

SLB NEWSLETTER

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SOUTH LEICESTER BIRDWATCHERS



Now entering our 8th year, the newly elected Committee (see insert for specifics roles) would like to say "Thank you" for your continued support of the club and renewing your membership. Also a big "Thank you" on behalf of the club goes to Paul Seaton, John Palmer & Jane Wright, who all stood down from their Committee roles at the A.G.M., for their hard work and dedication over the years.

The winner of the 2013 Annual Photographic Competition was John Palmer with his photo of a Common Sandpiper (see picture).



Finally, please remember that deposits and your menu choices for the Xmas Meal at Chef Patron, arranged for Wednesday 4th December, need to be given to Jane Hibbert by 14th November indoor meeting.

Indoor Meetings & Events

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

11 th Dec	John Jones	Skokholm Island
8 th Jan	Ben Hall	Photography
12 th Feb	Neil Glenn	Moroccan Birds
12 th Mar	David Lingard	Italian birds and the work of LIPU

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.

For further information on the South Leicester Birdwatchers, please contact Graham Turner on 01455 282854 or e-mail graham.turner@btinternet.com

Trip Reports

Blacktoft Sands Saturday 14th September 2013 (SW)

It was damp as we set off from Blaby, however after a breakfast stop by the time we arrived at Blacktoft the sky was clearing. The weather stayed fine for the rest of the day, though the wind was cool! After a short talk from the warden, as there were just 14 of us we set off together for the hides. We had been in the far hide for around 15 minutes watching the various waders and also getting brief glimpses of Water Rail when someone said "here come the Otter family!". To everyone's amazement we watched a mother otter and 3 young come out of the reeds and run across the mud to the other side, it was a wonderful sight and one no-one expected at 11am! At one of the other hides there was only a female duck present and after much studying and debate we came to the conclusion that it was a Garganey. After lunch we went to the hides on the other side where we found the Curlew Sandpiper, Spotted Redshank and also 2 Ruddy Shelduck. There were lots of butterflies about and also small toads and lots of Tree Sparrows on the feeders. A good day out with the highlight being the amazing otter family. Total of 46 species for the day.

Holme NOA Reserve 12th October 2013 (GT).

We thought that a wet day was in prospect as we left Blaby in rain and drove to the east coast mostly through rain. However we were in for a pleasant surprise as the weather held fair and remained dry for our visit. Further good news was that the NOA were able to carry out their bird ringing activities and we were able to watch them ring and release a number of different birds. These included Blackcap, Robin, Chiffchaff and Goldcrest all of which were present in large numbers having arrived from the continent following the strong easterly winds of the previous day. We scanned the fields and found a Great Grey Shrike sitting on the top of a bush and the entire group had good views. We then moved to the beach to sea watch and were rewarded with a good passage of Gannet and Scoter as well as a good view of a passing Great Skua. Further along the coastal path we were surprised to see an owl coming in off the sea and as it flew close by saw it was a Short Eared Owl. Finally back at the car park a Yellow-browed Warbler gave some brief views for a lucky few. An excellent trip with a total of 66 species for the day.

An appeal for more volunteer drivers

If you are happy to volunteer yourself as a driver for any of the field trips please ensure you make this clear on your booking form. It would be nice for the regular volunteer drivers to be passengers sometimes.

Field Trips—2013

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. **NB. 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 Kite. 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.

January 11th RSPBs Frampton Marsh & Freiston Shore, Lincs

Two neighbouring RSPB sites next to the Wash. We can expect to see a good variety of ducks, with the drakes looking at their best. There will be geese, over wintering waders and possibly Twite, Snow Buntings. Toilets at Frampton. Cost £2.50

February 15th RSPB Fairburn Ings, Yorkshire

More than 4 years since the group visited this excellent site comprising a group of shallow lakes in the Aire Valley with a riverbank walk. Wintering swans and plenty of waterfowl. Visitor Centre. Cost £2.50

March 15th RSPBs Otmoor and Farmoor Reservoir, Oxfordshire

A first visit to these two RSPB reserves. Otmoor has reedbeds, scrubland and mature woodland. Bittern is a possibility. Hunting peregrines, Hen Harriers, Short-eared Owls and Merlins have all been recorded here. Farmoor is a reservoir site with a trail alongside the River Thames. Plenty of waterfowl to see. No facilities at Otmoor. Toilets at Farmoor. Cost £2.50

April 12th Potteric Carr NR, South Yorkshire

When we went to this site in January 2012, all the lagoons were frozen over. It was uncomfortably cold! As Spring visitors, we could see passage waders as well as numerous waterfowl. Bittern is a strong possibility. There should also be plenty of avian Spring visitors. Toilets at Visitor Centre and Café. Cost £6.50 (or £2.50 if you are a member of LRWT. LRWT cards will be required on the day)

All forms and payments returned to Sue Walton please.

A "Tight" Situation by Marion Turner

I know that a lot of the group complain about Feral Pigeons f tables as they eat almost everything in sight, but we do not mi we live there are always plenty of Feral Pigeon that visit us from the local quarry fc

However, the other day in amongst them feeding we spotted a R looked to have an injury to one of its legs. Having brought it in soon realised that the leg was broken, although the bird seer and continued to feed on peanuts & seed in the safety of our old On further examination we found the owners telephone number and took the details of the leg rings.

We looked on the internet to see the area where the Pigeon was registered but having rescued Racing Pigeons previously we did not hold out much hope that the owner would be that interested in retrieving the bird. They are usually not local and often the birds are young ones that have got lost or given up flying with the main flock and the owners don't want them back.

Anyway we decided to ring the owner, who turned out to be a gruff sounding chap from North Yorkshire. Having explained the situation and given the details of the bird he was really happy to hear from us as she was one of his best racers and he had been concerned when she hadn't returned with the rest.

The conversation then became a little weird when he asked me if I wore tights or stockings! Not being quite sure whether to hang up there and then I just said in a sharp tone that was being very personal to which he laughed and then explained his reason for asking, If I had a spare pair he wanted me to place the bird in the stocking having cut a tiny hole for the legs to protrude through and suspend in the air so as no weight was being placed on the injured leg. He then explained that he would contact a courier to collect the bird in the morning and told me not to feed her any more peanuts as I was spoiling her!

Sure enough the following morning the courier arrived and placed her, still suspended, in a box and they disappeared off. Later that day the owner rang to say she had been returned to him safely and how grateful he was for what we had done. He said he was no longer going to race her but would breed her and said she would be allowed peanuts as her racing days were over.



The next edition of the Newsletter will be issued in February 2014. If you have a story for inclusion please send copy and photos to Marion Turner at graham.turner@btinternet.com