

Alnwick Wildlife Group

Promoting awareness of the countryside and its flora and fauna



REVIEW OF OCTOBER 2012

NEWSLETTER 134

www.alnwickwildlifegroup.co.uk

email: redsquirrel@alnwickwildlifegroup.co.uk

NEXT MEETING - DECEMBER 12TH 2012

CHRISTMAS MEETING + RED KITES IN THE NORTH EAST SPEAKER : JUDY SUMMERSON

Judy Summerson is the membership secretary of the Friends of Red Kites in the North East. But that title hides an enormous amount of work and knowledge about these magnificent birds. Judy spends a lot of time working with volunteers to further the success of the Red Kites project in our area and she particularly publicises the project with youngsters.

Then, when she's not doing Red Kite things, she is organising secretary of the NWT Gateshead Wildlife Group and she gets involved with many botanical projects such as surveying hay meadows.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN DECEMBER.

With less than a month to go until the winter solstice, most of nature has hunkered down for winter. Early autumn frosts have meant that there are now few plants in flower, although it would be interesting to know what people find. All of the summer migrants have flown for warmer climes but a few stragglers can be found such as a late Chiffchaff or Blackcap. There are a few insects on the wing such as the Winter Gnat, December and Winter Moth. This is one of the best-time of year to see our native mammals such as Brown Hare, Roe Deer, Fox and Badger.

Many of our plants are now in an apparent dormant state. This is a good time of year, to start to learn the identification of trees by their structural shape, bark and dormant buds. Once you have your eye-in identification is relatively straight forward. The cathedral-like crown of the Ash, with drooping branches tipped with black buds and hanging bunches of keys (seeds), is an important asset to our local landscape. One possible project that Alnwick Wildlife Group could undertake would be to try to find some of the largest specimens of Ash within our landscape. Any Ash tree with a dbh (diameter at breast height) of greater than 120cm is notable in the lowlands. On poorer soils, a dbh of 80cm could be a similar age.

Last year a large Ash tree (at least 100cm dbh) blew down in the Glanton parish. Examining the tree on the ground showed how important it was to local wildlife. Suitable holes were being used by Tree Sparrows and Jackdaws. A crack in the trunk appeared to have a Bat roost and several of the dead limbs were being investigated by Great Spotted Woodpeckers. King Alfred's cakes (semi-spherical black lumps) were also found as well as heart rot.

Other things to look out for in December are the increases in bird numbers at your bird table especially if there is a period of snow. One bird to look out for is the Blackcap. Up until recently, it was thought that these were migrants that had decided to stay in the UK. Ringing recoveries and DNA sampling indicated that these birds were in fact from Germany and central Europe that had taken a westerly migration route.

In calm sea conditions, Ross Sands, Bamburgh, Cheswick, Berwick upon Tweed and Alnmouth are all good to search for sea duck, divers, grebes and auks. It is not impossible to turn up four species of Grebe (Black-necked, Slavonian, Great-crested and Red-necked) as well as three species of diver (Red-throated, Black-throated and Great Northern) and a good selection of ducks (including Eider, Common and Velvet Scoter and Long-tailed Duck).

Winter is often the best time to see the 'feral' goats especially in the fields around Ad Gefrin, east of Kirknewton. The population is estimated to be about 210 in 2012 in the eastern Cheviots. If you are lucky you may see some of the large 'billies' (males) which are less reluctant to come down from the hills. Their shaggy coats, long beards and suitable impressive scimitar horns make them very photogenic.

I hope that you have a happy Christmas and very enjoyable New Year.

Jack Daw.

Please send sightings reports for August, no later than 6th October 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.

Meeting of Wednesday 31st October 2012

The meeting was first asked for its approval for the purchase of a Public Address system costing £599. There was general agreement that Richard could go ahead with this.

