

CAR TRIP TO MARBURY COUNTRY PARK – SATURDAY 17th APRIL 2021

Seven members turned up for an early start at Marbury Country Park. Created from what was once derelict land the area provides a rich and green environment, fields, woodland and flashes. The flashes are the most recent area of land to be reclaimed from salt mining.

Leaving the car park a Song Thrush and Nuthatch were calling, then seen. An unidentified Warbler was singing. Walking along the footpath a pair of Nuthatch were flitting about, Blue tits, Blackbird, Magpie, and Dunnock were busy feeding, a pair of Robins having a courtship feed. A handsome Jay flew over. Over to the distant view of Budworth Mere Shoveler, Shelduck, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Black-headed Gull and Canada Geese added to the list.



Nuthatch

Retracing our footsteps we made our way to the footpath alongside Budworth Mere.

On the track Woodpigeon walked ahead, then a Stock Dove with his striking glossy green neck patch. A beautiful rich full throated song was heard, Blackcap male and female.



Great Crested Grebes

Telescopes out now to see across the Mere, Great Crested Grebes having a courtship display, Tufted Ducks, Coots, Moorhen, Cormorant displaying, dabbling Mallards, preening Gadwall in front of the spit, Mute Swan, Greylag Geese, Herring Gulls, Lapwing searching for earthworms or insects. Grey Heron beside the lake with a Heronry high in the nearby trees. Continuing along the footpath another welcome warbler song, Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler were carefully identified. Further on Great Tit, Reed Bunting and

female Chaffinch added to our growing list, Carrion Crows flying over, a grating cawing. A couple of members popped in to a hide to be rewarded with a view of Coal Tit.

Continuing along the footpath to the woodland, Celandines, Wood Anemones, Bluebells, Wild Garlic were growing in profusion along the banks of the beck, the fresh green leaves of Hawthorn and woodland trees were a stunning sight. Here Treecreeper was shuffling up the trunk of the trees, a little Wren with the big voice foraged around.

Over the canal bridge turning left we took the footpath past a wood carving of newt and frog, a Speckled Wood butterfly darted past, now to pause at the field where a Cattle Egret was seen on our last visit. No sign of it today but a Mistle Thrush in the far end of the field was not missed by us, nor the Lapwing and Stock Dove. Onwards to Neuman's Flash.



Pied Avocets

High up in the clear blue sky we spotted a Cormorant soaring on the thermals, what an unusual sight we thought. Later we saw a Buzzard also enjoying the thermals. Goldfinch were out and about, and we heard and later saw Cetti's warbler.

Stopping for a well-earned rest in the hide overlooking Neuman's Flash Black-headed gulls dozing, bobbing on the water, flying around in great numbers made it difficult to



Lesser Redpoll

spot the Avocet we had come to see. Sharp eyed Julian won the gold star of the day, two dabbling and five resting on the sandy bank, such a thrill to see these elegant waders. The sighting of a Snipe probing on the same bank was a bonus. In addition to these we spotted more Shelduck, Herring Gull, Little Grebe, Great Crested Grebe, Oyster catcher, a pair of Shoveler, Pied Wagtail, Teal, and gliding towards us to have a closer look a Cob and Pen.

Fully rested we moved along the bund to Ashton's Flash. Sparrows quarrelling as usual, Bullfinch heard, another Blackcap, Song Thrush.

Amongst the Birches a mixed flock of finches including four Redpolls. This Flash has a large area of water and vegetation, the presence of salt has allowed several seaside plants to establish. Waders and waterfowl use this area but today little was seen. A Mallard and her eight ducklings enjoyed the quiet, in the distance Lapwing and Oystercatcher. A Brimstone butterfly fluttered past. Back on to the footpath large clumps of Cowslips were growing on the grassy wayside.

Time to head back to the car park along the Orchid Trail. Woodpecker was heard drilling, a Jackdaw and Magpie having an altercation in the field, a couple of Buzzards soaring overhead, and Orange Tip butterfly fluttering ahead of us along the path.

We all agreed we had a wonderful six hours birdwatching, with a superb field count. Not a cloud in the sky, and so warm some of us had to shed a layer of clothing, but not Robert who survived the day wearing a woolly hat and large over jacket (eh??-editor).

Thanks to everybody who made this day so memorable.

JENNY I