

## BLACKTOFT SANDS R.S.P.B RESERVE – Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2017

Three members, Charles Seymour, Malcolm Swift and Brian Smithson set off from Dronfield at 08.30hrs in drizzle with skies overcast and grey. We reached Blacktoft at about 09.45hrs with much the same weather and windy and put on our waterproofs for a start. Large skeins of Pink-footed Geese were flying noisily over from the coast and heading inland to find shelter.

There were Tree Sparrows and a few Great Tit and Blue Tit on the feeders as we made our way to the Visitors Centre which was shut.

So it was straight on to the FIRST HIDE with Geese still flying over – we counted at least sixty in one group. A few Redshank, Teal, Black-headed Gull and Herring Gull were on the water and a Grey Heron by the reeds. TOWNEND HIDE was our next visit there were about eighty Black-tailed Godwit feeding in the shallows. Some flapped their wings and others flew a few yards giving us good views of the black tail and the white wing bars. Also feeding were a dozen or so Redshank.

It was quiet except for the “twittering” of the Godwits which stopped when a Marsh Harrier flew low over the reeds and put them up. At SINGLETON HIDE we saw Shelduck and Shoveler on the water, and around forty Dunlin grouped together at the edge of the water but they flew off as soon as we arrived at the hide. A small group remained on the other side of the water along with more Redshank and a single Ruff and a single Curlew Sandpiper. A Kestrel hovered above the reeds as we made our way back to the path.

The only flowers that were noted today were Dandelion, Hogweed and Common Ragwort.

As we retraced our steps we called in at XEROX HIDE where Widgeon was added to our list of wildfowl. The best sightings were of 15+ Spotted Redshank loafing around next to Black Godwit and eleven Snipe fed in the grassy edges of the pools. Shoveler numbers were up to twenty and new species we recorded here were Pied Wagtail and Moorhen.

By this time (lunchtime) we had glimpses of the sun but the wind had increased in strength making the Marsh Harriers work hard as they were almost hovering as they faced into the wind.

MARSHLAND HIDE had only a few birds – Teal, Shoveler, Shelduck, Godwit and six Snipe. A single Lapwing stood by itself in the water.

We then took the 600yards walk along the grassy path up to OUSEFLEET HIDE and it was a struggle against the wind. No water in front of the hide, just masses of yellow flowers grew where it should have been. There were no birds either until a Wood Pigeon and then a Greater Black-backed Gull flew in front of us. Then a large flock of Lapwing with Starlings under them flew from right to left. As we left the hide Malcolm spotted a weasel run across the path- our only mammal so far. Behind the bushes lining the path on the left we spotted four Konik Ponies sheltering in the reeds. The sun showed itself after about 15.00hrs as we made our way back to the car and Goldfinch boosted our sightings at the feeding station.

A good day out with a total of 33 birds. We set off back about 16.15hrs and it took us an hour and a quarter to reach Dronfield.

Reporter Brian S. Smithson

Members 3   Birds 33   Flowers 3   Mammals 1

## BLACKTOFT SANDS RSPB - Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2017 - SPECIES LISTS

### Birds

Pink – footed Goose  
Tree Sparrow  
Blue Tit  
Great Tit  
Magpie  
Black – headed Gull  
Common Crow  
Wood Pigeon  
Redshank  
Teal  
Herring Gull  
Grey Heron  
Black –Tailed Godwit  
Little Egret  
Lapwing  
Marsh Harrier  
Shelduck  
Shoveler  
Ruff  
Curlew Sandpiper  
Dunlin  
Kestrel  
Blackbird  
Spotted Redshank  
Wigeon  
Snipe  
Mallard  
Moorhen  
Pied Wagtail  
Starling  
Lapwing  
Goldfinch

### Flowers

Dandelion  
Hogweed  
Common Ragwort

### Mammal

Weasel

TREE SPARROW





REDSHANK



MARSH HARRIER

MAGPIE





**KESTREL**