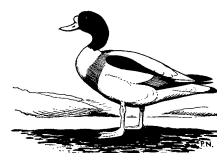


Teesmouth Bird Club Newsletter

April 2015 (No. 60)



Reg. Charity 508850

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*The TBC Newsletter is published three times a year.
Compilation and layout Eric James, distribution Chris Sharp,
web download Jamie Duffie.*

*Any material for inclusion in the Newsletter is welcome.
Please send contributions to tbc.projects@hotmail.co.uk or by
post to Eric James, 7 Hilderthorpe, Nunthorpe, Middlesbrough
TS7 0PT*



What's this bird doing?

See page 18

MONTHLY SUMMARIES

Chris Sharp summarises the winter period that did produce some good birds as well as an unusual number of Grey Phalaropes.

NOVEMBER



Rough-legged Buzzard, Sleddale

Renton Charman

The Eastern Crowned Warbler was still at Brotton on 1st and continued to attract large numbers of birders wanting to catch up with this third for Britain. It was accompanied by a Yellow-browed Warbler. Sea watching off Saltburn produced two Great Northern and a single Black-throated Diver along with 95 Little Gulls and 12 Whooper Swans. Up to three Rough-legged Buzzards were at Sleddale and these birds remained until mid-December. A Great Grey Shrike here on this date was a "one day job". A Grey Phalarope was off South Gare and during the next few days was joined by two more.

Whooper Swans were passing through the county in good numbers at this time with small herds reported on most early November days. Fifteen

flew past Brotton on 2nd. A late Wheatear was on Seaton Common on this date.



Grey Phalarope & Curlew Sandpiper, South Gare Mike Small

Both Puffin and Long-tailed Duck were offshore at South Gare on 4th and a late Curlew Sandpiper was here and remained until 9th. The 5th saw a small passage of Little Auks off Hartlepool with about 60 birds being involved. A Grey Phalarope also flew north here and this may have been the same bird which appeared in the harbour the following day and remained until 11th. Four Grey Phalaropes present in the county at the same time is exceptional. Two Pomarine Skuas flew past Saltburn on 5th and a Lapland Bunting was at North Gare.

A Lesser Whitethroat and Woodcock were at Hartlepool on 6th. Odd Little Auks also continued to be reported for a few days. A Great Grey Shrike was on the outskirts of Middlesbrough on 8th. A Black-throated Diver flew past Hartlepool and a Little Stint was on Dorman's Pool. The latter remained until 13th. A late Ring Ouzel was at Brotton on 9th. A Long-eared Owl flew in off the sea at Hartlepool and 16 Snow Buntings were on Seaton Snook. The similar number remained here for the rest of the winter. With few reports from South Gare this species continues to decline as a winter visitor to Cleveland.

A Great Northern Diver was in Hartlepool harbour on 10th. Three White-fronted Geese were at Scaling Dam on 11th and a Hoopoe was reported from a Hartburn garden on 12th. Good numbers of Pink-footed Geese passed overhead mid-

month. 300 were over Seal Sands on 15th with a further 400 over here the following day. A Lapland Bunting was at Huntcliff on 16th and five Pale-bellied Brent Geese were on Hartlepool Town Moor on this date and a Pomarine Skua passed the Headland.

A strong north easterly on 17th produced a late Sabine's Gull off Seaton Carew along with six Pomarine Skuas and a Little Auk. A Waxwing over Skelton proved to be one of the few winter records of this invasive species. A Green Sandpiper was on Greenabella Marsh on 18th. One or two Great Northern Divers were on Seal Sands at this time with another passed Redcar on 19th along with two Pomarine and two Great Skuas.



Isabelline Wheatear, Seaton Snook

Renton Charman

One of the highlights of the autumn was the Isabelline Wheatear at Seaton Snook from 23rd. This most confiding individual stayed for five days and represented the first county record. It proved very popular with photographers both local and not so local. A Black Redstart was also present here on 24th and a Slavonian Grebe was offshore. A single Waxwing also was over here on 25th on which date 154 Bean Geese were at Scaling Dam. Ring-necked Parakeets roosting in Hartlepool at this time peaked at 39.

A drake Green-winged Teal at Dorman's Pool on 26th was presumably the returning bird from the past few winters. It remained in the area until the end of the winter. A Tundra Bean Goose was at Cowpen Marsh on 29th. Two Hen Harriers were at Scaling Dam on this date. Two Scaup were here the following day along with a Whooper Swan and a Green Sandpiper. The last

day of the month also saw two Waxwings over Nunthorpe and two Lapland Buntings at Old Cemetery, Hartlepool.

DECEMBER

A Grey Phalarope was briefly off Parton Rocks on 2nd. Sea watching at Hartlepool on the same day saw another Grey Phalarope, two Little Auks, two Great Northern Divers and a Puffin. A Great Northern Diver was at Seaton Snook and a Yellow-legged Gull was at Cowpen Bewley landfill.

The Guisborough area was popular with Brambling. Over 100 were at Highcliff Nab and up to 70 were at Lockwood Beck Reservoir. The sea off Redcar attracted small numbers of Velvet Scoter and up to eight were to be present all winter. They were often accompanied by one or two Long-tailed Ducks and about 60 Common Scoter.



Brambling, Scaling Dam

Renton Charman



Black Redstart, Redcar

Martyn Sidwell



Brent Goose, Newburn

Brian Martin



Long-tailed Ducks, Redcar

Eric James



Bar-tailed Godwit, Seaton Snook

Ian Forrest

A second-winter Iceland Gull was at Saltburn on 7th. Both Spotted Redshank and Greenshank were wintering on Greenabella Marsh, the second successive year for both species. Nearby the Whimbrel was also wintering again at Seal Sands. A Snow Bunting at RSPB Saltholme from 8th was an unusual visitor to the reserve and the bird continued to be reported until the end of January.

Mid-month was fairly quiet with the mild weather not producing an influx of many birds from the continent. A couple of Whooper Swans were on Seaton Common on 11th, and a Velvet Scoter was on Seal Sands on 14th. Four Cranes were reported flying south at Seaham, Co Durham on 17th. Observers were able to position themselves at the coast and they were duly recorded passing Hartlepool and South Gare. The instant information provided by Twitter, once again proved to be a winner.

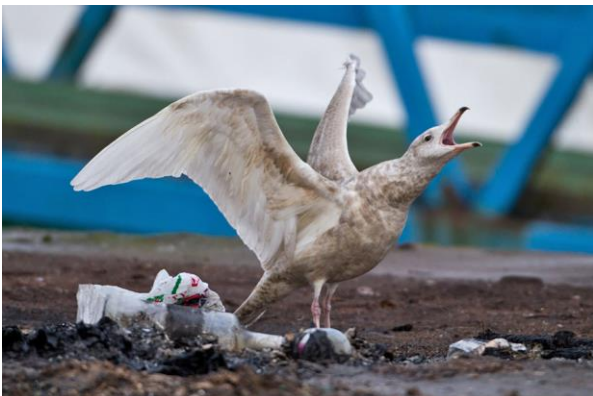
Strong onshore winds on 20th produced the final Little Auk of the year off Hartlepool and a Great Skua at South Gare. Two Long-eared Owls were roosting at Haverton and these birds were to prove an attraction well into the New Year. A Black Redstart was present at Redcar from 26th. A Waxwing at Greatham Creek from 27th departed on 31st much to the chagrin of the year listers. A Sandwich Tern off Redcar on 28th was

an unusual winter visitor and perhaps reflected the relatively mild weather. A Glaucous Gull was at Hartlepool from 28th and the year ended with a first-winter Caspian Gull at Cowpen Bewley on 30th and a Bonxie north at Saltburn on 31st.



Waxwing, Greatham Creek

Martyn Sidwell



Glaucous Gull, Hartlepool Headland

Martyn Sidwell



Glaucous x Herring Gull, Hartlepool Headland

Martyn Sidwell

JANUARY

A usual many birders were out on the first, but it was a case of more birders than birds. The only birds of note recorded on the first day of the year were Great Northern Diver and Puffin off South Gare and the Glaucous Gull at Hartlepool. Little was to change during the first half of the month. The Green-winged Teal was regularly reported at Saltholme Pools and both Dark-bellied Brent Goose and Velvet Scoter were on Seal Sands.

Two Waxwings were at Thornaby on 4th. A White-fronted Goose was at Bowesfield and a Hawfinch was reported from a Yarm garden on 5th. Three Bewick's Swans flying past Redcar on 6th were probably the rarest birds of the month. This is a difficult species to catch up with now in Cleveland.

Scaling Dam was the place to be on 8th with a ring-tail Hen Harrier, Scaup and three Tundra Bean Geese all present. A Lapland Bunting was at Seaton Snook on 11th. Two Shore Larks at Old Cemetery, Hartlepool from 13th proved popular. One bird quickly moved on but the other stayed into late February. A first-winter Caspian Gull was on Seaton Common on 14th and an adult Yellow-legged Gull was at Haverton from 16th, often sitting on the local lamp posts.

