

# Berwick Wildlife Group

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

## Monthly Review May 2009



### WILDLIFE REPORTS.

**Weather.** A bright, dry, but fairly windy month. At the end of the month high pressure brought clear sunny conditions and a temperature of 22.0°C (71.6°F) on the 28<sup>th</sup>, tempered by a cool SE wind. There were several cold nights during the first week with 3.3°C (37.9°F) recorded on the night of the 11<sup>th</sup>. Rainfall was again low with only 34mm (1.3 ins) recorded.

**Birds.** A good month for the more unusual spring migrants, with a pair of **Garganey** at Cocklawburn pond, a **Bluethroat** at Ord Country Park (part of an influx of 65+ along the east coast from the Tyne northwards) and a **Velvet Scoter** at Cocklawburn.

**Lepidoptera.** With the sunny conditions, good numbers of 'whites' have been seen. It's been a good spring so far for **Orange Tip** records, although **Peacock** numbers are down a little and **Small Tortoiseshell** are now scarce. It's good to report another increase in **Wall** sightings this spring. They have now spread into new tetrads on the coast north of Berwick. Mid-month, 5 **Speckled Woods** were sighted in Kyloe, an exciting find as these are the most northerly record so far in Northumberland.



Speckled Wood by John Rae

Very large numbers of **Painted Ladies** have been pouring over the south coast during the last 10 days of the month. Our first record was on the 25<sup>th</sup> at Needles Eye, a very worn specimen with another the same day in a Tweedmouth garden. Several inland records have been reported, but so far we have not seen the rush experienced 'down south'. We need all your June records in sites away from the coast, in N. Northumberland and the Borders Region, as Painted Lady has not been recorded in several tetrads in our area for the ongoing Millenium Atlas survey.

A **Small Pearl-Bordered Fritillary** was sighted in the College Valley on the 28<sup>th</sup>, another really unusual record for our area. The first group of 3 **Small Heaths** were in Cocklawburn dunes (30<sup>th</sup>) and a **Common Blue** was recorded the same day in Tommy the Miller's field. A **Hummingbird Hawk-moth** appeared in a garden at East Ord on the 31<sup>st</sup>. Hundreds of huge and impressively hairy **Garden Tiger caterpillars** were on the Snook at Holy Island mid-month – we hope they will soon become beautiful moths.



Garden Tiger Moth caterpillar by Phil Johnston

**Mammals.** Records of **Brown Hares** this month at Halidon Hill, West Ord, Oxford and Scremerston. A **Weasel** was seen in East Ord Industrial Estate (21<sup>st</sup>), pursued by a very angry Song Thrush. **Stoats** were recorded on Red Shin cliff (Spittal), Cocklawburn and Middle Ord.

