

Berwick Wildlife Group

www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk

Monthly Review July 2007



WILDLIFE REPORTS

Weather.

July may prove to be the wettest on record in some parts of England with extraordinary flooding occurring in Yorkshire, The Midlands and Gloucestershire. We must consider ourselves lucky around Berwick, as during a fairly dull, cool month we recorded 128mm (4.1inches), with only two full days of sunshine. Our wettest July day for many years was on the 22nd. when 37mm (1.45inches) fell in 24 hours. We can only hope for a late 'Indian Summer' now.

Birds

Whether a poor breeding season has occurred or not, there were large numbers of seabirds feeding along our coast this month. The Estuary gull roosts saw c.620 **Kittiwakes** (1st) with a group of 42 **Carriion Crows** feeding on Calot Shad. A **Common Crane** was seen flying west over Hutton, Paxton on the 2nd, where a search for the bird next day, found two **Red-legged Partridge** and a **Common Snipe**. A **Cuckoo** was seen being chased by Meadow Pipits at Little Beach (3rd) with 350 **Guillemots**, 34 **Razorbills**, 3 **Puffins** and 20 Gannets feeding in Meadow Haven. Also seen here was an **Arctic Skua**.

A leucistic **Starling** was found at Cocklawburn (4th) feeding with a flock of c300 birds. This bird was creamy white all over. Very obvious! It was seen for three weeks in the area. 14 **Canada Geese** were feeding at Whitesands on the 6th, with 38 **Lapwing** and 42 **Curlew** on Yarrow Slake. A **Great-crested Grebe** and a **Common Sandpiper** were at West Ord (7th) with c.100 **Sand Martins** (of which, 60% were juveniles) feeding low over the river. The WeBS Estuary count on the 13th found a **Great crested Grebe**, 16 **Grey Heron** 364 **Mute Swans**, 17 **Canada Geese** a **Barnacle Goose**, 36 **Goosanders** and a **Coot** with a juvenile at New Water Haugh. **The Mute Swan count** is lower than usual as many birds (flightless) have been seen on the sea between Dodds Well and Cocklawburn at high tide, probably due to disturbance by boating activities in the estuary.

A large Tern roost near Cocklawburn beach (15th), held 60 **Sandwich Terns**, 32 **Arctic Terns** and 3 **Roseate Terns** (rare around our area). Also here were 5 **Red-throated Diver** (all in summer plumage) a **Wheatear** and a **Cuckoo**. An **Osprey** flew over (17th), and was later seen to plunge into the sea without success off Cheswick. A **Treecreeper** was seen in Tweedmouth Cemetery (18th) and a flock of 44 **Swifts** were over East Ord at 8 a.m. (21st) along with two **Whimbrel** flying south at Spittal. A **Green Sandpiper** and 110 **Lapwing** were on Yarrow Slake (22nd) when 7 **Greylag Geese** flew over East Ord. At Meadow Haven were 6 **Shags** and 8 **Arctic Terns**. At Cocklawburn (23rd) were 34 **Common Scoter**, a **Greenshank** and a **Little Grebe**. A **Peregrine** was hunting around the Royal Border Bridge. A **Whitethroat** was at Spittal (25th) with 300 **Gannets** flying south in an hour offshore.

A **Great spotted Woodpecker** with an immature was seen around East Ord House all day (26th) with 17 **Greylag Geese** at Yarrow Slake and a drake **Wigeon** at Calot Shad. The estuary gull roost saw 260 **Kittiwakes**, 114 **Sandwich Terns**, 12 **Arctic Terns** and 8 **Common Terns** (29th). along with 52 Goosanders. Little Beach on the 31st held 18 **Ringed Plovers**, 8 **Dunlin** and a fine summer plumaged **Turnstone** with a male **Wheatear**. A **Buzzard** was in the Ord area all month and the **Whooper Swan** stayed on the estuary until 17th.

