

Berwick Wildlife Group

www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk

Monthly Review January 2010



WILDLIFE REPORTS.

Weather. New Year's day was a typical winter's day, with an inch of snow, sunny spells, wintry showers and a slow thaw. The next day brought a cold east wind and heavy showers of hail and snow giving another covering. This sequence continued for the next 10 days with a foot (30 cms) of snow on the ground by the 7th. Three nights of severe frost followed, turning the snow to ice. A return to a very slow thaw set in on the 15th, but the snow seemed to hang around for ages. Finally on the 16th the wind came from the south with heavy overnight rain clearing most of the lying snow. Thereafter it was rather grey and overcast with temperatures below average and light rain or drizzle on several nights. The wind returned to the north on the 29th, bringing clear, crisp, blue skies and keen overnight frost to the month's end.

With snowcover on the first 15 days, rainfall for the month was (with snowmelt) 84mm (3.3 ins). Frost occurred on 15 nights with the lowest temperature -10°C (14°F.) on the 8th & 9th. The coldest daytime temperatures were on the 7th & 8th when it only rose to -4.5°C (23.9°F) through the hours of daylight.

Birds. The hard snowy conditions over the first part of the month brought numbers of more unusual wintering birds into local gardens, like **Redwing**, **Mistle Thrush** and **Fieldfare**. The food provided there has literally been a life-saver. However the most frequently recorded unusual bird over the cold spell was the **Woodcock**. These woodland 'waders' suffer badly in long spells of frost and several birds were found foraging in gardens, roadside verges and on the shoreline. Most of them are migrants having come from Northern Europe due to hard conditions over there. A notable absentee during the cold weather was **Siskin**. A Winter Atlas survey at Berrington found: **Buzzard**, **Great Spotted Woodpecker**, **Jay** and **Tree Sparrow**.



Greylag Goose by Gill Young

Mammals. An immature **Common Seal** was on the shore at Fisherman's Haven on the 23rd. It was obviously 'unwell' as it stood its ground with a dog walker and two dogs, refusing to go back into the sea. Although outside our recording area, an unusual record of the beaching and death on the shore at Beadnell of an immature **Sperm Whale** on the 24th made newspaper headlines. An **Otter** was seen in the main street of Coldstream on the 26th at 21.45, crossing the road - towards the Police Station.

Other records. Another dead **Ray's Bream** was found on the tideline, this time at Cheswick on the 19th. The only early insect recorded was an **11-spot ladybird** on the 25th.

Plants. Despite the return to harder winter conditions, the bright sunshine brought out the first flowers of the year with Aconites, Snowdrops, Crocus, Celandine, Primroses and Coltsfoot braving the cold conditions.

THE RECORDS.

Date	Species	No.	Location	Grid Ref	Comment
	Birds				
01/01/2010	Pink-footed Goose	510	East Ord	NT979514	2 skeins flying south.
02/01/2010	Bullfinch	2	Yarrow Haugh	NT985527	Pair.
02/01/2010	Buzzard	1	Yarrow Slake	NT985530	
03/01/2010	Bullfinch	2	East Ord Green	NT979514	
03/01/2010	Mistle Thrush	2	Tweedmouth	NT999515	In garden. Snow.
03/01/2010	Song Thrush.	1	Tweedmouth	NT999515	In garden. Snow.
03/01/2010	Redwing	5	Tweedmouth	NT999515	In garden. Snow.
03/01/2010	Redwing	1	Castle Terrace	NT991537	In garden.
03/01/2010	Bullfinch	1	Cot Hill	NT762500	In garden.
03/01/2010	Fieldfare	8	East Ord	NT984516	Feeding on berries in garden.
03/01/2010	Pink-footed Goose	140	East Ord	NT984516	10.30. Flying S overhead.
03/01/2010	Redwing	1	Tweedmouth	NT992529	In garden. 10.30. Snowing.
03/01/2010	Song Thrush	1	Tweedmouth garden	NT991528	
03/01/2010	Pink-footed Goose	500	Tweedmouth garden	NT991528	Overhead, heading south.
04/01/2010	Fieldfare	3	Horncliffe	NT929500	Snowy morning. In front garden.
04/01/2010	Redwing	2	Horncliffe	NT929500	Snowy morning. In front garden.
04/01/2010	Goldfinch	4	Castle Terrace	NT991537	At seed feeder. Snow.
04/01/2010	Blackcap	1	Castle Terrace	NT991537	Male. At fat feeder. Snow.
04/01/2010	Reed Bunting	1	Mill Farm	NT988528	On stubble.
04/01/2010	Skylark	40	Mill Farm	NT988528	On stubble.
05/01/2010	Greylag Goose	56	East Ord	NT979514	Flying north.
05/01/2010	Bullfinch	5	Berwick, by Walls	NU003528	On honesty seeds. Snow, cold.
05/01/2010	Grey Wagtail	1	West St., Berwick	NT998529	In street in town. Snow, cold.
05/01/2010	Redwing	2	Berwick	NT997531	Eating Pyracantha berries. Snow.
05/01/2010	Fieldfare	1	Castle Terrace	NT991537	On apples with blackbirds. Snow.
05/01/2010	Long-tailed tit	10	Tweedmouth garden	NT991528	Very cold, deep snow.
05/01/2010	Goldfinch	13	Tweedmouth garden	NT991528	Very cold, deep snow.
05/01/2010	Chaffinch	5	Tweedmouth garden	NT991528	Very cold, deep snow.
05/01/2010	Song Thrush	1	Tweedmouth garden	NT991528	Very cold, deep snow.
05/01/2010	Wood Pigeon	1	Tweedmouth garden	NT991528	Very cold, deep snow.
06/01/2010	Brambling	1	Cornwall Avenue	NT984516	Male. At bird feeders in snow.
06/01/2010	Mistle Thrush	2	Cornwall Avenue	NT984516	Around bird feeders in snow.
06/01/2010	Long-tailed tit	10	Tweedmouth garden	NT992529	11.00. Very cold, deep snow.
06/01/2010	Pink-footed Goose	17	Yarrow Slake	NT985530	Flying S off Yarrow Slake. V cold.
06/01/2010	Linnet	2	Little Beach	NU006527	In mixed finch flock. Snow, cold.
06/01/2010	Bar-tailed Godwit	4	Little Beach	NU006527	Snow, cold.
06/01/2010	Grey Plover	3	Little Beach	NU006527	Snow, cold.
06/01/2010	Ringed Plover	40	Little Beach	NU006527	Snow, cold.
06/01/2010	Woodcock	1	Little Beach	NU006527	Flushed from grass. Snow, cold.
06/01/2010	Fieldfare	1	Quay Walls	NT997527	In berried bush. Snow, cold.
06/01/2010	Redwing	6	Quay Walls	NT997527	In berried bush. Snow, cold.
06/01/2010	Tawny Owl	1	Foulden	NT917568	Snow, cold.
06/01/2010	Barn Owl	1	Foulden	NT917568	Snow, cold.
06/01/2010	Bullfinch	1	North Road	NT994537	Male. In mixed finch flock. Snow.
06/01/2010	Woodcock	1	Cornwall Avenue	NT983515	Flew towards Caravan Park. Cold, snow.
06/01/2010	Dabchick	2	New Road	NT995534	Nr. Royal Border Bridge. V cold.
06/01/2010	Woodcock	1	Castle Terrace	NT991537	Standing still in snow at dusk.
06/01/2010	Redwing	6	New Road	NT989535	Sorting through snow-free areas.

06/01/2010	Mistle Thrush	1	Castle Terrace	NT991537	On apples with blackbirds. Snow.
06/01/2010	Barn Owl	1	Mill Farm	NT986529	Disturbed by geese. Snow, cold.
07/01/2010	Pink-footed Geese	17	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	Flew out of estuary, south.
07/01/2010	Woodcock	1	East Ord Country Park	NT982515	Assume from Cornwall Avenue (above).
07/01/2010	Mistle Thrush	1	Cornwall Avenue	NT984515	15.00. At feeders. Cold, snow.
07/01/2010	Fieldfare	3	Cornwall Avenue	NT984515	15.00. At feeders. Cold, snow.
07/01/2010	Blackcap	1	Cornwall Avenue	NT984515	Male. At feeders. Cold, snow.
07/01/2010	Raven	1	Cornwall Avenue	NT984515	14.30. Flying south. Bright, cold.
08/01/2010	Fieldfare	6	East Ord Country Pk	NT982515	Deep snow, bitterly cold.
08/01/2010	Redwing	2	East Ord Country Pk	NT982515	Deep snow, bitterly cold.
08/01/2010	Mistle Thrush	1	East Ord Country Pk	NT982515	Deep snow, bitterly cold.
08/01/2010	Starling	700	Tweedmouth	NT995522	At least. Regular roost environs Tweedmouth Church Yard.
08/01/2010	Goldfinch	3	Tweedmouth	NT995522	Snow. Bitterly cold.
08/01/2010	Woodcock	1	Tweedmouth	NT995522	Snow. Bitterly cold.
08/01/2010	Redwing	8	New Road	NT988535	Deep snow, bitterly cold.
08/01/2010	Brambling	3	Castle Terrace	NT991537	Deep snow, bitterly cold.
08/01/2010	Fieldfare	2	Castle Terrace	NT991537	On apples. Snow, bitterly cold.
08/01/2010	Fieldfare	1	Pier Road	NU004527	Snow, bitterly cold (-7C). In tree.
08/01/2010	Sparrowhawk	1	Pier Road	NU004527	Flew between cottages.
08/01/2010	Redwing	8	Pier Road	NU004527	Bitterly cold Sheltering in shrub.
08/01/2010	Woodcock	1	Pier Road	NU004527	Found dead on 9th.
09/01/2010	Twite	2	Pier Road	NU004527	Snow, bitterly cold.
09/01/2010	Skylark	6	Pier Road	NU004527	Snow, bitterly cold..
09/01/2010	Redwing	1	Berwick	NT999527	In urban yard. Snow, bitterly cold.
09/01/2010	Tree Sparrow	1	North Road	NT994537	Eating seed. Snow, bitterly cold.
09/01/2010	Brambling	3	North Road	NT994537	Eating seed. Snow, bitterly cold.
10/01/2010	Mistle Thrush	3	Castle Terrace	NT991537	Snow, thawing. Eating apples.
10/01/2010	Brambling	3	Tweedmouth	NT992529	In garden. 11.30, fresh, thawing.
10/01/2010	Fieldfare	1	Tweedmouth	NT992529	In garden. 11.30, fresh, thawing.
10/01/2010	Woodcock	1	Tweed Street	NT995534	Flushed from little park.
10/01/2010	Tawny Owl	1	Coldstream Bridge	NT849400	Took prey from road.
10/01/2010	Barn Owl	1	Beal	NU045427	.
11/01/2010	Shag	3	Spittal Bay	NU009517	
13/01/2010	Mute Swan	9	Cocklawburn pond	NU036475	
13/01/2010	Wigeon	3	Cocklawburn pond	NU036475	
13/01/2010	Tufted Duck	3	Cocklawburn pond	NU036475	
13/01/2010	Mallard	14	Cocklawburn pond	NU036475	
13/01/2010	Bar-tailed Godwit	8	Cheswick	NU0447	
13/01/2010	Ringed Plover	3	Cheswick	NU0447	
13/01/2010	Yellowhammer	1	Cot Hill	NT762500	Male. At bird feeders in garden.
13/01/2010	Great Spt.Woodpecker	2	East Ord Country Pk	NT982515	Male and female. Daily visitors.
13/01/2010	Nuthatch	1	East Ord Country Pk	NT982515	Daily visitor.
13/01/2010	Brambling	4	East Ord Country Pk	NT982515	At feeders.
13/01/2010	Sparrowhawk	1	Little Beach	NU006526	Male. 14.00. Damp and cold.
13/01/2010	Bullfinch	6	Yarrow Haugh	NT983530	In small party. Cold and damp.
14/01/2010	Little Grebe	2	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	WeBS.
14/01/2010	Grey Heron	24	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	WeBS.
14/01/2010	Mute Swan	52	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	WeBS.
14/01/2010	Mallard	136	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	WeBS.
14/01/2010	Eider	22	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	WeBS.
14/01/2010	Goldeneye	178	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	WeBS.
14/01/2010	Moorhen	2	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	WeBS.
14/01/2010	Redshank	76	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	WeBS.

14/01/2010	Turnstone	18	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	WeBS.
14/01/2010	Long-tailed tit	8	Tweedmouth garden	NT991528	
16/01/2010	Merlin	1	Billylaw, Ord Moor	NT980495	Male. Hunting in hedgerows.
16/01/2010	Yellowhammer	34	West Ord	NT953518	
16/01/2010	Goldfinch	62	Cornwall Avenue	NT984516	Around bird feeders.
17/01/2010	Eider	26	Meadow Haven	NU012526	
17/01/2010	Great Cstd Grebe	1	Dodd's Well	NU001542	On the sea.
17/01/2010	Purple Sandpiper	16	Dodd's Well	NU001542	
17/01/2010	Grey Plover	8	Dodd's Well	NU001542	14.30.
17/01/2010	Dunlin	1	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	
17/01/2010	Bar-tailed Godwit	1	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	
17/01/2010	Greylag Goose	110	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	Or more. Landed. 12.30.
18/01/2010	Wigeon	4	Cocklawburn pond	NU036475	
18/01/2010	Tufted Duck	6	Cocklawburn pond	NU036475	
18/01/2010	Red-throated Diver	2	Cocklawburn	NU0347	
18/01/2010	Guillemot	1	Cocklawburn	NU0347	
18/01/2010	Common Scoter	52	Cocklawburn	NU0347	
18/01/2010	Pink-footed Goose	7	Cheswick	NU0447	Flying north.
18/01/2010	Red-throated Diver	2	Cheswick	NU0447	
18/01/2010	Merganser	1	Tweed Dock	NT996524	Drake
18/01/2010	Coot	2	Tweed Dock	NT996524	Feeding at dock entrance.
19/01/2010	Goldfinch	1	Cot Hill	NT762500	On old sunflower eating seeds.
19/01/2010	Long-tailed tit	7	Cot Hill	NT762500	One with white head - European race.
19/01/2010	Woodcock	1	Castle Terrace gdn.	NT991537	Disturbed and flew into field.
19/01/2010	Grey Heron	1	Above Pier Road	NU004528	Floodwater pool by tennis courts
20/01/2010	Red-btd Merganser	5	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	
24/01/2010	Ringed Plover	46	Little Beach	NU006528	
24/01/2010	Sanderling	82	Little Beach	NU006528	
24/01/2010	Dunlin	118	Little Beach	NU006528	
24/01/2010	Purple Sandpiper	18	Little Beach	NU006528	
24/01/2010	Turnstone	26	Little Beach	NU006528	
24/01/2010	Oystercatcher	54	Berwick Golf course	NT9953	
24/01/2010	Purple Sandpiper	5	Ladies Skerr	NU006535	
24/01/2010	Eider	16	Sharper's Head	NU005541	
24/01/2010	Oystercatcher	82	Dodd's Well	NU001542	
24/01/2010	Bar tailed Godwit	4	Dodd's Well	NU001542	
24/01/2010	Grey Plover	2	Dodd's Well	NU001542	
24/01/2010	Eider	18	Berwick Pier	NU0052	
24/01/2010	Red-throated Diver	2	Berwick Pier	NU0052	
24/01/2010	Great Cstd Grebe	1	Berwick Pier	NU011524	11.45. On sea at end of Pier.
24/01/2010	Magpie	2	Flagstaff Park	NU002532	Nest building.
24/01/2010	Peregrine	1	Berwick Walls	NU002529	Male. Hunting, Walls by Barracks.
25/01/2010	Common Scoter	110	Cocklawburn	NU0347	
25/01/2010	Sanderling	14	Cheswick	NU0447	
25/01/2010	Ringed Plover	5	Cheswick	NU0447	
25/01/2010	Turnstone	3	Cheswick	NU0447	
25/01/2010	Sparrowhawk	1	Union Brae.	NT994526	Male, with blackbird prey.
28/01/2010	Greylag Geese	94	East Ord	NT979514	Flying north
28/01/2010	Greylag Goose	67	Yarrow Slake	NT985530	
28/01/2010	Heron	16	Yarrow Slake	NT985530	
28/01/2010	Redshank	132	Yarrow Slake	NT985530	
28/01/2010	Black-headed Gull	52	Yarrow Slake	NT985530	
28/01/2010	Shag	7	Yarrow Slake	NT985530	
28/01/2010	Curlew	16	Yarrow Haugh	NT985527	

29/01/2010	Blackbird	12	Cornwall Avenue	NT984516	Around bird feeders
29/01/2010	Goldfinch	66	Cornwall Avenue	NT984516	Around bird feeders
30/01/2010	Greylag Goose	86	East Ord	NT979514	Flying north
31/01/2010	Grey Wagtail	1	Lifeboat Station	NU000520	Male
31/01/2010	Moorhen	1	Lifeboat Station	NU000520	Unusual this far down estuary
	<u>Mammals</u>				
03/01/2010	Grey Squirrel	1	Cot Hill	NT762500	Under seed feeder in garden.
11/01/2010	Fox	1	Castle Terrace	NT990538	Crossing back garden. Snow.
24/01/2010	Common Seal	1	Fisherman's Haven	NU004538	Immature. Sick?
26/01/2010	Otter	1	Coldstream	NT846402	21.45. Main street, going E then x-ing towards Police Staton.
	<u>Fish</u>				
19/01/2010	Ray's Bream	1	Cheswick	NU042471	Dead on shore.
	<u>Insects</u>				
25/01/2010	11-spot ladybird	1	Castle Terrace	NT991537	In water container. Alive. Rescued.
	<u>Lichens</u>				
14/01/2010	Lecanora chlarotera		Co-op Car Park	NT995521	Characteristic of young urban trees.
14/01/2010	Hypogymnia tubulosa		Quay Walls	NU003527	On sandstone top of wall.
20/01/2010	Cladonia fimbriata		New Road	NT992534	With moss on top of wall.
27/01/2010	Parmelia sulcata		Harthope Valley	NT967236	On Alder trunks.
27/01/2010	Cladonia polydactyla		Harthope Valley	NT967236	On Alder trunk in moss.
27/01/2010	Usnea subfloridana		Harthope Valley	NT967236	On Alder trunk by river.
27/01/2010	Evernia prunastri		Harthope Valley	NT967236	On Alder trunks.
27/01/2010	Hypogymnia physodes		Harthope Valley	NT967236	On Alder trunks.
27/01/2010	Melanelixia fuliginosa ssp. glabratulata		Harthope Valley	NT967236	On Alder trunk.
27/01/2010	Physcia tenella		Earle, nr. Wooler	NT996258	Ash tree in stock field.
27/01/2010	Physcia adscendens		Earle, nr. Wooler	NT996258	Ash tree in stock field.
27/01/2010	Xanthoria parietina		Earle, nr. Wooler	NT996258	Ash tree in stock field.
27/01/2010	Physcia aipolia		Earle, nr. Wooler	NT996258	Ash tree in stock field.
27/01/2010	Ramelina farinacea		Earle, nr. Wooler	NT996258	Ash tree in stock field.
27/01/2010	Evernia prunastri		Earle, nr. Wooler	NT996258	Ash tree in stock field.
27/01/2010	Hypogymnia physodes		Earle, nr. Wooler	NT996258	Ash tree in stock field.
27/01/2010	Parmelia sulcata		Earle, nr. Wooler	NT996258	Ash tree in stock field.
27/01/2010	Physcia aipolia		College Valley	NT895279	Ash tree in stock field.
27/01/2010	Parmelia saxatilis		College Valley	NT895279	Ash tree in stock field.
27/01/2010	Parmelia sulcata		College Valley	NT893274	On Alder trunk by stream.
27/01/2010	Evernia prunastri		College Valley	NT893274	On Alder trunk by stream.
27/01/2010	Cladonia polydactyla		College Valley	NT893274	On Alder trunk in moss.
27/01/2010	Usnea subfloridana		College Valley	NT893274	On Alder trunk by stream.
27/01/2010	Melanelixia fuliginosa ssp. glabratulata		College Valley	NT893274	On Alder trunk by stream.

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR 2009 RECORDS?

All our records for 2009 have now been sent to EYE (Explore Your Environment), who are absolutely delighted to get so many entries from the previously almost "blank" north of their region (they cover all of North East England). The records will be put on the North East Environmental Data Hub, a database of wildlife and habitat information, and eventually on to the National Biodiversity Network. Both these databases are available to anyone, including environmental surveyors (who often carry out surveys with un-realistic time constraints and must rely on already-available data). Our records are therefore vital in helping to ensure that the region's species and habitats are properly protected.

Appropriate casual records have also been sent to the North Northumberland Bird Club, British Trust for Ornithology and Butterfly Conservation, again to help their conservation efforts. Data from our more specialist surveys also find a good home. For example, Butterfly Conservation receive data from our Butterfly Transects at Cocklawburn and Tommy-the-Miller's Field, information on birds from tetrad (2k x 2k square) surveys goes to the BTO's Atlas project, results from grassland surveys are to be sent to Northumberland Wildlife Trust, photos from Cocklawburn Dunes go to Natural England, information on lichens has been submitted to OPAL (Open Air Laboratories), and records from our mammal surveys go to the Mammal Society and Northumbria Mammal Group.

So our records really are valuable and help protect wildlife. With many thanks to everyone who has sent them in. We are particularly grateful to John Rae who has devised a much more efficient system for collecting and collating them all. Even so he has spent hours in front of the computer getting the data organised and forwarded to where they will be most useful. Do please continue to send in casual records - use our form on the website, phone 01289 309046 or e-mail mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk.

SPECIAL APPEALS FOR RECORDS.

Mammal signs and sightings. Northumbria Mammal Group is presently working towards a publication on the Mammals of the North East. They are at the stage of gathering and collating sightings of all mammals in Northumberland and observations from Berwick and the north of the county are (surprise!) particularly sparse, so if we can record any mammals that we see it would increase their geographical range of mammal records very significantly. They are interested in all mammals (moles, deer, badgers, hares, rabbits, mice, voles and shrews.) You don't even need to see the actual beastie – records of fresh mole hills, field-vole signs (tunnels and cut grass) etc. are perfectly valid. So let us know of your sightings of any mammals or signs, together with the date and location, or ideally a 6- (or more) figure map reference. Send to John Rae, 01289 381218, john_rae@dsl.pipex.com or to Fiona, faungier@aungier777.freemove.co.uk. We will collate the sightings and signs and forward them to the Northumbria Mammal Group.



Bank vole runs formed under snow – JR.

Beached birds. Newcastle Bird Club is carrying out a survey of dead (beached) seabirds. If you come across any please send details (species, grid. ref., date, and estimated time of death (e.g. 1 day; 2-3 weeks) to Malcolm Hutcheson on m.hutcheson08@btinternet.com or 01289 309046. Check for rings, too (send to Natural History Museum, London or use BTO website).

SURVEYS PLANNED FOR 2010.

In addition to the general records, we would love help with our more detailed surveys. Beginners are very welcome. This really is a worthwhile, educational and satisfying way of using some of your spare time, and it's fun too! There is no charge for survey participants, and children are welcome although they must be accompanied.

It is easier for us (because weather conditions may alter the time of a survey at the last minute) to have contact details of those interested and then give these people information on the surveys, rather than to plan each survey well in advance and advertise each separately. So please "sign up" to some surveys at one of our forthcoming indoor meetings, contact Fiona by phone (01289 330591) or e-mail (mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk), or as given below for each type of survey.

Bats. Bat surveys have been planned on Thursday evenings throughout the summer, weekly from 27th May to 12th August. For details please contact Leslie Cook on 01289 305435 or as above.

(Other) Small Mammals. There will be surveys (trapping, transects etc.) for the Mammal Society's Monitoring Scheme in April/May and October/November, and other trapping exercises in our area to build up information on species present throughout "our" area. Please contact John on 01289 381218 or john.rae@dsl.pipex.com.

Estuary Birds. Our annual mapping survey of the wintering birds of the estuary and adjacent coast is planned for Saturday February 13th at 12.00 noon (see details under Forthcoming Events, below). We also plan to initiate a second water bird mapping exercise in October.

Reptiles. When the weather warms up we hope to set out some reptile refuges (pieces of old corrugated iron?) then wait and see. Please contact us if you are interested in helping.

Intertidal survey. Following the very successful Beach Safari with Jenny Prince, we plan a more thorough survey of the intertidal area off Little Beach (near Berwick Pier). Probably in the second weeks in March or April – please let us know if you are interested.

Butterfly transects. These are part of Butterfly Conservation's national survey which involves counting butterflies once a week from April to September, but as we work in small teams individuals only need go out every three weeks or so. If you fancy a stroll in the sunshine with a purpose this is ideal. Beginners are very welcome. Just contact us and arrange to come along.

Dragonflies. Evening meeting in May or June.

Plants of the whin sill and other grasslands. A re-survey of sites examined at Ewe Hill, plus other areas with interesting grassland. May onwards. Please let us know if you are interested.

FOSSILS.

Life began before BWG counted it! John Rae discovered that much of the sand on the beach at Cheswick has been removed by recent storms, exposing a layer of Carboniferous lime-rich rocks particularly rich in fossil corals (John's picture right). Apparently a whole coral reef has been fossilised. It is worth going down to have a look soon as the rocks



could get covered again quite easily, as the beach is in constant flux. To get there: turn off the A1 towards Cheswick. Once past the old school house in Cheswick turn left (do not follow the road round towards the golf course). Go past the farm cottages and across the railway bridge to the little car park, then follow the path straight to the beach. Grid ref NU 041 471. There should be a rocky reef straight in front of you, nearer high- than low-tide mark, and the best fossils are on the seaward side in a layer of slightly reddish rock. There is a huge variety of corals, including large solitary ones and small and large ones in colonies, as transverse or longitudinal sections. The whole reef must have been buried alive by a slump of calcareous mud which has preserved them beautifully for 400 million years.

PERSONAL DATA ON COMPUTERS.

Just to remind members that we do keep a list of your names and contact details on computers (Chairperson's, Treasurer's and the Group computer). We will of course not deliberately hand them on to anyone else under any circumstances (although I have made the occasional slip in Group e-mailings). Should someone want to contact one of you, we will always ask before handing on details. However would anyone have any objection to wider circulation of the membership list between the Committee members? This would be especially helpful as most surveys are now organised by contacting those who have expressed interest rather than through public advertisements. If you object to this do please let us know (01289 330591 or mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk).

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.



Wednesday 10th February, 7.30 pm. Wildlife photographer Phil Mclean, will talk about and demonstrate his craft. One of his pictures is on the left. Look forward to an evening of superb photos combined with wildlife and photographic information, and an introduction to the animals that have 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, so 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.

March/April. Several outdoor surveys begin. May has even more! Details above.

If you want more information on any of our events and surveys, 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 along. Everyone is welcome – there may be a small charge (no charge for children, but they must come with an adult).