



A Welcome from the new Chairman

'Sumer is icumen in, lhude sing cuccu! Have you heard any cuckoos this year? If you have heard cuckoos on your patch around and about Nidderdale and AONB please let our Club recorder Pete Seaman know, We need: Where you heard the cuckoo and when. It will be interesting to see just how many we record this year. Cuckoos are declining in numbers but some innovative research might help. 5 male cuckoos were fitted with satellite transmitters in 2011 and have been tracked to their wintering grounds in North Africa. This exciting new development provides brand new information about their route to North Africa to overwinter and where they prepare for the Spring desert crossing. Last year they found that 3 of the cuckoos had left the UK by the end of June, much earlier than thought. Also, a brand new migration route has been discovered with a possible important stopover North of Madrid. You can follow the 'blogs' of the 4 surviving male cuckoos: Kasper, Chris, Martin and Lyster on the BTO site (science-migration-tracking studies) and see if they made it back to the UK.

I would like to record thanks on behalf of the members to Tony and Alwin Knowles for their work for Nidderdale Birdwatchers over the past years. Tony will continue with conservation projects for the Club and Alwin will continue to give of her time and energy to inform and support us.

Enjoy your Summer birdwatching. Make a note of Club events. Come along if you can.

Ros Wade

Chirps (with apologies to Twitter!)

Angus Gosman 24th March

Yesterday's treat up on the moor-he decided to stand his ground -fear he will be the one to sit on the end of the gun barrel !!

Tony Knowles 1st April

Walked around the Middlesmoor/Scar/Dale Edge today. Wheatear, golden plover, redshank, oystercatcher, lapwing and curlew, greylag, canada and mallard all keen to get on with the breeding. No sign of ring ousel so far although I've heard that they've reached as far north as the Midlands. Anyone seen one yet? One surprise was a dipper at Angram - wouldn't have thought there was much for them up there.

Sandy Marcussen 5th April

Spring must be in the air, we've just seen our first swallow of the year in Glasshouses. The Tawny Owls have been getting very active the past couple of nights, had some good views of them.

Pete Seaman 24th April

In front of the viewing screen at Lingham yesterday afternoon 4 Yellow Wagtails were showing well among at least 12 Pied Wagtails and what appeared to be 2 White Wagtails. Also there were at least 5 Avocet and both Ringed and Little Ringed Plover plus Greylag Geese with about 20 goslings



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It would be good to make 'Chirps' a regular in the newsletter, so if you have any bird related sound bites to share, send them to Sue Hickson and we will publish a selection. Twitter restrict comments to 140 characters, so around that number would be good.



EVENTS PROGRAMME

The description of each outdoor event gives the name and contact details of the Event Organiser. **Please let the Organiser know if you intend to go on a trip.** This does not mean that you cannot attend at the last minute but trips may be cancelled if there appears to be insufficient interest, so we need to know in advance who wants to go. We would also advise that you check the website or ring the Organiser just before the event to ensure that it is still happening and the arrangements haven't changed.

The rendezvous point for car sharing is the car park in Pateley Bridge opposite Towler's newsagent at the bottom of the High Street unless otherwise notified.

Friday 11th May Forest of Bowland

This is a full day trip to the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. We are aiming to see upland birds and with a bit a luck perhaps some special species like the Hen Harrier which breeds here. To get to the best places means a bit of a walk so you should be prepared for about 3 to 4 miles. You will also need to bring a packed lunch.

Car sharers meet at the Pateley Bridge rendezvous at 8.30 am. We will not know until nearer the date exactly where our walk will start, as we will use up-to-date information about the best places to see the birds. Because of this, information for those going direct will be provided nearer the time of the trip.

The organiser is Sheila Nash



Saturday 19th May Scargill Reservoir

A half day trip. Meet as usual at Pateley Bridge 8.30am or on site 9.00am. Park at Stainburn Forest c.p. on Norwood Lane between Beckwithshaw and Norwood (grid ref.SE26532). There are no facilities at the parking place. The plan is to walk the water board road (about a mile each way maximum) through Haverah Park to Scargill Reservoir looking for springtime moorland birds such as Meadow Pipits, Wheatear, Golden Plover and Lapwing with the chance of the odd raptor. There may be time to look for Lesser Redpoll and Crossbills in the forest next to the car park. It is quite exposed so please dress accordingly and a drink and snack may be useful. **The organiser is Pete Seaman**

Please let Pete know if you are coming.

