

THE DIPPER



THE GWENT ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
Registered charity number 1088830

GOS WEB SITE: www.gwentbirds.org.uk

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Note from the Chairman.....

SUMMARY OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 13TH SEPTEMBER 2022 ONLINE VIA ZOOM

COMMITTEE POSITIONS:

Various committee will step down at the end of the year: Gill Jones (Membership Secretary); Catherine Gregory (Secretary), Leesha Salamon (Treasurer) and Dave Brassey (Outdoor Secretary). Please consider volunteering.

Linking the treasurer and membership secretary roles together may be possible. (Note that since the committee meeting we have a potential volunteer for secretary).

PEDW:

Andrew Baker gave an update on PEDW (Planning and Environment Decisions Wales); the Welsh assembly is currently holding an enquiry into Rushwall solar farm, as to whether it goes forward or not. GWT are very active in this. The solar farm was originally stopped because of landscape concerns. AB objected on our behalf as the SSSI area is an inappropriate place for a solar farm and has asked for the mitigation acreage to be increased.

WEBSITE:

There has been a major upgrade of WordPress; it is possible do more with better control to improve the Dipper archive and news archive. Andrew Cormack has improved the process for joining (via top menu) and is making it clear that credit cards can be used, with standing order as default. AC has turned Darryl Spittle's presentation (about bird recording) into a page.

INDOOR EVENTS

Robin Hall is planning next year's programme of indoor events and would like to know if there is any feedback on ideas for the meetings. It is likely that the 4 meetings at the darkest time of the year would be by Zoom (last two before Xmas, first two after). The internet connection is not great in the Goytre area so it would be impractical to combine Zoom with a live meeting from GVH at the same time. The membership survey (20% response) was quite positive towards Zoom meetings.

INDOOR PROGRAMME

The indoor programme starts from Saturday 17th September (Sri Lanka) with the first two meetings in Goytre Village Hall, then by Zoom for the darker months. Robin Hall is looking for a speaker for the Zoom meeting on 29th October as someone dropped out and would be interested in any suggestions for next year; cut-off date for next year is the end of October (suggestions to indoor@gwentbirds.org.uk). The committee discussed advertising the meetings more widely.

If a talk were to be shared, it would be preferable to ask the membership secretary to send out a message to the membership only, then send out a link to interested members.

OUTDOOR PROGRAMME

The next event is a full day at Steart on 24th September with Blair Jones; observatory trip is booked.

ANNUAL REPORT

The data for 2020 and 2021 data may be put into one report to bring this back on track and save on postage. Ways of sharing the work that goes into the report was raised.

GOYTRE HOUSE WOOD

Jubilee Tree planting project.

Saplings will be delivered early November with planting planned for Saturday 19th November; we just need volunteers.

NEWPORT WETLAND RESERVE

There is still only one lagoon with water in it and there are plans to cut grass on the islands. Recent sightings include a Citrine Wagtail, Little Stint, 50 Yellow Wagtails, Kestrel and Goldcliff Ringing Group ringed an Aquatic Warbler at Uskmouth (the first for about a decade).

LLANDEGFEDD RESERVOIR

The planning application by the reservoir, to turn the water sports centre into a general entertainments centre continues. Welsh Water have agreed to have a SSSI plan done by Ricardo consultancy; there will only be two weeks to check if it's a decent plan, which is not enough.

LEVELS STAKEHOLDERS

The Levels stakeholder presentation (GWT with other stakeholders of the Gwent levels) was circulated before the meeting. There is an opportunity to put forward a priority list to the Welsh government, which may lead to funding. Key areas for GOS are curlews (Verity Picken's surveys), swifts, kestrel (Goldcliff Ringing Group).

BTO Business

There has been a good response to surveying post pandemic. There will be a number of squares to be surveyed for next year. The video of training session can be made available and old hands could show newcomers how it is done. Please help to bring in some new blood into the survey team.

There will be a second year of the WOS Rookery survey; people found it straightforward and hopefully will participate again.

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 1st November, 7:30 pm.

Goytre House Wood – Tree planting update

As previously indicated in the Dipper we have been granted 110 tree whips for planting at Goytre House Wood this year.

We now have a delivery window for the trees and therefore we have set the date for planting as Saturday 19th November.

The provisional schedule is provided elsewhere in the Dipper.

We would love to see members come along and lend a hand during the day, even if you can only manage an hour or so, please do come along.

We are hoping to have younger helpers from the local cub / scout group on the day.

If you feel you are unable to help with tree planting, we will require help back at the village hall from 2:30 pm when we will have refreshments available for those who have helped in planting the trees.

Tree Planting Schedule – Saturday November 19th, 2022

9:00 am Committee Personnel arrive at Goytre Wood

Erect GOS Gazebo and prepare tree whips

9:30 Volunteers start to arrive.

