NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND BIRD CLUB

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Honey Buzzard on Migration R. Poyer

MEMBERS' NIGHT: This new venture combined festive fare of Mulled Wine, Mince Pies and other seasonal goodies with three varied presentations from Members. Stewart & Alison McCormick introduced us to the joys of Japan with their 'Birding Japan in Winter', followed by John Lumby in warmer climes with a birding trip to Borneo. After the interval, Chairman Richard Poyer transported us to Bulgaria as he shared the bonhomie and good birding of the NNBC trip to coincide with the Autumn Migration along the Baltic Coastine. Turn to page 3 for a report of the evening……

Winter visitor: Purple Sandpiper R. Poyer

NEW YEAR'S DAY John Lumby led the Annual New Year Quest on a calm and beautiful sunny day to see how many species the group could find before retiring to the Castle Hotel. '*Our final stop had to be Stag Rocks where we managed to see…….two hundred Purple Sandpipers on the rocks'* Check out page 4 for John's account of their very successful quest.

Noticeboard on page 2

Bird Records on page 4

WHAT'S NEW ON THE WEBSITE: Philip Hanmer rounds off his Year with some surprising captures (see picture opposite) whilst ringing locally from his home near Alnwick. Check out the photos and the write-up on 'Ringer's Roundup' for December

HAPPY NEW YEAR

NOTICEBOARD

Indoor Meetings — Bamburgh Pavilion

- **Friday, 12th January 2018 at 7.30pm** Brian Clasper makes a welcome return visit to the Pavilion as he 'Follows a Daughter Round AUSTRALIA'. Excellent photography and warm repartee will ensure our year gets off to a fine start.
- **Friday, 9th February 2018 at 7.30pm** *'Wildlife of the Falklands'*. Tim Mason. Following two periods of service as Headmaster of the Junior School on the Falkland Islands, which allowed him to indulge his twin passions of Photography and the Natural World, Tim will give us a fascinating insight to the birds and other wildlife of these windswept islands.
- [* N.B. This replaces the scheduled talk by Mike Watson on 'Colorado', which has unfortunately been cancelled at short notice, and will now appear in the programme for 2019]

- **Field Trips & Residentials** [For all Field Trips Read please Risk Assessment on Website beforehand . [For last-minute Cancellations e.g. adverse weather conditions, check our Facebook Page.]

Sunday , 18th February, 2018 at 10am Warkworth & Coquet Estuary Meet in the small public car park by Warkworth Golf Course (O.S.ref NU255064) . Please share cars if possible. We'll explore the area for divers, sea-birds, wildfowl and waders. Bring warm clothing, stout footwear and optional packed lunch (or an opportunity to visit one of Warkworth's cafés and/or pubs afterwards) ***Leader: Richard Poyer***

RESIDENTIAL WEEKEND: BIRDING IN SPEYSIDE from 4th-7th JUNE 2018 3 nts DB&B for £232.50

One double room remains available for this attractive short break at the Grant Arms Hotel in Grantown –on-Spey. If interested, further details are available from Fiona Southern. e-mail: jfs@robincottage.co.uk

TIME TO RENEW ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Membership Subscriptions were due on 1st of January; they remain unchanged at £10 per Individual or £15 for Couples or Family Members living at the same Address. (Please note that a membership form is sent out as a *separate* attachment with the December e-Newsletter.) To Renew your membership simply fill in the form and send it to the Membership Secretary with a cheque made payable to North Northumberland Bird Club, or bring it along to our first meeting of the New Year on 12th January, 2018

EDITORIAL ASSISTANCE. Following the recent request for help with Editing the Newsletter, we are delighted to welcome **Mora Rolley** who has kindly volunteered to assist with the task of editing and collating some of the articles received each month.

Half a million people took part in this annual survey of their garden birds last year. Even if you are not a member, you can still go online and request a FREE survey pack from the RSPB www.rspb.org.uk. The count only takes an hour.

NNBC Members' Night, December 2017

In a new venture for this Christmas season, the meeting of the Bird Club at Bamburgh in December was a much more informal one. Four members of the club described birding holidays taken in 2017 while mulled wine and mince pies were served to the audience in the interval.

