



From The Chairman

What a wonderful summer that was. It seemed to extend itself into autumn. But November is rearing its head and December and January inevitably follow on. Not seasons of mist and mellow fruitfulness but of sleety rain, mist, fog, ice and snow. Time to snuggle under the duvet? No. Time to get out and about and enjoy so many birding wonders. We have winter visitors to entertain us, Field Fare and Redwing



are already flying over my patch. And we have the promise of Waxwings and winter Geese. Frosty mornings watching waterfowl and waders under a wintry sun are special days.

You will all have a special local patch in which you choose to watch birds. It might be your own garden, the view from your sitting-room or it might be a stretch of coast, woodland, waterside, hills or farmers' fields. Why not take some photographs of your patch and write a sentence or two about the birds you see and why your patch is special to you. We might put your patch in the newsletter or you can show it off at a members' evening. This year's is on November 18th at The Royal Oak, Dacre Banks. Email niddbirds@gmail.com or speak to any member of the Committee whose contact details are on the last page of your newsletter.

I look forward to seeing as many as possible of you at the upcoming events including our Christmas Social on Monday 16th December at the Royal Oak. We are not including a quiz this year but we have found another fiendish way of testing your grey matter. Happy birdwatching to each and everyone.

Ros Wade

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Chirps

Just had this tiny (for non-birders the smallest bird in Europe !) Gold Crest fly into my window from the bird feeder. the good news it was stunned and after 10 mins flew off !!! What a beautiful bird
Angus Gosman



Just spreading the word that this last weekend's Migration Festival at Spurn was a brilliant experience despite the fact that good weather meant less landfalls. I heartily recommend this event for next year so keep a look out on the Spurn Bird Observatory/Yorkshire Wildlife Trust websites.
Sue Harrison

Pete reports a sighting of a Marsh Harrier yesterday afternoon, Thursday 22nd August, on Dallowgill Moor. It is a 'cream crown', so either a female or a juvenile. Please keep an eye out for it.

31 August A Marsh Harrier that may be the same bird was seen at Gouthwaite this afternoon, also Osprey seen fishing there. In total 7 species of raptor seen this afternoon.
Pete Seaman

WINTER 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. Some events demand a reasonable level of fitness depending on distances and terrain to be covered so if in doubt contact the organiser. Under 16s should be accompanied by an adult on all outdoor events. Non members are welcome at events. ***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 unless otherwise stated

Friday 8th November Brockholes



A full day's trip to the new reserve near Preston, for waders and other winter migrants. The award winning floating village allows people to get as close to the natural environment as possible.

The paths are mostly level. There is a 125m walk from the car park to the Visitor Village. Adapted toilets are at the Visitor Village. There are no toilets on the reserve. Meet at Pateley Bridge at 8.30am or at the reserve at 10am



Monday 18th November 'Our Birding Year' at the Royal Oak (7.30pm)



An evening for members by members. Please bring any slides, pictures, pieces of artwork, poems or anything else bird related which you have produced this year to share with the group.



Sunday 24th November Colsterdale

A half day visit looking for raptors, Winter Thrushes, moorland birds and waterfowl. There are no facilities in Colsterdale and limited parking. Bring warm clothing and suitable footwear for uneven and muddy tracks. Meet at 9am in Pateley lower car park opposite Towlers newsagents or 9.30am at the lay-by alongside Leighton Reservoir.

Picture courtesy of Matt O'Brien
mypennines.co.uk



Friday 13th December Staveley and Christmas Lunch



A half day visit around this constantly evolving and constantly fascinating reserve, followed by a lunch (optional) at the Royal Oak, Staveley. Sample menu and prices will be circulated nearer the time, but if you want any details, please



Meet at Pateley Bridge CP at 9am
or at the reserve at 9.30am

Monday 16th December Christmas Social at The Royal Oak



Come along and meet up, share experiences of birding throughout the year and there may even be some food and entertainment laid on! £5 contribution asked towards refreshments.

