



BIRD NEWS
Vol. 27 No. 1 Spring 2016

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New South Wales, Australia

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Wood Warbler training days

Training days are to be arranged, initially to help those who want to participate in the CBC Wood Warbler survey (see overleaf) but are unfamiliar with Wood Warblers and their breeding biology. This would typically be the last few days of April and the first two weeks of May.

Although reasonably easy to locate by sound, Wood Warblers are notoriously difficult to see; they are the same size and colour as the canopy leaves in which they feed.



Wood Warbler, Tony Marsh

Finding the nest and establishing proof of breeding is a skill set that is acquired through patience and experience. Understanding their breeding biology is key to interpreting the changes in behaviour, song and call, as the season progresses.

All nests are on the ground, typically built into last year's dead vegetation. Building and visiting the nest, are the only time the birds come to ground. Even when feeding chicks, they are reasonably tolerant of observers, though remain frustratingly elusive. Both sexes are identical, which can make it problematic, if trying to watch a bird back to incubating, as only the female incubates. I wouldn't like to guess how many times I've watched the 'wrong' bird!

Establishing breeding is more difficult to assess, and arranging exact dates is not possible, until arrival dates are known. Being summer migrants, they are susceptible to the vagaries of the weather, and arrival and subsequent nesting activities are related; though is likely to be throughout June. Wood Warbler are single brooded, with amazing synchrony of first egg dates, in good warm springs. Mixed and cool conditions protracts the breeding season well into July; failed nests are also replaced which also extends the season. Nevertheless, taking these into account, it remains a relatively short span of time to establish breeding and gather territory and nest site data.

If you are interested please contact [Dave Piercy](#) 017687 77246 who will endeavour to find a trainer in your area. If you have a good knowledge of Wood Warbler please volunteer to be a trainer for at least one morning.

John Callion

The CBC Wood Warbler Survey 2016-17

The Bird Club is organising a survey of the county's Wood Warblers beginning this spring with a 'pilot survey' to trial fieldwork methodology and recording forms on sites usually frequented by the species.



Wood Warbler, Adam Moan

All results will contribute to the full survey in 2017. In addition, training sessions will be offered for members less familiar with Wood Warblers, their songs, calls and behaviour, during May this year (see page 3).

The initial objectives of the project outlined in the winter newsletter have been extended:

- To update the current distribution of Wood Warblers.
- To establish a county population estimate.
- To record the breeding status of birds holding territory.
- To investigate environmental factors which may affect Wood Warbler populations.
- To compare the current status of Wood Warblers with previous tetrad based data (i.e. 1984 BTO Survey; 1997-2001 and 2008-12 county atlas surveys).

Wood Warblers are on the Red List for Birds of Conservation Concern following a 37% contraction in range and steep decline in numbers in the UK since the 1990s. A BBS national population estimate of 5,000-7,000 males in 2009 compared to a CBC county figure of 2500 pairs in 2001 may be viewed with a mixture of pessimism, nostalgia and scepticism. The Cumbria tetrad atlas surveys (1997-2001 and 2008-12) show a 50% decrease in the number of occupied tetrads.

However, distribution maps are not reliable indicators of Wood Warblers density. 'All species' tetrad surveys undoubtedly miss suitable habitats and most counts conducted in April or July are when birds are absent or difficult to detect. Hence a need for a different approach.

Wood Warblers arrive from their wintering grounds in West and Central Africa in late April and the early weeks of May. They frequent the broad-leaved woodlands of hilly terrain dominated by mature oak, beech or birch with little secondary growth and ground cover. Cumbria is well-endowed with this habitat in the upland valleys of the Lake District and Pennines. There is little suitable territory in lowland or coastal areas.

The CBC survey will prioritise woodlands known to have been occupied by Wood Warblers in recent years. It is also important to investigate sites with earlier reports of territorial birds. Records published annually in the *Birds and Wildlife in Cumbria* journal suggest that few woods are checked on a regular basis. Locations with a history of Wood Warbler occupancy dating back to the 1984 BTO sample survey have been identified and exploration of these sites will form a significant part of the project.

Wood Warblers are the largest of Europe's leaf warblers. They are distinctive and attractive with their brightly contrasted yellowish-green upperparts, sulphur yellow throat and white belly. Relatively wide-winged and agile, much of their time is spent foraging in the high canopy. Thus, catching sight of these birds can be challenging, particularly as the season progresses and trees develop full leaf cover. Finding Wood Warblers relies heavily on listening for their clear and unmistakable song and plaintive, piping calls. Subtle changes in vocalisation give clues to each stage of the breeding cycle which lasts until mid-July.

The initial phase of the Wood Warbler survey this spring has two aspects:

The Pilot Survey. Ideally two visits to one or more woodlands usually frequented by Wood Warblers – a May/early June visit to count territories and record habitat details and a June/early July visit to assess breeding status. Help from anyone with an interest in the species will be greatly appreciated.

Wood Warbler Mornings. Sessions at various locations during May for anyone wishing to learn more about the birds, their behaviour and habitat. (See page 3)

If you wish to take part please contact Malcolm Priestley for further details:

Havera Bank East, Howgill Lane, Sedbergh, Cumbria LA10 5HB

Email: mmphavera@hotmail.co.uk

Tel.: 015396 20104

Mike Carrier, John Callion, Dave Piercy, Malcolm Priestley

Cumbria Bird Atlas 2007 – 2013

The results of the Bird Atlas work carried out in Cumbria between 2007 and 2013 are now available online. They have been collated into an online book which can be viewed or downloaded as either a PDF or as an Ebook from the Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre web site or via the Cumbria Bird Club web site. It can found at: <http://www.cbdc.org.uk/data/bird-atlas-maps>. or <http://www.cumbriabirdclub.org.uk/publications/county-atlas>

There are two sections in each version, one for non-passerines and the other for passerines.

