

MAY 1985

Weatherwise the month began quite cool and changeable, but by mid-month some improvement took place, and towards the end of the month a long overdue warm spell arrived when the Scandinavian high became established. Temperatures were lower than one might expect during May - the lowest being 34°F on the 7th, and the highest 69°F on the 26th.

The cool changeable conditions, although unpleasant, ensured a substantial number of grounded migrants at most sites, and during the month three new species were recorded in the Fylde.

Observers records indicated four distinct periods when migrants arrived in the Fylde during May. The first influx occurred between the 1st-7th, when warblers and chats proved fairly plentiful, along with good numbers of Common Sandpipers and Whimbrel. Wood Warblers turned up at five sites, Blackcaps at seven sites, Redstarts at nine sites, and Pied Flycatchers at eight sites. Common Sandpipers were present in good numbers, with up to 15 at the Mere, 10 at Fleetwood Power Station, 6 at Street Gravel Pits, 5 at Wilkinsons Gravel Pits, and unusually, 3 in Stanley Park. A count of 83 Whimbrel at Cogie Hill on the 1st had increased to 107 on the 3rd.

On the 5th a small depression developed over southern parts bringing heavy rain and thunderstorms to the Fylde, effectively grounding many migrants until it had passed. Heavy rain fell all that afternoon, driven by a fresh E.NE wind, but by early evening the sky was clearing gradually from the South. With the passing of the rain a new species came to the Fylde - two Common Cranes were seen to arrive from the South at the Mere. The two cranes circled the island before flying on North, to be seen a few minutes later as they passed over Carleton on their way towards Fleetwood and Morecambe Bay. Grounded birds on the 5th included up to 31 Wheatears at Fleetwood Power Station, with lesser numbers at many other sites, up to 6 Whinchats at a dozen sites, 7 Tree Pipits at the Power Station, and a Fieldfare at Broadwater Wood, Fleetwood. Two more Fieldfares were found at St. Annes Crematorium on the 6th (both birds being present until the 15th). The passing of the depression saw a gradual decrease in the numbers of grounded birds as they moved out during the next couple of days in calmer conditions.

Another influx on the 11th and 12th saw up to 12 Whitethroats along the old railway at Fleetwood, 21 Sedge Warblers at the Power Station, 3 Lesser Whitethroats at The Naze, 5 singing Wood Warblers and 6 singing Redstarts at Nicky Nook, the first Spotted Flycatcher at Salwick, and a Black Necked Grebe at the Mere.

Following heavy rain on the 14th and 15th, more migrants were grounded and the first large arrivals of Swifts were noted at the Mere and at the I.C.I. Pool. A female Red Backed Shrike, the first to come to the Fylde since 1971, caused quite a stir at the Power Station on the 16th. Unfortunately a passing Sparrowhawk didn't view the shrike with the same reverence as the gathered birders - the hawk, on the lookout for its supper obviously saw the shrike as fair game. The Sparrowhawk was seen to dash into the bush where the shrike was perched, and the shrike was not seen again.

The fourth influx of migrants came late in the month, when high pressure and warmer conditions brought several birds with a definite Continental flavour. On the 26th a Hobby flew South over the Mere in the early evening, and on the 27th a late White Wagtail was by the pool on Newton Marsh. The 27th saw another "first" for the Fylde when a Subalpine Warbler was found in the sea buckthorn on L.S.A.N.R. (the bird stayed until the following evening). On the 29th another "first", a Tawny Pipit found on Fleetwood Golf Course at 05.35, was seen to leave to the SE at 05.57; and on the 31st two Black Terns were in flight over the Mere.

Sadly, in the midst of all this coming and going of migrants and rarities, a lack of Yellow Wagtails and Sand Martins was plainly obvious, indicating yet another bad winter for these two species.

Apart from the good numbers of Common Sandpipers and Whimbrel early in the month, other "fresh" wader species were few. Single Little Ringed Plovers were at Street G.P. and Fleetwood Marsh on the 2nd and 17th respectively, single Greenshanks at Lane Ends on the 3rd, at the Mere on the 4th, and Conder Green on the 25th, and a Green Sandpiper going North over the Mere on the 20th.

The West Coast wader passage counts of Sanderlings included 1400 at Rossall Point and 1150 at St. Annes - the latter site having at least fourteen birds which had been dyed yellow whilst in their winter quarters, also a few birds having yellow leg tags.

The last Purple Sandpipers at Rossall were 5 on the 11th, on which date, 1010 Turnstones were also at the same location.

