

# Teesmouth Bird Club

## Newsletter



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Thanks to the contributors to this issue:- Chris Sharp; Mike Leakey; Ted Parker

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

#### July

The White-headed Duck continued to show well on Saltholme Pool. Single first summer and second summer Mediterranean Gulls were in fields at Marske (1<sup>st</sup>). It was a very poor summer for Little Gulls with only 1 or 2 odd birds seen. Gone are the days when 20 or 30 first summers regularly spent the summer months on the North Tees Marshes. As usual the July wader passage was underway from early in the month but numbers and variety were generally low with just a few Common Sandpiper, Black-tailed Godwit, Greenshank and Ruff. A northerly wind (8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>) produced the first significant sea watching of the season with single Sabine's Gull, Storm Petrel, Balearic Shearwater and Long-tailed Skua all being reported. Roseate Terns appeared sporadically at South Gare from mid-month. A Black-necked Grebe was on Holme Fleet mid-month. Little Egrets have been expected on the North Tees Marshes during the summer months in recent years and numbers increased from early July to a peak of 8 in August. Most of these favoured the Greatham Creek/Greenabella Marsh area. Another was seen at Cattersty Pond from 23<sup>rd</sup> until the month's end. A Curlew Sandpiper was on the Brine fields (18<sup>th</sup>) and the following day 93 Black-tailed Godwit were at Dorman's Pool. Two Black Terns were on the Reclamation Pond (25<sup>th</sup>) with one remaining until 27<sup>th</sup>. 20 Storm Petrels were tape lured at Hartlepool (26<sup>th</sup>). The regular attendees at these sessions are still waiting for that Swinhoe's or even a Leach's. An Osprey was at Scaling Dam from 27<sup>th</sup> until early August. The end of the month saw increased numbers of passage waders on the North Tees Marshes with 2 Little Stint, Wood Sandpiper, 3 Spotted Redshank, 3 Greenshank and 3 Green Sandpiper.

#### August

Three Ruddy Shelduck were on Bowesfield Marsh (1<sup>st</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>). These were the first Cleveland record for a number of years and as with all Ruddy Shelduck in this country their origin is subject to much debate. 4 Little Stints were on Saltholme Marsh (1<sup>st</sup>) and a Red-necked Grebe was on the sea off Hartlepool the same day. A Little Egret was at South Gare (8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>). The 9<sup>th</sup> saw easterly winds and the start of three days of rain. Common Sandpipers were recorded in large numbers at

this time throughout the area with over 50 at Scaling Dam and several large parties on the North Tees Marshes. Pied Flycatchers were the other notable bird at this time with over 100 at Hartlepool, of which 25 were trapped. The other coastal sites also held good numbers of this species at this time. The 10<sup>th</sup> saw a Wryneck at South Gare, an Icterine Warbler at the Zinc Works Road bushes and a Booted Warbler at the Jewish Cemetery, Hartlepool. Unfortunately the latter two only showed to the initial observers. Several Spotted Flycatchers, Redstarts and Whinchat were also seen during this fall.

Another rarity, which only showed well to the finder, was a summer plumaged Spotted Sandpiper found late on the evening of 11<sup>th</sup> on Saltholme Marsh. Most observers only saw flight views at dusk and the bird was not seen the following morning. 12 Black Terns were at Dorman's Pool (12<sup>th</sup>). The following day produced 3 Wryneck at South Gare and also a Roseate Tern offshore. A male Red-backed Shrike was by the lagoon at South Gare (14<sup>th</sup>).

After this little run of excitement the remainder of the month was fairly uneventful. Ospreys were at Scaling Dam (17<sup>th</sup>) and (24<sup>th</sup>). Sea watching from Staithes (20<sup>th</sup>) produced a Long-tailed Skua, Red-necked Grebe and 87 Arctic Skuas. A Temminck's Stint commuted between Saltholme Pool and Calor Gas Pool (24<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>) and was occasionally joined by a Little Stint. Once again it was a poor autumn for this latter species. A Honey Buzzard over Dorman's Pool (30<sup>th</sup>) unfortunately didn't linger.

