



February Newsletter



Speakers Tom Cadwallender and Drew Lyness

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Long Tailed Tit - The Hirsell - Neil Hinchliff



Club Information

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Committee

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Graham Bell



Committee

Member

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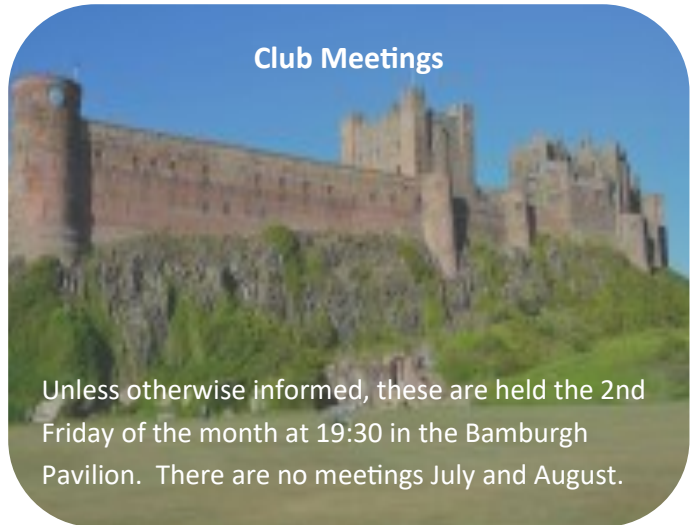
Committee

Member

Chris Cobb



Club Meetings



Unless otherwise informed, these are held the 2nd Friday of the month at 19:30 in the Bamburgh Pavilion. There are no meetings July and August.



Bird Recorder

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On-Line Editor

Richard Poyer

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John McCutcheon

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Check out our Internet presence



On our web site at:

northnorthumberlandbirdclub.co.uk



On our Facebook page at:

www.facebook.com/NorthNorthumberlandBirdClub



Email us at:

ringouzel@northnorthumberlandbirdclub.co.uk



Members WhatsApp Group Chat

NNBC Chat (Join by requesting a [link](#))



Noticeboard

Dear all,

Once again, we will soon be in need of a few new committee members. Sarah has recently stood down, and very soon Fiona and Liz will be stepping down following admirably long stints.

We have received one likely candidate, but with a male majority, we would like to try and redress the balance by attracting a few more women, though males are welcome to put their names forward too.

We are a friendly and inclusive club, with the role of the committee being very straight forward. We meet once a month to discuss any issues prior to our Bamburgh indoor evening; with perhaps small advance roles being issued for the pavilion. Our ideal would be to retain a full committee quota of 10, thereby easing the quest for our continued success.

Please feel free to contact myself, or any member of the committee at any time.

Neil Hinchliff

Upcoming Field Trips

Friday 21st March 2025 at 10:00

Branton & Hedgeley - Details to follow

Friday 24th April 2025 at 10:00

Harthope Valley - Details to follow

Also on horizon...

May 11th - Dawn Chorus, Ford and Etal

May 24th - St Abbs

June 9th—Upper Teesdale

To look forward to...

We are also considering putting together more trips during this coming year...these may include longer day trips to the likes of Fairburn Ings and Tophill Low (Yorkshire); Blacktoft Sands (Lincolnshire); and perhaps multi-day trips to say Dumfries next wintertime.

For all Field Trips please read the Risk Assessment on our Web site beforehand. For dates and times and last minute changes / cancellations check our Facebook Page, NNBC Chat, or directly with Leaders for the event. Please car share if you can.

"Birds are magical. Their flight alone can arouse a clever thought"

