**devonbirds** Plymouth Branch – Soar & Starehole Valley for Migrants

Monday 17th October 2022 with leaders Kev and Jacki Solman

Monday dawned fair, which was a great relief after a full day of incessant rain on Sunday. Expectations of the twenty-four participants (including six new members) for some seasonally special birds were high, at this, one of South Devon’s best known stopping off spots for the autumn migration.

The walk began with dozens of restless Skylarks, in the blustery wind, over the airfield and the adjacent stubbles. Meanwhile the Meadow Pipits and even the assembled gulls were keeping their feet firmly on the ground. A late group of three Swallows flew close by the farm where a few migrant Chiffchaffs and Blackcap, along with the local Stonechats and Goldfinches, gave a flavour of what we would search for lower down the valley.

In the shelter of the valley a few of the resident Yellowhammers and Cirl Buntings put on a good show for us. The passage migrants were represented by a pair of Bullfinches, with Goldcrest, more Chiffchaffs and a good few Blackbirds. Sadly, some of those we had anticipated were not to put in an appearance.

In all, thirty-five bird species, along with five butterflies and a couple of dragonflies, as listed below were seen on the day.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Common Name |  |
| 1 | Pheasant |  |
| 2 | Gannet | 4+ |
| 3 | Cormorant | 1 |
| 4 | Kestrel |  |
| 5 | Moorhen | h |
| 6 | Herring Gull |  |
| 7 | Great Black-backed Gull |  |
| 8 | Lesser Black-backed Gull |  |
| 9 | Woodpigeon |  |
| 10 | Skylark | 100+ |
| 11 | Swallow | 3 |
| 12 | Meadow Pipit |  |
| 13 | Pied Wagtail | 4 |
| 14 | Dunnock |  |
| 15 | Robin |  |
| 16 | Stonechat |  |
| 17 | Blackbird |  |
| 18 | Blackcap |  |
| 19 | Chiffchaff |  |
| 20 | Goldcrest |  |
| 21 | Wren |  |
| 22 | Great Tit |  |
| 23 | Blue Tit |  |
| 24 | Long-tailed Tit | 6+ |
| 25 | Magpie |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  | Common Name |  |
| 26 | Carrion Crow |  |
| 27 | Raven | 2 |
| 28 | House Sparrow |  |
| 29 | Chaffinch |  |
| 30 | Linnet |  |
| 31 | Goldfinch |  |
| 32 | Greenfinch |  |
| 33 | Bullfinch | 2 |
| 34 | Yellowhammer |  |
| 35 | Cirl Bunting |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  | Butterflies |  |
| 1 | Clouded Yellow | 4 |
| 2 | Small Copper |  |
| 3 | Peacock |  |
| 4 | Red Admiral |  |
| 5 | Speckled Wood |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  | Dragonflies |  |
| 1 | Golden Ringed | 1 |
| 2 | Hawker (sp) male | 1 |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

Report by Chris Marcol. pp Kev & Jacki Solman