

## The Birds

If it wasn't for the first few days of this period this would be a very short and boring newsletter! The first few days were magical, the rest surprisingly poor...

The main highlight of the period - and indeed the year - occurred on 19<sup>th</sup>. Just as it was getting light, six large dark shapes in the far corner of Blackhole Marsh revealed themselves to be **GLOSSY IBIS**! They stayed on the marsh for about half an hour, before flying across the river. They then spent several hours



feeding on flood in the fields just to the east of the river. They moved on to the Coly, then spent a couple of hours on Colyford Common. At about 14:00 they were seen to fly off high to east, this is the last time they were seen on patch, but certainly not the last time they were seen...



They were seen flying east along the Fleet, then landed briefly at Radipole before continuing east. By the evening all six were seen flying east over Pennington Marsh, Hampshire. A couple of days later five were found at Dungeness, Kent, and remain 'til today. It is presumed that these are five of our six...quite where the sixth has gone who



knows?

The other rarity highlight was a **Pectoral Sandpiper** that was found on Blackhole Marsh on 16<sup>th</sup>, and remained 'til the following day. This new reserve is really proving itself to be the local hot-spot, The Axe - and Devon in fact - are lucky to have it!

After the **Pec Sand**, wader numbers have crashed. At the moment you would be lucky to find a **Dunlin**! Two **Bar-tailed Godwits** have been on the estuary for a week now with up to nine **Black-tailed**. A **Little Stint** was on Blackhole Marsh on 20<sup>th</sup>.



Duck numbers continue to increase, with **Teal** being most notable. While the **Pec Sand** was residing at Blackhole Marsh, up to 260 **Teal** could be seen feeding between the islands. **Wigeon** numbers are at the thirty mark and three **Shoveler** were on the estuary on 28<sup>th</sup>.

The usual migrant hot spots have been visited, like Beer Head and Axe Cliff - but little has been seen. Well, except for **Meadow Pipits**! Large flocks have been moving through the patch daily, which is the 'norm' for this time of year. A male **Redstart** on Beer Head on 28<sup>th</sup> was the highlight up here, otherwise there's been just a very light splattering of common migrants.

*Photos: Glossy Ibis - Steve Waite; Pectoral Sandpiper - Ian Seward.*

## Ringling

Good catch this morning (Friday 25<sup>th</sup>) of 41 birds and only four retraps. The tally was Robin 2(1), White Wagtail 1, Cetti's Warbler 4(1), Kingfisher 2(1), Sedge Warbler 12, Wren 2, Reed Warbler 3, Chiffchaff 7, Blue Tit 3(1), Dunnock 1, Song Thrush 2, Blackbird 1 and Great Tit 1. Please note that the next sessions are an evening wader catch on either 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> October, date depending on the weather, and the second on 30<sup>th</sup> October in the crop field. This session is also open to members of the Axe Vale & District Conservation Society, a local conservation body that has in the past generously sponsored the Group.

## The Trivia

An Environment Agency assessment published on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September reveals that just five rivers remain 'High' status waterways, all in remote areas of Northumberland and Wales. The report lists 26% of rivers as 'Good' status, the required European standard. This means 74% of rivers are failing including 117 rivers (2%), which are classified as 'Bad', making them among the worst in Europe. Amongst these are the Stour estuary and a stretch of the River Trent. Just five of the 6,000 rivers in England and Wales remain in

condition:

<http://www.birdguides.com/webzine/article.asp?a=1751>



Peter Vernon has been busy with his macro lens again! “I went for a walk with the dog yesterday, 24<sup>th</sup>, around the fields above where I live and was surprised to see Honey-suckle, Dog Rose and Bramble in flower alongside their fruit (images attached) . I have also attached a close up of a Garden spider, they do have beautiful markings on their abdomen. Oh and also attached an image of a glorious Male Dark Bush Cricket, the antennae are amazingly long!”



Sue Smith says “Finally got close to this Yellow Wagtail near Seaton hide!”

And Peter Vernon – again recently found this newly emerged Red Admiral.



Norman Nelson was surprised on holiday:- “I have attached a photograph of a bird I came across whilst in North Brittany. The weather conditions on the day were awful with a force 8 blowing for most of the day, very wet and not the best of days for birding. The bird was clearly distressed and appeared to have an injured wing and must have been around for some time.”



**Diary Dates**

Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 10.00 a.m. onwards Meet the Birds at Colyford Common

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> October 5.00 p.m. Bird-watching tram trip. Booking essential on 01297 20375

For more information, ring EDDC on 01395 517557.

This twice-monthly email newsletter is freely available to anyone who would like it, as is a periodic one about the activities of the East Devon Local Group of the Devon Wildlife Trust. Just send me an email with Axe Estuary Birds and/or East Devon DWT in the subject line. Also, for those without a computer, I will send a copy by post if you would like to send me some stamps.

Thanks to those who keep us informed – please continue to tell us of any unusual, interesting or amusing sightings, and what is about locally, and send any photos you would like to share.

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