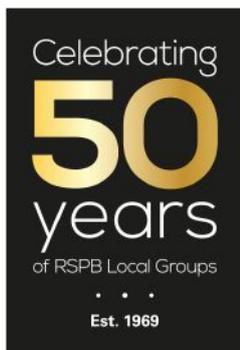


Autumn 2019



## RSPB local groups – how it all began

I joined the staff as Regional Organiser on April 1st 1968. The job description was a trifle unclear “to assist in projecting the aims and objectives of the Society

across England”. At this time the RSPB was little known outside the South East, with just one nature reserve of note in the North, that being the famous Leighton Moss in Lancashire. We also had a small full-time staff in Scotland.

Before taking up my appointment, I did some homework about the Society and found that we had already been down the local club/society route, and at the end of the Victorian age, in the early part of our history, the main thrust of the campaign against the plumage trade had come from hundreds of small groups of volunteers, some became “local representatives” not only in the UK but also in parts of Europe and throughout the Empire.

The First World War saw the end of the trade in plumage – and the local groups and clubs just faded away, even in the 1930s some local representatives were still listed in the Society’s annual report.

On my appointment in 1968, a list of County/Regional representatives was presented to me. Some were dead and most of the rest were mainly inactive. So, I was given a free hand to try to re-establish a more active Regional setup. A big task!

As far as I could judge, the greatest asset we had was a full programme each year of new, home produced wildlife films – these being premiered at the Royal Festival Hall, London. These shows attracted two sellout audiences of over 4,500. After these showings nothing much seemed to happen to the films so I decided to take the films out on tour with the shows being staged in conjunction with the local and county bird clubs. These shows were very successful and I soon had a small network of volunteers who were keen to do more to help the Society.

So, in 1969, after a few false starts, the group system as we know it today was born and eventually, at the height of our development we listed 176 groups and nearly 250 annual films shows at the start of our Centenary year in 1989. These were members’ groups, rather different to the local groups we have today and as you know these groups and local representatives raised many thousands of pounds and recruited hundreds of new members. They also played a key role in Centenary year and staged hundreds of events of all kinds.



RSPB Leighton Moss

You might say “the rest is history”, but the groups had not been welcomed by the “birding” establishment across the UK. We were seen as “incomers” intent on poaching their members and depriving them of income from the film shows – films which they had rented at very low cost from the RSPB Film Unit. The establishment of RSPB groups was also opposed by some key members of RSPB Council, many who were from the “county ornithological” establishment. Difficult days. However, my Director (CEO in today’s terms) Peter Conder fully supported my work as he felt we were in urgent need of a more widely spread regional framework. I remember him saying “Trevor if you think you can deliver – then you have my backing”.

The regional groups led eventually to the establishment of a network of Regional Officers with staff across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Some of the early groups continued to thrive and play a key role in the work of the Society. To many people the local group “is the RSPB”, some of these group members may never visit a reserve but will help at a local event, sell raffle tickets or run a stall selling wild bird food. They are all great supporters of the world’s greatest wildlife conservation organisation.

So, we have come full circle, from the campaign against the plumage trade to Birdlife International. From the film shows to lectures and worldwide conservation projects of all kinds. From birds in the garden to help on our rapidly expanding nature reserves – we all have a part to play.

So, if you are reading this as one of our supporters, thank you for all you do. We are living through a period of great change, socially and economically. The RSPB is well equipped to face these challenges, and the local group network will, I believe, remain at the heart of the Society.

You are the RSPB in Action.

*Trevor Gunton,  
former Head of (and founder of) Development*

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## Long service awards

At the April meeting Peter Holden presented long service awards to two of our volunteers. Chris (Christine) Flintham and Sandra Lait.

Chris has volunteered at many RSPB events over the years including the long-running peregrine watchpoint at Lincoln Cathedral. She has also helped to organise volunteers’ rotas and has proof read and corrected many documents on behalf of the Group. Chris also acts as the hostess at the Group’s indoor meetings, serving refreshments to visiting speakers and sponsors and making sure new visitors are made welcome. Chris received the Bittern Long Service Award for volunteering for the RSPB for 30 years.

