

Berwick Wildlife Group

www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk



Newsletter: April-May-June 2007

WILDLIFE REPORTS FOR JUNE

Weather. One might ask whatever happened to our Summer as June started with a sequence of dull days with seamist and fog and a regular chilly NE wind. Heavy rain on the 13th (20mm. 0.8inches) brought about a change to blustery showery conditions. This, with an unusual fall in night time temperatures (7.5C/46F on the 26th) must have brought a high mortality rate to both nestling birds and butterflies. Total rainfall for the month was 91mm or 3.65inches.

Birds.

Three **Canada Geese** at Yarrow Slake on 2nd were the start of a northerly movement to their moulting grounds in Scotland. On the 5th at Little Beach were 42 **Ringed Plover**, 16 **Dunlin**, 9 **Sanderling** and a pair of **Shelduck**. The 6th saw 14 **Guillemots**, 12 **Sandwich Terns** and a dark phase **Arctic Skua** in Spittal Bay. A male **Yellow Wagtail** was found near Ord Sewage Works on the 8th. Our trip to Needles Eye on the 9th saw 10 **Goosander** in Dodds Well with a fine singing **Grasshopper Warbler** on the cliff path. At the Eye we saw 7 **Puffin** with the other Auks on the nesting ledges with approx. 1,000 **Kittiwakes**. On the cliff top we also saw a pair of **Yellow Wagtails**, a **Sedge Warbler**, **Whitethroat** and a **Dunlin** which flew over and down into the pool in the Ramparts Estate.

The feral **Whooper Swan** was still on the Estuary on the 10th with 17 **Goosander**. On the 15th the pair of **Stonechat** at Little Beach were feeding young. A **Little Egret** appeared at Yarrow Slake on the 16th with 5 **Canada Geese**. It only stayed for a day though. A sunny morning on the 17th saw a fine male **Hobby** chasing two young Swallows around the grounds of Ord House.

Canada Geese reached 13 on the estuary on the 20th with two flying north at Cheswick later in the day. 2 **Wigeon** and 21 **Curlews** were on Yarrow Slake on the 23rd, while the following day saw 60+ Swifts in a flock in the early morning over East Ord. A strong NE gale on the 25th brought huge numbers of seabirds past the Pier with an hours seawatch recording 1,840 **Gannets**, c.600 **Guillemots**, c.500 **Kittiwakes**, 20 **Razorbills**, 12 **Puffins** and 5 **Manx Shearwaters**. On the 27th a high count of 330 **Mute Swans** at the mouth of the Estuary, with 220 **Kittiwakes** and 10 **Sandwich Terns** roosting on Calot Shad. The same day saw 23 **Goosander** at West Ord with the 4 **Lapwings**, first of the post-breeding season, at New Water Haugh and a female **Yellow Wagtail**. A female **Eider** with 6 ducklings were feeding in Meadow Haven on the 28th. This is a good breeding record as Eider rarely breed between the Tweed and the Border. An **Arctic Skua** was harrying the **Sandwich Terns** feeding over the Haven and a drake **Scaup** was with 34 **Eiders** in

the Estuary. The 29th saw a **Grey Wagtail** at Borewell and 16 **Common Scoter**, 10 **Red-breasted Merganser** and a female **Peregrine** at Cocklawburn.

Mammals. On the 30th, a Roe deer hind and two calves, the latter still with spotted coats and slightly unsure of their legs, were seen near Berwick. We left quickly so that the hind could return to the calves.

Butterflies.

The best news of the month must be the finding of a small group of **Small Blue** butterflies, just north of our area in the Lamberton tetrad. The persistence of the recorder paid off by searching through a large area of Kidney Vetch, the Small Blue's food plant, to find this little 'gem' which was last recorded here 50 years ago. He has also recorded **Small Skipper** and **Large Skipper** near Chirnside.

Elsewhere we recorded good numbers of **Painted Ladies** on our Needles Eye trip with six in the Sharpers Head tetrad and 14 in the Needle's Eye tetrad. The Regional Recorder has asked us to keep 'an eye open' for possible sightings of **Speckled Wood**, which has been found north of Belford this month and **Holly Blue** which seem to be out in large numbers in the south of the county in Tyneside. Lets hope the cold damp weather at the end of the month has not curtailed their progress.

Thank you very much everyone who sent in records – please keep them coming.

BUMBLEBEES.

Inspired by John's article in the May Review, I have become very interested in bees, and am reading a fascinating book by Dave Goulson on Bumblebee behaviour and ecology. Did you know that bumblebees have a phenomenal metabolic rate compared to us? It seems a jogging human male will consume the energy in a Mars bar in roughly an hour, but a bumblebee of equivalent mass would burn the same energy in just 30 seconds!

I have also been filling in the form for the Bumblebee Conservation Trust's Beewatch 2007 for our garden - but, oh dear, even although we get far fewer species here than in the south it is not as easy as I thought. I have made a crib-sheet for myself, and put a copy in with this newsletter.

SUBSCRIPTIONS.

