

BIRD NEWS
Vol. 35 No.1 Spring 2024

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Twinned with Cumberland Bird Observers Club
New South Wales, Australia
<http://www.cboc.org.au>



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CBC Outdoor Meets 2024

Offering opportunities to visit locations of bird and natural history interest around the county in good company.

Guides at our meets are volunteers who know the sites and are happy to share their knowledge but members are responsible for their own safety, security and well being on meets. Places are usually limited in order to minimise our impact on the locations, other folk and to ensure that participants get the benefit of a leader's knowledge.

To book a place and receive full details please contact organisers Mike and Lyn Mills on meetings@cumbriabirdclub.org.uk or call 01946 590616.

Sunday 28th April: Ulverston – Sea Wood and Birkrigg Common with Mike Douglas. Spring-time on Morecambe Bay – a combination of spring migrants and the birds of the limestone common, coastal woodland and a lunch stop watching the rising tide. Meet at 10.00 am.

Saturday 18th May: Livingstone Homestead, Longtown CA6 5PQ

Dawn Chorus meet

We'd love to see you at the Dawn Chorus meet led by new member, Andy Lester. The meeting starts early at 6.30 am to get the best of the bird song and will visit riverside, meadow and woodland on his farm near Longtown. Andy is a professional ecologist and conservation liaison officer for Hampshire Ornithology Society. To compensate for the early start, hot drinks, bacon butties and a veggie alternative will be available after the meeting. Donations welcome We hope you can join us.

NB We are aware that there is a similar event at Watchtree on the same date.

Saturday 22nd June: Around Hodbarrow, Millom.

There's more to Hodbarrow than a host of nesting terns, but they certainly make a great spectacle! Come and see what else we can find.

Saturday 7th September: Ravenglass Estuary.

Dave Shackleton, village resident, guiding us to the delights of the estuary at this exciting time of year.

If you have any requests or suggestions for other locations then do let us know, or better still why not offer a venue which you know well and which you think that others may enjoy.

CBC Yellowhammer survey

Cumbria Bird club are having a close look at Yellowhammers this year and we need your help. We think that you could find it enjoyable, interesting and a great focus for you to get out and enjoy summer checking out our Cumbrian countryside for this iconic bird.

This is 'citizen science' at its best and you can involve yourself, and others – it's not just for CBC members. Take part at whatever level you wish and with whatever time you can spare. Be warned however, it can be addictive!

What's involved:

Level 1. At its simplest, use the app <https://canvis.app/2fnuJe> , and enter any sightings of Yellowhammers you come across onto the online map of Cumbria. Whether it's a family walk or part of a serious search all April-July sightings will help map Yellowhammer distribution in 2024. Alternatively - simply send your sightings to the organisers and we will enter them on the map.

Level 2. Register to carry out two 2 hour surveys (one in April/May and one in June /July) within one of the 2km x 2km squares (tetrads) from the map of proposed tetrads. Your findings will then allow a direct comparison of sites with a history of Yellowhammer occupancy.

We have 86 proposed tetrads to survey, most of which had Yellowhammers present when last surveyed – in 2008-11. A few of those tetrads however had lost or gained their Yellowhammers at that time and we need to know their current status.

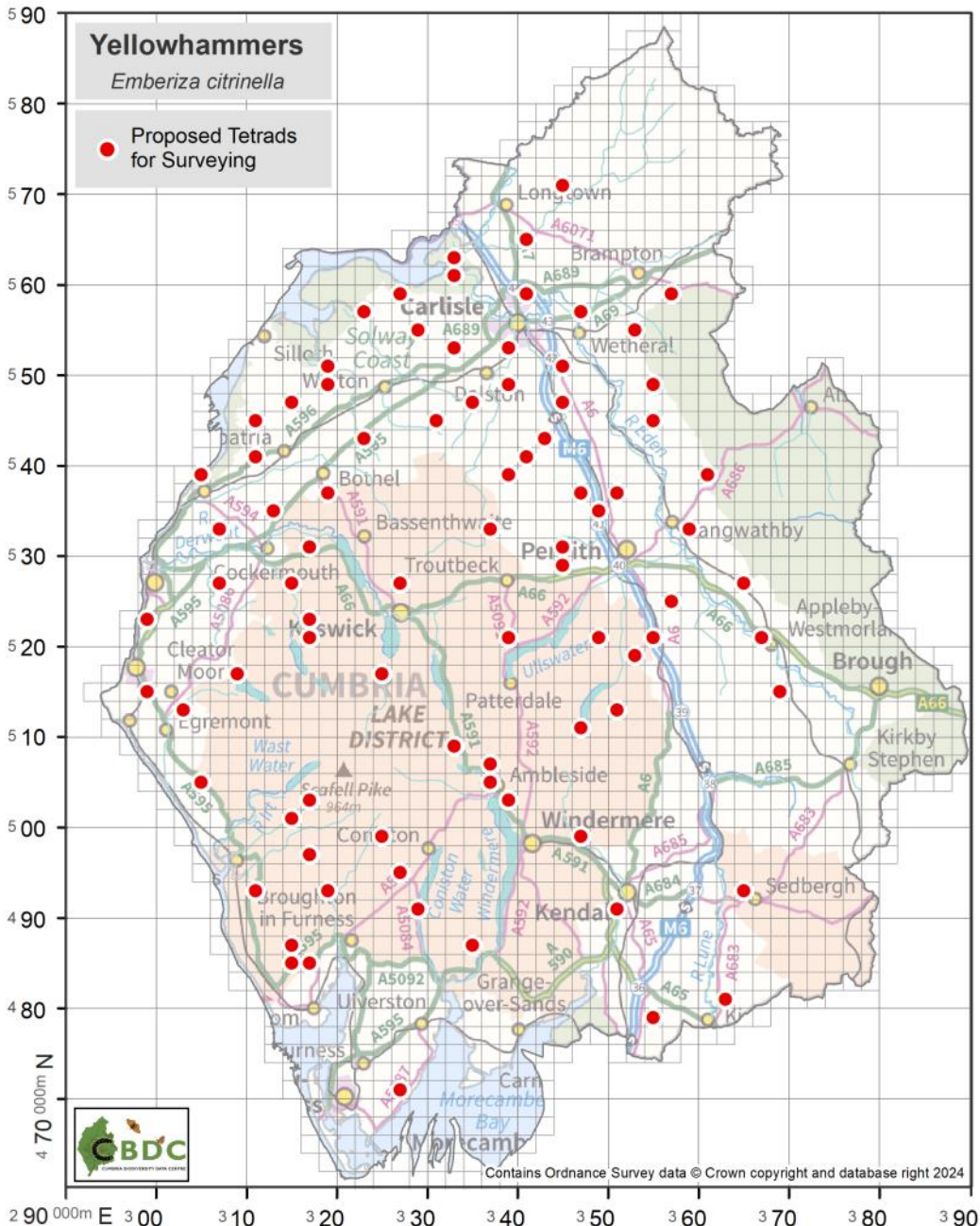
If you have Yellowhammers local to where you live feel free to register for a tetrad of your own choice. Please also let the organisers know if you are willing to take on a tetrad or tetrads which have not been taken up by anyone else.

