

BIRD NEWS
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Club news and announcements

AGM

The AGM will be held in Penrith (venue to be announced) on Friday 4th November at 7.30pm.

Vacancies on Council: Chair, Vice-chair (three posts) and Treasurer.

According to the terms of the constitution the above posts will become vacant at the AGM though there is a proviso that the current incumbents may remain another year if there are no other suitable candidates. This note is to seek nominations from members to fill these posts. According to the terms of the constitution, nominations should be submitted to the secretary not later than seven days before the AGM (i.e. by 28th October).

Vacancies on Council: two ordinary members.

We would welcome new faces on council. Please feel free to put yourself forward. There are generally just three council meetings a year. If you would like to know more about what is involved please contact any current officers or members whose details are on the inside cover.

Field trip: St. Bees Head seabird cliffs on Saturday 9th July 2022.



Fulmar, St Bees, Tony Marsh

A half day meet, 9 a.m.-1p.m. Total distance 2.5 to 3 miles, easy walking.
Leader Dave Shackleton.

With the seabird nesting season reaching its peak we just have time to fit in a meet before the birds leave the ledges for another year. Dave Shackleton knows the cliffs and their occupants through many years of involvement and monitoring and although Puffin and Black Guillemot still breed in very small numbers it is the Guillemot, Razorbill and Kittiwake number which impress and lend that special character to the sandstone ledges. A chance to top up on that special flavour – summer at a seabird colony.

For full details and to book a place contact Mike and Lyn Mills on meetings@cumbriabirdclub.org.uk or call 01946 59061

CBC field trip Watchtree 16th April 2022

Easter Saturday might not seem the best day to arrange a Bird Club meet at Watchtree Reserve, judging by just how popular a venue the reserve is. With the recent arrival of spring migrants, however, an early morning meet was proposed by Frank Mawby as the best time to enjoy the reserve and well before the bank holiday rush. An added bonus, which we were unable to promote beforehand, was the possibility that Frank's ringing group would be active – if the weather on the day was suitable.



Tree Sparrow, Gowrie, Tommy Holden



Bullfinch, Gowrie, Tommy Holden

The weather was decidedly spring like and we met Frank for early admittance to the reserve at 7a.m. With directions on where to find him Frank scuttled off back to the ringing group while we parked up and grabbed our gear. Having caught up with him, Frank introduced the ringing team and with a steady stream of birds coming in from the mist nets we were soon treated to spring migrants in the hand. For most of the group this afforded a first hand experience of ringing with the efficiency of the team, as they processed the catch, being most impressive.

For our group this was a privileged session as Frank provided such detailed knowledge, way beyond what is normally available through birding resources. There were moult details, sexing, longevity, identification points and controls of migrants rung in previous years. This was a rich experience with Willow Warbler, Long-tailed Tit, Robin, Reed Bunting, Lesser Redpoll, Sedge Warbler, Bullfinch, Goldfinch, Blackcap, Tree Sparrow and Blackbird rung during the session.

Leaving the ringers for a while we headed off to the pool and woodland areas to enjoy a range of species, other wildlife and good company before returning for an update with the ringers. The session was winding down by 11 a.m. with the facilities filling with family groups as we were leaving.

A thoroughly enjoyable meet with thanks to Frank and his team of ringers.

Mike and Lyn Mills

CBC field trip RSPB Geltsdale 28th May 2022

Everyone met up at 9.00am in the **RSPB Geltsdale car park** and the weather was glorious, which was amazing as it was cool, overcast and windy on the day before and after! Whilst waiting to leave we could hear Curlew, Cuckoo, Chaffinch, Sedge and Willow Warbler. Walking along to the track to the lime kilns we saw Lapwing and heard Blackcap and Redpoll. We then went into **Forest Head Quarry** heading towards **Brown Fell** and just before we left the quarry a Tree Pipit was seen carrying food. Mike then spotted a very distant Buzzard, a rare sight this year with the lack of Field Voles.

We were hoping to see Ring Ouzel in the Quarry but no luck. However just below **Hully Gully** Dee spotted a male flying into a tree at the bottom of the gully. We then watched the male land on some heather whilst there was a female actually in the gully.



Further up the **Brown Fell** track we came to a Whinchat territory, where we had close views of a colour-ringed female and distant views of an un-ringed male. All along the track there was a constant soundtrack of Willow Warbler and Redpoll.



Just before **The Neuk gate** a pair of Ring Ouzel were flying back towards the gully (we assumed the same pair?). On either side of the gate we had alarm calling Stonechat, Skylark and Meadow Pipit. At the **Brown Fell** natural amphitheatre we flushed a Common Snipe.

We stopped for lunch just above **The Gairs** house, where we heard and saw a Cuckoo sitting on the roof and it seemed to be using the chimney as an amplifier. It then flew all the way round us being mobbed by three Meadow Pipits all the way.

Just after **The Neuk gate** we saw the female Ring Ouzel again feeding on the track. We also had close views of a pair of Stonechat carrying food.





At **Howgill** we split up to look for Adders and orchids. Unfortunately it was too hot for the Adders and only a few people had a quick glimpse of a male disappearing into the dead bracken (Adam had seen five and three the cooler days before and after!). Also it has been so cold and windy recently, so there were only a few Northern Marsh Orchids out. Just before the **Geltsdale** carved seat we heard a Garden Warbler and just after we had a colour-ringed male Whinchat. However it

was so hot that the heat haze meant we could not see the ring colours.

We stopped for a coffee and comfort break at the **RSPB Stagsike visitors centre**, where we saw Goldfinch, Siskin and a very red male Redpoll on the feeders. Mike then spotted an Oystercatcher flying past and then straight away said "Osprey in a dead tree". We then had great views of it being mobbed by the Oystercatcher, Lesser Black-backed and Black-headed Gulls. After checking his photos Adam noticed that it had a SatTag, so hopefully it will be Blue UV, which is a regular visitor to the Tarn.

As we were running late, half of the group then had to head off and the rest went down the side of **Tindale Tarn** towards **Tarnhouse Farm** where we had better views of the Osprey sitting in the tree, plus Swallows, House and Sand Martins feeding over the Tarn. At this time of the year the Tarn is very quiet, so we only saw Mute Swan, Canada and Greylag Goose, Coot, Swallow, Sand and House Martins, plus a Common Gull nesting on the east end island.



After approximately five miles walking and over seven hours we ended up with a total of 48 species. We were lucky to see our two main target species Ring Ouzel and Whinchat but amazingly we did not see a Kestrel or Red Grouse or even hear a Grasshopper Warbler!

Other species seen

Orange Tip, Green-veined White, Peacock, Small Copper
Mother Shipton, Common Heath, Common Carpet and Brown Silver-line
Rabbit, Brown Hare and Roe Deer

Adam Moan (all photos were taken on the trip by Adam)

CBC Rookery survey: April 2022

The Cumbria Bird Club had undertaken two previous surveys of Rookeries throughout the county in 1996 and 2013.

