

BIRD NEWS
Vol. 35 No. 2 Summer 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.



Listening for Redstart at the dawn chorus meet

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.

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.

Mike and Lyn Mills

Dawn chorus meet: Livingstone Homestead, near Longtown



A group of 20 bright-eyed and bushy-tailed CBC members and friends met at 6.30 am at Livingstone Homestead for the dawn chorus meet. After weeks of rain, the weather was kind and we were able to visit a variety of habitats to listen for bird song. Highlights included Blackcap, Willow Warbler and Chiffchaff in the mixed woodland; Whitethroat and Redstart on the field margins and Siskin, Redpoll, House Sparrow and Tree Sparrow on the farm's bird feeders. In total, 40 species were recorded .

The meet was led by Andy Lester, a new Cumbria Bird Club member, previously Conservation Officer for Hampshire Ornithological Society (HOS). Indeed, the walk started with a message from the President of HOS, Chris Packham! It also finished in style with a fabulous bacon buttie breakfast outside in the sun, watching the Starlings flying in and out of their nests in the eaves to feed their young.

Many thanks to Andy for leading the trip and to those who made the delicious breakfast.

Full species list: Blackbird, Blackcap, Blue Tit, Bullfinch, Buzzard, Carrion Crow, Chaffinch, Chiffchaff, Coal Tit, Collared Dove, Cuckoo, Dipper, Dunnock, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Great Tit, Greenfinch, Goldcrest, Goldfinch, Grey Wagtail, House Martin, House Sparrow, Jackdaw, Nuthatch, Pheasant, Redpoll, Redstart, Robin, Rook, Sand Martin, Siskin, Skylark, Song Thrush, Starling, Stock Dove, Swallow, Treecreeper, Tree Sparrow, Willow Warbler, Woodpigeon, Wren.

Sue King

Yellowhammer survey 2024

Thank you, to all of you who have come forward to survey tetrads and record sightings on the mapping app. With your help we have coverage of 86 tetrads, 10% of the tetrads achieved during the three years of the BTO/CBC Atlas coverage in 2008-11, all aimed at gaining a snapshot view of how Yellowhammers are doing in Cumbria.

Initial findings – the Yellowhammers were slow to get started with breeding – presumably a weather effect. This gave us the perfect excuse to make a slow start at surveying until the weather warmed! Yellowhammers like feeding with an area of bare ground, be that track, quiet road or field gateway so hedgerow to hedgerow silage meadows have no appeal and we are finding that the birds are turning up in clusters where the habitat is suitable.

The mapping app, (<https://canvis.app/2fnuJe>), is proving valuable for drawing in sightings which will supplement the tetrad survey results so do please keep logging sightings. It is worth a look even if you have no sightings to log as the picture of Yellowhammer distribution around the county develops.

We look forward to receiving tetrad recording forms come the end of July and hope that everyone has enjoyed their tetrads.

Do let us know of interesting and entertaining outcomes of your survey visits, from what we have heard there have been more than just Yellowhammers.



Yellowhammer enjoyment of open ground for feeding , Adam Moan

Mike and Lyn Mills

Ravens in central Lakeland: are they in decline?



Cavorting juvenile Ravens, St. Bees, Tony Marsh

The Raven enhances many a hill walk with its strange croaking calls and acrobatic flights along the high ridges of the central Lakes. The birds are synonymous with uplands and described by Derek Ratcliffe as the 'spirit of the wild'. But will this always be the case?

This spring, CBC had a request from the author Adam Nicolson for information about the Raven nest sites described by William Wordsworth. Yewdale crags, which were the site of Wordsworth's youthful adventures, are no longer occupied. However, we assumed there would be an active Raven nest nearby which could be observed from a safe distance. Finding one would surely be a simple task as Ravens use traditional sites, many of which have been occupied for decades, explaining why there are so many Raven Crags in Cumbria. However, it became something of a quest!

