

I'm not a big lover of the winter, but think that it's just about tolerable if you make the most of any fine days. The weather of late has been atrocious, but over the past few days seems to have settled down a bit, giving an opportunity to get out and see some birds.

There are plenty of birds to be seen at present; Finch and thrush numbers are currently boosted by wintering continental birds, including some non-native species such as brambling, fieldfare and redwing (pictured) - There have also been a handful of waxwing sightings locally!

If you get chance, head down to Newport Wetlands Reserve. This time of year it's a great place to see wildfowl and waders; Recent duck sightings include tufted duck, gadwall, pochard, shelduck, shoveler, pintail, teal and wigeon. Waders include curlew, knot, ringed and grey plover, snipe, oystercatcher and lapwing. A few unusual birds have also been noted at the reserve recently, including merlin, short eared owl and great white egret.

Last, but not least, the nightly murmuration of roosting starlings is building up to approximately 10 thousand birds at present. These birds start gathering just before dusk and can be seen above the reedbeds to the seaward side of the visitor centre – Get out and see them while the weather permits.

Check out the latest local bird sightings at www.gwentbirds.org.uk





Birdwatching Events

GOS continue their excellent programme of illustrated talks tonight, Saturday 1st December, with ' LIPU –
Working in Britain for Birds in Italy' by David
Langard

LIPU

(the Italian League for Bird Protection) works to prevent the illegal trapping of songbirds. As many migrant birds cross Sicily, Sardinia and mainland Italy en route to the UK, their endeavours have a significant impact on the birds we see here.

The final talk of 2012 takes place on Saturday 15th December and is being given by GOS's own Al Venables

. His talk 'Birds and Islands' considers why islands, from South Wales to the South Pacific, are special for birds. Al really knows his stuff and this promises to be a great way to round off the year.

Talks take place at Goytre Village Hall (just off the A4042 Newport to Abergavenny road) and start at 7.30pm. Argus readers are very welcome. Entry, including tea and biscuits, costs £2

For more details visit www.gwentbirds.org.uk

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