Three Jack Snipe were at Coatham Marsh on 17th. Nearby the Scoter flock was off Redcar occasionally attracted up to three Long-tailed Ducks and a single Great Northern Diver. Two Waxwings were at Lackenby from 20th. Two Whooper Swans visited Saltholme Pools on 21st with a further single on 23rd. The Long-eared Owl roost at Haverton attracted up to four birds. A Puffin was off Saltburn on 24th with both Black-throated (2) and Great Northern Divers (1) there the following day.



Shore Lark, Hartlepool

Renton Charman



Shore Larks, Hartlepool

Ian Forrest



Marsh Tit, Scaling Dam

Renton Charman



Fieldfare, Hargreave's Quarry

Renton Charman

Two Green Sandpipers were found wintering. The usual Portrack bird was present but more reliable was a bird behind Morrisons at Teesside Retail Park. Two Bitterns were at RSPB Saltholme on 30th. The last day of the month saw two Little Auks, Puffin and Great Northern Diver pass Hartlepool.

FEBRUARY

An excellent winter's sea watch on 1st off Hartlepool produced a single Pomarine Skua, two Great Skuas, 20 Little Auks and a Black-throated Diver. A Black-necked Grebe visited Seal Sands on 3rd. It proved to be a poor winter for the scarcer grebes with a complete absence of both Slavonian and Red-necked.

One or two Little Auks continued to be reported from the coastal stations over the next few days. A Great Northern Diver was off Hartlepool on 4th with another at Seaton Snook. This latter bird



Little Auk, Hartlepool Headland

Brian Martin



Green-winged Teal, Saltholme

Martyn Sidwell

was probably one of the three birds that were regularly off South Gare during the month.

A first-winter Iceland Gull was a brief visitor to Newburn on 7th. Again it was a quiet winter for white-winged gulls. This proved to be the only Iceland in the first two months of the year and the larger Glaucous Gull was also present in fewer numbers than in the past few winters.

The Green-winged Teal continued to be reported from Saltholme or Dorman's Pools. Rarest bird of the month was the Black Guillemot which was present in Hartlepool Fish Quay from 9th to 18th.

Ten Waxwings at Guisborough on 14th was by far the largest flock of the winter. A Taiga Bean Goose in the Haverton/Cowpen Bewley from 18th accompanied seven Pink-footed Geese and remained into March as did a White-fronted Goose which was at Scaling dam from 20th. A Bittern was at Dormans Pool on 21st. A female Eider on the river Tees at Stockton from 21st fed happily with the Mallard and Mute Swans it accompanied.

A Marsh Harrier was at Dormans Pool from 24th. Avocets arrived back on the North Tees Marshes on 25th when four were on Greenabella Marsh. Numbers had increased to ten by the end of the month. A Short-eared Owl on Cowpen Marsh caused some interest as the species had been completely absent during the preceding three

months. This owl is definitely getting scarcer in Cleveland. It is only a few years ago when a walk along Greatham Creek in winter would guarantee three or four of these graceful creatures.

A Jack Snipe was on Dorman's Pool on 27th. The month ended with the Spotted Redshank, Greenshank, Green Sandpiper and Whimbrel all still present and birders dreaming of the first Wheatear of the spring.



Black Guillemot, Hartlepool Headland

Hilary Chambers



Bean Goose, Haverton Hole

Brian Martin



White-fronted Goose, Scaling Dam

Chris Small



Green Sandpiper, Teesside Retail Park

Ian Forrest

COMMITTEE NEWS

Mike McGroarty summarises some of the recent discussions by the Club Committee

The Club Committee (Board of Trustees) met in February and reviewed the reports from our three Sub-committees. Points of interest for Members are as follows:

The Club Committee thanked John Crussell for his six years of contribution to the Committee, as this was his last meeting as a Trustee. A replacement is being sought and anyone interested should contact Chris Sharp - a female member would be particularly welcomed as the Committee would like to correct the current gender imbalance. The Conservation Committee is also in need of increasing its current membership and expressions of interest in joining that team will be welcome. The Committee meets up to four times a year and duties are not onerous. Ali McLee, who chairs that Committee, can provide further information for anyone interested.

We continue to plan for the erection of an elevated viewing platform on the track at the South end of Dorman's Pool in memory of the late Ted Parker but the timescales necessary to obtain the relevant consents and for construction will probably mean that, to avoid disturbance, we will not be able to have it in place until after this year's breeding season. An application for grant support was made but is now looking unlikely to succeed.

Our Treasurer's report confirmed that we remain in a strong financial position, even after allowance is made for the above project.

Some time was also spent in planning for the Club's AGM (to be held on Monday 13th April) including consideration of whether there is a sufficiently meritorious candidate for the Ted Parker Award for outstanding contributions to the Club.

Volunteering for membership of TBC committees

If you want to volunteer or just want information on what is involved, the contact details for the people mentioned by Mike (above) are :

Chris Sharp :

Email chrisandlucia@ntlworld.com

Tel 01429 865163

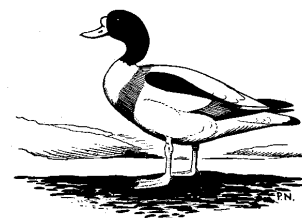
Alistair McLee :

Email canda.mcllee@virgin.net

Tel 01642 787305

TEESMOUTH BIRD CLUB

(Registered as a Charity No. 508850)



ANNUAL REPORT 2014

THE CLUB COMMITTEE

(Chairman) **Mike McGrory**
(Vice Chairman) **Dave Nelson**
(Hon Secretary) **Chris Sharp**
(Hon Treasurer) **Mark Askew**
((Ordinary Member) **John Crussell** (First Appointed 2009)
(Ordinary Member) **Colin Walker** (First Appointed 2011)
(Ordinary Member) **Peter Garbutt** (First Appointed 2013)
(Ordinary Member) **Alistair McLee** (First Appointed 2013)
(Ordinary Member) **Brian Clasper** (First Appointed 2014)

RECORDS SUB-COMMITTEE

(Chairman) **Tom Francis**
Chris Brown
Stewart Hinley
Graeme Joynt
Graham Megson
Mark Rowbottom
Chris Sharp
Chris Bell
Mark Askew
Geoff Iceton

MARKETING & MEMBERSHIP SUB- COMMITTEE

(Chairman) **Chris Sharp**
John Fletcher
Eric James
Julie Mason
Russell McAndrew
Dave Nelson
Chris Brayshay
Anne Brayshay

CONSERVATION SUB-COMMITTEE

(Chairman) **Alistair McLee**
Graham Megson
Vic Fairbrother
Alan Snape
Sue Antrobus
Ken Smith
Dean Heward

HONORARY TREASURER'S REPORT 2014

A steady year, with an increase in overall funds of £3068. The surplus was primarily due to donations from the sale of Ted Parker's equipment and for George Alderson's funeral, as well as a higher than normal income from the provision of data that Alistair McLee manages admirably. While additional funds were released to support the well-received improvements to the Cleveland Bird Report, other costs remain under control and we were able to support birds and birding through expanding the bird feeding stations and funding ringing equipment.

As Club finances are still healthy, we do not propose to seek an increase in membership subscription fees for 2016.

Mark Askew

TBC Balance Sheet 01.01.2014 to 31.12.2014 on next page

TEESMOUTH BIRD CLUB
Statement of Income & Expenditure for 2014
(with 2013 for comparison)

	2014		2013	
	<u>Income</u>	<u>Payment</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Payment</u>
Subscriptions	4723.00		5194.00	
Gift Aid	1052.89		1017.15	
Interest	413.77		409.88	
Meetings		332.10		337.16
Lecture Fees		150.00		72.00
TBC Gen Publications	401.45		573.15	
Bird Report		2300.00		1900.00
Printing & Stationery		473.99		469.80
Postage		459.20		669.68
Subs to other Societies		48.00		47.50
Data Provision	965.00		148.50	
Insurance		510.53		492.82
Sundries		30.00		0.00
Website		166.82		162.62
TBC Merchandise	4.00	0.00	30.00	0.00
Outings	0.00	0.00	334.20	330.00
TBC Workshop	0.00		30.00	
Donations	1344.00		0.00	
Dorman's Pool		0.00		1200.00
Feeding Stations		550.09		352.49
Recorder's Expenses		0.00		0.00
RSPB Tern Island		0.00		2000.00
Report Editor's Computer		314.95		0.00
Tees Ringing Group		500.00		0.00
	8904.11	5835.68	7736.88	8034.07
Excess Income		3068.43		-297.19
	<u>8904.11</u>	<u>8904.11</u>	<u>7736.88</u>	<u>7736.88</u>
Balance B/F 2013		55493.33	Balance B/F 2012	55790.52
Excess Income		3068.43		-297.19
Balance 31.12.2014		<u>58561.76</u>	Balance 31.12.2013	<u>55493.33</u>
Cash in hand		0.00		0.00
Bank Current Acc		2978.54		323.88
P. Stead Mem Fund		0.02		0.02
NSB Investment Acc		55583.20		55169.43
		<u>58561.80</u>		<u>55493.33</u>

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2014



The principal role of the Board of Trustees ('Main Committee') is to ensure that our Club operates in line with our charitable objectives (if you are unfamiliar with them, see the Club website or a hard copy from our Hon. Secretary) and in accordance with the legal requirements of the Charities Act 2011 and other legislation. To this end we meet quarterly and I give a short summary of points of interest to members in each Newsletter.

