

Alnwick Wildlife Group

Promoting awareness of the countryside and its flora and fauna



www.alnwickwildlifegroup.co.uk

Email: redsquirrel@alnwickwildlifegroup.co.uk

NEWSLETTER 163 April 2015

Review of March 2015

NEXT MEETING MAY 27TH 2015 7-30PM

COASTAL BIRDS

SPEAKER: IAIN ROBSON

Iain works for the Northumberland Coastal Area of Outstanding Beauty and is a well-respected bird-watcher and ringer. Tonight's talk will look at the breeding shore birds that we find on our coasts in spring and summer. The talk will concentrate on species such as Little Tern and Ringed Plover which are continually under pressure from the increases in the number of people visiting the coast as well as sea-level rise. We look forward to Iain's excellent slides and presentation.

CAWLEDGE BURN LOCAL WILDLIFE SITE FIELD VISIT

On **Sunday 26th April** we shall be helping Alnwick Town Council with a survey of this site. On this introductory visit we shall introduce people to the site and concentrate on spring birds and plants. Sturdy footwear and suitable clothing, plus binoculars. Finish by 1.00pm

Meet at 10.30am behind the Lionheart industrial park at Grid Ref NU 197 118. Take the Shilbottle road from the (currently closed) A1 southbound slip road at the south end of town. Turn left opposite the new petrol station and drive down to the T junction by the Mole Country Store. Go left there and then right at the next T junction. Park on the right hand side.

Please send sightings reports for April, no later than 6th May 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.

A RINGERS YEAR MARCH 2015

March 2015: Siskins seemed to have arrived, although only in small numbers. However, one captured on the 14th proved to be a female with a brood patch (which it will use to keep its eggs warm) then another the same on the 18th. So these birds do think it's spring! The Siskins arriving near home this month have included several last seen at the end of the summer in 2014. They have clearly been away and returned to their home patch to breed.

Returns from the BTO this month included a Siskin controlled by me at Lemmington in August which had originally been ringed in January 2014 at Hamilton in Lanarkshire. There was also a Blue Tit – not at first sight very exciting since it was ringed by Lemmington Hall and recaptured (alive) at the same place - but as its now in its 6th year this is rather notable. The BTO also told me of a Barn Owl that I ringed in its nest near Fontburn Reservoir last June which was found dead at Elsdon.

Work on Barn Owl conservation has continued; with myself and Maurice McNeely finding a pair of owls in a box near Allerdean. Unfortunately the top of the box was coming apart in worsening weather. So we bagged up the owls; took the roof off the box, serviced the box, put on a new roof and then returned the owls to their new improved home (all as it started to rain and blow a gale). The female owl proved to be a control (already ringed by someone else) so we await news of its origins from the BTO; while the male was a new young bird. I have now called a moratorium on Barn Owl checking until June (when we will check for breeding).

The other news I had from the BTO this month was that one of my Trainees (Ross Ahmed) has just received his own ringing license from the BTO after a number of years of training.

PHH 27/3/15

Phil Hanmer

A Ringer & Trainer

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

SOME UNUSUALLY PLACED FROG SPAWN.

While on a recent AWG field visit to Ford Moss, Mora Rolley came across this strange sighting -

A whole bunch of frog spawn running down a fence post. A few theories were made as to how this occurred, one is that the female Frog was preyed upon by a bird, anything from Heron to Carrion Crow, Tawny Owl or Kestrel, it is not possible to be sure and when taken to the post to be eaten, the eggs were laid.

It's a shame that the spawn is wasted but this is how things happen in the natural world!

Many thanks to Mora for her excellent photograph illustrating a very unusual find. If anyone has found anything like this before, or, even better, has witnessed it happen, please let us know.



PLANT CORNER

Most Plant Corner articles tend to be rather backward-looking because they are inspired by things already seen and by the time of publication are a bit dated. So this month I thought I'd try to be ahead of the game and write about a group of plants that won't come into flower until mid-May at the earliest. I've also been reading – or perhaps dipping into would be more accurate – the latest volume in the new British Wildlife Publishing Collection, called *Rivers*.

The genus *Ranunculus* is so familiar that if Keith and Ian were to ask about it in a Christmas quiz everyone would correctly say Buttercups. A few might also add Lesser Celandine, but probably fewer still would say Water Crowfoots (tempting to call them water crowfeet, but don't!). These species are most likely less familiar because many of them are only found in still or running water and you need wellies or sometimes waders to get up close and personal. They have been described as the icons of British rivers and while it's fairly easy to be able to say you are looking at a water crowfoot, deciding which one is often much harder. Even the simple statement that all have five-petaled white flowers is not always right because there are plenty of hybrid forms that can have multi-petaled arrangements. To quote the *Rivers* book, "there is a population in the Eden in Cumbria which has so many petals that in summer the surface of the river looks as if it is covered with miniature white dahlia flowers".

