

Autumn 2017

Have you heard what's happening at Snettisham?

Did you know about the exciting new crowdfunding initiative by the RSPB in Eastern England in aid of building an amazing new hide at Snettisham nature reserve in Norfolk? To find out more about how wildlife watchers like you will benefit from this innovative project, and how to get involved in supporting it, please read on...

As you may know, in 2013 a destructive storm surge tide hit Norfolk and Suffolk coastlines. At Snettisham it wreaked havoc – destroying shingle banks, flooding lagoons and almost overtopping the inner sea wall. It also destroyed two of the reserve's most popular hides.

Working with specialist Norway-based birding architects, Biotope, the RSPB has drawn up plans for a new hide to replace those lost in 2013. This new hide is designed to be storm-proof and provide stunning views of the famous wader spectacles of The Wash – when tens of thousands of waders descend into the lagoons after being forced off the vast mudflats by the incoming tide.

The hide will hold up to 80 people and have dedicated areas for birdwatchers and photographers, as well as wheelchair access and catering for people of all ages and abilities who are drawn to Snettisham by its fantastic wildlife.



Waders at Snettisham



The proposed new wader spectacle hide for Snettisham

This will not be just any hide, and as a result will cost £140,000 to build. This is where we hope that lovers of Snettisham Nature Reserve and its wildlife will be able to help.

In order to raise the money needed to build the hide, on Monday 10 July the RSPB in Eastern England launched a crowdfunding appeal to encourage people to donate to the cost of the new hide.

Already the appeal has received the boost of a £20,000 grant from the Environmental Projects Agency, but that leaves £120,000 still needing to be raised to be able to build the new hide and inspire a new generation of nature lovers with the special wildlife of Snettisham and The Wash.

How you can help

These are a few things you can do if you would like to help us realise this vision for Snettisham (and we hope you will!):

1. Donate to our appeal – if you've visited Snettisham and experienced the sound of ten thousand pink-footed geese flying overhead or seen the mesmerising display of knot as they fly to escape from the incoming tide before going to roost in the reserve's lagoons, we hope you will understand why we think this new hide will be so brilliant. You can donate to our appeal on our Crowdfunding page: www.crowdfunder.org.uk/snettishamhide or if you would prefer, you can email snettishamproject@rspb.org.uk or phone 01845 545263 for other ways of making a donation.

2. Share the appeal with people you know – more than 25,000 people visit Snettisham each year. We hope that a large number of these people will want to give their support to help build this new hide that will make Snettisham’s wildlife accessible to so many more people. If you know people who you think would like to support our appeal, please tell them about the appeal.
3. Shout about it! – We want to get the word out to nature lovers everywhere. If you use Twitter and/or Facebook, you can help. Please use #SnettsHide to tag your tweets / Facebook posts. Tell people you have donated and ask them to do the same www.crowdfunder.org.uk/snettishamhide
 - Sign up to support our Thunderclap: <https://www.thunderclap.it/projects/59212-rebuild-snettisham-hide>
 - All you need is a Facebook or Twitter account – it’s dead easy!

Finally, if you have made it this far, if you have any questions about the new hide or our crowdfunding project, please email snettishamproject@rspb.org.uk or telephone 01485 545263.

Thank you for your support!

*Drew Lyness,
Local Groups and Volunteering Support Officer,
Eastern England*

Recycling ink cartridges

Thank you for continuing to recycle your old printer cartridges. These do not have the value they once had so I’m very pleased to report that you raised £783.68 for the RSPB last year, an amazing 146% increase on 2015-16.

For all the information about recycling ink cartridges, including a list of cartridges which can be recycled, please check on the Recycling Factory website:
<http://www.therecyclingfactory.com/rspb/>

New Local Groups and Volunteering Support Officer

A new Local Groups and Volunteering Support Officer for Eastern England has been appointed. He is Drew Lyness. Drew is now the point of contact for all RSPB Groups and volunteers in Eastern England.

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Stamping out albatross deaths

Thanks to a social media campaign last Christmas many more organisations and supporters are collecting used postage stamps to benefit the Albatross Stamp Appeal and income is growing every quarter. In the financial year 2016-17 the wonderful sum of £19,377 was raised. That’s a fantastic 62% increase on 2015-16.

We are able to send out branded collection boxes and promotional material on request to any organisation or company able to collect used stamps for us to turn them into cash to help our work in the southern oceans with this iconic species.

