

Teesmouth Bird Club Newsletter

April 225 (No.90)



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

The good autumn for Whooper Swans continued with 14 at Lockwood Beck on 1st, 12 over Seal Sands on 2nd and 23 over Seaton Snook on 3rd with 35 over the River

Tees later in the day and 20 at Scaling Dam. A Bearded Tit was at RSPB Saltholme on 1st. A Red-necked Grebe was on Bran Sands from 2nd. Up to ten Snow Buntings were at Redcar and nine were at Boulby.



Egyptian Goose, Cowpen

Ian Forrest

A late Yellow-browed Warbler was at Zinc Works Road on 3rd. The Red crested Pochard was still in Ropner Park and remained into 2025. A Slavonian Grebe was off Seaton Snook on 3rd. A single Spoonbill in the Saltholme/Dormans Pool area remained throughout the winter.

Up to four Velvet Scoters were off Marske early in the month and a Little Auk was here on 6th followed by a Slavonian Grebe the next day. Three Ruddy Shelduck on 9th at RSPB Saltholme had reduced to a single bird the following day.

Twite numbers reached 103 at Seaton Snook on 10th. A Pomarine Skua flying up Greatham Creek on this date was an unusual location. Stewarts Park held both Mandarin and Whooper Swan on this date and a Jack Snipe was at South Gare.



Mandarin, Stewarts Park Martyn Sidwell

A Richard's Pipit at RSPB Saltholme on 11th was a good find and it continued to be reported until 16th. Sea watching at Hartlepool saw a Sabine's Gull and a Little Auk and a Long-tailed Duck was in the harbour. 32 Whooper Swans were over Skelton. Two Great Northern Divers flew past Hartlepool on 12th and a late Sandwich Tern was off South Gare.

A Little Auk was off Redcar on 14th. Seven Velvet Scoters were off Parton Rocks on 15th with three more off Redcar. A Black Guillemot showed well in Hartlepool harbour 18th-19th. Little Auks increased in numbers with 30 off Hartlepool on 19th and 34 the following day. An impressive 916 Kittiwake were off Redcar on 19th.



Black Guillemot, Hartlepool Ian Forrest

Odd Little Auks continued to be reported from the coast until 27th. A Hen Harrier was over Cowpen Marsh on 26th and was reported again at RSPB Saltholme on 30th. Two Long-tailed Ducks were on Seal Sands and Twite numbers increased to 140 at Seaton Snook.

DECEMBER

Twenty Snow Buntings were at South Gare on 1st and this proved to be the highest count of the winter. This species continues to be seen in fewer numbers each winter. A Shore Lark at Seaton Snook 3rd-5th was the only record of the year for another species which has declined in Cleveland in recent years. What was presumably the same ring-tailed Hen Harrier was at Cowpen Marsh on 5th.



Shore Lark, Seaton Snook Martyn Sidwell

One or two Long-tailed Ducks were at Seal Sands at this time. Early Dec also saw a few Little Auks reported from coastal locations but 39 were off Hartlepool on 9th along with

two Long-tailed Ducks and two Velvet Scoters. The Red-necked Grebe continued to be reported from both sides of the Tees mouth until 15th. Two Velvet Scoters were off Marske on 12th but generally things were fairly quiet mid month.



Caspian Gull, Hartlepool *Martyn Sidwell*

A Swift sp was an unexpected sight over Seaton Common on 18th. A Long-tailed Duck was in Hartlepool harbour 19th-20th. Up to three Great White Egrets were around Saltholme Pools accompanying the long staying Spoonbill. A Caspian Gull was at Hartlepool on 22nd with another at Redcar 29th-31st. A Slavonian Grebe on Seal Sands was a welcome Christmas present 24th-26th.

JANUARY

It was a slow start for year listers. The long staying Red Crested Pochard and Spoonbill were still present. A Great Northern Diver was off South Gare and nearby a Bittern was at Coatham Marsh. A Caspian Gull was at Haverton on 1st and a Glaucous Gull at Hartlepool on 2nd. This latter species is becoming increasingly rare in Cleveland.

