

# Fylde Bird Club



NEWSLETTER No. 31

## NOVEMBER 1987

A few summer migrants lingered into November, a reflection of a fairly mild season with conditions cool but not too cold. Three Swallows appeared at the Mere on the morning of the 1st, and it was probably the same three birds seen flying south at Fairhaven Lake later that same morning. The 1st also saw 2 Blackcaps at South Station and another at Lytham Station, whilst on the 3rd a Blackcap was in a Cleveleys garden and another at the Railway Bushes by the Pleasure Beach. A Blackcap was amongst birds ringed at Clifton Hall on the 14th, and a single was reported from Ribby the same day. A Chiff Chaff was ringed at Clifton Hall on the 7th. Another late migrant was a Whimbrel at Singleton on the 6th, whilst a Black Redstart at Fairhaven Lake on the 1st was the only record for that species during the month.

Disappointingly low numbers of Fieldfares and Redwings were about the area, the largest numbers reported being 100 Fieldfares and 50 Redwings at Ribby on the 3rd. Eleven Siskins were noted moving south at Fairhaven on the 1st, and up to 4 at Ribby on a few days throughout the month - no Bramblings have been recorded for November. Snow Buntings and Twite were at their usual haunts at Rossall and Fleetwood Golf Course, with up to 8 Snow Buntings and 30 Twite on several dates.

The activities of the ringers at Clifton Hall at mid month produced several records of local interest - counts of up to 100 Blue Tits, 50 Great Tits and 40 Blackbirds, were of considerable note, and 8 Long Tailed Tits on the 21st, of which 6 were ringed, was also of special interest. Other passerine records of local interest included 2 Bullfinches at Ribby on a couple of days, and a Nuthatch at Weeton on the 21st.

Sparrowhawks appeared to be fairly plentiful with singles reported from ten different sites - these included one ringed at Clifton Hall on the 14th, and at least 2 at Ribby on one occasion. Merlins were somewhat more scarce, with singles at four sites, including one of particular note in Revoe Park, Blackpool. Short Eared Owls have also been somewhat thin on the ground, with 2 at the Mere, 3 on Clifton Marsh and a single at L.S.A.N.R..

Seawatching during November produced very little of note, the only records of interest being those of a single Black Throated Diver at Rossall on the 1st, a Red Throated Diver at the same place on the 7th, and an unexpected Little Auk off South Prom on the 22nd. Two or three Little Gulls were noted off Anchorsholme and Central Prom at mid month, and Fleetwood's Glaucous Gull was a regular sight perched atop the dome of the Marine Hall.

The monthly count for the Birds of Estuaries Enquiry was carried out on the 22nd, the results appearing later in this Newsletter. Other than the results of that count very few wader records were submitted for this summary. However, amongst those received were those 3 Purple Sandpipers at Rossall and a single at South Prom on the 8th,

3 Woodcock at the Mere and 3 at Ribby, up to 4000 Lapwings and 1000 Golden Plover at Newton Marsh, a lonely Snipe out on the beach at Lytham on the 8th, and a Grey Plover at the Mere on the 29th.

A gradual increase in wildfowl numbers at the Mere saw influxes of Mallard, Teal, Shoveler and Pochard towards the end of the month, whilst at Lane Ends on the 22nd considerable numbers of Mallard and Wigeon had gathered at the high tide roost, 1000 and 525 respectively. A most unexpected sight at the Lane Ends roost on the 22nd was the flock of 65 Scoters, not a species one might normally see in such numbers at this roost. Whooper Swans were reported flying south over the Mere on the 2nd and the 6th, with 3 and 4 birds respectively, whilst 2 Bewick's Swans put in a very brief appearance when alighting on the Mere on the 2nd.

#### DECEMBER 1987

If you think November was a quiet month for birds, then from the number of records submitted for this December summary one might imagine that most members had put away their binoculars for the winter - a heartfelt thank you goes out to those few members who submitted notes for the month.

The lack of onshore winds, in fact any kind of wind, produced little in the way of seabird records. Occasional Red Throated Divers produced the most frequent sightings, with up to 3 off Rossall and Anchorsholme on a few days and 2 off South Prom at the month end. Late in the month 20 Kittiwakes appeared off Rossall, and 5 Little Gulls were feeding at the sewage outfall off Central Prom.