The Atlas has been generated from the data collected in Cumbria by volunteers for the Bird Atlas 2007-11, a joint initiative of the British Trust for Ornithology and Cumbria Bird Club. The survey primarily covered four breeding seasons (2008-2011) and four winters (2007/8-2010/11). However, the survey period was extended in Cumbria to give time to cover all the tetrads (2km by 2km squares) in the county, so additional data is included for the breeding seasons 2008-2012 and winters 2007/8-2012/13.

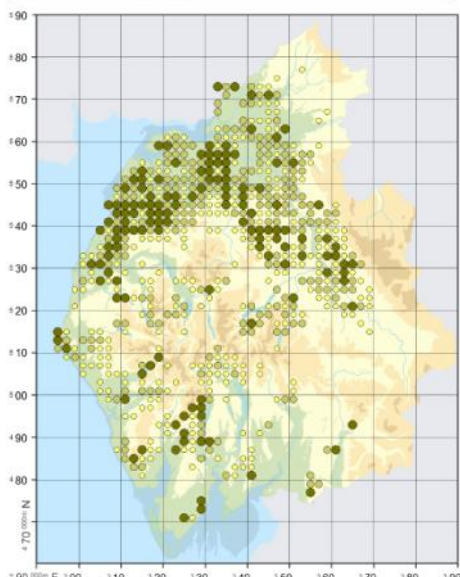
The survey results were published by the BTO in their national atlas and the maps for Britain and Ireland are also available online for a national context at <http://blx1.bto.org/mapstore>. The maps in this Cumbria atlas allow more detail to be seen at a county level.

Following a general introduction giving details of how to interpret the maps, the core of the Atlas consists of individual species chapters. Each starts with a brief statement of the species' status in the county. This is followed by a table summarising occurrence by tetrad, and maps at the 10km square level showing change since the three previous national atlases namely: Breeding since 1968-72, Breeding since 1988-91, and Wintering since 1981-84.

The core of each chapter consists of tetrad maps, where appropriate showing: Breeding Category, Breeding Relative Abundance, Ten Year Breeding Change, Wintering Presence and Wintering Relative Abundance. See sample maps for Yellowhammer and a few other species on the next two pages.

The Bird Club would like to express its gratitude to Moustafa Eweda, Teresa Frost and Gary Hedges at the Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre for their commitment to delivering the mapping aspect of the project and Rob Pickett from the Bird Club for analysing the raw data. It would also like to thank Clive Hartley the overall leader of the fieldwork aspect of the project and regional organisers, Colin Gay, Dave Piercy and Steve Westerberg, and not least the many fieldworkers who contributed to the data gathering over the six years of the survey.

Dave Shackleton

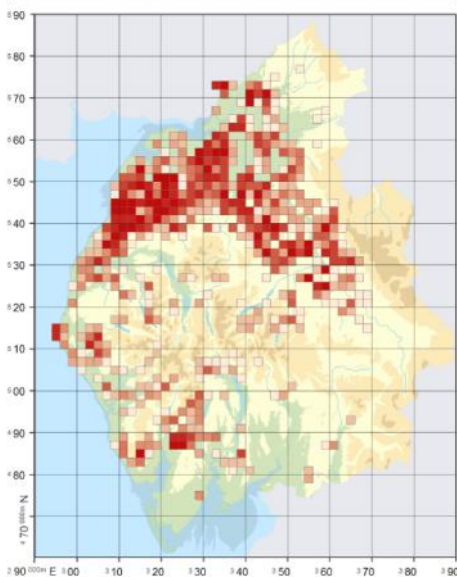


Yellowhammer

● Possible	263
● Probable	209
● Confirmed	139

Evidence of breeding in the 2009-2011 survey. Category determined by the strongest recorded evidence of breeding by birds in suitable nesting habitat in the tetrad.

Includes records from Timed Tetrad Visits and Roving Records

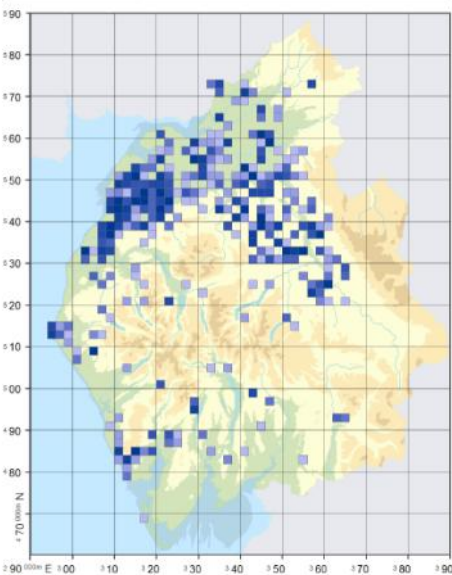


Yellowhammer

Relative abundance during the April to July Timed Tetrad Counts (TTC) in the 2009-2011 survey. Relative abundance category derived from the maximum number of birds recorded in one TTC.



