



BIRD NEWS
Vol. 25 No. 4 Winter 2014

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Twinned with Cumberland Bird Observers Club

New South Wales, Australia

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please contact the Secretary who holds some.



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Club news and announcements - AGM notes

Notes from the AGM

Vice-chair Mike Carrier reported on another active year for the club and treasurer David Cooke gave an overview on the year's accounts. The main points from the AGM are outlined below. A full copy of the minutes and accounts are available from the secretary.

1 Chairman's Report.

County avifauna/atlas John Callion reported on progress with the county avifauna/atlas. This will be the first avifauna since 1886. The format is to be a concise avifauna with atlas maps for both breeding and winter seasons. The aim is to produce a single volume of around 720 pages. Progress so far is that the maps have been completed and some species accounts are underway.

The project will take around 3 years to complete. Six species mock ups have been produced to circulate and for use as PR and sponsorship. In total 365 species have been recorded in Cumbria and the six selected for mock ups cover all types (Curlew, Willow Warbler, Corn Bunting, Great Northern Diver, Pomarine Skua and Stone Curlew). Original photos of birds in Cumbria are to be used if they exist. There are still 75 unallocated species needing authors. More volunteers needed.

Wintering sawbill survey Malcolm Priestley reported on this survey as detailed in the last newsletter. A full analysis of the survey will appear in the next edition of "Birds and Wildlife in Cumbria".

Killington Malcolm Priestley also reported on the successful campaign against the proposed wind turbines at Killington. Killington is particularly important for Black-headed gulls with 2-3000 pairs nesting annually - over 2% of the national total. Also for migrating Osprey and locally nesting waders. There were over 1000 objectors recorded by SLDC.

Many thanks to all who made their voices heard. After an initial approval the scheme was referred to the Secretary of State due to a lack of proper debate. The scheme was then deemed to require a public enquiry. However before this could take place the contractors withdrew their planning request.

We need to be vigilant against any further attempts to revisit this plan.

2. Accounts Year Ended 31st August 2014

The accounts which were scrutinised by an independent examiner and found to comply with the requirements of the Charities act.

The deficit for the year was £3215. This compares to a surplus of £2091 to August 2013.

Main reasons for deficit:

- a) No gift aid claims submitted for 2014. In 2013 claims for three years were made. Two claims are to be made soon.
- b) Increasing cost of annual report of £405. Now £9 per copy.
Extra £200 in postage to send out.
- c) Speakers fees are up by £220.
- d) Atlas preproduction cost of £3000 paid to BTO.

There has been a corresponding fall in monetary assets, now £26,115 of which £20,850 is ring-fenced for the costs to be incurred over the coming months for the production of the new Avifauna/atlas.

3. Election of officers & Council members

Mike Carrier was elected Acting Chairman for one year.

Council would like to record their thanks to Dave Shackleton as outgoing Chairman. He has led the club through difficult times with expertise especially with respect to the mammoth task of going forwards with the avifauna.

Dave Shackleton and Nick Franklin were elected to council.

Council would like to record their great thanks to Peter Ullrich who has been ever present on council over the last 15 years as chairman, vice-chairman and ordinary member. Also many thanks to Rob Pickett who is standing down as an ordinary member and has made a great contribution in particular towards the avifauna.

Regional recorder for Allerdale and Copeland

Nick Franklin has taken over this post. His contact details can be found on the inside cover.

Council would like to thank Derek McAlone for his many years of outstanding service in this demanding role.

Subscriptions

The Cumbria Bird Club 2014/2015 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.

Birds and Wildlife in Cumbria

This is likely to be published in March 2015 when it will be posted out to members.

WeBS counter needed for the Inner Solway.

There is a vacancy for a keen person to cover the area from Glasson Point to Dykesfield (basically Burgh Marsh).

One count per month on a Sunday – takes approx 2 hours over the high tide period.

Telescope and ability to identify and count large numbers of waders and wildfowl essential.

