

Daniel M Turner
North Shields
Saturday 26 Jan 2008

To: NE England volunteers
North Norfolk volunteers
SE Scotland volunteers

Cc: Dr Jan van Franeker, Martin Heubeck, Eric Meek,
Dr Jane Delany, Keith Fairclough, and other interested parties

Dear All,

Here is our regional winter newsletter for all you 'Save the North Sea' Fulmar project and Beached Bird surveyors and interested parties.

Thank you all very much indeed once again for your time and commitment. Our data and samples continue to grow and provide invaluable information.

The next Fulmar Litter workshop is to be on Texel, The Netherlands, in March. I shall be taking some Fulmar stomachs there from 2007 corpses collected in northeast England. It will be good to catch up with the other co-ordinators from around the North Sea.

British Airways very generously awarded 'Northeast England Beached Bird Surveys' £650 in December as part of their 2007 outstanding community volunteering award programme, following my application in November. I have therefore set up a bank account with Lloyds TSB in order to have access to these funds. Some of this money has been spent to purchase a freezer to be housed with Martin Blick in County Cleveland for the storage of bird corpses. Martin has been much involved in our Northeast England project since December 2003 and has found very many corpses during his regular surveys of the beaches at Hartlepool North Sands, Redcar, Saltburn, etc. The freezer will be a valuable asset for this area, in order to keep bird remains in good condition before transportation for storage and analysis elsewhere. With the rest of this award another freezer may be purchased, also additional measuring equipment which volunteers may borrow and possibly one or two other items. Everyone's efforts are being appreciated!

It seems likely that analysis of the Razorbill wreck from late September 2007, which was reported in our last newsletter, from the eastern North Sea will be recorded in a paper for publication. Our group will probably be providing some of our autumn data, along with Orkney and Shetland, as a part of the whole picture.

Yet another of my British Airways friends and colleagues is to join our group and cover a stretch of shore at the very northern end of Druridge Bay in mid Northumberland. Jim Donnelly lives at Amble, right next to the beach, and is also interested in photography. Thanks Jim and I hope you enjoy your surveys.

Can everyone please continue to return your monthly survey forms (including 'nil returns') and if you have any outstanding reports for recent months can you please forward them to me? Many thanks.

Here's wishing you well for 2008.

Best wishes,

Dan Turner

January 2008 news update

Northeast England, Beached Bird Survey summary report September to December 2007

NE England Surveyors

Martin Blick
 Chris Beneke, George McVitie and Gordon Hyslop
 Peter Collins
 Jonathan Everett
 Daniel M Turner
 Steve Holliday and Maurice Hepple
 Ray Chilton
 Gavin Dudley, Phil Gilbert, Graham Relf
 Phil Davey
 George Moody
 Malcolm Hutcheson
 Hew Ellis, Michael Yianni and Malcolm Eason

Area

County Cleveland
 County Durham
 Tyne and Wear (south)
 South Tyneside, Tyne and Wear
 North Tyneside, SE and Mid N/land
 Blyth south beach (South N/land)
 North Blyth / Wansbeck (South N/land)
 Druridge Bay (Mid Northumberland)
 Beal Station (Fenham Flats) (North N/land)
 Lindisfarne (North N/land)
 Berwick area (North N/land)
 N/land and Tyne & Wear (occasional surveyors)

Key

Cle
 Du
 T&W
 T&W
 MN, SN, T&W
 SN
 SN
 MN
 NN
 NN
 NN
 MN, SN, T&W

Month	September 2007									October 2007						
	Northumberland			T & W		Du	Cle	Tot	Northumberland			T & W		Du	Cle	Tot
	NN	MN	SN	N	S				N	Mi	S	N	S			
Kilometres	18.5	7.7	7.8	3.0	2.1	4.5	5.0	48.6	18.5	1.2	7.8	3.0	2.3	4.5	10	47.3
Fulmar								0							3	3
Gannet								0							2	2
Eider Duck	1							1	1							1
Wigeon								0			1					1
Waders	1						1	2								0
Arctic Skua								0							1	1
Gulls	1				1			2			1		2		4	7
Terns						1		1								0
Auks	29	15	5		1	1	10	61	4	3	7		1		25	40
Feral Pigeon			1					1			1					1
Total corpses	32	15	6	0	2	2	11	68	5	3	10	0	3	0	35	56

Month	November 2007									December 2007						
	Northumberland			T & W		Du	Cle	Tot	Northumberland			T & W		Du	Cle	Tot
	NN	MN	SN	N	S				N	Mi	S	N	S			
Kilometres	18.5	3.2	7.8	2.2	1.5	4.5	6.5	44.2	18.5	3.0	7.8	3.0	2.3	4.5	6.5	45.6
Fulmar								0								0
Cormorant	1							1					1			1
Pink-foot Gse								0	1							1
Shelduck								0	1							1
Eider Duck	1							1								0
Gulls		1				1	2	4		1	1				2	4
Auks	21	2	2			1	18	44	6	1	2				1	10
Feral Pigeon								0								0
Total corpses	23	3	2	0	0	2	20	50	8	2	3	0	1	0	3	17

There was a remarkable movement of many thousands of Little Auks *Alle alle* off the east coast of England in November 2007 peaking during the second week. At the Farne Islands, Northumberland, on 11th Nov a new UK record of 28,803 birds were recorded during the day. Also at the Farne Islands 4,476 were recorded moving N on 13th and 6,170 noted on 25th (these Farne Island figures were extracted from the Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club, i.e. NTBC, Monthly Summary for November 2007). The birds struggled against strong Northerly winds and were blown very close to the shore. As a consequence some of our surveyors were able to recover corpses and we currently have a total of 18 from this period stored in a freezer. I have taken some measurements from many of these birds. As well as Northeast England surveyors providing corpses, we received one corpse each from Michael S Hodgson and Alan Curry of the NTBC. These Little Auk corpses will be sent at the end of the winter to Jerome Fort in France for analysis during his PhD studies into the wintering ecology of this species.

