

Fylde Bird Club



NEWSLETTER No. 24

SEPTEMBER 1986

September was a super month weatherwise, with a prolonged period of settled conditions almost throughout.

The settled conditions provided ideal conditions for migrants, unfortunately very few put down in the Fylde. The Wryneck found at the Mere at the end of August was last seen on the 3rd. The Swallow roost at the Mere held up to 6000 birds until mid month, gradually reducing to about 200 at the month end.

Fairhaven proved popular with a number of observers, the sites' position at the SW corner of the Fylde at the mouth of the R. Ribble making the area an ideal migration watch point for birds moving south. Whilst many sites were almost devoid of birds, Fairhaven saw a reasonable passage of migrants. Yellow Wagtail numbers were, 25 on the 3rd, 20 on the 9th, and 17 on the 12th; Tree Pipits, 12 on the 9th, 7 on the 12th, and 10 on the 14th; whilst 34 Grey Wagtails passed over on the 9th, 30 more on the 10th, and 14 on the 12th. The 12th also saw a Great Spotted Woodpecker high over Fairhaven and flying SE, and a Cuckoo south the same day. Fairhaven also provided the only Sand Martin record of the month, a single on the 3rd, and also the latest Swift, a single on the 7th.

The variety of warblers reported was disappointingly low - only four species were recorded, Blackcap, Garden Warbler, Chiff Chaff and Lesser Whitethroat, with the 3 Garden Warblers at South Station on the 14th the largest group. Wheatear and Whinchat numbers were also low - the 7 Wheatears at Lane Ends on the 6th and 2 Whinchats at the Mere on the 7th and 14th maxima for both species. A few Spotted Flycatchers were about early in the month, 3 at Ribby on the 3rd, one at Fairhaven and one at Poulton on the 9th, one in Watson Road Park on the 13th, and one at L.S.A.M.A. on the 14th. The only Pied Flycatcher reported was a bird in a Knox Grove garden on the 27th - the second in that garden this year.

A Kingfisher was seen at Conder Green on several days throughout the month.

The settled weather also meant that few "fresh" waders would be grounded on the Fylde. A single Little Stint was at the I.C.I. Pool from the 1st to the 16th, up to 3 Curlew Sandpipers at the same site to the 20th, a single Green Sandpiper there on the 4th, and a single Common Sandpiper on the 9th. Elsewhere, a Common Sandpiper was at Lane Ends to the 12th, a Green Sandpiper at Warton Marsh on the 13th, and 3 Spotted Redshanks on Lytham Beach on the 30th. Greenshanks were the most numerous of the "fresh" waders, with singles at four sites, up to 2 on Warton Marsh and Newton Marsh, and 3 at Lane Ends.

In contrast to some wader species Black Tailed Godwits were well represented, up to 4250 on Lytham Beach and up to 36 at I.C.I. Pool.

Single Merlins appeared at six sites during September, including one at the Mere Swallow roost on the 10th, and single Sparrowhawks at only three sites was a poor number of sightings at the conclusion of the year's breeding season. A "ring tail" Hen Harrier was at Lane Ends on the 6th, and the first Short Eared Owl of the winter was a single at the Mere on the 15th.

Two adult Glaucous Gulls were back at the I.C.I. Pool by the 3rd, and it may have been one of these birds seen at Fleetwood Promenade on the 7th.

Wildfowl numbers were fairly unimpressive throughout the month, only Mallard in reasonable numbers. Up to 110 Mallard were at the Mere and 500+ at Lane Ends. The Mere also held the highest numbers of Tufted Duck and Pochard, 61 and 50 respectively. Eleven Ruddy Duck were at the Mere throughout September. The I.C.I. Pool, although not holding too many birds, certainly held a greater variety, which included Mallard, Shoveler, Wigeon, Pintail, Tufted, Pochard, Scaup, Canada and Grey Lag Geese.

The first Pinkfeet of the winter was a skien of 25 going south over Normoss on the 23rd.

OCTOBER 1986

The settled conditions of September continued into October, but by mid month the change came and more unsettled weather brought considerable falls of rain at the month end.

Early morning migrant watches at Fairhaven during the first week indicated a considerable movement of Chaffinches going south. A one hour count (07.15 to 08.15) on the 4th produced 534 Chaffinches going south, accompanied by 194 Starlings, 19 Skylarks, 7 Brambling and 5 Siskin. The following day, the 5th, 240 Chaffinches, 164 Starlings, 66 Meadow Pipits, 28 Skylarks, 8 Siskins and a Lapland Bunting, all moved south between 07.15 and 10.15.. Six Siskins were at Ribby on the 6th, 2 at South Station on the 16th, and 16 at Clifton Hall on the 26th. Bramblings were reported from three sites, 5 in Watson Road Park on the 16th, one at Singleton on the 20th and 6 at Clifton Hall on the 26th. A roost of up to 56 Pied Wagtails was at the Mere during the first week of the month, whilst late in the month a gathering of 40,000 Starlings was on Newton Marsh prior to going to roost south of the Ribble at Hesketh Bank.

On the 18th a flock of 95 Collared Doves was feeding on St. Annes Moss when one was seen to be siezed by a Sparrowhawk, fortunately for the dove it was probably too large for the hawk to cope with and was soon released.

The first Redwings of the winter were heard calling over Blackpool in the darkness on the 4th, whilst 11 at the Mere on the 12th were the only other birds reported for the month.

