

# Alnwick Wildlife Group

Promoting awareness of the countryside and its flora and fauna



[www.alnwickwildlifegroup.co.uk](http://www.alnwickwildlifegroup.co.uk)

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**NEWSLETTER 223 APRIL 2020**

**Review of March 2020**

## VIRAL MEANDERINGS

Well, here we all are then, in semi or total lockdown or in self-isolation or even quarantine. If we are lucky we have gardens and if we're really lucky we have close access, on foot, to open countryside for our daily exercise.

AWG members will be reacting in different ways to their current situation. For some, Parkinson's Law will apply. This says that "work expands to fill the time available" and for 'work' we probably ought to include 'self-generated activity'. For many of us, boredom may not be a problem because there are always things on the personal to-do list that have been un-done for years but which are now coming into their own.

For some of us the crisis will have made us come to grips with aspects of technology that we've been avoiding for ages – like face-timing, skyping, joining or setting up WhatsApp groups and perhaps even having Zoom conference calls (whatever they are!).

So, what is AWG's position in all this? Sadly, members will be aware that we have had to cancel all our planned evening meetings, all our planned walks, and recently we decided that all our survey efforts for Northumberland Estates for this April, May and June would have to be abandoned. On the other hand our Newsletters are our lifeline and we hope, nay expect, to go on producing these at the regular monthly intervals. But even this isn't totally straightforward because the one thing we can't do is to collect and post out the paper copies from our printer. So, a few of our members, who don't use email, won't get their copies for the next few months. We've said that they will still be printed and that once the situation improves we'll send out a bumper posting of all the issues they've missed.

There are some other things we can do to try to maintain people's interest. You will see from this issue that George Dodds, our Chairman, is initiating a garden bio-blitz challenge. Nothing vastly sophisticated – just an encouragement for members to search out and identify as many living organisms they can find in their gardens, or in backyards if you've no garden, or even in your window boxes if those are the limit of your current wildlife accessibility. George's article will tell you more about this idea, as will other pieces in this issue.

If you do get involved in this, then having access to decent sources of identification will be a great help. So if you find that you can't spend your spare money (if you actually have any) on the things you might otherwise spend it on, why not have a look at a good natural history book seller on-line, like the Natural History Book Society (NHBS) and buy one or two good field guides to groups of organisms that you don't usually think too much about.

Finally, if you really want to wallow in misery about the state of the human race, or even frighten yourself more than you currently are, why not try to get hold of a second hand copy of *Plague's Progress*? Written by Arno Karlen in 1995 (although there's a second edition from 2001), it looks at the history of epidemic diseases and concentrates particularly on the accelerating frequency of disease outbreaks as we have become more complacent about our ability to deal with health emergencies. It's written in accessible language and you may well end up feeling that if this American could analyse the dangers so clearly 25 years ago, why have we come to our present situation? You'll probably need to get a second hand copy for less than £5 because the original hardbacks, new, tend now to be ten times that amount.

*Plague's Progress* by Arno Karlen. Pub: Victor Gollancz 1995 ISBN: 0 575 06135 9

We are currently experiencing unprecedented times. Lock-down, self-isolation and self-distancing have all appeared in our vocabulary in the last 5 weeks. Spring is upon us and we are confined to barracks except for exercise. Even the self-isolating Wetland Bird Survey has been put on hold.

There is a patch of ground that the majority of us can cast an eye upon. Even for those that do not have a garden or a window box, a view of the street can provide opportunities for watching wildlife. The Alnwick Wildlife Group committee thought it would be interesting to challenge members to record as many species as possible in their patch. It can be as simple as recording the numbers and species of bird visiting your garden every, day, or every week or whenever you can. Or even better, try to get to grips with identifying some of the smaller species that visit your patch. Why not set yourselves the challenge of learning about Woodlice, Bumblebee or the flowering plants in your garden. Over the coming editions, we will try to highlight some of the families, groups and species that might be worth having a look for.

I have started to record the species that live, visit and fly over our house in Glanton. This also includes species that live inside e.g. Daddy-long-legs spider. Since the announcement of lock-down on the 24th March, 86 species have been recorded (Plants 20, Invertebrates 30, Birds 35 and 1 Mammal). This is not too bad for a backyard that is enclosed on three sides by buildings and has a concrete floor (figure 1). I also search the pavement that is adjacent to the property for colonising plants, Bryophytes, and Liverworts. Listening in the early mornings and evenings has helped to increase the numbers of birds seen / heard from the house.



Figure 2: Backyard in Glanton



Figure 2: Common pill-woodlouse

Bird highlights have included 2 Shelduck (29/3), Oystercatcher regularly flies over the house, a pair of Curlew can be heard displaying in fields to the south of the village, Mediterranean gull (adult on 24/3 – flew over), migrating Fieldfares and Skylarks, a visiting Chiffchaff in the garden and a fly-over Yellowhammer. All of the plants that I have recorded have arrived on their own volition (as far as I know). These include an Ash sapling, Hop trefoil and Common mouse-ear (on the pavement). Invertebrates are an ever-expanding list. The moth trap has as expected been quiet but 8 species have been recorded already including Early tooth-striped and an Early grey. Three species of butterfly have already visited the garden; Small white, Small tortoiseshell and Peacock. Slowly but steadily the search for invertebrates continues especially under the flower pots where there are host of marvellous creatures to be found.

A good place to start is to have a look at the Nature spot website (<https://www.naturespot.org.uk/>). This is a website for recording the wildlife of Leicestershire and Rutland but it is an extremely useful website for getting started with lots of excellent photos. The website is a credit to their organisers and I just wish there was a similar resource in the north.

I will keep my tally of species going for my house. It is hoped that we can encourage more members to have a look and report what they have seen. Records can be sent to [redsquirrel@alnwickwildlifegroup.co.uk](mailto:redsquirrel@alnwickwildlifegroup.co.uk)

Stay safe and happy searching.

Jack Daw.



As my contribution to George's Garden Bio-blitz idea I thought I'd have a close look at our lawn in an attempt to encourage you to look at your own. I've entitled this article **PART 1** because I intend to start with the more difficult lawn plants - the mosses and the grasses. In the May newsletter I hope to move on to the other lawn weeds, because by that stage more of those may be in flower, unless you've scalped the lot.

If you plan to do a bio-blitz count of species in your garden, then your lawn plants will be good additions to your totals. If you don't have a lawn of your own you could still have a look at any other area of mown or semi-mown grassland near your home that you can get to in these virus-ridden times when you go out for exercise.

Identifying plants in mown grass is not always too easy. Most species are likely to have had their flowers mown off (Plantlife is currently, on their website, encouraging lawn owners to stop mowing and let things grow during May). Also, for the grasses, even the leaves will not be intact and identifying grasses with neither flowers nor complete leaves is really something of a problem. Perhaps one key is to think back to previous years when you came back from holiday and found that many of the weeds and the grasses had taken advantage of your absence to flower and be easier to categorise. What follows is related solely to our lawn and there'll be some members who may be mildly appalled that we have so many things that are not 'bowling green' lawn species.

My photos below show part of my lawn from a 'normal' viewpoint and then three close-ups of selected parts that give an idea of the variety of species.



From the three close-up shots you can perhaps see, roughly from the left, Fox-and-cubs, Yarrow, Germander Speedwell (in yellow circle), Common Sorrel, White Clover and Dandelion. Those are just for starters, and that ignores the moss and even a bit of grass. The left-hand photo also has some bits of old rabbit droppings, which adds another, unwelcome, garden bioblitz species!

I'll start with the moss. Unless you spend a lot of time feeding, aerating and otherwise cossetting your lawn, you're almost bound to have some moss. Fortunately, from the point of view of identification, there is usually a small suite of moss species that are robust enough to be a significant feature of lawns. On ours I can find just four.



The classic lawn moss is *Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus*, sometimes called Springy Turf-moss or, in the USA, Square Goose-necked Moss. (If you want to try to pronounce the generic name, try splitting it in two and pronouncing it as “*Rightiddy adelphus*”.) Probably 90% of the moss in our lawn is this species and it is ubiquitous in many other areas of grassland in natural habitats. If you are in the habit of walking bare-foot on your lawn you'll know when you are standing on a patch of Springy Turf-moss because it is like walking on a mass of miniaturised soft bed springs. When you pull out a handful of the moss you can see that the body of the plant consists of much-branched more-or-less horizontal leafy stems (left-hand photo), but the outer end of each stem turns to grow vertically. From above, as the right-hand photo shows, each upright stem looks spikily squarish because each pointed leaf is bent backwards at a right angle. [P.S. a major prize for anyone who can accurately identify the lichen in the left-hand photo which is on the stone of our sundial. I only ask because I'd like to know the answer.]



Piece of Springy Turf-moss



Springy Turf-moss in the lawn

At one point where the lawn abuts onto a rather wet bank of soil there's a moss species that is really a soil weed, but a little of it encroaches into the lawn. It is called *Atrichum undulatum* Common Smoothcap, or, rather more prettily, Catherine's Moss.

The unbranched shoots grow vertically and have spread leaves, each of which, under a lens, can be seen to have crinkly (undulating) surfaces.

It's interesting to note the moss shoot at the top of my close-up because the leaves on this bit don't seem to be crinkly and they seem narrower and more pointed. Perhaps the young shoots of *Atrichum* aren't initially crinkly, or maybe it's the shoot of a different moss - one of the *Polytrichum* species perhaps.



Next come two species that both have fronds that are flattened and pinnately branched. I think (hope) I've identified these correctly. The left-hand image is what the internet says is *Brachythecium rutabulum* Rough-stalked Feather-moss. I failed to get a decent shot of what I think is this species in my lawn. The right-hand shot is from the edge of the lawn by the gravelled driveway. The moss is *Kindbergia praelonga* Common Feather-moss. What makes this photo more interesting is that it also includes, in the blue circle, a small specimen of *Cardamine corymbosa* New Zealand Bitter-cress and in the red oval a rather nice small patch of the Liverwort *Marchantia polymorpha* with some of the asexual reproductive cups called gemmae.



**Brachythecium rutabulum**



**Kindbergia praelonga**

You will have to forgive me for not giving detailed descriptions of why I think these two mosses are what I say they are. To do so would take an acre of space and I'm inclined to feel might bore readers to death.

Then we come to the grasses. I've already said that identifying grasses in mown lawns is problematic, but there are some things you can look for that make it a bit easier. The first is any sign of patches of grass with coarse broad leaves that grows rather more quickly than the rest of the lawn. If you have that phenomenon then this is probably Cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*. Particularly when you make the first cut of the year these patches quite often end up pale and whiteish because you are cutting down to the lower parts of the vigorous leaves which tend to be deprived of light in the rather dense tufts and so have little chlorophyll. To put it mildly, Cock's-foot is not exactly an ideal lawn grass and you are not too likely to have any unless your garden is adjacent to farmland (like ours) or to overgrown road verges.

The next clue is to check the grasses at the edges of the lawn to see whether any are making regular attempts to spread sideways into flower beds with strong underground rhizomes. As you start to sort your lawn edges and your flower bed weeds in the spring you are most likely to discover these rhizomatous grasses. One fortunate thing is that these problem species are not too likely to be the dreaded Couch Grass *Elymus repens*, also called Twitch. Twitch is far more often a problem in vegetable gardens that are next door to waste ground. Much more likely in a lawn are Red Fescue *Festuca rubra* or Smooth Meadow-grass *Poa pratensis*. These two are easy enough to tell apart if they have flowers, but, if mown, you need to look at the leaves to see if they are tightly folded, and so look quite thin (Red Fescue) or rather more open flatter blades between 1 and 4mm wide (Smooth Meadow-grass).

The main non-rhizomatous species in my lawn are *Lolium perenne* Perennial Rye-grass, *Anthoxanthum odoratum* Sweet Vernal-grass and *Poa trivialis* Rough Meadow-grass. This last grass does spread sideways, but via horizontal surface stems called stolons rather than subterranean rhizomes. The other two are better behaved. If you are down on hands and knees checking your lawn and you come across horizontal stolons in the 'thatch', don't assume that they are from Rough Meadow-grass until you've made sure that they are not part of White Clover's efforts to achieve world domination.

Lastly, in my lawn, is the small annual grass that specialises in colonising bare soil patches. *Poa annua* Annual Meadow-grass is ubiquitous and is the usual grass weed that seeds itself in flower beds. So, if you have bare patches where the children/grandchildren have been playing football, the grass that will first appear if you manage to give those areas a rest will be this species. It doesn't compete too well with larger perennial grasses, so will tend to disappear as the sward recovers.

On the next page are some illustrations of the main grasses I've mentioned, but with flowers attached. So, if you do decide to let your lawn grow in May in order both to provide more nectar sources for insects and to enable you to identify more of your lawn weeds, you'll get some flowers on the grasses and these illustrations may help.





**Cock's-foot**



**Red Fescue**



**Smooth Meadow-grass**



**Perennial Rye-grass**



**Sweet Vernal-grass**



**Rough Meadow-grass**



**Annual Meadow-grass**



April 2019 and every other one in living memory for that matter, was totally different to the concerns we are all facing in April 2020. Little did we know last year at this time that in 2020 we would all be largely housebound, we would have to queue at supermarket doors for household basics and we would be afraid to watch the latest news bulletins for the depressing information it provides on a daily basis. Such is day to day life with COVID-19 or Coronavirus lurking across the world.

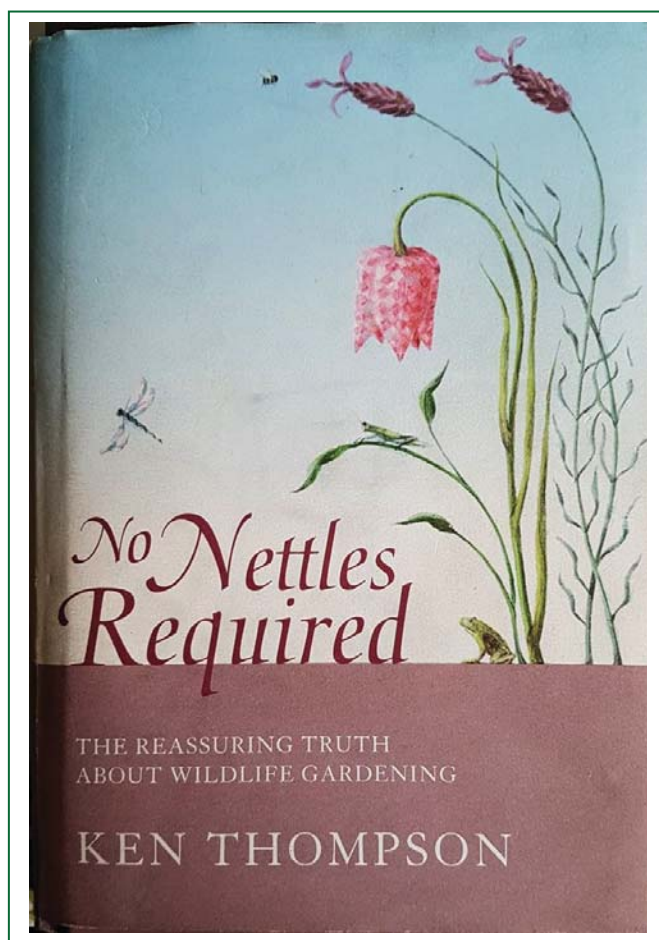
But, despite this blight on humanity, the natural world continues about its business undeterred.

For me, I have never had a spell as long as this at home without going in to work. We will be into week 4 of the Lockdown by the time you read this, a state where we are only allowed out for essential work, shopping, medicine or some basic exercise. I am currently working from home, but even taking this time constraint into consideration, I am able to spend an hour and a half each day in the garden when I would normally have been driving to and from the office. Even lunchtimes and tea breaks are spent outside on my patch, so from the 20<sup>th</sup> March when these restrictions began for me, I decided to make the most of my garden wildlife watching. Until we are able to get back to normality, these pages will try to help you to look for wildlife in your house , garden and view as I have.

Where do we start? I am very lucky in that I live in a rural area with a great view over open countryside, but hopefully even if you live in a town or village with a small garden you will be able to get to find and learn about some wildlife. You just have to set your sights a little smaller and try thinking 'out of the box'.

### Some Literature

Before I start with the wildlife, some essential reading might help with garden watching. My main source of inspiration to get outside is a little book available online in either new or used copies for as little as £4 –



Ken describes a study he and students of Sheffield University carried out of gardens in the city. Without the details they found that ALL gardens are good for wildlife and you can make them better with very little effort or cost or deviation from your usual gardening methods. The basic rules to improve biodiversity are -

Do not use any chemicals ie pesticides, slug pellets, weedkillers etc.

Plant as wide a variety as possible. It need not be native to the UK, but keep things diverse.

Have a good compost heap.

And that's about it. Anything else you can do is a bonus. Many people see garden wildlife as Hedgehogs, Blackbirds, Frogs, Bees, Butterflies etc but these are in the final 1% of all garden wildlife, the rest are the tiny things such as insects, worms, slugs, flies etc. Look after these, and the larger stuff will look after itself...

To begin, what to look for at home, let's try some window moths.

If you have a bright window light such as a bathroom or downstairs toilet or an outside light in a porch maybe, try leaving it on all night when it is mild cloudy and calmish. It can often attract some moths in small numbers, in particular in spring, the flatter, 'geometer' species such as Pugs and Carpets, but chunkier 'noctuid' moths can be there too. Check the window and surrounding walls as late at night as possible to see if anything has arrived.

In April look out for –



**Figure 1: Water Carpet, Hebrew Character and Early Thorn, all very common at this time.**



**Figure 2: Common Quaker and Double striped Pug**



Whilst you are checking windows after dark you will likely come across a few spiders too. These are much more difficult to identify but you might be able to assign them to a family group.

Commonest around houses is –



**Figure 3: Missing Sector Orb Weaver *Zygiella x-notata* found around windows inside and outside all houses.**



**Figure 4: Lace Web Spider *Amaurobius* sp lives in cracks and holes around stones or door frames, window cills etc. It rubs its hind legs together like a grasshopper to attract a mate.**



**Figure 5: Mouse Spider. Around 1cm across its leg span, it is a very proportionate spider and runs around walls hunting after dark. It doesn't build a web.**



**Figure 6: The Giant House Spiders, Tegenaria / Eratigena sp. Common. They don't want to be put outside, much preferring a shed or outhouse in which to live.**

I hope we can inspire you to investigate all wildlife forms around your house and garden while we are in temporary confinement, we will continue next month with a few things outside in the garden...Stay safe and well everyone.

*Stewart Sexton, Howick.*



**MARCH 2020:** Regular readers of this article will know that I operate a Ringing Station at Howick from July into the Autumn. If you're interested in reading about the birds at this site then I recommend you get hold of a copy of the recently published 2018 Bird Report for Northumberland, Newcastle & North Tyneside (Birds in Northumbria) because there is a seven page paper titled 'Howick Ringing Station – The evolution of a place to appreciate and study birds'. You can go onto the website of the Northumberland & Tyneside Bird Club to find out how to get a copy. I have also contributed to the classified listings of birds including the Goldeneye and Owls.

At the end of Feb and early March we were out checking on Barn Owl boxes to see how they had survived the winter (we only found one blown out of a tree!), to undertake necessary repairs, to clean out jackdaw sticks and discover which Barn Owls were contemplating breeding 'early'. An old horse shed near the coast yielded a pair of birds on the 6th: a new female probably 3 yrs. old and a retrap (already ringed) young male. The male (GV97838) was from a late nest (13/8/19) on a local old railway line and it was gratifying to see it had made it through the winter from such a late brood; its other sibling had been found dead in the box. The attached photo shows that the right-hand bird (the female) has a few faint spots hinting at her being a female which was confirmed by her weight of 440g, while the male only weighed 325g. At another site, not far from Howick both birds looked like classic males (very white and non-spotty) and were of similar weights (360g); see picture. However, both were retraps and the un-spotty female (GR20048) is an amazingly successful breeder at her more normal site near Boulmer, where she has bred for something like 10 yrs. The male (GV55857) in the box (his normal box) was a 5 yr. old who we know lost his mate last year. Interestingly on our third (and last) day of checking owl boxes we encountered the same female again; back at her normal site (with a different, 3 yr. old, male), and her weight had shot up to 450g! In all we were able to check 20 odd boxes and found occupancy of mostly pairs of owls in 10. This suggests a good breeding year on the coast at least – although it must be said that some of the females were below a good breeding weight and so may not breed particularly early.

The other task we did recently was to check on my several small bird box study sites, again cleaning out and repairing boxes for Tits, Tree Sparrows, Redstart, Nuthatch and the like. None of these small passerine birds are breeding yet but if we don't clean the boxes out we will just be encouraging bees to take them over and while I don't resent our native Bumble Bees doing this I do object to the 'invading' Tree Bumblebee! If you have not encountered this recent immigrant to the British Isles, then you may not be aware how aggressive it can be – to people and small birds! We also put up 20 odd new boxes to replace worn-out ones.

Being pretty-much confined to home recently I have tried some ringing in the garden; although with no Siskins around I confess to being less motivated than I should be. The morning of the 25th netted 6 new birds including a very splendid male Nuthatch (with russet flanks); and 5 retraps. These included a 5 yr. old Great Tit. The 26th was better with 11 new birds and 11 retraps. The new birds did include several Goldfinches (that often travel and feed with the Siskins but not this year). The first photo shows two male birds; the lower is less well marked and probably younger while the upper one is older and shows a strong projection of red plumage back behind the eye and dark nasal bristles. The second picture of a single bird is probably a female (with little red projecting behind the eye and grey nasal bristles) and a definite young (last years) bird, with a very pale tipped juvenile Greater Covert feather obviously showing in the wing. These are details that ringers learn to look for in the hand and you can sometimes see in the field with your binoculars! I tried again on the 29th using some traps and caught 7 new birds and 6 retraps. The new birds included a Tree Sparrow, a Robin and a Blackbird; all clearly female birds showing the early signs of developing brood patches; indicating that they are thinking about breeding soon (particularly the Blackbird). Included in the retraps were another female Robin and a 5yr old female Blackbird with a more developed brood patch (who probably already has a nest close-by).

*Phil Hanmer 'A' Ringer/Trainer; Natural History Society of Northumbria Ringing Group (Hancock Museum).  
E-mail: tytoalbas@btinternet.com*



Horse Shed Owls



Juvenile Female Goldfinch



Unspotty Pair of Owls



Male Goldfinches



## SIGHTINGS MARCH 2020

BIRDS	
Great Crested Grebe	1 at Branton Ponds on 19 <sup>th</sup> 1 at East Chevington on 9 <sup>th</sup>
Grey Heron	6 at Branton Ponds on 6 <sup>th</sup>
Whooper Swan	12 over Branton on 3 <sup>rd</sup> 5 at Branton Ponds on 4 <sup>th</sup> and 2 on 9 <sup>th</sup> 21 over Branton Ponds on 19 <sup>th</sup> 55 at Low Newton on 6 <sup>th</sup> and 26 on 12 <sup>th</sup> 60 over Felton on 16 <sup>th</sup>
Shoveler	1 at Hedgeley Lakes on 26 <sup>th</sup>
Pochard	1 at Branton Ponds on 15 <sup>th</sup>
Gadwall	32 at Hedgeley lakes on 6 <sup>th</sup>
Ring-necked Duck	1 briefly at Branton Ponds on 29 <sup>th</sup>
Goldeneye	14 at Branton Ponds on 7 <sup>th</sup> and 24 on 8 <sup>th</sup>
White-tailed Eagle	1 at Howick on 31 <sup>st</sup>
Common Buzzard	2 at Lemmington Hall on 17 <sup>th</sup> 4 at Smeafield on 24 <sup>th</sup>
Sparrowhawk	1 at Branton Ponds on 17 <sup>th</sup>
Goshawk	1 in Alnwick area on 17 <sup>th</sup>
Peregrine	1 at Roseden on 21 <sup>st</sup> 1 near Bamburgh on 9 <sup>th</sup>
Grey Partridge	2 at Branton on 23 <sup>rd</sup>
Red-legged Partridge	A pair at Smeafield on 11 <sup>th</sup>
Oystercatcher	48 at Branton Ponds on 7 <sup>th</sup>
Ringed Plover	4 at Hedgeley Lakes on 6 <sup>th</sup>
Green Sandpiper	2 at Hedgeley Lakes on 6 <sup>th</sup> and again on 22 <sup>nd</sup> 1 at Branton Ponds on 15 <sup>th</sup>
Mediterranean Gull	2 at Branton Ponds on 17 <sup>th</sup> 1 over Glanton on 25 <sup>th</sup>
Lesser Black-backed Gull	6 at Branton Ponds on 4 <sup>th</sup> 6 at Felton on 31 <sup>st</sup>
Common Gull	1 in Felton garden till 31 <sup>st</sup> (Norwegian colour ring J059)
Stock Dove	2 at Branton Ponds on 8 <sup>th</sup>
Sand Martin	5+ at Hedgeley Lakes on 26 <sup>th</sup>
Grey Wagtail	1 at Felton on 29 <sup>th</sup>
Dipper	2 at Felton Bridge on 31 <sup>st</sup>
Wheatear	3 at Gleadscleugh on 21 <sup>st</sup>
Common Redstart	1 at Belford on 12 <sup>th</sup>
Redwing	3 at Branton Ponds on 22 <sup>nd</sup> singing birds at Hedgeley Lakes on 26 <sup>th</sup> including several Icelandic birds.
Fieldfare	50+ at Harwood on 21 <sup>st</sup> 20+ at Hedgeley Hall on 22 <sup>nd</sup> 700+ over Branton on 30 <sup>th</sup> 44 at Hedgeley lakes on 30 <sup>th</sup>
Mistle Thrush	A pair at Smeafield on 5 <sup>th</sup> and 19 <sup>th</sup>
Chiffchaff	3 at Branton Ponds on 8 <sup>th</sup> 2 on 15 <sup>th</sup> and 4 on 17 <sup>th</sup> lots at Branton Ponds and Hedgeley Lakes on 26 <sup>th</sup>
Long-tailed Tit	6 at Smeafield on 22 <sup>nd</sup>
Willow Tit	1 at Branton Ponds on 29 <sup>th</sup>
Marsh Tit	2 at Whinney Hill Farm on 16 <sup>th</sup>
Treecreeper	1 at Detchant on 31 <sup>st</sup>
Jay	3 at Hedgeley Lakes on 30 <sup>th</sup>
Raven	2 at Fenham Hill on 6 <sup>th</sup>
Common Crossbill	20+ in Harwood Forest on 21 <sup>st</sup>
Yellowhammer	1 at Smeafield on 10 <sup>th</sup> and a pair on 27 <sup>th</sup> 5 at Kyloe Woods on 3 <sup>rd</sup>
MAMMALS	
Otter	1 found dead in Bamburgh on 17 <sup>th</sup>
Stoat	1 in ermine at Branton Ponds on 17 <sup>th</sup>
PLANTS	
Coltsfoot	At Branton Ponds on 7 <sup>th</sup>
INVERTEBRATES	
Buff-tailed Bumblebee	1 at Branton Ponds on 7 <sup>th</sup>