Date	Species name	No.	Location	Grid reference	Comments
	<b><u>Birds</u></b>				
01/05/2009	Tree Sparrow	1	NewWater Haugh	NT975526	
01/05/2009	Buzzard	2	NewWater Haugh	NT975527	
01/05/2009	Kestrel	1	NewWater Haugh	NT975528	
01/05/2009	Bar-tailed Godwit	2	Yarrow Point	NT986532	One in breeding plumage
01/05/2009	Sedge Warbler	4	Cocklawburn Pnd	NU036475	
01/05/2009	Tufted Duck	4	Cocklawburn Pnd	NU036475	
01/05/2009	Dunlin	1	Cocklawburn Pnd	NU036475	
01/05/2009	Sandwich Terns	62	Cocklawburn Pnd	NU036475	Passage birds
01/05/2009	Wheatears	3	Cheswick	NU0346	Greenland race
01/05/2009	Sanderling	47	Cheswick Blk Rcks	NU037476	Migrants
02/05/2009	Sedge Warbler	2	Tapee Fen	NT995537	3 days before last yr.
03/05/2009	Purple Sandpiper	8	Dodd's Well	NU001542	
03/05/2009	Swift	4	West Ord	NT953518	
03/05/2009	House Martin	10	West Ord	NT954519	Passage migrants over river.
03/05/2009	Swift	4	West Ord	NT954519	Passage migrants over river.
04/05/2009	Whitethroats	2	Halidon Hill	NT981547	
04/05/2009	Red-throated Diver	1	Cheswick	NU0346	
04/05/2009	Eider	64	Cheswick	NU0346	
04/05/2009	Common Scoter	130	Cheswick	NU0346	
04/05/2009	Turnstone	12	Cocklawburn	NU0347	
04/05/2009	Purple Sandpiper	6	Saltpan Rocks	NU026491	
04/05/2009	Sandwich Terns	110	Saltpan Rocks	NU026491	
04/05/2009	Yellow Wagtail	1	Sea House	NU023495	Male
04/05/2009	Osprey	1	Birgham	NT798389	Fishing 20 mins. on R Tweed.
06/05/2009	Housemartin	2	Sisterpath	NT755484	Returned to last year's nests.
07/05/2009	Swift	1	Sisterpath	NT755484	First of the season.
08/05/2009	Swift	5	West End	NT992529	
08/05/2009	Whitethroats	1	Mill Farm	NT998530	
09/05/2009	Cuckoo	1	Chirside	NT877550	Male. In garden.
10/05/2009	Swift	3	Tweedmouth	NT9952	
11/05/2009	Swift	4	Tweedmouth	NT9952	
11/05/2009	Kittiwakes	42	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	
11/05/2009	Sandwich Terns	114	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	Heavy coastal passge this yr.
11/05/2009	Whooper Swan	1	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	Suspect origin, fairly tame.
11/05/2009	Grey Wagtail	1	Toddles Shiel	NT980523	Male
11/05/2009	Swift	3	North Road	NT994537	First of the season at house.
12/05/2009	Peregrine	1	Ord Industrial Est.	NT9852	Male, chasing feral pigeons.
14/05/2009	Ringed Plover	78	Little Beach	NU006528	
14/05/2009	Dunlin	8	Little Beach	NU006528	
14/05/2009	Whimbrel	2	Little Beach	NU006528	
14/05/2009	Red-spotted Bluethroat	1	Holy Island	NU14	Male. Excellent view.
15/05/2009	Garganey	2	Cocklawburn Pond	NU036475	Pair. Migrants
15/05/2009	Greylag Goose	2	Cocklawburn Pond	NU036475	Pair
15/05/2009	Canada Goose	2	Cocklawburn Pond	NU036475	Pair

