NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND BIRD CLUB

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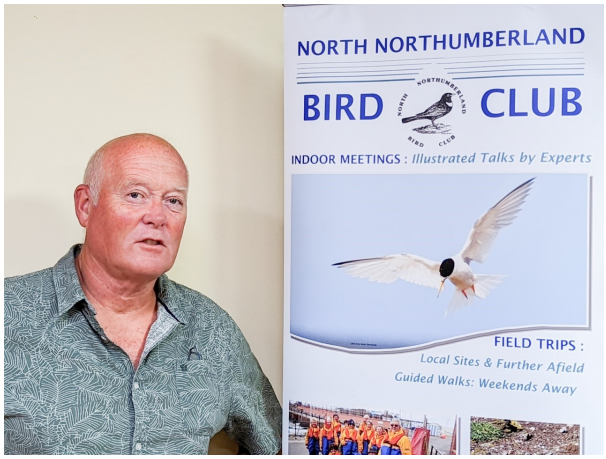


Brian Clasper

FIELD TRIPS See a reports of last month's field trip to Lindisfarne on **pages 4,5 & 6 .**

UGANDA– it's Birds, Gorillas, and other Wildlife.

Brian Clasper gave a talk on Uganda—it's Birds, Gorillas, and other Wildlife….Turn to **pages 7-10** for **Richard Poyer's** report.

ABERLADY FIELD TRIP See details on our Notice Board on **page 2**

Sparrowhawk at Howick Photo supplied by Phil & Alison Hanmer

RINGER'S ROUNDUP **(see page 11 & 12)**

AGM announcement on **page 3**

TREASURER NEEDED . See details of what is involved in the role on **page 3.**

SUBSCRIPTIONS REMINDER see **page 2**

NOTICEBOARD

INDOOR MEETINGS BAMBURGH PAVILION

· **Friday 14th October 2022 at 7.30pm Gill Thompson** will give a talk on

THE BREEDING WADER PROJECT—in the Northumberland National Park.

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.]

Field Trip at 11.00am on Tuesday 25th October 2022 to ABERLADY BAY

Join us for a leisurely stroll round Aberlady Bay to see the Pink-footed Geese plus other shorebirds and seabirds before returning to the Car Park around 3.30 p.m. High tide at 5.7m is at 3.26pm. (15.26) The geese come back in to roost later so you may wish to bring extra food supplies if you are staying to see them.

Meet in the Car Park on the A198 north-east of Aberlady (near the bridge over the Peffer Burn) at 11.00 am to begin walk at 11.15am **. Please car share, if possible, as parking is very limited on the side of this busy road**. Bring stout shoes, waterproofs and lunch. All members welcome (non-members £2.00)
Leaders : Richard Poyer 07936 909649 : Liz Harrison 07778 552259

IF YOU HAVE NOT YET PAID MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE NOW OVERDUE

Following a change ratified at our last AGM the membership year now runs from 1st September to 31st August. Fees remain unchanged at :-

Family/Couple £15, Individual £10, Student - Free.

You can pay by BACS but we would ask you to also fill in the attached Membership Form for our records.

Of interest ?

The BORDERS FUNGUS GROUP (membership free) is running a series of Fungal Forays through September to November visiting some good local birding haunts (Lindisfarne, Newton links, Hirsel and several more). If you are interested contact them directly : Sheila.lillie@live.co.uk

NOTICEBOARD

TREASURER NEEDED

After several years of outstanding service our current Treasurer, John Southern, is retiring from the committee at the end of the Club Year 2023 , although he will be on hand to give advice and guidance, if required, to the new incumbent.

Set out below are a few pointers as what is involved :-

A basic knowledge of computing

A basic knowledge of Microsoft Excel & Word \(or equal)

A basic knowledge of spreadsheets

Maintaining a bank account on line

Prepare and present a statement of Club finances at the committee meetings and the A.G.M.

If you feel you can you can take on this role or would like to discuss it further, please contact our Chairman, Richard Poyer. Also, a meeting can be arranged with John Southern to discuss matters in more depth.

