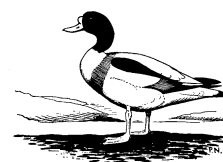


Teesmouth Bird Club Newsletter

December 2020 (No.77)



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JULY 2020

The flock of juvenile Bearded Tits continued to delight birders at Dormans Pool throughout the month, and the Great White Egret stayed all month.

An Osprey was at Scaling Dam on 2nd, then Cleveland's earliest White-rumped Sandpiper (by ten days) was found on Cowpen Marsh on the morning of 3rd, before moving to Saltholme Pools an hour later. It did exactly the same next morning.

Another Great White Egret was at Crookfoot Reservoir on 6th, a single Ruddy Shelduck flew over South Gare on 8th, a Cory's Shearwater was off Cowbar on 9th, three Pomarine Skuas were off Hartlepool on the same day, and a Black Redstart was at Cowbar on 14th.

Excitement on 16th came in the form of the only singing Corn Bunting of the year on Cowpen Bewley Tip, followed by a summer-plumaged Cattle Egret around Saltholme, (The bunting is rarer than the egret this year – totally unthinkable 20 years ago).



Cattle Egret

Ian Forrest

The first returning Merlin was at South Gare on 19th, the same day as a record count of 632 Black-tailed Godwits was noted on the North Tees Marshes, the only Egyptian Goose of the year was on Back Saltholme on 20th, and after approximately 200 Rose-coloured Starlings were spread throughout the UK in June and July, one was found in Billingham on 22nd and stayed until the following morning. It or another was photographed on Hartlepool Headland on or about 23rd-24th, but not seen by any birders.

An Osprey was at Scaling Dam on 23rd-24th, and a colour-ringed Scandinavian Lesser Black-backed Gull was at the same place on 25th. It had been ringed in Central Norway in July 2014, seen in SW France in October 2014, then Norway in July 2016 before gracing Scaling Dam.



Osprey

Renton Charman

Two Storm Petrels were caught late at night at Skinningrove, also on 25th, a total of 106 Little Egrets came out of the Haverton Hole roost at dawn on 29th, and two Ospreys were at Scaling Dam on 31st. The last day of the month was also the hottest, 31 C being recorded locally.

AUGUST 2020

One Osprey was still at Scaling Dam, a rather smart Curlew Sandpiper was at the same place, and the first Red-necked Grebe of the year was off Marske, all on 1st. What was presumed to be the same Cattle Egret was at Greatham Creek on 1st, but this time it stayed in the Greatham Creek area for three weeks. The Haverton Hole Little Egret roost peaked

at 122 on 2nd, (and still 118 on 31st) the same day as Cleveland's fifth Gull-billed Tern was seen by one observer on Seaton Snook. Despite 20 other birders being there within half an hour, it was never seen again.

After about 18 weeks of closure due to the coronavirus, three out of the four hides on RSPB Saltholme re-opened on 3rd, the same day as the first Black Tern of the year was on Seaton Snook, and Cleveland's first colour-ringed Little Gull was at South Gare. It had been ringed in the nest by the Gulf of Bothnia, N Sweden on 15 July 2019.

A Pomarine Skua was off Hartlepool on 4th, a Red-crested Pochard was on RSPB Saltholme on 5th, the same day as a second Great White Egret joined the long-staying bird, and three were present from 7th.

One of the wandering Isle of Wight White-tailed Eagles passed Scaling Dam on 8th having roosted by Grinkle Park on the previous night, the first Pied Flycatcher of the autumn was at Hartlepool on 9th, and single Sooty and Cory's Shearwaters passed Hartlepool on 10th.

A very small number of migrants were seen mid-month, including Wryneck at South Gare on 12th, Little Stint in Greatham Creek from 13th, the first of a few Long-tailed Skuas off Hartlepool on 14th and a Red-backed Shrike at the same place on 15th.

An eclipse drake Mandarin found on Cowpen Bewley Tip Pools on 16th stayed into September, two juvenile Scaup were on RSPB Saltholme on 17th, a Black-throated Diver was off Saltburn for a few days from 20th and a Balearic Shearwater lingered off Hartlepool on 21st.

The first of the wintering Yorkshire Barnacle Geese arrived on Saltholme on 21st, when 65 were counted, a total of 106 being there next day and 134 by the end of the month, one or maybe two Ospreys passed over Teesmouth on 23rd, five Great White Egrets came out of the egret roost at dawn on 24th, and two more

Balearic Shearwaters passed Hartlepool later on the same day.

Storm Ellen passed to the West of Cleveland on 21st having almost no effect, but Storm Francis, following the same track on 25th, created interesting sea-watching from 26th to 30th. All four skua species passed along the coastline on 26th, 28th and 29th, over 100 Arctic Skuas passing Hartlepool on 28th. Other birds seen in this four-day period include Leach's Petrel off Hartlepool, Great Shearwater off Cowbar, as well as small numbers of early Pale-bellied Brent Geese, and a very few Black-throated and Great Northern Divers, Sooty Shearwaters, Little Gulls and Roseate Terns.

SEPTEMBER 2020

The first returning Spotted Redshank was in Greatham Creek from 2nd, the same day as an unusual wagtail at RSPB Saltholme. Superficially it was a Pied/White Wagtail, but was showing the characteristics of White-faced Pied (or Amur) Wagtail, from the Far East.

The Cattle Egret re-appeared beside Greatham Creek on 3rd but only stayed another day, and the first skeins of Pink-footed Geese passed over Cleveland on 6th. Another two juvenile Bearded Tits were on Dormans Pool from 12th, indicating a successful second brood for one pair, and potentially bringing the number of Bearded Tits to at least 17, a Hobby was at Wolviston on the same day, and an Osprey passed Hartlepool Headland on 13th.



Bearded Tit Ian Forrest

The 14th was a noteworthy day; the shop and café at RSPB Saltholme re-opened after 25 weeks of closure, and a second Spotted Redshank performed on the many muddy margins of the main lake there from 14th. A male Hen Harrier drifted south over Dormans Pool on the same day and another Hobby was at Scaling Dam.

An early Snow Bunting was at Cowbar from 15th, then a Northerly wind on 16th created reasonable sea-watching, all four skuas passing Hartlepool as well as the first Sabine's Gull of the year, and the first Yellow-browed Warbler was at Cattersty Gill next day.

The first Lapland Bunting of the autumn was seen on 18th, two Little Stints were on Saltholme Pools, also from 18th, the first Jack Snipe of the autumn was on Dormans Pool on 19th, the number of Yellow-browed Warblers reached five on 20th, then 16 along the coast of Cleveland on 21st, the same day as the first Redwing and Whooper Swans were seen.

A Pectoral Sandpiper graced RSPB Saltholme on 23rd, three being there next day and a remarkable five on 25th, but only two stayed to the end of the month. Cleveland's earliest Siberian Stonechat was at South Gare for six days from 24th (most records are in Oct), and the first Firecrest of the year was at Warsett Hill, also on 24th.

A strong North wind on 25th-26th created big seas, but not much passed, other than a Sabine's Gull on 25th, and 412 Sooty

Shearwaters and small numbers of Caerlaverock-bound Barnacle Geese on 26th. Next day, a Common Scoter was on Saltholme Pools, the first Brambling of the winter and a Bar-headed Goose were in the same area, and a late Wood Warbler was at Hunley Hall Golf Course.

An arrival of Yellow-browed Warbler was evident from 27th involving at least 20 birds along the coastline and four inland. A Great Northern Diver showed well in Hartlepool harbour from 28th, and a late Swift was at Saltholme on the same day.

OCTOBER 2020

The first big movement of Pink-footed Geese was evident on 2nd, with 1100 over Saltholme alone, and another 318 graced Cowpen Bewley Tip pools on the same day. The first Black Redstart of the autumn was at South Gare, also on 2nd.

