



# Fryde Bird Club

Chairman: Mr. L. BLACOW  
Secretary: Mr. A.J. HINCHLIFFE

NEWSLETTER NO. 65

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## FROM THE CHAIR

Estuaries are to the fore again; we now have Strategies, Liaison groups, Conservation groups, Steering groups - all kinds of groups looking at our estuaries. I have attended meetings and listened to project officers, estuary officers etc. telling me how important our estuaries are and how many birds use them.

Through the fog of slides, figures and talk of sustainable use! I asked myself how do they know? I've never seen these people at Rossall or Cockersands. Simple, they use our count results - our figures are the nuts and bolts of their argument in defence of our estuaries.

Recently we have struggled to maintain full coverage of our Wader count sites. Please come along and help or we may run out of nuts and bolts. What will the experts do then and more importantly what will happen to our estuaries?

At the October meeting I offered to hand over the job of editing the Bird Report and got the response I expected. I had hoped that someone would have offered to spread the load.

This load is becoming increasingly heavy for the few who help. Why not start the New Year by resolving to help with one or two of the jobs. I don't mind doing my bit and that goes for the committee but we would appreciate a bit of help. See you at Lane Ends in January.

L.G.B

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN MEMBERS

With the advent of Birdlines it might be assumed that there is no need for members to contact one another after the arrival of a rare or scarce bird in the area.

In fact, probably a very small percentage of members phone Birdline for news on a daily basis either by inclination or for financial reasons.

There is, therefore, a need to 'keep in touch'. If we all have 2 or 3 people who we feel we should pass on the news to and they in turn do likewise, then in most cases we should all get to know of the rare birds we all like to see.

I recently got to know of the Pilling Buff Breasted Sandpiper by listening to Eric Hardy's Countryside broadcast on Radio Merseyside a full week after it was reported to F.B.C members at the August meeting.

Many members had seen it by the previous Sunday. A rushed visit there failed to find the bird.

Frank Bird heard of a White Winged Black Tern two days after it arrived and he lives less than half a mile from the Mere. You probably have your own tale of woe.

Can we all be more communicative in future?

Maurice Jones

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What do you think? Any points of view on this matter will be published in the December Newsletter; so get your letters to me.

Ed

On the next page is Fylde Bird Club's submission to 'Birdwatch' magazines monthly Club Focus columns. As you will probably know the magazine is a monthly which invites Bird Clubs to outline in no more than 500 words, details of the Club, it's activities, where it meets etc. John Fletcher has compiled the necessary information after consultation with the committee, so let's hope it gets published.

P.S. As you will note the libellous bits about the Secretary and any reference to Sponsorship by alcoholic beverage companies have been removed.

A.D

FYLDE BIRD CLUB

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In 1983 a small number of birders who watched Marton Mere in Blackpool decided to meet on a regular basis. From this beginning The Fylde Bird Club was formed to foster and encourage the study of birds in the Fylde region.

One of the first objectives of the Club was to persuade Blackpool Borough Council to safeguard Marton Mere. Founder members provided information to English Nature and BTO that resulted in the Mere being declared a SSSI. It is now a LNR and has a full time warden.

The Club is becoming more involved with conservation issues by commenting on planning applications considered to be ecologically harmful and by providing other bodies with records and information on which to base their own representations. Details are provided from the Club's own records or from specific surveys undertaken by members. Involvement in surveys include BoEE counts (BTO), Wildfowl counts, and Pink-Footed Goose survey (WWT), low water counts on the River Wyre, most BTO surveys, and commissions for outside bodies. The Fylde Breeding Bird Survey was undertaken over five years and is due for publication in 1994. Members are also involved in nest-box schemes and ringing. Donations both in cash and kind have been made to Marton Mere LNR and to the Wyreside Ecology Centre. Guided walks, with a birding bias, are undertaken on behalf of the Wyre Borough Council. Some of the more popular(?) events include Spartina digs, litter collecting, and general labouring.

The Club has representatives on various local bodies including two management teams, three conservation groups and assisting with two local YOC groups. The Fylde Bird Report is produced annually and retailed throughout Lancashire.

All the above leads to a large workload for a relatively small Club. Membership currently stands at 66 members. We can boast having in our ranks the young bird artist of the year 1991, the County Recorder, the BTO Reg. Rep., one of the country's top listers, good speakers, photographers, birders, and all round naturalists.

Meetings are either a business meeting followed by member's slides/talk, or a guest speaker. The meetings are friendly, informal, entertaining, and occasionally amazing - I know of no other organisation where at its AGM, the Hon. Treasurer's recommendation of a £0.50 increase in subs is rejected by the floor in favour of a £1.50 increase in subscription.

