

# Essex Birdwatching Society Newsletter



**EBwS.org.uk**

*Connecting Essex birders for over 60 years*

Registered Charity No: 1142734

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**March 2017**

Dear Members,

It's that time of the year when we are all starting to look forward to Spring, the days are getting longer, the birds are singing and the first summer migrants will arrive. It's a great time to get out and enjoy some local birdwatching.

Happy Birding Emma.

## **EBwS Field Trip**

**Sunday 12 March**

**RSPB Rye Meads and Wildlife Trust Amwell Quarry**

**Please note that this field trip will now be by private vehicle (not by coach).**

Rye Meads forms part of the Lee Valley, where we will be looking for Kingfisher, Smew, Bittern, Siskin and other winter visitors sheltering in this protected area. At the time of writing recent sightings are: Great White Egret, Bittern, Bearded Tit, Water Pipit, Green Sandpiper, Kingfisher, Cetti's Warbler, Caspian Gull.

Amwell Nature Reserve is a former gravel pit in the Lee Valley near Ware. It supports internationally important numbers of wintering wildfowl, along with outstanding communities of breeding birds and dragonflies and damselflies. Birds to see are Bittern, Peregrine, Water Rail, Redwing and Fieldfare.

**Meeting first at Rye Mead reserve at 09:00am and then moving on to Amwell Quarry at 13:30am.** The meeting place for Amwell Quarry is on in Amwell Lane. Please note that there is a very busy railway foot crossing to gain entrance to the reserve viewing area. PLEASE TAKE SPECIAL CARE WHEN MAKING THE CROSSING ON THIS VERY FAST PART OF THE TRACK.

## **EBwS Talk**

Join us on **Friday 3 March** at 7.30pm for the AGM, followed by a talk about:

**WILDLIFE OF THE FALKLANDS** by Derek Howes

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

**Members £3.00 each and Guests £4.00 each on the door.**

Derek Howes, tour leader and photographer, takes us on an epic journey down into the southern Atlantic Ocean to the Falkland Islands for the splendid wildlife found there including just a few Penguins.



## EBwS Events

On **Sunday 22 January** we attended a **Winter Birding Day** at Essex Wildlife Trust Fingringhoe Wick Nature Reserve with Swallow Birding who provided guided walks around the reserve. It was a bright sunny winter's day (which meant you forgot how cold it actually was!) and this provided excellent views of the birds on the reserve.



The two walks were both very well attended; it was great to see new and more experienced birdwatchers enjoying the birds on the reserve. There was great excitement when a Kingfisher was seen from Margaret's Hide on both of the walks and also a Water Rail in full view on the ice covered lake by the visitor centre. It was a very enjoyable day out and great to see the enthusiasm for bird watching from all who attended.

The birds seen on the day included: Dark-bellied Brent Geese, Little Grebe, Little Egret, Glossy Ibis, Marsh Harrier, Buzzard, Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon, Water Rail, Kingfisher, Green Woodpecker, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Skylark, Song Thrush, Mistle Thrush, Goldcrest, Chaffinch, Linnet, Bullfinch.

Some dates for your diary - Swallow Birding and Essex Birdwatching Society will be back at Fingringhoe Wick Nature Reserve on August Bank Holiday weekend on **Sunday 27 August** and also next year on **Sunday 28 January 2018**, we look forward to seeing you there.

## EBwS Bird Records

Thank you for adding all your bird sightings on our website - [EBwS.org.uk](http://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

### **Introduction to the Birds and other Wildlife of the Ingrebourne Valley**

**EWT Ingrebourne Valley Visitor Centre**

**Saturday 11 March – 10:00am – 12:00pm**

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. Binoculars and scopes will be available to use. Meet at the visitor centre. Every 2nd Saturday of the month. £5 donation per person. Book by phone on 01708 520364 or email [ingrebourne@essexwt.org.uk](mailto:ingrebourne@essexwt.org.uk)

### **Guided Walk – EWT Abberton Reservoir**

**South East Essex RSPB Local Group**

**Monday 13 March – 10:00am**

Meet at Layer Breton Causeway at 10:00am. Generally these are intended as short outings of 2-3 hours duration at sites in the local area or within short travelling distance. If the weather is fine and the "birding" good the walk may be extended; it is up to the individuals how long they stay. There is a charge for non EWT members. All welcome.

### **Improve your Birdwatching – EWT Abbots Hall Farm**

**Wednesday 15 March – 10:00am – 4:00pm**

Join Liz Huxley for a classroom session looking at topics such as fieldcraft, 'jizz', taking notes and improving ID skills, followed by a short walk to put the theory into practice and then a longer guided walk after lunch. Please bring a packed lunch and binoculars if you have them. Price / Donation £30 per person. Book by phone on 01621 862960, Email [admin@essexwt.org.uk](mailto:admin@essexwt.org.uk) or Website <http://www.essexwt.org.uk/events>.