#### September

September was dominated by westerlies and consequently little in the way of passerine falls was noted at the coast. September falls used to be the norm, but in recent years changing weather patterns mean they are somewhat of a rarity. Good numbers of Short-eared Owls were in the Greatham Creek area early in the month with up to 6 present. A Marsh Harrier was over Saltholme Pools (5<sup>th</sup>). It was a poor late summer/autumn for this species. A northerly blow (6<sup>th</sup>) produced 2 Sabine's Gulls, Long-tailed and Pomarine Skua at Hartlepool and the

following day a Black Guillemot, Long-tailed Skua, Red-necked Grebe and 40 Manx Shearwaters flew north. A Hobby was at Loftus (9<sup>th</sup>). A good variety of waders were around the North Tees Marshes mid-month with 9 Curlew Sandpipers and double figure counts of Greenshank. A 'grey' Stint around Saltholme 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> attracted attention. In often gale force winds viewing conditions were rarely ideal but after much debate it was tentatively identified as a juvenile Red-necked Stint. Unfortunately within 10 minutes of the news being released on the pagers it flew off much to the chagrin of several local observers. Video footage of the bird was taken and most who have seen stills from this footage on the birding web sites were in agreement with the identification. If accepted it will be the first Cleveland record of this eastern equivalent of our Little Stint.

The first Barnacles of the autumn were 130 past Hartlepool (22<sup>nd</sup>) with a flock of c100 present on Seaton Common the same day. The following day a single Sabine's Gull, 545 Little Gulls, 2 Storm Petrels, Great Northern Diver, 5 Roseate and 5 Black Terns flew past in a strong northwesterly. The following day was even better with 16 Storm Petrels, 1 Leach's Petrel, 7 Pomarine Skuas and 24 Sooty Shearwaters. A single flock of 63 Scaup past Hartlepool (27<sup>th</sup>) was unusual. Some 1,100 Pink-footed Geese flew past Hartlepool (29<sup>th</sup>). As the wind swung briefly to the southeast on 30<sup>th</sup> a Red-breasted Flycatcher was at South Gare and migrants at Hartlepool included Ring Ouzel, Redwing, Fieldfare and Brambling.

### October

A Yellow-browed Warbler was at Hartlepool (1<sup>st</sup>). A late Garganey was on Bowesfield Marsh (2<sup>nd</sup>). A Black Tern was on Saltholme Marsh (3<sup>rd</sup>) and a Hobby flew in off the sea at Hartlepool the same day. The drake White-headed Duck continued to show well on Saltholme Pool. Whooper Swans appeared (7<sup>th</sup>) with 5 on Saltholme Marsh and 6 at Scaling Dam with 3 Buzzards also at the latter locality. 1035 Barnacle Geese flew past Hartlepool the same day and a Long-eared Owl was at South Gare. Sea watching at Hartlepool (8<sup>th</sup>) produced a juvenile Long-tailed Skua, Sooty Shearwater and 22 Bonxies. The following day saw a Balearic Shearwater, Great Northern Diver, 2 Long-tailed Skuas and a large movement of ducks including 40 Velvet Scoter and 20 Long-tailed Ducks. Another Balearic was recorded the following day along with 9 Brent Geese and a further duck movement including 401 Common Scoter. A Bewick's Swan was at Scaling Dam (11<sup>th</sup>) along with 2 Barnacle Geese. The wind finally swung around to the southeast and over the next 4 or 5 days several scarce migrants were at the coast. A Firecrest was trapped at North Gare, 2

Red-breasted Flycatchers were at Hummersea, 2 were also seen at Saltburn along with a Pallas's Warbler and another Red-breasted Flycatcher was at Cattersty Gill. A Great Grey Shrike was at South Gare (13<sup>th</sup>) and remained for 3 days.