Monday 21st May Flying by night at Timble

This is an evening walk and bird watch through the woods and clearings at Timble on the edge of moorland. We hope for summer visitors including tree pipit and for long-eared owls. For those who would like to we will wait until dusk to see if night-jars are present. For car sharers meet at the Pateley rendezvous at 7 pm or if going direct at 7.30pm at the parking area in Timble which can be reached by taking the Otley road from the A59 at Blubberhouses and turning right at Timble crossroads; there is parking on the left a few hundred metres along this track.

The organiser is Ros Wade if you want to come and/or want any further information.

PS bring midge repellent!

Friday 8th June Brimham Rocks

Brimham rocks near Summerbridge is a National Trust site, offering walks, magnificent views over the Nidderdale scenery and of course the dramatic Millstone Grit rocks shaped during the Ice Age 18,000 years ago. We shall be walking around the rocks, the woodland and the nearby heather moor looking for summer visitors. Car sharers meet at the Pateley Bridge rendezvous at 8.30am or for those going direct at the National Trust car park at Brimham at 9 am. The site is signposted from the B6265 Pateley to Ripon road and the OS Grid Ref is 99:SE206650.

The organiser is Ann Crouch

Monday 18th June Flying By Night in the Nidd Gorge



This is an evening walk and birdwatch in the Nidd Gorge which lies between Harrogate and Knaresborough. The Gorge is an extensive area of broadleaf woodland through which the river winds and is surrounded by some agricultural land. It therefore presents good opportunities to see birds, particularly many of the summer migrants which will be around. Car sharers meet at the Pateley rendezvous at 7 pm or if going direct at the Woodland Trust car park on the Ripley/Knaresborough road at 7.30. This not far from the turn-off to Scotton on the opposite side of the road. **The organiser is Lynda Fussell**

Sunday 24th June; coach and boat trip to the Farne Islands



The Farne Islands are a magical place where you can really get up close with 3 different types of terns, guillemots, puffins, shags, razorbill, gannets, eider etc. It's a long trip but an outstanding birdwatching experience. There are places for 14 people on the coach/boat trip and we will leave Pateley Bridge at 6 am to be in Seahouses at the dockside for 9.30 to leave at 10am. The trip is 5/6 hours in duration landing on Staple Island and Inner Farne; there are no facilities on either island so you need to bring a packed lunch. You should also wear old outer clothing and a hat as the birds are no respecters of people and you will need protection!

The two islands are National Trust property and a charge of £6 per person landing fee is charged to non members, whilst members are free.

The cost of this all day trip will be £30 per person for the boat trip and £11 for transport. Bookings will be on a first come first served basis and the closing date is the 1st May 2012. We need a £15 deposit to secure a seat, - cheques made payable to Nidderdale Birdwatchers. **The organiser is Brian Robertshaw**

Friday 13th July Staveley

Staveley, near Boroughbridge, is a Yorkshire Wildlife Trust Reserve. The 40 hectare reserve consists of a shallow lagoon edged with reedswamp, fen, and flower-rich grassland with scrub and pasture. Since 1974, 205 species of bird have been recorded. Of these approximately 45 are known to have bred. Common breeders include both reed and sedge warbler while grasshopper warbler and barn owl breed less regularly. Throughout the winter months a variety of wildfowl is attracted to the main lagoon and locally uncommon species such as short-eared owl and jack snipe are frequently seen. Mammal records have recently included less common species such as harvest mouse and water shrew. The reserve is especially important for dragonflies. **The organiser is Linda Pridmore (Sheila Nash as backup)** Half day, meet Pateley Bridge at 8.30am or Staveley car park 9am.

Monday 16th July Birdwatching In Your Garden

Hosted by Sue Harrison in her garden. We would like those attending to think about what works for them in their garden - what flowers or bushes attract wildlife, where they grow and names if they know them; what food they put out and any information that's useful to know about feeders. If members have cuttings or plants to sell or give away, please bring them. We might even have refreshments available! Shelter if wet.

The organiser is Sue Harrison Time 7pm onwards.

