

Berwick Wildlife Group

www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk

Monthly Review February 2007



WILDLIFE REPORTS.

The month was unusually mild with the only frost of note being on the night of the 6th when the temperature dropped to -3.3C (26F.) There was little sunshine with most days being overcast with light and variable winds. The last two weeks of the month were duller and damper with sea mist on several days, but the average daytime maximum temperature was high, around 7C – 10C (46F – 50F). The recorded rainfall was 85mm or 3.4 inches.

Birds.

- Feb. 1st** Several skeins of **Pink-footed Geese** were moving north over the town, about 800 in morning and a further 42 in afternoon. A **Buzzard** was seen in Tommy-the-Miller's Field, harried by gulls until it flew off.
- 2nd** 4 **Rock Pipits** and a pair of **Stonechats** on the Pier. 26 **Greylag** and 2 **Pinkfooted Geese** on Yarrow Slake. 48 **Ringed Plover** were on Cocklawburn beach.
- 6th** The last sighting of the male **Snow Bunting** on the Pier. A single **Waxwing** made a brief appearance around Hiveacres, returning from the 24th to the end of the month.
- 8th** In Meadow Haven, 10 **Shag** and 6 **Red-breasted Mergansers**. Good numbers of waders were on Little Beach with 164 **Sanderling**, 7 **Dunlin**, 6 **Turnstone**, 3 **Grey Plover** and 2 **Purple Sandpiper**. 2 **Stonechats** at Riverdene fields.
- 9th** 170 **Golden Plover** were at Cocklawburn with 90 **Oystercatchers** and 70 **Lapwing** and a flock of 18 **Twite**. At Cheswick were a **Great Northern Diver** and 3 **Red-throated Divers**. 3 **Bar-tailed Godwits** were on Little Beach.
- 11th** A pair of **Stonechat** were on the railway bank, Spittal, present the rest of the month. A pair of **Blackcaps** seen regularly in a Mansefield Road garden, with another pair in the Castle Drive area.
- 13th** At Cheswick there were 32 **Ringed Plover**, 3 **Sanderling**, 5 **Purple Sandpiper**, also 55 **Twite** at Sea House and 6 **Turnstone** and 9 **Purple Sandpipers** at Cocklawburn.
- 14th** 28 **Whooper Swans** with 92 **Mute Swans** feeding in a kale field at Loanend, Hornccliffe. 2 **Red-throated Diver**, 5 **Shag** and 38 **Eider** in Spittal Bay. 3 **Teal** at the Tweed Estuary mouth.
- 17th** Several **Grey Partridge** heard calling near Mill Farm. **Great Spotted Woodpecker** at Chateau Pedro. A male **Blackcap** in a Springfield Park garden.
- 19th** A **Siskin** in a Tweedmouth garden.
- 20th** A **Little Grebe** and a pair of **Wigeon**, Yarrow Slake. A **Nuthatch** calling around Ord House all day.

- 21st** A mixed flock of 36 **Linnets**, 14 **Reed Buntings** and 8 **Yellowhammers** at Sea House. A **Grey Wagtail** and 7 **Pink-footed Geese** in the coastal fields at Cocklawburn.
- 25th** On Little Beach, 26 **Ringed Plover** 32 **Dunlin** and 174 **Sanderling**.
- 27th** A **Peregrine** in a Scremerston garden, sheltering from heavy rain under a thick hedge.

Elsewhere in the region, 150 **Redwings** at Paxton and a **Nuthatch** at Norham Castle on 11th.

Amphibians.

Frogs are already appearing in garden ponds, preparatory to breeding. There has also been a report (from the Scottish SPCA) of a Great Crested Newt captured in (and returned to) our area.

Insects

Following last months intriguing record of a **Red Admiral** seen at Cornhill mid-month by the Berwick Ramblers comes another butterfly sighting. This time a **Comma** near Horncliffe around 7th February.

Plants.

Spring flowers continue to put in an unusually early appearance, with Primroses already in bloom at Etal in the last week of February.

Thank you to everyone who sent in records. **To submit a wildlife record** please either phone Malcolm on 01289 309046 or use the record form on the "Recent Sightings" page of our website (www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk). Sightings here cover the core of our "Berwick Wildlife Group" area – from the Scottish Border to Scremerston on the East side of the A1. Records on the website cover a wider area (including Eyemouth and Wooler) – we just don't have room for them all here. So send in your records by your chosen method.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Our plans for 2007 include surveys of squirrels, bees, butterflies, bats, plants and marine litter, also monthly walks, watches, visits and so on. Details will be in the next (early April) newsletter, but two you need to know about before then:

Wed 14th March. Illustrated Talk on Red Squirrels by Philippa Mitchell of Northumberland Wildlife Trust and Red Alert North England. 7.30, Berwick United Reformed Church, Main Street, Spittal. Usual charge: members £2.00, visitors £3.00.

****A boat trip to the Farne Islands, including guided walk on Inner Farne****
Saturday 14th July, afternoon (2½ to 3 hours). Cost varies according to numbers, but will be about £12.00 for boat trip, plus £5.40 landing fees for Inner Farne (free to NT and NTS members). **Places need to be pre-booked, so if you would like to come please let us know as soon as possible** e-mail mail2@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk or telephone Fiona on 01289 330591.