**Devon Birds Plymouth Branch Outdoor Meeting Friday 8 April 2022**

**Topsham and Bowling Green Marsh and Exminster Marshes**

Nine Plymouth Branch members enjoyed visiting the Topsham area on Friday 8 April. Before leaving Holman Way car park the bird list had notched up the first few species which included a singing Blackcap and Chiffchaff in the low trees / shrubs behind the recycling containers. Walking down to The Quay a Grey Heron floated over to land in a back garden! Most of the waders and duck were further down the Exe on the mud flats that were still exposed, so we continued down towards the Goat Walk to get much closer views. Continuing on the road we spent some time watching several Chiffchaff at close quarters before walking down the path to the viewing platform over the Clyst. The distinctive call of Cetti’s Warbler was heard from the thicket of bramble and scrub behind the platform. Highlights included a pair of Red-breasted Merganser and 5 Great Crested Grebe with a Green Woodpecker regularly yaffling in the distance.

At Bowling Green Marsh birds of note were Pintail, Egyptian Geese, Greenshank, a number of Reed Bunting, Kingfisher and a Snipe, the latter catching our attention as it swam across the water channel from the hide to the first island and then, with 3 others, provided good views whilst they fed. A Great Tit was collecting nesting material from a feeder and taking it into one of the holes drilled in the wall of the hide.

The group decided to try their luck with the Spotted Crake and moved on, later in the afternoon, to Exminster Marshes. In the sunshine it was a joy to listen to Skylark overhead and to watch a Spoonbill feeding. For many the first Swallows of 2022 were viewed passing overhead. A Marsh Harrier made a number of forays at the back of the marsh. As for the Crake, the hardy remainers saw a small bird making a Usain Bolt style dash between one clump of soft rush and the next – the conclusion – maybe??

The confirmed bird list is provided below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Great Crested Grebe | Avocet | Blackbird |
| Cormorant | Dunlin | Song Thrush |
| Little Egret | Snipe | Cetti’s Warbler |
| Grey Heron | Black-tailed Godwit | Blackcap |
| Mute Swan | Curlew | Chiffchaff |
| Canada Goose | Redshank | Long-tailed Tit |
| Egyptian Goose | Greenshank | Blue Tit |
| Shelduck | Black-headed Gull | Great Tit |
| Wigeon | Lesser Black-backed Gull | Reed Bunting |
| Teal | Herring gull | Magpie |
| Mallard | Great Black-backed Gull | Jackdaw |
| Pintail | Wood Pigeon | Carrion Crow |
| Tufted Duck | Collared Dove | Starling |
| Red-breasted Merganser | Kingfisher | House Sparrow |
| Buzzard | Green Woodpecker | Chaffinch |
| Moorhen | Wren | Greenfinch |
| Coot | Dunnock | Goldfinch |
| Oystercatcher | Robin |  |

Additional species seen at Exminster Marshes:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Spoonbill | Marsh Harrier | Skylark |
| Shoveler | Pheasant | Pied Wagtail |
| Swallow | Lapwing | Feral Greylag Goose |

Total = 62 species Mary Johnson