



Fylde Bird Club

Lancashire



December Newsletter 2012

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Pete and I wish all members of the club a very merry Christmas a happy and peaceful New Year.

A huge thank you to all who have contributed during this last year, we have had some excellent news and reports from members, on seawatching, and of course from all locations across the Fylde, without this we would have not been able to produce this Newsletter.

During October we have had some very rare visitors to the Fylde, a Yellow Browed Warbler was seen at Fleetwood and at Fluke Hall, a Pallas's Warbler found its way to Chris Batty's neighbours garden, Chris was very generous in letting countless visitors from all over the country to see the bird from his back garden. He has written a report for us with two pictures, the bird was elusive to see, it took a few visits for some of us to get the bird in our bins, just as soon it was on view it disappeared again just as quick.

We had a day at Marton Mere tidying up the foliage and making ready for the next year. We had a good turn out from members of the club, we also had the help from the Ranger service.

Next year we are introducing a FOR SALE and WANTED, items will have to be related to birding. All sales will be between buyer and seller and the club will not be responsible for any items sold. We require all requests to be with us by 21st February for inclusion in the March edition. Please include your contact details, telephone number and email address.

Are there any mums, dads or grandparents with children at local schools who would love to put together nest boxes, we can supply the materials and will give them the instructions of how to put them together. We will give them details of where the nest boxes are situated, perhaps this will give them an interest in birdwatching in the future.

We will be running our Pelagic trips from Fleetwood in August, for details please see our March and June Newsletters.



Marton Mere Conservation Working Party and Report (July to September)

Ellen Pemberton

On the 23rd of September fifteen members of the Blrd club along with the Ranger service met at the Mere to carry out essential work. Larry Ryan from the ranger service provided the boat so we could gain access to the island. The aim was to cut back the reeds in front of the Fylde Bird Club hide. We worked on some of the other areas cutting back foliage and generally tidying up. Paul Ellis along with some members of the club went on the small boat to the island, reeds needed cutting and the vegetation thinning, the aim is to gently shelve the edge to encourage waders to feed and make nests in order to breed.

Maurice along with Ellen and Mike worked on the Willows near to the dam, they spread runners under ground and so they need aggressive cutting back each year. As I went round the Mere I found members on all parts some in groups or working on their own tackling the undergrowth. Members of the club who helped on the 23rd (my apologies if I have omitted any name):

M. Jones, E Pemberton, S Piner, P Ellis, M Sutcliffe, P Slade, M McGough, M Myersgough and dog, A Myersgough, J Wacey, A Bains, N Long, R Pocklington R Drinkwater and C Batty. The Ranger service provided the boat, Rangers L Ryan, E Preston and G Olley



Paul Ellis on the Island

Another 3 months have passed and summer is behind us – not that we have had what you might call a summer! The area of the Mere known as the scrape has been underwater and there has been a lake in the east field. Nevertheless the last 3 months have been packed with good sightings, starting with 3 Lesser Redpolls flying over on 3rd July. Also this month a pair of Great Crested Grebes had a chick and on the 29th, the aforementioned flooded east field hosted a Black-tailed Godwit.

On 2nd August a Little Ringed Plover was present and on the 4th there was a Fox and 14 Swifts. Flocks of over 50 Lapwings were in the east field on August 4th and 10th, as well as 45 Tufted Ducks on the latter date. On the 11th there were 2 Common Terns, 2 Sand Martins and a juvenile Marsh Harrier flew east. (I was alerted to the latter's presence when all the gulls on the lake took off!)

There were 2 more tern sightings in August, both juveniles. One was a Common Tern, present on the 12th and 13th. The other was a Black Tern which also arrived on the 12th and unusually for this species, it stayed around – till the 19th to be precise. Swifts were seen again on 14th and 19th August. There were also 11 Gadwall and 2 Common Sandpipers on 14th August. There were sightings of single Common Sandpipers on the 19th and 20th. On the 26th a Stock Dove was in the east field.