Please contact Norman Holton on 016973 51330 (work hours) or e-mail norman.holton@rspb.org.uk

Colour ringed Greylag and Canada geese sightings

As part of a long-term study to monitor feral geese, several hundred Canada and a smaller number of Greylag geese have been colour-ringed around Windermere. If anyone sees any colour-ringed Canadas or Greylags away from the public-feeding sites at Bowness-on-Windermere, could they please report them by email to roy.armstrong@cumbria.ac.uk or by post to Roy Armstrong, Habberley Cottage, Port Carlisle, Cumbria, CA7 5BU

British Birds for sale

We have 1984 - 1991 (Vol 77-84) in binders

1992 - 1999 unbound plus a few stray editions - (Dec 1982, Nov & Dec 1983 Plus index to 1983)

Will not refuse any sensible offer for them.

Contact : Steve and Sandra Kruger s.kruger258@btinternet.com

Cumbria Bird Club winter bird race 2014

Sunday 11th 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 Hope and Anchor at Port Carlisle. Pie, Chips & Peas (Veggie option available) will be available at the finish. Please let the organiser know the requirements for your team (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 Phil Evans a ring on tel 07837 769359 or email philevans64rbp@gmail.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!!



Dodgy wildfowl, Derwent Water, Dave Piercy

Indoor meetings programme winter 2014/2015

Wednesday 7th January 2015: with Carlisle NHS, Tullie House 7.15pm

'Through the Lens' - Keith Kirk

A look at wildlife through an ever improving photographic technology.

Friday 6th Feb 2015: Penrith UR Church 7.30pm

'Northumbrian County Atlas 2007 - 2011' - Tim Dean

A fascinating preview of the results of Northumbrian Atlas fieldwork. Comparisons with previous Atlases and breeding and wintering abundance will no doubt illuminate both marked contrasts as well as echoes of the Cumbrian experience.



Monday 9th March 2015: with Kendal NHS Friend's Meeting House Stramongate 7.30pm

'Our disappearing Swifts' - Tanya and Edmund Hoare

The talk will include video clips of many aspects of behaviour of Common Swifts within nest spaces in the eaves of their cottage. Also to be presented will be the latest research on migration obtained from Swifts harnessed with tiny geolocators. Reasons for their decline, and national and international efforts to halt this will be discussed.

Don't forget that all our talks are free to non-members so please help to boost attendance by spreading the word.

Submitting records

Please submit all your records for 2014 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 2012 Birds and Wildlife in Cumbria).

Editor

Cumbria rookery survey 2013 - results

Analysis of the results of the 2013 survey of rookeries in Cumbria has been much delayed, but at last this task is complete. The headline news is that the survey found a total of 27,213 apparently occupied nests (aon) in 956 rookeries (a rookery being defined as any nest or group of nests separated by more than 500 m from the next nearest nest or group of nests). Individual rookeries varied enormously in size. The majority were quite small, with a little over half holding twenty or fewer nests. At the other end of the scale there were just seven rookeries with more than 150 aon, the largest being at Acorn Bank, near Temple Sowerby in the Eden Valley, with 327 aon.



Rook, Roger Ridley

The most striking aspect of the 2013 Survey, however, is the marked decline in numbers compared with the previous survey in 1996. The latter found a total of 44,775 aon in 1,010 rookeries, or, in other words, there has been a reduction of 39% in the county's Rook population in the seventeen years between the two surveys. The declines (expressed as a percentage of the 1996 figures) were most marked in those areas where the Rook is most numerous – basically the Eden and Caldew Valleys and the south Solway Plain – rather less marked elsewhere and in most peripheral areas numbers actually increased. Comparison of the two surveys also reveals that there has been a remarkable turnover in rookeries. No less than 426 (42%) of those present in 1996 had disappeared by 2013, whilst 345 new ones had, meanwhile, been established.

The reasons for the marked decline between the two surveys are not known with certainty but the most important factor is likely to be 'agricultural intensification'. Persecution by man (i.e. shooting) as well as felling of trees continues to be a feature of the lives of Cumbria's Rooks and may also be implicated in the declines. A more detailed appraisal of the results and comparison with the 1996 Survey will appear in *Birds and Wildlife in Cumbria 2013*.

