



Anglesey, Sunday 11 October 2014

Six members enjoyed a warm, sunny day on a trip to Anglesey. The day was spent looking for rarities but sadly we missed out on them all but ended up with 57 species for the day. We started at Cemlyn where the highlights included Gannet, Shag, Little Egret, Stonechat, Rock Pipit, Raven, Chough, Linnet, Wheatear, Turnstone, Golden Plover and Greenshank.

We moved on the Breakwater Country Park for lunch followed by a circular walk and highlights here included a number of Common Bussard enjoying the warm thermals around Holyhead Mountain, further better views of Chough plus Little Owl and a flyover Peregrine.

Our next destination was Valley Lakes RSPB reserve where the good wildfowl numbers included Gadwall, Wigeon, Pochard, Shoveler plus Little and Great Crested Grebe.

Our final port of call was Maltraeth Marsh RSPB reserve, a new location for MCOS trips. The highlight here was a single Kingfisher flying down the river Cefni.

The warm sunshine brought out a few butterfly species including Comma, Small Copper, Meadow Brown and Peacock. The 'rarities' we looked for and missed were Short-toed Lark at Cemlyn (present for a few days and seen 10 minutes before we arrived at the field), a Yellow Browed Warbler found in the morning at the country Park and a Glossy Ibis that had been present for a few days at Maltraeth Marsh. Better luck next time!

Ray Evans

Anglesey, 18th October 2015

Only 3 members turned up for the first weekend trip of the new season to Anglesey. En-route to Cemlyn, we picked up a Hooded Crow on roadside wires at Llanfachraeth. We started at Cemlyn where the highlights included Gannet, Shag, Little Egret, Red-Throated Diver, Guillemot, Common Buzzard, Stonechat, Rock Pipit, Golden Plover and Greenshank.

We moved on to Breakwater Country Park for lunch followed by a circular walk and highlights here included Raven, Chough, Sparrowhawk, Kestrel plus a female Blackcap – our only migrant warbler of the day.

We stopped at a roadside field near Ty Croes to check through a big flock of feral Greylag Geese but sadly there was nothing more exciting amongst them.

We moved to Maltraeth estuary and the Cob Pool where highlights included Little Grebe, Wigeon and Pintail.

Our final port of call was a feeding station at Llyn Parc Mawr between Maltraeth and Newborough and birds here included Great Spotted Woodpecker, Treecreeper and Jay plus a Red Squirrel. The sightings of Jay gave us all 8 of the UK crow family in one day – no mean feat. Number of species for the day - 56

Ray Evans

Anglesey, 15th October 2017

The first weekend trip of the new season saw 6 members make the trip to Anglesey. We met at Cemlyn Bay where the highlights were Shag, Razorbill, Manx Shearwater, Gannet, an early Goldeneye and Rock Pipit. We stayed here for a short time before moving to the Inland Sea at Four Mile Bridge where highlights included Wigeon, Redwing, Red Breasted Merganser and a single Red Necked Grebe.

We then moved on to the Range, a coastal, cliff-top heathland south of South Stack where we saw Raven, Stonechat and the highlight a juvenile Dotterel. After lunch we headed to South Stack where the only bird of note in fairly windy conditions was a Chough.

We travelled to Soldier's Point on the edge of the Breakwater Country Park in Holyhead where we saw the undoubted star bird of the day in a juvenile Isabelline (Daurian) Shrike. After everybody had their fill of this rarity, we travelled to Penrhos NR where the highlights were a group of Pale-Bellied Brent Geese, Dunlin, Curlew and Bar-Tailed Godwit.

Our final destination was Malltraeth Marsh RSPB reserve near Holland Arms where we saw among other things Common Buzzard, Shoveler, Snipe and Black Tailed Godwit.

The weather stayed fine all day except for the high winds at South Stack. The tally for the day was 54 species.

Ray Evans

Anglesey, 21 October 2018

Seven members made the trip to Anglesey. We met at Cemlyn Bay where the highlights were Shag, Kittiwake, Manx Shearwater, Gannet, Purple Sandpiper, a summer-plumaged Great Northern Diver in the bay, Greenshank, Curlew and Snipe on the lagoon and a mixed flock of Chaffinch, Goldfinch, Reed Bunting and House Sparrow in a field nearby but no sign of the reported Tree Sparrows which is a rarity for Anglesey.