The results of the latter survey confirmed a substantial decline in both the number of rookeries (5.3%) and the number of apparently occupied nests (39%) in Cumbria between the two field-work years. The aim of the 2022 survey was to update the status of Rooks in Cumbria, identifying changes in their population and distribution.



Rook, Portinscale, Tony Marsh

Over 40 participants achieved complete coverage of all eighty ten kilometre squares in the county which had recorded rookeries in the earlier surveys. A preliminary review of the results suggests that the number of active rookeries lost has continued at a similar rate as before. However, the decline in the Rook population has slowed down considerably during the last decade with significant increases in the lowlands of the south and west of the county and patchily elsewhere. The main areas with a persistently negative trend are in the eastern Lake District and the Eden Valley.

A full report on the 2022 survey will be published later in the year. Meanwhile, many thanks to everyone who contributed to a successful conclusion to the project.

Malcolm Priestley

House Sparrow predating a Golden-ringed Dragonfly

Just watched something I've never seen before in our back garden in Arlecdon. I looked out of the window to see a House Sparrow predating a Golden-ringed Dragonfly. I watched it for three to four minutes as it busily wrestled with the seemingly dead dragonfly before flying off with it. Funny thing is I have never recorded this dragonfly around here!



Peter Ullrich

Mass arrival of Common Swifts

It was not until 8th May that our first Swift returned to its nest at Lowgill. Often they are earlier (our earliest in past years was 3rd May). Many of the Swift fraternity around the country were becoming anxious that they were late coming back this year. However on 9th May there was a sudden influx of Swifts – eight suddenly darted into their nest sites at Lowgill, and that included three pairs. Within four days, by the 12th May, 86% of our birds on camera had returned. Usually we'd see one or two a day arriving over a period of up to ten days / two weeks. What is amazing is that this mass arrival on 9th May happened throughout the country, on the very same day, with friends and colleagues in towns such as Bristol, Leeds, Bolton, Cambridge all messaging to say they'd suddenly had large numbers of their Swifts back.



Even more incredible is that this influx on 9th May was seen in Europe too. The international Swift forum reported big numbers returning to their colonies on that day, as far afield as Switzerland, Berlin and Netherlands. The synchrony is truly mind-boggling. Why?

The migration route for western European common Swifts is via West Africa and Spain and one obstacle is negotiating the Pyrenees between Spain and France. There had been very bad weather with northerly winds in Southern Europe at the end of April and early May and we believe that this held up the Swifts in Spain. At Falaise de Leucate in south eastern France, a few miles up the coast from Perpignan, birders count numbers of migrants passing through. It is a vast area full of ponds and salt marsh, teeming with insect life, part of the Parc Naturel de la Narbonnaise. On 5th May they recorded 3,170 Swifts passing through but on 7th they counted 29,525 Swifts and on the 8th an amazing 68,047 Swifts. What a sight that must have been. Perpignan is 800 miles from the UK but a Swift takes only a day or so for that distance. Hence the mass arrival of Swifts everywhere on May 9th.

Similar huge numbers were also counted on 7th and 8th May at another hot spot, Etang de Canet, further south on the Mediterranean coast of France and only 25 miles from the Spanish border. It is a shallow lagoon largely only one metre deep. These migration places are excellent for watching the spring migration for other species such as White Stork, Black Kite, Red-rumped Swallow, Marsh Harrier and European Bee Eater.

On a completely different topic, I don't think we could ever better Segovia, as a place to marvel at Swifts. It is said to have 2,000 breeding pairs and the wonderful Roman aquaduct pictured, in the centre of town has literally hundreds of Common Swifts nesting. We spent the most fantastic evenings watching Swift displays as they whizzed around filling the sky, as screaming parties of 50+ zoomed around. We were in Segovia for the 6th International Common Swift conference (25th -27th May) and after days of talks, what could be better than evenings relaxing with a beer and watching the aerobatics. Magic.

Tanya & Edmund Hoare



Swallows

As we sip our morning coffee in bed on these June mornings, we look out over the garden, where about fifty swallows are breakfasting on invisible midges. As they feast on the wing, trilling with joy, they treat us to an amazing aerial display: white-rumped darts arcing through the air at phenomenally high speeds, circling and re-circling with quick flaps followed by a glide, swooping higher on fine days than on wet mornings (perhaps insects fly lower when it is raining). They manoeuvre around each other with consummate skill, never colliding, ravelling and unravelling an invisible skein, in constant Brownian motion. Then, as if on a military order, the squadron wheels as one and instantly the air is clear again.

Rosamund Macfarlane

CBC Swift survey 2021 - a brief summary

The CBC Swift survey was first carried out in the summer of 2018 and was then repeated in 2019, 2020 and 2021. Many thanks to all who took part.

Aims and scope

The main aim was to identify the presence of Swifts in suitable breeding habitat in Cumbria. Also to carry out timed counts on the maximum number of Swifts seen and the maximum number of “screamers” seen at any one time.

