

Berwick Wildlife Group

www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk

Monthly Review February 2009



NEW FORMAT FOR RECORDS.

The Group needs to keep its growing collection of information on local wildlife in a consistent manner, one that is as far as possible compatible with other people's records.

We have recently been in touch with Explore Your Environment (EYE), a very helpful group dedicated to collecting and providing records of wildlife throughout the North East. EYE (<http://www.eyeproject.org.uk/>) wants to improve access to information on wildlife in order to help to protect the environment, assist with planning for the future and let people discover the natural heritage on their doorstep. They also pass data on to the National Biodiversity Network (NBN), which we have been hoping to do for some time but is quite complicated.

The NBN website is an amazingly useful tool. For example, go to <http://www.nbn.org.uk>, click on the NBN Gateway tab, type in your desired species, choose interactive map, and you can find out exactly what records have been made locally, by whom and when. I happened to try "Great Spotted Woodpecker", and the map shows lots of recent sightings in the Borders (records from Scottish Borders Biological Records Centre and Scottish Ornithologists' Club), but an almost complete blank for North East England. Which is where EYE and BWG, and you, come in. We can only conserve wildlife if we know where it already is, or isn't, and ask ourselves questions like why this pattern? Why the gaps? Is the population stable? And what can we do to help?

So it makes sense for us to contribute to EYE, but to avoid hours of repetitive work we need to store our data in a way that is compatible with their computers. Also (bearing in mind eventual transfer to NBN) some common names we use need to be changed (e.g. Grey Heron instead of just Heron). We have settled on keeping everything in Excel, so the "Casual Sightings" incorporated in the monthly Reviews will now come as tables. Don't worry if you don't have Excel on your computer. Tables from Excel can be imported into Word, which is what we have done here, and it should open in your usual word processor program. If it is no good on your computer, (or you just hate the format), let us know. But keep sending in the records!

WILDLIFE REPORTS.

Weather. This month has been one of two halves, either side of the 15th. The first half was a real February 'filldyke', wet but cold and frosty at times. There was snowfall on 5 days, the heaviest fall being 75mm (2.9 ins) coming on the 12th. The lowest temperature was on the 6th when -5.5°C (22.1°F) was recorded, following a day with heavy hoar frost and a max. of 1.0°C (33.8°F). All this was to melt away with a fresh SW wind on the 16th, daytime temperatures gradually reaching 13.5°C (56.3°F) on the 26th. This brought about a significant change in the countryside with spring bulbs flowering and several bird species coming into song. Rainfall for the month was 65mm (2.5 ins).

Birds. Highlights of the month include a **Snow Bunting** on Little Beach (3rd), 3 early **Guillemots** in Spittal Bay and a **Snow Goose** flying north with a large skein of **Pinkfooted Geese** (18th). A **Black-throated Diver** was in the estuary off Calot Shad (20th).

