

Essex Birdwatching Society Newsletter



EBwS.org.uk

Connecting Essex birders for over 60 years

Registered Charity No:1142734

Email: essexbirdwatchingsociety@gmail.com

January 2018

Dear Members

For those of you who do a list each year I am sure that you were out on New Year's Day or the day after and visited some local Essex sites to start you on your way. Essex Birdwatching Society has a number of field trips meeting at local sites and coach trips further afield over the next coming months, for further details please visit our website.

Wishing you all a Happy New Birding Year

Emma

EBwS Field Trip

Sunday 14 January

RAINHAM MARSHES RSPB RESERVE (RM19 1SZ)

NON COACH TRIP

A 09:30 am start at one of the best reserves on the Thames estuary, especially in winter where Short-eared Owl, raptors, waders, wildfowl and geese can be seen. Hot drinks and food are available in the centre with panoramic views across the reserve. At the time of writing the latest sightings include: Woodcock, Short-eared Owls, Barn Owl, Ringed Plover, Yellow-legged Gull, Firecrest, Water Rail, Marsh Harrier, Cetti's Warbler, Avocet, Golden Plover, Ruff, Fieldfare, Mistle Thrush, Redwing, Raven and Bullfinch.

For more details, latest sightings and a map of the reserve go to the [RSPB website page](#) .

EBwS Talk

Join us on **Friday 5 January** at 8pm for a talk about:

WILDLIFE OF THAILAND by Graham Ekins

Venue: Quaker Meeting House, 82 Rainsford Road, Chelmsford CM1 2QL

Members £3.00 each, Guests £4.00 each on the door.

Ecologist Graham Ekins shows us some of the wintering and resident birds of fabulous Thailand, with its diversity of wildlife and habitats; from the salt pans south of Bangkok with Eastern Long-billed Curlews, Malaysian Plovers, Spoon-billed Sandpipers, Nordmann's Greenshank and flocks of Great Knot. West to the vast tropical forests of Kaeng Krachen, rich in insects, mammals and birds, to coastal Krabi and the upland forests of Khao Luang. Then north and the 3 forested mountains of Doi Inthanon, Doi Lang and Doi Ang Khang with their wealth of wintering Asian species including 25 warblers, numerous flycatchers, thrushes plus Himalayan species. Will two hours be enough?

EBwS Event

Sunday 28 January

EWT Fingringhoe Wick Nature Reserve

Swallow Birding and Essex Birdwatching Society will be back at EWT Fingringhoe Wick Nature Reserve in January with guided walks around the reserve. We look forward to seeing you there.

Essex Wildlife Trust
Fingringhoe Wick Visitor Centre & Nature Reserve



**WINTER
BIRDING DAY**

Sunday 28th January 2018
10.00am - 4.00pm



Guided bird walks around the nature reserve with expert guides
Help with bird identification
Food and drink in the tearoom
Bird feeders and bird food

Exhibiting throughout the day:

Swallow
BIRDING
Swallow Birding
(Birdwatching Tours and Day Trips)
www.swallowbirding.co.uk



Essex Birdwatching Society
www.ebws.org.uk

Please ring the Visitor Centre at Fingringhoe Wick on 01206 729678 for more details

Registered Charity No. 210065 Protecting Wildlife for the Future and for the People of Essex

EBwS Conference

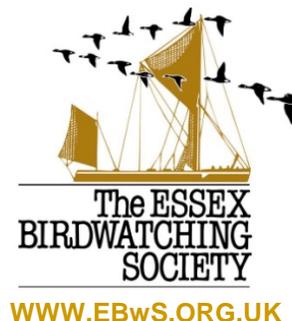
Saturday 17 March - Coastal and Marshland Birds of Essex

Tickets are priced at £20 adult (accompanied under 16's £5) and include refreshments and lunch and are now available from Secretary Lesley Collins, 07515 338999 or email essexbirdwatchingsociety@gmail.com

There is a limit of 100 delegates so don't miss out, get your tickets early!

Please see next page for full details.