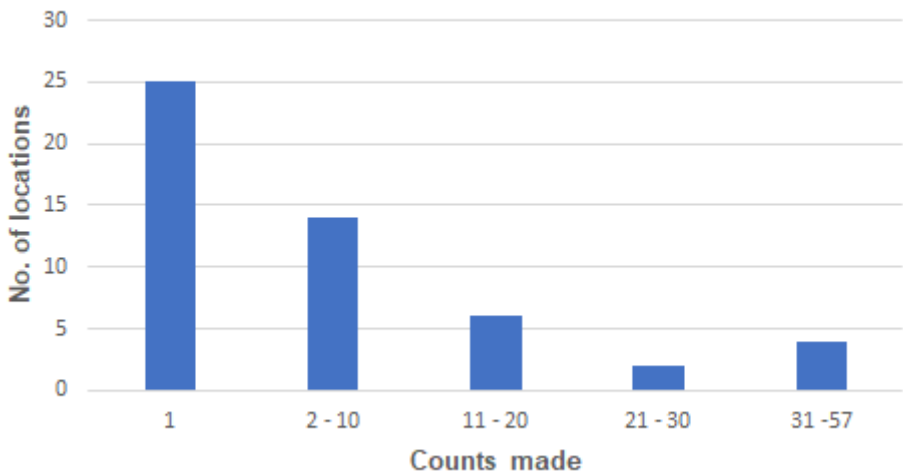
Coverage

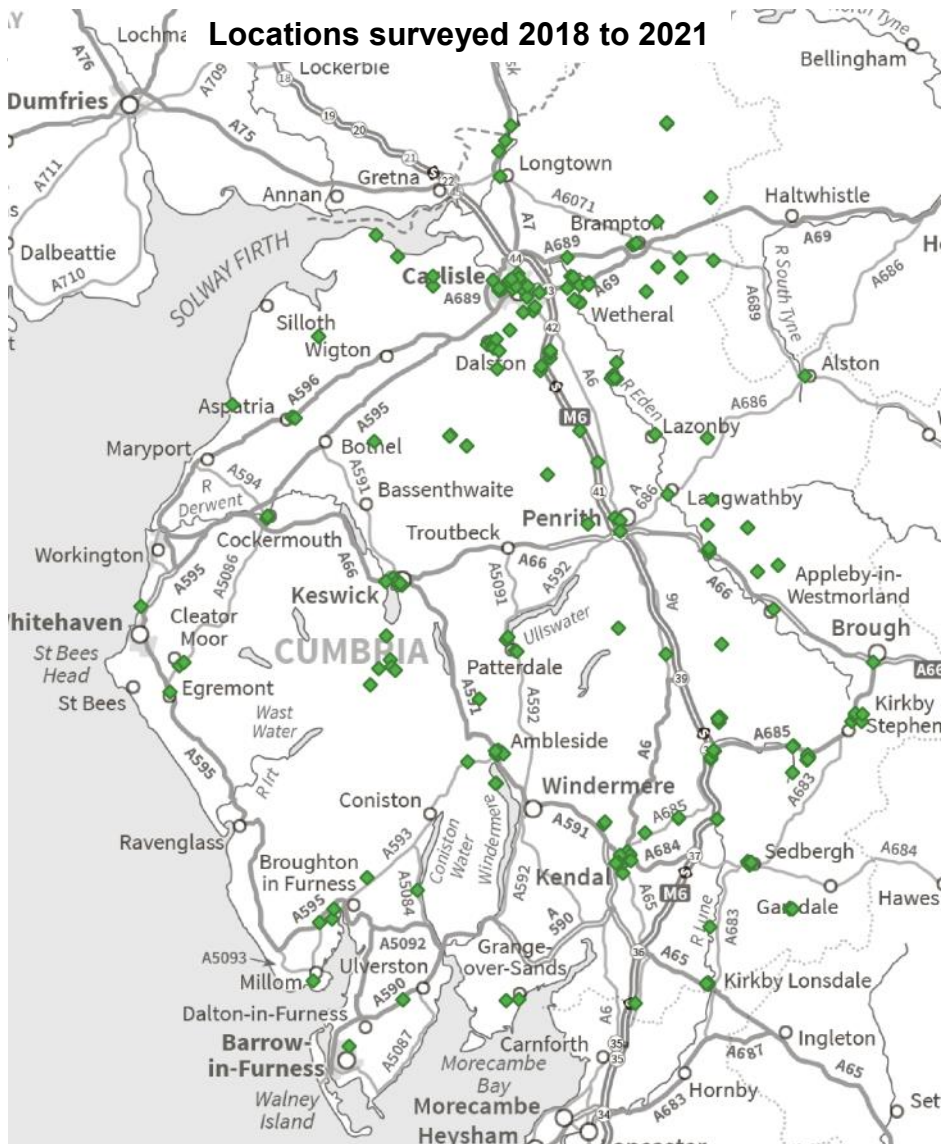
Year	No. of locations	Counts made	Average counts/location
2018	121	536	4.4
2019	71	374	5.3
2020	49	556	11.3
2021	51	394	7.6

The pandemic obviously restricted surveying activity for a time, though even at the nadir at least surveys could legally take place by “working from home”. As can be seen on the graph below nearly a half of all locations received a solitary visit with around another quarter providing up to ten counts. A remarkable 57 the most from one residence in Ravenstonedale.

Every location surveyed in 2021 recorded at least a single Swift. The lack of nil returns points to local knowledge targeting known Swift colonies

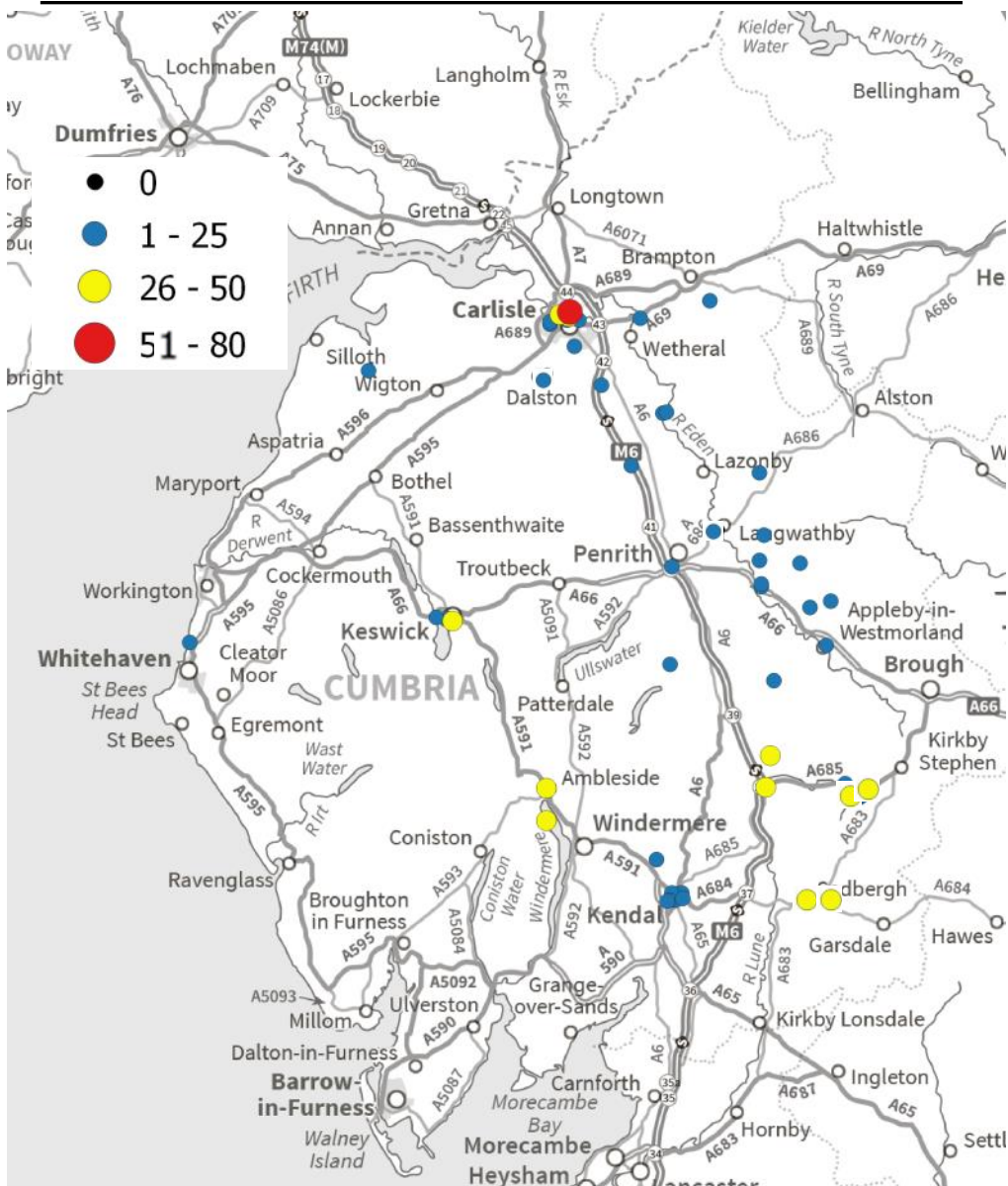
2021 - Total no. of visits made to each location





Over the four years good coverage of the county has been achieved with surveys spread over 52 10km squares. A varied mix of human habitations from a remote moorland chapel to estates and commercial areas in Carlisle. There was also a good selection of our towns and some smaller villages and hamlets.

