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Northern Fulmar nr. Whitley Bay: Dan Turner

BEADNELL to BUDLE and BEYOND..

John Lumby led this car-based trip on the 24th Oct, visiting several of our best coastal sites. Turn to page 4 for his report ……

NOTICES & NEWS

on **page 2 and 3** including details of the next talk at Bamburgh, details of our next Field trip to Saltholme, plus *updates from* previous Newsletters on **Fair Isle Bird Observatory** and the artist **Darren Woodhead**.

BIRD RECORDS for OCTOBER

turn to **page 6** for the most recent sightings compiled by our Recorder, John Lumby.

NEBBS & THE FULMAR PROJECT

Richard Poyer reports on Dan Turner's talk at the Pavilion on the work of the North East Beached Bird Survey and the Fulmar Project, monitoring the scourge of plastic in the North Sea and its devastating impact on our seabirds on pages 4&5

Yellow-browed Warbler, Howick : photo P. Hanmer

RINGER'S ROUNDUP

Phil Hanmer includes his annual Barn Owl Breeding Report for 2021, the *worst year* he has ever recorded since he started sixteen years ago, which he concludes is mainly due to adverse weather conditions rather than the pandemic. Also enjoy the tale of an 'unwary wader', or the passage of these delightful little warblers (see photo opposite), many now appearing to favour a 'western' migration route from Siberia to Africa which brings them down our East Coast in the Autumn…. check out the NNBC website for the 'roundup'……..

NOTICEBOARD

Our Next Indoor Meeting begins with our short A.G.M. on Friday 12th November 2021 at 7.30p.m. , followed by a talk given the well-known TOM CADWALLENDER, who has kindly stepped in at short notice when the original speaker* had to cancel due to a family bereavement. Tom has previously given several excellent talks to NNBC: he will take us Birding and Mammal Watching in the Brazilian Pantanal with his colourful and exciting presentation 'Jacamars to Jabirus via Jaguars'

***We look forward to hearing Emma Witcutt's talk of Gough Island in a future meeting.**

Please Note that three Documents relating to the Annual General Meeting on Friday 12th November are attached to this email along with your Newsletter. These include copies of the Minutes of the Previous AGM held in 2019, the Agenda for the AGM 2021, and the Chairman's Report. It is hoped that most members will be happy to receive and read their documents electronically whilst helping to reduce our carbon footprint.

FIELD TRIP As we go to print, there are still TWO SEATS available to book on the Hire Bus for our Next Field Trip, led by Richard Poyer, to RSPB SALTHOLME on Saturday, 20th November. To book, email richardpoyer67@gmail.com

REMINDER: NNBC MEETINGS and COVID

We believe we have an obligation to make the meeting as safe as possible for all attending. We would like you to wear a mask when entering the building, and continue to do so as you move about the room, including when getting your refreshments from the hatch. At the break we would like you to maintain social distance as you come up for a drink and that you return to your seat once you have collected it. Your mug will be collected from you.

Reporting Bird Records to the North Northumberland Bird Club:

NNBC's Bird Recorder, John Lumby, collates sightings sent to him each month, and these are published in the Club Newsletter so that all members know what has been seen around our region. Your sightings should be sent to him (see 'back page' of Newsletter for contact details) no later than the first day of the month, in order to be published in the Newsletter later that same month.

The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) also collates rare and unusual bird sightings through the County Recorder system. (For records to be accepted for this they need to be verified and reliable, as they are feeding through into scientific analysis.) For this reason, it is usually best *in addition* to send such records directly to the Northumberland & Tyneside Bird Club following the extensive guidance they give available on their website: (https://www.ntbc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/guide-to-submitting-records-2019-September-update-version-2.pdf).You will need full details of your sighting, and may be contacted by the County Bird Recorder to confirm these.

Report from 'Friends of Red Kites (FoRK)'- Autumn 2021 newsletter.

"We know of forty-four chicks that have fledged this summer, from twenty successful nests, beating last year's figure of forty-two. Sadly, there were six nests which failed with four of the failures due to the hailstorms and the cold, wet weather of May.