Next day (said to be the wettest day ever recorded in the UK), was wet and windy from the east. It brought large numbers of Redwings, Robins and Goldcrests to the coastline, as well as the rarest bird of the year, Britain's fourth Masked Shrike, to the trees along Old Cemetery Road, Hartlepool. It was difficult to see in the poor weather, but next day it performed well for its admirers, in the sunshine.



Masked Shrike

Ian Watson

Other birds seen on 3rd-4th included Red-breasted Flycatcher at Hartlepool, Little Buntings at Hunley Hall Golf Course and Hartlepool, and over 200 Svalbard Barnacle

Geese past Hartlepool on 4th. Cleveland's 11th (and Hartlepool's 2nd) Radde's Warbler was found on 5th, and ringed next day.

A late Garganey graced Cowpen Marsh from 8th, staying into Nov, at least 50 Whooper Swans passed on 9th, approximately 1500-2500 Little Gulls were off Redcar on 9th-10th, a Slavonian Grebe was on Cowpen Bewley Tip Pools on 10th and two rather early Tundra Bean Geese were at Scaling Dam from 11th.



Brambling

Ian Watson

The wind had an element of East in it from 14th, which produced the first Little Auk of the winter at Hartlepool, as well as Pallas's Warbler at Hummersea and a Short-toed Lark at South Gare. Another Pallas's Warbler was found on 15th, at Hunley Hall Golf Course, and a Firecrest was at South Gare, followed next day by Dusky Warbler and Great Grey Shrike, also at South Gare, and finally a Stejneger's Stonechat –you've guessed it – at South Gare from 17th. With five good birds all being in one place for at least three days, little else was found in Cleveland!

Jack Snipe hid on Dormans Pool all month, peaking at 15 on 17th, the first Long-tailed Ducks of the autumn were seen on 23rd which included one on Scaling Dam for at least a week, a Pallas's Warbler was at Hunt Cliff on the same day, the first Water Pipits of the winter were around Saltholme from 27th, then a Black Redstart and a rather late Yellow-browed Warbler were at Hartlepool on 28th.

The last day of the month saw Storm Aiden pass to the West of Cleveland, but all it brought was strong winds and more rain.

VIRTUAL BIRDWATCHING

2020 has been difficult, very difficult, for birdwatching among many other things. My problems started on the Sunday before Christmas 2019. Arriving at Hurworth Burn to watch birds, I slipped on the iced-over car park and wrecked my back. Having spent January and February indoors trying to sort my back, I eventually saw an osteopath who untwisted my back just in time for me to go into lockdown. Some time in May after the first unlocking I ventured to Snilesworth for the first half-hearted birdwatching trip of the year. I achieved total social distancing but no bird sightings. So I reverted to isolation. Around 18th June I again ventured forth. I actually saw some birds; seven spoonbills. I had never seen so many together. I moved on to Greatham Creek. More woe I suddenly developed an eye problem. I returned home to sulk until early July when I went over to Dorman's Pool to see the reported bearded tits. I spent a pleasant couple of hours chatting to acquaintances I had not seen for months, but saw no bearded tits. So back home to slump in front of the tellie to watch virtual this, that and the other. Which made me realise I had spent 2020, so far, virtual birdwatching.

My garden birdwatching had been disappointing. In 2019 my highest score of goldfinch on or around the niger seed feeder was 24. This year most days it was 2 and only once did it rise to 6. Otherwise highlights were visits from a pair of bullfinch, a couple of greenfinches, long-tailed tits and a great spotted woodpecker.

I was left to think about what I might be doing if it were not for the curfew. I would almost certainly have been to Bassenthwaite in the hope of seeing the osprey. I am not sure whether I am capable of ascending to the viewing point in Dodd Wood, but I know a spot on the A66, beside the lake (incidentally the only lake in the Lake District), where

there is a near certain view of the nest with at least one bird atop. Or would I, at last, have made it to Esthwaite Water where another pair of osprey nest.

I used to have a caravan in the Lake District and got to know hotspots for viewing Spring migrants. One of my favourite annual visitors was wood warbler. This year there were lots of reports of wood warbler spotted at places relatively more local to Teesside. So I am sure I would have ventured to Muggleswick for wood warbler, probably urged on with the Harry Potteresque hint in the name of the location.

For days before I went out for the bearded tits I had read the reports on "the web" of a great white egret and red crested pochard around the North Tees pools. I had a quick look for them en route to Dorman's Pool, but to no avail. In June there was an influx of rose coloured starlings. My son went to see one near Wetherby. In normal times it is likely that he would have phoned me to join him as we had planned to do earlier in the year to go to St Aidan's to try to see the breeding black necked grebes. There is a lot to look forward to next year. The black necked grebes should be back; but probably not the rose coloured starlings.

As lockdown started I had no recent birdwatching experiences to write about. I cast my mind back to trips in years gone by about which I had not written. One in particular to Mexico and Guatemala brought back memories of a fabulous holiday and some sightings of exotic birds. Referring to my notes and photographs vivid memories flooded back: the osprey, in Mexico, fishing along the shallows of the sea; my first ever views of hummingbirds at Atitlan in Guatemala. They were all flashing colour, like mobile jewels darting hither and thither and then hovering as they sucked the nectar from flowers. Then at Tical where I expected to have to explore the jungle to find toucans. I in fact saw two different species of toucan in the trees behind our sparse single story accommodation, the classic keel-billed toucan, the bearer of Guinness, and the

smaller collared aracari. I remembered the Montezuma's oropendula and the turquoise browed motmot, both as exotic in appearance as in name. The oropendula are large (20ins) yellow and black birds. This a description of their cacophony. "The Montezuma Oropendola's song is an unforgettable, bizarre gurgling and hollow popping series of squeaky "woik- woik"s, a low "chuck" or "whek," often a "gruff", a sneezy "rruh", a cooing, a slightly clucking "whi-t-wuuu", and a gruff clucking "kyuk kyuk". Unforgettable but indescribable I would say. This a book description of the turquoise-browed motmot: "The Turquoise-browed is small for a motmot, but its body is covered in colour and pattern. Besides the motmot's typical black mask around the eyes, the Turquoise-browed also has black and turquoise streaks on its face and throat. Its head and breast are olive green, but the back and underside are rufous, the underside a shade lighter. This motmot's shape is distinct due to its two long tail feathers that have racket-tips at the end of long bare shafts." After viewing and imagining the riot of colour in the hummingbirds and motmot, all subtle shading and iridescence, the scarlet macaws popped up. Huge mostly red all over birds, with brilliant yellow and blue wings, some with a bit of green thrown in.

From the heat and humidity of Central America my thoughts wandered to Canada. I stayed in Banff, visiting my son, spending half of the time skiing and the other half sight-seeing. Feeders outside of the cafes at the top of the ski runs attracted plenty of Clarke's Nutcrackers. On a trip to Jasper we drove along a dead straight road with no traffic through a deserted snowscape Just as I was beginning to think life on Earth had ceased, a bald eagle flew up from the pine forest lining the route and proceeded to circle up on thermals until it became a black dot in the sky. At the edge of Banff is a marshy bit of land known as the Fen. My son, James, had spent many happy hours birdwatching at the Fen, so we had to pay a visit. Fascinating were the chickadees. They are of the tit family and the black-capped chickadee resembles a great tit. However, the boreal chickadee was

unlike any of our tits with its brown head and flanks. The highlight of the outing was hearing a woodpecker drumming. It sounded very close; it must be in the tree next to us. We searched up and down without seeing the bird. I of course assumed that it was following the golden rule of woodpeckers – always drum on the OTHER side of the tree. James nudged me and pointed. I took a step to the side and there, about three feet away at eye-level, was a diminutive woodpecker; a three-toed woodpecker. It appeared totally oblivious to our presence. Lesser-spotted woodpecker, you declining skulker, please note and copy your Canadian cousin's revealing behaviour.