We'll start with the easiest, because it is mostly land-based. **Ivy-leaved Crowfoot** (*Ranunculus hederaceus*) is found on wet mud, either at the edges of streams or in other boggy areas. At Titlington Mount there's been a good population for years around



a gently overflowing sheep trough. The reason it's the easiest is that it is one of only two British species which has all its leaves as 'normal-looking' flat-bladed (laminar) structures lying on the surface of the mud. If you live in south west Northumberland you'd have to be a bit more careful because there's the closely related Round-leaved Crowfoot (*R. omiophyllus*), but we don't get that here in the north of the county. You will notice that these two species have common names that lack the 'water' prefix, presumably because they specialise in terrestrial habitats.

All other species are found in the water and have finely divided filamentous leaves under the surface. Sometimes these are the only leaves, but in other cases the plants may also have flat laminar leaves, particularly at flowering time, floating on the top of the water.

It now has to be careful. Several of the species described as separate in the field guides are increasingly thought to have

insufficient genetic differences to make them separate – in other words they are simply variations on a single species and are probably the result of ancient hybridisation. So I'm going to steer



clear of Common, Pond and Stream Water Crowfoots whose DNA is very similar to that of **River Water Crowfoot** (*R. fluitans*) which is pictured on the previous page.

This one has only submerged, divided leaves which are individually as much as 30 cm long and stream out like hair with the river's flow. It specialises in fast-flowing rivers with rocky or stony beds and is frequent in the Aln, Breamish, Glen, Till and Tweed.

This leaves my favourite, mainly because I find it in the Titlington Burn below our house. **Thread-leaved Water Crowfoot** (*R. trichophyllus*) also lacks any floating leaves, but its filamentous leaves are finely divided and nothing like as long as those of the River species. It is mostly found in small streams near the source



of larger flows, which sometimes may dry up in the summer.

So this summer, when you see some "water weed" with smallish white flowers, have a look, if you can get close enough, to see if it has any floating leaves. If not you may need to try to pull out some of the submerged leaves to see if they are long and straggling like River Water Crowfoot or in shorter fan-shaped clumps like Thread-leaved. In the meantime you can certainly look out for Ivy-leaved. Of course if it has both floating and submerged leaves then you are stuck and will need to see if you can make sense of the descriptions in the field guides.

Richard Poppleton

STEWCHAT...

'In like a lion, out like a lamb' so the saying for March goes, except this year there was a lion at both ends! There were a lot of loud stormy nights down on the coast, and even the good days were breezy.

Most of my walks this month were either around Howick and Craster or down at Warkworth Gut and Amble Harbour. As expected, the first spring arrivals were **Lesser Black Backed Gull** on 7th flying north at Craster closely followed by 2 **Chiffchaffs** at the east end of the Long Walk on 15th, both pretty much bang on time.

If you read the popular wildlife and birding magazines and websites they will encourage you to look out for, expect even, **Wheatears** and **Sand Martins**, but my experience doesn't back this up. In Northumberland we get an odd straggler **Sand Martin** at the end of March and an occasional Wheatear but we are a bit too far north really, so now, I tend to save time and just wait until April when sightings can be assured.

This year fitted the normal pattern with only a single male **Blackcap** arriving on the 24th leading the way for spring visitors. Even this bird was probably an eastern European bird moving back to the continent having spent the winter in a wooded garden somewhere not too distant.



Figure 1; Blackcap.

As well as the **Chiffchaffs** on the 15th, the bird of the day was a lonesome **Twite** with 200+ **Linnets** near Seahouses Farm, Howick, feeding in roughed up stubble. This is a scarce bird here being seen in only 3 out of the last 6 years. At the same time 4 **Willow Tits** were on territory at Craster with the males singing their tree pipit-like songs high in the topmost twigs. A very unusual song for a Titmouse.



Figure 2; Willow Tit

It was clear that our winter visitors were now departing on a broad front as the month progressed **Whooper Swans**, **Peregrine**, **Canada Goose**, **Fieldfare** and **Waxwing** were all seen briefly moving through Howick.

On the mammal front, **Brown Hares** were very active, sometimes being seen through our kitchen window, up to 5 **Roe Deer** were regularly seen at Warkworth and, more unwelcome, **Brown Rat** was attending our bird table



Figure 3; Brown Rat (top and Brown Hare (below)

Stewart Sexton, Howick.