Auk corpse summary, Sept – Dec 2007, NE England surveys

Species	Sept 07	Oct 07	Nov 07	Dec 07	Total
Guillemot	38	31	6	5	80
Razorbill	6	6	1	1	14
Puffin	-	3	2	2	7
Little Auk	-	-	31	2	33
Auk species	17	-	4	-	21
Total	61	40	44	10	155



Photo 1 (left).

Martin Blick with eight Little Auk corpses he collected at Hartlepool (the two birds on the right of the front row) and Saltburn (six birds), County Cleveland, on 12 and 13 November 2007 respectively. These birds weighed between 110 and 121 grams. Wing lengths were between 115 and 131 mm.

Photo 2 (above).

Little Auk corpse NEE-2007-003-LA on Seaton Sluice beach, SE Northumberland, 13 Nov 2007. This bird weighed 120 grams and had a left wing length of 122 mm.

Photos by D.M.Turner

Gull corpse summary, Sept – Dec 2007, NE England surveys

Species	Sept 07	Oct 07	Nov 07	Dec 07	Total
Black-headed	1	-	2	1	4
Common	-	1	1	-	2
Herring	-	4	1	3	8
Great Black-backed	-	1	-	-	1
Kittiwake	1 juv	1	-	-	2
Total	2	7	4	4	17
Length of coast (km)	48.6	47.3	44.2	45.6	185.7

juv = juvenile i.e. bird of the year.

Other interesting shore finds (dead unless specified) during the NE England Beached Bird Surveys

Oystercatcher	13.09.07	Hartlepool N Sands	MAB	Dead about 2 weeks.
Sheep skull	14.09.07	Seaham to Ryhope	GM	
Curlew	23.09.07	Lindisfarne	GDRM	Single bird.
Blackbird	12.10.07	Redcar	MAB	24 hours dead.
Redwing x 3	12.10.07	Redcar	MAB	One bird c2 days dead, two birds c4-5 days dead.
Seal sp.	23.10.07	Wansbeck estuary to North Blyth.	RC	A pup. Dead 2 – 3 weeks. 2 feet 6 inches long. No head.
Brown Hare	28.10.07	Seaton Sluice	DMT	Complete. Photos taken.
Flounder	28.10.07	Seaton Sluice	DMT	Complete, fresh. Photos taken. Fish sp.
Starling	04.11.07	Blyth South beach	DMT	Possible adult male (from measurements and plumage).
Grey Seal	13.11.07	Saltburn	MAB	Adult male? Over 2 metres in length.
Harbour Porpoise	13.12.07	Hartlepool N Sands	MAB	About one week dead. Only 1.2 metres long.
Ray's Bream	23.12.07	Blyth South Beach	STH	Specific name: <i>Brama brama</i> . Photographed.
Saithe	23.12.07	Seaton Sluice	MY / DMT	Specific name: <i>Pollachius virens</i> . A fish species also called Coley and Coalfish. Photographed. 38 cm long.
Salmon	23.12.07	Blyth South Beach	DMT	Specific name: <i>Salmo salar</i> . 57 cm in length. A male with a hooked lower jaw. Photographed.
Eider	14.01.08	Holy Island	GDRM	Female, ringed (BTO) HT81972. Reported to BTO on 23 Jan 2008.

Stop press. Steve Holliday informed me (26 Jan 2008) that he had just heard of the presence of a live Harp Seal *Pagophilus groenlandicus* during Wednesday 23 Jan on the beach stretch he surveys with Maurice Hepple at Blyth South Beach. The seal eventually swam out to sea. (a) '... breeds in the White Sea, ... around Greenland, Jan Meyen and northeastern Canada', '... vagrants occur as far south as Britain'. (b) 'The best swimmer of all seals'. (c) '... the most numerous pinniped of the North Atlantic Ocean', 'The coats of the young – "whitecoats" – have been highly prized'. The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) was founded in 1969 to combat the seal slaughter off the east coast of Canada. References: (a) Corbert, G, and Ovenden D, (1980). The Mammals of Britain and Europe. Collins. (b) Van Den Brink, F H, (1967). The Field Guide to the Mammals of Britain and Europe. Collins (c) Macdonald, D (1984). The Encyclopaedia of Mammals: 1. George Allen & Unwin.



Photo 3 (above). Ray's Bream *Brama brama*, 23 Dec 2007, Blyth South Beach. Found by Steve Holliday. Scale: the edge of the black camera pouch, below the fish, is 10 cm long. Photo by S.T.Holliday.