Sandra has helped to run children’s activities at various events the Group has attended and she currently helps to sell bird food at the Group’s indoor meetings. However, Sandra’s main volunteering role is looking after numerous pin badge boxes around Lincoln, which, last year, contributed to the total amount of £2,167 raised from pin badges and collection boxes in the Lincoln area. Sandra received the Kingfisher Long Service Award for volunteering for the RSPB for 15 years.

Many thanks to both of you for all you have done to help nature.

## Yvonne’s 10k run

On Sunday 7 April Yvonne Allen once again took part in the Lincoln 10k run to raise funds for the RSPB. Although it was not her best run time, Yvonne completed the full 10k and beat all previous fund-raising records by raising a staggering £403.25!

Very well-done Yvonne and many thanks to you for raising such a magnificent sum of money to help nature.

## Field meeting reports

### Brandon Marsh – 17 February 2019

Our first day trip this year was in February and we went to Brandon Marsh near Coventry. This reserve is managed by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and consists of old colliery subsidence pools, gravel pits, marsh, reedbeds, grassland, willow scrub and woodland.

Our first bird of the day was a magpie which was located outside the Visitor Centre but the adjacent feeders were attracting reed buntings, great tits, blue tits, long-tailed tits, a marsh tit, robin, redpoll, nuthatch, dunnock, chaffinch, greenfinch and great spotted woodpecker. We then set off to explore the reserve and its seven hides. In the wooded areas we saw blackbirds, carrion crows, woodpigeons, a jay, mistle thrush, wren, treecreeper and two goldcrests flitting about in the tops of the trees.

The various pools contained mute swans, Canada geese, greylag geese, mallards, tufted ducks, pochards, shovelers, shelducks, teals, gadwalls and goldeneyes. Also, there were cormorants, coots, moorhens, a grey heron, oystercatchers, lapwings and a common snipe. We saw a large number of gulls, mainly black-headed and herring gulls with a few lesser black-backed, great black-backed and common gulls. Five stock doves were spotted, a common buzzard was circling above us and we had an excellent view of a male sparrowhawk perched in a tree. The only other raptor seen was a kestrel but additional birds included a green woodpecker, pied wagtail and redwing. It was a great day and the total birds recorded was 51.

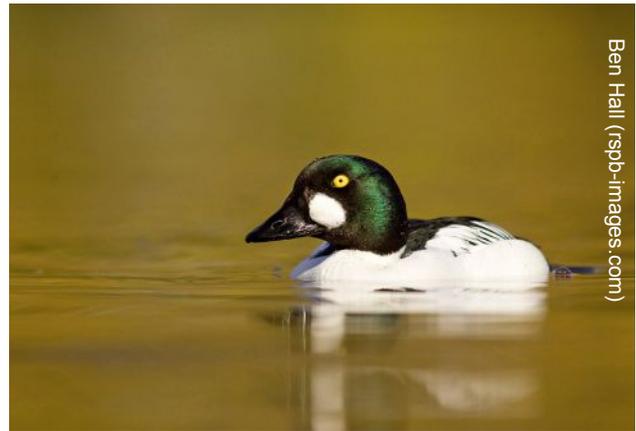
### Tophill Low – 17 March 2019

In March we went to Tophill Low near Beverley, East Yorkshire. The reserve lies in the valley of the River Hull and includes two large reservoirs, lagoons, marshes, scrub and small woodlands.

Mike Langman (rspb-images.com)



Long-tailed tit



Goldeneye (male)

It is owned by Yorkshire Water and managed by Tophill Low Wildlife Group, which has made many improvements to the site.

First of all, we went to the Visitor Centre, which overlooks the D reservoir, where there were male goldeneyes displaying, pochards, tufted ducks, oystercatchers, coots, great crested grebes, black-headed gulls and common gulls. On the feeders there were great tits, blue tits, chaffinches, two coal tits, tree sparrows, a marsh tit and male greenfinch. The seeds and grain, which had fallen beneath the feeders, were enticing a couple of dunnocks and a male pheasant and in the adjacent trees we saw blackbirds, robins, jackdaws and woodpigeons.