Michael Bassey Johnson



Upcoming Meetings

Friday 14th March 2025 at 19:30

The Peregrine Project with **George Smith**

Friday 11th April 2025 at 19:30

To Antarctica & Back with Arctic Terns with **Chris Redfern**

Friday 9th May at 19:30

South East Australia & The Outback with **John Lumby**

See web site for details of other Meetings

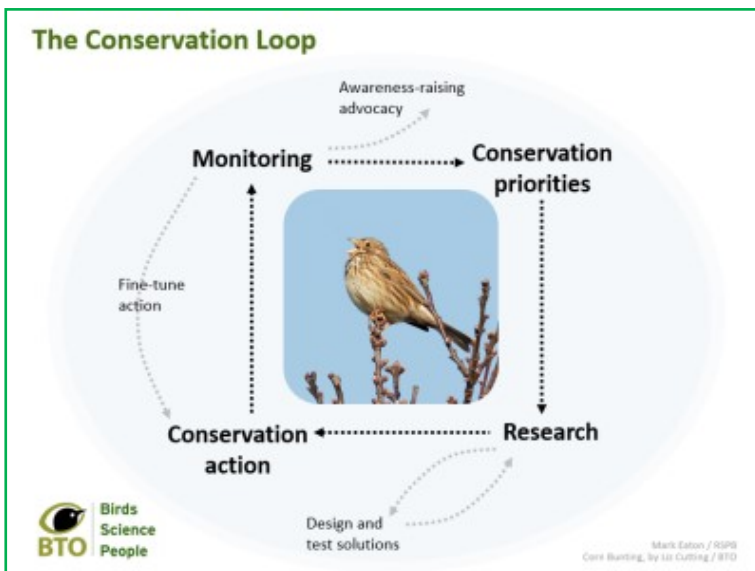


Speaker's Presentation

BTO & BTO Surveys with Tom Cadwallender and Drew Lyness

We had a good turnout of club members for our British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) indoor meeting presentation on this Valentines evening. Tom Cadwallender (BTO Regional Representative for Northumberland) had been our initial contact, together with his wife Muriel Cadwallender (Breeding Birds Survey Co-ordinator for Northumberland). The overall plan was to thoroughly introduce some of the more popular surveys to club members, as well as running through the methodologies used for collating all the statistics.

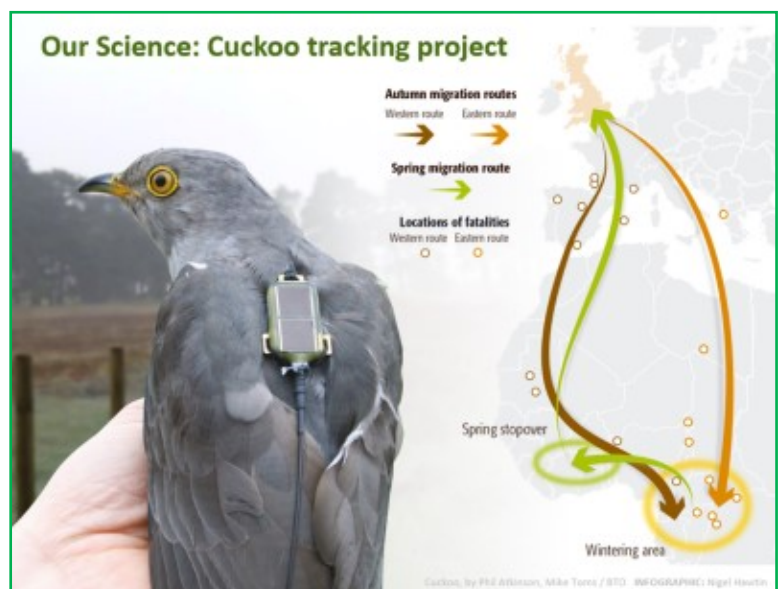
In order to get a fuller picture of BTO survey strategies, Tom and Muriel were able to bring along Drew Lyness (BTO's Development and Engagement Co-Ordinator) who is generally based at BTO HQ in Thetford, Norfolk. Sadly, Muriel had to drop out at the last minute, so we all sat back for - at times a quite comedic - but certainly, a very professional and entertaining double act.



Their talk covered the BTO and it's reasons and importance for its existence, and then gradually introduced a variety of Surveys including Garden Birdwatch, Birdtrack, Breeding Bird Survey (BBS), Cuckoo Tracking Project, Bird Ringing Scheme, Heathland Birds Survey, Heronries Project (now around 75 years in the running), Nest Record Scheme, Waterways Breeding Bird Survey (WBBS), Wetland Bird Survey (WeBs), and Winter Gull Survey (WinGs)....most of which any present member of the BTO could participate in throughout the year in their potential new roles as "citizen scientists".

Many of the audience were already BTO members, as well as active surveyors of at least one census, but by the end of the evening the enthusiasm was noticeable. I will be encouraging all to consider joining, and then assisting the BTO in their quest for data, and will always be at hand to point people towards the most ideal co-ordinator depending upon the survey chosen.

Of course, it didn't just stop at birds, as mammals, bats, insects, etc are all monitorable, with all and any correctly collected data being welcomed by the BTO.



