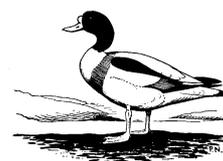


Teesmouth Bird Club Newsletter

December 2018 (No.71)



Reg.Charity No.508850

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MONTHLY SUMMARIES

Martin Blick reviews the birding highlights of the July to October period.

JULY 2018

This month was uneventful for the first two weeks, with continuous high temperatures of 24 to 29 °C on most days throughout the month.

Autumn wader passage was evident with three Green Sandpipers on Cowpen Marsh on 1st and the first of the returning Curlew Sandpipers on Greenabella from 2nd .

An Osprey was at Scaling Dam again on 9th, and Lockwood Beck next morning, the same day as the first Sooty Shearwaters passed along the coastline.



Arctic Skua, South Gare

Rob Young

The first Arctic Skua was in the Tees Bay on 14th, the first of the autumn's Garganey was on RSPB Saltholme on 16th, the first of three Pectoral Sandpipers was at Scaling Dam for an hour on 17th, three juvenile Black Swans were on Back Saltholme from 18th and a

juvenile Black Redstart was at Lockwood Beck on 20th



Garganey, Saltholme

Ian Forrest

The first Roseate Terns of the autumn were at Hartlepool on 21st, but bird of the year for some was the adult Franklin's Gull at Scaling Dam for almost two hours on the same day. Fortunately it re-appeared on 24th, and stayed to 29th, although its appearance was erratic.

A Leach's Petrel was seen but not caught on Marske beach during a night-time petrel-ringing session on 22nd-23rd, the first autumn Merlin was seen at Redcar on 24th, another (or the same?) Pectoral Sandpiper was on Dorman's Pool on 25th, but Scaling Dam was the place to be (again!) on 25th when a Marsh Sandpiper was photographed in the morning, but not identified until darkness fell.

Torrential rain and a spectacular thunderstorm tracked across Cleveland on the evening of 27th; just over an inch of rain fell, but had little effect on parched lawns and gardens. More rain fell on the following three days, and a drake Green-winged Teal was on Dormans Pool from 28th, into August.

The Haverton Hole egret roost is now in its seventh year, numbers building up, as usual, through Jul and peaking at 86 on 31st.

AUGUST 2018

A Spoonbill was at South Gare on 2nd, three being in the Saltholme area on 3rd-4th, the Franklin's Gull re-appeared at

Scaling Dam from 6th to 8th and was at Pinchinthorpe on 9th. Also, a White-rumped Sandpiper was on Redcar beach on 7th, and five Scaup were at RSPB Saltholme on 8th.

The Little Egret roost peaked at 93 on 10th, significantly less than the 141 counted there in Aug 2016, a Black-necked Grebe and a Tree Pipit were noted at Hartlepool on 14th and a different Black-necked Grebe was on Cowpen Bewley Tip Ponds from 17th. Also on 17th, Cleveland's second Western Bonelli's Warbler was found in North Gare bushes where it stayed for three days, and the first of the returning Yorkshire Barnacle Geese arrived at Saltholme.

The first Red-necked Grebe of the autumn passed Cowbar on 20th, the same day as an Osprey passed over Scaling Dam, and the day that work started on altering the shoreline around the RSPB Saltholme hide. It created a significant amount of disturbance for the following month, but it also created large expanses of mud as Back Saltholme and Saltholme West were partially drained.

The first Little Stint of the autumn was on Seaton Snook on 23rd, a Balearic Shearwater was off Hartlepool, the first Pomarine Skua of the year passed Cowbar and Saltburn and another Spoonbill was on Dorman's Pool, all on 25th, and three Black-necked Grebes graced Longnewton Reservoir from 26th.

Scaling Dam proved lively on 28th when two Red Kites were around the reservoir trees for an hour and a pair of Barnacle Geese with one juvenile joined the pair that had bred there and reared three juveniles.