It would appear that our kites are doing reasonably well and going from strength to strength. We now look forward to the autumn and winter roosts when numbers counted should reflect the successful breeding seasons of late. However, sadly, 2021 has seen an increase in deaths of a number of red kites, some of which are still under investigation. The work FoRK undertakes has never been more vital – becoming a member and or the renewal of your membership contributes greatly to our mission to sustain and protect the stunningly, beautiful red kite adorning our skies."

Please report sightings of Red Kites via the FoRK website: www.friendsofredkites.org.uk or using the form on NNBC website.

FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY TRUST RECEIVES ADDITIONAL FUNDING

'Good News' Update to the article 'FIBO THEN & NOW' in the NEWSLETTER published in October 2020.The original FIBOappeal, which raised over £6 million pounds towards the rebuilding of the Observatory, suffered a severe setback when the original company which tendered for the rebuild, pulled out of the deal around the same time as Covid was casting its long shadow. No other tenders were forthcoming and the remaining Observatory staff, Warden (David Parnaby) and Administrator (Susannah Parnaby) were laid off.

A £7.4m project to rebuild Shetland's world-renowned bird observatory on Fair Isle has taken a step forward as Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) and the Scottish Government announce a funding package totalling £2.35m. The project, which is led by Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust (FIBOT), will create seven new green jobs, help to sustain the island's population and meet the community's aspirations to become carbon neutral by 2040. The development aims to create a sustainable and energy-efficient building, using power from the island's community-owned renewable energy grid as well as from the building's own solar panels.

As well as being a popular visitor attraction for bird watchers, the observatory has had an important research role, gathering bird census and migration data for the past 70 years. The observatory was first established in 1948 and has played a vital role in sustaining the population of Fair Isle, which is located roughly halfway between Orkney and Shetland and currently has a population of around 50. The new premises will include 29 high quality guest rooms for visitors and staff with social space and facilities for research. This will occupy the site of the most recent building, which was completed in 2011 but destroyed in a disastrous fire in March 2019. Subject to planning consent, it is hoped that construction on the island could get under way in summer 2022 and the new observatory be ready to welcome its first visitors in spring 2023.

Confirmation of the funding package means one of the UK's most remote communities can look forward to a promising future as a global eco-tourism destination that plays a crucial role in the social and economic life on the island.

VIEW towards SHEEP CRAIG, FAIR ISLE photo SVMcC

ARTIST DARREN WOODHEAD photo SVMcC

WINTER EXHIBITION AT WATERSTON HOUSE, ABERLADY : DARREN WOODHEAD

The Scottish Ornithologists' Club (SOC) has announced details of its forthcoming winter exhibition, entitled *New Work*, which will feature the craft of well-known Scottish wildlife artist **Darren Woodhead**. (Many members will recall his visit to the Bamburgh Pavilion in 2019)

In the exhibition, Darren presents work created over the past two years. Working along the coast, rivers and fields of his native East Lothian, he observes and paints birds, insects and landscapes found in this stretch of the Scottish countryside. Woodhead is a field painter. He stands in the landscape, immersed in the natural world he depicts, and works from direct observation in brush and watercolour. There is no studio. He observes and reacts in the moment to the appearance of a bird or the fluttering of passing butterflies. To produce such joyful and seemingly effortless work relies on consummate skill as a painter and as a naturalist.

The exhibition runs from 22 November 2019-15 January 2020 at Waterston House, Aberlady, East Lothian, EH32 0PY. It is open daily between 10 am and 4 pm, but will be closed on 25-26 December and 1 January.