### **Birding and Photography – EWT The Naze**

**Saturday 18 March - 10:00am - 1:00pm**

Liz Huxley will lead a classroom session followed by a guided walk on the Naze. Please bring your own camera equipment. Donation £15 per person. Book by phone on 01255 679379 or email [naze@essexwt.org.uk](mailto:naze@essexwt.org.uk)

### **Winter Birdwatching Walk – EWT Belfairs Woodland Centre**

**Sunday 19 March - 10:00am - 1:00pm**

Join our Woodland Ranger Ashley for a walk through the reserve to look for our winter residents. Looking for resident such as Great Spotted Woodpecker, Nuthatch and Treecreepers and migrants like Woodcock, Redwings and Stock Doves. Meet at the Belfairs Woodland Centre, 10 minutes early for registration. Ideal for age 12 upwards. Booking is essential. Price / Donation £5 per person. Book by phone on 01702 477467 or email [ashleyp@essexwt.org.uk](mailto:ashleyp@essexwt.org.uk)

### **Coach Trip to - RSPB Lakenheath Fen, Suffolk**

**RSPB Havering Local Group**

**Saturday 25 March - 7:00am – 8:00pm**

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. There are toilet facilities in the visitor centre and they sell hot or cold drinks and snacks. Seats cost £18.00 each. Booking is essential, last booking date 17 March. Telephone: 01708 250585 / 07967 343861 or e-mail: [mich@el-hughes.wanadoo.co.uk](mailto:mich@el-hughes.wanadoo.co.uk)

### **Guided Walk - Wakering Stairs**

**South East Essex RSPB Local Group**

**Sunday 26 March - Meet at 09:00am**

Take the Foulness Road from Great Wakering church and the 2nd exit from the mini roundabout. Follow this road to the seawall. High tide 12:24. Generally these are intended as short outings of 2-3 hours duration at sites in the local area or within short travelling distance. If the weather is fine and the "birding" good the walk may be extended; it is up to the individuals how long they stay. All welcome.

## Other Talks

### Inspired by birds

#### South East Essex RSPB Local Group

**Wednesday 1st March - Doors open at 7:30pm for an 8.00pm start**

This talk by Peter Holden takes us on a travel back in time and looks at how birds have inspired men and women to create some objects, images and other works of art, music and science. The talk will include film from the RSPB archives, recordings from the BBC and the very best nature writing from the RSPB library... as well as some available from Amazon! Location - 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. Suggested donation of £5 for non members.

### Illustrated Talk: The Barn Owl

#### Basildon Natural History Society / Essex Wildlife Trust

**Wednesday 8 March - 8:00pm - 10:00pm**

An illustrated talk by Jeffrey Martin. For some years the Barn Owl has been hailed as the species that will save Britain's wildlife by encouraging farmers to manage their land for the benefit of these mystical and interesting birds. But is the present approach working? In his talk Jeff Martin reveals many interesting things about this 'phantom of the farmyard' and he also challenges the conservation methods we are presently using in ensuring this owl remains a farmland star of the future. Non-members are most welcome. £1 entry donation requested. Venue: Laindon Community Centre, Aston Road, Laindon SS16 6NX. Ample parking space. Refreshments available at a small charge. Contact details: Brian Dawson 01268 491540 / 07752 879252, or [www.bnhs.net](http://www.bnhs.net)

### Mediterranean Island Birdwatching: Highlights from Southern Cyprus & Sardinia

#### Chelmsford & Central Essex RSPB Local Group

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

This illustrated talk by Alan Thorpe gives a personal insight into some of the more interesting birds to be seen on Cyprus and Sardinia, two of the Mediterranean's largest islands. 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.

### Birds without Borders - the challenge of migration

#### Colchester RSPB Local Group

**Thursday 9 March - Doors open 7:00pm for a 7:45pm start**

Peter Holden MBE, ex RSPB staff, describes the story of migration including many amazing facts about their journeys. 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 Volunteering Opportunity: Little Tern Surveyor – Essex

**Minimum one day per week, May to mid August 2017**

**Be part of the RSPB's Saving Nature Scheme:** We are looking for keen bird watchers to help monitor and protect little terns and other beach-nesting birds around the Essex coast (specifically the Blackwater Estuary, Hamford Water and Colne Estuary) during the breeding season. The role would involve identifying those beaches where little terns are gathering, monitoring nesting activity and chicks, and keeping records of predators and human disturbance until chicks are fledged.

#### Skills you need

- Ability to identify coast birdlife.
- Willing to observe for long time periods.
- Ability to work outside in all weathers.
- Driving license and access to a vehicle is useful.
- Enthusiasm for wildlife conservation.

**Full training provided in April. Out-of-pocket expenses are reimbursed**

**For more information Contact: Sarah Gelpke [Sarah.Gelpke@RSPB.org.uk](mailto:Sarah.Gelpke@RSPB.org.uk) / 07703 470713**

***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.***