NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND BIRD CLUB

Honorary President: Graham Bell

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MEMBERS' NIGHT

Scarlet Robin, (Aust.)

White-breasted Robin

Alan & Margaret Goodall — Peter Lees— Alison & Stewart McCormick

Galapagos Mocking Bird

Amazon Kingfisher

Rufous Owl—NT, Australia

Magnificent Frigate Bird— Galapagos Islands

Agami Heron—Brazilian Pantanal

NOTICEBOARD

INDOOR MEETINGS — BAMBURGH PAVILION

- **Friday, 11th January 2019 at 7.30pm (Bamburgh Pavilion) PHILIP HANMER: KARTONG BIRD OSERVATORY & the BRITISH CONNECTION. Philip Hanmer is a well-known member of the Bird Club, a Ringer & Trainer who contributes a regular monthly blog of his ringing activities. His talk features a wonderful Bird Observatory in The Gambia which attracts many of our summer migrants in addition to many native and colourful West African species.**
- **Friday 8th February 2019 at 7.30pm MIKE WATSON: BIRDING COLORADO'S HIGH PLAINS. Mike is an experienced leader with the specialist tour company BIRDQUEST. Amongst the many delights, expect to be engaged and amazed by the colours and antics of lekking members of the Grouse family including the spectacular Greater Sage Grouse and both Lesser and Greater Prairie-Chickens.**

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, 24th February, 2019: Warkworth & Coquet Estuary 10 a.m. Meet in the small public car park by Warkworth Golf Course (O.S: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**

NNBC TRIP to SPAIN 16th –23rd MAY 2019

This visit to Extremadura and the Gredos mountains organised through Naturetrek is already guaranteed to go ahead, but there are still a few places available if any other members wish to join those already 'signed up' for this two-centre holiday. For further details: see December Newsletter or contact Fiona Southern Tel. 01668214481 / email jfs@robincottage.co.uk

NEW YEAR BIG BIRD DAY January 1st 2019.

When 9 of our keenest members arrived at North Sunderland they were delighted to find that the day was fine but cold to begin our 12th attempt to see as many different species as possible on a short winter's day. First were Herring Gull, Goldfinch, Carrion Crow, Starling, Jackdaw, Rook, Blackbird, Blue Tit, Chaffinch, Robin, Woodpigeon, Rock Dove (feral pigeon) and Collared Dove, then a short drive to Low Newton which added Pheasant, Kestrel, Curlew, Black-headed Gull, House Sparrow, Common Buzzard and Magpie. The beach gave us Rock Pipit, Cormorant, Turnstone, Oystercatcher, Bar-tailed Godwit, Redshank, Grey Heron, Dunlin, Sanderling, Pied Wagtail, Stonechat and Purple Sandpiper, plus Eiders and 5 Goldeneye which were on the sea. The scrape & pool added Mallard, Teal, Wigeon, Shoveler, Lapwing, Golden Plover, Greylag Goose, Pink-footed Goose, Stock Dove, Moorhen, Reed Bunting, and a surprise, a wintering Ruff. We were on 46 species.

Next stop was Beadnell Harbour which added Common Gull, Red-throated Diver, Gannet and 3 Long-tailed Ducks among 80 Eiders, followed by a quick stop at Knacker's Hole sea wall to add Great Black-backed Gull and Grey Plover. On moving swiftly northwards to Monk's House Pool, a Little Grebe obliged. Our next stop was Stag Rocks in a strengthening north wind, which produced a quite choppy sea. We only managed to add Red-breasted Merganser, 8 Common Scoter (no slav. grebes) and, on the Golf Club putting green, a Meadow Pipit. We were now on 56.

