



BIRD NEWS
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New South Wales, Australia

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Club news and announcements



Norman Holton

long time site manager at the RSPBs Campfield Marsh, Hodbarrow and St Bees reserves, died recently after a long battle with illness. His contribution to bird and habitat conservation on the Cumbrian Coast, and on the Solway Mosses and wetlands was immense. A legendary character within the RSPB, Norm was full of knowledge and humour. He will be sadly missed by the birding and conservation community in Cumbria. Our thoughts are with his family at this very sad time.

AGM

The AGM will be held at Penrith United Reformed Church on Friday 7th October 2016 at 7.30pm. The business of the AGM is intended to be as brief as possible and will be followed by a talk by Alan Fielding on Golden Eagles.

Vacancies on Council: Secretary, Treasurer, up to two vice-chairmen and two ordinary members.

We would welcome any members willing to help in the running of the club. We are currently struggling to keep the club moving forward. There is so much we can achieve but we need more help. Please volunteer.

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 if there are no other suitable candidates. This note is to seek nominations from members to fill these posts.

Talks, events and outings

The club desperately needs one or more organisers. Please offer help if you can.

CBC indoor meeting programme winter 2016/2017

Friday 7th Oct (AGM): Penrith United Reformed Church 7.30pm *'Golden Eagles' – Alan Fielding*

Alan started as a marine botanist but has been working on birds of prey, particularly Golden Eagles for over 30 years. He has been a scientific advisor to the various Irish bird of prey re-introduction programmes, an expert advisor to a study of the possible impacts of wind farms on Hen Harriers in Ireland and is currently a member of the



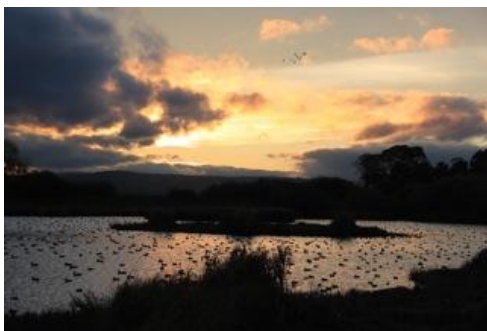
Scottish Natural Heritage Scientific Advisory Committee Experts Panel. He is also involved in plans to bring more Golden Eagles into Southern Scotland. He is a director of a charity called Highland Renewal, which manages a small, but beautiful estate on the south west tip of the Island of Mull that has its own eagles and Hen Harriers.

In his talk Alan will use extensive photographs to describe the ecology of the Golden Eagle and examine the current threats and opportunities affecting them.

Monday 14th November 2016 Friend's Meeting House

Stramongate 7.30pm Joint with Kendal NHS

'The RSPB and the Dee Estuary. Past, present and future.' - *Alasdair Grubb.*



A journey through the time the RSPB has spent on the Dee Estuary (Cheshire) from its small acquisition in 1979, through much more acquisition and development of visitor facilities and wildlife spectacle.

Wednesday 11th January 2017: Tullie House 7.15pm

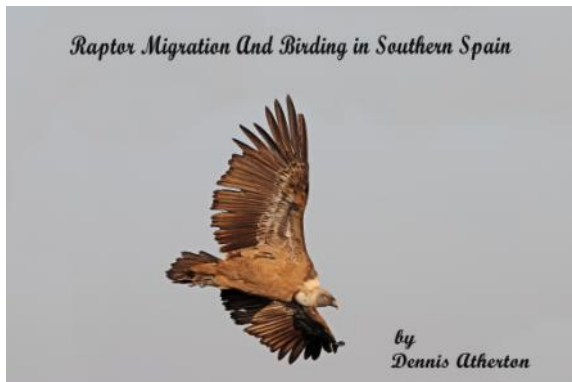
Joint with Carlisle NHS

'Incredible Journeys' - *Brian Morrell (WWT Caerlaverock)*

Thurs 6th April 2017: Marchesi Centre, Windermere 7.30pm

Joint with RSPB South Lakeland group.

