

DURSLEY BIRDWATCHING AND PRESERVATION SOCIETY



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

The first indoor meeting of the winter season was Andrew Bluett giving a presentation about a bird that he has spent many hours studying, the Marsh Warbler. As a breeding bird it has been lost from British aviculture but can still be found over in Europe. Andrew has published a monologue about the Marsh Warbler and is well worth reading if you can find a copy from the very limited print run.

Recently, I have had a two week break in Cornwall but was very unlucky with the weather, rain and more rain, what happened to an Indian summer? It wasn't all doom and gloom though as we spent a pleasantly warm day at Lizard Point, where we managed to get our Chough fix for the year. Other birding highlights included a Spoonbill and Bar-tailed Godwit at Hayle RSPB reserve. Of course, there were all the other usual suspects that you would expect on estuary mudflats along with a large flock of Mediterranean Gull and three Pink-footed Geese, they were a surprise find.

I missed the subject of a major twitch, There was a report of a Booted Eagle in the St Just and Lands End area on the Cornwall Birds website. The next day was one of the very few days of wall to wall sunshine and despite armies of twitchers scanning the sky, it had moved on. I met a group in a layby near St Just that had been there since 7.30am and were still there at 3.30pm. I said I'm a patient man but not that patient and moved on.



© Ken Cservenka

I did take my moth trap and caught two moths that were lifers, L-album Wainscot (photo left) and Radford's Flame Shoulder, (right) the latter appears to have had a good year as I caught 10 over four trapping sessions.



© Ken Cservenka

Both moths appear to have a south coast distribution and are classed as immigrants, though other moth trappers suspect that Radford's Flame Shoulder may have bred in the UK this year.

The society had a very successful meeting at Slimbridge in beautiful autumn weather led by Dot Jones. I managed to add several species to my year list.

Ken.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

CHEW VALLEY LAKES

Leader: **Simon Ashley**

Sunday November 10th 9:30 - 4:00pm

This is always a popular trip with our members - Chew Valley lake has a number of free publicly accessible viewpoints which can give great views of wintering wildfowl.

We will meet at one of the best known of these, Herriot's Bridge on the A368 which is on the south side of the lake at 9.30am. After spending some time here, we will take a short walk to the bird ringing station for morning coffee and biscuits, a great opportunity to see birds in the hand and to learn a little about ringing.

Please note hide visits require a day permit (£7, free to Juniors) we can purchase these from the ringing station and a donation of £5.00 per member helps the running of the ringing station,

On previous visits at this time of the year have seen interesting birds especially Redwing, Fieldfare, Goldcrest, and Water Rail. In addition to the bridge viewing spots - Chew Valley Lake has a wide selection of hides and those that wish to can continue exploring around the lake to enjoy some wonderful birdwatching. Previous years have been a total "duck-fest" with rarer species such as Scaup, Lesser Scaup, Smew and bizarrely a Common Scoter.

This trip is available to book online.

3 Hour Guided Birdwatching Cruise - Departing from Exmouth Marina (EX8 1FE)

Saturday 11th January 2025 - Boat Departure time: 10:15;

We are able to offer free mini bus transport for this trip. Allowing a journey time of about 2 hours the mini bus would need to leave Dursley by about 8:00 am - this will need to be confirmed.

We have booked 12 spaces @ £14.00 per person and we **need to give total numbers by the end of November**, so if you are interested please email Simon. simonashley65@gmail.com. **If the trip is oversubscribed names will be entered into a draw for places.** This trip will be available to book online.

There is the option to pre-order pasties on the boat - steak or roast vegetable (Vegan) - the current price for these (if ordered prior to the cruise date) is £4.50. This may be subject to an increase in the new year.

NB: If any trip is in doubt because of bad weather or unexpected circumstances or has to be cancelled- we will try and contact everyone by telephone or through the 'WhatsApp' group. We will also put a notice on our website and inform members by e-mail. It is important therefore that we have your contact details.

If you would like to be added to the 'WhatsApp' Group, please contact Caroline Sandrey (Membership Secretary) caroline.sandrey@gmail.com or Simon Ashley (DBWPS Secretary) simonashley65@gmail.com



COTSWOLD WATER PARK

Leader: **Mike Robinson**

Sunday 24th November

An early winter walk around the Lower Moor Lakes and hides.

