



BIRD NEWS
Vol. 24 No. 2 Summer 2013

Club news and announcements
Atlas/Avifauna progress
Rookery survey – an update
Rooks & motorway service areas
Wintering Goosander survey 2013/14
Wintering Snipes on limestone pavement
Canada Geese
Waxwings in Cumbria 2012/13
A colour-ringed Great Black-backed at Anthorn
Eycott Hill - a new nature reserve
Recent reports
Migrant arrivals 2013

Contents - see back page

Twinned with Cumberland Bird Observers Club

New South Wales, Australia

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



Officers of the Society

Council

Chairman: Dave Shackleton, 8 Burnbanks, Bampton, Penrith CA10 2RW
tel. 01931 713693; d.shackleton@btinternet.com

Vice-chairmen: Clive Hartley, Robin Sellers, Mike Carrier

Secretary: David Piercy, Derwentwater Youth Hostel, Borrowdale, Keswick
CA12 5UR; tel. 017687 77246; daveandkathypiercy@tiscali.co.uk

Treasurer: Treasurer: David Cooke, Mill Craggs, Bampton, CA10 2RQ
tel. 01931 713392; cooke856@btinternet.com

Field Trips Organiser: Vacant

Talks Organiser: Vacant

Publicity : Colin Gay, 8 Victoria St., Millom, LA18 5AS
tel. 01229 773820; colinathodbarrow@btinternet.com

Members: Peter Ullrich
Rob Pickett
Keith Hamilton
Peter Howard
Malcolm Priestley

Recorders

County: Stephen Westerberg, 8 Beckside Gardens, Brampton, CA8 1US
Stephen.Westerberg@rspb.org.uk tel. 016977 42652

Barrow/South Lakeland: Ronnie Irving, 24 Birchwood Close, Kendal LA9 5BJ
ronnie@fenella.fslife.co.uk tel. 01539 727523

Carlisle & Eden: Chris Hind, 2 Old School House, Hallbankgate, Brampton, CA8
2NW chris.m.hind@gmail.com tel. 016977 46379

Allerdale & Copeland: Derek McAlone, 88 Whinlatter Road, Mirehouse,
Whitehaven CA28 8DQ derekmcalone@hotmail.co.uk
tel. 01946691370

C.B.C. Bird News

Editor: Dave Piercy

B.T.O. Representatives

Cumbria: Clive Hartley clive.hartley304@btinternet.com tel. 015395 36824
Assistant reps: Colin Gay, Dave Piercy & Steve Westerberg

Club news and announcements

Annual General Meeting Friday 4th October 2013

The AGM will be held at Penrith United Reformed Church on Friday 4th October 2013 at 7.30pm. The business of the AGM is intended to be as brief as possible and will be followed by a talk by Gavin Thomas on the RSPB's Bowland Wader Project.

Vacancies on Council: Secretary, two vice-chairmen and two members.

According to the terms of the constitution the above posts will become vacant at the AGM though there is a proviso that the current incumbents may remain another year if there are no other suitable candidates. This note is to seek nominations from members to fill these posts. According to the terms of the constitution, nominations should be submitted to the secretary not later than seven days before the AGM (i.e. by 27th September).

Richard Wimpess

Richard was born in Barrow in Furness and attended Barrow Grammar School for Boys. It was the Natural History Society at the school which started his interest in birds. A report 'The Birds of Foulney Island', produced by that Society in 1963, included many records submitted by him. On leaving school Richard joined Barclays Bank, initially at the Barrow Branch, but during his early career he moved around several branches in Furness and, typical of Richard, he quickly gained a wide knowledge of the best birding sites close to wherever he was working.

He was a founder member of Walney Bird Observatory in 1965 and served as treasurer between 1970 and 1982. It was at Walney that he became a bird ringer and eventually a trainer who was very patient and willing to share his knowledge with new ringers. His encouragement helped to develop the Observatory until 1982 when work transferred him to Wigan where he met his wife Pat. After they were married in 1985 they moved back to Cumbria. Richard was a founder member of Cumbria Bird Club and its first Treasurer.

In addition to birding Richard was a keen golfer, he was a member of Cockermouth Golf Club for 22 years during which time he held several offices including Captain in 1998 and President in 2003 and 2004 and he had been Secretary for 8 years at the time of his death. His time on the golf course was often recorded in his bird sightings posted on the CBC forum.

Richard will be very much missed for his ringing expertise, his vast bird knowledge and his sense of humour. More than 100 people attended his funeral at Christchurch, Cockermouth on May 21st. Our sincere condolences go to Pat and his family.

Keith Parkes

CBC Indoor meeting programme winter 2013/2014

Friday 4th October (AGM): Penrith UR Church 7.30pm

'The RSPB's Bowland Wader Project' - *Gavin Thomas*



Bowland's nationally important populations of breeding Lapwing, Curlew, Redshank and Snipe are declining. This is due to intensification of grassland management and landscape-scale drainage of fields.

As a result, Bowland's wading birds have fewer areas in which to feed and successfully raise their chicks. However, with the support of the Wader

Project, numerous local farmers and landowners are managing land sympathetically for these birds and are helping to maintain and increase their populations.

Friday 15th November: Cockermouth UR Church 7.30pm

'Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks' - *Roy Atkins*

Roy used to be chairman of CBC and is now a renowned tour leader and speaker. His picture of the Mountain Bluebird should whet the appetite. It would be good to get a better turn out than usual for this venue so please pass the word around especially



if you live near Cockermouth. Free to non-members as well.

Friday 7th February: Penrith UR Church 7.30pm

'The Ring Ouzel' - *Innes Sim*

Innes grew up in Aberdeen, and has been interested in birds for as long as he can remember. Like many other schoolkids of his age he spent much of his time learning how to find bird's nests, which has proved to be an important skill in his future career in ornithology.