Maximum no. of Swifts at each location 2021



The highest count came from the Stanwix area of Carlisle where there were around 80 birds on the 20th and 26th July. These counts were made around the times of Swift peak activity. There were a range of further high counts from Carlisle including 50 above Clark's Field on the 27th June.

Counts in the range of between 20 and 50 came predictably mainly from our major towns that were surveyed. The exception was Penrith where only low numbers were recorded. Is this due to there being less buildings made of Lakeland stone with its welcoming crevices? Perhaps the town's 'hotspots' were not covered. It would be interesting to continue to receive counts in the future. I used to record good numbers whilst waiting for trains at the station but recent visits have garnered few records.

The Sedbergh area, is now exceptional for Swifts. The enthusiasm and expertise of the local Swift group have shown what can be achieved. There are now a number of local Swift groups around the county and all are having a great impact.

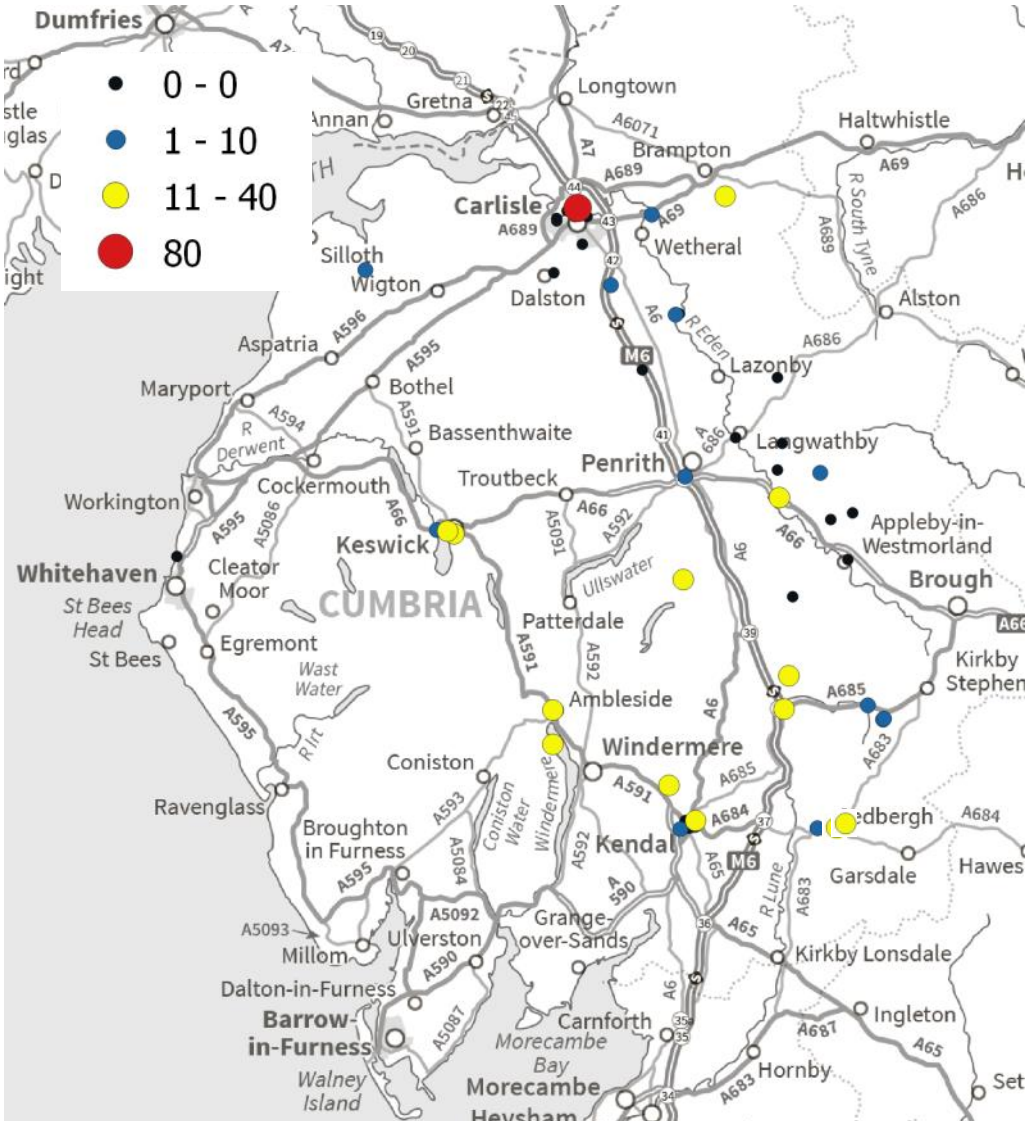
Table of the highest counts with at least 20

Location	Maximum Swifts	Date
Carlisle	80	20th & 26th July
Sedbergh	46	18th July
Orton	45	17th July
Ambleside	45	22nd July
Wray Castle	38	23rd July
Keswick	30	22nd July
Farlam	24	16th July
Kendal	20	16th July
Ravenstonedale	20	19th July

Note that as for Carlisle the dates are all around mid-July onwards. The peak time for Swift activity with chicks not yet fledged and breeding and non-breeding Swifts very active.

The high numbers are obviously not restricted to the major towns. Wray Castle according to its surveyor "is a perfect playground for Swifts, who swoop from the walls, circle towers and then head off to the lake to feed."

Maximum no. of screamers at each location 2021
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Screaming parties are spectacular. They are a key part of any survey as they give an indication of where Swifts are breeding. Swift's nests take a great deal of patience to find and are easily missed with birds darting in and out in the blink of an eye. Screaming parties hurtling around the roof tops can often be seen to tour likely nesting places.

The largest screaming party of 80 was seen from a house in the Stanwix area. Seen from a single vantage point the observer noted that they were in two discrete groupings of 40 or so.