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/join-and-donate/donate/appeals/albatross/howyoucanhelp/stamps.aspx>

For more information about stamps please contact CommunityMarketing@rspb.org.uk

Used stamps are sold by weight so just tear off the corner of the envelope with the stamp still attached (they weigh more that way) and give them to Diane and John Mortemore or Doreen and Dickie Bird who organise the collection of stamps on behalf of the Lincoln Local Group.

The Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas, early April 2017

Not a heading usually seen in this publication. But we were due to support the Brigade Band at their concert in Hunstanton so we booked a couple of nights B&B in the Old Town in order to birdwatch on the North Norfolk coast.

We began the outward journey at the Hawk and Owl Trust's much improved reserve at Sculthorpe with its smart visitor centre, new hides, sand martin wall (under construction), and 100% boarded walks. Bird feeders gave us good views of bullfinches and bramblings and then in another hide the memsahib called a redpoll. This was poo-pooed by some 'real' birders but a warden who was stood nearby confirmed it was a mealy redpoll. The woods produced a good selection of woodland birds with good views of treecreepers etc., and a goldcrest perched on an ivy-covered tree trunk.

From there we carried on to Cley which is still suffering the effects of the January tide surge with a large part of the shingle sea bank washed away and at least half the reedbeds completely flattened. There was a lot of water in the lagoons and fewer birds than usual, although the water meadows held a decent selection of waterfowl.

Our route to our overnight stay was diverted via Docketing and Heacham due to part of the A149 being closed.

The following morning we found a shorter diversion to get us to Titchwell where the tide was far out and the sea quite choppy. A large raft of scoters was visible but not the reported 50+ long-tailed ducks. A large number of



Photo: Peter Skelton

Brambling

oystercatchers, and a few sanderlings and turnstones occupied the water's edge. During the morning a solitary swallow flew in off the sea (7 April). Several pairs of red-crested pochards were spotted on the lagoons along with a good number of avocets and a few remaining brent geese. Near the visitor centre a sparrowhawk flew low over the footpath.

We then 'twitched' to Burnham Norton where a green-winged teal had been reported. At the car park a picnicking birder told us it had been seen in some small ponds/large puddles in a nearby flood meadow. It couldn't be located initially but was eventually picked up in flight and then 'scoped on one of the puddles when it landed. On the way back to the car park we were told to look in a ditch, which intersected the meadow and we had a good view of a male garganey criss-crossing the ditch.

It being the evening of the band concert stumps were drawn early. After a very dull, cloudy, windy day it was ironic that the sun broke through just as we arrived at the theatre!

For our third day we set off early for Titchwell to arrive before the tide got too far out. It was a calm, sunny morning and the sea was quite flat. The scoters were quite scattered but one or two velvets were picked out amongst the commons. A long search eventually produced a great crested grebe, a red-breasted merganser and a single long-tailed duck. One very plain grey grey plover was at the water's edge with the usual oystercatchers etc. Whilst sea watching two Sandwich terns were noted diving for food.

Returning to the visitor centre we were scanning the marsh when a group of six or seven dog walkers passed behind us. One of the lady (?) members of the group commented quite audibly, "B****y twitchers". Yet for years we had always thought RSPB Titchwell was a bird reserve.

Nearer the visitor centre we were cheered by a five second (or less) view of a Cetti's warbler sat in the open on a bare bush.

Heading for home we spent an hour or so on Snettisham Common hoping for warblers, ring ouzels or wheatears, but perhaps we were a week or so early?

The Band? Excellent, as usual, with several pieces and the dancers getting standing ovations.

*Les Oiseaux
RSPB Lincoln Local Group*

Group Volunteers

What's missing from the above?

Yes, you've guessed it - it's **U!**

We need **you** to help to run **your** group.

In 2009 there were 161 local RSPB groups in the UK now there are just 147. A loss of 14 groups and the main reason they are folding is because local group members cannot be found to help to run them. The Lincoln Local Group is now beginning to find that problem. When the Group started 43 years ago so many people wanted to get involved and join the committee that the Group had to hold elections at the AGMs. Now, sadly, we are struggling to find anyone to help. We have had a vacancy for the role of volunteer coordinator for over a year, which means we are finding it very difficult to keep some of the public events going.