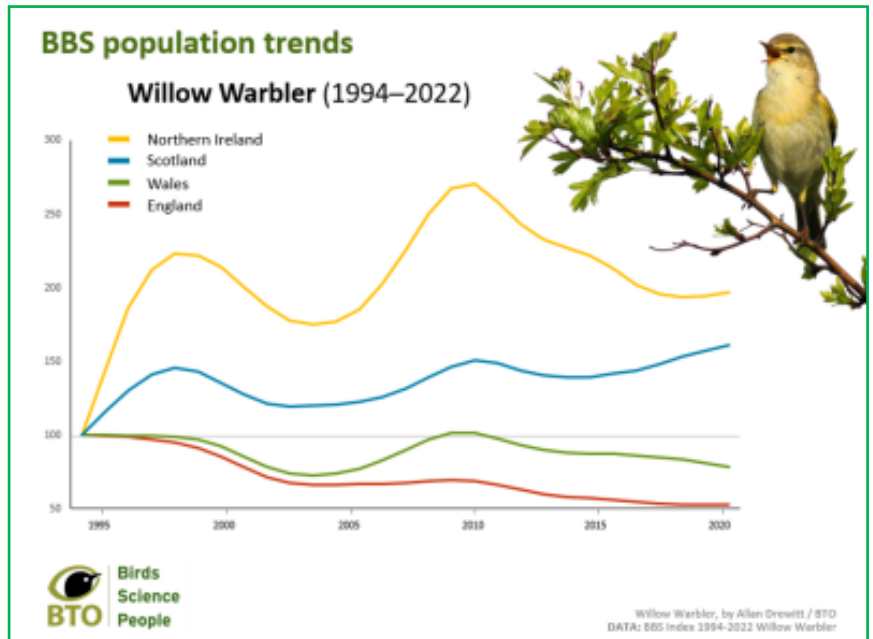


Speaker's Presentation

A small donation was made to the BTO at the end of the evening.

Many thanks again to Drew, Muriel, and Tom for putting together such a superb evening.

Neil Hinchliffe





Field Trip Report

Coquet Estuary, Warkworth and Birling Carr led by Chris Cobb. 20th February 2025

A group of 16, including some new members, met at 9.30 am at the Warkworth Beach Car Park. This would normally be one of Richard Poyer's regular walks but because his walking is limited at the moment Chris volunteered to lead it this time. As we gathered in the car park very few small birds were seen in the trees and shrubs apart from a lone Blackbird and a Song Thrush.

We made our way through the picnic area spotting a Chaffinch, a Magpie and a Rook. We carried on downhill and turned right along the track behind the caravans towards the salt marsh where an obliging Stonechat made an appearance. The count started to pick up when we began to see some waders including Redshank, Curlew, Teal, Oystercatchers and Shelduck. A couple of Meadow Pipits and a Skylark also swept by.



We spoke too soon about the weather commenting that we were pleased that it was milder today, and then the wind picked up making it hard for the people using scopes to keep them steady to try and identify the species and confirm for me that the little black duck I was looking at was in fact a piece of wood in the water!

Richard did in fact manage to catch us up along this stretch and join us for a short while, chatting with the new members he had not met before. Turnstone, Dunlin, Bar-tailed Godwit & Curlew were added to the list here. Richard left us to enjoy the rest of our day with a parting comment that the Estuary seemed particularly quiet this morning; and he was correct! Neil in desperation using his scope over towards the rooftops in Amble added House Sparrow and Starling to our list.

We carried on and took the right-hand fork in the track into the dunes where there wasn't much to be seen other than a flock of Linnets and a nice group of Ringed Plover down on the beach. We then retraced our steps and took the track up to the North Pier where we saw a Pied Wagtail. A raft of Scoters and Great Crested Grebe were seen





Field Trip Report

out to sea with scopes which we hoped we would get a better view of from the Birling Carr side. So, we retraced our steps back to the cars for people to have a short lunch break where Neil was the only one to spot a Goldcrest. Suitably refreshed 10 of us carried on and took the coast path northward to Birling Carr where we caught a quick shower of rain before the sun put in an appearance.

Not much was seen through the golf course to the caravans, only a fleeting glimpse of a wren. We then took up position in the shelter of a caravan and the scopes were set up for the next half hour or so to scan out to sea. The Scoters that we had seen earlier were still on the water and a Little Egret flew by. A Slavonian Grebe and a Red Throated Diver were also spotted.

We then made our way back to the carpark via the bridlepath where we saw a large flock of mixed Corvids overhead. It had been a pleasant, sociable day and when we totalled it up, we had seen 48 species in all. Not many photos were taken, so thank you to Neil for providing these to brighten up my report.

