



STB Newsletter

November 2019

Enjoy the Birdlife – AUTUMN SPECIAL

Just as folk come & go through the seasons and others live here all year round, as do the birdlife of the Boardwalk and Slash Pond.

Autumn is therefore an exciting time of change. Whether flying from the north in search of food and milder climes, or simply passing through on their journey, bird migration is one of the UK's most impressive natural events. So look out for the comings and goings of flocks, as well as remembering to look out for those preferring to fly solo.

A successful Summer breeding season has enhanced our local corvid population of **Jackdaws, Rooks, Crows** and **Magpies** and are readily seen and heard around the area, while those **Starlings** that are with us all year round are joined in large numbers by their Siberian cousins for the Winter season and their spectacular murmurations. Similarly our resident **Blackbird** and **Thrush** families will soon be overwhelmed by relatives from Scandinavia and northern Russia, so look out for flocks of **Redwing** and **Fieldfare**.

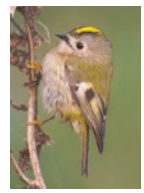
Their numbers being determined by the success or failure of the Rowan crop back 'home'.



Redwing



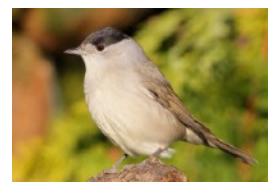
Fieldfare



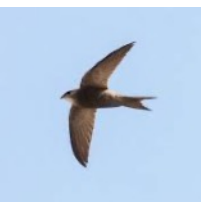
At the other end of the spectrum, a less obvious and much smaller visitor, the **Gold Crest**, is Europe's smallest bird weighing the same as a ten pence piece yet, incredibly, able to journey across the North Sea to spend its winter here.

Gold Crest

Also travelling south, our more melodious visitors that have sung through the Spring & Summer, will mean that things will be quieter for the next few months. The **Reed Warbler** - more often heard than seen – has returned to West Africa, as the **Sedge Warbler** seeks out more tropical climes. Whereas their distant cousin, the **Blackcap**, also from Africa may be seen throughout the year.



Blackcap



Swift

We will miss our **Swallows & House Martins** (Hirundines) having entertained us over the past months with their aerial acrobatics as they fed on a range of insects both high in the sky and at water level over the pond – we wish them well with their 200 miles a day journey to South Africa. Although it is unclear exactly where in Africa UK House Martins reside over our Winter. We also mourn the rapid fall in numbers of **Swifts** to the UK (53% decline since 1995) so if you saw and heard one this Summer count it as a privilege.

The Slashpond 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 Nature Trail Quiz. The area offers a circular route of approximately ½ mile which is accessible to motobility scooters, wheelchairs and pushchairs.



Cattle Egret

Climate change continues to affect who comes and goes to our neighbourhood so to be honoured by a **Cattle Egret** visiting the Slash Pond was exceptional; as was a **Black Swan** (most likely an escapee from someone's collection and far from its Australian home). As ponds freeze during the Winter, some species tend to seek out ice free water so hopefully we will once again see **Little Grebe** and **Great Crested** grace the Slash-pond to keep our resident **Moorhens** company.

We should not forget that many species have chosen to make the Slash Pond and surroundings their permanent home so keep an eye out for the elusive **Kingfisher, Great Spotted, Green & Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers,** and **Water Rail**; and the **Wren** and **Dunnock** will be more readily seen during Winter as trees & hedgerows lose their leaves.



Water Rail

Being so close to the sea, regular visits from **Herring Gulls** and **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** to wash and preen, and **Cormorant** to feed will hopefully continue through the Winter. As well as **Mute Swans** and **Mallard** taking a rest.

One thing we can be assured of is that the **Robin** as well as **Great, Blue & Coal Tits, Woodpigeon, Collard Dove, Pied Wagtail, Dunnock,** and **House Sparrow** together with **Bull Finches, Chaffinches** and **Goldfinches** (the latter preferring Teasel seeds during the Winter) will always be with us if we continue to protect the safe haven that is the Broad Haven Boardwalk and Slash Pond.

Happy birding - David Meanwell

I can hear the swishing grass whilst the sun is burning us.

I can see the lily pads floating in the wrinkly water.

I can hear the birds sing and it sounds like they are playing the flute.

I can see the dragonfly dancing on the water top.

Sarah Williams – Broad Haven School

Thank you Sarah for your atmospheric poetic observations!

Join Us - Next Meeting:

8pm, Monday 2nd Dec in The Rafter's - stairway to this meeting space is behind the Broad Haven village hall. (NB: Through 2019 - meetings are each even numbered month from Feb' ... Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct, Dec) It's a lovely community group with something for everyone and it's a bit of a social too! Have a think about coming along; you'll be most welcome.

Please keep an eye on our facebook page in case of any updates. If you're not on facebook and have a query re the meetings or indeed any other boardwalk related matters, please email us (boardwalkgang@gmail.com)

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

WATCH THIS SPACE (for activity and meeting re-scheduling when necessary):

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

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