

Berwick Wildlife Group

www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk

Monthly Review September 2009



PREAMBLE

A slightly different format to the Review this month with the wildlife records beginning on p. 3.

Berwick Wildlife Group members have had an extremely busy September, with the last surveys of the year of butterflies and bats, an expedition to the shore at Holy Island, a visit to a Whin Grassland site, fixed point photos at Cocklawburn, the Beachwatch litter survey and a very successful small mammal trapping week, as well as the "casual records" that many of you have sent in and for which we are most grateful.

VISIT TO THE NORTH SHORE OF HOLY ISLAND

by Elizabeth Martin-Fisher.

Early on Saturday 19th September, when the spring tide had exposed a wide area of rocks and coarse sand, full of rich colours, a party from BWG led by Jenny Prince explored the rock pools on the north shore of Holy Island. This is a wonderful area and every rock lifted produced an abundance of animal life. Classifying busily with the aid of assorted seashore books, we found among other things: breadcrumb and other sponges; many beadlet and two dahlia anemones, the latter camouflaged with



Looking in the rock pools – John Rae



Purple Henry Starfish – John Rae

backwards under the rocks and shrimps in the pools; common starfish, purple henry starfish and brittle stars; many butterfly, a shanny and a worm pipefish. We failed to find the immensely long bootlace worm, seen here on other occasions, but everything else was reliably present at this amazingly rich site, where Jenny opened up a new world for members of the Group. We are most grateful to her for passing on some of her extensive knowledge of sea-shore life.

sand; scale worms clinging tightly to the rocks; ragworms slithering over them; white keel worm tubes encrusting the rocks; two sea slugs, a sea hare with bright pink curls of eggs and a sea lemon; numerous crabs and other crustacea – hermit crabs in dog-whelk shells, dark green-black shore crabs, piecrust-frilled edible crabs, velvet swimming crabs which did not scuttle for shelter but fought back with their elegant blue-lined legs and snapping claws, tiny long- and broad-clawed porcelain crabs, squat lobsters retreating rapidly



Worm Pipe Fish – John Rae



WHIN SILL GRASSLAND

This summer we were asked to survey some of the Whin Sill and other potentially interesting grassland sites in the north of the county, not examined during the main survey carried out two years ago. The Whin Sill is a complex sheet of igneous rock which outcrops mostly in Northumberland, producing small areas of thin, drought-prone but base-rich soils with a characteristic, unusual and extremely threatened flora. This includes many spring annuals such as clovers, spring bulbs (onions) and shrubs like rock-rose. Unfortunately

Examining whin sill grassland - John Rae

we didn't get round to the survey until August, when it became obvious that many of the characteristic species were already overwintering as seeds or tiny unidentifiable seedlings. An interim report on the sites examined will be produced, but we need to go back to some of them, and new ones, next spring and early summer. If you are interested in helping do let us know.



Rock Rose on Whin Grassland – John Rae

SMALL MAMMAL SURVEYS

These took place at Cocklawburn and at Tommy-the-Millers Field in the third week of September. A description of the week's work by Molly, with photos by John Rae, is on our website (<http://www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk/News.html#SmallMammals2>). For those of you who receive a paper newsletter (who I take it aren't on the internet) a copy is included here.



NATIONAL MOTH WEEK

On 18th September, at a moth event organised by Barry Prater and the NTS, moth traps were set up at St Abbs Head, with moth experts on hand to discuss moths and moth trapping. The evening was cloudy but windless and 56 moths of 17 species were identified from the traps. Most striking to a beginner were the beautiful Canary-shouldered Thorns attracted to two of the traps; an amazing photo of one by Barry is shown here.

RINGING RECOVERY

On 7th August I found a dead female eider on the strandline at Cheswick (just below the "Big Dune"), with a ring. The BTO tell me it was ringed as an adult (2 years +) on Inner Farne on 21st May 05 – so it may not have moved far (22km) but it has spent at least 4 years as a breeding-age adult, presumably all locally.

