284 N between 10th-22nd (SSWT). N/NW movement was also evident at a range of sites between 10th-31st, with totals of 50-80 at Druridge Pools (NFO), Hartley Bay (SPP), Little Mill (SW), Prestwick Carr (PCF) and St Mary's (AC), and 20-46 at Cramlington, Cresswell Pond, Ellington, Hepple, Seahouses and Tynemouth. East Chevington held peaks of 135 on 10th (TRD) and 198 on 18th (TF/JFa), 124 were at Derwent Reservoir on 18th (a record count for the site in a 52-year history; IFo), 110 at Beal on 14th (IK), 60 N at Stag Rocks, plus a further 41 on the sea, on 26th (RB/MB), and 62 at Longhirst Flash on 12th (TB). Groups of 12-32 were at Bakethin Reservoir, Castron, Catcleugh and Derwent Reservoirs, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Bay, East Chevington, Fenham-le-Moor, Gosforth Park NR, Grindon Lough, Longhirst Flash and Low Newton. Two to eight were also at Greenlee Lough, Linton, Rayburn Lake, Rockcliffe, Swallow Pond, Wark on Tweed and West Ord.



A Whooper Swan flies over

Tim Dean at East Chevington on 25th March

Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*

Two, of the Tundra *rossicus* race, were at Hoppen Kiln on 6th (GPK) and three were at nearby Bradford Kaims on 12th (MSH).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Light northerly movement involved 160 at Cheswick (DF) and 70 at Seaton Sluice (SSWT) on 31st, 150 at Tynemouth on 5th (CB/SSt), and 22-60 at Cocklawburn, East Chevington, East Ord, Ord Moor, Spittal Bay, Wooler.

About 3,800 were at Doddington on 7th (DF), 1,064 were at Budle Bay on 13th (DF), 600 near Earsdon on 15th (MSH), 200-379 at Bradford Kaims, East Chevington, East Holywell, Newton Pool and Whitley Bay Farm, 150 at West Stobswood, and 30 at Cresswell Pond.

White-fronted Goose *Anser flavirostris*

Eurasian *albifrons* race birds involved 26 at Cheswick on 2nd (MHu), 13 at Low Newton scrape on 1st (DF), ten at Budle Bay on 12th (MSH), seven at Grindon Lough on 2nd (PRM), and an injured bird at Druridge Pools between 5th-24th. One, of the Greenland *flavirostris* race, with an injured wing was at Druridge Pools on 24th (STH).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

One to two flew N at Seaton Sluice and Whitley Bay. Budle Bay attracted a peak of about 365 on 27th (DF), 220 were at Caistron on 11th (JD), 214 at Cheswick on 2nd (MHu), 104-141 at Bothal Pond (TD), Earsdon (MSH) and East Holywell (MNC), 50-90 at Cocklawburn, Derwent Reservoir, Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother GP, Linton Ponds and Woodhorn Flashes. Counts of 28-30 came from Bradford Kaims, Hauxley Reserve and Prestwick Carr. Three neck-collared birds at Derwent Reservoir on 22nd had been ringed at Blondous, northern Iceland on 18th July 2016 (IFo).

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

130 flew W at Wark on 1st (PRM), and 12 S at Seaton Sluice on 29th (SSWT). Peak counts were 153 at Grindon Lough on 2nd (PRM), 100 at Bothal Pond on 24th (TF/JFa), 57 at Widdrington Moor Lake on 3rd (STH), 36 at Swallow Pond (SPP), 22-25 at Castle Island, Linton Ponds, Newcastle Leazes Park and West Ord, and 17 at Plenmeller Common. One to eight were also at Dinnington (nesting pair), Hauxley Reserve, Killingworth and QEII CP Lakes, Prestwick Carr, Silverlink CP, Spartylea and St Mary's Wetland.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Three flew S at Tynemouth on 31st (SPP). Numbers at Budle Bay included a peak of 615 on 6th but declined to 56 by 27th (DF *et al.*). Singles were also at Hauxley Reserve and QEII CP Lake.

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

About 100 pale-bellied *hrota* race birds were still at Holy Island on 31st (IK) and 76 were in Budle Bay on 13th (DF) but only one on 14th (MSH).

Dark-bellied *bernicla* race birds involved 170 at Holy Island on 4th declining to about 60 by the end of the month (IK).

Four un-raced birds flew N at Boulmer on 27th (STE).

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

A total of 33 flew N and five S at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT) and three flew N at Whitley Bay (IJ). Budle Bay attracted 125 on 12th (MSH), 64 were at the Blyth Estuary on 26th (LJM), 42 at Bell's Farm, Cresswell on 24th (MSH), 22 at Howdon (CB), and 11-19 at the Coquet Estuary, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Hauxley Reserve and Widdrington Moor Lake. Four to seven were also at Cresswell Links, West Stobswood and Whitley Bay, and two at Cocklawburn and Lynemouth Flash. Up to 15 were at the Elswick-Scotswood area and one to two at Prestwick Carr and Spillers Mill (Byker), while further inland one to three were at Grindon Lough and Haughton Strother GP.



Two Shelduck
Howdon Wetland by Colin Bradshaw

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

Five (four drakes) flew over Ridley Stokoe on 28th while a further two pairs were on the River North Tyne (TB/ADM/HG), three (two drakes) were at Wark on 12th (JR), and single pairs at Redmire and Glen Ridley on 25th (JR/NA). A female was disturbed from a tree hole (a potential nest site?) at Low Angerton on the River Wansbeck on 30th (IRD).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

One to three flew N at Seaton Sluice and Whitley Bay during the month. At least 600 were at Cresswell Pond on 1st (IFo), 369 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 7th (MR), 350 at Hoppen Kiln Flash on 6th (GPK), 300 at Grindon Lough (PRM), 200-255 at Big Waters, Bothal Pond, the Coquet Estuary, Derwent Reservoir and Low Newton, and 110-196 at Branton Middle Steads, Caistron, Druridge Pools, Hauxley Reserve and Linton Ponds. Counts of 26-62 came from the Tweed Estuary and Widdrington Moor Lake.

American Wigeon *Anas americana*

A drake was at Grindon Lough between 2nd-4th (JBU/AJH/PRM).

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Two flew S at Seaton Sluice on 31st (SSWT). The largest counts involved 26 at Bothal Pond on 12th (TF/JFa), 24 at Cresswell Pond on 9th (STH), 22 at Caistron on 11th (JD), 18-19 at Druridge Pools (PRM) and Hauxley Reserve on 18th (HRS), and ten to 11 at Lynemouth Flash and Marden Quarry. Six to nine were at Arcot and Swallow Ponds, Bolam Lake, Howdon, Longhirst Flash and West Stobswood Pool, and four at Low Newton scrape. One to two were also at Brenkley, Big Waters, Haughton Strother GP, QEII CP Lake and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Teal *Anas crecca*

Peak counts were 301 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 1st (MR), 212 at Budle Bay on 13th (DF), 175 at Druridge Pools on 30th (PRM), 115 at Grindon Lough (PRM), and 50-76 at Branton Middle Steads, Prestwick Carr and West Stobswood Pool. Counts of 23-43 came from Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Bothal Pond, Elswick, Lynemouth Flash and West Hartford, with ten to 17 at Cresswell and Linton Ponds, and Craggy Bog.



A drake Teal at Howdon Wetland by Colin Bradshaw

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Moderate numbers included 72 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 7th (MR), 66 at Derwent Reservoir on 3rd (IFo), 57 at Haughton Strother GP on 22nd (MR), 56 at the Tweed Estuary (MHu), and 12-27 at Bothal, Cocklawburn and Linton Ponds, Felton, Newcastle Exhibition and Leazes Parks, QEII CP Lake, Silverlink CP and Widdrington Moor.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Up to three (two drakes) were at Druridge Pools between 26th-30th (TB/TF/JFa *et al.*), and singles were at Airy Holm Reservoir (IFo), Budle Bay (GPK), Grindstonelaw (ALT) and Stobswood (TF/JFa).

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

A pair found at Arcot Pond on 17th (PRM) were again present on 20th (SPP), 25th (DM) and 27th (LJM), and a pair was at Gosforth Park NR on 24th (AJ).

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Seven flew N at Annstead on 20th (DF). A peak of 34 was at Druridge Pools on 27th (TRD), 19 were at Monks' House Pool on 15th (DF), 14 at Low Newton scrape on 31st (TRD/JD), and five to eight at Arcot Pond (DM/LJM), Bothal Pond (TF/JFa), Budle Bay (CGK), Monks' House Pool (MSH) and Prestwick Carr (PCF). One to two were also at Cresswell Pond, Grindon Lough and Haughton Strother GP.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Bothal Pond held a peak of 28 on 5th (TF/JFa), 21 were at Holywell Pond on 19th (SPP), 13 at Killingworth Lake on 5th (SRB), ten to 11 at East Chevington (DF) and Swallow Pond (GPK), and three to five at Arcot Pond and East Chevington. One to two were also at Derwent Reservoir, Grindon Lough, Hauxley Reserve, Ladyburn Lake and Linton Ponds.

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*

A drake was discovered at Gosforth Park NR on 16th (PJ) and was also present on 23rd (IJ). It was also noted at Killingworth Lake on 24th (JBu/AC) and Silverlink CP on 29th-30th (SRB/IF/PRM *et al.*).



The drake Ferruginous Ducks
Top: at Silverlink by Colin
Bradshaw
and right: at Gosforth NR
showing its wing pattern by
Tim Dean

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*

A drake was at Hauxley Reserve on 18th and was noted regularly there until 31st (HRS *et al.*). It was also noted on nearby East Chevington north pool on 25th where it was seen to display briefly to Tufted Ducks (TF/JFa *et al.*).



The drake Ring-necked Duck at Hauxley NR.
Top: by Mike Carr on 29th March and bottom: by Jack Bucknall on 30th March

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Peak counts were 77 at Killingworth Lake on 6th (LJM), 43 at Ladyburn Lake on 1st (IFo), 37 at Swallow Pond on 25th (GPK), 30-34 at East Chevington (PRM) and Haughton Strother GP (MR), 20-28 at Arcot, Linton and West Allotment Ponds, Grindon Lough, Ladyburn and QEII CP Lakes and Newcastle Leazes Park and ten to 16 at Big Waters, Bothal Pond, Howick Hall and Newcastle Exhibition Park

Scaup *Aythya marila*

Good numbers at East Chevington north pool included peaks of 19 on 19th (AJR) and 16 on 25th (PJA), while five to 14 were noted regularly between 2nd-27th. Four (one drake) were at Killingworth Lake on 25th (PRM) and one to two between 17th-24th (AC/PRM *et al.*), three at Linton Ponds on 5th (TF/JFa), three at Bothal Pond on 18th (TF/JFa) and one there on 24th and 29th (TD/IFo/NFO), a pair at Holywell Pond on several dates between 1st-11th, with one remaining until 19th (GPK/SPP), and a pair at Swallow Pond on 25th (GPK *et al.*). One was on the River Tweed near Horncliffe on 4th (CH). Singles were also at Spittal Bay on 7th (MHu) and Holy Island on 25th and 31st (IK/NFO).



A drake Scaup at Killingworth Lake
by Jack Bucknall
23rd March

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

A total of 80 flew N and 40 S at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT) and seven N at Whitley Bay on 23rd (IJ). Small numbers involved 59 at the Blyth Estuary on 26th (LJM), 52 at Cocklawburn on 28th (MHu), 37 at St Mary's Island (MSH), 23 at Blyth Harbour, and 14-15 at North Blyth and Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay). Five to nine were at Newbiggin and the Tweed Estuary.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

121, including many drakes, were at Stag Rocks on 7th (MH/AA) and 100-120 were noted there on 4th (DF); about 100 were at Cheswick on 10th with 32 there on 11th (DF), and 16 displaying at nearby Cocklawburn on 15th (MHu). Singles were also at Holy Island and, more unusually, on the freshwater Bothal Pond on 24th (TB/TD *et al.*).

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

At Seaton Sluice, 63 flew N and 23 S during the month (SSWT), and a total of 24 moved N and 14 S at Whitley Bay (IJ). 600 were at Cheswick Sands on 10th (DF) and 800 on 19th (CH), 86 at Cocklawburn on 28th (MHu), 30 at Stag Rocks (RB/MB), 15 at North Blyth and three to six off Druridge, Low Newton and Newbiggin.

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

Three flew N at Seaton Sluice on 22nd (SSWT), and one flew N at Berwick pier on 14th (MHu). Two were off Druridge on 10th (TRD), with three on 18th (TF/JFa) and four (three drakes) on 30th (PRM/NFO). More unusual was one (an immature drake) in Blyth Harbour on 24th (AC).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

A peak of 57 was at East Chevington on 29th (IFo), 55 were on the River Tweed near Coroner's Meadow on 16th (CH), 30-32 at Grindon Lough on 13th (MRS) and West Ord on 19th (MHu), 20 at Castle Island (STH) and New Water Haugh (MHu), and 11-16 at Branton GP, Bolam and QEII CP Lakes, Swallow Pond and West Ord. Counts of five to nine came from Bothal Pond, Caistron, Hauxley Reserve, Killingworth Lake, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Widdrington Moor, and three to four from Big Waters, Cresswell Pond and Ladyburn Lake. Display was noted at the regular breeding site on 24th.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Eight flew N and three S at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT). Peak counts were 16 at Budle Bay on 28th (MJC), 12 off Cambois on 13th (CH), 11 displaying at East Chevington on 19th (AJR) and eight at the Blyth Estuary (LJM), Druridge Pools (PRM) and Stag Rocks (RB/MB). Three to four were at Ladyburn Lake and the Tweed Estuary, and one to two at Cresswell Pond, Low Newton, Whitley Bay and Widdrington Moor.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Five flew N and three S at Seaton Sluice between 16th-31st (SSWT), and one to two flew past Tynemouth and Whitley Bay. The largest counts involved 14 at West Ord on 27th (MHu), nine at the Tweed Estuary on 9th (MHu), and six at Haughton Strother GP (MR), Longhoughton Quarry (BS) and New Water Haugh (MHu). Three to four were found at Branton GP, Bywell and Wark, and one to two at Airy Holm Reservoir, Bolam Lake, Bygate Farm (Upper Coquetdale), Caistron, Castle Island, Cocklawburn Pond, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, College Valley, Haydon Bridge, Jesmond Dene, Newcastle Leazes Park and Redesmouth.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Between one and three were reported from five locations during the month.

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

Very high numbers were reported from the Allendale Common with birds calling and displaying (MSH). 24 were counted at Broadstruther in the Cheviots on 23rd (JD) and 12 were displaying at Hawsen Burn on 24th (MJC). Five, two pairs and a male, were seen at Ottercops Moss, a gratifying sight on degraded moor, and two were on Plenmeller Common.

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

Five males were at two leks and six greyhens were at two leks on Hexhamshire Common on 25th (STE). Six were 'lekking' at dawn on 26th on Allendale Common (MSH). One to four birds were also seen at five other places in the south Northumberland uplands. At Carrshiels only one bird was seen on 26th March, thought to be due to over-grazing by livestock (MSH).

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Six birds were seen at Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay) on 5th (MNC) and also at Beal on 25th (NFO). Four were at Whittledene on 1st and three at Humshaugh on 6th. One to nine were noted at nine other places.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Four were at Plenmeller Common on 23rd and three males were at Spartylea all month (CT). A male at Tynemouth on 25th was the first here since 2014.

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

The monthly total from Seaton Sluice was 77 - 45 N and 32 S (SSWT), well above the monthly average for March. At Rockcliffe 15 passed on 23rd - 8S, 6N (IJ). 14 were on the sea with scoters on 15th at Cocklawburn (MHu) and on 29th, 11 were on the sea at Blyth Bay (SSWT). Nine were offshore at Seaton Sluice on 27th (CGK/GPK) and eight were offshore at Druridge on 30th (PRM).

Elsewhere one to six were recorded at nine places at other places along the coast.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

Singles were at Low Hauxley on 3rd (BS), Newton on 7th (TRD/JD), Cheswick on 11th (AJ) and Rockcliffe on 23rd (IJ).

Pacific Diver *Gavia pacifica*

The county first from January remained at East Chevington from 1st to at least 15th.

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

Three were off Cocklawburn on 10th (AC) and singles at Stag Rocks on 2nd and at Cheswick on 10th. No movements were noted at SSWT during March.

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

44 were at Cullernose Point (Craster) on 7th (TRD/JD). 20 were at Rockcliffe by 12th (IJ) and by 13th eight adults were occupying cliff nest sites at Newbiggin (CH).

A returning Fulmar

Tynemouth

8th March

Alan Jack



Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

A bird flew N at Seaton Sluice on 23rd. This was noted as extremely unusual, however there have been four other east coast reports in the first three months of 2017 (SSWT).

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

Two to five were reported passing on four days. A light passage was seen at Rockliffe on 21st and 22nd (IJ). Up to three were sighted elsewhere along the coast.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

33 were at Blyth Harbour on 5th (STH), 28 inland at Derwent Reservoir on 19th (IFo) and 23 on the River Tweed on 31st (CH). Elsewhere one to eight were reported at various locations, inland and at the coast. Two *sinensis* birds were in the Blyth Estuary on 3rd (AJ). Seaton Sluice reported no significant movements (SSWT).

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

100 were off Stag Rocks on 3rd (JBu) and 40 were there the following day (AJ). One to 14 were at five other places during the month. Seaton Sluice Watch Tower recorded a monthly total of 17 N and 9S 32 S – “very low”.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Numbers of this recent arrival in Northumberland increased as the month progressed. Four were at Fenham le Moor and at Holy island Causeway on 23rd, three were at Cramlington on 24th and Druridge NR on 30th. One to two were reported throughout the month from about 16 locations.

Great White Egret *Ardea alba*

A single bird was seen on several days in the Druridge Bay area from 26-30th. (TF/JFa/TB *et al.*).

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

The peak counts were 19 at Howdon on 16th (CB) and 11 at River Tweed Estuary (Mhu).

One to five were at ten other other locations.



A Grey Heron

Howdon Wetlands

Colin Bradshaw

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Well reported this month from many widespread sites. Maximum numbers were over ten at Arcot Pond on 17th (PRM). One to 2 were seen at some 24 other places. Display and mating and trilling was reported at numbers of locations.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps Cristatus*

Birds started to arrive at their breeding sites in earnest from the start of the month. Some good counts were made. Nine were at Derwent Reservoir on 26th (IFo) and seven were at East Chevington by 12th (TF/JFa) and seven were also at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 15th (MR). Three pairs at Druridge Pools on 10th were the first of the year there (TRD). One to six were recorded at some 11 widely dispersed water bodies through the area. An adult in breeding plumage was off Holy Island on 31st (IK).



Two Great Crested Grebes from Killingworth Lake.
Above: by Alan Jack and below: by Colin Bradshaw

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

One was at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 2nd (AC) and also on 3rd (JBu) and another was at Cheswick on 10th (AJ).

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

Numbers increased from last month with eight off Holy Island on 4th (IK) and seven present at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 4th (DF), and two were there the previous day (JBu). Two were at East Chevington on 12th - one on north pool and one off the burn mouth (TF/JFa). In addition, singles were seen on 18 days at four locations.

Red Kite *Milvus Milvus*

Only two records this month, both involving birds at Derwent Reservoir. Two birds were present on 17th and a single bird there on 21st (lfo).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

On 30th a male and female were at Druridge Pools for a few minutes before heading towards East Chevington (PRM). Possibly the same male was seen at East Chevington also on the 30th (STH) and 31st (JBU).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

A male and female were seen at one locality throughout the month but never at the same time (IK). A pair was seen hunting at another site on 12th (JBU). A single male and a single female were observed at two other confidential sites on 5th and 21st (MH/AA).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Two males and a female were at Harwood forest on 12th (JBU), a pair was calling on territory there on 15th (STE) and two females were there on 15th (MH). A pair was watched displaying at another site on 5th (MH). Single birds were at Grindon Lough hunting wildfowl on 2nd (PRM), Harwood Forest on 7th (STH), Kielder Water on 16th and an adult was at another site on 18th (MH).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Three birds were in the air together at Arcot Pond on 24th (LJM). Single birds were noted at 14 sites including a male trapped and ringed at Bamburgh on 27th (BRS)

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

At Middlemoor (North Charlton) 12 birds were in the air simultaneously on 5th (MH), eight birds were at Broomley Woods (nr Stocksfield) on 26th (IK) and six were at West Ord (Berwick) on 6th (MHu). Five birds were at Harwood Forest on 7th (STH) and 13th (MJC) and at Carey Burn (Harthope Valley) on 24th (MJC). One to four birds were at over 40 sites.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Four birds were heard squealing at Gosforth Park NR on 16th (TRD) and two were heard or seen at Prestwick Carr on 18th (PCF) and East Chevington on 29th and 30th (IRD/STH). Single birds were either seen or heard at Backworth, Big Waters NWT, Druridge Pools, East Chevington NWT, Holy Island and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

At Castle Island 21 birds were seen on 12th (STH) and 10 were at Hauxley NWT on 18th (HRS). Seven birds were at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 8th (DM) and at QEII CP on 12th (CDH) and six were at Arcot Pond on 25th (DM). One to four birds were at several other locations including a bird calling in flight as it flew over Wark at 23:15h (PRM).

Coot *Fulica atra*

36 adults and one brood of three chicks were at Swallow Pond (Wallsend) on 31st (SPP). 17 were seen at Bothal Pond on 24th (TD), 16 were at Arcot Pond on 18th and 25th (DM), 15 at Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 9th (DM), 14 at QEII CP on 12th (CDH), 13 at Killingworth Lake on 17th (PRM) and 11 were at Haughton Strother GPs on 24th (MR). One to nine birds were at eight sites during the month.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

With the exception of two records from the Blyth Estuary on 15th (BS) and 26th (LJM), all records were from Cresswell Pond NWT. The first sighting, of two birds on 8th (MSH), was eleven days earlier than last year. Numbers quickly built up with five recorded by 17th (PRM), seven by 20th (MSH) and ten by 30th (MSH).

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Large numbers of birds deserted their winter coastal habitats and moved inland. The largest count reported was at Branton GP where 165 birds were counted on 13th (TRD/JD). Other large counts were 160 at Castron on 11th (JD) and 60 at Derwent Reservoir on 5th which had built up to 98 by 22nd (IFo). The largest coastal counts were of 85 at Budle Bay on 14th (CGK) with 60 at Hauxley NWT on 28th (HRS). Counts of 20-50 came from Cocklawburn, Cresswell Pond, Humshaugh (Haughton Strother), Lynemouth Flash, North Blyth staithes, the Tweed Estuary, Spartylea and Whittle Dene Reservoir.

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

380 birds were counted at Backworth on 3rd (GPK) with 200+ at Longhirst Flash on 6th (MSH) and 160 at Prestwick Carr on 4th (PCF). Further inland, 122 were seen at Derwent Reservoir on 22nd (IFo) and 121+ were at Grindon Lough on 2nd (PRM), a number which had reduced to 78 by 16th (AJR). Prestwick Carr held 95-105 on 21st (AJH,PRM) and 68 were counted at High Acton (Allendale) on 10th, mixed in with a pre-breeding flock of Lapwings. Counts of 30-50 were made at Burnt Ridge (Hexham), Doddington, Haughton Strother GP, Rowley Burn (Hexhamshire) and Whinshiels. Smaller counts came from East Chevington and Stewart Shiel / MOD Range.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Birds were seen at three sites. Six birds were present in the Blyth Estuary on 3rd (AJ) and two birds were in the Tweed Estuary up until 19th (MHu). On 23rd Derwent Reservoir had only its second spring record (IFo).

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Nearly all records appeared to be of birds now in breeding areas with the largest at Allendale (Acton Moor), where on the 5th ca. 500 were counted (ASJ). A count of 200 was made at Derwent Reservoir on 3rd, a number which had declined to 103 by 24th (IFo). Other counts of 100 or more were made at Grindon Lough (ca. 140 on 2nd, PRM), Houghton Strother GP (120 on 6th, MR) and Prestwick Carr (100 on 3rd, PCF). A count of 93 was made at Widdrington Moor on 4th (AWG). Other

counts came from Allendale (High Knock Shield), Big Waters NWT, Bothal Pond (Coney Garth), Branton GP, Grasslees, Haltwhistle, Hauxley NWT, Holy Island, Howdon, Laverock Hall Farm (Blyth), Plenmeller Common, Spartylea and Wark (North Tyne).

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

The first sighting this season was made on 24th at a coastal site (ADMc/STH). Two further reports were received, both from inland sites on 28th and 29th (AA, MR, respectively). All records were of single birds.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

The largest count was of 34 in the Blyth Estuary on 3rd (AJ). The only other double-figure count was of 15 at Longhirst Flash on 5th (TF/JFa). Other counts came from Chevington Burn beach, Cocklawburn, Cramlington (Northumberlandia), where a pair were displaying (STH), Cresswell Pond NWT, Derwent Reservoir, East Chevington, where a pair were displaying on the beach (TRD), Houghton Strother GP, Holy Island and Low Newton.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Although the number of reports from inland sites continued to increase from last month, coastal sites still commanded the larger counts throughout March. The largest count was made at Holy Island on 25th, where 312 birds appeared to be migrating north (MJC). Other large counts were a minimum of 265 at Budle Bay on 13th (DF), 240 at Yarrow Slake (R Tweed) on 9th, which represented the largest recorded count for that site (MHu), 172 in the Coquet Estuary on 7th (AWG) and 100-120 at Druridge Pools between 24th-26th (STH, TB). The biggest inland count was at Derwent Reservoir on 2nd with 122 birds (IFo). Grindon Lough had a count of 64 on 2nd (PRM) and Prestwick Carr had 60-62 on 20th/21st (PCF, PRM). Other, smaller counts came from Allendale, Cocklawburn, Cresswell Pond NWT, East Chevington NWT, Grasslees, Hauxley NWT, Hawsen Burn, Hexhamshire Common, Langley Dam, Longhorsley, Monks' House Pool, Plenmeller Common, Spartylea, St Mary's, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Widdrington Moor.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Reports came from five sites with 29 at Coquet Estuary the largest count (7th, AWG). Other counts came from Howdon (26 on 19th, CB), Druridge Pools (25 on 10th, EC/JSB), Warkworth (28 on 17th, MH) and Holy Island (9 on 20th, AWG).

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Four birds were seen in the Tweed Estuary on 1st (MHu) and three were seen in the Blyth Estuary on 26th (LJM).

February bulletin correction The Godwit photograph was of this species.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

The highest numbers recorded were 37 at Newbiggin on 1st (STH) and 32 at Calot Shad (River Tweed Estuary) on 10th (TRD). Cresswell Pond attracted a maximum of 20 on 10th (TRD) and nearby at Bell's Farm, 17 were counted in fields on 24th (MSH). Elsewhere, 19 were on North Blyth Staithes on 13th (STH) and one-six were at Cocklawburn, Hauxley NWT and Newton during the month.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

The largest group by far was 122 on the River Coquet Estuary on 5th (AWG). Eight were at the River Blyth Estuary on 26th (LJM), three at Hartley Bay on 10th and a single at Druridge Pools on 1st and 5th. A single dropped into Derwent Reservoir during a heavy shower on 19th (IFo).

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

The wintering bird at Druridge Pools was noted on many dates from 1st-30th.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

The largest count this winter came from Boulmer Haven with 189 seen on 18th (SW). The Druridge Bay flock remained with the highest count coming from Chevington Burn with 105 seen on 25th (MH). Other notable counts were 70 at Sandham Bay (Holy Island) on 4th (IK), 69 at St Mary's Island on 20th (ASJ) and 67 at Cocklawburn on 24th (MHu). On 1st, 42 were at Hauxley Beach (IFo) and 35 at Newbiggin (STH).

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

The Druridge Bay area remained favoured with the maximum count received being 200 at a high-tide roost at Druridge Pools on 10th (EC/JSB). Lesser numbers were seen there during the month with a decrease to only five by 28th (TRD/JD). Cresswell Pond held 60 on 10th and 28th (TRD/JD) and 36 were seen in fields at nearby Bell's Farm on 24th (MSH). Away from Druridge Bay, an impressive 171 were at the River Coquet Estuary on 5th (AWG) and 30 at Low Newton Scrape on 7th (TRD/JD). Three were at the River Tweed Estuary and Hauxley NWT. Singles were seen at inland at Prestwick Carr, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Widdrington Moor from mid-month.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

The flock at Stag Rocks which has been present since November 2016 reached a maximum this month of 94 on 7th (MH/AA). Blyth Harbour held 31 on 5th (STH), 24 were at Cheswick on 30th (CH) and a maximum of 17 at Tynemouth on 27th. 12 were at Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) on 30th (IJ) and 11 were at Seaton Sluice on 21st (SSWT). Singles were at Hauxley and Football Hole (Newton).

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

The wintering bird at Fenham-le Moor was reported on 23rd (MJC).

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

An early migrant appeared at East Chevington on 19th (AJR).

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Only one bird was reported from Whittle Dene Reservoirs compared to four in February (MR). Singles remained from last month at Blagdon, Haughton Strother GP and Rothbury-Thropton (MR/PCF/JD).

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

The wintering bird at Budle Bay was reported until 14th. Two were reported on 13th (DF).

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Birds were seen in greater numbers and at more locations than last month and there was movement noted back to inland breeding grounds. A high-tide roost at Cresswell Pond attracted 200 on 10th (TRD) and this flock was probably responsible for a count of 108 feeding in fields with other waders at nearby Bell's Farm on 24th (MSH). Other high counts were from the River Tweed Estuary where 167 were seen on a WeBS survey on 9th (MHu), 115 at Budle Bay on 14th (CGK), 85 at Newbiggin on 1st (STH) and 61 at the River Coquet Estuary on 5th (AWG). At North Blyth Staithes, 49 were counted on 13th (STH) and the maximum at Hauxley NWT was 39 (HRS). Elsewhere, 30 were at Druridge Pools on 30th, 14-18 were at Cocklawburn Pond and on the River Tyne at Elswick and Newburn. The group that has wintered at Bothal Pond reduced from 20 on 12th to one on 24th (TD). Return to upland breeding areas was evident with 22 displaying males at Acton Moor (Allendale) on 25th (ASJ) and 17 at Grindon Lough on 31st (PRM). The single wintering bird at Derwent Reservoir increased to 11 by 24th (IFo). Two pairs were at High Knock Shield (Allendale), three birds at Prestwick Carr, two were displaying on Hexhamshire Common and one at Plenmeller Common.



A Redshank by Mike Carr
Stag Rocks on 2nd March

Jack Snipe *Limnocyrtus minimus*

Three remained faithful to Newburn Riverside (IFo) and singles were at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) on 5th and Grindstonelaw on 25th (both ALT).

Long-Billed Dowitcher

Limnodromus scolapaceus

A single bird was reported from Cresswell Pond on 21st (RB/MB).

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Birds were more visible this month with two at Grindon Lough on 2nd (PRM) and two roding at Harwood Forest on 1st (STE). Singles were inland at Broadstruther (Cheviots), Sinderhope (Allendale), Hexhamshire Common (roding) and Wark. Near the coast, singles were at North Shields on 23rd and Rising Sun Country Park (Wallsend) on 28th (both KWy).

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Well reported this month with wintering flocks still in evidence and birds were also returning to breeding areas. Numbers at Druridge Pools increased from 20 on 1st to 51 by 28th (IF/PRM/TRD *et al.*). Backworth attracted 49 on 27th (CGK), 43 were counted at Haughton Strother GP on 12th (MR), 18 at Branton GP and Newburn Riverside and 16 were at Cresswell Pond. At potential breeding localities, 11 displaying birds were counted on Acton Moor (Allendale) (ASJ), four birds were 'drumming' on Burnt Ridge (Hexham) (PRC) and two pairs were displaying at Allendale Common, Carrshield and Coalcleugh on 26th (all MSH). Two 'drumming' birds were seen at Plenmeller Common (CT) and Broadstruther (Cheviots) (JD). One-six were counted at Bothal Pond, Castron, Grindon Lough, Hauxley NWT, Prestwick Carr and Rowley Burn (Hexhamshire).

Auk *sp*

At Seaton Sluice, apart from 100 S in one hour on 28th, few were recorded (SSWT). On 25th, around 2,000 were seen from the mainland in four flocks of 500 at Coquet island, moving N in large flocks over the sea (MH).

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

'Thousands' were reported to be back on Coquet Island on 31st (JBu).

Razorbill *Alca torda*

Three reports only, comprising 12 at Saltpan Rocks (Cocklawburn) on 28th (MHu), five at Stag Rocks on 7th (MH/AA) and a single moving N at Rockcliffe on 22nd (IJ).

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

Ten were at Bamburgh Stag Rocks on 26th (RB/MB), four to six at Berwick Pier and Cocklawburn (MHu) and a single at Cullernose Point (TRD/JD)..

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Singles were recorded at Seaton Sluice on 22nd, the first recorded sighting of the year (SSWT) and offshore in Druridge Bay on 30th (PRM).

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Passage movements S of 150-200/h were recorded at Rockcliffe (IJ) and Seaton Sluice (SSWT) on 12th and 28th respectively with lighter passage N noted on other dates at Berwick Pier on 14th (Mhu) and Rockcliffe (IJ); a continuous movement along the river was observed at Howdon on 24th (CB). Gatherings of 300-400 were at Cullernose Point and Tynemouth at the month end (TRD/JD/SPP) with a total of 260 at nesting sites on and around the Tyne Bridge (Newcastle) on 16th (DM).

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Foraging in roadside fields between Widdrington and Red Row, 3,200 were counted on 6th (CB), 800 were on fields at Bell's Farm (Cresswell) on 8th (MSH), 330 in the Blyth Estuary on 6th and a similar number in the Linton Pond area on 12th (CDH). Smaller flocks of 50-100 were recorded at Bothal Pond, Byker, Exhibition Park, Gosforth GC, Grindon Lough, Jesmond Dene and in the River Tweed Estuary.

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

A winter-plumaged bird flew N offshore at Seahouses on 20th (DF) and two adults moved S offshore in Druridge Bay on 30th (PRM).

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Newbiggin Bay and nearby Spital held a maximum 14 up to 16th, around half of which were adult birds (CH/RS/STH). Elsewhere, one or two were noted at Boulmer, Cresswell, the River Blyth Estuary and Seaton Suice (AJ/BS/SSWT/TF/JFa) and a pair prospected a potential nesting site, with Black-headed Gulls, at a confidential site (TRD/JD). No records came after mid-month, possibly indicative of an early departure to their summer haunts.

A summer plumage
Mediterranean Gull Newbiggin
Jack Bucknall
5th March



Common Gull *Larus canus*

A number of large migratory flocks were noted with a maximum of 2,485 coming in to roost on Kielder Water on 16th with 1,000 in pasture fields at Whittonstall on 23rd (IFo), 800 at Haughton Strother GP on 13th (MR) and 400 at Heddon on the Wall (IK). Elsewhere, smaller gatherings of up to 200 were recorded at Bellingham, Espley Hall, Grindon Lough, West Ord and West Woodburn.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

Very well reported as numbers of returning birds increased throughout the month, from 2nd onwards, and a monthly total of 20 was recorded passing Seaton Sluice from 9th-31st (SSWT). A maximum count of 30 came from Cramlington, Plessey Checks on 30th (TB) with 13 at Newburn (IFo) on 20th, 12 at Budle Bay on 14th (CGK), ten at Byker (DM), nine at Branton GP (MJC), eight in Jesmond Dene (MJCo) and seven at Grindon Lough (MRS). One to six were recorded at a further 16 widespread inland and coastal localities.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argenteus*

Gatherings of 388 and 170 were in the River Tweed Estuary and at West Ord on 8th and 17th respectively (MHu) with 87 at Haughton Strother GP on 27th (MR) and up to 50 in a high-tide roost, present throughout the month, at Byker (DM). One to six were at five other localities.

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoideus*

An adult was at Swallow Pond on 4th (GPK) and an immature remained at the North Shields Fish Quay on 5th (JBu). An inland record came from Grindstonelaw, near Ryal, of a near-adult bird on 29th (ALT).

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

An immature remained at the Fish Quay until at least the 5th (DRW/JBu) and, possibly the same individual, was recorded at St Mary's Island on 28th (AC).

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

In the River Tweed Estuary, 17 were present on 9th (MHu) and a maximum of 15 were noted at Grindon Lough (PRM) with one in the Byker high-tide gull roost (DM).

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

Around 45 at North Seaton during the month (RS).

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

On 20th 90 were at Haughton Strother GP (MR), 48 at Howdon on 19th (CB), three pairs at Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 21st and Coalcleugh on 26th (LJM/MSH). Five were at Windmill Lane (Cramlington) on 17th and Jesmond Dene on 26th, four at Longlands School (Ord) on 6th and one to two at 11 widespread locations.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Highest count was about 100 at Crookham on 4th (JR), 50 at Weetslade Colliery CP on 5th (PJA), 11 at Jesmond Dene on 26th and one to eight at Spartylea all month with a single N over the sea at Seaton Sluice on 25th.



A Woodpigeon up close at Gosforth NR by Mike Carr on 20th March

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Five were at Dinnington on 3rd (PCF), two at Spartylea all month and at High Heaton on 20th (CT/CDH).

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

All reports were of single birds at Spartylea on 1st, West Hartford on 3rd and 5th, Portgate (Corbridge) and Greenfield on 10th, Humshaugh on 16th and 18th and East Chevington on 25th. There were four road casualties on the A1 at West Cawledge, Blagdon, Stannington Station and A69 near Mowden Hall.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

A pair were vocal from 10th at Shiremoor (CGK) and two were at Derwent Reservoir on 20th (IFo) with a single there on 26th and at Druridge on 28th and 30th.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Two avoided the box but were around the garden all month at Stamfordham (EC), called at Spartylea all month and at Howick from 13th (CT/JAR). Females on eggs were found at Branton on 2nd, Low Hedgeley on 14th, Doddington and near Wooler on 24th (PHa /AHa). Singles were also at Acomb, Bedlington, Gosforth Park NR, Haughton Strother and Wark,

Long-eared Owl

A bird called mid-morning at a confidential site on 11th (GPK *et al.*) and roosted in the village garden (Holy Island) on 3rd (IK).

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Up to seven were at Widdrington Moor Lake on 4th (TB/AWG) with one to two remaining all month. A peak count of five at Prestwick Carr on 6th (STH/PCF) with four on 10th (EC/JSB) and two to three regularly in the first half of the month. Two were also at Longhirst Flash on 12th, Cresswell Pond on 25th and Holy Island on 28th with singles at all these locations and Blackhill, Druridge Pools, Grindon Lough and Lucker Moor.



A Short-eared Owl at Widdrington Moor Lake
Tim Dean on 10th March

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Four were found at two locations in Jesmond Dene on 26th (MJCo). All other reports were of singles at East Chevington, Gosforth Park, Haughton Strother, Howick Hall, Linton Ponds, Low Angerton, Ouseburn, Plessey Woods, Prestwick Carr, Wallington and Weetslade Colliery CP.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Calling all month at Prestwick Carr (STH/PCF) and from 10th at Rothbury (TRD) with singles at Kyloe Woods on 3rd, Broomley Woods (near Stocksfield) on 9th, Ellington on 12th, Tyne Riverside (Newburn) on 20th, Gosforth Park NR on 22nd and 29th, Harthope Valley on 24th, Letah Woods (Hexham) on 25th and Ridley Stokoe on 28th.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Two pairs were in dispute at Gosforth Park on 2nd (MJC) and four at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 18th (TB), three at Jesmond Dene on 15th (MJCo). Two were at Spartylea all month, at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 18th, Holywell Dene on 20th, Cottingburn Wood (Morpeth) on 26th, Plessey Woods CP on 28th and Wark on 31st with singles at a further six locations.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Three birds were observed at Widdrington Moor Lake on 6th (MSH) and two birds were at Brier Dene (Whitley Bay), East Chevington NWT, Haltwhistle, Harwood Forest, Prestwick Carr and at Widdrington Moor Lake. Single birds were at 20 sites.

A Kestrel

Tynemouth

Alan Jack

7th March

**Merlin** *Falco columbarius*

A male, probably a first winter, flew SW near Snods Edge on 1st (IFo) and other singles were seen at Widdrington Moor Lake on 3rd (STH), Lorbottle on 4th (PHa/AHa), between Budle and Bamburgh on 19th (DF) and at three inland sites (MH/AA).

Gyr Falcon type *Falco sp*

A bird was noted at Longhirst Flash on 5th (TF/JFa).

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

On 4th a pair was noted at Widdrington Moor Lake (TB/AWG), a pair was near Belford on 14th and 20th (DF) and a pair displaced a Merlin *Falco columbarius* from a crag at an inland location on 21st (MH/AA). Single birds were at Alnwick, Backworth, Cresswell, Druridge, Fenham-le-Moor, near Haltwhistle, Hauxley beach, Humshaugh, Prestwick Carr and at St Mary's Island and at an inland site.

Ring-necked Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

Single birds fed on blossom heads at Melton Park / Black Plantation (Gosforth) on 19th (PJA) and one was at Wallsend Metro on 24th (CGK).

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*

One remained at Prestwick Carr all month (PCF *et al.*) and was heard singing on 25th (MSH).

Magpie *Pica pica*

A Darras Hall garden held 14 on 25th with 12 at Howdon on 13th (CB), five at Jesmond Dene on 5th with a pair nesting at Kenton. One on 17th and two seen at Spartylea on 24th & 25th were the observer's first since October 2015 (CT) and one at the Snook (Holy Island) regarded as rare at this location (MJC).

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

A group of five at Humshaugh on 6th was unusual (SRB) with three at Howick on 26th (JAR). Two were at Morpeth on 1st, Howick on 6th, Prestwick Carr on 11th, Backworth on 14th, Arcot Pond on 18th, Mitford on 24th and Plessey Woods CP on 28th. Singles were at five other locations.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

At Spartylea 25 to 40 were seen all month (CT), 21 at former Spillers Mill site (Byker) on 20th (DM), five at Jesmond Dene on 26th and present at Hartford Hall (Bedlington).

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Nest counts of 55 at Holywell Dene on 19th (SPP), 20+ at Langley Dam on 25th (PRM), 14 at Mitford on 24th (STH), six at Swallow Pond and five near QEII CP Premier Inn (Ashington) with 15 birds present there. Two flew North over sea at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower on 20th.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Visible movement N over the sea with 34N and 1S between 13th and 31st. 34 searched for shellfish at Calot Shad (R.Tweed Estuary) on 3rd (MHu), a peak of 30 at Spillers Mill site (Byker) on 20th building from 12 there on 1st, 14 at Beacon Hill (Cramlington) on 18th (DM) and eight at Winter's Gibbet (Harwood Forest) on 13th (MJC). One to five were at Jesmond Dene, Longhorsley Moor (two active nests), Spartylea and Plenmeller Common.

Raven *Corvus corax*

Two at Winter's Gibbet (Harwood Forest) on 7th (STH), Featherwood (MoD Range) on 19th (JR), Harthope Valley on 24th (TRD/JD), Bell's Valley (Wooler) on 27th (DF) and Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) on 30th (ALT). Singles were west of Cullernose Point, Harwood Forest, Hexhamshire Common, Quarry House Moor and Wark (N.Tyne).

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

A fall of migrants towards the end of the month with 108 found at Holy Island on 25th and 21 on 28th with 12 at Hepburn Woods on 23rd (MJC), around 10 at Arcot Pond on 17th (PRM) and seven at Ellington on 25th (TB). One to six were at 12 other widespread localities.



A Goldcrest eyeballs Mike Carr

Holy Island on 25th March

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

At Spartylea five to 12 were seen all month (CT), with two nest building in a nestbox at Gosforth Garden Village on 5th and at Jesmond Dene on the same date.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Feeders attracted 11 at Prestwick Carr on 8th (PCF), eight seen all month at Spartylea (CT) and seven at Jesmond Dene on 5th (MJCo).

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Many were noted singing at Broomley Woods (Stocksfield) on 9th (IK), six seen all month at Spartylea (CT), four on feeders at Tynemouth on 15th (CB), three at Jesmond Dene on 26th and one singing at QEII CP on 12th.

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

A peak of four at Prestwick Carr 11th and two visited feeders at Dinnington regularly during the month (PCF). Singles were singing at Holywell Dene on 1st, Green Letch (Bedlington) on 3rd and Linden Hall (Longhorsley) on the same date.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

Two were present throughout the month and noted singing at Linden Hall (Longhorsley) on 11th and 3rd (NFO), two in display or aggression chasing at Colliersdean (Widdrington) on 14th (MH/AA) and at promenade (Morpeth) on 21st (IRD) with single at Letah Wood (Hexham) on 28th.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Counts of 79 on 25th and 41 on 28th at Holy Island many of which would be migrants (MJC). 20 were at Chew Green (Upper Coquetdale) on 11th (JR/NA), ten were singing at Town Moor (Newcastle) on 28th (DM), nine at Whittle Dene on 1st (MR) with five at Backworth and Winter's Gibbet (Harwood Forest). One to two were at eight widespread localities.

Shore Lark *Eremophila alpestris*

Seven remained at East Chevington on 2nd and 12th (SPP/TF/JFa) dropping to four by 18th.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

An early report of 20+ at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 4th (M.Potts) with the next being seven at East Chevington, five at Druridge Bay and three at Rayburn Lake on 12th (TF/JFa/TB/AJ) with four to nine at East Chevington till 18th. Peak count was 30 moving through Killingworth Lake on 31st (JBu) with 13 at Haughton Strother on 29th, seven at Swallow Pond on 31st (SPP) and six near Coroner's Meadow (R.Tweed) on the same date. One to three were at eight locations between 20th & 31st.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Widely reported again this month with seven noted at Hepburn Woods on 23rd and three pairs in the Harthope Valley on 24th (MJC). Five were at Castle Island and two pairs at Leazes Park on 1st, and four were at Spartylea throughout the month. In addition to three at Jesmond Dene, pairs and singles were reported from a further 16 localities including nest-building pairs at Longhorsley and Waters Meet (Hexham).

Chiffchaff *hylloscopus collybita*

Well reported this month with 93 records received from 70 localities. Passage birds on Holy Island included three on 19th and 13 on 25th and 28th (IK/MJC). A high total of 13 came from Branton GP on 29th (JD), while up to nine were heard singing at Arcot Pond by the end of the month. Eight singing birds were at Ha'penny Woods (Blyth) and counts of seven came from Bedlington (Green Letch), Harthope Valley, Hepburn Woods and Holywell Dene. Six were singing at Plessey Woods and five at Cramlington (Valley Park), Jesmond Dene and Swallow Pond; five together in a tree at Howick Hall on 19th may have been recently arrived migrants. Elsewhere there were numerous reports of up to four singing males.

Willow Warbler *hylloscopus trochilus*

Early returning birds were all in song, with singles at Thrunton Woods on 29th (MJC), Bedlington on 30th (MJC) and Swallow Pond on 31st (GPK *et al.*).

Blackcap *ylvia atricapilla*

The female at Walker, reported last month remained in the area throughout. Further singles were noted at Bedlington (Green Letch), Guyzance Mill, Hexham and Spartylea between 28th and 31st.

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

Early in the month there were flocks of 45 at Forest Hall on 8th (AC), 21 at Tynemouth on 5th (KWY/JBu), 13 at Cramlington (Northburn) on 7th (LJM) and ten at Gosforth Garden Village on 3rd (EFC). Towards the end of the month, 12 at Wallsend on 25th had declined to six by 27th (AC/DRW) and four were at Howdon on 27th (CB).

A Waxwing

by Jack Bucknall

Tynemouth



Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

A total of four were noted in Jesmond Dene on 5th (MJCo). At Gosforth (Black Plantation) there was a singing bird and a pair prospecting a nest hole on 19th, while three were singing in Plessey Woods on 28th. A pair at Spartylea throughout was nesting by the end of the month and two were also reported from Chugdon Woods (Ellington), Ha'penny Woods (Blyth) and Leazes Park. Further singles were noted at Holywell Dene, Mitford, Northumberlandia (Cramlington), Seaton Delaval and Wark (North Tyne).



A Nuthatch in Holywell Dene by Alan Jack on 1st March

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Four were singing at Gosforth (Black Plantation) on 13th, one of which was excavating a nest crevice (PJA); a pair was noted nest building at Spindlestone on 14th and nest building was also reported from Humshaugh. Counts of three came from Harthope Valley, Hepburn Woods and Jesmond Dene, while two were at Howick, Mitford and Wallington and singles at Derwent Reservoir, Gosforth Park NR, Holywell Dene, Northumberland Park (North Shields), Spartylea and Stamfordham.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

A total of 12 were noted at Prestwick Carr on 11th (PCF) and five were singing in the Alwin Valley (Upper Coquetdale) also on 11th. Elsewhere, one to three were reported from Hawsen Burn, Jesmond Dene, Kenton and Spartylea.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

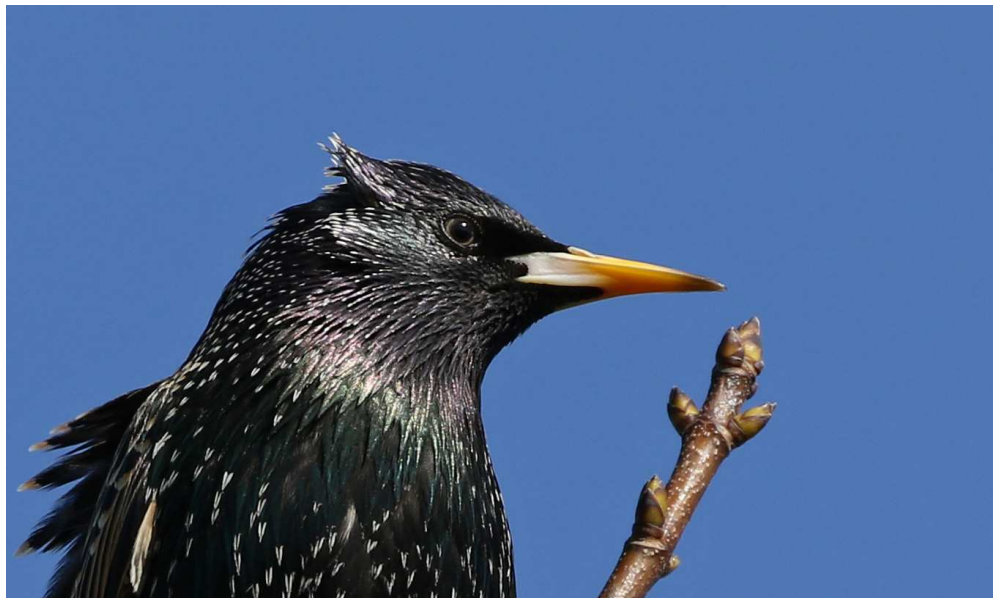
There were 1,000 at Prestwick Carr on 4th (PCF), with flocks of 300 at Lynemouth Flash on 28th and 200 at Blyth South Pier and Newbiggin on 20th and 29th respectively. About 40 were at Siloans Farm (MoD) on 19th and six to 18 were noted throughout at Spartylea.

A gleaming Starling

Holy Island

Mike Carr

25th March



Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

A total of 11 nests were located in Coquetdale by 18th (JR/NA) and three singing birds were at Carey Burn (Harthope Valley) on 24th. Pairs with nests were reported from Cottonshopeburnfoot (Redesdale), Elsdon and three North Tyne sites, while pairs were also noted at Bywell Bridge, Holywell Dene, Spartylea and West Dipton Burn (Hexham). Elsewhere there were reports of singles at College Valley, Derwent Reservoir, Fontburn, Haydon Bridge, Highford Bridge (Morpeth), Kielder Village, Mitford and Waters Meet (Hexham).

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

In The Cheviot Hills two males were noted at Hawsen Burn on 24th, one of which showed some albinism in the head plumage (MJC), while in the same area two males and two females were reported on 29th (NFO). Single migrants, both males, were noted at Holy Island and at Holywell Pond on 28th (MJC/PRC).

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Passage birds on Holy Island included eight on 25th and 45 on 28th (MJC). A 4km walk at Horton Burn (Cramlington) on 15th produced a total of 43 (LJM) and 26 were noted between the A69 and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 25th. Twelve were at Howdon on 19th and up to five at Spartylea, with four at Jesmond Dene and two at College Valley. Nest building was noted at Corbridge, Humshaugh and Kenton from 11th and a female was feeding young in the nest at County Hall (Morpeth) on 30th.

Black-throated Thrush *Turdus atrogularis*

An adult male at Prestwick Carr on 20th was an excellent find (ADMc). It turned up at Prestwick Mill Farm later in the day but was not seen subsequently.



The short staying
but very welcome

Black-throated
Thrush

Prestwick Carr

Top: by Mike Carr

right: by John Littleton

20th March



Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Larger flocks included 300 at Linden Hall on 18th (NFO) and at Hexhamshire Common on 25th (STE) and 230 at Smallburn (Longhorsley) on 13th. Elsewhere 100-150 were reported from Carrow, Derwent Reservoir, Haughton Strother (Humshaugh), Siloans Farm (MoD) and Spartylea and 80-85 from Charlton, Thorngraston Common and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Smaller flocks of up to 35 were noted at a further 12 localities.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Seven at Whittle Dene Reservoirs included four singing males, while four were also singing at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) and Plessey Woods and four were at Spartylea throughout. Three migrants passed through Holy Island on 28th, with one to three at a further 12 localities, including a bird nest-building at Humshaugh by 24th.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

A flock of 80 was at Corbridge on 15th; 70 were at Haughton Strother and 60 at Haughton Castle (Humshaugh) on 22nd and 28th respectively and 60 were at Thorngraston Common on 16th. Earlier in the month, 35-40 were noted at Howick on 7th and 9th, 16 were at Leazes Park on 1st and 15 at Jesmond Dene on 5th. One to seven were reported from a further nine localities.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Six singing birds were in the Harthope Valley on 24th (MJC). Two pairs were found in the Alwin Valley on 11th and four birds were at Corbridge on 30th. Singles were at three localities in Jesmond Dene, two were singing at Exhibition Park, while pairs were noted at Blagdon, Cramlington (Valley Park), High Carrick and Stewart Shiel (both MoD) and Leazes Park. Singing birds were noted in Newcastle City Centre at Swan House roundabout and Civic Centre; further singles were reported from Howdon, Mitford and Newbiggin.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

At Holy Island, 16 migrants were noted on 25th (MJC) and six on 28th. Eleven were counted at Prestwick Carr on 11th, while four were reported from Alwin Valley, Jesmond Dene and Spartylea. A bird was nest building in an open nest box at Corbridge by 27th.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

A male was at Berwick from 16th-24th (BGW/MHu/TBr), while a first-winter female was found at Seaton Sluice on 23rd (CS).

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Peak counts in coastal areas were five at Druridge Pools on 30th (PRM), two pairs at Cocklawburn on 15th, four at Cresswell Pond on 24th and four at Tynemouth on 4th. Up to three were noted at East Chevington, while pairs were reported from Berwick GC, Holy Island, Low Newton, Lynemouth Flash and St Mary's Island and a single male was at Ellington. The recent improvement in inland records continued, with two pairs noted at Winter's Gibbet (Harwood Forest) on 7th, three at Ottercops Moss on 18th, pairs at Debdon (Rothbury), Hawsen Burn and West Hartford and singles at Howdon, Longhorsley Moor and Quickenincote Farm.



A cock Stonechat by Alan Jack on 20th March



A potential *rubicola* Stonechat on Holy island on 25th March by Mike Carr

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

The first returning individuals were a male at Longhirst Flash on 19th (TF) and another at Grindstonelaw on 21st (ALT). Two were at Cocklawburn on 24th and three at Shillmoor Farm and a single at Holy Island on 25th. Singles at Allendale Common and Stublick Moor on 26th, were followed by four at Cresswell Pond and three at St Mary's Island on 29th (IFo), and two from Craster-Dunstanburgh and singles at Cresswell Pond and Ross Back Sands on 31st.



A Wheatear newly arrived on Holy Island on 25th March by Mike Carr

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

Seven, including four singing were at Whittle Dene on 15th(MR). Five were noted at Spittal Burn (Newbiggin) on 19th (RS). Four were at garden feeders during the month at Stamfordham(EC). One to four were at five other sites.



A Dunnock at Gosforth NR by Mike Carr on 28th March

House sparrow *Passer domesticus*

A four-kilometre walk at Horton Grange (Cramlington) on 15th produced a count of 79 birds (LJM). A winter flock of 50 were beginning to disperse at Spittal Burn during the month (RS). 50 remained at Cullercoats Bay all month (ASJ). 30 were noted at Druridge Farm on 27th (CB/JGS). 26 in a Cramlington garden on feeders on 4th (DM). Two to 20 were at four further locations during the month.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Feeders at Holywell Pond and in Holywell Dene continued to attract numbers with 25+ at the former and 16-18 the latter during the month(ASJ). 11+ were noted at Cresswell Pond and at Longhorsely on 17th and 22nd respectively (PRM/NFO). One to eight were at 14 further sites in the month, including a single in a Gosforth garden.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Six were found along the Carey Burn (Harthope) on 24th (MJC). Four were seen at Jesmond Dene on 5th and at South Gosforth during the month. Pairs were back on breeding territory in Upper Coquetdale at seven sites from 11th (JR/NA). Pairs were also at Sipton Burn and Spartylea in Allendale. Two to three birds were also observed at a further 17 sites, including six sites in Newcastle city centre.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrelli*

A roost of 60+ at Gosforth Park on 16th was impressive (CGK). Elsewhere, 24 were seen at Haughton Strother on 13th (MR). At Seaton Sluice between 11th and 25th, 20 birds were noted heading N (SSWT). 13 at Holy Island on 28th were considered to be migrant birds (MJC). Well inland, nine were at Derwent Reservoir on 21st and four were in the Harthope Valley on 24th (IFo/MJC). Two to three were also noted during the month at six sites.

A Pied Wagtail

East Chevington

Colin Bradshaw

**White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba alba*

Two had returned to Haughton Strother by 20th, with one there on 27th and a single at Derwent Reservoir on 24th (MR/IFo). On 31st one was also seen at Chibburn Mouth (East Chevington) (JBu).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Some notable numbers this month, with returning birds to Holy Island included 50 arriving low over the sea from the south east on 19th, 188 counted on 25th and 50 on 28th (IK/MJC). 68 heading N passed Seaton Sluice during the month, with four birds S (SSWT). Inland, 50 were noted at Ottercops Moss, many of which were in pairs on 19th and 50+ paired and displaying/singing birds were at Acton Fell (Allendale) on 25th (MH/ASJ). Several small flocks of birds were newly arrived in breeding areas at Harwood on 11th (IK). Further passage was also noted at Gosforth Garden Village with 36 birds moving NW on 19th and a steady, small N passage of calling birds over Marden Estate (Cullercoats) during the month (MJC/ASJ). 30 were noted at Haughton Strother on 22nd (MR). 22 moved NW at Winter's Gibbet on 13th and 20 were in Hawsen Burn (Harthope Valley) by 24th (MJC). Small numbers flying N were noted at Bamburgh and St. Mary's on 14th and 15th respectively (BRS/MSH). Elsewhere, one to eight were seen at a further ten sites.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

11 were counted at Old Hartley this month on 10th (SPP). Nine were at nearby St. Mary's Island on 2nd may have involved some of the same birds (ASJ). Five noted at Boulmer on 7th (TRD/JD). One to two were at five further sites. Singles of the subspecies *Littoralis* were seen at Boulmer on 7th, Sandham Bay (Holy Island) on 17th and Chibburn Mouth (East Chevington) on 31st (TRD/JD/IK/JBu).

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

Five were at Druridge on 25th and 26th gradually reduced in number over the following week to one bird by the month's end (AC/TRD/JD *et al.*).



A Water Pipit at Druridge Pools by Colin Bradshaw

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

32 birds remained of the large wintering flock at Holywell Dene by 1st (SPP). 15 attended feeders at Wallington on 14th (TRD/JD). At a Cramlington garden, birds present all month peaked at 11 on 22nd (STH). Groups of eight had been at Howick all month (and most of the winter) and at Spartylea. One to four were seen at six further sites during the month.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

A good count of 45 were below feeders at Rothbury on 23rd (JD). Eight to 20 were noted all month at Spartylea. Elsewhere, two to three were at four other sites.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

17 were counted at Hepburn Woods on 23rd, with six at Green Letch (Bedlington) on 30th (MJC). Six, three pairs, were in Holywell Dene all month (ASJ). Five all month came in to garden feeders at Rothbury (TRD/JD). One to four were also at six further locations.

Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*

Up to seven were noted at Spartylea all month (CT). Six birds were at Brandling Park (Newcastle) on 28th (DM). Singles were seen at six sites within Jesmond Dene during the month (MJCo). One to four were at six other sites.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

A large flock of 250 was on wires above a pheasant crop at Laker Hall (Corbridge) (MR). 60+ were at Druridge Links on 8th (MSH) and 60 at Howick on 13th (JAR). At Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay), 30 remained from the large winter flock here (MNC). Flocks of 23-25 were at Holywell and at St. Mary's on several dates (ASJ). By the month's end, several pairs had formed at Holywell, with males singing (ASJ). 19 were at Holy Island on 25th (MJC). Four were at Prestwick Carr on 11th (PCF). At Quarry Cottage, Spital (Newbiggin) six birds had returned to a breeding area by 20th (RS).

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

Wintering and passage birds remained with 30+ noted at Druridge Links on 8th (MSH). 12 seen at Druridge Bay C.P. at dusk on 18th (SW). Eight were at East Chevington on 15th (IRD). Seven were noted at East Chevington on 28th and over dunes, heading north at Druridge Pools on 30th could refer to the same birds?(IF/PRM). Two were seen at Fenham Le Moor on 23rd (MJC).



A Twite at East Chevington on 31st March by Jack Bucknall

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis caberet*

Several pairs and small groups were noted in roadside trees in breeding areas in the Longhorsely/ Beacon Hill area on 18th, with display seen (ASJ). Birds were also back on breeding territories at Harwood on 11th (IK). Five birds were at Spartylea on last two days of the month (CT). Four were noted at Grindon, Prestwick Carr and Rothbury in the month. One to two seen at six further sites, with display noted at Hexhamshire Common (STE).

Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

46 were counted at Thrunton Woods on 29th, with 12 at Hepburn Woods on 23rd and seven at Craggside on 21st (MJC). Eight birds were noted at Minsteracres on 19th (AJH). Two to six were at Winter's Gibbet on various dates (Jbu/MJC/STH). One to two were at four other sites during the month.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

44 were attracted to feeders at East Ord (Berwick) on 8th (MHu). Up to 30 were at Spartylea all month (CT). Three to nine at six other sites.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

60 at Humshaugh on 30th was the largest gathering this month (SW). 50+ were at Wark on 21st (PRM). 20 at Gosforth Park on 2nd and at Craggside on 21st (MJC). Up to 15 were at Spartylea during the month (CT). One to eight were noted at 14 further sites during the month. At the coast, birds were noted moving N, with two on 2nd and 11 on 19th (RS).

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Two were found at Newbiggin Church Point on 22nd (JBU) and singles noted during the month at East Chevington, Chibburn Mouth and two Holy Island sites.



A Snow Bunting at Newbiggin by Jack Bucknall on 22nd March

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citronella*

25 were at a farm at Felton on 16th (NFO). Eight on 17th were at Prestwick Carr increased to 12 by 21st (PCF). One to three were at four further locations.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

38 were counted over Holy Island on 25th (MJC). Seven, including singing males, were at St. Mary's and Haughton Strother on 27th (ASJ/MR). One to four were at 11 other sites during the month.

Corn Bunting *Miliaria calandra*

A single of this now extremely rare county bird was seen in scrub at Low Newton on 5th (BS).

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

The individual seen in previous months was again seen, this time at Budle Bay on 12th (MSH) & 14th (CGK). Two were also seen at East Chevington on 2nd (SPP).

HYBRIDS**Tufted Duck x Pochard** *Aythya fuligula x Aythya ferina*

Single drakes were again seen with one at Arcot Pond on 6th (LJM) and 22nd (STH), at Big Waters on 17th (PRM) and at Swallow Pond on 31st (SPP). Quite possible that same individual involved as sites close together. Parentage thought to be this match.

Gyrfalcon x Saker *Falco Rusticolus x Falco Cherrug*

The escape at large since September 2016 was again seen with a sighting at Longhirst Flash on 5th (TF/JFa).

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

A juvenile at Swallow Pond on 31st (SPP) resembled a bird of this parentage. Colloquially known as 'Viking Gull'. It was feeding on a dead Canada Goose.

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Bamburgh Ringing Station, Berwick Wildlife Group, Hauxley Ringing Station, Seaton Sluice Watch Tower.

Apologies for any accidental omission

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), Tom Brewis (Avocet to Godwit), Clive Hampton (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 Jack (Dunnock to Corn Bunting), and Steve Holliday (WeBS Inland Counts).

Data Manager is Tom Brewis

Thanks to David Sanders of NNBC for providing data.

Proof reading was by Mike Smith.

Mail distribution by Paul Stewart.

Edited by Steve Barrett NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.com

RECORD SUBMISSION

Please email records for the month to ntbc.records@googlemail.com

Please email for a copy of the standard spreadsheet and other details.

Location names and grid references: Please use of standard location names and include grid references as this 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.

Can contributors please remember to ensure that all submissions of records are properly completed, e.g. an observer's name/initials for each record, only digits in the count column and no rows with only observer and nothing else. Your help in this matter will be greatly appreciated by Tom Brewis when he does the monthly processing.

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

Annual membership costs £10 for a junior, £30 for an individual, and £32 for a family.

For membership enquiries please contact ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

If you internet bank you can pay online: please include your name in the ref. It is helpful if you email me to let me know when you've made the transfer ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

If you decide to set up a standing order please date the first payment at least a fortnight from your posting date to allow time to process with the bank. You can also set up your standing order directly with your bank if you wish; just let me know.

Finally, if you know anyone who might like to join NTBC please pass on the club information - new members are always welcome.

Jo Bentley - Hon Treasurer

NTBC AGM

The Club Annual General Meeting will be held on 12th October before the Indoor Meeting.

NTBC WEB SITE

The club website is an excellent online resource for anyone interested in birds. There are:

Photo Galleries – Here you can view hundreds of photos of birds from Northumberland, Newcastle and North Tyneside. Members are encouraged to contribute their own photos. Simply send them to galleries@ntbc.org.uk

Sightings – Here you can view reports of birds recently reported in the County. Anyone who would like to contribute and post sightings to this page, please email sightings@ntbc.org.uk Please note this section is moderated, so there may be a short delay before your record appears.

There are also County Checklists, Records Committee updates, Information on important Surveys, useful articles and reports on Bird ID and Overseas Birding Trips....and much more...

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

New content such as Birding Trip Reports etc.. is always welcome and very much appreciated.

To find out more please visit www.ntbc.org.uk



A Red Grouse checks out Simon Elliot
Hexhamshire Common
25th March

INLAND WeBS COUNTS: NORTHUMBERLAND

Version:

Interim

Year: 2017
Month: March

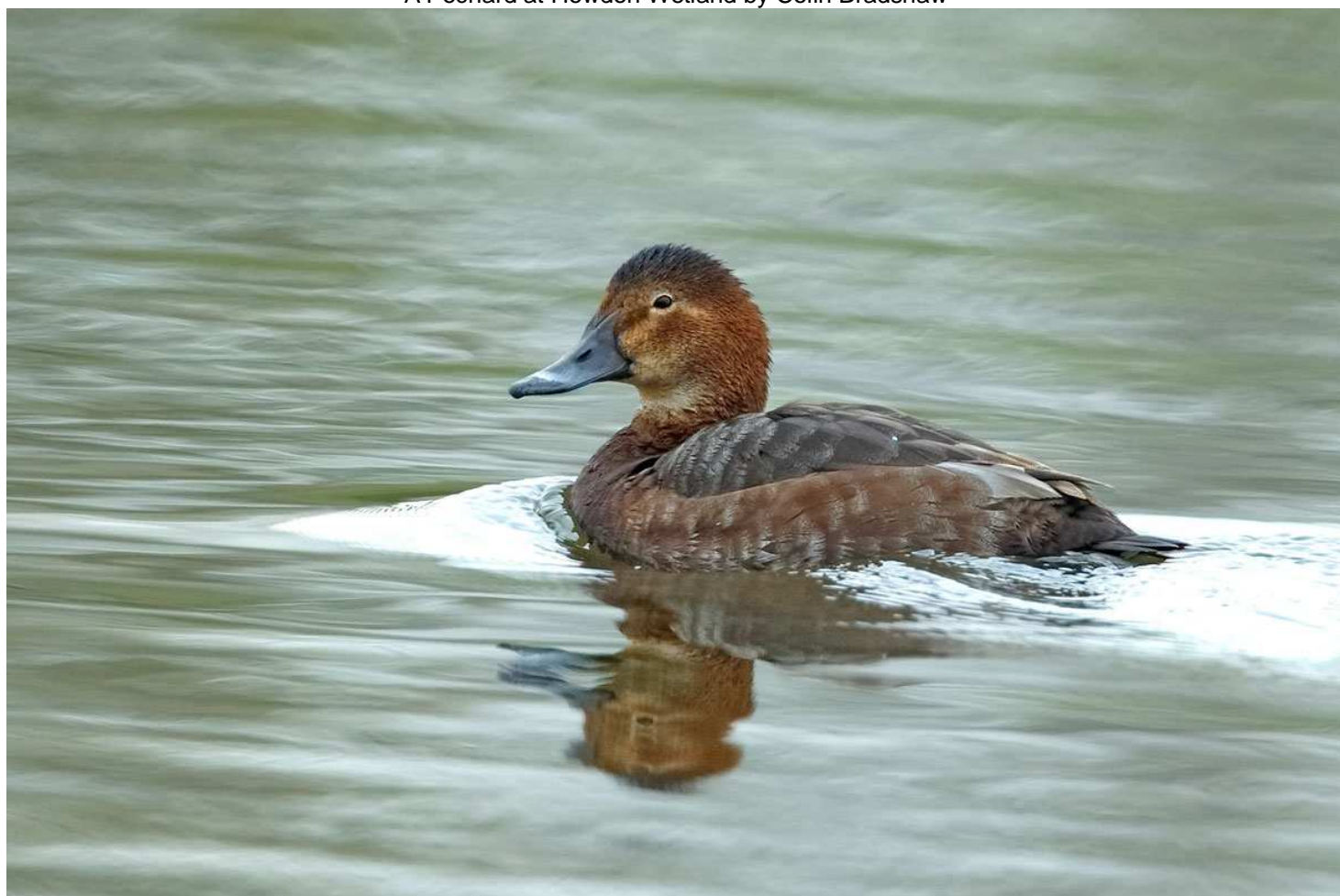
Year: 2017
Month: March

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A Gadwall arrives at Druridge Pools by Chris Barlow

A Pochard at Howdon Wetland by Colin Bradshaw





The Green-winged Teal at Druridge Pools by John Littleton on 23rd April
A young Lapwing at Yearle by Mike Carr on 28th April





Above a Woodcock - Harthope Valley 26th April, in distraction display as with a chick, by Janet Dean
Below, Alan Jack 's photograph of a Redshank at Allendale on 22nd April

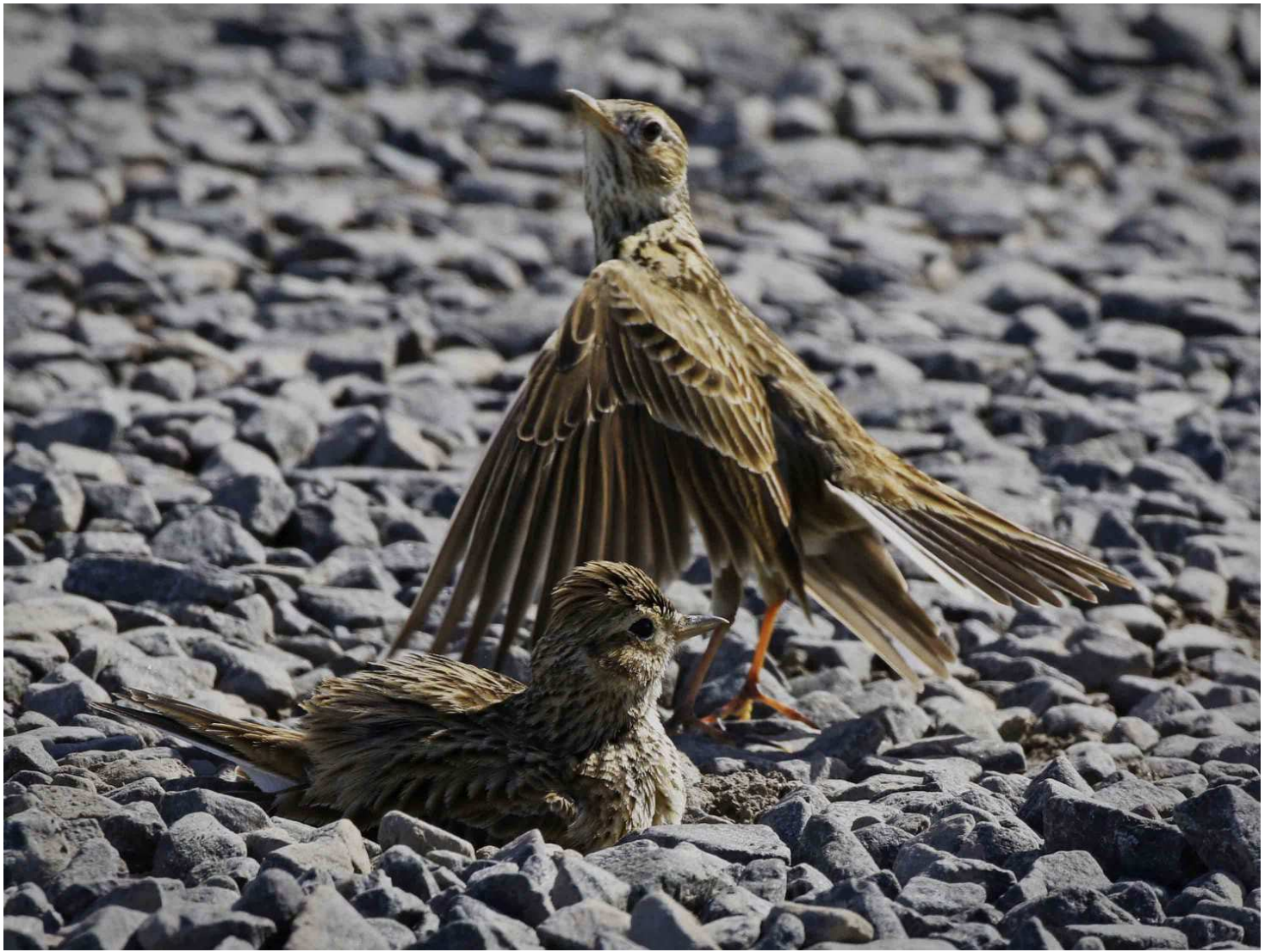




The short staying Hoopoe at Derwent Reservoir on 17th April by John Hall

A 'Scandinavian' Rock Pipit by John Littleton from Chibburn on 5th April by John Littleton





Skylarks on Holy Island by Mike Carr on 23rd April
A Grasshopper Warbler sings at Druridge Pools by Colin Bradshaw





A drake Teal at Newton Pool by Janet Dean on 21st April

A Wood Pigeon on the lookout at Howdon Wetland by Colin Bradshaw





A Short-eared Owl on Holy Island by Mike Carr on 29th April

A colourful flock of Black-tailed Godwits at Holywell by Colin Bradshaw



Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

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

Bulletin 2017 No 4

MONTHLY SUMMARY APRIL 2017

4th June 2017



CONTENTS

Pelagics programme 2017

There is a photograph supplement this month (electronic bulletins only)

CLASSIFIED LIST HIGHLIGHTS

Tundra Bean Goose	Up to three in Budle Bay on 21st and 22nd.
Green-winged Teal	Drake at Hauxley and Druridge Pools.
Ring-necked Duck	Drake still at Hauxley until 9th.
Ferruginous Duck	Drake still present at Arcot Pond and Silverlink CP until 8th.
Bittern	Single still at East Chevington on 1st.
Great White Egret	One still at Druridge Pools until 7th.
Spoonbill	Single at Druridge Pools from 10th to 18th.
Crane	One at Druridge Pools and East Chevington on 9th and 10th.
Grey Plover	Interesting sighting of five inland at Grindon Lough mid-month.
Dotterel	Two at Whittle Dene and one at Longframlington Common.
Spotted Redshank	Wintering individual at Budle Bay in summer plumage late in month.
Wood Sandpiper	One at Druridge Pools on 30th.
Jack Snipe	One at Weetslade Colliery CP on 1st.
Black Tern	Singles at East Chevington, West Ord and Grindon Lough from 21st.
Hoopoe	A lucky observer saw one which made a short visit to Derwent Reservoir on 17th.
Great Grey Shrike	Wintering individual still at Prestwick Carr until 1st.
Hooded Crow	Roaming individual at many coastal sites from 14th.
Firecrest	One at Northumberland Park in North Shields on 2nd.
Shore Lark	Up to four still at Boulmer and East Chevington.
Red-rumped Swallow	One at East Chevington on 10th.
Waxwing	14 still at Blyth on 1st.
Wheatear	Large fall at end of month with over 200 in Budle Bay area and 99 on Holy Island.
Blue-headed Wagtail	Singles at Low Newton and Boulmer.
Water Pipit	One still at Druridge Pools until 7th.
Mealy Redpoll	Two at Mootlaw Quarry, Ryal on 8th. Only record of year so far.

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 first autumn meeting will be on Thursday September 14th .

The Hoopoe which was
photographed by a lucky

John Hall at

1600h from the hide at

Derwent Reservoir

on 17th April.

It flew off after 20 minutes.



FIELD TRIPS

24th June 2017 Nightjars

Please contact Steve Anderson seaswan@btinternet.com

CLASSIFIED LIST

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Four flew N and six S at Seaton Sluice between 9th-26th (SSWT). New Water Haugh held 118 on 23rd (MHu), 72 were at the Tweed Estuary on 7th (MHu), 42 at Killingworth Lake on 5th (LJM), 32 at Howdon (CB), and 16 at the former Longhirst Flash. Pairs on nests were found at Bothal Pond, Byker, Howick Hall, Little Waters, Newcastle Exhibition and Leazes Parks, Shield on the Wall, and Woodhorn Flashes.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

At Seaton Sluice, 47 flew N on 1st and 15 N on 8th (SSWT), while 16 were on the sea off St Mary's on the latter date (SPP). On 1st, a group of 50 was at Brandon (IBDa/KDa), 37 were off St Mary's (JBU) and 22 flew W at Corbridge (PRM); and counts of 12-15 came from Beal, Catcleugh Reservoir and Fenham Mill on 2nd. Seven to nine were at Druridge and East Chevington, and one to two at Backworth Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Greenlee Lough, Longhirst Flash, Low Newton, West Ord and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*

Three, of the Tundra *rossicus* race, were at Budle Bay on 21st and two on 22nd (CGK/GPK).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

100 flew N at Craster on 2nd (PHa/AHa) and 20 N at Dipton Wood on 3rd (STE). 700 at Budle Bay on 14th dropped to 600 by 19th (DF) and 80 by 21st (CGK/GPK), and 440 were at Howick on 2nd (AJ). One to nine were at nine further, mainly coastal, localities.

White-fronted Goose *Anser flavirostris*

A single bird, of the Eurasian *albifrons* race, with a damaged wing (but just able to fly) remained at Druridge Pools until at least 25th (TB/IRD/AJR *et al.*).



The Druridge Pools White Front by Chris Barlow

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

At Seaton Sluice, 22 flew N on 21st and eight N on 29th (SSWT). Castron held 86 on 20th (AJR), 60 at Bothal Pond on 1st (TF/JFa), 53-57 at Haughton Castle (SW) and Woodhorn Flashes (PRM), and 22-41 at Cocklawburn Pond, Grindon Lough and Spartylea. Ten to 13 were also at Arcot and Middle Ord Ponds, East Chevington and the Tweed Estuary, and two to eight at/over Aydon, Cocklawburn, Humshaugh, Lynemouth Flash, Yarrow Slake and West Hartford. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer	Notes
Derwent Reservoir	14	83	IFo	First brood of 4 on 10th, then broods of 10,9,8,7,6,6,6,5,5,4,4,4 between 24th-30th
Haughton Strother GP	3	15 (7,4,4)	MR	On 30th
Branton GP	2	12	IBDa/KDa	On 22nd
Marden Quarry	2	--	KWY	On 29th

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

A total of 12 flew N and 30 S at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT), and seven moved N and three SE at Ellington on 29th (TB). Peak counts involved 105 at Grindon Lough on 4th (PRM), 54 at Bothal Pond on 1st (TF/JFa), about 45 at Castle Island on 26th (PRM), 20-36 at Harehaugh, and Linton and Swallow Ponds, and 12-17 at Druridge Pools, Haughton Strother

GP, Holywell Pond and Newcastle Leazes Park. One to four were also at Arcot Pond, Paddy Freemans Lake (Jesmond), Killingworth Lake, Wansbeck Riverside CP and Woodhorn Flashes.

Canada Goose breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer	Notes
Bank's Pond, Dinnington	1	4	PCF	On 28th
Marden Quarry	1	--	KWY	On 29th

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Northerly movement was noted at several coastal sites, beginning with 100 at Craster on 2nd (PHa/AHa) and followed by 40 at Newton Point (BS) and five at Seaton Sluice (SSWT) on 24th, and 50 at Boulmer (BS) and Seaton Sluice (SSWT) on 27th. At Budle Bay, 55 were noted on 3rd (GPK), and 30 on 14th and 18th (DF). Singles were at Druridge Pools, East Chevington and Hauxley Reserve.

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Four pale-bellied *hrota* race birds were at St Mary's Island on 18th (AC/AJ), and 33 un-raced birds were at Fenham Flats on 7th (JDL).

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was 48 N and 42 S (SSWT). Budle Bay held 86 on 21st (CGK/GPK), 66 were at Boulmer on 22nd (BS), 40 at Cresswell Pond on 9th (CDH), 30-35 at Bell's Pond and Druridge Lane/Pools, and 18-26 at Charlton Mires, Howdon and Longhoughton Steel. Three to nine were also at Castle Island, Ellington, Hoppen Kiln Flash, Linton Ponds, the former Longhirst Flash, Lynemouth Flash and New Water Haugh, and one to two at Backworth, Bothal and Middle Ord Ponds, Byker, and Craggy Bog (Murton). Further inland, five to seven were at Branton GP, Castron and Haughton Strother GP, and three at Grindon Lough.

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

Two drakes and one duck were at Glen Ridley bridge (River North Tyne) on 1st (JR/NA), three drakes at Smalesmouth-Stannersburn on 23rd (DM/LJM/JR/NA), a pair at Ridley Stokoe on 2nd (TRD/JD), and a duck at Redmire bridge on 15th (JR/NA).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Singles flew N at Seaton Sluice on 19th and 30th (MHu). 118 at Grindon Lough on 4th (PRM) dropped to 22 by 14th (PRM), 100+ were at Druridge Pools on 1st (TD), 98 at Derwent Reservoir on 3rd (IFo), 22-33 at Budle Bay (CGK/GPK) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs (SR), and 13-15 at Bothal Pond, Derwent Reservoir and Gosforth Park NR. One to five were at six further scattered sites.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Two flew N at Seaton Sluice on 20th (SSWT). Peak counts were 19 at Castle Island on 26th (PRM), 15 at Bothal Pond on 1st (TF/JFa), 14 at Lynemouth Flash on 1st (DM/STH/PJA), 11-12 at Linton Ponds (CDH) and Woodhorn Flashes (PRM), and six to eight at Capheaton Lake, Druridge Pools, Hauxley Reserve, Hedgeley GP and Howdon. Three to five were at Big Waters, Castron, Cresswell and Swallow Ponds and Marden Quarry, and one to two at Arcot and Bell's Ponds, the Blyth Estuary, Brenkley, Seaton Delaval, Shield on the Wall and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. More unusual was a pair on the River Tyne at Tynemouth on 18th (DRW).



A drake Gadwall flies over Druridge Pools by Chris Barlow

Teal *Anas crecca*

Six flew N and one S at Seaton Sluice between 8th-22nd (SSWT). About 200 remained at Druridge Pools on 1st (TD), 122 at Grindon Lough on 4th fell to 56 by 14th (PRM), 82 were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 1st (SR), and 40-65 at Big Waters (SPP), Budle Bay (GPK), Castle Island (DM/STH/PJA) and Derwent Reservoir (IFo). Ten to 16 at Arcot, Bothal, Cresswell and Linton Ponds, Ellington and West Ord, and one to six at five further sites.,

Green-winged Teal *Anas carolinensis*

A drake at Hauxley Reserve on 15th (TRD) was also noted on 23rd (TB/TF/JFa/AJR).

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Moderate numbers involved peaks of 40 at Haughton Strother GP on 12th (MR), 30 at Castle Island on 1st (DM/STH/PJA), and 28 at the Tweed Estuary on 7th (MHu). Counts of 12-20 came from Killingworth Lake and Newcastle Exhibition and Leazes Parks. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer	Notes
Corbridge	1	10	PJA	Well-developed young on 29th
Howick	1	10	JAR	On 18th
Newcastle Exhibition Park	1	10	GB	Fresh young on 26th but down to 3 young by 28th
Derwent Reservoir	1	8	IFo	New brood on 29th
Hulne Park, Alnwick	1	7	RB/MB	On 30th
Seaton Delaval	1	6	IFo	On 30th
Arcot Pond	1	4	DM/LJM	On 23rd

Pintail *Anas acuta*

At Druridge Pools, five (three drakes) were noted between 14th-18th (TB/TRD/JD *et al.*) and three to four (two drakes) regularly between 1st-24th (CB/TD *et al.*). Two drakes were at Grindon Lough on 11th and 14th, with one there on 7th (PRM/MRS). A duck was at a flooded field at Grindstonelaw (near Ryal) between 1st-5th (ALT).

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

A pair, initially noted on the sea off East Chevington on 4th, flew off N (MH/AA). Single pairs were also at Arcot Pond on 2nd (DM), Cresswell Pond on 7th-8th (TB/TRD/JD) and Warkworth Lane Ponds on 28th (TB). Single drakes were at Druridge Pools on 1st (GB/TF/JFa), Arcot Pond on 3rd (STH), Holywell Pond on several dates between 7th- 19th (CB/GPK/SPP), and St Mary's Wetland between 16th-18th (AC/KWY *et al.*). The latter was paired with a female Teal (AC).



A drake Garganey stretches its wings at Holywell pond - Colin Bradshaw

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Druridge Pools attracted a peak of 44 (34 drakes) on 1st (DM/STH/PJA) and 3rd (TRD) and 18 remained on 23rd (AJR). Elsewhere, ten were at Arcot Pond on 4th (STH), four pairs at Cresswell Pond on 23rd (AJR) and six at Prestwick Carr (PCF). Three to four were also at Bothal and Swallow Pond, Grindon Lough and Hedgeley GP, and one to two at Beanley, Monks' House Pool, New Water Haugh and Woodhorn Flashes.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Peak counts were 12 at Swallow Pond on 17th (GPK), 11 at Holywell Pond on 11th (SPP), nine at Arcot Pond on 9th (LJM), and six to eight at Big Waters (SPP) and Bothal Pond (TB). Three were also at Killingworth Lake and one to two were at Druridge Pools, Ladyburn Lake, and West Allotment Pond.



Two striking drakes. Above: a Pochard at Holywell Pond by Colin Bradshaw and below: the Ring-necked Duck at Hauxley on 3rd April by Tim Dean



Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*

The drake, first noted in March, was again at Hauxley Reserve on several dates between 1st-9th (GB/LAR/PRM *et al.*).

Feruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*

A drake was noted at Arcot Pond on 3rd (GM *et al.*) and Silverlink CP on 5th (TRD).



The much photographed Feruginous Duck from Cobalt Park on 5th April by Chris Barlow

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Four flew N and two S at Seaton Sluice on 25th-26th (SSWT). The largest concentrations concerned 52 at Killingworth Lake on 5th (LJM), 44 (22 pairs) at Capheaton Lake on 2nd (STE), and 25-28 at Haughton Strother GP, QEII CP Lake, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Woodhorn Flashes. Ten to 16 were at Bothal, Cresswell, Linton and Swallow Ponds, East Chevington, Marden Quarry and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and five to nine at Arcot Pond, Castle Island, Druridge Pools, Howdon, Monks' House Pool and Newcastle Exhibition and Leazes Parks.

Scaup *Aythya marila*

At Bothal Pond, three were noted on 1st (TF/JFa), two on 2nd (TD) and one until the end of the month (TF/JFa *et al.*). Singles were at East Chevington on 1st (TF/JFa), Holywell Pond on 16th (MSH), West Allotment Pond on 5th (TRD) and Woodhorn Flashes on 16th (per NNBC).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

A total of 127 flew N and 106 S at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT), 15, including two displaying drakes, were at Blyth Harbour on 17th (CDH), and eight at the Tweed Estuary.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

One flew N at Tynemouth on 26th (DRW) and one flew N and then back S at Boulmer on 28th (BS). At Seaton Sluice, one was offshore on 12th-13th, two between 14th-21st and three between 22nd-30th (SSWT/PJA/KWY). Two were with Common Scoters off Low Newton on 21st (TRD/JD) and one at Stag Rocks on 20th (JDL). Singles were noted occasionally on the River Wansbeck at Castle Island between 4th-30th (TB/TF/JFa) and at Bothal Pond on 7th (TF/JFa).

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

An above-average April total at Seaton Sluice involved 519 N and 30 S, and 70 were on the sea there on 13th (SSWT). Low numbers elsewhere involved 30 off East Chevington on 1st (GB/LAR), ten at Low Newton on 21st (TRD/JD) and two at Cocklawburn and Stag Rocks.

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

Four flew N at Tynemouth on 3rd (SPP). Three were off East Chevington burn mouth on 1st (TF/JFa), with two noted on 2nd (MH). Two were also at Stag Rocks on 10th (DF).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

One flew N at Seaton Sluice on 12th (SSWT). Capheaton Lake held 32 on 2nd (CGK/STE *et al.*), 11 were at Bothal Pond on 11th (IRD), nine at East Chevington on 7th (TRD/JD), and four to seven at Big Waters, Branton GP, Castle Island, Catcleugh and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, Druridge Pools, Grindon Lough and Holywell Pond. One to two were also at Airy Holm and Bakethin Reservoirs, Arcot and Cresswell Ponds, Haughton Strother GP, New Water Haugh and the Tweed Estuary.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

A total of 28 flew N and five S at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT) and one N at St Mary's (SPP). Budle Bay held a peak of 18 on 13th (DF), 14 were off Druridge on 7th (TRD/JD), six to seven at the Blyth Estuary (LJM), Castle Island (DM/STH/PJA) and East Chevington (TRD/JD/PRM), and three to four at Beal and Cresswell Pond. One to two were at Ashington (River Wansbeck), Druridge Pools and the Tweed Estuary.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Seven flew N and eight S at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT), three flew S at Cocklawburn on 6th (MHu), and one N at East Chevington (SW). Peak counts were 39 at Horncliffe on 21st (JDL), 30 at New Water Haugh on 27th (MHu), 28 at Horncliffe on 16th (JDL), and ten at the Tweed Estuary and West Ord (MHu). Three to four visited Bywell, Castle Island, Hexham and Waters Meet (River Tyne), and one to two were at Barrowburn, Beanley, Buckham's Bridge (Upper Coquetdale), Bygate, Caistron, Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Pools, Furnace Bridge, Morpeth and Tynemouth.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Two were at Beadnell on 19th (JPL).

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

At least 40 in the Harthope Valley between East Langleeftord and Yearle on 8th was by far the highest count (PJA). One to six were at several other locations including right on the coast at Bamburgh, East Chevington and St. Mary's leading to concerns regarding competition with Grey Partridge (TRD/JD).

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

Noted as "common" in the Simonside area on 29th and Allendale on 30th (ASJ). Eight were at Spartylea on 9th (CT) and one to two were at Langleeftord, Longframlington Common and Thrunton Woods.

A Red Grouse gives Alan Jack the eye
Allendale 22nd April

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

Four males and three females were at Westburnhope (Hexhamshire) on 15th (PRC) with three males and a single female at a lek on Hexhamshire Common on 3rd (STE). One to three were at several other usual locations, although a male at Sundaysight (Lanehead) was the observer's first there (AH per MH).

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Two pairs were at Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin) all month (RS) and four were seen at Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay), Prestwick Carr and Woodhorn Flashes. One to three were at many other localities.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Seven were at Prestwick Carr on 1st (PCF), five at Spartylea all month (CT), three were at Linton Ponds, a pair at Whitelea Grange (Cramlington) all month and a single at Priors Park Tynemouth was the first since 2014.

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

The monthly total figure of 72 from Seaton Sluice Watch Tower was below average for April with 60 N and 12 S in 93 hours (SSWT). 27 were at Cocklawburn on 14th (DF) and 19 present in ideal conditions at East Chevington on 2nd – that number reducing to two by 4th (MH). 12 were off Cheswick Sands on 27th (CH) and one to three were recorded throughout the coast, often in summer plumage during latter half of the month.

Black-throated Northern Diver *Gavia arctica*

Late singles were observed at Stag Rocks on 7th (JDL) and past Seaton Sluice on 26th (SSWT).

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

One was sighted N past St Mary's Island at 0814hrs on 29th (AC), and likely the same bird was observed past Seaton Sluice Watch Tower.

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Some large passage counts towards the end of the month with 550 per hour N past Berwick Pier on 25th (MHu), 550 N in five hours at Seaton Sluice on 26th – including a single dark phase "Blue Fulmar" (SSWT) - and 360 N in one hour past Howick on 26th (BS). 39 were at Tynemouth Priory on 18th (SPP) and 30 were at Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) on 17th (IJ). One to six were recorded from several other locations.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

Seaton Sluice recorded one N on 17th then four N on 26th (SSWT). Also two N past Howick (BS) and one N past Tynemouth (DRW), both on 26th.

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

Passage was fairly low at the start of the month with a significant increase towards the end with 308 past Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) on 23rd (MJC), 860 N per hour at Berwick Pier on 25th (MHu), 1,000 in one hour passing N at Howick on 26th (BS), then 1,200 per hour N past Saltpan Rocks (Cocklawburn) also on that date (MHu).

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

The low-tide roost at New Water Haugh (River Tweed) peaked at 62 on 27th and 38 were present during a WeBS count at the River Tweed Estuary on 7th (MHu). A flock of 34 were at East Ord (Berwick), flying towards the sea on 22nd (MHu) and 17 were at Derwent Reservoir on 10th (IFo). 12 were at Big Waters NWT on 30th (GB) and one to seven were at several other typical localities. No significant movements were recorded at Seaton Sluice (SSWT).

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

At Seaton Sluice there was no indication of any passage with a monthly total of 31 N and nine S (SSWT). The largest concentration was at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) with a minimum of 70 present on 18th (BRS). Only one to three birds were recorded elsewhere.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

One was at East Chevington on 1st (MJC/TF/JFa).

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Fenham Flats had a peak of five on 11th (JDL) and the highest count at Druridge Pools was four on 14th (TB). One to two were at many other locations including a colour-ringed adult at a subsidence pond in field to south of Gosforth Park on 14th – pale orange with black letter H on right tibia and a red ring with no lettering on left tibia (MJC).

Great White Egret *Ardea alba*

The Druridge Pools bird that arrived at the end of March remained until at least 7th (DM/IJ/TRD/JD *et al.*).

Two photographs by Tim Dean

Top: the Druridge Pools Great White Egret

7th April.

Right: the Spoonbill at East Chevington

19th April

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Howdon Wetland peaked at 12 on 15th (CB), nine were recorded during a WeBS count at the River Tweed Estuary on 7th (MHu) and nine were also observed on the riverbank following feeding Cormorant at West Ord (Berwick) on 14th (MHu). Eight were at Druridge Pools on 1st (DM) and one to two were at several other locations.

Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

A sub-adult was at Druridge Pools-East Chevington area on 10th (CB/JGS/TB/AC *et al.*), followed by another sighting of it or another individual flying S past Seaton Point (Boulmer) on 13th (AB/LB) and then a possible third individual was at Druridge Pools on 17th-18th (DLo/TB/TRD/JD).



Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Five pairs at Woodhorn Flashes was the highest count on 27th (PRM), with breeding activity noted at many other locations including Arcot Pond, Big Waters NWT, Branton GP, Capheaton, Druridge Pools, Holywell Pond, Swallow Pond and several other typical sites throughout the county.



Above: Little Grebe at Druridge Pools by Chris Barlow and below: a Great Crested cousin at Killingworth Lake by Alan Jack

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*

A good number of reports from suitable breeding sites included peak counts of eight at East Chevington on 1st (MJC), three pairs at Derwent Reservoir (IFo), six birds at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 11th (SR), two pairs at Killingworth Lake – one with a brood of two small young by 28th (DM/ASJ) – four birds at Haughton Strother and three at Big Waters NWT. Elsewhere, one to two birds were at Arcot Pond, Bothal Pond (Coney Garth) – a pair which had eggs predated or stolen by 21st, Branton GP, Druridge Pools, Holywell Pond and Swallow Pond.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigrocollis*

The first returning bird to a site in the south east of the county was on 9th (GPK/JBu/CGK/AC).

Red Kite *Milvus Milvus*

Single birds were seen at Nunwick on 2nd (SW), Derwent Reservoir & Greenhaugh on 3rd (IFo/AC) and one drifted NW at Backworth on 13th (GPK). Other single birds were noted at Spartylea being mobbed by Oystercatchers *Haematopus ostralegus* on 13th (CT), Winnows Hill (Blanchland) on 22nd ASJ and at Wooler on 28th (EHa).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Up to three birds two males and a female were at East Chevington throughout the month (JBu/TF/JFa *et al.*) and single birds were also noted at Druridge Pools on 1st (TD), Tynemouth on 13th (SPP), Ellington Pond on 28th (TB) and at Big Waters NWT on 30th (GB).



A Grey Heron checks out a Marsh Harrier at East Chevington
6th April by John Littleton

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

A ringtail was at a site on 6th (AC) and an adult male was noted hunting over suitable moor land on 7th (EC/SJB).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Two females were in different areas at Harwood forest with one being harassed by a male Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* on 2nd (MSH). The only other records involved single birds at Kielder on 2nd, 9th & 10th (TRD/JD/per NNBC/AJ).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Pairs were observed displaying at Big Waters NWT and Chapel House (Newcastle) on 9th (GB/MH), South Gosforth on 10th (PJA), Blyth on 13th and Ellington on 14th (TB) and at Gosforth Garden Village on 20th and 21st (MJC). Single birds were seen at 20 sites during the month.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

On the 22nd ten birds were present in the Tyne Valley from Blucher (MH), eight birds were at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 27th (MR), six were in the Harthope Valley on 28th (MJC) and five were at Prestwick Carr on 17th (MH). One to four birds were at 56 sites.

Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo Lagopus*

A juvenile buzzard showing characteristics of this species was seen and photographed in the Breamish Valley on 18th (MJC).

Osprey *Pandion haliaetuss*

A pair was back at a nest site at Kielder on 2nd (TRD/JD/CGK *et al.*) and two birds were at Derwent Reservoir on 15th (IFo). Singles were at Beal and Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 2nd (MJC/MR), East Chevington on 14th (PRM), Derwent Reservoir on 15th, 26th & 30th (IFo), Killingworth on 23rd (GB) and Horncliffe on 24th (JDL).

Mike Carr pictures an Osprey

Beal Point on 2nd April



Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

On 14th three birds were at East Chevington (PRM) and two birds were heard at Gosforth Park NR (MJC). Single birds were either heard or seen at Arcot Pond, Backworth Pond, East Chevington NWT, Gosforth Park NR and Holy Island.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

16 birds were at Castle Island on 26th (PRM) and ten were there on 1st (DM/STH/PJA). Six were at Woodhorn Flash on 27th (PRM), 5 at Linton Pond on 9th (CDH) and at Jesmond Dene on 25th (MJCo). One to four birds were at Arcot Pond, Bothal Pond, Corbridge, Cresswell Pond, Exhibition Park (Newcastle), Killingworth Lake, Leazes Park (Newcastle), QEII CP, Spartylea, Wansbeck Riverside Park & Wark (North Tyne).

Coot *Fulica atra*

26 adults and three nests were at Swallow Pond (Wallsend) on 19th (CDH). 18 birds were at Druridge Pools on 1st (DM/STH/PJA) and at Killingworth Lake on 28th (DM), 17 birds and three nests were at Bothal Pond on 26th (TD), 16 were at Arcot Pond on 2nd (DM) and at Woodhorn Flash on 27th (PRM). One to nine birds were at 12 sites during the month.

The East Chevington Crane by Chris Barlow

Crane *Grus grus*

A first-winter bird was on the Budge Fields (Druridge) on 9th (TB) and on the 10th (JBU) it then flew off N and relocated at East Chevington later that morning (JBU). Two birds were at Longhirst Flash on 20th (TF/JFa/ADM).c).

**Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Counts of up to 18 birds were regularly made at Cresswell Pond NWT, especially after 8th. Birds were observed copulating on 16th at nearby Druridge Pools (TB) and displaying at Cresswell Pond on 23rd (AJR). Four birds were reported from Blyth Estuary from 3rd-5th (AJ, LJM).

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Evidence of breeding came from Redesmouth on 20th where a nest with three eggs was reported (IRD). The largest count of 133 (ASJ) came from a high-tide roost at St Mary's. A late flock of 58 was seen at Derwent Reservoir on 26th (IFo) and 52 were counted at Berwick (Ladies Skerr) on 19th (MHu). Other records came from Arcot Lane, Beltingham, Big Waters NWT, Bothal Pond (Coney Garth), College Valley, Corbridge, Cramlington, Cresswell Pond NWT, Gosforth Garden Village, Grindon Lough, Harehaugh, Haughton Strother, Killingworth, Longbenton, Lynemouth Flash, New York, Prestwick Carr, R Tweed Estuary, Rockcliffe, Shotleyfield - Airy Holm Reservoir, Spartylea, Wallsend, Wark (North Tyne), Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Woodhorn Flashes.

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Spring movements were notable at inland locations in particular, with ca. 800 'northern race' birds in East Allendale on 7th and on the same day ca. 700 at Grindon Lough (EC/JSB). Between 4th and 16th Grindon Lough held 100-700 birds. On 9th 150 'northern race' birds were at Backworth (CGK/GPK). Prestwick Carr held 100 on 9th which increased to 150 by the 13th (PCF). At Bellingham, Hareshaw Common on 2nd a passage of 120 birds was witnessed (TRD/JD) and on 5th 80 birds were counted at Kirkhaugh in South Tynedale (AJR). Spartylea also reported small numbers earlier in the month. At the coast the largest count came from Holy Island on 23rd with 70 'northern race' birds counted near the Lonnens, a number which declined to 12 by 29th (MJC/ADM). Backworth reported 12 'northern birds' on 16th.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

An "amazing inland record" came from Grindon Lough where up to five birds were seen between 4th-16th (PRM, PRC). Two birds were seen at Tynemouth on 16th (DR) and two at Boulmer on 27th (MJC).

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

On 30th a count of at least 120 pairs, many on nests and with young, was made at Allendale (ASJ). Other reports involving breeding came from Backworth on 25th, where ten pairs were nesting (ASJ), from Beanley on 2nd, where a count of 15+ involved three females on eggs (MJC) and also from Lynemouth Flash on 27th with a count of 14+ and a pair with a brood of two (PRM). Further breeding reports were of newly hatched birds at Spartylea on 28th and 29th (CT) and of three chicks at West Hartford on 30th (STH).

Other reports with no breeding evidence came from Arcot Lane, Backworth, Bothal Pond (Coney Garth), Corbridge, Aydon, Cramlington, Harehaugh, High Struthers, Holywell Pond, Howdon, Linton Ponds, River Tyne, Waters Meet, Wallsend, Rising Sun CP and Woodhorn Flashes.



A handsome Lapwing by Colin Bradshaw at Howdon wetland

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

32 reports came from 16 sites with the largest count of seven from the south-east of the county (PRM). Sites ranged from coastal to abandoned quarries inland, river gravels and lakes. Presumably some of these sites, particularly along the coast held passage birds.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

There were 15 birds at Boulmer on 24th (TRD) and between six to eight birds at East Chevington on 7th-9th (RB/MB and TRD/JD). Counts of six or fewer came from Blagdon, Brenkley, Derwent Reservoir, Hedgeley GP, Humshaugh, Haughton Strother, Longhirst Flash, Low Newton scrape, R Tweed Estuary, R Wansbeck, Castle Island and Ryal (Mootlaw Quarry).



A Ringed Plover at East Chevington shore by Chris Barlow

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

Two very early birds were reported from just north of the North Reservoir at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 14th (SR). Another record was of a single bird flying north over Longframlington Common on 16th (MJC).

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Passage appeared to have begun mid-month with the earliest record (of a single bird) coming from Ellington on 13th (TB). Thereafter, numbers steadily increased to a maximum of 29 on 28th at East Chevington (AJH). Prior to this peak count 26 were counted at Hadston Carrs on 20th (TF/JFa) and the same number at Cresswell Pond NWT on 28th (EC/JSB, AJH). The total count at Seaton Sluice for the month was 17N and 11S (SSWT). Other counts came from Alnmouth, Boulmer, Budle Bay, Craster, Druridge Pools, Holy Island, Humshaugh (Haughton Strother GP), Monks' House Pool, Prestwick Carr and St Mary's Island.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Displaying males were reported from Allendale, where a count of 40 birds was made on 30th (ASJ) and from Longhorsley on 9th and 24th (AB/LB). The largest count of 100 came from Druridge Pools on 1st (TD). Other large counts were at Prestwick Carr where between 2nd-13th 52-80 birds were reported (PCF, MRS), 67 at Cresswell Pond on 9th (CDH) and 22 in the Tweed Estuary on 7th (MHu). Other reports came from Berwick (Ord Moor), Bothal Pond (Coney Garth), Corbridge (Milkwell), Fontburn, Grindon Lough, High Struthers, Holywell Pond, Humshaugh (Haughton Strother), Spartylea, Thorngrifton Common and Walltown (Hadrian's Wall).

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

The number of records was bolstered by northward passage with the highest count at Holywell Pond on 20th when 52 were counted (ASJ, CB). Other counts of more than ten were 11-24 at Druridge between 14th-24th (TRD, PRM, CD), 18 at Howdon on 1st (CB), 18 at Warkworth on 15th (SW) and 16-17 at Cresswell Pond on 16th (PRM, TB). Other counts came from Budle Bay, Low Newton scrape, R Blyth Estuary and Castle Island.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

The usual stronghold of Holy Island had the largest count with 57 roosting on St Cuthbert's Island on 23rd (MJC/ADM). Boulmer recorded 12 on 15th (SW) but elsewhere counts were of three or fewer birds at Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Tynemouth and Warkworth.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Still present in decent numbers this month with maximum counts of 44 at Tynemouth on 2nd (DRW), 36 at Boulmer on 27th (MJC) and 33 at Cresswell Pond on 9th (CDH). Lower numbers elsewhere included 20 at Craster on 2nd, 12 at Cocklawburn on 20th five at the River Tweed Estuary on 7th and three at Ladies Skerr (Berwick) on 19th.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

The largest count was 35 at Warkworth Harbour on 15th (DW). Birds were recorded from Boulmer from mid-month with a peak of 30 on 13th (BS). At Seaton Sluice, 12 were on rocks near the watchtower on 5th (SSWT). One-six were at Budle Bay, Cresswell Pond and Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay).

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

The single wintering bird at Druridge Pools increased to three on 3rd (DF) and then six by 28th (AJH). At Cresswell Pond, a single on 1st increased to four by 9th (TRD/CDH/TB *et al.*). The only other report was a single at Grindon Lough on 9th and 14th (PRC/PRM).

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Boulmer attracted the largest numbers as in March with a maximum of 254 seen on 14th (SW). Druridge Bay retained respectable numbers with 82 on 2nd decreasing to 30 by 15th (MH/SW *et al.*). A group at Cocklawburn increased from 12 on 6th to 92 by 20th (MHu). The peak count at Tynemouth during the month was 30 on 23rd (DRW). Elsewhere, 12 were at Cresswell, ten at Budle Bay and two at Hauxley.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Last month's large flocks had dissipated, with a maximum of only 26 at Boulmer on 24th (TRD). Nine were at Cresswell Pond on 7th (TRD/JD), four at Grindon Lough on 30th (ASJ) and three were at Druridge Pools on 1st and Haughton Strother GP on 30th (GB/MR). One-two were at Cocklawburn, Derwent Reservoir, Low Newton Scrape, Lynemouth Flash, Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) and Woodhorn Flashes.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Stag Rocks retained good numbers with the maximum being 85 on 23rd (CGK/GPK). Smaller groups further south were 38 at Craster on 15th (MJC), 25 at Boulmer on 13th (BS) and 19 at Tynemouth on 9th (SPP). There were 15 at Cocklawburn on 6th, 11 on the rocks below Seaton Sluice Watchtower (SSWT) on 5th and ten at Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) on 11th (IJ).

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

After last month's early single at East Chevington, further singles were seen at Haughton Strother GP and Branton GP on 2nd/8th (SW/MR/IBDa/KDa). One to two appeared at Cresswell Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Hedgeley GP and Thrum Mill (Rothbury) by 19th. Thereafter birds became widespread at inland breeding areas and passage localities. A count of 19 pairs was made in Coquetdale between Hepple and Blindburn on 29th (ASJ), eight at Castle Island on 26th (PRM), five were at Hedgeley GP and Derwent Reservoir (IBDa/KDa/IFo). One to two were at Ashington, Bywell Bridge, Clennel Hill, Cocklawburn Pond, Cresswell Pond, Harthope Valley, Hulne Park, the River East Allen, Rothbury, Smalesmouth, Stannersburn, Tynemouth, Upper Coquetdale, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Wylam.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Our wintering birds were augmented with new arrivals, with three appearing at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 3rd (SR), two were reported from Castle Island on 26th (PRM) and singles were noted at Backworth Pond, Blagdon, Branton GP, Hedgeley GP, Holywell Pond, Haughton Strother GP, Powburn and Prestwick Carr. A single at Tynemouth Boating Lake, left unimpressed after a brief visit early on 8th and was probably the first documented record for Tynemouth (DRW).

**Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*

The first arrivals were singles at Druridge Pools on 7th (TRD/JD) and St Mary's Island on 9th (AC/JBu). Two were at Castle Island on 26th (JBu/PRM) and singles were in the Lindisfarne area on 23rd-28th at Budle Bay, Fenham Flats and Holy Island, (MJC/JDL/GPK).

A Common Sandpiper at Brandon on 18th by Mike Carr and a Redshank stretches at Newton Pool on 21st April by Tim Dean

Wood sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

A single at Druridge Pools on 30th was the sole report (TF/JFa).

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Some large coastal counts were made with inland breeding areas also being occupied this month. A WeBS count on 7th at the River Tweed Estuary revealed 192 birds (MHu). Budle Bay held 120 on 21st (CGK/GPK) and 105 were at the River Blyth Estuary on 5th (LJM). Other significant counts were 79 at Castle Island on 26th (PRM), 64 at Tynemouth on 20th (DRW) and 50 at both Cresswell Pond and Druridge Pools on 1st (TD). Inland 22 pairs were in Allendale by 30th (ASJ), a maximum of 29 at Grindon Lough on 7th (PRM) and ten at Derwent Reservoir on 3rd (lfo). Two pairs were at Caistron on 20th, a pair at Kirkhaugh (South Tynedale), two at Spartylea and singles at Low Alwinton and Harehaugh. At other locations at or near the coast, 28 were at Cocklawburn, 19 at Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay), 12 at Cresswell Pond, two at Craster Harbour and singles at Bothal Pond and Lynemouth Flash.

Jack Snipe *Limnocryptes minimus*

Singles at Weetslade Colliery CP on 1st and Backworth Pond on 2nd (SPP) were the only reports.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

A female with one chick was seen at Langleeford in the Harthope Valley on 26th (TRD/JD). Two were at Cottonshope and a single at North Yardhope, both in the Otterburn Training Area on 21st-22nd (JR/NA). A bird was roding at Spartylea on 20th (JT) and other singles were at Swallow Pond on 1st and Rothbury on 28th (GPK/JD). The propensity for this species to be found in unusual situations was demonstrated by one landing in North Shields Police Station on 1st and another being flushed from a patch of daffodils in the observer's garden in Gosforth on 2nd (CB/STE).



Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

The largest groups were 40 at Druridge Pools on 1st (DM) declining to one by 18th (TRD/JD) and 27 at Backworth on 8th (CGK). In breeding areas there were 13 displaying males at Allendale on 30th (ASJ) and ten at Spartylea all month (CT). One –five were at Bothal Pond, Cocklawburn Pond, Corbridge, Cresswell Pond, Deadwater Fell, Grindon Lough, Hauxley NWT, Haughton Strother GP, Lynemouth Flash and Prestwick Carr.

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

One was reported from Beacon Point (Newbiggin) on 17th (per NNBC).

Auk *sp*

Small numbers passed Seaton Sluice up to 22nd when 250 N were counted but larger numbers moved from 26th-29th with up to 500 N per hour (SSWT).

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

Three moved N at Seaton Sluice on 17th (SSWT) and a single was seen off Snab Point (Cresswell) on 27th (PRM).

Razorbill *Alca torda*

A pair prospected sites on the cliff at Tynemouth Priory on 29th (SPP) and five were at Cocklawburn on 10th (MHu).



Razorbills at Craster on 15th April by Mike Carr

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

On 25th, 130 per hour were counted moving N at Berwick Pier (MHu) and at Seaton Sluice 50 passed mainly S in two hours on 30th (PJA). Elsewhere, nine were at Berwick Meadow Haven on 27th (MHu) and a single was seen at Low Newton (TRD/JD).

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

The first record of the year was a single N at Boulmer on 28th (BS).

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

A summer-plumaged bird was at East Chevington North Pool from 21st-23rd (TB/TRD/JD/TF/JFa/AJR), two flew N at Berwick, West Ord on 28th (MHu) and a single was at Grindon Lough on 30th (ASJ).

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

The numbers noted at Seaton Sluice built up from 1st with the main passage N from 19th-22nd when counts were made of 151 moving N and 292 S (SSWT). Unusual records were of a single bird briefly at Haughton Strother GP on 19th and a pair flying high NW over that site on 21st (MR). Maximum gatherings were 41 at Holy Island on 23rd (SR/AH/MJC), 22 in the Tweed Estuary on 25th (MHu) and from 6th, 10-20 at Bamburgh, Cocklawburn, Craster, Cresswell and Hauxley. Elsewhere, one to nine were noted at twelve coastal localities between Tynemouth and Berwick.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

At Seaton Sluice, small numbers were noted after the first two flew N on 20th with a maximum of 22 N on 25th (SSWT). Elsewhere, the first returning birds were one at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 14th (SR) and two at St Mary's Island on 17th (CB) with the main influx commencing on 21st with a maximum of 40 at East Chevington, North Pool on 28th (EC/JSB) and one to eight at Arcot Pond, Big Waters NWT, Killingworth Lake and Tynemouth (STH/LJM/DM/GB/AJ/DRW/TRD/JD).

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

The first record at Seaton Sluice was 4N on 25th with few thereafter (SSWT). A very early sighting was two at Cocklawburn on 6th (MHu) and two flew N at Craster on 15th (MJC). East Chevington North Pool held one on 21st (TB/TRD/JD) rising to six on 23rd (AJR), one flew N at Tynemouth on 22nd (DRW) and two passed Snab Point on 27th (PRM).

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Small numbers passed Seaton Sluice until 22nd when 890 passed N in five hours and on 26th with 2,200N in five hours. Movement elsewhere included 800 N in one hour at Howick on 26th (BS), 550 per hour N at Cocklawburn on 10th, 360N per hour at Berwick pier on 25th (MHu) and continuous movement up and down the Tyne at Howdon on 17th (CB). Totals elsewhere were 350-400 at Tynemouth Priory cliffs on 18th (SPP) and 20-50 at Dunstanburgh, Holy Island and Rockcliffe.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Double-figure counts were 93 at Grindon Lough (PRM), 58 at Castle Island (DM) and 25 at Killingworth Lake (DM). One or two were at five other localities.

A Black-headed Gull calls

Howdon Wetland

Colin Bradshaw

**Little Gull** *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

An immature was seen at Alnwick, Charlton Mires Flash on 14th and 17th (AH) and at Big Waters NWT three 1st-summer birds stayed briefly on 30th (GB).

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Surprisingly, only one record of an immature at Castle Island on 26th (JBu).

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Good numbers were recorded throughout at Seaton Sluice, mainly moving N, with 460 N on 8th and 375 N on 25th (SSWT). On 2nd, 400 were at Haughton Strother GP (MR) and the only other count was four at Castle Island (DM).

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

Well reported, with the largest concentration of 150, mainly immatures, feeding in fields at Forestburn Gate on 23rd (JR). Elsewhere, the peak count for Swallow Pond was 37 on 16th (GPK) with 15 in a high-tide roost on the Tyne at Byker on 4th (DM). Up to ten were at Bothal Pond, Castle Island, Derwent Reservoir, Cramlington, Cullercoats Bay, Ellington, Exhibition Park, Grindon Lough, Howdon, Jesmond Dene, Killingworth Lake, Leazes Park, the River Tweed Estuary, Seaton Sluice WT and Silverlink.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argenteus*

A WeBS survey in the Tweed Estuary included 390 on 7th (MHu), a total of 177 were on Swallow Pond and nearby fields on 19th (CDH) and 95 were on Castle Island on 1st (DM). Gatherings of 20-70 were on the River Tyne at Byker, Haughton Strother GP and Whittle Dene Reservoirs (DM/MR/SR) with one to eight at six other localities..

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoides*

An adult was on the sea at Beacon Point (Newbiggin) on 17th (NNBC) and single immature birds were recorded at St Mary's Island on 1st (SPP), Tynemouth on 3rd and 5th (SPP) and 25th (DRW) and Castle Island on 23rd (TF/JFa).

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Fourteen were at Grindon Lough, eight in the River Tweed Estuary, four at Castle Island and singles on the River Tyne at Byker.

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

Eight at Southfield Green (Cramlington) on 1st and present at Jesmond Dene during the month (DM/MJCo).

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

A flock of 57 at Coldwell on 2nd (SW), 24 at Druridge Lane on 14th (TB), 16 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 5th (MR), 14 at Druridge on 18th (TRD/JD) with six at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 23rd and five at Jesmond Dene on 16th. One to four were at 15 other widespread localities.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

A large flock of 1,000, probably continental winterers, was at Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield) on 28th (IFo), 755 opposite members hide at Holywell on 19th (CB), 300 at Boulmer on 10th (JAR), 95 at Rising Sun CP (Wallsend) on the same date (CDH) and 36 at Lynemouth Flash on 27th (PRM). One to eight were at Spartylea and Jesmond Dene during the month.



Above: a Barn Owl hunts at Cresswell on 7th April by John Littleton and right: the Tawny Owl in Eddie Crabtree's garden nest box at Stamfordham on 27th April

Long-eared Owl

One was at Longhirst GC on 27th (TB).

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

On 1st singles were at Druridge Pools, Prestwick Carr and St Mary's Island with one at The Snook (Holy Island) on 2nd and three further dates till month end, nr Spartylea and Longhirst Flash on 7th, Druridge Pools on 10th, Cheswick Dunes on 16th, Alnwick Moor on 27th and Ross Links on 30th.

Swift (*Apus apus*)

Two at Big Waters on 30th (GB) with the first north at Tynemouth on 15th (DRW), over Budge fields on 24th (ADMc) and Druridge pools on 30th (TF/JFa).

Hoopoe *Upopa epops*

A lucky observer saw and photographed a bird for 15 minutes at 1600h at the hide at Derwent Reservoir on 17th April (John Hall).

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Two were at Jesmond Dene on 2nd (MJCo), singing at Ouseburn (South Gosforth) on 7th (PJA) and at Hagg Bank (Wylam) on 21st (SW). Singles were at a further 15 widespread localities.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Four all month at Spartylea (CT), four including two fledged young at Gosforth on 12th (STE), two at Longbenton on 24th and one at Rising Sun CP (Wallsend) on 19th.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

At least three were in a nest with sitting adult at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) on 8th (ALT) all other reports being singles from Cresswell Pond and Humshaugh on several dates, Longhorsley on 13th, Prestwick Carr on 14th and Longhorsley Moor on 29th.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Singles near reserve at Big Waters on 9th (GB) and Derwent Reservoir in 13th, 18th & 19th (IFo).

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Two called all month at Spartylea (CT) and a pair nested at Lemmington Hall (Edlingham) on 7th (PHa/AHa). Singles regularly at nest box at Stamfordham and at Ashington, Derwent Reservoir, Ellington, Holywell Dene, Howick and Rothbury.



Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Present all month at Prestwick Carr, at Hauxley NWT on 1st, Kyloe on 2nd, Kielder Castle on 8th, Glen Ridley Bridge on 15th, Chugdon Wood (Ellington), Fourstones Quarry, Woodhorn Flashes all on 16th, Haughton Strother on 19th, Netherwitton Common on 21st, Howick and Wallington Halls on 24th, Dukeshouse (Hexham) and Craggside (Rothbury) on 27th, Letah Wood (Hexham) on 29th and Langleeford (Harthope Valley) on 30th.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

A high count of seven at Gosforth Park NR on 14th (MJC), three at Arcot Hall GC on 14th and Jesmond Dene on 2nd (DM/MJCo) with a pair nest building at Armstrong Park all month, two at Spartylea on 1st, Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 17th, 18th & 20th and at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 29th. Singles were at 16 further locations.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

A pair was observed mating at Backworth on 28th (ASJ) and two birds were also seen at East Chevington on 14th (PRM) and in the Harthope Valley on 28th (MJC). Single birds were at 24 sites during April.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

At or near the coast single birds were at Fenham Flats on 8th (IBDa/KDa), Holy Island on 15th (ADM), Rockcliffe (Brows Bat) and Tynemouth on 17th (IJ/DRW) and single birds were at inland sites on 3rd, 25th and 26th.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

A pair was noted on territory on 2nd (CGK *et al.*) and at three other inland sites on 2nd, 13th and 14th (SW/PRM). At or near the coast single birds were at St Mary's Island on 1st (SPP), Seaton Sluice on 5th (SSWT), and Boulmer on 17th (BS) and at Needles Eye (Berwick) on 19th (BWG).

Ring-necked Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

Two flew SW at Gosforth Garden Village on 4th (MJC).

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*

The individual at Prestwick Carr was seen on 1st / 2nd (GB/PCF) and fed intensively over that weekend but was not seen thereafter having been present for 141 days.

A bird was photographed on an Osprey nest at Kielder on 1st. The resident Osprey soon chased it off. (Joana Daley).



A Great Grey Shrike uses an Osprey nest at Kielder as a vantage point
Probably a unique photograph (Forestry Commission/Joanna Dailey)

Magpie *Pica pica*

Just one report of four at Jesmond Dene on 7th (MJCo).

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

On 3rd five were at Gosforth Park NR with three there on 3rd (MSH/MJC), two pairs at Wylam on 1st (STE), three at Howick Pond / East Arboretum on 2nd, Ulgham Lane and Ellington Dene on 29th. One to two were at 17 other widespread localities.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Up to 25 were seen at Spartylea all month (CT), three at Jesmond Dene and nest building at Gosforth Garden Village and Howick.

A Jackdaw

Howdon

Colin Bradshaw

**Rook** *Corvus frugilegus*

Rookeries in the Fontburn area had 32 apparently occupied nests on a BBS count on 29th (TD) with nine at Cramlington Hall on 2nd and six at Seaton Burn on 4th (DM). On 8th 43 were at Carraw. 33 at Winshiels and 22 at Haltwhistle (SW). Six flew east at The Snook (Holy Island) on 2nd (MJC) with two to four over the Tyne at Tynemouth on four dates being notable for the location (DRW).

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Record passage numbers at Seaton Sluice with 195N and 39S over the sea during the month (SSWT) with 58W over Holy Island on 30th and 52 on 23rd (MJC/ADM). 29 were at Hemscott Hill Links on 1st, ten flew in off sea at Budle Bay on 23rd, seven with three active nests at Longhorsley Moor on 9th, six at former Spiller's Mill (Byker) on 27th and one to five at four other locations.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

One was at St Mary's Island on 9th (JBu/AC) before flying W. On 14th one was seen at Boulmer, Alnwick and Hipsburn with presumably the same bird in field at Druridge Lane and remained in the Druridge area till 21st (TB *et al.*). One was also on rocks at Seaton Sluice at first light on 21st before flying N, the first record for the observer in 35 years. (MH).

Raven *Corvus corax*

Five were at Corby's Crag (Edlingham) on 26th (MJC) with two at Breamish Valley on 1st and 18th, Fourstones Quarry on 16th, Kyloe Shin on 28th and Ford on 29th. Singles were at Craster, Hedgehope and Hexhamshire Common.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

On 7th five were found at Jesmond Dene (MJCo) with two at Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 8th, Arcot Hall GC on 14th, Wallsend Rising Sun CP on 19th and Wedderburn Leap on 28th (DM/CDH/AB/LB). Singles were at eight other locations.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus*

One was at Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 2nd (DRW).

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Up to ten were at Spartylea all month (CT), two pairs completed nest building in two boxes at Fulbeck (Morpeth) (TD) and three were in Jesmond Dene on 16th (MJCo).

Great Tit *Parus major*

Six the peak in Jesmond Dene on 25th (MJCo), four all month at Spartylea (CT) and a female nest building at Humshaugh on 1st (SW).

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

At Spartylea six were seen all month (CT), four on feeders at Tynemouth on 30th (CB), three at Jesmond Dene on 16th (MJCo) and two at Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 9th (MNC).

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

Pairs at Prestwick Carr on 15th at Linden Hall and Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) on 17th and 29th (PCF/NFO/ASJ). Singles were at Backworth on 2nd, Bedlington on 3rd, Longhorsley Common and Craster on 15th and Wallsend Rising Sun CP on 25th.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

A peak of three at Linden Hall (Longhorsley) on 6th with singles present daily (NFO), two at Borough Woods (Morpeth) on 2nd, Fontburn on 29th and Nunnykirk on the same date (TF/JFa/TD/GB). Singles were at Hagg Bank Wylam and Nunnykirk.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

On 29th 96 were at Holy Island (MJC), 27 at Allendale on 30th, 24 at Simonside on 29th (ASJ), 15 at Seghill Tip on 9th (CGK) and 12 at Weetslade Colliery CP on 5th (LJM). One to eight were at seven other widespread localities.

Shore Lark *Eremophila alpestris*

Four were present at Boulmer till at least 13th with two remaining till the month end (BS *et al.*).



A Shore Lark at Chibburn on 5th April by John Littleton

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Very well reported with some large counts of 420 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 11th (SR), 403 at Horncliffe on 9th (JDL), 350 at Big Waters on 24th (SPP), 300 at East Chevington on 11th (MH/AA) with 200-240 there on 18th and 21st, 200+ at Branton on 28th (IBDa/KDa), 150 at West Ord (Berwick) on 30th (MHu) and 120 at Haughton Strother on 19th (MR). Peak counts at other locations were 100 at Capheaton on 6th and Bothal Pond on 25th, 75 at Killingworth Lake on 3rd, 50 at Beanley on 14th, 40 at Wark on 8th and QEII CP on 27th. One to 30 were reported from a further 29 widespread localities.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Returning birds seen on 1st with three N at East Chevington and two N at Druridge Pools (MJC/TF/JFa) the next not till 6th with singles at Ellington and Gosforth Garden Village. Thereafter one to ten were recorded at 26 widespread localities till 15th. Peak counts occurred after that date with 50 at Holywell Pond on 17th (ASJ), 35 at Horncliffe on 28th (JDL), 22 at Caistron on 20th (AJR) and 20 at Bothal Pond on 16th, Cresswell Pond on 17th, Woodhorn Flashes and QEII CP on 27th. 60 per hour headed west at Budle Point on 21st (CGK/GPK).



A Swallow over Druridge Pools on 26th April by John Littleton

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

A slow build up with a single at Lynemouth on 2nd (TB), one N at Gosforth Garden Village on 4th and Ellington on 5th (MJC/TB) with two N at Woodhorn Churchyard on 11th and one N at Cresswell Pond on 14th. The peak counts were six over (Wagtail Farm) Rothbury on 22nd (JD), five at Swallow Pond (Wallsend) on 20th (GPK *et al.*), three at Longframlington Common on 16th and two at Holy Island on 23rd, Derwent Reservoir on 26th and Cramlington on 28th but many were reported at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 20th. Singles were at nine other locations from 17th till month end.



A House Martin over Druridge Pools on 26th April by John Littleton

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica*

Seen twice for a few minutes on 10th at East Chevington South Pool before flying off S (ADMc).

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Ten at Castle Island was the largest count (PRM). Elsewhere one to two were noted at a further 13 localities, including a pair nest building at East Ord and another pair at a nest site at Ellington.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

The first report of this increasingly rare breeding species was a singing male at the traditional Allen Banks locality on 30th (ASJ).

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

There were 85 records from a total of 71 localities in April. Passage birds included 16 at Holy Island on 30th and 14 trapped and ringed at Bamburgh during the month. High counts of singing birds included 22 at Branton GP on 9th (MJC), 17 at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) on 14th, 15 between Halfpenny Woods-Kitty Brewster on 4th, 13 at Gosforth Park NR on 14th, 12 at Arcot Hall GC on 14th, 11 at Cramlington (Brockwell) on 16th and ten at Plessey Woods on 25th. Elsewhere seven to eight were noted at Breamish Valley, Cramlington (Valley Park), Craster, Derwent Reservoir, Harthope Valley, Jesmond Dene, Longhorsley Moor and Rising Sun CP.



A Chiffchaff
Branton GPs
Tim Dean
9th April

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

There were 91 records from a total of 61 localities in April. Nine passage birds on Holy Island on 29th increased to 29 on the following day (MJC/ADM). A high count of 49 singing birds was made between Heighleygate-Longhorsley (4km) on 29th (ASJ), while elsewhere further counts of singing birds included 25 at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) and 20 at Wingates on 29th, 17 at Breamish Valley on 18th, 15 at Harthope Valley on 28th, 12 at Gosforth Park NR on 14th, 11 at Derwent Reservoir on 22nd and ten at Prestwick Carr on 29th; six to eight were also noted at Branton GP, Caistron, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Spartylea and Spindleston.



A Willow Warbler
Upper Coquet Valley
by Janet Dean on 19th April

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

A total of 22 (21 males / one female) were reported from Aydon (Corbridge) on 20th (RB/MB), 14 singing males were noted at Holywell Dene and eight at Backworth on 25th; eight birds were also in song at Swallow Pond on 12th and two displaying pairs and four in song were at Plessey Woods on 25th. A total of six were trapped and ringed at Bamburgh during the month, while counts of four to five came from Arcot Hall GC, Berwick, Cramlington (Valley Park), Holy Island (30th), Jesmond Dene and Longhorsley Common. One to three were reported from a further 46 localities.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

The first was at Berwick (Castlehills) on 13th (MHu), followed by further singles at Red House Farm on 20th and well inland at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 21st. Two were at Longhorsley on 30th and singles at Harthope Valley on 28th, Longhorsley Moor on 29th and Airy Holm Reservoir, Berwick (Middle Ord pond) and Hulne Park on 30th.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

A very early arrival was near Maiden's Hall (West Chevington) on 9th (ADMc). Another was at Big Waters by 24th, while on 30th two were at Cramlington and singles at Budle Point, Tynemouth and West Hartford.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

One singing at Druridge Pools on 14th and another at Prestwick Carr on 17th were the first arrivals (PRM/PCF). Three were at Holy Island and three at Budle Point on 30th, with two at Brier Dene Farm, Ellington and Cramlington (Brockwell) on the same date. Elsewhere singles were noted at Backworth on 20th, Budle Bay and Ellington on 23rd, Lynemouth on 24th, St Mary's Island and Woodhorn Flashes on 27th, Arcot Pond and Aydon (Corbridge) on 28th and near Humshaugh and Newbiggin on 30th.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

The first arrival was at Prestwick Carr on 9th, numbers here increasing to seven by 23rd (PCF). Further singles were at Arcot Pond and St Mary's Island from 14th-16th. Up to three were at East Chevington from 20th, with two reported from Berwick, Budle Bay, Chugdon Wood (Ellington), Druridge Pools, Fontburn, St Mary's Island and West Hartford. Singles were also noted at Big Waters, East Sleekburn, Ellington, Lynemouth Flash and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.



Reeling Grasshopper Warbler on 23rd April
Druridge Pools by John Littleton

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

The first arrivals were at Caistrion on 12th (JD) and East Chevington on 14th (PRM). The peak count from Prestwick Carr was seven on 29th (PCF), while singing birds included five at Budle Bay on 28th, four at Backworth Pond on 27th and three at Holy Island Lough on 29th. Elsewhere one to two were reported from Arcot Pond, Bamburgh, Big Waters, Branton GP, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, St Mary's Island and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

The first arrivals were at East Chevington with one singing on 21st (TRD/JD/TB) and it or another at the Chibburn mouth on 30th (PRC).

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

The final report of this winter period was a flock of 14 in a garden at South Blyth on 1st (GB).

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Up to five in Jesmond Dene included at least one nesting pair (MJCo/DHWP). Four were noted at Simonburn, three + at Gosforth Park NR, three at Furnace Bridge (Bedlington), Howick Pond, Ulgham Lane and Wallington Hall, with one to two at a further 12 localities, including nesting pairs at Leazes Park and Spartylea.

A Nuthatch at a feeder
Craggside NT
29th April
Janet Dean



Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

One to two were reported from 16 localities. Nest building was noted at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 16th (TB) and a pair was feeding young in a nest at Jesmond Dene (BHWB).

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Reports of singing birds included 19 at Holywell Dene on 27th (ASJ), ten at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 19th and seven at Longhorsley Moor on 7th. Breeding was confirmed at Letah Wood (Hexham), Longhorsley and Wallington Hall.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

A flock of 30+ at Derwent Reservoir on 19th, loosely associated with Fieldfares, may have been late continental migrants. At Spartylea, four to 12 were noted throughout and two nesting pairs were at Fulbeck (Morpeth).

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Two breeding pairs were at Spartylea throughout the month (CT) and two pairs at Furnace Bridge (River Blyth) throughout, included a mating pair (LJM). Breeding was also confirmed at Hartford Bridge (Bedlington), Harthope Valley, Hulne Park, Wallington Hall and Waters Meet (Hexham). One to two were reported from a further seven localities.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

Peak counts from the Cheviots were nine at College Valley on 13th (a loose flock of seven plus a territorial pair), seven (five singing males and two females) at Harthope Valley on 28th and one in the Breamish Valley on 18th and 28th (MJC/NFO). Elsewhere, two appeared to be collecting nest material at Thorngraston Common on 9th and a singing male was at Sipton Burn (Allendale) on 30th. A passage bird was at Holywell Grange on 11th, another at Druridge Pools on 14th and 17th, while on Holy Island there were one to two on 15th and four on 30th.



A Ring Ouzel at Druridge Pools on 13th April by Chris Barlow

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

12 passage birds were at Beal on 2nd (MJC) and four at Holy Island also on 2nd. Six were noted at Harrow Bog (College Valley) on 23rd and four were at Spartylea and Jesmond Dene. Two at Cramlington on 25th included a leucistic bird.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

The largest gatherings were 200 at Haltwhistle Common on 20th (SW), 185+ at Grindon Lough on 7th and 160 at Derwent Reservoir on 19th. Elsewhere flocks of 100-135 were reported from Berwick Moor, Carraw, Hexhamshire Common, Whitley Chapel and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, with a further 80 at Brocolitia and 65 at Kirkhaugh (South Tynedale) on 4th-5th. Counts of 30-50 came from East Bolton, Cottonshope, Humshaugh, Ingram, Linden Hall, Prior House, Sioan's Farm and Tarsset, with up to 25 from a further ten localities including a single bird feeding deep in the undergrowth, in potential breeding habitat at Langleeford (Harthope Valley) on 26th and seven passage birds at Holy Island on 30th.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Nine were counted on the Yoke Burn (Upper Coquetdale) during a 2km walk on 26th (JR). Seven were singing at Arcot Hall GC on 14th and seven were in song at Holywell Dene on 27th. Up to six were noted at Spartylea during the month and four were singing at Longhorsley Moor on 7th. One to two were also reported from Corbridge, Howdon, Jesmond Dene, Letah

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

There were very few reports this month, suggesting an early exodus. Fifteen were at Humshaugh and six at Corbridge on 1st and two at Swallow Pond on 8th. All other sightings were of single birds at five localities, including the final record from Holy Island on 15th.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

The highest count this month was 12 in the Harthope Valley on 28th, which included a pair with two fledged young mobbing a Sparrowhawk carrying prey, possibly a third fledgling. Breeding was also confirmed at Furnace Bridge (River Blyth), Humshaugh, Longhorsley, Mitford and Rising Sun CP. Six were at Whittle Dene on 15th, five in Jesmond Dene (three sites), two pairs in Exhibition Park and three at Gosforth Park NR. Singing birds were noted at Fulbeck (Morpeth), Hancock Museum (Newcastle City Centre) and Linton Ponds, with one to two at a further five localities.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Nine were noted at Prestwick Carr on 1st (PCF) and nine were singing at Longhorsley Moor on 9th (AB/LB). Six were reported from Holy Island on 30th, while four were at Spartylea throughout the month and at Jesmond Dene on 16th. Two were noted at College Valley and at Letah Wood (Hexham).

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

The first report was from Rothbury on 27th, where a single was singing at Old Railway line (TRD/JD). At the favoured locality of Allen Banks there were counts of up to four males and a female from 28th-30th (AA/ASJ), while another regular site at Nunykirk held three males and a female on 29th (GB/ASJ). Three were noted at Letah Wood (Hexham) and a single was at Fontburn on 29th. A passage bird was at Tynemouth on 23rd.

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

A very early arrival was a male at Muckley near Longhorsley on 3rd (AB/LB). A female on Holy Island on 7th was followed by a more general arrival from mid-month, including birds at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) on 15th, Derwent Reservoir on 17th, Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) and Longframlington (two) on 21st and Meadow Grange (Berwick) on 14th. By the end of the month there were counts of eight between Longhorsley and Wingates and four at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) on 29th (ASJ), three at Harthope Valley on 28th and two at Letah Wood (Hexham) on 29th. Singles were also reported from Mitford on 29th, Prestwick Carr on 24th and Rothbury (Old Railway line) on 27th.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

The first arrival was a single at Hawsen Burn (Harthope Valley) on 29th (IBDa/KDa). The 30th produced three at Harthope Linn (EHa), two at Acton Moor (Allendale) and two on Holy Island.

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

The peak count from Bewick Moor was four pairs on 11th; the male bird of a pair here on 19th showed many characteristics of the **Continental race** *S.r. rubicola* (MJC). Two pairs were in the Alwin Valley on 8th and at Craggside on 26th, while up to four were at Druridge during the month. Elsewhere peak counts were three on Holy Island and at Lynemouth Flash, two were at Boulmer, Cocklawburn, East Chevington, Hawsen Burn (Harthope Valley), Longframlington Common and Low Newton and singles at Howick, Prestwick Carr, Shillmoor Farm (Upper Coquetdale), Stag Rocks and Tynemouth (Long Sands).



Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

A huge 'fall' occurred on the final day of the month, with over 200 (including 48 in a single field) in the Budle Bay area (GPK) and 99 on Holy Island (MJC/ADM); in addition 15 were noted at Ellington, ten at Bradford Kaims and four at Ord Moor (Berwick) on the same day. The latter and some of the Holy Island birds showed characteristics of the **Greenland race** *O.o.leucorhoa*. An earlier more modest arrival produced peak counts of 15 at St Mary's Island, 11 at Old Hartley, eight at Craster and seven at Boulmer from 13th-16th. Inland, six to nine were noted at Derwent Reservoir on four dates from 13th-26th, eight were at Prestwick Carr on 24th, six at Allendale on 30th and at Harthope Valley on 8th and five were at Simonside on 14th. Five were at Low Newton on 21st and four at Longhoughton Steel on 15th and at Swallow Pond on 12th, with one to three at a further 24 localities.



A Wheatear on Boulmer Beach
27th April by Mike Carr

**Dunnock** *Prunella modularis*

Seven were at Prestwick Carr on 8th(PCF). Six noted at Spartylea on 1st and four at Jesmond Dene on 16th.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

30 were noted at Druridge on 10th with 20 also at Widdrington (CB/JGS). Seven were at Spartylea all month and six to eight at garden feeders in Tynemouth and Cullercoats.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

46 was the peak count of a flock at Chugdon Wood(Ellington) during the month(TB). 28 were observed at Haughton Strother on 19th(MR). 25 were at Ulgham Lane on 29th(TB). 15 were at Waren Mill Caravan Park throughout the month. 12 was a good garden count at Corbridge on 14th(MR). Ten were seen at Holywell and Weetslade and one to eight were at 14 further sites including birds at garden feeders at Longbenton and Dinnington, and nesting in a house gutter at Heddon.

A Tree Sparrow

Holywell

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

The regular site of Whittle Dene held seven on 20th (SR). Four were at Haughton Strother on 25th (MR). Three at Hoppen Kiln Flash on 29th (GPK). One to two at seven further sites during the month.

Blue Headed Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

One was at Low Newton Scrape on 22nd and one at Boulmer on 27th (NNBC/BS).

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Three pairs were found between Hartford Bridge and Plessey Mill Farm on 25th and at Harthope Valley on 29th, including a nestbuilding pair (LJM/MJC). Up to four were at Spartylea all month (CT), with four at Furnace Bridge and Jesmond Dene on several dates. Three at Hulne Park on 30th. One to two were at a further 23 sites, including a nest of five young at Upper Coquetdale on 26th.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrelli*

Four were at Longhoughton Steel on 15th and at St. Mary's Island on 20th (SW/ASJ). Three seen at Northumberland Park (North Shields) (MNC). One to two were at seven other locations during April.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba alba*

Birds were present all month at Haughton Strother, with a peak of 13 on 25th (MR). Eight were at Low Newton with five at East Chevington on 21st (TRD/JD/JF/TF). One to four were seen at a further 19 widespread sites during the month.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

The first arrivals involved two birds at Haughton Strother on 14th (MR). Five displayed at Netherwitton Common on 23rd (TRD/JD). Beacon Hill/Longhorsley Moor held three to four singing males in the final week (ADMc/ASJ/GB). Four were also displaying on 29th at Windylaw Wood (Wingates) with three at Simonside that day (ASJ). A single was noted at Thrunton Woods on 28th (TRD/JD).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Northward passage at Seaton Sluice involved 96 birds on 4th in two hours (SSWT) with 48 also heading N at East Chevington on 1st, while at Gosforth Garden Village counts of passage birds involved 33 on 4th, 41 on 5th and 32 on 8th (EFC/MJC). 17 were at Prestwick Carr on 5th (PF). In upland breeding areas birds were noted as less common than in recent years by the month's end, possibly due to weeks of cold north winds holding up arrival (ASJ).



A meadow Pipit at East Chevington
Tim Dean on 7th April

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

On 1st at Chibburn (Druridge), eight were present, at least two of which were of the subspecies *Littoralis* (MJC). Three were at Rockcliffe (Cullercoats) on 17th (IJ). Singles were noted at Tynemouth and Boulmer during the month.



A litoralis Rock Pipit at East Chevington by Chris Barlow

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

One to two were found at Druridge Pools on 1st remaining until 7th (TB/GB/TF/JF/TRD/JD).

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Six were at Hexham on 13th (AJH). Up to four were noted at Spartylea until 20th (CT). Four were also at feeders at Cramlington on 4th, with two at garden feeders at Linden Hall on 20th (STH/NFO). Two were last seen at a Stamfordham garden on 13th (EC). Singles were also seen at Kyloe, Kielder, Humshaugh, Swallow Pond and finally at Holy Island on 30th.



A Brambling on a feeder at Linden Hall on 20th April by Neil Osborne

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

An individual of this now very rare county visitor was seen and photographed at a Christon Bank garden on 24th by M. Sparrow.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Up to 14 were noted all month at Spartylea(CT). Eight were at Longhorsley Moor on 9th (AB/LB). Singles were at six sites in

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

12 were at Gosforth Park on 14th (MJC). 12 (six pairs) were noted at Holywell Dene on 27th(ASJ). Six attended garden feeders at Rothbury and five did likewise at Morpeth all month (TRD/JD/TD). One to five were at 16 further sites during the month.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

Five days of cycle rides in Cramlington produced a total of 37 singing males (SJL). Seven at Spartylea all month (CT). One to three were at nine further sites.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

An impressive April flock of 280 birds was found at Coldwell on 2nd (SW). Flocks were also seen of 60 at Haughton Strother on 2nd and two of 30 birds at Holy Island on 23rd (MR/MJC/ADM). 42-47 were at Prestwick Carr, Backworth and Derwent Reservoir during the month (PF/CK/IFo). Flocks of 20-30+ were noted at a further six sites (MSH/ASJ *et al.*). One to 14 were at nine other locations. Six pairs were nest building in Gorse at Holywell by 28th (ASJ).

Twite *Caruelis flavirostris*

40 remained at East Chevington on 7th, dwindling to four by 28th (TRD/JD/AJH). One was in full song here on 2nd (MH). One to six were noted at six other sites, including two birds inland at Haughton Strother on 19th (MR).



A Twite at East Chevington on 4th April by Chris Barlow

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis caberet*

The species was noted as common, in good numbers, at breeding areas at Beacon Hill, Wingates, Simonside and Ingram in the final week with many displaying males and small groups (ASJ). 12 were at Hexham on 13th and up to ten at Spartylea all month. Ten were also at Branton on 14th. One to five were at 15 further sites, including two flying NW over the Snook (Holy Island) on 23rd.

Common Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*

Two were observed with Lesser Redpolls at Mootlaw Quarry on 8th (ALT).

Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Several small family groups were observed this month, totalling 27 birds at both Longframlington Common on 16th and at Cragside on 26th, with three small parties totalling 20 birds at Corby's Crag also on 26th (MJC). 22 were at Beanley Woods on 22nd (IBda/Kda). 14 flew over Linden Hall on 17th (NFO). Two to nine were seen at nine further woodland sites.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

A flock of 60 was at Coldwell on 2nd (SW). At Spartylea, a maximum of 20 was observed from birds present all month (CT). 11 flew NW at Gosforth Garden Village on 8th (MJC). Elsewhere, one to ten were at ten further sites during April.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

At Humshaugh, 30 on 14th increased to 60 by 16th (SW/TSW). Up to 15 were at Spartylea all month (CT). Eight flew N at Gosforth Garden Village on 6th (MJC). Feeders attracted birds at Nunykirk on 29th with six increasing to 13 during the day (GB/ASJ), at Linden Hall, four birds and at Rothbury, five birds (NFO/TRD/JD). One to six were seen at a further 19

sites during the month.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

17 were counted at Whittle Dene on 14th(SR). Five pairs were at East Holywell on 24th (MNC). Nine males sang at Backworth/East Holywell on 23rd, with four singing at Holywell, along Waggonways on 10th (ASJ). Up to eight were noted at Prestwick Carr on various dates and at Ulgham Lane on 29th (PCF/MH/TB). One to four were seen at nine other sites.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Seven were at Prestwick Carr on 1st and six to seven males at Backworth and Holywell Pond and at St. Mary's during the month (PCF/ASJ). Five were at Humshaugh on 2nd (MR) and at Upper Coquetdale on 29th (ASJ). Four were noted at Derwent Reservoir on 24th (IFo). One to three were at six further sites including singing males at Killingworth Lake and Newcastle Town Moor (ASJ/GB).



A male Reed Bunting at Longframlington Common by Janet Dean on 12th April

ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN

Escapes

Diamond Dove *Geopelia cuneata*

A diamond dove was a resident during the last week of April in a Woolsington garden(I. McCran per SRB).

A Diamond Dove

Woolsington

I McCran



Hybrids

No Sightings

Birds of Unknown Origin

No Sightings

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Alnwick Wildlife Group, 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), Steve Laing (Red Grouse to Black-necked Grebe), Trevor Blake (Honey-buzzard to Crane), Tom Brewis (Avocet to Godwit), Clive Hampton (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 Jack (Dunnock to Corn Bunting).

Data Manager is Tom Brewis

Thanks to David Sanders of NNBC for providing data.

Proof reading was by Mike Smith.

Mail distribution by Paul Stewart.

Edited by Steve Barrett NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.com

RECORD SUBMISSION

Please email records for the month to ntbc.records@googlemail.com

Please email for a copy of the standard spreadsheet and other details.

Location names and grid references: Please use of standard location names and include grid references as this 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

Annual membership costs £10 for a junior, £30 for an individual, and £32 for a family.

For membership enquiries please contact ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

If you internet bank you can pay online: please include your name in the ref. It is helpful if you email me to let me know when you've made the transfer ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

If you decide to set up a standing order please date the first payment at least a fortnight from your posting date to allow time to process with the bank. You can also set up your standing order directly with your bank if you wish; just let me know.

Finally, if you know anyone who might like to join NTBC please pass on the club information - new members are always welcome.

Jo Bentley - Hon Treasurer

NTBC WEB SITE

The club website is an excellent online resource for anyone interested in birds. There are:

Photo Galleries – Here you can view hundreds of photos of birds from Northumberland, Newcastle and North Tyneside. Members are encouraged to contribute their own photos. Simply send them to galleries@ntbc.org.uk

Sightings – Here you can view reports of birds recently reported in the County. Anyone who would like to contribute and post sightings to this page, please email sightings@ntbc.org.uk Please note this section is moderated, so there may be a short delay before your record appears.

There are also County Checklists, Records Committee updates, Information on important Surveys, useful articles and reports on Bird ID and Overseas Birding Trips....and much more...

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

New content such as Birding Trip Reports etc. is always welcome and very much appreciated.

To find out more please visit www.ntbc.org.uk

Northern Experience PELAGIC Trip Programme 2017

(in association with the Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club)

4-hour evening pelagics departing Royal Quays Marina, 18:00h and Mill Dam (South Shields), 18:10h. Cost £30/person.

Target species; ***Storm Petrel, skuas, shearwaters, cetaceans***

Wednesday 28th June, Wednesday 5th July, Monday 10th July, Wednesday 12th July,

Wednesday 2nd August and Wednesday 9th August

10-hour 'Northumberland Ultimate Pelagic' to the Farne Deeps departing Royal Quays Marina, 08:00h and Mill Dam (South Shields) 08:10h. Cost £70/person. Target species; ***White-beaked Dolphin, Common Dolphin, Minke Whale, skuas, shearwaters, storm petrels***

Wednesday 16th August, Saturday 26th August, Saturday 2nd August,

Wednesday 13th August and Saturday 16th September

Our pelagic trips from Royal Quays in 2017 will take place on the *JFK2*, a 10m catamaran, offering an outstanding vantage point for observation of wildlife to all on board. All of our Royal Quays pelagics are limited to a maximum of 12 participants. Some truly outstanding opportunities for photography occur on our pelagic trips as well, with many birds and cetaceans approaching very close to the boat. Our 4hr sailing prices are at a discounted rate for members of NTBC/DBC.

Our pelagic trips have proved very successful and they are an excellent way to enjoy our offshore wildlife. More experienced birders may well find that the North Sea is a new frontier for their birding. Pelagic birding is very unpredictable but highlights of our trips have included the 1st British North Sea ***Wilson's Petrel*** (2002), ***Long-tailed Skua*** (2002, 2014), ***Sabine's Gull*** (2005), ***Great Shearwater*** (2007), ***Balearic Shearwater*** (2007, 2013), ***Pomarine Skua*** (2007, 2012, 2014), ***Grey Phalarope*** (2010, 2012), ***Red-necked Phalarope*** (2013), excellent views of ***Sooty Shearwater*** in each of the last fifteen years, ***Harbour Porpoise*** (2006, 2012-2016), ***Minke Whale*** (2006, 2007, 2008, 2011-2016), ***Orca*** (2013) and several very close encounters with ***White-beaked Dolphin*** in each year since 2010.

Participants should bring their own food and drink and warm/waterproof clothing.

To reserve a place on any of these trips, please contact Martin Kitching martin@newtld.co.uk or (01670) 827465 and send a deposit of £10 per person per trip (cheque payable to 'Northern Experience Wildlife Tours Ltd', non-refundable if you cancel at a later date) to NEWT Ltd, 18 Frances Ville, Scotland Gate, Northumberland, NE62 5ST. The balance of payment is due 2 weeks before sailing.

Martin Kitching

Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

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

Bulletin 2017 No 5

MONTHLY SUMMARY MAY 2017

4th July 2017



CONTENTS

A County cycling day record by Graeme Bowman.

CLASSIFIED LIST HIGHLIGHTS

Quail	Singles near Todburn and at Cheswick.
Great Northern Diver	Summer plumaged individual off Holy Island on 8th.
Black-browed Albatross	Excellent views of one past Cocklawburn on 4th. Two previous records.
Spoonbill	Up to three at Druridge Pools.
Honey-buzzard	One over Ellington on 29th.
Dotterel	Popular coastal record of six at Boulmer on 9th and 10th.
Temminck's Stint	One at Castle Island on 20th and 21st and another at Druridge on 30th.
Red-necked Phalarope	Female for 3rd year at Grindon Lough from 18th.
Jack Snipe	One at Druridge Pools on 3rd and 7th.
Great Skua	One past Berwick on 8th.
Black Guillemot	Summer plumaged adult past Newbiggin on 22nd.
Glaucous Gull	Summering bird at Monks' House Pool from 13th.
Wryneck	One on Holy Island on 6th.
Golden Oriole	Male singing at Gosforth Park on 22nd. Also seen well.
Short-toed Lark	One unusually inland at Catton Moss from 8th to 14th.
Shorelark	One still present up to 28th. Latest County record in Spring.
Red-rumped Swallow	One over Snook on Holy Island on 13th and another at Druridge Pools on 15th.
Yellow-browed Warbler	Singing male on Holy Island on 13th. Very Rare in Spring.
Citrine Wagtail	Exceptional find. Female at Lynemouth Flash on 12th and 13th.
Snow Bunting	Splendid summer male at Newbiggin on 10th.

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 first autumn meeting will be on Thursday September 14th .



A Wood Warbler under the microscope at Holy Island
by Mike Carr on 4th May

FIELD TRIPS

24th September 2017 **East Lothian**

Contact Steve Anderson seaswan@btinternet.com

CLASSIFIED LIST**Mute Swan** *Cygnus olor*

A pre-moult flock at the Tweed Estuary numbered 205 on 15th and included one ringed at Linlithgow Loch, West Lothian on 20th September 2009 (CH), 32 were at Killingworth Lake on 5th (DM), 19-28 at Castle Island (PRM), Howdon (CB) and five to eight at Druridge Pools and Newcastle Leazes Park. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Capheaton Lake	2	15 (8,7)	STE. Fresh broods on 25th
Big Waters	1	8	GB. Fresh cygnets on 7th, probably moved in from 'Little Waters'
Lee Moor Farm (near Little Mill)	1	8	PHa/Aha. On 24th
Annitsford Pond	1	7	LJM. On 16th
Howick Pond	1	7	PHa/Aha. Hatched on 22nd
Holywell Pond	1	6	MSH. On 30th
Howdon	1	6	CB. On 31st
Pauperhaugh (River Coquet)	1	6	IRD. On 28th
Bothal Pond	1	5	TF/JFa. On 20th (seven eggs noted on 14th; TD)
Ex-Longhirst Flash	1	5	TD. On 14th
Grindon Lough	1	1	PRM. On 18th
Newcastle Exhibition Park*	1	1	GB/DM. From 16th. Also 4 unhatched eggs

Pairs on nest were also noted at Arcot Pond, Byker, Greenlee Lough, Killingworth Lake and Shield on the Wall (MRS). A Fox carried a young cygnet in its mouth at Big Waters on 11th (GB). * The adult female at Newcastle Exhibition Park was reportedly killed by a dog (per DM).

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Four were at West Ord on 2nd (MHu) and two on 4th (per NNBC), while singles were at Backworth on 2nd (AJ), Cresswell Pond on 1st (TB), Haughton Strother GP on 14th (MR) and Killingworth Lake on 5th (DM).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Two flew N at Fenham Flats on 6th (JDL), two were at Big Waters on 1st (GB) and singles at Grindon Lough on 4th (PRM) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 17th (SR).

White-fronted Goose *Anser flavirostris*

An individual of the Eurasian *albifrons* race with a damaged wing was at Druridge Pools until at least 7th (TB/TF/JFa/PRM). What may have been the same individual, also with a damaged wing, was at Haughton Strother GP between 14th-31st (MR).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

44 flew N at Ellington on 31st (TB). A total of 328 adults were at Derwent Reservoir on 17th (PRM), 130 at Haughton Strother GP on 28th (MR), 31 at the *Beehive*, Earsdon (MSH), and six to 11 at Bothal Pond, Cocklawburn, Druridge Pools and Grindon Lough. Breeding data were as follows (additional to April unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Hedgeley GP	7	--	LJM. On 23rd.
Branton GP	6	18	LJM. On 23rd. Includes some young from April?
Haughton Strother GP	4	20	MR. On 28th. Includes some young from April?
Druridge Pools	3	12+	MSH/LJM. From 8th
Woodhorn Flashes	2+	22+	CDH/LJM. 22 young on 14th and 16 young on 30th
Brenkley	1	4	PCF. On 9th
Derwent Reservoir	--	197	PRM. On 17th. Probably includes some broods from April.
Gosforth Park NR	--	10	PJA. Well-grown young with three pairs of adults on 11th.

Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens*

A white morph individual was at Woodhorn Flashes briefly on 17th (per NNBC).

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Eight flew S at Ellington on 28th (TB), 38 adults were at Castle Island on 12th (STH), 38 at Grindon Lough on 12th (MRS), 22-25 at Bothal (TF/JFa), Hedgeley GP (DM/ALT/HD) and Linton Ponds (CDH), and Killingworth Lake (AW), and ten to 12 at Arcot and Swallow Ponds, and Newcastle Leazes Park. Two to six were also at Jesmond Dene and New Water Haugh. Breeding data were as follows (additional to April unless otherwise stated):

Canada Goose:- Breeding data

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Branton GP	6	20	LJM. On 23rd
Hedgeley GP	4	--	LJM. On 23rd
Castle Island	3+	22+	STH/PRM. From 12th
Halton-lea-Gate	3	17	SW. On 15th
Druridge Pools	3	15	TD/MSH. From 11th
Haughton Strother GP	2	7	MR. On 16th
Amble Braid	1	7	PRM. On 11th
Gosforth Park NR	1	5	AW. On 9th
Grindon Lough	1	5	PRM. On 18th
Big Waters	1	4	GB. On 15th
St Mary's Wetland	1	4	MSH. Brood of 4 on 17th reduced to 3 by 31st

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Two were at Big Waters on 3rd (GB). On 6th, skeins of 180 and 80 flew N at Berwick (MHu); on 7th, 200 flew E at Acomb (MR), 95 E at Haughton Strother GP (MR), 16 N at Whitley Bay (IJ) and one over at Druridge Pools (TF/JFa); a 'large flock' flew N at East Ord at 2350h on 10th (CH); two flew N at Tynemouth on 28th (SPP); and four moved S at Cheswick Sands on 30th (CH).

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Budle Bay attracted 103 on 29th (PRM), 33 were at Hemscott Hill on 5th (TB), 24 at Boulmer on 10th (TB), and ten to 18 at Amble Braid, Castle Island, Druridge Pools and the Tweed Estuary, and three to six at the Blyth Estuary, Howdon, Swallow Pond and Yarrow Slake. One to two were also at Alnmouth, Derwent Reservoir, Elswick, Haughton Strother GP, Hazlerigg (near Wideopen), Hedgeley GP, Holywell and Middle Ord Ponds, the former Longhirst Flash, Monks' House Pool, St Mary's Wetland and West Ord. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Charlton Mires	2	17	AH. On 27th
Boulmer	1	6	GB/LAR. Fresh ducklings on 29th
Cresswell Pond	1	6	MSH. On 29th

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

Three were at Branton GP on 23rd (LJM), and single pairs at Low Carritheth on 1st (JR), flying upriver at Humshaugh on 7th (MR) and Wark on 7th (PRM). Single birds (all drakes where specified) were at Gosforth Park NR on 28th (PJA), Hexham Green on 18th (ALT), Haughton Strother GP on 16th (MR), Low Angerton on 29th (IRD), and flying over Wark at 2340h on 26th (PRM). More unusual was a drake at Spindlestone Wood pools from 1st-3rd at least (AWG/JDL).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

20 (13 drakes) were at Grindon Lough on 4th (PRM) and nine to 12 between 12th-18th (PRM/MRS), ten at Druridge Pools on 3rd (PRM) fell to five by 8th (MSH), three on 13th (GB) and one up to 17th (TRD), four (three drakes) were at Derwent Reservoir on 17th and two on 24th (PRM), and one to two at Arcot, Bothal, Cresswell and Linton Ponds, Big Waters, Capheaton Lake, the former Longhirst Flash and Plenmeller Common. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Derwent Reservoir	3	19	IFo. First brood of 5 on 21st, then broods of 8 and 6.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Peak counts were 37 at Druridge Pools on 3rd (PRM), 12 at Bothal Pond on 14th and 26th (TD/TF/JFa), and six to nine at Castle Island (PRM), East Chevington (TRD), Howdon (CB) and Linton Ponds (CDH). Three to five were also at Big Waters, Capheaton and Ladyburn Lakes, and Hedgeley GP, and one to two at Caistron, Charlton Mires, Grindon Lough, ex-Longhirst Flash, Lynemouth Flash, Marden Quarry and Woodhorn Flashes.

Teal *Anas crecca*

Ten flew N at Snab Point on 8th (MSH). About 70 at Druridge Pools on 3rd (PRM) fell to 20+ by 8th (MSH), and 63 at Grindon Lough on 4th declined to 18 by 6th (DM) and one by 18th (PRM). Five were at Derwent Reservoir and West Ord, and one to two at Amble Braid, Arcot and Bothal Ponds, Big Waters and the former Longhirst Flash up to 17th.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

37 were at Castle Island on 12th (STH), 35 at West Ord on 2nd (MHu), and 20-26 at Big Waters, Bothal Pond, Grindon Lough, Killingworth Lake and the Tweed Estuary. Breeding data were as follows (additional to April unless otherwise stated):

Mallard Breeding Data:-

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Branton GP	5	20	LJM. On 23rd
'Northumberlandia', Cramlington	4	--	LJM. On 3rd
Druridge Pools	3	17	LJM. On 30th
Stakeford	2	19 (10,9)	GB. On 13th
Whittle Dene Reservoirs	2	18 (10,8)	SR. On 2nd
Bothal Pond	2	12 (6,6)	TD. On 14th
Hedgeley GP	2	9	LJM. On 23rd
Charlton Mires	2	8 (4,4)	PRM. On 29th
Howick	2	--	JAR. Brood of 4 on 11th (as April?)
Broomley Pond, Stocksfield	1	9	IK. Brood of small young
Grindon Lough	1	8	PRM. On 4th
Haughton Strother GP	1	8	MR. On 16th
Newcastle Civic Centre	1	8	DM. Tiny young on 2nd
Castle Island	1	7	MSH. On 22nd
Derwent Reservoir	1	7	IFo. New brood on 9th
Swallow Pond	1	6	GB/LAR. On 27th
Cresswell Pond	1	4	MSH. On 16th
Linton Ponds	1	4	CDH. On 14th
Newcastle Leazes Park	1	1	DM. Tiny young on 11th

Pintail *Anas acuta*

At Druridge Pools, a pair was noted between 1st-3rd (GB/PRM), five birds on 6th (DM/ALT/HD), and a duck on 12th (TB).

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

A pair briefly visited Holy Island Lough on 8th before flying off N (IK). Single drakes were at Haughton Strother GP on 3rd (MR) and Druridge Pools on several dates between 12th-17th (AA/TRD/MSH *et al.*). A duck was at Monks' House Pool on 29th-30th (TB/PRM).

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Small numbers involved peaks of six (four drakes) at Druridge Pools on 3rd (PRM), two pairs at Lynemouth Flash on 18th (TB), five at Cresswell Pond on 1st (GB), three at Monks' House Pool (JDL), and one to two at Arcot, Bothal and Swallow Ponds, Castle Island, Charlton Mires and Longhirst Flash.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

12 (11 drakes) were at Holywell Pond on 30th (MSH), six at Bothal Pond on 6th (DM), six at Swallow Pond on 5th (DM), three at Woodhorn Flashes on 13th (GB), and one to two Arcot Pond, Druridge Pools and Killingworth Lake.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

About 40 were at Killingworth Lake on 1st (AW), 24 at Haughton Strother GP on 1st (MR), and ten to 17 at Bothal Pond (TF/JFa), Capheaton Lake (DM), Castle Island (PRM), Druridge Pools (PRM) and Swallow Pond (DM). Five to nine were at Howdon, Ladyburn and Tynemouth boating lakes, Linton Ponds, Newcastle Leazes Park and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and one to four at 12 further scattered sites.

Scaup *Aythya marila*

One was at Bothal Pond on 6th (DM/ALT/HD).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

34 at Cocklawburn on 27th included 32 drakes (MHu), 20 were at the Tweed Estuary on 7th (MHu), 17 at the Blyth Estuary (PRM), 12-14 at Amble Braid and Budle Bay, and five to nine at Blyth Harbour and Holy Island. Breeding data were as follows:

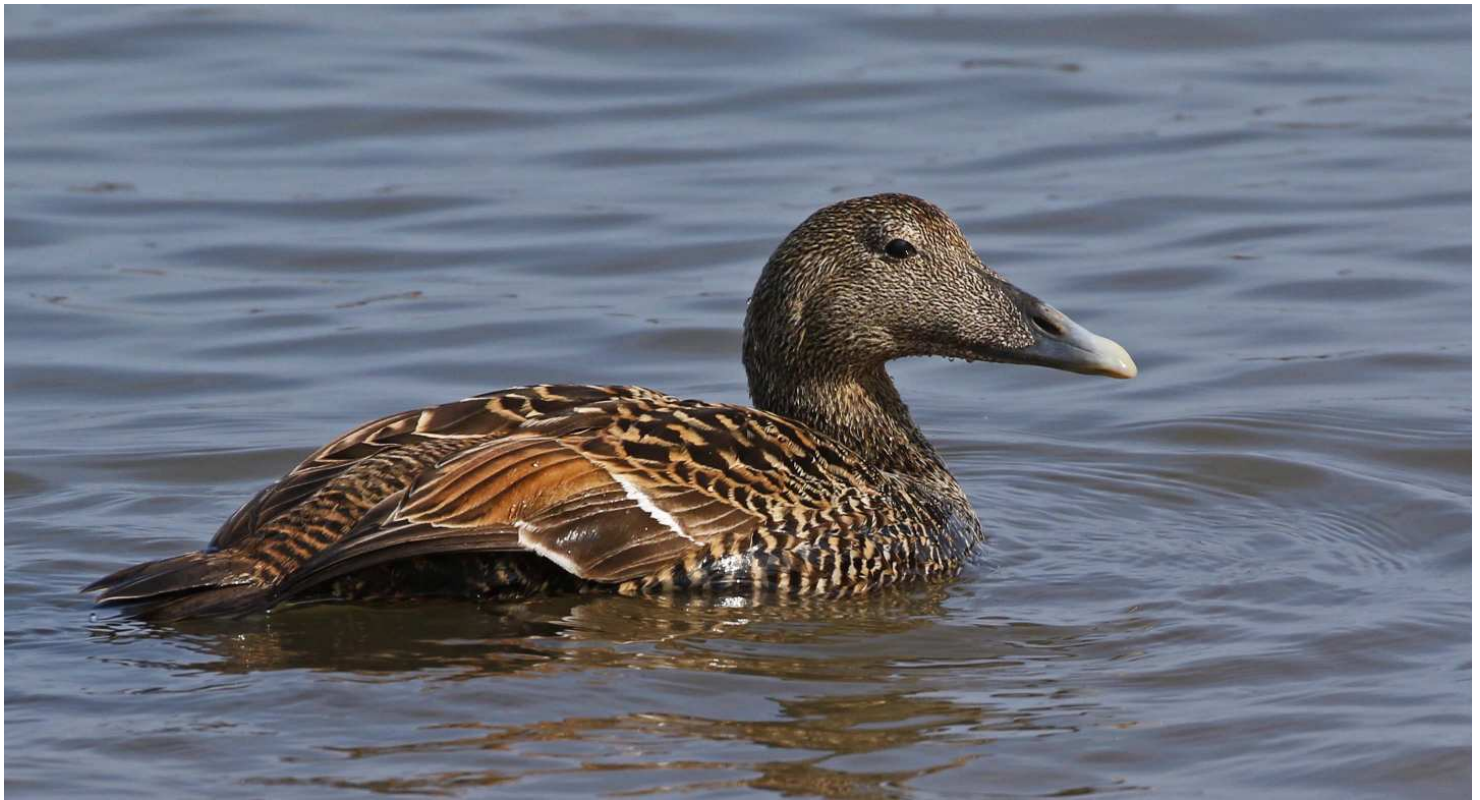
Locality	No. of broods/crèches'	No. of young	Observer/notes
Budle Bay	1	8	PRM. Young accompanied by 6 adult females on 29th
Boulmer	1	3	GB/LAR. On 29th
Howick	1	2	JAR. On 22nd

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

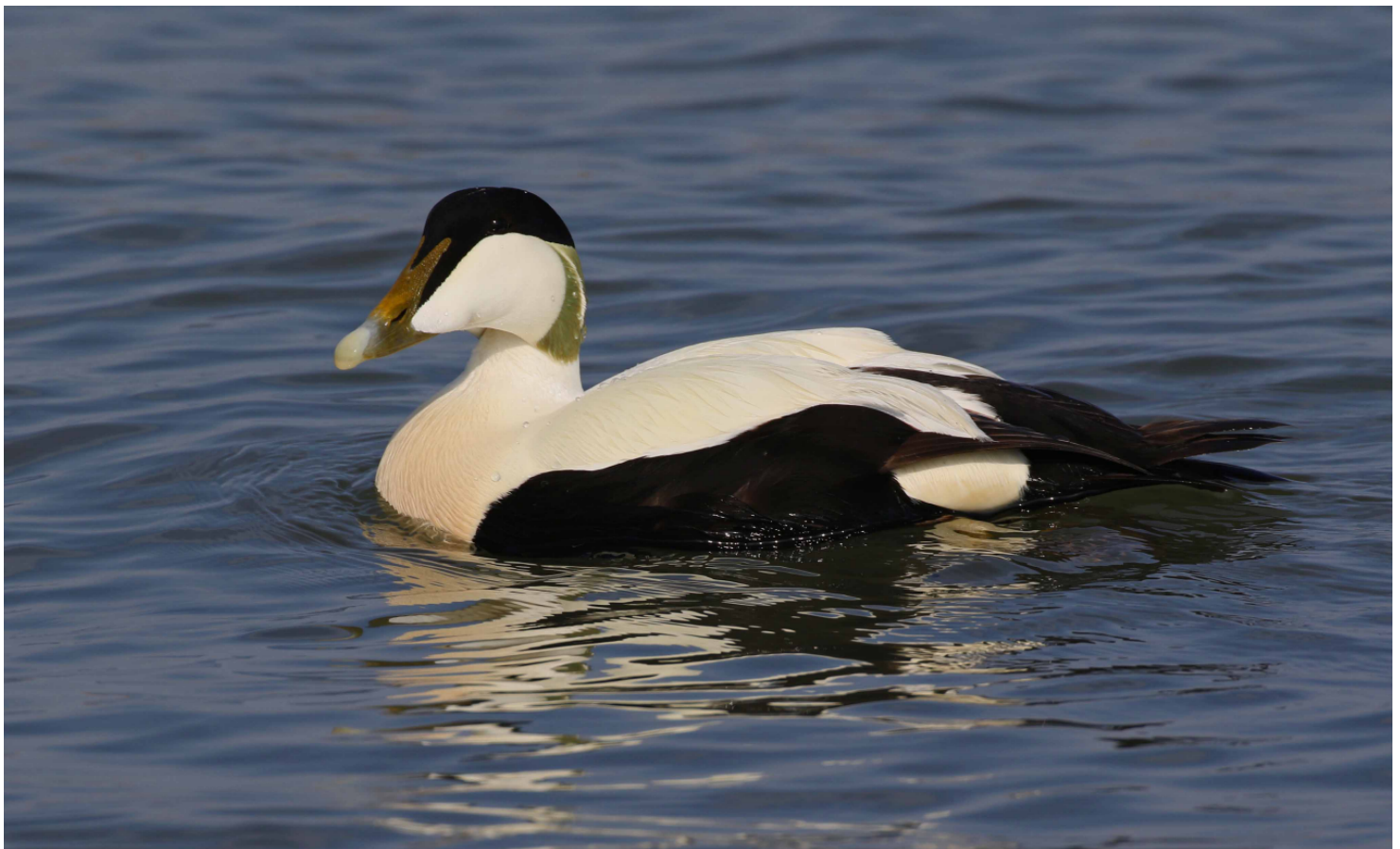
Singles were off Seaton Sluice on 1st (STH), Castle Island on 5th and 7th (TB/TF/JFa) and Bothal Pond on 9th (NFO).

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

70 were at Berwick Little Beach on 5th (JDL), 53 off Seaton Sluice on 2nd (LJM), 41-43 at Newbiggin, the Wansbeck Estuary on 10th and 13th (GB/CH), 35 at Cocklawburn (MHu), 15-18 at North Blyth and Whitley Bay, and three to eight off Cresswell and Stag Rocks. More unusual was a female at Branton GP on 17th (IBDa/KDa).



Eider Ducks from Holy Island on 1st May by Mike Carr



Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

The sole report involved a drake that flew S off Cresswell on 18th (ALT).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Singles were at Druridge Pools on 27th (TF/JFa) and New Water Haugh (River Tweed) on 21st (MHu). Breeding data were as follows (additional to April unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Confidential site	1	8	PHa/AHa. Fresh ducklings on 23rd

In addition to the above, a drake displayed to two females at a different site on 6th (DM/ALT/HD).

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Three flew N at Tynemouth on 8th (DRW). Three were at the Tweed Estuary on 8th (MHu), three at East Chevington north pool on 13th (GB) and singles at Budle Bay and off Druridge Links and, more unusually, at Monks' House Pool on 27th (ADM).

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

A group of 98 at West Ord on 2nd consisted largely of immature birds (MHu), 23 were at Horncliffe on 4th (JDL) and 15 at Holy Island on 27th (IK). Six to nine were at East Ord (MHu) and Holy Island (ADM) and three to four at Derwent Reservoir and New Water Haugh. Reports of one to two also came from Carlscroft (River Coquet), Castle Island, Chollerford, Corbridge, Dilston Mill, East Chevington, Etal, Linnbrigg, Newburn-Wylam, Tynemouth, Wark and Weldon Bridge. Breeding data were as follows (additional to April unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Derwent Reservoir	1+	20	IFo. Single female with new brood of 20 young (all the same size) on 17th! (possibly a 'dump brood'?)

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

One was flushed from a wide grassy verge by the bike-riding observer near Todburn on 14th (NFO) and a single was calling in fields by the railway near Cheswick on 21st (DF).

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

An increase in sightings this month with ten+ present in the Carey Burn/Harthope Valley area on 6th (DM) and 31st (STH), with one to two at Alnwick Moor, Beacon Hill (Longhorsley), Bee-Hive (Earsdon), Bilton (Hipsburn), Chollerford, Derwent Reservoir, Green Pits (Allendale), Greystone Farm (West Allendale), Halton-lea-Gate, Haughton Strother GP, Herd's House (Whitfield Moor), Lough House (Longhorsley) and Ouston Fell.

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

Reported as common in Allendale on 25th with several pairs and young seen (ASJ). 11 were at Ouston Fell on 4th (PRM). A moorland tour on 6th produced a minimum of ten at Allendale Common and Pithouse Fell (Slaley), six at Sipton Burn, four at Plenmeller Common and five at Hawsen Burn (Harthope Valley) (DM). Six were at Acton Fell (Blanchland), two in the Harthope Valley on 31st and one at Catton Moss on 11th.

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

Two at Blanchland Moor on 18th (ALT) and a single there on 6th (DM) were the only records.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Two pairs were at Prestwick Carr on 5th (PCF), four were at Creswell Pond on 27th and Druridge Pools on 30th, but otherwise it was mostly pairs seen at various locations including flying over the A1 near Alnwick, Derwent Reservoir, Guide Post, Hartley Lane (Whitley Bay), Holywell Pond, Laverock Hall (Blyth), Linton, Rowley Burn (Hexhamshire), The Snook (Holy Island), Wallington, Warkworth Lane and Whittle Dene Reservoir. Singles were at Bilton, Blanchland Moor, Chugdon Wood (Ellington) and Linden Hall.

An increasingly
uncommon sight

-
a Grey Partridge

-
Bothal

-
Janet Dean

-
14th May



Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Four were at Spartylea on 25th (CT) and three males were at feeders in Nunnykirk on 6th (DM).

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Five were at Cocklawburn on 16th (MHu) and one to two were seen at Beadnell Haven, Druridge, Meadow Haven (Berwick), Rockcliffe and Spittal Bay (Berwick).

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

Two sightings this month, the first in full summer plumage feeding offshore in rough seas at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) on 8th (IK) followed by one in partial summer plumage offshore at East Chevington on 13th (GB).

Black-browed Albatross *Thalassarche melanophris*

One was at Saltpan Rocks (Cocklawburn) on 4th and watched for only five minutes as it was harried by three Great Black-backed Gulls before heading NE out to sea (MHu).

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

The only passage recorded was a total of 132 heading north in two hours past Annstead (Seahouses) on 8th (DF). 21 were on cliffs at Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) and eight were at nearby Brown's Bay on 20th (IJ). 16 were on nesting ledges at Tynemouth Priory on 5th (DM) and one to four were at several other locations.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

Ten – three N and seven S – passed Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) on 18th (IJ) with ten also heading N past Hadston Carrs (Druridge Bay) in twenty minutes on 29th (TF/JFa). Nine flew N at Tynemouth in one hour on 20th (DRW) and two flew N past St Mary's on 8th. A single was also seen at Coquet Island on 31st.

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

Large northerly movements were noted in strong north-easterly winds at the start of the month with 1,700 per hour passing Berwick Pier on 7th, followed by 1,000 per hour on 8th (MHu), a grand total of 1,557 N past Annstead (Seahouses) on 8th (DF) with a further report of 100+ flying N per hour past Snab Point (Cresswell) also on that date (MSH).

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

46 were present during a WeBS count at the River Tweed Estuary on 12th (MHu). Other notable counts were 16 in Blyth Harbour on 20th (STH), 14 at Derwent Reservoir on 9th (IFo) and 11 at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 21st. One to eight were at Big Waters NWT, Druridge Bay CP, Elswick Wharf, Hedgeley GP and Killingworth Lake. Two immatures of the continental *sinensis* race were at Cresswell Pond on 16th (MSH).

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Six at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 21st, three at Calot Shad (R Tweed Estuary) on 8th and three at Boulmer on 10th were the only sightings.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Six at Druridge Pools on 10th was the highest congregation, with numbers there gradually reducing towards the end of the month (TB). Two flying into trees there on 22nd hinted at possible breeding (TRD). Elsewhere, one to two birds were seen at Bell's Flash (Cresswell), Bothal Pond, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Fenham Flats, Furnace Bank (Bedlington), Holy Island Causeway, Sleekburn and on the River Wansbeck at Castle Island, North Seaton and Morpeth Centre.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Howdon held 14 on 16th (CB), nine were at Druridge Pools on 23rd (IFo), seven were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 1st (SR) and five were roosting on a cliff face at Berwick Little Beach on 17th (MHu). One to four were at thirteen other localities including confirmed breeding at Howick with young calling from two nests (JAR).

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

Up to three adults were at Druridge Pools from 28th-30th (TB/MSH/TF/JFa).

A Spoonbill lands

Druridge Pools

27th May

Jonathan Farooqi



Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Breeding records included an adult with three well developed young on 21st at Hartside Farm Pond (Breamish Valley) which is often used by air rescue to put out fires in the valley (PJA), two adults and a juvenile at Monks' House Pool (Seahouses) on 29th (PRM) and a pair with one well-grown young at Holywell Pond on 30th (MSH). Non-breeding sightings of one to six birds came from Bothal Pond (Coney Garth), Branton GP, Castron, Capheaton, Druridge Pools, Gosforth Park NR, Hedgeley GP, Howick Pond, Laverock Hall Farm Pond (Blyth), Linton Ponds, Northumberlandia (the observer's first record here), Swallow Pond and Woodhorn Flashes.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps Cristatus*

The highest count was six adults and one juvenile at Big Waters on 21st (GB). A total of six – three pairs – were at East Chevington on 11th (TD) with six also at Killingworth Lake – a pair with two young on the small lake and a further pair nesting on the main lake – on 24th (LJM) and a further count of six – all adults – at Widdrington Moor Lake on 24th (MSH). Derwent Reservoir held up to five all month (IFo) and two breeding pairs remained at Haughton Strother GP. One to three were at several other locations.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigrocollis*

A single bird was at Arcot Pond for one day only on 5th (LJM/DM). Only one pair was reported from the regular breeding site in South East Northumberland.



A Black-necked Grebe
Tim Dean on 17th May

Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

A bird showing characteristics of this species was being chased over fields at Ellington by a Buzzard *Buteo buteo* at 17:15h on 29th (TB)

Red Kite *Milvus Milvus*

Single birds were seen at Derwent Gorge on 2nd (EC/JSB), over the A68 at Riding Mill on 4th (EC) one was at Tyne Riverside CP (Newburn) before drifting back towards Blaydon on 6th (JBu). On 10th an untagged bird was circling the south pool at East Chevington before flying off towards Widdrington Village (TB) and a bird was seen at Carterway Heads also on 10th (IFo), a bird was at Crooked Oak (*nr* Derwent Reservoir) on 11th (IK). Single birds were also at Derwent Reservoir on 17th & 24th ((PRM/IFo), Blanchland Moor on 21st (ASJ), Branton GPs on 27th (IBDa/KDa). A bird was seen flying south from Druridge towards and over Hemscott Hill and Cresswell Pond towards Cresswell Village on 28th (TB/ADMc).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

A male was noted at East Chevington on several dates throughout the month (DM/ALT/ HD *et al.*) and single birds were also noted at Woodhorn Flash on 2nd (*per* NNBC), Cresswell Pond on 7th (TB), in off the sea at Holy Island on 13th (TF/JFa), West Stobswood Pool on 21st (TRD) and at Detchant (near Belford) on 29th (PRM).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

A bird was noted at Prestwick Carr on 1st (PCF).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Two birds were at Dukeshouse (Hexham) on 1st (AJH), Howdon on 16th (CB) and two males sparring in the air were attacked by a Corvid at Blanchland on 25th (AJN). Single birds were seen at 16 sites during the Month.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Five plus birds were at Allenbanks NT on 28th (PRM) and five were also noted at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 4th (MR) and at Derwent Reservoir on 17th (PRM). Three birds were observed at Allenbanks NT on 4th (PRM) and at Ellington on 10th and West Hartford on 18th (TB). One to two birds were at 30 sites during the month.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetuss*

Only two records this month with single birds seen at Derwent Reservoir on 8th (IFo) and at Holy Island on 20th and 21st (IK).

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

The only sightings involved a bird out in the open at Hedgeley GPs on 19th (JD) and a single at Gosforth Park NR on 22nd (AW).

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Six birds were at Killingworth Lake on 1st (AW) and at Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 2nd and 17th (DM), four birds were noted at Monks' House Pool on 25th (PRM) and three were at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 4th, 11th and 18th (DM). One to two birds were at Amble Braid, Arcot Hall GC, Fenham-le-Moor, Gosforth Park NR, Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh), Jesmond Dene (Newcastle), Spartylea, Swallow Pond (Wallsend) and at Tynemouth boating lake.

Coot *Fulica atra*

30 birds including two small young and six birds on nests were at Bothal Pond on 28th (TD), 28 birds were at the Rising Sun CP on 5th (DM) and 20 were at Killingworth Lake throughout the month (AW). 15 birds were at Linton Ponds on 14th (CDH) and up to ten birds were at Haughton Strother GP throughout the month (MR) and ten were at Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 17th (DM). One to eight birds were at 12 sites during the month.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

By 17th, up to 18 birds were reported from Cresswell Pond NWT with seven nests occupied by birds incubating eggs (TRD, MSH). On 24th a fledged bird was reported (TB). No other record of fledged birds was submitted with only a single occupied nest reported at the end of the month (MSH on 25th).

Records also came from Longhirst Flash where the maximum count was of four birds (TF/JFa, TD). By the end of the month a possible nest at the same site was reported (NFO, on 31st). Further sightings of up to four birds were made from 7th onwards at Druridge Pools (TF/JFa, TD), at Ellington, Warkworth Lane, where two birds were reported at intervals throughout the month (TB) and a single was noted in the Blyth Estuary on 5th (LJM). A first record of two birds for Derwent Reservoir was made on 9th (IFo).

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Breeding records came from College Valley, where two chicks were accompanied by two adults at Southernknowe Bridge on 10th (AWG) and from Branton GP, where two broods were seen on 23rd (LJM). As usual, most of the larger counts came from the coast with 54 at Cresswell Pond NWT on 31st (MSH), 52 at Berwick Little Beach on 25th (MHu), 31 at Budle Bay on 29th (PRM) and 27 at Fenham-le-Moor on 25th (PRM). Other counts greater than ten came from Amble Braid, Derwent Reservoir, Humshaugh Strother GP, Newbiggin and Tweed Estuary. Smaller counts came from Allen Banks, Alnwick (n. of Charlton Mires), Bothal Pond (Coney Garth), Catton Moss, Corbridge, Cramlington, Derwent Reservoir, Ellington, Gosforth, Greenlee Lough, Harthope Valley (Carey Burn), Hedgeley GP, Killingworth Lake, Newcastle (Gosforth), Prestwick Carr, R Blyth Estuary, Shotleyfield (Airy Holm Reservoir), Sipton Burn (Allendale) and Swallow Pond (Wallsend).

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

"Several pairs with small young" were recorded at Blanchland Moor on 21st (ASJ). Twenty two birds were seen near the Straight Lonnen on Holy Island on 1st (MJC/ADM), a number which had declined to three by 18th (ADM). A single bird was reported from Derwent Reservoir on 3rd (IFo).

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

A bird in non-breeding plumage was at Derwent Reservoir on 1st (IFo), one at Druridge Pools on 2nd that was coming into breeding plumage and was accompanied by a Ruff (AA) and two near the Causeway on Holy Island on 25th (PRM).

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

More than 90 pairs with either nests or young were seen at Acton Moor (Allendale) on 21st (ASJ) and six pairs (two with young) were at Backworth on 9th (ASJ). Other records involving breeding evidence were seven adults with two juveniles at Prestwick Carr on 3rd (PCF), six adults with two young at Wingates on 25th (ASJ), a pair with three chicks near the Straight Lonnen on Holy Island on 12th (MJC/ADM), a pair with young at Chair End on Holy Island on 4th (MJC), a pair with a brood of three at Charlton Mires (*nr* Alnwick) on 29th (PRM), a brood at Linton Ponds on 14th (CDH) and three broods noted at different times in the month at Haughton Strother GP (MR).

Other records not involving evidence of confirmed breeding were 40 from Bothal Pond (Coney Garth), 20 from Catton Moss, ten from Grindon Lough, eight from Spartylee and other smaller counts from Bilton, Carrshield (Barney Craig), Corbridge (Milkwell), Cramlington, Derwent Reservoir, Field House Farm (Ponteland), Gosforth Park Flash, Grindon Lough and Howdon.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Counts of up to six were made at sites west of the A1 with display and distraction behaviour noted at two of these sites. Another six sites reported up to five birds from sites toward the coast.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Northerly passage greatly increased the size of counts, notably on Holy Island, where 350+ were counted from the Causeway on 25th (PRM) and 257 were reported from the Blyth Estuary on 11th (PRM). Other large counts were made at Blyth Estuary (79 on 28th, LJM), Annstead (Seahouses) where a minimum of 60 were recorded on 25th (DF), at Boulmer on 11th (43, PRM), at Cocklawburn (39 on 16th, MHu), Amble Braid (minimum of 39 on 3rd, PRM), at the Tweed Estuary on 12th where 30 "Icelandic" birds were counted (MHu). Smaller counts came from Bothal Pond (Coney Garth), Chevington Burn (beach), Cresswell, Hemscott Hill, Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Pools NR, East Chevington, Embleton beach, Hedgeley GP (New workings), Haughton Strother GP, Lynemouth Flash, Newbiggin and R Wansbeck, Castle Island.

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

Six birds (two females and four males) were reported from Boulmer on 9th and 10th (AJ, Kda/IBDa/TB).

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Fourteen birds were seen flying north on 9th at Low Newton (NFO). The rest of the month's passage was more of a trickle with four birds seen off Newbiggin on 3rd and 8th (PRM, NFO) and four at Druridge Pools on 11th (TD). Three were reported flying over Cresswell Pond on 6th (SW), three at Boulmer on 11th (PRM) and three at Tynemouth on 2nd (SPP) and 20th (DRW). Other sightings came from Derwent Reservoir, Grindon Lough, Holy Island, Haughton Strother GP.



A Whimbrel passes Beacon Point by Neil Osborne

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Counts of ten or more came from Longframlington with 25 counted on 7th (AB/LB), Derwent Reservoir where 14 were seen on 17th (PRM), 12 seen at Catton Moss on 11th (PRM), 12 at Prestwick Carr South on 18th (AW) and ten at Cresswell Pond on 23rd (IFo). Smaller counts came from Allen Banks NT, Budle Bay, Carrshield, Barney Craig, Ellington, Warkworth Lane, Fenham-le-Moor, Longhorsley Moor, near Heighley Gate, Pithouse Fell (Derwent Reservoir), R Tweed Estuary, Spartylea, Whitfield, R Allen, Cupola Bridge.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Numbers at Druridge Pools reached a maximum of 12 on 29th (TB, TF/JFa). Other locations with reports were eleven at R Wansbeck (Castle Island) on 18th, eight at Cresswell (Hemscott Hill) on 18th, seven at Cresswell (Bell's Flash) on 21st, seven in the Blyth Estuary on 21st and five at each of Howdon, Woodhorn Flash, Cresswell Pond (two birds in summer plumage) and Bothal Pond.



A Black-tailed Godwit at Howdon Wetland on 1st May by Colin Bradshaw

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Off Holy Island 200 winter-plumage birds were in a high-tide roost (IK), there were eight birds seen at Hauxley Beach on 27th (IRD), four at Amble Harbour on 15th (TRD) and singles at Cresswell Pond and Newbiggin.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Numbers reduced on the coast as birds left for breeding grounds. The highest count came from Stag Rocks with 25 on 5th (TD). The only other double-figure counts came from Cocklawburn, with 17 on 16th (MHu), 13 at Newbiggin on 17th (TRD) and 12 at St Cuthbert's Island (Holy Island) on 25th (IK). One to seven were at eight other locations including a summer-plumaged bird at Derwent Reservoir on 1st (IFo).