*Robin Sellers
(on behalf of the organisers of the 2013 Cumbria Rookery Survey)*

Little Egrets in Cumbria – request for information about night-time roosts

The past ten years or so have seen a dramatic rise in the numbers of Little Egrets in Cumbria. Most, but by no means all, sightings have come from coastal saltmarsh, but even so trying to estimate how many there are in the county is far from straightforward.

Little Egrets are one of those species, like Cormorants, that gather together at dusk to form communal roosts, and in principle this provides a simpler and more accurate way of assessing numbers.



Little Egret, Near Solway Viaduct, Roger Ridley

There is, however, one small snag, and that is that one needs to know where all the roosts are if such an approach is to work. I am aware of two Little Egret roosts in Cumbria, one in the Barrow area, and a second associated with the Duddon Estuary. I am fairly sure there is another on the Kent Estuary, where I have seen birds flying upstream at dusk, and there is one fourth at Leighton Moss, just outside Cumbria, but no doubt including some birds that fly into Cumbria by day to feed.

Little Egrets have started to appear in the north of the county, so there will almost certainly be one or two further roosts here. If anyone reading this can supply further details of roosts or records of small parties of egrets flying purposively in the late afternoon (almost certainly birds heading to their roosts), I'd be very grateful for the details. It has to be said that the sight of large white birds standing in a tree (all the roosts I am aware of are in trees next to water) is slightly comic and one might have thought that such roosts would be very obvious, but in my experience they are surprisingly difficult to locate. Partly this is because the birds tend to arrive very late, well after sunset, so are easy to overlook.

If we can locate all the roosts in the county then it may be feasible to undertake a proper census. I have visited the two roosts I am aware of in the south-west of the county in recent weeks and together they held 97 birds; the question is how many more are there to discover?

Robin Sellers

Tel: 019467 25453; e-mail: sellers@craghouse7.freemove.co.uk

Red-eyed Vireo on Walney Island



Red-eyed Vireo, Walney, Lou Cross

The 4th November 2014 had dawned bright and sunny with a light easterly breeze. I had begun the day at Snab Point, Walney Island checking the surrounding bushes for newly grounded overnight migrants and was rewarded with close views of a Yellow-browed Warbler. The autumn of 2014 proved to be the best ever year for this species on the island and this was to be the last of eight individuals that were recorded. Nonetheless, I spent 10 minutes watching this diminutive Siberian sprite before moving on towards the observatory unaware that this excellent sighting was to be quickly eclipsed by events that were to take place over the next hour.

A check of the remaining roadside bushes en route added little of note before I arrived at the observatory garden; here a large greenish coloured warbler with a prominent supercilium was immediately glimpsed just before it disappeared into a privet bush. Fortunately over the next 30 minutes it put in several more appearances to reveal a slate grey crown, red eye, greenish upperparts and white underparts to go with the white supercilium and allow a positive identification of Red-eyed Vireo to be made.

Red-eyed Vireo on Walney Island

I alerted Kevin Johns, who was on site before me to begin the days ringing effort, to the bird's presence and he also obtained brief views before the bird fortuitously found its way into one of the mist-nets that had been previously erected in the vicinity of the garden.

The bird was then duly ringed, processed, photographed and released back into the observatory garden where it remained to the delight of a steady trickle of visiting birders who arrived through the course of the day.



Red-eyed Vireo, Walney, Lou Cross

Despite being found mid-week, around 70 birders arrived from across Britain to connect with the bird which showed especially well at times as it basked in the afternoon sun. However, although present until dusk, clear skies and light winds through the night induced the bird to move on and there was no sign next day to the dismay of another influx of observers who had travelled to the site overnight.

The latest addition to the island list, which now stands at 298 species, this was also the first record for Cumbria and the North West of England and became one of the latest ever occurrences in Britain. The Red-eyed Vireo breeds throughout southern Canada and the USA, east of the Rockies and migrates south to winter mainly in the Amazon Basin region of northern South America.

An autumn vagrant to Britain and Ireland, where it is the most frequently occurring Nearctic passerine, records have occurred from September through to early November and within Britain there is a noticeable bias to the southwest of England with relatively few occurrences outside this region. While there are around 130 previous records for Britain since the first was recorded in 1962, few have been ringed.