Categories: 1 = 1-1, 2 = 2-2, 3 = 3-3, 4 = 4-4, 5 = 5-5, 6 = 6-6, 7 = 7-7, 8 = 8-8, 9 = 9-9, 10 = 10-10.

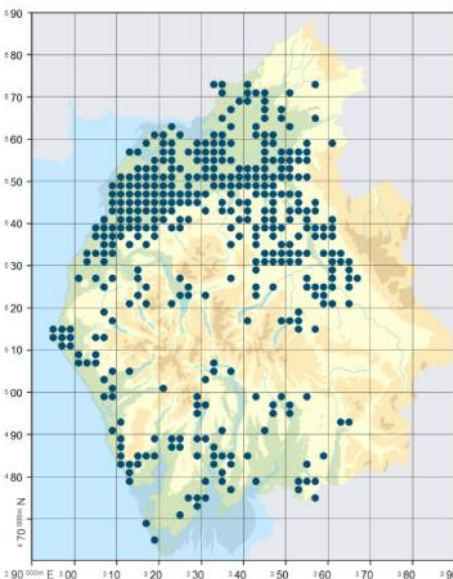


Yellowhammer



Relative abundance during the November to February Timed Tetrad Counts (TTC) in the 2007-2011 survey. Relative abundance category derived from the maximum number of birds recorded in one TTC.

Categories: 1 = 1-1, 2 = 2-2, 3 = 3-3, 4 = 4-4, 5 = 5-5, 6 = 6-6, 7 = 7-7, 8 = 8-8, 9 = 9-9, 10 = 10-10.

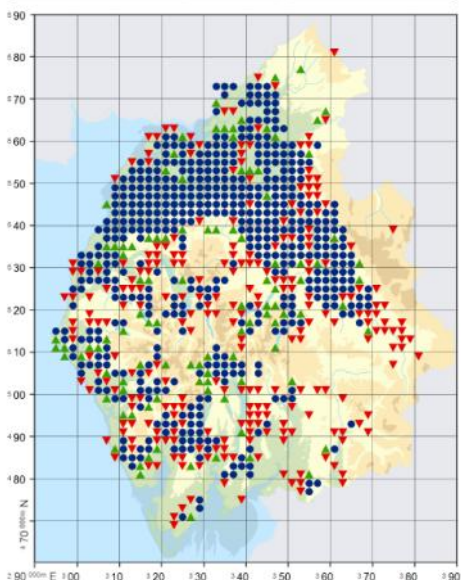


Yellowhammer

● Presence 390

Presence during November to February in the 2007-2011 survey.

Includes records from Timed Tetrad Visits and Roving Records

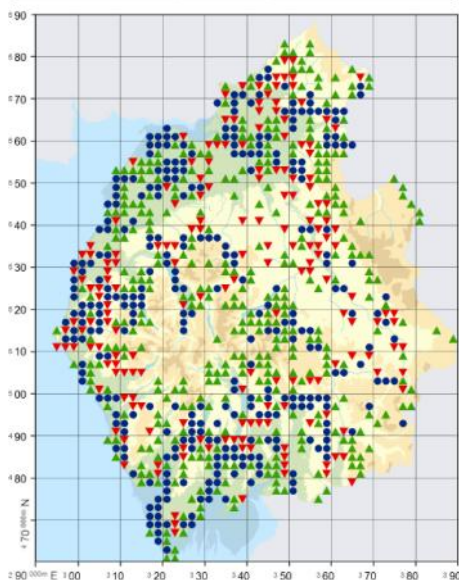


Yellowhammer

▲ Gain	105
● Stable	596
▼ Loss	250

Evidence of breeding in the 2008-2011 atlas compared with the 1997-2001 atlas.

Gain: Only present in national 2008-11 atlas. Stable: Present in Cumbrian 1997-2001 and 2008-11 atlases. Loss: Only present in Cumbrian 1997-2001 atlas.

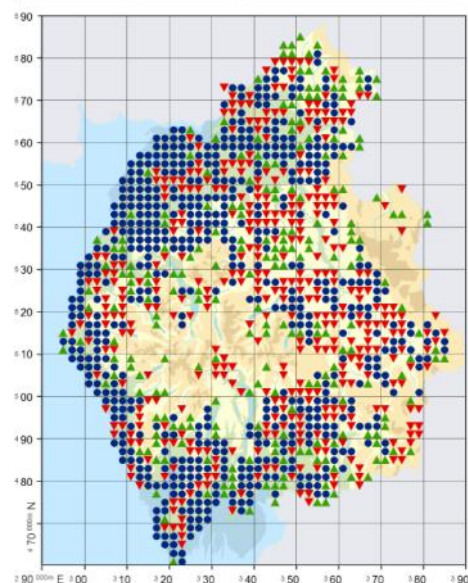


Reed Bunting

▲ Gain	369
● Stable	304
▼ Loss	183

Evidence of breeding in the 2008-2011 atlas compared with the 1997-2001 atlas.

Gain: Only present in national 2008-11 atlas. Stable: Present in Cumbrian 1997-2001 and 2008-11 atlases. Loss: Only present in Cumbrian 1997-2001 atlas.

