NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND BIRD CLUB

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Richard Baines

Goldcrest - Hanmer

BIRDS OF BHUTAN - Land of the Thunder Dragon

Richard Baines, gave a talk on a year on his visits to this fascinating area See **pages 3,4 &5** for **Paul Ashdown's** report.

BIRD RECORDS for MAY

The most recent sightings in our area will be compiled by our Recorder, **Paul Armstrong.** (see pages 8 to 11.)

RINGERS YEAR

See pages 6 & 7.

WEBSITE

Keep up to date with the latest news on our **Website**.

www.northnorthumberlandbirdclub.co.uk

NOTICEBOARD

NNBC MEETINGS

INDOOR MEETINGS BAMBURGH PAVILION

- **Friday 8th September 2023 at 7.30pm Phil H**anmer will give a talk on **QUEENSLAND and Further North.**
- **Friday 13th October 2023 at 7.30pm Mhairi Maclachlan will give a talk Cumbria's Coastal RSPB Reserves**

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.]**

LOW NEWTON 27th September. Leaders Paul Ashdown and Martine Delbauve

tel 01665 576771

Wednesday 27th September 2023 10.00am at Tin Church or 9.45am at free car park above the village.

FARNES DEEP—Unfortunately this trip is cancelled due to low numbers.

NORFOLK TRIP A proposed draft itinerary is shown below. Final costs and itinerary to be confirmed once numbers of participants are known. If you are interested in going or want more information, please contact **John Lumby** directly. J.lumby@yahoo.co.uk

5 or 6 days (4/5 nights) staying in Wymondham 4/5 nights at The Townhouse Hotel etc using a Travelsure 19 or 32 seater coach. Suggested dates are 28th April to 3rd May or 5th May to 9th May, 2024. Leader John Lumby.

Day 1 Drive from Northumberland with pick ups to a reserve near Spalding & then via King's Lynn to Wymondham, overnight at hotel.

Day 2 Go north from Wymondham to Cley next the Sea NOA reserve & area, back to hotel.

Day 3 Go north west from Wymondham to Weeting, Holme & RSPB Titchwell reserves, back to hotel.

Day 4 Go south east from Wymondham to RSPB Minsmere reserve, etc return to hotel.

Day 5 Return home with stops

Alternative would be extra day (6) to go to RSPB Lakenheath etc, on Day 5, & then return home with stops on Day 6.

6 days would give a very good bird list well over 120, including many unusual species such as Wood Lark, Stone Curlew, Bearded Tit, Bittern, Black-winged Stilt, Night Heron, Dotterel, Spoonbill, Marsh Harrier, Montaque's Harrier, Common Crane, Nightjar, Nightingale, Woodcock, Avocet, Golden Oriole, Glossy Ibis, possible Honey Buzzard etc

Typical costs, Townhouse Hotel = £75 pp/n. Cost of a coach seat will vary depending on days away & choice of coach, but £155 to £200 covers, with 19 participants.

Please let John Lumby know of your interest/choices as soon as possible. tel 01665 720 654 or e mail as above.