3 Garganeys were at the reserve on 3rd September, with a Black Swan (I doubt that it had flown all the way from Australia) on the 6th. A Redshank flew west on the 13th and the first Teal of the winter (15 birds) arrived on the 21st. Also present on the 21st were 2 Water Rails. There were more sightings of Stock Dove this month, singles on the 14th and 21st and 2 on the 22nd. Pink-footed Geese also flew over, with 415 on the 21st and 120 on the 22nd.

On 23rd September, during the work party, 3 Redpolls and 2 Grey Wagtails flew over. While work was being carried out on the island, a Barn Owl flew out of the box – it wasn't going to get any rest there that day! However one of the Willows in the south-west corner of the reserve escaped having all its branches cut, as some Eyed and Poplar Hawk Moth caterpillars had made it their home. Luckily the weather stayed fine for the work party; for the next 2 days it bucketed down! The path near the feeding station was flooded and most of Lawson's Wetland was underwater. Swallows were taking advantage of the insects disturbed by the flood. Every cloud, as they say, has a silver lining.



SEAWATCHING YEAR - PART 3

Stephen Dunstan

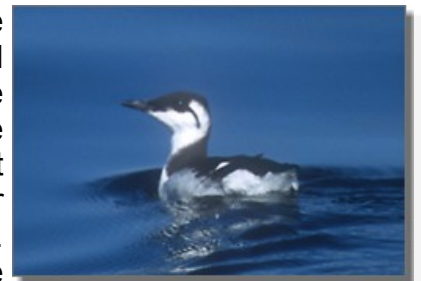
July

There is a lot of daylight to play with in July, and after a bit of a lull in June things begin to pick off the Fylde coast. Skuas and shearwaters are often to the fore, and this year was no exception.

On the 14th I arrived at Starr Gate at 6am on a calm morning. Visibility was excellent, but otherwise there was no grounds for believing a seawatching spectacle was unfolding offshore. It was soon apparent though that large numbers of Manx Shearwaters were moving south. Some were close, some were miles away, but for at least an hour and a half there was a continuous movement and stragglers continued to go through in pulses. I had promised to be home by 8.30 so as the numbers began to mount up I was beginning to get stressed that I was going to have to go before completing a long held ambition of seeing 1000 Manxies off Starr Gate in one day. I got to 1000 at 8.20, so I was slightly late home but very satisfied. Like seeing 100 Red-throated Divers passing in a day this was an entirely self imposed target that appeared increasingly fanciful, so I am glad to have now managed both.

Another highlight of the month for me was also from a morning watch at Starr Gate, this time on the 27th. Common Scoter begin to return in numbers in July, but it is a rare event indeed that a Velvet Scoter appears so early in the season. They are rarely reliable at any time but numbers peak in late autumn with most other reports in mid winter and on spring passage. It was really pleasing therefore to see a drake with Common Scoter landing at mid range in excellent viewing conditions. It remains to be seen what the rest of the year will bring, but I have already had a fantastic year for Fylde Velvet Scoter and can't really complain even if I don't see any others.

On the 19th and 20th I was surveying for Marinelife on the Heysham-Warrenpoint route. Both days were blessed with light winds and fellow bird club member Nick Grounds and I had high hopes of some excellent sightings. We weren't to be disappointed, we had a Common Dolphin, just shy of 40 porpoises and best of all a Balearic Shearwater between the Isle of Man and Lancashire on the return journey. I would particularly like to highlight in this article though the experience I had on the return leg off the Fylde coast. Whilst this was my third stint on this survey the others had been in November and March when darkness fell as we were still in sight of the Isle of Man. It was a revelation therefore to find that the return route went up the entire Fylde coast from Starr Gate to Fleetwood, albeit several miles offshore. We saw no fewer than 250 Guillemots within sight of the Fylde coast, including a large number of dependent juveniles. In many years watching from land I had only seen a juvenile Guillemot once and it was interesting to see what can be just out of range of land based observations. As if the highlights above weren't enough there were other reasons to reflect that July had been most productive personally in seawatching terms. An enjoyable morning watch at Starr Gate on the second included two returning Little Egrets north, only the second sighting I have ever had from Starr Gate, as well as two Arctic Skua and 450 Common Scoter as numbers of these began to build. Highlight of a couple of welcome porpoise sightings was two seen surfacing several times in flat calm and sunny conditions off Gynn Square on the 24th.



