Visit to Venford Reservoir area by DB Plymouth Branch on 16.05.2022

Conditions involving a stiff breeze, mist and intermittent rain with a cool temperature made for a challenging birding experience at Venford Reservoir. This meant that bird identification relied a great deal on bird sounds for the eleven of us attending.

We crossed the dam and walked down to the stream, which conveyed the water from the reservoir to the River Dart to follow the pipeline path. This was an attempt to remain in the more sheltered areas. Several Tree Pipits sang from the blackthorn. Yellowhammer and Stonechat were singing from the nearby gorse.

This ancient woodland was experiencing the typical dampness it needed at last. Mosses, liverworts and lichens had been fairly dry in previous weeks with limited rain on the Moor until now.

Of the migrants expected at this time, Willow Warbler proved to be most vocal with Blackcap, Chiffchaff and Cuckoo calling. Swallow and House Martin dived for insects over the buildings of the treatment works. Pied Flycatcher was only heard and Redstart was not seen at all. Good views of Treecreeper were enjoyed.

Although the weather conditions were not very favourable, this allowed time to learn some bird calls and songs. Those with an upper hearing loss would have missed the Goldcrest however. Looking down through the trees to the River Dart proved to be quite atmospheric during our three mile meander.

Species list - Cormorant, Grey Heron, Herring Gull, Wood Pigeon, Swallow, Cuckoo, House Martin, Tree Pipit, Meadow Pipit, Grey Wagtail, Pied Wagtail, Wren, Robin, Stonechat, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Mistle Thrush, Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff, Blackcap, Goldcrest, Pied Flycatcher, Coal Tit, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Treecreeper, Jay, Raven, Carrion Crow, Chaffinch, Siskin, Yellowhammer Total 32 Liz Harris