

# SLB NEWSLETTER

Issue no. 31

Aug 2013

## SOUTH LEICESTER BIRDWATCHERS



I hope you are all enjoying this hot summer weather, it is certainly a change for us (& the birds!) from last years summer or lack of it!. We have had various successful nests in the garden including Blue Tit, Great Tit, Robin, Wren, Blackbird & Song Thrush with some of them managing two broods. As you may have already heard this was the first year SLB held a "24hour Bird Race" which whilst the number of people involved may have been low those who were certainly enjoyed the experience. As it proved a success I am sure the event will be repeated in future years when hopefully more of you will take up the challenge.

Remember to get your pictures for the Annual Photographic Competition held at the A.G.M. in to Dennis as soon as possible. Finally, I know people don't like to think of Christmas too early but a date for your diary—the SLB Christmas meal will be held on Wednesday 4th December at Chef Patron, Thurlaston. Further details will follow at the A.G.M.

### Indoor Meetings & Events

Our forthcoming programme of indoor meetings, with guest speakers is:

11 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Paul Hobson	Coast & Pole to Pole
9 <sup>th</sup> Oct	AGM & Photographic Competition	
13 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Andrew	Bird on the hand
11 <sup>th</sup> Dec	John Jones	Skokholm Island

Meetings start at 7.30pm (doors open from 7pm) finishing at approx. 9.30pm. Please attend early if you wish to book trips, speak to the Committee or order seed.

### Trip Reports

#### Paxton Pits Saturday 11th May 2013 (SW)

We arrived at Paxton as the Centre opened at 10am, and after paying for passes and collecting a token for a free tea or coffee, we split into two groups. There were no signs of the promised heavy showers as we set off in search of Nightingales, we had the usual ducks and Cormorant etc on the lakes but the Nightingales were silent. After stopping at the first hide we heard and had good views of a Garden Warbler, and then the partial song of the Nightingale and also good views for some of us! There were a few Cuckoo calling and I think most of the group got to see them too. It was also good to see Swift about as well as Swallows. After lunch the promised heavy showers arrived and our group got a good soaking, though the other group managed to keep dry in a hide! It was a good day out, though the birds were quite hard to pick out, sheltering in deep cover from the wind and showers. A total of 57 bird species on the day.

#### Lakenheath RSPB Saturday 15th June 2013 (GT)

When we arrived at Lakenheath the conditions were not ideal with strong winds and rain clouds threatening. We set off on the circular walk and were soon hearing and less frequently seeing an assortment of warblers as well as a cuckoo. As we approached the New Fen viewpoint a Bittern took to the wing and a lot of the group had excellent views as it flew by. As we were watching a host of Hirundines and Swifts swooping low over the reeds a Hobby also joined in and an obliging kingfisher flew in, across the pool and landed on the reeds where it gave super views to all.

Continuing on to the second viewpoint strong wind weren't helping us locate the Golden Orioles but lots of Marsh Harriers were showing well. After sheltering from a brief sharp shower we climbed up the river embankment to view the fields on the far side in the hope of Cranes – and yes there they were, two feeding in a nearby field giving all the group a view. Shortly after they took to the wing giving good flight views. An excellent finish to the day with 65 species seen on the day.

#### Wales Weekend 17th/18th/19th May 2013 (GT)

Friday 17th May

A group of 26 members left Blaby early for this years weekend away in North Wales. We arrived at Connah's Quay Nature Reserve on the Dee Estuary at around 9.30 and spilt into two groups to explore the site.

The reserve is a mixed habitat of estuary, farmland, hedgerows and a large power station. Highlights of our visit included a pair of Peregrines around the power station towers who provided views of a food pass for one group and a cronking Raven gave itself away perched on a pylon. There were also good

## Wales Weekend 17th/18th/19th May 2013 (GT)

Friday 17th May cont'd

views of Little Ringed Plover and Wheatears.

After lunch we travelled to Conwy RSPB where we were greeted by warm sunshine. A walk around the perimeter trail and along the estuary revealed lots of Hirundines and warblers and the opportunity for the group to compare waders. Whimbrel & Curlew stood obligingly next to each other as did Turnstone with a Ringed Plover and Sanderling and Dunlin all of which were providing close views. Three Red Breasted Mergansers were also a good find.

We then took the short journey to the Marlborough Hotel in Llandudno, our base for the weekend.

Total 71 species on the day.

Saturday 18th May

After a hearty breakfast we left the hotel for South Stack Cliffs RSPB on Anglesey. As we walked towards the cliff view point we had fine views of a pair of Stonechat feeding their young. From the view point all the group had good views of the large colony of Guillemot and Razorbill as well as smaller numbers of Puffin. A single Gannet flew past as did a Peregrine. Highlights though were the excellent close views of Chough and Raven.

After lunch we drove further round the coast to visit Cemlyn Nature Reserve where there is a large tern colony. After a short walk along the shingle beach we were able to view the 400+ Sandwich Tern on one island along with smaller numbers of Arctic and one or two Common Tern. Also present were a couple of pairs of Red Breasted Mergansers and a nesting pair of Mediterranean Gulls which were located after a bit of a search.

Also a nice selection of waders were present including Knot, Dunlin, Ringed Plover and a Common Sandpiper.

A total of 64 species for the day

Sunday 19th May

Today we headed back to Anglesey for a boat trip around Puffin Island on a catamaran. We left from Beaumaris for the 70 minute trip in very calm conditions and were soon enjoying excellent views of target species.

As conditions remained calm the skipper was able to get near to the island and the bird colonies and so close views of Eider, Kittiwake, Shag, Fulmar, Guillemot & Razorbill were possible together with the bonus of a fine looking Black Guillemot. On the return we also has quite good views of porpoise and several more obliging Black Guillemot provided further close views.

The afternoon was spent at Aber Falls Nature Reserve. Most of the group undertook the walk to see the falls but there was enough excellent bird life on route to satisfy all.

Sightings of Wood Warbler, Redstart, Pied Flycatcher, Dipper and Grey Wagtail were all welcome and a bonus if somewhat distant Ring Ouzel for some who walked to the falls.

A few of the stars from the Wales Weekend Trip. Photos by Graham Turner



### Field Trips—2013

September 14th

RSPB Blacktoft Sands

A site many of us will have visited before, there is a small visitor centre and six hides. The reserve is on the Humber Estuary and a good site for passing waders! Cost £2.50 assuming you are an RSPB member.

October 12th

Holme NOA Reserve

A trip to the East Coast to visit the NOA and weather permitting see some bird ringing! There are 5 hides and a chance of sea watching here and at the adjacent NWT reserve. There are toilets at the end of the road and a small shop at the NWT reserve.

Cost £5.00 including permit for the day. There may also be a parking charge.

November 16th

RSPB Newport Wetlands

A new reserve for the club! The reserve lies on the Severn Estuary and there is a visitor centre with a cafe selling light refreshments. There are various trails and viewing screens with a wide variety of birds seen on site. **This trip will be by coach, with a 7am start!!** Cost £23.50 assuming you are an RSPB member.

December 14th

Fineshades Wood/Eyebrook Reservoir

Two sites fairly close to home for a short winter's day. At Fineshades there is a hide and various woodland trails, for woodland birds and the chance of Red Kites. There is a visitor centre and cafe. After lunch we will head to Eyebrook for ducks and waders etc. Cost £2.50. There will also be a parking charge at Fineshades.

All forms and payments returned to John Palmer please.

***The next edition of the Newsletter will be issued in November if you have a story for inclusion please send copy and photos to Marion Turner at [graham.turner@btinternet.com](mailto:graham.turner@btinternet.com)***