

OCTOBER COACH TRIP TO RSPB DEE ESTUARY -BURTON MERE WETLANDS

Sunday 15th October

We still have plenty of spaces left on our coach for the trip next Sunday to RSPB Dee Estuary reserve on the Wirral, about 10 miles from Chester.

The pink footed geese have started arriving and there are reports of black tailed godwits, ruff, snipe, golden plover and lapwings. Since the beginning of October there have been some interesting birds on the reserve including cattle egret, pectoral sandpiper, little stint, marsh harrier, hen harrier, wood sandpiper, spotted redshank, and peregrine.

There is a small visitor centre with toilets and where you can get a hot or cold drink and a snack. There are two main hides: the reception building and Marsh Covert hide, a smaller hide: the Inner Marsh Farm hide – and several viewpoints. There are five nature trails through woodland, reedbeds, pools and grazed pasture land. The Hillfort trail provides views over the Dee estuary and back across the Wetlands.

Please note that the coach will drop us off at a layby by a school from which it is a 750 metre walk along a road and track to the visitor centre.

Please reserve your place with Heather tonight.

Cost for this trip will be £17 per head and the coach will leave the B&M car park at 7.30 am. It is approximately 100 miles to Burton Mere and will take about 2 ½ hours to get there.

There is free admission to Burton Mere for RSPB members, otherwise £4 for adults and £3 for concessions.

LOCAL BIRDWATCHING WALK: FRIDAY 20th OCTOBER

We are making our next visit to Doxey Marshes.

Doxey Marshes, a Staffordshire Wildlife Trust reserve has a good range of wildfowl and wading birds with over 200 species recorded and over 80 breeding species. We will be meeting at the Reserve car park at 10am for an approximate 2 hour visit. 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).

Meet at the car park at the end of Wootton Drive ST16 1JR (see following instructions)

From M6 Junction 14 - Leave the motorway at this junction and head south towards Stafford along the Eccleshall Road A5013. Take the first turning on the right to access the main reserve car park. This turning is sign posted with a brown tourist sign. Follow the road (Creswell Farm Drive/Wootton Drive) through the housing estate, down a slight hill and around the bend until you reach the car park and the playground.

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

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SHETLAND SUMMER MAGIC

In July 2017 I and six other birdwatchers joined Speyside Wildlife (our Programme leaflet sponsor) on a trip to Shetland. Collecting a mini-bus at Sumburgh, we sped off to Lerwick's Tesco to grab a picnic lunch. Our first tick here – an Arctic Tern in the car park gazing at cars circling around it! Then on to Saxa Vord, Unst via Yell and two ferries, spotting Otter, Curlew, Dunlin, Snipe, Golden Plover, Red-throated Divers, Whooper Swans en route and a heart-stopping moment when, in a roadside puddle, we saw a male Red-Necked Phalarope. Much watching and photography! Eventually the bird took off and we climbed back in the bus, only to de-bus when a female arrived on the same puddle. More elation, more watching and more photography!

During the next few days, we were on Norwick beach with Ringed Plover, Dunlin, Redshank, Arctic Skuas, large numbers of Arctic Terns overhead, Shags and Cormorants, and on Skaw beach, after a paddle in the sea, we spent a delightful half hour watching a nest of Shetland Wrens (a subspecies of the Common Wren) with parents feeding their young. We later moved on to Keen Hamar (a SNNR) to look for and find Edmondston's Chickweed, found only on Unst.

The following days were spent at Loch Funzie on Fetlar where three Red-Necked Phalaropes flew overhead, Whimbrels nested on the moor and a summering Long-tailed Duck was spotted on the water. After that we moved to Busta Voe where we trekked out to the cliffs of Hermaness, spotting yet again another pair of Red-Necked Phalaropes in a roadside pond, walking past nesting Great Skuas and being greeted by the smell of the Gannet colony. The cliffs were white with thousands of birds and their guano, hiding the presence of Guillemots, Puffins and Razorbills and Rock Pipits.

Day 5 was my target bird day – Storm Petrel. At 11pm, we took the boat out to Mousa Island and the Broch where the birds nest in the crevices. We were soon greeted by hundreds of petrels flying in like bats to their nests with their mates calling from within. An unforgettable experience and well worth the late night! Finally, our last day took us by boat out to the 500 foot cliffs of Noss with yet thousands more Gannets, though sadly only one pair of Kittiwakes which are in steep decline.

How would I sum up my visit to Shetland? Difficult to put into words. Let's just say it was magic.

Roger Rooke

DON'T FORGET

To sort out your favourite wildlife photographs from the last 12 months to display at the December meeting. Please make sure the subject matter is wildlife or landscape based and mounted on card so they can be presented on our display boards. Please note this year that we would like photographs to be no larger than 8" x 12" (A4 size) to give everyone a fairer chance of winning when we are selecting our favourite photo.

SUTTON COLDFIELD RSPB GROUP COACH TRIPS –

Sutton group are running a coach trip to WWT Slimbridge on 12th November. For further information and to book please contact Tony Green on 01827 750633 or tonygreen777@hotmail.co.uk

Next meeting: Tuesday 14th November

To be confirmed