

SLB Bird Boxes at Rectory Farm, Great Easton

Following on from Phil Johnson talk at our December indoor meeting it came to light that the bird boxes we had placed in two of the spinneys on the farm were no longer being monitored by Dr Colin Hewitt. It was therefore decided to arrange for a working party to visit the farm to clean them all out and carry out any repairs necessary and if possible to have them ready for this Spring's breeding season.

So our intrepid group consisting of Roger, Jane H , Sue W, Brian C, and John set off to complete the task in hand. Despite the spinneys being much more dense and them having to fight their way through the branches and the undergrowth they managed to find 21 boxes.



They were happy to report that despite the lack of any attention being given to the boxes their overall condition was very good with just a few in need of repair, and more importantly most of them had been used!

After all of them had received a good clean out, with some being fixed more securely to their tree, a couple of Robin boxes being re sited and a new roof being made for one of the Blue Tit boxes they are now all ready for this years breeding season. Another visit will be arranged later in the year to record breeding successes.

Bring on the birds!

May Weekend Away

Please note the balance of payment is required by the April indoor meeting at the latest. A deposit of £50.00 per person has already been paid so the balance is £130.00 per person if sharing a room or £150.00 per person for single rooms.

Please either hand your cheques to Sue Walton or post to
6 Peers Way, Huncote, Leics, LE9 3BT.

The next edition of the Newsletter will be issued in May 2016. If you have a story for inclusion please send copy and photos to Marion at graham.turner@btinternet.com



SLB NEWSLETTER

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**SOUTH LEICESTER
BIRDWATCHERS**



Hope some of you took time out last month to participate in the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch. The RSPB reported in 2015 that over half a million people took part and recorded over 8.5 million birds in total. This event must provide them with a wealth of information regarding the health of bird populations. For 2016 our contribution was 19 species including Reed Bunting and Sparrowhawk. Hope you can all add a few more!



Finally, now is the time to clean out and repair your nest boxes and hopefully you will be successful in gaining a family of new neighbours of the feathered variety. Remember to keep feeding and ensure there is always fresh water.

Indoor Meetings & Events

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

10th February	Steve McGennis	Blue Tits through the seasons
9th March	Dave Nicholls	Naturespot, recording Leics wildlife
13th April	Nick Martin	Birds of the Forest of Dean
11th May	Chris Ward	Natural Born Predators
8th June	Jeff Baker	Warbler I.D. Masterclass

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
e-mail graham.turner@btinternet.com
www.southleicesterbirdwatchers.uk

Trip Reports

Ouse Washes RSPB – 14th November 2015 (GT)

The remnants of an Atlantic hurricane was forecast so we were pleased to start our days birding in dry conditions. Shallow water levels at this largest area of washland in the UK were evident and the reserve held huge numbers of Wigeon and Teal and also good numbers of Pintail and Lapwing. Whooper Swan were in and gave good views and we also found flocks of Ruff and Golden Plover. Around the reserve were Marsh Harrier, Buzzard, Kestrel, Sparrowhawk and a Peregrine conveniently perched for prolonged views and at the visitors centre there was a nice selection of passersines including Tree Sparrow and Siskin.

Total number of species for the day was 63.

Brandon Marsh WLT—12th December 2015 (SW)

A small group of 8 braved the weather for the trip to Brandon, but not too long after we arrived the rain let up to leave an overcast day. At the first hide most of us saw the Kingfisher flitting about close to the waters edge, there were also the usual ducks and gulls, including a nice Goldeneye. Jenny spotted some waders close to the far bank, which turned out to be 3 Snipe. From East Marsh Hide we all had lovely close views of 2 Water rail in the channel by the hide. We walked on to the furthest hide, a new addition to the Reserve, and although we didn't see much from it I'm sure it will be good in the future. All of us then enjoyed a good hot lunch in the cafe, while watching the birds on the feeders. In the afternoon we walked through the wooded area to Wright hide, where we watched the gulls attempting to break open fresh water mussels by flying up with them and dropping them, without much success! On the way back to the visitor centre we stopped to watch a flock of around 30 Siskin in the Alders. All in all a lovely day out despite the weather predictions.

A total of 53 species for the day.

Attenborough Nature Reserve 16th January (GT)

A relatively nearby reserve for the club today to this Wildlife Trust site in neighbouring Nottinghamshire and a dry, cold day was a welcome respite from the wet, windy weather of the past few days. As we headed towards the Tower hide we had good views of winter duck including both male & female Goosander and Goldeneye and from the hide we had good views of a pair of Bullfinch and Reed Bunting. Buzzard and Sparrowhawk were added as we followed the paths around the site and along by the side of the River Trent which bordered the reserve. After making full use of the cafe facilities we returned in search of a reported Firecrest but with no luck. Despite quite a few of the pools remaining frozen throughout the day we did find several Snipe basking in the late sun and also had good views of a Water Rail along the edge of the rushes. A total of 59 species on the day.

Field Trips 2016

Feb 13th RSPB Blacktoft Sands, Yorkshire, DN14 8HR

Our previous visit was in the Autumn. This tidal reed bed is the largest in England and is important for its breeding Bearded Tits, Bitterns, Marsh Harriers plus various waders and waterfowl.

Facilities: Toilets. Cost £2.50

Mar 12th Thetford Forest, Suffolk & Nunnery Lakes, Suffolk, IP27 0TJ

March gives us the best chance of seeing the elusive Goshawks. We could even witness them displaying. Plenty of other birds to find too: Crossbill, Siskin, Brambling, Woodlark...

Facilities: Toilets. Cost £2.50

April 16th Goyt Valley, Derbyshire

An amble along a rolling moorland road, alongside water and woodland in early Spring. What's not to like...

No facilities at the main car park (but toilet at south end of the valley). Cost £2.50

May 14th SLB Bird Race, Rutland Water

Rutland Water will be the venue for the SLB Bird Race 2016. This trip is **free** to all members to celebrate our forthcoming 10th Anniversary as a club this September.

May 20th-22nd Suffolk Weekend Away

Spaces still available—contact Sue Walton

June 11th Bempton Cliffs, Yorkshire

Travelling by coach to this magnificent seabird colony, we will not know which way to look as there is so much activity at this time of year - Gannets, Auks etc.

Facilities: A new visitor centre opened Spring 2015 - light refreshments available. Toilets. RSPB cards required. Cost £25.00

All booking forms and payments to be returned to Sue Walton please.