



Blacktoft Sands & Fairburn Ings, Sunday 17 May 2015

Ten members visited Blacktoft Sands and Fairburn Ings. Shortly after arriving at Blacktoft, whilst looking out across the reed bed from the reception centre, the group were treated to exceptional views of a male Montagu's Harrier. The reserve warden commented that these were probably the best views he had seen of this bird since its arrival.

From the hides further views of the male, together with the female Montagu's Harrier were seen. There were also fairly continuous sightings of male and female Marsh Harrier, some hunting while others were seen to be carrying nesting materials. Good numbers of breeding Avocets were present with young chicks seen venturing out into the open.

Wildfowl present included: Mallard, gadwall, Shoveler, Pochard, Shelduck, Greylag and Canada Goose. Views of singing Blackcap, Sedge and Cetti's Warbler were limited due to the cold and windy conditions. Waders were few in number with only Ringed and Little Ringed Plover noted.

After leaving Blacktoft Sands the group moved on the Fairburn Ings where Spoonbill, Ruddy Shelduck and Ruddy Duck were the main birds of note.

Surprisingly, only one Whitethroat and one Common Tern were seen during the day. The days total of species seen was 51.

Graham Haspey

Blacktoft Sands and Fairburn Ings, 10th June 2018

Six MCOS members met at Blacktoft Sands. Weather conditions were calm and overcast.

Reed Warbler, Sedge Warblers and Cetti's Warbler were in great voice as the group moved to the hides where fair numbers of water fowl and waders were present. Ducks included Mallard, Teal, Gadwall, Wigeon, Tufted and Shoveler. Pick of the Waders were Avocet and Little Ringed Plover. A single Spoonbill, Little Egret and Grey Heron were busy feeding in the margins where a Water Rail made a very brief appearance.

In the reedbeds a family of Bearded Tit were showing well and good numbers of Reed Buntings were frequently seen. Several Marsh Harriers were hunting over the reedbeds but sadly there was no sighting of the female Montagu's Harrier that had been present for some time on the reserve.

After lunch the group moved on to Fairburn Ings. First stop was the viewpoint for the Spoonbills that had bred successfully on the reserve. One chick had been confirmed by the wardens and further eggs were expected to hatch. Directly above the Spoonbill nest a Little Egret nest containing three good sized chicks could also be seen. Moving on to one of the hides, Sand Martins were seen nesting in an artificial nest hole bank. A long trek in Sunny conditions was then undertaken to look for Black-necked Grebes which had also bred on the reserve. These birds were reported to be present on one the three coal tip pools. The first two pools drew a blank and doubts began to creep in as to whether the grebes would be found. As the third pool came into view grebes with young were spotted at a distance on the far side. Telescopes were quickly deployed but 'Little Grebe' was the outcome. Then the eagle-eyed member of the group, Paul, spotted two birds which were quickly confirmed as Black-necked Grebes. As the group moved off to head back to the car park, 'eagle eye' spotted the bonus bird. A Bittern flew across the pool giving excellent views. which rounded off a very enjoyable day.

Total species seen: 57.

Graham Haspey.