15/05/2009	Gannet	440	Cocklawburn	NU0347	In an hour. Strong S wind
15/05/2009	Shelduck	3	Cheswick	NU0346	
15/05/2009	Red-spotted Bluethroat	1	East Ord Cntry Pk	NT9851	08.10 a.m.
17/05/2009	Goosander	9	West Ord	NT953518	
17/05/2009	Ringed Plover	76	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	migrants
17/05/2009	Dunlin	10	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	
17/05/2009	Turnstone	2	Tweed Estuary	NT9952	
18/05/2009	Red-throated Diver	3	Cocklawburn	NU0347	
18/05/2009	Stonechat	4	Cocklawburn	NU0347	Pair + 2 juveniles
18/05/2009	Shelduck	9	Cheswick	NU0346	Flying south
18/05/2009	Stonechat	5	Cheswick	NU0346	Pair + 3 juveniles
18/05/2009	Common Partridge	2	Cheswick	NU038469	
18/05/2009	Tufted Duck	4	Cheswick	NU036475	2 pairs.
18/05/2009	Little Grebe	1	Cheswick	NU036475	
18/05/2009	Shelduck	1	Cheswick	NU036475	Drake, overhead
18/05/2009	Stonechat	8	Cheswick	NU038469	3 pairs plus 2 grown young.
18/05/2009	Buzzard	1	Cheswick	NU038469	Over dunes
20/05/2009	Lesser Whitethroat	1	Oxford Pools	NU0046	Male
22/05/2009	Common Scoter	340	Cocklawburn	NU0347	Migrant gathering
22/05/2009	Ringed Plover	5	Cheswick Blk Rks	NU037476	Pair + 3 juv. Disturbed by dog
22/05/2009	Herring Gulls	440	Cheswick Blk Rks	NU037476	440, most imm., on shore.
25/05/2009	Kittiwakes	1000+	Needles Eye	NT993555	850 nests, bit down on last yr.
25/05/2009	Guillemot	54+	Needles Eye	NT993555	54 nests.
25/05/2009	Razorbill	8+	Needles Eye	NT993555	8 nests
25/05/2009	Shag	2	Needles Eye	NT993555	Pair. Single nest as last year
25/05/2009	Fulmar	17+	Needles Eye	NT993555	17 nests
25/05/2009	House Martin	8+	Needles Eye	NT993555	8 nests
25/05/2009	Whitethroats	4	Needles Eye	NT993555	2 pairs
26/05/2009	Ring Ousel	6	Harthope Valley	NT9421	
26/05/2009	Whinchat	1	Harthope Valley	NT9422	Male
26/05/2009	Cuckoo	1	Harthope Valley	NT9423	
28/05/2009	Bullfinch	1	Yarrow Haugh	NT987530	Male
29/05/2009	Green Woodpecker	1	Lickar Dene	NU015420	Male seen & heard 'yaffling'.
30/05/2009	Velvet Scoter	1	Cocklawburn	NU0347	Imm. Drake, + 180 Common
30/05/2009	Eider	110	Cocklawburn	NU0347	Mainly imm. & mat. drakes
30/05/2009	Sedge Warbler	1	Yarrow Haugh	NT984527	At new nest site.
30/05/2009	Bullfinch	1	Yarrow Haugh	NT984527	Male
30/05/2009	Mute Swan	126	Yarrow Point	NT986532	
31/05/2009	Sanderling	25	Little Beach	NU006528	
31/05/2009	Ringed Plover	14	Little Beach	NU006528	
31/05/2009	Dunlin	2	Little Beach	NU006528	
31/05/2009	House Martins	5+	Dodd's Well	NU001542	5 nests
31/05/2009	Rock Pipit	2	Dodd's Well	NU001542	Pair on nest, feeding young.
31/05/2009	Spotted Flycatcher	1	Watch Reservoir	NT667560	
31/05/2009	Sandpiper	2	Watch Reservoir	NT667560	
	<b><u>Lepidoptera</u></b>				
13/05/2009	Wall Butterfly	6	CocklawburnDunes	NU033481	On first section of transect.
14/05/2009	Speckled Wood	5	Kyloe Woods	NU058882	Most northerly local record?
17/05/2009	Wall Butterfly	2	Tommy-the-Millers	NT993535	On transect
25/05/2009	Painted Lady	1	Needles Eye	NT9955	An early migrant.
25/05/2009	Small Tortoiseshell	1	Needles Eye	NT9955	
25/05/2009	Wall Butterfly	1	Needles Eye	NT9955	
26/05/2009	Painted Lady	1	Harthope Valley	NT 94 21	
28/05/2009	Small Pearl-bord. Fritillary	1	College Valley	NT904284	

29/05/2009	Small Copper	3	Cocklawburn	NU037475	
29/05/2009	Wall Butterfly	3	Cocklawburn	NU037475	
29/05/2009	Drinker moth caterpillar	1	Cocklawburn	NU037475	On Cocksfoot.
29/05/2009	Painted Lady	3	Cot Hill	NT759498	.
30/05/2009	Painted Lady	2	Morebattle	NT756236	Sunning on cow pats.
30/05/2009	Small Heath	3	Cheswick	NU0348	Despite strong wind.
30/05/2009	Brimstone	1	Palace Street	NT998526	Settled on yellow VW Beetle
31/05/2009	Humming-bird Hawk Moth	1	East Ord	NT9851	In garden on honeysuckle.
	<b><u>Amphibians &amp; reptiles</u></b>				
19/05/2009	Toad tadpoles	100+	Cheswick Pond	NU038469	Also sundry invertebrates
19/05/2009	Frog tadpoles	10s	Cheswick Pond	NU038469	
19/05/2009	Common Lizard	1	Cocklawburn	NU032481	Basking on cooker top.
	<b><u>Plants</u></b>				
13/05/2009	Meadow Saxifrage	2	Wooler Water	NT994283	Two patches, in flower.



Cuckoo by Alan Yeomans  
(left)

Meadow Saxifrage by Sue Maddox (right).



**With many thanks to Malcolm Hutcheson and the other recorders.** Please send us your records for June, and photos (digital or prints/slides to be scanned). We are sorry but some people, particularly those using Firefox, have had trouble with the form on the Sightings page ([www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk/Sightings.html](http://www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk/Sightings.html)). We will try to rectify this, but in the meantime if it doesn't work just e-mail in sightings (date, species, numbers, location, grid ref if possible plus any comments) to [mail3@www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk](mailto:mail3@www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk) or phone 01289 309046.

