



LOCAL GROUP

# News & views

from the Lincoln Local Group



Summer 2024

## Norfolk and Suffolk Weekend January 2024

In January 30 members of our Group spent three days in Norfolk and Suffolk. We set off from Lincoln at approximately 8.30 am and arrived at RSPB Snettisham Reserve at 10.20 am. We parked at the cafe, which had been opened especially for us and we were able to purchase bacon and sausage sandwiches and hot drinks. It was a very cold day so this was an ideal start.

As we entered the reserve, we spotted a Red Kite and during the walk to the beach we saw Lapwings, Jackdaws, Carrion Crows, Woodpigeons, Egyptian Geese and Greylag Geese. A Marsh Harrier and Common Buzzard were flying over the scrub and in the bushes, there were Linnets, Goldfinches, Redwings, a Song Thrush, Blue Tits, Long-tailed Tits, House Sparrows, Blackbirds and Robins. On the small lagoons we found some Mallards, a Coot and Moorhen. When we reached the first salt lagoon we spotted Gadwalls, Shovelers, Teals, Goldeneyes, Tufted Ducks, Pochards, Mute Swans and a Black Swan. Also, a Sparrowhawk flew over with a bird in its talons. At the next lagoon there was a Little Grebe and a Black-throated Diver, which was showing very well.

We then went onto the beach and we were greeted with the sight of thousands of waders and wildfowl. These were mainly Knot interspersed with small flocks of Dunlin,



Photo: Peter Skelton

Black-throated Diver in winter plumage at Snettisham

Redshanks, Bar-tailed and Black-tailed Godwits, Sanderlings, Ringed Plovers, Turnstones, Oystercatchers and a few Curlews and Avocets. A Purple Sandpiper, Common Snipe and Greenshank were also seen. The wildfowl consisted of Shelducks, Pintails, Wigeons, Long-tailed Ducks, Barnacle Geese, Brent Geese and Pink-footed Geese. Other birds included a Kingfisher, Pheasant, Rock Pipit, Kestrel, Collared Dove, Cormorants, Black-headed Gulls, Herring Gulls and Lesser Black-backed Gulls. Also, when we returned to the coach a Barn Owl was spotted quartering the scrub which was a superb ending to our first day.

The next day we set off for Minsmere RSPB reserve in Suffolk and again there was a cold wind but it was dry. After calling at the reception and café we headed for the Bittern and Island Mere Hides. On the way through the woods we spotted, Magpies, Blue Tits, Great Tits, Chaffinches, Goldfinches, Robins, a Coal Tit, Dunnock, Wren, Chiffchaff, Redpoll, Siskin, Treecreeper, Pheasant and Red Deer. At the Bittern Hide we saw two Marsh Harriers, a Pied Wagtail and two Water Pipits. We then moved on to the Island Mere Hide and we managed to find a Bittern, Water Rail and Common Snipe. Also, there was a small flock of Whooper Swans and a few Wigeon.

Unfortunately, the footpath to the West and South Scrapes was flooded so we were only able to visit the hides on the East Scrape. However, this was not too disappointing because there was a good variety of wildfowl



Photo: Peter Skelton

Bittern on the ice at Minsmere

which included Pintails, Shovelers, Goosanders, Shelducks, Mallards, Teals, Gadwalls, Mute Swans and a single Bewick's Swan. There was a solitary Yellow-legged Gull among the other gulls as well as some Black-tailed Godwits and a Little Egret. However, I think the highlight of the day was the sudden, brief appearance of a female Hen Harrier. Other birds seen during the day were Starlings, Meadow Pipits, a Stonechat, Cetti's Warbler, Fieldfare, Bullfinch, Bearded Tit, Peregrine Falcon, Little Grebe and the usual Woodpigeons, Rooks and Carrion Crows.

Our final day arrived all too soon but arrangements had been made for us to visit Hickling Broad on the way home. We arrived there slightly later than planned because someone left their binoculars in the hotel room, therefore, we had to return to the hotel to retrieve them. This caused a few remarks but all in good fun.

Again, some areas were out of bounds because of flooding and most of the birds seen were the same as the previous two days. However, we did add some new birds to our list, namely Grey Heron, Jay, Great White Egret, Stock Dove, Hooded Crow, Great Crested Grebe and Long-tailed Tit. This brought our total birds seen over the three days to one hundred.

We had a great three days; the weather was fine and the hotel was very good. Our thanks go to Peter and Graham for organising and leading the holiday and to our excellent driver, Keith.

*Ray Daniels*  
*RSPB Lincoln Local Group*

## A Change of Hotel for our Four-day Trip to Wales

We have learnt that the owners of the Royal Goat Hotel, Beddgelert have put the hotel up for sale. We have stayed at this hotel on several occasions and always found it to offer a good

### WALKS ORGANISER AND WALK LEADERS WANTED

The Group is looking for someone to organise the rota for the monthly bird watching walks at Hartsholme Country Park.

