NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND BIRD CLUB

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Dr Chris Redfern *-Photo S. McCormick*

Beautiful Sunbird *Photo Phil Hanmer*

ARCTIC TERNS on the FARNES

Dr Redfern has been studying these amazing globetrotters for many years, using recent advances in technology to reveal the routes these birds follow in their annual migration to Antarctica. NNBC members were thrilled to be given this window into the epic lives of a bird so familiar to us all from the short time they spend with us each year during the breeding season.

COQUET ESTUARY

Storm Ciara put paid to our original plan of visiting the Coquet on 9th February. The Field Trip has now been re-scheduled to take place on Sunday 16th February, though the weather remains unsettled! Full details on page two, with the reminder that any *last minute* changes are posted on the club's Facebook Page.

KIELDER GOSHAWKS

There has been an incredible response to this opportunity of visiting Kielder Forest with expert Martin Davison. Full details of how and when places on this Field Trip are being allocated appear on page two.

JANUARY BIRD RECORDS

on page 4

NNBC WEBSITE

In these cold dark and stormy days, why not take yourself off to sunny Gambia and enjoy Phil Hanmer's report from his recent ringing trip to West Africa; add a touch of tropical colour to your life with a sunbird or two and find out what our Ospreys are up to. [Ringer's Roundup]

NOTICEBOARD

INDOOR MEETINGS — BAMBURGH PAVILION

- **Friday 21st February 2020 at 7.30pm AN EVENING WITH DAVID LINDO aka The Urban Birder for an Evening of laughs and tales from urban birding around the world.**
  Friday 13th March 2020 at 7.30pm* SWIFTS– KEEPING MORPETH'S SWIFTS ALIVE Graham Sorrie Graham founded the Morpeth Swift Conservation Project in 2014, since when he has worked tirelessly to raise awareness of their decline and encourage his local community to provide nesting sites and protect this summer visitor.

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, 16th February, 2020: 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**

- **Sunday 8th March 2020: GOSHAWKS Kielder Forest 10a.m. Leader Martin Davison [Please note that Martin has strictly limited the number of Participants to 22.]** We will meet at Kielder castle Car Park at 1000 hrs. (**PLEASE bring change for the parking meter**). We will be walking slowly along forest tracks with many stops to scan for displaying Goshawks and other Raptors and birds of the forest. We will be returning to the carpark at about 1400hrs. Participants are advised to bring a packed lunch and suitable gear e.g. Stout shoes, warm & waterproof clothing. Kielder Castle Car Park (O.S.ref: NY 625937) lies north-west of the reservoir, about 35 minutes driving beyond Otterburn. Any members interested *who have not already contacted Liz* should email Liz Harrison [liz.a.harrison22@btinternet.com]with their names before Wed.19th February when the list will be closed. **As Liz now has a list of forty members who have already responded, ALL the names will be independently drawn from a hat and listed in order. The first 22 will be offered places on the visit, the remaining names forming the reserve list. Results of the draw should be available at our next club meeting.**

- **REMINDER: Please note that all subscriptions were due by 1st January 2020.** If you have yet to pay, please complete the Membership Form (sent out with the December Newsletter), which should be completed and returned A.S.A.P. with the appropriate payment by post or in person at the February Meeting. **It is also possible to pay online by BACS transfer to the club's bank account. The sort code of our Barclays Account is 20-58-17 and the account number 00607703. Please provide your name as a Reference.** [It would be appreciated if members paying by Bank Transfer could also email membership secretary Fiona Southern at jfs@robincottage.co.uk so that she can send out your membership card)

- **PLEASE NOTE THAT NO FURTHER COPIES OF THE NEWSLETTER WILL BE SENT OUT TO MEMBERS WHO HAVE NOT RENEWED THEIR SUBSCRIPTIONS BEFORE THE NEXT EDITION.**

A FEW RECENTLY PUBLISHED RECOMMENDED BOOKS

BIRDING WITHOUT BORDERS *Noah Stryker* One person's amazing quest to see more than 5000 species in one year!

ON THE MARSH *Simon Barnes* 'A Year surrounded by Wildness and Wet', a heartwarming account set in Norfolk from an author who will be familiar to many RSPB members.

MY PENGUIN YEAR : Living with the Emperors *Lindsay McCrae An* enthralling account written by this young cameraman from the Lake District who spent nearly a year in Antarctica filming the penguins through their breeding season for the BBC series '*Dynasties*'.

ARCTIC TERNS on the FARNES

This month's meeting of the North Northumberland Bird Club featured a talk by Dr Chris Redfern, emeritus professor at Newcastle University, who has been studying the Arctic Terns which breed on the Farne Islands. Some 1500 pairs of these elegant birds breed on the Farnes each year, about 10% of the total population for the UK and Ireland. Dr Redfern's study focuses on the birds nesting in the courtyard between the chapel and the old Peel Tower, which will be familiar to anyone who has visited Inner Farne. Regular ringing has shown that birds are very faithful to their nest-sites. This means that when small recording devices are added to the standard rings on the birds, recapture in a following year is highly likely, and the data recorded on these "geolocators" can be retrieved. Dr Redfern's analysis of the breeding success of the birds ringed in this way indicated that it had no negative impact on the birds, and the data secured give us a new insight into the lives of the birds when they leave the Farne Islands.

These data include information on light levels, contact with water, and temperatures, which when analysed, allow scientist to establish the location of the birds at regular intervals. Although we have known for a long time that the birds migrate to the Antarctic after breeding, we have known little about routes or behaviour while they are away from their breeding site. Information recovered from the geolocators on just under 50 birds has thrown considerable light on these mysteries.

