

Keyhaven Marshes 3/2/18

Andrew wrote:

The two themes of the day were good views of good birds and spells of drizzle; but the birds won! At the roadside pools there was a female Marsh Harrier perched at the end of the hedgeline, and a Greenshank amongst the Tufties and Coots. Redshank, Greenshank and a Curlew then flew up, probably spooked by the harrier. Along the seawall there were numbers of Reed Buntings in the bushes, Stonechats, and Snipe and Teal in the marsh. On the (high tide) sea there were softly barking Brent Geese, Shelduck, Wigeon, Great Crested and Little Grebes, and Curlew on the surviving saltmarsh.

Once we'd passed the dogwalkers, there were numbers of Turnstone and Rock Pipits on the shingle. Grey Plover, Dunlin and Bar-Tailed Godwits roosted on the islands, and around 200 Knot swirled up at intervals. A pair of Red-Breasted Mergansers gave close views, then we found a Peregrine perched on an island.

At lunch there were Avocets and a pair of Pintail on the lagoon, and a perched Kingfisher (not the last!). A perched female Sparrowhawk caused excitement (was it a Goshawk?). Next a Spoonbill flew low towards us, landing in the lagoon. More Kingfisher(s), then we found our 'scarcer grebes' - 2 Slavonians and a Red-Necked Grebe fishing near the pier.



The weather briefly worsened – more rain and some mist, then we found the pair of Bearded Tits that were showing brilliantly in the reeds. We finished with another view of 'spoonie', followed by some Golden Plovers flying with Lapwing, then to the pub for a well-earned drink.

Marion added:

As Andrew led a brisk walk to where the 'scarcer grebes' had been spotted, the tail-end of the group stopped to gaze at the pair of Bearded Tits – showing even more brilliantly than when Andrew and co saw them on their way back! The female was going up and down, in and out of the reeds but the male was working his way along the bottom of the front edge of the reeds, doing the splits as most of us had only ever seen on TV and occasionally dipping into the water for a drink.

One person booking another coach trip commented: What a great day out Keyhaven was, despite the rain. And another, on seeing our video on Facebook, also called it a "great day". You can view the video on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fQ5jg-cWSbc&t=14s>.