

Travelling Naturalist Trip Report July 2nd – 5th 2007

A wet and windy week, more like April than July, lots of good birds but not surprisingly very few butterflies.

Monday July 2nd

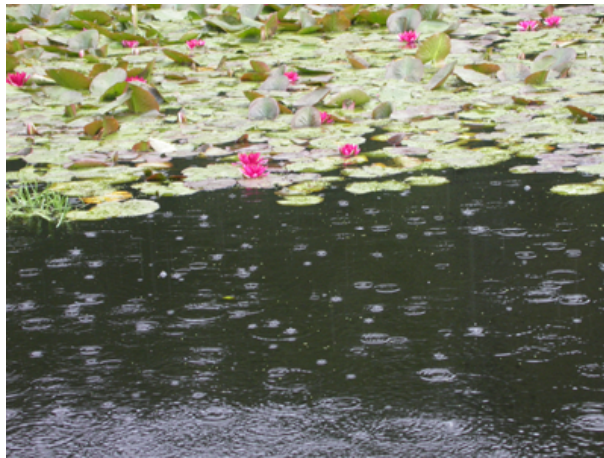
Weather: cool and breezy with overcast skies

2100 Yew Tree Bottom

Our first evening in the New Forest started with a fabulous dinner in our hotel, followed by a trip out to see Nightjars. Not long after we arrived at the site the first Nightjars started singing and soon we had seen several birds, although somewhat distantly.

Tuesday July 3rd

Weather: Sunny intervals with frequent heavy thundery showers



0930 Raptor viewpoint

Shortly before we reached this classic site the rain stopped and the sun came out. This clearly had an effect on the local finch populations with family parties flitting around all over the place. Before long we had seen Crossbills, Bullfinches and, best of all, Hawfinches. A female Redstart was found at the top of the first path and a Marsh Tit could be heard calling nearby with a Blackcap singing not far away. All this and we still had only walked a few yards from the car!

Reaching the raptor viewpoint we immediately latched on to a distant large raptor, which turned out to be a Common Buzzard. A Kestrel was found soon after but the star bird was a Honey Buzzard which spent about 10 minutes circling round in front of us, occasionally performing its dramatic roller-coaster display flight with wing-claps as well!

Lunch was had at the water-lily pond in torrential rain, with us and the Common Blue Damselflies sheltering from the rain. The Bog Asphodels and Sundews growing near here added a bit of botanical interest.



Bog Asphodel



Common Blue Damselfly

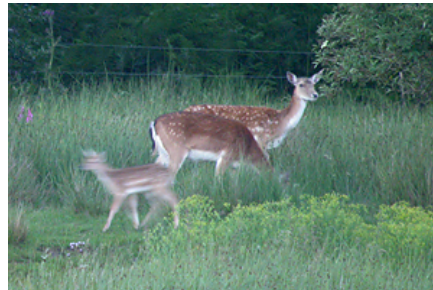


Roe Deer tracks

1430 Pennington

Walking out towards the coast we saw a female Common Darter before a patch of very heavy thundery rain sent the insects into hiding. There were plenty of birds though including Common, Little and Sandwich Terns and lots of Swifts and martins. For the second year running we found a flock of summering Eider, this time with a Great-crested Grebe. Reaching the end of the walk we turned round just as the sun came out again and the butterflies came out from hiding. Common Blues and Small Skippers were seen along with a number of rare plants including Sea Kale, Sea Rocket and Bugloss. Shortly after we drove off it started raining again!

1930 Queens Meadow



Fallow Deer

The evening walk with the Forestry Commission Deer Warden started with a couple of female Red Deer with a fawn. Before long we were watching a herd of 80 Fallow Deer, mostly females with their young. The walk back produced excellent views of Nightjars and Woodcock as well as Jupiter and another planet, probably Venus.

Wednesday July 4th

Weather: As yesterday but with less frequent showers



0930 Bishop's Dyke – Denny Wood

We had just stepped out of the vehicle when we heard Crossbills calling from the trees. They remained hidden so we walked towards Bishop's Dyke in breezy but dry conditions. The wind kept most of the birds hidden but we did see a fine male Stonechat and a very pale Buzzard soaring over Denny Wood. A number of good plants were found including Marsh and Trailing St John's Worts, Bog Myrtle, Marsh Pennywort and Bur-reed. Reaching the shelter of the trees a few more birds appeared with Redstarts, Treecreepers and finally the first Crossbills of the week we were able to see properly.