A chance encounter with a local bird ringer aged 12 sparked an interest in bird ringing, and he went on to gain his A permit by the age of 20. He studied Zoology at Aberdeen University, where he gained his BSc in 1989. He then began his career with the Conservation Science department of the RSPB, where he still works today.

He has worked on a variety of projects, including seabirds on Orkney, Red Kites in Spain, and Buzzards in the West Midlands, as well as organising national surveys of Hen Harriers, Black Grouse and upland birds.

He has worked on Ring Ouzels, in both an amateur and professional capacity since 1998, and completed his PhD on the ecology of the species in Glen Clunie, Aberdeenshire in 2013. He continues to attempt to understand the underlying reasons for the long term decline of this iconic upland species to this day.

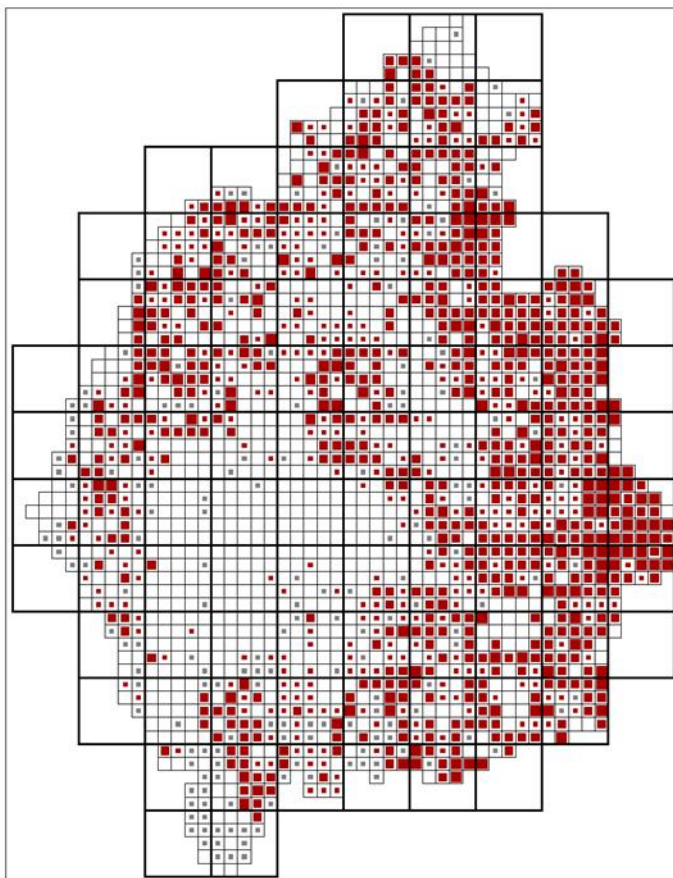


Monday 24th February: with Kendal NHS Friend's Meeting House Stramongate 7.30pm

'A year at Leighton Moss'-David Poole (photographer and naturalist)

More information in the next newsletter.

Atlas/Avifauna progress



Provisional distribution of breeding Curlews by tetrad, 2008 to 2012

Fieldwork for the Britain and Ireland Atlas came to an end in July 2011 and was followed by an additional year's work here in Cumbria in an attempt to achieve complete coverage of all tetrads in the county. By the end of July 2012 all but a handful of tetrads had received their full quota of 2x2 hours timed tetrad visits (TTV's) in both the breeding season and winter and the few which remain are currently being surveyed. We will, therefore, have a complete data set for the county in the autumn of this year.

The Britain and Ireland Atlas is due to be published later this year and a special pre-publication offer is currently available which closes on 31st July www.bto.org/shop/bird-atlas. Hailed as the most important British and Irish

bird book for two decades, its publication should be a worthwhile reward for all the hard work that members of the Cumbria Bird Club and countless others have put in over the last several years.

In addition to contributing to the above, a small team of CBC members have been working in conjunction with the staff of BTO and the Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre aimed at publishing more detailed, tetrad-level results for Cumbria as part of a comprehensive County Avifauna, the first since Macpherson's "Fauna of Lakeland" of 1892!

Detailed tetrad level maps of distribution and relative abundance will be ready for circulation to species authors in September this year, along with:

- guidelines for the production of species accounts
- tables and graphs for individual species containing the latest Atlas data and a comparison with previous atlases
- tables containing Wetland Bird Survey data for all relevant species, both at county and site level
- an analysis of the results of the BTO's Breeding Bird Survey for Cumbria
- graphs of trends in migrant arrival and departure dates
- a map showing the county Avifauna boundaries
- a map showing sub-areas of the county, along with a printout of Atlas data for each sub-area
- guidance on the systematic analysis of Cumbria Bird Reports
- guidance on the availability of data on ringing recoveries/controls
- a bibliography of references to Cumbria birds
- a glossary of terms

It is hoped that the provision of this level of detail will not only assist the account writing process but also help to achieve a degree of consistency between species accounts.

Currently we have a small group of CBC members who have expressed an interest in becoming involved as species authors. If you wish to add your name to this pool please get in touch with me as soon as possible, stating any preferences you may have for particular species.

Clive Hartley, Undercragg, Grange over Sands, Cumbria LA11 6DB (Tel: 015395 36824; email: clive.hartley304@btinternet.com)

Rookery survey – an update

The cold and much delayed spring of 2013 was perhaps not the ideal time to have been doing a rookery survey but fortunately all seems to have turned out well despite the weather.

Trees generally seem to be three to four weeks late in coming into leaf, but the cold weather seems only to have delayed breeding in Rooks by a week or so – if nothing else the late opening of the leaf buds has made it easier to see Rook nests than is sometimes the case.

Despite everything we appear to have obtained complete coverage of the county with the majority of counts being made around the optimum time. Work is currently in hand to collate the results (getting on for a thousand counts in total and most certainly not a trivial task!) and work out what it tells us about the current state of Rooks breeding in Cumbria.



Rookery counting weather at Hartsop

Compared with the previous survey in 1996 it is clear that there have been substantial decreases in some areas, but much less marked changes elsewhere. Quite what the overall picture is must await a more detailed appraisal of the results.

