



BIRD NEWS
Vol. 22 No. 3 Autumn 2011

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Club news and announcements

Subscriptions

The Cumbria Bird Club 2011/2012 subscription becomes due on 1st October. You will receive a subscription form with this mailing unless you pay by Banker's Order. To prevent unnecessary costs, such as postage for reminder letters, please can you ensure that this is paid as soon as possible. Why not pay at the AGM!

Annual General Meeting Friday 7th October 2011

The AGM will be held at Penrith United Reformed Church on Friday 7th October 2011 at 7.30pm. The business of the AGM is intended to be as brief as possible and will be followed by a talk entitled 'Wind farms, fisheries, alien predators, climate change: can we conserve seabirds?' by Bob Furness. See the meetings programme overleaf for full details of Bob's talk.

Vacancies on Council: Secretary, county bird recorder and two ordinary members.

According to the terms of the constitution the above posts will become vacant at the AGM though there is a proviso that the current incumbents may remain another year.

This note is to seek nominations from members to fill these posts. According to the terms of the constitution, nominations should be submitted to the secretary not later than seven days before the AGM (i.e. by 30th September). Please contact Dave Piercy (address on inside front cover) for a proposal form and further details on what is involved.

Newsletter editor, outings and talks organisers.

Would anyone interested on taking on one of the above roles please contact the secretary. All are vital in helping to run the club. Volunteers please.

Birds and Wildlife in Cumbria

It is envisaged that "Birds and Wildlife in Cumbria 2010" will be published later than usual in its new larger format towards the end of the year. Please submit your photos to Clive Hartley (see inside cover) as soon as possible.

Web site

Council have agreed to spend around £1000 on a complete overhaul of the web site. This will probably take some time to complete. We are aiming to completely transform the site in design. This will enable us to easily upload more up to date content and communicate better with members as well as attract new members. All ideas and contributions welcome. Many thanks to Chris Cant for keeping the current site up to date.

Proposed changes to the CBC newsletter

Many thanks for the many members who gave me feedback on the new e-mailed PDF version of the newsletter. There were many good suggestions for improvements. For the present I have not implemented any of the improvements suggested as hopefully there will be a new editor soon to lead the way ahead and perhaps completely overhaul the current format. Unfortunately some items using colour will obviously not work too well on the printed version so apologies to those only receiving a printed copy. I will attempt to work out how to balance these considerations better in the future.

Please ensure we have your correct e-mail address. If you have e-mail and did not receive a colour copy in PDF format of this newsletter please e-mail Dave Piercy at daveandkathypiercy@tiscali.co.uk.

Photographs

Please submit your photos for inclusion in future newsletters and the web site. There are very few contributors at present so please forward any photos to the secretary. Photos for submission for the bird report are also needed as soon as possible - end of October at the latest to Clive Hartley.

Outings

Winter Bird Race – Sunday 8th January 2012

Venue in the South-east of the county to be announced. A fun event for all abilities. More teams needed.

If you fancy a go give Colin Gay a ring on 01229 773820 or e-mail colinathodbarrow@aol.com. Pie and chips (veggie available) at the end – numbers needed please.

Solway Dawn Flight of Geese - Sunday 26th February

Meeting at Border Marsh Gate at 0600 hrs. A true Cumbrian spectacular spectacle!

Full details from Frank Mawby FrankMawby@aol.com tel: 016973 51301

New Lancashire WT reserve at Brockholes - Spring date to be announced

The old gravel pits by the M6 on the Ribble valley turn off to Preston. Great site and a good alternative to a motorway cafe if you are going south. The visitor centre floats on one of the lakes and there are two or three areas of water with lots of hides and viewing points.

Lots of good breeding waders and other species in the spring.

See web site www.brockholes.org.

Further details in the next newsletter.

CBC Indoor Meeting Programme Winter 2011/2012

Friday 7th October (AGM): Penrith UR Church 7.30pm

“Wind farms, fisheries, alien predators, climate change: can we conserve seabirds?” - Bob Furness.

Bob Furness has been obsessed with seabirds ever since he was taken to Foula on a ringing expedition by Peter Mawby in 1971. He wrote “The Skuas” in the Poyser series in 1987 and has been Professor of Seabird and Fishing Interactions at the University of Glasgow until this year. He recently moved from the university to work part-time



Guillemot with sand eel, Bob Furness

for an environmental consultancy specialising in renewables. He is also employed part-time by Scottish Natural Heritage as a member of their scientific advisory committee, and is on the Council and Ringing Committee of the BTO. Bob is particularly proud of having ringed 1000 kittiwakes in one day in arctic Norway, and of helping to discover a new species of storm-petrel, Monteiro’s Storm-petrel, in the Azores.

