

The recent warmer, if rather soggy, weather has certainly kickstarted spring into life. Toads are now gathering to mate in a reservoir near my home, albeit about 4 - 5 weeks later than usual, and lots of green shoots are visible as young plants finally dare to venture above ground.

On the birding front, the lingering flocks of redwing and fieldfare have taken the westerly winds as their cue to depart, whilst a host of summer migrants have at long last decided to hop across the channel.

Swallow, blackcap, chiffchaff, willow warbler, whitethroat, redstart, common sandpiper and pied flycatcher have all been seen locally over the past few days and new species are turning up virtually every day.

Check out the sightings page at www.gwentbirds.org.uk for news of the latest arrivals. Why not celebrate the belated onset of spring by taking part in one of the many guided birdwatching walks coming up?



Gwent Ornithological Society Walks

On Saturday 27th April, local naturalist Keith Trott will be leading a walk around Cwmyoy. This is one of the loveliest spots in

Gwent

and Keith has planned a route taking in farmland along the

Afon

Honddu

. Birds likely to be seen include dipper (pictured), grey wagtail, redstart - plus pied and spotted flycatchers. Meet Keith at the car park opposite The Queen's Head PH,

Cwmyoy
(SO 311 220) at 8.00am.

A special out of county walk takes place on Saturday 4th May when Stephen Davies will lead you around Shapwick Heath on the Somerset Levels. This fantastic location holds some incredible birds such as bittern, common crane and marsh harrier. Meet at Magor Services (J23 M4) at 9.00am.

Argus readers are very welcome at these events. For more details visit 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.

Walks at Newport Wetlands Reserve

Tomorrow, Sunday 21st April there is a guided walk at NWR to see the numerous wading birds that breed on this important site. Expect to see lapwing, redshank and oystercatcher as well as the scarce and beautiful avocet. Meet at the Farmers Arms PH, Goldcliff at 9.00am.

On Sunday 5th May there is a chance to listen to the Dawn Chorus at NWR - with experts on hand to help you identify the many species that you hear. Meet at the reserve car park at 5.15am. For further details of NWR events call 01633 636363.

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