

BIRD NEWS
Vol. 27 No. 4 Winter 2016

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Club news and announcements

AGM report

At the AGM of October 2nd 2016 Malcolm Priestly was elected to Chairman, Mike Carrier and Peter Howard were elected as vice-chairmen and Colin Auld and Jake Manson were elected as members of council. Full minutes are available on request from the secretary.

Subscriptions

The Cumbria Bird Club 2016/2017 subscription were due on 1st October. If you receive a subscription form with this mailing then according to my records we have not yet received your payment. Please let me know if this is not the case. Please pay overdue subs as soon as possible. Thanks

CBC meeting programme winter 2016/2017



Wednesday 11th January 2017: Tullie House 7.15pm

Joint with Carlisle NHS

'Incredible Journeys' - *Brian Morrell (WWT Caerlaverock)*

Thurs 6th April 2017: Marchesi Centre, Windermere 7.30pm

Joint with RSPB South Lakeland.

'Raptor migration in Southern Spain and Gibraltar' – *Denis Atherton*

The annual Cumbria bird club bird race will be held on Sunday the 8th of January 2017, and finishes at 5.30pm at the Agricultural Hotel, Castlegate Penrith, Cumbria, CA11 7JE. New teams are always welcome, so why not give it a go! It's fun and exciting.

To enter or for more information about the race see the next two pages. Good luck to everyone taking part and let's hope for good weather on the day.

Cumbria Bird Club Winter Bird Race

Sunday 8th of January 2017

**Finishes at 5.30pm at the Agricultural Hotel, Castlegate
Penrith, Cumbria, CA11 7JE**

Object of the race - To gain the greatest number of species of wild birds within the borders of Cumbria County between early morning and 5.30pm on January 8th 2017.

Rule 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, then that's OK too.

Rule 2 Start time is from when your team is fully assembled on the day.

Rule 3 For late arrivals at the finish a penalty of one species per five minutes of lateness will be deducted.

Rule 4 Only true wild birds count! (no budgies or dodgy wildfowl)

Food

consists of Steak and ale pie, chips and vege.
or veggie options of cannelloni, moussaka or Stilton pasta
bake.

Cost £8.95 per person.

Closing date for entries, Monday 2nd of January 2017.

See the entry form for further details on page two.

Cumbria Bird Club

Winter Bird Race Sunday January 8th 2017

Entry Form

Name of Team

--

Name of the Team Members

**Please indicate how many members of your team will want
steak and ale pie, chips and vege or the Veggie option
£8.95 per person**

Steak pie, chips and vege	
Veggie option	

Entry forms to be returned before the 2nd of January please.

Via Email too - philevans64rbp@gmail.com

Or phone Phil Evans on - 07837769359 with your details.

The CBC Wood Warbler survey 2016/2017



Wood Warbler, Miltonrigg Wood, Roger Ridley

The Bird Club is organising a county-wide survey of Wood Warblers during their breeding season from May to early July in 2017. The project is a response to the designation of Wood Warblers on the Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern following a 66% decrease in estimates of the UK population since the 1990s.

Cumbria is well-endowed with typical Wood Warbler habitat and the county remains an important stronghold for the species in Britain. The Cumbria atlas surveys (1997-2001 and 2008-12) suggest a similar trend to the national picture with a 50% decrease in the number of occupied tetrads between the two atlas periods. However, distribution maps based on 'all species' timed, tetrad surveys are not reliable indicators of Wood Warbler population density or breeding status.

The CBC fieldwork aims to be more focused on suitable sites with a history of Wood Warbler occupancy.

The main objectives of the survey are:

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

In 2016 a pilot survey was undertaken to test proposed fieldwork methodology and identify any problems with provisional recording forms and instructions. An encouraging sample of 132 woods were investigated in 90 tetrads distributed across all parts of the traditional range of Wood Warblers in Cumbria. Potential Wood Warbler sites were selected from records derived from the Cumbria breeding bird atlases, the BTO Survey and a variety of other sources. The majority of woods were visited both early and late in the breeding season, exceptions being those habitats clearly unsuitable for the species. First visits in May or early June were the most productive for detecting Wood Warblers visually or in full song often well beyond the morning peak. Second visits proved important for confirming breeding status (mainly by alarm calls or second phase song) and birds were found at several sites in the late period only.

