

Naturetrek 'Forests of the North York Moors' Day Trip 10 June 2021

The group met at Wykeham just before 8.30am. After introductions and a briefing we set off on a short drive to Wykeham Raptor Watchpoint. The weather forecast for the day was cloudy but warm and it turned out to be very pleasant with a light breeze and good visibility.

We stayed at the watchpoint for a couple of hours. Raptors were in short supply today and we had to be content with distant views of Common Buzzards, which we saw again but much closer later in the day. There was still plenty to see and we had lovely scope views of a pair of Crossbill, the red male showing very well. A Garden Warbler sang from a nearby bush and stayed long enough for more scope views, and we saw several Siskins close by. A scraping noise could be heard from the undergrowth and eventually we tracked down a wasp collecting wood scrapings. A red and black 'hopper' jumping bug was also seen.

Late morning we returned to Wykeham and had an early lunch in the garden beside Bolli's Tea Rooms. As we descended we saw a Lapwing and some were lucky enough to spot a Whitethroat singing in it's display flight and a bright Yellowhammer.

Once refreshed we moved to Forge Valley and after parking our convoy of cars, set off on a boardwalk path beside the River Derwent. It was quite muggy as the steep tree covered valley sides trapped the heat at the bottom of this narrow valley. As we crossed the bridge to the boardwalk we were delighted by a Grey Wagtail. Woodland bird sightings included Nuthatch, Treecreeper (one bathing at the side of the stream), lots of Robins, a party of Long-tailed Tits, Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler, Wren and Bullfinch. On waterside vegetation were lots of Beautiful Demoiselles with the metallic cobolt-blue wings of the male glinting beautifully in the sunshine. We came across quite a few butterflies. They were mainly whites (Small White, Green-veined White and Orange-tip) but it was nice to find a fresh Red Admiral.

Mid-afternoon we returned to our vehicles and the convoy moved to Wykeham Lakes. On the access track we passed a family of Greylag Geese with several young. We parked at the new watersports area with its useful facilities, and added Pied Wagtail to our day list as there was a pair close by feeding a youngster who obliged for scope views. We then walked past a fishing lake, where we noted Great Crested Grebe, to a working quarry area holding a large roost of gulls, more Greylag Geese, Mallard and Great Cormorant. An Oystercatcher flew by calling as we got to grips with the gulls. Most were Herring Gulls but we took time to identify the Lesser Black-backed Gulls and the single Great Black-backed Gull. Surprisingly the roost was devoid of Black-headed or Common Gulls. As we were watching a male Great Spotted Woodpecker flew to a nearby tree and showed well.

Our last location was further around the workings and accessed through woodland. Enroute we identified both Common Bluetail and Common Bluet Damselflies. At the hide and viewing screen we saw Mute Swans with young and our last sightings were of Kestrel and a Grey Heron which appeared to cause most of the gull roost to take flight and circle around us. Back at the vehicles we said our 'goodbyes' and the day trip came to an end.

Sightings

Birds (In order of finding during the day)

Chaffinch
Chiffchaff
Robin
Blackbird
Wren
Goldfinch
Blackcap
Herring Gull
Crossbill
Willow Warbler
Carrion Crow
Common Buzzard
Jackdaw
Pheasant
Garden Warbler
Blue Tit
Siskin
Swift
Lapwing
Swallow
Common Whitethroat
Yellowhammer
Feral Pigeon
Grey Wagtail
Mallard
Bullfinch
Long-tailed Tit
Great Tit
Nuthatch
Treetreeper
Collared Dove
Pied Wagtail
Greylag Goose
Sand Martin
Great Crested Grebe
Oystercatcher
Lesser Black-backed Gull
Great Cormorant
Great Black-backed Gull
Great Spotted Woodpecker
Moorhen
Coot
Mute Swan
Kestrel
Magpie
Grey Heron

Butterflies

Peacock

Green-veined White

Small White

Orange-tip

Red Admiral

Moths

Silver-ground Carpet

Dragonflies and Damselflies

Beautiful Demoiselle (male and female)

Common Bluetail (Blue-tailed Damselfly)

Common Bluet (Common Blue Damselfly)

Others

Red and Black 'hopper' jumping bug (*Cercopis vulnerate*)

Wasp collecting wood scrapings

White-lipped Banded Snail

Brown-lipped Banded Snail

Scorpion Fly (*Panorpa communis*)

Cockchafer (also called May-bug)