



BIRD NEWS
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Twinned with Cumberland Bird Observers Club

New South Wales, Australia

<http://www.cboc.org.au>

If you want to borrow CBOC publications
please contact the Secretary who holds some.



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Club news and announcements

CBC 30th Birthday Celebrations and AGM

It was great to see so many members at the celebration AGM. There was a festive atmosphere and some fantastic cakes as well as scones with cream and jam! The two magnificent birthday cakes in the photo were made by Mike and Lyn Mills who are also in the photo.



The highlight of the evening was a fascinating, and heartfelt talk by John Callion on 'The Dotterel and other Cumbrian birds - my journey'. A personal history from childhood, illustrated by the "Cumbrian" species giving inspiration along the way. Culminating in a detailed insight into a special species - the Dotterel. The exceptional dedication required for the fieldwork was awe inspiring.

Mike Carrier gave a resume of the achievements of the club which will hopefully be the subject of a future article. Both John and Mike echoed concerns over the great losses to wildlife and habitat already inflicted and the need for action in the future.

Full minutes of the AGM are available on request from the secretary.

Subscriptions

The Cumbria Bird Club 2019/2020 subscription was due on 1st October. If you receive a subscription form with this mailing then according to my records you pay annually by cheque or bank transfer. Please let me know if this is not the case.

Bank transfers clearly referenced with your name to Barclays Bank PLC, Carlisle (sort code 20-18-47) for the credit of Cumbria Bird Club, a/c no. 30464821. Please e-mail Dave Piercy when you do a transfer. Thanks.

Gift Aid Claiming

Cumbria Bird Club can reclaim 25% of a member's subscription each year if we hold a valid signed Gift Aid declaration. Currently approximately 50% of members have provided the necessary document. This results in additional income of £450 per annum. If you are a taxpayer and haven't signed a declaration please consider doing so. Either use the [form on the Club website](#) or request one from Dave Piercy or myself. Please remember if you no longer pay tax we need to hear from you so we stop claiming. Any queries please contact me by email. David Cooke – Treasurer cooke856@btinternet.com

The CBC Winter Wetland Survey (2019-20)

The CBC winter survey of freshwater bodies in Cumbria not monitored by the BTO Wetland bird survey begins in November. Sites of interest have been identified in most ten kilometre squares in the county. However, further information about recently developed wetlands and regular floodwaters would be useful at this stage. The survey requires two visits to selected waters, one in early and the other in late winter to record the number of wetland birds present including wildfowl, crakes, waders and gulls.

Thank you to those of you who have already registered an interest in the project. Further information and recording forms will be distributed shortly and the regional co-ordinators will be in contact to suggest promising water bodies to visit in your area.

More fieldworkers are needed in all parts of the county to cover as many of the abundant wetland sites in Cumbria as possible. If you are able to take part, please contact the appropriate (see map overleaf) survey co-ordinator listed below. Please provide your contact details and an indication of the area/10 Km square(s) you would be able to visit or your preferences for specific wetland sites

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Malcolm Priestley



Mallard, River Ellen, Tommy Holden



Goldeneye, Geltsdale, Adam Moan

CBC Winter Wetland Survey Regional co-ordinator's areas				NY38	NY48	NY58	NY68	NY78	NY88
NX97	NY07	NY17	NY27	NY37	NY47	NY57	NY67	NY77	NY87
NX96	NY06	NY16	NY26	NY36	NY46	NY56	NY66	NY76	NY86
NX95	NY05	NY15	NY25	NY35	NY45	NY55	NY65	NY75	NY85
NX94	NY04	NY14	NY24	NY34	NY44	NY54	NY64	NY74	NY84
NX93	NY03	NY13	NY23	NY33	NY43	NY53	NY63	NY73	NY83
NX92	NY02	NY12	NY22	NY32	NY42	NY52	NY62	NY72	NY82
NX91	NY01	NY11	NY21	NY31	NY41	NY51	NY61	NY71	NY81
NX90	NY00	NY10	NY20	NY30	NY40	NY50	NY60	NY70	NY80
SC99	SD09	SD19	SD29	SD39	SD49	SD59	SD69	SD79	SD89
SC98	SD08	SD18	SD28	SD38	SD48	SD58	SD68	SD78	SD88
SC97	SD07	SD17	SD27	SD37	SD47	SD57	SD67	SD77	SD87
SC96	SD06	SD16	SD26	SD36	SD46	SD56	SD66	SD76	SD86

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Swift Survey

It is still not too late to send in your forms to Dave Piercy. There will hopefully be some analysis of the results in the next issue.