We will meet at the Lower Moor Visitor Centre car park at 9.30. The car park entrance is at ST007939.

We plan to move on to Twitcher's Gate to see more wildfowl and maybe a Marsh Harrier. To reach Twitcher's Gate take the Spine Road towards South Cerney. At the Spine Road cross roads go straight on and take the first road on the right. Take a left turn after $\frac{3}{4}$ mile along a narrow lane. Twitcher's Gate is at about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile on a sweeping left hand bend at ST066946. There is limited parking so best to car share from Lower Moor.

INDOOR MEETING DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Please note a change of speaker on some dates. Many thanks to Rebecca who has had to re-jig the programme at short notice when our November speaker had to cancel.

25th November 1:45 - Ken Newcombe.

Ken is the Educational Engagement Coordinator of Gloucestershire Butterfly Conservation Group. Ken will be talking about Butterflies and Moths

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 7:30 - AGM

This is a provisional date. More details in next Bulletin.

Indoor meetings are held at Dursley Community Centre. ([what3words ///reinvest.sued.device](https://what3words.com/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).



MEETING REPORTS

Frampton in Autumn

Sunday 6th October

Report from: **Dot Jones**

Under overcast skies we set off for Townsend (Sailing) Lake, Curlew and Redwing gave us a fly over and the reliable Yellow legged Gull was in residence on the pontoon.

Next we headed for Court Lake itself with fingers crossed that the Ospreys hadn't left overnight. We weren't disappointed as both put in appearance with one perching up for photo opportunities. A Peregrine tried perching in one of the trees at the back but the Osprey did not tolerate this intrusion and soon saw it off. One or two Siskin flew over and a Great Egret (one of three seen) tussled with a couple of Grey Heron.

We still experienced the seasonal crossover with Chiffchaff calling and several Mistle Thrushes coming through. Goldcrests, Treecreepers and Robins were everywhere.

Fifty-three species seen/heard all told. As the wind started to get up we completed our circuit but the rain had held off for us. Many thanks to Nick who always makes it an interesting walk.

Species list : 1 Canada Goose, 4 Shoverler, 10 Gadwall, 13 Wigeon, 3 Mallard, 5 Tufted Duck, 1 Little Grebe, 2 Great Crested Grebe, 1 Stock Dove, 2 Wood Pigeon, 6 Moorhen, 38 Coot, 12 Curlew, 17 Black-headed Gull, 1 Common Gull, 1 Yellow-legged Gull, 2 Lesser Black-backed Gull, 8 Cormorant, 4 Great White Egret, 3 Heron, 2 Osprey, 1 Buzzard, 1 Kingfisher, 2 Great Spotted Woodpecker, 1 Peregrine, 1 Jay, 9 Jackdaw, 21 Crow, 2 Raven, 2 Coal Tit, 4 Blue Tit, 6 Great Tit, 20 Swallow, 6 House Martin, 4 Chiffchaff, 6 Cetti's Warbler, 21 Long-tailed Tit, 6 Goldcrest, 1 Nuthatch, 5 Treecreeper, 2 Wren, 8 Mistle Thrush, 2 Song Thrush, 1 Redwing, 3 Blackbird, 10 Robin, 2 Dunnock, 1 Grey Wagtail, 6 Chaffinch, 2 Bullfinch, 3 Goldfinch, 2 Siskin.

Slimbridge Autumn Special

Sunday 27th October

Report from: **Anne Nuttall**

Seventeen DBWPS members gathered in the carpark at Slimbridge for the regular walk around the reserve, led by Dot. It was a perfect October morning - a blue sky, warm, and no wind.



The first visit was to the Peng Observatory, where we were able to appreciate the growing numbers of waterbirds now on the reserve. A look at the bird list will indicate the variety of species that are now there. At least 6 Snipe were picked out, although many more have recently been recorded, and also a couple of Spotted Redshanks along with their Common relatives.



A Kingfisher flew over the water and momentarily perched in clear view on a fence, until a corvid chased it into the net-covered pipe; and a Grey Wagtail was feeding on the grass below the windows of Scott House.

