

## Northeast England Beached Bird Surveys Group

### Regional Newsletter 21

2014, May



#### Distribution list

Northeast England volunteers  
Southeast England volunteers  
Southeast Scotland volunteers

Shetland beached bird survey coordinator  
Orkney beached bird survey coordinator  
Jersey beached bird survey coordinators

Newcastle University (Dove Marine Lab and others)

Dr Jan Andries van Franeker (International coordinator, Fulmar project)

Interested parties in NE England and elsewhere

#### Compiler / Editor

Daniel M Turner, Coordinator NEBBS Group, North Shields, England

The photograph above shows beach surveyors Linda Charlton, Jan Hunter and Michael Yianni at Druridge Bay (Northumberland) on 26 Feb 2012.



## NEBBS Group, Newsletter 21

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If you think anything important is missing from this newsletter, notice any errors or have ideas for future content then please get in touch.

### Note for NEBBS Group surveyors

Please continue to return your monthly survey forms including 'nil returns' i.e. when no corpses are found during any monthly survey – so that we have a record of the exact length of shore that has been surveyed. If you have un-submitted reports for recent months please forward them for future inclusion in later more complete reports and papers.

Thanks again and sending good wishes to you all.

email: [dan.m.turner@btopenworld.com](mailto:dan.m.turner@btopenworld.com)



### Publications

- Avery-Gomm, S., O'Hara, P.D., Kleine, L., Bowes, V., Wilson, L.K., & Barry, K.L. (2012). Northern fulmars as biological monitors of trends of plastic pollution in the eastern North Pacific. *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, 64(9), 1776-1781.
- Duff, J.P., Harris, M.P. & Turner, D.M. (2013) Mass mortality of puffins linked to starvation. *Veterinary Record* 173:224. Select this link to view:  
<http://www.nhsn.ncl.ac.uk/news/wp-content/uploads/mass-mort-in-puffins-Duff-Harris-Turner-2013-Sept-Vet-Record.pdf>  
Relates to the seabird wreck (eastern England and Scotland) in March/April 2013
- Edwards, E.W.J., Quinn, L.R., Wakefield, E.D., Miller, P.I. & Thompson, P.M. 2013. Tracking a northern fulmar from a Scottish nesting site to the Charlie-Gibbs Fracture Zone: Evidence of linkage between coastal breeding seabirds and Mid-Atlantic Ridge feeding sites. *Deep-Sea Research Part II: Topical Studies in Oceanography*, Vol 98, Part B, 15 December 2013, pages 438-444  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.dsr2.2013.04.011>
- Harris, M.P. & Elkins, N. (2013) An unprecedented wreck of puffins in eastern Scotland in March and April 2013. *Scottish Birds* 33:157-159.
- Kühn, S., van Franeker, J.A., 2012. Plastic ingestion by the northern fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis* in Iceland. *Marine Pollution Bulletin* 64, 1252-1254. For the complete paper contact Susanne Kühn or the NEBBS co-ordinator.  
For an abstract of the paper: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.marpolbul.2012.02.027>
- Rebolledo, E.L.B., van Franeker, J.A., Jansen, O.E., Brasseur, S.M.J.M. 2013. Plastic ingestion by harbour seals (*Phoca vitulina*) in The Netherlands. *Marine Pollution Bulletin* 67, 200-202.  
For an abstract of this paper: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.marpolbul.2012.11.035>
- Turner, D.M. 2013. Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis* analysis performed at the Dove Marine Laboratory (Newcastle University), 10-11 June 2013  
<http://www.nhsn.ncl.ac.uk/news/wp-content/uploads/Results-Fulmar-Analysis-DML-2013-June-v2b-DMTurner-For-NHSN-with-pics.pdf>
- Unwin, M. 2013. The problem with plastic. *The RSPB magazine*, Winter 2013, pages 60 – 64.
- Van Franeker, J.A. Blaize, C., Danielsen, J., Fairclough, K., Gollan, J., Guse, N., Hansen, P-L., Heubeck, M., Jensen, J-K.J., Le Guillou, G., Olsen, B., Olsen, K-O., Pedersen, J., Stienen, E.W.M. & Turner, D.M. (2011) Monitoring plastic ingestion by the northern fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis* in the North Sea. *Environmental Pollution*, Volume 159, Issue 10, pages 2609-2615.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.envpol.2011.06.008>  
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0269749111003344>