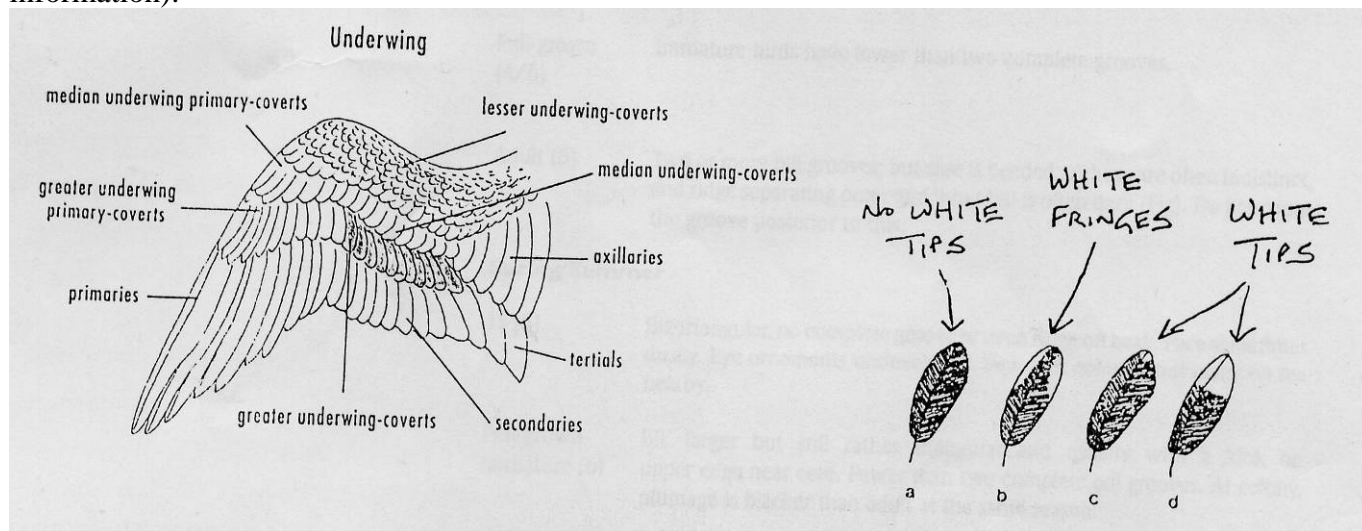
Photo 4 (left). Maurice Hepple (left) and Steve Holliday (right), 17 Sept 2006, Blyth South Beach. Maurice and Steve normally perform a monthly survey here together. Photo by D.M.Turner

Photo 5 (right). Jim Donnelly, 26 Jan 2008, Low Hauxley to Amble beaches, mid Northumberland (the white lighthouse on Coquet Island is visible in the background). Jim has lived at Amble for eleven years and before moving to Northumberland he was a part-time ranger in the Peak District National Park. Jim performed some bird surveys in this previous role. On the offshore Coquet Island is a healthy breeding population of Roseate Terns *Sterna dougallii* (94 pairs in 2006), other Terns *Sterna* sp., as well as Puffins *Fratercula arctica*, Black-headed Gulls *Larus ridibundus*, etc. There are also breeding Grey Seals *Halichoerus grypus* which Jim can hear from his house as they call in the winter, he describes these sounds as 'eerie'.

Photo by D.M.Turner



Guillemot: Birds are scored according to the colour and pattern of the greater under-wing coverts (see below). These feathers have either white tips (almost certainly first-winter birds), have silvery white fringes (probably immature), or are all dark grey (no white tips i.e. adult). (Extract from Martin Heubeck information).



Other comments, NE England surveyors - Nov 2007

George Moody: on 11th, Large numbers of Little Auk passing over, 10 – 40 at a time, some landing in the harbour only to be harassed by Great Black-backed Gulls (GBBG). I later spoke with George on 17th Nov: he said GBB Gulls had harassed the Little Auks during passage, the Little Auks dived underwater, but the gulls took them as they surfaced. A local farmer had seen no Little Auks in his fields during this passage, although during previous passages he had recorded some.

Peter Collins: on 11th, constant passage of Little Auks close inshore passing directly overhead along the beach from Whitburn to Roker. The Great Black-backed Gulls were having a ‘great’ time feeding on them i.e. taking live birds. No Little Auk corpses were found there from 11th – 17th.

Southeast England – Beached Bird Survey summary report 2007

Data collected by: Steve Bexton MRCVS BVMS, Veterinary Officer, RSPCA East Winch Wildlife Centre

and his team: Hayley McMinn, Alison Charles and Sue Levings.

Table. Summary data: dead birds found during the Holkham Bay surveys, Norfolk.

Month 2007	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Kilometres surveyed	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.0	2.9	2.9	2.9		
Fulmar													0
Black-headed Gull	1												1
Guillemot			1				3		3		1		8
Puffin						1							1
Total birds	1	0	1	0	0	1	3	0	3	0	1		10
Number of oiled birds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0

Table 2. Other interesting shore finds (dead unless specified)

Species	Date	Where found	Observer	Comments
Common Seal	09.11.07	Holkham Bay	A. Charles	Juvenile. Jaw bone only.

****Note:** Please remember to save any ringed auks, any Little Auks (whatever the condition and state of completeness) and Fulmars (with complete abdomens) for analysis. Also save any interesting specimens that are in good condition – for the Hancock Museum or our own collection.