The main activities contributing to these objectives are carried out by our three Sub-committees, the members of which do a great deal of work during the year, largely unseen by the rest of us, and thereby maintaining the high reputation of the Club as the foremost authority on the birds of the former County of Cleveland.

The Conservation Committee is the group through which the Club is involved with conservation projects, usually in liaison with other like-minded bodies and the relevant authorities. Advice is often sought regarding potential harmful impacts of proposed developments and the Committee will raise objections or comment upon harmful aspects of planning applications and may suggest compensatory measures. Reports from the Committee appear in each Club Newsletter and give examples of some of the work of that Committee. Members of this Committee also liaise with a broad spectrum of other local and national bodies to ensure we are aware of what others are doing and can play our part or exert some influence where appropriate.

The Records Committee is responsible for vetting all bird records in our area and for the annual compilation and publication of the well-respected Cleveland Bird Report, the most recent report being even more impressive than usual in its new format and greater use of colour images. Past data is held securely and is available on request to those with an appropriate interest. This can also provide a source of income to the Club.

The Marketing and Membership Committee deals with the attraction and retention of members, promotion of the Club, relations with the local media and sale of publications as well as organising, and often leading, our local outings and securing speakers for our evening meetings. The onerous task of compiling and editing our excellent Newsletter also falls within the remit of this Committee.

The Trustees are satisfied that our Committee structure is working well and delivering all that is expected, to a very high standard. In addition, we continue to operate on a sound financial footing. Thanks are due to all members of these Committees and to all those who contribute in so many ways to the continued success of the Club.

Those of us not directly involved in the above activities can also play our part in submitting sightings records (see the helpful advice in the December 2014 Newsletter) and, importantly, by upholding the reputation and standards of our Club in all of our birding activities.

Lastly, I owe a big thank you to my fellow Trustees who have supported and guided me through my first year of office.

Mike McGrory

TBC Chairman

April 2015

HONORARY SECRETARY'S REPORT

As can be seen from the table on the next page, the Club membership fell again in 2014. This is the second consecutive year of falling numbers.. I guess numbers couldn't go on rising. It is to be hoped that numbers level out over the next few years.

Since 2012, senior citizen membership fees have been the same as full membership fees and hence the table below does not split the number of senior citizens but it is safe to assume that the number of members in this age group continues to rise. At £12 the membership fee still remains excellent value.

As a Club we have managed to keep the subscriptions at a relatively low level for several years and I am certain that in these austere times

	Total	Full	Family	Junior	S/C	Life	Hon
2001	231	120	67	-	24	14	6
2002	254	130	79	-	25	14	6
2003	259	135	77	-	27	14	6
2004	270	132	78	-	40	14	6
2005	287	134	95	-	39	14	5
2006	317	157	89	-	52	14	5
2007	346	156	119	-	51	14	6
2008	421	176	170	-	55	14	6
2009	487	203	190	1	73	14	6
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

this is one of the reasons behind the Club's success. The presence of RSPB Saltholme has no doubt also been an influence.

As in previous years, the many hours of free time given by certain members is worth a mention. Both Dave Nelson and John Fletcher have shown many new members the main bird watching sites in Cleveland and I am sure their efforts are much appreciated. Eric James continues to edit the newsletter and collate the articles for publication. Our website manager Jamie Duffie has also overseen a website that gains praise from everyone who logs on. Despite many teething problems over the past year the site is well used and, with the ever increasing use of Twitter as a means of reporting sightings and publishing photographs, represents the best way for visitors to the area to keep up with what's around

The annual bird report is also a publication the Club can be rightly proud of. I know the amount of time that is spent collating the records and writing and checking the report runs into many hundreds of hours. The recorder Tom Francis, the editor Graeme Joynt and the rest of the compilers and records sub-committee must be thanked for their efforts. The 2013 bird report is in a new larger format and represents the first report to be in full colour. The extra pounds spent on this improvement represent excellent value.

Although Don Page retired as treasurer in 2000 he continues to complete the Club's annual Gift Aid applications. As can be seen from the income and expenditure account this represents a significant proportion of the club's income. Don was rewarded for his efforts in becoming the first recipient of the "Ted Parker Award". This is a new annual award the Club will be giving in recognition to members who have contributed significantly to the Club and its aims over a

number of years. A fitting tribute to the man whose name the award bears.

Many other members contribute to the smooth running of the Club. We are always on the look out for other members to join the various sub-committees. If you wish to get involved do not hesitate to speak to me or another committee member.

Chris Sharp

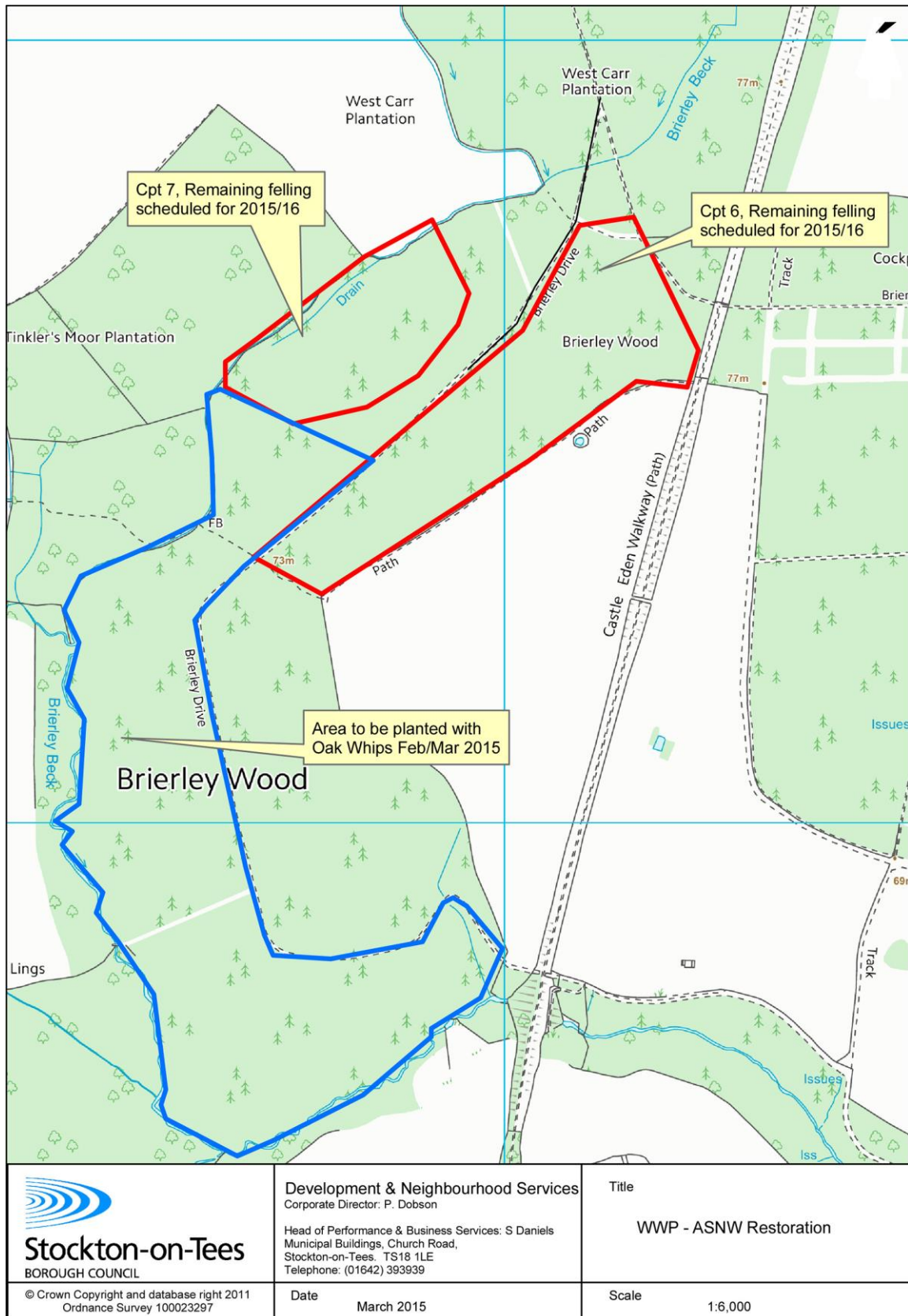
CONSERVATION NEWS

Alistair McLee describes the progress with conifer removal in Brierley Wood. With the changes made so far, the future of the wood looks promising.

I announced the plan to selectively remove alien conifers in the Brierley Wood area of Wynyard Woodland Park, in our April 2014 Newsletter. This process, carried out over the winter months has been completed for this season. All of the felling and extraction could not be carried out however, as Great Crested Newts had started their annual migration to their spawning pond, and the law required the work to be put on hold for finalisation next winter.

Having said that, the great majority of the site has been felled and for the first time in 60 years, light now reaches the ground. A surprising number of slender broadleaved trees had been surviving, by struggling upwards toward the light in the conifers' gloom. How well these will fare when they have to experience winds for the first time, remains to be seen, but the survivors, plus new seedling colonisers, will start the succession process. In one sector, to speed the succession to oak woodland, 3,000 oak whips have been planted. Next autumn will see forgotten Jay acorn caches' contribution to oak colonisation.

Cont on page 12



Brierley Wood : map of future work



Selective thinning of conifers



Oaks appearing in cleared area



Conifers for felling next winter

Photographs by Alistair Mclee

The Club will be reporting to Stockton on breeding bird species starting to utilise the area and your records should be sent to me in the first instance. Now I see the clearance, I fancy even more the area for Nightjar, after all they breed in Hamsterley to the north and Guisborough Forests to the south.

It might be worthwhile keeping an eye on this area. To send records to Alistair, see contact details on page 6.

REQUESTS FOR HELP

ATTRACTING JUNIOR CLUB MEMBERS

Volunteers are urgently needed to help try and recruit young people to join Teesmouth Bird Club. Two taster sessions for youngsters are being organised for Friday 22nd May and Sunday 24th May, and the Club is appealing to experienced bird watchers to give up just a couple of hours of their time on both dates to talk to teenagers about the Club and help with identification of birds. Comprehensive schools and youth clubs, some of whose members are taking their Duke of Edinburgh Awards of which bird watching is a component part, have shown an interest.

We plan to take one party of teenagers on a walk along Greatham Creek and guide another round RSPB Saltholme, pointing out the Common Terns making full use of the Club's sponsored 'rafts', demonstrating one of the practical ways the Bird Club is helping conservation.

We are hoping that RSPB Saltholme and the Teesmouth Field Centre will be generous enough to let their premises be used as rendezvous points, where initial introductions can be made. If you are able to help, please contact Anne or Chris Brayshay on (01642) 870213.

TEES VALLEY WILDLIFE TRUST SURVEY

Amy Carrick of the TVWT is asking for assistance at Preston Park :

"I was wondering if you could help me, I am planning on carrying out a bio blitz style survey on our Preston Farm reserve in the summer and was wondering if the TBC would like to be involved in the survey? I have the Angling Trust on board already and hope to get other groups involved also.

In terms of dates, I'm looking at Friday 12th /Saturday 13th June, possibly getting schools to help on the Friday and general public on the Saturday. Preston Park Museum say we can use their car park as a base. We'll be looking at the wildflowers in the meadows, birds in and around

the ponds, as well as what's in the ponds, and also mammals. So it'll be a mixture of scientific surveys and some activities for kids to do as well, to ensure as wider participation as possible.

Early days yet but I just wanted to gauge interest first".

You can contact Amy by Email at

<mailto:acarrick@teeswildlife.org>

BTO SURVEYS

***Vic Fairbrother** reports on the latest situation on availability of survey squares.*

House Martin Survey

Volunteers are invited to take on a 1-km square for the new House Martin Survey this year. Just three visits are required from late May onwards. There are four random squares still to allocate in Cleveland:

NZ 4117 Burnhope farm near Elton.

NZ 4321 Roseworth, Stockton.

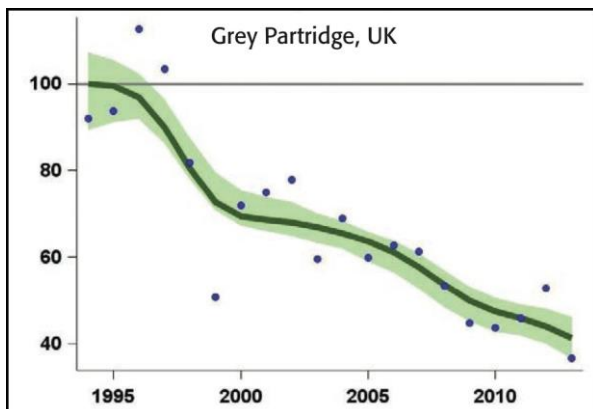
NZ 6816 Little Moorsholm Farm.

NZ 7215 Handale, Loftus.

The survey requires you to find and map any House Martin colonies in the square and to count occupied nests.

Breeding Bird Survey

The BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) is the main scheme for monitoring the population changes of the UK's common breeding birds. It is a national volunteer project aimed at keeping track of changes in the breeding populations of widespread bird species in the UK. Wild bird populations are an important indicator of the health of the countryside, and knowing to what extent bird populations are increasing or decreasing is fundamental to bird conservation.



Grey Partridge population trend : this sort of information from the BBS is used to promote conservation measures.

Now is the time to volunteer for a BBS square ready for the 2015 season! This will be the 22nd consecutive year of the survey and 26 squares will be covered by local volunteers this year but the following Cleveland Region squares are available to allocate.

NZ3019 Ketton Hall.

NZ3114 Lingfield, Darlington.

NZ3311 Dinsdale Wood.

NZ4037 Wingate.

NZ4516 Thornaby.

All BBS squares are valuable to the survey and it would be great to have full coverage.

Full details of both surveys are on the BTO website where you can request a square :

www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/house-martin-survey

www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/bbs

Or you can contact Vic Fairbrother directly :

Tel (01287 633744)

Email vic.fairbrother@ntlworld.com

You do not need to be a member of the BTO to take part in these surveys!

Some comments from BBS surveyors

The BBS only requires three visits per year to your square, but taking part is a rewarding experience. The squares are chosen at random to ensure that all habitats are covered, so some are in what might seem unpromising locations. These two comments by surveyors show that this is no handicap :

"I took on an urban square in the middle of a very boring bit of Bristol. The walk past the twenty foot walls of Bristol Prison with TV cameras covering every yard is always rather fun. I have never understood why every BTO member does not have their own square - the whole thing is a doddle - and I am back home by 9am" **Richard Bland**

"I appreciate the value of persisting with an average square of farmland, to enable the gathering of data to show just how badly our farmland birds are doing" **Louise Bacon**

Those of us who have trouble getting out of bed in the morning might appreciate this comment :

"What I like about the BBS is that it forces me to get up early and to walk over a familiar patch. Early morning is a special time, and as I always aim to complete the walk when the weather is favourable it is great to feel the sun's rising warmth" **Paul Copestake**

REPORTS ON LOCAL OUTINGS

HARTLEPOOL HEADLAND

10th January 2015 *Chris Sharp*

About 20 members attended on what was a bitterly cold day. A walk around to the harbour produced the usual species of wader including Purple Sandpiper and Turnstone. A Rock Pipit was also present. Very few birds were to be seen on the sea with just a few Eider and Red-throated Divers. The walk north from the Heugh battery was soon abandoned. Walking head on into a strong north westerly was no fun! We then headed for the Fish Quay where the Glaucous Gull showed well.

NORTH GARE AND SEATON SNOOK

22nd February 2015 *Chris Sharp*

Again a very cold and windy day but thankfully it remained dry until we returned to our cars. We met at North Gare car park and walked out to the end of Gare. The seed provided by the Club in the car park produced good views of Skylark and Reed Buntings. The sea was quiet at the end of the Gare save for a few Shags and a single Red-breasted Merganser. We also had distant views of a Great Northern Diver just off South Gare.

We then walked across to Seaton Snook where the wintering flock of Snow Buntings gave good views. Two males stood out from the rest.

SALTERN WETLANDS

14th March 2015 *Chris Sharp*

This was a chance for members to visit this newly created habitat. About 22 members attended and we walked along the newly created footpath towards Greatham. Although few birds were seen along the way - just a few Dunlin, Ringed Plover and Grey Plover, many could see the potential of the area and for most it was their first visit to this under-watched part of the North Tees Marshes. Just beyond the farm there are two newly created pools known as Greatham Borrows Pit. A few Wigeon and Tufted Duck were present here. On the walk back we looked over at Greatham Tank Farm. Again most present did not even realise there were any pools here.

