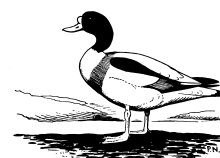


Teesmouth Bird Club

Newsletter

August 2025 (No.91)



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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.

MARCH 2025

The drake Red crested Pochard remained on Ropner Park at the beginning of the month and stayed throughout the period. It was joined on 1st by a drake Mandarin but the latter did not stay. The long staying Iceland Gull was also still at Portrack and the wintering Spoonbill remained on the North Tees Marshes along with two or three Great Egrets.. Two of the latter were also in Wynyard on 2nd.

A Red Kite was over Greatham Creek on 1st. The first returning Whooper Swans were over Phil Stead hide on 2nd. 57 were over Saltholme Pool the following day with 15 at Lockwood Beck on 3rd and a further 38 were

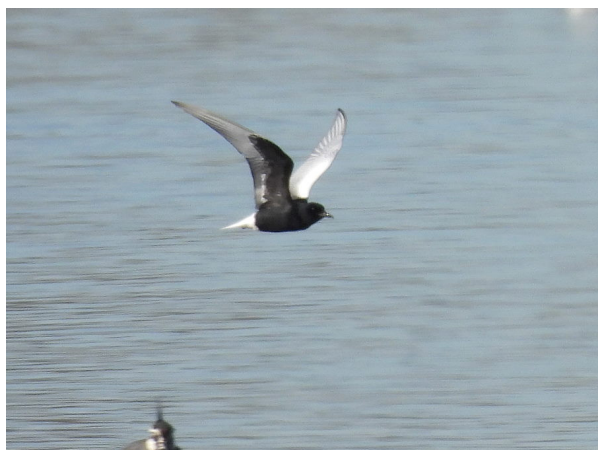
tracked from Scaling Dam to Hartlepool on 4th.

More Red Kites were seen 4th-7th with two in Sleddale on 5th. A Ruff was on Cowpen Marsh on 5th. Singing Chiffchaffs were present from 7th and Cleveland's earliest ever Wheatear was at South Gare on 8th. This was followed by a Little Ringed Plover at Saltholme Pools on 9th.

A Bearded Tit on Dormans Pool on 11th was the first of a series of records from here over the next few weeks but they proved difficult to see as usual. A Great Northern Diver was in Hartlepool harbour on 12th. It was a poor winter for this species in Cleveland.

An adult Little Gull was at RSPB Saltholme 13th-17th. Scaling Dam held both Mediterranean Gull and Whooper Swan on 17th and a Red Kite was over the A19/A174 junction on 18th. Water Pipits were at RSPB Saltholme and Dormans Pool on 19th. Up to four Mediterranean Gulls joined the Black headed Gulls at Paddy's Pool from 21st. The first Ring Ouzel of the spring was at Boulby on 22nd with a Back Redstart at South Gare on the same date. The first Swallow was at North Gare on 27th on which date a Glaucous Gull flew past Hartlepool. A Water Pipit lingered at Cowbar and a Red Kite was over Lockwood Beck on 29th.

APRIL 2025



White winged Tern

Ian Forrest

The month got off to a cracking start with an adult White winged Tern at Saltholme Pools on 1st. This was easily the earliest ever to be seen in Cleveland. Two Mandarins were in the Leven Valley on 2nd whilst two Common Crane flew over Saltholme Pools on 3rd. A Little Gull was present here on 4th.

An early Common Redstart was at Portrack Marsh on 7th. A Black Redstart at Old Cemetery, Hartlepool on the same day was only a brief visitor. A Ruddy Shelduck was at Saltholme Marsh on 8th. The first Grasshopper and Reed Warblers were at Haverton Hole on 9th.

Redstarts were back in Newton Woods on 13th on which date the first Yellow Wagtail was at Saltholme Pools, four very early Little Terns were at Seaton Carew and two Common Cranes flew over Zinc Works Road. A Stone Curlew on Seaton Common on 14th was the first in the county since 2011. A Hooded Crow was also present here and it remained until 18th.

A Blue headed Wagtail was a good find at Hunley Hall Golf Course on 15th. 92 Black-tailed Godwits, a Spotted Redshank and three Ruff were at Saltholme Pools on 16th.

Two White-tailed Eagles were photographed at Seaton Snook on the morning of 17th. Both birds were then subsequently seen flying south later in the day over Dormans Pool and RSPB Saltholme. Amazingly one was again at Seaton Snook on 19th before being seen over Wilton.

The 18th saw a Ruddy Shelduck at Margrove Ponds and the Iceland Gull re-appeared at Haverton Hill. A Black Redstart was present at South Gare on 19th-20th was one of only a few spring records this year. An Osprey flew over Seal Sands and the first Lesser Whitethroat was at RSPB Saltholme. Common Redstarts were at Boulby on 20th and RSPB Saltholme on 21st.

