



for birds
for people
for ever

The Heron



Newsletter - December 2007



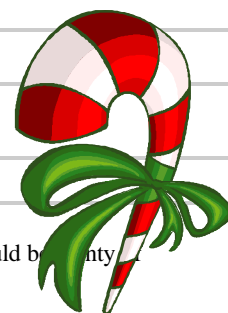
FOR YOUR DIARY

DECEMBER 2007

Sunday, 16 December	<p><i>Outdoor Meeting:</i> TITTESWORTH RESERVOIR This excellent local site boasts a good species list, particularly at this time of year. Why not join us for some birdwatching followed by festive fare? Depart at 9.00 am from Duke Street Car Park for an all day trip. Leader: Lydia Taylor 01260 275248</p>
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JANUARY 2008

Friday, 4 January	<p><i>CAWOS Meeting:</i> WHAT'S THAT RAPTOR? by Keith Offord 7.45 pm at Cranford Suite, Civic Centre, Toft Road, Knutsford.</p>
Tuesday, 8 January	<p><i>Indoor Meeting:</i> FLOODPLAINS OF THE ORINOCO by John Raines</p>
Sunday, 13 January	<p><i>Outdoor Meeting:</i> FARM VISIT (Nr. ASHLEY) AND TATTON MERE The first site hosts wintering finches and buntings including yellowhammers while there should be plenty of wildfowl for us to see on the mere. Depart at 9.00 am from Duke Street Car Park for an all day trip. Leaders: Neville Powell and Ray Evans 01625 432635</p>
Sunday, 20 January	<p><i>WGBG Coach Trip:</i> SLIMBRIDGE Depart at 7.30 am from Wilmslow Guild, Bourne Street, Wilmslow</p>
Thursday, 24 January	<p><i>Showing Birds to People:</i> RIVERSIDE PARK, MACCLESFIELD Meet in the Car Park off Manchester Road (Grid Ref: SJ914745) for a leisurely stroll looking for winter visitors. 10.00am – 12.30pm. Contact: Ray Evans 01625 432635</p>
Sunday, 27 January	<p><i>National RSPB Event:</i> BIG GARDEN BIRDWATCH Why not join us to see how many birds we can find during one hour in and around the garden at Pikelow Farm, School Lane Marton (Grid Ref: SJ856690)? 10.00am – 12.30pm. Contact: Ray Evans 01625 432635</p>



A SEASONAL MESSAGE FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN AND COMMITTEE

At this festive time your Committee joins me in thanking you all for the support that you have given over the past twelve months to The RSPB, your local Group and, of course, its Officers and Committee. Without your continued encouragement, goodwill and, in many cases, unstinting effort, it would have been impossible to achieve all that we have over the past twelve months. It is really heartening to see so many new faces at our Meetings and we hope that all members, old and new, will continue working together to promote the Group and its activities to the benefit of birds and the environment. As well as our regular Indoor and Outdoor Meetings, we have many other events planned during the second-half of our 2007 – 2008 Season, one of which is 'Big Garden Birdwatch' at Pikelow Farm on Sunday, 27 January 2008. We hope that you will continue to come along to such events because their success is dependent upon your support. Until then it only remains for us to wish all members and friends of The RSPB Macclesfield Local Group.

'A Very Merry Christmas and A Happy and Prosperous New Year'.

www.macclesfieldrspb.org.uk

Registered Charity Number 207076

CHAT FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Friends,

David Fielder

It is with great sadness that I have to report the sudden death on 13 November of David Fielder, husband of the late Dorothy Fielder who did so much for the Group during its early years. I am sure that many long-standing Group members will affectionately remember David as being always there to support Dorothy both during their time here in Macclesfield and latterly in Norfolk. The funeral took place at Mintlyn Crematorium, Kings Lynn on Tuesday, 27th November 2007.