Maureen Cobb

Species Seen:

Coquet Estuary and Warkworth Dunes

- Mute Swan
- Common Shelduck
- Mallard
- Eurasian/Green-winged Teal
- Common Eider
- Common Scoter
- Common Pheasant
- Common Woodpigeon
- Eurasian Oystercatcher
- European Golden Plover
- Common Ringed Plover
- Northern Lapwing
- Eurasian Curlew
- Bar-tailed Godwit
- Common Redshank
- Ruddy Turnstone
- Red Knot
- Sanderling
- Dunlin
- Black-headed Gull
- Common Gull
- European Herring Gull
- Great Black-backed Gull
- Lesser Black-backed Gull
- Great Cormorant
- Common Magpie

- Rook
- Carrion Crow
- Eurasian Skylark
- Eurasian Wren
- Common Starling
- Eurasian Blackbird
- European Stonechat
- House Sparrow
- Pied Wagtail/White Wagtail
- Meadow Pipit
- Common Chaffinch
- Common Linnet
- Common Reed Bunting

Birling Carrs

- Common Eider
- Common Scoter
- Red-breasted Merganser
- Common Woodpigeon
- Slavonian Grebe
- Great Crested Grebe
- Red-throated Diver
- Little Egret
- Eurasian Jackdaw
- Rook
- Carrion Crow



Bird Sighting Records

Below are the highlights for February 2025...

Tundra Bean Goose	1 at Alnmouth on 25th	NH
White-fronted Goose	36 at Monk's House Pool on 20th and 40 on 28th	JPL
	6 at Newton Scrape on 28th	JPL
	28 (European) at Monks House Pool on 27th	PCA
Pintail	60 at Fenham-le-Moor on 7th	PN&MN
Velvet Scoter	1 at Stag Rocks on 28th	NH
Grey Partridge	2 at Birling on 22nd	RP
Great Crested Grebe	1 at Branton on 5th and 26th	JMcC
	2 at Birling Carr on 20th	NNBC
Slavonian Grebe	3 at Birling Carr on 20th	NNBC
Avocet	1 at Newton Scrape on 28th	JPL
	1 at Newton Scrape on 28th	NH
Black-tailed Godwit	1 at Coquet Estuary on 4th	RP
Knot	2 at Coquet Estuary on 20th	NNBC
	5 at Holy Island on 7th	PN&MN
	9 at Coquet Estuary on 4th	RP
Purple Sandpiper	5 at Football Hole on 15th	PCA
Woodcock	1 at Warkworth on 15th	JHB
Common Sandpiper	4 at Newton Scrape on 20th	JPL
Lesser Black-backed Gull	At Branton/Hedgeley on 28th	JMcC
	1 at Coquet Estuary on 20th	NNBC
Red-throated Diver	1 at Birling Carr on 20th	NNBC
	1 at Beadnell on 26th	PCA
Little Egret	1 at Fenwick on 11th	MLT
Sparrowhawk	1 at Longframlington on 16th and 25th	JMcC
	1 at Long Nanny on 22nd	PCA
	1 at Low Newton on 7th	PCA
Marsh Harrier	1 at Low Newton on 26th	PCA
Barn Owl	1 at Buston Links on 6th	RP
Short-eared Owl	1 at North Northumberland on 28th	PCA
	1 at North Northumberland on 24th	PHa
Kingfisher	1 at Howick Pool on 1st	P&AH
Great Spotted Woodpecker	1 at Yearle on 25th	DG&RB
Goldcrest	2 at Howick Pool on 22nd	P&AH
Nuthatch	1 at Howick on 13th	BRW
	4 at Howick on 1st	P&AH
Dipper	1 at Ingram on 16th	PCA
White Wagtail	1 at Howick on 1st	P&AH
Bullfinch	2 at Branton on 5th and 19th	JMcC
Greenfinch	12 at Longframlington on 14th	JMcC
Twite	c20 at Long Nanny on 12th	PCA
Siskin	4 at Longframlington on 13th, 1 on 26th	JMcC



Bird Sighting Records

Contributors

Paul Armstrong (PCA)
Graham & Rosemary Bell (DG&RB)
Jon Bowen (JHB)
Phil Hanmer (PHa)
Phil & Alison Hanmer (P&AH)
Neil Hinchliff (NH)
John Lumby (JPL)
John McCutcheon (JMCC)
Phil & Marge Noble (PN&MN)
Richard Poyer (RP)
Mark Tranter (MLT)
Barry Whitehead (BRW)
NNBC Field Trip (NNBC)

