

Alnwick Wildlife Group

Promoting awareness of the countryside and its flora and fauna



www.alnwickwildlifegroup.co.uk

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NEWSLETTER 159 DECEMBER 2014 Review of November 2014

NEXT MEETING – JANUARY 28TH 2015 AT 730P.M. ST. MICHAEL'S HALL, CANONGATE.

FARNE ISLANDS UNCOVERED – DAVID STEELE

David is vastly experienced in the ecology and running of the Farne Islands. His talk to the North Northumberland Bird Club, in 2014, had people queuing to get in. This should be a fantastic evening of pictures and descriptions.

MOTH OF THE MONTH - JANUARY

This is the first of a series highlighting moths that can be seen in Northumberland over the year. We start at the most unlikely time of the year, but there are species that fly in January if there is even a short milder spell. Most are species that hibernate over the winter, but some emerge from pupae in the ground.

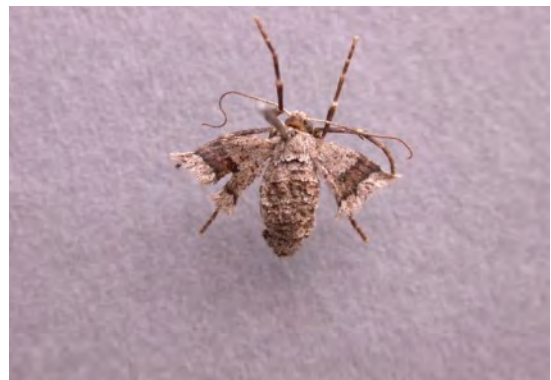


Male Early Moth

One such species is the appropriately named Early Moth (*Theria primaria*), with an earliest recorded sighting in Northumberland of the 7th January. Like many of the Geometer 'Winter Moths' only the males are capable of flight; the females having only vestigial wings. The females climb up their chosen food plant

at night (Blackthorn or Hawthorn in this case) and attract a mate with pheromones before laying their eggs on the unopened buds.

The males, which are sometimes attracted to lit windows, have a slightly darker band across the forewing with a fuzzy, half-mooned shaped spot on the middle. They are roughly triangular in shape (at rest) and about 15 mm across the widest point. On



**Female Early Moth
(set specimen)**

the wing, the whitish hind wings stand out in car headlights. Not surprisingly, the females are difficult to spot, but can sometimes be found by hunting bushes with a torch.

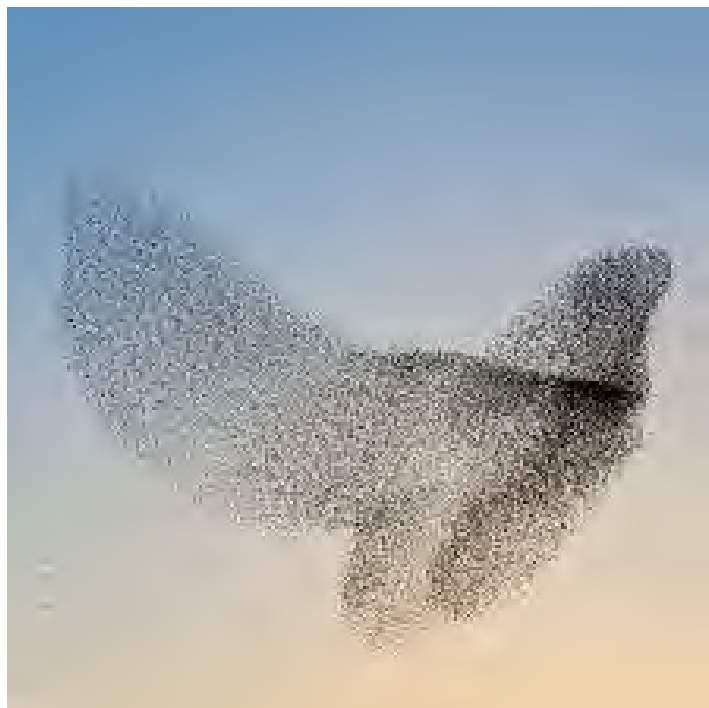
Alan Fairclough, Swarland.

