

Weeting Heath – 16 June 2024

In June 33 people went on the field trip to Weeting Heath in Norfolk. It is managed by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust and it is an area of sandy heathland and conifer forest. It was a fine, cloudy day with sunny periods later. When we arrived, we were told that the Stone Curlews were visible so we made our way to one of the hides.

We immediately found one in the rough grass but we needed to view it through a telescope to positively identify it. Eventually it started moving around and three more birds appeared and we had excellent views of all of them. Further out in the field there were Woodpigeons, Stock Doves, Lapwings, Carrion Crows and an Oystercatcher. A Skylark was singing and Herring Gulls, Black-headed Gulls, Lesser Black-backed Gulls and Swifts were flying around. We also spotted a Red Kite and Kestrel in the distance.

After a short break for lunch, we decided to do the Woodland Walk. Around the Visitor Centre there were Chaffinches, Goldfinches, House Sparrows, a Wren, Marsh Tit, Nuthatch and Great Spotted Woodpecker. On the heathland we found a Curlew and Swallows and House Martins were flying over. In the woodlands we saw Blackbirds, Blue Tits, Great Tits, a Sparrowhawk and Common Buzzard.



Stone Curlew

As we progressed along the track we met Steve, who is one of our group and he informed us that he had found a Nightjar. He very kindly took us to the area where it was perched on a branch a few yards from the footpath. We were able to obtain an excellent view of the bird and while we were watching it, a male Nightjar flew over us into the same wooded area. It is unusual to see Nightjars during the day; therefore, it caused a lot of excitement. It was definitely the highlight of the day and if Chris Packham had been there, he would have been "rubbing his thighs". Reluctantly we continued our walk and added Yellowhammer, Goldcrest and Green Woodpecker to our list. This brought the total bird species seen during the day to 33.

*Ray Daniels
RSPB Lincoln Local Group*