

Fylde Bird Club



NEWSLETTER NO. 39

VIEW FROM THE EDITORS CHAIR

As mentioned in the last Newsletter and at the April meeting Fylde Bird Club had agreed to lead a Wyre Borough Council organised walk at Nickey Nook on Sunday 4th June. In the event, five members turned up on a beautifully sunny day and escorted a party of fifteen mainly elderly enthusiastic novices on a walk of birdwatching interest.

This proved to be a great success with excellent views of Yellowhammer, Long Tailed Tits, Pied Flycatcher and Grey Wagtail. Other species seen included Great Spotted Woodpecker, Tree Pipit, Treecreeper and Spotted Flycatcher - Wood Warblers were heard but not seen. The walk took approximately four hours and seemed to be enjoyed by all, including the leaders.

Most of the Walkers possessed binoculars and though often having difficulty in locating a moving bird they were keen to persevere and wait for it to reappear. It was rewarding to find people genuinely interested and gaining pleasure in seeing and having pointed out to them common species such as Meadow Pipit and Willow Warbler.

I am sure that by leading this walk Fylde Bird Club gained considerable goodwill and appreciation, not only from the participants but from Wyre Borough Council who are keen to encourage such 'specific interest' walks.

To this end we have agreed to lead a similar walk at Lane Ends, Pilling on Sunday September 3rd. The walk is being limited to 25 people who have to book in advance through Wyre Borough Council. The walk coincides with a particularly high tide and at this time of the year there should be a good selection and large numbers of Waders present. Telescopes would obviously help people gain more enjoyment on the day and I am asking for as many members as possible to turn up with their 'scopes' at 12.00 on September 3rd.

I am convinced that by helping more people enjoy and understand the needs of birds, in a wider context helps safeguard sites threatened by development and promotes the 'greening' of the country. So come on - turn up!!

Alan Dawe.

Many thanks to Len Blacow, Alan Hinchliffe, Andrew and Monty Myerscough for leading the recent walk.

MARTON MERE IN THE FIFTIES.

Between March 1952 and November 1959 (when I began National Service) I made 742 visits. The Mere and its environment were very different from the Mere we know today. Only about one third in size and set in agricultural land, its margins of Reed, Reedmace and Yellow Flag Iris almost completely obscured views of the open water in Summer. A small copse lay to the South where the Caravan site now stands and a few trees at the East end. Clumps of Willows bordered the S.W corner and along the North side which had a broad belt of Reed Grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*). To the South side of the main dyke inflow was a large boggy and rushy swamp but already to the North West tipping operations were beginning to spread towards the water. A wooden fishing jetty at the N.E. corner was often in bad repair.

On only my third visit on the 15th March 1952 I obtained good views of 6 male and 3 female Garganey which still stands as a Spring record count for Lancashire and one of the earliest ever dates. I didn't realise at the time that a Sedge Warbler on the 13th April was a week or so earlier than average.

Up to about six Water Rails were present outside the breeding season and varying numbers of Jack Snipe up to a maximum of 15 in March 1954. About 2 pairs of Yellow Wagtails bred, also Yellowhammers and the Phalaris was used as a roost by up to about 140 Corn Buntings. Common Scoter were much more frequent than now as also were Scaup and Kingfisher until 1957. Highlights later in 1952 included 1 male Garganey on 2nd May ; Black Tailed Godwit on 15th May; Male Gadwall on 18th May; Little Tern on 27th May; 15 Goldeneye on 15th October.

In 1953 9 Scoter were present on the 2nd February and 21 Yellowhammer on the 17th March; 3 male Brambling on the 20th March was a new species followed by a male Ring Ouzel on the 6th April. May produced Green Sandpiper on the 5th, 60 Sand Martin on the 7th; male Garganey on 10th, 11th and 24th and an abnormal Swift with white belly on the 27th.

A Spotted Crake from the 20th September to the 6th October was the first of over a dozen to be seen in later years.

86 Pied Wagtails were in the roost on the 11th October and a Long Tailed Duck present from the 11th to 12th November.

A Black Throated Diver commuted between the Mere and the sea daily between 8th December and 1st January 1954 whilst 2 days later an immature Greenland Whitefront was the first record of this race for Lancashire.