Swift boxes - a plea for help

We recently bought a Swift nest box to support Swifts in Carlisle, and despite the best of intentions we have neither the tools nor the skills to put this up ourselves. We are struggling to find someone who can help us with this and wondered if other members would also appreciate hearing from anyone who could help, or knows someone who may be able to help, to allow more members to support Swifts in Cumbria. If you know of anyone who would be willing to help members erect swift boxes, which need to be quite high (higher than most boxes for garden birds, for example), or if you would be interested in hearing of anyone who could help in your area, please get in touch with Georgina Collins at collins.georgina50@gmail.com



Swift, Geltsdale, Adam Moan

REMINDER: 2019 LONG-EARED OWL SURVEY RESULTS

Please could everyone who very kindly participated in the LEO Survey please return their final results as soon as they can. It is extremely valuable for us have information **for all the sites** which were actually covered this year, so we can compare this data with past and future surveys. So even if you didn't see/hear any LEOs during your visits, please could you e-mail the info to Pete Howard at p.howard691@btinternet.com. Negative results are just as important as positive ones. Please use the Excel Spreadsheet provided if at all possible (I can e-mail further spreadsheets if you have mislaid the original). To keep it simple, the minimum useful data would be the site name and grid ref, date and timing of the survey, and LEO and/or Tawny owls heard. Other details such as weather conditions and other birds/wildlife would, of course, be most welcome. Any summer visit (June-August) data can be inputted on the same spreadsheet by simply clicking the 'Phase Two' tab at the bottom left of the page. If you don't feel inclined to fill out the spreadsheet, then please could you provide the minimum data in a written e-mail. Many thanks again for all your efforts.

Pete Howard
p.howard691@btinternet.com

CBC Meeting programme 2019/2020

Wednesday 22nd January 2020:

Tullie House 7.15pm Joint with Carlisle NHS
'Twenty years of Pied Flycatchers in a Gallo-
way wood' - *Brian Smith*

Monday 9th March 2020:

Friends House, Stramongate, Kendal

The second Fred Gould Memorial Lecture
joint with KNHS

Talk by Paul Colley, winner of the Wildlife
Photographer of the Year 2018.



Pied Flycatcher, Geltsdale, Adam Moan

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.

More "Brief Encounters" please - see overleaf.

Editor

Brief encounters



Ravens, St Bees Head, Tony Marsh

We headed back along the cliff top path from Fleswick Bay to the lighthouse on St. Bees Head when a Raven landed in the field 70 – 100 m ahead of us, with an intact Guillemot egg in its bill. 'This will be interesting', I said and we stood and watched the Raven tuck the egg into the short grass and with four or five deft strokes attempted to cover the egg. Job done, the Raven eyed us, with one of those knowing looks, and then flew off.

'Come on', says I, 'you haven't seen a Guillemot egg before have you, come and have a look at this,' and we quickly covered the ground to where the egg was hidden. The egg remained hidden since despite pin pointing the position, despite there being little grass with which to hide an egg and despite a good search and then some, we could not find the egg! Moral of the story – don't flatter yourself that you're smarter than a Raven.

Stepping through the gate onto the straight section of path, which had once been the old railway line, we walked on. At the next gateway at the other end of the straight I noticed something move and realised that it was a Hare, which was now setting off towards us. We both froze as the Hare lolloped casually along the 200m towards us only to stop 25m away, at this point we assumed that it had rumbled us even though the wind was in our favour. It was a young Hare, nearly full grown, and it left the path, into the nettles and cover of the old track side. Assuming that the show was over we were about to set off again but we held our positions a while longer.

Meanwhile the Hare had continued, under cover, towards us and now emerged back onto the track a mere 10-15m away! We had not moved since first sighting the Hare, not even to raise binoculars, let alone dig out the camera. Knowing that we were both fit to burst with the excitement of the encoun-



Hare, Killington, Fred Gould

ter we had difficulty containing ourselves as the Hare continued to come yet closer still and ended up sitting down beside us, within half a metre of our feet! We managed to remain statue like, although looking down at the beauty without so much as tilting our heads proved a challenge. Shortly the hare moved on and in a further half metre must have caught our scent, and was off at full tilt, allowing us to breathe again. Moral of the story – don't get up to leave before the performance is over.

The cairn on top of Cross Fell is a big affair with four radial windbreak walls furnished with stone benching to enable a sheltered seat whatever way the wind blows. At 8.45a.m. on 29th April it made the obvious place to take a break – well it seems daft to stand in the open on such an exposed plateau to pour a well deserved coffee from the flask when there's somewhere handy to blend into the surroundings and from which to take stock of what's around.

Hardly had the coffee filled the cup than the hush of this quiet morning was broken by birdsong and I realised that a Willow Warbler was tripping down the scales somewhere else around the cairn.

Peering over the shelter wall there was the Willow Warbler pecking around for the odd insect and meeting me eye to eye. I then watched through binoculars as the bird took off, northwards, flying just a couple of feet above the ground until lost to sight leaving me pondering how far it had come and how far it had left to travel. For sure it had a way to go since close on 3000 feet up and with nothing by way of a shrub for 2-3 miles this was a bird of passage. Moral of the story – always take time out with fellow travellers.