Thirty years ago, as part of a Masters degree, I studied nesting Ravens in the central Lakes, with invaluable help from Peter Davies, then chair of the Cumbria Raptor Study Group. As a result, I had a record of traditional sites and expected to find them occupied.

However, after many damp expeditions into the hills between late February and mid-May, myself and Chris Hind had checked 12 known sites, of which only five showed signs of occupation. By late April/May, all had failed except one which we think fledged three chicks.

I know that in 1995, ten of these sites were occupied with five successfully rearing 11 chicks so there appears to have been a drastic decline in this area.

Ravens in central Lakeland: are they in decline?

The Raven is not endangered. Indeed, in the UK it's population has grown considerably in the last 25 years but its distribution seems to be changing. The 2023 BTO trends map for England, also shows a recent decline which is confined to some areas, so could the upland population of Cumbria be one of them?

We know that the size of a healthy bird populations is usually constrained by nest site availability and food supply. The number of upland nest sites remains unchanged, but it is possible that recent, increasingly severe storms have made them uninhabitable with nests getting washed or blown from the crag. This was an observable problem at some sites in 1995, so it is certainly possible.

Has food supply changed? Pellet analysis in 1995 showed the birds fed mainly on carrion with a small proportion of invertebrates and the occasional small mammal or bird. Current sheep-stocking levels on the fell are considerably lower than 30 years ago and improved animal husbandry mean that dead stock on the hill is now a rare site, so food supply is likely to have declined.

In addition, past persecution may have confined nesting Ravens to refuges in the uplands but, with this pressure reduced, birds appear to be spreading back into the lowlands where they frequently nested in the past. The Cumbria Bird Atlas 2008-2011 certainly shows the birds are spreading out from the central mountains.

A wider survey over several years would clarify the picture but if the impressions from our short survey are correct, Ravens may no longer breed quite so often on the mountain crags of Cumbria. This is a sad loss but we hope that the overall population will remain stable, with enough remaining in the hills to keep that wild spirit alive.



Raven, Castle Carrock, Adam Moan

Any upland records would be a great help in understanding what's going on so please keep your eyes peeled for Ravens in the mountains and send in your sightings.

Sue King

RSPB beach nesting bird project on the Cumbrian coast



Ringed Plover nest site location (red arrow) at Seascale

In 2022 Natural England initiated a survey of Ringed Plovers along the Cumbrian coast. It found 198 pairs. Although it did not address productivity, many observers expressed concern at the high levels of disturbance they had witnessed. A follow up survey in 2023 looked at productivity between Sellafield and the Ravenglass estuaries. This found poor nesting success particularly on the heavily disturbed beach either side of Seascale but better success on the less disturbed beaches around Drigg Point.

Other parts of the country have seen the instigation of beach nesting bird protection schemes in recent years. Often these have initially focussed on breeding terns, but with increasing concern over the fortunes of Ringed Plovers and Oystercatchers, have been extended to include these more dispersed species, for example in Northumberland and Norfolk.



*Oystercatcher on nest, RSPB Geltsdale,
Adam Moan*



*Ringed Plover, Bowness, Tony
Marsh*

RSPB beach nesting bird project on the Cumbrian coast

While predation of clutches of eggs appears to be the biggest cause of nest failure, the high levels of human induced disturbance, particularly involving dogs are believed to increase the risk of predation, along with more direct causes of failure such as trampling.



R. Plover, Flimby, Tony Marsh

The RSPB, supported by funding from Natural England has instigated a project to try to improve breeding productivity on the Cumbrian Coast and to this end have employed a beach nesting bird project officer Steph Leow. Steph is working with local communities to raise awareness of disturbance issues, promote more responsible dog walking activity and initiate management interventions such as the installation of signage, marked out nesting areas and possibly nest cages.

Obviously with a long coastline Steph cannot cover it all and is concentrating on certain areas where there are higher numbers of plovers and high disturbance e.g. at Grune Point, Allonby, Seascale and Haverigg. She is looking to recruit volunteers to help and if you are interested would be pleased to hear from you. She can be contacted at steph.leow@rspb.org.uk






Dave Shackleton



Ringed Plover and Turnstone, Workington, Tony Marsh

Curlew Recovery South Lakes (CRSL): 2024 update

The CRSL season started in mid-April with three survey days to find territorial Curlew pairs. As we hoped, this year, with more funding and assistance, we are doing well. Our 2024 numbers so far:

	20 nests found.
	20 nests fenced.
	2 nests known to be predated: 1 crow & 1 stoat.
	38 chicks on the run (35 alloy ringed including 24 colour flagged with green scheme marker and orange numbered flag).
	11 families currently being tracked to estimate chick survival to fledging.

Our thanks go to: the farmers, who have been fantastically helpful in allowing us access to their fields to find and fence nests and track birds; the licenced ringers who have turned out early morning and late evening to ring chicks, and all our workers and volunteers.

Keep up to date through our social media at <https://linktr.ee/curlewslakes>

Sue King



Nestcam shot of a stoat attack. The bird survived but, sadly, not its eggs.

Reshape your brain



Curlew, Russel Austin

Did you know that learning skills—like bird identification—can reshape the brain? Join us as we continue to explore connections between neuroplasticity and knowledge of the natural world.



Our newest online study is now available at
www.birdingstudies.com

The study (~15min) is open to all, regardless of experience. Research updates and publications are also posted on the site so you can see what you're helping us discover. Study participation spots refresh monthly. Thanks!



Participants can enter raffle for binoculars giveaway



Swifts Spring summary

To start with the good news, at our Lowgill colony this year we had our earliest ever arrival of a Swift on April 28th - beating last year's record by one day. Its mate returned on 6th May, the first of our pairs to be re-united. It's interesting that this pair is invariably the first to come back. Research with geolocator tags has shown that the male and female do not migrate together nor are they together in Africa. Even so after over 20 years of studying Swifts we still find the fact that they each arrive separately at that exact same nest site, year after year, truly extraordinary. It seems that what binds them together is the nest site.

The rest of our Swifts arrived over the first two weeks of May, although both birds of one pair didn't return until 25th May. We are pleased to report that all of the 18 nests sites that we have on camera are now occupied (last year's total altogether was 34 pairs). We had another record of the earliest ever egg laid on 17th May, and hence the earliest ever hatching on 3rd June; eggs are generally expected at the end of May onwards with hatching in mid-June. What is strange about that early pair is that the eggs hatched after only 17 days of incubation whereas at least 20 days is the norm. We are pleased to report that at least eight pairs have clutches of three eggs (last year was a record 12 pairs).

The bad news however is that the awful cold windy and wet first half of June has been dire for Swifts. Chicks are usually left uncovered once they are four days old so that both parents can go out foraging. But this year many parents remained on the nest brooding them for longer, presumably because it was so cold. Over one particularly wet weekend around 15th June, in virtually all the nests both parents stayed in all day, meaning the chicks were hardly fed. We have never seen that happen before.

In the early nests where the chicks were already a week or so old they have developed well; but the consequence for the nests with three younger chicks was that the youngest could not compete for any food that was brought in and did not thrive. The result was that in at least three nests the third chick was tiny compared with its siblings, as shown in the picture, and may be unlikely to survive. Let's hope for some warmer weather and that all the rest develop well, fledging towards the end of July.

The two older chicks, with developing feather marks under the skin, are facing to the right on the nest.

The tiny chick is bottom left of the nest, lying with drooped head on the bottom of the other two.





**Swift
Awareness
Week**



Sedbergh Community Swifts

Friday 5th July at the colony in Lowgill, LA8 0BN

A morning of panoramic Swift watching
and viewing via nest cameras

Welcome - Booking essential



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Generally, because of poor weather up to mid June, we have had very quiet mornings and evenings, with few screaming parties or Swifts swooping around feeding. All we need is a change and some fine days and we'll hopefully be able to enjoy our Swifts aerial antics once more.