Please send sightings reports for December, no later than 6th January 2015 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.

WHAT WILDLIFE TO LOOK FOR IN JANUARY.

Cold temperatures moving in from the north west have seen a distinct change in the wildlife on our door step. Large numbers of **Wigeon** have moved south from Fenham Flats, numbers of ducks and geese have declined in a number of lakes and ponds in our area and there is a lot less insect activity. With the advent of the cold weather, there has been an increase in **Fieldfare**, **Redwing** and **Blackbird** numbers. This is welcome after a poor autumn passage.

Clear January late afternoons are a great time to watch wildlife going to roost. Birds can roost in a wide range of different habitats to protect themselves against the elements. Roosts can be in conifer woodland such as the gathering of corvids (**Jackdaws**, **Carriion Crows**, **Rooks** and **Ravens**) at Powburn. They are not just confined to the countryside – one of the largest **Pied Wagtail** roosts is north of the railway station at Berwick in the Tappie Loch reed bed. In the past up to 120 wagtails have gathered. **Blue tits**, **Treecreepers** and **Wrens** will also use nest boxes. Can you beat the world record for roosting wrens in a nest box? The record is an incredible 63 birds! Roosts are not just confined to small birds as you may be fortunate to find gatherings of **Long-eared** or



Short-eared Owls. One of the most impressive spectacles are the gatherings of **Starlings**.

These murmurations can be on a colossal scale. The last one that I saw was about 30,000 birds on Lindisfarne four years ago. Apparently, this year the roost is even bigger with at least 50,000 birds. A local farmer watched the birds come out of the roost and it took over 15 minutes of a steady stream of birds before the last one left! The murmuration in the evening must be spectacular.

Of course with the gathering of large numbers of birds, there are always the predators. These can range from **Sparrowhawks**, **Buzzards**, **Merlins** and



Peregrines to more unusual species such as **Grey Herons** and **Bitterns**! Bitterns are very adept at picking off a starling or two from the stems of common reed.

If 'Jack Frost' starts to bite and ponds and lakes freeze over, then this is a great time to go looking for the elusive Bittern. Increasing numbers of this camouflage heron are turning up in winter. East Chevington and Gosforth Park are some of the best places to see Bitterns in winter. But they can turn up almost anywhere – a wintering bird at Newton Pool or Branton Ponds would be a welcome treat.

Don't just go to roost in January – there is plenty of wildlife to be found in Northumberland countryside.

Jack Daw.

PLANT CORNER

In late August this year we were on Simonside. It was a general botanical excursion, but there were some particular target species.



The first was **Chickweed Wintergreen** (*Trientalis europaea*). August is far too late to find this species in flower but we hoped to find the remains of the leaves. Sure enough, quite close to the car park, and after a bit of searching, we found some under bracken

in the wood. When Chickweed Wintergreen (which incidentally is neither a Chickweed nor a Wintergreen) is in flower it is a very attractive little species. I often tend to think of it as the UK equivalent of the alpine Edelweiss, although, apart from being small and white, they don't have much in common. What was very different (for me) about the plants we found was that some were in fruit. I'd never before seen the small blue fruits.



We then walked uphill on the main track until we came to a good gravelly area just off the path. Here there were three species of Clubmoss all growing in close proximity

among the low Bilberry plants. These are quite primitive non-flowering plants which, while rather moss-like, have elongated stems which are often branched and whose leaves have midribs and stomata like those of the higher plants. Many species have their spore-bearing leaves gathered together as elongated cones at the ends of branches. The first one we



spotted was **Stag's-horn Clubmoss** (*Lycopodium clavatum*). This is not very rare, particularly by the sides of forestry tracks. It has long low prostrate branching stems and in the 19th century was supposedly sufficiently common that local shepherds in the hills would sometimes twine lengths of stem around their hats as decoration.