Colin Raven

New bird for my garden - Nightjar!!



Nightjar, Allonby, John Callion

My cottage is situated at the north end of Allonby village with uninterrupted views across the Solway to the Galloway Hills, (and Robin Rigg wind farm). The front aspect has no garden as it's 'common land', with the Spring high tide line approx 80 metres away. At the back, I have a smallish 'wildlife' garden, approx 15x30metres, with some smallish willow, a cluster of rose, a lot of nettles, bramble and a small pond.

This September, the whole of the UK was under the benign influence of a high pressure system that gave a prolonged spell of settled weather, with little wind and rain, these conditions are ideal for mist netting. Subsequently, on most days in the early morning just after first light, I would operate the net for a couple of hours. As the weather was set and my garden private I furled the net when not in use, making it inoperable.

On the morning of the 10th, I went outside at 0710 to unfurl the net, then returned to the house, put the kettle, radio and computer on, made some

coffee and 'logged on' at 0730. As I stepped outside onto my patio, my eye caught the movement of a medium sized bird as it flighted from an area of 'dead' wood to my left, and headed towards the bottom shelf of the mist net. In the moments it took me to walk the six or seven metres to the end of the net my first thoughts were it was a male Sparrowhawk, but something wasn't right, it didn't have the dash and urgency of an accipitor, the flight was light and languid. In the split second of my mind debating the flight action, as I arrived at the net, the bird turned its head towards me and displayed an enormous orange gape, reminiscent of what I'd previously seen with fledgling Cuckoos.

Quickly, I extracted the bird, did some swift research into ring size, ageing and sexing etc, as I didn't want the bird in captivity too long. It turned out to be a juvenile bird, most likely a female from colour pattern. Following a quick photo for the record I released the bird before it was fully light and it flew off towards the nearby farmland.

Once I had re-gathered my composure, I started to speculate the origins and timing of this most unlikely garden visitor. Cumbria is towards the northerly limit of the Nightjars range, with only a handful breeding in the county, though last and this year there seems to have been an increase around the northern county boundary, with as many as ten 'churring' males. In southern Scotland the most recent BTO Atlas shows about twenty occupied 10km squares, mostly in the south, not far from Cumbria. It's also conceivable that there has also been an increase in Scotland too, given the summers of 2013 and 2014.

As to how and why the bird was in my garden, well, on reflection, I think the most likely reason, was, that the bird was on migration, was crossing the Solway and as it was starting to get light, it was looking for some suitable secure place to roost, and the dead wood and cover in my garden was ideal as it made landfall.

I think this scenario is credible, for I'm certain I would have flushed the bird on my first visit to unfurl the net, as I did fifteen minutes later.

Having ringed and released the bird, I couldn't help but smile and think of all those unsuccessful trips to the Duddon Marshes with Dave Thexton and Norman White, trying to trap Nightjars when they were regular there in the 1980's.

John Callion

Swift nest boxes

In many ways Swifts are remarkable birds. The sight and sound of legions of Swifts hurtling overhead on a warm summer's evening is something not easily forgotten.

For centuries Swifts have used our buildings as nest sites - holes in masonry or access under the eaves is typical, but there is now evidence that Swift numbers are declining in parts of the UK. There may be other factors in this decline but one of the reasons is the loss of suitable nest sites. Modern buildings simply do not have the available holes, and our older buildings are being renovated with holes blocked and a great deal of plastic is used in roofing attachments, bargeboards etc.



For the birds this has become a problem, but we can help. Help by putting up nest boxes. This has already been done in other areas of the country with favourable results. Clearly there are advantages in putting up boxes where there have been Swifts in the past, but it is quite conceivable that the birds will take to new areas provided nest sites are available.



The making and erection of Swift boxes is fully explained at www.swift-conservation.org/Nestboxes&Attraction.htm and other websites. It is also a distinct advantage if the calls of the bird are played from a small recording device when they first come back - it will now be early May 2015!



If I can be of any help regarding any aspect of the making and erection of boxes for these birds, please contact me.