A single Little Auk was off Hartlepool on 3rd with a Hen Harrier at Cowpen Bewley on this date. A Black Redstart at Saltburn 3rd-4th proved to be the only one of the winter. A Water Pipit was at RSPB Saltholme on 4th. The Red-necked Grebe was off Bran Sands early in the month and continued to be present into February. A Black-throated Diver flew past Hartlepool on 6th.

Despite the very cold temperatures at this time little in the way of cold weather movement was noted. The White-fronted Goose continued to be reported around RSPB Saltholme and both Green and Common Sandpipers were at Portrack roundabout. A single Greenshank was also wintering around Greatham Creek.



Iceland Gull, Haverton *Ian Foster*

About 100 Twite continued to be reported from Seaton Snook and Snow Buntings were limited to single figures at South Gare. Single Great Northern Divers were off both South Gare and Seaton Snook 8th-14th. A Long-tailed Duck on the river Tees by the Riverside Stadium on 17th was a good find. Up to 20 Goosander were at Ropner Park along with the Red-crested Pochard.

Six Whooper Swans at Liverton from 17th remained into February. An Iceland Gull at Haverton Hill on 18th stayed for a month. As with its larger congener, the Glaucous Gull records have become increasingly scarce in recent years. A 1st winter Caspian Gull was also present here at this time.

Three Ravens were near Guisborough on 18th and birds continued to be reported in the Sleddale area for the remainder of the winter. Water Pipits were at both Dormans Pool and Cowbar. Up to three Great White Egrets were in and around RSPB Saltholme. A Scaup was reported from here on 23rd.

A 1st winter Caspian Gull was at Hartlepool on 24th. For those struggling to identify this species, this bird was conveniently ringed.

Four Bearded Tits were at Dormans Pool on 26th. They continued to be heard here sporadically with another at RSPB Saltholme. A White-fronted Goose was at Cowbar 27th-28th and the long staying bird was still present at RSPB Saltholme.

Both Slavonian and Red-necked Grebes were off South Gare on 28th along with a Little Gull and four Puffins. Two Egyptian Geese at Cowpen Marsh on 30th remained into the spring.

FEBRUARY

17 Razorbills were back at the cliffs at Cowbar on 1st. Very little change was noted early in the month. The Iceland Gull remained at Haverton and Ravens continued to be seen in Sleddale. A Yellow-legged Gull was at Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park on 7th. Up to 19 White-fronted Geese were at Crookfoot from 8th and 31 joined the Whooper Swans at Liverton on 9th.

The first returning Avocet was at RSPB Saltholme on 10th. In what was an extremely poor winter nationally for Waxwing six were reported at Redcar on 10th. In contrast to last winter sea duck were scarce on Cleveland's coastline. A single Velvet Scoter was off Redcar on 13th. A Caspian Gull was at North Gare on 14th. Two Mandarin were at Skelton Pond from 14th. 20 White-fronted Geese graced Scaling Dam and the surrounding fields from 17th and five were over Cowpen Marsh on 20th.

A Black Throated Diver was off South Gare on 22nd. The two Ravens were still in Sleddale on 25th along with a Red Kite. A Cattle Egret was photographed at Kirklevington on 28th but did not linger. The month ended very much as it began with the Red Crested Pochard in Ropner Park, the Spoonbill on the North Tees Marshes and Water Pipits at RSPB Saltholme and Cowbar.