Next, we set off round the D reservoir via the footpath through woodland. Here we saw carrion crows, a wren, great spotted woodpecker, treecreeper, goldcrest and male pheasant. As we came out of the woods near some marshes, we spotted a grey heron and male and female reed buntings. In the distance a red kite was seen and a small skein of greylag geese flew over. From a hide overlooking the reservoir we saw teals and wigeons and along the dam wall there were lapwings, fieldfares and three buzzards soaring.

After lunch we made our way to the O reservoir calling in at the North and South Lagoon hides on the way. Here we added moorhens, cormorants, gadwalls, shelducks, mute swans, mallards a little grebe and pied wagtail to our list. We then went to Watton Borrow Pits where there were curlews, redshanks, Canada geese, a little egret, magpies and two lesser black-backed gulls.

When we returned to the Visitor Centre, we spotted a barn owl flying low over an adjacent field, which was a lovely ending to a great day. A kingfisher was also seen by some of the

group and two people saw a sparrowhawk with a blackbird in its talons. This brought the total birds for the day to 53. Roe deer and a stoat with young were the only mammals recorded.

**RSPB St Aidan's – 14 April 2019**

This was our first trip to this RSPB Reserve, which is located near Leeds. There are 12 kilometres of trails that take you through the various habitats, including reedbeds, wetland, meadows and woodland, or, you can enjoy panoramic views from the Visitor Centre. On our approach to the Visitor Centre we saw chaffinches, black-headed gulls, magpies, carrion crows, feral pigeons and woodpigeons but we were unable to locate the little owl which frequented the area containing the now redundant giant digging machine. The Centre overlooks Bowers Lake where we found a grey heron, mute swans, Canada geese, shelducks, tufted ducks, coots and herring gulls. Also, there were many sand martins, house martins and a few swallows flying over the water.

We then set off on the footpath around the reedbeds to find the black-necked grebes. On the way there is a large grassland area where we saw reed buntings, lapwings, stock doves and a flock of geese which contained greylags, pink-footed geese and a solitary bean goose. When we arrived at the reedbeds we heard a bittern booming and we found moorhens, shovelers, pochards, mallards, gadwalls, great crested grebes and cormorants. A common buzzard was flying in the distance and eventually we spotted some black-necked grebes among the reeds. We saw seven altogether and they were resplendent in their full summer plumage. A couple of them came quite close so we had superb views. We continued round the reedbed and added male



Peter Skelson, RSPB Lincoln Local Group

Black-necked grebe








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and female goldeneyes, a skylark, blackbird and kestrel to our list.

After lunch we explored the southern part of the reserve alongside the River Aire where there are some lakes and we found a little egret, starlings, lesser black-backed gulls, wigeons, teals and redshanks. In the trees and bushes there were blue tits, great tits, long-tailed tits, coal tits and goldfinches. A chiffchaff was the only warbler we saw but we heard Cetti's warbler, willow warbler and blackcap. A wren was singing and we spotted a male pheasant and a couple of meadow pipits. A green woodpecker was also seen.

When we arrived back at the Visitor Centre an RSPB volunteer showed us a black-tailed godwit through his telescope and we were informed by one of our group that he had photographed a bittern and spoonbill. All too soon it was time to return to the coach and

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most of us were sitting comfortably in our seats when we saw a small group gathered near the large digger. Some of them started waving to us so we realised they had spotted the little owl. This was too good an opportunity to miss so most of us alighted from the coach and joined them. We had excellent views through a telescope and this brought our total birds seen to 54. This was an excellent ending to a great day at a superb reserve and I am sure we will visit again.

*Ray Daniels*  
RSPB Lincoln Local Group

*Ed: The trip report from St Aidan's was Ray's last report for a few weeks due to ill health. In the meantime, Pete Dryburgh has very kindly volunteered to write the trip reports.*

### RSPB Fowlmere and Ouse Fen - 19th May 2019

Twenty-six of us set off from Lincoln on a sunny day, stopping en route at Peterborough Services, heading for Cambridgeshire. Our morning was spent at RSPB Fowlmere near Royston. This is a smallish Site of Special Scientific Interest which comprises a mosaic of woodland, reedbeds and small lakes/ponds. A chalk stream runs through the reserve.

