

BIRD NEWS
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Club news and announcements

Subscriptions

The Cumbria Bird Club 2012/2013 subscription was due on 1st October. You will receive a subscription form with this mailing if your payment is outstanding. To prevent unnecessary costs, such as postage for reminder letters, please can you ensure that this is paid as soon as possible.

Outings and talks organisers

Would anyone interested on taking on the above role please contact the secretary. Volunteers please.

Birds and Wildlife in Cumbria

"Birds and Wildlife in Cumbria 2011" is at the printers and will be sent out over the next few weeks. Please be patient as it will take me a week or two to get them all packed up and sent out.

Birds and Wildlife in Cumbria - Editor

Clive Hartley has decided to step down as editor of the report in order to concentrate on the new county avifauna/atlas project. The new editor will be Dave Shackleton. Council would like to thank Clive for the huge amount of commitment he has shown as editor for the last eleven years. In that time he has made great improvements to the layout, format and content. The report is now an A5 format 190 page book compared to the 80 page A4 booklet of a decade ago.

Birds and Wildlife in Cumbria - Species writers

We will need new species authors for the next edition of the report. Please contact Dave Shackleton for further details. You do not need to be an expert.

Future Surveys

We are currently in the midst of a Cormorant roost survey - a reminder to surveyors that the next count is on the weekend of February 2nd-3rd 2013.

The April 2013 Rookery survey is detailed later in this newsletter.

Council are considering a reprise of the 1991 winter Goosander survey (the first ever CBC survey). A repeat survey of this species is particularly timely as it appears to be coming under great pressure from fishing interests.

Other surveys under consideration are a reprise of the Sand Martin survey and a winter Twite survey.

We are also keen to support BTO surveys such as the current winter thrush survey. They are also planning a breeding Woodcock survey this spring which we would hope to use to improve our data on Cumbria's residents.

Notes from the AGM

The AGM was well attended and followed by an excellent talk on Coots by Steve Christmas (see his follow up article in this newsletter) . Vice-chair Clive Hartley reported on another active year for the club and treasurer David Cooke gave an overview on the year's accounts.

Steve Westerberg was elected as County Recorder and Peter Howard, Keith Hamilton, Les Cornwell and Malcolm Priestley were elected to Council. A full copy of the minutes and accounts are available from the secretary.

Talk's Programme

Wednesday 9th January : with Carlisle NHS at Tullie House 7.15pm

'From Oban to Spitzbergen an Arctic journey' - Angus Hogg

Friday 1st February: Penrith UR Church 7.30pm

'Birds in the marine environment' - *Paul Walton*

Of all British wildlife, seabirds are perhaps the most important in terms of global significance – and planetary responsibility.

New and alarming threats to this extraordinary heritage are emerging. It is increasingly clear that climate change is driving massive regime-shifts in marine ecological systems.

The accelerating growth in marine renewable energy developments, themselves designed to combat climate change, brings its own uncertainties and problems. Poor development and implementation of marine environmental legislation stagnates progress, with severe shortcomings in marine protected areas networks.

This talk will explore some of the issues and examine how our seabirds might cope.



Guillemot, Isle of May, Andy Hay © RSPB

Mon 11th Feb: with Kendal NHS Friend's House Stramongate 7.30pm

'Dippers' - Peter Mawby - an updated reprise of one of the best single species talks we have had.

Cumbria Bird Club

Winter Bird Race 2013

Sunday 6th January 2013

Object of the race.

To gain the greatest number of species of wild birds within the borders of Cumbria county between early morning and 5pm.

Rules

- 1.** Three out of four **or** two out of three **or** both if only two in a team must hear or see each species claimed. If you want to do the race solo that's ok too.
- 2.** Start time can be whenever your team is fully assembled on the day - finish time is 5pm at the:

Ratty Arms Ravenglass

Pie, Chips & Peas (Veggie option available)

Will be available at the finish. Please indicate requirements for your teams on the entry form (cost a mere £6 per person).

- 3.** For late arrivals at the finish a penalty of one species per 5 minutes will be deducted.
- 4.** Only true wild birds count (no budgies or dodgy wildfowl).

This race is now a well established annual Bird Club event. We still need more teams; you don't need to be front runner to compete. The race is just for fun after all, and it gets you to areas you would normally not visit.

If you fancy having a go just give Colin Gay a ring on 01229 773820 or email colinathodbarrow@btinternet.com

. I will send your team a species list. Please can I have numbers for the food asap.

COME ON ALL YOU MEMBERS HAVE A GO you will enjoy it!!

The Workington Mediterranean Gull - an update

The long-staying Mediterranean Gull at Workington has provided an interesting and rare chance to observe the plumage sequence in this species.

This has been possible because the bird has a deformed and non-functional leg which makes it easily recognisable in all situations.

I described its plumage transition in the Spring

2012 Newsletter and drew particular attention to the atypical wing pattern in its 3rd and 4th winters.

The question immediately arose as to whether these atypical and rather subtle features – namely dark marks on P8 and P9 were age related. When my article was posted on Birding Frontiers it attracted the attention of continental observers who commented that these dark marks can occur in birds of varying ages and are not a useful age indicator. But what of our local bird ?