SEPTEMBER 2018

The only inland Little Stint of the year was at Bowesfield from 1st, four rather early Pale-bellied Brent Geese passed Cowbar on 3rd, and a cold Northerly wind on 4th brought a Great Northern Diver to

Hartlepool, but little else. A very approachable Pomarine Skua graced South Gare in the first half of the month.

Winter came one step nearer with the first skein of Pink-footed Geese passing Hartlepool, South Gare and Skelton on 13th, and three Great Northern Divers flew inland over Seaton Snook on the same morning. More Pink-footed Geese were seen next day and around 1000 flew South on 15th. The peak count (of 23) Roseate Terns was noted at South Gare on 16th.

The recent practice of naming storms around the world adds a little extra interest for those that always have an eye on such things; three tracked North East over the UK, the first being Ex-hurricane Helene on 18th which was followed by Storm Ali on 19th and Storm Bronagh on 20th. Gale-force South Westerly winds were evident on 19th bringing a Pectoral Sandpiper to Dorman's Pool and a Mandarin to Wynyard, and almost half an inch of rain fell on 20th, the first significant rain for nearly two months.

The Spoonbill that had been around since August visited Bowesfield on 21st, five Common Cranes flew South over North Tees Marshes on 24th, the same morning as the first skim of ice was evident on parked cars, the first Whooper Swans were (very early) on 25th and the first of the autumn's Yellow-browed Warblers was at Hartlepool on 26th.

A Hen Harrier was on Liverton Moor on 27th, a trickle of Svalbard Barnacle Geese was evident on 28th and 29th, and an escaped Ruddy Shelduck that had been around Co. Durham for weeks visited Longnewton Reservoir on 30th.

OCTOBER 2018

This was undoubtedly the best month of the year in terms of variety of birds arriving, but still did not come close to

the calibre of birds in Cleveland in October 2016.

The first Lapland Bunting of the winter flew over RSPB Saltholme on 1st, along with another 100 Caerlaverock-bound Barnacle Geese, two Velvet Scoters visited Scaling Dam briefly on 2nd, and a Great White Egret was seen to leave the Haverton Hole roost at dawn on 3rd but was not seen again. Also on 3rd, the first Jack Snipe, Long-tailed Duck, Fieldfare and Redwings of the autumn were recorded, and the first Snow Bunting on 5th.

A trickle of coastal migrants was evident on 7th with Ring Ouzels at Brotton, then the first Yellow-browed Warbler at Hummersea on 8th and another on Old Cemetery Road on 10th. A big arrival of birds was noted on 11th with large numbers of Redwings, Bramblings and Ring Ouzels, plus about 20 Yellow-browed Warblers, a few Meally Redpolls and one each of Rough-legged Buzzard, Shore Lark and Firecrest.



Spotted Sandpiper, Marske

Ian Watson

Next day Storm Callum tracked North-East over Scotland giving us strong winds and steady rain for most of the day, as well as Cleveland's sixth Spotted Sandpiper on Marske beach for three days. The strong winds remained on 13th, but the daytime temperature was up to 23 °C, remarkable for mid-October. Next day saw another arrival of Yellow-browed Warbler, around 25 spread along the coastline, but not much else.



Yellow-browed Warbler Hartlepool Headland Ian Watson

The first Cetti's Warbler of the autumn was at Haverton Hole (where else?) on 14th and three were there by the month's end, the first Hawfinches of the autumn (two) flew over Skelton on 15th, the same day as the only Honey Buzzard of the year was on the Long Drag. A rather late Hobby was at Scaling Dam on 17th, a Slavonian Grebe was off Hartlepool North Sands on 18th, and the only Barred Warbler of the year was at Hartlepool from 19th, the same day as the first Waxwing of the winter flew over.



Barred Warbler, Hartlepool Headland Ian Forrest



Bearded Tit, Long Drag Ian Forrest

A significant movement of Whooper Swans was noted on 19th-20th, involving

around 150 birds flying South, including nine that flew over Stockton centre at midnight on 19th, three Bearded Tits were by the Long Drag from 20th, a Richard's Pipit flew over Cattersty on 21st, and another Great White Egret was by the Long Drag on 22nd.