George's specimens for the 33-strong audience began with a dead starfish with a large central disc and rather short arms. It could have been a Common Sun Star. This was followed by a pair of Storm Petrel wings. Phil Hanmer then gave a brief Barn Owl report. It had been a good start to the year but as the weather worsened things had gone downhill. The birds had more success nearer the coast. In his boxes there had been 33 breeding attempts, with 26 successful and a total of 73 young had been ringed.

There was then the usual sharing of sightings. [*To encourage people either to submit their sightings to Ian & Keith Davison (details in each Newsletter) or to join and contribute to our new Blog, I'm no longer going to record sightings details in the meetings reports*].

George introduced the speaker, Professor Peter Davis whose topic was *George Johnston – Berwick's Marine Biologist*. Johnston (1797 – 1855) was the 10th of 15 children born to a farming family near Coldstream. He studied medicine at Edinburgh and became a GP, first at Belford and then in Berwick where he had to fit all his natural history work around his heavy GP schedule. But he still found time to found the Berwick Naturalist Field Club in 1831 which was probably the first English club of its type – not only making natural history a social pursuit but also writing up and publishing the results of all the field work.

Nationally Johnston became known for his publications on flora, on zoophytes, on sponges and lithophytes and on conchology. His works were invariably beautifully illustrated by his wife Katherine, although sadly all her original art works were lost over time, as were most of Johnston's specimens. Katherine's other appearance in this story involves her contributions to her husband's marine collecting. As a pillar of the community, to be seen collecting things from local beaches would have been regarded as very odd at the time, so Katherine had the habit of hiding his collected items under her voluminous skirts until they got home.

In 1844, in collaboration with other prominent northern naturalists, the Ray Society was formed in London (they chose London because the snobbish southern experts would not have regarded anything formed in Berwick as 'relevant'!). This society was named for John Ray, an eminent botanist, and is still going strong 168 years later. It promoted the publication of natural history texts, particularly on the 'less interesting groups of organisms'.

In addition to his GP work and extensive natural history activities, Johnston was a Justice of the Peace and was Mayor of Berwick three times. He died in 1855, aged only 58, and the house he and Katherine lived in for many years in Berwick town still has a brass commemorative plaque on its front door.



A Katherine Johnston illustration from GJ's
Volume on Zoophytes

BEYOND THE BORDER

Number 12: October 2012

Identifying fungi can be a daunting task with thousands of species to differentiate between but we are fortunate to have a number of distinctive forms growing within our local area. **Fly Agaric** (*Amanita muscaria*) is instantly recognisable and regularly features in children's books so is known to most people. The fruiting bodies consist of a white stem atop which sits a stunning scarlet cap. Fresh specimens will be sprinkled with large white flecks but heavy rain soon washes those off. These are toadstools of acidic woodland and usually appear beneath **Scots Pine** (*Pinus sylvestica*) and most particularly **Birch** (*Betula sp.*). Colonies of these most colourful fungi were admired within the Bowmont Forest (nr. Kelso/26th). I must warn you, however, that not only are they poisonous but also highly hallucinogenic. It is said that the Vikings would sometimes eat small fragments prior to engaging in a battle. They were then able to fight in a half-crazed rage!

Although not as colourful the **Parasol Mushroom** (*Macrolepiota procera*) is a fungus which can be eaten. It is cream to nut-brown in colour and has a particularly flaky cap with a prominent central raised area known as the umbo. The overall shape of the fruiting body is like that of a lady's parasol and on the stem is a double ring which can be moved up and down. Parasol Mushrooms appear in a number of different habitats which include dune-slacks, lawns and woodland clearings but (16th) I stopped to examine specimens which had appeared on a roadside verge at Darnchester between Coldstream and Leitholm.

Imagine for a moment the wick of a candle that had been extinguished and you can easily visualise the most aptly named **Candlesnuff Fungus** (*Xylaria hypoxylon*). It can grow to about two inches (5+cms) high but is usually little more than half that size. Maturity leads to the single 'wick' both branching and flattening with age until, eventually, it resembles a mini-version of a deer's antlers. Consequently – but rather confusingly – it sometimes then attracts an alternative name of Stag's Horn Fungus. Examples can be found throughout the year but this October led to an explosion of activity across the Scottish Borders. Massed colonies formed on the rotting branches, logs and stumps which littered many a deciduous woodland floor.