Alpine Clubmoss (*Diphasiastrum alpinum*) is altogether rarer in Northumberland and seems to be decreasing, so this good patch with its healthy sporing shoots was an excellent find, particularly at this



comparatively low altitude. Then as a bonus we found a single shoot of **Fir Clubmoss** (*Huperzia selago*) growing right beside some of the alpine species. *Huperzia* is mostly found on high screes and damp rock ledges in the west of the county and in various places in the Cheviots. Jim Clark

has been keeping his eye on a small patch on a rock in one of the moorland burns at Harehope for several

years. Our next target was **Dwarf Cornel** (*Cornus suecica*). You can tell from its name, *Cornus*, that it's a dogwood. [Its older name,



almost unpronounceable, *Chamaepericlymenum*, wouldn't have helped in that respect, although if you are fascinated by names you may notice that the *periclymenum* part of that word is the same as the specific name of the common Honeysuckle and both the leaves and the fruits of Dwarf Cornel do somewhat resemble those of honeysuckle.] It is so low-growing and comparatively non-woody that it doesn't really look like a dogwood until you see the startling red berries in the late summer and autumn. As with the alpine clubmoss the large patch below the north-facing Simonside cliffs is a very good one for Northumberland. It was too late for flowers, but the red berries were spectacular, which makes it really quite surprising that the patch was only noticed for the first time in 1976. It has all the appearance of having been there for very much longer than that.

Keith and Ian Davidson have found patches of Dwarf Cornel in the Cheviots and we've discussed putting on a hill walk next summer to try to find some of these – watch this space!

Lastly, on the summit ridge of Simonside we looked for and found our last target species, **Cloudberry** (*Rubus chamaemorus*). This is a species of high elevation blanket bog and, like Fir Clubmoss, is mostly found in the far west of Northumberland. So the big patch at only 420m here is distinctly unusual. The

problem with Cloudberry is that it is dioecious (separate male and female plants), so the male plants produce no fruit and even female ones often don't if there are no male pollinators nearby. So the plants we found had none of the attractive ripe orange fruits (or even the pre-ripe red ones). In Scandinavia they are called Hjortron berries and are considered a prized delicacy when made into a jam and eaten with smoked reindeer meat.



Cloudberry has an alternative name – Knoutberry – and its frequency in the west of the county is shown by the name Knoutberry Rigg, a hill near Allenheads.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Remember that subs are due in January. Still no increase - £10 single, £17.50 for two or more at the same address. Please make cheques to Alnwick Wildlife Group and bring to the January meeting or post to:

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

Please try not to forget. Chasing subscriptions is a bit of a thankless task.

Some members now pay by Standing Order with their bank. If you'd prefer to do so please let Richard know and he'll organize the relevant form for you.

BARN OWLS IN NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND; 2014 UPDATE.

"Of all the owls the White or Barn-Owl is the best known, for it is more frequently associated with human habitations than other species. It is often described as white, the under parts being most noticeable when, with desultory flight; it reels and wavers through the dusk. Crepuscular and nocturnal in its habitats, it eludes observation; it appears a noiseless shadow..." T.A.Coward (1920). The Birds of the British Isles. Warne.

Philip Hanmer, with much help from his farmer collaborator David Wood, Alison Hanmer and his son Hugh; started a project to both conserve and study barn owls in north Northumberland (outside the National Park); about nine years ago. Philip gratefully acknowledges the recent donation to the "owl fund" given by the Alnwick Wildlife Group.

Barn Owls are thankfully rarely persecuted these days but isolated incidents do still occur. The biggest determinant of the owls success is the weather (particularly in the winter and early spring of every year). Boxes provide not just a breeding space but also an important refuge out of the cold, the wet and strong winds; as they are used all year round. Those sited in quiet barns and hemmel's being the most advantageous. To get a complete picture it would be necessary to have data from every barn owl nest in the county. However, this study (of over 100 nest sites) indicates that the exceptionally good early spring weather of 2014, after a mild winter, encouraged the very early breeding of many Barn Owls. The weather was in marked contrast to the spring of 2013 and according to the Met Office May 2014 was the sixth consecutive month with above average temperatures. Nights were very mild and the UK had its mildest spring for minimum temperatures since 1910; there were hardly any frosts.

Consequent on the above it was a very good year for Barn Owls with 33 successful nests (33% occupancy) and 121 owlets being ringed (*Tawny Owls also had a good year*); this has been the largest number ever (the best recorded by this project) and probably the best for owls in the last ten years. Barn owls started to nest in March and April; most owlets were ringed in June (or even towards the end of May). The average number fledged per nest was 4 (compared to the normal figure of around 2). There were also no known failures. The strongest population of Barn Owls in the

county exists in the coastal strip between the A1 and the sea from High Newton - south.