'Stumpy', Workington, Craig Shaw

I visited Workington on 21st November 2012 by which time the bird should have fully grown primaries. I went armed with plenty of white bread but the gull was already present around the car park and gave good close views. The wing pattern showed a dark line on P10 only – the typical adult wing. In this individual at least, the gradually diminishing dark marks on the outer primaries do seem to have been age related.

Chris Hind

Did you know?

The world's last known pair of Great Auks were caught and killed on the island of Eldey off the south-west coast of Iceland in June 1844. The last sighting in Britain had been just a few year's previously on St. Kilda. Bones of the Great Auk turn up from time to time in prehistoric middens, but not, as yet, from Cumbria.

DYK

Cumbria Bird Club Rookery Survey - April 2013

As detailed in the Spring 2012 newsletter Council has decided to carry out a complete survey of the county's rookeries. This is primarily to determine what has happened to the county's Rooks since the 1996 survey, but also to ensure that the proposed new county avifauna contains information about the Rook that is as up to date as possible.

The intention is to carry out a survey of all the county's rookeries between Saturday 6th April 2013 and Sunday 21st April 2013. Surveyors will be asked to volunteer to take on a designated area (usually a 10 km square, or one or more 5 km squares). You will be armed with a list of rookeries found during the 1996 survey and will be requested to check all places likely to hold rookeries, as well as many other places as possible. As a rough guide it can take up to two full days of fieldwork to survey a 10 km square properly.

Locating rookeries and counting nests is fairly straightforward and we hope that anyone who has never been involved in survey work will give it a go (but 'old hands' are also very welcome!). There are a lot of rookeries in Cumbria, and the success of this project is very dependent on getting sufficient people out in the field. Please do not be backward in coming forward! If you would like to participate in this survey please contact one of the survey organisers:

North-west Cumbria:

(NX93, NY03, NY04, NY05, NY13, NY14, NY15, NY16, NY23, NY24, NY25, NY26)
Norman Holton, RSPB (tel: 01697 351330; e-mail Norman.Holton@rspb.org.uk)

North Central Cumbria:

(NY33, NY34, NY35, NY36, NY37, NY43, NY44, NY45, NY46, NY47, NY48)
Mike Carrier, Lismore Cottage, 1 Front Street, Armathwaite, Carlisle CA4 9PB (tel: 016974 72218; e-mail: m.carrier131@btinternet.com)

North-east Cumbria:

(NY53, NY54, NY55, NY56, NY57, NY58, NY61, NY62, NY63, NY64, NY65, NY66, NY67, NY68, NY71, NY72, NY73, NY74, NY75, NY83, NY84)
Stephen Westerberg, (tel: 016977 42652; e-mail: swesterberg@btinternet.com)

South-west Cumbria:

(NX90, NX91, NX92, NX93, NY00, NY01, NY02, NY03, NY10, NY11, SD08, SD09, SD16, SD17, SD18, SD19, SD26, SD27, SD28, SD29, SD37)
Robin Sellers, Crag House, Ellerslie Park, Gosforth, Cumbria CA20 1BL (tel: 019467-25453; mobile: 07704-674259;
e-mail: sellers@craghouse7.freemove.co.uk)

South-east Cumbria:

(SD38, SD39, SD47, SD48, SD49, SD57, SD58, SD59, SD67, SD68, SD69, SD78, SD79, SD89, NY60, NY70, NY80)
Malcolm Priestley, (e-mail: malcolm.priestley@hotmail.com)

Central Cumbria:

NY12, NY20, NY21, NY22, NY23, NY30, NY31, NY32, NY40, NY41, NY42, NY50, NY51, NY52
Dave Piercy (tel: 017687 77246; e-mail: daveandkathypiercy@tiscali.co.uk)

Bird behaviour notes

Whilst in Pyrenees recently watching migration we came across House Martins and a few Common Swifts at a small lake at about 3000 ft. the day after there had been a heavy passage of both Swifts (including a couple of Alpine) and Hirundines.

To start with House Martins were engaged in the usual apparently random flying around at various heights with some birds dipping to drink. However suddenly a group of about 100 House Martins appeared and formed themselves into something like the “screaming groups “normally associated with Common Swift in UK and started to fly back and forth over the lake, dropping to drink as they passed; they made probably 5 passes over the lake drinking as a group on each occasion, they then lifted up and flew away to south. All the time they moved in unison looking like a flock of waders with white rumps – Green Sandpipers – came to mind.

We couldn't recall having seen House Martins behave in unison like this before; is it something we have missed or may be this is normal behaviour of birds on active migration ?

Bob Jones

Corvid Carrying Item in Foot

Whilst watching geese on Rockliffe Marsh from Edward 1st Monument Car Park, Joe Robinson, who was with me, pointed out what looked like a raptor carrying prey in its talons flying slowly towards us across the Marsh.

As it got nearer it started to look wrong for a raptor and we realised it was in fact a Carrion Crow and wondered if it had its foot entangled in something.