As July rolls on I have broken free a couple of more times trying to spot the bearded tits at Dorman's Pool. One time five were spotted about 50 yards along the track from where I was standing. Virtual birdwatching is much less of a lottery. If you google a bird you are fairly certain to see an excellent representation of the sought after specie. And in this first half of July virtual birdwatching has become fantasy birdwatching. First were reports of white-tailed eagle flying around the North Yorkshire moors. Surely just a fly-over; but, no, regular reports keep coming in of sightings. Less of a long stay, but even more unbelievable was the black-browed albatross seen and photographed among the gannets at Bempton. Equal in the "I don't believe it" stakes was the lammergeyer seen in Derbyshire. Some spotters confused me by reporting the bird under its alternative name; bearded vulture. Someone else showed off posting a photograph of the lammergeyer being mobbed by a merlin. What a strange coincidence that these three huge birds should all be around at the same time. One probably relocated from the Isle of Wight; another possibly a fugitive from the Picos de Europa or an escapee (who would keep a lammergeyer in a cage?); and the other way off course from the Antarctic or the Southern oceans.

Apart from these avian giants there were also reports on TV programmes and social media sites of rare breeders. Crane colonies which

had been introduced in the last year or two were filmed with chicks. Meanwhile RSPB Medmerry in Kent reported a breeding pair of black-winged stilts. I have often seen these spindly legged waders while on holidays in Europe. Will they spread North like avocets eventually showing at Saltholme?

I could go on with describing my nostalgic rummage through past records and photographs, and my surfing through birdwatching websites and twitter But as I am now getting out more often I will stop. I would like to conclude that virtual and fantasy birdwatching cannot beat the real thing. But having failed to catch a glimpse of the bearded tits at Dorman's Pool on four occasions and missed the cattle egret at Saltholme I am not sure.

Keith Robson

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR – DECEMBER 2020 - BARBARA CRINSON

Like so many other organisations across the country, and indeed the world, most of our usual club activities remain on hold due to Covid-19. However, because of the ongoing uncertainties, we took the decision to hold an online AGM in October and the Trustees met for a committee meeting via Zoom in November. Despite a number of technical glitches, we achieved a quorum for the AGM, but only just, and I have to thank the very small minority of members who took the trouble to help the officers of the Club achieve our aim. The minutes of the AGM are included in this newsletter and are also displayed in the Forum section of the website. At the recent Trustees meeting, it was felt that the Club needs to consider a change in the Constitution, so that if we are forced into holding a future online AGM, the quorum required should be reduced from twenty to ten. Members are invited to enter this discussion.

However, it is our intention to hold the next AGM in September 2021, when hopefully, we can all meet again in person.

Fortunately, the welcome news in these challenging times is that the Annual Bird Report is now available, with very many thanks particularly to Chris Brown and also the team of compilers. Keep an eye on the website Twitter feeds to find out how to obtain your report and, of course, our secretary, Chris Sharp, will be able to offer more advice.

The updated information board has been re-instated at Scaling Dam hide, thanks to the diligence of Martin Blick, and both Martin and I attended a socially-distanced committee meeting for the Scaling Dam Wildlife Advisory Group in August.

The feeding station is operational at Scaling Dam, despite arriving one morning to discover that the feeders had been stolen, and it is our hope that remedial work taking place at Lockwood will be complete by Christmas and that we can re-start the bird feeding in front of the shelter. It is always a joy to watch the birds at our Cowpen Bewley site and don't forget to visit Stillington, where Gwynn is putting in so much time and effort to maintain that particular feeding station, simply loved by the Tree Sparrows! It is with great sadness that we have had to say "Goodbye" to our dear friend Keith Ryan, who looked after the bird feeding station at Billingham Bottoms over recent years. I am sure he would approve of the fact that Alan Curnow has very kindly stepped forward to take over the role. Thank you, Alan!

One of the Founder Members of the Teesmouth Bird Club, Peter Evans, has also passed away recently and an obituary for Peter is included in this newsletter.

The Club benefits not only from what people give in life, but we are quite frequently remembered in wills, and members should be interested to learn that we have received a kind donation of £500 from the Charles Sim legacy.

Two of our members who devoted twenty years of their lives to studying Ring Ouzels are Vic Fairbrother and Ken Hutchinson.

They have produced a wonderful book called "The Ring Ouzel", which has been illustrated by Jonathan Pomroy and can be obtained from www.whittlespublishing.com. It has received excellent reviews from Bo Beolens who writes for "Birdwatching" magazine and the well-known ornithologist, Mark Avery. I acquired my copy from the local independent bookshop and whilst reading it, I constantly felt as though I was actually with Vic and Ken on the moors, experiencing their observations first-hand.

In these times of dark evenings and additional restrictions, I would encourage members to look at the potted version of the conference put together by Tees Valley Nature Partnership, held in November, entitled "Tees Nature and the Climate Emergency". There were some top quality speakers including Craig Bennett, CEO of the Wildlife Trusts and Paul Allen who heads up the Zero Carbon Britain Hub at the Centre for Alternative Technology. The talks are available on "youtube" and I can forward the link to anyone who is interested. After listening to the content, the one question which should end up at the forefront of everyone's minds is, "What changes in my lifestyle am I going to embrace to make a difference?". Steve McDonnell and I both registered for the conference and it is with great pleasure that following our AGM, I can welcome Steve as our new Vice Chair, who will take over from me next April.

I must also offer my thanks to Barbara Keville, our outgoing Vice Chair. Shortly before relinquishing that particular position on committee, Barbara undertook a great little project to produce a superb banner for the Club. Hopefully, in the not too distant future, we will be able to put it to good use at a few events to attract the public and create greater awareness of our existence and aims.

Meantime, forget fashion and style – pile on the warm woollies, don the wellies and get out wherever permissible to enjoy some winter birding. No-one will recognise you in that mask – or will they?!

KEITH RYAN

1948 – 2020



Keith Ryan passed away at home in Norton on the 3rd November 2020 with wife, Jan and daughter Heidi by his side. He was a member of the Teesmouth Bird Club since the early 1960s.

He was fondly regarded by all who knew him. Known for his infectious smile and his kind compassionate spirit, he was a friend to us all. Keith was born in Bishop Auckland in 1948 and then moved to the Cleveland area. He joined the Merchant navy initially after leaving school, travelling to Brazil at one stage, and he used to tell me about the Albatrosses that used to follow his ship, keeping his interest in wildlife alight. He returned to Stockton to work as a bus driver, taxi driver then a school bus driver.

I was familiar with seeing Keith in the Eighties, birding in the Cleveland area. However, our friendship started, when on November 1st 1986, while sea watching from the Hartlepool Headland observatory, I picked up a distant Cory's Shearwater heading north. It was such a rare sighting and it was with disbelief when the late Ian Lawson managed to pick it up and then the late Terry Williams and finally Keith. Pleased with ourselves the Bird pager went off, "Chimney Swift on Scilly"! We all wished we were there, so Keith said, "Why don't we go?" The rest is history. So, in October 1987, which was one of the best years for Scilly birding, we set off. It was a true adventure getting there, driving through the famous hurricane to get to Penzance for the ferry. On arrival in the area,

we parked next to a car that was severely damaged (it had hit a cow on the M5!). We were at Nanquindo valley to see a Parula warbler, a stunning American warbler. We then boarded the ferry, where I realised how good Keith's observational skills were. Having an early morning pint below decks, he calmly pointed out another rarity, a Sabine's Gull, as it flew past the porthole. This started regular Autumn trips to the Scillies and beyond.

While returning from seeing a Nutcracker (1991) in Staffordshire, which we nearly ran over incidentally! (Keith was studying the map as we were lost again) we stopped off at a service station for a fry up. We knew where every transport café / service station in the UK was, due to our jaunts, so we had to go in for his free meal, as he used his old bus driver's badge to obtain a free one. Here we sat down and worked out our UK bird lists. This started us twitching in earnest for many years.

Keith was proud of being a RSPB voluntary warden for the European Bee - eaters that bred for the second time in the UK in 2002, which just didn't involve protecting the birds, but also contributing to a behaviour log. He quickly became an expert.