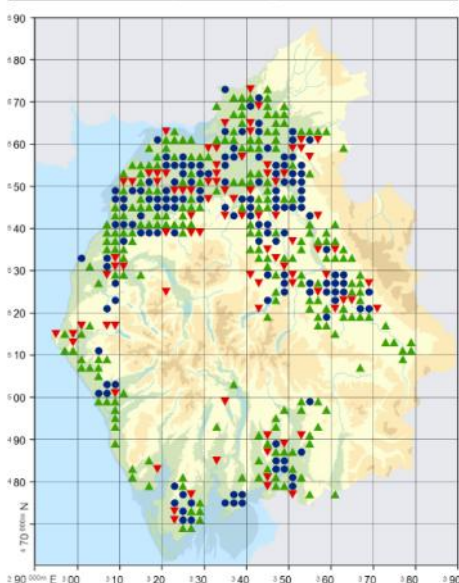


Linnet

▲ Gain	234
● Stable	567
▼ Loss	389

Evidence of breeding in the 2008-2011 atlas compared with the 1997-2001 atlas.

Gain: Only present in national 2008-11 atlas. Stable: Present in Cumbrian 1997-2001 and 2008-11 atlases. Loss: Only present in Cumbrian 1997-2001 atlas.



Tree Sparrow

▲ Gain	235
● Stable	143
▼ Loss	87

Evidence of breeding in the 2008-2011 atlas compared with the 1997-2001 atlas.

Gain: Only present in national 2008-11 atlas. Stable: Present in Cumbrian 1997-2001 and 2008-11 atlases. Loss: Only present in Cumbrian 1997-2001 atlas.

Dear CBC members, Les Robertson, a CBC member, donated his extensive collection of books and magazines to be sold with profits going to the Cumbria Wildlife Trust, shortly before his death last year. The magazines are free to a good home, which I am sure would have pleased Les. If you are interested please contact me, Fiona Galloway, 01946841313 or Fiona.Galloway@me.com. There are 100 copies of CBC magazine Bird News from vol 1 no. 3, Summer 1990 to vol 26 no. 1, Spring 2015 and 27 copies of Birds and Wildlife in Cumbria from 1988 to 2013. There is also a copy of The Arran Bird Report 2009.

Title	Price
A Field Guide to the Land Snails of Britain and North-West Europe	£5.00
Britain's Reptiles and Amphibians (WILDGuides)	£5.00
Alaska Wildlife (Pocket Naturalist Guide Series)	£2.00
Handbook of British Mammals	£4.00
Why Big Fierce Animals are Rare (Penguin Press Science)	£5.00
Animal Behaviour: An Evolutionary Approach	£5.00
Grasses, Ferns, Mosses and Lichens of Great Britain and Ireland	£5.00
Flora of Cumbria	£10.00
New Flora of the British Isles	£4.00
British grasses and their employment in agriculture 1917	£5.00
The Wild Flower Key: British Isles and North West Europe	£5.00
Wild Flowers of Britain and North West Europe (New Generation guide)	£1.50
Great Yew Forest	£1.00
Mushrooms and Toadstools	£2.50
The History of the Countryside	£4.00
Wild Life in My Garden	£1.00
Working with Wildlife Site Guide (CIRIA)	£5.00
The Doomsday Book: Can the World Survive	£2.50
The Diversity of Life	£3.00
England's National Nature Reserves	£3.00
Wildlife Habitat in Cumbria (Research and Survey in Nature Conservation Series)	£5.00
Birds and Men (Collins New Naturalist Series)	£2.00
The Sea Shore (Collins New Naturalist Series)	£2.00
Collins Pocket Guide - Insects of Britain and Western Europe	£1.00
Insect Natural History (Collins New Naturalist Series)	£2.00

Walney Wanderers retain Bird Race Shield

The Cumbria Bird Club Winter Bird Race is a long-standing event in the CBC fixtures calendar and following a failure to attend for the first time in 2013 and no event in 2014, Walney Bird Observatory again entered a team in 2015 with the 97 species seen in a howling gale and a monsoon good enough to regain the trophy from the Solway Searchers.

Determined to return to form and once again break the 100 species barrier, on 10th January 2016 WBO again fielded a team. However, the weather again conspired to make it difficult with the “Walney Wanderers”, comprising Tony Phizacklea, Chris Turner and Colin Raven, assembling at 0600hrs under leaden skies, driving rain and a howling gale. The rain finally relented at 0650hrs and almost immediately two Tawny Owls appeared to set the total running. Heading towards home ground, Robin, Coot and Mallard were added before the ghostly white images of Little Egret and Mute Swan emerged out of the dark.



Stonechat, Alan Frost

As dawn began to break a flock of 40 pale-bellied Brent Geese, two Shags and several Great Crested Grebes were seen before a Peregrine flushed an excellent variety of waders and wildfowl. Two Greenshank and several Shoveler were next to fall before a Raven flew over pursued by the local Carrion Crows. A Short-eared Owl was the next addition when it was flushed by the rising tide and both Jack Snipe and Snipe followed to leave the total on 50 species by 0950hrs. A check over the now mountainous sea only revealed several small groups of Kittiwake fleeing into the more sheltered waters of Morecambe Bay before the anticipated Purple Sandpiper failed to show, although Stonechat and Rock Pipit were added.



Reed Bunting, Geltsdale, Adam Moan

A check of a garden feeding station at the north end of the island provided a number of garden birds including Bullfinch and Tree Sparrow before the flooded horse paddocks along Carr Lane held Linnet, Skylark, Meadow Pipit and the sought after Water Pipit – the rarest bird we were to see all day.

