

The RSPB Macclesfield Local Group



giving
nature
a home

The Heron



Newsletter - January 2017

We welcome Ieuan Evans as our speaker tonight

This will be Ieuan's first visit to our group. He works as part of the senior management team at the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) where he is responsible for people engagement. He describes himself as a bad birdwatcher but on the positive side he is training to become a bird ringer!

In his talk, 'Unravelling the Mysteries of Migration' he will give an overview of BTO's exciting tracking work involving satellite tags, GPS tags and geo-locators on species such as a swift, cuckoo, nightjar and lesser black-backed gulls. He will also reveal the latest from a number of projects using cutting-edge technology to push forward our understanding of bird migration at an amazing pace.

DIARY DATES

JANUARY 2017

Thursday 12	'Ad Hoc' Outdoor Meeting: Westport Lake Longport, Stoke on Trent If the weather is favourable please join us for a morning walk around Westport Lake. The Lake supports a range of wildfowl, tufted duck, common pochard and there has been a long staying long tailed duck, as well as common woodland species in the nature area. Meet in the free Staffordshire Wildlife Visitor Centre car park at 10:00 am, Post Code ST6 4RZ. The walk should be completed by 12:30 pm and there are toilets and a café in the Visitor Centre on site. Please check the website for the latest status of this visit, if the weather turns nasty we will cancel call the Leader Thursday morning between 8:00 and 9:00am if the weather is uncertain. Leader Ian Taylor 01260 275248
Saturday 28	National RSPB Event: 'Big Garden Birdwatch' Help the RSPB build up a picture of bird populations across the country by taking part in The RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch with birdwatching experts from The RSPB Macclesfield Local Group and Wildlife Explorers. There will be advice on using binoculars and telescopes and help with identifying common garden birds, as well as lots of helpful hints on completing your own survey at home. Meet outside the café, West Park, Prestbury Road, Macclesfield, SK10 3BJ 10:00 am to 12:00 noon Contact: Tina Hanak 07870 804413 or visit the Wildlife Explorers website
Sunday 29	WGBG Coach Trip: Lancashire Wildlife Trust Reserves at Meresands Wood and Brockholes Depart at 8:00 am from Wilmslow Guild, Bourne Street, Wilmslow, SK9 5HD Contact: Steve McGann 01625 533652. Note: No RSPB Local Group outdoor meeting this month, please consider supporting this coach trip instead. Booking is essential to ensure a seat.

The Royal Society for the protection of Birds (RSPB) is a registered charity: in England and Wales no. 207076, in Scotland no. SC037654

DIARY DATES CONTINUED

JANUARY 2017

Sunday 29	Working Party: RSPB Coombes Valley Join us at our nearest RSPB reserve 'Holly bashing' - processing and stacking holly brash. You'll need to dress according to whatever the weather wishes to throw at us on the day and a pair of walking boots would be advisable, as we're likely to be working on a slope. You'll need to bring your own lunch and drinks. Meet at the RSPB Coombes Valley visitor centre LR Grid reference: SK009534 Time from 9:30 am with a weather dependent finishing time of 3:30 pm Contact: Abercrombie 07775 904683 or Paul Bennett (Warden) 01538 384017
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FEBRUARY 2017

Friday 3	CAWOS meeting: A Digital Lane by Mike Lane 7:30 pm for a prompt 7:45 pm start at St. Vincents Roman Catholic Church, Tatton Street, Knutsford, WA16 6HR
Tuesday 14	Indoor Meeting: Sights and Sounds of British Wildlife by David Tolliday Introduced by: Ian Taylor 01260 275248