Although the birding was quiet, the walk fulfilled its intention of showing members some new places to visit off the beaten track.

LOCAL OUTINGS APRIL TO AUGUST 2015

COWPEN BEWLEY WOODLAND PARK

Tuesday 28th April 2015

Join Dave Nelson to explore this local nature reserve. A good selection of common woodland species should be seen and early summer migrants such as Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff and Blackcap should be well established. Meet at the nature reserve car park at 9.30 a.m.

Leader: **Dave Nelson** Tel: 01642 824755

SUMMER MIGRANTS AT FLATTS LANE COUNTRY PARK MIDDLESBROUGH

Tuesday 5th May 2015

Meet in the car park at 9.15 a.m. at Flatts Lane Visitors Centre for a walk in search for summer migrants and other resident birds with Geoff Myers, who knows this area very well. Hopefully summer visitors should include the usual warblers including Lesser Whitethroat, Blackcap and possibly Garden Warbler and Grasshopper Warbler. Many other resident woodland species should also be present.

Leader: **Geoff Myers** Tel: 01642 461850

NIGHTJARS

June 2015

It is hoped that the Nightjars will be back at Guisborough Forest this spring. If they are, it is intended to visit here on a June night. Seeing and hearing them is very much influenced by the weather. It is therefore the plan to advertise this walk at a later date on the website whenever the weather conditions look favourable.

SEA WATCHING AT HARTLEPOOL HEADLAND

Saturday 22nd August 2015

Meet at the Heugh Gun Battery from 9.00 a.m. for this always popular outing. If the weather conditions are favourable almost anything is possible at this time of year. Four species of skua and two species of shearwater are the targets. Even if it is a westerly there still should be something of interest to see, such as Common Scoter and Teal. If the sea watching is poor there may be something to be found in the nearby gardens.

Leader : **Chris Sharp** Tel: 01429 865163

FOXGLOVE COVERT NATURE RESERVE

Chris Brayshay describes this unusual nature reserve that is inside a military establishment, and gives details of a planned TBC visit.

Foxglove Covert, the UK's only nature reserve to have its own 24-hour armed guard, is the destination of a Club visit on Sunday April 19th.

The 100 acre reserve on the edge of Catterick Garrison - the British Army's largest camp anywhere on the globe - is the top bird-ringing site in the UK, with a total of 40,074 birds caught in 32 mist nets and ringed in the reserve's first 21 years of existence.

Foxglove, one of a chain of 120 ringing sites across the British Isles, passes its data to the British Trust for Ornithology which analyses the results.

Behind its tall security fence and locked gates, the reserve is another world, with 70 different kinds of birds, while it is the home of roe deer, badger, otter, water voles, and 670 species of plants.

Over 2,300 species of plants, birds, animals, moths, bats, trees, mosses and lichen have been recorded across the site which boasts 15 very different habitats seamlessly stitched together.

One of those habitats, the woodland trail, is in

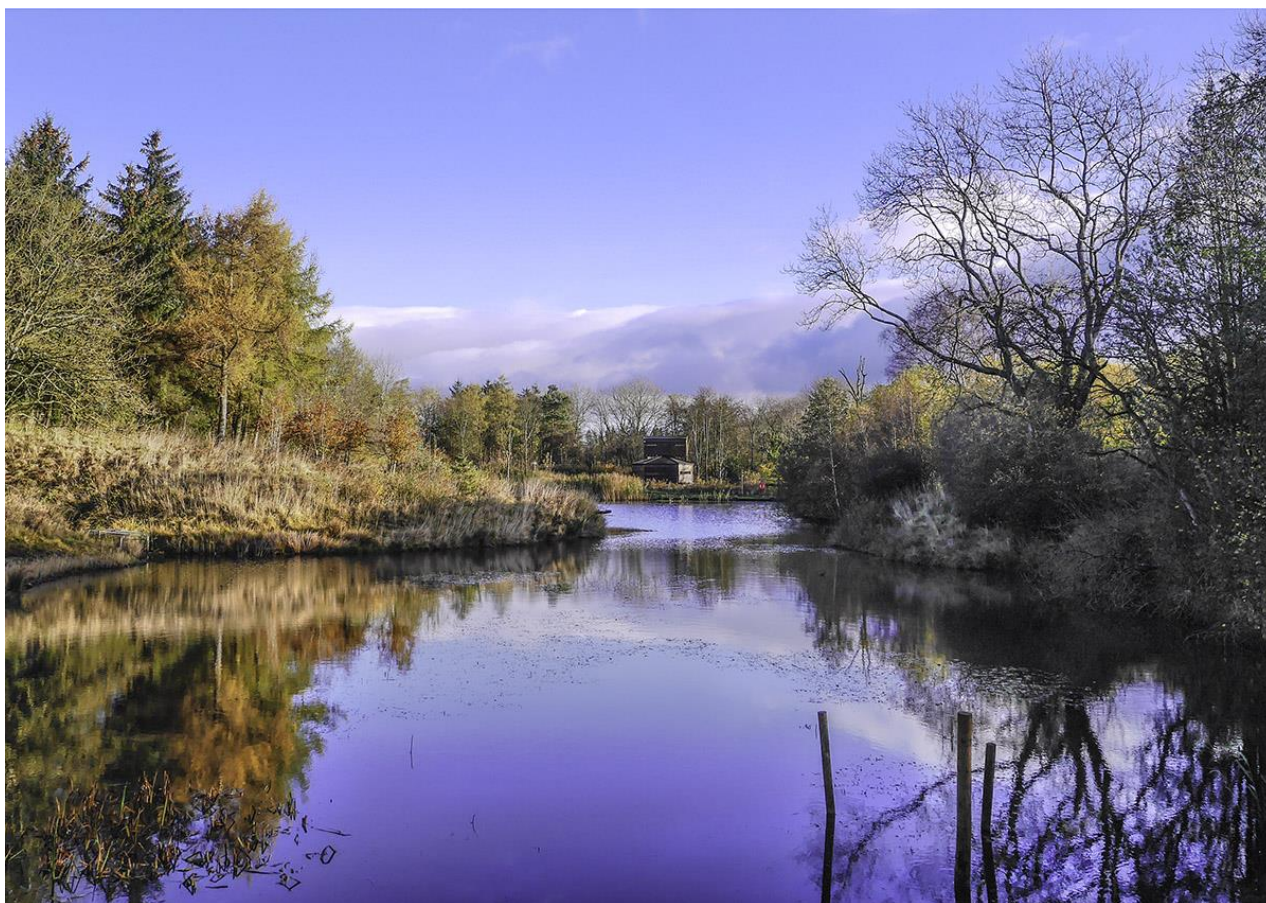
spring carpeted with primroses, bluebells, violets and herb robert, wood avens, stitchwort and bugle. Marsh marigold and lady's smock flourish around pools full of frog and toad tadpoles while damselflies dart in the air above. And in the due season that can mean a visit from a Hobby.

Foxglove has been placed in the UK's top 100 pond systems for the sheer biodiversity found here.

Great Spotted and Green Woodpeckers are regularly seen on the reserve together with Nuthatches, Treecreepers, Jays and the full range of tits, with of course the exception of the Crested.

There are Buzzards and Tawny Owls living on and around the reserve with Kingfishers regularly visiting Foxglove's lake and terraced pools. Spring brings the return of Chiffchaff, Willow, Sedge, Reed and Grasshopper Warblers, Blackcap and Redstart.

The surreality of Foxglove could not have struck me more forcibly than when visiting the reserve on a week day, two years ago. I listened to a Sedge Warbler, churring out its courtship song to the distant crack-crack accompaniment of 30-round magazine SA80's automatic rifles being discharged on nearby firing ranges.



Foxglove Covert Nature Reserve

In fact one corner of the reserve comes so close to a moorland exercise ground that the key to one of the hides – the wetland hide – is kept hidden to stop soldiers sneaking indoors out of the wet and cold.

Foxglove began almost by accident. A slip-up in the timetable when transferring the tank training school from Catterick to Bovington, Dorset, left recruits marooned at the North Yorkshire garrison with little to do.

Major (rtd.) Tony Crease, the reserve's architect, was asked by his bosses in 1992 to find some useful work for the young soldiers.

The Ministry of Defence initially gave him 28 acres of wild, boggy moorland edge on which to set the youngsters to work, to tame and redevelop. And that was how Foxglove began: the first local nature reserve to be established on MoD land in the UK.

A lifelong birder, Tony was so inspired by what he found while serving in Germany for 25 years that he used what he had seen as a template for Foxglove Covert on his return to Catterick.

Tony admits: "I think they (the Ministry of Defence) felt we were a bunch of nutters, and that after 15 to 16 months everyone would get posted elsewhere and the place would revert back to being a wilderness."

It hasn't!

