

# NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 1999



**Fylde  
Bird Club**  
**LANCASHIRE**

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## ***From the Soapbox***

In September your Committee went through its annual soul searching and brain storming session in search of *The Answer*. The Question was: what do the members want from *their* Bird Club, which the Committee can reasonably strive to provide?

As in past years, the Question proved to be too difficult to answer. However, if we are missing the obvious and you think you know what it is, then please let the nearest Committee member know or better still stand for election to the Committee at the AGM. The published September Committee minutes record some of our ideas. Remember that this is **YOUR** Bird Club and you can shape it.

The Bird Club has prepared a submission proposing that Lytham Moss should be designated as a County Biological Heritage Site. A Lancs. County Council/Lancs Wildlife Trust/English Nature committee meets in November to consider this and other such proposals. If successful this will at least give the site some recognition of its ornithological value, which may assist in resisting damaging developments. To date Lancashire County Council and Fylde Borough Council have considered the site to have, 'No known wildlife interest'. An extension to the existing C.B.H. Site at Clifton Marsh has also been proposed. This is exactly the sort of work, which Len Blacow has been encouraging us to contribute to. If you know of a good local site for birds, which has no protection and have detailed notes on its birds, then please pass the data on to Len.

The fate of a plot of land at College Farm has been sealed and 100 houses will be built there, despite objections. This land is at the southern end of the last open space between Cleveleys and Fleetwood to the west of Amounderness Way. These are the fields which are used at times by up to 5000 Pink footed Geese in winter. The good news is that the lost area is only a small proportion of this open space and the Local Plan, up to 2006, does not allow any more development in this area. In the run up to 2006 we will literally have to watch this space! In the mean time, enjoy the great views of geese from the tram stops on Rossall Road, when they return.

Paul Ellis

## ***Diary Dates***

### Wyre Guided Walk

11 December Rossall Point....meet at 09:15 am at beach car park to the north end of Fleetwood Golf Course.

### Wader Counts

28<sup>th</sup> November.....meet at Pilling Lane Ends Car Park at 11:30 am

12<sup>th</sup> December.....meet at Pilling Lane Ends Car Park at 10:30 am  
(provisional date)

### Christmas Bird Count

28<sup>th</sup> December .....meet at Brock or Marton Mere at 10:30 am

## September

The month was one of the warmest for 50 years with temperatures peaking at around 28c in some areas. Winds generally remained south or south – westerly and rainfall was generally plentiful.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> there were 4 Red – throated Divers off South Prom whilst on the 21<sup>st</sup> a Little Grebe was at Marton Mere. The 6<sup>th</sup> saw 2 Little Egrets on the Wyre at Shard Bridge and further sightings occurred at Little Singleton on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. A Bittern had returned to the Mere by the 21<sup>st</sup> and was seen again on the 29<sup>th</sup>. 47 Pintail were noted at Lane Ends on the 12<sup>th</sup> whilst the next day there were 120+ Teal at the Naze pool. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> a Garganey was at the Mere whilst a Ruddy Shelduck of unknown origin was there from the 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup>. On the 27<sup>th</sup> a Greenland Whitefront Goose was at Lane Ends.

A few raptors were reported, the first being a female Marsh Harrier off Fluke Hall on the 12<sup>th</sup>. Next day saw a Merlin at Lane Ends whilst on the 25<sup>th</sup> a juvenile Marsh Harrier and a male Hen Harrier were off Fluke Hall. On the 29<sup>th</sup> an Osprey was reported from the Mere. Throughout the month Sparrowhawks were reported regularly from Little Singleton. On the 25<sup>th</sup> there were 5 Water Rails at Marton Mere. Plenty of waders continued to be reported starting with a Green Sandpiper at Freckleton entrance pool on the 5<sup>th</sup>. Greenshank were much in evidence, the largest numbers being 7 at the Naze pool on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 10 at Skipool the previous day. On the 10<sup>th</sup> there were 12 Curlew Sandpipers at Lane Ends, with odd ones seen at Lytham on various dates. 2 Spotted Redshanks were also at Lane Ends on the 10<sup>th</sup> whilst on the 13<sup>th</sup> there were 3 Spotted Redshanks and 3 Little Stints at the same site. 66 Black – tailed Godwits were at Skipool on the 12<sup>th</sup> with 495 Oystercatchers roosting on Pontins roof at St Annes on the same date – a record number. Perhaps the best find was a juvenile Pectoral Sandpiper at the Mere on the 12<sup>th</sup> by Mick and Pauline McGough. However as with most waders at the Mere, lack of suitable habitat meant that the bird moved on after a couple of hours. Also on the 12<sup>th</sup> another Green Sandpiper was off Fluke Hall and on the 28<sup>th</sup> there were 7 Ruff at Lane Ends.