Notice of the **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

of the North Northumberland Bird Club to be held at Bamburgh at 7.30pm on November 11th 2022

The club is run by a Committee of ten members. At the present time, there is a vacancy following the resignation of Glynis Gower. Any members interested in serving on the committee are welcome to put their name forward to the Secretary before the closing date. Nominations for the committee to be with our Secretary Paul Ashdown by October 28th 2022,

email : ashbauve.pm@gmail.com

Nominations must be seconded and the nominee must have given their agreement to the nomination.

NOTICEBOARD

HOLY ISLAND FIELD TRIP 18th SEPTEMBER 2022.

Due the popularity of this walk the numbers allowed the group to split into two. We therefore have two reports. One from Phil Hanmer and another by John McCutcheon.

Holy Island bird walk 18/9/22; Philip & Alison Hanmer

Autumn Saturdays are usually Bird Ringing days at Howick Ringing Station but due to a run of wet and windy weather such activities were in abeyance and so we set out to join the guided walk. Arriving on Holy Island in an annoying wind (but no rain) we were assaulted by the incredible number of ordinary visitors – leading to a scrum at the astoundingly expensive (and temperamental) parking ticket machines. When we eventually met up with the rest of the NNBC people we could not find Richard our guide! Someone asked if we had a phone number for Richard on our phone – and luckily we did. The call connected and we discovered that Richard was stranded down south somewhere on the A1 with a car breakdown.

So we made the best of things and the party sort of divided up into a couple of smaller groups that both made their way around the island; a third group just vanished! Starting with a scrutiny of the Strawberry Field near the Coach Park for a reported Black Redstart we drew a blank although we did see several Pied Wagtails and lots of Goldfinch feeding on thistles. We then walked up the Crooked Lonnen looking for Geese in the fields. However, there were only Curlew and Starlings to be seen and a few random gulls. Reaching the coast we viewed Eider, Herons, Oystercatchers and Redshank; and two Divers flying past. Progressing past the Hide there were a pair of Swans and 7 cygnets (a high number compared to only two at Howick for example) and a large number of moulting mallard ducks. There were also Moorhens, Little Grebe and a barmy Heron – *insisting on standing on a wall behind the pool in the quite strong gale that was blowing.*

Returning to the coast, as we progressed towards the Beacon on Emmanuel Head, a definite Red Throated Diver showed itself. There were also Gannets including several juveniles, Eiders and Cormorants. After a lunch break in a sheltered spot we progressed towards Sandham Bay to find Bar-tailed Godwits, Oystercatchers and Redshanks. At the furthest point west there was a lone Grey Plover which seemed to be very much on its own. Walking further along it eventually emerged that the Grey Plover was accompanied by two Dunlin.

Heading up to the quarry folks looked for rarities but none were found and so the group started to break up further as some of us needed to head back to the Car Park before parking tickets expired.

Alison and I returned home via Budle Bay where we were overflown by a skein of 30 Pink-footed Geese. There were also 150 plus Greylag Geese, some Canada Geese, 40 odd Shoveler Duck and 50 Shelduck on the mud flats. So ended a bird walk on Holy Island; what all the other visitors to the island were doing we really don't know!

Phil & Alison

HOLY ISLAND FIELD TRIP 18th SEPTEMBER 2022. (cont.)

Report by John McCutcheon

17th September, and around 16-18 members met up in the Chare Ends car park on Holy Island. Crossing the causeway just as the tide went out meant few sightings were evident other than a few Curlews. Members formed small groups around the main entrance. As the nominated start time passed, binoculars came out scouring the car park to find Richard, but only saw a Roe Deer in the distance. After a while and a phone call, the group were told that car trouble had stranded Richard on the A1 and he was unable to travel and lead the group. Undeterred, all decided to go it alone and make a start along Crooked Lonnen. With the large number of members present, the group quite soon fragmented into mainly two parts, the larger group forging ahead while a smaller group made up the rear.