The first Whinchat was at South Gare on 24th and the Iceland Gull re-appeared at Haverton Hill on 25th. A Spotted Redshank in full summer plumage graced RSPB Saltholme 25th -27th and the first Swift and Garden Warblers were recorded on 26th. Another Osprey was over Seaton Common on this date.

Two Wood Sandpipers were on Cowpen Marsh on 28th. Pairs of Mandarin Ducks were at both Skelton and Greatham from 29th. Yet another Osprey was over Dormans Pool on 29th. A different Hooded Crow showed well on Seaton Common and a pair of Egyptian Geese produced seven goslings on Cowpen Marsh. Common Terns were back at RSPB Saltholme from 29th.

MAY

An Arctic Tern was at RSPB Saltholme on 2nd. A pair of Garganey was on Coatham Marsh on 3rd. One of the highlights of the spring was the adult Ross's Gull which flew past Marske on 4th. Sadly it was only seen by the one observer and is the first county record for 30 years. Two Ruddy Shelduck were at Greatham Creek on this date.

A Wood Sandpiper was present at Scaling Dam on 5th. Both Great and Arctic Skuas passed Hartlepool on 5th and a Dotterel was a brief visitor to Guisborough Moor on 6th. A Bittern at Haverton Hole on 7th was one of a series of reports over the next two months and one wonders whether breeding was attempted.

A drake Scaup on Margrove Ponds on 8th was a good find. The two Garganey remained at Coatham Marsh and another was at RSPB Saltholme. The latter site also saw a Hobby on 10th, four Wood Sandpipers on 11th, three Little Stints on 13th and a Curlew Sandpiper

on 14th. Five Dotterel at North Gare from 15th proved very popular and remained until 19th.



Dotterel

Martyn Sidwell

Ospreys were at Scaling Dam on 14th and over RSPB Saltholme on 15th. An adult Long-tailed Skua was past Hartlepool on the latter date. Mid month was exceptionally quiet with a complete lack of migrant passerines at the coast in common with the rest of the month.

Single Curlew Sandpipers were at RSPB Saltholme 17th, 24th and 25th and a Wood Sandpiper was there on 23rd. Again it proved to be a poor spring for wader passage with no large numbers of Ringed Plover or Dunlin. Red Kites were over Freeborough Hill on 20th and others continued to be reported on the county boundary at Sleddale.

A Spoonbill on the North Tees Marshes paid a visit to Rossmere Park, Hartlepool on 28th. A Ruddy Shelduck was at Scaling Dam from 26th and was joined by a Great White Egret on 28th. Garganey numbers increased to three

at Coatham Marsh and a Hobby was over Billingham on 31st.

JUNE

One of April's White-tailed Eagles reappeared in Sleddale on 2nd. Two birds continued to be reported either side of the county boundary into July. A Quail was also at Sleddale on 1st. A drake Garganey joined the Ruddy Shelduck at Scaling Dam on 2nd.

A Glossy Ibis remained at Bowesfield Marsh from 4th-7th and this site also held a Marsh Warbler on 8th and 9th. Increased observers at Sleddale saw a Hobby on 6th and a Red Kite on 11th.



Glossy Ibis

Ian Foster

Egyptian Geese again bred successfully on Cowpen Marsh with a pair raising seven young. Three or four Great White Egrets and two Spoonbills continued to be reported from the North Tees Marshes and one wonders whether either of these species might be added to the list of successful breeders in the not too distant future.

An Osprey was at Scaling Dam on 12th and both a Quail and a Hobby were at Liverton on 13th. A Pacific Golden Plover on Cowpen Marsh on 15th was only the second county record with the first being thirty years ago. It remained in the area until 25th but was often elusive as it fed out on the Salterns.



Pacific Golden Plover

Ian Forrest

A Little Tern at Scaling Dam on 17th was unusual. A Temminck's Stint at RSPB Saltholme on 19th was the only one of the spring and a Hobby was there on the same day. Up to five Wood Sandpipers were also present here 21st-22nd and a Roseate Tern flew past the visitors centre on 22nd.

Unusually large numbers of Mediterranean Gulls were reported at this time with ten between Redcar and Marske on 24th and six at Bydales on 26th being the largest. Ospreys were at Sleddale on 22nd and RSPB Saltholme on 29th.

A Quail was heard at Seaton Carew on 25th and six Bearded Tits at Dormans Pool on 29th suggested successful breeding here. Black-tailed Godwit passage peaked at 485 on the North Tees Marshes on 29th.

