

Teesmouth Bird Club Newsletter



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Thanks to the contributors to this issue:- Chris Sharp; Graeme Joynt; John Sharp

All unsolicited copy will be most welcome, ideally sent by email, or on 3.5" computer disk, using word processing software, but typed and handwritten copy is equally acceptable. Any topic concerned with birds or the local environment is grist to the mill.

MONTHLY SUMMARY by Chris Sharp

December

The Desert Lesser Whitethroat remained at South Gare until 2nd on which date 4 Waxwings were by the Stockton Barrage. The Sabine's Gull of the previous month was relocated at Brotton (9th) and remained in the local fields until 14th. Up to 10 Little Gulls were at Marske Sewer at this time. Both Black-necked and Red-necked Grebe were off Newburn Sewer (10th) along with 19 Great Crested Grebe. At least 40 Twite were around Greenabella Marsh at this time. Around mid-month a Great-Northern Diver was off South Gare and 75 Pink-feet flew south over there (15th). A Barn Owl was an unfortunate roadside casualty at Greatham (15th). A Mealy Redpoll was at Saltholme (18th). This sub-species has recently been split and interest in Redpolls is sure to increase during the year. 3 Bearded Tits on the Long Drag from 22nd remained until 2001. Eight White-Fronted Geese joined the Greylags at Saltholme (22nd) and the following day 3 were at Scaling Dam together with the long staying Slavonian Grebe. A Dark-bellied Brent Goose was around Saltholme and 6 Pale-bellied Brent Geese were on Seal Sands. A strong northerly blow (24th) produced single Pomarine and Arctic-Skuas, 5 Bonxies and 2 Great Northern Divers off Hartlepool. 2 Smew were on the Reclamation Pool from 24th. This is now becoming a regular site for seeing this species in Cleveland. Up to 16 Water Pipits were around Saltholme at this time. Late in the month a few Waxwing began to appear with 6 at Guisborough and 12 at Stockton. Large numbers of Greylags were at Crookfoot along with 3 White-fronted and 6 Pink-footed Geese and 4 Whooper Swans. What was presumably the same Black-necked Grebe as the previous winter, reappeared in Jackson's Landing from 30th.

January

Year-tickers were out in force on 1st. A new county record was set for the most species seen on New Years Day with 115 being the new marker. Messrs Taylor, Regan and Sidwell had ideal weather conditions and some good birds. The Black-necked Grebe remained in Jackson's Landing for a few days, the 2

Smew remained around Reclamation Pond/Saltholme for the whole month. A Great Northern Diver was on Seal Sands again remaining until the end of the month. Other long stayers included the 3 Bearded Tits on the Long Drag, a Slavonian Grebe at Scaling Dam and Long-tailed Duck at Catersty Pond. The Waxwing invasion gathered pace in the first few days of the month with flocks occurring in a number of places. 81 were by the Tees Barrage and 164 by the A19 at Portrack (6th). Good numbers continued to be seen throughout the month. 20 Bewick's Swans were reported briefly by Greatham Creek (1st). This is a rare bird in Cleveland now. More expected were 2 Whooper Swans at Dormans Pool (4th). 6 Pale-bellied and 2 Dark-bellied Brent Geese on fields by the Power Station remained until mid-March. Up to 6 Shag were offshore at Steetley in the first few days and at least 16 Water Pipits were around Saltholme.

Mid-month saw 190 Eider off South Gare along with 90 Snow Buntings. The adult Glaucous Gull was regular at Hartlepool along with 3 Mediterranean Gulls (2 adults and a 1st winter). Up to 60 Twite were on Greenabella Marsh. An Egyptian Goose of unknown origin was at Scaling Dam briefly (14th). More obliging was the 2nd winter Ring-billed Gull which spent 5 days on the ice on the River Tees by Barclaycard in Stockton.

Little of note appeared in the latter half of the month despite the cold weather. Large numbers of Greylags were in the Crookfoot area with Up to 25 Pink-feet amongst them.

February

Despite some cold weather during the month February was largely a disappointing month for unusual birds in Cleveland and reflected a similar story in the rest of the country. An Iceland Gull on Long Newton Reservoir on 2nd was the first of several records from this locality during the month with possibly up to 6 different individuals being recorded along with a single Glaucous Gull. Large numbers of Gulls were using this site to roost at, but unfortunately it is a "permit only

site". Both Slavonian and Red-necked Grebes were reported occasionally off the headland at Hartlepool but the Glaucous and up to 3 Mediterranean Gulls were more regular. Early in the month a large influx of Woodcock occurred within the County, the Long Drag bushes being an especially favoured location. A Green Sandpiper was found wintering at Haverton Hole and Smew numbers increased to 6 on the North Tees Marshes. The 2nd-winter Ring-billed Gull was relocated on Portrack Marsh (13th) and remained until 18th. A Lapland Bunting was reported at Saltholme Pools (16th). This species is becoming increasingly difficult to see in Cleveland. 1-2 Black-tailed Godwits were around Greatham Creek. More Waxwings were located in the latter half of the month with 17 at the Tees Barrage and 50 in central Middlesbrough.