A stiff SW blow on the 24th, the only one of the month, produced a few seabirds off Rossall, with 4 Manx Shearwaters, 18 Gannets, 16 Fulmars, 2 Arctic Skuas, and a Pomarine Skua, the records of interest. Two Pomarine Skuas had been off Rossall on the 18th (a light phase and a dark phase), and a single there on the 19th - three Arctic Skuas were seen chasing terns off Anchorsholme on the 12th. Little Tern records were of 4 at Rossall Point on the 6th, with singles there on the 18th, 19th, and 24th, and a single on the beach at St. Annes on the 19th.

A glaucous Gull, identified as a first summer bird, was at Fleetwood Power Station from the 1st to at least the 15th.

A few Pinkfeet were somewhat late in departing for the North, with a single in flight over Warton Bank and a group of 25 going North over Fleetwood on the 5th. Other waterfowl records of interest included 3 Greylags South over Bispham Marsh on the 16th, a drake Goosander in the Ribble Estuary at Fairhaven on the 2nd, 58 Eider off Rossall on the 6th, the last Goldeneye on the I.C.I. Pool on the 12th, a pair of Scaup on Stanley Park Lake on the 19th, and a female Shoveler with four young at the Mere on the 26th.

A most unusual record for our coast was a Grey Seal off South Prom on the 19th.

JUNE 1985

Following the excitement generated by the many grounded migrants during May, June proved something of an anticlimax.

The only migrant of note was a Turtle Dove in Watson Road Park on the 1st; but as for the rest, almost nothing. A Cuckoo was near the Mere during the first three days of the month, and odd single Sand Martins appeared at the Mere up to the 29th.

Early in the month, up to 800 Sanderlings were still at St. Annes, including at least one yellow dyed bird, but by the 8th most had moved on to Arctic breeding grounds. A late departing flock of Ringed Plovers was that of 75 birds at Fairhaven, probably making for the same breeding areas as the Sanderlings. A flock of 76 Turnstones at Rossall Point on the 19th was probably made up of young birds which would summer here this year, before making the long trek North next year to breed.

Seawatchers were thankful for some strong westerly and north westerly winds between the 8th and the 13th to add some sparkle to a very quiet month. On the 9th, 10 Fulmars, 96 Manx Shearwaters, and 5 Gannets were off South Shore, whilst further North, 8 Fulmars, 9 Manx Shearwaters, a Great Skua and a Puffin, were seen off Rossall. The 12th saw 6 Fulmars, 49 Manx Shearwaters, 25 Gannets and 13 Kittiwakes off South Shore.

Two immature Little Gulls appeared intermittently at the Mere throughout the month, and a single was at Rossall on the 21st. A 2nd summer Mediterranean Gull was at Fleetwood Power Station on the 30th, and the same day, 3 "late" Common Terns flew west at the Mere.

Amongst local breeding birds, the pair of Stonechats which deserted their earlier nest at the L.S.A.N.R. during the cold weather of April, had by the 5th of June, brought two fledged young onto the Reserve, whilst at the Mere, in addition to the Shoveler and its four young, a Tufted Duck was seen with three young, and at least seven broods of Coot. At least two pairs of Mute Swans had young during June, a pair at the Mere had two cygnets and a pair in the Carleton area had four.

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BIRD NOTESCormorants soaring on Thermals.

On the morning of 3rd June 1985, from a window in the South Shore Telephone Exchange, I saw two Cormorants flying North over the sea about 100metres apart. This at first seemed like a familiar fly-past, but then the leading bird began climbing slowly but surely in huge circles. The second bird followed, until both were at a height of about 700ft.

The pair, by now alternately flapping and gliding, and looking like two vultures, were briefly joined by a Swift.

This continued for about five minutes until both birds were lost to sight during a long slow descent to the North.

The day was hot and sunny, with an Easterly wind.

I believe that this behaviour has been recorded previously for this species in B.W.P..

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

Volunteers are required for the Morecambe Bay Wader Counts at Pilling and Cockersands.

Count dates:	August	17/18
	September	14/15
	October	19/20
	November	16/17
	December	14/15

Cormorant Survey - Counts at known roosts between September '85 and March '86

TETRAD SURVEY

Recent suggestions that members partake in a 2 x 2km breeding survey of the Fylde Area has prompted the following questions, which as Recorder for the past seven years, I cannot answer.

I have listed the species and posed the questions. Can you answer them?