Mike Carrier

tel 016974 72218; m.carrier333@gmail.com

Great Tits in trouble

Whilst examining young birds in nest boxes at Armathwaite earlier in the season I encountered a problem I had not witnessed before.

One box contained seven young Great Tits within a few days of fledging. Of the seven young, five were joined by their legs being totally entwined. When I picked one up, five came together!



Great Tit, Roger Ridley

It took over half an hour to get the birds' legs free. When this had been done two appeared totally fine, two others had deformed legs and feet and one had no legs below the knee. Unfortunately this bird had to be dispatched.

The four were replaced in the box and when I visited a few days later it was empty. So six young got away.

Over the years I have found it quite unusual for young birds to be deformed in any way, and for the legs of five to be entangled in this unusual manner was something I had not come across before.

Mike Carrier

Shelducks galore



Shelducks, Duddon Estuary, Derek Dixon

Just to say that I did a WeBS count on the Upper Leven on Sunday and there were c1100 Shelduck - I never seen so many there - 3 x higher than any previous count!!

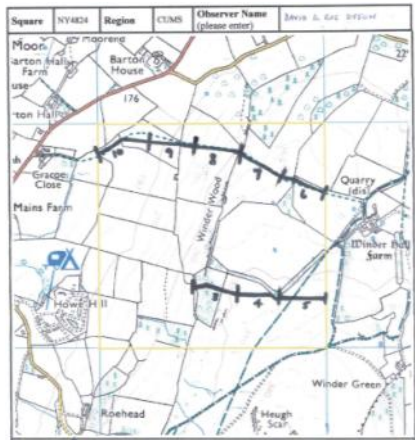
Wow - why!!

E-mail from John Peatfield

NY4823 and 4824

NY4823 and 4824 – what lies behind those ordinary numbers? Well, as it happens, something extraordinary. For these arbitrary squares contain such a richness of landscape, of wildlife, of big skies and open moorland, pasture and plantation, of walking with a purpose, of listening, watching and recording.

You start with a stiff climb up the edge of Askham Fell, a pause to get your breath and dig out the clipboard, and attune your senses to the early morning call of woodland birds, and then you begin.



There is a sunny bank of primrose and violet to delight, then a plunge into the trees. Here are Goldcrests, Wrens and Treecreepers, Chaffinches, Robins and Willow Warblers, and sometimes a Tawny Owl being mobbed. Here are signs of Roe Deer and Badger – once, a nest of bumble bees dug out by a Badger – and the stink of Fox.

After the woodland, the open fell. Degraded by sheep, yes, but rich in pipits, warblers, Linnets and Stonechats, and woodpeckers along the line of trees. Twice, a group of Red Deer crossed behind us and bounded gracefully over a tall stone dyke.



Willow Warbler, Duddon Estuary, Derek Dixon

The second transect crosses pasture and limestone scar before falling away down to 'ground level' again. Much less bird life, here, but a good place for Redstarts – sometimes a considerable fall of them competing for territory.

A Red Squirrel loped along a wall at one time, there are Buzzards in the sky, and there is always a splendid view of Ullswater.



Skylark, Workington Harbour, John Stephenson

Before you know it the first square is done. Then it's back up the hill and along the scar with its little bit of limestone pavement to the start of the second square.

This is all open fell, with much less variety, but the Skylarks are magnificent, and there is an occasional gem, like the Dotterel seen close by one May morning.

All of this, and the stride along the ridge of Heughscar Hill, lifts the spirit, and brings a satisfactory sense of the job done.

David Dyson

After many years of surveying David & Ros are unable to continue with these two BBS squares. If you would like to take them on or perhaps another BBS square near you. Just two visits required in spring every year. Contact one of the BTO reps (see inside cover).

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

Recent reports

The period covered is September to November 2014. 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*.



Whooper & Mute Swans, Siddick, Peter Heather

Wildfowl

The first **Whooper Swan** was an early adult past Silecroft on 18th September. A few more were seen before the end of the month, surprisingly mostly in the south of the county. Thereafter, counts included 181 near Calvo while 141 headed south over Walney in November.