High water levels and the restriction imposed by the foot and mouth outbreak late in the month meant bird-watching around the area proved hard work and birders began to dream about spring falls of migrants at the coast.



NOTICEBOARD

Old TBC Reports

Our stock of back numbers of these for sale varies from dozens for certain years to zero for others. I occasionally get requests from birders and libraries either for reports for a particular year or for a set of TBC reports going back to the year dot.

So, if your bookcase is bulging at the seams, or your pile in the corner keeps toppling over and you want to dispose of your old reports, I would be please to take them off your hands. The reports which are completely sold out and which I would particularly welcome are:-

1974, 1978, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1985, 1986 and 1987

In the case of those years where we have dozens of copies, I am proposing that we reduce the stock gradually to ease the storage problem. So, if you want any of these, at bargain prices, now is a good time to ask me:

John Sharp
TBC Sales
10 Glendale, Guisborough, Cleveland TS14 8JF

STOP PRESS - WETLAND BIRD SURVEY

Because this issue is being prepared early to allow your Editor a well deserved trip to Texas, the Wetland Bird Survey Teesmouth - Winter 2000/2001 Summary will appear in the next issue of the Newsletter.

FOR SALE

Spotting Scope - Opticron Piccolo 60mm with 20x45 zoom eyepiece (with tripod). As new. £120.00.

Telephone Kevin Tunney on 0191 377 3279.

RARE BIRDS IN CLEVELAND - Part 2: May – July by Chris Sharp

MAY

1 st	Savis Warbler	–	Long Drag (95)
	Red Footed Falcon	–	Long Newton (87)
3 rd	Broad-billed Sandpiper	–	Greatham Creek (87)
	Glossy Ibis	–	Haverton Hole (92)
	American Wigeon	–	Saltholme Pool (88 to 7 th)
	Black Kite	–	South Gare (88)
	Baird's Sandpiper	–	Saltholme Marsh (79)
	Ring-necked Duck	–	Crookfoot Reservoir (77)
7 th	Semi-Palmated Sandpiper	–	Dormans Pool (89-10 th)
	Ross's Gull	–	Hartlepool (76)
	Subalpine Warbler	–	Hartlepool (99)
8 th	Ring-necked Duck	–	Hartlepool (93)
	Penduline Tit	–	Hargreaves Quarry (93)
	Subalpine Warbler	–	Hartlepool (75)
9 th	Rustic Bunting	–	Redcar (75-10 th)

10 th	Little Swift	–	Boulby (98)
	Red-footed Falcon	–	Greenabella Marsh (90-21 st)
	Baillon's Crake	–	Wilton (65-12 th)
12 th	Lesser Crested Tern	–	Hartlepool (94)
13 th	Thrush Nightingale	–	Hartlepool (96)
	Thrush Nightingale	–	Hartlepool (85-15 th)
	White-winged Black Tern	–	Saltholme Pool (72-16 th)
15 th	Red-throated Pipit	–	Coatham Marsh (76-16 th)
16 th	Red-footed Falcon	–	Scaling Dam (92)
	Thrush Nightingale	–	Locke Park (67)
17 th	Red-footed Falcon	–	Redcar (89)
	Black-winged Stilt	–	Coatham Marsh (86)
18 th	Thrush Nightingale	–	Hartlepool (97-19 th)
	Black Kite	–	South Gare (88 – found dead)
19 th	Great Reed Warbler	–	Wilton (73)
20 th	Short-Toed Lark	–	Hartlepool (97)
21 st	Bee-eater	–	Cowpen Marsh (81)
22 nd	Subalpine Warbler	–	South Gare (94)
23 rd	Thrush Nightingale	–	Hartlepool (89)
	Savi's Warbler	–	Haverton Hole (82-29 th)
24 th	Red-footed Falcon	–	Hartlepool (95)
	Red-footed Falcon	–	Hartlepool (94)
	Bee-eater	–	Boulby (92)
	Red-throated Pipit	–	Cowpen Marsh (92)
	Savi's Warbler	–	Haverton Hole (89-2/6)
25 th	Marsh Sandpiper	–	Cowpen Marsh (63-29 th)
26 th	American Wigeon	–	Long Drag (86-29 th)
	White-winged Black Tern	–	Coatham Marsh (76-30 th)
	Red-throated Pipit	–	Cowpen Marsh (63)
27 th	Red-footed Falcon	–	Coatham Marsh (89)
28 th	Subalpine Warbler	–	Lovell Hill (78)
	Great White Egret	–	Scaling Dam (74-6/6)
29 th	Red-footed Falcon	–	Eston Moor (89-31 st)
31 st	Broad-billed Sandpiper	–	Long Drag (81-1/6)
JUNE			
1 st	Bufflehead	–	Coatham Marsh (94-7 th)
2 nd	American Wigeon	–	Dormans Pool (85)
3 rd	Broad-billed Sandpiper	–	Creatham Creek (92-4 th)

