

Alnwick Wildlife Group

Promoting awareness of the countryside and its flora and fauna



www.alnwickwildlifegroup.co.uk

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NEWSLETTER 172 JANUARY 2016

Review of December 2015

NEXT MEETING: FEBRUARY 24TH, 2016

SPEAKER: GILL THOMPSON

"ICONIC BIRDS OF THE NORTHUMBERLAND PARK"

Gill Thompson is a long-serving Ecologist for the Northumberland National Park. She has become fascinated with the classic birds of the Park, such as Curlew, Ring Ouzel, Red and Black Grouse. She will share with us details of their biology, ecology and fluctuating fortunes and, in the case of the Grouse, their management by man.

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR SUBS FOR 2016?

For existing members the rates (for 2016 only) are £6 single or £10 for a household.

Cheques please to:

Richard Poppleton, Greystone Cottage, Titlington Mount, Alnwick NE66 2EA

Please send sightings reports for January, no later than 6th February 2016 to: Ian & Keith Davison, The Bungalow, Branton, Powburn, NE66 4LW or Tel: 01665 578 357 or email to redsquirrel@alnwickwildlifegroup.co.uk Copies of the monthly Newsletter and sightings will be made available on the web site one month after the paper publication.

Dec 2015: This month has continued like the last with too much wind and rain to do much bird ringing (or watching). I have managed five sessions near home at Lemmington Hall; all but two with trainees; but no work was attempted with Barn Owls. One new Barn Owl box was put up at the extreme south of my study area (near Rothley) and a new 'tawny-duck' box went up at Howick. I can see I will be busy in February and March trying to get lots of small boxes (and a few large ones) up before the spring.

I have caught and ringed a number of rather splendid looking Greenfinch recently (see picture). This is an encouraging development as it's more usual to come across slightly sick looking individuals of this species. I have also had a very high proportion of adult (as distinct from Juvenile) birds – this tending to confirm that 2015 was a poor year for breeding productivity amongst our common tits and finches; the same was true for Barn Owls. This was a national trend reported by the BTO, RSPB and other people but a brief article in the BBC Wildlife Magazine to the effect that the poor Barn Owl productivity 'was all due to a shortage of voles' annoyed me. I hate simplistic science and the extension of something that might be true in some parts of the British Isles to the whole country. My study of Barn Owls over the last ten years actually suggests a very strong link between the weather in the winter and early spring and the successful nesting (or otherwise) of our North Northumberland owls.

I have had time recently to review some of the 'control' information I get back from the BTO on ringed birds and found some interesting returns. These have included for example a Barn Owl hatched near Edlingham in June being found dead on the road near Cockburnspath in the Borders in October; and another from Longhorsley being picked up on the A1 at Belford also in October. More encouraging was an owl hatched at Allerdean in 2014 turning up in a box at Hutton in the Borders in Jun 2015; and another from Lee Moor being found in a box at Horndean in June; while a female that bred back in 2009 at Lee Moor decided to move only as far as Rock in June 2015. Another owl hatched at Red Row in June 2014 turned up as a successful breeding female in a box that was only put up this spring near Linden Hall; while a bird that was hatched at Howick back in 2011 decided to take up residence near Warkworth in June 2015. Finally a bird hatched near Holystone in 2014 was in residence at a box near Longhorsley in June

2015 although did not breed. However, it was a most beautiful Guttata (Northern European) type owl (see picture).

A Mute Swan cygnet ringed at Howick back in 2011 has recently been recorded on the river at Amble; and a Siskin I ringed at Lemmington in April 2013 was found on the Isle of Mull in May 2015. It's not only movement information but the age of some of our common species that can be fascinating with recent local records being a Goldfinch recaptured in May being at least 6 yrs, a Chaffinch recaptured this month being 7 yrs; and a Blue Tit recaptured in March being 6 yrs old.

Anyway as I can't take any more of this dreadful weather I will be packing for a ringing safari in South Africa in the next few days!

