

Fylde Bird Club

LANCASHIRE

Chairman: Mr.L.G.Blacow

**Secretary: Mr.P.Ellis
18 Staining Rise
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FY3 0BU**

NEWSLETTER AUGUST 1998

FROM THE CHAIR

We have received a letter recognising the work of Fylde Bird Club. When it was read out at our July meeting those present agreed it should be included in our newsletter. It is reproduced in full:

Dear Chairman,

I wish to offer Fylde Bird Club some of the recognition it deserves for the good work it carries out as no other bird club I have witnessed has shown the same commitment to local conservation and promotion of birdwatching. This has been achieved by the members who are always willing to share their enthusiasm with the public and new members, dramatically increasing awareness of the conservation plights faced on our coast. Supporting local YOC groups has encouraged more youngsters to take an interest in the world around them which will hopefully be retained throughout their lifetime.

In a changing environment Fylde Bird Club has been an ever-present opponent to development schemes threatening our local birding haunts and it is important that this is continued into the future. Fylde Bird Club has set out to achieve tough aims and these have been accomplished thanks to the support of such dedicated members and a hard working committee.

Well done

John Poland

I must echo the writers thanks to all of you for your continued support.

LGB.

Recent Sightings

April

It was the wettest April for a century. Early April was mild but by mid-month there was low pressure to the east with a northerly airflow. Temperatures were low with snow in the south and flooding in the Midlands. The wind then turned southerly with milder damp conditions to the month end.

A Little Grebe was noted on Marton Mere on the 5th and again on the 19th whilst on the 11th 11 Red-throated Divers were at Rossall with 46 off South Promenade plus 'some' Gannets and Razorbills on the 18th. A Bittern was still at the Mere on the 7th whilst a Spoonbill turned up on the Wyre at Windy Harbour staying until the 2nd May.

On the 5th there was one male and two female Velvet Scoter opposite the 'Big One' off South Promenade and on the 11th 61 Eider were off Rossall. There were still a few geese about – a Greylag over Lytham St Annes Nature Reserve being a first there. On the 17th a single Barnacle was with 500 Pink-feet at Lane Ends whilst 1000 of the latter were at Gulf Lane the same day. On the 22nd a Dark-bellied Brent was noted off Burglars Alley, Fleetwood. Meanwhile 19 Grey Herons occupied nests in Stanley Park.

Not many raptors were reported, the exceptions being a male Merlin which frequented Rossall School area to mid-month and a Buzzard at the Mere on the 21st.

A Little Ringed Plover was on the island at the Mere on the 6th and there was one at Newton Marsh on the 18th. Black-tailed Godwits increased at Newton Marsh with 1500 being the largest count on the 21st. At the Mere a Jack Snipe was noted on the 13th, 10 Whimbrel on the 22nd and nine Common Sandpiper on the 23rd. There was a Green Sandpiper at Newton Marsh on the 18th and a Spotted Redshank off Burglars Alley on the 22nd.

A good record was a Green Woodpecker at the Mere on the 4th. Unusually, two Glaucous Gulls were reported – an adult at Jameson Road, Fleetwood, on the 4th and a second winter at Naze Point, Freckleton on the 16th. Freckleton also hosted an Iceland Gull on the 15th. There was the usual trickle of Med Gulls at the Mere throughout the month with a couple of Little Gulls on the 11th and 12th. On the 5th 50 Little Gulls were off South Promenade together with a Sandwich Tern. An Arctic Skua was noted off Rossall on the 11th. A Short-eared Owl was seen at the Mere on various dates up to the 10th whilst a Barn Owl frequented the area opposite Poulton Golf Course off Amounderness Way.

The first Swallow reported was at the Mere on the 3rd with two Swifts there on the 22nd. Two Water Pipits were at Warton Bank on the 4th. Good numbers of White Wagtails were reported at several locations throughout the month with a Yellow Wagtail at Newton Marsh on the 18th. The Great Grey Shrike lingered until mid-month at the Mere whilst a Black Redstart was at Rossall early in the month. There was a steady passage of Wheatears at the Lytham St Annes Nature Reserve and the Mere to the 23rd when 28 were at the Mere and over 100 were in the Rossall area.

Other migrants began to increase in numbers around the 23rd when there were 30-40 Willow Warblers in Mount Park, Fleetwood, and seven Grasshopper Warblers and 11 Whitethroats at the Mere. On the 20th a male Redstart was at Fleetwood and on the 25th a Garden Warbler was at Stanah. On the 16th a Ring Ouzel was reported near the CEGB pool at Fleetwood. A Long-tailed Tit was noted collecting nesting material at the Mere on the 3rd. Three Yellowhammers were at Newton-with-Scales on the 6th whilst on the 12th 45 Twite were at Lane Ends. On the 28th five Siskin flew north at the Mere. On the 9th a Raven was reported at the Mere.

