

SLB NEWSLETTER

Issue no. 24

November 2011

SOUTH LEICESTER BIRDWATCHERS



Having just completed our 5th year in existence the Committee wanted to say "thank you" to everyone who renewed their membership for another year. **Long may we continue.**

The annual photographic competition was held on the AGM night with a lovely selection of photos being provided by members. The winning entry and our congratulations go to Jan Thompson for her picture of a Mute Swan in flight.

A reminder that the SLB Xmas meal is this year being held on Wednesday 7th December at Chef Patron, Thurlaston. Please contact Jane Hibbert to book your place. Friends and family are all welcome. **Birdy bit** - with winter fast approaching remember to keep feeding and providing water for all our feathered friends, where would we be without them. Enjoy!



Indoor Meetings

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

December 14th	- David Garner	-	Old Hushwings
January 11th	- Paul Fuller	-	Wayside & Woodland
February 8th	- Dr Graham Lenton	-	Two Islands
March 14th	- Trevor Gunton	-	Birds of the Broad Acres
April 11th	- Rob Fray & Hannah	-	Shetland & Storm Petrels

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.

Trip Reports

Titchwell RSPB, Norfolk—Saturday 17th September 2011 (PS)

We all managed to get around the A47 closure, add to that the slow service at Tesco we were a little later than planned arriving at Titchwell. As it was high tide we headed down to the beach first which proved to be productive, with sightings of Eider, Red Breasted Merganser, Grey Plover, Gannet, Sandwich Tern and Godwits. There were also large numbers of Knot, Oystercatcher and Sanderling on the shoreline.

After lunch we headed towards the hides but had to stop for Angie's Spoonbill, well spotted, as it was with a Little Egret and could easily have been overlooked and a nice Greenshank en route was a good find.

This was the first visit by SLB since the new hides had been built; clearly they were designed by the same person who built most of the world war two bunkers. He had a helping hand from the guy who invented the Enigma Code; his contribution was to install the easy to operate window system.

From the hides a late Sedge Warbler was spotted. A few people in the group were lucky enough to have Redstart, Whinchat and a Little Stint. A good day out, with good weather and a total of 70 species for the day.

Boston Belle on the River Witham, River Welland and The Wash, Lincolnshire. Saturday October 22nd 2011 (PS)

We have good days out, we have great days out and we have exceptional days out, this was clearly the latter. We all met at The Jolly Sailor, Boston Marina, some of us having a little breakfast to sustain us for the trip ahead. Another beautiful day with wall to wall sunshine throughout, the autumn sun enhanced the day considerably.

Once we negotiated the lock, we headed down river and immediately had Grey Wagtail, Bar Tailed Godwit and very good numbers of Redshank. A Peregrine Falcon on top of Boston Stump and good views of Common Sandpiper, Brent Geese and Shelduck along the river banks.

A total of 52 species for the day.

Field Trips

December 17th Ladywalk Reservoir and Whitacre Heath NR 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.

January 14th Grafham Water, Cambs

A new site for the club and not too far to travel on a short winters day. There are 5 bird hides as well as a Visitor's Centre. Cost £2.50 per person plus car parking charge.

February 11th Potteric Carr, South Yorkshire

A return visit for the club following expansion of the site which now has 14 hides as well as Visitor Centre and Cafe. Cost will be £4.50 per person (including permit)

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.

Eyebrook Bird Boxes update

As we mentioned in the last Newsletter Dr Colin Hewitt was to keep the group updated on this project at Rectory Farm, Great Easton. The boxes were monitored for the British Trust for Ornithology Nest Records and Ringing Scheme and highlights from his report are shown below.

SLB erected 26 nest boxes in two small spinneys and these have proved to be very successful in 2011. Six out of ten small hole boxes successfully hatched 38 chicks of 3 species being Great Tit, Blue Tit and Tree Sparrow. Unfortunately not all the hatchings survived although Colin was able to ring a total of 12 Great Tit chicks, 8 Blue Tit and 5 Tree Sparrow (pictured).



The early spring weather this year was thought to be responsible for the Tit breeding season starting two weeks early. Unfortunately this proved to be the downfall for some nests as there was a spell of very windy, wet and cold weather just as most chicks hatched. This meant that foraging for food would have been much more difficult and the chicks would have become chilled more easily. Nest recorders from all over the country contributing to the BTO Nest Records Scheme also reported there had been a higher than normal mortality or nest failure in Tit boxes than in previous years.

The open fronted boxes for Robin, Wren and the like were less successful and these may be resited into deeper foliage in time for the next breeding season. Colin is hopeful that next year he will be able to report on recoveries and recaptures of this years birds.

If you wish to receive a full copy of the report please email Marion on graham.turner@btinternet.com

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).

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