



DURSLEY BIRDWATCHING AND PRESERVATION SOCIETY DECEMBER 2025



CHIT CHAT FROM THE CHAIR

Firstly, I wish you all Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. The festive season is almost here so thoughts must turn to things like decorations, holly and mistletoe for instance, always traditional 'must haves' for a lot of people, but I say leave the berries for our wildlife, alternatives are available with just a bit of effort and if you are into arts and crafts you may already be doing so. It's lovely to go foraging but instead of cutting that perfect piece of holly full of berries or that ideal berry laden branch of mistletoe to hang over the door, collect just the greenery and in place of holly berries attach cranberries for the holly berries and instead of mistletoe berries make some using fondant icing or gumpaste, plus both are edible. With natural food sources beginning to dwindle I'm sure the wildlife will appreciate us leaving extra for them. Putting fatty treats out, as it turns colder would be welcomed as well. However you are spending Christmas/New Year have a wonderful time and I look forward to seeing you all out and about in the New Year.

Dot

Bird of the Month

Raven - *Corvus corax* - our largest corvid, known for its intelligence but often symbolizes mystery and adventure. I love to hear them 'cronking' overhead when out for a walk.

- Black feathers, with a glossy metallic sheen
- Powerful blunt beak and shaggy throat feathers called hackles
- Distinctive diamond or wedge-shaped tail in flight
- Much bigger and chunkier than Crows and Rooks, but it can be tricky to judge scale when they're flying
- Often seen in pairs or small family groups - males females and juveniles all look similar



STOP PRESS

The Bewicks are back! The first Bewicks arrived back at Slimbridge on 16th November 2025. Hopefully there will be many to see when we visit on Sunday 18th January.



INDOOR MEETING DATES 2025/2026

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

08th 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 tea, coffee and mince pies. Donations of raffle prizes will be very welcome.

26th 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.

23rd 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.

23rd March 7.30pm ~ AGM - Annual AGM with updates on grant projects.



FORTHCOMING FIELD TRIPS

Sunday 7th December Severn Beach/Aust

Leader: Simon Ashley

Meet at 9:00am on the sea wall just above Beach Road and we'll walk towards the wetlands at New Passage. 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

2026 Field trips - further details to follow

Sunday 4th January Frampton in Winter

Leader: Nick Goatman

Meet at 8:30 at the little carpark in Watery Lane, for this walk on Nick's 'patch'. He will be able to tell us if there are any new visitors to the area. (///refrain.dampen.chuckling)

Sunday 18th January Slimbridge - Winter Special

Leader: Dot Jones

Meet in the car park at 9:30 for a morning visiting the hides.

Sunday 8th February Somerset Levels and Starling Roost

Leader: Amanda Sultan-Black

Sunday 22nd February Oldbury on Severn

Leader: Dot Jones

Sunday 8th March River Frome, Stroud

Leader: Simon Ashley

Sunday 29th March Portland Bill

Leader: Simon Ashley

Sunday 12th April Cleeve Hill

Leader: Arthur Ball

Sunday 26th April Coombe Hill Meadows

Leader: tbc



TRIP REPORTS

Sunday 26th - Slimbridge WWT

Report from: **Ken Cservenka**

Thirteen members joined our chair and Slimbridge volunteer Dot, for a morning visit to the hides at the reserve in pleasant weather conditions. Starting at the Peng Observatory overlooking the Rushy Pen we were treated to a display of all the usual suspects for this time of the year but it was still a bit too early for the Bewick's Swans and the White-fronted Geese, probably due to the warm autumn so far. Some members at the front of the party had a fleeting view of a pair of Glossy Ibis before they disappeared behind the Centre buildings. The much anticipated Temminck's Stint was not present on this first visit but appeared later in the day.

We then made our way to the South Lake hide where we added gulls and waders to the list including Mediterranean Gull and a large flock of Black-tailed Godwit. The party then walked through the grounds past the collection birds including those with the shocked sounding call reminiscent of comedian Frankie Howard, the Eider Duck drakes.