The first southbound **Pink-footed Geese** were noted over several sites on 7th September and a total of 4073 flew through Walney during the month from 12th onwards. The first **Barnacle Geese** consisted of at least 350 over Tindale Tarn on 22nd September followed by 180 at Haweswater on 23rd while subsequent counts included 8500 on Rockcliffe Marsh. In the less favoured parts of the county, October brought up to 39 to the Kent Estuary and 37 to Walney, the latter lingering through November.



Barnacle Geese, Anthorn, Roger Ridley



Pink-footed geese, Solway, Darren Robson

The first **Brent Geese** reappeared at Walney on 25th September, 13 pale-bellied birds. Thereafter, numbers in the Foulney/Walney area increased to 156 pale-bellied and 72 dark-bellied. Elsewhere, four dark-bellied birds were on the Duddon Estuary on 6th November.

A female **Red-crested Pochard** was on Whinfell Tarn in October and early November. A female **Long-tailed Duck** took up residence on the pools at Walney from 22nd October and remained throughout the period, being joined briefly by a second bird on 21st November, while, more fleetingly a female/immature appeared at Arnside on 4th November and a drake was seen off Nethertown on 11th November.



Long-tailed Duck, Walney, Colin Inman

Velvet Scoters consisted of one at Walney on 1st October and a drake at Bowness-on-Solway on 21st October. Inland **Common Scoters** were restricted to two drakes on Talkin Tarn on 1st November while coastal maxima included 335 at Walney. Rarest duck in the period, however, was probably the **Ruddy Duck** on Derwent Water on 9th October.

Other wildfowl counts included 1400 **Pintail** at Rockcliffe, 2000 **Teal** on Wedholme Flow and 29 **Gadwall** at Hodbarrow.

Divers to grebes

A **Red-throated Diver** turned up well inland near Alston on 16th September but had to be taken into care while totals at coastal locations included 17 at both Workington and Silecroft in September and a truly remarkable 744 off Maryport in October.

Black-throated Divers were limited to several sightings of a single off Nethertown in November. Single **Great**

Northerns were seen off Walney in October and November and inland on Derwent Water on 29th October.



Great White Egret, Hodbarrow, Ian Kinley

A poor autumn for **Leach's Petrels** produced just two off Walney Island on 23rd October. **Gannets** included a maximum 131 at Walney in October. **Shag** sightings comprised up to 16 at Walney during the period and a single at Workington.

A **Bittern** returned to Siddick Pond on 14th October, with intermittent reports thereafter.

The continued rise of the county's **Little Egret** population was reflected in record counts on both Walney Island and the Inner Solway; numbers peaked at 88 on Walney, 39 on the Kent Estuary, 13 on the Inner Solway, 10 on the Duddon Estuary, six on the Upper Leven Estuary, four on the Esk Estuary south of Ravenglass and four in the Lyth Valley. A **Great White Egret** visited Hodbarrow on 6th October and a **Spoonbill** flew over the saltmarsh at Humphrey Head on 28th September.

A **Slavonian Grebe** graced the main lagoon at Hodbarrow on 16th September where it was joined by a second bird on 18th, at least one of which remained to the month end, while two, initially still in summer plumage, were off Nethertown from 9th October to at least 18th November and another appeared inland on Mockerkin Tarn on 16th November. Nethertown produced the only **Black-necked Grebe**, a single on 28th October.

Raptors to waders

Red Kites were seen at a few scattered sites away from the Grizedale release site. **Marsh Harriers** appeared at several sites on the Inner Solway in September, at least two juveniles lingered around the Kent Estuary throughout the period and other late birds, mostly juveniles were seen at Walney on 15th and 16th October, Soddy Gap on 31st October and the Duddon Mosses on 5th November. A few **Hen Harriers** settled into wintering haunts.



*Purple Sandpipers, Workington,
Steve Dutton*

September **Ospreys** were restricted to Walney and the Kent Estuary with the former site recording late individuals on 16th October and, most exceptionally, 16th November. An adult female **Rough-legged Buzzard** was reported flying southeast over Selside on 22nd October and was followed by a further report of a bird at Cardurnock on 8th November. A **Common Crane** was found at Barton Fell near Brampton on 7th September.