Even I know the picture is not of an eider; it shows a wheatear, cleverly photographed by John Inglis on 21st September at Little Beach (see record below).



THE RECORDS

Date	Species name	No.	Location	Grid reference	Comments
Birds					
01/09/2009	Greylag Goose	72	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	
01/09/2009	Pink-footed Goose	1	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	
01/09/2009	Canada Goose	5	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	
01/09/2009	Wigeon	4	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	
01/09/2009	Greylag Goose	38.798	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	
02/09/2009	Wheatear	2	Cocklawburn	NU0347	
02/09/2009	Goldfinch	130	Cocklawburn	NU0347	
02/09/2009	Willow Warbler	2	Cocklawburn	NU0347	
02/09/2009	Greenshank	1	Cocklawburn Pond	NU036475	
02/09/2009	Tufted Duck	2	Cocklawburn Pond	NU036475	
02/09/2009	Wheatear	5	Little Beach	NU006528	
02/09/2009	Ringed Plover	24	Little Beach	NU006528	
02/09/2009	Dunlin	6	Little Beach	NU006528	
03/09/2009	Peregrine	1	East Ord	NT979514	Male
03/09/2009	Starling	10	Tapee Fen	NT995537	Starlings gathering nightly on the 'communications mast' N of fen.
03/09/2009	Pied Wagtail	10	Tapee Fen	NT995537	Wagtails beginning to congregate at the fen, sign of impending migration.
04/09/2009	Swallow	42	Pier House	NU008525	Migrant group
04/09/2009	Teal	66	Spittal Bay	NU009517	Strong, blustery NW wind
04/09/2009	Pintail	24	Spittal Bay	NU009517	
04/09/2009	Velvet Scoter	2	Spittal Bay	NU009517	
04/09/2009	Common Scoter	23	Spittal Bay	NU009517	
04/09/2009	Wigeon	12	Spittal Bay	NU009517	
04/09/2009	Gannet	120	Spittal Bay	NU009517	120 north per hour
04/09/2009	Arctic Tern	14	Spittal Bay	NU009517	
04/09/2009	Red-throated Diver	1	Spittal Bay	NU009517	
04/09/2009	Gt.Spt Woodpecker	1	Spittal	NT9952	Above cliff path. Poss. migrant?
04/09/2009	Pintail	24	Berwick Pier	NU0052	Flying north. 3.30p.m.
04/09/2009	Velvet Scoter	2	Berwick Pier	NU0052	Flying north. 2.30p.m.
04/09/2009	Sparrowhawk	1	Castle Drive	NT993539	Female
05/09/2009	Sparrowhawk	1	Castle Drive	NT993539	Female
06/09/2009	Little Egret	1	Causeway, Holy Is.	NU0943	
06/09/2009	Cormorant	18	Meadow Haven	NU012526	Roost
06/09/2009	Shag	30	Meadow Haven	NU012526	Roost
06/09/2009	Teal	116	Middle Ord Pond	NT969506	
06/09/2009	Black-thrted Diver	3	Meadow Haven	NU0152	08.30 on high tide. 14.20 flew S.
07/09/2009	Sandwich Tern	140	Cocklawburn	NU0347	Roost
07/09/2009	Arctic Tern	16	Cocklawburn	NU0347	Roost
07/09/2009	Buzzard	2	Cocklawburn	NU0347	
07/09/2009	Chiff-chaff	1	Cocklawburn	NU0347	
07/09/2009	Sand Martin	5	Cocklawburn	NU0347	With other hirundines over the pond
07/09/2009	Starling	540	Cocklawburn	NU0347	Migrant flock
07/09/2009	Tree Sparrow	24	Letham Shank	NT857374	
07/09/2009	Osprey	1	Cocklawburn	NU0248	10.20a.m. Adult with injured left leg.
08/09/2009	Sparrowhawk	1	Castle Terrace	NT993536	Female
09/09/2009	Tufted Duck	3	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	
09/09/2009	Lapwing	150	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	

