

Berwick Wildlife Group

www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk

Monthly Review November 2009



WILDLIFE REPORTS.

Weather. Rain has been the feature of November with a total of 110mm (4.33 ins), a little over the average. Spare a thought, though, for our neighbours in Cumbria who were hit by a deluge on the 19th bringing record 24 hour totals, with 71.6mm (2.82 ins) at Shap, 64 mm (2.52 ins) at Keswick and an incredible 314mm (12.36 ins) at Seathwaite. For comparison 10.4 mm (0.41 ins) was recorded in East Ord on 19th! All that rain brought havoc to the Derwent Valley, the drowning of Cockermouth and the division of Workington, and still the critics say we are not contributing to global warming!

Fortunately, most of our monthly rainfall came overnight, with the first day of the month being the wettest with 20mm (0.8 inches). As with all Atlantic low pressure systems the wind occasionally got up to gale force, with the sou-westerly on the 25th being particularly vigorous. Frost occurred on six nights and the mild conditions throughout the beginning of the month disappeared on the 25th with the first snowfall appearing on the Cheviots and a cold northerly wind setting in.

Birds. We got into 'winter mode' with regular movements of **Geese** and **Whooper Swans**, but numbers of finches and thrushes remained low and there were no waxwing records. Juvenile **Gannets** visited the Estuary during the first week but duck numbers were low due to the Tweed being regularly in 'spate'. A **Great Crested Grebe** was seen on 8th, and a late **Greenshank** was at Yarrow Slake on 23rd. A drake **Shoveler** visited Cocklawburn pond (23rd) and a drake **Scaup** was with **Eider** at Cheswick the same day. Small birds remained scarce, with 120 **Linnets** at Borewell Farm (16th) the only flock of note.

Butterflies. A good month for late **Red Admiral** records, two in an East Ord garden on 8th and the last one there on the 15th. **Silver Y Moths** had been seen in several gardens early in the month.

Bees. There is a record of a worker Buff-tailed Bumblebee still the working on the 26th – and there is a record of one active on 1st December.

Mammals. A fox was noted in Castle Drive on the 15th, and the records from our Longworth traps show that there is plenty for it to eat in the fields and woods nearby.

With many thanks to Malcolm Hutcheson and the other recorders. Please send us your records for December, and any photos (digital or prints/slides to be scanned). Use our form on the website, phone 01289 309046 or e-mail mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk. All records are welcome, but please make a special effort to report mammals, even the rabbits competing for your Christmas veg and the moles intent on altering your lawnscape. So little is known about mammals in this area that the Northumbria Mammal Group would be pleased with the all records.

THE RECORDS.

Date	Species	No.	Location	Grid Ref	Comment
	Birds				
01/11/2009	Gt Black-backed Gull	42	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	Roost
02/11/2009	Whooper Swan	8	Tweed Estuary	NT9853	3.00 p.m. Flew off west
02/11/2009	Nuthatch	1	Castle Terrace	NT998538	In garden.
03/11/2009	Gannet	2	Meadow Haven	NU012526	Juveniles
03/11/2009	Eider	6	Meadow Haven	NU012526	
03/11/2009	Stonechat	2	Little Beach	NU006528	Pair
03/11/2009	Wigeon	5	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	
03/11/2009	Whooper Swan	3	Berwick Walls	NU001532	2.30 p.m. Flying overhead (S)
04/11/2009	Pink-footed Goose	1,360	Cocklawburn	NU0347	8 skeins flying south
04/11/2009	Red-throated Diver	3	Cocklawburn	NU0347	
04/11/2009	Common Scoter	720	Cheswick	NU0346	
04/11/2009	Goldeneye	30	Cheswick	NU0346	With Common Scoter
04/11/2009	Red-throated Diver	5	Cheswick	NU0346	
04/11/2009	Teal	18	Berrington Pond	NU011510	
04/11/2009	Whooper Swan	8	Berrington	NU011510	Flying east towards coast
04/11/2009	Jay	2	Berryburn House	NU011510	
04/11/2009	Bullfinch	3	Lickar Dene	NT857374	
04/11/2009	Dipper	1	Berrington Beck	NU0043	Scarce hereabouts
06/11/2009	Pink-footed Goose	326	Oxford	NT998502	Grazing in fields
06/11/2009	Mute Swan	7	Cocklawburn Pond	NU036475	
06/11/2009	Mallard	14	Cocklawburn Pond	NU036475	
06/11/2009	Pink-footed Goose	1,300	Cocklawburn	NU0347	Several skeins flying south
06/11/2009	Common Snipe	2	Cheswick	NU0346	
06/11/2009	Goldfinch	22	Cheswick	NU0346	
06/11/2009	Reed Bunting	10	Cheswick	NU0346	
06/11/2009	Bar-tailed Godwit	4	Cheswick	NU0346	
06/11/2009	Nuthatch	1	Castle Terrace	NT998538	In garden
07/11/2009	Goldeneye	18	West Ord	NT953518	
07/11/2009	Goosander	5	West Ord	NT953518	
07/11/2009	Canada Goose	7	Yarrow Slake	NT985531	
07/11/2009	Greylag Goose	41	Yarrow Slake	NT985531	
07/11/2009	Snipe	1	Yarrow Slake	NT985531	
07/11/2009	Little Grebe	1	Yarrow Slake	NT985531	Juvenile
07/11/2009	Lapwing	350	Yarrow Slake	NT985531	
07/11/2009	Heron	12	Yarrow Slake	NT985531	
08/11/2009	Gt Crested Grebe	1	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	
08/11/2009	Pink-footed Goose	300	Berwick	NT9953	Flying south
08/11/2009	Cormorant	14	Meadow Haven	NU012526	roost
08/11/2009	Shag	18	Meadow Haven	NU012526	roost
08/11/2009	Sanderling	86	Little Beach	NU006528	
08/11/2009	Dunlin	64	Little Beach	NU006528	
08/11/2009	Ringed Plover	42	Little Beach	NU006528	
08/11/2009	Gt Spt Woodpecker	1	Castle Terrace	NT998538	In garden.
08/11/2009	Nuthatch	2	Castle Terrace	NT998538	In garden.
10/11/2009	Short-eared Owl	1	Cocklawburn Dunes	NU032483	Flying high over dune/grassland
11/11/2009	Heron	17	Yarrow Slake	NT985531	
11/11/2009	Redshank	170	Yarrow Slake	NT985531	
11/11/2009	Cormorant	12	Yarrow Slake	NT985531	
11/11/2009	Mallard	18	Yarrow Slake	NT985531	

