

# DURSLEY BIRDWATCHING AND PRESERVATION SOCIETY NOVEMBER 2025



## CHIT CHAT FROM THE CHAIR

Recently I read a report and was sickened to learn that Tarras, a territorial Golden Eagle had gone missing from the Langholm area in "suspicious circumstances". Tarras's mate, Wren also went missing around the same time, which has given cause for concern.

Four year old Tarras's last transmission was between 27 and 29 August 2025 and the pattern of these transmissions suggested that he had come to harm. Of course despite specialist dog and other specialist searches of the area neither bird nor tracker have been found which seems to be the norm in these cases, the perpetrators disposing of all evidence of their illegal activities.

Tarras was part of the South of Scotland Golden Eagle Project. It is not known how close the nearest game bird release site is to where these magnificent birds disappeared. The police are looking into the matter and their investigations are on going but appeals for any information appear to have fallen on deaf ears.

In 2022 there were 61 recorded incidents of raptor persecution (involving all species). At least 64% of all incidents were linked to land used for game bird shooting. The authorities know of the likely perpetrators of these crimes but still very few are brought to justice and punished in any way apart from the odd gamekeeper getting a token fine and a slap on the wrist. The wildlife protection officers hands are tied when it's quite often the case that decisions as to whether these cases should be brought to court or not are made by those who happily participate in the slaughter of birds reared for the gun!

In the meantime our wildlife continues to pay the ultimate price for just living and following its instinct to procreate the next generation.

Dot

**Bird of the Month** - can be attributed to a few different birds but I've chosen one of my favourites - the Kestrel - *Falco tinnunculus* - amber listed so sadly still in decline since the 1970's probably due to changes in farming. Old English name is Windhover

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## FORTHCOMING TRIPS

**Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> October: Autumn visit to Slimbridge Leader: Dot Jones**

Dot will meet everyone in the main WWT car park at 9:30. The organised walk will last approximately 3-4 hours, but of course you might like to stay longer. Migration should be well under way, so birds such as Golden Plover and White-fronted Geese might start to come in as well as wintering ducks such as Pintail and Wigeon, and there's always the possibility of spotting a rare vagrant or two.

Please remember to bring your WWT Membership card if you have one.

**Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> November Chew Valley Lakes Leader: Simon Ashley**

Please note change of date - book via the website. Or contact [simonashley65@gmail.com](mailto:simonashley65@gmail.com)

A morning at Chew Valley Lakes, including a visit to the Ringing Station (CVRS). It's always exciting to see birds so close and to appreciate the vital contribution that ringing makes to our understanding of populations and migration patterns. CVRS received a DBWPS grant earlier this year to invest in new mist nets and equipment. This will be a good opportunity to see our funding in action.

After this session, there are a couple of options depending on the weather, bird sightings and enthusiasm. There are a number of hides and vantage points around Chew Valley; there may also be the option to visit the nearby Cheddar Reservoir. The low water levels have meant extensive mudflats and scrapes that have proved irresistible to passing waders - including two species of phalarope, curlew sandpipers and glossy ibis.

To attend the Ringing, a donation of £5 per person is required.

This will be a car share leaving Stroud at 7:30am - logistics arranged via our WhatsApp group.

**Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> November Cotswold Water Park Leader: Ken Cservenka**

Meet at the Lower Moor Car Park, CWP at 8.30 for a morning walk around the Wiltshire Wildlife Reserve and possibly take refreshments at the Dragonfly Café on the reserve afterwards. When last visited the lake was very quiet after a suspected visit from an otter but a good number of species were visible from the café area. If car sharing meet in Stroud at 7:30am

**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December Severn Beach/Aust Leader: Simon Ashley**

A winter visit to this well-watched site on the Severn Estuary. Under the shadow of the Second Severn crossing, this part of the coast is a great place to visit for a short Sunday morning stroll. We'll meet on the sea wall just above Beach Road and walk towards the wetlands at New Passage - hopefully find a few birds along the way. There are several types of habitat, including wetlands, salt marsh, hedges and the wide estuary itself.

Car share logistics co-ordinated via our WhatsApp group - we'll aim to meet on Beach Road at 9:00am.

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**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, please contact Caroline Sandrey (Membership Secretary) [caroline.sandrey@gmail.com](mailto:caroline.sandrey@gmail.com) or Simon Ashley (DBWPS Secretary) [simonashley65@gmail.com](mailto:simonashley65@gmail.com).

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## INDOOR MEETING DATES 2025/2026

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

**27<sup>th</sup> October ~ 1.45pm**

**Speaker: Roberta Goodall**

A talk about birding trips to Hungary along with some fantastic photographs from Roberta. Roberta is kindly donating her fee to Wader Quest, a charity close to her heart.

**Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>rd</sup> February ~ 1.45pm**

**Speaker: Andrew Bluett**

Andrew is 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<sup>rd</sup> March 7.30pm ~ AGM**

Annual AGM with updates on grant projects.

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## 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.

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## 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.

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## TRIP REPORTS

### KENT RESIDENTIAL

### Combined Report

#### Day 1 - Simon Ashley

With four days of immersion in nature to look forward to, our intrepid crew set off from the depths of the West Country and headed east. It's a long way to Sandwich, so we decided to break up the journey and stop for some birding en route.

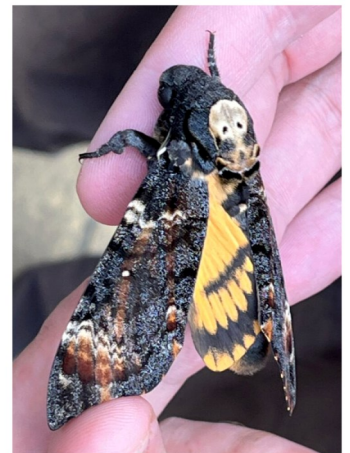
Our two cars met up at Staines Reservoir - just off the flight path for nearby Heathrow. Not the most promising location for a birding trip on the face of it, but like so many of these artificial water bodies, it attracts significant numbers of birds. We knew that six or so Black-necked Grebes had been regularly seen on the pools. Luckily, it didn't take long for an eagle-eyed member of our group to find two of them just a hundred metres or so offshore. These two were soon joined by a third, and the remaining three were quickly found amongst the flocks of Tufted Duck. What was most surprising was the huge numbers of Great-crested Grebes that also congregated on the pools. The fun didn't end there, as we also had at least one Wheatear and a couple of Yellow Wagtails along the banks and railings.

NB you can see Simon's video here: <https://dbwps.org/2025/10/12/kent-residential-day-1/>

After a brief lunch stop, we headed for Pegwell Bay, located at the northern end of Sandwich Bay. This site has a large intertidal area and can be good for waders, gulls, and, at this time of year, migrating birds. We hadn't timed it perfectly, as we arrived around high tide, meaning most of the birds were on a distant spit rather than closer in on the foreshore. Still, we did pretty well, adding another 26 species to our list.

Next, it was time to head to Sandwich Bay itself and check into our accommodation at the bird observatory. Before we even had time to check in, we were in for a real treat. A Death's-head Hawkmoth,

which had been found as a caterpillar and reared at the observatory safe from predation, had hatched a day or so before and was about to be released. We got the chance to see this moth in the hand - and what a beast it was! I think it was the first one any of our group had seen, and it was a real highlight of the whole weekend. As if that wasn't enough, we were also shown three little owls in the observatory garden that had successfully bred this year.



#### Day 2 - Land based - Susanne Zamze

The second day dawned with blue skies and 4 early birders left to go sea-watching while the rest of us went to observe the morning's bird ringing. Birds are ringed at the observatory year round with peak ringing around migration time. A number of nets were situated nearby on the reserve with volunteers (fully trained ringers and students) regularly bringing back 'bags' of birds from the different locations. Most of the birds trapped that morning were Chiffchaff and





Goldcrest, with also a few Blackcap and one rather agitated Firecrest - the star of the show! Other species, such as Willow Warbler had already migrated through earlier in the year, whilst Goldcrests were arriving for winter rather than leaving for warmer climes. Each bird had it's weight, wing length, sex where possible, fat store, and age, that is whether adult or this year's young, recorded by hand later to be computerised and submitted to the BTO. The level of fat stored was assessed by blowing aside the feathers on the bird's belly to reveal the layer of fat under the bird's skin (which in bird's is quite translucent).

Interestingly, most of the birds trapped were this year's young as apparently the adults know where they are going and know better than to be caught! Also, male and female tend to migrate in separate groups, so most of the Blackcaps trapped that morning were male. Many thanks must go to the wonderful, knowledgeable and dedicated staff and volunteers running the observatory.

After the sea-watch folks returned, the group re-adjourned and Malcolm led us on a very pleasant walk along the lanes, fields, ponds and lakes to the village of Worth and back. The hedgerows were bursting with sloe and hawthorn berries, as they are everywhere this year. However, it was very quiet for the smaller birds, which were presumably keeping out of harms way when not flying into nets! Of note, Siskin were heard calling and glimpsed briefly. Not a full list - but to give an impression, the lakes that day contained a good variety of ducks, including Shoveller, Gadwall, Wigeon, Mallard, Pintail, Teal and Tufted, lots of gulls and a variety of waders including a Ringed Plover, Ruff, Redshank, Godwit and many Lapwing. Unfortunately the Glossy Ibis and White Tailed Eagle seen earlier in the day did not put in another appearance.