Friday 10th August Otley Wetlands

The Otley Wetland Nature Reserve, which provides a home to everything from song thrushes to otters, was built on the site of the old Hanson sand and gravel works at Bridge End. This 13.7 hectare site has a conservation lake, native woodland, scrub, hedge-rows, reedbeds and grassland. - **The organiser is Hilary Atkins** Half or full day, depending on whether folk want to stay longer. Time and meeting place to be confirmed.



Monday 20th August Bird Watch Challenge

The organiser is Ros Wade Meet at Royal Oak, Dacre Banks 7.30pm. Ros will direct operations when people arrive. The aim is to see how many birds you or your team can spot from the vicinity of the pub in 1 hour. Not competitive, but Bird Recorders will be pleased to have the results.

Friday 14th September RSPB Saltholme Reserve near Middlesbrough



This is the new RSPB wetland reserve which has won lots of praise. Autumn offers the chance to see migrant waders such as black-tailed godwits, ruffs and green sandpipers, and with the possibility of rarities such as curlew sandpipers and little stints on one of their migration stop-overs. And of course there are the flocks of golden plover and lapwing which arrive to spend winter on the reserve, plus the returning winter wildfowl. There is a state-of-the art visitor centre with café and shop and three hides including the striking Wildlife Watchpoint which overlooks one of the busiest pools. Entrance is free for RSPB members or £6 per car for non-members.

For car-sharers meet at the Pateley Bridge rendez-vous at 8.30 am or if going direct meet at the Reserve at 10 am. Saltholme is 10 minutes from the A19; turn east off the A19 north of Stockton along the A689. After half a mile, take the A1185; in 4 miles join the A178 at a mini roundabout and take the third exit. The reserve entrance is about 300 yards on the right-hand side. **The organiser is Sheila Nash**

Sunday 30th September Washburn Valley (To Be Confirmed as awaiting a leader)

A NEW PIN-UP FOR YOUR KITCHEN NOTICE BOARD

to remind you of what's on offer this summer



Month	Date	Venue and Type of Event
May	Friday 11th	Forest of Bowland <i>A full day trip</i>
	Saturday 19th	Scargill Reservoir <i>A half day trip</i>
	Monday 21st	Flying By Night at Timble <i>Evening walk and birdwatch</i>
June	Friday 8th	Brimham Rocks <i>A half day trip</i>
	Monday 18th	Flying By Night in the Nidd Gorge <i>Evening walk and birdwatch</i>
	Sunday 24th	Farne Islands <i>Full day coach and boat trip</i>
July	Friday 13th	Staveley <i>A half day trip</i>
	Monday 16th	Garden Birdwatching <i>An evening event</i>
August	Friday 10th	Otley Wetlands <i>Full or half day depending on preference</i>
	Monday 20th	Bird Watch Challenge <i>Evening birdwatch</i>
September	Friday 14th	Salthome
	Monday 24th	Nidderdale Show <i>We will have a stand</i>
	Sunday 30th	Washburn Valley (Tba)

CLUB EVENTS
Reports from members on past outings

MARTIN MERE Saturday 25th February

In February I took a party of 15 members on a full day trip to the Wildlife and Wetland Trust reserve at Martin Mere near Southport. I hired a 17 seater minibus from Skipton Self Drive and picked everybody up at Sheila's. They were all inside when I arrived. Paul looked quite pleased I was not too late so we all piled in and left about 9am. It took about 1 hour 45 minutes to get there and we were met by a guide who arranged to get us all in and also gave us a brief resume of various times that events were taking place.

The day was bright and visibility was very good and as a bonus it remained dry all day, if a little chilly. We decided on a 'do your own thing' as opposed to everybody going round together and arranged to meet up at the minibus at 4.30pm, which everybody did. The minibus worked really well and the transport cost was £9 per person for the 140 mile round trip.



Birds were good; approximately 1200 Swans still on the reserve, about 300/400 have already left for home. Lapwing - lots and lots, really good to see so many as they are on the Red List. Raptors included Marsh Harrier. We had really excellent views of one female on the ground, eating a coot; felt sorry for the coot? Peregrine also about causing mayhem amongst the Lapwing as it tried for a kill and succeeded. Kestrel and Buzzard also in view. Ringed Plover, Ruff also about as were Golden Plover but waders not in any great numbers, also Pintail - approx. 400 on the reserve: wigeon, teal, pochard, gadwall all in good numbers. Captive male Eiders displaying, noisily near entrance and amusing all visitors.

