

MORE BIRD WATCHING AND CONSERVATION 2010



The Course

The course is aimed at people who have already done some birdwatching, and want to improve their knowledge, and their ability to find and recognise birds in the field. It has been designed partly for people who want to progress from the *Introduction to Birdwatching and Conservation* course run in 2009, but anyone else who can already identify most of the common British Birds can join too. It is organised by The National Trust, together with the Church Stretton branch of Shropshire Ornithological Society (SOS), and supported by the Biodiversity Training Project. In addition to the birds, emphasis will be placed on opportunities to join other local organisations (or local branches of national Organisations), to do more birdwatching, and (for those who are interested) to get involved in some practical conservation work.

The course consists of six evening classroom sessions, each followed by a field trip, starting in late March 2010. Each indoor session will cover birds which can be found at that time of year, and cover identification, behaviour, habitats, song and how to go out and look for them. Some of the sessions will also deal with conservation action, and what is being done locally to help these birds. The following Outdoor meeting will visit places where they are likely to be found, and perhaps where conservation work is taking place, to provide practical experience to reinforce the content of the indoor sessions. We hope to see 100 species.

The indoor sessions are on a Tuesday, at approximately monthly intervals, starting on 30 March (with a break in July, August and September). Sessions will start at 7.30pm, last for two hours, and be held in the tea room in the National Trust Pavilion at Carding Mill Valley (Church Stretton - OS Grid Ref SO443946). Dates are not evenly spaced, to avoid holiday periods. The field trips will mainly be on Sunday mornings, starting at 9.30 and lasting two and a half hours, although two full day trips are planned towards the end. The first four field trips are at 3-week intervals, so visits coincide with bird activity and breeding timetable.

The Course Outline is detailed overleaf.

Course Leaders and Tutors

Most of the indoor sessions will be led by Leo Smith, the local ornithologist who has been monitoring the bird populations on Long Mynd since 1994, and he was the lead author for *Wild Mynd – the Birds and Wildlife of the Long Mynd*. Leo also helps organise bird survey and conservation work in other parts of the Shropshire Hills, and often presents illustrated talks about this work to local Bird and Wildlife Groups.

All the local birdwatching and conservation organisations want to involve new people. Each of them will present their own activities at the second session, so participants can join in during the 2010 season.

Peter Carty, National Trust Property Manager for the Long Mynd, will present the October session, as the Ribble Estuary was his first “home patch”. He often leads walks and gives illustrated talks to local organisations, particularly about birds and other wildlife on his properties. Pete is a member of SOS and previously managed reserves for the RSPB. He has ticked off around a quarter of the world’s birds.

John Swift will help lead the May session on nestbox schemes, and the following field trip to the Darnford Valley. John operates Dipper and Woodland Bird Nestbox Schemes for the Upper Onny and Upper Clun Community Wildlife Groups, and has been running his own schemes for many years. He also undertakes Bird survey work for the national and Shropshire Bird Atlas, the BTO, and the Community Wildlife Groups.

A major aim of the course is to help participants find and identify birds in the field, so the course leaders will help lead the field trips, and we will try (but not guarantee) to provide four experienced leaders per field trip so every participant will get as much personal one-to-one assistance as you want.

Booking and Costs

Booking is Essential – 01694 722631

The course has been planned as a whole, and the 12 sessions can be booked for £60. If there are any remaining places, individual sessions can be booked for £6 each. However, there will be additional costs for the last two field trips, to cover transport and admission to the Reserves. Assuming there is sufficient interest and participants are willing to pay, a coach will be arranged.

Suitable footwear and outdoor (water- and windproof) clothing is needed for all outdoor field trips. Participants will need to make their own way to the starting point of the first four, though car sharing can be arranged at the previous indoor session.

More Information

National Trust Shop, 01694 722631, cardingmill@nationaltrust.org.uk

Indoor Meetings

7.30pm, Chalet Pavilion, Carding Mill Valley

Outdoor Meetings

9.30am at specified meeting place

Tuesday, 30 March 2010

Introduction to the course – what we intend to cover and introduction to tutors & other participants.

Discussion of what participants hope to get out of the course, so we can tailor it to your wishes.

Identification – variation within a species (male, female, juvenile, breeding and winter plumages)

Tuesday, 27 April 2010

Introduction to local Birdwatching and Conservation Groups – field trips and places to go

- *Shropshire Ornithological Society (SOS)*
- *Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)*
- *British Trust for Ornithology (BTO)*
- *Shropshire Wildlife Trust (SWT)*
- *Biodiversity Training Project*

Tuesday, 18 May 2010

Hedgerow & Farmland birds

Birds in the *Shropshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)* – the criteria for inclusion, the species and their habitats, and what is being done to reverse their decline.

Tuesday, 8 June, 2010

Breeding Strategies

Gardening for Birds

Local Nest Box schemes for Barn Owl, Dipper and woodland birds (Pied Flycatcher, Redstart, Tree Sparrow etc)

Recording it all as a contribution to conservation

Tuesday, 5 October 2010

Waders and Shore Birds

More on migration and winter visitors

Local winter visitors (Redwing, Fieldfare, Brambling)

Tuesday, 23 November 2010

Birdwatching & Conservation - how bird watching and reporting results as part of a coordinated project can help conservation – everything from “Garden Bird Watch” and nest boxes in the garden to participating in community wildlife groups to help Lapwing and Curlew, helping with the Shropshire Bird Atlas (organised by Shropshire Ornithological Society) and the Breeding Bird Survey (a national project run by the British Trust for Ornithology). What we all can do to “Make our Birdwatching Count”.

Sunday, 18 April, 2010

Carding Mill Valley and Rectory Wood, Long Mynd.

(Meet at Chalet Pavilion SO443946)

Sunday, 9 May 2010

Venus Pool Reserve near Shrewsbury (owned by Shropshire Ornithological Society). “V.P.” is mainly a wetland. Breeding resident and summer visitors should be present at this time.

(Meet at Venus Pool Car Park (SJ547061). Car sharing will be arranged)

Sunday, 23 May 2010

Lydham and Kinnerton

(for Lapwing, Curlew, Hedgerow & Farmland birds, and conservation action)

(Meet Lydham Village Hall - junction of A488 & A489, Grid Ref SO336910)

Sunday, 13 June, 2010

Darnford Valley

(for woodland birds, the nest box scheme, and upland birds)

(Meet at Horseshoe Inn, Bridges Grid Ref SO393965)

Sunday, 7 November, 2010

RSPB Marshside Reserve (Ribble Estuary) and WWT Martin Mere Reserve *(Full day trip to Peter Carty's home turf, including two major bird reserves. Meeting & travel arrangements, and costs, to be confirmed after discussion with participants - a coach trip can be arranged, departure 8.00am).*

Sunday, 28 November, 2010

The Red Kite spectacular at Gigrin Farm near Rhayader, and the work of the Welsh Kite Trust.

(Full day trip, joint with Introductory Course. Meeting & travel arrangements, and costs, to be confirmed after discussion with participants - a coach trip can be arranged, departure 11.00am).