A minimum of 125 individual Wood Warblers were recorded by the pilot survey in 44 (49%) of tetrads covered. Figures for the same 90 tetrads in the two Cumbria breeding bird atlases are 67 (74%) occupied tetrads in 1997-2001 and 49 (54%) in 2008-2012. Much of this apparent continuing range contraction is accounted for by deserted former Wood Warbler territories in the Pennines and the north of the county. Prime woodland in the central and southern Lake District showed little change.

The pilot fieldwork also experimented with the recording of habitat details for both woods with Wood Warblers present and absent. Variables recorded included woodland tree species, canopy cover and age structure, ground vegetation, extent of shrub layer and topography. Recording forms were relatively straightforward to complete and the data collected so far has been very revealing and has produced strong positive and negative correlations between environmental factors and Wood Warbler presence and numbers.

The CBC Wood Warbler survey 2016/2017

Further analysis of the birds' habitat preferences may have particular value in assessing the impact of current woodland management practices on the rapidly changing fortunes of the species.

Fieldwork for the pilot survey was rewarding and enjoyable in magnificent woodlands at their best in May and June. However, the sample of sites explored in 2016 remains too small to make firm conclusions about the status of Wood Warblers in Cumbria. The main survey in 2017 has the ambition to cover all known Wood Warbler habitat in the county, which includes sites in over 200 tetrads. Many more observers are needed to ensure the project's success. For anyone wishing to learn more about the birds, their behaviour and habitat, visits to key locations will be arranged in the first week of May.

If you are interested in taking part in the survey please contact John Callion (North Cumbria) or Malcolm Priestley (South Cumbria) for further details.

John Callion: Bank Cottage, Allonby, Silloth CA15 6QH
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Malcolm Priestley

2016 Birds and Wildlife in Cumbria Submitting records for all species

Please submit all your records for 2016 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 2014 Birds and Wildlife in Cumbria).

Editor

Free to a good home

British Birds and Birding World

Free to a good home: Ian Kinley's extensive collection of British Birds and Birding World. Both are bound and his British Birds collection is from 1972 until 2015 whilst his Birding World collection is from the start of that publication until it ceased to be published a couple of years ago.

Please contact Dave Thexton david.thexton@sky.com to arrange collection

Birds and Wildlife in Cumbria and CBC Newsletters

Free to a good home: the annual Birds and Wildlife in Cumbria from 1994 to 2013. Also a run of the quarterly Cumbria Bird Newsletters complete from Volume 7 No. 2, summer 1996 to date. If any one is willing to collect them from my home in Grange-over-Sands. Tel: John Curtis 015395 35757 to arrange collection.



Grey Heron with Brown Trout, Brougham Castle, Adam Moan

A strange Shrike in my garden



Brown or Turkestan or Red-backed or ? Shrike, Hallbankgate, Adam Moan

Here is a copy of the e-mail Adam Moan sent to Birdwatch after finding the bird above in his garden:

I thought you might like a photo of this strange Shrike that I had in my garden (Hallbankgate near Brampton, Cumbria) on the 4th December. Whilst checking on my feeders I noticed this strange looking House Sparrow in the trees behind, that looked slightly larger than the rest and that all of the others birds were alarm calling.

On closer inspection I realised that it had an eyestripe, so I rang my friend Pete Howard (seasonal Hen Harrier Warden) and when I said that it wasn't a Great Grey he said he would come up straight away. I showed him the only photo I managed to get (taken through double glazing) before it went into the conifers at the bottom of my garden. Pete managed to get a brief view of it and then started to look through the bird guide, his initial thought was juvenile Red-backed but more likely juvenile Brown Shrike. After checking more books when he got home he decided it wasn't a Red-backed, so we sent my photo to a few of the local experts and they agreed with us. Plus pointing out that a first winter Brown Shrike had been seen on Shetland and later at Spurn in October.

Pete and I spent the rest of Sunday afternoon and all Monday morning searching the local area (disused quarry with Hawthorn bushes and rush) but could not find it.

After the photo doing the rounds for a couple of days the comments back so far are :-

- Barring on the mantle and dark tertials fit Red-backed.
- Mantle/back colour fit Turkestan.
- Mantle/head/back colour is wrong for Brown.
- Lores too dark for Red-backed.

Pete's response to these comments are :-

I have still seen/heard nothing to definitely rule out Brown Shrike - i.e. structural/tonal features.

Colour cannot safely be used as a criteria because Adam took the photo through a double-glazed window! I suspect the milky/grey appearance/cast is an artefact of this. His impression was of a browner-looking bird (he first thought it was just a House Sparrow!). Although I only saw bird for about 5 seconds, it appeared to me to be browner than in the picture.

