

DURSLEY BIRDWATCHING AND PRESERVATION SOCIETY



FROM THE CHAIR - Welcome to the October edition of the Society Bulletin.

As I sit at my computer writing this months "From the Chair", it is a thoroughly miserable day outside and the weather reports on the TV news show flooding in various parts of the country, especially in the South. I hope this coming autumn and winter isn't as wet as the 2023/24 one, which lasted well into the spring.

Butterfly numbers have suffered as a result this year, possibly threatening some species into local extinctions as recently reported on BBC News. I wasn't able to go to the Weymouth area event but I was geared up to go to Sodbury Common only to discover on the day before that it had been cancelled due to the forecast of bad weather. As it turned out here in Cirencester at least, the weather was okay until the mid afternoon. Why doesn't it ever work out in your favour when you trust it not to rain? It was a lovely sunny morning here on Friday so I put the final coat of gloss paint on my shed door only to have it spoilt with water marks when we had a thunder storm appear dead on time at 2pm.

I hope we have a good turnout for the first indoor meeting on the afternoon of 30th September (yes I know this is the October Bulletin). Andrew is someone I know very well and is an excellent speaker and has written an in-depth study of the Marsh Warbler.

Ken

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Frampton in Autumn

Leader: Nick Goatman

Sunday 6th October 8:30 - 12:30 (ish)

We should get best of Autumn migrants and may be a lingering osprey. Meet at the small car park in Watery Lane for 8:30.

(what3words ///riverbed.goats.capillary)



Slimbridge Autumn Special

Leader: Dot Jones

Sunday 27th October 9:30

Meet in the car-park at WWT Slimbridge at 9:30am - Wintering birds should be here in good numbers so it looks to be a great trip with our own super knowledgeable leader.

(what3words ///lifeboats.trophy.waffle)

INDOOR MEETING DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

30th September 1:45 - Andrew Bluett

Marsh Warblers

28th October 1:45 - Roberta Goodhall

'Round the Horn - Birding at the bottom of the World'.

25th November 7:30pm - Tom Mabett

Tom is the Operations Manager and Tour Leader from Naturetrek

'Europe's Best Birding' Tom will be talking about his favourite places from the Camargue to the uplands of Sweden. A great range of birds will be covered.

9th December 7:15 - Christmas Quiz, Buffet and Raffle

Oliver Paisey will be testing your knowledge with a wildlife quiz. We will have a bring and share buffet and a raffle.

NB Please bring raffle prizes for the Christmas event to any meeting and give to a committee member.

27th January 2025 1:45 - Philip Mugridge

Philip and his wife Helen are a fantastic photographic team. This talk will explore the wildlife of the Orkney Islands

24th February 1:45 - Jackie Harris

Jackie will explain what makes each WWT site special, including the main headquarters at Slimbridge.

31st March 1:45 - Ken Newcombe

Ken is the Educational Engagement Coordinator of Gloucestershire Butterfly Conservation Group. Ken will be talking about Butterflies and Moths just as they start to appear locally. (Should be perfect timing.)

Indoor meetings are held at Dursley Community Centre. (what3words ///reinvest.sued.device)

If anyone is unable to drive to any evening meeting please request a lift share through What'sApp or email Rebecca (crazypaisey@hotmail.com).



OUTDOOR MEETING REPORTS

Portland, Weymouth and Burnham 8th September

Report from: **Simon Ashley**



How to bird in the rain

We were only 4 for our trip to Dorset, we'd been forced to switch from Titchfield Haven as much of the reserve was closed for hide and bridge upgrades. The weather forecast wasn't looking too good, but we headed south through darkening skies and some heavy rain.

We aimed straight for the Bill - our furthest point. We weren't out of the car for long before the heavens opened, and we

got nicely wet. We did find some decent birds though, a bedraggled Wheatear sat on the wave cut platform, a few Gannets cruised past the obelisk and a Raven sat obligingly on a post just a few meters away.

On our way to the observatory - we walked past the small quarry and for once one of the resident Little Owls was actually visible. We did a tour of the neighbouring fields and looped back to the car - getting ever wetter... On to our next stop - Ferrybridge. It's always productive here and there was a nice collection of waders to admire. Curlew Sandpiper and Little Stint along with Ringed Plover, Dunlin and Bar-tailed Godwits. There were a few Sandwich Terns amongst the Gulls and plenty of Mediterranean Gulls amongst the Black-headed Gulls. The rain had dried up and we ate our lunch bathed in warm sunshine.