The bird eventually landed near the Monument on Burgh Marsh, let go of whatever it was it was carrying (too far away to identify), picked it up in its bill in the normal way and flew away to the east; so it was not a question of the bird having become entangled.

Neither of us could remember ever seeing a corvid using its feet to transport items before – has anyone else come across this behaviour ?

Bob Jones

Is the internet all good news for birds and for bringing birders together?

When I started birding in Cheshire in 1960's the only way of finding out about had been about, apart from birds you had seen yourself, was in the Liverpool Echo on a Monday in the column by Eric Hardy – not great - as by the time one had time off work the next weekend the birds had almost invariably moved on!

Things moved on via telephone info lines to Rare Bird alert, Birdguides etc and it is easy to keep informed on what's going on nationally - thanks to the internet.

I was recently approached by a birder from the Gulf of Bothnia in Sweden about skua passage in Solway to which he had seen reference on the internet and has now joined the SolwaySkua site – our aim will be to compare notes about the skua passage on both our local “patches” there being a regular passage up the Gulf, which he is studying.

I have also been in contact with a Canadian conservation worker about migrants. Both examples of cooperation brought about by the internet.



*Bonxie, Bowness-on-Solway,
Darren Robson*

Whilst all this has brought birders together I have just started to wonder if the tide has may have started to turn the other way. Why – because it is so much easier for small groups or individuals to do their own thing – their own blogs or small groups of birders on social media sites – where people operate in their own small pools and news doesn't necessarily get out to the wider birding fraternity.

One also has, unfortunately, also to consider how easy it is for an outspoken comment on an internet site to turn into a disruptive spat.

I know there are several blogs/small groups in various parts of Cumbria and I hope this trend doesn't become a retrograde step as far as getting records to Cumbria Bird Club is concerned, in particular, and, less importantly, the dissemination of information on “what's about” locally.

Another unforeseen consequence of dissemination of information more widely is that it can, and is, in certain circles in the County, being used as ammunition by those who do NOT have the interests of birds at heart and who would seek to reduce numbers of certain species.

Bob Jones

Colour ringed Coot in Cumbria



Fig 1: Colour ringed Coot C/Y, P/M, Thacka Beck, 23/02/2012, Gordon Williams

Relatively few Coot have been ringed in the UK and their migration patterns are not well known. Since 2008, over 1,600 coot have been colour ringed in the North-west, mainly in Merseyside, Lancashire, Cheshire and Greater Manchester, resulting in sightings from as far afield as Cornwall, Wiltshire, Durham and the Scottish Borders. Additionally, 31 have been ringed at Bowness-on-Windermere, mostly in September, and a further 10 just across the county border at Pine Lake, Carnforth, Lancs.

During the early part of the study, combinations of three colour rings, in addition to the standard BTO ring, were used. Since 2011, white darvic rings with 3 black letters have been used.

Of the Coot ringed at Bowness, two ringed in September 2010 were sighted further south, one wintering at Birkacre Lodge, Chorley in the two subsequent winters, and the other being sighted the following April at Marshside, Southport (Table 1). A third bird ringed at Bowness in December 2008 was re-sighted there the following June. Of those ringed at Pine Lake in December 2010, one was sighted the following summer at Amberswood Lake, Wigan and the other at Litherland, Liverpool the following autumn.

*Colour ring codes (CR) used in Table 1:

B	Dark Blue	C	Dark Pink (Carmine)	G	Green
M	Metal (BTO ring)	N	Black (Niger)	O	Orange
P	Pale Blue	V	Violet (Mauve)	R	Red
W	White	Y	Yellow		

Colour Ringed Coot in Cumbria

Table 1: Coot sightings involving birds ringed in Cumbria (first two records) and those ringed elsewhere and resighted in Cumbria.

Ring no.	CR*	Age	Date	Location	Distance
GR25214	V/W V/M	Ad	12/09/2010 05/01/2011	Bowness Birkacre, Chorley	82km SSE
GR25216	R/R Y/M	1 st Yr	12/09/2010 27/04/2010	Bowness Marshside, Southport	77km S
GC87808	Y/R V/M	Ad	23/01/2009 16/01/2010 02/01/2012	Marine Lake, Southport Marine Lake, Southport Ormsgill Reservoir	54km NNW
GR24351	Y/P O/M	1 st Yr	18/09/2010 10/12/2011	Stanley Park, Blackpool Ormsgill Reservoir	37km NNW
GR24353	Y/B O/M	1 st Yr	18/09/2010 21/10/2011	Stanley Park, Blackpool Ormsgill Reservoir	37km NNW
GR24359	Y/W O/M	Ad	23/09/2010 10/12/2011	Stanley Park, Blackpool Ormsgill Reservoir	37km NNW
GR24395	P/Y Y/M	Ad	29/11/2010 02/01/2012	Stanley Park, Blackpool Ormsgill Reservoir	37km NNW
GR25011	P/G O/M	1 st Yr	30/11/2010 21/10/2011	Marine Lake, Southport Ormsgill Reservoir	54km NNW
GR25106	Y/O C/M	Ad	02/12/2010 02/01/2012	Marine Lake, Southport Ormsgill Reservoir	54km NNW
GR25143	B/N C/M	Ad	03/12/2010 10/12/2011 10/02/2012	Marine Lake, Southport Ormsgill Reservoir Marine Lake, Southport	54km NNW
GR25252	V/V C/M	Ad	03/12/2010 22/08/2011	Marine Lake, Southport Ormsgill Reservoir	54km NNW
GR25293	W/G O/M	1 st Yr	03/12/2010 16/10/2011	Marine Lake, Southport Ormsgill Reservoir	54km NNW
GR25335	V/B Y/M	1 st Yr	11/12/2010 22/08/2011 17/01/2012	Marine Lake, Southport Ormsgill Reservoir Rishton Reservoir, Blackburn	54km NNW 41km ENE
GR25338	V/V Y/M	Ad	11/12/2010 26/03/2011 02/01/2012	Marine Lake, Southport Marshside, Southport Ormsgill Reservoir	3km N 54km NNW
GR25408	C/Y P/M	Ad	28/08/2011 23/02/2012	Redesmere, Cheshire Thacka Beck, Penrith	164km NNW

