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September Newsletter

We have many members to thank for their time in sending articles to the newsletter, some of you are becoming regulars, and others give their time generously in making the club the success it is today. Following is a list of the articles and the people who have contributed to this edition, please free to email any item you would like to include, any help would be most welcome.

<u>Change to Sightings Page</u>	<u>Members take note</u>
Marton Mere Report	Ellen Pemberton
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Birds of the Month.....	S Piner/ D McGrath/ P Slade
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The Fylde Bird Club sightings page (<http://www.fyldebirdclub.org/sightings.aspx>) is now using an automated system. The Club welcomes submissions of all sightings of birds on the Fylde from members and non-members alike.

It is no longer necessary to routinely email your sightings to the Club. Instead, to add your sightings please login at <http://www.fyldebirdclub.org/login.aspx?p=submit.aspx> using the username **lapwing** and the password **lapwing** .

If you wish to report a sighting of a bird that is breeding and that you consider may be indirectly threatened through the broadcasting of its presence, you can still submit the record directly to the Fylde Bird Recorder at news@fyldebirdclub.org .

Many thanks for your continued support

Volunteers are needed at Marton Mere Nature Reserve

Volunteers are needed at Marton Mere, Blackpool on the 25th September, we meet at 10.am. or later, even if you have only a hour or two to spare your help will be greatly appreciated.

The reeds have over grown near the Fylde Bird Club Hide and need clearing before the winter, the island also needs a lot of attention.

Larry Ryan, a ranger from B.C.C. has offered a use of their small boat, they also have some waders, chest waders and tools.

If you wish to bring your own tools, they would be very welcome. Bring wellies and gardening glooves.

Marton Mere Report – Spring/early Summer 2011

I heard my first singing Chiffchaff of 2011 on 19th March; the Tree Sparrows and Bramblings which had been frequenting the feeding station through the winter were still present, as were 9 Goldeneyes. 2 weeks later, most of the winter migrants had gone and some more summer migrants had arrived, including over 50 Sand Martins on 3rd April.

The first Swift I saw at the reserve was on Easter Saturday, 23rd April. Also present that day were a Common Sandpiper and a singing Grasshopper Warbler. The warblers had all arrived by now and the Cetti's are still going strong. Over the Easter weekend, there were 2 noteworthy birds nearby, a drake Garganey and a Whinchat, on Mythop Flood and Lawson's Road respectively.

A Wren built a nest in the south-west planting hide and actually managed to fledge young, which I saw flying about on the beams. During a downpour on 8th May, a Black-tailed Godwit flew in and landed on the scrape, where it stayed for about 10 minutes before heading for the coast. Oystercatchers and Lapwings have also been visiting the scrape. On 22nd May, a Common Tern and a flock of 12 Dunlin passed through the reserve.

There have been a lot of young birds in June, including Moorhens, Mute Swan cygnets and numerous Mallard ducklings. Ducks other than Mallard are largely absent at this time of year, but on 19th June I saw a Gadwall with a solitary youngster. There have also been Teal and Pochard present, one male of each. At the end of June, many warblers were still singing.

The year is now on the turn and some of the Mallards are beginning to go into eclipse; by the time you read this the gull flocks on the lake will include this year's speckly-brown juveniles and, who knows, the Mere may have hosted 1 or 2 scarce waders on their way south.

Ellen Pemberton

A Day at Conder Green

On 18th May, during a much-needed week off work, I had a visit to this site on the northern edge of the Fylde. As I live in Marton and don't drive, getting there was an almost military operation, first of all getting a bus into Blackpool town centre, then catching the Knott End service and finally the Stagecoach bus, bound for Lancaster (a 2-hourly service) which stops by the Conder Pool. My dad's advice? "Arm yourself with a Lancaster taxi number!"

When I left Blackpool it was wet and windy, not what you might expect in mid-May. By the time I was at Knott End, the rain had cleared but it was still cold. The Lancaster bus wound its way through Preesall and Pilling, past Sand Villa, where the Cattle Egret had been found 2 years earlier and arrived in Conder Green about 10.20. I sent my dad a text to say I'd arrived; he replied that he'd just pegged the washing out.

On the pool there were a pair of Tufted Ducks and on the estuary 3 Bar-tailed Godwits. About a month earlier I had visited Conder Green with the family and seen both Redshanks and a Greenshank. The Common Redshanks were the only "shanks" in evidence today, though. A few Shelducks were also loafing on the estuary. The tide was coming in but all the creeks in the river were not yet covered.