I think most people tried the tea room which is now in a bigger area and I thought food to be good value. I really enjoyed this visit and I hope everybody else did. I will be doing the Farnes Island trip next but with only a 15 seater minibus on 24th June 2012. There are still a few places left

and I will need £15 deposit made payable to Nidderdale Bird Watchers if you want to go.

Brian Robertshaw

HELL WATH NATURE RESERVE RIPON Friday 9th March

This trip proved to be very rewarding in more ways than one. Six of us set off from Ripon Choir School across a field towards the river Skell where it meets the river Laver. In almost the 1st field we saw a pheasant, 7 magpies, a song thrush, several wood pigeon and in a hawthorn bush we were lucky to spot 2 longtail tits collecting spiders webs to embellish the nest they were building. Later on we were to find a brand new completed nest.

The walk follows the Skell river bank through deciduous woodland and open scrub grassland. We saw 2 dippers and sharp eyed Brian spotted a kingfisher but I only glimpsed its rear disappearing upriver. There were also several skirmishes witnessed amongst the mallards.

I have tried many times in the past to spot a goldcrest but have only managed to hear their call. Clearly Sheila got it wrong when she said they are found at the tops of high pine trees. This one was medium way up a deciduous tree with no conifers in sight! I also saw a beautiful male bullfinch and his dusky pink lady. Other finches seen were goldfinch, chaffinch, and greenfinch. We saw 5 species of tit - - great, blue, longtailed, coal and marsh. A nuthatch, treecreeper and yellow hammer were added to the count. A sparrow hawk was seen looking for lunch which caused some commotion amongst the songbirds. Returning along the football pitch and past local houses we saw a dunnoek, 2 collared doves, a tree sparrow, blackbirds, starlings, crows and jackdaws. Birds heard but not seen were an oystercatcher and a curlew. In total we saw 31 species of birds and if we needed further evidence that Spring was on its way we found a pond full of frog and toad spawn.

Finally I can honestly say that this is the only time I have ever been birdwatching and not been absolutely frozen. So hats off to Ann Crouch for organising it and for the lovely homemade soup she laid on at the end. She even provided a kingfisher in the bathroom to console those who missed it on the river. It would be well worth returning there when the summer visitors start to arrive.

Alison Waterworth

FOXGLOVE COVERT 25th March 2012



The day dawned with a thick mist blanketing everything in sight, but by the time the 15 birders arrived at Foxglove Covert LNR (and were allowed through the security of Catterick Garrison), the sun was blazing in the sky and the birds were singing out their hearts.

In the first 5 minutes of waiting in the car park, Chiffchaff, Siskin, Redpoll and Bullfinch were noted, with flyovers from Lapwing and Jay. The reserve is made up of various habitats over a fairly wide area, but the woodland was the most productive. Greater-spotted Woodpecker, Goldcrest and the constant presence of singing Chiffchaff were the pick of the bunch. Buzzards and Kestrel were seen soaring on thermals, and Long-tailed Tits were

gathering nesting materials.

The most numerous bird of the day was the Lesser Redpoll, with groups of birds feeding in the tops of the many larch trees. The best birds of the day must go to a group of 5 Crossbill, one of which gave truly excellent views as it sat quietly in the top of a pine tree. Away from birds, Toads were in full breeding mode and obvious all around the reserve, and a single Roe Deer was seen. The final part of the day was spent watching the local ringing group work - a bonus chance to see Bullfinch up close.



This is a great reserve, well-maintained, welcoming and with lots to see – perhaps it should have a regular slot on our annual calendar of trips?

Alex Penn

CALDERDALE Friday 13th April

The weather was kind for our visit to Calderdale to find moorland birds on April 13th. After meeting and combining cars 12 of us went to Warley Moor reservoir. Walking round we found numbers of Canada geese, curlews, meadow pipits (many carrying nesting material), 2 skylarks singing and male mallards. Further on we had good sightings of twite. After climbing the embankment we found a flock of 7 wheatears one of which we thought was a Greenland Race. Further on was a greylag goose, a possible sighting of a short eared owl, several red grouse and 8 oystercatchers. 2 lapwings were disputing territory. A kestrel and a sparrowhawk flew by and 2 ravens flew overhead whilst we had lunch, in the sunshine.