The Tack Piece was next to be visited by the group - referred to as 'an army' by a birder, as we passed him along the track! Many ducks and waders were on the channel edges and spread over the area, although some were rather distant to identify easily with only binoculars, but thanks to Dot and other members with telescopes we were all able to get good views. All the expected varieties of ducks were here, and I was happy to hear the very vocal Wigeons once again and see the elegant Pintails.



From the Estuary Tower and Zeiss Hide, looking out over the Dumbles, we had views of at least 9 Cattle Egrets living up to their name, feeding around the grazing cattle - one was even on the back of a cow, as were some of the numerous Starlings. There was also a Little Egret, a Great Egret and a Grey Heron in view, good to compare the differences. Flocks of Lapwings took to the air when disturbed by the Peregrine we had seen sitting on one of the usual posts on the sea wall. A small group of White-fronted Geese were feeding after their long journey, the single feral Pinkfoot could just be glimpsed

over the sea wall, and a family of Common Cranes were in view. Mary spotted a fox in the distance, its glossy coat showing well in the sunshine, and it appeared to be successful in catching its lunch as it pounced on its prey, probably a small rodent.



The final spectacle just before we departed was a huge flock of Golden Plover flying in, catching the sunlight as they manoeuvred before coming in to land on the sandbanks on the river.

A very satisfying morning - thank you Dot and all who came.

Group Bird List: Great-crested Grebe, Cormorant, Little Egret, Cattle Egret, Great Egret, Grey Heron, Mute Swan, Pinkfoot Goose, White-fronted Goose, Canada Goose, Greylag Goose, Barnacle Goose, Shelduck, Wigeon, Gadwall, Teal, Mallard, Pintail, Shoveler, Pochard, Tufted Duck, Peregrine, Moorhen, Coot, Common Crane, Golden Plover, Lapwing, Ruff, Snipe, Curlew, Redshank, Spotted Redshank, Dunlin, Black-tailed Godwit, Black-headed Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Wood Pigeon, Kingfisher, Grey Wagtail, Pied Wagtail, Robin, Blackbird, Cetti's Warbler, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Magpie, Jackdaw, Rook, Carrion Crow, Starling, Goldfinch, Linnet, White farmyard Geese, Fox, Red Admiral Butterfly



Round the Horn - Birding at the bottom of the World

Speaker: **Roberta Goodall**

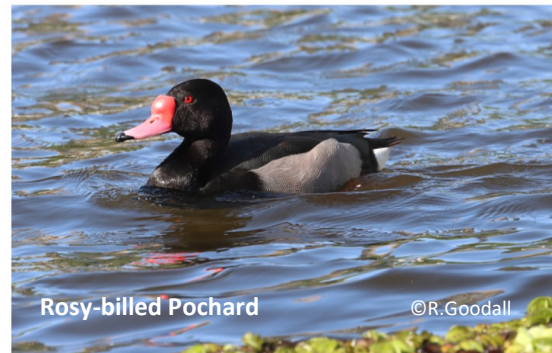
Monday 28th October

At our second meeting of the 'Winter' season, Roberta gave us a marvellous talk - an account of her trip last winter utilising the itinerary, and comfort, of a commercial cruise ship to explore the birdlife at 'the bottom of the world'. The trip covered several thousand miles visiting four different countries: Chile, Argentina, UK (Falkland Islands) and Uruguay. Days at sea provided opportunities to seawatch and look for albatrosses and cetaceans where the stability of the ship's deck made this much easier than a traditional small-boat pelagic, and always with great coffee and cake nearby! Plenty of days were spent on land as well seeking out those elusive 'special' birds, not seen elsewhere. An enormous variety of species were seen including everything from Penguins to Parrots and occasionally Dolphins! Roberta saw no less than 9 different Albatross species and recorded 295 different bird taxa of 270 species - including 111 lifers of 65 species. I think more than one of those present were inspired to make a similar trip!