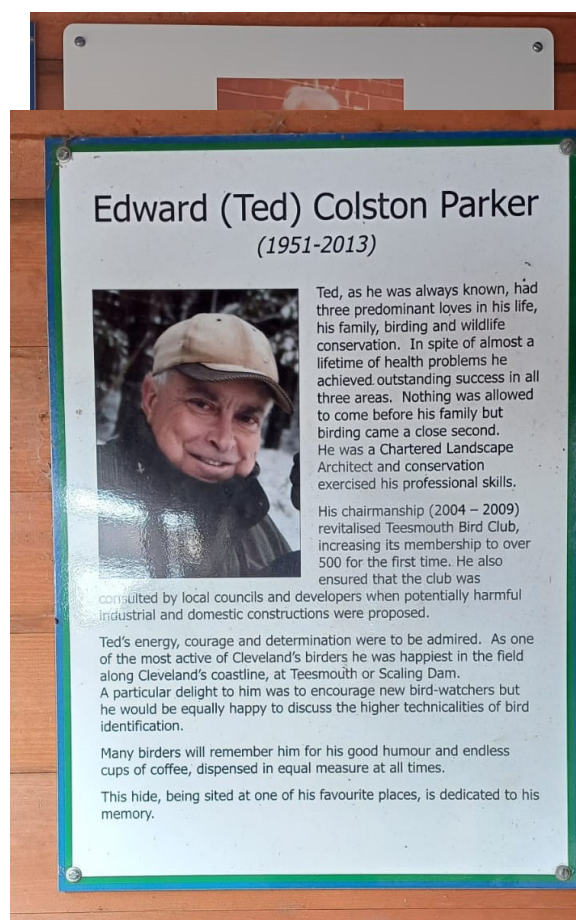
It was certainly a very quiet winter for scarce birds in Cleveland. Hopefully the spring months would be more productive.

FEEDING STATIONS – AN UPDATE

The Trustees have agreed to continue funding four feeding stations, supplying food at the following locations:

Lockwood Beck Reservoir, Stillington Forest Park, Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park and Billingham Beck Valley Country Park.

The feeding stations are filled between



October and about the end of March (ending slightly later at Lockwood Beck).

There are now two benches at the Lockwood Beck feeding station. The most recent one is in memory of Don Page who was the Treasurer of the club for many years. A plaque has also been installed and this sits next to the one of his long time birding companion, Ted Parker to whom the first bench is dedicated.

**DURHAM BIRD CLUB 50th
ANNIVERSARY EVENT, SUNDAY MAY
11th 2025**

Our sister club – Durham Bird Club – are holding an event at Bishop Middleham to celebrate their 50th year, at which Teesmouth Bird Club members will be most welcome.

The Castle Lake Conservation Group, which has sought to protect the long-term future of the Lake and works closely with DBC, is arranging the event and has booked Bishop Middleham Village Hall on 11 May 2025 as the centre for the day's activities.

Castle Lake is of course important for birds and is home to many species. The Club has, over the years, carried out numerous habitat and other works here. It is also important botanically and some wildflowers should be out by this time. Historically, it is also important as a site for the former Prince Bishops and some interesting archaeological excavations have been carried out here by DigVentures.

Refreshments are planned during the day. Below is a likely timetable of events on the day

- An early morning "Dawn Chorus" walk between 06.00 and 08.00 am.
- Opening the Hide between 10.00 and 13.00 for people to see the birdlife on the Lake, with members present to identify birds for visitors.
- One or two Guided Walks (depending on numbers) between 10.00 and 13.00 to show people the birdlife, botany, landscape and archaeology on the site.
- Between 12.00 and 15.30, the Main Hall of the Village Hall will be open for various conservation organisations,

including the Club, to promote themselves.

- Between 13.00 and 15.30, the Meeting Room will also be open for talks on the history of Durham Bird Club, birdlife in the area, the works undertaken in respect of the Great Fen, and the archaeological history of the site.
- At about 15.30, a celebratory cake will be cut.

We hope that this will be a great event to help celebrate the Durham Bird Club's fifty years of existence and of course hope the next 50 years will be as successful.