We hope to be in a position to give a more definitive summary of the results by the time of the next issue of Bird News. Meanwhile a big thank you to everyone who participated in the survey and our compliments to all those who have already returned their surveys forms.

Robin Sellers (on behalf of the Rookery Survey Organising Committee)

Why do Rooks have such a fondness for motorway service areas?

In *Crow Country*, Mark Cocker's very readable account of his lifelong passion for Rooks and Jackdaws, he notes that many rookeries are constructed in the grounds of the better kind of country residence. Whilst he did not specifically have Cumbria in mind it is certainly true of many of our rookeries. By way of example here is a list of a dozen or so rookeries in the west of the county, whose names give a good indication of where they are sited: Brockwood Hall, Carlton Hall, Ehen Hall, Ellerslie House, Eskmeals House, Fleatham House, Harecroft Hall, Muncaster Castle, Po House, Rothersyke House, St. Bees Abbey, St. George's Church (Millom), Springfield House and Whicham Hall.

Admittedly some have changed their function, so Brockwood Hall and Fleatham House are now hotels, and Harecroft Hall was until recently a school, whilst Po House and Whicham Hall are nothing more than good-sized farms. Why should this be – what is so attractive about such places to Rooks? One possible answer is that these rookeries date back to Victorian times when it was considered quite the done thing to have a rookery in the trees by one's residence, but is that all there is to it?

Possibly not! On a recent journey to the West Country I was struck by how many motorway service areas on the M6 and M5 have rookeries. I cannot claim to have visited every single service area on these two motorways (I am not that much of a glutton for punishment) but the following certainly have rookeries (from north to south): Burton-in-Kendal, Forton, Charnock Richard, Knutsford, Sandbach, Keele, Michael Wood, Sedgemoor and Taunton Deane.

In addition there were quite a number of rookeries in trees, some little more than saplings, growing by the side of the motorway. None of these service areas is more than fifty years old and the rookeries must be of comparatively recent origin – what is it that the Rooks find so attractive in them and is there any connection with their fondness for the grander sort of country house?

I think the answer is that there is a common theme and that it has to do with disturbance. Rooks are considered to be pests by some farmers, and there is no doubt that they can do serious damage to newly sown crops, although this has to be balanced by the good they do in terms of removing leatherjackets and other soil invertebrates that are harmful to crops.

Although the evidence is largely anecdotal or circumstantial it is clear that shooting of Rooks at their breeding colonies is by no means uncommon and probably has been a feature of Rooks' lives ever since the gun was invented (and especially since the shotgun was introduced). However, Rooks rid themselves of this threat if they breed where they are tolerated, for instance in the grounds of country houses or where shooting is either prohibited or very unlikely as at motorway service areas.

Why do Rooks have such a fondness for motorway service areas?

I would be interested to hear from anyone who has information about the shooting of Rooks at rookeries in Cumbria. I'd also be interested to know if anyone can confirm or elaborate on the following related to me by a farmer I spoke to during the recent Cumbria rookery survey. Although I can't help feeling he was pulling my leg, the chap was adamant that Rooks made good eating (his son corroborated this) and that they regularly shot newly fledged Rooks from the rookery by their farm, but they had to be newly fledged birds, the adults weren't worth the bother.

Robin Sellers, sellers@craghouse7.freemove.co.uk 01946725453

Wintering Goosander survey 2013/14



Goosander, River Derwent, Steve Dutton

The 1990/91 Goosander survey found a minimum of 735 birds present in Cumbria representing more than 10% of the estimated wintering Goosander population in Britain.

During the last two decades it has been apparent that there have been significant changes in local populations, roosting sites and habitat preferences in many parts of the county.

Furthermore, increasing pressure from fishing interests for licences to cull Goosanders has highlighted the need to update our knowledge of the current status of the species.

The new survey will aim to cover all the main river systems, lakes and estuaries in Cumbria with counts in November, January and March coinciding, as far as possible, with the dates of the Wetland Bird Survey.

At this stage in the planning of the project, the CBC Goosander sub-committee is appealing for volunteers to act as local organisers co-ordinating fieldwork in individual drainage basins (e.g. Duddon, Derwent, Esk and Lyne etc).

If you can help please contact Malcolm Priestley by e-mail priestleyfamily@hotmail.com , by post (Havera Bank, Howgill Lane, Sedbergh LA10 5HB) or by telephone 015396 20104.

Malcolm Priestley

Wintering Snipes on limestone pavement

For the past 18 months I have been assisting Cumbria Wildlife Trust by doing a monthly transect survey to get a relatively systematic baseline picture of the birds on Hutton Roof/Lancelot Clark Storth reserves.

On 20th December 2012 I flushed two Snipe off the limestone pavement on Uberash Roughs (in the area SD555776) and just recorded it and moved on. In February and March 2012 there were two more sightings. This winter Snipe have been seen on other occasions. The birds have been seen in two areas around 400m apart separated by a wall between the Hutton Roof and Lancelot Clark Storth reserves; but part of a relatively continuous limestone pavement feature.

On 29th January 2013 six Snipe were flushed – a seriously winter day with heavy hailstorms which meant I only did half the survey and returned the next day. On a slightly improved day, 30th January, four birds came up from under my feet and were definitely in a wide gryke between the clints. They would be sheltered there and one assumes in some grykes there would be access to food.

Has this been observed before?

Although I have now passed on the monthly surveys to a new volunteer I have offered CWT to do some systematic visits across winter 2013/14 to try to get a picture of birds across the limestone pavements in the Uberash Roughs area.

John Peatfield 8th May 2013

Canada Geese

RSPCA plan to ring a number of Canada geese on Windermere in July. We will be working with Kane Brides and we are hoping to ring around 200 birds with standard BTO rings and Darvic rings. We therefore need to get the message out to the birding community in Cumbria to look out for these birds and report them through the BTO website.