A Northern Bullfinch was trapped at Hartlepool (16<sup>th</sup>) and over the next few days several of these larger sub-species were seen at coastal sites with flocks of up to 6 seen at South Gare. Single Waxwings were at Hartlepool and South Gare (17<sup>th</sup>). A Great Northern Diver flew past Hartlepool (17<sup>th</sup>) but otherwise sea watching was quiet for the rest of the month. Persistent overnight and morning rain (20<sup>th</sup>) together with easterly winds brought a huge fall of migrants to the coastal stations. The most obvious species in the fall were Goldcrests with many hundreds seen. Large flocks of Brambling were also involved together with lesser numbers of Chiffchaff and Blackcap. Good numbers of the winter thrushes were also seen. Not surprisingly several unusual species were also reported with pride of place belonging to the single observer Pallid Swift at Hummersea. Other birds at Hummersea were a Waxwing and a Pallas's Warbler. Hartlepool held 2 Pallas's Warblers and single Yellow-browed Warbler, Great Grey Shrike, Firecrest, Richard's Pipit and Hawfinch, the latter being the first headland record for 40 years. Another Pallas's was at South Gare along with a 'Siberian' Stonechat, which remained until the end of the month. A probable Richard's Pipit was heard at Saltburn with a Firecrest seen here too. The wind had veered to a gale force southwesterly by the following morning meaning viewing conditions were difficult. Despite this a Yellow-browed Warbler was found at Hummersea, a Pallas's Warbler at Boulby along with 3 Black Redstarts and 4 Ring Ouzel. Two Black Redstarts were at Skinninggrove and a Snow Bunting was at South Gare. The 22<sup>nd</sup> produced a Yellow-browed Warbler at Hazel Grove, Saltburn the same site holding a Pallas's Warbler the following day. Two Firecrests were at Hartlepool the same day and a large movement of Pink-footed Geese flew through the area with at least 760 over Hartlepool. A Bluethroat was trapped in bushes by the Long Drag (26<sup>th</sup>).

A further fall took place (28<sup>th</sup>) with many Thrushes recorded. Good numbers of Woodcock were also involved with at least 10 at Hartlepool and another Firecrest was trapped here. A Little Auk was picked up on Seaton Common and was released into Hartlepool Bay, where it was seen to swim away strongly. 3 Bearded Tits were on Coatham Marsh (29<sup>th</sup>), yet another Pallas's Warbler was at Saltburn (30<sup>th</sup>) and the month ended with a Long-tailed Duck on Saltholme Pool and 21 Waxwings in Saltburn, part of a huge influx into northern Britain in late October.

### Editorial Statement

The next newsletter will be the 30th since the present editor took charge representing 10 years of the club's history. It is time that new blood took over and so this edition is the penultimate in its present form. Your committee is reviewing what is needed for the next few years and will hopefully announce the results of that review in the next edition.

## SECRETARY'S NEWS

### International Bewick's & Whooper Swan Census 2005

I am organising the above for Cleveland. The counts take place over the weekend of 15/16 January 2005. As you will be aware both species have become scarcer in Cleveland in recent winters but if anyone sees any over this weekend could you please let me know by post or e-mail ([chrisandlucia@sharp12756.freemove.co.uk](mailto:chrisandlucia@sharp12756.freemove.co.uk))

### Guided Walk Around RSPB Saltholme

Kevin Bayes of RSPB is leading a guided walk around RSPB Saltholme for Teesmouth Bird Club members on Saturday 22 January 2005. Please meet at the bus stop by Saltholme Pool at 11.00 a.m. The walk should last about 2 hours and Kevin will let us know how the project is progressing and what future plans there are. Suitable footwear should be worn, as the area can be quite muddy during the winter months

### Down Loading Your Newsletter

In an attempt to reduce photocopying and save postage many members now simply receive an e-mail to say that the latest newsletter is available to download from the club's web site. I am sure that there are still members out there who are receiving hard copies of the newsletter who are on the web. Could they please e-mail me at [chrisandlucia@sharp12756.freemove.co.uk](mailto:chrisandlucia@sharp12756.freemove.co.uk) to save the club money and me time.



## WETLAND BIRD SURVEY - AUTUMN 2004 SUMMARY

Coverage was excellent, with 91 out of 92 sector counts carried out.