Afterwards we drove, to save time, down to Cold Edge dams. Walking up the dams we found a dunnock close by which led us to 2 pairs of reed bunting. On the dams was a flock of 5 goosanders, but they didn't stay long. Also, a pair of goldeneye, the male displaying fruitlessly and a flock of 10 lapwing. To top it all, just as we were dropping down to the road, a peregrine flew just over our heads giving us wonderful views. Walking back to the cars a glimpse of a merlin was had, also another kestrel, a redshank, a heron and several garden birds at the homesteads. 33 species were seen in all including corvids, pied wagtails and 4 rheas! Along with strange domestic hens.

Jane Uttley

Leading a Bird Watching Event

You may notice that we are still looking for a leader for an event in September. We always need volunteers to organise these outings. The venue can be either a place suggested by Sheila Nash and Ann Crouch who arrange the programme, or we are always happy for people to suggest a favourite and/or new place that they think other birders might like. There is not usually a huge amount involved. It is useful if you have visited the venue before. If the access is tricky or there is a longish walk involved, it is helpful to mention this as some members may have limited mobility. Availability of toilets is a useful thing to mention. Details of venues can often be found on line. You might want to give people some idea of the cost which could be involved and also (most important!) the birds which may be around. Other than this, it is just a question of waiting for people to contact you and perhaps organising some car sharing.

Do help to share the load by offering to lead an outing.

Summer Birds

The Swift is a medium-sized aerial bird, which is a superb flier. It even sleeps on the wing! It is plain sooty brown, but in flight against the sky it appears black. It has long, scythe-like wings and a short, forked tail. It is a summer visitor, breeding across the UK, but most numerous in the south and east. It winters in Africa. Swifts never perch on wires like swallows. You might see excited screaming parties of them careering madly at high speed around rooftops and houses, often low, especially towards dusk. They eat flying insects and airborne spiders and there are estimated to be around 85,000 breeding pairs in Britain. They are usually the last to arrive and the first to leave of these summer visitors.



Our British **Swallows** mainly winter in South Africa, migrating through Western France, the Pyrenees and down through Spain to North Africa and across the Sahara. They can cover 200 miles a day, mainly during daylight, at speeds of 17-22 miles per hour

They arrive back here in April or May and nest in both open countryside and rural building such as barns, preferably near water. The brood of three to six chicks has usually fledged by July and the parents may then raise a second and even third brood. By September they are preparing to migrate. They can be seen collecting on telegraph wires. Most have left by the end of September with the early broods of youngsters being the first to go.

The return journey takes around six weeks. Swallows migrate during daylight, flying quite low and covering about 320 km (200 miles) each day. At night they roost in huge flocks in reed-beds at traditional stopover spots. Since swallows feed entirely on flying insects, they don't need to fatten up before leaving, but can snap up their food along the way. Nonetheless, many die of starvation. If they survive, they can live for up to sixteen years.

The House Martin is a small bird with glossy blue-black upper parts and pure white under parts. It has a distinctive white rump with a forked tail and, on close inspection, white feathers covering its legs and toes. It spends much of its time on the wing collecting insect prey. The bird's mud nest is usually sites below the eaves of buildings and the name of the bird is related to its use of man-made structures. They are summer migrants and spend their winters in Africa. Although still numerous and widespread, recent moderate declines earn them a place on the Amber List. There are between 273,000 and 535,000 breeding pairs in Britain.



And finally, a heartwarming tale from Angus.

I got a bit too wet in the rain so I'm just drying out - but I can definitely smell orange sauce !!



Lovely result!! After about an hour the little duckling came round having dried off ate some corn, jumped out of the oven, charged round the cottage and luck was with me as her mum turned up with her little ones and I let my orphan out the door and she ran to mum and if you look carefully you'll see her behind mum. All the others are underneath ! Made my day



The Committee for 2012/2013 are

Ros Wade – Chairman
Sue Hickson – Secretary
Ann Crouch – Treasurer
Lynda Fussell Angus Gosman
Sheila Nash Adrian Roberts

Nidderdale Birdwatchers is a voluntary organisation which exists to promote interest in and understanding and knowledge of birds, their environment and conservation, and in particular to promote the study and welfare of the birds within Nidderdale. Membership is open to all interested individuals; for details contact the Membership Secretary, Angus Gosman or visit our website www.niddbirds.org.uk