With this early start a number of second broods were anticipated but only one was definitively identified near Howick. There were some young ringed in late July and these may have been from replacement broods (the adults having

failed to raise young from an earlier nesting attempt). Indeed at one site near Craster Jackdaws had definitely prevented the owls from breeding early but they were able to succeed starting later in the year.

12 new adult owls were ringed and 20 were re-trapped (including 4 controls). The pair that produced the second brood, nesting near Howick, is also notable for both being 8 or 9 years old. Jackdaws were slightly less of a problem than normal, presumably because of the early breeding of the owls. Kestrels might have been expected to do quite well in these climatic conditions but probably lost out in the competition for nest sites (especially in owl boxes); only three were used.

N.B. Barn Owls are a Schedule One specially protected species. A license is required to approach a suspected nest site. Philip thinks it is important to show people owls under the proper conditions and is a trainer for nest recording and ringing.

Philip Hanmer

e-mail: tytoalbas@btinternet.com



THOMAS PERCY WOODLAND

Members may recall that during the summer AWG was asked by Alnwick Town Council to take an interest and involvement in two potential Local Wildlife Sites in and around Alnwick. One of these was the woodland above the old Thomas Percy School site which lies on the line of a footpath and wildlife corridor between Greensfield Farm and the Summerseats (by The Dunterns).

Elizabeth Jones is Chair of the Alnwick in Bloom Committee and also a member of AWG. She included the Thomas Percy Woodland as one of the sites in the Royal Horticultural Society's "Its Your Neighbourhood" section of Alnwick's "Britain in Bloom" entry. Having been round the site earlier in the summer with Jim Clark and Town Councillor David Farrar, whose initiative the Local Wildlife Sites has been, I agreed to accompany the assessors when they came in August.

The principle of the judging of Its Your Neighbourhood sites is to determine how they are getting on – not to decide whether they've won a prize. Each site is given a grade (which you can see in the Assessors' Comments below). So in the case of the woodland, where nothing has yet been done and it's just at the ideas stage, all we could hope for was to get some words of encouragement about the assessors' estimate of the potential for development.

Last week I attended a small ceremony in Alnwick at which the certificates were given out. The woodland was judged to be 'very exciting' and of potentially 'great benefit' to Alnwick.

AWG will probably be involved in carrying out some wildlife surveys in the wood and so it seemed right to let you all see the comments (below) and the certificate (next page). Then when we are looking for people to take part in the surveys, you may be enthused to get involved. I hope so!

Richard Poppleton

GRANDTOTALPOINTSASSESSED

2/5

LEVEL ACHIEVED

Improving

Areas of achievement:

Although work has not yet begun, thus is a very exciting project to develop an area of woodland and open grassland for wildlife and education. The Alnwick Wildlife Group with Northumberland Wildlife Trust and Northumberland County Council have plans to make the woodland more accessible and to create a wildflower meadow on the former school grounds by removing topsoil and re seeding.

Areas for development:

The project will be of great benefit to Alnwick and we wish it success.

Results

Level	Description	Points
Level 1	Establishing	0-35
Level 2	Improving	36-52
Level 3	Developing	53-68
Level 4	Thriving	69-85
Level 5	Outstanding	86-100

RHS IT'S YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

The Royal Horticultural Society and Northumbria in Bloom are proud to present

Thomas Percy Woodland

with a 2014 It's Your Neighbourhood Award of

Level: 2 IMPROVING



Royal Horticultural Society President

**northumbria
in Bloom**

Communities Growing Together

**NORTHUMBRIA IN BLOOM CELEBRATES
50 YEARS**
RHS BRITAIN IN BLOOM


Royal
Horticultural
Society
Sharing the best in Gardening

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A RANGER

It's 8.30a.m. . Time to start.

I have a guided walk at 10 o'clock. I ask Derek if I can do my project work. He says 'Yes' but cut the grass at Once Brewed first.