We are also looking for additional volunteers to lead the walks. Please email Graham at: [graham.mumby-croft@lincolnrspb.org.uk](mailto:graham.mumby-croft@lincolnrspb.org.uk)



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standard of accommodation but the selling agent's description of the hotel has rung alarm bells and we cannot take the risk of booking it again for our trip in May. The selling agent describes the hotel as follows: -

"The hotel has never fully reopened since COVID and the hotel has deteriorated in parts due to the closure. The current owners planned to refurbish the hotel to restore it to its former stunning glory days. However, due to other business opportunities they are reluctantly selling to let another purchaser take on this project."

A report in the local press states: "Parts of the hotel are in need of capital expenditure as the hotel has deteriorated in areas during lockdown and requires refurbishment."

To maintain the standard of hotel that members expect we have managed to find suitable accommodation at The Royal Victoria Hotel, Llanberis, which is a 3-star hotel in the heart of Snowdonia. The price quoted in the programme will remain the same as any price increase will be absorbed by the Group. We have only been allocated 20 rooms and most have already been taken so you need to contact Geoff Styles by email [geoff.styles@lincolnrspb.org.uk](mailto:geoff.styles@lincolnrspb.org.uk) as soon as possible if you are interested in joining us on this 4-day birdwatching trip. Once Geoff has confirmed availability, you will need to pay a £30 deposit to secure your room.

We will be visiting some of the best birdwatching sites in Wales, including RSPB Conwy, RSPB Ynys-hir, RSPB South Stack and RSPB Burton Mere. The trip also includes a visit to the MWT Dyfed Osprey Project. Choughs inhabit the cliffs at South Stack so this is a great opportunity to add some new birds to your bird list. All transport is provided from Lincoln on an executive grade coach and the price of £325 per person in a twin or double room includes 3 night's dinner, bed and breakfast at the hotel.

## Thank You

This will be the last newsletter that I publish as Group Leader so I want to take the opportunity to thank the committee members who are retiring at the Group's AGM on Thursday 9 May.

The retiring Committee members are:

Fiona McKenna, who has been a volunteer for 15 years and a committee member for the last 6 years. Fiona has helped with the Heron watchpoint at Hartsholme Country Park, the Peregrine watchpoint at Lincoln Cathedral and organised the monthly guided birdwatching walks at Hartsholme Country Park.

Mel Thorn, who has been your Membership Secretary for the last 5 years and made sure that you have all received your annual programme. It has involved labelling, distributing and delivering thousands of programmes,

Mel has also been conducting a bird survey at Bradshaw's Farm for several years, but he has now handed over the survey work to another volunteer. Mel helps as a Visitor Welcome Assistant at RSPB Langford Lowfields and prior to that he was a visitor Welcome Assistant at RSPB Frampton Marsh.

Stuart Foster, our longest serving Secretary. Stewart joined the committee in 1985 as the Group's Publicity Officer and the following year he became the Group's Secretary, a role he has done for 38 years. Stewart's main role was to arrange the programme of speakers for the Group, which he has done superbly well over the years and booked speakers who have entertained and enthralled us with their exploits and superb photography. Stewart has also meticulously taken the minutes at all of our committee meetings for the past 38 years.

Stewart has contributed so much to the group over the years. In 1990, in conjunction with Mike Willey, he organising a one-week



From the archives. The RSPB Lincoln Local Group Members at Port De Pollença, Mallorca, April 1992

### NEWSLETTER EDITOR WANTED

Would you like to take over and edit/create these newsletters three times a year?

If you have the necessary skills and would like to put them to good use please contact a committee member as soon as possible.

birdwatching holiday to Mallorca for 24 members of the Group. The holiday was so popular that it was repeated two years later and this time 41 members of the Group booked to go on the trip. We had a great time on the Island and came home with a group list of 134 species of birds, several of which don't occur in the UK. Thank you, Stewart for the work you have done for the Group.

**All RSPB Local Groups are run by their members for their members. No one else will run the Group for you. You must do it between yourselves. If you don't, there will not be a local group.**

Finally, to Mike Willey, who joined the committee in 1976 as the Field Meetings Leader, a role he has continued in for 48 years. I have learnt more about birds from Mike than anyone else and I am indebted to him for arranging field meetings, coach trips and holidays to almost every part of the UK. Through Mike's coach trips I have seen more of England, Scotland and Wales than I could ever have imagined and expanded my bird list to numbers I would not have believed possible.

Several of Mike's coach trips turned into real adventures with many memorable moments. I will never forget the time when the coach ran out of diesel on the return journey from our first birdwatching weekend to the Farne Islands and Bass Rock. By an amazing coincidence the coach freewheeled to a stop right outside a local pub. So, while the unfortunate driver was arranging for some diesel to be delivered and then undertaking the task of priming the fuel pipes, guess where all the group members

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were? It was quite a surprise (and delight) for the landlord!