Work prevented me seeing a Black Necked Grebe on the 11th January 1954 (D. McCullagh and N. Harwood).

A pair of Garganey occurred on the 20th March and an oiled Red Throated Diver on the 24th, which was found dead in April. The Mere's only Spring Spotted Crake was seen on the 23rd April. A Black Tern appeared on the 2nd May and 3 on the 4th. As many as 75 of each Yellow and White Wagtails were

roosting nightly in this period and my first Pied Flycatcher was on the 4th. Autumn highlights were a Spotted Redshank on the 22nd August, a persistantly hovering Barn Owl on the 25th September - a species seen quite regularly in the area, a late Spotted Crake on the 14th November and the Mere's second Smew on the 21st November (N. Harwood had seen one 11th to 20th January 1951) Nine species of duck - but only 35 individuals were present on the 12th December and the first Bittern on the 2nd January 1955.

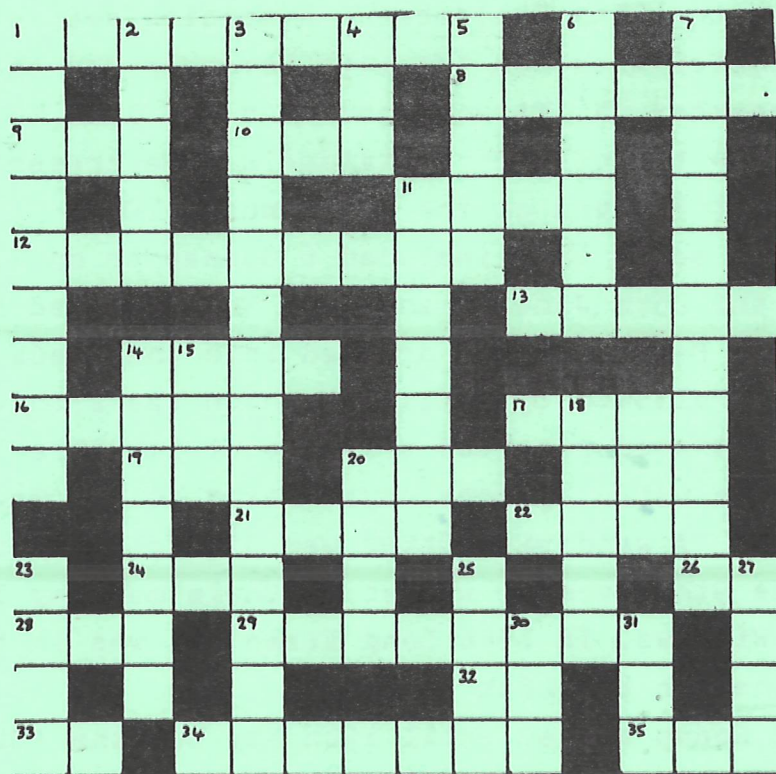
Duck highlights of early 1955 included 6 Goosander on 7th January, 23 Pintail briefly on the 23rd January and male Red Breasted Merganser the same day. The Mere's first Marsh Harrier dropped into the reeds on the 16th May but didn't stay long followed by a Black Tern on the 27th and 4 next day. On the 31st May Mr. Harwood recorded a female or immature Little Crake which was disturbed onto the water by some boys. Sixty Yellow Wagtails were roosting on the 11th September. A wandering Otter was diving and catching fish all over the Mere on the 9th November whilst on Christmas day I disturbed a Tawny Owl from the South Willows. In 1956 Long Eared Owl was in the same area on 14th March and another on the 28th November.

In Spring a male Scaup stayed until 19th May but the 'Bird of the Decade' fell to Derek McCullough on the 8th August with the discovery of a female Little Bittern which stayed in the bay at the West end until the 12th. A Black Tern was seen next day and 70 Yellow Wagtails on the 9th September with male Gadwall on the 23rd.

I made fewer visits from 1957 to 59 - only about 60 per year. Scarcer visitors included Red Breasted Merganser 16th January 1957; Black Tern 14th August 57; Coal Tit 13th November 57; Snow Bunting 5th February 1958; Greylag Goose 19th February 1958; late Jack Snipe to 3rd May 1958; adult Winter Little Gull 29th November 58 (a rare bird in Lancashire at the time); Gadwall on 19th May 59; Garganey on 19th August 59; Black Tern 31st August 59; Ring Ouzel 18th to 20th September 59; Green Sandpiper 11th October 59.

