

# Berwick Wildlife Group

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



## Monthly Review: October 2019.

### WILDLIFE REPORTS.

**Weather;** October has been a fairly quiet month, settling down to a quiet few days abbreviated almost weekly by passing weather fronts off the Atlantic with there spells of wind, rain or showers.

Temperatures have been average for October throughout, up to the final week when the first white frosts of the winter were recorded.

Wet spells started on the 4<sup>th</sup>, when storm 'Lorenzo' passed through. By the time it got to Berwick it had weakened, having dropped most of its rain along the western seaboard of the UK. This pattern of calm and sunny, wet and windy became a weekly feature throughout the month. The wettest spell was over the 24 hour period of 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> when 22mm( 0.87 inches) of rain was recorded,

Winds were held to a moderate condition, occasionally from the cold NW quarter, bringing temperatures down. Clear sunny days could be counted on one hand, with the warmest days with a max of 14.4C (58F) between the 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>. The coldest night occurred on the 28<sup>th</sup> when the temperature fell to zero centigrade (32F).

Rainfall totals for the month were; 82mm (3.2 inches), a little above average.

**Birds;** Most of the summer migrants have left by October, but the influx of winter visitors is still building up. **Pink footed Geese** appeared with a resident flock of c.150 birds seen daily commuting between Coldingham Moor to feed and there roost site in Budle Bay at dusk. Elsewhere wildfowl and waders are settling in around the coastline. **Curlew** seem to have taken a fall in numbers and the winter thrushes also seem to be scarce so far. Only time will see an improvement.

The coastal fields at Cocklawburn (3<sup>rd</sup>) held 130 **Lapwing**, 230 **Golden Plover** and 56 **Curlew**. In the dunes a flock of 130 **Linnets** fed on Meadowsweet seedheads. Three **Tufted Duck** were on the pond and 8 **Common Scoter** and 4 **Guillemots** were off Saltpan rocks. Single, **Slavonian** and **Great crested Grebes** were seen in Spittal Bay (7<sup>th</sup>) along with 10 **Red**

**throated Divers.** A fresh southerly wind saw a sea movement with 850 **Gannets** an hour passing the Pier along with 5 **Wigeon** and 18 Common Scoters, all heading south. In the trees at Pier House were a **Chiff-chaff** and a **Yellow browed Warbler** along with 8 **Goldfinches**.

The following day at Cocklawburn (8<sup>th</sup>) the Lapwing flock had risen to 340 while on the beach were 28 **Ringed Plover**, 12 **Turnstones** and a single immature **Arctic Tern**. Overhead three skeins of **Barnacle Geese** passed south with their 'barking' calls, a total of 264 birds. On the sea at Saltpan rocks were 7 Red throated Divers, 4 Guillemots and a single **Razorbill**, with 22 Turnstone and 4 **Purple Sandpipers** among the rocks. An afternoon high tide saw 5 **Sandwich Terns** and another Immature Arctic Tern in Spittal Bay, with a male Stonechat seen at Huds Head.

A 2<sup>nd</sup> year **Iceland Gull** was seen briefly at the mouth of the Estuary(11<sup>th</sup>) A **Goldcrest** was seen at Pier House and a **Little Egret** and a duck **Goldeneye** were at West Ord.

A **Grey Wagtail** was seen on my garage roof in Cornwall Avenue(13<sup>th</sup>).with another seen at the Lily pond, Castle Park the following day. Five **Grey Partridge** were at Billylaw with 16 **Yellowhammers** noted at West Ord. A flight of 140 **Canada Geese** flew north over West Ord(18<sup>th</sup>).

Stormy condition on 20<sup>th</sup>, saw 28 **Cormorants** in Calot Shad along with 26 **Great black backed Gulls**. One bird was ringed and carrying an orange 'darvic' ring on its left leg.

A 'seawatch' over the Pier noted 500 Gannets flying south in an hour along with 550 Guillemots,

6 Goldeneye and a pair of **Velvet Scoter**. 15 Guillemots were feeding in Spittal Bay.

A group of 28 **Teal** were on Middle Ord pond(21<sup>st</sup>) along with a pair of Little Grebes and 3 passing **Fieldfares**. A flock of 130 Lapwing were at New Water Heugh with a Little Egret and 8 Goldeneye. Two flights of Whooper Swans, 33 birds in all, giving their bugling calls as they flew west over East Ord.

A **Short eared Owl** was seen coming inland, high over the sea at Little Beach and a male Stonechat and a flock of 24 **Chaffinches** and 16 Goldfinches were at Pier House. A flock of 22 **Twite** were at Cocklawburn (22<sup>nd</sup>) with over 1,000 **Starlings** foraging in the coastal fields.

Dawn on the 24<sup>th</sup>, saw an 'armada' of Pink footed Geese coming in off the sea at dawn. Over the period of an hour some 2,860 birds were seen moving west in 18 noisy skeins from the Border to Goswick. A truly noisy but glorious sight! To add to this, an immature **Red Kite** was seen hunting Cheswick dunes, a rare bird in our area. A flock of 74 Common Scoter were offshore at

Saltpan rocks. Another flight of 18 Whooper Swans flew south over Spittal Bay(25<sup>th</sup>) with 15 Red throated Divers,18 **Shag**, 8 Guillemots and 28 **Eider** seen on an almost flat calm sea. 94 **Mallard** were on Calot Shad.

A group of 6 Grey Partridge were in fields at Longlands School(27<sup>th</sup>). A high tide at Little Beach(28<sup>th</sup>) saw the disturbed seaweed attract c.560 feeding **Black headed Gulls** along with 130 **Redshank**, 64 Turnstones and 18 **Dunlin**. At Cocklawburn (29<sup>th</sup>), a large flock of 382 Golden Plover arrived and a big flock of c.1,600 Starlings were being harried by a male **Merlin**.

**Mammals;** I've received a sighting of a **Weasel** hunting gardens on Hiveacres estate (19<sup>th</sup>) where several records of a Hedgehog have also been noted. No other records received.

### **Insects;**

Butterflies; The last sightings are important, so send in any late sighting to add to what I have got so far which is; Small White (22<sup>nd</sup>); Small Tortoiseshell (8<sup>th</sup>); Peacock (1<sup>st</sup>); Red Admiral (28<sup>th</sup>); Painted Lady (31<sup>st</sup> – still visiting my garden); Speckled Wood (9<sup>th</sup>) and Comma (27<sup>th</sup>). Last year I had records of Peacock and Red Admiral into the first week of November.

### **Other records;**

Can members wishing to add their records to the newsletter, send them directly to me by the 30<sup>th</sup> of each month at **m.hutcheson08@btinternet.com**

**We need all your records please.**

**With many thanks to Malcolm Hutcheson and the other recorders.** Please send us your records, and photos (digital or prints/slides to be scanned). Use our form on the Sightings page ([www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk/Sightings.html](http://www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk/Sightings.html)), phone 01289 309046 or e-mail [mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk](mailto:mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk).

Other sightings; still House Martins around on 5<sup>th</sup> October, Many geese movements between roosts and feeding grounds, Kestrels around Chirnside, White egret on Blackadder, many road kill badgers.

**Our October talk** was the welcome return of Tom Cadwallender, who although with a small audience, was well received and prompted many questions afterwards. It was Tom's usual engaging style of excellent photography, mixed with interesting facts and anecdotes from his 'birding' life, about the summer birds of the Northumberland coast. If previously unaware, we learnt amongst much more, about the incredible life stories and migrations of the tern family and the fascinating work being done on Coquet Island.



Simon Wright

**Our November talk** is from Iain Cowe, our local organiser for Butterfly Conservation. Many of you will know Iain who is a dedicated butterfly expert and of his recent work in discovering the presence in the area of the White Letter Hairstreak. This will be the subject of his talk on November the 20<sup>th</sup>.



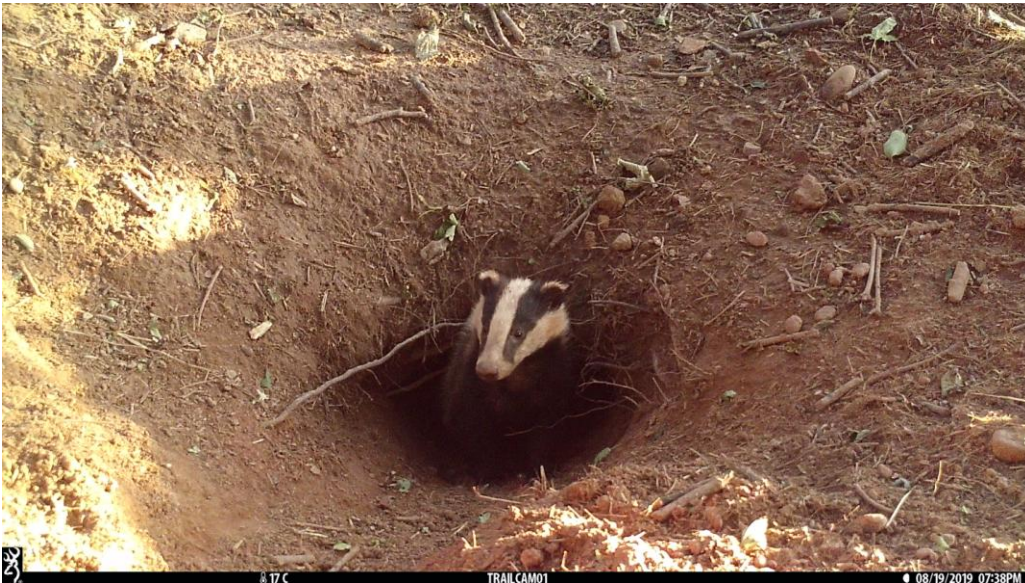
Butterfly Conservation

**Website update;** Elaine and another member of the BWG have been working on developing a new website – which should be ready for use soon. Watch this space for more news.

Some pictures from a camera trap near Chirnside



Simon Wright



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**2020**

**January; Talk on 22<sup>nd</sup> will be by the Berwickshire Marine Reserve.**

**February; Talk on 19<sup>th</sup> by Tony Lightley. Tweed Valley Osprey Project**

Committee

Chair, Simon Wright, Secretary, Kay Adamson

Treasurer and membership, Elaine Beauchamp

Group recorder, Malcolm Hutcheson + Molly Hardie, Kate Dixon.