Mantle - BWP says juvenile Brown Shrike mantle is 'softly waved or barred' and simply 'less barred' than on Red-backed.

Solidly dark-centered tertials actually rules out pure Red-backed, and is a feature of Brown/Isabelline.

Dark lores - a feature of Brown (and possibly Isabelline), but definitely not Red-backed.

Primary projection is not very clear from the photo, but perhaps too short for Red-backed? But maybe the tail is proportionately too short for Brown? Although it does look quite narrow?

Adam's summary: Here's some of the stand out comments for me :-

Solidly dark centred tertials rules out Red-backed and is a feature of Brown or Isabelline.

Dark lores are a feature of Brown (and possibly Isabelline) but definitely not Red-backed.

Blackish mask eliminates Red-backed.

Lacks rufousness of Red-backed.

Primary projection looks short for Red-backed but perhaps in the range of Brown.

As an amateur that has only seen Red-backed before, I am pretty confident that it was not one, but I have never seen Brown or Turkestan before. However, some people are suggesting that it might be a hybrid of Brown or Turkestan with a Red-backed?

Not bad for my garden list and whilst looking for it again I managed to also add Waxwing to it!

Adam Moan (paraphrased e-mails)

Comments below taken from Birdforum and Rare Bird Alert:-

From Ilya MacLean - finder of Brown Shrike on the Lizard which was accepted by BBRC:

I'm struggling a bit with the wing formula and emarginations from this photo, but that longest primary looks like P3 to me, which would strongly favour Red-backed. It also looks to have at least 7 exposed, favouring Red-backed. The outer tail feathers, while partially obscured, look as long as the inners, again favouring Red-backed (Brown should have very short outer-most retrices).

From Paul Leader: The mottled mantle is just retained juvenile feathers. My experience is that first-winter Red-backed retains more juvenile feathering than Brown, but the latter can retain juvenile mantle feathering in a similar manner to this bird. Red-backed also tends to retain more juvenile feathering on the crown than Brown Shrike which tends to completely moult the crown. The bill shape is very difficult to judge due to the angle, but strikes me as very deep based. Without seeing the underside of the tail I don't think it is possible to judge the tail difference. The primary projection looks short for Red-backed but perhaps in the range for Brown? I still think the blackish mask eliminates Red-backed, but I'm less familiar with that species than Brown.

Andy Stoddart – Rare Bird Alert weekly roundup

it appears to show that only the third and fourth primaries are emarginated - correct for Red-backed Shrike but not for Brown and Isabelline Shrikes which also have an emarginated fifth primary. However, it shows some slightly more puzzling features - its ear coverts are quite dark grey and the lores are solidly dark too whilst the tertials appear to be fully dark-centred (i.e. lacking dark subterminal fringes). And what about the warm chestnut forehead? Even if all this is somehow compatible with a Red-backed Shrike rather than something with Brown or Turkestan Shrike influence, this is still a remarkable record for Cumbria in December. Whatever it is, it presumably originates from somewhere in deepest Asia.

Lesser Black-backed Gull and wind farms

In a bid to understand how the amber-listed Lesser Black-backed Gull behaves around offshore wind farms, the BTO has partnered with DONG Energy to carry out a study of the species off the Cumbrian coast.

During the two-year study, state-of-the-art GPS tags are being used to track the movements of gulls from a colony at Cumbria Wildlife Trust's South Walney Nature Reserve, the species is protected here but has recently been in decline, and from rooftops in Barrow-in-Furness, where Lesser black-backed Gulls are often less welcomed by their human neighbours.



The tags, which sit between a bird's wings like a backpack, will allow the BTO researchers to understand many different aspects of these birds' lives around wind farms, including crucially, whether gulls are at risk of death through collision with turbine blades.

"While offshore wind farms are a key weapon in the fight against climate change, it is important to understand potential effects of their development on wildlife in order to minimise any negative impacts. The tagging will enable the BTO to study the flight patterns of these two groups of gulls and offer an unprecedented chance to understand how seabirds respond to the construction of an offshore wind farm, as well as to further understand their movements through the year" said Emily Scragg for the BTO. "I can't wait to see the results".

"We are keen to learn more about how these gulls behave around offshore wind farms as they fly above, below or between the individual wind turbines. It will also be interesting to see how they interact with the wind farms" said Allen Risby, Lead Environmental and Consent Specialist with DONG Energy. He added, "They might provide opportunities for the gulls too."