Or the time in those early days when we booked a low cost and rather unreliable coach and we all had to get out and push-start it when it refused to start! Or the time before the advent of satnavs when we were hopelessly lost. The coach driver stopped to ask directions from someone working in his garden. Ten minutes of driving later, and much to the disbelief of the gardener, we ended up in the same place! In the year 2000, Mike arranged a one week's birdwatching trip to Scotland for the Group, which was repeated again in 2004 and 2015.

Mike has taken us on so many wonderful trips by coach, boat and train and given us all so many different memories that I can't thank him enough for all he has done.

A huge thank you to all the retiring committee members for the work they have done for the Group and for the RSPB.

Finally, I would like to thank you for allowing me to be a committee member since the Group's formation 50 years ago and for allowing me to be your Group Leader for the last 40 years. I have enjoyed every minute of it and will greatly miss being part of the team. But now, in my eighties, it's definitely time for a younger person to take on the responsibility of running the group. I will certainly continue to help and volunteer whenever I can to support the RSPB and campaign to protect our wonderful wildlife.

It's amazing just how much pleasure you can get by joining a committee and helping to run a local members' group - you should try it sometime - you may be surprised just how much you enjoy it!

The retiring committee members and I have given the remaining committee members all the



From the archives. The Lincoln Group at Gibraltar Point, July 1974, the year the Group was founded. All of the Group's Leaders are on the photo. Win Chambers 1 year, George Posnett 9 years and Peter Skelson 40 years.

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information they need to continue to run the Local Group. So, it's now down to them to take the Group forward and build on the successes of the last 50 years. They are:

- Graham Mumby-Croft, Treasurer
- Geoff Styles: Field Meetings Organiser
- Jane McAdoo: Indoor Meetings Organiser
- Colin Goulding: Fund Raising Organiser
- Mike Catchpole: Publicity Organiser
- Heather Dowson: Sponsorship Organiser
- Roger Cargill: Membership Secretary

My plea to you is this, please, please continue to support the RSPB and the Lincoln Local Group. Nature is in crisis and needs you now more than ever. Since 1980, one out of every six birds have been lost. That adds up to the loss of 600 million breeding birds over 40 years, according to a 2021 study from the RSPB.

We have sprayed our gardens and fields with pesticides and herbicides wiping out so much of the natural food sources birds need and we continue to destroy their habitats making Britain the most nature depleted country in Europe. We all need to do much, much more to protect what nature we have left.

*Peter Skelson, Group Leader,  
RSPB Lincoln Local Group*

## Field meetings reports

### Frampton Marsh, 10 December 2023

If it's a 'D' it's a dim, dreary, drizzly sort of a day. If it's a 'B' then it's brilliant birding. If it's an 'F' then you know it's Fantastic Frampton, Lincolnshire's own very special nature reserve. All these conspired to make for another great day out with the Lincoln Group.

RSPB Frampton Marsh is to be found just south of the town of Boston and alongside the Wash, part of Eastern England's internationally important flyway for birds. It has a splendid new visitor centre with café and toilets and is run by very pleasant and helpful staff and volunteers. There is a large car park capable of holding two coaches whilst the Group were at the reserve, as well as space for a good number of cars. There are several freshwater lakes as well as large areas of flooded freshwater marshes. The freshwater side of the reserve is protected by high banking from which it is possible to view vast areas of saltmarsh.

25 Members left Lincoln at 8.30 am for the short ride to Frampton, arrival there being shortly after 9.30 am. As we approached the reserve car park our first excellent sighting was a Marsh Harrier gliding effortlessly over the flooded fields and putting up thousands of Lapwings to whirl and turn in the sky above. We had been made aware beforehand that a rarity was on site, which was often to be seen from the car park. Everyone rapidly descended from the coach with binoculars, scopes and cameras at the ready. The bird was rapidly found and seen by most Members: it was a North American Lesser Yellowlegs, a wader, which had found its way to Frampton and seemed to like it there as it had been there for some weeks. This was a 'lifer' for most of the Group. It was to be present close to the car park many times throughout the day and at one point it was only 3 metres (10 feet) from the car park fence where its bright yellow legs could easily be picked out. Hopefully, there should be some good pictures of it for potential inclusion in next year's calendar.

A quick visit to the visitor centre allowed people to get a drink and view the waterfowl on the adjacent lake. The Group then split up into several smaller groups. Our small group headed off towards the main 360 hide and spotted many small birds such as Starlings and Chaffinches feeding on seed heads alongside the path on the way. A secretive Snipe was spotted on a mud bank close to the water's

edge, and a flash of blue showed us a Kingfisher heading into the reeds.



Scaup by Mike Langman  
(rspb-images.com)

The 360 hide, as its name suggests, gives extensive views over significant parts of the reserve. There were lots of wildfowl, including Brent Geese, several Whooper Swans, many beautiful Pintail Ducks and several other species of wader and duck seen from this hide.