Maurice Jones.

Crossword submitted by D.J. Berry. Answers in the next issue.



Clues Across.

- 1) Winter Visitor pays to visit the countryside.
- 8) (and 13 down) Global traveller loves the colder corners.
- 9) Usually means stop... but its better with start,
- 10) Ruffs display ground
- 11) It may be on your list when you peer out of the hide.
- 12) Sounds a bit like this bird was made by Kelloggs.
- 13) To nibble and rehook ones barbs for instance.
- 14) See 34 across
- 16) Rare British breeder sings like a canary.
- 17) Member of the Turdidae family talks a lot.
- 19) Strewth! Bonzer bird Bruce.
- 20) Grown men have been known to do this after dipping out.
- 21) Corvus Frugilagus.
- 22) Small brown job makes a lot of noise.
- 24) Second best place to being in the field.
- 26) Noisy three-legged race may frighten the birds (.1.1)
- 28) In birds it is kept clean by the nictating membrane.
- 29) Superstitious Roman said that a glimpse of this warbler could cure jaundice.
- 32) Waders roost when the tide is this.
- 33) Has 19 across ever been recorded at Marton Mere?
- 34) (and 14 across) One of the 'all Blacks' whose eating habits leave a lot to be desired.
- 35) It may keep the dudes hair in place on a sea watch.

Clues Down

- 1) Small bird needs combustion to reach the top.
- 2) Duck Down.
- 3) Foreign man has returned to the Eaves.
- 4) Fratercula Artica for example.
- 5) Large Raptor is feeling a little under par.
- 6)

Clues Down - cont.

- 6) The queen follows a northerner to locate a duck.
- 7) 'Peeping Tom' would need to eliminate this one.
- 11) Frolicking songster has ascended to great heights.
- 14) Slips quietly behind a tree or wall.
- 15) Area protecting binocular optics.
- 18) Change grey to night and the twitchers will come running.
- 20) Associated with hair-loss or so the saying goes.
- 23) See 8 across.
- 25) Three birders caught up in a riot.
- 27) Small duck is always late.
- 30) Posh word for 24 across.
- 31) It all began here... or did the chicken come first?

RECENT REPORTS : MARCH and APRIL

The mild conditions of February continued into March with generally light winds and favourable conditions for migration. All this came to a stop at the end of the month with winds moving to the north and east and frost and sleet showers reminding us that even in April winter could still be experienced in the Fylde.

MARCH

At the coast in the early part of the month up to 300 Common Scoter could be seen regularly off South Promenade whilst at Rossall Point the flock of Eider peaked at 400 on the 12th with 250 still present on the 27th. Up to 3 Red Throated Divers were offshore throughout the month. Great Crested Grebes on passage numbered 38 at South Promenade on the 5th declining to 15 on the 19th. Most of these birds were in summer plumage and made a fine sight on flat calm seas. Further evidence of migration were the small parties of Wigeon seen moving northwards off South Promenade.

In the third week small numbers of Gannets, Fulmars and Kittiwakes were observed as West North Westerlies brought the birds close inshore. A Little Gull was noted at Central Promenade on 6th with 2 present at the same location on the 18th. A Sandwich Tern at South Promenade on the 26th was the first of the year.

Over Wyre on the 5th, 6000 Pinkfeet fed in the fields at Moss Edge accompanied by 6 Adult and 2 Juvenile Greenland Whitefronts:- a bonus was provided by the Bean Goose of the Western race which walked into view after proving invisible for at least two hours! Not two minutes later, the whole flock was flushed by one man and his dog plus a few sheep taking exception to the presence of the geese eating the new grass!

By the 19th only 500 Pinkfeet remained in the Eagland Hill area accompanied by a solitary Whitefront.