The study is being jointly funded by the Walney Extension and Burbo Bank Extension projects, two of the offshore wind farms that DONG Energy is currently constructing off the northwest coast. Tagging was undertaken this year during the gulls' summer breeding season and the work thus far has already shown some differences in the use of offshore areas by birds from South Walney and Barrow. Through the course of the next two years, further fascinating results are expected as we move from the construction phase of the wind farms through to when the turbine blades start turning.

BTO press release Oct 2016

Waxwings in Cumbria 2016



Waxwing, Dalston, Guy Broome

Waxwings appeared in Cumbria on 28th October 2016, at Scout Scar, soon to be followed at Brampton, Kendal, Carlisle, Keswick and Wetheral (Cumbria Bird Club Newsletter 2016). Maximum numbers were recorded in Dalston on the 30th of November, estimated at a peak of 1000. It should be accepted that exact counts are difficult in that flocks split up and are highly mobile between tall roosting trees and lower berry rich sites. There is a danger of double counting on the same day.

The preferential fruit food sources were Rowan, with Hawthorn, Cotoneaster and Apple as second choice. Some individuals were noted in a state of torpor, possibly owing to the berries fermenting on the trees after repeated frost and thawing, or possibly due to fermentation in the bird's crops. Lack of

dead birds noted, suggested recovery from this state, possibly after a hangover !

Efforts to maximise foodsource and encourage easy public viewing should be applauded e.g. Dave Hickson's Nursery in Dalston. Close viewing of this spectacular "ambassador" species will undoubtedly convert many to Birding and Conservation. The Primary School Children on the opposite side of the road knew exactly what they were—shouting out to observers— "They're Waxwings and they're behind you" !

POSSIBLE REASONS FOR ERUPTIONS.

The documented food source during breeding in Scandinavia is insects, mainly Diptera; midges and mosquitos. There may be weather related and cyclical population trends in these invertebrates in the conifer Taiga forest and bog edge habitat. Peak breeding of Waxwings is in June and may not always coincide with the peak hatch of Diptera.

Berry abundance in Scandinavia is likely to vary in the same way as it does in the UK, with influencing factors being Spring frosts and Easterly winds.

Abundance of flower feeding birds such as Northern Bullfinch is also likely to vary year by year. An abundance of summer diptera combined with failure of berries could well combine as factors triggering an eruption.

The last major Waxwing eruptions in Cumbria were in 2010 and 2012. The 2012 eruption was unique in that it involved scattered rural locations, as well as the usual urban sites, e.g. Arnside Knott (CBC Newsletter 2013). Historically, in the more distant past, the eruptions tended to favour the Eastern UK, e.g. that of 1965/66.



Waxwing, Dalston, Guy Broome

Birds tend to move further South in the UK after mid winter and return through in early Spring e.g. Penrith, up to April 2012.

WING STRUCTURE

The waxy red tips to the secondary feathers are unique to UK birds and maybe even worldwide. From photos taken this season, the tips seem to grow in length with ageing of the bird. They seem to produce a clattering noise on takeoff and presumably allow visual contact in dark Taiga forest. There appear to be a preponderance of juveniles in the UK eruptions.

WORLD CONTEXT

There are three other species in the genus *Bombycilla* (Waxwings), others being Bohemian and Japanese, with similar habitat and behaviour. *Ptilogonis*, Silky Flycatchers are thought to be very closely related. Three species are endemic to montane Central America and do not migrate. They have very similar habitats to Waxwings, nesting in lichen - strewn upper montane forest



Long-tailed Silky Flycatcher and Crested Berrypecker , Guy Broome

but feeding in public areas in a confiding manner (see photo of Long-tailed Silky Flycatcher). Hypocolus from the Middle East is another close relative.

In the Southern Hemisphere, the Crested Berrypecker, endemic to Central New Guinea was originally thought to be a close relative of Waxwings but has recently been re-classified in Paramythiidae, related to Australian Whipbirds. Nevertheless, the species has a remarkable resemblance to the Waxwing group also inhabiting lichen-strewn upper montane forest and is relatively confiding to humans.

REFERENCES

Cumbria Bird Club Newsletters, since 2012

Birds of the Western Palearctic Region, Snow and Perrin, Oxford University Press

Birds of Costa Rica, Garrigues and Dean, Helm Guide

Birds of New Guinea, Beehler and Pratt, Princeton University Press

Personal observations Dave Hickson (Dalston)

Personal Observations Guy Broome (Norway, Finland, Costa Rica and Papua New Guinea)

Guy Broome

Armathwaite Tree Sparrow project

The project has now been running for 12 years. This involves feeding the birds throughout the winter, providing nest sites in the form of boxes for the breeding season and finally monitoring success and ringing the young.