Colour Ringed Coot in Cumbria

However, perhaps more interesting have been the sightings in Cumbria of birds ringed elsewhere in the study area. An excellent set of sightings by Ken Hindmarch and others at Ormsgill Reservoir in autumn and winter 2011/12 originated at Stanley Park, Blackpool (4) and Southport (8), two of the latter being re-sighted later in the same winter back at Southport and at Rishton Reservoir, Blackburn, respectively (Table 1).

However, the most unexpected record involving Cumbria concerns a bird ringed at Redesmere, Cheshire, at the extreme south of the study area, in August 2011 and re-sighted in February 2012 at Thacka Beck Reserve, Penrith (Table 1; Fig. 1). This bird had moved 164km north in winter!

These are very interesting results to come out of the study at this early stage. We would encourage observers to continue to look out for ringed Coot in Cumbria and all further sightings would be gratefully received.

Kane Brides and Steve Christmas

kanebrides@gmail.com se.christmas@ntlworld.com



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A short guide to 'The British List'

'The British List' is one of those mysterious documents mentioned in hushed tones by serious ornithologists but not something that ordinary birders need to concern themselves with – or so I was led to believe when I first became interested in birds. There might have been a time when there was a glimmer of truth to this, in that access to the list was not always straightforward for amateur ornithologists, but in the age of the internet this no longer applies - it is a resource available to anyone.



Eurasian Nuthatch, Stanwix, 12 Oct 2012, Roger Ridley

So what is 'The British List' and how does one get hold of a copy? Quite simply 'The British List' is a check-list of the birds known to have occurred in a wild state in Britain since 1800. I cannot pretend that it is an exciting read, but it has its uses. If you want to know whether a particular species has ever been seen in Britain this is the place to look, if you want to know the correct scientific name for a species or how to spell its scientific name then this is an ideal place to look, if you want to know what order species should be listed in then here's where to find the current position, and if you want to know the correct English name (is it Great Black-backed Gull or Greater Black-backed Gull?) this is where to find the definitive answer.

The British List is maintained by the British Ornithologists' Union (BOU), Britain's premier ornithological society, through their 'Records Committee' (BOURC). They, in turn, are advised on matters to do with the sequence in which the species are listed and on what should be considered species and what subspecies by a Taxonomic Subcommittee. As an example of the sort of thing they concern themselves with might be mentioned the question of the relationship between the Carrion Crow and the Hooded Crow. The Victorians thought of them as separate species, for much of the twentieth century they were considered to be simply two races or subspecies of the same species, but are now definitively identified as two distinct if closely related species subspecies.

Both committees publish regular (more or less annual) reports; that of the

A short guide to 'The British List'

Records Committee contains formal notification of changes to the list with some explanation and justification as to why the changes have been made – if you want to know why Carrion Crows and Hooded Crows are now seen as separate species this is where to find out.



Eurasian Siskin, Killington 23 Mar 2008, Fred Gould

The British List has undergone some radical changes in recent years, and this has undoubtedly caused a good deal of uncertainty, even confusion at times. Two main drivers have been behind these changes. Firstly some twenty years ago a project was begun to agree a set of 'International English names' for birds (not just those found in Britain, but throughout the world). This has now been achieved, but the results have not been universally acclaimed. Many of the new names proposed are singularly unimaginative – Northern Fulmar rather than Fulmar, Common Pochard rather than Pochard, European Shag rather than Shag, Eurasian Siskin rather than Siskin and so on. The resulting confusion about names has not been helped by the fact that some provisional names such as Little Plover for Little Ringed Plover did not catch on and have subsequently been abandoned.

The sequence in which species are listed in the British List is intended to reflect their evolutionary relationships – the older the family and the older the species in that family, then the earlier in the sequence they appear. Formerly such matters were determined on the basis of species' appearance, morphology, anatomy *etc*, but with the development of techniques based on DNA analysis there has been a revolution in our understanding of these evolutionary relationships. The sequence of species has changed dramatically, and our understanding of what constitutes a species rather than a subspecies is also now much better than it was. The unfortunate consequence of all these changes is that no one version of the list has persisted for very long. One hopes that the major changes are behind us, but it would be naïve to think that there will be no further changes in the future. It is particularly unfortunate that these two sets of changes should have happened more or less concurrently, but future generations may see it as a blessing in that it has got the whole thing out of the way reasonably quickly. It seems that our generation of birders is cursed with living in interesting times.