He was constantly out birding and walking the dogs Ruby and more recently, Sky. He maintained the Billingham Bottoms feeding station which attracted many unusual species. Indeed, his roaming around Norton produced in February 2008, in the churchyard, the rare Hume's Leaf Warbler.

On a weekend, around Teesmouth, Keith and Dave Laing were always out birding, part of Teesmouth's birding fixtures and fittings.



Brian Clasper, Keith Ryan and David Laing on the Scillonian

Keith and I worked as a team and he could read my mind. So much so, at the end of March 2016 we had been tracking sightings of a Gyr Falcon (a massive Ermine coloured bird); our ultimate bird goal was in the Hebrides! It was being seen on and off, but I thought I'd give Keith a ring for his opinion to travel via ferry to North Uist to see it. I phoned and before I could say anything, he said "When are we going?" We got amazing views of the bird all day. Two days later, in bright blue sunshine with Geese migrating and other birds of prey seen, with an amazing back drop of St Kilda, he said we were in heaven.

Keith enjoyed travelling the world. He really enjoyed his superb trip recently to Costa Rica with Alan Murray and his son, watching many exotic species.

Prior to this in 1995, Keith went with a large group of local birders to Canada to witness the spring east coast migration. It proved to be a bumper year. One morning, the colourful American warblers were in their hundreds around us, so dense that they were running between our tripod legs. Keith had never seen a Hummingbird. One landed on his cap, people took photos of it on him, but he never saw it, it flew off! Two days later he found a tree full of them!

He enjoyed our trips to Spain to see Wallcreeper, Lammergeiers etc but he thoroughly enjoyed our Iberian Lynx trip, showing off his photography skills, as we tracked some remarkably close individuals.

This skill came from our India trips to see the Tigers and wildlife, never mind the curries which he adored.

Keith was also blown over by The Brazilian Pantanal where we stayed at some dubious accommodation, one being a river hotel boat on the River Cuiaba. Keith got talking to the owner, who was a 6 foot 2 tall, blonde - haired guy of German origin. He came up to me and said that the owner's Mam and Dad moved over here after the war. Boys from Brazil? Later that week Keith got amazing images of two Jaguars - our goal, photographing them with tears in his eyes, when we had virtually, given up prior to a major tropical storm coming in.



Brian Clasper, Jim France clutching a live Yacare with Keith Ryan in the Brazilian Pantanal

Keith's ultimate experience was the Spitsbergen Scenic Arctic trip, which turned out to be a true polar expedition. He kept on saying "Brian I never dreamed I would see Polar bears; fancy a mint?".

Keith enjoyed his annual Birdfair days at Rutland Water, where Ian Hillery and Jim France would join us, giving him the opportunity to catch up with friends from the UK and around the world, and them with him.

These are a few of my tales with Keith and you will have your own memories of him.

Keith has passed away but will always be there with us.

Brian Clasper

PETER EVANS

1928 – 2020



Born in the Wirral, Cheshire Peter spent some of his earlier years in South Africa. Whilst at school in Africa he developed his deep interest in wildlife and in particular capturing wild events on camera. There is a story that Peter suffered his games master's displeasure by paying more attention to a stalking Secretary Bird than to the cricket match in which he was playing.

Returning to the UK Peter graduated as a research chemist and married his wife Valerie living in Birmingham before moving to Teesside to take up a position in ICI. Eventually Peter became the company's Long-range Planning Manager a post he held until his retirement.

Although the Teesside job offer was important the fact that the area was good for birds was also an important factor. Soon after he arrived Peter made his mark by finding in 1952 the first Terek Sandpiper for the county and only the third record for the British Isles.

Peter was a founder member of the Teemouth Bird Club and served as Club Chairman. On his retirement from ICI in 1989 he became the first Managing Director of the newly formed Industry Nature Conservation Association (INCA). This was a role for which he was ideally suited. As a naturalist and with his many years as an industrial manager he was highly respected by both conservation ecologists and his former industrial colleagues.



The Terek Sandpiper was an exciting find, but rarity hunting was not that important for Peter, his great passion was wildlife photography using both still and cine cameras. In those pre-digital days he soon became a respected expert in the field and was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society. His photographs have appeared in numerous exhibitions and publications. His own book *Where and How to Photograph Wildlife* is illustrated by hundreds of his stunning pictures. Although always after the most perfect or unusual photograph he always put the welfare of his

subject first, be it a butterfly, a Bullfinch or a Buffalo.

Whilst happy to picture birds, plants and butterflies in his own area Peter travelled the world from Iceland to India, Canada to Christmas Island. Birds have always been his prime subjects and he had seen many species in his travels but Peter was not a “lister” and happily admitted that he didn’t even know how many species he’d seen in Cleveland let alone the world.

At times he travelled with his late wife Valerie and frequently with other wildlife enthusiasts, often fellow members of the Teemouth Bird Club such as the late Denis Summers-smith and Edgar Gatenby. Peter was an excellent travelling companion always calm and never ruffled, even when our Morris car “sank” whilst trying to ford a river in India Peter, unlike the rest of us, took it all in his stride. In all the time I’ve known him I only heard him once uttered a mild expletive. We were walking at night along a jungle trail when a Tiger stepped out in front of us. Notwithstanding Peter still had the presence of mind to shoot off a couple of pictures!

Of all the places he had visited amongst his favourites were Australia and his old stomping ground of South Africa. Peter loved Africa and whilst we were visiting a reserve in Kwazulu in typical fashion he greatly impressed the game rangers by greeting them in their native Zulu.

An excellent naturalist, a talented photographer and good friend who will be sorely missed.

Ken Smith

POTTY-MOUTHED PARROTS



Five African Grey Parrots : Billy, Eric, Tyson, Jade and Elsie joined the Lincolnshire Wildlife Centre's colony of 200 grey parrots in August, but while they were in quarantine in separate cages, keepers were surprised when the birds started swearing. It only took one bird to start and the others would join in. The chief executive said "we are quite used to parrots swearing, but we've never had five at the same time and, although most parrots clam up outside, for some reason these five relish it".

No visitors had complained about the parrots, and most found the situation funny. However, the parrots have been separated to save children's ears. They were moved to different areas of the park so they don't set each other off. From what I've heard from some children, it's doubtful that the parrots could teach them much.

But it isn't always like this, one African Grey caused problems when he started buying things via Alexa :

It was not the first time this parrot, called Rocca, had been in trouble. He was re-homed from the National Animal Welfare Trust sanctuary in Berkshire because staff thought his bad language might upset visitors.

Sanctuary worker Marion Wischnewski volunteered to foster him and took him to her home in Oxfordshire.

He bought watermelons, raisins, broccoli, ice cream, a light bulb and a kite.

Unfortunately, those items weren't on Ms Wischnewski's Christmas wish list, but are the things Rocco likes to eat. Although it's not clear what a parrot needs with a light bulb

or a kite.

The species can mimic human speech, but it might need patience. One American man tried teaching a bird, with little evident success, but after several weeks' of avian silence, the bird burst out with, "Talk!, dammit!, Talk!"

They can also learn from flock members, as shown by a flock of wild parakeets that swore at people. It was thought that an escaped pet, taught to swear had joined the flock and spread its bad habits. If the Lincoln birds had got the other parrots swearing, the zoo would have had a really serious problem.



Pied Crow

Parrots, of course, aren't the only mimics of human speech, as crows have similar abilities. In fact, visitors to Knaresborough Castle can be greeted with a Yorkshire-accented, "Y'alright, love?" from a Pied Crow (*Corvus alba*), which is actually a small species of raven from Africa

PREDATOR AND PREY (pt. 2)

Only to be read by the young at heart! We need a bit of frivolity in life!

Unfortunately, nobody has sent me any tales from lockdown, so I shall share another of my own. This one, I'm afraid, only has a token link to birds – that connection being centred on the bird feeders in my back garden.