Mediterranean Gulls began to be noted again at the Mere with 1 there from the 27<sup>th</sup>. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> there were 27 Sandwich Terns off Knott End jetty together with a Black Tern. The 19<sup>th</sup> saw 3 Swifts at Rossall School whilst a Kingfisher was at Skipool on the 12<sup>th</sup>. Another good bird for the Mere was the Wryneck found by Paul Ellis on the 26<sup>th</sup> on the north path. Unfortunately it had gone by the next day, although it is possible it had been there a day or two before being discovered. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> there were 253 Swallows moving south at the Mere with 150 at Lane Ends on the 27<sup>th</sup>. The 19<sup>th</sup> saw House Martins still nesting at Rossall Hospital. 6 Grey Wagtails were at the Mere on the 10<sup>th</sup> whilst on the 22<sup>nd</sup> 1000+ Meadow Pipits flew over the site. On the 1<sup>st</sup> Maurice Jones rescued a Goldcrest which flew into the visitor centre at LSANR. A few Warblers were still present late in the month with Sedge Warbler, Reed Warbler, Blackcap, Chiffchaff and Willow Warblers all being noted at Marton Mere.

A.J.H.

## Club Meetings

At a recent Committee meeting the question of membership of the club came up for discussion. It was felt by some of the committee that perhaps the venue, and the meetings being held on a Wednesday evening were reasons why potential members were not being attracted to the club. Perhaps you feel that the Cricket Club room is not big enough or is too hot in Summer, or perhaps the Wednesday night clashing with Fylde Naturalists or European football on TV keeps people away. Please let the committee know if you have any strong feelings on the matter or have any suggestions regarding changing the night or know a better venue. It need not have a bar – people who wish can get together in a pub after the meeting and it may also be cheaper or even free for the room.

A.J.H.

## Bridges of Ross, County Clare, Ireland

Sitting in our sea watching shelter on Blackpool prom. I have often thought how much better our days would be if only we could 'get rid of Ireland'. Ireland forms a land barrier to the westerly winds blowing in off the Atlantic.

There are no such barriers at Bridges of Ross, just 3000 miles of open Ocean. Paul Flint, of Buxton, Derbyshire who runs the pager service, Birdnet has organised a short break sea watching holiday there for several years. Frank Walsh and I decided to join him and ten other enthusiasts in late August this year.

After driving to Buxton we joined the mini bus for the journey to Holyhead. As the Ferry timings had been changed, both crossings were in darkness. However this gave us a few more hours sea watching on our first day. Accommodation was at Anvil Farm, Killbaha, only a couple of miles from the sea watching point. Each day we were up before 6:00 am, helped ourselves to cereals, toast, tea or coffee and were sea watching by 6:30am. A meal and drinks filled in the next few hours (and us).

Bridges of Ross is a natural arch in the cliff on the north side of Loop Head, on the northern edge of the mouth of the Shannon River. The cliffs at Loop Head are too high for good sea watching.

We often saw one or two Choughs on the way to our seas watch point. The ideal wind direction there is probably between west and north-west.

This is what I recorded:

### **27<sup>th</sup> August**

Sunny. Light West wind. 13:15 – 18:30

60 Manx & 2 Sooty Shearwaters; 8 Storm & 2 Leach's Petrels; 1 Bonxie; 1 Arctic Skua & 4 Whimbrel

### **28<sup>th</sup> August**

Overcast. Calm to Light West wind

300 Manx; 16 Sooty & 2 Mediterranean Shearwaters; 6 Black Terns; 5 Storm Petrels (I missed a lot of these); 1 Bonxie; 6 Arctic Skua; many Gannets and Fulmars. We saw a few unidentified dolphins and 2 Sunfish on the surface.

### **29<sup>th</sup> August**

Heavy rain for 1.5 hours in morning almost put an end to our efforts. Moderate wind veering due West.

Before breakfast: 4 Cory's; 1 Great; 5 Sooty & many Manx Shearwaters; 5 Storm Petrels; 1 Bonxie;

4 Arctic Skua; 1 Black Tern; 1 Sabine's Gull & 7 Risso's Dolphins.

After noon: 1 Cory's; 1 Great; 2 Sooty; 1 Mediterranean; & sev. hundred Manx Shearwaters; 5 Storm Petrels; 1 Bonxie; 4 Arctic Skua; 1 Black Tern; 1 Sabine's Gull & 7 Risso's Dolphins. A distant Grey Phalarope settled on the sea for 5 minutes.

### **30<sup>th</sup> August**

Wind Moderate to Fresh WNW.

Sea watched 06:30 – 11:30am before having a late breakfast and making our return journey, which produced a brief male Hen Harrier.

Our best watch with hundred of Gannets, many Fulmar, thousands of Manx Shearwaters about 10 Great and 20 Sooty Shearwaters; 3 Sabines Gulls; 4 Arctic Skuas; 3 Bonxies; 2 Leach's & sev. Storm Petrels.

Frank, Paul Flint and myself managed to miss a Soft Plumaged Petrel and Graham Catley watching 400yards to our right, claimed 2 Wilson's Petrels, which all 13 of us missed!

Most of the species listed, were seen in larger numbers by the group as a whole.

Thus ended a most enjoyable introduction to Irish sea watching. The cost was £140, excluding only our evening meals and drinks. It may be possible to organise a trip by private car, which would reduce the costs still further.

Maurice Jones.