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***BIRD NEWS***  
***Vol. 29 No. 1 Spring 2018***

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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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**Talks organiser:** Vacant

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## Club news and announcements

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### Swift survey - 2018

It is the club's intention to carry out a survey of Swifts in the county this season. The object would be to identify numbers of birds from observations above suitable areas (villages & towns etc), to record screaming parties of birds and estimate numbers in these parties. If possible the location of nest sites will be recorded. The survey would be best carried out between mid June and late July, when breeding birds are more active. Weekly counts on warm, humid evenings are ideal with a minimum of just two counts made to be of use.

If you are interested please contact Dave Piercy tel. 017687 73201; [daveandkathypiercy@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:daveandkathypiercy@tiscali.co.uk) for further information and methodology. The aim is for a simple survey that most members could take part in.

### WeBs vacancies

There are now vacant WeBS sites in the Lyth Valley at the Brigsteer Wetlands, Killington Reservoir and Ormsgill Reservoir. Anyone interested to get in touch with Dave Shackleton [d.shackleton@btinternet.com](mailto:d.shackleton@btinternet.com) 01931 713693

### Friday Oct 5th (AGM): Penrith United Reformed Church 7.30pm

'Eight years of colour-ringing Whinchats at RSPB Geltsdale' - Stephen Westerberg

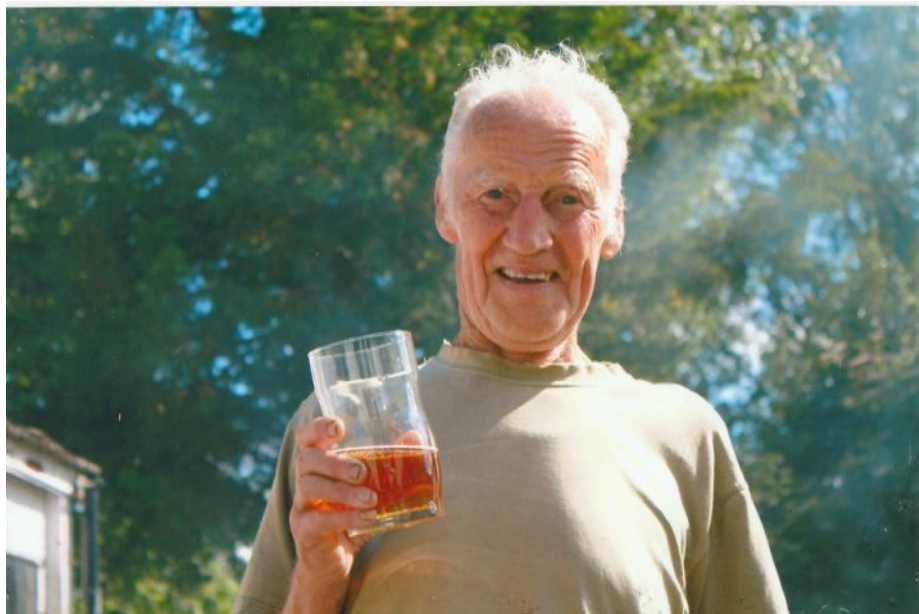


### Transactions of Carlisle Natural History Society Volume XIII

Many CBC members will be keen to obtain a copy of this latest volume. With articles on Dotterel, Pink-footed Goose, Reed Warblers and Lakeland taxidermists. Beautifully produced with many colour photos and illustrations. See inside back cover for further details and how to obtain your copy.

## Fred Gould, 1938 – 2017

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On 20/12/2017, Arnold Frederick Gould, all-round naturalist and sometime stand-up comic, sadly passed away at the age of 80 at his home in Kendal. Fred loved nothing more than pottering in his garden so it was poignant that the heart attack which took his life occurred whilst he was pruning a Yew tree in his beloved garden. Fred leaves a wife, Margaret, daughter Dianne and sons Gary and Lindsey plus eight grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

To most birders in Cumbria, Fred needs little introduction being one of the great characters of our era with a larger than life personality and an engaging sense of humour. His earlier life however will be less well known especially to those from beyond the Kendal area.

Fred began life in 1938 in the Far Cross Bank area of Kendal which put him in the heart of “Doodleshire” as it known locally, a fact which he was always proud to point out to any who would listen. He first attended St George’s School and on passing his eleven plus, went on to Kendal Grammar School before taking a job as a clicker (leather cutter) at the K Shoes Factory at Netherfield, in Kendal. At around this time, Fred became the leader of the Kendal Teddy Boys, enthusiastically leading the traditional rowdy behaviour at the Saturday Night Kendal Town Hall Dance. This would commence when “Fred the Ted” gave the signal for action to his mates with a loud shout of “Up the Teds”! Fred also loved sport and played football for Victoria Sports Club

and cricket for Kendal Cricket Club and was an avid supporter of West Ham United “because they won the world cup” just in case you’re wondering.

The army and national service took him to peacetime Germany where he saw out his time without being involved in any fighting, at least not on behalf of the armed forces! His finest military achievements included achieving the rank of lance-corporal and playing the big bass drum in the band complete with bear skins (or was that bare skin, I’m not sure which he was referring to when he told me).

Back in civilian life, factory work was not for Fred however, and with a life-long love of gardening and a desire to be his own boss, opening a flower shop in Kendal was the ideal solution to his predicament. His academic life was not quite over at this stage however and he went on to achieve a City and Guilds pass in floristry which helped him with his new venture. In the days before pagers and mobile phones, Gould’s Flower Shop soon became the Nancy’s of Kendal with a notice-board full of the latest bird sightings and a friendly chat available to any who called in. When in later life Fred sold the shop, he continued his love of horticulture by helping out at a local nursery and later still, working part-time for an undertaker including driving the hearse. In classic Fred Gould style, he even turned up at a Waxwing twitch in Kendal in the hearse though he was quick to point out that he was on his way back empty from a funeral not on his way to it!

His passion throughout was Natural History and Killington Reservoir was his stamping ground and Ronnie Irving’s tribute below is witness to the impact he made on wildlife in that area. His love of wildlife encouraged him to develop an interest in photography and he went on to become an accomplished wildlife photographer. Although he was an excellent birder and photographer in his own right, he really was an all-round naturalist with great knowledge of plants and insects as well as birds which resulted in him becoming chairman of Kendal Natural History Society.

I first came to know him in the early seventies and shared many birding experiences with him, most notably three trips abroad to Hungary, Bulgaria and Andalusia. He was a massively energetic and enthusiastic travelling companion and despite being the oldest in the party on each of these trips, he birded relentlessly from dawn until dusk continuing right through until the last light had gone from the sky when the rest of us were flagging at the end of a long, hard day. As a birder, he was a committed survey man and WeBs counter (though not always on the right dates!), a brilliant nest finder and very successful finder of rarities. Perhaps his finest achievements in this respect was the Workington

Ross's Gull, Cumbria's first and only record which prompted Birdwatch magazine to add the following when they reported the record: "*Only a super-optimist checks gulls on the Cumbrian coast in June*". Well Fred was certainly that and more! Two Caspian Terns, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Common Crane, Sabine's Gull and several Pectoral Sandpipers were other notable finds.

Fred had few enemies but he really didn't get on with shooters and he had several skirmishes with wildfowlers around the Kent Estuary over the years though he did soften his views a little as the years went on. In complete contrast, on almost all other occasions humour was never far away where Fred was concerned and he did like to make people laugh, never more so than his light-hearted summaries of latest bird sighting delivered at the end of Bird Club meetings. In a similar vein, he hosted an annual slide show in Kendal held each January, initially in the Cock and Dolphin and latterly in the Duke of Cumberland pubs, which was an extremely informal and at time raucous review of bird photographs taken in the previous year and which was attended by birders from all over the county and beyond.