How to register:

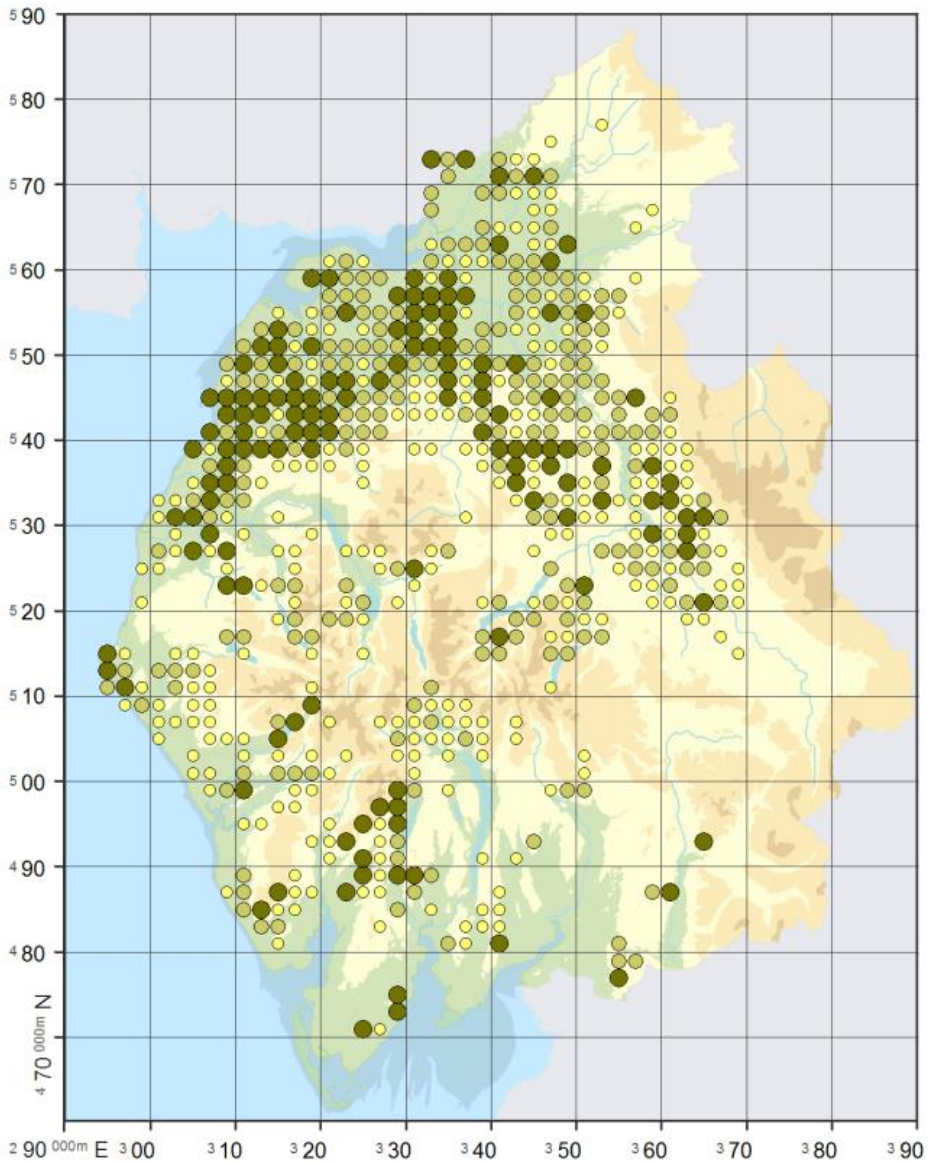
Please get in touch with survey organisers Mike and Lyn Mills at mike.lyn@talktalk.net or by post at The Stables, The Groves, Whitehaven. CA28 8JT for full details and to register your involvement. Keep an eye on the club website for details regarding the available tetrads as we are hoping to post full details in the near future.