Britain holds internationally important populations of many seabirds, and most of these now have strong protection of breeding colonies through EU designation of Special Protection Areas (SPAs). However, after many decades of growth, populations of most of our seabirds are now in decline. Wind farms, fisheries, alien predators, and climate change are all significant threats to our seabirds.

In this talk, Bob will discuss how these threats affect seabird populations, and will outline some of the new tools becoming available to researchers that may help to identify which populations are at particular risk and may identify possible mitigation measures. These new techniques include the ability to track precisely the migrations and foraging trips of seabirds with GPS loggers, to use “forensic” analysis to identify the diets and behaviour of seabirds while they are away at sea, and to study the detailed behavioural responses of seabirds to offshore wind farms and tidal turbines.

Friday November 4th: Cockermouth United Reformed Church 7.30pm.

‘The Langholm project 2 - is there hope for Hen Harriers ?’ – A talk by Aly McCluskie of the Langholm project and featuring stunning photography by top Scottish wildlife photographer Laurie Campbell.

Friday 2nd December: Penrith UR Church 7.30pm

'From the Tyne to the Solway' - Dave Fairlamb RSPB Warden Mersehead

All the reserves and various bird species Dave has encountered through his work in conservation over the last 30 years and he will concentrate mainly on Mersehead in the second half of the talk.



Ivory Gull, Edmund Fellowes

Wednesday January 4th 2012: with Carlisle NHS at Tullie House 7.15pm

'The Wildlife of the North' - Edmund Fellowes. Edmund is a renowned photographer and an excellent speaker from Dumfries. Past winner of British Birds photograph of the year. The "North" includes at least as far as Norway!

Monday 27th Feb: with Kendal NHS Friend's House Stramongate 7.30pm

'Seabirds of North West Scotland' - David Mower

David Mower is now the warden of Leighton Moss RSPB reserve. His slide show is based on his time on Handa Island in the 1970s.



Red Kites, Les Cornwell, Grizedale Forest

In ideal weather for an outing, a party of 14, led by Clive Hartley, gathered for what promised and proved to be a fascinating time. We were soon in the hands of Iain Yoxall, the manager of the Red Kite re-introduction project at Grizedale. His lively and instructive presentation contained not only the details of the project but also lots of information about the lifestyle of the birds themselves.

Then Iain took us to the very site of the release. The project involves the release of about 30 birds each year for three years. The second release took place in early August this year and four or five of the birds were still flying about in the vicinity of the pens. However, four birds, deemed unfit as yet to join the outside world, remained inside one of the pens and we could view and photograph them through a small peephole at the rear.

When we were all satisfied, Iain took his leave, suggesting that we might care to walk up to a nearby tarn for our picnic. Most of us did so and were able to enjoy other features of the woodland wildlife including butterflies, dragonflies and, in a small wood-pile, two or three wood wasps working away with their ovipositors.

It was a most enjoyable visit throughout and for that our thanks go to Iain and Clive.

Denis White

Red Kite wing tags

Wing tags provide important information on the post release movements of Red Kites. Young kites are known to disperse widely prior to their return to natal areas to breed.

Two tags are fitted to each young Red Kite. The wing tag colour on the left wing refers to the area of hatching/release while the wing tag on the right wing refers to the year of hatching. All wing tags carry a unique number.



Red Kite, Les Cornwell, Grizedale Forest

Wing tag colour scheme	
Area of Hatching/Release	Year of Hatching
Left Wing Tag	Right Wing Tag
Wales	1998
Chilterns	1999
Black Isle	2000
East Midlands	2001
Yorkshire*	2002
Central Scotland	2003
Dumfries & Galloway	2004
Northumberland	2005
Cumbria	2006
	2007
	2008
	2009
	2010
	2011
	2012

*No wing tagging has been carried out in Yorkshire since 2006; because of this the Cumbria release at Grizedale has been allocated orange area wing tags.

In many sightings only one wing tag can be seen. Because of this, a narrow coloured band at the base of each wing tag refers to the colour of the wing tag on the opposite wing.

Cumbria wildlife recorders' conference

22nd October 2011 10:00 am - 4:30 pm

Venue: Lecture Theatre, Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery, Carlisle
www.tulliehouse.co.uk/cumbrian-wildlife-recorders-conference

Free entry. Booking essential as places are limited.