Outside activities are arranged two or three times a year; recently these have included pelagics on Morecambe Bay, trips to Flamborough, Anglesey, Bridlington for RSPB pelagic, and Spurn.

A bi-monthly Newsletter is produced and gives details of recent sitings together with members articles and relevant press releases and cuttings. A pool of foreign birding information is held for use by members.

The Fylde Bird Club meets at Blackpool Cricket Club, Stanley Park, Blackpool on the third Wednesday of each month. Current annual subscriptions is £10, £5(GAP) and £3(Students), and includes a copy of the annual Bird Report.

Further details from

The Hon. Secretary  
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The Club Recorder is

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## RECENT REPORTS

### JUNE

Bird of the month was undoubtedly the second Summer White Winged Black Tern which graced the Mere from the 25th until the 28th. It was, as the saying goes "very obliging", dipping over the lily pads in all parts of the Mere so that no matter where you stood, good views were assured. Occasionally it would perch on a post preening for a while, before resuming it's hunt for insects. As expected its arrival brought many birds to the Mere but unlike other occasions, no rarities were found. Nevertheless, there were other birds to be seen including displaying Great Crested Grebes, three beautiful drake Pochard, Common Terns and the odd Cormorant.

Earlier in the month an albino Black Headed Gull was seen at the Mere on the 2nd. This bird was discovered by none other than Ed on one of his infrequent visits. On the following day he visited Lytham Crematorium where 4 Long Tailed Tits were present. Always on the lookout for the unusual and out of place, the 5th saw him at Stanley Park finding an immature Little Gull and on the 11th, by the Tesco Superstore where a pair of Lapwing with two chicks were in the adjacent field. A no doubt flying visit to South Bromenade on the 13th found him watching a Tern for five minutes which he considered to be a Whiskered Tern - 6 days before the one was found at Cemlyn Bay on Anglesey. Beat that if you can!

A few Common Sandpipers continued to move through the area throughout the latter half of the month.

Singles were seen at the Mere and in the Pilling area. On the 28th 4 were on the mud by the river at the Naze. In the same area 36 Black Tailed Godwits were seen on the 17th including 3 on the 30th along with 3 Bar Tails in non breeding plumage. Small parties of Common Terns were fishing the pools left by the receding tide.

At the coast small numbers of hirundines moved northwards. A few Siskins moved over Coastal Fylde on the 13th.

The 20th was the day of the Wader count which, predictably for June produced no great numbers of Waders. At Barnaby Sands, which on first sight seemed to be a "birdless desert", to quote the immortal words of our Secretary; was found to contain 145 Curlews. This courtesy of a low flying helicopter which put them to flight. As the tide filled the gulleys 5 female Eider appeared, alas, with no young in tow. To add further interest to the day a Ruddy Shelduck was seen frequenting with it's more common cousins. Rarity of the day was, without question, the presence of our Secretary, in not quite full summer plumage.

Seawatching was O.K if not particularly spectacular. Star bird at Starr Gate was a single Storm Petrel, seen by Peter Scholes, I think, on a morning visit. On the 19th there were 42 Fulmer, 20 odd Sandwich Terns and Gannets, 9 Manxies, 1 Arctic Tern and a pale phase Arctic Skua. A few Common Scoter

could be seen offshore in less than spectacular numbers. No Grey Seal. Along at Preston Dock a first Summer Little Gull was present on the 4th and a pair of Great Crested Grebes on the 7th which were subsequently displaying on the adjacent Ribble. Breeding Kestrel and Reed Bunting were also recorded.

Oddity of the month and definitely not tickable was the Buff Necked Ibis which was reported from several sites in the Fylde - but not where I was. It certainly wasn't seen at the Shelter nor Watson Road Park.

## JULY

No sooner is Spring migration over than Autumn migration has begun. On the 12th 2 Greenshank, a Whimbrel and 2 Common Sandpipers were at the Naze. By the end of the month the numbers of Greenshank increased with 9 seen on the 22nd.

My only sighting of a Fylde Yellow Wagtail was on the evening of the 12th in the fields near to the Naze. This species is definitely a rarity so far as breeding in our area is concerned, although it can be seen in reasonable numbers on passage during Autumn. On the same evening and in the same area a Short Eared Owl was quartering the fields near Grange Farm.

Still in the Freckleton area, 4 adults and 4 downy young Little Grebes were seen on the 22nd at Newton Pool. To jump ahead a bit, a pair of Shoveler raised 9 young at the same site.