Great Northern Diver, Roa Island, Lou Cross

As a youth, and in the days before vinyl recordings, let alone CDs or online bird sound recordings were available, I recall listening to a Sunday natural history radio programme which featured the call of the Great Northern Diver. It was around the same time, and same programme, as the migratory passage of birds at Eilat became known, for those of a similarly long tooth! Many of us continue to be blown away by the haunting call of the Loon, with seldom the opportunity to hear it on Cumbrian shores.

22nd November 2018 was one of those dull, damp and misty autumn days when it's not quite raining. Everywhere calm and still, not a soul stirring. We were dropping back down the River Esk estuary, with the tide in the double kayak to Ravenglass under the spell of the day, the place and the birds. Neither of us had spoken for a while, caught up in our own thoughts, and hence we were both completely caught by surprise by the encounter which followed.

A Great Northern Diver surfaced no more than 12m in front of us, looked long and hard at us and then let out the opening strains of its call before diving. The bird surfaced again, further away, and let out the same call. The atmosphere around the estuary, the surprise which made us both start, and the sheer beauty of the call, at full volume, combined to create one of those indelible experiences which become etched into the memory – we were buzzing for hours and days after. Moral of the story – never take for granted the impact of wild places.

Lyn & Mike Mills

Fulmars v Peregrines



Peregrine and Fulmars April this year in the more northern cliff section

Four years ago, I noted that a pair of Peregrines appeared to be prospecting, setting up territory, on cliffs used by a small colony of Fulmars. They regularly inspected a nest that had been built the previous year (but not used) by the resident Raven pair. The Ravens successfully bred, as they regularly do, a bit further south.

Though seen regularly each year since, it was not until this year, 2019, that the Peregrines produced young – four in number. I guess they were too young to breed in previous years,

In March of this year I counted 18 individual Fulmars exhibiting their usual behaviour – gliding about, perching, squabbling, courting. They do this early in the season and then they usually leave for a while. Before this year I had not noticed any animosity or interaction even between them and the Peregrines. However, on two occasions this year I witnessed Fulmars being chased off out to sea.

The Fulmar colony is divided in two, separated by a short distance and, I suppose, a physical separation in the form of steel netting installed to protect the railway from rockfall. The more southerly section is the site of the Peregrine nest – the modernised Raven's one – and was the first part to be colonised (some 30+ years ago) by the Fulmars. It always has the most activity of the two sections. This year, well into the season, there was virtually no activity in that section and only possibly four pairs active in the more northern part.

As I write – mid August – there is almost constant noisy activity from the Peregrine family and no Fulmars to be seen. I suppose it remains to be seen what happens next year. It would be great to see Peregrines regularly breeding here - but at the expense of the Fulmar colony?

Jim Hewitson

Ormsgill on and off

Most descriptions of local patches involve regular visits over many years. Apologies at the outset for this one being a bit less systematic. Hopefully it will still be of interest to some.

My first birding memories are from around 1977-78. I lived literally across the street from Ormsgill Reservoir, on a street called Laburnum Crescent. Other kids went fishing, for some reason (maybe because



my father had a passing interest in wildlife) I preferred to watch the birds. I don't have any notes from that time, as I was still at primary school. I do however remember seeing Great Crested Grebes and Pochard among the more expected species. On one occasion I did see a Black Swan, which as a kid was particularly exciting. Whilst it was a very exposed site with quite a lot of disturbance the reservoir had the plus that you generally didn't have to look too hard to see the waterfowl. Back then there were in fact two reservoirs, but the upper reservoir was always the poor relation with hardly any birdlife and was eventually drained to create playing fields.

My parents moved out of Barrow around 1980, only to Dalton but without transport it very much curtailed my visits to the reservoir. As I got a bit older travelling by public transport became more of an option. I joined a new WATCH group which had a meeting at the rezza as part of a national wild-fowl watch. Other than the group leader I was the only one there with real binoculars, one or two of the others had toilet rolls stuck together! Anyway my attention was drawn to a bird in silhouette in the Coot flock which was rising out of the water and shaking repeatedly. It proved to be a Red-necked Grebe, the first one I had ever seen let alone found. In those days there wasn't much of a grapevine and it was only when Birds in Cumbria was published the following year that I saw that others had also seen the bird.

I dipped in and out of visiting the reservoir as a teenager. I do remember a teacher at Dowdales rekindling my interest at one point, stopping by at the Schneider Road side and seeing a Black Tern at very close range. Gradually I got to know a few other birders, and the advent of Bird Watching Magazine gave more information on what was being seen in the area and further afield. A particular memory of that period is Martin Cope, who had moved onto the estate where I used to live, finding a juvenile Sabine's Gull on the reservoir.