Contact Tullie House box office for tickets 01228 618700
This free event is open to anyone interested in Cumbrian Wildlife.

A varied range of talks to highlight different areas of wildlife study, recording and conservation projects in the county and how the information is used to inform conservation and planning decisions.

Posters and contributions to the "open mike" session welcomed, please contact nature@tulliehouse.co.uk.

This event coincides with the official launch of the Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre and the opening of a new temporary exhibition on wildlife recording in Cumbria at Tullie House Museum, *In Search of Nature* on until January.
www.tulliehouse.co.uk/search-nature



For your (Australian) diary ...

Have you seen or heard a Powerful Owl near your home?

Powerful Owls are currently the subject of a project, being overseen by Rod Kavanagh, to count the number of pairs within the Sydney basin.

If you see or hear a Powerful Owl, or want to get involved in the project please e-mail birdsinyourbackyards@birdsaustralia.com.au with any photos or recordings you have or visit the Powerful Owl survey website at:
www.birdsinbackyards.net/surveys/powerful-owl.cfm

EagleCAM – The White-bellied Sea-Eagles at Birds Australia, Sydney Olympic Park have laid two eggs.

Thanks to infrared light and camera, the exact time interval between the laying of the two eggs was three days and twenty minutes.

The live-streaming is gaining momentum with over 20,000 views in the first two weeks at an average of 130 per hour. If you want a quick peek it is available 24/7, but you do have to put up with the pesky pre-roll ads, someone has to pay, there is no free lunch!

www.ustream.tv/channel/sea-eagle-cam

Cumbria bird atlas 2007/08 - 2011/12: The final winter

Now that most records have been submitted for the final winter of the British and Ireland Atlas we are in a position to gauge the amount of additional work that is required in order to achieve 100% coverage of all tetrads within Cumbria for the purposes of the proposed County Avifauna. Due to the tremendous effort which volunteers have already devoted to this project, we are pleased to report that what remains should certainly be achievable this coming winter, provided CBC members are still willing to get involved.

The table below contains a list of all those tetrads within the county for which we have still to identify a volunteer. The list gives the tetrad reference, the approximate location and whether an early winter visit, a late winter visit or both are still required. Each winter visit involves 2 hours of fieldwork, so it is quite feasible to cover two adjoining tetrads within a winter's day.

If you are able to volunteer for one or more of the tetrads this would be greatly appreciated, as it will add considerably to the value of all that we have been able to achieve to date. We have subdivided the tetrads according to the names of the four BTO representatives who have been responsible for organising the survey work. You can reserve your tetrads by telephoning, emailing or writing to the relevant person.

(1) NE Cumbria: Stephen Westerberg, 8 Beckside Gardens, Brampton, CA8 1US. Tel: 016977 42652. Email: stephen.westerberg@rspb.org.uk

Tetrad	Location	Early, late or both visits still required?
NY54Y	Scarrowmanwick	Both early and late visits required.
NY54Z	Newbiggin Fell	Both early and late visits required.
NY55G	Southwest of Castle Carrock	Both early and late visits required.
NY63N	Melmerby High Scar	Both early and late visits required.
NY63P	East of Melmerby Fell	Both early and late visits required.
NY63T	Melmerby Fell	Both early and late visits required.
NY64F	West side of Hartside Pass	Both early and late visits required.
NY72D	Dufton Pike	Late visit only still required.
NY72I	Blackstone Edge	Late visit only still required.
NY72S	Murton Fell	Late visit only still required.

(2) South-west Cumbria: Colin Gay, 8 Victoria Street, Millom, LA18 5AS.
Tel: 01229 773820. Email: colinathodbarrow@aol.com

Tetrad	Location	Early, late or both visits still required?
NY02Y	Deanscales	Both early and late visits required.
SD29U	Brim Fell, Coniston Old Man	Early visit only still required.
SD28D	Broughton in Furness	Both early and late visits required.
SD28Q	Osmotherly Moor	Early visit only still required.
SD28W	Broughton Beck	Early visit only still required.
SD19D	Muncaster Castle	Early visit only still required.
SD19G	High Corney/Waberthwaite Fell	Early visit only still required.

In addition to accepting records for the above, the BTO have agreed to allow us to continue to enter Roving Records into the system for another winter. By logging in to the Bird Atlas homepage and clicking on “Any square summary” you can also download a list of what has been seen in a particular tetrad within Cumbria to date. Armed with this, you can then go into the field and search for any species you think may have been missed.

