

# Berwick Wildlife Group

[www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk](http://www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk)

## Monthly Review: September 2011



### WILDLIFE REPORTS.

**Weather.** September started on a wet note with several weakening Atlantic storms passing through, including the remnants of Hurricane 'Katia' which brought gale force winds on the 12<sup>th</sup>. Things settled down by mid-month, with average temperatures. The arrival of a high pressure system during the last week brought a southerly airflow and unusually warm conditions for the end of September. The maximum temperature was 24°C (75°F) on the 30<sup>th</sup>. Even with some clear, cool nights, no frost was recorded.

Most of the rainfall came in the first half of the month, with final figures of 42.5mm (1.7ins) making it a dryer month than average. With the warm conditions, it was very surprising to record an Aurora Borealis over North Northumberland just after dusk on the 25<sup>th</sup>, with some incredible pictures recorded at Holy Island on local TV. What surprises await us in October?

**Birds.** Migration was in full swing with departing summer visitors and the first winter migrants arriving. The outstanding bird was a **Sandhill Crane** which was seen over the A1 just north of Berwick (16<sup>th</sup>) having been first located over Dunbar earlier that day. It or another was recorded in Norfolk two days later while a second bird was on the Shetland Isles at the same time. Normally these birds frequent the Russian Steppes and migrate down into the Indian sub-continent.

More usual was a **Spotted Flycatcher** at East Ord (3<sup>rd</sup>) and a large gathering of c.150 **House Martins** (7<sup>th</sup>) over the Walls. **Wheatears** have been recorded all month along the coast, the peak being 9 at Cocklawburn (13<sup>th</sup>), and a fine large bird of the Greenland race was on the Golf Course (14<sup>th</sup>). The same day saw a large gathering of Terns roosting on rocks at Dodd's Well on the falling tide, which included c.140 **Arctic Terns**, c.45 **Common Terns** and c.36 **Sandwich Terns**. Also on the shore was a **Curlew Sandpiper** at Little Beach.

It was good to see 4 **Little Egrets** back at Yarrow Slake (15<sup>th</sup>) with the odd bird lingering to the end of the month. This reflects the 'explosion' of these birds into Southern England in the last decade. Also on the 15<sup>th</sup> 4 **Wigeon** and a **Goldeneye** were at New Water Heugh. A **Tawny Owl** was calling at 6.a.m. in Ord Country Park (19<sup>th</sup>).

Waders were on the move this month with 510 **Knot** roosting on Saltpan Rocks (21<sup>st</sup>). That day 182 **Common Scoter**, 80 **Eider** and 3 **Red-throated Divers** were at Cocklawburn. 92 **Golden Plover** were at Cocklawburn on the 26<sup>th</sup> with 350 **Lapwing** and the first 20 **Pink-footed Geese** flying south, while an immature **Gannet** and 3 **Guillemots** were off Calot Shad on the high tide. Of smaller migrants, **Chiffchaff** were recorded at Cocklawburn, East Ord, Cot Hill and Pier House during the last three days of the month, a **Whitethroat** was at Cocklawburn (29<sup>th</sup>) and 5 **Redwings** (30<sup>th</sup>) at East Ord.

**Mammals.** **Hedgehogs** were recorded in several places, with 2 in the "Garden City" on the 8<sup>th</sup>. A **Stoat** was seen near the A1 bridge at East Ord (13<sup>th</sup>), and 2 at Cot Hill on the 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Butterflies.** It has been a quiet month for butterflies due to the variable weather, but records have come in on favourable days. Numbers of **Small Copper**, **Small Tortoiseshell** and **Peacock** were good, and **Small Whites** have been sighted up to the end of the month. **Red Admirals** were more numerous and a few **Painted Ladies** were recorded. A **Speckled Wood** was seen at East Ord (23<sup>rd</sup>), probably a 'new' tetrad.

**Other Insects.** With the mild conditions at the end of the month, numbers of **Silver Y Moths** have appeared again. Some more unusual migrant moths were brought into the area on southerly air masses, with a **Rusty-dot Pearl** and a **Vestal** recorded just over the Border near Horndean.

**Plants.** The late burst of mild weather has encouraged some spring flowers, such as cowslips, violets and a host of garden plants to burst into bloom.