4th CONSERVATION CONFERENCE



'COASTAL & MARSHLAND BIRDS of ESSEX'

Saturday 17th March 2018, Northumberland Lecture Theatre, Writtle University College, Writtle, CM1 3RP

08:45-09:45 Registration and refreshments – *with time to view the exhibits and displays*

10:00-10:05 Welcome address by **GERRY JOHNSON MBNA**, *EBwS Chairman*

MORNING SESSION Chaired by **M *******

10:05-10:40 **"CONSERVING THE COASTAL BIRDS OF ESSEX – REFLECTIONS FROM 30-YEARS ON THE FRONT LINE"**

Dr CHRIS GIBSON FBNA, *Ecologist, Conservationist, Broadcaster and Author*

10:40-10:50 Beyond the Podium – up to ten minutes of delegate's 'Questions & Answers' with Chris Gibson

10:50-11:25 **"BREEDING SEASON POPULATIONS OF WADERS – WINNERS AND LOSERS"**

Dr DAWN BALMER, *BTO Ecologist, Head of Surveys and National Survey Coordinator*

11:25-11:35 Beyond the Podium – up to ten minutes of delegate's 'Questions & Answers' with Dawn Balmer

11:35-12:10 **"NEW MOON ON THE WANE – THE CURSE OF THE CURLEWS"**

RICK SIMPSON, *Wader Quest*

12:10-12:20 Beyond the Podium – up to ten minutes of delegate's 'Questions & Answers' with Rick Simpson

12:20-13:40 **'Light' sandwich lunch break – time for informal discussions with speakers and to view the displays**

AFTERNOON SESSION Chaired by **M *******

13:40-14:15 **"LITTLE TERNS – BIG CHALLENGES"**

SUE RENDELL-READ, *RSPB Ecologist, Project Manager EU LIFE and Little Tern Project*

14:15-14:25 Beyond the Podium – up to ten minutes of delegate's 'Questions & Answers' with Sue Rendell-Read

14:25-15:00 **"WATER BIRDS OF THE COAST IN WINTER"**

Dr TERESA FROST, *BTO Ecologist Wetland Birds Survey National Organiser*

15:00-15:10 Beyond the Podium – up to ten minutes of delegate's 'Questions & Answers' with Teresa Frost

15:10-15:45 **"DEVELOPMENT OF RESERVES – FROM RAINHAM TO WALLASEA"**

GRAHAM WHITE, *RSPB Senior Wetland Ecologist*

15:45-15:55 Beyond the Podium – up to ten minutes of delegate's 'Questions & Answers' with Graham White

15:55-16:30 Summing up and 'Grand Raffle' draw with so many splendid prizes to be won.

EBwS News

December Field Trip – Blue House Farm EWT Reserve by Gerry Johnson

The group of 14 assembled in the car park in readiness for the 09:00 start. Good numbers of Goldfinches were joined by Greenfinches, Chaffinches, Robin, Dunnock, Great and Blue Tits. Before reaching the sea wall on a calm morning Meadow Pipit, Grey Heron, Little Egret and Rooks were seen. In the sheltered bays Wigeon, Black-tailed Godwit, Avocet, Redshank, Golden Plover, Grey Plover, Dunlin and Lapwing were amongst the birds seen. Across the reserve Peregrine Falcon, Common Buzzard, Kestrel and Marsh Harrier were noted. We heard and saw Canada, Greylag Geese, but not in numbers like the Brent Geese. On the flash of water good numbers of Teal and Gadwell were seen. From the last hide visited we saw Little Egret, Grey Heron plus male and female Marsh Harrier. Before returning to the car park Reed Bunting, Redwing and Fieldfare were seen feeding on berries. It was an excellent winter's day where over fifty species were seen by the group.

Swift Conservation - A Plea for Help!

Our Society is now working in partnership with the Essex Wildlife Trust (Swifts now included in their 'Living Landscapes' remit) to install Swift nest boxes on buildings in the county. RSPB data indicates that we have nationally lost c.50% of our breeding Swifts since 1995. Several reasons are contributing to this decline but one aspect that we as individuals can address is to install a series of Swift nestboxes on our houses. The traditional nesting sites of Swifts under the eaves are steadily being blocked off with the addition of soffit and fascia boards when dwellings are renovated to improve their insulation.

Our Swifts are slowly becoming homeless! Swifts are communal nesters, so a recommended way forward is to attach 3 Swift nestboxes at the eaves level and install a tweeter in one of the boxes connected to a small amplifier that emits their duetting courtship call. This will bring Swifts down that are passing by to investigate the offer of new homes.