Knot *Calidris canutus*

On 20th, 60 winter-plumaged birds were seen in a high-tide roost at St Cuthbert's Island (Holy Island), presumably a summering group (IK). Also at Holy Island, 44 were feeding on the flats on 29th and may have been from the same group (GB). Elsewhere, one-two were at Amble Braid, Branton GP, Derwent Reservoir, Hedgeley GP and the River Blyth Estuary during the month.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

All sightings came from the Druridge Bay area with birds present throughout the month. At Druridge Pools the maximum number of males was three on 7th (TB) with single females being noted on several dates (PRM/TF/JFa *et al.*). At Cresswell Pond, four were noted on 6th (SW) and at Hemscott Hill Pond, one on the 24th increased to three by 29th (TB/MSH).

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

A bird was seen briefly in flight at Druridge Pools on 14th (ADMc). One was at Castle Island (River Wansbeck) from 20th-21st (TF/JFa/TRB *et al.*). A further sighting came from Monks' House Pool on 28th (BS).

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

The largest flocks were 100 at Newbiggin on 8th (NFO), 66 at Holy Island on 29th (GB), 60 at Budle Bay on 25th (DF), 51 at Tynemouth on 2nd (SPP) and 50 at Cheswick on 21st (DF). Smaller groups on the coast were 28 at Druridge Bay, 20 at Cocklawburn, 18 at Boulmer and 12 at both Cresswell Pond and Berwick Little Beach. Six were at East Chevington and Newbiggin and one to two at Derwent Reservoir from 17th-22nd (PRM/IFo).

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

North-bound birds probably accounted for larger numbers on the coast this month with a minimum of 180 counted at Holy Island on 25th (PRM), 104 at the River Blyth Estuary on 11th, 50 at Amble Braid on 3rd and 40 at Boulmer on 10th (PRM). Smaller groups were 28 at Newbiggin on 12th and at 20 at Holy Island on 29th. Inland, the maximum at Derwent Reservoir was seven on 23rd (IFo) and five at Grindon Lough on 4th (PRM). One-five were at Castle Island, Cocklawburn, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Hedgeley GP and Haughton Strother GP. An interesting observation on Braydon Crag (Cheviots), where one flew away 'injured' being joined by its presumed mate and another confiding bird on 26th (AB/LB).

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

The wintering flock at Stag Rocks decreased from 60 on 5th to 26 on 16th (TB/DF). Elsewhere, 25 were seen at Newbiggin on 8th (NFO), nine at Tynemouth Pier on 2nd (SPP), two at Holy Island and singles at Cresswell and Hauxley.



A purple Sandpiper at Beacon Point on 21st May by Neil Osborne



Above: a Temminck's Stint at Castle Island on 20th May by Jonathan Farooqi and below: a Little Stint at Holy Island on 29th May by Jack Bucknall

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

A small influx was apparent from mid-month with the first being seen at Fenham Flats on 13th (TF/JFa). Two were at Charlton Mires (north of Alnwick) on 27th (AH) and singles at Cresswell Pond from 24th (TB/MSH) and Holy Island on 29th (JBu/GB).



Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

As in May 2016 a female was seen at Grindon Lough being recorded from 18th-24th (PRM/AA/TRD).

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Well reported this month as birds occupied breeding territories and passed through lowland areas. A healthy count of 11 pairs was made in the Breamish Valley on 1st (ASJ) and three pairs were at Derwent Reservoir (PRM/IFo). In other potential breeding areas, four were at Houghton Strother GP (Humshaugh), four at Caistron, three at Beltingham (South Tyne), three at Alwinton (Upper Coquetdale), two at Cupola Bridge (River Allen), Airy Holm Reservoir, Colt Crag Reservoir, Hedgeley GP and Allerwash (South Tyne). Singles were reported from nine other inland localities. Four passage birds were at Castle Island on 1st (GB) and singles passed through Backworth Pond, Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, Gosforth Park, Holywell Pond and Newbiggin.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

One was seen on a small roadside pool at Rising Sun CP (Wallsend) on 1st (SPP). One was at Longhirst Flash on 9th (NFO)

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

Addition to April Bulletin- A summer-plumaged bird was seen at Budle Bay on 28th and 29th (GPK/DF).

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Light Spring passage continued this month with two at New Water Haugh (River Tweed) on 14th MHu), two at Foxton Bend (River Aln) on 6th (DM) and singles at Big Waters, Boulmer, Hedgeley GP and Longhirst Flash.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

A notable group of four was at Horncliffe on 4th (JDL) and one-two at Druridge Pools from 3rd-29th (PRM/AA *et al.*). Singles were seen at Longhirst Flash and West Hartford on 7th and 9th.

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

The largest group on the coast was 35 at Amble Braid on 3rd (PRM). At Druridge Pools, the maximum count was nine on 3rd (PRM). Elsewhere in potential breeding areas, eight were at Derwent Reservoir on 25th (IFo), six at Grindon Lough on 18th (PRM), four at Spartylea on 25th (CT), two at Houghton Strother GP and Charlton Mires and singles at Coatenhill Reservoir (East Allendale) and Hedgeley GP.

Jack Snipe *Limnocryptes minimus*

A single was reported by several observers at Druridge Pools from 3rd-7th.



A Jack and a Common Snipe at Druridge Pools

Jonathan Farooqi

7th May

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Two were reported from Harwood Forest, Slaley Forest and Stanley Plantation (Stagshaw) and a single was at Beanley Wood.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

The largest group reported was from Druridge Pools with 12 on 3rd (PRM). Three pairs were located on Catton Moss on 11th (PRM), four were at Spartylea and Prestwick Carr and a pair was at Ouston Fell. Singles were seen at Blanchland Moor, Bothal Pond, Catcleugh, Derwent Reservoir, Killingworth Lake, Pithouse Fell, Sipton Burn, Stonehaugh, Rothbury, Shield on the Wall and Thrunton Woods.



A Common Snipe on a stone wall in Allendale
Alan Jack on 21st May

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

A single N with Gannets, at Berwick Pier on 8th was the only report (MHu).

Auk *sp*

At Snab Point (Cresswell) 290 per hour flew N on 8th (MSH).

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

A handful flew S in an hour at Tynemouth on 20th (DRW). On 6th, 'hundreds' were seen flying on and off Coquet Island (DM/ALT/HD) and singles were noted on other dates at Snab Point and Rockliffe.

Black Guillemot *Cephus grylle*

A rare sighting was a summer-plumaged individual flying S with eight Guillemots at Church Point, Newbiggin on 22nd (PS).

Razorbill *Alca torda*

Two prospected on Priory Cliffs (Tynemouth) on 14th (DRW) and one or two were seen at Cullernose and Howick.

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

At Berwick Pier, 280 per hour flew N on 8th (MHu) and on 27th at Cocklawburn Saltpan Rocks 16 were on the sea and 425 passed N in 30 minutes (MHu). Counts of 20 came from Cresswell, Snab Point and Low Hauxley (TRD) and three to four were at Beadnell and Seaton Sluice (LJM).

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

The Holy Island colony of 15 pairs suffered its frequent early-summer disaster, being washed out by a very high tide on 25th (IK). Six were at Boulmer on 19th (BS) and elsewhere, one to three were recorded at Beadnell, Budle Bay, Cheswick Sands, Cresswell Pond, Embleton, Holy Island, Howick, Newbiggin, Newton and Monks' House Pool on dates throughout.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

One was over the River Tweed at West Ord on 4th (*per* NNBC).

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

At least 300 were on the beach at Budle Bay, many displaying in pairs, on the 5th (TD), 79 at Boulmer on 11th (BS) and 66 in the River Blyth Estuary on 11th (PRM). Smaller groups of 15-40 were seen elsewhere at Amble Braid, Bamburgh, East Chevington, Newbiggin and the River Tweed Estuary.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Light passage N was noted at Rockcliffe on 7th (IJ). Breeding pairs comprised six on the raft at Whittle Dene Reservoirs (MR), four at a new site on the staithes at North Blyth (STH) and a single at Holywell Pond (MSH). The largest gatherings were 45+ at Newbiggin on 3rd (PRM), 20-30 at St Mary's Wetland (KWY) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs (MR) and 16 at Gosforth Park NR (AW). Elsewhere, up to six were at Arcot Pond, Amble Braid, Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Haughton Strother GP, Killingworth Lake, Leazes Park, Monks' House Pool and Swallow Pond,

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

Seen at long distance from Low Hauxley, three were on Coquet Island on 27th (TRD).

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

In excess of 200 were on the beach at Budle Bay on 5th, many displaying in pairs (TD) and 100+ gathered at Newbiggin on 3rd (PRM). Elsewhere, 12 flew N at Tynemouth on 1st (DRW) and two were on Druridge Pools on 3rd (PRM).

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

On 8th, 500 per hour moved N at Berwick Pier (MHu). Detailed nest records from the Newcastle city breeding area on 10th were 300 on the Tyne Bridge North Tower, 54 on the Bridge itself, 77 on the Guildhall, 42 on Quayside buildings and 14 on the Dean St. bridge; nest building was still in progress there with many birds on eggs (DM). On the Tynemouth Priory Castle cliff at least 60 birds were on nesting ledges on 5th (DM). Maximum counts elsewhere revealed 124 in the River Tweed Estuary gull roost on 28th (MHu) and 100 moved continuously up and downstream on the Tyne at Howdon on 16th (CB).

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

A maximum of 84 was at Grindon Lough on 12th (MRS), 10-20 were at Gosforth Park NR, Greenlee Lough and Killingworth Lake with single-figure counts at four other localities.

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Single 1st-summer birds were noted at Bamburgh (Stag Rocks), Druridge Pools and Monks' House Pool on dates throughout (DGB *et al.*).

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Two adults flew over at Amble Braid on 15th *en route* back to Coquet Island (TRD) and immature single birds were seen at Derwent Reservoir (PRM), Newbiggin (GB) and Haughton Strother GP ((MR).

Common Gull *Larus canus*

One to four were at Castle Island, Cocklawburn, East Chevington and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.,

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

Breeding records were four nests on factory roofs at Davy Bank, Wallsend (CDH) and three nests on the James Burrell building and Wimbourne Quay in the Blyth Estuary (LJM/PRM). Gatherings of 10-25 were recorded at Byker (DM), Derwent Reservoir (IFo), Exhibition Park (PJA/DM), Grindon Lough (MRS) and Haughton Strother GP (MR) with one to eight at Bothal Pond, Corbridge, Howdon, Jesmond Dene, Killingworth Lake, Leazes Park and Swallow Pond,

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argenteus*

Nesting was in progress in the Blyth Estuary where 24 nests were occupied on the James Burrell building with two on the staithes (PRM/STH) and at South Harbour eight nests were counted (LJM). At Berwick Little Beach 400+ fed under the wrack at high tide on 8th, 224 were in the River Tweed Estuary on 12th and 110 in the gull roost at West Ord on 28th (all MHu). Lesser counts elsewhere were 56 in a roost on the Tyne at Byker and a similar number at Tynemouth Boating Lake (DM), 13 at Exhibition Park and one to four at Killingworth Lake, Jesmond Dene, Leazes Park and Prestwick Carr.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

A second-summer individual was seen on three dates, 13th, 15th and 29th at Monks' House Pool (DF/MSH/PRM/IBDa/KDa).

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Twelve were at Derwent Reservoir, eight in the Tweed Estuary, two at Grindon Lough and singles on the Tyne at Byker and Elswick, all between 3rd and 12th (IFo/MHu/PRM/DM).

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

On 5th 13 were at Tynemouth Castle cliffs, nine at Southfield Green (Cramlington) (DM) and present at Jesmond Dene all month.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Regularly at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) all month with five the peak on 1st and 25th and three there on 20th and 27th. Two were at Linton on 4th and Swallow Pond on 17th with singles at five further locations.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Around 15 at Killingworth Lake and Gosforth Park NR during the month, eight at Weetslade Colliery CP on 21st (AW), seven at Jesmond Dene on 7th and three to six at Allen Banks, Prestwick Carr and Spartylea.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

A peak count of seven including two juveniles coming to food at Newbiggin during the month (BS), six at Killingworth Lake, five at Dinnington and two at Spartylea and Alnmouth.

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

First reported at Winnows Hill (Slaley) on 2nd (EC/JSB) with good numbers thereafter. A high count of seven between Simonside and Tosson Hill on 18th (MJC), six at Harwood Forest on 19th and 27th (STE), five at Lordenshaw on 10th, four at Alwinton on 10th and Blanchland on 25th (ASJ). Three were at Breamish Valley, Derwent Reservoir, Langleeford and Wingates with one to two at a further 34 widespread localities.

April Bulletin omission

The first arrival was a bird which passed Backworth on 16th without pausing (ASJ). After this singles were heard or seen at five inland breeding areas – at Blanchland (Winnows Hill) on 22nd (ASJ) and at Harthope Valley on four occasions in the last week of the month (TRD/JD/AJ/IBDa/KDa)

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

On 6th and 7th two were at Humshaugh (SW) with all other reports of singles at Bilton, Bradford Kairns, Cresswell Pond, Hemscott Hill and Druridge Pools (on numerous occasions), Ellington, Halton Shields, Holy Island, Howick, Longhorsley, Monks' House Pool, Park End, Rothbury and Seaton Burn.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Two at Druridge Pools on 27th (TF/JFa) with a single perched on a farm aerial there on 17th (TRD) and at West Kyle 24th to 29th (per NNBC), Alnwick Moor on 24th and Branton on 27th (IBDa/KDa).



A Little Owl checks out Jonathan Farooqi on 27th May



A young Tawny at Eddie Crabtree's garden nest box in Stamfordham.

By Eddie Crabtree on 13th May

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

A pair called around a garden at Rothbury all month, two at Dipton Common on 6th (ALT/HD/DM), Greenhaugh on 17th (SW), Harwood Forest on 19th (STE), Humshaugh on 20th (SW) and Spartylea on 25th (CT). Singles were at eight other locations including a fledgling about to leave box at Stamfordham on 14th, a 13-year-old female at Lemmington Hall (Edlingham) plus one road casualty at Hampeth (A1).

Long-eared Owl *Asio Otus*

At Druridge Pools one showed regularly all month from 10th (JBU, TB *et al.*). One was at an undisclosed site in the Breamish Valley on 20th (PJA) and at Swallow Pond on 25th (SPP).

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Different birds at Chare Ends and Snook (Holy Island) on 6th (ADM), with singles on three dates thereafter. One displayed at Shieldbridge (West Allendale) on 6th (DM/ALT/HD), carried prey at Catton Moor on 9th (TF/JFa) and was at Alnwick Moor on 24th (TRD).

Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

A male churring at Harwood Forest on 19th was still on territory there on 24th (STE). Three (two male, one female) were at the south edge of Slaley Forest on 31st (DM/STH/LJM), two at Thrunton Woods on 27th (BJ) and one at Corbridge Common on 24th (TWi).

Swift (*Apus apus*)

50 the peak at Big Waters on 5th and 7th (SRB/GB), 40+ at Druridge Pools NR on 29th (MSH), 37 flew N in two groups at East Chevington on 10th (MJC), 30 at East Ord (Berwick) on 30th (MHu), 25 at Lynemouth on 11th & 15th (TB) and 20+ at Wark (N Tyne) on 7th & 10th (PRM). Ten to 16 were at Allen Banks, Berwick, Cresswell Pond, Morpeth, Prestwick Carr, Upper Tasset Burn and Weetslade Colliery CP with one to nine at 20 other widespread localities.



A Swift over Howdon Wetlands
by Colin Bradshaw on 17th May

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Two pairs were found and fed young in nest about 700m apart west of Morpeth between 9th and 21st (ADM_c), two were on the Wansbeck at Low Angerton on 16th (IRD) and at Wylam on 27th (SR). Singles were at Wark on 7th, near Ladies' Bridge (R.Coquet) on 9th, Gosforth Park NR on 9th, 14th and 22nd, Felton on 17th and Tiptoe Woods (Etal) on 28th.

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

One was found on north dunes (Holy Island) at 4.20pm on 6th but soon flew off to N possibly seen later between Chare Ends and Snook (ADM).

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Two were at Dukeshouse (Hexham) on 1st (AJH), Willowbog (Stonehaugh) on 13th and singles were at Prestwick Carr all month, Letah Wood (Hexham) on 3rd and 4th, Allen Banks NT and Plankey Mill on 4th, Wark on 7th, Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 17th, West Dipton Burn on 18th, Harwood Forest and Debdon (Rothbury) on 19th.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

On 19th four were at Allen Banks, three at Killingworth Lake on 1st and Gosforth Park NR on 22nd (AW). Pairs were nesting at Harwood Forest on 19th (STE), Nuns Moor (Newcastle) on 26th (PCF) and Southfield Green (Cramlington) on 31st (DM) with two also at Spartylea and Chugdon Wood (Ellington). Singles were at 12 other locations.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Three birds including a nesting pair were at Derwent Reservoir on 24th (PRM) and two birds were seen at Weetslade CP on 10th (AW) and at West Hartford on 23rd (TB). Single birds were at 18 sites during May.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

A pair was noted at one site on 28th (PHa/AHa) and a single bird was at another confidential site on 6th (DM/ALT/HD) and a single bird was seen in the Harthope Valley on 9th (AA).

Ring-necked Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

Regularly seen at Welbeck Road (Heaton), two to nine flying towards the Byker Wall most evenings (PB) with one over Wigmore Avenue (Walker) on 4th (SPP) and calling at Nuns Moor Allotments (Newcastle) on 26th (PCF).

Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

Seen for one minute before flying off having been recorded singing at Gosforth Park NR on 22nd (AW).

Magpie *Pica pica*

Around 15 gathered at Killingworth Lake on 1st and were found between Wylam and Newburn on 8th with ten at Gosforth Park NR on 9th and Prestwick Carr on 18th (AW). Eight were at Weetslade Colliery on 10th and Allen Banks on 19th with two at Jesmond Dene on 21st.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Two were at Jesmond Dene on 3rd (MJCo), Allen Banks NT on 4th (PRM), Gosforth Park NR on 22nd (AW) and Thrunton Woods on the same date (JD) with all other reports of singles at Ellington regularly and 14 other widespread localities.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

At Killingworth Lake around 12 were seen all month, ten at Weetslade Colliery CP on 10th and 21st and Prestwick Carr on 18th (AW). Eight were at Allen Banks on 19th and Gosforth Park NR on 22nd with two at Jesmond Dene on 21st.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Four were at Killingworth Lake all month (AW), Spartylea on 25th (CT) and a pair with two juveniles were at Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin) on 30th (BS). Four active nests were at Rising Sun CP visitor centre on 5th (DM) and two were found between Newburn and Wylam on 8th.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

A high count of 33 in Blyth Estuary on 20th (STH), 19 at the former Spillers Mill (Byker) on 4th (DM), ten between Newburn and Wylam on 8th, eight all month at Killingworth Lake and at Elswick Wharf (Newcastle) on 3rd. Six flew east over the Snook (Holy Island) on 4th (MJC) and were at Prestwick Carr on 18th with one to four at Gosforth Park NR, Jesmond Dene and Weetslade Colliery CP.

Raven *Corvus corax*

Two at Harthope Valley on 26th and 31st (AB/LB/TRD/JD) with a single there on 7th and at Southernknowe (College Valley) on 10th, Linhope (Upper Breamish Valley) on 13th, Brough Law (Breamish Valley) on 20th and Cupola Bridge (Whitfield) on 24th.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Six was the peak at Allen Banks on 19th with four there on 4th (AW/PRM) and four at Gosforth Park NR on 22nd. Two were at Valley Park (Cramlington), Derwent Reservoir, Gosforth Park NR, Holy Island, Newburn, Rising Sun CP and Wark with singles at a further eight locations.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Around ten at Killingworth Lake throughout the month and at Allen Banks on 19th, eight at Prestwick Carr on 18th, six between Newburn and Wylam on 8th and at Gosforth Park NR on 22nd (AW). Five were at Spartylea and a single at Jesmond Dene and Newbiggin.

Great Tit *Parus major*

At Killingworth Lake around ten seen/heard throughout the month and eight at Allen Banks on 19th, six at Gosforth Park NR on 22nd (AW). Four including recently fledged young were at Gosforth Garden Village on 28th with one to four at five further locations.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Four at Gosforth Park NR on 9th, two between Newburn and Wylam on 8th (AW), Jesmond Dene on 21st and Spartylea on 25th (CT) with singles at Allen Banks, Cambois and Derwent Reservoir.

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

A peak count of three at Prestwick Carr on 18th with a pair at nest site on 21st (AW/PCF). All other reports were singles at Big Waters (noted with a white tail) on 1st, Longhorsley on the same date and Reigh Pond (Throckley) on 27th.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

Two pairs with nests in stone walls at Highford / Mitford Castle on 9th, 13th and 17th (ADMc/GB) with singles regularly at Linden Hall (Longhorsley) and a one of a pair carrying food there on 17th (NFO).

Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla*

One was found at Catton on 8th but the only reports submitted were on 10th and 11th (CT/PRM/IJ).



The popular Short-toed Lark
Catton Moss on 9th May
Jonathan Farooqi

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

A large count of 110+ on the ranges at Otterburn on 10th with 32 (inc. 12 singing) at Simonside on the same date and 31 at Ray burn/Wanneys/Buteland Fell on 25th (ASJ). 20 were at Weetslade CP on 10th and 21st, ten at Prestwick Carr on 18th, nine at Amble sewage works on 3rd, eight at St Mary's on 22nd and one to six at three other locations.

Shore Lark *Eremophila alpestris*

Two were at Boulmer on 1st /2nd with one remaining till 31st (BS *et al.*) and one was at Beacon Point (Newbiggin) on 17th (*per* NNBC).

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

At Tynemouth Priory 80-100 present on 28th (SPP), 70 at Killingworth Lake on 7th with 50 there on 1st (AJ/AW) and at Big Waters on 7th (GB), Roddam on 23rd (Pha/AHa) with 40 at Derwent Reservoir on 8th (IFo). 140 AON were counted at Haughton Strother on 7th (MR), 32 nest tunnels were noted at Tynemouth on 28th with 30 birds on 24th (AJN) and 11 pairs at a colony on N.Tyne at Wark (SPP/AJN/PRM). Two to 15 were at four other locations

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

One hundred per hour flew N over four hours at St Mary's on 9th (ASJ), 150 at Killingworth Lake on 7th (AJ), 50+ at Spital on 13th (GB), 30 N at East Chevington on 10th (MJC), 30+ at Bamburgh on 13th (BRS) and 23 S at Boulmer on 11th (PRM). Two to 20 were at 12 other locations with nesting noted at a further eight.

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

Counts of 30 at Holy Island on 12th (MJC/ADM), Lynemouth on 15th (TB) and Castle Island Way (Ashington) on 21st (LJM), 18 N at East Chevington on 10th (MJC), ten at Wark on 7th (PRM) and nine at Spartylea on 25th (CT). Two to six were at seven further locations with nesting at three locations in Cramlington noted as slow having only two to five nests at each site.

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica*

An adult male flew over Snook House (Holy Island) on 13th heading off E (MJC) and two were in the Druridge Pools area on 15th (ADMc).

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

A family party of ten at Capheaton on 25th was the largest gathering (STE). Further family parties of six to eight were noted at Cramlington (Alexandra Park), Fulbeck (Morpeth) and Newburn Business Park. A pair were seen attending a nest at Ellington on 14th and 28th, while one to three were noted at a further nine localities.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

An extraordinary spring record concerned a singing male at Holy Island (Captain's Garden) on 13th (TF/JFa).

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

A passage bird was at Holy Island on 7th (MJC). Inland single singing birds were reported from Allen Banks on 5th-6th and 24th, Eals on 19th, Longhorsley from 19th-20th, Todburn from 14th-20th, West Dipton Burn from 19th-21st and a confidential site on 10th.



Two spring Warblers

Above: a Yellow-browed Warbler on Holy Island on 13th May by Jonathan Farooqi
and below: a Wood Warbler announces his arrival at Allen Banks on 6th May by Jack Bucknall



Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Peak passage at Holy Island included 18 on 1st and 20 on 4th, with ten on 7th and eight on 12th (MJC/ADM). Singing birds were well reported, with 16 at Arcot Hall GC on 9th (LJM), 15 at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) on 11th and 12 at Swallow Pond on 1st. Eight were singing at Howick on 3rd, six+ were noted at Bamburgh on 13th and six were reported from Allen Banks, Gosforth Park NR, Jesmond Dene and Killingworth Lake. Elsewhere four to five were noted at Bilton, Cambois, Haughton Strother (Humshaugh), Longhorsley Moor, Rising Sun CP and Weetslade Colliery CP with one to two at a further 15 localities

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Peak counts of passage birds at Holy Island were 40 on 1st and 15 on 7th, with one to nine on a further seven dates. In breeding areas, singing males included 43 at Wandylaw Wood (Wingates) on 25th, 40+ in the Breamish Valley on 14th, 39 at Stonehaugh on 24th and 23 at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) on 25th (ASJ). A further 17 were singing at Longhorsley Moor on 25th, 16 at Arcot Pond on 1st and 12 at Arcot Hall GC on 9th and at Prestwick Carr on 6th. Up to 11 were noted Swallow Pond, ten at Whittle Dene Reservoirs, seven at Derwent Reservoir, Howdon and Rising Sun CP and six at Newbiggin. One to five were reported from a further 24 localities.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

A high count of 16 singing males came from Whittle Wood (Ovingham) on 3rd (AJR). Counts of 13 singing males were reported from Craggside on 6th (MJC) and Holywell Dene on 7th (ASJ), while eight to nine were singing in the Rising Sun CP-Swallow Pond area from 1st-5th. Elsewhere, seven (five singing males) were at Allen Banks on 4th, six singing males at Howick on 3rd and four to five at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh), Jesmond Dene and Marden Quarry (Whitley Bay). One to three (mostly singing birds) were reported from a further 14 localities. Passage at Holy Island included three on 1st, six on 4th, one on 6th and a single on 13th.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

There was a good count of 11 singing males from a young plantation at Wandylaw Wood (Wingates) on 14th (ASJ). A count of six singing males came from the Stonehaugh area on 24th, while five were heard at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) on 10th, four at Twizel (Berwick) on 23rd and four at Longhorsley Moor on 25th. Three were noted at Hareshaw Linn (Bellingham) and from Linden Hall-Heighley Gate, while two were seen and/or heard at Branton GP, Bulby's Wood (Breamish Valley), Castron, Derwent Reservoir, Haughton Strother (Humshaugh), Holystone, Netherwitton and Wark (North Tyne). Singles were reported from a further 26 widespread localities, including a migrant at Holy Island on 4th.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

An influx occurred at Holy Island during the first week with five on 1st (DRW), 11 on 4th (MJC) and three from 6th-7th (IK/MJC); another was here on 13th. There were three (two singing) at Amble Sewage Works on 3rd (PRM), while two were reported from Arcot Pond on 9th, Beaconhill (Cramlington) on 3rd and Big Waters on 14th. A male was singing at Priors Park (Tynemouth) from 5th-20th at least, while other singles mostly in song were reported from a further 21, mainly coastal or near coastal localities.



A Lesser Whitethroat on Holy Island

Mike Carr on 4th May

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

High counts of singing birds included 21 in the Breamish Valley on 1st, 19 in the Holywell Dene/Pond area on 3rd and 18 at Wingates on 11th (ASJ). At least 12 territories were identified in the Ponteland-Dissington area during the month, 12 were at Newbiggin on 12th and 11 at Prestwick Carr on 6th. Other reports of singing and territorial birds included seven at Aydon (Corbridge), seven at East Chevington, five at Castle Island, Cramlington (Whitelea) and Derwent Reservoir and four at Allen Banks, Fenham-le-Moor, Rising Sun CP, St Mary's Wetland and Weetslade Colliery CP. Elsewhere, six were at Beal Point on 13th, four at Holy Island on 4th and one to three at a further 31 widespread localities.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Up to eight singing birds were heard at East Chevington (MJC *et al.*), five at Prestwick Carr and four at Arcot Pond and at St Mary's Wetland. Three were singing at Halton-lea-Gate, while counts of up to two came from Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Ellington, Holywell Pond and Newbiggin. At Holy Island one was at Chare Ends on 1st, one in the Vicarage garden paddock from 5th-7th and another at Chare Ends on 6th; another was at Beal Point on 13th. Singles were noted at a further 15 localities.



Two warblers on
Holy Island

Top: a Grasshopper

Warbler by Mike

Carr on 4th May

right: a Sedge

Warbler on 14th

May by Jonathan
Farooqi



Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Up to 13 were noted at Prestwick Carr (6th-PCF) and 12 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs (17th-SR), while over eight were at Bamburgh on 13th. Counts of seven singing males came from Holy Island, Holywell, Prestwick Carr and St Mary's, while up to six were singing at Arcot Pond and five at Dissington and at West Hartford. Four were singing at Bilton, Breamish Valley, Druridge Pools, Gosforth Park NR and Haughton Strother (Humshaugh), while four were noted at Berwick (Needle's Eye), Linton Ponds and Woodhorn Flashes. One to three were at a further 20 localities.

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Peak counts from the main breeding areas were six at East Chevington on 17th (TRD), five at Cresswell Pond on 27th (IRD) and four at Gosforth Park NR on 3rd-9th (AJ/AW). Two singing males were at Blyth Estuary on 10th-11th and Warkworth Lane on 26th, while singles were singing at Druridge Pools, Holy Island Lough, St Mary's Wetland and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulous*

Four late birds flew low N at Swallow Pond on 8th (SPP).

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Four were noted at Gosforth Park NR and singles from four localities in Jesmond Dene, while two were reported from Allen Banks, Castlehills (Berwick) and Spartylea. Nest holes were being attended at Acomb on 3rd, Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 9th and Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 7th, while singles reported from a further nine localities included a juvenile at Humshaugh on 20th.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

A nest with five young was found at Comb (Falstone) on 8th (JR), while up to four were at Allen Banks (AW/PRM). Singles at three localities at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) on 4th included a bird with food and up to three were at Gosforth Park NR. One to two at five further localities included adults with food at Pennypie (Blanchland) on 25th and Prestwick Carr on 6th.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

27 at Arcot Hall GC on 9th included 20+ singing (LJM), while elsewhere 13 were singing at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 7th and 12 at Longhorsley Moor on 25th. About ten were noted at Gosforth Park NR during the month, with eight at Killingworth Lake and at Prestwick Carr. Seven were at Allen Banks, six from Newburn-Wylam and six at Weetslade Colliery CP. One to four at a further five localities included a singing male at the Henhole (Cheviot Hills), 711 metres asl. on 26th.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

The largest gathering was 200+ at Prestwick Carr on 21st (PCF). Elsewhere about 50 (adults and juveniles) were at Newbiggin from 9th to the month end, while 25 juveniles were in a flock of around 30 at Longframlington on 7th; recently fledged young were among another flock of 30 at Holy Island on 29th. Up to 12 were reported from a further nine localities, including fledged young from two nests at Dinnington and fledged young at Fulbeck (Morpeth), Howick and Humshaugh.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Four were at Spartylea on 25th (CT) and a pair fed a juvenile on the River Wansbeck at Bothal on 13th (TD). Up to three were noted at Allen Banks, while reports of one to two came from Allendale Mill, Barrowburn (Upper Coquetdale), Cupola Bridge (Whitfield), Dilston Mill, Harthope Valley (Coldgate Mill, Hawsen Burn and Langlee), Plankey Mill, Sipton Burn and Swarland Burn.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

Two passage birds were at Holy Island on 1st and 12th (MJC/ADM) with singles there on 4th, 6th-8th and 13th. Further passage birds were one to two at Newbiggin GC on 12th-13th and one at St Mary's Wetland on 4th. In breeding areas up to five (three males / two females) were in the College Valley on 28th and three (two males / one female) at Hawsen Burn (Harthope Valley). Single males were also in song at Carshope (Upper Coquetdale) and at Simonside, both on 11th.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Counts of eight to ten came from Gosforth Park, Killingworth Lake, Newburn-Wylam and Weetslade Colliery CP, with five to six noted at Allen Banks, Dinnington, Jesmond Dene and Newbiggin; several sites reported fledged young. A pair was feeding at least two young at Holy Island on 12th, four were at Spartylea on 25th and a leucistic bird was seen at Cramlington on 23rd.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

A flock of ca.100 was on the MOD Ranges at Crow Stone on 6th (JR/NA); six were at Hedgeley GP on 3rd (IBDa/KDa) and four at Holy Island on 1st (DRW). The final record was of a single at Holy Island on 13th (TF/JFa).

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

A count of 14 (singing and feeding young) in the Stonehaugh-Simonburn area on 18th was an encouraging sign of increased numbers, as was a further ten in the Breamish Valley on 14th (ASJ). Seven were singing at Arcot Hall GC on 9th and four singing at Longhorsley Moor on 25th. Two pairs were at Howdon and four birds at Allen Banks and Gosforth Park NR. Three to four territories were occupied at Cambois and three singing birds were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs by the end of the month; and adult and two fledged young were at Whitley Bay Community Garden on 20th and fledged young were also noted at Holy Island. One to two were reported from a further eight localities.



A Song Thrush heralds spring
Janet Dean on 18th May
Rothbury

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

A late migrant was at Newbiggin GC on 12th (NNBC).

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Five were noted in Jesmond Dene (four areas) on 7th (MJCo) and four were at Dinnington on 28th. Evidence of breeding came from Comb (Falstone-two fledged young), Valley Park (Cramlington-nest) and Whitehall (College Valley-food for young), while one to two were reported from a further 16 localities.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*.

One to four passage birds were noted on Holy Island on seven dates from 12th-29th with a peak of seven on 13th (TF/JFa *et al.*); further, presumed passage birds on 13th were noted at Druridge Farm and Tynemouth. In breeding areas, eight were counted from Brown Rigg-Hareshaw Linn (Bellingham) on 18th (NFO), three pairs were at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) on 21st and five birds were in Upper Coquetdale on 11th. Four were at Hartside Farm Plantation, Ingram and at Middleton Hall, while three were seen at Fourstones. One to two were reported from a further 17 localities.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

An impressive count of 27 (18 singing) came from Arcot Hall GC on 9th (LJM), while ten were at Gosforth Park NR on 22nd and nine singing at Longhorsley Moor on 25th. About eight were noted between Newburn-Wylam on 8th, eight were at Prestwick Carr on 18th and five to six at Allen Banks, Gosforth (three fledged young), Holy Island and Killingworth Lake. Pairs feeding at least one fledged young were noted at Gosforth Garden Village on 3rd and at Holy Island on 4th, while a juvenile was noted at Howick. Two were also at Hawsen Burn and Spartylea.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

At Letah Wood (Hexham) there was a peak count of five males on 5th, while pairs were attending nest boxes here on 4th and 22nd (AJH/AWG). At other regular breeding sites, up to five (four males) were noted at Nunykirk, three males were at Allen Banks, three males at Whitley Chapel and three birds at Dipton Woods; three males were also noted at a confidential site. Two singing males were near Eals and at Low Carritheth (Hesleyside) and singles at Crooked Oak (Derwent Reservoir), Hareshaw Linn, near Glen Aln, Kielder Water, Stanton and West Dipton Burn. Two passage birds were at Holy Island on 6th and one on 7th.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

A light influx occurred on 1st, with two at Holy Island (DWR), one in a Belford garden (DF) and another at Chugdon Wood (Ellington-TB). Later in the month a single was at Boulmer on 10th (TB).

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

At least ten singing males were heard between Longhorsley-Forestburngate on 27th (ASJ) and a minimum of eight were noted at Tasset Burn on 26th (CW). Six were singing between Linden Hall-Heighley Gate on 14th, five from Benridge-Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) on 13th and five from Brown Rigg-Hareshaw Linn on 18th, while four singing males were at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) on 25th, Holystone on 14th and Letah Wood (Hexham) on 5th. Three passage birds were at Holy Island on 1st, three were singing at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 5th and three were at West Dipton Burn (Hexham) on 19th. Elsewhere one to two were reported from a further 25 areas of potential breeding.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Some high counts from upland breeding areas included 19 (16 males / three females) in Upper Coquetdale and seven at Alwinton on 10th (ASJ) and 17 (14 singing males / three females) in the Breamish Valley on 14th (ASJ). In the Harthope Valley, three pairs were noted at Hawsen Burn on 14th and 26th, five (four males) were at Harwood Forest on 19th, two at Acton Moor (Allendale) on 21st and two in the College Valley on 28th. On the coast two were at Holy Island on 1st and 12th and singles at Boulmer on 9th and Newbiggin on 12th.

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Inland: Four breeding pairs were located at the Wanneys on 14th, one of which had three fledged young (IK). A pair with four fledged young on Rothbury Moor and six (including three fledged young) at Chatton Moor on 22nd all showed characteristics of the Continental *rubicola* ssp, as did one of two pairs present on Berwick Moor on 21st (MJC). Elsewhere pairs with fledged young were noted at Allendale (three young), Hawsen Burn (Harthope Valley), Ingram (two young), Simonside (three young and two young), Widehope (four young) and Winnows Hill (Slaley-two young); a female was carrying food at Thrunton Woods on 29th. This welcome increase in inland sightings included four in the Breamish Valley on 21st, three (male / two females) at Hawsen Burn on 26th, a pair at Dunsdale (College Valley) on 10th, a pair at West Hartford on 25th and a male at Debdon (Rothbury) on 19th.

Coastal: Eight were noted from Embleton-Low Newton on 9th (NFO), where a pair was feeding young at Newton Pool on 4th. On Holy Island a pair with two young was at Sandon Bay, while at Chare Ends a male, two females and a juvenile were noted, one pair showing characteristics of the Continental *rubicola* ssp (MJC/ADM). Elsewhere two pairs were at Cocklawburn, two pairs at Howick (including a pair carrying food), a pair with two juveniles was at East Chevington, two at North Blyth included a female with food; two were at Bewick and singles at Monks' House Pool, Newbiggin and Stag Rocks (Bamburgh).

Wheatear *Oenanthe Oenanthe*

An influx produced 24 on Holy Island on 1st (MJC/ADM) with up to six here on a further seven dates. At Boulmer, 15 on 10th (TB) had reduced to five by the following day and 13 were at Newbiggin GC on 3rd (PRM). Inland five were at Prestwick Carr on 2nd and at Cramlington (Northumberlandia) on 3rd. Elsewhere one to three were reported from seven coastal and 18 inland localities. A male bird showing characteristics of the **Greenland race** *O.o.leucorhoa* was at Holy Island on 7th (MJC).

Duncock *Prunella modularis*

A pair was feeding three fledged young at Gosforth Garden village on 2nd and at Manor Walks (Cramlington) on 24th, while a pair escorted two young at Newbiggin on 26th (MJC/BS). Four were at Spartylea and Killingworth Lake throughout the month. Three were at Weetslade C.P. on 21st.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Up to 40 including fledged young were noted on Holy Island on two dates during the month (MJC/ADM). Five were at Spartylea on 25th and two pairs at garden feeders in Tynemouth and Marden Estate. Three pairs, each with three young, were at Newbiggin on 18th (BS).

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Up to 40+ were at Chugdon Wood all month (TB). Sixteen were at Haughton Strother on 7th (MR). Common in Holywell Dene during the month, with several nesting pairs and pairs with fledged young (ASJ). One to eight were noted at a further 16 locations, including a pair using a nest box in a Morpeth garden and a pair at garden feeders in Longbenton.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava flavissima*

Eleven were counted at Whittle Dene on 11th, with a single seen there on 6th (SR/DM). Four at Druridge Pools on 27th (TFa/JFa). Three were also at Druridge Pools on 6th (DM *et al.*). Two singles noted flying over Holy Island on 1st (MJC). One to two were at eight further sites during the month.

Blue-headed Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

One was seen at Druridge Pools on 6th, 13th and 20th (DM/HD/AT/TB/TFa/JFa).

Blue-headed/Yellow hybrid (Channel Wagtail). *Motacilla flava x flavissima*.

A bird was at Druridge Pools on 7th (TB/TFa/JFa).



Two much appreciated Wagtails from the coast.

Above: a "Channel" Wagtail by Jonathan Farooqi on 7th May at Druridge Pools and below: one of the finds of the spring, a very confiding and much photographed Citrine Wagtail from Longhirst Flash, by Tim Dean on 15th May



Grey-headed Wagtail *Motacilla thunbergi*

A bird thought to be of this race but not confirmed was present at Monks' House Pool on 12th(DF).

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*

A very confiding female of this rare species was discovered at Lynemouth on 12th remaining the following day(MSH).

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Nine at Plankey Mill on 4th consisted of a pair with four fledged young and a further three adults along the river (AWG). Six were on the Wansbeck at Bothal on 9th (TD). Several pairs were along the Upper Coquet during the month and a juvenile at St Mary's on 30th (ASJ). Five were noted at Spartylea on 1st and a family group at Linnheads on 18th (CT/AJN). Two pairs were at the North Tyne at Wark and at Whittle Dene during the month (PRM/MR). An adult accompanying three young at the Carey Burn bridge on 31st (STH). One to two were noted at 16 other locations from Jesmond Dene to College Valley.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrelli*

Noted as common along the Coquet west of Alwinton on 11th, with 23+ adults counted on territory along six miles. A family party of six was at St. Mary's on 30th (ASJ). Four were present at Killingworth Lake all month (AW). One to three were at seven other sites.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Six birds were at Haughton Strother on 1st (MR). Singles were found at Holy Island, Boulmer and Druridge Pools during the month (MJC/TB/TF/JFa).

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Young plantation at Wandylaw Woods (Wingates) held good numbers as usual with 11 singing/displaying males (five in an 800 metre transect) on 25th, with five males also at nearby Simonside and four at Beacon Hill/Longhorsely Moor on the same day (ASJ). Three were singing at Ladyhill (Stonehaugh) on 20th (SW). Two were seen/heard at Debden, Dipton Wood, Wark Forest, Tarsset Burn and Thrunton Woods during the month. Singles were at a further seven inland sites, with passage migrants on Holy Island on 4th, 7th and 13th (MJC/TFa/JFa).



A Tree Pipit
1st May
Beacon Hill
Jonathan Farooqi

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Common in the Simonburn/Stonehaugh area with a minimum of 60+ birds noted displaying and feeding young in nests on open grassland on 18th. Good numbers were also at Buteland Fell/ Wanneys same day, 35-40 pairs (ASJ). Less common perhaps at Simonside on 11th, with 15 birds noted. Nine to 11 pairs were nesting in fields at St. Mary's during the month (ASJ). Ten were seen along the College Valley on 10th (AWG). Four displayed at Newcastle Town Moor, near Exhibition Park on 2nd (DM). One to five were at five further sites, with a juvenile being fed at Blyth Harbour on 20th (STH).



A Meadow Pipit
7th May
Colin Bradshaw
Wark Forest

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Six were present at Rockcliffe (Cullercoats) on 20th and four on 1st. Five were at Newbiggin on 12th (IJ/PRM). At Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) a pair were nest building on 1st (MJC). A single was seen at St. Mary's on 17th (TRD).

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Two were observed on 2nd flying over Snook (Holy Island)(MJC).

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Jesmond Dene held ten birds during the month (MJCo). Eight were between Newburn and Wylam along the Tyne on 8th and at Spartylea on 25th (AW/CT). One to six were at five further locations.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Nine pairs were found in 3km of Holywell Dene at dawn on 9th (ASJ). A pair attended garden feeders at Rothbury all month (TRD/JD). One to two were noted at 15 other sites.

Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*

Six were at Spartylea on 25th (CT). One to two were at five further sites including males singing at Amble Sewage Works and St James's Metro Station, Newcastle. A pair all month at garden feeders in Marden Estate.

Linnet *Carduelis canabina*

27 were at Whittle Dene on 11th (SR). 15 at Amble on 3rd and Holy Island on 29th (PRM). 13 were at Northumberlandia on 3rd (LJM). Along waggonways at Holywell, six pairs fed young in nests during the month and at St. Mary's a family party was noted on 1st (ASJ). Two to 12 were noted at six further locations in the month.

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis caberet*

Appears abundant this year with 40+ comprising many pairs and family groups noted in the Stonehaugh/Wark Forest area on 24th, 30+ at Simonside on 11th, including a family group of seven. Much song and display at Beacon Hill, Wingates and Lordenshaw on 11th (ASJ). In the Breamish Valley, 20+ on 14th and 30+ on 28th (ASJ/JBu). Considered abundant also at Wanneys on 14th, in suitable new forest habitat (IK). One to nine were at 11 further sites, including three at Bamburgh on 13th.

Common Redpoll(Mealy) *Carduelis flammea*

One was at Crooked Lonnen (Holy Island) on 1st and one was seen at Hedgeley on 7th (IBDa/KDa).

Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Small groups totalling 41 birds noted at Craggside on 6th (MJC). Common at Wark Forest, with 30+ seen on 24th and small groups of birds seen in most areas of conifers in Bellingham/Otterburn area that day (ASJ). 15 seen at Kielder Water on 19th and seven at Thrunton Woods on 28th (NFO). One to four were also at three other sites.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

12 were at Spartylea on 25th(CT). Ten+ were at Killingworth Lake during the month (AW). Ten were also at Allenbanks and Prestwick Carr on two dates. Two to eight were seen at eight further sites.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Five were at Spartylea on 25th (CT) and four at Nunnykirk on 6th, Wark on 7th and at Lordenshaw on 24th (DM/PRM/ASJ). One to three were seen at six other sites.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

A late male in almost full summer plumage was at Newbiggin on 10th (STH *et al.*).

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citronella*

12 were recorded in 7.5 km between Linden Hall and Todburn on 21st (NFO). The Breamish Valley held seven singing males on 14th (ASJ). Seven were also noted at Allenbanks on 28th (PRM). Six (three singing) were at Beacon Lane (Cramlington) on 19th, with five (males) there on 1st and on 21st (LJM/DM). Five(two singing) at Fenham Le Moor on 25th (PRM) and four in song at Holywell on 3rd (ASJ). One to three were found at seven other sites during the month.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Around 20 were found at Holy Island on 29th with ten at the Lough alone on 7th (PRM/MJC). Ten males sang at St. Mary's on 3rd (KWY/ASJ). Nine males sang in Upper Coquetdale on 11th (ASJ). Eight were at West Hartford on 16th (LJM). Six were at Gosforth Park, Prestwick Carr, Cresswell and East Chevington during the month and one to four were at a further 18 widespread locations, including singles at Killingworth Lake and Grindon Lough.

ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN**Escapes**

No Sightings

Hybrids

No Sightings

Birds of Unknown Origin

No Sightings

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Alnwick Wildlife Group, Bamburgh Ringing Station, North Northumberland Bird Club,

Apologies for any accidental omissions

BULLETIN COMPILATION AND PRODUCTION

This bulletin was compiled by Graeme Bowman (Mute Swan to Ruddy Duck), Steve Laing (Red Grouse to Black-necked Grebe), Trevor Blake (Honey-buzzard to Crane), Tom Brewis (Avocet to Godwit), Clive Hampton (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 Jack (Duncock to Corn Bunting).

Data Manager is Tom Brewis.

Thanks to David Sanders of NNBC for providing data.

Proof reading was by Mike Smith.

Mail distribution by Paul Stewart.

Edited by Steve Barrett NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.com

RECORD SUBMISSION

Please email records for the month to ntbc.records@googlemail.com

Please email for a copy of the standard spreadsheet and other details.

Location names and grid references: Please use of standard location names and include grid references as this 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.

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If you internet bank you can pay online: please include your name in the ref. It is helpful if you email me to let me know when you've made the transfer ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

If you decide to set up a standing order please date the first payment at least a fortnight from your posting date to allow time to process with the bank. You can also set up your standing order directly with your bank if you wish; just let me know.

Finally, if you know anyone who might like to join NTBC please pass on the club information - new members are always welcome.

Jo Bentley - Hon Treasurer

NTBC WEB SITE

The club website is an excellent online resource for anyone interested in birds. There are:

Photo Galleries – Here you can view hundreds of photos of birds from Northumberland, Newcastle and North Tyneside. Members are encouraged to contribute their own photos. Simply send them to galleries@ntbc.org.uk

Sightings – Here you can view reports of birds recently reported in the County. Anyone who would like to contribute and post sightings to this page, please email sightings@ntbc.org.uk Please note this section is moderated, so there may be a short delay before your record appears.

There are also County Checklists, Records Committee updates, Information on important Surveys, useful articles and reports on Bird ID and Overseas Birding Trips....and much more...

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

New content such as Birding Trip Reports etc., is always welcome and very much appreciated.

To find out more please visit www.ntbc.org.uk

'Bird Racing' on a Bike

After trying a 'pedestrian bird race' in 2015 (finishing on 117 species) I attempted a 'cycle bird race' on Saturday 13th May 2017 having been inspired by Andy McLevy who attempted this in May 2007 (also setting a target of 117 species).

After some deliberation the route finally decided on began in the Morpeth-Mitford area and took in Beacon Hill before crossing east to Bothal Pond, Longhirst Flash and Castle Island and then heading up to Druridge Bay via Newbiggin.

The weather in the morning was rather misty and murky, occasionally drizzly but cleared during the afternoon to leave a fine and sunny evening. Woodland birds were well-represented and included the chance discovery of breeding Marsh Tits in the High Ford road bridge. The rarest bird of the day was Citrine Wagtail – a very obliging bird at Lynemouth Flash (discovered by Mike Hodgson few days before).

The hundredth bird of the day was a migrant Ring Ouzel at Newbiggin golf course (thanks to Alan Priest for finding this) but Kestrel wasn't recorded until almost 2000h (the 120th bird)! Druridge 'Budge' fields were excellent, with Snipe, Whimbrel, Ruff, Black-tailed Godwit, Wood Sandpiper, Garganey and Grasshopper Warbler. A Great Northern Diver on a largely empty sea off East Chevington was a big surprise.

After covering over 50 miles (measured on 'Google Map') the final total was 124 species – more than anticipated. A wide range of birds included five different Little Egrets at four sites (including one on the River Wansbeck in Morpeth), Marsh Harrier, Mediterranean Gull, Kingfisher, Cuckoo, Barn, Tawny and Long-eared Owls, and seven different singing Redstarts. Some 'hoped-for' species inevitably failed to appear and these included Red-throated Diver, Goosander, Little Ringed Plover, Puffin, Little Owl, Rock Pipit and Lesser Whitethroat.

On paper at least, it seems quite possible to better this total, even to 130 on the 'right' day. So, plenty of time to get in some training for May 2018 and have a go...

Graeme Bowman



A Golden Plover surveys Allendale moors by Alan Jack



Alendale Moor in springtime. Above a Red Grouse with young
and below a female and a young Stonechat , both by Alan Jack



Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

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

Bulletin 2017 No 6

MONTHLY SUMMARY JUNE 2017

5th August 2017



CLASSIFIED LIST HIGHLIGHTS

Ruddy Duck
Quail
Great Northern Diver
Manx Shearwater
Great White Egret
Spoonbill
Slavonian Grebe
Curlew Sandpiper
Little Stint
Wood Sandpiper
Pomarine Skua
Little Gull
Glaucous Gull
Corn Bunting

Male at Bothal Pond from 8th.
Signs of a notable Quail year with sightings from many sites.
Summer plumaged adult along coast this month.
Large day count on 26th at Seaton Sluice with 737 seen.
One at Newton Pool from 22nd to 24th.
Up to four at several sites along the coast
Summer plumaged adult at Bothal Pond and then Linton Pond.
Three at Budle Bay from 18th to 22nd.
Summer plumaged adult at Longhirst Flash on 2nd.
Notable passage from mid month.
Two off Newbiggin on 30th.
Small scale passage during month with maximum of only four together.
Immature at Low Newton on 24th.
Singing male at Boulmer from 19th. Still just clinging on in county.

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 first autumn meeting will be on Thursday September 14th .

FIELD TRIPS

24th September 2017 **East Lothian**

Contact Steve Anderson seaswan@btinternet.com



A recent arrival in our area - a Ring necked Parakeet
Nuns Moor Newcastle by Tim Dean

CLASSIFIED LIST**Mute Swan** *Cygnus olor*

The Tweed Estuary held a peak of 365 on 9th (MHu), 56 (including five young) were at Howdon on 25th (CB), 51 adults were at Killingworth Lake on 22nd (ASJ), 27-34 were at East Chevington and the Wansbeck Estuary, and 11-16 at Foxton Bend, Grindon Lough and Widdrington Moor Lake.

Breeding data were as follows (additional to May unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Killingworth Lake	2	11 (7,4)	ASJ. On 22nd
Newton Pool	1	8	TD. On 19th
Burradon Pond	1	7	LJM. On 4th
East Chevington	1	7	PRM. On 14th
Big Waters	1	6	PRM. On 1st. As May (reduced brood?)
Caistron	1	6	ASJ. On 24th
Linton Ponds	1	6	CDH. On 11th
Shield on the Wall	1	5	MRS. On 11th
Havannah NR	1	4	PCF. On 14th
Willington Gut, Wallsend	1	3	CDH. On 18th
Arcot Pond	1	1	LJM. On 6th

A colour-ringed adult on the River Tweed at Berwick on 5th had been ringed at East Boldon, South Tyneside in August 2016 (CH).



A Mute Swan and cygnets
Killingworth Lake
Alan Jack
11th June

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

At West Ord, one was present on 4th and 9th and two on 11th and 14th (MHu). Singles were at the Tweed Estuary on 9th (MHu) and Widdrington Moor Lake on 22nd (PRM).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

One was at Haughton Strother GP on 7th (MR).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

A count of 1,250 at Derwent Reservoir on 19th contained 'hundreds of juveniles (IFo), 97 were at Haughton Strother GP on 7th (MR), and 26 at Cheswick on 15th (PRM). One to six were also at Alnmouth, Bothal and Coanwood Ponds, Grindon Lough, Hedgeley GP and the Tweed Estuary. Breeding data were as follows (additional to April-May unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Haughton Strother GP	6	28	MR on 13th. Includes all broods previously reported
Plenmeller Common	--	11	PRM. 14 adults plus 11 goslings on 7th
Cresswell Pond	1	1	STH. On 11th.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Northerly movement involved 133 (in three skeins) at Berwick on 5th (MHu), 87 at Tynemouth on 4th (DRW), 47 at Whitley Bay on 2nd (IJ), and 14-25 at Ellington, Newbiggin and North Blyth on single dates between 1st-18th, while 20-27 flew S at Ellington, Newbiggin and Whitley Bay on single dates between 2nd-17th (TB/IJ/RS). The largest concentrations involved 190 at Colt Crag Reservoir on 28th (MR), 110 (adults) at Grindon Lough on 7th (PRM), 109 at QEII CP Lake on 21st (TB), 80-87 at Derwent Reservoir and Holy Island, 38-59 at Alnmouth, Castle Island and Killingworth Lake, and 21-22 at Cresswell and Swallow Ponds. Counts of ten to 19 also came from Bothal Pond, Budle Bay, Catcleugh Reservoir, the Tweed Estuary and West Ord, plus one to eight at/over Big Waters, Coanwood Pond, Holy Island, Jesmond Dene, Kielder Water and Plenmeller Common. More unusual was one on the sea off Newbiggin Beacon Point on 15th (STH). Breeding data were as follows (additional to April-May unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Coanwood Pond	3	11 (4,4,3)	PRM. On 21st.
Colt Crag Reservoir	2	10	MR. On 28th.
East Chevington	1	5	PRM. On 14th.
Hedgeley GP	1	5	LJM. On 13th. As May?
Grindon Lough	1	4	PRM. On 7th. As May?
Linton Ponds	1	4	CDH. On 11th.
Halton-Lea-Gate	1	3	PRM. On 21st. As May?

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Four were at Grindon Lough on 18th (PRM), and singles at Alnmouth on 22nd (PRM), Budle Bay all month (CGK/GPK) and Druridge Pools on 8th (IRD).

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Budle Bay held 134 on 9th and a peak of 217 on 23rd (DF), 11-20 adults were at the Blyth Estuary (LJM), Boulmer (PRM), Druridge Pools (PRM) and Foxton (MSH), and eight were at Fenham Flats. One to three were also at Cresswell Pond, Longhirst Flash, the Tweed Estuary and West Hartford. More unusually, two slept on the wooden staithe at Blyth on 1st (STH). Inland, two were at Broomlee Lough on 20th (PRM) and two at Derwent Reservoir on 17th (very scarce there; IFo).

Breeding data were as follows (additional to May unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Foxton Bends	4	13 (8,3,1,1)	PRM. On 22nd
Amble Braid	2	19 (10,9)	MSH. On 9th
Coquet Estuary	1	11	TD. Small young on 16th
Druridge Pools	1	10	MSH. On 26th
Middle Ord Pond	1	10	MHu. On 4th
Castle Island	1	9	STH. On 9th
Howdon	1	6	CB. On 5th
Backworth	1	3	CGK. On 17th
Boulmer	1	2	PRM. On 22nd. As May (reduced brood)?
Blyth Estuary	1	1	LJM. On 10th

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

Single ducks were at Haughton Strother GP on 7th (MR) and Low Angerton (River Wansbeck) on 13th (IRD).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

12-14, mainly in pairs, were at Grindon Lough between 2nd-18th (MSH/PRM/MRS), six were at Druridge Pools on 16th (TRD) and one to three there between 5th-12th (TRD/JD), and one was at Haughton Strother GP on 29th (MR). Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Plenmeller Common	1	3	PRM. Also 2 males and 2 females, on 7th
Derwent Reservoir	1	5	PRM. On 2nd. As May?

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Peak counts were 44 at Castle Island on 9th (STH), 29 at Linton Ponds on 11th (CDH), ten at Bothal Pond (TF/JFa) and Castle Island (GB), and seven to eight at Big Waters, Budle Bay (unseasonably high count; CGK) and Druridge Pools. Three to four were also at Branton GP and Howdon, and one to two at Low Newton, the Tweed Estuary and West Hartford. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Linton Ponds	2	14 (9,5)	GB/LAR/TB. Brood of 5 from 9th, brood of 9 on 22nd
Bothal Pond	3	29 (12, 10,7)	TD/TF/JFa/MSH. Brood of 12 from 1st, 10 from 18th and new brood of 7 on 25th
Druridge Pools	1	9	TRD/JD. On 20th
Big Waters	1	2	GB. On 18th

Teal *Anas crecca*

At Seaton Sluice, a total of 23 flew N and seven S between 21st-30th, including eight N on 21st (SSWT). Druridge Pools held 12 on 22nd (PRM) and two to three between 5th-20th (TRD/JD), and five to six at Bothal Pond (TRD) and Grindon Lough (PRM). One to two were also at Cheswick, Fenham Flats, Houghton Strother GP, the former Longhirst Flash and Middle Ord Pond on occasional dates. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Derwent Reservoir	1	4	IFo. On 22nd.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

The largest counts were 44 at Castle Island on 9th (STH), 42 at Big Waters on 11th (GB), 42 at Grindon Lough on 18th (PRM) and 42 at the Tweed Estuary on 9th (MHu), while 25-32 were at Bothal Pond and the former Longhirst Flash, and 11-14 at Coanwood Pond, Wark 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
Linton Ponds	--	20	LJM. On 26th. Includes brood from May?
Holywell Pond	--	12	LJM. On 20th
Grindon Lough	2	17 (11,6)	PRM/MRS. From 7th-11th
Castle Island	2	8 (5,3)	GB/STH. From 9th. Includes brood from May?
Bothal Pond	2	7 (5,2)	PRM. On 14th. Includes reduced broods from May?
Holy Island Lough	1	9	PRM. On 15th
Broomlee Lough	1	7	PRM. On 20th
Big Waters	1	6	PRM. On 1st
Coanwood Pond	1	5	PRM. On 21st
Arcot Pond	1	3	PRM. On 1st
Foxtan Bends	1	3	PRM. On 22nd
East Cramlington Pond NWT	1	1	LJM. Large young on 20th

Pintail *Anas acuta*

An unseasonable drake was at Colt Crag Reservoir on 28th (MR).

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

A pair was at Druridge Pools on 1st-2nd (TF/JFa/PJA et al.), and a drake was at Holywell Pond on 2nd (SPP).

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

At Druridge Pools, three pairs were present on 5th (TRD), five drakes on 12th (TRD/JD), and one to three birds on several further dates up to 20th. A pair was at Monks' House Pool on 7th (TRD). Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Bothal Pond	1-2	5-11	TD/EC/JSB et al. From 25th

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

11 (ten drakes) were at Bothal Pond on 25th (TD) and one to nine regularly there between 9th-16th (TB/TF/JFa et al.). Ten were at Holywell Pond on 20th (LJM), five at Linton Ponds on 22nd (GB), two at Arcot Pond (LJM/PRM), and one, more unusually, at Tynemouth Boating Lake (DRW). Breeding data were as follows (additional to previous months unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Holywell Pond	2	8 (5,3)	SPP.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Three flew N at Seaton Sluice on 28th (SSWT). Peak counts were 22 at Haughton Strother GP on 29th (MR), and ten to 13 at Arcot (LJM/PRM) and Bothal Ponds (TD), East Chevington (PRM) and Grindon Lough (PRM). Five to eight were also at Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools and Paddy Freemans Lake (Jesmond), and one to four at Coanwood and Middle Ord Ponds, Derwent Reservoir, Newcastle Exhibition Park and Plenmeller Common. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Slaley Forest	1	7	IFo. Newish young on 14th.



A pair of Tufted Duck
Branton GPs
Mike Carr on 4th June

Scaup *Aythya marila*

A drake flew N at Seaton Sluice on 30th (SSWT), and a drake was at Budle Bay from 28th-30th (GPK).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

A total of 37 flew N at Seaton Sluice on 28th-29th (SSWT). Peak counts of adults were 60 at North Blyth (PRM) and 54 at Boulmer on 22nd (PRM), 52 at Seaton Sluice on 25th (CDH), 24-36 at Cheswick, Holy Island, Low Hauxley and St Mary's, and 13-14 at Fenham Flats and the Tweed Estuary. Breeding data were as follows (additional to previous months unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods/crèches	No. of young	Observer/notes
Holy Island causeway	2	12	IK. On 6th
Budle Bay	2	11	IK. On 6th
Amble Braid/Coquet Estuary	2+	9	TD/MSH. Single large young on 9th and 3 females with 9 young on 16th
Snook Point-Football Hole-Newton Point	2	6	TD. On 19th
Boulmer	1+	11	PRM. On 22nd
Warkworth	1+	10	AWG. On 10th
Stag Rocks	1+	8	BRS. On 9th

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

Two were at Cheswick on 15th (PRM).

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Strong passage at Seaton Sluice resulted in total of 3,910 N and 890 S between 20th-30th, including 1,508 N and 508 S on 20th and 1,059 N and 376 S on 28th (SSWT). Elsewhere, a total of 665 flew N at Newbiggin on three dates between 15th-30th (STH/JGS), 430 flew N and 106 S at St Mary's on 28th (MSH), 325 flew N at Newton Point on 14th (DF), 200 N at Stag Rocks on 23rd and 28th (DF), and 40-80 N at Boulmer, Holy Island and the Wansbeck Estuary on three dates. Six to ten were off Druridge and North Blyth.

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

Two flew N at Holy Island on 29th (IK).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Two flew N at Newbiggin on 30th (JGS). Five females were at a confidential breeding site on 10th where a brood of eight young was noted in May, all of which appeared to have been taken by a predator (TRD). Singles were also at Bothal Pond on 1st (TF/JFa) and New Water Haugh (River Tweed) on 14th (MHu).

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Ten flew N at Newbiggin on 15th (JGS) and five N at Seaton Sluice between 21st-30th (SSWT). At Fenham Flats, 27 were noted on 15th (PRM), and one to two were at Budle Bay, East Chevington and Holy Island. More unusual was a drake, in eclipse plumage, inland at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 21st (SR).

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

A group of 110 at St Cuthbert's Island, Holy Island on 17th consisted mainly of fresh-plumaged juveniles, plus a few adult females (IK). Other peak counts were 36 at Budle Bay on 15th (CPK), 34 at Spittal cliffs on 12th (MHu), and 19 (possibly a crèche of well-grown young) at the Blyth Estuary (LJM). Six to ten were also at Boulmer, North Blyth and the Tweed Estuary, and one to two at Low Hauxley, Newbiggin Beacon Point, New Water Haugh and Tynemouth. Breeding data were as follows (additional to May unless otherwise stated):were

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Derwent Reservoir	1	7	IFo. New brood on 6th.
Beanley	1	5	TRD/JD. On 1st.

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*

A drake found at Bothal Pond on 8th (IRD/TFa/JFa) was a surprise (given the recent nationwide cull). It was also reported there on 11th, 13th-14th and 28th (TB/TD *et al.*).

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

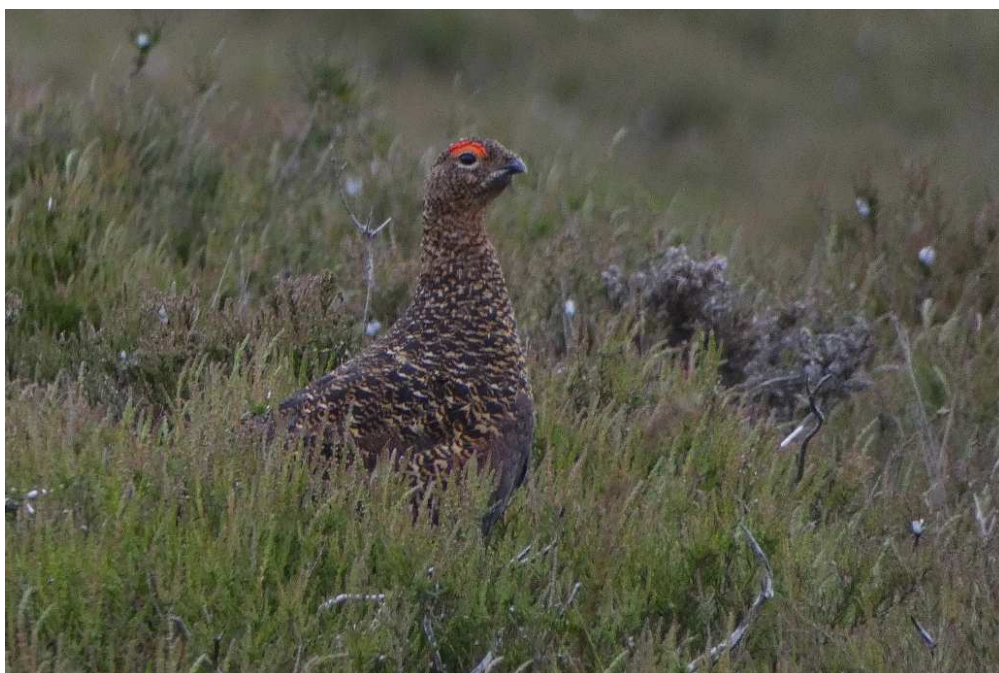
Signs that this may be a "Quail Year" with records received from seven sites. All records are from birds heard calling. One was singing from fields next to the west "flash" at Longhirst on 2nd (PJS/CS/SFW) increasing to two on 21st (TF/JFa/PS), two also at Pegswood on 19th (JBu), one calling at Bellasis Bridge (Blagdon) on 3rd (STH), one at Low Newton on 4th (CB/JGS), a single briefly at Howdon on 12th (CB), one near Bamburgh on 16th (GPK) and East Stobswood on 20th (TDR/JD) and finally a male singing from a field just west of Wark village along Stonehaugh Road on 25th (PRM).

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

14 were in the Harthope Valley on 10th (TRD), two were at Coanwood Pond on 21st and a kamikaze individual sat in the middle of the A1, forcing cars to go around it, on 4th (ADM).

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

The peak count was a minimum of 30 on Whitfield Moor on 21st (PRM) followed by 15 at both Simonside on 13th (JD) and in the Carey Burn area (Harthope Valley) on 11th (IRD), at least 12 at Winnows Hill (Slaley) on 2nd and a minimum of ten, including four chicks, on Fellhouse Fell on 21st. One to two were at Alnwick Moor and Plenmeller Common.



A Red Grouse awaits the Twelfth of August on the Simonsides
Janet Dean on 13th June

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

A single male was at Whitfield Moor on 21st (PRM).

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

A pair with seven chicks was at Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin) on 24th (RS) and all other records were of singles or pairs from Arcot Hall GC, Bothal Pond, Chugdon Wood (Ellington), Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Halton-Lea-Gate, Hemscott Hill (Cresswell), Longhirst Flash, Ponteland, Prestwick Carr, Wark and Widdrington Moor Lake.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Three were at Spartylea all month (CT).

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Seaton Sluice Watch Tower reported a total of six (three N and three S) between 20th-30th (SSWT).

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

A summer-plumaged adult was offshore at Druridge on 6th (TRD) and one was very close offshore at Newbiggin on 30th (JGS).

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

80 were at Marshall Meadows (Berwick) on 14th, with 20 at both the Farne Islands on 9th and Needles Eye (Berwick) on 22nd (TRD/JD). Elsewhere, ten were at Couquet Island on 8th, four were present during a WeBS count in the River Tweed estuary and a single was at East Chevington NWT.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

Some good passage towards the end of the month included an all day total of 737N from various observers at Beacon Point (Newbiggin) on 26th (STH/ADM/PS/TRC/AP), a total on 310N and 20S past Seaton Sluice between 20th-30th (including 201N in one and a half hours on evening of 26th) (SSWT), further Newbiggin totals of 77N in one hour on 27th and 39 on 30th, 22N past Snab Point (Cresswell) on 26th and four N in the early evening of 28th past St Mary's.

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

Movements past Seaton Sluice included 430N in three hours on 29th (SSWT). 60 were fishing offshore at Newbiggin on 22nd (STH) and one to 20 were sighted offshore from several other locations.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

24 at East Chevington NWT on 14th was the highest count (PRM) followed by 14 at Castle Island (R Wansbeck) on 9th (STH) and 12 at Derwent Reservoir on 24th (IFo). One to five were at several other localities including a first summer bird of the continental *sinensis* race at Cresswell Pond NWT on 12th (MSH).

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Ten were at Needles Eye (Berwick) on 22nd (TRD/JD), eight were present at the Meadow Haven (Berwick) roost on 5th (MHu) and singles were at Holy Island and The Long Nanny.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

The peak count came from Druridge Pools with six there on 1st (TF/JFa) and the same number in Budle Bay on 19th (CGL/GPK). Four at the Royal Border Bridge (River Tweed) on 5th included a colour ringed adult (ring no. GV05405) ringed near Hartlepool on 09/06/2016 (CH). Four were also at Beal on 15th and one to three were at Blyth Estuary, Cresswell Pond, Fenham-le-moor, Foxton, Furnace Bank (Bedlington), Haughton Strother GP, Holy Island, Holywell Pond, Low Newton, the river Coquet Estuary and Warkworth Gut. A pair were nesting in trees at a site in SE Northumberland on 20th (TRD/JD).

A Little Egret
Cresswell Pond
Janet Dean
12th June

**Great White Egret** *Ardea alba*

One arrived at Swallow Ponds on 21st, flying in to the south east corner where it fished then roosted (SPP). This represents the first record for that site. Presumably the same bird was then at Low Newton from 22nd-24th (JGS/CGK/GPK).

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

18 was the maximum count at Howdon on 26th (CB) and eight were in the River Tweed Estuary during a WeBS count on 9th (MHu). One to five were at several other usual localities, including juveniles are two sites.

Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

Following a single bird at Druridge Pools on 3rd (TB), four were watched at Beal Point (Lindisfarne NNR) at 06.19h on 4th before flying E over Holy Island then being lost to view after ten minutes. This is the third ever record for Holy Island (ADM). Presumably the same group of birds remained in the county with one at Druridge Pools on 13th, then Widdrington Moor Lake on 20th, increasing to two there on 22nd and three back at Druridge Pools on 25th-28th.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Breeding reports as follows:

Locality	Date	Observer/notes
Swallow Pond	21st	Six adults and three tiny chicks (SPP)
Holywell Pond	20th	Six adults and two young (LJM)
Blyth GC	18th	Two adults and five tiny young (SJL)
Cragside (Rothbury)	29th	One adult and three young (TRD/JD)
Dinnington	21st	A pair and two juveniles (PCF)
Grindon Lough	2nd	A pair and only one young (MSH)
Linton Ponds	11th & 22nd	An adult with one small youngster (CDH/GB)

Other records, with no breeding noted, included a peak of five at Bothal Pond (Coney Garth), three at Big Waters NWT, Druridge Pools and Low Newton, two at Arcot Pond, Broomlee Lough, Colt Crag Reservoir and Haughton Strother GP and singles at Druridge Bay CP, Middleton Hall and Northumberlandia (Cramlington).

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps Cristatus*

Up to eight were at Big Waters NWT throughout the month, with seven adults and a large juvenile present on 18th (PRM/GB) and six were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 30th (SR) although no breeding was noted. At Killingworth Lake there were two pairs on 15th, one with a very large chick and the other with two small young. By 20th the first pair had built a second nest and were on eggs (ASJ). At Bothal Pond there were also two pairs – one with five very small young on 3rd, subsequently reduced to two young by 11th but still present on 27th (TD/MSH/PRM *et al.*). One to three were at several other localities.



A Great Crested Grebe on a Killingworth Lake nest
Alan Jack on 11th June

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

An individual in full, striking, summer plumage visited Bothal Pond (Coney Garth) on 17th and was well appreciated by many observers (TF/JFa/TD/TB). It relocated to Linton Ponds on 20th where it remained until at least 28th (TRD/JD/GB/TB).

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigrocollis*

Pairs were at two sites in SE Northumberland throughout the month.

Red Kite *Milvus Milvus*

Single birds were noted at Carterway Heads on 5th (IFo), Berwick on 7th (MHu) and at Low Waskerley on 11th (IFo). On 23rd singles were at Hemscott Hill and Minsteracres Estate (ADMc/IFo).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Two birds were at Druridge pools on 2nd(TF/JFa) and at East Chevington on 8th and 16th(TRD).Singles birds were seen at Druridge Pools on 2nd (TB), East Chevington On 5th (TRD) and at Boulmer on 20th (TB).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

A male was noted at an upland site in the north of the County on 10th (TRD).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Only single birds were seen this month at Ashington, Blagdon, Choppington, Ellington, Hartburn, Longhorsley Common, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, River Wansbeck Estuary, and St Mary's Wetland and at Warkworth.

Common Buzzard

Buteo buteo

On 3rd seven plus birds were at Kielder Water (PRM) and four were seen at Blagdon (STH).Three were at Woolsington (Newcastle) (SRB) and two birds were at West Hartford throughout the Month (TB) and two's were also at Arcot on 1st (PRM), Druridge Pools on 3rd (TB) and at Wark (N Tyne) on 25th (PRM). Singles were seen at 14 sites during the month.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetuss*

Two birds seen at Derwent Reservoir on 14th (IFo) and singles noted there on 12th, 23rd & 27th (IFo). Birds were also seen flying N at St Mary's Island on 17th (SPP), East Chevington on 19th which came down to bathe twice (ADMc) and a bird flew in to Slaley Forest at dusk to roost on 21st (IK/TW/ASH).

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Single birds were seen at Arcot Pond on 1st (PRM), East Chevington on 14th (PRM), Swallow Pond on 18th (SPP) and at Druridge Pools on 22nd (ADMc). Birds were heard calling at Big Waters on 11th (GB) and at East Chevington on 16th & 19th (ADMc).

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Broods were noted at Haughton Strother G's (Humshaugh) on 3rd (MR), Middleton Hall on 13th (LJM), Wallsend Hall grounds (CDH) and Jesmond Dene (MJCo) on 18th, and pairs were also at Silverlink CP (North Shields) on 19th & 24th (LJM/PRM), Colt Crag Reservoir on 28th (MR). A pair hatched four young in the main drain from the Lough to harbour on Holy Island during the Month (IK).

Coot

Fulica atra

59 birds including several juveniles were at Bothal Pond on 22nd(GB) and 56 at Swallow Pond on 27th (SPP) were the highest counts, followed by 49 and 44 at Bothal Pond on 14th and 25th (PRM/TD) and 28 at Druridge Pools on 22nd (PRM). Broods were noted at Burradon Pond (Cramlington), Coanwood Pond, Grindon Lough, Humshaugh, Killingworth Lake and Linton Ponds.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

A succession of records came in throughout the month for Cresswell Pond. The highest count of adults was of 13 on 22nd (TB), a number which appears to have built up from single numbers at the beginning of the month but was lower than the maximum count of 18 in May. Records of breeding at the same site fluctuated as the month progressed with a total of six young reported on 11th (STH). Thereafter a variety of observers reported up to four young. Single adults seen at nearby Druridge Pools were very likely some of those birds reported from Cresswell Pond. Two other sites in SE Northumberland reported confirmed breeding and two birds were noted near Earsdon on 23rd (ASJ).

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

There were only two reports with breeding evidence: a brood of two were seen at Humshaugh, Haughton Strother GP on 3rd (MR) and three young were recorded at Powburn (Council Yard) on 13th (ID). The largest counts were a single high tide flock of 118 at Cheswick, Black Rocks on 12th (MHu), 56 at Boulmer on 22nd (PRM), 40+ on 9th at Budle Bay (MSH), 28 on 1st at North Blyth staithes (STH) and the same number during a WeBS count in the Tweed estuary on 9th (MHu). At Cresswell Pond, 17 were noted on 14th (PRM), 13 at Plenmeller Common on 7th (PRM), 12 on Holy Island causeway on 15th (PRM) and 12 at Humshaugh, Haughton Strother GP on 29th (MR). Smaller counts came from Spartylea, Alnmouth, Big Waters NWT, Bothal Pond (Coney Garth), Catcleugh Reservoir, Coanwood Pond, College Valley (Whitehall), Derwent Reservoir, Grindon Lough, Grindon Lough, Halton-Lea-Gate, Kielder Water, R Aln (Foxton Bends), R Wansbeck estuary, Shotleyfield (nr Airy Holm Reservoir), Wark (North Tyne), Wark (North Tyne), Whittle Dene Reservoirs.



An Oystercatcher at Branton GPs
4th June by Mike Carr

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

The largest count was of 39 birds at Newbiggin (Beacon Point) on 26th (STH). Other records were of nine, also at Beacon Point, on 23rd (AA), two pairs at Slaley, Winnows Hill on 2nd (PRM), four at Plenmeller Common on 7th (PRM), a pair at Whitfield Moor on 21st and a single showing moulted summer plumage at Boulmer on 20th.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Budle Bay had 130 1st-summer birds on 23rd (CGK/GPK) while on 1st a single was reported from Cresswell Pond (JBu) and another single was seen at Boulmer on 20th (TRD/JD).

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

A post-breeding flock of 92 at Derwent Reservoir, which included juveniles, was seen on 2nd (ASJ). On 14th 58 birds were recorded at Cresswell Pond NWT (PRM) and a post-breeding flock of 42 was at Longhirst Flash on 18th (MSH). Bothal Pond held 27 on 25th (TD) while Holywell Pond had 20 on 20th (ASJ). Smaller counts of ten or more came from Foxton Bends (14 on 22nd which included a brood of two), six pairs at Coanwood Pond on 21st, between 4-12 all month at Spartylea and ten (including four juveniles) at Prestwick Carr on 10th. All other records came from Big Waters NWT, Bilton, Dinnington, Grindon Lough, Holy Island (reporting a lack of fledged birds despite five or six known birds nesting), Humshaugh (Haughton Strother GP, where four pairs of birds appear to have been predated), Lynemouth Flash (with brood of two), Plenmeller Common, Slaley (Winnows Hill).

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Confirmed breeding came from two sites, one to the east of the A1 and one to the west of the A1 with strong suggestion that breeding was occurring at a third site. In total, reports came from eight sites.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Breeding was reported from Derwent Reservoir (IFo), Ryal, Mootlaw Quarry (ALT) and Humshaugh, Haughton Strother GP (MR). Blyth estuary had the largest reported count – eleven on 28th (PRM) while ten were reported from Holy Island, Sandham Bay (PRM). Smaller counts came from Colt Crag Reservoir, Cresswell, Bell's Farm, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, ex-Longhirst Flash, Newton, Long Nanny.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Some of the earlier sighting in the month were presumably of laggards still venturing north – two at Druridge Pools on 9th (TB) and a single bird at Holy Island on 15th (PRM). Later records were probably (?) of returning birds – one at Boulmer on 20th (TB), two at Budle Bay on 30th (GPK) and a single, accompanying Curlews on 30th at Newbiggin (JGS). A further report of a single bird flying N at Rockcliffe was without a date and presumably earlier in the month.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

The only record of breeding came from Allendale on 2nd where "several pairs with young" were noted (ASJ). Post-breeding flocks began coastal movements toward the end of the month with Seaton Sluice Watch Tower recording a northward movement of 68 between 29th-30th and 67 birds were reported from Newbiggin on 30th (JGS). Prior to this movement the largest count was of 19 birds at Boulmer on 22nd (PRM). Other double-figure counts were made at Carterway Heads (Derwent Reservoir), Alnmouth Widdrington Moor Lake (a flock of 15 on 19th) and five pairs at Coanwood Pond on 21st (PRM). Other records came from Big Waters NWT, Broomlee Lough, Fellhouse Fell, Fontburn area, Grindon Lough, Halton-Lea-Gate, Longhorsley, Smallburn, Old Water (Warkworth), Plenmeller Common, Ponteland, R Blyth estuary, R Tweed estuary, Shotton pit heap, Slaley (Winnows Hill), Spartylea, Wark (North Tyne) and Whitfield Moor.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Significant numbers were seen throughout the month, often in breeding plumage and largely restricted to the Druridge Bay area. The largest count was of 19 at Druridge Pools (Budge Field) on 2nd (PJA/CS/SF, TF/JFa). Druridge Pools dominated reports throughout the rest of the month with fluctuating counts down to 12 by the latter part of the month. Other reports came from East Chevington (12 on 16th, (TRD), near Bell's Farm on 5th (four, TRD) and Castle Island (R Wansbeck), where two were reported on 9th (STH).

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

The non-breeding flock at Holy Island was counted as 268 on 16th (IK). Ten birds were at Budle Bay on 23rd (CGK/GPK). Single birds were reported from Inner Farne on 9th (TRD) and from Boulmer on 30th (TRD/JD).

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

A potential summering group of 50 was at Snab Point, Cresswell on 26th (TB). The only other counts were 20 at Low Newton on 8th (TRD) and a maximum of 12 in Sandham Bay, Holy Island on 15th (PRM).

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Only one bird was reported at Budle Bay on 30th (GPK).

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

A single male at Druridge Pools on 3rd increased to three by 22nd (TB/PRM/CH *et al.*).

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Three were at Budle Bay from 18th-22nd (GPK).

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

The only report concerned 20 late birds at Low Newton on 8th (TRD).

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Low numbers were noted on the coast with three at Cresswell on 5th (TRD), three at Cheswick on 15th, two at Sandham Bay, Holy Island also on 15th (PRM), a single at the Long Nanny on 7th (TRD) and ten at Budle Bay on 23rd (GPK/CGK). Inland, at potential breeding locations, two were at Grindon Lough on 7th (PRM) and a maximum of three at Derwent Reservoir from 27th-28th (IFO).

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

A single bird in summer plumage was seen at the former Longhirst Flash on 2nd (several observers).

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Counts from potential inland breeding areas came from Derwent Reservoir with five on 2nd (PRM), four at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 30th (SR), pairs at Catcleugh Reservoir and Falstone and singles at Beanley, Ingram and Wark. Returning birds were seen at coastal locations from 22nd with four at Castle Island (GB), two at Cresswell Pond and one at Budle Bay on 25th.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Birds possibly already on return passage were at Low Newton on 18th (JGS), Backworth Flash on 22nd (ASJ) and Haughton Strother GP from 22nd-29th (MR).

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

A single adult was seen at both Cresswell Pond and Druridge Pools on 26th (MSH).

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Birds were reported from mid-month with singles at Druridge Pools from 16th-25th (TRD/TF/JFa *et al.*). Singles were also at Monk's House Pool and Bothal Pond on 19th (GPK/CB/JGS) and Longhirst Flash on 25th (TD/JFa/TF). Three arrived ahead of a heavy rain front at Backworth Flash on 30th (MSH).

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Birds were on territory or at potential breeding areas with a maximum of seven at Spartylea (CT), six at Grindon Lough (PRM) and pairs at Backworth, Broomlee Lough, Coanwood Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Pools, Fellhouse Fell, Halton-Lea-Gate and Plenmeller Common. Five were back in Budle Bay by 21st (GPK), 14 at Foxton Bend (River Aln) and eight at Boulmer on 22nd (PRM). On 27th, 28 were at Budle Bay and 31 in the River Blyth Estuary (GPK/PRM).

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Birds were less visible during breeding and reports were received from only three locations. A maximum of five was at Winnow's Hill (Slaley Forest) during the month (JBU/EC *et al.*). Two were seen at Beanley Plantation on 15th and two in Wark Forest on 21st (TRD/JD/PRM).

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Displaying birds were much in evidence this month with six pairs at Winnow's Hill (Slaley Forest) on 2nd (PRM), nine birds displaying at Allendale on 2nd (ASJ), five pairs at Halton-Le-Gate (PRM) on 21st, eight at Plenmeller Common on 7th (PRM), three pairs at Grindon Lough (PRM) and two pairs at both Broomlee Lough and Whitfield Moor (PRM). Two were displaying at Blagdon and Harthope Valley on 4th and a pair was at Coanwood Pond. Singles were at Alnwick Moor, Blanchland Moor ('singing'), Druridge Pools, Holy Island, Longframlington Common (displaying) and Spartylea during the month.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Two pale phase birds flew N at Newbiggin on 30th (JGS).

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

At Seaton Sluice, 14 flew N from 29th-30th (SSWT) and at Newbiggin, nine (some probably the same as at Seaton Sluice) flew N on 30th (JGS). Elsewhere, three flew N at Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) during the month and singles were seen at Beacon Point (Newbiggin), Beadnell and the River Wansbeck Estuary.

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

Four flew N at Newbiggin on the morning of 30th (JGS) and singles flew S at Seaton Sluice on 28th and 30th (SSWT).

Auk *sp*

At St Mary's Island 76 moved N in half an hour on 28th (MSH).



One of the outstanding bird spectacles of our area
Auks nesting on Inner Farne by Tim Dean on 9th June

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

At Seaton Sluice, movement was recorded from 20th-30th with totals of 93N and 90S (SSWT). At the main breeding colonies, ca.2,000 and 3,000 were on Coquet Island and the Farne Islands respectively and a single bird was on the stack at Needles Eye, Berwick, possibly still holding on there as a mainland breeding species (TRD/JD).



Above a Puffin arrives home with Sand eels
and below a Razorbill
both on Inner Farne by Tim Dean on 9th June



Razorbill *Alca torda*

Fifty were counted at Berwick, Needles Eye on 22nd, 20 on the Farne Islands on 9th and a single on Coquet Island (TRD); two were still around the Priory cliffs, Tynemouth on 18th (DRW)

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

Counts of ca.5,000 and 800 came from the Farne Islands and Needles Eye, Berwick respectively (TRD/JD) and elsewhere, away from the breeding sites, 50 were at Boulner and ten at Holy Island (TRD/JD).

Razorbill/Guillemot

Several large movements were recorded at Seaton Sluice in the final ten days with a maximum of 750 N in 2.5 hours on 28th (SSWT).

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

The Lindisfarne colony, where some pairs lost eggs due to high tides in May, again lost clutches this month due to strong winds and high tides (IK). At Bamburgh, Stag Rocks 24 were recorded moving N on 10th (DF) with one to four seen at Boulmer, Holy Island and Low Newton.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Sixty moved N at Seaton Sluice in 1.5 hours on 28th (SSWT) and unusual inland records were of two moving NW over Haughton Strother GP on 22nd (MR) and a single NW over Longbenton on 30th (ADM). The largest count was ca.100 on the Farne Islands (TRD) with 40-70 at Alnmouth, Holy Island (St Cuthbert's Island) and Newbiggin (Beacon Point), 10-30 at Boulmer, Coquet Island, Druridge and East Chevington and up to nine at six other widespread coastal localities.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

At Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 21st, a total of 28 included six young on the raft, all of which were gone by 26th, possibly predated (SR) and at Big Waters NWT at least five nests held young by 18th (GB). A first breeding record came from the North Blyth staithes on 25th where 12 pairs were nesting, six with young and six on eggs (STH). Two pairs at Swallow Pond each had three chicks on 23rd (SPP). Counts of 20 and 10 came from Coquet Island and the Farne Islands respectively (TRD) with at least 11 at Alnmouth on 22nd (PRM). One to four were at nine other localities mainly at or near the coast but also Newburn and Colt Crag Reservoir.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

On Coquet Island, 20 were recorded on 8th (TRD) and ten fished offshore at Low Hauxley on 14th (PRM)

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

The mainland colony at the Long Nanny held around 600 pairs, ca.1,000 birds were counted on the Farne Islands and ca.100 on Coquet Island during the early part of the month (TRD). Two 1st-summer birds in 'portlandica' plumage were noted at Budle Bay (CGK/GPK) and East Chevington (TRD).



An Arctic Tern on Inner Farne by Tim Dean on 9th June

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

On 24th, 200 per hour moved N into strong winds at Castle Point, Holy Island (IK) and at St Mary's Island in excess of 60, mainly adults, flew N in one hour on 28th (MSH). The Farne Islands held ca.1,000 on 9th and 400 were counted at Berwick, Needles Eye on 22nd (TRD/JD). Elsewhere, 156 were in the Tweed Estuary, Calot Shad gull roost on 2nd (MHu) and many birds moved continuously up and down river at Howdon on 24th (CB). Up to six were recorded from seven other coastal localities.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

At the Plenmeller Common colony, 600+ including juveniles were counted on 7th (PRM) but reports from elsewhere were few, including 18 in the River Tweed Estuary (MHu) and one to nine at five other localities.

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

At Seaton Sluice, a single immature moved N on 22nd with two adults and an immature there on 30th (SSWT); three also moved N at Holy Island on 29th (IK). Up to four, all immatures, were at Cresswell Pond from 2nd-14th (TB *et al*) and single immatures and an adult were at Newbiggin on dates from 26th-30th (JGS/STH).

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

From 22nd-26th, reports from the Newbiggin area comprised two to three adults and two immatures (CH/STH). One of the adults was ringed in Antwerp, Belgium in May this year (CH).

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Nine were at Haughton Strother GP (MR) and elsewhere one to three were at six other sites.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

Flocks of 55 and 47 were present in fields in the Breamish valley and Wingates (ASJ). Other sightings were 11 at Derwent Reservoir (IFo) and up to nine at Blyth Riverside, Bothal Pond, Haughton Strother GP, Jesmond Dene and the River Tweed Estuary.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argenteus*

Breeding records included 11 young at the Blyth Riverside Industrial Estate (LJM), three pairs at Wallsend, Davy Bank (CDH) and Wansbeck Hospital (RS), two pairs on nests at North Blyth (STH) and one (unlucky?) observer had a pair hatching two young in a nest on his roof at Monkseaton (MSH). A WeBS in the River Tweed Estuary included 576 on 9th (MHu) and 70+, mainly immatures, were at St Mary's Island (MSH). One or two were at three other localities.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

A rare summer sighting was an immature bird with heavy wing moult at the Low Newton flash on 24th (JGS), possibly the same individual recorded at Monks' House Pool in late-May.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Only two records comprising nine in the River Tweed Estuary and an immature at Colt Crag Reservoir.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

High counts of 37 at Howdon on 26th (CB), 24 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 13th (MR), ten at Widdrington Moor Lake on 28th (TB) with one to five at Big Waters, Bilton, Broomlee Lough, Ellington, Jesmond Dene, Tynemouth and Whittle Dene.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Six at Jesmond Dene on 4th (MJCo), four all month at Spartylea (CT) and present at Whitley Bay Community garden (IJ).

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

On 4th a total of 35 at Holy Island with 25 coming to seed put out at Chare End (ADM), 12 including three juveniles all month at Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin) (RS) and two all month at Spartylea (CT).

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Highest count three at Stonehaugh on 3rd (ASJ) with two at Derwent Reservoir on the same date (IFo), Blanchland Moor on 4th (TF/JFa) and Halton-Lea-Gate on 21st (PRM). Singles, generally calling were at 11 further locations.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Two were at Bilton and Druridge Pools on 22nd (TF/JFa/PRM) and Longhorsley Moor on 24th (AB/LB) with singles regularly at Druridge, Cresswell Pond and Anick, Derwent Reservoir, Halton-Lea-Gate, Linton, Prestwick Carr and Simonburn.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

An adult and three large juveniles were near Big Waters at dusk on 22nd (GB) with two at Derwent Reservoir on the same date (IFo), at Druridge on 24th (PCF) and on territory throughout the month at Backworth and Shiremoor (CGK). Singles were seen regularly at Druridge and at Whittle Dene on 14th and Wark Forest on 21st.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Four males called at Winnows Hill (Slaley) on 1st with male and female calling at Rothbury during the month (TRD/JD) and two regularly at Spartylea (CT). Two juveniles from garden nest box called every evening at Stamfordham (EC) with singles at Dinnington, Haughton Strother GP, Jesmond Dene, Longhirst Flash, Twice Brewed, Wark and Woolsington.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

Three separate families of 1, 2 and 3 calling juveniles were at Wark Forest on 21st with two juveniles calling at Nunwick on the same date (PRM), at Thrunton Woods on 15th (TRD/JD) with one calling at Druridge Pools on 2nd (PJA/CS/SFW). Adults were at Druridge Pools on 3rd and 13th and hunted the dunes on 17th.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

A pair fledged at least two young from a confidential moorland site (IK) with singles at Plenmellor Common on 7th, Hareshaw Common (Bellingham) on 16th and Sewing Shields on 21st (PRM).

Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

The regular site at Winnows Hill (Slaley) had five males on 2nd (PRM), four on 18th (EC) and three on 7th (JBU) with singles heard there on 21st and at Beanley Plantation on 15th (TRD/JD).

Swift (*Apus apus*)

More than 400 were over fields to east of Holywell Pond on 2nd (SPP), 120 N over Weetslade CP on 26th (PS), 60+ at Backworth Flash on 30th (MSH) with 40 at Druridge Pools on 5th and Arcot Pond on 12th. Nesting colonies at Cullercoats and Whitley Bat held 40 and 35 birds respectively with four to 20 at eight other locations.

Four dead young were found below three nests at Lemington in the last week of June. In previous years the house occupants have managed to 'launch' them or restore them to the nest (RSY/MY).

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

All sightings were singles at Beanley on 1st, Bellasis Bridge on 3rd, Low Angerton on 10th, High Ford Bridge (Morpeth) on 14th, Paperhaugh on 22nd, Haughton Strother GP on 25th and 27th, Ogle Bridge on 26th and Budle Bay on 27th.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

The regular calling bird at Prestwick Carr moved east to Banks Pond Dinnington and was seen on 11th and 25th (PCF).

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

A peak count of four at Low Angerton on 13th (IRD) with two adults and two juveniles in the observers garden at Tynemouth on 19th (CB). Three were at Spartylea all month with fledglings seen on 5th (CT), Jesmond Dene on 4th (MJCo) and Linhope (Ingram) on 9th (IRD) with two at Harthope Valley, Longhorsley Moor, Morpeth and Wark. Singles were at a further three locations.



A Great Spotted Woodpecker recovers after crashing into the County Recorder's lounge window
Tim Dean on 20th June
Rothbury

Kestrel *Falco tinninculus*

Up to three birds were at West Hartford throughout the Month (TB) and three were also at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 28th (PRM). Two birds were seen at Arcot Pond on 1st (PRM), Druridge Pools on 4th (TB) and two newly fledged young were on the ground at Derwent Reservoir on 22nd (IFo). Single birds were observed at 12 sites.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

On 18th a bird flew N past Emmanuel Point (Holy Island) low over the sea (PRM) and a bird flew S over Swallow Pond on 21st (SPP).