Abstract (from van Franeker, *et al.* 2011)

The abundance of plastics in stomachs of northern fulmars from the North Sea is used in the OSPAR Ecological Quality Objective (EcoQO) for marine litter. The preliminary EcoQO defines acceptable ecological quality as the situation where no more than 10% of fulmars exceed a critical level of 0.1 g of plastic in the stomach. During 2003–2007, 95% of 1295 fulmars sampled in the North Sea had plastic in the stomach (on average 35 pieces weighing 0.31 g) and the critical level of 0.1 g of plastic was exceeded by 58% of birds, with regional variations ranging from 48 to 78%. Long term data for the Netherlands since the 1980s show a decrease of industrial, but an increase of user plastics, with shipping and fisheries as the main sources. The EcoQO is now also used as an indicator for Good Environmental Status in the European Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

Van Franeker, J.A. & The SNS Fulmar Study Group (2011) Fulmar Litter EcoQO monitoring along Dutch and North Sea coasts in relation to EU Directive 2000/59/EC on Port Reception Facilities: results to 2009. IMARES Report Nr C037/11. IMARES, Texel. 52pp & 2 app.

Van Nus, T.M.C & Moreira, P.L., 2014 (March). Survey of beached birds and mammals: São Jacinto – Torreira, March 14, 2014. (Report from Portugal).  
[http://www.nhsn.ncl.ac.uk/news/wp-content/uploads/Van\\_Nus\\_Moreira\\_Beached\\_bird\\_mammal\\_survey\\_Portugal\\_March\\_24\\_2014.pdf](http://www.nhsn.ncl.ac.uk/news/wp-content/uploads/Van_Nus_Moreira_Beached_bird_mammal_survey_Portugal_March_24_2014.pdf)

### Fulmar Workshop 2013

Eleventh Fulmar Workshop, 15 – 20 Feb 2013, IMARES labs, Texel, the Netherlands:

During our two laboratory analysis days we worked on:

<b>Species</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Birds</b>
Fulmars	Germany	2006	1
		2009	2
		2010	1
		2011	9
		2012	66
	Belgium	2010	1
		2012	15
	N Norway	2012	8
	SE England	2012	1
Cory's Shearwater	Canary Islands	2011	14

DMT worked on Fulmar analysis with two researchers from The Netherlands:  
Tessa van Heumen and Caitlyn Vries.



The frozen birds were brought to the workshop as follows:

Germany	Stefan Weiel,
Belgium	Eric Stienen & Hilbran Verstraete
N Norway	Magdalene Langset
SE England	Daniel M Turner
Canary Islands	Marina Garcia Codina



### Fulmar Workshop photographs

1. Edward Soldaat with Southeast England fulmar SEE-2012-007.
2. Two groups in the lab. Foreground: Caitlyn Vries (left) and Tessa van Heumen. Background from left: Magdalene Langset, Stefan Weiel, Dr Jan Andries van Franeker (explaining a point) and Alice Trevail.
3. Bird-watching group at De Slufter, Texel. Back row (from left): Daniel Turner, Pieter van Franeker, Magdalene Langset, Dr Jan Andries van Franeker. Front row (from left): Alice Trevail, Lara Hielke and Eileen Hesse.