MOTH OF THE MONTH – MAY

One of the larger moths that flies in May is the Scalloped Hazel (*Odontopera bidentata*), with a wing length of up to 25 mm. It is a common species in Northumberland with over 6000 recorded and I have seen it quite frequently at lighted windows. The normal background colour varies from light to mid-brown, with a darker band across the centre of the wings and dark oval stigmata towards the leading edges. If you are very lucky, you might come across the black form (*f. nigra*), shown in the lower image, which has a frequency of about 0.5% in the local population. The larvae feed mainly on Birch and Hawthorn but have been found on a wide range of woody plants.

There is a related family of similarly coloured moths with jagged edged wings called the Thorns, but confusion with the Scalloped Hazel is unlikely because they rest with their wings held above their back rather than kept flat.

Alan Fairclough.



MYSTERY PHOTOGRAPH

In February Des Taylor's photograph was one of the *Lycoperdon* puffballs. From its habitat by the coastal golf course at Seahouses it ought to be the Grassland Puffball (*Lycoperdon lividum*), but the colour looks rather pale, so it might be one of the related, supposedly woodland puffballs.



This month's mystery photo continues the conifer theme of the March Plant Corner article. These are obviously conifer cones, but from which species?

My guess at the two plumage photos from the March newsletter are that the lower one was the back end of a drake Eider and the upper one was probably the back of a duck Eider

WHAT WILDLIFE TO LOOK FOR IN MAY

Despite a very warm week over the Easter period, the weather has reverted to type – cold and windy as I write this article. The warm weather produced a wealth of activity with good numbers of both **Peacock** and **Small tortoiseshell** butterflies on the wing as well as four species of **Bumblebee**. Yet migrant birds have been quite slow to appear. Numbers of **Sand martins** have picked up but there are relatively few **Swallows** and **House martins** and warblers are thin on the ground apart from **Chiffchaffs**.

May is a month for all of the senses. There is the all-round experience of the dawn chorus and the sea-bird colonies on the Farne Islands or the heady aroma of **Bluebell** and **Ramson** scent in native deciduous woodland such as Holystone. Bumblebees are one of the prominent invertebrate species on the wing.

There are six common species: see illustrations.

Bumblebees are social insects and live in nests of up to 400 individuals. Each nest is ruled by a queen and lasts for just one year. This is different to honeybee hives which remain active for several years. In early spring the queen emerges from hibernation to start a new nest. Her first task is to build up her energy reserves so it is really important that she can find plenty of pollen and nectar-rich flowers. Once she has found a suitable nest site she will rear her first batch of eggs. This process is repeated throughout the summer with the queen rarely leaving the nest.

No matter how small your garden, you can contribute to our efforts to save the sound of summer by providing lots of bee-friendly flowers throughout the year. Many ornamental plants that are commonly found in British gardens, such as pansies and begonias, are of no value to wildlife as they produce little pollen or nectar. There are hundreds of beautiful flowers that do offer these rewards though, including foxgloves, lavender, geraniums, herbs and wild roses that can brighten up your garden and provide nectar sources for bees.

May is an excellent month to look for wildlife in the Northumberland countryside. Hopefully the sun will shine and we can experience to true beauty of our part of the County.

Jack Daw.



White-tailed



Garden



Early



Red-tailed



Buff-tailed



Common carder bee

MEETING OF WEDNESDAY 25TH MARCH 2015

39 were present, including two visitors and two new members, Peter and Enid Peutherer from Alnwick. At the last meeting George had shown piddock worm holes from a beach rock and this time he had a piece of wood with multiple ship-worm holes, some of large diameter. There was then a woodcock, intact despite being a road casualty. This species has been known to pick up its young between its feet and fly off to remove them from danger. In spring the males are thought to hold leks like black grouse. Lastly there was a water shrew showing well the sharp dividing line between the black upper parts and the white underside.

The speaker was Shaun Hackett who has been a National Park Ranger for more than 25 years. His topic was *Helping the Pollinators*. The government has recently woken up to the environmental and economic importance of pollinators and has instituted a ten-year research programme.

Even though much of the media's attention is captured by the difficulties of honey bees in recent years, many groups of insects are important pollinators. These include moths, butterflies, beetles, hoverflies and solitary bees, as well as the colonial honey bees and bumblebees.