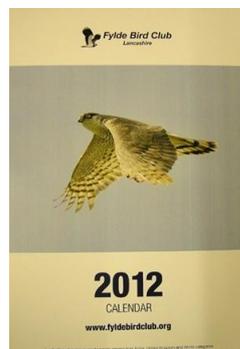
I watched the Godwits for about half an hour before making my way over the bridge towards the cafe. A Sedge Warbler was singing in a bush by the Conder Pool and I also heard a Whitethroat on the bridge. I had a coffee and one of the other guests in the cafe asked me if I'd seen an Osprey – I replied along the lines of no such luck!

By midday the tide was in and I spent a couple of hours watching over the estuary, first from the cycle path and then from the road near the cafe. I then returned to the platform by the pool, until about 4.00. Redshanks re-appeared in the creeks but the Godwits had moved on.

There were a lot of Swifts, Swallows and House Martins circling. The latter were collecting mud from a roadside puddle. When the tide had dropped again, though, they started to gather mud from the river. There have been reports that many House Martins have had difficulty obtaining nest material, due to the dry weather during

April. Hopefully after the rain we have had in May, this will no longer be a problem for them. Despite the chill in the air, this was a lovely day out and I made my way home (this time via Lancaster) arriving tired but happy.

Ellen Pemberton



Fylde Bird Club Calendar

David and Jackie Moreton have kindly agreed to produce the 2012 calendar, all pictures are taken by Club members during the last year and most are within the Clubs area. The calendars will be on sale at the September, October, November and December meetings, the cost is the same as last year **£3.99**. The pictures chosen are:-

- Sparrowhawk taken by Jackie Moreton in her back garden
Fylde winner
- Water Rail taken by Paul Slade at Marton Mere
- Redshank taken by Howard Philips at Abbeystead
- Bittern taken by Stuart Piner on the Lancaster canal Carnforth
- Wood Warbler taken by Paul Ellis at Waddacar
- Grasshopper Warbler taken by Stephen Dunstan on the Out Skerries
- Goosander taken by Mick McGough at Troutbeck
- Juvenile Tawny Owl taken by Mike Foy at Hambleton
- Cuckoo taken by David Moreton at Cockers Dyke
UK winner
- Red necked Phalarope taken by Mick McGough at Fairhaven Lake
- Great Northern Diver taken by Jackie Moreton on Fleetwood Marina Lake
- Waxwing taken by Peter Rhind at Preston Town Centre
- Fish Eagle taken by Kinta Beaver in Kenya
World winner

Juvenile Cuckoo returned to Marton Mere

On Wednesday July 13th a call was received from Brian Gregory, a member of the Bird Club and Beat Nature Watch, that a juvenile Cuckoo had been released at Marton Mere.

The Cuckoo had been found near the Blackpool and Fylde College by a member of the public, who contacted a vet. The cuckoo was infested with parasites and undernourished. The vet then contacted John, (sorry don't know his surname) a Lecturer in wild life, he also works with local schools and at Lancaster University.

John breeds many types of insects including crickets which he fed to the cuckoo, once the Cuckoo became stronger and in much better health it was time to release it back to its natural habitat.

Recent sightings by Stuart Piner

May 2011

May's headline bird was discovered by Dave McGrath on 3rd when he heard an unfamiliar bird song during his daily walk through Devonshire Road Rock Gardens. He believed the song resembled that of an Iberian Chiffchaff, so the following day he returned and captured a recording of the strange songster on his camera. After successfully recording the bird's song, Dave returned home and emailed the sound file to others who were able to confirm the identification as an Iberian Chiffchaff, the first record for the Fylde. Birders soon arrived on site late morning on 4th May, when the bird's advertising song and diagnostic call were both recorded. The bird was last heard during the morning of 5th May, although some observers suspected that it remained, silent, in the rock gardens until 8th May.

Iberian Chiffchaff was split from Common Chiffchaff by the BOURC in 1998, based on differences in structure and plumage, vocalisations and mitochondrial DNA sequences. The Devonshire Road Rock Gardens Iberian Chiffchaff represented the thirtieth record for the British Isles, following seven in southwest England, six in both East Anglia and southeast England (where the first was found in London on 3rd June 1972), four in Scotland, three in northeast England, and singles in northwest England, Ireland and Wales. All records are of singing males, typically located in the last week of April or early May: some present only for a day, others making more protracted stays (up to 75 days in one instance).

