

STOP A CURLEW CATASTROPHE

The BTO need your help to prevent a curlew catastrophe. Apparently there is a real danger that seeing them in the UK may become a thing of the past. The curlew is one of our most rapidly declining species and has recently been placed on the UK red list of birds of conservation concern. English populations have declined by 46% between 1994 and 2010, with Scottish and Welsh birds faring even worse. As almost a third of Europe's curlews live in the UK, these declines become even more significant.

There is an urgent need to identify the causes of these declines as a necessary first step to introducing potential conservation interventions. Our estuaries support internationally important communities of wading birds due to our mild climate and key position on the East Atlantic flyway. However, our estuaries are under ever increasing pressure from human activities, such as development and agricultural intensification.

The BTO are looking for support and to help visit bto.org.uk/support-us/appeals/bto-curlew-appeal.

COACH TRIP TO RSPB BEMPTON CLIFFS

Sunday 26th June

Our next coach trip is to RSPB Bempton Cliffs in June. This is the peak time to see all the nesting sea birds, including of course the puffins. Bempton has the largest mainland breeding colony of gannets. You can get close to the action from six, safe cliff-edge viewing platforms. Inside the seabird centre, which has been rebuilt in 2015, there's an exciting exhibition area, large TV screens screening live images from the cliffs. There is a café and decked area overlooking the reserve with tables and chairs.

Therefore please reserve your place with Heather tonight.

Cost for this trip will be £17 per head.

Free admission to Bempton for RSPB members, otherwise £3.50 for adults.

BBC COUNTRYFILE ON SUNDAY 21st FEBRUARY

Alan Williams, who is coming to talk to us in May about Tean Valley Meadow nature reserve, has told me that BBC Countryfile has been filming at the reserve for the programme that is due to be broadcast on Sunday 21st February. So make a date to watch the programme if you can.

LOCAL BIRDWATCHING WALK: THURSDAY 11th FEBRUARY

RSPB Sandwell Valley

We are going to Sandwell Valley for our next local birdwatching walk.

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.

The reserve is between Great Barr and West Bromwich, brown signposted off the A4041 (Newton Rd) North of Hampstead, and take Hamstead Road (B4167), which is fifth on the left near the bottom of the hill by the church (look for the brown sign marked RSPB nature centre). Postcode is B43 5AG.

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).

NEXT MEETING: 8th MARCH

Deer of Cannock Chase

We thought it would be good to have a change and learn about other local wildlife on Cannock Chase. I am sure many of you often see deer when you are out birdwatching and so we have invited Rob Davies from Staffordshire County Council for a fascinating talk on one of Cannock Chase's most iconic residents!

Recent surveys suggest more than 850 deer, including species such as fallow, red and muntjac live on the 26 square mile Chase.

SPONSORS

We would like to thank our sponsors for 2016 who have pledged their support this year. Their adverts appear in our programme. Please use their services if possible and, if appropriate, mention the group and add your thanks.

SPEAKERS FOR 2017

I am just about to start planning our meetings for 2017 and booking speakers. It is necessary to do this so far in advance because the popular speakers get rapidly booked up and are often engaged to lead tours or go away on extended holidays and expeditions in the spring and summer and can be difficult to contact later in the year.

If there are any subjects you would like covered and which would be of interest to all or any speakers you can recommend, please let me know.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Sutton group are running a coach trip to RSPB Burton Mere this Sunday on 14 February. For further information and to book please contact Tony Green on 01827 750633 or tonygreen777@hotmail.co.uk.