These additional records will not contribute to the Britain and Ireland Atlas, but they will enable us to draw on them for the purposes of the proposed Cumbria Avifauna. So please keep the records coming in!

Thanks for looking and here’s hoping to hear from you!

Stephen, Clive, Dave and Colin



Tree Sparrow, Darren Robson

1. Introduction

This project has now been running for seven consecutive seasons with Tree Sparrows being fed at a feeding site during the winter, and the breeding season closely monitored.

It has been a remarkable period, not only in terms of weather, but for the success of the breeding season. We estimate that at least 900 young successfully fledged during the course of the three broods during 2011.

The 2010/11 winter was particularly harsh with lying snow and often sub-zero temperatures for weeks during December and January. Spring came in April with a month of mainly dry, sunny weather followed by a cool and often wet May and June. Despite all this, Tree Sparrows in the project area did exceptionally well. We are now confident that feeding birds during the short winter days when natural food is often in short supply, followed by the provision of nest sites in the form of nest boxes during the breeding season contributes to this success.

2. Winter Feeding

The arrangements for feeding Tree Sparrows during the 2010/11 winter were identical to those of the preceding season. Food, in the form of millet, was put out from 1st November 2010 until 12th April 2011. The feeding station close to Aiketgate covers a relatively small area - less than 50m x 50m.

Surrounded by farmland there is a mature hedge on three sides together with a handful of mature trees. Within the site is an area of scrub willow and a low-lying damp bit which can hold water.

Tree Sparrows almost always approach the feeding area along external hedging and it was interesting to observe that the feeders closest to the boundary hedge were emptied first. A few Tree Sparrows were at the station almost immediately after food was put out and there were 50 or so by the middle of the month. Despite the severe weather this figure remained fairly constant until the end of January 2011 when 90 were present. During February the total rose to 105, but at the same time birds were displaying at nest sites two miles from the feeding station! Into March and early April numbers declined to a handful by the time feeding ceased.

3. The 2011 Breeding Season

2011 was a remarkable breeding season despite the preceding harsh winter and the poor summer. In 2011, 134 nest boxes were in position aimed specifically at Tree Sparrows. By early March there were a number of unlined nests in the general area and Tree Sparrows had laid eggs and were incubating hard by the end of April.

During the season there was an high number of first, second and third broods and an almost unprecedented high in the average number of young fledged per brood.

First Brood	99 Successful broods 445 young fledged 4.5 average
Second Brood	62 successful broods 260 young fledged 4.2 average
Third Brood	44 successful broods 184 young fledged 4.2 average

Once again in 2011 there was little or no mortality of young birds in the nest. This despite the low night-time temperatures and often wet days during May and June. Could the ornate 'weaver type' construction of the nest and the insulation a wooden nest box provides be in any way responsible for this?

4. Ringing

A total of 638 young Tree Sparrows were ringed during 2011. This far exceeds any previous total for one season.

No colour ringing was carried out in 2011.

First Brood	324	8th - 19th May
Second Brood	170	13th - 29th June
Third Brood	144	15th July - 2nd August

We find it astonishing that a small passerine like the Tree Sparrow is capable of producing good numbers of young at the third attempt and so late in the season.

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5. Discussion

- a) As in previous years, observations of birds at the feeding station indicate that a very small proportion are ringed - on occasions less than 5%. Similarly on those occasions when an incubating female has been handled and examined at the nest, none have been found to be ringed.
Where do our birds come from and what happens to the young from the scheme? Unfortunately these questions are as yet unanswered.
- b) What is now apparent is that all second and third broods are from boxes already used during the first brood. The adults simply refurbish the old nest. There were no cases of an unused box being taken over later in the season.
- c) Whilst there was no mortality amongst fledglings this was, on odd occasions, due to the fact that we released young birds that were tangled in plastic and in one case thin wire. These materials had been used in the construction of the nest and could easily have proved fatal. On one occasion an adult was found dead in a nest box due to entanglement with plastic - fortunately there were no eggs or young.
- d) Adult tree sparrows were observed taking material into disused House Martin nests during November. Almost certainly this would be used as a winter roost site.
- e) It has become obvious that House Sparrows (*passer domesticus*) and Tree Sparrows (*passer montanus*) choose not to mix. Despite the proximity of House Sparrows to the feeding station there is no evidence of their presence. Similarly even in a restricted area the two species keep themselves very much to themselves !
- f) Other species at the feeding station included up to 14 Stock Doves, six Dunnock and at times 100 Chaffinch. It was noticeable that when disturbed these were all back feeding first. The Tree Sparrow was the last to return - up to thirty minutes later was no exception.