Inland, 10 Goldeneye, 1 Pintail and a Scaup were on the I.C.I Pool at Fleetwood on the 11th and 3 male Ruddy Ducks at Marton Mere on the 5th. On this latter date 110 Common Gulls (a rarely counted species) were present prior to moving north to their breeding grounds. Later in the month on the 20th 390 Lesser Black Backed Gulls were seen at Fleetwood Power Station

The Birds of Estuaries count took place on the 12th and details from South Morecambe Bay can be found at the end of the Newsletter. At St. Annes 393 Oystercatcher, 60 Grey Plover, 600 Sanderling, 500 Dunlin, 2,500 Knot, 12 Bar-Tailed Godwit, 2 Turnstone and 1 Ringed Plover were counted.

Throughout March northward movements of Meadow Pipits had been noted at coastal sites with up to 30 at Lane Ends and Fleetwood, and 75 at Fairhaven on the 25th. 2 Coal Tits in a Cleveleys Garden and parties of Goldcrests at other coastal sites were further evidence of migration.

The first Spring migrants into our area were noted from the 26th. On this date a Wheatear was found at Staining and 5 Chiffchaff were caught and ringed at Winmarleigh. Interestingly 3 of those ringed were 'retraps' from the previous year. By the following day a Willow Warbler was singing in Poulton; 9 Wheatears were present at Fairhaven whilst 3 Sand Martins flew East and 2 flew over Rossall Point. An early White Wagtail was also noted at Fairhaven. 35+ Goldcrests moved through Fairhaven on this date, of which 9 males and 2 female were ringed. A similar number of this species at Ribby were counted of which 12 males and 2 females were ringed. Certainly a busy day for the ringers.

On the 28th 17 Wheatears graced Blackpool Airport with their presence and on the 29th the first Swallow was seen at Marton Mere.

At Lytham St. Annes Nature Reserve a Ring Ouzel arrived on the 29th along with 3 Wheatears. A pair of Stonechats had been present there since March 12th.

A flock of 150-200 Fieldfares in the fields at Out Rawcliffe were the last of the year.

APRIL

On the 1st of the month a Blackcap appeared at Singleton. From thereon for the next two weeks summer migrants were in short supply with only a few reports of Sand Martins, Willow Warblers, Chiffchaffs and Wheatears from the area.

Competing for a claim to the title of 'bird of the month' a Great Grey Shrike arrived at Fleetwood on April 4th and remained until the 9th. The other claimant was a Richards Pipit discovered by Malcolm Evans at Carr House Green Common Inskip on April 15th and staying until the 17th. This is the 9th Fylde record and the first since the 1983 bird found near Blackpool Airport on 26th March which stayed until 29th April.

Small numbers of White Wagtails were noted moving in midmonth; on the 15th 30 were at Rossall School with fewer numbers seen at other coastal sites. Ring Ouzels were noted at the school on the 18th and 19th.

At the C.E.G.B Pool Fleetwood a pair of Ruddy Duck appeared on the 19th to join the 3 Goldeneye still present. On the 16th a pair of Garganey arrived at Marton Mere joining the five Ruddy Duck and one female Scaup already present. The Garganey stayed until the 19th but on the 23rd another pair put in a brief appearance. At the Mere a Green Sandpiper called as it flew

over on the 17th. On the 19th the first Common Sandpipers were reported also at the Mere.

In the third week migration became more noticeable as weather conditions improved. The Mere saw its first Sedge Warbler on the 23rd; Pied Flycatcher; Grasshopper Warbler and a male Redstart on the 27th; with a pair of Redstarts present at nearby Stanley Park on the same day. Wheatears which had trickled through the area throughout the month increased in numbers with 6 at Stanley Park and 33 at the Airport also on the 27th.

Yellow Wagtails were scarce with singles seen at Freckleton on the 21st and 28th and at Clifton Marsh on the 30th. The only other record was a single at Marton Mere on the 27th. Definitely a poor year - but more of that in the next issue.

The first Cuckoo of the year was seen at Rossall on the 29th; the same date saw the first Swift over Ansdell. Lesser Whitethroats and Whitethroats were reported from Marton Moss and St. Annes on the same day. Single Whinchats were seen at Fairhaven and the Airport on the 27th followed by one at the Mere on the 29th.