Wood Vetch (*Vicia sylvatica*) is a nationally scarce plant and yet there is an enormous colony growing beside the main A1 road at Lamberton. Most people who travel along that busy stretch will be unaware of its existence let alone its significance. Other sites do exist – on the Berwickshire coast and (very occasionally) inland from there. I was fascinated by the contents of a letter I received which described the finding of this Vetch by the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club during the nineteenth century. That was at a location in the Hawick area ...and then, quite by accident, I stumbled upon two plants in a nearby valley on October 11th. Wood Vetch is a good-sized clambering perennial with showy blooms that are coloured cream-lilac with prominent purple veins.

Amongst my other finds was **Wild Basil** (*Clinopodium vulgare*). It's one of the Calamints with pink-purple flowers, foliage that is downy and has a faint but pleasant smell. I've watched it for a time – growing on an old railway-line near Kelso and thought that it probably arrived with ballast. Not necessarily so, however, because I've since come across more beside an arable-farm track near Makerstoun. Some wildflowers produce a late flush of colour – just as they do in our gardens – and **Ragged Robin** (*Lychnis flos-cuculi*) displayed a few colourful blooms beside Mire Loch (St. Abb's) on the late date of the 22nd.

Searching for signs of our insect life has all too often been a fruitless task. Poor weather conditions were ongoing and so numbers of many species were not only well down but, in some cases, non-existent. I was able to observe a **Southern Hawker** (*Aeshna cyanea*) near Tweedbank on the 8th. It is one of our largest Dragonflies and although often visiting garden ponds this one was hunting above the near-still waters of the River Tweed. 2 late **Common Darters** (*Sympetrum striolatum*) were my last record of the year when I watched them at a small oxbow pond near Yetholm Mains (Yetholm/9th). Tragic to see such a dearth of butterflies with records of **Small Tortoiseshells**, **Peacocks** and **Red Admirals** all being restricted to single figures. Few lasted beyond the middle of the month and it does raise concern about the likely scarcity of eggs which were probably laid to produce next year's adult population.

It is impossible not to be full of admiration for the **Atlantic Salmon**. They have had to contend with **Sea Lice**, **Dolphins** and **Killer Whales** only to make their way upstream and pit their wits against Man and the numerous physical obstacles that threaten to block the river's course. Most spawn, during the late Autumn with a single female laying up to 15,000 eggs. These are fertilised and deposited in traditional gravel beds known as redds where, eventually, a tiny percentage will survive and head out to sea before completing their miraculous life-cycle. Massive numbers of **Common Toads** and **Common Frogs** appeared along wet roads on the nights of October 11th + 14th as they retreated to winter hideaways. **Adders** would also have gone into hibernation with chosen sites including cavities beneath huge rocky outcrops or within the tangled root system of a mighty tree.

Little Grebes took advantage of good feeding at Cauldshiels Loch (nr. Lindean, Selkirk), and on the still waters of the River Tweed and at Whitrig Bog (nr. Smailholm) but by far the biggest count was on the lake at The Hirsell (Coldstream, 4th) with up to 11 visible at any one time. Some **Whooper Swans** had made their way back from Iceland before October was through with 38 at Belmont (between Eccles and Hume/28th), 10 flying upstream along the Tweed (Sprouston/29th) and 17 feeding near Redden (31st). Meanwhile **Pink-footed Geese** were regularly seen throughout the month with 600+ near Crailing (2nd), 150+ flying NW over Kelso (4th) and 200+ at Manorhill (nr. Makerstoun/13th) representing just a glimpse of their presence. Much smaller numbers of **Greylag Geese** and very occasionally **Canada Geese** were also in the area.