It was looking rather sorry for itself when somebody (Colin Raven possibly) appeared in the car on the overlooking Tally Ho car park to say a Wryneck had been caught at South Walney. Fortunately my taxi driver (mum) was willing to take me over in the car and I enjoyed a notable pair of ticks in one day.

After I left the area with University and work I generally visited Walney rather than the reservoir when I was back in the Barrow area. One exception I do remember was a visit where there was a drake Scaup among the Tufted Duck in the south east corner. I assume I went because the bird had been reported, but in any case it was so approachable that I got a photo taken above it and some Tufted Ducks with an unusual perspective. This was considered sufficiently different such that it was a runner up in a Birdguides photo of the month competition.



The rather telescoped history above brings us up to date.

I noticed on the CBC website that the reservoir was vacant on the WeBS scheme. Although I live in Blackpool I am in South Cumbria visiting my parents every month so I dropped Dave Shackleton a line to enquire about taking it on. Since the back end of last year I have taken on the mantle, and also picked up a couple of non-priority sites (Parker's Pond and Standing Tarn) near my folks in Dalton.

It has been good to get back to the place where I cut my birding teeth, partly for the nostalgia, but for more reasons than that. The similarities and differences are particularly striking, I haven't seen a single Pochard but Goosander are now regular when I never used to see them there. The passerines are rather better value than I ever remember them being in the past, with Bullfinches, Great Spotted Woodpecker as well as more warblers than memory recalls.



The presence of some nice duck species at an urban site encourages a few photographers to visit and share their work on Facebook. On the back of this I read a disappointed review that basically said it wasn't on a par with the likes of Leighton Moss. I am not sure what level of expectation people have had before visiting a reservoir in Barrow-in-Furness, but I don't think it is even that untidy and there are some striking views of the urban landscape. Whilst I haven't seen anything yet to start a twitch, my first site Gannet this August was a thrill and in another way so was the excellent nesting season for Tufted Ducks with eight different broods seen.

On one of the WeBS counts I did at Parker's Pond earlier this year I found an interesting 'aythya' diving duck which on reflection was the same bird previously photographed at Ormsgill Reservoir in the prior winter. A couple of my pictures are attached. It is quite clear that it isn't 'just' a bog standard Tufted Duck, and it can realistically only be some kind of Tufted Duck x Scaup hybrid or backcross. A friend whose opinion on such things I greatly respect has said he thinks it is a Tufted Duck x Lesser Scaup, and interestingly a nasal saddled Tufted Duck seen at Ormsgill was from a site in southern Europe where a Lesser Scaup was also ringed.

Stephen Dunstan

Submitting bird records in today's world

The common perception

With so many ways to submit bird records today, you probably think they are all just as good ... Well, unfortunately you would be wrong !

The reality

Out of the ten ways that people commonly report bird sightings there is only one that works reliably in the county. And that is to report directly to the Cumbria Bird Club.

The reasons why

In Britain we have a national network of County Recorders and each county has a team of people who process records and assess them for validity. Each county produces an annual bird report from those records. In Cumbria both these processes are carried out by the Cumbria Bird Club.

Records submitted to other bodies such as BirdGuides, Rare Bird Alert or the local Facebook Group need to find their way to the Cumbria Bird Club before they can be processed and made use of. This takes time and inaccuracies often creep in. The Cumbria Bird Club searches for records submitted to these various bodies but this can be a complex process. The reason for that is the bird information services take records from each other in such a way as to form a long convoluted chain. The original observer is consequently often difficult to trace. This difficulty is compounded by some of the bodies' very defensive interpretation of the Data Protection Act so accessing an observer's contact details is obstructed.

Some alternative routes

Some bodies such as Birdguides, RBA were set up to provide rapid sharing of records of mainly unusual species. While they work well for that, they do not work well as a route to creating a permanent record.

BirdTrack was set up by the BTO around a decade ago and many observers have made that their sole reporting route. While it has some national value the records often suffer from vague location detail and a total lack of detail on the birds themselves regarding gender and numbers involved. Observers should also be aware when reporting away from their home county that not all counties use BirdTrack so their records may never reach the local recorder.

In conclusion

If you enter bird records to the alternative bodies alone then they may never form part of the permanent record for Cumbria.

Please submit records to the Cumbria Bird Club if you want them to count.

Chris Hind (County Recorder)

The breeding season at Watchtree and local area

If our ringing at Watchtree is a good guide the warblers seem to have had a very good year, especially Willow Warblers, Chiffchaff, Garden Warbler and Blackcap.

We have ringed over 200 Willow Warblers since the end of June. The few pair of Sedge Warblers we have seen to be average. We recorded a Lesser Whitethroat breeding for the first time at Watchtree but no juveniles were captured so we have no indication of how it fared.