TEESMOUTH BIRD CLUB

Registered as a Charity No. 508850

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

THE CLUB COMMITTEE

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

RECORDS SUBCOMMITTEE

(Chair) **Alan Crossley**
Tom Francis
Graeme Joynt
Chris Brown
Ian Kendall
Mike Leakey
Stewart Hinley
Geoff Iceton

CONSERVATION SUBCOMMITTEE

(Chair) **Alistair McLee**

Honorary Treasurer's Report 2024

The main feature of the balance sheet this year was a legacy of £38875.29 from the estate of former member Joyce Hodgson, received towards the end of 2023. The trustees and members were asked to consider ways of spending this generous sum of money that would be beneficial to our aims and interests as a club. Trustees therefore invested in the following donations and projects:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| • The Barn Owl Nesting Box Project | £3000.00 |
| • Floating Islands Scaling Dam | £20,521.00 |
| • Commemorative Bench (Don Page) | £639.29 |
| • MOTUS | £3159.52 |
| • Friends of Bluebell Beck | £100.00 |

£27,419.81

Membership shows little fluctuation; therefore, income from subscriptions is similar to last year.

As the cost of living rises this is reflected in the increased costs of printing and postage. The move by most IT providers to purchase software by yearly subscription puts an increased cost on the club's expenses. Finances are, however, still in a favourable position.

Steve McDonnell

Report from the Chair for 2024

This report provides an overview of the Club's activities and achievements over the last twelve months. As retiring Chair, I would like to thank all members of the Trustees group and members of the Records Subcommittee for their efforts during the period of my tenure. Honorary Secretary Chris Sharp, Acting Treasurer Steve McDonnell and Trustee Barbara Crinson are worthy of particular praise for their contributions.

The Club's AGM took place on 8 April. We welcomed Steve Ashton as a new member of the Trustees group, and a further Trustee is to be sought. The group has met on a quarterly basis via Zoom Meetings, ably arranged by Julie Mason. These meetings took place on 30 April, 27 July, 29 October and 28 January. Notes from these meetings are available to all members on request. The 62nd session of evening meetings involved an excellent series of talks between September and April inclusive, again organised by Julie Mason. These meetings were much appreciated and were generally well-attended. The annual Nightjar Walk was held at Guisborough Forest (17 July), and other local outings followed at Seaton Snook (24 August), Hartlepool Headland (1 February), North Gare & Seaton Snook (1 March) and Hardwick Park (16 March). Our thanks go to the leaders of these outings.

The Club's Records Subcommittee convened on 22 April and 17 December. At the latter meeting Alan Crossley stood down from his duties as County Recorder, and we thank him for his efforts over the last few years. Martyn Sidwell, an experienced and dedicated local birder who will be familiar to most members, is our new Recorder.

A significant milestone for the Club was reached at the end of November, with the publication of the 50th annual Cleveland Bird Report (covering the calendar year of 2023). The core of the Report comprises monthly summaries, the species accounts according to the classified list and the ringing report. Three new species for Cleveland are also documented in detail, namely Brown Booby, Caspian Stonechat and Soft-plumaged Petrel, along with our second record of Isabelline Wheatear. Production of the Cleveland Bird Report involves many hundreds of hours of entirely unpaid work, and the Recorder, Editor, Records Sub-committee, compilers and contributors all deserve huge credit for the quality of the Report and its prompt publication.

Much work has been going on behind the scenes on two major projects, namely the installation of a MOTUS station at RSPB Saltholme and the provision of nesting rafts at Scaling Dam Nature Reserve. Both involve significant capital expenditure and close liaison with partners and suppliers, primarily driven by the indefatigable Barbara Crinson. It is hoped that both projects will come to fruition this spring. The Trustees have also allotted one-off funding to the local Barn Owl Project and to a nestbox scheme at Bluebell Beck, Middlesbrough. A memorial bench to long-serving Club stalwart Don Page has been installed at Lockwood Beck. The Club is continuing to provide financial contributions to several feeding stations during the winter months, namely Lockwood Beck, Stillington, Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park and Billingham Beck Country Park.

Ali McLee has continued the Club's input to local conservation issues, including identification of key bird species for the developing Cleveland Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the Environment Agency's plans for managed realignment around the north-east "cell" of Greatham Creek. A new Peregrine nesting tray is to be installed at Middlesbrough College, and efforts continue to promote the installation of Swift boxes in Guisborough and at a new Amazon site at Bowesfield. The new Kittiwake nesting tower on land adjacent to the RNLI station at Hartlepool has now been completed, and three Club members attended an engagement event there on 13 February.