At the end of May we went to the 7th International Swift Conference in the Italian city of Trieste, for three days of interesting talks on lots of different aspects of research being done on Swifts. Our Cumbrian contribution was to give a talk on how birds, such as Swifts that spend nine months of the year airborne, sleep on the wing. A fascinating topic!

Tanya & Edmund Hoare

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[\(1\) Sedbergh Community Swifts | Facebook](#)



Alpine Swift

The lovely city of Trieste was an ideal place to hold a Swift conference. With its old buildings and traditional tiled roofs, there are many opportunities for cavity nesting birds.

Although the International conference was inaugurated for the Common Swift *Apus Apus*, contributions about other swift species are also included. Common Swifts, Alpine and Pallid Swifts are all present in Italy. The Common Swifts were screaming overhead as we walked to the conference venue, and then listened to over 15 hours of presentations over three days.

We've picked out some of the talks to summarise here from Swiss and US groups. The first one is very worrying:

Avian trypanosomiasis: An emerging disease in the Swiss Alpine Swift (*Tachymartia melba*) population

Pia Cigler told us that Alpine Swifts have been studied by the Swiss Ornithological institute for over 40 years. In the summers of 2022 and 2023 sudden mortalities occurred (30-80%) in nestlings from several different sites. Post mortem examination of nestlings showed good body condition but extensive subcutaneous haematomas. Tissues tested positive for an avian trypanosome. Trypomastigote morphometrics indicated *T.bouffardi*, a west African avian trypanosome that causes high parasitaemia but not mortalities in Passeriformes. The species affecting Alpine Swifts has been called *T.bouffardi-like* (Cigler et al 2023).

Death is suspected to result from haemorrhage from louse fly stings (*Crataerina melbae*). These flies have been identified as the vector of the protozoans. Findings suggest a novel avian trepanosomiasis is causing mass nestling mortality in Swiss Alpine Swift populations. There is no known cure for the disease and only time will tell if it can spread to other swift species.

Changes in body size and shape of Alpine Swifts in response to climate change

Giula Masoero explained how changes in body size and shape have become a flagship response to climate change, but there is still little understanding of the mechanisms driving those changes.

Using data on Swiss Alpine Swifts from 1999 to 2023, climate-induced changes in nestling growth and adult body size showed that climate has significant effects on the wing growth of nestlings. Nestlings now grow their wings faster and fledge earlier. Adult birds showed an increase in wing and tail length but not in body mass or sternum.

Within-individual centring models show that these changes were explained by demographic effects, with new recruits to the breeding population (especially females) having longer wings and tails over the years and by plasticity, with individuals moulting and growing longer feathers. All adult and nestling traits were heritable, with genetic correlations among most of them. It is not known what advantage longer wings has for the birds in higher temperatures.

Five is one too many

Susanna Meyer from Laufen, Switzerland, described her observations of two nest boxes on her house occupied by Common Swifts. Common Swifts are nest site faithful and in most cases are believed to reunite and breed with the same partner in successive years.

Although Swifts are difficult to tell apart, Susanna was able to do so after studying feather colouration as well as small white specks on the plumage that varied between birds.

One pair bred without incident. In the other box a new male was seen briefly, but then returned a few days later after the breeding pair from the previous year had returned. A fight ensued and five hours later the original male struggled from the box, but returned later that night. All three roosted in the box, with the female and the new male on the nest and the original male, from the previous year, at the front of the box. He departed the next morning.

Eggs were laid and judging by the timing involved, Susanna believed these to be the genetic offspring of the new male. (Of course, we'll never know what mating behaviour might have gone on outside the nest box)

Amazingly the original male returned and ousted the new male when the nestlings were 10 and 12 days old. Although he took over, he didn't participate in the feeding (as is normal and as he did the year before) for 10 days, leaving the female to cope alone. He then decided to help feed the youngsters which weighed a normal 50g at the time they were ringed.

