

Day Trip Summary

Name of trip: Vale of Mowbray (GBR271)

Date of trip: 29 July 2021

Species highlights (5+): Birds - Osprey, Wood Sandpiper & Dunlin; Butterflies - Brimstone, Wall & Brown Argus; Dragonflies – Blue Emperor, Black-tailed Skimmer & Brown Hawker

Summary of the day: The group met at Nosterfield Local Nature Reserve just before 9am. The weather forecast threatened heavy showers on and off throughout the day but we were lucky and the weather stayed mostly fine and sunny. The wind was a factor and it got stronger and cooler as the day progressed. After introductions and a briefing we spent some time viewing the main lake where we enjoyed a selection of birds including Dunlin still showing its black underside and Wood Sandpiper. We then set off to walk to North hide, enroute discussing the many butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies along the flower-rich path. We talked about how to identify the different white butterflies and the blue-tailed damselflies. At North hide we watched Oystercatchers and a juvenile Great Crested Grebe with its striped head. We then walked back to the car park. We had seen numerous Little Egrets during our walk and the high count was twelve; a group of ten and two singles.

From the car park we drove the short distance to Nosterfield Quarry. We started by looking over Lingham Lake from the viewing screen where we added Great Cormorant to our sightings. After an early lunch at the picnic tables we walked to Flasks Lane. Along the paths in sheltered, sunny areas we saw lots more butterflies including Brimstone and dragonflies including Common Darter. At the end of Flasks Lane we were watching two Common Buzzards when our attention was drawn to an Osprey holding station over the lake in the wind. Suddenly it dived into the water and appeared carrying a fish which it carried to a nearby bare tree. A wonderful experience!

Next we crossed the causeway between Flasks and Kiln Lakes to visit the screen overlooking the reedbed. On the causeway we saw a Four-spotted Chaser dragonfly and several Brown Argus butterflies. For a moment we were fooled by two Common Tern decoys on the tern platform, but thankfully we had seen several of these terns earlier.

After a pleasant walk we arrived back at our cars and drove to Masham where we visited the Market Place for an afternoon tea stop. After making use of the public facilities we drove the short distance to Marfield Wetlands where we made a tour of the reserve passing the lakes, crossing the sheep fields and returning through woodland. As the afternoon progressed the wind strengthened and cooled so birds were skulking, but we did add a few more species to our day list, the last one being a single Swift amongst dozens of Swallows and House Martins hawking insects overhead. Eventually we arrived back at the car park where we said our goodbyes and departed after an enjoyable day in the Vale of York.