NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND BIRD CLUB

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SALTHOLME Richard and Graham check out the birdlife on their circuit of the RSPB reserve on the edge of Industrial Teesmouth. Report and more photos from the recent club outing can be found on page 3.

NOVEMBER BIRD RECORDS see page 6

White-headed Woodpecker T. Cadwallender

JACAMARS, JABIRUS, JAGUARS..... at our latest indoor meeting, Tom Cadwallender took us on an exciting tour of Brazil's Pantanal. Turn to pages 4 & 5 for Paul Ashdown's enthusiastic report; accompanied by more stunning images, like Paul's 'favourite'; (opposite) of the White-headed Woodpecker.

Marsh Tit at East Linden (Photo: Hanmers)

NNBC WEBSITE Phil Hanmer has a wide-ranging account on the club website of recent ringing activity, including a couple of photos of Willow Tits, and comparative statistics as the season draws to a close. Always well worth a read…….

With Best Wishes for Christmas & the New Year

NOTICEBOARD

INDOOR MEETINGS — BAMBURGH PAVILION

! THE PAVILION IS OPEN ! WE ARE MEETING AS USUAL. PLEASE REMEMBER FACE MASKS

- **Friday 10th December 2021 at 7.30pm** Paul Snell will present his talk on 'Ringed Plovers of Lindisfarne National Nature Reserve, one of the most important nesting sites for this vulnerable wader.
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- **Friday 14th January 2022 at 7.30pm** The ever popular David Steel makes a very welcome return to the Pavilion for our first talk of the New Year entitled 'The Life and Times of the Atlantic Puffin'. Already well-known locally from his years working on the Farne Islands, he moved 'up the coast' a few years ago to become the Reserve Manager on the Isle of May (Scottish Natural Heritage).

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.]

1st January 2022: Annual New Year's Day Birding Bash. Meet 8.15 am at Free Car Park on the right as one enters High Newton to record as many species as possible in varying locations up and down the coast ,ending with a meal at The Middle, Bamburgh. ***Leader: John Lumby***

Eighteen NNBC members including founder and honorary President Graham Bell and two recently -joined members boarded our Travelsure coach on a sunny but windy morning. Our driver, Mark, soon had us at the RSPB Saltholme Reserve, arriving by 9.40 , where we were nearly the first visitors of the day. Despite several previous visits, it never fails to surprise me how this Nature Reserve is surrounded by so much industry with towers and pylons everywhere!

Pintail *Photo: Margaret Goodall*

The latest bird news listed Spoonbill and Bittern but no Long-eared Owl yet. Some people made for the café whilst others immediately headed off to see the birds. At the Saltholme Pool there were hundreds of wigeons and large flocks of Lapwing and Golden Plover. A couple of Cormorants sat on posts whilst a very large flock of Canada Geese were grazing in the field. Smaller groups of Shelduck, Shoveler and Teal with a few Gadwall, Pochard and Tufted Duck were all silhouetted against the early morning sun. The early visitors to the hide looked in vain for the Spoonbill.

A few of us walked the 4.5 miles of the perimeter route. This took us past a small pond where a kingfisher had been seen earlier – but not when we were there! However, there was a good gathering of Gadwalls. The bushes and hedges were surprisingly quiet – not even a Robin! On reaching the highest point of the Reserve (all of 9 metres), we enjoyed excellent views of a Kestrel perching at the top of a tree before it took off. To the south of the Tees estuary was the imposing *Roseberry Topping* in North Yorkshire

Following the path, we came to an area with several hundred Canada Geese. They slowly waddled away from us towards the nearest pool. Soon after, we met a couple who told us they had heard a bittern booming 10 minutes earlier. For us however, there was no time to dwell, as a very late lunch beckoned. A quick visit to the shop followed, meeting many of our group buying cards and gifts, before returning to the coach for our journey back to Northumberland.

Report by Richard Poyer

Birds seen Mute swan, Greylag Goose, Canada Goose, Shelduck, Wigeon, Gadwall, Teal, Mallard, Pintail, Shoveler, Tufted Duck, Pochard, Goldeneye, Cormorant, Little Egret, Grey Heron, Spoonbill, Little Grebe, Buzzard, Kestrel, Moorhen, Coot, Golden Plover, Lapwing, Curlew, Black-tailed Godwit, Ruff, Green Sandpiper, Redshank, Black-headed Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Stock Dove, Short-eared Owl, Magpie, Carrion Crow, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Wren, Starling, Blackbird, Fieldfare, Redwing, Robin, Stonechat, Dunnock, House Sparrow, Tree Sparrow, Pied Wagtail, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Reed Bunting. ***53 species***

JACAMARS to JABIRUS via JAGUARS: *Birds & Mammals of the Brazilian Pantanal*

Tom Cadwallender's presentation gave everyone a technicolour escape from the grey, wet and wintery weather we had all trekked through in order to make November's meeting in Bamburgh. With azure blue skies, and talk of temperatures in the mid-30s, we were treated to a feast of birds and other wildlife as Tom's group made their way down the fabled ***Transpantaneira***, (95 miles long) which is one of the very few routes into the magical Pantanal. This amazing wildlife hot-spot is a seasonal swamp covering about 62000 square miles across Brazil, Paraguay and Bolivia. Each dry season, the marshland drains under the searing temperatures, and the wildlife is gradually concentrated in the remaining wet patches and rivers. Tom explained that many of the birds and other animals were relaxed and relatively easy to see, from open boats, open trucks and walks. The roads, bridges and accommodation had a distinctly frontier look, but the images Tom shared with us were a glorious feast of rainbow plumes, quirky beaks, and more than a few razor-sharp teeth.