Lunch was had under the enormous oaks of Denny Wood next to a bramble bush that we hoped would attract a few butterflies if only the sun would come out. As we packed up to go the sun did come out and immediately produced a wonderful White Admiral which uncharacteristically for this species posed for numerous photographs. A couple of Silver-washed Fritillaries also appeared to keep it company but our attention was definitely on the White Admiral as it showed its beautiful upper and underwing patterns.



New Forest Crowfoot



White Admiral

Walking back through Denny Wood we had good views of a family of Redstarts including a gorgeous male. Nearby we disturbed a pair of Tree Pipits and a camera team from the BBC filming a scene on decomposition for Gardeners World!

1500 Emery Down

A reptile feast here with fine views of Sand Lizard, Grass Snake, Adder, Natterjack Toad and Green Frog to mention just a few. Shame they weren't wild!

1600 Rhinefield Arboretum

The main reason for stopping here was to see the 2 amazing specimens of Giant Redwood, but we also saw some very smelly Stinkhorns and added Ringlet to the butterfly list.



Stinkhorn

2100 Brockenhurst Allotments

We failed to see any owls but we did have a close view of a Roe deer with a young fawn – a very rare site indeed.

Thursday July 5th

Weather: overcast and breezy with rain from lunchtime onwards.

1000 Keyhaven

We were hoping to add considerably to the butterfly list here but the cold, windy conditions put paid to that. Also the heavy rain during the week had flooded all the feeding areas that usually produce a good selection of waders so we had to work hard to see much at all. Black-tailed Godwits were present but in much reduced numbers, as were most of the other waders including Curlew and Ringed Plovers. One of the best sights was the colour-ringed Greenshank feeding next to a Redshank allowing a useful comparison. The Lapwing chicks were a memorable sight as well as was the first Gannet seen on one of these trips. A number of birds were heard rather than seen including the first Dartford Warbler and Cetti's Warbler we have come across at this site. Apart from these few notables we enjoyed the fresh air!

1300 Bolderwood

Lunch was the highlight here, much the better for us not realising that we were sat on a Hornet's nest! Some fine fungi here on the dead Beeches including Artist's Fungus and Varicoloured Bracket.

After lunch we visited the deer viewpoint and were treated to very close views of some fine Fallow bucks, their antlers well-grown but still in velvet.

When the rain started in earnest we all decided that we had got wet enough for one week and returned to the hotel to end what was a memorable week – and more for the birds than the wet feet!

Bob Ford, July 2007

Birds:

Great-crested Grebe	PENNINGTON
Gannet	KEYHAVEN
Cormorant	KEYHAVEN
Little Egret	KEYHAVEN
Grey Heron	KEYHAVEN
Mute Swan	PENNINGTON
Shelduck	KEYHAVEN
Mallard	PENNINGTON
Eider	PENNINGTON
Honey Buzzard	RAPTOR VIEWPOINT
Buzzard	BROCKENHURST
Kestrel	ACRES DOWN
Pheasant	ACRES DOWN
Moorhen	PENNINGTON
Coot	PENNINGTON
Oystercatcher	PENNINGTON
Ringed Plover	KEYHAVEN
Lapwing	KEYHAVEN
Black-tailed Godwit	KEYHAVEN
Woodcock	YEW TREE BOTTOM
Curlew	KEYHAVEN
Redshank	KEYHAVEN
Greenshank	KEYHAVEN
Black-headed Gull	ACRES DOWN
Herring Gull	ACRES DOWN
Great Black-backed Gull	PENNINGTON
Sandwich Tern	PENNINGTON
Common Tern	PENNINGTON
Little Tern	PENNINGTON
Wood Pigeon	ACRES DOWN
Stock Dove	ACRES DOWN
Collared Dove	BROCKENHURST
Green Woodpecker	DENNY WOOD
Great Spotted Woodpecker	BROCKENHURST
Nightjar	YEW TREE BOTTOM
Skylark	KEYHAVEN
Swift	ACRES DOWN
Sand Martin	KEYHAVEN
Swallow	PENNINGTON
House Martin	PENNINGTON
Meadow Pipit	ACRES DOWN
Tree Pipit	ACRES DOWN
Grey Wagtail	BROCKENHURST
Pied Wagtail	ACRES DOWN
Wren	ACRES DOWN
Dunnock	ACRES DOWN
Robin	ACRES DOWN
Redstart	ACRES DOWN
Stonechat	ACRES DOWN