TBC visit

Maps showing access to the Reserve can be found at : www.foxglovecovert.org.uk/contact/ and clicking on [Download our location map \(pdf\)](#)

To reach the reserve members must drive through the centre of the Garrison. On the A6136, drive straight across the 'Aldi' roundabout – the supermarket is to your right - and pass Catterick Golf Course on your left.

As you find yourself next to an athletics track on your left, the main road swings to the left at the foot of a hill taking you out of the camp and towards Leyburn. Take the second road off on the right signposted 'Marne Barracks'.

The bottom of the road you now head down is barred by a red and white painted road barrier. Show the duty sentry proof of identity. He will direct you to a guard room to your left.

You will again have to give ID details, registration, make and colour of the car and number of people travelling with you, whereupon you will be issued with a yellow pass which must be displayed on the dashboard.

Because Britain is on a 'severe' terrorism alert you may have to wait to be escorted to the entrance gate to the reserve.

Car parking on the reserve itself is limited and as our visit deliberately falls on a day when bird ringing will be in progress, what spaces are available will have been occupied since dawn!

It is therefore suggested that Bird Club members park their cars on a large and unused barrack square immediately adjacent to the actual gates to Foxglove – and walk the quarter of a mile to the reserve's field centre. **Could members park up on the square between 10am and 10.15am, please?**

Anyone experiencing delays can ring the field centre on (01748) 831113.

Reserve manager Adam Edmond is offering everyone a guided tour of the reserve, while members can see birds ringed, sexed and weighed.

The volunteer run reserve is dog-friendly, with owners asked to keep their pets on leads while mist netting is in progress.

Notes : Photographic ID is required for entry.

If you have spare seats in your car, or if you are without transport, contact Chris Sharp who will try to organise car sharing. Chris's contact details are :

Email chrisandlucia@ntlworld.com

Tel 01429 865163

If you have any other enquiries, please contact Chris Brayshay on 01642 870213.

Blowing our own trumpet

Chris Brayshay is our Publicity Officer and has already succeeded in getting two items of positive news about Teesmouth Bird Club in the local Press within the first month of this year.

The Club is keen to spread the word about its conservation work, so if anyone has ideas for articles to promote the work of the Club would they please give Chris a call on 01642 870213.

DRONING ON

Alistair McLee draws our attention to some possible drawbacks of one particular technological advance.

Today's news often features articles on drones, whether they are being used for remote warfare or illegal sorties over airports (or sheep herding!). Even more popular are articles on relatively inexpensive drones which the public can buy with very few constraints on their use, other than a few fairly pertinent safety considerations. It is the misuse of these boys' toys which is starting to attract publicity.

The growing ownership of these models should give one a feeling of early unease. Of course there are legitimate uses for such methods of surveillance, but it usually is in the hands of genuine and legitimate users e.g. search and rescue, archaeological surveying, habitat assessment and species enumeration. The latter application of drone based aerial photography can become a double edged sword.

Counting nesting sea birds, assessing the numbers of dolphins in a megapod, counting birds in wintering flocks are, in my view, a legitimate use of the equipment provided it is done with due concern for the target species and is performed swiftly and only once. So far so good, so what is to worry about? Well you will no doubt recall those spectacular aerial shots of Lesser Flamingos in Africa, caribou on the Canadian tundra, the mobs of kangaroos in Australia. Notice something - they were all fleeing from the microlight taking the films. Of course, the shots of migrating storks crossing the Bosphorus were taken from a remote controlled aircraft designed to look like a stork and appeared not to be interrupting the exhausting crossing, but then that could be simply skilful editing.

New technology has driven a huge upsurge in wildlife photography, and sadly there is an element who do not behave responsibly. Drone based photography opens a wonderful new vista for spectacular images and at the same time a vehicle for unwarranted, thoughtless disturbance. At present, the law only requires that the operator must be within 500m of the drone and have it in sight. Well that is alright then! There is starting to be a move to have all drones identified, not by physical lettering or the like, but by a constantly emitted signal. Mobile phone users wishing to act as a policing force for improper drone flying could demand an app which could read the signal from the miscreant drone and subsequently identify its pilot.

All a flight of fancy you say.....

We shall see.

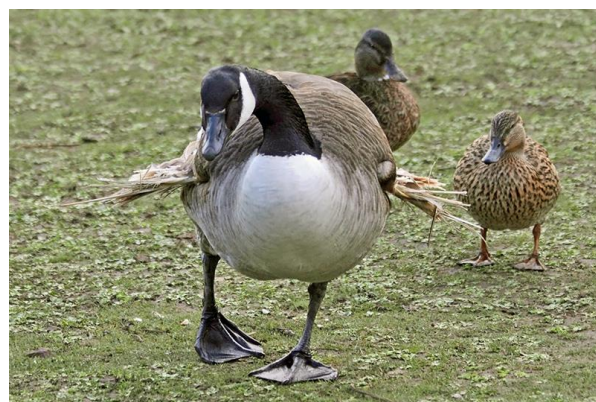


TIT-BITS

A collection of bits and pieces of bird related news and facts.

KILLING WITH KINDNESS

While feeding bread to ducks is a common enough activity, it can have unfortunate consequences for young birds whose bones are still developing. When a bird hatches, many of its bones are actually cartilage, which gradually ossifies to produce bone. The last part to ossify is the carpal joint (the bend in the wing, or the bird's 'wrist') and this is where problems arise from non-natural food. An excess of calories, especially as protein, and a shortage of manganese and some vitamins cause the joint to distort leading to a condition known as 'angel wing'. Instead of the outer wings lying against the body, they stick out at odd angles and the attached feathers are badly formed. Birds with this condition can't fly and only survive in sheltered areas such as parks.



Canada Goose with angel wing

rspb.org

Ducks and geese are the most affected species, but the condition has been reported in Goshawks, bustard chicks and birds of the parrot family. These were birds presumably raised in captivity.

The subject of feeding ducks inappropriate food has also been raised recently by Chris Watson, a well-known nature sound recorder. The birds in this case are Eiders in Northumberland. They have become tame enough to be fed, but what they are given (such as chips and bread) is short of the calcium they would obtain from their natural diet of shellfish, and this can cause problems with egg formation.

If all this has put you off feeding ducks, then there are always gulls happy to take proffered food. Some work on Black-headed Gulls has shown that those in urban areas survive well on waste human food. In fact, given a choice of a natural food (sprats) and artificial food (white bread), these birds preferred the bread. In

Krakow (Poland), the abundance of Black-headed Gulls was actually related to the number of litter bins!

THE SHARP END OF BIRD CONSERVATION

Membership of the RSPB carries little risk, though you might have to put up with reading ill-founded criticism by a retired cricketer who likes shooting birds. Not so the membership of CABS (Committee against Bird Slaughter). These people are the vigilantes of bird protection, visiting countries such as Cyprus and releasing illegally caught songbirds and destroying the traps. They face the possibility of meeting gangs of hunters shooting at them, smashing their cars and causing serious injuries. The number of birds that they manage to release is a minute fraction of those caught, but their hope is to influence public attitudes towards this form of poaching. A claimed area of success is Brescia in Northern Italy where there are now few poachers and little public support for them.

Catching migrant birds for food is a long established custom round the Mediterranean. But there is a big difference between peasant farmers eking out their food supplies, and the industrial scale hunting of small birds for what is effectively gourmet food – from ambelopoulia in Greece to Ortolan Buntings in France. The French, of course, take the haute cuisine aspect of eating songbirds to its ultimate. The Ortolans are trapped and kept in the dark for three or four weeks where they feed and put on masses of fat. After drowning in Armagnac, and plucking, they are roasted whole. Their final ghoulish end comes with diners covering their heads with napkins, supposedly to capture the fine aroma as they eat. Selling Ortolans is illegal in France but some chefs are now campaigning for the ban to be lifted for one weekend per year, 'to preserve French culinary culture'. This, of course, would mean that catching the birds would have to start a month in advance.

Videos of CABS members in Cyprus, and those releasing trapped Ortolans can be seen at :

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y_zdDBAp6cI

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GG65CeckSNc>

MALTA HUNTING REFERENDUM

Somewhere else where bird conservationists have run into serious danger is Malta, infamous for its uncontrolled hunting of migrant birds. There is, however, a glimmer of hope with a referendum on the banning of spring hunting fixed for 11th April. Let's hope that it succeeds, and that subsequent laws are enforced.

WHAT'S THE TRUTH ABOUT CORMORANTS?



Cormorant, Scaling Dam

The Cormorant stands with wings outstretched. It's drying its wings because the bird does not have waterproof feathers and gets soaked when it is swimming. Or is it?

There are many ideas, often contradictory, to explain the behaviour. Some are just plain nonsense, such as claiming the species 'has not yet managed to evolve waterproof plumage'. Cormorants have been round long enough to achieve whatever plumage is appropriate for their way of living. A related claim is that the birds don't have a preen gland for producing waterproofing oil.