Phil Hanmer

A Ringer & Trainer

*Natural History Society of Northumbria Ringing Group
(Hancock Museum)*

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STEWCHAT...

After the final storms of November, December continued pretty much in the same vein, a very windy and mild month. There was no chance of a frost let alone a white Christmas!

At the beginning of the month Howick was almost Howick Island with one neighbour suffering from the floods after a small ditch filled up and burst its banks, then forming a river across the garden, through the house and out onto the road blocking all access. Fortunately it soon abated, leaving a sodden, muddy landscape.

A trip down the Amble on 6th produced a few interesting birds with a **Glaucous Gull**, **Snow Bunting** and **Kingfisher** all in the estuary, while back at home a nice flock of 12 **Lesser Redpolls** fed on **Willowherb** seeds along the lane.

Back down to Warkworth on 13th found a female **Blackcap** feeding on yew berries with many **Redwings** and a few **Mistle Thrushes**.

A Big surprise came on 19th when I put the moth trap out and caught a **Hebrew Character**. This is a very common moth here, but is a spring species, numbers peaking late March and April, so this was my 'earliest' ever record. Its understandable maybe as the temperature on the day was 15 degrees, a very warm spell for December, even encouraging our neighbour out to cut the lawn. The smell of cut grass at Christmas is a very bizarre thing indeed!

A few days off before Christmas was quiet apart from a female **Merlin** hunting the coast fields, and showing well perched on a fence post. The next day the **Merlin** was replaced by a nice **Peregrine** following the same route south along the coast.



Figure 1: Glaucous Gull, centre with Great black backed Gulls, right and Herring Gulls, left.

On Christmas Eve a **Barn Owl** was out hunting at 8am in the field behind our house while 2 **Bramblings** were with other finches in stubble near the Old Rectory at Howick.

Even on Christmas Day, a few birds were noted, 8 **Pink footed Geese** flew south and a lone **Siskin** wasn't far behind.

A trip down south as far as Pegswood (you didn't think I had ventured beyond the county did you?) was well worth it as a **Long Eared Owl** was seen in the car headlights on top of a hedge, all puffed up, 'ear tufts' waving in the wind then a **Barn Owl** was waiting for us on a gate post as we arrived back home.

The year drew to a close with the arrival of storm 'Frank' and a group of 19 **Twite** on the Coquet Estuary saltmarsh. Here's to 2016, here's hoping we all have a healthy, prosperous and wildlife filled New Year....

Stewart



Figure 2: Twite on the Coquet Estuary.

PLANT CORNER

In December Jane and I were walking past a wood bank when she said, “there’s some nice Polypody over there”. I took a quick glance and said, “no, that’s Hard Fern”. But later I wondered if I’d been right, which made me think about the differences, in the field, between these two ferns. Photographs or diagrams in field guides often make them look very different, but a single specimen in the field can sometimes be confusing.

If we start with the similarities, they are both evergreen and rather leathery and they are both 1-pinnate. This means that the side leaflets (pinnae) are not further subdivided into smaller pinnules. However, there the similarities end. I’ve tried to summarise the differences in the table below.

HARD FERN (BLECHNUM SPICANT)	COMMON POLYPODY (POLYPODIUM VULGARE)
Fronds long (20 – 65 cm)	Fronds short (5 – 25 cm)
Fronds narrow and tapering strongly at both ends	Fronds broader & tapering significantly only at the top
Fronds grow from a central rosette	Fronds grow at intervals from a creeping rhizome
Main fronds sterile. Taller, thinner fertile fronds, which die down in winter, grow from the middle of the rosette.	All fronds similar, although inevitably varying in size with age.
Spore cases (sori) are long and thin, running the length of the underside of the pinnae of the fertile fronds	Spore cases (sori) are small and roughly circular on the backs of the pinnae of mature fronds
Grows only in strongly acidic habitats	Grows well in weakly acidic conditions on peat banks, trees, drystone walls, rocky outcrops and cliffs

So, on winter walks in February, keep a look out for wintergreen pinnate ferns and see if you can be sure which species they are.

