

Whilst thumbing through my copy of the Argus each morning I can't help noticing how many birds appear as 'picture of the day'. Over the last few weeks sparrowhawk, mallard, robin, swallow and lapwing have all featured - and there can only be one explanation – Argus readers like birds.

I imagine that anyone reading this column also has an interest in birds – and I expect many are members of the RSPB. However, I don't suppose many are members of Gwent Ornithological Society (GOS).

GOS is (inadvertently) one of Gwent's best kept secrets. It is your local bird club and offers a great deal to local birders; GOS runs a programme of guided walks which help improve your ID skills whilst introducing you to the wide range of species that can be found nearby. It also hosts over a dozen illustrated talks from renowned guest speakers each year, maintains a very informative website and produces a quarterly newsletter and annual bird report for members.

On top of that GOS carries out bird surveys and helps assess the environmental impact of local developments. In short it is a friendly, busy birdwatching group that aims to conserve the local environment and help improve people's appreciation of birds.

GOS currently has about 330 members, whilst I estimate the RSPB has about 8 or 9,000 in the Gwent area. These figures, I believe reflect the low level of awareness of GOS compared to the high profile of the RSPB. Find out more about GOS at [www.gwentbirds.org.uk](http://www.gwentbirds.org.uk) and, if you like what you see, join today.



## Birdwatching Walk

Argus readers are invited to take part in a guided birdwatching walk along the Monnow Valley on Saturday

11th

August. Meet walk leader John Coleman at Waitrose car park, Monmouth at 8.00am for a 2 – 3 hour ramble along the river, keeping an eye out for birds such as kingfisher, dipper (pictured), grey wagtail, sand martin and common sandpiper. There is no need to book a place – just turn up. Remember to bring boots and waterproof clothing, refreshments, drinks and binoculars if you have them.

If you would like more details visit [www.gwentbirds.org.uk](http://www.gwentbirds.org.uk) or give Steve Butler a call on 01873 854583.

### Keep in Touch

Thank you to all readers that have taken the time to get in touch.

I always enjoy hearing from you and can be contacted at [smegstevens@gmail.com](mailto:smegstevens@gmail.com)