

Saltholme RSPB Reserve – 15 September 2024

In September we went to the RSPB Reserve at Saltholme which is near Middlesbrough. We arrived at 10 am and the weather was cloudy but dry and remained the same throughout the day. Saltholme Reserve was officially opened in 2009 and although it is in the heart of industrial Middlesbrough it is a wonderful reserve. It has a good café, shop and reception, which overlooks a lake and from here we saw Stock Doves, Mallards, Gadwalls, Tufted Ducks, Pochards, Mute Swans, Lapwings, a Little Grebe, Coot, Moorhen, Common Snipe, Greenshank and Little Egret. A Sparrowhawk also flew across the front of the viewing area and the adjacent feeders were attracting Blue Tits, Great Tits, Goldfinches and a Greenfinch.

We then moved on to the Pools Hide which is a good place to see water birds and we were not disappointed. There were Canada and Greylag Geese, Avocets, Little Stints, Ringed Plovers, a Curlew, Grey Heron and Common Sandpiper. Swallows were flying around and a couple of Pied Wagtails were flitting about on the water's edge. There was a flock of gulls consisting of Herring Gulls, Great Black-backed Gulls, Lesser Black-backed Gulls and a Common Gull.

We eventually retraced our steps to visit the Wildlife Watch Point. On the way we spotted a Kestrel, Magpie, four Barnacle Geese, Black-tailed Godwits, Starlings, Linnets, Carrion Crows and two Pink-footed Geese flying over. At the hide we had an excellent view of a Water Rail, Bar-tailed Godwit and Teals. There were two Tree Sparrows on the feeders and we heard a Cetti's Warbler and Wren in the bushes.

Our next area was the wildflower walk and we added Blackbird, Robin and Marsh Harrier to our list. At the viewing area at Allotment Pool, we saw Shovelers, a Cormorant, Great Crested Grebe, Sand Martins and Woodpigeons. One person also had a brief sighting of a Ring Ousel on a post on the far bank. When we returned to the Visitor Centre, we stopped at Paddy's Pool Hide and there were over a hundred Barnacle Geese.

We had a wonderful day and the total bird species seen was 54.



Bar-tailed Godwit, RSPB Saltholme

Ray Daniels
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