



DURSLEY BIRDWATCHING AND PRESERVATION SOCIETY SEPTEMBER 2025



CHIT CHAT FROM THE CHAIR

As heat-wave number four makes its presence felt there are still changes happening that tells us the seasons are moving on. Numbers of post breeding birds are starting to grow, plenty of Green Sandpipers are busily feeding up ready for when the time feels right for them to head to Southern Europe or Africa for the winter. The Cuckoos and Swifts have all left apart from the odd straggler. Ospreys are beginning to pass through as well. Chiffchaffs are now calling as opposed to singing their name; Willow Warblers are massing on the south coast ready for their sub-Saharan journey to their wintering grounds and Robins are beginning to try out their autumn song. As we wish them all safe a journey and return for next year, birds like Snipe are appearing ready to spend the winter with us.

Although farmers crop yields are down due to the dry weather the bushes and trees are showing us what a warm dry spring/summer can produce. Soft fruits are plentiful with the Blackberries ripening about two weeks earlier than normal and Hawthorn bushes are glowing red with their heavy crop of berries, ready for Thrushes and Blackbirds to enjoy.

At this time each year I'm filled with eager anticipation as to what the cooler/cold months will bring to our shores, familiar over-wintering species returning. Will we have as many or will they short stop in Europe as seems to be the growing trend? We will have to wait and see.

Bird of the Month:

With quite a few to choose from as bird of the month for September I've chosen the Common Redshank - *Tringa tetanus* - the sentinel during the breeding season often seen perched up on fence posts proclaiming noisily at any approaching predators.

Dot



FORTHCOMING TRIPS - Please contact Simon to book

Chipping Sodbury Common

Leader: **Mike Tranter**

Sunday 31st August

Meeting at 08:30, park on the roadside verge near Newhouse Farm (ST 73822 83566). We'll walk across the common targeting refuelling passage migrants amongst the resident birds. Past years have seen Whinchat, Wheatear, Common Redstart, Spotted Flycatcher and occasionally a Wryneck in late August. It will also be a late chance for warblers before they fly south; Willow, Common and Lesser Whitethroat.

The terrain is flat, but can be very muddy. Watch for update on WhatsApp in the week ahead.

Titchfield Reserve

Leader: **t.b.c.**

7th September

Titchfield Haven Nature Reserve is managed by Hampshire County Council and is home to an abundance of birds, mammals, insects, reptiles and plants. There's plenty to see all year round, from soaring birds of prey to the most delicate butterfly. Previous list from 2019 visit turned up amongst others: Turnstone, Peregrine falcon, Kingfisher & Snipe

Titchfield Haven, Cliff Road, Hill Head, Fareham PO14 3JT

Google Maps <https://maps.app.goo.gl/BM3YB3J6JZQLsV648>

Entrance to the reserve - Adults: £6.50 Senior citizens: £5.50; there is a kiosk selling hot and cold drinks and snacks, and ice cream.

Nearest parking is the local Fareham Borough Council car parks near the sailing club or the sea front. Both areas are pay and display.

5th October **Frampton in Autumn** - further details to follow

26th October **Autumn visit to Slimbridge** - further details to follow

9th November **Chew Valley Lakes** - further details to follow

23rd November **Cotswold Water Park** - further details to follow

7th December **Severn Beach/Aust** - further details to follow

NB: If any trip is in doubt or cancelled because of bad weather or unexpected circumstances , we will try and contact everyone by email or through the WhatsApp group. It is important therefore that we have your contact details. We will also put a notice on the website.

To be added to the WhatsApp Group, **or to book on a trip** please contact Caroline Sandrey (Membership Secretary) caroline.sandrey@gmail.com or Simon Ashley (DBWPS Secretary) simonashley65@gmail.com



INDOOR MEETING DATES 2025/2026

Indoor meetings take place at Dursley Community Centre, Rednock Drive, GL11 4BX

22 September ~1.45pm

Speaker: Conor Jameson

Conor will give us a presentation on the renowned naturalist and author W.H.Hudson based on Conor's latest book entitled Finding W.H.Hudson. Hudson moved to England from Argentina and was a champion for conservation and a keen supporter to the women who founded the RSPB. Conor worked for the RSPB for over 25 years and Birdlife International before becoming a full time author.

To start our new winter programme members are encouraged to invite friends to this meeting - free of charge.

27 October ~ 1.45pm

Speaker: Roberta Goodall

Another fascinating talk, along with some fantastic photographs from Roberta. She is kindly donating her fee to Wader Quest, a charity close to her heart.

Date TBC November 7.30pm

Speaker: Tom Mabett

Tom is the Operations Manager and Tour Leader for Naturetrek. He will be talking about his favourite places in Europe to go birding. The destinations range from Camargue, Extremadura, Hortobagy to the uplands of Sweden. A great range of birds will be covered

08 December ~ 7.30pm

Christmas Quiz and Puddings Night

Simon Ashley will be testing our brains with his specially created bird and wildlife quiz. Members are requested to bring a pudding or sweet treat to share. The committee will supply teas, coffee and mince pies.

26 January ~7.30 pm

Speaker: Dr. Mark O`Connell

Dr O'Connell will be talking to us about the work of the Stroud Valleys Dipper Project. The five valleys hold an important and unusual population of the European Dipper. A species that is on the Amber list and has declined by 39 percent since 1995.

23 February ~ 1.45pm

Speaker: Andrew Bluett

Andrew is s a well known speaker to our club on a variety of birds, wildlife and other topics. He has a new and exciting talk for us in 2026. Further details will follow.

23 March 7.30pm ~ AGM

Annual AGM with updates on grant projects.



TRIP REPORTS

Somerset Levels

Report from: **Colin Crew**

Sunday 3rd August

Eight members headed south to Somerset's 1500 hectare Avalon Marshes for the day and, despite spending much of it getting wet in the unseasonal 'mizzle', managed some reasonably successful birding and a few laughs along the way.

Egrets were in evidence throughout the day, with one of at least five Great Whites seen early on from the bridge. Great Crested Grebes, including several adults with stripey youngsters, were everywhere. Good numbers of eclipse Mallard and Gadwall were present, but only five duck species were noted, the others in small numbers, with just a single Pochard.

At the viewing screens, a couple of 'Terns' on mid-water rafts caught the eye, but careful study quickly identified them as an Advertising Tern (likely vinyl or plastic) and a Decoy Tern (possibly wooden). The nearby Little Grebes were certainly much louder and more active! Loose groups of hirundines and a few Swifts hawked constantly for insects over the vast reedbeds despite the dull and damp conditions. The Avalon Hide gave distant views of Sedge and Reed Warbler, and, after a good deal of patience, all members managed to see Bearded Reedlings. We were less lucky with Bittern, with just one brief fly over being enjoyed by a single member. Several Marsh Harriers were quartering the area, with the behaviour of one female suggesting a possible nest.

Noah's Hide finally provided sightings of Little Egrets and one Cattle Egret, then as the weather finally brightened up, a Buzzard, a Sparrowhawk and one or more distant Hobby were spotted from Meare Heath Hide.

But arguably the best was saved until last, as whilst walking back to the car park we were able to watch 6 Cattle Egret, 2 Little Egret and a Cormorant in the same tree, and then a stunning Hobby perched up nearby, which then gave great flight views and was observed to catch and devour several prey items on the wing.

A total of fifty-six species was a good return, given the time of year, regular drizzle, and complete lack of any waders. Thank you to Simon for leading, Simon and Mike for driving, and to all those who attended for being excellent company.



Somerset Levels Trip, Bird List (taxonomic, including heard only):

Canada Goose, Greylag Goose, Mute Swan, Shoveler, Gadwall, Mallard, Pochard, Tufted Duck, Great Crested Grebe, Little Grebe, Bittern, Grey Heron, Little Egret, Great White Egret, Cattle Egret, Cormorant, Sparrowhawk, Marsh Harrier, Common Buzzard, Water Rail (H), Moorhen, Coot, Black-headed Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Herring Gull, Woodpigeon, Collared Dove (H), Feral Pigeon, Swift, Great Spotted Woodpecker (H), Hobby, Magpie, Jackdaw, Rook, Carrion Crow, Bearded Reedling, Blue Tit, Swallow, House Martin, Long-tailed Tit, Cetti's Warbler (H), Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler (H), Sedge Warbler, Reed Warbler, Blackcap, Goldcrest (H), Wren, Treecreeper (H), Starling, Blackbird (H), Robin, Pied Wagtail (H), Chaffinch (H), Goldfinch and Reed Bunting (56 species).

R.S.P.B. Arne

Report from: Anne Nuttall

Sunday 10th August

An early start saw 8 of us meet in the car park at RSPB Arne at 10 o'clock. After a two-and-a-half-hour drive, with the main highlight being the sight of a good number of colourful hot air balloons in the hazy sky over Bristol, it was good to hear and see three Buzzards high above - it seemed like two adults were trying to encourage their youngster to go and make its own way in life. Some of us sympathised! A group of Swallows were also flying low, with a Swift amongst them.

A sunlit bird high in a tree puzzled us at first but it eventually was identified as a juvenile Greenfinch. Later in the day, on the birdfeeders near the café, there were more Greenfinches, Goldfinches, Siskins, Bluetits, and Great Tits. We set off through the beautiful woodlands, a mixture of ancient Oak, Lime, Pine, Silver Birch, Field Maple, Hazel, Hornbeam and Blackthorn trees. Walking there was so restful and calming, providing much needed shade as a relief from the open sunny spaces.

Throughout our walk there were plenty of birds singing and calling to help identify the species in the trees, but focusing on them as they flitted about amongst the leafy branches was another matter. Those with the sharpest eyes had an advantage.

Setting off on the circular trail to the Shipstal Hide, we first had good views of Stonechats and Spotted Flycatchers on the overhead wires. Also seen were groups of Long-tailed tits, Coal tits, Bluetits, with plenty of song from Robins, Willow Warblers, and Chiffchaffs and a Great-spotted Woodpecker calling in the trees. When we reached the Shipstal Hide we marvelled at the huge numbers of Little Egrets we saw. They almost outdid the Black-headed Gulls, but not quite. A large number of Black-tailed Godwits were distant, and a few Curlews were well camouflaged amongst the tussocks on the salt marsh, Oystercatchers were very vocal and active and it was pleasing to see some Sandwich Terns on a sandbank. Mute swans were heard flying, but not seen. Just before we left a Cuckoo flew past, surprising everybody.

As the trail left the woods we took a short cut on the Dumbledore Trail through fields, with a harvested crop on one side, over which Swallows were skimming low, and on the other side a mixed hedge in which we saw Whitethroat and Lesser Whitethroat, more Stonechats and Spotted



Flycatchers; in another hedgerow on our way back for lunch there were still more Spotted Flycatchers, one of which rather blotted his copybook by catching a Clouded Yellow butterfly. Can you believe it? Plenty of Ragwort was growing nearby and was being divested of its seeds by a flock of Goldfinches.

Other butterflies seen during the day included Speckled Wood, Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown, Red Admiral and a vivid Holly Blue.

Our picnic lunch was taken under a tented awning, and we were entertained by watching two adult Swallows feeding their vocal youngsters inside an artificial nest. Possibly a third brood, we thought.

The second trail was the Hyde's Heath trail, where Dartford Warblers can usually be seen, but in the end only a fleeting sighting of one was made. Another target bird was Osprey, which turned out to be one of those birds that we were



told "was seen here just a few minutes ago" by a helpful walker. But not by us!! However, we saw a few more Sandwich Terns, Grey Herons, a Shelduck with a single cute tiny duckling, very distant Grey Seals and some Cormorants. No Osprey but plenty more Gulls.