We then decided to look over the saltmarsh and had distant views of a bird of prey on a fence post: the consensus opinion was that it was a Buzzard. However, suddenly, the heavens opened, and we had to head back hurriedly to the visitor centre for lunch, getting drenched in the process. A warming cup of tea and scones 'to die for' as they were so good, left us in fine fettle for an afternoon's birding. Our party then went to the hide at the southern end of the main lake to see if we could see a pair of Scaup which others had seen earlier. However, no such luck, although we had nice views of Goldeneye and Pochard instead.

Return to the visitor centre in the mid-afternoon meant that more sampling of the excellent cakes and drinks had to be enjoyed! By this time, it was getting towards dusk and we were treated to the spectacle of a number of Harriers dropping into the reeds to roost. Shortly afterwards it was back on the coach and off to Lincoln after another great Group day out. Thanks to Graham, Geoff, and Peter for the organisation of the day.

For those interested in knowing which species were seen on the day (48 Group total) here is the list:

Buzzard, Kestrel, Marsh Harrier, Pheasant, Carrion Crow, Jackdaw, Magpie, Black-tailed Godwit, Curlew, Dunlin, Green Sandpiper, Golden Plover, Lapwing, Lesser Yellowlegs, Redshank, Ruff, Snipe, Gadwall, Goldeneye, Mallard, Pintail, Pochard, Scaup, Shelduck, Shoveler, Teal, Wigeon, Blackbird, Fieldfare, Starling, Little Egret, Little Grebe, Brent Geese, Canada Geese, Greylag Geese, Pink-footed Geese, Whooper Swans, Moorhen, Kingfisher, Chaffinch, Goldfinch, Greenfinch, Linnet, Skylark, Wren, Black-headed Gull, Herring Gull.

*Pete Dryburgh  
Lincoln Local Group*

## Blacktoft Sands – 25 February 2024

Our first day trip of the year was to the RSPB Blacktoft Sands Reserve, which lies at the confluence of the Rivers Ouse and Trent on the south side of the Humber Estuary. The reserve consists of mudflats and saltmarsh at the confluence of the rivers but most of the area is a tidal reedbed and is the largest in England. There was still evidence of the recent flooding but everywhere was accessible.

This reserve is renowned for its population of Tree Sparrows and there were four birds on the feeders when we arrived. Other birds on the feeders were Blue Tits, Great Tits, Chaffinches and a Dunnock, Blackbird and Robin were spotted in the hedgerow. A Red Kite also flew over while we were looking at the feeders. The reception hide overlooks the reedbed and from here we saw a Common Buzzard, Black-tailed Godwit, Marsh Harrier, Mute Swan, Little Grebe and Greylag Geese.

We visited all five hides and Marsh Harriers quartering the reedbed were visible from all of them. However, the bird of the day for me was a Barn Owl which flew towards the hide and then across the front of it, giving us a superb view. Also, soon after this a Bittern was spotted flying over the reedbed. On the brackish lagoons we found a Whooper Swan, Canada Geese, Mallards, Gadwalls, Tufted Ducks, Wigeons, Shelducks, Teals, Shovelers and Pochards and they were eventually disturbed by a brief visit from a Peregrine Falcon. The only other waders were Lapwings and a group of ten Common Snipe on the edge of one of the lagoons. Other birds seen throughout the day were a Kestrel, Bullfinch, Great Black-backed Gull, Stock Dove, Woodpigeons, Coots, three Little Egrets, a Magpie, Carrion Crows and Pied Wagtails.

It was a great day and we saw a total of 39 birds.

*Ray Daniels  
RSPB Lincoln Local Group*

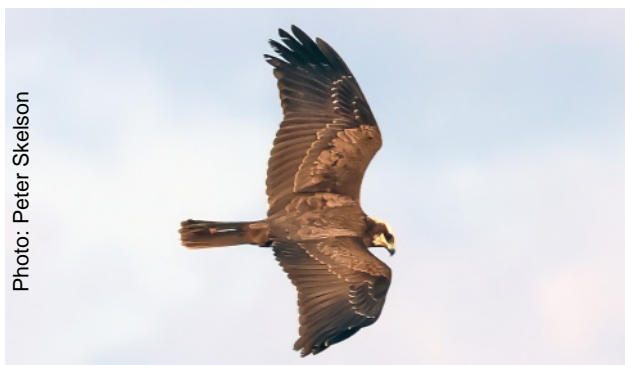


Photo: Peter Skelson

Marsh Harrier Blacktoft Sands

## Swift Awareness Week

**Saturday 29 June to Sunday 7 July 2024**

Each year, Swifts fly from Africa to the UK to breed, but numbers here are plummeting and they desperately need help. In just 25 years, more than half of our Swifts have vanished and the loss of nest sites in the roofs of buildings appears to be at least partly responsible. That's why we're asking you to look out for nesting Swifts near you and record them on 'Swift Mapper'. [www.swiftmapper.org.uk/](http://www.swiftmapper.org.uk/)

Swifts nest in holes in buildings – under roof tiles, in holes in eaves or soffits, for example, so if you see a Swift flying up to a building and vanishing inside, then that's a nest site. And we'd like to know where those are. But this can be tricky to spot – Swifts don't always enter or leave their nest sites very often, and they are very quick about it when they do.