Finally on the 22nd a summer plumaged Black Guillemot headed north off Gynn Square. This isn't the first Fylde summer record I have had, presumably of a failed or non-breeder, but records of birds in their attractive summer garb are not frequent on the Fylde so I was pleased to see another one. At the end of the month it was the National Whale and Dolphin Watch. Dave McGrath ran several public events and the results from these are on his ['lalows' blog](#). Both he and I drew a blank on porpoise and dolphin sightings in the event period, but Bottle-nosed Dolphin sightings in the wider area kept hopes high.



August

There were some decent seabirds seen off the Fylde during August. Unfortunately I had left to go to work on the 28th when the best of these, a Sabine's Gull, went past Starr Gate but I did have compensations (see below). My own personal highlights were an adult Pomarine Skua (one of four reported in a very good August Fylde total), Little Terns, Black Terns and several Arctic Skuas on a number of dates. It will be interesting to see whether Arctic Skuas continue to be seen off our coasts in reasonable numbers given the catastrophic falls in numbers that are occurring on Shetland. We have been here before in terms of recent Fylde seawatching, the peak Fulmar count in a day's seawatching off Blackpool is over 500 whereas nowadays it is a very notable day if you have seen over 5.

In terms of gatherings of more common species the most notable feature was the re-occurrence of the large scoter gatherings off North Shore that have characterised recent summers. The peak count was early in the month, when in the region of 6-7000 were lingering north of North Pier. The activities of a scallop trawler throughout the month were rather concerning, and at the end of the month 25000 were reported off North Wales and it is not known if this included birds moving away from the disturbance in this part of the world.

As suggested in the July account a Bottle-nosed Dolphin pod was lingering around the Fylde during the summer, and when I set off for the Heysham-Warrenpoint ferry survey on the 16th I had already suggested to my co-surveyor that we might get lucky and see these animals as Jonny Scragg had seen them off Rossall Point a couple of days previously. These things rarely go according to plan though, so it was a very pleasant surprise when the pod appeared close to the ferry off Knott End and a couple even briefly indulged in a brief spot of bow riding. This was the first time I had seen a pod of Bottlenose Dolphins on the Fylde rather than single animals and it was a great thrill.



The return leg of the ferry survey also had its highlights. Leaving Warrenpoint behind and heading towards the Isle of Man we had excellent views of a group of Common Dolphins, initially at some range but then leaping clear of the water not far in front of the boat. We saw over 3700 Manxies during the two days, and I was delighted when a group lifted from the water in front of the ferry and a Sooty Shearwater stuck out like the proverbial sore thumb as it made a leisurely flight out of the way of danger. 'Sooty's' are normally only seen in the north west in testing observation conditions, so it was a pleasure to see one at close range in calm conditions fairly close to home.

On the 28th the forecast looked reasonably promising for a smattering of seabirds off the Fylde, with a moderate westerly forecast. I decided to set the alarm early and get some seawatching in before heading for work. It soon became clear that movement was much greater than I had anticipated. In 80 minutes I saw over 100 Gannets, a couple of Arctic Skuas and a few Kittiwakes and Guillemots. Best of all though was the sight of at least two Bottlenose Dolphins moving north, presumably others weren't noticeable in the breezy conditions. By the end of the day the combined efforts of the Fylde's seawatchers had produced a relatively notable haul including several Great Skuas, Fulmars, Black Terns and Little Terns. If you put the time in you win some and you lose some, but I was genuinely ambivalent as to whether I would rather have seen a Sab's or the two dolphins, a close call I feel.