Volunteering can be such an enjoyable and rewarding thing to do and knowing that you are doing something to help nature is surely reward enough as we all know how much nature needs our help.

I have been a committee member for 42 years, 32 years as Group Leader and eventually someone else will have to take over if the Group is to continue so it is essential that vacant committee posts are filled. It would be tragic if the Lincoln Local Group had to close after all the hard work and enthusiasm people have put in to running it over the last 43 years.

Next year the monthly 'Birdwatching for All' walks at Hartsholme Country Park can only take place if someone volunteers to organise the rota for the people who lead the walks. It is not an onerous task as most of the leaders have been leading the walks for many years. All



Lincoln Group volunteers at Lincoln Cathedral




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they need is someone to email or phone them in November each year and arrange the dates for the following year's walks. These walks have been running for 26 years and they are as popular as ever. In April this year 22 people went on the walk, including children, so it would be a disaster if we were unable to run them next year. Many people first heard about the RSPB Lincoln Local Group by coming on one of these walks, so they are essential in helping to maintain the Group's membership.

The person taking on this job does not necessarily need to be a committee member, although you would be most welcome to join the committee if you would like to do so. You will obviously want to know what is involved so I have described the task in detail below.

You will need to contact the walks leaders in November each year, preferably by email, and find out which months they are available to lead a walk. Then produce a rota and send a copy of the rota to all the leaders, with a copy to me and the Head Park Ranger. During the year you may occasionally have to substitute a leader due to illness or holidays but this is rare. You will need to comply with Data Protection requirements regarding the leaders contact details, but this is common sense and it would

be fully explained to you. A report of the birds seen and the number of people who attended is compiled by each walk leader and sent to you (usually by email). You then need to forward a copy to me and the Head Park Ranger. The total time required is no more than about 15 hours a year. So as you can see it is not time consuming or onerous in any way.

You may say that if it's not that difficult why can't an existing committee member do it. The truth is that existing committee members are all fully committed to running the group and simply do not have the time to take on any more tasks. You must appreciate that everyone is a volunteer and as such can only devote a certain amount of time to running your Group.

I know that hardly a day goes by without me having to do something for the Group. Apart from the indoor meetings I have to find and write articles for these newsletters and organise the publishing and printing of them and the annual programme, keep the Group's website up to date, prepare the agenda and chair the monthly committee meetings, act as the Group's contact point for our Regional Office and HQ, write project plans, complete risk assessments and annual reports, keep a record of volunteers time and other Group statistics, give illustrated talks to other clubs and societies, repair and maintain the group's marquee and other equipment, organise and book meeting venues, organise the publishing and printing of the Group's calendar, answer numerous emails and phone calls from the general public and Group members, fill vacant slots on the rotas for events such as the heron and peregrine watchpoints, Hartsholme Country Park's Spring Fair and Countryside Links, etc. The list is endless.

"Local Groups can only survive if RSPB members come together and help each other to run them"

I get a huge amount of satisfaction from doing my bit to help nature, but if I had to take on just one more task I'm afraid it would be the proverbial "straw that breaks the camel's back". I will also have failed in my role as Group Leader if I can no longer generate enough enthusiasm to get people involved and help me and the other committee members to run the Group, that's why I need you to help.

Similarly, I also need a volunteer to organise a rota for next year's heron watchpoint at Hartsholme Country Park and a volunteer to

2018 Calendar £6.50

Stunning images of British wildlife photographed by members of the RSPB Lincoln Local Group



A great Christmas gift for friends and family

organise the rota for the peregrine watchpoint at Lincoln Cathedral.

Local Groups can only survive if RSPB members come together and help each other to run them. So please volunteer so that the Group can continue with these immensely popular public events next year. You would get so much enjoyment and satisfaction from helping. I look forward to hearing from you.

*Peter Skelson, Group Leader
RSPB Lincoln Local Group*

RSPB AGM and Members' Day

**Saturday 7 October 2017 QEII Centre,
Westminster, London**

Join us for an inspiring day in London and find out about what we've achieved in the past year thanks to your continued support, from ground-breaking conservation to innovative partnerships; be inspired by talks from staff and find out how you too can do your bit, plus a look forward to the challenges facing nature ahead.

If you would like to find out more about the event please visit rspb.org.uk/agm, e-mail agm@rspb.org.uk or call the Events team on 01767 680551.