Around our local patch

The change to more seasonal weather has seen an influx of wintering bird species to Macclesfield over the past few weeks. Up to twenty-five goosanders have been present at times on South Park Lake with a further eleven at Styperson Pool and large flocks of siskins and bramblings have been encountered in Riverside Park and the Goyt Valley respectively. Additionally, redpolls have been reported visiting garden feeders. More unusual sightings during the past month have included a winter-plumaged Mediterranean gull at Redesmere, a peregrine falcon, probably a juvenile bird, hunting over Ridgegate Reservoir and a pair of ravens over Prestbury. Further afield, a cattle egret appeared briefly on the golf course adjacent to Pennington Flash. It is rare for this species to venture so far north although there are a number currently in the southwest of England.



Swift action needed

A survey by the RSPB this summer has revealed that virtually all of the UK's swift population nests in buildings. Interestingly, rural homes appear twice as likely to have nesting swifts as urban ones. Swifts prefer older properties, particularly those built before 1919, as these offer more nesting sites than modern homes. However, these sites may be lost inadvertently during renovation work, which may explain the 26% decline in our swift population since 1994. 'Concern for Swifts', an organisation dedicated to conserving this species has produced a five-point plan to safeguard existing sites or create new ones.



Otter by Langman

Otterly wonderful !!!

It was reported recently that otters had returned and were breeding at RSPB Leighton Moss Reserve after an absence of ten years. Local residents who have been monitoring the species for many years saw a mother and two cubs. Recent habitat management work by the RSPB has almost certainly contributed to the species successful return to the reserve.

Territorial responsibility?

The RSPB has highlighted to the Government that the UK's fourteen Overseas Territories between them are hosts to thirty species of nesting birds facing global extinction. Furthermore, twenty of these species are found nowhere else in the world. The birds face a variety of threats ranging from non-native species competition, interaction with commercial fisheries, especially long-lining vessels and habitat degradation as a result of climate change. The mitigation measures being promoted by the Albatross Task Force and adopted widely by fishing vessels in the South Atlantic are already reducing seabird by-catch numbers but more needs to be done about the other threats.

Logging out !!!

Climate negotiators in Bali have been told about the efforts of Burung Indonesia with the backing of the RSPB and Birdlife International to get lasting protection from logging for an area of lowland rainforest in Sumatra. The Harapan Rainforest project is being hailed as a model for others to adopt. The President of Sierra Leone will announce a similar project shortly and the UK government has already pledged funds for rainforest conservation in the Congo while Guyana has offered to lease its rainforest to the UK. These rainforests are invaluable sites for carbon storage as well as irreplaceable habitats for rare and remarkable wildlife and, as such, must be protected. Unfortunately, carbon sequestration by standing forests is not recognised under the Kyoto protocol or in any carbon trading schemes. Until it is, and there are appropriate financial incentives to protect forests, their destruction will continue. Harapan is the Indonesian word for hope. Let us hope that it is the forerunner of many more projects of this type.

Podcasting for 'Homes for Wildlife'

I was delighted to be invited to promote the RSPB's 'Homes for Wildlife' via the medium of the December Issue of the Monthly MBC Ranger Service Podcast. In the interview with Martin James, I was able to explain the aims and scope of the project and hopefully provide some encouragement for listeners to participate. Instructions for downloading the Monthly MBC Ranger Service Podcasts which contain lots of interesting information about local wildlife and activities can be found at: www.macclesfield.gov.uk/standardpage.asp?pageid=12701



MERESANDS WOOD AND MARSHSIDE 18TH NOVEMBER 2007

The weather forecast had not been good, but as we assembled in the car park at Meresands Wood (a small Lancashire Wildlife Trust reserve) it was fine and getting a little brighter.