Having only been a member for one year and this being my first field trip, I did not know what to expect but was encouraged that the synergy of the small group I was in was significantly greater than my own limited knowledge - which made the trip very worthwhile.

In the first part of the tour up we ventured up Sandham Lane and on to Crooked Lonnen: the expected Sparrows, Martins, Swallows and Crows showed well as did very large flocks of Starling. Quite a dew Pied Wagtail, Goldfinch and Linnet entertained up the Lonnen. On reaching the coastline we headed north towards the small lake and stopped off at the hide to see Mute Swan, Mallard, Widgeon, Teal, Little Grebe and Moorhen. We took the opportunity to sit in the hide and have a quick bite of lunch, then onward to Emmanuel Head where we caught up with the forward group. A bit of sea watching and we were rewarded with sightings of Red Throated Diver, Black Throated Diver, Gannet and Bar Tailed Godwit among others. We then headed toward the northern shoreline and cliffs, spotting a few waders as we went. On to the quarry which was sparse and then on to Straight Lonnen as we made our way back to the village.

The grove of willows half way down Straight Lonnen had been reported as home to Icterine Warbler in the last week or so. A flutter in the willows caused a detailed look by the group but the debate decided it was a Willow Warbler along with a Blue Tit and no Icterine to add to my Northumberland List. As we moved on we were however pleased to see 5 Roe Deer in a field to the right, showing their jumping prowess as they easily leapt over the surrounding fence.

HOLY ISLAND FIELD TRIP 18th SEPTEMBER 2022. (cont.)

Report by John McCutcheon (cont)

Having lugged my camera around all day but not feeling the light or proximity of birds was sufficient for a decent shot, the only thing I managed was a full zoom of a pair of Stonechats, but this was more to demonstrate the capabilities of the camera to another member who had recently purchased the same model. Not a great shot but good enough to confirm an ID .

Approaching the village, most needed to get back to their cars based on what they had paid for – and given the uncertainty and inefficiency of the island car park meters. So four of us continued down to the Vicars Garden. Quite quiet except for around a dozen Collared Doves. Telescope out, we spotted around 24 Brent Geese on a sandbank and on another a large bob of seals. After 5 hours of enjoyable spotting, it was back to the car park to wind our way home.

It was quite a successful day with some 49 species being recorded (at least by the trailing group). The species list was: Brent Goose, Mute Swan, Eurasian Wigeon, Mallard, Eurasian Teal, Common Eider, Common Scoter, Little Grebe, Feral Pigeon), Common Woodpigeon, Collared Dove, Common Moorhen, Eurasian Oystercatcher, European Golden Plover, Eurasian Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Dunlin, Common Redshank, Black-headed Gull, Common Gull, Herring Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Red-throated Diver, Black-throated Diver, Northern Gannet, Great Cormorant, European Shag, Grey Heron, Common Magpie, Carrion Crow, Eurasian Blue Tit, Eurasian Skylark, Barn Swallow, Common House Martin, Willow Warbler, Common Starling, European Robin, European Stonechat, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, Pied Wagtail, Meadow Pipit, Rock Pipit, Common Linnet, European Goldfinch, Grey Plover, Pied Flycatcher. Along with the birds we saw 6 Roe Deer, 4 Rabbits and several dozen seals, but no Richard .

John McCutcheon

Ps Additions to John and Phil's from **Marge and Phil Noble :**

Wheatear, Coot, Ringed Plover, Magpie, Greenshank, Little Egret

UGANDA– it's Birds, Gorillas, and other wildlife - Brian Clasper.

Report by Richard Poyer

Brian started our new season by sharing a really interesting and colourful journey round Uganda, a country which few of us will have visited or will ever visit. Arriving at Kampala in October 2019 he started on a journey which would take in gorillas, chimpanzees, hippos, rhinos, giraffes, elephants, big cats and of course, birds.

His first stop was the Lake Mabamba marshes near Entebbe. Malachite Kingfisher, Long-toed Plover, Blue-throated Bee Eater and Swamp Flycatcher were just some of the many colourful birds in the swamps. But the bird he was looking for was the Shoebill. 5ft. tall and feeding on lungfish in the papyrus reed beds, this bird has the appearance of a bird from the prehistoric age. Brian was duly rewarded with close views of two birds.