On arrival we were met by the warden who gave us some information about the reserve and advised us to split into two smaller groups owing to the compact nature of the site. Our group left the small information hut and headed left along the main path, whilst the other group took the right fork.

We were soon assailed by plenty of birdsong with most of our warblers now back from warmer climes. In the first section of our walk we saw/heard: robin, goldfinch, blackcap,



Turtle dove

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chiffchaff, blackbird, song thrush, reed warbler, reed bunting, wren, woodpigeon, buzzard, willow warbler, dunnoek, blue tit, great tit, chaffinch and mallard. The main hide overlooks the reedbed pond where we sighted a pair of lapwings, with one on the nest, greylag and Canada geese, a grey heron perched precariously on a fence. We had been told previously that there was a barn owl on site and there he sat in his box entrance fast asleep about 100 metres from the hide! Everyone was able to get marvellous views of him.

Just afterwards we heard the sound many of us were looking forward to, the soft purring of a turtle dove. These greatly endangered birds are a delight to hear but are a superb sight when able to be seen. It was our leader, Mike, who managed to get a sighting of the one we were hearing as it sat on some hawthorn bushes. Putting a telescope on it meant most of the group were able to see the magnificent plumage of the bird. Some had never seen a turtle dove before, whilst for others it was some time since a sighting so it made everyone's day.

Before leaving the hide we were able to view two beautiful linnets visiting their nest, hear Cetti's warbler and sedge warbler and see both

swifts and swallows flying overhead. A male pheasant strutted through the undergrowth whilst coots were also on the water.

Returning to the coach, we also heard a cuckoo and saw rooks, crows and jackdaws on adjacent farmland. Lesser whitethroat, jay and great spotted woodpecker were also seen by other group members.

After lunch we headed for RSPB Ouse Fen nature reserve near St Ives in Cambridgeshire. This is a joint venture between the RSPB and Hanson (a major gravel company). The area is part of a 30-year project to create Britain's biggest reedbed on worked-out sand and gravel workings. The reserve is sited to either side of the River Great Ouse. Within it there is a working sand and gravel operation which is clearly off-limits to the general public. Owing to its size we were unable to view the whole of the area so we concentrated on the land to the west of the river. This consists of well-established paths running through tree/hedge lined areas within which there are open meadows, lakes and ponds.

Heading out from the site entrance we followed the path network and were able to see/hear many birds: greenfinch, song thrush, carrion crow, chaffinch, woodpigeon, great tit, black-headed gull, blackcap, blue tit, blackbird, mute swan, reed warbler, reed bunting, garden warbler, buzzard, lesser whitethroat, green woodpecker, buzzard, starling, cuckoo, oystercatcher, lapwing, common tern, jackdaw, Canada goose, coot, red kite, tufted duck, cormorant, willow warbler, great crested grebe, little grebe, chiffchaff, pheasant, robin, swallow, a beautiful male marsh harrier, mistle thrush, lesser black-backed gull, shoveler, Cetti's warbler, pochard, gadwall, mallard, Egyptian goose, moorhen and magpie.

However, yet again the star birds of the day were a beautiful barn owl hunting over the fields near the river and numerous sightings of the delightful turtle dove. The reserve must be one of the best places in eastern England to see the dove. We had at least five sightings of it near the main quarry entrance including a pair which stayed in our vision for some five to ten minutes.

This is a site which attracts birds throughout the year including bittern and kingfisher and there is no doubt we will be returning for a visit in the near future. Thanks are due once again to Mike and Carol for arranging another great day out.

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### **Bolton Abbey and Strid Wood - 23 June 2019**

Bolton Abbey is a former 12th Century Augustinian monastery closed under the Dissolution of the Monasteries ordered by King Henry Eighth (now ruined). It is sited alongside the River Wharfe in the Yorkshire Dales not far from Skipton. It and Strid Wood to its north are popular tourist spots visited by many people and it can get very busy near the car parks and cafés as it did when we visited.