We moved to a small lake inland from Cemlyn, a new venue for the Society, Llyn Llygeirian. Here in amongst a group of Tufted Duck was a female Lesser Scaup (a new bird for the Society, I think).

We then moved to the harbour at Holyhead where we had our lunch and where we were unsuccessful in finding the Black Redstart reported earlier in the morning. Moving from here to the Inland Sea at the Anchorage at Four Mile Bridge, the highlights included Red-breasted Merganser, Great Crested Grebe and Wigeon and again were unsuccessful in finding the reported Cattle Egret.

We travelled to Penrhos CP where the highlights were a group of Pale-bellied Brent Geese, Eider, Mediterranean Gull and Slavonian Grebe.

Our final destination was on the mainland at Fairbank Road in Towyn near Rhyl where we had a few brief views of a Yellow-browed Warbler.

The weather stayed fine all day and the final tally of birds was 60 Species.

Ray Evans

Anglesey, 13th October 2019

The first weekend trip of the new 2019/2020 season on saw six members make the trip to Anglesey. We met at Cemlyn Bay but the weather was atrocious with very heavy rain. A small flock of Golden Plover was flying around the field adjacent to the carpark. A decision was taken to move to Holyhead Harbour where we did some birding under one of the shelters out of the rain and highlights here included Linnet, Stonechat, Razorbill and Shag. There aren't many reserves on Anglesey with hides so another decision was taken to move back to the mainland to Llanfairfechan where we took our lunch first and then went under the shelter on the front. Unfortunately, another birding group from the Wirral had the same idea so it was a little crowded under this shelter.

Highlights here included a small flock of Eider, parties of Common Scoter, Gannet, Red-breasted Merganser, Red-throated Diver, Wigeon, Turnstone, Ringed Plover with Dipper and Grey Wagtail on the river. Although the rain was easing it was still fairly heavy and we moved to the luxury of hides at RSPB Conwy. Here we saw Gadwall, Shoveler, Teal, Common Snipe and Little Egret. The sun started breaking out mid afternoon and we decided to drive up to the Great Orme to look for a Yellow-browed Warbler that was reported earlier. We didn't see the Yellow-browed because although dry by now there was a strong gusty wind on the top. We did see Stonechat, Raven and Chough.

The weather did not spoil our day's birding but did change our itinerary for the day but we still ended up with a total of 51 species.

Ray Evans

Anglesey, 17th-19th February 2023

Fifteen members enjoyed a weekend's birding in Anglesey. We stayed at The Valley Hotel in Valley and were well looked after.

We met on the Friday morning at the seafront in Llanfairfechan, where highlights here included Gannet,

Goosander, Eider and Rock Pipit with Grey Wagtail and Dipper on the river. We moved on to the Spinnies Nature reserve at Aberogwen where we had Little Egret, Greenshank, Bar-Tailed Godwit, Pintail, Goldeneye and a few woodland birds. We then moved on to Foryd Bay at the southern end of the Menai Straits where we saw Brent Goose, Shag, Grey Plover, Little Grebe and Mediterranean Gull but we couldn't find the Baikal Teal that had been present during the previous two weeks. We had our lunch stop here overlooking the bay, and after lunch moved on to Anglesey 'proper' and visited Cors Ddyga RSPB reserve but unfortunately couldn't find any parking spaces and carried on to Malltraeth estuary. During a short walk, highlights included Stonechat, Common Buzzard, Raven, Wigeon, Teal and Pintail and then we travelled the short distance to Aberffraw Common and Llyn Coron where we had further Goosander, Tufted Duck, two Little Owls in a farm building and the undoubted highlight, a Short-eared Owl hunting on the common. It was then time to make our way to the hotel to check in, and later enjoy an excellent evening meal with a few beers.