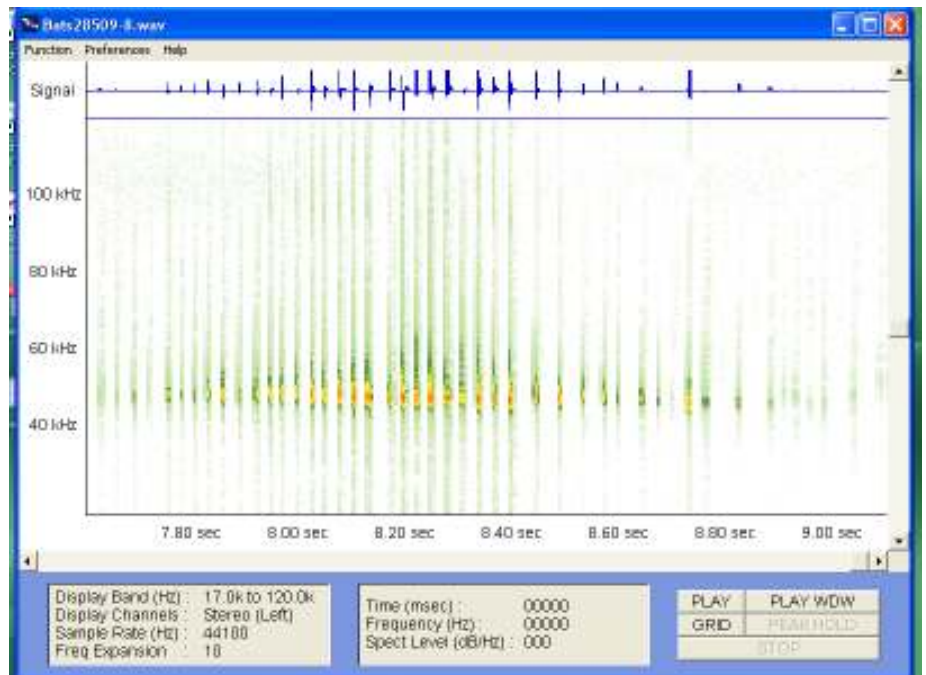
## **SUBSCRIPTIONS.**

Following our A.G.M. on 13<sup>th</sup> May, **membership subscriptions for 2009/10 are now due.** The fees remain the same as last year : £8.00 for individuals, £13.00 for two or more people at the same address. Benefits of membership include newsletters, reduced charges for events, and the chance to take part in our many surveys and also participate in various teach-ins (e.g. the recent bat detector evening), lobbying work and so on. Please either hand your fees (cash or cheque) to a member of the Committee at a meeting, or send your cheque (made out to Berwick Wildlife Group) to our treasurer, Enid Turnbull, at 5 Springfield Park, East Ord, Berwick upon Tweed, TD15 2FD. Thank you.

## BAT DETECTORS.

Thanks to a demonstration by Steve Betts and Paul Lowings, and to John Rae, we have been able to record bats on mini-disc via our new frequency division detector, and transfer the recording to the computer to give auditory and visual outputs. Part of the recording looks like this. This is a Berwick bat squeaking!

Unfortunately we can't identify the species yet, it will take us a little time to learn to interpret the results properly, but it looks as though the detector and software will be really useful.



What's more, **Howdens Joinery of Alnwick have very kindly donated £50.00 to the Group.** As it happens, we have £80.00 left over from Northern Gas Network's donation for bat detecting equipment (the Batscan software is now cheaper than when we applied for the grant). A new Batbox III D heterodyne bat recorder (which we badly need) costs £130.21, which we can now afford. So thank you very much Howdens Joinery, and Gerard McDonnell who set everything up. We are extremely grateful.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

**Butterfly transects** take place from April to September in Tommy-the-Miller's Field and at Cocklawburn, always when it's nice and sunny! Ideally we need to have more surveyors – beginners are very welcome (we were all beginners just recently).

**Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> June, 7.00pm. Town Trees (2).** An examination of the more unusual tree species planted around Berwick/Tweedmouth/East Ord, with Malcolm Hutcheson. Meet at 7.00 pm (19.00) at the entrance to old Paxton Road at the top of Castle Terrace, (NT 986 539).

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June. Bat Survey, Riverdene, Tweedmouth** – a bat survey of the environs of the Royal Border Bridge, as part of the consultation to be carried out prior to the proposed illumination of the arches of the bridge. Meet at 9.30 pm. in Riverdene, near the bridge ( NT 991 528).

**Friday 12<sup>th</sup> June. Bat Survey of Holy Island.** Part of the 'bio-blitz' to be held on 12/13<sup>th</sup> June – final arrangements will be given to those intimating that they wish to attend the 'batty' part of the event on the evening of the 12<sup>th</sup>. This is an opportunity to meet and work with members of Northumberland Bat Group. Meet at 8.30pm in the car park at the landward side of the causeway. Safe crossing time starts at 9.20 pm (and extends to 04.45 on Saturday morning).

**Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> June. Bioblitz at Holy Island.** The idea is for teams of people, assisted by a whole raft of experts, to find as many species as possible in 24 hours (and, because so many are working in one place at one time, find some unusual records and also produce a valuable "snap-shot"). The botanist Claire O'Reilly is to be working at the Snook between 10.00 and 13.00 and we have been invited to join her (but records of all kinds of wildlife are welcome). So, whatever your speciality, beginner or expert, do join us. Meet at the Snook car park (NU 106 434) at 10.00 a.m. (Safe Crossing Times 09.35 to 17.40, but Bioblitz ends at 13.00).

**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> June, 1.30pm. Goody Patchy. Walk** led by Maurice McNeely. A patch of unimproved grassland with orchids, woodland and old walls, now under the care of the St Boisil's and St Bartholomew's Residents Association. Meet at Dock Road entrance to Goody Patchy, near pumping station (NT 998 520).

**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> June, 10.00am. Bumblebee identification walk (1).** Records are required nationally to establish the changing and shrinking distribution of bumblebees in gardens and in the countryside. Beewatch is organised by the Bumblebee Conservation Trust (<http://www.bumblebeeconservationtrust.co.uk/surveys.htm>). Bees can be tricky to identify "on the wing", so we hope to pool our knowledge, see if we can get the local bees sussed. Meet at bench by entrance to park (white gates, S side E end) off Castle Terrace, (NT 994 536). We will look at bees in Tommy the Miller's Field and perhaps in local gardens. Walk will be cancelled if heavy rain or strong wind (to check phone 01289 330591).

**Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June** (or Friday 19<sup>th</sup> if Thursday very wet or windy). **Bat Survey, Riverdene, Tweedmouth**– the third and final survey of the environs of the Railway Bridge, as 11<sup>th</sup> June above. Meet at 9.30 pm. (NT 991 528).

**Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June, 10.00 am. Bumblebee identification walk (2).** Meet at bench by entrance to park (white gates, S side E end) off Castle Terrace, NT 994 536. We will look at bees in Tommy the Miller's Field and perhaps in local gardens. Walk will be cancelled if heavy rain or strong wind (to check phone 01289 330591).

**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June. Border Green Festival.** Theme – Our Seas, Our Coast. BWG will have a stand. Do visit us. We would be most grateful for helpers on the day – phone 01289 330591.

**July Whin Sill Grassland surveying/recording.** Details to be arranged. A re-survey of sites known to be botanically important. Will involve standard techniques of study of vegetation within quadrats, on several occasions at different sites. Beginners (and experts) welcome. If you are interested please phone 01289 330591 or e-mail [mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk](mailto:mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk) and we can let you know the details.

**Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> July** (or if 2<sup>nd</sup> very wet or windy, Fri 3<sup>rd</sup>). **Bat Survey around Fields House/Lord's Mount/Bell Tower Park/Low Greens** (NT 997 534 ) – a walking survey of an area from which the presence of bats has been reported. Meet at 9.30 pm outside The Pilot.

As you can see, our summer survey season is in full swing.

**If you are interested in any of the above events**, or would like to know more about the Group see our website ([www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk](http://www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk)), e-mail [mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk](mailto:mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk), phone 01289 330591, or just come to an event. Everyone is welcome at all events - there may be a small charge (no charge for children, but must be accompanied by an adult).