5 th	Gull-billed Tern	–	Reclamation Pond (91)
	Wilson's Phalarope	–	Dormans Pool (71)
6 th	Lesser Scaup	–	Saltholme Pool/Reclamation Pond (99-31/7)
7 th	Booted Warbler	–	Hartlepool (92)
10 th	Red-footed Falcon	–	Haverton Hole (92-12 th)
	Lesser Crested Tern	–	Hartlepool (90)
	Purple Heron	–	Cowpen Marsh (75)
11 th	American Golden Plover	–	Greatham Creek (95)
12 th	Ross's Gull	–	Tidal Pool (95-27 th)
	Red-footed Falcon	–	Reclamation Pond (92)
13 th	Lesser Crested Tern	–	Dormans Pool (87)
	Broad-billed Sandpiper	–	Long Drag (86)
14 th	Lesser Crested Tern	–	South Gare (95-15 th)
16 th	Spotted Sandpiper	–	South Gare (95)
	Lesser Crested Tern	–	Reclamation Pond (91)
	Great White Egret	–	Cowpen Marsh (99-17 th)
17 th	Lesser Crested Tern	–	Seaton Snook (84-20 th)
19 th	Black Kite	–	Wilton (93)
	Franklin's Gull	–	Reclamation Pond (91)
20 th	Terek Sandpiper	–	Long Drag (79-22 nd)
21 st	Laughing Gull	–	Long Drag (81-22 nd)
	Short-toed Lark	–	Coatham Marsh (74-14/8)
	Gull-billed Tern	–	Coatham Creek (73)
22 nd	Great Reed Warbler	–	Haverton Hole (95-4/7)
23 rd	Broad-billed Sandpiper	–	Tidal Pool (90)
	Broad-billed Sandpiper	–	Greenabella Marsh (74-29 th)
26 th	Broad-billed Sandpiper	–	Greenabella Marsh (92)
27 th	Rose-coloured Starling	–	Billingham (73-30 th)
29 th	White winged Black Tern	–	North Tees Marshes (96-7/7)
	White winged Black Tern	–	Saltholme Pool (85)
	Lesser Grey Shrike	–	Hargreaves Quarry (74-3/7)
JULY			
2 nd	Great Spotted Cuckoo	–	Dormans Pool (95-9 th)
	American Golden Plover	–	Seal Sands/ Greenabella Marsh (79-9 th)
4 th	King Eider	–	South Gare (98)
6 th	Demoiselle Crane	–	Cowpen Marsh (67 – 4 birds till 17/9)
8 th	Black Stork	–	Eston Nab (95)
10 th	White-winged Black Tern	–	Hartlepool (95)

12 th	Caspian Tern	–	Long Drag (81)
13 th	White-rumped Sandpiper	–	Bran Sands (90)
17 th	Penduline Tit	–	Haverton Hole (92-18 th)
19 th	Great White Egret	–	Scaling Dam (90)
22 nd	Broad-billed Sandpiper	–	Tidal Pool (94-26 th)
23 rd	White-rumped Sandpiper	–	Saltholme Pool (90 to 3/8)
	Semi-palmated Sandpiper	–	Greenabella Marsh (89 –25 th)
24 th	Franklins Gull	–	North Gare (77)
25 th	Bee-eater	–	Margrove Ponds (87-26 th)
26 th	White-rumped Sandpiper	–	Long Drag (80-27 th)
30 th	White-rumped Sandpiper	–	Dormans Pool/Reclamation Pond (83-9/8)
31 st	White-winged Black Tern	–	Greatham Creek (84-5/8)

More rare birds have been recorded in May than in any other month of the year in Cleveland. Most are somewhat predictable spring overshoots and are seldom present the following day. The two rarest birds of the month (Little Swift and Baillon's Crake) both occurred on the same day (10th).