Having led his team "The Gouldfinches" for many years in the annual Bird Club Bird Race, sadly, there was no "Gouldfinches" entry into the January 2018 competition. Although the "Gouldfinches" are now officially retired, next year, Fred's sons Gary and Lindsey, will be forming a new team known as "The Juvenile Gouldfinches" which will be a fine tribute to this unforgettable, friendly, extrovert, birder extraordinaire who has left such mark on all who were lucky enough to know him. I will miss him greatly and I'm sure the Cumbrian Birding scene for very many reasons will not see his like again. RIP Fred Gould and "Up the Teds"!

*Dave Thexton*

### **Ronnie Irvings's personal tribute:**

When I first moved to Kendal to live Fred was one of the first birders to make his presence known to me! I was looking for a reported Blue-headed Wagtail at Sandy Bottoms when this wild eyed, grass covered stranger leapt from a ditch, shovel in hand, "You must be that ringer from West Cumbria that's just moved here?" That was my introduction to Fred Gould Landscaper! I soon discovered he had other strings to his bow as well as being a birder, try botanist, lepidopterist and photographer and although I don't think he realised it..... accidental Ecologist!

The casual visitor to Killington Reservoir could not realise how much landscaping Fred did in the area, starting with all the roadside verges, wherever there was a space he would have a tree or a plant for it, he had a good relationship with a local garden centre and any surplus trees or plants would find a home at Killington. Next time you are on Fairthorns Lane look out for that Chilean Beech, as well as patches of Purple Loosestrife, Dyer's Greenweed, Melancholy Thistle and Jacob's Ladder to name just a few, I'm not a botanist!. These additions to the ecology have proved attractive to additional fauna and it is now a stronghold for butterflies such as Green Hairstreak and recent colonisers like Ringlet as well as providing suitable habitat for a nice selection of nesting birds.

He didn't just restrict himself to habitat creation, drystone walling was another of his skills and this can clearly be seen if you look at the island where the gulls nest, recently after 'sorting out' the vegetation on the island he proceeded to rebuild most of the perimeter walls, this is still the main Black-headed Gull colony in the county with at least 3,000 breeding pairs. However his *piece de resistance* has to be a walled island in one of the western bays, it took him many months to build, and literally starting from nothing but the basic shoreline, its roughly twenty feet long, ten feet wide and at least two feet high, the core filled with smaller stones from the surrounding area, man-handled into place in bags and buckets. As I write this I know it has been adopted by a pair of oystercatchers, this would have delighted Fred because he was always keen to know when they returned to Killington.

I have christened this island Fred's Folly, and not just for the alliteration, you see, I can't visit Killington without seeing something that reminds me of Fred, the whole area will always be a memorial of sorts to him. He certainly made his mark and he won't be forgotten.

Rest in peace Fred it's a job well done!

Ronnie

## The CBC Wood Warbler survey 2016/17: An interim report

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Records from 415 woods in over 250 tetrads (2km<sup>2</sup>) have been submitted by many observers visiting sites during the last two Wood Warbler breeding seasons. The main report on the survey is due to appear in the 2017 edition of 'Birds and Wildlife in Cumbria' which will be available early next year. The project is now close to achieving comprehensive coverage of woods throughout the county, where the presence of Wood Warblers has been proven during the last three decades. Therefore, it has been decided to extend fieldwork into the spring and early summer of this year with the aim of filling in the gaps which remain in all parts of Cumbria. Approximately 70 tetrads await investigation although priority will be given to sites with most recent evidence of birds in suitable habitat.

The table below is a provisional summary of the number of tetrads where Wood Warblers have been found during the current survey in five distinct 'sub-regions' of Cumbria. Comparisons are made with figures from the two Cumbria bird atlases, excluding tetrads still awaiting fieldwork visits.

### Changes in the number and distribution of tetrads occupied by Wood Warblers 1997-2017

Cumbrian sub-regions	Atlas 1 (1997-2001)	Atlas 2 (2008-2012)	CBC survey 2016/17
Lune and Kent Valleys	16	4	6
South Lake District	53	37	49
West Lake District	59	33	26
East Lake District	23	12	14
Lower Eden Valley and Far North	36	12	8
<b>County Total</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>103</b>

#### Notes:

Figures in the table refer only to tetrads already surveyed during the current CBC Wood Warbler Survey.

South Lake District: Windermere to Ravenglass

West Lake District: Eskdale to Keswick and Solway Plain

East Lake District: Thirlmere to Upper Eden Valley



The drastic 45% contraction in the range of the species in Cumbria between the two atlas periods (1997-2001 to 2008-2012) is apparent. However, in the relatively short interval separating the second atlas and the CBC survey results there are signs of the population stabilizing with a modest 5% increase in tetrads where Wood Warblers have been detected. Any conclusions at this stage must be viewed with caution. It was anticipated that more intensive single species fieldwork would encounter more birds than atlas surveys. Annual fluctuations in the number of Wood Warblers arriving and breeding successfully in the county may complicate the picture further and a significant number of sites remain to be explored.

The Lake District has always been the stronghold of Wood Warblers in Cumbria and the current survey has revealed tetrad occupancy in the classic woodland habitats between Windermere and Dunnerdale in the south and Borrowdale in the north to be similar to the situation in the 1997-2001 atlas. A conspicuous exception is the foothill gills and valleys along the coastal fringe from Ravenglass to the Marron Valley. Here, every square with historical records has been checked, all yielding negative results. Small numbers of Wood Warblers are present in the east of the county from the Lune Valley to the Geltsdale area. Only 20 years ago over a quarter of Cumbria's occupied tetrads were Pennine birds!

There are opportunities to contribute to the completion of the Cumbria Wood Warbler Survey in all areas of the county from May to early July. If you are able to help with the project, please contact Malcolm Priestley for further details at:

Havera Bank East, Howgill Lane, Sedbergh LA10 5HB  
Email: [mmphavera@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mmphavera@hotmail.co.uk)  
Tel: 015396 20104

*John Callion, Mike Carrier, Jake Manson, Dave Piercy, Malcolm Priestley*

## Iceland Gulls in Cumbria

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An Iceland Gull ? Just along from my house ? That was rather unexpected !



The fittingly snowy field just west of Williamgill Wood, Hallbankgate that the gull frequented intermittently for four days from 6<sup>th</sup> February 2018.



Probably a second winter bird showing pale eyes but a bill pattern not entirely typical of that age group. The lack of distinct dark markings on the tertials and scapulars suggest second Winter.

So, it was time to delve into the history. Where and when have Iceland Gulls occurred in the county ?

There's no place quite like the beginning to start when digging into the annals of history. It was time to consult the old faithful Fauna of Lakeland, MacPherson 1892. The first four records of the species fall neatly into place, all in a nice short paragraph. The first was in 1835 at an unspecified location on the Solway Firth. I didn't look in Birds in Cumberland, MacPherson & Duckworth 1885 in view of this being an earlier work and so presumably less definitive ... surely ?

Then on to the 12 volumes of The Transactions of the Carlisle Natural History Society with their treatises on bird records by such luminaries as Dunlop, Blezard and Stokoe. These works variously give details of recent and earlier records but none gives every record so that all have to be checked in order to form a complete picture. This mid-period of the 20<sup>th</sup> century feels a bit like the ornithological Dark Ages coming between the Victorians who were the Romans of their time with their stone edifices represented by the corpses of their shot birds and the more modern era with all the benefits of digital recording, good field guides, sophisticated cameras and knowledge.