NNBC OUTING: 'Beadnell to Budle & Beyond...' Sunday 24th October

Nine members met at 10 a.m. in **Beadnell Car Park** on a sunny & breezy morning, the first stop being the **Harbour** where we managed to find the following birds: Herring gull, Eider, Turnstone, Redshank, Grey plover, Guillemot, Oystercatcher, Cormorant, Starling, Jackdaw, Carrion Crow, Common Scoter, Gannet, Black-headed Gull, Rock Pipit, Rook, House sparrow, Curlew, Fulmar, Great black-backed Gull, Heron, Blackbird. At our next stop, **Logan's Pool** at the golf club, we added the following species: Magpie, Kestrel, Wood Pigeon, Redwing, Red-breasted Merganser. We moved on to **Monk's House Pool** which produced Teal, Shoveler, Moorhen,10 Snipe, Stonechat, Common gull, Black-tailed Godwit, Lapwing, Golden Plover, Pied Wagtail and Mallard. Travelling onwards to **Budle Bay** we added Shelduck, 5 Little Egret, Mute Swan, Wigeon, Brent Geese, Greylag Geese, Ringed Plover, Knot and at least 34 Shoveler to our growing list.
As It was now 2pm lunch called half the party away, but the rest visited **Stag Rocks** adding Linnet, Razorbill and Kittiwake. A good morning.

Report by John Lumby

Beached birds of North-East England and the Fulmar Project: Dan Turner

With the demise of hundreds of razorbills and guillemots along the east coast in September, Dan Turner's talk on beached birds was well timed. A Tynesider, Dan described how his interest in ornithology led to a study of Kittiwakes in his local area. This long- term project started in 1994 and is still ongoing. However, in 2003 he also became involved in a European study of the Fulmar and established the *North East Beached Birds Study (NEBBS)*.

The purpose of this European project, based in the Netherlands and led by Dr. van Franeker, is to research the role of plastics in creating litter in the North Sea. Plastic objects of all kinds are being ingested by seabirds, leading to their deaths. It is one of nine projects in the **OSPAR Convention (1992)*** - the means by which 15 Governments & the EU cooperate to protect the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic. OSPAR set the aim of an Ecological Quantity Objective where 10% or less of the beached Fulmars have 0.1g or less of plastic in their stomachs. In 2011 the North Sea had 60% of beached Fulmars studied with more than 0.1g of plastics in their stomachs. This contrasted with only 28% in the seas around Iceland. The difference was not surprising considering the large

Dan explained how Fulmars forage exclusively at sea, capturing prey from the sea surface. They frequently ingest floating litter, including plastic objects, presumably because they are mistaken for food. Fulmars do not regurgitate plastic particles but accumulate them. The content of plastic particles in their stomachs can therefore be used as an indicator of the amount of litter encountered at sea. Ingested plastics may reduce food intake and the ability to digest food, leading to a deteriorating body condition associated with increased mortality and reduced breeding success.

Fulmar NEE-2014-004, stomach contents ready to sort. Bird found in bay south of Cresswell, Northumberland on 30 June 2014. Adult female with 24 plastic particles of 1.7535 gm

Wageningen Marine Research, Den Helder, 22 Feb 2018.

Much of this plastic consists of small industrial pellets known as *beads* or *nurdles* used in thousands of industries which produce everything from space craft to Lego. Inadequate precautions during production, loading, transport and handling of the material is responsible for the nurdles entering the marine ecosystem.

After starting NEBBS, Dan gradually attracted volunteers and now has many people who routinely survey the beaches of Northumberland and Durham for beached Fulmars. The location, date and finder of each bird collected is recorded, and the birds given to Dan. Around the North East he has access to 7 freezers; generally, the carcasses are stored to await dissection at Newcastle University's **Dove Laboratory** in Cullercoats. The dissection of the birds is a skilled task and Dan has been to the Netherland regularly, not only to convey the dead Fulmars, but to be trained in the dissection of the birds and the study of their stomach contents.

Since 2003, 138 birds have been collected by the team. What have these studies revealed? Dan showed images of many Fulmar stomach contents – one of which even contained a weather balloon! The birds can have as much as 1.2g of plastic in their stomachs. Most of the plastic material is in the form of beads.

The promising outcome of the studies is that the amount of plastic is decreasing but it will take until 2054 to reach the Ecological Quantity Objective set of 10% or less of the beached Fulmars having 0.1g or less of plastic in their stomachs. In the North East England study area, there has been a steady decline in the mean weight of plastic in the Fulmars studied from 0.21g to 0.07g

In his talk, Dan touched on the wrecks of 2013 and 2018 when Puffins and Guillemots respectively were washed up in large numbers on the Northumberland coast. The cause of these wrecks were storms with strong easterlies. As for this year' event –he said that the verdict on the cause is still being assessed.