Heavy rainfall throughout the month ensured that many fields held considerable amounts of standing water, and it was on flooded fields at Thurnham on the 20th that up to 6000 Lapwings, 1200 Golden Plover, 600 Curlew and 200 Redshanks were gathered. Likewise at Lane Ends, some 260 Redshanks could be found on the flooded field opposite the car park. A flooded ditch at Lane Ends attracted a Green Sandpiper on the 22nd, and it was probably this same bird located at nearby Moss Edge on the 30th.

The most interesting record of the month was undoubtedly that of a Bittern flushed from a reedy pond in fields at College Farm, Rossall, on the 3rd - unfortunately, no subsequent sightings were reported.

The Snow Buntings and Twite remained at Fleetwood throughout the month, whilst elsewhere, a flock of some 300 finches at Warton Marsh was made up of Chaffinches and Greenfinches. Amongst other passerines of note were 2 Stonechats at L.S.A.N.R., a Chiff Chaff in a Marton garden, a Goldcrest and 2 Coal Tits in a Cleveleys garden, and in that same garden, for the second year running, a Brambling appeared on Christmas Eve. A southerly movement of some 340 Wood Pigeons over Warton on the 27th was also of note, as was the gathering of 50 Corn Buntings at Eagland Hill on the 30th.

Following last month's influx of wildfowl, another noticeable arrival took place during December - at the Mere, Mallard numbers increased to 360, Teal to 253 and

Shoveler to 79. At nearby Stanley Park, Shoveler numbers stood at 106 on the 15th, and at least 6 Ruddy Ducks were there on the 19th. Pintail showed signs of movement on the 20th when 8 were in flight off South Prom, a single flew west over L.S.A.N.R. and a single was at the Mere. Wildfowl of note on the sea off Blackpool included 29 Tufted Duck, 42 Eiders and 80 Scoter.

Wintering Mute Swans at Fleetwood Marine Lake remained fairly stable at about 45, whilst 6 Whooper Swans on the sea off Lane Ends on the 22nd had moved over the sea wall onto reclaimed marsh between Pilling and Cockerham by the 26th. Pinkfeet moved back to their Over Wyre haunts by mid month, when up to 2500 at Cockerham Moss and Eagland Hill had 10 "Russian" Whitefronts and a Barnacle for company. Towards the month end, the Whitefronts increased to at least 19, part of a widespread influx to Lancashire and Merseyside which saw 95 at Marshside and 30 on Carnforth Marsh in late December. A "Greenland" Whitefront at Marshside in late December, had been fitted with an orange neck collar whilst at Wexford Slobs, Ireland - this bird could turn up at one of the Over Wyre sites when the geese move north in the New Year.

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#### BIRDS OF ESTUARIES COUNTS

November 22nd 1987

##### Rossall Point

Oystercatcher 90, Ringed Plover 56, Grey Plover 4, Turnstone 514, Purple Sandpiper 2, Bar Tailed Godwit 4, Redshank 269, Knot 6, Dunlin 40.

##### Lane Ends

Cormorant 6, Pinkfoot 107, Mallard 1000, Teal 300, Wigeon 654, Pintail 2, Shoveler 3, Scoter 65, Merganser 3, Shelduck 150, Oystercatcher 7000, Grey Plover 210, Turnstone 70, Curlew 130, Bar Tailed Godwit 20, Redshank 217, Knot 6500, Dunlin 2000, Red Thr. Diver 1.

##### Cockersands Point

Cormorant 1, Mallard 24, Wigeon 20, Merganser 1, Oystercatcher 9, Grey Plover 1, Curlew 60, Redshank 200, Dunlin 23.

##### Thurnham/Glasson

Gt.Cr.Grebe 1, Cormorant 1, Brent Goose 1, Mallard 76, Teal 1, Wigeon 2, Merganser 5, Shelduck 8, Oystercatcher 540, Lapwing 3072, Golden Plover 200, Grey Plover 139, Turnstone 128, Curlew 5, Bar Tailed Godwit 84, Redshank 108, Knot 12, Dunlin 1000.

