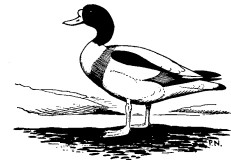


Teesmouth Bird Club Newsletter

April 2024 (No.87)



Reg. Charity No.508850

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MONTHLY SUMMARIES

Chris Sharp reviews the main birding highlights of the spring and early summer periods, which did not live up to the standard set by last year but was nevertheless interesting.

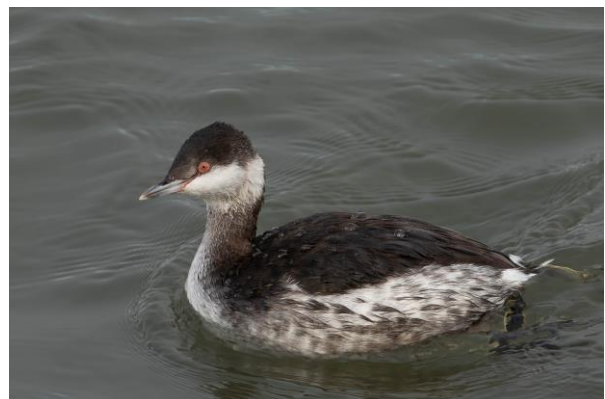
NOVEMBER

A Little Auk was off Redcar on 1st with twos at both Hartlepool and Marske on 3rd. Both Long-tailed Duck and Hen Harrier were at Scaling on 1st. A long staying Red-necked Grebe was at South Gare from 1st and may

have been the bird seen off Seaton Snook on 4th.

The Brown Booby made a surprise return on 2nd when it flew south at Hartlepool and then was seen briefly on the Pilot Pier at South Gare before flying off south again. The North Tees Marshes held four Cattle and three Great White Egrets at this time along with a Spoonbill and these birds remained into 2024. A Great Northern Diver at Jacksons Landing from 4th showed well. Four Shore Larks at Boulby on 4th was the only record of the year of this ever scarcer winter visitor. A Black Redstart was also here on this date and several Whooper Swans passed through the county at this time. About 1,300 Pink –feet flying south at Hartlepool on 4th was a good count.

A late Curlew Sandpiper was at Saltholme Pools on 5th. The two Slavonian Grebes remained in Hartlepool harbour and were still present into 2024. They were often accompanied by one or two Great Northern Divers. Another of the latter took up residence at Scaling and stayed until the end of the year.



Slavonian Grebe, Hartlepool

Martyn Sidwell

A 1st winter Caspian Gull was at Hartlepool on 7th. Up to three Long-tailed Ducks were

off South Gare. A ring-tail Hen Harrier showed well on Cowpen Marsh from 11th-14th. A flock of Waxwings at Middlesbrough totalled 53 on 12th. A late Northern Wheatear was at Hartlepool 13th-14th and a late Swift sp was at Ingleby Barwick the following day.

Cowpen Marsh held four Water Pipits on 17th. A Grey Phalarope was in Hartlepool harbour 18th-19th but was often elusive. Common Scoter numbers reached an impressive 1,700 between Redcar and Marske on 18th. Lockwood Beck held over 100 Brambling on 19th and smaller numbers remained here until the year end. Two Little Auks were off South Gare on 21st with another at Hartlepool.

Eider numbers peaked at 550 off Redcar on 23rd. A drake Surf Scoter flew past Hartlepool on 24th along with three Little Auks. Another or possibly the same Grey Phalarope was here on 25th. The majority of Waxwing records were now from the Stockton area with 93 at Portrack on 26th. A Long-tailed Duck on the river Tees on this date was a good find.

The long staying White-fronted Goose continued to be seen at RSPB Saltholme. A Caspian Gull was here on 28th. Up to 20 Snow Buntings were at South Gare. A Black Redstart at Ferry Road, Hartlepool remained into 2024.

DECEMBER

A Ruddy Shelduck was on Cowpen Marsh on 2nd. Poor weather pushed a Red-necked Grebe into Hartlepool harbour on this date to join the long staying Slavonian Grebes and Great Northern Diver.