Date	Species name	No.	Location	Grid reference	Comments
	Birds				
01/02/2009	Whooper Swan	11	Shoreswood	NT941465	
01/02/2009	Whooper Swan	42	Battle Hill, Norham	NT9145	
01/02/2009	Canada Goose	6	West Ord	NT953518	
01/02/2009	Common Shelduck	1	Meadow Haven	NU012526	Male
01/02/2009	Eurasian Wigeon	10	Middle Ord Pond	NT969506	
01/02/2009	Common Teal	20	Middle Ord Pond	NT969506	
01/02/2009	Northern Gannet	3	Berwick Pier	NU0052	Flying south
01/02/2009	Eurasian Bullfinch	3	Loanend, Horncliffe	NT945507	
01/02/2009	Green Woodpecker	1	Castle Hills	NT987535	In area all month
01/02/2009	Goldcrest	2	Castle Terrace	NT991538	At feeders all month
01/02/2009	Tufted Duck	14	Cheswick Pond	NU035475	
01/02/2009	Mallard	18	Cheswick Pond	NU035475	
01/02/2009	Little Grebe	1	Cheswick Pond	NU035475	
02/02/2009	European Shag	5	Spittal Bay	NU009517	
02/02/2009	Rock Pipit	3	Sandstell Point	NU005521	
03/02/2009	Grey Plover	2	Little Beach	NU006528	
03/02/2009	Bar-tailed Godwit	14	Little Beach	NU006528	
03/02/2009	Snow Bunting	1	Little Beach	NU006528	Male
03/02/2009	Eurasian Wigeon	2	Old Bridge	NT996527	Pair
03/02/2009	Common Goldeneye	12	Castle Vale	NT994533	Drakes
03/02/2009	Ringed Plover	44	Little Beach	NU006528	
03/02/2009	Sanderling	70	Little Beach	NU006528	
03/02/2009	Eurasian Oystercatcher	70	Little Beach	NU006528	
03/02/2009	Bar-tailed Godwit	7	Little Beach	NU006528	
03/02/2009	Grey Plover	3	Little Beach	NU006528	
03/02/2009	Dunlin	66	Little Beach	NU006528	
05/02/2009	Gt. Spotted Woodpecker	1	Castle Terrace	NT991538	On fat feeder
09/02/2008	Tawny Owl	1	East Ord	NT979514	Roosting in tree
09/02/2008	Fieldfare	1	Riverdene	NT992530	
09/02/2008	Fieldfare	5	Rose Garden	NU003531	
10/02/2009	Fieldfare	20	Tapee Fen	NT995537	
10/02/2009	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	4	Tapee Fen	NT995537	Diff. times; diff plumage.
12/02/2009	Brambling	1	Beal	NU037413	
12/02/2009	Barn Owl	1	Beal	NU041413	
13/02/2009	Fieldfare	20	East Ord	NT979514	
13/02/2009	Redwing	12	Tweedmth Churchyd.	NT996522	
14/02/2009	Fieldfare	28	East Ord	NT979514	Feeding in local gardens
14/02/2009	Goldcrest	1	Castle Drive	NT992539	On nut feeder. Also 15th.
14/02/2009	Fieldfare	6	Sewage Works	NT982525	
14/02/2009	Common Shelduck	1	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	
15/02/2009	Common Linnet	9	Cocklawburn	NU0347	
16/02/2009	Red-breasted Merganser	6	Cheswick	NU0346	
16/02/2009	Purple Sandpiper	6	Cheswick Blk Rocks	NU037476	
17/02/2009	Pink-footed Goose	127	Cheswick Buildings	NU021458	Grazing in fields
17/02/2009	Common Eider	52	Cocklawburn	NU0347	
17/02/2009	Common Eider	26	Spittal Cliffs	NU0150	
17/02/2009	Northern Fulmar	2	New Bridge	NT995529	Pair
18/02/2009	Snow Goose	1	Spittal Bay	NU009517	Flying with Pinkfoot flock
18/02/2009	Pink-footed Goose	1000	Spittal Bay	NU009517	Flying north
18/02/2009	Long-tailed Duck	1	Cheswick	NU0346	With Common Scoters
18/02/2009	Common Scoter	54	Cheswick	NU0346	
18/02/2009	Common Scoter	38	Spittal Cliffs	NU0150	