Transpantaneira

Amongst the very first Pantanal residents we met were the Caimans which lurk in huge numbers in just about every patch of water across the region. These huge, alligator-like beasts were shown lazing around on the banks and shallows, but you couldn't miss the formidable jaws. All around these slumbering beasts, Tom showed us a feast of birds. Water birds of every shape and colour imaginable gave us a stunning show. Amongst my favourites was the Sun Bittern, with its amazing display, wings spread and catching the blazing light. Tom said his choice of prettiest bird in the whole world was the Agami Heron, captured lurking in the shady patches at the edge of the water. The cutest water bird of all had to be the Pied Plover chick which Tom had captured looking fluffy, top-heavy and slightly confused.

Sun Bittern displaying

The avian show wasn't restricted to the water. We were introduced to whole families of birds we don't have in Europe, from the turkey-like Chaco Chachalaca, and the curly-topped Bare-Faced Curassow, to the Southern Screamer and the ostrich-like Greater Rhea. Amongst these unfamiliar residents, Tom had been looking for one in particular, the Chestnut-Bellied Guan, which is endemic to the Pantanal so impossible to see anywhere else. Sure enough, he had a photo for us.

Bare-Faced Curassow

And then in the trees and bushes, a feast of the most amazing colours, like the Orange-Backed Troupial and the Yellow-Billed Cardinal. Of all those with vibrant plumage however, two or three do stand out.
The Hyacinth Macaw is even bluer than the tropical sky, and the pure elegance of the White Woodpecker is just magic, my personal favourites of the night. Of course, you also just have to mention the unforgettable Toco

Hyacinth Macaws

Toco Toucans

Toucan. For this stunner, it isn't so much the plumage that amazes but the incredible bill, huge and bright orange against the black and white body.

Raptors galore also enjoy the bounty of the Pantanal, and Tom gave us fine images of wonders like the Bat Falcon and the Snail Kite. Of course, not all the hunters are birds. Two real stars captured on Tom's camera are amongst the most iconic animals of South America – the Giant River Otter, and the elusive Jaguar. Tom's pictures of both took us to the heart of this amazing place and left me, and perhaps others, working out how soon I could book my flight! **Report: Paul Ashdown**

[All Photographs by Kind Permission of Tom Cadwallender]

Tom Cadwallender in the Pantanal, indicating a Jaguar lying up on the shady river bank.

BIRD RECORDS NOVEMBER 2021

Brent Goose	1000 at Harper's Heugh on 15th (JPL,AB).
Pink-footed Goose	6 near Branton on 14th (I&KD) & 120 at Boulmer on 22nd (A&MG).
Eurasian White-fronted Goose	1 near Branton on 14th (I&KD).
Whooper Swan	3 at Branton Ponds on 7th &7 on 19th (I&KD),
Long-tailed Duck	1 off Stag Rocks on 2nd (A&MG).
Red-breasted Merganser	1 offf Stag Rocks on 2nd (A&MG).
Grey Partridge	8 at Boulmer on 22nd (A&MG).
Red-throated Diver	1 off Stag Rocks on 13th (I&KD).
Great Northern Diver	1 off Stag Rocks on 13th (I&KD).
Great Shearwater	1 off Stag Rocks on 1st /2nd (A&MG) & 1 on 13th (I&KD).
Slavonian Grebe	1 off Stag Rocks on 2nd (A&MG).
Little Egret	3 at Budle Bay on 15th (JPL,AB), 2 at Branton Ponds on 19th & 3 on 21st (I&KD), 3 at Branton Ponds on 22nd (JMcC).
Sparrowhawk	1 at North Sunderland on 18th (JPL).
Purple Sandpiper	85 at Stag Rocks on 2nd (A&MG).
Wilson's Phalarope	1 at Newstead on 1st /2nd (A&MG) & on 1st (I&KD).
Black Guillemot	1 off Stag Rocks on 13th (I&KD).
Puffin	4 off Stag Rocks on 2nd (A&MG).
Collared Dove	9 at Boulmer on 22nd (A&MG).
Merlin	1 at Swinhoe on 9th (JPL).
Jay	1 at Spindlestone Wood on 1st (A&GM).
Raven	4 near Branton on 15th (I&KD).
Shore Lark	3 at Holy island Snook on 9th (JGl).
Rose-coloured Starling	1 at Glanton on 15th (I&KD).
Stonechat	1 near Branton on 15th (I&KD).
Brambling	2 at Spindlestone Wood on 1st /2nd (A&MG).
Twite	50 at Long Nanny on 10th (JPL).
Linnet	120 at Boulmer on 22nd (A&MG).
Yellowhammer	5 at Boulmer on 22nd (A&MG).

[Correction from October Records: Cory's Shearwater (2) **should read Great Shearwater (1) JPL]**

Observers Adrian Baker (AB), Ian & Keith Davison (I & KD), Judy Glover (JGl), Alan & Margaret Goodall (A&MG), John P Lumby (JPL), John McCutcheon (JMcC).

December Records: please submit no later than 2nd January 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**.

A Merry Christmas & a Great Birding New Year to all contributors in 2022.