

## Magical Mull by John Palmer

On 1<sup>st</sup> May Sue and I set off for a long awaited week on the Isle of Mull. Soon after landing, from a hide well lashed down, we found Whimbrel, Rock Pipit, Shag and a Great Northern Diver in full summer plumage. A lovely start.

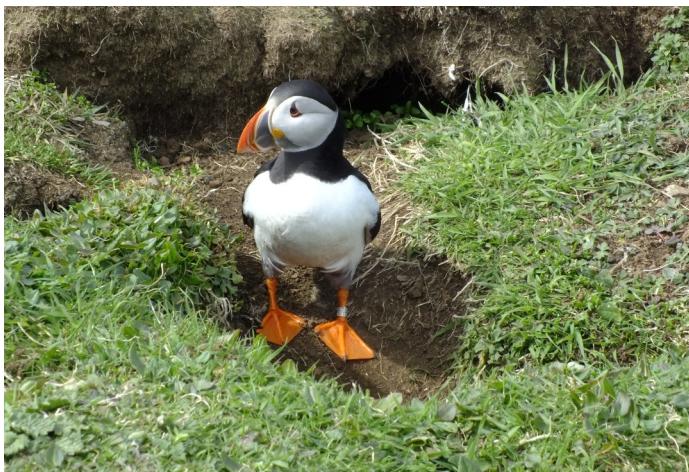
We then had an amazing guided day, when we quickly found an otter followed by fantastic views of a male sea eagle sitting at the top of a tree.

There were lots of Wheatears and Hooded Crows, plus Whinchat and Tree Pipit and an unexpected White Fronted Goose. Later in the day we found our first ever Adders, sunbathing, then, near the Iona ferry, Common Sandpipers, Golden Plovers, Gannets and a Whooper Swan. We finished the day with two Cuckoos, Siskins and House Sparrows!. An incredible day with 60 species in glorious surroundings.



*White Tailed Eagle by Sue Palmer*

Highlights of other days were distant Golden Eagles, Hen Harriers, Red Breasted Mergansers, Dipper, Raven, Twite and Linnet.



*Puffin by John Palmer*

On Staffa we had a migrating pipit sitting very close to us which I have recorded after research as a Tawny Pipit. With Razorbills, Guillemots and comical Puffins on Lunga island and a visit to colourful Tobermory it was a great week.

Overall we had 74 birds plus otters, adders and red deer.  
Magical indeed.

*The next edition of the Newsletter will be issued in Nov 2015. If you have a story for inclusion please send copy and photos to Marion at [graham.turner@btinternet.com](mailto:graham.turner@btinternet.com)*

## **SLB NEWSLETTER**

**Issue no. 39**

**Aug 2015**

**SOUTH LEICESTER  
BIRDWATCHERS**



Hopefully it has been a good year for the birds as the Spring and Summer weather this year hasn't been too bad, locally at least. We had our usual bird breeding successes in the garden including Robin, Blackbird, Dunnock, Great & Blue Tits despite the fact that one of our boxes was again taken over by bees. It's all nature and they help pollinate the vegetable patch too. We are now looking forward to the reverse migration to see what we can spot on their way back that we missed earlier in the year.



**REMEMBER** the Annual Photographic competition will again be held after the AGM in October so get your entries sorted and email to us at the email shown below by the end of Sept. Prizes for the two categories "Birds" and "British Wildlife, Fauna & Flora". Maximum of two entries per person per category.

### **Indoor Meetings & Events**

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

**9<sup>th</sup> September** Prof. Graham Martin Through Birds' Eyes

**14<sup>th</sup> October** AGM & Annual Photographic Competition

**11<sup>th</sup> November** Paul Hobson Scottish Delights

**9<sup>th</sup> December** Phil Johnson Rectory Farm

**13th January** Jeff Blincow Birds in Flight

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 or e-mail [graham.turner@btinternet.com](mailto:graham.turner@btinternet.com)