September

Locally September was a bit of a frustrating month for seawatching, with a lot of unsettled weather but generally 'the wrong kind of unsettled weather'. This finally took a change for the better with the forecast for 14th September, which looked promising. Unfortunately (or fortunately) I was due to leave for a pelagic in Lanzarote that afternoon with fellow bird club members Chris Batty and Stuart Piner.

Following discussion we agreed to car share to Bispham for first light, seawatch for as long as possible then head for the airport. Whilst it wasn't electric it wasn't bad, over the first hour or so we racked up five Great Skuas heading south which is not a total to be sniffed at in Lancashire. Frank Bird had joined us and eventually he called a couple of Leach's Petrels, I missed the first of these but connected with the second.

And what of the Lanzarote pelagic? Well in short it was awesome. For readers who do not know these trips were launched speculatively recently on the basis that the sharp increase in sea depth had proved to be a pointer to good feeding areas for whales, dolphins and seabirds elsewhere (e.g. in the Bay of Biscay). Last year the trips produced some remarkable birds in a Western Palearctic context, particularly Black Bellied Petrel and several South Polar Skuas. An indication of what was to come was provided when we arrived at the harbour in the dark on the morning of the 15th and one of the participants found a Bulwer's Petrel resting at the base of a wall.

There were no fewer than seven species of petrel seen – additionally Madeiran, Wilson's, Storm, Leach's, White-faced and an all too brief Swinhoe's Petrel which was firmly in the 'untickable views' category for the Fylde delegation. Many of the other petrels though obligingly lingered at the 'chum' put out from the boat, and side by side comparison of Madeiran's. We also saw all four regular species, including several Long-tailed Skuas both adult and immature and a couple of impressive full spooned 'Poms'.

For me though the real highlights of the trip were the non-birds, in particular:-

- a large pod of Bottlenose Dolphins (certainly over 100 animals) that when approached by the boat participated in a sustained session of 'bow riding'. The pelagic boat was relatively small so the views afforded whilst these majestic creatures kept pace with the boat were among the very best I have ever had of dolphins
- a Hammerhead Shark came in to investigate the chum when we were stopped at one of the favoured areas. It didn't even occur to me that we would have a chance of seeing a hammerhead so the element of surprise added to what was already a breathtaking experience
- some fabulous encounters with Bryde's Whales, a species I had never seen before. This included one surfacing so close to the boat that we were able to hear it exhaling, and another animal which leapt completely clear of the water
- several turtles, some at very close range.

It was back to reality the following weekend. But on the 22nd that involved flat calm seas off North Shore. For the duration of a two hour watch I undertook from Gynn Square three of four Harbour Porpoises were on more or less continuous view, the best sightings I have ever had of 'porps' on the Fylde. There were also in excess of 3000 scoter offshore, 23 Red-throated Divers moved south and a Grey Seal was lingering. The sun also shone, it wasn't Canaries temperatures but if anything it was preferable as it wasn't insufferably hot. A timely reminder that whilst it is always delightful to see wildlife sights further afield we can take for granted the riches that occur on our doorstep.



Bird of the Month

Stuart Piner

August

Highlights of the month were a Pectoral Sandpiper found by Barry Dyson at Lathwaite on 29th (the first to be discovered on the Fylde since 2006) and a Turtle Dove at Clifton (first seen in late July, but twitchable only on 2nd August). Elsewhere on 29th a flock of 13 Lesser Snow Geese were located on Pilling Marsh, before they relocated to Cocker's Dyke and later flew past Rossall Point. The following day the same flock flew over Slimbridge WWT (Gloucestershire). Whilst this wandering group of geese are presumably not of Nearctic origin, their source, perhaps from a feral population rather than directly from captivity, remains a mystery.