Another great year for the peregrines of Lincoln Cathedral

2017 has been the 11th year that peregrines have bred on the main tower of the Cathedral, successfully raising three juvenile birds. The eggs were laid in March and the young fledged at the end of May. Over the 11-year period the birds have raised 30 young.

The RSPB has, on all of these 11 years, organised a watchpoint at the Cathedral, most recently on the East Green, to meet members of the public and give them the opportunity to see and learn more about these spectacular birds, which are a great attraction to the Cathedral in their own right. On an average day up to 300 people visit the watchpoint. There is a genuine 'wow' factor when people see the birds through the telescopes for the first time, and children in particular get very excited.

*Alan Flintham
RSPB Lincoln Local Group*

Ed: If the watchpoint is to take place in 2018 we need someone to organise the volunteers' rota.

Future coach trips

RSPB Saltholme - 10 September

Saltholme is a top birdwatching site situated on Teesside near Hartlepool. The reserve consists of wet grassland, open water pools and scrapes. New areas of reedbed are being created to try and attract marsh harriers. September is peak migration time so we should be able to see good numbers of wading birds such as black-tailed godwit, ruff and an assortment of sandpipers. Plenty of wildfowl and herons are also here. There are several nature trails with hides overlooking pools. Good views can be had of one of the pools from the visitor centre, as well as a bird feeding station where we have had sightings of a fox on previous visits. There is a well-stocked shop and an excellent cafe serving a superb Sunday lunch and other delights. Come with us and enjoy great day out.

Thorp Perrow Arboretum - 22 October

This is the Group's first visit to Thorp Perrow Arboretum and we should be in for a real treat. The Arboretum is situated near Bedale, North Yorkshire and it is one of the finest collections



Photo: Peter Skelton

One of the 2017 juvenile peregrines at Lincoln Cathedral

of trees and shrubs in the country. There are 100 acres of woodland walks, trails and glades to explore so we can hope to see a good variety of birds. October is an excellent time to visit for the spectacular variety of colours and the countless types of fungus to be found, which you could discover on a fungus foray. If you wish there is also a bird of prey and mammal centre to visit. There are plenty of facilities available including a licensed tearoom. A good day out is in prospect.

Idle Valley Nature Reserve - 19 November

Close to Retford it is the first time the group has visited this particular site. The Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust manages the reserve, which is one of the largest wetland sites for nature conservation in the East Midlands. The area covers a network of lakes, wetland, grassland and scrub and it is home to a diverse range of wildlife. A good variety of late autumn and wintering birds should be seen including wildfowl, waders and thrushes. Along the many footpaths are viewing screens and platforms. The visitor centre has the usual facilities, a wildlife trust shop and café.

Potteric Carr Nature Reserve - 10 December

The final outing of the year is to the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust reserve of Potteric Carr, Doncaster. It is a large site consisting of woodland, wetland and grassland habitats. There are many hides where views can be had of kingfishers, water rails, woodpeckers, waders and waterfowl. It is a good site for wintering bitterns and water voles. A new visitor centre has been built since our last visit and it has a café, shop and facilities. The centre overlooks a lake and reedbed with a bird feeding station close by. Potteric Carr is an excellent site to round up the Group's visits for 2017.

*Colin Goulding
RSPB Lincoln Local Group*

Field meetings reports

National Memorial Arboretum - 26 February 2017

Our February trip was to the National Memorial Arboretum in Warwickshire. This was a first for the Lincoln Group and it turned out to be an interesting day. It is the United Kingdom's centre of Remembrance and home to the iconic Armed Forces Memorial. After spending a short time in the superb Remembrance Centre we set off to explore the section of the Arboretum, which adjoins the rivers Tame and Trent. This also gave us the opportunity to look at a few of the memorials.

In this area we saw a robin, blackbird, wren, pied wagtail, blue tit, coal tit, great tit, long-tailed tits, dunnock, treecreeper, skylark, goldcrests and goldfinches. On the rivers and adjacent marsh we found a heron, oystercatcher, coot, moorhen, great crested grebe, fieldfares, redwings, male reed bunting and a sparrowhawk pursuing some common snipe.

A kestrel and buzzard were also spotted as well as carrion crows, rooks, jackdaws, a magpie, woodpigeons and a stock dove. There was a cormorant, black-headed gulls, lesser black-backed gulls and a few wildfowl, which included greylag geese, Canada geese, mallards, shelducks, goosanders, teals, tufted ducks, shovelers and gadwalls.

