



NORTH SOMERSET AND BRISTOL GROUP NEWSLETTER – February 2017

Dear Member

Last month's talk, deemed 'inspirational' and 'the best' by Nick Upton was very well attended. It was interesting to have updates on projects that he had told us about last time and to enjoy his accounts of more recent projects, all illustrated with his wonderful photos. It was also good to have the opportunity for some to meet the Trust's new COO, Adrian Blumfield.

This month our speaker will be **Mya-Rose Craig AKA Birdgirl** who, at 14 years old held the record for the youngest birder to have seen 4,00 species of birds in the world. Not only an avid birder, she is a blogger and storyteller and will recount her experiences from around the world, the conservation projects she has seen and her desire to inspire young people to be interested in birds, wildlife and conservation. The illustrated talk is called '**Born to Bird**', starting at 7.45pm at the Star at Tickenham on **Monday, 13th February**. *Please note that this is a week earlier than our usual talk date.*

A very last minute reminder that on **Sunday 5th February** Roger Moses has kindly offered to lead a walk at Bridgewater Bay NNR. The rising tide (high at 12.30) should push large flocks of waders up the beach, attracting raptors – peregrine and merlin - if we are in luck. On the way back, weather and time permitting, we may call in at WWW Steart Marsh. Meet at 10.30am at Natural England car park ST275459. Dress for the cold, bring hot drinks and sustenance! Please let me know if you plan to come.

Kestrel Highways Project

The last checks before the start of the new breeding season are being carried out, ranging from minor repairs after the winter to removing jackdaw sticks and evicting squirrels to meeting new owners where sites have changed hands to dialogue with developers working in close proximity to an existing box. This box will be particularly closely monitored as the kestrel pair are 'ready' nearby. Unfortunately it is not possible to move this box at the moment as there are no other suitable trees in the vicinity. Hopefully, the developers will be sympathetic and plans can be made to relocate a new box for next year. This year some of the new boxes have been supplied by the Kestrel Project Fund. Our group has made a contribution towards travel expenses. Many thanks to Barry and his team for all the time and energy they devote to this project.

To become involved with this year's monitoring team, for more information or to report kestrel sightings – please contact Barry: baz.gray@btinternet.com

News from Shapwick Reserve:

Progress continues. The container is being clad with weatherboard to match to new building and will be used for additional storage. Plans for the installation of a water collection system which includes a cloakroom sink, tap, waste, a 250litre external rainwater collecting tank with stand are well developed and parts are being ordered. This all means that the prospect of a loo draws ever closer! The hedging planted last year has been painstakingly pruned to encourage bushing out and Barry is looking to identify potential trees in the mature hedge to grow into hunting viewpoints for kestrels.

The next work day is most likely to be Sunday 26th, though we are awaiting confirmation of this. For further information on volunteering, please contact : simon.beard@hawkandowl.org Tel 01300 320008 or Barry: baz.gray@btinternet.com

Other dates and items which may be of interest:

Tuesday 14th February – the talk for the South Gloucestershire Group will be by **Oliver Smart**, an award winning wildlife photographer Iron Acton Parish Hall at 7.30 pm.

Friday 17th February – when it is hoped that Sam Hobson will be the speaker for Abbots Leigh Wildlife Group with a talk 'Urban Wildlife'. 7pm for 7.30pm at Abbots Leigh Villlage Hall, tickets £5, to include a glass of wine or juice. <http://www.abbotsleighwildlife.com/events/>

14th--21st February is National Nest Box Week, about the latest time this spring to be installing a bird box in your garden.

Friday 24th February 7.30pm at Claverham. YACWAG's Daniel Hargreaves will be talking about an exciting new bat project in North Somerset. This is a members evening but it is free entry and to join costs only £4! For more details see the YACWAG website

If you are out with your camera, a reminder of the Trust's photographic competition – sponsored by Wex Photographic, You are invited to submit images of flora & fauna, wildlife or landscape taken on one of the Trust's four reserves. The closing date is 31st May 2017. Full details can be found at <http://hawkandowl.org/2018-photographic-calendar-competition/>

We hope to see you at Mya-Rose's talk on the 13th – and a reminder that under 18's have free entry to these talks.

Best wishes

Carrie Riches

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This newsletter is intended to keep you up to date with this group's activities and other events which may be of interest. If you do not wish to receive this, please let me know.