Peregrine*Falco peregrinus*

Two adult birds were on the cliffs below the caravan park at Marshall Meadows on 14th (TRD/JD); singles were noted at Winnow's Hill (Slaley) on 1st (TF/JFa) and at Sandham Bay (Holy Island) on 15th (PRM).



A Peregrine on cliffs near Berwick by Tim Dean on 24th June

Ring necked Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

Three were at Nuns Moor (Newcastle) on 9th and one went E over Jesmond on 28th (PCF/GB).



A Ring necked Parakeet at Nuns Moor Newcastle by Tim Dean on 16th June

Magpie *Pica pica*

Just two reports of six at Jesmond Dene on 24th (MJCo) and two juveniles at Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin) from 26th to 30th (RS).

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Four was the high count at Ellington on 20th with singles there regularly (TB), two at Jesmond Dene on 18th (MJCo) and singles also at College Valley, Cramlington, Felton, Linton Ponds, Longhorsley Moor and Widdrington Moor Lake.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

On 26th 88 were at Howdon (CB), 4 to 15 at Spartylea all month (CT), seven at Jesmond Dene on 11th (MJCo) and adult with two juveniles at Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin) from 21st to 30th (RS).

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

140 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 22nd (MR), 25 including ten juveniles at Prestwick Carr on 4th and up to five at Spartylea all month (CT).

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Two nested on a railway electric pylon at Needles Eye (Berwick) on 3rd (MHu) and four were at Jesmond Dene on 24th (MJCo).

Raven *Corvus corax*

A family party of two adults and two juveniles at Ravenshaugh Crag (Wark) on 3rd (ASJ) and one at Coanwood Pond on 21st (PRM).

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Five at Wark on 25th of which four were singing males (PRM), two at Ellington on 16th, Longhorsley Common on 21st and Whittle Dene on 28th with singles at Broomlee Lough, Darras Hall and Havannah NR.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

A family party of seven at Prestwick Carr on 4th (PCF), four at Spartylea all month (CT) and fledged from two nest boxes in the observers garden at Fulbeck (Morpeth) (JD) with two at Jesmond Dene on 11th.



A Great it and a Blue Tit at Tynemouth on 26th June by Colin Bradshaw

Great Tit *Parus major*

Two family parties totalling 11 at Prestwick Carr on 4th (PCF) with four at Spartylea all month (CT) and three at Jesmond Dene on 4th (MJCo).

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Only one report of two at separate locations in Jesmond Dene on 24th (MJCo).

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

A pair fed five fledged juveniles at Prestwick Carr on 6th (PCF) and a pair with three juveniles at Absheil (Beacon Hill) on 18th (TD). Singles were at Big Waters, Derwent Reservoir, Linton Pond, Prestwick Carr and the track from Cresswell Pond to Warkworth Lane.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

In the Fontburn area a pair with five juveniles on 3rd (TD).

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Singing birds at Otterburn Ranges on 10th, Wanneys on 15th and 16 at Simonside on 17th with two all month at Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin) (RS).

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

A re-colonised site restored after 8 years by Lord James Percy at Roddam had 90 AON with a count of 196 on 30th (PHa/AHa) and the established site at Haughton Strother GP had 140 AON on 13th (MR) with at least 16 AON at the Tynemouth Priory cliffs first established last year (DRW). 140 were at Whittle Dene on 30th (SR), 20 were at Wark on 18th and Ponteland on 23rd with one to ten at College Valley, Howdon and Newton Links House.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

The peak count was 30+ at Backworth Flash on 30th (MSH) with two to ten at Spartylea and Whitley Bay. Wind and rain at Holy Island during the last week was disastrous with five broods totalling 19 found dead on 29th and other more advanced broods depleted from five to one or two chicks (IK). Active nests were noted on the 'Wylam Brewery' building Exhibition Park and in cave at Wark Common repeating last years occurrence.

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

At Capheaton on 15th there were up to 23 AON with ten nesting pairs at Upper Coquetdale on 10th, eleven at Ingram on 17th (ASJ) and two at Wansbeck Hospital on 13th (RS). Six nests in farmhouse windows at Fontburn with ten birds counted 3rd (TD) but worryingly none found on a BBS at Denton Burn (Newcastle) on 4th (SRB). Eight were at Spartylea and Tyne Riverside (Newburn) with four at Whitehall (College Valley).

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

There were two family parties at Colt Crag Reservoir on 28th. Eight were at Ellington on 22nd and two at Jesmond Dene on 18th.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Two singing males were at Derwent Gorge on 4th (IK) and a single was noted at Sidwood (Tasset) on 15th (ASJ).

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

At Arcot Hall GC, 22 singing males and a pair carrying food to a nest were noted on 6th (LJM). Up to 15 singing males were at Beacon Hill (Longhorsley) on 17th and 11 at Holywell Dene on 11th. Elsewhere there were nine singing at Wandylaw Woods (Wingates) on 17th, six at Jesmond Dene on 4th, five at Bilton, and Longhorsley Moor and one to three at a further ten localities, including two late migrants at Holy Island on 4th.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

In the Breamish Valley, 34 singing males were heard on 17th (ASJ). Elsewhere, 15 at Arcot Hall GC on 6th included 13 singing and a pair with food for young, while 13 singing males were also noted at Longhorsley Moor on 24th. There was a count of 12 from Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 21st, nine were singing at Colt Crag Reservoir on 28th and four to seven were reported from Halton-Lea-Gate, Kielder Water (Tower Knowe), Prestwick Carr and Wark (North Tyne). One to three were reported from a further 13 localities, including one to two late passage birds at Holy Island from 4th-7th and on 17th.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Four in Jesmond Dene on 24th was the highest count. Three singing males were at Wark (North Tyne) on 25th and one to two at a further nine localities, including a pair feeding a nest at Whitley Bay on 2nd.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Nine singing males were at Wandylaw Woods (Wingates) on 17th (ASJ). Three were noted at Fontburn and Harthope Valley, two at Longhorsley Moor and singles at Derwent Reservoir, Longhorsley Common, Longhorsley Moor and Wark (North Tyne).

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Single birds were reported from Castle Island, Druridge Pools, Holy Island (apparently feeding young), Meldon, Pegswood and Shadfen.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

A total of 17 singing males were noted on the Holywell-Backworth footpath/waggonway on 10th (ASJ). Fourteen singing males were located in the Breamish Valley on 17th, nine birds were at Prestwick Carr on 4th and four males were at Arcot Pond and at Bilton on 1st and 22nd respectively. One to three were reported from a further 13 localities, including fledged young at St Mary's Island by 20th.

A Whitethroat at Holywell Dene
4th June by Alan Jack

**Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella naevia*

Two 'reeling' birds were reported from Bamburgh on 9th and Cheswick on 15th, while singles were noted at Abshiel, Arcot Pond, Dinnington, East Chevington, Ellington, Hauxley, Low Newton, Newton Pool, Prestwick Carr, St Mary's Island and West Hartford.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Four pairs were present at Cheswick by mid-month (PRM), with counts of five coming from Holy Island, Haughton Strother (four singing) St Mary's Wetland (singing) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Two breeding pairs were at Newburn Riverside, up to four birds were at East Chevington (included two singing males) and three singing males were at Fenham-le-Moor. Singles were reported from Arcot Pond, Beal, Bothal Pond, Coanwood Pond, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools and Low Hauxley.



A Sedge Warbler decides to sing
Cresswell
by Colin Bradshaw

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*

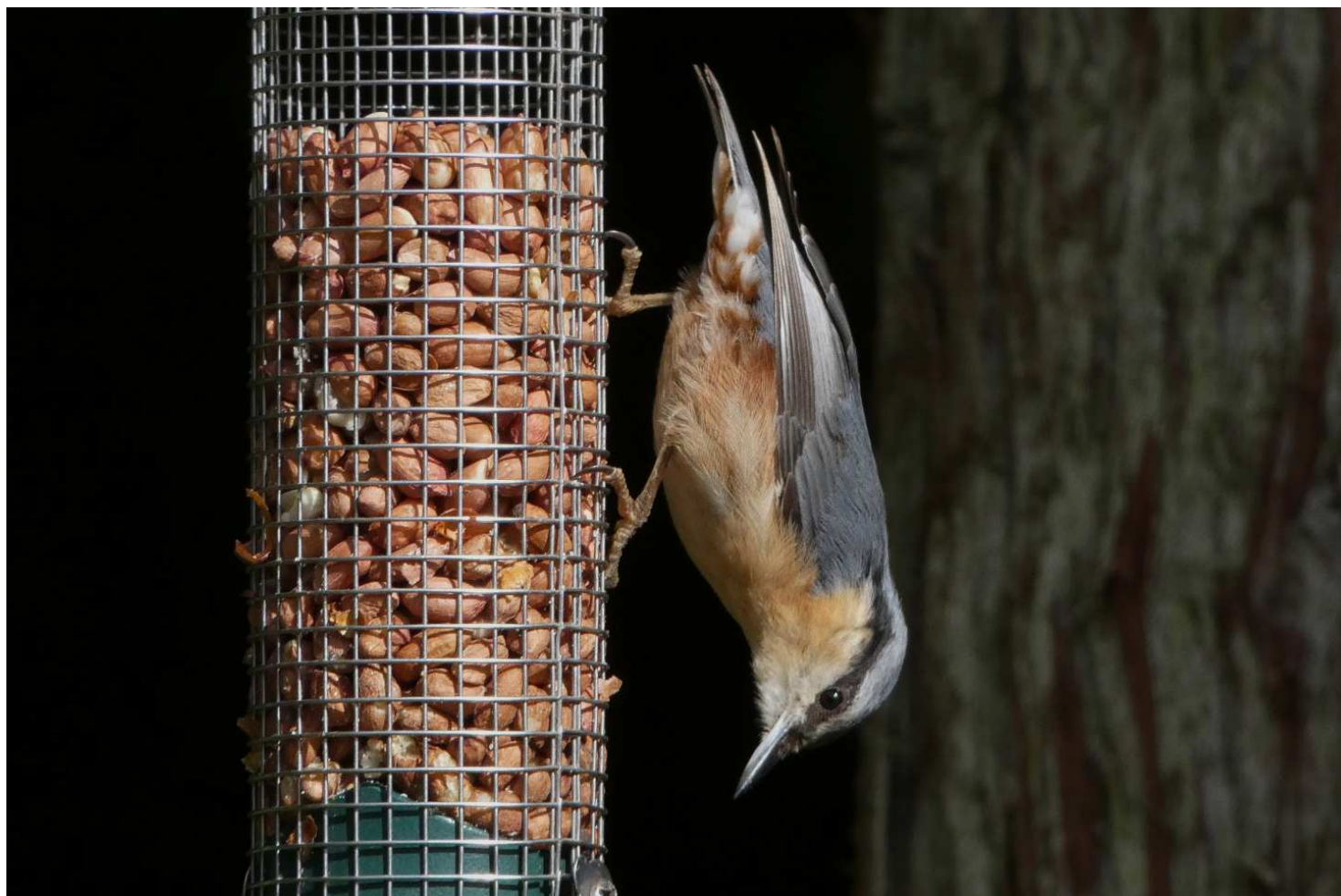
A singing male was at Low Newton from 4th to month end (Gary Woodburn/CB/JGS)

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

A family party of five was at Holywell Pond (SPP). Three were reported from East Chevington on 14th and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 26th and three at Cresswell Pond on 14th included a bird carrying a fiscal sac. More unusual was two at Spartylea throughout the month, while singles were seen / and or heard at Big Waters, Druridge Bay CP, Druridge Pools and St Mary's Wetland.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

A pair fledged six young from a nest in a brick wall in a garden at Stamfordham - a site used in 2016 (EC). Two adults and two juveniles were at Fulbeck (Morpeth) on 10th and a juvenile was at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 27th. Elsewhere two were on feeders at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 4th and likewise a single at Rothbury almost daily. Two were at Wark (North Tyne) on 18th and 25th and more unusual was a single at Newcastle University grounds on 14th.



A Nuthatch in a Rothbury garden by Janet Dean on 9th June

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Singles were noted at Bilton, Derwent Reservoir and Wark (North Tyne).

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

A high count of 36 (32 singing) was made at Arcot Hall GC on 6th (LJM), while 12 singing birds were reported from Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) and Longhorsley Moor. Up to five were at Spartylea throughout, four at Jesmond Dene and three (singing) at Longhorsley Common.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

A flock of 140 was at Berwick GC on 5th (MHu) and 100 (mostly juveniles) at Derwent Reservoir on 19th. Nine (five juveniles) were at Quarry House (Newbiggin), up to 12 at Spartylea, eight on feeders at Tynemouth and a pair apparently with a second nest at Fulbeck (Morpeth).

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Two were noted at Spartylea throughout the month, while singles were reported from Bilton, Branton GP (juv), Halton-Lea-Gate, Mitford, Ponteland and Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth).

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

The only report was of two males at Hawsen Burn on 9th (AA).

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

A total of 29 singing males were noted at Marden Estate (Tynemouth) on 3rd (ASJ). Up to seven were at Spartylea during the month, four singing males at Longhorsley Moor and four in Jesmond Dene on 24th and a pair with two juveniles at Newbiggin on 26th.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

A single bird in a garden at Bridge of Aln to 16th had been present throughout May (AH).

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Ten singing males were noted in the Breamish Valley on 1st (ASJ). At least four pairs were in the Low / High Newton area on 4th; a count of eight at Arcot Hall GC on 6th included six singing males and the species was noted as common in the Stonehaugh area mid-month. Seven were at Holywell Dene on 2nd, fours were reported from Backworth and Spartylea, three at Jesmond Dene and Whittle Dene Reservoirs and two at Longhorsley Moor and at Wark (North Tyne).

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Two recently fledged young were at Arcot Hall GC on 6th. Singles were noted at Howdon, Jesmond Dene, Longhorsley Common, Longhorsley Moor, Spartylea, Whitfield Moor and Winnows Hill (Slaley).

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*.

Four pairs were at Ingram on 24th (ASJ), two pairs at Lordenshaw on 17th and two pairs at Simonburn on 15th. Evidence of successful breeding came from Colt Crag Reservoir, where a pair was carrying food for young, Spartylea where up to seven included adults feeding young and at Stamfordham where a pair fledged four young. Three were at Coronation Wood (Harthope Valley) on 13th and one to two late migrants were at Holy Island (Snook) on 4th. Two were at Fontburn on 3rd and singles at Ancroft, Derwent Reservoir, Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.



A Spotted Flycatcher at Ingram
by Alan Jack on 17th June

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Seven were singing at Colt Crag Reservoir on 28th. Up to five were noted at Spartylea during the month and four singing birds and a juvenile were at Longhorsley Moor on 24th; four were also noted at Jesmond Dene on 14th.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

The only report this month was a single at Fontburn on 3rd (TD).

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Three pairs were at Wark (North Tyne) on 25th (PRM). An adult and two juveniles (fledged from a box) were at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 27th, while singles were noted at Derwent Reservoir, Dipton Mill and Thrunton Woods.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

An impressive count of 34 in Upper Coquetdale on 10th comprised 15 pairs and four males, while seven pairs were feeding young in nests in the Upper Breamish Valley on 17th (ASJ).



Above a Whinchat at Ingram on 17th June by Alan Jack and below a Stonechat at Long Nanny by Janet Dean on 7th June



Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Successful breeding was noted at West Hartford where a pair was seen taking food to a nest on 1st and later with two fledged young on 22nd. Other pairs with two fledged young were at Winnows Hill (Slaley) on 2nd, at Stonehaugh on 15th and a male was seen with two juveniles at Broomlee Lough on 20th. Two pairs on Holy Island included a female carrying food on 7th, a pair with a single juvenile was at Long Nanny on 7th and another pair fed young in a nest at Simonside on 17th. One to two adult birds were also reported from Alnmouth, Bellingham, Boulmer, Cheswick, Debdon, Druridge Pools, Dunsdale (College Valley), East Chevington, Low Hauxley, North Blyth, Warkworth and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Wheatear *Oenanthe Oenanthe*

Three pairs were noted in Upper Coquetdale on 10th, a pair with three fledged young were at Plashetts on 15th and a pair was at Stonehaugh, also on 15th (ASJ).

Duncock *Prunella modularis*

Three were in Jesmond Dene and two at Spartylea this month, with an adult accompanying a fledged youngster in a Marden garden the only records.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Two large gatherings on Holy Island on 4th, 110 attracted to seed provided at Chare Ends cottages and 80 at Coombs Farm/Straight Lonnen (ADM). 68 were counted at Pegswood (not including juveniles) on 4th (TD). 50 including juveniles were seen during the month at Spital (Newbiggin) (RS). Feeders at Marden and Tynemouth attracted 12 all month and six (females/juveniles) on 19th respectively and two birds at Big Waters were unusual (ASJ/CB/GB).

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

A good count of 47 was made at Chugdon Wood on 4th (TB). Ten were at Cresswell on 6th (TRD). Eight+ fledged young were seen at Weetslade C.P. on 4th (LJM). Four, including two fledged young were at a Heddon house on 22nd (AA). Two also fledged from a Morpeth garden nest box on 7th (TD). Four pairs noted at Wark on 25th (PRM). One to five were at six further sites during the month.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

At least four pairs were seen in arable fields at Whittle Dene on 28th, with four birds seen at the reservoirs on 30th (PRM/SR). One to two were at six further sites.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Eight were at Whittle Dene on 2nd and five on 28th and up to seven were at Spartylea during the month (SR/PRM/CT). A total of five were at Jesmond Dene on 24th (MJCo). A female with two juveniles was at Haughton Strother on 13th (MR). Other single juveniles were seen at Belford and Mootlaw Quarry during the month. One to two were seen at a further six locations.



A Grey Wagtail at Rothbury
by Janet Dean on 7th June

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrelli*

A good count of 20 was made at Whittle Dene on 2nd(SR).20+ including juveniles noted at Colt Crag on 28th(MR). Seven were at Arcot Hall GC on 6th included two fledged young and an adult took food to a nest(LJM). A family group of a pair with four fledged young was feeding along the beach at St. Mary's on 22nd(ASJ). Six were at Spartylea all month(CT). An adult and three fledged young were noted at a Newsham(Blyth) school on 8th and a pair with two young were at Spital(Newbiggin)on 29th(PJA/RS). One to three were at five other sites.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Good numbers continued to display at Wingates this month, with ten males noted over a two hour walk on 17th (ASJ). Elsewhere, singles were watched displaying at five other inland/woodland sites during the month(IK/TRD/AB/LB/PRM).



A Tree Pipit in the Simonsides
14th June
Mike Carr

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

The Otterburn Ranges continued to hold large numbers of breeding birds, with 90+ pairs noted from a 26km cycle ride on 10th. At Plashetts on 50+ was the minimum number noted of breeding birds in heath/grassland habitat, many feeding young(ASJ). 18 displaying/carrying food were counted along the Carey Burn on 11th(IRD). Several birds continued to display at St. Mary's. Two birds were also reported at two further sites.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Only three single reports this month were from Newton(carrying food),Amble Harbour and low Hauxley.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Between four to ten all month were at Spartylea(CT). A total of six were at various Jesmond Dene sites on 4th(MJCo). A pair frequented a Marden Estate garden all month.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Six including two juveniles were seen at Howden on 1st(CB). Two adults and two juveniles were in a Morpeth garden on 14th and two pairs at garden feeders in Rothbury all month(TD/TRD/JD). One to three were at ten further sites.

Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*

Four were at Castle Island on 22nd (GB). One to two at five other sites.

Linnet *Carduelis canabina*

Ten were noted at Holywell on 2nd (ASJ). Eight were at West Ord (Berwick) on 14th and at Whittle Dene on 28th(MHu/PRM). A family group of six were at Spital(Newbiggin) on 5th and 30th(RS). One to six were at a further nine sites, including four on Holy Island on 15th(PRM).

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis caberet*

As last month, considered as common in the Stonehaugh/Simonburn area on 3rd(ASJ). 11 were noted at Simonside on 17th(ASJ). Ten+ were at Tower Knowe on 3rd and nine at Coanwood on 21st(PRM). One to two were seen at five further sites during the month.

Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Commonly seen in the Stonehaugh area of Wark Forest on 3rd(ASJ). A female and three juveniles were feeding at Dilston on 9th(IfO). One to two at three other inland forest sites.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

A feeding flock, including juveniles of 25-30 was seen at St. Mary's on several dates. Nine pairs noted in Wark on 25th(PRM). Up to 14 at Spartylea all month(CT). One to five seen at nine other locations.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Few reports this month with four at Fontburn the highest count on 3rd and at a Rothbury garden during the month. Elsewhere, one to three were at five sites.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

A 20km cycle ride on 3rd from Ponteland to Ingoe/Wallridge revealed a total of 29 singing males, and on 8th, another ride produced 12 birds singing from Kirkley Hall to Belsay. Ten males sang from hedgerows around Whittle Dene on 15th(ASJ). 11 were in song in the Wark area on 25th(PRM). Eight likewise in the Breamish Valley on 17th(ASJ). Four including a fledged youngster were at Weetslade on 14th(LJM). One to two were seen at a further eight sites during the month.



A cock Yellowhammer at Ingram
by Alan Jack on 17th June

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

13 males were found at East Chevington on 14th and 12 sang in and around St. Mary's Wetland all month. 11 (two females) were on Holy Island on 15th (PRM/ASJ). In upland areas eight sang in Upper Coquetdale on 10th and eight at Breamish valley on 17th and seven males on rough grassland at Plashetts on 15th (ASJ). Six (three pairs) were breeding at Haughton Strother and six were seen at Halton Le Gate on 21st (MR/PRM). Birds sang in urban areas at Howden, West Allotment and Tyne Tunnel Trading Est. during the month (CB/ASJ). One to two noted at nine further sites this month.

Corn Bunting *Miliaria calandra*

An individual of this now very rare county species was singing at Boulmer from 19th to the month's end (TFa/JFa/PRM/ASJ/TRD/JD).

ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN**Escapes****Helmeted Guineafowl** (*Numida melagris*)

Three were seen at Cheeseburn near Stamfordham on 1st (PJA). Feeding together in arable field.

Hybrids

No Sightings

Birds of Unknown Origin**Red-breasted Goose** (*Branta ruficollis*)

Two flew in to Cresswell Pond on 2nd (ADMc). They flew off N after ten minutes. Although no rings, date and two together would lean towards these being escapes.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

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Alnwick Wildlife Group, Bamburgh Ringing Station, 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), Steve Laing (Red Grouse to Black-necked Grebe), Trevor Blake (Honey-buzzard to Crane), Tom Brewis (Avocet to Godwit), Clive Hampton (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 Jack (Duncock to Corn Bunting).

Data Manager is Tom Brewis.

Thanks to David Sanders of NNBC for providing data.

Mail distribution by Paul Stewart.

Edited by Steve Barrett NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.com

RECORD SUBMISSION

Please email records for the month to ntbc.records@googlemail.com

Please email for a copy of the standard spreadsheet and other details.

Location names and grid references: Please use of standard location names and include grid references as this 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

Annual membership costs £10 for a junior, £30 for an individual, and £32 for a family. For membership enquiries please contact ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

If you internet bank you can pay online: please include your name in the ref. It is helpful if you email me to let me know when you've made the transfer ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

If you decide to set up a standing order please date the first payment at least a fortnight from your posting date to allow time to process with the bank. You can also set up your standing order directly with your bank if you wish; just let me know.

Finally, if you know anyone who might like to join NTBC please pass on the club information - new members are always welcome.

Jo Bentley - Hon Treasurer

NTBC WEB SITE

The club website is an excellent online resource for anyone interested in birds. There are:

Photo Galleries – Here you can view hundreds of photos of birds from Northumberland, Newcastle and North Tyneside. Members are encouraged to contribute their own photos. Simply send them to galleries@ntbc.org.uk

Sightings – Here you can view reports of birds recently reported in the County. Anyone who would like to contribute and post sightings to this page, please email sightings@ntbc.org.uk Please note this section is moderated, so there may be a short delay before your record appears.

There are also County Checklists, Records Committee updates, Information on important Surveys, useful articles and reports on Bird ID and Overseas Birding Trips....and much more...

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

New content such as Birding Trip Reports etc., is always welcome and very much appreciated. To find out more please visit www.ntbc.org.uk



A Shag nesting on Inner Farne by Tim Dean on 9th June

Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

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

Bulletin 2017 No 7

MONTHLY SUMMARY JULY 2017

5th September 2017

CONTENTS

County Records Committee Vacancy

Colour Ringed Shags appeal

CLASSIFIED LIST HIGHLIGHTS

Ruddy Shelduck	Female at Budle Bay and Fenham Flats from 10th to 14th. Potentially from continent.
Quail	A notable Quail year with sightings from many sites.
Great Northern Diver	Summering bird still present with sighting at Boulmer on 9th.
Sooty Shearwater	Single N at Seaton Sluice on 26th.
Spoonbill	Continued presence with up to three together at three sites.
Slavonian Grebe	Summer plumaged adult still at Linton Pond to at least 12th.
Red Kite	A coastal bird in Druridge Bay area early in month.
Curlew Sandpiper	Two summer-plumaged adults from 27th at Cresswell Pond.
Little Stint	One at Cresswell Pond on 23rd.
Pectoral Sandpiper	Adult at Druridge Pools from 1st to 4th.
Spotted Redshank	Summer-plumaged adult at Budle Bay all month.
Wood Sandpiper	Continued passage all month.
Long-billed Dowitcher	Notable find involved a summer-plumaged adult at Boulmer from 7th to 15th.
White-winged Black Tern	Astonishingly, two different adults with birds at Druridge Pools and Newton.
Mediterranean Gull	Normal influx with up to 38 seen at Newbiggin.
Caspian Gull	Polish ringed adult returned to Amble on 26th.
Glaucous Gull	Immature continued to be seen with sightings at Boulmer and Annstead.
Nightjar	Unusual migrant with one at Whitley Bay GC on 16th.
Hobby	Sightings at Corby's Crag, Budle Bay and Humshaugh.
Hooded Crow	One at Stobswood on 9th.
Corn Bunting	Singing male at Boulmer remained until 2nd.

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 first autumn meeting will be on Thursday September 14th .

FIELD TRIPS

24th September 2017

East Lothian

Contact

Steve Anderson

seaswan@btinternet.com

A Mediterranean
Gull

Newbiggin

Colin Bradshaw

16th July



CLASSIFIED LIST**Mute Swan** *Cygnus olor*

Killingworth Lake held 62 on 19th (DM), 14 adults were at Castle Island on 23rd (DM) and six at Newcastle Leazes Park. Additional breeding date were as follows (additional to previous months):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Holywell Pond	1	6	DM. On 17th.
Castle Island	1	2	DM. On 23rd.
Wansbeck Business Park, Ashington	1	1	LJM. On 12th.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Singles (adult where stated) were at the Coquet Estuary on 16th (MK), Druridge Pools on 8th (GB/SR), East Chevington on 3rd (BS), Warkworth on 20th-21st (BS/AJ), West Ord on 4th (MHu) and Widdrington Moor Lake on 1st, 16th and 20th (TB/MK/BS). At least two individuals were involved (the Warkworth and Widdrington Moor Lake birds on 20th; BS).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

A total of 435 were on the Northumberland side of Derwent Reservoir on 12th (LJM). Other peak counts were 370 at Haughton Strother GP on 31st (MR), 300 at Airy Holm Reservoir on 25th (IFo), and 158-168 at Hauxley Reserve (AJR) and Hoppen Kiln Flash (CGK/GPK), and 85 at Arcot Pond (DM). Counts of 24-38 came from Bakethin Reservoir, Marden Quarry and West Ord, while four to nine were at Big Waters, Bothal Pond, Castle Island, Grindon Lough, Killingworth Lake, Newcastle Leazes Park and New Water Haugh.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Castle Island held 161 on 17th (STH), 51-82 were at Grindon Lough (MRS), Haughton Strother GP (MR), Killingworth Lake (including a leucistic individual; DM/LJM) and New Water Haugh (MHu), 28-42 at Bothal Pond, Marden Quarry, Newcastle Leazes Park, the Tweed Estuary and Widdrington Moor Lake, and 12-15 at Bakethin Reservoir and Big Waters. Breeding data were as follows (additional to previous months):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Bank's Pond, Dinnington	1	6	LJM. On 12th.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Two were at Castle Island on 17th (STH), and singles at Budle Bay all month (CGK/GPK) and Beal Point, Lindisfarne NNR on 16th (MJC).



A Barnacle Goose at QEII Park
16th July by Colin Bradshaw

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Three birds of the pale-bellied *hrota* race were at Fenham Flats on 7th (SR).

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

An unringed individual (female type) was at Budle Bay between 10th-12th (GPK et al.) and Fenham Flats on 14th (SR).

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Six were at the Coquet Estuary on 29th (AWG) and four adults at Castle Island on 23rd (DM/STH/PJA). Breeding data were as follows (additional to previous months unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Castle Island	3	23 (9,7,7)	MK. On 22nd. Includes brood of 9 reported in June?
Tyne Estuary	2	8 (7,1)	MK. Pair with 1 small young and pair with 7 larger juveniles on 20th.
Bell's Pond, Druridge Bay	1	5	GB/LAR. On 8th
Cresswell Pond	1	3	AJR. Small young on 9th.

In addition, 15 juveniles were at Charlton Mires on 5th (AH), 11 large juveniles at Druridge Pools on 16th (MK) and three juveniles successfully fledged from one pair at Boulmer (where a second pair lost all young)(BS).

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

One was at Houghton Strother GP on 11th (MR).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

28 were at Grindon Lough on 20th (MRS) and 16 at Derwent Reservoir on 26th (IFo). One to two were also at Budle Bay, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Houghton Strother GP and Hauxley Reserve on sporadic dates between 1st-27th.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Peak counts were 20 at Bothal Pond on 25th (TF/JFa), 17 at Linton Ponds on 23rd (CDH), and ten at Druridge Pools on 28th (TRD). Six to eight were also at Big Waters, Castle Island and Marden Quarry, and two at Holywell Pond. Breeding data were as follows (additional to previous months unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Bothal Pond	3	19 (10,7,2)	TD. On 23rd. All previously reported?
Druridge Pools	3	16+	GB/LAR on 8th. Includes brood from June?
Bell's Pond, Druridge Bay	2	5 (3,2)	GB/LAR on 8th.
Castle Island	1	10	MK. On 1st.
Ladyburn Lake	1	7	LJM. On 11th.
Linton Ponds	1	7	CDH on 23rd. As June?
Swallow Pond	1	7	SPP. On 19th.

Teal *Anas crecca*

16 flew N and six S at Seaton Sluice between 24th-26th (SSWT). Druridge Pools attracted a peak of 22 on 2nd (GB), 13 were at Budle Bay on 19th (GPK), six at Linton Ponds (CDH), and one to three at Big Waters and Derwent Reservoir.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

146 at Big Waters on 23rd was the only three figure count (GB), with 50-66 at Castle Island (STH/DM/PJA), Houghton Strother GP (MR), Ladyburn Lake (LJM) and Marden Quarry (KWY), 30-49 at Derwent and Whittle Dene Reservoir, Holywell and Linton Ponds, and Newcastle Leazes Park, and ten to 23 at Bakethin Reservoir, Bothal Pond, Craggy Bog, Newcastle Exhibition Park, Spartylea, the Tweed Estuary and West Ord. Breeding data were as follows (additional to previous months unless otherwise stated):

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Ladyburn Lake	4	15 (8,3,2,2)	LJM. On 11th.
Castle Island	3	13 (7,3,3)	STH/DM/PJA on 23rd. Includes at least one new brood (seven tiny young)
West Stobswood Pool	1	8	MK. On 1st.
Holywell Pond	1	7	DM. On 17th.
Bell's Pond, Druridge Bay	1	6	GB/LAR. On 8th.
Lynemouth	1	5	GB/LAR. On 8th.
Howick	1	4	JAR. On 2nd.
Middle Ord Pond	1	4	MHu. On 9th.
Newcastle Exhibition Park	1	2	GB. Fresh young on 26th.
Killingworth Lake	1	1	DM/LJM. On 19th

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Four were at Druridge Pools on 1st and singles on 3rd and 25th (TRD/JD). Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Swallow Pond	1	8	SPP. Small young on 19th.
Bothal Pond	1	7	TF/JFa on 1st. As June? Later reduced to 5 young (TD)

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Holywell Pond held a peak of 23 on 9th (GPK), five were at Druridge Pools on 1st (TRD/JD) and one to two at Bothal and Linton Ponds, Druridge Pools and Haughton Strother GP.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

The largest concentrations were 35 at Bothal Pond on 25th (TF/JFa), and 23-29 at Cresswell Pond (IRD), Haughton Strother GP (MR), Holywell Pond (DM) and Killingworth Lake (DM/LJM). Six were at Big Waters, and one to three at Airy Holm Reservoir, Castle Island, Jesmond Dene, Middle Ord Pond, Newcastle Leazes Park and West Ord. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Haughton Strother GP	4	14	MR. On 2nd
Druridge Pools	2	8 (5,3)	GB. On 8th
Mootlaw Quarry	2	6 (3,3)	ALT. On 8th
Wansbeck Business Park, Ashington	1	8	LJM. On 12th
Hauxley Reserve	1	7	MK. On 1st
Linton Ponds	1	4	CDH. On 23rd
Bakethin Reservoir	1	2	STH. On 7th
Cheswick Pond	1	2	DF. On 14th
Cocklawburn Pond	1	2	MHu. On 14th
Newbiggin	1	1	GB/LAR. On 8th. On pool south of Woodhorn Flashes

Scaup *Aythya marila*

A drake flew N at Tynemouth on 25th (DRW). Single drakes were also reported from Budle Bay between 2nd-11th (TRD/JD/GPK et al.), Cresswell Pond on 14th and 19th (IRD/NFO) and Fenham Flats on 7th (SR).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

53 were at North Blyth on 9th (STH), 25 at Newbiggin on 17th (STH) and four at the Tweed Estuary. Breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of crèches	No. of young	Observer/notes
Beal Point, Lindisfarne NNR	1	5	MJC. Young plus 3 adult females

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Strong movement was recorded at Seaton Sluice on 5th-6th when a total of 1,630 flew N and 70 S (SSWT); 808 flew N at St Mary's between 5th-24th (JBU/MSH), 200 N at Cullercoats on 23rd (CGK), and 30-95 N at Hauxley and Newbiggin. Gatherings offshore involved 700 off Druridge on 3rd (TRD), 300 at Stag Rocks on 11th (TRD/JD), 275 (including 145 adult drakes) at Cheswick on 14th (CH), 160 at Cocklawburn (MHu) and 50 at Seaton Sluice. Counts of 15-20 also came from Craster and Howick.

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

A total of eight flew N at Seaton Sluice between 1st-26th (SSWT), and one moved N at Tynemouth on 1st (DRW).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Two females were at the regular breeding site on 2nd (JD). A juvenile was at Hauxley Reserve on 28th (TRD) and a single bird was at New Water Haugh on 26th (MHu). Breeding at a new site in the north of the county involved an adult with four ducklings on 13th (PHA/AHa).

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Seven flew N at Newbiggin on 24th (ASH/JR). A minimum of 26 were at Boulmer on 11th (EC) and six were at Craster on 8th (IRD).

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Large counts involved 102 female/immatures at Cocklawburn on 17th (CH), 90 juveniles at Castle Point, Holy Island on 16th (IK), 90 at Spittal cliffs on 18th (MHu), 62 at the Tweed Estuary on 21st (MHu) and 52 at nearby New Water Haugh on 23rd (MHu), and 39-46 at the Blyth Estuary (MK) and Boulmer (MSH). Groups of 12-21 were at Amble, Fenham Flats, Fisher-man's Haven (Berwick) and North Blyth, and two to seven at Budle Bay, North Blyth, Tynemouth and Warkworth.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Last month's influx continued with reports from 12 locations. The Elford area (Bamburgh) held up to four singing males on 4th (CGK/GPK), two were heard or seen at Beal Point, Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay), Fenham-le-Moor, Northside Farm (Horsley) and Stobswood, with singles at Holburn Grange, Holy Island, Low Newton, Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) and St.Mary's.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

The largest count was 150 at Blawerie (Bewick Moor) on 16th (SW). Singles were at Big Waters NWT and Brunton Bank.

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

A total of nine were present at a nest near Spartylea and had successfully fledged by the end of the month (CT).

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Breeding records included a pair with ten young at Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin) on 6th (RS), although only one large youngster was still present by 29th, a pair with eight juveniles at Longhoughton on 7th (JAR), a pair with one juvenile at Cresswell Pond and a single bird with one large young at Arcot Lane (Cramlington). Other records, with no mention of young, were eight at Spartylea on 21st, two at Ellington and Haughton Strother GP and a single at Druridge.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Five were at Beacon Lane (Cramlington) on 12th (DM) and one to three were at East Cramlington Pond, Spartylea and West Hartford.

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Total passage recorded during the month at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower was seven N and two S in 31 hours between 1st-26th (SSWT). Passage at Newbiggin included two N between 0700-0845 on 3rd and two N between 0645-0830 on 16th (STH). Single birds were observed e at several other points all along the coast throughout the month.

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

One was swimming close inshore at Boulmer on 9th (TB).

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Eight at Ness Quarry (Holy Island) on 12th was the only record (AWG).

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

The first of the season was a single N at Seaton Sluice on 26th (SSWT).

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

The monthly total of 137 (117 N and 20 S) past Seaton Sluice was, as the last two years, well below the expected average for July (SSWT). Other passage records included 70 past Newbiggin Point on 12th (ASH/JR), 12 N past St Mary's in 30 minutes on 11th (AJ) and two to six from several other localities.

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

Large movements were recorded on 24th with a grand total of 1517 heading N past Annstead in two hours and 15 minutes (DF), 1350 N past Seaton Sluice in three hours (SSWT), 760 per hour N past Berwick Pier (MHu), 140 N between 0715-0815h at St. Mary's (MSH) and 54 N, six S past Newbiggin (ASH/JR). 20 were feeding close to the shore at Howick on 2nd, 20 were also at Snab Point (Cresswell) on 25th and, unusually, ten were feeding in the Tyne Estuary as far up as Black Middens on 22nd (DRW) with a single seen at North Shields Fish Quay Sands on 25th (KWY). One to five were reported from elsewhere.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

The only passage noted was the local morning movements of 48 N at Beacon Point (Newbiggin) between 0700-0845 on 17th (STH). A total of 101 on a breakwater in Newbiggin village bay on 31st suggested good feeding in that area after 52 were also present there on 20th (STH). 80 were fishing and resting on rocks offshore at North Blyth on 13th and 41 were there on 9th (STH). Other good counts of 40 at East Chevington on 19th, 36 at Castle Island (R Wansbeck) on 23rd, 26 in the River Coquest estuary on 29th and 22 at Derwent Reservoir on 29th. 15 flew north over Woodhorn Flashes on 28th and one to 14 were at several other localities including at least two of the continental *sinensis* race at Amble Braid.

A *sinensis* Cormorant

North Shields

Neil Osborne

27th July



Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

In the Berwick area ten were at the Meadow Haven roost on 16th and three were in Spittal Bay on 11th (MHu).

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

The now widespread occurrence of this species along the coast was further evidenced by a total of 79 records this month from 21 sites. 15 in Budle Bay on 21st was a potential site record and Bothal Pond (Coney Garth) also proved popular with numbers gradually increasing to 11 by 23rd (TD). Nine were at Beal Point on 16th (MJC) and the peak count on the River Wansbeck was six at North Seaton on 18th (TB). Five were at Amble Braid on 27th (NFO) and one to four were at Boulmer, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Holywell Pond, River Blyth estuary, River Coquet estuary, River Tweed estuary, Seaton Sluice, Sleekburn, St. Mary's, Swallow Pond, Tynemouth and Warkworth Gut. Several of these records were of juvenile birds.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

A total of 18 were in the River Tweed estuary during a WeBS count on 21st (MHu). Seven was the maximum number at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 12th (SR) and Castle Island on 23rd (DM). One to two were at several other locations.

Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

The roving group of three recorded in June remained in the county during the first week of the month and shared their time between Widdrington Moor Lake, Druridge Pools and Cresswell Pond until 7th before disappearing (TB/TF/JFa/IK *et al.*). A single bird was at Budle Bay from 11th-18th and it, or another, at Cresswell Pond on 25th (CGK/GPK/TRD/JD *et al.*).

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Peak counts as follows:

Locality	Peak Count	Date	Observer/notes
Swallow Pond	15	22nd	(SPP)
Ladyburn Lake (Druridge Bay CP)	14	11th	Eight Adults with six young (LJM)
Bothal Pond (Coney Garth)	12	29th	Six adults and six juveniles (TD)
Holywell Pond	11	17th	Ten adults and one juvenile (LJM/DM)
Big Waters NWT	10	19th	(GB)
Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal)	7	1st	Pair with three new chicks and one adult feeding a juvenile (ALT)
Linton Ponds	6	23rd	Two adults and four large juveniles (CDH)
Newton Pool	6	30th	Incl. two juveniles (MK)
Haughton Strother GP	4	13th	(MR)
Hauxley	4	28th	Two adults and two juvenile (TRD)

In addition, one to three were at Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield), Arcot Pond, Bakethin Reservoir, Bank's Pond (Dinnington), Belsay Hall, Castle Island, Druridge Pools, Marden Quarry (Whitley Bay) and Northumberlandia (Cramlington).

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps Cristatus*

At the start of the month Widdrington Moor Lake held up to 12 birds (MK), including at least two young, with numbers gradually reducing towards the end, however the two young were still present on 25th (TRD). Nine were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 15th (SR) and Big Waters held seven adults and one independent juvenile on 9th (GB). Six were at East Chevington on 1st (TRD/JD) and Killingworth Lake held four adults and one juvenile on 19th (DM/LJM). A pair feeding two young at Ladyburn Lake (Druridge Bay CP) on 11th may be the first breeding record for this site (LJM). A pair and two juveniles remained at Bothal Pond (Coney Garth) throughout the month (IRD/TD/TF/JFa) and one to three were at Airy Holm Reservoir, flying S offshore at Cullercoats, Haughton Strother GP, Holywell Pond and Swallow Pond.

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

Last month's well-appreciated summering adult remained at Linton Ponds until at least 12th (TRD/AA).

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigrocollis*

A pair were at a site in the south east of the county.

Red Kite *Milvus Milvus*

Two pairs fledged broods of two and one in the County (IK). Single birds were seen at East Chevington on 1st (TF/JFa), Druridge Pools on 2nd (GB), and Blanchland on 8th (ASJ), Snods Edge on 26th and 27th and at Low Waskerley on 28th (IFo).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Three records involving a female at Cresswell Pond on 7th (TB), a male over fields North of Boulmer on 10th (BS) and an immature at Druridge Pools by a Kestrel *Falco tinunculus* then Crows on 30th (TD).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Two males and a female were at Quarry Cottage, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea all month (RS). Two plus birds were at Gosforth Park NR on 23rd (MJC), and two females were at Ellington on 18th (TB) and two unsexed birds were at Tynemouth on 25th (KWY). Single birds were at 10 sites during the Month.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Four birds were at Bellasis Bridge (Blagdon) on 8th (STH) and at West Hartford on 12th (TB) and three birds were at Howick on 29th (JAR). Two's were seen at the College Valley, East Allen, Hexham, Sinderhope and West Hartford and singles were seen at nine sites during the month.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetuss*

Derwent Reservoir had three birds present on 25th (IFo) and one to two birds on several dates throughout the month (ASJ/IFo). Two birds were seen at Lindisfarne throughout the month (IK/CGK/GPK) with singles seen on Holy Island and Longbridge End (Beal Point) (SR/MJC).

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

At Big Waters NWT two birds were seen and or heard on 9th and 31st (GB) and single birds were seen at West Hartford on 2nd (STH), Druridge Pools on 4th (TF/JFa) and at Gosforth Park NR on 15th and 23rd (PJA/MJC).

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

15 birds were at Druridge Bay CP on 11th (LJM) and six birds were at Castle Island & Linton Pond on 23rd (DM/CDH), four at Cocklawburn Pond on 3rd (MHu) and Jesmond Dene on 19th (MJC) three at Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 27th (DM) and two were at Howick on 6th (JAR) and East Cramlington on 17th (DM).

Coot *Fulica atra*

Bothal Pond had 65 birds present on 29th (TD), 32 were at Linton Ponds on 23rd (CDH) and 27 at Big Waters NWT on 19th (GB) were the highest counts followed by 18 at Holywell Pond on 17th (DM) and Haughton Strother GPs (Humshaugh), 17 at Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 25th (GB) and 13 at Killingworth Lake on 19th (DM). One to twelve were at Arcot Pond, Burradon Pond, Druridge Bay CP, Heighley Gate (Morpeth), Holywell Pond, Humshaugh, Leazes Park (Newcastle) and at Middle Ord Pond (Berwick).

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Records suggest that many adults had dispersed since the end of June. However, while one pair were still on nest at Cresswell Pond early in the month (MSH), another pair was rearing two chicks at another site in SE Northumberland (TF/JFa, MSH, TRD). A single bird was still being reported at Cresswell Pond on 28th (TB) but with no mention of young. Another pair were reported from Beehive Flash on 2nd (JBu) and a single was seen at Widdrington Moor Lake on 13th (TB).

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

High tide roosts of 82-102 at Ladies Skerrs, Berwick (20th-31st) provided the largest counts (MHu). On 26th a movement S of 58 was seen at Seaton Sluice (SSWT) and 51-55 birds were counted at St Mary's Island on 24th and 25th (MSH, ASJ). Other notable counts were Newbiggin, Beacon Point where 35 were counted on 9th and 40 on 16th (STH) with further 20+ counts coming from Tweed estuary (32 on 31st, MHu), North Blyth staithes (24 on 22nd, STH), another 24 from Humshaugh, Haughton Strother GP (24th, MR) and 21 from Derwent Reservoir on 24th (IFo). Smaller counts came from Allendale (Sinderhope), Alnwick (north of Charlton Mires flash), Bothal Pond (Coney Garth), Cramlington (Beaconhill), Cresswell (Bell's Farm pond), Holy Island (Sandham Bay), R Coquet estuary and Spartylea.

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

With the exception of a count of 300 at Derwent Reservoir on 25th (IFo), all reports came from coastal locations. The largest of these by some way came from Holy Island where on 31st ca.1000 "northern" birds were seen in the fields between the Straight Lonnen and The Lough (IK). On the same day at Holy Island 560 birds were reported "including a flock of 500 which dropped onto the island following a heavy rain shower" (MJC). The day before an estimated 450-550 were seen at Newbiggin (NFO) and numbers built up at St Mary's Island from 200+ to 450 between 24th and 30th (MSH/AC, ASJ). Other counts in the hundreds were 210 at Newbiggin (Beacon Point) on 17th (STH), 150+ on the rocks at Cullercoats on 28th (MK) and 132 at Craster on 30th (AWG). Smaller counts came from Backworth, Boulmer, Budle Bay, Howick and Newton Links.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

A 1st-summer bird was present at Boulmer throughout the month (BS, GB).

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Records involving evidence of breeding were of two broods, each of eight at Castle Island on 23rd (STH/DM/PJA) and of three large young accompanying a pair of adults on Holy Island on 30th (MJC). A sizeable total 560 birds was counted at Charlton Mires (just north of Alnwick) on 16th (AH) with other large counts coming from Cresswell Pond (300-316 between 19th-30th, CH, IRD, TD), St Mary's Island (150+ on 16th, MSH), the Coquet Estuary (113-120 between 16th-29th, MK, AWG), Widdrington Moor Lake (110 on 29th, ASJ) and 100+ from the Derwent Reservoir on 8th (ASJ). Smaller counts came from Allendale, Sinderhope, Big Waters NWT, Bothal Pond (Coney Garth), East Chevington, Holy Island, Humshaugh (Haughton Strother GP), R Wansbeck (Castle Island), Shield on the Wall, Spartylea and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

There were four, possibly five, sites which reported evidence of breeding, perhaps complicated by movement of family groups. In total, records were from nine sites.

March 2017 Bulletin additional record

Two were at Derwent Reservoir on 26th March (IFo).



A Little Ringed Plover at Castle Island
20th July by John Littleton

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Evidence of breeding was reported from three sites. On 2nd a pair were seen with a juvenile at Longhirst Flash (MSH), on 20th adults were seen on territory, possibly pending a second brood at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) (ALT) and on 24th a pair with three chicks was seen at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) but was apparently absent on 31st (MR). Fourteen birds were reported at Cheswick (Black Rocks) on 18th (MHu) and ten were seen at Chevington Burn (on beach) on 30th (TD). Counts involving single figures came from Amble Harbour, Cocklawburn (Berwick), Derwent Reservoir, Holy Island (Sandham Bay), Longhirst Flash, R Coquet estuary and Tynemouth.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Passage was evident throughout the month, building up significantly toward the end. The largest count was of 50 at Holy Island (made up of individual flocks of 18, one, three, 27 and a single) heading S on 30th (MJC) with some of these flocks also reported by other observers on Holy Island (IK). Twenty were also reported on the same day at Budle Bay (CGK/GPK). Tynemouth had 15 flying S on 15th (DRW) and a record of 12 came from Longbridge End (Beal Point) on 20th (MJC). Other double figure counts came from Annstead, Seahouses (12 on 31st, DF) and from Holy Island on 18th (ten, SR). Other single figure counts came from Amble Braid, Bedlington, Boulmer, Cheswick, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Bay, East Chevington, Ellington, Chugdon Wood, Embleton GC, Fenham-le-Moor, Hauxley, Newbiggin, Beacon Point, North Blyth, R Blyth estuary, R Tweed estuary, R Tweed, New Water Haugh, St Mary's Island.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Virtually all records came from coastal areas. The largest count was of 234 at Boulmer on 18th (BS), which declined 163 by 21st (NFO). On the latter date 112 were counted in the Tweed Estuary during a WeBS while on 16th 90 birds were recorded in the Coquet Estuary (MK) and at the beginning of the month 75 were seen at the Long Nanny (Newton) on 1st (ASJ). On 9th 73 birds were seen at Hauxley NWT and 68 were at Cresswell Pond (both AJR). Other counts came from Allendale (Sinderhope), Berwick (Ladies Skerr), Castle Island, Cramlington, Cresswell Pond, Newbiggin (Beacon Point), R Blyth estuary and Spartylea.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

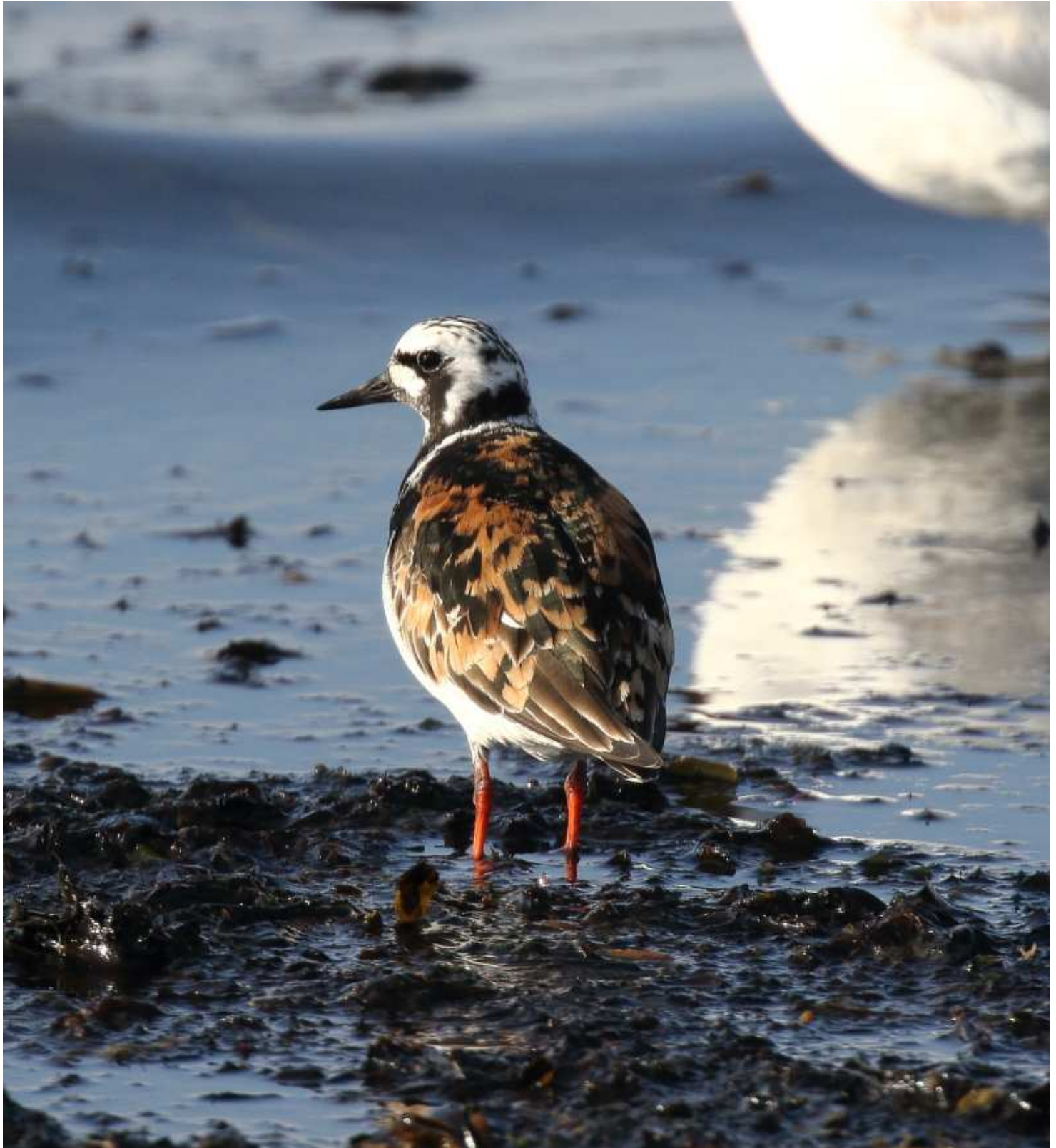
Records were dominated by Druridge Bay sites and the Coquet Estuary. The largest count came from Hauxley NWT on 9th where 84 birds (70% in summer plumage) were seen. Druridge Pools had many counts reported with the maximum being 58 on 3rd (TRD) while Amble Braid recorded a maximum of 30 on 31st (NFO). Twenty or more were seen at St Mary's on 9th (SPP) and Cresswell Pond had a count of 17 mainly summer plumaged birds on 6th (IK/ASH). Warkworth Gut held 17 birds on 14th (AA) and, further north, 16 were seen on 28th at Budle Bay (CGK/GPK). Cresswell Pond had nine birds on 12th (JBU) and, further to the south, at Castle Island, eight birds were reported on 17th (STH). On 18th at the Rocket Pools on Holy Island, five birds were seen (IK) and three were at Low Newton Scrape on 30th (MK). Two birds were seen flying S over Tynemouth on 15th (DRW) and nearby Howdon reported a single in summer plumage on 24th (CB) with 2-3 noted at Monks House Pool for much of the month (GPK).

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Seaton Sluice Watch Tower reported six birds flying N on 24th (SSWT). Four were recorded at Hauxley on 1st (MK) and the same number were seen at Beacon Point, Newbiggin on 16th (STH). Smaller numbers were seen at Amble Braid, Boulmer, Cresswell (Snab Point), Fenham-le-Moor, Holy Island (Sandham Bay), Holy Island (St Cuthbert's Island), North Blyth and Tynemouth.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

The first sign of movement was 32 S at Seaton Sluice on 26th (SSWT). Last month's group at Snab Point (Cresswell) increased to 88 on 11th (BS). Return passage was evident elsewhere with double figure counts of 33 at North Blyth Staithes on 11th (STH), 30 at Sandham Bay (Holy Island) on 29th (AWG), 26 at St Mary's Island on 30th (ASJ), 25 at Tynemouth on 29th (DRW), 22 at Hauxley on 1st (MK) and 20 at the River Blyth Estuary on 22nd (MK). One to seven were at seven other locations.



A summer plumaged Turnstone at St. Mary's
Alan Jack on 22nd July

Knot *Calidris canutus*

At Seaton Sluice, the first birds were three S on 6th followed by 42 S from 22nd-26th. All were in breeding plumage (SSWT). Following a single at Budle Bay in June, 135 were reported from here on 22nd (GPK). At Cresswell Pond, four summer plumaged birds on 21st had increased to 25 by 23rd (AJ/IK/ASH *et al.*). Maximum counts elsewhere were 25 at Newbiggin on 29th (NFO) and 12 at Amble on 26th (TF/JFa). One to four were at Berwick Little Beach, Boulmer, St Mary's Island and Tynemouth.



A Knot at Newbiggin by Alan Jack on 29th July

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

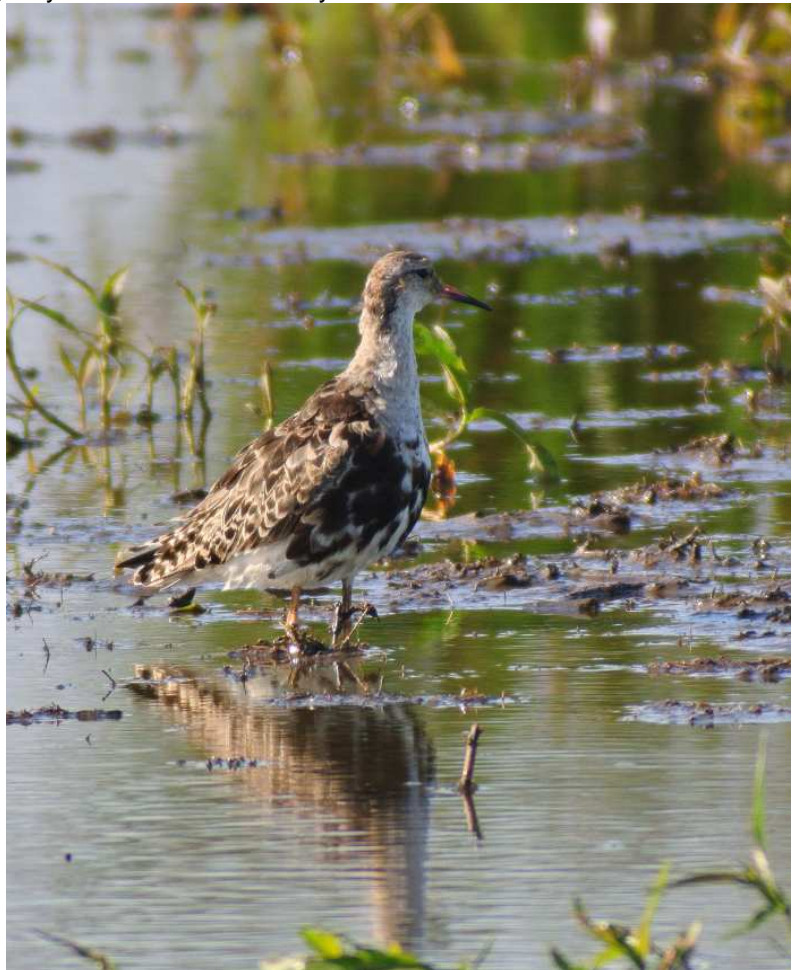
A male from last month remained until 19th at Druridge Pools (TB/NFO/*et al.*). Two were at Cresswell Pond on 23rd (IRD/IK). Singles were at Hauxley on 21st (TF/JFa) and Backworth Flash on 30th (MK).

A Ruff

Druridge Pool

Neil Osborne

14th July

**Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*

One breeding plumaged adult at Cresswell Pond on 27th, increased to two on 30th and back to a single on 31st (TB/TRD/BS *et al.*).

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

On 24th, 20 flew N at Seaton Sluice (SSWT). The favoured haunt of Druridge Bay attracted 22 breeding plumaged adults on 18th (HP), increasing to 100 at Chevington Burn on 30th (TD). Birds had returned to Newbiggin with six at Beacon Point on 16th (STH) increasing to 81 in Newbiggin Bay by 29th (ASJ). Other notable counts were 62 at Cheswick Black Rocks on 14th (MHu), 48 at St Mary's Island on 26th (ASJ). Lower numbers were 18 at Berwick Little Beach, 17 at Tynemouth, 13 at Cocklawburn and three at Boulmer.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

There was a noticeable return to the coast from mid-month. At the River Coquet Estuary, 25 on 16th increased to 150 by 29th (MK/AWG). Maximum counts at other favoured localities were 120 at Budle Bay on 11th (GPK), 104 at Cresswell Pond on 27th (NFO), 60 at both the River Blyth Estuary and Sandham Bay (Holy Island) on 22nd-29th (MK/AWG). Other significant counts were 52 at Boulmer on 15th (GB), 28 at Bell's Farm Flash and 25 at Druridge Pools both on 20th (MSH) and 24 at North Blyth Staithes on 16th (STH). One to 12 were at Amble Braid, Berwick Little Beach, Castle Island, Cheswick Black Rocks, Derwent Reservoir, Haughton Strother GP, the River Tweed Estuary and St Mary's Island.



Two Dunlin by Colin Bradshaw. Above at Cresswell on 16th July and below an immature at Cresswell on 31st July



Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

A single was reported from Cresswell Pond on 23rd (IK/ASH/MSH/IRD).

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

An adult was at Druridge Pools from 1st-4th (MK/TB/EC *et al.*).

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Well reported this month with 60 records received as birds vacated breeding areas and appeared at lowland pools and coastal locations. The largest group was at Castle Island with 15 on 22nd (MSH). At Cresswell Pond, a single on 1st increased to 11 by 23rd (MSH/TRD/JD *et al.*). Other concentrations were ten at Charlton Mires (north of Alnwick) on 22nd (AH), eight at Hauxley on 21st (TF/JFa), six at Haughton Strother GP on 11th (MR) and six at Derwent Reservoir, Foxton Bend, Newbiggin, and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. One to four were at 25 other localities including birds still well inland at Bakethin Reservoir, Blakehopeburnhaugh (Kielder Forest) and Colt Crag Reservoir.



Above a Common Sandpiper at Cresswell Pond by Colin Bradshaw on 31st July and below a Green Sandpiper also at Cresswell by Neil Osborne on 14th July

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*

Southward passage was evident with three seen at Charlton Mires (North of Alnwick) on 21st (AH). Singles were at Beal Point, Budle Bay, Druridge Pools, East Cramlington LNR, Haughton Strother, Holy Island and Howick.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

A well admired moulting summer plumaged adult was reported at Budle Bay from 11th-31st. (TRD/JD/MJC/DFD *et al.*)

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Well reported from coastal areas, with the largest group being five at Foxton Bend on 21st (AJ). Three were at Budle Bay on 28th (GPK/CGK). Two were at each of Beal Point, Boulmer, Castle Island, Druridge Pools and Holy Island. Singles were reported from Cresswell Pond, Fenham Flats, Hauxley and the River Blyth Estuary.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Last month's passage increased, with five being found at Druridge Pools on 8th (HP), decreasing to two by 27th (NFO). Elsewhere, three were at Hemscott Hill (Cresswell) on 4th (TF/JFa) with singles seen at Backworth Pond, Beal Point, Boulmer, Hauxley, Low Newton, and Monk's House Pool.



A Wood Sandpiper

Hauxley by John Littleton on 26th July

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Some large concentrations were recorded as birds returned to the coast or passed through the area. Budle Bay held a maximum of 320 on 11th (GPK). The River Blyth Estuary attracted 250 on 22nd (MK) with 168 at North Blyth Staithes on 11th (STH). The Rocket Field Pools on Holy Island, held 150 on 18th (IK), 140 were at the River Coquet Estuary on 29th (AWG), the maximum at St Mary's Island was 72 on 25th (ASJ), 68 were seen at Newbiggin on 9th (STH), 60 at Boulmer on 11th (MSH), 56 at the River Tweed Estuary on 21st (MHu) and 52 at Howdon on 24th (CB). Two to 25 were at three locations in the Berwick area, *Derwent* Reservoir, Druridge Pools, Sandham Bay (Holy Island), Spartylea and Tynemouth.

A Redshank at Cresswell

Colin Bradshaw

31st July

**Long-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus scolopaceus*

A well watched bird found at Boulmer on 7th (BS) was last reported on 15th (HP/TRD/GB/ *et al.*). What was thought to be the same bird was seen in Norfolk on 16th.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Few reports were received in July with the highest count being three at Castle Island on 22nd (MK). Singles were at Druridge Pools, Derwent Reservoir and Hepburn Moor.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice from 1st-26th was five N and four S (SSWT). Three flew N at Annstead on 24th (DF), two were at Hadston Carrs on 2nd (TF/JFa) and two 'marauding' birds were at Newbiggin on 8th (GB). On 18th, a dark phase bird and a pale phase bird were seen in Druridge Bay (HP) and a juvenile and second summer bird on 21st (HP). Singles were at Boulmer, Cambois, Chevington Burn Beach, Druridge Pools, Hauxley and Tynemouth during the month.

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*

A first summer flew S at Tynemouth on 16th, landing on the sea several times. (SPP)

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

Northward passage was conspicuous on 24th with six observed at Seaton Sluice (SSWT), five at St Mary's Island (MSH), four at Tynemouth (DRW), three at Newbiggin (TF/JFa), two at Stag Rocks and one at Annstead (DF). Some of these reports may have involved the same birds. Two were seen at Newbiggin on 12th (ASH) and singles were at Snab Point (Cresswell) on 12th (ASH/IK) and Tynemouth on 1st (DRW).

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

Only small numbers were recorded passing Seaton Sluice with a maximum 37N in three hours on 24th (SSWT). Few reports from elsewhere, with 20 seen from the mainland on Coquet Island, eight at Berwick, Needles Eye and five at Bamburgh, Stag Rocks and Tynemouth.

Razorbill *Alca torda*/**Guillemot** *Uria aalge*

At Seaton Sluice, the maximum count was 160N and 20S in four hours on 5th (SSW).

Razorbill *Alca torda*

On the sea and the ledges at Dunstanburgh Castle, 25 were present on 18th but no young were recorded (EC); four were offshore at Saltpan Rocks, Cocklawburn on 3rd (Mu)

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

In the Berwick coastal area between Needles Eye and Saltpan Rocks gatherings of up to 48 were seen at three localities (MHu) and further south 30 were at Bamburgh, Stag Rocks (TRD/JD) and 15 at Cresswell, Snab Point (TRD).

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

At the start of the breeding season the Long Nanny colony held 14 nests but high tides washed out all but three in June. However a subsequent influx of adult birds resulted in 38 pairs laying or re-laying but a combination of poor weather, with heavy rain and strong winds, and predation of chicks meant that only four young are known to have definitely fledged, a disappointing outcome, similar to last year's failure (National Trust Rangers/MSH). Away from the Long Nanny, one to four were recorded at Beadnell, Budle Point, Holy Island and Low Newton.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

A single adult fed with Common Terns at Tynemouth on 24th before slowly moving N past the Priory (SPP).

White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*

During a small influx of this rare summer visitor, two occurred in the county, the first being an adult in full summer plumage at Druridge Pools on 1st (TF/JFa/TB) and a second from 2nd-4th, a different individual losing a little of its summer plumage, was seen mainly at the Low Newton scrape but occasionally at the nearby Long Nanny tern colony (GW/TRD *et al*).



Two views of a Druridge Pools

White-winged Black Tern

Tim Dean

2nd July

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Three counts of birds moving S during the period 15th-25th comprised maxima of 400 in one hour at Hadston (ASJ), 282 in three hours at Tynemouth (DRW) and 280 in two hours at Seaton Sluice (SSWT). Gatherings of 100-150 were reported from Cresswell, Holy Island and the Tweed Estuary (MJC/MHu/TRD) with ten to 80 at seven other widespread localities (MHu/MK/TD/TRD). A colour-ringed juvenile, Yellow 28 C, at Newbiggin on 28th had been ringed as a chick in June at Haringvliet, Holland (STH).



A Sandwich Tern passes St. Mary's on 18th July by Alan Jack

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

At Seaton Sluice, 130 moved S in four hours on 26th (SSWT). Three pairs each with three young were on Swallow Pond on 5th (SPP) and a pair with three large young was at Holywell Pond on 3rd (ASJ). A mixed flock of 200 of all ages gathered on the beach at Chevington Burn on 30th (TD) and smaller groups of 10-30 were counted at East Chevington, Hauxley, Holywell Pond, Newbiggin and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. One to four were seen at thirteen other sites on dates throughout.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

A bumper year at the Coquet Island colony with 111 pairs, which equals the record and highest since 1970. Chicks were at record levels but the final number successfully fledging is not yet available; however, this year will be an exceptional one and bodes well for the 2019 breeding season (TC). The first two birds returning S at Seaton Sluice were seen on 26th (SSWT) and post-breeding gatherings built up with eight, four adults and juveniles, at Beacon Point, Newbiggin on 29th (NFO) and six, four adults, two juveniles at Budle Point on 30th (CGK/GPK). One or two were seen at Cresswell Pond, Cullercoats, the Long Nanny and Tynemouth.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

The Long Nanny colony this year held about 1,800 pairs in May but high tides washed out many nests. Poor weather conditions also impacted on the colony but it was estimated that about 600-1000 young have fledged, a huge improvement on 2016 (National Trust Rangers/MSH). At Seaton Sluice, a maximum of 46 moved S on 26th (SSWT), at Cullercoats 20+ were counted on 24th, an early arrival date, usually mid-August (CB) and 24 were at Beacon Point, Newbiggin on 16th (STH). On the beach at the Long Nanny, at least 22 1st-summer birds were present on 3rd (JCD/MSH).

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

The maximum count at Seaton Sluice was 550 S in two hours on 22nd (SSWT) and on 24th 80 moved N per hour at Berwick Pier (MHu). At Dunstanburgh Castle, ca.400, including many fledged young, occupied the breeding ledges on 18th (EC). Gatherings elsewhere included 284 in each of two counts at sites in the Tweed Estuary on 21st and 23rd (MHu), 100 feeding offshore at Newbiggin on 8th (GB), a similar number on Coquet Island as seen from the mainland (TRD) and 65 at Craster (IRD).

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Three-figure counts were 264 in the River Tweed Estuary (MHu), 170 at Castle Island (DM/STH/PJA) and 111 on Killingworth Lake (DM). Whittle Dene Reservoirs held 76 and 20-50 were at Bothal Pond, Cheswick, Exhibition Park Lake and Jesmond Dene.



A Black-headed Gull at Monk's House on 2nd July by Tim Dean

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Five birds comprising four adults and an immature, flew N at Tynemouth on 1st (DRW) and two immatures were seen at Hemscott Hill on the same day (TF/JFa). Four immatures were recorded at Tynemouth on 24th (SPP) and two adults were in the Tynemouth/Seaton Sluice/Newbiggin areas on 23rd-24th (DRW/SSWT/TF/JFa); on other days, from 2nd-25th, singles, of varying ages, were recorded at Annstead Point (Seahouses), Berwick, Boulmer, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Hadston Carrs, Low Newton and St Mary's Island.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

From 10th onwards the usual summer influx became apparent and the species was extremely well reported by many observers. The maximum count in the favoured Newbiggin South Bay was 38 on 19th comprising 28 adults (three carrying colour rings) and ten immatures (CH). A count of ten at Newbiggin on 10th rose over the next two weeks towards the month end (STH/TB/CB/JGS/ASH). Elsewhere three to five were at Boulmer, Budle Bay, Castle Island, Cresswell Pond and Linton Ponds (AA/TF/JFa/CGK/GPK/CH) with one to two at ten other localities the majority close to Newbiggin but also including Holy Island and St Mary's Island.



A juvenile Med Gull at Hauxley NR on 16th July by Chris Hind

The bird was ringed on Coquet Island by Chris Redfern on 22nd June as one of three pulli. The ring is black on yellow 2X8H

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Few reports, comprising only 12 on Berwick, Little Beach (MHu), four at Howdon (CB) and at Berwick, West Ord (MHu).

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

Breeding records from the Blyth area were eight juveniles at Wimborne Quays, three at the Power Station and two at the Riverside Industrial Estate (LJM). The highest counts were 38 at Haughton Strother GP (MR), 17 at Killingworth Lake (DM), nine in the Tweed Estuary (MHu) and six at Berwick, West Ord (MHu) with one to three at three other sites (DM/MJCo).



A Lesser Black-backed Gull at QEII Lake by Colin Bradshaw on 16th July

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argenteus*

Successful breeding in the Blyth area included 50 juveniles at the Riverside Industrial Estate and 23 at the Power Station (LJM). A WeBS in the River Tweed estuary included 144 and a roost at West Ord held 130 (MHu) with 25 at Killingworth Lake and 21 at Castle Island (DM/STH/PJA).

***Caspian Gull** *Larus cachinnans*

A single report of the returning adult bird, ringed PKCS, in the Amble Harbour on 26th (TF/JFa).

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

An immature bird, presumably the individual reported previously in May and June, was again recorded on 1st at Boulmer (BS/TF/JFa), on 10th at Annstead, Seahouses (DF) and on 16th at Tynemouth (SPP).

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Four in the River Tweed Estuary (MHu) and a single at Haughton Strother GP (MR) were the only sightings reported.

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

On 23rd 18 were at Southfield Green (Cramlington), 17 at North Blyth Staithes on 18th (DM) and present at Jesmond Dene during the month.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Eight the peak at Cresswell Pond on 25th with two to five there regularly, three to seven at Chugdon Wood Ellington (TB), four at Jesmond Dene on 19th and at Gosforth Park NR on 23rd with one to three at Ellington, Tynemouth and West Hartford.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Four to eight seen at Spartylea during the month and eight at Jesmond Dene on 30th (CT/MJCo).

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Ten adults and four juveniles came to food at Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin) all month (BS) with two all month at Spartylea (CT).

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

On 30th two were at Budle Bay (CGK/GPK) with a single there and at Headshope (Otterburn) on 29th and single juveniles at Hauxley on 19th and Holy Island on 30th.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Four juveniles at Holystone Grange on 3rd (SW) and four at Longhorsley Moor on 11th (AB/LB). Two were at Stonehouse (S.Tyne) and Walwick on 11th (SW) and a pair fed young in tree nest site at Eshott on 22nd (MSH) with singles at an encouraging 12 other locations.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Most reports involved a family group at Druridge with one to four seen regularly near the cottage during the month. A pair fledged young at Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay) on 9th with pairs on territory on Backworth and Shiremoor and singles at Bells Farm Pond, Longhirst and Spindleston.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Two to four seen all month at Spartylea (CT) and a pair with two juveniles calling in the observers garden at Fulbeck (Morpeth) on 30th (TD). Singles were at Howick on 4th, Castron, Chollerton, Elsdon and West Woodburn on 18th, Humshaugh on 30th and Great Whittington on 31st. One road casualty was at Weldon Bridge on 2nd.

Long-eared Owl *Asio Otus*

Two at East Chevington on 2nd (TF/JFa) and singles at Corbridge on 20th (CS) and North Walbottle on 21st (SR).

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

A very fresh plumage juvenile was at Holy Island on 17th (IK).

Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

One early migrant seen at dusk at Whitley Bay GC on 16th (AC).

Swift *Apus apus*

200+ moved S at Budle Bay on 3rd (GPK) and 80/h N at Cocklawburn on the same date (MHu). 200+ over Foxhunters (Whitley Bay) on 9th (ASJ) with 170 feeding at Bellasis Bridge on 8th (STH), 100 over wood at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 7th and at Fell House Farm (North Walbottle) on 11th (TB/SR). 24 to 60 were at Berwick, Blyth, Cullercoats, Horsley, Humshaugh, Lynemouth, Seaton Delaval, Spartylea, Whitley Bay and Whittle Dene with one to 20 at seven other locations.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

A pair fed at least three fledged juveniles on the Ouse Burn at Gosforth on 15th (MJC/PJA) with two on Wansbeck at Low Angerton and Borough Woods (Morpeth) on 17th (IRD). Singles were at eight inland and four coastal locations

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Just one report of a juvenile at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 17th (MR).

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Two adults and three young at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 16th (TB), a pair with at least one juvenile feeding on nuts in the observers garden at Fulbeck (Morpeth) during the month (TD), two all month at Spartylea and at Humshaugh on 22nd with singles at five locations in Cramlington, three in Newcastle and at Backworth.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

At St Mary's Island pair with three juveniles was present on 25th (ASJ), four birds were at Mootlaw Quarry (Ingoe) on 9th (ALT) and three birds were at North Blyth on 13th (STH). Two birds were seen at Arcot Pond, Howick, West Hartford and at Whittle Dene Reservoirs and single birds were at 12 sites during the Month.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

A male was seen at Billsmoor Park on 3rd (SW) and unsexed birds were at Fenham-le-Moor on 23rd (SR/AH) and Budle Bay on 30th (CGK/GPK).



A Juvenile Merlin from north Northumberland on 9th July by Mike Carr

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

On 2nd a silhouetted bird with a distinct jizz of a Hobby was seen at Corby Craggs (TRD) and a 1st summer bird headed West at Budle Bay on 11th (GPK) and a single was at Haughton Strother GP's (Humshaugh) on 31st (MR).

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Three birds were at Greenhaugh (Kielder) on 16th (per BC) and three birds possibly juveniles were flying over Howick on 30th (BS). Two adults were seen in Budle Bay throughout the Month (CGK/GPK) and two birds an adult and a juvenile were harassing a Curlew *Numenius arquata* at Humshaugh on 24th (MR). Singles were at Boulmer, Brinkburn Priory, Cresswell Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Holy Island and at Humshaugh,

Ring necked Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

One was at Gosforth Garden Village (Newcastle) on 27th (MJC).

Magpie *Pica pica*

Just one report of four at Jesmond Dene on 19th (MJCo).

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Five the high count at Ellington on 29th (TB) with two at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 17th and 19th (DM) all other reports singles from six other sites.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

A peak count of 45 at Howdon on 15th (CB), up to 32 all month at Spartylea (CT), five at Jesmond Dene on 9th and pairs with juveniles at Blyth, Cowpen and Newbiggin.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Two to five were at Spartylea all month (CT).

A Rook
Newbiggin
16th July
Colin Bradshaw

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

A pair fledged three young from a tree in Leazes Park (Newcastle) (DM) and four were in Jesmond Dene on 19th (MJCo).

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

One was at Stobswood on 9th (TF/JFa).

Raven *Corvus corax*

On 27th seven were on MOD land at Kypoe Knowe (JR), two adults with three juveniles at Chew Green (Upper Coquetdale) on 16th (ASJ) and four at Thirlmoor (Otterburn) on 13th (JR).

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Low counts with two at Spartylea on 19th and Jesmond Dene on 23rd (CT/MJCo). Singles were at Valley Park (Cramlington) all month, Brinkburn Priory on 6th and Big Waters NWT on 9th.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

More than 20 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 27th (MR), six all month at Spartylea (CT), and one in Jesmond Dene on 9th.

Great Tit *Parus major*

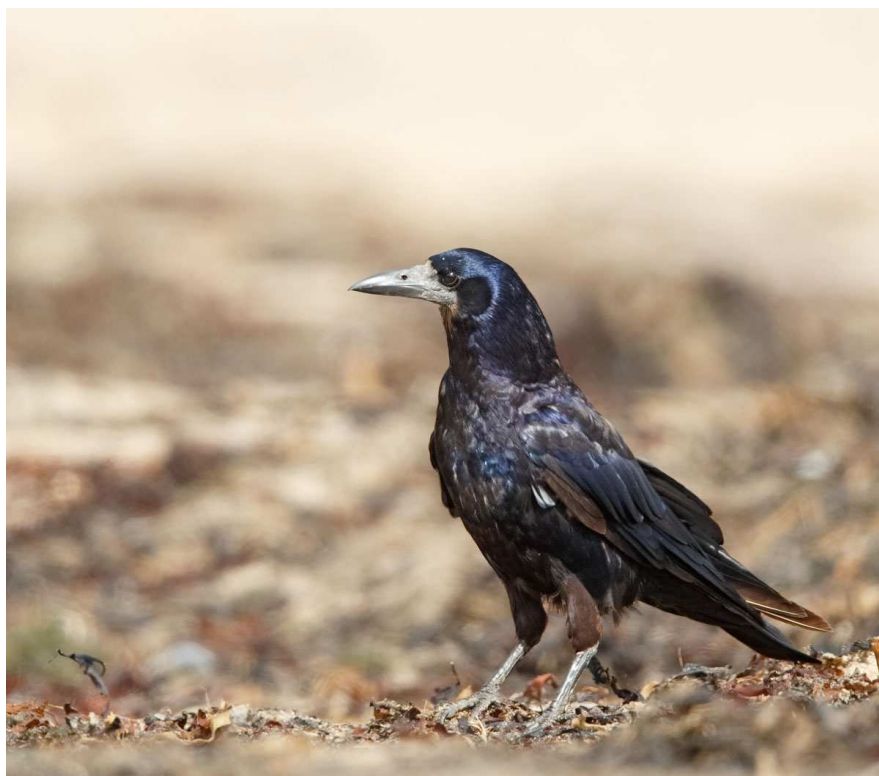
Two family parties were at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 7th (DM), four at Spartylea all month (CT) and two at Jesmond Dene on 30th.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Two at Jesmond Dene on 30th (MJCo), one in wood at Linton Pond on 23rd (CDH) and a family party at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 18th (DM).

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

All reports singles at Prestwick Carr on 8th, Big Waters NWT on 9th, Seaton Sluice on 25th, Hauxley on 26th and daily in garden at Linden Hall (Longhorsley) from 27th to 31st.



Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

In garden at Linden Hall (Longhorsley) regularly from 13th to 31st (NFO).

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

15 sang at Simonside on 3rd (ASJ), eight at Holy Island on 30th (MJC) and six at St Mary's Island on 8th with one singing at Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin) from 1st till 8th.

Bulletin addition May 2017 Two unquantified counts in the Skylark section were 20+ at the Wannys and 80+ at Otterburn ranges (ASJ).

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Post breeding gatherings of 470 on the Tyne at Spittal (Hexham) on 29th (SW), 250 at Haughton Strother GP on 4th (MR), 100 forced down by the weather at Druridge Pools on 1st (TRD/JD), around 75 at Blagdon on 12th, Cresswell Pond on 19th, 60 at Beacon Point (Newbiggin) on 17th, East Chevington on 29th with 40 at Upper Barrowburn on 16th and Hoppen Kiln Flash on 29th. Eight to ten were at three other locations with seven nests (of 27 in total this year) still active at Beacon Point (Newbiggin).



A Sand Martin gives Colin Bradshaw the eye.
Howdon Wetland
5th July

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

On 30th 73 were at Holy Island (MJC), more than 50 at Milkhope Lake (Blagdon) on 12th (LJM), 21 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 12th (SR) and up to ten all month at Spartylea. Many were reported at Harthope Valley and Grindon Lough with broods were still present at Exhibition Park on 27th and Howick on 31st with five south over Gosforth Garden Village on 27th.



A Swallow in the upper Coquet valley
Alan Jack on 16th July

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

One cottage at Barrowburn (Upper Coquetdale) had 31 active nests on 16th with 30+ pairs seen at other farms along the valley (ASJ). 36 were at Holy Island on 30th (MJC), 14 at Haughton on 22nd (SW), up to 10 at Spartylea all month and at Exhibition Park on 27th, four at Howdon on 24th and two at Newbiggin on 28th. Two nests were above the entrance at Heighley Gate (Morpeth) on 2nd and brood on the wing at Howick on 31st.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Counts of family parties were 16 at Fulbeck (Morpeth) on 14th (TD), 12+ near Humshaugh on 27th and ten at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 10th and 25th. Another family party was noted at Leazes Park on 27th and four were at East Allen on 13th.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Eight were noted at Gosforth Park NR on 23rd (MJC) and seven were at Marden Quarry on 16th. Elsewhere one to four were reported from a further 11 localities, including a migrant at Holy Island on 30th.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Seven migrants were on Holy Island on 16th, with 17 there by 30th (KWY/MJC). Two to eight were noted at Spartylea throughout and eight were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 27th. The only other report was two juveniles at Brierdene (Whitley Bay) on 29th.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Four juveniles were at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 16th and four birds at Brierdene (Whitley Bay) on 29th. Counts of two (some of which were in song) came from Belsay Hall, Cramlington (three sites), Jesmond Dene and Spartylea and singles were noted at Holystone Grange, Howick and Warden.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Singles were noted at Belsay Hall on 10th, West Hartford on 12th and a migrant, scarce for this site, passed through Exhibition Park on 31st.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

The only report was a single passage bird at Holy Island on 30th (MJC).

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Singles were noted at Beal Point on 16th, Buston Links on 2nd, Cramlington (Valley Park) on 1st, Derwent Reservoir on 27th and Humshaugh on 8th.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Well reported again this month, with up to two 'reeling' at West Hartford to 25th (LJM *et al.*). Two were also at Big Waters on 9th (including a juvenile), Hauxley NR on 29th (RB/MB) and at North Walbottle on 21st (SR), with singles reported from Arcot Lane, Arcot Pond, Castle Island, the Cheviots (320 metres asl), Cresswell Pond and Grindon Lough. The final record of the month was another single at Holy Island on 30th.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

There were 11 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 12th, suggesting a good breeding season at this site (SR). Two adults were feeding at least three young at Holy Island on 30th and a family party was noted at Arcot Pond on 23rd, two to three were reported from Swallow Pond on 23rd and singles were at Beal Point on 16th and Holywell Pond on 17th.



A Sedge Warbler
St. Mary's
16th July by Alan Jack

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Eight at Druridge Bay CP on 11th included five singing and a bird carrying food to a nest (LJM). A further eight at Gosforth Park NR on 23rd included four singing birds (MJC). Four were singing at Holy Island (Lough) on 30th and three singing at Bates Minewater Treatment Works on 5th. Singles were noted at Holy Island (Snook) on 12th, Howdon on 5th, Swallow Pond on 25th and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 12th.



A Reed Warbler at Holy Island Lough
Mike Carr on 30th July

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Four were noted at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 4th and threes at Arcot Hall on 18th and Jesmond Dene on 30th. Two were at Spartylea throughout the month and singles at Arcot Lane, Backworth GC, Bakethin Reservoir, Belsay Hall, Cramlington (Northumberlandia) and Langleeford.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Seven were at Gosforth Park NR on 23rd (MJC) and a single at Winter's Gibbet (Harwood).

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

One to four was reported from Jesmond Dene, Newbiggin and Spartylea.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

The largest reported gathering was 450 at Holy Island on 30th (MJC). Counts of 66-110 came from the Newbiggin area; 100 were at North Blyth, 85 at Cramlington (Southfield Green) and up to 12 at Spartylea.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Breeding data was as follows (JR);

Coquetdale: 12 pairs (54 eggs) fledged 48 young

North Tyne: Three pairs (15 eggs) fledged nine young

Redesdale: Two pairs (14 eggs) fledged 14 young.

Elsewhere one to two was reported from Blakehopeburnhaugh, Hexham, Howick, Jesmond Dene, Rothbury and Spartylea.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

In breeding areas four (two adults and two young) were at Hawsen Burn on 1st (AJ) and a single was at Makendon (Upper Coquetdale) on 2nd.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

26 were at Holy Island on 30th (MJC), up to seven at Spartylea throughout the month and two at Jesmond Dene.



An unusual sight. Two male blackbirds together during the breeding season. Photographed in Gosforth by Simon Elliott

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Three pairs were located between High and Low Newton; two were at Spartylea and singles at Boulmer and Jesmond Dene.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

A flock at Backworth numbered 15-17 on 22nd and 27th (KWY/CGK). Eight were at Exhibition Park on 27th and counts of seven came from Cramlington (Windmill Lane) on 16th, Haughton Castle on 22nd, Otterburn on 29th and Spartylea on 19th. A single was at Big Waters on 9th.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*.

Up to 12 at Spartylea during the month were the result of two successful nests (CT). Pairs with three fledged young were at Ingram on 1st (ASJ) and in a Stamfordham garden for most of the month (EC). Four passage birds were noted at Holy Island on 30th, while in breeding areas one to two were reported from Bakethin Reservoir, Belsay Hall, Langleeford and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Two to five at Spartylea and two at Jesmond Dene were the only reports.

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Three were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 12th (SR) and one at Countess Park (Redesmouth) on 12th.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

A count of 40+ in Upper Couquetdale on 16th comprised 13 pairs plus young (ASJ). Three were at Coldburn (College Valley) on 6th and a single at Hawsen Burn on 1st.

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

A family party of up to five was reported from West Hartford (the second brood here this year-TB *et al.*). Up to four were noted at Holy Island (including two juveniles) and a pair with one juvenile was at Widehope. Counts of three were reported from Boulmer, Cocklawburn and St Mary's Island, while two were noted at Alnwick Moor (with food), Berwick Moor (alarm calling), Buston Links, North Blyth and Quarry House Moor. Single males were at Druridge and Sweethope Lough and juveniles at Low Newton and West Stobswood.



A worn plumaged adult Stonechat at Druridge on 31st July by Colin Bradshaw

Wheatear *Oenanthe Oenanthe*

14 juveniles and four adults were in Upper Coquetdale on 16th (ASJ). A pair and two juveniles were at Derwent Reservoir on 25th and three were at Greenleighton Quarry on 18th. One to two was also reported from Boulmer, Budle Bay, Cresswell Pond, Long Nanny, Newbiggin, Prestwick Carr, West Hartford and Whinshiels.



A juvenile Wheatear in the upper Coquet valley on 16th July by Alan Jack

Duncock *Prunella modularis*

Four were noted at Spartylea all month and a single seen in Jesmond Dene.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Large counts of 150+ were at Needles Eye(Berwick) on 17th and 140 at Holy Island on 30th(MHu/MJC). 50 were at Quarry Cottage(Newbiggin) and at Cullercoats Bay all month(RS/ASJ). One to thirty were seen at seven further locations.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

60 at Waren Mill Caravan Park on 15th increased to 150+ by the month's end and included many juveniles(CGK/GPK). 30+ were at Boulmer on 10th(CB/JGS). Two to 15+ were at five other sites.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava favissima*

Eight were seen at Low Newton Scrape on 14th and six at Whittle Dene on 12th (MJC/SR). Three juveniles were at Boulmer on 13th(TF/JF). One to two were seen at 11 further sites during the month.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Up to seven were noted at Spartylea all month(CT). Five were at Whittle Dene on 12th(SR). Three at Howick on 1st, with a family of four there on 9th(JAR). One to two were at six other sites.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrelli*

11 were noted at Whittle Dene on 12th(SR). Up to six all month at Spartylea(CT). A pair with two young was at Quarry Cottage(Newbiggin) all month and a male with two young were at North Blyth on 15th(RS). A "family party" was at Exhibition Park(Newcastle) on 27th(DM).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

A count of 79 was made on 30th at Holy Island(MJC). 22 were at Derwent reservoir on 22nd(IFo). Two birds were at two other sites.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Four to six were seen all month at Spartylea(CT). Two in Jesmond Dene on 23rd and all month in a Marden garden(MJCo/ASJ).

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Eight were noted at Howden on 5th(CB). A pair with four juveniles was at Ellington on 29th(TB). Two pairs were attracted to garden feeders all month at Rothbury(TRD). One to two were at four other sites.

Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*

Eleven were at St. Mary's on 20th(ASJ). Four were at Spartylea and Whittle Dene during the month.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

60, including juveniles were found at Mootlaw Quarry on 1st(ALT). 56 were on Holy Island on 30th(MJC). 35 were noted at Boulmer on 27th (JAR) and 24 at Cocklawburn on 3rd(MHu). 16 were at Quarry Cottage on 15th(RS). One to four were at a further four sites in the month.



A Cock Linnet at Cresswell on 31st July by Colin Bradshaw

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis caberet*

At least six were at Sweethope on 18th (STH). An adult fed a juvenile at Mootlaw Quarry on 8th.

Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Two were at Hindhope Linn on 28th and at Widehope (Kielder) on 29th (JR). Singles in the month at Thrunton and Bakethin.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

36 fed on thistles at Needles Eye (Berwick) on 17th (MHu). 27 were also feeding at St. Mary's Wetland on several dates (ASJ). 18 were at Haughton Strother on 24th and at Northumberlandia (Cramlington) on 30th (MR/LJM). Up to 16 were at Spartylea during the month. 12 to 15 (ten juveniles) fed at garden feeders all month at Marden (ASJ).

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Ten males sang at Fenham Le Moor on 31st (CGK/GPK). Eight were singing at Whittle Dene and five at Holywell until the month's end (ASJ). Six sang on 30th at Linden Hall/Todburn (NFO). One to two were at five further locations.

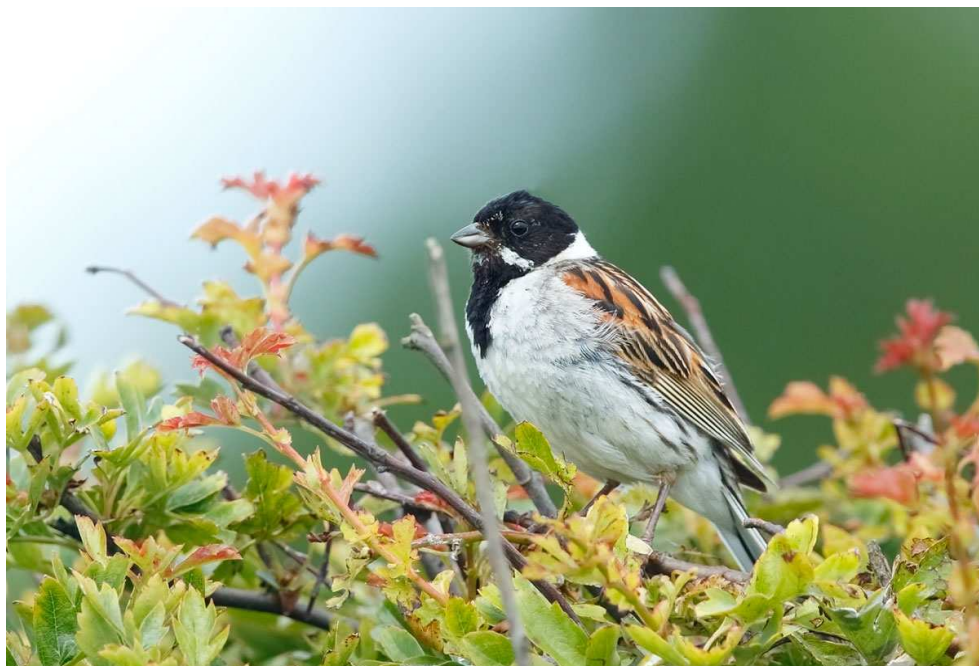
Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Across Holy Island 29 were found on 30th (MJC). 11 were at Whittle Dene on 12th (SR). Eight were at Arcot Pond on 12th (DM). Seven were seen at St. Mary's on 16th (ASJ). Two males were found at Hepburn Moor on 16th (SW). One to two were at three further sites.

A handsome cock Reed Bunting

Druridge

16th July by Colin Bradshaw

**Corn Bunting** *Miliaria calandra*

The single bird from June at Boulmer remained into July, last seen on 2nd. (TF/JFa/BS).

The popular Boulmer Corn Bunting

Alan Jack

1st July

ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN**Escapes**

No sightings

Hybrids

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

One seen at Killingworth Lake on 19th (DM).

Birds of Unknown Origin

No sightings



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Alnwick Wildlife Group, National Trust, 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), Steve Laing (Red Grouse to Black-necked Grebe), Trevor Blake (Honey-buzzard to Crane), Tom Brewis (Avocet to Godwit), Clive Hampton (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 Jack (Dunnock to Corn Bunting).

Data Manager is Tom Brewis.

Thanks to David Sanders of NNBC for providing data.

Mail distribution by Paul Stewart.

Edited by Steve Barrett NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.com

RECORD SUBMISSION

Please email records for the month to ntbc.records@googlemail.com

Please email for a copy of the standard spreadsheet and other details.

Location names and grid references: Please use of standard location names and include grid references as this 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

Annual membership costs £10 for a junior, £30 for an individual, and £32 for a family.