Among the wildfowl the outstanding performance was from gadwall, the 276 counted in October comfortably constituting a new Tees WeBS record; it is instructive to recall that as recently as 1988-1995 the species' five-year mean peak was a mere 3 birds! The autumn also brought yet another seasonal WeBS record for coot (1498, September). Notably poor maxima came from teal (510, September), mallard (294, September), shoveler (107, August) and pochard (48, August), all of which were over a third down on their seasonal norms.

Knot were unusually numerous, with a seasonal record of 440 (October) being almost five times in excess of the current five-year mean. In September, fine totals were yielded by grey plover (95), black-tailed godwit (108) and redshank (1723). The curlew peak of 983 in August is our best seasonal figure for a decade. However, golden plover (22, July) were virtually absent, no little stints whatsoever were recorded by the survey, and the maxima for sanderling (114), dunlin (602), ruff (8), snipe (15) and green sandpiper (2) – all of which fell in August – were all less than half their respective five-year means.

In marked contrast to 2003, Sandwich terns were very scarce; the peak of 333 in July is the worst on record, reflecting widespread nesting failure and an early departure from Northumbrian sites. Conversely, despite also suffering a poor breeding season, the common tern maximum (1251, August) was slightly above average. Disastrous predation at the Crimdon little tern colony prompted adult birds to relocate to the Tees WeBS site in July, when 110 were counted.

Following this series of counts, in autumn the Tees and Hartlepool Bay WeBS Site remains of national importance for little grebe, cormorant, gadwall, shoveler, but sanderling loses this status. Redshank remains of international importance.

MIKE LEAKEY

WeBS Local Organizer

November 2004

## WETLAND BIRD SURVEY TEESMOUTH AUTUMN 2004 SUMMARY

	July 18	August 15	September 12	October 10	Autumn 2004 maximum as % of average peak count over previous five autumns
Little Grebe	17	<u>54</u> **	39*	37*	73%
Great Crested Grebe	24	<u>27</u>	2	4	135%
Cormorant	353**	<u>471</u> **	317**	132**	86%
Grey Heron	37	<u>56</u>	47	32	86%
Mute Swan	73	<u>78</u>	61	69	117%
Shelduck	161	80	91	<u>423</u> *	128%
Wigeon	1	8	340	<u>1149</u>	112%
Gadwall	12	59*	141**	<u>276</u> **	220%
Teal	6	126	<u>510</u>	333	58%
Mallard	186	164	<u>294</u>	174	62%
Pintail	0	0	3	<u>30</u>	120%
Shoveler	10	<u>107</u> **	86*	100**	61%
Pochard	45	<u>48</u>	29	26	55%
Tufted Duck	75	<u>130</u>	82	123	82%
Ruddy Duck	20	25	<u>37</u>	36	61%
Coot	1011*	1278**	<u>1498</u> **	1353**	165%
Oystercatcher	608	888	685	<u>1160</u> *	76%
Ringed Plover	26	<u>184</u> *	65	56	96%
Golden Plover	<u>22</u>	3	11	13	3%
Grey Plover	0	33	<u>95</u>	79	159%
Lapwing	895	832	634	<u>1043</u>	79%
Knot	11	289	186	<u>440</u>	493%
Sanderling	41	<u>114</u>	60	96	34%
Little Stint	0	0	0	0	0%
Curlew Sandpiper	1	0	<u>10</u>	0	156%
Purple Sandpiper	2	3	2	<u>14</u>	56%
Dunlin	535	<u>602</u>	212	141	46%
Ruff	3	<u>8</u>	4	1	42%
Snipe	2	<u>15</u>	2	9	34%
Black-tailed Godwit	41*	22	<u>108</u> **	45*	265%
Bar-tailed Godwit	17	11	50	<u>57</u>	102%
Whimbrel	<u>24</u>	11	8	1	200%
Curlew	753	<u>983</u> *	508	529	150%
Spotted Redshank	1	1	<u>4</u>	1	91%
Redshank	961*	<u>1723</u> ***	1318**	1484**	97%
Greenshank	5	<u>23</u>	13	4	116%
Green Sandpiper	1	<u>2</u>	0	0	45%
Wood Sandpiper	0	<u>2</u>	0	0	200%
Common Sandpiper	3	<u>19</u>	1	0	380%
Turnstone	17	<u>270</u>	71	164	83%
Sandwich Tern	<u>333</u>	78	39	0	23%
Common Tern	293	<u>1251</u>	9	0	117%
Arctic Tern	0	<u>2</u>	0	0	17%
Little Tern	<u>110</u>	0	0	0	265%

Underlined counts indicate Autumn 2004 maxima.