Sometimes two similar species can cause regular uncertainty unless you know one or two particular characters to look for. Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*) and Meadow Buttercup (*R. acris*) are a case in point. In short vegetation the creeping species is quite easy to identify because you can see the horizontal stolons (or runners) that creep across the surface and root at intervals to produce new plants. This can be a pain when they creep from your lawn into the flower beds. But last summer in the Thomas Percy woodland in Alnwick there was a patch of lush growth near the gate in the top corner that had a number of tall buttercups. It was tempting to assume they were all the meadow species which certainly grows taller and often thrives in tall grassed areas. However, to be sure, you needed to search around for lower leaves and to look closely at the flower stalks. This showed that both species were present.

Creeping Buttercup has leaves with end lobes that are sessile (lacking separate stalks) and the flower stalks have distinct grooves along their length.

Meadow Buttercup end leaf lobes are stalked and the flower stalks are un-grooved.

This year, then, when you have a couple of species that confuse you, do make the effort to check your field guide and specifically identify one or two characters that you know you will be able to check in the field and which you know will be diagnostic. It’s the same with birds – often similar species can be confusing until you are clear in your mind which particular characteristics you need to focus on to tell them apart.



Hard Fern with fertile fronds in centre



Hard Fern fertile frond with long thin sori



Common Polypody



Common Polypody fronds, front and back with sori



Creeping Buttercup



Creeping Buttercup with grooved flower stalk



Meadow Buttercup leaf



Meadow Buttercup un-grooved flower stalk

MEETING OF WEDNESDAY 9TH DECEMBER 2015

35 members and visitors met in festive mood for our Christmas event. The speaker was Steve Lowe, Head of Conservation for Northumberland Wildlife Trust. Steve has developed an enthusiasm for marine issues. His expertise has quickly increased to the point where he now chairs various committees and is called on by Defra for advice in this area. His talk was entitled "Humps, Bottles and Killers".

Until quite recently marine legislation was bitty and not joined up. But then, at the height of the MPs' expenses scandal in 2009, a major lobbying event was held at Westminster which managed to get MPs listening. This lobby led to the concept of Marine Advocacy. The problems for the marine environment arise from a range of things: fishing methods; over-fishing; 'by-catch' – a scandalous situation in which unwanted species and over-quota fish are returned, dead, to the sea; habitat damage from dredging; pollution; litter; discarded plastics and plastic beads which are the raw materials for plastics manufacturing. One result of all these threats has been the depletion and sometimes total loss of some of our locally-occurring megafauna. These include herring, cod, skate, eels, blue-fin tuna, basking sharks and European sea sturgeon.

The Wildlife Trusts have worked to get government to establish Marine Reserves and Protected Areas, together with improved marine management. Northumberland now has a European Marine Protected Area stretching from Alnmouth to St Abbs and including the Farnes. The special features are breeding puffins, the Farnes, breeding grey seals and sea cave environments. Much research centres on seals and cetaceans. For example we know how many seal pups are born, but not how well they then survive. Geo-tagging of the seals helps, but the public can contribute greatly by reporting dead marine mammals, with accurate location and photographs, which helps to establish causes of death.

NWT also works with the RSPB. Roseate terns are doing well on Coquet Island. Eider are in decline, possibly because cleaning up sewage effluent has affected the numbers of mussels which are their food. Periodic invasions of pipefish have resulted in serious effects on birds that rely on sand eels. Pipefish are poorly digested and also tend to choke young chicks.

Coastal problems are often associated with our dune systems. When land immediately inland of the dunes is used for agriculture the natural movement of the

dunes is prevented and the unnaturally narrow line of dunes is then more open to erosion from the sea.