SPEAKERS 2025 – 2026

2025

1st September - "The Red Kite Returns"
Harold Dobson

6th October - "Seaton Carew Little" Terns
Derek Wood

3rd November - "Birding in Dumfries and Galloway"
Linda Jenkinson

1st December - "The Rarity Garden". Richard Baines

2026

5th January - "Monals and Maharajas, an Indian Adventure"- Graeme Joynt

2nd February - "Petrels on thin ice - the past, present and future of the world's most southerly seabirds"? Ewan Wakefield.

2nd March - "The Western Isles & St Kilda: birds and wildlife on the Outer Hebrides". Andrew Lapworth

13th April – Annual General Meeting and RSPB Saltholme Update

FROM THE CHAIR

On behalf of the Trustees, I would like to thank our retiring Chair, Mike Leakey for leading our indoor meetings and chairing Trustee Meetings so ably. Mike now takes on the role of Vice-Chair while continuing his good work as BTO Regional Organiser and on the Records Sub-committee. We welcome Rex Earnshaw to the Trustees Committee. Meetings have been held on 29th April and 21st July via Zoom.

Alistair McLee represents the Club in many local conservation issues and is actively involved in a number of projects and initiatives in the area. He reported that the Transporter Bridge peregrine falcon had unfortunately not laid eggs this year with no new breeding activity noted from two other sites in Middlesbrough. On a more hopeful note, positive discussions have taken place between Ali and the manager of CF Fertilisers about creating peregrine falcon nesting sites on the redundant Nitram tower and No.2 Nitric Acid plant.

No news has been received from the Guisborough Levelling-up funding programme regarding the possible installation of swift boxes on West Gate, Guisborough and the idea of erecting a swift tower at Amazon distribution centre at Bowesfield was abandoned. Meanwhile, the swift nesting project at Seaton Carew's pumping station is progressing well, the funding for which was

received by the Club from Northumbrian Water. A meeting to finalise the practicalities of the project has been arranged.

Ali and Mike Leakey have attended talks with The Environmental Agency regarding plans to restore tidal influence to Portrack Marsh with the aim of mitigating flood risk upstream on Lustrum Beck whilst creating areas of saltmarsh, intertidal habitats and saline lagoons. Details are yet to be finalised but the work is unlikely to go ahead before 2027.

The Trustees are pleased to report that the hardware for Motus (Wildlife Tracking System) has been successfully installed at RSPB Saltholme and the system went live on May 14th. Data is presently uploaded on a weekly basis, although it is hoped that this will be transferred automatically with the fitting of an ethernet connection. The Trustees thank Barbara Crinson and her team for their efforts over recent months and years in bringing this project to fruition. It was, however, extremely disappointing to receive the news that the installation of the Biomatrix island at Scaling Dam Reservoir had been cancelled right at the last minute. This was a result of objections from The Reservoirs Inspectorate. It was particularly frustrating for Barbara and all those involved who had put a lot of time and effort into this project. The Club will request the return of funds, but in the meantime, a number of potential alternative sites are being explored.

Work on the 2024 Cleveland Bird Report by the Records Sub-Committee is progressing well, with all species accounts being completed. Our County Recorder, Martyn Sidwell, reported that a number of bird descriptions submitted to BBRC (British Birds Rarities Committee) had been accepted - four outstanding records from 2021 and eight in 2024.

There have been two successful local outings. On 3rd May Chris Sharp lead a walk around Bowesfield Marsh, Stockton, in search of summer migrants and on 30th June a nightjar walk at Guisborough was lead by Bert Mitchell. Both events were well attended and enjoyed. Thanks to both Chris and Bert.

A new season of indoor meetings commences on Monday 1st September. I look forward to seeing you there.

Debbie Lawson, Chair

BTO NEWS SUMMER 2025

Breeding Birds Survey and Waterways Breeding Birds Survey 2025

The warm and dry spring and early summer proved conducive to these surveys locally. At the time of writing, data has been input for at least one visit for at least one visit to 22 1km squares in the Cleveland BTO Region, though we are not destined to match the peak year of coverage of 2019, when 27 squares received both visits. As always, thanks are due to all who participated in this vital long-term project.

The Breeding Bird Survey started in 1994, and a report is produced every year containing population changes and other results from the scheme. The 2024 Breeding Bird Survey Report highlights the continuing decline of some farmland species and more recent declines of woodland birds, at least in England. In Scotland, there is a focus on upland birds, where an all-species indicator using BBS data shows a 20% decline since 1994. In Wales, there are mixed fortunes, with species like House Sparrow bucking the downward trend seen in England, whilst Curlew are in severe decline, as they are elsewhere in the UK. Some songbirds in Northern Ireland, such as Blackbird are doing comparatively well compared to the wider UK trend.