Not a bad list considering the location and I think most people had an enjoyable day.

Frampton Marsh - 2 April 2017

Our trip to the RSPB reserve at Frampton Marsh was very well supported and it was a fine day with sunny periods. When we arrived at



Photo: Peter Skelson

Wren

Photographic Holidays

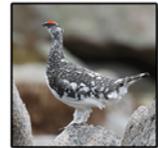
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the car park a swallow flew over and for many of us it was the first of the year. We checked the fields near the car park and found wigeons, shelducks, lapwings, coots, moorhens, curlews, skylarks, little egrets, mute swans, redshanks and pied wagtails. The feeders next to the reception were attracting goldfinches, chaffinches and a greenfinch and on the pool there were tufted ducks, black-headed gulls, teals, shovelers, gadwalls, mallards, pochards and avocets.

We then walked down to the sea bank and on the way we saw Canada geese, little grebes, ringed plovers, oystercatchers, a cormorant, two whooper swans, ruffs, dunlins, three black-tailed godwits, one bar-tailed godwit, two spotted redshanks and brent geese. A sedge warbler was singing and we saw a wren, yellowhammer, male and female reed buntings, meadow pipits, starlings, great crested grebes, a herring gull and a distant common buzzard.

After lunch we walked round the eastern pool calling in at the hides and we added whimbrel, heron, pintail, Mediterranean gull, goldeneye, greylag geese, lesser black-backed gull and little ringed plover to our list. On the sea bank there was a brief sighting of a merlin and some

roe deer and a stoat were also seen on the reserve.

Our total species of birds seen for the day was 53 and it was a great day out at one of the RSPB's finest reserves.

Cavenham Heath & Weeting Heath - 23 April 2017

Our April field trip was to Cavenham Heath near Mildenhall and Weeting Heath near Thetford. Both reserves are good for woodlarks and stone curlews so we were hopeful that we would see both species. Our first port of call was Cavenham Heath where we decided to explore the Heathland Trail. We were soon recording the common birds like collared doves, woodpigeons, jackdaws, rooks, carrion crows, robins, goldfinches and chaffinches. We then saw a male blackcap, yellowhammers, linnets, skylarks and two wheatears.

We managed to find a woodlark among the heather but further along the track we were surprised to see two stone curlews, clearly visible, only a short distance from the footpath. Stonechats were also showing well and birds seen flying over the heath were a grey heron, little egret, curlew, sparrowhawk, kestrel, common buzzard, swallow, two shelducks and mallards. We then spotted a red-legged partridge and green woodpecker and two grey wagtails and a pied wagtail were seen near the river.

After lunch we set off for Weeting Heath, which holds several pairs of stone curlews. They can usually be viewed from two hides but unfortunately on this occasion we were unable to locate the birds. However, there was a brief sighting of one flying over. We did the Woodland Walk and we had great views of a singing woodlark, chiffchaff and willow warbler. The feeders were attracting chaffinches, yellowhammers, blue tits, great tits, a marsh tit



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and coal tit. We also saw pheasants, long-tailed tits, a treecreeper, common buzzard, great-spotted woodpecker, mistle thrush, curlew, lapwing, swallow and jay. This made the total species of birds seen over the two sites to 44.

Middleton Lakes - 21 May 2017

In May we went to Middleton Lakes in the Lower Tame Valley, Warwickshire. It was formerly an old gravel quarry, which has been transformed by the RSPB into a natural oasis bursting with wildlife. It was a lovely, warm, sunny day and after an introduction by the warden we began our exploration of the woodlands, meadows and reed beds.

First of all we noticed the activity at the heronry and we found singing reed buntings and common whitethroats in the adjacent bushes. Swallows and swifts were flying around and a kestrel, jay, magpie, jackdaws, woodpigeons, carrion crows, black-headed gulls and lesser black-backed gull were noted.

The feeders alongside the boardwalk near Heron Corner were attracting house sparrows, chaffinches, great tits, blue tits, a coal tit, nuthatch, greenfinch and great spotted

woodpecker. In the nearby vegetation and reedbed there were Canada geese with young, mallards, a coot, moorhen, robin, blackbird and dunnock. Continuing through the lovely wooded area we saw goldfinches, a pheasant, song thrush and common buzzard. At Fisher's Mill Bridge there was a pair of bullfinches and on the canal and pool we found gadwalls, tufted ducks, shelducks, a cormorant and great crested grebe.