Grass cut – it's time for the walk which starts at Haltwhistle following a stream northwards along an industrial mining area. The path is what's left of a road which was used for 'quarrying'. Quarrying has been done here since Roman times. The walk is enjoyed by the clientele who have learning difficulties.

We have a 'pond dip' this afternoon with kids from a local school. They should enjoy that!

The dip started at one and we get down on our hands and knees to look at the creatures in air trays.

Bloodworms, pond skaters, larvae of mayflies and stoneflies mostly but the kids are enthralled when I tell them that the bloodworms have the same red blood (haemoglobin) as we do.

We finish with a chat with the teacher.

Derek says: "Can you do the gate at the farm we looked at yesterday?" I say yes and make my way.

The gate needs to be made into something like a kissing gate. I get my posts in with difficulty as the area is a stone pile. I get my rails in straight and level only to discover that the field is full of young bulls! The gate may not last long. It starts to rain just as I finish off. I

try to drive up the field but the tyres simply spin on the greasy surface. The farmer gives me a tow up the slope of the field. I stop and thank him and have a 15-minute chat. Then I go back to Once Brewed.

Next I have to go to the main tip with the rubbish. What a smelly job. You can imagine what two- week old banana skins smell like.

It's 7.30. Derek says 'can you have a last look around?'

I start at Vindolanda where someone waves me down asking for help.

A little boy of about 8 years has fallen and has a potential broken arm. They're going to take him to Hexham Infirmary but only after having seen all the sights.

They ask me: Can I take him to hospital?

I radio Derek and ask permission to take him. He says 'yes'

It's about a 45-minute drive and we get there with the little boy on a carer's knee.

I ask if he wants me to come in with him and he says 'yes'

Beside it gives me a chance to show off in front of the nurses. Yippee!!

His arm is broken and I leave to go back to the wall at about 8.30.

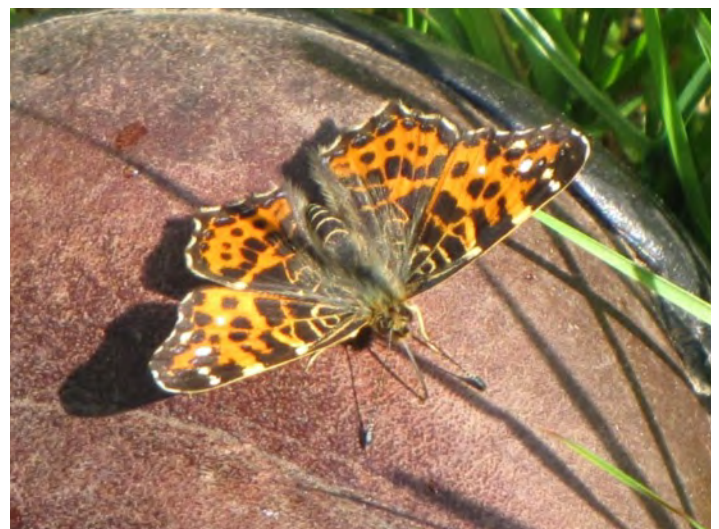
I get home at 9.15. – A long day.

DAVID TURNBULL

MYSTERY PHOTOGRAPH

This was taken in 2012 in a pine wood in NE Germany near the Baltic coast. It is sitting on Jane's boot. I think I know what it might be, but any opinions would be welcome.

Richard



MEETING OF WEDNESDAY 26TH NOVEMBER

A good audience of 41 gathered and George started with a piece of fossilised tree fern found at Buston Links and the beak and front of skull from a juvenile Eider. Eiders need powerful bills to tackle the food items of mussels and crabs.

some good close-ups of adders. He clearly has the ability to get a wide range of bird species to pose for his camera! The best thing was that he was able to bring a whole range of personal observations into the talk. To pick a few, these included clumps of grass sprouting in a rook's nest; the use of that same tangled nest as an opportunity for tree sparrows to breed; the collective flock fishing of goosander's on



Our speaker was Hugh Tindle from Powburn talking about *the Wildlife of the Breamish Valley*. The river Breamish runs from its source in the Cheviots to Old Bewick Bridge where it swings north and becomes the river Till, flowing up to join the Tweed between Cornhill and Norham. Most of Hugh's talk covered the area between Beanley and Ingram.

