NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND BIRD CLUB

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Charles Everitt *photo Fiona Southern*

CHARLES EVERITT: A REFLECTION ON WILDLIFE CRIME

As a Police Officer who has spent much of his working life fighting Wildlife Crime as part of the National Wildlife Crime Unit, Charles is well placed to look back at the many challenges facing the Police Force today, particularly persecution of Raptors.

turn to page 3 for Richard Poyer's account

'large skeins of Pinkfeet'..*Photo Richard Poyer*

DRURIDGE POOLS

"Our interest having been stimulated by Iain's brilliant talk to the Club at our September meeting" ten members gathered at the reserve, "the sky above constantly busy with large skeins of Pinkfeet…"
see pages 2&3 for the full report ***by Liz Harrison***

OCTOBER BIRD RECORDS

see page 4

Yellow-browed Warbler Photo P.Hanmer

NNBC WEBSITE

Phil Hanmer reports "we were still catching lots of Chiffchaffs, but on this morning we also ringed a beautiful **Yellow-browed Warbler**"a species generally believed to be pioneering a new migration pattern….. The full story, and more photos make it well worth visiting this month's 'Ringer's Roundup'

NOTICEBOARD

INDOOR MEETINGS — BAMBURGH PAVILION

- **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…
- **Friday 13th December 2019 at 7.30pm MEMBERS' NIGHT** Based on the successful format of previous years, members and friends are invited to join us for Mulled Wine and Festive Nibbles, which will accompany a couple of presentations by club members. **PHILIP HANMER** will talk about 'FROSTY POLAND– seeking owls, woodpeckers and other wildlife' while **DAVID RICHENS** will take us to exotic SRI LANKA with 'Bird Watching in MANNAR'

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 SALTHOLME RSPB RESERVE Sunday 24th November

At the time of going to print, there is still one place remaining on the bus for anyone interested. For further details please contact Richard a.s.a.p. richardpoyer67@gmail.com ***Leader : Richard Poyer***

NNBC EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING - An EGM will be held at the meeting of January 10th 2020, this announcement giving the necessary two months notice in advance. This meeting is needed to propose a change to the "Dissolution" paragraph in the Constitution.

NORTHUMBERLAND NATIONAL PARK : UPLAND BIRDS WADER SURVEY 2020

For the past few years Northumberland National Park volunteers have carried out surveys of Breeding Waders within the Park. It is however not necessary to be a Park Volunteer to take part in this important survey which is open to all those interested in birds and who are able to identify the common Wader species by sight and sound.
Volunteers will be entitled to claim travel expenses from the Park to cover their journeys to their allocated survey area which which will consist of a minimum of two visits in early and late Spring . Training in completing the survey will be given by National Park staff. For more details or to express an interest for next year please contact Liz Harrison liz.a.harrison22@btinternet.com or Richard Poyer richardpoyer67@gmail.com

Field Trip to Druridge Pools

Ten members who were not at all discouraged by a forecast of persistent rain met up with our leader Iain Robson who was to show us around Druridge Pools- his patch! Our interest had been stimulated by Iain's brilliant talk to the Club at our September meeting about his passion for the area.

The weather at Druridge was surprisingly fine and calm ,although those of us who had travelled from the Berwick area had left home in heavy rain.

Druridge Pools, the site of previous open cast coal mines bought from British Coal in 1987, provides a varied habitat of scrub, dunes, mixed managed woodland, scrapes and a deep pool.

With the sky above constantly busy with large skeins of Pinkfeet, flocks of Lapwing and Curlew, our attention was also drawn to a large flock of Long-tailed Tits flitting restlessly from bush to bush. Some time was spent looking for a resident Little Owl which did not oblige this morning!

Moving on to the hides, Great Spotted Woodpecker , Stonechat, Reed Bunting ,Meadow Pipit and Mistle Thrush were added. At the Budge Hide , Teal , Wigeon, Shoveler, Mallard and Gadwall were immediately flushed by gunfire at a nearby Pheasant shoot. Iain remarked that light aircraft from nearby Eshott also regularly disturbed the Lapwing and wildfowl as they tried to feed, but approaches to the Airfield in an attempt to limit overflying had been unsuccessful.

Moving on ,Great Crested Grebe and Tufted Duck were added to a final list totalling 50 species before the rain arrived in earnest , sending the group scurrying for their cars after an enjoyable, entertaining and productive morning.

Report: Liz Harrison

A reflection on bird crime by Charles Everitt

Charles has spent most of his Police Career fighting wildlife crime. Currently working with the UK National Wildlife Crime Unit, he is only a few months from retirement and so looked back on his work. He shared some of his cases and looked at the challenges facing Police Forces in tackling crimes against raptors.

Working in Edinburgh, many of his early cases were of a domestic nature with people using catapults and guns to shoot birds, stoning ducklings on the Leith, throwing a crow into a library and using Larsen traps in the city to catch Magpies. Perhaps his most gruesome case was the person exporting parts of birds for shamanistic purposes. Charles discovered freeze-dried owl heads in glass jars!

Egg collecting is not a thing of the past and Charles was summonsed to Rum when a land agent became suspicious of a visitor. Intercepting him at the harbour he discovered blown eggs of Manx Shearwater, Warbler and Pipit on the man. Investigating his home in London police found 700 eggs. In other cases a prison officer was found to have 7,000 eggs whilst a Victorian collection of 17,000 eggs was being traded abroad. These crimes are, of course, awful but it is the killing of raptors and the controversies around driven grouse shooting which get the headlines today.

