NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND BIRD CLUB

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Iain Robson at Druridge Bay

DRURIDGE POOLS

The Pavilion was full , eager to hear about Iain Robson's 'obsession' with this reclaimed opencast mining site, one of the string of reserves fringing Druridge Bay managed by Northumberland Wildlife Trust. With an incredible total of 250+ species seen over the years , his enthusiasm for birding his 'local patch' lit up the audience……turn to page 3 for Richard Poyer's account

Pinkfeet at Aberlady Bay Photo: GW

MUSSELBURGH LAGOONS

Members had a wonderful day visiting the Lagoons and Seafront at Musselburgh, also calling in at Aberlady Bay on the homeward run where they had an unexpected 'treat'- *thousands* of Pink-footed Geese!

Report by Liz Harrison on page4

SEPTEMBER BIRD RECORDS

see page 5

'Swanning about' at Howick Photo P.Hanmer

NNBC WEBSITE

Philip Hanmer has had a very busy month ringing owls, migrant warblers, Mistle Thrushes and some delightful Long-tailed Tits plus the ringing of this year's cygnets at Howick, a task which requires a large team of helpers. (see photo opposite). The full story, and more photos make it well worth visiting 'Ringer's Roundup'

NOTICEBOARD

INDOOR MEETINGS — BAMBURGH PAVILION

- **Friday 11th October 2019 at 7.30pm CHARLES EVERITT: A Reflection on Bird Crime.** Wildlife Photographer Charles makes a welcome return to the Pavilion wearing his 'other' hat as an officer in the UK National Wildlife Unit reflecting on the increasing pressure from over-eager wildlife photographers and drone users, disturbing wildlife in their quest for the ultimate shot– often unaware of the laws and penalties protecting many species and nest sites.
- **Friday 8th November 2019 at 7.30pm AGM + Madagascar: A Family Odyssey** Following our short annual general meeting, NNBC Bird Recorder John Lumby takes us to one of the most fascinating islands in the World with its unique assemblage of wildlife...

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.]

NNBC Field Trip to DRURIDGE POOLS NWT RESERVE guided by last month's speaker IAIN ROBSON on Saturday October 19th 2019.

Meet at 10 am at entrance to Reserve as you turn off the road. **Post code NE61 5 EG. OS: NZ277962**

SUGGESTED DIRECTIONS From the North on A1 (see below)

[NB Access via the A1068 winding coastal route from Alnwick via Amble is also possible but longer/slower.]

*On **A1** travelling south, avoid signs to 'Amble' or 'Felton'. Continue beyond end of the dual carriageway south of the Felton turnoffs for c.3 miles and look out for a minor road on the left signed "Widdrington/Chevington Moor".

*Follow this minor road for c.2 miles to the cross roads (Ignoring signs to West Forest, East Forest and Tritlington).

*Go straight across, signed " Widdrington Village"- you will soon cross the Railway at a level crossing: continue on this winding narrow road with badly worn edges- it is the most direct route. (and takes you past Widdrington Moor Pool with the chance of seeing 3.000 plus pink-feet.)

*Coming to a roundabout on the A1068, take the second exit left at the roundabout and continue down to Druridge Pools.

*Turn left at the T junction where the road makes a sharp right near the coast.

Please wear sensible shoes , bring waterproofs and a packed lunch if wished,for a walk of around two miles around the reserve looking for waders,wildfowl and any rarities on migration!

The Drift Cafe is 5 minutes down the road at the edge of Cresswell - a very popular place with hot food etc.

Be sure to check NNBC Facebook page the night before in case of cancellation etc.! ***Leader : Iain Robson***

Notices relating to the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING to be held on 8th November 2019 at 7.30pm

***Nominations for the NNBC Committee** **If you wish to propose a member for the committee then you will need to email a written nomination together with the proposer and seconder to the secretary glynis.gower@btinternet.com or send by post (Secretary's address on front cover of the newsletter). A written acceptance from the nominee is also required.**

Nominations should reach the Secretary by 25th October 2019 at the latest

***If you have an item for AOB at the AGM please let the secretary know in writing by 1st November 2019"**

Sophie Webster, Northumberland Wildlife Trust's new 'Catch my Drift' project assistant gave a short illustrated talk to the audience before Iain Robson's talk on 'Druridge Pools' at our September Meeting. She outlined the ambitious plans NWT have to make the Druridge Reserves, particularly the East Chevington Pools, more manageable as regards control over water levels, and the hides more people friendly than the current 'metal boxes' (which are widely avoided by birders.) Further Information can be found online at www.nwt.org.uk/news/do-you-catch-my-drift

Sophie Webster : Photo SVMcC.