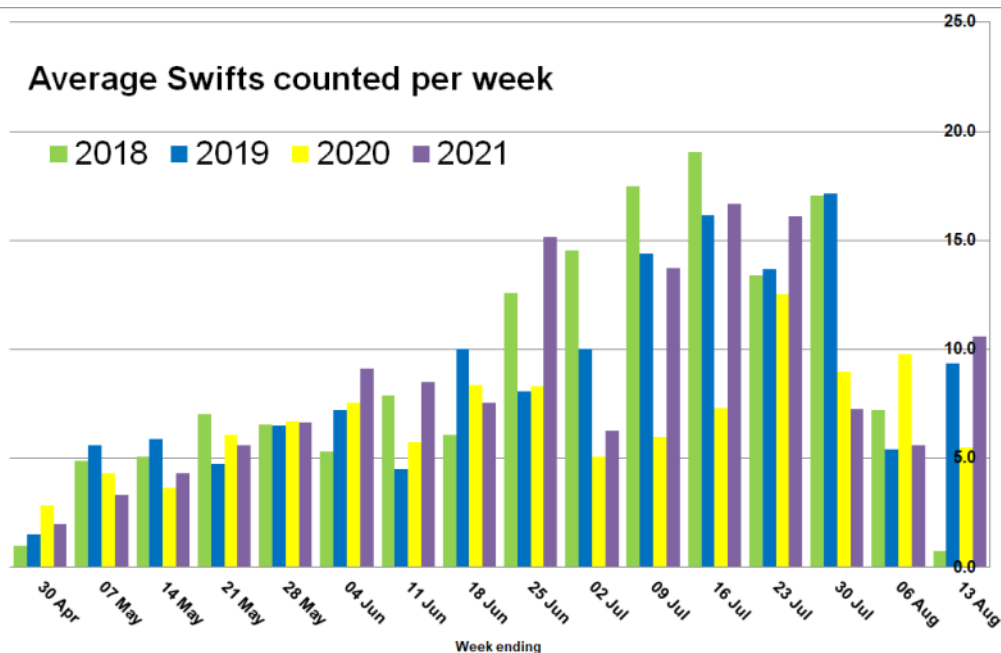
Table of the highest counts of screamers

Location	Maximum Screamers	Date
Carlisle	80	26th July
Sedbergh	45	10th July
Ambleside	34	20th July
Orton	34	17th July
Wray Castle	30	23rd July
Keswick	20	20th June
Kendal	20	22nd July

The dates are again, with the exception of Keswick, around Swift peak activity times.

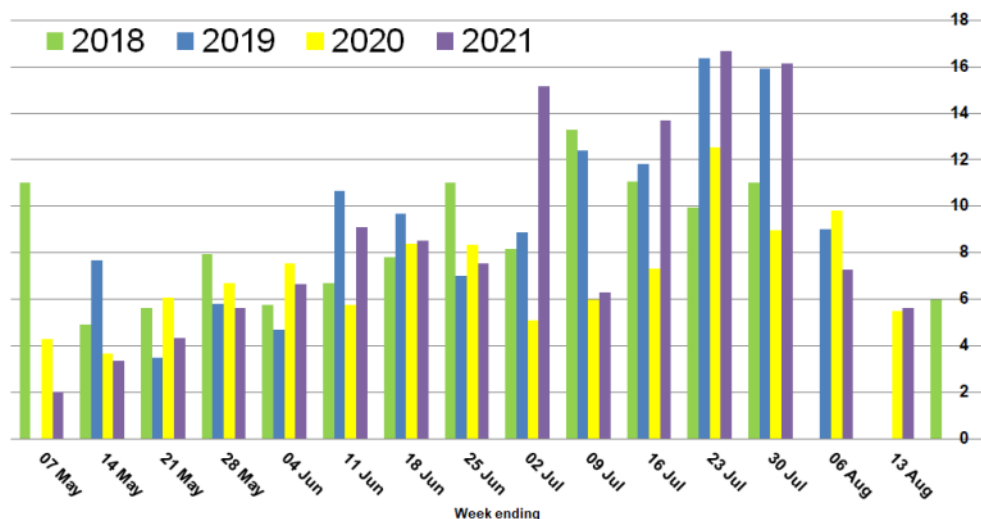
Perhaps surprisingly no screamers were reported from 26 of the 51 locations. Eighteen of these locations were visited only once. A future survey should target visits at peak screamer times and dates. It may prove advantageous to focus solely on screaming parties as other birds present may not belong to the local colony.

Average Swifts counted per week



Average screamers per count by week

non-zero counts only



2020 was by all accounts a terrible year for Swifts. They were buffeted by extreme storms on their epic journey here with consequential huge losses. On arrival here the weather was initially welcoming. Sadly the breeding season soon deteriorated with cold and wet exacerbated by gales. The end of June saw huge numbers heading south down the east coast.

The graphs clearly highlight 2020 as a poor year especially from mid-June onwards. 2021 had to be an improvement surely? Both graphs show a very slow build up in the May of 2021 lagging behind even 2020. From June onwards numbers recorded in 2021 began to pick up giving the hope of a better season.

The weather in 2021 was generally poor in May, unseasonably cold and wet. This along with problems on migration are likely to contribute towards the slow start. Fortunately June and July were more balmy and conducive to insect life. For once the north-west had a better summer than the south. One theory being that birds moving north to escape the weather joined our populations. Also breeding birds didn't need to travel far to feed and were therefore more likely to be picked up by surveyors.

Some comments from surveyors give hope that this was not just a better year than 2020 but a very good year for Swifts.

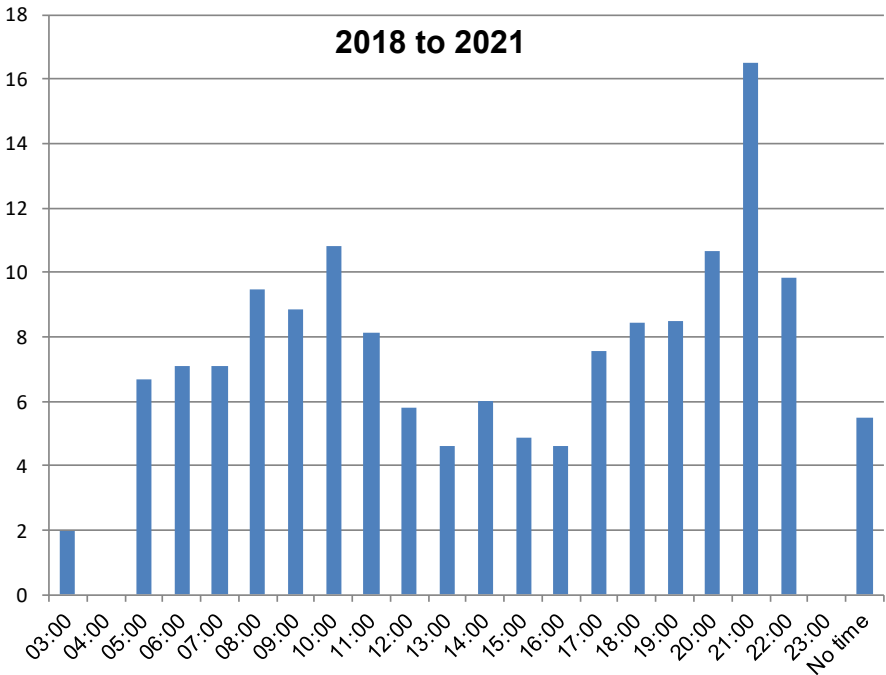
"In this summer's wonderful warm weather we had the best ever Swift displays that we can remember..."

