



# STB Newsletter

April 2021

## A Timely Reminder ...

This time last year David, one of our friends, gave us an insight into the birdlife we could look out for around the boardwalk as we anticipated the end of the winter months, longer days and lighter evenings. Of course also this time last year, we were increasingly distracted, by news of the novel virus and its impact as we were all asked to stay at home for, as it turns out, the first time. So here we are, the clocks have just gone forward again and we're now more familiar with following advice on when and where we are able to head out to. When that means the boardwalk is accessible to you and in case, with all that was going on last year, you missed the lovely informative account of 'The Boardwalk's Springtime Birds' ... you'll find a reminder below.

And before your attention turns to that feature - **breaking news** - just last week David observed and heard 14 **snipe** in the reed beds adjacent to the boardwalk ... keep your eyes peeled:



"skulking wading birds with short legs & long straight bills" - RSPB

Interestingly "The UK population of snipe has undergone moderate declines overall in the past twenty-five years, with particularly steep declines in lowland wet grassland, making it an Amber List species."

Glad to know they've taken a shine to Broad Haven!

More information and their call can be heard on the [RSPB](#) site.

## The Boardwalk's Springtime Birds

**"Spring has sprung, the grass is ris, I wonder where the boidies is"**

If only we would all stop, look and listen then we would be able to answer this 1940 nonsense poem questionably attributed to Ogden Nash. Yes spring has sprung and the boidies – sorry, birds – are all around us and making themselves heard as they vie for territory and a mate. One swallow may not make a summer but the return of the piercing song of just one Chiff Chaff is enough to convince me that winter is over, as this small visitor from Africa returns for the season. Most of the migrants that tend to arrive in April become more numerous through the month and into May so hopefully more obvious to spot as the weeks go on. Interested? Here's some pointers to help you look out for regulars ...

A highlight is the elusive Skylark more often heard rather than seen as it hangs on fluttering wings high in the sky. Although resident throughout the year spring seems incomplete without its high rolling notes repeatedly sung in long series. Even more iconic is the distinctive, yet now rarely heard call of the

The Slash Pond Boardwalk is an alternative attraction to our wonderful Seaside Award beach (the national standard for the best beaches across the

UK). At more than 350 metres, the boardwalk is a sheltered, non-slip, paw friendly decked walkway surrounding a serene pond in a habitat that supports a wildflower meadow, a picnic area, willow dens, bug houses and bat & bird nesting boxes.



Parking at Trafalgar Terrace car park (along the seafront, turn left at the Galleon Inn, ¼ mile on the left. Parking is free with a donation box at the entrance to help local community groups). Walk out of the car park, turn left, the walk entrance is 30 metres on the left. Sat Nav directions use SA62 3JU. Bring along a small net and enjoy the 'Dipping Deck' or test yourself with our Nature Trail Quiz. The area offers a circular route of approximately ½ mile which is accessible to motobility scooters, wheelchairs and pushchairs.

Cuckoo also having made its tortuous journey from Africa – so listen carefully before it goes quiet when it departs in July. Now regarded as a rarity and on the “Red List” of endangered species as UK numbers have fallen by 65% since the 1980s.

More common and unmissable is the raucous noise from the ever growing local population of Corvids (no relation to Covid!). As anyone living close to Haroldston Woods will testify – the volume of the arguing and nest building activity of Rooks is something to behold. Joined by their Jackdaw and Crow cousins in their hundreds, their flypast is one of Broad Haven's daily spectacles.

One of the victims of changing habitats is the Swift whose numbers declined by 53% between 1995 and 2016. Their screaming parties that filled our skies seem a distant memory these days but we still hope to see them return once again. House-martins and Swallows (unrelated to and often confused with Swifts) are always a thrill to watch as they return to last year's nesting sites, collect mud and sand for nest building and fly low over the slash pond as they feed on emerging insects. Birds that never seem jet lagged after their long haul flight from the southern hemisphere.

Birds of the Warbler family always bring their individual songs to grace the boardwalk area. Too often written off as LBJs (little brown jobs), each have their own unique jizz (movement and song characteristics), so listen and look out for the Reed, Sedge and Willow Warblers and their relations – the Blackcap and Whitethroat. The aerobatics of the undistinguished Spotted Flycatcher, in and out of the bushes surrounding the slash pond, is also thrilling, albeit fleeting.

The Pied Wagtails that we are so familiar with should not be overlooked as they may well be joined by their rarer cousins the Grey, White or even Yellow Wagtails.

Not all our bird life is made up of exotic overseas visitors as we have many resident species that we can too easily take for granted and so ignore the inherent beauty of their song that is far more voluble at this time of year. The Robin, Dunnock, Chaffinch, Blackbird and Song Thrush are just a few locals to listen out for; as is the cacophony of the House Sparrows in the Peasey Park brambles - in itself beautiful. Although well established, their habitat is soon to be overtaken by developers and will constitute both a loss of habitat and a loss to the village.

Whatever you see or hear in and around the village do enjoy (even if you can't always put a name to them) and treasure the experience as we are all fully aware that climatic and environmental changes, habitat loss and human indifference mean that we can take nothing that nature offers us for granted. Nor should we. ... David Meanwell

For help identifying birds you've spotted, try using the RSPB tool linked here to '[Identify a bird](#)'

## Join Us:

**Please keep an eye on our Facebook page for news of meetings, TLC days and updates to any of the dates/times listed in this newsletter.**

Facebook - [facebook.com/supporttheboardwalk](https://www.facebook.com/supporttheboardwalk)

If you're not on Facebook and have a query please email us [boardwalkgang@gmail.com](mailto:boardwalkgang@gmail.com)

We are a lovely community group - have a think about coming along, you'll be most welcome.

**'Support the Boardwalk' – Fundraising to Preserve and to Enhance**

Website - <http://www.supporttheboardwalk.co.uk>