

HOPE YOU'RE IMPRESSED - I'VE GOT THE RIGHT MONTH THIS TIME!

MONEY DOWN THE DRAIN

These days most of us are well aware of the importance of keeping up our fluid levels. Nutritionists and health gurus claim that many of us don't take on enough liquid during the course of the day and gleefully list the dire consequences of dehydration - headaches, lethargy, confusion, kidney stones etc,etc. The message has sunk in and on any expedition to Tesco's or to feed the ducks in the park you will encounter the bottle-hugging brigade as they carefully protect themselves from the dangers of drying out and expiring in the pet food aisle.

Obviously we do have to take in enough liquid to keep ourselves healthy and anyone engaged in any type of vigorous activity needs to maintain fluid intake. However the big question is - what sort of liquid? While being a 'stout' advocate of the pleasures of alcohol even I don't consider it as a major source of daily fluid. Basically we only need water, just tap water, not the fancy- named substance found in the plastic bottles retailing at about £1 for half a litre. There are dozens if not hundreds of companies producing their own brand of water and we buy nearly 20 billion bottles of it a year. At two quid a litre bottled water is dearer than petrol and two quid gets you over 1000 litres of tap water, that'd keep you sufficiently damp for quite a while. While accepting that some people have problems with tap water, for the vast majority there's no earthly reason to buy the bottled stuff. It's not even necessarily healthier; the water that gushes from your tap is stringently tested every day at source while bottled water is tested far less frequently and by the time you purchase it can have spent months in the bottle.

As well as the sheer waste of money, the environmental impact is frightening. It takes 162g of oil and seven litres of water to produce one plastic bottle - - - isn't that crazy, using seven litres of water to produce a bottle which will hold one litre of water which costs a thousand times more than the water from your tap; and this at a time when the supply of clean drinking water and water for agriculture is of major concern across the globe.

Despite all efforts and against all stated claims, the University of Nottingham inform us that just 35% of plastic bottles in household waste go for recycling, the rest goes into landfill. Any walk or cycle ride around our roads reveals verges and hedgerows liberally adorned with plastic debris from a variety of drinks and foodstuff and while recycling rates are improving there is a vast amount of plastic litter everywhere. You may have heard of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, a floating mass of mostly plastic waste circulating in the Pacific Ocean. A rough estimation of its extent is a staggering 15 million square kilometres!

Most of the above information comes from the RSPB "News and Views" magazine with a little help from Mr Google. After such damning figures, surely it is incumbent on the RSPB to stop selling bottled water at any of its sites and incumbent on us as members to refuse to buy it from any source.

NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY NOVEMBER 12

WILDLIFE IN ART

COOMBES VALLEY

I've been asked to publicise the following events at Coombes Valley RSPB Reserve. They may be of interest if you have youngsters to occupy over half term.

Creatures of Coombes Valley

26 Oct-3 Nov. 10.00am - 4.00pm. A self-guided half term trail to discover the magical creatures of the woodland, both good and bad!

£4 per child, members £2

Spooktacular Halloween Party

An afternoon of fun; spooky themed activities including pumpkin carving, spooky games, quiz, a dusk walk and campfire marshmallows.

Booking essential; £10 per family group-non members, £6 for family group members.

For booking & details call 01538 384017

www.rspb.org.uk/coombesvalley

THANK YOU

A belated thanks to all members who brought along new visitors to our last indoor meeting. Hopefully they will become regulars and help maintain our high attendance level. With the ever increasing cost of speakers and their travel costs and the hire of the venue at over £50 we need a full room every month if we are to cover expenses and make a bit of profit to feed back to HQ.

Likewise the money taken by the raffle and refreshments is essential income, keeping us financially viable.

DON'T FORGET!

To sort out your photos to display at the December meeting. You don't have to be an ace photographer, just share your favourite wildlife pictures from the last twelve months.

LEGACIES

Not the happiest of subjects to bring up but I came across an article about legacies while reading a sheet offering advice on fundraising. Apparently 70% of the UK population regularly give to charity but only 4% leave a charitable bequest in their will. Leaving a charitable legacy is easy to arrange and it can be beneficial in helping to reduce inheritance tax. Over 50% of RSPB legacies are from supporters who do not appear to have ever been an RSPB member.

This is obviously a very simple way of making a major contribution to fundraising, it's easier, less embarrassing and probably more effective than standing on a street corner dressed as a Puffin while shaking a collecting tin and frightening small children. Not wishing to encourage anyone's demise, I'll order some leaflets which will be available at future meetings.

If you wish to obtain a leaflet yourself, contact David Beach on 01767 693306

AND FINALLY

It will soon be time for your winter edition of the RSPB magazine to pop through your letterbox. Since 1966 *Birds* magazine has been the means of communicating news, views, information and advice on all bird and nature related subjects. For the majority of RSPB members who do not or cannot attend local group meetings this has been the main point of contact with the charity and its title had a direct link with the organisation they originally joined, possibly many years ago.

Now, with the rebranding of the organisation, any reference to birds has been dropped from the title and the magazine will be known as *Nature's Home*. While understanding the desire to attract a wider nature-based audience I do find this a very twee title, more suitable to a kid's ladybird book rather than the mouthpiece of a world-renowned society.

How long, I wonder, before the RSPB becomes the RSPN.

Bob