

Pennington Flash Field Trip 27/09/2017 Sandbach U3A Birdwatching Group 1

Ten members of the group ventured up to Pennington Flash for the first field trip of the new season in cool but dry weather. We were soon picking up Tufted Duck, Great Crested Grebe and Cormorant from the car park. We moved up to the Horrocks Hide, only to find it still locked (C.1000). So we set up 'scopes alongside the hide to view the spit, finding Mute Swan, Gadwall (of which there were many all around the site), Lapwing and 6 Common Snipe. The padlock on the hide also encouraged us to look at the feeding area across the path from it, where we found Goldfinch, Chaffinch, Dunnock and a possible Chiffchaff.

We walked on to find the Tom Edmondson hide (overlooking the north end of Pengy's Pond) also locked, but made the most of the screen opposite to find Grey Heron and Shoveler. We walked round to the Ramsdale hide (locked again) and were about to turn back when a ride-on mower appeared with one of the groundsmen on it, and glory be! - he had a key with him! (c.1030). We all piled into the hide, and were quickly spotting birds along the visible waterlines, adding Little Grebe, and over the Sailing Club three late Swallows. Outside the hide another (or the same) Chiffchaff was heard & seen briefly, and we plodded off through the mud up towards the canal. A viewpoint here brought in Canada Geese, Sparrowhawk and Jay.

We turned back towards the main part of the reserve, checking out the Teal and Lapwing hides (nothing new) before reaching the Bunting Hide. This was strangely quiet with Bullfinch, Stock Dove and a female Blackcap the main captures here. We trooped back to the car park, where we picked up our day's sustenance and headed to the now-open Horrocks Hide to eat it.

After lunch we went to check if the Tom Edmondson hide was open - it was, and we were greeted by a local birdwatchers' usual cry "You should have been here 10 minutes ago when the Kingfisher was just outside!" Chastened, we settled in and waited, checking the Teal floating about. Suddenly the turquoise tornado arrived from stage left, and you could feel the tension ease!

We headed back toward the Bunting Hide, hoping for Willow Tit, but first stopped off at Pengy's Hide. The feeders here were busy, with Greenfinch, Coal Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Blue and Great Tits, and again a little patience brought us our quarry, as two Willow Tits started to fly in, snatch food, and fly out again to eat it. A little more patience enabled us to get good views of the busy pair. Pleased with our success, we abandoned our attempt at the Bunting Hide and headed for the cars. Two of our number had made it to the Bunting Hide anyway, and they too enjoyed views of perhaps a third Willow Tit.

Our day trip total came to 42 species, a great start to our 2017/2018 season.

Trip List Pennington Flash 27th Sept 2017

NAME

Canada Goose
Mute Swan
Gadwall
Northern Shoveler
Green-winged Teal
Tufted Duck
Little Grebe
Great Crested Grebe
Great Cormorant
Grey Heron
Eurasian Sparrowhawk
Common Moorhen
Eurasian Coot
Northern Lapwing
Common Snipe
Black-headed Gull
Herring Gull
Lesser Black-backed Gull
Stock Dove
Common Wood-Pigeon
Eurasian Collared-Dove
Common Kingfisher
Eurasian Jay
Eurasian Magpie
Carrion Crow
Barn Swallow
Willow Tit
Coal Tit
Great Tit
Eurasian Blue Tit
Long-tailed Tit
Winter Wren
Common Chiffchaff
Blackcap
European Robin
Eurasian Blackbird
European Starling
Dunnock
Chaffinch
European Greenfinch
European Goldfinch
Eurasian Bullfinch