After scanning the lakes we carried on to Worth and stopped for a welcome drink in the pub back garden, adding Greenfinch to the list. We then strolled back in warm evening sunshine, adding a Great Spotted Woodpecker, and a lovely flock of Golden Plover. Dawdling at the back I lingered to take in the glorious sight of hundreds of Swallows lined up on the telegraph wires all facing in the same direction with Starlings amassed further back in their own groups turning the wires black with birds. A great end to the day.

## Day 2 - The Sea Watch Group - Mike Tranter

Whilst one half of our party stayed at the observatory to observe the ringing the other half had an early start for a morning sea watch. We arrived at the top of a cliff at a point nicknamed the 'stink' as its next to a sewage pumping station, which fortunately didn't live up to its name. It was actually a bright and sunny morning; not the normal stormy weather I normally associate with a sea watch.

North Foreland is the most easterly point in Kent and provides good views out to sea for birds flying along the coast or migrants heading back to warmer climes. Here we met up with the local sea watch group and whilst we set up our scopes they explained the reference points used to help locate sightings. These were features in the array of wind turbine off the coast; the in-lines, the tower and Preston (being the most northerly point of the array).

We had just missed an Arctic Skua but still spent a thoroughly enjoyable few hours. Red-throated Diver, Brent Goose, Common Scoter, Shag and Sandwich Tern being the highlights out to sea. Turnstones, Wheatear on the shoreline with waves of Swallows (which became a theme for the weekend), Martins, Meadow Pipits, Linnets and Siskin heading out across the English Channel. 28 species recorded in total.

Reports of a Yellow Browed Warbler popped up on BirdGuide in a nearby park, so we set of in hope of seeing our first example of this morning. But birding is never guaranteed, resulting in our first 'dip' of our trip. (10 species recorded).



After returning to the observatory we joined up with the rest of the weekend group, for a circular walk out to RSPN Worth Marshes. This is a farmland area on reclaimed marshland, where the RSPB have purchased a number of farms and are in the process of restoring and creating new scrapes and wetlands. Although not open to the public, birding is permitted from the public footpaths. The walk took us past a number of scrapes with the usual ducks and gulls plus a highlight of a curlew sandpiper. On our return to the observatory, after refreshments at the pub in Worth village, a flock of Golden Plover was observed. A more thorough scan through picked out one slightly different bird, a little larger and darker; a Grey plover. (62 Species)

### Day 3 - Observatory - Karin Honeyball

A great time was spent enjoying the Kent Migration Day organised by the Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory. Activities included guided walks, ringing demonstrations, migration watches and talks.

Using four strategically sited Heligoland traps, a dedicated team of volunteers started ringing and recording the captured birds' data from 5am and had processed over 220 by the day's end. Migrant species ranged from Goldcrests, Firecrests, Blackcaps and Chiffchaffs to House and Sand Martins, in abundance, and Song Thrush; even a Green Woodpecker was bagged, all 'fascinating' to watch up close.

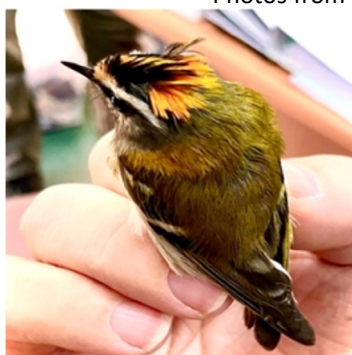
A highlight of the day was the sighting of a White-tailed Eagle soaring over Sandwich Bay and later the observatory itself. An interesting experience and fun day for all.

### Day 3 - Coast Walk - Mike Tranter

We split our resources to attend as many of the activities put on by the observatory for the festival with a group of 3 heading out along the coast to the point where a visible Migration Watch was being held. With one eye looking out to sea and the other behind us we spent a productive few hours recording in excess of 45 species including; Red-throated diver, Hobby, Redpoll, Brambling, and Kittiwake.



Photos from Karin Honeyball





On returning to the Observatory we learned of a further rarity that had dropped in to Worth Marsh, so we headed straight out again. We parked up and after a short walk returned to one of yesterday's scrapes where we were pleased to find a whirling Red-necked Phalarope. A great tick.

This was followed by a further trip to Pegwell Bay Country Park where there was report of a Greater Scaup. This was found, albeit distantly, bobbing up and down on the sea edge as the tide rushed in. Good numbers of waders, including Bar and Black-tailed Godwits, Knot, Sanderling, Golden and Grey Plover, as well as ducks and Sandwich Terns.

The days bird-watching concluded with a short drive out from the observatory to a field known for Grey Partridge. After a lengthy scan of the field 7 were eventually found, hunkered down in the grass.

Prospect cottage, the home of the late artist and film maker Derek Jarman, probably Dungeness's most famous resident.



