

Like many other birdwatchers across the country, I was very grateful for the recent good weather giving me the opportunity to carry out a couple of breeding bird surveys. These surveys involve making two early morning visits to a specific site each spring to see which birds are present. My particular sites are Llanvair Discoed, notable for the number of whitethroat nesting in the hedges and Clytha Hill, a real stronghold for yellowhammer. I don't like dragging myself out of bed, but I thoroughly enjoy visiting these spots....as long as the weather is fine.

Of course the wind and rain returned, much to my disappointment, but it gave other birdwatchers the opportunity to head coastwards, hoping to spot sea birds such as fulmars, petrels, skuas and gannets flying close to land to avoid the elements.

The wind and rain actually gave me a nice surprise by way of disorientating a gannet which landed locally. This bird was rescued by Mike and Cath of City Wildlife Care, who allowed me to have a good look at it whilst it was cared for prior to it's release. I'd never seen a gannet up close before and hadn't appreciated how magnificent they are.



## Birdwatching Walks

Next Saturday, 25th May, GOS have organised a guided birdwatching walk at Highbury Woods, a wonderful nature reserve situated on the

Offa's  
Dyke Path as it follows the River  
Wye  
near  
Redbrook  
. The  
Wye  
Valley is a renowned  
birdwatching  
hotspot, so walkers can expect to see an impressive variety of woodland and riverside bird  
species.

This moderate 3 hour walk is being led by local birder Tim Oliver and the meeting point is  
Waitrose car park, Monmouth at 9.00am.

The following Saturday, 1st June, there is a walk at Graig Goch Woodland near Cwmfelinfach  
in the  
Sirhowy  
Valley. This is a moderate to hard 3 hour walk and is being led by Al  
Venables  
, one of South Wales' leading bird experts and the meeting point is the Pont Lawrence Reef car  
park at 9.00am. (Off the  
A4048  
at  
Cwmfelinfach  
- follow signs to '  
Ynys  
Hywel  
Centre'). Al knows this area like the back of his hand and I expect him to reward walkers with  
views of seldom seen birds such as wood warbler and  
crossbill  
.

Argus readers are very welcome at these events. For more details visit  
[www.gwentbirds.org.uk](http://www.gwentbirds.org.uk) or call Steve Butler on 01873 854583.

Please remember to bring suitable clothing and footwear along with refreshments - and  
binoculars if you have them.

## 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)