The next day was a trip to the Ziwa rhino sanctuary where 90 rangers look after southern white rhinos. Re-introduced to Uganda in 2005 the aim is to build up small herds out on the grassland. From the rhino sanctuary it was north west on Chinese built roads to the Murchison Falls. Chinese investment is huge in Eastern Africa as they exploit the mineral and oil reserves of the region. Large groups of Crowned Crane, the national bird of Uganda, were on the savanna.

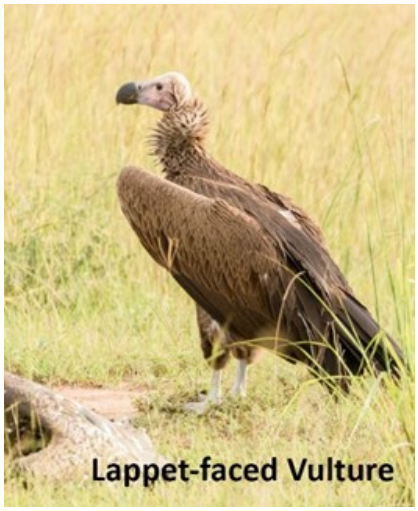
Crowned Cranes

The savanna is also home to vultures – the Lappet Faced and the Ruppells's Griffon, feeding on dead antelope and other game killed by lions. Across the savanna were groups of giraffe including the rarer Rothchild's.

UGANDA (cont.)

In the Murchison Falls region it was time to get close to crocodiles, hippos, warthogs, elephants, buffaloes and leopards.

There were numerous Fish Eagles, Storks and Herons whilst Pied Kingfishers and Red-throated Bee Eaters seemed to be everywhere. The most eye-catching of Bee-Eaters was the Carmine.



From the Falls it was south to the Kibale Forest to see the chimpanzees, monkeys and baboons and then on to the Queen Elizabeth National Park. Here, as in Kenya, the pastoralists were moved out of the savanna areas when the Parks were created in order to avoid conflict with big game animals. Now however, people are being allowed back in but issues still remain.

A boat journey on the Kazinga Channel meant close encounters with hippos and views of thousands of Swifts and Sand Martins in migration. Along the shore were Gull-billed Terns, African Skimmers, Spoonbill, Pelicans, Black-Winged Stilt and many other wader species.

UGANDA (cont.)

Leaving the river behind, it was on to the Bwindi National Park and to go sliding down hill, accidentally, to have a close encounter with the mountain gorillas that Brian had come to see. He blamed his new boots.

Here there are also potential conflicts as tea and coffee plantations surround the Park and could extend into the forest.

UGANDA (cont.)

He was able to see a bird that, along with the Shoebill, he had always wanted to see – the African Finfoot. The Finfoot is a very secretive and elusive bird, rarely seen. So this was a prized sighting for Brian – one to remember.

This short report can't do justice to the many colourful and exciting sights that Brian saw on his trip and which he shared with us on that Friday evening. Thank you Brian.

A RINGERS YEAR .

All photographs in this report supplied by Phil & Alison Hanmer

SEPT 2022: As we come to the end of the Barn Owl nesting season (*yes its much longer than most of our other native birds)* owl workers start to get their detailed records sent into the BTO; and this then turns up a lot of information on the 'controls' (birds ringed and then recaptured/found). In this respect the sad ones are the early deaths; like a young owl from near Netherwitton, only ringed on the 1st July that turned up dead after apparently trying to navigate the road network around Morpeth and Pegswood on the 17th September.

Better news comes about four adults that are still alive: Including a Scottish bird hatched somewhere near Jedburgh in 2020 that is now residing near Earle; while a bird hatched near Longhorsley in 2016 is still in the same area; and as a breeding female laid a clutch of three eggs in May but then stopped incubating them. However, she then laid a second late clutch of 6 in June and I ringed the 4 surviving chicks in August. Another male bird that was hatched in the Upper Breamish Valley in 2016 (or possibly earlier) nested successfully near Netherwitton (raising 2 young) and is consequently at least 6 years old. Finally, a long-favoured owl site near Fallodon that had been vacant in 2021 was repopulated by a new pair and the male bird was found to have come from Howick after being hatched in 2014; so he is 8 yrs old.

I have also had news of everyone's familiar 'Blue Tit'; two birds have been travelling in a small way. APK5924 ringed in July 2021 near Swarland was controlled alive at Howick Ringing Station on the 20/9/22; while AXR3322 also ringed near Swarland but this time in Sept 2021 was also found to be at Howick on the 2/9/22.

This brings us neatly to events at Howick Ringing Station during September that have been much disrupted by the weather. On the 2nd we captured 43 birds including 32 new birds and 11 retraps. One retrap Blue Tit turned out to be 5 yrs old but the best catch of the day was a new young Lesser Whitethroat (see pict.) along with several Blackcaps and Chiffchaffs all in the process of migrating south towards Africa. The 17th proved to be a busy day with a catch of 82 birds 61 new and 21 retraps; including a juvenile Common Whitethroat (see pict.), more Blackcaps, Chiffchaffs and two adult Willow Warblers (a much rarer bird *than its cousin the Chiffchaff Warbler* at Howick these days). The Whitethroat is on its way to winter in West Africa east to the Sudan; while the Lesser Whitethroat is heading towards North East and central Africa.

Lesser Whitethroat

Whitethroat

A RINGERS YEAR (cont.)

Yellow-browed warbler

The 20th saw the catch rise to 93 (probably a record for this site) 79 new and 14 retraps; including what seem to have been migrating-in thrushes (Mistle & Song). We also captured that most beautiful of rare but regular migrants a Yellow-browed Warbler (see photo.) on its way from Siberia to Africa. We also encountered part of the resident Howick Long-tailed Tit flock and several House Sparrows; not a bird we usually see at Howick! Numbers returned to normal on the 23rd as we caught 42 birds; 21 new and 21 retraps. These included a Chaffinch from 2015 and several Bullfinch along with other mostly resident (rather than migrant) birds. Finally, on the 25th we captured 25 birds 40 new and 16 retraps. Chiffchaffs and Blackcaps were again in evidence and some suspicious looking Blackbirds that may well be migrants coming in from Scandinavia. Some excitement was provided by the capture of a young female Sparrowhawk (see photo on **page 1**.) that did its best to injure one of my C Ringers with its needle-sharp claws. It had apparently been trying to catch a blue tit for its elevenses.

Best Regards

Phil Hanmer S Ringer/Trainer; Natural History Society of Northumbria Ringing Group (Hancock Museum). E-mail: tytoalbas@btinternet.com

