



Well here we are again in August, most of the Swifts have probably left these shores, soon to be followed by our other summer visitors - how short the summer seems sometimes. However, we now look forward to the reverse migration with the chance of almost anything turning up and also tricky eclipse plumage ducks to try to sort out.

Isn't birding great, there is always something to watch out for all year round!

Right: Pictures of the group on Brownsea Island during our Dorset weekend and one of the resident Red Squirrel (courtesy Keith Walsh)



Indoor Meetings

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

September 14th - **Allan Parker** - Potteric Carr Nature Reserve

October 12th - **AGM & Buffet** plus Annual photographic competition

NOTE : Please send your photos to Dennis before the end September

November 9th - **Roy Croucher** - Managing the Countryside for Wildlife

December 14th- **David Garner**

January 11th - **Paul Fuller** - Wayside & Woodland

Meetings start at 7.30pm (doors open from 7.00), finishing at approx. 9.30pm. Please attend early if you wish to book trips, speak to the committee or order seed.

If you would like to help or can contribute in any way towards the compilation of the newsletter, please contact Marion on 01455 282854, or e-mail graham.turner@btinternet.com

For further information on the South Leicester Birdwatchers, please contact Paul Seaton on 07969 387914, or e-mail paul.lseaton@gmail.com

Trip Reports

Weekend in Dorset 20th - 22nd May 2011 (GT)

Day 1 – Radipole RSPB & Portland Bill

Twenty-nine SLB members departed Blaby at 6.45am by coach for this year's weekend break, on this occasion to Dorset. On the journey down we saw a good number of Red Kite & Buzzard which together with the bird quizzes kept us busy.

We arrived at Radipole RSPB in the heart of Weymouth late morning and were soon enjoying the outbursts from the Cettis, Sedge & Reed Warblers. Along with good numbers of Hirundines & Terns one of the highlights of the day was seeing the food pass between the male & female Marsh Harriers. A few of the group were also fortunate enough to have a couple of sightings of the resident Water Voles.

In the afternoon we took the short drive to Portland Bill where we spent a couple of hours sea watching and exploring the area. There were plenty of Guillemots on the sea along with a fewer number of Razorbill plus we had good views of Gannet & Fulmar passing by.

The walk along the coastline produced views for some group members of Purple Sandpiper & Rock Pipit.

We returned to the coach and onto our weekend accommodation at the Portland Heights Hotel. A total of 65 species on the day.

Day 2 – Brownsea Island

After a good breakfast the group set off for a day trip to Brownsea Island, a new site for the SLB group. There was some early morning mist but this soon cleared to leave a warm sunny day. We boarded the ferry at Poole Harbour and as we neared the island we could both see and hear the Tern and Gull colonies.

We first made our way to the Nature Reserve and were soon having excellent views from the hides of a large group of Black tailed Godwits mostly in breeding plumage, as well as close views of the resident Common and Sandwich Terns. A Mediterranean Gull was soon found close to the hide to allow all to have good views. A summer plumage Grey Plover was also a good find.

We then walked through the woodland where views of various Tits, Siskin and a Nuthatch feeding young were seen. A Cuckoo was also heard.

Most of the group were also rewarded with close views of the resident Red Squirrels either at the feeding platform or the Visitor's Centre. In fact one individual was most obliging as it came close enough to allow an unexpected opportunity for photos.

After a welcome ice cream the group assembled at the quayside for the return trip which included a tour of the 5 islands contained within Poole Harbour. A total of 63 species on the day.

Despite the strong wind there were good numbers of small waders including Dunlin, Sanderling, Ringed Plover & Turnstone. We also managed some distant views of the Little Tern colony.

We then drove to Arne RSPB arriving mid morning. The reserve has been extended in recent times and we started with the newer Coombe Heath Trail. The continued strong wind kept a lot of the small birds down but a good number of the group managed sightings of the resident Dartford Warbler on the heathland. After lunch we explored the rest of the reserve and it's woodland and saltmarsh habitats. The double decker hide overlooking the saltmarsh gave good close views of the Sika Deer.

The weather had been very good to us over the weekend and the group managed a total of 91 species.

Redgrave & Lopham Fen, Suffolk—11th June 2011 (GT)

A new site for us as we explored this Suffolk Wildlife Trust reserve on a warm and sunny day. A walk around the Waveney Trail took in both fen & woodland habitats and we were rewarded with good views of Hobby, Cuckoo and Little Owl. This reserve isn't restricted to birds and we saw roe deer, grass snake, water vole and large numbers of dragonfly.

After lunch we completed the Great Fen Trail which yielded two further Little Owls, photographable dragonfly and a Prairie Dog! The Trust weren't aware of it's presence previously but as it also obliged the photographers they have the evidence now Total for the day was 49 species at a delightful reserve which I'm sure we will return to.

Field Trips

September 17th RSPB Titchwell, Norfolk

It's been a long while and there have been major changes. So worth a look.

Cost £2.00 per person assuming you are an RSPB member

October 22nd Boston Belle, Lincolnshire. **Fully booked**

NOTE Departure time 8am from Blaby

November 12th WWT Slimbridge, Gloucestershire.

A late autumn visit for wintering geese and swans. Heated hides and food should keep us busy for the day.

Cost will be £11.00 each

December 17th Ladywalk Reservoir and Whitacre Heath Nature

West Midlands

A local trip to the Tame Valley area. We will visit the West Midland Bird Club site of Ladywalk Reservoir with Whitacre Heath nature reserve after lunch.

Cost will be £4.00 per person.

Please refer to the booking forms for full details of the trips. Also note that all bookings and payments should now go to John Palmer.

Eyebrook Bird Boxes update

As some of you may be aware after five years service on the SLB Committee Dennis Taylor will be stepping down at the forthcoming AGM. One of his many roles was the monitoring and recording of activity at the nest boxes at Rectory Farm. As you may recall the boxes were purchased by club funds and erected by members three years ago.

Fortunately, Dr Colin Hewitt of Leicester University contacted Dennis to enquire whether he could become involved with the nest box scheme, as he was completing a ringing project on the birds found in the surrounding area.

After discussing with Phil at Rectory Farm this seemed to be the best way forward for the continuation of the SLB nest box scheme.

Colin was pleased to report that three broods (one Blue Tit and two Great Tit) were big enough to ring on his last visit on the 24th May and that the Tree Sparrow nest had six warm eggs which showed they were being incubated.

He felt that he would not be bothering the tits from then on as they were likely to fledge within a few days, but that he will continue to keep an eye on the Tree Sparrow nest once or twice more over the following weeks. After that he was to start checking for second or third broods of Tree Sparrow at the reservoir end. He also hoped for second brood Robins in the open fronted boxes now the vegetation had grown over some of them.

As we have now had four of the tit nests ringed and a Tree Sparrow still on the go he felt that it was a pretty good result so far for such small areas with so many boxes,

Interestingly at nearby Rutland Water he found that the previous week's windy and inclement weather had resulted in some broods starving. Thankfully it doesn't seem to have had such an impact on the farm boxes.

Colin will keep the group updated on his findings over the forthcoming months.

*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).*

The next edition of the newsletter will be issued in November 2011