Fascinating talks were given by US Swift enthusiasts.



Chimney Swifts



Vaux's Swift, Chapman School Arizona

Vaux's and Chimney Swifts
Chaetura vauxi and *Chaetura pelagica*

Diane Yorgason-Quinn and Michael Helm presented the latest summaries of the amazing Vaux's Swifts that roost in old chimney stacks along their migratory path in the western USA. The Vaux's Happening Project has identified over 200 roost sites between the Yukon and Guatemala, with the largest chimney roost site being in Rainier, Oregon.

The study was initiated by Larry Schwitters when he scaled a 150ft industrial chimney in Michigan to record the over 22,000 closely related Chimney Swifts that pour into it at night and out again next morning. The incredible sight of many thousands of Swifts streaming in, looking not unlike smoke, is

awesome to see. Seeing them packed tight, clinging to walls and each other within the chimney is truly amazing.

White fronted Swift *Cypseloides storeri*

Eric Horvath presented his incredible search for the first nest of the migratory White-fronted Swift, the least well known of the neotropical Swifts. They were believed to breed close to waterfalls, and his extremely patient search in inhospitable terrain eventually found a nest in Michoacan, Mexico. He documented the Swifts and the nest site, under an overhanging rock beside a waterfall, with excellent photographic evidence.

We had to admire his amazing dedication.

Susan Rowlands, Penrith Swift Group and Tanya Hoare, Sedbergh Community Swifts



Common Swift, Farlam, Adam Moan

A Sizergh garden



I have written about our humble garden nature reserve at Sizergh in the past. We are surrounded by grazing fields for sheep, cows and horses so it stands out for any passing bird, butterfly, dragonfly etc.

In April for a couple of weeks, we had an Ermine stoat visiting us . It was very cautious, disappearing at the first sign of us. I'm not surprised since it stood out snow white among our growing wild flowers.

We have had newts in the pond since January, even when it was frozen over. In March I counted 30 male frogs croaking plus numerous pairs and courting toads.

We had two Blackcaps take up territories at each end of the garden and saw a couple of Goldcrests carrying nesting materials into our large conifers.

End of May saw the first exuvias of damsel flies with Large Red



Goldcrest, Keswick, Tony Marsh

showing first. June , we had the first Emperor to emerge from our pond, females have been seen laying for the past few years, and the pond has numerous larvae always on show. Last year we had 65 Southern Hawkers hatch.

Greater Butterfly and Twayblade Orchids are all on show at the moment and the various wildflowers are competing with each other to take over our large wildflower areas.

Dave and Betty Finnegan



PS I saw 12 Hawfinches at Sizergh castle end March. Most that had been seen was 17 including one that had been rung in Norway.



Blackcap, Keswick, Tony Marsh

Recent reports

The period covered is March to May 2024. Records of rarities are subject to acceptance by the County Records Panel.

Whilst efforts are made to trace as many records as possible there may be omissions and this is not intended as a definitive record.

Wildfowl



Shelduck, North Scales, Adam Moan

A pair of **Lesser Scaup** appeared at Hodbarrow on 25 March and remained to 17 April. These birds had previously been seen in Lancashire on a Blackpool golf course and then at Leighton Moss.

A **Red-breasted Goose** was with **Barnacle Geese** on Burgh Marsh on 12 March. A **Ring-necked Duck** reappeared at Longtown Ponds on 19 April.

Greater Scaup in the period comprised two at Walney on 19 March, two off Bowness-on-Solway on 29 April and another pair at Hodbarrow on 5 May. A drake **Velvet Scoter** off Walney on 28 May was followed by a female the following day, earlier in the month up to 10000 **Common Scoter** had been seen from there. A drake **Long-tailed Duck** passed Silecroft on 3 March with two off Bowness-on-Solway on 29 April. Drake **Garganey** were at Park End Moss on 6-9 May, and South Walney on 9-13 and 20 May.



