



North Wales 16 February 2014

Six members made the trip to the North Wales coast. Meeting at Llanfairfechan front we were soon watching Red-throated and Great Northern Divers, Common Scoter and flypast Brent Geese but after 30 mins we decided to move down to Aberogwen and the North Wales Wildlife Trust Spinnies reserve. Highlights here included Goosander, Little Egret, lots of Goldeneye and hundreds of waders, mostly Curlew and Redshank plus a Water Rail under the feeders at the roadside hide.

Returning to Llanfairfechan for high tide and lunch we had an excellent sighting of a Great Northern Diver close inshore plus Black Guillemot out on the sea and Dipper and Grey Wagtail in the river running through the town. Four Buzzards and a pair of Raven flew over the mountain behind the town.

Moving on to the RSPB reserve at Conwy, the highlights here were a drake and two female Scaup plus Snipe, Black-tailed Godwit and various other wildfowl. A short stop at Rhos on Sea yielded further Red-throated Diver, Guillemot, Shag and Turnstone but no sign of any Purple Sandpipers.

We ended the day at Pensarn scanning through the vast flock of Common Scoter but we could not find any of the Surf Scoter reported earlier in the day. Richard found a single Slavonian Grebe. A total of 62 species was seen during the day.

Ray Evans

N Wales, Sunday 11 January 2015

Thirteen members enjoyed the first trip of 2015 to N Wales. We all met at Llanfairfechan promenade and immediately proceeded to Foryd Bay a tidal bay southwest of Caernarfon. Skirting the minor road to the west of the castle at Caernarfon brought us to the Menai Straits and eventually the northern end of Foryd Bay. We made a few stops along the bay and highlights included up to 6 Great Northern Divers with some them very close inshore, a flock of Brent Geese that over-winter in the bay, Black-tailed and Bar-tailed Godwit together on the foreshore, Little Egret, Rock Pipit and sizeable flocks of Wigeon and Pintail.

After a couple of hours we travelled back to the Spinnies nature reserve at Aberogwen. Highlights here included sizeable numbers of Great Crested Grebe and displaying Goldeneye, a female Eider Duck, 4 Greenshank and a roosting Peregrine.

We then returned to Llanfairfechan for our lunch. Highlights included further, more distant views, of Great Northern Diver, Slavonian Grebe, Black Guillemot plus Dipper and Grey Wagtail in the stream.

We then proceeded to Old Colwyn to view the Scoter flock in the bay which was a few thousand strong but we only managed Common Scoter and were unable to find any Velvet or the over-wintering Surf Scoters,

Our final destination was a small working sand quarry between Afonwen and Bodfari on the A541 Mold-Denbigh road. However, we failed to find the reported over-wintering Black-necked Grebe or Mandarin Duck and added only Tufted Duck and Coot to our list for the day.

We managed 49 species on a cold, very blustery day with poor light.

Ray Evans

Llanfairfechan and North Wales Coast, Tuesday 14 April 2015

Eleven members met at the beach car park. The weather was colder than back in Cheshire, with a biting cold wind. With the tide well out a flock of Sandwich Terns fed on the tide line, with distant views of other waders and gulls.

As we walked along the coast to Morfa Madryn, newly arrived Swallows struggled in the wind. From the shelter of the hides we picked up more birds including Chiffchaff, Meadow Pipit, Skylark, Oyster Catcher and nesting Lapwing. A single Goosander was on the far lagoon.

A drive to the Spinnies at Aber Ogwen proved to be more sheltered, with woodland birds on the feeders. The estuary held a few Egrets and a pair of Goosander but few waders.

In all we saw 42 species and despite the wind we enjoyed the backdrop of the Carneddau.

Harold & Valerie Fielding

North Wales, 24th January 2016

Seventeen members enjoyed the first trip of 2016 to North Wales. We all met at Llanfairfechan promenade. Highlights here included distant views of Great Northern Diver, Common Scoter, Goosander plus Dipper and Grey Wagtail in the stream.