So, there's something else you can look out for. When Swifts fly fast and low at roof-top height, often in groups and often screaming loudly, this is a very good clue that they are nesting nearby. So, we also want records of these screaming parties.

But please don't report sightings of Swifts that are flying high in the sky, feeding over water or fields, or away from buildings on Swift Mapper. These birds could have travelled long distances and may not be local breeding birds – they don't give us any information on exactly where they are nesting. Please use BirdTrack instead if you'd like to record these sightings.

### Put up a nest box

By putting up a specially-designed nest box and fixing it under the eaves of your home, you can mimic the cosy holes Swifts usually nest in. You can find them in our RSPB shop.

It can take a little while for Swifts to adopt a new nest site, so don't worry if your box isn't used straight away. Swifts are long-lived and creatures of habit, so once they do find your box, they'll keep returning to it year after year.

### Install a Swift brick

If you're embarking on some major house renovation work, creating an extension or building a new house then a Swift brick, built into the fabric of a wall, is a great, permanent and low-maintenance alternative to a nest box.

## Where to put a Swift box

First, you'll need to check you have a suitable spot for your nest box. Place it on the wall of a building, ideally under the eaves (where the roof hangs over the walls). It should be 5m (15 feet) above the ground and easy for Swifts to fly into. Think of how a Swift will approach the nest – it flies down and then up to the nest site at speed, the upward swoop helps it slow down to land. The box shouldn't be in direct sunlight, so place it on a wall that faces north, east or somewhere in between. (Note: If you are having major renovation works done, you can use a special Swift brick. These fit into the fabric of the outer house wall. However, it should only be done by a qualified builder.)

## Swift nest box plans – make your own

Measure out the pieces of your exterior plywood according to our diagram. Cut all the pieces, including the rectangular hole into the front, shown in black, 28mm high & 65mm wide.

Note: the dimensions shown are for 12mm thick wood. If your wood is different to that the dimensions will need to adjust accordingly to match the size needed for the opening.

## Putting your Swift nest box together

Make sure you use screws to attach the front so it can be removed and cleaned when needed. You can use nails, glue or screws for putting together the rest of the box. Ideally, attach a little wedge of wood just above the entrance to help shelter the entrance hole from the elements. The wedge needs to have a sloping top to stop predators from perching there.

## Putting up your Swift box

Use the projections on the backplate of the box to screw it firmly to the masonry of the house, just under the eaves. To be safe, avoid fixing it over doorways, windows or walkways, just in case it falls.

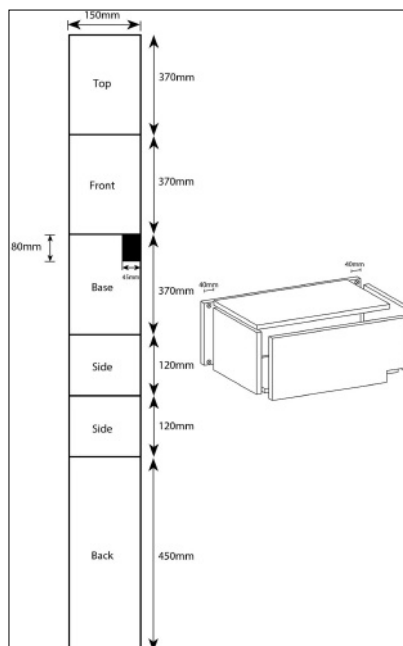
Mike Langman (rsfb-images.com)



Swift

## Attracting Swifts to your nest box

It's not guaranteed that Swifts will find your box, but you can boost the chances by playing taped Swift calls via loudspeaker during the



breeding season (May-July).

If you do manage to attract them, remember Swifts are sensitive to disturbance and protected by law, so watch the nest box from the ground or install a camera inside before the breeding season starts.

A larger copy of this nest box design can be found on the following RSPB webpage:

[www.rspb.org.uk/helping-nature/what-you-can-do/activities/create-a-high-home-for-swifts](http://www.rspb.org.uk/helping-nature/what-you-can-do/activities/create-a-high-home-for-swifts)

Ready-made Swift boxes can be bought from the RSPB Shop [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)

## Create a Swift colony

Swifts are sociable birds that like to nest, feed and migrate in groups. They mate for life and like to return to the same nesting site year after year. So, if you have space, why not put up a number of boxes, near each other?