09/09/2009	Kingfisher	1	West Ord	NT953518	
10/09/2009	Swallow	100	Cot Hill	NT762500	On wires and stubble. Also on 11th.
11/09/2009	Great Crstd Grebe	1	Cheswick	NU0346	Offshore
11/09/2009	Arctic Skua	1	Cheswick	NU055462	Harrassing herring gulls. 16.00.
12/09/2009	Common Scoter	104	Cheswick	NU0346	
12/09/2009	Eider	236	Cheswick Blk Rocks	NU037476	
12/09/2009	Red-throated Diver	2	Cheswick Blk Rocks	NU037476	
12/09/2009	Ringed Plover	28	Cheswick Blk Rocks	NU037476	
12/09/2009	Turnstone	8	Cheswick Blk Rocks	NU037476	
12/09/2009	Teal	6	Yarrow Slake	NT983528	Warm and sunny.
12/09/2009	Wigeon	3	Yarrow Slake	NT983528	Warm and sunny.
12/09/2009	Greenshank	1	Yarrow Slake	NT983528	Warm and sunny.
12/09/2009	Sparrowhawk	1	Castle Drive	NT993539	Female. Took house sparrow
13/09/2009	Arctic Skua	3	Meadow Haven	NU012526	
13/09/2009	Sandwich Tern	130	Ladies Skerr	NT996542	High tide roost
13/09/2009	Cormorant	26	Sandstell Point	NU005521	High tide roost
14/09/2009	Red-throated Diver	5	Spittal Bay	NU009517	Flying south
14/09/2009	Arctic Skua	1	Spittal Bay	NU009517	Dark phase
14/09/2009	Velvet Scoter	2	Berwick Pler	NU0052	Flying South. 8.45 am..
14/09/2009	Brent Goose	16	Berwick Pler	NU0052	Flying South. 8.45 am..
16/09/2009	Sandwich Tern	48	Cocklawburn	NU0347	High tide roost
16/09/2009	Arctic Skua	1	Cocklawburn	NU0347	Light phase
16/09/2009	Merlin	1	Cocklawburn	NU0347	Male. Hunting young swallows
16/09/2009	Stonechat	5	Cocklawburn	NU0347	
16/09/2009	Guillemot	7	Spittal Bay	NU009517	
16/09/2009	Gannet	300	Spittal Bay	NU009517	Feeding near shore after Herring
16/09/2009	Kittiwake	120	Spittal Bay	NU009517	120 north per hour
16/09/2009	Teal	34	Spittal Bay	NU009517	Flying north
17/09/2009	Little Grebe	3	Cheswick Pond	NU035475	
17/09/2009	Red-throated Diver	1	Cheswick	NU031476	Offshore
17/09/2009	Chiff-chaff	2	Castle Hills	NT987535	
17/09/2009	House Martin	50	Sisterpath	NT755485	Only a few around subsequently.
17/09/2009	Ringed Plover	1	Cheswick	NU037476	
17/09/2009	Turnstone	2	Cheswick	NU037476	
17/09/2009	Dunlin	1	Cheswick	NU037476	
17/09/2009	Knot	2	Cheswick	NU037476	On rocks, 14.30.
17/09/2009	Great Crstd Grebe	3	Cheswick	NU037476	Offshore, 14.30.
17/09/2009	Short-eared Owl	1	Magdalene Fields	NT998535	Quartering ditch
18/09/2009	Grey Heron	32	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	High tide roost
18/09/2009	Common Snipe	2	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	1.00pm.
18/09/2009	Dunlin	16	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	1.00pm.
18/09/2009	Greenshank	1	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	1.00pm.
19/09/2009	Bar-tailed Godwit	5	Little Beach	NU006528	
19/09/2009	Turnstone	144	Little Beach	NU006528	
19/09/2009	Knot	12	Little Beach	NU006527	2.00pm.
19/09/2009	Curlew Sandpiper	2	Little Beach	NU006527	2.00pm.
20/09/2009	Teal	5	West Ord	NT953518	
20/09/2009	Stonechat	1	Ford Moss	NT965375	Warm. 11.00 - 14.00.
20/09/2009	Buzzard	5	Ford Moss	NT965375	Warm. 11.00 - 14.00.
20/09/2009	Osprey	1	Norham	NT8946	11.00 am. Above R. Tweed, 3. mins
20/09/2009	Redshank	190	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	High water roost
20/09/2009	Curlew	33	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	High water roost
20/09/2009	Heron	17	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	High water roost
20/09/2009	Cormorant	3	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	2 juveniles
21/09/2009	Turnstone	2	Little Beach	NU007528	