A number of tree sparrows were among the more common species on the feeders, and a great spotted woodpecker landed on a tree in the car park before we made our way into the reserve. A water rail had been seen from the Lancaster hide and a bittern was reported on the notice board wintering there, so this is where we headed to first. After a short wait the little skulker (the rail) appeared and eventually walked around in the open on top of a feeding platform so that we all had a really good view. Quite a treat for those who hadn't seen a water rail before; in fact, quite a treat for us all. The elusive bittern did not appear for us this time.

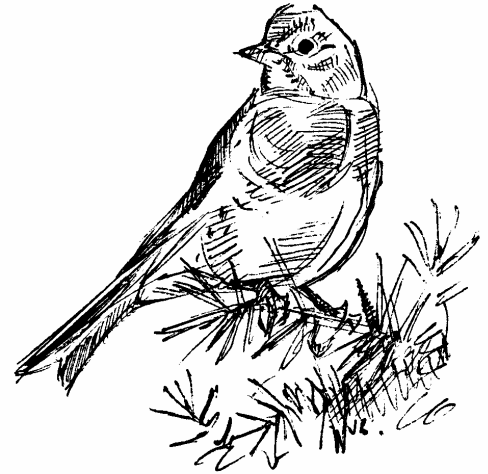
It was a nice walk through the woodland, picking up different tits, nuthatch, jay, and four goosanders on the lake from another hide. A male and three females were a good addition to the other more common ducks and grebes.

Back to the car park, where a flock of siskins were in the alder trees, and someone told us that the bittern had appeared ten minutes after we had left the hide – well, you can't win them all.

After lunch we moved on to Marshside for the afternoon. This reserve was unexpectedly quiet. You could see heads of pink-footed geese and wigeon hunkered down in the marsh. A flock of lapwings went up but, unusually, there were no golden plover among them and small waders were few and far between. A low flying kestrel put up a couple of snipe, so maybe they were all hunkered down from the cold wind. We managed a few black-tailed godwits and some very smart pintails from the screen and a few curlew were distant across the marsh on the edge of the sea.

We left Marshside for Tom's last mystery destination. This turned out to be the beach at Ainsdale, where a few snow buntings had been reported the day before. The beach was busy with Sunday visitors flying their kites and with dog-walkers, so it didn't look promising. However, walking beyond them, we did find a nice flock of linnets and, on the water's edge, sanderling, dunlin and oystercatchers, but the light was fading fast and the decision was made to hunt no more for the snow buntings.

Our total species for the day was 56 and the views of the water rail were memorable. Many thanks go to Tom Gibbons for leading another good outing.



Linnet by Busby

SAVE YOUR STAMPS AND HELP TO 'SAVE THE ALBATROSS'

In the excitement of opening your Christmas cards this year please don't forget that, by saving the stamps, you can help to 'Save the Albatross'. Why not leave yourself a reminder to save the stamps from all the mail you receive? Please don't try to remove stamps from envelopes as this could damage them. However, if you wish to help, we would be most grateful if you could carefully trim around each stamp or group of stamps to leave a 6mm (¼ inch) margin of envelope on all sides (see picture). Furthermore, we will be even more pleased if you are prepared to sort your stamps into the following three categories, Foreign, British commemoratives (special e.g. Christmas) and British definitives (non-pictorial). Remember, all proceeds from the sale by The RSPB of collected stamps will go to help 'Save the Albatross'.



CHARITY CARD SHOPS: THANKS

The Group Leader and Committee wish to thank all members and friends of the Group who helped on our allotted days at the Charity Card Shops at Macclesfield and Wilmslow Libraries and Knutsford Heritage Centre this year. Furthermore, we are most grateful to Chris Revett, Joan Wilson, Jennifer Tolliday and Trisha Thompson who, along with John & Clare Mortin, have looked after our interests at these different venues and replenished stock on a regular basis.

We are indebted also to the many other members and friends who have assisted with RSPB Sales at Charity Fairs and other events during recent months.

LET'S BE 'GREEN' THIS CHRISTMAS BY RECYCLING OUR CARDS AND REAL TREES?