6. Acknowledgements

Again our thanks for all concerned for their valued help and support. Also, sincere thanks to the Cumbria Biodiversity Partnership for the generous grant towards the cost of food. To Hannah Bernie (C.W.T. Rockcliffe Warden) for her kind help during the ringing.

Mike Carrier & Tony Kendal

Unusual nest sites of Black-headed Gulls



Black-headed Gull , Oddendale Quarry, June 30th 2011, Dave Shackleton

Breeding Black-headed Gulls tend to favour shingle beaches, sand dunes, saltmarshes, rocky islets, bogs or emergent vegetation around inland waters on which to locate nesting colonies. Of 115 nesting locations identified from historical and contemporary records in Cumbria, emergent vegetation characterises about 57% of colony locations, with a further 10% choosing to nest on bog vegetation often associated with pool complexes. Rocky islets within inland waters account for 8% of colony locations and it is at these that some pairs have taken to nesting in unusual locations.

At Seamew Crag – a small islet on Lake Windermere, several pairs in a colony of about 50 pairs have annually nested off the ground on top of stunted two to three feet high bushes since 2009. (Clive Hartley & Robin Sellers pers com.). This is notable but not without precedent elsewhere. In East Anglia in 1947 an entire colony of 350 pairs switched from ground nesting on fens to nesting up to 8 feet up in trees in a young spruce plantation in response to floodwater (Vine & Seargeant 1948). That a proportion of the Seamew colony do this regularly suggest it is more to do with a lack of space rather than a response to fluctuating water levels.

At a small lake on the Warcop MOD Range in the North Pennines, a colony of about 10 pairs has nests located on a wall running into the water. In the absence of a genuine rocky islet this is perhaps not such a surprising adaptation.

In contrast several pairs recently attempted to nest on top of a concrete structure at High Newton Reservoir between Witherslack and Newby Bridge. However having been predated they then switched to nesting on small islets within the reservoir which, though safer from predators, are unfortunately subject to flooding.

In recent years a large colony has become established at the partially flooded Hardendale Quarry near Shap. In 2009 this site held some 1200 pairs mainly nesting on a major islet within the flooded area, but with satellite nests on the shore, large boulders and on the low cut platforms of the cliff faces just above the water level. In 2010 this part of the quarry ceased to be worked and the water level in the quarry bottom has risen dramatically to the extent that the main nesting islet is now underwater. In 2011 the colony size fell to 488 nests, but most notably, 147 nests were located on narrow cliff ledges well above water level. On 30th May many of these nests had chicks, though it is not known what proportion of nests fledged young.

The total population of Black-headed Gulls nesting in Cumbria has fallen dramatically with the demise of the huge Ravenglass and Sunbiggin Tarn colonies. The Hardendale site is the second biggest in the county at present with only Killington larger in size. Of the 14 colonies located in 2009, five were at man-made sites – either quarries or reservoirs and these accounted for 94% of the 4521 pairs. The importance of these sites is not to be underestimated and all are subjected to the vagaries of fluctuating water levels and high levels of disturbance.

References

Vine, A.E. & Sergeant, D.E. 1948. Arboreal Nesting of Black-headed Gull Colony. *British Birds* 41:158-59

Dave Shackleton

The life and times of an ornithological legend

Author's note: What follows is pure fiction. Any resemblance to real events or people is accidental, which is just as well considering...

P.C.Pluck was born to be in the Conservation Constabulary (a now defunct branch of the police force of which little was known to most of the population even in its hey day). His heightened sense of right from wrong and his dogged attention to detail were evident from an early age. In fact, when he joined the constabulary, his life hardly changed. He simply carried on doing what he had done during his life up to that point.

Even before he could talk, P.C.Pluck's parents were proud to show off his bird calling ability. Being rather bohemian, they had called him Peregrine Cuckoo Pluck and later believed that the inevitability of his future years had been set by their choice of nomenclature. Not surprisingly, his first recognisable bird call was that of the cuckoo and later in life, if asked what his specialist area in the ornithological world was, he would answer that of the bird of prey.

He learnt to use binoculars and a telescope before he went to school and frustrated his teachers when at school by insisting on reading and annotating technically demanding ornithological tomes rather than succumbing to the delights of 'Mr Blue Hat' et al. His time in state education was curtailed when, at secondary school, he suffered merciless bullying because of his name. His parents blamed themselves, removed him from the system and decided to take his education into their own hands.