"Conservations with other South Lakeland Swift observers confirmed that this had been a very good year for numbers..."

The numbers of screamers peaked as would be expected in mid to late July. Hopefully these relatively high numbers, compared to the last three years, may be reflected in next year's arrivals. However this will also rely on the many other factors that control their food supply.

Average Swifts by time

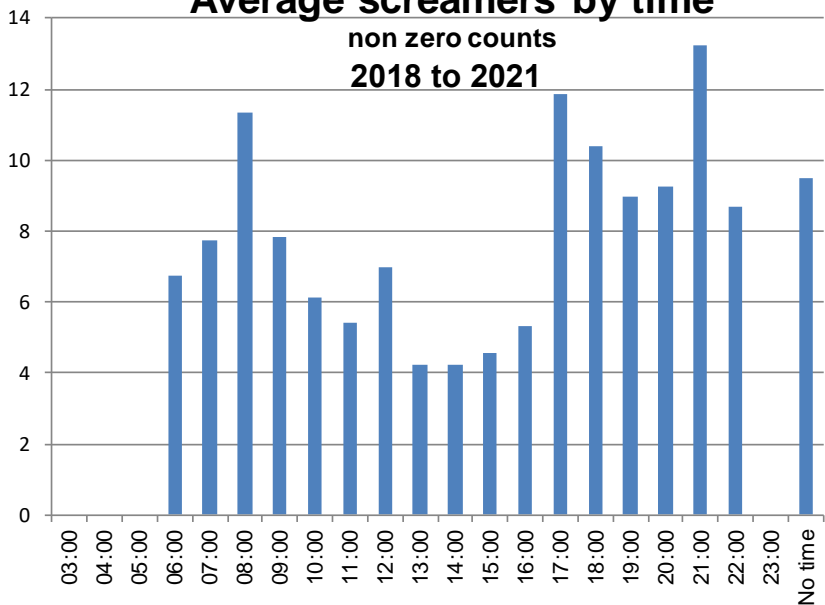
2018 to 2021



Average screamers by time

non zero counts

2018 to 2021



CBC Swift survey 2021 - a brief summary

The Swift survey took place from 2018 to 2021. In the four years covered 17604 Swifts and 7309 screamers were counted during 1855 visits.

The graphs consolidate data from all four years and illustrate when the most productive times of day for surveying occur. Counts of Swifts peak around 10:00 and with even greater numbers at 21:00. The number of screamers peak at 08:00 then at 17:00 and 21:00. This data could be used in future surveys to target the best times in particular for screaming parties.

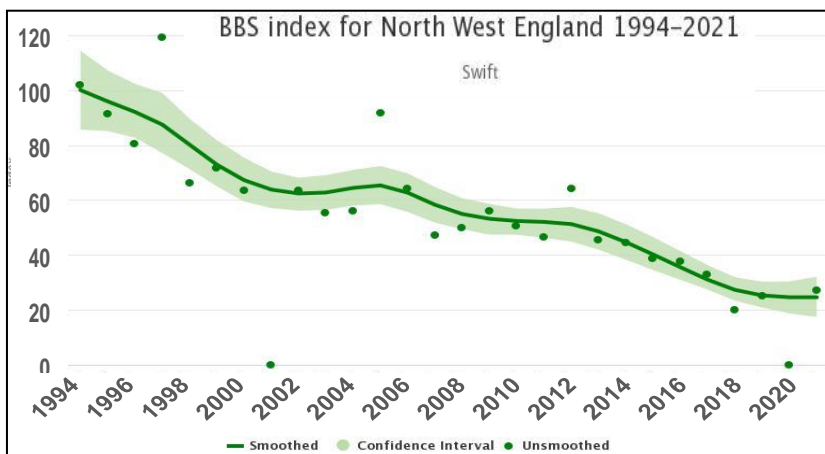
This survey has reinforced our knowledge of Swift distribution in the county. It has not given us any great insight into total population numbers or the depth of the obvious declines. The survey has, however, given us an outline of differences that can occur over a period of breeding seasons. Some indication of how distant weather systems can impact on our populations as well as the more obvious vagaries of our Cumbrian climate taking its toll.

Hopefully the data gathered has given us a useful baseline against which future surveys can be measured.

Perhaps the greatest effect has been to encourage more people to look out for Swifts. Also to inspire others to protect current nesting sites and to add nest boxes to their own properties. At least one new local Swift group has formed through surveyors taking up the passion. Local Swift groups must take the majority of the plaudits as they have made remarkable progress over the years in promoting and taking practical action for Swift conservation.

Room for one final graph. A grim reminder. Note 2020 was particularly bad.

Dave Piercy



Recent reports

The period covered is from March to May 2022 inclusive. Some records are unauthenticated and may require review.

Wildfowl

The two female **Ring-necked Ducks** continued to be seen on pits at Longtown on and off to 12 April. Arguably on a similar level of rarity these days, a pair of **Smew** were in the northwest bay of Ennerdale on 8 March.

There was a good showing of **Garganey** across all the months under review. An early pair were at New Sandsfield on 18 March. A female was at Park End wetland 13-14 April. A male was near Whitehaven on 19 April. A pair were at Foulshaw/Ulpha Meadows on 27 April, a male was at Hodbarrow on 2 May with the last of the spring at Black Dyke on the 5th.



Garganey, Brigsteer, Robert Pocklington

The only **Scaup** in the period were apparently a carry-over from earlier in the winter. The female at Walney remained to 18 March, and was presumably the bird off Foulney on the 20th. The Sunbiggin Tarn bird remained until at least 15 March. In terms of other aythyas a pair of **Pochard** were at Park End wetland in mid-April and one was at Foulshaw/Ulpha Meadows on 16 May. There were 66 **Tufted Duck** at a private Castle Carrock site in April.

All **Long-tailed Duck** records were from the Solway in May – four at Port Carlisle on 4th, two past Bowness on the 6th and one there on the 22nd. By contrast all **Velvet Scoter** reports came from the south at Walney BO – three on 30 March and singles on 21 and 31 May.



Common Scoter, Bowness, Roger Ridley

Common Scoter records included 900 at Bowness-on-Solway on 18 April. Some nocturnal migration was noted over Ulverston in small numbers in March and April. Other birds away from usual haunts included a male at Foulshaw on 4 April, a female there on the 11th and one on the Kent in Kendal in between these on the 9th.