Much of Shaun's talk was concerned with bumblebees. There are the 'big six' species – Common Carder (pictured on Aubretia), which weaves grass stems together to form nests; white-tailed, buff-tailed, garden, red-tailed and early. The latter five all form nests in the ground holes of small mammals. The early bumblebee is significantly smaller than the rest at this time of year when all the bees you will see are queens. The white-tailed and the garden bumblebee are quite similar, but the latter species has a notably long face and a very long tongue, at 14mm, which enables it to specialise in feeding on tubular flowers.

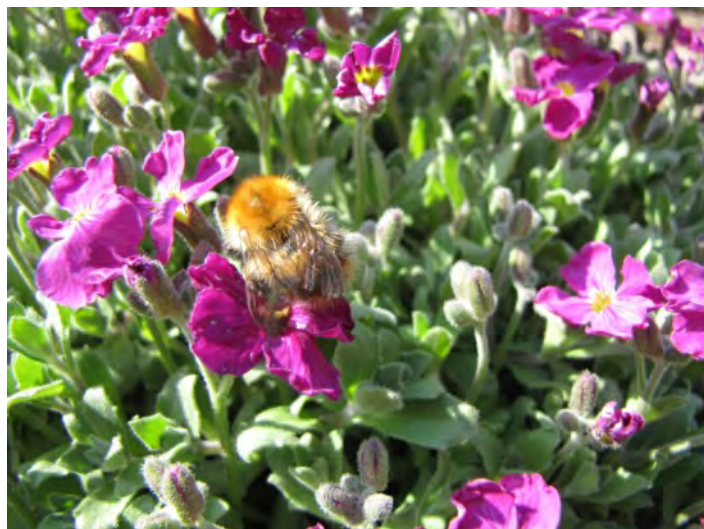
In the uplands there are the moss carder and the mountain (or bilberry) bumblebee. And most recently Britain has been colonised by the tree bumblebee from France and individuals have been found as far north as central Scotland.

Shaun took us through the lifecycle of the bumblebee. When new queens emerge they will forage for a couple of weeks before seeking out a nest site and laying eggs. This early foraging means they are good pollinators for blackthorn, crab apple and other early flowerers.

Later in the year foxgloves are uniquely pollinated by bumblebees, usually the long-tongued garden bumblebee. Tomatoes also require bumblebee pollination because the bees' buzzing flight shakes the flowers and helps pollen spread, in a rather more efficient way than a human with a paintbrush. So often commercial growers will deliberately import bumblebee colonies to their glasshouses. Raspberries are best pollinated by bumblebees.

Good bee habitat requires successional flowering and the National Park tries hard to be proactive with their farmers in creating and maintaining new meadows. Roadside verges, cut just once a year, are good areas of habitat. The best plants of all are red clover, but even tall grasses can be OK if they have climbing vetches among the grass. In spring willows are very important food sources and the Park includes goat willow in its tree planting schemes because goat willow really doesn't need very wet conditions.

Gardens are often a key to bee success and ensuring a good succession of flowers can ensure the survival of many bee species. And not all needs to be neat and tidy – nettle patches are essential for a number of common butterflies and rampant honeysuckle will often attract elephant hawkmoth. All in all, although humans do many things that threaten the pollinators, we can also all do our bit to help them.



FORD MOSS PLANNING

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will see a piece by one of our newer members, Sue Perry, about the introductory visit to Ford Moss at the end of March. It is now time to set out the plans for the year's survey and to specify some important ground rules for our mutual safety on the site and for the recording and reporting of what we find.

BIRDS

Visit at any time (but please read the safety advice below). We already have five sets of records from the January to March period, but we need to keep the recording going throughout the year.

MOTHS

Stewart will be leading two (possibly three) visits with moth traps. The two fixed dates will be:

Saturday 23rd May; Saturday 11th July

- Meet at the parking area by the roadside at **9.30pm**
- Take a couple of vehicles up the track into the reserve with the equipment
- Finish whenever!

OTHER LARGER INVERTEBRATES

e.g. Butterflies, Beetles, Dragonflies, Bees, Flies, Woodlice, Centipedes & Millipedes etc.

The request is that everyone who visits the reserve should try to make as many casual records as possible. If you don't know what you are looking at try to take some photos which may then enable you to use the Internet to i.d. them or to consult others at the September AWG meeting or by email.

REPTILES & AMPHIBIA (AND POSSIBLY AQUATIC INVERTEBRATES)

Stephen Block from the Berwick Wildlife Group will be scheduling some recording activity (details when we have them) following an investigational visit with Richard on 14th April. However, in addition to his efforts, any and all casual sightings of adders, slow worms, lizards, frogs, toads and newts will be welcomed.