Walney Wanderers retain Bird Race Shield

Finally, a Collared Dove was added as we left the island to leave the running total on 69 species. Kestrel, Reed Bunting, Ringed Plover and Pheasant en-route to several “guaranteed” Kingfisher. Typically, none appeared although Buzzard, Grey Wagtail and Goosander amongst a few commoner species were some compensation and we headed towards the woodland stage with 80 species under the belt by 1200hrs.

A prime area of Cumbrian woodland immediately produced Marsh Tit and Coal Tit but thereafter birds became very difficult to locate with only Long-tailed Tit, Treecreeper and eventually Sparrowhawk, Great Spotted Woodpecker and Jay added. Barnacle Goose on a nearby salt marsh was next to fall before two Red Kites circled over the car. Without doubt part of the Cumbrian re-introduction scheme the temptation to add these to the list was resisted. Eventually Grey Heron and then



Bullfinches, River Dandy, Adam Moan

Pink-footed Goose were added en-route to Hodbarrow where the main targets, Great Northern Diver and Slavonian Grebe, were followed by Tufted Duck and Gadwall to leave the total on 95 species as the light began to fade.

Heading back to the finish line, a great deal of searching through the day was finally rewarded with a Dipper showing well from Duddon Bridge. Arrival at Haverthwaite was 30 minutes early and gave an unforeseen tactical advantage to the opposition – sack the captain for failing to note that the finish time had been changed from the traditional 1700hrs to 1730hrs. However, as the other teams arrived over the course of the next hour, it quickly became clear that although we had missed Nuthatch, Redwing, Fieldfare, Siskin, Lesser Redpoll and Twite, all had suffered in the poor weather conditions and despite the 96 species recorded being the lowest total we had achieved for many years it proved enough to retain the trophy.

“Walney Wanderers” would like to dedicate their win to the memory of Ian Kinley a long-time supporter of Walney Bird Observatory and the Winter Bird Race.

Colin Raven

Many thanks to **Phil Evans** for organising the Bird Race.

Bird Legislation in the UK (Part 2)

The Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981 remains the cornerstone so far as bird legislation and protection in this country is concerned.

The Act clearly states that all wild birds, their nests and their eggs are fully protected by law unless a specific exemption has been made. The exemptions referred to are made in respect of game birds, wildfowl and the various species deemed to be a pest and may cause damage.



Blackcock, Stagsike Cottage, Adam Moan

So far as the wildfowl and game birds are concerned the dates of the close season are clearly stated. The close season is that period of the year when the various species are otherwise fully protected.

Birds deemed to be pest species and may cause damage are dealt with under a general license mainly issued by DEFRA. The general license permits authorised persons to kill certain species to protect public health and to prevent serious damage to livestock, crops, fisheries etc. In this instance an authorised person is the owner or occupier of any land on which the action takes place or any person authorised by the owner or occupier.



Grey Partridge, Beaumont, Roger Ridley

An authorised person may legally use cage traps and nets to take certain species under a general license. The trap most frequently used is the Larson cage trap. This is used to catch Carrion Crows and Magpies using a decoy bird. They remain legal provided the decoy bird is given adequate food, water, shelter and a perch. The trap must be checked daily and non-target birds should be immediately released.

Set out below are the periods in the year when both game birds and wildfowl may be legally killed. This period is known as the open season.

Pheasant	Oct 1st - Feb 1st
Partridge (Red-legged & Grey)	Sep 1st - Feb 1st
Black Grouse	Aug 20th - Dec 10th
Red Grouse	Aug 12th - Dec 10th
Common Snipe	Aug 12th - Jan 31st
Woodcock	Oct 1st - Jan 31st
Golden Plover	Sep 1st - Jan 31st
Coot	Sep 1st - Jan 31st
Moorhen	Sep 1st - Jan 31st

Ducks:

Mallard	} Sep 1st - Feb 1st (extended to Feb 20th below the mean high water mark)
Gadwall	
Goldeneye	
Tufted	
Pintail	
Shoveler	
Teal	
Wigeon	

Bird Legislation in the UK (Part 2)

Geese:

Greylag Goose
Pink-footed Goose
White-fronted Goose
Canada Goose*



Sep 1st - Feb 1st
(extended to Feb 20th below the mean high
water mark)

(*May also be killed under the terms of a general license.)

The offer for sale of geese at any time of year is prohibited. This also applies to Moorhen, Gadwall and Goldeneye.

Below are those species which may be killed or taken, including the destruction of nests and eggs under the terms and conditions of the general license.

Carrion Crow/Hooded Crow
Rook
Jay
Jackdaw
Magpie
Feral Pigeon
Wood Pigeon
Collared Dove
Great Black-backed Gull
Lesser Black-backed Gull
Herring Gull
Canada Goose



Jay, Susan Brandes

By necessity the Act is a complicated one, but I hope the above explains the legislation which exists to fully protect most species and yet allows others to be killed or taken in a controlled manner.