After a couple of hours we travelled to the Spinnies nature reserve at Aberogwen. Highlights included displaying Goldeneye, Wigeon, Little Grebe, Little Egret, Greenshank and Kingfisher. We were unable to access all the reserve because a bird identification course run by North Wales Wildlife Trust was taking place.

We then proceeded to Old Colwyn to view the Scoter flock in the bay. However, it was extremely windy and it was difficult to keep our telescopes upright. We only managed Common Scoter before we decided to call it a day.

We drove back to Conwy RSPB reserve, had our lunch and then highlights on the reserve included a Firecrest for a couple of members, plus Siskin, Shoveler, Treecreeper, Lesser Redpoll and Greenfinch.

We moved on to Rhos on Sea, which was a little sheltered from the wind and found Purple Sandpiper, Rock Pipit along the shoreline plus Red-throated Diver, Razorbill and Shag offshore. We were unable to find the Black Redstart, which had been seen along the promenade earlier in the day.

Our final destination was Pensarn when we had a brief search for Snow Bunting along the shoreline but with no luck.

We managed 64 species on a cold, very blustery day.

Ray Evans

North Wales Coast and Foryd Bay, Sunday 15th January 2017

Ten members enjoyed the first trip of 2017 to North Wales. We all met at Llanfairfechan promenade and highlights here included Dipper, Grey Wagtail, both Black- and Red-throated Divers, Common Scoter, Slavonian Grebe and Eider.

We then proceeded to Foryd Bay, a tidal bay southwest of Caernarfon. Skirting the minor road to the west of the castle at Caernarfon brought us to the Menai Straits and eventually the northern end of Foryd Bay. We made a few stops along the bay and highlights included a flock of Brent Geese (both Pale- and Dark-bellied) that over-winter in the bay, Rock Pipit, Wigeon, Pintail, a wintering Greenshank and a Long-tailed Duck

After a couple of hours we travelled back to the Spinnies nature reserve at Aberogwen where we had our lunch. Highlights here included sizeable numbers of Goldeneye, Peregrine, Raven and a big mixed flock of Curlew, Redshank with a few Black-tailed Godwit in the fields.

We then proceeded to the Westshore at Llandudno where a walk along the beach gave us another Peregrine, Rock Pipit and two Snow Bunting.

We then moved on to Rhos Point and saw Purple Sandpiper but there was no sign of the reported Black Redstart.

Our last port of call was the Kinmel area where we looked for the reported Waxwings but to no avail and a quick visit down to the beach gave us Sanderling as a new bird for the day. With the light fast diminishing we called it a day.

We managed a respectable 70 species on a cold January day.

Ray Evans

North Wales, 21st January 2018

Eleven members enjoyed the first trip of 2018 to North Wales. We all met at Llanfairfechan promenade and highlights here included Dipper, both Great Northern and Red-throated Divers, Common Scoter, Eider and Bar-tailed Godwit.

After a couple of hours we moved to the Spinnies nature reserve at Aberogwen. Highlights included a good number of Goldeneye and Wigeon, Slavonian Grebe, a further two male Eider close to shore, Greenshank, Red-breasted Merganser, Peregrine, and a mixed flock woodland birds at the feeders including Nuthatch.

We left the Spinnies and went to RSPB Conwy where we had our lunch. It was quite breezy at Conwy with the southerly wind funnelling down the valley directly into the reserve. Wildfowl highlights here included, Gadwall, Shoveler, Goosander, Pochard and a first winter male Scaup. Other birds of note were Stonechat, Siskin, Linnets and a Sparrowhawk.

It was a little more sheltered at Rhos Point and here we saw 4 Purple Sandpiper, Turnstone and Rock Pipit.

Our next port of call was Llanddulas where a Glaucous Gull was sitting obligingly on a post. Our last destination saw us at Pensarn looking offshore at the huge Scoter flock but we were unable to locate anything other than Common Scoter while a Sanderling was very close just over the sea wall. With the light fast diminishing we called it a day.