The 3rd May proved to be somewhat of a red letter day; in addition to the Iberian Chiffchaff, Pete Woodruff discovered a female Kentish Plover at Cockersand, where it lingered with Ringed Plovers at Cockersand until 5th May. This is the first Kentish Plover to be recorded on the Fylde since the famous returning female was last seen at Knott End on 9th March 1997; that bird being present around the Wyre Estuary mouth between Fleetwood and Knott End for six consecutive winters, having originally been discovered at Rossall Point on 8th March 1992. The only Fylde record prior to the Wyre Estuary bird was of one at Lytham on 19th August 1963. On 8th May 2011 Maurice Jones discovered two Temminck's Stints at Newton Marsh. The birds remained until the following day. This represented the first Fylde record of Temminck's Stint since 2005, when one visited Newton Marsh on 10th May.

In a month crammed with rarities, a potential addition to the Fylde list, a Golden Eagle seen by Bob Danson flying south near Pilling on 2nd May, perhaps didn't receive the attention it deserved. Whilst Golden Eagles are known to escape from captivity, there are also three accepted Lancashire records of birds presumed to be of wild origin, all from the east of the county, the first of which was discovered in May 1983. The famous Cumbrian nesting site at Haweswater, where Golden Eagles first attempted to breed in 1969, is only approximately 44 miles north north-east of Pilling as the eagle flies and, intriguingly, an adult Golden Eagle was also reported at Leighton Moss RSPB on 2nd and 8th May 2011. The 2nd May Leighton Moss sighting was logged at 1250, 1.5 hours later than Bob's Pilling sighting, so given the distance involved (Leighton Moss is only approximately 20 miles north north-east of Pilling), both sightings could easily relate to the same individual. Adult Golden Eagles are known to be more sedentary than immature birds; it is unusual for adults that have acquired a breeding territory to move more than a few kilometres for the remainder of their lives. However, it is hypothesised that records away from known breeding ranges in the first half the year could reflect a period of more active dispersal by non-breeding Golden Eagles, during a period when territorial birds would be actively involved in territorial behaviour, thus 'forcing' non-breeding birds to move elsewhere. Given there is only thought to be a single Golden Eagle currently present in Lakeland, perhaps an unmated adult bird is more likely to wander in search of a mate.

On 8th May a male Blue-headed Wagtail was discovered on Fleetwood Golf Course before being relocated at Ridge Farm later during the same morning. A 3rd-summer Iceland Gull was logged at Rossall Point, a Dark-bellied Brent Goose was at Bank End and Garganey records comprised a drake at Newton Marsh and a pair by Fluke Hall Lane. A Black Redstart visited an Ansdell garden, a Quail was located in the coastal fields at Cockersand and records of passage waders included Wood Sandpipers at Mythop and Cockersand, Curlew Sandpipers at Newton Marsh (2) and Cockersand, Little Stint at Cockersand and Fluke Hall Lane and two Avocets at Cockersand. Marsh Harriers flew over Jameson Road, Cockersand, Ridge Farm and Glasson.

Seawatching records included Long-tailed Duck, eight Black Terns and seven Little Terns at Rossall Point; two Black Terns and eleven Little Terns at Starr Gate and two Black Terns off Cleveleys.

June 2011

Following a busy May, June was predictably much less eventful. Highlights included a Black Redstart in Lytham; Quail at England Hill (3), Copthorne Fisheries (2), Bone Hill and Cockersand; Garganey at Newton Marsh; Hobbies north west of Garstang (2) and at Blackpool Airport and two Common Scoters at Preston Dock.

A couple of pairs of Avocets nested on Warton Marsh, which constituted the first breeding attempt on the Fylde; one of the pair hatched two chicks, but sadly both pairs failed to fledge any young.

July 2011

During the evening of 3rd July Paul Slade located an adult male American Golden Plover on the Wyre Estuary by Shard Bridge. This represents the third Fylde record of American Golden Plover, following one on Fleetwood Golf Course on 20th September 1988 and a juvenile at Cockersand on 19th November 2008. The previous American Golden Plovers were both brief visitors, but fortunately Paul's bird lingered until the following day.

Two Fylde pelagics departed from Fleetwood during July; the first produced a juvenile Yellow-legged Gull over Shell Flat and the second produced a couple of Arctic Skuas. Elsewhere Yellow-legged Gulls were recorded at Skippool (a lingering 2nd-summer and a brief adult, before it died), lingering adult at Glasson and further sightings of adults at Thurnham and Cockersand. Flyover Crossbills were logged at Poulton-le-Fylde (four on 9th) and Rossall School (one on 24th), Marsh Harriers were recorded at Whyndyke Farm and Cockersand and a drake Scaup visited Glasson Basin for just one day. A Pale-bellied Brent Goose commuted between Cockerham Marsh and Cockersand and a Quail was heard at Black Lane Head. A Puffin picked up in an exhausted state at Starr Gate on 20th unfortunately died six days later in care. On a more positive note, Black Redstarts bred for the second consecutive year in Preston city centre, fledging two young in late July.