The wind turned Northerly from 25th, bringing snow and hail on 27th, but also creating some interesting sea-watching; quite large numbers of Pomarine Skuas passed (on 26th), plus Bonxies, a few Manx and Sooty Shearwaters, and large numbers of duck, which were predominantly Wigeon and Common Scoter. A trickle of Great Northern Divers was also noted, followed by small numbers of Little Auks (on 27th) and at least one each of Leach's Petrel, Long-tailed Skua, Black-throated Diver and Red-necked Grebe.



Short-eared Owl, Seaton Comon Ian Watson

There was also a significant arrival of Long- and Short-eared Owls, Woodcock and assorted winter thrushes. A rather late Lesser Whitethroat was at Boulby on 28th and the first Glaucous Gull of the winter passed South Gare on the same day. Next day the only Black Guillemot of the year was in Hartlepool harbour for a little less than an hour and the only Red-breasted Flycatcher of the year was in the Zinc Works bushes, staying three days.

A juvenile Long-tailed Skua found dead on Hartlepool North Sands on 31st was

likely to have been the individual seen off the headland on 27th-28th.

ROUND UP FROM THE CHAIR DECEMBER 2018

Apart from our enjoyment spending time in the field observing birds, I always think that the highlight between August and December has to be the arrival of our annual Cleveland Bird Report. It is worth reminding all club members of the time and effort which is expended by a small team in order to create this top quality publication for our information and pleasure. It goes without saying that the club extends a huge thank you to all involved in its compilation, including the photographers, who willingly provide such stunning images from their portfolios to enhance the script.

Someone else to thank is undoubtedly Eric James, who for reasons of ill health, is stepping down from formatting our thrice yearly newsletter. Jamie Duffie, who valiantly manages our website, has agreed to take over the job from Eric.

Chris Sharp, our dedicated Secretary, has put together the monthly bird summaries, which appear in our newsletter, for what seems like an eternity. Chris now gets a well deserved break from this task, having handed over the role to Martin Blick.

We need to extend a huge thank you to all the aforementioned people. Without such valuable input from a group of hard-working individuals, it is a well known phenomenon that voluntary organisations can disintegrate. If you value your club, please consider how you could contribute now and in the future.

Whilst on the topic of newsletters, it is worth mentioning that ours was the guest publication featured in an episode of "Have I Got News For You" – albeit a very brief appearance. A bit like some of our birds!!

More news comes from our Records sub-committee. They are welcoming Ian Boustead to join their ranks but,

unfortunately, it is with regret that we have to announce that Harry Murphy will be unable to take over the role as Recorder. He and his family are moving to The Netherlands. At the time of writing, we are still waiting for confirmation of who will become our next County Recorder.

Moving on to the school news, we have been thanked by Rosehill Primary for our donations of birdbaths, nest boxes and feeders and primarily for the work we did this summer to create a new feeding station. In fact, an article has appeared in their school newsletter to this effect.

We also know that St. Cuthbert's Primary has their feeding station operational for the second season so, hopefully, the children will continue to enjoy their birds.

The Lockwood Beck feeding station may eventually be enhanced by the addition of a roof extension at the back of the lodge. A bat survey had to be carried out over the summer to ensure this protected species would remain unaffected. We are also obliged to carry out a risk assessment, prior to commencement of work. However, meantime, go and enjoy the woodland birds and look out for the two Dippers, which appear to be rather fond of sitting on the nearby jetty.

NATIONAL WILLOW TIT SURVEY

Our endemic race of Willow Tit is the fastest declining resident bird species in the UK, with an 80% decline in the last 20 years, and it is Red-listed.

Due to declining numbers, monitoring the species is becoming increasingly difficult.

Therefore, a national survey is required to ascertain population estimates, current distribution and measures of change in order to underpin any conservation work.

It is hoped that county-level surveys will be conducted across the known range by Willow Tit study groups, county bird clubs and other organisations. The survey will run from mid-

February to mid April, with two visits per tetrad (2x2 km) during this period.

Surveys will be conducted on all suitable habitat within tetrads, using a standardised playback method using a recording with a combination of Willow Tit alarm call and song.