A **Little Ringed Plover** was at Sunbiggin Tarn in September. **Little Stints** were generally scarce, with peaks of five at Walney, four on the Kent Estuary and two at Bowness Railings. A **Pectoral Sandpiper** was reported on Walney Island on 24th and 26th October.



*Curlew Sandpiper, Bowness-on-Solway,
Darren Robson*

The Workington **Purple Sandpiper** flock had reached just six in November, with five on Walney.

Curlew Sandpipers passed through in mediocre numbers with four at Walney but no more than two at any other site.

Ruff too were in short supply with 18 in the Rockcliffe area the only double figure count though a few did linger into November with two on the Kent Estuary and one inland at Thacka Flash, Penrith.

Black-tailed Godwits included 128 on the Kent Estuary, 98 at Rockcliffe and 10 at Walney in September, 16 on the Kent Estuary in October and 16 at Campfield Marsh in November.

Ever under-recorded, **Jack Snipe** consisted of four at Walney and singles near College Green, Heversham and on Border Marsh while 230 **Common Snipe** were counted on Wedholme Flow. The sole **Wood Sandpiper** was at Walney on 3rd September. **Green Sandpipers** were widely reported in



Spotted Redshanks, Port Carlisle, Darren Robson

modest numbers while late, or more likely, overwintering **Common Sandpipers** were on the Inner Solway at Glasson Point on 11th November and Rockcliffe on 28th and on the Esk Estuary near Muncaster on 24th.

Spotted Redshanks consisted of singles at Walney and Hodbarrow. **Greenshank** totals at Walney peaked at 21 in both September and October and 16 in November; less expectedly, up to 15 were on the Mite Estuary in October, with eight still present in November.

A first-winter **Grey Phalarope** appeared briefly on Walney Island on 24th October.

Skuas to auks

Single **Pomarine Skuas** were off Walney on 19th and 25th October while the only **Great** was also off Walney on 1st October. **Arctic Skuas** were more widespread with ones and twos at several sites in October and two late individuals off Nethertown on 14th November.



Mediterranean Gull, Workington, Steve Dutton

Kittiwakes were reported in modest numbers, peaking at 117 off Walney in October.

Mediterranean Gull sightings in September consisted of at least 15 in the Workington/Siddick Pond area, a juvenile/first-winter on the Kent Estuary and single adults at Bowness-on-Solway and Rampside, October produced no less than 26, including six first-winters, in the Workington/Siddick area, a first-winter at Walney and single adults on the Kent Estuary and at Kirkbride and Silloth.



Razorbills, St. Bees, John Stephenson

Many fewer were reported in November, largely due to the absence of records from the Workington area, and records were limited to an adult at Eskmeals and a single bird at Walney.

A late **Sandwich Tern** was seen in the Walney Channel on 10th November. **Razorbill** numbers peaked in October with 330 at Walney. **Black Guillemots** were restricted to singles at Walney on 3rd and 20th October.



Black Redstart on Vulcan Bomber, Carlisle Airport, Roger Ridley

Owls to buntings

Short-eared Owls were not widely reported but did include four at Threlkeld Common in September. A juvenile **Nightjar** was, amazingly, trapped and ringed in an Allonby garden on 10th September. A **Great Grey Shrike** took up residence at Dalton Craggs from 20th November and another was found near Hawkshead on 24th. **Hooded Crows** were limited to long-stayers at Walney and around the Irt Estuary. There were a handful of November **Swallow** sightings, the latest being at Siddick on 14th. A colour-ringed male **Bearded Tit** that toured the reedbeds on Walney Island from 14th to 24th October was the first in the county since 1999.

The county's third **Cetti's Warbler** lingered at South Walney from 7th to 24th October. It proved an exceptional autumn for **Yellow-browed Warblers** with no less than 13 recorded, all in the southwest of the county with the majority on Walney, beginning with an influx of five on Walney Island, three at Haverigg and one at Kirksanton Haws, all on 14th October, followed by two

more on Walney on 16th October and further singles on 4th November at Snab Point Walney and Westfield Point N.R. Rampside.