The Travelling Naturalist

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Cetti's Warbler (heard)	KEYHAVEN
Reed Warbler (heard)	KEYHAVEN
Dartford Warbler (heard)	KEYHAVEN
Whitethroat	PENNINGTON
Blackcap (heard)	ACRES DOWN
Chiffchaff (heard)	ACRES DOWN
Willow Warbler	ACRES DOWN
Goldcrest	ACRES DOWN
Spotted Flycatcher	ACRES DOWN
Long-tailed Tit	ACRES DOWN
Marsh Tit (heard)	ACRES DOWN
Coal Tit	ACRES DOWN
Blue Tit	ACRES DOWN
Great Tit	PENNINGTON
Nuthatch	EMERY DOWN
Treecreeper	DENNY WOOD
Magpie	PENNINGTON
Jackdaw	PENNINGTON
Rook	PENNINGTON
Carrion Crow	ACRES DOWN
Starling	KEYHAVEN
House Sparrow	KEYHAVEN
Chaffinch	DENNY WOOD
Greenfinch	ACRES DOWN
Goldfinch	KEYHAVEN
Linnet	ACRES DOWN
Siskin (heard)	ACRES DOWN
Bullfinch	ACRES DOWN
Hawfinch	ACRES DOWN
Crossbill	ACRES DOWN

Butterflies:

Red Admiral	ACRES DOWN
White Admiral	DENNY WOOD
Silver-washed Fritillary	DENNY WOOD
Meadow Brown	ACRES DOWN
Ringlet	RHINEFIELD
Large White	ACRES DOWN
Common Blue	KEYHAVEN
Silver-studded Blue	DENNY WOOD
Small Skipper	KEYHAVEN
Large Skipper	ACRES DOWN

Moths:

Clouded Buff	DENNY WOOD
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Dragonflies:

Common Blue Damselfly	ACRES DOWN
Common Darter	PENNINGTON
Broad-bodied Chaser	ACRES DOWN
Emperor	ACRES DOWN

Other insects:

Mottled Grasshopper	ACRES DOWN
Pond Skater	ACRES DOWN
Dor Beetle	EMERY DOWN
Wood Ant	QUEEN'S MEADOW
Hornet	BOLDERWOOD

Mammals:

Rabbit	PENNINGTON
Grey Squirrel	RHINEFIELD
Roe Deer	BROCKENHURST
Fallow Deer	QUEEN'S MEADOW
Red Deer	QUEEN'S MEADOW

Amphibians:

Common Toad	DENNY WOOD
Natterjack	EMERY DOWN
Green Frog	EMERY DOWN
Palmate Newt	EMERY DOWN

Reptiles:

Common Lizard	EMERY DOWN
Sand Lizard	EMERY DOWN
Slow-worm	EMERY DOWN
Grass Snake	EMERY DOWN
Adder	EMERY DOWN

Notable Plants:

Agrimony
Alkanet
Bell Heather
Bilberry
Bird's-foot
Bog Asphodel
Bog-myrtle
Bogbean
Bracken
Bur-reed
Bugloss
Butcher's-broom
Bird's-foot-trefoil
Common Heather
Common Mallow
Creeping Willow
Cross-leaved Heath
Douglas Fir
Dwarf Thistle
European Larch
Fiddle Dock
Floating Sweet-grass
Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil
Green Alkanet
Hard-fern
Heath Bedstraw
Honeysuckle
Hop Trefoil
Lady-fern
Lesser Skullcap
Lesser Spearwort
Lousewort
Lucerne
Marsh Pennywort
Marsh Ragwort
Marsh Samphire
Marsh St John's-wort
Meadow Thistle
Milkwort
Musk-mallow
Purple-loosestrife
Round-leaved Crowfoot
Round-leaved Sundew
Rowan
Lucerne
Sand Spurrey
Scots Pine
Sea Rocket
Sea-kale
Selfheal
Sessile Oak
Silver Birch
Silverweed
Small Cudweed
Sneezewort
Tormentil

Water-purslane
White Beak-sedge
White Clover
Wild Carrot
Wood Spurge
Wood-sorrel
Yellow Loosestrife
Yew
Yorkshire-fog

Fungi:

Varicoloured Bracket
Artist's Fungus
Stinkhorn
Puffball
The Blusher
Horse Mushroom