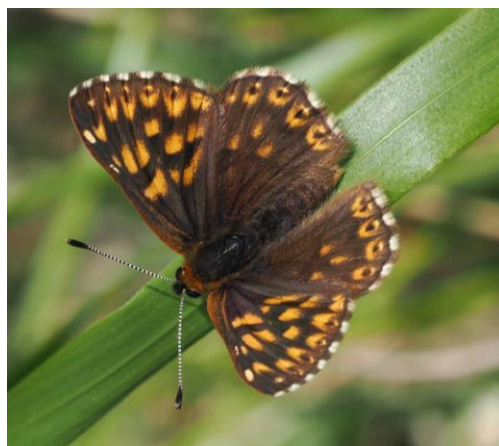


DURSLEY BIRDWATCHING AND PRESERVATION SOCIETY



FROM THE CHAIR - Welcome to the June edition of the society bulletin.

I have been absent from most events this month, though I did attend the excellent trip to Rodborough Common led by Simon Ashley on Saturday May 4th. It was a lovely sunny morning and as well as birds the main attraction at this site is the increasingly rare Duke of Burgundy Butterfly. The Duke as referred to by butterfly experts has a very short flight season throughout May. Other interesting butterflies seen at this site at this time of year include the Dingy Skipper and Green Hairstreak. Of course other spring butterflies can be seen here including the sulphur yellow Brimstone, Orange Tip and Peacock. As we made our way across the common we encountered several patches of Early Purple Orchid and we kept our eyes peeled for another speciality of the site, Pasque Flower. We found some growing close to the path with their flowers glowing like purple stars in the beautiful spring sunshine. It wasn't long before we came across one of our target butterflies the Green Hairstreak in one of their favoured more sheltered locations. When we reached the spot favoured by the Duke of Burgundy we struggled to see one at first but once we had spotted one we eventually found at least three. We concluded that they had only just emerged as they were very fresh specimens. Probably the most notable bird seen was a Jay as they are not often seen in open habitat. After a very enjoyable walk we made our way to the famous ice-cream shop to have a refreshing ice-cream. As I mentioned at the start of my piece I have been absent from events mostly due to issues around changing my car and one event clashed with a moth trapping event on Salisbury Plain. I hope to attend events held this month, must try harder. Best wishes. Ken Cservenka - Chair



FORTHCOMING EVENTS - Please book online

Saturday 8th June 2024 10am - 12 noon Birds and Butterflies of Rough Bank, Bisley

Leader: Barbara Wood

Rough Bank is an SSSI owned and managed by Butterfly Conservation. At this time of year 10 species of butterfly are possible as well as good numbers of birds.. On a past club trip to the site I recall seeing, among others, Redstart, Spotted Flycatcher and a Tree Pipit in display flight.

Meet at 10 am at the Rough Banks car park, SO914087. Take the B40705 north out of Bisley and the car park entrance is just over a mile on the left hand side.

NB Please note the site is steep and rough underfoot in places



Thursday 13th June 2024 Nightjars in the Forest of Dean - Leader: Ken Cservenka

Meet at 7.30 pm in the lay-by near the stone works on the B4228, which is the road running parallel to Cannop Ponds from Parkend. We will have a walk looking for wildfowl and waterfowl (Mandarin, Grebes, Wagtails & Dipper) also woodland species such as Warblers, Flycatchers and Redstart) Leaving around 8.45pm we will drive to another part of the forest for a walk looking for Nightjars, Owls and Woodcock as the Nightjars can start churring around 9.40pm.

Nightjars can be relatively late migrants and this year we hope to discover them in a location subject to information received so try to come for the whole meeting.

Sunday 23rd June 2024 Martin Down NNR, Hampshire - Leaser: Simon Ashley

Car share trip leaving from Cheapside Carpark in Stroud at 8:00am - Arriving at Martin Down top car park around 10:30am.

This is often an excellent trip and probably offers the best chance of one seeing a Turtle Dove this year. The Turtle Dove is a species in trouble. It has seen a dramatic reduction in numbers due to habitat loss, changes in agricultural practices, and hunting pressures during migration. The UK population of Turtle Dove has decreased by around 98% since 1970.