##### St. Annes Beach

Oystercatcher 150, Ringed Plover 14, Grey Plover 300, Turnstone 1, Bar Tailed Godwit 200, Knot 500, Sanderling 500.

December 20th 1987

Rossall Point

Oystercatcher 63, Ringed Plover 40, Grey Plover 11, Turnstone 377, Redshank 56, Knot 7, Dunlin 5, Sanderling 84, Purple Sandpiper 1.

Lane Ends

Cormorant 2, Mallard 1000, Teal 300, Wigeon 170, Pintail 15, Goldeneye 1, Merganser 1, Shelduck 241, Oystercatcher 4400, Grey Plover 120, Curlew 24, Bar Tailed Godwit 4, Redshank 290, Knot 3000, Dunlin 2300.

Cockersands Point

Mallard 102, Wigeon 48, Shelduck 5, Oystercatcher 62, Ringed Plover 17, Grey Plover 27, Turnstone 111, Redshank 68, Dunlin 48.

Thurnham

Cormorant 2, Mallard 104, Teal 40, Wigeon 93, Merganser 14, Shelduck 69, Oystercatcher 280, Lapwing 1600, Grey Plover 155, Golden Plover 6, Turnstone 16, Curlew 2, Bar Tail. God. 109, Redshank 37, Knot 51, Dunlin 32.

Arm Hill

Mallard 77, Teal 84, Merganser 8, Shelduck 160, Oystercatcher 318, Curlew 1, Redshank 360, Dunlin 300.

St. Annes Beach

Oystercatcher 800, Ringed Plover 29, Grey Plover 300, Bar Tailed Godwit 3000, Knot 2500, Dunlin 1000, Sanderling 500.

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FYLDE BIRD REPORT and LANCASHIRE BIRD REPORT

Records for inclusion in both these publications to be submitted to Len Blacow and Maurice Jones by the end of February 1987.

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FYLDE BIRD CLUB -"PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION 1988"

The 1988 competition will be extended to include photographs taken throughout the British Isles and not just those from within the boundaries of the Fylde Bird Club.

RULES

1. Photographs must have been taken during 1988.
2. Each photographer may submit up to three slides.
3. Photographs taken at or near the nest will not be admissable.
4. Photographs taken abroad will not be admissable.

If we can obtain enough entries for the competition, then it is hoped that an independent judge from one of the local photographic societies will select the winning slides.

Closing date for entries will be the December meeting of the Bird Club.

The following information has been submitted, on behalf of the Fylde Ringing Group, by Phil Slade.

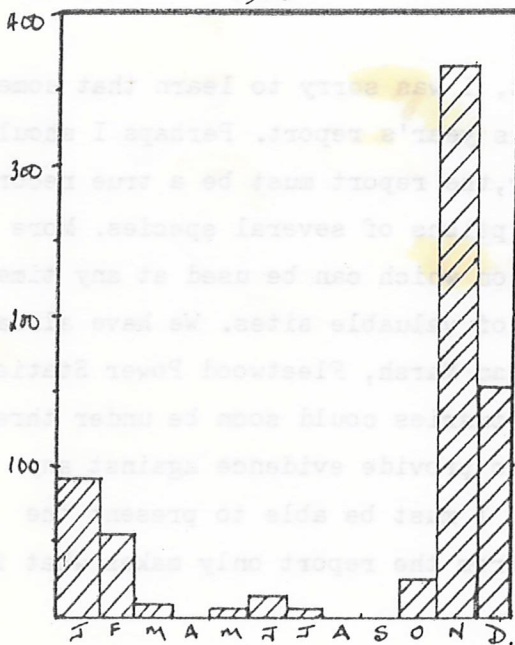
### Ringling of Chaffinches at Clifton and Singleton Halls

The vast majority of Chaffinches (@95%) were ringed at Clifton Hall and Singleton Hall, both well established roost sites.

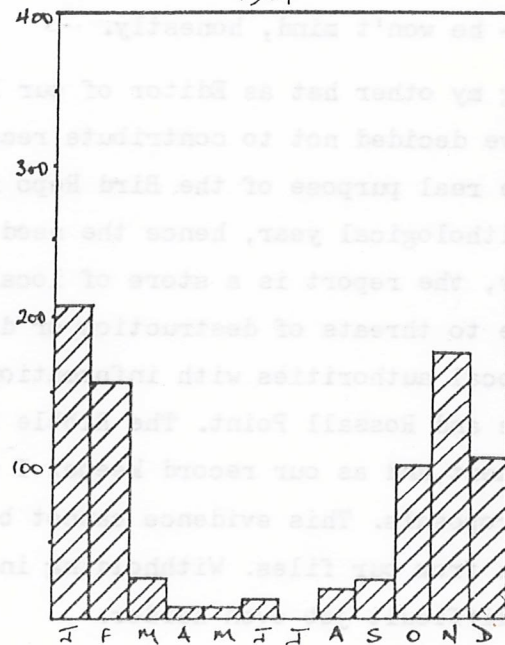
The two graphs show peaks of roosting activity during the coldest months of the year, January and February, followed by rapid declines during late February and March, when birds abandon the roosts.

Diurnal passage along the Fylde Coast is most noticeable during September and October, but it is not reflected in roosting activity until the later passage in November. 1986 was a phenomenal example of this, with 355 birds ringed. In both years, November provided a high turnover of birds. It can be seen from the graphs that numbers decline in December, but note the high number of birds present during January and February, 1987, following the previously mentioned passage of November, 1986.

Chaffinch - Monthly Ringing Totals  
1986



1987



During 1987 the Fylde Ringing Group ringed a total of 3171 birds of 59 different species. More than half of these birds were made up of three species, Blackbird(297), Blue Tit(524), and Chaffinch(791). Other species of interest included Sparrowhawk(20), Ringed Plover(10 ringed as Pulli), Pied Flycatcher(29 ringed as Pulli), and a single Lapland Bunting(ringed at the Lane Ends Amenity Area).

George Bowden and Bob Danson were also very active, with much of their ringing being carried out Over Wyre. During 1987 they managed a total of 1683 birds of some 37 species. Almost two thirds of this total was made up of 425 Blue Tits, 246 Starlings and 329 Tree Sparrows(288 of which were Pulli).

FROM THE CHAIR - Len Blacow

At last year's A.G.M., Phil Slade reminded us of our original commitment to fieldwork. No doubt Phil will be pleased to hear that almost a quarter of the Club's members helped with the January Birds of Estuaries Count. I want to thank all of those members and would hope that we can produce a similar turn out for the next count on Sunday the 21st February.

If we can attain this sort of coverage for the wader counts, surely we can do even better with the Breeding Bird Survey. We must all make an effort to contribute this year because all the records will be passed on to the B.T.O. for use in the National Survey which begins in 1988. I would like every member to attempt to cover a tetrad, but realise this isn't likely. If you feel that a full tetrad is too much work then try a quarter or a half, and maybe next year you may feel able to tackle a full tetrad. Remember, you don't need to find everything in your square, birdwatching is a hobby and the survey work is a pleasure not a task. Peter Guy has worked hard in setting up this survey, the best way to reward that effort is to overwhelm him with record sheets next September - he won't mind, honestly.

Wearing my other hat as Editor of our Bird Report, I was sorry to learn that some members have decided not to contribute records to this year's report. Perhaps I should explain the real purpose of the Bird Report. Firstly, the report must be a true record of the ornithological year, hence the need for descriptions of several species. More importantly, the report is a store of local information which can be used at any time in response to threats of destruction or development of valuable sites. We have already provided local authorities with information for Bispham Marsh, Fleetwood Power Station, Marton Mere and Rossall Point. The Ribble and Wyre estuaries could soon be under threat of development, and as our record keeper I will have to provide evidence against any damaging proposals. This evidence cannot be invented, I must be able to present the information from our files. Withholding information from the report only makes what is already a difficult job even harder.

DIARY DATESBirds of Estuaries Counts

Sunday 21st February 10.30 (Priority Count). Sunday 20th March 09.30.

Sunday 17th April 09.30. Sunday 15th May 08.30.

All times are 3 hours before High Water. Counters to meet at Lane Ends.

Field Trip

Any members interested in going to see the geese Over Wyre meet at Lane Ends Car Park, 10.30 Sunday 28th February.

Club Meeting

Wednesday 20th April - 60° North (Shetland), presented by Stan Craig.