Now, under normal circumstances, I would probably encourage any brown rats to inhabit the bottom of the garden, but during those

weeks of restricted movement, there was one particular diminutive member of my resident rodent family which provided me with the most enormous entertainment and endless fascination.



From a very young age, Reuben (alias Ruby), accepted the fact that his two-legged landlady liked to sit on the garden bench and observe the day to day life of his family, as well as the comings and goings of those flappy creatures that seemed to enjoy an endless supply of nosh, apparently stored in those strange cages and tubes up at the top of a very long pole. Now Reuben very quickly learned how to scale that pole and because he was still quite dinky in size he could squeeze himself through the bars of the peanut guardian and munch nuts until he was stuffed to capacity. This was a much better strategy and definitely worth the perilous climb, rather than scrabbling around at the base of the feeders, waiting for the usual cast-offs from all those flappy creatures. What he didn't bargain for was the fact that his landlady was going to make life a little more challenging for him in the days to come.

She appeared one morning with a tub in one hand and with the other he realised that the

contents of the tub were being applied and smeared up and down the length of the pole. "Mmm – oh well, nothing for it – time to go and investigate."

The first attempt to scale the dizzy heights proved to be a bit tricky for Reuben. In fact, he got about six inches above the ground and gradually, despite his neat, wrap-around technique, he slithered very slowly back down to earth.



"Yuk – grease on all four paws – got to get this lot removed and it seems that scampering around in the grass for a while is doing the trick. Ok – back to the pole – attempt number two. Mmm – this strategy is working, another six inches higher."

It was pretty obvious Reuben was a fast learner and a great problem solver. That pole was soon thoroughly degreased and Reuben was successfully back in pole position, inside the guardian with the nuts! It did not take long for me to reach the conclusion that Reuben really did deserve those nuts – being so clever and persistent had brought him his just rewards.

At this point, you are probably wondering how “Predator and Prey” bears any relevance in the story. Well – one morning I was at my desk in the study and from that position I could only see the peanut guardian. Reuben had already done his daily workout, had surmounted the usual obstacle presented to him and was tucked inside the cage. However, there was not the slightest flicker of movement from him and, at first, I thought the effects of having a full tummy had brought on the inevitable snooze, familiar to us all. However, on further investigation, I realized that at the base of the pole there was now a black cat gazing intently up at the cage overhead. The ensuing stand-off lasted for a full half hour, with Reuben completely frozen, until eventually the cat got fidgety and sloped off looking slightly peeved. It took Reuben another half an hour to defrost before he dared to take the leap of faith and launch himself towards the safe, dark confines beneath the garden shed.



I haven't seen Reuben for a while – he may have become too fat and unfit to either climb the pole or get into the cage, but----- there are Tawny Owls in the vicinity----- as well as a black cat with a major score to settle!!

Barbara Crinson

TIT-BITS



A collection of bird related news and facts, compiled by **Eric James**

ITCHY PUFFINS

Any mention of tool using birds and you think of Corvids or parrots, but Puffins show that necessity really is the mother of invention

As would be expected for a species that winters at sea, the Puffin's plumage is very thick and dense, so any itches are difficult to scratch. However, birds in Anglesey and Iceland are using twigs to deal with those irritating sensations

LONG-LIVED BIRDS

On the subject of Puffins, how many people imagined they can live up to 42 years? As part of the new Ringing Report, [the Longevity Records for Britain & Ireland have been updated](#) to include new records set during 2019. These include a Puffin seen alive 42 years after it was ringed on Skomer Island, a Little Egret that was reported alive 13 years, 6 months & 12 days after it was ringed as a nestling and a Siskin caught 8 years, 6 months & 10 days after it was ringed. The record for the oldest bird is still held by Bardsey Island's 50 year-old Manx Shearwater.

VOCAL SOUNDS BELOW WATER

Whales, dolphins, seals and even sea turtles can make vocal calls under water, and penguins can now be added to that list. Researchers in South Africa taped cameras with audio recorders to the backs of six King Penguins, ten Gentoo Penguins and two Macaroni Penguins. The recording equipment was housed in aluminium tubes to withstand pressures at depths of up to 300 m., where these birds hunt (if I've got my conversion factors right, 300 m. of water is about 427

lb/in²). The team recorded 203 vocalisations from all three species during four hours and 43 minutes of underwater filming. The calls were quite different from the calls given on land, being very short chirps – typically only 0.06 seconds long, – and very different from the penguins’ intensively studied land vocalisations, which are around three seconds long, much louder and include a variety of different sounds.

The calls mostly occurred just before capturing prey and were given more often when they are feeding on their own, suggesting that they call to attract other penguins, their hunting success being greater when they forage in groups; another possibility is the sounds might disorient prey.

IN PRAISE OF PARASITES

When a species goes extinct, a further unnoticed and probably unlamented loss is any parasites that were unique to the species.

Parasites can have surprising effects beyond the hosts. A clam called the New Zealand cockle lives in many of the nation’s mudflats, using its muscular foot to burrow into the ooze. A fluke (*Curtuteria australis*) embeds itself in the cockle’s foot. If they become heavily infested, cockles lose their ability to hide in the mud and find themselves stranded. Research reveals that mudflats with more parasitised cockles had higher species diversity. Creatures living in the sediment are less disturbed by burrowing shellfish and the exposed cockles are taken readily by waders and fish. In addition, their shells offer a new habitat for barnacles and other aquatic species.

As well as disrupting ecosystems, the loss of parasites could even be bad for their hosts. When scientists gave anti-parasitic drugs to Oystercatcher chicks, they found that treated birds were more likely to die than the untreated ones. The researchers aren’t exactly sure why, but they think the lack of parasites may have interfered with the proper functioning of the bird’s immune system. This is similar to what is thought to happen in humans. Known as the hygiene hypothesis, some evidence suggests that in our hyper-clean, low-parasite modern world (kills 99.9% of household germs!), our immune

system isn’t trained to deal with the worms and bacteria with which our species evolved. As a result, it overreacts to what should be harmless targets, causing allergies and autoimmune diseases such as Inflammatory Bowel Disease, which includes Crohn’s disease. The presence of parasites helps to redirect the immune system away from the prolonged inflammation indicative of these conditions.

PS : I am not recommending that you should start licking the kitchen floor.

EASY FEEDING FOR PENGUINS

Not all penguins like to make deep dives for food, at least not when there’s an easier alternative.

Two Little Blue Penguins took this to the extreme and set up their nest in a mobile sushi store. The police had to repeatedly deal with the intruders and escort the reluctant birds back to the sea.

It started when staff at the Sushi Bi store in Wellington, New Zealand, first noticed something was amiss when they heard ‘cooing and humming’ from the warm grills beneath their mobile truck.

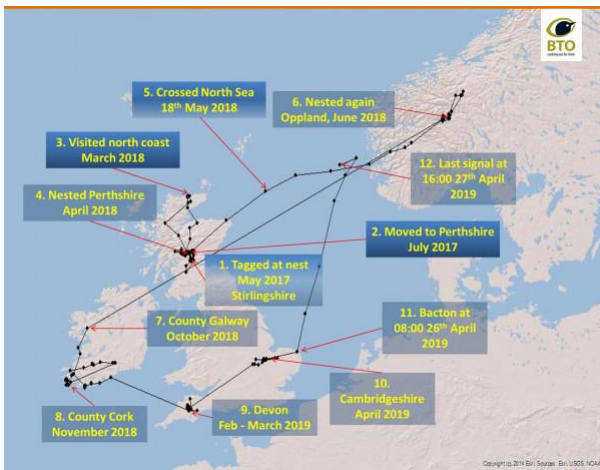
The local police were called and escorted one ‘grumpy bird’ back to the sea.

However, it’s difficult to separate a penguin from a good supply of food and it returned to the store – this time with a friend.

In the species, it is the male is responsible for selecting the place for the nest, and they prefer hidden places with little light such as below tree trunks or inside small crevices on the rocks.....and under mobile food vans.