Not just about Turtle Dove though, Martin Down National Nature Reserve (NNR) is a stunning expanse of chalk downland located on the Hampshire-Dorset border in southern England. Covering over 350 hectares, it is renowned for its rich biodiversity and historical significance. We can expect to witness a vibrant array of flora and fauna.

The reserve is particularly famous for its wildflowers, with species such as the Burnt Tip, Pyramidal and Common Spotted Orchids, together with Clustered Bellflower in full bloom. These flowers create a colourful tapestry across the landscape, attracting numerous butterflies, including the rare Marsh Fritillary and the vibrant Adonis Blue.

There are good numbers of Skylarks, Yellowhammers and Corn Bunting. There are no facilities at Martin Down so please bring a packed lunch. We'll try to minimise walking by driving to the lower car park after our morning visit to the upper part of the reserve.

August 2 @ 8:00 am - August 5 @ 5:00 pm

Devon Residential 2-5th Aug **EARLY BOOKING REQUIRED**

Leader - Simon Ashley - We're hoping to run a long weekend trip to South Devon around the weekend of 2-5 August. **Maximum numbers for this trip 8 people. Please let Simon know if you're interested by 3rd May in order to book accommodation and Pelagic trip.** There are more details and likely costs on the website; but centering the trip around Brixham the intention is to spend one day on a pelagic trip, and see a few sea specialists and for the remaining days we'll visit places like:



Berry Head National Nature Reserve, an internationally acclaimed site known for its coastal wildlife, historical significance, and geological formations. It's home to a variety of seabirds and offers stunning views of the South Devon coast.

Slapton Ley National Nature Reserve: Located about 13 miles from Brixham, Slapton Ley is the largest natural freshwater lake in the south-west of England. It's separated from the sea by a narrow shingle bar. The reserve is renowned for its diverse habitats supporting a wide range of species, including birds, insects, and plants. Birdwatchers can expect to see species such as Cetti's warblers, Bitterns, and occasionally Ospreys.

Dawlish Warren National Nature Reserve: Approximately 20 miles northeast of Brixham, Dawlish Warren offers a unique combination of beach, dunes, grassland, and mudflats, making it a fantastic site for birdwatching.

If any trip is in doubt because of bad weather or unexpected circumstances

For bookable events, we will try and contact everyone by telephone if an event has to be cancelled. We will also put a notice on our website and inform members who get their bulletin by e-mail. It is important therefore that we have your contact details. **KRC**.

OUTDOOR MEETING REPORTS

Saturday May 4th, Rodborough Common - Leader: Simon Ashley

Seven stalwart members of the Dursley Birdwatching and Preservation Society met at the appointed car park at 11 am. The weather conditions were good bright and sunny with a gentle Breeze. Lots of the spring flowers were out in bloom cowslips, early purple orchids everywhere. The wet spring we've had gave us cause for concern that the butterflies might have had a difficult winter. Indeed, butterflies were hard to find.

Our first insect of note was a silver Y, a day flying migratory moth - we found three or four of these during the walk. We also managed to pick up a few other late spring butterflies including Small white, Orange tip, Peacock, Small Heath and Dingy Skipper.

The far end of the Common contains an area known as the Coombe, this is a hotspot for butterflies and here we found a green hairstreak. This metallic green butterfly favours Hawthorn and was a delight to see.

Early Purple Orchid



Rodborough Common is also home to some of Britain's rarer flowers we found the striking purple and yellow Pasque Flower.. The number of plants was definitely up from previous years. Encouraging to see. The Coombe is a sun trap which is why it's so popular with butterflies: we saw two or three Duke of Burgundy here the main target for our walk. An ulterior motive for picking Rodborough Common is Winstones ice cream factory so a short detour was the perfect way to finish our walk.



Pasque Flower

Species List:

Butterflies

Small white, Orange tip, Peacock, Duke of Burgundy (3), Green Hairstreak, Small Heath, Dingy Skipper

Flowers

Early purple Orchid, Pasque Flower

Birds

4 Woodpigeon, 1 Common Buzzard, 1 Kestrel.
1 Eurasian Jay, 6 Magpie, 12 Jackdaw, 20 Carrion Crow, 3 Skylark, 2 Chiffchaff, 1 Blackcap, 1 Wren, 1 Song Thrush, 3 Blackbird, 2 Robin, 3 Meadow Pipit and 1 Greenfinch.