Pochard, Castle Carrock, Adam Moan

Six **Pochard** at Hardendale Quarry on 3 March was a good count by recent standards.

Eider counts in the south of the county included 4800 off Walney on 11 March.

A new record count of **Brent Geese** was made at Walney in March with no fewer than 592 birds.

Pink-footed Goose passage included 6095 through Walney on 18 April, and a good late total of 800 over Keswick and Troutbeck on 5 May.

Whooper Swan passage totals in March included 140 past Foulshaw on 8th 167 over Walney on the 9th and 125 from Hodbarrow on 25th.



Cuckoo, Geltsdale, Adam Moan

Gamebirds

A **Quail** was heard calling at Red Hall Farm, Wigton on 24 May.



Red Grouse, Geltsdale, Grey Partridge, Carlattan Mill, Adam Moan

Nightjar, Swift, Cuckoo

The first **Swift** was at Sizergh on 14 April.

Recent reports

Cranes

An exceptional spring passage of **Common Crane** began with two over Arnside on 20 March. One was at Foulshaw on 19 April, with two at Wedholme Flow on the 21st. Three that had previously been in Lancashire flew over Holme on 24th April, then Milnthorpe. Another was at Wedholme Flow on 4 May.

Waders



Little Ringed Plover, Tommy Holden

Curlew Sandpipers were recorded in May at Walney on 8-9th, Bowness Railings on the 19th-26th and finally Hodbarrow on 28th. There were two **Ruff** at Arnside on 31 March and singles at Campfield on 2 April and Wedholme Flow on 19 May.

Wintering **Greenshank** including 16 at Ravenglass and eight at Walney in March, numbers dropping away quickly in April at both locations. There were still seven **Purple Sandpipers** at Workington on 6 April. Two **Avocet** at Walney on 10 May were notable there.

Little Ringed Plover were reported from five sites in the centre and north of the county plus a couple at Hodbarrow. The largest **Jack Snipe** count was eight at Thornhill Meadows on 28 March. **Whimbrel** flocks included 32 at Lowca on 21 April, and 42 at Watchtree and 35 at Seascale beach and 30 at RSPB Campfield on 25 April.



Snipe, Geltsdale, Adam Moan

Gulls, Terns and Skuas

Pomarine Skua reports all came from Bowness-on-Solway, with two on 8 May and two or three on 27 May. A total of eleven **Arctic Skua** were logged off Walney in April and May with one past Drigg on 2 May and others past Drigg on 29th and 30th of the month. The only **Great Skua** record received was of one from Walney on 31 March.

Little Gull from Walney included six on 18 and 19 March and a single on 1 April, whilst an adult was at Hodbarrow on 30 April. **Kittiwake** passage included 116 off Walney on 22 March, 150 there on 11 April and 182 on 21 May, with 290 east past Bowness Railings on 24 May.

Mediterranean Gulls included one off Walney on 15 March and two there on 27 April, with a second year at Hodbarrow on 30th April. **Sandwich Tern** were reported from 15 March at Walney, with many records of this species and **Little Tern** thereafter but a very poor **Arctic Tern** passage save for 51 at Walney on 3 May.

Auks

Away from the nest sites at St Bees all scarce auk reports came from Walney. Three **Black Guillemot** were seen there on 3 May, whilst the increasing occurrence of **Puffin** there in spring was reflected in records on five May dates including six on 5th and three on 19th and 31st.

Recent reports

Divers

The **Great Northern Diver** continued at Walney to 3rd March, whilst one passed Silecroft on 6 April. The best **Red-throated Diver** counts included 91 past Silecroft on 17 March and 44 at Tarn Bay, Eskmeals on the 11th.

Petrels, Shearwaters, Gannet, Shag, Cormorant

Shag totals on Walney Island peaked at 16 in March and 12 in April, falling to four in May. The best of five days with **Fulmar** records there was three on 19th April, whilst one went past Silecroft on 29 May. **Manx Shearwater** totals included 120 south past Silecroft on 29 May.