Lepidoptera					
02/09/2009	Fox Moth Caterpillar	10	Cocklawburn	NU0347	By track. Also on 21/08/09
07/09/2009	Speckled Wood	1	New Road	NT989535	2.20 pm. On ivy and nectaring on sea aster. There still at 4.30.
07/09/2009	White Ermine Caterpillar	1	Cot Hill	NT762500	
12/09/2009	Painted Lady	7	North Road	NT994538	On lavender
12/09/2009	Tortoiseshell	1	North Road	NT994538	On lavender
15/09/2009	Wall Butterfly	1	St Abbs Reserve	NT913677	Nr farm cottages. 11.20 am. Most northerly locally this millennium.
16/09/2009	Painted Lady	1	Cot Hill	NT762500	On Sedum in garden
20/09/2009	Red Admiral	3	Ford Moss	NT965375	Warm. 11.00 - 14.00.
20/09/2009	Peacock	1	East Ord	NT997515	
23/09/2009	Red Admiral	1	Royal Tweed Bridge	NT994527	Alighted on car in slow traffic
25/09/2009	Tortoiseshell	1	Castle Drive	NT993539	Semi-torpid on lawn
30/09/2009	Red Admiral	1	Hutton	NT891536	Flying past
Hymenoptera					
16/09/2009	Buff-tailed Bumblebee	11	Cot Hill	NT762500	On Sedum in garden
27/09/2009	Early Bumblebee	1	Tommy-the-Millers	NT991535	Queen, feeding.
28/09/2009	Buff-tailed Bumblebee	1	Castle Terrace	NT991538	Queen, flying past.
Marine life					
19/09/2009	Breadcrumb Sponge	5	Holy I., Back Skerrs	NU127441	<i>Halichondria panicea</i>
19/09/2009	Sponge	5	Holy I., Back Skerrs	NU127441	<i>Myxilla encrustans</i>
19/09/2009	Beadlet Anemone	50	Holy I., Back Skerrs	NU127441	<i>Acinea equina</i>
19/09/2009	Dahlia Anemone	2	Holy I., Back Skerrs	NU127441	<i>Urticina felina</i>
19/09/2009	Scale Worm	3	Holy I., Back Skerrs	NU127441	<i>Harmothoë impar</i>
19/09/2009	Ragworm	2	Holy I., Back Skerrs	NU127441	<i>Nereis pelagica</i>
19/09/2009	Sea Hare	1	Holy I., Back Skerrs	NU127441	<i>Aplysia punctata</i>
19/09/2009	Sea Lemon	1	Holy I., Back Skerrs	NU127441	<i>Archidoris pseudoargus</i>
19/09/2009	Dog-whelk eggs	1	Holy I., Back Skerrs	NU127441	<i>Nucella lapillus</i>
19/09/2009	Shore Crab	5	Holy I., Back Skerrs	NU127441	<i>Carcinus maenas</i>
19/09/2009	Edible Crab	25	Holy I., Back Skerrs	NU127441	<i>Cancer pagurus</i>
19/09/2009	Velvet Swimming Crab	25	Holy I., Back Skerrs	NU127441	<i>Necora puber</i>
19/09/2009	Long-clawed Porcelain Crab	1	Holy I., Back Skerrs	NU127441	<i>Pisidia longicornis</i>
19/09/2009	Broad-clawed P C	50	Holy I., Back Skerrs	NU127441	<i>Porcellana platycheles</i>
19/09/2009	Squat Lobster	10	Holy I., Back Skerrs	NU127441	<i>Galathea squamifera</i>
19/09/2009	Common Hermit Crab		Holy I., Back Skerrs	NU127441	<i>Pagurus bernhardus</i>
19/09/2009	Shrimp	3	Holy I., Back Skerrs	NU127441	<i>Palaemon elegans</i>
19/09/2009	Common Starfish	15	Holy I., Back Skerrs	NU127441	<i>Asterias rubens</i>
19/09/2009	Brittle Stars	30	Holy I., Back Skerrs	NU127441	<i>Ophiothrix fragilis</i>
19/09/2009	Purple Henry Stfish	1	Holy I., Back Skerrs	NU127441	<i>Henricia sanguinolata</i>
19/09/2009	Purple Sea Urchin	1	Holy I., Back Skerrs	NU127441	<i>Psammechinus miliaris</i>
19/09/2009	Butterfish	10	Holy I., Back Skerrs	NU127441	<i>Pholis gunnellus</i>
19/09/2009	Shanny	1	Holy I., Back Skerrs	NU127441	<i>Lipophrys pholis</i>
19/09/2009	Worm Pipefish	1	Holy I., Back Skerrs	NU127441	<i>Nerophis lumbriciformis</i>