On Twelfth Night, or earlier, when you come to take down all your Christmas decorations and cards, please remember to save the latter for recycling. There will be collection boxes at Tesco, M & S and W H Smith stores throughout January. Additionally, at our January Indoor Meeting ONLY, we will have a collection box available where you can deposit your cards, which we will take for recycling. With your help The Woodland Trust hope to collect 100 million cards with a combined weight of nearly 2,000 tonnes. This should enable them to plant 24,000 new trees.

Don't forget also that, if you have a real Christmas tree for disposal, for a small donation in aid of East Cheshire Hospice, you can arrange for it to be collected and recycled. For more details and to book a collection visit www.echtrees.org.uk or phone 01625 612025 or 01625 827164. Please note that this service is available in the following postcode areas only: SK9, SK10, SK11, SK12 and WA16. Collections will take place during the weekend 12 –13 January 2008.

REMINDER !!!! TITTESWORTH RESERVOIR VISIT on Sunday, 16th DECEMBER

The Outdoor Meeting on 16th December will be visiting Tittesworth Reservoir followed by lunch at the nearby Public House 'The Lazy Trout' at Meerbrook.

Why not plan to join us for some birdwatching and festive fare?

Prices for lunch are very reasonable, in the region of £10 for a main course and sweet with drinks and coffee charged extra.

I have pre-booked an area of the restaurant but would appreciate knowing if you plan to attend so that I can make 'The Lazy Trout' aware of prospective numbers.

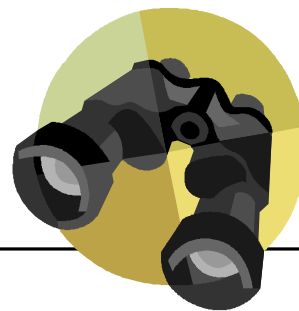
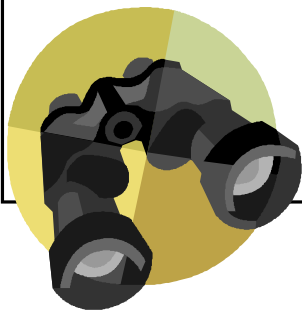
Lydia Taylor

Tel: 01260 275248 or E-mail: membership@macclesfieldrspb.org.uk

WANTED!!!

OLD BINOCULARS AND TELESCOPES

Do you have an old or unwanted pair of binoculars or a telescope collecting dust in a cupboard? Anything that is slightly out of alignment or just in need of a good clean can be put to use in a worthy conservation or education project somewhere in the world, where it will be gratefully received. All you have to do is just bring any binoculars to one of our meetings and we will do the rest. Since the Second-hand Binocular Donation Scheme started in 1985 more than 5,000 pairs have been donated to around 90 countries, mainly in Europe and Africa but more recently to India and Indonesia. Further details of the scheme can be found at: www.rspb.org.uk/supporting/green/donateoptics/index.asp



SURPLUS OR UNWANTED GIFTS

If you are wondering what to do with any surplus or unwanted Christmas gifts, please consider donating them to The RSPB Macclesfield Local Group to benefit birds and other wildlife. We can use them as prizes in our monthly raffles or sell them at our 'Bring and Buy' in February.

Please pass on a copy of this newsletter to any member or non-member of the Group that you know who may be interested

Health and Safety

In the event of fire or other emergency necessitating evacuation of the building, please leave in an orderly manner via the nearest available Emergency Exit or as instructed by a designated Committee member. Emergency Exits, indicated by the internationally recognised symbol of a 'running man' on a green background, are situated through the door at the rear of the hall either straight down the corridor or directly on the right through the main entrance with further exits to the right and through the door to the left of the stage.

If required, there is a first aid kit in the kitchen off the entrance corridor. (If you do have an accident, however minor, while here tonight please report it directly to a Committee member who, amongst other things, will ensure that details are logged in the Accident Report Book.)