Some explanations do not even involve drying, such as that the spread wings help control the bird's temperature, aid digestion or just help balance.

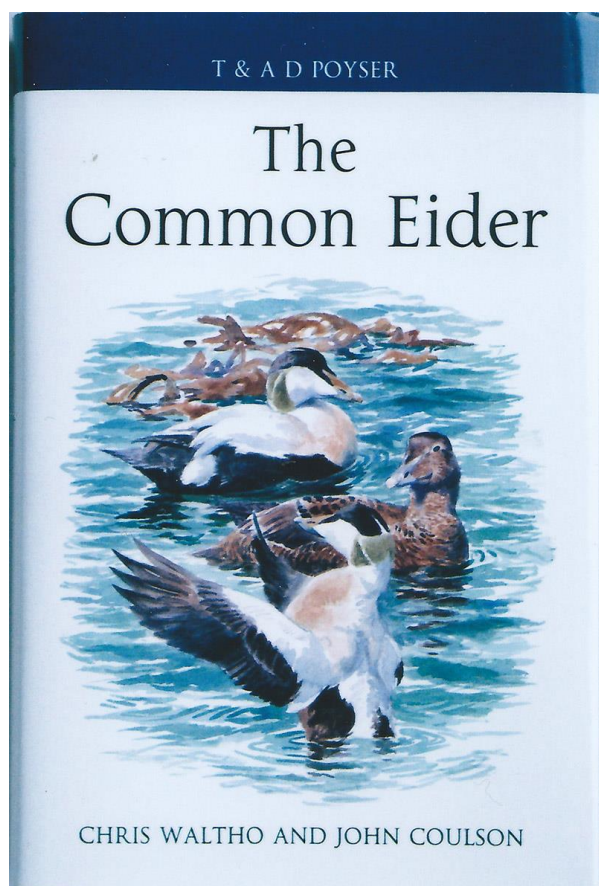
There is also confusion over how much of the bird gets wet : is it just the wings or the whole body? One aspect that most theories agree on is that wetting the plumage reduces buoyancy and makes diving easier. Reducing buoyancy is also proposed as an explanation of the birds swallowing pebbles.

The problem with wet plumage is the loss of the layer of air next to the skin. This air insulates the bird from the cold water, particularly important for birds breeding in the far north. One explanation that avoids this problem is the idea that only the outer part of each feather is wettable, the inner end remaining dry and maintaining the layer of air. This is conceivable because the water resistance of a feather depends not just on preen oil but on the size and spacing of its barbs and barbules. Even this is undermined by work which suggests that in dives below a certain depth the water pressure forces the air out, wetting the bird's skin. After surfacing, the feather structures push the water out, helped by the stretched wings.

Life is so complicated.

A BOOK WORTH READING

Russell McAndrew reviews the latest Poyser monograph, *The Common Eider* by Chris Waltho & John Coulson.



This is the latest of Bloomsbury's well-known Poyser monographs and, unlike some of them, is based on studies of populations of British birds. Chris Waltho and his large team of helpers have studied the Eider of the Clyde area for more than forty years. His co-author, Durham's John Coulson, while best known for his work on Kittiwakes, has tracked the fortunes of the Farnes and Coquet Island Eider populations for over fifty years. Coulson's findings, published in four major papers between 1984 and 2013, are incorporated into this book which is (surprisingly) the first comprehensive English language monograph on this popular sea duck.

As many of the Eiders that visit the Cleveland coast are presumably Farnes or Coquet birds, this is to some extent a book about 'our' birds. It contains lots of tables, histograms and graphs, but the text is readable and packed with information, illustrating the value of long-term studies. There is a section of colour plates showing Common Eiders doing interesting things, plus portraits of the other three eider species. Some widely-believed 'facts' about Eiders are debunked. For example, that they are colonial (not really, the females are not well adapted to

nesting so close together but are simply forced to do so by the shortage of safe sites), and that crèches of ducklings are the norm (they are not).

Globally, Eider numbers may be fairly stable at around 3½ million but there appears to be a decline in Britain. The authors appeal for better monitoring by including this sea duck in future national seabird censuses. Counts of occupied nests can be misleading because of the variable proportion of females that nest in any given year. On Coquet Island, there have been years when only half the adult females have nested. Interestingly, the arrival of a summering flock at South Gare in 1981 coincided with a long period of low breeding numbers on Coquet. Cleveland is probably near the edge of the winter range of Northumberland Eiders, helping to account for the big fluctuations we see in the numbers off our coastline. Something else we see, the preponderance of males, is a widespread phenomenon due to females experiencing an increasingly higher mortality than males.

Book titles can mislead. The preceding Poyser monograph, *The Teal*, turned out to cover both Common and Green-winged Teals. This book, despite its even more specific title, concludes with a chapter by the Russian biologist Diana Solovyeva (who does not feature on the title page) comparing all four of the world's eider species. A better title might have been simply *Eiders*.

While the accuracy of the ornithological information in this detailed book may be beyond question, a statement in the introduction will send some readers to their dictionaries. It is claimed that the word 'duvet' comes from the French for eider. My French dictionary translates duvet as 'down' and BWP gives the French name for Common Eider as *Eider à duvet*.

With its good index, this is a book to go to for any Eider information you need, from subspecies distribution and identification, through all aspects of their biology, to management and conservation.



'Our' Eiders, Hartlepool Headland

PROFILE – MARK ASKEW

Chris Brayshay interviews long standing Club member Mark Askew



Mark in Iceland last year

Club Treasurer Mark Askew is married to Sixth Form sweetheart Alison and has three grown up children – 26-year-old Robert, Philip, 23, and Catherine aged 21.

Mark has worked as environmental health and safety manager with a Teesside based chemical firm for more than twenty years.

Mark, now 52, has been birdwatching for many years, “.....ever since I was a teenager. Coming from Nottingham my local patch was Clumber Park. That was probably my stomping ground. I still have a soft spot for woodland birds. Probably the most spectacular bird I saw, when I was a kid, was a Green Woodpecker.”

He and Alison - now married for thirty years - swapped their native Nottinghamshire for the “cracking countryside” around Guisborough in 1984, after they both graduated from university.

“We see Nightjars every year,” said Mark of one of the advantages of his North East home.

Mark is now a bicycling birder getting around his local birdwatching patch on his mountain bike.

“I get on my bike and combine birdwatching with a bit of healthy exercise and keep a mental list of the birds I see while biking. For us Guisborough Forest is so easy to get to – and then on to the moors. I have seen Rough-legged Buzzard from my bike. It is quite easy to combine a bit of

fitness with birding!”

“My patch is more towards Boulby: I suppose the triangle between Guisborough, Scaling and Boulby. I used to go to South Gare, but it has become such a dumping ground with fly tipping I grew sick of it. One of the things about Boulby is only a few of us go there, so the chances of finding something there yourself increases, because not many people are looking. There is nothing like the buzz of finding your own bird.”

Mark was only one of three birdwatchers lucky enough to see a Fea’s Petrel at Cowbar last year – a first for the Cleveland area.

“I did not know what to expect and I could have jumped off the cliff with excitement,” he said.

There was more excitement in his latest foreign expedition to Ecuador, travelling with fellow bird watcher Graham Megson. He has lost count of the numerous species the two spotted while in South America.

“One of my next jobs is to tot them up,” said Mark. “We are still going through the list. We certainly saw new woodpeckers and woodcreepers. We were seeing different species every place we visited. Probably 90 percent of what we saw were “new” birds.”

While this year’s trip to Ecuador is obviously high on Mark’s list of best birding experiences, one highlight will always be an unexpectedly exciting holiday in Cornwall.

He explained: “One of my best moments which really got me going was a sea watch going back to 1983, probably the best ever sea watch, down in Cornwall. We were in a caravan at the time. We woke up the morning after a horrendous storm to find we were about the only caravan left standing.”

“But there were masses of seabirds including a flock of Sabine Gulls, hundreds of petrels - I saw a Wilson’s Petrel and hundreds of Storm Petrels, lots of Shearwaters; a whole mix of birds. Hundreds of new birds in one day.”

Mark has gifted his pair of “trusted” Leica binoculars to Alison, who has “a casual interest in birds,” while he has switched to Zeiss bins. He uses a lightweight Leica telescope.

“For walking the cliffs you want something small and manoeuvrable,” he said.

It was while Mark was first birdwatching in Teesside in 1984 that he bumped into Teessmouth Bird Club member Pete Johnson, who has since sadly died.

“He suggested I went along to a Club meeting

with him; probably in the autumn of 1984. I suppose I went to my first Club meeting after coming up here from Nottingham and I have carried on ever since."

"I got to know people, like-minded people. Gradually I wanted to get more involved and I got on to the Committee. But I have been involved with the Records Committee on and off over quite a few years."