Finally, I would again like to register my appreciation to all the Trustees, officers and members of the Club for their guidance and encouragement during my second year as Chair. I wish my successor Debbie Lawson every success in her coming tenure, and I am sure she will benefit from similar support.

Mike Leakey

Honorary Secretary's Report 2024

Club membership fell by another 11 in 2024 and is at its lowest level for 16 years but is still at a healthy 434 in total. Our first junior members in six years joined the club in 2024. Hopefully more can be attracted to join in future years. At £5 the membership rate for junior members remains an incentive.

	Total	Full	Family	Junior	S/C	Life	Hon
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
2024	434	267	146	2		14	5

As in previous years the many hours of free time given by certain members is worthy of mention. Jamie Duffie continues to edit the newsletter and 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.

The Club continues to support local feeding stations. The site at Lockwood Beck is particularly popular. A second bench has now been installed. This was in memory of Don Page, the club's former Treasurer. A generous donation of £500 was received from his family towards the cost. Many thanks are due to the small team of volunteers who installed the bench and keep the bird feeders topped up and cleaned.

The annual bird report is also a publication of which the Club can be rightly proud. As a former member of the Records Subcommittee, I know the amount of time that is spent collating the records and writing and checking the report. Our recorder Alan Crossley, who stepped down at the end of the year, the Records Subcommittee and the compilers must be thanked for their efforts. Chris Brown continues to edit and format the report. Although Tom Francis stepped down as Recorder at the end of 2018, he and Graeme Joynt continued to assist Alan in his duties as Recorder. Another member whose efforts for the club go unrewarded 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
2024 (with 2023 for comparison)

	2024		2023	
	Income	Payment	Income	Payment
Subscriptions	4475.67		4422.88	
Gift Aid	0.00		0.00	
Interest	1511.87		169.36	
Meetings		395.86		319.97
Lecture Fees		273.00		227.00
TBC Gen Publications	227.52		249.86	
Bird Report		3402.80		3200.00
Printing & Stationery		523.37		300.00
Postage		999.94		770.73
Subs to other Societies		58.50		78.00
Insurance		141.76		157.00
Sundries	0.00	129.89	22.5	
Website		480.00		399.53
Donations	750.00	3704.80	38875.29	
Feeding stations		981.83		1245.50
Hide repairs		0.00		173.80
Data provision	0.00			0.00
Bank charges		0.00		0.00
Club Projects		23680.52		
	6965.06	34772.27	43739.89	8420.38
Excess Income		-27807.21		35319.38
	6965.06	6965.06	43739.89	43739.89
Balance B/F 2024		91610.26	Balance B/F 2023	56294.75
Excess Income		-27807.21		35319.51
Balance 31.12.2024		63803.05	Balance 31.12.23	91610.26
Cash In Hand		0.00		0.00
Bank Current Acc		11091.18		40410.26
Deposit A/C 'PSMF'		0.00		0.00
Skipton Building Soc,		52711.87		51200.00
		63803.05		91610.26

BTO News Spring 2025

Breeding Birds Survey and Waterways

Breeding Birds Survey 2025

Work has been progressing to recruit new volunteers for this key BTO survey in Cleveland, and my thanks are due to those who have expressed an interest in participating for the first time. New volunteers are however still needed for some 1km squares. Only two visits per square are required (plus an initial short reconnaissance visit to check transect routes and record habitat) each taking no more than two hours. I'm happy to assist new volunteers with initial visits to squares, and to provide advice and guidance throughout.

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.

Tees Estuary Wetland Bird Survey

WeBS Local Organiser Adam Jones adam.jones@rspb.org.uk is still looking for 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 for more information.

Heathland Birds Survey 2025

The Heathland Birds Survey will target Nightjars, Woodlarks and Dartford Warblers in all habitats throughout the UK. The survey aims to cover all the main occupied sites as well as surrounding habitats into which these species may have expanded more recently. It will also record a number of other important

heathland bird species. Here in Cleveland, Nightjar is obviously the focus of the survey. The previous population estimate made for the species is now over 20 years old and indicated a national population of 4600 territories (churring males).

