

Berwick Wildlife Group

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Monthly Review October 2007



WILDLIFE REPORTS

Weather. The mild, calm conditions of September continued throughout October, with many days of sunshine or high thin cloud and variable light winds. The only exception to this was the 9th, a day of rain, (10mm – 0.4ins). Total rainfall for the month was 30mm (1.25ins). Fog on the 10th cleared by mid-day. There was slight frost on the 18th and 24th. The month has added to an unseasonal year so far, with the Autumn lacking the expected gales. Now we wait to see what November brings!

Birds. With the quiet weather conditions migration was rather sporadic, the exception being days with large movements of Geese.

In Spittal Bay (2nd) were 6 **Red-throated Divers**, some still in summer plumage, with 18 **Guillemots**. Down the coast a Cocklawburn (3rd) were 3 **Red-throated Divers**, 12 **Shags**, 18 **Razorbill** (family groups) with a large flock of 68 **Ringed Plover** on the shore. At the Pond were 3 **Common Snipe**. A **Wheatear** was on the Golf Course (5th) and on the same day 13 **Razorbills** at the Lifeboat Station. The Group's October Birdwatch (6th) found 3 **Redwings** in Flagstaff Park and a further ten at the Middle School grounds with a good movements of migrant **Blackbirds**. Star birds of the walk were a fine female **Peregrine** and a dashing **Merlin**, both off the Coastwatch tower. Later in the day a **Yellow-browed Warbler** was found at Sea House, with 3 skeins of **Barnacle Geese** flying south, a total of 125 birds. There was a male **Peregrine** also here with a Redshank kill. At Cocklawburn, 134 **Common Scoter** with 146 **Lapwings** were in the fields.

7 **Grey Plovers** were on Little Beach (7th) rising to 11 birds by 21st, also here were 10 **Bar-tailed Godwits**. More migration on the 8th saw an **Osprey** over East Ord with 500 **Barnacle Geese** flying off the sea westwards and 625 **Pinkfoot Geese** moving south. The Estuary WeBS count (9th) found, 31 **Grey Herons**, 84 **Mute Swans**, 4 **Wigeon**, 2 **Tufted Duck**, 2 **Goldeneye**, 7 **Guillemots**, 22 **Razorbills**, 1,072 **Lapwings** and 332 **Redshanks**. The high tide at Little Beach (10th) found 8 **Dunlin**, 2,000+ **Black headed Gulls** and two young **Pheasants!** A **Little Auk** was found swimming around the Old Berwick Bridge. Another **Wheatear** was on the Golf Course (13th). A pair of **Stonechats** were at Mill Farm with a **Great spotted Woodpecker** in the trees. 2 **Goldcrests** were at Riverdene with 3 **House Martins** still present at a nest at the Royal Border Viaduct. On 14th, 4 **Grey Plovers** were at Little Beach.

10 **Redwing** and 5 **Fieldfares** were at East Ord (20th) with a **Hawfinch** feeding on fallen haws with winter thrushes in a Castle Terrace garden. This is a rare bird in Northumberland and may have been a Scandinavian migrant. 2 **Sandwich Terns** and 3 **Arctic Terns** were at Cocklawburn (21st). The same day a **Black-throated Diver** and 32 **Shags** were in Meadow Haven. A **Buzzard** was over the cliffs at Marshall Meadows (23rd). On the river, 14 **Goldeneye** and 4 **Goosanders** were at New Water Haugh and 72 Greylag, a **Woodcock** and 16 **Common Snipe** at Yarrow Slake. Over Berwick (28th) was an adult **Peregrine** with an immature 'terrorising' the local feral pigeons. On Little Beach were 8 **Purple Sandpipers**, 65 **Turnstones** and 9 **Wigeon**.

Elsewhere in the area. A **Little Gull** was spotted N. of Eyemouth on 1st. On Holy Island, 2nd, were hunting **Hen Harrier** and **Peregrine**, plus 20 **Twite** on wires of Straight Loaning. At Sisterpath, SW of Duns, 2 **House Martin** nests still had young on the 7th. At Cot Hill nr. Duns (7th) were c.60 **Chaffinches**, 20 **Long-tailed Tits** and 8 **Yellowhammers**. 20 **Barnacle Geese** were seen on the 8th at Eyemouth. On the 9th at Cothill 12 **Redwings**, 2 **Song Thrushes**, 4 **Dunnocks**, 3 **Goldfinches** and 6 **Yellowhammers**. A **Hooded Crow** was with **Carrion Crows** N. of Eyemouth on the 15th. On the 22nd at Cheswick were 2 **Black-throated Divers**, 7 **Red-throated Divers**, 86 **Common Scoter** and a drake **Long-tailed Duck**. At Norham East Mains (25th) were 25 **Greylag Geese** and c.300 **Wood Pigeons**. A **Raven** was sighted at Blakie Heugh south of Eyemouth on the 28th.

Mammals. A dog **Otter** was seen regularly for the first ten days of the month, feeding around Calot Shad. However, it was feared the same animal was found near the Royal Border Viaduct severely injured. A local 'vet' could not save it. Another female has since been seen in the river around the three bridges. **Weasels** were sighted at Sea House and Scremerston mid-month. A group of 3 **Harbour Porpoises** were seen off Eyemouth on the 1st, and 4 off Cocklawburn on the 7th.

Save our Squirrels Group. Two members attended a conference at Morpeth in October, called to bring landowners, councils and wildlife organisations together to help the beleaguered red squirrel in Northumberland. The Berwick SOS Group will soon be surveying Kyloe, Shilow and Detchant Woods and have also been asked to start surveying buffer zones around the woods for sightings and evidence of reds and (especially) greys. We need more volunteers to share the work. If you would like to help, either on the odd occasion or regularly, contact Elizabeth on 01289 305189 or elizabethbamford@aol.com.

Butterflies. A late **Meadow Brown** was seen in the dunes of Holy Island on the 2nd. Good numbers of **Painted Ladies**, **Red Admirals**, **Peacocks** and **Small Tortoiseshells** were around until late into the month. A few **Large** and **Small Whites** appeared until mid-month and several **Commas** were around during the last week. It's interesting to note there are no records of **Humming-bird Hawk Moth** so far this year.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday 14th November. **Cyril Guthrie of Wooler** will demonstrate and talk about the making of his superb wildlife films. Berwick United Reformed Church, Main Street, Spittal, 7.30pm.

*****New Announcement.***** **Sunday 25th November, Bird Atlas 2007-11, national survey for BTO.** BWG has volunteered for 18 local tetrads. Initial meeting arranged to learn the technique while surveying tetrad NU 04 E. Meet at 1.00pm in centre of Scremerston (by Police Station and Church, NU 007 493).

*****New Announcement.***** **Thursday 6th December. Beach Litter Survey (for Marine Conservation).** Meet at 10.00 a.m. at Lowry Shelter, Little Beach, Berwick (NU 007 527). Wear strong footwear and warm clothes and bring tough gloves.

Wednesday 12th December. Berwick is Brilliant for Wildlife – Display and discussion of highlights from our many surveys in 2007. Do come along and swap information on our local fauna and flora. Seasonal refreshments provided. Berwick United Reformed Church, Main Street, Spittal, 7.30pm.

Our events programme running up to May 2008 was printed in the last (September) Newsletter – if you did not get a copy (or need another), let us know.

Contact us. Look at our website www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk, phone 01289 330591, e-mail mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk or join an event (non-members very welcome).