

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 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