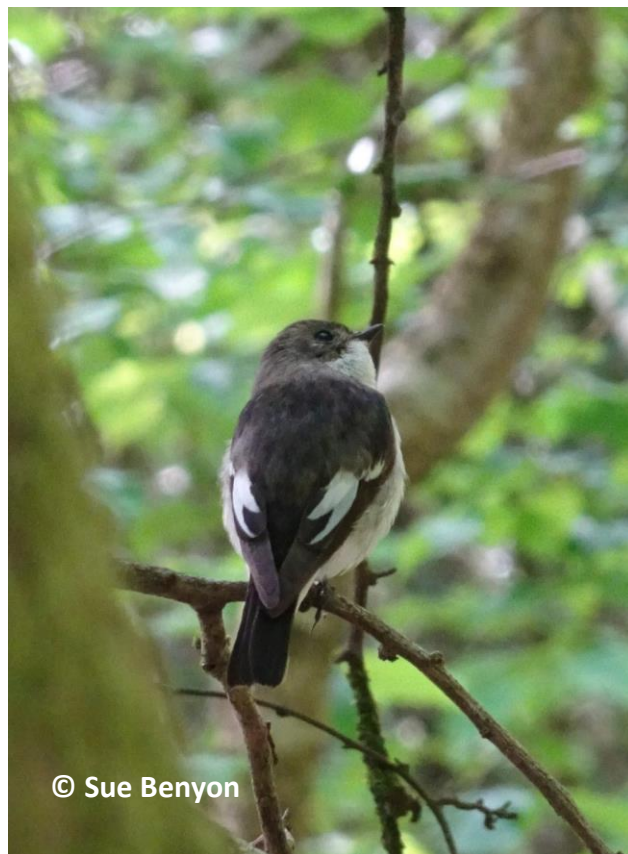
Report and Photographs – Simon Ashley

Saturday May 11th Forest of Dean, RSPB Nagshead - Leader: Barbara Wood

With the promise of a day of warm sunshine, eight Club members met at Nagshead RSPB reserve for a morning's birding. We were glad to find the main tracks were drying out well after the recent rain. Conditions were perfect for sound as well as sight and sure enough soon after setting off up the main track we heard the faint sound of a tiny bird - the Firecrest. With some careful scanning it was soon located, the white flash over its eye giving it away.

Continuing along the track towards the Campbell hide, weaving our way through the magnificent old oaks we had good sightings of Treecreepers probing the deep grooves in the bark.

As we drew nearer the hide a loud repetitive song could be heard over the varied calls of nuthatches. Once inside the hide we had a clear view of the singer - one of our targets - the Pied Flycatcher. This dapper black and white bird obligingly sat a few feet away so we could all get a good view.



© Sue Benyon



For a while we watched other woodland birds coming down to drink from the pond - a Blackbird pair, Blue tits and a good close view of a Treecreeper.

Back on the main track a Goldcrest was seen and heard, providing a good comparison with the similar sized Firecrest.

Turning right on to the Long Trail we saw evidence of the forest mammals - parts of the track were given a good turnover by Boar, and glimpsed high above us was a small group of Fallow deer. Walking through the marsh enclosure in the midday heat it was very quiet and still apart from a group of Siskins and some Long-tailed tits. Then all of a sudden the peace was disturbed. We heard a loud "Kyik -kyik" call: from just above our heads and a male Goshawk flew out and began to circle overhead, followed a short while later by the female, both blessing us with such good views.

On the home stretch down the track we looked up through the canopy and observed two Ravens mobbing a Buzzard. There was a good variety of woodland birds, but sadly, no Wood warbler or Redstart this time. (The Redstart had been seen last week from Lower Hide)

On the way down to the Lower Hide were seen Blackcap, and Garden Warbler singing almost together, Wied wagtail, Siskin and young Great Spotted Woodpeckers.

