

BIRDWATCHING GROUP report by Andrew Lapworth

Visit to Hurworth Burn Reservoir 21 August 2023



On a warm, sunny and breezy day 10 of us met at this attractive and open reservoir site near Wingate. The path initially follows the old Hurworth Burn railway branch line to Castle Eden Dene.

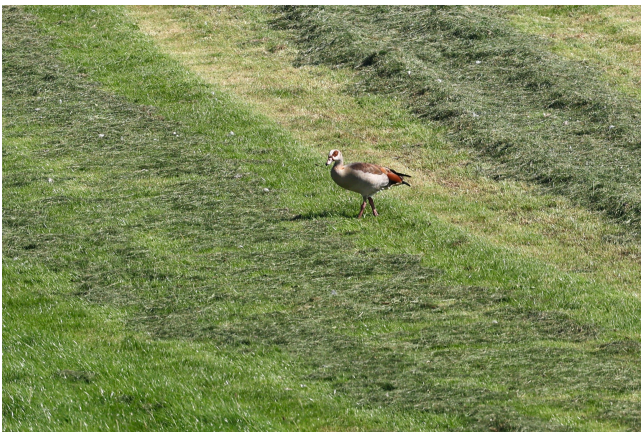
From the car park we enjoyed great views of several calling Common Buzzards, and walking along the disused railway track path, we tried to get our eyes on and identify numerous small birds actively feeding in the hedgerows: most likely mainly Chiffchaffs and Willow Warblers.

We eventually had a good view of a Whitethroat

that perched briefly but giving us time to see it properly. Speckled Wood, Red Admiral and Peacock butterflies provide colour along the wayside flowers.

On the reservoir itself were several Great-crested Grebes, many Coots and flocks of Black-headed Gulls; a Great Black-backed Gull flew over. We had good but distant views of big flocks of Greylag and Canada geese on the banks. Large flocks of Lapwings were flighty. Further on we

found the solitary and rather exotic **Egyptian Goose** in a field, that Linda had seen on her recce the previous week. It's not a true goose and not only from Egypt, but is related to Shelducks! It is widely distributed across much of sub-Saharan Africa, with its natural breeding range extending to the Western Palearctic at Lake Nasser in Egypt. It's an introduced bird in Britain, and is quite striking in flight. It is a rare vagrant to Co. Durham from naturalised populations in the UK and Europe.



Thanks to *Jim Coleman* for the action shot of us in the car park.

Egyptian Goose photo by Andrew Lapworth.