To: NE England volunteers
North Norfolk volunteers
SE Scotland volunteers

Daniel M Turner
North Shields
Thursday 21 Aug 2008

Cc: Dr Jan Andries van Franeker, Martin Heubeck, Eric Meek,
Dr Jane Delany, Keith Fairclough, and other interested parties

Dear All,

Here is our sixteenth regional newsletter (including NE England, SE England and SE Scotland) for the 'Save the North Sea' Fulmar project and Beached Bird Surveys.

Thank you all very much indeed once again for your time and commitment – this newsletter serves to summarise the results of recent surveys and show how important they are.

Newsletter 16 SNS Fulmar project and BBS (including NEE, SEE and SES):

1. Overview	page 1
2. Northeast England, Beached Bird Survey summary report January to June 2008	page 2
3. Recent donations to Hancock Museum and preserved specimens for NEBBS Group	page 5
4. Northern race of the Razorbill <i>Alca torda torda</i>	page 5
5. Some recent illustrated finds in Northeast England	page 6
6. Scottish Seabird Centre event, Feb 2008	page 7
7. 'Save the North Sea' Fulmar workshop, March 2008, Texel, The Netherlands	page 8
8. Fulmar wreck, May - June 2008, Northeast England	page 9

The British Airways award (Outstanding Community Volunteering Awards 2007) for the 'Northeast England Beached Bird Surveys' group of £650 has so far been spent as follows:

- (a) Bird freezer. Housed with Martin Blick in County Cleveland £159.90
- (b) Travel expenses. For some extra surveys during the Fulmar wreck of May / June £34.80
- (c) Preservation of 8 bird specimens: to use for educational purposes for our project. appr.£200.00

Work for (c) above is still underway, but we have received and paid for the preservation of six birds so far. I am having some steel 300mm rulers made up into bird wing rulers so that all our Northeast England surveyors should be able to have one if you wish: total cost approx £40.00

This will leave approximately £215. Here are a couple of further ideas:

- (1) Dial callipers from the BTO cost £22.33, they are used for measuring head / bill and tarsus – if a surveyor would like one perhaps we can subsidise the cost and charge surveyors half price at £11?
- (2) And perhaps we can provide a similar offer for purchase of 'Id guide to European Non-Passerines' (BTO Guide 24), full price is £12, includes detailed measurements of birds: £6 to group members?

Welcome to another two new surveyors:

- (1) Jamie Regan, Dunbar, East Lothian. Jamie attended the event at the Scottish Seabird Centre and expressed an interest in getting involved.
- (2) Alex Moore, Cullercoats Bay, North Tyneside. Alex is a beach lifeguard at Cullercoats Bay and one of his duties is to check the bay each day for litter, etc.

Please continue to return your monthly survey forms (including 'nil returns' i.e. when no corpses are found) and if you have any un-submitted reports for recent months please forward. Many thanks.

Here's wishing you all well for the rest of summer 2008 and onwards into the autumn.

Best wishes,
Dan Turner

Newsletter 16

'Save the North Sea' Fulmar project and Beached Bird Surveys (including NEE, SEE and SES)

Northeast England, Beached Bird Survey summary report January to June 2008

Area	Key	Area	Key	Area	Key
County Cleveland	Cle	South Northumberland	SN	Tyne and Wear (South)	T&W (S)
County Durham	Du	Mid Northumberland	MN	Tyne and Wear (North)	T&W (N)
		North Northumberland	NN		

Month	January 2008								February 2008							
	Northumberland			T & W		Du	Cle	Tot	Northumberland			T & W		Du	Cle	Tot
	NN	MN	SN	N	S				NN	MN	SN	N	S			
Kilometres	18.5	5.9	7.8	3.1	0.0	4.5	0.0	39.8	18.5	3.6	6.8	3.0	0.8	2.0	8.5	43.2
Fulmar								0								0
Cormorant				1				1								0
Shag	6		1					7	3							3
Eider Duck	2	1						3	4							4
Waders	1							1			1					1
Gulls		2						2		1				3		4
Auks	1							1	4	1						5
(Redwing)		1						1								0
Total corpses	10	4	1	1	-	0	-	16	11	2	1	0	0	0	3	17

Month	March 2008								April 2008							
	Northumberland			T & W		Du	Cle	Tot	Northumberland			T & W		Du	Cle	Tot
	NN	MN	SN	N	S				NN	MN	SN	N	S			
Kilometres	18.5	5.9	7.8	3.0		4.5	6.5	46.2	18.5	5.3	7.8	3.0	0.8	4.5	5.0	44.9
Fulmar					1			1							3	3
Gannet								0					1			1
Cormorant								0			1					1
Shag	3	1						4	2	1	1					4
Eider Duck								0	1							1
R-b Merganser								0		1						1
Waders								0		1	1					2
Pheasant		1						1								0
Gulls	1		1					2	1	2	3	3			2	11
Auks	1	1	1				2	5		2	1				1	4
Feral Pigeon								0			1					1
Wood Pigeon								0							1	1
Total corpses	5	3	2	0	1	0	2	13	4	7	8	3	0	1	7	30

Month	May 2008								June 2008							
	Northumberland			T & W		Du	Cle	Tot	Northumberland			T & W		Du	Cle	Tot
	NN	MN	SN	N	S				NN	MN	SN	N	S			
Kilometres	18.5	8.9	7.9	3.0	0.8	4.5	3.0	46.6	18.5	5.6	7.8	3.3	0.8	4.5	11	51.5
Fulmar	2	11	14	1			6	34		4	1	1			4	10
Gannet		4	3			1		8		1					3	4
Shag	1							1								0
Eider Duck		1						1	2							2
Kestrel			1					1								0
Wader?(DMT)			1					1							1	1
Gulls	2	11	11			1	3	28		1	1		1		7	10
Terns	2	1						3	1		1				2	4
Auks	1	6	4				1	12	1	7						8
Feral Pigeon		1	7	3				11			1					1
Duck?(STH)			1					1								0
Unknown		1	1					2								0
Total corpses	8	35	44	4	0	2	10	103	4	13	4	1	1	0	17	40

Some data are still to be received, to be added later and further checks made.