## Trip Reports

Cumbria Weekend - 15th-17th May 2015 - GT

### Day 1 Leighton Moss RSPB

With an early coach start from Blaby, quizzes on the way and a quick breakfast stop 25 club members arrived at Leighton Moss for the start of our weekend away in the north west. The weather was kind and remained dry if a little windy. We explored the whole reserve and all 6 hides. Highlights included Marsh Harriers, Bearded Tit, Avocet and a flock of c80 Black-Tailed Godwit including a number resplendent in their summer plumage. Marsh Tit, Cetti's & Grasshopper Warbler were added and a Water Rail was heard. We arrived at our hotel near Shap, which had been a hunting lodge in its time and were very impressed with its location, woods and stream and having a little time before our evening meal we explored some of the hotel's 30 acres. Around the stream we were to discover Grey Wagtail, Common Sandpiper, Curlew & Cuckoo. The woods held a good colony of Red Squirrel and we had some great views and decided that a spot of early morning birding would be called for.

76 species on the day - a good start.

### Day 2 South Walney Nature Reserve & Foulney Island NR

The early bird walk added breeding Dipper and Spotted Flycatcher as well as further excellent views of the Red Squirrels. After a hearty breakfast we were back to the Irish Sea coast to visit these 2 Cumbria Wildlife Trust sites. There were 2 circular walks up to 3 miles in length as well as 3 hides near to the visitor centre. A windy day but not unusual for this "island" on the edge of Cumbria. We soon found Sandwich & Little Tern, Bar-Tailed Godwit and a Whimbrel. There were lots of Eider Duck giving close views and amongst the breeding Herring Gull and Lesser Black Backed Gulls we found a Yellow Legged Gull. A total of 61 species on the day bringing sightings total to just over 100 for the weekend so far.

### Day 3 Geltsdale RSPB

This is certainly a remote RSPB site and the wind whistling up the valley would be testing in our bid to add speciality species to our weekend list. Those that were keen set off up the woodland trail and on to the open moorland above. Others explored the area around the visitor centre and tarn and found Snipe, Redshank and Spotted Flycatcher. Thankfully it remained dry and although the birds were keeping their heads down a Peregrine was seen high on the moors but the sought after Black Grouse were elusive. Happily though the returning group were met by the rest of the group near to the visitor centre and there amongst the grass and rocks were 6 male Black Grouse including a couple displaying their white rumps. We all had great views and also a decent view of a perched Cuckoo. This brought the weekend total to a respectable 104.

## Trip Reports cont'd

RSPB Coombes Valley – 13th June 2015 - GT

A wet trip to Coombes Valley RSPB near Leek in Staffordshire - it rained all day. The site had been extended since our last visit 5 years ago and added a mile to the circular walk. Despite the poor weather there were good views of target species. A Wood Warbler was heard trilling in the trees at the far end of the reserve and we took some time tracking it down. But eventually virtually all of us had close views including in the scope and a few yards further on a pair of Pied Flycatchers were feeding young in a nest box. Good close views again. A few were also lucky enough to find a newly fledged Redstart looking most Robin like but with a much longer tail. 44 species for the day.

## Field Trips 2015

### September 12th NNR Gibraltar Point, Lincs PE24 4SU

We were looking for Springtime migrant species on our last visit here. An Autumn trip should throw up migrants heading in the opposite direction. No café (being rebuilt after storm damage, but a mobile catering van should be on site) but there are facilities .

Cost £2.50

### October 17th RSPB Titchwell Marsh, Norfolk, PE31 8BB

We can't go wrong with this wonderful reserve on the north Norfolk coast. Café and facilities.

Cost £2.50

### November 14th RSPB Ouse Washes, Cambs, PE15 0NF

The waterfowl numbers should be swelling with more migrants flying south at this time of year. Hen Harriers, Short-eared Owls, Peregrines and Merlins hunt over the washes and surrounding farmland.

No café but there are facilities

Cost £2.50

### December 12th WLT Brandon Marsh, Warks, CV8 3ET

A nearby reserve where we can make the most of the short winter days. Bitterns show themselves periodically. Always good numbers of waders and waterfowl found on the lagoons.

Café (if you plan to have a meal in the café, they would like advance notice to help their caterers) and facilities

Cost £5.00 (unless you are a WLT member then the cost is £2.50 and your membership card will be required on the day).

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