For membership enquiries please contact ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

If you internet bank you can pay online: please include your name in the ref. It is helpful if you email me to let me know when you've made the transfer ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

If you decide to set up a standing order please date the first payment at least a fortnight from your posting date to allow time to process with the bank. You can also set up your standing order directly with your bank if you wish; just let me know.

Finally, if you know anyone who might like to join NTBC please pass on the club information - new members are always welcome.

Jo Bentley - Hon Treasurer

NTBC WEB SITE

The club website is an excellent online resource for anyone interested in birds. There are:

Photo Galleries – Here you can view hundreds of photos of birds from Northumberland, Newcastle and North Tyneside. Members are encouraged to contribute their own photos. Simply send them to galleries@ntbc.org.uk

Sightings – Here you can view reports of birds recently reported in the County. Anyone who would like to contribute and post sightings to this page, please email sightings@ntbc.org.uk Please note this section is moderated, so there may be a short delay before your record appears.

There are also County Checklists, Records Committee updates, Information on important Surveys, useful articles and reports on Bird ID and Overseas Birding Trips....and much more...

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

New content such as Birding Trip Reports etc., is always welcome and very much appreciated.

To find out more please visit www.ntbc.org.uk

COUNTY RECORDS COMMITTEE

Duncan Watson will complete his four year spell on the committee in December 2017. Hence there will be a vacancy on the CRC to be filled. Please could anyone wishing to apply to join the committee let the County Recorder Tim Dean know, either by email or letter. Applicants need to have a comprehensive knowledge of Northumberland's birdlife and will be required to attend three 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
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Rothbury
NE65 7PW

email : t.r.dean@btinternet.com



A juvenile Mediterranean Gull
Newbiggin
Colin Bradshaw
16th July

Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

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

Bulletin 2017 No 8

MONTHLY SUMMARY AUGUST 2017

5th October 2017



CLASSIFIED LIST HIGHLIGHTS

Garganey	The only sighting was a female / immature at Druridge Pools for most of month.
Great Northern Diver	Single at Longhoughton Steel from 9th then two on 29th and 30th. Unseasonal.
Cory's Shearwater	One past Newbiggin on 22nd.
Sooty Shearwater	Only one noted all month, this at Tynemouth. Unusually none seen at Seaton Sluice.
Balearic Shearwater	Singles at Tynemouth and Newton Pt.
Storm-petrel	Two ringed at Druridge Pools overnight on 12th.
Night-heron	Juvenile at Whittle Dene Reservoir intermittently from 1st to 5th.
Great White Egret	One at Newton Pool and scrapes from 28th.
Spoonbill	Single still at Cresswell Pond up to 23rd.
Spotted Crake	One found at Druridge Pools from 20th to 22nd.
Dotterel	Juvenile at Whittle Dene Reservoir on 25th.
White-rumped Sandpiper	Adult at St Mary's then Cresswell and Druridge from 7th to 16th.
Pectoral Sandpiper	A juvenile was at Druridge Pools on 30th and 31st.
Yellow-legged Gull	A juvenile was found at the Blyth Estuary on 5th.
Caspian Gull	The ringed Polish bird was again at Amble Harbour from 5th.
Glaucous Gull	A first-summer was noted at Tynemouth on 12th.
Hobby	An adult was seen at Cornhill on 21st.

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 12th October 2017 **Tropical Birds and Raptors**•Phil Hanmer will talk on a recent trip to south Africa, where not only did he get to see lots of nice birds but got to ring some as well!



A young Moorhen negotiates Hedgeley Gravel Pits
John Littleton
16th August

FIELD TRIPS

The next trip is on **22nd October 2017 Holy Island**. Meet at Beal Road Ends car park at 9am.
Contact Steve Anderson seaswan@btinternet.com

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

The Tweed Estuary held 172 on 10th (MHu), 46-74 were at East Chevington (PRM), Howdon (CB) and Killingworth Lake (LJM), and 21-29 at Castle Island, the Wansbeck Estuary and Whiteadder Point. Five to eight were also at Bothal Pond, the Coquet Estuary, Meadow Haven (Berwick), Newcastle Leazes Park, Whittle Dene Reservoirs, Widdrington Moor Lake and Willington Gut.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

One, with a missing eye, was noted at the Coquet Estuary-Warkworth on three dates between 5th-30th (PJA/TD/TF/JFa). An adult was also on the River Tweed near Horncliffe on 5th, having also been present on 5th July (CH).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

34 flew N at Ellington on 27th (TB). Larger counts involved 580 at Haughton Strother GP on 14th (MR), 442 at the Tweed Estuary on 10th (MHu), 364 at Airy Holm Reservoir on 13th (IFo), 243 at Budle Bay (MSH) and 105-141 at East Chevington and Holywell Pond. Counts of 52-67 came from Castle Island and Whiteadder Point, and 12-34 were at Arcot and Bothal Ponds, Big Waters, East Ord, Ellington and Widdrington Moor Lake. One to three were also at Charlton Mires, Cresswell and Linton Ponds, and Druridge Pools.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

18 flew S at Howick on 21st (JAR). Peak counts were 566 at Grindon Lough on 13th (MRS), 350 at Haughton Strother GP on 24th (MR), 273 at Castle Island on 13th (STH/DM), 110-198 at Cresswell Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Foxton Bends, Hauxley Reserve and Widdrington Moor Lake, and 55-92 at Bothal Pond and New Water Haugh. Groups of 16-31 were at Ashington, Big Waters, Druridge Pools, Linton Ponds, New Moor and the Tweed Estuary.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Two, including a colour-ringed individual, were at Castle Island on 13th and 21st (STH/DM/MK), and singles were at Budle Bay all month (CGK/GPK) and QEII CP on 9th (TB).

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

20 un-raced birds were at Fenham Flats on 27th (SR/AH).

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

12 were at Castle Island on 26th (DM/LJM), 11 (nine juveniles) at Druridge Pools on 8th (DM/LJM), eight at Alnmouth on 23rd (MJC) and eight at Fenham Flats on 2nd (MJC), and five to seven at Amble and Warkworth. Two were also at Budle Bay.

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

Two were at Haughton Strother GP on 14th (MR).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Seven flew N at Tynemouth on 23rd (MK/DRW) and two N at Seaton Sluice on 9th (SSWT). Numbers at Grindon Lough rose from 51 on 13th (MRS) to a peak of 83 by 25th (PRM). Elsewhere, 11 were at East Chevington (PRM) and Lindisfarne NNR (PRM) from 24th, and one to four at Bothal and Cresswell Ponds, Boulmer, Castle Island and Hauxley Reserve.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Linton Ponds held 101 on 13th (CDH), 22 (including broods of ten, seven and two large young) were at Bothal Pond on 4th (TD), and nine to 13 at Big Waters, Castle Island (including a brood of eight half-grown young), East Chevington and Swallow Pond (including a brood of seven young). Two to four were also at Caistron, Druridge Pools, Hauxley Reserve and Marden Quarry.

Teal *Anas crecca*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was 356 N and 125 S (SSWT), 142 flew mainly N at Tynemouth plus 49 S on 23rd (MK/DRW), and 17 flew N at Newbiggin on 9th (TF/JFa). Peak site counts were 80 at Budle Bay on 27th (GPK), 60 at Druridge Pools on 16th (PRM), 44 at Grindon Lough on 25th (PRM), and ten to 30 at Arcot Pond, Charlton Mires, Holy Island 'rocket field', Monks' House Pool and Newbiggin. Three to eight were also at Big Waters, Bothal, Cocklawburn and Cresswell Ponds, Castle Island, Howdon, East Chevington, East Cramlington LNR, and Tynemouth.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

63 at Derwent Reservoir on 22nd rose to 188 by 29th (IFo), 117 were at Cresswell Pond on 8th (DM/LJM), 80-95 at Big Waters, Branton and Haughton Strother GPs, Charlton Mires and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and 29-70 at Arcot and Linton Ponds, Castle Island, East Chevington, Newcastle Exhibition and Leazes Parks, Shield on the Wall and Whiteadder Point. Counts of 13-22 came from Arcot Pond, Byker, Druridge Pools, Grindon Lough, the Tweed Estuary and Widdrington Moor Lake. Late breeding was as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Newcastle Exhibition Park	1	7	GB. New brood of fresh young on 15th. Later reduced to six young

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Three were at Holy Island Lough on 28th (IK), and singles at Druridge Pools on 29th (IRD) and Arcot Pond on 30th-31st (DM/LJM).

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

A juvenile was reported regularly at Druridge Pools between 7th-25th (TF/JFa/NFO *et al.*).

The Garganey at Druridge Pools

A digiscoped image by Neil Osborne
24th August

**Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*

Peak counts were 19 at East Chevington on 16th (PRM), ten at Druridge Pools on 6th (MK), six at Bothal Pond on 4th (TD), and five at Whittle Dene Reservoirs (SR). One to two were also at Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother GP and Monks' House Pool.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

14 at East Chevington on 29th (NFO) and eight at Cresswell Pond on 30th (IRD) were the largest counts, followed by six at Bothal Pond on 7th (TF/JFa) and three to four at Big Waters and Branton GP. One was also at Druridge Pools.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

The greatest concentrations involved 45 at East Chevington on 16th (PRM), 44 at Widdrington Moor Lake on 21st (AWG), and 33 at Cresswell Pond on 30th (STH/IFo). Counts of 21-29 came from Bothal and Swallow Ponds, Druridge Pools, Grindon Lough and Haughton Strother GP, with 12-19 at Branton GP and Linton Ponds. One to eight were also at Arcot and Cocklawburn Ponds, Big Waters and Castle Island but more unusual were two at the Blyth Estuary on 1st (LJM/DM). Late breeding data were as follows:

Locality	No. of broods	No. of young	Observer/notes
Whittle Dene Reservoirs	2	3	MR. On 4th
Cocklawburn Pond	1	2	MHu. On 2nd

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

75 were at Longhoughton Steel on 20th (SW), 72 at both Seaton Sluice (CDH) and North Blyth (STH), 14-42 at Birling Carrs, the Blyth Estuary, Cocklawburn and Stag Rocks, and two to ten at Amble, Lindisfarne NNR, Newton Haven, Seahouses and the Tweed Estuary.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

A total of 2,024 N and 177 S at Seaton Sluice was a record August total for the locality, and included 643 N and 103 S on 1st (SSWT), and 70-95 flew N at Tynemouth (MK) and Whitley Bay (IJ). About 300 were off Cresswell on 7th (TRD/JD), 50-84 at Alnmouth (AB/LB) and Cocklawburn (MHu), and 30 at Newbiggin.

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

The majority of reports involved birds moving N offshore, with 15 at Seaton Sluice between 9th-12th (SSWT). On 9th, eight flew N at Howick (BS), three N at Newbiggin (GB/TF/JFa), and one to two at Annstead Point (GPK) and Tynemouth (DRW). One was at Stag Rocks on 8th (JDL).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Singles flew N at Howick (BS) and Newbiggin on 9th (TF/JFa). Six were at the regular breeding site on 4th (MJC), and singles at Druridge Pools (TRD/JD) and East Chevington on 16th (PRM).

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

13 were at Alnmouth Bay on 24th (AB/LB), and one to two at Holy Island and Longhoughton Steel.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

A flock of 148 were at Holy Island on 7th (NFO), 78 at the Tweed Estuary on 10th (MHu), 42 off Amble on 24th (AWG), 20-24 at the Blyth Estuary (STH), Haughton Strother GP (MR), Warkworth weir (TRD) and Whiteadder Point (TBr), and ten to 18 at Bygate Farm (Upper Coquetdale) and Longhoughton Steel. Five to nine were also at Boulmer, the Breamish Valley, Budle Bay, Castle Island, Foxton Bends and North Blyth, and one to two at the Aln Estuary, Amble, Cullernose Point, Haydon Bridge, the Long Nanny Estuary and Wark.



A goosander at Amble by Jonathan Farooqi
30th August

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

A single male was singing from a Barley Field at Budle Bay all month until 20th (GPK) with singles also at Bellasis Bridge (Blagdon) and Fenham-le-Moor.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

11 were at Agarshill Fell (Whitfield) on 29th (SW). The only other records were two at Waren Mill Caravan Park (Bamburgh) and a single bird at Hepple.

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

There were "ridiculous numbers" at Allenheads on 6th (CB), 64 were at Catcleugh on 25th (AJR), 30 at Border Ridge (Windy Rig) on 2nd and 16 at Harwood Shield on 13th.



A Red Grouse at Allenheads by Colin Bradshaw on 17th August

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

Between four and ten birds were seen all month at Spartylea and one to two were at Allenheads (CT).



A Black Grouse at Allenheads on 17th August by Colin Bradshaw

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Reports came from ten sites with the highest count of 16 from Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 16th (TB) followed by 12 at Waren Mill Caravan Park (Bamburgh) on 30th (GPK).

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Seven were at Spartylea all month (CT) and a juvenile was being harassed by a stoat at Hauxley on 26th (DM).

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Seaton Sluice Watch Tower reported an average month for August with three N and five S (SSWT). Two were at Longhoughton Steel on 20th (SW).

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

Two were close in off Sugar Sands (Longhoughton) on 29th (NFO) after a single near there on 20th (SW), and one was seen regularly at Howick Haven throughout the month (BS).

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

A large movement was recorded at Seaton Sluice on 9th with up to 60 per hour and a total of 310 N (SSWT). One to four were reported from elsewhere including four downy young still in nests at Coves Haven (Holy Island).

Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris borealis*

On 22nd one flew N close inshore at Church Point (Newbiggin) at 17:08 (TF/JFa).



The Cory's Shear water passing Church Point, a 'record shot' by Jonathan Farooqi on 22nd August

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

The only record was one flying S past Tynemouth on 23rd (MK). Seaton Sluice Watch Tower reported no records which was deemed "exceptional" for this time of year (SSWT).

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

An extremely low monthly total – for the third year in a row – from Seaton Sluice of 38N and six S (SSWT). Other than at least 90 sitting on the sea off Newbiggin on 1st (AA), there were only several reports of small numbers from elsewhere.

Balearic Shearwater *Puffinus mauretanicus*

One seen flying N past Tynemouth at 19:06 on 22nd (DRW) was followed by another past Newton Point on 23rd having, unknown to the observer (TRD), been seen passing Boulmer ten minutes prior.

Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

Two were trapped and ringed overnight by Iain Robson on 12th-13th at Druridge Pools (TF/JFa).

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

A total of 3,640 N were counted past Seaton Sluice in seven hours on 9th (SSWT) and one to 30 were recorded from several other coastal sites.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

As is usual for this time of year, some large congregations were noted throughout the county with the Blyth Harbour roost – the two offshore wind turbines included - peaking at 146 on 31st (STH), 61 at East Chevington on 16th (PRM), 55 at Tynemouth on 29th (KWY), 55 also at St. Mary's on 6th (MSH) and 48 at Castle Island (River Wansbeck) on 26th (DM). A single flock of 42 flew N past Church Point (Newbiggin) on 9th (GB) and one to 41 were reported from many other typical localities. At least three continental "*sinensis*" race birds were at Amble Braid towards the middle of the month.

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

At Seaton Sluice, three N on 9th were the first birds since May 29th and only two more were recorded by the end of the month (SSWT). 54 were feeding in the bay at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 28th, after 18 were counted roosting there on 17th (MHu). The only other record was 30 at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 26th (DM).

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

One was spotted flying across the reeds at East Chevington North Pool on 7th (TF/JFa).

Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

A juvenile was at Whittle Dene Reservoirs from 1st–5th (SR/PRM).

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

The large numbers that are now present in the county were evidenced by almost 100 records received this month. Some high counts from the north east coast of the county with 17 at Budle Bay on 30th being a new site record (GPK), Fenham Flats (Lindisfarne NNR) peaking at 15 on 24th (JDL) and 12 in the Goswick Sands area on 7th (NFO). Nine were in the Tweed Estuary during a WeBS count on 10th (MHu), with nine also present in the Blyth Estuary on more than one date (LJM). Eight were at Warkworth Weir (River Coquet) on 9th and one to seven were at 23 other localities including a pair with two locally bred juveniles at a site in South East Northumberland.



A first - a Little Egret at Tynemouth boating lake by Duncan Watson on 28th August

Great White Egret *Ardea alba*

One was at Newton Pool from 29th to the end of the month (BS/JPL).

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

20 were present during a WeBS count at the Tweed Estuary on 10th (MHu) and 13 were roosting at field edges near Boulmer on 24th (AB/LB). Ten were in a stubble field at Low Hauxley and one to nine were at several other localities.

Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

A single, rather sedentary bird remained at Cresswell Pond until at least 23rd (AA/STH/IFo/PJA *et al.*), however it or another was sighted in a tree at the River Wansbeck (North Seaton) on 4th (TB).



A Spoonbill stretches a leg (and wing)
Druridge Pools
Janet Dean
22nd August

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Breeding records continued with a total of 21 at Bothal Pond (Coney Garth) on 27th including two new broods of three chicks each (TD). Holywell Pond held a minimum of 20 birds on 31st and Swallow Pond peaked at 19 (six adults, ten chicks and three juveniles) on 13th (SPP). Double-digit counts also came from Castle Island with 18 on 26th (DM), 17 at Big Waters NWT on 21st, 12 at East Chevington, and 11 at Linton Ponds. One to nine were at Airy Holm Reservoir, Arcot Pond, Bakethin Reservoir, Branton GP, Caistron, Cocklawburn Pond, Druridge Pools, Foxton Bend, Grindon Lough, Hauxley, Hedgeley GP, Holy Island Lough, Longhoughton Quarry, Marden Quarry, Shield on the Wall and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.



A Little Grebe at Branton Gravel Pits
16th August
Mike Carr

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps Cristatus*

Whittle Dene Reservoirs peaked at nine on 10th (SR). East Chevington held six on 16th, including two juveniles (PRM), and six were also at Big Waters NWT on 6th (GB). One to three were at Bothal Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Holywell Pond, Stag Rocks, Swallow Pond and Widdrington Moor Lake.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

One was distantly offshore at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on 23rd (TF/JFa).

Red Kite *Milvus Milvus*

All records this month came from Derwent Reservoir with two birds seen on 21st and single birds on 5th and 18th (IFo).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

An adult male was seen throughout the month at Boulmer (BS/NFO) and a male flew N at Ellington on 14th (TB). A female/juvenile type bird was at Linton Ponds on 13th (CDH), a juvenile flew S at Druridge Pools on 15th (AA), another juvenile flew S over the sea at St Mary's Island on 26th (SPP) and a female/juvenile was also seen at Fenham Mill on 27th (DF).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

A juvenile bird was being mobbed by a Buzzard *Buteo buteo* and a Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* at Widehope on 7th (JD).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

A juvenile was seen in the Harthope Valley on 8th (AA), a male was seen at the River Till (near Shellacres) on 16th (MJC) and a young female was at Ryal on 17th (ALT).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Three recently fledged young were seen begging for food from adults at Valley Park (Cramlington) throughout the month (DM). Two birds were at Ellington on 9th and 22nd (TB), near the border on the A1 at Berwick on 22nd (TBr) and at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 29th (SR). Single birds were at 20 sites during the month including one bird bathing in the burn at Howick on 20th (JAR).



Above a Sparrowhawk at Druridge Pools by
Jonathan Farooqi on 9th August and below
a Buzzard at Allenheads on 17th August by
Colin Bradshaw

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Six birds were near the border on the A1 at Berwick on 22nd during a two-hour walk along hedgerows (TBr). Five birds involving two adults and three juveniles were at the River Till (nr. Shellacres) on 14th (MJC). Four birds were noted over the fields at St Mary's Island on 20th (ASJ) while three birds were seen at Linton Ponds on 13th (CDH), Blyth on 16th (TB) and at Howick on 20th (JAR). One or two birds were at 17 sites.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Two juveniles were still viewable on the nest from Leaplish (Kielder) on 3rd (TRD/JD); one - two birds were seen throughout the month at Derwent Reservoir and Holy Island area (IFo/NFO *et al.*). A single bird flew over Rochester towards Kielder carrying a fish on 3rd (TRD/JD), a bird flew South over Druridge Bay CP on 27th (TF/JFa) and a bird flew into the County from Yetholm Loch on 29th (JDL).



Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Three calling birds were at Holy Island Lough on 6th (MJC). One or two birds were at Big Waters NWT throughout the month (GB) and two birds were at Druridge Pools on 16th and 21st (MJC/PRM) and a juvenile and a very small chick were seen at Holywell Pond on 31st (SPP). Single birds were noted at Arcot Pond and Druridge Pools throughout the month.

Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana*

A well watched bird was seen at Druridge Pools from 20th – 22nd (CH/TF/JFa/TRD/JD).



A digi-scoped image of the Spotted Crake at Druridge Pools by Neil Osborne on 20th August

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

15 birds were at Big Waters NWT on 21st (GB), 10 were at Haughton Strother GPs (Humshaugh) on 2nd (MR) and at Druridge Pools on 13th (DM/STH). Seven birds were at Bank's Pond (Dinnington) on 1st (PCF) and at Grindon Lough on 17th (PRM). One to six birds were noted at 17 sites.



A young Moorhen gets stuck at Hedgley gravel pits on 16th August by John Littleton

Coot *Fulica atra*

The two highest counts of 97 & 83 came from Swallow Pond on 25th & 19th (SPP) followed by 70 at Bothal Pond on 4th (TD). Other counts of 48 birds were at Killingworth Lake on 15th (LJM), 45 at Linton Ponds on 13th (CDH), 27 at Big Waters NWT on 13th (GB), 26 at Widdrington Moor Lake on 21st (AWG), 25 at Branton GP on 4th & at Grindon Lough on 17th (MJC/PRM). One – twenty birds were noted at eight sites during the month.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

All but one record came from Cresswell Pond NWT with the highest count of six on 16th (PRM). Four juveniles were recorded up to 18th (PRM, MSH, NFO, TD, TRD). One bird was reported from Monks' House Pool on 20th (GPK/RA).

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

All but four of the 23 records were coastal. Seaton Sluice Watch Tower had a monthly count of 49N and 239S. On 20th St Mary's had 123 (ASJ) and 121 were counted at Beacon Point (Newbiggin) on 22nd (STH). Other peak counts of above 50 came from Longhoughton Steel (SW), North Blyth staithes (STH) and Tynemouth (DRW, MK). Smaller counts came from Amble, Castle Island (R Wansbeck), Cresswell Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Ellington (Chugdon Wood), Humshaugh (Houghton Strother GP), Low Newton, R Blyth Estuary, R Tweed Estuary, Rockcliffe/Browns Bat, Spartylea, Warkworth (Birling Carrs) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Regular gatherings of ca. 1,000 occurred between the Straight Lonnen and The Lough on Holy Island (IK) and a similar number was counted at Chare Ends on 31st (SR). Six hundred birds were counted at Beacon Point, Newbiggin on 22nd (STH) and 300 were at Derwent Reservoir on the same date (IFo), while 300 were at Holy Island on 26th (DM) and 250 were seen at St Mary's on 1st (KWY). Other counts of 100 or more came from Cullernose, Howick, where 200 were reported on 13th (AWG) and 103 were at Grindon Lough on 13th (MRS). Other smaller counts came from Beal Point (Lindisfarne), Boulmer, Brides Hole (Holy Island), Ellington (Chugdon Wood), Howdon and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

There was a notable increase in the number of records this month with 17 at Goswick Sands on 7th topping the list (NFO). Twelve birds were reported at Budle Bay on 14th (GPK) and nine were at Longhoughton Steel on 20th (SW). Five birds passed north at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower on 8th-9th. One to four birds were recorded at Boulmer and Holy Island.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Branton GP had a count of 2,014 on 13th (IBDa/KD) which might well be a record for an inland count in recent years. On 12th there were 700 counted at Derwent Reservoir (IFo), over 600 were estimated at Cresswell Pond NWT on 1st (MSH), which declined to 300 by 8th (DM), and a peak count of 550 was reported from Budle Bay on 27th (CPK/GPK). The large count at Branton on 13th had reduced to 400 on 16th (SRB), 390 was the biggest count of the month at Bothal Pond (Coney Garth) on 7th (TF/JFa) and a WeBS count of 350 was made at Caistron on 13th (JD). Castle Island (R Wansbeck) had 240-260 birds on 13th (MK) and 203 were at Houghton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 14th (MR). Counts of 100-200 came from Amble, Arcot Pond, Berwick (Whiteadder Pt), Castle Island, Grindon Lough, Lynemouth Flash, Monks' House Pool, St Mary's Island, Tyne Estuary, Warkworth weir, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Widdrington Moor Pool.

Erratum: delete reference to two broods of eight from Castle Island on 27th in July Bulletin.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Records appear to be dominated by birds dispersed from summering grounds, mainly juveniles. Up to four juveniles were reported from the R Wansbeck at various dates (MK, STH, TF/JFa, DM). Reports of three came from higher ground in the south of the county (IFo) and reports of juvenile singletons came from Druridge Pools, Boulmer and Monks' House Pool.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Post-breeding flocks and birds on passage were reflected in increased numbers this month. About 330 were estimated at Beal Point on 24th (PRM) and a peak count of 200+ was made at Budle Bay on 16th (CGK). Other counts were much smaller with 44 at St Mary's on 20th (ASJ), 41 at Amble on 16th (PRM) and 35 at Low Newton Scrape on 26th (CB, DM). Smaller counts came from Boulmer, Cresswell Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Pools NR, East Chevington, Hauxley (Bondicarr), Holy Island, Low Newton, Newbiggin, Beacon Point, R Tweed Estuary, R Wansbeck, Castle Island, Tynemouth and Warkworth, Birling Carrs.



A Ringed Plover at St. Mary's by Alan Jack

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

A juvenile was reported from Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 25th (first seen by Steve Ripon, MR, SR).

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

There was a steady flow of records throughout the month. Thirty-four were seen flying south at Tweedmouth on 8th (CH) while between 1st-23rd Seaton Sluice Watch Tower logged 6N and 13S. On 2nd 16 were at Holy Island (SR) and 14 were seen at Alnmouth on 23rd (MJC) with a further 14 counted at Lindisfarne NNR on 27th (SR/AH). On 24th there were 12 at Beal Point (PRM) and 11 were in the Fenham Mill area on 2nd (MJC). Single-figure counts came from Budle Bay, Amble, Beal Point, Boulmer to Craster, Cresswell Pond, Cullernose Point, Druridge Pools NR, Hauxley, Coquet Point, Holy Island, Howick, Longhoughton Steel, Low Newton, Newbiggin, Newbiggin, Beacon Point, North Shields, R Blyth Estuary, R Blyth, Kitty Brewster, R Coquet Estuary, St Mary's Island and Tynemouth.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

The roost at the mouth of the Long Nanny (Newton) had 280 birds on 8th (TRD) and 241 birds were counted at Longhoughton Steel on 20th (SW). The peak count in the Blyth Estuary was of 120 on 4th (AJ), 104 were counted in the Tweed Estuary during a WeBS on 10th (MHu) and 77 were seen feeding in a field near Boulmer on 24th (AB/LB). On 22nd there were 57 counted at Newbiggin's Beacon Point (STH), on 25th, 35 were found between Boulmer and Craster (MJC) and 30 were at Alnmouth on 23rd (MJC). Smaller counts came from Amble, Castle Island, Craster, Cresswell Pond, Derwent Reservoir, East Chevington, Newton Flash, North Blyth staithes, Prestwick Carr, Spartylea and Wark (North Tyne).



A Curlew at Holy Island
Alan Jack on 13th August

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Three records submitted for this month have exceeded the highest count in the Bulletin database. On 3rd a minimum of 160 were counted at Amble Braid (SPP) and later in the month 127 were at Druridge Pools NWT on 29th (LJM) while 108 were at Hauxley on 30th (TF/JFa). Earlier in the month Druridge Pools was the focus for most records with counts in the 40s and 50s for much of the time. Other locations with counts were the Coquet Estuary-Warkworth Gut area with 73 counted on 22nd (AA), 15 at Monks' House Pool on 13th (GPK) and ten at Budle Bay on 31st (GPK). Locations with smaller peak counts were Castle Island, Holy Island, Howdon, Low Newton scrape, R Aln, Foxton Bends and Tweed Estuary, Calot Shad.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Counts of 300-350 were made of the roost at Holy Island (IK, MJC). On 24th a count of a minimum of 21 was made at Beal Point (PRM). All other counts were of four or fewer birds and came from Alnmouth, Amble, Cresswell Pond, Newbiggin, Beacon Point, R Blyth Estuary, Seaton Sluice Watch Tower and St Mary's Island.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Movement was noted at Seaton Sluice from 1st-3rd with a total of 30 S (SSWT). The largest numbers were concentrated in the SE with 39 at North Blyth Staithes on 22nd (STH), 32 at St Mary's Island on 20th (ASJ) and 21 at Tynemouth on 13th (MK). Counts from further north involved 25 breeding-plumaged birds at Sandham Bay (Holy Island) on 4th (IK), 28 at both Stag Rocks and Snab Point (Cresswell) on 26th (DM) and 24 at Boulmer-Craster on 25th (MJC). One-ten were at Alnmouth, Amble, Castle Island, Football Hole (Newton), Kitty Brewster (River Blyth), Monk's House Pool, the River Blyth Estuary, Seahouses and Warkworth.



A Turnstone at Hadston calls. Alan Jack on 10th August

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Birds flew S at Seaton Sluice early in the month with a total of 84 noted from 1st-4th (SSWT). The largest flocks were noted at Lindisfarne NNR with 160 in the Fenham Mill area on 2nd (MJC) and 36 at Budle Bay on 3rd (GPK). Other double-figure counts were 12 at Stag Rocks on 23rd (GB), 11 at Beacon Point (Newbiggin) on 2nd (NFO) and ten at Birling Carrs (Warkworth) on 13th (AWG). One-eight birds were at eight other sites between Tynemouth and Holy Island.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Arrivals were conspicuous this month with birds seen on many coastal stretches and pools. The highest count was 35 at Longbridge End (Lindisfarne NNR) on 26th (GB/DM) and 25 at Beal saltmarsh on the same day (IK). These could have involved some of the same birds or be two groups of a larger flock. Birds were present at Druridge Pools throughout the month with numbers fluctuating between one and 11 during the month indicating a continual turnover of passage birds. One-three were seen at Amble Braid, Bell's Farm Flash (Cresswell), Boulmer, Budle Bay, Castle Island, Charlton Mires (north of Alnwick), Cresswell Pond, Hauxley, Hoppen Kiln Pool, Low Newton Scrape, Monks' House Pool and the River Blyth Estuary.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Last month's adult at Cresswell Pond remained until 5th (LJM/PJA/DM). Other singles were at Beacon Point (Newbiggin) on 1st (AA) and Bondicarr on 2nd (AJR). A juvenile was at Druridge Pools on 30th (TF/JFa).

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Numbers at St Mary's Island increased from 17 on 1st to 133 by 24th (KWY/MK/ASJ *et al.*). At Sandham Bay (Holy Island), 30 on 4th increased to 130 on 7th (IK/NFo). Other significant concentrations were 92 at Bondicarr (Hauxley) on 20th, 80 (including 30 juveniles) on Cresswell beach on 31st (NFo), 75 at Beacon Point (Newbiggin) on 5th (STH), 55 at Budle Point and 15 at Tynemouth on 4th (MK). One-five were at Beal Point, East Chevington and the River Blyth Estuary.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

At Seaton Sluice, 144 S were counted on 15th (SSWT). Large counts of 550 were made at Budle Bay on 15th (CGK/GPK), 270 at Beal Point (Lindisfarne NNR) on 24th (PRM) and 150 at Fenham Mill on 2nd. At Druridge Pools, nine on 4th had increased to 146 by 29th (NFo/MSH/TRD *et al.*). Some or all of these birds may have accounted for a report of 140 from nearby Bell's Farm Flash on 15th (MSH). Elsewhere, birds were present all along the coast with maxima of 70 at St Cuthbert's Island (Lindisfarne NNR) on 17th (MJC), 62 at Cresswell Pond on 4th, 60 at Castle Island, 47 at the River Blyth Estuary on 16th, 45 at Boulmer-Craster on 25th, 32 at East Chevington on 4th and 30 at both Low Newton Flash and the River Coquet Estuary. One-19 were at Alnmouth, Amble, Bothal Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Haughton Strother GP, the River Tweed Estuary and Warkworth.



A Dunlin at St. Mary's
Alan Jack
2nd August

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

The first returning birds were singles flying S at Seaton Sluice on 1st and 2nd (SSWT). A single was at Boulmer on 9th (JAR) and two were at Tynemouth also on 9th (SPP). At the regular haunt of Stag Rocks, the maximum was 7 on 23rd (GB).

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

An adult was at Sandham Bay (Holy Island) on 6th (BS) and a single was at Druridge Pools on 16th (PRM/TF/JFa).



The Druridge Pool Little Stint. Jonathan Farooqi on 16th August

White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis*

An adult was reported from St Mary's Island on 7th-8th (AC/IJ). Further reports were of adults at Cresswell beach on 8th-9th (TB/GB/TF/JFa) and then an adult was reported at Druridge Pools from 11th-16th (TF/JFa/CB/JGS *et al.*).



The White-rumped Sandpiper on Cresswell beach
by John Littleton on 8th August

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

Two juveniles were seen at Druridge Pools on 30th (TF/JFa) and a single juvenile on 31st (TRD/JD).

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Last month's concentration at Castle Island had declined to five by 1st (LJM/DM) and only a single was seen by 31st (TF/JFa). Whittle Dene Reservoirs attracted a maximum of four on 15th (MR) and four were at Charlton Mires (north of Alnwick) on 23rd (AH). One to three were at Alnmouth, Amble Braid, Branton GP, Cresswell Pond, Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Pools, Fenham Mill, Foxton Bend, Hauxley, Hedgeley GP, Lindisfarne NNR, the River Blyth Estuary, Tyne Estuary, Tynemouth and Warkworth.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Passage was conspicuous with birds reported from 14 locations. The highest counts were of four at Hedgeley GP from 13th-28th (IBDa/KDa/NFo) and four at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 31st (SR). Groups of three were seen at Charlton Mires on 2nd (AH) and Druridge Pools on 7th (MJC/TF/JFa). Singles were at Big Waters, Branton GP, Castle Island, Cocklawburn Pond, Cramlington, Goswick, Hoppen Kiln Pool, Haughton Strother GP, South Low (Lindisfarne NNR) and West Hartford.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

A juvenile was noted at Druridge Pools from 4th-18th (NFo/TD/AA *et al.*). A moulting adult was noted throughout the month at Budle Bay (NFo/DF/CGK *et al.*) and singles were at Crag End on 6th (NFo) and Cresswell Pond on 15th (AJ). A juvenile was present at Druridge Pools from 23rd-29th (PRM/MSH/DGB *et al.*).

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Very well reported, with birds seen at about 30 locations. The largest group was nine at South Low (Lindisfarne NNR) on 30th (SR) and eight at Longbridge End on 6th (NFo). Some of these birds may have been responsible for reports from Beal and Holy Island Causeway. Counts of four came from Fenham Mill on 2nd (MJC), Bothal Pond from 27th-29th (TD/TF/JFa) and Castle Island on 28th (MK). Three were at Budle Bay and Foxton Bend and counts of two came from Alnmouth, Boulmer-Craster, Derwent Reservoir, Grindon Lough, Hoppen Kiln Pool, the River Wansbeck Estuary and West Hartford. Single birds were seen at Beacon Point (Newbiggin), Druridge Pools, Gosforth Garden Village (flying S), Hauxley, Hedgeley GP, Linton Ponds, Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal), Monks' House Pool, Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin), River Coquet Estuary, St Mary's Island and Willington Gut (Wallsend).

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Passage continued with more sightings of this uncommon species. Singles were at Druridge Pools from 2nd-7th (NFo/TRD/JD *et al.*). Singles were also seen at Lynemouth Flash on 4th (AA), Monks' House Pool on 8th (DGB), Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal), on 9th (ALT), Hoppen Kiln Pool on 12th (GPK), Hedgeley GP on 16th (SRB) and Low Newton Scrape on 22nd (DGB).

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Seaton Sluice recorded 329 S during the month (SSWT). The Rocket Field Pools on Holy Island held 400 at a high tide roost on 14th (IK) and 110 were roosting on nearby St Cuthbert's Island on 17th (MJC). Other counts from Lindisfarne NNR were 320 at Budle Bay on 4th (GPK), 240 at Beal Point on 24th (PRM) and 80 at Fenham Mill on 2nd (MJC). Elsewhere the maximum in the Blyth Estuary was 344 on 16th (STH), 150 were at the River Coquet Estuary from 13th-16th (MK/PRM0, 118 on the River Tweed Estuary on 10th (MHu) and 100 at the Tyne Estuary on 2nd (MK). A 'massive' count for Castle Island was recorded on 13th when 88 were present (STH/DM). Counts of 60 came from Alnmouth and Boulmer-Craster and the maximum at Howdon was 52 during the month. One-25 were at eight other localities.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Druridge Pools was the main site with counts of one-26 made during the month (MSH/PRM/GB *et al.*). Maximum numbers at other locations were 11 at Bothal Pond on 27th (TD) and ten at Grindon Lough on 25th (PRM). One-six were at Airy Holm Reservoir (a local rarity), Beal Point, Castle Island, Castron, Cresswell Pond, Haughton Strother GP, Hoppen Kiln Pool, Howdon, Low Newton Scrape and Spartylea.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

A single on the sea at Church Point (Newbiggin) on 22nd (TF/JFa) was the only bird reported.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was 18 N and 14 S in 39 hours. This was an extremely low total for August continuing the trend of the last few years. At Tynemouth, two dark-phase juveniles chased Sand Martins and a Swallow on 1st (SPP), four flew N on 22nd and four S on 23rd (MK/DRW). Three were seen at Chiburn (Druridge Bay) on 8th (MJC) at Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) on 9th (IJ) and two were at Beacon Point (Newbiggin) on 30th (STH/IFo). Singles were seen during the month at Cocklawburn, Cresswell, Druridge, Goswick, Longhoughton Steel, Newbiggin, Newton and during a North Sea pelagic.

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

Seaton Sluice recorded 13 N and 1 S during the month (SSWT). Four flying N were seen at both Newbiggin and Annstead Point (Seahouses) on 9th (TF/JFa/GPK) and two flew N at Tynemouth on the same date. Two flew N at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) on 21st (DF). Singles flew N at Annstead on 7th and S at Craster-Dunstanburgh on 8th (CH). Singles were also seen at Boulmer-Craster on 25th and on a North Sea pelagic on 17th.

Auk *sp*

On the sea at Birling Carrs, Warkworth were 30 young birds on 13th (AWG).

Razorbill *Alca torda*

Very few were noted in flight from the watch tower at Seaton Sluice and no large family parties were recorded (SSWT).

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

The only records were ten at Seaton Sluice on 4th (ASJ) and a single at Cullernose Point (TRD/JD)

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

Six flew N at Boulmer on 10th (BS) and a maximum of five were at Budle Point up to 16th (CGK/GPK) with a juvenile there on 23rd (TF/JFa).

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

A single was recorded at Beacon Point, Newbiggin on 30th (STH/IFo) with possibly the same bird, a juvenile, feeding in King Edward's Bay, Tynemouth on the same day (SPP).

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

At Seaton Sluice large numbers moved mainly S with numbers dropping off after the third week and the maximum record was 156N and 850S from 1st-3rd and 145S/hour on 17th (SSWT). The largest roosting concentration peaked at 170 at Cocklawburn from 2nd-7th (CH/MHu) with smaller gatherings of 30-50 at mid-month in the River Tweed and Blyth Estuaries (MHu/STH). Groups of ten to 30 were at Beacon Point, Berwick Little Beach, Birling Carrs, Druridge, St Mary's Island and Tynemouth with one to eight at ten other widespread localities between North Blyth and Lindisfarne.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*/ **Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo*

The peak monthly count in Budle Bay was 420 on 27th (CGK/GPK).

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

A maximum of 45 flew S in three hours at Seaton Sluice on 3rd (SSWT) with far fewer records than for the following species. The Long Nanny colony still held 40 on 8th and at Cocklawburn, Saltpan Rocks, 14 were in the roost on 2nd with only two by the month-end (MHu).

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Recorded daily at Seaton Sluice, moving mainly S, with a maximum of 80/hour on 21st/22nd (SSWT). A first breeding record came from North Blyth Staithes where 13 pairs hatched a minimum of 20 young from which eight fledged successfully (STH). The roost at Beacon Point (Newbiggin) held numbers varying from 40 to 130 throughout the month with the maximum recorded on 30th (STH/IFo). Elsewhere 10-25 were at Beal Point (Lindisfarne), St Mary's Island and Whittle Dene Reservoirs (PRM/MSH/SR) and one to five at eight other widespread coastal localities.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

Well recorded this month with Budle Point holding the largest numbers with a maximum of 31 adults and 11 juveniles on 21st (BS) and 33, including four juveniles, on 14th (CGK). Sixteen were recorded at North Low on 7th (NFO) and Beacon Point, Newbiggin attracted up to 12 throughout the month (AA *et al.*) with one to five at Chibburn Mouth (Druridge), Howick, the Long Nanny and Seaton Sluice.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Gatherings of 100-120, including many juveniles, were at Cullernose Point (TRD/JD) and Tynemouth (KWY); elsewhere up to 80 were in the River Tweed Estuary (MHu) and 55 in Blyth Harbour (STH). On 4th, the breeding colony on the Newcastle Quayside still held 50, adults and fully grown juveniles (GB).

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

The Budle Point evening roost contained 2,000 on 15th (CGK) and three-figure gatherings comprised 500-700 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs ((MR/SR), 337 at Castle Island (DM), 308 in the River Tweed Estuary (MHu) and 209 at Arcot Pond (LJM). Small groups of 20-30 were at Bothal Pond, Exhibition Park, Jesmond Dene and Leazes Park. Two colour-ringed birds at Castle Island on 21st were both from Norway, white J3TP and J4LT (STH).

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Only two sightings reported, a single at Monks' House Pool on 1st (DGB) and an adult on the River Coquet at Warkworth on 5th (PJA)

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

An extremely popular species with around 50 records submitted this month, the majority comprising adult birds. The largest count totalled 57 in two groups from a ploughed field at Cresswell Home Farm and on the nearby beach/rocks on 10th (MSH). Newbiggin South Bay held 38 in two groups on 21st (TB) from where many other sightings of up to 25 came throughout the month (TB *et al.*) and Cresswell Pond/Snab Point featured many records of up to 27 (NFO *et al.*). The Ellington area held up to ten (TB) throughout with six at Budle Bay (CGK) and in the QEII CP (MSH). One to two were recorded elsewhere at Blyth, Castle Island, Cheswick, Fenham-le-Moor, Holy Island, St Mary's Island and Tynemouth. Two colour-ringed birds were at Castle Island (TF/JFa), an adult, white 3KPR, ringed in Holland and a juvenile, yellow 2X7H, ringed on Coquet Island on 26th June.

Common Gull *Larus canus*

A large influx over 24 hours occurred on 15th when 1,700 were in the Budle Bay roost, up from 450 the previous evening (CGK) and groups elsewhere comprised 900 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 19th (SR), 125 at Haughton Strother GP on 29th (MR) and 120 on the River Tweed at West Ord on 5th, 'the first of sizeable return flocks' (CH). One to six were counted at seven other localities.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

A pair with three recently-fledged juveniles were at Cramlington, Southfield Green, probably having bred at a nearby industrial site (DM). The Budle Point gull roost held 210 on 14th (CGK) with up to 40 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 19th (SR) and ten in the estuaries of the Rivers Blyth and Tweed (AJ/MHu). One to four were seen at Arcot Pond, Castle Island, Exhibition Park, Grindon Lough and Jesmond Dene (DM/LJM/MJCo/PRM).

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argenteus*

Four pairs attempted breeding on the North Blyth Staithes, three successfully, fledging five young. The gull roost at Budle Point held 2,000 on 14th (CGK) with 850 in the River Tweed Estuary on 10th (MHu) and 600 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 19th (SR). Fifty-one were at Castle Island, 12 on the Coquet at Warkworth with one to three at Arcot Pond and Leazes Park (DM/LJM). A colour-ringed adult at Cresswell Pond, yellow Y700, was ringed in York in October 2016 (TF/JFa).

***Yellow-legged Gull** *Larus michahellis*

A juvenile was on the River Blyth Estuary on 5th (AC).

***Caspian Gull** *Larus cachinnans*

Three reports came of the Caspian Gull, ringed PKCS, at Amble Harbour from 6th-26th (PJA/PRM/TRD).



The Amble Polish-ringed Caspian Gull 'PKCS' by Tim Dean on 23rd August

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

The immature summering bird was again recorded on the Black Middens (Tynemouth) on 12th (MK).

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

The Budle Point roost held 170 on 14th (CGK), 79 were on the Black Middens on 25th (MK) and 49 at Warkworth Gut on 26th (DM/GB/LAR). One to seven were at five other localities.

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

At Whittle Dene 100 on 25th (MR), 35 under railway bridge at Stakeford on 1st, 27 at Blakemoor Farm (Cresswell) on 8th and 16 at Southfield Green (Cramlington) on 1st (DM).

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Peak counts of 36 at Howdon on 17th (CB), 15 at Cresswell Pond on the same date (NFO), 14 at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 20th (TB), 12 at Derwent and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 15th (IFo/MR). Five were at Jesmond Dene on 27th, four at Whinney Hill Farm on 19th, three at Northumberlandia (Cramlington) on 21st and one to two at Town Moor (Newcastle), Tynemouth and Spartylea.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Four to six all month at Spartylea (CT), six at Jesmond Dene on 6th (MJCo) and a pair fledged two young at Southfield Green (Cramlington) on 17th (DM).

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Thirty were on wires at Amble on 23rd (TB), present all month at Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin) with a peak of 14 including three juveniles (BS) and two all month at Spartylea (CT).

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

All reports of singles, generally juveniles, at Old Hartley on 2nd, Lowick from 5th to 12th, Holy Island on 6th and 16th, Seaton Sluice, Derwent Reservoir and Druridge on 14th, Hartley on 15th, Haughton Strother on 24th and Cresswell Pond on 27th.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Two at Humshaugh on 2nd with singles there on 1st and 24th (SW) and at Great Whittington on 5th, Beanley Wood on 6th, Cresswell Pond on 7th and 16th, Stagshaw on 14th, Halton-le-Gate on 30th and Acomb on the same date. A corpse on Holy Island on 17th was likely fox kill (MJC).

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

The family party at Druridge remained all month, the peak count four on 7th (TF/JFa) with two vocal at Shiremoor on 25th following weeks of silence (CGK) and at least two individuals at Derwent Reservoir, with singles recorded regularly during the month (IFo) and one near Big Waters Reserve on 27th (GB).

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

At Spartylea two to four were present all month (CT) with three or four including two juveniles, calling at Fulbeck (Morpeth) on 20th (TD). Three were at Harsondale Burn on 29th and two at Allenheads on 5th & 12th were seen feeding on rabbit roadkill (CB). Singles were at Warden, Rothbury, Humshaugh and Walwick, all in last ten days of the month.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Two on moors above Allenheads on 10th (CB) and one at Snook (Holy Island) on 27th (SR/AH).



A Short-eared Owl at Allenheads by Colin Bradshaw on 10th August

Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

At Beanley Wood two were found on 6th with a single there on 1st (IBDa/KDa).

Swift (*Apus apus*)

On 7th 95 were at Newbiggin and at least 50 at Hauxley NWT (TB/STH), 45 at Berwick on 4th with 40 at Hauxley on the same date (MJC/AJH) and 30 at Ponteland on 13th (PCF). 20-28 were at Humshaugh regularly in the first weeks of the month, 27 at Big Waters on 2nd, 23 at Chesterwood and 22 at Newcastle Garden Village on 5th with 21 S in five minutes at Cramlington on 14th. One to 15 were at 25 other locations with singles still present until the end of the month.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Well reported with two at Shillmoor Farm (Upper Coquetdale) on 12th (JR), Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 19th (SR), and River Till nr. Shellacres on 22nd (MJC). Singles were regularly at Castle Island and Jesmond Dene and at nine other coastal locations and nine inland.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Only one report of a single at Comb (near Falstone) on 19th (JR).

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Two all month at Spartylea (CT) and two juveniles visiting garden feeders at Tynemouth (CB) with two at Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 25th (GB) and Whittle Dene on 29th (SR). A juvenile was trapped and ringed at Bamburgh on 8th with singles regularly at Valley Park (Cramlington), Chugdon Wood (Ellington) and seven other locations.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Four birds involving an adult and three juveniles were at St Mary's Island on 20th (ASJ); three birds were seen at Derwent Reservoir on 1st (IFo), Bamburgh on 2nd (BRS) and at Beal Point on 24th (PRM). Two birds were at Ellington, Grindon Lough, Holy Island, Howick, Longhorsley Moor, and at the River Till (near Shellacres). Single birds were at 11 sites.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

An immature male was at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 16th (TB) and a female/immature was at Boulmer on 21st (BS). Single unsexed birds were at Greenlee Lough on 13th (MRS), Holy Island on 16th and 30th (SR), Baldersbury Hill (Berwick) on 22nd (TBr), Monks' House Pool on 23rd (GB), Tarsset Burn on 25th (AA).

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

On 5th a juvenile flew S at King Edward's Bay (Tynemouth) mobbed by Crows (SPP) and an adult bird was at Cornhill on Tweed on 21st (MJC).

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Two birds were seen in Budle Bay throughout the Month (CGK/GPK) and two juvenile males were interacting aggressively in flight at Derwent Reservoir on 3rd (IFo). Single birds were at 22 sites including a male circling over Byker Metro Station (Newcastle) on 25th (SPP).

Ring-necked Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

Five including a courting pair were at Nun's Moor (Newcastle) on 25th (PCF), a pair flew out of trees at Brunton Park (Gosforth) on 31st (DM) and one flew SW at Gosforth Garden Village on 19th (MJC).

Magpie *Pica pica*

Just one report of three at Jesmond Dene on 27th (MJCo).

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

A high count of six together at East Cramlington LNR on 31st (STH), five at Harwood Forest on 21st (AB/LB), and River Till nr. Shellacres on 22nd (MJC) with four at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 9th (TB). One to three were at Ellington regularly, two at Netherwitton and singles at a further five locations.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

A large count of 200 at Derwent Reservoir on 15th (IFo), 25 off Beacon Lane (Cramlington) on 25th (DM), eight to 20 at Spartylea all month and eight at Paddy Freeman's Lake (Newcastle) on 6th (MJCo).

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

A stubble field at High Cocklaw (Berwick) had 120 feeding birds on 31st (TBr) and two to five were at Spartylea all month (CT).

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Five were at Jesmond Dene on 13th (MJCo).

Raven *Corvus corax*

All reports singles at Beanley on 6th, Greenlee Lough on 13th, Melkridge Common on 25th, Spartylea on 27th and 29th and Cocklawburn on 31st.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

More than five were at Grindon Lough on 17th (PRM), an adult with two juveniles at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 2nd (TB) with more than three, presumably dispersing birds, at Bamburgh on 8th & 25th till month end (BRS). One to two were at five other widespread localities.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

In fifteen minutes 16 were recorded at Netherwitton on 12th (JR), six seen all month at Spartylea (CT) and two at Jesmond Dene on 27th (PCF).

Great Tit *Parus major*

Five all month at Spartylea (CT) and three at Jesmond Dene on 6th (MJCo).

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

25 recorded in 15 minutes at Netherwitton on 12th (JR) with two singles at Jesmond Dene on 6th (MJCo).

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

At Netherwitton three in 15 minutes on 12th (JR), two regularly at Big Waters (GB), at Prestwick Carr on 14th (PCF) and Derwent Reservoir on 23rd (IFO). Singles were at Linden Hall (Longhorsley) regularly all month (NFO), Bellasis Bridge on 1st and Derwent Reservoir on 29th.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

Two at Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth) on 31st (MJC) with singles at Rothbury on 4th, a garden at Fulbeck (Morpeth) on 5th and Linden Hall (Longhorsley) from 17th to 25th.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Just one report of two east at Ellington on 21st (TB).

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Heavy weather downed around 150 migrants at Cresswell Pond on 12th (EC/JSB), 150 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 19th with 70 there on 25th (SR/MR), 100 at Druridge pools on 6th with 60 there on 7th (MK/MJC). 55 were at Hexham Race Course on 16th, 30 at Holy Island on 6th and 25 at Big Waters on 2nd with one to ten at seven other locations including Town Moor (Newcastle) where they are regarded as scarce.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

A number of three-figure counts with 200 at Chollerton on 24th (SW), 153 at Holy Island on 6th, 150 moving south at Fenham Mill (Lindisfarne) on 2nd (MJC), 150 on lines at Prestwick on 31st, 110 S between Boulmer and Craster on 25th (MJC) and 105 at Humshaugh on 22nd (SW). 20 to 60 were at Alnmouth, Buckham's Bridge, Cramlington, East Cramlington LNR, Druridge, Ellington, Gosforth Garden Village, Little Benton Farm, Newbiggin, St Mary's Island and near River Till. One to 16 were at many of these locations and three others.



A Swallow at Elwick by Alan Jack on 13th August

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

65 at Hexham Race Course on 16th & Humshaugh on 22nd (AJR/SW), 60 at Lynemouth on 17th & Alnmouth on 23rd (TB/MJC) with 50 at Newcastle Town Moor on 14th and Old Hartley on 21st (GB/ASJ), 42 at Cramlington on 24th (DM) and 40 at Newbiggin on 9th (BS). 20 to 32 were at Boulmer, Craster, East Ord, Ellington, Holy Island, Howick, Lynemouth and Spartylea. 40 flew north in 30 mins at Cocklawburn on 31st (MHu) with three to 16 at six other locations.

The first cliff-nesting birds at Coves Haven (Holy Island) still had large young, probably second broods, in four nests (IK).

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

The largest gathering was 24 at Waren Mill Caravan Park on 15th (CGK); 13 were on garden feeders at Tynemouth on 31st and at Alexandra Park (Cramlington) on 17th and 12 at Netherwitton on 12th. A family party was found at Brandling Park (Newcastle), eight were at Alnmouth, Chugdon Wood and Ellington and three to five at a further five localities.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

A late bird was still in a breeding area at Sidwood (Tarsset Burn) on 25th (AA).

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

A total of 33 trapped and ringed at Bamburgh during the month was the highest August total for the site (BRS). Elsewhere on the coast, eight were at Alnmouth on 23rd and eight between Boulmer-Craster on 25th. Inland seven were at Branton GP on 4th and at least seven accompanied a tit flock at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 9th. There were counts of four from Ellington and Netherwitton and three at Southfield Green (Cramlington), while one to two were noted at a further 15 localities.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

A total of 20 were trapped and ringed at Bamburgh during the month (BRS). Some light coastal 'falls' were apparent with counts of ten at St Mary's Island on 19th (MK) and at Hadston on 20th (AJR); six to eight were noted at Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools and Holy Island between 6th and 7th, while seven were inland at Netherwitton on 12th. Counts of five came from Alnmouth on 23rd, Ellington on 25th and Spartylea on 16th, while four were noted at Boulmer-Craster on 25th, Longhorsley on 3rd, Tynemouth on 20th and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 25th. One to three were reported from a further 11 sites.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

A total of 11 were trapped and ringed at Bamburgh during the month (BRS). Six were at Marden Quarry (Whitley Bay) on 13th, two at Jesmond Dene on 6th and at Alnmouth on 23rd and singles at Amble on 16th, Boulmer-Craster on 25th, Exhibition Park on 16th and 25th (different birds) and at St Mary's Wetland on 26th.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

One (or more) singles were at Exhibition Park on 2nd-3rd, 8th, 16th and 18th (PJA/GB), while further singles were noted at Big Waters on 13th, Budle Point on 16th and Tynemouth on 28th.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Singles were at Alnmouth on 23rd, Bamburgh on 16th, Budle Point on 11th, Hadston Carrs on 27th Holy Island on 2nd and Tynemouth on 6th.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Six were trapped and ringed at Bamburgh during the month, five of which were on 22nd (BRS). Family parties of five were at West Hartford on 6th and Prestwick Carr on 16th, while five were also at Ellington on 12th. Three+ to four+ juveniles were noted at St Mary's Wetland on 6th and 27th, two were at Boulmer-Craster on 25th and singles at Castle Island on 13th, Craster on 24th, Cocklawburn on 15th and 31st, Exhibition Park on 25th, Hauxley NR on 26th and Valley Park (Cramlington) on 4th.



A Whitethroat at Druridge by Colin Bradshaw on 17th August

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Only casual data was gathered from the long-standing Cramlington study area this year; a minimum of 17 territories were identified, of which eight were at Arcot Pond and six at West Hartford (STH/GMi/LJM/DM). A single 'reeling' bird was heard at West Hartford on 2nd, another was singing strongly in a wet fen area near Stamfordham from 6th-8th, while another was at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 6th.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Five trapped and ringed at Bamburgh during the month was a very low total for this site (BRS). A family party of five was at nearby Monks' House Pool on 13th (CGK/GPK), three were at Cocklawburn on 15th, two at Hadston Carrs, St Mary's Wetland and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 27th, 6th and 25th respectively, while singles were also reported from Big Waters on 17th and Holy Island on 6th, 17th and 23rd. Another was still well inland at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 29th.

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Two were singing at Holy Island (Lough) on 6th (MJC), with singles there on 16th-17th. At Big Waters a bird was carrying food on 6th, two to three were noted on 13th, one on 17th and two on 20th (GB). Elsewhere singles were at Creswell Pond on 1st and at St Mary's Wetland on 27th.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Five were noted in Jesmond Dene on 6th (MJCo) and up to three in Chugdon Wood (Ellington) and at Netherwitton. Two were at Spartylea and singles at Bolam, Doxford Hall, Matfen and Rothbury.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Four trapped and ringed at Bamburgh during the month was unusual for this site in late summer (BRS). Two were at Netherwitton on 12th and singles were reported from Bulby's Wood (Breamish Valley), Chesterwood, Exhibition Park, Howick, Jesmond Dene and Rothbury.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

17 were trapped and ringed at Bamburgh during the month (BRS). Four were noted at Spartylea throughout and a single was at Jesmond Dene.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

By far the largest reported gathering was 650 at Cresswell Pond on 15th (NFO). A flock of 250 was at Howick on 21st and up to 120 were at Newbiggin throughout. Up to 16 were noted regularly at Spartylea.



A Starling gleams on Holy Island by Mike Carr on 6th August

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Three were on the weir at Haydon Bridge on 10th (CB/OBr) and two at Shellacres (River Till) and at Spartylea. Singles were also reported from East Woodburn, Harsondale Burn (Staward), Howick, Jesmond Dene, Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth) and Wallington.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

A pair was feeding two recently fledged young at Newbiggin on 3rd (BS). Up to six were noted at Spartylea during the month and four were at Jesmond Dene on 6th.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Ten birds (at least three pairs with young) were at Allenheads on 9th (CB). Six were noted in the Low-High Newton area on 14th and two were at Spartylea throughout.



Two thrushes at Allenheads on 10th August, above: a Song Thrush and below: a MistleThrush, both by Colin Bradshaw



Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

An impressive flock of 48 flew from a small wooded area at Plessey Checks (Cramlington) on 14th (STH). Eight at Howick on 3rd increased to 18 by 20th (JAR). Seven to nine were noted at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on three dates and five were at Exhibition Park on 25th.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Upland areas supported some notable counts, with 23 (four family parties) at Allenheads on 6th, with 14 still present here on 9th; up to 12 were at Spartylea to 10th, where the last nest fledged on 7th and it was noted as very numerous in woodland near Greenlee Lough on 13th. Eight at Chesterwood was another good count and one to two were reported from Exhibition Park on 2nd-3rd, 15th-16th and 25th. Two were also at Bakethin Reservoir on 3rd, Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 24th and Swallow Pond on 16th, with singles at Alnmouth on 23rd, Arcot Pond on 25th, Branton on 3rd, Budle Bay on 14th, Derwent Reservoir on 8th, Hindhope Linn (Kielder) on 3rd, Linden Hall on 17th and Northumberlandia on 6th.



A Spotted Flycatcher at Allenheads on 17th August by Colin Bradshaw

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Seven were at Prestwick Carr on 16th (PCF), three in Jesmond Dene on 20th and two at Spartylea throughout; one at Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin) on 11th increased to two by 26th.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

A single was seen in a mixed flock with Spotted Flycatcher / Chiffchaffs at Allenheads on 9th (CB).

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

A female was at Tynemouth from 17th-19th (SPP).

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

A family party of four (including a male) was at Fourstones on 28th (AJ) and an adult and a juvenile were at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 5th. At Exhibition Park there was a male on 16th and a female/juvenile on 18th, while further singles were reported from Big Waters, Budle Point, Derwent Reservoir, Hadston, Prestwick Carr and St Mary's Wetland.



A Redstart at Hadston Carrs
Mike Carr on 9th August

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

A family party of five was at Cheswick Sands on 23rd (CH). One was at Boulmer on 21st; three were here on 22nd (BS) and two on 28th. A juvenile was at Old Hartley on 15th with two here on 20th and 26th. An adult and juvenile were at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) from 15th-24th and two were at Exhibition Park on 21st and 25th. Elsewhere singles were noted at Arcot Pond (juv. from 21st-25th and adult on 30th), Cocklawburn on 8th, Cresswell Pond on 2nd, Druridge Pools NR on 4th, Holy Island on 2nd, Ellington on 28th, St Mary's Wetland on 27th, Swallow Pond on 25th and Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 1st.

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Further evidence of successful breeding included a pair with three juveniles at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) on 24th (ALT), a second brood of one adult and three juveniles at West Hartford on 22nd, a male and two juveniles at Long Nanny on 8th, a pair with a juvenile at Boulmer on 13th, a pair carrying food at North Blyth staithes on 5th and a pair feeding young in the nest at Holy Island (Chare Ends) on 1st. Elsewhere, four were noted at Longhoughton Steel on 20th, three at St Mary's Island on 17th and two at Cresswell Pond (two juveniles), Ellington, Lynemouth Flash, Low Newton and Whitley Chapel. Singles were reported from Cullernose Point, Holy Island (Snook), Howick (juvenile) and more unusually from Exhibition Park, where a fresh juvenile was seen on 2nd.

Wheatear *Oenanthe Oenanthe*

Five in the Old Hartley / St Mary's Island area on 20th was the highest count, with four birds there on 26th (AJS/SPP). Three were at Druridge Pools NR and two at Hadston on 20th, while further counts of two came from Boulmer on 28th, Cresswell Pond on 5th, Derwent Reservoir on 20th, Grindon Lough on 17th, Holy Island on 7th, Newbiggin on 30th and Newcastle Town Moor on 15th, with singles at the latter site on 16th and 21st. Singles were at Derwent Reservoir on a further seven dates and also at Boulmer on 13th, Branton on 29th, Cheswick on 13th, Coquet Estuary on 13th, Hadston Carrs on 23rd, Holy Island on 1st, Hexham Racecourse on 16th, Long Nanny on 8th, Northumberlandia on 6th, Tynemouth on 29th and 31st and at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 25th.

Dunnoek *Prunella modularis*

A pair with three young were at Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin) on 4th and four at Spartylea on 1st.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Two counts of around 100 were noted this month at Laverock Hall road (Blyth) on 16th and during a walk at Berwick on 22nd (SJL/TBr). Around 70 were at Cullercoats Bay all month (ASJ). Up to 60 were attracted to garden feeders at Newbiggin during the month (RS).

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

An increasingly healthy population was reflected this month with large gathering of 100 plus at Haughton Strother on 29th (MR). 80 plus, including many juveniles, was notable at Briar Dene Farm on 21st (SPP). 45 at Chugdon Wood on 9th increased to 50 by 19th (TB). 30 were noted at Shellacres (River Till) on 16th, with 30 at Doddington on 21st (MJC/JD). 22 counted in hedgerows in a two-hour walk at Berwick on 22nd (TBr). One to eight were at six further locations.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava flavissima*

Nine juveniles were found at Whittle Dene on 10th (SR). Eight birds were at Druridge Pools on 7th (MJC). Seven flew south at St. Mary's during the course of the month (ASJ). Six at East Chevington on 16th (PRM). Five were noted at Boulmer on 1st (BS). One to four were seen during the month at 26 widespread sites, including further birds migrating S.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Eight at Whittle Dene on 31st was the month's high count (SR). Four were noted at Jesmond Dene, Spartylea, Haughton Strother and Breamish Valley during the month. One to two were noted at nine further sites.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

A large count of 59 was made at Charlton Mires Flash on 6th (AH), with 24 still there on 26th (GB/DM/LAR). 28 birds were observed at Hedgeley on 27th and 27 at Whittle Dene on 31st (NFO/SR). 23 were at Derwent Reservoir on 15th (IfO). 19 fed along the tide wrack at St. Mary's on 26th (ASJ). 18 at Low Newton on 26th (GB/DM/LAR). 14 were seen at Hexham Race Course on 16th (AJR). Four to twelve were noted at six other sites.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

One still in breeding habitat at Hepple on 2nd (CS).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

At Beacon Point (Newbiggin) on 30th, 30 were in the area and a further 25 flew south (STH/IFo). 30 birds arrived from the north to land and feed in fields at St. Mary's on 21st where light passage S was noted on 28th (ASJ). Light passage also seen at Newbiggin and Cramlington in the final week of August (RS/DM). Four seen at Newcastle Town Moor on 9th (DM).



A Meadow Pipit at Allenheads on 17th August by Colin Bradshaw

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Singles were seen at Football hole and St Mary's Island on 23rd (TRD/ASJ).

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

A maximum at Spartylea of six during the month (CS). Two at Jesmond Dene on 20th.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Six were at Howdon on 13th (CB). Four noted at Budle Point on 15th was unusual (CGK). A pair with two young frequented a Morpeth garden all month as did a male and two females at Rothbury (TD/JD/TRD). One to three seen at a further seven locations.

Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*

20 were at Whittle Dene on 25th and 16 at St Mary's the following day (SR/ASJ). 12 at Ellington on 25th (TB).

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

A large finch flock of 150 birds was thought to contain mostly Linnets at Cresswell Pond on 16th (SRB). 110 to 120 were in stubble at St. Mary's in the final week (ASJ). 86 counted at Cocklawburn on 22nd (MHu). 50 plus were at East Chevington on 4th (AJH) and 50 at Derwent Reservoir on 29th (IFo). 30 at Boulmer on 9th had increased to 65 by 13th (JAR). 40 noted at Low Newton on 23rd and at Creswell on 1st (GB/DM). One to sixteen seen at seven further sites during August.

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis caberet*

20 plus noted at Grindon on 25th and 20 at Derwent Reservoir on 23rd (PRM/IFo). Singles were at the coast at Bamburgh on 2nd and Tynemouth on 29th.

Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Four birds seen at Sidwood on 25th (AA). A single at Widehope on 7th (JR).

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

An impressive flock, containing many juveniles was observed at Swallow Pond on 27th. Thought to hold between 300 to 400 birds (SPP). 120 were at Northumberlandia (Cramlington) on 6th and 100 at West Hartford on 28th (STH). Up to 80 were seen at Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin) during the month (RS). 38 to 50 were feeding at St Mary's on several dates (ASJ). 32 were at Humshaugh on 29th and 30 on Holy Island on 6th (MR/MJC). Elsewhere, one to 24 were at ten other sites. 18 were trapped and ringed during the month at Bamburgh.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

A flock of 60 was at Derwent Reservoir on 22nd(IFO). At Rothbury, four were attracted to garden feeders during the month. Two birds were at Chesterwood on 5th(SW).

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

13 were noted in hedges at Berwick on 22nd (TBr). Three were at Holywell all month and at Little Mill on 4th (ASJ/SW). Singing birds were at Beacon Lane (Cramlington) on 13th (2), Longhorsley on 1st (2) and East Chevington on 16th (1).

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

19 at St. Mary's on 27th included 15 feeding in a crop field (ASJ). The only other reports were of two at Howdon the following day (CB) and a single at Arcot on 30th (DM).

ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN**Escapes****Cape Shelduck** *Tadorna cana*

A female type was noted at Foxton Bends on 26th (GB / DM / LAR).

Hybrids

No sightings

Birds of Unknown Origin

No sightings

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

This bulletin was compiled by Graeme Bowman (Mute Swan to Ruddy Duck), Steve Laing (Red Grouse to Black-necked Grebe), Trevor Blake (Honey-buzzard to Crane), Tom Brewis (Avocet to Godwit), Clive Hampton (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 Jack (Duncock to Corn Bunting).

Data Manager is Tom Brewis.

Thanks to David Sanders of NNBC for providing data.

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RECORD SUBMISSION

Please email records for the month to ntbc.records@goolemail.com
 Please email for a copy of the standard spreadsheet and other details.

Location names and grid references: Please use of standard location names and include grid references as this 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

Annual membership costs £10 for a junior, £30 for an individual, and £32 for a family.
 For membership enquiries please contact ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

If you internet bank you can pay online: please include your name in the ref. It is helpful if you email me to let me know when you've made the transfer ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

If you decide to set up a standing order please date the first payment at least a fortnight from your posting date to allow time to process with the bank. You can also set up your standing order directly with your bank if you wish; just let me know.

Finally, if you know anyone who might like to join NTBC please pass on the club information - new members are always welcome.

Jo Bentley - Hon Treasurer

NTBC WEB SITE

The club website is an excellent online resource for anyone interested in birds. There are:

Photo Galleries – Here you can view hundreds of photos of birds from Northumberland, Newcastle and North Tyneside. Members are encouraged to contribute their own photos. Simply send them to galleries@ntbc.org.uk

Sightings – Here you can view reports of birds recently reported in the County. Anyone who would like to contribute and post sightings to this page, please email sightings@ntbc.org.uk Please note this section is moderated, so there may be a short delay before your record appears.

There are also County Checklists, Records Committee updates, Information on important Surveys, useful articles and reports on Bird ID and Overseas Birding Trips....and much more...

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

New content such as Birding Trip Reports etc., is always welcome and very much appreciated.
 To find out more please visit www.ntbc.org.uk

Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

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

Bulletin 2017 No 9

MONTHLY SUMMARY SEPTEMBER 2017

6th November 2017



MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS and BIN - Subscriptions for 2017/8 are now due. This entitles you to a free copy of Birds in Northumbria 2016 which we are hoping to distribute at the December meeting. Andy and his team of writers, artists and photographers have been working really hard to bring publication of BIN forward this year. We hope to get copies to all paid up members before the end of 2017. Further details of membership are given at the end of the bulletin.

CLASSIFIED LIST HIGHLIGHTS

Taiga Bean Goose	Four flew N at St Mary's then Newbiggin on 16th. Also one W at Holy Island.
Garganey	Singles mid-month at Big Waters, Druridge Pools and Linton Pond.
Ruddy Duck	Drake at Bothal Pond on 12th.
Quail	Late record at Hadston Carrs on 24th.
Cory's Shearwater	One past Holy Island on 16th.
Great Shearwater	Single past Howick on 16th.
Great White Egret	One at Newton Pool stayed through to 12th.
Red-necked Grebe	Singles in Druridge Bay and past Seaton Sluice, Newbiggin and St Mary's.
Honey-buzzard	Juvenile at The Snook early morning on 27th.
Corncrake	One found in Berwick garden on 27th was taken into care and released the next day.
Black-tailed Godwit	High count of 126 at Amble Braid on 27th.
Pectoral Sandpiper	Single remained at Druridge Pools until 2nd.
Grey Phalarope	One flew N at St Mary's on 15th.
Long-tailed Skua	Popular confiding juvenile on Goswick GC from 24th.
White-winged Black Tern	A moulting adult was found off Bamburgh on 24th and seen through to 30th.
Sabine's Gull	Several sightings on key sea watching day of 17th.
Mediterranean Gull	Peak count of 68 at Newbiggin on 28th.
Caspian Gull	The ringed Polish bird 'PKCS' was seen at Warkworth weir through to 7th.
Nightjar	An unusual autumn coastal record of one at St Mary's on 27th.
Yellow-browed Warbler	Now regular autumn influx from 19th. Peak of 22 on Holy Island on 28th.
Barred Warbler	One on Newbiggin Ash Lagoon bank on 30th.
Lapland Bunting	One flew S at Cullernose Pt on 17th.



The much photographed juvenile Long-tailed Skua from Goswick GC. Colin Bradshaw 26th September

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 9th November. **State of the UK's Birds**• Mark Eaton will talk about the monitoring schemes for birds in the UK, the results that we get from those schemes, what that tells us in terms of winners and losers amongst our birds, and the implications for conservation.

FIELD TRIPS

Contact Steve Anderson seaswan@btinternet.com

CLASSIFIED LIST

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

A total of eight flew N and three S at Seaton Sluice between 1st-17th (SSWT), two flew S at Cullercoats on 10th (IJ), and one N at Newbiggin on 16th (GB). Peak counts were 192 at the Tweed Estuary on 6th (MHu), 63 at Killingworth Lake on 6th (LJM), 61 at QEII CP Lake on 10th (CDH), and 22-42 at Castle Island (DM/STH), East Chevington (DM/GB), Howdon (CB) and the Wansbeck Estuary (DM). Groups of 12-18 were at Holy Island, Meadow Haven (on the sea) and Whiteadder Point, and six to eight at Bothal and Linton Ponds, the Coquet Estuary and Newcastle Leazes Park.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

One was at the Tweed Estuary on 6th (MHu).

Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*

On 16th, four of the 'Taiga' *fabalis* race flew N at St Mary's (AC) and Newbiggin (GB/TF/JFa), and one, also of this race, flew W at Holy Island Snook (MJC).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

One at East Chevington on 5th (TRD) was followed by three at Budle Bay on the following day (GPK), seven S at Boulmer on 8th (BS), 17 S at Newton Point on 12th (DF), 215 at Beal on 15th (DF) and 300 at Holy Island on 16th (MJC). Also on 15th-16th, 195 flew N at Seaton Sluice (SSWT), and 28-100 were at/over (both N and S) at Budle Bay, Cresswell Pond, East Ord, Ellington, Prestwick Carr, Snab Point, St Mary's, Tynemouth and Warkworth Lane; 80 moved N at Holywell Pond on 20th, 550 N at Holy Island on 26th (ADM), 182 S at Hadston on 29th (AA), and 170+ N at North Seaton on 30th (BS). Larger numbers involved 1,800 at Fenham Flats on 18th (DGB), 3,100 at Budle Bay on 20th (CGK/GPK), and 2,000 at Widdrington Moor Lake on 24th (TB), while 30-33 were at Cresswell Pond and Goswick.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

A minimum of 800 was at Haughton Strother GP on 20th (MR), 366 were at Budle Bay on 19th (DF), 294 at Big Waters on 24th (AJJ *per* GB), 65-72 at/over Prestwick Carr (PCF) and QEII CP Lake (CDH), and 17-37 at/over Grindon Lough, Linton Ponds, Lynemouth and the Tweed Estuary. One to three were also at Bothal and Cresswell Ponds, Charlton Mires, Druridge Pools, Grindon Lough and Holy Island.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

QEII CP Lake held 470 on 10th (CDH), 330 were at Haughton Strother GP on 21st (MR), 116-166 at Gainslaw (MHu), New Water Haugh (MHu) and Sandy Bay, Newbiggin (DM *et al.*), and 51-94 at Big Waters, Castle Island, Grindon Lough, Hauxley Reserve, Linton Ponds and the Tweed Estuary. Counts of 23-48 came from Airy Holm Reservoir, Bothal and Cocklawburn Ponds, and Newcastle Leazes Park, and 13 were at Newcastle Exhibition Park.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Eight flew S out of the Tweed Estuary on 19th (MHu), and singles were at Budle Bay until 9th (GPK) and QEII CP Lake on 10th (CDH).

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

The first pale-bellied *hrota* race birds involved 51 S at Holy Island (DF) and six N at Tynemouth (SPP) on 4th, 800 at Fenham Flats on 8th (TRD/JD) and 1,000 there on 11th (CGK/GPK), and 1,450 at Beal on 15th (DF) when eight flew N at St Mary's (MSH). Northerly movement on 16th included 156 at Newbiggin (GB), 73 at Tynemouth (DRW), and ten to 12 at St Mary's and Whitley Bay, while a total of 153 flew N at Seaton Sluice between 16th-25th (SSWT), and four to 30 flew N at Boulmer, Cullernose Point and Newbiggin on 17th. A group of 54 was at Budle Bay on 29th (GPK).

Un-raced birds included 350 at Fenham Flats on 3rd (JPL) increasing to 450 by 6th (JDL) and 1,000 on 10th (DGB), and 300 flew N at Annstead Point on 16th (GPK).

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

A monthly total of 40 N and ten S at Seaton Sluice included 31 N on 24th (SSWT), and 37 flew N at Tynemouth on 24th (DRW). Budle Bay attracted a peak of 283 on 10th (BS), 12 were at Holy Island causeway on 20th (PRM), four at the Coquet Estuary and one at Castle Island.

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

Two were on the River Wansbeck at Low Angerton on 27th (IRD).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

The monthly total of 1,551 N and 17 S at Seaton Sluice included 1,551 N between 14th-18th (SSWT). On 16th, 256-320 flew N at Annstead Point (GPK), Newbiggin (GB/TF/JFa), and Tynemouth (DRW); on 17th, 502 moved N at Cullercoats (CGK), and 210-250 N at Newbiggin (GB/ASH *et al.*) and Tynemouth (DRW); and 175 flew N at Annstead on 18th (DF). Numbers at Fenham Flats increased from 12 on 3rd (MJC/ADM) to 1,200 by 11th (CGK/GPK), while 700 were at Budle Bay on 27th (CGK/GPK). Other peak counts were 174 at Grindon Lough (PRM), 102-110 at Big Waters (GB) and East Chevington (PRM), and 59-62 at Cresswell Pond and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and ten to 25 at Druridge Pools, Haughton Strother GP and Swallow Pond.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

At Seaton Sluice, one flew N and two S between 17th-25th (SSWT), and singles flew N at Tynemouth (DRW) and Whitley Bay (IJ) on 17th. Peak counts were 46 at Cresswell Pond on 8th (MJC), 30 at Linton Ponds on 23rd (DM/GB), 21 at Castle Island on 10th (DM/STH), 12-13 at Marden Quarry (KWY) and Swallow Pond (SPP), and eight at Caistron (JD). Three to four were also at Arcot Pond and Druridge Pools, and one to two at Bothal Pond, St Mary's Wetland and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Teal *Anas crecca*

A notable 1,512 flew N and 102 S at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT). On 16th-17th, 263-325 flew N at Newbiggin (GB/TF/JFa) and Tynemouth (DRW); 435 flew N at Cullercoats on 17th (CGK); and 186 flew N at Annstead on 18th (DF). Numbers at Budle Bay rose from 100 on 1st to 600 by 6th and 1,500 by 24th (CGK/GPK), 102-193 were at Druridge Pools (MSH), Derwent Reservoir (IFo), East Chevington (PRM) and Grindon Lough (PRM), and 76-81 at Castle Island and Swallow Pond. Groups of 31-47 were at Arcot Pond, Earsdon, Haughton Strother GP, Holy Island and off Whitley Bay, while ten to 28 were at Bothal, Cocklawburn and Linton Ponds, Ellington, Howdon, Monks' House Pool, the Tweed Estuary and West Ord.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

A total of 11 flew N at Seaton Sluice on 16th-17th (SSWT). Largest concentrations were 143 at Budle Bay on 2nd (DF), 105 at Linton Ponds on 10th (CDH), 89 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 20th (SR), and 52-78 at Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, Haughton Strother GP and St Mary's Wetland. Groups of 32-46 were at Arcot and Bothal Ponds, Bates Minewater Treatment Plant (Blyth), Castle Island, Newcastle Exhibition and Leazes Parks, the Tweed Estuary, West Ord and Whiteadder Point, while 12-27 were at Byker, Budle Bay, the Coquet Estuary, QEII CP Lake and St Mary's Wetland.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

At Seaton Sluice, a total of 23 flew N between 14th-18th (SSWT), 12 flew N at Cullernose Point on 17th (BS), and ten N at Howick on 16th (BS). One to three also flew N at Hadston Carrs (TF/JFa), Newbiggin (GB/ASH *et al.*), Snab Point (TF/JFa) and Tynemouth (DRW), between 15th-17th. Peak counts were 30 at East Chevington north pool on 13th (PRM), three at Big Waters on 26th (GB), and three at Budle Bay until 29th (GPK). One to two were also at Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother GP and Hauxley Reserve.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

A drake in eclipse plumage was at Druridge Pools on 14th and 22nd (MSH). Singles were also at Linton Ponds on 23rd (GB/DM) and Big Waters on 26th (ISD/AJJ *per* GB).

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Two flew N at Seaton Sluice on 13th (SSWT), and one moved N at Newbiggin on 17th (GB). East Chevington north pool proved attractive for this species, holding a peak of 86 on 24th (TB). Elsewhere, 22 were at Swallow Pond on 24th (SPP), 17 at Monks' House Pool on 30th (DF), 14 at Budle Bay on 22nd (GPK), 13 at Grindon Lough on 22nd (PRM), and ten at Druridge Pools (MSH). Seven to nine were at Big Waters and Cresswell Pond, and one to two at Haughton Strother GP, Linton Ponds and Newton Pool.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

11 were at Cresswell Pond on 23rd (DM), nine at East Chevington on 13th (PRM), five at Big Waters on 3rd (GB), and four at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 25th (SR). One to two were also at Arcot Pond, Grindon Lough and Haughton Strother GP.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Northerly movement involved 13 at Seaton Sluice between 14th-24th (SSWT), 11 at Whitley Bay on 15th-16th (IJ), and seven at Newbiggin on 16th (TF/JFa). Modest counts included peaks of about 40 at East Chevington on 13th (PRM), 39 at Druridge Pools on 8th (MJC), 34 at Castle Island on 4th (STH), 30 at Bothal Pond (PRM), and 20-27 at Grindon Lough (PRM), Haughton Strother GP (MR) and Swallow Pond (SPP). Eight to 12 were also at Arcot and Linton Ponds, and Newcastle Exhibition and Leazes Parks. One was at Budle Bay on 9th (CGK/GPK).

Scaup *Aythya marila*

Singles flew N at Seaton Sluice (SSWT) and Tynemouth (DRW) on 16th; and Annstead on 18th (DF). One was at Bothal Pond on 21st (TB).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

Six flew S at Holy Island on 3rd (MJC), 128 were at Birling Carrs, Warkworth on 11th (AWG), 38 at Holy Island on 3rd (MJC/ADM), and one to six at the Coquet and Tweed Estuaries, and Snab Point.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

A total of 1,361 flew N and 96 S at Seaton Sluice during the month, including 344 N on 17th (SSWT), a total of 354 flew N at Tynemouth on 17th and 24th (DRW), and 214 N at Annstead on 18th (DF), while 22-50 flew N at Newbiggin, Snab Point and St Mary's between 15th-17th. About 225 were off East Chevington on 6th (AB/LB), 200 at Goswick on 26th (TRD), 115-136 at Cocklawburn-Cheswick (DF/MHu), and 45 near Seahouses (Phi/SSc).

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

A monthly total of 20 N at Seaton Sluice included 17 N on 16th-17th (SSWT). Singles N at Newbiggin and Tynemouth on 14th-15th were followed by seven to nine N at Howick (BS), Newbiggin (GB/TF/JFa), St Mary's (MSH) and Tynemouth (DRW) on 16th, and on 17th, 21 flew N at Cullernose Point (BS), and six N at Tynemouth (DRW). Also on 16th-17th, three to four moved N at Annstead Point (GPK) and Cullercoats (CGK), and singles at Boulmer, Snab Point and Stag Rocks, while two moved N at Annstead on 18th (DF). Six were at Holy Island on 17th (IBDa/KDa), and two at Seahouses on 17th (Phi/SSc).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

On 16th, two flew N at Howick (BS) and one N at Newbiggin (GB). A party of five at New Water Haugh on 15th consisted of single adult male and female plus three juveniles (MHu). Three were at the regular breeding site on 1st (TRD/JD), two were at East Chevington on 5th (TRD), and one at West Ord on 17th (MHu).

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Eight flew N at Stag Rocks on 9th (BRS), three N at Seaton Sluice between 10th-18th (SSWT), and singles N and S at Tynemouth on 16th (DRW). Seven were at Budle Bay on 27th (CGK), three at the Tweed Estuary (MHu) and one to two at Cullernose Point, Holy Island and Stag Rocks.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

A total of 30 moved N and 13 S at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT), seven flew SW at East Cramlington LNR on 7th (STH) and one N at Whitley Bay on 17th (IJ). Peak gatherings involved 124 off Cocklawburn on 8th (MHu), 52 at the Tweed Estuary on 6th (MHu), and 11-16 at Boulmer (BS), Branton GP (IBDa/KDa), Horncliffe (JDL), Stag Rocks (DF) and Whiteadder Point (TBr). Eight were at the Blyth Estuary, three to four at Holy Island and Rothbury, and one to two at Budle Bay, Caistron and Seahouses.

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*

A drake was at Bothal Pond on 12th (TF/JFa).

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

A single bird was flushed twice from dunes at Hadston Carrs (Druridge Bay) on 24th (TF/JFa).

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

At least 40 were in the Holywell area on 20th (SPP). Two were at Alnwick Moor and a single at Big Waters NWT.

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

The only reports were eight at Simonside on 14th (IRD) and one at Longframlington Common.

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

A male and three females were at Coalcleugh on 15th (STH).

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Ten at Beal on 24th was the highest count (SR/SH), followed by nine at Haughton Strother GP on 21st (MR). Six were at Longhirst and one to four were seen at Beacon Hill (Cramlington), Lynemouth and Middle Ord (Berwick).

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

A large count of 20 at Green River Mill (Mitford) throughout the month (MNC).

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

The total passage recorded during the month at Seaton Sluice was above the average for September with 263 (125 N and 138 S) in 75 hours of observation (SSWT). 33 flew past Tynemouth (18 S and 15 N) between 0645-0900 on 17th, after a total of 25 (15 N and ten N) past there on 16th between 0645-1100 (DRW). Similarly, seawatching at Church Point (Newbiggin) on those dates recorded total passage of 24 on 17th and 12 on 16th (GB). One to nine were reported from many other coastal sites.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

A total of six records received, all of single birds. One was in partial summer plumage close inshore at Snab Point (Cresswell) on 16th (TB) and the others were at Alnmouth Bay, Cocklawburn Beach, Holy Island, Seaton Sluice and flying N past Snab Point on 13th.

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

Two was the monthly total at Seaton Sluice with singles S on 1st and 17th (SSWT). Two flew N at Cullernose Point on 17th (BS) and singles were seen at Birling Carrs (Warkworth), Emmanuel Head (Holy Island), Newbiggin and Tynemouth.

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

The only significant movement occurred on 17th when 700 flew N past Seaton Sluice in nine hours, including a single "Blue Fulmar" (SSWT). One to fourteen were reported from elsewhere, all flying N.

Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris borealis*

One was at Holy Island between 1415-1515 on 16th (MJC).

Great Shearwater *Puffinus gravis*

One N at 0722 past Howick on 16th (BS).

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

The peak count was 57 N past Cullernose Point on 17th (BS). Seaton Sluice Watch Tower reported a "low count for the seventh year running" with a monthly total of 53 N, of which 51 were between 15th-17th (SSWT). Reports from other locations reflected that main passage period in the middle of the month with 24 at Tynemouth on 16th (SPP), 23 N at Tynemouth between 0645-0900 and 13 N past Cullercoats on 17th (DRW/CGK), 12 at Holy Island on 15th and 11 N past Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) on 16th. One to ten were seen from many other sites, the only other records outside the dates of 14th-18th being a single bird past Holy Island on 1st.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

The monthly total of 142 past Seaton Sluice in 75 hours of watching was a very low count for September with the majority (137 N) passing between 15th-18th. The remaining five S were between 25th-28th (SSWT). This pattern was repeated by other observers up and down the coast with one to 34 recorded from many localities, all between the dates 14th to 17th. All were flying N apart from one lone outcast heading S past St Mary's on 16th (MSH). A single bird flew N past Hauxley on 2nd (SW). A fascinating record of a juvenile roadside victim collected outside Arcot Hall on 8th. The bird was deemed to have been dead between one to three days and sent to Dan Turner for analysis. Several others were picked up across the country during the same period, though most were rehabilitated and released (STH/GM).

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

Huge passage numbers were recorded mid-month, mirroring the Shearwater movements above. The day totals at Seaton Sluice during this period were 3,250N on 16th, rising to 5,000 N on 17th and numbers dropping off to 1,400 N on 18th (SSWT). Similar large counts came from elsewhere with 3,582 N at Annstead (Seahouses) in just over four hours on 18th (DF), 3,000 N past Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) on 16th (MJC), ca.2,500 N at Cullernose Point on 17th (TRD), 1,400 N per hour at Cocklawburn and Berwick Pier (MHu), 1,392 N in 60 mins past Stag Rocks on 16th (DF) and several other large counts from elsewhere. Numbers were lower earlier in the month, but still respectable, with 1,256 N and 132 S past Annstead on 11th (DF), 336 N and 132 S past Emmanuel Head on 4th (DF) and 147 N past Cullernose Point in 30 mins on 2nd (SW). Passage reduced dramatically after 18th to single-figure counts only.



A Gannet passes St. Mary's
Colin Bradshaw on 17th September

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

No obvious passage was noted at Seaton Sluice this month, but 59 headed N past Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) in three hours on 16th (MJC). Blyth Harbour roost held 134 on 5th (STH), 49 were in the Coquet Estuary during a WeBS count on 10th (AWG), 44 roosted at dusk on the staithes at Howdon on 14th (CB), Castle Island peaked at 40 on 4th (STH), 34 were in a high tide roost at Sandstell Point (Spittal) on 13th (MHu) and 33 were roosting at the base of "The Couple" statue at Newbiggin on 12th (LJM). One to 23 were at many other localities including single continental "*sinensis*" race birds at Arcot Pond and Hauxley NWT.

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Passage records included 17 N past Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) in one hour on the afternoon of 3rd (MJC), however only small numbers were recorded, on a regular basis, at Seaton Sluice with no more than five per day (SSWT). The Meadow Haven (Berwick) roost held 26 on 3rd (MHu). One to two were seen elsewhere,



A Shag photographed by Colin Bradshaw passing St. Mary's

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

The Budle Bay site record was broken again with 18 present on 1st (GPK). Large counts from other sites included 18 at Fenham Flats on 6th (JDL), 16 during a WeBS visit to the Tweed Estuary also on that date (MHu), 15 between Beal Point-South Low on 10th (MJC), ten at Castle Island (R Wansbeck) on 3rd (TF/JFa) and nine in the Blyth Estuary. One to eight were at many other localities, including one well inland at Dilston (Corbridge). A colour-ringed bird was at Castle Island on 10th – red J on left and yellow H on right (DM) - and one present at Beal on 30th had been ringed as a nestling at Hartlepool (DF).

Great White Egret *Ardea alba*

The Newton Pool bird from last month remained until 15th (Aha/PHa/BS).

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

The Tweed Estuary peaked at 27 during a WeBS visit on 6th (MHu). Ten were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 14th (SR) and Castle Island peaked at seven on 10th (DM). One to six were at 11 other sites.

A melanistic Grey Heron

Woodhorn Lake

Alison Watson

27th September



Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Peak counts, after a successful breeding year, were as follows:

Locality	Peak Count	Date	Observer/notes
East Chevington	42	13th	PRM
Caistron	21	10th	JD
Bothal Pond (Coney Garth)	19	4th	TF/JFa
Swallow Pond	18	1st	SPP
North Seaton (R Wansbeck) weir	16	23rd	DM
Linton Ponds	14	10th	CDH
Grindon Lough	14	26th	PRM
Low Hauxley NWT	12	27th	AJR
Holywell Pond	12	20th	SPP
Druridge Pools	11	13th	MJC

One to six birds were also at Airy Holm Reservoir, Arcot Pond, Big Waters NWT, Branton GP, Budle Bay, Castle Island, Druridge Bay CP, Exhibition Park (Newcastle), Heighley Gate Garden Centre pond (Morpeth), Holy Island Lough, Marden Quarry, Monks' House Pool (Bamburgh), St Mary's Wetland and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Passage at Seaton Sluice consisted of a single bird flying N on 9th (SSWT). Inland, the highest numbers were at Widdrington Moor Lake with seven there on 24th (TB), followed by six at East Chevington (TRD/PRM) and five at Big Waters NWT and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. The only other records were a juvenile at Swallow Pond and a single at Stag Rocks.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

Three were sighted off Seaton Sluice, all heading N, between 8th-17th (SSWT), which may include the following records of one N past St Mary's at 0830 on 16th (MSH/AC) and a single N past Church Point (Newbiggin) on 17th (GB). At Druridge Bay a juvenile showed well just offshore on 1st (TF/JFa).

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

At the end of the month two were at Cocklawburn Beach on 30th and one in Alnmouth Bay on 26th (AB/LB).

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigrocollis*

A juvenile was at East Chevington from 13th-24th (PRM/TB/TF/JFa).

Honey-buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

A juvenile was at The Snook (Holy Island) early morning on 27th before being driven off NW by an adult Peregrine *Falco peregrinus* (ADM).



The Holy Island Honey-buzzard and Peregrine together. Not a common sight in Northumberland.
Photographed by Andy Mould on 27th September.

Red Kite *Milvus Milvus*

Only one record this month with a single bird seen flying E at Ryal on 4th (ALT).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Single juvenile birds were in Cresswell/Druridge area throughout the month (MSH *et al.*) and other single birds at Prestwick Carr on 2nd (*per* PCF), Beal Point (Lindisfarne) on 10th (TF/JFa), Big Waters NWT on 14th and 25th (*per* ISD/GB) and at Holywell Pond on 30th (SPP).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Ringtails were seen at the Otterburn Ranges on 10th (TRD/JD), East Chevington on 13th (PRM) and at Goswick GC on 30th (CDB).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

A bird was observed at Haughton Strother GPs (Humshaugh) on 15th (MR).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Two birds, a male and female, were at Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin by the Sea) throughout the month (BS) and two birds were also at Derwent Reservoir on 1st (IFo), West Hartford on 11th (TB), Low Cocklaw – Letham (Berwick) on 12th (TBr), two females interacting at Ellington on 21st (TB) and at Big Waters NWT on 24th (GB). Single birds were at 16 sites during the month.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Five birds, two adults and three dependent young were at Shellacres (River Till) on 1st (MJC); four birds were at Low Cocklaw – Letham (Berwick) on 12th (TBr), Milkwell (Corbridge) on 22nd (RB/MB) and at Grindon Lough on 28th (PRM). Three birds were at Fourstones, Grindon Lough, Linton Ponds, Prestwick Carr, Warkworth Lane (Ellington) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. One or two birds were seen at 19 sites.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetuss*

Four birds were present at the same time at Derwent Reservoir on 5th (IFo), and one or two birds were there on several dates (IFo). Single birds were also seen at Beal on 4th (DF), Big Waters NWT on 7th (GB *per* AJJ) and one ate a fish at Goswick Sands on 10th (TF/JFa).

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Two birds were noted at Big Waters NWT throughout the month (GB) and two birds were at East Chevington on 13th (PRM) and at St Mary's Wetland on 25th (ASJ). Single birds were noted at Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Haughton Strother GPs (Humshaugh) and at Holy Island.

Corncrake *Crex crex*

On 27th a bird was found in a garden after a misty wet spell and was taken to Berwick Swan Trust where it was identified by Graham Bell and released the next day when it "shot off like a bullet from a gun" (DF).

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

19 birds were at Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 11th and 28th (DM/GB). 11 were at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 1st (DM) and at Haughton Strother GPs (Humshaugh) on 11th (MR). Ten birds were at Druridge Pools on 13th (PRM) and eight birds were at Linton Pond on 23rd (DM/GB). One to six birds were noted at ten sites.