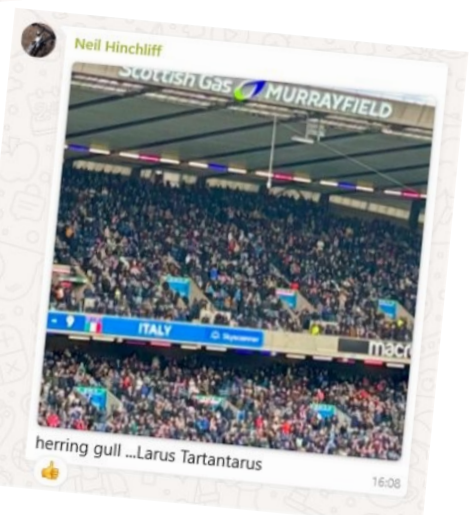
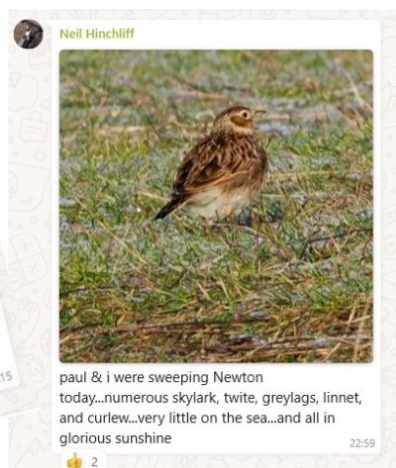
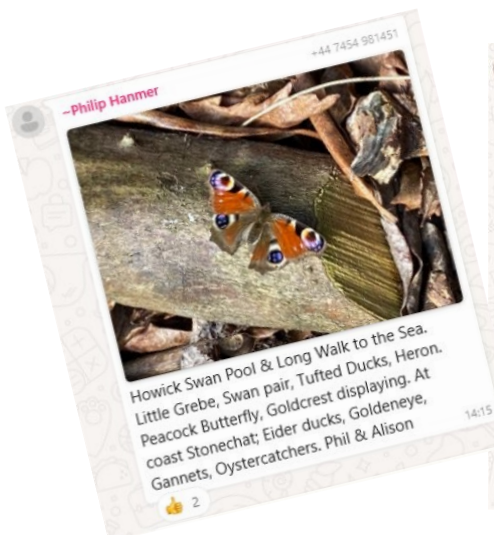
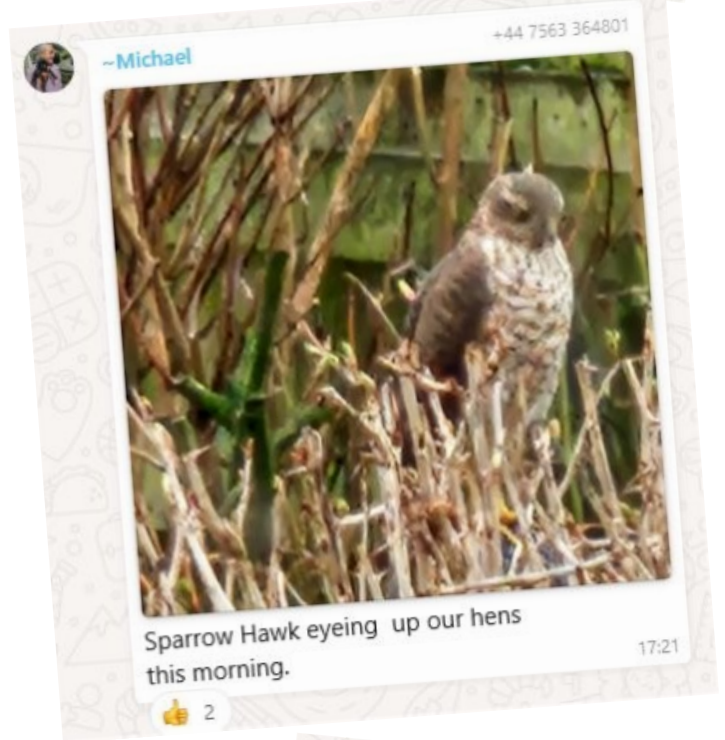
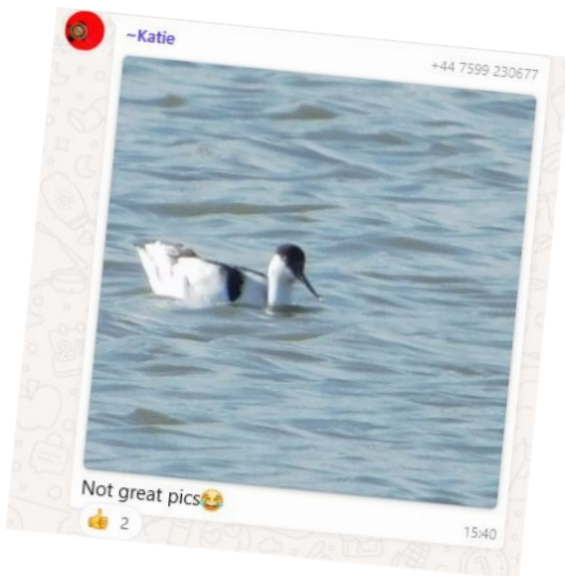
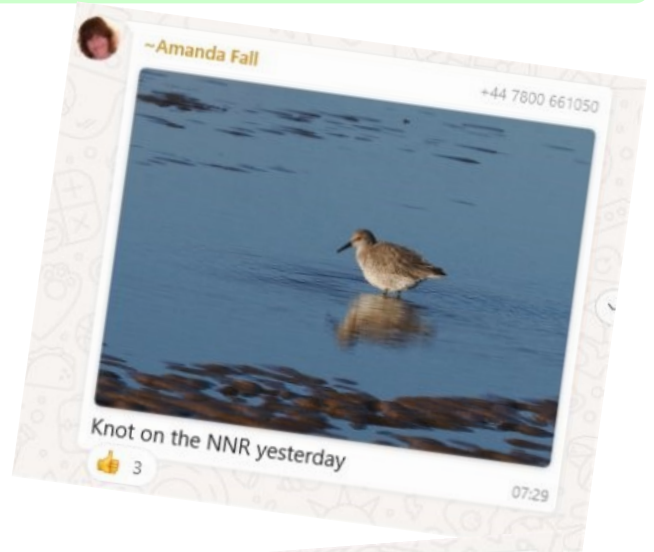
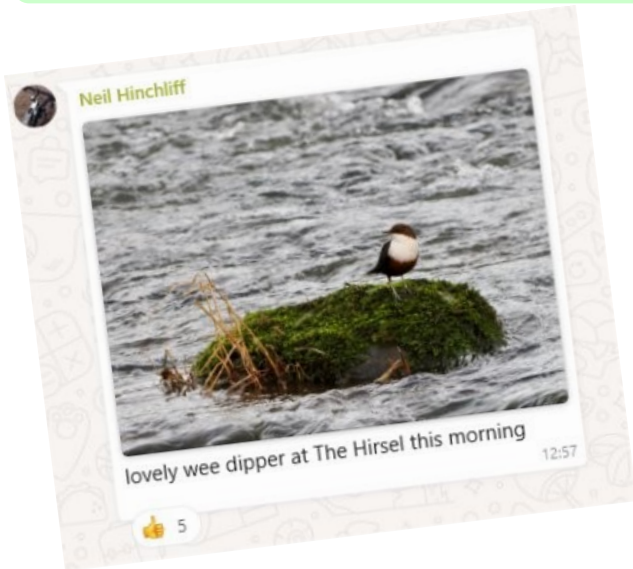


Short-eared Owl Alnwick Moor Road 24/2/25
Phil Hanmer



What's Up on WhatsApp

NNBC Chat—A quick look at some of the posts on the club's WhatsApp Group page





Members' Contributions

A quick look at the BTO



Following last months impressive presentation by Tom Cadwallender and Drew Lyness, I thought I'd take a look at the organisation's web site and the messages it gives:

You can visit their site at www.bto.org and explore the plethora of interesting information they have to offer. Much of the snippets presented here have been taken directly from their web site

The home page message starts with the mantra:

A world inspired by birds and informed by science

and highlights three essential aspects of their organisation:

Making birdwatching count

We empower 60,000 bird-enthusiasts to gather vital data, develop their skills and be part of a vibrant community

Championing impartial science

We answer the most pressing questions about birds, through our thorough and impartial scientific research

Sharing our bird knowledge

We communicate our knowledge and expertise to increase the value of birds and other wildlife for all.

From the site you can subscribe to their e-newsletter and find out much about the volunteering opportunities available to you.

The well organised site has 5 main menu items covering lots of what the site has to offer. These are highlighted below, but best bet is to visit the site and look for yourself. It is well very organised and easy to navigate.

The difference we make:

This is a very comprehensive blog type section that allows you to easily navigate the content you might be interested in. It has a comprehensive range of topics for you to explore

How you can help:

- Attend BTO events
- Donate
- Take part in a project
- Help fund our work
- Join BTO
- Provide for Birds
- Report Something
- Shop

Understanding birds:

- Articles
- Avian influenza
- BirdFacts
- Bird families
- Bird recording
- Book reviews
- The British List
- Biodiversity loss and the UK's birds

You can join directly on the web site:

Membership fees start from £3 per month:

You will learn about birds, support the BTOs work and enjoy exclusive content and benefits

Our science:

- Focal research areas
- Projects
- Publications
- Case studies
- Research topics
- BTO Consulting
- Products and Technologies
- Our approach to science
- Data
- National Offices
- BTO science newsletter

Develop your skills:

- Training courses
- Key birding tools
- Survey essential
- Field craft articles
- Learn to identify birds

and of course the surveys that we heard so much about from Tom and Drew's presentation...

and so much more...