Goosander are generally declining so 30 at Port Carlisle on 18 May was a good count. There were up to 42 **Goldeneye** on the Eden at Rockcliffe in the period. With regard to potentially summering birds a pair were still at Hodbarrow in late May and the presumably injured drake at Ormsgill looked set to stay again. **Eider** records in the north of the county include two at Bowness-on-Solway on 18 May and four on 25th. Other records included 600 **Shelduck** on the Leven Estuary on 19 March, 192 at Glasson on 22 May, and 400 **Pintail** on the Leven Estuary also on 19 March.



Goosander, Russel Austin

Pick of the goose records during the period was a **Greenland White-front** through Walney on 24 April. There was a pronounced passage of **Pinkfeet** on 14 April, including no fewer than 12330 over Walney, 2500 north in ten minutes at Arlecdon and other widespread reports. There may also have been large overnight movements on 6-7 March, when 16 nocturnal passes were noted over Ulverston. There were still 310 Pale-bellied **Brent Geese** in the Walney / Foulney area in March.

Whooper Swan passage in March was well recorded, larger counts are listed. On 6th March 55 went north over Ambleside, the following day 68 passed over Ulverston. There were 93 at Pelutho on 8 March. One hundred dropped in at Elterwater on 16 March, 57 passed Longtown on the 18th.



Shelduck, Russel Austin

Nightjar, Swift, Cuckoo, Pigeons and Doves

The first **Swift** were at Arnside and Foulshaw on 28 April. Larger gatherings of this species comprised 150 at Park End wetland on 26 May and 100 at Bassenthwaite Lake on 22 May.

Cuckoo reports included three together (two males, one female) at Torver High Common on 20 May and three calling at Bassenthwaite on 5 May.

Rails and Crakes, Crane

A **Crane** flew over Arnside Knott on 15 April. Perhaps the same bird was at Foulshaw Moss on the 17th. It is now known that some of the birds from Loch of Strathbeg use a migration path that takes them through South Cumbria and North Lancashire.

Water Rails were seen regularly at Foulshaw and Wedholme Flow.



Water Rail, RSPB Geltsdale, Adam Moan

Grebes

No reports received other than **Great Crested Grebe** displaying at regular sites.

Waders

There were two transatlantic visitors in the north of the county in the period. A summer adult **Spotted Sandpiper** was a popular attraction at Port Carlisle on 11-13 May. Prior to this a **Pectoral Sandpiper** was at Wedholme Flow on 17 April and then relocated at Campfield Marsh on 30 April to the next day.



Spotted Sandpiper, Bowness, Roger Ridley

The only **Curlew Sandpiper** of the spring was at Port Carlisle on 21 May. Similarly, there was a single **Wood Sandpiper**, at Campfield Marsh on 29 April. A **Spotted Redshank** spent most of April at Hodbarrow. A run of **Little Stints** in the latter half of May included birds at Port Carlisle on 19th, Bowness-on-Solway on 24th and 26th and Hodbarrow on 27th.

Peak **Ruff** passage counts were eight at Wedholme Flow on 18 April and four at Campfield Marsh on 9 May. Up to seven wintering **Greenshank** were still at South Walney in March, other records received were of two at Longtown on 18 March, three at Eskmeals on 22 March and one at Bassenthwaite on 4 April. **Green Sandpiper** were at Linstock (two) and Rockcliffe on 26 March, followed by one on 12 April at Rockcliffe.



Ringed Plover, Flimby, Tony Marsh



Little Ringed Plover, Sam Griffin

Perhaps the first **Whimbrel** to arrive was one at the Leven Viaduct on 30 March. Flocks noted included 70 near Watchtree on 30 April, 60 at Campfield on 2 May, 25 at Flimby on 27 April and Bowness-on-Solway on 5 May and 24 at Port Carlisle on 5 May.

Common Sandpiper arrival began with one on the Est at Longtown on 11 April. **Little Ringed Plover** first appeared on 18 March at Halforth, with reports from half a dozen sites including some kept confidential thereafter. The only **Avocet** records submitted were four at Campfield and two at Bowness-on-Solway on 30 April

Black-tailed Godwit assemblies included 296 at Campfield Marsh on 13 April, 200 at Bowness-on-Solway on 11 May and 150 at Foulshaw Moss on 8 March. Other wader spring passage included 2000 **Golden Plover** at Burgh Marsh on 30 March, 789 **Ringed Plover** at Port Carlisle on 22 May and 97 **Sanderling** at Port Carlisle on 21 May.

Two **Jack Snipe** were at a site 350 feet above sea level at Geltsdale on 7 March.



Common Sandpiper, Camerton, Derek McAlone



Sanderling, Grune, Roger Ridley

Gulls, Terns and Skuas



Fulmar & Herring Gull, St Bees, Tony Marsh

A **Yellow-legged Gull** was in Whitehaven Harbour on 6 March. This is presumably the bird noted here on and off over several years. There were **Ro-seate Terns** at Hodbarrow on 4 May and Walney on 12 May.

Skua passage was rather low key this year. Following the first **Pomarine Skua** at Walney on 10 May the only records from Bowness-on-Solway were four on 11 May, five on 25 May and one on the 26th. No Long-tailed Skuas were seen on the vigils recording Solway overland passage.

A scattering of **Little Gull** reports included adults at Bowness-on-Solway on 7 April, Port Carlisle on 21 May and the Kent Estuary on 26 May with a second-year bird lingering at Hodbarrow 27-31 May. **Mediterranean Gull** records included one at Haverigg on 22 March and up to three at Hodbarrow at the end of April. **Kittiwake** passage peaked at 2000 past Bowness-on-Solway on 6 April, whilst there were 436 there on 12 March and 330 on 11 May.

In a lacklustre spring nationally for the species only one **Black Tern** was seen, at Bowness-on-Solway on 20 May. First arrival dates for the three county breeding species included 17 March at Walney for **Sandwich Tern**, 18 April there for **Arctic Tern** and 19 April at Hodbarrow for **Common Tern** and **Little Tern**.

The first **Arctic Skua** was at Walney on the early date of 17 March. Peak counts came unsurprisingly from Bowness-on-Solway including seven on 11 May and 26 May and six on 6 April. **Great Skua** were thin on the ground with the only multiple occurrence three in (and two out) at Bowness-on-Solway on 13 May, given the impacts of bird flu in Shetland records may be fewer going forward.

Auks

Several reports of up to two **Puffin** were noted from Bowness-on Solway in April. The species has become increasingly regular off Walney in spring and the peak count there was twelve on 15 May. A total of 110 **Guillemot** passed Bowness-on-Solway on 10 May.

Divers

Great Northern Divers were seen off Bowness-on-Solway on four dates – 27 April and 10th, 20th and 22nd May. **Red-throated Diver** totals included 30 off Bowness on 11 May and 24 at Foulney on 20 March.

Petrels, Shearwaters, Gannet, Shag, Cormorant

A **Storm Petrel** moved south off Lowca Beach on 8 May. A **Shag** was also here in March, whilst up to thirteen were seen off Walney. The first **Manx Shearwater** were recorded off Walney on 6 April, the highest daily count there was 1350 on 13 May.