We made our way round Fisher's Mill Pool and we spotted mute swans, shovelers, little ringed plovers, ringed plovers, lapwings, oystercatchers, dunlin, a redshank and avocets with young. Garden warblers, willow warblers, Cetti's warblers, reed warblers, sedge warblers, chiffchaffs, blackcaps and both common and lesser whitethroats were singing everywhere and we managed to see sedge and reed warblers and blackcaps.

One person had a brief glimpse of a kingfisher and other birds seen included a pied wagtail, wren, willow tit, long-tailed tits, Mediterranean gull and two common terns. We certainly had a very enjoyable day at a fine reserve and we saw a total of 58 bird species.

Ray Daniels
RSPB Lincoln Local Group

Inspiring young people

The magazine for Wildlife Explorers has a new name

The July/August edition of *Bird Life* magazine will have a new name - *Wild Explorer*.

For quite some time the title *Bird Life* has been an awkward fit for the magazine sent to our 8-12 age group. For a start there's the clash with BirdLife International but more compelling is the acknowledgement that it no longer represents what we are about.

The club, and its magazine, are about all nature. The title that was dreamed up more than a generation ago was simply not appropriate anymore. So, a big welcome to *Wild Explorer*.

In the words of the group that carried out market research and went through the selection process:

"Wild Explorer captures the spirit of the children in the 8-12 age group, inspiring them to feel like an explorer. *Wild Explorer* suggests a growing



Common whitethroat

independence found through discovery of nature, and implies challenge and adventure. It also strongly links to our Wildlife Explorers Club and the legacy and heritage locked up in it, without relying on the logo or club itself."

We hope our Wildlife Explorers will like their new-look magazine with its shiny new name.

Report wildlife crime

WWF is asking people to help to stop the illegal wildlife trade that is killing African elephants for ivory and putting hundreds more threatened species at risk. Please report anything you see or hear that may be linked to this illegal trade. You should also report any wildlife crime you see being committed by calling Crimestoppers on 0800 555111 (you must be 16 or over).

WWF recommend the following:

Do

- Look and listen but don't attempt to investigate anything yourself
- Use your common sense and don't put yourself at risk
- Call Crimestoppers on 0800 555111 (you must be 16 or over)

Don't

- Draw attention to your interest
- Take any action yourself
- Arouse suspicion in any way
- Buy anything as evidence. This encourages the trade and you could be prosecuted
- Ask any questions that might arouse criminals' suspicions

These common-sense actions should be followed if you see *any* wildlife crime being committed. Together we can protect our natural world for future generations to enjoy.

Dumfries & Galloway - 1 June to 5 June 2017

In June we had a five-day break in Dumfries and Galloway. We stayed at the Station Hotel in Dumfries and we visited Ken Dee Marshes, Mersehead, Wood of Cree, the Mull of Galloway and Caerlaverock. Thirty of the Group set off from Lincoln at 7 am and instead of our usual break at the motorway services, we stopped at a lovely café on the A66. Here there were delicious homemade cakes, scones, various pies and tasty breakfasts.

We then made our way to Campfield Marsh, which is an RSPB reserve on the English side of the Solway Firth. When we were walking along the track to the Centre we disturbed a tawny owl perched in one of the trees, which was an excellent bird to start our list. After a brief introduction by the Warden we began to explore the reserve. On the feeders there were goldfinches, chaffinches, house sparrows, tree sparrows and great tits. In the vicinity of the Centre we found a pied wagtail, robin, starlings, blackbirds, collared doves, carrion crows and a magpie. House martins and swallows were flying around.

Further into the reserve we saw lapwings, linnets, a stonechat, willow warbler, chiffchaff, wren, reed warbler, pheasant, common buzzard, kestrel and grey heron. At one of the hides we were observing a fox when a roe deer ran in front of it and flushed a common snipe. A song thrush was singing and in the fields there were numerous rooks and a few jackdaws, woodpigeons, meadow pipits and skylarks. On the coast we saw oystercatchers, lesser black-backed gulls, great black-backed gulls, black-headed gulls, herring gulls, cormorants, curlews, redshanks, shelducks and mallards. After a pleasant afternoon we made our way to our hotel at Dumfries looking forward to our evening meal and a drink. While travelling through Dumfries four geese were spotted on the river.

