

**NTBC**

Northumberland & Tyneside Bird Club

Registered Charity No. 517641

GUIDE TO SUBMITTING BIRD RECORDS

Why submit your records to the NTBC?

Records submitted to the County Recorder are used by the bird club to compile a monthly bulletin which is issued to all members via email. This shows details of species recorded in the county during the month concerned and also forms part of the basis of the annual bird report for the county, *Birds in Northumbria*. This annual report is the definitive record of historical ornithological information for the area covered by the club which includes Northumberland and the Metropolitan Districts of Newcastle upon Tyne and North Tyneside. The records are permanently archived and, with prior arrangement, they are available for more detailed research. Club members wishing to carry out a detailed study of digital records should contact the County Recorder or any NTBC Committee member for more details.

What to report

The bulk of the records concern numbers, distribution, arrivals, departures and movements of our regular resident and visiting species. Quantitative and comparative data on breeding species are among the most important in the ornithological field and contributors are encouraged to submit this information. Records of species of conservation concern are of particular value: please see the leaflet *Birds of Conservation Concern in the United Kingdom* (available free from the RSPB or BTO) for what species at which times of the year. Other records involving the monitoring of vagrants and scarce migrants for the official Northumberland bird list. The appendix at the end of this guide show the main categories of records required. It is also useful to look through a few monthly bulletins to get an indication of what is relevant.

Please note that if you are carrying out fieldwork for surveys, records entered on to survey sheets, etc. are kept separately from bulletin records and will not automatically appear in the bulletin as well. If your fieldwork locates some interesting birds, please also enter these via the club's electronic record sheet so they can also be published in the bulletin and annual report.

Remember that in all bird recording, the welfare of the birds and their habitat must be your first consideration. This is especially true when dealing with breeding species.

How to submit your records

For most observations, the club asks that observers submit their records via email on a spreadsheet which is available, with guidance, from the Data Manager. For records of rare or unusual species (see Schedule A below) special 'Rare Bird' report forms are available (on the club website www.ntbc.org.uk or from the County Recorder) to provide the supporting evidence in greater detail than is possible on the spreadsheet.

Spreadsheet records

Any spreadsheet program compatible with Microsoft Excel (e.g. Open Office or Libre Office) may be used. Initially, you should obtain a Template in the standard Club format by sending an e-mail request to the Data Manager at NTBC.Records@googlemail.com (please specify which program/version you will be using if not a recent version of Excel). The template spreadsheet and full guidance notes will then be emailed to you

Completed spreadsheets should be emailed as file attachments to NTBC.Records@googlemail.com to arrive before (or at the latest on) the 8th of the month following that in which the records were collected. There is no requirement to order records on the spreadsheet in BOU taxonomic sequence.

Confidential Records

Occasionally contributors may see a species in a locality that they feel should be kept confidential. These records may be submitted to the County Recorder in confidence by writing **Confidential** or **Confidential locality** within the Comments section of the spreadsheet. If marked **Confidential** the record will not appear in the bulletin or annual report. If marked **Confidential locality** it will be published but without precise reference to the site, e.g. 'in the north of the county'. Please do, however, provide full details of the site so that records from other observers not so annotated can be similarly treated.

Records typically treated in this manner include breeding records of those species at particular risk from illegal persecution (e.g. Hen Harrier, Peregrine Falcon, Long-eared Owl, Raven). The County Recorder may choose to not publish any sensitive record. Note that confidential records may need to be discussed by the County Records Committee before the sighting can be accepted but observers can request that site names are withheld from the CRC or given vaguely by the County Recorder in such meetings.

Rare and Unusual Species

Sightings of rare or unusual species require supporting evidence, usually in the form of a detailed description on special forms available from the club web site (www.ntbc.org.uk) or the County Recorder. The ongoing taxonomic and genetic debates over a number of species and subspecies mean that detailed field notes are vitally important in establishing records for both immediate publication and possible re-interpretation in the future. Taking field notes makes observations more rigorous and critical. Photographs and/or sound recordings can make the acceptance of such records easier.

In the Appendix below, Schedule A gives a list of species for which full written descriptions (preferably on the standard club Rare Bird Report Form) are required. The lists in this schedule is not exhaustive and notes may be requested on *any* record by the County Records Committee, for example a species reported out of season or at an unusual locality. Please note that for brief notes species, identification details that prove the identification beyond reasonable doubt are still required.

The County Records Committee

The County Records Committee comprises the County Recorder, who acts as Chairman, and four others elected by the committee of the Northumberland & Tyneside Bird Club. They are chosen not only for their ornithological expertise but also, importantly, for their knowledge of the county and its birds.