Friday 10th January Rodley Reserve

A well-managed, accessible and varied nature reserve on the outskirts of Leeds. Meet at Pateley at 9.00 or in the reserve carpark at 10.00, which is signposted from the A657 Rodley Town Street. A member of the reserve trust will give an introduction in the visitor centre (snacks, loos) and guide us round the various habitats including wet grassland, reedbed and a lagoon with a profusion of ducks and water birds.

For location and reserve maps, sightings and other details see the reserve website at:

www.rodleynaturereserve.org/



Monday 27th January Pub evening Nosterfield-a stepping-stone in the landscape An illustrated talk by Simon Warwick *Please note Fourth evening of the month*

This is our first evening meeting of the year and promises to be of interest to many of our members who already know Nosterfield Nature Reserve or have yet to visit it. Simon will talk about the inspiration behind the site, its setting in the landscape and the huge potential for such sites in the wider region.

The meeting is at the **Royal Oak Dacre Banks at 7.30pm**

CLUB EVENTS

Reports by members on past outings

Friday 9th August Gouthwaite Reservoir



Seven members met up at the car park and viewpoint alongside Gouthwaite reservoir for a morning's bird watching in the upper part of our recording area and maybe hoping for a glimpse of the Ospreys that had been seen in the area some weeks earlier. The bushes in the car park had some early berries on them which had attracted several species including three Garden Warblers and the usual mixed tit flock were busy feeding along the side of the stream passing through the car park into the reservoir.

At the viewpoint we met up with Colin (Slator) and he had identified several species out on the water for us to enjoy. Among the resident Greylag and Canada Geese four Bar Headed Geese stood out well in the sunshine sailing under the far bank of the reservoir. The water level had risen after the recent rain so there was very little mud in front of the viewing area to attract waders but there

was an odd Redshank feeding among the numerous Lapwings but viewing these was difficult due the overgrown vegetation around the platform. The raptor fans among us were well catered for with both Common Buzzard and Kestrel over the woods and moorland over the far side.

A short visit to Scar House gave us different birds altogether, no moorland species showing here but a good number of warblers and hirundines were around the end of the dam. The central tower on the dam had at least ten House Martin nests and several young were being fed in the nest. One tree below the dam had good numbers of Willow Warblers and Chiffchaff while both Pied and Spotted Flycatchers were feeding on the edge of the plantation. Once again it was an interesting mornings birding showing the diversity of the bird life in our area. **Pete Seaman**

Monday 19th August The Royal Oak Bird Stroll



A select band met at the Royal Oak pub in Dacre Banks for a bird stroll. We started by the riverside after following a path around the woodyard and then walked as far as the forestry following alongside part of the old railway track. Good sightings of Swifts and House Martins over the river and a Dipper. We also counted several flocks of Mallard, one with two adults and seven young, grazing in the meadows. On our way back in the semi-dusk we

heard a Tawny Owl calling.

Ros Wade

Saturday 14th September Long Preston Wetlands

It was the middle of September when six of us, led by Lynda Fussell, made our way to Preston Wetlands. We expected cool weather. There had not been much rain, the paths were dry and the river on the low side.

We didn't see any waders apart from a flock of Lapwings overhead. There were the usual small birds, Goldfinch, Chaffinch, Willow Warbler. Three members of the tit family and four from the crow's. A good number of gulls were flying and circling at a high altitude - we identified Black Headed, Greater Black-backed and Herring Gulls.

The highlights of the day were the four to five Whinchats sitting on a fence, giving us good views, and the raptors - Sparrow Hawk, Kestrel and Buzzard. The best was the Ospreys. We weren't sure that the first one we saw we'd identified it correctly. But the second one was closer and we oo'd and ar'd as it tumbled in the air above us.

By the end of the day we seemed to be carrying as many clothes as we were wearing. Thanks Lynda and our companions for a beautiful day. **Ann Crouch**



Monday 16th September Talk on Black Grouse Illustrated Talk on the Upper Nidderdale Black Grouse Recovery Project

Dr Phil Warren of the Game and Conservancy Conservation Trust, an independent charity which carries out scientific research into Britain's game and wildlife, told us about the work being done to conserve black grouse in northern England. 19 members attended the meeting on Monday 16th September. Habitat loss has caused a dramatic drop in numbers and they are now a Biodiversity Action plan priority species.