\* Denotes count of >50% of national importance

\*\* Denotes count of national importance

\*\*\* Denotes count of international importance

N.B. 'Teesmouth' includes Hartlepool Bay.

## NEWS UPDATE FROM THE COMMITTEE

### FIVE-YEAR PLAN

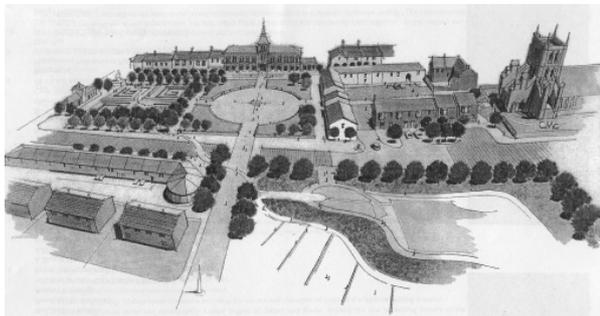
The Five-Year Plan is progressing well, with several targets having already been achieved, including the disabled access to the *Jeff Youngs Hide* at Dormans Pool. Work is now proceeding on some of the most urgent tasks, including:

- A review of the Club's Constitution,
- The preparation of a New Member's Information Pack.
- Production of a new Application Form.
- A members' feedback questionnaire, which will help to steer the Five-Year Plan (we anticipate this being issued to members early in 2005).
- A review of the Newsletter.
- Better advertising of Club meetings.

The Conservation and Marketing & Membership Committees have both met, agreed their Terms of Reference and have started work on their elements of the Five-Year Plan.

### HARTLEPOOL HEADLAND NEW TOWN SQUARE

We were very pleased to hear that our written response, sent to Hartlepool Borough Council following a workshop attended by the Chairman on 18th June, was included with the briefing documents issued to the 4 short-listed consultants. The Club was invited by the Council to view an exhibition of the outline designs prepared by the 4 consultants at the Borough Hall on 27th and 28th October and there was an opportunity to complete feedback forms. Russ McAndrew, on behalf of the Club, fed back views to Hartlepool Borough Council on our preferred design, which most closely followed the Brief and retained most of the existing 'infrastructure' of trees and shrubs, so vital to migrant birds. The 4 consultants have been interviewed and the feedback on the exhibition assessed and winning consultant was announced on 17<sup>th</sup> November – Ferguson McIlveen of Middlesbrough. Their design was also the Club's preferred scheme.



FERGUSON McILVEEN'S WINNING DESIGN

Club Chairman, Ted Parker, declared an interest, as he is employed by Ferguson McIlveen and, consequently, took no part in either the formulation of the design or feedback on the exhibition to Hartlepool Borough Council. The winning scheme is considered to have most closely followed the Brief and respected the Headland's importance for migrant birds. The next stage will be detailing up the proposals in consultation with the stakeholders, for a start on site in 2005.

### TEESSIDE OFFSHORE WIND FARM, REDCAR

It was excellent news to hear that Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council's Planning Committee refused Planning Permission for the onshore works. We still await a decision from the Department for Trade and Industry on the offshore works. The DTI can override the local council's decision by 'calling in' the Planning Application, which will result in a Public Inquiry. Hopefully, however, it will respond to the overwhelming opposition by conservation bodies and local people and refuse permission for the offshore works.