18/02/2009	Red-throated Diver	4	Spittal Bay	NU009517	
18/02/2009	Common Guillemot	3	Spittal Bay	NU009517	
19/02/2009	European Siskin	1	Riverdene	NT992530	
19/02/2009	Eurasian Curlew	25	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	
19/02/2009	Grey Heron	22	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	
19/02/2009	Common Redshank	200	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	
19/02/2009	Northern Lapwing	55	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	
20/02/2009	Mute Swan	32	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	WeBS count
20/02/2009	Common Shelduck	1	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	
20/02/2009	Common Goldeneye	154	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	WeBS count
20/02/2009	Black-throated Diver	1	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	WeBS count
20/02/2009	Little Grebe	3	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	WeBS count
20/02/2009	Northern Fulmar	4	Union Bridge	NT914511	2 pairs
20/02/2009	Grey Plover	1	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	
20/02/2009	Northern Lapwing	142	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	WeBS count
20/02/2009	Eurasian Curlew	146	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	WeBS count
20/02/2009	Common Redshank	262	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	WeBS count
20/02/2009	Ruddy Turnstone	63	Little Beach	NU006528	
20/02/2009	Rock Pipit	2	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	
20/02/2009	Grey Heron	9	Yarrow Slake	NT984529	
20/02/2009	European Siskin	3	Riverdene	NT992530	
22/02/2009	Common Eider	12	Berwick Pier	NU0052	
22/02/2009	Common Eider	43	Fishermans Cove	NU003538	
22/02/2009	Great Cormorant	16	Meadow Haven	NU012526	Meadow Haven Roost
22/02/2009	European Shag	12	Meadow Haven	NU012526	Meadow Haven Roost
22/02/2009	Ringed Plover	44	Little Beach	NU006528	
22/02/2009	Red Knot	82	Meadow Haven	NU012526	
22/02/2009	Sanderling	27	Little Beach	NU006528	
22/02/2009	Purple Sandpiper	6	Dodd's Well	NU001542	
22/02/2009	Bar-tailed Godwit	10	Fishermans Cove	NU003538	
22/02/2009	Dunlin	52	Little Beach	NU006528	
22/02/2009	Eurasian Curlew	48	Cocklawburn	NU0347	
22/02/2009	Ruddy Turnstone	16	Dodd's Well	NU001542	
26/02/2009	Whooper Swan	29	Royalty Farm	NT936475	
26/02/2009	Grt Spotted Woodpecker	1	Castle Terrace	NT991538	Drumming on branch
	Mammals				
12/02/2009	Otter	1	New Road	NT995532	On shore.

BTO Winter Atlas survey. Notable records included: **Cheswick Buildings** tetrad (NU 04 H), **Pink-footed Goose**, **Grey Partridge** and **Yellowhammer**; **Old Dryburn** tetrad (NU 04 A), **Tufted Duck**, **Goosander**, **Lapwing** and **Tree Sparrow**.

With many thanks to Malcolm Hutcheson and other recorders this month, and a particular thank you to John Rae who has worked immensely hard to get all our data into Excel format. Please send us your records for March, and any digital photos (or prints/slides to be scanned). Use our form on the Sightings page (www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk/Sightings.html), phone 01289 309046 or e-mail mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk.

Want to know more about the Group? See our website or e-mail (as above), phone 01289 330591, or just come to one of our events (below). Everyone (including accompanied children) welcome – there may be a small charge.



The Western Cape, by Gill Young



Mosses and lichens at Cocklawburn



Red Squirrel by John Rae



Brambling (see record on 12/02 above).

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday 11th March. An illustrated talk on "**Scenery and flora in the Western Cape of South Africa**", by Gill Young. **7.30pm.** Berwick United Reformed Church, Main Street, SPITTAL.

Saturday 21st March, 1.30pm. Lichen/moss walk with Dr. Janet Simkin of the University of Newcastle. Meet at car park by pill box at end of road past Cocklawburn Beach (NU 032 482). We will walk slowly stopping frequently, so wear warm (waterproof) clothing.

Sunday April 19th. Walk with Berwick Save our Squirrels in Detchant wood looking for signs of squirrels. Meet at **1.30 pm** at entrance to the wood opposite bungalow called Detchant Park, on minor road between Detchant and Fenwick (NU 082 373). Limited parking (car share if possible). Probably muddy - wear boots or wellies.

May 9th/10th/11th . The Botanical Society of the British Isles (BSBI) are having their **Spring Conference in Berwick**. This will focus on the alien trees and shrubs that are now part of the British landscape, and how to recognise and record them. There will be talks and exhibitions in the Guildhall, Berwick on Saturday and excursions to Cheviot Trees and Kyle Woods on Sunday, St Abbs Head or Holy Island on Monday. The Chairman has kindly invited BWG members to all the events, and we will have a small exhibition of the Group's work. Details and a booking form will be e-mailed soon, or included with paper newsletters.

To celebrate it's 25th Anniversary, **North Northumberland Bird Club** will host a **special presentation by Laurie Campbell, "Taking stock; my life in photography"**, on **Thursday 19th November at 7.30 pm** in the Maltings. Reserve the date in your diary now. Details later.