'Raptor migration in Southern Spain and Gibraltar' – *Denis Atherton*



Citrine Wagtail on the Esk at Longtown



Citrine Wagtail, Longtown, Nick Franklin

I stopped to check a small group of wagtails on the shingle by the River Esk near Longtown at around mid-morning on Saturday 3rd September and was amazed to see the characteristic head pattern of first-winter Citrine Wagtail. But was it really? I was aware that there are certain pitfalls.

The bird was a mix of shades of mid to pale grey and white. Importantly there was no dark 'necklace' which might have indicated an aberrant Pied/White Wagtail. The wing bars were broad and white – too bold for any Yellow Wagtail, certainly not any of the familiar western races. There was no perceptible colour in the plumage – again useful in ruling out Yellow Wagtail. The only identification resource I had with me was the Collins Bird Guide App on my phone. Most features seemed good for Citrine Wagtail including the all black bill but the appearance of the lores was rather worrying. Collins Guide illustrates and describes pale lores. This bird had lores with a rather smudgy look. I took a series of 'phonescope' shots while hoping that the wading fisherman just upstream would not come any closer and flush the bird.

Back home I was able to access more identification information both on-line and in print. The consensus of opinion seemed not to stress the importance of the lores being pale. Particularly useful was an article in an earlier Birdwatch magazine by the excellent Andy Stoddart who described and showed an image of the lores as being smudgy. With the last real doubt



Citrine Wagtail, Longtown, Nick Franklin

removed, around mid-day, I put the news out as the bird being a probable Citrine Wagtail. It seemed wise to add the proviso 'probable' in view of the growing knowledge about eastern races of Yellow Wagtail which was the final, albeit remote concern in my mind. I also uploaded one of my record shots of the bird to Birdguides and it was not long before Birdguides removed the 'probable' tag – they were clearly happy with the identification.

The bird remained there until early in the morning of the 5th September and was seen and photographed by a good number of people. This was the first 'twitchable' Citrine Wagtail for Cumbria. The only other documented record is of a bird seen but not photographed at Walney Island on 22nd August 2015 for ten minutes only. Interestingly, the weather conditions that Colin Raven described on that day in 2015 were very similar to those I experienced – thick cloud over the Irish Sea with persistent rain in the forecast.

Citrine Wagtail breeds from Belarus eastwards in a broadening swathe across eastern Europe to northern Russia and China; there is an isolated population in northern Poland. It winters in India and south east Asia. Since the first English record in 1964 it has become more frequent but most have been in east coast counties. Nick Franklin has kindly provided the photographs.

Chris Hind

Esthwaite Water Osprey on migration

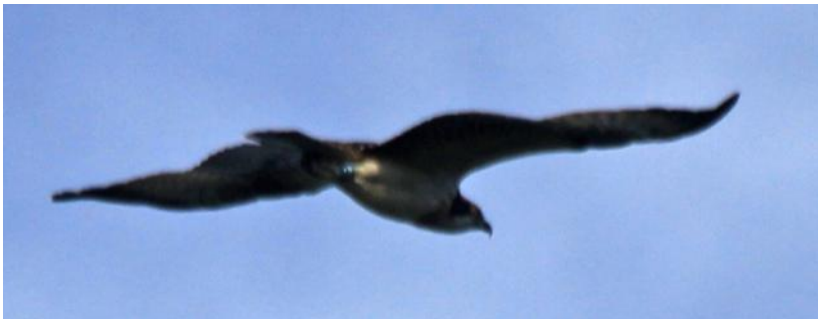


There are three pictures below of an Osprey seen migrating in Guernsey 49.434948, -2.670282 at 08:30 on the 24th August, seen and taken by Dave Andrews [Ecologist, Ornithologist and Marine Mammal Observer]

These pictures I believe show a colour ringed Osprey Blue V6 ringed this year by me from the Esthwaite Water nest, the one by the lake's edge, and the first time chicks have successfully fledged off that nest. There were two chicks colour ringed Blue V6 and Blue V7.

There is also above a picture of the two chicks on the Esthwaite nest taken on ringing day.

I believe they fledged on about the 15th/16th July. Not sure when it would leave the nest site to head south -- but this date in Guernsey seems early for the chicks to be migrating, however it illustrates the usefulness of colour ringing.