I inadvertently flushed a **Woodcock** at Eastfield (nr. Stichill/28th) and had a lucky find with a **Green Sandpiper** (29th) which searched for tasty morsels at the waters edge downstream from Kelso. Several **Barn Owls** and **Tawny Owls** were encountered in the vicinity of the England/Scotland border on the night of the 31st. Many succumbed during the hard winter of 2011 and so it's encouraging to find local populations that have survived. Another bird which has suffered greatly in recent years has been the **Kingfisher** but I was left in no doubt as to its presence at Sprouston (29th) after having heard its high-pitched piping before witnessing the characteristic flash of electric blue.

A late **Swallow** lingered at Eckford (11th) and there was another at Floors Home Farm (nr. Kelso/Oct 13). **Waxwings** began to arrive at the end of the month with these magnificent Scandinavian visitors appearing in gardens at Duns, Eyemouth, Kelso, Lamberton, Reston and Selkirk.

Massive flocks of **Redwings** (numbering well into the thousands) were said to have been passing over Burnmouth and Lamberton from the sea (13th) and later that day 150+ were spotted at Studrig nr. Kelso. The influx continued over the coming days. **Fieldfares** arrived a little later with 3 reaching Cherrytrees (nr. Yetholm) on the 19th and then some big gatherings which included 150+ in the Bowmont Forest and 200+ near Middle Softlaw (Kelso/26th), 300+ nr. Stichill and 1000+ near Kennetside Heads (Hume) on the 28th. **Chiffchaffs** continued to sing at Belford on Bowmont (2/3rd) and at Berwick-upon-Tweed and Westruther (4th) whilst 10+ **Nuthatches** demonstrated much loud trilling in the grounds of The Hirsell (4th).

Ravens stand out from the usual Carrion Crows by their greater size, and distinctive outline. It was sometimes just a solitary "cronk" which alerted me to their presence in the Belford -on-Bowmont, Morebattle and Yetholm areas. **Jays** were often seen in and around stands of sessile **Oak** (*Quercus petraea*) in Berwickshire and Roxburghshire. They were busily collecting and hoarding **Acorns** for the winter ahead. **House Sparrows** continue to be well represented in this part of the country and at Manorhill (Makerstoun/13th) I came upon a single flock of 100+. A finch which is often overlooked is the **Lesser Redpoll** but I unexpectedly came upon 4 near The Castles (Yetholm/3rd) and two days later there were 5 at Windywalls. I have to assume that a flock of 40+ **Siskins** found in a tree behind St Abb's Head (22nd) had just arrived from Scandinavia (?) whilst 2 **Bramblings** near Yetholm Mains (19th) were my first for the season.

Small numbers of **Pipistrelle** (???) Bats remained active with 3 near Nisbet on October 2nd. **Hedgehogs** continued to be seen at Birgham, Coldstream, Lamberton and Lennel well into October but by the month-end most would have taken to hibernation. **Grey Squirrels** sought acorns and, where available, **Hazel** (*Corylus avellana*) nuts. Given the chance they would steal those already buried by Jays! These rodents seemed to be particularly numerous in the Galashiels/Tweedbank area on the 8th. I was fortunate to have quite a number of **Otter** sightings during the month. One involved an animal that was dozing in the sun (21st). I spotted it at the waters edge but it immediately launched itself into the River Tweed. My study only lasted a further thirty seconds when it surfaced to inspect me before vanishing from view....

ROGER MANNING.



Wood Vetch



Candlesnuff Fungus

Howick October 2012 Highlights.

October continued much as September with plenty of birding excitement around the area as migration increased.

Strangely enough though, one of the main highlights was not avian at all...

The 4th dawned fine and calm with a lovely sunrise. As I walked the dog before work in the morning, a few **Lesser Redpolls** were feeding on Meadow Sweet seeds in the village wood. As we came out on to the road, I was amazed to find an immature **Red Deer** stag standing watching me, backlit in the rising sun, his breath clearly seen coming from his nostrils. He had large 'spikes' and that 'lion maned' neck that is so distinctive. After gathering his senses he danced around briefly before hopping a five bar gate and was gone.

The whole thing had a spiritual feeling about it...