A few of us also visited Cannop Ponds providing Mandarin duck, Canada and Greylag geese, Mute swan, Coot with young, Herring gull, Goldfinch, Dunnock and Chaffinch.

Species List:

Blue Tit, Great Tit, Coal Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Blackbird, Robin, Dunnock, Wren, Song Thrush, Chaffinch, Goldfinch, Nuthatch, Treecreeper, Goldcrest, Firecrest, Goshawk, Buzzard, Raven, Jay, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Swift, Siskin, Pied Wagtail, Chiffchaff, Garden Warbler, Blackcap, Pied Flycatcher, Mallard, Mandarin Duck, Canada Goose, Greylag Goose, Mute Swan, Coot, Herring Gull

Bird List by Barbara Wood and Mike Robinson

Sunday May 19th WWT Slimbridge Wetland Centre - Leader: Dot Jones

Species List: 45 different species spotted, (229 individual birds)

12 Greylag Goose, 3 Barnacle Goose, 3 Canada Goose, 3 Mute Swan, 1 Egyptian Goose, 12 Common Shelduck, 2 Garganey, 6 Northern Shoveler, 14 Gadwall, 3 Mallard, 3 Green-winged Teal, 4 Tufted Duck, 2 Great Crested Grebe, 2 Common Moorhen, 2 Coot, 60 Pied Avocet (Breeding Colony), 25 Black-headed Gull, 2 Herring Gull, 2 Little Egret, 2 Grey Heron, 1 Marsh Harrier, 1 Sparrowhawk, 3 Kingfisher, 3 Jackdaw, 6 Rook, 1 Carrion Crow, 1 Blue Tit, 1 Great Tit, 1 Sedge Warbler, 1 Reed Warbler, 2 Swallow, 2 House Martin, 1 Willow Warbler, 3 Chiffchaff, 4 Cetti's Warbler, 1 Blackcap, 2 Wren, 4 Blackbird, 1 Robin, 1 Pied Wagtail, 1 Chaffinch, 1 Greenfinch

Butterflies : Brimstone, Orange Tip, Small Tortoiseshell, Red Admiral.

We also saw a newly emerged Broad Bodied Chaser Dragonfly, and a Roe Deer buck and doe.

MEMBERS BIRD SIGHTINGS

Please enter your sightings at www.universalquestions.com/nature OR <https://theglosterbirder.co.uk> And do let us know of anything rare or unusual you see.



GLOUCESTERSHIRE BIRDING HIGHLIGHTS

We suggest you refer to The Gloster Birder website: <https://theglosterbirder.co.uk> for up-to-date information.

FROM OUR MEMBERS

Nurture Nature Notes for June 2024 - Otis Tarda

Having survived a miserable and inhospitable spring our garden birds especially are having a hard time. A Blackbird built a beautiful nest in early spring only to abandon it due to the unfavourable weather. She has since rebuilt, and she and her cock bird have managed to get a small brood through to fledgling stage having survived the increasing number of hazards and predators, the latter being Corvids, Grey squirrels, cats and the local marauding Sparrowhawk. The only other birds in our garden are accentors, a Robin or two (not our usual resident robins of over several years that probably didn't survive the very cold conditions in December) and a wren plus the occasional tit. Over wintering Blackcaps were few, and other winter migrants were scarce too. As more land is developed with housing, industry and solar panels, where traditionally one saw Redwings, Fieldfares, and at WWT sites Bewick Swans, numbers are declining.

We are losing acres of traditional farm land where birds feed so the corvids are turning to residential gardens and feeding stations for food and thus depriving the native small birds of their regular sources. It is now a common site to see a dozen or so Rooks taking off when one draws back the curtains in the morning. Rooks especially are very crafty at getting food from the most sophisticated of feeders with their hammer drill beaks. Some folk have removed their feeding stations due to the incessant filching of food by corvids. Gone are the House sparrows, Starlings and the Finches. This bodes ill for our already declining garden bird populations. Our situation might be extreme, however, other residents in our village and further afield are reporting similar declines and intrusions. Some plan to give up feeding completely - especially if



they also have the very bold Wood Pigeons as residents - fouling bird baths and spreading disease. As for summer visitors - the writer's family have yet to see a single hirondine, though Swifts were reported to have arrived early in Yorkshire - who has seen any, or heard a Chiff Chaff in their usual haunts? Other warbler species too are fewer, and who has heard a Cuckoo? One good piece of news for the Yorkshire coast is the recovery of Puffin and Kittiwake numbers due to the banning of sand eel extraction.