This area has some excellent wildlife habitat, including Beanley Wood, the Station Wood by Powburn, the gravel ponds at Low Hedgeley and Branton, the river itself, the old railway line in Crawley Dene and, not least, Hugh's own garden. The photographs he showed (although not the one above) were all his own and were all taken in 2014.

Many of Hugh's photos were of birds, but he included some mammals, plants and insects, plus

Branton ponds with the grey heron that had learnt how profitable it was to follow them around and benefit from the way they herd the small fish into the shallows; the kingfisher nests in the river banks; the dominant pair of mute swans at Low Hedgeley which drive away other pairs that try to nest in either of the two ponds; the tree bumblebees using tree sparrow nest boxes; and a rabbit in the garden that appeared with myxomatosis but made a full recovery after a couple of weeks.

Hugh's talk was an excellent illustration of the fact that a comparatively small area of our North Northumbrian countryside can reveal a very rich wildlife scene over the course of a year and a good naturalist with perseverance and patience can get to see many of those riches.

STEWCHAT

After last month's mothy interlude, this episode will attempt to be more educational.

When I say 'educational' what I really mean is that I am going to try and show one of our favourite woodland birds in a different light.

The bold, but secretive, Bullfinch is always a delight to see as it flits along a woodland or moorland edge in winter. But just how well do we know this familiar species?

In the UK our resident breeding and wintering British Bullfinches are of the sub species *Pyrrhula pyrrhula pileata*. There is very little individual variation in plumage or size between individuals, however, if you are very lucky you may come across the larger, brighter Northern and eastern form, *P.p. pyrrhula* or Northern Bullfinch. This race of Bullfinch hails from the vast, mysterious taiga birch and pine forests of north eastern Scandinavia and Siberia and is a rare visitor to our shores.

During the 70's, when I was a lad of 9 or 10 years of age, I knew an old chap called Geordie, who lived near us, who kept several species of British finches in aviaries to breed for show purposes. His goal was to breed a hybrid between a female British Bullfinch and a male Greenfinch or Goldfinch. This, as you may imagine, was fraught with difficulty and success was minimal. It was while showing me his birds one day he told me about the large and beautiful Northern Bullies that were believed to visit Northumberland during some winters. His evocative description of a silver grey and rose pink bird, much larger and brighter than our own stirred my imagination and became a mythical hoped-for find for me.

This hoping and waiting lasted a further 20 years or more, long after Geordie had passed away, before I realised my ambition of seeing this denizen of the sub-arctic wastes.

I scrutinised every Bullfinch I came across during the winters that followed that must have numbered hundreds if not a thousand individual birds, to no avail. Sometimes I would find a lone male in the snow and would convince myself it was 'huge' and

'bright', but deep down I knew this was more wish than reality.

Then, one late October day while ringing migrant birds at Hauxley Ringing Station, an unusual call attracted attention from the pre-dawn gloaming. It was a soft but buzzing 'peep', with a very nasal tone, quite unlike anything I had heard before, and nothing like the soft piping Bullfinch calls we know so well here. The rush of adrenalin that came when I tracked down its owner in the wood was unbelievable. There, in front of me tooting like a toy trumpet was a large plump female Bullfinch. It was clearly none other than 'Northern Bullie! Even though it was a female, it stood out as different to the norm. It was almost as large as a Waxwing with very soft looking feathering and a plumped out shape. The tone was cinnamon in colour with a greyish shawl, black cap, wings and tail. There was a very broad white wingbar and the white rump was large and 'wrap around' reminiscent of a Jay in flight.

We were fortunate enough to catch her in a mist net later on where wing measurements and weight confirmed that this was the bird from the north - over 10% larger than our locals.

Since that day I have seen and caught two other females at Stobswood, seen a male at Hauxley during spring emigration and most recently found another male at Howick during the hard weather of November 2010 that was still around the following March.

The notes and poor photos below are my impressions gathered from these experiences.



Figure 1: British Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula pileata*



Figure 2: Female Northern Bullfinch P.P.Pyrrhula, Stobswood

Fig 2, Shows the bulky blunt headed shape with pale plumage and broad pale wing bar.