On reaching the Zeiss Hide we all spent a while attempting to catch a glimpse of a very camouflaged Bittern, a task that was personally beyond me on this occasion. Next stop was the Kingfisher Hide at the end of the South Finger; here we added several small birds such a Blue Tit on the bird feeders. In the trees a short distance from the hide a search was made to find the reported Yellow-browed Warbler but again this bird eluded me though it was seen or heard by some.

Some of us visited the Peng Observatory on our way out and we were lucky as reported above to spot the Temminck's Stint on a small island.

Temminck's Stint

© Roberta Goodall



Bird List:

Greylag Goose, Barnacle Goose, Canada Goose, Mute Swan, Shelduck, Shoveler, Mallard, Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Pochard, Tufted duck, Feral Pigeon, Woodpigeon, Collard Dove, Water Rail, Moorhen, Coot, Pied Avocet, Golden Plover, Lapwing, Curlew, Black-tailed Godwit, Snipe, Redshank, Spotted Redshank, Temminck's Stint, Black-headed Gull, Mediterranean Gull, Herring Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Little Grebe, Cormorant, Glossy Ibis, Bittern, Little Egret, Grey Heron, Sparrowhawk, March Harrier, Red Kite, Kingfisher, Kestrel, Magpie, Coffee coloured Jackdaw, Rook, Crow, Great Tit, Yellow-browed Warbler, Chiffchaff, Long-tailed Tit, Goldcrest, Wren, Starling, Robin, Grey Wagtail, Pied Wagtail, Chaffinch, Common Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Blue Tit



Coffee-colored Jackdaw

© Simon Ashley



Sunday 16th - Chew Valley Lake

Report from: **Amanda Sultan-Black**

Twelve keen Dursley birders met at Herriots Bridge for a day together visiting the bird ringing station and exploring Chew Valley Lake which sits in the Mendip hills. It is the UK's 5th largest freshwater lake, a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Protection Area (SPA). Earlier this year Chew Valley Lake ringing station, (which does such valuable work) had received a grant from DBWPS for funding to help purchase equipment specifically new nets. As you can imagine we were eager to visit and see the equipment in situ.

But first a couple of the earlier arrivals had had the rare delight of seeing an otter nearby the bridge. We all enthusiastically checked out the water either side of the bridge but no further otter sightings were made. We were compensated by good bird numbers though. A selection of what we saw here were: Great Crested Grebes, Great Egrets and Little Egrets stalking and feeding alongside each other; a raft of gulls included some Common Gulls. Oh, and so many Northern Shoveler I lost count, Tufted Duck and a real treat of 4 Whooper Swans. A few of us had failed to bring warm gloves, hats and scarves so were caught off-guard by the first really chilly morning and decided to make our way to the warmth of the ringing station.



Great Tit and Reed Bunting



At the ringing station we filled the hut to capacity. I'm sure that I speak for the group when I say we were not disappointed. The ringing team made us very welcome and talked us through the 'painstaking' process (quite literally as some of the birds peck and claw and cling to the ringers hands) of first identifying and sexing the bird. After identifying they proceed to work quickly as a team to take measurements, weigh, ring and determine the health of the bird by checking its fat reserves. All this is recorded by the ringers before releasing the bird back into the wild. The valuable information they gather is collated and shared with the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) with all records stored at the Natural History Museum in London.

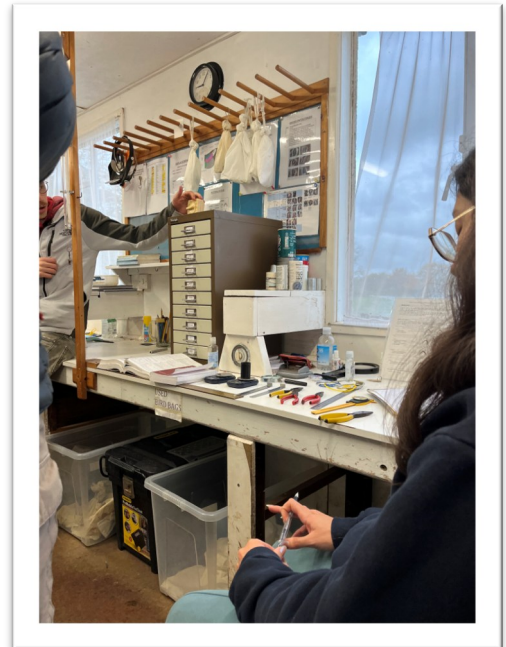
The team have a timer that goes off every 15 minutes to ensure that they check the nets regularly to reduce stress for the birds. During our visit we saw: Great Tits and Blue Tits (that are notoriously feisty!), a Cetti's Warbler (a real treat to see up close), Dunnock, Robin, Goldcrest, Chaffinch and a Reed Bunting.