SMALL MAMMALS

Veronica and John Carnell from the Northumberland Mammal Group will be scheduling a 'trap and release' exercise on **7th September**. Further details in

newsletters closer to the time. In the meantime casual records of mice, voles, shrews, stoats, weasels, rabbits, hares etc will be very useful. We may try to have a go at bats on the moth evenings (above).

PLANTS AND LICHENS

Unlike everything else in this survey, plants and lichens don't move around. So we shall schedule two major survey visits during the growing season:

Sunday 7th June, Saturday 22nd August

Meet at the parking area by the roadside at 10.30am. Bring lunch and wellies because we shall go into the bog. Anyone with expertise or an interest in plants and lichens would be welcome to come along and add to the number of keen eyes looking out for different species. Don't worry if you don't think you'll know what they all are – there will be one or two of us who will either know or who will have the necessary books with us.

RECORDING & REPORTING

All records should be sent to Richard Poppleton, either by email (richard.pop@btinternet.com) or by post (Greystone Cottage, Titlington Mount, Alnwick NE66 2EA) as soon as possible after you've made the observations.

Please make sure that whatever format your records are in they include ***your name, date of sightings, indication of the sort of habitat they were seen in.*** This last comment won't apply to birds and possibly not easily to larger flying insects.

GUIDANCE FOR FORD MOSS VISITS

PLEASE READ THIS IF YOU INTEND TO VISIT FORD MOSS

Ford Moss can be a potentially dangerous place, particularly if you leave the perimeter path and venture on to the bog. You are advised not to visit on your own and certainly not to go into the central bog alone. This area has old mining shafts and other areas of deep bog.

TRIPS, SLIPS AND FALLS

The ground is uneven, often muddy and slippery. You must wear suitable footwear such as walking boots or wellies. If you intend to venture on to the bog wellies are essential.

WEATHER

Consider the likely weather in advance and wear or bring clothing suitable for the conditions.

BITES AND STINGS

In the summer bring appropriate insect repellent and clothing that can cover most of your skin.

MEDICATION AND MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Fortunately at no point are you likely to be further than a mile from the parking area, but please bring with you any necessary medication (e.g. inhalers) that you know you may need. Also, if you know you may have physical difficulty with the conditions, be prepared to turn back rather than get into difficulty. If your visit is part of an organised day, please let the leader know of any problems both in advance if they are predictable or as soon as they become apparent on the day.

GETTING LOST

Because there is a perimeter path the risk of getting lost is minimal. But if you are intending to strike off on your own into the central bog on an organised day, you must let the leader know and follow his/her advice.

FACILITIES, FOOD AND DRINK

Ford Moss has no facilities. So on a long visit you must bring necessary food and drink with you. You are likely to be handling plant material or animals in one form or another, so you may feel you ought to bring hand gel to use before handling any food.

PETS AND CHILDREN

Pets should not be brought on Ford Moss visits. Children are very welcome provided that any youngster under the age of 16 is accompanied by a parent or guardian. You should also consider whether the nature of your visit is suitable for any young people who might accompany you, bearing in mind that these are visits with serious survey aims.

EMERGENCIES

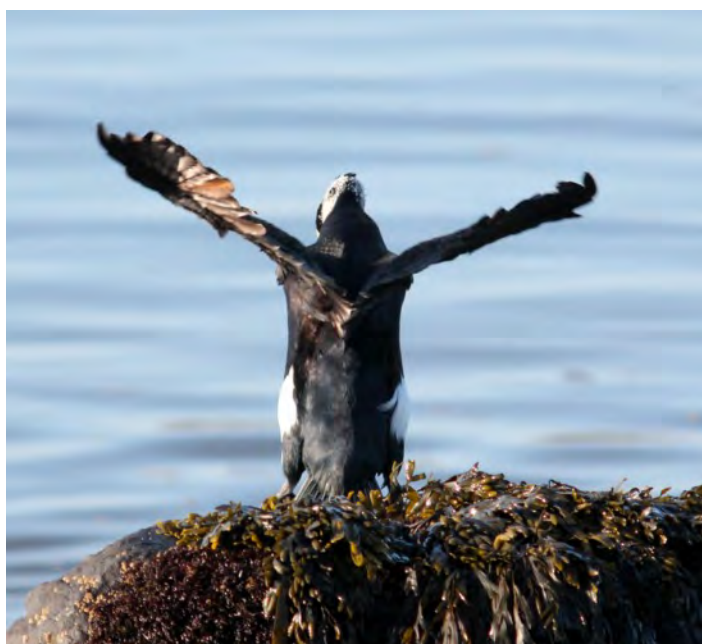
If any emergency happens, tell someone else immediately. The nearest hospital facilities are at Berwick Infirmary and Alnwick Infirmary, both contactable via 0344 811 8111. Both have 24 hour minor injuries units.