Figure 3: Male Northern Bullfinch, Howick, 2011

Fig 3, Shows the huge broad white wing bar (compare with the pic of the British bird above), silver grey back (darker on British bird) and faint whitish edges to primary wing feathers. The pink is also a paler rose colour; making British birds seem quite dull in comparison!



Fig 4, This poor image was taken by phone down a scope but still shows the brighter more defined coloration with the broad white wing bar that lacks any grey.

Figure 4: Male Northern Bullfinch, Howick Nov 2010, may be same individual as that above?



Figure 5: Notes on bird seen in Fig 4.

To summarise, do try and take a more critical look at the Bullfinches you see, especially after easterly winds and cold weather in late October – March. If there are other birds to compare with, look for large size - Northern Bullfinch is much larger and bulkier than British Bullfinch eg British birds have a wing length of 83mm and weigh 24 gms while Northern birds have 93mm+ wing and weigh 33gms. When translated to bulk this is a huge difference.

But one of the best ways to pick one out is that call. It is a tooting tone quite different to the piping we are used to.

If you do find one of these rare visitors, I'm sure you will be impressed as much as I was. I look for them every year. Fingers crossed that one might arrive this winter...

Stewart Sexton, Howick...

SIGHTINGS NOVEMBER 2014

BIRDS

Great Northern Diver	1 off Berwick Pier on 22 nd
Black-throated Diver	2 at Snab Point on 23 rd
Red-throated Diver	1 at Embleton Bay on 24 th 4 off Berwick Pier on 22 nd 3 off Stag Rocks on 24 th
Slavonian Grebe	1 off Ross Back Sands on 23 rd
Red-necked Grebe	1 at Fenham Flats on 10 th
Great Crested Grebe	1 at Fenham Flats on 10 th 1 off Berwick Pier on 22 nd
Little Egret	8 at Fenham Flats on 10 th
Cormorant	1 near New Bewick on 9 th and 11 th
Mute Swan	10 at Fenham Flats on 10 th
Whooper Swan	26 at Low Newton on 2 nd 32 at Fenham Flats on 10 th 13 at East Chevington on 23 rd 30 at Newton Flash on 24 th 17 at Howick on 25 th
Pale-bellied Brent Goose	1277 at Fenham Flats on 10 th
Barnacle Goose	62 at Fenham Flats on 10 th 1 near River Till on 22 nd
Greylag Goose	200+ at Low Newton on 2 nd
Pink-footed Goose	800 near River Till on 22 nd
Bar-headed Goose	2 at East Chevington on 23 rd
Pintail	97 at Fenham Flats on 10 th
Goldeneye	7 at Branton Ponds on 9 th 12 at Fenham Flats on 10 th 50+ at East Chevington on 23 rd
Gadwall	4 at Branton Ponds on 9 th 3 at Hedgeley Lakes on 9 th 2 at Howick on 25 th
Teal	600 near River Till on 22 nd 26 at Branton Ponds on 24 th
Wigeon	10500 at Fenham Flats on 10 th 600 near River Till on 22 nd 42 at Branton Ponds on 24 th 4000 at Fenham Flats on 10 th
Shoveler	1 at Howick on 25 th
Shelduck	997 at Fenham Flats on 10 th
Eider	136 at Fenham Flats on 10 th
Long-tailed Duck	1 at Fenham Flats on 10 th 4 off Ross Back Sands on 23 rd
Goosander	7 at Branton Ponds on 24 th
Smew	1 at East Chevington on 23 rd
Red-breasted Merganser	6 at Fenham Flats on 10 th 4 at East Chevington on 23 rd
Merlin	1 at Fenham Flats on 10 th
Hobby	1 probable (although extremely late for this species) at Smeafield on 27 th
Grey Partridge	69 at Ratcheugh and Snableazes on 27 th
Water Rail	2 at Branton Ponds on 12 th 1 at Heugh Head on 12 th
Woodcock	1 on Holy Island on 1 st 2 at Smeafield on 9 th 1 at Hannah's Hill on 15 th and 20 th
Jack Snipe	2 at Harehope Hill on 3 rd
Golden Plover	60 at Low Newton on 2 nd
Grey Plover	149 at Fenham Flats on 10 th
Lapwing	110 at Branton Ponds on 9 th
Dunlin	800 at Fenham Flats on 10 th
Black-tailed Godwit	7 at Fenham Flats on 10 th
Bar-tailed Godwit	At Seaton Point on 12 th
Purple Sandpiper	100 at Stag Rocks on 24 th
Green Sandpiper	1 on River Till on 22 nd
Curlew Sandpiper	1 at Alnmouth Estuary on 3 rd
Redshank	250 at Fenham Flats on 10 th
Lesser Black-backed Gull	16 at Branton Ponds on 4 th
Mediterranean Gull	1 at Holy Island on 1 st
Little Auk	25 at Seaton Point on 6 th and 2 on 18 th
Barn Owl	2 near Bolton on 3 rd 1 at Branton on 9 th 1 at Mindrum Mill on 11 th 1 at