### SEAL SANDS WASTE DISPOSAL FACILITY

The Club has continued to oppose this development. We were requested by Hartlepool Borough Council to provide formal feedback on the Scoping Report prepared by the environmental consultants appointed by Coastal Caverns (UK) Ltd and to identify specific items that should be included in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). We submitted our report on 10th September and forwarded copies to the Environment Agency, English Nature, RSPB, Tees Valley Wildlife Trust and Iain Wright, the newly-elected MP for Hartlepool. We spelt out in the strongest possible terms the existing ornithological importance of the site, our key concerns and areas that must be included in the EIA. An article appeared in the *'Evening Gazette'*, which outlined the basis of the Club's opposition. Iain Wright has responded, stating that he fully endorses our stance and requested we keep him informed. The Environment Agency sent us a copy of their response to the Scoping Report and it has rightly placed exacting requirements on the content of the EIA. We await the publication of this.

## HARTLEPOOL OBSERVATORY

The Committee continues to be very unhappy about the way the Club has been 'evicted' from Hartlepool Observatory, following our 45-year-long tenancy of this site. We had a meeting in late July with representatives of Hartlepool Borough Council and Heugh Gun Battery Trust (HGBT) to try and resolve the situation. The outcome of this was that the Trust immediately terminated the Agreement drawn up the Council's Legal Department in November last year, under which we were to continue to have access to the Observatory. The Council, however, agreed to approach PD Ports on the Club's behalf to see if it would be agreeable in principle to our use of the adjacent Heugh Lighthouse as a site for a new observatory. We have since learned that PD Ports has requested further information and we hope that it will agree to our request. Following our meeting with the Council, we wrote to its Chief Executive, Paul Walker, to express, in the strongest possible terms, our dissatisfaction at the way we have been treated and that HGBT had never even signed the Agreement! The response we received was less than satisfactory and glossed over our concerns. We subsequently alerted the Heritage Lottery Fund of our situation, which had, we had been informed, provided funding for the scheme, only to be told that this was not, in fact, the case. We have also contacted the North Hartlepool Partnership to enquire whether, out of the £25m being spent on improvements to Hartlepool Headland, some modest funding can be found for a new observatory building. We continue to pursue this matter as vigorously as we can.

## JEFF YOUNGS HIDE

The car park and disabled access to the Jeff Youngs Hide was completed in September and we are grateful to the Tees Valley Wildlife Trust, who carried out the work, and to our sponsors. The project was entered for a PANDA (People and Nature Development) Award, sponsored by *npower* and we were delighted to be awarded the 3rd prize of £50, which will be collected by Club representatives at an awards ceremony on 25th November. This sees the achievement of Target 5 of the Five-Year Plan.

## OVERHEAD TELEPHONE WIRES AT DORMANS POOL

The Committee has written to BT drawing its attention to the danger these wires pose to birds. Two young Mute Swans have already died this year, along with a number of gulls. We have requested that the cables be removed, if redundant, or marked, if not. We await a response.

## SCALING DAM

Continued water level management has continued to pay dividends at this site. At the time of going to press, 144 species have been recorded this year – one of the best ever – particularly rewarding as the site has been included by Northumbrian Water in the 2004 BTO Hanson Challenge. The Scaling Dam Wildlife Advisory Group's Action Plan for 2004-05 includes an Osprey tower, creation of breeding habitat for Little Ringed Plovers within the Reserve area, planting of native trees and shrubs, further repairs to the hide, removal of non-native species from plantations, the construction of a new screen and the creation of 2 feeding stations. The latter have recently been completed, one of which can be seen from the hide and are attracting lots of birds. The Committee would like to thank Martin Blick for constructing the feeding stations, Northumbrian Water, Dave Simpson and Keith Ryan for providing seed and those members who frequently replenish the feeders, particularly Don Page and Martin Blick.

## REVISIONS TO THE CLUB'S CONSTITUTION

In October, the Committee agreed revisions to the Club's Constitution and these have been submitted to the Charities Commission for comment and approval. Revisions were needed for the following reasons:

- The Constitution was last modified in 1984 and no longer fully reflects the activities of the Club in the 21st century (for example, there is no mention of '*conservation*' in the existing document).
- A Constitution is needed that fully embraces the new Five- Year Plan.
- Some aspects of the existing Constitution are unworkable and need changing.