His classroom now became the great outdoors, and he was able to hone the skills that proved both invaluable and slightly troublesome in his adult life. His 'patch' was his home county. Because of his extensive and precise geographical knowledge, when asked for directions by members of the public, his answer could easily flummox the uninitiated. He always used a mixture of 8 fig. grid references and bird sightings. For example:

Member of public: 'Excuse me constable, can you tell me how I get to village X from here?

P.C. Pluck: Of course, sir. Go straight along this road until you reach NY0512 1868. Turn left. Continue for half a mile until you reach the telegraph pole with the Great Spotted Woodpecker's nest. Now turn right. Village X is at NY0471 1875.

Able to count starling flocks with unnerving accuracy, at the annual village Summer Fayre, it was P.C.Pluck who, with a penchant for jelly babies, would accurately guess how many sweeties there might be in the jar. Following his third year of success, he was banned from further entries due to a complaint made by a member of the public who believed the whole event had been 'stitched up' and that Pluck had put the sweeties into the jar himself.

Unfortunately, P.C. Pluck never married, or even managed a long term relationship. His absolute dedication to birds left most potential human partners he encountered under no illusions regarding who he would save if forced to make a choice between them and yet another dawn rising to prowl his beat. He met nobody prepared to sacrifice themselves to the unsociable life he chose to lead.

In the year 2012, the Conservation Constabulary was disbanded, due to the economic crisis the country was facing at the time, and Peregrine lost his job. This made not a scrap of difference to his life. Money did not matter to him as he had left his job with a substantial voluntary redundancy package, and rumour has it that, in any case, he was immediately recruited by the secret service, who recognised his special skills of observation and detection, and used him to continue to monitor the impact of alternative power initiatives with a special brief to infiltrate groups who might sabotage government plans. Of course he became a double agent, unable to compromise his allegiance to the ornithological world in favour of the more lucrative secret service. He was never caught.

Author Anon: working under cover in the Frizington area.

BirdingCumbria and SolwaySkuas

If not already a member, why not join these Yahoo Groups?

- Get information about “what’s about” and what’s going on in the County
- Share sightings with others and advertise events you might be running
- Seek information from others on a topic/species that you take a special interest in.
- Join discussion on birds and related topics
- Help to build up a more detailed picture of the skua passage through the Solway
- Access all the records posted since Feb 2002 to make comparisons with previous years

Site addresses are - <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BirdingCumbria/>
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/solwayskuas/>

Bob Jones, bob@onethirty.force9.co.uk

Recent reports

The period covered is June to August 2011. Some of these records are unauthenticated and may require review by the Club Records Panel or British Birds Rarities Committee. Species order and nomenclature follow that used in the most recent edition of *Birds and Wildlife in Cumbria*.

Wildfowl to Quail

Unseasonable adult **Whooper Swans** lingered on the Irt Estuary until 20th July and with the **Mute Swan** flock at Hodbarrow in June, the latter perhaps accounting for a second adult that flew over the Irt on 28th June and was seen on 20th July on a small pond near Beckermeth. A pair of **Garganey** were found at Mazonwath near Sunbiggin Tarn on 20th June. **Common Scoters** included 410 at Walney in July while other wildfowl in the period included an early **Goldeneye** and 114 **Tufted Ducks** at Hodbarrow on 7th August. The **Quail** continued calling at Finglandrigg into June and four more were heard near Easton along with singles at Cumwhitton, near Thursby, near Ivegill and near Cliburn. A single near Kirkbride was the only one heard in July.

Divers to herons

Red-throated Divers were recorded in small numbers at several coastal locations. **Manx Shearwater** maxima included 475 at Walney and 150 at Selker in June; 383 at Walney in July. **Storm Petrels**, as last summer, were disappointingly scarce with site maxima of just three at Selker (where most visits drew a blank) and two at Walney, with none at all reported from Workington in the period. **Gannets** included 145 at Walney in June, 124 at Walney in July. **European Shags** comprised singles at Walney and Selker in June and Walney and Workington in August. **Little Egrets** consisted of up to four on the Kent Estuary and a single at Bardsea in June, increasing to 19 on the Kent Estuary and a single at Walney in July and 21 on the Kent Estuary, eight at Walney, three at Bardsea and two on the Inner Solway in August. A **Great White Egret** visited Bassenthwaite Lake on 2nd June and two **Spoonbills** put in a brief appearance at Walney on 17th June.