Cattle Egret, Cowpen Marsh

Ian Forrest

A 1st winter Caspian Gull was at Hartlepool on 4th and again on 8th. Little was changing at this time in terms of scarce birds though Cattle Egret numbers increased to four on the North Tees Marshes and Velvet Scoter numbers to 18 off Redcar.

A Rough-legged Buzzard and two Hen Harriers in Sleddale on 11th made for a fine sight. 26 Waxwings were at Guisborough on 12th. Caspian Gulls continued to be seen with two at Hartlepool on 16th. A ring-tailed Hen Harrier on Cowpen Marsh from 19th may have been November's bird. It stayed for the winter and was often accompanied by several Marsh Harriers, up to six Barn Owls and one or two Short Eared Owls.

Five White-fronted Geese were at Scaling on 19th in what was a poor winter for our scarcer geese. The Brambling flock at Lockwood still numbered 50 on 21st. Two Ravens were in Sleddale on 22nd and four Whooper Swans were on Saltholme Marsh. This species no longer spends the winter at Teesmouth with most winter records being of birds passing through.

A Black-throated Diver was off South Gare on 25th along with the long staying Red-necked Grebe. A Black-throated Diver at Jacksons Landing from 28th showed well and was present into 2024. In addition to the Redcar flock, 8 Velvet Scoter were off Seaton Carew late in the month.

JANUARY

The New Year saw a good selection of scarcer birds still present for the keen year listers. The four Cattle Egrets were still on Cowpen Marsh. Great White Egret and Spoonbill were on the North Tees Marshes and a Bittern was at Haverton Hole. The Hen Harrier was on Cowpen Marsh and the two Slavonian Grebes were in Hartlepool harbour and the Black-throated Diver was nearby at Jacksons Landing. A Hooded Crow at Norton, though was the most unusual bird seen on 1st.



Black Redstart, Hartlepool

Ian Forrest

There was little change over the next few days. A Long-tailed Duck was on the flood on Seaton Common on 2nd, Great Northern Divers were at Hartlepool and Seaton Snook and the Black Redstart was at Ferry Road. A Red-necked Grebe was on Bran Sands on 7th.

Both Common and Green Sandpipers were wintering at Portrack and single Spotted Redshank and Greenshank could be seen by Greatham Creek. Up to three Long-tailed Ducks were at Crookfoot from 10th. One or two Egyptian Geese were around RSPB Saltholme from 10th and two Ruff were on Cowpen Marsh. Velvet Scoter numbers increased to an impressive 26 off Redcar.

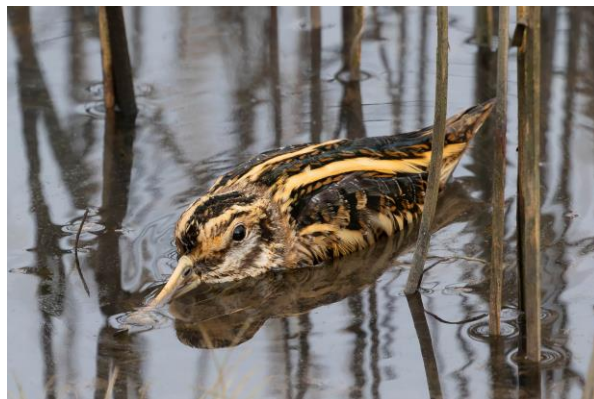


Long-tailed Duck, Saltholme

Ian Forrest

A cracking male Long-tailed Duck at RSPB Saltholme from 13th attracted a steady stream of admirers. Mid month saw reports of Hen Harrier, Red Kite and two Ravens from Sleddale. Bearded Tits were calling at Dormans Pool on 14th. A Caspian Gull was at Saltholme Pools on 15th. A single Waxwing was in the car park at RSPB Saltholme on 16th.

The only really cold spell of the winter occurred from 17th and most of the pools in Cleveland froze over. A Jack Snipe showed well on the Zinc Works Road, a Little Auk was at South Gare and a Bittern performed on the ice at RSPB Saltholme on 19th. A Glaucous Gull was briefly at Seaton Carew on 20th. Both Long-tailed Duck and Great Northern Diver were on the River Tees on this date.