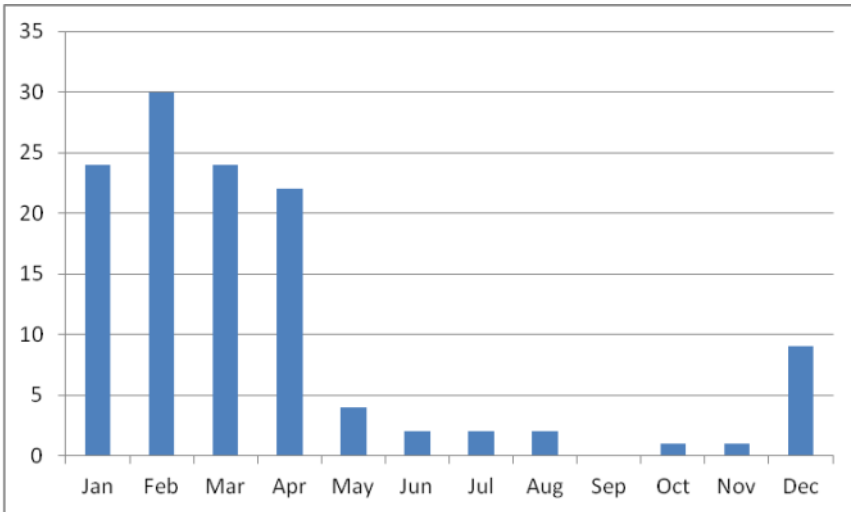
*Iceland Gull, Hallbankgate, Chris Hind*

The fragments of information gleaned from the CNHS Transactions volumes mostly fell into place ... but sometimes they don't fall into place, they fall apart – in vol VI Blezard 1943 tells us that the all important first record for Cumbria came from Browhouses on the Scottish Solway – so not a first for Cumbria ! Another 45 years went by before the first Cumbrian bird was recorded ... or more particularly, shot. On finally checking MacPherson & Duckworth I find that he comes clean on the location of the 1835 bird and lays the blame at Heysham's door for not knowing that Browhouses is in Scotland.

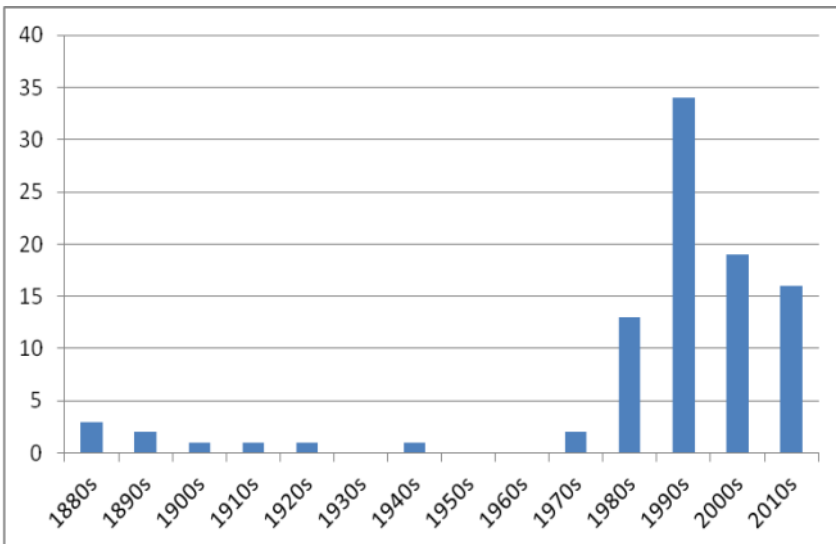
The search facility in the CNHS Transactions pdfs really comes into its own in cases like the Ivory Gull account in Blezard 1943 (where I would otherwise not have thought to look). He considers that a 'reported' (sounds like Bird-Guides doesn't it ?) Ivory Gull in Allonby Bay in 1911-12 is inauthentic and was probably an Iceland Gull.

This fascinating unfolding of the history of Iceland Gull in Cumbria presents a picture of the distribution of all accepted records from that first one in 1880 to the present time. In terms of locations, Walney leads the field with Working-ton, Tarns Dub and Sellafield following. Coastal records are predominant but there is a wide scattering of inland locations, most of which have only a single record. The peak time for birds appearing has been February but again records come from every month except September. Iceland Gull was rare in the county until the end of the 1970s, becoming almost annual since then.





Numbers of birds recorded in each month.



Numbers of birds recorded in each decade.

*Chris Hind*

## **The benefits of adding "Patchwork Challenge" to your birdwatching experience**

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First of all, what exactly is the "Patchwork challenge" (PWC)? The aim of this nationwide competition is to see how many species you can see or hear, in or from a 3 square km patch, within one calendar year. It is also possible to have more than one patch - one person currently has three in the Inland North league. PWC was originally set up as blog, but last year it was changed to a website, which has meant it is now a lot easier to use (though as it is run by volunteers it sometimes can be a bit slow to update). Although you may not be competitive, the challenge does encourage you to regularly cover a dedicated small patch and to check closely every bird that you see. Steve Westerberg, for example, has seen Kittiwake, Little Gull and Med Gull at Geltsdale, just by looking closer at passing gull flocks.

So that you are only competing with people in the same region (though not necessarily within the same habitats) they have divided the UK into 15 leagues, of which some are Inland and some Coastal. There is also a league that separates out the RSPB reserves, as well as a Green league for those people that do not use a car to visit their patch. Unfortunately there is no league for Upland areas, so I wasn't awarded extra points for the Little Egret and Common Scoter that I have seen on my patch at RSPB Geltsdale.

Points are given for each species depending on their national rarity, based on the Bird Guides categories on their bird map. The vast majority of species are worth only one point. Some difficult-to- see (though not to hear) species such as Water Rail are only one point, whereas Red Grouse (easy for me to see in Geltsdale, but restricted to moorlands) are two points. Also Hobby, which here is a locally scarce summer migrant (though it may potentially be seen anywhere in the country), is only one point, whereas Marsh Harrier, which can be seen all year round, but only really on marsh/moorland, is two points. Rarer migrants such as our usual two Shrikes are worth three points, whilst the really rare Shrikes can be worth up to 5 points. Extra points are awarded if you find any rarity yourself.

As well as competing with other people on points you can also compare your own performance with percentages based on your previous year's scores. However, it's best not to not compare this against other people's, as recent starters or low scoring people usually have a very high percentage.

It does help to have some friendly rivalry. Here, Steve Westerberg covers Tindale Tarn and an area to the west, whereas I cover Tindale Tarn and an area to the east. We do try to text each other with new sightings - mind you the reception might not always be as good as it should be! Steve and I compete in the Inland North league. Amazingly we are the only participants from Cumbria in this league or the Coastal North league this year, and I only joined because Steve told me about it.





*Some of the new species I have seen on my patch since participating in PWC.  
Shrike sp, Black-tailed Godwit, Common Scoter, Hooded Crow, Little Egret, Waxwing*

Early participants of PWC started with a 3km square or triangular area, whereas, as a walker, I decided to use footpaths to define my patch, so that I could walk over as much of the 3 sq km as possible. Recent joiners have caused a bit of controversy by using very long thin strips along coast lines or "Polo" rings around lakes to extend the watchable area from their patch. One Inland North patch looks like a spider's web, with lots of long thin paths joining up lots of small areas. Personally I would say that that it is desirable to include a body of water, as much variety of habitat as possible, and places with bird feeders within your patch. However, one Inland North patch is on a housing estate and another is in Newcastle City centre.