American Golden Plover, Wyre Estuary 3rd & 4th July 2011

During late June 2011 I began my annual twice daily Autumn visits to the Wyre Estuary between Shard Bridge and Wardleys Creek.

As usual some of the first returning birds are Golden Plover, many of which are still in full summer plumage.

Sunday evening of the 3rd July started well with a showy 2nd summer Yellow Legged Gull, things were about to get much better though when I started scanning through the distant Lapwing and Golden Plover nearer Shard Bridge and picked out a stunning full summer plumage 'Lesser' Golden Plover, but which species was it ? I had not seen one in summer plumage for many years.

I thought I had better put the news out as quickly as possible before pondering over it's identity. Frustratingly very few people were answering the phone but Chris Batty did so and quickly reminded me of some of the identification points, several of which pointed towards American rather than Pacific. Mick McGough was first to arrive armed with a copy of the recently released Advanced Bird Guide by [NilsVanDuivendijk](http://www.amazon.co.uk/Advanced-Bird-Guide-Plumage-Palearctic/dp/1847736076) (<http://www.amazon.co.uk/Advanced-Bird-Guide-Plumage-Palearctic/dp/1847736076>) which quickly confirmed the bird as an American Golden Plover



**Adult Male American Golden Plover
Shard Bridge 4th July 2011 (Chris Batty)**

This was only the third Fylde record and the first adult after a brief juvenile at Cockersand in November 2008 and another brief bird on Fleetwood Golf Course in September 1988.

Paul Slade

For further details of this bird, see the excellent and recently updated :

<http://fyldebirdclubimages.blogspot.com/2011/07/american-golden-plover-at-shard-bridge.html>

Iberian Chiffchaff at Devonshire Road Rock Gardens, Bispham

Whilst walking my dog on my regular route around Devonshire Road Rock Gardens, Bispham, Blackpool on the morning of Tuesday 3rd May 2011 I heard an unfamiliar song which started out like a Chiffchaff that had forgotten the 'chaff' and ended with a faster flurry of similar notes.

As we're concentrating more on the dog than wildlife at that time of the morning I don't normally carry my binoculars but do take a notebook and record the morning's high

My entry for that day shows a Blackcap, Lesser Whitethroat and a bird only recorded as song, written as chiff chiff chiff chiff chiff chiffer chiffer chiffer and another Blackcap further on in the walk.

This wasn't your 'normal' Chiffchaff but sounded 'Chiffchaffy' enough not to be anything else but maybe unlikely to be one of the northern subspecies which I have seen and heard in autumns' past, I decided to listen to Iberian Chiffchaff on Xeno-canto - bird sounds of Europe website - and found the recordings to be very similar to what I had heard.

So I set off the following morning with my camera set to video mode to record the song I suspected that the bird would have left during the clear night. It hadn't and was still singing as I arrived on site and I was able to get a few recordings.

I played my recordings and those on Xeno-canto to a non-birding colleague at work



and asked him to 'spot the odd one out' but he said they were all the same! With my suspicions now further aroused I emailed one of my shorter video recordings to Chris Batty as I was sure he'd know what I had heard. He confirmed those suspicions in a phone call later that morning. Looking good – I don't find many scarce birds in the park, never mind rare(ish) ones, a Redstart or Pied Flycatcher would be a red letter

bird.

Within an hour or so I met CB on site where we both stood listening to the bird singing and watched it flitting around the bushes at head height but not really showing well for about half an hour before we were joined by Maurice Jones and Stewart Meredith. They both agreed that the bird they could hear was Iberian Chiffchaff.

Eventually Chris managed to get a few pictures, sound recordings and a some short video-grabs. Maurice got good views of it in a Sycamore tree and was able to show it to a visiting birder.

The bird remained on site for several days but as the weather deteriorated it sang far less and changed to a subdued more Chiffchaff like song at times. Eventually it was seen well by many birders and a large number of photographs were taken.

From some of the photographs the bird appeared to have a damaged or infected eye

Dave McGrath

Monitoring Breeding Owls in over Wyre

It's that time of year again, I have just been round cleaning out Kestrel and Tawny Owl nest boxes in preparation for the breeding season. I have found that large nest boxes in trees are a magnet for grey squirrels which use them though the winter, filling them with sticks and all kinds of rubbish. Occasionally one of the pesky varmints is still in residence and I don't know who is the most startled when one runs up my arm while in the process of removing the drey. I try to do this task around the end of March and usually within days the rightful owners are back.