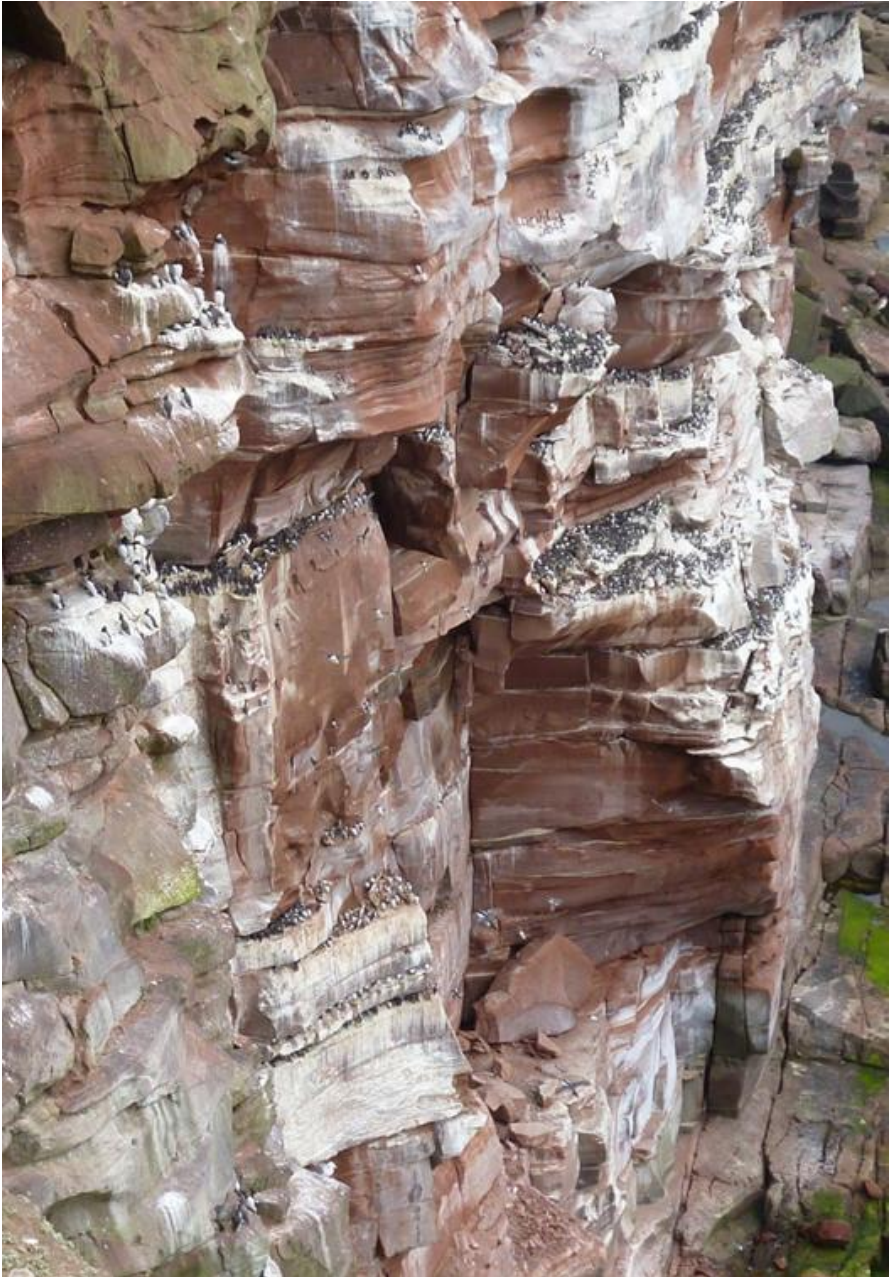


E-mail from Pete Davies

A disastrous year for Kittiwakes at St Bees Head



July 7th 2014 - St Bees cliff face before the 2016 cliff collapse



June 17th 2016 - St Bees cliff face after the 2016 cliff collapse

A disastrous year for Kittiwakes at St Bees Head

Kittiwake productivity monitoring was carried out at St Bees between 1985 and 1993 and again annually since 2009, and has fluctuated markedly between years in both periods. A sample of about 90 to 100 nests is monitored each season. The 2016 breeding season was the worst of all seasons monitored.