Dr Redfern was able to show us that when the birds leave the Farnes, they do not head directly south down our North Sea coast, but go west across the country and then south down the Irish Sea. From there, they continue south, head down the coast of west Africa, and then turn east into the Indian Ocean. This eastern journey across the open ocean takes many of them as far as waters near New Zealand, before they turn south again to the Antarctic coast. Here, they appear to feed on krill fished from the holes in the ice-sheet known as "polynyas", and they follow this food source south as the ice melts in the Antarctic summer. By February the birds are ready to complete their moult, often roosting directly on the ice. New feathers safely in place, they move westward along the coast with the prevailing wind before returning north. Most of the birds go back up the coast of west Africa, but at least a few take an alternative route through the mid-Atlantic. When they get back to the Farnes, each bird has completed a round trip of up to 90 000 kilometres, a stunning feat for a bird weighing only about 110 grams. Although the birds return to their familiar spots each year, often for up to 20 years, they do not travel as pairs.

Arctic Tern with geolocator fitted to left leg: (*Photo by kind permission of Dr C. Redfern)*

The success of this work also offers scientists the chance to study the impact of climate change on the Antarctic environment remotely. The geolocators turn each bird into a remote sensing device recording changes in the ice sheet and showing, by alterations in their behaviour, the impact this is having. NNBC members were thrilled to be given this window into the epic lives of a bird so familiar to us all, and thanked Dr Redfern for offering them such insights.

Report by Paul Ashdown

BIRD RECORDS JANUARY 2020

Brent Goose	5 at Monk's House Pool on 1st pale-bellied race (NNBC).
Barnacle Goose	c.700 at Harper's Heugh on 1st (NNBC).
Greylag Goose	c.75 at Harper's Heugh on 1st (NNBC).
Pink-footed Goose	c.100 at Harper's Heugh on 1st (NNBC), 2000 at Doddington on 12th DG&RHB).
White-fronted Goose	2 at Harper's Heugh on 1st (NNBC), 2 at Low Newton Scrape on 10th (A&MG), 6 at Branton Ponds on 25th (A&MG), all Eurasian race.
Whooper Swan	4 at Low Newton Scrape on 1st (NNBC) with 37 on 8th (PA).
Shelduck	2000 at Fenham-le-Moor on 12th (DG&RB).
Pintail	20 at Fenham-le-Moor on 5th (I&KD).
Pochard	2 at Branton Ponds on 1st (I&KD) & 1 on 25th (A&MG).
Tufted Duck	6 at Monk's House Pool all month (JPL).
Velvet Scoter	1 off Cocklawburn on 5th (I&KD).
Common Scoter	200 off Ross Back Sands on 4th & 250 off Cocklawburn on 5th (I&KD).
Black Scoter	1 off Cocklawburn on 5th (I&KD).
Long-tailed Duck	1 at Monk's House Pool on 1st (NNBC), 2 at Stag Rocks on 1st (NNBC), 25+ off Ross Back Sands on 4th & 2 off Stag Rocks on 4th (I&KD).
Goldeneye	20+ off Football Hole on 13th , 1 at Long Nanny on 20th & 1 pair on River Coquet at Warkworth on 22nd (PA).
Goosander	12 at Branton Ponds on 19th (DG&RHB).
Grey Partridge	9 at Beal on 5th (I&KD).
Red-throated Diver	2 at Stag Rocks & 1 at Beadnell on 1st (NNBC), 3 off Ross Back Sands on 4th & 8 off Cheswick on 5th (I&KD).
Black-throated Diver	1 at Stag Rocks on 1st (NNBC),1 at Ross Back Sands on 4th & 2 at Cheswick on 5th (I&KD).
Slavonian Grebe	3 at Stag Rocks on 1st (NNBC), 12 at Ross Back Sands on 4th (I&KD).
Little Egret	2 at Branton Ponds on 1st & 3 by the 5th (I&KD), 1 still on 25th (A&MG), 1 at Hedgeley Ponds on 19th (DG&RHB), 1 at Doddington from 14/20th (M&LV).
Buzzard	1 at Harper's Heugh on 1st (NNBC).
Black-tailed Godwit	2 at Budle Bay on 1st (NNBC).
Little Auk	1 off Cocklawburn on 5th (I&KD).
Collared Dove	22 at North Sunderland roosting all month (JPL).
Merlin	1 at Lilburn on 4th (I&KD).
Fieldfare	200+ at Beanley Wood on 26th (I&KD).
Black Redstart	1 at Boulmer on 18th / 21st (A&MG).
Water Pipit	1 at Seaton Point Boulmer on 18th (A&MG).
Rock Pipit	4 at Beadnell Harbour on 1st (NNBC).
Twite	25 at Ross Back Sands on 4th (I&KD).
Lesser Redpoll	2 at River Breamish on 9th (I&KD).
Crossbill	6 at Beanley Wood on 26th (I&KD).
Siskin	50 at Branton Ponds & 90 at River Breamish on 9th (I&KD), 24 at College Valley on 18th (EH).

Observers Paul Ashdown (PA), Graham & Rosemary Bell (DG&RHB), Ian & Keith Davison (I & KD), Alan & Margaret Goodall (A&MG), Liz Harrison (EH), John P Lumby (JPL), Michael Veitch (M&LV),

Club Excursion = (NNBC).

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