THE WANDERING OF A BREEDING STARLING

Bird tracking continues to find unexpected results. A female Starling fitted with a tracking device has seems to have bred in Scotland and in Norway in the same year



The movements of the female Starling tagged in Stirling that apparently bred in both Scotland and Norway in the same year.

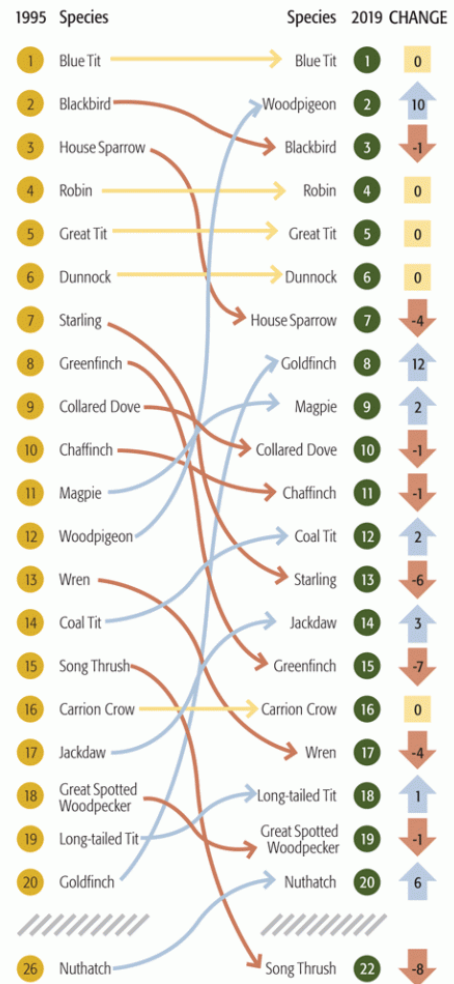
FINDING BIRD RINGS

Most of us have stared at a bird's leg at high magnification, trying to read the numbers on a ring, all the while hoping the bird would turn round so the other side of the ring was visible. However there are less usual discoveries of rings. In the November issue of *British Birds*, there is an article on the Essex nature reserve at Abberton Reservoir. Ringing of waterfowl has been practised here for many years and there have been some strange ring recoveries, most notably two involving comestibles. The first was a teal served up on a plate, presumably in a posh restaurant, still with a ring that had been put on 28 days earlier. Even more surprising was a ring on a Mallard that turned up ten weeks later in a pork pie.

The mind boggles.

25 YEARS OF BTO GARDEN BIRDWATCH

Over this period of time, there have been many changes of fortune among our closest birds, summarized in this chart :



STORM PETREL FORAGING

Lightweight (<1 g) GPS trackers continue to give us fresh insights into bird behaviour. Storm Petrels breeding on small islands off north-west Europe are now known to travel up to 300 km (186 miles for us oldies) from their colonies when foraging for food. The work was carried out on the RSPB reserve of Mousa in the Shetland Islands, which is home for around 11,000 pairs of Storm Petrels, the largest breeding colony in UK, and comprising 2% of the world population. The species has been studied on Mousa for nearly 30 years, so the nesting areas and individual pairs are well-known, meaning the birds can have the tags attached and removed with the minimum of distress. Over the course of four years, 42 birds were tracked during all the stages of the breeding cycle – from having eggs, brooding small chicks, and, later in the

season, when they had larger chicks which were not brooded.



The results were surprising, not just for the distances, but also for where the birds went. The expectation was that the birds would roam far and wide during the course of their foraging trips, but with most heading out westwards to the edge of the continental shelf where high densities had been reported from boat surveys. The researchers were amazed when they downloaded the data from the first tracked bird, and saw that it had headed to the south of the Shetland Islands, feeding far from the open ocean in relatively shallow waters to the south-east of Orkney, but as more birds were tracked the same pattern was repeated and over the course of the study a highly consistent picture emerged. Most birds were foraging to the south of the Shetland Islands, up to a journey of about 397 km from the colony.

The tracks of particular individuals also provided a fascinating window into the conditions the birds have to deal with regularly. One bird tracked during a period of strong westerly winds was blown right across the North Sea to the coast of Norway, north of Stavanger, and took refuge, during daylight, in a fiord, before heading back to Shetland the following day. Just 48 hours after leaving its nest it was safely back home again, having travelled nearly 1000km, and when its chick was weighed, it was found to have been fed.

It was fortunate that this bird had been tagged, but how many other feats of endurance by these tiny birds have gone unrecorded?

Two feeding areas were identified that exceeded the criteria for Marine Protected Area status. Loss or damage to these could have a serious effect on the population.

A BOOK OF PARTICULAR LOCAL INTEREST

The Ring Ouzel A view from the North York Moors Vic Fairbrother & Ken Hutchinson softback, 272 pages, inc. maps, photographs, and paintings by Jonathan Pomroy (*Whittles Publishing* £27.95)

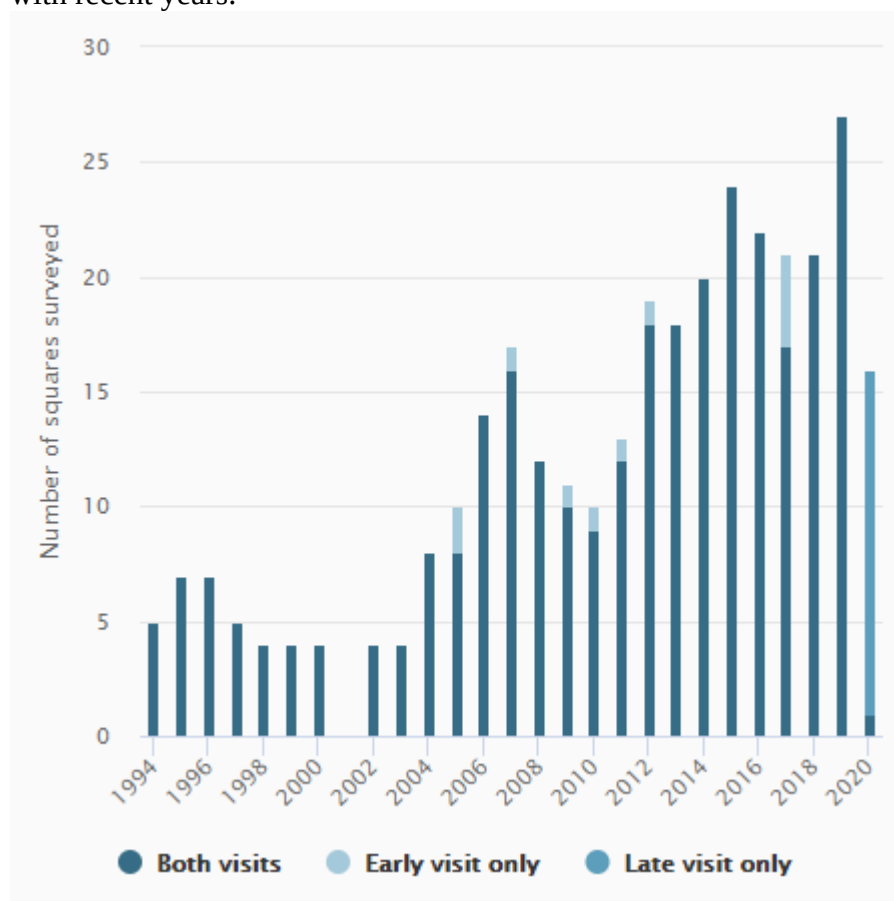
It is a pleasure to highlight a book that will be relevant to many members, especially to those who spend any time on the Moors. Many members will know that Vic and Ken spend much time studying Ouzels, and their observations form a large part of this book. It's not just their own work, there are chapters on observations from other Ouzel enthusiasts in different parts of the country. Vic and Ken met as a result of a raptor and upland bird conference where there was a talk by Chris Rollie on the decline of the Ring Ouzel; Chris has written the foreword of this book. He and others formed the UK Ring Ouzel Study Group where the two authors met and started their collaboration. The first work was taking part in the first national survey of Ring Ouzels in 1999. Vic and Ken covered the North York Moors National Park, or at least the areas above 300 m (the approximate tree line). They found, between 1999 and 2003, territorial birds in 38 tetrads. A second national survey in 2012 showed a decline of 29%, confirming its Red-listed status. After 2003, the concentration was in Rosedale, which has good numbers of Ouzels, plenty of suitable habitat and easy access along the disused iron ore railway. The bulk of the information comes from these studies, as demonstrated by the extensive quotes from field notes. Having walked a circular route round upper Rosedale a few times in the past, I was surprised by quite how many nests the authors had found and monitored, though this

The previous article looked at the structure of birds' legs and breast muscles; this one looks at the wings.