A Ringer's Year - February 2025

February is always a strange month; its short and the weather is invariably unsettled; we humans are always looking for signs of spring and its almost inevitable that some ill-informed media commentator tells us that birds have started nesting (most have not). We will start a check of Barn Owl sites in March to do last minute repairs to boxes, clean out old jackdaw sticks and excessive amounts of owl pellets and yes, it's just possible that a particularly forward pair of owls will have started laying eggs. However, its more likely we will find that some pairs of birds have adopted a box (perhaps having roosting there all winter) or a new youngish male has claimed a box and is hoping to attract a mate.

During April and most of May we will leave our Barn Owls in peace to let them get on with nesting and not return to them until the end of May and June to find out what they have done. So, if you see Barn Owls around a box in the next couple of months by all means tell us about it but please leave them alone. Tawny Owls will be starting to lay eggs soon and we will leave them to get on with this until April. Finally, if you're going to tell me you have nesting Blue Tits in your garden (because you have seen one taking a feather into a box); no sorry they are not nesting yet – they nest until May but ambitious birds do like to try to 'claim' boxes and holes at this time of year (it's a bit putting towels on a deck-chair).

Like last month it was interesting to get some returns from the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO). First there was an adult Blue Tit (AER9187) controlled by Hilary near East Linden on the 6/2/25; that it turns out was originally ringed as a pullus (in its nest) by another ringer on the in the first week of June 2022; just a mile away near South Linden. So, it had not travelled far but it had survived into its third year. Then there was a Siskin (BEE0590) controlled near Longframlington on the 31/1/25 that had been ringed (just out of its nest) at Swarland in June 2024. Finally, Allan, ringing at Selkirk, back on 9/3/24, had ringed a Siskin (BJD0216) and this was then controlled by another ringer at Peebles on the 28/1/25; clearly on its way back north but using just a slightly different route than last year.



Doing the last session of the BTO Winter Ringing Project on the 17/2/25 we captured 28 birds 17 new and 11 retraps. Almost the first bird captured was a very alert adult Male Nuthatch (see photo). Nuthatches are not exactly a woodpecker but they get very vocal and try to claim a piece of woodland as their territory this time of year. Then there were two Siskins; an adult male and a juvenile female (hatched last year); both probably going to travel further north before nesting. There were then a whole bunch of Blue Tits and Great Tits not a single one a juvenile. Confirming yet again what a poor breeding year last years tits had. Finally, there was a juvenile Dunnock and a juvenile Robin (the number of Robins around our garden this year is excessive; and yes,

they insist on constantly chasing each other). You may ask why there are still juvenile Dunnocks and Robins about (and not juvenile tits) – the explanation is that these birds are capable of having multiple broods, so if the 'May' nest fails they can try again unlike the tits who can only do it once.

The retraps included two adult Long Tailed Tits, almost certainly a pair, that we see regularly see around the garden (particularly liking to feed on fat balls). Sometimes there is another Long Tailed in tow; probably a related bird (see



Ringer's Roundup



photo). There were also four adult Blue Tits, one from 2023, and yet another adult Robin, also from 2023. The BTO (almost certainly my son Hugh) will analyze all the results of the Winter Ringing Project undertaken by ringers up and down the country.

Despite the vagaries of the weather, we managed another session of the Blackbird colour ringing project at Howick Village on the 5/2/25. One new female was ringed with an Orange ring above the metal BTO ring on the right leg; indicating a 2025 bird; and Orange above Blue on her left (see pict). She is now easily identifiable at a distance as 'Orange/Blue'. We also recaptured Green/Yellow from 2024; Blue/Yellow from 2024; Red/

White from 2025; and Yellow/Yellow from 2024. Clearly Howick Village is a good place for Blackbirds to prosper. The by-catch included a new Dunnock (ringed by a new trainee) and a retrap Robin and another retrapped Dunnock.

Trying again on the 19/2/25 we were defeated by some incredibly cold weather after re-trapping Yellow/Yellow we packed up and finished early. Yellow/Yellow seems to have lost some tail feathers (see pict.) after perhaps fighting with fellow blackbirds or having an encounter with a local free-ranging cat...



Phil Hanmer

S Ringer/Trainer, Natural History Society of Northumbria Ringing Group (Hancock Museum)

Email: tytoalbas@btinternet.com



Epilogue

Thank You...

Thank you to everyone who supported, with purchases or donations, the 'homemade stall' at February's meeting. NNBC has sent £120 to 'Friends of Red Kites' (FoRK) who are very appreciative for the donation:" A huge "Thank you" for your donation."

You might like to visit: <https://friendsofredkites.org.uk>

Rosemary Bell

166 and counting...

EBird users have reported 166 species in Northumberland this year including Long-Eared Owl and Black Grouse

Spring is in the air...