My regular Swallow's farm showed a slight recovery in numbers after last year's crash (20 pair in 2017, 12 in 2018 and 13 this year) and as I write I know two pair have third broods in progress. The House Martin numbers on our house are down I think, but when we left home at least four pair were still feeding and fresh shells suggested a nest hatched about 27th August.



Willow Warbler, Portinscale, Tony Marsh



Tree Sparrow, Portinscale, Tony Marsh

The Barn Owls I monitor produced 30 chicks in eleven boxes, which is a great relief after having only five chicks in two boxes last year. Tree Sparrows seem to have stopped at two broods this year, although on our last ringing outing we were catching recently fledged young.

However, at the beginning of July I saw one of the largest flocks of Tree and House Sparrows I have ever seen feeding on barley in a field next to Watchtree, at least 400 in my estimation.

The breeding season at Watchtree and local area

Interestingly too we were catching one or two very young Linnets in late August. Lots of juvenile Redpoll too.

We had three pair of Curlews displaying on and around Watchtree and two pair produced young but whether or not they fledged I have no idea. The two sites where I monitor Little Ringed Plover both reared young to fledging and we think there were two pair at each site.



Linnet, St Bees, Tony Marsh



Redshank, Geltsdale, Adam Moan

The only site I know for breeding Redshank is Wedholme Flow and I estimated there were at least seven pair and most seemed to have young by June. Not so sure how well the Lapwing did here but there were certainly juveniles being guarded well into June.

There was also a small colony of Black-headed Gulls (estimate about 25 pairs) back on Wedholme and they too reared a few chicks.

Frank Mawby



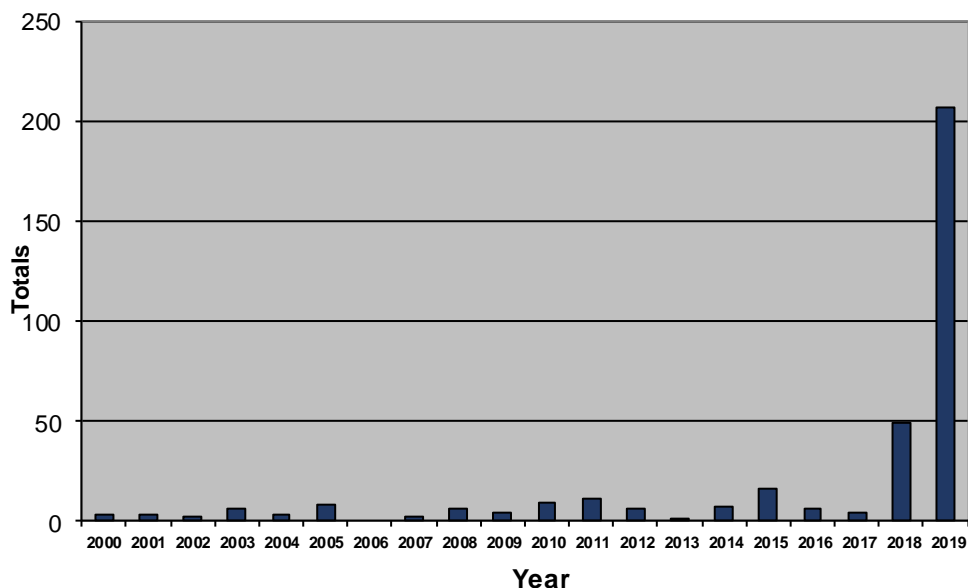
Lapwing, Solway, Tommy Holden

Puffin influx into the waters around Walney Island

At the end of the 19th century, Durnford (1883), Macpherson (1892) and Mitchell (1892) all considered the Puffin to be a fairly common victim of autumn and winter storms when examples could be regularly found washed ashore on the island. Subsequently, Blezard (1943) thought it a storm-driven vagrant, although acknowledging that dead birds were occasionally found historically in large numbers along the shores of Walney Island, a view that was maintained by Oakes (1953) and Spencer (1973). Perhaps therefore, not surprisingly, the first two Walney Bird Observatory records involved dead birds at South Walney on 10th August 1965 and 7th June 1967. Dean (1990) also commented that all island records, prior to a single at South Walney on 6th May 1973, involved birds found on the strandline.

Thereafter, the majority of sightings occurred in autumn with peaks of six on 30th October 1978 and eight on 10th October 1984 although Dean (1989) called into question the identification of some records, suggesting the possibility of confusion with other auks.

