



The Essex Birdwatching Society Newsletter



March 2018

Dear Birders

It felt like spring was on its way last weekend and even was quite pleasant standing on Abberton's causeways. However at the time of writing we are about to enter a prolonged cold snap, do remember to look after your garden birds by providing them with daily food and water.

Happy Birding Emma

EBwS March Indoor Meeting

Join us on **Friday 2 March** at 7:30pm for the AGM followed by a talk about:

WILDLIFE OF EASTERN EUROPE by Steve Grimwade

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

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

'Swallow Birding' tour guide Steve Grimwade takes us on a fantastic journey through Poland, Hungary, Belarus and Bulgaria showcasing the amazing variety of birds, butterflies and flowers of this unspoilt region.

See Swallow Birding at www.swallowbirding.co.uk

EBwS Conservation 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 available from Secretary Lesley Collins, 07515 338999 or email essexbirdwatchingsociety@gmail.com

Please see next page for full details.

Tickets are selling fast with now only a few spaces remaining don't miss out!

Don't forget to return your Grand Raffle counterfoils and monies to a EBwS Committee Member or return to Lesley Collins by Saturday 3 March to be in with a chance to win one of the splendid prizes. Tickets will also be on sale at the AGM and at the Conference.

EBwS April Field Trip Meeting

Sunday 8 April

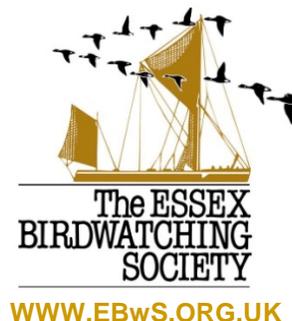
RUTLAND WATER RESERVE

Rutland Water in the Midlands is home to the annual 'Bird Fair' in August and the successful 'Osprey Reintroduction Programme'. It offers many opportunities to see Kingfisher, Willow Warbler, Bullfinch, Common Buzzard, Red Kite and a host of additional early summer migrants from the many hides, not forgetting Osprey!

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

Coach trip commences from Trinity Church (opposite the County Hotel) at 07:15am for 07:30am, Chelmsford only. There is a large 'free' car park next to County Hotel in Chelmsford. Please call Gerry Johnson on 07775 663166 (after 7:00pm) for more details and to reserve coach seats. Coach trips cost £20.00-£23.00 each, subject to destination and attendance. Accompanied juniors travel 'free'. To avoid disappointing anyone on a waiting list, non-attended coach bookings, without cancellation notice, will incur the full trip cost.

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

February Field Trip Meeting – Dungeness by Steve Grimwade

Around 40 people, including several with us for the first time joined the coach with pickups at Chelmsford, Shenfield and Grays respectively for the journey to the vast expanse of shingle at Dungeness, Kent.



The day started by heading to the area adjacent to the power station where we were greeted by Dungeness warden Owen Leyshon who updated us on bird news and some information on the area. Then we spent the next hour and half sea-watching around 'the patch' an area of warm water expelled from the nuclear power station which attracts large numbers of birds.

Small numbers of Red-throated Diver and Northern Gannets passed offshore and with some patience we found Common Guillemot and Black-legged Kittiwake amongst the thousands of gulls.

Eventually we found a first-winter Glaucous Gull roosting on the sea where good scope views were enjoyed. With time running out, we ambled back to the coach noting several European Stonechat and a couple of Meadow Pipits in the areas of Gorse and short grass close to the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway station.

The journey round to the RSPB reserve didn't take long and after checking in at the visitor centre we had lunch in some of the hides overlooking Burrowes Pit.

Good numbers of Northern Shoveler fed close to the hides along with a few Common Goldeneye, Tufted Duck, Gadwall and Eurasian Teal.

Bird news came in from other parts of the reserve so we walked round to Christmas Dell hide which was a little crowded to say the least, but there was plenty of room outside overlooking the pits. A fine winter-plumaged Slavonian Grebe was seen plus a juvenile Black-throated Diver and three Smew, a drake and two redheads. A Great Egret flew past delighting everyone as it made its way northwards towards Dengemarsh.

We headed that way and from the hide it was great to see vast flocks of European Golden Plover and Northern Lapwing taking to the air. The cause of these disturbances was a female Merlin plus a couple of Western Marsh Harriers.

Our next port of call was Boulderwall Farm where up to seven Eurasian Tree Sparrows were on the feeders. Moving over to the ARC pit, we strolled down to Hanson hide where a Eurasian Bittern was crashing its way through the reeds and another Great Egret took shelter from the blustery wind.

