

# Celtic Bird Tours

## South Wales Wetlands

1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2000  
Tour Report

Tour Leader: Neil Donaghy.

Participants: Jill Sharland. Helen Cheleda. Lesley Tuthill on 2<sup>nd</sup> only.

### 1<sup>st</sup>

Sunny Intervals then rain in the late afternoon.

Wind: 2 - 4 ESE

18 Celsius

I met Jill and Helen at the Atlantic Hotel at 08.45 and we headed straight to Kenfig NNR. The light wind looked promising for visible migration and so it proved until approximately 11.00, when the wind picked up. Barn Swallows were moving east in ones and twos with a total of 200 throughout the morning. Meadow Pipits were also moving with approximately 50 altogether. One House Martin was disappointing but small numbers of Chaffinch, Skylark and Wood Pigeons kept us alert for passing birds. At 09.30 a large raptor approached from the north east at a height of no more than 50 metres. The bird gave excellent views and it wasn't too long before we all had agreed that it was a juvenile Honey Buzzard, an excellent find and only the second record for the reserve and Bridgend County. The bird continued south east towards Porthcawl and presumably out over the sea. At least 10 Goldcrest were either seen or heard but overall the bushes were unusually quiet with just a few Robins, Blackbirds and a Song Thrush of note.

At the north hide, we spent some time on the finer points of gull identification, with instant results when Jill and H were put to the test later! A young male Kestrel gave good views as it perched atop a Hawthorn and a flock of 6 Mistle Thrush was a good count. A Grey Heron sat on a post and Coots, Moorhens and Mallards loafed on the water.

We flushed 4 Snipe from the east pool marsh but both a juvenile Bullfinch and a couple of Stonechat were rather difficult in the poor light. Another male Stonechat a little further around the pool was more obliging. Two Dunlin at close quarters gave superb views, as they fed actively in the mud and a Common Sandpiper flitted across the pool before landing and allowing scope views. A Wheatear was seen only briefly as it flew past us and out of sight, whilst good numbers of Pochard, Tufted Duck and a lone male Ruddy Duck completed the highlights.

We took lunch at Eglwys Nunydd Reservoir where more Tufted Duck and Coots, along with 7 Great Crested Grebe and 4 Dabchick were present. The real highlights however were the 3 stunning Black Terns that we spent almost an hour watching. The rest of the site was quiet but just before we departed 10 Greylag Geese flew north west. The rain came and we finished birding for the day at approximately 17.00.

### 2<sup>nd</sup>

Sunny Intervals.

Wind: 7 NW decreasing later.

16 Celsius

What a difference a day makes! After yesterdays almost ideal conditions, today was anything but ideal.

We started off at Porthcawl Sea Front, hoping for passing seabirds. We managed just a single male Common Scoter and a Great Black-backed Gull, along with a Turnstone on the grass.

It was quickly decided to move on to Sker via a coffee stop at the hotel. It was so windy that at times it was hard to stand up, never mind try and focus binoculars and telescope on the few birds that we present. The light however was good and this showed the true beauty of the 100 or so Oystercatchers that flew down channel before settling on the rocks. A further 6 Turnstone and a flock of approximately 150 Herring Gulls. Also on the beach were 9 Curlew and another 7 Great Black-backed Gulls. A couple of Wheatears huddled against the rocks trying to find some shelter and 2 Rock Pipits fed amongst the shingle. A juvenile Knot on the rocks proved difficult to see and a flock of 40 Linnets were in the field.

We moved on to Th Watermill floods, where 8 Wigeon, 30 Mallard and 27 Mute Swans were present. A single Stock Dove flew over distantly. At the Ogmores estuary, we took lunch as the wind began to decrease. Two Common Redshank gave good views and small numbers of Rock Pipits and Pied Wagtails fed on the grassy banks. Two Common Buzzards gave a brief display flight, allowing good comparison of the salient features with yesterdays Honey Buzzard, small numbers of Cormorants loafed on the logs, sunbathing and a couple of Kestrels were over the hills. A rather disturbing incident took place that involved two youths mistreating a Black-headed Gull before dumping it in the bracken with a broken

wing. We rescued the bird and took it to KNNR, where it was taken to the Vet and presumably put down. At the pool, we had rather distant views of the male Ruddy Duck, Tufted Duck, Pochard and a very brief Chiffchaff. En route back to the car, we had a charm of 50 Goldfinch and a couple of Dunnocks. We returned to the hotel at approximately 17.15

**3rd**