The meeting opened with **Alison and Stewart McCormick** reliving their trip to Japan. They travelled widely across the country, from Kyushu in the south to Hokkaido in the north.

Arriving in Tokyo their first bird watching was on the main island of Honshu. Woodland walks were rewarded with Japanese Woodpecker, Pygmy Woodpecker, Daurian Redstart, Pallas's Rosefinch, Copper and Japanese Green Pheasant. As well as new birds, Alison and Stewart visited the volcanic region where the famous Japanese Macaques or "Snow Monkeys" bathe in the hot water pools. Leaving the snow of the Japanese Alps behind, they moved south to the much warmer island of Kyushu. Here one of the main attractions was the Hooded Cranes - thousands of them- overwintering on rice stubble. On a pelagic trip they also saw the rare and tiny Japanese Murrelet.

The last part of the trip meant heading for the winter cold of Hokkaido at minus 20C where they were rewarded with the highlight of the trip, enjoying the sight and sound the beautiful Japanese Red-crowned Cranes bugling and performing their fantastic dancing routines in the misty, freezing dawn. The excitement wasn't over, for at midnight they watched the very rare Blakiston's Fish Owl, followed the next day by a pelagic trip into the pack ice to see the magnificent Steller's Eagles. Superb photographs accompanied the talk.

John Lumby then changed not only the hemisphere but also the temperature taking us to tropical Sabah in northern Borneo. Staying in luxurious accommodation, John explored the forests of the Tabin Reserve and the Kinabatangan River. The trip was not without its exciting moments when Borneo elephants rampaged through part of the camp! John had hoped to see the Borneo Bristlehead but this rarity of the tree tops escaped him. He did see many of the thirteen species of Kingfisher, eight species of Hornbill along with Sunbirds, Spiderhunters, Bulbuls and Trogons. Such marvellous names for these colourful and exotic birds!

After refreshments, **Richard Poyer** talked about the trip to Bulgaria made by sixteen club members. Visiting the Black Sea coast in September, the aim was to see the migration of raptors and water birds on their journey back to Africa as well as other birds generally missing from the UK. The first three days were spent in the north where the highlight was standing on the Kaliakra peninsula watching such species as Pallid Harrier, Honey Buzzard, Levant Sparrowhawk, Booted Eagle and Hobby. The passerines were also interesting with Red-breasted Flycatcher and Red-backed Shrike. Moving south there were good views of Black Tern, Montagu's Harrier and Little Owl, but we were too late for Stone Curlew.

The southern base, near Burgas, is noted for its saline lagoons and reedbeds. Here we visited two reserves with excellent visitor centres (Pomorie and Poda), partly funded by the RSPB. Sandwich Tern, Little Ringed Plover, Yellow Wagtail, Greater and Pygmy Cormorants, Little and Great White Egrets, Dalmation Pelicans and Black Storks were among the many birds seen. Amongst the reeds were Penduline Tit and Sedge Warbler. The highlight was probably watching hundreds of Red-footed Falcons feeding on fields adjacent to the lagoons. At a migrant count location over 10,000 Falcons were recorded on passage while on ploughed fields nearby there were many White Wagtails and Wheatears.

All too soon we were heading back for the UK after a trip full of bonhomie, birds and wine. ***Report by Richard Poyer***

Japanese Red-crowned Cranes bugling.

Yellow Wagtail at Pomorie

For more information and photographs on **JAPAN in WINTER** or **NNBC Trip to BULGARIA** go to the **MAGZINE** tab on the **NNBC WEBSITE**