Annual Totals for Puffin off Walney Island (2000-2019)



(Source: WBO 2019)

Latterly, there is little evidence of autumn offshore passage with the majority of sightings between May and July. For much of the early 21st century the species was still considered scarce with an average of around four birds recorded each year and peaks of seven on 15th May 2005 and six on 19th June 2016. A change in fortunes was first noted in 2018 when a then exceptional total of 49 birds were logged on 13 dates between 19th May and 8th July with a maximum 11 on 9th June, however even these numbers were soon to be eclipsed. In 2019 a total of 207 birds were seen on 43 days between 22nd April and 15th July with peaks of 14 on 25th May, 26 on 30th May and 19 on 28th June.

With the Cumbrian breeding population currently in decline and perilously small, reduced to a few pairs, this is unlikely to be the source of the birds occurring off Walney Island. While a number of other colonies are scattered around the Irish Sea the most substantial populations occur on Skomer and Skokholm to the south and are perhaps the most likely source of the birds occurring off Walney Island, although it still remains a scarce bird off the Lancashire and Merseyside coastline. However, there is some ringing evidence to suggest that birds from Scottish colonies also reach the Irish Sea during the breeding season. An adult ringed on Sule Skerry, Orkney on 20th July 1993 was recovered on Walney Island on 28th May 1994.

Colin Raven

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Recent reports

The period covered is June to August 2019. Some of these records are unauthenticated and may require review by the Club Records Panel or the British Birds Rarities Committee.



Common Scoter, Geltsdale, Adam Moan

Wildfowl

As is the norm at this season there were fewer records of wildfowl. The regular summering **Whooper Swan** was on the River Eden at Grinsdale on 4th August, **Gadwall** numbers at Hodbarrow peaked at four on 12th June and an adult was there with a half-grown juvenile on 15th July. Foulshaw area numbers peaked at four on 24th August. Returning **Teal** at Walney had increased to 58 by the end of August. A **Pochard** was at Hodbarrow on 27th June.

The **Eider** which had frequented the Inner Solway previously were last reported on 2nd June with four birds passing Bowness. Return passage of **Common Scoter** was noted with 24 on Haweswater on 20th August, Blea Tarn, Haweswater had five on 22nd and two were on Brothers Water on 28th. Birds were also appearing off Walney with 245 on 26th June increased to 800 by 7th July and still 675 at the end of August.

Partridge to Herons

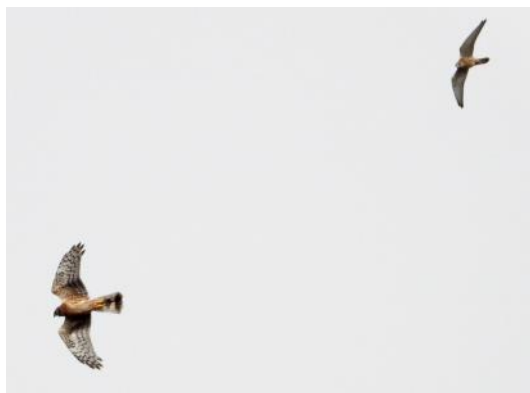
Single **Quail** were reported from Brigsteer on 27th June, Wythop on 12th July, Langwathby on 21st and Wiggonby on 30th. Two **Great Northern Divers** were off Bowness on 2nd June. 25 **Manx Shearwaters** were there on the same tide. By the end of the month 525 passed Walney with a further count of 1000 on 20th July. Over 100 were off Silecroft on 12th June and over 200 were off Selker on 15th July. Strong north westerlies brought two **Leach's Petrels** to Walney on 31st August.

A **Great White Egret** was reported from Bassenthwaite on several days from 15th July and one was at Arnside on 13th August. **Little Egrets** at Walney started to increase with ten there on 18th June and then 25 were on Chapel Island, Cartmel on 12th July whilst on South Solway 45 were at the Bowness area on 14th. In August numbers increased at the Port Carlisle Island roost

from 16 on 4th, to 35 on 7th and 54 on 29th – these often including large feeding groups as the tide ran off the area on the landward side of the island. Regular counts throughout the period from the Foulshaw area peaked at six birds. At least 360 were in Cumbrian roosts around Morecambe Bay and the Duddon Estuary in mid July rising to 499 by mid August.

A **Western Cattle Egret** was reported at Sandside on 14th August and another was at Blea Tarn, Haweswater on 26th.

Raptors



Hen Harrier & Kestrel, Geltsdale, Adam Moan Peregrine, Whitescar, Adam Moan

An **Osprey** was at RSPB Campfield on 21st July and then on several dates from 1st August perching on posts on the water's edge. Passage birds were recorded at Walney in mid August. Apart from the southern mosses the only **Red Kite** reported was from Spadeadam on 20th August.

Marsh Harriers were reported regularly from southern mosses and at Walney on several dates – a female moving north on 19th June, a bird on 28th and 29th July and again on 7th, 13th and 27th August. A juvenile and/or female was reported on four dates in the first half of August from Anthorn, Border Marsh and Wedholme Flow and a juvenile was at Old Sandsfield on 29th.

A **Honey Buzzard** passed through RSPB Geltsdale on 1st June. An immature Merlin was by the Irt Estuary on 4th August. A **Hobby** was at RSPB Geltsdale on 25th July and again on 4th August with single birds at Ennerdale on 11th (hunting Sand Martins) and Lanercost on 19th; two birds were at Lessonhall on 17th. Up to two were also on the southern mosses from early July to late August. A **Peregrine** was seen twice in mid-July on Dixon's Chimney, Carlisle.

Waders

Oystercatcher nests at Par-ton/Lowca were washed out by high spring tides on 19th June. A single **Avocet** was at Port Carlisle on 14th July, and on 20th. Two **Little Ringed Plover** were present at Walby Flash and two were by a southern water on 20th June.



*Golden Plover & Black-tailed Godwit,
Port Carlisle, Adam Moan*

A **Dotterel** nest found on the fells on 21st June was subsequently deemed to have failed. A juvenile was seen on Scafell on 20th August. The post breeding flocks of **Lapwing** were first seen at Carlisle Airport (124) on 13th July, 60 at nearby Walby Flash on 7th August, at least 300 at RSPB Campsfield and 250 near Oulton on 22nd. Fourteen, presumably returning, **Grey Plover** were counted at Walney on 29th June.

The first **Curlew Sandpiper** reported at Port Carlisle was on 24th July and an adult was at Sandside on 28th. A **Green Sandpiper** was around Foulshaw on 18th June, a single was by Carr Beds on 4th August, five were at Wedholme Flow on 14th with one at Sandside on the same day and then a single at College Green on 19th and another on a field flood at Low Crosby on 21st. Significant numbers of **Common Sandpiper** reported were 15 at Ravenglass on 30th June, 20 at Drumburgh on 10th July, 15 at Old Sandsfield on 1st August, 14 at Port Carlisle on 4th August and nine on the River Eden at Rockliffe on the same day.

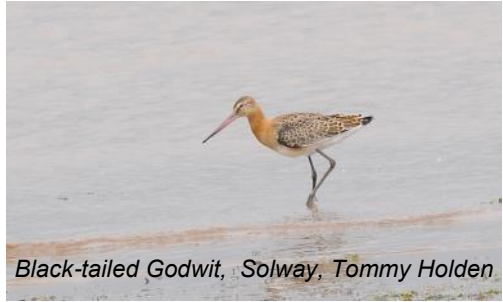
At least 1000 **Common Redshank** frequented Port Carlisle Harbour at the end of July with a similar number at Walney on 29th August. A single juvenile **Spotted Redshank** was in Port Carlisle Harbour on 15th August then two juveniles and an adult on 29th August.



Turnstone, Solway, Tommy Holden

Knot numbers at Walney included 450 on 27th June and 400 on 5th July. Five **Greenshank** were at Walney on 29th June (increased to 15 by 23rd August) and two at Ravenglass a day later, four at Old Sandsfield on 1st August, 12 on the Mite Estuary on 3rd, three at Anthorn on 8th and singles at Foulshaw on 26th and Port Carlisle on 29th.

Two **Black-tailed Godwits** were noted at Siddick Ponds on 12th July, three on the Irt Estuary on 24th then ten there flying south on 28th with singles at Walby Flash on 29th, Rockcliffe on 4th August and on a field flood at Fingland on 21st. Other August sightings were ten at Port Carlisle on 15th, two at Hodbarrow on 20th, and 15 at Bowness on 29th.



Black-tailed Godwit, Solway, Tommy Holden



Curlew, Solway, Tommy Holden

Curlew numbers at Walney started to build in June – 256 there on 17th and up to 1120 by 6th July and 2250 by early August. **Whimbrel** reported were one at Selker on 15th July and three at Hodbarrow the same day. There were two at Port Carlisle on 1st August, three at Walney on 2nd August and at Port Carlisle in mid August. Three were at Hodbarrow on 8th and 20th October. A late roding **Woodcock** was over Walton Moss on 13th July.

A minimum of ten **Common Snipe** were at Walby Flash on 7th August. After heavy rain six **Ruff** were on the flood at Fingland on 21st August and five were near Oulton a day later.

Skuas to Auks

There was an **Arctic** and a **Great Skua** off Bowness on 2nd June with a **Pomarine** off Nethertown the same day. A pale phase adult **Arctic** was at Silecroft on 12th June and two juveniles were seen flying in then out of the Solway one hour apart. A single was off Tarn Bay, Eskmeals on 4th August. Another **Pomarine** was off Selker on 15th July.

The regular build-up of **Mediterranean Gulls** was noted first at Hodbarrow with a single on 12th June then Drumburgh with a single bird on 10th July and then four at Sillioth on 26th and a single bird at Walney on 31st. By 17th August the high tide roost at Flimby held 124 birds with



Mediterranean Gull, Allonby, Roger Ridley

Recent reports

another ten at Workington Harbour; there were still 100 in the same area a week later including French and Irish colour ringed birds.

