



Marshside/Mere Sands, 13 October 2013

Eight people came to the outdoor meeting but it was a very quiet affair due to the lack of any substantial water. Pink-footed Geese were in abundance and a few ducks, Black-tailed Godwits and a couple of Little Egrets but generally very quiet until we went past Banks Marsh where a Great White Egret flew by. Mere Sands nature reserve was also very quiet with only a few duck species seen along with the Canada Geese. Afterwards several of us went for a walk around Martin Mere on the walk around the perimeter. It was really good with good numbers of Geese and Whooper Swans. Also, a female Peregrine was on the ground eating its kill.

Paul Kenyon

Marshside Southport, 6th December 2015

Seven members turned out despite the weeks rain. The sun never really appeared despite the promise of a sunny day and the weather turned cold.

Most of the fields were flooded and this suited the ducks and geese. From the RSPB hides good views were obtained of Gadwall, Pintail, Shoveler, Wigeon and Pink-footed Geese and a Ross's Goose. The latter is presumed an escape though it has wintered for a couple of years. A large flock of Black-tailed Godwits and Golden Plovers were present but no Snipe possibly due to the amount of water. A distant view of a Brown Hare was obtained.

Afterwards we viewed Crossens Marsh on the seaward side of the road where we saw Peregrine, Merlin and a Sparrowhawk with an occasional Greenfinch and small flock of Goldfinch.

After lunch we drove to Hesketh Out Marsh which is a new area for the society. Here we had stunning views of a day flying Barn Owl, Female Hen Harrier, a couple of Buzzards and a Peregrine.

Then back to the Marine Lake where we viewed many Coot and good numbers of Little Grebe.

Total number of species 40.

Paul Kenyon

Marshside RSPB & Hesketh Bank, Sunday, 16th October 2016

Only five members turned up for this outdoor meeting. It doesn't appear a popular choice with people at the moment.

On arrival we were met by skeins of Pink-footed Geese in formation coming to feed on the marsh. We managed to reach the first hide before it started to rain. Highlights included the Cattle Egrets amongst the cows and a Kingfisher plus a large flock of Black-tailed Godwit. Pink-feet, Canada and Greylag Geese were feeding on the RSPB reserve along with a dubious Ross's Goose.

Once the rain had stopped, we went to view the marsh between the road and the sea where we were treated to views of Marsh Harrier and many wader species the highlight being a huge murmuration of Knot. Dunlin, Ringed Plover and Golden Plover were seen in flight and a Great White Egret in the distance. Little Egrets were everywhere. Back to the car for lunch then off down the road looking for Yellow-browed Warbler which didn't show. Because of the rain and the time we went to Hesketh Bank where we added Whooper Swan, Stonechat and Greenshank to the list.

Raptor wise, apart from Marsh Harrier, Peregrine and Sparrowhawk plus Kestrel were seen. In all a total of 55 species were seen.

Paul Kenyon

Marshside, Southport and Martin Mere, 17th October 2017

After a battering from the remnants of Hurricane Ophelia on the Monday, the forecasts showed that the worst of it would be over by our planned trip on Tuesday. 11 members met at the sand

washing plant car park at Southport and walked to the Sandgrounders hide which was warm and comfortable to look over the marsh. We got close up views of Black-tailed Godwit and lots of duck! (Teal, Shoveler, Shelduck, Wigeon). We had a very windy walk to Nel's hide but were rewarded by distant views of 5 Cattle Egret and a Little Stint.

We drove to Martin Mere for lunch and met up with the Aldridges. Andrew had counted the Pink-footed Geese and confirmed the count at 17,000. An amazing sight, the goose air traffic control had a hard job to avoid collisions as they whiffled down to land!! Only 2 Whoopers were seen, we thought that these 2 may have decided not to migrate due to injury. Species count for the day was 43.

Stephen Williams

RSPB Marshside, 9th December 2018

Nine members of the society turned out for a chilly but fine day. Parking at the now defunct sand plant we viewed the Marsh where we had good views of many Pink-footed Geese, many on the Marsh and many in the sky. Little Egrets were in all the gullies and a distant murmur of Knot was enjoyed as well as a Merlin perched on a stump and a couple of Marsh Harriers. We crossed over the road to the hide where we had good views of many species of duck, Pintail, Shoveler etc and a couple of raptors, Kestrel and Sparrowhawk. Golden Plovers were in the sky with the very jumpy Lapwings. Two brown hares were on the Marsh with good numbers of Black-tailed Godwits.

We crossed back over the road to the sand plant where we saw Peregrine. We then crossed back to look over the opposite Marsh where there was more duck. Good numbers of Pintail, Shoveler and Tufted Duck. Tree sparrows were seen here too.

Next we headed off to a very windy Hesketh Bank where we had a picnic lunch. Birds of note here were two Hen Harriers (male and female).

We decided to head to Lunt Meadow which is a reserve not visited by the society before. A Short-eared Owl was seen as well as many Snipe but suddenly the weather deteriorated and we headed home.

45 species were seen.

Paul Kenyon

Ainsdale Beach and RSPB Marshside, 18th Feb 2019

Fifteen members turned out on a dry and windy day at Ainsdale beach in front of Pontins. The tide was high but the waders were far off due to dog walkers and folk enjoying the beach. But we clocked lots of gulls and Skylarks singing their heads off! Next time we need to walk further along the beach. We did try another spot nearer to Southport and the waders were there but needed a scope. We transferred to RSPB Marshside and had our picnic in the hide. Plenty of waterfowl: Gadwall, Pintail, Golden Plover, Shoveler, Teal, Black-tailed Godwit. We saw Barnacle Geese on the meadow far off and Pink-footed Geese. The RSPB volunteer gave us a tip that a Scaup was on the adjoining lake. This we found and was the bird of the day. We met Ray Evans on the marsh looking for raptors and spotted a Kestrel and a possible Merlin. I recorded 37 species.