Hérons and Allies

A 'booming' **Bittern** was at Park End wetland from 16 May for around eleven days, testimony to the habitat work done here. The overwintering **Spoonbill** remained at Askam until 17 March. One was at Hodbarrow on 16 April then two, an adult and second year, were there 24-27 May.



Great White Egret, Brigsteer, Robert Pocklington

Great White Egret were reported regularly at Park End wetland, and also from Lazonby on 22 April, Waterhead, Windermere on 5 May and Bowness-on-Solway on 6 May. **Little Egret** sightings included 40 roosting at Hodbarrow on 27 May.

Birds Of Prey



Herring Gull mobbing Peregrine with prey, St Bees, Tony Marsh

A **Black Kite** was noted on 25 May heading north near Haile, Egremont.

Red Kite were noted as quite regular at Park End wetland. Other records received probably understating abundance came from Foulshaw and Ulpha Meadows, Campfield and Wigton whilst the most unusual record of the period was two over Walney on 19 March.

At least two male **Marsh Harriers** were in the Foulshaw / Ulpha Meadows area, whilst a female was regular at Park End Wetland. There were two reports of **Hobby** – Little Strickland on 17 May and Port Carlisle on 21st.

Owls, Woodpeckers, Shrikes

A **Wryneck** was near Garnett Bridge, north of Kendal on 4 May. A **Long-eared Owl** was at Foulshaw on 4 March, another at Sandsyke on 7 March but was unfortunately found dead the next day

Corvids

The situation with **Hooded Crow** was complicated by hybrids / intergrades, but there were still clearly several pure birds in the county. The most regularly reported bird ironically (given the previous comment) paired with a Carrion Crow on Walney and went on to fledge young. A flock of six birds in mid-April at St Bees included some apparent hybrids, but at least two pure birds were in this area with perhaps the same at Egremont and Workington. Elsewhere two were seen together at Powter Howe Wood, Thornthwaite and at Port Carlisle and Conis-
ton Old Man.



*Long-eared Owl,,
Sam Griffin*

Hirundines

Arrival dates included three **Swallow** at Watchtree on 17 March, 20 March for **Sand Martin** at Longtown, and 8 April at Annaside for **House Martin**. Birds not arriving at expected sites was commented on for all the hirundine species, this may have been moderated by some late arrivals in some areas but still reflecting clear declines. An estimated 1000 **Sand Martin** passed through Bassenthwaite in a couple of hours on 12 April.

Warblers

Any sweepstake for the next new bird for Cumbria location probably wouldn't have Barrow-in-Furness railway station in the guesses, but a singing **Iberian Chiffchaff** was reported there on 14 April.

The colonisation of the county by **Cetti's Warblers** has surged in the last couple of years. Reports in the period included Foulshaw, Ormsgill Reservoir, Park End wetland, Siddick Pond, Thacka Beck NR and Thwaite Flat.

Wood Warblers included up to three singing at Glenridding and one in Powter Howe woods, though the latter compares with five in 2018/19.

Grasshopper Warbler arrived from 13 April at Campfield Marsh and Park End wetland, up to four reeled at the latter site.

Other arrival dates included 13 April for **Sedge Warbler** (Park End), 18 April for **Reed Warbler** (Park End and Foulshaw), 19 April for **White-throat** (Hodbarrow) and 21 April for **Lesser Whitethroat** (Gleaston). A marked arrival of **Chiffchaff** was noted across the county from 10 March.



Wood Warbler, Russel Austin



Blackcap, Geltsdale, Adam Moan

Recent reports

Starlings

A **Rosy Starling** was at Seascale on 16 May, part of a reasonable influx into the country.

Thrushes, Chats and Flycatchers

Wheatear arrived from 12 March, when birds were seen on Walney and at Campfield. The first **Whin-chats** were also at Walney, on 16 April, and also Torver Low Common.

Spotted Flycatchers were noted at both Sedbergh and Sizergh on 5 May, this species continued to move late through Walney with four on 22nd and one still migrating on 29th.

The first **Ring Ouzel** was noted from Torver High Common on 15 March, with others in the northern fells on the 25th. Coastal migrants were noted at Walney on 28 March and 15-16 April and Grune Point on 25 April. A late **Fieldfare** was at Mosedale on 20 May.



*Spotted Flycatcher,
Hallbankgate, Adam Moan*

Wagtails and Pipits

A **Blue-headed Wagtail** was at Braystones on 1 May. An intergrade Blue-headed x British '**Channel**' **Wagtail** was on the River Esk at Longtown on 24 -25 April. The first **Yellow Wagtail** at Walney on 20 April was one of four there during the spring, another was at Langwathby on the 29 April.



Rock Pipit, Harrington, Derek McAlone



Yellow Wagtail,, Longtown, Roger Ridley



*Meadow Pipit,
RSPB Geltsdale, Adam Moan*

Up to three **Water Pipits** were still at Biggar Bank following high tide flooding in early March, with one remaining until the 20th.

Tree Pipits were back at breeding grounds before any coastal migrants were reported, with the first at both Meathop and Roudsea Mosses on 10 April.

Finches



Brambling, Hallbankgate, Adam Moan

There were 55 **Twite** at Walney in early March, and a passage flock of 50 passed through Selker on 10 March.

Two **Hawfinch** were at Old Park Wood in April. Several contributors reported good numbers of **Siskin**, and flocks of up to ten **Brambling** were noted from scattered locations early in the period.



Hawfinch,Sizergh, Tony Marsh



Wren, Russel Austin



*Red Grouse,
RSPB Geltsdale, Adam Moan*

Buntings

Two **Corn Bunting** were seen at St Bees on 29 April. There were also reports in this area last year and the origin of these birds is intriguing given the species is considered to be extinct as a breeding bird in the county.

Escapes / Unknown Origin

White Storks were reported west over Grasmere on 21 March and in the Lyth Valley on 12 April. Various reports in the Furness area undoubtedly related to wandering individuals from the South Lakes Animal Park but the origin of these birds is more open to argument. At least three birds from the reintroduction project at Knepp, West Sussex reached Lancashire at the same time and that could be the source of these sightings.



Yellowhammer, Gowrie, Tommy Holden

As ever, we are indebted to all the contributors, too numerous to list.

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.

Stephen Dunstan



House Martins returned to the gable of our Bungalow at Dubwath for the fourth year. They have only just taken residence after reconstructing the wrecked nest on top of the security alarm box. They have probably been around now for approximately three weeks. Attached is an image from the previous year's successful brood.

Hoping the Spotted Flycatcher returns to its old nest site next to the shed door (never turned up last year).

Terry Hughes e-mail 1st June

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 September 1st 2022

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If you do not have a computer: please send in as clear a format as possible to Dave Piercy, 64 The Headlands, Keswick CA12 5EJ; tel 017687 73201

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