Mike and Lyn Mills

Proposed tetrads for surveying Yellowhammer in 2024



YELLOWHAMMER: Evidence of breeding in the 2008 to 2011 survey



Yellowhammer

● Possible	263
● Probable	209
● Confirmed	139

Evidence of breeding in the 2008-2011 survey. Category determined by the strongest recorded evidence of breeding by birds in suitable nesting habitat in the tetrad.

Includes records from Timed Tetrad Visits and Roving Records.

Whooper Swan - something strange afoot



I have attached a picture of a Whooper Swan executing a textbook landing (onto grass) in a really strong crosswind. It was taken on December 16th of last year. I had taken a picture of it in flight, the day before, heading toward the place where the “landing picture” was taken.

In the picture you will see that its feet are not webbed. It had by then taken up with an “odd flock” of waterfowl comprising: a “divorced” Mute Swan; a Whooper Swan that was injured three years ago, stayed around and has since healed; a Cygnet belonging to the Mute Swan and a “widowed” Greylag.

I have contacted various UK waterfowl “authorities” for comment, haven’t received a word, and at this point don’t expect to receive one. As of two days ago it seems to have left its companions, and this area, for parts unknown. It could have gone west to the estuary. So I thought you might like to report it to the members. I’d be interested to know if any had seen such a sight.

Russel Austin

What does your subscription pay for?

The bulk of your subscription goes to fund the printing and distribution of the CBC Annual Report and a very small amount to pay for meeting room hire and speakers costs. All other club services are provided free of charge by volunteers including leading outdoor meets, writing and producing the Annual Report, acting as Treasurer and managing the club’s day-to-day activities.

We manage all this on a tight budget so please check that your subs are up-to-date (£20 per annum single membership or £25 family). We will send a reminder if we have not received them or there is a payment shortfall because you are paying at an old rate. Unfortunately, because of the printing costs, we will be unable to send out the Annual Report to anyone who hasn’t paid their subs in full by June 2024 and we know you wouldn’t want to miss it!

Sue King (Secretary)

Bittern at Gosling Sike



Bittern, Neil Aiston, Gosling Sike

Reports of sightings of a Bittern at Gosling Sike nature reserve in Carlisle began early December 2023. Mid December these sightings were confirmed by local wildlife enthusiast Neil Aiston who managed to take a picture of the bird. This was quite an achievement in itself due to the Bittern's secretive nature and extraordinary ability to camouflage.

The Bittern has an amber conservation status and was once extinct in the UK, but has made a comeback in recent years. The sighting was a significant event, as it was the first time a Bittern had been seen at Gosling Sike. Since then, the Bittern has been sighted a number of times on the reserve by Cumbria Wildlife Trust staff and members of the public. There has been lots of speculation as to what brought the bird to Gosling Sike, the most popular being that the long stretch of freezing temperatures caused the bird to change site.

The known abundance of Common Frogs some of which hibernate in water rather than on land at the site may have attracted it. Despite its secretive nature the Bittern was spotted a number of times in the reedbeds surprisingly close to the path and public walkways where people often walk their dogs without leads. A trail camera was set up near to the pond, where it was sighted most, by Guy Broome one of our volunteers. After a week the footage shown caught the Bittern walking across the frozen pond not long after a group of keen birders had left the site. There have been no further sightings so far but some think they have heard its booming call. We are hopeful it will return.



The appearance of the Bittern at Gosling Sike is a testament to the importance of nature reserves in preserving and protecting wildlife. The wetlands at Gosling Sike were developed in 2012 under the supervision of reserves officer Kevin Scott after a generous donation of land from Susan Aglionby.

The canalised river was re-wiggled to slow down the flow of water through the site meaning the area was able to retain more water, common reeds were planted to filter contaminated water. Heterogenous ponds were created to be as complex as possible to support habitats for various species thereby increasing biodiversity.

Kevin has commented about the Bittern sighting "I think it's absolutely fantastic and hugely exciting although it is not a site I would expect it to use for breeding due to its size. However, seeing the return of more nature to this place demonstrates wildlife can co-exist with sustainable farming practices".

Maddy Marshall, CWT Apprentice at Gosling Sike

Books for sale - all proceeds to CBC

Member Stephen Hill is downsizing his library. Postage would be extra, or they could be collected from Steve or at a CBC meeting.

- 1. The Birds of the Lake Counties. 1962.** *Ralph Stokoe. Carlisle Natural History Society.* £10
- 2. Lakeland Birdlife. 1920-1970.** *R H Brown.* £10
- 3. Natural History in Cumbria. 1970 - 1972.** *Association of Cumbria Natural History Societies.* £5
- 4. Natural History in Cumbria. 1973.** *Association of Cumbria Natural History Societies.* £5
- 5. West Cumberland Field Society- Annual Transactions. 1971.** £5
- 6. West Cumberland Field Society-Annual Transactions. 1972-73.** £5
- 7. Bill Oddie's Gripping Yarns.** £7
- 8. Call of the Eagle. Dave Walker.** £10

He also has loads of CBC Annual Reports from the year dot !! - offers...or free to a good home. Contact Steve direct. Stephenhill100@yahoo.co.uk

Stephen Hill Down Line, Clifton, Penrith, CA10 2EX

Field meeting Red Hall Farm, Saturday 27th January 2024

Martin Baird had owned this farm for over 20 years. Until recently it was a dairy farm, but Martin is now rearing beef cattle. The farm is a 180 acre mix of grassland, barley stubbles, (Martin is especially keen on spring barley for the wildlife) and fodder beet, which because it can be weedy is very attractive to birds. More recently he is growing crops of oil



CBC members at Red Hall Farm, Mike Mills

seed rape. The hedgerows are maintained for wildlife. There are two rushy fields, a pond on a small stream, a second pond and an area of scrub and woodland in a steep valley with a beck running through. Martin provides three areas of wild bird food crops in two field corners. There is a wide variety of seed in the crop mostly kale, gold of pleasure, linseed, triticale, phacelia and quinoa. The seed varieties attract different birds, especially the two-year crops. These crops demand fertilizer and weed control for success.