BIRD RECORDS DECEMBER 2017

Whooper Swan	63 west of Cornhill from 3rd /13th (JDL,AR), 7 at Horncliffe on 20th (JDL).
Pink-footed Goose	600 at Fenham Le Moor on 3rd (JDL) & 300 on Holy Island on 10th (GB).
Shoveler	20 at Budle Bay on 5th (GB).
Long-tailed Duck	6 at Stag Rocks on 5th (GB).
Common Scoter	60 at Stag Rocks on 5th (GB).
Goldeneye	7/14 at Horncliffe all month (JDL), 19 at Branton Ponds on 10th (I&KD).
Red-throated Diver	2 at Stag Rocks on 3rd (JDL).
Little Egret	3 at Fenham Flats on 3rd (JDL), 1 at Branton Ponds on 16th (I&KD), 1 at Horncliffe on 22th (JDL), 1/2 at Budle Bay all month (JPL).
Slavonian Grebe	2 at Fenham Le Moor on 10th (GB).
Coot	76 at Branton Ponds on 10th (I&KD).
Black-tailed Godwit	3 at Fenham Le Moor on 3rd & 15th (JDL).
Sanderling	90 at Little Beach Berwick on 14th (JDL).
Purple Sandpiper	c.150 at Stag Rocks all month (JDL,GB,JPL).
Green Sandpiper	1 at Branton Ponds from 4/22nd (I&KD).
Woodcock	2 over Kettle Band on 17th (G&RB).
Merlin	1 at Carey Burn on 4th mobbing (following) Peregrines (G&RB), also 1 at Titlington Mount on 4th (I&KD).
Peregrine	1 pair at Carey Burn on 4th (G&RB).
Chiffchaff	1 at Branton Ponds on 15th (I&KD).
Mistle Thrush	c.30 at Cornhill churchyard on 11th (JDL).
Rock Pipit	2 at Little Beach Berwick on 14th (JDL).
Bullfinch	2 at Branton on 26th (I&KD).
Twite	1 at Little Beach Berwick on 14th (JDL).

Observers Graham & Rosemary Bell (G&RB), Ian & Keith Davison (I & KD), James D Lough (JDL), John P Lumby (JPL), Allan Robson (AR).

January Records: please submit no later than 1st February to the Recorder, John Lumby, Shearwater, 2 St Cuthbert Close, North Sunderland, Seahouses, NE68 7WG. TEL: 01665-720654.
e-mail: j.lumby@yahoo.co.uk **or .com** .

The New Year 'Big Day' January 1st 2018

When six of our stalwart members arrived at North Sunderland to meet the leader John Lumby, they were surprised by the sunniest start and brightest blue sky ever! In our now annual attempt to see as many different species as possible to kick start the New Year; how many would we manage to see on a short mid-winter's day? First were Goldfinch, Kestrel, Carrion Crow, Starling, Jackdaw, Blackbird, Blue Tit, Curlew and Rock Dove (feral pigeon). Then on to Beadnell and down to the Harbour which gave us Rock Pipit, Shag, Cormorant, Turnstone, Oystercatcher, Grey Plover, Eider, Gannet, Bar-tailed Godwit, Redshank, Great Black-backed Gull, Herring & Black-headed Gull, Grey Heron, Ringed Plover, Dunlin, Sanderling and House Sparrow; also 2000 Pink-footed Geese which flew along the dunes. The rest of the village added Moorhen, Magpie, Dunnock, Chaffinch, Wood Pigeon, Collared Dove, Rook and Great Tit; we had clocked up 36 species, a good start.

So moving quickly northwards to Monk's House Pool, Teal, Common Gull, Mallard, Lapwing, Reed Bunting, Common Snipe & Shoveler obliged; we were on 43. Then to Spindlestone Wood (both hides) where we managed to add Pheasant, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Coal Tit, Tree Sparrow, Nuthatch, Mistle Thrush, Robin, Long-tailed Tit & Jay. Going to the Mill added Common Buzzard, Redwing plus 200 Greylag Geese which flew over; we were now on 55. Budle Bay was next with Shelduck, Wigeon, Goldeneye and Little Egret, whilst our next port of call, Waren Mill, gave Goosander, Goldcrest & Little Grebe. A quick dash to the hide at Fenham Le Moor produced Bullfinch, Linnet, Twite, Brent Goose, Pied Wagtail, Snow Bunting, Yellowhammer, Greenfinch and Fieldfare pushing our tally to 71. Re-tracing our route with the light starting to go, our final stop had to be Stag Rocks where we managed to see Common Scoter, Red-throated Diver, Slavonian Grebe, Red-breasted Merganser, Guillemot and 8 Long-tailed Ducks amongst the waves, plus 200 Purple Sandpipers on the rocks. The tally for the day was **78 species**, our highest total to date; we still missed some common birds seen in other years, but it was a great way to start the birding year! By popular demand we then adjourned to the Castle Inn, Bamburgh for a well-deserved meal. ***John Lumby***