

Alnwick Wildlife Group

Promoting awareness of the countryside and its flora and fauna



www.alnwickwildlifegroup.co.uk

Email: redsquirrel@alnwickwildlifegroup.co.uk

NEWSLETTER 188 MAY 2017

Review of April 2016

SEPTEMBER MEETING – SEPTEMBER 27TH 2017 – A WALK ON THE WILDSIDE – RON MCCOMBE

A collection of images which Ron is showing to audiences all over the UK and Europe.

NEW VENUE for AWG meetings – REMINDER!!

Please remember that **FROM SEPTEMBER** we shall be meeting in the St James's Church Centre at the top of Pottergate in Alnwick, just below the Pottergate tower.

The room is the upstairs space used for the URC services. It has comfy chairs, an integrated sound system with a hearing loop for those with hearing aids and a big TV screen monitor that we shall use instead of a normal fabric screen. Although it is upstairs, there is a lift for anyone who finds staircases difficult. We shall be able to continue our tradition of providing free refreshments at the end of the meetings.

Parking should, if anything, be easier than at present. The roadsides on Northumberland Street and the bottom of Howling Lane will provide plenty of opportunities. Morrison's car park allows 3 hours free parking providing you display a parking disc and there is an even closer small car park

The map on the next page shows the location and marks the potential parking spots

WALKS PROGRAMME – REMINDER

Please do remember to look at our walks programme elsewhere in this Newsletter. Since the April newsletter we have added one more walk in early August.

Please find next season's membership card in this newsletter at the end of **SPRING WALK – SUNDAY 23RD APRIL.**

If you would like a hard copy, please let us know.

Please send sightings reports for May, no later than 6th June 2017 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.

AWG welcomes contributions for the newsletter and items for inclusion should be submitted by the 12th of the month to redsquirrel@alnwickwildlifegroup.co.uk

Eglingham



Alnmouth



St James's Church Centre is circled in RED Parking options in patterned green

A1



Pedestrian access only through Tower at top of Pottergate



Rothbury

April 2017: This month has continued to be busy with a passage north of Siskins, Goldfinch and for the first time this year a small number of Redpoll (notice I make no distinction between Common and Lesser since genetic research has now confirmed that any differentiation is trivial; a fact which I have always believed); see pic. However, not all these birds are migrating north – quite a number of the Siskins are stopping to breed and the females are developing clear brood patches (with which they warm their eggs). A few hours on the 1/4/17 netted 30 new birds and 35 retraps including the first Chiffchaff of the year; very unusually this showed a very clear block of 5 Old Greater Coverts (that is juvenile feathers) in its wings thus indicating that it was hatched last year and had probably just arrived back from Senegal or The Gambia. Another session on the 14th captured just short of 100 birds; including the retrap of a Siskin originally ringed as a new juvenile in 2013. Birds starting to breed included Siskin, Robin, and Tree Sparrow. Greenfinches, Dunnock and Chaffinches were also noted as starting to breed on the 20th.

I also started to explore a new study site this month near Longhorsley where the rare Willow Tit seems to breed. However, the first ringing sessions actually captured some Blue Tits, Chaffinches and a rather nice Willow Warbler (just returned from the Ivory Coast or Ghana). The attached picture shows a size comparison with a rather more sedentary Chaffinch!

Meanwhile one of 'my' Siskins ringed in February was recently controlled by another ringer in West Lothian; and I controlled another bird already ringed in Chilworth, Surrey both clearly heading north to nest. Sadder news came with a return from the BTO telling me that Female Barn Owl FS85696 that was originally ringed as an adult nesting near Wooler in 2014 had been found dead, also near Wooler in April. This bird raised young successfully in 2014, 15 and 16; and was already settled in her nesting site, with her mate, in March this year. Similarly Barn Owl FH79952 originally ringed as an owlet near Longhoughton in 2014 was found dead on the A1 near South Charlton in April. However, this was first I had heard of this bird since it was originally ringed.