We then went to Spindlestone Wood (both hides, thanks to Michael) where we managed to add Great Spotted Woodpecker, Great Tit, Coal Tit, Tree Sparrow, Treecreeper, Nuthatch, Dunnock, Long-tailed Tit and Jay. Going to the Mill added nothing new, so our next port of call was Waren Mill which gave us Whooper Swan and Shelduck (no siskins as on previous day). Continuing round the corner to Harper's Heugh, a very large flock of Barnacle Geese and Mute Swan added to the tally, followed by a quick dash to the hide at Fenham Le Moor which produced Brent Goose, Ringed Plover and Knot pushing our score to 72.

With the light starting to go, a drive south down the A1 took us to Newham where we circled the by-roads managing to add Mistle Thrush, Redwing, Song Thrush, Peregrine, Grey & Red-legged Partridge. The final tally for the day was 78 species. Due to the "Beast from the East" we missed some common passerines (greenfinch, etc.), which are in very low numbers in our area, but it was a great fun way to start the birding year! We then adjourned to the Castle Inn, Bamburgh for a very enjoyable meal. **John Lumby**

NNBC MEMBERS' EVENING Friday 14th December

The final meeting of the year was a members' evening with five members taking us to different parts of the globe.

Firstly was a journey to **Patagonia and the Pantanal** with Alison and Stewart. In Patagonia we shared their experiences searching for the Puma. At first there were distant views and four-mile hikes to get a glimpse of one but a few days later they had several including a close encounter with one on the road by their minibus. There were, of course, sightings and excellent photographs of many birds, including Birds of Prey such as Condors and Caracaras and, in a region with plenty of pools and rivers, ducks such as the Torrent, the Andean, the Spectacled and the Steamer. Unfortunately the fine weather of the early days gave way to cloud and rain on the final day which curtailed the bird sightings. Travelling 1,600 km. north-east the search was then on for Jaguars in the Brazilian Pantanal. This is the world's largest tropical wetland, the size of England and Wales. The jaguars were more easily found than the pumas with many interesting sightings, often along the waterways. The bird life was abundant. There are 656 species but even if Alison and Stewart didn't see them all there were sightings of four kingfisher species, several heron and parrot species, including the world's largest, the Hyacinth Macaw.

Then it was off to **Australia,** courtesy of Margaret and Alan whose family live there so this was their 11th visit. The main areas where they stayed were Western Australia and the Northern Territory. Though not intended as a birding holiday they saw well over 80 species many in what was city and town parkland. In the Perth/Freemantle area there were Spotted Turtle Doves, Crested Terns, Magpie Larks and various species of Cormorant, Pelicans, Egrets and Ducks. Needless to say the robin and wren seen were very different to our own. The wren was a Red-winged Fairy Wren and the robin had a White-breast which is found only in the S.W. of Western Australia. A few days later they saw a Scarlet Robin and not only the world's largest Tern -the Caspian but also the world's largest kingfisher - the Laughing Kookaburra. After family visit to New South Wales they travelled to the Northern Territory. They arrived in Darwin two weeks after a destructive tropical storm and found chain saws at work everywhere -especially in the local parks. Nevertheless there they saw three species of Honeyeaters while a particularly rewarding trip was to the Yellow Water Billabong in the Kakadu N.P. with thirteen species of egret, duck, eagle, kite and geese. Finally the park in Darwin provided sights of colourful birds such as Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove and Yellow Oriole. The highlight was seeing the Rufous Owl, a bird of dense vegetation but visible because of the storm damage.

Finally Peter transported us to **Ecuador,** firstly to the mainland to the Cloud Forest and Rain Forest and then to the Galapagos Islands - quite a contrast. Starting at the luxurious Mashpi Lodge in the Cloud Forest we saw exotically coloured birds such as the Crimson-rumped Toucanet and the pink Squirrel Cuckoo. A strange animal was the Transparent Frog - clinging to a window. Continuing with the humid theme we moved to the Amazon Rain Forest and Peter talked about the issues of oil versus conservation and showed the work of vets caring for injured animals to return to the wild. Next we visited The Galapagos Islands with their unique group of animals and its key role in shaping Darwin's Theory of Evolution. We saw many different species of finch, each with their own bill variant. The most entertaining species was the Frigate Bird, with its red, balloon like chest inflation when courting and the Blue- footed Booby with its ungainly courtship dance. Herons, egrets, tern and penguins were all there and as well as the birds we saw the famous giant tortoises and the turtles, both needing conservation projects.