June is often a month of surprise and four species which haven't occurred in Cleveland for over 20 years have been recorded in the latter half of the month (Terek Sandpiper, Laughing Gull, Rose-coloured Starling and Lesser Grey Shrike).

One of the most interesting records from July is the occurrence of the 4 Demoiselle Cranes from 6th on Cowpen Marsh. Although regarded as escapes from captivity at the time several current birders still have them on their county lists!

RECORDS COMMITTEE NEWS

1. The major piece of news regarding the Records Committee this year is the **retirement of Dr. Denis Summers-Smith**, one of our most accomplished birders and one of the few who can truly be described as an ornithologist. Denis has been a key member of the Committee since its inception and his knowledge of, in particular, our 'commoner' birds and their habits will be sorely missed. His retirement will no doubt enable him to spend even more time studying and writing about the sparrows of the world. Enjoy it Denis!
2. **Member of the Committee** - Tom Francis is also retiring. Many thanks are due to Tom for his efforts. He is replaced by Alan Wheeldon, who many members will know due to his long standing as a birder in the area. This is however, his first stint as a member of the Records Committee.
3. The Committee has decided to discontinue the **Special Study Species**, a series which has been a feature of the Bird Report since 1977. The Committee takes the view that the '25 year reviews', written by Geoff Icton, combined with the results currently being received from the Breeding Bird Survey, have lessened the value of the Special Study summaries. Their value in past years should not be underestimated, as they have formed the baseline for the innovations mentioned above.
4. **Records of Bean Geese in Cleveland** - The Records Committee is set to review all records of Bean Geese in Cleveland in an attempt to identify which races (species?) have occurred. Several taxonomists have now proposed that the 2 forms "Taiga" and "Tundra" should be treated as separate species; both have certainly occurred in our area, although identifications to (sub)species level have rarely been published. We would therefore like to appeal for good quality descriptions and/or photographs to be submitted for any previous Bean Geese observed in Cleveland. Any information which may be of help should be sent to Graeme Joynt, 3 Brigandine Close, Seaton Carew, Hartlepool TS25 1ES. The data is to be collated by Alan Wheeldon, and hopefully with your help we may be able to shed some light on the situation locally. The article below 'sets the scene' for this review and includes identification tips for any 'Bean' Geese you may be lucky enough to find in the future. So get those old notebooks out!
Graeme Joynt

TAIGA BEAN GEESE *Anser fabalis* & TUNDRA BEAN GEESE *Anser serrirostris*

During the afternoon of the 2nd March 1968, my three animated companions and I avidly watched a small flock of silent 'grey' geese, near to Threave Castle, in southwest Scotland. The geese appeared similar in size to Greylag Goose, but not as bulky. They stood tall and upright and were basically brown in colour. They appeared long-necked, had long, deep, orange-marked bills and their legs were also orange. In flight a very dark head and neck were obvious, as was a dark forewing, which produced more of a uniform upperwing appearance. The underwing appeared very dark. Later we heard them call; a low, nasal or bassoon-like, disyllabic 'hank hank'. They were, of course, Bean Geese, then a new species for three of us, but not for Willie Austin. Willie was a wonderful character, an old 'Solway stalwart, whose vast local knowledge enhanced the annual winter trips made by countless visiting birders: indeed Willie was 'Mr. Solway'.

The point is, that so far as the four of us were concerned, the geese were *just* 'bean geese'. Now of course, I realise, that they were Taiga [or Forest] Bean Geese. We saw them at least once or twice in subsequent years, but it is now many years since they were recorded anywhere in the Dee Valley.

For some time now the 'rank and file' of the birding fraternity have found themselves, more than ever before, being pushed and prodded along the 'Species Road' by the taxonomists. In 1996, Dutch Birding, forever in the vanguard of identification and taxonomic issues, published 'Progress in taxonomy of Taiga and Tundra Bean Geese' by George Sangster and Gerald Oreel. Yet as long ago as 1842, Naumann's stated proposal was that Taiga and Tundra Bean Geese represented distinct species.

Nowadays, there is a strong body of opinion, that the bean goose complex should perhaps be considered to comprise three monotypic species: Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*; Taiga Bean Goose *A. fabalis*; and Tundra Bean Goose *A. serrirostris*.