After a tea and biscuits break we were getting ready to leave when the ringers returned with a Great Spotted Woodpecker, so yes you guessed right, we sat right back down to watch this up close. The ringers warned us that the woodpeckers usually 'scream' when being checked and rung, however this one was patient and quiet with no screaming or hand pecking!





Left - Demonstrating the new garden nets provided by a DBWPS grant - difficult to see even for us!



Right - Inside the ringing station where the licensed ringers are busy between April and September

Reluctantly leaving the warmth of the ringing hut, we ventured back out into the cold and drove to Woodford Lodge to get our permits to visit the hides. We then proceeded to visit Nunnery Point and Moreton Bank hides. These turned up some more good sightings such as: a flock of Golden Plover, my favourites Eurasian Teal, Little Grebe, loads of Great Crested Grebe, after a lot of searching and guidance from fellow birders Common Goldeneye, Marsh Harrier and a very brief sighting of a Black Necked Grebe.

On our return journey home most of us made a detour to try to get the Penduline Tit at on Cake Pill pool on Northwick Warth. Unfortunately we dipped it as the assembled birders including our very own Colin Greenfield, informed us it had flown off by 10am. Not a totally wasted detour as we did pick up 2 new species for the day a Peregrine Falcon and a Stonechat. By this time it was getting colder and we decided to call it a day and another very worthwhile day at that...

Bird List:

Canada Goose, Mute Swan, Whooper Swan, Shelduck, Shoveler, Wigeon, Mallard, Green-Winged Teal, Pochard, Tufted Duck, Goldeneye, Woodpigeon, Water Rail, Moorhen, Coot, Oystercatcher, Golden Plover, Lapwing, Dunlin, Black-headed Gull, Common Gull, Herring Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Little Grebe, Great Crested Grebe, Cormorant, Little Egret, Great White Egret, Grey Heron, Marsh Harrier, Buzzard, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Kestrel, Magpie, Jackdaw, Crow, Raven, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Cetti's Warbler, Goldcrest, Wren, Starling, Mistle Thrush, Fieldfare, Robin, Dunnock, House Sparrow, Grey Wagtail, Pied Wagtail, Meadow Pipit, Chaffinch, Linnet, Reed Bunting, Black-necked Grebe, Stonechat, Peregrine



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 Simon Ashley (DBWPS Secretary) simonashley65@gmail.com or Caroline Sandrey (Membership Secretary) caroline.sandrey@gmail.com



MEETING REPORTS

Monday 27th October - Roberta Goodall

Report by: Ken Cservenka

Roberta's Hungarian adventures

Our society's explorer and photographer stayed closer to home for her adventures into Hungary. Travelling from Budapest she stayed at the Oriel Eco Lodge near the River Tisza Floodplain and the Kiskunság National Park. The nearby hides range from the Drinking Pool Hide where the pool is at eye level affording excellent views of the birds and a perfect angle for photographic opportunities; Floating hides where the occupant is required to lay face down and there are also Tower hides with scary looking ladders or steps. However, none of these examples are a problem as there were lots of hides to choose from.

Drawing on Roberta's experience, in April the water birds and summer visitors will be present and by May and June the breeding birds will have young. A lot of the birds that are familiar to us such as Chiffchaff, Great Spotted Woodpecker and Jay can also be seen here along with a good selection of birds that we have to make a special effort to see; examples include Hawfinch, Redstart and Wood Warbler. Then there are the special rarities that are sometime found in Britain including Hoopoe, Wryneck and Night Heron.