Monday 23rd September Nidderdale Show



It was a good day at the Nidderdale Show with a good number of people showing interest in our stall. A few people showed interest in joining the club but nobody actually did. The winners of the club quiz on the Crow Family was won by Yvonne Welsh of Knottingley and Angus's quiz by Mr or Mrs (hard to read) Breckon of Pateley Bridge. They both will receive Smith's vouchers of £15. The star of the day was Adrian's daughter, Holly, who not only got the easy quiz right without help, but wrote the answers herself with phonetic help from her dad. She's only four and a half!
Ann Crouch

Sunday 29th September Moth Morning with Jill Warwick



Nine members met at Nosterfield reserve on a gloriously sunny morning.

After we had all seen the Yellow-legged Gull which was posing on one of the islands in front of the screen we gathered to see what delights Jill's moth traps held. We were not disappointed. Jill passed round the egg trays which the moths settle on attracted by the Mercury lamps inside the traps. Fortunately the weather the previous evening was fine and the traps yielded 37 species. It was fascinating to hear about the different species and to see their amazing wing patterns and colours.

There were Red Underwing, Angle Shades, Silver-Y, Burnished Brass and the marvellous Merveille du jour to name just a few. Thanks to Jill for the time spent setting the traps and giving us the opportunity to observe the moths at such close quarters.



Merveille du Jour Moth

Friday 11th October East Coast Migration Watch

The weather forecast said strong northerly winds, cold and clear. When nine of us set off in the minibus, the morning was still, misty, and muggy. As we reached Filey the wind strengthened, the mist cleared, the sun came out and we met up with the rest of the group and Nidderdale Birdwatchers' resident migrant, Hilary.

The wind had whipped the sea up into a whirling, swirling cauldron below the Brigg and flecks of foam were repeatedly whisked off, giving the impression of a flock of small white waders skimming the shore. It was difficult to hold binoculars still and the wind had obviously caused some problems for migrants as we did not see as many as expected.

However there were plenty of gannets who were quite at home skimming the white horses, their young, inky black and just as skillful. These were joined by shearwaters who were even more graceful and didn't flap as much. A black bird was spotted on the water and there was much discussion about its identity. Could it be a diver? Observation was made more difficult as the bird kept disappearing in the swell, but a young man finally joined us and pronounced that it was a young gannet. The matter settled, we enjoyed sitting in the sun watching the theatre of the sea and birds and not even the lure of lunch made us rush back to the minibus. After eating we spent some time skulking in the bushes looking for birds that were doing the same thing. Then we motored on to Bempton and found the feeding station very busy. Several bramblings were admired and there was a brief glimpse of a goldcrest, as well as plenty of greenfinch, goldfinch, chaffinch, tree sparrow, collared dove and pheasant.

We had a grand day and our thanks go to Ann for organising it and to Brian for driving the minibus. His experience of the day was somewhat restricted as the bus would not lock so could not be left unattended.



Monday 21st October Social Evening at the Royal Oak

A Social Evening with a difference was enjoyed by around fifteen members. Books were available for sale and nearly £30 was raised for Club funds. There was an opportunity for members to bring their own nature books to sell and to donate a portion to funds if they wished. Members also received hard copies of the books and brochures in our Library.

The Library is now available at Nidd Plus in Pateley Bridge from 10am to 4pm weekdays, telephone 01423 714953

Ros Wade

Sunday 27th October Saltholme



Three keen souls, Tony, Franky and Lynda, braved the terrible weather forecast and headed up to Saltholme on Sunday 27th October, and had a very pleasant day!

