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Lichfield RSPB Local Group MAY NEWSLETTER

DAWN CHORUS ON DEMAND

For those of you who would like to see the dawn chorus but don't fancy getting up at 4.30 am I would recommend you watch a film that was shown on BBC4 last week called "Dawn Chorus – The Sounds of Spring". It was shown on 4th May and you can still watch it on the BBC iPlayer for the next 20 days. It is a one hour film showing the dawn chorus in three locations in Devon, in a wood, on a heath and in an Exeter suburb. There is no commentary or background music, just the sounds of nature with some occasional explanatory subtitles. You can also use it to brush up your bird sound identification skills.

LOOKING AHEAD

The speaker list for next year's evening meetings is now complete and hopefully we have a varied and interesting programme to look forward to educate and entertain us for the evening.

We will be welcoming back some speakers we have had before including Alan and Sylvia Williams who will talk about their ongoing work with owls and Jim Almond from Shropshire. More local interest will be provided by Rob Davies from the Staffordshire County Ranger Service who will talk about the deer of Cannock Chase.

TWO NIGHTS FOR NIGHTJARS

It's that time of year again. We will meet as in previous years at the Whitehouse car park (postcode WS12 4PR) on Cannock Chase at 9pm. The two dates, in case the weather is unsuitable on the first date, are Tuesday 9th and 16th June. I will be there on both nights and hopefully we will see and hear these enigmatic visitors. There is also a very good chance of seeing Woodcock performing their roding flight and perhaps long eared owls (I saw them last year at this time). Put some warm clothes on as it can get quite chilly when the sun goes down and a torch may be useful to get back to the car park.

COACH TRIP TO MARTIN MERE and MARSHSIDE

Sunday 18th October

I should like to give you advance notice of our next coach trip in October. As I said in April, we need to fill the coach or else we will not be able to continue running these coach trips. Therefore please reserve your place with Heather tonight.

Cost for this trip will be £15 per head. We will only book the coach when we know we have enough confirmed places to cover the coach hire cost so please book as soon as possible.

Group admission price to Martin Mere for non WWT members is £9.43 (concessions £6.92).

The RSPB is the country's largest nature conservation charity, inspiring everyone to give nature a home.

The RSPB is a registered charity: England and Wales no. 207076, Scotland no. SC037654.

Dennis 0121 353 6886

www.rspb.org.uk/groups/lichfield

dennis.muxworthy@btinternet.com

TRIP TO LEIGHTON MOSS

We visited Leighton Moss on a dry and bright day with occasional sunny intervals. We saw a good selection of summer visitors, with swifts, swallows and sand martins flying over the pools and warblers in the reedbeds and woods. The male marsh harriers were showing well hunting over the reeds. We were disappointed not to see any bearded tits or hear any bitterns booming but the highlight of the day was the sight of up to three otters swimming and playing together in the middle of a pool only 100 yards from the hide. They continued to show well most of the day. For most of us this was our first ever view of an otter in the wild and will be long remembered. We finished the day having seen over 60 species.

LOCAL BIRDWATCHING WALKS

We have now completed three local walks over the last few months and they have all proved popular with 12 – 15 people attending each one so we intend to continue them in the autumn, after a break in July and August when bird-watching is a bit quiet.

The walks will last approximately 2 hours. Paths can be muddy so please bring appropriate footwear.

Either meet at the venue at 10.00am or contact me by phone (0121 353 6886) or email (dennis.muxworthy@btinternet.com) and we may be able to share transport from Lichfield B & M car park.

The programme of walks for the autumn is as follows:

Thursday 17th September

Kingsbury Water Park, Bodymoor Heath

Meet at Broomey Croft car park (automatic barrier £3 per car). Postcode is B76 0EE

Tuesday 6th October

Croxall Lakes

Meet at the reserve car park

Friday 6th November

Belvide reservoir (managed by the West Midland Bird Club)

Go to junction 12 of the M6 on the A5 from Cannock. Continue west along the A5 and after approximately 3 miles, turn left onto Horsebrook Lane. Turn right onto Shutt Green Lane (half mile). The car park is on the right after about one mile. The WMBC request a donation of £3 from non-club members (collected on the day). A code is required to open the gate to the car park so I will get there at 9.30 to open the gate. Postcode is ST19 9LX.

Thursday 17th December

RSPB Middleton Lakes

Meet at the reserve car park

NEXT MEETING: 8th SEPTEMBER

French Pyrenees presented by Richard Ashbee

Richard is a professional photographer based in Sheffield and will take a look at some fantastic birds of the Pyrenees.

SEE YOU ALL IN SEPTEMBER AND HAVE A GREAT SUMMER