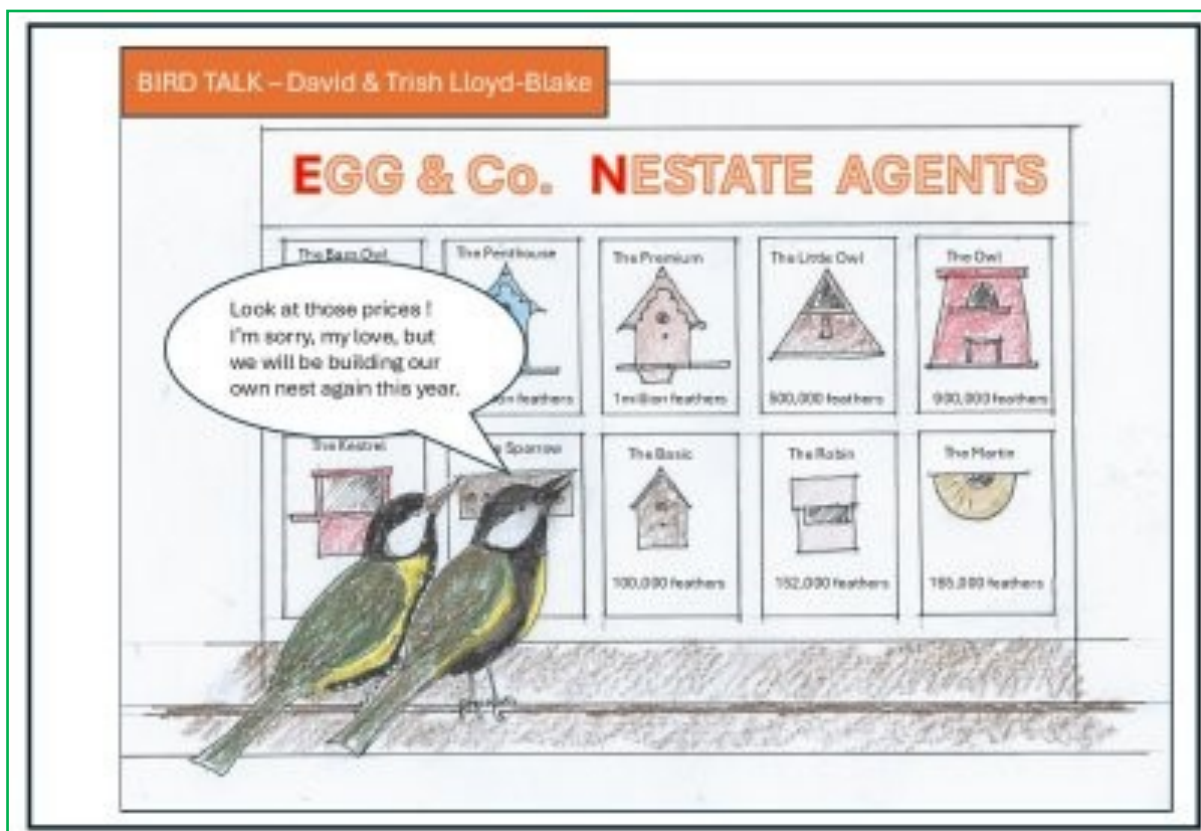
The first Chiffchaffs have arrived at Branton and Pied Avocets at various places along the coast



A Blast from the Past - this month's hint

Help your garden birds to find nest material by putting out dry moss (raked from your lawn?), hair (from a pet brushing?), feathers (from plucked fowl or an old pillow?) and mud for Thrushes, Blackbirds, Swallows and House Martins (pond or pubble?)

Hints are from Graham Bell's early newsletters

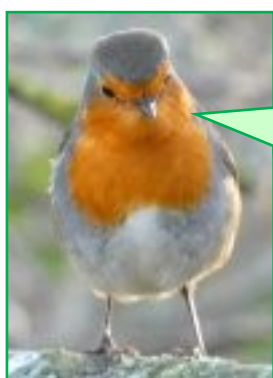


Members' Contributions to the Newsletter

Several members have submitted articles for publishing in the Newsletter, offered on their own volition to add interest, inform and entertain the other members.. so far all have been very interesting and much appreciated. BUT we need more, so please consider an offering you think will interest, enlighten or simply amuse your fellow members.

In 99.9% of cases, they should of course relate to birding!

Look forward to receiving your offerings!



Got something you'd like to add? Please let us know.

Content for the Newsletter

Submissions for inclusion in the form of notes, articles, photographs etc are welcomed. These should be Emailed to the Newsletter Editor. Deadline for copy is the first Friday of the month, but earlier is preferred. The target date for distribution is the weekend before the club's meeting, usually on the Sunday.