MARCH 2017

Friday 3	CAWOS meeting: AGM followed by Seeing Birds in a Magical New Light by David Quinn 7:30 pm for a prompt 7:45 pm start at St. Vincents Roman Catholic Church, Tatton Street, Knutsford, WA16 6HR
Tuesday 14	Indoor Meeting: Around the World with the BBC Natural History Unit by Stephen Moss Introduced by: Alan Brereton 01625 615628
Sunday 19	Outdoor Meeting: North Wales Coast Join us for a visit to the popular bird watching sites along the North Wales Coast looking for waders and sea watching around high tide at 14:44 pm. Early migrants, wheatear and sand martins may be a possibility. Meet at Duke Street car park at 8:30 am for an all day visit. Car Park fees maybe payable during the day. Leader: Ray Evans 01625 432635
Thursday 23	Special Event: RSPB Coffee Morning Enjoy a cup of tea or coffee with biscuits at Gawsworth Community Hall. A selection of homemade cakes and preserves will be available to purchase. Gawsworth Methodist Community Hall, Congleton Road, Gawsworth, Macclesfield, SK11 9QZ, 10 am to 12 noon Contact: Chris Revett 01625 617384
Sunday 26	WGBG Coach Trip: Carsington Water Depart at 8:00 am from Wilmslow Guild, Bourne Street, Wilmslow, SK9 5HD Contact: Steve McGann 01625 533652

A Further Miscellany by Ray Perry

Simon Says: Simon Barnes continues to be a contributor to the *Sunday Times* on a weekly basis. His piece on the 5th December 2016 concerned a day at the Snettisham reserve. He was accompanied by Jake Fiennes, manager of the nearby Raveningham Estate which Jake runs for business and the wildlife. Yes Jake is a member of the famous Fiennes film family but has not followed in their footsteps.

The pair of them were watching geese, particularly the pink-footed variety. Simon continues to

follow sport and mentioned the Olympia Horse Show. He also recommended us birders to have a look at chaffinch flocks for birds with white bums. They are bramblings. Those of you who are regular birders will know that male bramblings are orangey and not reddish. They are around this area. I've had a pair in my garden!

In the *Sunday Times* magazine of the 12 December 2016, Simon mentions jizz and writes mainly about robins, probably due to the approach of Christmas. He also suggests asking family for a new pair of binoculars - always assuming your current pair needs replacing! He also suggests giving a loved one a beaver gnawed woodchip from the Devon Wildfowl Trust. Very novel!

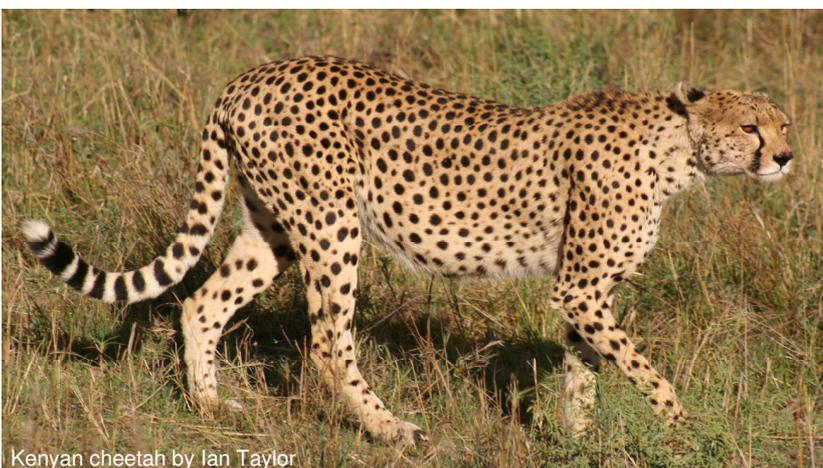
Another wildlife writer: I have discovered another national newspaper wildlife columnist. This is John Ingham who is the Environmental editor of the *Daily Express*. He writes for his newspaper quite regularly and seems remarkably well informed. Have a look if you come across his paper.

Wild things: Several interesting books about wildlife and plant life have recently been reviewed in the *Sunday Times*. The best of the year are reckoned to be *The Genius of Birds*, *The Making of the British Landscape* and *The Long, Long Life of Trees*. In the bird book, the author, Jennifer Ackerman, argues that, far from being "bird brained", our feathered friends can be extremely clever. Think of crows.

New Bird Book: Oh, yes! I purchased this "new" book from a charity shop in Macclesfield for less than a pound! It looks as if it is brand new. The only thing wrong, is that somebody has "lifted" the accompanying disc of bird calls and song. Fortunately they are listed in the book and they are all known to me. It is a book that has been endorsed by the RSPB and written by Rob Hume and entitled "Birds of Britain and Europe". Must be good – in fact it is! Why? Because it has over 50 A4 pages of general information, followed by species information, one species per page. The book has 485 pages. However, rarities run to 4 species per page and vagrants are listed – without pictures but with some basic information.

