

## **COACH TRIPS AND VISITS TO RESERVES**

At a recent committee meeting we discussed the viability of future coach trips for the group. We decided we would ask you to complete a questionnaire about coach trips and some alternative options and I would be grateful if you could do this tonight and hand in the forms at the end of the meeting.

Although many people enjoy going on coach trips there has been a gradual decline in numbers for a variety of reasons and it is becoming difficult to fill even the smaller 29 seater coach that we have been using. The next trip in May is less than half full at the moment. The group has a small amount of reserves to use to cover any shortfall and this will be exhausted unless we can sell most of the seats.

It seems to me we have several options:

- We can run future coach trips but only if there is more support from the group and we sell the seats before we commit to booking the coach.
- We consider reducing to one or possibly two trips a year if there is sufficient demand, to give us more time to advertise and fill a coach.
- We discuss running joint trips again with Sutton Coldfield group to help them fill their coach.
- We use car sharing to visit reserves, either local visits as we have just started, or perhaps longer visits at the weekend to larger reserves.

We have been pleased with the interest in the two recent local visits. 12 people came on our Middleton Lakes walk in February and 14 visited Doxey Marshes in March. Therefore we will arrange monthly local visits except for July and August and I will prepare a programme for 2015-16. We will arrange the usual evening walk in June to Cannock Chase for nightjars. Any suggestions for visits later in the year would be welcome.

### **LEIGHTON MOSS COACH TRIP**

**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May**

Our next trip is to the RSPB reserve at Leighton Moss. Leighton Moss has the largest reedbed in north-west England, and is home to some really special birds such as breeding bitterns, bearded tits and marsh harriers. There are three nature trails and seven hides. There is a visitor centre, shop and café on site.

Reserve your place tonight with Heather. Cost is £15 per head. Admission to hides and nature trails is free for RSPB members or £7 for non-members (concessions £4.50).

## **LOCAL BIRDWATCHING WALK: 5<sup>th</sup> MAY**

### **Cannock Chase – Seven Springs**

Our next local birdwatching walk is at Seven Springs car park on Cannock Chase.

This is usually a good place to see newly arrived summer visitors. When I visited it in early May last year, common warblers were there, a wood warbler was singing in the trees near the car park and we found tree pipits, redstarts and spotted flycatchers nearby. Hopefully they will all be there again this year.

We will be meeting at Seven Springs car park (postcode ST17 0WT) off the A513 about 1 mile west of Wolseley Bridge at 10am for an approximate 2 hour visit. (The A513 has been closed for roadworks near Milford for several months but you can access the car park from Wolseley Bridge).

Please come along if you can and share your birdwatching skills with us. If anyone requires a lift from Lichfield please see me this evening or contact me either by phone on 0121 353 6886 or email ([dennis.muxworthy@btinternet.com](mailto:dennis.muxworthy@btinternet.com)).

## **NEXT MEETING: 12<sup>th</sup> MAY**

### **BORN TO FLY**



Our next meeting in May is the last one before our summer break and we are going to show the RSPB film which follows the European crane, one of the world's highest-flying birds, on its epic journey south from the Arctic, across Europe to the oak woodlands of Spain and Portugal.

This is the incredible story of an intelligent bird, a born survivor, with an uncanny ability to adapt to an ever-changing world.

### **CHANGE OF SPEAKER TONIGHT**

Geoff Trinder has had to cancel his visit due to illness but fortunately we are able to welcome back Jeff Clarke at short notice and he is going to present his new talk "Antipodes – At the Edge of the Abyss".

New Zealand is the seabird capital of the world, blessed with many species of albatross, petrels and shearwaters, penguins and numerous members of the cormorant clan. New Zealand is also home to a number of threatened endemic landbirds. This talk illustrates a large proportion of the region's iconic wildlife and explores the threats they face and the conservation efforts required to save them.