Unlike the corresponding bones in the legs, the radius and ulna develop separately and fully, thus giving the bird the ability to alter the wing profile to suit the flying conditions, by twisting the two bones. The ‘thumb’, plus feathers, form the alula which can be extended forward to allow some airflow over the top of the wing and avoid turbulence and loss of lift when flying slowly. The same concept has been adopted by aircraft designers: if you have ever sat in an aeroplane seat with a view of a wing, you might have noticed that during landing when the speed is slow, the leading edge separates and moves forward.

Breeding Birds Survey and Waterways Breeding Birds Survey

While the spring lockdown measures caused the wholesale abandonment of early season visits, 55% of late season BBS visits were successfully undertaken, along with 100% of late season WBBS visits. The graph below shows how this level of coverage within the Cleveland BTO area compares with recent years.



The following table lists the most numerous species recorded by BBS in Cleveland in 2020:

Species	Individuals	Squares	Percentage of all squares surveyed
Woodpigeon	427	15	94%
Starling	231	12	75%
Jackdaw	209	14	88%
House Sparrow	191	11	69%
Blackbird	182	16	100%
Rook	159	7	44%
Chaffinch	154	15	94%
Wren	130	15	94%
Carrion Crow	113	14	88%
Goldfinch	95	15	94%

The most widespread species recorded by BBS in Cleveland during 2020 were as follows:

Species	Squares	Percentage of all squares surveyed	Individuals
Blackbird	16	100%	182
Woodpigeon	15	94%	427
Chaffinch	15	94%	154
Wren	15	94%	130
Goldfinch	15	94%	95
Blue Tit	15	94%	50
Jackdaw	14	88%	209
Carrion Crow	14	88%	113
Robin	14	88%	63
Skylark	13	81%	54

Scarcer species recorded included Barn Owl, Willow Tit, Garden Warbler and Lesser Redpoll, each of which were found in single squares.

Please do consider taking part in the Breeding Bird Survey. Most long-term volunteers find getting to know the breeding bird communities of a single 1km square a fascinating and rewarding experience. Only two sessions per 1km square are required (plus an additional short reconnaissance visit to record habitat) each taking no more than two hours. The following squares are available to allocate for 2021.

NZ3114	Lingfield, Darlington
NZ4516	Thornaby
NZ6914	Moorsholm area
NZ7016	Liverton
NZ7017	Liverton Mines

All BBS squares are valuable to the survey and it would be great to have full coverage. Full details are on the BTO website www.bto.org where you can register. Please contact me on 07510 996977 or mikelaquila@hotmail.com if you think you can help.

House Martin paper published

A paper of the results from the House Martin Nest Study has been published in Ibis. We hope the paper will be open access soon:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/ibi.12888>

There is a nice summary of the paper on the BTO website here:

<https://www.bto.org/our-science/publications/peer-reviewed-papers/using-citizen-science-assess-drivers-common-house>

Thank you to everyone that promoted the House Martin Nest Study, and took part. It's great to see the paper published.

Contact: Ian Woodward (ian.woodward@bto.org)

Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey

The latest UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme report is out now. Data collected by BBS volunteers for the Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey (WCBS) feeds into this report and the butterfly trends. The report can be found here: <https://www.bto.org/our-science/projects/bbs/bbs-publications/other-reports>

Mike Leakey, BTO Regional Representative for Cleveland

TEES ESTUARY WeBS COUNT DATES 2021

Date	High Water Time	Tide Height
10 th January	13:09 GMT	4.9m
07 th February	11:42 GMT	4.4m
07 th March	10:01 GMT	4.3m
11 th April	16:29 BST	5.2m
23 rd May	13:46 BST	5.0m
20 th June	12:11 BST	4.8m
18 th July	10:31 BST	4.8m
22 nd August	16:48 BST	5.3m
19 th September	15:52 BST	5.2m
17 th October	14:50 BST	5.0m
14 th November	12:29 GMT	4.6m
12 th December	10:35 GMT	4.4m

WETLAND BIRD SURVEY TEESMOUTH AUTUMN 2020 SUMMARY

	July 05	August 16	September 13	October 11
Little Grebe	12	39	41	<u>54</u>
Great Crested Grebe	<u>23</u>	13	4	0
Cormorant	87	<u>336*</u>	292*	166
Little Egret	34*	<u>51**</u>	40*	31*
Grey Heron	28	<u>71</u>	35	25
Mute Swan	28	46	43	<u>46</u>
Greylag Goose	152	122	<u>1634</u>	289
Shelduck	<u>240</u>	13	140	207
Wigeon	16	28	220	<u>1371</u>
Gadwall	281**	<u>563**</u>	532**	259**
Teal	48	378	470	<u>731</u>
Mallard	124	371	<u>521</u>	175
Pintail	0	0	2	<u>16</u>
Shoveler	28	71	85	<u>207**</u>
Pochard	<u>72</u>	47	11	54
Tufted Duck	<u>139</u>	129	64	58
Coot	311	<u>702</u>	512	481
Oystercatcher	150	<u>728</u>	269	289
Avocet	<u>30</u>	7	1	0
Ringed Plover	2	<u>234*</u>	53	27
Golden Plover	0	2	1	<u>355</u>
Grey Plover	7	34	4	<u>70</u>
Lapwing	223	380	588	<u>1547</u>
Knot	8	91	<u>101</u>	13
Sanderling	0	102*	70	<u>197**</u>
Little Stint	0	0	0	0
Curlew Sandpiper	0	0	<u>2</u>	0
Purple Sandpiper	0	0	0	0
Dunlin	8	299	<u>377</u>	319
Ruff	0	4*	<u>5*</u>	0
Snipe	0	13	4	<u>54</u>
Black-tailed Godwit	23	<u>57</u>	14	39
Bar-tailed Godwit	9	16	17	<u>19</u>
Whimbrel	5	<u>6</u>	1	0
Curlew	358	<u>420</u>	353	381
Spotted Redshank	0	0	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Redshank	109	894*	505	<u>951*</u>
Greenshank	1	<u>6**</u>	2	2
Green Sandpiper	4	<u>7</u>	1	0
Common Sandpiper	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	1	0
Turnstone	37	<u>141</u>	69	77
Sandwich Tern	8	<u>167</u>	46	0
Common Tern	<u>276</u>	271	120	1
Arctic Tern	0	0	0	0
Little Tern	<u>7</u>	0	0	0

Underlined counts indicate Autumn 2020 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 Salholme Reserve.

WETLAND BIRD SURVEY - AUTUMN 2020 SUMMARY

A good level of cover was achieved with 159 of the scheduled 172 sector counts completed over the four months.

The peak counts for Little Egret (51, August), Gadwall (563, August), Shoveler (207, October), Sanderling (October, 197) and Greenshank (6, August) were of national importance according to the species WeBS threshold levels published by the BTO. However, in contrast to last autumn the peak Gadwall count was not internationally important and Avocet numbers failed to reach national importance.