Of our large mammals, the current position varies with the species:



Bottle-nose Dolphin



Beluga Whale

Harbour Porpoise are in major decline; Bottle-nose Dolphin have been moving from the Moray Firth to our coast, but when here in numbers they tend to harass and even kill Porpoise; White-beaked Dolphin winter on the Dogger Bank but come here in June to calve and then move to the Farne Deeps where feeding is good. Minke Whale numbers are on the rise; Risso's Dolphin are now more often seen; occasional visitors include Sperm, Humpback, Killer and (most unexpectedly) Beluga Whales.

We then broke for refreshments brought, once again, in great quantity and excellent quality and variety by those attending. THANK YOU ALL!

Finally there was the Quiz, this year produced by Stewart Sexton. Under other circumstances I would have used this report to moan about the unfairness of some of the questions – but our team won, admittedly after a tie-break question, so it was clearly a BRILLIANT QUIZ!!

Richard

INVERTEBRATE CORNER

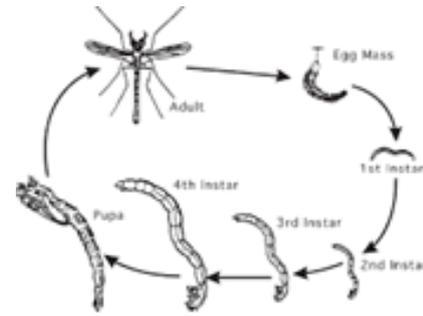
CHIRONOMIDS:

Chironomids are a family of true-flies (Class Insecta; Order Diptera) commonly known as non-biting midges. The adults [see photo] are small (wing length typically less than 5 mm) and delicate and superficially resemble mosquitoes, however they do not suck blood, usually preferring nectar. They are the most ubiquitous and usually the most abundant insect group in fresh waters with larval densities often exceeding several thousand per square metre. Their distribution extends from pole to pole and they are the dominant group in the Arctic. As well as occurring in all the "usual" types of fresh water (streams, lakes, rivers, ponds), many are terrestrial or semi-terrestrial. Others live in pitcher plants [see photo], leaf axils, or water-filled treeholes, and some are marine living in tidepools or even on tropical coral-heads to a depth of 30 m.



The chironomid life cycle is relatively simple: the adults lay their eggs in the water and these hatch into larvae that go through four stages before pupation and the emergence of the next generation of adults.

In temperate waters, the life cycle typically takes one year, but in warm desert pools it may be completed in as little as 10 days with most of the year being spent as diapausing (hibernating), desiccation-protected eggs [see photo].



The larvae of most species feed on small organic particles and unicellular algae which they graze off rock surfaces or filter from the passing water. The larvae of some species are micro-predators. Chironomid larvae are very important elements in aquatic food-webs, assisting in the decomposition and recycling of nutrients, and, together with the adults, are fundamental to the diets of larger aquatic invertebrates, fishes and birds. In addition, the predictable response of populations of certain species to different types and levels of pollution makes them useful as biological indicators of water quality. The larvae of some species are able to survive under very low dissolved oxygen levels because they possess haemoglobin and as such are red in colour – leading to another common name for chironomids, which is blood-worms [see photo]. These are often mimicked in flies tied for trout fishing [see photo].



Selective feeding in the larvae has led to a highly diverse array of mouthparts and associated teeth, the patterns



of which are used to separate the species. Moreover, these structures preserve well after the larvae die and persist in sedimentary deposits for thousands of years allowing palaeoentomologists to characterise the nature of past environments and climate on Earth [see photos of the fossil head-capsules of two different chironomid species, complete with teeth and mandibles].

*Dudley Williams
Newton on the Moor*



MICRO-MOTHS – LEAF MINERS, CONTINUED

by Alan Fairclough

Three more families of micro-moths that mine are the Phyllonorycters, Elachistidae and Momphidae. Phyllonorycters. About 55 British species (many in Northumberland). This group make quite large inflated blotch mines in leaves during early summer and/or autumn (sometimes with two generations a year) using mainly tree and shrubs, but also some herbaceous plants. New species are being added to the list every two or three years, often introduced with imported nursery plants. An example is the Firethorn Leaf-miner (*P. leucographella*), introduced to the southeast in the mid-1990's on *Pyracantha* plants, which by the early millennium had spread all over the British Isles.