Early July sees the first of the Waders at the coast with most still in full breeding plumage. A Knott flew past Starr Gate on the 4th and as the month progressed larger parties of this species and Sanderling could be seen heading southwards. A flock of 14 Knot flying west over Woodplumpton on the 6th was unusual. By late July 528 Black Tailed Godwits were present at Granny's Bay, Fairhaven, and on the beach between St. Annes and Blackpool some 2000 Sanderling were roosting on the 25th. Small numbers of Whimbrel were seen on the Wyre and on the Ribble.

At Pilling Lane Ends, 101 Golden Plover were on the Saltmarsh. Note the precise count, entirely due to fine viewing conditions on a warm sunny day, counted at leisure whilst consuming Salami sandwiches and slightly over the hill muddy brown coffee. Ah, the joys of Wader counting! Earlier in the day I called at Cockersdyke where 112 Dunlin were present. Also on the beach was a party of 89 adult Common Gulls also having returned from northern climes. Yes, folks, at times you'll count anything.

Seawatching improved during the month with some good numbers of birds and a healthy variety of species. Moderate winds from the west on the 17th produced 64 Kittiwake, 65 Gannet, 142 Sandwich Terns, 1 Bonxie and 7 Arctic Skuas. The following day which I unfortunately missed (grits teeth and stiffens upper lip) brought 2 Pomerine Skuas close inshore. The last day of the month brought 230 Manx Shearwaters past Starr Gate, 3 Arctic Skuas and a Bonxie. 131 Common Scoter were offshore and 20 Fulmars flew south.

Just outside our area a Wandering, 3 Yellow Nosed and 5 Black Browed Albatross flew north off Woollongong, Australia. Press Star and 4 for further details.

## AUGUST

Evidence of return passerine movement appeared at LSANR in the form of a lone Willow Warbler on the 4th. Wheatears were moving from mid month, 1 was at LSANR on the 15th, 2 at Fairhaven on the 17th and 7 on the seawall at Starr Gate on the 22nd. A Goldcrest was at Fairhaven on the 17th and on the 21st a Yellow Wagtail flew south at the same location. 2 Willow Warblers were in the bushes.

On the Wader front Greenshank and Whimbrel were seen in good numbers. 15 of the latter species were on Barnaby Sands on the 21st. The following day 'wader of the month' arrived at Lane Ends - a Buff Breasted Sandpiper, presumably the same one as last year? It was seen on the 23rd but as far as can be ascertained then disappeared.

ST. Annes shore roost on the 22nd produced 1200 Knot, 35 Ringed Plover, 198 - not 200 Oystercatcher, 4 Bar Tails, 91 Dunlin and 610 Sanderling. For good measure there was a lone Turnstone, 50 Sandwich and 20 Common Tern. Maurice also counted one oiled Guillemot, he didn't say whether it was dead or alive but if it's the former and it stays around surely it must be a contender for the beached birds survey during 1994.

At Lytham on the 23rd there were 1200 Black Tailed Godwits. A Spotted Flycatcher and a Treecreeper were at Green Drive, Lytham, on the same day.

At the Mere on the 27th there were 267 Coot and approximately 5000 Swallows and 1 Sand Martin at the roost. On the 30th the number of Swallows had declined to 4000 but by way of compensation 2 Green Sandpiper were present along with one Fox on the island. Maurice's long awaited Mediterranean Gull turned up on the Reserve on the 31st when an adult was seen taking flying Ants, along with 1000 Black Headed Gulls. For those who weren't aware, the last Mediterranean Gull Maurice saw was over 5 years ago.

Hot news from the Shelter was the reappearance of the Grey Seal just offshore on the 1st. Also just offshore was a Kestrel flying south. On the same day a Little Tern and 4 Arctic Skuas were present. The 14th saw 3 Little Terns and a large movement of 1200 Common Terns south. In attendance were 7 - 8 Arctic Skuas. A Red Throated Diver was seen on the 30th.

A female Marsh Harrier spent a morning at Newton Pool on the 8th. It gave exceptionally close views, scaring the local Moorhens and ducks as it quartered the pool.

Away from birds and Mammals Maurice recorded a Holly Blue butterfly at home on the 2nd August. He doesn't say whether this was a first or not or even twitchable.

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POSTSCRIPT

What funny weather we've been having recently. Only one south westerly wind since the end of July and flat calm seas with sharp horizons very much the norm. It's hard to remember what it's like to be constantly wiping salt spray from the front of the telescope in the Shelter. Sadly, it looks as though it's going to be a Leach's-less year, although it's not too late yet - November and December have produced wrecks of birds caught up in really bad weather. On balance I'd rather see them zig-zagging through the troughs unaffected by the weather conditions though.

