

# BIRDWATCHING *Group*

Visit our website at <http://wgbwcopy.wikidot.com/wgbg>

## NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2022



### TONIGHT'S MEETING (1st December)

Tonight we have a short slide show followed by our Christmas buffet.

The speaker is your newsletter editor Robert D with a talk entitled "Jamaica".



Red-billed Streamertail

The slide show will be followed by our Christmas buffet where nibbles and drinks (non alcoholic) will be available. There will be a nominal charge of £3 per head if you attend the buffet. The Guild will now supply glasses so you don't need to bring one, just your own plate (preferably reusable plastic).

## **COACH TRIPS**

Our December outing is a morning car trip to Marbury Country Park followed by Christmas lunch.

Meet at the main Marbury Country Park car park (OS map reference SJ 652 764, postcode CW9 6AT) at 9:30am. The car park is open from 9am if you want to arrive a bit earlier. This is a pay & display car park, accepting card or cash.

The lunch is booked for 12:30pm, so please be there in plenty of time if you want a pre-meal drink.

If you are birdwatching at Marbury CP before the meal, then the Spinner and Bergamot is about 1 mile away in the village of Comberbach. When leaving Marbury CP, turn right and drive about 1 mile towards Comberbach. The Spinner and Bergamot is on the left, just before the turn off on the right for Great Budworth. The car park is on the left immediately after the inn (postcode CW9 6AY).

Please remember that you will need to pay the balance for your meal on the day (the restaurant requests card only, no cash or cheques). A 10% service charge will be added to your bill to cover the tip.

The next coach trip is on Sunday 22nd January 2023 to Fairburn Ings reserve in Yorkshire, departing from the Guild at 8am. Book your seat at the desk. Note that we now request that you pay the full cost for trips (£27) when booking.

## **WEEKEND AWAY**

If you have not already done so, please remember to pay your balance for the weekend away to Somerset Levels at tonight's meeting.

**Cheques payable to The Guild for Lifelong Learning.**



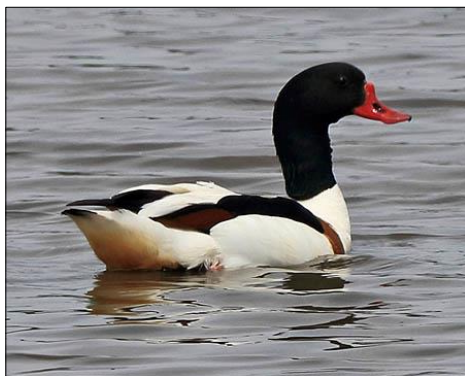
## **CAR TRIP TO BURTON MERE - 15th JUNE 2022**

Eight members assembled at the reserve on a bright and sunny June morning ready to explore this wonderful RSPB reserve.

First stop was the Scrape as viewed from the Visitor centre. Here we had the usual collection of wildfowl and waders as well as the raucous Black-headed Gull colony. There were many Pied Avocets, Lapwings, Common Redshanks and Black-tailed Godwits present, with many of the latter showing a great degree of their orange breeding plumage. Among the ducks were a pair of Shelducks with ducklings, mallard, Gadwall, Shoveler, Teal, and a pair of Tufted Ducks with ducklings. Many of the drakes were already moulting into their drabber eclipse plumage. Also present were a great many Canada Geese and Greylag Geese. A Coot with a well-grown young was on its nest on the pool next to the Visitor Centre.



Coot & young at nest



Shelduck

Further round at the Bunker Hide we didn't see anything different but a little further round at the farm bird feeder we had Chaffinch, Goldfinch, Blue Tit, Great Tit and Pheasant.

We backtracked to the Visitor Centre and then on to the Reedbed Screen. Here we were treated to a very close view of a Great Egret (see photo in the November newsletter). It was quite unperturbed by all the birders watching it as it carried on fishing.

Reed Warblers and Sedge Warblers could be seen and heard in the reeds, Reed Bunting was also seen,

and the explosive song of Cetti's Warbler could be heard from the bushes behind us. Unfortunately, since the trees and bushes now had a good covering of leaves, we failed to see the bird.

We also failed to see any Bearded Reedlings. Despite the fact that they have been resident and breeding on the reserve for several years now I have never seen one here. Maybe next time?

Next stop was the Marsh Covert Hide. Out on the sandy bank here we had a pair of Little Ringed Plover. They were a bit distant but it was possible to make out the distinctive yellow eye ring with a scope view. One of them was sitting in a depression which may or may not have been a nest – difficult to tell at that range. Also here we had a Little Egret which was showing a fine set of plumes. One Barn Swallow was seen here but no Sand Martins or Swifts were seen.



Little Egret



A quick stop at the Bridge Screen didn't add any new birds to the list so we carried on to the Border Hide. On the way we managed to locate Blackcap, Willow Warbler and Chiffchaff in the bushes.



Oystercatcher

We had excellent views of a female Marsh Harrier quartering over the reedbed in between times when it dropped down into the reeds. While searching over the reedbed in the direction of the Visitor Centre for any sign of the Marsh Harrier, another large brown bird briefly came up from the reedbed, flew for a few seconds then dropped back down again. A Bittern! It was the sort of sighting where you had to be looking at exactly the right place at the right time to have seen it. Unfortunately I don't think that anybody else saw it, at least not from the Border Hide.

There is an offshoot of the Black-headed Gull colony on the islands in front of the Border Hide which gives a considerably closer view than from the Reception Hide. There were plenty of adult birds about, all in fine voice, and a good number of chicks of varying maturities. An Oystercatcher was present here for a while. There was a sizeable mixed flock of waders here – Common Redshanks, Lapwings and Black-tailed Godwits. A pair of Canada Geese caused a bit of a stir by parading themselves and four large goslings through the middle of the pool. One birder present kept calling Spotted Redshank. I couldn't see any. Brian had a look through the birder's scope and shook his head, not convinced of the identification. There were a few ducks such as Teal, Gadwall, and Shelduck present as well. A Little Ringed Plover, possibly one of the pair seen earlier, appeared here for a short time giving much closer views than previously.



Black-headed Gull

On returning to the Visitor Centre we found that the Great Egret had moved to the pond next to Reception giving excellent views again.

A very pleasant day out for everyone.



Little Ringed Plover



**A personal account by ROBERT D**

### **WHATSAPP GROUP**

The Committee has launched a WhatsApp Group called “The Cheshire Birders” – all members are invited to join. We hope that members can use the app to informally share birding information with each other – sightings, news, photos etc.

The focus will be primarily on birding, but I am sure that we could tolerate the occasional post on other interesting wildlife. Photos of sunning yourself on the beach at Benidorm would most definitely be deleted.

If you would like to join the group then see Dave Swann at the meeting tonight or text a message to him on 07983 392685. Of course you will need the WhatsApp app installed on your mobile device.

### **NEXT MONTH’S MEETING**

The January indoor meeting will take place on Thursday 12th January 2023, when our speaker will be Mike Lane with a talk entitled “A Digital Lane Returns Again”.

Hope to see you all then.

## **NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS**

Still required – your articles for the newsletter. Tell us all about that birding holiday of a lifetime or that unusual visitor to your garden bird table. Send any interesting photos you have taken on our coach trips.

Deadline is the Friday before the meeting.



**Merry Christmas from the Committee**