



Welcome to the start of our third year and, as always, there's an action packed programme for the coming months.

Don't forget to let us know of any special local sightings - we'll try to mention as many as we can at the start of each meeting. Also, many thanks to those who have volunteered to man the refreshment table over the coming months - a very important part of the evening!

The festive season is soon approaching as well and we'll be joining in the celebrations with a Christmas meal at The Shires in Peatling Parva. If you haven't yet booked your place, please see Jane Hibbert for details of the menu.

So to get us into the festive spirit, here's your first Christmas cracker joke: Why do seagulls fly over the sea? Because if they flew over bays, they'd be bagels! Sorry, but had to slip that one in somewhere.



2008 Photo Competition Winner - Sedge Warbler by Marion Turner

AGM Report

Many thanks to all our members who came along to the AGM in October. We have had another very successful year.

As reported, the membership subscriptions generally covered the room hire and speaker fees for the year and our other major expenditures were for nest boxes (for our scheme at Rectory Farm) and insurance cover. Our surplus revenue was mainly made up from the income generated by the field trips and seed sales.

The suggested discussion on reducing numbers going on field trips resulted in the opinion that numbers would only be limited where either the site or transport arrangements dictated. Where possible, advance notice of such restrictions would be given.

Once again, a big thank you from everyone to Mez Inchley for providing the teas and coffees, as well as a selection of home baked cakes.

2008 Photo Competition

The AGM also saw us holding a photographic competition featuring members' photographs.

The placed entries are featured in this newsletter and these and many others will feature in our 2009 calendar.

So many thanks to those who took part: Anne Smith, Sue McKenlay, Jan Thompson, Sue Walton, David Luyt, Dennis Taylor and of course, those who took the laurels – Marion Turner and John Palmer.

2009 Calendars

Our 2009 calendar is now available and features many of the photographs from our competition – and excellent it is too! If you haven't already placed your order for one (or more), there are a limited amount available to purchase at £4.00 each. Please see Dennis for your copies.

Meet the Committee

Continuing our series on the members of the committee, here's a little about the man behind the newsletter....

Name: Dennis Taylor

Wife & Kids: Happily single, thanks!

Pets: Eddie the Cockatiel, Findus & Macrae the Goldfish and everything that visits the garden.

Favourite Tipple: Mug of tea.

Job: I'm paid to surf the internet and play with toy trains!

Hobbies: Photography, wandering around aimlessly in my motorhome and Mini's amongst many other things.

Live: Blaby.

Local Patch: My back garden.

Top Birding Site: Anywhere in Scotland, especially sea cliffs.

Favourite Bird: Lapwing, but I'd also settle for any sea bird.

Rarest Bird Seen: In the UK - Spectacled Warbler, Great White Egret.

New Contact Details

Please note that Paul Seaton has changed his phone number and e-mail address to the following:

Phone : 0116 2888730

E-mail : paul.lseaton@btinternet.com

You can still contact Paul on his mobile 07973 156060, which remains unchanged.

Please support our seed sales! 2 & 5kg bags will be available at meetings for you to buy on the night. You can also buy seed in advance for collection at the following meeting (ask for an order form).

Field Trip Reports

Spurn Point, East Yorkshire - September 13th 2008

It's quite a distance to Spurn, but it was well worth the drive. Probably one of the best days we have had out as a group. The weather was excellent and the birds, although not in great numbers, were superb. Walking away from the centre towards the lake we had excellent views of Yellow Wagtails, Tree Sparrow, Redstart and Osprey. From the hide Knot, Redshank and one Brent Goose. After lunch we took the donkey track down to the point and it was worth the effort. The rewards were Cuckoo, Whitethroat, Wheatear, Rock Pipit, White Wagtail, Spotted Flycatcher and for me, my personal favourites of the day, the very obliging Whinchats.

A site well worth visiting and it will appear again on a trip list in the future.

Titchwell, Norfolk - October 10th 2008

Again, we had t-shirt weather on a beautiful day on the North Norfolk coast. We had a good variety of waders including Grey Plover, Golden Plover, Black Tailed Godwit, Little Stint, Ruff, Knot, Dunlin, Sanderling, Avocet and John's group had the Curlew Sandpiper. Some winter ducks were there but not in great numbers - a couple of Pintail's were a nice find. There were a number of fly-pasts by Pink Footed and Brent Geese. Several Bearded Reedlings were heard 'pinging' and then seen several times moving between reed beds. The distant back view of a small raptor was judged to be a Merlin by the RSPB warden. Whilst having lunch a small group of Snow Buntings flew away from us, giving a very brief glimpse.

A good day out, but a little predictable? Or maybe I'm just a little bored with Titchwell and I reckon there were more humans than birds! Unlike Spurn, do not expect to see a return visit to this site until probably 2011 or 2012. We have quite a few other sites in Norfolk to try and the next few years will see SLB giving them a visit.

Paul Seaton

New Members

A warm welcome to those who have joined SLB in past couple of months:

Sheila Stokes, Elizabeth Sperry, Shirley Parsons & Chloe Ward.

And we'd also like to thank everyone showing their support by renewing their membership.

Random Jottings

There was a very hard decision for me to take a few weeks ago. Over the past few months, I've been getting the local white doves coming into the garden, hoovering up all the seed that spills out of the feeders. That had been rather handy really, as it left very little to rot. The trouble was though, their numbers had been increasing, as well as a few stray racing pigeons joining the throng. So when the total got to 40 plus, I thought it was time to try and take some action.

First of all, a phone call to the local RSPCA. "Try the main phone number please". Well that's just an automated advice service (when you get through all the options). The district council pest controller was next. "Don't do birds". How about an independent company? "That's £400 per week and it may take two weeks!" Parish council? So far, no reply.

So the only option was to stop feeding altogether. I wasn't happy with that, but what else could I do? As you may know, I take part in the BTO's Garden Bird Watch survey. So why not see what happens when there's no main food source in the garden and use that as the survey information.

I still kept the peanut feeder and fat ball holder in use – they still keep the squirrel amused – and I put the bird table in the bottom corner of the garden where the doves can't get to and just put a handful of seed on at a time. All the hanging feeders were removed.

You can probably guess what happened. Within two days there were very few small birds visiting and the larger birds couldn't work out what was going on. So now, there's no Goldfinches, Bullfinches, Great Tits, Coal Tits, Starlings, Stock Doves or House Sparrows at all. The only solace is that they are seen around and about, but not in my garden.

But my Greater Spotted Woodpecker still comes to visit! And a Heron. The odd Wood Pigeon & Collared Dove still turn up. A Robin and a Blackbird, a couple of Chaffinches and Greenfinches, the odd Blue Tit and – well that's all there is now. From one extreme to the other!

So is my bird watching in the garden all over? Has my local patch gone? Well, the good news is the doves have moved away and the maximum seen around is thirteen and only six come into the garden at any one time. I'll give it a few more weeks. Then I'll see what happens when I try to reintroduce the feeders again. I do miss my birds!

Dennis Taylor

Field Trips

Saturday 15th November - WWT London - FULLY BOOKED.

Saturday 13th December - Eyebrook Reservoir / Fineshades Woods / Red Kite Roost Walk - FULLY BOOKED.

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

2009

Saturday 17th January : RSPB Frieston Shore, Lincolnshire. A new destination, good for waterfowl and waders. This is a remote part of Lincolnshire and there are no facilities here. We have arranged with The Plummers Place Hotel, Frieston, use of a room and toilets whilst in Frieston. In addition to this a hot and cold buffet will be provided at lunchtime for the group. **Cost £10.00 Including Hot and cold buffet at lunchtime.**

Saturday 14th February : RSPB Pulborough Brooks, Sussex by coach.

Thousands of wintering ducks, geese, swans and waders use the flooded brooks, including Bewick Swans. Pulborough is also good for raptors. Facilities include 4 hides and 3 viewpoints. There is a visitor centre/tearoom and toilets all on site.

Cost £16.00 assuming you are an RSPB member

Saturday 14th March : Lackford Lakes, Suffolk Another new site for us to explore, managed by Suffolk Wildlife Trust. Good for waterfowl and gulls and the first chance of the early migrants such as Chiffchaff and Sand Martin. Facilities include 8 hides, visitor centre, light refreshments and toilets. A cup of tea or coffee on arrival and at lunchtime is included in the price. **Cost £4.00 (Includes £2.00 donation to SWT)**

Saturday 11th April : Blakeney Point, Norfolk/FPB Norfolk or Cley. A good time of year to visit the point. We will do it the easy way by catching a boat from Morston Quay; hopefully some Terns will be present along with other migrants. In the afternoon we move off to visit the Farmland Bird Project near Cley Spey, Glandford, or Cley NWT. **Cost £11.00 including boat trip**

Saturday 16th May : Goyt Valley, Nr Buxton, Derbyshire. An excellent area for Pied Flycatcher/Redstart/Dipper/Grey Wagtail etc. plus the chance of some of our upland breeding birds Ring Ouzel, Whimbrel and Whinchat. The only facilities will be a toilet block. Please be aware that this trip will involve a lot of walking up hill and down dale, uneven surfaces etc - *you have been warned!!* If the weather is kind it will be a great day out. **Cost £2.00**

Saturday 13th June : NWT Attenborough, Nottinghamshire A welcome return to Attenborough Nature Reserve. We last visited here in May 2006, seems like yesterday! A large site to get round with plenty to see. The warblers will be dripping off the trees at this time of year. Plenty of hides/Visitor centre/Café and toilets. **Cost £2.00**

Indoor Meetings

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

December 10th 2008 - Christmas Dinner

At The Shires, Peatling Parva.

January 14th 2009 - Chris Andrews

A talk about the wildlife of Fineshades Wood.

February 11th 2009 - Tim Appleton

All about the development of the Rutland Water site.

March 11th 2009 - Keith Ferrar

The history and work of the RSPB.

April 8th 2009 - David Tideswell

Blue Tits - raising a family.

May 13th 2009 - Ron Kilsby

More RSPB cine films from the archives.

June 10th 2009 - TBA

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

Please attend early if you wish to book trips, speak to the committee, or order seed etc..

Bird Eye-identification

An straight forward quiz! Just name the bird...