Coot *Fulica atra*

A count of 119 birds came from Swallow Pond on 19th (SPP). Other high counts came from Grindon Lough with 44 birds on 26th (PRM), 35 at Linton Pond on 23rd (DM/GB), 29 at Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 13th (GB) followed by 22 at Bothal Pond on 18th (TD) and 21 at Haughton Strother GP's (Humshaugh) on 1st (MR). One to thirteen birds were noted at seven sites during the month.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

One record of a single bird seen at Cresswell Pond on 29th (AA).

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Beal Point-South Low held 120 birds on 23rd (MJC) and a roost of 100 was at St Cuthbert's Island (Holy Island) on 30th (ASJ). Earlier in the month other counts were 66 on 14th at Saltpan Rocks, Cocklawburn (MHu), 41 on 11th at Birling Carrs, Warkworth (AWG), 34 at Blyth on 22nd (PCF), 32 at Stag Rocks, Bamburgh on 17th (BRS) and 28 on 23rd at Cresswell Pond (DM). Smaller counts came from Coquet Estuary, Holy Island, Tweed Estuary and Wansbeck Estuary.

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Three large flocks were seen flying around at High Tide between The Lough and the Lonnens at Holy Island on 16th, giving an aggregate count of ca. 2,300 (MJC). Similarly large counts were reported on different dates throughout the month from the same location (MJC/ADM, IBDA/KDa, SR, ASJ, PRM). A count of ca. 1,000 was made at St Mary's on 11th (ASJ) with 450 at Annstead, Seahouses on the same day (DF). Grindon Lough held 435 on 22nd (PRM), 400 were counted at Boulmer on 7th and 17th (TRD/JD) and 375-425 were estimated at Marden Rocks, Alnmouth on 26th (AB/LB). On 12th 350 birds were counted at Beacon Point, Newbiggin (STH) and 250 were counted at Cullercoats on 15th (ASJ). Smaller counts came from Berwick (Ord Moor, Billylaw), Bothal Pond (Coney Garth), Boulmer, Cresswell (Snab Point), Cullernose Point, Ellington, Howick and Ryal (Mootlaw Quarry).



A Golden Plover at St. Mary's
18th September by Colin Bradshaw

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

The count of 200 at Ross Back Sands on 2nd (GPK) was one of the higher counts of recent years and the peak count of 110 at Budle Bay on 27th (CGK/GPK) was also significant. Another large count of 101+ was made on the Causeway at Holy Island (PRM) on 20th. Counts of two or fewer came from Boulmer, Budle Bay, Seaton Sluice Watch Tower, St Mary's and Warkworth (Birling Carrs).

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Although most records came from the coast, Grindon Lough proved to be the site with the largest counts: 200-550 were counted between 9th and 28th (PRM, MRS), while nearby Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) had 280 birds on 24th (MR) and Greenlee Lough had ca. 120 on 9th (MRS). At the coast, the biggest count came from East Chevington, where ca. 475 birds were seen on 13th (PRM). Other counts of more than 200 were from Budle Bay on 9th with 440+ (PRM), Tweed Estuary with 352 on 6th (MHu), Newcastle Business Park with 308 on 11th (DM), 250 at Cresswell Pond on 21st (MJC) and 211-225 on Monks' House Pool on 9th and 10th (PRM, BS). Smaller counts came from Blyth (Horton), Bothal Pond (Coney Garth), Boulmer, Castle Island (R Wansbeck), Charlton Mires flash (nr Alnwick), Cocklawburn, East Cramlington LNR, Ellington, Ellington, Chugdon Wood, Holy Island, Monks' House Pool, R Coquet Estuary, R Tweed (Yarrow Slake), Shield on the Wall, St Mary's and Woodhorn Flashes.

A Lapwing in the
St. Mary's sunshine

Colin Bradshaw

18th September



Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Three records, all from R Wansbeck between 3rd-5th and of one to three birds (STH, TF/JFA).

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

There was a count of 54 from Cocklawburn on 8th (MHu) and one of ca. 40 at Beal Point on 9th (PRM). Also on 9th a count of ca. 30 was made at Goswick (PRM), on 5th there were 25 at East Chevington (TRD) and in the Tweed Estuary there were 16 on 6th (MHu). Other counts came from Berwick (Little Beach), Boulmer, Cresswell (Snab Point), R Wansbeck (Castle Island), Tynemouth and Warkworth (Birling Carrs).



A Ringed Plover at St. Mary's by Alan Jack on 12th September

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

A dozen sightings submitted, all of three or fewer birds. Records came from Beal Point (Lindisfarne NNR), Budle Bay, Cullernose Point, Lindisfarne NNR (Fenham Flats), Fenham Mill, Goswick, Holy Island, Newbiggin and St Mary's.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

The largest count was of 168 in the Tweed Estuary on 6th (MHu). About 130 were at Old Hartley on 11th (MNC), Holy Island had 120+ on 20th (PRM) and there were 88 in the Blyth Estuary on 5th (STH) with 87 in the Coquet Estuary on 10th. Between 80-84 were counted at St Mary's between 11th and 19th (MSH, ASJ) and a flock of 20 were flushed by a Hen Harrier at Goswick GC on 30th (CDB). Four birds were recorded at Snab Point, Cresswell on 13th.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Last month had a count of 127 at Druridge Pools which was apparently the highest in the Bulletin database; this month had a count which was just one short of that. At Amble Braid 126 were counted on 27th (CSa). The same location had 105 birds on 10th when a WeBS was carried out (AWG). In the same record-breaking vane, Budle Bay had a count of 73 on 6th (GPK) which was a site record. Hauxley NWT had 38-64 between 11th-27th (AJR, MSH) and 33 were at East Chevington on 13th (PRM). Counts of ten to 36 came from Monks' House Pool, R Blyth Estuary, R Tweed Estuary (Yarrow Slake), R Wansbeck (Castle Island) and Warkworth Gut. Smaller counts came from Druridge Pools NR, Holy Island, Lindisfarne NNR (Beal Point) and R Wansbeck (Castle Island).

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

More than 440 birds were at Holy Island Causeway on 20th (PRM) with 300 roosting at St Cuthbert's Island on 3rd (MJC/ADM). Two hundred and fifty were seen in the Beal Pt-South Low area on 23rd (MJC) and 60 were counted at Budle Bay on the same day (MJC). Smaller counts from other sites were from Berwick (Little Beach), Boulmer, Earsdon (Beehive), Goswick, Newbiggin (Beacon Point) and R Tweed Estuary.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) drew most birds this month, with a maximum of 89 on 5th (DF) reducing to 30 by 17th (BRS). Other counts over ten were 15 at Snab Point (Cresswell on 7th (TRD/JD), 12 roosting on St Cuthbert's Island (Holy Island) on 3rd (MJC/ADM) and 12 at Boulmer on 17th (TRD). Two-five were at Birling Carrs (Warkworth), the River Coquet Estuary and Seahouses. A 'mega' record involved one at Castle Island from 3rd-5th (TF/JFa/STH) possibly the first record for this site.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Birds were concentrated in the Holy Island area with 500 in a roost at St Cuthbert's Island on 30th being the highest count (ASJ). Much smaller numbers were seen elsewhere with 15 at Fenham-le-Moor on 8th (TRD/JD) and 12 at Boulmer on 17th (TRD) being the only double-figure counts. One-four were at Beal Point, Cullernose Point, St Mary's Island, Warkworth and Whitley Bay.

A Knot at St. Mary's

Alan Jack

11th September

**Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*

Numbers increased as passage continued through the area with a large count of 43 made at Boulmer on 28th (BS). Beal Point remained attractive as last month with a maximum of 32 seen on 23rd (MJC). Also in the Lindisfarne area, 26 were in Budle Bay on 9th (CGK/GPK) and 18 in one flock at Fenham Mill on 8th noted as an 'odd' locality for this species (TRD/JD). Other counts in double figures were 18 at St Mary's Island on 21st (ASJ) and 18 juveniles at Grindon Lough on 26th and 28th (PRM). Elsewhere birds were recorded mainly on coastal pools with nine at Druridge Pools on 13th (PRM), seven at Hauxley NWT on 12th (AA) and five at Castle Island from 3rd-5th (STH/JFa/TF). Four were at Bothal Pond and three at Monks' House Pool. One-two were at Cresswell Pond, East Chevington, Haughton Strother GP, Holywell Pond, Howick, Tynemouth and Warkworth Gut.

A Ruff at St. Mary's

Alan Jack

22nd September



Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

There was a welcome small influx of mainly juveniles into the area this month with two juveniles at Boulmer on 5th (CSa) with one seen on 9th (BS). On 16th, two flew over Druridge Pools (TF/JFa) and two juveniles were at Budle Bay on 22nd (GPK). Singles were seen at Beal Point, Fenham Flats, Howick and St Mary's Island.



An (aptly named) Curlew Sandpiper
11th September
Alan Jack
St.Mary's

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

The large group in the St Mary's Island area persisted from last month with 110 on 1st increasing to 182 by 10th (ASJ). What were probably some of the same birds were at Whitley Bay north beach where a maximum count of 108 was made on 12 (MSH). The favoured haunt of East Chevington attracted 95 on 5th (TRD) and 46 were at Newbiggin on 3rd (STH). Other sightings were 26 at Cocklawburn, 25 at Holy Island Causeway and 11 at Goswick.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

The largest counts came from several locations on Lindisfarne NNR and may have involved the same group of birds. At Fenham Flats ca.1,500 were seen on 8th (TRD/JD), 700 were at Holy Island causeway on 20th (PRM), 570 at Beal Point on 9th (PRM), 320 at Budle Bay on 1st (CGK/GPK) and 80 at Goswick on 9th (PRM). The highest count at Druridge Pools was 80 on 1st (MSH) which had reduced to two by 13th (PRM). Cresswell Pond had a maximum of 60 on 5th but only five by 28th (TRD). Other significant counts were made at Boulmer with 60 on 17th (TRD), 49 flying N at Tynemouth on 16th (DRW), 18 also flying N on the same date at nearby Rockcliffe (IJ), 35 at the River Coquet Estuary on 10th (AWG) and 13 at Castle Island on 4th (STH). One to eight were at Berwick Little Beach, Grindon Lough, Monks' House Pool and Tynemouth Boating Lake (first observer record here).

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Numbers were unremarkable with 15 at Stag Rocks on 5th (DF) reducing to two by 27th (TRD/JD). The only other reports were two at Cullercoats on 17th (ASJ) and one at Newbiggin on 1st (STH).

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

As with Curlew Sandpiper, an influx of juveniles was recorded during the month with five at Goswick on 9th (PRM), four at Beal Point also on 9th (PRM) and four at Cresswell Pond on 30 (JBU). Three flying with a large group of Lapwing were seen at Monks' House Pool on 8th (JPL) and three were seen at Low Newton on 30th (GPK). Two were well inland at Haughton Strother GP on 24th (MR) and two were at Budle Bay on 28th (GPK). Singles were reported from Boulmer, Druridge Pools and St Mary's Island.

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

Last month's bird at Druridge Pools was last seen on 1st (MSH).

Grey Phalarope *Phalaropus falcarius*

A single flew N at St Mary's Island at 17:50 on 15th (AC).

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Passage was virtually over by mid-month with a flock of five S at Seaton Sluice on 9th being notable (SSWT). Big Waters held two on 3rd (GB) and singles were seen at Hauxley NWT on 5th and at Castle Island from 3rd-19th.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Whittle Dene Reservoirs had three on 2nd reducing to a single by 22nd (SR/AA/MR). Two were at Branton GP on 1st and Lilburn Burn on 24th (IBDa/KDa/DF). Singles were seen at Arcot Pond, Backworth, Castle Island, Charlton Mires (north of Alnwick), Haughton Strother GP, Hedgeley GP, Holy Island and Longhirst Flash.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

Last month's long-staying adult was seen until 24th and was joined by a juvenile from 3rd-22nd (GPK/JPL/TRD *et al.*). Two were also seen at Seahouses on 1st (JDL). A single was at Bothal Pond from 1st-24th (TD/TB) and one was seen flying E over the Snook (Holy Island) on 28th (MJC).

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

The concentration at Beal Point (Lindisfarne NNR) persisted throughout the month with a maximum of 12 noted on 9th (PRM), reducing to eight by 30th (ASJ/SR/AH *et al.*). In other locations on Lindisfarne NNR, seven were at Fenham Flats on 10th (DGB), five at Budle Bay on 9th (CGK/GPK) five at Holy Island Causeway on 20th (PRM) and two at The Snook on 28th (MJC). The maximum noted at Bothal Pond was four on 9th (TF/JFa) and two were at both Castle Island on 3rd (TF/JFa) and Cresswell Pond on 25th (TB). Singles were at Big Waters, Branton GP, Cullernose Point, Goswick, Hauxley NWT, the River Tweed Estuary, Shiremoor, West Hartford, West Ord (Berwick) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.



A Greenshank at Holy Island by Mike Carr on 10th September

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Numbers at Lindisfarne NNR increased from last month with 480 at Beal Point on 9th (PRM), 340 at Holy Island Causeway on 20th (PRM), 235 at Budle Bay on 11th (CGK/GPK) and 252 at the Rocket Fields (Holy Island) on 20th (PRM). Other three figure counts were made at the River Tweed Estuary with 222 on 6th (MHu), 167 at Howdon also on 6th (CB) and 158 at the River Blyth Estuary on 13th (LJM). Castle Island attracted 93 on 4th (STH), 81 were counted at the River Coquet Estuary on 10th (AWG) and 61 were at Cresswell Pond on 13th (PRM). One-20 were at Bothal Pond, Cocklawburn Pond, Druridge Pools and Grindon Lough.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Immigration was suggested by eight flying in off the sea at St Mary's Island on 27th (MSH). Grindon Lough was the favoured site with 18 seen on 22nd (PRM). Haughton Strother GP held 12 on 29th (MR) and Cresswell had seven on 30th (GB). Eight were at Beal Point, six at Castle Island and Bothal Pond, four at Big Waters, Howdon, and Snab Point (Cresswell). Two were at each of Boulmer, Druridge Pools and East Chevington.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*

The sole report was of a single flying E over Holywell Pond on 30th (SPP).

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

All passage was concentrated into the period 11th-18th. The first was a pale-phase adult N at Annstead on 11th (DF). This was followed by two N at Newbiggin on 14th (JBU/DD/ADM), an adult and juvenile N at Holy Island on 15th (SR), and a adult N and a sub-adult S at Tynemouth on 16th (DRW). On 17th, two flew N at Seaton Sluice (SSWT) and singles flew N at Boulmer, Holy Island, Newbiggin, Seahouses, St Mary's Island and Tynemouth. The final record was a juvenile flying N at Annstead on 18th.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was 62 N and 17 S in 75 hours. This was noted as another very poor September total (SSWT). On 13th four flew N and 1 S at Cresswell and three were at Annstead. The next day 16 flew N at Newbiggin (JBU/DD/ADM). Eight flew N at Holy Island on 15th (SR) and on 16th, nine flew N at Tynemouth and eight mostly N at Newbiggin. Passage N on 17th was noted at several coastal locations with 31 at Cullercoats (CGK), 15 at Newbiggin (GB), 12 at Tynemouth (DRW), 11 at Holy Island (IBDa/KDa), seven at Cresswell, six at Boulmer, five at Cullernose Point and three at St Aidan's Dunes (Seahouses). The main passage was over by 18th when 11 were seen at Annstead (Seahouses) (DF). Elsewhere, one-two were at St Cuthbert's Island (Holy Island), Spittal Bay (Berwick) and Stag Rocks.

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*

The first sightings this month involved two adults and a juvenile flying N together at Snab Point (Cresswell) on 13th (PRM). Juveniles flew N and S at Tynemouth and a juvenile was at Holy Island on 15th (SR/DRW/SPP). Singles flew N at Annstead on 17th (Phi/SSc) and St Mary's Island on 18th (AC). No more were noted until a much admired and photographed juvenile resided at Goswick Golf Course from 26th-30th (CB/TRD/JD *et al.*).



The Goswick Long-tailed Skua

Above: avoiding a golfer by Colin

Bradshaw and right: by Janet Dean





The Goswick Long-tailed Skua.

Left: by Alan Jack

and below: by Tim Dean



Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

The monthly totals at Seaton Sluice were 54N and 7S (SSWT). The main period of passage was during mid-month when three flew N at Newbiggin on 14th (JBU/DD/AMc). On 15th seven flew N at Tynemouth (SPP), four at Holy Island and three S at Cheswick. On 16th, 21 flew N at Tynemouth (DRW), seven mainly N at Newbiggin and five at St Mary's Island. The largest counts on 17th were 32 N at Cullercoats (CGK), 13 N at Newbiggin (ASH), eight N at Cresswell in 90 minutes and six were seen at Holy Island. The next day 13 flew N at Tynemouth (DRW). Elsewhere during the month, four flew S at Hauxley, three N at Seahouses, two N at Holy Island and St Aidan's Dunes (Seahouses) and singles were at Cullernose Point and Stag Rocks.

Auk *sp*

At Seaton Sluice the only significant movement was 600N in two hours on 24th (SSWT), at Hauxley 100 moved N on 23rd (RB/MB) and 20 moved S in two hours at Snab Point on 13th (PRM). The great majority of all these sightings comprised the two larger auk species.

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

From 15th-21st, 23 (14N. 9S) passed at Seaton Sluice (SSWT) and 10 flew N at Cullercoats on 17th (CGK).

Black Guillemot *Cephus grylle*

A rare sighting at Tynemouth was one feeding offshore in King Edward's Bay on 19th (SPP).

Razorbill *Alca torda*

A single at Goswick on 26th was the only record (TRD).

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

Four were on the sea at Snab Point, Cresswell on 13th (PRM) and elsewhere, one to two were seen at five localities between Goswick and Warkworth, Birling Carrs (TRD/JD/AWG).

Tern *sp*

The tern roost at Budle Point held 450 on 10th falling to 240 on 24th (CGKGPK).

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

Four were in the Budle Point roost until 29th, regularly commuting to Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) to feed (CGK) and at the latter site single juveniles were noted on three dates from 12th-24th (TRD/DF). Single juveniles were also noted at Annstead, Boulmer, Goswick and Snab Point on 10th-11th (AA/DF/BS/TF/JFa) and a single was offshore at Newbiggin on 1st (STH).

White-winged Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*

An adult was in the tern roost at Budle Point until 30th (CGK/GPK) and possibly the same individual was first seen distantly moving N at Whitley Bay and Cullercoats on 17th (CGK/IJ). The Budle Point bird commuted regularly to feed at Stag Rocks, (Bamburgh) where it was seen on 24th and 27th (TRD/JD).

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

The largest passage movements recorded at Seaton Sluice totalled 144N and 91S from 9th-11th (SSWT). Numerous sightings came throughout the month with 10-30 at Bamburgh, Boulmer, Budle Point, Cocklawburn, Cheswick Sands, Goswick, Holy Island, the River Tweed Estuary, Seahouses and Tynemouth (MHu/TRD/JD/ASJ/PRM/CH/DRW/PHi/SSc) and one to nine at 20 other localities between Beal Point in the north and Whitley Bay (MJC/TRD/JD/MHu *et al.*).

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

From the watch tower at Seaton Sluice a total of 204 (142N, 62S) passed from 1st-18th with very few thereafter (SSWT). The roost at Budle Point still contained 100+ on 30th (ASJ) and 15-40 were at Bamburgh, Newbiggin, Seahouses and Snab Point from 9th-17th (BRS/STH/PM/PHi/SSc). Elsewhere, one to seven were at five other sites.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

The peak monthly count in the Budle Point roost was 12 adults and four juveniles on 24th (CGK/GPK) with two in the roost at Beacon Point (Newbiggin) on 1st (AA), one juvenile at St Mary's on 2nd (SPP) and one at Bamburgh on 8th (AA).

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

At least 200 were in the roost or feeding offshore at Budle Point on 30th (ASJ) and 30+ were at Bamburgh on 9th (BRS). Up to five were at Bamburgh, Holy Island and Seahouses.

Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini*

On 15th, a juvenile flew N at St Mary's Island (AC) and on the 17th possibly the same individual flew N at Snab Point, Cresswell (TF/JFa), Cullernose Point (BS) and Seahouses (PHi/SSc).

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Passage movements included 600 per hour on 15th past Berwick Pier (MHu), 370 on 13th during a two-hour early morning sea watch at Snab Point (Cresswell) (PRM) and at Holy Island, 223 flew N in three hours early afternoon on 16th (MJC). The River Tweed Estuary held 88 during a WeBS on 6th (MHu) with 60 counted near Seahouses on 17th (PHi/SSc). The nesting site at the Baltic Arts Centre still held 12 on the nesting ledges on 1st (DM) but elsewhere records were sparse with only one to four at five localities.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Three-figure counts of 220-290 came from Beal Point, Castle Island, Howdon and the River Tweed Estuary during the first half of the month (DM/STH/CB/MHu/MJC) with 142 at Linton Ponds on 23rd (DM). Gatherings of 15-70 were recorded at ten sites elsewhere mainly in the south east but also at Grindon Lough (PRM).

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Three juveniles passed N at Seaton Sluice on 17th (SSWT) and a single bird was regularly in the Budle Point tern roost throughout (CGK/GPK). Single birds, either adult or immature, were recorded elsewhere on five dates from 11th-22nd at Bamburgh, Cheswick, Cresswell and Seahouses (DF/GPK/PRM)

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

The count at the favoured Newbiggin beach rose to 68 on 28th from 54 on 9th (STH) and on 14th 43 adults and 15 2nd-winters were in Newbiggin Bay (CH). On various dates, one to three were at Cresswell Pond & Snab Point, Ellington, Linton Ponds, Seaton Sluice, Swallow Pond and Tynemouth including one at Whittle Dene Reservoirs. In the north, up to four were in Budle Bay throughout the month (CGK/GPK/TF/JFa) and at Elwick on 10th (SR/AH) with one to two at Bamburgh, Beal and Holy Island,

Common Gull *Larus canus*

At Haughton Strother GP on 27th, 1,000 were present (MR) and other large counts were 650 at Mootlaw Quarry (ALT), 360 on the River Tweed at the A1 border (TBr), 300 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs (SR) and 103 in the River Tweed Estuary (MHu).

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

An impressive 116 were at Branton GP on 20th (IBDa/KDa) but elsewhere lower counts were a maximum of five in the Tweed Estuary and at Castle Island (DM/STH) with one to three at Arcot Pond, Cramlington, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Bay, Ellington, Grindon Lough, Holy Island, Jesmond Dene, Linton Ponds, QEII CP Lake and the River Tweed Estuary.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argenteus*

The peak monthly count in Budle Bay was 2,000+ on 10th (CGK), 800+ were counted there on 19th (MSH) and 574 were found during a WeBS survey in the Tweed Estuary on 6th (MHu). Beal Point and a ploughed field at Letham Shanks (Berwick) held 150, with 64 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs, 48 at Castle Island, 38 at the QEII CP Lake and one to 12 at six other localities,

***Caspian Gull** *Larus cachinnans*

A single record of the ringed adult at Warkworth Pier on 7th (Csa).

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinund*

At Seaton Sluice 180 moved S in three hours on 25th (SSWT) and 76 were at Warkworth Gut on 23rd (DM/GB). Elsewhere, 20-30 were at Beal Point (MJC), Berwick (Spittal), Castle Island (DM/GB), the Tweed Estuary (MHu) and one to ten at seven other localities.

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

A daytime roost at New Bridge (Berwick) held 880 on 13th (CH), 60 at Stakeford Railway on 10th (DM/STH) and 12 at Southfield Green (Cramlington) on the same date.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

A pre-roost gathering of 44 at Howdon on 14th (CB), 12 at Cresswell Pond on 8th (MJC) with two to three regularly at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) and six other locations.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Just one report of six at Jesmond Dene on 3rd (MJCo).

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

At Ellington 22 on 24th (TB), up to 12 at Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin) all month (BS) and five at Whittle Dene on 17th.

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

A juvenile flew S over St Cuthbert's Island (Holy Island) on 26th (MJC).

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

All reports were of singles at Cresswell on 5th and 19th, Shilbottle on 10th, Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 16th and Caistron on 20th. One roadside casualty at East Newbiggin (Norham) on 8th (TBr).



A Barn Owl at Cresswell returns from a hunt. Mike Carr on 23rd September

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

The observer's first record in 47 years was one calling at Hexham evoking response from a Tawny Owl (AJR).

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Two males and a female called at Prestwick Carr on 21st (PCF), two or more throughout the month in the observer's garden at Fulbeck (Morpeth) (TD) and two regularly calling at Warren Mill (GPK), Howick (JR) and Prestwick Carr on 16th. Singles were at Dinnington on 10th, Chollerford on 13th, Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 19th, Ealingham Rigg (Bellingham) on 20th and Ellington on 26th.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Seen at dusk on several dates from 9th at Boulmer (BS), hunting at Prestwick Carr on 22nd (*per* PCF), at Old Hartley on 25th (MJC) and in-off at St Mary's Island on the same date (AC).

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

Single heard at wild flower meadow Swallow Pond on 24th (SPP).

Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

One was in a garden at Heddon on the Wall at 9am on 8th (ABr) and one was at St Mary's Wetland on 27th (ASJ *et al.*).

Two sleepy Nightjars

Right: in a Heddon garden by Aiden Bruce on 8th September

Below: at St. Mary's on 27th September

by Alan Jack



Swift (*Apus apus*)

Five at West Hartford on 10th the peak count (STH/DM) with two at Amble on 7th (BS), Castle Island on 10th (STH/DM) and Ellington on 12th (TB). Singles were reported from nine locations between 8th and 13th with one at Beadnell on 19th, Hexham on 25th and the last at Newbiggin on 29th (AC).

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Well reported with two or more at Horncliffe and Budle Bay during the month (JDL/CGK/GPK), two at Shellacres (R.Till) on 1st (MJC), Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 2nd (SR), Haughton Strother GP on 17th (MR), Beal Point-South Low on 23rd (MJC) and Jesmond Dene on 24th (MJCo). Singles were seen at all of the above plus 11 coastal and 14 inland locations.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

One calling at Swallowship Wood (Corbridge) on 6th (AJR) and Prestwick Carr on 28th (PCF).

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Two were at Haughton Castle on 3rd (SW) and Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 18th (MNC). All other reports singles from Valley Park (Cramlington) regularly and seven other widespread locations.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Six birds were noted at Old Hartley on 11th (MNC) and two to four were seen on Holy Island throughout the month (ADM *et al.*). Three birds were at St Mary's Island on 28th (ASJ) and two birds were at Ellington on 21st (TB), Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 27th (TB) and at West Hartford on 29th (TB). Single birds were seen at 19 sites.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

A single bird was seen on Holy Island on several dates (SR/MJC). Other single birds were at Boulmer throughout the month (BS), Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin by the Sea) on 24th (BSt) and a bird had a dart at the juvenile Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus* at Goswick GC on 26th (CB).



A Merlin at Goswick by Colin Bradshaw on 17th September

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

On 16th a juvenile was at The Snook (Holy Island) (MJC) and a juvenile was at Druridge Pools on 21st (ASH/AN) and another juvenile was at Grindon Lough on 26th (PRM).

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Two birds were seen in Budle Bay throughout the month (GPK *et al.*); two were at Holburn Moss on 8th (EHa) and at Beal Point (Lindisfarne) on 10th (TF/JFa). Single birds were at 11 sites including an adult which stooped at a juvenile Honey-buzzard *Pernis apivorus* three times before driving it off at Holy Island on 27th (ADM).

Ring-necked Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

Three flew over Byker Metro station at dusk on 3rd (SPP) with two at Nuns Moor (Newcastle) on 8th, over NE at Regent Centre (Gosforth) on 9th and High E/SE at Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 27th (GB).

Magpie *Pica pica*

On 7th 11 were at Newbiggin Water Treatment Plant (BS), three at Jesmond Dene on 11th (MJCo) and a single on Holy Island from 23rd to 26th being uncommon at this location (MJC/ADM).

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Well reported in limited numbers with three at Windmill Lane (Cramlington) on 3rd (LJM), Coast Road (Newcastle) on 18th and Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 30th (TB). Two were at Green River Mill (Mitford) on 8th, Linton Ponds on 10th, Ellington on 17th, Chirdon Burn on 24th and Haughton Castle on 26th with singles at 16 other widespread localities.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

On a 3km walk about 100 were found at Low Cocklaw-Betham (Berwick) on 12th (TBr), six went to roost in roundabout light at Southfield Green (Cramlington) on 18th (DM) and five at Paddy Freeman's Lake (Newcastle) on 11th (MJCo). Migration noted at Holy Island on 20th with one west (PRM).

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Movement of 25 east over Holy Island 25 on 28th and 16 on 24th with 11 West on 17th (MJC/ADM). 14 flew south at Seaton Sluice between 10th and 27th and four at Jesmond Dene on 17th. An adult with full white wing bars was with other corvids at Beal salt marsh on 25th (IK).

Raven *Corvus corax*

Three flew E at Meadow Cottage (Allenheads) on 15th (STH), two at Hulne Park on 3rd (BS) and one at Grindon Lough on 26th (PRM).

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Light passage with ten on Holy Island on 10th rising to 19 on 16th with five to seven remaining till 29th (MJC/ADM), seven were at Cresswell Pond on 19th with more than six at Bamburgh on 17th and 26th. Three were at Druridge Pools, Beal Point and Valley Park (Cramlington) with one to two at 11 other locations.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

On 1st 40 were at Haughton Strother GP (MR), 22 between Low Cocklaw and Cantry's Brig (Berwick) on 11th (TBr), more than ten at Bamburgh on 25th (BRS) and two at Jesmond Dene on 3rd. 16 were trapped and ringed at Bamburgh during the month.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Twelve found between Low Cocklaw and Cantry's Brig (Berwick) on 11th (TBr), ten at Haughton Strother GP on 1st (MR), six+ at Bamburgh on 25th and three in Jesmond Dene on 24th.

A Great Tit

Howdon

17th September

Colin Bradshaw

**Coal Tit** *Periparus ater*

Feeders at Howdon attracted four on 3rd (CB), two at Cambois Railway line on 2nd and one at Jesmond Dene on 3rd.

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

Three at Craster on 19th (BS), two at Derwent Reservoir on 1st, Brierdene (Whitley Bay) on 20th and one to two at Big Waters all month. Unusually one was at Budle Point till 27th with singles at Arcot Pond, Branton GP, Cresswell Pond, Ellington and Longhaughton Quarry.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

One seen from the hide at Wallington on 25th (AJN) was the only report.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Movement south noted in most reports with 50 per hour at Budle Bay on 26th (CGK), 156S at Holy Island on 28th, 92S at Beal Point-South Low on 23rd (MJC), 50 in fields at St Mary's Island on 22nd with 30+S on 25th (ASJ), 30 at Cresswell Pond on 18th and 20th, 30S at Goswick GC and Snook (Holy Island) on 30th. One to 23 were at nine other locations the latest being 100 in fields north of Sandy Bay Caravan Park (Newbiggin), eight S at Ellington and one at Southfield Green (Cramlington) all on 30th (DM/GB/LAR/JAR).

hirundine sp

Around 5,600 noted moving S over sea on morning of 13th at Spittal Bay (Berwick) (MHu).

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Thirty at Creswell Pond on 8th (MJC), 25 remaining from breeding colony of ca. 90 nests at A69 bridge over the Tyne at Hexham on 4th (AJR), 9S at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 10th (TB), seven at East Chevington on 13th (PRM), six over pond at Cocklawburn on 8th and four at Druridge Pools on 13th. One to two were at six other locations, the latest at Haughton Strother GP on 15th where there were at least three occupied nests on 1st (MR).

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Very well reported as migration continued with 500 S at Cresswell Pond on 19th, 250 at Holy Island on 3rd (MJC/ADM), 150 at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 10th and Warkworth Lane (Ellington) on 11th (TB), 120 at Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin) on 7th (BS) and 100 at Prestwick Carr on 2nd (PCF). 20-87 were noted at the above and 12 other widespread localities and up to ten at eleven more till month end with 32 S at Backworth and five S at Howick on 30th (ASJ/JAR). On Holy Island 30 monitored nests produced at least 109 chicks with 20 other pairs producing young giving an island total of 175-180 young fledged with pairs having lost young during bad weather in June relaying and raising second broods (IK).

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

On 12th 160 gathered on cliff faces and shrubs at Berwick Little Beach (MHu), 150+ at arriving at Druridge Pools NR in one large gathering mid-morning of 6th (MSH), 80 at Beal on 3rd (ADM), 75S at Warkworth Lane (Ellington) on 11th (MJC), 64 at East Ord (Berwick) on 12th (MHu) with 50 at Haughton Strother GP on 10th and Cresswell Pond on 19th. One to 46 were at the above and 13 other widespread localities again recorded until month end with one at St Mary's Island on 30th (ASJ).

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

The largest 'tribe' was of 22 at Gosforth Garden Village on 9th (MJC). There were further gatherings of 15 at Prestwick Carr on 16th, 14 at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 24th, 12 at Arcot Lane on 2nd, ten at Cramlington (Barns Park) on 10th and at Wark (North Tyne) on 25th and nine at Cramlington (Valley Park) on 16th, while three to four were noted at Beanley Plantation, Horton and Jesmond Dene.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

The first arrival was at Budle Point on 19th, followed by singles at Holy Island on 20th and Newton tin church on 22nd. A much larger influx occurred from 25th, when at least four were at Craster and three at St Mary's Island, with six at the latter locality on 26th, two of which remained to the month end (ASJ). As might be expected, Holy Island figured prominently during this period with counts of up to six on 26th, nine on 27th, a peak of 22 on 28th and 13 on 29th (MJC/RA/CGK/ADM). Elsewhere, two were noted at Bamburgh on 26th, Boulmer from 26th-28th, Tynemouth between 26th and 30th and Budle Point on 27th, with singles also reported from Goswick from 26th-27th, Cresswell Pond and Druridge Pools on 28th, Craster on 29th and Bamburgh and Newbiggin on 30th.

Yellow-browed Warblers on Holy Island
in September

Right: by Mike Carr on 29th and below:
by John Littleton on 26th



Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Peak counts included, 16 between Low Cocklaw-Canty's Brig (Berwick) on 11th (TBr), 15+ at Budle Point on 26th, 11-13 at Cresswell Pond on 8th and 19th respectively, nine at Holy Island on 29th, eight+ at Druridge Pools on 13th, six at Bamburgh on 13th and well inland six with a tit flock at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 20th. Four to five were also reported from Arcot Pond on 16th and 29th, Brierdene on 20th, Cambois on 2nd, Castle Island on 19th, Prestwick Carr on 24th, St Mary's Island on 27th and Warkworth Lane on 11th. Elsewhere one to three were reported from a further 35 widespread localities.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Eight were at Longhorsley Common and four at Cresswell Pond on 8th (AB/LB/MJC). Three were noted at Holy Island on 3rd and 17th, with singles there on 16th, 26th and 28th and three were also at Arcot Pond on 10th. In addition, two were reported from Budle Point on 26th, Ellington on 30th and Low Cocklaw-Canty's Brig (Berwick) on 11th, while singles were at Bamburgh on 9th, Cramlington (Northburn) on 10th, Cresswell Pond on 18th, Druridge Pools on 8th, Gosforth on 20th and Tynemouth on 28th.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

The peak day count from Holy Island was three on 28th (MJC) with singles there on 3rd, 24th, 26th and 29th. Three were also at Priors Park on 28th (CB), while two+ were noted at Bamburgh on 4th and two at Craster on 29th. Singles were reported from Bamburgh on 9th, Druridge Pools on 8th and 13th, East Ord on 3rd, Rothbury on 19th and Sandy Bay (Newbiggin) on 30th.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Two were at Holy Island on 29th (BS). At Bamburgh a bird trapped and ringed on 17th was re-trapped on 26th, having increased its weight from 18 grams to 25.3 grams; another was trapped here on 19th (BRS). Singles were also noted at Waren Mill on 16th, Budle Point on 26th and Old Hartley and St Mary's Island on 28th.

Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria*

A single was at Newbiggin (ash lagoon bank) on 30th (GB).

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

One at Holy Island on 16th increased to three on 17th; two were noted on the island on 20th, 24th and 28th with a peak of four on 29th (BS). At St Mary's Island singles were noted on 18th and 26th-28th.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Three were at Hadston Links on 1st, while elsewhere during the month singles were noted at Bamburgh, Cocklawburn, Prestwick Carr and West Hartford. The final record was from a Corbridge garden on 26th.

Pallas's Grasshopper / Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella certhiola* / *Locustella naevia*

A bird near The Snook car park (Holy Island) on 26th could not be positively identified to species (STH/MJC/ADM/MWi).

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Singles were at Arcot Pond on 2nd, Cresswell Pond on 8th, West Hartford on 10th and at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 14th.

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Five (including at least four 1st-winters) were at Cresswell Pond on 8th (MJC) and a single at Holy Island (Lough) on 29th.

A Reed Warbler

Holy Island

8th September

Mike Carr



Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Up to five were noted in Jesmond Dene (three sites), four at Wallington and two at Chugdon Wood (Ellington), Humshaugh and Longhirst. Singles were also reported from Arcot Hall GC, Bywell, Northumberland Park (North Shields), Rothbury and Wark (North Tyne).

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Singles were reported from Chirdon Burn (North Tyne), Grindon Lough, Haughton Castle, Linton Ponds NR, Priors Park (Tynemouth-the observer's first record here), Rothbury, and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

An impressive 33 were counted from Low Cocklaw-Canty's Brig (Berwick) on 11th (TBr). Eight were Holy Island on 27th and three at Jesmond Dene on 24th.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

The largest gathering was 650 at Grindon Lough on 28th (PRM). Elsewhere, 300 were gathered at St Mary's Island on 20th and 250 flew W (at dawn) at Holy Island on 20th; the peak count from Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin) was 240 on 3rd, declining to 70 by month end. The only other reports were 55 at Prestwick Carr on 2nd, 11 S at Sandy Bay (Newbiggin) on 30th and one at Jesmond Dene.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Singles were noted at Bywell, Castron, Howick Hall, Jesmond Dene and Shellacres (River Till).

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

The peak count from Holy Island was six on 24th (MJC/ADM), with one to two there on 26th and 28th. Another was at Boulmer on 26th.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Some modest arrivals at Holy Island produced counts of 26-28 from 16th-17th, 23 on 23rd, 32 on 24th, a peak of 50+ on 28th (CGK/GPK/PS) and 35 on 29th. Elsewhere, 15 were reported from Low Cocklaw-Canty's Brig (Berwick) on 11th and two were at Jesmond Dene on 24th.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

The first were two early arrivals at Lynemouth on 12th (TB). One at Waren Mill on 25th was followed by a light influx at Holy Island with one on 27th, five on 28th (CGK/GPK/PS) and two on 29th.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Day counts from Holy Island increased from mid-month, with four on 20th, nine on 26th, 25 on 24th, 91 on 28th and a peak of 95 on 29th (MJC/ADM/PRM). Elsewhere six+ were noted at Bamburgh and four at Sandy Bay (Newbiggin) on 30th.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

A light influx occurred from 24th, when 13 were on Holy Island, with further counts here of two to 12 from 26th to 29th. A larger flock of 50 was at Berwick on 25th (RNa), while ten flew W at Blyth on 26th. Two were well inland at Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) on 25th and singles at St Mary's Island on 27th and at Ellington on 30th.



A Song Thrush on Holy Island by Mike Carr on 17th September

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

The largest gathering was 25 at Sinderhope Gate (East Allen) on 15th (STH). A flock of 18 was at Horton (Blyth) on 22nd, 12 were at Haughton Castle on 3rd, two at Wark (North Tyne) on 11th and a single at Jesmond Dene on 17th.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

On Holy Island birds were noted on 3rd, 20th, 26th and 28th (two). Elsewhere singles were reported from Bamburgh on 9th and Big Waters on 5th.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

A conspicuous species at Holy Island from mid-month, with a peak of 71 by 28th (MJC); other notable counts included 61 on 29th, 47 on 26th, 28 on 17th and 17-25 on four dates from 10th-24th. A total of 31 were counted between Low Cocklaw-Canty's Brig (Berwick) on 11th and ten were trapped and ringed at Bamburgh during the month. The only other reports were five at Jesmond Dene on 17th and one at Brown's Bay on 9th.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Singles were at Holy Island on 16th-17th and 26th, St Mary's Island on 25th and at Budle Point on 27th.



A Pied Flycatcher shows the way on Holy Island
Mike Carr on 17th September

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

On Holy Island an adult male was on the Straight Lonnen on 24th (MJC), with it or another at the excavations on 27th (ADM); an un-aged bird was at Holy Island on 28th (SR), when another was at Tynemouth Pier (DRW).

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

The peak count from Holy Island was 12 on 28th (MJC/RA/CGK), with two to eight there on three other dates from 26th-29th. Two were at St Mary's Island on 25th (ASJ) and a single at Swallow Pond on 9th (SPP).

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

The peak count from Holy Island was 16 on 28th (MJC/RA/CGK), with 12 there on 27th, four on 29th and one on 26th. Four at Great Ryle (Whittingham) included a family party of three, three (including a juvenile) were at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) to 4th and two were at Druridge Pools on 25th.

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Peak counts for the month were six at Holy Island on 26th (including a family party of four-STH/ADM), five at North Blyth (AJR), four (two pairs) at Howick, three (family party) at Beanley Plantation, three (including a juvenile) at Boulmer and three's at Cocklawburn, Prestwick Carr and St Mary's Island. Elsewhere, two were at Cresswell Pond and at Mootlaw Quarry (Ryal) and singles at East Chevington, Low Newton and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Wheatear *Oenanthe Oenanthe*

Small numbers at Holy Island peaked at six on 9th (IK). Three were at Budle Bay to 25th and up to two at Newbiggin on several dates; two were at Boulmer from 4th-7th and two at Fenham Flats on 6th. Elsewhere, singles were noted at Cocklawburn on 9th, Goswick on 9th and 30th, Prestwick Carr on 24th, St Mary's Island on 16th and at Whitley Bay on 12th.



A Wheatear on Holy Island by Alan Jack on 9th September

Dunnoek *Prunella modularis*

Six were observed all month in a Cramlington garden and six plus at Bamburgh on 9th and small numbers moving through the latter site during the month, with 13 trapped and ringed(LJM/BRS).

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

A 3km walk between Low Cocklaw and Letham(Berwick) on 12th revealed around 125 birds(TBr). 80 were at Holy Island on 10th and at Whittle Dene on 12th(MJC/SR). 65 to 70 were at Cullercoats all month(ASJ). Up to 60 attended garden feeders at Spittal (Newbiggin) during the month (RS). 35 were seen at Dinnington on 10th (PCF). At Goswick G.C. 36 plus on 26th (CB/JGS). On 2nd 16 counted in a Gosforth garden was a record number (MJC).



A house Sparrow at Newton by Colin Bradshaw on 17th September

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

In the final week of the month, S passage noted at the coast at St Mary's with small flocks of 16, nine, five and three observed. This peaked on 30th with 44 seen (ASJ). At Tynemouth that morning, 50 were noted on the move S, and at Newbiggin three flocks totalling 32 birds were observed (DRW/GB/LAR/DM). 28 were at Haughton Strother on 3rd (MR). One to 12 were observed at a further ten locations including six regularly at garden feeders at Dinnington.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava flavissima*

The 8th at Cresswell Pond saw three flying S, with a further three at the pond. Two were there on 13th (MJC/PRM). Four remained at Whittle Dene on 5th (SR). Three were at Low Newton on 10th (AHa/PHa). Southbound migration was noted during the first two weeks, with single birds watched at Gosforth Garden Village, Holy Island, Fenham Flats and on two dates at St. Mary's (MJC/TFa/JFa/ASJ/MSH). Singles also seen at Straight Lonnen, Low Newton, Hexham and near Charlton Mires up to 26th.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

13 birds at Whittle Dene on 2nd was a good count, with seven remaining on 14th (SR/MR). Four were at Bamburgh on 19th, at Jesmond Dene on 24th and at Wark the following day (BRS/MJCo/PRM). One to two were noted at a further 23 widespread sites during the month.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrelli*

Some impressive gatherings this month, with 60 plus, pre-roost at Bothal pond on 13th (PRM). 53 fed on Whitley Bay Mini - Golf Course on 20th, increasing to 57 (including many juveniles) the following day (MSH/AC/ASJ). A minimum of 40 gathered, also to roost at Hexham Market Place on 25th (AJH). 34 fed at Castle Island on 4th (STH). 29 were at Whittledene on 3rd (SR). 24 also fed at Longhorsley on 8th (AB/LB). 18 moved off S from Holy Island Harbour on 24th (IK). Three to 14 noted during the month at a further 12 locations, including birds heading south at several sites.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba alba*

Two were at Beacon Point(Newbiggin) on 12th and a single was seen at Castle Island on 10th (DM/STH).

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Two birds were still in breeding territory on the late date of 8th at Harthope Valley (AA). Two migrants were noted at Holy Island on 10th (MJC).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Many birds were observed migrating S this month by dedicated observers with examples being 458 counted at East Cramlington LNR in two hours twenty minutes, early on 7th with 130 the following day and 299 on 30th (STH). Over 350 were counted during the month over Marden Estate (Cullercoats), with birds passing every day (ASJ). 300 noted passing at Warkworth Lane on 11th and 70 the next day (MJC). A minimum total of 300 plus also past south at St. Mary's during the month, with 50 on 6th and 44 on 7th (ASJ). At Holy Island counts were as follows; 108 flew south on 1st, 51 on 3rd, 152 on 10th, 26 on 13th, 289 on 17th, 89 on 23rd and 307 on 28th (MJC/ADM). 60 also seen leaving the Harbour area on 24th and 50 on 20th (IK/PRM). 196 flew south at Cresswell on 8th and 150 on 18th. 160 at Tynemouth on 30th (MJC/DRW). At Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin), daily counts were as follows; 7th to 10th 60 birds passed south over one hour each day: 11th to 13th 80 over one hour: 20th 80: 21st 60 and 30th 70 birds (RS). Elsewhere, 15 to 37 were noted at a further ten sites.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Few were reported this month, with three at St. Mary's and two at Cullercoats Bay and two at Tynemouth Pier on 23rd (ASJ). One was at Boulmer on 7th(TRD/JD).

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Five on 24th, four on 26th and 20 on 29th were at Holy Island (MJC/ADM). Two birds arrived in off the sea at Budle Point on 24th (CGK/GPK). One flew S at Whitley Bay Cemetery on 25th and two flew over Marden Estate on 29th (ASJ). Singles were at Tynemouth on 26th and 30th (SPP/DRW).

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

100 were seen at Haughton Strother on 10th (MR). 36 were noted flying S at Tynemouth on 30th (DRW). 23 were at Low Cocklaw (Berwick) on 11th (Tbr). 11 headed S on 30th at East Cramlington LNR. One to four were at four other sites.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

One was seen at Hexham on 30th (MR).

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Seven found at Low Cocklaw on 11th and five at Prestwick Carr on 7th (TBr/PCF). Three males and a female attended feeders in a Rothbury garden all month (TRD/JD). Four were also at Warkworth Lane and Cresswell Pond during the month (MJC). One to two were noted at nine further sites.

Greenfinch *Coelebs coelebs*

16 at Whittle Dene on 2nd and 14 at St. Mary's on 21st were the month's largest counts (SR/ASJ). Up to nine were at Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin) during the month (RS). Eight were on feeders in a Corbridge garden on 21st (MR). Two to five were at three other sites.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Some large gatherings this month, with feeding flocks of 250 to 300 watched at St Mary's/Old Hartley and Whittle Dene on several dates (ASJ/MNC/SR). 200 were at Boulmer on 4th (JAR). 100 were seen at Kearsley on 10th (ALT). 80 at Chare Ends (Holy Island) on 26th (STH) and 46 reported on the Island on 28th could refer to this group (MJC). One to 45 at 11 further locations this month.

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis caberet*

Notable S passage this month with 50 through Newbiggin in small groups on the morning of 30th (GB/DM/LAR). Daily light passage all month at Budle Bay and on many days at Marden Estate (Cullercoats) (CGK/GPK/ASJ). 24 were seen at Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin) on 30th (RS). 15 moved through East Cramlington on 30th (STH). 11 were at Holy Island on 28th and ten were at Bamburgh on 26th. Two to six also went south at St. Mary's on several days in the final week (MJC/BRS/ASJ/MSH). Six flew through East Chevington on 19th (TB). One to two migrating at four further sites. Elsewhere, 15 were at Widdrington Moor Lake and at Hadston on 24th (TB/AA). One to three were at six other sites during the month.

Redpoll sp.

110 were observed flying S at Tynemouth on morning of the 30th (DRW).

Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Light passage this month with three birds S at Beal on 23rd and two at East Cramlington and Sandy Bay on 30th. Inland records involved two at Dukeshouse (Hexham) on 3rd and Longframlington Common on 23rd and a single at Wark on 25th.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

The Budle Bay/Stag Rocks area held impressive numbers during the month with perhaps up to 1,000 birds estimated to be in the area. 300 were at Budle on 24th, 500 at Stag Rocks on 26th (CGK/GPK) and 300 to 400 at Stag Rocks on 30th (ASJ/BRS). Elsewhere, 200 were at Prestwick on 28th and 200 flew south at Tynemouth on 30th (PCF/DRW). 32 flew S at East Cramlington also on 30th. 60 was the month's maximum count, with birds present each day at Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin). 60 plus at Arcot on 3rd, 75 on 16th and 80 on 24th. Also 75 at Mootlaw Quarry on 10th (RS/LJM/STH/ALT). 55 feeding at St. Mary's on several dates (ASJ). 50 at Boulmer and Lynemouth Flash on 4th and 25th (JAR/TB). 87 were trapped and ringed at Bamburgh during the month. One to 36 were at thirteen other locations during September.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

60 were seen at Humshaugh on 3rd (SW). 18 at Haughton Strother on 19th and at Yearle on 7th (MR/DGB/RHB). One to two were at six further sites, including a single passage bird south at St Mary's on 27th (ASJ).

Lapland Bunting

A single, the first of the Autumn, flew S at Cullernose Point on 17th (BS).

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citronella*

Only one report this month, with a bird flying over Holy Island thought to be this species (MJC).

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

25 to 27 were at St Mary's/Old Hartley on several dates during the month, (six in Wetland area, ten in hedgerows/trees and 11 in a crop field). 16 were together feeding in the crop field at Hartley on 9th (ASJ). At Holy Island, seven on Snook on 17th, 14 across the Island on 20th and 23 on 28th (MJC/ADM/PRM). Six plus were at St. Mary's Wetland on 18th (MSH). Five were at Whittle Dene on 22nd (MR). Two were at Howdon, one at Grindon and at Goswick.

A Reed Bunting

Alan Jack

St. Mary's

23rd September



ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN**Escapes****Budgerigar** *Melopsittacus undulatus*

A blue individual flew W with Swallows at Big Waters on 11th (GB).

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

Two were noted at Queen Elizabeth CP on 10th (CDH).

Tufted Duck x Pochard *Aythya fuligula* x *Aythya ferina*

One was at Swallow Pond from at least 9th to 21st (SPP).

Birds of Unknown Origin

No sightings

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

This bulletin was compiled by Graeme Bowman (Mute Swan to Ruddy Duck), Steve Laing (Red Grouse to Black-necked Grebe), Trevor Blake (Honey-buzzard to Crane), Tom Brewis (Avocet to Godwit), Clive Hampton (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 Jack (Duncock to Corn Bunting).

Data Manager is Tom Brewis.

Thanks to David Sanders of NNBC for providing data.

Proof reading was by Mike Smith.

Mail distribution by Paul Stewart.

Edited by Steve Barrett NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.com**RECORD SUBMISSION**Please email records for the month to ntbc.records@googlemail.com

Please email for a copy of the standard spreadsheet and other details.

Location names and grid references: Please use of standard location names and include grid references as this 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

Annual membership costs £10 for a junior, £30 for an individual, and £32 for a family.

For membership enquiries please contact ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

If you internet bank you can pay online: please include your name in the ref. It is helpful if you email me to let me know when you've made the transfer ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

If you decide to set up a standing order please date the first payment at least a fortnight from your posting date to allow time to process with the bank. You can also set up your standing order directly with your bank if you wish; just let me know.

Finally, if you know anyone who might like to join NTBC please pass on the club information - new members are always welcome.

Jo Bentley - Hon Treasurer

NTBC WEB SITE

The club website is an excellent online resource for anyone interested in birds. There are:

Photo Galleries – Here you can view hundreds of photos of birds from Northumberland, Newcastle and North Tyneside. Members are encouraged to contribute their own photos. Simply send them to galleries@ntbc.org.uk

Sightings – Here you can view reports of birds recently reported in the County. Anyone who would like to contribute and post sightings to this page, please email sightings@ntbc.org.uk Please note this section is moderated, so there may be a short delay before your record appears.

There are also County Checklists, Records Committee updates, Information on important Surveys, useful articles and reports on Bird ID and Overseas Birding Trips....and much more...

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

New content such as Birding Trip Reports etc., is always welcome and very much appreciated.

To find out more please visit www.ntbc.org.uk



A Sparrowhawk checks out Mike Smith

A Kenton garden

13th September

Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

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

Bulletin 2017 No 10

MONTHLY SUMMARY OCTOBER 2017

3rd December 2017



CLASSIFIED LIST HIGHLIGHTS

Todd's Canada Goose	Two were at Budle Bay from 9th.
Richardson's Canada Goose	One in Budle Bay / Fenham Flats area from 8th.
Red-breasted Goose	Un-ringed Subadult at Big Waters from 20th. Unknown Origin.
Garganey	Late singles at Big Waters and Bothal Pond.
White-billed Diver	Two different individuals on 29th off Newbiggin. Also Seaton Sluice and Tynemouth.
Storm Petrel	Singles at Newbiggin and Tynemouth on 29th.
Leach's Petrel	One past Newbiggin on 19th close inshore.
Bittern	Single at East Chevington from 15th.
Great White Egret	Two different individuals at various sites in month.
Spoonbill	Late record of one in Druridge Bay area from 21st to 24th. Also at Beal Point on 28th.
Red-necked Grebe	Popular long-stayer at Linton Pond from 29th.
Red-necked Phalarope	Juvenile at Druridge Pools from 10th to 16th. First in area for 30 years.
Long-tailed Skua	The popular confiding juvenile on Goswick GC stayed until 15th.
White-winged Black Tern	The moulting adult remained in Bamburgh / Budle Bay area until 6th.
Glaucous Gull	A second-winter was present in Budle Bay from 9th.
Bee-eater	Two juveniles were seen briefly at East Chevington on 15th with one at Druridge from 18th.
Firecrest	One on Holy Island on 18th.
Shore Lark	One at East Chevington from 14th.
Cetti's Warbler	Single singing males at Druridge Pools and East Chevington from 12th.
Dusky Warbler	One was ringed at Bamburgh on 20th.
Barred Warbler	Singles at Newbiggin, Druridge Pools and Budle Pt.
Redwing	Remarkable day count of 17,260 Redwings passing through Holy Island on 19th.
Water Pipit	Singles on Holy Island and Druridge Pools.
Brambling	Astonishing total of 1,144 Brambling counted flying over Holy Island on 19th.
Hawfinch	Single flying S at Holy Island on 19th.
Little Bunting	Excellent views of one at Low Newton from 20th to 23rd.

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 14th December when David Steel will describe **The Birds of the Isle of May**

Birds in Northumbria 2016 will be issued free to paid up members. Please pick up your copy and for other members.

FIELD TRIPS

Contact Steve Anderson seaswan@btinternet.com

CLASSIFIED LIST

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

A count of 56 at East Chevington north pool on 6th included 55 adults (MH). Other peak counts were 51 at Killingworth Lake on 22nd (LJM), 40 at QEII CP Lake on 8th (CDH), 40 at the Tweed Estuary on 5th (MHu), 22-32 at Bolam Lake and Meadow Haven (Berwick), and 13 at Big Waters and Castle Island. Six to nine were also at Embleton Bay, Holy Island, Ladyburn Lake, Linton Ponds, Newcastle Leazes Park and Shield on the Wall. A colour-ringed individual noted at Beal on 30th was ringed at as a cygnet in Edinburgh, Scotland in 2014 (CF).

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

On 3rd, 15 were at Budle Bay (CGK/GPK), eight flew N at Stag Rocks (DF), six S at Cresswell (TRD) and one was at Druridge Pools (IRD), 25 adults were at Holy Island causeway on 5th (TM), 16 were off Berwick on 6th (PHi), and 16 (12 adults) were at East Chevington on 8th (TRD). One to eight were also at/over Arcot Pond, Branton and Haughton Strother GPs, Monks' House Pool, the Tweed Estuary and Warkworth between 5th-9th, and 11 were at Cresswell Pond on 10th (TRD). Numbers at East Chevington rose to 29 by 23rd (TF/JFa) and 32 (23 adults) by 29th (TD), ten to 12 were at Beal, Budle Bay and Fenham Mill between 16th-30th, and four to nine at/over Airy Holm Reservoir, Cheswick and Stag Rocks.

A total of 14 flew N and 82 S at Seaton Sluice between 25th-29th (SSWT), 32 (five juveniles) rested on the sea off Cullercoats-St Mary's on 26th (JBU/AC/ASJ) and on 28th, four flew N, 20 S and seven W at Newbiggin (GB). More unusually, a flock of 20 flew E/SE over Newcastle Exhibition Park on 18th (GB). Groups of ten to 17 moved over (various directions) Cullercoats (ASJ), Ellington (TB), Felton (STH), Horncliffe (JDL), Newbiggin (TF/JFa) and Tynemouth (DRW) between 17th-29th.

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

A total of 880 flew N and 3,085 S at Seaton Sluice during the month, including 1,050 S on 25th (SSWT), about 2,250 flew N at Holy Island on 15th (ADM), 900 N/NW at Stag Rocks on 3rd (DF), 800 N at East Ord on 16th (MHu), and 650 S there on 8th (MHu) when 500 flew S at Goswick (PHi/SSC), and 500 S at Tynemouth on 27th (DRW).

On 3rd, 7,000 at Budle Bay was a new site record (CGK/GPK), about 3,000 moved S at Holy Island (IK) and hundreds flew SE at Cheswick (CH). About 4,000 roosted on sandbanks at Holy Island on 4th (IK). Other peak counts were 6,000 at Widdrington Moor Lake on 6th (BWG), 2,500 at Goswick on 7th (PRM), 2,500 at Beal on 25th (DF), 2,500 at Doddington on 29th (JD), 2,000 at Fenham Flats and Warkworth Lane and 1,000 at East Chevington. Groups of 600-749 were at Druridge Pools and Holy Island Snook, 200-420 at/over Belford, Bothal Pond, Hoppen Kiln, Spittal Bay, West Chevington and West Ord, and 104-178 at/over Byrness, Craster, Derwent Reservoir, Grindon Lough, Prestwick Carr, Quarry Cottage and Stag Rocks. Groups of 52-85 flew S/W at Big Waters, Cocklawburn, Corbridge, Cramlington, Kielder Water and Morpeth, while 15-47 were at eight further sites. Birds were heard flying over during darkness at Holy Island on 3rd (IK), Kenton on 7th (MRS), and Wark on 28th (PRM).

grey goose (sp.) *Anser* (sp.)

300 flew W at Horsley on 8th (MRS).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

61 flew SW at Haughton Pasture on 15th (SW) and five flew S at Seaton Sluice on 25th (SSWT). At Haughton Strother GP 1,040 on 8th fell to 447 by 23rd (MR), 915 were at Derwent Reservoir on 22nd (IFo), 715 at Airy Holm Reservoir on 18th (IFo), 309 at Low Newton on 14th (SW), 247-280 at Budle Bay-Hoppen Kiln and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and 100 at Druridge Pools. Groups of 49-70 were at Grindon Lough and Prestwick Carr, and 18-37 at Corbridge, East Chevington, Linton Ponds and the Tweed Estuary. One to two were also at Arcot and Bothal Ponds and QEII CP Lake.

Greater Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

About 200 flew NW at Quarry Cottage on 20th (BSt), about 90 moved SE at Wark on 14th (PRM) and 42 N at East Ord on 8th (MHu). 779 at Haughton Strother GP on 6th dropped to 175 by 23rd (MR), about 500 were at Grindon Lough on 8th (MRS) and 407 there on 12th (PRM), 248 were at QEII CP Lake on 8th (CDH), 152 at Derwent Reservoir on 27th (IFo), and 80-96 at Bothal Pond, the Tweed Estuary and Widdrington Moor Lake. Counts of 20-42 came from Big Waters, Linton Ponds and West Ord, and 11-15 were at Budle Bay and Newcastle Leazes Park.

Two individuals of the *interior* race (known as 'Todd's Canada Goose') were at Budle Bay on 9th (AC/TRD) and 14th (TF/JFa), with one noted regularly until 23rd (CGK/GPK *et al.*)

One feeding with Barnacle Geese at Beal on 25th and Budle Bay on 27th was thought to either be of the race *parvipes* (known as 'Lesser Canada Goose') or of the *interior* race ('Todd's Canada Goose').

Cackling Goose *Branta hutchinsii*

An individual belonging to the *hutchinsii* race (known as 'Richardson's Canada Goose') was discovered in the Fenham Flats area of Lindisfarne NNR on 8th (BS), and was noted at Budle Bay, often with Barnacle Geese, on at least seven dates between 9th-27th (CGK/GPK/TRD *et al.*) and at Ross on 19th (CDB).



Richardson's Cackling Goose at Budle Bay by Chris Barlow on 16th October

Species	Date	Place	No		Notes	Observer	Tetrad
Cackling Goose	09/10/17	Budle Bay	1	to 22nd	Seen on 6 different dates, seen well on occasions and probably aged as a 1st cal year bird	CGK/GPK	
Cackling Goose	13/10/17	Budle Bay	1	with Barnacles	Small and very dark – presumably "hutchinsii"	DF	
Cackling Goose	14/10/17	Budle Bay	1		with Barnacle geese	IBDa/KDa	
Richardson's Canada Goose	08/10/17	Lindisfarne NNR, Fenham Flats	1		south section viewed from Elwick hide	BS	NU14A
Richardson's Canada Goose	09/10/17	Budle Bay	1		Found just after the two Todd's. Same size as Barnacle. Paler underneath & flatter chest. So 3 vagrant Canada at one site !	TRD	NU13M
Richardson's Canada Goose	14/10/17	Budle Bay	1		Also in fields viewable from Harper's Heugh.	TF/JFa	NU13M
Richardson's Canada Goose	19/10/17	Ross	1		Feeding (fortunately) near the front of the Barnacle flock	CDB	NU13I
Richardson's Canada Goose	27/10/17	Budle Bay	1		still with Barnacles	TRD/JD	NU13M

Richardson's/Cackling Geese Records October 2017

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

36 flew W at East Ord on 3rd (MHu), eight were at Holy Island on 4th, on 6th, 34 flew S at East Ord and 12 N at Newbiggin, and 201 flew W at East Chevington on 7th (PRM). Large numbers used Budle Bay beginning with 41 on 6th and 60 on 7th (CGK/GPK) and increasing to 6,500 on 8th (GPK), an estimated 9,400 on 9th (DF), 10,000 between 10th-12th (DF), 9,300 on 13th (DF), 5,000 on 14th (TF/JFa), 2,500 on 20th (DF), 1,600 on 27th (DF), and 550 on 30th (CGK/GPK). Nearby (and probably involving some overlap with the above), 4,000 flew W at Belford on 8th (DF), 4,000 were at Ross on 19th (CDB), and 2,450 at Goswick Sands on 8th (CH). Also on 8th, 2,259 flew S at East Chevington (MJC), 1,570 SW/W/NW at Kielder Water (PRM), 855 moved N and 415 S at Boulmer (BS), 600 S at St Mary's (ASJ), 170 S at Berwick (MHu) and 120 N at Seaton Sluice (SSWT). Up to 1,050 were at Belford on 9th and 18th (DF), but fewer were left later in the month; 550 at Goswick on 26th (TRD/JD), 226 at Beal on 25th (DF) and 106 S at Cocklawburn on 23rd (MHu) being the largest counts. Away from Kielder Water, few were noted inland except for 120 over Branton on 12th (IBDa/KDa). One to seven were also noted at/over Druridge Pools, Grindon Lough, Haughton Strother GP, Low Newton, QEII CP and Widdrington Moor Lakes, and Tynemouth.

Two leucistic individuals flew S at East Chevington on 8th (MJC), and singles were noted over Belford on 8th (DF) and Budle Bay on 10th (MSH) and 13th (DF).

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Pale-bellied *hrota* race birds included about 800 at Holy Island causeway on 4th (PRM) and 630 at nearby Beal Point, Lindisfarne NNR on 6th (CH), and 110 were at Budle Bay on 3rd (CGK/GPK).

Five dark-bellied *bernicla* race birds flew N at Seaton Sluice between 18th-20th (SSWT).

Records of un-raced birds involved about 3,500 at Fenham Flats on 30th (JPL) and 2,000 on 19th (ASJ), while 27 flew in off the sea at Old Hartley on 28th (MNC).

Red-breasted Goose

An un-ringed individual, of unknown origin, was found at Big Waters on 20th (JCD *per* GB) and remained into November, sometimes associating with Greylag Geese.

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was 40 N, including 16 N on 20th and 18 N on 31st (SSWT), 800 were at Fenham Flats on 26th (MJC), and numbers at Budle Bay peaked at 590 on 21st (DF). Two were inland at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 20th (SR), and singles were noted at Cocklawburn and Druridge Pools on singles dates.

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

One was at Haughton Strother GP on 6th (MR).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was 2,234 N and 37 S (SSWT). Fenham Flats held 10,000 on 26th (MJC) and about 8,000 on 30th (JPL), 8,000 were counted between Ross-Guile Point on 16th (MJC), 3,100 were at Budle Bay on 6th (CGK/GPK), 420 at Grindon Lough on 10th (PRM), 233-250 at Branton GP (TRD/JD) and Derwent Reservoir (IFo), and 100-152 at Big Waters, Cresswell Pond, Gosforth Park NR, Haughton Strother GP and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Counts of 30-63 came from Druridge Pools, East Chevington and Linton Ponds, while 16 were at the Tweed Estuary.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Peak counts were 101 at Linton Ponds on 31st (TRD), 92 at Big Waters on 25th (GB), 57 at Gosforth Park NR on 17th (MJC), 52 at East Chevington on 8th (MJC), and 20 at Castron (CDH). Nine to ten were also at Castron and Marden Quarry, three to four at Bothal Pond, Branton GP, Castle Island and Druridge Pools, and one at Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Teal *Anas crecca*

A total of 575 moved N and 63 S at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT), and 25 flew N at Newbiggin on 29th (GB/TF/JFa). Budle Bay held a peak of 1,100 on 5th (CGK/GPK), 162 were at Derwent Reservoir on 31st (IFo), about 150 at Grindon Lough on 10th (PRM), 102-112 at Arcot Pond and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and 77 at Holy Island 'rocket field pools'. Counts of 23-50 came from Bothal Pond, East Chevington, Haughton Strother GP, Low Cocklaw and Monks' House Pool, and 18 were at Holywell Pond.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

A total of 50 flew N at Seaton Sluice between 27th-31st (SSWT), and five flew N at Newbiggin on 29th (GB/TF/JFa). The largest gatherings were 193 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 23rd (SR), 135 at Budle Bay on 9th (DF), 130 at Haughton Strother GP on 20th (MR), 100-125 at Derwent Reservoir, Hebron and Heighley Gate, and 53-98 at Castle Island and the Tweed Estuary. Groups of 20-49 were at Bothal, Linton and Middle Ord Ponds, East Chevington, Ladyburn and QEII CP Lakes, Marden Quarry, and Newcastle Exhibition and Leazes Parks, and 12-14 were at Arcot Pond and Widdrington Moor Lake.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Four flew N and one S at Seaton Sluice between 20th-22nd (SSWT). Numbers at Fenham Flats peaked at 75 on 1st (CGK/GPK), 12 were at East Chevington on 21st (CDB), six at Budle Bay on 5th (CGK/GPK), five at Druridge Pools on 9th (MSH), and three at Big Waters and Cresswell Pond. One to two were also at Haughton Strother GP and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. A female, with two Mallard, was on the shoreline at Boulmer on 19th (TRD/JD).

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

A juvenile was at Bothal Pond on 7th (TF/JFa). One was also at Big Waters on 22nd-23rd (GB).

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

One flew N at Seaton Sluice on 20th (SSWT). Budle Bay attracted a peak of 35 on 30th (CGK/GPK), 23 were at Swallow Pond on 15th (CDH), 22 at East Chevington on 8th (MJC), 20-21 at Druridge Pools (MSH) and Monks' House Pool (PRM), and ten at Grindon Lough (PRM). Eight to nine were also at Bothal Pond and Gosforth Park NR, three to four at Big Waters, Linton Ponds and Newton Pool, and one to two at Cresswell Pond and Marden Quarry.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Low numbers included peaks of six at Killingworth Lake on 22nd (LJM), five at East Chevington on 8th (MJC), and three at Haughton Strother GP on 23rd (MR). One to two were also at Big Waters, Grindon Lough, Holywell Pond, Ladyburn Lake and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Peak counts involved 80 at East Chevington on 15th (MSH), 68 at Killingworth Lake on 22nd (LJM), 50 at Ladyburn Lake on 29th (DM), 35 at Grindon Lough, and 20-24 at Bothal Pond and Castle Island. Ten to 12 were also at Bolam and Widdrington Moor Lakes, Haughton Strother GP, and Linton Ponds, six to eight at Big Waters and QEII CP Lake, and one to four at Cocklawburn Pond, Derwent Reservoir and Kielder Water.

Scaup *Aythya marila*

A drake flew N at Seaton Sluice on 25th (SSWT). Two were at Cresswell Pond on 23rd (TF/JFa) with singles there on 16th and 19th (IRD). Singles were also at East Chevington on 12th (TRD/JD) and 23rd (TF/JFa), and Warkworth on 4th-5th (CSa).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was 105 N and 44 S (SSWT), and 12 flew N at Newbiggin on 28th (GB). About 40 were at Stag Rocks on 4th (PRM), six to nine at Blyth Harbour and the Tweed Estuary, and two at Holy Island causeway and Warkworth.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

Seven flew N at Seaton Sluice between 24th-30th (SSWT), seven moved N at Newbiggin on 29th (GB/TF/JFa) when five moved N at Tynemouth (DRW), and singles flew N at Boulmer on 19th (TRD) and Druridge on 20th (TRD/JD). Eight were off Emanuel Head (Holy Island) on 29th (SR), five at Cheswick on 26th (TRD/JD), four at Goswick on 9th (BS), and three at Budle Bay on 23rd (CGK/GPK). Singles were also at Cresswell Pond, East Chevington north pool and Ladyburn Lake on occasional dates between 16th-31st (IRD/TRD/MH/AA *et al.*)

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was 966 N and 69 S (SSWT), and 76 flew N and one S at Newbiggin between 28th-31st (GB/TRD *et al.*). At Cheswick, 515 were counted on 25th (CH), and 300-400 between 26th-30th (TRD/JD/DF), 150 were off Druridge on 20th (TRD/JD), 50 at Cambois Bay on 25th (STH), and one to five at Boulmer and Stag Rocks.

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

At Seaton Sluice, 13 flew N and one S during the month (SSWT); four moved N at Tynemouth on 29th (DRW) when three+ flew N at Newbiggin (CDB/TRD) and two N at Cullercoats (CGK/GPK/AJ). One flew N at Newbiggin on 6th (JBu) and three flew S at Boulmer on 17th (CSa). A single flock of 20 was close inshore at Cheswick on 30th (DF); seven were at nearby Goswick on 11th (JBu), three off Druridge-East Chevington between 13th-23rd (AA/TF/JFa *et al.*), and two amongst 42 Common Scoters in Newbiggin Bay on 19th (CH). One was at Embleton Bay on 14th (SW).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

A total of 183 flew N and 24 S at Seaton Sluice during the month, including 214 N and 14 S on 30th (SSWT), and on 29th 37 flew N at Tynemouth (DRW) and 17+ N and seven S at Newbiggin (GB/TF/JFa). About 75 were at Fenham Flats on 30th (CGK/GPK/AJ), 24 at East Chevington on 29th (TD), and ten to 14 at Bolam Lake (PRM), Branton GP (TRD/JD) and Whittle Dene Reservoirs (MR). Three to five were also at Druridge Pools, Warkworth and West Ord, and singles at Castle Island, Derwent Reservoir, Haughton Strother GP, QEII CP and the Tweed Estuary.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was eight N and four S (SSWT), and three flew N and one S at Newbiggin on 29th (GB/TF/JFa). Budle Bay held 12 on 30th (CGK/GPK); ten were between Ross-Guile Point on 16th (MJC), eight off Cheswick on 26th (TRD/JD), and five to six off Druridge-East Chevington and Holy Island. One to two were also at Boulmer, Stag Rocks, Warkworth and West Ord, while four visited East Chevington north pool and singles at Druridge Pools and St Mary's Wetland.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Two flew N and seven S at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT), six moved S at Newbiggin on 15th (GB), one N at Newbiggin, and one to two S at East Chevington and Embleton Bay. Peak counts involved 43 at Branton GP on 3rd (JD), 17 at Stag Rocks on 4th (PRM), 16 at Budle Bay on 6th (MJC), and ten at the Tweed Estuary on 5th (MHu). Three were at Castle Island and Derwent Reservoir, and one to two at Alnwick, Cheswick, Cocklawburn, Druridge Pools, Morpeth, Newton Pool, North Blyth and West Ord.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

20 were at Brier Dene Farm (Whitley Bay) on 29th (MNC), five at Alnwick Moor and one to four at Howick and Warren Mill.

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

On 10th, three were at Addycombe (Rothbury) (TRD/JD) and two cocks were displaying at Quarry House Moor (PCF).

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Double-figure counts included 14 at Old Bewick on 5th (PCF), 11 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 10th (MR), 11 also at Newbiggin GC on 20th (PRM) and up to ten at Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin) all month (RS). One to eight were at nine other easterly locations.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

A remarkable count of 52 at Pegswood on 11th (TB).

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

A good month with over 30 records received. The passage total of 207 (70 N and 137 S) in 50 hours at Seaton Sluice was "above average" for October (SSWT). Numbers in Druridge Bay peaked on 25th with at least 38 present (BS) whilst 25 was the monthly maximum at Cheswick Sands also on that date (CH). One to 11 were at many other sites along the coast.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

Five (four N and one S) were recorded passing Seaton Sluice from 10th-30th (SSWT). Two were amongst the Red-throated Divers off Cheswick Sands on 8th (CH) and singles were off Church Point at Newbiggin on 18th and flying S at Boulmer on 19th.

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

A good October for this species with a total of 11 (seven N and four S) passing Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT), four N past Newbiggin in nearly five hours on 28th (GB), another four past there on 29th (ADMc), two S at Tynemouth on 29th and two N at St. Mary's on the same day. Singles were observed from several other locations.



29th October -a White Billed Diver passes Church Point. by Chris Barlow

White-billed Diver *Gavia adamsii*

Two were observed flying N past Newbiggin on 27th (ADMc), then two again during the morning of 28th, the second in the company of a Great Northern Diver (GB). On the morning of 29th, one was tracked along the coast at Tynemouth - St Mary's - Seaton Sluice - Newbiggin (AC/DRW/SSWT/TF *et al.*) and a second, again in the company of a Great Northern Diver, was later observed flying N past Newbiggin (TF/JFa/CDB).

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

The only reports were of four N at Newbiggin on 28th, two N past there on 29th and a single sighting from Seaton Sluice Watch Tower all month.

Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

One was observed travelling slowly N at Newbiggin on 28th (JF *per* GB), and another (or possibly two) the following day passed Tynemouth then Newbiggin (TF/JFa/DRW/MK/CDB).

Leach's Petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

One was sighted during a WeBS visit to Newbiggin Bay on 19th (CH).

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

Passage numbers were reduced dramatically from September with a total of 370 (330 N, 40 S) past Seaton Sluice throughout the month (SSWT). Many, all juveniles, were feeding close inshore at Snab Point (Cresswell) on 3rd (EC/JSB) and one to 15 were reported from several other locations.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

A total of 92 at Calot Shad (Tweed Estuary) on 3rd was the largest low-tide roost ever counted there by the observer (MHu). Blyth Harbour held 74 on 1st (STH) and 46 were in the Meadow Haven (Berwick) roost on 12th (MHu). One to 17 were at many other localities, including some localised "high" counts such as eight at Killingworth Lake on 22nd (LJM) and eight also at Arcot Pond on 27th (STH). A single continental "*sinensis*" race bird was at Druridge Pools on 9th (MSH).

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

As usual, Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) proved popular at this time of year with ca.110 present on 4th (PRM). 24 were in the Meadow Haven (Berwick) roost on 12th (MHu) and one to five were at Blyth Harbour, Calot Shad, Cheswick, Craster and Low Newton.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

One was at East Chevington, seen on several dates from 15th onwards (MF/TRD/JD/TF/JFa/ADMc).

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Reduced numbers from last month with the largest concentration in Budle Bay peaking at 14 on 2nd (GPK). Holy Island had a maximum count of seven on 8th (DGB) and six were present during a WeBS visit to the Tweed Estuary on 5th (MHu). Six were also found between Ross to Guile Point on 16th and one to five were at 24 other sites including two colour-ringed individuals – one at Beal Point ringed at Netherhall, Essex, 13/05/2016 and one at Budle Bay ringed at Hartlepool, May 2016.



Two images of a Little Egret.

Top: by Janet Dene from Newton Pool on 22nd

October and right: by Mike Carr on 7th October

Holy Island



Great White Egret *Ardea alba*

What may well have been the same roving individual was first seen on 8th heading S over Goswick GC driving range (Phi/SSc), then East Chevington north pool the same evening (TF/JFa), Laverock Hall (Cramlington) at 0745 on 9th (STH), Holywell Pond on 11th, back to Goswick on 15th (per NNBC), then on rocks near the sea at Boulmer on 16th (RB/MB) and lastly on 19th at Chibburn Mouth (East Chevington) (IRD) and flying SW at Earsdon (AC).

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

A grand total of 28 were present during a WeBS count at the Tweed Estuary on 5th (MHu) and 13 were at North Blyth staithes on 23rd (STH). One to seven were at Arcot Pond, Castle Island, Derwent Reservoir, East Chevington, Linton Ponds, Monks' House Pool, Newbiggin, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Widdrington Old Moor.

Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

One briefly toured the Druridge Bay area - first seen at Druridge Pools on the morning of 21st (CDB) then on the north pool at East Chevington (TF/JFa), and finally Cresswell Pond on 22nd and 24th. It or another was at Beal Point on 28th (per IK).

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Peak counts were as follows:

Locality	Peak Count	Date	Observer/notes
East Chevington	20+	15th	MSH
Swallow Pond	16	25th	GPK
Castle Island	13	8th	STH/DM
Grindon Lough	12	12th	PRM
Bothal Pond	11	Oct	TF/JFa
Caistron	10	6th	JD
Linton Ponds	10	8th	CDH
Warkworth	8	7th	PRM
Druridge Pools	7	9th	MSH

One to five birds were at many other typical localities, and one was unexpectedly on the sea at Boulmer on 5th.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Four were at Widdrington Old Moor on 6th (AWG) and three at Killingworth Lake on 22nd (LJM). One to two were at Big Waters, Chevington Burn mouth, Druridge Bay, East Chevington, Fenham-le-Moor, Holy Island, Seaton Sluice and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

A very popular individual at Linton Ponds was present from 28th onwards (CDB/TRD/TD *et al.*).

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

Two were off the burn mouth at East Chevington on 8th (TF/JFa), with two also at Budle Point on 30th (CGK/GPK/AJ). Singles were reported from Boulmer, East Chevington North Pool and Tynemouth.

Red Kite *Milvus Milvus*

The only records this month came from Derwent Reservoir with two birds there on 31st and a single there on 26th (IFo).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Four birds involving three juveniles and a second calendar year bird were at East Chevington on 22nd (MH), three birds were at Widdrington Moor Lake on 5th (ADMc) and two were seen at Druridge Pools and East Chevington on several dates. Single birds were at Big Waters NWT, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, and Linton Ponds and at Widdrington Moor Lake.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

A ring-tail was seen hunting the fields near The Lough (Holy Island) on 6th (IK) and a male was noted at Prestwick Carr on 16th (BB/PCF).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

A juvenile bird was observed at a confidential site on 10th (AA/MH), an immature female was at Grindon Lough on 10th (PRM) and an adult male flew S over the castle at Holy Island on 15th (MJC/ADM).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Two juvenile females were regularly roosting in an island garden throughout the month (IK). A pair was noted at Alnwick on 7th (PRM) and at Ellington on 24th (TB), two were also at Marden Quarry (Whitley Bay) on 22nd (KWY), Newbiggin on 20th (PRM) and at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 15th (SR). Single birds were seen at 18 sites.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Six birds at Haughton Strother GPs (Humshaugh) on 6th (MR) was the highest count this month. Three birds were at Holystone on 27th (MJC) and at Milkwell (Corbridge) on 29th (RB/MB) while two were at Alnwick on 19th and Widdrington Moor Lake on 22nd (TB) and singles were observed at nine sites.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

East Chevington had five calling birds on 8th (MJC) and three were at Newton Pool on 14th (SW). Two birds were seen or heard at Gosforth Park NR on 17th (MJC), Holy Island Lough on 18th (MJC) and at Druridge Pools on 20th (PRM). Single birds were noted at Arcot Pond, Big Waters NWT, East Chevington, Prestwick Carr and St Mary's Wetland.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

16 birds were at East Chevington on 8th (MJC), 14 at Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 7th (DM), 13 were noted at Hauxley on 6th (MH) and at Linton Ponds on 8th (CDH). While 12 birds were at QEII CP on 8th (CDH) and 11 birds at Low Newton on 14th (SW) and at Gosforth Park NR on 17th (MJC). One to nine were at Arcot Pond, Bolam Lake, Castle Island, Druridge Bay CP, Leazes Park (Newcastle) and Monks' House Pool.

Coot *Fulica atra*

The highest count this month came from Big Waters NWT with 80 birds present on 25th (GB) followed by 68 at Grindon Lough on 10th (PRM) and 67 at East Chevington on 8th (MJC). 58 were at Linton Ponds on 8th (CDH) and 23 at Gosforth Park NR on 17th (MJC). One to ten birds were noted at seven sites during the month.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

A single, late bird hung on at Monks' House Pool for nearly all of the month.



Two images by Chris Barlow. The Monk's House Pool Avocet on 16th October and an Oystercatcher not feeding on oyster at Church Point on 29th October

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

While Oystercatchers were still found inland with three seen at Derwent Reservoir on 18th and a single still there on 21st (IFo), all other records were coastal. The largest count came from Budle Bay where a count of 140 was made on 3rd (CGK/GPK) and at the same location a count of 119 was made on 6th (MSH). Further south, a count of 83 was made at a high-tide roost at North Blyth staithes on 5th (STH) and on the same day 58 were seen at Beacon Point, Newbiggin (STH). Counts of 20 or fewer came from Brown's Bay (Whitley Bay), Cullercoats Bay, Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Bay and R Tweed Estuary.



Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

An estimated 2,000 birds were at St Mary's on 9th (AC) and at Holy Island on 20th (MJC). An exact count of 1,512 was made at Grindon Lough on 10th (PRM) and 565-575 were at Cocklawburn on 30th (MHu). There were between 400 and 450 seen at Newton Point between 14th and 23rd (SW, DF) while Tynemouth had a count of 350 on 2th (DRW). Boulmer hosted 300 on 19th (TRD/JD), 270 were seen flying east at Belford on 10th (DF), and, inland, 230 were at Derwent Reservoir on 27th (IFo). Counts of 100-200 came from Blyth (Laverock Hall), Brown's Bay (Whitley Bay), Druridge Pools, Monks' House Pool and West Chevington. Lower counts came from Berwick (Ord Moor, Billylaw), Bothal Pond (Coney Garth), Boulmer, Brocolitia (Newbrough), Cramlington, Druridge Pools, Goswick, Low Newton, Newbiggin, West Chevington, West Hartford and Woodhorn Flashes.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Budle Bay had a notable maximum count of 120 on 13th (GPK). By contrast, other sites had much smaller counts with ca.15 on the Holy Island causeway on 7th (PRM) and the same number found in the north east part of the island on 28th (TD). On 1st at Tynemouth nine birds flying south were counted (DRW) and four were at Berwick Little Beach on 29th (MHu). Other counts came from Bamburgh (Stag Rocks), Boulmer, East Chevington, Lindisfarne NNR (Beal Point) and Tweed Estuary.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

A minimum of 1,200+ was reported from Grindon Lough on 12th with ca. 600 still present on 18th (PRM). Other large counts from well inland were at Derwent Reservoir on 18th (400, IFo), at Humshaugh, Haughton Strother GP on 8th (490, MR) and at Brockbushes (Corbridge) also on 8th (200, MRS). In coastal areas the largest counts were at Budle Bay on 9th (550, DF), in the Tweed Estuary on 5th (510, MHu), at Charlton Mires flash (Alnwick) on 9th (441, AH), at St Mary's on 27th (380, ASJ) and Cocklawburn on 23rd (286, MHu). Other counts of 100-280 came from Bothal Pond (Coney Garth), East Chevington, Holywell Pond, Monks' House Pool, R Tweed (New Water Haugh), R Wansbeck (Castle Island) and West Hartford. Smaller counts were reported at Big Waters NWT, Goswick and Widdrington Old Moor.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

By far the largest count came from Blyth Harbour on 14th where 135 were seen on the roof of Ferguson's, a figure which had increased from 60 on 1st (STH). Between Ross and Guile Point on 16th a count of 64 was made (MJC), 58 were counted at Little Beach, Berwick on 12th (MHu) and 56 were on the Long Nanny, near Newton on 1st (TM). Counts of one to 33 were made at Boulmer, Chevington Burn mouth, Cocklawburn, Craster, and Holy Island.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

A single bird was seen at Fenham-le-Moor on 1st (GPK).

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Three hundred were counted between Ross and Guile Point on 16th (MJC), 180 were at Old Hartley on 2nd (MNC) and ca. 170 were roosting on saltmarsh next to the Holy Island causeway on 4th (PRM). During a WeBS count, 106 were recorded in the Tweed Estuary (MHu), while on the same day 82 birds were seen in stubble at St Mary's (ASJ) and 64 were counted at Cocklawburn on 30th (MHu).

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Although numbers had declined after the record-breaking levels of the past two months, sizeable flocks were still much in evidence. Amble Harbour had 75-86 between 17th-31st (CSa) and Budle Bay reported anything between four and 30 with the largest count on 3rd (CGK/GPK). A high-tide roost by the weir at Warkworth numbered 18 on 7th (PRM) while counts of four or less came from Druridge Pools, Holy Island (Rocket Field pools) and Monks' House Pool.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

The estimated 2,000 seen on the mud flats at Holy Island (ASJ) equalled the estimate made for the same location in January, 2013. There were ca. 430 between St Cuthbert's Island and the harbour on Holy Island on 4th (PRM) while counts of 40 or fewer came from Berwick (Little Beach), Boulmer, Budle Bay, Beal Point, Newbiggin (Beacon Point) and Tweed Estuary (Calot Shad).

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Few sites had reports submitted, with Stag Rocks holding a maximum of 54 on 5th (DF). Also on 5th, 25 were counted at Boulmer, 22 were at Cheswick Black Rocks on 30th (MHu) and 20 were at Craster on 19th (TRD/JD). Six were at Berwick Little Beach and two at Newbiggin.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Most birds seen this month were in the Lindisfarne area with 150 at St Cuthbert's Island on 4th (PRM), 80 at Ross-Guile Point on 16th (MJC) and 25 at Budle Bay on 23rd (CGK/GPK). The only other reports received were 18 at Boulmer on 30th and two at Newbiggin on 31st (TRD).

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

The peak count this month came from Low Newton with an impressive 52 reported on 14th reducing to 18 by 22nd (SW/CBD/TRD/JD). On 1st, 25 were at Fenham-le-Moor (GPK) and 18 were seen at St Mary's Island, reducing to four by the end of the month (ASJ). On 2nd, Old Hartley held 12 (MNC) and 12 were at Fenham Flats (NNBC). The monthly maximum seen at Grindon Lough was ten on 12th (PRM) and nine were recorded on a WeBS count at Beal Point (Lindisfarne) on 8th (CH). One or two were at Budle Bay, Charlton Mires, Cresswell Pond, Goswick, Holy Island, Monks' House Pool and Newbiggin.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Last month's light influx continued with birds favouring Lindisfarne and Druridge Pools. Two were reported from Budle Bay and Fenham Flats on various dates from 2nd-30th (BS/CGK/GPK). A juvenile was at Druridge Pools from 1st-13th (JBu/ADMc/TRD *et al.*) and a single was seen at The Snook (Holy Island) on 7th (PRM).

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

St Mary's Island remained the key site for the third consecutive month with a maximum of 180 counted on 8th (ASJ). A count of ca.120 was made at Bondicarr (Hauxley) on 3rd (EC/JSB) which contained a high proportion of juveniles. The Chevington Burn mouth area of Druridge Bay attracted birds all month with a peak of 101 on 22nd (MH/DM/TD). Other significant counts were 50 at Church Point (Newbiggin) on 20th (GB), 35 at East Chevington on 18th (TRD/JD) and 32 at Boulmer on 30th (JAR).

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Lindisfarne retained the largest numbers with a maximum count of 700 made at Budle Bay on 23rd (CGK/GPK), 450 from Ross-Guile Point on 16th (MJC) and 60 at Holy Island Causeway and Snook on 3rd (PRM). Much lower numbers were seen elsewhere with 42 at Berwick Little Beach on 12th (MHu) and 40 at Cresswell Pond on 3rd (TRD). One-ten were seen at Boulmer, Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Grindon Lough, Low Newton, Monks' House Pool and Newbiggin.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

The flock at Stag Rocks built up from six on 11th to 75 by 30th (MSH/TM/BS *et al.*). Numbers were much lower elsewhere as no site recorded birds in double figures with one to six at Cullercoats, Hauxley, Newbiggin and Seaton Sluice Watch Tower.

A Purple Sandpiper

Stag Rocks

Alan Jack

15th October

**Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*

The group at Goswick from September remained until 9th with a maximum of six recorded. Druridge Pools attracted a high of three on 3rd and three were at Budle Bay also on 3rd (MSH/CGK/GPK). Two were at Monks' House Pool on 3rd-4th (MH/AA/PRM) reducing to one by 6th which remained to 18th (DF/MSH/AH). Other singles were at Cresswell Pond on 1st (TF/JFa), Holy Island Causeway on 7th (PRM), the Rocket Field Pools on 15th (MJC), Fenham-le-Moor on 13th (BS) and East Chevington North Pool on 8th (DM).

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

There were two reports of this delightful visitor this month. Grindon Lough again attracted a bird, with a juvenile seen for 20 seconds at 14:30 hours on 10th (PRM). Another juvenile was at Druridge Pools. First found on 10th and last reported on 16th (JD/TRD/IRD *et al.*).

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

A late bird was at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 6th (SR).

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Numbers declined from last month with birds probably settling into regular winter haunts. Two were seen at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 9th (SR). Singles were at Haughton Strother GP on 2nd and 8th (MR) and one was also seen at Branton Ford on 27th (IBDa/KDa).

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

The long-staying birds at Budle Bay were noted with two on 1st (NNBC) and one on 2nd which remained until 18th (CGK/GPK). Other sites held singles with one at Cresswell Pond on 1st (TF/JFa), Fenham-le-Moor on 4th (JDL) and Bothal Pond from 7th-31st (TF/JFa/TD *et al.*).

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

The number of records submitted declined as birds moved on to winter quarters further south. The concentration at Beal from last month reduced from eight on 10th (CH) to one by 30th (DF). Four birds were reported from Alnmouth on 25th (MJC) and two were at Holy Island on 21st (DGB). There were singles at Bothal Pond from 7th-25th (TD/IFo/TB *et al.*) and a single at Fenham-le-Moor on 26th (MJC). Unusually, none were reported from Budle Bay this month (CGK/GPK).

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

There was a low number of reports this month but still some respectable counts in those received. The regular WeBS count on the River Tweed Estuary revealed 314 on 5th (MHu). The maximum at Budle Bay was 210 on 2nd (CGK/GPK) and 196 were at the high-tide roost at North Blyth Staithes on 5th (STH). A total count of 163 was made at St Cuthbert's Island and the Rocket Field Pools (both Holy Island) and Newbiggin attracted a maximum this month of 72 on 5th (STH). A short way inland, five were at Bothal Pond on 21st (TD).

Jack Snipe *Limnocryptes minimus*

The first flush of migrants was noted after a single bird on the last day of September. One was at Boulmer on 3rd (CSa) and further singles were at Budle Bay on 4th (CGK/GPK/PRM), Beal on 9th (BS), Cheswick on 10th (DF), The Snook (Holy Island) on 15th (MJC/ADMc) and Newbiggin Golf Course on 20th (PRM).

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Coastal migrants were noted at Holy Island on 2nd with two on 18th and one on 19th (MJC), Howick on 30th (JAR) and one 'in-off' at Newbiggin Golf Course on 31st (TRD).

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Concentrations were noted at several wetland sites during the month with 26 flushed at St Mary's Island on 20th (ASJ), 24 at Callerton Subsidence Pond on 9th (MH), 17 at Haughton Strother on 16th (MR), 14 at Cresswell Pond on 3rd (IRD), 14 flying S at East Chevington on 8th (MJC), 11 at Low Newton on 14th (SW) and ten at Druridge Pools on 20th (PRM). One-nine were noted at Arcot Pond, Big Waters, Bothal Pond, Branton GP, Cheswick, Cocklawburn Pond, East Chevington, Grindon Lough, Monks' House Pool, Newbiggin and Prestwick Carr. Three arrived from the east with Thrushes *sp.* at St Mary's Island on 19th (MSH).

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Passage fizzled out at the start of the month with two immature S at Annstead on 2nd (DF) and singles at Stag Rocks on 3rd-4th (MH/AA/PRM).

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*

The juvenile continued to tour the golf course at Goswick with the last report being on 10th (CH/CBD/Phi/SSc *et al.*).



The Goswick Long-tailed Skua finds lunch
Chris Barlow

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

Passage continued late in the month with much lower numbers than September. Five flew N at Seaton Sluice between 29th-30th (SSWT). At Newbiggin, one flew N and three S on 28th and three N on 29th (GB/TF/JFa). One flew S at Tynemouth on 29th (DRW) and one was at Newton on 30th (KDa/IBDa).

Razorbill *Alca torda*

A single bird was at Bamburgh Stag Rocks on 6th (MSH).

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

One to three were at seven coastal localities between Cocklawburn in the north and Blyth Harbour on various dates throughout (TRD/JD/STH/PRM/MHu), the latest being two at Newbiggin on 29th.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

Of the four birds which were recorded towards the end of last month at Budle Bay, three 1st-winters remained there until 6th (CGK/GPK/DF/MJC) with one or two also recorded at nearby Bamburgh Stag Rocks during this period (TM/PRM/NNBC). A single 1st-winter also frequented East Chevington on 15th (TF/JFa/MSH/CDB).

White-winged Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*

The adult bird first recorded in Budle Bay at the end of last month was again present, either there or feeding off-shore at nearby Bamburgh Stag Rocks, until 6th (CGK/GPK/NNBC/PRM/MJC).

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Few remained in the county with only ten passing Seaton Sluice from 10th-20th (SSWT) and elsewhere, during the first week, one to four were at Bamburgh, Berwick, Boulmer and Newbiggin (MH/AA/PRM/MHu/TRD/JD/STH) with two at Newton Point on 14th (SW).

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Six were at Bamburgh Stag Rocks on 4th (PRM) and a 1st-winter was there the previous day (MH/AA).