On 14th three Pomarine Skuas lingered off Rossall Point and towards the end of the month a Pomarine Skua and Sabine's Gull were both logged off Starr Gate, whilst seawatching during the month also produced a Little Tern and four Black Terns off Blackpool and a Black Guillemot and Little and Black Terns off Rossall Point.

A Spoonbill lingered at Glasson throughout August, a Redstart visited Treales, a Pied Flycatcher was in Fleetwood and a Ruddy Duck was at Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park. Wood Sandpipers were located at Lousanna and Todderstaffe Hall, a Black Tern lingered at Marton Mere, Ospreys flew over Glasson and Fleetwood and up to six Garganey moved around the Todderstaffe/Mythop area, whilst another was seen in Fleetwood.

September

Two American Golden Plovers were discovered during September, a 1st-summer at Cockersand on 5th and a juvenile on Fleetwood Golf Course on 26th. These represent the fifth and sixth Fylde records, three of which have been discovered at Cockersand, whilst Fleetwood Golf Course also hosted the first Fylde record (in September 1988).

A Great White Egret visited Warton Marsh, Curlew Sandpipers were logged at Braides (4), Cockersand (2) and Thurnham (2), up to six Barnacle Geese were on Pilling Marsh, the Lune Estuary Spoonbill was seen on a couple of dates and Pale-bellied Brent Geese were off Rossall Point (3) and Starr Gate. Garganey visited Mythop/ Marton Mere (3), Newton Marsh and Lathwaite, a Shag flew past Blackpool North Shore, Wood Sandpiper, Hobby, Redstart and Little Tern were all recorded in Fleetwood and a Hobby was at Winmarleigh Moss. Multiple Leach's Petrels were logged off both Blackpool North Shore and Rossall Point on 14th and Blackpool Central Pier on 17th.

October

A Pallas's Warbler visited Chris Batty's Knott End garden from 15th-20th, the third Fylde record and the first since 1997. Yellow-browed Warblers were discovered at Fluke Hall, Fleetwood Cemetery and Mount Park (Fleetwood). Elsewhere scarce passerines comprised a Firecrest, Black Redstart, Ring Ouzel and flyover Lapland and Snow Buntings in Fleetwood, Ring Ouzel over Fairhaven, Redstart at Ridge Farm and Crossbills over Fleetwood (6) and Knott End.

A Great White Egret was again seen on Warton Marsh, a Great Northern Diver, three Velvet Scoter, Scaup, Shag and a Long-tailed Duck were all logged off Rossall Point, whilst a Shag flew past Blackpool South Pier. Two Scaup visited Glasson Basin, Hen Harriers were seen at Danson



Hill and a number of Over Wyre sites, a Garganey was at Lathwaite and Curlew Sandpipers were at Cockerham Sands (5), Fluke Hall (2), Bank End, Lathwaite, Fleetwood, Cocker's Dyke and Nateby. Up to 22 Barnacle Geese were counted on Pilling Marsh, whilst others accompanied Pink-footed Geese near Marton Mere (3), Todderstaffe Hall (2), Fleetwood (2), Lytham Moss, Knott End and Cocker's Dyke. Eurasian White-fronted Geese were identified near Marton Mere and in Fleetwood, whilst Pale-bellied Brent Geese visited Pilling Marsh and Rossall Point (2).

Pallas's Warbler at Knott End

Chris Batty

At 09:35 on 15th October, as I worked at my computer, my eye was drawn to two Long-tailed Tits flying across my garden and into my neighbour's garden. It is a popular dictum that autumn flocks of Long-tailed Tits should always be checked in case they 'carry' with them an Asian warbler, and, accordingly, I instinctively reached for my binoculars and peered through the window. Incredibly, my view was greeted not by a Long-tailed Tit, but by a Pallas's Warbler! A bright moss-green warbler sporting a lemon-yellow rump, supercilium, crown stripe, greater covert and tertial tips: unmistakable!