The most recent season (2015/16) started well with in excess of 100 Tree Sparrows at the feeders throughout January and well into February. Other folk, independently feeding birds in gardens in the area, also reported good numbers of Tree Sparrows at their feeders.

However the breeding season most certainly did not live up to expectations, and the final results gave realisation that this was by far the poorest season since the project started. The number of nest boxes allocated specifically to Tree Sparrows in 2016 was exactly 100. This number produced the following results:

	No. of pairs	Average Brood size
First Brood	25	3.4
Second brood	8	4.3
Third brood	1	3.5

The total number of young ringed during the season was just 94. Compare this with the 638 ringed in 2011.

And the reasons! Well the birds certainly got through the winter, but it became obvious that nest building, usually starting in January with nest lining in March, was not going ahead as expected! In some cases complete nests were only made a few days before the first eggs were laid. Prior to that there had been several weeks of cold and often wet weather and I can only conclude that this was a main reason for the extremely poor breeding season.

With so relatively few young being produced in 2016 it will be of interest to see what the next winter and season brings.

Mike Carrier



Tree Sparrow, Watchtree, Roger Ridley

Recent reports

The period covered is September 2016 to November 2016. Some of these records are unauthenticated and may require review by the Club Records Panel or British Birds Rarities Committee. Species order and nomenclature follow that used in *Birds and Wildlife in Cumbria*.

Wildfowl



Whooper Swans, Walby, Roger Ridley

The first **Whooper Swans** recorded were two at Siddick Pond on 3rd October, with a family party of six birds there on 25th. A single bird was with Mute Swans on Talkin Tarn on 10th and six were at Longtown on 23rd. An apparent family group including six young were at Whitrigg and may have been new arrivals as all were sleeping apart from one; the same day 15 were on the sea off Mawbray consisting of two family parties one with six young and the

other five. Several observers subsequently commented that breeding season seemed to have been good with families with a large number of young being more frequent than usual. Significant numbers were 58 at Kirkbride Airfield on 24th October. In November numbers started to build up at Angerton with 135 there on 4th increasing to 148 on 10th. The largest count in that area was 250 on 26th. Birds returned to the Walby/Laversdale area with 21 on 11th increasing to 36 on 23rd.

13,000 **Barnacle Geese** were on Rockliffe Marsh on 26th October. The first **Pink-footed Geese** reported were 25 from the River Esk at Longtown on 5th September with small numbers being reported moving south in the Penrith area and most interesting, 170 which went south very high over Dunmail Raise in three skeins during the afternoon of 17th September. There were 300 over Carlisle Airport on 30th.



Barnacle Geese, Anthorn, Roger Ridley



Leucistic Barnacle , Anthorn, Roger Ridley

In October birds were reported moving south over the Wigton area on five dates, 500 were roosting in Moricambe Bay on 3rd with a maximum of 2000 moving north at dusk at Allonby on 21st. At Walney 2000 passed through on 8th October and 1000 on 22nd. The only significant report in November were 1000 at Blackdyke, Silloth on 7th. Soddy Gap held 342 **Greylag Geese** on 6th October including a bird with an orange neck ring.

Two **White-fronted Geese** were at Walney from 20th November till the end of the month. Six **Pale-bellied Brent Geese** were photographed at RSPB Campfield reserve on 18th September and on 15th November 60 Dark-bellied and 47 Light-bellied were at Foulney. A **Snow Goose** was reported from RSPB Campfield on 18th October. **Pintail** were present in several areas in higher numbers than usual with 1670 on the Duddon and 300 on Kent Estuary on 20th September and 1800 at the former site on 5th November. On the Solway 500 were off Campfield RSPB on 25th October and there were 700 in the River Waver on 13th. The most significant number of **Teal** were 1000 on the River Duddon on 5th November. 2700 **Wigeon** were at Walney on 15th October.

Mandarin Duck seems to be spreading in the north with four males and two females on Bassenthwaite and a single on Derwent Water in November.

Two immature **Scaup** were at Hodbarrow on 4th October and seven birds were there on 10th November, four were on Siddick Ponds on 8th October, five were on Derwent Water on 7th November.