May

The weather was generally settled and it was quite dry and warm. There were periods of northerly airstreams and frequent easterly winds which were mostly light.

On the 3rd there was a male Red Breasted Merganser at the Mere whilst off Rossall Hospital a Black-throated Diver was a good record. Eight Gannets were off Starr Gate on the same day, together with 14 Common Scoter. 40 Eider were off Rossall and two Dark-bellied Brent Geese were still at Lane Ends. On the 19th an Osprey was reported flying over Blackpool.

On the 2nd two Common Sandpipers were on the island at the Mere together with a Snipe. Whimbrel roosts peaked at 847 at Barnacre and 400 in the Ribble on the 3rd with one seen at Starr Gate and 29 at Windy Harbour the same day. A Little Ringed Plover was noted at Freckleton Entrance Pool on the 3rd. On the same date there was a family party of five Dippers on the River Brock with a Kingfisher there also.

The 4th, Bird Race Day, also saw one adult Pomerine Skua at Rossall with a Little Tern noted there also. An Iceland Gull was at the Mere on the 18th and six Arctic Terns were noted off Naze Point also on the 3rd. On the same date there was a male Yellow Wagtail at Freckleton Entrance Pool, a Whinchat at Rossall School and a Nuthatch at a nestbox in Hackensall Wood.

On the 27th the last Wheatear was noted at Lytham St Annes Nature Reserve. Early in the month there were 25 Sedge Warblers at the Mere and three Lesser Whitethroats there also. Around this time there was a widespread arrival of Lesser Whitethroats and Grasshopper and Garden Warblers. Also at the beginning of the month, four Redpoll flew north at Rossall, 10 Redpoll were in Mount Park, Fleetwood, and there were four Siskin at Fluke Hall.

These were the only records received for May.

June

The month was a complete contrast to May, being unsettled throughout and one of the wettest on record. The first part of the month was also cool with northerly winds but it then turned southerly with average temperatures.

On the 9th seawatchers were rewarded with a passage of 655 Manx Shearwaters going north off South Promenade between 9.45am-11.45am, together with 10 Gannets. A Peregrine was at Lane Ends on the 9th whilst a Buzzard was noted near Todderstaffe Hall on the 12th. Members are asked to look out for wing-tagged Hen Harriers this coming winter, tagged in Bowland this summer. On the 17th an Oystercatcher was incubating eggs on Pontins roof at Lytham St Annes Nature Reserve whilst on the 28th a Common Sandpiper was at Freckleton – presumably the first of the return passage. On the 10th Quail were calling at Eagland Hill and Bone Hill, Over Wyre, whilst a good record on the 12th was of a Turtle Dove near Todderstaffe Hall. Perhaps the best record received was that of a Bee Eater going west over Fairhaven Lake at 9.25am on the 19th. Monty Myerscough reported 12 pairs of Barn Owl breeding in boxes in the Fylde (excluding Over Wyre) whilst there were 24 pairs of Little Owls Over Wyre. On the 16th two Barn Owls were reported on Lytham Moss. On the 7th there was a Spotted Flycatcher on Lytham St Annes Nature Reserve and on the 12th a pair of Lesser Whitethroats were carrying food near Todderstaffe Hall. At Stanah eight Long-tailed Tits were reported on the 11th and eight Goldfinches on the 23rd.

P.S Articles for the Newsletter are urgently required so come on put pen to paper!

I should also like to take this opportunity to thank those of you who have sent your good wishes after my recent operation and for the get well card from the Club. They were much appreciated and hopefully I am now recovering well.

A.J.H

A BIRDING HOLIDAY TO NORTH EAST SPAIN

Whilst chatting to Derek Hutton in the Millers Bridge Hide at Martin Mere he told me of a camping holiday that he had made with his wife to the Aragon Steppes and Spanish Pyrenees. He had flown to a small airport at Reus which is only 80km from the Ebro delta. The Ebro is Spain's second greatest wetland and is more accessible and birder friendly than the Coto Donana.

Could we manage three habitats in one week?

After studying the Michelin 443 map and reading various trip reports, Dave Gosney's booklet and Birds in Catalonia we decided to give it a try. We being Frank Walsh, Dave Hindle and myself. Flying from Manchester on the 22nd April we arrived at Reus at mid-day and headed south in our hire car. A 2 star Hotel at St Carles de la Rafita was only £11.50 for B&B.

By 3.30 we were on our way into the delta giving us 6 hours birding until dusk. On the 23rd we had a full day in the delta. Numerous flooded rice paddies were interspersed with large freshwater lagoons, reedbeds, saltpans and coastal grass and scrub. 11,600 pairs of Audouin's Gull nested in 1997!

Highlights included 200 Flamingos, many Black Winged Stilts, Avocets and Kentish Plovers, hundreds of Cattle Egrets, lots of Little Egret, regular Purple Herons, 3 Squacco, 3 Night Heron. Not one of the deltas 200 pairs of Little Bittern showed itself!

Other water birds included a Purple Gallinule and a Glossy Ibis. There was little variety in ducks but the small lagoon at Al Garcal held 600 Red Crested Pochards. We had very close views of 3 Audouin's Gulls and 15 or so Slender Billed Gulls, a colony of over 60 Gull Billed Terns, 3 Caspian Tern and several flocks of Whiskered Terns.

A colony of over 10 Collared Pratincoles and migrant Little Stints, Greenshanks and Wood Sandpiper added variety. Small birds included many Fan Tailed Warbler, several Savi's Warbler, the first of many Spotless Starlings, Crested, Short Toed and a few Lesser Short Toed Larks, Hoopoes and Blue Headed Wagtails.

I had a male Spectacled Warbler, we all heard Corncrake and we had one Starling!

On the 24th to the accompaniment of singing Serins at the hotel we drove inland on the C230 through stony hill terrain. We passed the first of 3 White Storks on its nest at Maella and a brief stop at the River Guadalupe produced 8 Bee Eaters, 10 Crag Martins, male Montagu's Harrier and the first of many singing Cetti's Warblers and Nightingales. Beyond Caspe we reached the Monegros Steppes.

This open and barren land is being converted to barley fields with the help of EU subsidies. Calandra Larks were everywhere, Choughs common and all the derelict farmsteads had small colonies of Lesser Kestrel. We had several Black Eared Wheatears, 10 Rock Sparrow and the first of many Thekla Larks near Sastago. We stayed two nights at a main road 'Truckers Stop' at Osera, ideal for late and early morning forays to search for Dupont's Lark.

Our first evening produced a Golden Eagle, Stone Curlews, 4 Pin Tailed Sandgrouse, Tawny Pipit and many Lesser Short Toed Larks. At dawn on the 25th we heard 3 singing Dupont's and after considerable effort got good views of this elusive Linford Christie of the lark world. Three Montagu's Harriers and a Great Grey Shrike were also before breakfast. Highlights later as we toured the reserves around Belchite and El Planeron were Woodchat Shrike, singing male Blue Rock Thrush, our first 5 Griffon Vultures, 13 Black Kites together, 5 Black Wheatears. Another Great Grey Shrike was in the same field of view as our first male displaying Little Bustard. Our only Great Spotted Cuckoo, Bee Eaters, Quail, a Short Eared Owl and more Stone Curlews ended a superb day.

Five singing Dupont's Larks heralded dawn on the 26th but two hours failed to see one! We then headed north with our first Booted Eagle. At the Laguna de Serinena were 100+ Black Winged Stilts, 10 singing Cetti's and a White Stork. Approaching the Sierra de Guara which we had been told was the best site for Lammergeiers by an expert Spanish birder we ran into heavy rain. In a two hour 'window' of good weather we had over 30 Griffon Vulture, a very close Egyptian and superb views of two of our main quarry. With the onset of further rain we drove on to Jaca.

The 27th saw us driving to the top of the Hecho valley where we failed to find Wallcreeper on the cliffs at the Infierno. Both Kites and Griffons are common in this area. Two very close Lammergeiers, 2 Booted Eagles, 8 Water Pipits, Rock Bunting, 13 Chamois, a mixed party of 130 Alpine and 57 Red Billed Choughs and Black Bellied Dipper were seen and later Bonellis Warblers, Crossbills and Firecrest. Our route took in the 2 monasteries of San Juan de la Pena on a plateau surrounded by high cliffs. This area produced our fifth and final Lammergeier.

Early morning on the 28th added 3 Subalpine Warblers, Cirl Bunting, Rock Buntings and we heard Woodlark (our 8th lark) and Wryneck.

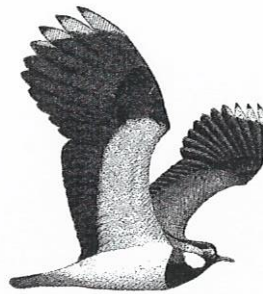
The Ordesa National Park was spectacular in the extreme, we had it almost to ourselves but two Alpine Swifts were the only birds of note. We then drove south on empty roads passing a memorable male Rock Thrush to our last hotel at Lleida.

