

## Summer Leys Nature Reserve – 13 October 2024

These worked-out gravel workings are managed by the Bedfordshire/Cambridgeshire/Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust. The reserve is located at Wollaston near Wellingborough in Northamptonshire in the Upper Nene Valley. It is 47 hectares in area and has a small range of facilities including a small shop/refreshment area and toilets as well as several hides. The site consists of a large lake as well as scrapes and woodland. Part of the route round the main lake consists of the line of a disused railway, now a public footpath.

The visit by the Group was the first this century so most people had never visited the reserve. Departure from Lincoln was at 8 am with further pick-ups at North Hykeham. Twenty-six Members made the trip.

Arrival at the reserve was at 10 am where we were met by the warden and a volunteer who were most helpful in giving information about the site and dispensing fortifying drinks. The sightings board revealed that there was a rarity on the reserve of which more later.

We split up into small groups and headed off into the reserve where our party spotted several small birds in the woodland including Robins, Great and Blue Tits, a Wren and a Dunnock. The hides on the east side of the lake included a double-decker hide and a feeding station. From these we were able to see that there was a large gull colony with Black-headed, Common, Great Black-backed and Lesser Black-backed present. There were also scores of Cormorants and Lapwings. The duck species were mainly of the dabbling sort except for Tufted Ducks. There were also substantial numbers of Greylag and Canada Geese both on the lake and adjoining fields. Wherever we go now we are sure to see egrets and this site was no exception producing several Great Whites as well as Little Egrets. There were also several Snipe.

The Feeding Station produced Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Dunnock, Great Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Collared Dove, Woodpigeon and a single Great Spotted Woodpecker.

Moving onto the west side of the lake we spotted a large group of enthusiasts viewing one of the islands on the lake. We had been made aware that this bird was present, but then we homed in on a Glossy Ibis which was sitting amongst other birds - a very beautiful sight to see and for quite a few members their first sighting of this splendid bird. We spent many minutes watching it.

Suitably delighted by this sighting our party then headed off for a well-earned lunch!

After lunch we repeated the morning's walk but in the opposite direction. We viewed the island again, but the Ibis had gone. However, a lady pointed out to us that the bird had moved to an island on the other side of the lake. Using our scopes, we had some wonderful views of the Ibis feeding along the island's shoreline.

This is an excellent reserve, and our visit was very well-received by all. Departure was at 4.30 pm and arrival back in Lincoln was around 7 pm. Thanks are due to Geoff and Graham for organising another great day out and to Roger for sorting out the tech!

Birds recorded during our visit:

Black-headed Gull, Common Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Great Tit, Blue Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Robin, Wren, Goldfinch, Greenfinch, Dunnock, Woodpigeon, Collared Dove, Carrion Crow, Jackdaw, Magpie, Lapwing, Snipe, Glossy Ibis, Buzzard, Kestrel, Sparrowhawk, Greylag Goose, Canada Goose, Mallard, Teal, Wigeon, Gadwall, Pintail, Shoveler, Tufted Duck, Great White Egret, Little Egret, Great Crested Grebe, Little Grebe, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Cormorant, Goldcrest, Blackbird, Coot, Moorhen, Grey Heron, Mute Swan, Starling, Reed Bunting, Stonechat.



Glossy Ibis, Summer Leys

*Peter Dryburgh  
Lincoln RSPB Local Group.*