Before I started PWC I had recorded 119 species in a 6.5 mile radius area around my house. Now, after the three years I have been taking part, I have seen 115 species in just my 3 sq km patch. By covering a smaller area more regularly and thoroughly I have added 11 new species to my original 119 species.

The highlight has undoubtedly been the "Brown Shrike" I saw in my garden in December 2016, and, as I found it, it was worth 15 points. Unfortunately the BBRC has now judged this as "unproven", but it has recently been accepted by the CBC rarities committee as a "Shrike sp.". Steve Westerberg has seen 129 species on his patch in the four years that he has taken part, but has only had a maximum of 110 species in any one year and my best annual total was 115 species with a score of 142 (which was due to the Brown Shrike).

As well as potentially increasing the numbers of species you might see on your patch, the PWC is also helping to increase the number of bird records submitted nationwide. However, with only two participants in the whole of Cumbria, this means that a very large county is only being represented by an area of 6 sq km. All I can say is that I have really enjoyed the last three years of my PWC and that it has actually helped improve my birding skills. I can unreservedly recommend the whole experience to any fellow birder. So, if you might be interested in taking part, please do have a look at their web page.

[www.patchworkchallenge.com](http://www.patchworkchallenge.com)

*Adam Moan*



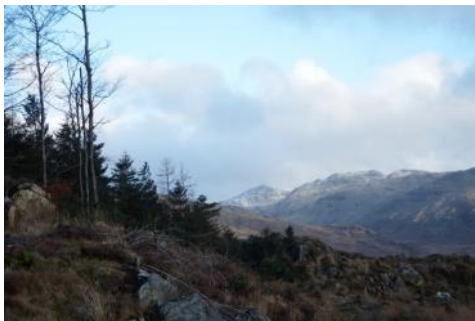
## Restoring Hardknott Forest - bird surveyor needed

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I'm involved in a forest restoration project at Hardknott Forest (the Forestry Commission site). We are gradually returning the area to native tree species and I'm looking for someone to help me with a breeding bird survey at the site. If you are willing to help then please contact John Hodgson, Hardknott Forest Project Officer: [j.h.hodgson@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:j.h.hodgson@leeds.ac.uk) tel:07866218781

### Introducing Hardknott Forest

Hardknott Forest is a 600 hectare conifer plantation in the upper reaches of the Duddon valley in the Lake District. It was planted in the 1930s after strong local opposition. Now, over 70 years later, the forest plantations are reaching maturity. After consultation with local people and organisations the Forestry Commission has decided to restore the entire plantation into



native habitats of oak and birch woodland, bogs and open ground. This initiative represents a historic opportunity to create the largest semi-natural woodland in the Lake District; linking Hardknott Forest with the existing Duddon Valley Woodlands, a series of ancient oak woodlands that snake down the valley and all the way to the coast.

### Restoring Hardknott Forest

Restoring Hardknott Forest is an exciting project to restore one of the largest conifer plantations in the Lake District to native woodland.

Regenerating non-native trees are gradually being removed and replaced with native species such as Oak. Some areas are regenerating naturally and we have seen Holly, Willow, Birch and Rowan all returning to the forest, with associated benefits for native wildlife. Other areas of the forest will remain as crag or bog.

The local area is known to support rare mammal species such as Dormice, Otters and Red Squirrels, and birds increasingly seen here include Great Spotted Woodpeckers, Jays and Bullfinches. Monitoring of the wildlife and vegetation is an ongoing and fascinating part of the project.

More information and other possibilities of volunteering from John above.

*Details from a draft leaflet "Restoring Hardknott Forest - Woodland regeneration in the Duddon Valley"*

## The status of Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* in North Carlisle

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In November 2017, we moved from Shap to the Knowefield area of Carlisle. One of my first tasks is to undertake a comparison of the status and population of species seen regularly in and around our new home with those seen over nine years in and around our former home in Shap.



*Collared Dove, Shap garden, Stephen Mott*

Shap lies at around 260m above sea level and can experience colder winters and higher rainfall than the 21-30.5m of Knowefield, Carlisle. Once we have been in Knowefield for twelve months, we will have a more informed picture, but there is one species that is noticeably absent in Knowefield – the Collared Dove, *Streptopelia decaocto*.

In Shap, Collared Doves were widespread and numerous, coming to feed on fallen seeds from the garden bird feeders. They were frequently heard and seen around the village in pairs or small groups. They were well distributed further away from the village too, usually where there were buildings. Two or three pairs of Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus* were also frequent visitors to the garden and bred locally. Their numbers were increasing over the nine years 2008-17. Two pairs of Stock Doves *Columba oenas* also frequented the garden, with young, in the summer and autumn months. Feral Pigeons were scarce.



*Wood Pigeon, Carlisle garden, Stephen Mott*

In the Knowefield area, Wood Pigeons are much more numerous than they were at Shap and they seem to be more densely distributed. I have heard a pair of Stock Doves in Rickerby Park and there are some Feral Pigeons. Yet I have not seen any Collared Doves. The habitats around Knowefield and North Carlisle would seem to be suited to Collared Doves. The distinctive song, display flights and “party trumpet”

wheeze are all absent from this area. None come to the garden, but I counted five pairs of Wood Pigeons taking seed fallen from the feeders.

It is possibly a little too early but I am beginning to put together a theory that Collared Doves are out-competed by Wood Pigeons when the populations or population density of the latter reaches a certain level. North Carlisle including Rickerby Park has large numbers of Wood Pigeons, many more so than a similar area in Shap. There may be other reasons for the absence of the Collared Dove from this area of North Carlisle and further work needs to be carried out to see if there is a correlation between high numbers of Wood Pigeons and low numbers of Collared Doves, or if there are other negative influences on the potential population of Collared Doves. If any correlation between high densities of Wood Pigeons and low occurrence of Collared Doves is found, it may have implications for the national status of populations of Collared Doves as the population size of the Wood Pigeon increases.

*Stephen Mott, Carlisle, March 2018.*

### **Stock Doves beat the weather?**

A pair of Stock Doves laid two eggs in a nest box in Armathwaite between 23rd and 27th December! The two young were ringed on 2nd February and flew shortly afterwards. Early birds!

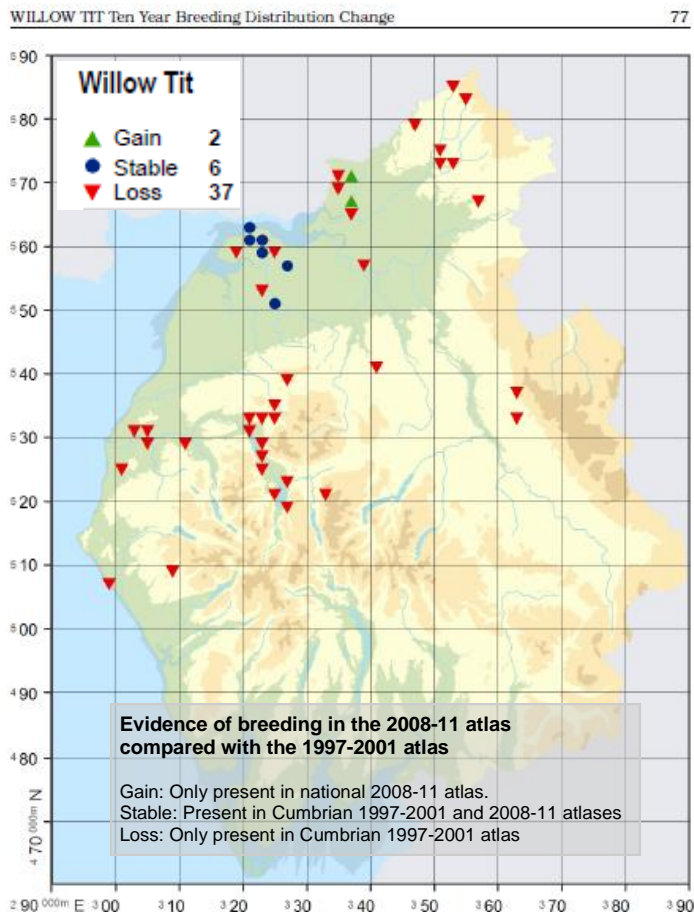
*Mike Carrier*



*Stock Dove with Woodpigeons, Stanwix garden, Roger Ridley*

## Willow Tits in Cumbria – Present status and conservation efforts

In Cumbria Willow Tits have always had a localised distribution. Survey work for The Breeding Birds of Cumbria - A Tetrad Atlas 1997-2001 found them in 21 10km squares and a population estimate at that time was around 100 breeding pairs.