A recent survey of the River Aln in Hulne Park for nesting Dipper produced only one definitive nest (*perhaps they will be late this year*) but another regular nest site near Ingram had five healthy pulli on the 22nd; which a trainee enjoyed ringing (see pic.). Throughout the whole proceedings, *which required waders and a large step ladder*, the adult pair waited more or less patiently with beaks full of insect food to feed then as soon as we got out of the way! The other birds which always nest this time of year are Tawny Owls and these look to be having more success than last year with the first brood ringed on the 24th; see pic.

Anyone interesting in ringing is invited to get in touch. I will generally be ringing on Fridays & Saturdays.

Phil Hanmer

A Ringer & Trainer

Natural History Society of Northumbria Ringing Group (Hancock Museum)

E-mail: tytoalbas@btinternet.com

Pictures on next page...



This month I bring you a puzzle and one which I hope you will be willing to help solve. It's the great Apple conundrum.

In a recent Plant Corner article I referred to the question of hedgerow apple trees. I made the confident assertion, based upon what the books say rather than my personal knowledge, that the Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*) has thorny twigs. Self-sown (or often human-sown) Domestic Apple (*M. pumila*) trees or shrubs lack thorns. Incidentally don't worry if your books give domestic apple the name *Malus domestica* – the change to *M. pumila* is fairly recent.

But then it's always good when someone challenges your statements and at the April AWG meeting Vivien Boulton brought an apple twig with young leaves and almost open flowers. She was confident that it was a Crab Apple, but it clearly had no thorns. So a couple of days later I went down the fields from our house to look at two hedgerow trees that my records said were also *M. sylvestris*. Lo-and-behold – also no spines, or at least what I would call spines. That means that either the books are wrong, or I am misinterpreting the botanical descriptions, or the trees that both Vivien and I have been looking at aren't actually Crab Apples at all.

Clive Stace's botanical bible – *The New Flora of the British Isles* – gives descriptions of the two species as follows (just picking out the relevant bits):

CRAB APPLE

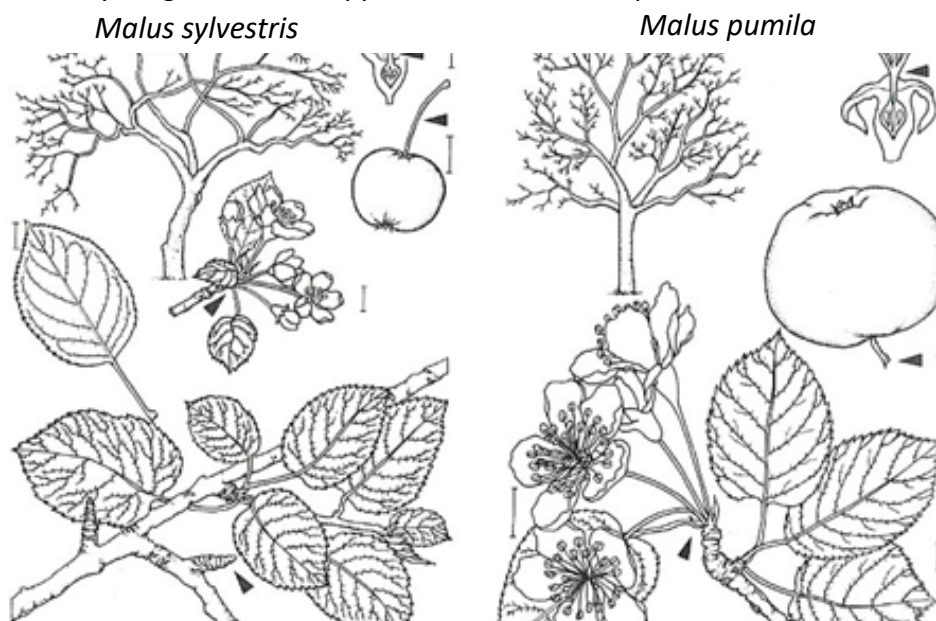
Often spiny. Leaves 3-5cm long and hairless when mature. Fruit yellowish-green, c. 2-3cm diameter. A native species, but some claim it to be very rare in the British Isles. Much over-recorded for Domestic Apple. The two species are distinct and do not appear to hybridise in Britain, but both show a range of physical characteristics.

DOMESTIC APPLE

Not spiny. Leaves up to 15cm long, hairy on lower surfaces. Fruit variously coloured and up to 12cm diameter. Much commoner than *M. sylvestris*. Self-sown plants usually have small yellowish sour fruits.