*Adam Grogan
RSPCA Wildlife Department*

Waxwings in Cumbria 2012/13



Waxwings, Carlisle, Darren Robson

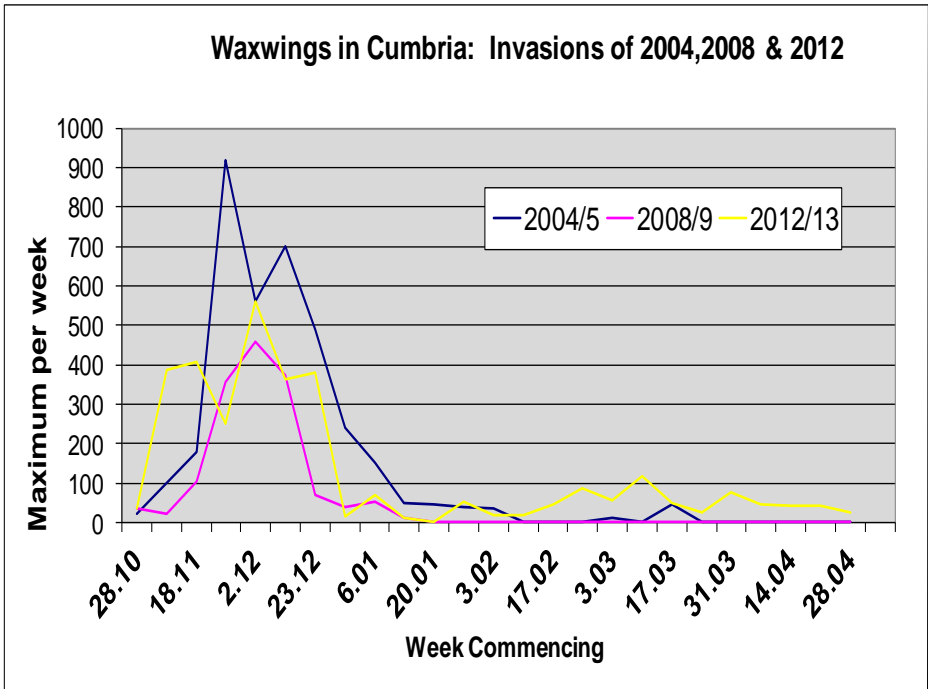
It first became clear in the third week of October 2012 that there was the possibility of 2012 being an “invasion” year with birds being seen in Orkney & Shetland on 18th October and then 24th October (or earlier) in Aberdeenshire with similar pattern in other areas of Scotland.

The first birds recorded in Cumbria were three present with a Fieldfare flock at Haweswater on 29th October. This perhaps set the pattern with birds in the latest invasion being less concentrated on urban areas as has been the case in the past perhaps because crops on the ornamental trees preferred in the main in the past, were low due to the cold wet summer preceding and local birds had already eaten the crop by end of October.

One result of this was that birds tended to be more spread geographically with birds in West Cumbria (25 at Marks & Spencer's Workington 13th November) and down the west coast on a number of occasions. Birds were

also present, particularly into 2013, in the South Lakes suggesting that they were possibly birds starting to return north being present right through to the end of April.

Whilst birds were seen in places such as Penrith, Dalston and Carlisle which had produced very large flocks in previous invasions, numbers were relatively much smaller.



The graph above shows the temporal spread of birds in each of the last three invasions and it will be seen that all three show a similar basic pattern with birds arriving at end of October, peaking in Mid-December with only very small numbers left after the end of January.



Waxwing, Penrith, Craig Shaw

The numbers shown for 2012/13 are heavily influenced by birds using Arnside Knott as a feeding area but much more interestingly as a roost site with numbers, many provided by Arnside NHS, as follows :-

<u>Date</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>No</u>
21/11/2012	6	05/12/2012	200
23/11/2012	40	09/12/2012	200
24/11/2012	40	10/12/2012	200
29/11/2012	9	12/12/2012	84
30/11/2012	30	13/12/2012	300
01/12/2012	350	15/12/2012	80

It would seem a fair assumption that the reduced count on the 12th December may simply reflect a count undertaken at a time other than when birds were coming to roost. Few Waxwing roost sites have been identified in the county in the past

In view of the location of the Knott being right on the county border it is known that birds were foraging outside the county (including Silverdale) although small numbers were recorded taking Yew berries on the Knott.

The Arnside flock resulted in a much heavier emphasis on the south of the county than had been the case in previous invasions.

The Arnside birds were by far the most significant group in the county although flocks in excess of 100 birds were seen in Penrith (on several dates in November with a max of 135 on 14th November), and Carlisle Kingstown IE (max of 130 also on 14th November); these dates were the peak in the north of the county. Penrith held birds from the end of January to end of March with a maximum of 86 birds on 24th February 2013 – feeding on ornamental berries on a bush in the centre of town near Penrith Station.

It will be noted that there were birds present right through to the end of April – these were in the south of the county with birds at Kendal and Levens for extended periods, with the last records being 20 in both areas on 6th April 2013; these birds were presumably on their return migration.

As stated above there were more records received away from the “traditional” sites in Penrith, Keswick & Carlisle and the following are selected examples of birds recorded from more “natural” habitats / sites –

29/10/12	Birds with Fieldfare at Haweswater
10/11/12	57 in Hawthorns at Metal Bridge
16/11/12	22 at Raughton Head
24/11/12	37 on Yews at Derwentwater Youth Hostel
26/11/12	45 in Lazonby Village
07/12/12	40 feeding on rose hips Wetheral Shield
14/01/13	3 feeding on rose hips at Old Carlisle, Wigton
16/01/13	3 feeding on rose hips at Bowness Railings

Conclusion – whilst the latest invasion generally fitted with pattern of previous years in terms of timing there were some interesting differences in behaviour, geographic spread and records extending well into “spring”.

Bob Jones

Sources

Arnside Natural History Society

Birdguides

BirdingCumbria

CBC “Latest sightings” pages

A colour-ringed Great Black-backed Gull at Anthorn

While checking through the gulls at Anthorn on 24th August 2012 I came across a juvenile Great Black-backed Gull carrying a colour ring. This gull and the nearby Common Gulls were well settled and I was able to read the ring and take some digiscope record shots.



The bird had been ringed as a pullus on Ireland's Eye Island off Howth, Co. Dublin on 27th June 2012. Interestingly, the ringer was Chris Honan who had provided us with generous hospitality at his home in Drogheda a couple of years ago. Drogheda is a town with a turbulent past, lying as it does close to the site of the Battle of the Boyne. It is also remembered for the notorious massacre perpetrated by Cromwell some decades earlier - not perhaps a place where Englishmen would expect to find a warm welcome!

Great Black-backed Gull tends to attract little attention, even from 'larophiles' as it is monotypic - there are no subspecies. It is essentially a North Atlantic and West European species. Birds breeding north of the Arctic Circle are completely migratory whereas the southern breeders undergo dispersive movements. Numbers wintering in Britain are roughly twice those breeding here. Recent ringing recoveries suggest that many British breeders winter in the Iberian Peninsula. Perhaps this individual was heading in that direction.

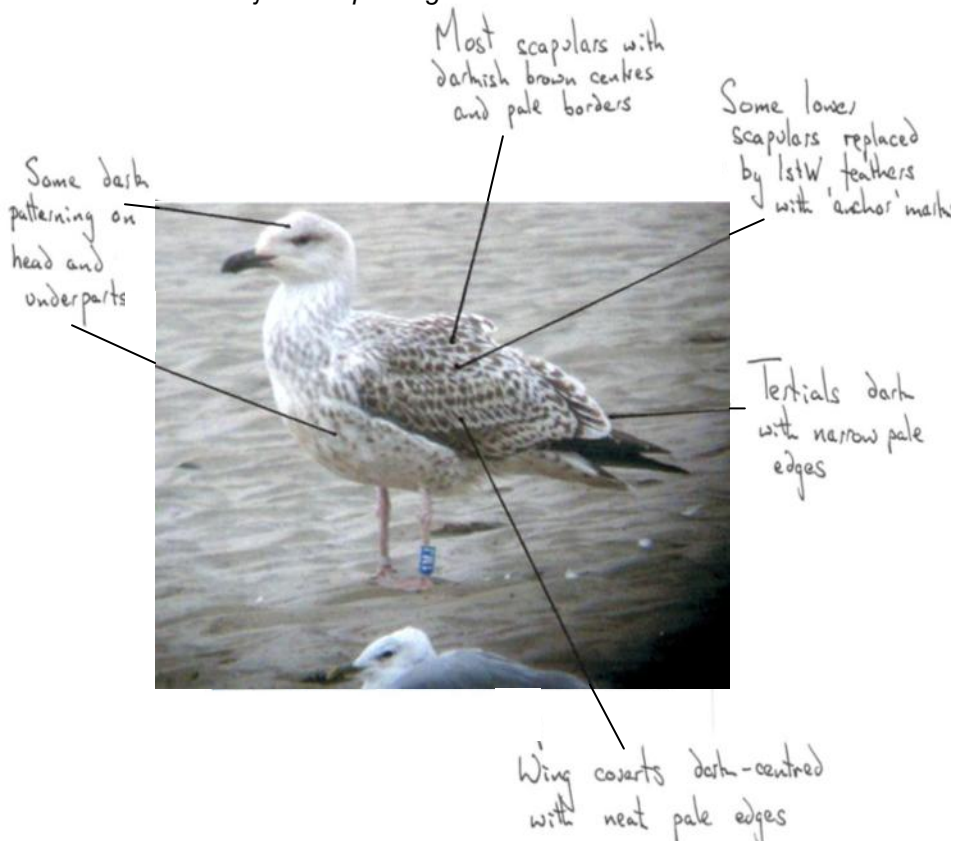
So, what features on this bird make it a Great Black-backed Gull? The main confusion species at this age are Herring Gull, Yellow-legged Gull and rather more obscurely Heuglin's Gull.

A colour-ringed Great Black-backed Gull at Anthorn

- Size - this is a big bird, the nearby Common Gull in the picture gives some indication of this.
- Structure - massive bill with marked gonys angle
- large angular head and robust neck
- long stout legs
- full body and short tail
- Plumage - overall impression of chequered upperparts (compared particularly with Herring Gull)

But now a little more detail is required with some consideration given to age/plumage/moult. A number of features show the bird to be in juvenile plumage, although it is already starting to moult into its first winter plumage. It is likely to be in the process of this moult until October – December.

The features of juvenile plumage are exhibited in the record shot below



A colour-ringed Great Black-backed Gull at Anthorn

Comparison with similar species -

Herring Gull would show structural differences and look rather smaller, shorter legged and less robust. At this time of year it would appear darker on the under parts and more uniform (i.e. less chequered) above. It would also be likely to be more advanced in its moult into first winter plumage.

Yellow-legged Gull would have more similarity in structural terms although would look 'slighter'. It would have a less chunky and angular bill. It would also be more advanced in its moult and particularly would show more 'anchor-marked' scapulars.

By the New Year the bird should be in full first winter plumage.

This is characterised by a number of changes -

Head and under parts much whiter

Scapulars and mantle feathers with 'anchor' marks

Broader pale fringes to wing coverts - this gives an even more chequered look to the wing

Much broader and less even pale edges to tertials - the 'oak-leaf' appearance

Chris Hind

Guidance for Contributors

My aim is to produce an "inclusive" magazine that has something for everybody. All contributions, from a two-line anecdote (a "Champagne Moment") to a six-page semi-scientific article, will be considered. Priority is always given to items of Cumbrian relevance. All photos, artwork etc are most welcome.

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

Editor

Eycott Hill - a new nature reserve

Cumbria Wildlife Trust is in the process of developing a new nature reserve near Berrier, just inside Lake District National Park boundary.

