

Essex Birdwatching Society Newsletter



EBwS.org.uk

Connecting Essex birders for over 60 years

Registered Charity No: 1142734

Email: essexbirdwatchingsociety@gmail.com

February 2017

Dear Members,

It's that time of the year again when many of us will be starting our annual bird list. Hopefully you have made a good start and also added the iconic winter bird to your list the Waxwing. In the UK this winter it has been a bumper year for Waxwings and there has been several sightings for Essex. In the winter it is important that we are feeding our garden birds and the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch is the perfect opportunity for you to record the birds in your garden. Happy Birding Emma.

EBwS Field Trip

Sunday 19 February – RSPB Cliffe Pools

Cliffe Pools is one of the jewels along the Thames Estuary in North Kent. The nature reserve offers a remote landscape with open horizons and skies which is ideal for attracting spectacular numbers of wintering waders. A number of trails at varied lengths afford great views over the pools, the wildlife, and the River Thames running alongside. This excellent reserve is great for Merlin, Marsh Harrier, Sparrowhawk plus winter waders and wildfowl.

Coach trip commences from Trinity Church (opposite the County Hotel) at 07:15am for 07:30am, with pick-ups at Shenfield High School at 07:45 and Oak P.H. Grays at 08:00 as required. 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'. An entrance charge applies to some venues and reserves for non-members. To avoid disappointing anyone on a waiting list, non-attended coach bookings, without 24hrs cancellation notice, will incur the full trip cost.

EBwS Talk

Join us on **Friday 3 February** at 8:00pm for a talk about:

WILD SCOTLAND by Duncan Macdonald.

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

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

Duncan Speyside Holidays tour leader brings us some splendid images of the delights of what can be found in the various parts of the Scottish Highlands – Eagles, Ptarmigan, Capercaillie, Black Grouse, etc.

Duncan Macdonald has 16 years experience of leading wildlife watching groups in the Highlands and now spends most of his time working as a countryside ranger for the Highland Council. He still finds time though to lead tours for Speyside Wildlife with a background in environmental education and conservation.

<http://www.speysidewildlife.co.uk/>



EBwS Events

Join us on **Sunday 22 January** from 10:00am till 4:00pm:

Fingringhoe Wick Visitor Centre & Nature Reserve – Winter Birding Day

Join Swallow Birding and us for a great day of walks around this fantastic reserve. With Glossy Ibis, Merlin, Velvet Scoter, Goosander, Black-throated Diver, Peregrine and lots of winter waders and wildfowl seen recently it should be a superb day of winter birding!



Essex Wildlife Trust
Fingringhoe Wick Visitor Centre & Nature Reserve

WINTER BIRDING DAY
Sunday 22nd January 2017
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 Membership

Please don't forget to renew your membership for 2017. Membership costs just £16 for a year (£4 for junior members), which entitles you to our yearly Essex Bird Report and the Essex Birding Journal published twice a year.

You can download and complete one of the membership forms on our website <http://www.ebws.org.uk> and return to 'Membership Secretary' Mr Peter Dwyer, 48 Churchill Avenue, Halstead, Essex, CO9 2BE.

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

Winter Waders Walk - EWT Thurrock Thameside Nature Park

Thursday 2 February - 10:30am – 12:00pm

Come for a guided walk to discover some of the wading birds that feed out on the mudflats between Thameside Nature Park and the river Thames. Suitable for all fitness levels. Please bring suitable clothing and footwear for the weather conditions on the day. Meet at the visitor centre. Book via - 01375 643342 or matthewm@essexwt.org.uk

Winter Birdwatching Walk – EWT Belfairs Woodland Centre

Saturday 4 February - 10:00am - 1:00pm

Join our Woodland Ranger Ashley for a walk through the reserve to look for our winter residents! Meet at the centre to join Ashley on a walk through the Belfairs reserve. We will be looking for residents such as Great Spotted Woodpecker, Nuthatch and Treecreepers and migrants like Woodcock, Redwings and Stock Doves. Ideal for age 12 upwards. Booking is essential. Book via 01702 477467 or ashleyp@essexwt.org.uk

Birdwatch on EWT Two Tree Island Nature Reserve

Basildon Natural History Society

Saturday 11 February - 11:30am - 1:30pm

A birdwatch at EWT Two Tree Island. Meet at first car park on left after crossing the creek bridge, nearest postcode SS9 2GB. Map Ref: TQ 824 852. Contact details: Brian Dawson 01268 491540 / 07752 879252 or see website www.bnhs.net

Raptor Ramble – RSPB Wallasea Island

Saturday 11 February – 1:15pm – 3:15pm

A walk focusing on the birds of prey that winter on Wallasea's extensive rough grassland areas, with a chance of up to 9 species actively making the most of the short days plus overwintering farmland birds. Price: £5 donation requested. Booking is essential. Telephone: 01268 498620 or e-mail: southessex@rspb.org.uk

Winter Birdwatching at the Naze – EWT Naze Centre

Saturday 18 February - 10:00am - 4:00pm

Liz Huxley will lead a classroom session followed by a short walk to put theory into practice. A longer guided walk will take place after lunch. Please bring binoculars and a packed lunch. Book via - 01255 679379 or naze@essexwt.org.uk.