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the records, the surveys, the photographs and to the Newsletter. Records and surveys are our most effective way of helping to conserve wildlife – if no one knows it is there it can't be "saved". Please use our web-site for your records, e-mail www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk or phone 01289 309046.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

October. Air Quality Survey for OPAL (Open Air Laboratories). A survey of lichens on deciduous trees, plus examining sycamore leaves for tar-spot fungus, on Berwick Walls (sycamore), in Warkworth Terrace (ash) and the green at East Ord (oak). Results will be co-ordinated nationally to map the occurrence of indicator lichens and tar spot across England and investigate the link between them and known levels of significant nitrogen pollutants. Dates to be arranged. Let us know if you are interested: e-mail mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk or phone 01289 330591.

Sunday 11th October, 1.30pm. Geological Walk with Ian Kille at Cocklawburn. The rocks here are very varied and have many fossils in them, giving clues as to what the area was like over 300 million years ago. Meet at car park at end of beach road below pill box, NU 032 481. Warm clothing and boots recommended – rocks may be slippery. About 2 hours slow walk. Everyone welcome. Members £2.00, non-members £3.00, accompanied children free.

Saturday 24th October, 10.00am. Early Migrants bird walk with John Inglis and Malcolm Hutcheson. Meet at car park at end of road above Little Beach, Berwick (NU 005 529) – where the air ambulance sometimes lands, by Magdalene Fields golf course. We will walk slowly, stopping frequently, so wear warm clothing and bring binoculars if possible. A chance to see some unusual migrants. Beginners welcome.

Wednesday 11th November 7.30pm. Aisling Lannin. Talk on Marine Pollution. Marine life around the coast of the British Isles is as colourful and fascinating as that anywhere in the world's oceans, but it is under threat, particularly from pollution and over-fishing. Berwick United Reformed Church, Main Street, SPITTAL.

Thursday 19th Nov. 7.30 Maltings. *North Northumberland Bird Club special Silver Anniversary Event : "TAKING STOCK: MY LIFE IN PHOTOGRAPHY" - an evening with Laurie Campbell at The Maltings, Berwick-upon-Tweed.*

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).