At just under 220 hectares, Eycott Hill Nature Reserve is an upland mosaic of moorland, meadow, bog and beck which gives wonderful views over Blencathra and the Northern Fells.

About half of the nature reserve is a SSSI, designated for both its biological and geological importance. A series of volcanic ridges runs through the site, at the bottom of which lies a complex of valley mires, rich in specialist plants and invertebrates. On the upper slopes, years of overgrazing have taken their toll, but with sensitive management and a reduction in grazing pressure, we are confident that large areas of upland heath can be restored.



In order to facilitate the development of a management plan, we are keen to gain as detailed a picture of all of the site's flora and fauna and are seeking to engage any willing local expertise. It would be fantastic if Cumbria Bird Club were able to help us with monitoring the site's avifauna. Eycott Hill already supports a good range of breeding birds, including Curlew, Snipe, Stonechat and Wheatear and Short-eared owl, Hen Harrier and Dipper have been observed during winter. Detailed baseline information and well-structured ongoing monitoring will help us to tailor our management to benefit as many species as possible.

I very much hope that we can work together and develop as rich a nature reserve as possible.

Lee Schofield

(Lee has now moved to another post. The new contact is now Kevin Scott, 01228 829575 kevins@cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk)

Recent reports

The period covered is March to May 2013. Some of these records are unauthenticated and may require review by the Club Records Panel or British Birds Rarities Committee. Species order and nomenclature follow that used in *Birds and Wildlife in Cumbria*.

Wildfowl



Green-winged Teal, North Plain, Darren Robson

Whooper Swan numbers declined in March but still included 124 at Longcroft and 70 in the Longtown area. Others were clearly on passage with a total of 61 past Walney and up to 27 on the Kent Estuary in April.

Pink-footed Geese remained in good numbers with 12000 on the Inner Solway and 7000 in the

Longtown area in March. The **Todd's Canada Goose** was seen intermittently among the Barnacle Geese around Kirkbride and Whitrigg up to 10th April. At least 10000 **Barnacle Geese** lingered on Rockcliffe Marsh well into May. The Walney/Foulney area held 70 dark-bellied and 160 light-bellied **Brent Geese** along with the long-staying **Black Brant/hybrid** during March. Elsewhere, a dark-bellied **Brent Goose** frequented the Inner Solway in April.

A pair of **Garganey** resided at North Plain from 25th to 30th April and the same site hosted a drake **Green-winged Teal** from 5th to 10th May. **Scaup** included 26 at Bowness-on-Solway, five at Walney and four at Hodbarrow plus a drake at Longlands Lake on 15th April that was the first the observer had seen there in 30 years of watching the site. **Long-tailed Ducks** were limited to a drake at Bowness-on-Solway on 15th April and a late individual that lingered on Wedholme Flow from 9th to 16th May. **Velvet Scoter** records consisted of a female at Bowness-on-Solway on 17th April and four birds at the same site on 3rd May while **Common Scoters** included 335 at Walney and 70 at Bowness-on-Solway.

Divers to herons

Red-throated Diver totals at coastal locations included 12 at Walney in March, 30 at Bowness-on-Solway, 28 at Braystones and 14 at Walney in April and 10 at Walney in May. Silecroft continued to host a **Great Northern Diver** just offshore to 2nd March.



Bittern, Siddick Pond, Steve Dutton

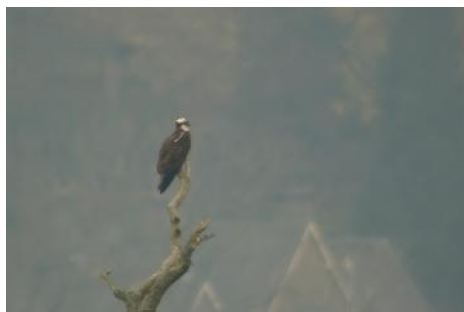
A **Red-necked Grebe** seen along the Furness coast between Aldingham and Roosebeck on 11th March was presumably the same individual recorded at Walney on 5th and 6th April. The long-staying **Slavonian Grebe** lingered at Hodbarrow to 15th April, by which time it had largely acquired summer plumage, while a winter-plumaged bird drifting on the tide off Arnside on 7th May was a rare visitor to the Kent Estuary.

Manx Shearwater totals included 483 off Walney, 120 past Workington and 50 at Far Arnside. A blue morph **Fulmar** passed Walney on 18th April. The first **Storm Petrel** of the year passed Bowness-on-Solway on 23rd May. **Gannets** included 50 at Walney in April and 231 there in May. **Shags** at Walney peaked at two in March, seven in April and four in May while, much more unusually, one was at Bowness-on-Solway on 16th April.

Two **Bitterns** remained at Siddick Pond during March. **Little Egrets** comprised site maxima of 12 on the Kent Estuary, seven in the Lyth Valley, six on Walney Island, three on the Duddon Estuary, two on the Inner Solway, two on the Irt Estuary and one on the Esk Estuary near Ravenglass. A **Great White Egret**, perhaps the regularly returning bird, was in the Kent Channel at Grange-over-Sands on 19th March. An early **Spoonbill** flew east at Walney on 21st March. A **White Stork** that flew north over Tebay motorway services on 24th May attracted the inevitable 'of unknown origin' tag.

Raptors to waders

A new pair of **Ospreys**, a Scottish-ringed female and an unringed male, took up residence at Bassenthwaite Lake though eggs were not laid until



Osprey, Bassenthwaite, Craig Shaw



Dotterel, An eastern fell, Roger Ridley

7th May: several additional birds were also seen. Elsewhere, northbound or wandering individuals were noted at Bootle, Ghyll Head near Windermere, Fisher Tarn, Killington Reservoir, Rockcliffe, Kirkby Lonsdale and Tindale Tarn. There were occasional sightings of **Marsh Harrier** around the Kent Estuary. A **Common Crane** flew over Wedholme

Flow on 13th May.