The potential current range of Willow Tits in Britain has been ascertained using information compiled from the 1988-91 Bird Atlas, the 2007-11 Bird Atlas and other recent records from the Rare Breeding Birds Panel.

OUR TASK

Details for the survey work to be carried out in our area are as follows:-

We have been allocated 54 Tetrads, with the possibility there will be additional squares to cover. This is a significant number and we need more than just a few volunteers out in the field.

To encourage participants, the maps, survey forms and instructions have already been printed ready for collection. They will be brought to each indoor meeting until the end of the survey period.

The recording, which acts as the tape lure, can be forwarded by email for use on personal phones. Alternatively, there will be MP3 players and speakers held at Saltholme reception where there will be a signing in and out book. In addition, the players and speakers will be collected and brought along to each indoor meeting.

Your coordinator for Cleveland is myself, Barbara Crinson. My contact details can be found within the home page on the website and also enclosed with the documentation for the survey. My email address is barbaracrinson@hotmail.com

Please do come forward to help with this important survey. The paperwork has already been prepared for you and let's face it, the whole exercise using a tape lure to achieve scientific results could be very rewarding and most enjoyable.

LOCAL OUTINGS JANUARY TO APRIL 2019

HARTLEPOOL HEADLAND

Saturday 26th January 2019

Join Chris Sharp and look for sea-ducks and wintering gulls around the headland. Waders, such as Purple Sandpiper, Turnstone and Knot should also be seen along with divers and grebes. There is also a chance of a Mediterranean or Glaucous Gull. Meet at 9.30 a.m. by Heugh Gun Battery car park.

Leader: Chris Sharp Tel: 01429 865163

NORTH GARE AND SEATON SNOOK

Sunday 24th February 2019

Join Julie Mason and Chris Sharp for a walk to these two coastal localities. A good variety of sea duck including Red-breasted Merganser and Eider should be seen. Hopefully the bay should also hold grebes and divers. The Snook is a regular wintering spot for Twite and small numbers of Snow Buntings have been present in recent winters. Meet at 9.30 a.m. at the North Gare car park

Leaders: Julie Mason [Tel: 01642 614583](tel:01642614583) and Chris Sharp

STILLINGTON WOODS

Thursday 7th March 2019

Join Barbara Crinson for a visit to this woodland area. The club have recently helped to create a feeding station here. Hopefully a good selection of woodland birds will be on offer. There is also the chance of a Green Woodpecker here. Meet at 10.00 a.m. at ST John's Church, Lawson Street, Stillington TS21 1JB. Grid Ref: NZ376236. The church is very visible from the main road in the village which is called Morrison Street. Strong boots or wellingtons are recommended.

Leader: Barbara Crinson

COWPEN BEWLEY WOODLAND PARK

Tuesday 23rd April 2019

Join Dave Nelson to explore this local nature reserve. A good selection of common woodland species should be seen and early summer migrants such as Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff and Blackcap should be well

established. Meet at the nature reserve car park at 10.00 a.m.
Leader: Dave Nelson Tel: 01642 824755

NATIONAL SEABIRD CENSUS

During the 2018 and 2019 breeding seasons, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) is working alongside the Seabird Monitoring Programme (SMP) to increase the national survey coverage.

Two specific species, the Kittiwakes and Shags are both very much of conservation concern, particularly the Kittiwakes, which have shown alarming declines over recent years. To ensure correct and current population estimates for all seabirds, and that the trends produced by the SMP are valid, it is necessary to compliment the SMP data with a census of the entire breeding population of the UK, or as much of it as possible.

Martin Blick very kindly offered to take on the role of Cleveland co-ordinator for the census. Extensive counting for this season has already taken place by a handful of experienced observers. Some specific locations are incredibly difficult to survey but with the help of Mike Leakey and his contact at ConocoPhillips, we have succeeded in obtaining an accurate count of the Kittiwakes and Shags utilizing the jetties at the Crude Oil Terminal. A boat was used to survey the birds and, of significance, is the fact that one Shag was occupying a nest. This is the first confirmation of a breeding attempt by a Shag in Cleveland. Another adult was in the vicinity and a young Shag ringed on the Isle of May last summer was also recorded on the jetties.

If any members feel they would like to offer help with the census next year or learn more, then please express your interest to Martin or speak to someone on committee.

BTO News Winter 2018

Tawny Owl Calling Survey

This autumn and winter we want to learn more about Tawny Owl population change and increase our understanding of their calling behaviour and distribution, particularly focusing on the impact of urbanisation and artificial lighting. We need your help, whether you usually hear Tawny Owls or not. Knowing where owls can't be heard is just as valuable as knowing where they can be heard.

It's easy to take part - just listen for 20 minutes during at least one evening between now and 31 March 2019. You can listen from your garden, a local park or woodland. You can listen for their familiar 'hooting' and 'keewick' calls any time between sunset and midnight. You can even listen whilst lying in bed with the window open! All we ask is that you tell us the date, start time of your survey, an estimate of cloud cover and importantly whether or not you hear an owl. If you hear a Tawny Owl at another time of the week outside the survey period you will also be able to record this. The more weeks that you can listen the better - but you can do as many or as few weeks as you are able. You record your weekly results online.

Download the [Tawny Owl Calling Survey Instructions](#) (PDF, 1.03 MB) here. If you'd prefer to record on paper recording sheets rather than use the BTO online system, you can - please email the organiser at gbw@bto.org or call 01842 750050.

English Winter Bird Survey - Help build a picture of how our winter birds fare on lowland farmland in England

The purpose of this survey is to investigate how wintering birds and Brown Hare benefit from using Agri-environment scheme (AES) options in winter, which remains a major gap in our knowledge. This work will complement existing studies that have successfully evaluated the effects of AES options on farmland birds and will further our

understanding of why the majority of breeding farmland birds are still in decline.

This survey will use the entire network of Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) 1-km squares and their survey transects during winter.

Up to four visits are required between 1 December 2018 and 31 March 2019, to record all birds and Brown Hare along a fixed route, by distance band and transect section (as for BBS). Some basic, but essential, habitat recording will be required for each transect section to assess how much farmland feeding habitat (e.g. stubbles, wild bird cover, etc.) is available during each winter visit.

The main focus of this survey is lowland farmland in England, however, we do welcome volunteers to take up squares that contain all other habitats.

Full details are on the BTO website. All the [instructions and forms needed to participate are available on the resources page](#).

Please contact me on 07510 996977 or mikelaquila@hotmail.com if you think you can help.

Mike Leakey, BTO Regional Representative for Cleveland

WETLAND BIRD SURVEY - AUTUMN 2018 SUMMARY

A fantastic level of coverage was achieved with 99/100 counts undertaken.

Following this series of counts, in autumn the Tees and Hartlepool Bay WeBS Site is of international importance for gadwall (707, August) and nationally important for cormorant (355, September), little egret (50, August & 55, September) and sanderling (420, August).

An autumn high of 519 shelduck was certainly one of the better showings for this period in the estuary. However peak counts for little stint, curlew sandpiper, ruff, spotted

redshank, common sandpiper and turnstone were rather poor. Totals for sandwich, common, arctic and little tern were some of the lowest ever recorded in autumn.

Scarce species observed during surveys included a single garganey (RSPB Saltholme, August & September), spoonbill (Dormans Pool, September), jack snipe (RSPB Saltholme, September & October), 3 roseate tern (1 North Gare Sands & 2 Coatham Sands North, September) and scaup (RSPB Saltholme, October).