Raptors to waders

Another batch of 30 **Red Kites** were released in Grizedale Forest in August. A male **Marsh Harrier** alongside the Kent Estuary in July had presumably wandered from nearby Leighton Moss as had the bird at Kents Bank on August 12th while passage juveniles were seen at Bassenthwaite on 15th August and around Campfield Marsh from 18th to 24th. The Bassenthwaite **Ospreys** successfully fledged two young though, as expected, the adult female departed around 23rd August whilst wandering or passage birds were observed around the Kent Estuary (up to four), the Furness mosses (several), Derwent Water (two), Ulverston, Killington Reservoir and Tindale Tarn. A radio-tagged Scottish bird spent much of August in the Dalston area though



Curlew Sandpiper, Bowness Railings, Darren Robson

wandering as far as Coniston Water. July brought **Hobbies** to Thacka Beck, Penrith; Foulshaw Moss and the Furness mosses. **Merlins** began to appear at coastal sites during August.

A **Spotted Crake**, the first in the county since 2002, briefly emerged from cover in the central marsh at South Walney on 1st August. A **Common Crane** was a brief visitor to the Rogersceugh area near Campfield Marsh on 2nd June.

Two **Avocets** were at Ulpha Meadows on 11th June. Away from known breeding sites, **Little Ringed Plovers** were seen at Hodbarrow - the reserve's second record – on 5th June, Thacka Beck (up to two) in June and July, Walney from 6th to 19th August and Soddy Gap on 6th August. A **Knot** was an unusual sight inland at Thacka Beck on 25th June. A **Curlew Sandpiper** at Bowness-on-Solway on 1st June was the last of the spring. The first juvenile appeared at Port Carlisle on 22nd August and



Little Ringed Plover, Soddy Gap, Craig Shaw



Purple Sandpiper, Workington, Darren Robson

numbers quickly increased, peaking at 23 on 29th though, away from the Solway, records were limited to three at Walney. Single **Little Stints** appeared at Bowness-on-Solway on 2nd June and Hodbarrow on 12th June, Port Carlisle on 28th July, Walney from 28th July to 4th August then, the first juveniles at Port Carlisle, Bowness Railings and Walney during August.

The first **Purple Sandpiper** returned to Workington on 29th August. Reasonable numbers of juvenile **Ruff** arrived in August, the most notable counts being 14 in a flooded field near Crosby-on-Eden, seven in the Lyth Valley and five at North Plain. **Black-tailed Godwit** numbers began to increase in July with 26 at Walney though 19 at Campfield Marsh and 15 at Walney were the sole double figure counts in August. **Whimbrel** passage, never as pronounced as in spring, included seven at Walney in July. **Greenshank** were, as usual, initially largely restricted to Walney where monthly maxima comprised two in June, 18 in July and 35 in August, Elsewhere, June produced singles at Bassenthwaite, Thacka Beck and the Kent Estuary before autumn



Little Stint, Bowness Railings, Darren Robson

passage got underway with totals that included nine at Anthorn. Juvenile **Spotted Redshanks** appeared at Walney, Hodbarrow, Campfield Marsh and Port Carlisle in August.

A **Wood Sandpiper** at Thacka Beck on 5th and 6th June was followed by one on the River Esk at Longtown on 13th July, two on the Irt estuary on 20th July and singles at Walney on 6th August and North Plain on 16th August. Other wader counts in the period included 300 **Sanderling** at Bowness-on-Solway.



Wood Sandpiper, Thacka Beck, Darren Robson

Skuas to auks

Two **Great Skuas** at Walney on 25th June were the only skuas until the same site produced two **Pomarine Skuas**, four **Arctic Skuas** and two **Great Skuas** in July followed by three **Pomarines**, four **Arctics** and two **Greats** in August.



Mediterranean Gull, Workington, Steve Sheehan

Also in August, up to four **Pomarine Skuas** lingered off St Bees Head from at least 7th to 14th while two **Pomarines** and an **Arctic** were seen off Workington on 13th. **Mediterranean Gull** sightings in June were limited to two, an adult and a first-summer, at Bardsea. July produced an increase in numbers with three at Workington, two

adults and the regular one-legged bird now in its third summer, at least two adults at Bardsea, two on the Kent Estuary, a second-summer and a juvenile, and single adults at Rampside, Campfield Marsh and Port Carlisle. A further increase in August resulted in at least seven birds at Workington (the regular one-legged individual along with at least three more adults and three juveniles); two, an adult and a second-winter, at Anthorn and single adults at Campfield Marsh, Maryport, Borwick Rails, Haverigg and Rampside.