The weather was kind to us, the occasional light shower sprinkled amongst the bright sunshine and gusty winds. We

missed the Barnacle Geese and the families of Whooper swans that had been there the day before, but had excellent views of a very obliging Little Egret,

loads of ducks, Mute Swans and Geese - Pink foot, Canada and Greylag. Also caught sight of the Snow Bunting.

Tony got some great photos of a very speedy Water Rail.... There were loads of waders with hundreds of Golden Plover, plenty of Lapwings and a good mix of

Black-tailed Godwit, Redshank and Snipe. A Long-Tail Duck, was spectacular amongst all the Gadwall, Teal, Shoveler, Tufted and other duck. Good views of a sparrow hawk clearing the feeder near the Phil Stead Hide.....

We had +30 species and a very pleasant day out.



Lynda Fussell

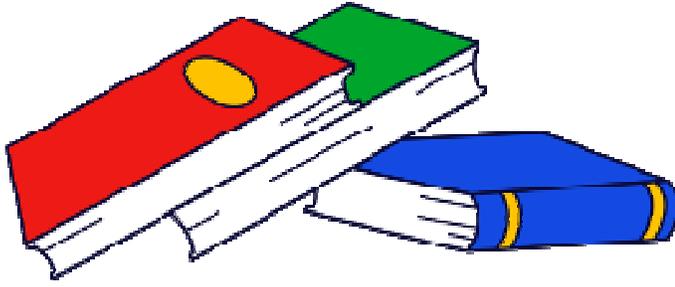
YOUR NEWSLETTER

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to the Newsletter either by sending reports, articles or photos. A special thanks to Angus who keeps me supplied with snippets and book reviews and to Tony Knowles who finds me pictures to illustrate the Newsletter when I am getting desperate to find things to fill it. **PLEASE** if you have been on a trip and have either organised it or been asked by the organiser to write a report, please, please send the report as soon as you can and with some pictures too if you can manage it. It doesn't have to be a long article, just a few sentences will do.

If you have some interesting birding stories, please also send them. A sentence or two is ideal for 'Chirps' and I am always delighted to receive longer articles too. Pictures are also great. If you enjoy the Newsletter, please do think about contributing to it. Then it will really be a Newsletter of the whole club.

Sue Hickson

NIDDERDALE BIRDWATCHERS' LIBRARY



Our Library is now available at the Nidderdale Plus Offices, Kings Court, round the back of the Museum in Pateley Bridge top of school hill, near St. Cuthbert's Church. Office hours are 10am-4pm Monday to Friday. There is a signing in and out book. We are pleased to say that we have recently acquired some Moth and Butterfly books from Jill Warwick to add in to our collection of books and brochures. Do come along for a browse and/or a borrow. The Library will not be available at our meetings. Many thanks for Nidderdale Plus for offering this facility. We are very grateful for all the work the Penns

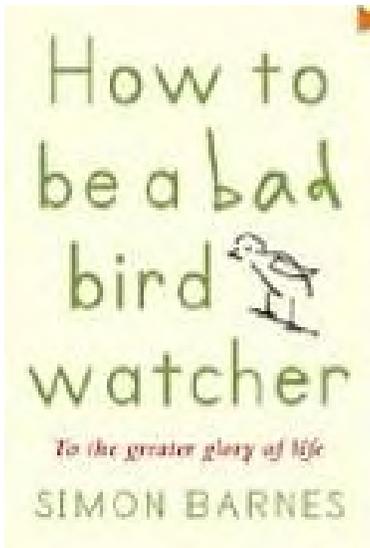
and Alex in particular have done in lugging the Library to our meetings in the past.

Nidderdale Plus's phone number is 01423 714953

Bird Recorder

Pete Seaman has been our Recorder for the past four years. He collates the sightings from the Nidderdale AONB Area and sends relevant information on to other Recorders including Paul Irving at Harrogate. He also puts together the information which goes into the Bird Record received by each member. Recording sightings is a very important part of Nidderdale Birdwatchers. Pete would like to move on now and would like to be able to hand the job on to someone else after this year end. If you would like to talk to Pete about what might be involved please contact him on: 01765 600565.