The next day, Friday, we visited Ken Dee Marshes in the morning and Mersehead Nature Reserve in the afternoon. Both are RSPB reserves and Ken Dee Marshes consists of water meadows, freshwater marshes, farmland, scrub and woodland. Mersehead Reserve is on the Solway Firth and there are two trails, a Wetland Trail and a Coastal Trail.

On arrival at Ken Dee Marshes we saw two red kites and the woods provided excellent views of



Some of the Lincoln Group members in Scotland

pie flycatchers, coal tits, a great spotted woodpecker, treecreeper, goldcrest, nuthatch, spotted flycatcher and willow tit. Willow warblers, garden warblers and blackcaps were also singing. Additional birds to the previous day included carrion crows, sedge warblers, a song thrush, dunnock, blue tit, common whitethroat, teals, shovelers, moorhens, greylag geese and Canada geese. At Mersehead Reserve the only new birds were a yellowhammer, sand martins, mute swans with cygnets, a ringed plover and sparrowhawk.

On Saturday it was an early start because we had quite a long journey to the Mull of Galloway. On arrival at the Mull we met with the warden who explained that it consists of three types of habitat: lichen-covered cliffs, rough grassland and maritime heath. The area is one of the few remnants of the natural habitat that used to cover much of the Galloway coast. At the Mull of Galloway you can climb the Lighthouse, visit the Exhibition of Lighthouse History, walk around the RSPB Scotland nature reserve and enjoy delicious food and drink at Scotland's most southerly coffee house.

We then started to explore the reserve and on the grassy cliff tops there were meadow pipits, linnets and a couple of wheatears flitting about. There were a few gannets, puffins, kittiwakes, fulmars, herring gulls and lesser black-backed gulls flying over the sea. On the steep cliffs, guillemots, razorbills, shags, kittiwakes and fulmars were nesting. Puffins no longer nest here and the gannets breed on the Scares, which are small rocky islets seven miles to the east. We saw swallows, house martins and swifts flying around and in the vicinity of the buildings we found a pied wagtail, goldfinches, common whitethroats, jackdaws and a kestrel. It was then time to sample the delights of the coffee house and we were not disappointed.

On the Sunday we went to the Wood of Cree, which is another RSPB reserve consisting of a small river, woodland and grassland. Along the

river we had excellent views of two dippers and a grey wagtail. In the woods there were blue tits, great tits, coal tits, a redstart, siskin, spotted flycatcher, pied flycatcher, mistle thrush, blackcap and great spotted woodpecker. Also, a tree creeper with young was showing very well and a garden warbler was spotted. A goshawk was seen flying above the woods while we were having lunch, which was a lovely surprise. Along the scrubland trail we found, meadow pipits, tree pipits and a grasshopper warbler. Also, there was a common buzzard, blackbird, stonechat, wheatear, swallows and a pair of redpolls.

On Monday we returned home but first of all we called at Caerlaverock Wetland Centre and spent a few hours there. There were some very heavy showers during our visit but luckily we were in the hides when they occurred. A pair of ospreys had nested outside the reserve and a camera had been placed in the nest. This enabled visitors to watch the activities on a screen in the restaurant. We saw a total of 42 species of birds at Caerlaverock but the only new ones were a greenfinch, wren, whooper swan, kingfisher, four ravens and three black-tailed godwits.

This brought our total species during the five days to 92. All the reserves visited were also rich in flowers, butterflies, moths and dragonflies. Among the butterflies seen were red admiral, green-veined white, orange tip, painted lady, small heath and pearl-bordered fritillary. There were brimstone, chimney sweeper and cinnabar moths and golden-ringed dragonflies and rose chafer beetles. Mammals included roe deer, fox, vole, wood mouse and brown rat.

We had a wonderful time in Scotland, the weather was good, the hotel excellent and our thanks go to Mike and Carol for arranging another marvellous holiday.

Ray Daniels
RSPB Lincoln Local Group

Winner of the Group Leader's award 2017

The award gives us a chance to thank someone who has made a significant contribution to the Group or the RSPB over the past year and we hope that it will encourage other people to volunteer. The award obviously cannot be given to committee members but you can nominate



Grasshopper warbler

Mike Langman (rspb-images.com)

anyone who you think deserves some recognition for what they do to help the Group or the RSPB.