Sixteen members turned out for the meeting on a cool, breezy, overcast day and it was especially good to have Harry Maylon along on his all-terrain buggy. The first area we walked through was an acre of wildbird food, now mostly kale which Martin said he would normally leave another season when it would flower and produce seed, However, it was not a good crop and had partly failed because of the dry spring, therefore he was considering ploughing and sowing a new crop in the spring. The small timber barn in the field attracted a breeding Barn Owl for the first time last year and they fledged two chicks.

The walk to the first field was unusually quiet, which we put down to the windy conditions. Frank assured us that usually there are Dunnocks, Robins and Blackbirds here, however a Woodcock flew across as we got near to the first field. The first field was a crop of fodder beet. All looked quiet but the Snipe soon started rising and by the time we finished the count was twenty-four, which Martin said was remarkably high, but he was also very pleased to see a covey of seven Grey Partridge. As we neared the pond in the field corner thirty-five Teal lifted. Reed Buntings moved along the tall hedge by the stream. The wild bird food crop was empty, all the fallen seed having been eaten.

Martin then guided us to a hedge he was laying alongside the entrance road. Here he explained the Cumbrian style of hedge laying and why it was necessary to lay a hedge every so often. Frank commented that Martin's hedges should be an example to many of his fellow farmers.

Field meeting Red Hall Farm, Saturday 27th January 2024

We walked back along the track whilst Martin walked an adjacent field looking for Skylark, we had seen one flying over and when we met up further along the track, he reported seventeen more. The walk then took us over the road to three stubble fields and Martin explained his reasons for growing spring barley just to have the winter stubbles. On the first field a flock of about 20 Fieldfare and 40 Starlings were feeding. Over the next two stubble fields there were very few birds although another Woodcock, a solitary Lapwing and a Sparrowhawk were seen. These two stubble fields usually held the Skylarks, but none were seen. For the 20 years he has been coming here Frank said this was the first year none were present.

The last of Martin's fields was a wet rush pasture, which he walked over whilst we all observed, another five Snipe were seen, and two wrens flushed. A Buzzard called as it flew over. This species regularly nests in a small wood on his neighbour's land. We walked back to the road and crossed into another stubble field with another wild bird food crop. Much to Martin's disgust this crop had been eaten out, but by Pheasants and Woodpigeons. We deviated off Frank's usual route along a narrow strip of woodland where a small Tit flock (Blue and Great) were moving through. Crossing another wet rushy field we came to a crop of oil-seed rape, which Martin complained had been well grazed by Woodpigeons, However, once the growing season started he thought it would recover.

The last area to visit was another pond in a small, rushy field and back to the farm via the steep wooded valley with a stream in the bottom. Due to the rather windy conditions birds were somewhat scarce, nevertheless Frank's bird list finished at 32 species, the highlights being the Snipe, Woodcock, Grey Partridge and Fieldfare. With the bird food crops eaten out we missed Yellowhammer and Tree Sparrow, which Frank said were always present in the autumn. Frank has been visiting the Farm since 2004 and has many lists, mostly in Birdtrack, although some of the first lists are on spreadsheet or iRecord lists. Over the years Frank has recorded at least sixty-four species. We also saw three Roe Deer and a Brown Hare.

Finally, Frank and Martin are looking for someone to carry on with the visits on a regular basis. For 20 years Frank has been visiting two or three times each autumn and winter and recording species and numbers and reporting to Birdtrack or, in earlier years to iRecord, although using the Bird Club format would do equally well. There is further scope to visit once or twice during the breeding season (April to June). Martin usually joins Frank and with sharper eyes and ears always adds a few species to Frank's observations. The walk usually takes about an hour and a half.

Frank Mawby

CBC bird list challenge 2024

Date: 3/1/24 Time: 1:00 – 4:30pm

This was my first time doing the bird list challenge, and decided my best bet would be to head to the coast.

I began with the garden birds – the resident and somewhat tame Herring Gulls Mortimer and Sid were already waiting on the shed roof, while the usual Blackbird, Robin etc. were seen around the feeders. Heading out the back door I was lucky to chance upon a flock of Pink-footed Geese passing overhead.



Long-tailed Tit, Powter Howe, Tony Marsh

On the walk itself, I made my way along to the Lowca road, where I unexpectedly heard a Great Spotted Woodpecker calling from the trees behind Moresby Hall! From there it was down towards the sewage works (a flock of around 20 Long-tailed Tits along with a single Goldcrest spotted here). The small beck was flowing with so much water that no birds were seen on it, On the beach it was mostly Herring and Black-headed Gulls, interspersed with a few Oystercatchers (and mad dogs scaring everything off...). I knew I could rely on the resident Stonechat, spotting the male on the rocks near Parton station. My star sighting however would have to be the group of three Purple Sandpipers, well camouflaged on the rocks at the far end of the beach.

As the light began to fade it was time to head home – a flock of Curlew flying over was a good last check on the list as I was leaving the beach. All in all an enjoyable afternoon birding, with quite a few unexpected sightings!