A reduction in range of 80% occurred between the 1997-2001 tetrad atlas and the 2007-11 Bird Atlas. However, more were recorded in the winter atlas (19 tetrads in winter compared to eight in the breeding season).



*Photo courtesy of Liz Still*

A survey commissioned by Cumbria Bird Club in 2016 found evidence of a further decline with perhaps as few as five territories. These were all in the north of the county in the wet woodlands surrounding the South Solway Mosses NNR with an outlier in the Penrith area. In 2017 some traditional territories seem to have been vacated or had limited presence and the Rare Birds Breeding Panel figure of two pairs (*British Birds* 110 December 2017) is potentially more accurate.

Willow Tits should be widespread across lowland landscapes containing a decent amount of wooded habitats. The cause/s of decline are still subject to ongoing research although climate change resulting in drying out of woodland and scrub habitats is a major issue and certainly would explain losses in the south and south-east of the UK. This is also compounded by a lack of woodland management resulting in a more closed canopy and a loss of shrub layer. Deer browsing, predation by Great Spotted Woodpeckers and competition from other tit species, especially in areas of nest-box schemes, are also often put forward as being contributory factors, although research on some of these is far from conclusive. Lack of rain and a decrease in soil moisture is hardly a factor in Cumbria so the maturing of woodlands is perhaps the major issue for us. Habitat connectivity is also critical and worthy of further analysis in respect to previous strongholds across Cumbria.

Recently, a small working group has been set up by Natural England, RSPB and Cumbria Wildlife Trust to try and bring Willow Tit back from the verge of local extinction. Two projects have initiated from this – firstly we've set up a colour ringing project focussing on the birds which remain on the Solway Plain. Feeding stations have been set up at two sites in winter 2017 at Glas-son Moss NNR and Cumbria Wildlife Trusts' Bowness-on-Solway Reserve. At the first ringing session Frank Mawby and John Callion trapped two birds within a few minutes – an adult and, pleasingly, a juvenile. Not a bad start! At the next session the first bird to hop into the nets was also a Willow Tit. To date we've trapped and rung four birds – one adult and three juveniles. All have survived the winter and have remained close to the ringing locations. Hopefully future sightings will give an insight into local movements, territory size and breeding productivity. At least we have proof that they bred successfully in 2017.

Secondly, an MSc student will be mapping the quality of potential habitat round the Solway, concentrating on Glasson Moss and Bowness Common SSSIs. This information will help to target habitat restoration and re-creation for Willow Tits on the Solway.

Additionally a peatland restoration contract on the fringe of Glasson Moss will also include work to improve the breeding and foraging habitat. This will involve selective tree thinning and coppicing to encourage the understorey as well as planting of favoured scrub species to enable habitat connectivity.

Conservation action for Willow Tits has quite rightly quickened across the UK in recent years with many local initiatives developing. Despite the national decline, populations have stabilised or possibly increased in certain areas of Yorkshire, Lancashire and the Midlands where populations are linked to well-connected habitats associated with post-industrial sites.

The recently launched 'Back from the Brink Project' is a nationwide coordinated effort to bring a wide range of leading charities and conservation bodies together to save threatened species. Willow Tit is one of 112 species which the National Lottery funded project aims to put back on the road to recovery.

<https://naturebftb.co.uk/> <https://naturebftb.co.uk/the-projects/willow-tit/>

Hopefully, the Project which is primarily based in the Dearne valley, nr Barnsley will give further insight into improving and expanding quality habitat, which can be replicated elsewhere.

So, is all of this 'too little – too late?' Certainly there's a challenge ahead if we are to save this charismatic bird from local extinction. However, a few 'word-of-mouth' sightings from other areas of the County hint at the possibility of small populations clinging on. Confirmed records of birds in the Longtown area to the east of Carlisle and at Bassenthwaite in 2017 give further hope that all is not too late for Willow Tits in Cumbria.

For further info contact

[Colin.auld@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:Colin.auld@naturalengland.org.uk)

*Colin Auld*



## Where have all these Hawfinches come from?

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*Hawfinch at ringing station*

The correct answer would be "we don't know". However, the numbers being reported here are almost certainly boosted by continental immigrants. With flocks of 700 down south and birds in all sorts of areas where they aren't normally recorded, it is clear that a very large invasion has taken place. Ringing data is scarce, but I don't think anyone really doubts that this is what is going on.

Here in Cumbria, I was rather hoping that we'd also benefit from the invasion but, up until recently, the numbers at the main sites didn't seem any different to previous years. At Sizergh, we were just getting three or four in any one morning (incidentally, the largest flock sizes recorded at this site coincided with another invasion year but this was some time ago now... others may remember the year). However, in the last week or two things have clearly changed. The numbers at Brown Robin are far greater than 'normal' (this is a site which gets monitored closely) and the recent flock of 20 or so at Latterbarrow is also indicative of our local groups picking up a few continental birds.

In five years of monitoring this species in Cumbria, the largest single flock I have ever seen is 13 (at Grange). We have had mornings at Sizergh during which we've caught and ringed three or four, only to see five or six unringed birds in the trees. So, while this bird is much more widespread in South Lakeland than many people realise, to get flocks of 20+ and 40+ is exceptional.

All sightings of Hawfinch in Cumbria are valuable to the ongoing project on this species, but please make a special effort to check for colour rings. All ringed birds have a red ring on their left leg with two white digits engraved and a standard BTO metal ring on their right leg. Even if you cannot read the digits, reports of colour ringed birds are still extremely important and very much appreciated. Please report any sightings (of ringed birds anywhere, or unringed birds away from Sizergh) to Stuart Sharp at: [s.sharp2@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:s.sharp2@lancaster.ac.uk) or 01524 510244.

If anyone is visiting Sizergh to look for Hawfinches, please view from the veranda. This not only reduces disturbance but is actually the best way to get a good look anyway. If the ringing team are present on site and catch one, birds will be always be brought over for people to see them. For more information about seeing or photographing Hawfinches at Sizergh, please contact Rob Pocklington at: [robert.pocklington@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:robert.pocklington@nationaltrust.org.uk)

*Stuart Sharp (based on a BirdingCumbria conversation)*

## Bird movements in the recent cold weather

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*No birds, Cumrew area, Guy Broome*

The recent cold weather seemed to produce unusual movements of birds. The extreme north-east of the county fared worst with gardens becoming almost birdless being filled with snow drifts and feeders etc blown away in 120 mph gusts from the helm wind. There were up to 15 foot snow drifts over five days. Corvids

returned two days after, House Sparrows, four days, singing Song Thrush by 10th March. On the west coast however there was little or no snow !