Little Ringed Plovers were observed at a number of known or potential breeding sites while one at Hodbarrow on 6th May was just the third site record. Up to 21 **Dotterel** graced an eastern fell in May. **Purple Sandpipers** peaked at 26 at Walney and 20 at Workington. **Ruff** were limited to singles at Anthorn, Wedholme Flow and the Lyth Valley. **Jack Snipe** included four at both Walney and Kents Bank, three at Soddy Gap, two on the Irt Estuary and a single at Hodbarrow. **Black-tailed Godwit** numbers increased substantially in April with counts including 120 on both the Kent Estuary and at Campfield Marsh while May totals included 140 on the Kent Estuary.

Whimbrel peaked at 61 at Walney and 50 on the Inner Solway. **Spotted Redshanks** were limited to singles at Borwick Rails in March and nearby Haverigg in April. Wintering **Greenshank** were, as usual, largely restricted to Walney where monthly maxima comprised four in both March and April, dwindling to a single in May. Elsewhere, one remained at Rampside in March while passage birds consisted of two at Old Sandsfield in May.

Wood Sandpipers appeared at North Plain on 28th April and nearby Campfield Marsh on 6th May.



Whimbrel, Inner Solway, Darren Robson

Skuas to auks

With a change in wind direction, Solway skua passage finally got underway on 15th April and by the end of May totals had reached 367

Pomarine, 67 **Arctic**, an exceptional 108 **Great** and 26 **Long-tailed**. In the same period, Walney logged one **Pomarine**, 22 **Arctic**, eight **Great** and two **Long-tailed**.

Elsewhere, four **Pomarine Skuas** passed Braystones while **Arctic Skuas** and the odd **Great Skua** were recorded at several coastal sites.



Pomarine Skuas, Bowness-on-Solway, Darren Robson



Great Skua, Bowness-on-Solway, Darren Robson

Kittiwakes included site maxima of 840 at Bowness-on-Solway and 160 at Walney. **Mediterranean Gull** sightings comprised two, an adult and a second-winter, at Hawker Marsh, single adults at Mawbray and Workington and a second-winter at Old Sandsfield in March.

Little Gull passage in April produced totals of 25 through the Inner Solway and 24 at Walney plus four at Hodbarrow and one at Bassenthwaite followed in May by seven past Bowness-on-Solway, three lingering at Drumburgh, two at Longtown and a single off Whitehaven. The adult **Yellow-legged Gull** was seen intermittently at Whitehaven into April.

Arctic Tern passage brought site maxima of 80 on the Inner Solway, 64 at Walney, 46 at Workington and 23 on the Kent Estuary plus inland records of 11 at Bassenthwaite, three at Ormsgill Reservoir, three over the River Kent in

Kendal and three at Windermere. More unusually, two **Sandwich Terns** turned up inland at Killington on 6th May. Both **Common** and **Little Terns** settled down to breed at Hodbarrow, the latter making a welcome return, though **Sandwich Terns** again failed to do so. Two **Black Terns** also dropped in at Hodbarrow on 9th May, the only ones of the spring.

Razorbills peaked at 100 at Walney in April while a maximum of 76 **Guillemots** were logged there in May. Away from St Bees, **Black Guillemots** were limited to up to three in the Whitehaven/Parton area and a single at Walney.

Advertisement



FOCALPOINT

Binocular & Telescope Sales - *Birdwatching at its BEST*
Marbury House Farm, Bentleys Farm Lane, Higher Whitley,
Northwich WA4 4QW

All the best equipment is on display and is available for testing at our Showroom situated in the Cheshire countryside.

We carry a full range of accessories to complement your hobby - Tripods, Cases, Straps etc - & we are fully accustomed to delivering the right equipment to both the new & experienced Birdwatcher alike.

New in 1999 was an outdoor clothing section which is constantly evolving to meet our customers' demands. We are at present stocking Walking Boots (Line 7) together with a number of complementary lines e.g. Trousers, Jackets, Fleece, Wind-block Fleece, Waterproof Jackets (3 in 1 Type), Activity Vests, Socks and much more.

We also operate a first-class postal service for our customers who are unable to call in person.

We constantly strive to bring our customers the best possible products & value.

For a free information pack please send an A4 S.A.E. (Please indicate your area of interest.)

BOOKS! We carry a wide range of titles - all the latest from all around the globe.

Birdwatching on the East Coast? - then call for details of our 6-birth Caravan @ Spurn.

Focalpoint is now under new ownership and things have changed. It's worth a look!!

Our New Quick Quote computer system ensures our best possible price at all times: give us a try.

Great service, deals, & viewing. Excellent advice & stock. Why go anywhere else ??

Our aim is your complete satisfaction, our goal is your recommendation of Focalpoint to others.

Official stockist for: Zeiss . Leica . Swarovski . Canon . Pentax . Kowa . Opticron . Bausch & Lomb . Optolyth . Bushnell . Swift . Manfrotto . Cullman . Velbon . Gitzo . Loadstone . Line 7 . Cresta . Skua . Nikon . Jenoptik . Silverthorn . Slik . Wynster

Directions: M56 jct 10, take A559 towards Northwich for 1 mile. At the Birch & Bottle (public house), turn right into Bentleys Farm Lane, and after ½ mile we are on the left through Marbury House Farm gates.

Showroom, sales and service: tel **01925 730 399**; fax **01925 730368**

Opening times. 9.30 am - 6.00 pm (Mon ~ Fri); 9.30 am - 5.30 (Sat)

E-mail: focalpoint@dia1.pipex.com; Website <http://fpoint.co.uk>



Owls to buntings

Short-eared Owls remained fairly widespread in March with four continuing to hunt the Mawbray area while at least one frequented the Inner Solway saltmarshes. A few lingered into April at coastal locations. More unusually, a **Long-eared Owl** roost near Sillioth held at least five birds.



