



Dear Birders

May is my favourite month of the year, the birds are in full song and the days are getting longer. It is also a great month to attend a dawn chorus event or go out early to your local patch, the early start will be worth it!

Happy Early Birding

Emma

EBwS May Field Trip Meeting

Sunday 13 May

TITCHWELL RSPB RESERVE

Please note 7am start

A return to one of our favourite reserves on the North Norfolk coast. Some great species can be found such as Bearded Tit, Spoonbill, Marsh Harrier, Spotted Redshank, Water Rail, Wheatear, terns and a host of summer visitors occur with the chance of a rarity turning up.

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 06:45 am for 07:00am, 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.

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 1 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



EBwS April Field Trip Report

RUTLAND WATER by Steve Grimwade

36 members met at Chelmsford for our April field trip to Rutland Water. The weather wasn't great for the journey with light rain which continued throughout the day. Despite this, we saw several RED KITES plus a few COMMON BUZZARDS from our luxury coach.



We headed to the excellent Egleton Nature Reserve, home of the annual British Birdwatching Fair in August and after getting our permits, we strolled to Lagoon IV.

Several WILLOW WARBLERS sang from the scrub plus a pair of EURASIAN BLACKCAPS were seen briefly whilst a EURASIAN BULLFINCH was much more confiding.

The rain had forced a group of hirundines down and they roosted in a couple of dead trees. On closer inspection we found COMMON HOUSE MARTIN, SAND MARTIN and BARN SWALLOW in good numbers.

Thanks to a call from Andrew Allen, we all managed scope views of a male AMERICAN WIGEON as it fed with a small flock of EURASIAN WIGEON on the grassy banks of the lagoon.

From the hide a pair of WESTERN YELLOW WAGTAILS fed on a distant island and other species of note included COMMON REDSHANK, EURASIAN OYSTERCATCHER and a couple of EGYPTIAN GEESE.

The next hide produced a superb adult MEDITERRANEAN GULL amongst the hordes of BLACK-HEADED GULLS, which was colour-ringed in Poland as a juvenile in 2016.

The open water from the new Lapwing Hide was quiet, although a summer-plumaged BLACK-NECKED GREBE kept us entertained, also a female GREATER SCAUP and a smart GREAT CRESTED GREBE which were very close to the hide.



With our stomachs rumbling, we headed back to the coach to pick up our lunch which some ate in the Birdwatching Centre whilst others ate on the coach.

The remainder of the afternoon was enjoyed on the Lyndon Nature Reserve on the southern side of the reservoir where the bird feeder produced five LESSER REDPOLL, EURASIAN TREE SPARROWS, YELLOWHAMMER, REED BUNTING and a weird plumaged WESTERN YELLOW WAGTAIL perched in a tree, which bore a passing resemblance to a Citrine Wagtail.

The highlight of the afternoon was the pair of WESTERN OSPREYS that we watched at the nest and it was great to have good views of these scarce birds.



A couple of GREAT NORTHERN DIVERS were seen out on the open water before we began our walk back to the centre. A first-winter male BRAMBLING was a good find by Peter King.

We recorded 90 species for the day which is very impressive for an inland site!



Event

Spring Bird Migration Day at EWT The Naze Centre

On Saturday 21 April Essex Birdwatching Society supported the Migration Day at EWT The Naze. It was a bright sunny day at the coast, which was ideal conditions for the leaded walks and species seen included Firecrest, Fulmar, Sandwich Terns, Sanderling, Lesser and Common Whitethroats, Willow Warbler and Chiffchaffs. The day was also supported by Swallow Birding, BTO and a bird ringing demonstration. It was great to see members at the event and we look forward to seeing you at the next EWT The Naze Centre Migration Day on Sunday 30 September.



Swift Project in Boxted

By John Smart - S.o.S = Save our Swifts!

I had a call from Steve who lives just outside of Boxted village, a little south of the Suffolk border, to say he was keen to help his Swifts in the area. Every year, there are Swifts feeding over the fields and woods nearby. Steve lives in a rambling 16th century house that has been much altered and extended ever since. The north elevation lent itself for such a project and we installed a call device with its tweeter in the right-hand box between the window and the return. There's a fourth Swift box under the gable end eaves on the west elevation.

His house overlooks rolling countryside and whilst there in mid-April Swallows, only just having returned, hawked above and a Common Buzzard sailed over. Muntjac and rabbits sometimes roam his garden.



Although I'm always appreciative of wherever I'm allowed to install Swift boxes; to get projects underway in different parts of Essex is an aim of mine. This complements nicely the focus on Chelmsford, a Swift stronghold, with particular reference to Writtle, where a Swift project has already been completed and two others are in the pipeline.

Not every house or area is suitable for a Swift project, and sometimes those keen to participate are disappointed by the fact. Swifts have certain requirements in terms of elevation and height on a structure and preferably without wires and cables running directly in front that could cause a hazard for the birds. However, each potential site needs to be individually assessed.



Local Wildlife Group Events

Field Trip Meetings

Saturday 5 May

Walk – Hatfield Forest (National Trust)

RSPB Chelmsford & Central Essex Local Group

Winifred and David Simmonds have kindly offered to lead another walk around this lovely site. Depending on ground and weather conditions, the aim will be to walk for about 2 hours, then there'll be the option of lunch in the outdoor café. For more information see - <http://www.rspb.org.uk/groups/chelmsford>

Saturday 5 May

Dawn Chrous and breakfast

EWT Abberton Reservoir

Enjoy a walk around the nature reserve listening to bird song and watching the reservoir wake up. Get up early and join our friendly leaders as we watch the reservoir and its wildlife waking up. For more information and booking details see - <http://www.essexwt.org.uk/events>

Tuesday 15 May

Spring Bird Identification

EWT Fingringhoe Wick & Abberton Reservoir

A practical session discovering spring birds in the North East Essex. The day will be largely spent outside looking for, listening to and identifying our spring and summer birds. You will also gain an understanding of the habitat and management requirements for a variety of breeding birds. There will be a short theory session at the beginning of the day to help you understand, that by improved note taking, fieldcraft and observation you can improve your bird identification skills. For more information and booking details see - <http://www.essexwt.org.uk/events>

Sunday 20 May

Coach Trip to RSPB Minsmere

RSPB South East Essex Local Group

For more information and booking details see - <http://www.southendrspb.co.uk>

Indoor Meetings

Wednesday 2 May

Peter Gasson "Pantanal"

RSPB South East Essex Local Group

Peter will take us on a visual journey to this natural region of Brazil encompassing the world's largest wetland area. He will show us a variety of species including Hyacinth macaws, jaguars, great otters and lots of birds and butterflies, as well as interesting plants. For more information see - <http://www.southendrspb.co.uk>

*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.*