On 28th February observers reported, from Parton, a steady southward passage of thrushes, mainly Redwing but also Fieldfare and Song Thrush. Fieldfare were also noted in Whitehaven town centre. To the south of Whitehaven in early morning there were large numbers of passerines moving south, low along the cliff top – a few hundred Skylark, tens of Pipits, Greenfinch and Chaffinch. This passage diminished as the day went on but still small groups of Skylarks were passing in the afternoon. At the same site ten Song Thrush appeared, an unusual number there. Fieldfare were also passing south. During the period 150 Skylarks were seen on St Bees Head. It was apparent that there was an influx of Song Thrushes into West Cumbria with many on St Bees north head – many more than usual - with 12 in one bush at one stage and “30+ in a short walk”.

On 1st March there was a large fall of birds in Whitehaven town centre on the cricket ground including Golden Plover c55, Mistle Thrush 5, Song Thrush 8, Meadow Pipit c50, Lapwing 12, Fieldfare c300, Redwing c200, Starling c80 - all feeding - there was only a slight covering of snow. A flock of 60 Golden Plover was at Harrington Marina at one stage.

Away from the west coast thrush species seemed to be the most widely reported with Fieldfares coming to gardens in small numbers and feeding on apples but larger numbers were seen, for example, 90 on 28th February which cleared out a large number of



*Fieldfare, Sandale garden, Chris Taylor*



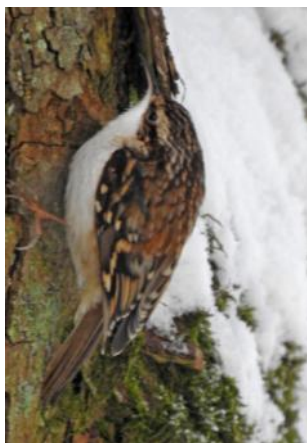
apples from a garden on high ground at Sandale in a very short time, 70 visiting a garden at Wreay and 40 in a garden in West Cumbria clearing a holly of its berries on 1st March despite three Mistle Thrushes defending the tree, all the birds dispersed once the berries were gone.

On the other hand in some areas comments were made to the effect that Fieldfare seemed to move on as soon as the snow stopped even though there was still food available. There were several thousand Fieldfare around Egremont on 2nd March as well as several hundred Lapwings – rare there away from the immediate coast – a smaller flock was also unusual near Cleator Moor. 15 Blackbird in Workington Park on 3rd March indicate that species was also involved. Mistle Thrushes were widely reported as unusually coming to gardens but in small numbers. Redwing were present but only in small numbers compared to Fieldfare.

Snipe in unexpected places were also reported, on road sides and a group at Longlands Lake from 27th February to 2nd March were unusual. Woodcock recorded included a bird flying through Stanwix, Carlisle in daylight.

Reed Bunting were also noted widely in small numbers with 17 at Siddick in the west and the same number at Wetheral in the east. Three Snow Buntings on Seatallen on 4th March were unexpected and at a low altitude.

Barn Owls were often seen hunting in daylight and in unusual places but with dead birds being seen on the M6 and four around Hallbankgate after the snow cleared. One sheltering in an out-house near Keswick was later found dead.



*Treecreeper, Geltsdale, Adam Moan*

On 3rd March the unseasonably low lake level of Derwent Water offered enticing mud spits and a winter refuge to an odd collection of waders with Snipe, seven Dunlin, three Lapwing, a Redshank and a Knot all feeding together. Two Sanderling were also reported from Bassenthwaite.

*Bob Jones - with many thanks to all contributors*



*Goldcrest, Cleator Moor garden, Alan Frost*

## Winter at Coker House – Kershope Forest

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Eighteen inches of snow February 28th to 2nd March, so lots of food out, niger, peanuts, mixed seed fat balls and cheese! My hens, the Robins and Blackbirds all love cheese! Blackbird numbers have been steadily rising since the first snowfall, now over 25 in the two acre Nursery. I assume they have some kind of grapevine for food sources, clearly shared by Goldfinches [18 on niger this morning], Greenfinches [seven today] and a mix of Chaffinches and Bramblings. A first for here is a pair of Red-legged Partridge, who obligingly posed with a Brambling.



The contrast with last week couldn't be more stark – then we had lots of spring bird song, the inspecting of potential nest sites, territorial behaviour. For the last few days it's been every bird for his/herself, food the priority and then a reasonable night-time roost. Blue Tits sleep under my roof tiles, Wrens and House Sparrows occupy both DIY and artificial House Martin nests, up to 70 Starlings roost in several dense laurels, some of the Blackbirds have resorted to perching in our greenhouses overnight and at least two Robins are bunking up with our hens. I do feel for our resident Barn Owls though, who have been out hunting from well before dusk, I guess without much luck.

Stranded for four days - "We might get a snowplough out to you on Monday" sayeth Cumbria CC.

*Ian Tyrrell*



## Walney Wanderers sneak past the winning post

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A cold, crisp frosty morning saw the Walney Wanderers comprising Tony Phizacklea (chauffeur), Chris Turner (spotter) and Colin Raven (tactician) assemble at 0545hrs. Birding began in earnest at 0600hrs as we arrived at the first location and eventually a Tawny Owl hooted to set the total running, but this was not enhanced by the “guaranteed” Water Rail. Two more vocal Tawny Owls were added at a new location but again no Water Rail!

Little Egret was next to fall along with an assortment of wildfowl and waders which called in the darkness as we headed on to Walney Island for first light. As dawn broke we were treated to a spectacular northbound passage of Pink-footed Geese which was to feature for much of the morning. Also seen were Barn Owl, Bullfinch, Goldcrest and the first Sparrowhawk – remarkably we were to see at least six different birds through the course of the day.

Grounded groups of six Mistle Thrush and three Fieldfare were suggestive of some overnight cold weather movement before five Pintail were added. The pools at the south end of the island then provided the usual suspects including Greenshank, Scaup and Black-tailed Godwit while several small groups of Twite were seen before an Eider fittingly brought up the first 50. More winter thrushes, this time Redwing were further evidence of cold weather movement before the sea disappointingly only produced Shag and Red-throated Diver, although a solitary Whooper Swan flew south. Heading back up the island, Jack Snipe and Rock Pipit were quickly added before Tree Sparrow was the last addition to leave the total on 73 as we left the island with no sign of Little Owl, Merlin or Peregrine.

Long-tailed Tit, Goosander, Kingfisher and the start of a flurry of Grey Wagtail, but no Green Sandpiper, were amongst the species added as we headed to the woodland stage. This produced Great Spotted Woodpecker, Jay, Buzzard, Nuthatch and Marsh Tit but no Raven, Siskin, Lesser Redpoll or Tree-creeper as the day failed to warm up. A Dipper was finally pinned down at a traditional site then it was back to Walney Island for the late tide and a selection of waders including Purple Sandpiper. However, Little Owl, Peregrine and Merlin all remained frustratingly elusive before a drake Gadwall and finally Woodcock were added in a dash to the finish and we arrived at the Agricultural Arms exactly on the 1730hrs deadline.

Food and drink were then served and eagerly consumed; there are no picnics enroute for the wanderers, before the results were announced. Despite falling short of the century with a total of 99 species it was just enough to win by a “short head” and retain the trophy with the Solway Dippers coming a close second on 98.

*Colin Raven*

## Recent reports

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The period covered is December 2017 to February 2018. Some of these records are unauthenticated and may require review by the Club Records Panel or British Birds Rarities Committee.