It was a most enjoyable evening seeing places most of us will never be able to visit.

Report by Richard Poyer

BIRD RECORDS DECEMBER 2018

Whooper Swan	13 at Budle Bay on 4th (GB).
Pink-footed Goose	c.400 Flying around Seahouses area all month (JPL).
Greylag Goose	1000 at Newton Pool on 4th (GB).
Barnacle Goose	c.2000 at Harper's Heugh on 4th (GB).
Gadwall	21 at Hedgeley Ponds on 9th (I&KD).
Pintail	1 at Branton Ponds on 21st (I&KD).
Shoveler	1 at Branton Ponds on 21st (I&KD), 8 at Monk's House Pool on 31st (JPL).
Pochard	2 at Branton Ponds on 3rd & 1 on 9th (I&KD).
Common Scoter	5 off Stag Rocks on 31st (JPL).
Red-breasted Merganser	1 off Beadnell Harbour on 31st (JPL).
Goosander	17 at Branton Ponds on 9th (I&KD).
White-billed Diver	1 off Stag Rocks on 2nd (I&KD,JPL).
Little Egret	1 at Monk's House Pool on 4th (GB), 1 at Branton Ponds on 9th (I&KD).
Slavonian Grebe	2 off Stag Rocks on 31st (JPL).
Sparrowhawk	1 at Yearle on 11th & 23rd (G&RB), 1 at Spindlestone Wood on 31st (JPL).
Curlew	22 at Hedgeley Ponds on 9th (I&KD), 60 at Belford on 17th (CD).
Bar-tailed Godwit	several at Budle Bay on 31st 1 being in full breeding plumage, unusual (JPL).
Purple Sandpiper	150 at Stag Rocks on 2nd was highest total (I&KD, JPL).
Jack Snipe	1 near Blawearie on 22nd (I&KD).
Bonaparte's Gull	1 at Bamburgh on 2nd (I&KD).
Mediterranean Gull	1 at Low Newton Scrape on 30th (JPL).
Stock Dove	1 at Branton Ponds on 8th (I&KD).
Merlin	1 at Yearle on 15th (GB), 1 at Wooperton on 19th (RB).
Peregrine	1 near Blawearie on 22nd (I&KD), 1 at Newton Point on 22nd (A&MG).
Raven	2 at Blawearie on 22nd (I&KD).
Willow Tit	1 at Branton Ponds on 17th (I&KD).
Nuthatch	1 at Yearle on 2nd (GB).
Treecreeper	1 at Spindlestone Wood on 31st (JPL).
Goldfinch	50 at North Sunderland all month (JPL).
Siskin	30 at Waren Mill on 31st (JPL).

Observers Graham & Rosemary Bell (G&RB), Ian & Keith Davison (I & KD), Chris Duncan (CD), Alan & Margaret Goodall (A&MG), John P Lumby (JPL).

January Records please submit records by 1st February to the Recorder, John Lumby, Shearwater, 2 St Cuthbert Close, North Sunderland, Seahouses, NE68 7WG.TEL:01665-720654 j.lumby@yahoo.co.uk. or .com

TIME TO RENEW ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Membership Subscriptions fall due on 1st of January each year; they remain unchanged at £10 per Individual or £15 for Couples or Family Members living at the same Address. (NB A Membership Form was sent as an attachment to the November Newsletter/also available to download from our Website). Our Programme Secretary has put together a very attractive selection of evening meetings; we hope you will look forward to joining us again in the New Year.

To Renew your membership simply fill in the form and send it to the Membership Secretary (address on title page of the Newsletter) with a cheque made payable to North Northumberland Bird Club, or bring your completed copy to our first meeting of the New Year on 11th January, 2019