All records (not just rarities) are considered by the CRC during the course of about three meetings during the year. Where full details have been submitted, the first observer named on a particular report will be notified of the committee's decision on the record.

The County Recorder will forward details of any record that requires consideration by the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC) directly to that committee. The CRC will only accept these records if accepted by BBRC. Decisions reached by the BBRC are published in *British Birds* and the County Recorder will also notify the first observer of their decision as it becomes available.

Generally non-acceptance of a record, by either the county or the national committee, is not a reflection of an observer's ability or integrity. By far the commonest reason for non-acceptance is insufficient details being available for the committee to accept the identification as 100% proven. In only a few cases is it felt that a genuine mistake may have been made in the identification.

and finally, ...

We hope that these notes will be of use to both our newer contributors and long-standing contributors alike and may help to enhance the already high standard of bird recording in the county. If you are not already a contributor, why not? Bird recording can be a very enjoyable and satisfying part of your hobby.

APPENDICES

1. Schedule A - full description required

All species and sub-species considered by the BBRC

Any species or sub-species removed from the BBRC list after publication of these notes

Any species or sub-species not previously recorded in the County

Any record for which the CRC have asked for full details

The following :-

Snow Goose	Cory's Shearwater	Pallas's Warbler
Taiga Bean Goose	Great Shearwater	(Inland & Spring birds only)
Bewick's Swan	White Stork	Radde's Warbler
American Wigeon	Glossy Ibis	Dusky Warbler
Green-winged Teal	Night-heron	Greenish Warbler
Ring-necked Duck	Cattle Egret	Arctic Warbler
Surf Scoter	Purple Heron	Blyth's Reed Warbler
Alpine Swift	Honey-buzzard	Marsh Warbler
Turtle Dove	Montagu's Harrier	Melodious Warbler
Corncrake	Golden Eagle	Icterine Warbler
Spotted Crake	Goshawk (Coastal records only)	Rose-coloured Starling
Stone-curlew	Black Kite	Bluethroat (Autumn only)
Black-winged Stilt	White-tailed Eagle	Nightingale
American Golden Plover	Rough-legged Buzzard	Red-flanked Bluetail
Dotterel	Bee-eater	Red-breasted Flycatcher
Temminck's Stint	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	Citrine Wagtail
White-rumped Sandpiper	Red-footed Falcon	Richard's Pipit
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Woodchat Shrike	Olive-backed Pipit
Pectoral Sandpiper	Golden Oriole	Water Pipit
Red-necked Phalarope	Chough	Common Rosefinch
Lesser Yellowlegs	Crested Tit	Parrot Crossbill
Sabine's Gull	Woodlark	Serin
Ring-billed Gull	Short-toed Lark	Corn Bunting
Yellow-legged Gull	Red-rumped Swallow	Ortolan Bunting
White-winged Black Tern		Little Bunting
White-billed Diver		
Wilson's Petrel	Yellow-browed Warbler	
Leach's Petrel	(Inland & Spring birds only)	

2. Subspecies - notes as appropriate to confirm identification

Black Brant

B. b. nigricans

Greenland White-fronted Goose

A.a.flavirostris

Kumlien's Gull

L. g. kumlieni

Lesser Black-backed Gull

L. f. intermedius

'Northern' Great Spotted Woodpecker

D. m. major

Jackdaw

other than *C. m. spermologus* & *C. m. monedula*

'Northern' Willow Warbler

P.t. acredula

'Siberian' Lesser Whitethroat

S.c.blythi

Yellow Wagtail

other than *M. f. flava* (Blue-headed Wagtail) &
M. f. flavissima ('British' Yellow Wagtail)

White Wagtail

M. a. alba (autumn & winter only)

'Northern' Bullfinch

P. p. pyrrhula

3. **Hybrids** Any bird suspected of being a hybrid between two different species

These lists are not meant to be exhaustive and the County Recorder may ask for notes on any species at any time.

4. All other species

Please send in records as follows: -

Breeding studies and totals, population counts and large flocks.

Migration totals and observations, including early and late dates of summer, passage and winter visitors (please include brief descriptions for any well outside of normal times).

Records of species in abnormal areas or habitat, including local site rarities and inland records of coastal species (please include any known relevant information e.g. 'only the second record in 20 years at this site', and brief descriptions for species very rare inland, e.g. Common Eider, Purple Sandpiper, Razorbill, etc.).

Unusual behaviour or plumages.

Significant ringing recoveries.

Anything else interesting or unusual.

31st July 2025