Usually by the end of April the Kestrels have eggs and the Tawny Owls should have chicks. It is now April 28th and one of Tawny Owls has three chicks and one has three eggs. The one with three chicks had a least twelve items of prey in the form of voles and mice in the box. A good sign for this seasons breeding success rate. I am always very concerned when I put a Tawny Owl off eggs knowing how easily they desert, something that is very hard to come to terms with.

I am very pleased to report that after watching the box for a couple of nights the Tawny Owl with eggs is still in residence. I watched it leaving and returning to the box within ten minutes or so, classic behaviour for most owls and birds of prey that are incubating eggs. I will check it again in about three or four weeks, the other Tawny Owl and Kestrel should have nice size chicks by then too.

In the meantime the Bat boxes at Calder Valley will have to be checked; there are sixty odd along a short stretch of woodland along the river valley. I expect to see Bats of one or two species in about three of the boxes, seven being the most I have had in one box. Sometimes I wonder if it's worth all the effort. I wonder if Bat boxes make any difference in an area. That is not as easy to prove as it is with birds, but it would certainly help with the studying and monitoring of an otherwise very difficult species.

I suppose you are wondering why I haven't mentioned Barn Owl and Barn Owl nest boxes which after all have occupied a large proportion of my time for the last twenty odd years. Well I am about to touch on that subject but I have little to report about the current breeding season as I don't start checking them 'til June. However I have two Barn Owl boxes with infra red cameras, it saves a lot of messing about with ladders and there is absolutely no disturbance for the Barn Owls. After checking those two both adults could be seen in both boxes one obviously sat on eggs and even turning them while I was watching.

I would like to point out at this stage to anyone who is thinking of putting up a nest box for Tawny Owls the best design is a chimney box sighted along and under a suitably angled branch. A word of caution though, Tawny Owls with young are very

protective and quite often attack anyone or anything that threatens them. I always wear goggles, hat and gloves when checking them.

It is now May 6th and I have just checked the Tawny Owl box that had three small chicks and I was very pleased to see that all three are now well advanced and at least three to four weeks old. The nest site is very close to the owners house and they have seen one or two of the young looking over the top of nest box on occasions, they also have some excellent pictures of the adults which they say are very approachable. They also have Barn Owls breeding in a disused barn and a colony of Brown Long Eared Bats in the roof space. My idea of a perfect pad.

I have witnessed some very strange behaviour from the pair of Kestrels I have been watching, I have even seen three Kestrels on occasions, one in the box and a male and female nearby. Apart from the fact they should have young by now the male should not be tolerating another adult Kestrel so close to the nest site. I decided to check the box last night May 30th and found five lukewarm eggs that weren't even in one place so I would be very surprised if any young are produced. If that is the case that will be the first time in ten years that no Kestrels have been produced from that box.

The two Barn Owl boxes with cameras now have young and young and eggs so I will be checking the rest fairly soon. So far the signs are looking good for a Barn Owl breeding season.

After checking about fifteen Barn Owl boxes in the first two weeks of June the number of breeding pairs stands at eleven of which two are on eggs and the rest all have young at various stages of development.

The other day I was shown a very unusual Barn Owl nest site by a farmer near Lytham. The entrance is very low down in a cow shed full of cows with plenty of human activity. I couldn't believe how far back the cavity went, at a conservative estimate I would say about fifteen feet and right at the end are three well grown Barn Owl chicks. That is only the second Barn Owl nest site I know that isn't in a nest box.

The most young produced so far is six at the site I mentioned earlier with Tawny Owls and Bats what a fantastic site that is. Oh! And there is a colony of Tree Sparrows too. I will report on the final numbers of Barn Owls when I have checked all the boxes all the indications are looking very promising.

It is now June 26th and I have managed to check most of the Barn Owl boxes just five or six more to check. The total number of breeding pairs stands at twenty one, which is a big improvement on last year. Apart from the boxes with breeding pairs there were one or two with Barn Owls in residence but not yet breeding I am hoping they will start breeding later in the year. I will check them in August and hopefully add one or two more to this years tally.

PS. The Kestrel eggs are still being sat after six weeks which is well past the twenty eight day incubation period for that species. If there is no change soon, I will remove the eggs and do the pair a favour.

Monty Myerscough

A Weekend in the Western Rhodope Mountains of Bulgaria.

After a hugely successful trip to the Black Sea Coast of Bulgaria in May 2010 I decided a return visit was in order for 2011.

After speaking to my two London based friends we picked a 'Bear & Birds' trip with the same company and guide we used last year, Dimiter Georgiev of Neophron Tours : <http://www.neophron.com>.

