

Timsbury Natural History Group Field Trip to Lower Swell and Greylake 20th February 2016

Seven members attended the two site field trip and in the end did not suffer the weather the north end of Somerset suffered. It proved to be a most enjoyable day with forty birds seen and or heard as well as a couple of mammals and some fungi.

The first site we visited was the Lower Swell site in the Swell Wood RSPB reserve. The ancient oaks of Swell Wood are part of a continuous strip of woodland extending some 10 miles (15 km) along the ridge from Langport to the Blackdown Hills. It has the largest colony of breeding grey herons in south-west of England.



The Timsbury Nats members prepared for a look at the Heronry and a walk around Swell Wood. Photograph taken by Rod Bruce.

The car park is well catered for with bird feeders and a steady of of birds were seen. The first arrival seen was a Nuthatch. This was followed by Great Tit, Blue Tit, Coal Tit, Marsh Tit, Long Tailed Tit, Chaffinch and Robin. After that we visited to Heronry Hide to view the Herons sitting on/building their nests. We had good view of a number of herons. What looked like a recording contraption [camera] was also spotted amongst the trees. From there we went on the 900m Woodland Walk. We had a very good view of a Treecreeper and saw a few sample of fungi. Firstly we saw *Stereum hirsutum* plus, alongside it, *Mycoacia uda*. Nearby was a mycelial growth over an oak marble gall. Later on we came across *Daldinia concentrica*. We heard a Great Spotted Woodpecker drumming away as our list of birds started to increase. We could also see in some distant fields a couple of Common Crane. One of them dutifully did a short flight before disappearing from view.



One of the visitors in the Swell Wood Car Park

Photograph Andrew Harrison



Photograph Andrew Harrison



One of the Herons in the Heronry at Swells Wood. Photograph by Rod Bruce.



An acrobatic Treecreeper

Stereum hirsutum plus, alongside it, *Mycoacia uda*
Photograph Andrew Harrison

A mycelial growth over an oak marble gall
Photograph Andrew Harrison

Daldinia concentrica
Photograph Andrew Harrison



Is it a bird, is it a plane or is it a UFO?
It is a Common Crane keeping it's distance. I have six other witnesses!
Photograph Andrew Harrison

The next stop was the Greylake RSPB Reserve and it was busy too.

The RSPB talk about The Greylake RSPB Reserve thus: -

"The fields here used to be arable farmland, but now they are being looked after so that they are ideal for wetland birds and other wildlife.

We have put in structures to keep the water levels high and have created miles of new ditches and shallow water-filled gutters, and dug out numerous shallow pools or 'scrapes'. Now you can see lapwings, snipe, curlews and redshanks nesting here in summer, as well as yellow wagtails, skylarks and meadow pipits.

In winter, the land floods and flocks of lapwings, golden plovers and other wading birds arrive. You can also see wigeons, teals, shovelers and Bewick's swans at this time of year. There is lots of other wildlife to see here too including dragonflies, water voles, otters and roe deer. There is a boardwalk which meanders from the car park to the hide and provides excellent disabled access."



Picture of the Snipe taken by Rod Bruce

Timsbury Nats meeting at Swell & Greylake 20/02/16

Birds

Little Egret
Mallard

Grey Heron
Shoveler

Mute Swan
Teal

Wigeon
Coot

Marsh Harrier
Common Crane

Moorhen
Lapwing

Snipe
backed Gull
Wood Pigeon
Woodpecker
Wren
Song Thrush
Great Tit
Marsh Tit
Trecreeper
Jackdaw
Starling
Reed Bunting

Black-headed Gull
Collared Dove
Robin
Fieldfare
Blue Tit
Long-tailed Tit
Magpie
Carrion Crow
Chaffinch

Lesser Black-
Great Spotted
Blackbird
Goldcrest
Coal Tit
Nuthatch
Jay
Rook
Goldfinch

Mammals

Roe Deer Grey Squirrel

Fungi etc - information supplied by Alan Rayner , Bath Nats

Stereum hirst

Mycoacia ud

Daldinia concentrica

A mycelial growth over an oak marble gall