We managed a respectable 73 species on a cold January day.

R Evans

North Wales, 20 January 2019

On Sunday 20th January, nine members enjoyed the first trip of 2019, to North Wales. We all met at Llanfairfechan promenade and highlights here included Dipper, Grey Wagtail, Red-throated Diver, Common Scoter, Eider, Brent Goose and Fulmar.

After a couple of hours we moved to the Spinnies nature reserve at Aberogwen. Highlights included a good number of Goldeneye and Wigeon, Slavonian Grebe, Greenshank, Red-breasted Merganser, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Nuthatch, Treecreeper, Goldcrest and a very obliging Water Rail outside one of the hides.

We had our lunch overlooking the estuary at the Spinnies and then moved on to Rhos on Sea. In a walk along the promenade, we saw Turnstone and eventually after a long search a single Purple Sandpiper.

Our next port of call was Horton's Nose at the harbour in Rhyl where the bird of the day, a Black Redstart was sitting obligingly on a boat in the boatyard. A walk down to the beach where the highlights were Sanderling and a Shag. We managed 61 species during the day.

R Evans

N Wales Coast, 12th January 2020

Twelve members enjoyed the first trip of 2020, to North Wales. We all met at Llanfairfechan promenade and highlights here included Dipper, Grey Wagtail, Red Throated Diver, Common Scoter, Eider, Brent Goose, Turnstone and Fulmar.

After a few hours we moved to the RSPB reserve at Conwy. We saw Goldeneye, Wigeon, Shoveler, Pochard, Redshank, Snipe, Siskin and Bullfinch but the undoubted highlight here was stunning views of a Firecrest (maybe 2).

We had our lunch when we returned to the cars and then moved on to Rhos on Sea. In a walk along the promenade we saw Rock Pipit and Shag and eventually after a bit of a search a single Purple Sandpiper which was enjoyed by many other walkers along the prom.

Our last port of call was Horton's Nose at the harbour in Rhyl and after walking down to the beach we eventually came across the 2 Snow Bunting which also gave excellent views in the telescopes..

We managed 64 species during the day.



Purple Sandpiper



Snow Bunting

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R Evans

North Wales Coast, 16 January 2022

Fifteen members enjoyed the first trip of 2022, to North Wales. We all met at Llanfairfechan promenade where the weather was windy, rainy and very misty to the extent that Puffin Island could not be seen across the water. However, it cleared up by mid to late morning. We soldiered on through the elements and highlights included, Red-throated Diver, Common Scoter, Eider, a big flock of Dunlin with Ringed Plover and Turnstone mixed in and single Rock Pipit and Dipper. The best bird was a very unseasonal first winter Sandwich Tern, which was fishing up and down the Straits.

Our next destination was the Spinnies Nature Reserve at Aberogwen. We saw Goldeneye, Wigeon, Slavonian and Great Crested Grebe and lots of Redshanks and Greenshank as the tide was dropping plus Peregrine, Sparrowhawk with prey and a single Black-tailed Godwit. Our lunch was taken here.

After lunch we moved to RSPB Conwy where one member (David) learnt a very valuable lesson, never leave any coffee or cake on the roof of your car for the local Herring Gull mafia. On the reserve there were more waterfowl including Shoveler, Pochard, Tufted Duck and a 1st winter Scaup. Passerines included Bullfinch, Siskin, Greenfinch but we found no sign of the reported Firecrest from the day before.

The next port of call was Rhos on Sea promenade where we saw Eider (again), Red-throated Diver and Shag and eventually after a bit of a search a single Purple Sandpiper.

Our final destination for the day was the sea front at Llanddulas, where Surf Scoter had been reported the previous day. However, even though there was a big flock of Common Scoter the light by this time was too poor to spot any of their American cousins. We did find more Great Crested Grebe, Red-throated Diver and Shag in amongst the Scoter.

We managed a respectable 68 species during the day.

R Evans