Yet another book: My brother sent me a book for Christmas. It is entitled "Birds of the Oyster Coast". It is a thin volume published by The Whitstable Natural History Society". I know Whitstable because brother Brian and I went there on holiday as young children. My daughter has stayed several times at Whitstable and other local seaside resorts. The area supports about 215 species of bird and the book describes 50 of them with nice watercolour paintings. I've seen all the species depicted. If you are down Kent way try to visit this interesting area. It's quite exciting.

Our green and pleasant land: A piece in the *Times* by Clive Aslet on Boxing day 2016 suggests there should be a natural assets audit to help save threatened nature species. Fifty three wildlife organisations revealed that 2000 UK species are in serious trouble. He suggests that the CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) billions should be used for restoration activities to increase Britain's natural capital.



Kenyan cheetah by Ian Taylor

The following day, tele news revealed that cheetahs face extinction. There are only 7,000 left in the wild. Although Aslet is somewhat upbeat about natural improvement, it has been stated that due to warmer weather, certain insects are not reproducing in grasses, which are food for migrating birds, which are heading for our shores somewhat earlier than usual this year. We have lost or had great reduction of many species of bird although some species, like the woodpigeon, has increased remarkably. It is wrong to

raise false hopes BUT a proper audit may help.

‘DOING STUFF’

Please visit the ‘Doing Stuff’ table in the interval. Abercrombie and Tina Hanak, our Wildlife Explorers Leader will be pleased to tell you about our latest projects. In particular, how you might be able to help with ‘**The Big Schools Birdwatch**’. From Monday 17 to Friday 27 January, Tina has arranged visits during the weekdays to ten local schools, including Terra Nova, Kings Juniors, Puss bank and Rainow Preschool. All but one of the sessions are in the morning, so if you have some time to volunteer and help please go along to the ‘Doing Stuff’ table to see if there is a date and a school that suits you.

The ‘**Annual National Big Garden Birdwatch**’ will be taking place from Saturday 28 to Monday 30 January, yes this year if you cannot watch for an hour over the weekend you can on the Monday. Tina Hanak with the Wildlife Explorers supported by members of the main group are holding an event in West Park, Prestbury Road, Macclesfield, SK10 3BJ. If you are a little tentative about your identification skills or would rather look for birds with like minded people do come along and meet outside the West Park café at 10:00 for a two hour birdwatch.

WEBSITE



Brambling by David Tolliday

Top of the Analytics - The RSPB monitor all Local Group websites and keep statistics of how many times a page is viewed. While the Group Website has always been popular we topped the list in December for page views across the Country - 2,358 unique page views compared to second place Liverpool Local Group with 1,498. I’m sure one of the reasons for The RSPB Macclesfield Local Group site’s popularity is the Wildlife Sightings page. Everybody needs to keep a sharp eye out for the popular winter migrants, waxwings, brambling, redwing and fieldfare, especially if they visit your garden for the Garden Bird Survey. Well done Joan Wilson, our Webmaster for keeping the website up to date with sightings and posting other things of interest to all our readers. Remember all our latest news can be found on the website at www.macclesfieldrspb.org.uk

THANK YOU

In December, the Local Group received a donation of £110 in memory of the late Miss Ann Margaret Brown of Wilmslow from her family and friends. The Committee are very pleased to receive this gift and our Secretary, Daryll Bailey has acknowledged receipt to her niece, Mrs Ann Hart of Ashbourne, Derbyshire. The money will be used locally to support our work in ‘Giving Nature a Home’.

Can You Help?

One of our lady members who lives in Buxton would really like to come on our weekend away in Suffolk. Do any of the Group who are signed up for Suffolk have a spare space in their car to give her a lift. She will share expenses and be good company for the journey. Please contact Graham Palmer, the trip organiser on 01625 420179 for more details. Thank you.

Health and Safety

In the event of fire or other emergency necessitating evacuation of the building, please leave in an orderly manner via the nearest available Emergency Exit or as instructed by a designated Committee member. Emergency Exits are indicated by the internationally recognised symbol of a ‘running man’ on a green background.

If required, there is a first aid kit in the kitchen. *(If you do have an accident, however minor, while here tonight please report it directly to a Committee member who, amongst other things, will ensure that details are logged in the Accident Report Book.)*