ADAM JONES
Local Organizer
Tees Estuary Wetland Bird Survey

November 2018

All WeBS data are collected on behalf of the WeBS Partnership, which retains exclusive rights to the sale or supply of these data for commercial purposes

WETLAND BIRD SURVEY TEESMOUTH AUTUMN 2018 SUMMARY

	July 08	August 12	September 09	October 07
Little Grebe	27	52	<u>54</u>	51
Great Crested Grebe	17	19	4	1
Cormorant	90	333*	<u>355**</u>	107
Little Egret	38	50**	<u>55**</u>	24
Grey Heron	32	<u>34</u>	31	28
Mute Swan	53	60	18	32
Greylag Goose	90	259	<u>583</u>	171
Shelduck	<u>519*</u>	173	110	261
Wigeon	8	24	78	<u>422</u>
Gadwall	211*	<u>707***</u>	301**	204*
Teal	90	442	<u>628</u>	484
Mallard	259	<u>399</u>	112	148
Pintail	0	0	<u>4</u>	2
Shoveler	26	35	<u>87</u>	78
Pochard	<u>38</u>	28	11	30
Tufted Duck	<u>122</u>	113	62	39
Coot	431	486	<u>580</u>	575
Oystercatcher	375	573	<u>862</u>	828
Avocet	<u>38*</u>	21	6	0
Ringed Plover	10	<u>251*</u>	89	7
Golden Plover	0	0	13	<u>305</u>
Grey Plover	0	1	<u>15</u>	5
Lapwing	338	391	<u>994</u>	939
Knot	0	33	<u>78</u>	19
Sanderling	5	<u>420**</u>	6	95*
Little Stint	0	0	0	0
Curlew Sandpiper	0	1	<u>2</u>	0
Purple Sandpiper	0	0	0	<u>2</u>
Dunlin	67	1593	<u>1830*</u>	95
Ruff	2	12	12	0
Snipe	9	<u>54</u>	17	12
Black-tailed Godwit	9	52	<u>59</u>	58
Bar-tailed Godwit	2	0	<u>18</u>	16
Whimbrel	2	<u>18</u>	0	0
Curlew	<u>560</u>	494	488	289
Spotted Redshank	0	0	0	0
Redshank	238	<u>683*</u>	678*	632*
Greenshank	0	<u>17</u>	5	1
Green Sandpiper	0	8	1	1
Common Sandpiper	1	<u>2</u>	0	0
Turnstone	0	<u>79</u>	39	52
Sandwich Tern	18	248	<u>290</u>	3
Common Tern	<u>343</u>	205	133	0
Arctic Tern	0	<u>1</u>	0	0
Little Tern	0	<u>1</u>	0	0

Underlined counts indicate Autumn 2018 maxima

* Denotes count of >50% of national importance

** Denotes count of national importance

*** Denotes count of international importance

N.B. 'Teesmouth' includes Hartlepool Bay & the whole of the RSPB Saltholme Reserve.

TEESMOUTH BIRD CLUB

PAYMENT OF SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions are due on 1st January and the current rates are: Reg. Charity No.508850

Standard/Individual £12.00

Family £16.00

Junior £5.00

Please forward your cheque made payable to 'Teesmouth Bird Club' to Chris Sharp, 6 Maritime Avenue, Hartlepool, TS24 0XF. If you prefer, you can set up a Standing Order.

I enclose my subscription of £for the year.....

Name.....

Address.....

..... Post Code.....

Email address.....

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To: The Manager.....Bank

Bank address.....

Code.....

and Bank Account Number.....agree to pay a yearly Standing Order of £.....

to TEESMOUTH BIRD CLUB, Sort Code 40-22-27 and Bank Account Number 90799599 to commence on

.....and to continue until further notice.

SIGNED..... Date.....

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I want the **TEESMOUTH BIRD CLUB** to treat all subscriptions/donations I have made since the date of this declaration, until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations

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To qualify as a Gift Aid donor you must be a taxpayer and have paid or will pay an amount of tax equal to the tax we reclaim on your subscriptions/donations.

Should you cease to be a taxpayer, please notify the Club so that further claims under this declaration may be cancelled.

IF YOU ARE ELIGIBLE, PLEASE SIGN THE GIFT AID DECLARATION IF YOU HAVEN'T PREVIOUSLY DONE SO. IT COSTS YOU NOTHING BUT ENABLES THE CLUB TO RECOVER THE TAX ON YOUR SUBSCRIPTIONS/DONATION.