	Roseden on 23 rd 1 at Branton on 26 th 1 at Harehope Hall on 1 st 1 at Old Bewick on 2 nd 1 at Chillingham on 4 th
Kingfisher	1 at Branton Ponds all month 1 flew through a garden in Branton on 13 th 1 at Berwick Little Beach on 22 nd
Great Spotted Woodpecker	1 at Harehope Hillend on 25 th and 26 th
Richards Pipit	1 at Newton Point on 17 th
Dipper	7 at Wooler Water on 25 th
Stonechat	3 at Low Newton on 2 nd
Black Redstart	2 on Holy Island on 1 st
Fieldfare	40 over Branton on 5 th 200+ over Branton on 6 th 110 near Wooler on 25 th 5 at Harehope Hillend on 11 th
Redwing	70+ over Branton on 6 th 26 near Wooler on 25 th
Mistle Thrush	7 at Harehope Hillend on 11 th
Blackbird	131 at Ratcheugh and Snableazes on 27 th
Barred Warbler	2 juveniles in same tree on Holy Island on 1 st
Blackcap	3 on Holy Island on 1 st
Humes Warbler	1 at Brierdene, Whitley Bay on 23 rd
Chiffchaff	3 at Low Newton on 2 nd 1 at Branton Ponds on 24 th
Yellow-browed Warbler	1 at Low Newton on 2 nd
Goldcrest	7 at Branton Ponds on 9 th
Willow Tit	2 at Low Newton on 2 nd 1 at Branton Ponds on 17 th
Marsh Tit	1 at Branton Ponds on 4 th
Long-tailed Tit	Large family group at Branton Ponds on 15 th
Raven	2 at Hepburn Woods on 2 nd 2 at Harehope Hill on 5 th
Starling	3000 at Smeafield on 8 th
Crossbill	6+ in Harthope Valley on 22 nd
Siskin	5 at Branton Ponds on 15 th 25+ at Branton Ponds on 17 th 130 in Harthope Valley on 20 th
Goldfinch	150+ at Branton Ponds on 14 th
Bullfinch	8 in Branton Garden on 11 th
Twite	25 at Fenham Flats on 10 th several at Seaton Point on 12 th
Snow Bunting	4 at Bamburgh on 14 th 1 at Seaton Point on 6 th 25 at Turnhouse Hill on 30 th
PLANTS	
Red Campion	In flower at Branton Ponds on 15 th
Ragged Robin	In flower at Branton Ponds on 23 rd
Wild Carrot	In flower at Branton Ponds on 24 th
Nipplewort	In flower at Branton Ponds on 24 th
Gorse	In flower at Branton Ponds on 24 th
MAMMALS	
Roe Deer	16 on Holy Island on 1 st
Red Squirrel	2 at Ingram on 8 th 1 at Howick on 25 th
Otter	2 at East Chevington on 23 rd
Hedgehog	1 at Lesbury on 3 rd
FUNGI	
Wood Blewit	At Branton Ponds on 15 th
Shaggy Inkcap	At Branton Ponds on 14 th
RAINFALL	77 mm
OBSERVERS	G&R Bell, J Clark, I&K Davison, J Dean, G Dodds, P Hanmer, M McMahon, E Panton, S Reay, J Rutter, S Sexton, B Welch.