MYSTERY BIRD COMPETITION.

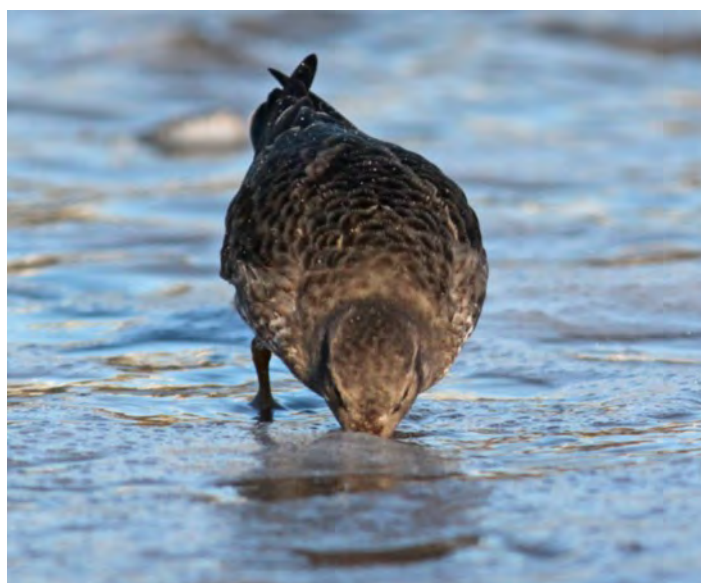
Hello all, this one is just for fun, no prizes...results next month.

Last month's quiz birds were 1. Great black backed Gull immature and 2. Eider drake.

Here are another couple...



Bird 1



Bird 2

VISIT TO FORD MOSS SATURDAY 28 MARCH

I have recently joined the group and this was my first field trip. It was my first visit to Wooler and the area, having just moved north, and it was lovely to feel so welcomed by the group. After some magnificent scenery it was with a sense of anticipation that I arrived at Ford Moss. It was very windy but fortunately the rain cleared soon after we arrived. We met Lord Joicey at the site and his knowledge of the area was invaluable as he explained the need for the quinquennial survey and set the reserve in its historical context. Since the last survey in 2008 a number of management decisions had been implemented.

- Silver birch trees were removed preventing further encroachment of woodland into the site.
- Fencing was erected for safety reasons as there are many open mine shafts as well as rising water levels in the boggy areas.
- Exmoor ponies were introduced to graze the taller grasses and so allow greater light penetration for plant species growing at lower levels.
- Drainage ditches were blocked to allow the water to accumulate and return the area to bog.

It is hoped that these measures will encourage the growth of bog plants, such as Sundew, to re-establish on the reserve. The survey would see the effects of the recent management decisions and subsequent change in the habitat species. The survey of the birds on the site would show if the erection of neighbouring wind turbines had any effect on the populations of birds such as snipe and woodcock.

My personal interest is in the lichens on the site. Richard excited and terrified me in equal measure as he stated that Janet Simkin had recorded 67 species of lichen in the survey of 2008. There was the reassurance that I would have her list as a guide, although looking at the number of the tricky crustose species, it will certainly be a botanical challenge. The two photos are of conveniently large and easy species that were actually found at Holystone in March, rather than at Ford Moss.

One of our number summed it all up for me. She was looking at the wonderful overall view of the site, someone else was tracking a woodland bird and I was using a hand lens to identify a lichen. From the

minutiae to the bigger picture, there is something for everyone in such an amazing place.



Peltigera membranacea



Peltigera lactucifolia

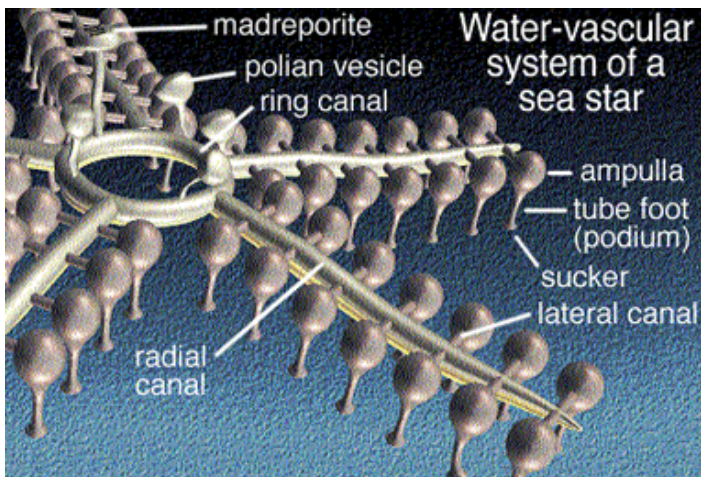
Lord Joicey showed us the huts that he will kindly allow us to use as our base when conducting the survey. I am sure these will be greatly appreciated for the break of a cup of tea and cake, certainly for me a ingredient of a successful field survey.