Fuegian (Wilson's) Storm Petrel



©R.Goodall



Rosy-billed Pochard

©R.Goodall

Snowy Albatross



©R.Goodall



Common Dolphins

©R.Goodall

FROM OUR MEMBERS

Nurture Nature Notes for November 2024 - Otis Tarda

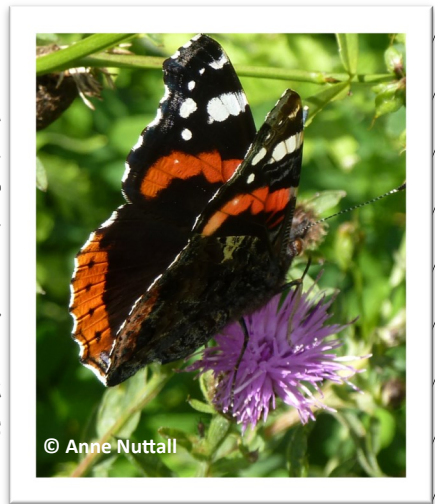
Following on from jackdaws and rooks in earlier articles are crows, which are highly intelligent, having huge brains - their brain to body ratio is even larger than humans. They mate for life, can remember faces, and have been known to attack humans who've harmed any of their family. They hold funerals when one dies, they'll fashion tools, such as a sharpened stick, they'll bend forked twigs into hooks and use them to scoop larvae and worms from holes in wood. They cache their food and even speak in regional dialects, but sadly they prey on smaller birds, their nestlings and eggs too. They also eat frogs and snakes and snails - there are 99 species of land snails in Britain and Ireland from about 27 families, some of which are common in gardens.



It is rare for birds to attack humans, however, recently an 86 year old pensioner was seriously injured in the French village of Verrieres near the Gorges du Tarn in Aveyron by a 9ft-wingspan Griffon Vulture, one of the largest European birds of prey. The LPO, France's bird protection league, reintroduced the species and there are over 850 breeding pairs in Aveyron producing 500 young annually. The local farmers are none too pleased because of increasing attacks on livestock. With the introduction of White Tailed Eagles in Southern England farmers here too are on the lookout for attacks. Some readers might remember Eric Hosking, the famous bird photographer, losing an eye from a tawny owl attack in the 1950s due to getting too close to the nest. He admitted it was his fault.

Many of you will have read about the WWF's (World Wildlife Fund) statement recently that humans are ruining the planet due to over-population (UK now increased to 67 million and growing, the World nearly 9 billion) and overdeveloping and ruining the environment. Destruction of forests in South America and Central Africa are so exploited that they are reaching tipping points and may never recover due to continuing destruction.

In the UK the Government has recently announced special Envoys for Nature and Climate. Let us hope that they will make a significant difference to the protection of flora and fauna in the British Isles. There is a current 'nature emergency' now for butterflies of the British Isles. Species in the danger zone amongst others this century are: Gatekeeper (-32%), the Common Blue (-52%), the Small Tortoiseshell and Green-Veined White (both -65%). The writer saw only one Red Admiral this autumn and no Peacocks all summer. Bat numbers are also down. We must be a force for Climate and Nature, otherwise all could be lost -perhaps we should all book our places on Musk's rocket to Mars!



It's pleasing to see our garden birds in their smart new plumages after moulting. Perky new tails, brighter coloured feathers and more singing to establish their territories. However, there are fewer of them - fewer Blackbirds, it's the first time we have no resident ones. Also Starlings, House Sparrows, Greenfinches and Goldfinches. Other residents are also reporting declining birds species and numbers in their gardens. It's the time of year to check bird boxes and hibernaculums (hedgehog boxes) and repair or replace as necessary. Don't forget to plant a tree for prosperity and carbon capture.

Remember to check bonfires for hibernating hedgehogs and dormice before 5th November.

Otis Tarda

We are lucky to have Goldfinches and Sparrows queuing up to get a spot at the feeder. The scene is not always as peaceful as the one pictured above, there is one particular Goldfinch who won't share the sunflower hearts at all. There are 6 perches, but any other bird trying to land is seen off immediately!

CMS



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.

EDITOR'S 'BIT'

Thank you to Dot Jones, Anne Nuttall, Roberta Goodhall, Otis Tarda and of course Ken for their contributions this month.

Please think about sharing any items of news you have, or birds you have seen - even if only in the garden. 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. **CMS**

SOCIETY NEWS

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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