Weymouth is such a good area with plenty of places to visit all near each other. We opted for Lodmoor reserve and added a few wildfowl to our list. Then, rather than go for Radipole Lake we decided to stop off near Burnham-on-Sea to see if we could find the Sabine's Gull that had been reported over the past week. It was a bit of a walk - and the bird wasn't where it had been reported. We walked a few extra hundred meters and eagle eye Susanne picked out the gull. We had excellent views both in flight and as it busied itself on the marsh. Our luck with the rain just held out and we made it back to the car to avoid a further soaking.



Sabine's Gull

We really made the best of the day, it was a great trip. (See bird list on following page)



Species list (from Portland, Weymouth and Burnham):

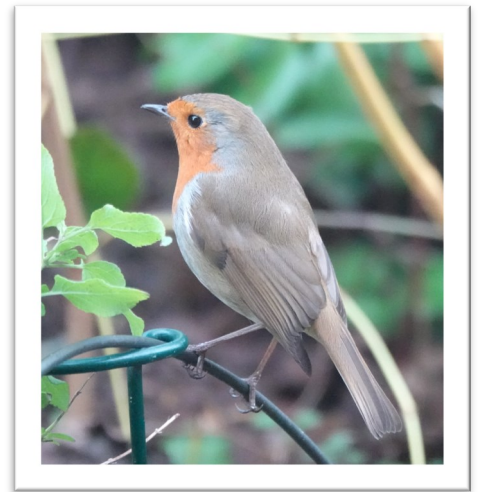
Mute Swan, Shelduck, Shoveler, Gadwall, Mallard, Tufted Duck, Great Crested Grebe, Stock Dove, Woodpigeon, Moorhen, Coot, Oystercatcher, Ringed Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit, Snipe, Redshank, Curlew Sandpiper, Sanderling, Dunlin, Little Stint, Sabine's Gull, Black-headed Gull, Mediterranean Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Sandwich Tern, Gannet, Cormorant, Shag, Little Egret, Grey Heron, Sparrowhawk, Buzzard, Little Owl, Kestrel, Magpie, Jackdaw, Carrion Crow, Raven, Blue Tit, Swallow, House Martin, Chiffchaff, Cetti's Warbler, Whitethroat, Starling, Blackbird, Stonechat, Wheatear, House Sparrow, Pied Wagtail, Meadow Pipit, Rock Pipit, Linnet, Goldfinch

FROM OUR MEMBERS

Nurture Nature Notes for October 2024 - Otis Tarda

A lovely day today in mid September as I write this month's article. Soon landscapes will be festooned in beautiful spiders' webs. Garden birds are emerging from their moults and one can often spot the discarded feathers. Unhappily, due to further decline in our British bird numbers continue in a downward spiral year on year. One hardly saw a starling or a house sparrow this year on feeders, or foraging on lawns and veg patches. It will be interesting to see what numbers constitute this autumn's murmurations - so fascinating to hear and see overhead in places such as Chirton Gorse and Marden Cowbag near Salisbury Plain, and also around Slimbridge and Cam.

Readers have reported that some of the songsters contributing to dawn choruses are absent this year, even the ubiquitous and well loved national bird, the Robin, are in decline. But this autumn it is noticeable that Robin numbers are down, meaning that they no longer have to sing from dawn to dusk in order to announce 'this garden is mine'. It is estimated that there are seven million Robin territories in this country. Incidentally, Vera Lynn's song about a nightingale singing in Berkeley Square, was more likely to have been a Robin, as they will sing in towns where street lighting means they have to be alert at all hours.



Last month I wrote that I would say something about Rooks. Rooks are gregarious and noisy birds, and tend to join Jackdaws to form very large flocks which are quite a spectacle when they do one of their mass 'fly overs'. Not confined to the countryside, they can be found anywhere there are tall mature trees in which to build their messy nests, which they have to repair each spring, often attempting to bring sticks which are so large and unwieldy that they end up dropping them. They will eat pretty much anything, including small birds and mammals, and will mob birds of prey too. Like all corvids they are crafty and their 'rookeries' can be very large and distinctive, and are often in use for years, sometimes decades.