11/11/2009	Canada Goose	7	Yarrow Slake	NT985531	
11/11/2009	Greylag Goose	47	Yarrow Slake	NT985531	
11/11/2009	Bullfinch	2	Yarrow Slake	NT985531	
13/11/2009	Lapwing	140	Cocklawburn	NU0347	
13/11/2009	Stonechat	9	Cocklawburn	NU0347	
13/11/2009	Common Scoter	740	Cheswick	NU0346	A high total
13/11/2009	Eider	86	Cheswick	NU0346	
13/11/2009	Red-throated Diver	6	Cheswick	NU0346	
13/11/2009	Purple Sandpiper	4	Cheswick Blk Rocks	NU037476	
13/11/2009	Turnstone	14	Cheswick Blk Rocks	NU037476	
13/11/2009	Long-tailed Tit	5	East Ord Green	NT980515	In party. 2.30 p.m.
13/11/2009	Snow Bunting	1	Cheswick Beach	NU037476	On shoreline. 10.30 a.m.
13/11/2009	Greylag Goose	150	Yarrow Point	NT984531	Flying, then settling on mud
15/11/2009	Teal	52	Middle Ord Pond	NT969506	
15/11/2009	Wigeon	3	Middle Ord Pond	NT969506	
15/11/2009	Mistle Thrush	3	Middle Ord Pond	NT969506	
15/11/2009	Ringed Plover	38	Berwick Golf Cse	NT9953	High tide roost
15/11/2009	Oystercatcher	52	Berwick Golf Cse	NT9953	High tide roost
15/11/2009	Red-throated Diver	2	Meadow Haven	NU012526	
15/11/2009	Canada Goose	38	Meadow Haven	NU012526	Flying into estuary off sea.
15/11/2009	Goldeneye	2	Yarrow Haugh	NT986533	Drakes, beneath Castle Hills
15/11/2009	Stonechat	1	Cocklawburn Dunes	NU0248	15.00hrs. On dune grasses
16/11/2009	Whooper Swan	1	Cocklawburn Pond	NU036475	
16/11/2009	Mallard	15	Cocklawburn Pond	NU036475	
16/11/2009	Tufted Duck	3	Cocklawburn Pond	NU036475	
16/11/2009	Common Partridge	2	Cheswick	NU0346	
16/11/2009	Gannet	8	Cheswick	NU0346	Feeding in the Bay
16/11/2009	Linnet	120	Borewell Farm	NT8527	
17/11/2009	Red-throated Diver	4	Spittal Bay	NU009517	
17/11/2009	Guillemot	1	Spittal Bay	NU009517	
17/11/2009	Golden Plover	62	Cocklawburn	NU0347	
17/11/2009	Lapwing	94	Cocklawburn	NU0347	
17/11/2009	Canada Goose	7	Yarrow Point	NT983530	Fine. 14.40
17/11/2009	Greylag Goose	110	Yarrow Point	NT983530	Fine. 14.40
17/11/2009	Goldeneye	32	Yarrow Haugh	NT981531	Fine. 14.30
17/11/2009	Whooper Swan	8	Castle Terrace	NT994536	Flying E overhead. 15.00
20/11/2009	Golden Plover	62	Cocklawburn	NU0248	Dry but very windy
21/11/2009	Greylag Goose	9	Yarrow Slake	NT985532	
21/11/2009	Lapwing	470	Yarrow Slake	NT985533	
21/11/2009	Grey Plover	3	Cheswick	NU031488	On Middle Skerrs
21/11/2009	Black-throated Diver	2	Cheswick	NU031488	Offshore. 11.30
21/11/2009	Gt Spt Woodpecker	1	Tweedmouth	NT991529	At garden nut feeder
21/11/2009	Gt Spt Woodpecker	1	Yarrow Haugh	NT986529	.
22/11/2009	Grey Plover	7	Dodd's Well	NU001542	
22/11/2009	Purple Sandpiper	22	Dodd's Well	NU001542	
22/11/2009	Mallard	22	Cheswick Pond	NU035475	
22/11/2009	Little Grebe	3	Cheswick Pond	NU035475	
22/11/2009	Pochard	1	Cheswick Pond	NU035475	Female
22/11/2009	Grey Plover	3	Cheswick Shore	NU037476	
22/11/2009	Bar-tailed Godwit	3	Cheswick Shore	NU037476	
22/11/2009	Purple Sandpiper	2	Cheswick Shore	NU037476	
22/11/2009	Turnstone	2	Cheswick Shore	NU037476	
22/11/2009	Black-throated Diver	2	Cheswick (offshore)	NU037476	
22/11/2009	Purple Sandpiper	22	Dodd's Well	NU001543	9.30 a.m. Sunny with showers
22/11/2009	Grey Plover	7	Dodd's Well	NU001543	9.30 a.m. Sunny with showers