Thank you to all of you who have continued as Berwick Wildlife Group members – we are really grateful for your support. If anyone has not yet paid their 2007/08 membership subs this is the last Newsletter you will receive until you pay! Members get e-mailed or paper copies of the monthly reviews or newsletters, free entry to events led by BWG members, and often reduced entry for talks and walks led by outside speakers. You also have a chance to learn new techniques of wildlife recording, to take part in our lobbying on behalf of local wildlife, and steer the Group's activities towards what interests you. Suggestions welcome! To join please send £8.00 (for individuals) or £14.00 (for families at one address), together with your name, address, telephone number and e-mail address if possible, to Margaret Williams, 1 Derwentwater Terrace, Scremerston, Berwick-upon-Tweed, TD15 2QY. If you are re-joining, all we need is your name – and the money of course.

EVENTS.

Our hard-working Events Secretary has already got all sorts of things organised for 2008, but there is still plenty to do in 2007.

Butterfly Transect in Tommy-the-Millers Field – weekly, on suitably fine days (of which there have been few lately, but any blink of sun and we rush out and count!).

Squirrel Surveys in Kyles Woods. For details please contact us (see below).

Condition Survey of Non-woodland Amenity Trees. Berwick's plot is (not surprisingly) the furthest north in England, so the data are particularly valuable. Late July or early August. We'd love some more helpers - if you are interested, just get in touch.

Wednesday 4th July. Tree Survey. New Road, Chateau Pedro and Castle Hills. Meet at bottom of Bankhill by riverside (by New Road/Love Lane), **7.00pm**.

Sunday July 8th. Border Green Festival. Mill Farm, Tweedmouth. "Thinking a bit about changing the way we live and about having some fun at the same time". BWG will have a stall – do come along.

Thursday 12th (if wet Fri 13th) July. Bat Survey in Spittal, with Spittal Improvement Trust, to identify new areas of bat activity. Meet outside the Blenheim, **21.30**.

Saturday 14th July. Boat trip to the Farne Islands, including guided walk on Inner Farne. Afternoon (2½ to 3 hours). If you would like to come please let us know as soon as possible - phone 01289 330591.

Thursday July 19th. Litter Survey, meet at car park by Little (Pier) Beach, Berwick (by Lowrie Shelter) at **2.00pm**.

Saturday 21st July. Butterfly Conservation Week. Butterfly Survey at Cocklawburn. Meet at car park by pill box, **10.00 am**.

Thursday 26th July. Bat Survey. Emergence survey, Camphill Farm Steading, led by Jane Young, Ecological Consultant. Please first telephone 01289 330591 if you are not a regular on these surveys, as times, meeting places etc. may be changed at the last minute to accommodate weather conditions.

Thursday 9th (or if wet Fri 10th) August. Bat Survey at East Ord Caravan Park. Walking a modified BCT triangular survey to determine bat species present. Meet at Caravan Park Entrance, **20.45**.

Saturday 11th August. Visit to Ford Moss, a lowland raised peat bog which is a Northumberland Wildlife Trust Reserve and of international importance, with Duncan Hutt, NWT Estates Manager. Parking limited so car-sharing advised. Meet at entrance to Ford Moss (NT 962 377, on unclassified road between Ford Common and Kimmerston) at **11.00 a.m.**

Thursday 23rd (or if wet Friday 24rd) August. Bat Survey on riverside, Old Whaling House to Chateau Pedro, checking for bat activity along Wellington Terrace, Quayside to Rowing Club boathouse and New Road, including checking for Daubentons on river. Meet at Palace Green, **20.15**.

Saturday 1st September. Butterfly Survey at Cocklawburn. Meet at car park by pill box. **10.00 am**.

Thursday 6th (or if wet Fri 7th) September. Bat Survey. Ravensdowne/Parade/Barracks, checking perimeter of Barracks adjacent to Upper Ravensdowne for possible bat emergence/roosts. Meet at Parade Car Park at **19.30**

Saturday 8th September. Fungus Foray with mycology specialist Dr Philip Mason, Grange Wood, Coldingham. Meet at the wood at **2.00 pm**. (NT 872 652. From Reston junction of A1 drive north on B6438 towards Coldingham, then take first left at Cairncross, Grange Wood is about 1 ½ miles on left). Car sharing advised as limited parking.

Thursday 20th (or if wet Fri 21st) September. Bat Survey – follow-up where required from results of previous work, details to be announced.

Friday 28th September. Litter Survey, meet at car park by Little (Pier) Beach, Berwick (by Lowrie Shelter) at **2.00pm**.

Saturday 6th October. Autumn Birdwatch, Berwick. A walk led by Malcolm and John I, a chance to see some unusual migrants. Beginners welcome. Meet at car park at the end of the road above Little Beach at **10.00 am**.

Wednesday 14th November. Cyril Guthrie of Wooler will demonstrate and talk about the making of his superb wildlife films, some of which have been shown on the BBC. Berwick United Reformed Church, Main Street, Spittal, **7.30pm**.

Want to know more? We'd love to see you at the surveys and events above – the more help and support we have the better. Or maybe you are the sort of person who prefers to go out by yourself and watch fauna and flora in peace and quiet? Either way, why not send us some of your records or photos, or take part in a **bee or butterfly survey in your own garden** or favourite patch (we have record sheets). Berwick is Brilliant for Wildlife – lets keep it that way. The more we know about the local plants and animals, the better the chance we have of effective protection and conservation.

Contact us. Look at our website www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk, phone 01289 330591, e-mail mail2@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk or just come to an event (non-members very welcome).