Jack Snipe, Zinc Works Road

Martyn Sidwell

Twite numbers increased to 150 on Seaton Snook and there were now four Egyptian Geese around Cowpen Marsh. A Water Pipit was at RSPB Saltholme on 24th and there

were two Spoonbills at Greatham Creek. Up to four Long-tailed Ducks were in the river mouth from 26th. 23 Waxwings on the outskirts of Hartlepool showed well on 26th.

A Common Whitethroat at Haverton Hole from 28th remained until the end of February and reflected the mild winter. Cetti's Warblers continue to increase in Cleveland and at least 16 birds were present on the north side of the river at this time.

FEBRUARY

Three Long-tailed Ducks on Crookfoot from 1st added to the good numbers of this species present this winter. Two Ravens were at Sleddale on 1st and again on 12th. Hopefully this species will repeat the breeding success of 2023. With no cold weather to get birds moving little change was noted in the first days of February. The Hen Harrier continued to show at Cowpen. Two Egyptian Geese were at Haverton Hole on 4th along with a Bittern.

The first Avocets of the spring were four at Seal Sands on 8th. Water Pipits were on Greenabella and at Scaling on 10th, the latter staying until 16th. A Long-tailed Duck was also at Scaling from 11th into March. Snow Bunting numbers increased to 30 at South Gare on 12th and 50 by 21st.



Caspian Gull, Haverton

Martyn Sidwell

An Iceland Gull was briefly at Parton rocks on 15th and was the only record of the winter. The two Slavonian Grebes continued to show well at Hartlepool. A Caspian Gull was here on 19th. A White-fronted Goose at Scaling

was present from 22nd. A single Waxwing at RSPB Saltholme was well photographed from 27th.



Waxwing, Saltholme

Martyn Sidwell

The month ended with several Great White Egrets, Spoonbill and Cattle Egret on the North Tees Marshes along with Hen and several Marsh Harriers. As the days were getting noticeably longer birders began to dream of the first returning summer migrants.

PROFILE: MIKE LEAKEY

This is the first of a new series of profiles on local birders and is based on 'interviews', with set questions. The original profiles began in the Summer 2005 Newsletter and ran continuously until the Spring 2016 edition. The first of the new series features current Club Chairman Mike Leakey, who has been a member of the Teesmouth Bird Club since his arrival on Teesside in 1992.



How did you start birdwatching, and how has your interest developed over time?

I was born in May 1961 in an old, rented cottage deep in the rural Caldew valley south of Carlisle. According to my mother, a pair of Redstarts were nest-building in the garden at the time, but my first infant memory of birds was the sound of a nearby rookery. Though not really birdwatchers, my parents had an *Observer's Book of Birds*, the illustrations in which – many by Thorburn – fascinated and inspired me as a child. By the time I was in secondary school I had a pair of binoculars, and roved northern Cumberland by bike and bus, with a freedom that would horrify modern generations of parents. In my later teenage years my interest in birds waned, as was – and indeed is – so often the case, but towards the end of my university degree in Leeds it was rekindled by visits to Fairburn Ings and the Wharfe Valley. After moving to York with my then girlfriend I got into birding in a big way and spent much of the 1980s hitch-hiking round Britain on numerous twitches, sometimes clocking up 12,000 miles a year. After a spell with the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers I got a six-week seasonal contract with English Nature on the Lower Derwent Valley. One contract led to another, and I finally wound up at Teesmouth in March 1992. I worked continuously for English Nature / Natural England until 2016, and thereafter part-time for the Industry Nature Conservation Association for a further five years.

What optical equipment do you use and what is your favourite bird book?

I've never been inclined to spend thousands on optics, mainly because I've could never justify the expenditure. I currently use Leica Ultravid 10x42 binoculars (purchased "pre-loved" from Peter Garbutt!) and a Nikon ED Fieldscope. Apart from the universally admired *Collins Bird Guide*, my favourite bird book is *Seventy Years of Birdwatching* by H G Alexander, which I acquired shortly after its

publication in 1974. Though only peripherally about birds, *The Making of the British Landscape* by Nicholas Crane is a fascinating read, detailing how habitats have changed on these islands over the last 10,000 years. As can be deduced, I have an interest in historical perspectives!

What is your favourite birding site?

It has to be my local patch, which covers 5 square kilometres of the Skerne valley between my home in Fishburn and Bishop Middleham. In Cleveland the Greatham Creek and Seal Sands areas hold many fond memories. Though I haven't travelled abroad to any great extent, I was much impressed by a recent visit to the Varanger Peninsula in northern Norway.

Do you keep lists?

I have never compiled my Cleveland list. My UK Life List is modest, in the 430s; I gave up long distance twitching in the mid-1990s when I got married and had children, and never got back into the habit. I do have some good "blockers" from the 1980s however, such as Golden-winged Warbler and Red-breasted Nuthatch. These days I'm most interested in my local patch list (see above), comprising some 150 species over the last five years, averaging 125 per year. I'm conscious of the need to reduce my carbon footprint. I would travel up to 50 miles for a UK lifer and try to limit myself to no more than two short haul return flights per year.

What environmental changes have you witnessed during your birding lifetime?

In the 1970s species such as Corn Bunting and Spotted Flycatcher were common components of the local avifauna, while (in Cumberland at least) Chiffchaff and Great Spotted Woodpecker were scarce, and Little Egret was an unheard-of rarity. Agricultural intensification and climate change are the obvious drivers of many of these changes. I arrived on Teesside after the last major phase of land claim, but Reclamation Pond was lost during my time with English Nature / Natural England, and that still hurts. The *quid pro quo* for this led ultimately to the establishment of RSPB Saltholme, which has obviously given a huge boost to local biodiversity, as have the managed realignment sites created by the Environment Agency around Greatham Creek. Nevertheless, it is hard to see any economic gains that have accrued to date on the old Reclamation Pond site.

What are your thoughts on the current birding scene?

I regret the decline of the traditional Natural History Societies, as these promoted a broad understanding and appreciation of what today would be termed ecology. I can see that young people now live their lives digitally, and the appeal of groups dominated by their elders is limited to say the least. By way of illustration, it is instructive to compare the demography of current twitches with images from the 1980s, where youths in their twenties (admittedly almost exclusively male!) made up a high proportion of birders. I'm afraid I don't have any answers as to how to address this generational imbalance, other than to urge everyone to behave in an encouraging and inclusive way to younger birders and beginners. I'm sure most of us learned much from mentors in our early days of birding. On the positive side, there are more women birders now than in the past, though we still have a long way to go to

match the Americans in this respect. Advances in technology have made bird photography much more accessible, though I worry that this has come at the cost of close observation and note-taking, and sometimes of the welfare of the bird as well.

Describe some of your birding highs and lows.

Discovering a Great Grey Shrike on my school playing fields at the age of 12 remains a clear and fond memory. During my time on Teesside two finds stand out, coincidentally both on the Tidal Pool south of Greatham Creek; a summer-plumaged Ross's Gull in 1995 and an adult Sharp-tailed Sandpiper in 2011. Though neither was new to Cleveland, the former was of almost mythic beauty, while I managed to pick out and tentatively identify the latter without the aid of a telescope. As for lows, several years previously I had hitch-hiked to Thurso in February for a Ross's Gull. The 1980s featured some cold winters, and I remember seeing ice-floes on the sea lochs on this occasion. Needless to say, I didn't see the bird. It was a long hitch back to York, somewhat redeemed by a drake King Eider at Embo.

Any embarrassing moments?

Plenty! I'm not blessed with the greatest visual acuity and have been known to suffer from the odd flight of imagination. One September I flushed a snipe from the grazed enclosure north of the Zinc Works bushes. The bird didn't call, and its escape flight followed a rather straight trajectory. For some reason I convinced myself that it could be a Great Snipe – the date may have swayed my judgement – and put it out as a "possible". Messrs Blick and Francis were among those to arrive promptly; the bird was soon flushed and revealed itself as a Jack Snipe, which is of course about half the size of Great Snipe!

Have you any birding ambitions?

To find the second Tengmalm's Owl to occur on my local patch (the first being identified from a Norwegian ring on a single leg discovered in 1981). Utterly unachievable of course!

What are your reflections on the Teesmouth Bird Club, past, present and future?

