



Hopefully, it's safe to say that we've now got the winter and cold weather behind us and it's time to look forward to our holidays in the sun. As you read this, we'll have been on our weekend Anglia trip and there's only one more evening meeting before our summer recess.

All in all, it's been a very successful year again and plans for next year's activities have already begun! More details in the next newsletter.

At our next AGM in October, the second half of the evening will be dedicated to a show of members' photographs. There's quite a few of you that take pictures, so please put together a selection of 10 to 15 bird photo's and let Dennis have them by the September meeting (preferably on a CD). We'll also have a photo competition. Choose and enter your best two photographs and we'll show the pictures – the audience will vote for the best shot and there will be a prize for the winner!

There will also be an extra trip – Phil Johnson at Rectory Farm has invited us for another tour of the farm to see his conservation work in action. There'll also be tea and scones afterwards! Please let Paul S. know if you are interested in going.

Our nest box scheme on the farm is progressing nicely – see page 2 for an update. Martin and Jools have also been busy. Martin used his carpentry skills to produce an excellent Owl box and Jools was brave enough to go up the ladder to site it. Where? At the bottom of Angie's garden! There is a local Tawny Owl and a Little Owl has been heard. As it mostly the case though, it's the Wood Pigeons that take an initial interest! Watch this space for updates.



2008 Field Trips

14th June 2008 - RSPB Ouse Washes, Manea, Cambridgeshire

An area of lowland wet grassland and open water. There are up to 70 species of bird that breed on the reserve. There are ten hides on site, a visitor centre (which is unmanned?) and toilet facilities are available.

Cost £2.00 for the day, assuming you are an RSPB member.

Saturday 13th September - Spurn Point, Humberside.

A new destination for the group and of course the right time of year for the odd rarity to appear. There is a car park/toilets/café available. Due to this reserve being in a very exposed position this trip will be subject to change in the event of bad weather - ie wet and windy!

Cost £2.00 (+£3.00 vehicle access charge)

Saturday 11th October RSPB Titchwell, Norfolk

A reliable site at any time of year and our first visit since 2006. Still a good month for the unusual to turn up and the waterfowl should but there in good numbers

Cost £2.00

Saturday 15th November WWT London, Barnes by coach.

Another new site for us to explore and a day off for the car drivers. Regarded as the best urban site in Britain to watch wildlife. There are seven hides/café/toilets/shop etc. Plus, of course, a captive bird collection that we would expect at a WWT site.

Cost for coach and entry is £21.50 if you are a WWT member, coach £14.00

Saturday 13th December Eyebrook Reservoir/Fineshade Woods/Red Kite Roost Walk

First we head to Eyebrook for waterfowl and waders. We will then travel to Fineshades on the lookout for all our native woodland birds. After lunch Chris Andrews of the RSPB will give us a short talk on the "Return of The Red Kite". Following this, Chris will lead us on a "Red Kite Roost Walk". We will have to drive approx 7 miles off site to where the kites roost. Hopefully we will be rewarded with 40/50 Kites coming in for the night. There are no facilities at Eyebrook, but Fineshades has a new Café/Toilets/Car Park and RSPB shop. Take your RSPB membership cards to avoid a car park charge.

Cost £6.00 including the Red Kite Roost talk and walk.

Nest Box Scheme Update

During February, our delivery of nest boxes finally arrived at Rectory Farm. So a week later, a working party of club members donned their wellies and set about the task of erecting the boxes at 2 sites – which we are referring to the 'Reservoir' and 'Caldecott' sites.

At the Caldecott site, which is younger and less established, 5 Tit boxes, 5 open fronted boxes and 2 colony boxes (to encourage Tree Sparrows) were placed in various positions. The Reservoir site is much more mature, but the limited siting opportunities meant that the boxes are quite close together. 4 Tit boxes and 3 open fronted boxes were placed in amongst the trees and our surplus boxes (a Tit box and 2 open fronted) were placed nearby in the corner of the field. After 4 hours, it was celebration all around as everything went mostly to plan. The biggest mishap was numbering one box out of sequence! As we went back to the farm, a Red Kite came to wave us adieu.



Three weeks later, a return trip was scheduled to check that all was well. Well everything was where we had left it and there were the first signs of occupation in one of the boxes. Another return visit during mid April and two more boxes showed signs of occupation. Things were going well!

What's the latest news? A visit at the beginning of May noted:

Caldecott site – 1 section of a colony box and 2 Tit boxes had nesting material inside.

Reservoir site – all 4 Tit boxes contained nesting material. And there were Tree Sparrows nearby!

It's difficult to know if we have nesting birds or not at this stage. Hopefully on our next visit (end of May), we might be able to see parents taking food into the boxes for the youngsters. Keep your fingers crossed!

Right: Site 1 nearest the Reservoir.

Left: Graham bravely climbed the trees to put in the Tit boxes.

Centre: In go the stakes to mount the open fronted boxes.

Photos by Jane Wright



Indoor Meetings

Our forthcoming programme of indoor meetings, with guest speakers, will be:

June 11th 2008 - Meet the Owls

Countesthorpe based John Leach and Janette Higgs will talk about their work on owl rescue and introduce you to some of their friends.

July & August 2008 - no meetings

September 10th 2008 - Birding on the North Norfolk Coast

An illustrated talk by Allan Parker

October 9th 2008 - Annual General Meeting

Our AGM and a members photographic evening and competition.

November 13th 2008 - Leicestershire Through The Seasons

By 'Photographer of the Year 2007', Danny Green

December 11th 2008 - Christmas Dinner

Details and date to be confirmed.

Doors are open from 7.00pm, meetings start at 7.30pm, finishing at approx. 9.30pm.

Please attend early, if you wish to renew your membership, book trips or order seed etc..

Saturday 27th December Watermead Country Park, Leicester.

We last did this trip Xmas 2006 and it proved to be an excellent day out. The Starlings coming into roost were fantastic. Add to that Goosander, Plovers, and Kingfisher. Hopefully they will be all awaiting us again. Facilities include toilets and hides. This is a full day. 8.30am start, meet at Watermead.

Cost £2.00

Random Jottings...

A couple of months ago at work, I moved from one end of the office to the other. The main benefit was that I got a great view out of the window. Trees and undergrowth with a ground level view. But the novelty quickly wore off just looking at Magpies, Wood Pigeons and Squirrels. But I had a redundant peanut feeder at home – so that was put into use.

“When will we get to see something feeding?” asked Jean, my next desk neighbour.

“Don’t know, maybe 2 days, could be a couple of weeks.” Just shows that birds love to embarrass you. Within 20 minutes, in came a Blue Tit and 10 minutes after that, a Great Tit!

Since then, I’ve added a hanging bird table feeding mixed seed and sunflower hearts and the species list has been growing, with a total count to date of 18. An early visitor was a Redwing, but the real reward has been the regular visits of a pair of Bullfinches. It’s been interesting to watch the Robin’s reaction to the male’s red chest, especially around the table. They’re constantly chasing back and forth. Even the Blue Tits see the Bullfinch as an intruder to be confronted.

When I looked at the habitat around the building, I suddenly realised that there’s probably around an acre of scrub, bushes and trees and mainly undisturbed for most of the day. So it’s becoming another project – at least it’s far more entertaining than staring at the computer screen all day!

Please support our seed sales! 2 & 5kg bags will be available at meetings for you to buy on the night.

Field Trip Sightings

A quick recap on the highlights of our recent field trips.

Potteric Carr - 16th February (54 species)

A little cold, but a good day. Goldeneye, Water Rail, Golden Plover, Snipe, Kingfisher, Siskin and, oh yes, a Bittern.

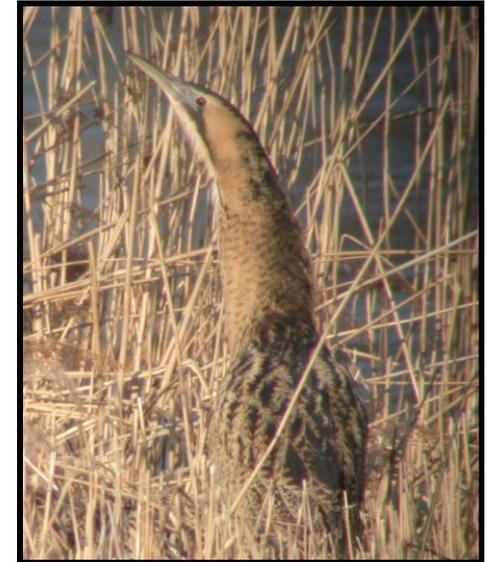
Snettisham – 15th March (72 species)

An overcast day with a high tide that didn’t come in very far!. Pink Footed, Brent and Barnacle Geese, Marsh Harrier, Avocet, Knot, Turnstone, Bar Tailed Godwit, Mediterranean Gull, Barn Owl and Short Eared Owl, Stonechat, Chiffchaff and Tree Sparrow.

Upton Warren & The Wyre Forest – 12th April (67 species)

A very nice day and a visit to the Garden Centre as well. Goosander, Little Ringed Plover, Snipe, Kingfisher, Sand & House Martins, Swallow, Cetti’s Warbler, Blackcap, Chiffchaff, Willow Tit, Nuthatch, Raven and Linnet.

If you would like a full tick list for any of our past field trips, please let Dennis know which you require. A master list of each trip is available for viewing at each meeting.



The star of Potteric Carr!
Photo by Marion Turner

If you would like to help or can contribute in any way towards the compilation of the newsletter, please contact Dennis