Hérons and Allies

Cattle Egret reports comprised one at Arnside on 9 March, two over Walney on the 29th of the month and one at Hodbarrow on 30th April. **Spoonbill** were at Campfield Marsh on 24-26 April, Walney on 5 and 25 May and Calvo March on 12 May. **Great Egret** were seen on four dates at Foulshaw, three at Sunbiggin Tarn and two at Arnside.

Raptors

A **Red-footed Falcon** graced Kelsick, near Abbeytown with its presence on 23-25 May. **Marsh Harrier** records included up to four individuals at Foulshaw Moss in March. **Hobby** were reported from a couple of sites, including Carrock Fell on 6 May.



Short-eared Owl, Geltsdale, Barn Owl, Talkin, Adam Moan

Goshawk were reported from a couple of sites in the south of the county. A good count of 16 Kestrel was made at Shap Fell on 3 March.

The first **Osprey** was at Arnside on 17 March, with birds returning to Foulshaw on 22nd and Bassenthwaite on 26th.

Corvids

The resident **Hooded Crow** remained at Walney throughout, with another there on 27 April.

Elsewhere one moved north at St Bees on 13 April with others here late April and early May, at Boltongate on 4 May, Drigg on 21-22 May, Windermere on 25-27 May, Keswick on 26 May and Eskmeals on 31 May.



Merlin, Geltsdale, Adam Moan

Hirundines



Sand Martin were seen from 7 March when there were birds at Walney.

The first **Swallow** was at Siddick Pond on 22 March, 300 moved north in two hours at Allonby on 24 April.

Swallow, Geltsdale, Adam Moan

Recent reports

Warblers, Crests



*Wood Warbler, Low Hynham Wood,
Grasshopper Warbler, Geltsdale,
Adam Moan*



Arrival dates included 22 March at Foulney for **Willow Warbler**, and 8 April at Foulshaw for **Grasshopper Warbler**. A large arrival of **Chiffchaffs** was noted across the county on 15-16 March.

Cetti's Warbler counts were highest at Foulshaw, where there were up to six in March and seven in April.

Thrushes, Chats and Flycatchers

A **Black Redstart** was at Workington 7-12 March.

The first **Wheatear** was on Walney on 16 March, with 158 reported there on 5 May.

Ring Ouzel reports included several males and a female on the Caldbeck Falls on 26 March, and passage counts at **Farleton Knott** of up to eight birds in early April.



Ring Ouzel, Whinny Fell, Adam Moan

A late **Fieldfare** was on Walney on 11 May, also here **Spotted Flycatcher** passage of seven birds in May included three on 31st.

Wagtails and Pipits

The **Richard's Pipit** previously mentioned at Ulverston remained throughout March to early April. **Water Pipit** flocks at Biggar, Walney after floods included thirteen on 26th March and eight still on 6 April.

White Wagtail passage included an impressive 50 at Drigg Point on 20 April, ten at Walney on 6 April, and seven at Cavendish Dock on 22 April. **Yellow Wagtail** reports came from Farleton Knott, Langwathby and Longtown but there were no migrants noted at Walney.

Finches and Buntings

A **Snow Bunting** was at Workington on 18-19 March. **Hawfinch** were reported from several sites but as usual largest numbers were at Sizergh Castle with up to fifteen in March. Up to 60 **Twite** lingered at Walney into April.

Escapes

A number of **White Storks** were seen during the period, one in the Whale / Helton area was apparently on the run from the Lowther Estate whilst birds continue to wander from South Lakes Animal Park.



Crossbill, Jockey Shield, Adam Moan

A Lady Amherst's Pheasant

continued to be seen in the Blencarn area. A **Lesser White-fronted Goose** flew over Waterhead, Windermere on 23rd May. One was seen at the same location in the spring of 2023.

Stephen Dunstan

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