

Fingringhoe Wick and Abberton Reservoir 22/4/23

38 people including several first timers were on the MBS coach trip to Essex 22nd April 2023. Unlike the January visit to Abberton Reservoir, this was a stop on a causeway on route to Fingringhoe as we'd often done in the past. On this occasion the coach parked at one end of the Layer de la Haye reservoir causeway. There was mist, and clouds of newly emerged midges. On the water, Great Crested Grebes, Tufted Duck, Mute Swans and Cormorants, with a Little Egret, and several Common Terns. A Yellow Wagtail flew over calling, and we heard Nightingale and Chiffchaff, and saw a Common Whitethroat on top of brambles. A Little Ringed Plover flew along the near bank; we relocated it near the mate who was sitting in the open on a nest. We could hear Skylark singing and found one on a fencepost. Onto the Billets Farm screen: Oystercatcher, Buzzard, male Reed Bunting, and more Skylarks, including one dustbathing. 3 Ringed Plovers and a Greenshank were in a flooded roadside field.



At Fingringhoe Wick it was now sunny and warm; a Swallow sat on the wire outside the visitor centre; also nearby a Blackcap, and a barking Muntjac deer. The day's highlight was seeing a Nightingale singing on a treetop; it flew off into cover, only to reappear and perform at length in the open for the whole group for several minutes; a male Bullfinch also appeared briefly. The group heard Nightingales throughout the afternoon and had good views of another male. At the saltmarsh there were Teal and Pochard on a pool, with Dabchick whinnying loudly. On the mudflats, numbers of Black-Tailed Godwits, many in summer plumage, also Oystercatcher, and Shelduck, with both Redshank and Curlew calling. Further wandering yielded plenty of Blackcaps, brief snatches of Willow Warbler and Lesser Whitethroat, a calling Green Woodpecker, Greenfinch, Chaffinch, and good views of a flying Buzzard. We also saw Speckled Wood, Brimstone and Peacock Butterflies; the group saw / heard a total of 73 bird species.



As Charlotte Tweeted: "This little fella gave our bird group a wonderful little concert."

We enjoyed refreshment in the Visitor Centre Café and several of us bought jam from the nearby Tiptree Factory (where we used to stop on route to Fingringhoe rather than the services used in more recent years). We returned to the coach for 4.30pm and, having noticed the preparations for the next day's Marathon, agreed not to return to Embankment. The majority got off the coach at Redbridge while some continued to London Bridge.

Report from Andrew Peel with added notes from M.Hill and photos from CharlotteW and MaryH.