Unmistakable or not, I had to get a photo to prove to everyone - including myself - that I wasn't temporarily delusional, and I had swapped my binoculars for camera within a second. I rattled off several bursts of photographs through the window before phoning Rare Bird Alert and spreading the news of my good fortune to all. I then checked my last photograph on the back of the camera and, to my horror, realised that the camera settings were incorrect and all the photos were wholly black. Now frantic, I checked the sycamore and, thankfully, the Pallas's Warbler was still there, allowing me to try again for photographs, with the camera now shooting in colour.

Soon after, the bird seemed to have disappeared, and I assumed it had accompanied the Long-tailed Tits as they moved east through the gardens alongside the sea wall. I attempted to give chase, but in the few minutes I had available I failed to relocate either the Long-tailed Tits or the Pallas's Warbler, and I assumed it had gone for good.

I then had to leave, and couldn't return until just after midday, when a cursory check of the sycamore revealed that the Pallas's Warbler was actually still there - it hadn't left with the Long-tailed Tits after all. I relayed the news and birders started arriving, enjoying views of the Pallas's



Warbler as it fed in its favoured sycamore until dusk.

I searched for the bird from dawn the following day but strong winds and rain meant the garden was devoid of birds and I assumed the Pallas's Warbler had moved on. However, on 17th October it returned, flying in over my garden and back into the sycamore, where it remained until dusk on 20th October, by which time it had been seen by well in excess of 500 birders, some from as far afield as London and Sussex.

It was the third Fylde record of Pallas's Warbler, following birds found at Gynn Gardens, Blackpool on 29th October 1994 by John Poland, and Bloomfield Road, Blackpool on 1st November 1997 by Ed Stirling.



Like many other vagrant passerines from Asia, Pallas's Warbler has shown a significant increase in records in the British Isles over recent decades, with an average of over 100 Pallas's Warblers a year recorded here since 2000, almost all in autumn. Although 2012 actually proved to be well below average, with perhaps just 15 having been discovered by late November, and only two of these arrived before that at Knott End; in Aberdeenshire and Angus on 13th October.

My lasting memory of the twitch was the good humour and courtesy of both the birders and my neighbours alike. So often, twitches are portrayed as riotous affairs when, in my experience, the reality could not be further from the truth. In fact my neighbour's interest in the bird ignited, on 19th October he walked to the end of his back garden in an attempt to see it for himself, and in doing so inadvertently displaced the bird into my garden and into a mist net, from which I quickly extracted it, ringed it and returned it to its favoured sycamore.

Since the departure of the Pallas's Warbler, I have been stopped in the street on numerous occasions by interested residents of Knott End, eager to know if the rare bird has flown, and when the next one will arrive - if only I knew!



A NOTE ON THE BIRDS OF FAIRHAVEN BEACH SALT

MARSH: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SNIPE

FRANK WALSH & MAURICE JONES

During the last 30 years the shore between Granny's Bay and the Beach Café Car Park, St Annes has been converting from an originally sandy beach to salt marsh, though the beach along the Fairhaven Park sea wall remains essentially muddy. The beach from the western end of the Fairhaven sea wall to the Beach Café is backed by sand dunes which, though degraded, offer some interest to the naturalist. Meadow Pipits, Stonechats, Whitethroats, Linnets and Reed Buntings have bred in the dunes area in recent years, and there is a locally important breeding population of Grayling butterflies. The salt marsh west of the Fairhaven sea wall extends for 1,250 metres and is, on average, about 60 metres wide (7.5 hectares). The width is greater towards the Fairhaven sea wall. Flooding occurs regularly at high tides, with the marsh flooding preferentially eastwards from the Beach Café. Thus the marsh itself does not provide a breeding place for any species of bird at present. Among the birds using it as a feeding site, and perhaps for cover, are regular Little Egrets, occasional Grey Herons, Feral Pigeon, Woodpigeon, Meadow Pipit, Starling, Carrion Crow, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Linnet, Reed Bunting and occasional Twite. Even more occasionally Horned Larks (Shore Larks) have occurred on the tide line, but their most recent visit was in 2003. Small numbers of waders feed or roost along the seaward edge of the marsh, while towards the St Annes end of the seaward edge of the marsh an interesting roost of gulls and terns has developed in July-August. This included a Roseate Tern on 31 July 2004 and a maximum of 578 Sandwich Terns on 10th August 2009.

