
Berwick Wildlife Group



www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk

Monthly Review: October 2018.

WILDLIFE REPORTS.

Weather For the main part of October the weather has been mild, dry and fairly sunny, making for a prolonged display of autumn colours. The only breaks to these conditions were on the 12/13th with the passing of Storm 'Callum' and the 26th, when cold arctic winds brought a chill to the month's end. The wettest day was the 13th, with 15mm (0.7 inches) which soon passed with the building of high pressure, returning us to quiet conditions with light winds for the next ten days. As the pressure subsided, the wind gradually strengthened to the north, bringing a spell of wintery showers of rain, sleet and snow off the North Sea. Overnight on the 28th a slight frost was recorded, but we avoided the first snowfall which fell in Durham and North Yorkshire. Over the final three days the wind veered round to the east, still carrying wintery showers with bright sunny spells, and a few glorious rainbows!

Rainfall total for the month was 39 mm (1.5 inches) making it the driest since 2006.

Birds The autumn migration was still in 'full swing' and with it the arrival of the **Pink footed Geese**. This made for a remarkable sight each morning up to mid-month, as up to 2,500 birds who had roosted in the Lindisfarne area at dawn returned back north to their food source on Coldingham Moor.

Elsewhere, the last of the Summer migrants were noted, with 2 **House Martins** at East Ord(2nd), two late **Sandwich Terns** off Sandstell Point(3rd) and a lone **Swallow** at Oxford(7th), and East Ord(16th).

A **Greenshank** was still at West Ord(4th) with 6 **Teal** and 8 **Goosanders**.

A few notable records from the WeBS counts on the 10th included 81 **Canada Geese**, 207 **Mallard**, 9 **Wigeon**, 520 **Lapwing** and 6 **Dunlin** on the Tweed Estuary, while on the coast Spittal/Cocklawburn there were 24 **Red throated Divers**, a **Great Skua**, 650 **Golden Plover**, 197 **Lapwing** 28 **Sanderling** and a single **Coot** on Cocklawburn pond.

A small flock of 12 **Redwings** flew west up the Tweed at West Ord(12th) and a **Little Egret** was on the falling tide on Calot Shad(14th). A flock of 18 **Yellowhammers** on Billylaw, Ord Moor(17th) was notable

with a roost of c.160 **Common Gulls** at West Ord along with 18 Teal and 3 **Bullfinches**. The Little Egret had moved upstream to New Water Heugh.

A group of 32 **Cormorants** and 24 **Shags** were a high count on the roost in Meadow Haven(21st), also in the Bay were 3 **Guillemots** and a Red throated Diver, with 5 **Grey Plover** on Little Beach. The same day saw a small flock of 8 **Siskins** flying up the Tweed at West Ord. An early morning fall of c.120 **Fieldfares** were over Tweedmouth(22nd) flying to the north west.

A strong north wind on 23rd led to a sea bird movement, with 145 **Kittiwake** flying north in an hour, and 270 **Gannets** flying south in the same period - very confusing!

A drake **Shelduck** turned up at West Ord(24th) and stayed to the end of the month, with a flock of 24 Redwings noted there. A high tide on 26th, washed away the piles of wrack on Little Beach exposing invertebrates and causing a feeding 'frenzy' of c.300 **Black headed Gulls** along with a lone immature Kittiwake and a single immature **Little Gull**. This was a great opportunity to compare these two juveniles as their similar plumage of a black 'W' wing pattern was notable, leaving size as the main difference. Also taking advantage of this food source were 17 **Bar tailed Godwits** and 6 Teal. The high tide also brought 5 **Goldeneye** to Calot Shad.

Two more groups of Yellowhammers were noted on 28th. with 22 at West Ord and 14 at Loanend, Horncliffe. On Murton Craggs a large flock of c.80 **Chaffinches** were in the stubble. The final day of the month(31st), saw a flock of 24 **Common Scoter** in Meadow Haven with a single female over Calot Shad with 2 **Red breasted Mergansers**.

Mammals The pod of **Bottle nosed Dolphins** which have been seen again all month with numbers increasing to 16 in Meadow Haven(21st). There was a regrettable headline in the local press: 'Keep off our Dolphins', referring to reports that jet-skiers were seen near these mammals. mid-month. If members see any disturbance to the 'pod', please contact the wildlife officer at Berwick police station, as this mindless or ignorant behaviour is an offence, namely disturbance of an animal protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act.

During the month, a **Brown hare** has been seen in the vicinity of Castle Hills House.

Insects Butterflies: The month saw a good showing of **Red Admirals** throughout. Peak numbers in Malcolm Hutcheson's garden were 18 (2nd) and 5 (22nd) with still a single specimen here (31st). The main garden plants attracting them were Buddleja weyeriana, Aster Barrs Pink and Sedum spectabile, all still in flower. Last dates here include; Large White(10th), Small White(19th), Comma(20th), Small Copper(10th) – his first record of **Small Copper** in October, Painted Lady(8th) and Speckled Wood(19th). Quite a special month.

Four species of moth noted in a Tweedmouth garden this month include, **Peach Blossom, The Snout, Clouded Drab** and **Engrailed**.

Other records

Please would members wishing to add their records to the newsletter, as a temporary measure send them directly to Malcolm Hutcheson by the 30th of each month at m.hutcheson08@btinternet.com

Reminder

Our next talk is on 21st November 2018 **David Long** will speak on **Botany and Rewilding in the Southern Uplands** - the work of the Border Forest Trust.

7:30 Bewick United Reform Church, High Street, Spittal

Editor's note

Slimline edition this month – no photos or other items submitted.