Twenty **Common Gulls** at Sedgwick on 25th August were the first of the autumn there. A **Yellow-legged Gull** was at Sandside on 19th June and a single was at Hodbarrow on 15th July. **Kittiwake** productivity was 0.74 chicks per incubated nest from 81 nests followed at St Bees Head significantly better than 0.1 in 2018. Ninety passed Bowness on 2nd June but inland one was on a flash at Fingland on 24th August. Nine **Little Gulls** flew west and out to sea at Walney on 27th August.



Sandwich Tern, Silloth, Tommy Holden

Sandwich Tern numbers at Walney saw 330 on 4th June with numbers reducing slowly during the month but still 245 at the end of July. A juvenile seen there on 28th July had been ringed in County Wexford on 25th June with another bird controlled the same day having been ringed at Cemlyn Anglesey on 18th June 2019. Twenty two **Little Terns** were on the high tide roost at Walney on 1st August. The only **Black Tern** reported was at Port Carlisle briefly before flying off south on 22nd July.



*Common Tern, Bowness Railings,
Roger Ridley*



*Common Tern, Bowness Railings,
Adam Moan*

445 **Guillemots** were off Walney on 3rd June. Four **Black Guillemots** passed Lowca on 19th June. Eleven **Puffins** were counted at Walney on 19th June and 19 on 28th. Up to 15 **Gannets** were south off St. Bees Head on 14th June and up to 12 south off Parton on 19th both containing some sub adult birds. Most unexpected was one on Ormskill Reservoir on 11th August .

Pigeons to Buntings

Cuckoo were reported from Walney at the end of June and a juvenile was on Binsey on 17th August. Numbers were up in Eskdale and Wasdale compared to last year. **Little Owl** were reported from Halforth, Holme (first for seven years) and High Hesket. Churring **Nightjars** were recorded from West Cumbria and a southern moss.

Swifts were widely reported with 21 moving north at Walney on 12th June and 34 on 25th. Up to 100 were feeding over rape fields at Aglionby in early July and 150 over Stanwix and Belah, Carlisle one evening. Birds were regularly reported in August with ten by the River Wampool on 16th of note, and the last were three at Sunbiggin Tarn on 29th. On the marsh just east of Drumbrugh there were circa 120 **Sand Martins** feeding around cattle.



House Martin, Geltsdale, Adam Moan



Kingfisher, R Ellen, Tommy Holden

Hirundine numbers of note were up to 1000 at RSPB Campfield on 3rd August and 500 **Swallows** at Sedgwick on 25th with 1000 passing through Walney on the same date. A juvenile **Kingfisher** at Watchtree NR was unexpected.

A **Wryneck** at Embleton on 7th June was equally unexpected.

Passage **Meadow Pipits** included 190 on the runway at Carlisle Airport on 23rd August with 24 **Pied Wagtails** and a **Wheatear** there at the same time.

Recent reports



Meadow Pipit, Geltsdale, Roger Ridley

Up to eight **Yellow Wagtails** were reported at Walney from mid July: in the north the only bird reported was a juvenile on the River Eden opposite Carr Beds on 4th August. A juvenile was at College Green on 15th July.



Grey Wagtail, Portinscale, Tony Marsh

Away from RSPB Geltsdale single **Whinchats** were reported from Gowk Bank on 13th August and Binsey (a juvenile) on 17th. A **Marsh Tit** was discovered in the River Lyne valley east of Longtown.

Unusual at Walney was a **Cetti's Warbler** on 20th July. Forty-four **Willow Warblers** were at Walney on 2nd August. **Wood Warblers** numbers were reported to be up on last year in Eskdale, Ennerdale and Wasdale.



*Wheatear, Herdhill Scar,
Adam Moan*



*Whitethroat, Geltsdale,
Adam Moan*



*Willow Warbler, Portinscale,
Tony Marsh*

A **Hooded Crow** was on the Irt estuary on 18th August. The first significant numbers of **Starling** were a flock of 400 at Watchtree NR on 7th August. Three pairs of **Ring Ouzel** were around Wastwater screes on 10th June.

House Sparrow numbers of note were 120 coming to feed in the Wigton area and 30 at Sedgwick. Walney held 116 **Tree Sparrows** on 25th August. A single **Crossbill** was at Parkgate Wood on 7th July and they were present at Gowk Bank in mid August.



*Grasshopper Warbler, Geltsdale,
Adam Moan*



*Garden Warbler,
Cliburn Moss, Tony Marsh*



Wheatear, Mawbray, Tommy Holden

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

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Information for contributors

The deadline for copy for the next issue is December 1st 2019.

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Cumbria Bird Club Website

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

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