Once the revisions have been endorsed by the Charities Commission, the revised Constitution will be issued to members for discussion, and hopefully approval, at the April 2005 AGM.

## JEFF YOUNGS HIDE, DORMANS POOL – PANDA AWARD

The Club's ambitious project to build a new hide, with disabled access, is now complete and the Committee entered it for a 'People and Nature Development Award', sponsored by npower and administered by Tees Valley Wildlife Trust. We are delighted to announce that the project has won 3<sup>rd</sup> prize of £50.00 and Ted Parker, Chris Sharp, Don Page and the late Jeff's mother, Daphne Youngs, received the award on behalf of the Club at an awards ceremony at Bellamy Pavilion on 25<sup>th</sup> November. The ceremony was attended by the Mayor of Stockton.

## SHARING BIRD INFORMATION

Recently, there has been a steady decline in Cleveland in the number of people either putting sightings of interesting birds on the Pager services or contacting others. This decline has had two major impacts: first, a smaller number of birders get to see and enjoy 'good' birds and, secondly, far less information gets on to the Club's Website (the Website Manager can only put out what information is available). A number of Club members have expressed particular concern to me over the dissemination of information about the potential Red-necked Stint on the North Tees Marshes in September, resulting in some long-standing local birders not seeing it. Whilst it is not the Club's responsibility to function as a rare bird alert information service, the Committee would greatly appreciate it if important local information could be 'phoned in' to the Pager services as soon as possible, so that all those who want to can share good birds. The relevant numbers are:

<i>Birdnet:</i>	01298 873052
<i>Rare Bird Alert</i>	07626 952952

**Ted Parker (Chairman)**

## RECORDS SUB COMMITTEE – A MESSAGE FROM THE CLUB CHAIRMAN

The 2003 'Cleveland Bird Report' was published several months ahead of schedule, due entirely to the hard work of the Records Sub Committee, the Compilers and, most importantly, the Editor, Graeme Joynt, who worked tirelessly to ensure that the final draft was technically correct, free from errors and written in a consistent style. The report gets better every year and the 2003 edition is excellent and contains more information than ever before. As Chairman, I would like to extend my thanks to all the members of the Sub Committee for their time and effort in producing a such a fine document, which is of great credit to the Club.

I urge members to start submitting your records for 2004 to the **County Recorder, Rob Little at 5 Belgarve Court, Seaton Carew, HARTLEPOOL, TS25 1BF**. The more records that are received, the more interesting and comprehensive the next 'Cleveland Bird Report' will be.

## GUIDANCE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF RECORDS

*(These notes, revised in 2004, have been prepared by the Records Sub Committee)*

The records for the 'Cleveland Bird Report' are welcomed from both casual and regular contributors, whether or not they are members of the Teesmouth Bird Club. Although the Report is often not published until late in the year, writing the Classified List usually starts in February and a complete first draft is usually ready by late March. Consequently, late submission of records can cause significant additional work for the compilers by having to accommodate them in parts of the manuscript already written, so please send your records to the Recorder at latest by 31st January 2005.

## CONTRIBUTION OF RECORDS

Records are welcomed from both casual and regular contributors, whether or not they are members of the Teesmouth Bird Club. They should preferably be submitted on the printed slips the Club provides free of charge or on copies of them. These are made available at club meetings or from the Recorder. It is important that only one species is recorded on each slip and that all relevant details such as species, date, location and number of birds involved are complete.

We are always interested in receiving records for all species. However, the following categories are of particular interest:

1. *Records of abundant, common or fairly common species which are out of the ordinary because they refer to unusual behaviour, birds away from their usual habitat, large flocks or birds seen out of their normal season.*
2. *Evidence of changes in population levels of any species*
3. *Regular counts from a specific locality*

4. *Records of species which are on the Red and Amber Lists.*
5. *Arrival and departure dates for both summer and winter visitors.*
6. *All records of breeding referring to nationally rare or nationally scarce breeding birds*
7. *All records of breeding referring to rare breeders in Cleveland*
8. *All records of uncommon, scarce, irregular, rare, vagrant or previously unrecorded species.*
9. *Exotic species which have escaped from captivity*

The species included in each category can be determined by referring to the status statement at the beginning of each species account in the 'Cleveland Bird Report' from 2003 onwards or in the Cleveland List published on the Teessmouth Bird Club website (<http://www.teessmouthbc.freeserve.co.uk>).