40 regional trends were generated for North East England, showing significant increases since 1995 for 10 species and significant declines for 12 species. Among the losers

were Swift (minus 80) and Yellowhammer (minus 52), while Whitethroat was among the winners (plus 36). The full report can be viewed at

<https://www.bto.org/sites/default/files/BBS-Report-2024.pdf>

Winter Bird Survey 2025/26

BTO have confirmed that the Winter Bird Survey 2025/26 has been given the go-ahead, thanks to generous pledges of funding from a number of private donors. The survey will take the form of the previous survey (2018/19) with the only main difference being the dates. As last time, there will be four visits, with exact windows yet to be confirmed. Whilst some of the midwinter surveying will occur in much the same periods, there will be a visit earlier on in the autumn.

Surveyors will be invited to survey BBS squares, using the same routes and field method, but with a different habitat form to BBS; that is likely to be the same as the last winter survey.

Surveyors will be invited to cover their own BBS squares in the first instance. Any that opt out, or where there is no surveyor, will be opened to the general public after a defined period. BBS surveyors will expressly not be giving up their squares for breeding season surveys, unless they explicitly say so. We will operate a system much like already occurs for butterfly surveys, where BBS volunteers can opt in, opt out (but make available) or state whether or not their square is 'available' for this survey.

Wetland Bird Survey

The national annual WeBS Report, entitled *Waterbirds in the UK 2023/24*, was published

in the spring, and contains a wealth of detail and several fascinating articles. The Tees Estuary WeBS site achieved an aggregate total of 25,030 waterbirds in the reporting year, boosting the site's 5-year mean to 20,176. The Tees Estuary currently ranks at 45th place in the list of principal sites for non-breeding waterbirds in the UK. The only other site in North East England to feature in the top fifty is Lindisfarne (in 18th place). The full report is available here:

<https://www.bto.org/sites/default/files/wituk-2023-24-report-bto-jncc-rspb-naturescot.pdf>

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.

Mike Leakey, BTO Regional Representative for Cleveland

WETLAND BIRD SURVEY TEESMOUTH SPRING 2025 SUMMARY

Coverage was good with 117 of the scheduled 126 sector counts completed over the three months.

For this series of counts the Tees Estuary and Hartlepool Bay recording area was nationally important for Gadwall (337, June) and Avocet (118, May).

It was a good spring for peak counts setting new spring maximum records; species involved included Shoveler (167, April), Great White Egret (4, April & May), Little Ringed Plover (14, June) and Wood Sandpiper (5, June). The Grey Heron peak count equaled the previous spring record of

46 birds set in 2005. Peak totals for Oystercatcher (1116, April) and Bar-tailed Godwit (97, April) also go down as the highest spring maximum counts to date. However, recreational disturbance in the form of paragliding and wind surfing was reported from Bran Sands on the day of the count; this will have resulted in the movement of roosting birds and therefore affected count accuracy. The peak count for Sanderling (11, May) has produced a record low count however sectors which host the core Teesmouth population of this species were not surveyed monthly throughout this series of counts.

Other interesting records during the spring included 3 Garganey (Coatham Marsh, May), 3 Spoonbill (Allotment Pool, June), 1 Pacific Golden Plover (Saltern Wetlands, June) and 1 Green Sandpiper (Coatham Marsh, June).

Adam Jones
Local Organiser, Tees Estuary WeBS
June 2025

WETLAND BIRD SURVEY TEESMOUTH SPRING 2025 SUMMARY

	April 13	May 25	June 22
Little Grebe	17	7	15
Great Crested Grebe	24	22	24
Cormorant	55	23	91
Mute Swan	24	29	41
Shelduck	281*	255*	197
Gadwall	154	258*	337**
Teal	402	2	53
Mallard	204	213	210
Shoveler	167*	63	65
Pochard	74	57	24
Tufted Duck	122	117	79
Eider	10	13	13
Coot	270	198	284
Oystercatcher	1116	458	425
Avocet	110**	118**	66*
Little Ringed Plover	10	12	14
Ringed Plover	51	80	7
Golden Plover	120	0	0
Grey Plover	1	1	0
Lapwing	277	156	332
Knot	52	0	1
Sanderling	8	11	0
Purple Sandpiper	0	0	0
Dunlin	148	8	8
Ruff	3	0	1
Snipe	15	0	3
Black-tailed Godwit	2	9	24
Bar-tailed Godwit	97	0	0
Curlew	163	0	178
Redshank	257	18	33
Turnstone	39	0	0
Sandwich Tern	0	2	201
Common Tern	0	84	146
Little Tern	6	21	57

Counts in bold indicate Spring 2025 maxima.

* Denotes count of >50% of national significance for that species

** Denotes count of national importance for that species

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.