

CAR TRIP TO RSPB BURTON MERE SATURDAY 12th JUNE 2021

We arrived just before 9am to find the entrance gate locked. A rather harassed member of staff arrived to open the gate and we all drove in, happy to be here.



Canada Geese & goslings

Burton Mere Wetlands is the heart of the RSPB Dee Estuary and has 5 trails. After some discussion the group of 11 split up, some leaving to follow the Wetland Trail. Along here is the Reedbed screen, to view the reeds and channel of water, Bittern had been sighted at this spot, and the lucky group saw it with good views.

The other group followed the wooden decking along the footpath to the viewpoint. Here across the Scrape we saw many Avocets with their young, Black-headed Gulls with chicks, Mediterranean Gull had been spotted earlier, Canada Geese, female Mallard with her ducklings and Tufted Duck.

Greenfinch, Goldfinch were on the feeders, and Sedge Warbler heard and seen. In the fields were Carrion Crows, Wood Pigeon, Magpie and Pheasant. Skylarks were singing overhead. 2 Great Spotted Woodpeckers flew over. We watched an aerial battle between 2 gulls and a Buzzard. After a cloudy start to the day the sun came out.

A short visit to Bunker hide overlooking the scrape, Coot, Avocet, Teal, Oystercatcher, a huge group of Black-tailed Godwits, and Shoveler, were all busy probing for breakfast.



Pied Avocet



Black-tailed Godwit

Retracing our footsteps Robin and Blackbird hopped along the footpath. There were plenty of Spring flowers on the edge of the footpath and beautiful Early Marsh Orchids. Holly Blue and Speckled Wood butterfly fluttered past. Passing the toilet block we noticed a bird nesting box had been taken over by bees

Onwards to the Wetland trail passing more feeders with Chaffinch and Blue Tit enjoying a seed breakfast. Corvids were in the distant fields, Lapwing so lovely to see and watch their tumbling flight. Chiffchaff, Cetti's Warbler, Willow Warbler and Blackcap were vocal in the warming sun.

Stopping at the Reedbed screen we hoped to see the Bittern but sadly he had gone to ground. Pausing for a while, eyes straining, this group now split up.



Little Grebe

Bridge screen – more Black-headed gulls with chicks, Oystercatcher, and Black-tailed Godwits. A wander along the walkway to Border hide provided little to see other than the lush Spring growth. Skylarks singing, a Kestrel hovered overhead.

Border hide – is as it says, on the border of Wales. Even more Black-tailed Godwits, a large handsome wader in full plumage, the evocative call of Lapwing, Redshank, Teal and Wigeon. Swallows swooping low catching flies on the wing, Swifts, spending most of their time in the air.

Leaving this hide along the walkway, up the steps, Burton Point was the next port of call with the panoramic views across the reserve to see the Dee estuary and the Welsh hills. A Chiffchaff was sitting in full view on a dead tree branch singing his notable song. Back along the walkway, with wonderful views over to the right.

Bridge screen again – this time Wigeon, Teal and Shoveler had made an appearance.

Marsh covert hide – Gulls galore, Tufted Duck, Lapwing, Moorhen, Coot, Avocet, Mallard with ducklings, Little Egret and again the handsome Godwit.

Heading for Reedbed screen a conversation with Ros, an RSPB guide, proved useful. She said Cetti's Warbler had 20 breeding sites on the reserve and confirmed we could hear and see Whitethroat, Sedge Warbler, and Reed Bunting.

No sign of the Kingfisher at the lily pond on the Mere Trail, so time for lunch by the feeders.

Great tit, Blue tit, Goldfinch, Blackcap, male Chaffinch, Coal Tit, Nuthatch were having lunch too. In the distance Mute Swans were sailing by on the Scrape.



Common Whitethroat

Other sightings by the groups were: Green Woodpecker, Marsh Harrier, Pied Wagtail, Little Grebe, Linnet and Dunnock. From Burton Point 'scopes came out to see Spoonbill and Great Egret with difficulty, far in the distance.

Butterflies were also out and about – Large Skipper, Large White, Green Veined White.

After lunch some members made their way to Denhall Lane at 1.50pm.

Fantastic views of the Skylarks rising high in the air for several minutes then spiralling down to the ground. House Martins and Swallows swooping past, Kestrel hovering, many Little Egret in the ditches, House Sparrows all added to the growing field list. Three Shelduck flew over looking black and white in the distance but then a flash of chestnut patches.



Large Skipper

Grey Heron flapped his large wings slowly making his way above the marsh. We had clear views of a Sedge Warbler singing from the vegetation, bill open wide. Arriving at Decca Pool better closer views of the Little Egrets, with Meadow Pipits flying past. We watched a distant shape on the fence, difficult to ID but it was a Crow. Almost as a grand finale a Marsh Harrier patrolled slowly above us, but then Whitethroat gave us a song. Wandering back down the road we spotted a “clattering” of Jackdaws, Song Thrush and more House Martins. Stuart and Julian set off in search of a Little Owl but the nest box appeared empty, a consolation was Reed Bunting.

Time for that end of day treat, ice cream, after a wonderful field trip with a commendable field count.

A later report came in from Robert who saw 6 Ravens flying over the marsh.



Black-tailed Godwits, Common Redshanks, et al

Photos by Robert D

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