Flights were arranged through WizzAir : <http://wizzair.com> from Luton Airport departing late Friday evening 29th April and returning Tuesday afternoon 3rd May.

After our 3am arrival at Sofia Airport we drove for about 4/5 hours with several roadside stops and quickly caught up with some top quality birds including Golden Oriole, Woodchat Shrike, Barred Warbler, Syrian Woodpecker, Alpine Swift, Turtle Dove, Short Toed Eagle, Rock Bunting and Black Eared Wheatear.

Arriving in the Western Rhodopes mid morning where we were to be based in a small very nice hotel for the next 3 nights.



Trigrid Gorge Hotel



The Western Rhodopes

The Western Rhodopes are one of the biggest mountain ranges on the Balkan peninsular, with great significance for the conservation of vast deciduous forests and unique pseudo-boreal conifer forests.

They are also home of the Grey Wolf, the European Wild Cat and the Balkan subspecies of Chamois.

After dropping our bags at the hotel we were quickly out birding and watching a pair of stunning Wallcreepers in the equally stunning Trigrid Gorge where Dippers and Grey Wagtails seemed to be every few hundred metres along the fast running River.

Heading out of the gorge and the rain we stopped at a nice quiet looking spot and were soon watching Redstart, Serin and Wood Warbler in the same bush. Moving on Dimiter suddenly stopped the car and jumped out pointing out a stunning looking Fire Salamander, the first of many we would see especially when it was raining when they would stand in the middle of roads.



Wallcreeper



Wallcreeper

Late afternoon we met up with one of the local rangers who drove us high in the mountains in his battered Lada Niva jeep to one of the well hidden bear hides where we would sit and wait for the next five hours. By darkness no bears had appeared, the only consolation being a couple of Red Deer and Roe Deer close to the hide.

After a much needed night's sleep we birded the Gorge and the area around Yagodin catching up with Black, Green and Grey Headed Woodpecker's, Cirl and Oortolan Bunting's, Hobby and a cracking Male Montagu's Harrier. After lunch we headed to Dospat for some forest birding and had close up views of Firecrest, Crested Tit, Willow Tit, dozens of Crossbill and rather surprisingly a singing male Ring Ouzel.



Crested Tit



Firecrest

Evening saw us sitting in the bear hide again but alas no bears again !

Early morning we headed out scanning the scree slopes looking for Balkan Chamois, finally picking one up distantly on a near vertical cliff face.

The next few hours brought the best weather of the trip, hot and sunny we headed in to the mountains above Devin seeing Alpine Swifts on the way up, roadside birds included Sombre and Marsh Tit's, Red rumped Swallow, Crag Martin, White Stork's and Bullfinch.

Above the forest the hills flattened out and we emerged in to a large lush green area full of birds, a brief shower must have pushed down migrating passerines as

one small tree lined field held 25 Whinchat, 2 Turtle Dove, Pied Flycatcher, Wood Warbler, Woodchat Shrike and Yellow Wagtail.



Fire Salamander



Crossbill

Our final evening and we tried a different bird hide, much higher up and a good 45 minute drive up a steep muddy track through the forest. Four hours later and again no bears, the highlight being a brief Nutcracker.

Tuesday morning saw us packing our bags and waiting outside the hotel to head back to the airport.

A movement on the scree opposite the hotel turned out to be two Balkan Chamois, typical we had tried hard for hours the previous two mornings looking for the things and here they were only yards from the hotel!



Balkan Chamois



Cirl Bunting

Heading out of the mountains in heavy rain was disappointing so we drove to the lowlands with a few stops enabling us to see a few new birds for the trip including Black Headed Bunting, Isabelline Wheatear, Long Legged Buzzard and Crested Lark.

Although we missed out on Brown Bear it was still a thoroughly enjoyable trip.

If any of you fancy trying Bulgaria I can honestly say last years Black Sea Coast trip was one of the best Birding Trips I have ever done.

