

April 2017

Compiled by Daniel M Turner
(NEBBS Group coordinator)



Local events you may like to attend or know about

- 1) Dove Marine Laboratory (Newcastle University), Cullercoats, Tyne and Wear.
Wednesday, 16 August, 10 am – 4 pm The aquarium will be open to the public and there will be a display with information about our beached bird and fulmar projects.
- 2) A beached bird survey on the Northumberland coast. Sunday, 24 September, 12 noon – 2 pm. Organised through the Natural History Society of Northumbria; limited places; book via the Society office (Ref: NHSN Bulletin No 294), phone 0191 208 2790.

Selection of recent northeast England survey findings, January to 1 April 2017

Wreck of cuttlebones, widely reported:

Date	Notes	Who
13.02.17	Blyth to Seaton Sluice: many [cuttlebones] mainly very small (little finger sized)	MHe
19.02.17	Tynemouth: many lightweight cuttlebones at the upper strandlines, several were quite small and perhaps two inches in length (several collected)	DMT
20.02.17	Whitley Bay: cuttlebones had again collected in places and we collected a few	DMT/LKC
26.02.17	Druridge Bay (N): light litter, several cuttlebones (five collected).	DMT/KM
27.02.17	St Mary's Island (N bay): numerous pieces of anglers' fishing line and a lot of small pieces of plastic (which Donna removed), plank of wood, two red roses, numerous dead cuttlefish in the seaweed.	DZ
28.02.17	Large numbers of cuttlefish [bones] on Warkworth and Boulmer Haven beaches	MD
01.03.17	Druridge Bay (S): some stranded cuttlefish bones present	MD
06.03.17	A [cuttlebone] 'wreck' along the driftline from Low Newton to Embleton Burn	B&JR

Other sightings (live birds, mammals, other)

Date	Notes	Who
31.01.17	Marsden Bay: big landslide at the north end of the bay.	JE
12.02.17	Marsden Bay: more fulmars pairing up / reinforcing pair bonds on the cliffs.	JE
13.02.17	Grey Seal pup - recent but head mutilated	MHe
26.02.17	Lindisfarne: porpoise and lumpsucker (fish)	GDRM
27.02.17	Beadnell Bay: 1 dead seal and 1 dead European eel	NW
27.02.17	St Mary's Island: skylarks singing, further erosion of cliffs where sand martins usually nest. Crag Point / Hartley Bay: six and five fulmars at these locations.	DZ
06.03.17	<i>Echinocardium cordatum</i> , sea potato (1 complete and several shards), Low Newton to Embleton Burn	B&JR
06.03.17	Craster-Dunstanburgh: seal (common), on beach at least 6 weeks, slow decay	MR
01.04.17	North Blyth (live birds): 4 sand martins, 1 song thrush singing (not seen), 20 common scoter, 5 red-breasted merganser (3 male, 2 female)	KM



(Left) Cuttlebones on display at the Old Low Light, 23 Feb 2017. They were collected on the beach at Tynemouth four days earlier.

(Right) Landslide at north end of Marsden Bay, Tyne and Wear. Photo taken by Jon Everett on 31 January 2017.



Selection of northeast England beached birds (corpses)