Thirty members visited the site and soon split up into smaller groups as people did their own thing. Our party crossed the river and headed up into the woodland where we saw and heard a number of small birds including a family of treecreepers, several warblers including blackcap, chiffchaff, garden warbler and willow warbler plus nuthatch.

Most of the group met up outside the Cavendish Pavilion for lunch before heading off into Strid Wood proper. From the woodland path, our group was delighted to see many grey wagtails leaping for flies over the water, several common sandpipers and some lovely female mandarin ducks, two of which had broods of three ducklings. A beautiful bonus sighting was a female goosander with a fledgling on a rock in

the middle of the river. Nearing Barden Bridge, we had special views of a male pied flycatcher as well as a redstart visiting its nest.

After an exhilarating day we headed back to the Strid Wood car park for a well-earned cup of tea and a slice of cake. Almost all of the group were treated to the sight of a spotted flycatcher flitting in and out of the trees next to the café as well as a nuthatch climbing a tree and several chaffinches looking out for crumbs. A final bonus came as a red kite floated over the coach as we left the car park (one of four we saw on our journeys to and from the area).

The total number of birds seen during the day was 42 and these were: black-headed gull, blackbird, blackcap, carrion crow, chiffchaff, chaffinch, goldfinch, house sparrow, house martin, swallow, sand martin, swift, jackdaw, lesser black-backed gull, oystercatcher, mallard, robin, jay, willow warbler, garden warbler, treecreeper, wren, blue tit, song thrush, long-tailed tit, nuthatch, grey wagtail, pied wagtail, mandarin duck, common sandpiper, feral pigeon, goosander, great tit, great spotted woodpecker, pied flycatcher, spotted flycatcher, pheasant, redstart, woodpigeon, red kite, dipper, whinchat and curlew.

Special thanks are due to Colin Goulding who stepped into the breach of running the trip when Mike and Carol were unable to do so.

### **Paxton Pits: 14 July 2019**

Paxton Pits National Nature Reserve is to be found just off the A1 trunk road to the east of the village of Little Paxton in Cambridgeshire. It consists of a series of worked-out former gravel pits located alongside the River Ouse. There is a good visitor centre and the paths around the site are well-made and accessible to most.

Our party arrived at the centre around 9.45 am and found it still closed. However, as soon as



Green woodpecker

Mike Langman (rspb-images.com)

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the staff realised we were there, they opened up for us. At that time the rainfall was quite heavy so the staff were kept busy supplying everyone with refreshing cups of tea and coffee. The rain soon eased off and we split into several groups to go around the reserve.

Our group spent the morning walking along the Meadow Trail. Bird activity was quite light so we all engaged in looking out for other wildlife along the trail too. Our first bird sightings of note were a mistle thrush in the long grass within one of the meadows and several common terns swooping across the lakes. Several insects were also identified including common darter dragonfly, blue-tailed damselfly, black-tailed skimmer and several butterflies including meadow brown, gatekeeper, ringlet, small and large skipper and common blue.

Moving on towards the village allotments we then saw a pair of long-tailed tits on the overhead wires and a group of house martins circling over the adjacent residential area.

We decided to walk along the River and Heron Trails in the afternoon. Bird activity was minimal except for the startling discovery of several family groups of green woodpeckers which were hurtling around the woodland calling

vociferously; a joyous sight to behold. We found several more insects whilst walking alongside the river including banded demoiselle damselflies.

We then retraced our steps towards the centre seeing a male yellowhammer on the wires and a single lapwing on Heron Lake. The party compared notes at the centre and the total number of birds seen came to 42, although no nightingales were seen or heard (Paxton Pits was once a place where there were regularly high numbers of singing males).

Thanks once again to Mike and Carol for arranging a very pleasant trip with a whole variety of wildlife on site.

*Pete Dryburgh,  
RSPB Lincoln Local Group*

## New information boards for Swanholme Lakes Local Nature Reserve

I represent the Lincoln RSPB Local Group on the Hartsholme Country Park Advisory Group; the key aims of which are to advise the City Council on all issues which affect the Park and to help promote its position of importance to the local community.