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

Four records of singles at Bamburgh Stag Rocks from 5th-14th possibly all relating to a lone 1st-winter bird and probably the same individual was seen further south at Boulmer, East Chevington and Newbiggin during the period 22nd-31st (many observers). Another very late record was an adult on Cheswick Sands on 27th (CH)



A juvenile Arctic Tern at Church Point Newbiggin on 29th October by Chris Barlow

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

The only records were of two at Calot Shad on the River Tweed Estuary on three dates, 1st, 12th and 17th (MHu).

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Three-figure gatherings comprised 200-320 at Castle Island, Holy island, Monks' House Pool and the River Tweed Estuary (DM/MHu/MSH/SR) and 100-135 at Bothal Pond, Exhibition Park and the QEII CP Lake (DM/TD/CDH). Elsewhere, smaller gatherings of up to 60 were at Arcot Pond, Brown's Bay and Leazes Park (DM/STH/IJ).

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

At Seaton Sluice, 15, mainly adults, moved N on 25th this comprising the only record from the watch tower (SSWT). A single adult was at Cocklawburn on 17th (MHu).

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Good numbers remained at Newbiggin during the month with totals of 36-37 (including four ringed birds) on 19th and 25th (TB/STH) and up to seven fed on bread throughout at Quarry Cottage, Newbiggin (BS). Elsewhere, six were seen at Cresswell village (AA) with one to three recorded from ten coastal and inland sites (many observers) mainly in the south east but also further N at Boulmer and Holy Island; the majority of these birds were adults.

Common Gull *Larus canus*

A flock of 10,000 gathered at Haughton Strother GP 4th (MR), 640 were at a roost at New Water Haugh in the Tweed Estuary on 15th, 325 in the estuary on 5th (MHu) and 500 at Shotleyfield (Airy Holm Reservoir) on 29th (IFo). Castle Island held 17 on 8th (DM/STH).

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

Branton GP held 54 on 3rd (IBDa/KDa) where eight remained until at least 23rd (TRD/JD) and 29 were at Yetlington on 14th (JR). One to three were seen at Big Waters NWT, Budle Bay, Castle Island, Cramlington, Derwent Reservoir, Grindon Lough, Holywell Pond and the Tweed Estuary (DM/CGK/MHu/MRS/GB/PRM/IFo/MSH).

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argenteus*

A WeBS in the River Tweed Estuary revealed 1,542 on 5th (MHu), 1,100 were in Budle Bay on 7th (CGK); 60-70 were at Castle Island (DM) and at the QEII CP Lake (CDH) of which 90% were 1st-winter birds (CDH). Smaller groups of up to 16 were counted at Arcot Pond, Exhibition Park, Haughton Strother GP, Leazes Park, Warkworth Weir and Whitley Bay.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

A 2nd-winter bird, probably the individual which summered in the county, remained in Budle Bay throughout the month until at least 26th (many observers).

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

In Budle Bay, 193 were present on 18th, these being mainly adults (DF), 135 were in Blyth Harbour on 14th (STH) and 81 at Linton Ponds on 29th (ASJ). Smaller groups of 15-30 were recorded at Castle Island and East Chevington (DM/STH), the Tweed Estuary (MHu) and Warkworth Weir (CDB). One to two were in Brown's Bay, Grindon Lough and Newbiggin.

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

A flock of around 200 were in flight at Blyth Town Centre on 17th (RS) with ten to 14 at Southfield Green (Cramlington) during the month (DM).

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Eight were at West Ord (Berwick) on 8th (MHu) and one to three at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) during the month (TB).

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Around 150 fed on stubble at Sandy Bay Caravan Park on 15th (RS) with 20 at Brierdene (Whitley Bay) on 22nd (IJ).

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Up to 17 came to feeders at Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin) during the month (RS) with six at Red Row and five at Cramlington on 14th (PCF).

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

All reports were of singles - at Holy Island on three dates, Stagshaw (Corbridge) on 4th, Humshaugh on 7th, Slaley on 12th, Prestwick Carr on 27th, Bolam Lake on 29th and Winshiels on 31st.

For the first time four pairs bred on Holy Island with four fledged at the Castle in October. Previously three were fledged in May with the same pair fledging two in September that vanished, presumed predated. The third pair fledged one as did the fourth but this youngster died (IK).

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Two were at Derwent Reservoir on 22nd and 28th with a single there on 24th (IFo) and at Druridge in 20th (TD).

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Two pairs were vocal throughout the month at Stamfordham with one roosting in a garden nest box (EC), two called regularly at Fulbeck (Morpeth) (TD) and Holystone on 27th (MJC). Singles were heard all month at Howick and Waren Mill and at Humshaugh, Ellington and Dukeshouse (Hexham). A road casualty was on the A1 at Priestbridge on 28th.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

A probable flew over the A1 just north of Alnwick on 15th and one was at Holy Island on 21st (MJC/ADM).

A Long-eared Owl quarters Holy Island

Mike Carr

21st October

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

At least three present at Holy Island during the month (IK) with singles at Druridge Pools on 18th (TB/TRD/JD) and flying west mobbed by corvids at Low Newton on 23rd (DF).

Swift *Apus apus*

One went S at Warkworth on 3rd (CSa).



Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*

At East Chevington on 15th two juveniles flew N over the north pool at 09.25 (TF/JFa/CDB *et al.*) then on 18th a juvenile was found at Druridge Pools (TB) remaining till 29th at least and observed by many.



The much photographed
Bee-eater(s) from Druridge
Bay

Top: by John Littleton on
21st

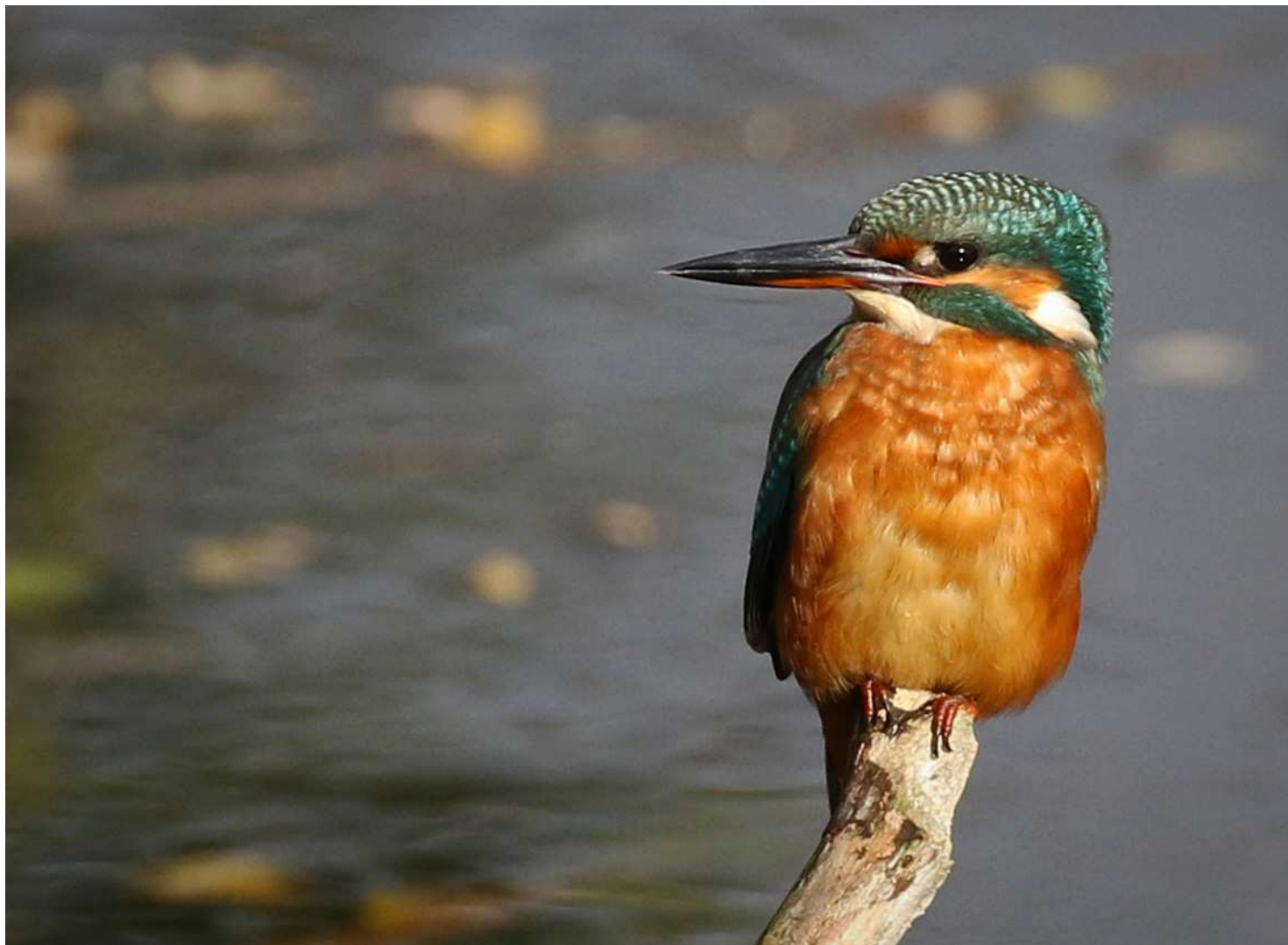
Middle: by Tim Dean on 18th

Right: by Chris Barlow on
20th



Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Well reported with two at St Mary's Island on several dates from 1st the only multiple sighting (ASJ) and other regular coastal birds at Budle Bay, East Chevington, Newbiggin and Seaton Sluice. Singles were at a further 18 widespread localities with one trapped and ringed at Bamburgh on 27th (BRS).



A Kingfisher at Gosforth NR by Mike Carr on 17th October

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Four birds were noted on Holy Island on 18th (MJC) and three there on 15th (MJC/ADM) and two birds there on 6th (MJC). Two birds were at West Hartford throughout the month and two were also at Castle Island on 8th (DM/STH), Guyzance on 19th (TB) and at Newbiggin on 20th (PRM). Single birds were seen at 21 sites.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Most sightings came from on or near the coast with birds noted at Beal, Berwick, Boulmer, Budle Bay, Chevington Burn Mouth, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Goswick, Holy Island, Low Newton and Newbiggin. A Juvenile flew S at the Winter's Gibbet (Harwood) on 22nd (JR).

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Two birds were seen in Budle Bay on 10 dates throughout the Month (CGK/GPK *et al.*). Single birds were on or near the coast at Budle Bay, Druridge Pools, East Chevington, Fenham Flats, Holy Island, and Newbiggin, Ross to Guile Point, Seaton Sluice and at Widdrington. The only other record was a bird at Prestwick Carr on 29th (PCF).

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Calling birds were at Ellington on 6th (TB), Kielder Water on 8th (PRM), Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin) on 19th (RS) and Dukeshouse (Hexham) on 30th (AJH).

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Five were at Wallington on 7th and Holystone on 27th, the peak counts (MJC). Three were at Bakethin Reservoir (Kielder) on 8th (PRM) with two at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 20th and 29th and Bolam Lake on 29th. Singles were regularly at Valley Park (Cramlington) and ten other locations.

Magpie *Pica pica*

A peak count of ten at Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin) during the month (RS). Eight were at Furnace Bridge (Bedlington) on 30th (JR) with one on Holy Island on 15th where they are scarce, being joined by another from 20th until 26th (MJC/ADM).

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Seven was the highest count at Holystone on 27th (MJC) with three at Horton (Blyth) on 5th, Ellington and Wallington on 7th, Big Waters on 8th and East Chevington on 23rd. Two were at four locations with singles at 17 other places.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Just two reports of 130 at Low Cocklaw (Berwick) on 30th (TBr) and 124 at Prestwick Carr on 29th (PCF).

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

On 30th 162 were at Low Cocklaw (Berwick) (TBr).

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

19 were on mown grass at Willington Gut (Wallsend) on 11th (CDH) with coastal movements noted at Seaton Sluice of 4N and 8S between 19th and 26th, four at Brown's Bay on 19th and three arriving at Holy Island from North on 6th.

Raven *Corvus corax*

Three were at Holystone on 27th and one at Craster on 25th (MJC).

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

At Howick Hall on 19th a count of over 100 with 20 ringed (PHa/AHa), 34 at Holystone on 27th (MJC), 30+ at Bakethin Reservoir (Kielder) on 8th (PRM), 26 at Holy Island on 19th and ten to 20 also at Bamburgh, Bolam Lake, Craster, Druridge Pools, Low Newton and Newbiggin. One to seven were at 19 other widespread localities with 22 trapped and ringed at Bamburgh during the month (BRS).

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus*

One was found at North Dunes (Holy Island) on 18th (MJC).

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

A high count of 20 at Brierdene (Whitley Bay) on 22nd with two at Rockliffe (Whitley Bay) on 18th (IJ). A total of 23 were trapped and ringed at Bamburgh during the month (BRS).

Great Tit *Parus major*

Six were at Brierdene (Whitley Bay) on 22nd with two at Rockliffe (Whitley Bay) on 18th (IJ) and a total of 17 were trapped and ringed at Bamburgh during the month (BRS).

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Nine were at Craster on 25th and Holystone on 27th (MJC) with four at Berwick Tennis Courts on 3rd (MHu) and Bamburgh on 16th (BRS). One to two were at Dinnington & Wark regularly, Low Newton, Newbiggin and Whitley Bay.

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

On 25th three were at Craster (MJC), two at Prestwick Carr on 9th and 28th (STH/PCF) and Derwent Reservoir on 23rd (IFo). Singles were at Craster, Rothbury and Brierdene (Whitley Bay).

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

A single bird was at Old Railway Line (Rothbury) on 9th (JD), the only report.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Good numbers with most noted moving S the peak 183 at The Snook (Holy Island) on 19th (MJC/ADM) with counts of 54 to 79 between 6th and 18th, 124 at East Chevington on 8th (MJC), 79 at Embleton Bay on 14th (SW), 54 at Craster on 25th and 50 at Druridge Pools on 20th. Ten to 41 were at five locations and one to nine at eight others.

Shore Lark *Eremophila alpestris*

One was at Chibburn Mouth (East Chevington) from 14th to month end (GB *et al.*).

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Two very late birds were at Backworth Pond on 17th (MNC).

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

On 7th 27 were over south pool at East Chevington (PRM), 12 at Holy Island Village on 2nd included an adult feeding juvenile on the wing (IK), ten over the observer's garden at Fulbeck (Morpeth) on 5th (TD), a family group of six at East Holywell with five S at Ellington on 2nd. One to four were at ten other locations with the last singles at Cheswick Dunes and East Chevington on 25th (CH/BS).

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

Eight were over the observer's garden at Fulbeck (Morpeth) on 4th (TD), six S at West Hartford on 2nd (TB), five at Rothbury on 5th (TRD/JD) with singles at Newbiggin, Cresswell Pond, St Mary's Island, Tynemouth and East Chevington from 3rd -15th, the last being Hulne Park (Alnwick) on 26th (STH).

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

A singing male was heard and briefly seen on occasion at East Chevington from 12th-25th (JBU *et al.*). Presumably the same bird was heard briefly at Druridge Pools on 20th (PRM).

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Two flocks totalling 32 birds were at Holywell Dene on 20th (ASJ). More unusually, several small groups numbering up to 30 were on the Straight Lonnen (Holy Island) from 18th-26th with a peak on 19th (IK) and a minimum of 30 were at Bamburgh on 27th (BRS). Elsewhere there were coastal flocks of 22 at East Chevington on 8th and 19 at Whitley Bay Cemetery on 20th. Counts of 13 came from Callerton Subsidence Pond on 9th and Prestwick Carr on 7th, while 12 were reported from Brierdene, Holystone and Newbiggin. Eight to ten were noted at Cramlington (Valley Park), Craster, Derwent Reservoir, Druridge Pools, Ellington, Gosforth Garden Village, Grindon Lough, Humshaugh, Leazes Park, Lynemouth and Newbiggin with seven at Furnace Bridge (Bedlington) and six at Castle Island and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.



Close up – a Long-tailed Tit on Holy Island on 15th October by Mike Car

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

On Holy Island there were singles on 1st and 3rd in the Straight Lonnen/St Coombs area (IK) with another at the Snook on 4th-5th (PRM/ADM); two were present on 6th, at Straight Lonnen and in the Churchyard and a single was at the Vicarage on 8th-9th (IK). By mid-month three to six were noted on the island from 19th-22nd with a peak on 20th (MJC/ADM/BC). Four were noted between Bamburgh and Budle Bay on 20th (GPK/MSH) and two were at Budle Point on 19th. Further counts of two came from East Chevington on 8th, St Mary's Island from 17th-19th, Craster on 19th and 25th and Low Newton from 23rd-25th. In addition, single birds were reported from St Mary's Island on 9th, Druridge Pools on 9th and 12th, Howick Hall on 14th and 19th, Cresswell, Cresswell Pond, Lynemouth and Newbiggin on 20th, Low Newton from 21st-22nd, Budle Bay on 21st and Snab Point on 23rd. An unusual inland record came from the grounds of St Cuthbert's School (Benwell Hill) on 12th (MJC).

Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus*

One was trapped and ringed at Bamburgh on 20th (BRS).

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Birds were reported from Holy Island on ten dates with a peak of 12 on 20th (MJC). Ten were at St Mary's Island on 19th (ASJ) and six well inland at Byrness on 5th, when three were also at East Cramlington LNR. Three were at Cramlington (Southfield Green) on 1st and at Craster on 2nd, with one to two reported from a further 11 coastal and 13 inland localities. Single birds showing characteristics of an **Eastern race** were at Holy Island on 15th and 18th (MJC).

A Chiffchaff by Alan Jack

27th October

St. Mary's

**Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Singles were at Holy Island on 2nd (IK) and at St Mary's Island on 19th (AC).

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

There were at least 40 at Howick Hall on 27th (PHa/AHa). Birds were noted at Holy Island on six dates from 15th-22nd with a peak of 11 on 20th (MJC) and five at Craster on 19th. Three were reported from Bamburgh, Marden Quarry (Whitley Bay) and Newbiggin on 20th, when two were also at Druridge Pools. A total of only seven were trapped and ringed at Bamburgh during the month (13 in October 2016), while elsewhere two were noted at Brierdene on 22nd and singles at Byrness on 5th, Derwent Reservoir on 26th, Druridge Pools on 7th and Newbiggin on 1st.



A Blackcap on Holy Island by Mike Carr on 20th October

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

A single was at Druridge Pools from 7th-10th, with two present on 9th (TB/TF/JFa/TRD/TD).



A Garden Warbler at Druridge by John Littleton on 10th October.

Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria*

The Newbiggin (ash lagoon bank) bird reported in September was still present on 1st (GB). Another was at Druridge Pools from 7th-10th (TF/JFa *et al.*) and a third individual was at Budle Point on 18th (GPK).

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Singles were at Craster on 19th, St Mary's Island on 24th and East Chevington on 25th (TRD/JD/ASJ).

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Four were noted at Bolam Lake and Wallington Hall. Three were feeding on Beech mast at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) during the month and three were at Holystone. Elsewhere one to two were noted at Arcot Pond, Chugdon Wood (Ellington), Kielder Water, Prestwick Carr and Rothbury.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Four were at Holystone on 27th and three at Wallington on 7th. Two were noted at Bolam Lake, while singles were reported from Chugdon Wood (Ellington), Craster, Cresswell, Derwent Reservoir, Jesmond Dene and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

40-41 were at Holy Island on 19th-20th (MJC/ADM/BCh), with 13-24 on a further five dates from 6th-22nd. Craster held 27 on 25th (MJC), while 11 were noted from Ross-Guile Point on 16th. A total of 12 were trapped and ringed at Bamburgh during the month and three were at Druridge Pools on 21st. Inland 16 were singing in the Southfield Green-Alexandra Park (Cramlington) area on 25th (DM) and six were at Furnace Bridge (Bedlington) on 30th.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

The East Chevington roost increased from 4,000+ on 7th to 10,000 by 20th (PRM/CDB). About 1,000 were at Grindon Lough on 8th (MRS) and 600 at Elishaw Bridge (Otterburn) on 29th (JR). About 500 were at Newbiggin (South Beach) on 17th (BS) and 200-300 were noted at Goswick, Harwood Forest and Prestwick Carr. Elsewhere, 180 were at Quarry Cottage, 100 at Elsdon and 30 at Cullercoats Bay.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Three were at Bakethin Reservoir on 8th (PRM), while elsewhere two were at Blanchland, Byrness, Thrum Mill and Weldon Bridge and singles at Lambley, Morpeth and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

A mid-month influx produced counts from Holy Island of 17 on 19th, 12 on 20th and six on 21st (MJC/ADM/BCh/RA). During the same period up to five (on 21st) were noted in Budle Bay (CGK/GPK), two were at Druridge Pools and Woodhorn on 20th, when singles were at Hadston and Lynemouth; singles were also reported from Tynemouth on 19th and East Chevington and Low Newton on 21st. One was again at Hadston on 23rd and another at East Chevington on 25th. Inland a male was at Grindon Lough on 18th and one was with Fieldfares on the summit of Cheviot on 26th.



a Ring Ouzel

Holy island

19th October

Mike Carr

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

A large influx on 19th produced 2,276 at Holy Island (MJC/ADM/BCh), 150+ at Budle Point (GPK) and 60+ at St Mary's Island (MSH). On the following day 100+ were at Newbiggin (PRM), 40+ at Bamburgh and 20-25 at Marden Quarry (Whitley Bay) and Woodhorn Church, while numbers on Holy Island had reduced significantly to 162. Later in the month 125 were at Craster and 30+ at Low Newton on 25th, 101 at Holy Island on 26th and 50+ at Bamburgh on 27th. Inland 41 were noted in the Southfield Green-Alexandra Park (Cramlington) area on 18th (DM). Four to 18 were reported from a further seven, mainly coastal localities.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Only modest numbers were noted arriving from mid-month, with 137 at Holy Island on 19th (MJC/ADM/BCh) and 100 at Howick Hall on 20th (PHa/AHa); 50 were at Edlingham on 21st and 50 flew W at Snods Edge on 27th. There were further modest movements of 30 at Budle Point on 19th and 18 at West Ord (Berwick) on 22nd, while elsewhere one to eight were noted at a further six localities.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

There was a significant influx on 19th when 315 were at Holy Island (MJC/ADM/BCh), 120 at Budle Point (GPK) and 100+ at Tynemouth (DRW). Thereafter numbers were much reduced with 33 at Holy Island and 20+ at Newbiggin on 20th and only 13-17 at Holy Island on 21st-22nd. Inland movement produced eight W at Arcot Pond and five S at East Cramlington LNR on 9th. One to four were reported from a further nine localities.



A Song Thrush

John Littleton

Druridge Bay

10th October

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

The 19th witnessed a huge arrival, with a co-ordinated effort producing a total of 17,260 at Holy Island (MJC/ADM/BCh/BS), where fishermen reported at least two snatched and eaten offshore by gulls (IK); elsewhere on the same day there were peak counts of 1,200 at Budle Point (GPK), 700 at Craster (TRD/JD), 650+ at St Mary's Island (MSH) and 500+ at Tynemouth (DRW), while 'hundreds' were noted arriving from the E at Howick Hall on both 19th and 20th (PHa/AHa). On 20th, 443 remained at Holy Island, 400 flew S well inland at Humshaugh, 300 were at Low Cocklaw (Berwick), 150+ at Bamburgh and 80+ at Newbiggin, while 150 were at Derwent Reservoir and 100 at Edlingham on 21st. Constant and daily passage SW involving many hundreds was witnessed over a Stamfordham garden from 18th-31st. Elsewhere, 65 were at Derwent Reservoir on 18th, 50 at Guyzance on 19th and at Plessey Woods on 12th, 40 at Corbridge on 20th-29th, 28-30+ at Big Waters, Bolam Lake, East Sleekburn, Hexham and Whitley Bay and up to 26 at a further 19 localities.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

The largest gatherings were 20 at Corbridge on 1st (RB/MB) and at Edlingham on 21st (PHa/AHa). A flock of 18 was at Bamburgh on 8th, 15 were at Howick on 23rd and seven at Arcot Pond on 9th. One to three were at a further 14 localities including singles at Holy Island (where the species is still something of a rarity) on 19th and 21st and two at St Mary's Island on 23rd, again rare here; the dates are significant in that they correspond with a large arrival of continental thrushes.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Light passage was noted at Holy Island with peak counts of 24 on 6th and 15th, 33 on 18th, 50 on 20th and 40 on 22nd (MJC/ADM). Elsewhere, 29 were at Craster on 25th (MJC), but only ten were trapped and ringed at Bamburgh during the month (50 in October 2016). Inland there were counts of 31 singing in the Southfield Green-Alexandra Park (Cramlington) area on 25th (DM), 12 were at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 20th and at Prestwick Carr on 29th, while 11 were at Furnace Bridge (Bedlington) on 30th. One to two were reported from a further four localities.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

An immature male showed well at Boulmer on 19th.

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

An adult male was at Holy Island on 1st and a juvenile there on 20th (IK).

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Two were on the Straight Lonnen (Holy Island) on 6th and presumably the same on 18th (MJC). The final record was a single bird at Boulmer on 23rd (BS).

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

This species was very well reported during the month, with peak counts of 11 in the St Mary's-Old Hartley area (ASJ), ten in the Druridge Pools area, and nine at East Chevington, Holy Island and at Ross-Guile Point. Elsewhere, four were noted at Goswick and up to three at Cocklawburn, Howick Haven, Low Newton, Newbiggin and Prestwick Carr. Two were reported from Chugdon Wood (Ellington), Grindon Lough, Lynemouth and Snab Point, while singles were also at Cheswick and Whittle Dene Reservoirs.

Wheatear *Oenanthe Oenanthe*

Three were at Holy Island on 2nd (IK), while two were noted at Boulmer, Cullernose Point, East Chevington and Newbiggin between 4th and 8th and Snook Point and Newton Point on 14th. Singles were noted at Newbiggin on 1st and 20th, Snab Point on 3rd, Stag Rocks on 4th and Cullercoats on 8th, while at East Chevington singles were reported on 12th, 14th-15th, and 25th. One was inland at Grindon Lough on 12th, with the final record from Hauxley Burn mouth on 26th.

Duncock *Prunella modularis*

A high count was made at Craster on 25th of 19 birds (MJC). 11 plus were noted at Bamburgh on 8th with 10 plus on 20th, 14 trapped there during the month (BRS). Six plus were at St. Mary's on 19th (MSH). Two to four were at three other sites.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

140 were counted at Holy Island on 18th (MJC). Up to 60 frequented a garden during the month at Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin) (RS). 40 to 50 were at Cullercoats all month (ASJ). 25 to 30 plus were at Wark on two dates (PRM) and 20 on 19th at Cullercoats Bay (IJ). 16 were in a Chapel House garden during the month, the highest count for a decade (MH).

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Southbound passage was noted on many dates this month, with the highest number being 170 through East Chevington on 8th (MJC). At St. Mary's, 24 flew S on 9th (MSH) and nine on 12th, 17 on 23rd, 31 the following day, 27 on 27th and small flocks on many other dates (ASJ). 27 also S at East Chevington on 14th (GB). 26 through Tynemouth on 20th (DRW). 73 were at Craster on 25th (MNC). Feeding flocks were noted at Brierdene Farm (Whitley Bay) - 55 on 5th, Chugdon Woods 45 on 22nd and 28th (TB) and 35 at Doddington on 29th (JD). 20 were at Haughton Strother on 20th and Fenham Le Moor on 16th and Hauxley on 7th (MR/MJC/ASJ). Eleven were at feeders at Druridge Bay CP on 2nd (DM). One to seven were noted at a further eleven sites.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Three were seen at Wark, Druridge and Craster during the month. Two flew E over Snook on 19th and one to two were noted at a further 22 sites.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrelli*

The only large count this month was of 34 at Berwick Golf Course on 1st (MHu). Nine were at St. Mary's on 14th and six at Beacon Point (Newbiggin) on 5th (ASJ/STH). Eight were at the beach at Druridge Bay C.P. on 29th (DM/LJM). One to three were at three other sites.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Conspicuous passage S this month with 77 noted at Holy Island on 6th, 28 on 15th, 122 on 18th, 160 on 19th (MJC/ADM). Elsewhere, 146 S at East Chevington on 8th and 54 on 14th (MJC/GB). 55 past Seaton Sluice on 3rd (MHp). 22 S at Gosforth Garden Village on 23rd and 17 through St. Mary's on 15th (ASJ). One to two S at three Cramlington sites on four dates during the month (DM). Two to six birds were at a further seven sites during the month.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

17 were counted across Holy Island on 22nd with the same number in Sandon Bay alone on 26th (ADM) and 11 were there on 18th (MJC). Between Ross and Guile Point on 16th, 14 birds were found (MJC). Eight were at Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) on 8th, with seven also at East Chevington that day (ASJ/MJC). Six were at St. Mary's on 11th (ASJ). One to four were at eight other locations, including a pair feeding in gardens at Cullercoats on several dates (ASJ).

Pipit sp.

Three birds heading S, calling at Snook and two at St. Lonnen (Holy Island) could not be attributed to specific species (MJC).

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

On 20th, one flew over Druridge Pools, calling at dusk and one was seen at Sandon Bay on 29th (CDB/SR).

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Huge numbers arrived at Holy Island on 19th, with observers counting 1,144 during the course of the day, most of which moved quickly towards the mainland. The following day, 168 counted, declining to 60-72, feeding in village trees by 21st and 32 on 22nd (MJC/ADM/BCH/BS/ASJ). 60 plus arrived at Budle Point on 19th (GPK). 25 flew S at Tynemouth on 20th and at Hadston on 23rd (DRW/TF/JF). 15-18 flew S at St. Mary's on 19th (MSH/ASJ). One to seven were noted at 14 further sites.

A Brambling

Alan Jack

21st October

**Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs*

35 at Craster on 25th was the month's peak (MJC). 25 birds at St. Mary's arrived and quickly moved on south on 19th (ASJ). A flock of 22 fed in Briar Dene on 26th (ASJ). Two also here on 22nd and in a Marden garden all month (IJ/ASJ).

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

One flew over the Vicar's garden at Holy Island village on 19th (MJC). As part of a record national influx, four were found in Hornbeams at Abbey Mill near Morpeth on 31st (ADMc).

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

11 at Prestwick Carr was the highest count this month (PCF). Nine were at Craster on 25th (MJC). Five at Linton on 8th and at Backworth on 24th (CDH/MNC). Four along the waggonway at Holywell on 25th and a male at St. Mary's on several dates was unusual (ASJ). Four were trapped and ringed during the month at Bamburgh. One to four were seen at a further 20 sites.

Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*

30 to 35 were feeding on Rosehips at St. Mary's on 19th (ASJ/MSH). 20 were doing likewise on 15th at Spital (Newbiggin), with ten were also there on 25th (GB/STH). Two to eight were at four other sites during the month.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Berwick held the largest flocks this month, with 110 on 9th at Spital and 84 at Cocklawburn on 19th (MHu). 80 were at Craster on 25th and 74 were counted on Snook on 6th (MJC). Also on Holy Island, 50 were noted on 4th and 30 on 15th (MJC/ADM). 40 were at Spital (Newbiggin) on 12th, declining to just four by the month's end (RS). 18 flew S at East Chevington on 8th (MJC). Two to 16 were at seven further sites.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

At the regular wintering site of Chibburn Mouth (East Chevington) numbers estimated varied throughout the month from 12 on 18th to 100 - 120 by the month's end (EC/TD *et al.*). Elsewhere, 60 were at Low Newton on 4th (SW), 40 plus at Druridge Links on 21st (MSH), 27 on Snook on 15th, with 18 there on 18th (MJC/ADM) and 25 at Hemscott Hill on 18th (TB). 15 plus were seen at Cresswell Pond on 23rd (TF/JFa). One to nine were noted at five other locations.

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis caberet*

Birds notably migrating this month, with a total of 134 observed flying S on 8th at East Chevington (MJC). Elsewhere, 29 flew south at Spital (Newbiggin) on 22nd, with 14 there the following day and 17 at St. Mary's on 19th with small parties of two to four seen migrating there on several other dates during the month, two briefly feeding in weeds (RS/ASJ). Nine at Alnmouth and seven at Craster on 25th were also moving through S, as were six at Gosforth Garden Village on 23rd (MJC). Five moved through East Cramlington on 9th (STH). Elsewhere, nine were at Prestwick Carr and at Haughton Strother on 18th and 25th respectively. One to five were seen at a further eight sites.

Mealy Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*

Six were found at Holy Island on 20th, with two present the following day and two on snook on 22nd. Four were at Craster on 25th (MJC). A single bird seen in Bamburgh dunes on 21st (CGK).

Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

27 were counted at Holystone on 27th (MJC). 20 frequented Thrunton Woods for most of the month (IBDa/KDa). 12 found at Rimside Moor (Rothbury) on 12th (JD). One to three were seen at three other inland forest sites.



A Lesser Redpoll by Chris Barlow. Druridge Pools on 19th October

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Around 200 to 300 remained in the Bamburgh G.C. area from last month's large numbers on 6th with numbers reducing during the month. 121 were trapped and ringed at Bamburgh (TM/BRS). 200 were also at Druridge Bay, along the old coal road on 11th, with 77 here on 25th (IFo/STH). 50 plus were along Crow Hall Lane (Cramlington) on 25th and 40 plus at Cresswell Pond on 3rd (MHS). One to 31 were noted at ten further locations during the month.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

61 were counted flying S at Craster on 25th (MJC). Birds passing through Spital (Newbiggin) between 19th and 23rd involved counts of 15, 18 and 41 (RS). 25 also flew S at Tynemouth on 20th (DRW). 50 were at Haughton Strother on 18th and 46 at Holystone on 27th (MR/MJC). 40 were at East Sleekburn on 27th (JR). One to 14 plus were observed at 12 other sites.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Ten were seen at Fenham le Moor on 30th, followed by a single that day (JPL/CGK/GPK/AJ). Two males and a female were at Cresswell on the beach on 24th and 25th (ADM/MH/AA/TRD/JD). Two flew S at Snook on 20th and two were at East Chevington on 23rd, with a single there on 27th and 29th (MJC/TF/JFa/TD/ASJ). One watched at Rockcliffe (Cullercoats), was found on 7th by a lady walking her dog and remained for a week (AC/ASJ). Singles flew S at Snook on 4th, 15th and 19th (PRM/MJC), and N at Tynemouth on 29th (DRW).

An welcome arrival at
Cullercoats.

A Snow Bunting on 8th
October

Alan Jack



Lapland Bunting *Emberiza lapponicus*

Two flew S at Druridge on 25th (IFo). Singles were at Holy Island at the Quarry on 18th and flying S at Snook on 21st (MJC). Further singles seen at Goswick on 26th and at Newbiggin on 30th (JD/ADMc).

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Several decent sized flocks found this month, with 42 being the largest near Old Mousen (Belford) on 21st (ASJ). 38 were at Craster on 25th and 25 in a set-aside at Doddington on 29th (MJC/JD). On 30th, 22 birds were found at Low Cocklaw (Berwick) (TBr). 15 were feeding in stubble on 19th at Callerton (MH). Five at Fenham Le Moor on 16th, three at Corbridge on 16th, two at Prestwick Carr on 7th. Possible migrants involved two at Holy Island on 19th and a single arriving at St. Mary's on 18th and Newbiggin on 20th (MJC/ASJ/GB *et al.*). Another single was seen at Beacon Lane (Cramlington).

**Little Bunting** *Emberiza pusilla*

One showed well at times near the tin church at Low Newton on 21st and 22nd (GW *et al.*).

A Little Bunting at Low Newton by Tim Dean on 22nd October



A Little Bunting at Newton Tin Church
21st October by Chris Barlow

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

30 were counted at Snook on 19th, 14 here on 7th, 12 on 18th and 19 elsewhere on Holy Island on 20th (MJC/ADM). 17 noted in the St. Mary's/Old Hartley area on 19th (ASJ). 5 were at Briar Dene Farm (Whitley Bay) on 29th (MNC). Ten plus at Old Hartley alone on 19th (MSH). Two to six at seven further sites during the month.



A Reed Bunting on Holy Island by Mike Carr on 7th October

ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN

Escapes

No sightings

Hybrids

No sightings

Birds of Unknown Origin

No sighting

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Apologies for any accidental omissions

BULLETIN COMPILATION AND PRODUCTION

This bulletin was compiled by Graeme Bowman (Mute Swan to Ruddy Duck), Steve Laing (Red Grouse to Black-necked Grebe), Trevor Blake (Honey-buzzard to Crane), Tom Brewis (Avocet to Godwit), Clive Hampton (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 Jack (Duncock to Corn Bunting).

Data Manager is Tom Brewis.

Thanks to David Sanders of NNBC for providing data.

Proof reading was by Mike Smith.

Mail distribution by Paul Stewart.

Edited by Steve Barrett NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.com

RECORD SUBMISSION

Please email records for the month to ntbc.records@googlemail.com

Please email for a copy of the standard spreadsheet and other details.

Location names and grid references: Please use of standard location names and include grid references as this 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

Annual membership costs £10 for a junior, £30 for an individual, and £32 for a family.

For membership enquiries please contact ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

If you internet bank you can pay online: please include your name in the ref. It is helpful if you email me to let me know when you've made the transfer ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

If you decide to set up a standing order please date the first payment at least a fortnight from your posting date to allow time to process with the bank. You can also set up your standing order directly with your bank if you wish; just let me know.

Finally, if you know anyone who might like to join NTBC please pass on the club information - new members are always welcome.

Jo Bentley - Hon Treasurer

NTBC WEB SITE

The club website is an excellent online resource for anyone interested in birds. There are:

Photo Galleries – Here you can view hundreds of photos of birds from Northumberland, Newcastle and North Tyneside. Members are encouraged to contribute their own photos. Simply send them to galleries@ntbc.org.uk

Sightings – Here you can view reports of birds recently reported in the County. Anyone who would like to contribute and post sightings to this page, please email sightings@ntbc.org.uk Please note this section is moderated, so there may be a short delay before your record appears.

There are also County Checklists, Records Committee updates, Information on important Surveys, useful articles and reports on Bird ID and Overseas Birding Trips....and much more...

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

New content such as Birding Trip Reports etc., is always welcome and very much appreciated.

To find out more please visit www.ntbc.org.uk

Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

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

Bulletin 2017 No 11

MONTHLY SUMMARY NOVEMBER 2017

4th January 2018



CLASSIFIED LIST HIGHLIGHTS

Greenland White-fronted Goose

Red-breasted Goose

American Wigeon

Red-crested Pochard

Ruddy Duck

White-billed Diver

Bittern

Great White Egret

Red-necked Grebe

Grey Phalarope

Spotted Redshank

Little Auk

Iceland Gull

Stock Dove

Bee-eater

Great Grey Shrike

Firecrest

Shorelark

Cetti's Warbler

Water Pipit

Hawfinch

Three were at Big Waters on 3rd.

Un-ringed Subadult at Big Waters for most of month. Unknown Origin.

Male at Elwick again on 4th. Previously seen there in eclipse on 8th October.

Pair at Big Waters from 2nd to 4th.

Female at Grindon Lough on 22nd.

Another record this autumn with one close past Seaton Sluice on 29th.

Two at Gosforth Park and a single at Branton GP on 14th.

A late record with one over Cheswick Links on 8th.

Popular long-stayer at Linton Pond stayed until 8th. Also two past Seaton Sluice.

An influx with several sightings offshore on 12th with northerly winds.

Singles at Bothal Pond & Budle Bay.

Small numbers in month with most on 12th.

Only a single seen with a first-winter on 30th past Seaton Sluice.

The impressive roost at Howdon reached 96 on 25th.

Another surprise sighting with one lingering briefly at Tynemouth on 5th.

The wintering bird was present at Prestwick Carr all month.

One at Northumberland Park on 19th.

Sightings of up to four at several localities.

Singing male still at East Chevington up to 19th.

Single again on Holy Island on 5th.

Influx as sightings of up to ten at Abbey Mill, Morpeth, also at Linden Hall and Wark.



A Guy Fawkes arrival. The Tynemouth Bee-eater by Duncan Watson on 5th November

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 11th January 2018. Tom Cadwallender on "Birding in the Americas". Some great birds from the length of the continent – the Rockies to Tierra del Fuego.

FIELD TRIPS

Contact Steve Anderson seaswan@btinternet.com

CLASSIFIED LIST

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

The largest reported counts were of 52 at Killingworth Lake on 14th (LJM), 47 at QEII CP Lake on 19th (CDH), 44 at a dusk roost at Howdon staithes (CB), and 26-31 at Big Waters and the Tweed Estuary. Elsewhere, 18 were at East Chevington north pool, and six to eight at Bothal and Linton Ponds, and Newcastle Leazes Park.

Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus*

Two flew S over Ashington on 1st (TB).

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Movement to S/SW involved 22 at Budle Bay on 11th (DF), 13 at Ross on 9th (DF), a total of 13 at Seaton Sluice on 3rd and 27th (SSWT), 12 at Ellington on 5th (TB), and ten at Newbiggin on 12th (GB). Peak counts were 47 at Fenham Mill on 11th (BS), 23 at Newton Pool on 18th (JDL), 20 at East Chevington on 19th (DM/STH/PJA), and 12-16 at West Ord (MHu) and Widdrington Moor Lake (AJ). Five to ten were also at Big Waters, Bothal Pond, Caistron, Haughton Strother GP, Hauxley Reserve, Horncliffe, and one to four at Airy Holm, Derwent and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, Druridge Bay CP, Grindon Lough

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Northward movement involved 210 at Cocklawburn on 24th (MHu), 120 at East Ord on 11th (MHu), and 43-60 at Tynemouth and Whitley Bay, while southbound birds involved 150 at Killingworth on 28th (CGK), 110 at Murton High Craggs on 26th (MHu), and 54-96 at Cramlington, Howdon and Seaton Sluice, and 250 moved W at Pegswood on 3rd (TB), and 61 W at Prestwick Carr. Large numbers in Druridge Bay included peaks of 3,500 at Druridge Lane on 19th (TB) when 1,000 were at Cresswell Pond (TB). Surprisingly few were reported from the north of the county, with 150 at Holy Island causeway (ADM), 60-100 at Budle Bay and West Fleetham, and 30 at Low Newton; in the south west, 123 were at Derwent Reservoir on 12th (IFo). A leucistic individual was at Cresswell Pond on 12th (TRD/JD).

White-fronted Goose *Anser flavirostris*

Three adults of the Greenland *flavirostris* race were at Big Waters on 3rd (TRD).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Peak counts were 860 at Haughton Strother GP on 20th (MR), at least 600 at Airy Holm Reservoir on 4th (IFo), 450 at Derwent Reservoir on 24th (PRM), 212 at East Chevington on 19th (DM/STH/PJA), and 120-182 at Big Waters (GB), Low Cocklaw (TBr) and Low Newton (TD). Counts of 33-46 came from Grindon Lough, the Tweed Estuary and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and 38 flew N at East Ord on 4th (MHu).

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Eight flew S at Ellington on 4th (TB). Grindon Lough attracted a peak of 371 on 16th (PRM) with numbers varying from 150-350 during the month. Elsewhere, 198 were at Derwent Reservoir on 1st (IFo), 140 at Killingworth Lake on 14th (LJM), 52-97 at Big Waters (GB), Bothal Pond (TD), East Chevington (DM) and West Ord (MHu), and 22 at QEII CP Lake.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

An estimated 1,500 were at Budle Bay on 6th (DF) and at nearby Ross on 26th (DF), while 400-1,000 were noted regularly in these areas between 14th-28th. The only other report was of a single at QEII CP Lake on 13th and 19th.

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

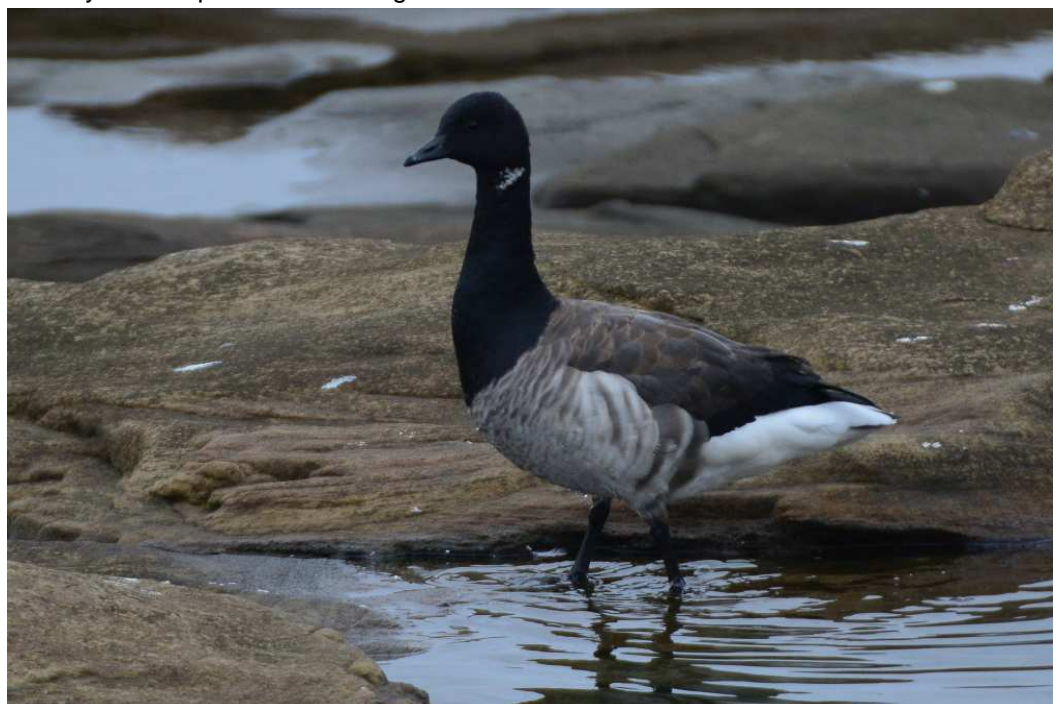
Pale-bellied *hrota* race birds included 15 N at Seaton Sluice (SSWT), eight N at North Blyth on 29th (STH), and one at Newbiggin on 3rd-4th. One un-raced bird flew N at East Chevington on 5th (SW).

A Brent Goose

Newbiggin

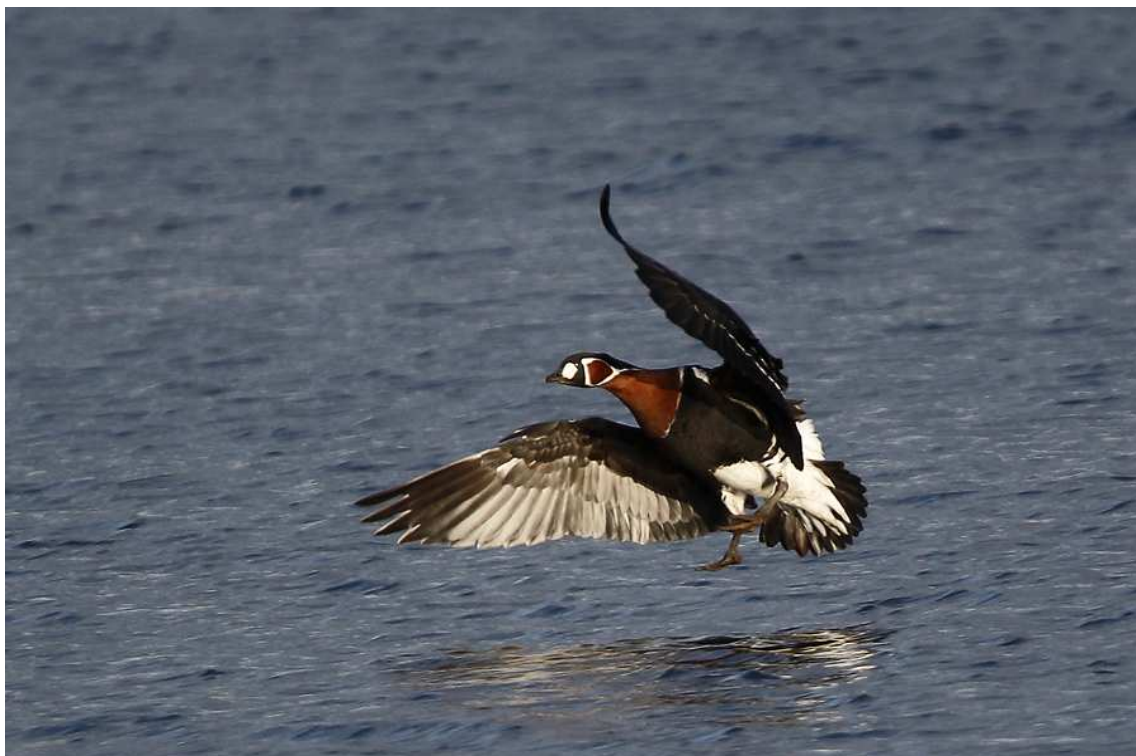
Tim Dean

3rd November



Red-breasted Goose *Branta ruficollis*

The individual of unknown origin, first noted in October 2017, was at Big Waters all month (GB/TD/TRD/PCF).



The Big Waters Red-breasted Goose lands. Chris Barlow on 3rd November

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

A total of ten flew N and two S at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT). Budle Bay held peaks of 508 on 11th (DF) and 386 on 10th (ASJ). Two were inland at Branton GP on 3rd (IBDa/KDa).

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

A drake was at Wydon Water (near Hexham) on 16th (AJH).

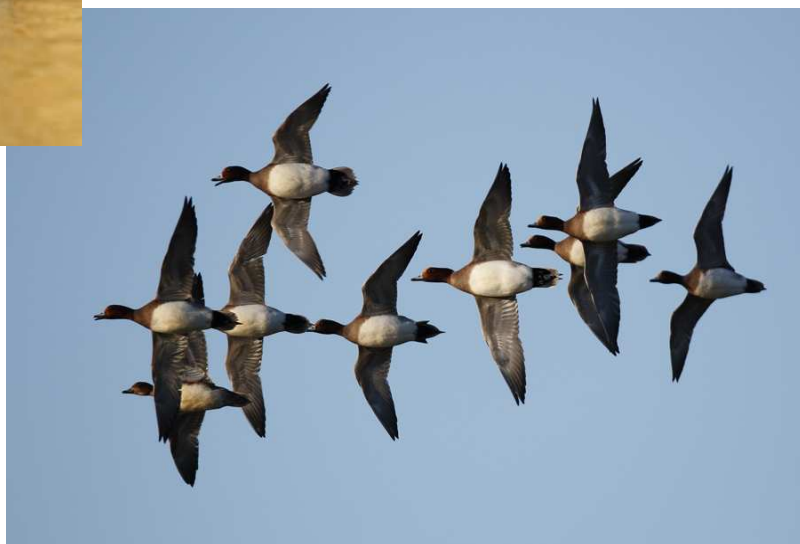
Wigeon *Anas penelope*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was 676 N and 18 S and included 215 N on 9th and 223 N on 29th-30th (SSWT). At Lindisfarne NNR, 1,400 were at the Fenham Flats section on 4th (JDL) and 800 at Budle Bay on 18th (CGK). Peak counts elsewhere involved 344 at Grindon Lough on 16th (PRM), 320 at Derwent Reservoir on 9th (IFo), 295 at Branton GP



Wigeon in November

Right: in flight at Cresswell on 26th by Chris Barlow and above: a handsome drake at Big Waters by Colin Bradshaw on 2nd



American Wigeon *Anas americana*

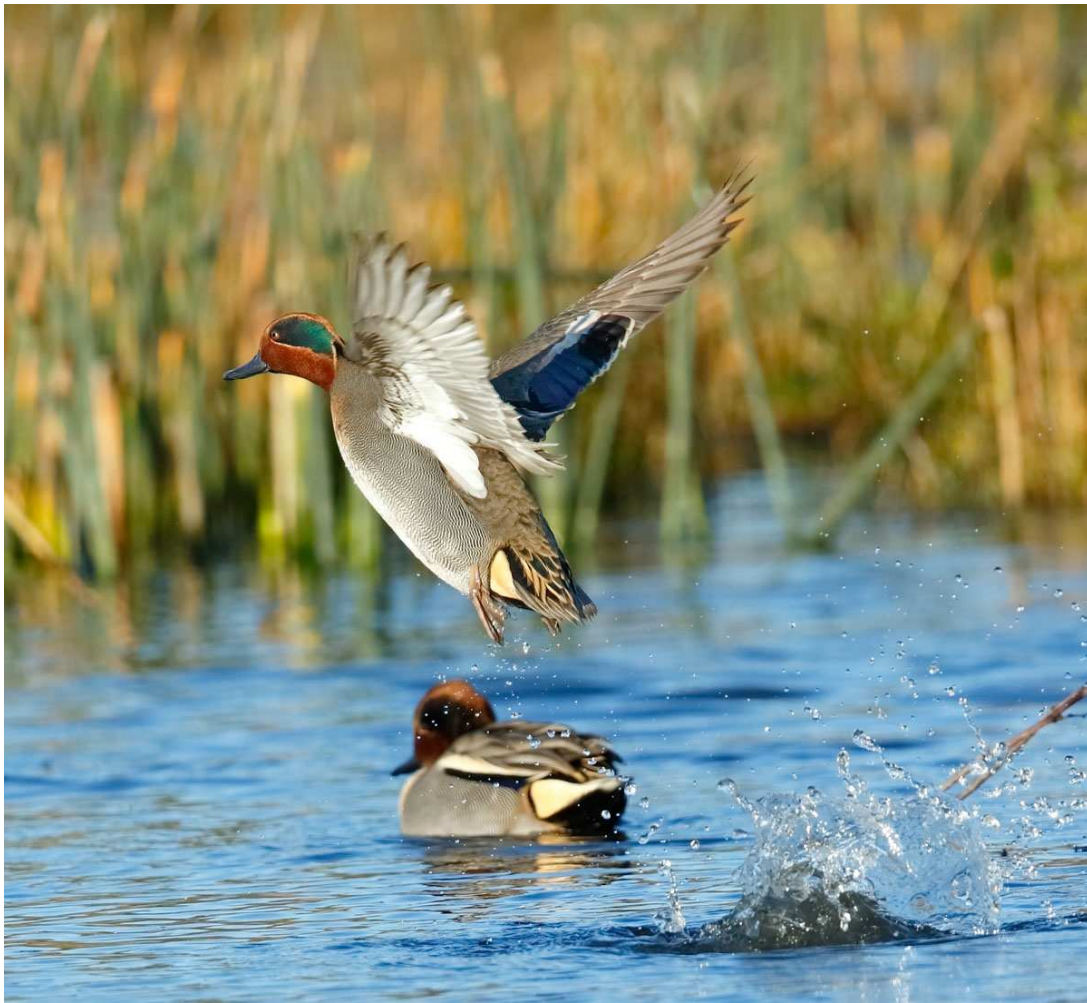
A drake at Fenham Flats on 4th had first been seen in eclipse plumage on 8th October 2017 (BS).

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Peak counts were 91 at Linton Ponds on 1st (MSH), 4th (GB/LAR) and 13th (STH), 88 at Big Waters on 19th (GB), 42 at Swallow Pond on 28th (GPK), 31-36 at Castron (JD) and East Chevington (SW), and 15-17 at Arcot Pond (STH) and Marden Quarry (KWY). Three to four were at Holy Island and Howdon, and one to two at Bothal Pond, Castle Island, Haughton Strother GP and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. A count of 26 at Fenham Flats on 4th (IBDa/KDa) was notable for the site.

Teal *Anas crecca*

An above average (for November) 580 flew N and 47 S at Seaton Sluice and included 375 N and ten S on 9th and 55 N on 30th (SSWT). Peak site counts were 264 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 25th (SR), 260 at Budle Bay on 18th (CGK), about 250 at Grindon Lough on 16th (PRM), 130-168 at Big Waters (GB), Derwent Reservoir (IFo), Howdon (CB) and West Stobswood Pool (MSH), and 75-76 at Arcot and Bothal Ponds. Counts of ten to 38 also came from Backworth and Cocklawburn Ponds, Castle Island, the Coquet and Tweed Estuaries, Haughton Strother GP, St Mary's Wetland, Whitley Bay and West Ord.



A drake Teal leaves Howdon Wetlands. Colin Bradshaw on 26th November

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

A total of 30 moved N and one S at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT). The largest counts were 210 at Derwent Reservoir on 24th (PRM), 196 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 25th (SR), 119 at Haughton Strother GP on 22nd (MR), 106 at the Tweed Estuary on 15th (MHu), and 57-82 at Bothal and Cocklawburn Ponds, and Big Waters. Counts of 21-36 also came from Allen Banks, Arcot Pond, Castle Island, Grindon Lough, Newcastle Exhibition and Leazes Parks, QEII CP Lake and Spartylea and 12-18 were at the Coquet Estuary, Haughton Strother GP and West Ord.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

One flew N at Seaton Sluice on 5th (SSWT). Only small numbers were noted at Fenham Flats, with a peak of 19 (ten drakes) on 14th (MH/AA). Three were at Budle Bay on 18th (CGK), and one to two at Big Waters, Derwent Reservoir, East Chevington and Grindon Lough. More unusually, two were at Branton GP on 5th (JD) and one on 26th (DGB).

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Swallow Pond held 54 on 6th (GPK), 42 were at East Chevington on 5th (SW), 30 at Budle Bay on 18th (CGK), 26 at Gosforth Park NR on 21st (AJ), 18 at Linton Ponds on 19th (CDH), and seven at Big Waters. Two to three were also at Bothal Pond, Grindon Lough, Marden Quarry and Monks' House Pool.

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*

A pair were at Big Waters between 2nd-4th (AJJ per GB *et al.*).



The Big Waters Red-crested Pochard pair by Tim Dean on 3rd November

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Seven were at Swallow Pond on 1st (GPK), five at West Stobswood Pool on 2nd (MSH), five at Widdrington Moor Lake on 14th (TB), three at Bothal Pond (TB) and East Chevington (NFO), and one at Linton Ponds.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

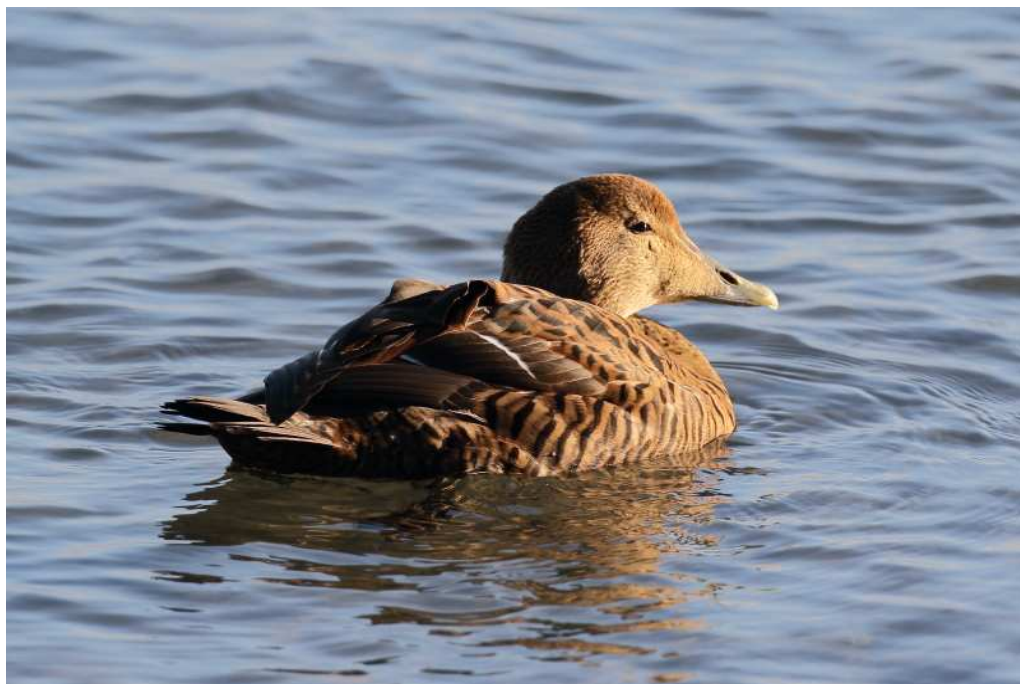
Moderate peaks involved 45 at Killingworth Lake on 30th (MSH), 40 at Swallow Pond on 26th (GPK), 26 at Grindon Lough on 24th (MRS), 20 at QEII CP Lake (CDH), and ten to 18 at Bothal and Linton Ponds, and Newcastle Exhibition Park. Six to eight were also at Big Waters, Castle Island, Cocklawburn Pond and Howdon.

Scaup *Aythya marila*

Two were at Fenham Flats on 14th (MH/AA).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was 63 N and 38 S (SSWT), and two to four moved N at Whitley Bay. Nine were at Birling Carrs (AWG) and one to four at Cullercoats and the Tweed Estuary.



A duck Eider

Seahouses harbour

Alan Jack

11th November

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

A total of nine flew N at Seaton Sluice between 27th-30th (SSWT), and singles moved N at Hadston Carrs on 12th (TF/JFa) and Tynemouth on 29th (DRW). 16 (ten drakes) were off Ross Back Sands on 6th (CH), 13 at Cheswick Sands on 2nd (CH), nine at Stag Rocks on 19th (CB) and seven at nearby Budle Point on 6th (DF). Two were at Fenham Flats on 14th (MH/AA) and Hadston Carrs on 2nd (MH/AA), and singles at East Chevington north pool and Ladyburn Lake on various dates between 3rd-27th (TB/NFO *et al.*) and off Newton on 26th (TD).

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

At Seaton Sluice, a total of 602 flew N and 97 S during the month (SSWT), and 55 N Whitley Bay on 13th (IJ). A count of 700 at Cheswick Sands on 23rd included about 85% females/immatures (CH), 160 were off Seaton Sluice on 28th (SSWT), 159 at Stag Rocks on 13th (ADM), 106 at Cambois (CH), and 34-64 at Cocklawburn and off East Chevington. Two to seven were also at Birling Carrs, Holy Island and Newbiggin.

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

A total of 17 flew N at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT), four moved N at Annstead on 13th (DF), and singles N at Tynemouth (DRW) and Whitley Bay (IJ) on 13th. Seven, including six adult drakes, were amongst 375 Common Scoters on 2nd (CH), five were off East Chevington on 27th (NFO), two off Seaton Sluice on 13th (SSWT), and singles at Holy Island (IK) and Newbiggin (TBr).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

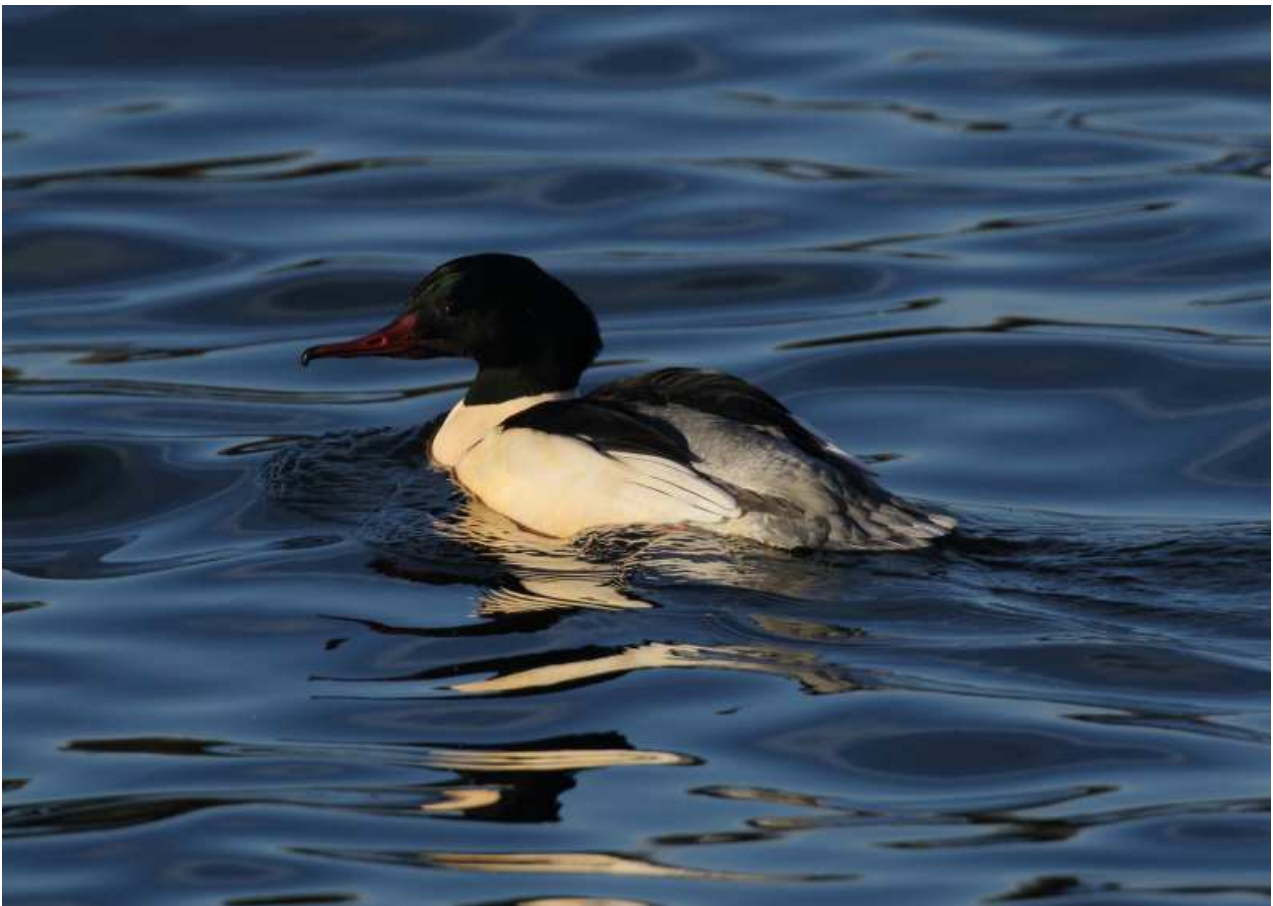
A total of 178 flew N and nine S at Seaton Sluice during the month, including 100 N on 13th (SSWT). On the latter date, 32-47 were also noted N at Annstead (DF), Tynemouth (DRW) and Whitley Bay (IJ). A total of 43 were on the River Tweed between Horncliffe-Gainslaw House on 14th (CH), 30 were in Newbiggin Bay on 13th (CH), 25 at Bolam Lake on 12th (JBu), and 11-18 at Castle Island, Derwent and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, Grindon Lough, and the Tweed Estuary. Five to eight were also at East Chevington, Football Hole, Snab Point and Widdrington Moor Lake, and three to four at Branton GP, QEII CP Lake and West Ord.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Seven flew N at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT) and one N at Whitley Bay, while 11 moved S at Holy Island on 12th with 12 further birds noted offshore (ADM). Nine were in Druridge Bay on 5th (SW), seven at Budle Point on 6th (DF), and up to four at Cresswell Pond on several dates (TB/TRD/JD).

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

A total of 12 flew N and one S at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT) and singles N at Snab Point and Tynemouth, 24 were at Tillmouth on 8th (MJC), 16 on the River Tweed between Horncliffe-Gainslaw House on 14th (CH), and three to five at Arcot Pond, Branton GP, Killingworth Lake, Warden and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. One to two were also at Caistron, Derwent Reservoir, Dilston Haughs, High Farnham, Sharperton, Thropton, Thrum Mill, Usway Burn, West Ord.



A Goosander on Killingworth Lake by Alan Jack

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*

A female was at Grindon Lough on 22nd (SJH).

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Nine were in the Breamish Valley on 5th (JD) and at Widdrington Moor Lake on 9th (JR). A visit to Upper Coquetdale on 19th produced seven at Scrainwood, a group of five at Windyhaugh car park and five also at Makendon (JR). Three were at the Rising Sun CP on 14th.

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

A minimum of 12 were at Hareshaw Common (Bellingham) on 4th (EAW). The only other reports were of one or two birds at Addycombe and Lordenshaw.

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

Present all month at Spartylea with numbers varying between four to 15 (CT). A single male was at Derwent Reservoir, in a pasture near the Sailing Club, on 12th and 14th (IFo).

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

12 were at Letham (Berwick) on 18th (TBr) and one to nine were at six other locations including a noteworthy single at Holy Island.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

27 were at Scrainwood on 19th (JR) and eight at Spartylea all month (CT).

Diver *sp*

Four distant singles flew S past Newbiggin on 12th (GB).

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

The total for the month at Seaton Sluice was below average, with 68 N and 44 S (SSWT). At Druridge Bay a total of 17 were counted on the sea on 5th (SW) and the highest count at Cheswick Sands was 15 on 8th (CH). 12 were at Holy Island on 14th (SR) and one to six were recorded from many locations throughout the whole of the coastal area.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

Singles were spotted at the coast throughout the month at Annstead, Boulmer, Brown's Bay (Whitley Bay), Seaton Sluice and Tynemouth and inland at Derwent Reservoir on 3rd (IFo).

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

November as usual proved to be a good month for this species with a monthly total of five N and four S past Seaton Sluice (SSWT), four S past Newbiggin Church Point on 13th (ADMc), three off Snipe Point (Holy Island) on 14th which included one bird in summer plumage (SR) and one to two seen at several other coastal locations. One, a first winter bird, was well inland at Derwent Reservoir from 14th-19th (IFo).

White-billed Diver *Gavia adamsii*

One flew N past Seaton Sluice watch Tower at 09:24 on 29th (MH/TRC).

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

All records were on 12th with three N past Seaton Sluice, one N at Cullernose Point (Craster) and a single N past Snab Point (Cresswell).

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

Good numbers were observed on passage throughout the month with 300 N, 60 S past Seaton Sluice in two hours on 7th, 167 N, mainly adults, there on 22nd and 60 N on 29th (SSWT). Other recorders registered 28 S and two N past Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) in 45 minutes on 12th (ADM), a minimum of 20 N at St Mary's on 12th (CGK/AJ) and 16 N past North Blyth between 1330-1500 on 29th (STH). One to eight were noted from other locations.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

57 were at Howdon Staithes on 1st (CB), 35 were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 8th (SR) and 22 were roosting at Meadow Haven (Berwick) on 1st (MHu). Five continental *sinensis* birds were included in a total of 15 present at QE11 CP Lake on 13th (STH) and one to 12 were at several other locations.

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

There were two spells of light movement at Seaton Sluice with four N, 13 S between 12-14th and 11 N, three S between 27th-28th (SSWT). The Meadow Haven (Berwick) roost held 18 on 1st and eight on 13th (MHu), three were at Snab Point (Cresswell) on 12th and Calot Shad (Tweed Estuary) on 15th and one flew N at Rockcliffe on 13th.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Two were seen from the Ridley Hide at Gosforth Park NR on 27th (JBu) and one was at Branton GP on 14th (IBDa/KDa).

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Numbers greatly reduced from the high summer totals with a maximum of only four at Fenham Flats on 4th (JDL) and three at Budle Bay on 18th (CGK). Three were also at Warkworth Lane (Ellington) on 14th (MJC) and one to two were at many other localities.



A Little Egret at Holy Island
Alan Jack on 11th November

Great White Egret

One flew SSE along Cheswick Links on 8th (CH).

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

The largest concentration was 19 present during a WeBS count in the Tweed Estuary on 15th (MHu) followed by 14 in the heronry at Howdon on 1st (CB). Nine were in the Blyth Estuary on 15th (LJM) and one to eight were at seven other sites. One at Cresswell Pond on 21st was caked in coal dust, possibly after foraging on the beach at Snab Point where there was a considerable amount of coal (TRD).

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Castle Island (River Wansbeck) proved very popular with a peak of 28 there on 19th (PRM). 13 were present during a WeBS count at Caistron, also on 19th (JD) and totals of 12 came from Swallow Pond on 1st (GPK) and on the River Tweed between Horncliffe-Gainslaw House on 14th (CH). One to eight were at Arcot Pond, Big Waters NWT, Bothal Pond (Coney Garth), Branton GP, Budle Bay, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Bay CP, East Chevington, Grindon Lough, Hauxley NWT, Linton Ponds, Long Nanny, Marden Quarry, QE11 CP Lake, Rothbury, Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth) and West Ord.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

The peak count this month was three at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 8th (SR) and one to two were at several other sites.

Red-Necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was two N (SSWT) and the Linton Ponds individual from last month remained from 1st to 8th (TB/GB/STH/TRD/JD).

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

Six were at Budle Point on 6th (DF) and four were at both Ross Back Sands (BS) and Stag Rocks (DGB/CB) on 19th. One to two were seen at East Chevington North Pool, Holy Island and Snab Point (Cresswell).

Red Kite *Milvus Milvus*

Only record this month came from Derwent Reservoir on 7th with a bird carrying the head from a nearby Greylag Goose *Anser anser* carcass to a tree stump where it ate the contents and flew off, not returning to the carcass which still had plenty of meat left on it (IFo).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

A juvenile was noted at Bell's pond, Druridge Pools and East Chevington on 2nd (MH).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Ringtail/females were noted at four sites, another un-aged/unsexed bird was at another site and a grey male was seen at another site on 29th (MH et al.).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

An unsexed bird was seen near Wooler from 8th until 10th (per NNBC); three other birds were noted at sites on 21st, 28th and 30th (MH/AA).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Two birds were at Abbey Mills (Morpeth) on 4th (GB) and two were also noted over the observer's garden at Fulbeck (Morpeth) on 6th (TD). Single birds were seen at 24 sites during the month.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Nine birds were attracted to the hillside drafts at Lucker Moor on 5th (MH). Five birds were noted within a 1km radius at Letham (Berwick) on 18th (TBr) and five were in the air together at Lambley Viaduct on 25th (SJH). Four birds were seen at Prestwick Carr on 5th (PCF) and at Milkwell (Corbridge) on 11th (RB/MB). One – three birds were at 16 sites.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Three birds were calling in different areas at East Chevington on 21st (TRD) and two birds were at Backworth on several dates (CGK) and at East Chevington on 19th (TB). Single birds were noted at Arcot Pond, Backworth, Big Waters NWT, East Chevington, Gosforth Park NR, Haughton Strother GPs (Humshaugh), Prestwick Carr and Swallow Pond (Wallsend).

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

21 birds were at Castle Island (Ashington) during a WeBS count on 19th (DM/STH/PJA). 15 were at Druridge Bay CP on 28th (LJM) and 14 were noted at QEII CP on 19th (CDH). Ten birds were at Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 6th (DM). One to seven was at Arcot Pond, Haughton Castle, Jesmond Dene (Newcastle), Leazes Park (Newcastle) and at Linton Ponds.

Coot *Fulica atra*

Big Waters NWT once again had the highest count with 102 birds present on 19th (GB). 29 birds were at Linton Ponds on 19th (CDH) and 12 were at Leazes Park (Newcastle) on 5th (DM). One to nine birds were noted at Bothal Pond, Grindon Lough and at QEII CP.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

A single bird was present at Monks' House Pool for the first three days of the month (DF).

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

The largest count was of 162 during a high-tide roost at St Mary's on 29th (ASJ). A roost of 110 birds was at Ladies Skerr (Berwick) on 1st (MHu) and a count of 86 was made at Budle Bay on 18th (CGK). Counts of ten to 28 came from the Tweed Estuary on 15th (28), Cullercoats Bay on 25th (20), Coquet Estuary on 19th (13) and Rockcliffe on 25th (ten). Smaller counts came from Derwent Reservoir and Warkworth.

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

A flock of ca.2,000 was at St Mary's on 1st (ASJ) and ca.1,200 were at Chare Ends, Holy Island on 23rd (ADM) with a minimum of 1,000 at Budle Bay on 24th (DF). Other sizeable counts were 900-1,000 at Warkworth Harbour on 23rd (CSa), 900+ at Grindon Lough on 23rd, a number which had steadily increased from 677 on 1st (PRM), 600 flying north at Tynemouth on 3rd (DRW) and the same number at Derwent Reservoir between 6th and 14th before declining to 410 by 24th (IFo) and 110-130 roosting at dusk in a cereal field near Longhorsley on 16th (AB/LB). Smaller counts came from Blyth (Laverock Hall), Cocklawburn, Cullercoats Bay, Druridge, Ellington, Monkridge Hall, Murton High Crag, Newcastle (Jesmond), Prestwick Carr and Weldon Bridge.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

On 18th there were 135 birds at Budle Bay (CGK) which was by far the largest count of the month. Nearby Fenham Flats held 68 on 14th (MH/AA), a roost of 12 was seen at Berwick (Ladies Skerr) on 1st (MHu) and five were recorded at Birling Carrs (Warkworth) on 19th (AWG). Smaller counts came from Cocklawburn, Coquet estuary, Cresswell (Snab Point) and Newbiggin.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

An estimate of 1,550-1,650 was made at Grindon Lough on 22nd (SJH) and a minimum of 1,600 were estimated at the same location on 24th (PRM). Derwent Reservoir had a count of 1,000 on 5th which was an increase on the 500 counted on 1st (IFo). For much of the month ca. 1,000 were present at Budle Bay (CGK) while the maximum count at St Mary's was 425 on 10th (ASJ). Other counts of over 100 were from Whittle Dene Reservoir (260 on 4th, SR), Cocklawburn (214 on 2nd, MHu), Coquet Estuary (206, 19th, AWG), Humshaugh, Houghton Strother GP (135 on 3rd, MR), Blyth, Horton (120 on 2nd, TB) and Bothal Pond (180 on 5th, TD). Smaller counts came from Big Waters NWT, Blyth (Horton), Blyth (Laverock Hall), nr Otterburn; Ulgham, Wark (North Tyne) and West Hartford.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Surprisingly, there were only four records. These were 30 at Budle Bay on 18th (CGK), 24 at Beacon Point, Newbiggin on 4th (CDB), eight at Cresswell Ices on 21st (TRD) and five at Cresswell (Snab Point) on 12th (TRD/JD).

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

St Mary's had the largest count at 76 on 10th (ASJ) and Cocklawburn had 72 on 2nd and the Tweed Estuary had 62 on 5th (MHu). Howdon had counts of 46 to 58 between 1st and 6th (CB), 32 were counted near the Tweed between the A1 and the Scottish Border on 16th (TBr) and 26 roosted at Ladies Skerr (Berwick) on 1st (MHu). Other, smaller counts came from Big Waters NWT, Callerton subsidence area, Coquet Estuary and Cullercoats Bay.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Five birds were seen at Holy Island Rocket Field on 5th (IK), three in the Coquet Estuary on 19th (AWG) and two at Monks' House Pool on 21st (DGB). Singles were reported from Budle Bay, Fenham-le-Moor, Howdon and Newbiggin, Beacon Point.



A Bar-tailed Godwit at Newbiggin
Chris Barlow on 11th November

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Lindisfarne NNR Beal Point had by far the largest count with 472 on 12th (CH). Thirty birds were counted at Budle Bay on 18th (CGK) and 19 flew north on 30th at Seaton Sluice (SSWT). Four were at Berwick, Ladies Skerr on 1st (MHu) and a single was recorded at Newbiggin, Beacon Point on 4th.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

The north of the county provided the highest counts with 42 at Berwick Little Beach on 1st (MHu). Four at Cocklawburn on 2nd increased to 32 by 24th (MHu). Twelve were reported from Birling Carrs (Warkworth) on 19th and the same number on the same date was at the River Coquet Estuary (AWG). One to nine were seen at Cresswell (Ices and Snab Point), Cullercoats, Newbiggin, Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) and the River Tweed Estuary.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Very scarce this month. A total of 42 N was reported from 29th-30th at Seaton Sluice (SSWT). 42 were at Birling Carrs on 19th (AWG) and a very low count of ten from Budle Bay on 18th (CGK) were the only reports received.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Lingering singles were seen at Grindon Lough from 1st-24th (PRM) and at the River Tweed Estuary on 15th (MHu).

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Numbers were reduced this month as birds moved on with no reports received from St Mary's Island which has held significant numbers of birds in previous months. The highest count was of 85 reported from Hadston Carrs (Druridge Bay) on 2nd (MH) and 80 were reported from Boulmer on 24th (AB/LB). At Budle Bay, 60 were present on 18th (CGK) and the same number was reported from Beacon Point, Newbiggin on 4th (CDB). Other counts were 16 at Berwick Little Beach on 16th, seven at Cresswell Ices on 21st, six at Cocklawburn on 2nd and a single at Rockcliffe on 25th.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Passage was noted at Seaton Sluice from 29th-30th when 255 flew N (SSWT). Numbers at Budle Bay increased from last month with a maximum of 1,700 counted on 18th (CGK). The only other three-figure count was 125 at the River Coquet Estuary on 19th (AWG). Elsewhere, 34 were at Berwick Little Beach on 1st, 18 at Newbiggin on 4th and 15 at Cresswell Ices on 21st. Late inland passage was noted at Derwent Reservoir with 15 on 9th (the highest daily count of the year here) and 12 at Grindon Lough on 24th (IFo/TRD). One to six were at Snab Point (Cresswell), Druridge, Haughton Strother GP, Low Newton, Murton (North Tyneside), Newbiggin and the River Tweed Estuary.



A Dunlin
Newbiggin
Chris Barlow
11th November

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

The favoured haunt of Stag Rocks attracted a notable maximum of 176 on 10th (ASJ). Much smaller numbers were seen at other localities with 26 at Birling Carrs and North Blyth (AWG/STH), 24 at Ladies Skerr (Berwick) on 1st (MHu) and 24 at Tynemouth Pier on 11th (DRW). One to ten were seen at Brown's Bay (Cullercoats), Cheswick Black Rocks, Cocklawburn, Cresswell, Hadston Carrs, Holy Island, Newbiggin, Rockcliffe and Seaton Sluice Watchtower during the month.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

An adult was seen at Fenham Mill (Lindisfarne) on 5th (BS).

Grey Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius*

Two birds were seen at Snab Point (Cresswell) on 12th (TF/JFa/ADMc) one of which was seen flying N (JD). Probably the same bird flew N at Cullernose Point at 1600h (BS). A single on the Durham side of the Tyne Estuary was viewed from Tynemouth on 6th (JBu).

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Some regular wintering sites were occupied with two at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 8th (SR), Hedgeley GP on 12th (IBDa/KDa) and Caistron on 19th (JD). A single was at Branton GP on 11th (IBDa/KDa).

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

The bird reported last month at Bothal Pond was last reported on 14th (TB). An adult was also seen in Budle Bay on 18th (CGK).

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Two singles were reported, at Beal on 7th (DF) and Budle Bay on 18th (CGK).

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Budle Bay held 300 on 18th which was an increase of 90 on October's maximum count. The other major counts came from riverside locations with 261 at Howdon (River Tyne) on 25th (CB), 212 at the River Tweed Estuary on 15th (MHu) and 88 at the River Coquet Estuary on 19th (AWG). Smaller numbers were noted at Berwick Little Beach with 38 on 1st, at Rockcliffe where 22 were seen on 25th and 20 were at Cullercoats the same day. There were 18 on the River Tweed (A1-Border) and 16 at a roost at Ladies Skerr (Berwick). At Brown's Bay (Cullercoats), 13 were seen on 25th and a single was at Birling Carrs (Warkworth). Inland, six were reported from Bothal Pond and singles were at Backworth, Big Waters NWT (a local scarcity) and Grindon Lough.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Singles were seen at Arcot Lane Flash on 19th and Arcot Pond on 23rd (DM/STH).

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Immigration was suggested with increased reports particularly from coastal areas. Singles were seen coming in off the sea at Newbiggin Moor on 9th and Snab Point on 12th (ADMc). The highest counts came from inland with five at Longhorsley Moor on 18th (AB/LB) and three at Gosforth on 4th (MJC). Single birds were seen on Holy Island during the month at The Snook, Straight Lonnen, flying across the Vicarage lawn and flying through village gardens (ADM/IK). Two were seen in flight during the early evening at Northumberlandia (Cramlington) on 16th (STH) and two were also at Chillingham on 15th (AJR). Singles were reported from Arcot Pond, Backworth, Chugdon Wood (Ellington), Longhoughton Steel (lurking in nettles behind a bench), Lynemouth Village (flying over the observer's car bonnet), Northumberland Park (North Shields), Shiremoor, Stag Rocks (feeding on the road at first light), Tynemouth and Windyhaugh car park.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

There were significant concentrations at three sites with Haughton Strother GP attracting 59 on 3rd (MR). Callerton subsidence area held 41 on 9th (MH) and 34 were recorded at West Hartford on 24th (STH). Nine were seen at Arcot Pond on 23rd (STH) and three were at Arcot Lane Flash on 19th (ADMc). A 'poor' monthly maximum of nine was noted at Backworth on 26th (CGK) and six were reported from Grindon Lough on 10th (PRM). One to five were at Big Waters NWT, Bothal Pond, Budle Bay, Caistron, Druridge Pools, Longhorsley Moor and Spartylea.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

One flew S at Emmanuel Head (Holy Island) at mid-day on 14th (SR).

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

One flew N at St Mary's Island on 12th (CGK/AJ).

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

One flew N at Snab Point (Cresswell) on 12th (TF/JFa).

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

One was on the sea at Boulmer on 25th (BS).

Guillemot *Uria aalge*/**Razorbill** *Alca torda*

Two noticeable movements were recorded at Seaton Sluice, mainly Guillemot, comprising 260 N in two hours on 2nd and 300 N in seven hours on 29th (SSWT).

Razorbill *Alca torda*

Two were on the sea at Rockcliffe and Brown's Bay on 13th and 30th (IJ).

Little Auk *Alle alle*

Strong northerly winds brought this species into the North Sea from 12th-14th, recorded passing N in small numbers at coastal sites as they returned to their wintering areas. The main movement was on 12th when a total of 28 were counted passing Cresswell Snab Point (TF/JFa/TRD/JD/ADMc), with eight seen at Cullernose Point (BS), six at Newbiggin (GB), four at Tynemouth (DRW), three at Seaton Sluice (SSWT) and one or two at Druridge Bay, Holy Island and St Mary's. Four were noted on 13th at Newbiggin (ADMc) with singles elsewhere on 13th-14th at Annstead, North Shields and Tynemouth and on three later dates between 17th-29th. One to four were at Boulmer, Newbiggin, North Blyth and Snab Point. One drifting slowly on the river at North Shields on 14th was taken by a hungry Great Black-backed Gull (AJ)

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

At least 100 moved N in Brown's Bay on 30th (IJ), five were at Snab Point on 12th (TRD/JD) and four at Rockcliffe on 13th (IJ).

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

A very late-staying 1st-winter bird, almost certainly the individual recorded at the end of October, was again seen at Beacon Point, Newbiggin on 3rd and 4th (CDB/TB).

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

No significant movements were reported from Seaton Sluice, with a maximum count of 45 N on 29th (SSWT) and the same movement was reported from Newbiggin, when 44 flew N in one and a half hours (STH). On the previous day, 28th, 30 moved N in half a hour at St Mary's Island (MSH) and further north, on 5th, ten moved N into a strong wind at Berwick Pier (MHu).

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

The evening gull roost at Derwent Reservoir held at least 3,300 on 24th (PRM) and smaller three-figure counts elsewhere, on various dates, were 276 at Howdon (GB), 262 in the River Tweed Estuary (MHu), 215 on the QEII CP Lake (CDH) and 100 in Jesmond Dene (MJCo). Counts of up to 30 came from Bothal Pond, Brown's Bay, Cullercoats Bay, Grindon Lough, Rockcliffe, Whitley Bay and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. A Norwegian-ringed individual at the QEII CP Lake carried a green ring JN35 (CDB).



The Norwegian-ringed Black-headed Gull at QEII CP Lake
Chris Barlow on 26th November

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

An adult and an immature flew N into strong winds at Berwick Pier on 5th (MHu) and a single adult was at Ross Back Sands on 19th (BS).

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

The monthly total recorded passing Seaton Sluice was 6N and 2S (SSWT). Numbers at Newbiggin declined from the high autumn peak to a maximum of 13 on 23rd, feeding on the school playing field (STH) and on 13th, 12, including 11 adults, were in South Bay (CH). Three adults and one 1st-winter fed regularly throughout on wholemeal bread in a cliff-top garden at Spittal, Newbiggin (BS). One to three were reported from Cambois, Castle Island, East Chevington, Holy Island, North Blyth, the River Tyne at Millenium Bridge and Swallow Pond.

Common Gull *Larus canus*

The Derwent Reservoir gull roost included around 6,200 on 24th (PRM) and 118 were at Grindon Lough on 22nd (SJH) with smaller numbers of up to 80 present elsewhere at eight localities, Alnham, Arcot Pond, Castle Island, Cullercoats, Glanton, Howdon, the River Tweed Estuary and Whittle Dene Reservoirs (JR/PRM/DM/MHu/IJ/CB).

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

Three were at Castle Island (DM), two at Cramlington, Derwent Reservoir, Grindon Lough, and Ladyburn Lake (IFo/SJH/PRM/LJM) with singles at Big Waters, Swallow Pond, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and Widdrington Moor Lake (GB/GPK/BS/PRM).

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argenteus*

Linton Ponds held 295 on 19th (CDH), 216 were in the Tweed Estuary (MHu), 168 at Castle Island (DM) and 142 at the QEII CP Lake (CDH). Elsewhere, ten to 15 were at Bothal Pond, Cullercoats Bay and Rockcliffe with up to seven at eight other sites.

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucooides*

A 1st-winter bird flying N at Seaton Sluice on 30th (SSWT) was the only record.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

Two reports of immature birds, a 1st-winter and a 2nd-winter, on 11th and 12th both flying N, at Tynemouth and Snab Point respectively (DRW/TF/JFa).

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

A movement N of 300, mainly adult birds, was observed at Seaton Sluice on 30th (SSWT) and counts elsewhere comprised 99 at Newbiggin (STH), 69 at Castle Island (DM/STH/PJA), up to 57 at Linton Ponds (CDH/MSH), 49 at East Chevington (DM/STH/PJA), 15 at Derwent Reservoir (PRM) and 12 at the QEII CP Lake (CDH). One to two were also at Brown's Bay, Grindon Lough and Rockcliffe.

Rock Dove *Colomba livia*

Present at Jesmond Dene during the month (MJCo).

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Pre-roost gatherings at Howdon of 96 on 25th and 88 on 1st (CB) with lower numbers elsewhere of five at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 24th, three on 18th (TB) and one to two there and at Berwick, Druridge Lane, Jesmond and Haughton Castle.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

A flying flock of 450 at Kiln Pit Hill on 1st (IFo), 300 at Letah Wood (Hexham) on 11th (AJH), 26 pre-roost at Howdon on 1st, a peak of 16 at Brierdene (Whitley Bay) on 18th and four to six at Jesmond Dene and Spartylea.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

On 1st 22 were at Saltwick (near Morpeth) (PCF), 17 flushed by Sparrowhawk at Fenham le Moor farm on 14th (MH/AA), 12 at Greenside Rest Centre (Wideopen) on 20th and at Wark (N.Tyne) on 23rd with two all month at Spartylea.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

All reports were of single birds at Humshaugh on 3rd, Fair Moor (Morpeth) on 9th, Ellington on 10th, Prestwick Carr on 14th and Spartylea on 19th.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Two were at Derwent Reservoir on 13th with singles there on 5th, 9th and 12th (IFo) the only other report being one at Druridge Lane on 19th (TB).

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

There was a single report of one all month at Spartylea (CT).

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

On 5th at 6.52am one flew across the A1 in the dark at the Longhirst turn off and one was at Straight Lonnen (Holy Island) on 9th (ADM).

Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*

A juvenile found by P Cassells at the pier bushes Tynemouth on 5th at 10.45-11.05h flew over Front Street at 11.40 (DRW).

The Tynemouth Bee-eater by Duncan Watson on 5th November

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

The only double-figure counts were two at Haughton Strother GP on 13th (MR) and Jesmond Dene on 26th (MJCo) with singles at 15 inland locations and six coastal including regular sightings at Swallow Pond and East Chevington N. Pool.



Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Two were heard at Dukeshouse (Hexham) on 21st (AJH) with singles were seen in flight at West Hartford on 2nd (TB) and at Tyne Riverside CP (Newburn) on 9th (SR).

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Two were present all month at Spartylea (CT), Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 11th (TB) and visited a garden feeder at Tynemouth on 15th (CB). Singles were regularly at Valley Park (Cramlington) and 12 other widespread localities.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Four birds were in the West Simonsides on 11th (MH) and three were at Simonburn Common on 30th (MH). One in Paddy Freeman's (Newcastle) on 26th was the first sighting there since 2015 (MJC). Two birds were seen at Grindon Lough on 15th (PRM) and at Ulgham (JR) and at Hepple (SW) on 25th. Single birds were seen at 24 sites.



Two views of a Kestrel

Beal

11th November

Alan Jack



Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Two birds were at Budle Bay on 18th (CGK). Single birds were at Beal Point, Bellingham, Boulmer, Craster, Derwent Reservoir, Fenham Flats, Glororum, Holy Island, Quarry House Moor, and QEII CP and at West Stobswood Pool.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Two birds were seen on Holy Island on 14th (SR) and single birds were at Abbey Mill (Morpeth) on 1st (ADM), Derwent Reservoir on 12th (IFo), Widdrington Moor Lake on 13th (AJ), Cocklawburn on 14th (MHu), Horncliffe on 21st (JDL), Cresswell Pond on 23rd (ADM), Rockcliffe on 25th (IJ), Grindon Lough on 26th (SJH) and at Howdon on 27th (CB).

Ring-necked Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

At Nuns Moor Allotments (Newcastle) ten were present on 22nd while six to seven went overhead at Shields Road (Byker) on 12th (RC) and four flew NW there on 28th (CGK).

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*

What was presumably the regular wintering individual was found at Prestwick Carr on 4th (MH) and remained there all month being reported on 17th and 26th (CB/PCF).

Magpie *Pica pica*

A roost at Northumberlandia (Cramlington) held 26 on 16th (STH), 22 were at Howdon on 1st and 19 on 25th (CB) with ten at Beacon Hill and Valley Park (Cramlington) on 11th (DM) and one to five at four other locations.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Highest counts were four at Addeycombe (Rothbury) on 2nd (JD) and Abbey Mill (Morpeth) on 3rd and 6th (TB/MJC). Two were at Derwent Reservoir, Haughton Castle, Sharperton and Widdrington Moor Lake with singles at 13 further widespread locations.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Some large flocks were noted with the peak 400 in flight at Derwent Reservoir on 8th (IFo), 300 pre-roost at Prestwick Carr on 14th, 250 moving S at Arcot Pond on 23rd (STH), 200 at Hexham on 30th (AJH), 180 at Whittle Dene on 19th (SR) and 150 at Low Cocklaw (Berwick) on 18th (TBr). Two to 30 were at Gosforth, Jesmond Dene and Whitley Bay.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

There was just one report of around 200 with Jackdaws in an emerging crop at Low Cocklaw (Berwick) on 18th (TBr).



A Carrion Crow has a crab lunch at Hauxley
Chris Barlow on 27th November

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Six at Jesmond Dene on 19th was the highest count (MJCo). Two to four were at Brierdene (Whitley Bay) and two at Cullercoats (IJ).

Raven *Corvus corax*

Two tumbled over Darden Burn (West Simonsides) on 11th (MH) and two were at Usway Burn (near Shillmoor) on 19th

(IRD) with one at Addycombe (Rothbury) on 2nd (JD).

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Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

More than six were at Harwood Burn on 4th (MSH), four at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 11th (DM) with three to five at Holy Island between 2nd and 8th (ADM/MJC). Three were at Prestwick Car, Windyhaugh Car Park and Whitley Bay with one to two at 13 other widespread localities.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus*

The individual remained at Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 19th (DRW).

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

21 were found in 1km stretch of hedgerow at Low Cocklaw (Berwick) on 15th (TBr), 13 at Brierdene (Whitley Bay) on 18th and at Ulgham on 25th (IJ/JR) and four to 12 at Spartylea during the month (CT). Two to ten were at Jesmond Dene, Windyhaugh Car Park and Whitley Bay.



Three resident members of the tit family at Howdon Wetland on 26th November.