Later in the evening I tried to re-find him without luck, but two **Stoats** were frolicking along the village lane. This stag was probably chased from the small herd west of Alnwick by one of the rutting males?

On 7th, a **Small White butterfly** was on our lavenders. As the day warmed **Small Tortoiseshell, Red Admiral, Speckled Wood and Silver Y** were all noted.

Through the day 400 **Pink footed Geese** flew south, as did 25 **Barnacle Geese** while a **Brambling** was along the lane.

Heavy rain with a smart NE breeze on 12th started the arrival of the winter thrushes on the patch. A half an hour from the garden before work had **428 Redwing, 30+ Blackbirds, 5 Fieldfares, 12 Song Thrushes** all arrived from the east, while **8 Lapwings** and a **Snipe** flew west overhead.

The following day, 13th, found some of the migrants taking cover in the hedgerows around the village – **1 Redstart, Brambling, a Snow Bunting** flew N, **3 Crossbills** were heard only, and strangest of all, a flock of **13 Coal Tits** flew high south along the coast path, obviously migrating!

4 Barnacle Geese flew south and in the afternoon a 2nd winter **Mediterranean Gull** was fly catching over the back field with Black headed.

On 14th a **Short eared Owl** was seen arriving from very high to the east as it glided down over the Old Rectory in the village.

Another large arrival of migrants occurred on 23rd.



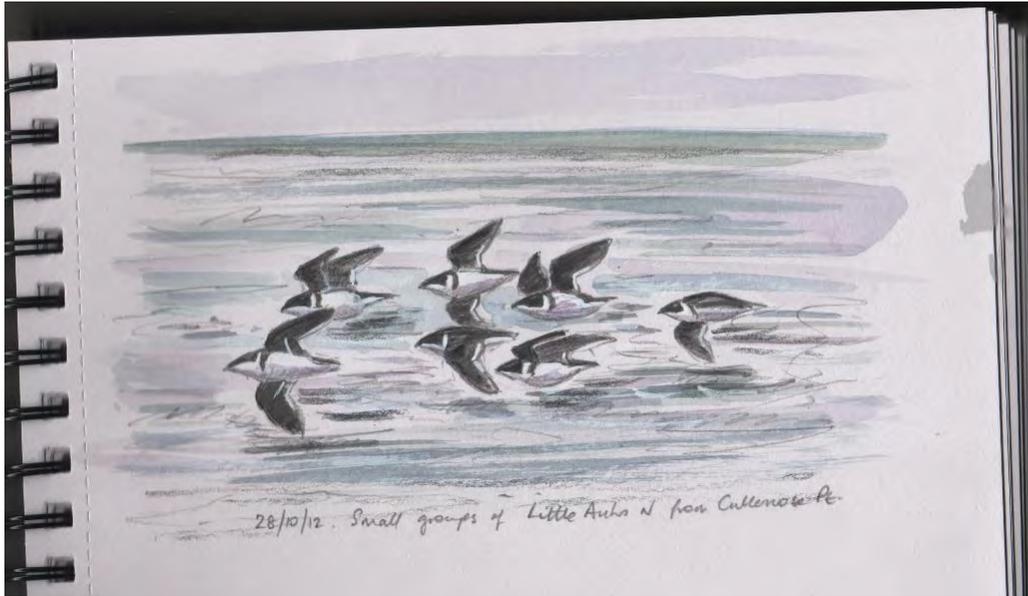
Black Redstart

200 each of Fieldfare and Redwing, 300+ Blackbirds, 50+ Song Thrushes, 1 male Ring Ouzel, 20+ Goldcrests, 3 Black Redstarts, 6 Brambling and best of all a very brief **Olive backed Pipit** on the Rumbling Kern. This is a very rare visitor from Siberia, a close relative of our Tree Pipit but very much more strongly patterned. After giving a good view on the ground and calling it flew off into the fog, not to be seen again. I later heard that in the afternoon, 2 of them arrived together on the Farne Islands, part of a large influx into the UK this month.