## Help to count Swifts

Help with a survey of Swifts in your local area by counting numbers and record them on 'Swift Mapper' [www.swiftmapper.org.uk/](http://www.swiftmapper.org.uk/)

## Global Birdfair

A new venue for this year's Global Birdfair. It will be held at Lyndon Top, Rutland Water on Friday, Saturday and Sunday 12, 13 & 14 July.

Lyndon Top is just a short walk from the Lyndon nature reserve and it overlooks the Osprey nest site.

## Global Birdfair Tickets

Available to book online from February 2024. Please try to buy your tickets in advance if you can. Programmes can be bought in advance with

your tickets & collected on your arrival at Global Birdfair by providing your Programme voucher.

There will only be cashless payment systems for purchasing tickets on the gate.

For further details visit: <https://globalbirdfair.org/>

### Travelling By Train:

Oakham Railway Station is 5 miles from the Global Birdfair event site.

There will be a free shuttle bus available between Oakham Railway Station and the Global Birdfair site at Lyndon Top. First Shuttle around 8:30am from Oakham Station - running on 12, 13 & 14 July (please note the restricted Sunday rail service)

### Travelling By Car:

There is ample free car parking at Lyndon Top including forward parking for those with Disabled badges and those who require mobility assistance during the event. Please do NOT attempt to park on the roads approaching the event or the Rutland Garden Centre adjacent to the event site.

If you have never been to the Birdfair before and wonder what it's all about you can watch a YouTube video presented by Simon McCabe which will give you a good overview of the Birdfair. Just go to the Global Birdfair website and scroll down to the video.

## Accounts auditor

We would like to record our sincere and grateful thanks to Ivor McNish who has audited the Group's accounts for the last 25 years. During that time Ivor has given advice and support to a succession of Group Treasurer's including Colin Goulding, Jim Fish and Graham Mumby-Croft. Ivor has done a brilliant job keeping an eye on the Group's income and expenditure but he has now decided to retire. We have been fortunate to find an experienced accountant, Rob Elkington who has volunteered to take over.

Chris Shields (rspb-images.com)



Bumble Bee


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## Killing Our Bees

British Sugar recently asked the UK Government to lift a ban on a chemical known to kill bees for use on sugar beet crops in England. This highly toxic chemical has been banned throughout Europe but, sadly, Farming Minister, Mark Spencer, has once again given the go-ahead for it to be used, despite over 15,000 messages being sent calling on him to listen to the science and support nature-friendly farmers. Just half a teaspoon of this chemical can kill 1.25 billion bees.

British Sugar is the sole buyer and processor of UK-grown sugar, but currently the company provides no way for beet farmers who choose not to use neonics, to market their sugar as neonic-free. And as consumers, we also have no way of knowing if the sugar we buy is affected. Only British Sugar can make this change happen. Neonic-free sugar is possible as evidence shows:

- In 2022, 29% of sugar beet farmers did not use the neonicotinoid Thiamethoxam after the UK Government approved its use.
- In 2023, this number rose to 40% of sugar beet farmers.



# GROUP LEADER URGENTLY NEEDED

To replace the vacancy left by the burned out present leader who has given his all in the service of the Lincoln Local Group and is now of use to neither man nor bird!

Apart from that he is retiring because he has been Group Leader for 40 years and a committee member for 50 years and he need a break!

So if you feel that you could do a good job then don't delay - apply now!

No previous experience is necessary as full training will be given by the RSPB

It is clear that a growing number of farmers do not want to use damaging neonicotinoids. We know the public want neonic-free sugar. In 2021 over 100,000 people signed a letter to the then-Prime Minister when this authorisation was first granted, calling for it to be overturned.

Banned, bee-killing pesticides should not be used under any circumstances, so the Wildlife Trusts are asking people to sign their petition to ask British Sugar to support farmers who aren't using neonics. By signing the petition you're helping to put pressure on British Sugar to stop bees and other insects from being harmed.

Already, over 40% of insect species worldwide are threatened with extinction. You can sign the petition by visiting:

[www.action.wildlifetrusts.org/page/142500/petition/1](http://www.action.wildlifetrusts.org/page/142500/petition/1)

## Monumental step to save seabirds

The UK and Scottish Governments' decisions to close sandeel fisheries in the English waters of the North Sea and all Scottish waters respectively, comes after more than 25 years of campaigning by the RSPB and others, which



Annabel Sharpe (rspb-images.com)

Puffins

called out the practice as one of the contributors to seabird decline. Many seabirds, including Puffins, rely on sandeels to feed their chicks. But climate change and over-fishing have vastly depleted sandeel populations, having a devastating knock-on effect on seabirds.

### Vulnerable to extinction

Last year's seabird census found that more than half the seabird species breeding on British and Irish coasts have declined over the last 20 years. In Scotland, which is home to over half of UK seabirds, this figure rises to 70% of species in decline. Shockingly, around one in four Puffins have been lost from across the UK since 2000. Both Puffins and Kittiwakes, which depend on sandeels for food, are threatened with global extinction and are Red-listed as birds of highest conservation concern.