### SOME OF THE 200+ RECORDS RECEIVED THIS MONTH

Date	Species	No.	Location	Grid Ref	Comments
	<b>Birds</b>				
01/09/2011	Swallow	10	Cocklawburn	NU0347	About to migrate
01/09/2011	Whinchat	3	Cocklawburn	NU0347	
01/09/2011	Buzzard	2	Cocklawburn	NU0347	
03/09/2011	Peregrine	1	Royal Border Bridge	NT993532	Female on bridge
03/09/2011	Gt Spt Woodpekr	1	Chateau Pedro	NT983532	
03/09/2011	Long-tailed Tit	3	S of bypass bridge	NT977518	Family
03/09/2011	Willow Warbler	1	S of bypass bridge	NT977518	
03/09/2011	SpottedFlycatcher	1	S of bypass bridge	NT977518	
03/09/2011	Buzzard	2	S of bypass bridge	NT977518	
04/09/2011	Peregrine	1	Needles Eye	NT993553	
04/09/2011	Wheatear	2	Needles Eye	NT993553	
07/09/2011	House Martin	150	The Stanks	NU001532	Feeding by the Walls
10/09/2011	Great Skua	1	Ross Back Sands	NU145380	
13/09/2011	Wheatear	9	Cocklawburn	NU033478	Between car park and pond
14/09/2011	Wheatear	1	Mag. Fields G C	NU0053	Greenland race
14/09/2011	Curlew Sandpiper	1	Little Beach	NU006529	WeBS
14/09/2011	Turnstone	52	Berwick North Shore	NT9953	WeBS
14/09/2011	Arctic Skua	1	Berwick North Shore	NT9953	Dark phase
14/09/2011	Sandwich Terns	35	Dodd's Well	NU000543	11.00. Low tide roost
14/09/2011	Common Terns	56	Dodd's Well	NU000543	11.00. Low tide roost
14/09/2011	Arctic Terns	130	Dodd's Well	NU000543	11.00. Low tide roost
15/09/2011	Peregrine	1	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	
15/09/2011	Greylag Geese	54	Tweed Estuary	NT9853	WeBS
15/09/2011	Lapwing	660	Tweed Estuary	NT9853	WeBS
15/09/2011	Pink-ftd Goose	70	Yarrow Point	NT985530	.
15/09/2011	Little Egret	4	Yarrow Point	NT985530	.
15/09/2011	Wigeon	4	New Water Haugh	NT978525	16.00
15/09/2011	Goldeneye	1	New Water Haugh	NT978525	16.00. Imm. Drake
15/09/2011	Little Egret	3	Yarrow Slake	NT984527	15.00
18/09/2011	Common Scoter	135	Cocklawburn	NU0348	
18/09/2011	Sandwich Tern	46	Cocklawburn	NU0348	
18/09/2011	Arctic Tern	10	Cocklawburn	NU0348	
18/09/2011	Tufted Duck	4	Cocklawburn pond	NU036475	
19/09/2011	Tawny Owl	1	East Ord	NT9851	Calling at 06.00
19/09/2011	Canada Geese	38	New Water Heugh	NT9752	