Current NE England Surveyors

	Area	Key
Martin A Blick	County Cleveland	Cle
Chris Beneke, George McVitie and Gordon Hyslop	County Durham	Du
Peter Collins	Tyne and Wear (south)	T&W (S)
Jonathan Everett	South Tyneside, Tyne and Wear (south)	T&W (S)
Alex Moore	Cullercoats Bay, North Tyneside	T&W (N)
Daniel M Turner	North Tyneside, SE and Mid N/land	MN, SN, T&W (N)
Steve Holliday and Maurice Happle	Blyth south beach (South N/land)	
Ray Chilton	North Blyth / Wansbeck (South N/land)	SN
Gavin Dudley, Jane Young, Phil Gilbert, Graham Relf, Jim Donnelly	Druridge Bay (Mid Northumberland)	MN
Phil Davey	Beal Station (Fenham Flats) (North N/land)	NN
George Moody	Lindisfarne (North N/land)	NN
Malcolm Hutcheson	Berwick area (North N/land)	NN
Hew Ellis, Michael Yianni and Malcolm Eason	N/land and Tyne & Wear (occasional surveyors)	MN, SN, T&W

Past NE England surveyors: Ross Ahmed, Keziah & Otis Gilbert, Jenny Prince, Geoff Siggins, Mick Simpson, Laurie Small.

Other interesting shore finds (dead unless specified) during the NE England Beached Bird Surveys

Oystercatcher	03.01.08	Lindisfarne	GDRM	Fresh
Pipefish sp.	05.01.08	Cambois to N. Blyth	RC	Approximately 30 pipefish washed up on the southern half of the beach, some still alive.
Thrush sp. – prob. Redwing	05.01.08	Druridge Bay (South end)	GRD / JY	Wing remains and breastbone.
Eider	14.01.08	Lindisfarne	GDRM	Female, ringed (BTO) HT81972. Ringing data: Ringed at 3+ years, 22 May 2000, Inner Farne, Farne Islands, Northumberland, Nat Hist Soc of Northumbria. 2793 days, 12 km, 309 degrees.
Harbour Porpoise	23.01.08	Wansbeck Estuary to North Blyth	RC	Approximately one metre in length, very fresh, still bleeding. At high water mark. Left side of face and lower jaw missing. One cut on back. Possibly died after getting caught in fishing boat netting 0.5 miles or so offshore.
Harp Seal - alive	23.01.08	Blyth South Beach	Per STH	The seal (an adult) was on the beach during the day and left in the afternoon heading out to sea.
Grey Seal	26.01.08	Druridge Bay	JD & DMT	Head rotting to skull. Still present 9 March 08.
Curlew	16.02.08	Blyth South Beach	MH & STH	Dead for approximately four days. Probable male.
Lumpsucker (fish)	22.02.08	Whitley Bay	DMT	Approx 23 cm in length. Probable male – showing orange belly. Photographed.
Shag	09.03.08	Druridge Bay, near Cresswell	GRD	Fresh dead on beach. Not oiled. BTO ring: 1334279. Photos from GRD Ringed: Inchmickery, Lothian Region, Scotland, as a nestling in a brood of two on 19-June-2007. Ringed by A. W. Lauder. Time since ringing: 264 days, distance: 135 km in direction: 128 deg.
Pheasant	09.03.08	Druridge Bay	GRD	Wings and breast bone
Possible Harbour Porpoise	16.03.08	Tynemouth Long Sands	DMT	Remains only. Missing head, tail and fin. Dark upperside and paler underside.
Grey Seal	23.03.08	Druridge Bay	DMT	Complete, fresh, photographed. Approx 112 cm in length.
Redwing	24.03.08	Saltburn	MAB	About two days dead.
Red-legged Partridge	06.04.08	Blyth South Beach	STH & MH	This species is raised on a nearby farm for shooting. Perhaps the bird was winged by a shot, landing in the river Blyth only to be