Total species seen: 21

Species list – Garden:

Herring Gull, Blackbird, Robin, Dunnock, Jackdaw, Blue Tit, Pink-footed Goose (flock flying overhead)

Species list – Parton area:

Great Tit, Woodpigeon, Collared Dove, House Sparrow, Oystercatcher, Starling, Carrion Crow, Great Spotted Woodpecker (heard), Long-tailed Tit, Goldcrest, Black-headed Gull, Stonechat, Purple Sandpiper, Curlew.

Charlotte Brough



Purple Sandpiper, Workington, Tony Marsh

A grim, chilly, dark, windy, showery day. Yes, the list of excuses is going to be as long as the species found. In truth we still had an enjoyable day out..

The two elderly participants sharing the one hearing aid set off heroically at the break of day or at least sometime around 9.30am. What a fantastic start! A skein of 200 or so Pink-footed Geese over our house heading north. The rest of the garden view could only yield the classic suburban sextet of House Sparrow, Dunnock, Feral Pigeon, Jackdaw and Herring & Lesser Black-back.

Off to Bassenthwaite at Powter Howe by local bus. Not being allowed to count on the bus was observed in full if only because the X5 service windows were as filthy as usual. An open top might have tested our commitment.

Bass was bleak with the water level so high all the rare species were no doubt hiding behind the shoreline. We did pick up a good number of the usual woodland and common waterfowl species. Pleased to see Great Crested Grebe – hard to find on Derwent Water these days. Treecreeper always a pleasure and never a certainty. Mistle Thrush singing lifted the spirits and thoughts of Spring elicited.

The walk back past the house with the crazy colourful carved figures was planned due to their enormous bird feeders. After some discussion on whether the carved Barn Owl was life-like enough to count we only managed to add Red Squirrel to our sightings.

The glorious wetland of the Derwent Water Hotel was well under water but there were further echoes of Spring from a nearby drumming Woodpecker followed soon after by a lamenting Song Thrush on the Howrahs. Sharp eyes detected a Redwing on the Howrahs and Mergansers were in the river nearby. Home to a Starling singing on the Headlands. It is only in the last few years we have noted them back breeding on the housing estate and they are always a welcome sight and sound.



Redwing, Keswick, Tony Marsh

Canada Goose, Greylag Goose, Pink-footed Goose, Mute Swan, Mallard, Tufted Duck, Goldeneye, Teal, Red-breasted Merganser, Pheasant, Feral Pigeon, Woodpigeon, Great-crested Grebe, Black-headed, Herring, Lesser Black-backed and Common Gull, Cormorant, Grey Heron, Buzzard, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Jay, Magpie, Rook, Jackdaw, Carrion Crow, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Coal Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Wren, Nuthatch, Treecreeper, Starling, Blackbird, Mistle Thrush, Redwing, Song Thrush, Dunnock, Robin, House Sparrow, Goldfinch, Siskin. Total species 43, Excuses 45.

Out West for the bird list challenge 2024.

For the first year we managed to get out on New Year's Day, despite Hogmanay and our plan of dropping the vehicle off at the end of our planned one way bike route! Well it seemed like a good plan in the making but we were not quite so enthusiastic, turning out in the dark to do the vehicle shuttle and get back for the garden birds at first light.

Our local Tawny Owls failed to show or call but the other regulars all put in an appearance including Great Spotted Woodpecker, Greenfinch and Collared Dove. We live quite close to West Cumberland Hospital and as we stepped onto the bikes a familiar call alerted us to an overhead Raven which seemed a good omen for the day but however hard we gazed skywards during the rest of the day we had no passing Pink-feet nor hovering Kestrel for the list.

On the cycle path route down to Whitehaven Harbour a pair of Mallard and a Moorhen were braving the delights of Pow Beck and once at the harbour Great Black-backed Gull, Feral Pigeon, Cormorant, Redshank and Red-throated Diver obliged. On to Parton along the coastal Waggonway where Great Crested Grebe, Stonechat, Oystercatcher and Heron were added and then, while checking bird feeders in Parton, a Goldcrest appeared along with a host of House Sparrows. Failure to find a Purple Sandpiper on this stretch of coast probably had more to do with the state of the tide than our shortcomings but it did necessitate calling at Workington Harbour pier later in the day.

The cycle path route turned out to favour cycle-birding as it gave safe opportunity to stop-start and wobble about while scanning, or following a Song Thrush/Redwing exiting a Hawthorn bush – it was the first of several Redwings, but no Fieldfare. This section of cycle path also offered the delight of a pair of Tree Sparrows on a dead tree branch, a soaring Buzzard, pair of Stock Doves, a head on encounter with a Sparrowhawk and a reliable Dipper. It also offered a track side bench on which to stop and enjoy a coffee and warm up in the sheltered sunshine after the shady cool of the coastal route.

Arriving at Workington, the River Derwent provided many Goosanders, a couple of Little Egrets, Rock and Meadow Pipits and a Med Gull, but NO Purple Sandpipers.! Then on to Siddick for three Whooper Swans which had been there for a few days but which we were sure would have departed come the day. Siddick also provided the expected Goldeneye, Tufted, Teal, Wigeon, Greylags, Little Grebe and Reed Buntings before heading on to the coast for some shorebirds and back to Siddick to end the day.

Our tally for the day was our best yet with 62 species. Bullfinch left it until the last minute to get on the list and, despite checking out every car park and harbour edge, a lone Pied Wagtail was found with the Turnstones on the shore.