21/09/2011	Goldfinch	85	Cocklawburn	NU0348	
21/09/2011	Little Grebe	1	Cocklawburn pond	NU036475	
21/09/2011	Common Scoter	182	Cheswick	NU0446	
21/09/2011	Red-thtd Diver	3	Cheswick	NU0446	
21/09/2011	Bar-tailed Godwit	3	Saltpan rocks	NU026490	
21/09/2011	Knot	510	Saltpan Rocks	NU0249	Migrants. High tide roost
22/09/2011	Arctic Skua	1	Cocklawburn	NU0348	
22/09/2011	Sandwich Tern	30	Cocklawburn	NU0348	
22/09/2011	Arctic Tern	5	Cocklawburn	NU0348	
25/09/2011	Raven	2	Ford Moss	NT965374	Flying together, calling
25/09/2011	Canada Goose	35	Yarrow Point	NT984527	
25/09/2011	Greylag Goose	120	Yarrow Point	NT984527	
25/09/2011	Little Egret	2	Yarrow Point	NT984527	
25/09/2011	Heron	8	Yarrow Slake	NT985531	14.00. High tide roost
25/09/2011	Curlew	52	Yarrow Slake	NT985531	14.00. High tide roost
26/09/2011	Pink-ftd Goose	20	Cocklawburn	NU0348	Flying south
26/09/2011	Lapwing	360	Cocklawburn	NU0348	
26/09/2011	Golden Plover	92	Cocklawburn	NU0348	
26/09/2011	Wheatear	2	Cocklawburn	NU0348	Still present 29th
26/09/2011	Teal	5	Little Beach	NU006529	
26/09/2011	Wheatear	1	Little Beach	NU006529	
26/09/2011	Gannet	1	Calot Shad	NU001524	Imm. resting on estuary
26/09/2011	Guillemot	3	Calot Shad	NU001524	Feeding in estuary
27/09/2011	Chiffchaff	1	East Ord	NT9851	
29/09/2011	Chiffchaff	2	Cot Hill	NT762500	
29/09/2011	Whitethroat	1	Cocklawburn	NU0348	10.00
29/09/2011	Stonechat	2	Cocklawburn	NU0348	10.00
29/09/2011	Wheatear	2	Cocklawburn	NU0348	10.00
29/09/2011	Pink-ftd Goose	216	Cocklawburn	NU0348	10.00, in 2 skeins flying S
29/09/2011	Curlew	8	Cocklawburn	NU032480	Feeding
29/09/2011	Stonechat	2	Cocklawburn	NU032480	Early afternoon
30/09/2011	Chiffchaff	1	Pier Cottage	NU005527	
30/09/2011	Redwing	5	East Ord	NT9851	
	<b>Mammals</b>				
01/09/2011	Hedgehog	1	Meadows Grange	NT991541	
08/09/2011	Hedgehog	1	Kentstone	NU039413	
08/09/2011	Hedgehog	2	Northumbs Avenue	NT999531	21.30
08/09/2011	Red Squirrel	2	St Cuthbert's Cave	NU0634	Feeding on ground
13/09/2011	Stoat	1	A1 by Tweed Bridge	NT973519	Crossing West to East
20/09/2011	Grey Squirrel	1	Horncliffe	NT9250	
23/09/2011	Hedgehog	1	The Meadows	NT991541	22.00. By garden wall
29/09/2011	Stoat	2	Cot Hill	NT762500	Chasing around garden
	<b>Reptiles &amp; Amphibians</b>				
08/09/2011	Common Toad	3	St Cuthbert's Cave	NU0634	1 adult, 2 juvenile
10/09/2011	Common Toad	5	Cocklawburn	NU034480	Young, on various paths
25/09/2011	Common Frog	1	Ford Moss	NT965374	.
25/09/2011	Common Lizard	2	Ford Moss	NT965374	Basking
29/09/2011	Common Toad	4	Cocklawburn	NU032480	Early Afternoon
29/09/2011	Common Lizard	5	Cocklawburn	NU032480	Early Afternoon
	<b>Insects</b>				
01/09/2011	11-spot Ladybird	1	Near Plantation	NT978530	By footbridge

08/09/2011	Small Copper	1	St Cuthbert's Cave	NU0634	On sheltered track
08/09/2011	Wall Butterfly	3	St Cuthbert's Cave	NU0634	On sheltered track
08/09/2011	Red Admiral	3	St Cuthbert's Cave	NU0634	On sheltered track
08/09/2011	Peacock Butterfly	3	St Cuthbert's Cave	NU0634	On sheltered track
16/09/2011	Common Hawker	1	Isle of Skye	NG5053	Female
20/09/2011	Painted Lady	1	Hiveacres	NT984515	Feeding on dandelion
24/09/2011	Speckled Wood	1	East Ord Country P	NT982514	11.00
25/09/2011	Red Admiral	3	Ford Moss	NT965374	
25/09/2011	Migrant Hawker	1	Ford Moss	NT965374	
28/09/2011	24-spot Ladybird	1	Berwick	NT991536	In house
29/09/2011	Red Admiral	8	Cot Hill	NT762500	On Sedum/daisies
29/09/2011	Garden Tiger Moth	5	Cocklawburn	NU032480	Caterpillars. Early afternoon
29/09/2011	Rusty-dot Pearl	1	Horndean	NT905496	
29/09/2011	Vestal	1	Horndean	NT905496	Berwickshire County record
	<b>Plants</b>				
25/09/2011	Bog Violet	1	Ford Moss	NT965374	In flower
29/09/2011	Cowslip	1	Cocklawburn	NU032480	In flower

With many thanks to Malcolm Hutcheson and the other recorders. Thank you all for sending in so many records, including the 63 records of 16 species of mammal that you have collected for the Northumbria Mammal Group, which should make some more “spots” on the species maps for this part of the County. We are most grateful.