- LITTLE GREBE - Has bred on farm pools in the Poulton area, how many other areas hold odd pairs?
- MUTE SWAN - How many pairs breed on the long length of Lancaster Canal in our area?
- GARGANEY - Bred on a small pool near Weeton in 1964, how many times has it done so since?
- KESTREL - How many pairs breed in the Fylde, and what kind of nest sites do they use?
- PARTRIDGE - What is the status and distribution of this "common" bird in the Fylde?
- OYSTERCATCHER - How many pairs breed inland in the Fylde?
- RINGED PLOVER - Where do these conspicuous breeders do it?
- WOODCOCK - Breeds just outside our area - do odd pairs breed in the Fylde?
- CURLEW - How many pairs breed in Eastern Fylde?
- COMMON SANDPIPER - Does this species breed along the R.Wyre in our area?
- STOCK DOVE - How many pairs breed and where?
- OWLS - Where are Tawny and Little Owl breeding?
- KINGFISHER - Has bred in the past - does it still do so?
- WOODPECKERS - Where are they?
- GREY WAGTAIL - See Kingfisher
- STONECHAT - Do odd pairs escape our notice?
- WHEATEAR - Breeds on marshes adjacent to ours - do any breed north of the Wyre?
- WARBLERS & SPOTTED FLYCATCHER - How many pairs and where do they breed?

(cont.)

- GOLDCREST - Do any small suitable woods hold pairs?
 TITMICE - Long tailed and Marsh could be somewhere - Where?
 JAY - Do they still breed in eastern Fylde?
 MAGPIE - How many pairs are breeding in gardens and along hedgerows in towns and villages?
 TREE SPARROW - Where do they breed? Not all in Bob Danson's nest boxes.
 REDPOLL - Is this another species going unnoticed?
 BULLFINCH - Records suggest that odd pairs breed - Where are they?
 GOLDFINCH - See Bullfinch
 YELLOWHAMMER - Are they still retreating eastwards?
 CORN BUNTING - Can anybody answer Owen Roberts' questions?

All these questions and many more will be answered in a Breeding Bird Survey of the Fylde. (Hopefully). Details will be released at a future meeting of The Fylde Bird Club.

RINGING TOTALS

Ringling totals, for approximately the first six months of 1985, attributable to The Fylde Ringing Group and to G.A. Bowden/R.E. Danson.

SPECIES	F.R.G.		G.A.B./R.A.D.		SPECIES	F.R.G.		G.A.B./R.A.D.	
	Ad.	Pull.	Ad.	Pull.		Ad.	Pull.	Ad.	Pull.
Canada Goose	-	-	-	1	Redwing	84	-	4	-
Sparrowhawk	1	-	-	-	Sedge	-	-	-	-
Kestrel	1	-	-	6	Warbler	20	-	5	-
Moorhen	2	-	-	-	Lesser	-	-	-	-
Lapwing	-	23	-	103	Whitethroat	1	-	-	-
Dunlin	2	-	-	-	Whitethroat	6	-	-	-
Redshank	8	-	-	7	Garden	-	-	-	-
Stock Dove	-	-	-	2	Warbler	4	-	1	4
Wood Pigeon	-	-	-	2	Blackcap	18	-	4	-
Collared Dove	1	2	1	-	Chiff Chaff	4	-	1	-
Little Owl	-	-	1	5	Willow	-	-	-	-
Tawny Owl	1	-	2	5	Warbler	42	-	29	-
Swift	52	-	11	-	Goldcrest	10	-	10	-
Skylark	-	3	-	10	Spotted	-	-	-	-
House Martin	1	-	6	-	Flycatcher	1	-	1	4
Swallow	-	-	5	18	Pied	-	-	-	-
Meadow Pipit	-	4	-	-	Flycatcher	-	-	1	-
Grey Wagtail	-	-	1	5	Long T. Tit	1	-	-	-
Pied Wagtail	-	-	1	5	Willow Tit	2	-	-	-
Dipper	1	-	-	-	Coal Tit	10	-	4	-
Wren	22	-	9	-	Blue Tit	173	-	132	207
Duncock	40	-	17	5	Great Tit	72	-	30	18
Robin	35	5	19	16	Treecreeper	11	-	3	-
Redstart	2	-	1	-	Magpie	1	-	-	31
Blackbird	160	4	76	29	Carrion Crow	-	-	-	11
Fieldfare	1	-	1	-	Starling	39	-	104	17
Song Thrush	26	3	23	-	Tree Sparrow	5	-	18	105
Jackdaw	-	-	-	18	Chaffinch	312	5	26	-
					Greenfinch	199	-	91	-
					Goldfinch	1	-	-	-
					Linnet	29	-	4	-
					Reed Bunting	10	-	2	-
						1411	49	646	666
					Totals	1460		1312	