George Swan's *Flora of Northumberland* says, of the two apples: "Distribution of the two species not well known".

The first question that needs to be addressed is what the books mean by spines in these species. The left hand diagram below helps to show that they are not really what most people would think of as spines. They are small side spurs which have failed to develop leaf buds and so have slightly sharp ends. The diagrams also emphasise one or two other features which distinguish the two apples, the most useful of which is the length of the fruit stalk. In the Crab it is usually longer than the apple itself, while in *M. pumila* it is much shorter



The challenge that I should like AWG members to take up this summer is to find apple trees in hedgerows or the open countryside or accessible woodland and look carefully at the characteristics of each tree.

If you could then make yourself a small table like the one below and enter your findings, we can perhaps make some decisions on the relative frequency of the two apples in our area. For the hairiness of the undersides of the mature leaves you will probably need a hand lens or a magnifying glass and the size of the fruits and the length of the fruit stalks is better done with a ruler or tape than just by guesswork.

For location please either give a Grid Reference or a rough description (eg. S of Powburn by A697)

Tree no.	Location	Spines present?	Hairy lower surface of leaves?	Average diameter of fruit (cm)	Length of fruit stalk (cm)

If you manage to make any records you could either email them to me (rich.titlington@btinternet.com) or bring them to the September meeting.

I shall be particularly keen to see whether we get any confirmed records of Crab Apple, because from the Flora's comments (above) it does seem likely that many of the wayside apple trees that we might at first think are crab apples are just self-sown domestic apple trees.

The two photos below are supposedly of Crab Apples, but are those little projections on the twig actually spines? And is that fruit stalk really longer than the apple?

Richard



George began by presenting the good audience of 38 with a Porpoise skull found on Ross Back Sands in 2016. There were also: newly leafing twigs of Hornbeam, Wych Elm and Crab Apple (but see the Plant Corner article elsewhere in this newsletter); a very smelly female Mallard wing found on the Low Hedgeley walk; a photo of a Violet Oil Beetle (*Meloe violaceus*) from the Cheviots – an uncommon species worth looking out for in the hills from March to June (pictured).



Then Geoff Sample, who lives locally but who has a national if not international reputation as a sound recordist, gave us a sensory tour of some of his favourite recording areas.

He began on the River Coquet where, as a child, he first learnt to look at, listen to and appreciate the local wildlife. His memories were from days when Stone Loach and Water Voles were common in the stretch of river between the Black Bridge (upstream from Warkworth) to the Walkmill stretch between Morwick and Guyzance.

When he was 12 his family moved to Tomintoul in the Scottish Highlands, a bleak single street village. Eventually here he found Capercaillie and breeding Crested Tits and became familiar with the rarely heard calls of Golden Eagles.



The presence of eagle territories in some highland glens but not in others may partly be related to the availability of prey, but is also affected by persecution on some of the shooting estates.

The first sound recording he played was a sequence in a Caledonian Pine forest and included Redstart and Tree Pipit. There is a lot of interspecies mimicry and resident birds often remain hefted to their own areas and develop their own variants of their species' song.

He then moved us on to the north Scottish coast and the Kyle of Tongue which is a shallow sea loch on the east of the A'Mhoine peninsula. The shallow waters make it an excellent area for waders and wildfowl and the bleak peninsula, crossed only by a single road, gives good opportunities for sound recording. Geoff's recording technique usually involves setting up his equipment and then being prepared to sit still in one place for a long time. When you do that, often unexpected things happen around you, like the appearance of a female Emperor Moth laying her eggs.

One recording from birch woods in Sutherland gave us dominant Cuckoo (often a feature of spring time recordings in northern Europe) with soft eagle calls in the background.



Although Geoff's main expeditions are in northern Britain, when he was commissioned to do the recordings for the Collins Warbler Guide he had to go further afield. He had photographs and recordings from the boreal forests of Finland, the northern European Plain in Poland, the island of Lesbos and the Spanish steppes. Unfortunately trying to describe in print what we heard on his recordings isn't a feasible exercise – you had to be at the meeting to hear them first hand.