Sue Perry

INVERTEBRATE CORNER

STARFISHES:

Starfishes, or seastars, belong to the Phylum *Echinodermata*, a major subdivision of the invertebrates. The phylum name means 'spiny skin', which refers to the rough texture (and in some subgroups actual spines) characteristic of many species. The roughness comes from small calcium carbonate plates that are linked together resulting in a somewhat rigid exo-(outer) skeleton (see photograph). A complex system of hydraulics (canals, valves, ampullae) runs throughout the body, allowing sufficient flexibility to bend the arms and creep along the sea floor (see diagram).



As their common name suggests, starfishes are star-shaped with a central disc and five or more radial arms. In the latter case, the number is generally a multiple of five as the typical echinoderm body is, uniquely, built on a five-sided (or penta-radial) symmetry (see photograph below of the common U.K. starfish, *Asterias rubens*). Most invertebrates and all vertebrates are built on a bilateral (two-sided) symmetry. Occasionally, there may be six or seven arms but this will have been due to a mishap during regeneration of a damaged arm. Regeneration ability

is remarkably advanced in most echinoderms, with single arms capable of regenerating a whole new body provided that a small portion of the central disc remains (see photograph). Research into starfish regeneration has been useful in helping to understand



tissue healing in humans, but we do not have anywhere near the capacity for self-repair seen in echinoderms.



Crown of Thorns Starfish: *Acanthaster planci*

Starfishes live mostly in coastal regions, where they crawl over rocky and sandy bottoms and, in the tropics, over coral reefs. They range in size from around 1 cm to 1 m, with the largest being the predatory crown-of-thorns starfish (see photograph) which has been responsible for damage to many coral reefs in the Pacific. Many species are brightly

coloured, both tropical and cold water forms (see photographs).



Starfish life cycles are complex. In some species, the female retains her fertilised eggs and broods them for about a month, eventually releasing them as tiny starfishes. In other species, the eggs are shed into the surrounding water where they are fertilised and go through several larval stages (see photographs below). These become part of the plankton



community, where they feed on smaller organisms until a final metamorphosis turns them into a form that settles onto the sea-bed. Some species can live for up to 35 years.



Two British starfish:

Asterias rubens (common starfish)

and *Crossaster papposus* (sunstar)

There are around 1,500 species worldwide, with 32 species occurring in U.K. waters. Other echinoderms include sea urchins, brittle-stars, sea cucumbers, and sea lilies.

