

## **BTO/NTBC BIRD ATLAS 2007-2011**

Fieldwork for this local joint BTO/NTBC venture began on 1st November 2007 and will continue through each winter and breeding season until 2011.

## **BTO/NTBC BIRD ATLAS JOINT MEETING 22nd November 2007**

The bird club held a joint Atlas Workers meeting at the Irish Club, Newcastle on 22nd November 2007. Over 40 people, members of both BTO and Bird Club, attended on a bitterly cold night and a successful informal meeting produced a number of questions about the fieldwork. Details are given below :-

### **Timed Tetrad Visits (TTVs)**

For each season two visits of 1 hour, with an optional second hour in each, are required to a tetrad (2 x 2 km square) to explore the different habitats and count all the birds seen and heard. It is preferable in the second of the visits in each season to try and cover a different route (and thereby possibly habitats) from the first. It is recognized that this may not be possible due to access restrictions, etc. It would also be preferable if the same tetrads could be visited in breeding season that were visited in the previous winter period.

**Once a tetrad has received its two visits in each season there is no further requirement to perform further timed visits to that tetrad.**

From discussions by some of the fieldworkers concerned, and our understanding of what is happening in the three adjacent counties (Borders, Cumbria & Co. Durham), those people concerned with TTVs to tetrads which span the county boundary are asked to try and split their observations between 'Northumberland' and the other county (Cumbria, etc). The actual input (either via paper form or online) to the BTO for this data will be the records for the whole tetrad but the 'split' information should be made available to the bird club at the end of each season. We will try and contact those fieldworkers who are involved.

The aim locally is to have every tetrad in the club's recording area covered by two timed visits in a winter period and a further two in the breeding season.

### **Roving Records**

To enable a complete picture of all species present during the winter and breeding seasons, this element of the survey requires visits to a 10km square, recording at tetrad level, any species seen or, indeed, heard. The object is to compile a full list of species using that square. Normal day-to-day birdwatching and any other casual observations, as well as specific 'Roving' visits will be important.

In Northumberland, as well as many counties in Britain, we are aiming for full coverage (25 tetrads per 10km square) in order to compare our results with the previous work that has been carried out here. The Bird Club published The Atlas of Breeding Birds in Northumbria in 1995, from fieldwork carried out between 1988-1992, and The Atlas of Wintering Birds in Northumbria in 2003, with survey work between 1996-2000. It would be great if we were able to match those previous works done by so many volunteers and see what differences have occurred locally in our bird populations.

### **Online Input**

Although the standard BTO paper forms have been sent to all fieldworkers we wish to actively encourage people to use the Online system available at [www.birdatlas.net](http://www.birdatlas.net) . If you have not already done so, you can go to the site and request a Username and devise your own password for instant access. Those of you who already have a Username at the BTO site (e.g. because you enter BBS data, etc.) will already have access.

The entering of data from Timed Tetrad Visits and Roving Records is straightforward and there is now a facility to edit your records online should you have entered something in error. An additional useful tool is the Square Summaries facility which allows you to see not only your own observations but details of others that have been recorded. This could become particularly important when trying to determine whether or not a species has been recorded in that tetrad in either winter or breeding seasons.

### **Volunteering**

Some volunteers have already taken responsibility for whole 10km squares, whilst others are asking for particular tetrads. Also some people feel able to help in either the winter or summer. However, everyone can help in some way and we do need you. There are around 75 x 10km squares in the club's recording area which will involve some 1400+ tetrads.

If you wish to volunteer to cover some tetrads (or a whole 10km square!) you can check the BTO Online system. Just use the Request TTVs from the Bird Atlas Data Home screen and this will show you which tetrads/10km squares are still available.

If you do not have internet access or would prefer to speak to someone direct please contact Tom and Muriel Cadwallender, 22 South View, Lesbury, Alnwick, NE66 3PZ; Tel. 01665 839884, email [tomandmurielcadwallender@hotmail.com](mailto:tomandmurielcadwallender@hotmail.com)

### **Finally**

It is hoped that we can have another joint meeting for fieldworkers (probably at a different locality in the county) in about a year's time but in the meantime if you have any queries or problems to do with the Atlas please contact either Tom & Muriel or John & Mike.

**Tom and Muriel Cadwallender (British Trust for Ornithology)  
John Day and Mike Hodgson (Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club)**