Please continue to send us records of wildlife, and photos (digital or prints/slides). Use our (newly re-jigged) form on the Sightings page ([www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk/Sightings.html](http://www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk/Sightings.html)), phone 01289 309046 or e-mail [mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk](mailto:mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk).

### **SPEED LIMIT ON THE ESTUARY**

Thank you also for the many signatures we have received on Do Shaw’s petition, showing that a substantial number of local people would be in favour of a speed limit on the estuary, or some other means of limiting the disturbance caused by power craft. Over 300 signatures have now been submitted to the Town Council. Unfortunately this is only a first step in the campaign – please press your local Town and County Councillors to take the idea forward or the initiative will be lost.

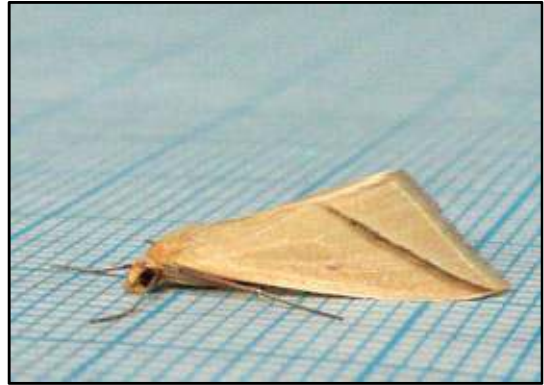
### **WIND TURBINES**

These raise strong feelings, and considerable debate about the consequence for wildlife. Does the benefit of generating electricity without burning fossil fuel balance the damage to wildlife caused by construction, operation and maintenance? Factors to consider include the efficiency of the generation, the distribution of the resulting electricity, the position and size of the turbines and above all the reliability of any prior surveys for wildlife. What is clear is that very large numbers of big turbines are planned in Northumberland (see, for instance, <http://www.middletonburactiongroup.co.uk/>), and together these would have considerable impact on birds, bats and other wildlife. The BWG Committee is trying to work out just what this might be, so that we can respond quickly and sensibly to the many planning applications already pouring in for the old Berwick District. If anyone has particular expertise in this area, or would like to express their views, please let us know.

## MEMBERS' PICTURES.



Common Lizard by Ian Bradley



Vestal Moth by Maurice Aungier (grid 1mm.)



Rusty-dot Pearl by Maurice Aungier (grid 1 mm.)



Common Hawker from Skye by Gill Young

**OUTDOOR WORK.** Our **Small-mammal survey** for the Mammal Society is underway this week (4<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> Oct). An expedition to the mouth of the Till with **Bryophyte expert John O'Reilly** is planned for mid-November. If you would like to take part in either of these please contact us for details – 01289 330591 or [mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk](mailto:mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk) .

**INDOOR TALKS.** These take place in winter (not December) at 7.30 pm on the second Wednesday of the month in the St Aidan's Room, Berwick United Reformed Church, Main Street, SPITTAL. Members and non-members are welcome. There will be a small charge to cover room hire, etc: Members £2.00; Non-members £3.00; (accompanied) children free.

**Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> October. Talk by Ian Kille - Geodiversity: geology and the meaning of life, the universe and everything.** This will be an intriguing and diverting talk by an excellent speaker.

**Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> November. Talk on "Our National Parks" by Sandra Gann of the Campaign for National Parks.** CNP is a charity working to protect and enhance the National Parks, and promote understanding and quiet enjoyment of them for everyone. This will be a fascinating glimpse behind the tea-rooms and scenery of the National Parks.

**BERWICK WILDLIFE GROUP MEMBERSHIP.** Membership of BWG costs £10.00 for one, £16.00 for more than one, person at the same address. Non-members are very welcome at all our outings and events (there may be a small charge). If you would like more information about any of our walks, talks and surveys, or would like to know more about the Group, see our website ([www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk](http://www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk) ), phone 01289 330591, e-mail [mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk](mailto:mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk) or just come on one of the events.