Mike Carrier

Barn Owl at Cumrew



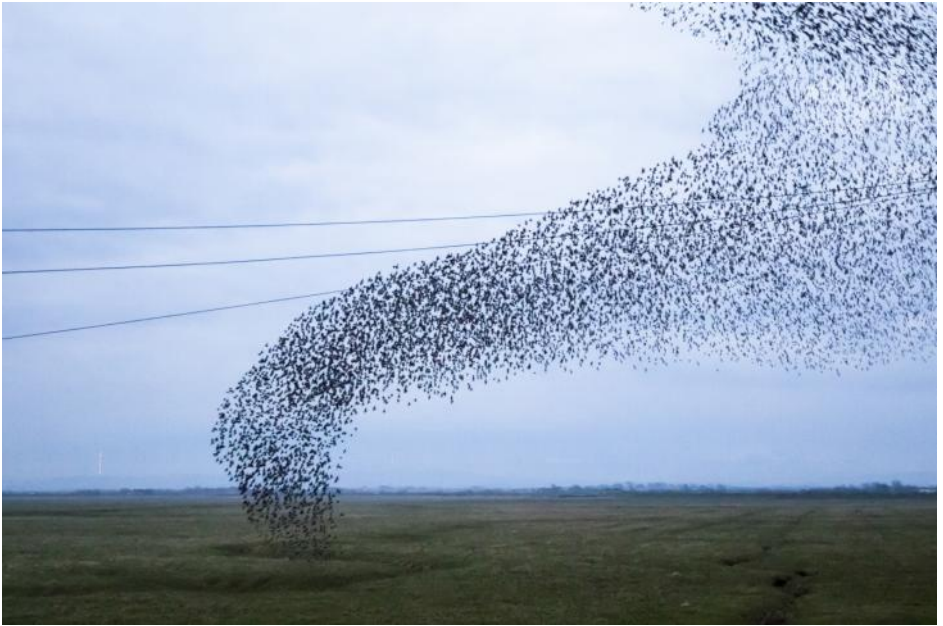
I have a Barn Owl tree nest box in my small field and have managed the environment to maximise voles - e.g. tussock grass and diversionary feeding in harsh weather of vegetable scraps in a box for voles / mice.

Guy Broome e-mail



Vole skull from Barn Owl pellet

Skinburness Starlings



Starlings arrived in Skinburness in mid January and stayed until the first week in March. Numbers peaked during February, there must have been half a million - maybe more. The photos don't do the numbers justice as I was in the middle of them, and they were everywhere around me - on the marsh, Michael's fields, in the village, over the sea. There are several Sparrowhawks living in Christina's woodland on Grune Point so I recorded some extraordinary acrobatics. I'm not sure if we got the Starlings that were evicted from Carlisle with fireworks and bright lights. My neighbour who's lived here



all her life, has never seen so many. We had a lot about five years ago, and people in the village cut down their trees to stop them roosting, but they were dropping down along Dick Trod Lane, inside the smashed windows of the Skinburness Hotel, in the grounds of Chichester House, and in the gorse etc. on the coast. Needless to say, they stayed away from Christina's woodland.

Vivian Russell e-mail

Recent reports

The period covered is December 2015 to February 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*.



Greenland Whitefront, Nick Franklin

Wildfowl

Whooper Swan numbers increased in the north-west of the county with 100 frequenting the Whitrigg/Angerton area – but very few juvenile birds. Into January 2016 numbers increased to a maximum of 120 there on 1st of the month and 111 on 5th. 148 seen from the air in two flocks near Kirkbride Airfield on 4th January probably duplicated the Whitrigg birds. 129 birds were next to the Wampool on 14th February. A flock frequented Walby/Carlisle Airport area throughout the period with up to 78 birds present on 13th February. Birds were recorded coming in off the sea at Allonby with seven adults on 12th February and six (including three juveniles) on 14th. The flock in the Kirkby Thore area increased from 11 on 22nd December to 29 on 23rd and to 70 birds by the end of February.

Pink-footed Geese numbers were low in December but 250 passed north over Allonby on 20th. Birds were seen to the east of Carlisle with 3500 south of Scaleby on 5th January and 150 north of Carlisle Airport on 12th. Increasing numbers were on the Solway with 1000 at Whitrigg on 15th January. February saw northward passage on the west coast with 200 over Workington on 4th and a total of 820 over Allonby on 12th. 150 were over Whitehaven on 24th with several more groups the next day. Numbers continued to build as the month went on with 7,000 at Wedholme on 14th and 5/6000 on Skinburness & Border Marshes on 27th as well as 3000 at Raby Cotes. At Walney northward flights were noted with 55 on 23rd January and 100 on 10th February.

A single **Tundra Bean Goose** was at Cardurnock on 5th January. **Greenland White-fronted Geese** associated with the Whooper Swans at Angerton with five there on 2nd December and three on 11th. There was also a single bird by River Eden at Linstock in December. Three **Eurasian White-fronted Geese** were in a mixed goose flock at Raby Coates in mid February with just one bird on 26th February. Significant numbers of **Greylag Geese** included 420 at Kirkby Thore on 23rd December 2015 and 300 on the temporary flood at Tarn Wadeling, High Heskett on 14th January 2016. The regular **Barnacle Geese** flocks were around the Solway with up to 13000 on Rockcliffe Marsh in February.

An adult **Snow Goose** first seen at Caerlaverock WWT in November moved around the Solway with the Barnacle Goose flocks throughout the period arriving back on Rockcliffe Marsh at the end of February. In addition one was seen and photographed with a large flock of grey geese at High Heskett on morning of 5th January – a day when there was still a bird on the Solway in the afternoon. A **blue phase** bird of unknown origin was with Barnacle Geese on Duddon Sands on 4th January. The **Brent Goose** flock at Walney increased from 98 on 12th December to 269 by the end of February. There was also a dark bellied Brent on the Irt estuary on 9th January - “very unusual here”.

Inland **Shelduck** consisted of 17 at Tarn Wadeling on 6th January. **Gadwall** reported were on Sunbiggin Tarn with 14 there on 23rd December and two still on 10th February and Hodbarrow had 21 on 19 January.