On **27th** the wind had turned into a strong Northerly, so a sea watch was the order of the day, from Cullernose Point. Watching from 8.10am – 10am good numbers of birds were moving north –

1 Velvet Scoter, 6 Little Auk, 1 Great Northern Diver, 2 Long tailed Duck, 1 Pintail, 1 Great Skua and 2 Sooty Shearwater plus lots of commoner wildfowl.

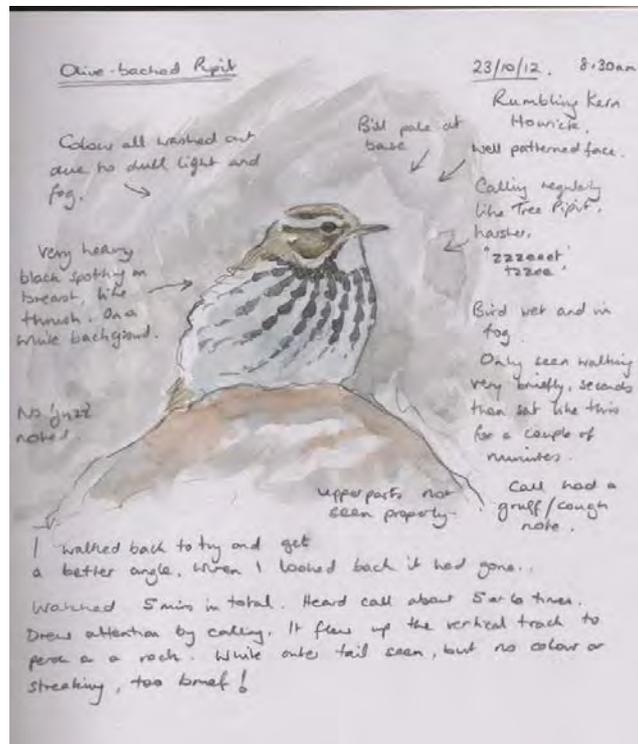
This inspired us to have another go the following morning where the highlights were- **107 Little Auks, 6 Velvet Scoter, 4 Long tailed Duck, 1 Great Northern Diver** and a female **Pochard** with a flock of **Wigeon**, the first of this species I have seen here in three years watching.



Little Auks

During this sea watch it was interesting to see small groups of starlings and thrushes arriving from Scandinavia, low over the waves. Two **Woodcocks** also came in, one landing right beside us for a while before heading off to more suitable cover.

So, as the nights draw in darker, it was great to go out with a bang! Some excellent birds seen for the area...



Olive backed Pipit

Stewart Sexton, Howick.

PLANT CORNER

If you are keen on botany and are not in a position to spend your winter months in warmer climates then you need to find something of interest during the 'non-growing' season. One distinct possibility is Ferns. Many of them are winter-green and retain many of the features that are useful for identification.

Last week I went out on a walk in part of Kielder Forest to the west of Bellingham – specifically to an area called Geordie's Crag. We were in search of a species called **Killarney Fern** (*Trichomanes speciosum*). For many years this fern was considered to be, in Professor Swan's words, 'one of the rarest and most beautiful ferns in the British flora' and was found in the south and west of the UK and in Ireland in its frondose form. But all ferns have a distinct alternation of generations. The fronds are the asexual sporophyte generation and bear the spores. But when a spore germinates it develops into a small, often minute, sexual generation called a gametophyte. Fertilised eggs from this generation then grow once more into a frondy sporophyte.

Killarney Fern is most unusual in that in northern Britain it is known only as the gametophyte generation and fronds are never found. The gametophyte grows like a mini green brillo pad (see the photo) on dark, wet rock surfaces in places that are usually semi-inaccessible and which often need a torch to see the plant.



Our group guide found the place where the then first site in Northumberland had been identified in 1994 on Geordie's Crag. Some of us were not totally convinced that what we were looking at was this fern. There seemed

to be several leafy-liverworts and some very small mosses, but not necessarily the fern. It didn't help that it was pouring with rain while we were looking for it. Killarney Fern has definitely been found here and the question was merely whether what we were looking at was the right thing. It seems probable that it has been here since the last Ice Age, surviving but not doing much else. Since 1994 another site for this gametophyte has been found at Hareshaw Linn, north of Bellingham.