I am honoured to serve as Chair of the Club and feel that I'm standing on the shoulders of giants. I think the Club's greatest achievement was the publication of *The Breeding Birds of Cleveland*, steered by Graeme Joynt, Vic Fairbrother and the late Ted Parker. The annual Cleveland Bird Report edited by Chris Brown is an exemplary production. As BTO Regional Representative for Cleveland I'm responsible for promoting and organising a range of BTO Surveys such as the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) and the Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS), ably assisted in the latter by Adam Jones. I'm sometimes frustrated by how hard it is to get Club members to participate in such surveys, which provide the opportunity to give something valuable back to a pastime that has given us all so much pleasure. I was in awe of Barbara Crinson's efforts in organising the national Willow Tit Survey, which resulted in Cleveland achieving an excellent level of coverage. Looking to the future, the Trustees are working hard with RSPB Saltholme to deliver Northeast England's first MOTUS station. Though we are a relatively large bird club in terms of membership, it is through such collaborative projects that we can achieve the greatest benefits.

BTO NEWS SPRING 2024

Tees Estuary Wetland Bird Survey

WeBS Local Organiser Adam Jones adam.jones@rspb.org.uk is urgently seeking new volunteers to cover the Coatham Sands North and Redcar & Coatham Sands South WeBS Sectors. The Wetland Bird Survey is the

key method used to assess the state of UK waterbirds, and together these sectors constitute a significant proportion of the Tees Estuary's open coast habitat. Please contact Adam directly if you think you can help.

Breeding Birds Survey and Waterways Breeding Birds Survey 2023

Several new volunteers have been recruited to BBS in Cleveland over the last few weeks – many thanks if you are one of them. You should by now have received forms and instructions if you have requested them.

In total, 82% of available squares in the Cleveland BTO Region have now been allocated. Currently vacant squares comprise the following:

NZ6321	New Marske	
NZ6612	Black	Howes, Lockwood Beck
NZ6513	Stanghow	Moor, Lockwood Beck

All BBS squares are valuable to the survey, and it would be great to have full coverage. Full details are on the BTO website <https://www.bto.org/our-science/projects/bbs> where you can register. Please contact me on 07510 996977 or mikelaquila@hotmail.com if you think you can help.

The Winter Gull Survey

The Winter Gull Survey (WinGS) will run over the winters of 2023/24 and 2024/25 to collect updated information on the numbers and distributions of these wintering gulls in the UK, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man; the first such survey to take place for over twenty years.

WinGS volunteers visited Cleveland gull roost sites in the last week of January, counting five key species: Black-headed Gull, Common Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Herring Gull

and Great Black-backed Gull. Results are summarised below.

Aggregate totals comprised 7294 Black-headed Gulls (BH), 8500 Common Gulls (CM), 153 Great Black-backed Gulls (GB), 3953 Herring Gulls (HG) and 2 Lesser Black-backed Gulls (LB). In addition, there were 6978 unidentified large gulls and 2840 unidentified small gulls. As expected, Longnewton Reservoir remains our premier winter gull roost site.

Thanks are due to the hardy band of counters who braved the elements to participate in January's survey.

Site	Date	BH	CM	GB	HG	LB	Large	Small
Hartlepool Hart Warren	28/01	390	640	2	63	0	0	140
Hartlepool Steetley	28/01	80	0	15	200	0	0	0
Hartlepool Old Cemetery	28/01	18	105	17	9	0	0	0
Hartlepool Bay	28/01	933	383	0	376	0	0	0
Seaton Sands	28/01	135	0	2	78	0	0	0
Seal Sands	28/01	12	1000	5	500	0	6500	0
Dormans Pool	28/01	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Saltholme Pools	28/01	752	2	64	2041	0	428	2400
Billingham Reach	26/01	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Coatham Marsh	27/01	11	0	0	26	0	0	0
Coatham Sands	28/01	3	3300	1	6	0	0	0
Saltburn to Redcar	28/01	325	0	0	0	0	50	300
Skinningrove	21/01	270	610		4	0	0	0
Scaling Dam Reservoir	24/01	65	60	13	10	0	0	0
Longnewton Reservoir	25/01	4300	2400	34	640	2	0	0

BTO Heronries Census 2023 Annual Summary

The 2023 Annual Summary for the Census was recently published on the BTO website and can be viewed at:

https://www.bto.org/sites/default/files/heronries_summary_2023_final.pdf

Data were received from a total of over 900 heronries last year and the Grey Heron population estimate for 2023 was 9,417 apparently occupied nests. This represents a slight decrease from the revised estimate of 9,617 nests in 2022.