Leucistic Barnacle Geese, Anthorn, Roger Ridley



Smew, Derwent Water, Tony Marsh

A drake **Green-winged Teal** was at Siddick Pond on 18 & 19th December and two on 21st. **Pintail** numbering 1400 were on the Duddon Estuary on 23rd January (down to 490 by 22nd February) whilst 105 were at Holme Dub on 28th January. **Pochard** records were widely spread but only consisted of up to 17 at Derwent Water, a single male at Winter Tarn, Shap on 3rd February and two males at Longlands Pond, West Cumbria the next day increasing to four by 17th February. Three **Scaup** (female or juveniles) frequented Hodbarrow lagoon throughout the period and inland two males and a juvenile were at Winter Tarn, Shap on 3rd February with two males still there a week later.

There were 3800 **Eider** at Walney on 19th December. One of the **Long-tailed Ducks** at Anthorn stayed until 3rd December and there was also one at Foulney on 13th December. A female **Smew** was on the River Esk at Longtown on 27th December and a drake on Derwent Water from 27th January till the end of February. Two female **Velvet Scoter** were off Walney Island on 13th December.

A drake **Bufflehead** seen at Grune point on 23rd January was presumably the bird seen in the county in November with another sighting at the end of February on the River Wyre (Lancashire).



Goldeneye, Derwent Water, Tony Marsh



Little Grebe, Brampton Junction Pond, Adam Moan

Divers to Cranes

Whilst they were reported regularly off Walney the only significant numbers of **Red-throated Diver** were c50 off Silecroft on 6th January. Whilst up the coast three **Black-throated Divers** were at Nethertown on 20th January and a single bird there on 13th February. The **Great Northern Diver** continued its stay at Hodbarrow throughout the period with others at Ennerdale Water throughout January and February, Coniston Water on 5th and Derwent Water from 16th January to 3rd February and a single at Nethertown on 13th February.

A **Slavonian Grebe** was at Hodbarrow throughout January and February with other singles at Parton on 10th February and at Foulney on 13th December, 16th January and 22nd February. An unseasonal **Manx Shearwater** was seen at Askham-in-Furness – ahead of a large squall. **Great White Egret** were restricted to the south of the county at Holme on 10th and 13th December and Kents Bank on 27th & 28th of December. Small numbers of **Little Egret** were on the Solway and up to 64 at Walney throughout the period with in addition three at Duddon Bridge on 5th December and two on the River Esk at Ravenglass at 12th December where they increased to ten by 27th January.

A **Bittern** was again recorded at Brigsteer wetland on 2nd February with records also from Siddick Pond. **Water Rail** was heard at Ulpha Meadows on 13th February. A **Common Crane** was seen flying north over Bassenthwaite Lake on 30th January.

Raptors to Waders

Two **Red Kites** were displaying in the south of the county on 22nd February. The first **Marsh Harrier** of 2016 reported was a male at Ulpha Meadows on 13th and 16th February presumably one of the Leighton Moss birds. **Hen Harriers** were regularly reported from the south Solway but in addition a number at less regular sites including “ring-tails” at Foulshaw Moss on 4th January 2016, Ennerdale on 13th and Greenodd on 24th. There were many records of **Merlin** from south Solway, a male at Foulshaw Moss on 4th January and a female hunting waders at Biggar Bank, Walney on 24th January. Inland birds were at Oulton, Wigton on 7th January, Sunbiggin Tarn on 10th February and Carlisle Airport on 13th. Also of interest were two **Common Buzzards** at Walney on 8th January.



Purple Sandpiper, Parton, Tony Marsh

The **Avocet** continued its stay with the Oystercatchers in the Bowness/Campfield area throughout. The spring build up of **Oystercatchers** at the meeting of the Rivers Eden and Irthing started with 40 birds there in February. 1100 **Golden Plover** were at Walney on 12th December and 1st January and 980 on Holme Dub on 24th February having been there throughout the period. Elsewhere there were birds seen at Walton Moss where 25 passed east on 4th January, two at Cliburn Moss on 16th, 80 on St Bees Head a day later and 68 at Seat Quarry, Caldbeck on 31st. 60 **Grey Plover** were at Foulney on 16th January. Away from the coastal sites **Lapwing** were reported at Tarn Wadling flood, High Heskett with 200 there 14th January and 150 on 17th February, 200 at Welton on 31st January and 170 at Cliburn Moss on 16th January. The regular build up of birds at Sandford on the A66 took place with at least 1200 on 18th February.

Significant reports of **Knot** were both at Walney with 1100 on 1st January and 7,500 on 24th. There were 194 **Sanderling** at Newbiggin on 9th February and 150 at Foulney the following day.



Purple Sandpiper, Parton, Tony Marsh

Purple Sandpiper had been unusually absent from Workington for most of the period but 19 were found there on 30th January whilst there had been nine at Walney on 12th December. 3600 **Dunlin** were at Foulney 13th December with 2900 on 16th January and 400 on 4th February at Port Carlisle. Two **Little Stint** were at Port Carlisle on 3rd January with one the next day, two on 7th, and one on 4th February.

The River Esk at Ravenglass continued to hold “fresh” waders with a single **Green Sandpiper** on 12th December and three there 27th January - at the same site there were two **Common Sandpiper** on 27th January. There had also been one on the River Esk at Longtown on 15th and 18th. Walney held **Greenshank** through December with maximum of eight there on 28th. On the Ravenglass Esk there were three on 12th December, increasing to five on 27th January and six (possibly additional birds) roosted on the Mite Estuary throughout the period. Hodbarrow held a bird on 6th January and a single bird was in Port Carlisle /Glasson Point area from 18th January to 1st February.