He finished close to home on the River Till near Wooler and recommended Akeld Wood as somewhere to explore. Geoff's talk was a fascinating personal insight into the itinerary of a top flight sound recordist.

After missing out on a March page for last month's newsletter, here we are, well into spring.

Whilst March was unseasonably mild, April has been a largely dry and cool month. This is a month of transition, particularly for birds, when our winter visitors depart and our summer birds arrive. In between all of this to-ing and fro-ing, resident birds settle down to breed.

The 2nd April was a lovely bright and calm day with Dippers nest building along the River Breamish at Hedgely.



Figure 1: River Breamish at Hedgely.



Figure 2: Dipper with nesting material.

On the new gravel workings here, a Green Sandpiper flew around calling over the heads of 35+ Tufted Duck and 5 Goldeneye. 2 Small Tortoiseshells came out in the nice sunshine.

The 3rd April found me having a quick detour from work into Druridge Bay where a Great White Egret had taken up temporary residence at Druridge Pools favouring the Budge Fields. My first Willow Warblers of the year were in song here too, while a pair of Pintails were also a highlight.

The first Swallows arrived back in Howick on 8th of the month, when a lone bird sang from telephone wires. This was joined by a pair of Blackcap and 3+ Chiffchaffs all newly arrived, while 2 Redwings in the village wood were preparing to go even further north to continue their summer in Scandinavia. The 9th was a cold dry sunny day so we took a trip down to Druridge Bay again to see if any more spring migrants had arrived. At Cresswell were a male Wheatear, 2 White Wagtails and 12 Avocets, but Druridge Pools remained largely spring migrant free. Highlight here were 3 pairs of Great crested Grebe squabbling over boundaries and another winterer, this time more permanently, was an injured Russian White-fronted Goose. It seemed in reasonable mood as it wandered around, wing hanging limply.



Figure 3: Fighting Great Crested Grebes, Druridge Pools.

A pair of Marsh Harriers showed well on breeding territory nearby. Insects on the 9th included first Speckled Wood and Large White of the year.

The 10th April saw a nice arrival of scarce birds into Northumberland, as spring migration builds up to a peak. There were Crane, Red Kite and Red rumped Swallow for the lucky few, but a Spoonbill at Druridge was the only decent bird to linger. On 11th 4 nice Shorelarks fed in a newly tilled field at Boulmer. Nearby were a female Wheatear, 4+ Purple Sandpipers. 80+ Turnstone, 60+ Sanderling, 100+ Redshank and 15 Shelduck.

A rare visitor, and new for me at this site, arrived at Howick Pond on 19th with two fine drake Mandarin Ducks skulking along the back margins. I called back next day for some photos but the birds had moved on.

This year I seem to be spending more time in 'the bay' at Druridge than I have for many years. On 21st a lovely summer plumaged Black Tern graced East Chevington North pool, for a few days while a Grasshopper Warbler or two showed very well reeling out its early song.



Figure 4: Grasshopper Warbler catches some early sun.

Larger numbers of summer warblers arrived at the month end with Grasshopper , Sedge and Reed Warbler in full song at Chevington, and a Yellow Wagtail flew over.



Figure 5: Spoonbill at Druridge.

As the month drew to a close, some lovely gatherings of plants were on show from the very familiar Bluebells in Bothal Woods, to the less known Corn Spurrey here at Howick. These mass gatherings are always well worth checking out as the sun shines



Figure 6: Bothal Woods Bluebells



Figure 7: Corn Spurrey at Howick.

Stewart Sexton, Howick.

It was a beautiful spring morning with bright sunshine and the temperature at about 13°, with almost no wind. Eleven members turned up to walk along the River Breamish at Low Hedgeley.

We started from the A697 end of the site and walked east along the river. Progress was slow – almost inexplicably people wanted to stop and look at things! Fortunately plant life was mostly uninspiring, or progress would have been even slower. We did notice Blackthorn in flower and many of the river-side willows coming into fresh leaf, all against a backdrop of brilliant yellow Gorse.



Sadly we saw no Dippers or Kingfishers on the river, even though both species are known to be around. Probably we ought to have started at 6.30 rather than 10.30. Three Common Sandpipers were around, loudly disputing either territory or each other and the air was busy with Sandmartins which were re-occupying or



re-excavating their nest holes in the gravelly banks of the river and in some of the newly excavated banks of the extraction areas, and hawking for insects in the warm air.