Mike Leahey, BTO Regional Representative for Cleveland



Annual Report

THE CLUB COMMITTEE

(Chairman) **Mike Leakey**
(Vice Chairman) **Steve McDonnell**
(Hon Secretary) **Chris Sharp**
(Hon Treasurer) **Mark Askew**
(Ordinary Member) **Alistair McLee** (Co-opted)
(Ordinary Member) **Julie Mason** (Co-opted 2017)
(Ordinary Member) **Barbara Crinson** (First Appointed 2022)
(Ordinary Member) **Connor Pimm** (First Appointed 2022)
(Ordinary Member) **Debbie Lawson** (First Appointed 2023)

RECORDS SUB-COMMITTEE

(Chairman) **Alan Crossley**
Tom Francis
Graeme Joynt
Chris Brown
Ian Kendall
Mike Leakey
Stewart Hinley
Chris Sharp
Geoff Icton
Martyn Sidwell

CONSERVATION SUB-COMMITTEE

(Chairman) **Alistair McLee**

Treasurer's Committee Report for 2023-24

Due to the untimely death of Mark Askew and shortly after that of Don Page, It was decided at a Trustees Meeting that a Treasurer's Committee comprised of all Trustees be put in place until a new Treasurer can be elected at the 2024 AGM. The Trustees have worked hard to present the 2023 Statement of Income and Expenditure.

This is the Treasurer's Committee Report for 2023:

- The HSB account was closed on 30 December 2022 and £322.69 withdrawn.
- The new Co-Operative Bank Account opened with £322.69 deposited as an opening balance.
- 4th July 2023 NS&I Investment account closed and £56,352.88 withdrawn.
- Skipton Building Society Investment Account opened, current balance £51,200.
- The Club received a legacy of £38875.29 from the estate of former member, Joyce Hodgson.
- The club Trustees agreed to £1500 donation to Tees Ringing Group.

Stephen McDonnell
On behalf of TBC Treasurer's Committee

Report from the Chair for 2023-2024

This is a brief summary of the Club's activities during the last year. I would like to thank the retiring Chair (and current Vice-Chair) Steve McDonnell and all the Trustees for all their efforts and for their continuing support. The last year has been particularly difficult owing to the deaths of our long-serving Honorary Treasurer Mark Askew, Newsletter Editor Eric James and club stalwart Don Page, all of whom have made massive contributions over many years.

The Club's AGM took place on 3 April. Long-time Trustee Brian Clasper has left the group, while we welcomed new member Debbie Lawson. Connor Pimm has resigned from the Group, following his relocation to Oxfordshire. The Trustees have met on a quarterly basis via Zoom Meetings, ably facilitated by Julie Mason. These meetings took place on 2 May, 25 July, 31 October and 30 January, Notes from these meetings are available to all members on request. The 61st session of evening meetings comprised a diverse programme of eight talks between September and April inclusive, again arranged by Julie Mason. These meetings were much appreciated and were generally well-attended.

Local outings were held at Margrove Ponds (21 April), Scaling Dam (15 May), Saltholme for damselfies and dragonflies (3 June), Guisborough Forest for Nightjars (7 July), "Wild Saltholme" (8 August), Seaton Snook on (3 September), Hartlepool Headland for seawatching (16 September), Hartlepool Headland (6 January), North Gare and Seaton Snook (3 February) and Bishop Middleham (23 March). As ever, our thanks go to the leaders of these outings.

The 49th annual Cleveland Bird Report – covering the calendar year of 2022 – was published in November. The body of the Report comprises the classified list and species accounts, but also documents the three most recent additions to the Cleveland list, namely Greater Sand Plover, Collared Pratincole and Scopoli's Shearwater. The Recorder, Editor, Records Sub-committee, compilers and contributors all deserve huge credit for the quality of the Report and its timely appearance.

Three Newsletters were published, in April, September and December. While Eric James' sterling input to Newsletters continues to be sorely missed, thanks are due to all contributors and to Jamie Duffie for his continuing assistance.

