

Day Trip Summary

Name of trip: Vale of Mowbray (GBR271)

Date of trip: Tuesday 7 June 2022

Species highlights (5+): Osprey, Little Owl, large number of chicks of many bird species, wealth of orchids, Bloody-nosed Beetle (adult and larva)

Summary of the day: The day started in the car park at Nosterfield Local Nature Reserve at 9am with the temperature around 12 degrees and a heavy cloud covering, however visibility was good. After introductions and a briefing we viewed the Main Lake from the viewing screen. The first thing that struck us was the cacophony of noise, mainly from the numerous Black-headed Gulls on the islands and their many chicks. One of the features of the day was to be the number and variety of chicks which was lovely to see and indicated a good breeding year. We worked our way through the birds on view enjoying a selection of ducks including Tufted Duck, Gadwall, Shoveler, Teal and Pochard. Oystercatchers and Lapwing were well represented and other waders included Avocet, Redshank, Dunlin, Curlew, Ringed Plover and Black-tailed Godwit. It was also nice to spot a Little Egret. We then set off to walk to the North Lake viewing screen and enroute found an interesting selection of birds including Little Grebe, Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler and Reed Bunting. A Common Buzzard showed well and two Stock Doves flew by. We checked the dragonfly pond but it was a little cool and only Pond Skaters were active. A feature of the path and the day as a whole was the number of orchids and we were pleased to see good numbers of Common Spotted, Marsh and Bee Orchids. Once at North Lake we added Pied Wagtail, Sand Martin and Canada Goose to our growing list of sightings. Walking back to the car park additions included Skylark, Blackcap and Sedge Warbler. Breaks started to appear in the clouds and with the rising temperature butterflies began to be active and we saw Small White, Large Skipper, Speckled Wood and Orange-tip. We also found an adult and the larva of Bloody-nosed Beetle which were good finds.

From the car park we drove the short distance to Nosterfield Quarry. We started by looking over Lingham Lake from the viewing screen. Whilst a few were using the facilities at the Information Centre which had re-opened after being locked during Covid, the first arrivals at the screen found an Osprey perched in a dead tree in the lake. Everyone was quickly summoned and we all had good views before the bird took off, circled and headed north, not to be seen by us again. We also added Great Crested Grebe and Brimstone and Large White butterflies to our list before moving to the picnic tables for lunch.

After lunch we walked along the footpath to Flasks Lane. As we approached a tree stump housing an owl box in a field about 100 yards away, we were discussing the likelihood of seeing an owl when, to our delight, a Little Owl was spotted on a fence post next to the tree stump. We spent some enjoyable moments watching it through the telescope. We continued to Flasks Lake where we found two Common Gulls before taking the path through the trees to the causeway between Flasks and Kiln Lakes to the hide overlooking the

Reedbed. From here we had a panoramic view over the lakes and enjoyed spotting both Sedge and Reed Warblers. We returned to the car park by the same route. After the causeway we came across a Jay which had been bathing and found a sunny spot in the grass to dry out, and a Common Frog had to be escorted off the path to the safety of the verge.

After our walk we drove to Masham where we sat in the Market Square at a café and enjoyed a drink before checking the adjacent churchyard, where some spotted Greenfinch, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Song Thrush and Tree and House Sparrows.

Our last stop was at Marfield Wetlands just outside Masham. We did a circular walk past lakes, alongside a stream, through a couple of fields and back through woodland, stopping at a viewing screen with feeders where Nuthatch, our last new bird of the day, was found. During the walk there were lots of orchids and damselflies and we discussed how to tell Common and Azure Blue Damsels apart. We also saw Common Blue and Peacock butterflies, a 7-spot ladybird and on the screen a Small Magpie Moth.

Eventually we arrived back at the car park where we reflected on a lovely day before saying our goodbyes and departing after an enjoyable day in the Vale of Mowbray.