

Berwick's Brilliant Wildlife 2.

Berwick Wildlife Group held their second celebration of the wildlife of Berwick and its immediate hinterland in The Aidan's Room of Berwick United Reformed Church, Spittal on Wednesday 14th January. Berwick Wildlife Group aims to foster appreciation, understanding and protection for local plants and animals. The Chairperson thanked all the people who had contributed to this work, especially the Group's members who have made the year's surveys and events so successful. Many others have helped the Group (and the wildlife) by sending in records, lending survey equipment, allowing surveyors on their land, giving inspiring talks, leading outings, providing photographs, offering meeting rooms, printing articles, displaying posters and giving grants to help with the costs of organisation and the purchase of survey equipment.

The backbone of the Group's work is collection of data on local wildlife. It was very gratifying to see so much interest from friends old and new in the displays illustrating the outcomes of the surveys in 2008. Many questions and discussions arose from the exhibits, and will help the Group plan work in 2009.

A new feature this year was a contribution from the EYE (Exploring Your Environment) Project, a collaboration by the Tyne and Wear Museums, the University of Newcastle and Northumberland Wildlife Trust, among others. This aims to establish a data-base of the wildlife present in the North East of England, and Berwick Wildlife Group sends them the results of its surveys. In this way local observations on wildlife are fed into national information banks and help to fill out the larger picture. Although North Northumberland has a wealth of flora and fauna, it has not been as well studied as some other areas, perhaps because of the scattered population. Results show that climate change is already affecting the distribution of wildlife, with several butterflies and birds being seen here for the first time as they extend their range northward.

Berwick Wildlife Group's ongoing projects include investigating birds, on the estuary and inland, bats, bees, squirrels, trees, insects and flowers. Anyone is welcome, be they beginner or expert. Times of these and indoor meetings are listed in the Group's Newsletter, in Border Events and on the Group's website, www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk. The next survey is a count of Estuary Birds on Saturday 7th February (weather permitting), starting at 10.00 am from the Tweedmouth end of the Old Bridge (bird counting is a cold job – wrap up well). The next indoor meeting is a talk by Ian Kille, "Putting Berwick on the Geological Map", on Wednesday 11th February, 7.30 pm., Berwick United Reformed Church, Main Street, Spittal. Non-members are welcome. If you have any queries please phone 01289 330591 or e-mail mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk .