

Alnwick Wildlife Group

Promoting awareness of the countryside and its flora and fauna



www.alnwickwildlifegroup.co.uk

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NEWSLETTER 243 DECEMBER 2021 REVIEW OF NOVEMBER 2021

THE MEETING FOR THIS MONTH IS CANCELLED THEREFORE THERE IS NO SPEAKER.

BLUE TIT WITH DEFORMED BEAK



Had this blue tit around the garden feeders in Alnwick yesterday with a deformed bill. It looked healthy apart from the obvious. Although it struggled with the peanuts, I think it was managing sunflower hearts.

Phil Jobson

Please send sightings reports for December, no later than 6th January 2022 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

Quite often in winter months I write about some aspect of trees in these Plant Corner pieces. Sadly, the devastation of so many trees in Storm Arwen has rather put me off this year, added to which going into many wooded areas at the moment is distinctly dangerous with so many fallen trunks precariously supported on other damaged specimens. As a result I shall talk about another favourite winter plant topic – Mosses.

I understand that getting to grips with identifying mosses is a rather esoteric pursuit and not too many of our members are likely to want to spend time with hand lenses and small clumps of difficult material from which you may emerge without any definite satisfying answer. Even trying to build up a list of mosses from your own garden can be a frustrating business. I know – I've failed often enough with specimens from my own patch! On the other hand there are some larger mosses that I think it would be nice to learn to recognise and which aren't quite as difficult. Given that there are well over 500 moss species in Britain and Ireland, becoming familiar with just ten of them might not be an unreasonable winter project, so if you can master these ten you've already got 2% of the total sorted. I've deliberately avoided the peat-forming *Sphagnum* species because they are quite easy to recognise as sphagnums, but harder to pin down to species.

I'll start with two mosses that grow like miniature trees. We need to be clear about the "miniature" bit, because although these are quite large as mosses go, the **Tree-moss** *Climacium dendroides* reaches only about 3cm tall even under ideal conditions and the **Fox-tail Feather-moss** *Thamnobryum alopecurum* gets to the massive height of 6cm (n.b. NOT 6mm as the British Bryological Society's usually reliable field guide has it).

The Tree-moss looks most like a palm tree with all its short, rather stiff branches growing out from the top of the stalk. The photograph shows the branches as rather brighter green than the more yellow-green that is often the case in the field. It grows in reliably wet places, often at the edges of lakes, and prefers base-rich rather than acidic soils. The Fox-tail Feather-moss has longer, more flexible branches and if you look at a single plant, as in the photo, it looks more like a deciduous tree. It tends to grow on rocks at the edges of streams and rivers, although you will also find it on the woodland floor and on tree stumps and quite often clumps will become detached and roll around the woodland floor in the wind.



Tree-moss



Fox-tail Feather-moss

While we are on the woodland floor, there are two prominent mosses whose leaves look more like small fern fronds. This is particularly true of **Common Tamarisk-moss** *Thuidium tamariscinum*. I've looked up pictures of Tamarisk trees and I'm hard-put to see how this moss can be likened to them, but the size of the 'fronds' is such that they are often quite distinctive. Also plentiful in wet woodland and on old tree stumps is the brilliantly-named **Glittering Wood-moss** *Hylocomium splendens*. Probably the easiest feature to help you spot the large leafy branches is the fact that the stems are rather obviously red.



Common Tamarisk-moss



Glittering Wood-moss

There's a trio of species in the genus *Rhytidiadelphus*. Many of you will already be familiar with the one that so often forms the bulk of the moss in poorly-drained lawns, with the very appropriate name **Springy Turf-moss** *R. squarrosus*. I've written about this one before when talking about the non-grass things that are in our lawns, and it really is quite easy to recognise when looked at from above because the leaves bend back at right angles to the stem and spread out so that the tops of each shoot look a bit like green stars.

Its two cousins are very common in woods in our area on our rather acidic soils. If you want to see both in quantity, park at the bottom of the beech wood by the road at Castle Hill by Callaly and start walking up hill. **Big Shaggy-moss** *R. triquetrus* certainly lives up to its name – big and distinctly shaggy. Each upright shoot can grow as high as 20cm and the leaves stick out in all directions. The **Little Shaggy-moss** *R. loreus* isn't actually that much smaller than the supposedly big one. It's just that its leaves are arranged more neatly on each branch – all pointing more or less in the same direction – so that it looks rather neater and less like a moss that's been 'pulled through a hedge backwards'!



Springy Turf-moss



Big Shaggy-moss



Little Shaggy-moss

I'll finish with another trio of distinctive mosses in the genus *Polytrichum*. To be fair, only the first, and probably the commonest, really qualifies as a big moss, but it's useful to be able to check with the other two somewhat smaller ones to be sure that you are not just looking at younger specimens of the big one.

Common Haircap *Polytrichum commune* forms very large tussocks in damp acidic moorland habitats, but it is quite shade-tolerant, so you will often find it in acidic wet woodlands. The size of the individual plants in a clump can reach as much as 40cm tall, but more often they are only about half that. The narrow pointed leaves are usually around 1cm long and when wet they spread away from the stem. To my mind this is probably the most distinctive of all the large mosses, both because of the appearance of its individual shoots and because of its clump-forming habit in often very wet ground.

The other two species, **Bristly Haircap** *P. piliferum* and **Juniper Haircap** *P. juniperinum* are significantly smaller and, while also needing acidic soils, both act as 'pioneer' species of comparatively dry bare substrates. In fact

the Juniper Hair-cap is actually most reliably found on recently burnt ground that is just starting to be re-colonised.

Because of these habitat requirements you shouldn't really confuse specimens of these two smaller Haircaps with young plants of the big common one, but just in case, you only need to look closely at the leaf tips. The Bristly Haircap leaves have tips that have long white hair-points, while the Juniper species have leaves with distinctive red-brown tips. Perhaps the most startling feature of both these plants can be seen in the spring when some patches develop male shoots with what look like small flowers. In the Bristly species these 'flowers' are a highly-coloured deep red, while the Juniper Haircap has more of an orange-brown colour. Do remember that these structures can't actually be flowers because mosses (along with ferns, horsetails and club-mosses) are non-flowering plants.



Common Haircap – tussock and shoot detail – Beanley Moors December 2021



Bristly Haircap – leaf detail with white hair-points and male shoots in spring



Juniper Haircap – leaf detail with sharp brown tips and male shoots in spring

An audience of 39 gathered for the November meeting. We had decided to use St James's new twin display screens. These worked well, with very sharp images, but at the end we agreed that they really weren't big enough for the sort of detailed photographic images most of our speakers have as part of their presentations, so from December we shall revert to our traditional projector and screen system.

Sadly, the venue's new sound system failed to work and we must hope that the problems will be sorted out in time for our December meeting.

George began with a Golden Plover specimen. These birds arrive here on migration to form big coastal flocks. Most of 'our' birds are from breeding grounds in Scandinavia and their piping calls can often be heard on winter mornings before dawn. When George then talked about the Seahouses Walrus, which had appeared in mid-month for a single day, we rather hoped he'd brought her with him, but unfortunately not.

We then welcomed Dr Gordon Port who has recently retired from his post as a lecturer in Ecology and Invertebrate Zoology at Newcastle University and who is heavily involved with the Natural History Society of Northumbria's invertebrate research projects. He explained that his talk title *Everything you wanted to know about Slugs and Snails, but were afraid to ask*, had been inspired by the title of the 1970s book whose title was the same except that the words 'Slugs and Snails' was originally 'Sex'.

His talk was structured around the answers to seven questions and concentrated rather more on slugs than snails.



Cepaea hortensis White-lipped Snail



Arion ater Large Black Slug

1. What are slugs and snails?

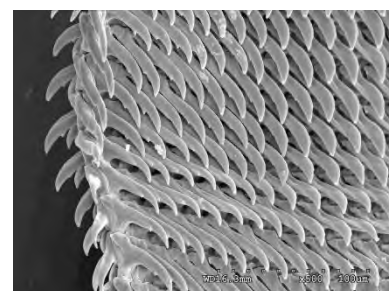
They are Molluscs and although the members of this large Phylum usually have shells, slugs are just molluscs without shells. It is thought that not all slugs are necessarily closely related. The different slug groups represent the end results of several lines of parallel evolution during which various forms of mollusc have found similar solutions to the problems of surviving successfully on land.

Britain has about 40 species of slug and about 100 snails. Of these only 5 slug species and 2 snails are significant pests either for gardeners or for commercial growers. This is largely because most species feed on dead and decaying plant material rather than on live plants.

Gordon then showed a gallery of photos to illustrate some of the different groups of slugs and snails.

2. Why are they pests?

Uniquely for land invertebrates they have a feeding method that is based on a rasping tongue (called a radula) with many small surface teeth. The photo shows the radula teeth magnified 500 times. They scrape the surface of the food plants which results in unsightly damage and gives opportunities for bacterial infections to further damage the plants. Of garden plants, perhaps



Hostas are the best example of species that are badly attacked, although probably the damage is caused more by snails than slugs.

Commercially they can be serious pests. Any grower whose salad crops arrive at a supermarket with even a single slug or snail will find that the whole batch will be rejected. In Australia one slug species climbs the stalks of wheat plants to aestivate among the seed heads. Then when the wheat is harvested, not only is the crop useless, but the blades of the machines become gummed up with the sticky mess from the slugs and have to be stopped and cleaned, often at the end of each cutting row.

3. What is their Life Cycle like?

Many species have an annual life cycle, but there is no specific seasonal starting point, so even within one species there may be several overlapping generations in a given year. Telling the age of a slug can be hard because they often react to adverse conditions by physically shrinking. Also, for reasons that aren't always clear, individuals will often grow at different rates even though they seem to be in the same environmental conditions, so animals of the same biological age can vary greatly in size.

Eggs are laid in batches of 20 to 50, usually in the soil, and they hatch into small versions of the adults. There are no larval stages. Some species, which may lay clutches of eggs late in the year, may overwinter as eggs or young juveniles in the soil. As a general rule a single animal will lay between 200 and 300 eggs in their lifetime.

4. What happens at night?

Most species tend to shelter in damp places during the day, but then about 20 minutes after dusk they emerge and start a nocturnal pattern of Move/Feed/Rest to digest/Repeat. And, of course, they mate during the night.

5. Are they hermaphrodite?

Yes, but not always male and female simultaneously. They tend to start as males and then convert to female as they age. Close nocturnal observation shows that they tend to follow each other's slime trails prior to mating, but it is not clear whether males follow females or *vice versa*. Garden Snails *Cornu aspersum*

(📷 below) have reproductive systems that include sharp needle-shaped darts which are used to stab the partner during mating – presumably to stimulate egg or sperm production. Leopard Slugs *Limax maximus* suspend themselves on a long string of mucus during mating (📷 right). The white mass at the base is the extruded genitals of the two animals, wrapped round each other.



6. Do slug pellets work?

This rather depends on the species. Not all are affected by all types of pellet, and in any case, although the pellets may immobilise the animals, they do not necessarily die and if they are not removed they may eventually recover. Traditional pellets contained metaldehyde, but this is no longer legal because of its effects on non-target species like beetles, birds and small mammals which eat slugs. Modern pellets have ferric phosphate as the active ingredient.

Other defensive methods that can be used with greater or lesser success are materials made of or infused with copper or zinc, although if these are used regularly there can be problems with the build-up of these metals which contaminate the soil. Potentially better are biological controls. Some beetles eat slugs, but there is a

tendency for the predators' jaws to become jammed up with slime, so increasingly nematode worms of species that specifically infect slugs and snails may be watered on the soil round target crops.

7. Do they like beer?

Beer traps are used by some gardeners (lager seems to be preferred!) but experimental evidence suggests that if both beer traps and traps that contain just water are both sunk in the soil around plants that need protection, the animals do not necessarily show a preference for the beer. The ones with beer may intoxicate slugs, but they usually recover, and the value of liquid traps, if there really is one, is that slugs may fall in and drown.

Slugs in UK gardens

A PhD student at Newcastle, called Imogen Cavadino, is fanatical about slugs and snails and her research work for her thesis has all been based around these animals in domestic gardens. In the early 1940s two researchers did some surveys of garden species, but with comparatively little follow-up. However their data have been useful as a baseline against which to compare Imogen's citizen science data 80 years later.

Her initial survey effort happened in 2019 and 2020 when she enlisted the involvement of volunteer surveyors to look specifically at the two species of Cellar Slug. She was interested in the extent to which the native Yellow Cellar Slug *Limacus flavus* has been being replaced in UK gardens by the more recent arrival, the Green Cellar Slug *Limacus maculatus*. She had hoped to recruit 60 volunteers, but ended up with 3,000.



Yellow Cellar Slug



Green Cellar Slug

One finding from this project was that, although the critical minimum night-time temperature for slug activity had been thought to be about 5°C, it was shown that there was still some activity when temperatures sank below zero.

Further parts of Imogen's research have resulted in 20,000 slug specimens now being held, preserved, at RHS Wisley.

Gordon's presentation ended with a lively question and answer section which underlined the degree of interest that AWG members have in these residents of our gardens. Topics included:

- Confirmation that slugs will be carnivorous if given the chance, although they tend just to eat each other rather than other animals. Cannibalism of smaller, younger members of the same species has been observed. So, if you are catching slugs for identification, try to keep them in separate small containers
- Pest species will have food plant preferences, and they will usually make straight for their favourite food and only move to less-favoured plants when the best are exhausted. While Hostas are often favoured in gardens, there may be differences between different Hosta varieties in terms of their susceptibility to attack.
- Slugs have been observed in bird nest boxes, although it seems likely that these will be Tree Slugs *Lehmannia marginata* (📷 below) which specialise in grazing lichens, fungi and algae on trunks and branches.



A lot has happened since the last newsletter, not least, the arrival in the county of Storms Arwen and Barra.

On Friday 26th November there was a rare red weather warning that stretched from Aberdeen down to North Yorkshire, mainly along the coast. A red warning is a serious risk to property the environment and to human life. Storm Arwen arrived bang on time, tracking down the North Sea on Friday evening causing mayhem along its path after peaking with 98 mph winds recorded at RAF Brizlee on Alnwick Moor. On Saturday 27th it had passed but there were still 60 mph winds throughout our area.

At Howick there has been significant damage to the woodland in the Arboretum and Long Walks area with more damage scattered around the estate as a whole. Our village hall has lost two landmark old Scots Pine trees from the car park with dozens more uprooted, snapped or blown over in the village wood. Some trees will be 200 yrs old and they are a very sad sight indeed.



How our wildlife coped with this turmoil I am unsure. Some small birds, voles, rabbits etc will be very low down under thick brambles or even in burrows, but things such as Roe Deer, Tawny Owls, larger roosting birds like Herons it must be unimaginable what they must go through. Time will tell if numbers are affected.

While the storm still raged on the 27th, and we were blocked in the village by fallen trees, I had a look at the sea from the Salter's Gate layby. 40 minutes being battered and soaked was more than enough, but in that time saw some good birds struggling into the gale.

1 Great Northern Diver, 3 Velvet Scoter, 1 Little Auk, 1 Long tailed Duck and best of all only my second local **Black Guillemot**. All driven from the northern North Sea by the fast moving storm.

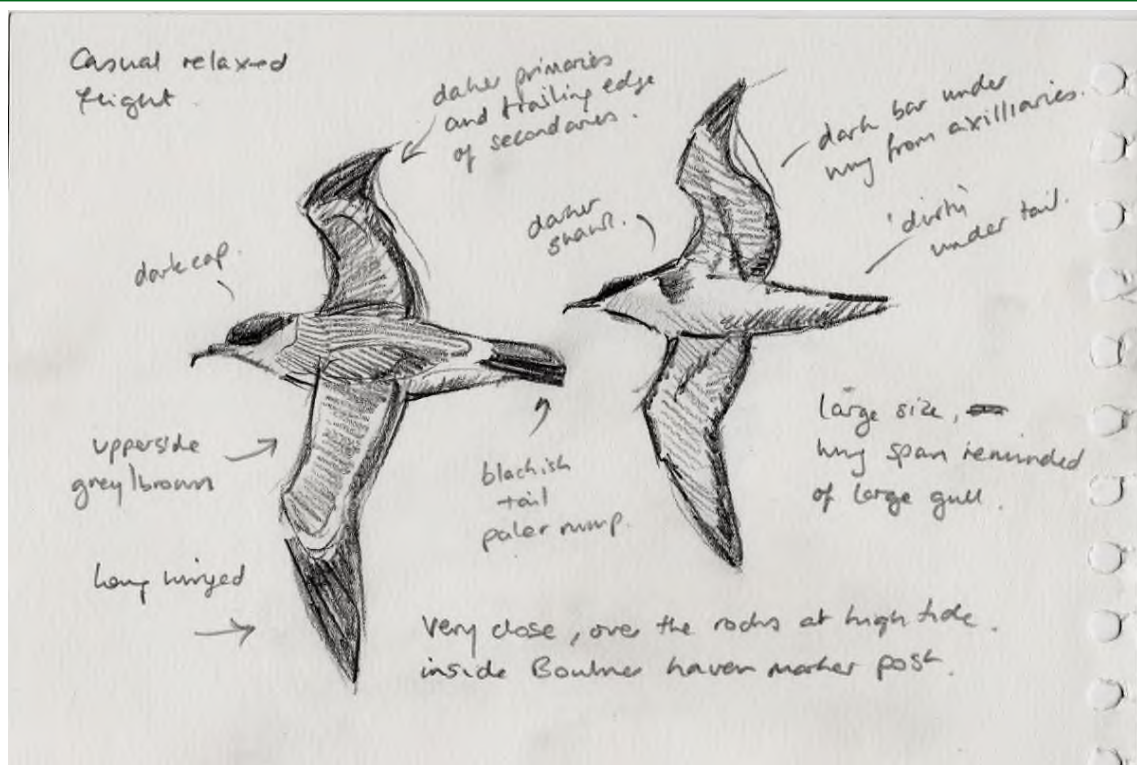


Figure 1: Great Shearwater, Seaton Point

The following day, the wind had abated somewhat so I headed down to Seaton Point to watch the sea there over the high tide. There were thousands of birds moving back north. Mainly Guillemots and Razorbills with at least 5,000 per hour passing the headland. It was quite overwhelming.

While concentrating on sifting through the masses of birds, again a few scarcities were found. Firstly, what I presume to be the same **Great Shearwater** that has been seen several times on the North Northumberland coast since September passed by at very close range, low over the waders roosting on the rocks giving fantastic views. My second **Black Guillemot** in two days came shortly afterwards followed by a huge first winter **Glaucous Gull** along the beach. Other birds counted included **23 Pale bellied Brent Geese**, **11 Goldeneye**, **51 Red throated Divers**, **9 Great Northern Divers** and **1 Black throated Diver**, **26 Puffins**, unusual in winter, **1 Velvet Scoter**, **1 Red necked Grebe** as well and many other commoner wildfowl and waders.

In the subsequent weeks we were left without power for 10 days so there was little time for watching wildlife other than during my frequent sorties out for logs for the woodburner. Hopefully the rest of the winter will be a little quieter.

Stewart Sexton, Howick.



Figure 2. Howick before Storm Arwen



Figure 3: And after... only a small snapshot of the wider picture of a changed landscape.

A RINGERS YEAR

NOV (and more October) **2021:** Returns from the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) this month included a Blue Tit (APK5924) that was originally ringed as a juvenile at Swarland back in July; but has apparently taken up residence at Howick where we controlled it very much alive on the 9th October. This is not a large movement but it's a little unusual for a Bluti. Meanwhile a male Goldcrest (NKH618) that we ringed on the 8th Oct at Howick had moved to Whitburn (controlled by the Whitburn Ringing Group on the 13th October). This bird weighed only 5.6g (a normal weight for this beautiful little bird) and still weighed 5.6g when it was controlled. Turning to Barn Owls the sad news was received that an owl (GY28075) hatched south of Brinkburn in June was found injured east of the A1 on the 24th October and had to be euthanised by a vet. Another owl (known to members of the Natural History Society of Northumbria, Hancock Mus. GV92583) to have successfully nested at Gosforth Park in 2020 was found dead in a box on the 26th August this year, at Gosforth Park Nature Reserve. The fascination of this bird is that it had been originally ringed (as an owlet) at Woodhurst in Cambridgeshire in July 2019! In order to monitor the effect of this current winter on our local owls please report findings of dead owls to myself or your local Natural History Group/Society (especially if they have a ring number).

We did ring at Howick on the 15/10/21 catching 39 birds (25 new and 14 retraps). The retraps included a male Chaffinch first ringed (as an adult) back in August 2015; so at least 6 yrs. old. There was also a retrapped Yellow-browed Warbler; the same bird that we ringed back on the 9th. Its weight was still the same at 5.9g; quite remarkable given it had experienced a week of bad local weather. The new birds covered: Bullfinch, Great Tits, Blue Tits, Dunnock, Chaffinch, Tree Sparrow, Coal Tit, Treecreeper and Goldfinch; while a Raven passed overhead. Returning on the 16th we captured 73 birds (48 new and 25 retraps). The new birds included 'still moving migrants' like Redwings, Blackcap and Goldcrest; as well as our more local resident tits; Goldfinch, Bullfinch, Robin and another new juvenile Treecreeper. On the 23rd we captured another 66 birds (52 new and 14 retraps). There seemed to be an influx of Goldcrests and many Goldfinches had homed in on the free bird seed. We held the last session on the 10th November and captured 69 birds (47 new and 22 retraps). We started with a late migrating Blackcap, a few Goldcrests and some continental looking (dark beaked) Blackbirds. However, there were many more local 'tits' including several that were retraps from 2019.

A rough analysis of the ringing season at Howick shows that we captured 878 birds in 2021 (compared with 1,143 in 2020):

116 new adults (compared to 153 in 2020); 505 new juveniles (compared to 594 in 2020).

From 31 species (compared to 36 species in 2020).

However, a glance back to previous years shows that the 2021 figures were actually quite consistent with 2017, 2018 and 2019. So it's the 2020 figures which are the outlier; showing an exceptionally good nesting season in 2020 (after the warm early spring weather).

Ringing with colleagues near East Linden on the 11/11/21 we captured 38 birds (20 new and 18 retraps) including 2 retrap Willow Tits; one an adult from 2019 and the other a juvenile we ringed in September. There was also a new juvenile Marsh Tit and an assortment of tits and Treesparrows. Returning on the 22/11/21 we captured 58 birds (31 new and 27 retraps). Included in the retraps was the adult Willow Tit from the 11th (Photo 1 attached); another adult first ringed in 2018 (Photo 2.); and another also captured on the 11th. We also retrapped a juvenile Marsh Tit first ringed on the 11th (Photo 3 attached). I can also report an observation (on the 15th) from another site near Fontburn Reservoir of Marsh Tits eating Honeysuckle berries (not a food I would have expected these tits to eat).

Currently waiting for the weather to improve so we can get on with making, repairing; and putting up new bird boxes for a variety of species including owls. Ideas for good sites are always welcome as are donations (have you seen the cost of wood now? – don't believe anyone who tells you inflation is not going up!).

Best Regards

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



Willow Tit 1



Willow Tit 2



Marsh Tit

Festive quiz

Use the first letter of each answer to create a festive message (not an anagram). All species have been seen within the Alnwick Wildlife Group area.

- A large finch seen, in winter, at Abbey Meadows woodland reserve, Morpeth?
- A purple fungi that if eaten could have serious consequences?
- Which genus contains the following species; Hoary, Ribwort and Bucks horn?
- A genus of bat that contains at least three species that are regularly seen in our area?
- A summer passerine migrant that brightens up any suitable wetland?
- This pinniped is now a rare sight on our coast?
- The Latin name of a common plant used in our homes over the festive period?
- Our commonest deer species?
- The stages in the life cycle of moulting insects?
- The phallic shaped fruiting body of this fungus can appear in woodland in our area? Often found by its smell.
- This species of carpet moth has two distinct marks on the outer upper wings that give its name?
- A large cetacean that can be found feeding off our coasts between July and October.
- This yellow flower is a welcome sight in our woodland at the end of January?
- A Branton Pond roadside verge reptile speciality? If lucky it can be found almost anywhere in our area?

Answers will be provided in the January edition of the newsletter.

Best of luck!

WINTER WALK – SATURDAY 20TH NOVEMBER 2021.

Eight hardy souls gathered in the car park at Warkworth Gut for a walk along the estuary and foreshore. The weather conditions were good for the exception of a stiff westerly wind. The saltmarsh and pools produced Little egret (1), Grey heron (2), Curlew and Redshank. Small numbers of Reed buntings flitted between the sand dunes and the saltmarsh. Viper's bugloss, Cat's ear and Common stork's bill (pale form) were all found in flower along the edge of the path. The largest numbers of birds were found on the mudflats of the estuary but the strong winds prevented a thorough examination. Golden plover (600+), Lapwing (80+) and Great black-backed gulls (50+) were the main species but there were also smaller numbers of Redshank and Oystercatcher. As we turned for home, a pair of Stonechats gave close views as they flitted along the flotsam on the edge of the dunes.



Twenty minutes were spent scanning from the pier. The highlights were an adult Whooper swan sitting on the sea, good numbers of Red-throated divers, Guillemots and Razorbills. There were smaller numbers of Puffins and singles of Black-throated diver, Great northern diver and Great crested grebe. Small numbers of Gannets, Shags and Cormorants fed offshore. The stroll back along the beach produced more Red-throated divers (some feeding in the surf giving close views), 7 Common scoters and more auks.

It was a lovely walk on a blustery morning with great company.

George Dodds

AWG SPEAKER PROGRAMME FOR 2021/22

Please note the change in programme for the March meeting. Neither the original speaker (Liz Clark) nor her replacement (Pauline Braviner) is now able to do the scheduled talk about Hedgehog Conservation. So, in their place, Chris Metherell will represent the Natural History Society of Northumbria and introduce the 2022 Common Orchid project which AWG hopes to get involved with. Then Richard Poppleton will give a short talk about some of the plants in the large family Asteraceae to whet your appetite for the coming botany season.

2022	Speaker	Topic
26 Jan	Tom Cadwallender (AWG)	Paddington gets the Bird – Birding darkest Peru
23 Feb	Graham Sorrie	Morpeth Swift Conservation
30 Mar	(a) Chris Metherell (b) Richard Poppleton	(a) The 2022 Common Orchids project (b) “Delightful Daisies”
27 Apr	Philip Hanmer (AWG)	The butterflies and natural history of the Cirque du Gavarnie, French Pyrenees
25 May	Dr Vivien Kent (The Otter Network)	Making Otters Count – the use of citizen science to monitor otter populations

SIGHTINGS NOVEMBER 2021

BIRDS

Great-northern Diver	1 off Stag Rocks on 13 th 1 off Amble on 20 th 1 at Boulmer on 21 st 1 at Stag Rocks on 30 th
Red-throated Diver	1 off Stag Rocks on 13 th several off Amble on 20 th 6+ at Boulmer on 21 st
Black-throated Diver	1 off Amble on 20 th 1 at Boulmer on 21 st
Great Shearwater	1 off Stag Rocks on 10 th and 13 th
Sooty Shearwater	1 at Boulmer on 21 st
Little Egret	2 at Branton Ponds on 19 th and 3 on 21 st 3 at Hedgeley Lakes on 7 th
Great-white Egret	1 at Hedgeley Lakes on 19 th
Whooper Swan	3 at Branton Ponds on 7 th and 5 on 8 th with 7 on 19 th 1 off Amble on 20 th 5 at Craster on 5 th 3 at Low Newton on 7 th
Brent Goose (Pale Bellied)	162 near Elwick on 30 th
Barnacle Goose	625 near Elwick on 30 th
Pink-footed Goose	6 near Branton on 14 th 1062 near Elwick on 30 th
White-fronted Goose	1 of the form albifrons near Branton on 14 th
Ruddy Shelduck	1 near Elwick on 30 th
Shoveler	34 at Budle Bay on 30 th
Goosander	3 at Felton Bridge on 24 th
Long-tailed Duck	2 at Boulmer on 21 st
Common Scoter	250 at Craster on 9 th
Velvet Scoter	1 at Boulmer on 21 st
Rough-legged Buzzard	1 near Elwick on 30 th
Merlin	1 near Elwick on 30 th
Spotted Redshank	1 at Boulmer on 25 th
Purple Sandpiper	30+ at Stag Rocks on 30 th
Ruff	5 at Druridge Pools on 30 th
Wilsons Phalarope	1 at Newstead Flash on 1 st and 4 th
Mediterranean Gull	1 at Stag Rocks on 14 th
Bonapartes Gull	1 at Stag Rocks on 10 th
Black Guillemot	1 off Stag Rocks on 13 th and on 30 th
Little Auk	3 at Boulmer on 21 st
Puffin	16 at Boulmer on 21 st
Barn Owl	1 at Browns Law on 11 th 1 at Lemmington Hall on 12 th
Skylark	40+ near Elwick on 30 th
Dipper	2 at Felton Bridge on 11 th 1 at Morpeth on 23 rd
Stonechat	1 near Brandon on 15 th
Fieldfare	1 at Craster on 8 th
Blackcap	1 at Felton on 29 th
Marsh Tit	1 at Fontburn on 15 th 2 at East Linden on 22 nd
Willow Tit	1 at Craster on 8 th 2 at Fontburn on 15 th 2 at East Linden on 22 nd
Long-tailed Tit	3-4 at Titlington Mount on 31 st
Rose-coloured Starling	1 at Glanton on 13 th
Raven	4 near Brandon on 15 th 2 at Dunstanburgh on 6 th and 18 th 1 at Howick on 18 th
Tree Sparrow	16+ near Elwick on 30 th
Linnet	218 near Elwick on 30 th
Twite	14 near Elwick on 30 th
Brambling	1 at Boulmer on 21 st
Snow Bunting	7 at Holy Island on 10 th
Yellowhammer	55+ near Elwick on 30 th
FUNGI	
Butter Waxcap	A small group near Powburn on 7 th at Felton all month.

Scarlet Waxcap	At Park Field Felton on 21 st
Snowy Waxcap	At Park Field Felton on 21 st at Felton all month.
Meadow Waxcap	At Park Field Felton on 21 st
Golden Waxcap	At Park Field Felton on 21 st
Parrot Waxcap	At Felton all month.
Blackening Waxcap	At Felton all month
Earth Tongue	30+ fruiting bodies at Branton Ponds on 13 th
Oyster Mushroom	At Branton Ponds on 13 th
MAMMALS	
Wild Goat	10 near Gleadscleugh on 6 th
Fox	1 at Craster on 29 th
Walrus	An immature female in Seahouses Harbour on 14 th
Harbour Porpoise	3 at Craster on 5 th
Bottle-nosed Dolphin	12 at Craster on 5 th and 11 th and 15 on 22 nd 6 at Low Newton on 30 th
OBSERVERS	
W Bullough, I&K Davison, G Dodds, M&J Drage, P&A Hanmer, A Keeble, R&J Poppleton, J Rutter, S Sexton.	

Hanmer & Wood Owl Boxes RESULTS 2021 (2007 = 30% nesting)

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Nesting	22%	28%	29%	20%	33%	20%	33%	22%	30%	64%	22%	36%	53%	15%
Successful nest	14% (14)	26% (26)	22% (22)	18% (18)	26% (26)	16% (16)	33% (33)	21% (21)	23% (23)	58% (58)	13% (13)	32% (32)	51% (51)	10% (10)
Eggs per clutch	4	5	4	4	3.5	3.3	4	3	3.5	3.7	4	3.9	4.5	3.6
% eggs hatched	53%	69%	68%	96% (69)	73% (85)	83% (55)	93% (127)	92% (57)	69% (73)	69% (196)	36% (32)	69% (97)	76% (182)	43% (23)
Average hatched	2	3	3	4	2.5	2.8	4	3	2	3	1.5	2.7	3.4	1.5
Average fledged.	1	3	2	3	2	2	4	2	2	2.8	1.4	2.5	3.2	1.4
Percent of eggs 'ringed'	32% (24)	59% (74)	55% (59)	88% (63)	66% (73)	61% (40)	89% (121)	84% (52)	84% (61)	92% (181)	34% (30)	65% (92)	76% (168)	39% (21)
Eggs were mostly laid	Second half of May	Second half of May	April, May & June	April to May	April and later	May but some later.	March & April	April	May but many later.	March & April	May	April & May	Early April	Late May
Weather (Met Office summary)	Coldest April since 2001 and above average rainfall; weather deteriorated further in June.	Warmer, dryer and sunnier than average in April & May. June was warmer and dryer than average.	Heavy snow in late winter & early spring.	Heavy snow in early Winter (Nov & Dec 2010)	Exceptional warm March & April; followed by above average rainfall; which continued.	Very cold spring. Below average temp. in June. Fine weather from July.	A mild winter followed by early warm spring; with hardly any frosts. Fine summer weather only declining in August.	A benign winter was followed by a short period of dry sunny and warm weather in April. However, May onwards was cool and wet.	Winter was the second wettest since 1910. Spring was dryer. April was cool and summer did not become settled until later.	Mild winter followed by a dry spring. Warmer than average from March to June. From mid July the weather was cooler and wetter.	Winter and spring had low average temperatures and late snow. May was warmer and the Summer very dry & hot.	Winter was milder & dryer than average. Temps fluctuated in April & May but the summer started warm; eventually becoming unsettled.	Winter was mild & dry. Spring was warmer & sunnier than average. The summer gradually became unsettled and finished wet.	Winter started mild but deteriorated in February becoming colder with snow. This continued into the spring. April started wet and got colder. May was little better and June was very mixed.