Kittiwake preening, St Bees, Dave Shackleton

It got off to a bad start when there was a cliff collapse sometime between 5th and 17th June on the cliff directly opposite the main (middle) viewpoint. This took out eight active Kittiwake nests and an unknown number of Guillemot and Razorbill nesting attempts.

On the next visit on 6th July it was apparent that Kittiwakes were struggling when, of 82 nests which were still incubating on 17th June, only 31 had chicks (just two with two chicks), and a further 15 may still have been incubating or brooding young chicks. However none of these 15 had chicks eight days later. The visit on 6th July was also concerning because eight nests with chicks were not attended by adults, something which does not normally occur until chicks are almost ready to fledge. This could suggest a shortage of food with both adults needing to leave the nest to find food. Of

those eight chicks, only three survived the next eight days and only one the next 17 days to possible fledging. By 14th July only 17 nests had chicks and all were singles, and by 26th July only seven chicks survived. Three of these were smaller than the other three and certainly would not have fledged by 30th July on which date there were no chicks left on nests. The fate of the remaining four is unknown. They may just have been old enough to fledge by 30th July, but on this date only one juvenile was seen on the wing at the colony, and they could equally have succumbed in the last few days prior to fledging.

In summary, of a sample of 90 nests where laying was strongly suspected, perhaps only four, and quite possibly no chicks fledged. This would be the only case of total or near total breeding failure of the monitored sample in any of the 17 years of productivity monitoring (Table 1)

Table 1: Productivity at St Bees Head 1985–1993 and 2009–2016:

	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93
Sample size of incubated nests	20	67	68	58	41	44	118	112	68
Total young fledged	12	9	70	17	13	9	131	75	19
Average young fledged per nest	0.6	0.13	1.03	0.29	0.32	0.2	1.11	0.67	0.28

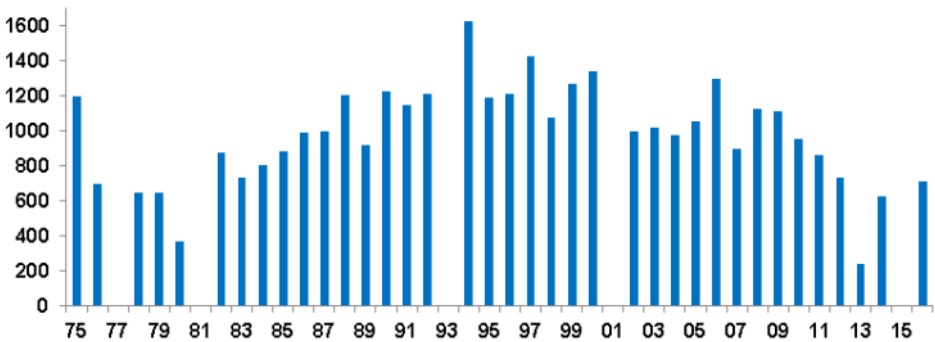
	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Sample size of incubated nests	52	49	105	110	90	99	101	90
Total young fledged	25	11	125	64	78	97	108	0 - 4
Average young fledged per nest	0.48	0.22	1.19	0.58	0.87	0.98	1.07	c. 0

In only six of 17 years with monitoring data, has the St Bees colony attained the 0.8 young fledged per nest, calculated by Coulson (2011) as needed to maintain a stable overall species population. Interestingly though, four of those seasons have been within the last six. Productivity has averaged 0.59 young fledged per nest per year across those 17 seasons. Hopefully the low productivity at St Bees in 2016 was just a particularly poor year, presumably caused by a localised and temporary food shortage.

A disastrous year for Kittiwakes at St Bees Head

Kittiwakes are not highly philopatric and chicks fledged at St Bees are not bound to return to breed there. So low productivity at the colony is not necessarily a factor in its recent decline. However low productivity in certain parts of its range, may be a factor in the overall species population decline in recent years and adversely impacted on the recruitment of breeders at St Bees. Against this backdrop of declining populations, the St Bees colony has mirrored the trend. However 2016 saw a continuing improvement in numbers from the low point of 2013, but was still less than half that of the peak in 1994 (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Apparently Occupied Nests at St Bees 1975 - 2016



No counts in 1977, 1981, 1993, 2001 and 2015

References

Coulson, J.C. 2011. The Kittiwake. T. & D. Poyser / A. & C. Black.