It's so distressing reading about the lack of insects, butterflies and the diminishing number of garden birds. A few weeks ago I heard the distinctive calls of Long-Tailed Tits, and was thrilled to see a family of fledglings darting in and out of the Hawthorn tree just outside the house and I rushed for my camera. Sadly as they are such nippy little birds, many of my photographs were of the branch they had just left, but I managed to capture one or two images. There were also young Bluetits and a baby Robin.



As I write this, even on this rainy afternoon, there are Goldfinches, Sparrows and a Robin enjoying the sunflower hearts in the bird feeder. Sadly I have not seen the number of Blackbird visitors we usually have during the summer.

CMS

EDITOR'S 'BIT'

I have used the "what3words" app to identify a meeting point for our events this month. You can use what3words on your computer (<https://what3words.com/>) or download the App to your phone. The three word location will be able to show you exactly where we plan to meet (eg. Carpark entrance). If members find this useful, I will try and use it for future events, so please let me know what you think.

Sadly the Bulletin is rather slim this month. It's your bulletin - I cannot write it, only gather in your stories and compile them into a Bulletin for others to enjoy. Please do send in your ideas articles, bird sightings and photographs whether by post or email and I will include them.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE BIRDING HIGHLIGHTS

You can refer to the Gloster Birder web site for up to date bird sightings in the county. Please enter your sightings at <https://theglosterbirder.co.uk>
Do let us know of anything rare or unusual you see.

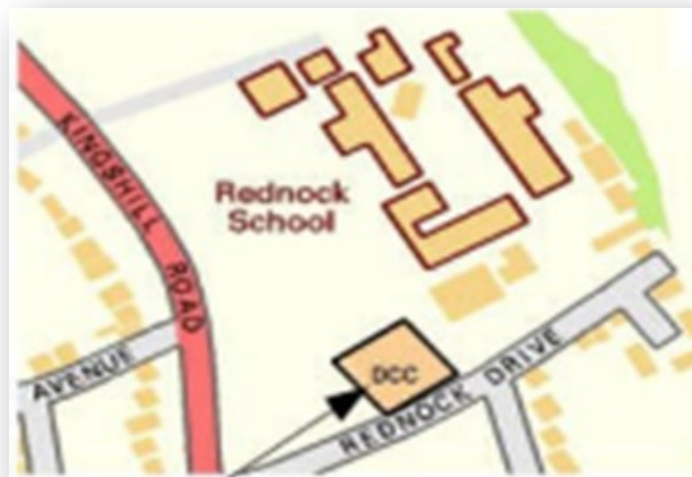


Thank you Simon Ashley, Otis Tarda and of course Ken for their contributions this month.

Please send any articles or photographs for the next bulletin by **15th of the month** to me by email at caroline.sandrey@gmail.com or by post to the address below.

SOCIETY NEWS

Indoor meetings take place at Dursley Community Centre GL11 4BX



Dursley Pet Shop

Remember, if you show your membership card in the Dursley Pet Shop you will 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

Chairman	Ken Cservenka	19 Overhill Road, Stratton, Cirencester GA7 2LG	01285 656480
Vice Chair	Roy Jellings	roy.jellings@aol.co.uk	01453 810176
Treasurer	David Wood	Garden Cottage, Commercial Rd, Chalford Hill, Stroud. GL5 3QZ	07870 553249
Secretary	Simon Ashley	2 Victoria Villas, Spillmans Patch, Stroud GL5 3LU simonashley65@gmail.com	07825 668389
Outdoor programme			
IT & Communications			
Indoor Programme	Rebecca Paisey	crazypaisey@hotmail.com	01453 811408
Membership Secretary	Caroline Sandrey	15 Spey Close, Thornbury, Bristol, BS35 2NR caroline.sandrey@gmail.com	07972 125959
Bulletin Editor			
Bulletin Distribution			
Librarian	Position Vacant		
General Committee	Dot Jones, Peter Steele, Alan Keith, Amanda Sulton Black		



Secretary: simonashley65@gmail.com



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