



## Newsletter, Autumn 2018



### **Red Kite Breeding Report 2018** - Ken Sanderson

#### **Summary of 2018 Breeding**

Number of known territories: 39 + a very probable 3 more (38)  
No. of incubating females: 19 (17)  
No. of known successful nests: 12 (14)  
No. of known fledged chicks: 24 (24)  
No. of chicks wing-tagged: 0 (10)  
No. of chicks ringed: 11 (3)  
No. of failed nests: 7 (1 definite, 2 probable)

(Numbers in brackets are last year's figures)

#### **More detailed report**

Monitoring in the early Spring put more focus on locations just outside the core area in an attempt to find more territories. This met with limited success as three additional territories were found between Hamsterley Mill and Ebchester. In total, six new territories were found but a couple of territories which were used last year did not hold pairs this year.

The core area over the last few years had held twenty-five to thirty pairs annually so less monitoring was done there and twenty-eight territorial pairs were going to be accepted as the figure for the core area.

Early indications between February and April involved pairs or single birds showing territorial behaviour in around forty-two regular and potential breeding localities across the region. Most were again in the core areas of the Derwent Valley within Tyne and Wear and the immediately adjacent localities in County Durham and Northumberland. As in 2017, there was a lot of kite activity in the Muggleswick, Derwent Gorge, Edmundbyers, Blanchland and Hunstanworth areas which could have potentially produced, at least, three territories but no evidence of breeding was noted. The finding of a shot and injured kite on the 21<sup>st</sup> April (later euthanized) on the Durham side of the Derwent Gorge could well have ended a breeding attempt. A pair of kites had been seen regularly in the Evenwood and Staindrop area of Teesdale in the early spring, and then higher up in Teesdale during early summer but, again, there was no evidence of any breeding taking place.

As the breeding season got underway, a total of nineteen active nests were located where pairs went on to lay eggs. Of these nineteen active nests, twelve pairs went on to fledge a total of twenty-four young. Of the seven nests that failed, four failed during incubation and three failed after hatching. Two failures can be put down to predation by crows. It is not known what caused the other five to fail.

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A total of 11 young were ringed. Others were too advanced to safely handle or the nest/nest site was not suitable for carrying out the work. No wing tagging took place this year.

We emphasise that the number of successful nests must be regarded as an absolute minimum. The size and range of the potential breeding area and the difficulties of access to some areas of suitable woodland meant that a few nests were likely to have gone undetected.

The twenty-four fledged young was the same figure as the 2017 season. Although the number of incubated nests and brood size was up on the previous year, the number of failures was higher, which has had a significant impact on fledged chicks.

Once again, most of the successful nests were in the core areas of the Derwent Valley and nearby areas within County Durham. Of the four nests in County Durham, one nest failed and the other three successfully fledged seven chicks. There were also two pairs in Northumberland; one just over the county boundary, near Ebchester, and one south of Corbridge. One of the nests failed and the other fledged two young.

The 2018 results again show that the population is continuing to face difficulty in expanding outside the core area. This is a matter of great concern as it means that the aim of establishing a sustainable breeding population across the region as a whole has still to be realised. FoRK have set up a working group to try and find out what is happening with our kites. They are currently in the process of analysing data gathered over the last six years and hope to have a report published by the end of the year.





## **Red Kite Family Fun Day - Sylvia Jones**



On Sunday July 22<sup>nd</sup> Friends of Red Kites reinforced our links with Go North East buses and the National Trust by holding this event at Gibside. Geoff parked the red kite liveried bus as a focal point for the entertainments team. We had children's crafts, face-painting, mask-making and Ryan the magician.

The National Trust allowed us to hold the event at Gibside and provided gazebos and tables. Volunteers from Friends of Red Kites had collected a substantial number of tombola prizes from our very generous members. This is a very popular event and many Gibside visitors took part. The tombola raised £187.

Thank you to everyone who helped. This event allowed us the opportunity to promote our work as custodians of the red kites and to gather information from the public and local residents. Everyone we spoke to was very supportive of the red kites and the work we do.



## **Membership Renewal - Judy Summerson**

It's that time of year when we ask you to renew your FoRK membership. The last page of this Newsletter shows the renewal letter and reply slip.

The red kites are grateful for your support and we hope you will renew your membership.

### **Kite-cam 2018 - Paul Danielson**

In the Summer newsletter, we reported on the camera on a red kite's nest which we followed through from the nest refurbishment, egg-laying over the cold Easter weekend through to the chicks (little white balls of fluff) hatching out.

This is to update readers that the two chicks grew at a phenomenal rate, practised wing-flapping and jumping onto branches adjacent to the nest. They eventually fledged towards the end of June.

It has been amazing and a privilege to be allowed to follow Storm and Rocket's family. The whole story, with snippets of recordings, is available in the "video footage" section on our website ([www.friendsofredkites.org.uk](http://www.friendsofredkites.org.uk)). We hope to repeat the project next year.

### **Annual General Meeting - Harold Dobson**

Our ninth AGM was held, once again, at Lintzford Garden Centre on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> June. 21 members attended the evening.

The business meeting was brief and efficiently run. Ken Sanderson, Harold Dobson and Hilary Johnson were re-elected as Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer respectively. They each provided a summary of their reports. Ken provided an update on this year's breeding figures. The following existing seven committee members were re-elected: Fiona Clapham, Paul Danielson, Sylvia Jones, Jackey Lockwood, Judy Summerson, Marian Williams, Allan Withrington and two new members, Roz Cowan & Karen Mathieson, were elected to the Committee.

Keith and his team, from the Garden Centre, served our pre-selected meal followed by a selection of cream cakes and tea/coffee. This represented excellent value for £9.00. The raffle raised £28.00.





**Coffee Morning (Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2018) - Fiona Clapham**



An enjoyable morning was spent at The Fellside Church in Whickham and at the same time raised funds for FoRK. We were invited by Avril Arbon and her capable, helpful Share team to host and serve a coffee morning.

Many thanks to all our members who provided the delicious array of tempting treats (see the early morning photo) or those who consumed them and made generous donations for our funds. The total amount raised was £222.13.





12th September 2018

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Dear Friend,

Your annual membership subscription for 2018-2019 is now due for renewal.

- **£7.00 for an individual**
- **£10.00 for a family or household**

Your subscription will help towards running the Friends Group, wing-tagging the birds to aid identification, help with monitoring expenses and you will be contributing towards the conservation of these magnificent birds of prey from the ever-increasing threat of persecution.

How to pay:

- **By cheque or postal order made payable to "Friends of Red Kites"**
- **By cash and please include your name and address.**
- **By standing order. The details for the standing order are: Nat West Bank, Sort code: 54-10-58, A/c name: "Friends of Red Kites", A/c no.: 19063695**

***Which ever way you choose to pay, including paying by Standing order, I would be most grateful if you would complete the form below and return it with your subscription to me by October 31st 2018.***

We are very grateful for your continued support and hope you will renew your membership.

Thank you.

**Judy Summerson**

**Membership Seretary**

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To: Judy Summerson, FoRK Membership Secretary, 12 Sunnidale, Whickham, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE16 5TT

Name .....

Address .....

Post code ..... Email Address .....

Paid by Cheque/Cash/Standing Order (Please circle how you have paid)

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