For some time, Trustees have been exploring the potential for a Motus tracking station in or around the Tees Estuary. Motus – or the Motus Wildlife Tracking System to give it its full title – is a Canadian-based international collaborative research network that uses coordinated radio telemetry to track animals and birds. Our efforts are now focused on RSPB Saltholme as a potential host location. Thanks to Barbara Crinson and Steve McDonnell for their efforts with this project, which we hope to dedicate to the memory of Mark Askew.

Ali McLee of the Club's Conservation Committee has successfully secured the installation of swift nestboxes in the refurbished Yarm Town Hall, has steered a Peregrine nestbox project at Holy Trinity Church, North Ormesby and is pursuing the provision of Barn Owl nestboxes. Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council have at last responded to our repeated enquiries regarding the cessation of access to the Long Drag; unfortunately, it seems that such access is now rendered impossible because of health and safety concerns. However, the Trustees remain keen to promote habitat improvements on the adjacent Sabic Brinefields estate.

A site visit to Greenabella and Greatham Creek was held with the Environment Agency to discuss managed realignment proposals, which are part of the wider Tees Tidelands initiative. These proposals present a major opportunity to restore intertidal mudflat habitat on the Tees Estuary.

The Club has recently received a generous legacy of £38,000 and the Trustees Group has held initial discussions on how this sum might best be spent.

Finally, I would like to reiterate my thanks to all the Trustees, officers and members of the Club for their guidance, support and encouragement during my first year as Chair.

Mike Leakey
Chair

Honorary Secretary's Report for 2023-24

CLUB MEMBERSHIP

	Total	Full	Family	Junior	S/C	Life	Hon
2010	521	209	209	2	78	13	5
2011	538	225	214	2	79	13	5
2012	548	312	217	1		13	5
2013	509	286	200	2		14	7
2014	488	261	207	2		12	6
2015	476	266	189	2		13	6
2016	480	268	192	1		13	6
2017	470	267	182	1		14	6
2018	453	266	166	1		14	6
2019	465	269	176	-		14	6
2020	451	270	162			14	5
2021	459	271	169			14	5
2022	469	276	175			13	5
2023	445	278	149			13	5

Club membership has fallen to its lowest level for 15 years but is still at a healthy 445 in total. Despite the fact that the junior membership rate was reduced to only £5 at the AGM in April 2016 the club continues to thrive without any members in this category.

As in previous years the many hours of free time given by certain members is worthy of mention. Special thanks go to Eric James who edited the newsletter until his untimely death. Jamie Duffie has taken over this task and our thanks go to him. He also doubles as our website manager and handles all the PayPal receipts for membership fees. This latter method is becoming an increasingly popular way for members to pay their subscriptions.

Sadly we lost the last two Treasurers of the club during 2023, namely Don Page and Mark Askew. Between them they served in this role for just short of 50 years.

The annual bird report is also a publication the club can be rightly proud of. As a former member of the records sub-committee I know the amount of time that is spent collating the records and writing and checking the report. Our recorder Alan Crossley, the records sub-committee and the compilers must be thanked for their efforts. Special thanks must go to Chris Brown who both edited and formatted the report. Although Tom Francis stepped down as recorder at the end of 2018, he and Graeme Joynt continue to assist Alan in his duties as recorder to ensure a smooth transition process.

Another member whose efforts for the club deserve recognition is John Fletcher. John has been our sales officer for many years, and he is invariably stationed at the back of each indoor meeting selling old bird reports and books donated by members. Thanks must also be given to Julie Mason who organises the indoor programme each session. It is never easy to arrange speakers but a varying programme each year is testament to Julie's endeavours.

Chris Sharp

TEESMOUTH BIRD CLUB
Annual Statement of Income and Expenditure 2023
(with 2022 for comparison)