Blue
Great
Coal

Colin Bradshaw



Great Tit *Parus major*

At Spartylea four to six were present during the month (CT), four at Jesmond Dene on 12th (MJCo) and singles at Brierdene (Whitley Bay) on 18th and 26th.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

On 29th 19 were at Holywell Dene with 17 at Bolam on 18th (ASJ), four to 12 seen all month at Spartylea (CT), five at Windyhaugh Car Park on 19th (JR), four on garden feeders at Tynemouth on 6th (CB) with one to three at six other locations.

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

Three were found at Big Waters on 4th (TD) with two at Prestwick Carr on 1st and Derwent Reservoir on 8th (PCF/IFo). One came to feeders regularly at Rothbury during the month regarded as unusual here (TRD/JD) with singles also at Linton Ponds, Longhorsley, Wallington and Whitley Bay.



A Willow Tit in a Rothbury garden
1st November by Janet Dean

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

A total of five found at Abbey Mill / Whorall Bank (Morpeth) on 6th (MJC), two at Letah Wood (Hexham) on 11th (AJH) with singles at three locations in Rothbury, Linden Hall (Longhorsley) and Scotch Gill Woods (Morpeth).

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

High counts from Beaconhill (Cramlington) with 28 on 11th and 25 on 14th (DM/STH), 24 at St Mary's Island on 12th (ASJ), ten at Glorum on 14th (MH/AA) with two to three at Arcot Pond and Grindon Lough.

Shore Lark *Eremophila alpestris*

One at Chevington Burn mouth on 1st increased to four by 23rd with four also at Long Nanny (Newton) on 26th (AB/LB/CSa/TD) with one in off at Snab Point (Cresswell) on 12th (TF/JFa).

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

At the Snook (Holy Island) on 2nd one flew N into a strong wind. (ADM).

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

One flew S at Tynemouth on 5th (DRW).

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

The bird reported last month at East Chevington was still present to at least 19th (MH/AA/TB).

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

There were plenty of sizeable gatherings this month, the largest of which was 21 at Dukeshouse (Hexham) on 21st (AJH); 16-20 were at East Sleekburn on 3rd and 13th and a total of 18 at Amble-Birling Carrs on 18th. Flocks of 12-14 were noted at Backworth, Corbridge, Prestwick Carr and Windyhaugh, while ten to 11 were reported from Big Waters, Chugdon Wood (Ellington), Cramlington, East Chevington, Haughton Strother (Humshaugh), Prestwick Carr, Tynemouth and Woolsington. More unusual were counts of six to nine at Holy Island on 2nd, 8th and 23rd. Up to nine were reported from nine localities.



A Barred Warbler at Druridge on 10th October by John Littleton

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

There were three at Low Newton scrape on 18th (IBDa/KDa), two at Holy Island from 12th-16th (ADM/SR), two at Tynemouth on 18th, one to two at Marden Quarry from 1st-26th and singles at Cramlington (Horton Park) on 2nd, East Sleekburn on 3rd, Holy Island on 23rd and St Mary's Wetland on 25th.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

A female at Newcastle Quayside on 22nd (DRW) was the only record.

Waxwing *Bombus garrulous*

Three at Beanley Wood (Eglington) on 18th was the only record (IBDa/KDa).

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Seven were at Bolam on 18th (ASJ) and four at Attlee Park (Bedlington) on 8th and at Letah Wood (Hexham) on 11th. Counts of three came from Haughton Strother (Humshaugh), Jesmond Dene and Spartylea, while one to two were noted at a further ten localities.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Three were at Bolam on 18th (ASJ) and two at Backworth and Northumberland Park (North Shields). Singles were noted at Branton GP, Derwent Reservoir, Humshaugh, Jesmond Dene, Rothbury, Spartylea and Wallington.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Further immigration was noted at Holy Island with peaks of 26 on 2nd and 35 on 23rd (ADM) and 14-19 on three further dates. Elsewhere ten were at Prestwick Carr on 4th and at St Mary's Island on 23rd, seven at Callerton subsidence area on 9th and six at Bamburgh Castle Woods on 5th. Five were singing at Holywell Dene on 29th and one to three were at Brierdene, Jesmond Dene and Spartylea.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Upwards of 30,000 were roosting at Gosforth Park by 19th (JBU); flocks of 2,000 to 2,800 passing over Prestwick Carr at dusk on 5th and 13th-14th may have been heading towards the Gosforth Park roost site (STH/PCF). Another regular roost at Holy Island Lough held about 14,000 birds on 3rd (IK). At Grindon Lough there were approximate counts of 470 on 14th, 1,100 on 16th and 400 on 22nd, while 400 were at Knowesgate on 12th. Large numbers were witnessed arriving in off the sea at East Ord on 4th, 100 were at Otterburn on 19th and up to 60 at Spartylea throughout. Elsewhere were 48 at Cramlington (Southfield Green) on 5th, eight at Jesmond Dene, six at Brierdene and five at Cullercoats Bay.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

One to two were reported from Attlee Park (Bedlington), Branton GP, Caistron, Corbridge, Scotch Gill Woods, Shillmoor, Spartylea, Thrum Mill (Rothbury), Warden and Wylam.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

There were 48 at Holy Island on 8th (MJC), while 36 recently arrived immigrants were well inland at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 27th. At Low Cocklaw, 30 were noted with other thrushes on 14th and 26 were at Corbridge on 28th. A count of 21 came from Ulgham on 25th, 20 were at Howdon on 8th and 18 at East Sleekburn on 25th, while a light influx produced ten + at Bamburgh on 10th. Six to seven were noted at Brierdene, six at Spartylea and three at Jesmond Dene.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Up to 500 were noted at Spartylea with a peak count on 12th (CT). Around 400 recent arrivals were at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 20th. At Derwent Reservoir 100 flew NW on 4th and 150 W on 8th, while 100 were at Beanley on 1st. Counts of 50-90 came from Dilston, Longhorsley, Low Cocklaw, Shield on the Wall and Swallow Pond and 20-40 were noted at Christon Bank, Crindledykes, Felton, Morpeth and Shiremoor. One to 15 were reported from a further 12 localities.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

An influx of wintering thrushes at Dilston Haughs (Corbridge) on 29th included ca.80 Song Thrushes feeding on hedgerow berries. There were four at Howdon on 25th and at Mitford on 13th (CB), while a single was noted at Exhibition Park on 17th.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

The largest gatherings were 65 at Dilston Haughs (Corbridge) on 29th and c.60 at Low Cocklaw on 14th (TBr). Elsewhere 50 were noted at Haughton Mains (Humshaugh) on 4th, 41 were at Holy Island on 2nd and 40 at Corbridge and at Hexham on 28th and 30th respectively. Flocks of 30 were reported from Shiremoor on 7th and Spartylea on 12th, while one to 12 were noted at a further 13 localities.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

11 at Blyth on 3rd (LJM) was the largest gathering, followed by six at Rising Sun CP on 14th. Four were at Ulgham, three at Bothal and Prestwick Carr and one to two at Corbridge, Derwent Reservoir, East Ord, Exhibition Park, Fulbeck (Morpeth), Jesmond Dene, Leazes Park, Simonburn and Wark (North Tyne).

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Passage continued at Holy Island, with counts of 38 on 2nd (ADM), 18 on 5th, six on 8th, 17 on 9th and 11 on 23rd. Elsewhere there were five at Brierdene on 26th, four at Bamburgh Castle Wood on 5th and at Spartylea and Windyhaugh, three at Jesmond Dene and singles at Brown's Bay and Cullercoats Bay.



A Robin at Howdon Wetland
26th November
Colin Bradshaw

Peak counts during the month were five at Holy Island (MJC), three at Addycombe (Rothbury) and at East Chevington, two at Blyth Estuary, Newbiggin, Stag Rocks and West Stobswood Pool and singles at Bamburgh Castle Wood, Cresswell and Newton.

Dunnoek *Prunella modularis*

Four were noted at Spartylea during the month and two at Marden, Cullercoats and Northumberland Park (North Shields) (CT/ASJ). Two also at Simonburn Common (MH).

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

80 feeding on spilt grain at Middlemoor Farm (North Charlton) on 28th was the month's peak count (MH). Around 70 were noted at Low Cocklaw on 15th(TBr), 50 at Whittle Dene on 16th (SR) and 30 at Cullercoats Bay on several dates (IJ/ASJ). 22 roosted at Southfield Green (Cramlington) on 4th (DM).

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

47 were counted at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 5th, with 38 there on 11th (TB). Around 15 were at Low Cocklaw on 15th with 15 at Ashington on 17th (TBr/TB). 12 roosted at Waren Mill on 18th (CGK). One to six were seen at a further nine sites during the month.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Two were noted during the month at Royal Quays (North Shields), Wark, Warden, Jesmond Dene and Humshaugh (ASJ/PRM/SW/MJCo). Singles seen at 24 other sites, including birds feeding in urban areas during the month at North Shields, a Marden Estate garden (Cullercoats), Whitley Bay and Newcastle (ASJ/DM).

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrelli*

The peak count this month was 15 at Chevington Burnmouth on 7th (MH/AA). Nine to ten were at St. Mary's on several dates (ASJ). Six at Ulgham on 26th (JR). Three were at Newbiggin and two at Briar Dene on 4th and 18th respectively. Feeding birds noted in several town/city centre locations during the month, such as North Shields, Whitley Bay and Newcastle (ASJ/DM).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

A flock of 30 arrived from N and fed in stubble at St. Mary's on 20th, with 14 remaining the following day before eventually moving off S (ASJ). 23 flew NW near Gosforth Park at dusk on 4th(MJC). 12 were inland at Haughton Strother on 27th (MR). 11 noted at Murton on 26th, with seven at Prestwick Carr and Backworth the same day (CGK/PCF). Groups of three were noted inland at Winter's Gibbet, Simonburn Common and Derwent Reservoir up to the month's end. Singles flew S. at Cramlington on 2nd and 11th (DM).

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

24, including three *Littoralis* birds was a good count at Sandon Bay (Holy Island) on 8th (MJC). Five sites checked on the island on 23rd revealed a total of 22 birds (ADM). 13 to 20 were also noted here on five further dates (MJC/ADM). Elsewhere, six were seen at Berwick Little Beach on 1st (MHu). Four to Five birds were at Beacon Point (Newbiggin) on 3rd and 4th (TRD/CDB). Five at St. Mary's on several dates and two at Cullercoats on 13th and 25th (ASJ/IJ). Two at were Tynemouth Pier all month and one was with Snow Buntings at Blyth South Beach on 14th (ASJ).

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

The only sighting this month was of one at Sandon Bay (Holy Island) on 5th (MJC).

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Four to seven were seen at Spartylea during the month (CT). Four flew over Warkworth Castle on 3rd (CSa). Two were at Holy Island village on 16th (ADM). Single birds were at Beanley on 1st and at Northumberland Park (North Shields) and Bolam on 18th, Rothbury on 23rd and Humshaugh on 30th.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

A feeding flock in a game crop at Aydon Castle on 28th numbered 150 birds (MR). A flock of 65 was at Carterway Heads on 3rd (IFo). 42 were at Felton on 23rd (MJC). 40 were at Harwood village on 18th and 25 at Bolam that day (ASJ). 25 also at Whitley Bay cemetery on 1st (ASJ). One to nineteen were at a further five locations, including six regularly at garden feeders at Marden Estate (Cullercoats).

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

The Abbey Mill area near Morpeth continued to host a small flock of this rare visiting species found late last month, feeding in the Hornbeam trees here and on the ground below. Ten seen on 30th was the peak count, with one to nine observed throughout the month (ADM/TB/CB/JBu/ASJ/TRD/JD *et al.*). Four noted at nearby Mitford on 27th were presumed to be from this group. Two birds were seen on 28th at Linden Hall, the first seen here in 14 years by the local observer at this site, which has hosted Hawfinches in the past (NFO).



A Hawfinch

Linden Hall

by Neil Osborne

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

The month's peak count was 11 early morning of 5th at Abbey Mill (Morpeth) (ASJ). Seven were seen at Rising Sun C.P. on 14th (LJM). Up to six were attracted to garden feeders at Rothbury during the month, with a male taken by a Sparrowhawk (TRD/JD). Five were seen at Humshaugh, Abbey Mill, Corbridge and Ulgham during the month. Four were at Holywell Dene and Tynemouth, Linton and East Sleekburn. One to three were noted at a further 15 sites throughout the month.

Greenfinch *Coelebs coelebs*

Poorly reported this month with a peak of only 11 noted at Newbiggin on 8th (JR). One to five were at six other sites.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

As last month, Budle Bay continued to hold the largest numbers with 200 there on 18th (CGK). 50 were at Haughton Strother on 20th and at Newton Point on 26th (MR/TD) and 45 at Sandon Bay (Holy Island) on 8th (MJC). 24 were at Tynemouth on 6th (CB). 11 to 17 were at five further sites during the month.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

The wintering flock at East Chevington burn mouth was counted with varying numbers during the month - 142 on 17th was the peak (CB), 110 on 5th (ASJ), 76 on 13th and around 18 to 50 were reported on other dates (AJ/AB/LB). Elsewhere, 106 were observed at Holy Island on 9th (80 at Snook, 26 at Sandon Bay), 55 were at Snook on 10th and 80 again present there on 16th, with one to 50 observed there on other dates during the month (ASJ/ADM). Three flocks of around 20 were seen at three further island sites on 12th, Snipe Point, north shore dunes and Emmanuel Head (IK). 20 birds were seen on salt marsh at Long Nanny on 26th (TD). 18 flew west from Beacon Point (Newbiggin) on 18th (CDB). Six were at Cocklawburn (Berwick) on 18th (MHu). A single seen on 4th at Tynemouth was unusual (DRW).



Twite at East Chevington burn mouth

top: by Chris Barlow and bottom: by Alan Jack

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis caber*

Around 40 were at Paxton Dene (Longhorsley) on 22nd (AB/LB) and 14 noted at Prestwick Carr on 11th (PCF). One to two at were six other sites, including one at garden feeders in Rothbury.

Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

25 were seen from Elf Kirk viewpoint (Kielder) on 16th (TRD/JD) and ten at Heavenfield on 4th (AJH). Four were at west Simonside on 11th (MH). A single was seen at Harwood Burn on 4th (MSH) and at Hepburn Woods on 9th (TRD).

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

50 frequented North Sunderland all month (JPL). 38 were counted at Howdon on 11th (CB). 36 attended feeders at East Ord (Berwick) on 26th (MHu). 30 plus were at Monkseaton on 1st (MSH). 28 were noted at Sandon Bay on 5th (MJC). Flocks of 25 were seen at Corbridge on 17th and at Byker on 28th (AJH/CGK). Up to 20 were at Spartylea all month (CT). 12 plus were at garden feeders all month at Marden Estate (Cullercoats) (ASJ). Two to 13 were seen at four further sites.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

A flock of 60 were at Alnham on 19th (JR) and 30 plus at Bamburgh on 10th (BRS). 24 were at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 15th (MR) and 20 plus were watched at Bothal Village on 4th (MSH). At the coast, 20 flew N at Seaton Sluice on 9th and 16 flew S at Tynemouth on 3rd (SSWT/DRW). A feeding flock of 15 birds was at Derwent Reservoir on 14th (IFo). One to 12 were seen at a further 12 sites, including a single at garden feeders at Fulbeck (Morpeth).



A Siskin at Howdon wetland by Colin Bradshaw on 26th November

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Five to nine were frequenting the Snook (Holy Island) on 9th (ADM). Seven were found at the North Shore (Holy Island) on 12th and a total of six birds arrived "in-off" at Sandon Bay on the island on 6th, with two to four still there on 23rd (IK/MJC/ADM). Six were seen on the beach at Goswick on 11th with three female/juveniles in the dunes there on 28th (BS/CH). A pair fed along South Beach at Blyth on a number of dates (ASJ/AJ) and a pair were found inland on 23rd at Newtown Park (Simonside) (per EC). Two were also watched at Beacon Point (Newbiggin) on 15th (MJC). Single birds were also observed at a further six locations during the month.



A Snow Bunting

Blyth

Alan Jack

14th November

Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*

There were only two sightings this month - three noted with Skylarks on 23rd at Chare Ends (Holy Island) and a single seen at Beal Point on 19th (IK/CH).

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citronella*

Groups of 17 were found this month at Felton on 16th and at Great Ryal (Alnham) on 19th (MJC/JR). Eight were at Beaconhill (Cramlington) on 14th (STH). Three were at Beacon Lane (Cramlington) on 11th (DM). Two well inland at Derwent Reservoir on 8th (IFo). A first winter male at Tynemouth on 4th was unusual for the site (DRW).



A Yellowhammer
Tynemouth
Duncan Watson
4th November

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

12 were seen at Beaconhill (Cramlington) on 14th (STH). Eight were at Berwick on 16th (TBr). Six were in field edges at St. Mary's on 10th and 17th (ASJ). Five were at a deserted farm at Simonburn Common on 30th (MH) and three at Arcot Pond on 11th (DM). One to two were at Howdon during the month (CB). A single was at Exhibition Park (Newcastle) on 2nd and at Southfield Green on 17th (GB/DM).

ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN**Escapes**

No sightings

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

One was seen at Grindon Lough on 10th (PRM). An unusual pairing.

Tufted Duck x Pochard *Aythya fuligula* x *Aythya ferina*

The regular hybrid was at Swallow Pond all month (GPK).

Birds of Unknown Origin

Birds of Unknown Origin

No sightings.

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Apologies for any accidental omissions

BULLETIN COMPILATION AND PRODUCTION

This bulletin was compiled by Graeme Bowman (Mute Swan to Ruddy Duck), Steve Laing (Red Grouse to Black-necked Grebe), Trevor Blake (Honey-buzzard to Crane), Tom Brewis (Avocet to Godwit), Clive Hampton (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 Jack (Dunnock to Corn Bunting).

Data Manager is Tom Brewis.

Thanks to David Sanders of NNBC for providing data.

Proof reading was by Mike Smith.

Mail distribution by Paul Stewart.

Edited by Steve Barrett NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.com

RECORD SUBMISSION

Please email records for the month to ntbc.records@googlemail.com

Please email for a copy of the standard spreadsheet and other details.

Location names and grid references: Please use of standard location names and include grid references as this 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

Annual membership costs £10 for a junior, £30 for an individual, and £32 for a family.

For membership enquiries please contact ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

If you internet bank you can pay online: please include your name in the ref. It is helpful if you email me to let me know when you've made the transfer ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

If you decide to set up a standing order please date the first payment at least a fortnight from your posting date to allow time to process with the bank. You can also set up your standing order directly with your bank if you wish; just let me know.

Finally, if you know anyone who might like to join NTBC please pass on the club information - new members are always welcome.

Jo Bentley - Hon Treasurer

NTBC WEB SITE

The club website is an excellent online resource for anyone interested in birds. There are:

Photo Galleries – Here you can view hundreds of photos of birds from Northumberland, Newcastle and North Tyneside. Members are encouraged to contribute their own photos. Simply send them to galleries@ntbc.org.uk

Sightings – Here you can view reports of birds recently reported in the County. Anyone who would like to contribute and post sightings to this page, please email sightings@ntbc.org.uk Please note this section is moderated, so there may be a short delay before your record appears.

There are also County Checklists, Records Committee updates, Information on important Surveys, useful articles and reports on Bird ID and Overseas Birding Trips....and much more...

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

New content such as Birding Trip Reports etc., is always welcome and very much appreciated.

To find out more please visit www.ntbc.org.uk

Jimmy Steele (1962–2017)

'I have discovered that, if the place you spend your time in can be more than a list, then life becomes more interesting... good birding is more than just good birds.' Jimmy Steele, *Frontiers in Birding*, 2008



With the tragically premature death of Jimmy Steele from a brain tumour in November 2017, British birding has lost one of its leading lights. In his ability to analyse complex issues and data sources and distil them into clear and easy-to-understand conclusions, Jimmy stands comparison with D. I. M. Wallace and Peter Grant as an outstanding communicator in the field of recording rare birds.

Jimmy's contribution went far beyond birding. He was an academic with an international reputation that saw the UK Government enlist his help and award him a CBE (in 2012) for the 'Steele Review' into the state of NHS dental services in England. In addition, he was a great family man, keen traveller, superb fish chef, tremendous raconteur, knowledgeable marine mammal watcher and an extremely enthusiastic (if terribly unskilful) cricketer.

Born in Edinburgh in 1962, his parents were both part-time actors, which is probably the source of his communication skills. Jimmy joined the RSPB's Young Ornithologists Club at school, making lifelong friends with similar souls such as Chris McGuigan. A travel bursary enabled his first 'distant' trip, to Fair Isle in 1979, and then a return to the island in 1981, when he lucked into Pallas's Reed Bunting *Emberiza pallasii*. He studied dentistry at Dundee where he met his wife Katie (and started a second life-long love affair, with vagrant Canada Geese *Branta canadensis/hutchinsii*). From Dundee he was briefly in Glasgow before moving to the Dental School at Newcastle University in 1989, ultimately becoming its Head and where he remained until his death.

It was at Newcastle that his birding career took off. On his first trip to Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, he was shown a Little Bunting *E. pusilla* and was surprised to find that the area wasn't routinely covered by local birders. Newbiggin became his patch and he put it firmly on the UK birding map. Since that first visit in 1989 he has found Britain's second Black-faced Bunting *E. spodocephala* and seen (and in most cases found) a slew of other top-drawer rarities, including Hooded Merganser *Lophodytes cucullatus*, Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*, Franklin's Gull *Leucophaeus pipixcan*, Iberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus ibericus*, Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella certhiola* and, more recently, Eastern Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus orientalis* and Siberian Accentor *Prunella montanella*.

His expertise and enthusiasm made him a natural fit for BBRC. He served nine years after joining in 1997 and wrote some of the Committee's most memorable papers over this period. Two, for me, stand out. His discussion of the British records of 'soft-plumaged petrels' [*Pterodroma mollis/madeira/feae/deserta*], where he explained why some sightings are of birds that show concolourous upperparts while others are heavily patterned was an exceptional piece of work (*Brit. Birds* 99: 404–419). So too was his analysis of the 'Druridge Slender-billed Curlew' (*Brit. Birds* 95: 279–299). No record, before or since, has generated more information than that curlew and Jimmy's handling and presentation of the data was first class. Initially unconvinced that the bird was acceptable, his research eventually led him to the conclusion that not only was it a Slender-billed Curlew *Numenius tenuirostris* but that the data were sufficiently robust to prove it beyond all reasonable doubt – a conclusion he still firmly believed at the time of his death. Of course, the record has subsequently been overturned, based partly on the belief that the species is as good as extinct. It is testament to Jimmy's integrity that, as a member of BOURC, he wrote the retraction paper with the same rigour as the original, ground-breaking article. He joined BOURC in 2010 where his combined knowledge of birding and genetics (a subject in which his wife Katie is an international expert) made him an invaluable member.

In recent years, his work both for the government and as head of the Dental school inevitably made his visits to Newbiggin less frequent. The family also bought a cottage at Newton-by-the-Sea and it is no coincidence that the locality, with records such as Stilt Sandpiper *Calidris himantopus* and Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*, is now rivalling Newbiggin for pre-eminence in the local birding scene.

Aside from his family, Jimmy's great loves were seawatching and geese. He was never happier than when looking for seabirds, either on the west coast of Ireland or at Newbiggin, where watching with him was made more enjoyable by his ability to mimic not only all the characters passing but also the assortment of dogs dragging their owners along the coastal path. In contrast, he could bore for Britain on Canada and Cackling Geese. So great was his perplexing enthusiasm for this species pair that he insisted, in his final months, on writing to BBRC/BOURC and setting out how to sort out the current mess of record assessment.

Taken ill in December 2015, Jimmy was told that he was likely to have only six months more to live. Rather typically, he defied the odds for a further 18 months. He kept working and birding, managing to be one of the small group to catch up with the Barra Eastern Kingbird *Tyrannus tyrannus* as well as finding time to complete the 'official Newbiggin List'.

Jimmy was a man of many talents and qualities who made a huge contribution and whose company and friendship was enjoyed by those lucky enough to know him. We will all miss him as there will be a Jimmy-shaped hole in the fabric of Northumberland's birding. Our thoughts are with his wife, Katie, and his children Tom and Jenny.

Colin Bradshaw

Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

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

Bulletin 2017 No 12

MONTHLY SUMMARY DECEMBER 2017

3rd February 2018



CLASSIFIED LIST HIGHLIGHTS

Tundra Bean Goose	Five flew S over East Chevington on 11th and two were over Ellington on 21st.
American Wigeon	The returning male was noted at Grindon Lough on 18th and 20th.
Great Northern Diver	Three inland with two at Widdrington Moor Lake and one at East Chevington.
Bittern	Singles at Gosforth Park and at East Chevington.
Red-necked Grebe	A juvenile allowed close views at QE II CP, Ashington from 3rd to 7th.
Little Stint	One at Fenham Flats on 17th. Presumably same individual that wintered last year.
Grey Phalarope	Another sighting with one at Cullernose Pt on 7th.
Spotted Redshank	Again wintering at Budle Bay with one seen on 3rd.
Little Auk	A few still being seen at three localities.
Ross's Gull	An adult was located on 31st at Longhoughton Steel. Probably same bird as in October.
Great Grey Shrike	The wintering bird was present at Prestwick Carr all month.
Firecrest	One wintering at Northumberland Park, N Shields.
Water Pipit	Single at Druridge Pools on 30th.
Hawfinch	Continued sightings of up to eight at Morpeth and one/two at Linden Hall and Humshaugh.
Common Redpoll	One at North Shields stayed near new Fisherman sculpture from 12th to 18th.
Lapland Bunting	Increasingly scarce in winter with sole record at Longbridge End on 30th.

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 8th February 2018. **Where have our curlews gone?**

Over the last century, two curlew species have probably declined to global extinction. Now, the Eurasian Curlew is in trouble. In this talk, Dr James Pearce-Higgins (Director of Science at the BTO) will give an introduction to the curlew and its ecology, before considering what the latest scientific evidence suggests has caused their decline. He will then review potential responses to this decline, before considering what the future may hold for this emblematic species, and others like it



A ring-necked Parakeet has an iced drink at Nun's Moor by John Littleton on 12th December

FIELD TRIPS

Contact Steve Anderson seaswan@btinternet.com

CLASSIFIED LIST

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Peak counts were 69 in the QEII CP area (including adjacent fields) on 26th (STH), 57 at Killingworth Lake on 9th (LJM), 50 at East Chevington north pool on 15th (DM/LJM), 47 at Big Waters (GB), and 21 at the Tweed Estuary (MHu). Five to nine were also at Bothal and Linton Ponds, Newcastle Leazes Park, Whiteadder Water (Border-A1) and Widdrington Moor Lake, and two to four at eight further sites.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Four flew S at Ellington on 10th (TB). A flock of 208 was in a brassica field at Under Green Hill Shield (near Norham) on 9th (CH), 63 were near Cornhill on Tweed up to 13th (per NNBC), 28 at north Druridge on 10th (AJR) increased to 43 (ten juveniles) on 12th (MH/AA) and 42 (12 juveniles) were still present on 21st (MSH) and 28th (GB/LAR). In addition, 12 (four juveniles) were at Caistron (JD), seven at Horncliffe, and one at Cresswell Pond.

Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*

Five of the 'Tundra' *rossicus* race flew S, calling, at East Chevington on 11th (CB). Two un-raced birds flew N with 20 Pink-footed Geese at Ellington on 21st (TB).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

At Ellington, 600 flew N and 3,000 S on 3rd (TB), 600 flew S at Boulmer on 2nd (BS), 424 flew S at Seaton Sluice, including 354 S on 2nd-3rd (SSWT), and 120-127 N at East Ord and Howdon. About 3,000 were at Cresswell on 5th (EC/JSB), about 3,000 at Doddington on 10th (TRD/JD), about 2,000 flying E over Widdrington Moor Lake on 17th (TRD), 1,900 at Briardene Farm, Whitley Bay on 3rd (MNC), and 600-650 at Bradford Flash (near Belford), Gloucester Lodge (Blyth), Druridge and Fenham-le-Moor. Counts of 300-400 came from Backworth, Bell's Farm (Cresswell), Goswick farm, Hauxley NR, Holy Island and Longhirst Flash, and 65-100 at/over Marden Quarry, Melkridge, QEII CP, Swallow Pond and Widdrington. Birds were heard flying over North Seaton during darkness on 16th (BSt).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

450 were at Derwent Reservoir on 16th (IFo), about 300 at Budle Bay on 19th (DF), 286 at Big Waters on 10th GB), 202-280 at Caistron (JD), East Holywell (MNC) and Outchester (MSH), 160-198 at East Chevington (AJR) and Low Newton scrape (DF), and 100-118 at Cocklawburn and Hazlerigg (near Wideopen). Counts of 30-51 came from Cooper's flash (near Ashington), Prestwick Carr, Whiteadder Water (border-A1) and Widdrington Moor Lake, while 12-22 were at the Tweed Estuary and West Ord, and one to two at four further sites.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Peak numbers were 349 at Grindon Lough on 27th (SJH), 212 at Derwent Reservoir all month (IFo), 195 at Widdrington Moor Lake on 4th (MSH), and 100-139 at Bell's Farm (Cresswell), Big Waters, Cresswell Pond and Widdrington Moor Lake. Counts of 50-98 came from Bothal Pond, Killingworth Lake, Longhirst Flash and West Ord, while 16-24 were at Newcastle Leazes Park, QEII CP and the River Tweed (A1-Border), and singles were at Hauxley NR and the Tweed Estuary.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Numbers in the Budle Bay-Harper's Heugh area varied from 600-1,100 between 3rd-28th (MSH/CGK) with a peak of 1,450 on 4th (DF). Far fewer were noted away from this area, with four to five at Hoppen Kiln and Outchester, and one to two at Bell's Farm (Cresswell), Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Middle Stobswood, QEII CP and Widdrington.

Barnacle Goose

QEII CP

28th December

Chris Barlow



Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

About 300 pale-bellied *hrota* race birds were at Fenham Flats on 30th while 57 were in the Beal Point-Longbridge End (DM/GB/LAR). Dark-bellied *bernicla* race birds included 51 at Holy Island harbour on 30th (MJC), and singles at Hoppen Kiln on 5th (MH/AA) and Bell's Farm (Cresswell) on 17th and 30th (TF/JFa/MSH).

Red-breasted Goose *Branta ruficollis*

An adult bird seen to be bearing a narrow, blue coloured plastic ring on one leg (indicating a captive origin) was at Bell's Farm (Cresswell) on 17th (TRD), and behind the *Drift Inn* café, Cresswell on 18th and 20th (TB/IF).

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

A total of 15 flew N at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT), 126 were counted at Fenham Flats on 15th when 84 were at Budle Bay (DM/LJM). Numbers at Howdon increased from six on 5th to ten by 16th and 16 by 22nd (CB). Two were at the Blyth Estuary on 9th (LJM), and singles at Boulmer and on the River Tyne at Elswick.

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

Single drakes were at Wydon Burn Reservoir on 4th and at Tyne Green on 15th (both Hexham)(AJH).

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

A total of 118 moved N at Seaton Sluice on 1st-2nd, including 80 on 2nd (SSWT) and three flew N at Tynemouth on 1st (IJ). A minimum of 400 were at Derwent Reservoir on 9th (IFo), 400 were at Bell's Farm (Cresswell) on 30th (MSH), 339 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 20th (SR), 305 at Big Waters on 10th (GB), 230-246 at the Coquet Estuary and Grindon Lough, and 61-89 at Boulmer, Colt Crag Reservoir, Linton Ponds and New Water Haugh. Groups of 23-34 were also at Haughton Strother GP, Hauxley NR, Longhirst Flash and the Tweed Estuary. The peak count at Bothal Pond was just three on 9th (very low numbers compared to previous winters)(TF/JFa).



A drake Wigeon at QEII CP
Colin Bradshaw on 12th December

American Wigeon *Anas americana*

A drake was at Grindon Lough on 18th (SJH) and 20th (PRM).

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

One flew N at Seaton Sluice on 15th (SSWT). Linton Ponds attracted 70 on 10th (CDH), 58 were at East Chevington on 19th (MH/AA), 55 at Swallow Pond on 9th (GPK), 34 at Arcot Pond on 24th (LJM), and 12-15 at Big Waters, Caistron, Kitty Brewster (Blyth Estuary) and Marden Quarry. Four to five were also at St Mary's Wetland, Warkworth Lane Ponds and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and one to two at Bothal Pond, Castle Island, Druridge Pools and Hauxley NR.

Teal *Anas crecca*

A total of 47 flew N at Seaton Sluice between 1st-10th (SSWT). Peak concentrations were 426 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 9th (SR), 282 at Holy Island on 30th (MJC/ADM), 247 at Big Waters on 10th (GB), 200 at East Chevington on 4th (MSH), 151-173 at Derwent Reservoir and Grindon Lough, 105-149 at Arcot, Bothal and Cresswell Ponds, Castle Island, Colt Crag Reservoir, and the Coquet Estuary, and 83 at Swallow Pond. Counts of 14-35 came from Hauxley NR, St Mary's Wetland, the Tweed Estuary, Wark Common and Whiteadder Water (border-A1). Display was noted at Big Waters on 24th (GB).

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Six flew N and three S at Seaton Sluice on 1st-2nd (SSWT) and three N at Tynemouth on 1st (IJ). Peak counts involved 280 at Cresswell Pond on 10th (AJR), 229 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 14th (SR), 213 at Derwent Reservoir on 12th (IFo), 189 at Big Waters on 10th (GB), 105-138 at Colt Crag Reservoir, Haughton Strother GP and the Tweed Estuary, and 52-82 at Bothal, Cocklawburn and Newsham Ponds, Boulmer, Castle Island, Marden Quarry, QEII CP Lake and Whiteadder Water (Border-A1). Groups of 20-45 were also at Chirton Dene Park (Wallsend), the Coquet Estuary, East Chevington, Elswick, Grindon Lough, Hauxley NR, Holy Island, Linton Ponds, Monks' House Pool, St Mary's Wetland and Wark Common, while 14-19 were at Arcot Pond, Budle Bay and Newcastle Leazes Park.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Three were at Fenham Flats on 15th (DM/LJM); two at Low Newton scrape on 16th (AJH) and two at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 9th (SR). Singles were also at Colt Crag Reservoir on 20th (MR) and the Tweed Estuary on 5th and 7th (MHu).

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

An impressive 39 were at Budle Bay on 19th (DF) and 20-36 on various dates throughout the month. Elsewhere, peak counts involved 23 at Swallow Pond on 1st (GPK), 15 at East Chevington on 4th (MSH), 14 at Linton Ponds on 3rd and 10th (CDH/TF/JFa), and five to six at Big Waters, Holy Island Lough and Killingworth Lake. Two were also at Arcot Pond and Longhirst Flash, but more unusual were two offshore from the Crooked Lonnen, Holy Island (MJC).

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

14 were at Widdrington Moor Lake on 10th (DM/STH/PJA), nine at Swallow Pond on 1st (GPK), eight at Killingworth Lake on 27th (MSH), five at East Chevington on 17th (TRD), and one at Haughton Strother GP.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Three flew N at Seaton Sluice on 1st (SSWT). Killingworth Lake held a peak of 75 on 9th (LJM) when 59 were at Castron (JD). Other peak counts were 42 at East Chevington on 7th (PRM), 41 at QEII CP Lake on 10th (CDH), 40 at Swallow Pond (GPK), 20-28 at Castle Island and Grindon Lough, and 11-15 at Bothal Pond, Haughton Strother GP and Marden Quarry. More unusual were 29 on the River Tyne at Elswick on 18th, having probably been forced off local ponds by freezing conditions (GB). The peak count at Bothal Pond was just seven on 23rd (very low numbers compared to previous winters) (TF/JFa).

Scaup *Aythya marila*

A drake was at Haughton Strother GP on 12th (MR).

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

The monthly total at Seaton Sluice was 147 N and nine S, including 99 N on 1st (SSWT) when seven to 15 flew N at St Mary's (MSH) and Tynemouth (IJ). At Holy Island, 166 were counted between the Heugh-'excavations' on 30th (MJC), 30 were at the Coquet Estuary on 22nd, 16-17 at Lynemouth Bay (MSH) and Seahouses harbour (DM), and two to six at Fenham Flats, Spittal Bay and the Tweed Estuary.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

Seven flew N and one S at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT) and one S at Tynemouth on 3rd (DRW). Peak counts were 48 off Ross Back Sands on 20th (CH), 21 (18 drakes) at Stag Rocks on 5th (MH/AA), six off Fenham-le-Moor on 20th (DF), and two at East Chevington between 4th-10th and one on 17th (EC/JSB/TRD *et al.*)

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

At Seaton Sluice, 195 moved N and 13 S, including 145 N between 1st-3rd (SSWT), and two to six flew N at Newbiggin, Tynemouth and Whitley Bay. About 500 were off Goswick on 22nd (BS), about 200 at Stag Rocks on 22nd (DF), 27-36 at Birling Carrs (AWG) and Cocklawburn (MHu), and two off Druridge.

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

Two flew N and one S at Seaton Sluice during the month, and singles moved N at Tynemouth on 1st (DRW) and Boulmer on 16th (BS). One was in Druridge Bay on 10th (TF/JFa).

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

A total of 22 moved N at Seaton Sluice during the month (SSWT) and three flew N at Tynemouth on 1st (IJ). Peak counts were 56 at East Chevington on 7th (PRM), 37 at the Tweed Estuary on 7th (MHu), 31 at Grindon Lough on 27th (SJH), 28 at Castle Island on 10th (STH/DM/PJA), and 13-19 at Branton GP, Castron, Howick, Killingworth Lake and on the River Tweed between A1-border. Six to eight were at Grindon Lough, Hauxley NR, Holy Island, Horncliffe, New Water Haugh, QEII CP Lake, Warkworth, West Ord and Whittle Dene Reservoirs, and three to four at Big Waters and Elswick.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Nine flew N and one S at Seaton Sluice during the month (MJC/ADM). A count of 41 at Holy Island on 30th included 39 off St Cuthbert's Island-the Heugh (MJC/ADM), seven were at Warkworth beach on 21st (CSa), six at Cresswell Pond on 5th (TRD), three to four at Boulmer, Cocklawburn, East Chevington and the Tweed Estuary. One to two were also at Birling Carrs, Cresswell (offshore), Ladyburn Lake and Stag Rocks. Two drakes vigorously displayed to a female at Cresswell Pond on 28th (GB/LAR).

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Moderate counts included peaks of 13 on the River Tweed between A1-border on 11th (TBr), 13 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 9th (SR), 12 at Whiteadder Water (border-A1) on 11th (TBr), six at Marden Quarry on 28th (KWY), and three to four at Bywell, Corbridge, Derwent Reservoir, Newcastle Exhibition and Leazes Parks, and Warkworth. One to two were also at Airy Holm Reservoir, Arcot Pond, Cocklawburn, Grindon Lough, Morpeth and QEII CP Lake.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

12 were at Brierdene Farm (Whitley Bay) on 10th (MNC), Holborn peaked at five on 30th (GB) and two were at Craggside and Haughton Strother GP.

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus*

Approximately 25 were active amongst the snow on the Simonside Hills on 28th (TD).

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

Four were at Spartylea on 1st and then one female was present on 21st (CT).

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

A large covey containing 18 birds was at Callerton subsidence area on 18th (MH). 13 were at Hemscotthill Links (Cresswell) on 5th (EC/JSB), seven were at Sandy Bay (Newbiggin) on 23rd and one to six were at Beal Road Ends, East Chevington, Longbridge End (Lindisfarne NNR), Longhoughton, Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin) and Seaton Sluice.



A Grey Partridge at East Chevington
Colin Bradshaw
11th December

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Numbers at Spartylea ranged from three to nine throughout the month (CT); four were at Brierdene Farm and one was at Rising Sun CP.



A cock Pheasant brightens up a Rothbury garden
Tim Dean on 8th December

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

The observers at Seaton Sluice Watch Tower experienced a record site count for the month of December with a total of 211 N and 105 S in 33 hours of watching. This included 100 N and 22 S between 1st-2nd (SSWT). Some good numbers seen all along the coast included at least 25 on the sea at Goswick on 22nd (BS), 14 offshore at East Chevington on 19th (MH/AA) a minimum of 12 at Stag Rocks on 3rd (CGK/AJ) and 11 in Lynemouth Bay on 21st (MSH). One to ten were at several other sites along the coast with Alnmouth Bay reporting the largest number (ten) seen during a WeBS count at this time of year since 2007 (AWG).

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

Several sightings included a monthly total of three N at Seaton Sluice (SSWT), two of which were on 1st and likely to be the two also recorded flying N at Howick and Tynemouth on the same day (BS/DRW/IJ). Two were at Ross Back Sands on 21st (CH) and singles at Berwick Pier, Goswick and Calot Shad (Tweed Estuary).

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

Seaton Sluice Watch Tower recorded a total of four N between 1st-3rd (SSWT). Stag Rocks, as usual, proved a favourable location with a peak of three present on 21st (DF). Two flew N at Howick on 1st (BS) and two first winter birds were at Widdrington Moor Lake from 4th-10th, reducing to one until at least 17th. Two were at Ross Back Sands on 21st and singles were reported from several other locations.



Great Northern Diver
East Chevington
5th December
Tim Dean

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Tynemouth peaked at ten on 1st (IJ) and the only other reports were of five in Lynemouth Bay and four at Rockcliffe.

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

A site record for December passed Seaton Sluice with a monthly total of 159 N and six S in 33 hours which included 93 N and two S on 15th alone (SSWT). Three to 15 were reported from other coastal locations.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

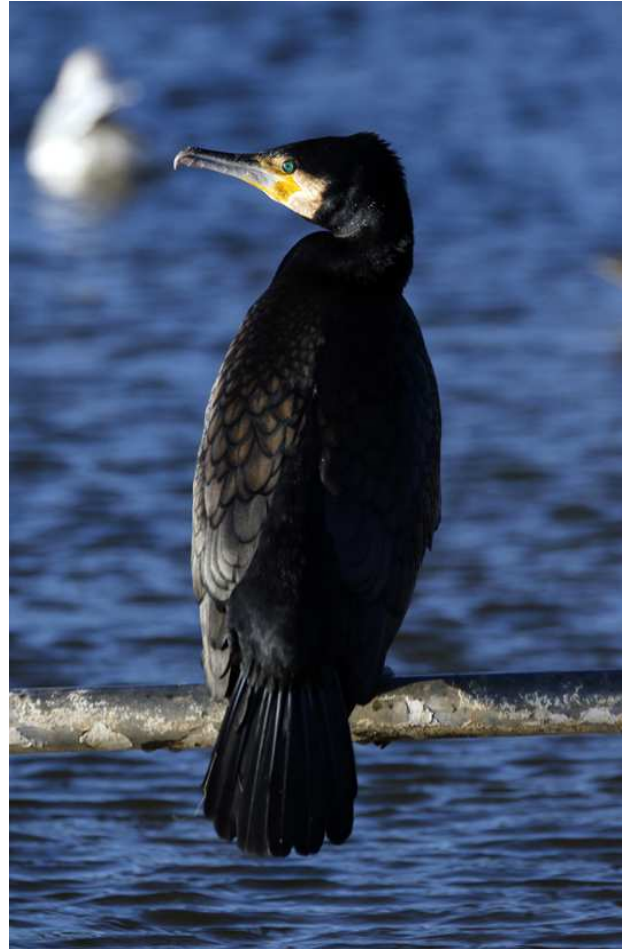
65 N and 26 S were recorded past Seaton Sluice between 1st-2nd suggesting some movement of birds (SSWT). The largest count was 110 sitting on the old pier in Amble Harbour on 12th (CSa), with 48 at North Shields Fish Quay on 1st (MSH), 46 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 9th (SR), 45 in the Coquet Estuary on 31st (AWG) and 30 in Blyth Harbour on 13th (STH). 25 were in the Meadow Haven (Berwick) roost on 24th and reports from QE11 CP included a peak of nine continental race "*sinensis*" birds and two of the "*carbo*" subspecies on 7th (IF). One to 12 were reported from many other localities.

A Cormorant

QE11 CP

28th February

Chris Barlow

**Shag** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

20 at the Meadow Haven (Berwick) roost on 24th was the highest count (MHu). 11 were on the sea at Boulmer on 30th (BS) and one to six were reported from Blyth Harbour, Calot Shad, Craster, Howick and Seaton Sluice.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Singles were seen at East Chevington on 4th and 5th (MSH/TRD) and Gosforth Park NR on 17th (MJC).

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Four were in the Fenham Mill area of Lindisfarne NNR on 5th (MH/AA) and Cresswell Pond peaked at two on 4th (TB). Singles were 15 other localities.



One of the coastal wintering Little Egrets by Mike Carr

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

17 were in the heronry at Howdon on 16th (CB) and 14 were in the Tweed Estuary during a WeBS count on 7th (MHu). Another WeBS count at Whiteadder Water found nine between the Scotland border - A1 on 11th (TBr) and eight were spread across Holy Island on 30th (MJC/ADM). One to three were at several other locations.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

The peak at Castle Island was 19 on 10th (STH/DM/PJA), 17 were on the River Tweed between Horncliffe-Gainslaw House on 9th (CH) and a minimum of 15 were at east Chevington NR on 4th (MSH). Reports of one to five birds came from 13 other sites.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

The largest count by far was nine at Buston Links (Alnmouth) on 21st (CSa). Two were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs up to 9th and singles were at Boulmer, Killingworth Lake, Longhoughton Quarry, Seaton Sluice and Widdrington Moor Lake.

Red-Necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

A well-watched first-winter bird was present from 3rd-7th at QE11 CP (TF/CB/TRD/NFO/PRM/IF).



The QE11 CP Red-Necked Grebe
Colin Bradshaw
5th December

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

A grand total of 26 were at Ross Back Sands on 21st (CH) and a further five were at Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) on the same day (DF). Three were at Holy Island on 3rd and Fenham Flats on 30th. Two at Howick on 16th was the only other site with recorded sightings.

Red Kite *Milvus Milvus*

All records came from a single observer with birds at Derwent Reservoir on 6th, 18th, 21st and 27th, Snods Edge on 8th and 16th and also at Low Waskerley on 12th (IFo)

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Ringtail/females were noted at two confidential sites, and a male was seen at another site on 24th and 28th.

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

No sightings of this secretive species this month.

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Two birds, a 1st winter male and an adult female, were seen at Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin) on a daily basis (BS). Pairs were at Garden Village (Gosforth) throughout the month and at Hauxley NWT on 28th (MJC) and two females were at Ellington on 30th (TB). Single birds were seen at 19 sites.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Four birds were at Whiteadder Water on 11th (TBr) and four were also at Derwent Reservoir on 18th (IFo), while three birds were noted at Prestwick Carr on 2nd (PCF), Holburn and at Rennington on 30th (DM/GB/LAR). Two birds were calling in the air at Howick even though it was still dark at 07:30h on 28th (JAR). Single birds were noted at 17 different sites.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Three birds were calling at the Lough (Holy Island) on 30th (MJC). Two birds were noted at Swallow Pond (Wallsend) on seven dates (GPK *et al.*) and two birds were seen or heard at East Chevington North Pool on 7th (PRM), Prestwick Carr on 10th (PCF), Holy Island on 12th (SR) and at Coanwood Moss on 21st (SJH). Single birds were either seen or heard at Arcot Pond, Cresswell Pond and at East Chevington,

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

42 birds were on the scrape at Low Newton on 16th (AJH) and 17 were at Castle Island on 10th (STH/DM/PJA). 14 were at QEII CP on 7th (PRM) and 13 were at Chirton Dene Park (North Shields) (MSH). 11 birds were at Whiteadder Water on 11th and at Spindlestone on 13th (MSH). One to nine birds were at East Chevington, Hauxley NWT, Leazes Park (Newcastle), River Coquet Estuary and at Swallow Pond (Wallsend).

Coot *Fulica atra*

125 birds were at Swallow Pond (Wallsend) on 31st (CDH) and 76 at Branton GPs were the highest counts this month. Killingworth Lake had 44 birds on 28th (MSH), Big Waters NWT had 34 on 10th (GB) and 28 were at QEII CP on 10th (CDH), while 26 birds were at Linton Ponds also on 10th (CDH). One to 15 birds were noted at Bothal Pond, East Chevington, Grindon Lough and at Leazes Park (Newcastle).

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

A count of 197 was made on Holy Island on 30th from The Heugh, anticlockwise to the Excavations, and included a putative 1st-winter Siberian Oystercatcher, ssp. *longipes* (MJC). At nearby Beal a count of 137 was made on 27th (DF) and, a little further north, 121 were counted at Cocklawburn on 6th (MHu). In the south of the county 112 were at roost at St Mary's on 10th (ASJ) while another count on Holy Island on New Year's Eve produced 80 birds at Nessend and a further 30 on the north and east coasts (MJC/ADM). Double-figure counts came from Beal Point (60 on 3th, DM), Stag Rocks (30 on 31st, TD), Boulmer (26 on 23rd, MJC), Birling Carrs, Warkworth (21 on 18th, AWG), Hauxley NWT (16 on 16th, HRS) and the Tweed Estuary (ten on 7th, MHu). Smaller counts came from Coquet Estuary, Corbridge (Milkwell), Craster, Derwent Reservoir and Humshaugh (Haughton Strother GP).



Oystercatchers by Mike Carr

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

An estimated 2,000 birds were seen at Ross fields (Lindisfarne NNR) on 26th (DF) and 1,500 were estimated at St Mary's on 21st (ASJ), many of which were recorded flying north at Seaton Sluice for much of the month (SSWT), while another large count was of 1,044+ at Blyth, Gloucester Lodge on 28th (MSH). On 10th 800 were seen at Druridge (AJR), 500 were at Budle Bay on 3rd (CGK/AJ), another 500+ were at Bell's Farm (Cresswell) on 30th (MSH) and 450+ were at Widdrington Moor Lake on 10th (MSH). Boulmer and the Coquet Estuary both had counts of 350 on 23rd and 24th, respectively (MJC, AWG) and 300 were at Newbiggin, Beacon Point on 22nd (STH). There were 150 at Seaton Sluice on 30th (PCF), 112 at Low Newton Scrape on 2nd (DF) and 100 at Prestwick Carr on 28th (PCF). Smaller counts were from Big Waters NWT (15), Cocklawburn (84), Cresswell Pond (one), Derwent Reservoir (40), Howick (38N), Longhorsley, Linden Hall (80N), Middle Stobswood (75) and Newcastle, Jesmond, RGS (five at night).

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Numbers of Grey Plover appeared to be well down on recent reports with 47 the highest count which came from Budle Bay on 19th (DF). Other counts were never greater than five and came from Bamburgh (Stag Rocks), Blyth Estuary, Cocklawburn, Coquet Estuary, Monks' House, Warkworth (Birling Carrs).

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

One thousand birds were estimated to be at Ross Fields on 26th (DF) with various other large counts throughout the month in that vicinity. At the other end of the county there were 400 counted at Derwent Reservoir on 22nd (IFo) while 300+ were at Widdrington Moor Lake on 4th (MSH). New Water Haugh on the Tweed, near Berwick had 246 on 31st (MHu) 225 were at St Mary's on 21st (ASJ). Further counts of 100-221 were made at Bothal Pond (Coney Garth), Boulmer, Brierdene Farm (Whitley Bay), Cocklawburn, East Chevington NR, Goswick Farm, Humshaugh (Haughton Strother GP), Low Newton scrape, Tweed Estuary and Whittle Dene Reservoirs. Additional sites reporting numbers below 100 were nr. Bamburgh, Waren Mill, Outchester, Big Waters NWT, Grindon Lough, Howdon, Howick, Prestwick Carr, West Hartford and Whiteadder Water: Border-A1.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

On 26th a count of 99 was made of birds roosting on a shed roof at Blyth South Harbour (MSH) and on 30th a high-tide roost of 55 was reported from Chevington Burn beach (TD). Other double-figure counts came from Cheswick Beach on 4th (39, CH), St Mary's on 3rd (22, ASJ) and Cresswell Beach on 15th (18, DM). Additional sites with records of eight and fewer birds were Fenham Flats, Beadnell (Collieth Hole), Cocklawburn and Coquet estuary.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

All but two reports were from on or near the coast with the highest counts both of 107 from Boulmer on 23rd and from Cocklawburn on 28th (MJC and MHu, respectively). One hundred were at Coal Road (Druridge) on 30th (TD), 82 at St Mary's on 21st (ASJ) and approximately 70 were reported during a farm survey at Goswick Farm on 4th (TBr). Fifty-two birds were counted between the Heugh and the Excavations (Holy Is) on 31st (MJC), 50 were at Beal Point on 30th (DM) and 45 were on school fields at Marden, Cullercoats on 29th (KWY) with a further 45 found throughout the month feeding at high tide at Quarry Cottage, Newbiggin ((RS). Smaller counts from additional sites were from Blyth (Gloucester Lodge), Callerton subsidence area, Castle Island, Coquet Estuary, Cresswell (Bell's Farm), Druridge Pools NR, Hauxley NWT, Howdon and Tweed estuary.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Twenty birds on 4th was a record winter count for the Rocket Field on Holy Island (IK). Nine were seen on the foreshore at Fenham Flats on 30th (DM, GB) and 7-8 were reported from Druridge Pools NR on 26th-31st (TRD, MSH, TF/JFa). Counts of three or less came from Blyth Estuary, Bradford Kaims, Hoppen Kiln Flash (nr Lucker), Budle Bay, Holy Island and Howdon.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

By far the biggest count was of 458 on 28th (DF). There were 50+ counted at Fenham Flats on 15th (DM) and 21 at Boulmer on 16th (BS). Twelve were in the Tweed Estuary on 4th and 7th (MHu) and quite possibly the 12 that were counted at Little Beach on 25th were some of those birds from the Tweed Estuary. Other counts of five or less came from Beadnell (Collieth Hole), Blyth (Kitty Brewster), Budle Bay, Cocklawburn and Coquet estuary.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

A walk from the Heugh to the excavations revealed a total of 36 on that stretch of Holy Island on 30th (MJC). At Fenham Flats, 18 on 15th increased to 30 by 30th (DM), 20 were at Stag Rocks on 31 (TD) and the maximum monthly count at Cocklawburn was 14 (MHu). Eight birds were seen at Craster on 7th (PRM) and two birds were at each of Birling Carrs (Warkworth), Cresswell Beach, Newbiggin, the River Coquet Estuary and the River Tweed Estuary.



A Turnstone risks all at Amble Harbour
Chris Barlow on 28th December

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Only two reports received this month. 200 were at Beal Point on 30th (DM) and 23 at Birling Carrs on 18th (AWG).

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

A very late bird was at Low Newton scrape on 2nd (DF).

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Birds were widespread along the coastline with reports received from Berwick to Tynemouth. At the excavations shore at Holy Island, 143 were seen on 30th (MJC/ADM) and 36 were at Sandham Bay (Holy Island) on 31st (MJC). Other notable counts were 90 at Berwick Little Beach on 14th (JDL), 75 at Chevington Burn Beach (TD), 63 at St Mary's Island on 3rd (ASJ) and 44 at Low Newton on 16th (AJH). Beadnell attracted 51 (DM) and in the Newbiggin area, 46 were reported from Newbiggin Bay and 24 at Church Point on 8th (SRB). Elsewhere, nine were at Tynemouth, three at Cresswell beach and two at Cocklawburn during the month.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

The only passage noted this month was a total of 58N at Seaton Sluice on 1st (SSWT). The River Blyth Estuary was the favoured site this month with 304 counted on 9th (LJM) and 150 at Kitty Brewster on 23rd (GB). A WeBS survey at the River Coquet on 18th revealed 114 (AWG) and 35 were seen at both Cresswell Pond on 5th and slightly further north at Bell's Farm Pond on 30th (TRD/MSH). In the north, 24 were at Cocklawburn on 14th and six at New Water Haugh (River Tweed) on 31st (MHu). Singles were seen at East Chevington, Grindon Lough and the River Tyne at Elswick.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

At Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) a maximum monthly count of approximately 150 was reported (JDL/DGB). An exact count of 121 was made from photographs on 28th (AJR). Other reports received from the same site during the month varied from 12-117 (DF/TD/MSH/GB/DM). Some notable concentrations were recorded at other locations including 59 at Low Newton on 16th (AJH), 43 at a high-tide roost on Blyth North Pier on 26th (MSH), 29 at Boulmer on 2nd (BS), 19 at Holy Island on 30th (MJC), 15 at Rockcliffe (Whitley Bay) on 28th (IJ) and 11 at Cheswick Black Rocks on 10th (CH). One-seven were reported from Birling Carrs, Blyth Harbour, Cocklawburn, Newbiggin and Seaton Sluice Watchtower.



A Purple Sandpiper
John Richards

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

The single seen last month at Fenham Mill (Lindisfarne) was reported from Fenham Flats on 17th (RA).

Grey Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius*

As last month, a single was seen flying N at Cullernose Point at 15.20 hours on 7th (PRM).

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Single birds were settled into winter quarters at Whittle Dene Reservoirs (MR/AA/SR) and Branton GP (IBDa/KDa).

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

A single bird continued its stay in Budle Bay until 3rd (CGK/AJ).

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Budle Bay retained its favoured location status with a high winter count of 323 on 3rd (CGK). A WeBS count at the River Tweed Estuary produced a total of 262 on 7th (MHu). Other reports of over 100 were from St Mary's Island with 145 on 10th (ASJ) and 120 at Cresswell Pond on 5th (TRD). Double-figure counts were received from the River Coquet Estuary with 75 on 18th (AWG), Boulmer with 70 on 23rd (MJC), Elswick (River Tyne) with 56 on 18th (GB), 25 at the Coal Road (Druridge) on 30th (TD) and 23 at Druridge Pools on the same date (MSH). On the River Tweed from the A1 to the border, eleven were noted on 11th with the observer reporting an increasing trend to winter in this area (TBr). One-six were seen at Bothal Pond, Castle Island, Craster, Hoppen Kiln Pool (near Lucker) and Prestwick Carr (noted as unusual here in winter).



A Redshank lives up to its name
Stag Rocks by Mike Carr

Jack Snipe *Limnocryptes minimus*

Singles were seen at Cramlington on 15th (STH), Beal saltmarsh and Goswick on 17th (RA).

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Two were at the Snook (Holy Island) including an individual trying to fly into Snook House via a glass panel above the door (ADM). Two were reported from Backworth on 10th (CGK), Kettle Band on 17th (DGB/RHB) and Belford Moor on 30th (GB). Singles were seen at Alnwick Moor, Bamburgh beach ('in-off'), Colt Crag Reservoir, Howdon, A69 at Ovington and Wooslington Ponds (first site record).

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Haughton Strother GP retained good numbers from last month with 23 recorded on 8th (MR). Lower numbers were seen elsewhere with 11 at Prestwick Carr on 11th (PCF), ten at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 9th (SR) and ten at Newburn Haugh on 29th (MH). Counts of one-eight came from Arcot Pond, Arcot Lane, Backworth, Big Waters, Bothal Pond, Callerton subsidence area, Coanwood Moss, Cresswell Pond, Doddington, Holy Island, Howdon and the River Tweed (A1-border).

Auk *sp*

At Howick on 21st, 630, almost all Guillemots, flew N in one hour (BS). At Seaton Sluice, movements N were recorded throughout with a maximum of 560 in four hours on 1st and several days with 60 per hour and 90 per hour on 27th (SSWT).

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

Singles were on the sea at Howick and Ross Back Sands on 21st (BS/CH).

Razorbill *Alca torda*

On 21st, three were at Cresswell, Snab Point and in Lynemouth Bay (MSH) with singles on other days at Druridge (TRD) and Rockcliffe (IJ).

Little Auk *Alle alle*

Three were seen from Holy Island on 12th (SR), two were at Tynemouth on 1st (IJ) and one flew N at Howick on 1st (BS).

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

At Tynemouth on 1st ca.100 were counted (IJ) with 30 at Cullernose Point on 7th (PRM), 20 at Rockcliffe on 28th (IJ) and ten at Craster on 7th (PRM). One to four were at four other localities (TRD/DM/LJM/MHu).

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Very few records, with only four birds recorded passing N at Seaton Sluice including three on 10th (SSWT) and elsewhere, three flew N at Berwick Pier on 15th (MHu), two fed at Stag Rocks on 5th (MH/AA) and one was at Longhoughton Steel, Boulmer on 31st (BS).

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Gatherings of 226, 187 and 115 were noted at the QEII CP Lake, Castle Island and Hauxley NWT respectively (CDH/DMHRS) with 50-100 at Arcot Pond, Leazes Park, Marden Quarry, Monks' House Pool and the River Tweed Estuary (DM/LJM/KWY/MHu), Up to 43 were at Bothal Pond, Brierdene and East Chevington (TD/IJ/DM).

***Ross's Gull** *Rodostethia rosea*

A few lucky and/or determined observers recorded this extremely rare visitor, an adult, at Longhoughton Steel (Boulmer) in the late afternoon of 31st (BS/TF/JFa *et al.*). Almost certainly this would be the same individual seen earlier in the winter on Fenham flats.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

At Seaton Sluice, only six were seen passing the watch-point during the month (SSWT). A maximum of 18 were at Newbiggin on 30th (STH) and lower counts there of up to seven came on several dates throughout (TRD/SRB/CH/TB); at Spittal (Newbiggin) up to seven were seen regularly as they came for food to a cliff-top garden (BS). Three individuals, all adults, were regularly at Swallow Pond including a Danish-ringed bird, white ZNV (GPK *et al.*). Elsewhere, one or two were seen at Amble, Boulmer, Cresswell Pond, Marden Estate (Tynemouth), St Mary's Island, Tynemouth and Warkworth. The majority of all these sightings involved adult birds.

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Around 500 frequented a flooded sheep pasture near Matfen on 20th (EC), 200 were at the Haughton Strother GP on 4th (MR) and 78 at Grindon Lough on 27th (SJH). Castle Island held 27 on 10th (DM *et al.*) and up to 15 were at Arcot Pond (DM) and at the QEII CP Lake (CDH).



A Common Gull at Ladyburn Lake by Chris Barlow on 9th December

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graelsii*

At Ashington New Moor ten flew from the tip towards the QE II CP Lake on 24th (TB) and single adults were at Swallow Pond on 4th (GPK) with the regular wintering bird in the Cramlington area reported frequently throughout (DM)

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argenteus*

Counts of ca.300 were made at the QEII CP Lake (CDH) and at Swallow Pond CDH) with 256 in the River Tweed Estuary (MHu) and 120-150 at Castle Island (DM) and Linton Ponds (CDH). Smaller concentrations of 40-80 were recorded at Airy Holm Reservoir (Shotleyfield) (IFo), Monks' House Pool (DM *et al.*) and Colt Crag Reservoir (MR) with up to 14 at Arcot Pond, Brierdene, Grindon Lough, Hauxley and Leazes Park,

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoideus*

The only record was of an adult which flew in to East Chevington North Pool on 5th, staying briefly for a 'wash & brush up' before flying off S (EC).

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

Two immatures flew N at Seaton Sluice on 1st (SSWT) and a 2nd-winter bird was in Budle Bay on 28th reported to be the individual seen in previous months this winter (DF).

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Gatherings of 40-70 were at East Chevington North Pool, Linton Ponds, the North Shields Fish Quay and the River Tweed Estuary with 15 at Derwent Reservoir, the QE II CP Lake and eight at Castle Island. One or two were also seen at Grindon Lough, Hauxley NWT and Monks' House Pool.

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

Counts of 118 at Blyth Bus Station on 9th and around 100 at Wallsend Town Centre on 30th (LJM/CDH) with 31 at Warren Mill on 15th and 12 roosting at (Southfield Green) Cramlington during the month.



A Feral Pigeon in Janet Dean's Rothbury garden

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

A pre-roost gathering of 67 was at Howdon on 29th (CB) with 15 at Gosforth Park NR on 17th (MJC), 13 at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 6th (MR) and eight at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 9th (TB). One to four were at Big Waters, Ellington, Howick, Spartylea and Widdrington Moor Lake.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

WeBS count at Whiteadder Water (Berwick) on 11th found around 625 (TBr), 500 at Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 8th and Lynemouth Flash on 30th (MR/MSH), 300+ at East Holywell on 23rd (MSH) and 231 at Callerton subsidence area on 11th (MH). Around 120 perched on trees next to the Keel Row Pub on 27th, 80 at Woodhorn Village on 23rd and 16-27 at Howdon and Whitley Bay.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Up to 20 birds came to feeders at Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin) during the month (BS), 14 were there on 26th (TRD) and two were at Spartylea all month. Display and mating was noted at Chapel House on 17th with display at Stonehaugh (Wark Forest) on 19th (MH/AA).

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

The presumed resident pair was at the Crooked Lonnen (Holy Island) on 3rd with one at the Snook on 7th and hunting around the Castle at dawn on 30th (IK/ADM/MJC). All other reports were of singles in the first half of the month at Carrawbrough on 1st, Stagshaw on 2nd, Howick on 5th and 14th, Humshaugh and Foxton on 6th, Mitford Steads on 8th, Cresswell on 11th and Shoreswood (Berwick) on 13th.



A Cresswell Barn Owl hunts
by Colin Bradshaw

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

On three dates between 7th and 28th three were at Derwent Reservoir with two on four dates (lfo), the only other report being one at Druridge Lane on 5th (TB).

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Four very vocal males at Ellington on 17th (TB), two calling regularly throughout the month at Howick (JAR) with singles at Park End, Prestwick Carr and Hepburn Woods on 2nd, Low Cocklaw (Berwick) on 9th, Fulbeck (Morpeth) on 26th and Derwent Reservoir on 27th.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

A poor winter for this species with only one at Holy Island on 3rd and 7th (IK/ADM).

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

The only multiple count was of two at Thrum Mill (Rothbury) on 21st (JD) with singles all month at Jesmond Dene and on four dates at Swallow Pond (Wallsend) (DHWB/GPK). Singles were also at five coastal sites and four inland during the month.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Two heard at Letah Wood (Hexham) on 3rd and one at Derwent Reservoir on the same date (IFo).

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

High counts of three at Hepburn Woods on 2nd and Hexham on 12th (MJC/AJH), two at Spartylea on 1st, Letah Wood (Hexham) on 3rd, Tynemouth on 6th, Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 10th and Valley Park (Cramlington) on 18th. Singles were at ten other locations.



A Great Spotted Woodpecker at Tynemouth on 6th December by Colin Bradshaw

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Five birds were noted on the A1 between Beal and Newcastle on 7th (ADM); four birds including three males were at Callerton subsidence area on 11th (MH). A pair were regularly seen at West Hartford during the month (TB0) and two birds were also at Blucher, Craster, Holy Island, Prestwick Carr and at Whiteadder Water. Single birds were at 20 sites.



A kestrel on Holy Island by Mike Carr

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Single birds were at Beal, Boulmer, Budle Bay, Goswick, Holy Island, Monks' House Pool, Stag Rocks (Bamburgh) and at Titlington Mount. A bird was seen mobbing a Peregrine *Falco peregrinus* at an inland site on 4th (DGB/RHB) and a female was seen at a site in the south west of the County on 18th (SJH) which is very unusual.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

A pair was at an inland site on 4th (DGB/RGB) and single birds were at Bothal Pond, Doddington, Humshaugh, Whittle Dene Reservoirs and at Widdrington Moor Lake.

Ring-necked Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

A report of 25 at Denton Dene on 8th (*per* SRB) with six there on 11th and at Moorside Allotments on 12th (SRB).

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*

The individual remained at Prestwick Carr all month being reported on 2nd and 18th (PCF/STH) but noticeably absent from its usual location in the days before New Year.

Magpie *Pica pica*

At Cramlington 58 roosted on 22nd (STH), 26 at Howdon on 19th (CB), 15 at Northburn (Cramlington) on 4th (LJM) and 11 at Brierdene (Whitley Bay) on 3rd (IJ). One to six were at Brierdene and Swallow Pond.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Five was the high count on 22nd at Hepburn Woods (MJC), three at Derwent Reservoir on 3rd and Ponteland on 16th (IFo/CW). Two were at Abbey Mill (Morpeth), Arcot Hall (Cramlington), Ellington, Hepburn Woods and Holystone with singles at a further four locations.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

A pre-dusk gathering of 200 was at St Nicholas Manor (Cramlington) on 15th (DM). Stubble fields attracted flocks of 160 at Howick on 18th (JAR) with 150+ at Harpers Heugh (Budle) on 13th (MSH), around 90 at Low Cocklaw (Berwick) on 23rd (TBr) and 76 at Beacon Hill (Cramlington). At Spartylea 50 were seen all month with two to ten at East Cottage (Lemington Hall) and Brierdene.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

More than 200 noted at Harpers Heugh (Budle) on 13th (MSH), 100 feeding at Alnwick Duchess School on 28th, 60 at Low Cocklaw (Berwick) on 23rd (TBr), and 37 at Derwent Reservoir on 21st (IFo) and one to six at QEII Park and Wallsend.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

On 9th 56 were at R Blyth Estuary and 41 at Arcot Lane (Cramlington) on 24th (LJM) with two to six at Brierdene (Whitley Bay) all month.

Raven *Corvus corax*

Two at Winter's Gibbet (Harwood Forest) on 3rd, Holy Island on 12th and Craggside (Rothbury) on 17th (MSH/SR/JD) with singles at Hepburn Woods and Holystone both on 22nd.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

High counts at Hepburn Woods with 32 on 22nd and 22 on 2nd (MJC), five at Chugdon Wood (Ellington) on 16th and more than four at Northumberland Park (North Shields) on the same date (MSH). Three were at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 10th and Ellington on 25th with one to two at a further 12 widespread localities.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus*

The long-staying bird was reported at Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 10th and 17th (DRW/MNC).

November Bulletin The section should say "An individual was present at Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 19th (DRW)."

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

A 2km stretch of hedgerow at Low Cocklaw (Berwick) held 27 birds on 22nd (TBr), 18 at feeders in Holywell Dene on 11th and 17 at Bolam on 4th (ASJ) with 12 at Brierdene (Whitley Bay) on 3rd. Two to ten were at four locations including a pair inspecting a new nest box in a garden in NE3.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Eight was the high count at Brierdene (Whitley Bay) (IJ) with six there on two other dates and Spartylea all month, five at feeders at Valley Park (Cramlington) on 10th and East Cottage (Lemington Hall) on 29th.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

A peak count of 42 at Hepburn Woods on 22nd (MJC), 25 at Wallington on 16th with 20 there on 8th (AJR/CB) and eight to 15 at Spartylea all month (CT). Twelve were at Hepburn Woods on 2nd and Bolam on 4th, 11 at Holywell Dene on 11th and East Cottage (Lemington Hall) on 28th with one to eight at five other locations.



Two of our resident tits in a Rothbury garden
Tim Dean on 8th December



Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

Feeders attracted four at Craster on 12th and new location of East Linden on 20th (PHa/AHa) with four at Brierdene (Whitley Bay) on 24th (IJ), three at Prestwick Carr on 10th and Derwent Reservoir on 21st (IFo). One to two were at these and four other locations.



Two 'cousins'. Above: a Marsh Tit at Wallington by Colin Bradshaw on 5th
and below: a Willow Tit at Rothbury on 8th December by Tim Dean.



Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

Two at Windy Edge (Stonehaugh) on 2nd and Linden Hall (Longhorsely) on 2nd & 10th (SW/NFO) with singles at Linden Hall regularly all month and New Mills (Berwick), Rothbury, Spindleston, Wallington and Widdrington.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

An emerging cereal crop at Low Cocklaw (Berwick) attracted 50 on 27th (TBr), 33 at Beacon Hill (Cramlington) on 10th (DM) and 16 at Beal Point Lindisfarne NNR on 30th (GB/DM/LAR). Ten were at Beacon Hill and Fenham-le-Moor, nine at St Mary's Island and one to six at Boulmer, Middle Stobswood, Newcastle Town Moor and Sandy Bay (Newbiggin).

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Five flocks totalling 42 birds were at Hepburn Woods on 2nd (MJC). There were 25+ at Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 16th, while in the Hexham area flocks of 22 (Dukeshouse), 21 (Tyne Green) and 20 (Letah Wood) were noted. Other sizeable 'tribes' included 15 at Ashington on 11th, 13 at Prestwick Carr on 10th, up to 12 in a Longbenton garden and 12 at QEII CP and Wallington. Elsewhere, eight to ten were noted at Brierdene (Whitley Bay), Craggside, Cramlington (Barns Park), Derwent Reservoir, Humford Mill (Bedlington), Haughton Strother GP (Humshaugh) and Tynemouth; more unusual was a regular flock of eight at Holy Island. Six to seven were reported from Bedlington, Blyth, Corbridge, Furnace Bank (Bedlington), Spartylea and Stonehaugh and two to five from a further seven localities.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Singles were reported from Branton GP on 15th, East Chevington on 11th, Howick on 5th, Marden Quarry (Whitley Bay) on 10th, Newbiggin on 23rd and Tynemouth on 10th.

A single bird of the **Siberian race** *P.c.trisitis* was photographed and sound-recorded at Newbiggin on 23rd (GB). This was in addition to the individual noted above on the same date.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Single males were at Corbridge on 26th, Howick on 5th, Tynemouth on 16th and 23rd and in a Woolsington garden on 27-28th, these being the only records. Females were reported from Gosforth Garden Village from 23rd-31st, Howick on 10th and Linden Hall on 9th, when an un-sexed bird was also at Morpeth.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

At least ten were noted in Howick Hall gardens on 5th (BS) and seven were at Bolam on 4th. Up to four were at Holywell Dene and three at Chugdon Wood (Ellington), while one to two were also reported from Arcot Hall GC, East Ord (Berwick), Eshott, Furnace Bridge and Humford Mill (Bedlington), Northumberland Park (North Shields), Rothbury, Spartylea, Spindleston and Wark (North Tyne).

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Three were noted at Hepburn Woods and two at Corbridge, Fulbeck (Morpeth) and Letah Wood (Hexham). Singles were also reported from Bolam, Derwent Reservoir, Furnace Bridge (Bedlington), Holywell Dene, Northumberland Park (North Shields), North Walbottle, QEII CP and Wark (North Tyne).

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Three to six at Holy Island on 7th and 2nd respectively increased to 20 by 30th, perhaps suggesting a hard weather movement from the mainland where there was lying snow (MJC/ADM). Elsewhere, up to four were noted at Brierdene (Whitley Bay), three were at Stag Rocks on 7th, three were on bird feeders at Lemington Hall on 29th and two at Spartylea throughout.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Several thousand birds flew W from the roost at Gosforth Park NR at dawn on 7th (GB). At Prestwick Carr, 1,500 flew E on 2nd and 600 were at Derwent Reservoir on 21st. Elsewhere 15-20 were reported from Brierdene (Whitley Bay), Fulbeck (Morpeth) and Spartylea.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

There were two at Furnace Bridge (Bedlington) on 23rd, while singles were reported from Bywell Bridge, Corbridge, Holywell Dene, Ponteland Park and Thrum Mill.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

33 recent arrivals were at Berwick on 22nd (MJC). Up to 18 were noted at Brierdene (Whitley Bay), 16 were at Whittle Dene Reservoirs on 6th and 15 at Alnwick GC on 27th. A Corbridge garden attracted up to 13 during the month, while 12 were at Holy Island on 30th. Counts of nine to ten came from Gosforth, Spartylea and Tynemouth and five were at Lemington Hall.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

There was further evidence of recent arrivals during the month. At Prestwick Carr 250-300 during the first week increased to 800 by 10th (AJR/IK). Other large gatherings were noted at Low Cocklaw on 22nd and East Ord on 16th (both Berwick) where there were 150-200 and 140 respectively. Elsewhere, 100-120 were reported from Derwent Reservoir on 10th, Haughton Strother (Humshaugh) on 4th and the Military Road (Chollerford-Whittle Dene) on 7th. Counts of 50-60 came from Druridge, Grindon Lough, Harlow Hill, Linden Hall, Scots Gap and Swallow Pond, while 30-46 were noted at Corbridge, Shoreswood (Berwick) and Spartylea and one to 25 at a further ten localities.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

A recent influx of 50+ was noted at Prestwick Carr on 6th (AJR) and there was an obvious increase in numbers at Backworth, where eight were reported on 10th. Three to four were at Fenham-le-Moor and two at Holy Island on 30th; two were also reported from Howdon, Priors Park (Tynemouth) and West Hartford, while singles were at Amble Braid, Berwick, Cramlington Hall, Havannah NR, Longbridge End (LNNR) and Middle Stobswood.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Over 300 at Prestwick Carr on 6th increased to 600 by 10th (AJR/IK). At Derwent Reservoir, 120 were noted on 5th, while 100-120 were at Low Cocklaw (Berwick) on 22nd. Elsewhere, 30-40 were reported from A1 (Borders), Corbridge, Harlow Hill, Haughton Strother (Humshaugh), Hexham and Morpeth, while 20-22 were also at Grindon Lough, Gosforth Garden Village, Scots Gap and Wark (North Tyne). One to ten were reported from a further 15 localities.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

30 at Cornhill Churchyard on 11th was by far the largest gathering (JDL). Five were at Druridge on 21st and three singing males were heard at Hepburn Woods on 2nd. Two were noted at Jesmond Dene and Stonehaugh, while singles were reported from Bellingham, Big Waters, East Ord (Berwick), Fenham-le-Moor, Fulbeck (Morpeth), Holborn Grange and Mitford.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Eight at Holy Island on 30th decreased to three by the following day (MJC/ADM). Up to seven were noted at Brierdene (Whitley Bay) and Spartylea during the month and three were on bird feeders at Lemington Hall on 29th.

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Peak monthly counts were four at East Chevington on 4th (MSH) and at Holy Island on 30th (MJC/ADM), two at Cresswell, Druridge Pools, Prestwick Carr, Seaton Sluice and Spittal (Berwick) and singles at Berwick (Little Beach) and Doddington and North Hauxley.

November bulletin The paragraph at the top of page 316 refers to Stonechat

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

At least eight were at Howdon on 22nd (CB). Up to five were at Quarry Cottage (Newbiggin) all month. During the month, four were seen at Spartylea and QE11 CP. Two were noted at Marden, Holywell Dene and Briar Dene.



A Dunnock at Wark by Colin Bradshaw on 7th December

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

At Holy Island, around 200 had gathered at Coombs Farm with a further 50 at feeders at the village school on 30th (MJC/ADM). About 60 were at Low Cocklaw (Berwick) on 22nd (TBr). 50 were seen at Quarry House (Newbiggin) all month and around 40 at feeders on 26th in Cramlington at Valley Park (RS/DM). 21 were at garden feeders at Beaconhill (Cramlington) on 29th (STH). Also at garden feeders, 14 birds were the peak count during the month at Chapel House and Gosforth Garden village. Two to four were at four further sites.



A Cock House Sparrow by Chris Barlow at Amble Harbour on 28th December

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

40 attended feeders at Hauxley on 30th (GB). At Chugdon Wood, 30 on 2nd increased to 37 by the end of the month (TB). 30 plus were at Outchester (Waren Mill) on 13th (MSH). 30 also at feeders at Lemington Hall on 29th (PHa/AHa). 18 and 12 spent the month in gardens at Corbridge and Fulbeck (Morpeth) respectively (MR/TD). 12 at feeders at Dinnington on 17th was the month's peak here (PCF). One to ten noted at ten other sites.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Two were present at Tynemouth Pier and at Gosforth Garden Village on 29th and 8th (ASJ/MJC). Singles were sighted at a further 13 locations during the month.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrelli*

22 was a good count on 2nd at Prestwick Carr (PCF). 14 were at Chevington Burn Mouth on 19th and nine at Whitley Bay mini-golf course the following day (MH/AA/ASJ). One to four were seen at four other sites.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

12 at Fenham Le Moor on 30th was the month's highest count (GB). Ten were at Backworth on 10th and eight at St. Mary's on 18th (CGK/ASJ). Inland birds scarce in winter, involved seven on 4th at Haughton Strother and four on 21st at Derwent Reservoir and one flushed from a sedge bed in heavy snow at Newburn on 29th (MR/IFo/MH). Four were at Prestwick Carr on 10th and at Holy Island on 30th. Two noted at Hauxley on 28th.

A Meadow Pipit

Church Point

27th December

Chris Barlow



Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Very well recorded this month, with impressive counts from hard-working observers on Holy Island on several dates. Mainly along the north and east shores, a total of 28 were counted on 7th, increasing to a maximum of 46 by 30th. 20 were at the beach near the Excavations on 31st alone (ADM/MJC). Seven fed in the north bay at St. Mary's Island on 29th (ASJ). Six were at a flash pool at Hauxley on 28th (GB). Two were seen during the month at Tynemouth, Cullercoats Bay, Rockcliffe (Cullercoats), Craster and Berwick Little Beach. Single birds at North Shields Fish Quay, Fenham Le Moor, Blyth Harbour, Newbiggin and Howick.

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

Two were present at Druridge Pools on 30th before flying off north (MSH).

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Ten to twelve were noted in a game crop at Holburn on 30th (GB). Seven at Hazelrigg Mill on 30th (DM). Five were at Spartylea on 6th and four at Wallington on 8th (CT/CB). Two males fed on provided seed at Bolam on 4th (ASJ). Two also at Holburn Grange on 30th (DM). A single frequented garden feeders in Corbridge all month and at Berwick on 4th. One was seen at Hexham also on 4th and at four further sites (MR/PRM).

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

45 were counted at Wallington on 16th (AJR). Between eight and 16 at Spartylea all month (CT). 12 were seen at Briar Dene on 24th (IJ). Eight were at feeders at Lemington Hall on 29th and five, also at garden feeders all month at Marden (Cullercoats) and up to five at Gosforth Garden Village. Six were at Northumberland Park (North Shields) on 17th.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

A number of wintering birds again remained at Abbey Mill (Morpeth) with eight being the peak count on 28th and five on 10th. Singles seen on two other dates (IJ *et al.*). Elsewhere, one to two also remained at Linden Hall, observed from 1st to 11th and a single bird was found at Humshaugh on 12th (NFO/SW).

A Hawfinch

Linden Hall

Neil Osborne

12th December

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Very well reported this month with a good count of 14 attending garden feeders at Rothbury on 28th, with eight present most other days of the month (TRD/JD). Ten were found at Abbey Mill and at Beaconhill (Cramlington) during the month (ASJ/STH). Six came in to garden feeders all month at Morpeth and six were seen at Alnwick and Howick during the month. Five were at Humshaugh on 4th and Spartylea on 12th. Four were noted at Wark, Craster, Beacon Lane, Tynemouth, East Chevington, Howdon, Briar Dene and QE11 CP on further dates and one-three found at an additional 23 locations during the month.

Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*

33 gathered pre-roost in an East Ord (Berwick) garden on 19th (CH). 25 did likewise at Linden Hall on 12th, with nine noted on 9th (NFO). 15 at garden feeders at Beaconhill (Cramlington) on 29th (STH). One to four were at five further sites. Notable was one observer's comment that no birds were seen in the whole year in a Woolsington garden, where it was recently the most common finch.





Two male finches in Tim Dean's Rothbury garden on 8th December. Above: a Bullfinch and below: a Greenfinch



Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

A flock of 120 fed in a game crop at Fenham Mill on 5th (MH/AA). 53 counted at Sandham Bay (Holy Island) on 30th had increased from 29 here on 2nd, with 40 at Holburn the next day (MJC/GB). 30 were seen at Hazelrigg Mill on 30th (DM/GB/LAR).

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

100 plus were at East Chevington burn mouth on 4th and 100, presumed the same flock at Druridge Bay dunes on 8th (MSH/SRB). 26 to 48 observed here on two other dates. Around 70 were noted at Goswick Farm on 3rd (TBr). 25 were seen on a fence at Hemscott Hill on 5th (EC/JSB). A single was seen at Berwick Little Beach on 14th and at Beal on 30th.



Twite from the East Chevington flock.

Above: by John Richards on 10th December and below: by Colin Bradshaw on 11th December

**Lesser Redpoll** *Carduelis caberet*

70 and 71 were counted at Hepburn Woods on 2nd and 22nd (MJC). Elsewhere, one to eight were noted at a further eight sites.

Common (Mealy) Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*

The sole sighting was of one found feeding on a small patch of waste ground at North Shields Quay on 12th, remaining until 18th (MK/DRW/ASJ).



The North Shields Fish Quay Mealy Redpoll
Colin Bradshaw on 18th December

Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

21 found at Hepburn Woods on 2nd included several singing males (MJC). 12 plus were seen at Harwood Village on 3rd (MSH). Seven were at Colt Crag on 20th and also at the Simonsides on 28th (MR/TD). Six were found at Stonehaugh on 19th, with four here on 2nd, including two singing males (MH/AA/SW). Four were seen at Thrunton on 24th and one at Wark on 9th.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

A flock of 32 was at Hepburn Woods on 2nd, increasing to 60 by 22nd (MJC). 45 to 50 were near the Drift Inn (Cresswell) on 15th and at Druridge Links and Holburn on 28th and 30th (ASJ/DM/LJM/GB). An impressive 44 visited feeders at East Ord (Berwick) on 3rd (MHu). 37 were seen at QE11 CP on 7th and 37 was the monthly maximum visiting garden feeders at Gosforth Garden Village counted on 26th (MJC/PRM). Also on 26th, a high number for the garden involved 25 at Chapel House (Newcastle) (MH). Garden feeders at Marden (Cullercoats) attracted birds all month with a maximum of 22 on 27th and 20 birds at Lemington Hall on 29th. 22 were at Sandham Bay (Holy Island) on 2nd (ASJ/PHa/MHa/MJC). Up to 20 were at Spartylea all month and at Prestwick Carr on 2nd (CT/PCF). One to 14 were noted at a further five sites.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

55 on 2nd at Hepburn Woods increased to 75 by 22nd (MJC). 50 were at Haughton Strother on 27th and 45 plus at Wark on 30th (MR/PRM). A flock of 35 was at Derwent Reservoir on 21st (IFo). 15 seen at Swallow Pond on 3rd and birds were present all month at Spartylea with a peak of 12 (CPK/CT). One to six were reported at five other sites during the month.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

26 were found on Holy Island on 12th (SR). 24 reported at the north west side of the Island the following day could be the same flock and 14 were at Snook on 23rd (CH). 20 were at Cheswick Sands on 4th (CH). At Sandham Bay, four were noted on 7th and 30th, with three here on 21st. Singles were found at Newbiggin on 8th and 9th.



Two photographs of the confiding Snow Bunting from Church Point in December.
Above: by Chris Barlow on 10th and below: by John Littleton on 8th.



Lapland Bunting *Calciarius lapponicus*

One, calling in flight, was seen at Longbridge End on 30th (GB/DM/LAR).

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citronella*

Two flocks totalling 110 birds fed in stubble at Callerton on 11th (MH). 20 plus were noted at Outchester (Waren Mill) on 13th (MSH). 13 were seen at Big Waters on 24th and 12 were at Holburn on 30th (GB/DM). On 26th, nine were at Howick and one lucky observer had nine in his garden at Corbridge (JAR/MR). Seven found at Low Cocklaw (Berwick) on 22nd and at Beaconhill (Cramlington) on 10th (TBr/DM). A single was at Havannah NR on 31st.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Six were at St. Mary's on 6th and several other dates during the month (ASJ). Five were found at the Blyth Estuary on 9th (LJM). Three were at Holburn and at Holy Island Lough on 30th and at Stobswood on 28th. Two seen at Big Waters on 24th. Single birds seen at five other sites during the month.

ESCAPES, HYBRIDS AND BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN**Escapes****Red-breasted Goose** *Branta ruficollis*

An adult on fields near Bells farm, Cresswell from 17th to 20th was initially thought to be of potential wild origin given location and date but closer scope views and photos revealed the remains of a narrow blue plastic ring. Hence it was presumed to be an escape from a collection as no metal ring accompanying the colour ring.

Was

Greater Rhea *Rhea americana*

A surprise find on the last day of the year with one nonchalantly wandering around a cattle field north of Thrunton Wood. The cattle eventually took exception and chased it to edge of field. Apparently the local caravan park owner keeps exotics and a local farmer confirmed that it was known to be part of his collection. (TRD/JD)

Hybrids**Tufted Duck x Pochard** *Aythya fuligula x Aythya ferina*

A hybrid was present at Killingworth Lake on 28th which was thought to be the same long staying individual. Also two other hybrids on 27th there which also resembled this pairing but were clearly different individuals.(MSH)

Birds of Unknown Origin

No sightings

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

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Alnwick Wildlife Group(Richard Poyer), Bamburgh Ringing Station, Hauxley Ringing Station, 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), Steve Laing (Red Grouse to Black-necked Grebe), Trevor Blake (Honey-buzzard to Crane), Tom Brewis (Avocet to Godwit), Clive Hampton (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 Jack (Duncock to Corn Bunting).

Data Manager is Tom Brewis.

Thanks to David Sanders of NNBC for providing data.

Proof reading was by Mike Smith.

Mail distribution by Paul Stewart.

Edited by Steve Barrett NTBCbulletin2012@gmail.com

RECORD SUBMISSION

Please email records for the month to ntbc.records@googlemail.com

Please email for a copy of the standard spreadsheet and other details.

Location names and grid references: Please use of standard location names and include grid references as this 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

Annual membership costs £10 for a junior, £30 for an individual, and £32 for a family.

For membership enquiries please contact ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

If you internet bank you can pay online: please include your name in the ref. It is helpful if you email me to let me know when you've made the transfer ntbc@jobentley.plus.com

If you decide to set up a standing order please date the first payment at least a fortnight from your posting date to allow time to process with the bank. You can also set up your standing order directly with your bank if you wish; just let me know.

Finally, if you know anyone who might like to join NTBC please pass on the club information - new members are always welcome.

Jo Bentley - Hon Treasurer

NTBC WEB SITE

The club website is an excellent online resource for anyone interested in birds. There are:

Photo Galleries – Here you can view hundreds of photos of birds from Northumberland, Newcastle and North Tyneside. Members are encouraged to contribute their own photos. Simply send them to galleries@ntbc.org.uk

Sightings – Here you can view reports of birds recently reported in the County. Anyone who would like to contribute and post sightings to this page, please email sightings@ntbc.org.uk Please note this section is moderated, so there may be a short delay before your record appears.

There are also County Checklists, Records Committee updates, Information on important Surveys, useful articles and reports on Bird ID and Overseas Birding Trips....and much more...

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

New content such as Birding Trip Reports etc., is always welcome and very much appreciated.

To find out more please visit www.ntbc.org.uk



A Rothbury Robin by Janet Dean



Tim with a smile and binocs as ever
Uganda 2016
by Brian Lancaster

Tim Cleeves is assured of a prominent place in the history of British ornithology thanks to an enigmatic shorebird. But his central role in the folklore of British birding was guaranteed long before he found the Druridge Bay Slender-billed Curlew in May 1998.

He was a dedicated conservationist, accomplished finder of rare birds, passionate Bob Dylan fan, legendary curry chef, devoted husband, father and grandfather - and long-suffering Bristol Rovers supporter. For more than half a century his stories and catchphrases have entertained birders from Unst to St Agnes - and beyond. His sudden death in December, aged 66, was yet another grievous blow to Northumbrian birding, coming so soon after the equally untimely deaths of Eric Meek and Jimmy Steele.

Tim Cleeves was born on the south-east side of Bristol in 1951. As a child, he was interested in all aspects of natural history and joined the junior section of the Bristol Naturalists' Society aged 11. Following the formation of the Bristol Ornithological Club in 1966, the legend 'T.R. Cleeves' appeared with increasing regularity in the Club bulletin alongside records of scarcities from the Bristol area.

Tim's career in bird protection and conservation started in 1975 when he took a contract job for the RSPB: wardening Red Kites and Peregrines in mid-Wales. That year was probably the turning point in Tim's life. After his RSPB contract finished, he visited Fair Isle in the September, coinciding with the first (and second!) Tennessee Warbler for Britain. But a far more profound encounter was with Ann, then the assistant cook at the bird observatory and now the hugely successful crime novelist. They married in February 1977 and relocated to Hilbre Island in the Dee Estuary where Tim had secured the warden's job. During this period Tim was a mentor to young Cheshire birders like Andy Stoddart and Martin Garner. T

Later that year Tim joined the staff of the RSPB as an assistant regional officer in the West Midlands. Tim excelled at this work, enthusing hundreds of people to engage in bird conservation; a lasting legacy of his time there is the Symonds Yat Peregrine watch point in The Forest of Dean.

The family moved to Holywell in Northumberland in 1987 when Tim became a Conservation Officer at the RSPB North of England office in Newcastle and it was in Northumberland that Tim found many of the 'rares' that resulted in 'T.R. Cleeves' appearing so regularly in the annual *British Birds* rarities reports. He logged both White Stork and Black Stork from his kitchen window in Holywell. And at nearby Seaton Sluice, where he spent countless hours seawatching with his great friend

Maurice Hepple, he found Bridled Tern and Ross's Gull. His Northumberland 'finds' list also included multiple White-billed Divers (the most recent was past SSWT on November 29th 2017), Surf Scoter, Blue-winged-teal, Bonaparte's Gull and Cattle Egret.

But it was the 'Druridge Bay curlew' that catapulted Tim into a maelstrom of debate that lasted for 16 years. In the early evening of 4th May 1998, Bank Holiday Monday, Tim and Ann visited Druridge Pools. A smaller bird took off briefly with accompanying Eurasian Curlews but it was distinctively different and Tim, the most diligent of observers, set to work sketching and taking notes. He had to return to work at The Lodge that evening but over the next three days a stream of observers came to see the bird. The cumulative notes, photographs and video of the 'Druridge Bay curlew' – and the exhaustive research by Jimmy Steele – convinced the BBRC, and subsequently the BOURC, that Tim had indeed found Britain's First – and most likely last – Slender-billed Curlew and it was admitted to the British List in 2002. In the *BB* write-up, the then BOURC Chairman, Eric Meek, praised Tim for having 'the confidence in his outstanding identification skills to stick to his guns throughout.'

But the enormity of the record, a first summer individual of a Critically Endangered species (a pair of which must have bred somewhere in Siberia in 1997), meant it came under intense scrutiny – particularly from those who had not ventured north to see the bird during its four-day stay. A subsequent small Curlew at Minsmere, Suffolk, in September 2004 fuelled the debate and BBRC/BOURC initiated a review of the Druridge Bay bird. The eventual conclusion was that the record was 'Not Proven' and Slender-billed Curlew was deleted from the British List in January 2014. That Tim treated its initial admission to the British List and subsequent deletion with the same shrug of the shoulders was a measure of his humility.

Tim's birding achievements were huge and his professional achievements were significant too. During his time at the RSPB he secured additional protection for the wintering populations of waders and wildfowl in Budle Bay. And during his 'exile' from Northumberland working at the RSPB office in West Yorkshire from 1999-2006 Tim initiated the Beckingham Marshes restoration project in the Trent Valley. During this time he also co-authored two books: *The RSPB Handbook of British Birds* with Peter Holden (Helm, 2002) and *Birds New To Britain 1980-2004* with myself (Poyser, 2005). Tim eventually took early retirement in 2007 and from his base in Whitley Bay he continued his quest for 500 species on his British List.

Tim touched the lives of hundreds of people. When he died on 16th December there was stunned reaction from birders nationwide, all of whom had celebratory tales of Tim. Ann summed it up beautifully that day: 'He was a brilliant birder but an even better friend.' Indeed, Tim Cleeves was so much more than a brilliant birder. He was funny, caring, thoughtful and generous. Mourners gathered at Tim's funeral wore their Bristol Rovers scarves with pride and listened to the music he'd planned during many a quiet seawatch. 'Magical Mystery Tour' by the Beatles was his sign-off choice and a very appropriate one too. Life - and birding - is indeed a magical mystery tour with destinations unknown and unpredictable. For too many people though, some of that magic has now gone with the passing of Tim Cleeves.

Adrian Pitches