### Fulmar specimens NE England

During the last three years our Northeast England Group has found the following fulmars suitable for analysis in the 'Save the North Sea' project

2011 3 suitable birds  
2012 8 suitable birds  
2013 10 suitable birds

The finders were as follows: Martin A Blick (7), Keith A Barrow (2), Peter Collins (2), George D R Moody (2), Daniel M Turner (2), Chris Beneke (1), Andrew Craggs (1), Maurice Hepple (1), Steve T Holliday (1), Gordon Hyslop & George McVitie (1), Barry & Jean Robinson (1)

**Many thanks to all our surveyors**, of course, for your important and regular surveys.



### Fulmar photos (from left)

1. Chris Beneke with Fulmar NEE-2012-004 (4 May 2012). Found by Chris Beneke, 2 May 2012, Crimdon stretch of Durham coast. Double light (LL) colour-phase, immature female. See also photo of stomach contents and info (page 15).
2. Fulmar NEE-2013-009 (30 May 2013). A first-year male bird, found by Keith A Barrow, 27 March 2013, Yorkshire coast. Light (LL) phase bird. Liver and muscle samples and head collected for further analysis. Died from starvation.
3. Dr Jan Andries van Franeker with Fulmar NEE-2013-003 (Dove Marine Lab, 10 June 2013). A first year male bird, found by Martin A Blick, 12 March 2013, Redcar. Dark (D) colour-phase bird. 24 plastic particles inside stomach with weight 0.2047 gram. Cause of death: plumage problems.



Seabird wreck March/April 2013, Puffins

From late March to end April 2013 we experienced a large seabird wreck on the east coasts of England and Scotland. This affected auks in particular and puffins in the main – see publications list: Duff, Harris & Turner (2013) and Harris & Elkins (2013). Our northeast England surveyors recorded the following numbers of auk corpses: Puffin (1,553), Guillemot (467), Razorbill (276) and Little Auk (4).

Photographs were taken of some of the puffins – head/ bill and wings – so the birds may be aged and the wing photos fed into a study of puffin wing moult. Professor Mike Harris, examined the photos and his results of ageing the 194 birds are recorded below

1st Winter	26	13.4%
2nd Winter	16	8.2%
3rd Winter	21	10.8%
Young adult	11	5.7%
Older adult	120	61.9%

Mike comments thus

‘Similar proportions for birds from Scotland that I also aged from photographs were 8.1%, 9.0%, 11.8%, 9.0% and 62.1%. The proportions are not significantly different and I find this reassuring.’



Seabird Wreck photos

1. Birds from Druridge Bay, collected by Country Park staff, 25 March 2013
2. Peter Collins with birds from Whitburn to Roker, 24 March 2013
3. Second-winter puffin, collected 25 March 2013, Whitburn to Roker (ref 6231)

### Surveyor News

Christine Vibert surveyed Tynemouth Longsands from Dec 2011 to early 2013.

John Steel recently offered to carry out occasional surveys north of Alnmouth.

Donna Zajac has started surveying Newbiggin Bay from April 2014.

We have a new surveyor for Whitley Bay beach.

New surveyors may be starting in the Beadnell Bay - Howick Burn / Bamburgh area.

Russell Davis has surveyed from Seaton Sluice to Blyth since April 2012.

I met Russell and his wife Kathy on 12 Feb 2012 while bird-watching in the mouth of the river Tyne. I showed them a couple of Iceland Gulls and they expressed an interest in the beached bird and fulmar projects. Russell came on an introductory walk in April and started surveying following this. He worked for local government from Scotland to South England – in the Parks and Gardens arena – looking after everything from parks, roadsides, playing fields, play areas to cemeteries and sand dunes. He has an interest in archaeology and has attended classes. He and his wife are keen walkers and enjoy exploring the countryside. On 7 February 2013 Russell attended to assist with Fulmar dissections at Dove Marine Lab, Cullercoats.



1. Russell at Druridge Bay, introductory survey, 30 April
2. Russell helping in Dove Marine Lab, 7 February 2013
3. Puffin found by Russell, late March 2013, Seaton Sluice (photo ref 6717, 2 April 2013)



Mo Dewar started surveying at Druridge Bay from March 2014.