Ending the industrial fishing of sandeels is just one necessary step in the effort to safeguard seabirds as they come under a barrage of existential pressures, including climate change, bird flu and poorly planned offshore marine development.

### Lifeline secured thanks to your support

Last year, the UK Government ran a public consultation to close sandeel fishing in the English waters of the North Sea. The RSPB and tens of thousands of our supporters leapt into action, with more than 33,000 people from across the UK adding their voice to our campaign and responding to the consultation. 8,000 RSPB supporters also took to social media to tell their MPs how they felt. The consultation found overwhelmingly in favour of a closure of sandeel fisheries with 95.5% in agreement.

The Scottish Government also ran a consultation proposing to end sandeel fishing

across all Scottish waters. Together, with over 11,000 RSPB supporters, we responded in favour of ending industrial sandeel trawling in Scottish waters. The consultation reported almost unanimous support for the move, with 97% in favour across individuals and organisations.

There's no doubt that this groundswell of support has been instrumental in putting a stop to sandeel fisheries. A huge thank you to everyone who has joined with us to save our seabirds.

## Long-service awards and retirements from the Committee

Alasdair McKee presented long-service awards to volunteers during his talk to the Group in March. Long-service awards are presented to people after they have volunteering for the Society for 5 years and then every following 5 years, providing they are still volunteering.

Gwen Randall and Fiona McKenna each received a 15-year award, Mike Tweddle a 35-year award and Peter Skelson a 50-year award and a framed print of a Sea Eagle.

Mike Willey and Stewart Foster each received a book to thank them for their 48 years and 39 years respectively of volunteering for the Society.

The following four photos by Mike Catchpole



Mike Willey,  
Alasdair McKee



Stewart Foster,  
Alasdair McKee



Mike Tweddle,  
Alasdair McKee



Peter Skelson, John  
Badley, Steve Rowland,  
Alasdair McKee

## GREENSPACES NATURE

FULLY GUIDED BIRD and WILDLIFE WATCHING HOLIDAYS  
and TOURS at a variety of UK locations.

Our small groups allow us to give a personal service.  
It is about watching not listing!

**All Greenspaces Tours in 2022 are now sold out**

### Tours for 2023

Norfolk Winter birding special – 26<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> January  
East Hampshire and West Sussex – 22<sup>nd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> April  
Lincolnshire High Tide Spectacular – 13<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> August  
Autumn in Speyside – 14<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> October  
Winter on the Somerset Levels – 21<sup>st</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> November

### Tours for 2024

West Norfolk and the Fens – 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> February  
Lincolnshire in Springtime – 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> April  
Spring on the Somerset Levels – 8<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> May  
Springtime in Speyside – 1<sup>st</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> June  
Autumn in Speyside/ Highlands 19<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> October

*More Tours are being planned and added*

Please see the website for further details: -

[www.stevelovellgreenspaces.co.uk](http://www.stevelovellgreenspaces.co.uk)

email: - [stephenlovell58@btinternet.com](mailto:stephenlovell58@btinternet.com)

Call Steve on - 07957 618684 or 01522 689456

All Our Tours give great Photographic opportunities

## 2025 Calendar

The Group will be producing a 2025 calendar. Further details and information about how to submit your photos for consideration can be found on the 'News' page of the Group's Website.

You can submit a maximum of three digital photos for consideration by emailing them to: [info@lincolnspb.org.uk](mailto:info@lincolnspb.org.uk)

The photos must have been taken in the UK by the person submitting them and the subject must be British wildlife or British wildlife habitats. No wildlife or habitats should be harmed, put at risk or unduly disturbed in the process of taking the photographs and the photographer must abide by the Code of Conduct for Wildlife Photography.

The photos must be in landscape format and ideally should be 3508 x 2480 pixels. Please

## MANY THANKS TO OUR ADVERTISERS AND SPONSORS

Please mention the RSPB when  
purchasing their products or services

# **BELIEVE IT OR NOT YOU ARE WANTED!**

## **ARE YOU:**

Young/Old?  
Dynamic/Lethargic?  
Bright/Dim?  
Happy/Miserable?  
Fit/Clapped Out?  
Bird Loving/Ornithophobic?

To be honest, anywhere in between will do!

## **THEN YOU ARE ELIGIBLE TO VOLUNTEER TO:**

Replace the retiring committee members who have served the Lincoln Members Group for many years - or to just help the few remaining committee members who are having to pick-up a substantial additional workload

No previous experience is necessary, full training will be given

71 people have served on the committee since the Group was founded - now it's your turn!