So we are looking for suitable sites to install Swift nestboxes. Please contact John at john_smart3@btinternet.com (underscore) for fuller details. Having a Swift colony on one's house is a privilege and a marvel! In the evening the birds race over the rooftops in their traditional '**screaming parties**' – the **Sound of Summer!** They are only with us for c.100 days a year and soon return to the insect rich skies over the African Congo. But they'll be back in early May 2018!

We have already installed boxes at Writtle University College, Chelmsford Museum in Moulsham Street, at EWT's Head Office at Abbots Hall, on an agricultural barn at Blackmore and on several residential houses and are in the process of completing a project on the 6 storey campus library roof at the University of Essex in Colchester. But the quest to install more continues! **Can you help please?**

Thank you, **S.o.S = Save our Swifts!**



EBwS Bird Records

Thank you for adding all your bird sightings on our website- EBwS.org.uk

Your contributions are really valuable as they help to build our knowledge of the birds of Essex which supports our conservation work.

Other Field Trips

Sunday 7 January

Car Trip to Cudmore Grove, East Mersea

RSPB Colchester Local Group

For car trips, no bookings are required, just meet at the venue, where, weather permitting, we hope you will have an enjoyable day of watching wildlife with like-minded folk. Car sharing is encouraged, especially for the longer trips. For more information see - <http://www.rspb.org.uk/groups/colchester>

Saturday 13 January

Introduction to the Birds and other Wildlife of the Ingrebourne Valley

EWT Ingrebourne Valley Visitor Centre

Join local naturalist Dave McGough on a walk around Hornchurch Country Park and the surrounding Living Landscape to experience the fantastic array of wildlife that the valley holds. Suitable for beginners. For more information see - <http://www.essexwt.org.uk/events>

Sunday 14 January

Southend Pier Walk

RSPB South East Essex Local Group

Meet at 09.45am at the lower entrance. All welcome. For more information - <http://www.southendrspb.co.uk>

Saturday 27 January

Coach Outing - RSPB Dungeness, Kent

RSPB Havering Local Group

The reserve is set amidst mile after mile of shingle. From the visitor centre you can look out through a huge picture window at all the water-birds on the large gravel pit just outside, often a rare grebe or diver is among them. There are six hides on the main nature trail. Dungeness's position, jutting into the English Channel, makes it ideally placed to watch for migrant birds arriving or departing, with wheatears, swallows, martins and warblers regularly seen. For more information - <https://www.rspb.org.uk/groups/havering>

Other Talks

Thursday 11 January

UK Birds of Prey - on a Wing and a Prayer by Jeff Knott

RSPB Chelmsford & Central Essex Local Group

Jeff Knott from the RSPB will present this very informative and interesting talk. Birds of prey in the UK have had a rollercoaster history, including some of our greatest conservation success stories, but also some of our biggest ongoing challenges. This talk looks at our changing attitudes to birds of prey and how these have driven the highs and lows, as well as peering into a crystal ball and seeing what the future might hold. For more information see - <http://www.rspb.org.uk/groups/chelmsford>

Thursday 11 January

Urban Birds by Simon Gillings

RSPB Colchester Local Group

Simon Gillings, BTO Head of Bird Population Ecology, gives us the chance to find out more about the birds on our doorstep. For more information see - <http://www.rspb.org.uk/groups/colchester>

Friday 12 January

Born to Travel by Peter Holden

RSPB Havering Local Group

Tonight Peter Holden MBE presents an illustrated talk entitled 'Born to Travel'. The story of bird migration - including many of the amazing stories that we are discovering about their journeys - and also some other creatures which regularly move about our planet. For more information - <https://www.rspb.org.uk/groups/havering>

Saturday 13 January

Operation Turtle Dove by Emma Stobart

EWT Braintree Local Group

Emma Stobart from RSPB will be here to talk about this critically endangered bird and how the charity is working with farmers in the Halstead area to try and reverse their decline. For more information see - <http://www.essexwt.org.uk/events>

*These field trips/talks/events are only a selection of activities from across the Essex area.
Please see your relevant local wildlife groups for further activities.*