

BIRDWATCHING *Group*

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NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2021

TONIGHT'S MEETING (26th November)

Tonight we welcome the return of Keith Offord with a talk entitled "Roadrunner Country".

Keith is a professional ornithologist, having established an interest in birds at an early age, pursuing this wherever he was living. He has a particular interest in raptors and graduated from Liverpool University with a degree in zoology, which involved research into the hunting and feeding behaviour of Hen Harriers. He has been actively involved in the monitoring of breeding raptors in Wales for 45 years and is coordinator of the NE Wales Raptor Study Group.

His photography has taken him all over the world and has received substantial acknowledgement. Each year he travels all over the UK giving lectures to photographic, wildlife and general societies. In addition, he has published many articles and features for wildlife and birding magazines plus accounts on the Hen Harrier and Merlin in the recently published *Birds in Wales*.

Please join me in welcoming Keith for what I am sure will be a very entertaining evening.



Black-throated Green Warbler by Keith Offord

FIELD TRIPS

Our next field trip is on Saturday 11th December and is a morning car trip to Chelford followed by Christmas lunch at the Egerton Arms.

Directions for the car trip

Meet at the Guild at 8:45am or at the end of Lapwing Lane at 9am. This is the second road on the left about half a mile south of Chelford roundabout when travelling south down the A535 (map ref SJ816734). First of all we will visit Lapwing Hall Pool and Acre Nook and we will move on to visit Mere Farm Pool later in the morning if time permits.

As conditions underfoot can be muddy at this time of year, it is advisable to wear good, waterproof footwear – Wellingtons/rubber boots may be best if you have them.

The Christmas lunch is booked at the Egerton Arms Pub for 12:30pm.

The address for the Egerton Arms is:

Knutsford Road
Chelford
Cheshire SK11 9BB

This is on the A537 on the Knutsford side of Chelford village.

Our next coach trip is on Sunday 23rd January 2022 to Carsington Water in Derbyshire, departing from the Guild at 8am.

The site is a large man-made reservoir near Ashbourne managed by Severn Trent Water and used extensively for a variety of leisure activities. There are several hides overlooking the reservoir and feeding stations at the visitor centre and in the woodland. A good variety of ducks, grebes, and other wildfowl should be seen as well as possibly divers, kingfisher, brambling, siskin, redpoll, peregrine, and barn owl. There is a café, shop and toilets at the Visitor Centre.



Great Northern Diver

COACH TRIP TO SPURN – SUNDAY 17th OCTOBER 2021

Low cloud and drizzle did not deter 25 happy birdwatchers board the coach at 7.30am. The return of field trips is welcomed by the group.

En route Wood Pigeon, Pheasant, Magpie, Jackdaw, and other Corvids were spotted in the fields. Stopping off at Ferrybridge services the weather brightened. Starlings gathered on the telegraph wires, a Buzzard sat in wait of prey on a telegraph pole, many gulls in the ploughed fields.

Kilnsea Wetlands Nature Reserve, accessible from Easington Road, has been created to compensate for habitat being lost nearby on the eroding Holderness coastline. Freshwater and saline pools with islands and spits and scrapes provide this site with roosting and feeding stations. This was where a few disembarked, to look over the estuary.



Dark-bellied Brent Geese

Oystercatcher probing for molluscs, a welcome sight of Brent Geese, Shelduck, Redshank, Dunlin were noted. Curlew flying over with his evocative call. Onwards then to the Observation Hub. No birds on the feeders but Goldfinch were chattering in the hedge. Walking along the road, Stock Dove and Blackbird seen far off in the field, and House Sparrows were busy in the hedges. Roe deer were grazing in the field.



Shelduck

A van stopped and the driver told 3 of us that a Jack Snipe had been seen on the left of the road in dense vegetation in a ditch. We had a good look but no luck to see this secretive bird.

Finally arriving to walk along the unsurfaced footpath of Kilnsea Wetlands Nature Reserve, Kestrel hovered overhead. From the hide Great Crested Grebe, Shoveler, Mallard, Greater and Lesser Black-backed Gulls, Herring Gulls, Black-headed Gulls, Grey Heron, Lapwings, Bar-tailed Godwits, a flock of

Brent Geese, Wigeon all added to our growing field list. The drizzle returned.

