



Following on from my slightly cautious comment in the last Newsletter that Spring was fast approaching, despite the cold weather it would appear that things have definitely picked up with more summer migrants being reported. We have seen Swallows over the house with Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler and Lesser Whitethroat and others singing heartily on the early morning dog walk. We are also hearing early signs of the dawn chorus with more birds joining in as the days progress. There have been reports of Redstart, Ring Ouzel, Wood Warbler, Common Terns, Whinchat & Grasshopper Warbler in the Leicestershire & Rutland area. However, don't be put off that everyone else seems to be seeing migrants by the dozen and some websites no longer even mention them because they are too abundant (allegedly!) I suggest that you allow yourself some time to go and find your own "firsts" for the year, it is all happening out there get out and enjoy it!



Indoor Meetings & Events

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

12th June	David Tideswell	Garden Birds of Spring & Summer
July/August	No indoor meetings	
11th Sept	Paul Hobson	Coast & Pole to Pole
9th Oct	AGM & Photographic Competition	
13th Nov	To be arranged	

Trip Reports

Holkham Saturday 16th February 2013 (GT)

Remarkably the day was dry with welcome sunshine although still very wet underfoot from all the recent rain. We heard reports of a number of raptors a mile back along the coast road from Holkham so we decided to start our day there, we soon saw a number of Buzzard and a Red Kite but the reported Rough Legged Buzzard avoided detection. We then went to Holkham Hall and explored the woods and lake and had an excellent selection of birds including Nuthatch, Treecreeper, Goldcrest various Tits and quite close views of drumming Great Spotted Woodpeckers. The lake produced all the usual winter duck including a pair of Goldeneye and a huge flock of mixed gulls. After lunch we explored the pines and beach at Lady Ann's Drive. We added Pink Footed and Brent Geese and Pintail, two Barn Owls hunting over rough ground and at least four Muntjac deer. Total bird species 64 on the day.

Leighton Moss Saturday 16th March 2013 (SW)

It was raining as we set off on the coach and after a short stop on the way we arrived around 10.30. After getting our permits most of the group set off on the 1½ mile walk down to the two hides overlooking the pools at Morecombe Bay. There were good views of the usual ducks including lovely views of Pintail, waders were present too, including Spotted Redshank, Avocet and Greenshank! Just before we left the hides a group of Wigeon flew in and with them at least 4 Red Breasted Mergansers which were great to see! As we walked back to the visitor centre for lunch the sun came out and stayed that way for the rest of the day, there was also a Bar Headed Goose in a field with some Greylags. After lunch we split into two groups to visit the hides on the reserve, we all had good views of Marsh Harrier and eventually Snipe. The feeders near the Visitor Centre produced good views of lots of small birds including for some a Brambling. A good long day out with a total of 66 species for the day.

Gibraltar Point NNR Saturday 13th April 2013 (GT)

We arrived to some early mist which was soon blown away by a southerly breeze. This in itself was welcome as it did bring a number of migrants through. Spring had been a long time arriving this year so the sight of Swallows and Sand Martins flying through were the first of the year for most of the group. Added to that we found 4 Little Ringed Plovers on one of the scrapes and a Firecrest in the pines with Goldcrests. The shoreline had a good selection of waders including Knot, Godwit, and Plovers. A total of 71 species on the day.

Field Trips—2013

May 11th Paxton Pits

A return visit to this Cambridgeshire reserve and a good time to see and hear Nightingales. There is a small visitor centre with toilet facilities as well as various trails and hides. Entry fee and free hot drink included in the price. Cost £5.00.

June 15th RSPB Lakenheath Fen

A site we have visited before as part of a weekend trip, but always worth another day out! There is a chance of seeing Golden Oriole, Common Crane and many other species. Full facilities with visitor centre and cafe. Cost £2.50.

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.

A mixed week in Devon by John Palmer

It was Easter and bitterly cold, though the sun shone most days and in the shelter it was quite pleasant. Opportunities for birding were limited, far too cold and rough to go on the headlands to look for migrants. A trip to the harbour yielded a group of Turnstones and further on there was a Shag by the sea wall with his crest showing clearly and another swimming in the harbour. It was great to see them close up.

On the final day we found a small reserve sheltered from the wind, and at last some signs of Spring. In a few minutes we had two male Blackcaps, a Chiffchaff and several Willow Warblers, all revelling in the warm sunshine. What a welcome sight.

Something else fluttering in front of us was not a bird, and was too big for a butterfly.

It turned out to be a bat out in the midday sun looking for food. Apparently they too are hungry after the cold winter but it is the first one I have seen in broad daylight. It was an amazing sight.

From the window came the final sighting. Over breakfast I glanced up and had quite a shock. Bounding across the field about 100 yards away, was a very large and totally black animal, completely on its own. It looked too big for a dog and there was no-one else about. I wonder ?

Notices

November Speaker

Trevor Gunton has withdrawn as our speaker for November due to health & transport problems. Jane Hibbert is currently working on a replacement and details will hopefully follow in the next Newsletter

Committee Vacancy

A committee position still remains vacant for organising our Guest Speakers. If you are interested in this position please contact Paul to discuss. We hope someone will volunteer to arrange this valuable part of our evenings together.

The next edition of the Newsletter will be issued in August if you have a story for inclusion please send copy and photos to Marion Turner at graham.turner@btinternet.com