White-tailed Bumblebee	1 at Smeafield on 2 <sup>nd</sup>
Red-tailed Bumblebee	1 at Felton on 19 <sup>th</sup>
Tree Bumblebee	1 at Branton on 15 <sup>th</sup>
Peacock	1 near Lemmington Hall on 25 <sup>th</sup>
Small Tortoiseshell	1 near Lemmington Hall on 25 <sup>th</sup> 1 at Felton on 5 <sup>th</sup>
Hebrew Character	5 at Glanton on 25 <sup>th</sup> 7 at Branton on 25 <sup>th</sup>
Twin-spot Quaker	1 at Glanton on 25 <sup>th</sup>
Small Quaker	1 at Glanton on 25 <sup>th</sup> 1 at Branton on 25 <sup>th</sup>
Mottled Grey	2 at Branton on 25 <sup>th</sup>
Early Grey	2 at Branton on 25 <sup>th</sup>
Satellite	2 at Branton on 25 <sup>th</sup>
<b>AMPHIBIANS</b>	
Common Frog	Frogspawn at Beanley Moor on 8 <sup>th</sup> Frogspawn at Felton on 9 <sup>th</sup> - 11 <sup>th</sup>
Common Toad	Many at Howick on 19 <sup>th</sup>
<b>REPTILES</b>	
Adder	6 at Branton Ponds on 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 10 on 4 <sup>th</sup>
Slow Worm	1 at Branton Ponds on 22 <sup>nd</sup>
<b>RAINFALL</b>	40mm
<b>OBSERVERS</b>	I&K Davison, G Dodds, P&A Hanmer, A Keeble, P&P McEwan, S Reay, S Sexton, B Welch.



Wild Daffodils in the Woods near Lemmington Hall

Photos Phil Hanmer



**Please send sightings reports** for April, no later than 6th May 2020 to: Ian & Keith Davison, The Bungalow, Branton, Powburn, NE66 4LW or Tel: 01665 578 357 or email to [redsquirrel@alnwickwildlifegroup.co.uk](mailto: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](mailto:redsquirrel@alnwickwildlifegroup.co.uk)