Druridge Pools: *when a Local Patch becomes an Obsession* Iain Robson

Druridge Pools in 1996: by Kind Permission of Alan Gilberton

Marsh Warbler (Male) IR

Iain Robson, Access and Natural Environment Officer at the Northumberland Coast AONB, took the audience on a guided tour of his birding "patch" - Druridge Pools. Since 1996 Ian has focused his Northumberland bird watching on this local patch, only some 1.5 square miles in area. In that time he has recorded 251 species.

The area consists of previous opencast land - now with pools and scrapes - dunes, scrub, trees planted since 1994, farm land and the adjacent sea area - quite a variety of environments which help to explain the number of species he has seen.

The core of the patch was bought by Northumberland Wildlife Trust for £1 in 1994 from RJ Budge - the opencast operator. The NWT oversaw the restoration of the site creating the scrapes and pool. The old Oddie hide (yes, Bill Oddie opened it) has just been replaced by a new one. [The dune area is owned and managed by the National Trust with Iain feeling that there could be more co-operations between the NWT and NT.]

The scrapes are a key habitat and attract a wide variety of wintering waders and wildfowl with passage migrants dropping in. As well as the usual Snipe, Curlew, Common Sandpiper, Black-tailed Godwit, Teal, Wigeon more unusual birds seen on the scrapes are Baikal and Green-winged Teal, Baird's and Pectoral Sandpiper, Black-winged Stilt (whilst Iain was in Spain this September!) and Little Stint.

The 35 feet deep pool has less variety of species but is one of the few places in Northumberland where Shoveler breeds. The reed beds fringing the pool now have eight pairs of Reed Warblers. Inland, fringing the farm field is a linear conifer plantation; taller than it should be and largely unmanaged it was, nevertheless, the site of the first recorded breeding in Northumberland of **Little Egret**.(see pic below)

The managed scrub layer between NWT and NT land provides an excellent site for warblers, including a pair of **Marsh Warblers** (first record of breeding for Northumberland), now annual records of Yellow-browed Warblers on passage, breeding Cetti's Warbler and Wryneck. The dunes, with bushes and various degrees of managed grazing, provide a varied habitat for chats, wagtails, warblers and rarities such as Red-backed Shrike.

Backing all of these habitats is the North Sea in the shape of Druridge Bay. Here amongst the usual Common Scoter and Red-throated Diver in winter and the Terns of summer, Iain has recorded Storm Petrels and the rarer Leach's Petrel. Out of all Iain's 251 sightings the one that he rates his top one is the bee eater seen on the 18th October 2017

Such a mosaic of habitats has rewarded the dedicated Iain with an enviable list of birds. His dry humour in recounting the tales of his watching brought his talk to life and showed us all what a great birdwatching place coastal Northumberland is.

Report: Richard Poyer **Photos: courtesy of Iain Robson (unless otherwise stated)**

Little Egret: by Kind Permission of Iain Fisher

Bee Eater at Druridge (IR)

Field Trip to Musselburgh Lagoons and Aberlady Bay

It was a fine calm day when nine of us made the trip north to Musselburgh Lagoons for our September Field Trip.

The water in the Lagoons was very low, and apart from a very obliging Ruff, some White Wagtail and Snipe there was little to keep us there. A Chiffchaff was spotted in the surrounding trees and as usual there were plenty of Speckled Wood Butterflies near the hides.

We then headed to the Sea Wall where Andrew was thrilled by the number of easily visible Velvet Scoter. Great Crested Grebe, Slavonian Grebe, Common Scoter, Adult and Juvenile Gannets and large rafts of Eider kept us entertained whilst a dark form heading low over the water raised speculation of a possible, but unconfirmed Skua.

