

## **BIRDWATCHING Report and photos by Andrew Lapworth**

### **AUGUST FIELD MEETING AT NOSTERFIELD NATURE RESERVE AND QUARRIES**

Twelve of us gathered on the 19th at this local nature reserve (between Bedale and Ripon) which is managed by the Lower Ure Conservation Trust. There are a number of hides along the pathways but we stayed outside looking through a blind with strategically placed viewing slits. This wet grassland area was once a sand and gravel quarry and it presented us with a wide vista of wetlands covered in birds. The flocks were at some distance so telescopes were needed to pick out and identify individual interesting birds amongst the feral Greylag Geese flocks. There were grebes, corvids and flocks of Starlings; the ducks were all in their eclipse plumages, making ID a challenge. We enjoyed watching a Great Egret saunter past a Little Egret, showing just how much larger the former really was.

In late summer many waders are returning from their local breeding ground on our moors and even from Scandinavia and the high Arctic. There were lots of Lapwings, a few Curlews, but we needed the 'scopes to pick out Snipe, Redshanks, Black-tailed Godwits (still showing some of their brick-red summer plumage), Ringed Plovers and a Common Sandpiper (not a Wood Sandpiper despite my best endeavours!)

After an hour or so we moved over to the still active working Quarry, where there is a portacabin visitor facility; as we arrived and were trying to park the cars sensibly we were told an **Osprey** was on view over Flask Lake. We soon set up a viewing 'scope and formed a queue to see the bird perched, in the distance, in a dead tree. It had obviously caught a fairly large fish and was settled there for the duration as it consumed its lunch. This was the first Osprey we had found as a group and a first-ever sighting for one or two. Ospreys bred last year for the first time in North Yorkshire at Bolton Abbey and this was probably one of the local birds. A **Buzzard** was also heard and seen.

We then had our packed-lunches on the picnic tables and a **Red Kite** flew over giving some of us very brief views. We next followed the field-side tracks to the first lake; Long-tailed Tits and Chiffchaffs called from the bushes swaying in the gusty breeze. At the lake we checked the gulls and ducks, adding Shelduck to the list. A **Marsh Harrier** gave good views, hunting over the lake margins, and a second bird showed up too. I was pleased to hear the laughing call of a Green Woodpecker in the distance. A good visit with over 35 species seen, including 4 impressive raptors.



Great White and 2 Little Egrets; a nice size comparison. Photo by Anne Newton



Osprey with fish: how we would have liked to see him/her. Photo by Andrew Lapworth



Osprey in the tree at Nosterfield: how we actually saw him/her! Photo by Andrew Lapworth