Butterflies

July is the month of the 'browns', with both **Ringlet** and **Meadow Brown** occurring in good numbers in our area, although not as prolifically as last year. 44 **Ringlets** were recorded on our transect in Tommy-the-Miller's field on the 5th (compared to 121 on 7th July last year), and **Meadow Browns** peaked there on the 28th with 50 (top count last year was 90 on 10th July). The first **Dark Green Fritillaries** were seen at Cocklawburn(15th) and Cheswick (23rd). As with other species, **Small Tortoiseshell** numbers are down but seem to be recovering. **Peacock** and **Painted Lady** have suffered badly from the cool, damp conditions with no sighting reported all month. Two **Red Admirals** were seen at Scremerston (5th) and Cocklawburn three days later, and **Commas** are just starting to appear, with 2 recorded from Tommy-the-Millers on the 30th. We can only hope for better weather and an increase in numbers of the autumn fliers next month.

With many thanks to the recorders. Do please send in any wildlife records you may have, and we really need some more photos for the website and Newsletters.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS .

Please note **there have been some changes to the previous lists**, new surveys or altered dates or times – don't just assume everything is the same – this is, I hope, the definitive version!

!!NEW!! Monday 6th (or if wet Wed 8th) August. Amenity Tree Survey for the Forestry Commission, with Ross Weddle. 10.00 am, Rotary Way and Parish Churchyard. Please contact us for details (and in view of dire weather forecast).

Time change. **Thursday 9th (or if wet Fri 10th) August. Bat Survey** at Ord House Country Park. To determine which species of bats are present and where they are located, we shall follow the 'dog-walk' pathway around the perimeter of the caravan parking area. Meet at entrance to Park at **21.30** (not 20.45 as previously stated).

Saturday 11th August. Visit to Ford Moss , a lowland raised peat bog which is a Northumberland Wildlife Trust Reserve and of international importance, with Duncan Hutt, NWT Estates Manager. Parking limited so car-sharing advised. Meet at entrance to Ford Moss (NT 962 377, on unclassified road between Ford Common and Kimmerston) at **11.00 a.m.**

Time change. **Thursday 23rd (or if wet Friday 24rd) August. Bat Survey** on riverside, Old Whaling House to Chateau Pedro, checking for bat activity along Wellington Terrace, Quayside to Rowing Club boathouse and New Road, including

checking for Daubentons on river. Meet at Palace Green, **21.00** (not 20.15 as previously stated).

Time change. **Thursday 30th (or if wet Friday 31st) August. Bat Survey** at New Mills (Canty's Bridge), to confirm reported sightings of bats flying over the river. Wear strong shoes or boots. Meet at 20.30 at Castle Drive for car sharing.

Saturday 1st September. Butterfly Survey at Cocklawburn. Meet at car park by pill box. **10.00 am.**

Thursday 6th (or if wet Fri 7th) September. Bat Survey. Ravensdowne/Parade/Barracks, checking perimeter of Barracks adjacent to Upper Ravensdowne for possible bat emergence/roosts. Meet at Parade Car Park at **19.30**

Saturday 8th September. Fungus Foray with mycology specialist Dr Philip Mason, Grange Wood, Coldingham. Meet at the wood at **2.00 pm.** (NT 872 652. From Reston junction of A1 drive north on B6438 towards Coldingham, then take first left at Cairncross, Grange Wood is about 1 ½ miles on left). Car sharing advised as limited parking.

Change of date and time. **Saturday 15th September. Beach Litter Survey,** (brought forward from Friday 28th) meet at car park by Little (Pier) Beach, Berwick (by Lowrie Shelter) at **10.00 am** (not 2.00pm).

Thursday 20th (or if wet Fri 21st) September. Bat Survey – follow-up where required from results of previous work, details to be announced.

An exciting programme of winter talks and summer walks has now been organised, taking us up to November 2008! Details will be given in the quarterly Newsletter at beginning of October.

Wildlife Surveys. These outings are more difficult to plan ahead as they are very dependent on weather or the previous results, and for this or perhaps some other reason are often far less well attended. They are of huge value to the Group, to other organisations and especially to the wildlife. Above all they are great fun to carry out and satisfying to complete. Why not come along to one or two (free to members) and see how you get on? There is so much to study (Bats, Butterflies, Beach Litter, Squirrels, Town Trees, and Bumblebees this year) that we could really do with more volunteers. No previous knowledge of survey techniques is required. Or maybe you have other interests or expertise – let us know and perhaps together we can organise a useful project? Just come along, or contact us for details first.

Contact us. Look at our website www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk, phone 01289 330591, e-mail mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk (no longer mail2@ as the spam has caught up with us) or just come to an event (non-members very welcome).