The Steppes south east of there near Artesa de la Lleida were full of flowers and we had great views of several Little Bustards, Stone Curlews, Sardinian Warblers, 4 Ortolan Buntings, Tree Pipit, Quails, a Roller and Bee Eater. A last brief stop produced a pair of Penduline Tits at the nest and a Melodious Warbler. En route to Reus produced 3 Turtle Doves.

Species 169

Flight	£129.00
Insurance	£10.00
Car Hire, each	£40.00
Petrol, lodging, food	£150.00
Taxi - Manchester	£28.00
Total	c£357.00

Maurice Jones



**Fylde
Bird Club**

LANCASHIRE

FYLDE BIRD CLUB COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT 8:23 PM ON WEDNESDAY
THE 6TH OF JULY AT THE HOLE IN ONE AT LYTHAM**

PRESENT

Chairman; Secretary; Treasurer; Paul Slade; Dave Pitman; Stephen Dunstan and Mike McGough.
Apologies were received from Alan Hinchliffe.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 8th of April were approved.

MATTERS ARISING

1) 1980's Breeding Birds Survey

The Chairman reported that he had written a note to Andrew Cadnam requesting him to pass all the data from the Breeding birds Survey to Stephen Dunstan. To date Stephen had not received any of the data. The Chairman agreed to send a reminder to Andrew with his copy of the newsletter.

Continuing Action: Chairman

2) Marton Mere

See Agenda.

3) New Club Car Sticker

Paul Slade reported that he had received the Car Stickers from the printers and he had brought them to the meeting. The price would be £85.66 for 300 stickers. All agreed that they were very good and Paul was thanked for his efforts. It was confirmed that they should be sold for 50p each to everyone, (inc. members). The Treasurer agreed to take charge of the stock and collect the monies from the members. The Chairman offered to take 12 to Stannah and 6 to Marton Mere, to begin with, (for sale).

Action: Complete

4) Newsletter

The next issue was due to be ready for the August meeting. The Chairman asked those present to help by providing him any recent reports from the last 3 months, in order that he could pass this on to Alan. The Chairman also appealed for other copy.

Continuing Action: All to provide copy.

5) Newton Marsh SSSI

The Secretary reported that he had been touch with Tony Baker of the RSPB who had conducted some limited Breeding Bird studies on the site. It had been agreed that a meeting of interested parties should be held, to co ordinate future Survey work at the site.

Action: Secretary to arrange a meeting.

6) Proposed Wildfowl Reserve Over Wyre

The Secretary reported that he still not contacted the RSPB since the last meeting owing to other priorities. It was decided that the Club currently had enough work to do and that this action should be closed. It was agreed that the Club could resurrect this project at some future date.

Action closed.

7) Bird Report

The Secretary reported that Wyre Borough Council had now paid all outstanding bills from the Club for past advertising fees. The Chairman announced that he had received a demand from the British Library for copies of past reports. The Secretary stated that he should have dealt with this task and apologised for not having done so. The Chairman agreed to send them the Reports.

Action: Chairman send past reports to British Library.

Activities required for the 1997 Bird Report were reviewed. The Secretary noted that we did not have an illustration for the cover and proposed that a colour photograph of the Citrine Wagtail would be appropriate. Paul Slade offered to get a quotation from a printers for producing a Bird Report with a colour cover.

Action: Paul Slade to get quote for Bird Report.

The Treasurer agreed to write an article on the finding of the Citrine Wagtail for inclusion in the report.

Action: Treasurer to write article for Bird Report.

The Secretary reported that production of the report had been very seriously handicapped by difficulties in securing observers' records. Many contributors had provided notes to the Lancs Report editors and assumed that they would automatically be passed on to the Fylde editors. This had not been the case in numerous instances and had resulted in the computer collated summaries of records going out to sub editors with serious omissions. Most of the missing data had been recovered, thanks largely to the efforts of Stephen Dunstan but much re-work was now necessary to incorporate the additional data.

In order to help avoid this problem in future years the Secretary proposed the following actions should be taken.

First the Editor should compile a list of key contributors and ensure that notes are secured from these observers before editing is started.

Secondly, Fylde Bird Club members should be requested to provide their notes directly to the Fylde Editors and not via the Lancs Editors. The Secretary offered to guarantee to copy and pass on all notes received by Fylde to the Lancs Editors within 3 days.

Records from the Marton Mere LNR annual report were discussed and it was proposed that the Warden should be approached to enquire if the Bird Club could borrow the log book from the reserve at the end of the year in order that it may be photocopied and returned promptly. This would remove the dependency on the production of the LNR Bird Report.