			2023			2022	
			Income	Payment		Income	Payment
Subscriptions			4422.88			4833.48	
Gift Aid			0.00			823.15	
Interest			169.36			52.20	
Meetings				319.97			459.27
Lecture Fees				227.00			250.00
TBC Gen Publications			249.86			168.97	
Bird Report				3200.00			3180.00
Printing & Stationery				300.00			466.36
Postage				770.73			917.19
Subs to other Societies				78.00			50.50
Insurance				157.00			157.00
Sundries			22.50	48.85			
Website				399.53			395.94
Donations			38875.29				
Tees Ringing Group				1500.00			
Feeding stations				1245.50			943.72
Hide repairs				173.80			1704.00
Data provision			0.00				
Bank charges				0.00			113.20
			43739.89	8420.38		5877.80	8637.18
	Excess Income			35319.51			-2759.38
			43739.89	43739.89		5821.13	5877.80
		Balance B/F 2022		56294.75	Balance B/F 2021		59054.13
		Excess Income		35319.51			-2759.38
		Balance 31.12.2023		91610.26	Balance 31.12.22		56294.75
		Cash In Hand		0.00			0.00
		Bank Current Acc		40410.26			279.69
		Deposit A/C 'PSMF'		0.00			0.00
		Skipton BS		51200.00		NS&I	56015.06
				91610.26			56294.75

WETLAND BIRD SURVEY TEESMOUTH - WINTER 2023/2024 SUMMARY

	November 12	December 10	January 21	February 18	March 17
Little Grebe	35	15	11	16	6
Great Crested Grebe	23	8	2	67	54
Cormorant	118	105	39	56	39
Mute Swan	33	30	28	35	26
Greylag Goose	361	164	158	46	49
Shelduck	312*	538**	385*	410*	240*
Wigeon	3285*	3780*	4270*	3577*	3546*
Gadwall	329**	223*	248*	252*	226*
Teal	1263	1932	1336	1386	840
Mallard	470	243	275	286	184
Pintail	24	39	10	29	33
Shoveler	213**	183*	310**	249**	158*
Pochard	22	47	42	49	92
Tufted Duck	103	92	96	120	128
Eider	6	16	4	53	44
Goldeneye	20	44	47	44	41
Red-br. Merganser	52*	77*	20	59*	42
Coot	517	562	539	494	400
Oystercatcher	1682*	1246	1453*	1195	340
Ringed Plover	53	79	46	27	7
Golden Plover	1118	2689*	334	585	300
Grey Plover	107	123	182*	74	29
Lapwing	2657	3447*	2388	2382	313
Knot	303	705	642	257	713
Sanderling	61	7	143*	25	55
Purple Sandpiper	0	2	0	0	0
Dunlin	329	853	624	631	534
Ruff	0	0	2	2	2
Snipe	100	178	38	8	8
Black-tailed Godwit	24	41	74	27	21
Bar-tailed Godwit	60	45	57	83	115
Curlew	726*	596	656*	730*	677*
Redshank	813*	489*	602*	729*	592*
Turnstone	158	93	128	65	77

* Indicates a count of >50% of national importance

** Indicates a count of national importance

N.B. 'Teesmouth' includes Hartlepool Bay.

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 - WINTER 2023/2024 SUMMARY

A good level of cover was achieved with 207 of the 210 scheduled sector counts completed over the five months.

Over this series of counts the Tees Estuary and Hartlepool Bay recording area was nationally important for Shelduck (538, December), Gadwall (329, November) and Shoveler (310, January). In comparison to last winter the grand totals for Wigeon, Sanderling and Curlew were not nationally significant.

The peak counts for Shoveler (310, January) and Snipe (178, December) set new winter maxima records. Great Crested Grebe (67, February) equaled the current maximum record set in the winter of 1995/6.

At the other end of the spectrum the peak count for Purple Sandpiper (2, December) highlights a dramatic decline for this species in the recording area, counts of over 150 individuals were the norm during the 1990's. Common Gull (104, November) set a record low peak count.

Other interesting records during the winter included, 4 Egyptian Geese (Fleet Field, January), 14 Velvet Scoter (2 Hartlepool Bay and 12 Redcar and Coatham Sands South, February), 3 Long-tailed Duck (Bran Sands South, November), 1 Great Northern Diver (Peninsula West, February), 2 Slavonian Grebe (Hartlepool Bay, January), 1 Red-necked Grebe (Peninsula West, November, Brands Sands South, December and North Gare Sands, January), 3 Cattle Egret (Cowpen Marsh, November), 5 Great White Egret (across Tees Estuary, February), 2 Spoonbill (Cowpen Marsh, February. One individual overwintered) and 3 Mediterranean Gull (Hartlepool Bay, January).

Adam Jones

WeBS Local Organiser

March 2024