For Mark, one of the attractions of birdwatching is the unpredictability of the hobby.

"While you know a train is going to turn up at a certain time, that takes the excitement out of it, but birds can appear anywhere – at any time. With birding you don't know what to expect, nor what you are going to see next - whether a different species or some different bird behaviour."

Mark's birdwatching travels started in Britain then spread over to Europe, the Mediterranean "and the usual suspects."

"When the family were young we used to coincide holidays with migration haunts, like Majorca. That then spread to Turkey and more recently we have been to Asia. We have really been all over!"

He and Alison are off to Iceland in the spring to see scientist son Robert who is hard at work studying and monitoring that country's volcanoes. Mark is of course packing his optics for a bit of birdwatching.

TBC PUBLICATIONS

The following publications are still available :

Birdwatchers of Teessmouth 1600 to 1960
£2, plus £1 p. & p.

Teessmouth Bird Reports 1958-1973 on a CD
£5.00

Birds of Tees-side 1962-67 by Phil Stead
£5.00

Birds of Tees-side 1968-1973 by Martin Blick
£5.00

Birds of Tees-side (1964) by Phil Stead £2.50
(published in *NHS Transactions*).

Cleveland Bird Reports:-

1974 to 2010 £3.00 each where available, plus
£1.00 for p. & p. per copy.
(Out of print 1974, 1976, 1978 to 1988 on a CD)

2005 Special Offer £1.00 each, plus £1.00
for p & p

2011 £5.00 each Plus £1.50 for p.&p. per
copy.

2012 £5.00 each Plus £1.50 for p.&p. per
copy.

2013 £7.50 each Plus £1.50 for p.&p. per
copy

Barn Owl at RSPB Saltholme Print @ £2 each

Cheques should be made payable to
"Teessmouth Bird Club" with orders, and sent
to: John Fletcher,
43 Glaisdale Avenue,
Middlesbrough, TS5 7PF.

Please pass on unwanted copies of Club
publications to John, particularly those that are
out of print, so that they can be resold to other
members. **BIG DISCOUNT on orders over
£20**

J.Fletcher j.fletcher666@btinternet.com
01642 818825

ARCHIVED TBC MATERIAL (Jan 2015)

The TBC has deposited bird reports and other
material at Teesside Archives for safe keeping.

The items deposited are as follows :

Teessmouth Bird Reports 1958 to 1973
Single-sided sheets.

Cleveland Bird Reports : Full set 1974 to 2013
Each new Report is added when issued.

Teessmouth Bird Club Annual Reports
1963, and 1971 to 2010
Subsequent reports are printed in Newsletters.

Teessmouth Bird Club Newsletters –
First Series : Numbers 4 to 8, 10, 11, 15, 18,
21, 23 to 28, 31 to 56 (March 1995).

Second Series : Number 1 (Summer 1995) to
Number 23 (Autumn 2002).

*Number 23 and later newsletters are available on
the TBC website www.teessmouthbc.com.*

Other Publications -

The Birds of Teesside by P J Stead (January
1964), published in *Transactions of the Natural
History Society of Northumberland and Durham
and Newcastle-upon-Tyne.*

The Birds of Teesside 1962-67 by P J Stead
(December 1969).

The Birds of Teesside 1968-1973 by M A Blick
(March 1978).

The Breeding Birds of Cleveland by Joynt, Fairbrother and Parker (2008).

The Birds of Cleveland by Martin Blick (2009), published by TVWT.

The Birds of Teesmouth 10th Edition (1988) First published in 1965 by the Teesmouth Bird Club, with drawings and accounts of 28 species common at Teesmouth.

The Natural History of Teesmouth (April 1966), published by the Cleveland Naturalists' Field Club and the Teesmouth Bird Club.

Birdwatchers of Teesmouth 1600-1960 by John Fletcher.

Also :

A Catalogue of the Birds observed in S.E.Durham and N.W. Cleveland by John Hogg, published in the Zoologist, 1845.

The Birds of the Tees Valley by Almond, Robinson and Nicholson, 1939

A History of the Birds of Durham by George W Temperley, 1951

Annual Reports of the Committee for Ornithology by the Yorkshire Naturalists' Trust Includes 1940, 1941, 1943, 1946 to 1959, 1965 and 1966 in one Report.

Annual Ornithological Reports for Northumberland and Durham by the Natural History Society of Northumberland, Durham and Newcastle-upon-Tyne : 1944 to 1958, 1960 to 1962, 1965.

Durham County Bird Report printed by University of Durham Printing Ltd : 1970 to 1973.

"Birds of Manitoulin Island" and the January 1984 edition of the **Manitoulin and Sudbury Districts Bird Report**, both by John C. Nicholson.

"Where and How to Photograph Wildlife" by Peter Evans.

Teesside Archives are in Exchange Square (Take Albert Road towards the Transporter Bridge, pass under the A66 flyover and it is the right turn at the lights before the Railway Bridge).

Opening hours are :

Tuesday	11am to 7pm
Wednesday	9.30am to 5pm
Thursday	9.30am to 1pm.

Booking required for visiting

(Phone 01642-248321.)

WETLAND BIRD SURVEY TEESMOUTH - WINTER 2014/2015 SUMMARY

All but one of the planned 140 sector counts were completed over the five months; another excellent effort..

Among the wildfowl the best performance came from greylag goose, the 605 counted in November constituting our third highest winter peak on record. The maxima achieved by shelduck (426, January) and wigeon (2230, February) fell squarely in line with their respective current five year means. However, for most other species this was a poor winter. For both cormorant (112, January) and coot (492, January) these were the worst seasonal figures for sixteen years. Numbers of gadwall fell substantially, with a peak of a mere 131 (January) compared with 554 last winter. Teal (642, November) returned the lowest winter maximum for a decade, while shoveler (62, November) also fared badly. All the diving ducks disappointed, particularly so in the case of goldeneye (41, March) and red-breasted merganser (34, February); for both species the worst showing since 2000/2001.

The stand-out wader maximum came from black-tailed godwit, with the 57 counted in November constituting a new WeBS seasonal record. The grey plover peak (138, December) was the best for six years, while knot (760, November) recovered slightly from last winter's nadir. Maxima of oystercatcher (804, November) and golden plover (307, November) were the lowest for 22 and 15 years respectively, while that of lapwing (3066, February) was at least a thousand down on the norm. Worryingly, the seasonal peaks achieved by both curlew (510, February) and redshank (765, January) were the worst for over a quarter of a century.

Following this winter's series of counts, and measuring our five-year means of annual winter peaks against the criteria for international and national importance, the Tees and Hartlepool Bay WeBS site is no longer of national importance for gadwall, yet retains this status for sanderling.

Mike Leakey

WeBS Local Organizer
March 2015

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WETLAND BIRD SURVEY TEESMOUTH - WINTER 2014/2015 SUMMARY

Species	November 16	December 21	January 18	February 15	March 8
Little Grebe	16	12	23	25	<u>26</u>
Great Crested	0	0	3	1	<u>43</u>
Cormorant	63	58	<u>112</u>	72	52
Mute Swan	32	<u>37</u>	25	34	32
Greylag Goose	<u>605</u>	419	202	372	55
Shelduck	283	361*	<u>426*</u>	394*	389*
Wigeon	926	2095	2087	<u>2230*</u>	1622
Gadwall	32	78	<u>131</u>	75	99
Teal	<u>642</u>	555	564	514	382
Mallard	172	<u>231</u>	230	129	104
Pintail	18	9	<u>44</u>	17	23
Shoveler	<u>62</u>	50	49	47	24
Pochard	16	18	15	35	<u>64</u>
Tufted Duck	42	65	80	72	<u>94</u>
Eider	<u>21</u>	8	8	3	14
Goldeneye	8	27	24	35	<u>41</u>
Red-br.	19	24	14	<u>34</u>	31
Coot	324	396	<u>492</u>	296	272
Oystercatcher	<u>804</u>	489	449	699	553
Ringed Plover	53	<u>57</u>	27	46	23
Golden Plover	<u>307</u>	55	65	3	0
Grey Plover	9	<u>138</u>	86	76	14
Lapwing	2587	2165	1146	<u>3066</u>	250
Knot	<u>760</u>	57	118	36	556
Sanderling	92*	170**	<u>204**</u>	113*	91*
Purple Sandpiper	0	8	50	<u>61</u>	36
Dunlin	56	17	136	10	<u>182</u>
Ruff	0	0	0	0	0
Snipe	<u>5</u>	2	4	0	<u>5</u>
Black-tailed	<u>57</u>	29	3	15	26
Bar-tailed Godwit	14	2	5	33	<u>35</u>
Curlew	205	399	264	<u>510</u>	455
Redshank	529	652*	<u>765*</u>	613*	624*
Turnstone	107	136	93	<u>158</u>	79

* 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