BIRD RECORDS September 2022

Report by Paul Armstrong

Below are the highlights for the month of September

Brent Goose	9 past Cullernose on 15th	I&KD
	24 on Holy Island on 17th	JMcC
	35-40 Light Bellied at Harper's Heugh on 21st	SV&AJM
Pink-footed Goose	45 the first flock of the autumn over Branton on 14th	I&KD
Whooper Swan	A flock heard but not seen over Branton on 24th	I&KD
Common Scoter	24 at Almouth Bay on 24th	RP
Great Crested Grebe	3 at Branton Ponds all month.	I&KD
	4 at Widdrington Moor Lake on 14th	RP
Avocet	3 flew over Long Nanny on 27th	PCA
Grey Plover	7 at Birling Carrs on 13th and 13 on 25th	RP
Ruff	1 on Long Nanny on 3rd	PCA
Curlew Sandpiper	1 on Long Nanny on 3rd	PCA
	1 on Holy Island on 10th	I&KD
	1 on Holy Island on 11th	PN&MN
	1 at Budle Bay on 13th	SVM
Dunlin	97 at Coquet Estuary on 3rd	RP
Purple Sandpiper	1 at Birling Carrs on 25th	RP
Redshank	105 at Coquet Estuary on 3rd	RP
	55 on Holy Island on 11th	PN&MN
Greenshank	1 at Brandon Ford on 7th	I&KD
	5 on Holy Island on 11th	PN&MN
Lesser Black-backed Gull	25 at Branton Ponds on 5th and 146 on 20th	I&KD
Great Skua	1 on Long Nanny on 3rd and 4th	PCA
Arctic Skua	1 seen from Berwick Pier on 12th	PN&MN
	4 past Cullernose on 15th 3 past Cullernose on 17th	I&KD
Common Guillemot	11 at Alnmouth Bay on 25th	RP
Red-throated Diver	5 at Cullernose on 15th	I&KD
	2 on Holy Island on 17th	JMcC
	15 at Alnmouth Bay on 25th	RP
Black-throated Diver	3 past Cullernose on 17th	I&KD
	1 at Holy Island on 17th	JMcC
Sooty Shearwater	1 past Cullernose on 17th	I&KD
Manx Shearwater	11 past Cullernose on 15th 24 past Cullernose on 17th	I&KD
Osprey	1 on Holy Island causeway pole on 6th	PCA
Hen Harrier	1 on Holy Island on 11th	I&KD
Buzzard	2 over Wooler on 29th	DL
Kingfisher	1 at Warkworth on 14th	P&AH
	1 on Long Nanny on 21st	PCA
Wryneck	1 at Chare End, Holy Island on 6th	PCA
	1 on Snook, Holy Island on 10th	PN&MN
	1 on Holy Island on 10th and a different bird on 11th	I&KD
Peregrine	1 on Holy Island on 10th	I&KD
Yellow-browed Warbler	1 at Howick on 20th	P&AH
Icterine Warbler	1 on Holy Island on 3rd	I&KD

BIRD RECORDS September 2022 (cont.)

Blackcap	3 on Holy Island on 9th	I&KD
	1 on Snook, Holy Island on 10th	PN&MN
	1 in willows below Bamburgh castle on 23rd	PCA
Garden Warbler	2 on Holy Island on 3rd	I&KD
Lesser Whitethroat	1 juvenille at Howick on 2nd	P&AH
	2 on Holy Island on 9th and 7 on 10th	I&KD
Spotted Flycatcher	1 on Holy Island on 4th and 7 on 9th	I&KD
	3 on Holy Island on 6th	PCA
	2 on Snook, Holy Island on 10th	PN&MN
Pied Flycatcher	14 at Holy Island on 3rd and 12 on 4th with 9 on 9th	I&KD
	3 on Holy Island on 6th and 1 on 13th	PCA
	1 on Snook, Holy Island on 10th	PN&MN
Redstart	19 on Holy Island on 9th and 5 on 11th	I&KD
	2 on Snook, Holy Island on 10th	PN&MN
	1 in Bamburgh dunes on 10th	PCA
	2 on Holy Island on 11th	PN&MN
	1 at Tyneley on 23rd	MSH
Whinchat	2 on Holy Island on 4th and 4 on 9th	I&KD
	1 at Bamburgh dunes on 13th	PCA
Yellow Wagtail	2 on Holy Island on 4th	I&KD
Tree Pipit	1 at Low Newton Tin Church on 7th	PCA

Please send October records to Paul Armstrong NNBCrecords@yahoo.com by 1st November 2022

If you want a bird adding to the highlights list, you will need to submit, the species, location, date(s) and count together with any comments. If you just want it added to the list of species seen in the month, then you only need submit the name of the bird.

Contributors

Paul Armstrong (PCA)
Ian & Keith Davison (I&KD)
Michael Hall (MSH)
Phil & Alison Hanmer (P&AH)
David Laidle (DL)
Alison McCormick (AJM)
Stewart McCormick (SVM)
Stewart & Alison McCormick (SV&AJM)
John McCutcheon (JMcC)
Phil & Marge Noble (PN&MN)
Richard Poyer (RP)

A list of all birds reported throughout September is attached to this newsletter.