Although Hartsholme Country Park already has four different very informative boards which were put up in 2008, last year the Advisory Group felt that there was a need for an



Yellowhammer

Mike Langman (rspb-images.com)

additional information boards for the Swanholme Lakes Nature Reserve. The Group has now produced them, and the Park Rangers have arranged for their erection in three different locations on the theme of "A Place for Nature in the City" (see photograph). These boards were funded by the Lincolnshire Co-op. I helped to put together the content for the information board and was one of three artists who produced illustrations of flora and fauna for it. The boards include the history of the Lakes and how the Reserve came about, draw attention to the wildlife that lives there, and explain the variety of wildlife habitats on the Reserve. They also give the important message that dogs can disturb the wildlife, emphasising the need to keep dogs on leads at all times.

*Alan Flintham  
RSPB Lincoln Local Group*

## Group Leaders award

This year the award went to Wendy and Michael Hinks who have been running the Group's second-hand bookstall for the last three years. Not only is it a very popular stall at our indoor meetings, it also contributes to Group funds. It's not easy carrying heavy boxes of books to the meetings each month and having to store them and sort them. Wendy and Michael also volunteer for the both the heron watchpoint and the peregrine watchpoint. Many thanks for all you are doing to help nature.

*Ed: You can nominate anyone who you think deserves some recognition for what they do to help the Group or the RSPB (committee members cannot be nominated).*

## Sponsorship

If you would like to sponsor an event, the printing of a newsletter, etc., please contact Heather Dowson, Sponsorship Organiser.

## Our amazing volunteers and why we need you

Many of you have helped us over the past year by leading walks or helping at events such as the heron and peregrine watchpoints, Hartsholme Country Park spring fair, Countryside Lincs, etc. In fact our records show that you spent 1,379 hours volunteering for the Group last year, and that doesn't include the many hours that some of you must have spent delivering programmes, so, a big thank you to you all for supporting the RSPB and your Local Group.

We always need new people to volunteer. You will get so much more from your membership by getting involved and helping. This will be 28th year we have been running the free monthly birdwatching walks at Hartsholme Country Park and Swanholme Lakes Nature Reserve and they are still popular with 20 people on the walk last September. However, they can only continue if we have enough people willing to lead them and we are now beginning to struggle to find enough leaders. So, if you can help and lead one of the walks next year please contact Fiona McKenna who will be organising next year's rota.

To try and continue to provide bird food at the indoor meetings Colin or Graham are currently traveling to Brant Broughton each month to collect it from the Jacksons. However, the Jacksons are no longer in good health so unless we can find someone to completely take over organising bird food sales, we're not sure how much longer we will be able to continue to provide it. That would be a huge blow as it is top quality bird food at very low prices and even at these low prices, we still make some money to help fund the running of your Group. If this is something you would like to help with please speak to a committee member to find out what is involved.

## Changes to your committee

At this year's AGM Roy Jillings retired as Membership Secretary. Roy has also been a keen volunteer at both the heron and peregrine watchpoints. He has done a brilliant job and we owe him a sincere and grateful vote of thanks.

We welcome Mel Thorn on to the committee who takes over the role of Membership Secretary and we hope that you will give Mel all the help that you can when it comes to distributing the Group's 2020 programme.

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## It's all down to us!

I'm sure you are all aware that the UN published a report on bio-diversity and eco systems in May this year. The report makes grim reading and warns that a million species are at risk of extinction.

The evidence is clear - nature is in trouble. Therefore, we are in trouble as we too are part of nature, and it is nature that makes up our life support systems to provide our food, our water, our energy, the air we breathe, and our well-being.

Everyone is responsible. So, we should all think about making some changes to our lifestyle. One positive thing you can do is continue to support the RSPB and other conservation organisations as they are working tirelessly to provide more places for nature. So, we urge you all to renew your membership and do all you can to support the RSPB.

## Quotable quotes

"The biggest threat to nature is WHO will care?"

*Dr Mike Clarke,  
RSPB Chief Executive*

## Every little helps!

### Operation turtle dove

In the UK, numbers of this species have plummeted by almost 95% in the last 20 years, making it the country's fastest declining breeding bird. There is no doubt that this situation is critical, and we must act now!