1000 **Common Redshank** were on Walney on 12th December. Foulney had 1300 Curlew on 16th February. **Common Snipe** included 12 in the bunded area at Carlisle Airport on 11th January and one flushed from snow covered peak of Dent Fell West Cumbria on 15th. Cliburn Moss had **Jack Snipe** throughout the period with singles on several days, two on 18th and 26th November and 23rd February but a maximum of three on 21st December. There were two birds on Walney on 1st January and singles at Carlisle Airport 11th January and R Esk Longtown on 18th. In January and February single **Woodcock** were reported from Cliburn Moss, Campfield RSPB and Finglandrigg .

Skuas to Auks

The only skua species reported were a **Great Skua** off Walney on 23rd January and a pale phase **Pomarine** past Workington on 30th. All records of **Mediterranean Gull** were from the north-west of the county – returning “Stumpy” was present at Workington Harbour where there were also 12 on 10th December and in 2016 an adult at Allonby on 29th January and an adult and a second winter at Kirkbride Airfield on the same date. On the 2nd February two adults were at Workington and two adults and three second winter at Maryport. By 20th February **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** were in increasing numbers on Walney breeding colonies. 14,630 **Common Gulls** roosted on Haweswater on 27th February along with 4,000 **Black-headed Gulls**.

Little Gulls were seen off Walney on three dates with a maximum of four on 4th February – three adults and a first winter. A single bird was seen in the north-west of the county on 30th January and 1st February. The only **Glaucous Gull** was at Walney on 11th February whilst a first winter **Laughing Gull** had passed the same site on 30th January. 110 **Kittiwakes** passed Bowness-on-Solway on 29th February. The only **Little Auk** was at Workington on 30th January.

Pigeons to Buntings

38 **Stock Dove** were regular at Cliburn moss throughout January & February. A **Collared Dove** was on a nest in Carlisle city centre on 24th January.

A **Long-eared Owl** was heard at Calderbridge at the end of January. A **Short-eared Owl** was at Holme Dub on 14th December with others at Walney on 10th January, Sandscale Haws on 19th, Whitrigg on 12th February and Carlisle Airport on 15th. One of the outstanding features of the period was of numerous day time sightings of **Barn Owl** from all quarters of the county –



Barn Owl, Braithwaite, Tony Marsh

suggested reason was lack of food source following the extremely wet weather (perhaps confirmed by many birds being taken to Knoxwood Wildlife Rescue in an emaciated condition) although later in the period some activity could have been related to breeding activity commencing.

Water Pipits were seen only at Walney with three on 28th December and 12th February and two on 24th January. Nine **Robins** were in song on Cliburn Moss on 20th February. **Black Redstart** frequented Whitehaven Harbour on 20th & 21st January. There was a pair of **Stonechat** at Parton on 10th February and one at Border Marsh on 28th February.



Stonechat, Stagsike, Adam Moan

“**Winter thrushes**” seemed in short supply but there were 100 **Fieldfare** near Carlisle Airport on 10th January and a similar number of **Redwing** the day later in the same area with smaller numbers of both species thereafter in the north of the county. Of particular interest was a male **Ring Ouzel** at Styhead Tarn, Wasdale on 29th

February – there had been others in the south of England for a few weeks. There were at least eight **Song Thrushes** on The Brows Lowca on 14th December. **Firecrest** were reported from Foulshaw Moss on 14th December and Witherslack Hall on 11th January 2016.



Blackcap, Carlisle, Roger Ridley

A **Blackcap** arrived in a Carlisle Garden on 14th February.



Crossbills, Great Wood Keswick, Tony Marsh

Forty **Tree Sparrows** were at feeders in Waterside in January reducing to 28 in February and there were also 20 on St Bees Head early in February. There seemed to be no large gatherings of **Brambling** with 12 near Tindale “all winter” being the most consistent group. **Twite** were recorded from the south of the county with 180 on Walney on 23rd January reducing to 70 by 6th February and 100 at Borwick Rails on 18th February.

A flock of **Lesser Redpoll** at Cliburn Moss increased from 30 on 9th December to 80 by 3rd January, 130 by 6th February and back to 90 by 23rd. Hawfinch were regular in very small numbers at Sizergh Castle throughout but five there on 11th January were of note as were eight at Halecat Garden Centre, Grange over Sands on 15th January. Only very small numbers of **Crossbills** were reported – from Cliburn Moss and Muncaster but in the Egremont area up to 100 birds were present and in addition six were seen mobbing a Sparrowhawk in Melkinthorpe Woods on 23rd January.

A **Common Rosefinch** was reported in song at Skinburness on 11th February. Up to 10 **Yellowhammers** were at Waterside in early February and 15 at Burgh by Sands at the same time.

As ever, we are indebted to all the contributors, too numerous to list individually. 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

FROM ROADSIDE TO FELLSIDE

Photographic exhibition by Adam Moan

RSPB Geltsdale Stagsike Cottages

March 13th until May 9th



Birds, mammals, reptiles, dragonflies, butterflies and
moths seen in the Hallbankgate / Brampton area

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Information for contributors

The deadline for copy for the next issue is June 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, Derwentwater Independent Hostel, 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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Cumbria Bird Club Website

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

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