Mo attended my talk at the Hancock Museum on 7 March 2014, asked a few questions and offered to volunteer. We carried out an introductory survey in late March and she has begun her own surveys. Mo was involved in last year's excavations on the coast at Hauxley, revealing 2,000 to 4,000 year old artefacts and showing the effects of a long-ago Tsunami (8,200 years ago) originating on the Norwegian west coast. She worked as a haematologist, now enjoying retirement and volunteering with the Northumberland Wildlife Trust – cutting back vegetation, putting up fencing, and so on.



The photo shows Mo Dewar on introductory survey at Druridge Bay, 24 March 2014.

**Thank you very much** - to all newcomers and the longstanding regulars of course – your efforts are greatly appreciated!

#### SW England seabird wreck, early 2014

Cristina Sellarés (National Trust for Jersey) reported the Channel Island of Jersey to have seen 1,022 bird corpses in the period from late January to late March (the main period was from 10 Feb to mid-March). The most numerous were as follows: razorbill (397), guillemot (323), puffin (104), shag (84), kittiwake (22), great northern diver (19), unidentified auk (12), herring gull (11) and black-headed gull (9). There were another 19 species numbering from one to five specimens and two unidentified gulls. Her report (8 April) may be found here

<http://www.birdsontheedge.org/2014/04/08/chronicle-of-a-jersey-seabird-wreck/>

A series of strong storms are to blame – producing difficult feeding conditions. Overall Channel Island corpses recorded from this incident reached a little below 1,300.

RSPB coordinator (Helene Jessop) summed reports mainly from S and SW England, W Wales, Bay of Biscay coastlines and SW France (where 15% birds were oiled). Seabirds wintering in the NE Atlantic were affected with auks in the majority and puffins the most common casualty on French coasts. Her report sums 32,156 as a conservative estimate of affected birds from end January to early March. Starvation seems to be the cause with no

avian influenza detected and 27 species affected. Most commonly affected was puffin (>15,800), guillemot (>9,000) and razorbill (>2,800) with >450 kittiwakes reported dead. More than 400 ringed birds were reported, including more than 100 each of puffin, guillemot and razorbill. Most birds from SW England and elsewhere in the UK were not oiled. SW France recorded 21,567 dead birds – including 14,455 puffins and 5,443 guillemots.

Surveys by Tim van Nus and Pedro Moreira from NW Portugal recorded 118 seabird corpses (94 puffins) on 14 March (10 km) and 45 seabird corpses (27 puffins) on 27 March (12.7 km) in the aftermath of the seabird wreck. For the 14 March report see [http://www.nhsn.ncl.ac.uk/news/wp-content/uploads/Van\\_Nus\\_Moreira\\_Beached\\_bird\\_mammal\\_survey\\_Portugal\\_March\\_24\\_2014.pdf](http://www.nhsn.ncl.ac.uk/news/wp-content/uploads/Van_Nus_Moreira_Beached_bird_mammal_survey_Portugal_March_24_2014.pdf)

RSPB Press release (4 March 2014)

<http://www.rspb.org.uk/media/releases/365357-atlantic-seabird-tragedy->

Wildlife Trusts press release (4 March 2014)

<http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/news/2014/03/04/massive-loss-life-storm-hit-seabirds>

#### Presentation at Hancock Museum

On the evening of Friday 7 March 2014 there was a presentation at the Hancock Museum, Newcastle, as part of the Natural History Society of Northumbria winter programme. The talk was entitled ‘Beached birds, Fulmars and pollution in the North Sea’ and was by yours truly. It lasted about 50 minutes, summarizing some of our methods, findings and people involved ... to be followed by questions. There was a good sized audience and four people offered their services as volunteer surveyors at the end. We had a display of stuffed birds and skulls, belonging to our group, which many people examined. The talk ended with a showing of an eight minute recording from the BBC 1 television programme ‘Inside Out’ from 9 September 2013. This included an interview with Dr Jan van Franeker (international coordinator of the Fulmar project) as he and I carried out analysis at the Dove Marine Laboratory (Cullercoats) in June 2013.