An up to date assessment of the current status of Kittiwakes in the United Kingdom can be found on the JNCC WEB site

<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-2889>

Dave Shackleton and the RSPB

Recent reports

The period covered is June 2016 to August 2016. 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 *Birds and Wildlife in Cumbria*.

Wildfowl



Common Scoter, Tindale Tarn, Adam Moan

There were 150 moulting **Greylag Geese** on the River Esk at Muncaster on 30th June with 250 on the east side of Ullswater on 2nd July along with 150 **Canada Geese** and 100 feral **Barnacles**. Approx 550 Greylags were also present at both Haweswater and Wet Sledale at the same time.

450 **Shelduck** were at Bowness on Solway on 5th June including an impressive flock of 250 birds. The only **Garganey** reported was one at Walney on 28th August. Two **Gadwall** were recorded on Ulpha Meadows on 5th June and a drake was on Walney on 8th and 9th June. A female **Shoveler** with two ducklings was at Hodbarrow RSPB on 7th June. The first birds returning at Walney were two on 21st July with five there on 31st. Walney saw their first returning **Common Teal** as early as 5th June with 50 there on 28th August; 30 were on Wedholme Flow on 13th July increasing to 100 by 21st August and 650 by the end of the month. A female **Long Tailed Duck** was with the **Eider** flock at Walney on 8th June.

Passage **Common Scoter** were reported from Derwent Water with singles on 1st and 15th August, Haweswater nine drakes on 12th August with a

single drake at Tindale Tarn on the same day – all part of a UK wide return passage; a further bird was on Windermere on 29th of the month. At Walney return passage saw 80 on 12th June increasing to 245 by 26th, significant numbers in July were 340 on 2nd, 300 on 10th and then 270 on 13th August. The drake **Bufflehead** was with Mallard on Bassenthwaite Lake on 4th June but seen to fly south so was presumably the same bird as seen near the car ferry on Windermere the next day.

Partridges to Herons

Quail were reported from Tindale Tarn on 6th June and at least one at Thornhill Meadows on 7th August. Thirteen **Grey Partridge** were at Bromfield on 22nd July with others reported several times from the Low Heskett area. A **Red-throated Diver** was off Selker on 6th June. On a day of southwesterly gales 11 **Fulmar** were reported at Bowness on Solway along with 72 **Manx Shearwaters** and seven **Gannets**. Other Manx Shearwaters at Silecroft were 150 on 21st June and at least 200 on 9th August. Walney Observatory had 300 on 12th June, 650 on 19th and 520 on 2nd July. A **Shag** was inland on a Derwent Water jetty on 5th August.

Numbers of **Little Egret** at Ulpha Meadows were present throughout the period with a maximum of at five on 5th June. There was an influx of 25 birds at Walney on 22nd July with birds present throughout the period and increasing to 31 on 21st August. Numbers started to build up on the south Solway in August with ten at Port Carlisle on 5th (including at least two juveniles) and 14 there on 21st. The only **Great White Egret** reported was a bird that flew over Siddick ponds on 21st August. Fifteen **Grey Herons** were on the River Esk at Muncaster on 30th June.

Raptors to Waders

A **Honey Buzzard** was over the M6 in South Cumbria on 21st June.

A wing tagged **Red Kite** was also seen from the M6 - on two occasions at Shap in June with others on the south Solway marshes on 5th June, Esthwaite Water and south of Carlisle on 26th and in West Cumbria on 29th July.



Juvenile Hen Harrier with transmitter, Geltsdale, Adam Moan



Osprey, Tindale Tarn, Adam Moan

A **Marsh Harrier** was at Carlisle Airport on 19th June and “cream crowns” were on Bowness Common on 25th August and on Wedholme Flow on 29th. Sightings from the south of the county included a male in June, a female in July and two juveniles in August. A pair of **Hen Harriers** bred at RSPB Geltsdale Reserve and a single “ringtail” was at Walney from 12th to 20th August with another south in the Keswick area on 18th August.