We urgently need updated population estimates to assess how breeding numbers and range have changed throughout the UK and Channel Islands. We also need to know how birds are faring on the network of protected heathland sites that support the majority of the populations of these specialist species.

The Heathland Birds Survey has been designed to cover the current known distribution of Woodlark, Nightjars and Dartford Warblers, but also to pick up recent range expansion or contraction. The data collected will be used to calculate up-to-date population figures for key protected sites, as well as wider national and regional population estimates. The data may also help with future designations of other important sites for heathland birds.

Only two recording visits are needed per 1km square, between late May and July. While we already have good coverage of the core Nightjar habitats of Guisborough Forest, volunteers are still needed for peripheral sites such as those around Lockwood Beck and Scaling Dam, with a focus on "priority sites". Full details of the survey can be found at <https://www.bto.org/our-science/projects/heathland-birds-survey> where a map of available sites can be viewed.

Please consider signing up for this important project.

Mike Leakey, BTO Regional Representative for Cleveland

WETLAND BIRD SURVEY TEESMOUTH - WINTER 2024/2025 SUMMARY

	November 10	December 15	January 12	February 09	March 09
Little Grebe	39	28	35	19	20
Great Crested Grebe	2	18	9	3	27
Cormorant	71	44	56	52	18
Mute Swan	37	30	20	20	26
Greylag Goose	94	53	193	10	73
Shelduck	212	148	209	271*	144
Wigeon	2401*	3465*	2276*	3436*	3182*
Gadwall	245*	248*	79	235*	175*
Teal	1109	717	418	825	712
Mallard	275	235	148	172	213
Pintail	23	30	62	37	46
Shoveler	199**	148*	99*	84	195**
Pochard	48	44	50	40	115*
Tufted Duck	73	59	40	69	126
Eider	6	7	72	17	11
Goldeneye	20	42	31	35	37
Red-br. Merganser	29	40	13	30	0
Coot	518	576	498	571	500
Oystercatcher	1171	1024	721	796	219
Ringed Plover	51	57	38	18	11
Golden Plover	1830	647	1	687	60
Grey Plover	57	125	73	49	40
Lapwing	2649	3632*	499	2640	368
Knot	40	38	54	17	33
Sanderling	60	85	164*	39	19
Purple Sandpiper	2	7	10	1	4
Dunlin	387	178	406	174	155
Ruff	0	0	0	0	1
Snipe	21	10	56	4	8
Black-tailed Godwit	38	16	1	14	32
Bar-tailed Godwit	53	31	67	45	2
Curlew	294	435	481	394	160
Redshank	823*	524*	354	357	384
Turnstone	108	89	74	41	55

* 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 2024/2025 SUMMARY

A good level of cover was achieved with 202 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 Shoveler (199, November). In comparison to last winter the grand totals for Shelduck and Gadwall were not nationally significant.

The peak count for Avocet (134, March) set a new winter maxima record. Pintail (62, January) numbers also peaked above the five-year average of 49 birds. Of concern were multiple new record low peak counts which were set by Shelduck (271, February), Knot (54, January), Curlew (481, January) and Black-headed Gull (668, December). The peak count for Cormorant (71, November) was the second lowest on record utilising data which goes back to the 1988/89 winter.

Other interesting records during the winter included, 1 Ruddy Shelduck (Fleet Field & Horse Field, November), 4 Egyptian Geese (Brinefields & Tidal Pool, January), 2 Scaup (Bran Sands North, November), 1 Long-tailed Duck (Bran Sands South, January), 1 Great Northern Diver (Peninsula East, February), 1 Red-necked Grebe (Bran Sands, overwintering), Spoonbill (1 RSPB Saltholme, overwintering), 1 Green Sandpiper (Seaton Common, February) and 1 Mediterranean Gull (Hartlepool Bay, overwintering).

Adam Jones

WeBS Local Organiser

March 2025