The Taiga Bean Goose is a rare and localised winter visitor in Britain. The Yare Valley in Norfolk has been a favoured area for many years. In the mid-1920's birds numbered 200 – 300 increasing dramatically to 5,000 in 1927. These days up to 400 birds can be observed from late November until the first half of February, departing over a period of two weeks. Departure is rather earlier in mild winters and somewhat later in cold ones.

Birds carrying neckbands – 22 were noted one winter - have been recorded for many years. It was discovered these 22 geese were from a group of 36 captured in a moulting flock of 300 non-breeding or failed breeding geese at a remote central Swedish locality during July 1987. Smaller numbers, c130 birds, winter in the Avon Valley in central Scotland, ranging between Cumbernauld and Falkirk. They usually start arriving in mid to late September and remain until early or sometimes late February.

Away from these two wintering areas, Taiga Bean Goose can be quite a difficult bird to see. For example, most of the bean geese in Britain away from the two regular Taiga Bean Geese flocks during the winter 1996/7 proved to be Tundra Bean Geese. The smaller Tundra Bean Goose occurs annually in small flocks in Britain, whilst individuals may also be seen in flocks of other goose species.

Differentiating between Taiga and Tundra Bean Geese

Taiga and Tundra Bean Geese are similar in certain respects, so much so, that there may be no wholly reliable way of separating them by *plumage* alone. They are both dark-headed, dark 'grey' geese with contrasting paler breasts and prominent neat, pale-edged dark tertials, matched by Pink-footed Goose. Typically, however, there is a marked difference in size.

The flight action and behaviour of the larger of the two, Taiga Bean Goose, recall Greylag Goose, *A. anser*, the largest and bulkiest of the 'grey geese' but the gait of the former is freer, its 'rear end' especially towards the tail, much slimmer. Indeed, its 'long' rear end produces more of a side-to-side swagger when walking.

Taiga Bean Goose also has a smaller wedge-shaped head and long but less heavy bill. Its bill has a slight concave slope to the upper mandible and a rather narrow lower mandible. In silhouette an extended, thin, almost Swan-like, neck is a constant character.

Tundra Bean Goose is smaller than Taiga Bean Goose, closer in size to Pink-footed Goose and with a similar dumpy structure. The head of Tundra Bean Goose is rounded, the bill short and relatively deep based. The lower mandible is often more conspicuous on Tundra Bean Goose than on Taiga Bean Goose, with a somewhat peculiar swollen appearance, reminiscent of the 'grinning patch' of Snow Goose *A. caerulescens*.

Taiga Bean Goose, at least, feeds at a slower rate than Pink-footed Goose. Both Taiga and Tundra Bean Geese rarely swim except when forced to do so, but can swim well if less eloquently than other geese. Known as the silent 'geese' they can be wary and exhibit shyness especially when present in small numbers [but so can other geese species].

The usual caveats apply. Flocks may be distant, light conditions may be poor. With lone birds or single species flocks, size difference

may not be apparent. Size variation is also a potential pitfall: males are larger than females, adults larger than juveniles. Extremes can and do occur in the same flocks, mixed or otherwise. Posture may vary temporarily and can be affected by the physical condition of the bird. Adverse lighting conditions may make it difficult for the observer to decide whether leg colour is dull orange or dull pink, this being especially true of duller juveniles. The orange-red soft part colouration of bean geese may often appear dull tomato-red at a distance or in overcast weather and can even give a pinkish-red impression. Legs may be mud-stained. Good light conditions are critical and a combination of the requisite angle of light, correct ageing of the goose and previous [recent] experience should provide a firm basis for correct identification.

It may well prove necessary to rule out Pink-footed Goose, when an observer is attempting to confirm the identity of what is considered to be a lone or distant Tundra Bean Goose. Both are small, dark, dumpy, short-billed, geese with pale fringed tertials. Pink-footed Goose has deep fleshy-pink legs and band on its bill. However, their bill *patterns* are similar and to reiterate, bare part colouration can be difficult to ascertain, even at moderate range and against the light. Tundra Bean Goose is, *on average*, larger and longer-billed than Pink-footed Goose. Pink-footed Goose has characteristically grey-toned upperparts, paler than the head and neck. The upperparts of Tundra Bean Goose are as dark as the head and neck; the flanks are also as dark, whilst the breast is obviously pale.

Furthermore, *at a distance*, only the head of Tundra Bean Goose looks really dark and merges more gradually with the pale buffy-brown upperparts, thus lacking the distinctive abrupt contrast between the head, neck and rest of the body shown by an adult Pink-footed Goose.

Compared with Pink-footed Goose, Tundra Bean Goose also shows a narrower white terminal tail-band and body feathers are more coarsely edged whitish, creating more of a 'scaly' effect than other geese species.