Stuart Meredith and Ribble Bird Tours take regular trips to Bulgaria using

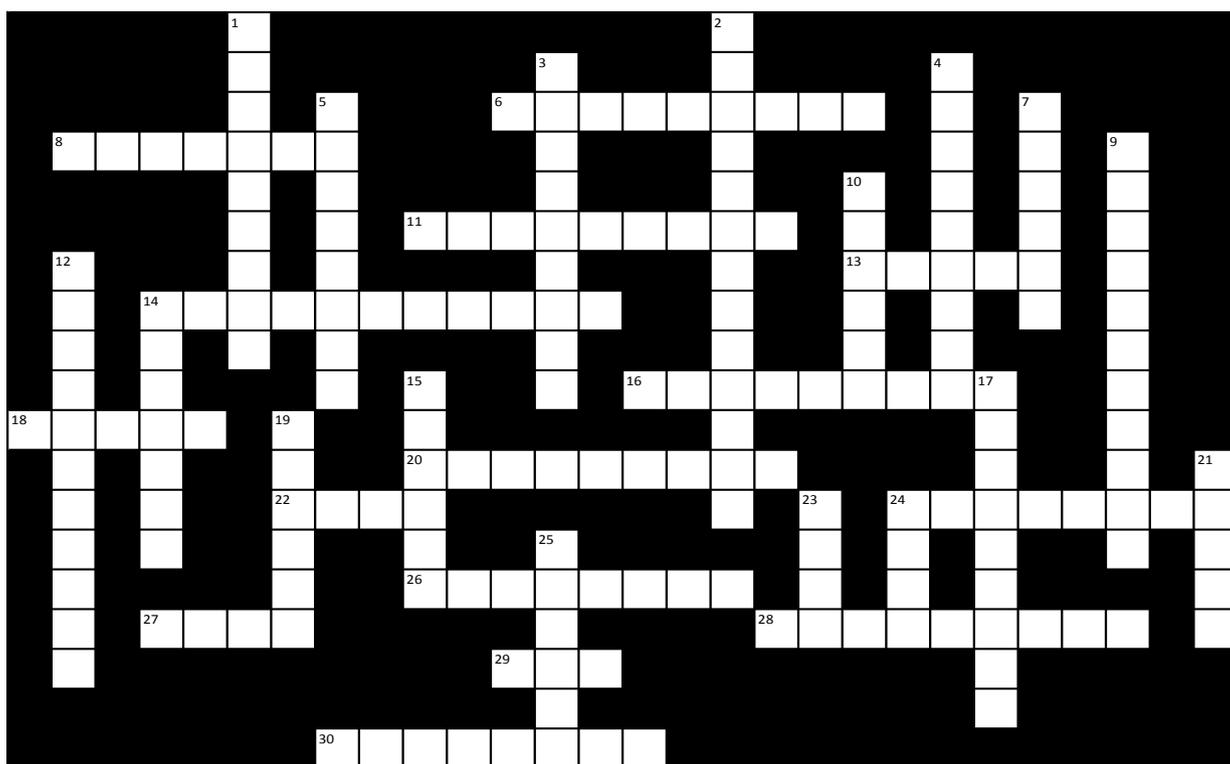
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/60`44199@NO4/?saved=1>

Neophron Tours, see his website for details :

<http://www.ribbonbirdtours.co.uk/Tours.htm>

Paul Slade

Cryptic Crossword 2, John & Anne Jenkins



Clues

Across

- 6 Cold garden tool used on maize. (9)
 8 Stop at this light before the election. (7)
 11 Got up for a strong short measure. (9)
 13 A mix-up in the pines. (5)
 14 Hadrian's a quiet mover! (11)
 16 Sticky stuff on the beach in front of East End lass. (9)
 18 Boost internet connection? (5)
 20 In flames on top of a wave! (9)
 22 We're told we must take this with the smooth! (4)
 24 Push 50 – then the queen arrives. (8)
 26 e.g. monkey to come out of its shell. (8)
 27 In panic, rowing away. (4)
 28 Wintry weather on noisy Scottish isle. (9)
 29 A British bird. (3)
 30 Talk after sound of success. (8)

Down

- 1 Canoodle with Clinton, for example. (9)
 2 Obstruction not applicable to the French
 Christmas bird – cold inside! (8,5)
 3 Is this oldie a favourite? Say yes! (9)
 4 A bit of high ground. (9)
 5 When the judge put it on you were done for! (8)
 7 Very large victim of raptor. (6)
 9 Very precious though well below par. (6,5)
 10 Little sibling joins family. (6)
 12 It ain't half windy after it's dark! (11)
 14 All twisted above the shoulders. (7)
 15 Chuffin' along like old Billy? (6)
 17 Very sharp statement of account. (9)
 19 Despicable person is obscene, not dead. (6)
 21 This bird could give us a lift! (5)
 23 Common little sooty ...or maybe a butty? (4)
 24 Manuscript reversed for bridge partners. (4)
 25 On this beach, ought to find bird! (6)