On this east side of the A697 there are two large mature ponds – lakes really – with two more that have been created in the last two or three years and are becoming vegetated. Then, in the still active gravel extraction areas, three more will eventually be formed once the extraction finally finishes at the end of this year. North Northumberland is not at all rich in areas of inland standing water, so this site will be an amazing habitat, with the added attraction of the Branton Ponds on the other side of the main road.

We hadn't gone far when the truth of the road sign on the A697 bridge was underlined. It says "Otters" and there, in the middle of the lake closest to the road, an adult animal treated us to some excellent views as it swam on the surface, continually diving and re-emerging. Even though the original plan for a fishery in this lake was not pursued, there must be fish in there.

Altogether, for a morning meander, we saw a respectable number of bird species (list below). There were also a few butterflies: a Small Tortoiseshell, a Peacock and an Orange Tip. I also saw what I thought was a Green-veined White, but because it refused to sit down and fold up its wings which would have made it easy to identify, it might have been a female Orange Tip (male and female pictured below). It's probably worth commenting that we thought we saw a Green Sandpiper, but of course it could have been any old passing wader with Graham Bell making Green Sandpiper calls. Who knows?!



Birds: I've put down all the ones I saw and all those I heard other people say they'd seen, but I may have missed one or two (Dunnock? Woodpigeon?)

Common sandpiper	Green Sandpiper	Redshank	Ringed Plover
Oystercatcher	Lapwing	Grey Heron	Common Gull
Black-headed Gull	Herring Gull	Lesser Bl-backed Gull	Shelduck
Mallard	Teal	Tufted Duck	Canada Goose
Mute Swan	Cormorant	Coot	Moorhen
Little Grebe	Common Buzzard	Pheasant	Sandmartin
Pied Wagtail	Grey Wagtail	Wren	Robin
Wheatear	Willow-warbler	Chiffchaff	Carriion Crow
Rook	Jackdaw	Chaffinch	Yellowhammer
Linnet			

Richard

For the latest news including meetings, field trips and more please access the—

'Alnwick Wildlife Group' website at :

www.alnwickwildlifegroup.co.uk

redsquirrel@alnwickwildlifegroup.co.uk



Best wishes to Alnwick Wildlife Group

For all your Wild Bird and Pet Animal needs.

Visit us at

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Alnwick. NE66 2HA.
Tel: 01665 510155

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PROGRAMME 2017/18



Membership -
£10 /year single
£17-50/year joint
**Visitors to Indoor
Meetings /Field Trips -**
£2

INDOOR MEETINGS 2017/18

St James's Church Centre Pottergate , Alnwick (All meetings commence at 7.30 p.m.)

Wednesday 27th September 2017

Wildlife photography: A Walk on the Wildside.....Ron McCombe

Wednesday 25th October 2017

Waxcaps – Grassland Jewels.....Shaun Hackett

Wednesday 29th November 2017

Wildlife tracks & signs.....John Steele

Wednesday 13th December 2017

Sea-watching at Kielder.....Martin Davison

Wednesday 31st January 2018

The State of Northumberland's Birds.....Mark Eaton

Wednesday 28th February 2018

Northumbrian Whin GrasslandsJanet Simkin

Wednesday 28th March 2018

Cheviot Goats.....Richard Bevan

Wednesday 25th April 2018

Ford & Etal.....James Joicey

Wednesday 30th May 2018

Birding Adventures in the Americas.....Tom Cadwallender

FIELDTRIPS

Please refer to the monthly Newsletter or the website for up to date information concerning field-trips and outings.

www.alnwickwildlifegroup.co.uk

WHAT WILDLIFE TO LOOK FOR IN MAY

Snow in the last week of April and a run of north easterly air flow has spoilt what has been a fantastic spring for weather. The late cold spell has held up many migrants and even now numbers of Swallows, House martins and Swifts seem to be fewer than normal. 'Our' House martins arrived in the first few days of May. Much to their disgust, their nest was lost over the winter due to strong winds and driving rain that softened the mud. Fortunately, the pair seem to favour 5 Front Street and have started to build again. It has been a very slow process due to the lack of mud. We think that they are flying up to 1 km to collect new mud and most of the building is done in the mornings. You cannot help admire their tenacity.