In 2004 we began to pay attention to the birds flushed from the marsh at high tide, seeing single Jack Snipe on 14 December 2004 and 26 January 2005, with 2 Jack Snipe on 18 February, and 3 on 9 March 2005. Singletons were seen in February and November 2006. In October 2007 there were 3 Jack Snipe on 25th, with 4 on 26th, together with 22 Common Snipe. A single Jack Snipe was seen on 26 November 2007, together with 33 Common Snipe and a single Water Rail.

This autumn (2012) snipe have been very conspicuous in the South Fylde. On 21 August, towards low tide, we saw a flock of 40 Common Snipe dive on to the marsh, something we had not witnessed before. Later we decided we should try to make standardised counts of the snipe which came off the salt marsh at each high tide period, though this decision was made after we had missed the September high tides.

The length of salt marsh makes it impossible for a comprehensive count to be made from a single viewpoint. Indeed the whole beach cannot be seen from any one position. As both species of snipe tend to take off and fly eastwards before usually diving back into the vegetation following the earlier complete flooding at the west end of the Fairhaven salt marsh, we decided to position ourselves 300 metres west of the Beach Café Car Park. We stood in the dunes 2-3 metres above salt marsh level, looking south (seaward) and counted all snipe which flew eastwards past us. From the totals of the two species we deducted counts of those snipe which flew past us westwards. By this means we avoided double counting.

It should be noted that it is not feasible to count snipe by walking through the salt marsh to disturb them. The marsh is very tussocky and Jack Snipe are only disturbed by a very close approach. The incoming tide makes a perfect tool for displacing the snipe. Common Snipe are much more easily disturbed than are the Jack Snipe, and so most depart earlier. The Jacks often remain in the marsh vegetation until it is almost completely immersed, perching on floating mats of vegetation. At that stage the Common Snipe are usually long gone.



Results

Table 1 *High Tide Snipe counts at Fairhaven salt marsh October 2012*

Date	Ht in metres	Jack Snipe	Common Snipe	Notes
14/10	9.3	4	110	Flooding not complete
15/10	9.7	18	149	
16/10	9.9	>8	>50	Bad weather, BDw & TR
17/10	10.0	3	80	CSnipe moving on our arrival

On the 14th Common Snipe movement may have begun before our count started. Also the marsh did not become fully flooded, so we were fairly sure that not all Jack Snipe were flushed. On the following daytime tide the marsh was fully flooded and the count of 18 Jack Snipe was probably accurate, though some Common Snipe may have moved before we started our count. On 16 October the weather conditions were poor for counting and we did not visit the salt marsh. However, Barry Dwire & Tony Rhodes decided to watch and saw at least 8 Jacks and 50 Commons. On the 17 October we reached the marsh when Common Snipe were already moving. However, we consider that we probably witnessed all the Jack Snipe which were disturbed from our sector. It seems likely that five high tides had flooded the marsh in the 3 days preceding our visit on that day, and that many of the displaced snipe had moved to other areas.

From our chosen position we are only counting a quarter of the length of the salt marsh. There is no reason to suppose that both species of snipe are not spread along the full length (1250 metres) of the marsh, though we have not proved this. This suggests that the Fairhaven salt marsh (called the Fairhaven Beach on the FBC website) may prove to be an important wintering site for both species of snipe in our area, and probably the easiest place to see Jack Snipe.

