

Day Trip Summary

Name of trip: Vale of Mowbray (GBR271)

Date of trip: 6 January 2022

Species highlights (5+): hunting Barn Owl, Marsh Tit, stunning male Goldeneyes, Bar-headed Goose (of unknown origin)

Summary of the day: The day started in the car park at Nosterfield Local Nature Reserve at 9.30am. The temperature was around freezing after a very cold night and the weather forecast was for a front containing some snow and rain to pass over during the day. After introductions and a briefing we wrapped up warm and moved to the viewing screen overlooking the main lake. The water level was low with part of the surface frozen. We worked our way through the birds on view enjoying a selection of ducks including many Wigeon and fewer Teal, Tufted Duck, Mallard and Gadwall. Others included Lapwing, Curlew, Greylag Goose and Black-headed Gull. We then set off to walk to the North Lake viewing screen and enroute found an interesting selection of birds in the path-side bushes including Bullfinch, Redwing, Blue Tit, Goldfinch and Dunnock. Once at North Lake we added Mute Swan, Shoveler, Shelduck, Grey Heron and Pied Wagtail. Looking back towards the Main Lake we saw a smaller, lighter grey goose but were unable to obtain a clear view. Walking back to the car park we noted Canada Goose, Great Tit, Coal Tit and Wren. Before returning to our cars we checked the Main Lake again and this time had good clear views of the mystery goose which turned out to be an adult Bar-headed Goose of unknown origin.

From the car park we drove the short distance to Nosterfield Quarry. We started by looking over Lingham Lake from the viewing screen where additions included Great Cormorant, Little Grebe and Coot. A couple of Redshank were spotted and we enjoyed watching many smart male Goldeneyes. We then had our lunch at the picnic tables.

Next we moved to Flasks Lane to view the lake where we added Great Crested Grebe and Herring Gull with flyover Fieldfare and Pintail. We crossed the causeway to the viewing screen overlooking the Reedbed. We were pleased that the screen had a covered area as by this time the snow had started to fall. Unfortunately most birds were hiding in the reeds but we were entertained by a very confiding Robin which sheltered with us under the canopy. Walking back to the vehicles we added Great Black-backed and Common Gulls on Flask Lake, and House Sparrow and Collared Dove in Nosterfield village, as the snow changed to light rain.

After our walk we drove through Masham to Marfield Wetlands where we made a tour of the reserve passing the lakes, crossing the empty stock fields and returning through woodland. By this time the rain had stopped, making the circuit more pleasant. Again much of the main lake was iced over which made for comic landings when a few ducks flew in. We heard a Great Spotted Woodpecker drumming and on some feeders noted Chaffinch and Marsh, Coal, Great and Blue Tits. Our attention shifted to a Barn Owl hunting over the reserve and we saw it well on a couple of occasions on our walk. At the back of the reserve we added Sparrowhawk and Mistle Thrush before returning to the feeders where we saw our last species as a few Long-tailed Tits were visiting.

Eventually we arrived back at the car park where we said our goodbyes and departed after an enjoyable day in the Vale of Mowbray.