Stephen Williams

RSPB Marshside, 9th November 2019

Nine members turned up on a very cold frosty morning. A quick look around before heading for the main hide gave us a Marsh Harrier, Sparrowhawk, Kestrel and flocks of Pink-footed Geese. The water on the lake from the main hide was too high for many waders and these were forced to the back and side of the water. These included large numbers of Black-tailed Godwits with a few Bar-tailed Godwits. Many Pink-footed Geese with some Canada Geese. A Little Grebe on the water with some Lapwings in the background. All the ducks were present with good numbers of Wigeon, Shoveler and Pintails. Afterwards we left the hide where we crossed the road to view any raptors or waders on the marsh. We saw a male Hen Harrier along with several Marsh Harriers, Sparrowhawk, Kestrel and Buzzard. Little Egrets were in the channels. Looking towards the beach

we could see flocks of Knot wheeling similar to a Starling murmuration. Fieldfares and Redwings flew over whilst watching these birds.

We then checked the water adjacent to the main hide. Here we found the female Greater Scaup.

Now lunch then off to the pier to see the large flock (100+) of Twite. We had good views and here we also had a solitary Knot.

Then on to Mere Sands Wood reserve where we saw Goosanders and had good views of Goldcrests.

In total we had 46 species.

Paul Kenyon

RSPB Hesketh Out Marsh/Marshside, 14 November 2021

Twelve members turned up on a warm sunny day in November to witness some exceptional birdwatching. On arrival at Marshside 2 Hen Harriers (ringtails) were seen. During the course of the next couple of hours several Merlins, Peregrines, Marsh Harriers, Kestrels, Sparrowhawks, Buzzards were observed in good numbers. A fantastic murmuration of Knots was also taking place along the shoreline at the same time. All the time Pink-footed Geese and Greylags were flying overhead. The hide across the road was almost empty of people so we fitted in ok. Cetti's Warbler was heard and seen by the hide entrance. We then walked to the platform at the very end of the reserve to observe a Glossy Ibis.

The afternoon was spent at Hesketh out marsh where we were treated to a fantastic Barn Owl display which posed for photo opportunities. Also, here 6 Grey Partridges and a Tree Sparrow. Overall, an excellent day with 70 species seen.

Paul Kenyon

RSPB Marshside, Southport and Ainsdale-on-Sea, 15 February 2022

Twenty members met at the beach for Ainsdale-on-Sea. The sand lizard artwork covering a whole building close by was amazing, reputed to be the largest artwork in the UK. Whilst it was dry, it was very windy so we didn't last long on the exposed beach which only had gulls and pippits to observe. We were lucky to miss the severe storm that was forecast for the next day. We drove on to RSPB Marshside, Southport where we were happy to shelter in the hides and bag lots of water birds including Ruff, Golden Plover, Black-tailed Godwit and Pintail. On our return, star birds of the day were close views of a small flock of Snow Bunting on the foreshore close to the pier and opposite KFC. This was a tip-off! Andrew A went on to Hesketh Bank and reported 1000s of birds and potholes! He had hoped for a reported Spotted Redshank but no luck. Total species 38.

Stephen Williams

Mere Sands Wood Nature Reserve and RSPB Marshside, 11 October 2022

Fourteen members met up at Mere Sands Wood Nature Reserve near Rufford on a cloudy but dry day. The visitor centre had been much improved since our last visit and now has a good *looking* café. We walked a circular trip round the lakes visiting all the hides and found Red-legged

Partridges in the nearby field which were very hard indeed to spot. See Simon Smith's excellent photo.



Red-legged Partridge



Roe Deer



Pied Wagtail

Pink-footed Geese were seen coming over in flocks. At the end of the walk, we surprised Roe Deer out in the open in the field but they soon disappeared. Our next location was to be WWT Martin Mere, but a case of Avian Flu had been discovered and the centre was closed. So, plan B was Marshside RSPB where we had our sandwiches in the Sandgrounders hide looking out over the marsh. A few Black-tailed Godwit were on the margins, Lapwing and lots of Pink-footed Geese plus the usual waterfowl. Opposite the hide next to the sand washing plant we saw a Stonechat displaying on top of a bush. Later, Paul also bagged a Merlin and Marsh Harrier at the same location then Golden Plovers at Bank's Marsh. Group total 45 species.

Stephen Williams

Marshside and Hesketh Out Marsch, 17 March 2024

Ten members turned up to Marshside at Southport after a very wet night. Fortunately, the rain abated by the start time and gradually got better as the day wore on. After viewing the Marsh from the car park which gave good views of two Peregrines, good numbers of Pink feet and a murmuration of Knot we headed towards the reception hide. On the way we stopped at the old sand plant where we saw and heard Chiffchaffs, Greenfinches and Goldfinches plus a couple of Stonechats.

The reception hide produced good views of Avocets, Black-tailed Godwits and many species of duck. Cetti's Warbler calling by the hide. Large number of Golden Plover gave good views. A trip across the road gave us views of Buzzard, Marsh Harriers and Hen Harrier. A Spoonbill fed in the channels along with Little Egrets. We then moved on over to the viewing point looking over the Marsh on the other side of the road. Little Grebe and Curlew were added to the list.

Lunch was taken and we then moved on to Hesketh Bank. Here we added Merlin plus a couple of Spotted Redshanks. As people started to leave three Red-legged Partridges put in an appearance.

A total of 65 Species seen.

Paul Kenyon