

Naturetrek 'Forests of the North York Moors' Day Trip 9 June 2022

The group met at Wykeham at 9am and after introductions and a briefing we set off on a short drive to Wykeham Raptor Watchpoint. Enroute those in one car in the convoy enjoyed a Green Woodpecker fly across the road in front of them. The weather was fine with a light breeze and good visibility. The temperature rose during the day and around midday the sun broke through the clouds so the afternoon was pleasantly warm.

There were plenty of people at the watchpoint so lots of pairs of eyes scanning over the valley and surrounding woodland in the hope of finding a Honey Buzzard. We stayed there a good couple of hours and managed one distant sighting of the target species. It was drifting away and very soon became a dot, but we did see it and confirm its identity. Whilst the Honey Buzzard played hard to get there was no such problem for Common Buzzard and we saw several of them well. The glade where we were positioned had trees on the edge and as we were at the top of a slope, the tops of the ones in front and at the sides were at eye level or just above. On them we enjoyed good clear views of male and female Crossbill, Siskin and Willow Warbler. The vegetation behind our position was alive with bees and we noted Tree, Early and Buff-tailed Bumblebees. Also the whole time we were there we were serenaded by birdsong, mainly from Song Thrush, Robin, Chaffinch, Willow Warbler and Chiffchaff.

Late morning we returned to Wykeham and had an early lunch in the garden beside Bolli's Tea Rooms. As we descended some spotted Tree and House Sparrows and heard Blackcap, Skylark and Yellowhammer. Whilst eating our picnic we saw Swallows and a couple more Common Buzzards.

Once refreshed we moved to Forge Valley. Most parked on Old Man's Mouth car park but Keith continued to Birdwatcher's car park to watch the birds at the many feeders rather than do the walk. Whilst there he added Jay, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Willow Tit and Nuthatch to the day list. Meanwhile the rest of us crossed a small bridge and did a linear walk along a wooden boardwalk through the trees alongside the stream. We enjoyed watching Grey Wagtails and to our surprise spotted a Dipper on the boardwalk, which moved to the stream on our approach. During the 'out and back' walk we saw the Dipper several times and enjoyed fabulous views. There were lots of male and female Blackcaps alongside the stream and at one point we were surrounded by at least eight Marsh Tits, some giving their distinctive call. We were also captivated by several Beautiful Demoiselles which showed well in sunny streamside glades. Once back at the vehicles we moved to Birdwatcher's car park to rejoin Keith and spent a little while enjoying the birds coming out of the woodland to the feeders.

Mid-afternoon we moved in a convoy to Wykeham Lakes and parked at the new watersports area with its useful facilities. Before setting off for a walk we checked the surrounding area and added Pied Wagtail, Great Crested Grebe, Coot and a pair of Egyptian Geese to our day list. We then walked past a fishing lake noting both Canada and Greylag Geese with young, to a working quarry area holding a large roost of gulls. As we approached the viewing screen through wild vegetation we studied the damselflies and identified Common Blue, Blue-tailed and Large Red Damselflies. We also noted the interesting hoverfly *Volucella pellecens*. At the screen the gulls were Herring and Black-headed Gulls and Lesser

Black-backed Gulls showing strikingly yellow legs. There was also a Mute Swan with six cygnets, Tufted Duck and two Oystercatchers. A Garden Warbler was an interesting find flycatching in the vegetation between the screen and the water. Back at the car park our last new sightings were Feral Pigeons and a Rook (we had probably seen Rook earlier with the many corvids visible from the Raptor watchpoint but they were too far away to identify with certainty.) We then reflected on the day before saying our goodbyes and departing after an enjoyable day.

Sightings

Whilst not everyone saw everything, the following list reflects sightings noted by group members during the day.

Birds (In order of finding during the day)

Chaffinch

Blackbird

Common Whitethroat (h)

Kestrel

Lapwing

Chiffchaff

Willow Warbler

Wood Pigeon

Robin

Green Woodpecker

Wren

Siskin

Jackdaw

Carrion Crow

Herring Gull

Common Buzzard

Bullfinch

Swift

Song Thrush

Crossbill

Honey Buzzard

Blackcap

Tree Sparrow

House Sparrow

Skylark

Pheasant

Yellowhammer (h)

Swallow

Starling

Grey Wagtail

Dipper

Marsh Tit

Mallard

Blue Tit

Great Tit
Jay
Great Spotted Woodpecker
Willow Tit
Nuthatch
Pied Wagtail
Canada Goose
Coot
Great Crested Grebe
Sand Martin
Egyptian Goose
Greylag Goose
Oystercatcher
Black-headed Gull
Lesser Black-backed Gull
Mute Swan
Tufted Duck
Garden Warbler
Feral Pigeon
Rook

Butterflies

Painted Lady
Green-veined White
Small White
Orange-tip
Red Admiral
Large Skipper

Damselflies

Beautiful Demoiselle
Common Bluetail (Blue-tailed Damselfly)
Common Bluet (Common Blue Damselfly)
Large Red Damselfly

Others

Grey Squirrel
Rabbit
Banded Snail
Buff-tailed Bumblebee
Tree Bumblebee
Early Bumblebee
Hoverfly *Volucella pellucens*