NOTICEBOARD

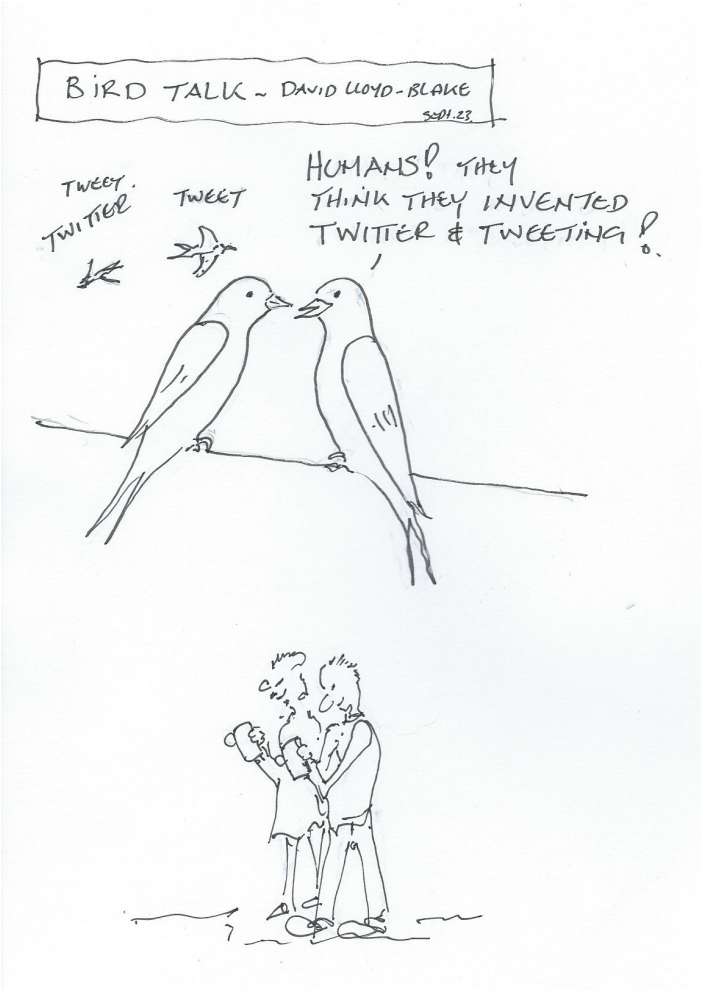
NNBC MEETINGS

REFRESHMENT COSTS

Unfortunately, due to increased costs, we are increasing the refreshment tariff to **£1** at our Friday talks.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW DUE.

Attached to the e mail with this Newsletter will be a Subscription Form.



BIRDS OF BHUTAN - Land of the Thunder Dragon

Our last indoor meeting before the summer break featured a talk from Richard Baines based on trips he led in Bhutan in 2019 and 2020. His enthusiasm for this rarely visited kingdom, its wildlife, culture and people shone out through the presentation, and was echoed by those in the audience who had also visited Bhutan.

Richard showed us what makes this such a special place, especially for birders. He shared a stunning portfolio of photographs featuring birds almost beyond imagination. Their bright, jewel like colours amazed us. Many were high-altitude, Himalayan or tropical forest specialists, and some were exceedingly rare. I thought this true of the lovely Black-necked Crane, with only about 1000 birds in the world, many of which winter in the high Phobjekha Valley. Then Richard showed us the gangling White-bellied Heron, right on the edge of extinction, with less than 20 birds confirmed!

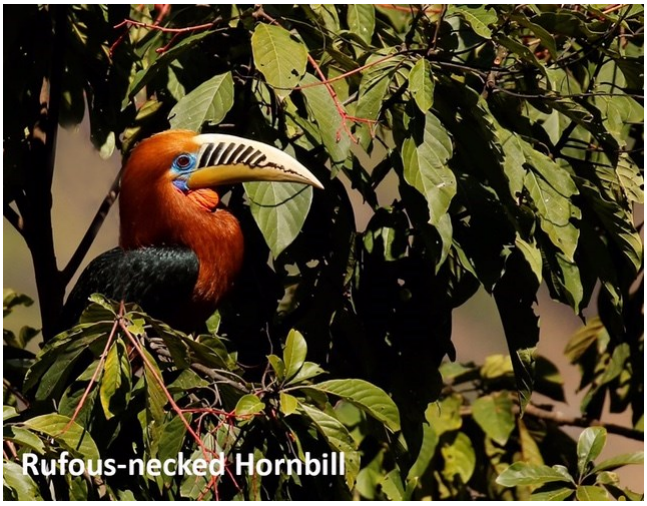
Bhutan has a highly respected reputation for conservation, and protects huge areas of ancient forest and high mountain. This supports awesome biodiversity, much of which is doing far better than the herons. Although Richard maintains that there are plenty of “little-brown-jobs” he concentrated on showing us dazzling fireworks of all shapes and sizes. From beautiful passerines like Himalayan Cutia, and an amazing range of Laughing Thrushes and Redstarts, through to large tree-dwellers like the Rufus-necked Hornbill and (always my favourites) the superbly named Darjeeling Woodpecker. On the ground and in the water, more amazing sights like the fantastic Ibisbill, and for me, best of all, the almost unbelievably marked Blood Pheasant.

All these wonderful birds were placed in a natural and cultural landscape by Richard’s photos and commentary. He described how views of the Himalayan Monal were secured by visiting a monastery where the monks regularly fed them, and he showed how his visits to the iconic Tiger’s Nest monastery were enriched by sightings of no less than three different Accentors (Alpine, Rufus-breasted & Altai). We also had flashes of other Bhutan wildlife, like the Golden Langur, and Bhutan Takin, glimpsed magically through the bamboo. However, things weren’t allowed to become too dreamlike, as he took us on a visit to a sewage farm, and described the excitement of local guides on seeing a Common Gull, somehow lost in landlocked Bhutan.

So much exotic beauty completely enthralled us, just as Richard had intended. He is off again next spring, hoping to see stunners like the Satyr Tragapon (what a name!), and the superbly cuddly looking Red Panda. Most of us will just have to dream and wait for the photos!