Up to five migrant **Ring Ouzels** at a time visited Eddy Scale quarry, Torver High Common in September while October brought six at Geltsdale, two on Walney and one at Haverigg followed by a single near Tindale on 4th November. Up to two **Black Redstarts** lingered at Walney from 28th October to 4th November with something of an influx in November producing singles at Great Broughton on 5th, Low Parkamoor, near Coniston on 16th, Carlisle airport from 28th into December and Humphrey Head on 30th.



Pied Wagtail, M. Davidson

A fall of **Wheatears** on 6th September produced 163 birds across Walney Island while good numbers of **Chiffchaffs** and **Goldcrests** were logged there during the month and diurnal migration was steady with a total of 175 **Tree Sparrows** and peaks of 4000 **Meadow Pipits**, 300 **Skylarks**, 150 **Swallows** and 80 **Pied/White Wagtails**.



Linnet, near Port Carlisle, Roger Ridley

In October, diurnal migration at Walney was marked by peaks of 5400 **Meadow Pipits**, 1265 **Skylarks**, 225 **Swallows**, 495 **Pied Wagtails**, 680 **Fieldfares**, 2085 **Linnet**s, 230 **Tree Sparrows** and 50 **Reed Buntings**.

The last **Wheatear** was at Walney on 2nd November.



Snow Bunting, Silecroft, Andrew Cockcroft

A **Water Pipit** was found at Roa Island on 25th October, lingering into November albeit with just intermittent sightings. Less expectedly, another was seen at Lady Hall on the Duddon on 6th November.

Twite included 150 on Newton Marsh, 130 at Walney, 100 near Port Carlisle, 80 in the Grange-over-Sands area, 40 on Burgh Marsh and 25 at Anthorn.

At least 30 **Crossbills** were seen at Whinlatter while several were in song on top of Raven Crag, Thirlmere. Up to six **Hawfinches** were seen at Barkbooth Lot along with a peak of four at Sizergh Castle.

Felltop **Snow Buntings** consisted of singles on Skiddaw and High Street while on the coast one was at Walney on 5th November and one visited Silecroft car park on 27th November. Much rarer, however, was the **Lapland Bunting** at Walney on 14th November.



Red-eyed Vireo, Walney, Lou Cross

Undoubted highlight of the period, if not the year, was the county and Northwest England's first **Red-eyed Vireo**, a stunning discovery at Walney Bird Observatory on 4th November.

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 <http://www.cumbriabirdclub.org.uk/> for details of how to do so.

Ian Kinley

Brantwood - volunteer bird surveyors needed

Brantwood is the former home of the Victorian art critic, writer, and campaigner John Ruskin. The estate is 250 acres of land rising steeply from the east shore of Coniston Water in the South Lakes. Of this about 100 acres is semi ancient woodland - primarily deciduous with oaks, ash, sycamore, silver birch with an understorey of hazel, holly, rowan and abundant ground cover.



Much of the woodland is of a similar age - many of the oaks are around 100 - 150 years old, and over the last few years various schemes have been introduced to increase the amount of regeneration taking place and to increase the diversity of habitats available. This has included erecting a deer fence around a large area of woodland - which the brambles have certainly appreciated - and more recently starting a policy of creating 'clearings' of around 50m x 50m to encourage the next generation of young trees.

It is also hoped that this will increase the range of habitats for wildlife and birds within the woodland - particularly species such as flycatchers, redstarts and warblers. We would like to get some idea of the current population of our woodland birds and perhaps do some resurvey work when the work is complete in around five years time.



If anyone is interested in this as a sort of project we would be very interested in hearing from them - I can be contacted at work on 015394 41396, or at home on 01229 885101.

If you want to know more about the estate and gardens you can have a look at our website at <http://www.brantwood.org.uk/garden-estate/>

*Dave Charles
Brantwood Estate Team*

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Information for contributors

The deadline for copy for the next issue is March 1st 2015

Please send contributions to Dave Piercy as e-mail attachments to daveandkathypiercy@tiscali.co.uk

If you do not have a computer: please send in as clear a format as possible to Dave Piercy, Derwentwater Independent Hostel, Borrowdale, Keswick CA12 5UR; tel 017687 77246

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

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Cumbria Bird Club Website

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

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