WHAT SPECIES TO LOOK FOR IN JUNE: STONEFLIES AND MAYFLIES

Early summer is a good time to go looking aquatic invertebrates. Any pond or river will have a diversity of species depending on its location, cleanliness and water temperature. Many of Northumberland's rivers are relatively clean and can support a rich diversity of aquatic life. May, June and July are the hatching time for Stoneflies and Mayflies.

STONEFLIES

There are 34 species of stonefly in Britain, which are common around fast-flowing streams and rivers, where the larvae spend their lives hiding amongst the gravels and feeding on algae and plants. The adults hatch out, usually in the summer, and do not travel very far from the stream: they are often found on riverside rocks and trees.

Stoneflies are fairly robust invertebrates with narrow, dark wings, long antennae and two stout tail bristles. Stonefly larvae can be recognised by having two 'tails' and by their habit of clinging to the undersides of rocks in fast-flowing water.



MAYFLIES

There are 51 species of mayfly in Britain. They are common around freshwater wetlands, from fast-flowing rivers to still lakes, where the larvae spend their lives underwater feeding on algae and plants. The adults hatch out, usually in the summer, and have very short lives (just hours in some cases) during which they display and breed; hatchings of hundreds of adult mayflies in the same spot at the same time often occur. Many species do not feed as adults as their sole purpose is to reproduce and once they have mated, they die. The common name is misleading as many mayflies can be seen all year-round, although one species does emerge in synchrony with the blooming of Hawthorn (or 'Mayflower').



Mayflies are delicate animals with broad, clear wings that have a lace-like appearance, very short antennae and very long, fine tail bristles. They hold their wings vertically, closed over their backs. Mayfly larvae can be recognised by their three 'tails'.

Hopefully the weather will improve and there will be plenty to see.

Jack Daw

SIGHTINGS APRIL 2017

BIRDS	
Spoonbill	1 at Druridge Pools on 11th and 2 on 19th
Little Egret	2 at Budle Bay on 18th
Great-white Egret	1 at Druridge Pools on 1st and 3rd
Whooper Swan	50+ over Brandon on 1st
Greylag Goose	2 pairs at Branton Ponds on 22nd with a total of 12 goslings 900 at Harpers Heugh on 4th
White-fronted Goose	1 at East Chevington on 9th 1 at Druridge Pools on 10th
Barnacle Goose	52 near Craster on 2nd 34 at Harpers Heugh on 4th
Pink-footed Goose	52 near Craster on 2nd 2000 at Doddington till 18th 500 at Budle Bay till 18th
Mandarin	2 at Howick on 19th
Green-winged Teal	1 at Druridge Pools on 29th
Mallard	2 females at Branton Ponds on 22nd with a total of 17 ducklings
Pintail	2 at Druridge Pools on 9th and 4 on 29th
Shoveler	3 at Hedgeley Lakes on 1st
Garganey	1 at Druridge Pools on 1st
Goldeneye	1 at Monks House Pool on 25th
Ring-necked Duck	1 at Low Hauxley on 9th
Pochard	2 at Druridge Pools on 9th
Ferruginous Duck	1 at Silverlink on 4th
Shelduck	7 at Branton Ponds on 28th
Marsh Harrier	1 at Druridge Pools on 1st a pair at East Chevington on 9th
Kestrel	2 over Bewick Moors on 6th
Merlin	1 at Fenham Flats on 8th
Grey Partridge	19 at Ratcheugh and Snableazes on 28th
Avocet	17 at Cresswell Pond on 9th and 11 on 15th
Ruff	1 at Druridge Pools on 1st 5 at Cresswell Pond on 15th
Redshank	7 at Hedgeley Lakes on 1st
Greenshank	1 at Branton Ponds on 30th
Turnstone	20 at Craster on 2nd
Ringed Plover	6 at Hedgeley Lakes on 1st 1 at Branton Ponds on 28th
Green Sandpiper	1 at Branton Ponds on 22nd 1 at Hedgeley Lakes on 23rd
Common Sandpiper	1 at Branton Ponds on 8th and again on 13th 5+ at Hedgeley Lakes on 23rd
Purple Sandpiper	1 at Craster on 2nd
Black-tailed Godwit	1 at Alnmouth on 23rd 25 at Aln Estuary on 7th
Whimbrel	2 at Holy Island on 30th
Sandwich Tern	8 at Guile Point on 8th 2 at Annstead on 11th
Black Tern	1 at East Chevington on 23rd
Cuckoo	1 at Hawsen Burn on 29th 1 at Harehope on 27th
Short-eared Owl	1 at Alnwick Moor on 26th
Tawny Owl	2 at Lemmington Hall on 7th
Barn Owl	1 hunting at Branton Ponds all month 1 at Cresswell Pond on 11th 1 at Fieldhouse on 15th 1 at Ratcheugh on 28th 1 hunting near Nursery House, Harehope all month