Report by **Paul Ashdown**

BIRDS OF BHUTAN - Land of the Thunder Dragon



A selection of the photographs from the talk.

RINGERS YEAR - Phil Hanmer

The RINGERS YEAR for July can be found on our website

AUG 2023.

First a correction, I reported last month on Barn Owl 'GV65409' originally ringed by one of my trainees in its nest near Longhorsley in 2017. I said this had been found dead a few miles to the east but in fact this male owl had been controlled alive by a fellow ringer roosting (apparently not nesting) in a *tawny* owl box. Perhaps this 6 yr. old owl will breed next year. Back in July we had returned to a nest box in an old granary near Warkworth to ring some owlets – we found two and *only one* was big enough to ring. In this situation the smaller chick often dies before fledging (as the larger one gets first helpings of prey items brought in by the adults). However, going back again on the 7/8/23 it was gratifying to find that both young owls were growing well and could be ringed (see photos showing the differences in stage of development). In addition, the quick reactions of one of my C Ringers led to the capture of both the adult owls as they tried to make an exit though the low door of this stone building. The female (GK410460) is an old friend having been handled first in 2016 (when she was already an adult) at this same location. In May this year she had five eggs and is probably 8 or 9 yrs old. The male was a new bird to us but is now FH79950 and he may be about five years old. In another box, at a rather more remote location north of Wooler, a parallel situation has occurred and I am pleased to report that checking again at the end of August proved successful with a second owlet ready to be ringed. Here we know the Male owl is at least 7 yrs old and the female is 5 yrs old.

Still fighting the weather (and unreliable weather forecasts) we have continued to ring at Howick Arboretum. On the 6/8/23 we captured 49 birds (38 new and 11 retraps) with two of the Coal Tits originally ringed in 2021. Most of the new birds were very juvenile (probably hatched close-by) including two Willow Warblers (see photo), four Goldcrests (see photo of one sitting on a branch after it had been ringed) a Blackcap, a Chiff-chaff and a Garden Warbler (see photo of a very inquisitive bird). The rest of the birds were made up of local tits and a couple of Robins.

Willow Warbler

Garden Warbler

Goldcrest

Chiffchaff

We were next able to ring on the 11/8/23 when we captured 45 birds (38 new and 7 retraps). The new birds included one each of very juvenile Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff and Blackcap; all of which will migrate away from the site in the next month or so. On the other hand the juvenile Nuthatch and Treecreeper we also ringed will probably stay local. The session finished early due to strong winds. This was not before the Head Gardener at Howick had brought me sad news of the finding of a dead adult Barn Owl with the ring 'GY34839'. Looking this up later I found it to be a three year old female owl that nested successfully in a tree box close to the gardens in June 2022 when she successfully fledged one young (*despite jackdaws doing their best to block her in her nest site with sticks*!)

The weather relented again for us to ring on the 25/8/23 when we captured 57 birds (49 new and 8 retraps). The Coal Tits again included a bird originally ringed as a juvenile in 2021. As well as two very juvenile young chiffchaffs there were also two Blackcaps. These were birds that had been hatched this year but were much further along in their development than most of the juveniles we had been seeing up to this point and appeared to be young birds already on their first migration towards North Africa (unlikely to have been hatched at Howick). Similarly, there was a new juvenile Garden Warbler also on its migration that will take it down into Africa, perhaps as far as Ghana or Nigeria; while some continue much further east and south for their '*winter holidays'*! Resident bird species captured included a new juvenile Nuthatch and a feisty juvenile Great Spotted Woodpecker.

Finally ringing again on the 26th we captured 28 birds (15 new and 13 retraps). The new bird included four young Blackcaps of which two were very young and local birds, while the other two were a little older, probably on migration and unlikely to be local. There was also a Chiffchaff that was just finishing its main moult and had the very characteristic 'square shaped' tail feathers of an adult bird (see photo). It would probably be migrating south towards Senegal and The Gambia soon. Included with the local tits, which made up the rest of the catch, was a new young Treecreeper, a bird which often joins up with foraging tit flocks in the winter.

We will continue to try and ring at Howick on Friday & Saturday mornings into the Autumn.