### **Swans to Ducks**

**Whooper Swans** were present throughout in regular areas with 70 (15 juveniles) at Walby on 20th December and 84 (23 juveniles) a day later; in February there 56 was the maximum. The 63 at Brunstock on 11th may well have been the Walby flock. 72 (26 juveniles) were at Kirkby Thore, a regular site, on 21st December with 64 there on 12th January. The Angerton/Kirkbride flock had 175 birds at the end of December and 200 by the end



*Barnacle Geese, Anthorn, Roger Ridley*

of January. The 89 birds around Kirkbride Airfield on 22nd December and 186 on 20th February may well have been from this flock.

On 4th December 1000 **Pink-footed Geese** went south over Wetheral in the early morning, with 1400 at Walby in mid month; 1240 passed through Walney on 10th. In January 200 went WNW over Penrith in the late afternoon and on 11th skeins totalling 350 birds went west over RSPB Geltsdale. Numbers appeared to build up earlier than usual with 2500 at Kirkbride on 11th January. 500 were at Aglionby in mid February and on 18th 4000 birds came in off the sea at Allonby going north-east. The only **Greenland White-fronts** reported were two in Lowther Valley on 9th February with Greylags. 600 **Greylag Geese** were near Great Corby on 23rd December reduced to 300 by early January. 6000 **Barnacle Geese** were at Anthorn on 3rd January as well as large numbers in Moricambe Bay in January and February and 12,000 on Rockliffe Marsh, also in February.

**Brent Geese** at Walney varied with 195 Pale and 71 Dark-bellied at the beginning of December increasing to 313 Pale and 72 Dark by early February. Two Pale and a single Dark were at Hodbarrow on 8th January. A single **Black Brant** was at Roa Island throughout the period. At Blackdyke, Silloth on 3rd January there were 68 **Shelduck** and 16 were at Kirkbride Airfield on 13th. **Pintail** numbers of significance were 76 at Campfield on 3rd January, 1520 in Duddon Estuary on 11th and 90 at Grune on 19th and then 220 off Campfield on 18th February. There were 240 **Wigeon** on the River Mite on

24th December, 700 at Grune point on 19th January and 560 at Longtown. Tarn Dubs held 610 **Teal** on 22nd January and 39 **Shoveler** on 17th December. Apart from the maximum of 13 on Derwent Water the only **Pochard** reported were a pair on the River Eden at Linstock in early January, up to five at Longlands Lake on 6th, 9th and 11th January and three at Hodbarrow on 8th January and two there on 9th February. Fifty **Tufted Duck** were on Tindale Tarn on 5th December (a record for the site) and then 70 at Longtown on 21st January. A colour ringed bird at Walney had been ringed in Portugal on 9th November 2016. Away from Walney there was a drake **Eider** at Workington throughout the period. At Walney 3550 were present on 15th December and 3800 in early February. Two **Long-tailed Ducks** frequented Bowness on Windermere from 12th December. 45 **Goldeneye** were on the River Eden at Rockcliffe on 4th December with an increased number of 122 between Rockcliffe and Carlisle on 16th. The drake **Smew** remained on Derwent Water throughout.

### ***Partridges to Herons***

Four **Red Grouse** were on Helton Fell in early January and 11 a little later in the month; 75 were seen at High Cup Nick on 20th. A single **Black Grouse** was seen in a Hawthorn on Ash Fell on 4th December and six were in Geltsdale in snow on 18th January with a similar number near Hallbankgate on 8th February. Thirteen **Grey Partridge** were at Carlisle Airport on 22nd December and 11 a month later and three at Grinsdale on 18th February. A pair were seen feeding on winter Barley at Abbeytown.

200 **Red-throated Divers** were off Lowca Brows on 17th December. On 11th January 20 were off Silecroft (increased to 65 on 4th February) and 30 were off Workington Harbour on 29th January, 10 at Eskmeals and then 25 at Tarn Bay on 4th February and 12 off Drigg. A juvenile **Great Northern Diver** was on Brotherswater from 10th December till at least 5th January. An immature **Shag** was off Parton on 29th January. **Bittern** were at Siddick Pond throughout the period.

Whilst **Little Egret** were recorded in numbers in the south of the county (55 at Walney on 9th December), there were just a handful on south Solway. Of more interest



*Red Grouse, Geltsdale, Adam Moan*





*Little Grebe, Brampton, Adam Moan*

were birds inland – at Langwathby in December, one over the A66 at Plumpton on 9th December, one at Seathwaite, Borrowdale on 11th December and on 16th one was at Castle Green, Kendal where the observer commented “first in 23 years”. One was at Sunbiggin Tarn on 31st and another in maize stubble at Dalston on 7th January. A **Great White Egret** was still in the Sunbiggin Tarn area up to 8th December and one frequented the Holme area from 10th December into early January. A **Western Cattle Egret** was again by the Lancaster Canal on 3rd December. Ten **Little Grebe** were on the River Eden between Carlisle and Rockcliffe on 16th December with 12 at Longlands Lake at the end of the month. At Longtown there were 13 on 21st January.

A **Black-necked Grebe** was at Lindale from 24th January to 7th February.

### ***Raptors to Waders***

An early **Osprey** was seen to perch for a period by the River Eden at Rockcliffe before heading off north, heavily mobbed. Apart from a bird at Bolton New House in mid January any other records of **Red Kite** came from the south of the county. Conversely **Hen Harrier** reports came mainly from south Solway but there was one report from the south of the county. Single **Marsh Harriers** were in the south on 30th January and 12th and 26th February. **Merlin** were regularly reported on Foulshaw, south Solway, at Kirkbride, but also at High Cup Nick on 20th January, Caldbeck on 8th February and Walton Moss (two) on 22nd. **Peregrine** were mainly reported from the south Solway and Foulshaw. **Water Rail** were regular at Siddick Pond, Derwent Water and the Foulshaw area as well as being reported from Soddy Gap on 3rd January and Sunbiggin Tarn later in the month. Up to five were on Walney during the period.

An **Oystercatcher** at Ormside, Appleby on 21st December was unusual so far inland at this stage of the year as similarly were ten at Little Salkeld on 12th January. By mid February there were 114 between Carlisle and Rockcliffe. **Grey Plover** were mainly reported from south Solway with 86 at RSPB Campfield on 3rd January being a high number. The juvenile **Dotterel** was still with the Golden Plover flock at Anthorn on 3rd December but not reported after that. The large **Golden Plover** flock remained on Moricambe Bay/

Cardurnock throughout – it numbered several thousand birds. Others seen were 80 on Par-ton Beach on 12th De-cember, 30 inland on Helton Fell on 3rd January. A flock also frequented Whitehaven CC ground in cold weather. 1400 were at Walney on 3rd Decem-ber. At least 400 were present at Holme Dub on 22nd January and 21st February.



*Redshank, Maryport, Tommy Holden*

An unusually early flock of **Lapwings** were at RSPB Geltsdale on 5th Janu-ary with 1300 birds present, 200 were at Long Marton in early February and c2000 next to the River Eden near Linstock on 11th. There were 59 **Black-tailed Godwits** at Hodbarrow on 8th January. Large numbers of **Knot** were in the south Solway and Moricambe Bay throughout with a number of colour “flagged” birds being easily picked up from photographs – something to look for in future. 2000 were at Walney at the beginning of the month (increased to 5000 by the end); colour ringed birds had been ringed in Netherlands (two) Iceland and Merseyside (two). The regular **Purple Sandpiper** flock of about 40 birds was at Workington throughout with others reported from Earnse Bay, Walney and Maryport.