Chris Newton was lucky enough to hear a Cuckoo recently and after waiting patiently was rewarded with a splendid photo opportunity.

Worldwide the picture is bleaker in some areas - the South African Penguin is nearing extinction as its habitat is destroyed by human activity, pollution, over fishing and increasing shipping activity. 2023 was the hottest year since modern records began, as hot as the temperature 2,000 years ago. How do the scientists know this? By counting and measuring the growth rings in the trunks of ancient tree species which provide information about the climate at the time. By the way, who's seen a bat this year so far? We haven't, and always have in previous years. So changing climate patterns are predicted to have ever more negative effects on Planet Earth. Anyone who is lucky enough to hear a Nightingale, please post the info on your local Facebook and inform your county website. Finally, who's seen or heard the large maybug, the noisy Cockchafer, barging its way towards lights and scaring young children? They are quite harmless, although the Asian Hornet is not, as described in this column last year. Should you see any, you should report this to DEFRA.

Editor's Note -

You can download the app 'Asian Hornet Watch' to a smart phone to notify sightings easily.

Farne Island Visit

We visited the Farne Islands and were able to land on Inner Farne on 16th May. The wardens told us that the Puffins were still arriving and beginning to nest, apparently Puffins luckily have not been too affected by the Bird Flu epidemic.





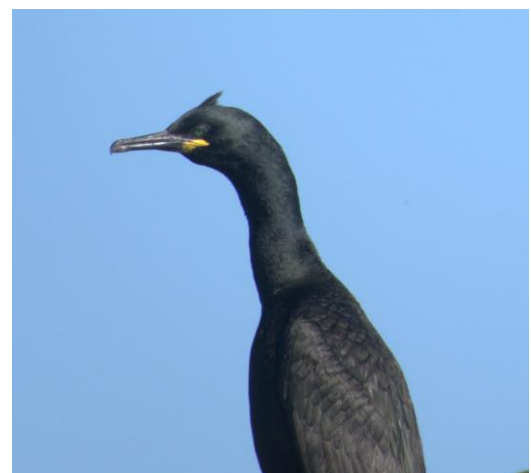
Kittiwakes are nesting, but we didn't see any Guillemots on nests. On the boat we were told that although Guillemots were present seemingly in the thousands, there were visible gaps on the rocks around the Islands where in previous years one would not be able to see rock between the nesting birds.

The Guillemots are such elegant looking birds and we learned from our boat captain that only about 5% of Guillemots have a white ring around the eye and white stripe along the cheek (which makes them look as though they are wearing spectacles). They are then known as Bridled Guillemots. I had not heard of this before, but it was later confirmed by the wardens on the Island.



The Eider ducks were sitting on nests all over the island -some right next to the boardwalk. So well camouflaged that we didn't necessarily spot them immediately. They took no notice at all of the many passing humans.

We spotted Razorbills nesting in amongst the Guillemots and a few Shags were lined up on the rocks showing their breeding crests. Terns have yet to arrive but new nesting areas have been created - with dummy birds to encourage the real ones!



FROM YOUR EDITOR

I have left in this editor's 'bit' but I don't know that I will generally have much to say! However, this month I have visited the North Yorkshire moors and the Farne Islands. So many birds to share, I have included a separate account. My most exciting bird on the moor was a Red Grouse who stayed near enough for me to take a photograph.

Has anyone any other holiday photographs to share?

Thank you to all who have submitted reports and articles recently. Please send all articles for the next bulletin by 15th of the month.



SOCIETY NEWS

Dursley Pet Shop

Remember, if you show your membership card in the Dursley Pet Shop you will now be entitled to a 10% discount on a wide range of gardening items sold in the shop such as seeds and bulbs etc., as well as the usual discount received on bird related items.

Dursley Birdwatching and Preservation Society - Officers & Committee 2024-2025

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