The British List is now available on-line. It lists the following information:

British vernacular name (the name commonly used by British birders)

International English name (if different from the British vernacular name)

Scientific name

Species category (the BOURC distinguishes between species present in a natural state since 1950, species present in a natural state between 1800 and 1949, and introduced species that have established self-sustaining populations).

Unfortunately there are a number of things which it does not give, but which are included in the latest printed version of the list (published in *Ibis* in 2006)

These include:

The full scientific name (with the name of the person who first named the species, thus the Herring Gull is properly *Larus argentatus* Pontoppidan)

The species status in Britain (breeding, winter visitor *etc*)

Subspecies occurring in Britain

For rarities date and place of first sighting and number of accepted records.

To see a copy of the British List go to the BOU's website www.bou.org.uk, click on 'British List' (top right of screen), then click on 'View the British List' (centre of screen five rows below heading). Note that at the time of writing (August 2012) the latest version of the British List was dated 15 December 2011. Googling 'The British List' takes you to the previous version dated 15 December 2010.

A downloadable copy of the 7th Edition of the British List as it appeared in *Ibis* is also available from the BOU's website – as above click on 'British List', then on 'The British List: a checklist of the birds of Britain (7th edition) (July 2006)' – 13 lines down from the heading. Subsequent changes are listed in the periodic reports of the BOU's Records Committee as published in *Ibis* and also available from this website – click on 'Reports & papers' the second entry in the menu at the left hand side of the screen. Finally a list of the birds of the world with their agreed International English names is available at www.worldbirdnames.org. Enjoy your birding!

Robin Sellers

Did you know?

As of 15 Dec 2011 the total number of species on the British List was 596.

DYK

Killington Reservoir: A wind farm proposal



Killington Reservoir 23 Mar 2008, Fred Gould

Killington Reservoir is the largest area of standing water in South-East Cumbria and together with nearby Lilymere has long been considered one of the most productive inland bird sites in Cumbria. The reservoir has long stretches of undeveloped shoreline and two largely undisturbed islands which attract a wide variety of breeding, wintering and passage birds. In addition, the immediate surrounding area has a diversity of habitats including rough grassland, heather moor, mature broadleaf woodland, conifer plantations, valley mires, small ponds and the towering cliffs of Roan Edge Quarry. Lilymere, New Park Mosses and Tarn, Firbank Fell and Killington Reservoir are designated as County Wildlife Sites.

Killington Reservoir is strategically located close to the Lune and Rawthey valleys connecting the Vale of Eden to the Kent Estuary and Morecambe Bay, an established flyway for migrating birds. Further east-west cross Pennine movements are noted following the Garsdale/Wensleydale gap. The number and regularity of passage birds observed at Killington Reservoir confirm its significance as a staging post on these migration routes.

The number and variety of birds seen at Killington Reservoir fluctuate annually and over longer periods of time. Water levels in the lake are variable and

at their best when a low shoreline exposes better feeding areas for wildfowl and waders. In recent years, an increase in the stocking of Rainbow Trout is thought to be the main cause of a parallel decline in wildfowl numbers matched by a substantial increase in the Cormorant population and passing Ospreys.



Pink-footed Geese, Killington 15 Nov 2008, Fred Gould

Nevertheless, over 180 species of bird have been recorded on and around the reservoir during the last 30 years of which more than 70 are regular breeders. This is a notable number for an under-watched inland site, 200 metres above sea level.

In September, Bank's Renewables lodged a planning application with South Lakeland District Council to build a wind farm on land adjacent to the north shore of Killington Reservoir. The proposal is to erect three turbines each 132 metres high (the height of Blackpool Tower's viewing platform). The most southerly turbine would be less than 300 metres from a small island hosting Cumbria's largest Black-headed Gull colony. A second turbine would be within a few hundred metres of Lilymere and associated wetlands and wood-



Common Scoter, Killington 12 July 2012, Fred Gould

lands with a third turbine just 750 metres from the neighbouring Lambrigg Wind Farm (5 turbines). Together with the Armistead Wind Farm, under construction a short distance to the south of Killington Reservoir, the three projects constitute a potential hazard to birds using and passing through the reservoir.

The risks posed to feeding, nesting and migrating birds through disturbance, dis-

Killington Reservoir: A wind farm proposal



Whooper Swans, Killington Reservoir 21 May 2011, Fred Gould

placement and collision are difficult to quantify. However, the location of the proposed Killington Wind Farm next to the two lakes in the area does cause concern for a number of vulnerable species. Notably:

Wildfowl: 21 species of duck have been recorded on the reservoir. Whooper Swans make brief stops on migration (a flock of 45 last year) and Canada Geese exceed 300 birds during the summer moult.