Mandarin Ducks, Bassenthwaite, H&S Strong



Long-tailed duck, Grune Point, Nick Franklin

The first **Long-tailed Duck** was a male at Sunbiggin Tarn on 20th October and it was present for three days at least. A single was at Drumburgh on 4th November, two were at Bowness on Solway on 16th; there had been four at Grune Point on 12th November and at least three of these were still present at the end of the month. The first bird at Walney was on 4th November with two there on 19th and singles on other days in the month. Singles were at Roa Island on 9th November and Foulney on 15th. A male **Eider** was heading south off Flimby on 4th October. The only **Smew** recorded was a “redhead” on the River Eden at Cargo on 13th November. A **Velvet Scoter** was off Walney with 190 **Common Scoter** on 13th October with the latter increasing to 216 by 26th October.

Grouse to Herons

Thirteen **Black Grouse** were near Slaggyford on 26th October and another 24 on Talkin Fell on 24th November. A **Great Northern Diver** was off Walney on 17th October and one was off Flimby on 28th November. Large numbers of **Red-throated Divers** were in the Outer Solway in October with 210 passing Maryport on 3rd and 309 there on 20th and also 167 at Flimby and 23 at Harrington the same day.

Four **Manx Shearwaters** were off Selker on 7th September. Significant numbers of **Cormorant** were in the same area in November. Eighteen **Shags** were at Walney on 20th November. There were two reports of **Bittern** from Siddick Pond in October. **Little Egret** were present on South Solway throughout the period with a maximum of 22 at Port Carlisle on 5th September and nine at RSPB Campfield on 18th October. Two were upstream of Rockliffe village on 13th November – the first time the WEBS counter had seen them on that stretch of the river. At Walney they increased

to 56 by 21st September and 72 by 23rd November. **Great White Egrets** were reported from Haybridge Nature reserve on various dates, Walney on 1st October, Kents Bank on 2nd, Killington Lake and Foulshaw Moss on 5th, Ulpha Meadows on 5th and 20th, two at Flookburgh on 10th and subsequently on two dates there, RSPB Campfield Reserve on 10th November and Arnside on 24th.

A **Slavonian Grebe** was back at Hodbarrow RSPB in October and one was at Longlands Pond on 17th October and 16 **Little Grebe** were at the same site on 26th November.



Little Grebe, Talkin Tarn, Tony Marsh

Raptors to Waders



Hen Harrier, RSPB Geltsdale, Adam Moan

A **Red Kite** was over Lowick on 20th September. On 3rd October singles were reported from both Blencathra and Grune point. There were up to three juvenile **Marsh Harriers** in the south of the county in October and singles were at Port Carlisle on 7th September and Campfield RSPB on 25th September and 10th October.

Hen Harriers were reported from the south of the county with a ringtail juvenile on various dates

from 20th October and an adult male on 23rd November. Reports also came from the South Solway mosses and coast throughout the period plus one at Watchtree Nature reserve on 11th November.

An unexpected juvenile **Golden Eagle** was at RSPB Geltsdale on 3rd September and on a couple of other dates subsequently. Passage **Osprey** continued to be reported in early September with one at Bowness on Solway on 1st and 2nd and bird(s) (including one fitted with a satellite transmitter) were seen fishing on the the River Esk at Longtown on several occasions. Walney saw birds on 6th September and again on 11th where colour rings showed that bird was of Scottish origin.

Peregrines were regular on the South Solway and southern mosses throughout and also at Walney. A **Hobby** was in the south of the county on 13th September, with one at Anthorn on 23rd October and Campfield RSPB on 25th. **Merlins** frequented Walney throughout with the following of note - three on 5th September and October three again on 30th and still two on 12th November. One was on Ulpha Meadows on 3rd and 7th October.

Water Rails were regular at Siddick Pond and singles were also reported regularly from Foulshaw from 1st September, Derwent Water from 9th October and Ulpha Meadows from 20th October and there was a single at Watchtree NR on 30th October. Fourteen **Golden Plover** were on Robinson on 2nd October and a flock was on Caldbeck Fells and the regular flock built up on Moricambe Estuary with c 2,500 there 19th October with another 1,000 in the River Eden Channel off Burgh Marsh on the same day. A possible **American Golden Plover** was with the Anthorn birds on 18th October. 1,200 **Lapwing** were at Old Sandsfield on 19th October with another 1000 off Campfield Marsh.