In flight, Pink-footed Goose shows a grey upper forewing, strikingly palest on the greater and primary coverts, which contrast strongly with the dark primaries and secondaries. The forewing of Tundra Bean Goose is much darker, similar to that of a White-fronted Goose, although can appear fairly pale in slanting light. Only Lesser White-fronted Goose *A. erythropus* has darker wings. Sometimes, lighting conditions conspire to make the greater and primary coverts surprisingly pale, but this pale area is limited to a stripe across the wing and therefore always less contrasting than on Pink-footed Goose. The lesser and median coverts always look dark.

Both juvenile Taiga and Tundra Bean Geese may be almost as pale as juvenile Pink-footed Geese, so it is imperative that close attention be paid to size, bulk and bare parts.

Large, dark, individual Pink-footed Geese may also initially confuse, but their *greyer* upperparts, together with their bare part colouration, should assist the identification of typical birds.

Any call emitted by a flying bird would of course further aid separation.

Immature White-fronted Geese could be mistaken for Taiga Bean Geese: they are dark plumaged, have orange legs and a variable amount of black on the bill. Some not only have a dark nail, but also some dark smudges at the base of the bill and on the culmen.

They should not, however, be mistaken for Tundra Bean Geese given that the bill is mostly orange [Greenland form *A. a. flavirostris*] or pink [nominant form] with black limited to the nail and along the culmen. The entire bill base is typically pale [black on most Taiga and all Tundra Bean Geese]. Some Taiga and Tundra Bean may exhibit a small amount of white feathering at the base of the bill, resembling first-winter White-fronted Geese developing the white front of the adults. White-fronted Geese develop black underpart barring during their first winter and lack the prominent white tertial fringes of Tundra and Taiga Bean Geese, so white-edged tertials can be a useful aid for picking out 'back-on' birds among a flock of White-fronted Geese. Whilst White-fronted Geese are closer to Tundra Bean Goose, than Taiga Bean Goose, in size and structure, being relatively small and chunky, they have slimmer bills and squarer heads.

In Taiga Bean Goose there is a west to east cline, with birds having longer and darker bills towards the east. Tundra Bean Goose also shows a west to east cline, with eastern birds tending to have larger and deeper based bills than western birds. Furthermore, Taiga and Tundra Bean Geese show considerable *individual* bill pattern variation.

Taiga Bean Goose typically has a long, slender or shallow mostly orange bill. Tundra Bean Goose typically has a heavy bill, especially the lower mandible. The bill is mainly dark-coloured.

As many as one in 1,000 adult Pink-footed Geese [more in juveniles] may exhibit orange legs and a few Pink-footed Geese have orange-coloured feet *and* bills. Conversely, both Taiga and Tundra Bean Geese may show pink bill and feet. In such cases, birds should be identifiable by structure, plumage and voice. Within the large flocks of Northern Europe, some birds have been observed which are regarded as being intermediate between Taiga and Tundra Bean Geese! There will always be problem birds.

Differentiating Between Taiga Bean Geese and Tundra Bean Geese

	Taiga Bean Goose <i>Anser fabalis</i>	Tundra Bean Goose <i>Anser serrirostris</i>
Typical Size	Approaching Greylag Goose	Closer in size to although averaging larger than Pink-footed Goose
General Appearance	More reminiscent of Greylag Goose	More reminiscent of Pink-footed Goose
Bill Structure	Long. Bill more slender, culmen concave between nostrils and tip and rounded nail. From above sides of bill about parallel. Lower mandible straight and slender	Short. Heavy, high at base, culmen gradually sloping to oval nail. From above, sides of bill converge towards tip. Lower mandible heavy and convex near base and appearance reminiscent of 'grinning patch' of Snow Goose
Bill Colour [adult]	Typically orange-red to orange-yellow usually with some black on culmen above nostrils at base of lower mandible and at tip. Regularly has black round nostrils and at base of upper mandible. Orange confined to upper bill behind nostrils and band behind nail. Nail black. Some have streak of orange extending along cutting edge of upper mandible to base of bill. Rarely ground colour of bill pink or flesh but intermediate orange-pink is said to occur fairly regularly	Typically black, orange confined to a narrow, neat [subterminal] band around bill behind nail. Rarely bill colour pink or flesh. Intermediate orange-pink stated to be fairly regular in occurrence
Flock flight formation	Possibly adopts less readily the familiar V formation although in Britain the sight of a large flock is a rare event away from the Yare Valley and Central Scotland	Possibly adopts less readily the familiar V formation but many observers' experience in Britain limited by the very small numbers usually seen
Flight Call of flocks	Distinctive low, guttural, nasal, disyllabic 'hank hank' or 'ung-ank' or evenly-spaced 'bow wow'.	Trisyllabic call resembling that of Pink-footed Goose: 'yak-ak-ak' but discernibly deeper in tone than that species.
Flight call of lone bird	'ow ow-ow aw' and also 'gock'	?
Conversational contact calls	Quiet, deep 'ah-ah-ah'	?
Wintering Feeding Habits in Britain	Feeds on grazing pastures. Although feeding habits not diagnostic may be a useful pointer when a <i>flock</i> is found but beware the two species can intermingle	Often feeds in crop fields. Feeding habits not diagnostic but may serve as a useful pointer when a <i>flock</i> is located. Remember such a flock may contain both species of bean goose