Angus's Book Reviews



“How to be a bad birdwatcher” by Simon Barnes (does lot of articles for The Times) Amazon £6.39 kindle £5.39

“Anyone who has ever gazed up at the sky or stared out of the windows knows something about birds”. In this funny, inspiring, eye-opening book, Simon Barnes paints a riveting picture of how bird-watching has framed his life and can help us all to a better understanding of our place on this planet

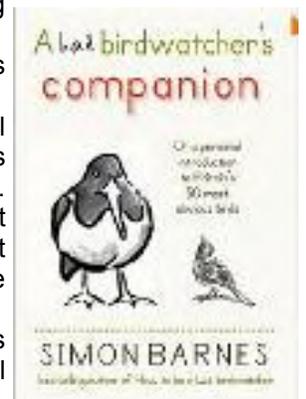
How to be a bad birdwatcher shows why birdwatching is not the preserve of twitchers but one of the simplest, cheapest and most rewarding pastimes around.

His companion book – “A bad birdwatcher's companion” is worth a mention. Amazon £ 8.00 kindle £5.99

Few books are more intimidating than a conventional field guide. There are simply too many birds in them. This book introduces the reader to Britain's most obvious birds. But it does more than that: it also explains the way different birds do different things, eat different food' sing different songs and live different lives, and explains why they are

different.

If you are a would-be-birdwatcher but don't know where to start, A bad birdwatcher's companion is for you. It will help you understand birdwatching: but far more important, it will help you begin to understand birds.



Can't resist adding a good thriller !

Peter Robinson “ Past Reason Hated “-all based in The Dales and Harrogate (on t.v. as D.C.I. Banks)

Angus

BTO Nest Record Scheme

Nidderdale Birdwatchers' commitment to "promote the study and welfare of birds in Nidderdale" resulted in several club initiatives to do just this, and one of them has been our commitment to the BTO's Nest Record Scheme (NRS). Volunteers around the country look for and record nesting activity each year and the resulting data is collated by the BTO and used to analyse and identify trends in bird populations and welfare. The information generated is used to plan conservation activities in this country and in other countries where our resident and migrating species move and live. The records we produce in the Dale are also sent on to you each year so that you know, for instance, that the number of nesting Pied flycatchers is increasing as a result of our work.

We have two woods in the Dale where nest boxes are checked each year and the records sent on to the BTO – Bryan's Wood near Dacre and Old Spring Wood at Summerbridge. There are roughly 130 boxes that are checked every week or ten days in the breeding season by club members. We make a written note of what's happening in each box – what bird, how many eggs, do they hatch, how many fledge etc – and then put the results into a BTO computer programme that does the rest of the hard work and passes the records back to the BTO.

There are other areas in the Dale where we have nest boxes which are not monitored, for example in schools and in other woods, and these are cleaned out at the end of each year, and repaired as necessary.

There are different activities involved in all this; visiting the woods, checking the contents of boxes, recording the data, loading the data onto a computer. Some of our volunteers do all these things, others just write down what's there, or can sit at home and load data into a computer.

As those of us involved are getting steadily (unsteadily?) older, we need your help. If you join us, you will get to visit places in the Dale you would not otherwise see, you gain more knowledge of birds and their habits, and the pleasure of seeing the eggs reach the hatching stage, and the development of the chicks, is fantastic. The sight of a nest full of well developed nuthatch chicks is a delight!

Would you like to join us? You don't need any specialist knowledge or training to help out in the countryside, and even if you can help by sitting at home and loading data into a computer we will be very grateful.



NEWS FROM MEMBERS

(WELL, ANGUS ACTUALLY!)

"Duck Dilemma"

Last year the Mallards in my garden produced 33 ducklings -only 3 made it thro till winter due not to predation but to the wet and cold. Several ended up in the oven in desperate attempt to breath life back into them (Why



are mallard young so appealing and yet turn into rowdy teenagers and in adulthood the males seem to have gang bang on their mind in the spring!!!???)