On the Saturday morning after a hearty breakfast, the group travelled just down the road to Penrhos nature reserve. Paul, our chairman, had to withdraw at the last minute from the trip for personal reasons but was able to join us for the Saturday and met us there. Highlights here included Red-breasted Merganser, Shag, Great Crested and two Slavonian Grebe. We moved round the corner to the next bay which overlooks part of the harbour at Holyhead and here we saw both Black-throated and Great Northern Diver together with Rock Pipit and a flyover Sparrowhawk. Our next destination was the harbour itself, where we had further Little Egret, two/three Black Guillemot which nest in the harbour walls, and a possible/probable Caspian Gull. This prompted extensive discussions there and then and again over a few drinks in the evening. It seemed to have some of the attributes (small, unmarked head, small dark eye, yellow legs) of a Caspian and lacked others (bill was quite short and mantle not quite dark enough). No photograph was taken and so it will remain a mystery.

We moved on again to South Stack where the highlights included Chough, Razorbill, Fulmar and another Raven. After having our lunch here we moved on to Valley Lakes RSPB reserve and after a short walk to the mound, the highlights included Great Crested Grebe, a flypast Kingfisher, Goldeneye, Pochard, more Chough and a heard only Cetti's Warbler. We returned to Aberffraw common for our final destination of the day and the Little Owls were still in attendance and one field near the farm buildings had several Starling together with winter thrushes, Fieldfare and Redwing. Another scan of the common saw us fail to find the Short-eared Owl from the previous day. We returned to our hotel and had another excellent meal - Steak Saturday with 25% off.

After yet another excellent breakfast, we travelled north to Cemlyn Bay, a North Wales Wildlife Trust reserve and highlights here included more Gannet (there is now a small gannetry on the north side of the island), Turnstone, Grey Plover, Purple Sandpiper, Guillemot, further Black Guillemot and a flighty flock of about 200 Golden Plover in fields alongside the lagoon. Our final destination on Anglesey was Benllech Bay where the seafront there had been a bit of a mecca for sea-duck over the winter. We could only find Common Scoter, Long-tailed Duck, Red-throated Diver and Brent Goose.

We had our lunch and a few in the group took their leave. The remainder of the group called at Llanddulas on the way home where the last few birds we saw were thousands of Common Scoter plus Guillemot, Red-throated Diver and Great Crested Grebe but we were unable to find the star birds, Surf and Velvet Scoter. We were though joined by an alternative star, TV naturalist Iolo Williams leading another group.

The weather was dry with sunny intervals but with a fresh wind at times and we ended up with 88 species over the weekend. The hotel was excellent, comfy rooms, good food and especially good company and everyone had a thoroughly enjoyable weekend's birding.

Ray Evans

Anglesey 15 October 2023

The first weekend trip of the new 2023/2024 season on October saw 3 members make the trip to Anglesey. The weather kept fine all day and we met at Cemlyn Bay where the highlights were Golden and Grey Plover, Turnstone, Snipe, Ringed Plover, Little Egret and Stonechat. There was very little movement on the sea and we decided to move on to Penrhos Nature Reserve to make use of the facilities there. The tide was very high and

the best birds here were Great Crested Grebe and Red-throated Diver. Our next port of call was Holyhead Harbour where we had our lunch and the best birds were Redshank, Razorbill and Shag. This site is usually good for Black Guillemot but unfortunately, we couldn't find any while we were there.

Our next destination was RSPB South Stack but it was very crowded because of the fine weather. We saw Raven and Rock Pipit at the top overlooking the lighthouse but no sign of any Chough surprisingly, we then moved down to the RSPB Café car park to use their facilities and found a Little Owl sitting out in the sun on a rock on the hillside opposite the café. We took the back road from South Stack in the hope of finding either Chough or Hooded Crow in one of the fields on the headland but no luck.

We travelled to the south-west side of the island to Aberffraw Common where the highlights were Kestrel and Mistle Thrush, moved to Malltraeth in the hope of birding on the Cefni Estuary but our hopes were dashed with no parking spaces due to the fine weather. Our last port of call was Llyn Parc Mawr in Newborough Forest where they have Red Squirrel coming to the feeders but not on this day, the place was again crowded with families making the most of the weather. We had a few common woodland birds on the feeders.

We ended up with 49 species over the day but because it was such a fine day the world and his wife were out and the journey home along the coast was slow.

Ray Evans