Ruff (5, September) recorded its lowest autumn peak count using data which goes back to 1988. A total of 728 Oystercatcher in August was the lowest autumn peak count since 684 birds were recorded in 2001. Curlew was another wading bird species which had a poor autumn showing with a peak count of only 420 birds in August. However, missed counts from sectors utilised by wading birds may have impacted overall figures.

Species with record peak autumn counts included, Great White Egret (3, August), Greylag Goose (1634, September), Barnacle Goose (154, September) and Eider (221, October). A count of 71 Grey Heron in August was notable being the highest number recorded in autumn since 75 birds in 2009.

ADAM JONES
Local Organizer
Tees Estuary Wetland Bird Survey

November 2020

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

TEESMOUTH BIRD CLUB

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 29th OCTOBER 2020

PRESENT: Ms B Crinson (Chairman)
Mr M Askew (Treasurer)
Mr C Sharp (Secretary)

1.0 WELCOME TO THE AGM – Ms Crinson welcomed members on behalf of the club. The meeting was held online due to Covid 19 restrictions.

2.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Apologies were received from Mr and Mrs Simcock.
24 members attended.

3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 April 2019 were accepted as a true record.

4.0 MATTERS ARISING – None

5.0 OFFICERS' REPORTS – These were available in written form having been published in the April newsletter. The Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary outlined the main items from these reports.

6.0 ELECTION OF TRUSTEES AND ORDINARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS – The following officers and ordinary Committee Members were elected following a show of hands:-

CHAIRMAN	-	Ms B Crinson
VICE CHAIRMAN	-	Mr S McDonnell
TREASURER	-	Mr M Askew
SECRETARY	-	Mr C Sharp
ORDINARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS	-	Mr B Clasper
	-	Mr T Horne
	-	Mr M McGrory
	-	Mrs B Keville
	-	Miss J Mason
	Co-opted	Mr A McLee

7.0 TED PARKER AWARD – The Ted Parker award for 2020 was awarded to Graeme Joynt. He would hopefully receive it in the near future when it was safe to meet again.

8.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS – Ms Crinson informed members that a new book about the Ring Ouzel by club member Vic Fairbrother was now available.

9.0 CLOSE OF FORMAL BUSINESS –

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. **Alternatively you can pay via PayPal using the link on the TBC website.**

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

Name.....

Address.....

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

Email address.....

Cut here -----

STANDING ORDER MANDATE – TO BE SENT TO YOUR BANK

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.

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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

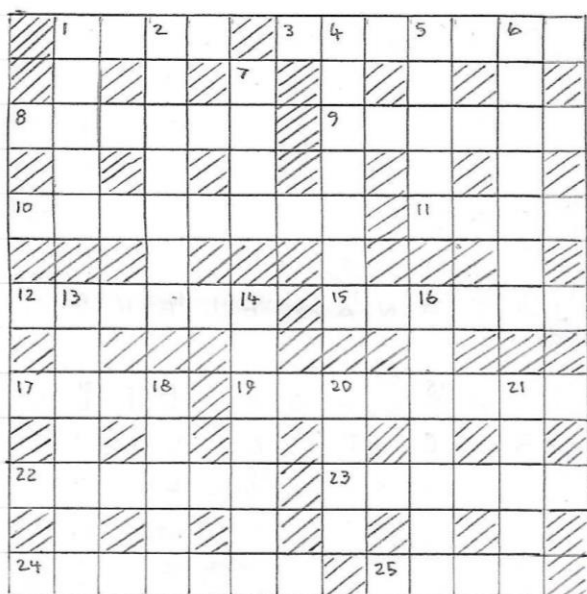
SIGNED..... Date.....

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.

CROSSWORD 2 SOLUTION BY BILL IRVING



Nº2 SOLUTION - ACROSS

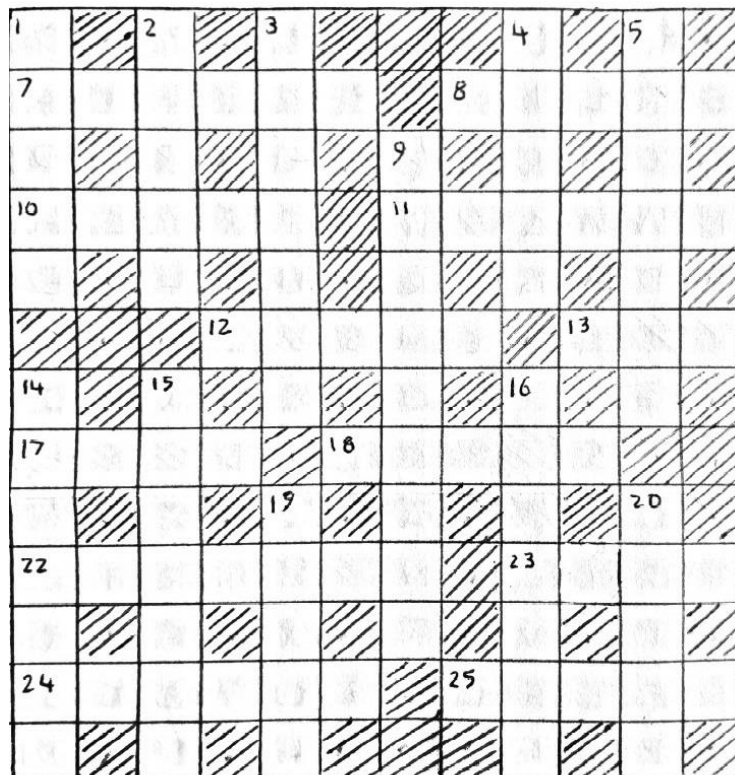
1 RHEA, 2 EGGHEAD, 8 WITHER, 9 AVOCET, 10 WOODLARK, 11 SKIN.
12 JACANA, 15 ELEVEN, 17 STAR, 19 HORNBILL, 22 DETOUR,
23 OCELOT, 24 CRESTED, 25 ISIS

Nº2 SOLUTION - DOWN

1 RHINO, 2 ECHIDNA, 4 GRACKLE, 5 HOOTS, 6 ALE WIFE, 7 ORCA
13 ANT BEAR, 14 ASH TREE, 16 EMBLEMS, 18 ROOTS, 20 ROCK,
21 LIONS

1	R	H	2	E	A	3	E	4	G	5	H	6	A	D
	H		C		O		R		O		L			
8	W	I	T	H	E	R		9	A	V	O	C	E	T
	N		I		C		C		T		W			
10	W	O	O	D	L	A	R	K		11	S	K	I	N
			N				L							
12	J	A	C	A	N	A		15	E	L	E	V	E	N
	N					S				M				
17	S	T	A		18	R		19	H	O	20	R	N	B
	B		O		T		O		L		I			
22	E	T	O	U	R		23	C	E	L	O	T		
	A		T		E		K		M		N			
24	E	R	E	S	T	E	D		25	I	S	I	S	

CROSSWORD 3 BY BILL IRVING



ACROSS		DOWN	
7	Raptor in Seamer linnet flock (6)	1	Fish seen where snows melted (5)
8	Bright bird could rile 2 ducks (6)	2	U.S. lady seen in Norfolk? (5)
10	Animal upset a shopping area (5)	3	Motorway rants seen in deserts? (7)
11	Bird seen in most rich habitats (7)	4	Cape of retribution? (5)
12	Pours as a number is in river (5)	5	Rail log trouble for big guy (7)
13	Part Latin for 16 down in ideal back street (4)	6	U.S. duck he'd dare somehow to identify (7)
17	Slow moving birds? (4)	9	Vegetative organ or insect for coastal bird (4)
18	Wide like one in Norfolk? (5)	14	Cattle egret? No smaller dark bird (7)
22	Skulker attacked sea bird (7)	15	Gamble made by 8 across? (7)
23	Shark with a caring reputation (5)	16	Hunter ran around in theatre (4,3)
24	Staggered by the French in type of bed (6)	19	Flat area in Somerset? (5)
25	Bird sounds on phone? (6)	20	Inexperienced woodpecker? (5)
		21	Presumably smallest sandpiper (5)