Dr Jan Andries van Franeker (right, in blue lab coat) being interviewed and recorded for BBC 1 television programme ‘*Inside Out*’. Dove Marine Laboratory, Cullercoats (Tyne and Wear) 11 June 2013.

## Shags

Eight shags, collected in northeast England by our Group in February and March 2013, were defrosted on 14 April 2014. They were defrosted sufficiently as to allow photographs to be taken of their outstretched wings (upper and under surfaces) and removal of at least six breast feathers each. The photographs and breast feathers have been sent to the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH), Edinburgh. These will assist in wing feather moult studies and the breast feathers will allow the specimens to be sexed. The eight birds have been re-frozen for further analysis.

The bird specimens are as follows:

<b>Date found</b>	<b>Location, finder, ringing details, etc</b>
10 February 2013	Headless immature, Lindisfarne NNR (in sand dunes Holy Island) Finder: Ajay Tegala (head possibly taken by a fox). Ringed: Isle of May, nestling, 14 June 2011
12 February 2013	Adult, Blyth South beach (Meggie's Burn mouth NZ 324 786) Finder: Maurice Hepple Ringed: Isle of May, nestling, 16 June 2009,
12 February 2013	Adult, Blyth South beach (opposite chip shop), unringed Finder: Maurice Hepple
25 February 2013	Adult, Whitley Bay beach (S end), Finder: Daniel M Turner Ringed: Isle of May, nestling, 20 May 2010,
28 February 2013	Immature, Druridge Bay, Finder: Daniel M Turner
28 March 2013 (A)	Immature?, Lindisfarne NNR, Finder: Andrew Craggs and Team
28 March 2013 (B)	Adult, Lindisfarne NNR, Finder: Andrew Craggs and Team
30 March 2013	Adult, Seaham Blast Beach, Finders: Barry and Jean Robinson Ringed: Isle of May, nestling, 15 June 2010.

In addition five pairs of shag wings were received (18 March 2014) from Jersey (Dept. of the Environment) following the recent seabird wreck (early 2014) in SE England, Northern France, Channel Islands, etc. The birds/wings were collected by Cristina Sellarés (National Trust for Jersey, Project Officer of Birds On The Edge) in Jersey as she coordinated some Jersey beached bird surveys during the wreck period. These wings have been sent onwards with another pair (from a Northumberland bird – collected in March 2013) to the CEH for assistance with their wing moult studies.





Photos: Wing and breast feathers of adult Shag Blue 'SAH', found 25 February 2013.

### Kittiwake summary

Kittiwakes so far stored for future analysis – there are seventeen i.e. 11 adults and six birds in their first year. They have come from: NE England (11), Norfolk (3), Jersey (2) and East Lothian (1).

They were collected in the period 26 Oct 2010 to 23 April 2014 by the following

CB	Chris Beneke	B&JR	Barry & Jean Robinson
LKC	Linda K Charlton	CS	Cristina Sellarés (Jersey)
PC	Peter Collins	ES	Edward Stubbings (Norfolk)
STH	Steve Holliday	DMT	Daniel M Turner
DBCP	Druridge Bay Country Park staff		



1. Linda Charlton weighs juv. kittiwake, 13 Aug 2010, John Muir CP, East Lothian
2. Barry and Jean Robinson with adult found 23 April 2014, Embleton Bay, N/land.
3. Barry and Jean's bird ready for measurements – which indicated a likely male.

Lindisfarne NNR blog

I have sent two fulmar analysis reports for inclusion on the Lindisfarne National Nature Reserve blog which appear under the following blog dates ...

- (a) 18 June 2013, 'Beached Birds examination' – look under Blog Archive for June
- (b) 21 September 2013, 'Beached birds update' – look under Topics, Marine / Litter

<http://lindisfarnennr.blogspot.co.uk/>

NEBBS Group web page

Here is the link to our web page

<http://www.nhsn.ncl.ac.uk/news/cms/beached-bird-surveys/>

Interesting bird findings - a request

Dan has mentioned in previous Newsletters that he is keen for a range of specimens to be collected for either analysis (Fulmars, Little Auks etc) or as good museum material (any species in really good condition). My request falls outside these two areas. I possess an extensive collection of bird skulls (currently 157 species) which is used for reference and education purposes e.g. the Northumberland Wildlife Trust and Durham County Council have both borrowed material for education or exhibitions over the years. If you come across any tide line corpses of scarce or species of interest, which don't fall within Dan's requirements, I'd be delighted to hear from you. Don't worry about condition.

On Blyth beach alone, which Maurice Hepple and I monitor, I have collected a whole host of interesting species down the years e.g. Red-throated Diver, Bean Goose, Common Buzzard, Storm Petrel, Arctic Skua, etc. If you do come across something unusual I'd be delighted to hear from you, thank you. In the first instance just pop the find in a plastic carrier bag and keep anywhere but the freezer!

**Steve Holliday**, Cramlington Tel 01670 731963 or 07786 213699.



Photo (25 Nov 2012) shows Steve with some of the bird skulls he has prepared for the Northeast England Beached Bird Surveys Group, in their display case.





Photo selection from NE England surveyors and observers



Photo 1 by Christine Vibert



Photo 4 by Donna Etherington



Photo 2 by Christine Vibert



Photo 5 by Carly Peggie



Photo 3 by Christine Vibert



Photo 6 by John Littleton

1. Coal dust, Tynemouth Longsands, 17 January 2012, by Christine Vibert
2. A child's feather arrangement, Tynemouth Longsands, 26 Aug 2012, Christine Vibert
3. Tangle of lobster pots and rope, Tynemouth Longsands, 21 Oct 2012, Christine Vibert
4. Porpoise corpse, Seaton Sluice, 5 April 2012, by Donna Etherington
5. Golden Plover wing, Druridge Bay (south), 25 February 2012, by Carly Peggie
6. Sheltering Guillemot, St Mary's Island, 19 October 2012, by John Littleton



Tail piece



Photo 2 by Dr. Jan A. van Franeker – IMARES.

Photo 1 by D M Turner

1. Red kite, washed up on Redcar beach (County Cleveland) 13 July 2012, found by surveyor Martin Blick. This was a breeding male, six years old, named *Shiver* which had been adopted by a school in Barmston (Tyne and Wear).
2. Stomach contents of Northeast England Fulmar NEE-2012-004 (see page 6). Held 4 industrial granules and 41 user plastic particles – total plastic mass 0.1698 gram.

**Final Notes**

1. Please remember to collect any ringed auks (Guillemot, Razorbill and Puffin), any other ringed seabirds, all Little Auks (whatever the condition and state of completeness) and please continue to collect all Fulmars with complete abdomens for the litter monitoring project. Also collect any interesting specimens that are in good condition – for the Hancock Museum or our own collection. Also please collect all complete Kittiwakes and let Dan Turner know when you have specimens to be taken away.

2. Many thanks to Dr Jan Andries van Franeker, Prof Mike P Harris and Steve Holliday for checking the draft of this newsletter.

3. Thanks also to James Littlewood of the Natural History Society of Northumbria for storing this newsletter on our Group web page.

Beached bird and ‘Save the North Sea’ Fulmar project *Newsletter* (for Northeast England Beached Bird Surveys Group) **Newsletter 21** completed: May 01, 2014.  
Newsletter photos (apart from page 14 and right photo on page 15) by Daniel M Turner.

Project supporters