Although every observer draws on his or her own personal experiences, the following may be regarded as extremely useful sources of reference

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| Birds Of Britain: 15 [author Michael J. Seago] February 2001 | The Complete Birds Of The Western Palearctic on CD-Rom : Disc 1 [1998] |
| Birding World 10: 421 – 426 | Collins Bird Guide [1999] |
| Dutch Birding 18 [6]: 310 - 316 [1996] | Frontiers of Bird Identification [1980] |
| Macmillan Field Guide to Bird Identification [1989] | Wildfowl, An Identification Guide [1989] |

THE CLEVELAND BREEDING BIRD SURVEY – AN UPDATE

Since 1999, the Teesmouth Bird Club has been conducting the most comprehensive survey ever undertaken to determine the breeding ranges and numbers of the species which nest within the Cleveland boundary. The purpose of this article is to update members on the progress of the Survey and, hopefully, to inspire a few more volunteers to come forward and lend a hand.

For anyone unaware of how the survey is being conducted, each volunteer is allocated a square which measures 2km x 2km (known as a tetrad). Between April and July, this area is surveyed thoroughly and the numbers of breeding birds in the tetrad determined – at least to the best of the counter's ability. As a minimum, each counter visits the full tetrad at least once in April, May and June, though most people have been putting in extra hours to produce more complete results. At the end of the period, the results are sent to me and collated; ultimately, the Club will produce a breeding atlas.

Progress Report

Total tetrads in Cleveland	197
Surveyed in 1999	44
Surveyed in 2000	31
Planned for 2001 (so far)	32
Remaining for future years	90

At current rate of progress, the survey will take 6 years in total to complete, finishing in 2004. So, if you have not yet taken part, your club needs you! Please contact me on 01429 289968 if you feel you can help with this important project. Even if you cannot do a full square, a smaller section would still be of great assistance and there is no obligation to do more than one year. The more counters, the quicker we can complete the survey.

Volunteers 1999-2001

The following counters have so far taken part; many thanks to them all.

Graham Megson, Bernie Beck, Paul Maclam, Mike Gee, Tom Francis, Kevin Spindloe, Colin Dodsworth, Chris Sharp, Graeme Joynt, Russell McAndrew, Alex and Andrew Cruikshanks, Paul and Stewart Hinley, Martin Blick, Mike Leakey, Herbert Mitchell, Geoff Icton, Robin Ward, Richard Taylor, Bill Irving, Chris Brown, Chris Bielby, Alistair McLee, Brian Hague, Mark Askew, Vic Fairbrother, Ian Edgar, Don Page, Ted Parker, Norman Walker, John Regan, Eric James, Gordon Follows, John Sharp, Michael Corner.

Results to Date

From the 75 tetrads so far surveyed, the following numbers of breeding pairs have been located. The figures are the 'total pairs' found by counters, this being the sum of possible and probable breeders. The final analysis of the data may interpret some of these figures slightly differently, so these figures are only provisional to date. I hope you will find them interesting, and they might inspire some of you to get involved. The final totals for some of our breeding birds look set to rewrite much of our previous assumptions, and of course provide vital conservation data.

Where possible I have listed previous estimates as published in the Cleveland Bird Report; when comparing, please remember that the figures in the left hand column represent the birds found so far i.e. in the 75 tetrads covered fully. The estimates are for the whole of Cleveland i.e. all 197 tetrads. In many cases they illustrate just how poor our knowledge of local breeding birds really is.

