

St Aidan's – 28 April 2024

Our field trip in April was to St Aidan's RSPB Reserve near Leeds. The area is bounded by the River Aire and was formed by mining subsidence. It consists of reedbeds, lakes with islands, scrapes, grassland, scrub and native trees. It attracts many interesting birds including Black-necked Grebes, which breed here.

When we left Lincoln, it was dismal and wet but at St Aidan's the rain was light for most of the time and it stopped by mid-afternoon. There were also some sunny periods. The Visitor Centre overlooks one of the lakes and there were many Sand Martins flying over the water. Among these birds there were some House Martins and one or two Swallows. A couple of Swifts were also seen later in the day. On the lake we spotted Great Crested Grebes, Mute Swans, Greylag Geese, Canada Geese, Coots, Tufted Ducks and Gadwalls.

We set off to explore the reserve and first of all we stopped at the trees near the enormous piece of mining machinery to see the resident Little Owl. However, we did need some help from one of the RSPB volunteers to find it. Further on in the reedbeds we spotted Lapwings, Black-headed Gulls, Shovelers, Mallards, Shelducks, a Kestrel, two Marsh Harriers, a Sparrowhawk, Little Grebes, Moorhens and a Spoonbill which flew over. A Redshank, Oystercatcher, Curlew, Black-tailed Godwit, Little Egret and two Bitterns were also seen. I think that most of our group saw the Black-necked Grebes along with a Sedge Warbler, Reed Bunting, Tree Pipit, Grey Partridge, Skylark, Dunnock, Pied Wagtail, Linnet and Meadow Pipit. Other birds seen were Woodpigeons, Magpies, Carrion Crows, Black-headed Gulls, Lesser Black-backed Gulls, Herring Gulls, Cormorants, Robins, Blackbirds, Blue Tits, Long-tailed Tits, Great Tits, Goldfinches and Starlings.



Black-necked Grebe

Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

Despite the weather we had a great time and we saw a total of 52 birds.

Ray Daniels
RSPB Lincoln Local Group