A short wander brought us to a screen. In a nearby field a huge flock of Soay sheep grazed quietly. Dunlin, Mute Swans, Greylag Geese and the wonderful Grey Plover from the Arctic Tundra were busy feeding on the scape. Leaving the screen a birdwatcher from another group allowed us to use his 'scope to see a Little Owl perched on a wood pile, tucked away from the increasing rain and wind. Further along the path we looked across the lagoons, then retraced our route back to the road. Tree Sparrows, Chaffinch, House Sparrows, Great Tit, Blue Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Dunnock

enjoyed the feeders and fallen apples in a garden. A Wren hurried into the hedgerow. Linnets perched in a row along with a Pied Wagtail on the phone wires. A handsome Jay flew over.

We made our way back to the coach to have lunch. A Two-barred Greenish Warbler had been spotted in the hedges by the coach park, a rare sighting as they are found in Siberia and northern Mongolia. Over 100 twitchers had arrived in the morning, crowding near the hedges, to see this little warbler. On and off during the day some of our group were rewarded with a sighting of this visitor.



Grey Plover

Refreshed from lunch in the coach we headed to Canal scrape hide. From here we watched Mallard, Moorhen, and Little Grebe. Later it was



Kestrel

reported a Sparrowhawk had flown overhead. We now headed for The Warren, so called because it was the site of a 15th Century rabbit warren. Nothing to report from here so we headed for the canal walk looking over the estuary to watch the tide coming in. To our right we spotted more Roe deer and 2 Highland cattle dozing under a tree. A Little Egret flew over and landed in the distance, 4 Turnstones were busy turning over stones foraging for invertebrates. More Grey Plover and a huge count of Shelduck first seen feeding then as the tide came in bobbing on the water. A Kestrel hovered over the bales of hay in the field.

Leaving the canal path, we popped in at the Crown Inn car park, finding a solitary Robin. The churchyard was also devoid of bird life but a Greenfinch was heard wheezing. Time to head back to the coach. Looking over the fields 4 young Roe deer were grazing, they took an interest in watching us watching them. A Kestrel was spotted in the distance sitting on the fence whilst a Pheasant wandered around.

Other reported sightings for the day -

Red-throated Diver, Gannet, Cormorant, Pintail, Merlin, Water Rail, Knot, Sanderling, Ringed Plover, Common Snipe, Black-tailed Godwit, Common Gull, Meadow Pipit, Stonechat, Reed bunting, Chiffchaff and Goldcrest. Greenshank and Skylark were heard.



Curlew (bathing)

A total field count of 68 which is very rewarding. Spurn National Nature Reserve is a constantly moving peninsula, which curves between the North Sea and the Humber estuary managed by the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. A truly iconic place.



Twitchers

Photos by Robert D

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WEEKEND AWAY TO NORFOLK

Reminder – the balance payments for the Weekend Away should be paid at tonight's meeting (26th November). Please make cheques payable to "**Wilmslow Guild**".

CIRCULATION LIST

An invitation to all new members – please join our email circulation list.

By doing so you will receive your newsletter 2 or 3 days before the monthly meeting and you will be guaranteed to get a newsletter even if you can't come to the meeting. Also we occasionally use the circulation list to send out important Group information in between the meetings so you will stay informed. The emails are sent out as BCC so your email address will remain private.

To join the circulation list please send an email to Robert at the address at the end of this newsletter

NEXT MONTH'S MEETING

Our next indoor meeting is in just 1 week on **Friday 3rd December** (note the change of date) at 7:30 pm when the speaker will be your newsletter editor Robert with a short slide-show on the subject of "Taiwan in Winter".

Afterwards we will be having our Christmas Buffet where nibbles and drinks will be available. There will be a nominal charge of £2 per person if you attend the buffet. As previously mentioned you will need to bring your own plate and cup (preferably reusable plastic).

Hope to see you all then.

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS

Still required – your articles for the newsletter. Tell us all about that birding holiday of a lifetime or that unusual visitor to your garden bird table.

Deadline is the Friday before the meeting.



Scissor-tailed Flycatcher by Keith Offord