				washed downstream.
Cormorant <i>P.C. carbo</i>	06.04.08	Blyth South Beach	STH & MH	This individual was attributed to the subspecies <i>P C carbo</i> by the finders.
Woodcock	20.04.08	Blyth South Beach	DMT	Right wing and breast bone only. Collected.
Shag	20.04.08	Blyth South Beach	DMT	Adult. Measured and photographed. Collected. BTO ring: 1300444. Ringed: nestling, 29-Jun-1991, Craigleith, Firth of Forth, Lothian. Ringer: Lothian Ringing Group. 6140 days, 132 km, 145 degrees.
Turnstone	26.04.08	Druridge Bay	DMT	Outer wing feathers and breast bone. Collected. Photographed (8242 - 45).
Racing Pigeon	04.05.08	Blyth South Beach	DMT	Dead about 3 weeks. Left leg: Red rubber ring – 3677 Right leg: White ring, GB07 S63591. Reported to Royal Pigeon Racing Association The bird was from a loft in Rotherham.
Eider	10.05.08	Alnmouth Bay, Northumberland	Maurice Hepple	Female. BTO ring: HT20774. Long dead. Ringed on Coquet Island, Amble, 04-June-1998, aged 2+ years. Ringed by J.C.Coulson.
Shag	15.05.08	Holy Island	Maurice Hepple	Colour-ringed (Green: 'JIU'). Long dead. Found in sand dunes at The Snook (grid: NU100435). BTO ring: G9388. Awaiting ringing details.
Fish species	17.05.08	North Blyth	STH	Probably a Thick-lipped grey mullet, Latin: <i>Chelon labrosus</i> . Id from photo on shore
Sandwich Tern	20.05.08	Lindisfarne	GDRM	Poor condition, thin. Passed to English Nature.
Arctic Tern	21.05.08	Lindisfarne	GDRM	Starvation likely cause of death. Passed to English Nature.
Kestrel	26.05.08	Blyth South	STH / MH	Female, presumably adult. Complete corpse, but weathered. About 4 days dead.
Kittiwake	26.05.08	Hartlepool North Sands	MAB	BTO ring: ET66650. Ringing data: ringed as a nestling from a brood of three, 14 July 2000, Inchkeith, Firth of Forth, Fife Region, Scotland. Lothian Ringing Group. 2873 days, 190 km, 141 degrees.
Common Seal	29.05.08	Cheswick Black Rocks	Maurice Hepple	Pup, 3 – 4 weeks old. Complete, eyes had been scavenged. Dead 4 – 5 days.
Grey Seal	07.06.08	North Blyth	RC	Adult. Jaw and flipper bones exposed, patches of skin missing, starting to decompose. Very smelly. Still present on 17 June. 5 – 6 feet long
Oystercatcher	12.06.08	County Cleveland	MAB	Dead about two weeks
Hare	12.06.08	County Cleveland	MAB	Dead about two days.
Harbour Porpoise	14.06.08	Hartlepool North Sands	MAB	Dead about one week. 0.85 metre long.

Gull corpse summary, January to June 2008, NE England beach surveys

Species	Jan 08	Feb 08	Mar 08	Apr 08	May 08	June 08	Total
Black-headed	1	1	1	1	2	2	8
Common		2		2	2		6
Herring	1	1		3	8	3	16
Great Black-backed			1	3	2		6
Lesser Black-backed					4		4
Black-backed sp.						1	1
Kittiwake				2	8	4	14
Unknown					2		2
Total	2	4	2	11	28	10	57

Auk corpse summary, January to June 2008, NE England beach surveys

Species	Jan 08	Feb 08	Mar 08	Apr 08	May 08	Jun 08	Total
---------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	-------

NEBBS Newsletters 15 to 16, 2008

Guillemot	1	5	4	3	10	6	29
Razorbill					1		1
Puffin			1	1	1	2	5
Little Auk							0
Total	1	5	5	4	12	8	35

Tern corpse summary, January to June 2008, NE England beach surveys:

Species	Mar 08	Apr 08	May 08	June 08	Total
Sandwich			2	2	4
Common					0
Arctic			1	2	3
Total	0	0	3	4	7

Recent donations (June 2008) to Hancock Museum, Newcastle, by NE England beached bird surveyors

Squid.	10.04.08	Wansbeck Estuary to North Blyth shore	Ray Chilton	Approx 60 cm in length, found high tide mark, fresh.
Octopus	06.05.08	North Blyth shore	Ray Chilton	Approx 30 cm in length. High tide mark.
Long-tailed Tit, nest	May 2008	South Tyneside	Jon Everett	Collected from Jon's dad's garden. It was attacked by a Magpie and the adult birds deserted the eggs.
Guillemot, adult	28.05.08	North Blyth - Cambois	Ray Chilton	Adult.
Kittiwake, adult	28.05.08	Holy Island	GDR Moody	Adult, fresh.
Kittiwake, chick.	06.06.08	Tyne Bridge, north Tower, Newcastle	D.M.Turner	Freshly dead at base of tower.
Blackbird, adult	09.06.08	Dunstanburgh (north)	D.M.Turner	Adult male, fresh.

Recently received from Eric Morton (taxidermist with the Hancock Museum), after preservation. Specimens were mostly collected during Northeast England beached bird surveys (NEBBS).

Puffin	23.06.07	Druridge Bay	Phil Gilbert	Photos and measurements taken.
Kittiwake	19.08.07	Blyth South Beach	D.M.Turner	Juvenile, very fresh. Photos and measurements taken on shore.
Sparrowhawk (Immature male)	20.11.07	Newcastle Business Park	Michael Scott	Not from the shore, but a good specimen worth preserving. Measurements taken.
Shag	20.04.08	Blyth South beach	D.M.Turner	Adult, ringed. Photos and measurements taken on shore. Ring: 1300444. Nestling, 29-Jun-1991, Craighleith, Firth of Forth, Lothian Region.