Eastern England supports more than half of the national breeding population. The farmland and scrub habitats in the region are just right to provide a successful breeding season, but help is needed to increase monitoring for this species, support RSPB conservation advisors who work with groups of landowners to establish 'Turtle Dove Friendly Zones', and rollout further supplementary feeding sites across the region.

It is for that reason that the Lincoln Local Group has made a donation of £3,500 to help to reverse the decline of this beautiful summer migrant.

For more information about how you can support turtle doves (e.g., conducting a breeding season survey, supporting an open-farm Sunday, assisting supplementary feeding schemes or selling turtle dove pin badges), please contact: Emma Stobart, Turtle Dove Conservation Advisor. Email: Emma.Stobart@rspb.org.uk

### RSPB Frampton Marsh

Despite being just over ten years old, RSPB Frampton Marshes now hosts internationally important numbers of wintering wildfowl.

In order to provide suitable conditions for wintering wildfowl (including dark-bellied brent geese and wigeon), the Frampton Marshes team must control a number of undesirable plant species on the marshland and



Brent geese



RSPB Frampton Marsh

surrounding fields, such as thistles and ragwort. These plants reduce the available area for grazing water birds.

The team must cut the grassland every autumn to provide short-sward areas, which make the best feeding grounds for wildfowl. To do this, they hire a tractor and mow the grassland, then scrape the grass banks with a topper. This process costs around £2,000 annually from the regional budget.

As it is one of the nearest - and arguably one of the best - RSPB reserves for our local group members; and we know many of you visit the reserve on a regular basis and make use of all it has to offer, we decided to donate the final £3,500 available to this reserve.

## 2020 Coach trips

Until now the Group has always included admission charges in the price of coach trips where it is applicable such as when we visit nature reserves owned by the National Trust, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, County Trust, etc. If you are a member of these organisations you are refunded the admission charge at a later date. This has caused extra work for the treasurer and you have had to wait to get your refund.

From 2020 two prices will be quoted in the programme, one for members of the organisation being visited and one for non-members. It will be important that you state at the time of booking whether or not you will have a **valid membership card of that organisation on the day of travel** and it will also be important that you bring your membership card with you. If you don't, you may have to pay the full individual entry charge and not just the reduced group entry charge that other non-members on the trip will be paying.

This new system will be better for you as you will not have to pay money out when you don't need to and then have to wait for it to be refunded; it will be easier for our treasurer and it will cause less confusion and save time.

Why do the seats on our coach trips cost more than the seats on a coach to a football match when the mileage is the same? The reason is that we hire the coach and driver for a much longer time period. A football match lasts a couple of hours, so a coach would usually be hired for half a day or an evening. When we hire a coach to travel the same distance it's hired from early morning until late evening and that makes a big difference to the hire charge. Every seat is usually taken on a coach to a football match whereas our coaches are, on average, only two thirds full. We also hire executive style coaches with on-board toilets so that people never feel uncomfortable on longer journeys and we also include a small amount for the driver's gratuities.

Each year we obtain quotations from at least three coach companies and then select the quote that offers the best value for money. Prices are calculated on the average number of people who go on the trips. Occasionally a coach trip will run at a loss, such as the recent one to Carsington Water. It is then subsidised from those that are profitable. This is much better than having to cancel a trip and disappoint people due to insufficient bookings - or even worse, increase the price for that particular trip! Any profits made over the year from coach trips are always ploughed back into RSPB nature reserves to provide better habitats for wildlife and better facilities for you. Don't forget It's a costly business running a reserve!