Little Gulls were limited to a single at Port Carlisle in July and an adult on Haverigg beach in August. Two **Sandwich Terns** appeared inland at Winder-

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Kittiwake, Port Carlisle, Darren Robson

mere on 22nd July. **Guillemots** included a maximum of 65 at Walney in June. Away from St Bees, the only **Black Guillemots** were at Selker and Walney in August. Walney also recorded an exceptional total of 11 **Puffins** in June, including four on 13th.

Owls to buntings

The first **Short-eared Owl** reappeared at Walney on 29th August. A **Hoopoe** graced a Beetham garden on 4th June. The first signs of autumn were already apparent at Walney in June with single **Cuckoo** logged on three days and a trickle of early returning passerines towards the end of the month that included 30 **Willow Warblers**, three **Redstarts** and single **Wheatear**, **Grey Wagtail**, **Blackcap**, **Chiffchaff** and **Spotted Flycatcher**.

Early movement continued during July with daily peaks of 200 **Swallows**, 40 **Swifts**, 40 **Sedge Warblers**, 20 **Sand Martins** and 17 **Whitethroats** while monthly totals included 140 **Willow Warblers**, seven **Wheatears**, seven **Blackcaps**, four **Redstarts**, three **Yellow Wagtails** and three **Spotted Flycatchers** though a male **Black Redstart** on 10th provided the highlight.

In August, diurnal migration finally took hold towards the end of the month with 1400 **Swallows**, 80 **Sand Martins**, 28 **Tree Sparrows** and 12 **House Martins** on 26th while monthly totals included 26 **Grey Wagtails**, 25 **Yellow Wagtails** and 12 **Tree Pipits**. **Sedge Warbler** (max. 12) and **Whitethroat** (max. 26) passage was above average while **Willow Warblers** (max. 32) and **Wheatears** (max. 10) were present in normal numbers.

Elsewhere, **White Wagtail** passage included a maximum of 12 at Sellafield in August while **Yellow Wagtails** included up to four at Thacka Beck. A female-type **Black Redstart** was seen briefly at Burneside on 15th August.

Hooded Crows were on the Esk Estuary near Ravenglass in June and at Whitehaven in July. **Common Crossbills** included 39 at Hallbankgate and a single over Port Carlisle in July followed by seven over Whitbarrow in August.

As ever, I'm indebted to all the contributors, too numerous to list individually. Feel free to send records by e-mail to ian.kinley@btinternet.com

NB *It is important that observers also submit records to the appropriate Regional Recorder at the end of the year. Please see either the latest edition of *Birds and Wildlife in Cumbria* or the Cumbria Bird Club website <http://www.cumbriabirdclub.org.uk> for details of how to do so.*

Ian Kinley

Records Panel – Amended Description Form

The Records Panel is conscious that a number of descriptions they receive fail to gain acceptance simply because the observer does not provide sufficient information. In an attempt to alleviate this problem, a revised description form has been produced that includes bullet points intended to encourage observers to provide as much detail of what they saw as possible. Whilst this is aimed primarily at those who are inexperienced at submitting descriptions, we hope it will also serve as a reminder to everyone to include all the details of their observation. Description forms can be downloaded from the Bird Club website at www.cumbriabirdclub.org.uk or requested from Regional Recorders.

Ian Kinley, CBCRP Secretary

Guidance for Contributors

My aim is to produce an “inclusive” magazine that has something for everybody. All contributions, from a two-line anecdote (a “Champagne Moment”) to a six-page semi-scientific article, will be considered. Where space is limiting, priority is always given to items of Cumbria relevance, but there is often space for other material, for example, members’ trip reports.

I am always happy to advise or assist in preparing a submission. How to submit your offering is indicated on the back cover.

Editor

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Information for contributors

The deadline for copy for the next issue is December 1st 2011

If you have a computer: please send contributions to Dave Piercy

- on disk (your disk will be returned if requested); or
- as e-mail attachments to daveandkathypiercy@tiscali.co.uk

If you do not have a computer: please send in as clear a format as possible to Dave Piercy,
YHA Derwentwater, Borrowdale, Keswick CA12 5UR; tel 017687 77246

Opinions expressed in this bulletin are not necessarily those of Cumbria Bird Club, its Editor, nor any of its Officers.

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