Want to learn how to count birds

Hi Jean

Please use my address as you will only have to relay any contacts, potential counters would meet me on WeBS count days 2 hours before high water at Fluke Hall Car Park and I would talk them through the survey as I conduct it with opportunities to count varying size parties of birds as they arrive at the roost. I have a fair amount of training experience as I deliver similar to Students from Blackpool & Fylde and Myerscough Colleges, plus our own volunteers, if need any other information please don't hesitate to contact me,

Len Blacow e mail: <mailto:LBlacow@wyrebc.gov.uk>

2011 WeBS Dates:

- Oct 16th
 - Nov 20th
 - Dec 11th
-

Trips by Ribble Bird Tours run by Stuart Meredith

Sunday September 18th The Fylde Coast Meet at 8am

A day spent birding around the Fylde should produce a good selection of autumn migrants and early winter visitors including the first of the Pink footed Geese from Iceland. There'll be the last of the summer migrants and perhaps a scarce or unusual visitor or two.

Wednesday September 21st Leighton Moss & Silverdale Meet 8am

A day in the Silverdale area where our main target birds will be Bearded Tit along with Bittern at Leighton and Hawfinch (if the Sizergh birds are showing at the time). There'll be numerous other birds to see today too and these will feature waders, raptors and wildfowl amongst them as well as a chance of Kingfisher.

Sat / Sun September 24th / 25th East Yorkshire Coast Depart 6am

A weekend on the East Coast will see us visiting sites such as Spurn, Filey, Flamborough, North Cave Wetlands and Blacktoft Sands for the best of the autumn migrants that, depending on weather systems, could include species such as Great Grey Shrike, Red breasted Flycatcher, Wryneck, Yellow browed Warbler and Firecrest along with scarcer and rarer species. There should also be plenty of the more usual species such as Ring Ouzel, Pied Flycatcher, Redstart and Brent Geese. Bittern, Bearded Tit and Barn Owl could be amongst the birds if we visit Blacktoft Sands.

Cost of £185 includes overnight stay with dinner and breakfast, all transport and services of leader / guide. Single room supplement £15. Minimum of 4 and a maximum of 5 bookings required on this tour.

Mon / Tues Oct 24th / 25th Hilbre Island, Parkgate & Inner Marsh Farm Depart 8am

An overnight stay on the Wirral Peninsula when we'll visit at least three excellent birding locations. There'll be an array of wildfowl that'll include Brent Geese along with numerous waders that may include Greenshank and Spotted Redshank. There's usually Little Egrets too with a good chance of raptors such as Hen Harrier, Peregrine, Marsh Harrier and Merlin and maybe Water Pipit and Water Rail.

Cost of £185 includes overnight stay with dinner and breakfast, all transport and the services of leader / guide. Single room supplement £15. Minimum of 4 and a maximum of 5 bookings required on this tour.

Wednesday October 26th Over Wyre & The Conder Meet 8am

There'll be plenty to see today. We'll hope that there are a few unusual geese amongst the Pink feet flocks and maybe the odd Bewick's amongst the Whooper Swans. There's a good chance of Spotted Redshank and

Greenshank among the waders and we also have a good chance of Barn and Little Owls, Kingfisher, Yellowhammer, Tree Sparrow, Twite, Stock Dove and Corn Bunting too.

Friday November 4th Pennington & Wigan Flashes Meet 8am

A day where we'll see plenty of wildfowl and woodland species with a reasonable chance of something unusual or rare along the way. There'll be the usual exceptional views of Willow Tit and Bullfinch at Pennington with a chance of Bittern at the Wigan Flashes as well as Redpolls too.

Mon 14th – Fri 18th November North Norfolk Coast Depart 6am

A great 5 day trip to Norfolk where we'll see an array of great birds that'll include up to 10 species of geese, Shorelark, Snow Bunting, Bittern, Bearded Tit, Red necked Grebe, Velvet Scoter, Golden Pheasant, Long tailed Duck, Barn Owl, Common Crane, Hen Harrier and Marsh Harrier as well as any (usually many) rarities that are around at the time.

<http://www.ribbonbirdtours.co.uk/Tours.htm>

Crossword No. 2

Solutions

Across

6 Corncrake
8 Redpoll
11 Rosefinch
13 Snipe
14 Wallcreeper
16 Goosander
18 Stint
20 Firecrest
22 Ruff
24 Shoveler
26 Nuthatch
27 Crow
28 Snowfinch
29 Auk
30 Whinchat

Down

1 Spoonbill
2 Barnacle goose
3 Goldeneye
4 Partridge
5 Blackcap
7 Osprey
9 Golden eagle
10 Siskin
12 Nightingale
14 Wryneck
15 Puffin
17 Razorbill
19 Curlew
21 Crane
23 Tern
24 Smew
25 Chough