The resident male **Golden Eagle** seems to have disappeared from the Haweswater area but a juvenile was seen at RSPB Geltsdale on 26th August (and again in early September). **Osprey** bred at Bassenthwaite, Foulshaw Moss and Esthwaite. Otherwise birds were seen at Grasmere in early May, one was over Tebay on 3rd July, Arnside on 12th and one at Melkinthorpe on 9th was moving south calling. Birds were seen on the Solway on a number of occasions and also at Kirkbride Airfield on 21st August. A remarkable eight, appearing to be mostly females, were seen in the south on 10th August.

The first returning **Merlin** was on Walney on 31st July and then on three dates in August including two on 13th. A **Hobby** was successfully hunting dragonflies at Foulshaw Moss on 16th June and a single was nearby on 26th June and 18th August. Other August sightings came from Brampton on 7th, Waterside Wigton on 11th and twice at Carlisle Airport in mid month and at Beetham on 31st. A **Peregrine** was on Wedholme Flow on 13th July and one was at Walney on 15th August. A juvenile was at Selker on 24th August. A **Water Rail** was on Cliburn Moss on 1st June.

100 **Golden Plover** were back at Campfield by 27th July and returning **Lapwing** numbered 158 on Wedholme Flow on 25th July. The only **Dotterel** reported was one flying over Kendal calling on 28th August. Returning **Curlew** reached 480 on Walney on 8th July. A **Whimbrel** still lingered at Bowness on Solway on 5th June with one at Siddick the next day. Four returning birds were at Allonby on 11th July, three at Hodbarrow on 19th July and three at Port Carlisle on 2nd August. 17 **Black-tailed Godwit** were on Wedholme Flow on 8th July, seven at Siddick Ponds on 27th July, six at Anthorn on 1st August, 21 at Port Carlisle on 21st and 12 at Eskmeals on 24th. **Ruff** were seen in small numbers at Campfield RSPB, Hodbarrow and Wedholme Flow in July and August. **Sanderling** at Maryport Harbour on 9th June numbered 54.

A part of a large influx into Britain, **Curlew Sandpiper** were present from 31st July (a single bird at Wedholme Flow) on the Solway, on Wedholme Flow and at Walney and Hodbarrow right through to the end of August. Birds were reported from Wedholme on five days with a maximum of three birds on 25th August. Reports on the south Solway came from Drumburgh to Grune Point on seven days with maxima of four at Campfield on 25th August, with three at Grune Point the same day and six at Port Carlisle on 28th – there may well have been duplication as birds moved around with tide/disturbance. The first birds of the autumn at Walney arrived on 22nd August, increased to three on 25th with a single bird still there on 29th. **Little Stint** were reported from Walney on 19th August and one at Port Carlisle on 21st August with three there on 25th. A single was on Wedholme Flow on 29th.



Little Ringed Plover, North Cumbria, Adam Moan



Juvenile Cuckoo with Meadow Pipit, Tindale, Adam Moan

Significant numbers of **Common Sandpiper** included 13 on the River Esk at Muncaster on 30th June, 20 on the River Eden at Sandsfield on 11th July, 24 at Port Carlisle on the same day as well as 12 on the Irt/Mite/Esk complex on the same day. There were nine on Wedholme Flow on 13th July. Single **Green Sandpiper** were at Carr Beds Rockcliffe on 10th July and Derwent Water on 10th August and then two on the River Esk at Longtown on 28th and at Siddick Pond on 13th August. A **Wood Sandpiper** was present on Wedholme Flow from 8th to 31st July followed by a single birds at Walney on 17th August.

The only **Spotted Redshank** reported were at Hodbarrow RSPB on 21st June and Port Carlisle on 16th August. A single **Greenshank** was at Eskmeals on 30th June. Three flew south over Carlisle Airport on 19th August. Otherwise all other records came from the west coast and Walney with two on the River Mite on 11th July, eight there on 28th and 17 around the estuary on 21st August. Eight were on Walney on 9th July and were present on most days with double figure peaks being 16 on 16th July, 18 on 23rd, 20 on 20th August, 19 on 25th and 24 on 27th with eight still there at the end of the month.