This year we recognised the work and support Carol Upton has given the Group for many years. Carol sells the Group's calendars each year thus making sure they remain a viable proposition for the Group. Carol also distributes the Group's newsletters and programmes and helps our Field Meetings Leader, Mike Willey to organise the field trips and holidays. So, thank you very much Carol for all you do to help.



Photo: Roy Jillings

Yvonne's 2017 10k run

Yvonne Allan entered the 2017 Lincoln 10k run to raise funds for the RSPB Lincoln Local Group. Apart from completing the full 10k, Yvonne raised £256.61 for the Group breaking all her previous fund raising records. A great achievement, well done Yvonne and many thanks to everyone who sponsored her.

Waitrose collection

In June Lincoln Waitrose supermarket selected the RSPB Lincoln Local Group to take part in their token scheme. A scheme whereby customers select which of three charities they would like Waitrose to support by dropping a token into one of three boxes when they leave the store. Waitrose then divides £1,000 between the three charities in proportion to the number of tokens dropped into each of their respective boxes. 27% of customers selected us so we received a donation of £270.

We would like to record our thanks to Waitrose and also to the many customers who selected our charity to receive part of the donation.

Dates for your diary

October

7 AGM AND MEMBERS' DAY, QE2 Centre, Westminster, London. See the winter issue of *Nature's Home* magazine or contact RSPB HQ T: 01767 680551.

12 INDOOR MEETING The Cairngorms and the Yorkshire Dales by **Steve Rowland**. Two different habitats each with its own unique variety of wildlife. Sponsored by Streets Chartered Accountants.

22 COACH TRIP to Thorp Perrow Arboretum, North Yorkshire for autumn colours. There is also the possibility of a fungus foray. Leave Lincoln 8 am. Leave reserve 4.30 pm. Adults £27 including admission charge. C, VC, WC.

November

9 INDOOR MEETING East Midlands through the Seasons by Danny Green (www.dannygreenphotography.com). Danny is an award winning nature photographer and was recently chosen by Canon to form part of their Ambassador programme. Sponsored by a member who wishes to remain anonymous.

19 COACH TRIP to the Nottingham Wildlife Trust Idle Valley. Leave Lincoln 9 am. Leave reserve 4 pm. Adults £13. C, H, NT, VC, WC.

December

10 COACH TRIP to Yorkshire Wildlife Trust Potteric Carr Nature Reserve. Leave Lincoln 8.30 am. Leave reserve 4 pm. Adults £18 including admission charge. C, H, NT, VC, WC.

14 INDOOR MEETING Designs on Nature by Lincolnshire Pyrography Artist Susan Robey (www.pyrographiques.co.uk). All of the 2018 calendar entries will also be shown. Sponsored by Janette Marshall in memory of Eileen and John White.

January

11 INDOOR MEETING Highlands and Islands by Geoff Trinder. Geoff is Vice-President of Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and a popular visiting speaker to the Group. Sponsored by Carol Harvey in memory of her husband Alan Harvey.

Any advertisements enclosed with this newsletter are not specifically endorsed by the RSPB or the Lincoln Local Group.

For sale

An unused Leica APO-Televid 82 Angled Spotting Scope complete with

Leica 25x-50x WW ASPH eyepiece

and

Manfrotto 190CXP3 carbon tripod

Offers in the region of £2,000 should be made to Louise Burton

Louise.Burton@naturalengland.org.uk

Mob: 07810 121824

Indoor meetings are held at Bishop Grosseteste University. Nature reserve facilities are shown thus: C = Café, H = Hides, NT = Nature Trail, S = Shop, VC = Visitor Centre, WC = Toilets. One child free for each full fare-paying adult booked on the Sunday coach trips (any admission charges still apply). To book coach trips or holidays phone Mike on 01526 321917.

Further details of all of our events can be found on our website: <http://www.lincolnrspsb.org.uk>

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<http://www.facebook.com/lincolnlocalgroup>

The RSPB is the country's largest nature conservation charity, inspiring everyone to give nature a home. Together with our partners, we protect threatened birds and wildlife so our towns, coast and countryside will teem with life once again. We also play a leading role in a worldwide partnership of nature conservation organisations.

Website: <http://www.rspb.org.uk>

The RSPB Lincoln Local Group holds regular events to which RSPB members and members of the public are welcome.

Website: <http://www.lincolnrspsb.org.uk>