Actions: Chairman

8) Planning Application at College Farm Cleveleys

The Secretary reported that he had not yet written again to the three local councillors concerning the plan to build houses on land used by geese between Blackpool and Fleetwood.

Action ongoing : Secretary to write to Councillors

9) Committee Jobs

It was noted that the Lancs Wildlife Trust's magazine, 'Lapwing' has never featured the Bird Club or carried any promotion for the Club. It was Agreed that the Press Officer should be actioned to send in the Club's details to the editor of Lapwing requesting a mention.

Action: Stephan Dunstan

10) 1999 Meeting Programme

It had previously been agreed that the Club needed to issue its annual programme much earlier than December. Dave Pitman agreed to pursue the matter on his return from holiday in early September. It was agreed that one or two nights could feature bird videos, both professionally made and by the clubs' own members.

Action: Dave Pitman.

11) Membership Cards

The Secretary reported that Alan Hinchliffe had reminded the printers that the Club were still waiting a price to print cards but had not received a reply yet. He offered to chase them for an estimate.

Action: Alan Hinchliffe

12) Local Birdline

Stephan Dunstan reported that the experiment was unsuccessful owing to lack of interest by members. He explained that information had been freely supplied but too few people had rung in to receive it and those who had used the service generally all had pagers anyway! Stephen suggested maybe trying it again next May.

13) Co-operation with Lancs Wildlife Trust

The Secretary reported that he had received a reply from the LWT suggesting a meeting with the Club. It was agreed that the Secretary should arrange the meeting.

Action: Secretary to arrange a meeting.

14) Problems with Gulls at Blackpool Zoo

The Chairman and Secretary reported that they had attended a meeting with Blackpool Zoo which had been constructive and amiable. The possibility of killing any of the gulls had receded while other solutions were explored. The Club had suggested that rocket netting and dying problem gulls would be a worthwhile experiment which would help determine if the gulls are few in number and 'local' or if large numbers are involved from 'out of town'. The Club had also suggested nets or other obstructions be erected in the preferred flight path used by the gulls when raiding fish. The Zoo management stated that winter was the worst time for raids and that at the moment the problem had receded to an acceptable level.

The Zoo manager stated that a number of wild bird species breed in the Zoo Grounds and it was agreed that a breeding bird census could be undertaken by bird club members. Stephan Dunstan and Mike McGough offered participate in such a survey and the Secretary agreed to write to the Zoo manager to make the necessary arrangements.

Action: Secretary to write to Blackpool Zoo

AGENDA

1) Permanent Hide at Marton Mere

The Secretary reported that he had received another letter from Blackpool Borough Council requesting that the proposal be put to the Club's membership. It was noted that the membership had already agreed to the idea in principle but a detailed specification was required. A plan of the proposed structure which also indicated its exact location was required in order that all parties involved would be in no doubt about what was intended. The Secretary and Chairman agreed to raise this point with Blackpool Borough Council. It was noted that the cost of materials would have gone up since the initial estimate was compiled, however the Council had informed the Club that the Caravan Park owners, Bourne Leisure, had offered to contribute £500 towards the project.

Action: Chairman and Secretary to contact Blackpool Borough Council

A.O.B.

1) Bird Ringing at Marton Mere

The Secretary read out a letter which he had received from the Fylde Ringing Group explaining that they were not responsible for the mysterious ringing of birds at Marton Mere.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 11:10 pm.



1997 Fylde Bird Report

You may be amazed to learn that at the time of writing last year's Bird Report is at the printers and it may even be out in time for the August meeting!

When you get your hands on it please read it and take note of those species which are under recorded. Please help if you can to fill in the gaps for the 1998 report. You don't need to find a first for the county to contribute useful records, a few counts of starlings and house sparrows would be greatly appreciated.

Records for 1998 can be submitted at any time up until the end of February 1999. You don't need to wait until the end of the year, notes can be submitted quarterly, biannually or monthly.

IMPORTANT REQUEST : Please pass your records *directly* to the Fylde editors and do not assume that if they are given to the editors of other reports that they will find their way to us. If you can only furnish one copy of your notes, then please hand them to the Fylde editors who will **guarantee** to copy them and pass them on to the Lancs Report editors within a few days.

Records can be given to Len Blacow, Paul Ellis or Kinta Beaver at the Club meetings or by post to 18 Staining Rise, Staining, Blackpool, FY3 0BU. All records will be most gratefully received.

Finally, may I offer thanks to everyone who contributed to the '97 Report.

On behalf of the editorial team,

Paul Ellis.