## Future coach outings

### Lackford Lakes 13 October



Merlin

Situated near Bury St Edmunds the reserve is managed by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust. The site was created from former gravel pits that lie beside the River Lark. It now consists of



Shoveler

wetland, scrub, woodland and sandy heath. Our visit will coincide with the arrival of a wide range of wildfowl. Regular visitors to the reserve include shoveler, goosander, bittern, lapwing and goldeneye. Kingfishers and great crested grebes are here all year round. The reserve has excellent facilities with a visitor centre, café, shop and toilets. There are four trails around the reserve and eight hides/viewing points. A trip not to be missed

### Rutland Water 17 November

This nature reserve is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and recognised as a globally important wetland Ramsar site. The reserve occupies shoreline and a series of shallow lagoons and covers a total area of 1,000 acres. Consequently, it attracts large numbers of waterfowl of which many are here in November. Good numbers of wading birds will be in evidence including golden plovers and lapwings. Excellent facilities are available at the Anglian Birdwatching Centre, displays, shop, and optical shop. There are nature trails and plenty of hides where you can view the birds. An excellent days birding in prospect.

### Blacktoft Sands 15 December

The reserve is situated near Goole on the south bank of the River Ouse. The site consists of a very large reedbed and a series of saline lagoons and wetlands. In winter it is famous for its evening raptor roost when up to 30 or 40 marsh harriers can be seen along with hen harrier and merlin. Barn owls and peregrine may also be seen hunting large numbers of teal and wigeon provide an impressive spectacle from hides. A good colony of tree sparrows frequent the feeding station along the hedgerow. Facilities include visitor centre, toilets, nature trail and six hides. Great reserve to finish the year off.

*Colin Goulding  
RSPB Lincoln Local Group*

## Dates for your diary

### SEPTEMBER

**15 COACH TRIP** to **Yorkshire Wildlife Trust Spurn Point**. The new visitor centre is now open. Leave Lincoln 8 am. Leave reserve 5 pm. Adults £19. C, H, NT, VC, WC.

### OCTOBER

**10 INDOOR MEETING Shetland Isles: a Northern Gem** by **Danny Green** ([www.dannygreenphotography.com](http://www.dannygreenphotography.com)). Sponsored by Streets Chartered Accountants in memory of Carol Curtis, one of the Tax Partners who passed away recently.

**13 COACH TRIP** to **Suffolk Wildlife Trust Lackford Lakes**. Leave Lincoln 8 am. Leave reserve 5 pm. Adults £29 including admission. C, H, NT, S, VC, WC.

**26 RSPB MEMBERS' DAY AND AGM**. QEII Centre, Westminster, London. To book a place see *Nature's Home* magazine or contact RSPB HQ T: 01767 680551.

### NOVEMBER

**14 INDOOR MEETING Spring in Poland** by **Peter Dunn** (<https://pjd43.zenfolio.com>). Sponsored by Just Audi VW.

**17 COACH TRIP** to **Anglian Water Rutland Water**. Leave Lincoln 8.30 am. Leave reserve 4 pm. Adults £22 including admission charge. H, NT, S, VC, WC.

**20 AFTERNOON BIRDWATCH** at **Woodland Waters**, Ancaster. Set in a 72 acre wooded valley. Meet at 10 am. Entrance fee £2 payable on entry. C, NT, WC.

### DECEMBER

**12 INDOOR MEETING Gary Prescott, The Biking Birder**. Gary has visited every RSPB nature reserve travelling entirely by bike. This evening he recalls some of his adventures, the people he has met and the wildlife he has seen. Sponsored by Janette Marshall in memory of her parents, Eileen and John White.

**15 COACH TRIP** to **RSPB Blacktoft Sands**. At this time of the year there will be plenty of winter wildfowl to see. Leave Lincoln 9 am. Leave reserve 4 pm. Adults £17. H, VC, WC.

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

### JANUARY

**9 INDOOR MEETING UK Wildlife** by **Ian Newton** ([www.iannewtonphotography.com](http://www.iannewtonphotography.com)). Sponsored by Carol Harvey in memory of her husband Alan Harvey.

**11 - 13 THREE DAYS in Dumfries and Galloway** visiting RSPB Campfield Marsh (Cumbria), RSPB Mersehead and WWT Caerlaverock. £160 in a double or twin room or £190 in a single room. Cost includes all coach travel, entry to WWT and two nights half board at the the Station Hotel, Dumfries. Deduct £6 from the above costs if you will have a valid WWT membership card at the time of travel. Cancellation insurance is *not* included.

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.lincolnrspb.org.uk>



Find us on 

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

The RSPB is the UK'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.

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