

Berwick Wildlife Group

www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk

Monthly Review December 2009



WILDLIFE REPORTS.

Weather. A typical mid-winter month, December, unlike last month, was true to form with keen frosts, and even a snow cover at Christmas. The first two weeks were quite wet, with rain occurring on eleven of the first seventeen days. Then a change of wind direction to the northerly quarter brought the first snow on the 19th. A series of cold nights followed, the coldest of these being the 20th with -4.5°C (23.9°F). Daytime temperatures were struggling to get above freezing with the 22nd only -1.0°C (30.2°F) all day. Light rain on the 23rd brought black ice and frozen conditions everywhere. A slow thaw then occurred each day with Christmas Day being bright and sunny with a good layer of frozen snow around. Rain on the 27th brought an increase to the thaw, but a return to clear sunny days brought back the frosty nights and icebound footpaths. These conditions continued to the end of the year with a cold night on 29th reaching -5.6°C (21.0°F). Total rainfall for the month was 76.5mm (3.01 ins).

Birds. **Nuthatches, Siskin and Brambling** were all found at Haggerston Castle on a Winter Atlas survey visit, otherwise the first two weeks were quiet for birds. Then the freezing conditions came and with most still water frozen brought counts of 142 **Goldeneye** in the Estuary (17th) and 24 **Tufted Duck** on the Tweed at West Ord (30th), while 16 **Teal**, 5 **Tufted Duck** and 2 **Coot** were on Cocklawburn pond (26th). Elsewhere, small groups of **Redwing** and **Fieldfare** visited local gardens in the snowy conditions and finch, tit and thrush numbers increased at feeding stations.

Mammals. A **Stoat** in semi-ermine coat was seen crossing the road at Borewell Farm on 17th. It had a grey/brown crown and back, with the rest of its body creamy white, except for the black tip on its tail.

Fish. A couple of beachcombers found a rare fish, a **Ray's Bream** on the tideline at Cocklawburn on 5th. It was well documented in the Berwick Advertiser, and confirmed the identity of another specimen found at Cheswick on 11th September. Normally inhabiting the Atlantic coast of Spain, Portugal and NW Africa, this species turns up occasionally in British waters, alive or often dead. It is not a "climate change" species, but has been seen here intermittently for many years (See <http://www.glaucus.org.uk/Bramabrama.htm>).

Liverworts, mosses and lichens. Following work for the OPAL survey and Janet Simkin's course in Newcastle (Part 2 starts on 1st February), Fiona and Molly have been trying to identify some local lower plants, which have been added to our records. If you can add to the list, or think that we have mis-identified any (only too likely), please let Fiona know. The OPAL lichen survey continues, and OPAL are particularly keen to get records from rural areas as some lichens, such as *Hypogymnia physodes*, which are sensitive to pollution but previously thought to be thriving out of the cities, are in fact disappearing fast. Finding out where they still survive is the key to understanding why they are suffering. Download survey information at www.opalexplornature.org . If you would like (rather amateur) help with identification please contact Fiona (faungier@aungier777.freeserve.co.uk or 01289 330591.)

THE RECORDS.

Date	Species	No.	Location	Grid Ref	Comment
	Birds				
01/12/2009	Brambling	6	Haggerston Castle	NU0443	11.00. Winter Atlas survey.
01/12/2009	Siskin	7	Haggerston Castle	NU0443	11.00 Winter Atlas survey.
01/12/2009	Nuthatch	2	Haggerston Castle	NU0443	Pair. Winter Atlas survey.
01/12/2009	Red-brsted Merganser	4	Yarrow Haugh	NT982525	Weather dry, cool.
01/12/2009	Wigeon	2	Yarrow Haugh	NT982525	Weather dry, cool.
01/12/2009	Canada Goose	27	Yarrow Haugh	NT982525	Weather dry, cool.
01/12/2009	Greylag Goose	126	Yarrow Haugh	NT982525	Weather dry, cool.
01/12/2009	Gt Spt Woodpecker	1	Cot Hill	NT762500	Visiting feeder daily.
01/12/2009	Nuthatch	2	Cot Hill	NT762500	Visiting feeder daily.
01/12/2009	Whooper Swan	6	Cot Hill	NT762500	Flying low over garden to W.
01/12/2009	Redwing	1	Cot Hill	NT762500	Eating hawthorn berries.
01/12/2009	Blackbirds	2	Cot Hill	NT762500	Black beaks - from Europe.
02/12/2009	Linnet	180	Borewell Farm	NU0149	1st big flock seen this winter.
02/12/2009	Woodcock	1	Cheswick Dunes	NU0347	10.00 a.m. Coastal migrant.
02/12/2009	Curlew	42	Cocklawburn	NU0347	
02/12/2009	Bar-tailed Godwit	7	Cocklawburn	NU0347	
02/12/2009	Wigeon	2	Cocklawburn Pond	NU036475	Pair
02/12/2009	Tufted Duck	3	Cocklawburn Pond	NU036475	
02/12/2009	Mute Swan	9	Cocklawburn Pond	NU036475	Pair + 7 Immatures
02/12/2009	Teal	6	Cheswick	NU0346	With Eider
02/12/2009	Eider	48	Cheswick	NU0346	
02/12/2009	Greylag Goose	145	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	
02/12/2009	Canada Goose	4	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	
02/12/2009	Grey Heron	27	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	Roost
02/12/2009	Lapwing	700	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	
02/12/2009	Redshank	260	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	
03/12/2009	Purple Sandpiper	4	Cocklawburn Beach	NU0248	Rising tide.
03/12/2009	Turnstone	6	Cocklawburn Beach	NU0248	Rising tide.
03/12/2009	Common Scoter	40	Cocklawburn Beach	NU0248	Rising tide.
03/12/2009	Oystercatcher	12	Cocklawburn Beach	NU0248	Rising tide.
03/12/2009	Grey Plover	1	Cocklawburn Beach	NU0248	Rising tide.
03/12/2009	Gt Spt Woodpecker	1	Tweedmouth	NT992529	Female, on fat ball feeder.
04/12/2009	Short-eared Owl	1	Cocklawburn Beach	NU0248	Hunting along the dunes.
04/12/2009	Stonechat	1	Cocklawburn Beach	NU0248	.
04/12/2009	Red-throated Diver	1	Cocklawburn Beach	NU0248	Rising tide, higher than 3rd.
04/12/2009	Eider	100	Cocklawburn Beach	NU0248	Rising tide, higher than 3rd.
04/12/2009	Common Scoter	150	Cocklawburn Beach	NU0248	Rising tide, higher than 3rd.
04/12/2009	Oystercatcher	20	Cocklawburn Beach	NU0248	Rising tide, higher than 3rd.
04/12/2009	Curlew	50	Cocklawburn Beach	NU0248	Rising tide, higher than 3rd.
05/12/2009	Fulmar	2	Union Bridge	NT995528	Early "prospecting" pair.
05/12/2009	Collared Doves	40	East Ord Farm	NT9751	Roost
06/12/2009	Canada Goose	6	West Ord	NT9551	9.00 a.m.
06/12/2009	Teal	54	Middle Ord Pond	NT969506	
06/12/2009	Goldeneye	9	West Ord	NT953518	
06/12/2009	Goosander	2	West Ord	NT953518	
07/12/2009	Rook	600	Scremerston Station	NU0049	
07/12/2009	Jackdaw	160	Scremerston Station	NU0049	

07/12/2009	Buzzard	1	Cheswick	NU0346	
07/12/2009	Long-tailed Duck	1	Cheswick	NU0346	Drake
07/12/2009	Common Scoter	1,100	Cheswick	NU0346	plus 260 flying south
07/12/2009	Red-throated Diver	5	Cheswick	NU0346	
07/12/2009	Gannet	2	Cheswick	NU0346	Immatures, feeding 'through' Scoter
07/12/2009	Mallard	62	Cocklawburn Pond	NU036475	
08/12/2009	Goldeneye	18	New Road	NT994534	By Border Bridge.
09/12/2009	Purple Sandpiper	20	Cheswick Black Rocks	NU037476	
09/12/2009	Turnstone	6	Cheswick Black Rocks	NU037476	
09/12/2009	Mistle Thrush	2	Cocklawburn	NU0347	
09/12/2009	Stonechat	4	Cocklawburn	NU0347	
10/12/2009	Goldfinch	34	East Ord	NT979514	Coming to feeders
11/12/2009	Dunlin	200	Little Beach	NU006528	
11/12/2009	Sanderling	80	Little Beach	NU006528	
11/12/2009	Ringed Plover	90	Little Beach	NU006528	
11/12/2009	Grey Plover	3	Little Beach	NU006528	
11/12/2009	Bar-tailed Godwit	6	Little Beach	NU006528	
11/12/2009	Stonechat	2	Little Beach	NU006528	Pair
11/12/2009	Turnstone	2	Little Beach	NU006528	
11/12/2009	Red-brstd Merganser	2	Little Beach	NU006528	
11/12/2009	Purple Sandpiper	2	Little Beach	NU006528	
11/12/2009	Common Snipe	6	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	
11/12/2009	Whooper Swan	6	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	3 adults & 3 imms., flying S.
11/12/2009	Goldeneye	38	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	
13/12/2009	Canada Geese	3	West Ord	NT953518	
13/12/2009	Teal	4	West Ord	NT953518	
13/12/2009	Goldeneye	18	West Ord	NT953518	
13/12/2009	Goosander	2	West Ord	NT953518	
13/12/2009	Cormorant	27	Meadow Haven	NU012526	Roost
13/12/2009	Shag	42	Meadow Haven	NU012526	Roost
13/12/2009	Eider	18	Meadow Haven	NU012526	
13/12/2009	Goldeneye	14	Meadow Haven	NU012526	
13/12/2009	Red-throated Diver	2	Meadow Haven	NU012526	
13/12/2009	Guillemot	2	Meadow Haven	NU012526	
15/12/2009	Red-throated Diver	3	Spittal Bay	NU009517	
15/12/2009	Shag	5	Spittal Bay	NU009517	
15/12/2009	Guillemot	4	Spittal Bay	NU009517	
15/12/2009	Red-brstd Merganser	2	Spittal Bay	NU009517	
15/12/2009	Fulmar	2	Spittal Bay	NU009517	
15/12/2009	Goldeneye	40	Calot Shad	NT974517	
15/12/2009	Goosander	2	Calot Shad	NT974517	
17/12/2009	Common Scoter	520	Cocklawburn	NU0347	
17/12/2009	Red-brstd Merganser	2	Cocklawburn	NU0347	
18/12/2009	Brambling	1	Cot Hill	NT762500	By bird feeder + chaffinches.
18/12/2009	Mute Swan	21	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	WeBS
18/12/2009	Grey Heron	19	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	WeBS
18/12/2009	Greylag Goose	122	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	WeBS
18/12/2009	Canada Goose	14	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	WeBS
18/12/2009	Canada x Greylag	2	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	WeBS
18/12/2009	Mallard	163	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	WeBS
18/12/2009	Eider	26	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	WeBS
18/12/2009	Goldeneye	142	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	WeBS
18/12/2009	Goosander	8	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	WeBS
18/12/2009	Redshank	184	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	WeBS

18/12/2009	Common Snipe	2	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	WeBS
20/12/2009	Grey Wagtail	1	Yarrow Haugh	NT985529	Fine, dry, low tide.
20/12/2009	Turnstone	5	Yarrow Haugh	NT985529	Fine, dry, low tide.
20/12/2009	Redshank	110+	Yarrow Haugh	NT985529	Fine, dry, low tide.
20/12/2009	Mallard	22	Yarrow Haugh	NT985529	Fine, dry, low tide.
20/12/2009	Heron	5	Yarrow Haugh	NT985529	Fine, dry, low tide.
20/12/2009	Canada Goose	8	Yarrow Haugh	NT985529	Fine, dry, low tide.
20/12/2009	Greylag Goose	150	Yarrow Haugh	NT985529	Fine, dry, low tide.
21/12/2009	Sanderling	62	Little Beach	NU006528	
21/12/2009	Ringed Plover	46	Little Beach	NU006528	
21/12/2009	Dunlin	128	Little Beach	NU006528	
21/12/2009	Grey Plover	5	Little Beach	NU006528	
21/12/2009	Bar-tailed Godwit	8	Little Beach	NU006528	
21/12/2009	Purple Sandpiper	4	Dodd's Well	NU001542	
21/12/2009	Grey Plover	6	Dodd's Well	NU001542	
22/12/2009	Greylag Goose	50	Mill Farm	NT990530	Overhead, heading south.
22/12/2009	Songthrush	2	Mill Farm	NT990530	Fine, dry.
22/12/2009	Blackbird	5	Mill Farm	NT990530	Migrants. Fine, dry.
22/12/2009	Pheasant	1	Mill Farm	NT990530	Cock. On stubble. Fine, dry.
22/12/2009	Skylark	40+	Mill Farm	NT990530	On stubble. Fine, dry.
22/12/2009	Grey Wagtail	1	New Road	NT988535	Below Castle Hills.
22/12/2009	Fieldfare	1	East Ord	NT979514	At feeder on apple 'chunks'.
24/12/2009	Sparrowhawk	1	Cot Hill	NT762500	Attracted to birds at feeders.
24/12/2009	Goldfinch	1	Cot Hill	NT762500	Daily visitor to feeders.
24/12/2009	Coal Tit	1	Cot Hill	NT762500	Daily visitor to feeders.
24/12/2009	Nuthatch	2	Cot Hill	NT762500	Daily visitor to feeders.
24/12/2009	Gt Spt Woodpecker	1	Cot Hill	NT762500	Daily visitor to feeders.
24/12/2009	Fieldfare	72	East Ord	NT979514	
25/12/2009	Buzzard	1	East Ord	NT979514	
26/12/2009	Coot	2	Cocklawburn Pond	NU035475	Water half frozen.
26/12/2009	Teal	16	Cocklawburn Pond	NU035475	Water half frozen.
26/12/2009	Blackcap	2	Castle Terrace	NT991537	Male, on fat feeder.
26/12/2009	Grey Partridge	14	Scremerston Station	NU0049	
26/12/2009	Mallard	46	Cocklawburn Pond	NU036475	
26/12/2009	Tufted Duck	5	Cocklawburn Pond	NU036475	
26/12/2009	Common Snipe	3	Cocklawburn Pond	NU036475	
26/12/2009	Stonechat	6	Cocklawburn	NU0347	
26/12/2009	Red-throated Diver	4	Cheswick	NU0346	
26/12/2009	Sanderling	14	Cheswick	NU0346	
26/12/2009	Bar-tailed Godwit	2	Cheswick	NU0346	
26/12/2009	Purple Sandpiper	10	Cheswick Black Rocks	NU037476	
26/12/2009	Pink footed Goose	400	Cheswick	NU0346	Flying south, well offshore
27/12/2009	Fieldfare	1	Castle Terrace	NT991537	Attracted by apples
29/12/2009	Redwing	6	Ord Road	NT986520	Under Whitebeams roadside.
29/12/2009	Barn Owl	1	Polwarth	NT746496	11.30. Flew out of old trees.
29/12/2009	Mallard	50	Polwarth	NT746496	Circling over fields.
29/12/2009	Mistle Thrush	1	Castle Terrace	NT991537	Among blackbirds at apples.
30/12/2009	Redwing	5	Castle Terrace	NT991537	Hunting under leaves.
30/12/2009	Tufted Duck	24	West Ord	NT953518	Large flock on river as still waters frozen.
30/12/2009	Goosander	2	West Ord	NT953518	
30/12/2009	Oystercatcher	42	Mag. Fields Golf Cse	NU004532	High tide roost
30/12/2009	Ringed Plover	34	Mag. Fields Golf Cse	NU004532	High tide roost
30/12/2009	Dunlin	48	Mag. Fields Golf Cse	NU004532	High tide roost