Report: Richard Poyer

[*The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the N.E. Atlantic (the **OSPAR** Convention) was opened for signature at the ministerial meeting of the former **OS**lo and **PAR**is Commissions held in Paris *in 1992*]

BIRD RECORDS OCTOBER 2021

Brent Goose	c.50 at Budle Bay on 24th (NNBC).
Pink-footed Goose	200 at Budle Bay on 19th (DG&JB).
Whooper Swan	12 at Low Newton on 8th (A&MG), 11 at Holy Island on 11th (EH,GW), 5 over Cullernose Point on 16th & 9 at Branton Ponds 20th (I&KD), 3 at High Letham on 30th (T&DLB).
Ruddy Shelduck	1 at Newton Pool on 8th (A&MG) a feral bird.
Garganey	1 at Hedgeley Ponds on 3rd (I&KD).
Shoveler	48 at Budle Bay on 19th (DG&JB) & still around on the 24th (NNBC).
Red-throated Diver	29 off Birling Carrs on 17th (A&MG).
Cory's Shearwater	2 close inshore at Stag Rocks on 21st (AB,JPL).
Great White Egret	1 at Hedgeley Ponds on 17th & over Branton on 20th (I&KD).
Little Egret	1 at Holy Island on 11th (EH,GW), 1 at Hedgeley Ponds on 17th (I&KD), 4 at Budle Bay on 19th (DG&JB) & 5 on 24th (NNBC).
Sparrowhawk	1 at Yearle on 8th (RB)
Water Rail	1 at Hedgeley Ponds on 17th (I&KD), 1 at Branton Ponds on 19th (DG&JB).
Golden Plover	400 at Boulmer 2nd /21st & 220 at Low Newton on 8th 600 on 17th (A&MG).
Whimbrel	1 at Holy Island on 10th (A&MG).
Black-tailed Godwit	1 at Monk's House Pool on 19th (DG&JB) & 1 on 24th (NNBC), 16 at Low Newton on 19th (A&MG).
Ruff	1 at West Loanend on 4th (EH,MW), 2 at Low Newton on 8th (A&MG).
Greenshank	1 at Holy Island on 11th (EH,GW).
Little Gull	1 at Low Newton on 8th (A&MG).
Mediterranean Gull	1 at Boulmer on 21st (A&MG).
Lesser Black-backed Gull	216 at Branton Ponds on 4th (I&KD).
Jay	5 near Doddington on 23th (SV&AJM).
Shore Lark	1 at Boulmer on 21st (A&MG).
Swallow	1 at Low Newton on 29th (A&MG) was the latest.
Chiffchaff	1 at Low Newton on 17th (A&MG).
Lesser Whitethroat	1 at Low Newton on 17th (A&MG).
Ring Ouzel	1 at Low Newton on 17th (A&MG).
Fieldfare	9 at North Sunderland on 12th (JPL), 6 at High Letham on 18th (T&DLB).
Redwing	1 at Holy Island on 10th (A&MG), 4 at Low Newton on 17th (A&MG), 12 at Branton Ponds on 17th (I&KD).
Stonechat	4 at Holy Island on 11th (EH,GW).
Wheatear	1 at Langleeford on 2nd (EH).
Rock Pipit	3 at Beadnell on 24th (NNBC).
Red-eyed Vireo	1 at Holy Island on 9/11th (I&KD)(A&MG)(EH,GW).
Brambling	6 at Low Newton on 17th (A&MG).

Observers Adrian Baker (AB), Graham & Julian Bell (DG&JB), Rosemary Bell (RB), David & Trish Lloyd-Blake (D&TLB), Ian & Keith Davison (I & KD), Alan & Margaret Goodall (A&MG), Elizabeth Harrison (EH), John P Lumby (JPL), Stewart & Alison McCormick (SV&AJM), Gillian Wolverson (GW)

Martin Worsfold (MW), Club Excursion = (NNBC).

November Records: please submit no later than 1st December 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 if any difficulty**.