Phyllonorycter quercifoliella (one of eight Oak species)



Mine on underside of an Oak leaf



Adult Wingspan 7-9 mm

Phyllonorycter leucographella



Upper-side mine on Pyracantha



Adult Wingspan 8-11 mm

Phyllonorycter hilarella



Multiple mines on Goat Willow



Adult Wingspan 6-8 mm

Elachistidae. 45 British species. More than half have been recorded in Northumberland. Most mine grass or rush leaves. The larvae linear mines, often across the whole leaf, but exit the mine to pupate. They mainly mine in the spring, with the adults flying in summer.

Elachista tengstromi. Not uncommon but easily overlooked



Mine on Hairy Wood-rush (*Luzula pilosa*)



Adult. Wingspan 8-9 mm

Elachista maculicerusella Common. Makes a linear mine then pupates on a different leaf.



Pupa on Reed Canary Grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*)



Adult. Wingspan 10-12 mm

Momphidae. 14 British species (9 in Northumberland).

They mainly mine Willowherb species, but the first example uses Enchanter's Nightshade

Mompha terminella. A much overlooked species.



Mine with larva



Adult. Wingspan 7-9 mm

Mompha raschkiella. Common, but the adult is rarely seen except at light traps.



Mine on Rosebay Willowherb



Adult. Wingspan 7-11 mm

MICRO-MOTHS – CASE BEARERS

Many of the general public are aware that Caddis Fly larvae live in cases made of stones or bits of vegetation, but very few are aware that there are also moth larvae that use cases for protection. The largest family are the Coleophoridae, but in this issue I will deal with two other examples; one that was a nuisance in the past and the other which is a bit weird.

First the nuisance: The Case-bearing Clothes Moth (*Tinea pellionella*), which as the name suggests, was a common pest until the early twentieth century because it feeds on animal materials, particularly wool, skins and feathers. With the introduction of modern detergents, dryer house environments due to central heating, and synthetic fibre materials this species has suffered a massive decline and although the adults still turn up occasionally in older houses they have usually come in after breeding in bird nests. The main remaining stronghold of this species is in Owl and Kestrel nest boxes. I bred more than 60 from an old Owl box last year, where they had a good supply of rodent fur in the Owl pellets. There are four other case-bearing Tineid species that have been recorded in the UK, but one is rare and has a southern distribution; the others have been imported occasionally on animal skins from the tropics.



Cases and larvae

Now to the weirdo I mentioned. There is a family of moths called the Psychidae all of which have case-bearing larvae. A few are normal enough with winged male and female adults and can be quite large with wingspans up to about 25 mm, while more have apterous (wingless) females. None of these have ever been recorded in Northumberland; we only have the real oddities! These are the species that not only have



Adult Wingspan 9-16 mm

apterous females, but there are no males. The females are parthenogenetic (self-fertile). They feed on lichens and algae on rocks, trees or posts, but with an adult phase that only lasts for a few hours and never moves away from the case, nobody could understand how they could have spread across the whole of Europe and Asia. Then it was discovered that the eggs can survive passage through the intestine of birds. If, for example, a Robin eats a female and then defecates somewhere else on a suitable habitat, the species can spread. Still a long shot, but it works apparently. So, if you see an old man staring for ages at a grave-stone, post or tree-trunk around here, it's probably either a lichenologist or me looking for Psychid cases.



Habitat: 18th Century grave-stone (Felton Parish Church)

Continued on next page...



Dahlica triquetrella case (6-7 mm) on the grave-stone above



Adult female and pupal case

Alan Fairclough

MICRO-MOTHS – CASE BEARERS (CONTINUED)

This time I will deal with the largest family of case bearing moth larvae; the Coleophoridae. There are about 110 British species, some 40 of which have been recorded in Northumberland. With maximum wingspans of 10 -22 mm, over 80% of the adults look very similar, varying only in fine details, with two smaller similar groups representing about 10% each. I will therefore get the adults out of the way first.



