

# Berwick Wildlife Group

[www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk](http://www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk)



## Monthly Review: August 2018.

### WILDLIFE REPORTS.

#### **Weather**

The sunny, warm conditions of July continued well into August, though with a thunder storm on the 10<sup>th</sup> which brought heavy rain, followed by a day of rain on the 12<sup>th</sup>. These two days brought our conditions back to a more normal system of weather for late August, coming from the west off the Atlantic, namely sunshine and showers until the month's end.

Warm air from the remnants of sub-tropical storm 'Ernesto', overnight on the 17<sup>th</sup>, brought a deluge of rain. The storm originated in the Caribbean and 'dumped' 14mm (0.6inches) of rain on us within a two-hour spell, but quickly passed over.

A change came on the 24<sup>th</sup>, when a pulse of cold air came down from the north, bringing the temperature back to normal for late August. It also brought spells of blustery showers, some with thunder in them. A vivid example was at mid-afternoon on the 24<sup>th</sup>, when a lightning strike offshore into the North Sea came with a thunder clap like a sharp explosion resounding over Berwick. The last five days of the month went back to sunshine and a few showers. The night time temperatures were falling, with a drop to 7.5C (46F) recorded on the 30/31<sup>st</sup>. A sign of autumn on its way!

Total rainfall figures for the month were 56.5mm (2.95 inches).

#### **Birds**

The season's return migration gets into full swing during August and this year was no different. The waders were on the move from the start, with 9 **Knot**, some still in summer dress, at Cocklawburn(2<sup>nd</sup>). With them were 14 **Ringed Plover** and 22 **Lapwing**. A flock of 126 **Kittiwake** were in the gull roost on Calot Shad at low tide, along with 2 **Dunlin**. A party of 22 **Swifts** were over East Ord(3<sup>rd</sup>) early morning, while on Calot Shad a group of 10 **Whimbrel** were with the first returning **Curlew**.

A **Greenshank** was with 64 Lapwing in New Water Heugh(6<sup>th</sup>) along with 42 **Goosanders**. The first returning 5 **Turnstones** were on Calot Shad(8<sup>th</sup>), three in fine summer dress. A small group of 18 **Golden Plover** were in the coastal fields at Cocklawburn(9<sup>th</sup>) with 88 Goosander in the bay there.

The Estuary WeBS count(10<sup>th</sup>) saw the largest gathering of moulting, immature **Mute Swans** recorded for over a decade, with 568 birds seen between the Pier and the A1 bridge. The count also included 380 **Greylag Geese** and 166 Lapwing.

A group of 3 **Little Egrets** appeared at West Ord(11<sup>th</sup>) with a large gull roost of 240 **Black-headed Gulls**, 62 **Common Gulls** and 3 **Lesser black-backed Gulls**. A small flock of 10 Swifts noisily flew over the town centre(10<sup>th</sup>) but all had left by the following day, for another year. A fine male **Black Redstart** was near the gun site at Cocklawburn(15<sup>th</sup>), where 6 **Sanderling** were on the beach. An immature drake **Goldeneye** appeared on the pond there, staying until the 22<sup>nd</sup>. A **Black tailed Godwit** flew

downstream at West Ord(19<sup>th</sup>) where an **Arctic Skua** was seen harrying **Sandwich Terns** feeding over Calot Shad. A high count of 102 Canada Geese were at West Ord(22<sup>nd</sup>) with a flock of 36 **House Martins** feeding over East Ord.

An adult Greenshank in a group of three at West Ord(26<sup>th</sup>) was carrying a yellow 'darvic' ring on its right leg. We are awaiting details from the BTO.

A count of 8 **Bar-tailed Godwits** were on Little Beach(30<sup>th</sup>), with 3 Whimbrel, 38 Ringed Plover and 16 **Dunlin** - winter is surely approaching!!

### Mammals

Very few records this month . The exception being the pod of **Bottle-nosed Dolphins** which have been seen all month between Needles Eye and Cocklawburn. Latest sighting being six in Spittal Bay(30<sup>th</sup>).

### Insects

Butterflies- A good influx of species this month, after a reduction in numbers over the summer months.

It all started with a strong movement of 'whites' at the start of the month, with double figures in many sites for both **Large and Small White** seen by mid-month. Also at this time a good number of **Peacocks** appeared, with a steady flow of **Red Admirals, Small Tortoiseshell** and - at last - a few **Painted Ladies**. Some gardens were host to the **Comma** with a strong showing of **Wall Brown** along the coast, some inland in gardens. As numbers of **Small Skipper** and **Meadow Brown** dropped away, several **Speckled Woods** were still on the wing. Of note at the months end were **Small Copper** records from East Ord and The Coastwatch Station on the Golf Course. No sightings of **Grayling** have been recorded from our coastal sites this year, which shows this species seems to be in decline.

Some moth species have been recorded with a strong showing of **Silver'Y'** moths along the coast. Records from a Tweedmouth garden include **Red - Green Carpet Moth, a Magpie Moth sub-species** and **Swallowtail** Moth.

**More Moth and Dragonfly records would be very welcome.**

### **Obituary – Chris Kanefsky**

(Malcolm Hutcheson writes)

I'm sad to report the death last month of Chris Kanefsky. He was one of the original members of the BWG committee in 2003.

He was an ecologist, conservationist, ornithologist and keen botanist. He initiated habitat surveys of Magdalen Fields Golf Course for flora and breeding birds, was active with the conservation of the Goody Patch and Dock Road area, while being the original surveyor of waders and wildfowl on the Tweed Estuary for the BTO's then Waders and Wildfowl Survey, which evolved into the Wildfowl and Estuary Birds Survey(WeBS).

He was single, rather a private man, who was pro-active and keen to see the BWG succeed. He will be sadly missed.

An interment ceremony of his ashes will take place at Tweedmouth Cemetery at 2 p.m. on the 21<sup>st</sup> September.

### Should Britain rewild its uplands?

You might be interested to listen to this debate. Although at times a dialogue of the deaf, which sometimes strays from the uplands at times, there are some forthright views, well articulated, and it is good to know that ideas like alternative uses of land, and rewilding are now reaching politicians.

<https://www.acast.com/intelligencesquared/thebattleforthecountryside-britainshouldrewilditsuplands>

### Mystery picture

With your editor's apologies for the quality of the images, this insect turned up recently on your his recycling wheely bin. Is it a bug? Is it a fly? Is it a wasp?





Answer: it's a Turnip sawfly *Athalia rosae* - often present in large numbers, apparently, and very strange-looking in profile.