The costs for the preservation of the specimens in the table above is being paid out of our community volunteering award from British Airways (The price is great value. Many thanks to Eric – a very skilled man!) and will be used for educational purposes. Eric is also preserving some other specimens for our group: Fulmar, Gannet, Red-legged Partridge, Guillemot, – collected during beach surveys.

Northern race of the Razorbill *Alca torda torda*

The northern race of the Razorbill is a possible winter visitor to our coastline in small numbers. In order to detect such individuals wing (and other) measurements would be necessary – the northern race is slightly larger than our own British breeding race *A torda islandica*. If you make use of one of the wing rulers (300 mm) mentioned on page 1, then accurate wing measurements should be possible.

Wing measurements (mm) of fully grown birds are below. Data from BTO Guide 24.

<u>Subspecies</u>	male	female
<i>A. t. torda</i>	201 – 216	201 - 216
<i>A. t. islandica</i>	187 - 200	194 - 200

Previous records of the northern race from our coastline are sparse (a single Northumberland record: Embleton, 1969), but we already have another probable specimen (from measurements, 18.02.07, Druridge Bay, DMT) and probably another one (or two) from head / bill photos (Oct 2007, County Cleveland, MAB).

Any Razorbills with more than one white line on the bill **should be collected please**.

If you are not sure about measurements / ageing / identification – you may collect Razorbills, etc (please phone or email me). Thanks to Steve Holliday for suggesting that we look out for Northern Razorbills.

Some recent illustrated finds in Northeast England



1. Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo carbo*) adult, Blyth South Beach, 6 April 2008. Photo by Steve Holliday.



2. Gannet (*Morus bassanus*) adult, Cresswell, Druridge Bay, Northumberland, 10 May 2008. Photo by Gavin Dudley.

If anyone finds a good Cormorant specimen please collect it from the shore and let me know so it may be passed to the Hancock Museum, Newcastle upon Tyne. The Museum is very keen to have one or two Cormorants for new displays. Chris Beneke found a Gannet corpse on the Durham coast on 19 April and he saved it. This is being preserved for our group. Alan Gilbertson saw this amazing White-beaked Dolphin (photo 3) on the shore of Druridge Bay on 2 June. When he checked again three days later it had been washed away. Alan took an excellent set of photos, is a keen birder and if he has time in the future may commence regular beach surveys with our group.



3. White-beaked Dolphin (*Lagenorhynchus albirostris*), Chevington Burn outlet, Druridge Bay, Northumberland, 2 June 2008. Photo by Alan Gilbertson.

Scottish Seabird Centre event, Feb 2008

On 27 February I gave an illustrated talk at the Scottish Seabird Centre (SSC), North Berwick, East Lothian, about beached bird surveys in Northeast England and the 'Save the North Sea' Fulmar project. This was followed by an interval and then the evening continued with a public dissection of Fulmar NEE-2007-006 collected (by Phil Gilbert) from Druridge Bay, Northumberland. The event was held in the cinema at the Seabird Centre and recorded on video by Kerr Loy, a keen local volunteer. Much interest was shown in the event since it came at the time when there was a lot of media discussion about plastic bags and pollution of the marine environment. Bob Dixon from 'Good Morning Scotland' BBC Radio programme came to make some interviews, record the dissection procedure and take some reactions from the audience after the event was over. There was also some local press coverage. Many questions arose during the talk and dissection and Ian Baird competently helped to field them. Ian also gave a very informative commentary while I was busy performing the dissection. Discovery Centre manager Paul Nixon arranged for the setting up and running of my Powerpoint presentation and Maggie Sheddan helped during the actual dissection. We were also assisted by other staff and volunteers with preliminary organisation, setting up, photography, refreshments, etc (Many thanks to Events and Exhibitions Officer Anna Pugh, Education Officer Emma Gardner, stills photographer Catriona Morrison, Maggie Sheddan, etc). I was also provided with a guided tour of the Discovery Centre by Lynda Dalgleish (Marketing Manager). The following morning there was a piece on BBC Scotland radio about this event and marine pollution, shortly before the 8 a.m. national news. It was very kind of the SSC to invite me and they provided much encouragement, as did international organiser Dr Jan Andries van Franeker, which all helped to maintain impetus - and they even asked me to come back in the future!

Maggie Sheddan is our 'Save the North Sea' contact in East Lothian and she has been very busy this summer accompanying boat trips (for the SSC) out to the Bass Rock and other Firth of Forth Islands, providing commentaries, etc. The boat trips are extremely popular and often organised especially for and by film crews. Maggie has been instrumental in the clearance of the Tree Mallow (*Lavatera arborea*) plant invasion on Craigleith Island which has blanketed much of the island so that Puffins have been unable to nest in their burrows in recent years. Their numbers had crashed from over 28,000 pairs in 1999 to less than 5,000 pairs in 2006. The Puffins are now returning following many visits by local volunteers to clear the vegetation. There are over 150 'SOS Puffin' project volunteers who have been travelling ten at a time by boat to Craigleith to carry out vegetation management. During my visit in February Maggie and I made a short beach walk and collected some litter to display during the talk that evening at the Seabird Centre.

Follow this link to the Scottish Seabird Centre website: www.seabird.org



4. Maggie Sheddan, North Berwick. SSC on the left and Craigleith Island in distance to the right.

5. Fulmar dissection in SSC. Maggie takes notes, Kerr films in close-up, Dan dissects and hand of BBC man to right with microphone. Projection screen behind. Photo: Catriona Morrison.