Raptor Persecution: Charles talked about the success of stopping the removal of Peregrine chicks at a site by putting a watch on the nest (it had been going on for 16 years). Turning to the problems of Golden Eagle, Sea Eagle, Hen Harrier and Goshawk persecution he showed how the remoteness of the locations where dead birds are found, the need for eyewitness corroboration and the nature of the Scottish legal system all made it very difficult to get successful prosecutions. Which one of maybe seven gamekeepers pulled the trigger on the shotgun or put the poisoned lure in place? Even RSPB CCTV footage cannot be accepted. The CCTV has to have been set up by the Police as part of a criminal investigation. With people being given the opportunity to hand in poisons, there has been a reduction in such causes of raptor deaths but an increase in deaths by shooting and trapping.

Charles felt a certain degree of optimism about the future. The key was to work with the land managers as had been done in projects such as "Heads up for Harriers" and the “Southern Scotland Golden Eagle Project”, identifying "safe" areas for release. Nevertheless, much still needs to be done halt raptor persecution.

Report by Richard Poyer

List of Sightings from the Field Trip to Druridge Pools

2500 Pink-footed Goose, 3 Mute Swan, 2 Whooper Swan, 6 Northern Shoveler, 4 Gadwall, 12 Eurasian Wigeon, 35 Mallard, 300 Eurasian Teal, 6 Tufted Duck, 25 Common Pheasant, 6 Little Grebe,1 Great Crested Grebe,12 Common Woodpigeon, 8 Common Moorhen, 2 Eurasian Coot, 300 Northern Lapwing, 120 Eurasian Curlew, 4 Common Redshank, 15 Black-headed Gull, 6 Common Gull, 10 Herring Gull, 1 Great Cormorant, 3 Grey Heron, 1 Eurasian Sparrowhawk, 1 Great Spotted Woodpecker, 6 Common Magpie, 7 Rook, 19 Carrion Crow, 2 Coal Tit, 7 Eurasian Blue Tit, 3 Great Tit, 8 Eurasian Skylark, 5 Common Chiffchaff, 35 Long-tailed Tit (europaeus Group), 1 Eurasian Blackcap, 5 Goldcrest, 5 Eurasian Wren (British), 13 Common Starling, 1 Mistle Thrush, 2 Song Thrush, 2 Eurasian Blackbird, 4 European Robin, 3 European Stonechat, 2 Dunnock, 1 Meadow Pipit, 4 Common Chaffinch, 1 Eurasian Bullfinch, 5 Common Linnet, 3 European Goldfinch, 1 Common Reed Bunting. (50 species) ***Many thanks to Iain Robson for providing a detailed list.***

Photo: Richard Poyer

BIRD RECORDS OCTOBER 2019

Barnacle Goose	700 at Harper's Heugh from 28th /31st (JPL, G&RB).
Pink-footed Goose	2500 over Bamburgh on 11th (JPL).
Whooper Swan	8 at Branton Ponds on 21st (I&KD), 15+ at Lucker on 26th , 5 at Cheswick on 29th & 5 at Low Newton on 30th (PS).
Pochard	2 at Branton Ponds on 13th (I&KD).
Long-tailed Duck	7 off Longhoughton on 28th (I&KD).
Red-throated Diver	3 off Longhoughton on 28th (I&KD), 2 off Annstead on 30th (G&RB).
Black-throated Diver	5 off Longhoughton on 28th (I&KD).
Great Northern Diver	1 off Stag Rocks on 30th (I&KD).
Manx Shearwater	1 past Cheswick on 29th flying north (PS).
Little Egret	4 at Holy Island on 10th (G&RB), 1 at Boulmer on 28th & 3 at Beal on 30th (I&KD).
Goshawk	1 male at Holburn on 22nd (CD).
Black-tailed Godwit	3 at Monk's House Pool from 10/13th (G&RB,JPL).
Knot	2000 at Holy Island on 10th (G&RB).
Greenshank	4 at Holy Island on 10th (G&RB).
Green Woodpecker	1 at Pauperhaugh on 5th (I&KD).
Merlin	1 at Holy Island on 10th (G&RB), 1 at Branton on 12th (I&KD).
Peregrine	1 at Holy Island on 10th (G&RB) & 1 at Branton on 12th (I&KD).
Great Grey Shrike	1 at Holy Island on 10th (G&RB).
Jay	4 at Branton Ponds on 21st (I&KD).
Raven	2 at Beanley Wood on 13th (I&KD).
Sand Martin	1 at Branton Ponds on 10th (I&KD).
Swallow	1 at Branton on 10th (I&KD).
Chiffchaff	6 at Branton on 1st (I&KD).
Yellow-browed Warbler	1 at Holy Island from 10/19th (G&RB,I&KD).
Ring Ouzel	1 at Holy Island on 19th (I&KD).
Fieldfare	) many passing over North Sunderland
Redwing	) most nights all month (JPL).
Twite	35 at Beal on 30th (I&KD).
Lapland Bunting	1 at Beal on 30th (I&KD).

Observers Graham & Rosemary Bell (G&RB), Ian & Keith Davison (I & KD), Chris Duncan (CD), John P Lumby (JPL), Paul Snell (PS).

November records, please submit records by the 1st December 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 November meeting more books from his library will be for sale. (£36 raised to date)