

# Berwick Wildlife Group



## Monthly Review. July 2020

### WILDLIFE REPORTS.

**Weather;** Following the dry Spring, the Summer months seem to be getting progressively wetter and July was a bit disappointing, as it was cooler, wetter and cloudier than the average for the month. No prolonged hot spell like July 2019 this year!

The pattern of weather fronts coming from the west was the scene for the first fourteen days, bringing spells of overcast conditions with rain or drizzle, every 48 hours or so.

The remnants of tropical storm 'Edouard' passed through the south of England on the 9<sup>th</sup>, the worst effects passing wide of our area. The winds fell light on the 15<sup>th</sup> as the positioning of two weather fronts formed what is known as the 'Foehn effect' in between them, when warm winds from the south move in between them. This caused the temperature to reach 82F on the 16<sup>th</sup>.

Following this spell, the weather settled down for a week or so of pleasant sunny days. By the 22<sup>nd</sup> another cold front with northwest winds, brought a wet day and 10mm of rain. It turned back to the southwest on the 23<sup>rd</sup> bringing sunshine and showers to the final days of the month.

Conditions over the month saw the hottest day on the 16<sup>th</sup> at 82F and the wettest on the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 25<sup>th</sup> with 7.5mm of rain. Thunder was heard at night on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. The coldest overnight temperature was on the 12<sup>th</sup> when it fell to 46F.

Total rainfall to the month was 82 mm. (3.2 inches), a little above the average for the last decade.

A well-recorded celestial event occurred over July, with the Comet 'Neowise' appearing in the northern sky, mid month. Its closest to the Earth was on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and could be seen well between midnight and 3.a.m. with the naked eye. If you missed it, you will have to wait another 7,000 years!!

**Birds;** July is a fairly uneventful month, with the breeding season coming to a conclusion and the first autumn migrants arriving later in the month. This year was a little different, with good numbers of post-breeding waders arriving on the coastline earlier than the 'norm' and good numbers of 'feral' geese in the area.

The month started with 32 **Guillemots** off Saltpan rocks, Cocklawburn (2<sup>nd</sup>) in family groups and 3 **Puffin** with them. An immature drake **Goldeneye** was seen on the pond all month. A 'summering' **Whooper Swan** and an early return **Common Sandpiper** were at Yarrow Slake.

A fine summer plumaged **Greenshank** arrived at West Ord (3<sup>rd</sup>) for a week. It was a wet day and 24 Guillemots, 4 **Razorbills** and 2 **Common Terns** were noted in Spittal Bay with 206 **Mute Swans** at Calot Shad with 66 **Kittiwakes** in the gull roost. A further 160 Mute Swans were in Tweedmouth Dock. All the swans were moulting immature birds. 20 **Cormorants** and 12 **Shags** were in the Meadow Haven roost (5<sup>th</sup>).

At Cocklawburn (7<sup>th</sup>) a drake **Gadwall** appeared on the pond with 3 **Tufted Duck**, a pair of **Little Grebes** and 2 **Lapwing** on the shoreline. Waders numbers were high on Yarrow Slake (9<sup>th</sup>), with 132 **Curlew**, 210 Lapwing, a pair of **Shelduck** and 4 **Little Egrets**. 4 **Common Gulls** were at West Ord (10<sup>th</sup>) with 42 **Goosander** and 38 **Sandwich Terns** noted at Calot Shad.

A **Whimbrel** appeared for a day with the Lapwing on New Water Heugh (15<sup>th</sup>) and a late brood of **Mallard**, a duck with 8 ducklings, were seen near the Old Berwick Bridge.

The Coastwatch tower, high tide roost (17<sup>th</sup>) noted another Whimbrel with 16 Curlew, 58 **Oystercatchers**, 22 **Redshank** and 4 Common Gulls. There were 52 Goosander in Meadow Haven.

A migrant male **Cuckoo** was on Spittal Cliffs (19<sup>th</sup>) with a **Raven** noisily flying north also seen. On Spittal Bay were 124 Goosander and a close inshore, a 'frenzy' of c.112 **Gannets** feeding.

A large group of 460 Mute Swans packed into Tweedmouth dock (20<sup>th</sup>) with a pair of Common Terns feeding a newly fledged juvenile. Meanwhile a peak number of 224 **Canada Geese** were just outside the dock on Calot Shad. Three **Wheatears** and 4 **Stonechats** were noted at Cocklawburn (21<sup>st</sup>) with a pair of Tufted Duck with 4 ducklings on the pond and 4 Common Sandpipers along the edge. At Saltpan rocks were a low tide roost of 26 Cormorants and 14 Shags with 6 **Common Scoter** offshore.

In Spittal Bay (23<sup>rd</sup>) were 34 Guillemots and 16 Sandwich Terns. Another Common Sandpiper was at New water Heugh (26<sup>th</sup>) with 26 Goosander and 18 Common Gulls in the roost at West Ord. The gull roost at Calot Shad (27<sup>th</sup>) held 140 Kittiwake.

On Cheswick Black Rocks (28<sup>th</sup>) were 7 **Turnstones**, a **Ringed Plover** and 3 Redshanks with 4 **Golden Plover** and 2 Whimbrel at Saltpan rocks, Cocklawburn. At New Water Heugh (29<sup>th</sup>) the **Greylag Geese** peaked at 196, with 48 Canada Geese and 2 Little Egrets.

**Mammals;** Single **Brown Hares** was at Cheswick, Cocklawburn dunes, Billylaw and West Ord.

A **Stoat** was seen hunting young rabbits in Cheswick dunes (31<sup>st</sup>) and several records of **Hedgehogs** in Berwick gardens have been seen. Two **Pipestrelle Bats** were seen during mid month in Ord Country Park. It's rather sad to think that a quarter of our native mammals are at risk of extinction. So says the **Mammal Society** in its first **Red List** of endangered species.

**Insects;** The various restrictions and weather conditions have meant that serious recording of **butterflies** has been limited. However, those of us that have ventured into 'the field' have noted a drop in most species this year so far. No great migration of Painted Ladies this year!

It is good to note the increase in **Small Skipper**, **Small Heath**, **Common Blue** and **Meadow Brown**, with prospects of good numbers of **Peacock** and **Small Tortoiseshell**. All records next month would be most welcome.

Perhaps you should try the BC '**Big Butterfly Count**' in your garden. Details on line, as it closes on **August 7<sup>th</sup>**.

It is good to see good numbers of both 5-spot and 6-spot **Burnet Moths** in the coastal dunes this year.

### **Other records**

Cetaceans; Once again the pod of 12-14 **Bottle nosed Dolphins** were seen regularly throughout the month from the Pier and south along Spittal Bay. There have been local sightings for a number of days in mid month of '2 Basking Sharks' in the Bay, but close scrutiny with a telescope revealed a female Dolphin with a young one at its side gliding around the surface with the dorsal fin out of the water and notably no tail fin like a shark would display.

Thank you to all who have sent in records this month. Can members wishing to add there records to the newsletter, send them to [sightings@berwickwildlifegroup.uk](mailto:sightings@berwickwildlifegroup.uk) or directly to me by the 30<sup>th</sup> of each month at [m.hutcheson08@btinternet.com](mailto:m.hutcheson08@btinternet.com)  
**We need all your records please.**