A few Long-tailed Tits moved through the willows and with them were four Common Chiffchaffs that were wintering in the area.

Time was slowly running away and with several vicious looking clouds heading towards us, we walked back to the hides close to the centre where the Glaucous Gull was roosting with large numbers of gulls and Great Cormorants.

We all got back on the coach just as the bad weather arrived – perfect timing!

Once again, our visit to the Dungeness area provided us with some excellent sightings and we all had a fantastic day!



EBwS News

Homes for Swifts

The gable ends of houses are ideal to mount Swift nestboxes on. The birds always seem to like them high up and at the eaves level and even better if there is an eaves overhang. It's best to avoid a south elevation as the sun can cause overheating within the box and it's also best to avoid telephone and power cables crossing in front or near to the boxes. A call device is always recommended as this brings the birds down to inspect a new home. A tweeter is in one of the boxes and the external loudspeaker cable is directed to a small amplifier in the house or situated in a garage. There is a timer in the circuit that plays the Swift courtship duet calls in the early mornings and late evenings. One needs to check first with neighbours that they are not inconvenienced by the high pitched sibilant call! However, objections are few. When a colony of Swifts is established, the call device can be switched off. The call is not dissimilar to the call made by 'screaming' parties that the locally nesting Swifts make.

Pictured here is Jim Hallisey and wife after Jim had installed the boxes on his house in Billericay. Jim runs a roofing firm "Top 2 Bottom Roofing Ltd" that serves Essex. He has kindly volunteered to help install Swift boxes for the EBwS + EWT Swift project and somehow finds time to fit this in with his busy business interests!

John Smart – S.o.S = Save our Swifts!

EBwS Data Protection

Please remember to return your Declaration Correspondence Form to confirm the various methods the Society may contact you and to continue receiving the emailed newsletter. The completed signed form must be returned to us by 1st May 2018.

EBwS Bird Records

Thank you for adding all your bird sightings on our website - www.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.

You can view these sightings on our website at the address above and by following us at:

@essexbirdwatchingsociety 

@EssexBirdNews 



Local Wildlife Group Events

Field Trip Meetings

Saturday 3 March

Wildlife Walk: Tollesbury Wick Reserve EWT Tollesbury Wick

Walk for wintering wildfowl at Tollesbury Wick Nature Reserve. For more information see - <http://www.essexwt.org.uk/events>

Saturday 10 March

Birding day – Can we beat 65 species in a day? EWT Abberton Reservoir

Get out and about on the nature reserve and around the reservoir to see how many birds you can identify. Our expert will help you with your basic identification skills. For more information see - <http://www.essexwt.org.uk/events>

Saturday 24 March

Coach Outing - RSPB Lakenheath Fen, Suffolk RSPB Havering Local Group

At Lakenheath Fen an area of arable farmland has been converted into a large wetland, consisting mainly of reedbeds and grazing marshes. The cranes which bred for the first time at Lakenheath Fen in 2007 should be more visible at this time of year. There are four viewpoints and one hide along the nature trail. For more information - <https://www.rspb.org.uk/groups/havering>

Indoor Meetings

Wednesday 7 March

Chris Ward - 101 Things You Never Knew About Garden Birds RSPB South East Essex Local Group

What is the life expectancy of a robin? Which species can fly 700 miles just to build a nest? Which species pluck feathers from live pigeons and why? Chris will tell us some facts we are learning about familiar garden birds through research and new scientific techniques. For more information - <http://www.southendrspb.co.uk>

Thursday 8 March

Working with Little Terns in the UK - a species recovery project RSPB Chelmsford & Central Essex Local Group

Sue Rendell-Read, Project Manager EU LIFE + Little Tern Recovery Project, and Jerry Lanfear, both from the RSPB, will present this informative and highly recommended talk. For more information and the change of venue details see - <http://www.rspb.org.uk/groups/chelmsford>

Thursday 8 March

Wading through Waders RSPB Colchester Local Group

David Darrell-Lambert. Director of BirdBrain UK looks at this familiar group of birds and explains how to tell them apart. For more information see - <http://www.rspb.org.uk/groups/colchester>

Thursday 22 March

Save our Swifts EWT Tendering Local Group

'Save our Swifts', an illustrated talk by Edward Jackson. For more information see - <http://www.essexwt.org.uk/events>

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