Port Carlisle held large numbers of **Dunlin** throughout with 500 in mid De-cember, 2000 a week later and 6000 by the end of the month. 2000 were at RSPB Campfield in early January. **Little Stint** continued to be reported from Port Carlisle (up to three) with the Dunlin flock up to the end of February, as well as two at Anthorn on 4th December and two on the River Bela, Mil-nethorpe two days later and two on Heversham Moss on 20th January.

**Green Sandpipers** were reported throughout the period with a single at Walby and two at Kirkandrews on Eden on 3rd December (a bird also at the latter site on 31st December) with another at Rockcliffe a day later. One was at a site used last winter at Wetheral on 3rd January, two were on the Ravenglass Esk on 5th, two were near Raby on 7th, one was on the River Lyvennet on 11th and one at Cliburn on 29th. In February two were again at

Kirkandrews on 7th and a single was seen flying by the canal at Holme on 27th and 28th February.

**Common Sandpiper** were reported from the Ravenglass Esk with one on 24th December and three on 5th January. One was at Waberthwaite on 9th February.



*Snipe, Geltsdale, Adam Moan*

A single **Greenshank** was at Port Carlisle in early December, 12 at Walney on 15th, and another at Ravenglass on 24th, at Drumburgh on 22nd January again at Port Carlisle on 11th February and at Glasson Point a day later – all these records on the south Solway may relate to one bird. Two were at Esk-meals on 8th January and 9th February. Two were also at Hodbarrow on 9th February. Inland one was on the River Esk at Longtown on 13th February.

A **Woodcock** was on Black Coombe on 5th December, at Dalston in mid December, Waterside on 1st January, Thackthwaite a couple of days later, Finglandrigg and Cliburn on 4th and two were on Bowness Common on 10th. On 18th January one was flushed from a snow free area at RSPB Geltsdale and on 21st the first seen there by the observer was on Helton Fell. On 30th January one was well away from any woodland or fellside, seen feeding in daytime in a field at Newton Reigny.

Up to 12 **Snipe** were observed using winter barley as a daytime roost. **Jack Snipe** were reported from the River Eden at Rockcliffe on 4th December and again on 18th February and also four from Carlisle Airfield on 23rd January.



*Woodcock, Newton Reigny, Ian Hayes*

A noteworthy 11 **Ruff** were with a Lapwing flock at Blackdyke, Silloth on 30th December (but only two the next day) and then singles at Anhorn on 1st February, Silloth on 4th and with another Lapwing flock at Rick-erby.



### ***Skuas to Auks***

Three **Mediterranean Gulls** (two adults and a second winter) were on the River Wampool near Whitrigg with a first winter there a day later. "Stumpy" was at Workington throughout the period for his 10th winter; however the most interesting record was 27 with Black-headed Gulls at Camerton on 24th January (one first winter with the rest either adult or second winter); a day later an adult was "worming" on Allonby Green and on 31st ten (adult or second winter) were in the Siddick/Flimby area. The only one reported in February was at Anthorn on 15th. A first/second winter **Iceland Gull** was near Hallbankgate from 6th to 9th February. An adult was at Bowness on Windermere from 7th to 25th February. A **Glaucous Gull** was at Walney on 28th December. Two early **Sandwich Terns** were off Walney on 25th February. A **Little Auk** passed Walney on 2nd December.

### ***Cuckoos to Buntings***

At least 1500 **Woodpigeons** frequented an area of stubble to the west of Carlisle bypass near Kirkandrews on Eden in mid December and 24 **Stock Doves** were at Walby on 23rd. **Short-eared Owls** were reported from Walton and Kirkbride in early January, with further sightings at Kirkbride later in the month and also on nearby Wedholme Flow. **Kingfisher** were most regularly reported from Siddick Ponds but also from the River Eden at Rockcliffe, the River Mite at Ravenglass and the River Lowther at Helton in early January and Longtown later in the month. **Rock Pipit** were regular at Workington and other sites on west coast. A **Water Pipit** frequented Walney in mid February.

A **Cetti's Warbler** was heard by participants in the CBC Bird Race at Siddick Pond on 7th January. A **Blackcap** was in a Stanwix garden in February.

There were three **Stonechat** at Lowca Brows including a colour ringed (by John Callion) bird on 12th December and another three at Kirkbride Airfield on 22nd and just one on 8th and 17th January. A male was on Walton Moss on 8th January and another at Askham Fell on the same day. A pair were near Askerton on 15th. One was singing at Allonby by 18th February. A **Black Redstart** was



*Blackcap, Stanwix, Roger Ridley*



*Snow Buntings, Grune Point, Roger Ridley*

seen at Dubmill Point on 10th December. **Song Thrush** were heard singing in several places by 27th December. **Fieldfare** and **Redwing** were reported throughout. The hybrid **Carrion/Hooded Crow** continued to be seen in the Whitehaven area. Two separate **Hooded Crows** were at Parton and Whitehaven on 29th January. **Brambling** were reported occasionally but only in very low numbers. 35 **Tree Sparrows** were in the Rockcliffe area in mid December. **Twite** were reported from Grune Point throughout December with 80 being the maximum on 15th and 60 were at Cardurnock on 5th. The Grune flock was up to 100 birds by 9th January and again on 19th. There were also birds at Millom in mid January. Numbers at Walney built up throughout with 85 in December up to 120 by mid February. Seventeen were on the sea wall at Cavendish Dock on 16th February.

**Hawfinch** seen away fromSizergh, were singles at Calthwaite on 11th December, Derwent Water on 16th, eight at Halecat on 10th January and one with the Fieldfare flock at Brampton on 13th January. Biggest numbers however were at Brown Robin CWT Reserve with 43 on 21st February (local birds or part of nationwide influx?), 26 the next day and also 20 at Latterbarrow CWT reserve on 22nd.



*Redwing, Aspatria, Tommy Holden*



*Fieldfare, Cleator Moor garden, Alan Frost*

Ten **Crossbill** were in Grizedale Forest on 13th January as well as being seen more often at Whinlatter Centre. Six (a pair plus three males and a female) were at Spadeadam in early February. One was on Muncaster Fell and several in Parkgate Woods on 18th February.

A number of comments were made to the effect that **Siskins** which had been visiting gardens "disappeared early and suddenly in February" but before the real hard weather set in. **Snow Bunting** were reported on 3rd December on the Helvellyn Range with 15 on Striding Edge, 59 on Lower Man and then on 10th five were on Grune Point reducing to three by 27th a date on which one was still at Workington Harbour having been there for ten days or so. In early February birds were found on Wolsty Banks – possibly the Grune birds and they were present till the end of the month. A single bird was on Skiddaw on 21st February.

*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](mailto: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](http://www.cumbriabirdclub.org.uk) for details of how to do so.*

*Bob Jones & Dave Piercy*

## Transactions of Carlisle Natural History Society, vol 13

With numerous full colour illustrations, charts and maps.

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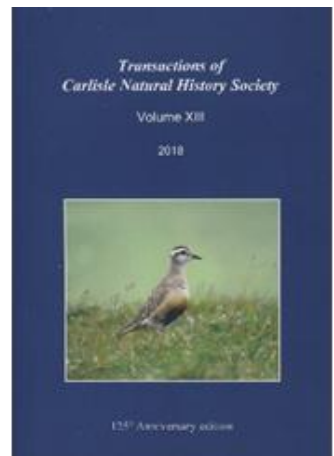
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by John Callion & John Strowger

*The Pink-footed Goose; roosting and feeding areas on the south Solway 1997-2016* [26 pages]  
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*Reed Warblers at Bassenthwaite NNR Constant Effort Site (CES) 1997-2016* [18 pages]  
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<http://www.cumbriabirdclub.org.uk>

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