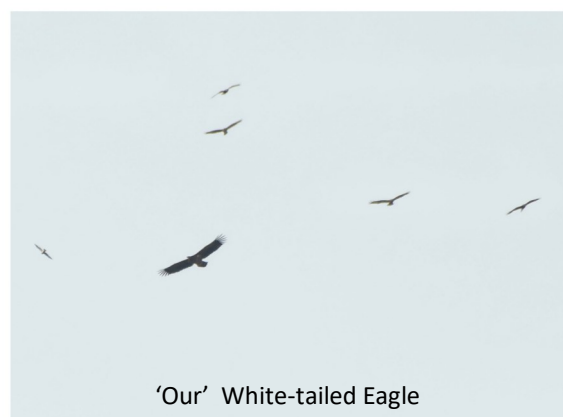
#### Day 4

Unfortunately our last day dawned and we had to set off towards home, initially heading south towards Dungeness.

Arriving at Dungeness we set up on the beach for a hours sea watch, where there was a lot of activity, notably at least 3 Arctic Skua's attacking the gulls and terns. After relocating to the RSPB reserve for lunch we picked up an alert of a Wryneck near to where we had been in the morning. We returned and spent a frustrating hour or so dipping on this. A pair of Peregrines flying around the decommissioned power station was scant compensation.

Reluctantly we called an end and headed back to Gloucestershire. What a great trip, with about 120 different species ticked. Thanks to Simon and Karin for driving, to the birds (mostly) turning out for us, for the welcome and tips from the staff and volunteers from the observatory and the other local birders we met.

The full list of birds can be seen on <https://ebird.org/tripreport/415553>



'Our' White-tailed Eagle

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Sunday 5th October

Nine members joined Nick on a clear sunny morning. It was lovely to see long standing member John Ryman out with us after a long absence going back to pre covid days!

We took our usual route, firstly to the Sailing Lake and then onto Court Lake. At first it seemed quite quiet but as we made our way round we started to pick up all the usual birds. One or two species were absent but by the end of the morning we still managed about fifty species.

As we came round the lane side of the Sailing Lake Nick spotted a bird swimming with a Great Crested Grebe, which we identified as a Red Breasted Merganser. Nick lamented that he only ever seemed to get females dropping in which at first this appeared to be. Nick later confirmed that it was actually a first winter male so he was well pleased.

We thanked Nick for a lovely morning and went our separate ways.

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## SPOTTED ON 'SOCIAL'

Thanks go to Roberta Goodall, who managed to get a photo of the Wryneck at Frampton Mansell.





## NOTE FROM OUR TREASURER

DO YOU PAY INCOME OR CAPITAL GAINS TAX? If so we can reclaim 25% of your membership subscription from the tax office providing you have paid enough tax. This can be on your wages, savings, investments (eg shares), pensions or on a capital gain.

We can claim for this tax year and the last three years. This could provide the society an extra £700 which we can use to support our grant scheme.

I'm sure you would rather we spent your well earned money rather than the government, but we need to evidence your permission for us to claim. To do this please complete and return the form overleaf. **MT**

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## THANK YOU

Thanks must go to Dot Jones, Simon Ashley, Susanne Zamze, Karin Honeyball, Mike Tranter and Oliver Paisey for their contributions this month.

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 15<sup>th</sup> of the month to me by email. [caroline.sandrey@gmail.com](mailto:caroline.sandrey@gmail.com) or by post to me at the address below. **CMS**

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## NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

Committee members, please note the next committee meeting will be held at 2 Hanover Lodge, Hunters Way, Stroud GL5 4UH on Tues 11th November at 1900 hrs.

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

<i>Chair</i>	Dot Jones	<a href="mailto:dorothy.jones3@me.com">dorothy.jones3@me.com</a>	<b>07478 662363</b>
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<i>IT &amp; Communications</i>			
<i>Indoor Programme</i>			
<i>Membership Secretary</i>	Caroline Sandrey	15 Spey Close, Thornbury, Bristol BS35 2NR <a href="mailto:caroline.sandrey@gmail.com">caroline.sandrey@gmail.com</a>	<b>07972 125959</b>
<i>Bulletin Editor</i>			
<i>Bulletin Distribution</i>			
<i>General Committee</i>	Ken Cservenka, Colin Greenfield		



**Secretary:** [simonashley65@gmail.com](mailto:simonashley65@gmail.com)



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# DURSLEY BIRD WATCHING AND PRESERVATION SOCIETY

## GIFT AID DECLARATION



Details of Donor

**Full Name**

**Address:**

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**Email Address:**

I wish Dursley Birdwatching and Preservation Society to treat all donations / subscriptions I make from the \_\_\_\_\_, 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.
- Please notify the Society if you change your name or address while the declaration is still in force.
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