

GOYT VALLEY CAR TRIP - 15 MAY 2021



Pied Flycatcher (male)

The Goyt Valley in spring sounds idyllic doesn't it? Oh, if only that was the case! We arrived promptly at 7.30 am having driven over the tops in mist. But what a welcoming sight greeted us; 17 members all muffled up in hats, gloves and scarves, so happy to be able to meet up again due to the partial relaxation of lockdown. It was cold however, just over 10 °C.

As we set off along the road there was nothing in the fields and trees on the right and very little birdsong. Scanning the reservoir we saw 4 Canada Geese with 13 goslings swimming in a line between their

parents. Initially we were noting 'heards' but after about an hour the bird activity increased and the 'heards' became 'seens'. On the sandy shore where the River Goyt flows into the reservoir we spotted a pair of Common Sandpipers. On the trees by the main bridge our first of several sightings of Treecreeper, whilst a Grey Wagtail showed briefly. We were treated to a flypast by a male Mandarin Duck heading up the valley towards the quarry. The Cuckoo was calling regularly, but from a distance and remained elusive all day.



Dipper



Tree Pipit

Shortly we reached the mixed woodland of beech, sycamore and oak favoured by the Pied Flycatcher. Our first sighting was of a female collecting nesting material, dried bracken, and returning to a nesting box on the right-hand side of the road. She was joined briefly by a male. Then began our purple patch. We saw 5 birds in total, 3 male and 2 females all busily nest building in different nesting boxes. Our views were absolutely superb; there was no need for bins.

Soon we turned left off the road along the Riverside Walk. Early elevenses and even a very early lunch were taken under the trees as a short light shower passed over.

Keen eyes noted a pair of Goldcrests flitting around in the tops of the pines and further on we watched a pair of Grey Wagtails feeding by the stream. We then climbed the steps (they get steeper every year!) and on to the road by the quarry.



Common Redstart

Some of the group carried on into the quarry proper and were rewarded with a Great Spotted Woodpecker. Meanwhile four of us meandered back to the road as far as the little packhorse bridge. Walking on to the grassy bank overlooking the tiny stream flowing into the river, we were thrilled to watch a Dipper collecting mosses and flying back to a hole by the side of a mini waterfall. He was very busy and the entire group managed to watch his activities. The packhorse bridge is now known as the Dipper Bridge.

We strolled back along the road which was now becoming quite busy. Cyclists were travelling in both directions which was both annoying and dangerous. We had to be constantly looking backwards. We also encountered a group of four sports cars obviously practising for the Le Mans Rally. At least they could be heard! We took the higher path to the left above the road and were amply rewarded for our efforts. We stood for a several minutes watching a Tree Pipit in display flight until a resplendent male Common Redstart demanded our attention. He sat on the wire fence and bobbed from post to post before flying on to a low vivid green shrub. The colours were just amazing and certainly the best views I have ever had. Curlew and Siskin were also seen from this elevated position as were a pair of Herons flying over the fields. A Mistle Thrush was feeding in the field as we started our descent; he was close to and the markings on him were bold and distinct.



Mistle Thrush



Grey Wagtail

Back on the road once more we noted that a pair of Cormorants had arrived on the reservoir. So had the fishermen and one proudly showed us his catch, a couple of good sized rainbow trout to be given to a friend. We arrived back at the cars at 1.15 pm ready for a late lunch. Several of the group had commitments for the afternoon and with some reluctance left.

Seven of us drove up the valley to Derbyshire Bridge. There was occasional light rain as we started up the track behind the car park.

Nevertheless we had good views of Whinchat, Wheatear, Meadow Pipits and Red Grouse, before the rain began to settle in and we all headed for home.

I've looked back over my records since 2010 for our trips to the Goyt Valley and this was by far the most successful in the numbers of our members attending and only just bettered in sightings by the trip on 04 June 2015. This had a higher bird count but included sightings at Dane Bower and Trentabank Reservoir on the way home. Our total for the day was 36 quality birds plus 3 'heards'.



Meadow Pipit

BARBARA P