The Robin is a relatively scarce bird in this area but of course they have a skulking nature on the continent unlike their British counterparts, so maybe overlooked. On the other had Black Redstart appear to inhabit gardens in continental Europe rather than industrial sites favoured by there British cousins, The common Corvid here is the Hooded Crow which replaces the Carrion Crow in Northern Europe including the Highlands of Scotland.



© R.Goodall

A beautiful Pair of Bee-Eaters also seen.

At the Drinking Pool notable species included Hawfinch, Hoopoe, Tree Sparrow, Pied, Spotted and Collard Flycatcher, Tree Pipit, Golden Oriole and Turtle Dove. Also seen here out in good light was Nightingale. Common garden birds were abundant on the way to the Tower Hide with the scary steep steps, here Red-footed Falcon, Kestrel, Lesser Grey Shrike, Roller, White Stork and Common Crane were added to Roberta's list. At the Nest Box Hide, Rollers were nesting relatively close to a pair of Hoopoe and at the Pop-up Nest Box Hide there was another pair of Roller and Little Owl. Middle Spotted Woodpecker and Penduline Tit were added to the ever expanding list of species.

At the wetlands area a saline lake produced Purple Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron, Squacco Heron, Spoonbill, Pygmy Cormorant, Spotted Redshank, Wood Sandpiper, Black-winged Stilt, Ruff and Green Sandpiper, Strangely, Lapwing are uncommon but Little Gull, Caspian Gull, Caspian Tern, Black Tern and a colony of very noisy Whiskered Terns were on the wing or resting on the islands. Garganey, Ferruginous Duck and the eastern race of Greylag Goose represented the Waterfowl. White Stork and Black Stork were nesting nearby and Black Woodpecker, Syrian Woodpecker, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Wryneck and Red-backed Shrike were also present.



SPOTTED ON SOCIAL

© Freddie Harrison



Our newest (and youngest) member, Freddie Harrison, has been birding with his camera and sharing some of his photographs. These three were taken at Lake Pochard Wildlife Haven.

© Freddie Harrison



© Freddie Harrison



Roberta shared this photograph of a Snow Bunting seen on Cleeve Hill Golf Course 31/10/25 ...



© Roberta Goodall

... and a Water Rail in front of the Willow Hide at Slimbridge



© Roberta Goodall



CHRISTMAS MEETING - 8TH DECEMBER - 7:30pm



Quiz - Simon will be testing us with his bird and wildlife quiz



Raffle - Donations for prizes will be welcome.



Refreshments - Please bring a pudding or sweet treat to share.



Thank you to Dot Jones, Ken Cservenka, Amanda Sultan-Black, Simon Ashley, Roberta Goodall and Freddie Harrison for their contributions this month.

DON'T FORGET to renew your membership!

Membership run from 1st January to 31st December - You can send a cheque made out to DBWPS to the Membership Secretary (address below), you can pay with cash at the December and January meetings, or you can pay by bank transfer. Our bank details are:

THE DURSLEY BIRDWATCHING AND PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Sort Code: **30-98-97** Account number: **82228162**

If you are renewing online and can agree to **Gift Aid** then **please** tick the box on the Membership renewal page. If you are renewing by post, **please** complete and return the form on the reverse of this Bulletin and enclose with your cheque

CMS



Committee members, please note the next committee meeting will be held at 2 Hanover Lodge, Hunters Way, Stroud GL5 4UH on Tues 13th January at 1900 hrs.

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

Chair	Dot Jones	dorothy.jones3@me.com	07478 662363
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Treasurer	Mike Tranter	mike.tranter22@gmail.com	07421 102412
Secretary	Simon Ashley	2 Victoria Villas, Spillmans Patch, Stroud GL5 3LU simonashley65@gmail.com	07825 668389
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IT & Communications			
Indoor Programme			
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Bulletin Editor			
General Committee	Ken Cservenka, Colin Greenfield		



DURSLEY BIRD WATCHING AND PRESERVATION SOCIETY

GIFT AID DECLARATION



Details of Donor

Full Name

Address:

Postcode:

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.
- If you pay tax at the higher rate you can claim further tax relief in your Self Assessment tax return.

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