9:50 am Nominated person to Goytre Car Park

10:00 am Cub Scouts to be escorted to Goytre Wood

10:15 am Health & safety information to volunteers, Instructions on planting.

10:30 am Commence planting of tree whips. Supervisory control and help by committee members

12:00 Short break (Volunteers to be advised to bring food & drink. (Possible supply of squash to Cub Scouts courtesy of GOS)

01:00 pm Return to planting remaining tree whips.

02:30 pm Completion? Volunteers to return to Goytre Village Hall for tea, cakes & biscuits (Supplied by GOS) (Goytre Hall is booked until 6:00 pm)

Committee to ensure Gazebo taken down and any rubbish to be collected for disposal. Return to Goytre Village Hall for refreshments.

05:00 pm approx. Finish

PARKING:

There is no parking facility at the wood. Goytre Village parking in car park opposite the Goytre Arms Pub.

There are two small pull-ins just after the canal bridge, Drive past the wood and over the canal bridge, pull-in on both the right & left side of the road. Possible 6? Cars maximum.



Best Coverage to date

What a difference a year makes! With lock-down restrictions lifted surveyors got out into the field and delivered a fantastic result. A total of 49 squares in the region had coverage – this is the highest number since the survey started, back in 1994 and only the third time that over

40 squares were covered. Also impressive has been the move to inputting data directly by people with some 79% of early visit and 84% of late visit data having already been submitted on-line.

Data this year was collected by 38 volunteers, with several people surveying more than one square. It's also worth noting that they walked some 180km to gather the data – what a fantastic, healthy effort. My thanks to everyone involved.

All data collected will feed through to the published BTO National statistics, but before then here are some provisional BBS statistics for the Gwent region:

Most widespread species for BBS

Gwent in 2022

Species	Squares	Percentage of all squares surveyed	Individuals
Wren	46	96%	595
Robin	46	96%	415
Woodpigeon	45	94%	786
Blackbird	45	94%	759
Carrion Crow	45	94%	630
Chiffchaff	45	94%	311
Chaffinch	45	94%	269
Song Thrush	44	92%	245
Blue Tit	43	90%	313
Great Tit	42	88%	194

Woodpigeon	786	45	94%
Blackbird	759	45	94%
Carrion Crow	630	45	94%
Wren	595	46	96%
Jackdaw	508	26	54%
House Sparrow	434	37	77%
Robin	415	46	96%
Blue Tit	313	43	90%
Chiffchaff	311	45	94%
Rook	292	14	29%

Why not join the active band of surveyors in 2023 and take on a survey square of your own. This really is a way of making your birdwatching count with the data collected feeding into the National statistics that then become available to influence and shape future policies that impact upon our birdlife.

A number of squares have now become available, so it's a perfect time to have a look at this survey and to plan for the 2023 season. Just drop me a line and I can provide further details including on training opportunities - bto@gwentbirds.org.uk. I look forward to hearing from you.

Richard M. Clarke
[BTO Regional Representative - Gwent](#)

UKBS Bird Report October 2022

Chris Hatch

Highlights:

Three Great white Egrets were seen at Newport Wetlands (1st). A Black Kite was also reported from this site, as was a probable Baird's Sandpiper (11th), and a Wood Sandpiper (17th). A Wryneck was present at Llangybi (14th).

Newport Wetlands Reserve:

A juvenile Garganey was reported (1st), whilst a Little Stint was present for most of the month. Up to eleven Curlew Sandpipers were present (29th).

Other Sites:

A Barn Owl was seen at Newport (3rd). A flock of 40 Yellow Wagtails was reported from Peterstone (13th).

Where to Watch Birds in Wales by David Saunders & Jon Green

Book review by Richard M. Clarke



WHERE TO WATCH BIRDS IN WALES



The book is described as the “**definitive guide to the birdwatching sites of Wales**” and essential for all birdwatchers living in or visiting Wales.

Now in its fifth edition, it features many new sites and includes updated maps and a revised and an expanded text. Inevitably, I found a few site details where further updating would be helpful, but this in no way devalues site entries and the core information provided is excellent.

The book uses what is now a well-established format. Sites are organised by vice county and a short county introduction to the ornithological interest is given together with a helpful county map of the sites included. As for site information, details of habitat, species likely to be encountered during different seasons of the year, past rarity information, access details and suggestions on the timing of a visit are all provided. Website

addresses are included where available, and OS Landranger and Explorer sheet references are provided.

A total of 142 sites are listed and therefore I’m certain that even the most travelled and experienced birdwatcher will find at least several new sites of interest to explore. When I picked this book up it felt very familiar and much like an old friend. I wondered however whether my feelings of nostalgia for the 5th edition were well placed. In these days of readily available website content, was there still a place for a printed book? Having reviewed the book, my view is that *Where to Watch Birds in Wales* remains an invaluable and most trusted site guide. It continues to be relevant as a definitive single source of information about Wales’ best birding spots and therefore continues to have a place on any respectable birder’s bookshelf.