Car Trip to Walton on the Naze

RSPB Colchester Local Group

Saturday 25 February - Meet at 9:30am

Location: Meet at the Naze car park (charges apply) - TM 264 234. 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. Price: No extra costs above getting to the venue.

Coach Trip to RSPB Pulborough Brooks, West Sussex

RSPB Havering Local Group

Saturday 25 February - Time: 7:00am – 8:00pm

Pulborough Brooks is set in the sheltered Arun Valley within the South Downs National Park. The Visitor Centre and reserve are open all year and boast a great variety of habitats including wetlands, woodland, and heathland. Pulborough Brooks is a haven for a wide range of wildlife and the reserve offers a good cross-section of passerines, waders and wildfowl. It also has four hides and three viewpoints, a café and toilet facilities. Seats cost £18.00 each. Booking is essential, last booking date 17 February. Telephone: 01708 250585 / 07967 343861 or e-mail: mich@el-hughes.wanadoo.co.uk

Wetland Birds Workshop – EWT Hanningfield Reservoir Centre

Sunday 26 February - 10:00am - 3:00pm

Come and see the wetland birds of Hanningfield. In the morning David Petts will help you to identify ducks. After lunch you will be looking at the different gulls we can find on the reservoir at this time of year. For 16 years and over. £5 per person. Booking is essential. Book by phone - 01268 711001.

Other Talks

Puffins in Shimmering Seas: A threat to seabirds and their food supply - Euan Davies **South East Essex RSPB Local Group**

Wednesday 1 February - Doors open at 7:30pm for an 8.00pm start.

The story of the Puffin, looking at its annual cycle of breeding and life on the high seas, exploring the threats it faces and what the RSPB is doing to counter them to give it a fighting chance in an increasingly hostile marine environment. Belfairs Woodland Centre, Eastwood Road North, Leigh on Sea, SS9 4LR. Note: turn down small road directly on the bend by the three flagpoles. Map reference: TQ 831 874. Entrance fee £3.00 for members and suggested donation of £5.00 for non members.

Saving the Albatross - Conservation Action on the High Seas **Chelmsford & Central Essex RSPB Local Group**

Thursday 9 February – 8:00pm – 9:50pm (with interval)

Oli Yates from the RSPB will give us an enlightening presentation to explain what the RSPB is doing in the fight to save the albatross. Location: Northumberland Theatre, Writtle College, Lordship Road, Writtle CM1 3RP (Across the road from the main college building, to the right of the Wilkins Tea Room & Shop). Ample free parking adjacent to the theatre. Access is at ground level. All welcome. Price: £3.50 (including tea/coffee/juice and biscuits in the interval).

The Jewel Hunter by Chris Goodie **Colchester RSPB Local Group**

Thursday 9 February - Doors open 7pm for a 7:45pm start

Chris Goodie talks about the story of the adventures undertaken to see all 32 exotic species of pitta in the rainforests of south-east Asia, Africa and Australia in one year. Location: The Community Hall, Shrub End Road, Colchester CO3 4SA (as usual, we ask that you do not park at the Leather Bottle PH. If the car park at the hall is full, roadside parking is available in the surrounding roads). Price: Local Group Members: £4, Non-members: £5.

Other Events

RSPB Big Garden Bird Watch – Saturday 28 – Monday 30 January

The RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch helps to build a picture of garden wildlife across the UK. In Essex last year the top ten species of birds were as follows from 1 to 10: House Sparrow, Starling, Blue Tit, Woodpigeon, Blackbird, Collared Dove, Great Tit, Robin and Goldfinch. This year you may have Waxwing to add to your list!

Breeding Bird Survey Volunteers

Izzy Donovan RSPB Warden for South Essex Reserves is looking for a couple of volunteers to help with the Breeding Bird Surveys over the Spring and was wondering if any members might be interested. Reserves could include West Canvey, Canvey Wick, Bowers Marsh and potentially the Vange Reserves.

The survey windows are **15 April – 30 April, 1 May – 21 May and 22 May – 18 June.**

The person/s would need to have good bird ID sight and sound and be reasonably fit, able to complete a 5-7km walk potentially through fields and uneven ground within 3 hours while carrying out the survey. They should be trustworthy as will know nest sites of rare breeding birds and have no previous wildlife convictions. Surveys are from dawn and have to be completed within 3hrs. One survey takes place in each window at least one week apart. Participants would gain early access to the reserve and will be surveying in areas that aren't usually open to the public.

Please contact Izzy Donovan if you are interested at Wat Tyler Country Park on 01268 498612 or email Isobel.Donovan@rspb.org.uk

***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.***