My legs had just about walked far enough so I returned to the café for a sorbet ice cream, detouring on my way back via some heathland and the Raft spider pond; I didn't see a Dartford Warbler or a spider, but saw an impressive Southern Hawker at the pond. And a Dunnock on the path was added to my sightings. The final bird seen by those travelling in Mike's car was a Jay in Chipping Sodbury car park.

Arne is a beautiful reserve, and it was unknown to some of the group, but several said they would like to return, maybe for a club weekend visit to Dorset. I had been there in the dim and distant past - I can find a record of visiting in 2000 on a club weekend, but much has changed and improved so that I barely remembered it.

Many thanks to Mike and Simon for chauffeuring the rest of us on the long drive there and back - it was very much appreciated. And thanks for the company of all who spent the day at RSPB Arne. And Simon for the bird list.

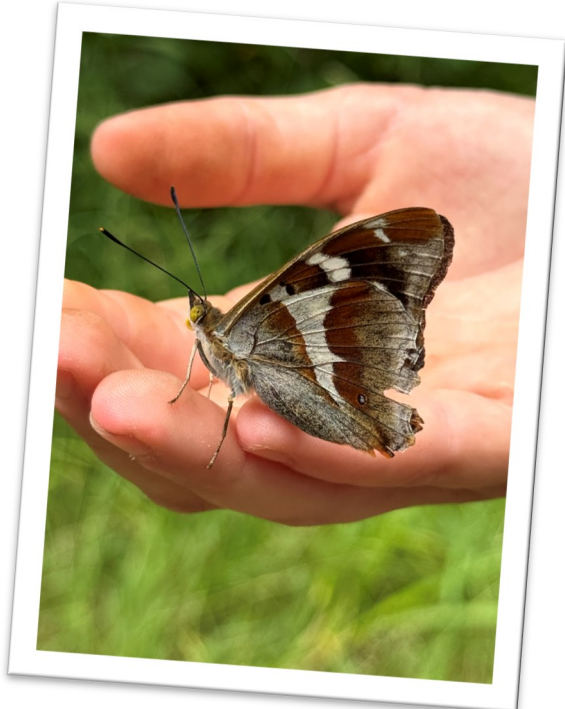


Arne Group bird list:

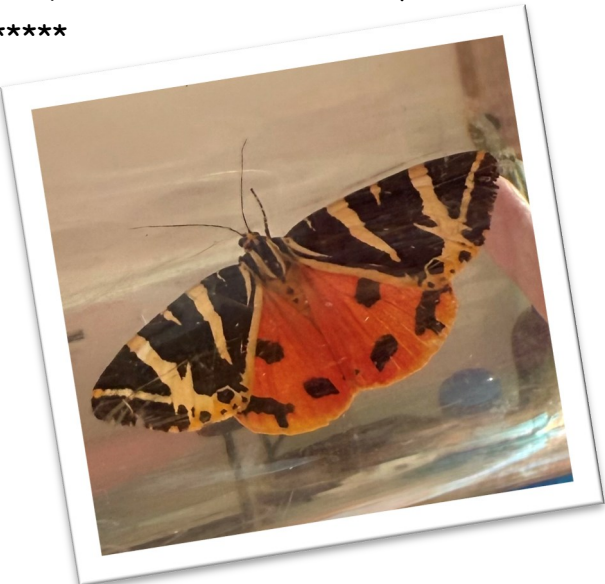
Cormorant, Little Egret, Grey Heron, Mute Swan, Mallard, Shelduck, Buzzard, Red Kite, Kestrel, Oystercatcher, Black-tailed Godwit, Whimbrel, Curlew, Redshank, Black-headed Gull, Mediterranean Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Herring Gull, Sandwich Tern, Common Tern, Stock Dove, Collared Dove, Wood Pigeon, Cuckoo, Swift, Great-spotted Woodpecker, Swallow, Pied Wagtail, Wren, Dunnock, Robin, Stonechat, Blackbird, Dartford Warbler, Lesser Whitethroat, Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler, Goldcrest, Spotted Flycatcher, Long-tailed Tit, Coal Tit, Bluetit, Great Tit, Treecreeper, Jay, Magpie, Jackdaw, Rook, Carrion Crow, Starling, Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Siskin. (54)