Mike and Lyn Mills

Flimby shore meet 16th March 2024

We set off with Skylark song and the tide line a long way off. It was a short walk to where we aimed to post ourselves but a flock of Golden Plover were already clearly visible amongst the rocky substrate on this section of coast.



Goldeneye, Castle Carrock, Adam Moan

Favoured with an offshore wind we settled ourselves into position with sitting mats and the breeze just catching the tops of our heads.

With a check to see if everyone was comfortable it was a case of 'let the show begin'. Amongst the chatter came the call, "I'm hungry, can I have lunch yet?", but most of us were too busy scanning the shore.

From a different angle the Golden Plover were incredibly difficult to pick out, despite us being closer. Those that were in summer plumage however were a delight to see and made good markers, allowing a count of 240 birds. As the tide crept in the Curlew were gathered along the tide line, Oystercatchers carried on feeding and a few Turnstones and Ringed Plovers showed.

A drink of coffee, maybe a sandwich and the choreography of the shore kept us entertained, especially when a lone Purple Sandpiper threaded its way through the plovers - a challenge to ensure that all could get a view. Having sat for long enough and the tide bringing the birds close it was satisfying to stretch our limbs, collapse tripods and slip away without disturbing the flock.



Turnstone, Grune Point, Tony Marsh

With the first spots of promised rain we resorted to Siddick where the rain came to nothing but we were treated to good looking Goldeneye, Reed Bunting together with our first Chiffchaff, 20+ Sand Martins and snatches of Cetti's Warbler calling.

A good afternoon and great company.

Mike and Lyn Mills

New CBC logo competition

Cumbria Bird Club is entering an exciting new phase of activity. We now have well attended meetings both at outdoor locations around the county and evening meetings with speakers. The website is dynamic being regularly updated and records are being submitted to us in greater numbers than ever. CBC Council feels that it is now time for a new logo. So we are inviting you to design the new logo and send your entries to a competition. We will then select the best and award a prize to the winning entry.

Please send your entries to our secretary, Sue King info@cumbriabirdclub.org.uk by Friday 28th June. You may send in more than one entry. We look forward to seeing your designs. Thank you.

Chris Hind (Chair)

Keswick Swifts meeting

Keswick Swifts
invite you to a
Swifts Gathering

on Thursday 18th April 2024
in Crosthwaite Parish Room,
By the Co-op, Main St., Keswick CA12 5NN

7pm - Doors open
7.30pm - 30 minute illustrated talk
"Swifts in Keswick"
8.10pm - Wine, soft drinks, nibbles
All welcome - entry £4

If possible, please RSVP a.s.a.p.
nicki.baker@btinternet.com

Artwork & books on display

Meet fellow enthusiasts from your area

Swift boxes, bricks, call systems on display

RSPB video: "Saving the Swifts"

Request help with putting up Swift boxes



Curlew Recovery South Lakes (CRSL)



Curlew, Port Carlisle, Tommy Holden

The Curlew nesting season will shortly be upon us and since February, birds have been appearing in the Lyth Valley where CRSL is based. Sometimes, they're in relatively large groups and at others, they're in ones and twos, apparently visiting areas which have held nests in previous years. Some birds may be just passing through and some resident but there's a lot we don't know. This year we are trying to get a better idea of the pattern of their arrival by using an app where anyone can enter Curlew sightings. <https://canvis.app/Q7tIFg> . Please feel free to enter your own Curlew records from anywhere in Cumbria.

The 2024 season gets underway with survey days in mid-April at Brigsteer, Underbarrow and Crook. From then on, it's an intense effort to liaise with our fabulous farmers (without whom the project wouldn't exist), find and fence nests and track the young birds once they've hatched. This year we've been lucky enough to gain funding from the LDNPA Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) scheme so we have more fencing kits and some paid assistants for the breeding season to assist our volunteers. Here's hoping that this will help us increase the number of successful fledglings in 2024.

Follow the project on Facebook page (facebook.com/profile.php?id=100091995920086) or on Twitter X (twitter.com/CurlewSLakes). Donations to support this vital local conservation initiative are welcome at: <https://justgiving.com/curlewrecoverysl>

Sue King. CBC Secretary & Trustee of Curlew Recovery South Lakes.

BBS and WBBS vacant survey squares

The BTO's Breeding Bird Survey is a national volunteer project aimed at keeping track of changes in the breeding populations of widespread bird species in the UK. BBS data and trends are widely used in bird research and conservation.

The survey involves two early-morning spring visits to a local 1-km square, to count all the birds you see or hear while walking two 1-km lines across the square. It is such an enjoyable survey where you can learn so much about your local bird populations.

The Waterways Breeding Bird Survey is an annual survey of breeding birds along rivers and canals.

Rivers and canals are great places for birds and birdwatchers, creating wildlife corridors that strike into the heart of our cities and stretch from moorland to estuary. The Waterways Breeding Bird Survey (WBBS) provides both a great excuse for a summer morning walk and an effective way to monitor the health of the species that live by our waterways.

The WBBS uses transect methods akin to those of the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) but with minor adaptations to a linear habitat.

