



Whilst the Christmas celebrations might be a distant memory we now have the excitement of a new years "Birding," Whether it is trying again to spot the bird that always eludes you each year, or beating last years total numbers seen or to get another "Lifer" tick whatever it is that gets you out there with your binoculars - enjoy! February is a good time to sort out the overwintering duck, geese and swan whilst they are still here in good numbers as well as the visiting winter thrushes. Also you never quite know what you might see, as depending on the severity of the weather on the continent we may be lucky enough to have an influx of Waxwing (pictured above photo by Graham Turner) Brambling or Long eared Owls now wouldn't that be nice!



Norfolk Weekend - A further £50.00 per person required by the March indoor meeting. The final balance will be required by the April indoor meeting. All monies to Paul Seaton

Indoor Meetings

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

March 14th	-	Trevor Gunton	-	Birds of the Broad Acres
April 11th	-	Rob Fray & Hannah	-	Shetland & Storm Petrels
May 9th	-	Ron Kilsby	-	RSPB Films
June 13th	-	Carl Baggott	-	Spitsbergen

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.

Trip Reports

Slimbridge, Gloucs — Saturday 12th November 2011 (JP)

Twenty of us set off for Slimbridge in November in weather that turned out to be more like September, mild and sunny. After an early getaway and the decision to forego a motorway breakfast we arrived at 9.15, to find we were too early to get in and coffee in the car park was not our usual treat!

However our two groups had a good selection of birds including White Fronted geese, Pintail, a Peregrine Falcon from tower hide, Water Rail, and Snipe. Redwing & Fieldfare were spotted and we had close views of a very late Sedge Warbler. Linnet, Yellowhammer and Reed Bunting were also nice to see.

A great end to the day was the swan feed particularly as some of the Bewick swan had literally just arrived. There were some big families of up to five young, many jostling for the best feeding positions and nervously squabbling away, especially the youngsters for which it was all completely new. It was a great experience to see the end of a long migratory journey happening a few yards in front of us. A very rewarding trip with 63 species for the day.

Ladywell Reserve & Whitacre Heath NR, West Mids Saturday 17th December 2011 (GT)

A cold day and a doubtful forecast looked to be in prospect for our day trip as we drove to our first site Ladywalk Reserve in the Tame valley in North Warwickshire. A permit only site which had not been explored by any of the group present previously so we were pleasantly surprised at the variety of habitats we discovered.

As soon as we started out and before entering the actual reserve we had an obliging Grey Wagtail along the river together with assorted duck and Little Grebe. Once in the woodland area we soon had Treecreeper, Siskin, Redwing, Redpoll and Bullfinch plus a Cettis Warbler was heard to add to our list. The river and pools revealed Goosander, three Little Egret flying by and a Green Sandpiper.

After lunch we drove the short distance to the nearby Whitacre Heath Nature Reserve which also forms part of the Tame valley floodplain network. Good numbers of Fieldfare and Redwing were seen and a mixed flock of Siskin & Redpoll high in the treetops challenged our neck muscles. A single Raven was also observed and heard overhead. A total of 55 species over two new sites for the group.

Trip Reports cont'd

Grafham Water, Cambs, Saturday 14th January 2012 (PS)

The coldest start I can recall on a trip, a balmy minus three degrees when we arrived at Grafham. A very nice site and we soon had some good quality sightings, Green Sandpiper, Grey Wagtail, and Goosander. There were distant views of a Great Northern Diver, a few Ruddy Ducks that had avoided the shotgun and most of the normal waterfowl.

Good views of a drake Scaup was a first on an SLB trip. There were good numbers of Fieldfare and Redwings. In the small bird department the picks were Treecreeper, Blackcap, Bullfinch and Goldcrest.

An entertaining day right to the end when several of us were locked in the car park!! Another first. A respectable 59 for the day

Field Trips

March 17th RSPB Middleton Lakes & Kingsbury Water Park

Newly opened RSPB site in the Midlands with limited but developing facilities. If time permits we may visit Kingsbury Water Park where there will be a parking charge. Cost will be £2.50 per person

April 14th College Lake, Herts

Another new site for the club. This former chalk pit has many hides, a Visitor Centre, Toilets and Cafe. Cost will be £2.50 plus car parking charge.

May 5th Evening "Nightingale Walk" at Hambleton Wood

A guided evening walk by a member of staff from Rutland Water. This is an excellent site for Nightingales and for Bluebells too! Walk will start at 6.45pm.

Cost £7.50 per person. **NOTE: not our usual Saturday**

June 16th Wicken Fen, Cambs

After a short introductory talk we will spend the day exploring this extensive site. Facilities including a Cafe. Cost £7.75 per person (£2.50 for National Trust members)

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

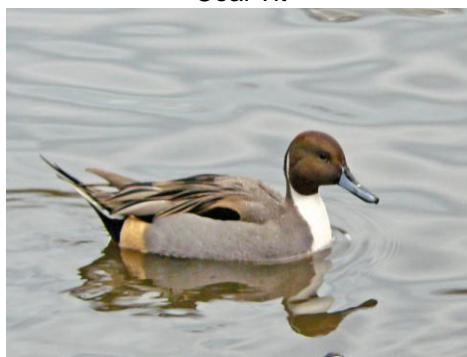
A selection of members photos from the archives



Coal Tit



Song Thrush



Pintail



Bullfinch

Members contributions to the Newsletter are most welcome. Please email Marion (see below for email details) with your reports and photos from anywhere in the UK. Look forward to reading about your exploits in future issues.

Should you wish to receive the Newsletter by email please send your request to Marion on graham.turner@btinternet.com

*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).
All seed is of a high quality and supplied by Rectory Farm (who adhere to the principles of farming in an environmentally responsible way). So choose SLB as your seed supplier and you will be also supporting your own bird club.*

The next edition of the newsletter will be issued in May 2012