

FIELD TRIP TO SPURN NATURE RESERVE - 27th OCTOBER 2019

Twenty seven bird watchers boarded the coach to Spurn “Yorkshire’s very own Lands End”. Having had an extra hour sleep the mood was cheerful, and the Autumn morning was promisingly bright.



Goldcrest

En route very little wild life could be seen through the windows of the coach, crows, magpie, gulls were spotted and distant swans. Acres of ploughed fields and pasture with tightly cut hedges were noted, empty of any sign of life.

Arriving at Kilnsea some members popped into the Crown and Anchor car park to spot a Wood Pigeon and Carrion crow. Later in the day a male Ring Ouzel was spotted in a field behind the pub by sharp-eyed Brian. Onto the path opposite the pub where Little Egret, Shelduck, and 2 Redshanks were seen in the distance on a shingle bank. By now we felt

very wind-blown as strong cold winds swept across the Humber Estuary. We called in at the churchyard, no feathered friends.

Onwards then to the Observatory. Here we saw a Tree Sparrow and many House Sparrows on the hedges and on the feeders, Goldfinches flew overhead. Following the road and past the large caravan site we arrived at Apple Tree cottage where birds generally congregate at the feeders and scrump on fallen apples. No birds today. Further on, noticing a large field of sunflowers we thought maybe we would spot birds feeding on the seeds of these enormous flowers, nothing! Looking across the fields a lone Barn Swallow swooped fast and low, how will it survive the cold wind and weather, will it manage to return home?



Stonechat

Arriving at the Discovery Centre a Curlew flew over and there was another flock of Goldfinches. This was a good sheltered spot to have lunch at the picnic tables. Others from the group arrived, well wrapped up against the cold strong wind. Woolly hats, scarves and gloves all had been donned for extra warmth. They reported they had seen two Goldcrest chicks ringed, “so sweet and tiny”, but the ringers were leaving to go home, “not a good day for birds.”

So we moved on to try spot the highlight of the day, Little Bunting, a rare visitor that breeds in a mix of Birch and Conifer from Finland to Siberia; only a few stray west to northern coasts. Reports said the bird had been spotted there over two weeks. We waited at the Heligoland trap, apples staked to the trees to attract this little bird which had been seen on numerous occasions the day before. We waited a bit more, eyes straining at every movement, a Great Tit showed up but not the Little Bunting, so off we

walked to Canal Scrape hide. The high winds had not eased up so a rest in a hide was a good plan. Here we saw Little Grebe, Mallard, 2 Moorhens and a number of magnificent Hebridean sheep. A large flock of Starlings flew over, Magpie and Kestrel showed up too. A friendly man in the hide told us that Mealy Redpoll and Common Redstart had been seen at the Friends of Spurn caravan site, near the fourth caravan along. This is a private site but ignoring the sign, we found the described spot. We waited, joined by three others, and waited. The couple had also seen the birds earlier.



Grey Plover

No sign now of them, so we left.

We made our way to the path running along the estuary to be rewarded with 2 Brent Geese grazing on the edge of the shingle, Oystercatcher calling whilst flying, and 2 Curlews flying to land nearby calling their wonderful song. A Greenfinch perched in a nearby bush. Walking towards us we saw a figure well wrapped up, bent against the high wind no flesh showing at all and wearing large sunglasses. It was difficult to ID this member of our group. (The sun had been low and bright all day with an almost cloudless sky).

She told us a few brave souls had walked to the Lighthouse "A tough walk in the wind, it

was like a sandstorm en route but saw 4 Shore Larks and close up view of a Grey Plover".

A hot cup of tea was required by now so we adjourned to the Crown and Anchor. Feeling refreshed and wrapping up well again we made our way down the road, ready to board the coach. We stopped to look at a resting Roe Deer in the field. Across the road, leaning on a farm gate with a huge hawthorn hedge loaded with red berries by it, we spotted Redwing, Blackbird, Blue Tit, Robin and an amazing Greater Spotted Woodpecker in flight ended our day of bird watching.

Others in the group had a more successful day in spite of the inclement wind, a collective field count of 62 was a pleasing result. The completed list:

Mute and Hooper Swan, Canada Goose, Pheasant, Gannet, Cormorant, Sparrowhawk, Merlin, Peregrine, Ringed Plover, Grey Plover, Knot, Sanderling, Dunlin, Bar-tailed Godwit, Turnstone, Arctic Skua, Black-headed Gull, Common Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Stock Dove, Collared Dove, Jackdaw, Rook, Goldcrest, Shore Lark, Wren, Ring Ouzel, Song Thrush, Stonechat, Chaffinch, Twite, Snow Bunting, and Reed Bunting.



Shore Lark

Spurn's iconic landscape is a constantly changing feature of Yorkshire's coastline and always at the mercy of the elements, those who stayed inland had less success finding

birds than those who ventured further afield, but all agreed we had an enjoyable day in spite of the cold high winds.

Photos by Robert D



Roe Deer

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