



Outdoor Programme Report – second half of 2023

All photographs taken on the actual walks by Dave Brassey unless stated otherwise.

Ham Wall - 8th July - Dave Brassey

The annual trip to the Somerset Levels suffered reduced numbers this year due to the threat of bad weather, but the five who took the risk were pleasantly surprised that the rain held off for most of the day. Excellent views were had of several Marsh Harriers, Bittern and Great White Egrets and there were plenty of butterflies, damselflies and dragonflies.



Bittern



Marsh Harriers



Blackcap fledgling



Peacock



Great White Egret

Steart – 23rd September – Blair Jones

A good turnout for this walk, but unfortunately no one told the birds we were coming as they all seemed to be hiding. However, the dozen birders had a very pleasant stroll around the reserve with good views of Marsh Harrier and Golden Plover as well as the more expected waders and passerines. Distant views of Spoonbill and Wood Sandpiper were also had.



The Group

Blair Jones



Pied Wagtail



Migrant Hawker



Wheatear



Wood Sandpiper



Devil's Coach Horse beetle

Pwll Ddu – 14th October - Nicholas Beswick

Another day where the forecast was not good, but the *Magnificent Seven* dodged the showers for a circuit of Gilwern Hill and a walk to Pwll Du quarry. Along the way Buzzard, Peregrine and Kestrel went over and a Raven kept a beady eye on us when we approached the quarry. Bushes were laden with berries, except for Rowan (which seems to be the Ring Ouzel's favourite). Stonechats showed well and several Red Admiral butterflies were enjoying the sunshine. A highlight at the end of the walk was a flock of 25 Fieldfare.

View towards The Skirrid	Fieldfare
Raven	Kestrel

Portland – 20th to 22nd October – Dave Brassey

We once again had a full house for our annual October two-night visit to the Observatory. The 14 birders who attended were pleased to leave the torrential downpours in Gwent to find that the clearing skies gave way to a glorious couple of days.

We were treated to many 'birds in hand' of which the highlights were Little Bunting and Yellow-browed Warbler, but the most surprising of 'captures' was caught earlier in the day before we arrived – a blue Budgerigar. The good news is that it was found a suitable home before we left!

In the garden Redwing, Brambling and Firecrest all showed well.

As expected, the Little Owl kept guard in the quarry, but on this trip there were several sightings of its partner at the same time. Down at The Bill the Rock Pipits showed well and out at sea sightings of Shearwater and Scoter were among the Gannets.

At Lodmoor and Radipole, Bearded Tit were seen along with several Mediterranean Gulls, Marsh Harrier, Snipe and Golden Plover among the usual waders and wildfowl. Ferry Bridge provided good numbers of Brent Geese (100) and Ringed Plover (80) plus Dunlin, Knot and both Godwit species.



Little Bunting

Lyndon Waters



Yellow-browed Warbler

Lyndon Waters



Bar-tailed Godwit



Back-tailed Godwit



Rock Pipit



Skylark



Redwing



Little Owl



Starling



Mediterranean Gull



Ringed Plover



Snipe



Oystercatcher



Bearded Tit

Lyndon Waters

Fourteen Locks – 4th November – Dave Brassey

This was the wettest walk we had this year as Storm Ciaran kept all but an intrepid three at home. The decision was made to test our waterproofs and see what could be seen on a shortened walk. We omitted the canal, the golf course and the Nature Reserve and just went around Ynysfro Reservoir and back through Maes Coed.

Sadly, not a lot to be seen apart from all the usual suspects on the reservoir but good views of a Goshawk flying over Maes Coed and there was a great abundance of fungi in the woods and the clear-fell area.