Main group: Generally grey or pale buff with paler striations,. Example above is *Coleophora striatipennella*.



Group 2: Plain beige to dark grey with a delta wing shape: e.g. *Coleophora spinella*.



Group 3: Shining metallic bronze or golden/green wings: e.g. *Coleophora trifolii*.

Now to the larvae: Most feed on leaves either by grazing the surface or making a series of mines that extend as far as they can reach without completely exiting their case and leaving a characteristic hole when they move on (see second image). The rest feed on seeds. The cases are made by mining into a leaf and cutting out the mined part, hollowing out a seed and using that as a case or making a case purely of silk. Most make at least two cases as they grow, but some just extend the existing case with more leaf material or silk.

Coleophora serratella is very common, feeding on Birch, Elm, Alder and Hawthorn. It makes two leaf cases, the first in autumn and the second in spring.

Continued on next page...



1st case (part silk 3-4 mm)



2nd case (7-10 mm)



Coleophora discordella (widespread in Northumberland) feeds on Bird's-foot Trefoil and adds a series of mined out leaflets to the case as it grows.



Case on Sea Rush (*J. maritimus*)

Coleophora maritimella uses the shell of the first seed it feeds on as its only case.
(Locally common in Northumberland where *Juncus maritimus* grows on saltmarshes.)



Coleophora alticolella feeds on the seeds of many species of Rush. The case is made of silk and is gradually enlarged throughout the larval stage. (Extremely common everywhere.)

Alan Fairclough.

WHAT WILDLIFE TO LOOK FOR IN FEBRUARY 2016

The Christmas holiday period was very dreary and you could count on one hand the number of times that the sun shone. The beginning of 2016 has been not much better but latterly the sun has started to shine and then the white stuff turns up.

One of the most impressive afternoon's wildlife watching was had on the 14th January on the Milfield Plain. There is still a large amount of water lying in the fields and this has attracted a wealth of wildfowl and others. Highlights consisted of 4,500+ Pink-footed geese, 500+ Teal, Wigeon and Mallard with a few Gadwall thrown in for good measure, Lapwing 160, 6-8 Green Sandpipers, 2 Greenshank, 6+ Redshank, Snipe, Woodcock (1), Barn Owl and a Dipper to name but a few. The Milfield Plain is not the easiest place to view but it can be accessed, via footpaths, from Doddington, Ewart, and West Fenton.

This is a small brown streaky finch that is related to the Linnet. Its mantle is tawny brown with dark streaks and white underneath and dark streaking on the flanks. Distinguishing features can be the yellow stubby bill and the pink rump on the males. In winter, Twite can be encountered almost anywhere on the coast especially where there is saltmarsh, sand dunes or permanent pasture where livestock are being fed. Good places to see them are Goswick shore, Fenham le Moor (in front of the hide), Ross, Long Nanny and Druridge Bay to name but a few. They can also be encountered inland where there are fields of turnips, weedy stubbles or occasionally game plots. Most of the birds we see are either from the north of Scotland or Scandinavia. They do breed in England but are increasingly rare. In the last 10 years, I have found 1-2 pairs breeding in suitable habitats of the Northumberland Sandstone Hills.

I hope that the weather improves to provide good winter wildlife watching.

Jack Daw.



Species of the month – Twite:

SIGHTINGS DECEMBER 2015

BIRDS	
Red-throated Diver	1 off Stag Rocks on 27th 1 off Stag Rocks on 22nd
Slavonian Grebe	1 at Guile Point on 13 th
Little Egret	3 at Fenham Flats on 13 th 1 at Branton Ponds on 28 th and 31 st 1 at Budle Bay on 22 nd and 2 on 29 th
Whooper Swan	25 at Amble on 6 th
Barnacle Goose	1000 at Budle Bay on 1 st and 1500 on 15 th
Brent Goose	387 at Fenham Flats on 13 th 300 at Smeafield on 29 th
Pink-footed Goose	290 at Doddington on 12 th and 15 th
Greylag Goose	750 at Budle Bay on 22 nd
Shelduck	1 at Branton Ponds on 22 nd
Gadwall	12 at Branton Ponds on 6 th 11 at Hedgeley Lakes on 15 th
Goosander	5 at Branton Ponds on 16 th
Red-breasted Merganser	2 at Warkworth on 13 th 3 at Holy Island on 15 th 2 at Stag Rocks on 22 nd
Long-tailed Duck	1 at Guile Point on 13 th
Common Scoter	3 at Stag Rocks on 1 st and 5 on 15 th
Goldeneye	6 at Branton Ponds on 6 th and 11 on 16 th 3 at Hedgeley Lakes on 16 th
Merlin	2 at Fenham Flats on 13 th 1 at East Chevington on 19 th 1 at Branton Middlesteads on 21 st 1 at Howick on 23 rd
Peregrine	1 at Fenham Flats on 13 th 1 at Howick on 24 th
Sparrowhawk	1 at Branton Ponds on 6 th
Goshawk	1 flew over Branton Ponds on 29 th
Water Rail	1 at Branton Ponds on 31 st
Snipe	8 at Branton Ponds on 15 th
Golden Plover	1050 at Fenham Flats on 13 th
Bar-tailed Godwit	130 at Fenham Flats on 13 th
Black-tailed Godwit	3 at Amble on 6 th
Curlew	698 at Fenham Flats on 13 th 23 at Hedgeley Lakes on 15 th
Knot	850 at Fenham Flats on 13 th
Oystercatcher	610 at Fenham Flats on 13 th
Lapwing	310 at Fenham Flats on 13 th
Green Sandpiper	1 at Hedgeley Lakes on 15 th
Glaucous Gull	1 at Amble on 6 th
Little Gull	1 (1 st winter) at Branton Ponds on 15 th
Stock Dove	7 at Howick on 27 th 1 singing at Yearle on 22 nd and 29 th
Long-eared Owl	1 near Howick on 26 th 1 near Wooler on 11 th
Barn Owl	1 at Howick on 24 th 1 near Howick on 26 th 1 at Branton Ponds on 28 th
Tawny Owl	3 near Hedgeley on 14 th 1 at Branton on 28 th
Little Owl	1 at Elwick on 13 th
Kingfisher	1 at Amble on 6 th 1 at Branton Ponds on 7 th and 15 th
Blackcap	1 at Warkworth on 13 th
Chiffchaff	1 at Howick on 15 th
Long-tailed Tit	20 at Smeafield on 15 th and 6 on 22 nd
Tree Sparrow	16+ at Smeafield on 25 th
Bullfinch	1 at Carey Burn on 18 th
Chaffinch	100+ at Howick on 24 th
Goldfinch	100+ at East Chevington on 19 th
Brambling	2 at Howick on 24 th
Siskin	20 at Howick on 27 th 50 at Branton Ponds on 16 th 50 in Harthope Valley on 18 th
Lesser Redpoll	12 at Howick on 7 th 1 at Howick on 27 th
Twite	19+ at Warkworth on 27 th

Yellowhammer	6 at Branton on 21 st and 40+ on 29 th
Snow Bunting	1 at Amble on 6 th 3 at Holy Island on 27 th 1 north of Boulmer on 31 st
PLANTS	
Foxglove	In flower at Branton on 16 th
Gorse	In flower at Branton Ponds on 16 th
Lesser Celandine	In flower at Branton on 29 th
MAMMALS	
Roe Deer	3 at Branton Ponds on 21 st
Red Squirrel	1 at Howick on 19 th
INVERTEBRATES	
Hebrew Character	1 at Howick on 19 th
Chestnut	1 at Howick on 19 th
Bumblebee.sp	2 at Smeafield on 10 th
RAINFALL	123mm
OBSERVERS	G&R Bell, I&K Davison, G Dodds, P&A Hanmer, S V McCormick, S Reay, J Rutter, S Sexton.