Goosander, Red Breasted Merganser, Bar Tailed Godwit, Meadow Pipit, Tufted Duck, Razorbill and Guillemot were added to our list.

Lunch was taken in temperatures resembling a Mediterranean holiday after which we decided to head back via Aberlady. A visit to Aberlady is not complete without a visit to the Farm café on the outskirts, where refreshments were enjoyed before a visit to the SOC headquarters at Waterston House.

Back via Aberlady Bay and what an unexpected treat! There were thousands of Pink Footed Geese on the shores, on the mudflats and eventually in the air having been disturbed by two walkers who clearly had no inkling or concern about the disturbance they were causing to the resting and feeding birds.

With all the birds having been driven out of sight it was time for home after a good day and a total of 55 species.

Mute Swan, Pink-footed Goose, Greylag Goose, Shelduck, Wigeon, Gadwall, Teal, Mallard, Tufted Duck, Eider, Common Scoter, Velvet Scoter, Red-breasted Merganser, Goosander, Pheasant, Gannet, Cormorant, Grey Heron, Little Grebe, Great Crested Grebe, Slavonian Grebe, Sparrowhawk, Coot, Oystercatcher, Lapwing, Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit, Ruff, Dunlin, Turnstone, Redshank, Snipe, Razorbill, Guillemot, Black-headed Gull, Common Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Woodpigeon, Magpie, Jackdaw, Rook, Carrion Crow, Blue Tit, Swallow, Chiffchaff, Starling, Blackbird, House Sparrow, White Wagtail, Pied wagtail, Meadow Pipit, Chaffinch, Goldfinch.(55)

Report : Liz Harrison

↑ Pink-footed Geese Photo– G Wolverson

← Scoping the Bay…… Photo-L Harrison

↓ Ruff probing the mud …….. G Wolverson

BIRD RECORDS SEPTEMBER 2019

Greylag Goose	478 at Branton Ponds on 14th (I&KD).
Whooper Swan	4 at Monk's House Pool on 27th (JPL).
Gadwall	48 at Hedgeley Ponds on 14th (I&KD).
Common Scoter	35 at Newton Point on 8th (I&KD).
Manx Shearwater	5 past Newton Point on 8th (I&KD).
Little Grebe	10 at Hedgeley Ponds on 14th (I&KD).
Spoonbill	3 at Budle Bay on 8th. One bird had yellow rings on both legs (GW).
Little Egret	1 at Branton Ponds on 14th (I&KD), 3 at Holy Island on 23rd (SVM).
Osprey	1 over River Till at Etal on 6th (E&EH).
Ruff	3 at Low Newton Scrape on 8th (I&KD).
Curlew Sandpiper	1 at Low Newton Scrape on 8th (I&KD).
Greenshank	1 at Hedgeley Ponds on 14th (I&KD).
Arctic Skua	1 at Stag Rocks on 27th (PS).
Short-eared Owl	1 at Holy Island on 26th (I&KD).
Swift	5 at Bamburgh on 27th (PS).
Jay	2 at Branton Ponds on 14th (I&KD).
Yellow-browed Warbler	1 at Holy Island from 22nd/26th (I&KD).
Mistle Thrush	20 at Wooler Common on 25th (DR).
Red-breasted Flycatcher	1 at Holy Island on 22nd (I&KD).
Pied Flycatcher	1 at Holy Island on 22nd /23rd (I&KD,SVM).
Redstart	1 on Holy Island on 22nd & 3 on 26th (I&KD).
Wheatear	1 at Berwick & Bamburgh on 7th (EH,GW).
Yellow Wagtail	6 at Low Newton Scrape on 8th (I&KD).
Lapland Bunting	1 at Holy Island on 7th & 15th (EH,GW,I&KD).

Observers Ian & Keith Davison (I & KD), Euan & Elizabeth Hardman (E&EH), Elizabeth Harrison (EH), John P Lumby (JPL), Stewart McCormick (SVM), David Richens (DR), Paul Snell (PS),

Gillian Wolverson (GW).

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

Richard Narraway Items

For Sale: GS665 Ga/45 angled Telescope c/w case, 2 eyepieces, adaptor, cap and VT50 Tripod

£220 ono as new. Contact john lumby 01665 720654.

At the October meeting more books from his library will be for sale.