This year I have ended up with nearly 100 going into winter. These go through 2x 25 kilo sacks of corn a week. I keep waking up in a cold sweat as to how many will I have this time next year if we have a good summer ? 300/500 ?

It won't be the current mantra "eat or heat " it'll be "they feed I starve !! " Don't tell me to not feed as my heart can't resist "Mum" when she literally knocks on the front door to show off her 10/12 day olds!!!

Answers on the back of a postcard please !

Thought I'd let you know 4 Bar-headed geese are back at Gouthwaite. Sometimes they can be seen resting on the mud flats from the main viewing platform where the car park is. Another favorite place is along the track from Bouthwaite heading towards Coville Barn but just before Coville there is an open field on the left that some times has an electric fence alongside the track and at the top of the field is a planted spruce wood. they seem to always be in company of grey-lag but there light grey bodies really stand out.

These are obviously "escapees" I'm sure you all know the amazing story of "Bar-headed" but if not delighted to tell the story !!

Angus Gosman



Pete's Corner

News of our local area from our bird recorder

NO4 AUTUMN 2013

Our birding summer featured raptors once again with the mystery of the Gouthwaite Ospreys continuing with reports coming in from the public as well as our club members. We had reports of one or two birds from early spring right through the summer until at least Nidderdale show day when a juvenile was reported over Silver Hill. Whether these birds were all the same or just wandering non breeders is something we may never find out but maybe we should watch the area closely next breeding season. The later part of the summer also gave other good raptor sightings around the Dale, a drive out to Strope Bridge on the Western edge of Dallowgill Moor gave views of a young or female Marsh Harrier, two Common Buzzards (including a very pale individual) and a cock Merlin. A Marsh Harrier had been reported in that area at the same time last year when that bird stayed in the area for about four weeks. On a mid September visit to Scar House Reservoir Chris and myself had views of four Red Kites, three Sparrowhawks, two Kestrels and a Merlin all from the car park and a Short Eared Owl passing over the road near Lofthouse village. During another interesting birding session on Gouthwaite seven species of raptor were viewed from the viewpoint and one regular watcher saw a total of nine raptor species the same afternoon while doing his regular count of the water fowl. As raptor protection is strong on the mind of our committee it is good to know there are still birds showing in the dale.

It was an interesting visit in August to Scar House Reservoir where the trees below the dam held a good mixture of Warblers in fact one tree held seven species of bird and we had both spotted and Pied Flycatchers with juveniles in the same patch of bushes. On the same morning the air seemed full of House Martins from the nesting colony on the central tower. There were still some birds in these nests when we visited in mid September, their young must have been very late leaving the nest and late heading south, and we can only hope they made it. Away from the area Nosterfield has had a good range of passage birds and on one visit some members had Common Sandpiper, Dunlin and Temmincks Stint in the scope view at the same time, great for i.d. purposes. Large numbers of Golden Plover and Lapwing that gather here make a spectacular sight in the sunlight when they are disturbed by a hunting raptor.

Writing this in mid October there is little sign of any big numbers of wintering Thrushes arriving yet but small numbers are slowly getting this far inland and looking at the bushes and trees there seems as though there will be plenty of welcoming fruits for them when they do arrive. A recent walk while doing the B.T.O. Winter Thrush Survey round our local patch gave us small numbers of Redwings and a couple of Mistle Thrushes but these were heard rather than seen so they were presumed to be birds passing over.

As this will be the last newsletter of 2013 would any members with outstanding records for the year please pass them on by the end of January 2014 so that they can all be collated and thanks to all who have contributed during the year, without your input the we would not be able to issue our annual report.

Pete Seaman

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this Newsletter, and special thanks to everyone who has contributed pictures. Do keep sending in reports, Chirps, pictures and bird related articles.

The Committee for 2013/2014 are

Ros Wade – Chairman

Sue Hickson – Secretary

Barry Slaymaker—Treasurer

Ann Crouch -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** on **01423 755276** or visit our website **www.niddbirds.org.uk**

Items for inclusion in the Newsletter are welcome and should be sent to

Sue Hickson