Best Regards

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

Bird Records Summer 2023

Apologies, but some records for May were missed as they ended up in the junk folder. The missing highlights are as follows:

MAY 2023 – ADDENDUM

Grasshopper Warbler	1 at Hedgeley Lakes on 20th	KL
Blackcap	1 at Warkworth on 18th	KL
	1 at Branton Ponds on 27th	KL
Garden Warbler	1 at Branton Ponds on 27th	KL
Spotted Flycatcher	1 at Hedgeley Lakes on 20th	KL
Bluethroat	1 (white throated) at Warkworth on 18th	KL
Redstart	1 at Hedgeley Lakes on 20th	KL
Dipper	2 at Breamish Valley on 19th	DG&RB
Tree Pipit	1 at Hedgeley Lakes on 20th	KL
Lesser Redpoll	1 at Hedgeley Lakes on 20th	KL

Highlights for the other three summer months are below:

JUNE 2023

Pochard	1 (with 5 young) at Branton Ponds on 3rd	JMcC
Red-breasted Merganser	1 at Long Nanny on 21st and 23rd	PCA
Grey Partridge	1 at Fenwick Granary on 4th	PCA
Nightjar	1 at Beanley Woods on 4th	I&KD
	1 at Lemmington Bank on 8th	I&KD
Swift	6 over Branton on 1st	I&KD
	10+ at Embleton Quarry on 4th	I&KD
Cuckoo	1 at Long Nanny on 21st	PCA
	1 at Harbottle on 2nd	JMcC
Water Rail	1 at Branton Ponds on 3rd and 14th	JMcC
Avocet	9 at Newton Scrapes on 24th	PCA
Golden Plover	1 at Long Nanny on 1st	PCA
Little Ringed Plover	1 at Powburn on 24th	PCA
Black-tailed Godwit	26 at Newton Scrapes on 24th	PCA
Wood Sandpiper	1 at Hedgeley Lakes on 1st	I&KD
Greenshank	2 at Holy Island on 11th	I&KD
Roseate Tern	1 at Long Nanny on 8th	I&KD
	1 at Warkworth on 29th	PCA
Black Tern	1 (American) at Long Nanny on 22nd	PCA
Sparrowhawk	1 at Chathill on 29th	PCA
Red Kite	1 at Heatherslaw Farm on 5th	JJ
	1 near Wooler on 22nd	BRW
Barn Owl	1 near Brandon on 13th	I&KD
	1 at Chathill on 5th	PCA
	1 at Longframlington on 7th	JMcC
Grasshopper Warbler	1 at Bamburgh on 1st	PCA
	1 at Warkworth on 22 and 29th	PCA
Blackcap	1 at Fenwick Granary on 4th	PCA
	1 at Branton Ponds on 14th	JMcC
Garden Warbler	1 at Branton Ponds on 14th	JMcC
Lesser Whitethroat	1 at Embleton Quarry on 4th	I&KD
Goldcrest	1 at Branton Ponds on 14th	JMcC

Spotted Flycatcher	1 at Fawdon on 17th	I&KD
Whinchat	5+ at Middle Dene near Ingram on 10th	I&KD
Lesser Redpoll	1 at Branton Ponds on 14th	JMcC

JULY 2023

Goosander	34 off Newton Links on 29th	PCA
Cuckoo	1 at Long Nanny from 23rd to 29th	PCA
	1 at Newton Scrape on 18th	PCA
Great Crested Grebe	2 at Branton on 5th	JMcC
Avocet	5 at Long Nanny from 19th to 28th	PCA
Golden Plover	70+ at Longhoughton Steel on 20th	I&KD
Whimbrel	1 at Longhoughton Steel on 20th	I&KD
	1 at Long Nanny on 21st	PCA
Green Sandpiper	1 at Hedgeley Lakes on 30th	I&KD
Wood Sandpiper	1 at Hedgeley Lakes on 30th	I&KD
	1 at Newton Scrape on 18th	PCA
Greenshank	3 at Hedgeley Lakes on 28th and 1 on 30th	I&KD
	1 at Long Nanny on 23rd	PCA
Yellow-legged Gull	1 near Boulmer on 20th	I&KD
Black Tern	1 (American) at Long Nanny on 6th	PCA
Ruddy Shelduck	3 at Long Nanny from 26th to 28th	PCA
Arctic Skua	2 off Longhoughton Steel on 20th 2 off Cullernose on 24th	I&KD
	1 off Newton Links on 26th	PCA
Puffin	1 off Cullernose on 24th	I&KD
Manx Shearwater	22 past Longhoughton on 20th 5 past Cullernose on 24th	I&KD
Little Egret	8 at Hedgeley Lakes on 9th	I&KD
	Group present on Tweed all month	D&TLB
Sparrowhawk	1 at Howick on 28th	P&AH
Hen Harrier	1 over Wooler area on 7th	BRW
Grasshopper Warbler	1 at Football Hole on 29th	PCA
	2 at Warkworth Dunes on 17th	PCA
Blackcap	2 at Branton on 5th	JMcC
Garden Warbler	1 at Newton Pool on 1st	PCA
	1 at Branton on 5th	JMcC
Lesser Whitethroat	1 at Newton Pool on 1st	PCA
Whitethroat	1 Juvenile at High Letham on 13th	D&TLB
Treecreeper	1 at Branton on 5th	JMcC
Wheatear	1 at Long Nanny on 6th	PCA
Yellow Wagtail	4 at Newton Scrape on 18th	PCA
Siskin	2 at Lemmington Hall on 17th and 27th, 3 on 31st	P&AH

