

Abberton Coach Trip 11/1/20

Andrew reports:

36 people arrived at Abberton on a day that was slightly windy and overcast. We set out from the visitor centre to the nearby Layer De La Hay causeway. The first sighting was of a lone Swallow that was hawking for insects low over the concrete banks. Then we enjoyed watching several female Goosanders feeding close by.



There were big rafts of Teal, and numbers of Tufted ducks. Goldeneye were numerous, with some of the males displaying. George found a Long-tailed Duck - it dived frequently but was eventually seen by all. A redhead Smew (female/youngster) was popular, then a pair of Scaup showed well. A local birder put us onto a lone Cattle Egret that was feeding amongst a flock of sheep in a nearby field. We carried onto Wigborough Bay, a shallower area of the reservoir overlooked by a hide and screen, where we watched 4 Bewick Swans - mostly sleeping - who were with 2 (noticeably larger) Mute Swans. There were also Shelduck, a Stonechat on the tall bankside vegetation, and several large Lapwing flocks wheeling about, probably around 4-500 birds. We then did a circuit of the hides beyond the Visitor centre, adding Kestrel, Marsh Harrier, Great White Egret, Linnet, Meadow Pipit and Skylark. Walking back we encountered a flock of 40 Fieldfares in a hedgerow. Next, a circular walk to see the Layer Breton Causeway. We also heard a Goldcrest and saw a perched Buzzard. The causeway was quiet, with many of the birds (mainly Pochard, Shoveler, and Tufted, with some Gadwall) sheltering from the wind under tree branches at the edges. Beyond the causeway there were 12 White-fronted Geese feeding in a field with Canadas and Greylags. A few caught up with the Black-throated Diver.

Robert Muller, a newcomer to MBS coach trips, posted his photos on

Facebook MBS 2020 Vision <https://www.facebook.com/groups/MBS2020/>

On Saturday I accompanied Marylebone Birdwatching Society on a coach outing to Abberton Reservoir, an Essex Wildlife Trust reserve. Overcast skies robbed my photos of some amount of colour and a fairly stiff breeze made me glad that I had worn sufficient winter clothing but I did have a very successful day's birding. There were lots of ducks. Dabblers included huge numbers of Teal and smaller rafts of Wigeon, Shovelers and some Gadwall and Mallards. Diving ducks included Tufted Duck, Goldeneye, Scaup, Smew and Goosanders. But my bird of the day had to be the sea duck called Long-tailed Duck, closely followed by a Black-throated Diver. One surprising spot was a Swallow that bravely skimmed up and down the causeway seeking insects. Abberton Reservoir has an excellent visitor centre with family friendly facilities and a well-used bird feeder station. One female Pheasant, not content to pick up the fallen seed like all the other Pheasants, entertained with an amusing balancing act in its attempt to pick seed directly from a feeder.



Sharyn also contributed some photos and wrote:

Smashing outing to Abberton Reservoir today 11th Jan 20 with MBS. Seeing Bewick Swans for the first time was so exciting. Other firsts included Scaup, Goosander and Cattle Egret. Landscapes were good too with striking winter trees & moody conditions over the Reservoir.



Trees from Mary Holden's album.