

Berwick Wildlife Group

www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk



Newsletter: July-Aug-Sept 2007

WILDLIFE REPORTS FOR SEPTEMBER

Weather. The first few weeks of the month were dominated by a big area of High Pressure centred to the west of Britain. This gave us a period of dry, sometimes cloudy conditions influenced by winds from the north west. Rainfall was below average with 38mm (1.5 inches).

Birds. Migration got into full swing through the month, especially along the coast with good numbers of sea birds. The winds in the northerly direction meant that small passerines were scarce, unless you were willing to get up early in the morning to see them!

At Cocklawburn (1st) we noted 8 **Knot** on the shore during the Group's Butterfly Walk, and a **Knot** and 7 **Arctic Terns** were at Little Beach. A **Peregrine** was noted here (2nd) with a **Sanderling** prey. In Spittal Bay were good numbers of Auks with c.50 **Guillemots** and c.30 **Razorbills**. Back at Cocklawburn (3rd) were a **Whitethroat** and 7 Teal. A **Wheatear** was on the Golf Course and a **Pied Flycatcher** was found at Elm Bank, Spittal and stayed into the next day. A sea-watch (4th), noted 1,200 **Gannets**, 6 **Puffins** and 16 **Goosander** all moving north at Meadow Haven. On Little Beach were 42 **Ringed Plover**, 16 **Dunlin**, 10 **Sanderling** and 50 **Oystercatchers**. A late afternoon sea-watch noted 350 **Fulmars**, 2 **Arctic Skuas**, 60 Guillemots and 8 Razorbills, also heading north over Spittal Bay. Also on the 4th, a **Greenshank** was spotted at Yarrow Slake.

A **Little Egret** was roosting with the **Grey Herons** on Yarrow Slake (5th), along with the **Greenshank**, the latter staying to the end of the month. A **Grey Wagtail** and 320 **Common Gulls** were at West Ord (6th) while at the coast there were 64 **Curlews**, 13 **Knot** and 114 **Oystercatchers** roosting on the rocks at the Coastwatch Station, with 37 **Guillemots** feeding in Fishermans Haven. On the 7th 30 **Common Scoter** were seen off Cocklawburn Beach. The 8th saw 2 **Greenshank** at West Ord, along with 2,300 **Common Gulls**, a significant increase. A summer plumaged **Red-throated Diver** was showing well at Berwick Old Bridge along with 14 **Goosanders**. At Cocklawburn the **Goldfinch** flock had risen to 110 birds by the 9th, with a female Sparrow Hawk 'pestering' them. The **Turnstones** on Little Beach numbered 74 on the 10th. 13 **Shags** were fishing in a group (12th) in Spittal Bay and 3 **Red-throated Divers** and 64 **Common Scoters** were on the sea at Cocklawburn.

The monthly WeBS count on the Estuary (14th) found a **Red-throated Diver**, 16 **Grey Herons**, 132 **Mute Swans**, 36 **Greylag**, 22 **Goosander**, 28 **Guillemot**, 16 **Razorbills**, 364 **Lapwing**, 74 **Curlew**, 180 **Redshank**, 2 **Greenshank**, 12 **Arctic Terns**, 8 **Common Terns**, and 20 **Sandwich Terns**. A good 'white bait' movement into the estuary on the rising tide attracting good numbers of sea birds.

A **Greenshank** was at West Ord (15th) along with a **Mallard** and a late brood of ducklings. A skein of 40+ **Pinkfeet** flighting south has started our change to Autumn. 36 **Shag** and 18 **Cormorants** were roosting at Meadow Haven (16th), also a passing **Manx Shearwater**. 36 **Pied Wagtails** were feeding at the Tennis Courts (19th) and 80 Grey-lag and a **Bar-tailed Godwit** was at Yarrow Slake. A passage of 70 **Swallows** flying south at dawn (20th) was noted at East Ord. At Yarrow Slake on the 22nd there were 76 **Greylag Geese**, 2 **Canada Geese**, 2 of mixed parentage and a **Bar-tailed Godwit**. A **Ruff** and 5 **Bar-tailed Godwits** were on Little Beach on the 25th with 14 **Dunlins**. The 27th brought 11 **Bar-tailed Godwits** to Little Beach and a **Spotted Flycatcher** was in a Tweedmouth garden. 16 **Wigeon** were at Yarrow Slake (29th).

For several years at least, the reeds of Tapee Fen have been a temporary home to migrating **Pied Wagtails**. This autumn, substantial numbers were observed on 23rd September, and 300 arose from the reeds at dawn on the 27th. Numbers are likely to rise even further into October. It is good to know that this traditional passage roost is still being used by the birds.

Elsewhere.

36 **Pinkfoot Geese** flying west at St. Abbs on the 13th with a **Goldeneye** on the Loch, while at Cheswick 76 **Common Scoters** were offshore. On the 16th a flock of 50 finches, mostly **Greenfinches**, were feeding at Cothill, SW of Duns, but were disturbed by a **Sparrowhawk**. At Cheswick (26th) were 3 **Great Skuas**, an **Arctic Skua** and 100+ **Gannets**, and a **Snipe** on the pond.