For more information :

[Breeding Bird Survey | BTO - British Trust for Ornithology](#)

[Waterways Breeding Bird Survey | BTO - British Trust for Ornithology](#)

BBS and WBBS Surveyors should be able to identify all birds that are likely to encounter by sight and sound. All enquiries to go to the BTO's Regional Representative Colin Gay

colinathodbarrow@btinternet.com, 01229 773820

Vacant BBS squares

NY0031: **North of Workington**

NY0128: **East of Workington**

NY0922: **Northwest of Loweswater**

NY0948: **South of Beckfoot**

NY1148: **East of Beckfoot**

NY1243: **East of Allonby**

NY2421: **West of Derwent Water**

NY3250: **Southwest of Carlisle**

NY3445: **Southwest of Dalston**

NY4171: **Northeast of Longtown**

NY4960: **West of Brampton**

NY5076: **Southwest of Blackpool Gate**

NY5573: **Southwest of Bewcastle**

NY5643: **Northeast of Kirkoswald**

NY6527: **North of Long Marton**

NY6717: **Southwest of Appleby**

NY6726: **Southwest of Knock**

NY7239: **Southwest of Garrigill**

NY7645: **Northwest of Nenthead**

NY7737: **Southeast of Garrigill**

NY7800: **South of Outhgill**

NY7807: **SE of Kirkby Stephen**

SD1183: **West of Whitbeck**

SD2172: **NE of Barrow-in-Furness**

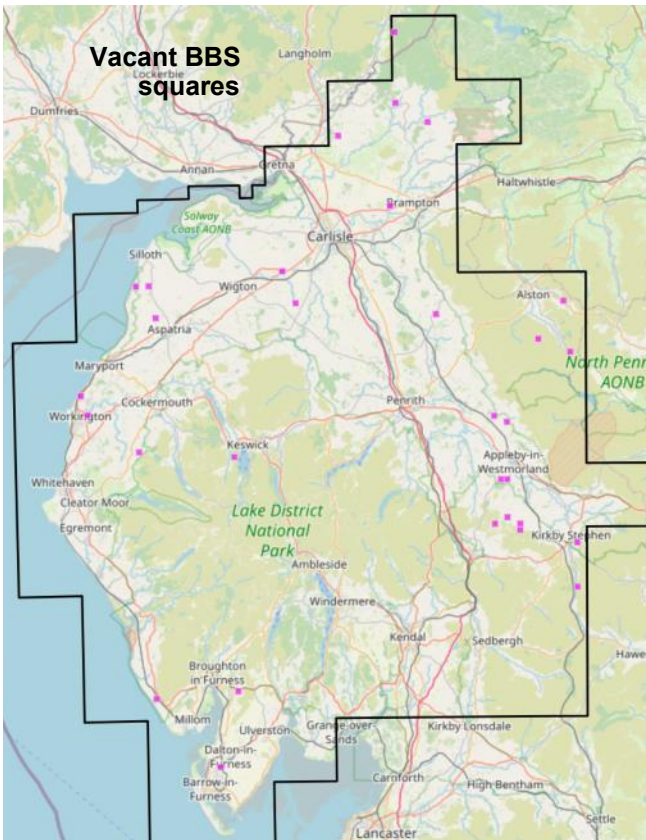
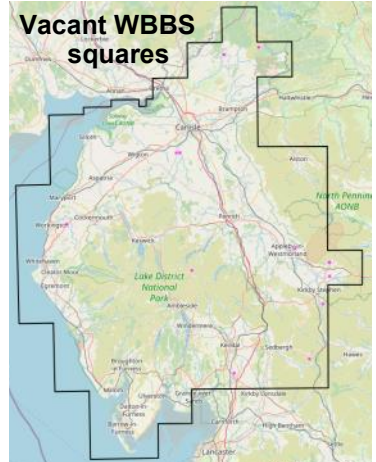
SD2484: **East of Grizebeck**

BBS and WBBS vacant survey squares

Vacant WBBS squares

NY0428: **Bridgefoot**
NY3648: **South of Dalston**
NY3748: **Dalston**
NY4014: **South of Glenridding**
NY5076: **North of Roweltown**
NY6078: **Churnsike Lodge**
NY7020: **East of Appleby**
NY7804: **North of Outhgill**
NY8012: **East of Brough Sowerby**
NY8016: **Brough**
SD5284: **Crooklands**
SD7488: **Garsdale**

Zoom in to see the maps more clearly



Stonechat, Siskin, Bullfinch, RSPB Geltsdale, Adam Moan

Recent reports

The period covered is December 2023 to February 2024. Some records are unauthenticated and may require review.

Wildfowl

A **Todd's Canada Goose** was at Anthorn on 4 December. Two **Taiga Bean Geese** were seen with Pinkfeet at Longtown on 2 January. Also at Longtown the **Ring-necked Duck** reappeared on 1-2 December. **Green-winged Teal** were seen on Roosecote Sands 18- 29 December, Campfield Marsh on 2 January and at Fell End NR from 5th February into March.



Whooper Swans, Braithwaite, Tony Marsh

Eurasian White-fronted Geese, or perhaps just one bird, were with Pinkfeet at Cargo on 4 December and Edenhall on 8 January. **Pale-bellied Brent Geese** reached a record 571 in the Walney – Roa Island area in January with small numbers of **Dark-bellied Brent** also seen, in the north a **Pale-bellied Brent** was at Cardurnock on 15 January.

Two redhead **Smew** were at Foulshaw / Ulpha Meadows on New Years Day. Two **Velvet Scoter** were off Walney on 19 January. There were several reports of up to two **Long-tailed Duck** off Walney in December and the first half of January, whilst singles were at Foulney on 23 December, off Baycliff on 18 January and south off Silecroft on 25 February. **Eider** concentrations included 7823 off Walney in January.

Whooper Swan flocks included 100 at Kirkbride in January and 120 at Pelutho in February, migration began in late February with 15 north off Silecroft on the 25th.

Mandarin observations included display on Derwent Water on 10 February.



Whooper Swans, Walby Flash, Adam Moan



Red Grouse, and Black Grouse, RSPB Geltsdale, Adam Moan

Gamebirds

Up to ten **Black Grouse** were seen together at Geltsdale in January.

Waders

The regular **Spotted Redshank** was seen on the Leven Estuary on several dates in February. **Greenshank** totals at the main sites included 23 on the Ravenglass estuaries in February and 16 at Walney in January.

Wintering **Common Sandpiper** included one on the Kent in Kendal and two still at Muncaster in February. **Green Sandpiper** reports included three on a flood at Holme in January.

Jack Snipe recording has been revolutionised by thermal imaging equipment, the highest count in the period was an exceptional 23 on Walney in January. **Woodcock** reports included twelve at Bannisdale on 2 December.



Ruff, Campfield RSPB, Adam Moan

Recent reports



*Common Snipe, Chapel House Pond
Adam Moan.*



Jack Snipe, Thacka Beck, Tony Marsh

Gulls, Terns and Skuas

A juvenile **Glaucous Gull** lingered in the harbour area at Workington from 17 January to the end of the period.

Three **Little Gulls** were seen from Walney on 22 January. **Kittiwake** reports included sixteen from Walney on 22 January. **Mediterranean Gulls** included one in Allonby Bay on 14 January, and singles at Walney on 10th and 13th February.

Auks

Black Guillemot were seen off Walney on 10 December and 3 January, whilst birds were back at St Bees at the end of the period.

Divers

It was an excellent period for **Great Northern Diver** records. On the coast there were records in all three months from Walney, and one at Foulney on 14 January. Inland birds were seen on Ullswater 2 December – 12 January, Windermere 3-4 December and 13 January, Ennerdale 6-17 January and Grasmere 27 January – 18 February.

Red-throated Diver counts included up to 331 past Maryport and 103 off Walney.



*Herring Gull, Maryport,
Tony Marsh*

Petrels, Shearwaters, Gannet, Shag, Cormorant

The first **Gannet** was off Walney on 7 January, with three February singles. Two **Fulmar** passed Walney on 22 January.

Shag totals at Walney included 37 in both December and January, the only other reports were up to five in Barrow Docks and one at St Bees on Boxing Day possibly the same as at Whitehaven on 28 December.

Hérons and Allies

A juvenile **Spoonbill** was at Campfield on 12 January, and a bird of this species flew over Walney on 25 February.

Bitterns were noted at Gosling Syke CWT from late November into January, and at Siddick Pond in December and January. Single **Great Egret** were noted at Crooklands, Egremont, Lazonby, Longtown and Sandside.



*Bittern, Siddick Ponds ,
Tony Marsh*

Raptors



Juv. Hen Harrier, , Tony Marsh

Among the **Red Kite** reports was apparent passage movement with three gaining height north over Whitehaven on 24 February.

Recent reports

Marsh Harrier records included up to four at Foulsaw / Ulpha Meadows, and one at Campfield on 9 Jan. Coastal **Hen Harrier** observations included up to three at Campfield in January, a ringtail at Flookburgh on 10 February and a male at Eskmeals the next day.



Marsh Harrier, Campfield Marsh, Adam Moan.



Sparrowhawk, Barry Jackson



Merlin, Campfield Marsh, Adam Moan.

Corvids

There were two **Hooded Crow** on Walney in early December then the resident bird was present throughout. Two flew north past Silecroft on 25 February.



Waxwings, Penrith, Tony Marsh



Waxwing, Geltsdale, Adam Moan



Waxwings, Penrith, Tony Marsh

Waxwing

The **Waxwing** irruption peaked in the county in December. Totals included no fewer than 250 in Penrith, 60 in Carlisle, 32 in Kendal and 30 in Dalston.

Warblers, Crests

Blackcap reports included a pair in a Cockermouth garden in January. **Cetti's Warbler** are now taken for a granted to a degree, but reports included four at Foulshaw/Ulpha Meadows, two wintering on Walney and at least one at Siddick Ponds and Foulshaw/Ulpha Meadows.

Thrushes, Chats and Flycatchers

Black Redstarts were seen in December at Workington on 12th and Walney on Boxing Day. Song Thrush passage over Ulverston recorded on nocmig included at least on the night of 16th-17th February.

Wagtails and Pipits

A **Richard's Pipit** was found at Sandhall, Ulverston on 22 February, and proved a popular attraction as it remained into March. All confirmed **Water Pipit** were at the favoured flooded fields at Biggar on Walney, with up to five in December, ten in January and twelve in February. A **White Wagtail** on three dates in January on Walney was an unusual winter record.

Finches and Buntings

After a run of coastal sightings earlier in the winter this period **Snow Bunting** were seen only on the fells, with four on Nethermost Pike on 4 January and one on Brim Fell on 9 January. Up to ten **Hawfinch** were at Sizergh Castle car park. **Twite** flocks included up to 80 on Border Marsh and 60 on Walney.



Greenfinch, Portinscale, Tony Marsh

The largest **Crossbill** concentrations reported were 31 at Penrith Beacon on 5 January and 20 at Brampton on 27 December. A total of 40 **Siskin** on Walney on 26 December was unusual there in winter, as was 200 **Linnet** at Sizergh on 19 December.

Stephen Dunstan

*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.*

CROSSBILLS !! Have
mf

pale
edges

prominent
"arrows" on
under-tail
coverts on
both
birds

of



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Information for contributors

The deadline for copy for the next issue is June 1st 2024

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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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