### Species for which descriptions are required

Records of less rare birds are passed directly to the compilers for inclusion in the Report but for records of unusual birds, rather more information is required. Descriptions for these species are requested in order that the record is available to, and will withstand scrutiny by, anyone reviewing records in the future. Full descriptions for the following species should be submitted to the Recorder.

#### 1. *British Birds Rarities*

Full descriptions should be submitted to the Recorder who will collate all the available evidence before forwarding to the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC) for assessment. The decision to accept or reject the record lies entirely with the BBRC and it is the policy of the TBCRSC to abide by their decision. No records of such birds are published in the Bird Report unless accepted by the BBRC. The BBRC has a strong preference for detailed written descriptions for the records it assesses which may be supported by photographs or video.

#### 2. *Other species which are rare in Cleveland or present special identification problems.*

TBCRSC will accept photographic or video evidence in addition to or in lieu of descriptions. Records of these species are assessed solely by the TBCRSC. If there is more than one member unwilling to support the record it will not be accepted for publication. It must be stressed that species in these records have not necessarily been misidentified, but usually that there is not enough evidence to convince the committee. These species are:

**Bean Goose, Snow Goose, American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Surf Scoter, Black Grouse, Cory's Shearwater, Great Shearwater, Balearic Shearwater, Leach's Petrel, Night Heron, Purple Heron, White Stork, Honey Buzzard, Red Kite, White-tailed Eagle, Montagu's Harrier, Rough-legged Buzzard, Hobby, Spotted Crake, Corncrake, Common Crane, Stone Curlew, Kentish Plover, Pectoral Sandpiper, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Red-necked Phalarope, Grey Phalarope, Long-tailed Skua (non-adults), Sabine's Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Black Guillemot, Ring-necked Parakeet, Bee-eater, Short-toed Lark, Woodlark, Richard's Pipit, Tawny Pipit, Nightingale, Aquatic Warbler, Marsh Warbler, Icterine Warbler, Melodious Warbler, Barred Warbler, Pallas's Leaf Warbler, Red-breasted Flycatcher, Golden Oriole, Woodchat Shrike, Chough, Raven, Rose-coloured Starling, Serin, Common Rosefinch, Cirl Bunting, Ortolan Bunting, Little Bunting.**

The TBCRSC may ask for an account of sightings other species where the bird has not been seen by several observers, the sighting is outside the pattern of occurrence for the year in question, a known confusion species was also present at the same time or the record is in some other way exceptional. A detailed record of these records may preclude the TBCRSC from asking for more details at a later stage.

If you are in any doubt as to whether a description is required then any member of the Records Sub-committee will be able to advise you. In the case of well watched birds, please do not assume that the record has been submitted by others. The submission of supporting records adds weight to the finders' record and often helps in reaching a decision quickly. Conversely, if consensus is not reached amongst observers at the time of a sighting it is unlikely there will be a positive outcome for the record without very detailed submissions.

### **Records Referring to Races**

The Sub Committee is interested in receiving records relating to distinctive races which are readily identifiable in the field. In general, races which are regularly recorded in Cleveland do not require descriptions. However, others which are rare or scarce such as Greenland White-fronted Goose, Yellow-legged Gull (non-adults only), Siberian Stonechat and Siberian Chiffchaff will. If you are in any doubt as to whether a description is required then any member of the Records Sub-committee will be able to advise you.

### **PHOTOGRAPHS AND SKETCHES FOR THE 2004 REPORT**

Photographs and sketches are required for consideration for inclusion in the 2004 '*Cleveland Bird Report*'. Photographs may be submitted in conventional or digital form and should be of the specific bird(s) concerned. The submission of material does not necessarily guarantee inclusion but the Records Sub Committee is always looking for new contributors to give as wide a choice as possible. Please submit all material to the Recorder, Rob Little as soon as possible.