Dudley Williams
Newton on the Moor

SIGHTINGS MARCH 2015

BIRDS

Red-throated Diver	2 at Birling Carr on 8 th 1 at Rumbling Kern on 15 th
Great-crested Grebe	1 at Branton Ponds from 8 th 2 at Birling Carr on 8 th 1 at Branton Ponds on 26 th and 2 displaying on 28 th 1 at East Chevington on 7 th
Little Grebe	1 at Branton Ponds on 3 rd
Whooper Swan	11 at Branton Ponds on 7 th 28 at Branton Ponds on 12 th 3 at Branton Ponds on 24 th
Pink-footed Goose	145 at Fenham Flats on 8 th 1500 at Doddington on 15 th 1000 at Smeafield on 18 th
Brent Goose	31(Pale-bellied) at Fenham Flats on 8 th 6 at Seaton Point on 17 th
Pintail	2 at Druridge Pools on 7 th
Gadwall	2 at Warkworth on 8 th
Scaup	4 at East Chevington on 7 th
Goldeneye	5 at Branton Ponds on 9 th
Sparrowhawk	1 at Branton on 18 th
Goshawk	1 in North Northumberland on 3 rd
Peregrine	2 at Howick on 8 th
Hen Harrier	1 in North Northumberland on 11 th 1 in North Northumberland on 4 th
Water Rail	1 at Branton Ponds on 13 th
Common Crane	2 flying North near Lowick on 15 th
Woodcock	1 near Chatton on 13 th 1 at Branton Ponds on 20 th 1 at Harehope Hillend throughout month 1 at Bewick Moor on 4 th
Sanderling	32 at Fenham Flats on 8 th
Grey Plover	108 at Fenham Flats on 8 th
Ringed Plover	125 at Fenham Flats on 8 th
Oystercatcher	409 at Guile Point on 8 th
Knot	85 at Fenham Flats on 8 th
Curlew	46 at Branton Ponds on 4 th 244 at Fenham Flats on 8 th
Mediterranean Gull	1 at Newbiggin on 1 st
Lesser-black Backed Gull	3 at Branton Ponds on 6 th
Iceland Gull	1 at Holy Island on 15 th
Short-eared Owl	1 at Warkworth on 1 st 2 at Warkworth Dunes on 8 th
Barn Owl	2 at Battlebridge on 25 th 1 at Bridge of Aln on 25 th
Kingfisher	1 at Warkworth on 1 st
Green Woodpecker	1 at Old Bewick on 16 th and 17 th
Skylark	5 at Ford Moss on 10 th 70+ at Puncherton on 14 th 9 at Howick on 15 th
Sand Martin	1 at Branton Ponds on 25 th
Rock Pipit	2 at Rumbling Kern on 15 th
Grey Wagtail	1 at Lesbury on 7 th
Waxwing	2 at Howick Gardens on 1 st
Dipper	1 at Lesbury on 7 th
Stonechat	2 at Warkworth on 1 st 3+ at Rumbling Kern on 15 th
Redwing	18 at Ford Moss on 10 th
Fieldfare	36 at Ford Moss on 10 th 150 at Biddlestone on 14 th 80+ at Lesbury on 13 th

Common Chiffchaff	1 at Branton Ponds on 16 th 2 at Howick on 15 th 2 at Branton Ponds on 20 th 1 at Alnmouth on 20 th
Goldcrest	9 at Ford Moss on 10 th
Willow Tit	1 at Branton Ponds on 8 th 4 at Craster on 15 th 1 at Branton Ponds on 23 rd
Treecreeper	1 at Doxford Hall on 5 th
Raven	1 near Biddlestone on 14 th
Jay	2 at Ford Moss on 10 th
Crossbill	2 at Quarryhouse on 4 th
Goldfinch	30 at Smeafield on 3 rd
Bullfinch	2 Bullfinch on 3 rd
Twite	1 at Howick on 15 th 40+ at Boulmer on 12 th
Linnet	200+ at Howick on 15 th
Tree Sparrow	22 at Branton on 21 st
Reed Bunting	25+ at Branton Ponds on 25 th
Snow Bunting	14 at Guile Point with 2 more near the Wideopens on 8 th
Yellowhammer	9 at Ford Moss on 10 th 10+ at Howick on 15 th

AMPHIBIANS

Common Frog	Frogspawn near Haggerston on 2 nd ,Frogspawn on Beanley Moor on 7 th Frogspawn at Branton Ponds on 18 th Frogspawn at Smeafield on 9 th
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REPTILES

Adder	8 at Branton Ponds on 3 rd and 9 on 18 th 2 at Langlee Craggs on 22 nd
Slow Worm	1 at Branton Ponds on 27 th

PLANTS

Coltsfoot	In flower at Branton Ponds on 4 th
Gorse	In flower at Branton Ponds all month
Primrose	At Careyburn on 22 nd
Golden Saxifrage	Both Opposite Leaved and Alternate leaved in flower at Harehope Hillend on 28 th

INSECTS

Buff-tailed Bumblebee	1 at Branton on 10 th 1 at Titlington Mount on 27 th
White-tailed Bumblebee	1 at Titlington Mount on 27 th
Tree Bumblebee	1 at Titlington Mount on 27 th
Early Bumblebee	1 at Titlington Mount on 27 th
Common Quaker	1 at Wooler on 19 th
March Moth	1 at Branton on 20 th
Peacock Butterfly	1 at Smeafield on 20 th
Small Tortoiseshell	1 at Branton on 20 th 1 at Lesbury on 22 nd

MAMMALS

Stoat	1 in partial ermine at Branton Ponds on 4 th 1 in ermine near Bulby's Wood(Breamish Valley) on 6 th 1 in ermine at Branton Ponds on 24 th
Red Squirrel	1 at Hedgeley Hall on 12 th

RAINFALL

20mm

OBSERVERS

J Clark, I&K Davison, T Dean, G Dodds, M McMahon,
R&J Poppleton, S Reay, B&M Rolley, J Rutter, G Sanders,
S Sexton,S Wilson.