On the other hand it's not been all that good for observing diurnal movement either. Too clear, too calm and despite seemingly favourable winds the birds just fly over never to be seen or heard. Really, I suppose you've got to be optimistic and think that something marvellous will appear on an otherwise calm sea or drop into a bush at Fairhaven in seemingly unpromising conditions. Maybe Maurice will eventually see a Radde's Warbler. Let us hope he comes across one in a bush on the Reserve rather than one miles away on the Scillies.

For those members who weren't able to attend the last meeting, we now have a fully fledged Rarities Committee under the worthy Chairmanship of Paul Ellis. So far as I can establish there was no rush of applicants for a place on the committee. Certainly no money changed hands to secure a position. May they have a lot to deliberate about in the future and I look forward to publishing their decisions; made no doubt in the warmth of some comfortable hostelry, not a million miles from Blackpool Cricket Club.

Christmas is coming so if you are thinking of buying someone a Bird book for a present then get your order in to Alan or Len so that they have time to get it to Santa for delivery on Christmas Day.

A.D

November 1993

2 September, 1993

## WINTER BIRDS ON ORGANIC FARMS

The results from the first winter of the investigation of the use by birds of organically farmed holdings compared with conventional ones provide encouragement for those who think organic will be best. The survey run by the British Trust for Ornithology uses the results from identical investigations on pairs of holdings matched carefully for soil, crops, locality etc. It is jointly funded by the Ministry for Agriculture and Worldwide Fund for Nature (UK).

In the latest issue of *BTO News* the organiser, JEREMY WILSON, concentrates on the nine species of seed-eating birds found on the farms. For the three least often recorded (Tree Sparrow and Corn and Reed Bunting) too few were found to provide a proper comparison. However for the other six species: Greenfinch, Chaffinch, Linnet, Goldfinch, Yellowhammer and Skylark, there was a distinct preference for the organic holdings. Between 63% and 90% of all the winter records of each of these six species came from organic rather than conventional plots.

Not all birds obviously prefer the organic holdings. For instance some gulls, Red-legged Partridges, Lapwings and Fieldfares were found more frequently in winter on conventional holdings. However it is often not possible to match plots exactly and some of the conventional farms surveyed had much bigger fields than the organic farms. It may be that this feature is of overwhelming importance for these species.

This important survey has a full year to run and further experienced birdwatchers are needed as volunteer observers to record the birds on pairs of farms. Offers of help should be sent to Jeremy Wilson at the BTO, The National Centre for Ornithology, The Nunnery, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 2PU.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

JEREMY WILSON

OR

CHRIS MEAD (WORK) 0842 750050 (HOME) 07606 466

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The BTO is Britain's leading bird research organisation. It uses thousands of skilled volunteer birdwatchers to collect the information used for the conservation of Britain's birds. Established in 1933, the BTO has recently moved to Norfolk, and is now raising the £1.5m to complete the renovation of its 12th century HQ.

BTO, The National Centre for Ornithology, The Nunnery, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 2PU  
Telephone 0842 750050 Facsimile 0842 750030.

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2 September, 1993

## BIRD RECORDING CARDS

Every year thousand upon thousand of bird records are submitted to the recorders of local bird Clubs by their enthusiastic members. Several Clubs have supplied their own printed cards in the past but now the BRITISH TRUST FOR ORNITHOLOGY, sponsored by Leica Camera, are making available standard record cards for bird watchers to use to submit their records to any local bird recorder.

STEVE DUDLEY, of the BTO, is responsible for the idea and has been able to match an initial print run of the 400,000, 6"x4" cards with a comprehensive *BTO Bird Recording Handbook* to explain how they should be used. He is convinced that the proper conservation of Britain's birds depends on the gathering of details of the individual records of the birds they see by ordinary watchers. The natural place for these to be sent is the local recorder.

'Local bird reports cover the whole of the country' says Steve Dudley 'they form the foundation of our ornithological recording. I am absolutely delighted that the BTO, through the generosity of Leica Camera, has been able to support this vital network'. The record cards are not for return to the BTO but to the local bird recorders.

A copy of the card (back and front) appears overleaf. Packs of cards are available from: BRC, BTO, The National Centre for Ornithology, The Nunnery, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 2PU and cost £2.00 for a pad of 100. Copies of the *BTO Bird Recording Handbook* have been very widely circulated but extra copies can also be obtained from the BTO - an SAE and a donation would be welcome so that even more copies can be printed.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

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OR

CHRIS MEAD 0842 750050 (Home) 07606 466

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