22/11/2009	Goldeneye	36	Yarrow Point	NT986533	In River Tweed
23/11/2009	Shoveler	1	Cocklawburn Pond	NU036475	Drake
23/11/2009	Goldeneye	1	Cocklawburn Pond	NU036475	Drake
23/11/2009	Scaup	1	Cheswick	NU0346	Drake, with Eider
23/11/2009	Eider	42	Cheswick	NU0346	
23/11/2009	Shag	3	Cheswick	NU0346	
23/11/2009	Purple Sandpiper	12	Cheswick Blk Rocks	NU037476	
23/11/2009	Turnstone	6	Cheswick Blk Rocks	NU037476	
23/11/2009	Bar-tailed Godwit	2	Cheswick Blk Rocks	NU037476	
23/11/2009	Pink-footed Goose	220	Cheswick Blk Rocks	NU037476	Flying south
23/11/2009	Grey-lag Goose	170	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	WeBS
23/11/2009	Canada Goose	42	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	WeBS
23/11/2009	Greenshank	1	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	WeBS
23/11/2009	Goldeneye	44	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	WeBS
23/11/2009	Lapwing	990	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	WeBS
25/11/2009	Teal	62	Middle Ord Pond	NT969506	
25/11/2009	Wigeon	6	Middle Ord Pond	NT969506	
25/11/2009	Goldeneye	7	West Ord	NT953518	
25/11/2009	Red-throated Diver	7	Spittal Bay	NU009517	
25/11/2009	Redwing	20+	Cot Hill	NT762500	First of the season
27/11/2009	Pink-footed Goose	300	East Ord	NT979514	Flying south
27/11/2009	Grey Wagtail	4	New Road	NT996530	Near boathouse
27/11/2009	Brambling	20	Wooplaw	NT506415	Feeding at woodland edge
27/11/2009	Turnstone	12	Cocklawburn	NU032481	Roosting on rocks on beach
27/11/2009	Purple Sandpiper	4	Cocklawburn	NU032481	Roosting on rocks on beach
27/11/2009	Golden Plover	100	Cocklawburn	NU032481	In flooded field + lapwing, curlew
29/11/2009	Wigeon	10	Middle Ord Pond	NT969506	
29/11/2009	Mallard	80	Middle Ord Pond	NT969506	
29/11/2009	Wigeon	12	West Ord	NT953518	
29/11/2009	Peregrine	1	West Ord	NT953518	Female
29/11/2009	Eider	34	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	Sheltering from gale
29/11/2009	Shag	2	Meadow Haven	NU012526	
29/11/2009	Eider	28	Meadow Haven	NU012526	plus 10 flying north, in gale
29/11/2009	Red-brsted Merganser	4	Meadow Haven	NU012526	
29/11/2009	Oystercatcher	110	Berwick Golf Cse	NT9953	High tide roost
29/11/2009	Ringed Plover	62	Berwick Golf Cse	NT9953	High tide roost
	Mammals				
05/11/2009	Grey Squirrel	1	Bonjedward	NT658237	Ran across road
11/11/2009	Wood Mouse	2	Cocklawburn	NU031480	2 in same Longworth
11/11/2009	Bank Vole	7	Cocklawburn	NU031480	In Longworth trapline
12/11/2009	Field Vole	1	Tommy the Millers	NT992534	Signs, in tussocky grassland
12/11/2009	Fox	1	Tommy the Millers	NT989535	8.30 - 9.00 a.m.
13/11/2009	Wood Mouse	4	Plantation	NT983534	In Longworth trapline
13/11/2009	Bank Vole	6	Plantation	NT983534	In Longworth trapline
13/11/2009	Fox	1	Castle Drive	NT992538	18.45.
14/11/2009	Field Vole	1	Cocklawburn	NU025489	Signs, in tussocky grassland
15/11/2009	Mole	1	Castle Terrace	NT991537	Active all year on lawn
18/11/2009	Wood Mouse	1	Mill Farm	NT988529	In Longworth trapline
18/11/2009	Bank Vole	8	Mill Farm	NT988529	In Longworth trapline
28/11/2009	Grey Seal	2	Tweed Estuary	NT993533	Slapping the water - altercation?
	Butterflies				
04/11/2009	Red Admiral	1	East Ord	NT984516	In garden
04/11/2009	Red Admiral	1	Berrington	NU0043	12.00. Feeding on ivy blossom