Mammals. A **Pipistrelle Bat** was flying in the midday sun (19th), a good butterfly day, at East Ord. Our evening visit to Canty's Brig on 30th August revealed both **Pipistrelles** and **Daubenton's Bats** hunting over the Whiteadder.

Butterflies. Local bred species are slowly increasing with numbers of **Peacocks**, **Red Admiral** and a few **Painted Ladies** appearing. A Berwick garden showed 2 **Red Admirals**, a **Painted Lady**, a **Small White** and a **Peacock** on the 11th, while an East Ord garden recorded 16 **Red Admirals**, 4 **Painted Ladies**, 2 **Peacocks** a **Small Tortoiseshell** and a **Comma** on the 19th. On the 22nd 2 **Meadow Browns** were on the Snook at Holy Island, a very late date for this summer butterfly, and on the 29th a stray **Red Admiral** was seen at 352m in the Cheviots.

Bees.

Have you been taking part in the **Bumble Bee Conservation Trust's Garden Beewatch** this year? BWG has sent in some records collected on Group outings, and so have several individual members. BBCT has thanked us for these, and hope we will take part again next year when the survey will be run again. We would also like to see any local bee records for our own interest, so if you have been collecting records do send them direct to BBCT and please also send us a copy. On the 29th a drone of the uncommon **Blaeberry Bumblebee** (*Bombus monticola*) was seen on Yeavinger Bell.

The mining bees discovered at Ford Moss last month were almost certainly *Colletes succinctus* (there is no English name). They have distinctive bands of pale dense hairs on the abdomen, and feed mainly on heather flowers. (More info. on Group News page on website, <http://www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk/News.html>).

Thank you so much to everyone who has sent in the reports and photos to make up this newsletter and our website and record sheets - please keep them coming.



Sanderling by Gill Young



Red Admiral on lavender by Gill Young



Blaeberry Bumblebee by Fiona Aungier



Colletes succinctus by Fiona Aungier

SURVEYS

The summer's work on estuary and coastal birds, bats, bees, butterflies, squirrels, town trees and beach litter has produced lots of information. I'd especially like to thank all the surveyors for their dedication and hard work in collecting the data, made particularly difficult this year by the uncertain weather. We aim to have all the results sorted out and written up by 12th December, for our celebration and display evening "Berwick is Brilliant for Wildlife" (see below), which will include consideration of projects for 2008. We will continue most of this year's surveys and also plan to do some work for the new BTO Atlas and the Wider Countryside Survey of Insects. Can you think of any other species groups or problem areas that need a closer look locally? Would you like to help with some of the existing surveys, alone or with a group (beginners or experts equally welcome)? Come along to the meeting on 12th December and discuss your ideas, or just get in touch with one of the Committee.

Contact us. Look at our website www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk, phone 01289 330591, e-mail mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk or just come to an event (non-members very welcome).

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

2007

Saturday 6th October. Autumn Birdwatch, Berwick. A walk led by Malcolm Hutcheson and John Inglis, 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**. Dress for standing around – can be cold!

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**.

Wednesday 12th December. Berwick is Brilliant for Wildlife – Display and discussion of wildlife highlights from 2007. Do come along and let us know what you found this year. Seasonal refreshments will be provided. Berwick United Reformed Church, Main Street, Spittal, **7.30pm**.

2008

Wednesday 9th January. Talk "Trees, woods and people" by Ross Weddle. Berwick United Reformed Church, Main Street, Spittal, **7.30pm**.

February. Estuary Bird Survey. BWG's regular mid-winter "count" to monitor changes in water-bird populations on the estuary and coast. Meet at the Tweedmouth side of the Old Bridge, **11.00 am on Saturday 9th February** (if weather appalling 11.00am Saturday 23rd February). Will definitely be cold, possibly wet and windy, wrap up well and bring some lunch.

Wednesday 13th February. The Music of Birds. Demonstration and talk by Geoff Sample, wildlife sound recorder. Berwick United Reformed Church, Main Street, Spittal, **7.30pm**.

Wednesday 12th March. David Rollo, OBE, will talk about his experiences as a wildlife vet. Berwick United Reformed Church, Main Street, Spittal, **7.30pm**.

Saturday 5th April. A spring walk in the Plantation, Berwick with Ross Weddle. Meet at top of Askew's Walk (NT 981 537), old Paxton road, at **10.30 am**.

Wednesday May 7th. AGM, followed by a talk on his Canadian Wildlife Adventure by John Rae. Berwick United Reformed Church, Main Street, Spittal, **7.30pm**.

Wednesday May 14th. A walk in the Hartshope Valley, with Gillian Thompson, ecologist with Northumberland National Park. Curlews should be calling. Meet at **Carey Burn Bridge**, about 3 miles S of Wooler on road between Earle (S of Wooler) and Langlee Ford, **NT 976 250, 11.00**. Finish about 3.00pm. Bring packed lunch, weatherproof clothes and strong footwear.

Members and non-members are very welcome at all these events. There may be a small charge, normally £2.00 for members and £3.00 for non-members. Any queries phone 01289 330591 or e-mail mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk .