

SLB NEWSLETTER

Issue no. 28

November 2012

SOUTH LEICESTER BIRDWATCHERS



We are now in our seventh year of existence with most of the group having survived the migration to Blaby! As usual a big thank you for renewing your membership for another year. Lets hope we can continue to pack it full of interesting talks and trips.

The AGM again hosted the Annual Photographic Competition with another lovely selection of pictures being sent in by members. The winner for 2012 was Angie Fear with her picture of Sanderling on the shoreline (see right). Congratulations to Angie.

The SLB Xmas meal will again be held at Chef Patron, Thurlaston on Wednesday 5th December. Please contact Jane Hibbert to book your place. Friends and family are most welcome



Indoor Meetings & Events

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

Nov 14th	-	Nick Martin	Secret Wildlife of the Cairngorms
Dec 5th	-	Christmas Meal at Chef Patron, Thurlaston	
Dec 12th	-	Sophie Barker	The work of N.O.A. and migration
Jan 9th	-	Chris Mills	Shore birds and waders
Feb 13th	-	Dr Graham Lenton	The Barn Owl

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

Frampton Marsh Nature Reserve, Saturday 15th Sept 2012 (GT)

The first trip of the 2012/13 season saw a return to Frampton Marsh RSPB having last visited in winter several years ago. The day was warm and sunny throughout - a very pleasant change from the previous months that could loosely be described as a summer. We set off round the Wash trail in two groups and were soon enjoying views of a variety of waders including Curlew Sandpiper, Dunlin, Snipe, Greenshank and many hundred Black Tailed Godwit. There must have been upward of thirty Little Egret on the reserve and good numbers of Martins and Swallows moving through.

Four Yellow Wagtail and a Wheatear were seen from the sea bank as well as a Hobby over the reedbeds. The highlight of the day though was not one but two Pectoral Sandpipers – a new bird for SLB - which offered excellent views and enabled the entire group comparison with the numerous Curlew Sandpiper and Ruff alongside them. A total of 58 species on the day.

Brockholes, Lancs, Saturday 10th Oct 2012 (GT)

Another new site for the group this time to the Lancashire Wildlife Trust reserve at Brockholes, near Preston by coach. The reserve which is an old quarry site had only been open since Easter 2011 and was obviously still maturing but it does have a good set of habitats including mature woodland, river bank, scrapes, deep water and reedbeds and the site will no doubt improve with time. There is also an unusual floating visitor “village” with restaurant, information centre and shops which will add to its all-round attraction.

There were a number of trails around the reserve which we explored and we soon found a flock of siskin on alders in the woodland as well as a nuthatch. On the scrapes we found 6 snipe and a kingfisher. A brambling was also seen on one of the feeders. 50 species on the day.

THANK YOU

A big thank you to Ann Kilbourne who very kindly donated a large projector screen for the club's use. This was soon put to good use at the AGM - enabling members to have a bigger and better view of the photo competition entries.

Field Trips

November 17th RSPB Ouse Washes

A reserve we have visited previously but at a different time of year, there are 10 hides and a small visitor centre with toilet facilities. There should be a good chance of seeing wintering swan, geese and ducks.

Cost £2.50 assuming you are an RSPB member

December 15th Summer Leys Nature Reserve

A site some of us have visited before, close to Wellingborough and not too far to travel on a winter's day. This reserve became a Wildlife Trust reserve in 2006 - there are 4 hides and good paths but no facilities. If time allows we may make a short visit to Pitsford Reservoir on the way home.

Cost £2.50.

January 12th Clumber Park

A new site for the club, this Nottinghamshire Park is owned by the National Trust and a good site for Hawfinch and other woodland birds. There are lots of trails and also a large lake, toilet facilities are available and the cafe will also hopefully be open when we visit. Cost £2.50. In addition a parking charge will apply to non-members of the National Trust.

February 13th Holkham

It's been awhile since the club last visited Holkham and February is a good time to see the large flocks of geese and also shore birds, waders and ducks - there are two hides and a large area of beach! Cost £2.50. In addition there is a parking charge at Lady Ann's Drive.

Please refer to the enclosed booking form for full details. All forms and payments returned to John Palmer.

A DRAMATIC OSPREY SHIFT by Sue Walton

I am now in my 6th year as a volunteer for the Rutland Osprey Project and during this time there have been many interesting sightings as well as lots of interesting Osprey action, but one shift was quite memorable. Our shift on Friday 20th July started as usual from the Lyndon Centre and we arrived to find a few people watching the large screen in the centre. The female chick (9F) had not yet made her maiden flight, but was helicoptering in the nest, so maybe we would see her first flight today. We walked down to Waderscrape hide to start our shift.

A DRAMATIC OSPREY SHIFT continued

The first hour was uneventful, with the male bird (5R) perched in the fallen tree opposite the hide, the female perched on the T-perch and the male chick (8F) taking lots of short flights to and from the nest, whilst 9F still kept us waiting! Suddenly 5R flew a few feet up from his perch, dropped down into the water and emerged carrying a large trout! All the visitors in the hide were thrilled to see him make his catch and we all watched as he carried the trout to the far T-perch. What happened next was extraordinary and never seen before by any of the Osprey Project staff.

While I was watching 5R tackle the trout, a chick flew in to view who at first I thought was 8F but no it was 9F - she had made her first flight! She attempted to land on the perch, but landed on top of her father 5R knocking him off the perch. He then chased her with the fish still in his talons, dive bombing her as he would an intruder. Then 5R took the fish to the nest where 8F was waiting. 5R then immediately flew straight over to the perch where 9F sat, knocking her off, chasing, and dive-bombing her again and again! She was soon flying very low over the water and I



thought she was going to go in but she managed to land in a field behind the nest and disappeared in the long vegetation. After about 15 minutes we were able to locate 9F at the edge of the field, then suddenly she was in the water trying to get airborne, 5R began dive-bombing her again but she managed to get out into the vegetation again. By now Tim Mackrill and field officer John were on site behind the field and they decided they would have to rescue her as she was too wet to fly. They managed to get her in a box and take her to the centre to dry out.

This however was not the end of the drama as when they were releasing her it was discovered that she had an injury to her wing and she was taken off to the vets where she had to have some stitches. It was decided to keep her in the centre overnight and put her back in the nest in the morning. 5R's strange behaviour continued for nearly a week. Every time 9F flew he chased her but while she was on the nest or perched he was OK with her. It just goes to show when you think you know all about the birds they surprise you! Two weeks later on our next shift all was calm and the family were happy together again!