FROM OUR MEMBERS

Is it generally a good year for butterflies? This beautiful Purple Emperor was spotted in Maulden Woods, east of Milton Keynes... Late July 2025



And this striking Jersey Tiger moth was quite at home in Thornbury! CMS



Place: Punjab, India

Date: December 1969

Our VW split screen camper van is rolling gently through Punjab State of Northerns India. We are on narrow country roads, the temperature is hot but not overly so and the sky is azure blue. The scenery going past our windows is varied and very interesting, crops ready for harvesting, villagers working in the fields and now as we approach small village on this dusty track we see on our right bright emerald green marshland with rice crops at its edge. And, WOW! We stop the van quickly for there, walking side by side only yards from us, on long red legs - a pair of **Sarus Cranes**, their grey white plumage and bright red heads gleaming in the sunshine- a fabulous sight.



It is really nice to see these cranes the proximity of the village, not bothered at all by local villagers around them. The villagers welcome these cranes, especially a pair

like these as they symbolise long life and good fortune. The birds pair for life bringing good luck and happiness to the village, a win win situation. They can live in complete harmony with a reliable food source and the villagers are so pleased that these two faithful birds have decided to live in their village.

A lovely memory and beautiful sight.

Tony Johnson

FURTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

DBWPS Members might be interested in a talk advertised in Thornbury:

WILDLIFE ENCOUNTERS FROM NEAR AND AFAR:

Paul Raven, local naturalist and amateur photographer will present a selection of his favourite landscape and wildlife photographs taken whilst out and about near home and much further afield.

Time and place: Thornbury United Reformed Church, Chapel Street, Thornbury BS35 2BA

Friday 5th September at 7:15 (Doors open at 6:45) ~ Entry cost £5.00

Proceeds will go towards Thornbury URC Refurbishment Project.

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.



GIFT AID REMINDER

The Society has not claimed Gift Aid for many years, and our records will now be out of date. If you are a UK Tax payer, and would like the Society to claim Gift Aid **please** complete the attached form and return to the Membership Secretary (see address below) OR scan and return via email: caroline.sandrey@gmail.com. OR send an email including your full name and address giving us permission to claim Gift Aid on your membership.

Claims can be backdated to 2021 so if you have been a member since then please enter that year. If you are a newer member, we can claim from your joining date.

THANK YOU

Thank you to Dot Jones, Simon Ashley, Colin Crew, Anne Nuttall and Tony Johnson for their contributions this month. Also our thanks to Rebecca for planning our winter programme.

Please think about sharing any items of news you have, or birds you have seen - Send any articles or photographs for the next bulletin by **15th of the month** to me by email. caroline.sandrey@gmail.com or by post to me at the address below. **CMS**

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

**Committee members, please note the next committee meeting will be held at:
2 Hanover Lodge, Hunters Way, Stroud GL5 4UH on 9th September at 1900 hrs.**

Dursley Birdwatching and Preservation Society - Officers & Committee 2025-2026

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DURSLEY BIRD WATCHING AND PRESERVATION SOCIETY



GIFT AID DECLARATION

Details of Donor

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I wish Dursley Birdwatching and Preservation Society to treat all donations / subscriptions I make from the 1st January 2021, until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations.

Signature:

Date:

Notes

- You must pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax at least equal to the tax that the charity reclaims on your donations in the tax year (currently 25p for every £1 you give)
- If in the future your circumstances change and you no longer pay tax on your income or Capital Gains tax equal to the tax the charity claims, you **must** cancel your declaration in writing.
- You can cancel the declaration at any time by notifying the Society in writing.
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