Date	Notes	Who
Jan '17	Lindisfarne (11-26 January): razorbill (2), black-headed gull, herring gull (immature), great black-backed gull, gannet (immature)	GDRM
26.01.17	Alnmouth to Boulmer: eider and guillemot	MD
04.02.17	Beadnell Bay: none found	JG+VR
10.02.16	Druridge Bay (mid): puffin (first-year, complete, fresh), guillemot (2 complete)	JG+NW
12.02.17	Roker beach: remains of female teal, immature kittiwake and puffin.	PC
13.02.17	Blyth to Seaton Sluice: common gull (adult, right wing, sternum); puffin (dead ca.5 days, mutilated by dog)	MHe
Feb '17	Lindisfarne (8-28 February): guillemot, little auk, herring gull (2), gannet (2), razorbill, eider (male)	GDRM
19.02.17	Tynemouth: puffin (2 x first-year birds), black-headed gull (adult, wing rems.)	DMT
26.02.17	Druridge Bay (N): razorbill (headless, right wing collected), one rabbit	DMT/KM
28.02.17	Alnmouth to Boulmer: guillemot (2), common gull (ad, wings and sternum)	MD
01.03.17	Druridge Bay (S): guillemot (first-year), headless puffin	MD
03.03.17	Druridge Bay: fulmar (Wrapped in fishing line and had a hook in its bill; collected and passed to DMT – stored frozen); herring gull	SL
03.03.17	Druridge Bay (N): guillemot (two: one headless and one intact)	JG+NW
05.03.17	Seaburn: razorbill (headless)	PC
Mar '17	Craster-Dunstanburgh: guillemot (2; one each - 6 & 13 March), common gull	MR
12.03.17	Beadnell Bay: none found	VR+NW
13.03.17	Newbiggin: eider male (one complete adult - STH; one headless - AP)	STH/AP
Mar '17	Lindisfarne (8-28 Mar): eider (male), razorbill (3), guillemot, swan sp. headless	GDRM
16.03.17	Seaton Sluice to Blyth: none found	RD
27.03.17	Whitley Bay: adult gannet (headless); noted there with head by GD on 24.3.17	DMT
28.03.17	Whitley Bay, coastal skate park: herring gull (adult, complete, fresh)	MR
29.03.17	Druridge Bay (N): guillemot (adult, 2 x first-year), black-headed gull (adult, remains), kittiwake (adult, wing remains, sternum - collected), three rabbits.	DMT
31.03.17	Tynemouth: black-headed gull (left wing remains)	DMT

So, as a brief summary, for Jan-March 2017, beached corpses were recorded as follows:

Swan sp.	1	Puffin	6	Kittiwake	2
Teal	1	Razorbill	8	Black-headed gull	4
Eider	5	Little auk	1	Common gull	3
Fulmar	1	Guillemot	15	Herring gull	5
Gannet	4	-----	----	Great black-backed gull	1

Note. Still awaiting some reports for this period.

Surveyors noted in tables (listed alphabetically by surname): Linda K Charlton, Peter Collins, Russell Davis, Mo Dewar, Gavin Dudley, Jonathan Everett, Jon Green, Maurice Hepple, Steve Holliday, Steve Lowe, Kevin Monaghan, George D R Moody, Alan Priest, Vicky Rae, Melvyn Rigg, Barry & Jean Robinson, Daniel M Turner, Natalie Wallace, Donna Zajac.



(Left) Immature guillemot remains, showing right underwing and sternum. Druridge Bay, 29 Mar 2017.



(Right) Kevin Monaghan on introductory survey, Druridge Bay, 26 Feb 2017.

Photos by D M Turner

Dr Jan van Franeker

Jan van Franeker is the international coordinator of the fulmar study project; a marine biologist based in the Netherlands and working for Wageningen Marine Research. Following an operation for removal of kidney with tumour in November 2015 he recovered well and had returned fully to work by April 2016. Further surgery, for the removal of an enlarged lymph node, followed last month. Jan reports to recover more quickly than after the previous operation, walks a few km every day to regain strength, and has already restarted some of his office work from home. We send our best wishes for an excellent recovery.



(Left) Jan and Yvonne van Franeker at Tynemouth, northeast England, 14 May 2012

(Right) Commemorative cushion of the Northumberland Federation of Women's Institutes.

Photos by D M Turner

Women's Institute (WI) in the UK (www.thewi.org.uk)

On Wednesday, 5 April 2017, the NEBBS group coordinator gave a talk to the Northumberland Federation of Women's Institutes (at their offices in Seaton Burn, Newcastle) about the beached bird and fulmar projects. He had been asked to talk of the plastics in the oceans and their impact on the environment. The second speaker this day was Lynn Johnson from Age UK; she talked about loneliness and how her organization helps in its alleviation. One of the WI organisers today, Rosie Harden-Vane, had specially chosen her attire to contain few synthetic fibres - in support of the plastics (and microplastic fibre) presentation – a commendable action on her part.

At the national WI annual general meeting this summer, all branches from throughout the country will vote on the following resolutions: (a) alleviating loneliness, and (b) Plastic soup: keep microplastic fibres out of our ocean.

Individual WI branches will have a vote for each resolution at the national AGM (in Liverpool) and can decide whether to vote for one or both resolutions. Any resolution adopted will be campaigned upon by the WI during the following year.

Associated references

From the 'Observer' (15 Aug 2015),

<http://observer.com/2015/08/microfibers-and-the-dark-sides-of-the-clothes-we-wear/>

Browne, M.A., Crump, P., Niven, S.J., Teuten, E., Tonkin, A., Galloway, T. & Thompson, R. 2011. Accumulation of microplastic on shorelines worldwide: Sources and sinks. *Environ. Sci. Technol.*, 2011, 45 (21), pp 9175–9179

City to Sea (www.citytosea.org.uk)

This organisation held a survey this spring. The top three concerns raised were as follows ...

- Supermarket packaging – less was wished for and that all plastics should be recyclable;
- Single-use plastics being flushed down the toilet – especially tampon applicators and sanitary towels;
- Single-use plastic bottles – a deposit scheme should be introduced and people should carry a reusable bottle.

So, this is what the organisation 'City to Sea' plans over the next year

- National campaign to stop plastics being flushed down the toilet;
- Campaign for supermarkets to eliminate non-recyclable plastic packaging and provide refills of certain products;
- Expand the refill schemes around the UK. Anyone who would like to volunteer to set up a refill campaign in their town should email gus@citytosea.org.uk

Avaaz (www.avaaz.org)

What / who is Avaaz? In their own words, 'Avaaz is a 44-million-person global campaign network that works to ensure that the views and values of the world's people shape global decision-making. ("Avaaz" means "voice" or "song" in many languages.) Avaaz members live in every nation of the world; our team is spread across 18 countries on 6 continents and operates in 17 languages.'

This organisation issued an email towards the end of April. Here are some extracts

'We're being buried under plastic. Soon there will be more plastic than fish in our oceans. And the worst thing is this crisis is totally unnecessary -- we don't need our water in plastic bottles!'

'Only a tiny fraction of the bottles we throw away are recycled. The rest takes up to a thousand years to decompose! Mountains of bottles are filling landfills, creating synthetic islands in our oceans, and beautiful marine creatures are now addicted to plastic because it's all they find to eat!'

This is what they propose

- To back key cities and countries like France, Ireland, Bangladesh, and Morocco which have begun plastics bans, to get allies to do the same;
- To run hard-hitting campaigns on China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Thailand, who dump 60% of the world's plastic, so they may regulate better;
- Run culture campaigns and popular advertising to make plastic bottles and bags un-fashionable and thereby dissolve demand;
- Spearhead a global beach clean-up day of action to raise awareness.

If you wish to donate to their organisation, then check their website.

The Avaaz email quoted these articles

'By 2050 there will be more plastic than fish in the world,' study says (Washington Post)

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2016/01/20/by-2050-there-will-be-more-plastic-than-fish-in-the-worlds-oceans-study-says/?utm_term=.acc4cc57f1c9

'Eight million tons of plastic dumped in ocean every year' (National Geographic)

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2015/02/150212-ocean-debris-plastic-garbage-patches-science/>

Other items of interest

Florida city poised to be first in state to ban plastic bags (21 March 2017),

<http://www.care2.com/causes/florida-city-poised-to-be-first-in-state-to-ban-plastic-bags.html>

India bans disposable plastics in Delhi (13 February 2017),

<https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/india-bans-all-disposable-plastic/>

Plastic and the Great Lakes (26 December 2016)

<http://www.care2.com/causes/22-million-pounds-of-plastic-enter-the-great-lakes-every-year.html>

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A selection of recent (and not so recent) papers and publications

Acampora, H., White, P., Lyashevskaya, O. & O'Connor, I. 2017. Presence of persistent organic pollutants in a breeding common tern (*Sterna hirundo*) population in Ireland. *Environ Sci Pollut Res*. Free availability ... .. <http://bit.ly/2ocpiOI>

Acampora, H., Berrow, S., Newton, S. & O'Connor, I. 2017. Presence of plastic litter in pellets from great cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) in Ireland. *Marine Pollution Bulletin* ... ..

Ask, A., Anker-Nilssen, T., Herzke, D. & Gabrielsen, G.W. 2016 (November). Contaminants in northern fulmars (*Fulmarus glacialis*) exposed to plastic. Technical report, Number TemaNord 2016:543, Affiliation: Nordic Council of Ministers.

Floren, H.P. & Shugart, G.W. 2017. Plastic in Cassin's Auklets (*Ptychoramphus aleuticus*) from the 2014 stranding on the Northwest Pacific Coast. *Marine Pollution Bulletin*: Vol 117, Issues 1-2, pages 496-498.

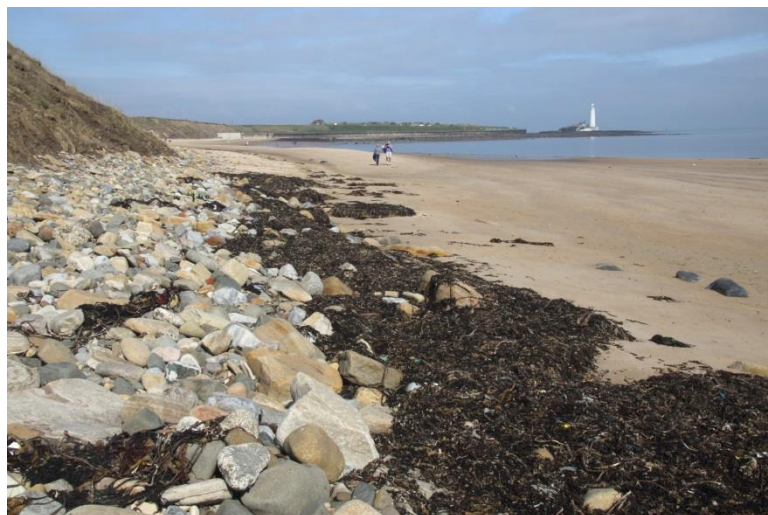
Hertzke, D., Anker-Nilssen, T., Nost, T.H. & Koelmans, A. 2015 (December). Negligible impact of ingested microplastics on tissue concentrations of persistent organic pollutants in Northern Fulmars off coastal Norway. *Environmental Science and Technology*: 50(4).

Maes, T. *et al.* A rapid-screening approach to detect and quantify microplastics based on fluorescent tagging with Nile Red. *Sci. Rep.* **7**, 44501; doi: 10.1038/srep44501 (2017).

Pettit, T.N., Grant, G.S. & Whittow, G.C. 1981 (January). Ingestion of plastics by Laysan albatross.

Terepocki, A.K., Brush, A.T., Kleine, L.U. & Hodum, P.J. 2017 (January). Size and dynamics of microplastic in gastrointestinal tracts of Northern Fulmars (*Fulmarus glacialis*) and Sooty Shearwaters (*Ardenna grisea*). *Marine Pollution Bulletin* ... ..

Vendel, A.L., Bessa, F., Alves, V.E.N., Amorim, A.L.A., Patricio, J. & Palma, A.R.T. 2017. Widespread microplastic ingestion by fish assemblages in tropical estuaries subjected to anthropogenic pressures. *Marine Pollution Bulletin*: Vol 117, Issues 1-2, pages 448-455.



(Above) Whitley Bay beach and St Mary's Lighthouse, Tyne and Wear, 27 March 2017

(Left) Kevin Monaghan during introductory survey, Druridge Bay, Northumberland, 26 Feb 2017.

**With thanks to:** Dr Jan van Franeker and Steve Holliday for checking and commenting upon the draft versions of this *News Note*. Thanks also to our dedicated surveyors – and please continue to collect fulmars, kittiwakes and little auks, plus ringed birds, for the time being.