Raptors:

i) Sparrowhawk, Buzzard, Kestrel and Peregrine nest in close proximity to the site.

ii) Passage birds include Hen Harrier, Merlin and Osprey. The importance of the Eden-Lune flyway for Ospreys has become more evident with data from radio tracked birds (9 of 54 tagged Scottish birds have passed over or close to Killington) in addition to several annual ground sightings.

Waders: 26 species have occurred at Killington. 7 species are regular breeders and peak movements of birds returning to their Pennine breeding grounds (often nocturnal) can be impressive.

Black-headed Gulls: An average of 3000 pairs breed on the smaller reservoir island, representing 60-70% of the county population and 3% of the national total. Mediterranean Gulls have also built nests in the colony.

Killington Reservoir: A wind farm proposal

Gulls & Terns: Kittiwakes, Common, Arctic and Black Terns are seen regularly during cross-country migration.

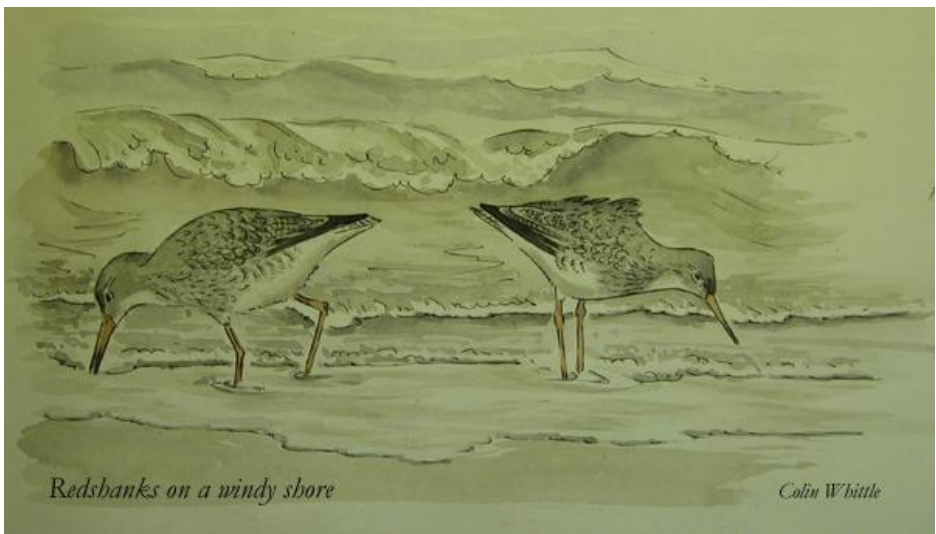
Owls: 2 pairs of Long-eared Owls breed locally and wintering Short-eared Owl feature in some years and occasionally breed.

Others: Cormorants, Grey Heron, Rooks and Jackdaws pass over the wind farm site in significant numbers to roost on the main island.

Comments on the Killington Wind Farm proposal (Planning Application No.SL/2012/0845) can be made by e-mail development.management@southlakeland.gov.uk or by post Mr Barry Jackson, Planning Officer, SLDC, South Lakeland House, Lowther Street, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 4DL.

Malcolm Priestley

From a sketchbook - Colin Whittle



All artwork for the newsletter most welcome. Please submit yours.

Recent reports

The period covered is September to November 2012. 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

September **Whooper Swans** consisted of two at Tindale Tarn and one at Walney on 21st followed by seven on the Kent Estuary and eight at Little Salkeld. Thereafter, counts included an exceptional 289 in the Eskmeals area in October and a spectacular 690 at Blackdyke near Silloth in November while a total of 124 passed through Walney in October. The first **Pink-footed Geese** appeared at Tindale Tarn, 31 flying west on 5th September. Unusually high numbers for the time of year were later to be found on the Inner Solway, feeding on unharvested barley with 5350 counted in October. Meanwhile, a total of 3084 flew through Walney in September followed by 8655 in October.



Richardson's Canada Goose, Whitrigg, Darren Robson

Two vagrant **Canada Geese**, both potential county firsts, were found associating with Barnacle Geese on the Inner Solway in October as a **Richardson's Canada Goose** at Whitrigg on 25th and 26th was, amazingly, followed by a **Todd's Canada Goose** at nearby Cardurnock on 27th.

The first **Barnacle Geese** of the autumn were 50 flying west at Tindale Tarn on 26th September followed by counts that included 9000 on Rockcliffe Marsh. Away from the Solway, 11 flew through Walney in September followed by another four in October. The first 17 pale-bellied **Brent Geese** returned to Walney on 14th September and numbers steadily increased to a record 170 in November. The flock occasionally wandered to nearby Rampside which hosted up to 178 **Brent Geese**, including at least 23 dark-bellied birds. Elsewhere, two dark-bellied birds were on Border Marsh on 14th October and a single dark-bellied was with Barnacle Geese at Cardurnock on 29th November. Last winter's **Red-breasted Goose** returned to the Inner Solway in November and accompanied Barnacle Geese at Whitrigg from 16th to 18th then Cardurnock from 28th into December.