Members of GOS are entitled to a 30% discount on the paperback version of this book. To take advantage of this terrific offer use the code WTWBW30 at the Bloomsbury (Helm) checkout:

<https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/where-to-watch-birds-in-wales-9781472979513/>

GOS INDOOR PROGRAMME 2022

Please note that meetings will be via Zoom or live at Goytre Village Hall. All meetings commence at 7:30 pm.

See comments column for location.

Zoom connection information will be sent to email members within 7 days of the date of the meeting.

DATE	TOPIC	SPEAKER	COMMENTS
OCTOBER 1ST	Wader Quest	RICK SIMPSON	GOYTRE VILLAGE HALL MEETING
OCTOBER 15TH	New Zealand: Endemic Birds & Natural History	JOHN BUCKINGHAM	ZOOM MEETING
OCTOBER 29TH	Russian Far East	CHRIS COLLINS	ZOOM MEETING
NOVEMBER 12TH	Britain's Coastal Birds and Their Secretive Lives	SIMON GINNAW	ZOOM MEETING
NOVEMBER 26TH	Birding Israel	MIKE ALLIBONE	ZOOM MEETING
DECEMBER 10TH	A Year In the Life of a Bird Tour Guide	NEIL GLENN	ZOOM MEETING

OUTDOOR PROGRAMME 2022

Date	Time	Walk Area	Description	Attendance	Meeting Place	Leader
Charges may apply at some reserves. at outdoor events is undertaken at your own risk.						
16/01/2022	7.00	Tregaron & Aberystwyth	Full day - Raptors and Starling murmuration	Abergavenny Bus Station. Car sharing.	Dave Brassey	
30/01/2022	9.00	NWR Uskmouth	Bird ringing with Goldcliff Ringing Group as part of the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch weekend. Weather dependent.	NWR Uskmouth RSPB centre	Richard M. Clarke	
13/02/2022	9.15	Slimbridge	Full day - Winter visitors inc Bewicks and Whoopers	Slimbridge Car Park. Charge for non WWT members	Dave Brassey	
19/03/2022	9.00	Mynydd Llangatwg	Moderate Walk 2 - 3 hours - Wheatear, Red Grouse and Golden Plover	SO202124 (NP23 4GU)	Nick Bewick	
23/04/2022	9.00	Brynmawr, Beaufort and Gamllydan	Moderate walk 2 - 3 hours	Asda Brynmawr car park	Nick Bewick	
30/04/2022	9.00	River Ebbw Tredegar Park	Easy Walk 2hrs with opportunity to look inside the newly built Sand Martin hotel	South bound layby on A467 (Forge Road - ST282860)	Richard M Clarke	
07/05/2022	9.30	RSPB Gwentfrwd-Dinas	Full day with RSPB staff guides - Hawfinch, Pied Flycatcher etc	Gwentfrwd-Dinas but car-sharing to be arranged	Dave Brassey	
15/05/2022	8.30	Lower Monnow	Easy walk 3 hours	On road by Osbaston School SO507137 - NP25 3PU	John Coleman	
28/05/2022	9.00	Collister Pill	Easy walk 3 hours	Urdy Church	Lyndon Waters	
10/06/2022	20.00	Wentwood Forest	Easy evening walk to look for Nighthar and Firecrest	Cadira Beeches	Gavin Vella	
11/06/2022	8.30	Blaen Bran Woodland	Moderate walk 2 - 3 hours	Blaen Bran Woodland car park ST272968	Keith Roylance	
18/06/2022	8.30	Trellech Heaths	Moderate walk 2/3 hrs	Ninewells Car Park	Steph Tyler	
26/06/2022	7.30	NWR Uskmouth	Wardler ringing with Goldcliff Ringing Group. Booking essential (surveys@gwentbirds.org.uk) Weather dependent	NWR Uskmouth car park	Richard M Clarke	
23/07/2022	9.00	Ham Wall	Easy walk Full day	Ham Wall Car Park ST 449 396 (Charge for Non-RSPB members)	Dave Brassey	
24/09/2022	9.00	Stearr	Full Day in this large improving reserve	Car Park ST 25208 44210	Blair Jones	
07/09-Oct		Portland	Bookings taken from 1st July - take sleeping bag and food. book - email Dave Brassey david.brassey@ntworld.com	Observatory	Dave Brassey	
22/10/2022	8.00	Allt-y-r yn NR and Ynys-y-Fro Reservoir	3 hours walk - some gradients and steps	Fourteen Locks Car Park (E1 charge)	Dave Brassey	
26/11/2022	9.00	Llandegfedd Reservoir	Easy Walk around the reservoir	Fisherman's car park at north end of reservoir SO332007	Keith Roylance	