Meanwhile, for those who don't take their pleasures in crawling around in rock crevices, there are two other small ferns that you can find quite easily. **Maidenhair Spleenwort** (*Asplenium trichomanes*) in the left-hand photo is a beautiful little fern often found growing in the cracks of stone walls. I won't cause you stress by going into details of the three sub-species. Then there is the closely-related **Wall Rue** (*Asplenium ruta-muraria*) in the right-hand photo, which is found in similar situations although often on drier and more exposed places and probably more in need of the more basic conditions provided by the mortar between the stones.



	SIGHTINGS OCTOBER 2012
BIRDS	
Red-throated Diver	1 off Guile Point (14 th), 4 off Holy Island (20 th), 12 at Cocklaburn (20 th), 10 off Newton Point (28 th), 2 off Stag Rocks (29 th)
Black-throated Diver	1 at Cocklaburn (20 th), 9 off Newton Point (28 th), 1 off Stag Rocks (29 th)
Little Grebe	4 (2 nd), 5 (12 th), 7 (27 th) at Branton Ponds
Great Crested Grebe	2 at Branton Ponds (1 st)
Sooty Shearwater	1 off Stag Rocks (29 th)
Little Egret	1 on Fenham Flats (13 th), 1 on Holy Island causeway (20 th)
Whooper Swan	5 flew over Branton Ponds (1 st), 1 (5 th), 13 (10 th), 6 (26 th), 5 on Branton Ponds (28 th)
Snow Goose	2 at Fenham le Moor (13 th)
Pink-footed Goose	750 at Fenham le Moor (13 th)
Barnacle Goose	1000 (13 th), 670 (14 th), 5000/6000 (17 th) at Fenham Flats
Brent Goose	1120 on Fenham Flats (14 th)
Scaup	4 on Fenham Flats (13 th)
Pochard	3 (12 th), 1 (21 st & 28 th) at Branton Ponds
Tufted Duck	80 at Branton Ponds (21 st)
Teal	300 + on Holy Island (6 th)
Eider Duck	520 at Fenham Flats (13 th)
Goldeneye	3 at Branton Ponds (16 th)
Long-tailed Duck	1 off Newton Point (28 th)
Velvet Scoter	3 off Stag Rocks (29 th)
Common Scoter	4 at Branton Ponds (12 th & 16 th), 7 at Cocklaburn (20 th), 100+ (29 th) off Stag Rocks
Red-breasted Merganser	4 at Guile Point (14 th)
Merlin	1 at Branton Ponds (1 st), 1 in the College Valley (9 th), 1 on the Snook (18 th), 1 off Newton Point (28 th)
Peregrine	3 at Fenham le Moor (13 th), 1 (juvenile) (17 th) at Branton, 1 (18 th) on the Snook, 1 (20 th) on Holy Island causeway, 3 (19 th) over Bewick Moor
Red Grouse	24 in the College Valley (9 th)
Water Rail	At least 2 at Branton Ponds all month
Snipe	42 near Cheswick (18 th)
Jack Snipe	1 near Cheswick (18 th)
Woodcock	2 at Titlington Mount (30 th)
Sanderling	80 at Low Newton (28 th)
Bar-tailed Godwit	164 on Fenham Flats (14 th)
Curlew	97 on Fenham Flats (14 th)
Curlew Sandpiper	1 at Elwick Flash (13 th +14 th)
Purple Sandpiper	60 at Stag Rocks (29 th)
Lapwing	1000 at Fenham Flats (20 th)
Common Sandpiper	1 at Branton Ponds (1 st)
Oystercatcher	425 at Guile Point (14 th)
Golden Plover	2000+ on Fenham Flats (20 th)
Grey Plover	51 on Fenham Flats (14 th)
Arctic Skua	1 at Stag Rocks (13 th)
Common Gull	600+ in the Till valley (11 th)
Arctic Tern	2 at Stag Rocks (13 th)
Little Auk	21 off Newton Point (28 th)