At the opposite end of the county, a drake **Green-winged Teal** lingered at Hodbarrow from 1st to at least 28th November and was also a returning bird. **Scaup** included 14 at Walney, 12 off Foulney Island, four at Hodbarrow and two on Bassenthwaite Lake. A **Long-tailed Duck** at Walney on 26th September was followed by two at Carr Beds, Rockcliffe during October.



Red-throated Diver, Hodbarrow, Ian Kinley

Velvet Scoters were restricted to a single at Walney on 20th September. Two drake **Common Scoters** visited Wet Sleddale Reservoir on 7th September while seven also appeared inland on Windermere on 26th October and counts at coastal sites included 365 at Walney in September. Other wildfowl counts in the period included 5412 **Eider** at Foulney/Rampside, 4600 **Teal** at Wedholme Flow, 165 **Shoveler** at Campfield and 114 **Goosander** at Soddy Gap.

Divers to herons



Slavonian Grebe, Hodbarrow 2nd Oct 2012, Peter Heather

November, and the only **Great North-erns**, singles on 17th October and 3rd November. A **Slavonian Grebe** lingered at Hodbarrow throughout October and November and another was seen at Walney on 17th November.

A spell of strong westerlies in September produced a handful of **Leach's Petrels** between 14th and 17th consisting of three at Workington and singles at Walney and Port Carlisle.

A remarkable 645 **Red-throated Divers** were counted drifting out of Allonby Bay on the ebbing tide on 15th October while totals at other coastal locations included 12 at Walney in September and 47 there in November. Meanwhile, one on the lagoon at Hodbarrow on 28th November was unusual. Walney produced the only **Black-throated Diver**, one on 17th



Leach's Petrel, Port Carlisle, Darren Robson

A juvenile **Gannet** appeared well inland at Shap on 21st September. Two **Shags** on the Esk Estuary near Ravenglass on 19th September were unusual while Walney logged three in September, six in October and 10 in November.

Little Egret numbers comprised 16 on the Kent Estuary, 14 at Walney, six on the Leven Estuary and one on the Inner Solway in September, followed by 40 at Walney, 17 on the Kent Estuary, 17 on the Flookburgh Marshes, six on the Inner Solway, five at Hodbarrow, four on Millom Marsh, two in the Lyth Valley and one on the Esk Estuary near Ravenglass in October and 30 at Walney, 12 at Hodbarrow, 10 on the Kent Estuary, five at Rampside, three in the Lyth Valley and three on the Inner Solway in November. Meanwhile, last year's long-staying **Great White Egret** returned to Campfield Marsh on 10th October, lingering throughout and the individual reappeared at Kents Bank for its fourth successive winter on 17th and 18th November. A **Bittern** was seen occasionally at Siddick Pond during November.

Raptors to waders

Marsh Harriers were limited to a single at Walney in September and a late female reported at Campfield on 30th October while **Hen Harriers** settled into wintering haunts. **Ospreys** consisted of singles at Walney, Baycliff, Wetheral and Longtown in September.

A juvenile **Dotterel**, always scarce in autumn, was seen on Little Man near Skiddaw on 29th September.

Curlew Sandpipers were largely restricted to the Inner Solway, peaking at a rather meagre six at Port Carlisle. **Little Stints** were even scarcer, being limited to singles at Port Carlisle and Arnside. **Ruff** too appeared in just small numbers, the highest count being just nine at Anthorn though a few did linger into October and November with nine still near Anthorn and two on the Esk Estuary near Ravenglass. The only count of **Purple Sandpipers** came from Walney where there were 17 in November. Few **Jack Snipe** were reported with just singles at Longtown and Walney.



Merlin , Anthorn 13 Oct 2012, Roger Ridley

Black-tailed Godwit numbers reached double figures only on the Kent Estuary and at Port Carlisle, peaking at 54 and 20 respectively in September; **Spotted Redshanks** consisted of two at Port Carlisle and singles at Hodbar-



American Golden Plover, Drumburgh, Darren Robson

row and on the Esk Estuary near Ravenglass though only the last mentioned seemed set to winter. Walney, as usual, provided the highest **Green-shank** totals with 30 in September, 11 in October and 15 in November. A single on the Esk Estuary in November was the only one reported from any other site after autumn migration had ceased.

It was, however, a spectacular array of Nearctic waders that dominated the autumn wader sightings beginning with a brief **Pectoral Sandpiper** at Kents Bank on 17th September. This was followed by no less than four different **American Golden Plovers**, three adults and a juvenile, that frequented the Inner Solway between Drumburgh and Longcroft on various dates from 18th September to 16th November though all were generally elusive and erratic in their appearances.

In the south of the county, single, or possibly just one, **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** appeared at Selker on 19th September and Walney Island from 19th to 21st September. Back on the Solway, a **Long-billed Dowitcher** was found at Drumburgh Marsh on 27th September.