## **REWARDS**

Cash - Nil  
Job Satisfaction - Definitely  
Enjoyment - Variable, depends on the weather and who turns up!  
Loyalty and Friendship - Et tu Brute

## **YOUR COMMITTEE NEEDS YOU NOW!**

Apply to any committee member

state in which month of the year the photos were taken. The committee will decide which photos will be used for the calendar. Their decision is final and no correspondence regarding the results will be entered into.

The deadline for submitting photos is 31 July 2024. Any submitted after that date will not be considered.

### **Future field trip reports and the 2025 calendar**

Although I am retiring as Group Leader and standing down from the committee at the AGM, I still intend to volunteer for the Group. I have agreed to continue to collate the photos and

organise the printing for the Group's 2025 calendar. I have also volunteered to continue to run the the Group's Website so that the remaining committee members can concentrate on all the other tasks they will have to take on board. If they decide not to continue to produce paper newsletters then I will publish the field trip reports on the Website.

*Peter Skelson  
Group Leader, Lincoln local Group*

### **Quotable Quotes**

"Volunteers don't get paid, not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless"

*Sherry Anderson*

## Dates for your diary

### APRIL

**28 FIELD TRIP to RSPB St Aidans, Yorkshire.** A stronghold for Black-necked Grebes. The reserve also has a good variety of reedbed warblers and wildfowl. Coach leaves Lincoln 8 am. leaves reserve 4.30 pm. Adults £30. C, NT, WC.

### MAY

**9 INDOOR MEETING. It's a Wonderful World - Look and You Will See: Panama Part 1 - In Search of the Blue Cotinga by Mike Catchpole.** To celebrate our 50th anniversary year there will be no admission charge for this meeting.

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.** The Group's AGM will be held at 9 pm following the talk and a short break. Free admission from 8.45 pm for people only attending the AGM.

**19 FIELD TRIP to RSPB Bempton Cliffs, Yorkshire.** The cliffs are packed with seabirds at this time of the year. Coach leaves Lincoln 8 am. Leaves reserve 5 pm. Adults £27. C, NT, S, VC, WC.

**21 - 24 FOUR DAYS in Wales** visiting **RSPB Conwy, RSPB Ynys-hir & MWT Dyfi Osprey Project, RSPB South Stack and RSPB Burton Mere.** The cost of £325 per person in a double or twin room or £385 in a single room includes all coach travel and three nights half board at The Royal Victoria Hotel, Llanberis. Cancellation insurance is not included.

### JUNE

**16 FIELD TRIP to Norfolk Wildlife Trust Weeting Heath.** Weeting Heath is the best site in the country to watch the rare Stone Curlews and is home to Crossbills. Coach leaves Lincoln 8 am. Leaves reserve 5 pm. Adults £35. Deduct £4.50 from the price if you are a member of the Norfolk Wildlife Trust. You will need to bring your membership card with you. H, NT, S, VC, WC.

### JULY

**12 - 14 GLOBAL BIRDFAIR at Rutland County Showground.** See page 7 or visit [globalbirdfair.org](http://globalbirdfair.org) for further details.

Any advertisements enclosed with this newsletter are not specifically endorsed by the RSPB or the Lincoln Local Group.

**NIGHTJARS at Sherwood Forest.** Meet at Sherwood visitor centre. Date and time to be advised. Please keep checking the Group's Website for date and time.

[www.lincolnrspb.org.uk/events.htm](http://www.lincolnrspb.org.uk/events.htm)

### AUGUST

**18 FIELD TRIP to Yorkshire Wildlife Trust Spurn Nature Reserve.** Coach leaves Lincoln 8 am. Leaves reserve 5 pm. Adults £29. C, H, NT, S, VC, WC.

### SEPTEMBER

**12 INDOOR MEETING. Crossing Boundaries – a unique story of birds and people on the high seas of Iraq.** by **Rolf Williams.** Sponsored by Margaret Lunn in memory of her husband Vic Lunn.

Indoor meetings are held in the Hardy Lecture Theatre at Bishop Grosseteste University and start at 7.30 pm.

Nature reserve facilities are shown thus:

C = Café, H = Hides, NT = Nature Trail, S = Shop, VC = Visitor Centre, WC = Toilets.

One child free for each full fare-paying adult booked on the Sunday coach trips (any admission charges still apply). To book field trips or holidays please email Geoff Styles at: [geoff.styles@lincolnrspb.org.uk](mailto:geoff.styles@lincolnrspb.org.uk)

The Group's website is:  
[www.lincolnrspb.org.uk](http://www.lincolnrspb.org.uk)



The RSPB is the UK's largest nature conservation charity, inspiring everyone to give nature a home. Together with our partners, we protect threatened birds and wildlife so our towns, coast and countryside will teem with life once again. We also play a leading role in a worldwide partnership of nature conservation organisations.

**Website: [rspb.org.uk](http://rspb.org.uk)**

The RSPB Lincoln Local Group holds regular events to which RSPB members and members of the public are welcome.

**Website: [lincolnrspb.org.uk](http://lincolnrspb.org.uk)**