Red-spotted Bluethroat, Walney, Walneybo.blogspot.co.uk

A **Bee Eater** briefly hawked over horse paddocks at Biggar on Walney Island on 1st May. A **Hoopoe** was photographed in a garden at Penton on 22nd April. **Hooded Crows** comprised long-staying individuals at Walney and Eskmeals plus singles at Moresbey and Nethertown.

A male **Subalpine Warbler**, Cumbria's third and the first for 20 years, was an elusive visitor to Rampside from 15th to 18th May. Singing **Wood Warblers** at Lilyhall Industrial Estate, Bowness-on-Solway, Rampside and Dallam were all unusual. **Waxwings** continued to be seen though often short-staying with peaks in March of 46 in Kendal, 43 in Penrith, 25 in Levens, 17 in Lindale, 16 in Grange-over-Sands, 13 in Bigrigg, seven in Scotby, six in Arnside, five in Carlisle and one in Wetheral. Birds continued to be seen to mid-April with peaks of 35 in Levens, 25 in Kendal, 10 in Stainton near Penrith, seven in Arnside, six in Penrith, two in Carlisle and a single at Halfpenny.

The persistent cold weather during March generally blocked migration with most species especially late arriving and a total of just six **Goldcrests** and three **Wheatears** logged at Walney. Notwithstanding 2120 **Meadow Pipits** on 7th and 65 **Wheatears** on 12th, passage remained slow at Walney until late April when day totals included: 56 **White Wagtails**, 75 **Wheatears**, 90 **Blackcaps**, and 110 **Willow Warblers**. A similar situation prevailed in May too until a fall on 19th saw the mass arrival of 30 **Spotted Flycatchers**, 40 **Wheatears**, 35 **Willow Warblers** and five **Whinchats**. Perhaps five different **Ring Ouzels** passed through Walney between 10th and 13th April.

A male **Red-spotted Bluethroat** was photographed at South Walney N.R. on 20th May.



Brambling, Cockermouth, Steve Dutton

Passage **Black Redstarts** were found at Walney, Kirksanton and Workington in April and Great Dun Fell in May. Two male **Whinchats** at Longlands Lake on 29th April were the first the observer had seen there in 30 years. **White Wagtail** passage brought a maximum 23 to Campfield Marsh. A **Water Pipit** was found at Cavendish Dock on 10th April.

A few **Brambling** lingered well into April. Dwindling **Twite** included flocks of 60 at Walney and 40 at Anthorn. A singing

male **Serin**, Cumbria's fifth, was a brief visitor to the observatory garden at South Walney on 19th April. **Common Crossbills** included 11 at Foulshaw Moss, 10 at Finglandriggg Wood and six at Cliburn Moss. The Sizergh Castle **Hawfinches** were generally elusive and peaked at just five meanwhile, up to eight birds frequented a Grange-over-Sands garden. **Snow Buntings** comprised 20 on Longlands Fell above Charleston Gill and five on the summit of Cross Fell.

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

NB *It is important that observers also submit records to the appropriate Regional Recorder at the end of the year. Please see inside cover.*

Ian Kinley

Migrant arrivals 2013

Overleaf are listed the earliest arrival dates for 2012, with locations, of the commoner summer migrants as reported at the time of writing.

In some cases (e.g. Common Sandpiper, Blackcap and Chiffchaff) it is difficult to distinguish genuine migrants from overwintering birds so a bit of informed guesswork has been employed. *Ian Kinley*



Chiffchaff, Siddick, Steve Dutton

Migrant arrivals 2013

Species	Location	Date
Common Sandpiper	Workington	11 th April
Sandwich Tern	Walney	21 st March
Common Tern	Bowness-on-Solway	16 th April
Arctic Tern	Bowness-on-Solway	14 th April
Little Tern	Walney	13 th April
Cuckoo	Ennerdale	20 th April
Swift	Appleby	14 th April
Sand Martin	Ambleside	30 th March
Swallow	Arnside	21 st March
House Martin	Kent Estuary	13 th April
Tree Pipit	Kendal	10 th April
Yellow Wagtail	Walney	15 th April
Redstart	Walney	12 th April
Whinchat	St. Bee's Head	5 th April
Wheatear	Sellafield	24 th March
Ring Ouzel	Carling Gill Tebay	5 th April
Grasshopper Warbler	Walney	19 th April
Sedge Warbler	Church Moss	20 th April
Reed Warbler	Church Moss	25 th April
Lesser Whitethroat	Bowness-on-Solway	16 rd April
Whitethroat	Church Moss	19 th April
Garden Warbler	Church Moss	25 th April
Blackcap	Bowness-on-Solway	16 th April
Wood Warbler	Bassenthwaite	21 st April
Chiffchaff	Greystoke Forest	15 th March
Willow Warbler	Dalston	4 th April
Spotted Flycatcher	Sedbergh	1 st May
Pied Flycatcher	Kendal	16 th April

Contents

Club news and announcements.....	31
Atlas/Avifauna progress <i>Clive Hartley</i>	34
Rookery survey – an update <i>Robin Sellers</i>	36
Why do Rooks have such a fondness for motorway service areas? <i>Robin Sellers</i>	37
Wintering Goosander survey 2013/14 <i>Malcolm Priestley</i>	38
Wintering Snipes on limestone pavement <i>John Peatfield</i>	39
Canada Geese.....	39
Waxwings in Cumbria 2012/13 <i>Bob Jones</i>	40
A colour-ringed Great Black-backed gull at Anthorn <i>Chris Hind</i> .	44
Eycott Hill - a new nature reserve <i>Lee Schofield</i>	47
Recent reports <i>Ian Kinley</i>	48
Migrant arrivals 2013 <i>Ian Kinley</i>	54

Information for contributors

The deadline for copy for the next issue is September 1st 2013

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 Youth 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.

© Cumbria Bird Club, June 2013

'Cumbria Bird Club' is a Registered Charity, number 1001459

Cumbria Bird Club Website

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

Contributions for the website to: daveandkathypiercy@tiscali.co.uk