We hope to be able to increase the size of the sector of marsh surveyed, perhaps to 600 metres, i.e. half the shore length. We also hope to confirm that snipe are to be found along the full length of the marsh.

Thanks to Jack Dixon, Tony Rhodes and Barry Dwire for help with counts.



FYLDE BIRD CLUB ANNUAL PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION (April 23rd 2013)

Each year the Fylde Bird Club holds a photographic competition. All members who paid their subscriptions for 2012 are invited to enter and may submit up to **TWO** photographs for each geographical category:

- Fylde
- British Isles (does **NOT** include photographs taken in Fylde)
- World (does **NOT** include photographs taken in Fylde and British Isles)

Digital photographs taken in the calendar year prior to the competition are acceptable. All entries to be submitted to Peter Rhind (by e-mail or by flash drive) preferably by the last day of April although it will still be possible to enter on the night. If you have any queries please contact Peter: Tel. 01253 812495; E-mail: rhind1003@btinternet.com

Competition rules

- Only **TWO** images per category per photographer
- All photographs must be taken during 2012
- No photographs taken at the nest
- No photographs of captive or trapped birds
- Please submit digital photographs only; slides/hard copies/prints will not be accepted (but may be submitted as scanned images).
- Only photographers who have taken the top five photographs in each class (as voted by members) will be asked to elaborate on their entries (e.g. where the photograph was taken, type of equipment used etc).

Winning entries will be available for viewing on the Fylde Bird Club photographic competition webpage: <http://www.fyldebirdclub.org/photocomp.htm>

PS Look out your favourite photos from 2012 (birds of course) and enter. I love seeing bird photos. Pete.



`Double` Oystercatcher Nest

On the 3rd of June 1987 at the N.W. corner of Blackpool airport on recently tipped but levelled ground I found the nest of an Oystercatcher with 7eggs. Visiting the site again on the 17th of June I found a second scrape only 11 cm from the first and not properly lined like the original nest. This new nest had 2 eggs whilst the original had 5. From a distance some time later 2 Oystercatchers could be seen incubating side by side. The result of these laying's is not known I believe the second laying female probably rolled 2 eggs across into its unlined scrape.

Cockles not so benign

The email sent by Tony Wooton Unwanted Hitchhiker reminded me of an incident on Southport beach on the 20th of September. Storms had cast many thousands of Cockles onto the beach. Lying there was a freshly dead Knot with a single cockle clamped on to the long centred toe tip of both feet. I sent it by post to Mr. E. Gorton, a taxidermist at Bolton museum. During transit the Cockle had died and released its grip but both toe tips had been nearly severed by the Cockles grip.

Maurice Jones

Preston Bird-watching & Natural History

There are some twin rooms available on the trip to Eastbourne on 24th to 28th April 2013, half board, five days/ four nights at the Queens Hotel.

£189.00 per person. Enquiries to Jean Wardle, jw.pres.soc@gmail.com or 07949 233922

Julia Newth from the WWT

Julia from the WWT came to the club to give a talk on the Illegal shooting of our migratory Whooper Swans, and the use of lead poisoning by gun shot pellets. You can register your objection by adding your name at the address on this site.

<http://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/stop-lead-poisoning-our-birds>



Amur Falcons

I have been asked to pass on the following information regarding the shocking slaughter of migratory Amur Falcons in Nagaland, Eastern India. Between 120000 and 140000 Amur Falcons are estimated to be killed annually by illegal hunting in this one state.

It is being done for profit not subsistence.

The following links provide the details; a petition and requests for financial help.

<http://www.birdlife.org/community/2012/11/help-required-to-end-hunting-massacre-in-nagaland-india/>

<https://www.change.org/en-IN/petitions/please-stop-amur-falcon-massacre-in-nagaland-india>

<http://www.justgiving.com/amurfalcon>

Paul Ellis