Departing summer visitors were few. The last Wheatear, Whinchat and Yellow Wagtail, were seen on the 5th, and the latest Swallows reported were 40 at the Mere on the 8th, but strangely nothing after these. Unusually strange was the complete absence of reports of House Martins during October - did they really depart so early?. The last warbler sightings were those of a Garden Warbler in a Knox Grove garden on the 11th, and 2 Blackcaps at South Station on the 14th.

The most unusual passerine record of the month was that of a Nuthatch at Lytham on the 8th - was this a migrant or do we overlook this species in our area?.

Sparrowhawks remained scarce about the Fylde, a similar picture to that in September. Single Sparrowhawks were at the Mere, Ribby and Singleton fairly regularly, but elsewhere the only birds seen were singles at St. Annes Moss and over Waterloo Road on the 8th, it may have been the latter bird seen in Watson Road Park the following day.

The only report of Little Owl was that of a dead bird on St. Annes Promenade on the 4th.

Over 1000 Mallard, 100 Teal, 380 Wigeon, and 10 Pintail, were at Lane Ends on the 5th, whilst at the Mere, 200 Mallard present throughout the month, and Shoveler increased to 40 by the 19th. Numbers of Tufted Duck and Pochard remained fairly stable at about 40 and 30 respectively at the Mere, and on the 7th the first Goldeneye of the winter was reported from the same site.

On the 25th an exhausted drake Scoter was taken to Paul Slade who kept the bird warm overnight before releasing it the next day.

The only Greenshank seen during October was one at Lane Ends on the 5th - the same day a Spotted Redshank was at the same place. Another Spotted Redshank was on Lytham Beach on the 10th. Single Jack Snipes were at Kirkham, L.S.A.N.R. and the Mere, during the first week of the month, and during the same period the largest flock of Golden Plover seen was one of 350 birds on Lytham Moss on the 4th.

The first three weeks of the month saw little in the way of seabirds. Two Sandwich Terns off South Prom on the 5th and 250 Guillemots there on the 12th were the only sightings of note. The change in weather conditions towards the month end brought a Leach's Petrel to Anchorsholme on the 19th, and another to South Prom on the 21st. The next day 4 more Leach's Petrels were in flight off South Prom, and an Arctic Skua was on the beach at the same place. Strong SW/W winds on the 25th and 26th pushed even more birds inshore - on the 25th, 8 Leach's Petrels and 2 Little Gulls were at South Prom, and 9 Leach's Petrels, 42 Kittiwakes, an Arctic Skua and an adult Mediterranean Gull, were off Anchorsholme - on the 26th, 6 Leach's Petrels and 120 Kittiwakes were off South Prom. The 120 Kittiwakes at South Prom included an exhausted immature bird

which Paul Slade managed to catch. Paul took the bird home where it was kept warm and fed before later being released. The last seabird record of note was that of a Pomarine Skua seen flying south off South Prom on the 30th.

Contributors:- C.Band L.Blacow F.Ellis P.Guy M.Jones Andy Myerscough
Monty Myerscough Paul Slade Phil Slade G.Smith E.Stirling

WADER COUNTS

September 21st

Rossall Point	Oystercatcher 601, Ringed Plover 63, Sanderling 460, Dunlin 102, Bar T.Godwit 3, Redshank 4, Turnstone 492.
I.C.I. Pool/ F.wood	Oystercatcher 21, Ringed Plover 14, Lapwing 288, Dunlin 4, Snipe 14, Black T.Godwit 29, Curlew 6, Redshank 4, Turnstone 42, Ruff 2, Curlew Sandpiper 2.
Lane Ends	Oystercatcher 3500, Ringed Plover 5, Grey Plover 775, Lapwing 500, Knot 750, Sanderling 30, Dunlin 1600, Snipe 2, Black T.Godwit 1, Bar T.Godwit 465, Curlew 53, Redshank 200, Golden Plover 142, Greenshank 3, Ruff 5.
Cockersands	Oystercatcher 1367, Ringed Plover 6, Grey Plover 5, Lapwing 23, Sanderling 20, Bar T.Godwit 3, Curlew 26, Turnstone 72.
Thurnham/Glasson	Oystercatcher 3, Lapwing 309, Snipe 3, Curlew 91, Redshank 116, Golden Plover 250.

October 19th

Rossall Point	Ringed Plover 13. Fishing match in progress.
I.C.I. Pool/ F.wood	Oystercatcher 8, Ringed Plover 35, Lapwing 30, Sanderling 1, Dunlin 12, Bar T.Godwit 28, Redshank 9, Turnstone 2.
Lane Ends	Oystercatcher 2300, Ringed Plover 3, Golden Plover 3, Grey Plover 131, Lapwing 1, Knot 12, Sanderling 2, Dunlin 1560, Black T.Godwit 14, Bar T.Godwit 45, Curlew 33, Turnstone 2.
Cockersands	Oystercatcher 1120, Lapwing 500, Snipe 6, Turnstone 78.
Thurnham/Glasson	Golden Plover 600, Dunlin 350, Curlew 2, Redshank 150.

FYLDE BREEDING BIRD SURVEY

During 1986, the Club embarked on what is probably the most important survey we will ever be involved with - the Fylde Breeding Bird Survey.

Below, represented in tetrad form (the unit for the survey), is the Fylde area. Those tetrads which received coverage, but not necessarily "complete coverage" in 1986, are ticked off. Further coverage of these tetrads in 1987 will hopefully complete the fieldwork for them, this will then allow observers to extend their activities into tetrads which remain uncovered.

The few members who provided information in 1986 need all the help possible to complete this survey. The task may appear somewhat daunting to the inexperienced, it isn't, any information you can supply regarding any breeding bird in the area will be of use in the final analysis of results.

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