Golden Plover, Tarn Point 2 Oct 2012, Peter Heather

Skuas to auks

Single **Pomarine Skuas** were seen at Walney and Bowness-on-Solway in September while **Great Skuas** comprised singles off Walney, Silecroft and Workington in September. An exceptional 30 **Arctic Skuas** lingered off St Bees Head on 22nd September with low single figures recorded at several other coastal watchpoints. A juvenile **Long-tailed Skua** passed Walney on 23rd October. **Mediterranean Gull** sightings in September consisted of four, three adults (including 'Stumpy') and a second-winter, at Workington, at least

two adults between Rampside and Bardsea and a second-winter at Bowness Railings. October produced at least six, five adults and a second-winter, along the Furness coast; four, 'Stumpy', the regular adult plus another three adults, at Workington, three birds at Parton and single adults at Maryport, Kirkbride and Anthorn. These were followed in November by at least four, three adults and a second-winter, in the vicinity of Roosbeck/Newbiggin; three, two adults and a first-winter, at Mockerkinn Tarn, two adults at Esk-meals; two adults (including Stumpy) at Workington and an adult at Soddy Gap.

Two adult **Yellow-legged Gulls** were found on the Esk Estuary near Ravenglass on 28th September, one of which continued to be reported intermittently to 4th November.

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Kittiwakes were reported in unremarkable numbers. A **Sandwich Tern** on Windermere on 28th September was an unusual inland record. **Razorbills** peaked at 134 off Walney in September and 370 there in November while **Black Guillemots** were limited to singles off Nethertown and Walney. Much more unusually, a **Little Auk** passed Bowness-on-Solway on 31st October.

Owls to buntings

Short-eared Owl sightings included up to three at both Walney and Skinburness Marsh plus singles at Campfield, Beckfoot and Foulney. Diurnal passage of **Swallows** and **Meadow Pipits** was heavy at Walney on the few calm days in September with daily maxima of 1100 and 5550 respectively. One of the features of late autumn at Walney was the movement of above average numbers of **Woodpigeons** over the island, peaking at 490 on 11th Novem-



Waxwings, Carlisle, Darren Robson

ber. The first of the winter's **Waxwings** appeared on 29th October with up to 11 in Carlisle and three at Haweswater. Numbers increased dramatically in November as birds appeared almost countywide with peak counts including 135 in Penrith; 130 in Carlisle; 80 in Barrow-in-Furness; 65 in Wetheral; 50 in Dalston; 45 in Lazonby; 40 in Keswick; 40 on Arnside Knott; 30 in Workington; 22 near Raughton Head; 22 at Thurstonfield; 20 in Brampton; 20 in Ulverston; 20 on Walney; 20 in Asby; 18 in Great Broughton; 17 in Milnthorpe; 15 in Kendal; 15 in Holme; 15 in Milburn; 10 in Cleator Moor and single figures at many other sites.

A **Black Redstart** at Grange over Sands on 30th November was the only one in the period. A few **Ring Ouzels** arrived with the winter thrushes in October; three at Geltsdale on 23rd and singles at St Bees Head on 20th, Wet Sleddale on 24th, Buttermere on 26th and Walney on 27th.



Black Redstart, Killington 19 May 2008, Fred Gould

Cumbria's second **Cetti's Warbler** skulked at North Scale, Walney Island on 28th and 29th October. A **Yellow-browed Warbler** was found at Westfield Point near Barrow-in-Furness on 25th September. Meanwhile, tardy summer migrants in November included **Blackcap** at Walney on 13th, **Whinchat** at Rusland on 14th, **Garden Warbler** on 15th and **Chiffchaff** on 17th, both at Walney, **Swallow** at Rusland Pool on 28th and **House Martin** at Greenodd to 29th. Long-staying **Hooded Crows** lingered at Walney and Eskmeals.

Bramblings were widespread though not especially numerous, 50 at Talkin Tarn being the largest flock reported. **Twite** flocks included 250 on Border Marsh, 180 at Walney, 30 at Anthorn, 22 at Holme Island and 14 at Mawbray. Two **Crossbills** at Walney on 9th September were unusual. Two **Haw-**



finches were seen at Elter Water in October followed by up to three at the much more well-known site at Sizergh Castle in November.

Snow Buntings consisted of seven on Crookburn Pike, Geltsdale, three on Great Dun Fell and singles at Walney and on the Kent Estuary near Halforth.

Fieldfare, Killington 20 Nov 2008, Fred Gould

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 either the latest edition of *Birds and Wildlife in Cumbria* or the Cumbria Bird Club website www.cumbriabirdclub.org.uk for details of how to do so.

Ian Kinley

Submitting records

Please submit all your records for 2012 to your regional recorder (contact details on inside cover) as soon as possible. You can submit written records on cards (available from recorders) or electronically on a downloaded spreadsheet available at www.cumbriabirdclub.org.uk/reporting/guidelines which also has guidelines on submitting records (guidelines also available in the 2010 *Birds and Wildlife in Cumbria*).

Editor

Did you know?

Most small birds such as Robins and Great Tits have 19 main feathers in their wings – ten primaries, six secondaries and three tertials. In some small birds, such as finches and buntings, the outmost primary is vestigial and in effect such birds have only 18 main flight feathers.

The Dodo was really just an overweight, flightless pigeon

DYK

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.

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Information for contributors

The deadline for copy for the next issue is March 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,

YHA Derwentwater, Borrowdale, Keswick CA12 5UR; tel 017687 77246

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

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

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