Up the coast at Rossall Ring Ousel and Grasshopper Warbler were found on the 29th and a Tree Pipit recorded on the following day. At Ribby 2 Lesser Whitethroats and Whitethroat were discovered, coincidentally, the same species were present at the Mere on the same date. A Grasshopper Warbler appeared at Ansdell on the 30th.

There were no reports of House Martins in April, making them unusually late this year.

Meanwhile, back at the coast 300 plus Eider could still be seen from Cleveleys and Anchorsholme on the 6th with small numbers of Great Crested Grebes and Red Breasted Mergansers present offshore throughout the month.

The St. Annes shore roost included 2000 Knot; 1100 Dunlin; 1200 Sanderling on the 2nd and on the 21st 5,000 Dunlin and 500 Knot.

On April 2nd 24 Little Gull flew south past South Promenade and on the same day a single Sandwich Tern was seen at the same point.

A second winter Mediterranean Gull was discovered at Knowle High School on the 10th and on the 18th a 1st winter bird was found at Lytham St. Annes Nature Reserve. 2 Little Terns were on St. Annes beach on the 19th; 7 Arctic Terns passed South Promenade on the 21st; 2 Common Terns were off Rossall Point on the 23rd.

Wader passage got underway with a single Whimbrel at Freckleton on the 21st, 5 at the Mere on the 27th. A Greenshank appeared at Newton Marsh on the 26th, still there on the 28th. At Newton 7 Black Tailed Godwits were present on the 21st.

Other sightings in the month included a Barn Owl on the Warton-Lytham main road at 10.15 on April 21st. Short Eared Owls were seen on the 4th and 12th near to Thornton I.C.I works. At Knowle High School a pair of Mallard on floodwater had 10 ducklings - nearby residents fearing for their safety sent for the R.S.P.C.A who later took them into care!

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Next Month

As requested a list of abbreviations will appear for all the well known sites in the Fylde. Please keep your articles and records coming in and thank you to all who have submitted material for this issue.

BIRDS OF ESTUARIES

12th March 1989

High Water 14.20 9.4m

	ROSSALL POINT	ICI POOL	ARMHILL	LANE ENDS	COCKERSANDS POINT	GLASSON/ THURNHAM	TOTAL
Gt. Crested Grebe				1			1
Cormorant				2		2	4
Mallard		4		57		2	63
Teal		1		150			151
Wigeon				13			13
Pintail				3			3
Goldeneye		1					1
Eider				369			369
Merganser				15		4	19
Shelduck				180		48	228
Pink Foot				3			3
Mute Swan	2	4					6
Oystercatcher	5	98		1300	480	341	2224
Lapwing						2	2
Ringed Plover	14				4		18
Grey Plover				220	17	80	317
Golden Plover							
Turnstone	286				90	2	378
Snipe							
Curlew				465		702	1167
Bar Tail	1					74	75
Black Tail							
Redshank	192	6		656		180	1034
Knot	1			9220	100	20	9341
Dunlin	50			7214	15	510	7789
Sanderling	54			20			74
Purple Sandpiper	1						1
Shoveler		4					4
Coot		10					10
Spotted Redshank				1			1

BIRDS OF ESTUARIES

9th April 1989.

High Water 14.17 9.7am.

	ROSSAUL POINT	ICI POOL	ARMILL	KANE ENDS	GLASSON/ THURNHAM	TOTAL
Gt Crested Grebe				2		2
Cormorant				2	5	7
Mallard		7	8	5	3	23
Teal			142	20		162
Wigeon			2		1	3
Shoveler		4				4
Goldeneye		2			11	13
Eider	8					8
Merganser					3	3
Shelduck		4	64	118	55	241
Canada Goose		4				4
Mute Swan	5	4				9
Oystercatcher	3	3	150	520	261	937
Lapwing		1			1	2
Ringed Plover	34			18		52
Grey Plover			3	500	108	611
Turnstone	261	92	110		5	468
Snipe			4			4
Curlew			88	600	223	911
Black Tail G.			14			14
Bar Tail Godwit					16	16
Redshank	135	5	400	200	87	827
Spotted Redshank				1		1
Knot			210	3000	137	3347
Dunlin	8		65	2500	84	2657
Sanderling	96			5		101
Purple Sandpiper	1					1

Cockersands Pt. completely covered.