Skuas to Auks

Away from Walney the only skuas reported were two **Pomarine** at Bowness on Solway on 28th June and five **Arctics** flying westward on 3rd August – it is interesting to wonder if these birds had come overland from the east or had earlier come into the estuary. At Walney single **Arctics** were seen on 19th June, 25th and 26th July and 21st August and two birds were seen on 27th June. The only **Great** was recorded on 17th July. Two **Pomarine**s were off Walney on 18th June.

Regular counts of **Sandwich Terns** on the west coast from Grune to Hodbarrow saw 318 on 11th July, peaking at 1793 on 8th August and dropping to 1341 by 20th. At Walney flocks of 100 were seen on 2nd August and 420 on 8th. The **Kittiwake** roost at Sellafield held 900 birds on 18th August but only included four juveniles. Three **Mediterranean Gulls** were at Workington on 5th July increasing to at least nine by 21st August probably under recorded as counts in early September of the coast north of Workington produced much higher numbers. A **Yellow-legged Gull** was present at Arnside on 22nd June and 6th and 18th July – but ages suggested 3rd summer on former dates and 2nd summer for the latter suggests two birds may have been involved. An **Iceland Gull** 3rd summer was at Walney on 4th June. Five **Puffin** were off Walney on 19th June. A **Black Guillemot** was seen off Selker on 6th June.

Cuckoo to Buntings

A pair of **Cuckoo** were in Borrowdale on 2nd June with birds through Walney on 11th June and 22nd July; a juvenile was at Red Hall farm from 23rd August to 6th September. **Swift** passage was noticeable particularly in late July (100 at Wedholme Flow on 25th) into early August but odd birds were still being reported at the end of the month.



Yellow Wagtail, Longtown, Roger Ridley



Whinchat, Geltsdale, Adam Moan

Kingfisher were reported from Ulpha Meadows, Waverton, Lessonhall, Longtown and the River Lowther. A **Hooded Crow** was at St Bees Head on 10th June and another was in the Irt estuary from 3rd to 8th July. A single **Firecrest** passed through a garden with a number of **Goldcrests** at Storth on 26th July. The first Goldcrest of autumn at Walney was on 12th August.

Presumably mainly passage single **Yellow Wagtails** were seen at Wedholme Flow on 25th July and Walney on 30th and then on four dates in August, Kirkbride on 8th and finally the River Esk at Longtown on 30th. A male and a juvenile were also at Campfield Pools on 16th August.

Unusually a passage **Ring Ouzel** was at Port Carlisle on 25th August. **Redstarts** were widespread with three pairs in Ashness Woods in June, fledglings were on Cliburn Moss in early July. The first of passage was at Walney on 17th July. Away from known breeding areas two **Whinchats** at Thornhill Meadows on 25th August were presumably passage birds, as was a bird at Walney on 18th July through to end of month, with five **Stonechats** there at one stage. An unexpected **Wood Warbler** was seen at Sandale on 15th August. **Spotted Flycatcher** were reported regularly from Waterside and Cliburn Moss. Away from known breeding areas a **Pied Flycatcher** was at Campfield RSPB on 4th August. There was an intriguing unconfirmed report of a possible **Collared Flycatcher** in a garden in Brampton on 9th June.

The bird seed plot at Red Hall farm held 32 **Greenfinches** on 26th August. The only **Hawfinch** reported was in a garden at Storth on 25th June. The club received some interesting images below of a male **Bullfinch** – juvenile plumage apart from a narrow vertical red streak down each side of the breast.



Bullfinch, Pete Burditt

As ever, we are indebted to all the contributors, too numerous to list. Feel free to send records by e-mail to: rjgreenacres72@gmail.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 www.cumbriabirdclub.org.uk for details of how to do so.

Bob Jones & Dave Piercy

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. Priority is always given to items of Cumbrian relevance. All photos, artwork etc are most welcome.

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 2016

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, 64 The Headlands, Keswick CA12 5EJ;
tel 017687 73201

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

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Cumbria Bird Club Website

<http://www.cumbriabirdclub.org.uk>

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