Kingfisher	1 at Hulne Park on 6th
Swallow	3 at Branton Ponds on 16th 2 at Lemmington Hall on 15th 4 at Fenwick on 4th 3 at Elwick on 3rd 1 at Harehope Hillend on 10th
House Martin	1 at Druridge Pools on 11th
Sand Martin	50+ over Branton Ponds on 10th 10 at Ingram Mill on 5th 200+ over Branton Ponds on 28th
Yellow Wagtail	1 at Cresswell Pond on 9th and 19th
Grey Wagtail	8 at Hulne Park on 6th 1 on River Breamish on 23rd
Water Pipit	1 at Druridge Pools on 1st and 3rd
Shorelark	4 at Boulmer on 11th 5 at East Chevington on 6th
Dipper	3 at Hulne Park on 6th
Wheatear	1 at Reaveley Greens on 1st 1 at Hedgeley Lakes on 23rd 50+ at Holy Island on 30th 1 at Branton Ponds on 30th several at Boulmer on 13th
Stonechat	2 at Hawsen Burn on 29th 3 at Newton Scrape on 4th 1 at Bamburgh on 4th
Whinchat	1 at Hawsen Burn on 29th 1 at Holy Island on 30th
Ring Ouzel	3 at Hawsen Burn on 29th 1 at Holy Island on 30th
Fieldfare	50 at Ingram on 5th 54 at East Bolton on 23rd
Song Thrush	2 at Smeafield on 11th
Blackcap	1 at Branton Ponds on 3rd 5 at Longhorsley Common on 15th 9 at Branton Ponds on 20th
Sedge Warbler	1 at Branton Ponds on 21st 1 at Alnmouth on 23rd
Grasshopper Warbler	2 at East Chevington on 23rd 1 at Ratcheugh on 28th
Willow Warbler	1 at Branton Ponds on 4th 1 at Longhorsley Common on 15th 14 at Branton Ponds on 20th
Chiffchaff	4 at Howick on 2nd 6 at Longhosley Common on 15th
Willow Tit	1 at Longhorsley Common on 15th
Treecreeper	2 at Howick on 2nd
Nuthatch	3 at Howick on 2nd
Jay	3 at Howick on 2nd
Hooded Crow	1 at Bell's Farm, Cresswell on 15th
Raven	2 near Ingram on 17th 2 near Ford on 29th 3 over Bewick Moor on 16th
Twite	12 at East Chevington on 6th
Lesser Redpoll	7 at Branton Ponds on 4th
Siskin	2 at Smeafield on 11th
Greenfinch	2 at Smeafield on 11th
Brambling	1 at Howick on 9th 1 at Yearle till 11th
Common Crossbill	22 at Beanley Woods on 18th
MAMMALS	
Grey Seal	2000+ at Guile Point on 8th
Brown Hare	6 at Smeafield on 26th
Hedgehog	1 at Powburn on 19th
Otter	1 at Hedgeley Lakes on 14th and again on 23rd 1 + 3 kits on River Breamish near Harehope on 10th
Red Squirrel	2 in Branton on 27th and up to 5 in village throughout month
PLANTS	