Little Grebe	29
Great-crested Grebe	16
Fulmar	125
Cormorant	34
Grey Heron	20
Mute Swan	3
Greylag Goose	44
Canada Goose	16
Shelduck	29
Gadwall	15
Mallard	173
Garganey	4
Shoveler	14
Pochard	24
Tufted Duck	33

Goosander	2	
Ruddy Duck	12	
Goshawk	1	
Sparrowhawk	36	
Kestrel	27	
Merlin	1	
Peregrine	1	
Red Grouse	56	
Red-leg Partridge	31	<i>previous estimates 10-20 for all Cleveland</i>
Grey Partridge	100	
Quail	1	
Pheasant	295	
Water Rail	16	
Moorhen	153	
Coot	115	
Oystercatcher	4	
Little Ringed Plover	2	
Ringed Plover	15	
Golden Plover	17	
Lapwing	269	
Snipe	35	
Woodcock	36	<i>previous estimates <10 for all Cleveland</i>
Curlew	67	
Redshank	22	
Lesser B-b Gull	39	
Herring Gull	840	
Kittiwake	3122	
Common Tern	16	
Razorbill	3	
Feral Pigeon	901	
Stock Dove	62	<i>previous estimates 10-30 for all Cleveland</i>
Woodpigeon	1308	
Collared Dove	567	<i>previous estimates 100-200 for all Cleveland</i>
Cuckoo	43	<i>previous estimates 60-100 for all Cleveland</i>
Little Owl	17	
Tawny Owl	69	
Swift	140	<i>previous estimates 400-500 for all Cleveland</i>
Kingfisher	2	
Green Woodpecker	3	<i>previous estimates 5-10 for all Cleveland</i>
Great Spot. Wood.	50	<i>previous estimates 20-30 for all Cleveland</i>
Skylark	602	
Swallow	346	
House Martin	235	
Tree Pipit	13	<i>previous estimates <15 for all Cleveland</i>
Meadow Pipit	611	
Rock Pipit	5	
Yellow Wagtail	17	<i>previous estimates <5 for all Cleveland</i>
Grey Wagtail	7	<i>previous estimates 5-10 for all Cleveland</i>
Pied Wagtail	125	
Wren	1599	
Duncock	1054	
Robin	1026	
Redstart	4	<i>previous estimates 5-50 for all Cleveland</i>
Whinchat	22	<i>previous estimates 10-20 for all Cleveland</i>
Wheatear	5	
Ring Ouzel	1	
Blackbird	2638	
Song Thrush	442	
Mistle Thrush	127	
Grasshopper Warbler	6	<i>previous estimates <10 for all Cleveland</i>

Sedge Warbler	202	<i>previous estimates 20-80 for all Cleveland</i>
Reed Warbler	21	
Lesser Whitethroat	37	<i>previous estimates 30-50 for all Cleveland</i>
Whitethroat	367	<i>previous estimates 100+ for all Cleveland</i>
Garden Warbler	70	
Blackcap	337	
Wood Warbler	1	
Chiffchaff	179	<i>previous estimates 30-50 for all Cleveland</i>
Willow Warbler	912	
Goldcrest	236	
Spotted Flycatcher	27	<i>previous estimates 30-100 for all Cleveland</i>
Long-tailed Tit	123	<i>previous estimates <50 for all Cleveland</i>
Marsh Tit	15	<i>previous estimates 10-50 for all Cleveland</i>
Willow Tit	15	<i>previous estimates 10-50 for all Cleveland</i>
Coal Tit	227	
Blue Tit	998	
Great Tit	427	
Nuthatch	13	<i>previous estimates 5 for all Cleveland</i>
Treecreeper	49	
Jay	33	<i>previous estimates 30-50 for all Cleveland</i>
Magpie	311	
Jackdaw	460	
Rook	470	
Carrion Crow	380	
Starling	2326	
House Sparrow	3135	
Tree Sparrow	73	<i>previous estimates 130-150 for all Cleveland</i>
Chaffinch	1018	
Greenfinch	632	
Goldfinch	228	<i>previous estimates 100-500 for all Cleveland</i>
Siskin	5	
Linnet	658	
Lesser Redpoll	5	<i>previous estimates <100 for all Cleveland</i>
Crossbill	2	
Bullfinch	51	<i>previous estimates 20-40 for all Cleveland</i>
Hawfinch	3	
Yellowhammer	379	
Reed Bunting	221	<i>previous estimates 250-500 for all Cleveland</i>
Corn Bunting	19	<i>recent estimates 10-20 for all Cleveland</i>

Grand total **32,625 pairs**

Hopefully this year will see these impressive totals rise still further. With your help we can complete the survey sooner rather than later – I look forward to hearing from more volunteers as soon as possible!

Graeme Joynt