Ruddy Shelduck	3 at Long Nanny on 4th	PCA
	3 at Newton Scrape on 5th	PCA
Common Scoter	200 at Alnmouth Bay on 8th	RP
Goosander	12 at Coquet Estuary on 6th	RP
Quail	1 at Ingram on 10th	I&KD
Golden Plover	185 past Cullernose on 6th	I&KD
Whimbrel	1 at Long Nanny on 7th	PCA
	1 at Coquet Estuary on 6th and 1 on 25th	RP
Knot	3 at Boulmer on 27th	PCA
	1 at Coquet Estuary on 10th and 16 on 25th	RP
	4 at Birling Carrs on 26th	RP
Curlew Sandpiper	2 at Boulmer on 23rd	I&KD
Temminck's Stint	1 at Newton Scrape on 5th	PCA
Little Stint	3 at Boulmer on 23rd	I&KD
White-rumped Sandpiper	1 at Boulmer on 23rd	I&KD
Green Sandpiper	1 at Branton on 23rd 1 at Ingram Haugh on 24th	I&KD
Redshank	338 at Coquet Estuary on 10th and 215 on 25th	RP
Greenshank	1 at Long Nanny on 25th and 30th	PCA
Mediterranean Gull	1 at Long Nanny on 23rd	PCA
Whinchat	1 at Newton stead on 23rd	PCA
Great Skua	1 past Cullernose on 4th and 1 on 17th and 1 on 31st	I&KD
Arctic Skua	1 past Cullernose on 4th and 1 on 16th	I&KD
Red-throated Diver	1 at Newton Stead on 2nd	PCA
	3 at Cullernose on 31st	I&KD
Sooty Shearwater	3 past Cullernose on 4th and 2 on 16th with 1 on 31st	I&KD
Manx Shearwater	44 past Cullernose on 4th and 19 on 6th with 28 on 16th	I&KD
Great White Egret	1 at High Letham on 30th	D&TLB
Little Egret	7 at Hedgeley Ponds on 4th	JC
	3 at Bowmont Water on 6th	JC
	Group present on Tweed all month	D&TLB
Sparrowhawk	2 at Doxford on 19th	PCA
Marsh Harrier	1 at Carham on 28th	D&TLB
Barn Owl	1 at Low Newton on 5th	PCA
Short-eared Owl	1 on Holy Island on 19th	I&KD
Kingfisher	2 at Long Nanny on 31st	PCA
	1 on River Breamish on 2nd	P&AH
Merlin	1 at Long Nanny on 12th	PCA
Peregrine	1 on Holy Island on 19th, 1 at Branton on 25th	I&KD
Raven	4 over Fawdon on 3rd, 2 at Gainslaw on 6th	I&KD
	5 over Yeavering Bell on 6th, 1 over Branton on 20th	I&KD
	1 over Hazeltonrig on 28th,1 over Reaveley on 30th	I&KD
Long-tailed Tit	40 at least by Lemmington Hall on 28th	P&AH
Willow Warbler	2 at Howick on 6th and 1 on 11th	HRS
	1 at College Valley on 24th	RP
Blackcap	1 at Doxford on 5th	PCA
	1 at Howick on 6th, 4 on 11th and 4 on 26th	HRS
Garden Warbler	1 at Howick on 6th and 25th	HRS
	2 at Branton Ponds on 13th	I&KD
Goldcrest	3 at Chathill on 24th	PCA
Spotted Flycatcher	1 on Holy Island on 19th	I&KD
	3 at Wallington Hall on 21st	RP

Pied Flycatcher	5 on Holy Island on 19th	I&KD
Redstart	1 at Fawdon on 3rd 1 at Branton on 12th	I&KD
Wheatear	3 at Newton Stead from 4th to 30th	PCA
Dipper	1 at Wallington Hall on 21st	RP
	1 at College Valley on 24th	RP

Please send September records to Paul Armstrong NNBCrecords@yahoo.com by 1st October 2023

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Contributors

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