

## Welney Wetland Centre – 17 November 2024

In November we went to Welney Wetland Centre in West Norfolk. There were 35 people on the coach and we arrived at the Reserve at 9.45 am. The weather was good and it remained dry until the journey home.

Welney covers 1,000 acres of the Ouse Washes which is Britain's largest area of seasonally flooded land. There is a heated Main Observatory, plus four hides and a magnificent Visitor Centre. In the winter you can watch the daily feeding of the Whooper and Bewick's Swans from the heated Main Observatory.

There is a bird feeding station which you can view from the Visitor Centre and it was attracting Blue Tits, Great Tits, House Sparrows, Tree Sparrows and a Blackbird. Access from the Visitor Centre to the hides is via a substantial wooden bridge and from this bridge we spotted two Cattle Egrets among the sheep. Also there was a hovering Kestrel and some Carrion Crows. We then visited the Main Observatory and were astounded to see such a large number of wildfowl. Whooper Swans were in the majority and there were many Wigeons, Pochards and a large flock of Black-tailed Godwits. A few Mute Swans were among them as well as Greylag Geese, Canada Geese, Coots, Mallards, Teals, Shovelers, Pintails, Gadwalls, Shelducks and a single Tufted Duck. A couple of Marsh Harriers were quartering the marsh, a Sparrowhawk flew across and two Great White Egrets were seen in the distance. Other birds included Starlings, Lapwings, Jackdaws, Golden Plovers, a Cormorant, Lesser Black-backed Gull and an Egyptian Goose.



Cattle Egret taken at Welney

We then moved on to the Reedbed Hide where we saw Black-headed Gulls, White-fronted Geese, Moorhens, Magpies, Dunlins, Grey Herons, a Redshank, Common Buzzard and one person caught a glimpse of an American Wigeon. We then returned to the Main Observatory to see the feeding of the swans which was a fitting end to a great day.

Additional birds seen by some of the group were two Peregrine Falcons, a Water Pipit, Pheasant, Red Kite, Barn Owl, Short-eared Owl, Common Snipe and Long-tailed Tits. This brought the number of bird species seen to 53.

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