<u>Mammals</u>					
14/12/2009	Mole (hills)		Sharperton, Northumbs.	NT955037	Many mole hills in pasture
17/12/2009	Stoat	1	Borewell Farm	NU0149	Grey crown and spine, the rest creamy-white .
28/12/2009	Grey Squirrel	1	Cot Hill	NT762500	Under seed feeder in garden.
<u>Mosses</u>					
05/12/2009	<i>Fissidens taxifolius</i>	Much	Askew's walk stream	NT984533	Woodland streamside
05/12/2009	<i>Plagiomnium undulatum</i>	Much	Askew's walk stream	NT984533	Woodland streamside
<u>Liverworts</u>					
24/11/2009	<i>Lunularia cruciata</i>	1	North Road, Berwick	NT994537	Base of wall
05/12/2009	<i>Scapania undulata</i>	Some	Askew's walk stream	NT984533	Woodland streamside
05/12/2009	<i>Lunularia cruciata</i>	1	Wall by New Road	NT984533	Shaded wall-base
05/12/2009	<i>Conocephalum conicum</i>	Some	Askew's walk stream	NT984533	Woodland streamside
<u>Lichens</u>					
27/11/2009	<i>Usnea wasmuthii</i>	Some	Wooplaw Wood	NT504420	Fallen from tree crown
27/11/2009	<i>Usnea subfloridana</i>	Much	Wooplaw Wood	NT504420	On twigs
27/11/2009	<i>Evernia prunastri</i>	Much	Wooplaw Wood	NT504420	Twigs and trunks
27/11/2009	<i>Melanelixia fuliginosa</i>	Some	Wooplaw Wood	NT504420	On trunks. Ssp. <i>glabrulata</i>
27/11/2009	<i>Parmelia sulcata</i>	Much	Wooplaw Wood	NT504420	On trunks
27/11/2009	<i>Xanthoria parietina</i>	Little	Wooplaw Wood	NT504420	On one trunk at S edge
27/11/2009	<i>Platismatia glauca</i>	Much	Wooplaw Wood	NT504420	On twigs & trunks
27/11/2009	<i>Hypogymnia physodes</i>	Much	Wooplaw Wood	NT504420	On trunks
27/11/2009	<i>Ramelina farinosa</i>	Much	Wooplaw Wood	NT504420	Twigs and trunks
27/11/2009	<i>Physcia tenella</i>	Some	Wooplaw Wood	NT504420	Twigs only

With many thanks to Malcolm Hutcheson and the other recorders. Many records despite a busy month with inclement weather. Please send us your records month by month throughout 2010, and don't forget mammal records to pass on to the Northumbria Mammal Group. Use our form on the website, phone 01289 309046 or e-mail mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk. Photos (digital or prints/slides to be scanned) are also very useful to us, especially if we can publish them on website or newsletter.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Wednesday 13th January, 7.30 pm. "Life, but not as we know it. The underwater world of St Abbs." A talk on the St Abbs and Eyemouth Voluntary Marine Reserve by the Marine Ranger, Liza Cole. Hear about and see (as left) the spectacular underwater scenery and the fantastic abundance and diversity of life off our local coastline. Berwick United Reformed Church, Main Street, Spittal. Members £2.00, non-members £3.00, accompanied children free.



Wednesday 10th February, 7.30 pm. Wildlife photographer Phil McClean, will talk about and demonstrate his craft. Look forward to an evening of superb photos combined with wildlife and photographic information, and an introduction to the animals that shared Phil's house. Berwick United Reformed Church, Main Street, Spittal. Members £2.00, non-members £3.00, accompanied children free.

Saturday February 13th. 12 noon. Estuary Count. BWG's annual survey of the birds in the estuary and adjacent coast, to discover which areas are most important to the birds. Meet at the Tweedmouth end of the Old Bridge (NT 995 526) where we will divide into groups. Survey usually takes 2-3 hours of slow walking and stopping to count, but you can leave earlier if you wish. Wear very warm waterproof clothing and boots, bring a bite to eat and maybe a hot drink, and binoculars. Beginners welcome. No charge. As February weather is often not ideal, fallback date/time is Saturday February 27th at 11.00 a.m.

Wednesday 10th March, 7.30 pm. Siberian Dream. In search of nesting Ross's Gulls. A talk by international birder **Graham Bell**. Berwick United Reformed Church, Main Street, Spittal. Members £2.00, non-members £3.00, accompanied children free.

April. Outdoor surveys begin in earnest, including studies of: Bats,(other) Small Mammals, Butterflies, Sea-shore Life and Whin Sill and other Grasslands. There will also be a number of visits to local places of interest, and participation in national surveys (e.g. for British Trust for Ornithology or Open Air Laboratories). It is very difficult to set up survey programmes far in advance as weather often dictates the exact time. If you are interested in taking part in any surveys please phone 01289 330591 or e-mail mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk and we can contact you at the appropriate time.

If you want more information on any of the above events, or would like to know more about the Group see our website (www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk), phone 01289 330591, e-mail mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk or just come to an event. Everyone is welcome – there may be a small charge (no charge for children, but they must come with an adult).



This wintry sunrise was photographed recently by Gill Young. Let's hope the weather ameliorates a little now, for the sake of the wildlife as well as our convenience.