Six juvenile **Ruff** were on College Green on 2nd September with eight birds there on 12th. Three were at Campfield RSPB on 3rd September and a single bird was there throughout October and two were at a flood at Heversham on 10th October. Field floods in the south of the county produced a variety of waders with **Pectoral Sandpiper** at Brigsteer on 10/12th September and Heversham on 13/16th. Also at Heversham were a juvenile **American Golden Plover** on 30th September, two **Wood Sandpipers**, one of which was injured and was present for a month, up to four **Ruff** on 4th October, 25 **Black-tailed Godwits** on same date and 28 on 10th October and a **Little Stint** on the same day. Regular counts of **Black-tailed Godwits** from College Green included 19 juveniles on 3rd September and a peak of 25 birds on 11th Oct.

A juvenile **Little Stint** was also here on 8th and 11th October.

Curlew Sandpiper continued to be present in September with a maximum of 22 at Port Carlisle/Bowness on Solway on 13th with still five there at the end of the month. Three were



Curlew Sandpiper, Bowness, Nick Franklin

at Arnside on 2nd October, a juvenile was at Hodbarrow on 4th with the latest being three at Bowness/Campfield RSPB on 7th.

Little Stint were seen in small numbers on the South Solway and also the flood at Heversham (including two on 17th October) with the last bird being on 13th November at Port Carlisle.



Green Sandpiper, Walby, Roger Ridley

Two **Common Sandpiper** were at Muncaster on 2nd November and one at Waberthwaite on 5th. Two **Green Sandpipers** were on Wedholme Flow on 5th September and singles were on College Green on 12th and at Waberthwaite on 20th. Walby Flash had up to three birds in the first week of October and a single from the middle to the end of November. Birds were also seen at Waterside, Wigton on 21st October and there were three on the River Esk at Muncaster, a regular wintering site, on 2nd November.

A **Woodcock** was at 2000ft on Torver High Common on 4th November. Thirteen **Common Snipe** were on the River Esk at Longtown on 6th September, 14 were at Carlisle Airport on 15th, 112 at Eycott hill on 10th October and ten at Siddick Pond on 14th. The first **Jack Snipe** was at Eycott Hill on 10th October with another at Tewet Tarn on 30th. In November singles were at Tarn Moor Sunbiggin, Watchtree and Cliburn Moss and two were by the River Eden at Rockliffe on 13th. The only **Spotted Redshank** sighted was a juvenile at College Green on 2nd September. Fifteen **Greenshank** were on the Mite Estuary on 5th September (increasing to 19 on 17th) with five at Grune Point on the same day. Six were on the Ravenglass Esk on 20th and the last reported four at Old Sandsfield on 19th October.

Skuas to Auks

There were three **Pomarine Skuas** and one **Arctic Skua** off St Bees Head on 1st October and a Pomarine was at Drigg the next day. A **Great Skua** was at Nethertown on 15th November. The annual Sellafeld roost contained 1,500 **Kittiwake** on 20th September. There were 250 **Black-headed gulls** at Walby Flash on 1st October. The North-west of the county again had an influx of **Mediterranean Gulls** with 33 at Siddick/Flimby and another seven in Workington on 5th September, by 20th these sites held 14 and 12

respectively. The gulls used Siddick Ponds for washing etc in early October with 15 on 6th, 20 on 9th and 12 on 14th. "Stumpy" was still at Workington Harbour on 20th November. A **Sabines Gull** flew south past Workington on 25th September.

Owls to Buntings

Short-eared Owls were reported only from Walney on 14th October and Carlisle Airport on 24th November when two were present.

A juvenile **Woodchat Shrike** was at Brigsteer from 4th September for two days. A **Great Grey Shrike** was first reported from Great Broughton on 6th November and was present until the end of the month. Cumbria's first **Isabelline Shrike** was present at Walney from 28th October for two days.



Great Grey Shrike, Soddy Gap, Roger Ridley

Whilst there was a hybrid Hooded/Carrion crow present in Whitehaven area consistently, a pure **Hooded Crow** was present on St Bees Head on 26th November. 400 **Skylarks** were on St Bees Head on 26th November. **House Martins** were in good numbers in mid September with 300 in the Brampton/Irthington area on 11th and 100 at Allonby on 15th. On 6th September 30 were seen to roost in a Beech tree at Castle Carrock. 150 **Swallows** were at Carlisle Airport on 8th September and 600 were in the Brampton/Irthington area on 11th September. Odd birds were about in October and the latest seemed to be at Carlisle Airport on 18th November. 160 **Hirundine species** moved south in 25 minutes over Wetheral just after dawn on 29th September and large numbers passed south at Allonby on 3rd October.

There was an exceptional influx of **Yellow-browed Warblers** in to the UK and Cumbria saw passage through in October; the first bird as at Levens (with a tit flock) on 3rd October thereafter birds were present in the coastal fringe in the south of the county – Kent's Bank, Westfield Point, Rampside, Walney, Flookburgh and Foulshaw Moss up to 20th. On the west coast the first bird was at St Bees Head on 3rd with birds present in Whitehaven/St Bees/Sellafield area right through to 22nd. Away from the coast, birds were at Waterside, Wigton on 7th, Cockermouth and Carlisle Airport both on 21st. The last bird was at Sedgewick on 23rd.

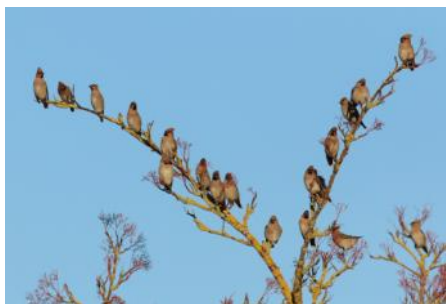


Waxwings, Carlisle, Tony Marsh



A male **Blackcap** was in a Whitehaven garden on 16th October.

The first birds of the **Waxwing** influx was a single bird at Scout Scar Kendal on 28th October; numbers in both Carlisle and Kendal started to build and birds were present throughout the month. In Kendal a flock built up to about 125 birds by 29th and the flock in Carlisle which had 50 birds on 7th had doubled in size by 11th and reached 150 by 13th but dwindled away after that though small groups were seen at various sites in the city, in Wetheral and Longtown. Dalston started to see birds on 14th with 200 there (possibly the Carlisle birds) but only smaller numbers later in the month until the 350 on 29th. Unlike previous influxes large numbers frequented Brampton with 214 also on 14th suggesting a large movement into the area with numbers dwindling as the month went on but still 35 on 28th. Keswick held up to 100 birds from 20th. 139 were in Penrith on 17th with numbers building as the month went on. Smaller groups were seen elsewhere. The berry crop was huge and birds were in many areas at the end of the month - "watch this space" for developments in December !



Waxwings, Dalston, Nick Franklin

A **Ring Ouzel** was at RSPB Geltsdale on 4th September, singles at Carlisle Airport on 11th and Swindale on 13th. Two males were at Geltsdale on 16th October and at least seven were at Gates Gill, Blencathra on 19th. At Torver a male and female were in the same small quarry from 3rd to 24th October apparently sharing two Rowan trees and one Holly!

Recent reports

Fieldfare started to arrive in mid October with 200 at Jockeyshield on 16th and 500 on 19th passing Binsey in 30 minutes as part of a wider passage including Redwing, Mistle Thrush and Starling. 250 were at Walton Moss on 31st.



Fieldfare, RSPB Geltsdale, Adam Moan

Redwing arrived a little earlier at the beginning of October with “first “ records on 2nd from Penrith, Campfield and Dearham. 200 passed Bowness on Solway going south east in 20 minutes in early morning. Autumn groups of **Mistle Thrush** included 21 at Fingland Rigg on 12th September and 15 on 14th at Low Heskett.

A **Black Redstart** frequented Whitehaven Harbour at the end of November. Significant numbers of **Stonechat** at Allonby were 17 on 15th September and 20 on 3rd October. Walney had a single **Firecrest** on 17th October. A single **Spotted Flycatcher** was at Wigton throughout September as well as two at Irthing Mill on 11th. **Wheatear** passage continued to 8th of October when a bird was on Siddick shore. It included two birds on Robinson on 2nd October, four at Kirkbride on 6th September and birds were present at Carlisle Airfield on five dates in September with a maximum of 14 on 9th. A juvenile **Yellow Wagtail** was at Brigsteer on 11th September and the first winter **Citrine Wagtail** frequented the the River Esk at Longtown from 3rd to 5th September. A single **Brambling** was at Sandale on 3rd October and a male and a female were in the Torver area on 7th but only Talkin Tarn held any (60) consistently in November. The only **Snow Bunting** reported were eight at Grune Point on 13th November.

As ever, we are indebted to all the contributors, too numerous to list. Feel free to send records by e-mail to: rjgreenacres72@gmail.com

NB *It is important that observers also submit records to the appropriate Regional Recorder at the end of the year. Please see either the latest edition of *Birds and Wildlife in Cumbria* or the Cumbria Bird Club website www.cumbriabirdclub.org.uk for details of how to do so.*

Bob Jones & Dave Piercy

Guidance for Contributors



Waxwing, Dalston, Nick Franklin

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

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Information for contributors

The deadline for copy for the next issue is March 1st 2017

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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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