13/11/2009	Red Admiral	1	East Ord	NT984516	In garden. On Wallflower
15/11/2009	Red Admiral	1	East Ord	NT984516	Probably roosting in cypress
	Other insects				
03/11/2009	Two-spot ladybirds	5	Berwick Walls	NU001532	1 on trunk of sycamore, 4 hibernating in crack in bark
26/11/2009	Buff-tailed bumblebee	1	Castle Terrace	NT991536	Worker, collecting pollen from remaining knapweed flowers

With many thanks to Malcolm Hutcheson and the other recorders. Please send us your records for December, and photos (digital or prints/slides to be scanned). Use our form on the website, phone 01289 309046 or e-mail mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk.

NATIONAL SMALL MAMMAL MONITORING SCHEME

The Mammal Society has initiated this scheme, "to provide long-term data on small mammal population trends to inform sustainable land management and conservation decisions. The aim of the surveys is to build up a picture of changes over time, so the same tetrads/sites/transects are to be monitored for years to come. The first of our surveys went ahead in November, with John and Sally Rae bravely overseeing everything despite suffering from what turned out to be swine 'flu!



The tetrads (2k x 2k squares) to be surveyed are generated at random but fortunately included two areas we already know well (Cocklawburn and Tommy the Miller's Field). This made it easy to set up new study areas quickly, and in both cases we also examined parts of the square which were not well known to us. The results from the Field Vole (signs) and the very successful trapping transects are included in the records list above, and the "poo samples" left by small mammals in the bait tubes have been sent to the Mammal Society for DNA analysis. John has written a report on our results which will be appearing on our website soon – if you want a paper copy please let us know. Also, if you fancy helping with this project, the next study sessions are in May 2010 – just let us know if you would like to take part in some of them.

A Woodmouse by John Rae



Puzzling over lichens on our first tree

OPAL LICHEN SURVEY

We have also been taking part in a survey of lichens to assess air quality nation-wide for OPAL (Open Air Laboratories, www.opalexplornature.org). Lichens are good indicators of air quality as some species tolerate pollution well and others are very sensitive. BWG members have recorded lichens on trees at 9 sites, filling in the usual gap in the data in N. Northumberland and the eastern Borders. In Berwick the air seems to be relatively polluted, the "sensitive" species of lichen not appearing until far outside the town.

The survey (and an excellent course by Janet Simkin for the Natural History Society of Northumbria) has sparked an interest in lichen identification among some of us – we hope there will be lichens listed on the record sheet once we become proficient enough. Also, the OPAL survey has now been extended to 30th January 2010 – why not have a go?

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 Eymouth Voluntary Marine Reserve by the Marine Ranger, Liza Cole. This was the first reserve of its kind in the UK, with spectacular underwater scenery and a fantastic abundance and diversity of marine life. 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 difficult to set up survey programmes far in advance as weather and number of participants vary. If you are interested please phone 01289 330591 or e-mail mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk .

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).



WITH BEST WISHES FOR CHRISTMAS AND THE NEW YEAR

