

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 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 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