Little Owl	1 at Glanton (21 st)
Long-eared Owl	1 (23 rd) on Holy Island in same tree as a Barn Owl
Short-eared Owl	1 on Holy Island (6 th), 3 on Holy Island (20 th), 3 along the Straight Lonnen(Holy Island) (23 rd), 1 at Titlington Mount (30 th)
Barn Owl	2 in the Straight Lonnen on Holy Island (18 th), 1 on the Straight Lonnen in same tree as a Long-eared Owl (23 rd)
Kingfisher	At least 2 at Branton Ponds all month, 1 on the Wooler Water (22 nd)
Swallow	2 over Glanton (15 th), 2 on Holy Island (23 rd), 6 over Low Newton (28 th)
Skylark	24 near Cheswick (18 th)
Pied Wagtail	80+ at Branton Ponds (3 rd)
Grey Wagtail	3 in Wooler (11 th)
Waxwing	2 at Powburn (31 st)
Stonechat	2 at Stag Rocks (29 th)
Redwing	428 at Howick (12 th), hundreds on Holy Island (23 rd), 2 at Smeafield (20 th)
Fieldfare	5 at Howick (12 th), hundreds on Holy Island (23 rd), 200 at Smeafield (22 nd)
Blackbird	30 at Howick (12 th)
Song Thrush	12 at Howick (12 th)
Chiffchaff	2 in Wooler (11 th)
Barred Warbler	1 on Holy Island (23 rd)
Yellow-browed Warbler	1 in the Straight Lonnen on Holy Island, (18 th +23 rd)
Goldcrest	Many on Holy Island (14 th), and hundreds (23 rd)
Starling	3000+ over Goswick G.C.(18 th)
Jay	Several in the College Valley (13 th)
Raven	3 in the College Valley (9 th), 1 over Branton Ponds (21 st), 2 at Harehope Hillend (23 rd)
Twite	30 at Fenham Flats (13 th) and 2 (14 th)
Brambling	1 at Fenham Flats (13 th)
Snow Bunting	3 on Holy Island (6 th), 4 at Budle Point (29 th)
Lapland Bunting	5 on Holy Island (15 th), 1 at the Snook (18 th)
MAMMALS	
Red Squirrel	1 at Branton Ponds collecting Hazelnuts (2 nd),1 in Branton (9 th), 1 in Titlington Lane (25 th)
Hedgehog	1 in Branton (5 th)
Wild Goats	30 near Easter Tor (13 th)
Bottle-nosed Dolphin	Up to 20 off Holy Island (20 th) (including some youngsters)
AMPHIBIANS	
Common Newt	1 on road in Branton (1 st)
INVERTEBRATES	
Southern Hawker	1 at Branton Ponds (9 th)
Common Darter	1 at Branton Ponds (12 th) and 3 (21 st)
PLANTS	
Lesser Hawkbit	In the College Valley (9 th)
Tormentil	In the College Valley (9 th)
Grass of Parnassus	In the College Valley (9 th)
Climbing Corydalis	At Titlington Mount (13 th +30 th)
Precumbent Pearlwort	At Titlington Mount (13 th)
Autumnal Water-starwort	In the Titlington burn (15 th)
RAINFALL	97.5mm
Observers:	J.Clark, G&G Dodds, I&K Davison, R&J Poppleton, S Reay, S Sexton, H Tindle.

CHRISTMAS MEETING



Do join us for the AWG Christmas Meeting on **12th December**

We've got Judy Summerson talking about Red Kites in the North East. Plus Ian and Keith Davisons's now-renowned Christmas Quiz.

And to make it all special we ask our members to bring some Christmas nibbles so we can have a festive end to our 2012 year of talks - as we've done every year since 2001. HOPE TO SEE LOTS OF YOU THERE!