'Save the North Sea' Fulmar workshop, March 2008, Texel, The Netherlands



6. SNS birding group, 30 March 2008. From left: José Roscales (Spain), Jane Gollan (France), Joël Bried (Azores), Keith Fairclough (Orkney), Dr Jan A. van Franeker (NL), Nils Guse (Germany), Edward Soldaat (NL), Mick Mellor (Shetland), Dan Turner (NE England). Photo: Pieter van Franeker

The 2008 SNS Fulmar workshop began on Wednesday 26 March as travellers converged on Texel from various countries. We headed for the IMARES laboratory complex with a mixture of defrosting Fulmars, stomachs and a scorching new species for the workshop - Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea* (courtesy of Joël and José). Mick won the prize for dedication, bringing with him a sack load of frozen Fulmars weighing over 20 kg! We were also fortunate to be joined by our colleagues Mark van der Walle and Hilbran Verstraete from Belgium.

During Thursday and Friday we worked in pairs during dissections, with Jan keeping a close eye on our activities and providing training as we progressed. Some of the Cory's Shearwaters had been road victims from the Azores where they are attracted to the bright lights of towns and then land on the roads bedazzled by the lights and unable to take off. Jan had already paid an earlier visit to José in the Azores to perform some dissections together. This work is part of a pilot study with this species, to see whether the North Sea marine litter project can be expanded into the North Atlantic and Mediterranean Seas. Jan and Edward took cloacal and oesophageal swabs from selected Fulmars and Cory's for Avian Influenza testing. Time was also spent sifting through two Texel shore litter samples in order to extract plastic granules and other small plastic fragments of the type that can be found in the our subject's stomachs.

During Saturday we learned from various presentations including: José's PhD studies on Cory's Shearwater, Edward's interest in seabird skull ossification, Joël and his seabird research in the Azores, a further presentation from Edward on Avian Influenza, and Fulmar project updates and Ecological Quality Objectives including those for the Guillemot from Jan. The afternoon concluded with, for some, a walk from IMARES to Oudeschild along the sea wall, birding as we went. At Oudeschild harbour we met up with Yvonne, Jan's wife and all enjoyed a lovely evening meal in one of the harbour restaurants.

The birding day (our last full day of the workshop) was a success with about 61 species recorded as we criss-crossed the island visiting various habitats. The day was cool and mainly dry with a few light showers, but this did not dampen our spirits and as the day ended we sat to eat at a very pleasant west coastal restaurant where our cheeks started to glow red after the day's exposure to the elements.

Many thanks to Jan once again for the excellent workshop organisation and to his assistants and colleagues who helped out while we were there: Ruben Fijn, Andre Meijboom and Hans Verdaat.

Fulmar wreck, May - June 2008, Northeast England

As our surveyors are aware we experienced a wreck of Fulmars in late May / early June. I tried to contact everyone when I was aware of something happening and most managed to walk beaches and perform extra surveys during this event. As a result we have 27 complete Fulmars in deep freeze collected during the period 26 May to 12 June. We already had two Fulmars collected earlier in the year and therefore now have a large sample for analysis in the laboratory. Maggie Sheddan also has a Fulmar for collection from North Berwick, East Lothian. I kept Dr Franeker informed as the wreck progressed and he emailed the other European SNS contacts asking them to look out in case their shores were also affected, but only our region seemed to be hit. I have notes on another 15 Fulmars (mostly incomplete) which were recorded during the wreck period. The wreck was associated with persistent winds from an easterly quarter for much of May with strong to gale force easterly winds on the 24th and northerly Fulmar passage was observed offshore with some blue-phase birds.

I hope to arrange a few days in the Dove Marine Laboratory (Newcastle University) during late autumn in order to carry out the initial analyses of these birds and extract their stomachs. The stomachs will be re-frozen so they can be taken over to Texel for the next 'Save the North Sea' Fulmar project workshop in February 2009. The analysis at the Dove Marine Laboratory, Cullercoats, North Tyneside, will take around four days – **you are all welcome (and are encouraged) to drop in to see the process** and maybe assist with some recording on our forms – as details are called out. Assistance will help speed the process and prove to be a learning experience for all concerned. You could come for a day, half a day or an hour or two - whatever fits in. When I have some definite dates I can pass these around, but if you think you may be interested in attending please let me know any days when you would / could be free during October and November and I shall see if we can arrange mutually convenient dates.



7. Ray Chilton with Fulmar NEE-2008-019 from Cambois beach, 28 May 2008.



8. George Moody, Holy Island, 31 May 2008. I had just collected Fulmar NEE-2008-020 from George.



9. Peter Collins, Marsden with Fulmar NEE-2008-001. 16 March 2008.

Photos. D.M.Turner

****Notes:** 1. Please remember to save any ringed auks (Guillemot, Razorbill and Puffin), any Little Auks (whatever the condition and state of completeness) and Fulmars (with complete abdomens) for analysis. Also save any interesting specimens that are in good condition – for the Hancock Museum or our own collection. 2. Many thanks to Dr Jan Andries van Franeker for checking the draft version of this newsletter and for converting the final version into Adobe .pdf format – so that it may be reduced in size for email purposes.

