

Rye Meads Sat 10 October 2018

Two of us travelled with Barbara from Liverpool Street Station. One person joined us at Cheshunt. Others emerged from further down the train when we changed at Broxbourne and others joined us on the platform at Rye House. As this was officially the 10.30 meeting point, we waited a few moments before setting off for the 10-minute walk to Rye Meads Reserve... where others were waiting. 15 of us eventually set off from the Visitor Centre about 10 to 11.

We'd already had a Cormorant and 4 Crows fly over; we'd heard Robin and seen a Blackbird shoot across the road. During the course of the day we must have seen another 9 individual Cormorants flying high.

Barbara had said the first hide was the best and this was where we should see Green Sandpiper. The moment we entered Draper Hide, a local birder pointed one out to us. It disappeared for a while but we saw it fly in again before we left the hide. We also had Mute Swans, Coot, Moorhen, a dozen Teal, a male Shoveler, a Little Grebe and a Gadwall. Plus Crow, Magpie, Wood Pigeon and, just before we left, a Grey Heron flew across.



We gazed up a tempting path, beyond a locked gate, trying to find the mystery bird we could hear trilling but we only saw Blue Tit and Blackbird and heard a distant Green Woodpecker.

From Ashby Hide we saw 4 Gadwall, a female Tufted Duck, a female Shoveler, 2 Coot and a Black-headed Gull. Some of us also spotted a Wren fly across to skulk in the bottom of the reeds.

As we emerged from the hide, we heard chattering Starlings and counted 11 on the pylon and cables above. Barbara had seen lots of Starlings on her recce a couple of weeks earlier. And we did see about 20 Starlings huddled close together on a wire a bit further on.

From Gadwall Hide we saw 2 Grey Heron, Mute Swans and Coots, Mallard and Shoveler, about 6 Moorhen and 10 Lapwing. I counted 200 gulls – Black-headed Gulls though we didn't look at them too closely. We did pick out a couple of Lesser Black Backed Gulls. Someone counted a dozen Wigeon.

From the next "twin" hide we could only see Swans and Coots. Barbara had suggested we had lunch in what she expected to be the quieter Kingfisher Hide but some people were feeling peckish and I displayed my Fairtrade wares – past best Geosticks gratefully received and different varieties of Liberation Nuts enjoyed by half a dozen people.



Outside this hide some saw a Dunnock while Sharyn pointed out some Glistening Inkcaps nesting on and around the Stag Beetle City. She told us about other varieties of Inkcaps and we later saw a Shaggy Inkcab bleeding ink.

Back on the path we soon stopped to admire a bush full of Spindle berries – and then to ensure everybody was able to see the female Reed Bunting feeding on the edge of the path. I noticed Geese flying over but couldn't identify them. Fortunately Barbara asked if I'd seen the 5 Canada Geese.

We had lunch in the Kingfisher Hide. No birds to distract us but Francis saw a Red Admiral butterfly and we saw several pairs of Common Darters in tandem apparently depositing a lot of eggs in the water. Soon after lunch, as we walked along the river, I spotted a raptor soaring very high up. We identified it as a Buzzard and later saw a closer bird which was joined by a 2nd.



We continued to the Warbler Hide. Trevor heard a Water Rail and some heard a Cetti's Warbler. We also saw a distant Stonechat. We then turned back toward the Visitor Centre though Sheila, Trevor and Francis left us to go through the turnstile towards the Otter Hide and a longer walk round outside the reserve.

The rest of us enjoyed an impressive flock of Lapwing – at first I thought about 30 but it was probably twice that – wheeling about in the sunshine. By 2.15pm we were back at the Visitor Centre overwhelming the volunteer with our demands for coffee, cups, milk and tending money for our purchases. Some stayed to drink at leisure but a few of us left in time to get the 2.52 train ... stopping before the bridge to add 4 House Sparrows to our list.

Path pic M.Hill; others M.Holden. More pics on <https://www.flickr.com/photos/mbsbirds/albums/72157699710447222>

SPECIES	No	COMMENT
Canada Goose	5	Flying over
Mute Swan	13+	1 + 2 cygnets, 2 + 6 cygnets, 2 and lake with many swans and coot
Shoveler	2+	1M from Draper Hide, 1F from Ashby Hide, several from Gadwall Hide
Gadwall	8	1 + 5 + 3
Wigeon	12	Gadwall Hide
Mallard	12	
Teal	12	Draper Hide
Tufted Duck	1	F from Ashby Hide
Little Grebe	2	1 Draper Hide, 1 along river
Grey Heron	4	1 flying past Draper hide, 2 from Gadwall Hide, another in flight
Cormorant	10	individuals flying over
Buzzard	2	1 soaring high above River Stort then closer view from near turnstile and 2nd came into view.
Water Rail	1	Hd
Moorhen	11+	5 Draper Hide, 6 Gadwall Hide
Coot	20	
Lapwing	60	10 from Gadwall Hide, impressive flock in flight which divided into two each with 20+
Common Snipe	4	Gadwall Hide
Green Sandpiper	1	Pointed out as soon as we walked into Draper Hide. Further good views before we left.
Black-headed Gull	200+	Counted 200 from Gadwall Hide. + other individuals in flight.
Lesser Black-backed Gull	2	with the 200 gulls from Gadwall Hide
Stock Dove	1	
Woodpigeon	6	
Collared Dove	1	nr station
Green Woodpecker	1	Hd
Jay	1	
Magpie	6	
Carrion Crow	10	
Blue Tit	3	
Great Tit	3	
Cetti's Warbler	1	Hd
Wren	3	1 seen in reeds from Ashby Hide, at least 2 others hd
Starling	30	11 on pylon and cables nr Ashby Hide then larger group huddled together on cable + some in flight.
Blackbird	5	
Robin	5	hd
Stonechat	1	Warbler Hide
House Sparrow	4	on way back to station
Duncock	1	Outside Gadwall Hide
Pied Wagtail	1	Gadwall Hide
Chaffinch	1	Hd
Goldfinch	1	Hd
Reed Bunting	1	Female on path after Gadwall Hide