Wood Anemone	In Crawley Dene on 1st
Moschatel	At Thrunton Woods on 15th
REPTILES	
Slow Worm	1 at Branton Ponds on 30th
INSECTS	
Red Admiral	1 at Branton Ponds on 4th
Peacock	2 at Smeafeld on 4th
Small Tortoiseshell	1 at Smeafeld on 6th
Wall	1 at West Allotment on 9th
Green-veined White	1 at Branton Ponds on 10th
Speckled Wood	2 at Branton Ponds on 15th and 20th
Orange Tip	1 at Branton Ponds on 20th 1 near Hedgeley on 23rd
Clouded Drab	4 at Branton on 8th
Common Quaker	6 at Branton on 8th
Pale Pinion	1 at Branton on 8th
Hebrew Character	3 at Branton on 8th
Pine Beauty	1 at Branton on 16th
Acleris literana	1 at Branton on 6th 1 at Howick on 21st
Streamer	1 at Howick on 22nd
Nut Tree Tussock	1 at Howick on 21st
Coxcomb Prominent	1 at Howick on 21st
Bee-fly	1 at Branton on 4th
Green Tiger Beetle	1 at Kyloe Quarry on 13th
RAINFALL	13mm
OBSERVERS	G&R Bell, D Bush, J&E Clark, I&K Davison, G&G Dodds,
	P&A Hanmer, M McMahon, J&J Panton, S Reay, J Rutter,
	S Sexton, S Williamson, AWG group outing.



WALKS

The first of these may well be in the past by the time you get this, but I've left it in just in case. Numbers 2, 3 and 4 are unchanged from the list sent out in April. **The final one is new.** I do hope we shall see many of you on one or more of these outings.

SUNDAY 28 May College Valley Led by George

Upland birds and plants and Cheviot scenery. Probably c. 5 miles with some uphill!

Meet at 10.30am in the Hethpool carpark. George is able to get permission to take cars further up the valley without the need for £10 permits, but we shall have to share cars beyond Hethpool. **Bring lunch**

O.S. Landranger 74 O.S Explorer OL16 Grid Ref NT 894 281

SATURDAY 3 June Alnwick Cemetery Led by David

Gentle exploration of the cemetery with its flora and fauna. Graveyards often provide real wildlife reservoirs in town environments. Time max 2 hours

Meet at 10.00am at the cemetery entrance on South Road. It's best to park in Sainsbury's carpark and walk along to the cemetery gates.

O.S. Landranger 81 O.S. Explorer 332 Grid Ref NU 195 123

SUNDAY 18 June Kyloe Quarry Led by Richard

This year AWG is surveying Kyloe Quarry for Lord James Joicey at Ford & Etal. This is an introductory visit to this fascinating large quarry that was last worked 40 years ago. Once you know where it is you can visit it independently and build up your own list of sightings to add to the records we shall compile during the year. Time c. 2 hours

Meet at 10.30am at the big layby on the road (B6353) from Lowick due east towards the A1 at Fenwick (or take the Fenwick exit if you are going north on the A1).

O.S. Landranger 75 O.S. Explorer 340 Grid Ref NU 043 407

SATURDAY 15 July A day on Lindisfarne Led by Keith

Plants plus birds and other animals. Bring binoculars, plant field guide and hand lens if you have any of these. Try to wear boots and clothes that won't provide too much attachment for the fruits of the dreaded pirri-pirri-bur or you'll spend half an hour at the end removing the offending burs. Timing c. 10.30 until 3.30. **Bring lunch**

Meet at 10.30am in the car park at the Snook (track on your left about half way between the mainland and the main island - the safe crossing time is from 10.15am).

O.S. Landranger 75 O.S. Explorer 340 Grid Ref NU 105 436

SUNDAY 6th August The Catheran Hole and Catheran Hill Led by Michael and Richard

A moorland walk with a mysterious cave and, if we can find it, the only North Northumberland site for the little Tunbridge Filmy Fern. Easy moorland walking with a bit of deep heather. Time 2 to 2½ hours. **Bring torch/head-torch for the cave.**

Meet at 10.00am on the grass verge west of Quarry House on the moorland above Hepburn.

From the A1 take the North Charlton exit. The moor road is gated in places and has some bits of slightly dodgy surface.

O.S. Landranger 75 O.S. Explorer 340 Grid Ref NU 100 246